

Selected lectures on Queensland History from the
Lectures in Queensland History Series

30 November 2009 –
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Lectures in Queensland History

Townsville City Council

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Acknowledgements

A series of ten lectures with a broad but central theme of the History of Queensland, *Lectures in Queensland History*, were held at CityLibraries Townsville from November 2009 to February 2012.

Many people assisted to make these lectures successful and although they cannot all be named a few will be mentioned. This series follows directly from the first Lecture series held at CityLibraries, the inspiration of Dr Judith Jensen, Coordinator of Lifelong Learning at the library. Funding was obtained and a select group of Lecturers was chosen by Judith as a representation of the subject areas most relevant to contemporary historical thought on the History of North Queensland.

The presenters, who contributed their time and work for these public lectures are also acknowledged. Their interpretation of their subjects and the often unacknowledged hours of research which go into presentations of this calibre must also be mentioned.

Trisha Fielding, Lifelong Learning Officer, organised this second series of lectures. Alicia Bolam, Dawn Bopf and Jodie Salisbury are the programs officers who worked behind the scenes with the many practical tasks associated with a series of this type.

Annette Burns
Local History Librarian
CityLibraries



Foreword

Queensland is still a place that is much talked about but little understood. We have a history that is exciting, complex, surprising, nuanced and more than a little shocking. It does not lend itself easily to simplification. It still dances like a shimmering heat-haze at the edge of our present perceptions.

Raymond Evans, John Oxley Award for Excellence in Writing About Queensland History, 5 June 2009

Queensland's history, as captured in the words of award-winning author Raymond Evans, can be elusive. Historians have had to tease out the surprising realities of the past from the self-congratulatory rhetoric.

Since colonial times, Queensland has been touted as a place that fired the imagination. People of various motivations were drawn here by fanciful visions of the frontier, where vast grasslands and exotic species beckoned settlers to partake in classification and conquest, where South Sea Islanders were deployed into plantation work that was deemed unsuitable for Europeans, and where newcomers were inspired to become farmers.

These critical essays capture the simple triumphalism of what many people believe the local past to be. They also confound our perceptions of what Queensland has been and what it has since become.

This series was delivered as public lectures from late 2009 to 2012, hosted by CityLibraries Townsville, and it drew on academic expertise from throughout the State.

The essays cover the themes of environmental history, race conflict history, and cultural history. They look deeply into the psyche of Queensland and reveal a rich and exciting past.

My council is proud to support this intellectual and cultural initiative.

Jenny Hill
Mayor of Townsville

The Visual Heritage of Australian South Sea Islanders

Professor Clive Moore

Clive Moore is Professor of Pacific and Australian History and Head of the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland. His most recent major monographs are *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History* (2003), *Happy Isles in Crisis: The Historical Causes for a failing state in Solomon Islands, 1998-2004* (2004). Professor Moore's *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay* (1985) is considered a classic text of Pacific labour trade studies.

**Lecture presented at CityLibraries Thuringowa Central
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The Photographic Heritage

The Kanaka¹ generation refers to the initial Pacific Islander indentured labourers brought to work in Queensland, Australia between 1863 and 1904. They came on 62,000 indenture contracts, although probably there were no more than 50,000 individuals given that many made more than one trip to Queensland. Only around 2,000 remained by the end of 1908 after deliberate attempts to exclude them through the White Australia Policy of the new Commonwealth of Australia. This paper explores a central question: Can the visual history of the Kanaka generation and their Australian South Sea Islander² descendants provide a different or just a supporting understanding of this era of Australian and Pacific history? Secondly, how do the images relate to the growing analysis of visual images of other Pacific Islanders and of indigenous peoples around the world?³

References

¹ "Kanaka", actually a Polynesian word for man, which has become a descriptor for the first generation of indentured labourers. Today, the word survives in Francophone New Caledonia as "Kanak," a nationalist term. In Australia "Kanaka" is now considered improper, although, strangely, over the last twenty years "Kanak" has entered Australian English to replace "Kanaka," used by descendants and others.

² "South Sea Islander," often marked on official nineteenth-century records as "SSI" to indicate the first generation or their children, now the preferred nomenclature for their descendants, termed "Australian South Sea Islanders" (ASSI).

³ Max Quanchi (ed.), *Photography and History in the Pacific Islands*, Special Issue, *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2006; G. Batchem, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*, New York, Princeton: Architectural Press, 2004; L. Bell, "Eyeing Samoa: People, Places and Spaces in Photographs of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in F. Driver and L. Martins (eds), *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 156-74; P. Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London: Reaktion, 2001; R. Dixon, *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, Representation and Colonial Governance*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001; F. Driver and L. Martins (eds), *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005; E. Edwards and J. Hart (eds), *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, London: Routledge, 2004; E. Edwards, E. Godson C, and R.B. Phillips (eds), *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, London: Berg, 2004; D. Eggleton, *Into the Light: A History of New Zealand Photography*, Nelson: Craig Potton, 2006; H. Geismar and A. Herle, *Moving Images: John Layard's Fieldwork and Photography on Malekula since 1914*, Adelaide: Crawford House, 2007; J. Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorian: Photography and the Culture of Realism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996; M. Hayes, "Photography and the Emergence of the Pacific Cruise: Rethinking the Representational Crisis in Colonial Photography" in E.M. Hight and G.D. Sampson (eds), 2002, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, New York: Routledge, 2002, 172-187; P. Hayes (ed.) *Visual Genders, Visual Histories*, London: Blackwell 2006; P.S. Landau and D.D. Kaspin (eds), 2002, *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002; J. Landman, *The Tread of a White Man's Foot: Australian Pacific Colonialism and the Cinema 1925-1962*, Canberra: Pandanus, 2006; M. Langford M, 2001, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001; J. Lydon, *Eye Contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005; C. Mayer, "The Traveller and the Island Belle: Frank Burnett's Photography in the Pacific", *Journal of Pacific Studies*, Vol 29, no. 2, 2006, 217-42; C. Pinney and N. Peterson (eds), *Photography's Other Histories*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2003.

The Kanaka visual images include etchings in newspapers, journals, commemorative books⁴ (some of which are based on photographs), cartoons, and actual photographic reproductions in these publications once the technique became possible after the mid-1890s. The photographs were taken by professional and amateur photographers for a variety of purposes. Some celebrated the advance of the colonial sugar industry while others were kept in family albums or as private mementos, both for Europeans and for the Islanders themselves. Although there were no attempts at large-scale photography such as with indigenous people in Africa, India, the Americas, New Zealand/Aotearoa, and with Australian Aborigines, hundreds of scattered photographs of the Kanaka generation were taken during the indenture years. There are also many public domain photographs of their descendants in Australia over the hundred years that have passed since the end of the Melanesian labour trade.⁵ Most of the original generation who remained in Australia were single men, the last of whom died in the 1960s: a significant number of photographs of them remain. The present-day community is descended from a nucleus of Islander couples and intermarriage with Aborigines, and with European and Asian Australians who lived on the fringes of white society, mainly still in the same districts to which the first generation came.⁶ Academic and popular books have reproduced many of these images, and more recently the descendants of Australian South Sea Islanders have accessed them in books on family history.⁷

Published research into this forty-year circular labour migration dates back to the 1910s, soon after government decree ended the process.⁸ Until the 1960s, all of the research was through newspapers, government documents, and private documents held by libraries. Then oral testimony was added to the mix, first through the early attempts by Robert Tan and Peter Corris in the 1960s, although none of their recordings remain.⁹ The next attempt to extend this oral approach was by Patricia

⁴ The best early collection is in Andrew Garran (ed.) *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Sydney: Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. 1886-1888, Sydney: Picturesque Atlas Publ. Co., Facsimile of Vols. I and II published Sydney: Ure Smith, 1974.

⁵ Patricia M. Mercer, *White Australia Defied: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland*, Studies in North Queensland History No. 21, Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University, 1995; Clive Moore and Trish Mercer, "The Forgotten Immigrants: Australia's South Sea Islanders, 1906-1993", in *Race Relations in North Queensland*, Henry Reynolds (ed.), Townsville: Department of History & Politics, James Cook University, 1993, 208-42; Clive Moore (ed.), *The Forgotten People: A History of the Australian South Sea Island Community*, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1979; Clive Moore, "Pacific Islanders after 1920", in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and their Origins*, James Jupp (ed.), Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1988, 725-27.

⁶ Peter Corris, "'White Australia' in Action: The Repatriation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland", *Historical Studies*, Vol. 15, no. April, 1972, 237-50; Clive Moore, "'Good-bye, Queensland, good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians': Australia's South Sea Islander Community and Deportation, 1901-1908", *The New Federalist*, Vol. 4, 2000, 22-29.

⁷ Recent Islander-authored family and district histories have unearthed numerous previously unknown photos of the original immigrant and subsequent generations, an indication of the large number of Islander photographs that remain in private hands. A list of books authored by Australian South Sea Islanders appears as Appendix II.

⁸ B.H. Molesworth, *History of Kanaka Labour in Queensland*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1917, and "Kanaka Labour in Queensland 1863-1871", *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, Vol. 1, no. 3, August 1917, 140-154.

⁹ Robert Tan was an MA student at the University of Queensland and the first academic to visit the Queensland communities. He was followed by Peter Corris who conducted interviews in Queensland in 1967 and the Solomon Islands in 1968. Summaries of the Solomon Islands interviews appear as an appendix in Peter Corris, *Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of*

Mercer and Clive Moore in the 1970s when we recorded an extensive collection of oral testimony from descendants of the Kanakas, some of them the children of the first generation. At the same time we collected photographs from the families and other individuals in several districts along the Queensland coast. These are deposited at James Cook University in Townsville. Thirty years ago there were few photographs of the Islanders in public collections, although the photographic heritage has been emerging since then as libraries have expanded their collections and many of them are now available in digital form.

The largest collection is held by the John Oxley Library section of the State Library of Queensland, augmented by smaller collections in municipal libraries along the Queensland coast, such as those in the Hinchinbrook, Mackay, Burdekin, and Maroochy shire libraries and the aforementioned collection at James Cook University. Hundreds of these photos are now available in digital form through Picture Queensland or Picture Australia.¹⁰ In total there are around three hundred extant photographs of the original indentured Pacific Islanders in public collections in Australia, along with perhaps another hundred of subsequent generations of Australian South Sea Islanders. Additional photographs appear in books and newspapers, which have not been systematically entered into library digital files. Thousands of Islander individuals appear in the photographs, most in regimented crowd scenes on recruiting ships, on plantations, and at mission churches, although there are also quite a few studio and outside portraits. While many other photographs are still in private hands, held by both European and Islander families, the public domain photographs are an under-utilized resource for the study of the history of Queensland's indentured Pacific Islander labourers and their descendants. So too are the hundreds of cartoons that peppered the illustrated weekly and monthly newspapers of Australia.¹¹

Only two academic studies have dealt with ASSI photographs, an indication of the neglect of this substantial and important collection. In his 2001 doctoral thesis on Islander archaeological landscapes, Lincoln Todd spent six introductory pages on photographic sources, noting the lacuna in the research, but did little to rectify it. He made no concerted effort to use photographs and makes some mistakes in his generalizations.¹² Hayes suggests that there are obvious preferences in the subject matter: "plantation houses, landscapes, Melanesian huts, Islanders working in the cane fields, Islanders at leisure and studio portraits," with a large number of formal

Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870-1914, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1973, 149-54.

¹⁰ <http://www.pictureqld.slq.qld.gov.au/>; <http://www.pictureaustralia.org/> A search of the Picture Queensland site, using "South Sea Islander" as the key term produced sixty-nine entries from the State Library of Queensland plus another four images from other participating libraries. Another search using "Kanaka" produced twenty-nine with a little overlap. Picture Australia carries 141 images under "South Sea Islander" and another six under "Kanaka," with quite a lot of duplication with the Picture Queensland site. It is unlikely that John Oxley Library knows exactly how many ASSI images they possess as considerable numbers are hidden under catalogue titles that do not refer to the Islanders. Many of the dates are incorrect and descriptions contain misinformation that requires correction.

¹¹ *Queensland Figaro*, 7 August 1886; 14 February 1885; *Boomerang*, 3 July 1889; *The Worker*, 17 November 1910.

¹² Lincoln Hayes, *Melanesians on Queensland Plantations: Archaeological Landscapes of Power and Survival in the 19th Century*, PhD thesis, James Cook University, 2000, 43-50. On page 138 Hayes asserted that group photographs usually show the Melanesians "dressed in loincloths, some with traditional armbands, nose bones and feathers." There are very few photos that show any Pacific artefacts, and the majority of the group photographs show Islanders wearing long trousers and shirts while working in the fields.

group portraits featuring the white staff and their Islander workforce in front of mills and other plantation buildings.¹³ He is not correct about the prevalence of plantation houses and landscapes: far more photographs have survived of the Islanders and their quarters than of the European side of plantation life. This may have been because of deliberate attempts to capture the more exotic Melanesian lifestyles, or perhaps some plantation house photographs have been catalogued separately. And there is another prevalent category: mission scenes and Christian Islanders posed holding hymnals or Bibles.

Hayes also failed to notice important indications of power relations. For instance, in his analysis of the photograph below, thirty-nine Islanders on Hamleigh Plantation at Ingham in 1883, Hayes located the place where the image was recorded and noted the women and the preponderance of loincloth apparel, but failed to mention the crucial point - Melanesian and European overseers standing side-by-side in the centre.¹⁴ This indicates that some Melanesians had moved up the power hierarchy midway through the labour trade years, even before the time-expired or ticket-holding elite developed.¹⁵ This is similar to the way 'Passage Masters' were incorporated into the labour trade in the islands, and argues for a much more complex analysis. The photograph is also worth studying for the range of clothing shown and the tools used in field agriculture. We do not know the time of year the photograph was taken. Such information would indicate the likely type of field work being undertaken and the climatic conditions, and whether the group was working on established fields or involved in clearing virgin forest. The size of the gang of labourers is also of interest as it may help us understand more about the development of the Butty Gang system in later use.¹⁶

While acknowledging James R. Ryan's reminder about photography in the British Empire - that photographs are "ambiguous images" with a "multiplicity of meanings"¹⁷ - even this 1883 photograph at Hamleigh plantation suggests that some of the empirical visual evidence has not been thoroughly explored by historians and ethnographers. Other examples may be added. For instance, we can spot illegal employment as house servants and underage workers in the fields, and can study the Melanesian architecture of the plantation cultural landscape. There are also photos of Melanesian artefacts - a large wooden slit drum possibly of Malaitan origin, of bows and arrows, and of Islanders wearing body decorations that combine trade beads and turtle shell with other items of European manufacture.¹⁸ When recently drawn to the attention of anthropologists, the images were quickly requested for use in forthcoming books.

¹³ Hayes, *Melanesians on Queensland Plantations*, 44.

¹⁴ Hayes, *Melanesians on Queensland Plantations*, 164-65.

¹⁵ Time-expired Islanders were those who had served their first three-year contract and were able to renegotiate the length of contracts and pay rates. Ticket-holders were 835 Islanders who had entered the colony before 1 September 1884 and were exempt from all further legislation after the 1884 revision of the *Pacific Islander Act*. Moore, *Kanaka*, 160-67.

¹⁶ Ralph Shlomowitz, "Team Work and Incentives: The Origins and Development of the Butty Gang System in Queensland's Sugar Industry, 1891-1913", *Journal of Comparative Economics*, No. 3, 1979, 41-55.

¹⁷ James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 16.

¹⁸ State Library of Queensland, John Oxley Library (SLQ JOL) 13355.



Islander workforce, Hamleigh Plantation, Ingham, 1883
(University of Queensland Library)



Slit drum, Innisfail, circa 1902
(Clive Moore personal collection)

Hayes stresses the power of the photograph for disciplinary surveillance, as represented in the ideas of Foucault, and that the majority of the photographs were deliberately constructed to depict domination, control, and ownership by employers. This is an affirmation of the self-perceptions of those behind the camera or paying for its images, a one-sided ideological statement, as the Islanders themselves seldom saw the results. Also, his study concentrates on plantations and does not deal with Islanders who worked on farms, also an important occupation after the 1880s. It thus gives a lopsided impression of Islander life in the final decades of the nineteenth century in Queensland.

Max Quanchi, a leading analyst of Pacific photography, has presented a conference paper on eighty-three Queensland Islander portraits as a genre, using a small sample of the greater body of images. He suggested that these portraits raised several questions relating to photographs as objects and their function as individual and community biographies. Like Hayes, Quanchi acknowledged that the photographs were socially constructed and contained cultural texts. He questioned the motivations of the sitters and the photographers, and took a visual economy approach, attempting to trace the use of the images over time and the differing titles they received. Quanchi defined five motivations for taking the portraits: group portraits commissioned by plantation owners and farmers to mark their success; individual and group portraits taken by travelling photographers for later sales; a few apparently conventional ethnographic front-and-side portraits; many images apparently commissioned to record an event, a presence, or a departure; and finally photographs taken as propaganda in the political campaigns for and against the labour trade. But like Hayes he does not have enough detailed knowledge of Queensland, the sugar industry, and the Islanders to be able to question dates supplied with photographs, or to connect the timing of restrictive legislation to the content of the images.¹⁹

Historiography versus Pictorial Evidence

Much has been written and argued about Pacific Islander labour trade migrants to Australia during the nineteenth century.²⁰ The second half of this paper attempts to apply thirty years knowledge of the Queensland labour trade to the visual record, using as my prism the major themes that have been covered by the extensive literature, to see which are picked up by the visual images and which are totally missed, and for any revelations that only become clear from the images, having been missed by other research. There are obvious limitations because of the nature of the photographic technology (particularly the need for the subjects to remain still for a longer period than is necessary today), the cumbersome procedures needed to develop glass plates and the cost of and limited number of cameras available, at least until Kodak roll film became available in the 1890s. Photography was still not widespread in the 1860s when the labour trade began and the earliest Islander image located so far was not taken until 1868.

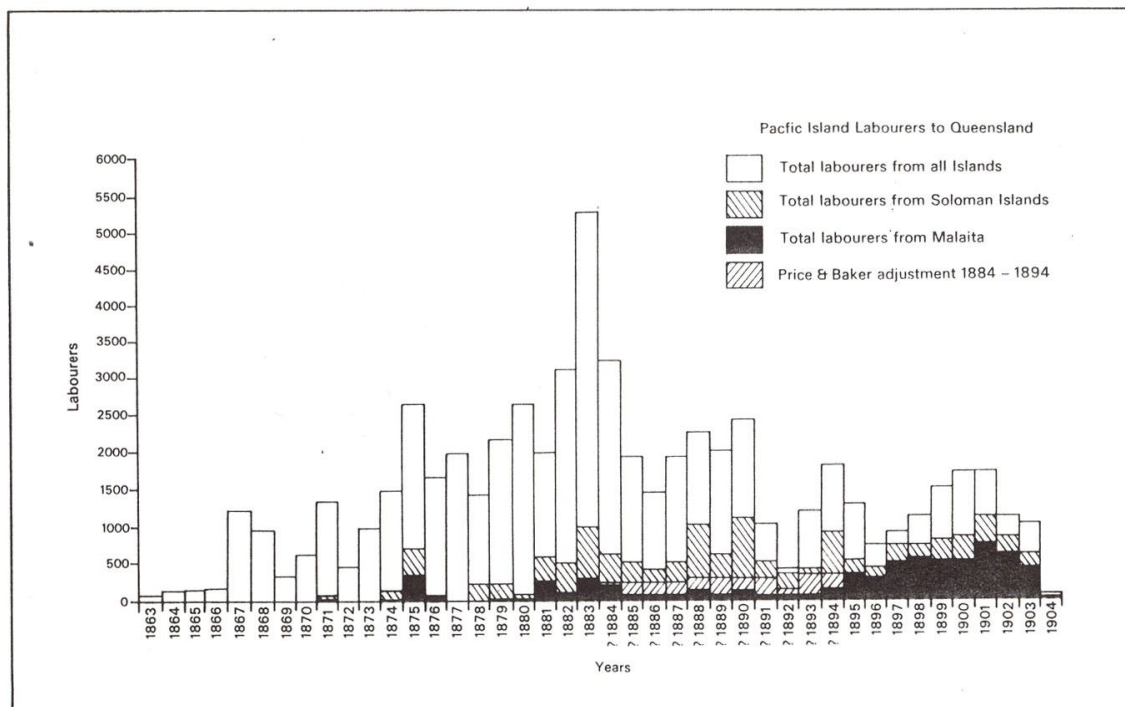
¹⁹ Max Quanchi, "Kanaka Portraits: Indentured Labour in Colonial Australia", Pacific Arts Association Conference, Salem, Mass., July 2005.

²⁰ I use Australia rather than Queensland, to include the few hundred Islanders brought into New South Wales in the 1840s by Ben Boyd, although overwhelmingly it was a Queensland phenomenon. Marion Diamond, *The Sea Horse and the Wanderer: Ben Boyd in Australia*, Carlton (Vic.): Melbourne University Press, 1988, 111-40; Clive Moore, "Revising the Revisionists: The Historiography of Immigrant Melanesians in Australia", *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 15, no. 2, 1992, 61-86; Doug Munro, "Revisionism and its Enemies: Debating the Queensland Labour Trade", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 30, no. 2, 1995, 240-249; Doug Munro, "The Labor Trade in Melanesians to Queensland: An Historiographic Essay", *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 28, no. 3, 1995, 609-27; Doug Munro, "The Pacific Islands Labour Trade: Approaches, Methodologies, Debates", *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 14, no. 2, August 1993, 87-108.



The earliest photograph of Islander men, working the primitive Alexandra Plantation mill at Mackay in 1868.

(Mackay City Council Collection. Photograph by Richard Daintree)



Migration of Pacific Islanders to Queensland, 1863-1905, showing total migration, and numbers from Solomon Islands and Malaita Island.

(Clive Moore, *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay*, Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and University of Papua New Guinea Press, 1985, 28)

A proportion of these circular migrants also travelled to other colonies such as Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia. Solomon Islanders made up 18,329 of the Pacific Islander and Asian indenture contracts in colonial Queensland, which probably

amounts to about 14,600 individuals.²¹ The majority were from the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) - 39,931 contracts and around 32,000 individuals. Smaller but still significant numbers came from the Loyalty Islands (1,123), Island Papua New Guinea (3,119), the Gilbert (Kiribati) and Ellice (Tuvalu) Islands (191), and in the 1860s about fifty from Rotuma and Niue. A breakdown of the origins of the majority appears as an appendix to this paper, the island origins being important when trying to understand the likely proportions of labourers from the different islands in the photos.²²

The early decades of the labour trade - a moving labour frontier that preyed on an untapped labour reserve - involved a large amount of kidnapping and deception. Historians agree that during the first ten years of recruiting at any Pacific island the predominant methods were likely to involve illegality, but over the decades Islanders became willing participants, just as they were when the internal labour trade began on the islands.²³ The process became a rite of passage for young men and a small number of women, and a constant source of trade goods for their families. The motivations for enlistment and the characteristics of the work remained much the same over several generations.²⁴ One of the major arguments in the historiography relates to the nature of the early recruiting process, the conditions on board the vessels and the changes over time. There were 870 voyages over forty years and many vessels travelled between the Queensland coastal towns and Island Melanesia two or three times each year. In the main they were schooners and brigantines, although in the final years steam-assisted ships joined the trade. The peak period was in the mid-1880s, and over the years bigger ships were used, even if all look small by today's standards - far too small to be carrying large numbers of Islanders. The earliest recruiting ship to be photographed was *Amy Robsart* in 1868, a 72-ton brigantine that made two trips in the labour trade in 1870, carrying 60 to 70 labourers. Conditions must have been very basic on board as the ship was quickly converted from a coastal trader.²⁵ This photograph and one the same year of three Islanders feeding cane into the Alexandra Plantation mill (probably both by geologist and photographer Richard Daintree) are the earliest extant.²⁶ No other photographs are

²¹ If we remove the 311 from the northern islands now included in Papua New Guinea (Bougainville, Buka and Nissan) and add in 144 from Lord Howe (Tömotu Noi) and Tikopia, the total from the present-day Solomon Islands is 18,018.

²² Charles A. Price and Elizabeth Baker, "Origins of Pacific Island Labourers in Queensland, 1863-1904: A Research Note", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 11, no. 1/2, 1976, 106-21.

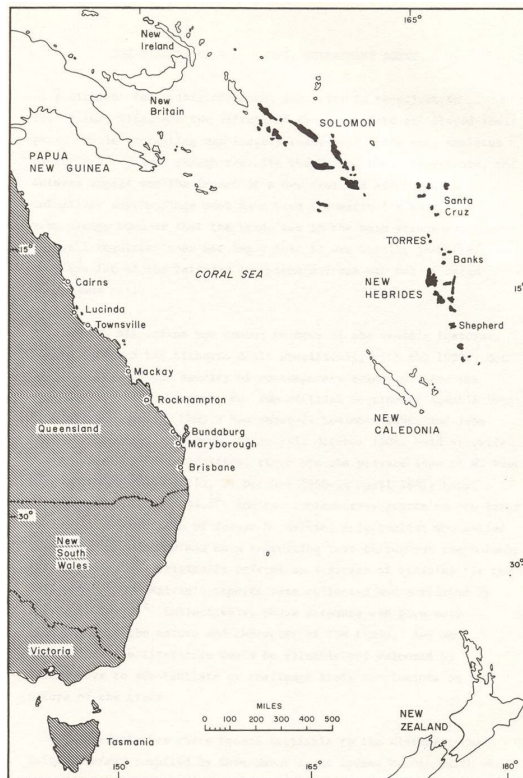
²³ The term "Blackbirding," derived from the African slave trade, meaning to steal humans, is often used to describe the entire Queensland labour trade. "Blackbirding" carries strong connotations of illegality. Although it is quite clear that a considerable proportion of the indentured labourers enlisted willingly even if beguiled by recruiters, many Australians (including Australian South Sea Islanders) use "Blackbirding" to describe the entire labour-recruiting process. These semantic differences partly help explain the longest running debate in the historiography of the Melanesian labour trade: were Queensland's Kanakas willing indentured labourers or were they unwilling participants, akin to slaves kidnapped from their islands?

²⁴ Clive Moore, *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay*, Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and the University of Papua New Guinea Press, 1985, 23-46; Corris, Peter, *Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870-1914*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1973, 24-44.

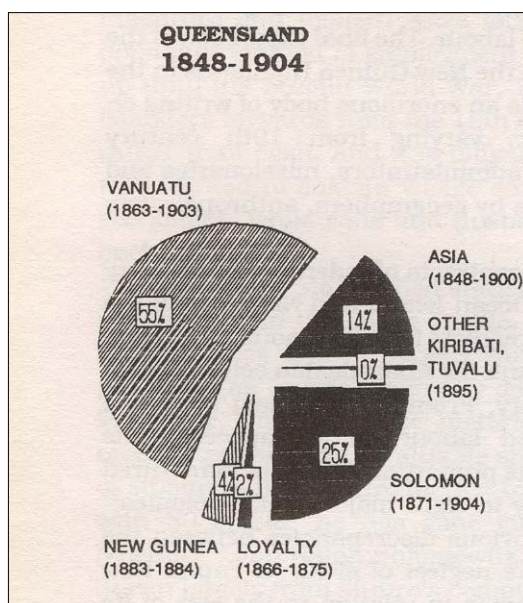
²⁵ Labour trade ship *Amy Robsart* in 1868, before the vessel joined the labour trade in 1870, H.L. Roth, *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Mackay*, Halifax: F. King & Sons Ltd., 1908, 114; *Mackay Mercury*, 28 May, 18 June, 23 July 1870; *British Parliamentary Papers*, Colonial: Australia, Vol. 26, Sessions 1871-3, 84.

²⁶ The earliest photograph of Islander men in Queensland, working primitive Alexandra Plantation Mill at Mackay in 1868, Mackay City Council Collection. Photograph by Richard Daintree; also see an etching of Islander men and women working a similar mill of about the

known from Mackay until June 1873 when the professional photographers William Boag and John Mills arrived.



Australia and the Pacific Islands: Ports and Island Groups involved in the Labour Trade



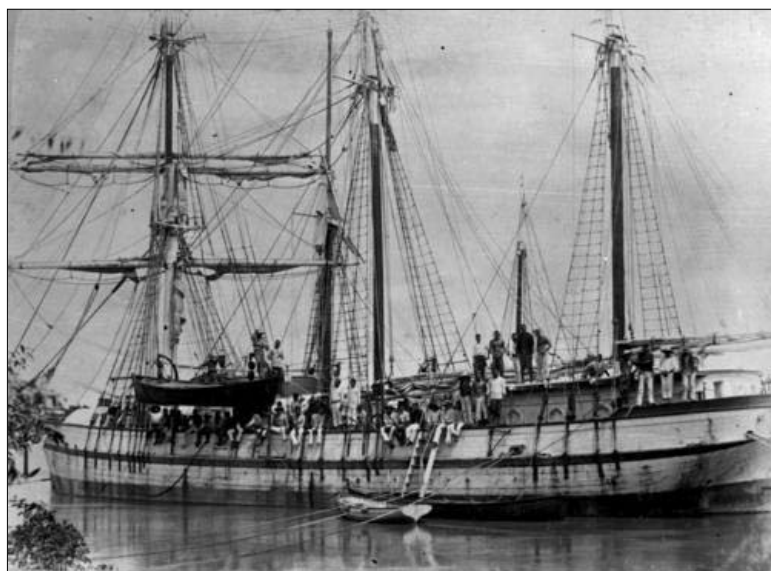
Non-European indentured labourers in Queensland, 1848-1904, and the Melanesian Islands from which indentured labourers came

Photographs of the actual recruiting process are rare, and given the state of photographic technology at the time, this is understandable. Historians suggest that the nature of the actual recruiting process varied over time, from outright kidnapping to willing enlistment, even if on culturally uneven terms. There is a plethora of documentary evidence of illegal and cruel methods used in the early years, and the possibility that illegal practices continued occasionally up until the early 1890s.

same era, Andrew Garran (ed.) *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Sydney: Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co., Vol. 1, 1886, 393.

There are several depictions of the most brutal of the kidnappings, all line drawings.²⁷ The only set of photographs that is probably very typical of the more usual later recruiting process is from Malekula Island in 1890. It shows the usual procedure of two whaleboats going to the shore, one staying out to cover the boat at the beach, the crew of which negotiated the terms of enlistment.²⁸ By law, after 1870 a government agent had to travel with these boats, although this practice was sometimes breached through illness or slack procedures.

As the trade progressed, the vessels became more substantial and had longer histories plying back and forth to the islands. The three-masted 237-ton schooner *May*, pictured below docked at Bundaberg, made several trips between 1890 and 1894, carrying up to 103 recruits, regularly visiting the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands. The *May* was also the first Queensland vessel to recruit in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.²⁹ There are several photographs of these Micronesian and Polynesian recruits at Yeppoon near Rockhampton, often passed off unknowingly in books as Melanesians, when their physical appearance belies the identification.³⁰



Labour Trade ship May at Bundaberg in the 1890s
(State Library of Queensland, John Oxley Library (SLQ JOL) 2246)

There are no views below decks, and we need to resort to sketches for an indication of the very basic and alienating conditions where the Islanders often had to spend up to two months, with restricted deck access.³¹ The photographs are mostly from the

²⁷ *Illustrated Monthly Herald*, 28 December 1872

²⁸ Boats from a labour trade ship at Malekula, New Hebrides (Vanuatu), 1890, National Library of Australia (NLA) an11279871-v and an3072829-v.

²⁹ Doug Munro, "Gilbert and Ellice Islanders on Queensland Canefields, 1894-1899", *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol. 14, no. 11, May 1992, 449-65.

³⁰ Gilbert and Ellice Islands women, Yeppoon Plantation, near Rockhampton, circa 1895, SLQ JOL 3656; Returning labourers on a ship, probably from Gilbert and Ellice Islands, James Cook University, Pacific Islander Photographic Collection (JCU PIPC); 5 May 1893, Immigration Agent to Under Colonial Secretary, GOV/A24; 7 February 1895, Immigration Agent to Principal Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, GOV/A28; 22 January 1895, Sir John B. Thurston to Governor Norman, In-letter 5030 of 1905, COL/A807, Queensland State Archives (QSA); *Mackay Mercury* 28 January 1895.

³¹ Etching of recruits quarters on a labour trade ship, William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade*, London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893, 4;

shore, although someone obviously had a camera on board one ship in 1888 (possibly the government agent Douglas Rannie) when the 114-ton schooner *Madeline*, which had been in the trade since 1882, was wrecked at Tongoa Island in the New Hebrides.³² There are photographs of the labourers on ships, but most of these were taken in port either on arrival or as the labourers were about to return home, as may be seen from their apparel. We know little about the crews or the relationships between Islander and European crewmembers.³³

We also lack photographic evidence of the scenes on the docks when the ships arrived in Queensland. Islander oral testimony in Australia not only emphasizes kidnapping but also the supposed slave-like sale of the indentured labourers and suggests that Islanders were chained together in the holds, on the 'auction blocks,' and on their way to the plantations and farms. This view is unsupported by documentary evidence.³⁴ There are some horrific photographs of Australian Aborigines chained together and there is no reason why similar photos could not have been taken of the Islanders. There is one isolated piece of documentary evidence that chains were used to restrain an Islander who had absconded from a plantation, but there is no evidence that this was a widespread practice.³⁵ The 'slave block' allegations have been explained satisfactorily as contracts changing hands on arrival in Queensland, as labour needs sometimes altered between the departure and return of vessels.³⁶ The only visual evidence are etchings from *Melbourne Punch* in 1871 and *The Bulletin* in 1881, which certainly depict roped and chained Islanders, but both images were part of the campaign to end the trade and may have been more allegorical than real.³⁷

Etching of Islanders below decks on a labour trade ship, Andrew Garran (ed.) *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Sydney: Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co., 1886, Vol. 1, 677.

³² Photographs showing crew and labourers from the labour trade ship *Madeline*, wrecked on Tongoa Island, 1882. Rannie was not on the *Madeline* but was probably on another ship in the vicinity. William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade*, London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893, 4; Andrew Garran (ed.) *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Sydney: Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. 1886, Vol. 1, 677. Douglas Rannie, *My Adventures Among South Sea Cannibals*, London: Seeley, Service and Company Limited, 1912, 207, 208, 215, 223; *Mackay Mercury*, 28 May 1888; Annual Report of the Department of Pacific Islander Immigration, *Votes & Proceedings*, Queensland, Vol. 3, 1889, 204.

³³ Labourers arriving on the *Fearless*, at Cairns, National Library of Australia (NLA) an24493567; Returning labourers on a ship, 1893, *Illustrated Australian News*, 1 February 1893; Labour recruits from the New Hebrides on the deck of a ship, SLQ JOL 103470; Moore, *Kanaka*, 77.

³⁴ Moore (ed.), *The Forgotten People: A History of the Australian South Sea Island Community*, 32-33; Faith Bandler, *Wacvie*, Adelaide: Rigby, 1977, 21; Education Queensland and AusAID, *Australian South Sea Islanders: A Curriculum Resource for Secondary Schools*, Brisbane: Education Queensland, 1997, 61; also refer to Hayes, Pacific Islanders on Queensland Plantations, 92-94, 183.

³⁵ In-letter 7284 of 1884, COL/A 404 QSA describes the use of leg irons on Salliallybura who absconded from Airdmillan Plantation, and was found dead on Seaforth Plantation in the Burdekin district in 1884. He had been locked in the Seaforth Plantation hospital, possibly without food or water for three days, restrained by leg irons, and was found dead, with a diagnosis of pneumonia. Kay Saunders, "'Lords of the Lash'. Methods of Correction, Coercion and Restraint', in Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1975, 196, 230, fn 259-60.

³⁶ Moore, *Kanaka*, 154-55; *Melbourne Punch*, November 1871.

³⁷ *Melbourne Punch*, November 1871; *The Bulletin*, 30 April 1881.

Predominantly labourers in the sugar industry, in the 1860s and 1870s Islander migrants also worked in the pastoral³⁸ and maritime industries and occasionally as domestic servants, although the latter occupation was illegal after 1878. There are no known images of Islanders in the pastoral industry, except for three portraits: one with an employer, another of the family of Kulijeri, a Malaitan man who worked in the pastoral industry around Charters Towers, and of two employees at The Hollow, a pastoral property in the west of the Pioneer Valley at Mackay.³⁹ The only clear evidence from the early maritime industry is etchings from Torres Strait, although presumably further research would locate more maritime images.⁴⁰ Employers also blatantly flouted the restriction on domestic service. Ample proof is found in photographs, such as those of Islander house servants and nursemaids on Hambledon Plantation near Cairns in 1891.⁴¹ Legislation passed in the 1880s, but already in force by regulations under a previous act since 1878, limited employment to field work in coastal tropical agriculture, which predominantly meant the sugar industry. As the photographic evidence shows, this also included coffee and sisal hemp plantations.⁴²

Within the sugar industry, photographs draw attention to the very different circumstances the Islanders faced in comparison with those on the islands, where agriculture concentrated on root crops and shifting cultivation methods. Commercial tropical crops were grown in regular rows over vast acreage.⁴³ Regimentation was the norm, as were long working hours, controlled by overseers, clocks, and mill steam whistles. Lincoln Hayes amply proves that Islanders on plantations lived under surveillance by overseers and plantation owners who structured their establishments to facilitate control of their workforces.⁴⁴ The cultural landscape of a sugar plantation bears little relationship with that of Melanesia. Mills, like the one depicted earlier in this paper, were dangerous, frightening places full of exposed machinery and boiling liquids that could trap the unwary. To the labourers, tramways and trains were strange contrivances and horses and carts previously unknown.⁴⁵ The regimentation extended to the Islanders' living quarters. Planters, by law, had to provide their labourers with barracks or small houses, although the Islanders seem to have preferred to recreate their island-of-origin architectural styles and to live in kin units in more discrete settings. They built houses made from blady grass and cane trash, which approximated the sago palm thatch used in the islands, or constructed them from wooden slabs and bamboo.⁴⁶

³⁸ Jeffrey E. Hopkins, *An Analysis of the Place of 'Foreign' Pacific Islanders in the Development of North-Eastern Australia and Eastern New Guinea, 1863-1878*, BA Hons, University of Queensland, 1993; and, "Pacific Islander Involvement in the Pastoral Industry of the Gulf of Carpentaria", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 88, no. 1, June 2002, 36-53.

³⁹ Johnston Allingham of Waterview Station with his employees; and Kalijeri from Malaita and his Aboriginal wife and family at Charters Towers, JCU PIPC.

⁴⁰ Garra, *Picturesque Atlas of Australia*, Vol. 2, 398.

⁴¹ SLQ JOL 172486 and 171012.

⁴² Islanders employed on a sisal hemp plantation, NLA 24494586-v; Islanders on a coffee plantation, The Leap, near Mackay, 1890s, JCU PIPC.

⁴³ Islanders lined up hoeing cane in the Herbert River district, 1902, SLQ JOL 16956;

Islanders in front of offices, Macknade Plantation, Ingham, JCU PIPC.

⁴⁴ Hayes, *Pacific Islanders on Queensland Plantations*, Chapters 6 to 8, 194-396.

⁴⁵ Islanders outside Ormiston Plantation Mill, Cleveland, near Brisbane, SLQ JOL 20279; An early locomotive on River Plantation, Mackay, 1880, Roth, *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Mackay*, 39.

⁴⁶ Islander quarters, The Cedars Plantation, Mackay, 1883, SLQ JOL 6298; Islander barracks and kitchen, Foulden Plantation, Mackay, SLQ JOL 171998; Islander houses on a plantation, Mackay, SLQ JOL 182760; Islander bark and slab houses, SLQ JOL 64761.



**Islander houses, Plantation at Mackay, 1890s
(Sydney Mail 1895)**

Inadvertently, the indenture process suited established gender and age roles in Melanesian society. The recruiters wanted strong young males. Women were not generally available to be recruited: the small numbers who left the island usually did so as partners of men.⁴⁷ And because of beliefs related to pollution during menstruation and birth, women were always troublesome to have cooped up for months on small, crowded recruiting ships, or later on the plantations and farms. The photographs do show women working alongside men (the 1883 Hamleigh Plantation photograph above is a good example), but also seem to indicate a degree of separation, which presumably means that Europeans realized that extreme gender antagonisms existed, far beyond those in European society. The photographs also show clearly that women were expected to take their children into the fields with them.⁴⁸

At home in the islands, young male Melanesians were usually not fully functional members of their communities. They were adventurous and often keen to escape the rigidity of village life. They could advance themselves by spending several years in Queensland, return with a box of trade goods, and through distribution could exchange foreign manufactured goods for social credit within their descent groups. Recruits converted most of their earnings into trade goods and only returned with small amounts of cash. The trade goods - tobacco, iron and steel items, cloth, guns, etc. - were consumables that boosted individual and collective prestige, but did not last long when distributed amongst relatives. There are many descriptions of the types of goods that the Islanders purchased and of their wanderings around Chinatowns on the outskirts of the European retail areas of the sugar towns, but very few images of this process exist, and there are no photographs of the ubiquitous "trade box" that each possessed, full of delectable goods and the occasional false bottom to hide guns that continued to be smuggled back to the islands right to the end of the labour trade, despite being banned exports after 1878. They developed

⁴⁷ Kay Saunders, "Melanesian Women in Queensland 1863-1907: Some Methodological Problems Involving the Relationship Between Racism and Sexism", *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 1980, 26-44.

⁴⁸ Islander women and an overseer, Cairns District, 1890, SLQ JOL 60233; Islander women hoeing cane, JCU PIPC; Women planting new cane, Bingera Plantation, Bundaberg, circa 1897, SLQ JOL 171280 and 142325.

close relationships with the Kanaka storeowners who provided storage for the boxes, offered Islanders a club-like atmosphere when there was no work, and provided illegal access to alcohol.⁴⁹ We also have no images of the Kanaka boarding houses where the time-expired men sometimes lived between jobs.

The circular nature of the labour trade tapped into existing patterns of residential mobility and customary mechanisms of compensatory religious sacrifices to ancestors, which made it possible for Melanesians to travel, yet remain safely within their cosmologies and religion. Mortality rates were high, particularly in the first six to twelve months of a 'new chum's' contract in the external labour trade, when they were exposed to potent new diseases, but the risk was outweighed by the benefits.⁵⁰ In response to outrageously high mortality rates, the Queensland government built four segregated hospitals for Islanders at Maryborough, Mackay, Ingham, and Innisfail, which operated from 1883 to 1889. Before and afterwards, Islanders were cared for at small hospitals on plantations by private doctors or in segregated wards in public hospitals. There are only two photographs readily identifiable as of plantation hospitals, at Mackay and probably Ingham.⁵¹

There was, however, more to life than working six and a half days a week on plantations or farms, although we have little early photographic evidence of Islanders' leisure activities, except close to their living quarters. From the occasional photograph it is possible to get some idea of the natural landscape available to them, and several photographs show Islanders holding bows and arrows used for hunting.⁵² Then, from the 1880s onwards, the Islanders began to be courted by Christian missionaries from several denominations - Anglican, Queensland Kanaka Mission, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Salvation Army, and Brisbane City Mission - with thousands of conversions up until 1906. During this period, photography was well advanced and there is no lack of photographs of the missions and pious Islanders posed in their best clothes, holding bibles and hymnbooks. They attended Sunday and night schools and large annual picnics, known as 'Tea Meetings'.⁵³

The Islanders' largely circular migration to work in Queensland was always a contentious issue, with allegations of kidnapping and slavery thrown around. As the White trade union movement grew in strength and as Australia moved towards federation of its six British colonies, a White Australia Policy emerged and led in 1901 to legislation to halt the labour trade and exclude all Pacific Islanders. This legislation

⁴⁹ Islander couple at Brandon in the 1880s with their prized rifle, SLQ JOL 9925; Islanders crowded around Hugh Hossack's store, River Street, Mackay, 1890s, JCU PIPC; Clive Moore, "'Me Blind Drunk': Alcohol and Melanesians in the Mackay District, Queensland, 1867-1907", In *Health and Healing in Tropical Australia and Papua New Guinea*, Roy McLeod and Donald Denoon (eds.), Townsville: Department of History and Politics, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1991, 103-22.

⁵⁰ Ralph Shlomowitz, "Mortality and the Pacific Labour Trade", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 22, no. 1, 1987, 34-55; and, "Epidemiology and the Pacific Labor Trade", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 19, no. 4, Spring 1989, 585-610.

⁵¹ Islander hospital on a plantation (place and source unclear, probably Ingham, JCU PIPC; Habana Plantation Islander hospital, Mackay, *Daily Mercury* Andrew & Cook 2000, 117; Kay Saunders, "The Pacific Islander Hospitals in Colonial Queensland: The Failure of Liberal Principles", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 11, no. 1, 1976, 28-50; Moore, *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay*, 235-45.

⁵² Islanders at a creek on Barrie Estate between Eton and Mackay, 1880, SLQ JOL 6298; Lagoon on Pioneer Plantation, Mackay, 1880, SLQ JOL 6298.

⁵³ Anglican Islanders at Mackay and Bundaberg in the 1900s, SCL September 1904, 13; September 1905, 10; Nambour Islanders with Bibles, 1906, SLQ JOL 23819; Islanders at Sunday school (SLQ JOL, in Andrew and Cook 2000, 3.

was ameliorated after a Queensland Royal Commission in 1906, and finally around 2,000 Islanders were allowed to remain in Australia.⁵⁴ A significant number of the portrait photographs were taken in 1906, an indication of Islander agency in creating memories for those staying and leaving. For quite some time earlier, there had been an emerging phenomenon as Islanders began paying photographic studios to have their portraits taken individually, in groups, and as families, or managed to get private owners' of cameras to record their images. From the 1890s, by which time possession of cameras was more common amongst Europeans, there are many photos with 'cute' poses of Islanders, including women and children, creating an image of a prosperous group, even if dressed in their Sunday best.⁵⁵ The year 1906 was also when the Islanders mounted their political campaign to ameliorate the effects of the planned mass deportation, through a series of petitions and delegations to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Governor of Queensland. The result contrasted with the 1870s photographs of men in loincloths and shows the immense transition that had taken place over forty years.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Several conclusions may be drawn. First, the Kanaka photographs can never really be sorted by island of origin for the group shots, and the year, even the decade, of many photographs is not always known. Libraries sometimes have seemingly arbitrary dates that may vary more than a decade from the actual dates. Generally, based on the pattern of recruiting (see Graph and Appendix I below), the early photographs up to the mid-1880s are more likely to be of Loyalty Islanders and New Hebrideans than Solomon Islanders, while after 1890 Solomon Islanders predominate both in the general population and in the photographs. Occasionally, it is possible to identify Solomon Islanders, such as Guadalcanal and Malaita labourers on Foulden Plantation near Mackay in 1873 or 1874.⁵⁷ The earliest photographs which name individuals are probably the ones from Foulden Plantation that were taken in 1873 or 1874 by William Boag, when Grisi from Simbo Island in the Solomon Archipelago or Albassoo from Vanua Lava Island in present-day Vanuatu were photographed and had their names recorded.⁵⁸ Most were not so lucky and occasionally the racism of the time is the dominant feature in naming photographs. Often they are only 'Our Boys', the 'Men' or at worst 'Specimens Mixed'.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Corris, "'White Australia' in Action: The Repatriation of Pacific Islanders from Queensland"; Moore, "'Good-bye, Queensland, good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians': Australia's South Sea Islander Community and Deportation, 1901-1908".

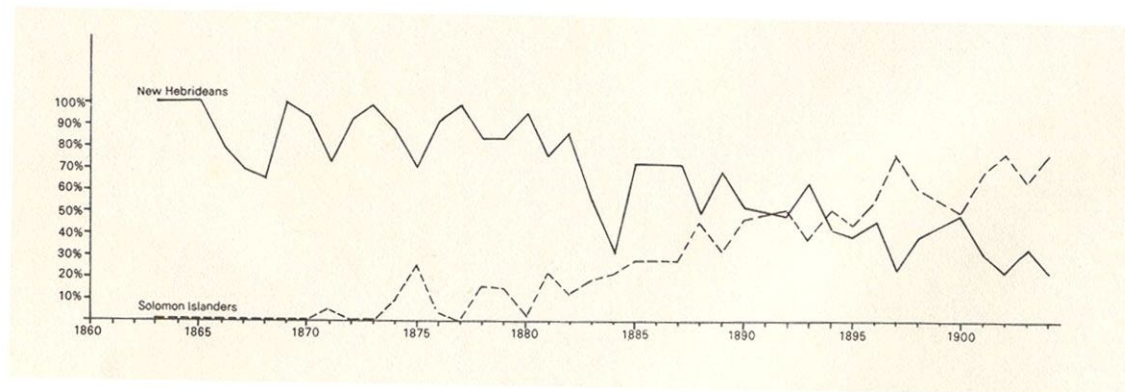
⁵⁵ Two Islander children 1900's, SLQ JOL 128204; Islander girl with flowers, JCU PIPC.

⁵⁶ Islander delegation to petition Queensland's Governor Sir Harry Chermiside, Rockhampton, March 1903, JCU PIPC; John Marlow, at Homebush, Mackay, prior to his return home in 1906, JCU PIPC.

⁵⁷ Guadalcanal and Malaita labourers, Foulden Plantation, Mackay, *circa* 1873-74, William Amhurst Tyssen-Amherst and Basil Thomson, *The Discovery of the Solomon Islands by Alvaro de Mendana 1568, translated from the original Spanish manuscripts; edited, with introduction and notes*, Vol. 2nd series, No 7, London: Hakluyt Society, 1901.

⁵⁸ Grisi from Simbo Island, and Albassoo from Vanua-Lava Island, Foulden Plantation, *circa* 1874, SLQ JOL 172003 and 172009.

⁵⁹ Islanders at Mackay, photographed by Henry Brandon *circa* 1880, SLQ JOL 6298.



Percentages of New Hebrideans and Solomon Islanders in Queensland, 1863-1904

(Tom Dutton, *Queensland Canefields English of the Late Nineteenth Century*, Pacific Linguistics Series D No.29, Canberra: Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1980, xiii.)

The second conclusion is that most of the paid portraits are of time-expired and ticket-holding Islanders. Time-expired Islanders earned considerably higher wages and made up a substantial proportion of the Melanesian population: 31 to 35% from 1888 to 1892, 57 to 67% from 1893 to 1899, 42 to 46% from 1900 to 1901, and 31 to 39% from 1902 to 1904. There were 835 ticket-holders in 1884, the number declining over time: 716 in 1892, 704 in 1901, and 691 in 1906. They had their own farms, ran boarding houses and small businesses, and were more likely to have married a non-Melanesian. Expressed as a proportion of the overall Melanesian population from 1885 to 1906, in any one year ticket-holders constituted between seven and eleven percent of the Melanesian population of Queensland. These two legislative categories formed the ageing elite, who became colonial settlers and bridged the gap between the 'new chum' recruits and the rest of the colonial population. Overwhelmingly, today's Australian South Sea Islanders are descended from time-expired and ticket-holding Melanesian immigrants.⁶⁰

Third, there is a missing element that is downplayed by concentrating on plantations - the number of Islanders, particularly in the 1890s and 1900s, who worked on small farms. Usually the 'new chums' worked on plantations, and time-expired and ticket-holders worked for the small farmers, some of the Islander individuals and families continuing to live on these farms for the rest of their lives. Their relationships with the European farmers were altogether different from those the 'new chums' had with their overseers and planters. Islanders working for farmers shared the same food and there was less separation, compared with the plantations, a factor that had implications for power relations. However, camera equipment was expensive and farmers were less likely to have had their own than were plantation owners or managers. One could also argue that they had less need for the disciplinary surveillance that Hayes suggests was a necessary part of the plantation environment.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Moore, *Kanaka*, 161-62, 164-67.

⁶¹ Islander with European farming family, Cleveland, near Brisbane, circa 1871, SLQ JOL 20251; Islanders with a European farming family, Gairloch, Herbert River (Ingham), 1888, SLQ JOL 16952.

Fourth, photographs from the twentieth century are of these time-expired and ticket-holding Islander individuals and their families. This point illustrates the complexity of the different groups of Islanders, and the need to be careful with generalisations about the photographic records. One of these families was that of Kwailiu and Orrani from the Fataleka language area, Malaita Island. Kwailu died in March 1906, which dates the family photograph below to not long before.



The forebears of the Fatnowna Family: Back row: Cecily, Joy, Lucy, and Harry; Front row: Eva, Orrani, and Kwailiu, Mackay 1906 (JCU PIPC)

Another intriguing development occurred when the Islanders began to take their own photographs. The only son of Kwailiu and Orrani, Harry Fatnowna, was born in 1897 while his parents worked at Palms Plantation near Mackay. After Kwailu's death, Orrani re-married to another kinsman Luke Logomier, who had been in Queensland since 1884 and was an Anglican lay preacher.⁶² The new relationship was recorded in a photograph taken not long after 1906. Harry married Grace Kwasi in 1918, the daughter of James Kwasi from Gela Island and Lissie Nego from Buka Island, Solomon Islands. They had fifteen children, ten surviving, and lived for most of their lives on Eulberti farm, the Christensen brothers' property. After becoming a lay preacher like his stepfather, Harry led the Islanders away from Anglicanism to Seventh Day Adventism in the mid-1920s. He also began to take and develop his own photographs in his leaf house at Eulberti farm, where the Fatnowna family lived for several decades, midway between Bucasia and Eimeo outside Mackay. The photographic circle was complete when Harry Fatnowna began taking photographs

⁶² Orrani and her new husband Luke Logomier, SLQ JOL 18059. Clive Moore, "Luke Logomier", in *Race Relations in North Queensland*, Henry Reynolds (ed.), Townsville: History Department, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1978, 181-194.

of his family and friends, but his choice of subjects and his motivation seem to have been very similar to those of European family snapshots taken in the 1930s.⁶³

Fifth, the hundreds of individual photographs viewed as an entire collection depict the creation of a colonial sugar industry along European lines, but the Melanesian presence was also great enough to create a Melanesian cultural landscape. The Islander physical presence was much lighter than the bricks, cement, and galvanized iron of the mills, sheds, and houses on the plantations and farms. Their houses were made of materials that have decayed and left evidence only of their hearths and of trees planted to screen them and provide fruit. Their graves are mostly unmarked on the plantations and farms on which they worked, or in the pagan areas of municipal cemeteries. The photographic evidence augments oral testimony and allows us to gain another window into Islander lives in the nineteenth century. The images that remain are not of slaves starved into submission, and some of the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s Islanders look very bourgeois in three-piece suits. While no one can take pride in the exploitative Queensland labour trade, the photographic images show a people who had a degree of agency over their lives, despite living in often trying circumstances. Photographers probably deliberately avoided the more odious aspects of the labour trade, and there were no crusaders who deliberately recorded the sad, racist, and violent aspects that undoubtedly occurred. But not all of the photographs are deliberate propaganda and somewhere in-between lies the truth. These immigrant Melanesians gaze back at us, often with great pride and determination about the new lives they made in Australia.⁶⁴

A final point relates to the question asked at the beginning: how do the images relate to the growing analysis of visual images of other Pacific Islanders and of indigenous peoples around the world? Within the areas of Melanesia from which the Kanaka generation came, the earliest photographs are by the missionaries William Lawes and George Brown in the 1870s around east New Guinea and adjacent islands, and by the professional photographer John W. Lindt along the southeast coast of New Guinea in the mid-1880s. In the Solomon Islands, the naturalist Charles Woodford took the first known photographs between 1886 and 1888. The first substantial collection from Melanesia was not made until 1906, by the Tasmanian W.T. Beattie.⁶⁵

⁶³ Harry and Matthew Fatnowna in front of the family houses at Eulberti, 1930s; Fatnowna and Motto Cricket Team, Eulberti, 1940s; Chris Fatnowna, Cliff Querro, and Henry Viti, Norman Fatnowna (back) and Christie Fatnowna and Cliff Querro in front of the family houses at Eulberti, 1930s, JCU PIPC; Noel Fatnowna, *Fragments of a Lost Heritage*, Roger Keesing (ed.), Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1989; Clive Moore, "Fatnowna, John Kwailiu Abelfai (1866?-1906)", in *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 8 (1901-1939)*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981, 473-474; and, "Fatnowna, Harry Norman (1897?-1967)", in *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 14 (1940-1980)*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996, 146.

⁶⁴ Brisbane Islander circa 1888, SLQ JOL 50886; Bundaberg Islander circa 1880s, SLQ JOL 1569.

⁶⁵ Brown began his extensive photographic collection of 900 glass plates after he was stationed in the Duke of York Islands, off New Britain. Beattie travelled through Melanesia on the Melanesian Mission's *Southern Cross* in 1906. Helen B. Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2006; Helen Gardner, "Photography and Christian Mission: George Brown's images of the New Britain mission, 1875-1880", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 41, no. 2, 2006, 175-90; John W. Lindt, *Picturesque New Guinea: With an Historical Introduction and Supplementary Chapters on the Manners and Customs of the Papuans; Accompanied with Fifty Full-page Autotype Illustrations from Negatives of Portraits from Life and Groups and Landscapes from Nature*, London: Longmans, Green, 1887; Charles M. Woodford, *A Naturalist Among the Headhunters: Being an Account of Three Visits to the Solomon Islands in the Years 1886, 1887 and 1888*, London: G. Philip, 1890; J.W. Beattie, *Catalogue of a Series of Photographs*

The Queensland photographs begin slightly earlier, but are quite different as they show Pacific Islanders transported away from their islands to colonial industrial environments. They also allow us to study adaptation to colonial life over forty years, particularly by the long-staying Islanders who became Australian immigrants. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Queensland Islanders were probably more 'sophisticated' in their adaptation to European ways than were any others in Melanesia. Certainly the equivalent immigrant labourer communities in Fiji and Samoa were much more marginalized. The Polynesian and southern Melanesian pastors working as missionaries in northern Melanesia were probably the closest equivalent in terms of their adoption of European styles of dress.⁶⁶

This paper is primarily a study of the visual history of indenture. Future research could productively compare the visual history of the Melanesian indenture process in Queensland with Asian indenture in Hawaii, Fiji, and New Caledonia, and also with the Indian indentured diaspora in Southeast Asia and Africa. The colonial empires were spreading through Asia, Africa, and the Pacific at the same time that photography was invented and then developed from an expensive cumbersome technique into one that was widely available. The visual heritage of the confluence of colonialism, indenture, and photography remains largely unexplored.

Illustrating the Scenery and Peoples of the Islands in the South and Western Pacific, Hobart: J.W. Beattie, 1909. This source is now available on Project Canterbury at <http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/>.

⁶⁶ Winston Halapua, *Living on the Fringe: Melanesians of Fiji*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 2001; Malama Meleisea, *O Tama Uli: Melanesians in Samoa*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1980; Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley (eds), *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, Suva: Pacific Theological College, and the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1996.

Appendix I:

Major Groups of Pacific Island Indentured Labourers in Queensland, 1863-1906

Papua New Guineans in Queensland, 1879-1906

Province & Major Islands	Number of Contracts	Percentage
Milne Bay	671	21.5
Woodlarks	33	1.05
D'Entrecasteaux	109	3.4
Louisiades	529	16.9
New Britain	812	26.0
New Britain	765	24.5
Duke of Yorks	47	1.5
New Ireland	1,325	42.4
Feni	37	1.1
Tanga	368	11.7
Lihir	649	20.8
Tabar	28	0.8
Nuguria	3	0.09
New Ireland	240	7.6
North Solomons	311	9.9
Nissan	215	6.8
Buka	58	18.6
Bougainville	38	1.2
TOTAL	3,119	100

Solomon Islanders in Queensland, 1871-1906*

Province & Major Islands	Number of Contracts	Percentage
Western	146	0.8
Shortland	12	0.06
Rannonga	15	0.08
Vella Lavella	85	0.4
Simbo	34	0.1
Choiseul	58	0.3
Isabel	208	1.1

Central	2,550	14.5
Gela	2,069	
Savo	481	
Guadalcanal	4,188	23.2
Malaita	9,192	52.9
Malaita	9,186	
Ngdi	6	
Makira	1,038	5.7
Santa Ana	74	
Santa Catalina	1	
Ugi	9	
Ulawa	147	
Rennell & Bellona	65	0.3
Bellona	65	0.3
Temotu	573	3.1
Santa Cruz	429	2.3
Lord Howe	112	0.6
Tikopia	32	0.1
TOTAL:	18,018	100

* From within the modern Solomon Islands

New Hebrideans (Ni-Vanuatu) in Queensland, 1863-1906

Province & Major Islands	Number of Contracts	Percentage
Torba	6,786	16.9
(Banks)	(5,678)	(14.2)
Mere-Lava	438	1.09
Merig	5	0.01
Gaua	2,537	6.3
Vanua-Lava	819	2.05
Mota	241	0.6
Valua	1,036	2.5
Ureparapara	602	1.5
(Torres)	(1,108)	(2.7)
Toga	510	1.2
Loh	172	0.43

Tegua	183	0.4
Metoma	20	0.95
Hiw	223	
Sanma	4,181	0.1
Espiritu Santo	2,806	7.02
Malo	1,375	3.4
Penama	6,193	15.5
Pentecost	1,960	4.9
Maewo	575	1.4
Ambae	3,658	9.1
Malampa	7,248	18.1
Lopevi	47	0.1
Paama	803	2.01
Ambrym	3,464	8.6
Malekula	2,934	7.3
Shefa	9,723	24.3
Efate	5,084	12.7
Eradaka	4	0.01
Moso	9	0.02
Pele	15	0.03
Emau	288	0.72
Nguna	607	1.5
Mataso	5	0.01
Makura	121	0.3
Emae	692	1.7
Buninga	21	0.05
Tongariki	148	0.37
Tongoa	934	2.3
Evoso	1	0.002
Epi	5,084	12.7
Lamenu	32	0.08
Tafea	5,800	14.5
Anatom	157	0.3
Tana	4,244	10.6
Futuna	221	0.5
Aniwa	4	0.01

Erromango	1,174	2.9
TOTAL	39,931	100

Loyalty Islanders (now New Caledonia) in Queensland, 1863-1906

Islands	Number of Contracts	Percentages
Mare	385	34.2
Tika	9	0.8
Lifu	715	63.6
Uvea	14	1.2
TOTAL	1,123	100

Source: Charles A. Price and Elizabeth Baker, "Origins of Pacific Island Labourers in Queensland, 1863-1904: A Research Note", *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 11, no. 1/2, 1976, 106-121.

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‘Beautiful one day, perfect the next...’ Becoming Queensland 1859-1909

Professor Anna Haebich

Professor Anna Haebich is a multi-award winning author and historian, known for her fresh approaches to Australia’s past and her meticulously researched and documented studies of Indigenous history. Anna is a John Curtin Distinguished Professor with Curtin University and a Vice-President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences. She is also an Griffith University Adjunct Professor. Her most recent book *Murdering Stepmothers*, is a work of creative non-fiction about the life and times of the last woman executed in Western Australia. Anna is a descendant of German immigrants who arrived in Queensland in 1864.

**Lecture presented at City Libraries Thuringowa Central
30 August 2010**

**Lectures in Queensland History
Number 2
30 August 2010**

What *is* it about Queensland? Why do so many people think the state is unique? Are the climate, history, politics, economy, racism and life-style *really* so different? Or is Queensland's difference an invention conjured up by jaundiced southerners and nostalgic ex-Queenslanders? Could it be the legacy of generations of spin-doctors luring settlers, tourists and big business with glowing promises of happiness, excitement and wealth only to be found within Queensland's borders?

This conundrum has haunted me over the years. As an absentee Queenslander I defended the state against endless claims of the bizarre and oddball and joined in the condemnation of heavy-handed government and corruption. Back home again I was confronted by Queensland quirky habits and ongoing controversies. Then the opportunity to delve further came my way when the State Library of Queensland and Griffith University appointed me as Q150 Historian-in-Residence. A highlight was working on the virtual exhibition *Becoming Queensland*, which took a fresh contemporary look at the state's formative years depicting its first 50 years from Proclamation in 1859 as an edgy work in progress.¹ Stories about the people, places, institutions and lifestyles that forged Queensland were woven together with historical photographs and beautiful objects from the SLQ Heritage Collections to provide first-hand glimpses of the past. Some objects showed how little times had changed. Others contained secrets to unravel. And there were those that made us exclaim, "Aha! So that's what happened!"

At the heart of the exhibition were stories that reflected on the experiences of immigrants and Aboriginal people, the forging of the state and its cultural life, and the celebrations of its fiftieth birthday in 1909. Here we share in some of these stories selected and adapted from the exhibition. There are surprises in store! Some of Queensland's cherished differences have a long history while others came from somewhere else altogether and a few turn out to be total fabrications.

Coming to Queensland

Queensland was a creation of the dreams and hopes of thousands of people seeking a better life in a new land. They were urged on by extravagant propaganda and persuasive officials who ensured a continuing flow of starry-eyed newcomers determined to try their luck. These hopes and imaginings drove the settler population from 23,520 in 1859 to 599,016 in 1909.

Queensland's preferred new settlers were young British families with some capital to settle on the land. Germans were a second best. South Sea islanders provided virtual slave labour on sugar plantations in the north. Chinese and Japanese were barely tolerated. Still by the end of the century Queensland had a far more multi-racial population than the other state that tragically gave rise to extremes of racism, particularly in the north.

Government spin to attract British migrants became more audacious over the decades. Their outrageous claims give growing support for the "imagined Queensland" argument. In 1898 when the state was still recovering from disastrous droughts and unprecedented levels of unemployment a government poster proclaimed 'Queensland's one need is more people' and promised British families a 'healthy and enjoyable climate, free education.'² Young women were enticed with

1 For this exhibition I worked closely with Louise Denoon and staff from Heritage Collections who selected objects and contributed stories. The virtual exhibition is no longer available on line.

2 Promotional map of Queensland, 1898. Call No.: RBM 840 1898 10771

promises of free passage, better wages, health and work opportunities and 'superior matrimonial prospects.'³ Such advertising is reminiscent of more recent campaigns extolling the virtues of Queensland. But not everyone was convinced. Departing migrant George Lansbury penned a spirited attack claiming, 'It is a dead sell to send poor people out here. ... No one advised us to [come] except the Pamphlets and statements of the Colonial government ... if I had a sister I would rather shoot her dead than see her brought out here to this little hell upon earth.'⁴

There are many stories of the diverging destinies of these newcomers in the State Library and we retold some in *Becoming Queensland*. With hard work and cheap land many achieved their dreams. But for others Queensland was not the Promised Land. Their hopes were dashed by natural disasters, economic depression and plain bad luck.

John and Mary Nicholson's family photo album shows their journey from London in 1864 to become established landed gentry in Brisbane. In the photographs, taken with one of Queensland's first privately owned cameras, we see glimpses of how they bring together the old and the new – Mary's worn workbasket from Home and the family garden of tropical fruit – and there are enigmatic keepsakes – a fragile fern leaf and a child's lock of hair. Painter Emil Lorenz's albums tell a different story of longing for his home. With their photographs and postcards of Brisbane and Germany jumbled together in no clear narrative they suggest the migrant's dilemma with home and heart at opposite ends of the world. The precarious life of Asian men employed on pearling boats in North Queensland was shockingly revealed in 1899 when hundreds lost their lives in Australia's worst natural disaster, Cyclone Mahina. Torres Strait Islanders were amongst the forgotten heroes who rescued people against all odds. Nor was there any security for South Sea Island workers as hundreds were expelled under racist laws at the turn of the century.

An indelible stain

Bloody frontiers left their indelible stain on relations between settlers and Aboriginal survivors. Few of the newcomers gave any thought to the hopes and dreams of the Aboriginal people whose lands were invaded. Their fate was sealed by settler killings, massacres, sexual violations, malnutrition, disease and premature deaths. The estimated population of 200,000 was slashed by 90 per cent to 25,000 by 1900. Retaliation by well-organised Aboriginal warriors halted progress in regions like the Bowen hinterland but eventually survivors were forced to 'come in' to live on pastoral stations and town camps. In 1897 Queensland legislated to force them into reserves where the 'dying remnants' could be protected while healthy adults and children were sent out to work. This created the Stolen Generations and Stolen Wages. Queensland was not alone in taking such harsh action and other Australian states like Western Australia adopted the 1897 laws.

Archibald Meston was an architect of these laws and one in a long line of larger than life Queenslanders. A journalist and civil servant for most of his life Meston preferred to imagine himself as a poet, adventurer, Scottish aristocrat, wealthy squatter, game hunter, athlete and advocate and friend of Aboriginal people.⁵ His poetry records his vision of the widely believed theory of the 'dying race':

3 Emigration to Queensland pamphlet, 1899, Call No.: RBJ 325.24109943 emi

4 George Lansbury, 1884 cited in Evans, Raymond, *A History of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2007, p. 109.

5 Taylor, Cheryl 2003, 'Constructing Aboriginality: Archibald Meston's literary journalism 1870-1924,' *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 2, pp. 121-139.

The last corroboree song is sung
And vibrant o'er the mournful field
Last echoes of the sounding shield.⁶

There was another side to the 1897 laws highlighted in the installation *Black Opium* (2010) by Badjalung artist Fiona Foley at the State Library of Queensland. Controls introduced in 1897 to stop the supply of opium to Aborigines were to halt opium addiction and related deaths. However, politicians seized the opportunity to appease voters in the north by blaming the Chinese and building on these laws to stop them from employing Aboriginal workers. This was a local expression of the virulent anti-Asian racism across the continent that shaped the shameful White Australia policy enshrined in law in the new federal parliament in 1901.

Forging Queensland

Queensland was aptly named. It was to be 'a little Britain.' Far from being an isolated outpost, it was to become a jewel in the close-knit web of the British Empire. The state's population would be white and predominantly British. Institutions of government, law and the economy all came from Home. Economic progress was driven by big business in London and subject to fluctuations in global markets. Yet, once set in motion, things took on a local flavour. The state's early politicians and civil servants lacked experience and skills and many dispensed largesse as they pleased. Cronyism and corruption flourished. They would reappear with a vengeance in the Bjelke Petersen era. Queensland was hardly a home for the little battler as immigration propaganda claimed. Failure on the land and harsh working conditions sparked wide spread strikes during the 1890s and a radical labour movement that attracted interest from international socialists, some who came to Queensland to see the 'working man's paradise' for themselves. Like today, discoveries of natural resources like gold and coal boosted the state's economy. From the 1890s the waters of the Great Artesian Basin ensured a booming pastoral industry. Queensland was forged from this crucible of change.

The SLQ Heritage Collections holds many priceless items from these times. For example, in 1892 the strikers proclaimed the Manifesto of the Queensland Labour Party, an iconic historical document now listed in the UNESCO's Memory of the World. A less well-known fact is that the strikers found inspiration for their political views in the latest socialist books available in the tent libraries at their bush camps. A photograph of strike leaders on their release from prison in 1893 shows the human face of this period of dramatic political change. From these dramatic events grew Queensland's Labor Party movement, which was elected to government in 1915.

Queensland's continued search for ever more mining resources adds a special flavour to the information-packed notebooks and sketches of the Government Geologist Robert Logan Jack, appointed in 1879. Logan Jack criss-crossed the state in his travels but he was also a 'man of empire' and in 1900 explored the Yangtse Klang River in China and on retiring recorded his admiration for the explorers of North Queensland in his book *Northmost Australia*.

Queensland style

The slogan 'Queensland style' conjures up for me the reality of unique personal experiences and then a barrage of spruikers selling tantalising dreams of holidays and life-style in 'Sunny Queensland.' There are the truly amazing natural flora and

6 Notebook in Archibald Meston Papers, Reference code: OM64-17

fauna, the coral reefs, white sandy beaches and beauty of the tropics and man-made elements of architecture, gardens and cuisine and Queenslanders' acclaimed hospitality. Most are not unique as the spruikers would have us believe but are a mix of the home-grown and the imported. This reminds us once again that Queensland was never an isolated wall-flower but a destination for streams of settlers and visitors who brought the new with them. Settlers' can-do mentality bent everything into an enigmatically Queensland shape.

For natural scientists Queensland was a fabled Mecca of exotic species. German collectors were prominent amongst those who scoured the bush for new discoveries and international renown. Zoologist Johann Ludwig Gerard Krafft who joined the Australian Museum collected snakes, a dangerous enterprise since 20 of 80 land-dwelling snakes are on the Queensland Museum's danger list. Editions of his book *Snakes of Australia* held at the Queensland State Library were illustrated by Sydney sisters Harriett Scott and Helena Forde. One contains press clippings and informative notes jotted in the margins. The changing commercial value of the Barrier Reef can be seen in William Saville-Kent's book *The Great Barrier reef of Australia; its products and potentialities*.⁷ The quirky colours and drawings look very contemporary and the hard sell has a familiar ring. But while we see the reef as a priceless protected World Heritage Area, Saville-Kent was promoting its commercial development. Nothing was safe. Fish, oysters, beche de mer, sponges, corals, turtles, dugong, marine worms, all could be harvested and sold for a profit. Only tourism, which began in earnest after the Second World War, was not mentioned.

New visions of agricultural and garden landscapes in Queensland were encouraged by the Acclimatisation Society of Queensland at Bowen Park (now the site of Brisbane's EKKA). The Society was part of an international network of science and commerce dedicated to exchanging, importing and acclimatising flora and fauna in new environments. The mainly British members in Brisbane were motivated by a mix of commercial gain and the urge to recreate the landscapes of home. The Society's minute books held in the SLQ Heritage Collections record imported agricultural products, beauty plants, tropical fruits and the future scourge, the rabbit. Acclimatisation was a two-way affair and Australian species like the majestic bunya tree can still be seen in unexpected sites around the world.

The Queenslander house raised off the ground and encompassed by verandas is an icon of local architecture. A symbol for many of us of home and belonging it has a special place in our cultural heritage and is mythologised in our literature. The flexibility of design, the up-stairs and down stairs and thin walls providing little privacy shaped our domestic and family life. Verandas were ambiguous areas, both inside and outside and multipurpose places for work, leisure and sleep. They became so ubiquitous that Queenslanders decided they were a local invention. But the veranda was transported here along the lines of Empire from the shady bungalow residences of India and could be found in every tropical colonial outpost. The cool shade they offered would have been enjoyed by Queensland's many international visitors including the trapeze artist the Great Blondin, the African-American boxer Jack Johnson and opera diva Nellie Melba and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. English writer Anthony Trollope visited in 1871 and recorded how Queenslanders of all ages spent many hours relaxing on the veranda and his own enjoyment of 'tobacco and brandy and water with an easy chair on the veranda, and my slippers on my feet.'⁸

7 Saville-Kent, William, *The Great Barrier Reef of Australia; its products and potentialities*, W. H. Allen & Co., London. 1893. Call NO: GSB 574.92 1893

8 Trollope, Anthony, *Australia and New Zealand*, Snell Elder & Co., 1873.



Looking back from the reality TV cooking shows of today to the recipes of Queensland's early years can be something of a shock. Mrs Lance Rawson's *Queensland Cookery Book and Household Hints* is one of the first books of Australian and specifically Queensland recipes and a rare and prized item in Heritage Collections.⁹ Few will find an appetite for the dinner menu of Wallaby Soup, Boiled Bandicoot and Banana Pudding with Prickly Pear Jelly. Mrs Rawson encouraged a distinctly local approach to cooking. She advised despairing young bush housewives that the makings of a nutritious feast could be found right outside their kitchen door. Nothing escaped her roving eye. Cooking essence could be brewed from loquat seeds steeped in wine, molasses was the base for a sweet candy and leaves of banana flowers provided decorative cups for other blooms. Mrs Rawson's small book speaks volumes about how Queenslanders learned to make-do in often challenging environments. Her recipes reflect the imperatives of extreme seasonal swings between abundance and dearth. Flo's pumpkin scones come directly from this tradition and the compulsion to provide a hospitable afternoon tea for parched passers-by.

The flourishing veggie garden once a staple of all Queensland backyards was established early in the state's history. We read in Claudius Buchanan Whish's diary for 1863 of his battles and successes in this endeavour. Whish was an English gentleman and the state's first commercial producer of sugar and quality rum and was elected to the Legislative Council in 1870. Yet like all good fathers he devoted himself to the humble task of making a vegetable garden to feed and delight his family. He planted a mix of old and new crops in the splendid soil 'a nice tinge of red over the chocolate coloured' on his property on the Caboolture River and then battled against plagues of pests, rising rivers and droughts before settling back to reap the fruits of his labour.

Turning fifty

Like the events of Q150 in 2009 that celebrated 150 years of Queensland statehood the Jubilee anniversary 100 years earlier was an important occasion for reflection and commemoration. Of the many celebratory publications two from the SLQ Heritage Collections have much to tell us about how the public viewed their past and what they valued in the present.

⁹ Rawson, Lance Mrs, Mrs. Lance Rawson's Cookery Book and Household Hints. Enlarged and Revised. With which is incorporated The Queensland Poultry Book, William Hopkins Bookseller, Rockhampton, 1890.

The *Queenslander* newspaper published a special *Queenslander Jubilee Issue* subtitled 'A Pictorial Memento of her first Fifty Years of Existence as a Self-Governing State.'¹⁰ This is a triumphalist celebration of the foundation of a British colony and its progress and development. This version of history commemorated the foundation of an imagined and hoped for Little Britain. The tabloid spread begins with a tribute to King and Country. Then follow thumbnail photographs of 'Living Pioneer Colonists', the majority being distinguished bearded men of good British stock, arranged to suggest formal boards of honour. Stories and images of explorers follow along with success stories of regional towns, railways, rural and pastoral industries and mining, all bearing testimony to the British stamp on the land. Forgotten are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Germans and other European nationalities, Chinese, Japanese and other Asian people and Pacific Islanders.

The second publication is *Queensland in 1908: a Souvenir of the Franco-British Exhibition* published on the eve of the Jubilee year for the Franco-British exhibition in West London, which was attended by eight million visitors. Queensland was primed for this chance of self-promotion and its Intelligence and Tourist Bureau prepared the pamphlet to promote 'Britain's Fairest Daughter' to investors, migrants and tourists. The superlatives remain familiar today: 'Land of Unrivalled Pastoral, Agricultural, & Mineral Resources', 'Tourists should Visit this Wonderful Country with its endless variety of Superb and Marvellous Scenery' and 'Full Particulars about Land Settlement in Queensland, Australia.' One heading used, perhaps for the first time, a cliché of advertising today: 'What Successful Settlers think of "Sunny Queensland."' These settlers all attributed their success to hard work, careful saving and the state's natural bounty. Mr Joseph Lester of Laidley who arrived with five pounds in his pocket and was now worth thousands 'would not leave Queensland for any consideration.' For Mr J Gillman there was 'no other country on earth where men of determination can do so well.' Mr Vincent Creagh, MLA, avowed that 'before many years Queensland will assuredly be the star of the Australian Commonwealth.'¹¹

Conclusion

There are many more stories about these early decades of Queensland's history in the SLQ Heritage Collections, which you can seek out any time on-line at the SLQ website. Local libraries and family collections are also remarkable sources of knowledge and identity.

And finally, we come back to the conundrum of whether Queensland is different or indeed unique. I'm inclined to blame the fervent imaginations of our spin doctors over the years, but I'll leave it to you to decide for yourself. For the future, I see Queensland balanced on the cusp of international sameness and local difference. I dream that it remains enigmatically unique. But it could easily tip the other way.

1 The *Queenslander* Jubilee issue: Queensland 1859-1909, August, 1909. Call No: RBF 994.3 QUE

1 Queensland in 1908: a Souvenir of the Franco-British Exhibition, Queensland Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1908. Call No.: RBQ919.43 QUE

¹⁰ The *Queenslander* Jubilee issue: Queensland 1859-1909, August, 1909. Call No: RBF 994.3 QUE

¹¹ Queensland in 1908: a Souvenir of the Franco-British Exhibition, Queensland Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1908. Call No.: RBQ919.43 QUE

Exploration and Empire: Imperial rhetoric in published accounts of exploration of eastern Australia 1770-1860

Dr Judith Jensen

Dr Judith Jensen is Coordinator of Lifelong Learning with the Townsville Library Service. In this role she administers the Library's delivery of learning programs by a team of enthusiastic and talented professionals. Her own background is in history and heritage and in a former role with the library she undertook a number of interesting programs with local schools such as the archaeology project *Eureka Unearthing the Story*. She has published a number of local history monographs and multi media publications. She completed her PhD thesis, *Unpacking the travel writer's baggage: imperial rhetoric in travel literature of Australia 1813-1914* in 2006.

**Lecture presented at CityLibraries Thuringowa Central
19 April 2010**

**Lectures in Queensland History
Number 3
19 April 2010**

My lecture today will centre on accounts of exploration of eastern Australia published in the first half of the nineteenth century. The period when major exploration was underway. After 1860, the accounts of exploration are more pragmatic in tone and highlight the consolidation of Australia as a source of mineral and agricultural resources for the empire. They are still interesting but have a different focus and feel.

The lecture could be subtitled "Reading between the lines", as I am not concerned with whether the explorer is accurate in his survey or landscape description. I am more concerned with how nineteenth century ideas inform the published accounts to project Australia as part of the imperial vision. The lecture examines the undertones of empire in the explorer's response to the Australian environment, which I have called imperial rhetoric to distinguish it from propaganda that has a more intentional aim. The images and ideas of empire explorers presented in their published accounts were both explicit and implicit. However explorers were not necessarily deliberately advocating Empire but were describing Australia by drawing upon contemporary science, aesthetic principles and the ideology of progress, which endorsed and supported Empire. The imperial rhetoric that resulted became a persuasive device that encouraged their readership towards a view of Australia as an important and progressive part of the British Empire. While it is not the concern of my lecture to measure the audience response to the explorers' messages, the sheer numbers of travel texts published during the nineteenth century indicate how popular these texts were with the public. The aim of this lecture is to explain and expound upon some of the intellectual underpinnings which explorers drew upon and how these ideas were used to broadcast their imperial vision.

I would like to begin by talking briefly about the literary conventions of published accounts of exploration which is part of the genre of travel literature.

What is travel literature?

As Percy Adams writes in *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, "The literature of travel is gigantic; it has a thousand forms and faces".¹

Adams' statement suggests that travel literature is not easily defined. However we do have a basic understanding of its characteristics after extensive study of literature with travel as a central theme. Characteristically, travel literature depicts the course of events of a journey undertaken by the traveller.

Travel literature has its beginnings in myths and legends such as Homer's *Odyssey*. In early Christian times travel literature took the form of informative but impersonal guidebooks utilised by pilgrims, merchants and officials. In the Middle Ages more personal accounts of journeys and voyages to Asia became popular. By the seventeenth century guidebooks were being produced which offered advice to aristocratic parents on how tours of the continent would expand and enhance the intellect of their sons.²

With the Enlightenment came increasing global exploration and published accounts of explorers' journeys became popular. Such accounts presented a pragmatic approach to travelling, which involved scientific observation and an emphasis on the description and collection of material but also underlined how these new lands and

¹ Percy G Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, 1983, p.281

² J. Seigneuret (ed.), *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, New York, 1988, pp1293-1301

resources might contribute to imperial development. As the eighteenth century progressed romanticism crept into the texts of travel writers and a more subjective approach became visible. The nineteenth century ushered in a revolution in travel. No longer was it only the upper classes that travelled but increasingly the middle classes journeyed in numbers on business and for pleasure. Public demand for travel literature increased and vast numbers of works appeared on the scene. This pattern continued into the early twentieth century.³

Travel literature then, can take the form of journals, diaries, guidebooks and journeys through foreign lands by explorers, scholars, diplomats, missionaries, doctors, sailors. Indeed, it could be the work of anyone who travels and later publishes an account of his or her journey.

Published accounts of exploration as travel literature

Published explorers' narratives were written within the accepted conventions of eighteenth and nineteenth century travel literature. Use of these conventions resulted in a certain uniformity of style and structure.

Structurally, their most common feature was their presentations as day-by-day records of the progress of the expeditions. Typically, the published account gave a date under which were recounted the events and discoveries of that day, before moving to the next date. The entry for a particular date could be long or short; sometimes days were missed; often a considerable amount of repetition could be entailed. But whatever the superficial variations, the published accounts almost invariably conformed to the structure of this example from Augustus Gregory's account of his North Australian Expedition:

17th September.- The supply of water and grass being sufficient, we remained at this camp to refresh the horses, which had suffered much from the long stages.

Lat. by Capella, 17 degs. 34 mins. 5 secs.; var. compass, 4 degs. 50 mins. East.

18th September.- Starting at 7.00 a.m., steered north 10 degrees east mag. till 12.30 p.m. crossing a level country with frequent hollows which form lagoons in the wet season, reaching a sandy creek with several channels, which we searched in vain for water; but found a fine lagoon about a quarter of a mile from it, in a grassy flat, in which we encamped....

Lat. by a Aquilae, 17 degs. 21 mins. 20 secs.; var. compass, 5 degs. 15 mins. east.

19th September.- The horse was cut into thin slices and hung on ropes to dry by 10.00 a.m., the liver and heart furnishing the party with an excellent dinner.⁴

The day-by-day written style might appear the "natural" way in which to represent the explorers' activities. After all, published accounts were usually based on the notebooks and journals updated daily by the explorer in the field.

³ Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.38-48

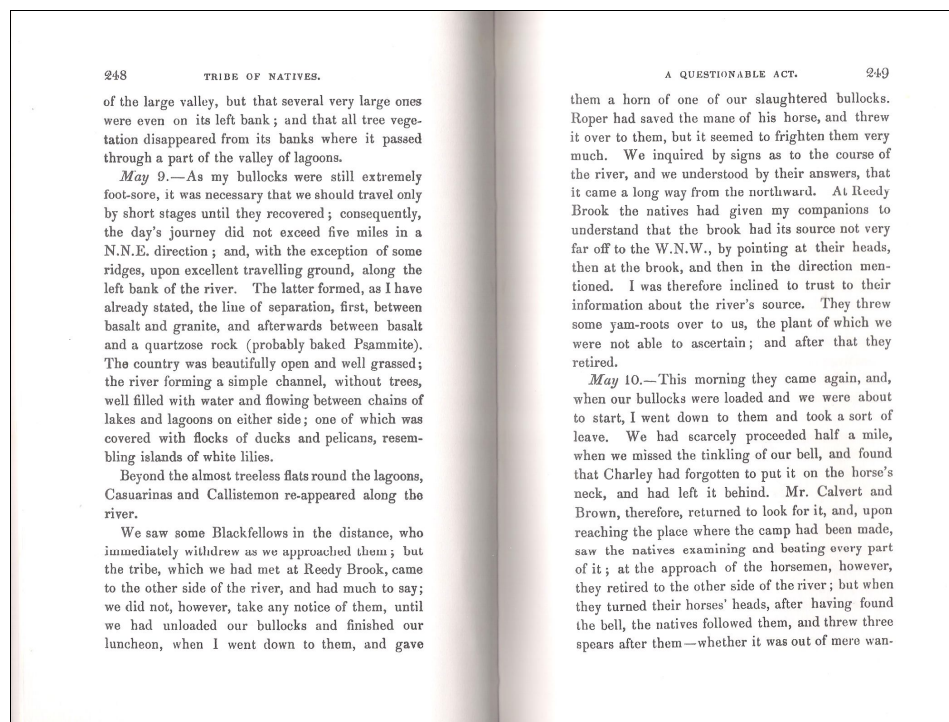
⁴ A.C. & F.T. Gregory, *Journals of Australian Exploration*, New York, 1968, p.177.

But the published account was not the field notebook as this comparison of a page from Leichhardt's field notebook with the same date in his published account indicates.



Leichhardt's field note book

Source: <http://libapp.sl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/spybus/RECOPT/PM/FULL1/1416/430783.1?http://image.sl.nsw.gov.au/4/c158/a403001h.jpg>



Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, pp.248-249.

It merely had the superficial appearance of one through the explorer's compliance with the literary conventions that had been set down in the seventeenth century. In fact what appears as two pages in the Leichhardt's field notebook appears in the published account as over twelve pages and includes not only scientific descriptions of the landscape but also accounts of everyday life and encounters with Aborigines.

This structural device of travel literature served to authenticate the account, by encouraging readers to believe that the words before them expressed the explorers' actual responses to the hardships they endured and the discoveries they made. The sense of authenticity created by the day-to-day record gave the accounts referential power and stimulated the reader to vicariously participate in the process of exploration. But however much the published accounts appeared authentic; they had almost invariably been edited substantially.

Editing was necessary to transform brief and monotonous ships' logs and field notebooks into texts that would engage and inform the reader. Editors claimed that this was done without endangering the sincerity of the account. Yet considerable pains were often taken to make the published version appear like a real field journal. A good example was Dr Hawkesworth's book, which was the first comprehensive account of Cook's journey of discovery in the South Pacific, commissioned by the Admiralty and published in 1773. This account, in the first person, reads as Cook's own account of his discoveries in the South Pacific. However, Hawkesworth had combined Cook's journal with the journals of Dr Solander, Joseph Banks and others to form a continuous narrative that was consistent in style. Hawkesworth stated in the introduction to his work that the narrative was to be "in the first person" so as to "excite an interest, and consequently afford more entertainment", adding that he would "intersperse such sentiments and observations as my subject should suggest". The resultant work combined philosophical comment with humour, pathos and fortitude to produce an epic account of grandiose and heroic proportions.⁵

At the other extreme some explorers' journals may have been subjected to relatively little editorial intervention or elaboration prior to publication. The editor of A.C. Gregory's journals commended the explorers' journal and did not deem it "desirable to alter or amend the impressions or views recorded at the time, but simply reproduce the journals as originally compiled".⁶

Editing often accounted for the delay in publication as Captain P.P. King, stated in the preface to his *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coast of Australia performed between the years 1818 and 1822*. In the case of this work, publication was delayed three years, while King completed the Chart of Survey. These charts had strategic importance to the Admiralty and to securing Australia's development as part of the British Empire. Thus they had higher priority than a published account of maritime exploration.⁷

In some instances appendices and additional material were added to the published accounts. These could be detailed maps of the expedition route or scientific reports on specimens collected during the expedition or lengthy discourses on aspects of the journey designed to elaborate journal entries and maintain the interest of the reader.

⁵ J Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages undertaken by the order of His Present Majesty for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*, London, 1773, 3 vols
Dr Hawkesworth cited in N Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts*, p.95

Rennie, *Far Fetched Facts*, p.96

⁶ Gregory, *Journals of Australian Exploration*, preface.

⁷ Captain P.P. King, *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia performed between the years 1818 and 1822*, Vol.1, London, 1827, p.vii.

These discussions catered to an educated reading public interested in scientific knowledge. The continuity of the narrative was not lost however, as these discourses were often included under the cover of the usual daily record.

Another standard feature of published explorers' accounts is that they were written in the first person. Australian explorers' journals followed this convention of travel literature established in the seventeenth century. Its use personalised the explorers' accounts as the explorer maintained the central and strategic position in the narrative. From this position the explorer selected the action narrated and wrote authoritatively about discoveries made during the journey. However writing in the first person also permitted subjective interpretations of the expedition. This was especially apparent in the romanticism that permeated the published accounts of Stokes and Mitchell and in the introspective style of Leichhardt.⁸ Attempted objectivity in first-person narration is to be found in the rational and methodical accounts of explorers like Sturt and Gregory. Despite variations in the depth of subjectivity revealed in the published accounts, one consistent feature of this convention was the way in which it contributed to the image of the explorer as hero. This helped to popularise the literature with the reading public. Moreover, by identifying the explorer with the narrator, the first-person convention led the reader to assume only one voice in the text which gave it authenticity.

This does not mean that exploration literature was only written in the first person, as in some circumstances, particularly when the explorer wished to distance himself from what was written, the voice would change to the third person. For example, Mitchell used "the author" in the preface of his *Journal of an Expedition into the interior of Tropical Australia* to differentiate himself, as the explorer-hero of the account, from Mitchell as "the author" of the preface, who extolled its validity and importance in extending geographic knowledge.⁹

I would like now to move to how contemporary ideas of science, aesthetic principles and the ideology of progress were utilised by explorers to incorporate Australia into the British vision of empire.

Through contemporary ideas of progress, aesthetics and science, explorers described and understood a new landscape and its people. Belief in progress allowed them to envision a land of settled communities that were industrious and socially refined. Aesthetic theories of the picturesque and romanticism placed the landscape within the bounds of European understanding and appreciation.

The pursuit of scientific knowledge was an important part of the imperial mission. Through the collection and systematic description of specimens, explorers incorporated Australia into a global web of scientific knowledge. Scientific societies and organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society and the Royal Gardens at Kew encouraged and legitimated their journeys.

While I will cover these contemporary ideas separately in this lecture, it should be stressed that they are often combined within passages of text in a symbiotic association that enriched the imperial rhetoric contained in the accounts.

Imperial science

⁸ Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye, How Explorers saw Australia*, Cambridge, 1996, 45-46
Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.166-167.

⁹ Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.vi.
Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p.48

Scientific societies established in Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries laid down conventions for recording journeys, and collecting and describing specimens. In the nineteenth century the Royal Geographical Society was influential in directing the course of exploration and in broadcasting the results. Organisations like the Royal Geographical Society established certain practices for how exploration should be carried out and influenced the survey and exploration of Australia's coastline and interior including the collecting of flora, fauna and geological specimens. Scientific collecting was an important aspect of exploration and was impelled throughout the nineteenth century by increasing specialisation into fields of botany, geology, zoology and ethnography. At first explorers and naturalists were astonished by the bizarre fauna and flora they discovered in Australia. By the early nineteenth century explorers and naturalists were regularly sending information and specimens back to Britain for further analysis. Findings were read at meetings of scientific societies and published in books and journals. Through imperial science the Australian environment was claimed for the empire and became part of the global Linnaean classificatory system. Imperial science acted as an agent for the dispersion of imperial rhetoric that not only emphasised Britain's leading place within the arena of global science but also had implications for continuing Australian settlement and Britain's ongoing industrial development.

Explorers set out with a particular purpose in mind - to answer questions about the unknown and to expand knowledge of the geography and natural history of the land. The information obtained was used to further the course of empire. In light of the extensive geographical research that had been undertaken in other parts of the world, by the early nineteenth century much of inland Australia was still unknown in terms of its geography, botany and geology.



Unexplored regions of mainland Australia 1824

(Unexplored regions in black)

Source: J. Bartholomew & KR Cramp, *The Australasian School Atlas*, fourth edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1959

In 1832, Allan Cunningham pondered this lack of knowledge of the interior of Australia in an article he wrote for the second volume of the *Journal of the Royal*

Geographical Society.¹⁰ In that article, he urged further exploration and linked the acquisition of geographic knowledge of Australia to the imperial enterprise.¹¹ Cunningham's paper revealed the centrality of exploration and the expansion of geographical knowledge to the course of settlement in Australia. He narrated the discoveries of earlier explorers, such as himself and John Oxley whose command of the systematic study of the land had opened up access to the interior and settlement. He described the Darling Downs as "an extensive tract of clear pastoral country", the lower sections of which presented all the attributes for successful pastoral settlement – grasses, water, fertile soil.

flats, which furnish an almost inexhaustible range of cattle pasture at all seasons of the year – the grasses and herbage generally exhibiting, in the depth of winter, an extraordinary luxuriance of growth. From these central grounds, rise downs of a rich, black, and dry soil, and very ample surface; and as they furnish an abundance of grass, and are conveniently watered, yet perfectly beyond the reach of those floods, which take place on the flats in a season of rains, they constitute a valuable and sound sheep pasture.¹²

In the conclusion to his paper, Cunningham urged further expeditions of inland Australia, not only to reveal information on its flora, fauna and inhabitants but also to determine "its system of rivers".¹³ On this last question he proposed an expedition to the north-western coast of Australia that would confirm or refute the existence of a navigable river that might be used as a means of communication.¹⁴

whether or not Australia, with a surface equal nearly to that of Europe, discharges on its coast, a river of sufficient magnitude to lead, by a long, uninterrupted course of navigation to its central regions; by which alone a knowledge of the capabilities of such distant parts of the interior may be acquired, and the produce of the soil be one day conveyed to its coast.¹⁵

In this passage Cunningham revealed the role of hypotheses in the process of geographical exploration. Explorers systematically described the environment in an accepted form, making comparisons with known geographic features in other parts of the world and then proceeding to make further assumptions about the still unknown parts. The American historical geographer J.L. Allen employs the concept of "geographic lore" to explain how assumptions and knowledge interacted in the process of exploration. Geographic lore ranged from known geographic facts, to conjecture, to the imagined, a belief that the desired object of exploration actually did exist. Using the known as a model, rational extrapolations about the unknown were made. However while exploration expanded geographic knowledge, myths often remained. These myths were transferred to less known regions. In this way geographic lore was dynamic, constantly changing as the unknown became known.¹⁶

¹⁰ Allan Cunningham, "Brief View of the Progress of Interior Discovery in New South Wales", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.2, 1832, p.99. <http://www.jstor.org/>

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid.*, p.112.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.131.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.132.

¹⁵ Cunningham, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.2, 1832, p.132. <http://www.jstor.org/>

¹⁶ Allen, "Lands of Myth", pp.41-61.

Geographic lore impelled the search for the Great South Land in the eighteenth century.¹⁷ As discoveries were made in the Pacific and Indian Oceans the area in which the Great Southern Continent could potentially be found diminished.¹⁸ After the discovery and settlement of Australia, geographic lore continued to motivate exploration. Empirical and non-empirical geographic lore supported the idea that a large navigable river existed in the interior which would allow easy communications between the southern colonies and northern Australia and Asia.¹⁹ The chief motive of King's hydrographic survey of the coastline in 1818-1822 was "to discover whether there be any river on that part of the coast likely to lead to an interior navigation into this great continent."²⁰ Much of the exploration of the interior of Australia in the early nineteenth century was motivated by the search for either an inland sea or a large navigable inland river. It was a commonly held belief that because the other continents of the world like Africa and America had such rivers, inland Australia would contain the same.²¹ Indeed Mitchell set out in 1831-32 in search of such a river flowing to the north-west. His journey was based upon known geographic facts and a report from a runaway convict. Mitchell believed that a watershed existed in the north-west which separated the Kindur of Barber the convict and the Darling river which had been discovered by Sturt.²² While Allan Cunningham challenged Mitchell's theory of a watershed that would be the origin of a great river leading to the north-west, the dynamism of geography as a science was apparent in his suggestion that further exploration of the northern interior should be undertaken to confirm his refutation.²³

Associated with the discovery of a great river was the location of fertile regions suitable for settlement.²⁴ Stokes conducted a hydrographic survey of the coastline of northern Australia urged on by these beliefs. His survey included a search for any large rivers in the Gulf of Carpentaria region. Stokes imagined that a fertile region with large navigable rivers flowing into the Gulf was waiting to be discovered on the western side of the coastal ranges of north-east Australia.²⁵ Although widespread settlement did not eventuate in the Gulf country, systematic descriptions of land like that of Stokes which included soil types, vegetation and other resources possibly contributed to Australia's selection as a new home for British emigrants. The concern to describe fertile and productive land was a consistent feature of accounts of exploration.

In the early eighteenth century, the Swedish naturalist, Carl von Linné (Linnaeus in Latin) developed a system of identifying plants and animals. Through his classification system explorers, naturalists and even non-professionals were able to classify, record and name the unknown flora and fauna they encountered.²⁶ His system of classification was a European construct that simplified the classification process to a limited number of characteristics. By the early nineteenth century the

¹⁷ W. Eisler, *The Furthest Shore: Images of Terra Australis from the Middle Ages to Captain Cook*, Cambridge, 1995. W. Eisler & B Smith (eds), *Terra Australis: The Furthest Shore*, Sydney, c.1988. G. Williams, "New Holland – The English Approach" in John Hardy and Alan Frost (eds), *Studies from Terra Australis to Australia*, Canberra, 1989, pp.85-92. Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, 1984.

¹⁸ Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, pp.1-6.

¹⁹ Allen, "Lands of Myth", p.46. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, New York, 1987, pp.56-57.

²⁰ King, *Narrative of a Survey*, p.xxvii.

²¹ Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.3

²² T.L. Mitchell, "Recent Information from Australia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.2, 1832, pp.318, 332. <http://www.jstor.org/>

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.318, 333.

²⁴ Allen, "Lands of Myth", p.46. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, pp.56-57.

²⁵ See previous chapter on progress for a description of the Plains of Promise as suitable for Christian settlement. Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.1, p.340.

²⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp.24-25, 27.

Linnaean system provided a global classificatory system accepted by explorers and scientists engaged in the service of Empire throughout the world. Through this system they were able to understand and claim the strange flora and fauna they encountered.

The connection of the system with imperial exploration in Australia began with Banks and Solander who had been a student of Linnaeus. However, the link became more evident and compelling, when James Edward Smith purchased Linnaeus' collection and books on his death. These works eventually formed the core of the library of the Linnean Society of London.²⁷ Alexander McLeay held the secretaryship of the Linnean Society of London from 1796-1816 and later established the Linnean Society of New South Wales when he was colonial secretary under Governor Darling. McLeay fostered science in the colony and also sent many specimens back to London. At his estate at Elizabeth Bay he grew exotic plants from around the world, which he distributed in an imperial manner to settlers for propagation.²⁸ Thus the land was claimed through the propagation of foreign species.

Carron, the botanist attached to Kennedy's expedition, had gained botanical knowledge through his experience as a gardener at Cambridge University and working in Alexander MacLeay's garden at Elizabeth Bay.²⁹ In his account of the journey, Carron focused on placing the vegetation within a European framework using a known botanical taxonomy. His scientific appreciation of the botanical diversity of the north Queensland rainforest was apparent in this empirical description.

In the scrub near our camp I found a species of *musa*, with leaves as large, and the plants as high, as the common banana (*M. paradisiaca*), with blossoms and fruit, but the fruit was not eatable. I also found a beautiful tree belonging to the natural order *myrtaceae*, producing on the trunk and large branches only abundance of white, sweet scented flowers, larger than those of the common rose apple (*jambosa vulgaris*), with long stamens, a very short style, slightly two cleft stigma, five very small semi-orbicular petals, alternate with the thick fleshy segments of the calyx, broad lanceolate leaves, the fruit four to six inches in circumference, consisting of a white fleshy, slightly acid substance, with one large round seed, the foot-stalk about one inch long. This is a most beautiful and curious tree (fruit perhaps not always one-seeded). Some specimens I saw measured five feet in circumference, and were sixty feet high, the straight trunks rising twenty or thirty feet from the ground to the branches, being covered with blossoms, with which not a leaf mingled. There were ripe and unripe fruit mingled with the blossoms, the scent of the latter being delightful, spreading perfume over a great distance around; I had frequently noticed the fragrance of these blossoms while passing through the scrub, but could never make out from whence it arose. It resembles the scent of a ripe pineapple, but is much more powerful.³⁰

Carron's description demonstrated the botanist's concern for following Linnaeus' systematic process for classifying plants through identification of specific characteristics; the plant's stamen, stigma, calyx, its leaves, flowers, fruit and seed.

²⁷ Carl Linnaeus, in Williams (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, pp.331-332.

²⁸ Lucile H. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion, The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens*, New York, 1979, pp.66-67.

²⁹ L.A. Gilbert, "William Carron, Botanist and Explorer, 1821-1876", *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, Vol.47, Part 5, October 1961, p.292.

³⁰ Carron, *Narrative of an Expedition*, pp.24-25.

Implicit in such descriptions was imperial rhetoric – that by classifying botanical specimens within the global taxonomic system, explorers and scientists made a territorial claim upon new environments.

Organisations like the Horticultural Society, the Linnean Society of London, the Royal Gardens at Kew and the Royal Society had government support and royal patronage and were sent a regular supply of botanical specimens discovered in Australia. These organisations had a pivotal role in botanical science in the collection, classification and dissemination of knowledge. Following Cook's voyage natural history specialists became an accepted part of exploration parties, collecting new species of flora, fauna and geological specimens. The importance attached by the Admiralty to the need for natural history specialists to accompany the voyages of survey can be found in the supplementary instructions to King.

receive on board Mr A Cunningham, a botanist, now in New South Wales, who has received the orders of Sir Joseph Banks to attend you; and you will engage any other person, if there be such in the colony, who possesses a competent knowledge of Mineralogy or Natural History... You will exercise your own discretion as to landing on the several parts of the coast which you may explore; but on all occasions of landing, you will give every facility to the botanist, and the other scientific persons on board to pursue their inquiries; and you will afford them such assistance in the pursuit as they may require.³¹

While at Endeavour River, Cunningham collected a variety of seeds and other curious plants which eventually formed part of his extensive botanical collection. Banks was later to acknowledge Cunningham's contribution to the collection at Kew, advising him in 1820, "I have received safe and in good condition the numerous things you have sent me, and the Royal Gardens have materially benefited by what we have had from you."³²

The Royal Gardens at Kew became a centre for plant collection, hybridisation and redistribution to parts of the empire. Cunningham, a botanist trained at Kew, not only collected specimens for Sir Joseph Banks but also was responsible for the planting of seeds of familiar European species at the various landfalls. Again, directions to King provide evidence of this. King was to provide himself with

the seeds of such vegetables as it may be considered most useful to propagate on the coasts you may visit, and you will take measures for sowing or planting them in the fittest situations, with a view not only to their preservation, but to their being within the observation and reach of succeeding navigators.³³

As well as providing sustenance for future mariners voyaging along the coast, the planting of European species at isolated spots along the coast was undertaken for scientific reasons. These experiments could indicate the fertility of the soil and the suitability of the area for European agriculture. King indicated an element of reciprocity in the process. At Cape Tribulation, he stated that "Mr Cunningham, in return for the plants he collected, sowed peach and apricot stones in many parts near

³¹ King, *Narrative of a Survey*, Vol.1, London, 1827, pp.xxx-xxxi.

³² Banks to Cunningham, 14 April 1820, cited in Moyal (ed.), *Scientists in Nineteenth Century Australia*, p.29

³³ King, *Narrative of a Survey*, p.xxviii

the banks”.³⁴ The successful planting of European species in a foreign setting also meant that European features became part of the landscape giving it greater familiarity in European eyes. It would domesticate the land to European needs and preferences.

These few examples demonstrate the importance of furthering scientific knowledge to the imperial vision. In understanding and naming its geographic features and flora and fauna, Australia became an important and progressive part of the British Empire.

Progress – describing the developmental potential of land as part of the empire

No philosophy was more central to the maintenance of the British Empire in the nineteenth century than the idea of progress. The intellectuals of the Enlightenment conceived a world governed by scientific rationalism and free from superstition. In their increasingly secularised world, the scientific reality of human progress could be defined with laws and principles developed to chart the progress of society. The Scottish model of progress as expounded by Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* set out economic factors as the driving force of progress. He considered that individuals were innately selfish and sought to better their own situation, but it was understood that in the process of individual advancement, benefits flowed through to society fostering social and economic advancement for all. Smith believed that evidence from the past suggested an identifiable sequence of development through four stages from primitive society through to advanced civilisation.

The ideology of progress inspired an optimistic outlook. It was based on the view that “civilisation has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction” towards the attainment of perfection.³⁵ Britain provided an example of the success of progress. Through industrialisation, mercantilism and colonial acquisitions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a belief in continued progress was sustained into the nineteenth century.

There is evidence in the published accounts of exploration that a strong belief in Christian conceptions of Providence underlay the ideology of progress. Providence was the hand that guided explorers to suitable land where Christian settlement and strong commercial centres would develop. However it was human industry that impelled imperial progress not Providence. Providence guided and protected the explorer, as its agent, during the course of his journey of discovery. The belief in Divine Providence and the optimism contained in the philosophy of progress inspired explorers’ discussions about the future of the Australian landscape and its inhabitants. At one point on his journey, Mitchell considered, he

had at length discovered a country ready for the immediate reception of civilized man; and destined perhaps to become eventually a portion of a great empire. Unencumbered by too much wood, it yet possessed enough for all purposes; its soil was exuberant, and its climate temperate; it was bounded on three sides by the ocean; and it was traversed by mighty rivers, and watered by streams innumerable. Of this Eden I was the first European to explore its mountains and streams – to behold its scenery- to investigate its geological character – and, by my survey, to develop those

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.222.

³⁵ J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth*, New York, 1960, p.2.

James H.S. Bossard, “The Concept of Progress”, *Social Forces*, Vol.10, No.1, October 1931, p. 5.
<http://www.jstor.org/>

natural advantages, certain to become, at no distant date, of vast importance to a new people.³⁶

In this quote Mitchell predicted the future of Australia Felix but he also revealed the nature of British progress as imperial in character, guided by Providence and motivated by economic incentive. Moreover, Mitchell considered himself the harbinger of progress to an untouched land that had been set aside by God for British use. He described an idealised land which he likened to the biblical Garden of Eden, abundant and still to be occupied. It encompassed all the attributes necessary for the establishment of civil society and merely awaited British settlement to develop to a more advanced state. Through individual initiative and industry, the landscape would advance to a commercial society within the Empire. As a consequence of this economic understanding of progress, explorers, like Mitchell, considered the landscape uninhabited. While explorers did not necessarily discount the presence of Aborigines or their prior use of the land, they considered them as living in a stage of savagery. Aborigines were a part of the idealised landscape like its exotic flora and fauna. Through their understanding of the ideology of progress, explorers dispossessed Aborigines of their land and claimed it as an important part of a progressive empire.

Although the idea of progress was secularised and rationalised to some extent by the early nineteenth century, explorers often advanced a form that was not only British and imperial but also Christian. Explorers believed their imperial mission was directed by Providence. While the land was claimed in a symbolic way by raising the British flag and proclaiming possession of the land on behalf of the crown, the explorer was guided to idealised land by Providence. This passage appears in Eyre's published account. It is part of a speech made by Sturt when he presented Eyre with a Union Jack before he left on his expedition. He wrote

This noble colour, the ensign of our country, has cheered the brave on many an occasion. It has floated over every shore of the known world, and upon every island of the deep. But you have to perform a very different, and a more difficult duty. You have to carry it to the centre of a mighty continent, there to leave it as a sign to the savage that the footstep of civilized man has penetrated so far. Go forth, then on your journey, with a full confidence in the goodness of Providence; and may heaven direct your steps to throw open the fertility of the interior, not only for the benefit of the Province, but of our native country; and may the moment when you unfurl this colour for the purpose for which it was given to you, be as gratifying to you as the present.³⁷

So the explorer, with God on his side, was the agent of progress.

Taking this further Mitchell depicted himself as a Moses-like figure leading his party through a harsh environment, believing "that He, who led Israel like a flock, would guide and direct our little party, through the Australian wilderness before us."³⁸ At one point on his expedition in 1846, he considered himself primitive man, an Adam-like figure, "awaking, again to trace, as if I had been the earliest man, the various features of these fine regions of earth."³⁹ Mitchell considered himself closest to God in such untouched regions. This passage demonstrates this sentiment:

³⁶ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.171.

³⁷ Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.19-20.

³⁸ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.165.

³⁹ Mitchell, *Journal of an expedition*, pp.310-311.

Young, I think, has said, that a situation might be imagined between earth and heaven, where a man should hear nothing but the thoughts of the Almighty; but such a sublime position seems almost attained by him who is the first permitted to traverse extensive portions of earth, as yet unoccupied by man; to witness in solitude and silence regions well adapted to his use, brings a man into more immediate converse with the Author both of his being, and of all other combinations of matter than any other imaginable position he can attain. With nothing but nature around him; his few wants supplied almost miraculously; living on from day to day, just as he falls in with water; his existence is felt to be in the hands of Providence alone; and this feeling pervades even the minds of the least susceptible, in journeys like these.⁴⁰

The explorer not only was guided by Providence but also protected by it during his expedition. Stokes attributed the preservation of the explorers from injury from the explosion of a fowling piece to God's protection while doing His work "so beneficial to humanity so calculated to promote the spread of civilization, which must ever be the harbinger of Christianity."⁴¹

The land the explorers idealised in their descriptions was found in the unexplored parts of Australia. This was land in its original state as God/Nature/Providence had provided it.⁴² In 1846, Mitchell conceived the possibilities of the land in Central Queensland to provide the foundations for advancement to civil society,

The charm of a beginning seemed to pervade all nature, and the songs of many birds sounded like the orchestral music before the commencement of any theatrical performance. Such a morning, in such a place, was quite incompatible with the brow of care. Here was an almost boundless extent of the richest surface in a latitude corresponding to that of China, yet still uncultivated and unoccupied by man. A great reserve, provided by nature for the extension of his race, where economy, art, and industry might suffice to people it with a peaceful, happy and contented population.⁴³

Mitchell alluded to the untouched, pristine state of the discovered land. It was an earthly paradise, free from the misery that pervaded British industrial society in the mid-nineteenth century - a land that evoked the promise of societal rebirth. He considered it an enchanting place that awaited transformation through British settlement and human industry.

Mitchell believed that British imperial progress was positive and constructive not aggressive and destructive. He regarded the future establishment of rural settlement on land he discovered and named Australia Felix as:

a lasting monument of the beneficial influence of British power and colonization, thus to engraft a new and flourishing state, on a region now so desolate and unproductive; but this seems only possible under very

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.315-316.

⁴¹ J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia, with an Account of the Coasts and Rivers explored and surveyed during the Voyage of HMS Beagle, in the Years 1837-38-39-40-41-42-43 by Command of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Also a Narrative of Capt Owen Standley's visits to the Islands in the Arafura Sea*, Vol.2, London, 1846, p.282.

⁴² God, Nature and Providence seem to be used interchangeably.

⁴³ Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.292-293.

extensive arrangements, and by such means as England alone can supply:-

Here the great mistress of the seas is known
By empires founded, - not by states o'erthrown⁴⁴

While idealised land could be perceived as fertile and peaceful it could also be considered “desolate”. But the word “desolate” pointed to how the land was devoid of signs of economic use, in the British sense, and was not necessarily used to denote the fertility of the soil. It was “desolate” and “unproductive” because it was not settled, not because it lacked potential. The use of such words did not erode the image of an idealised landscape but exposed the utilitarian understanding of land based in the idea of progress that was held by explorers.

With this view of land, explorers imagined the extent to which idealised land could be developed to become an important part of a progressive British Empire. As he commanded a view over the Plains of Promise in northern Australia, John Lort Stokes contemplated the progress of civilisation:

In that direction, however, no curling smoke denoted the presence of the savage; all was lonely and still; and yet even in these deserted plains, equally wanting in the redundancy of animal as in the luxuriance of vegetable life I could discover the rudiments of future prosperity, and ample justification of the name which I had bestowed upon them. I gazed around, despite my personal disappointment, with feelings of hopeful gratitude to Him who had spread out so fair a dwelling place for his creatures; and could not refrain from breathing a prayer that ere long the now level horizon would be broken by a succession of tapering spires rising from the many Christian hamlets that must ultimately stud this country, and pointing through the calm depths of the intensely blue and gloriously bright skies of Tropical Australia, to a still calmer and brighter and more glorious region beyond, to which all our sublimest aspirations tend, and where all our holiest desires must be satisfied.⁴⁵

This was an ideal setting for British settlement. It was open and park-like and unsettled. Stokes considered God created the region for the development of civil society. The commercial port of Investigator Road would ship produce from the fertile interior of northern Australia overseas and would result in the “habitations of civilized man, and the heaven-ward pointing spires of the Christian Church.”⁴⁶ He was impelled in his exploration by the thought that Christian settlement would one day be developed on the site. This thought, “added to the zest with which [the party] prosecuted [their] subsequent researches.”⁴⁷ The notion that God had provided such areas for British progress was common in published accounts of exploration.

Explorers invariably preferred open, park-like landscapes that they deemed were prepared by Nature or God for the purpose of British colonisation.⁴⁸ Mitchell imagined Australia Felix in this manner. It was “open and available in its present state, for all the purposes of civilized man.”⁴⁹ At an earlier point in his narrative he noted that:

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol 2, p.334.

⁴⁵ Stokes, *Discoveries*, Vol.2, pp.319-320.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.272

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.272-273.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 5 for further discussion of aesthetic preferences for park-like landscapes.

⁴⁹ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.333.

Flocks might be turned out upon its hills, or the plough at once set to work in the plains. No primeval forests required to be first rooted out, although there was enough of wood for all purposes of utility, and as much also for embellishment as even a painter could wish.⁵⁰

While Mitchell's depictions of idealised landscapes had aesthetic value, he connected aesthetic appreciation to the land's economic potential. In a stable, fertile environment such as Australia Felix, where individual freedom was not restrained and human industry prospered, the further progress of society was inevitable. Mitchell considered that the region awaited only the "enterprising spirit and improving hand" of "intelligent man" "to turn to account the native bounty of the soil."⁵¹

In Mitchell's published accounts of exploration he combined a belief in imperial progress with aesthetic appreciation and scientific enquiry. I would like to end with a brief discussion on how aesthetic principles were used to describe and portray the landscape.

Aesthetics principles

Aesthetic principles from landscape gardening, and from scholars like William Gilpin can be discerned in the images of landscape presented in the explorers' journals. Their descriptions not only demonstrated a preference for the contrived British "park-like" landscape but also revealed the more elaborate principles of romanticism, the sublime, the beautiful and the picturesque. Landscapes were depicted using Gilpin's picturesque conventions. In this tradition of illustration and landscape description the limits of the scene were defined, the foreground highlighted and the focus drawn to the middle ground. The use of aesthetic theories allowed the explorer, as a qualified arbiter of taste, to appropriate the landscape within a European understanding. The picturesque aesthetic often combined with an appreciation of the economic value of land in accounts of exploration and operated to reinforce the imperial rhetoric implicit in the texts.

The explorer, Mitchell could be considered a picturesque explorer. In describing a scene in Central Queensland he recalled the paintings of Salvator Rosa, an influential seventeenth century Italian artist noted for his depictions of nature's rugged formations, which were infused with moodiness and emotion. Inspired by the landforms and using the picturesque aesthetic, Mitchell described the landscape by comparison to a Rosa painting. He placed the scene within this accepted framework, he claimed the land for the British Empire. Mitchell wrote:

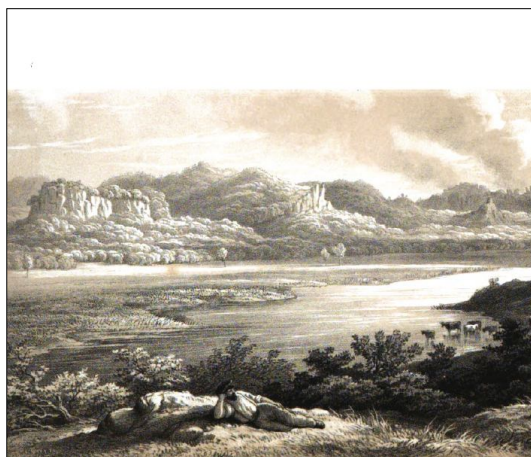
Travelling along the bank of this stream, we found it flowing, and full of sparkling water to the margin. The reeds had disappeared, and we could only account for the supply of such a current, in such a country, at such a season, by the support of many springs. We made sure of water now for the rest of our journey; and that we might say of the river "Labitur et latetur in omne volubilis aevum." The hills overhanging it surpassed any I had ever seen in picturesque outline. Some resembled gothic cathedrals in ruins; others forts; other masses evergreen woods, and having a fine stream in the foreground, gave a charming appearance to the whole country. It was a discovery worthy of the toils of a pilgrimage. Those beautiful recesses of unpeopled earth, could no longer remain unknown. The better to mark them out on my map, I gave to the valley the name of

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.271.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol.1, p.5.

Salvator Rosa. The rocks stood out sharply, and sublimely, from the thick woods, just as John Martin's fertile imagination would dash them out in his beautiful sepia landscapes. I never saw anything in nature come so near these creations of genius and imagination.⁵²

Elements of romanticism and the picturesque aesthetic are contained in this description and in the supporting image.



This illustration in his published account is the final touch in claiming the land for European settlement. The image of Martin's Range depicts the scene described in the text and was complete with representations of British imperial progress; the cattle at the river's edge and the recumbent shepherd like figure in the foreground ushering in the pastoral stage of imperial progress to land in its natural state.

The textual representation of the landscape by the explorer and the subsequent appreciation of the landscape scenery by the reader was tied to an aesthetic appreciation of landscape art. Mitchell clearly shows an awareness of the interconnection between the two in his use of the conventions of landscape painting in written descriptions and in the reference to painters such as Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa and John Martin. Not only were their names used in the naming of landscape features but their works became a reference point for the aesthetic appreciation of the scenery he observed.

Picturesque and park-like – the nexus of aesthetic and economic value of land

Explorers often described the landscape by comparison to English country estates. Mitchell demonstrated an appreciation of such picturesque scenes which contained open and undulating land with irregular groupings of trees as this description of land near the Gwydir River indicates.⁵³

Penetrating next through a narrow strip of casuarinae scrub, we found the remains of native huts; and beyond this scrub, we crossed a beautiful plain; covered with shining verdure, and ornamented with trees which, although "dropt in nature's careless haste", gave the country the appearance of an extensive park.⁵⁴

The appreciation of Australian scenery that was considered park-like and picturesque recurs in accounts of exploration. Generally the explorer's preference was for open, undulating land with detached groups of trees and contrasting vegetation. Such land was compared to the contrived country estates in England which had an economic value related to their productive use. The explorer's aesthetic preference for park-like landscapes and undulating and productive landscape scenery reflected the British idealised rural image that became popular through the development of country estates. Consequently the imperial rhetoric of explorers praised those aspects of the

⁵² Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.224-225.

⁵³ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.192. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.251..

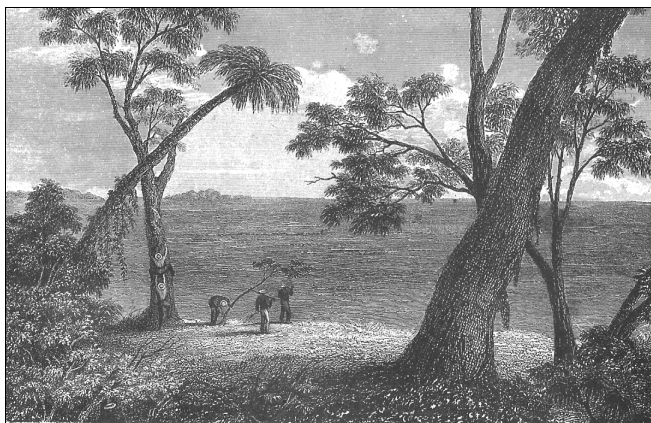
⁵⁴ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.90.

natural landscape that were not only picturesque but also productive, linking aesthetic preferences to the economic value of land. Oxley journeyed “through a beautiful picturesque country of low hills and fine valleys” near his camp at Limestone Creek. Describing the park-like quality of the landscape the detached groupings of trees and the open grassed areas, he stated “I never saw a country better adapted for grazing of all kinds of stock than that we passed over this day.”⁵⁵

In making a comparison with country estates in England, the explorer implied that the land was provided for British use. As mentioned earlier Providence often provided land that did not need to be improved but simply awaited settlement.

While the illustrations that accompanied the explorers’ texts combined the picturesque with the productive, the figures adorning the illustrations evoked the bucolic charm of the landscape. These figures were an important feature of conforming the illustrations to picturesque composition. Gilpin suggested that idle figures were suited to the picturesque as they added dignity to the scene without intruding on its naturalism.⁵⁶

In Stokes’s account, figures not only break up the foreground but also animate the landscape and accentuate the vastness of the *Plains of Promise* depicted. The inactive shepherd-like figures in the centre of the illustration surveyed the extent of the plains as if heralding the approach of civilisation.⁵⁷



***First View of the Plains of Promise
Albert River***

**Source: J. Lort Stokes,
Discoveries in Australia, Vol.II,
London, 1846, facing p.316.**



***Last View of the Plains of Promise
Albert River***

**Source: J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in
Australia, Vol.II,* London, 1846, facing
p.317**

⁵⁶ Gilpin cited in C. Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.118.

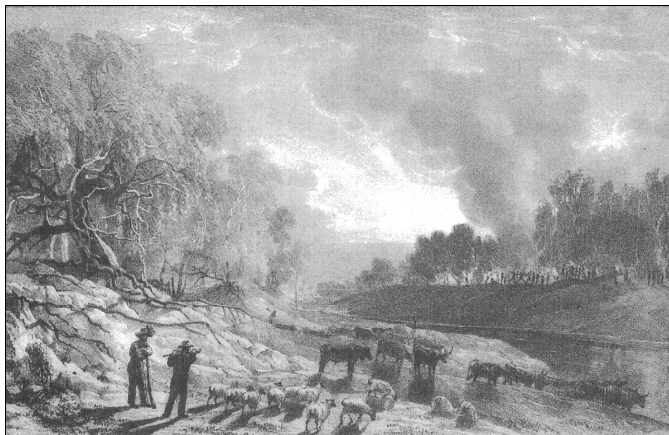
⁵⁷ Progress and the environment has been covered in detail in Chapter 4. Hussey, *The Picturesque*, pp.117-119. Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p.25.

Gilpin approached the use of animals in picturesque composition in a similar manner. Again they are not meant to be detailed or to be the focus of attention but were introduced to add to the deficiencies of an apparent idealised landscape.⁵⁸ The inclusion of herd animals in the illustrations in explorers' published accounts reinforced the imperial rhetoric of pastoral settlement.⁵⁹



The Yarrayne

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1839, facing p.160.



The River Darling

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.I, London, 1839, facing p.297.

The scene he composed demonstrated and reinforced the imperial mission. In the foreground expedition members tend grazing flocks of sheep and cattle while in the background on the far side of the river Aborigines appear engaged in a corroboree. Implicit in the illustration was the prediction of advancing civilisation in the form of pastoralism subduing a romantic landscape that was wild and uncivilised.

Conclusion

This lecture has examined some of the cultural underpinnings in published accounts of exploration in the nineteenth century. In describing the landscape explorers drew upon these ideas and were complicit in fostering the imperial view but they were not necessarily deliberate propagandists of Empire.

⁵⁸ Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.45.

⁵⁹ Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, The River Darling, facing p.297. *Ibid.*, Vol.2, The Yarrayne, facing p.160.

Fencelines and Horizon Lines: Queensland in the Imaginary Geographies of Cinema

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Framing Queensland and Early History

Film is a profoundly illusory medium. The sense of place in a film is often created with little more than a few images, dialogue and other narrative devices. The power of cinematography creates a sense of immensity of the place in the consciousness of the viewer, giving the impression of seeing or being somewhere, an experience that can be uncanny for viewers when the place concerned is a homeland (see Craven 2010). This article concerns a number of films in which Queensland has entered the cinematic imaginary. Fence lines and horizon lines suggest how our perceptions of Queensland in these films are subject to the illusory boundaries of cinematic settings. I ponder the regional, national and international resonances from times when Queensland was very marginal in the international film industry to the current era of Queensland's rising involvement in the industry.

Australian film histories are rarely focused on states or regions. An exception is in the work of Albert Moran, whose *Queensland Screen: An Introduction* (Moran 2001) contains a filmography of over 4000 film and television productions in Queensland throughout the twentieth century. While there has been an abundance of locally produced television, Moran points out that it is less straightforward to identify a coherent corpus of films that are written, made, financed, produced and post-produced entirely in Queensland by Queenslanders. Instead, he devises a set of criteria that includes films (and television) "that have in part or in whole been shot in Queensland and/or concern Queensland or Queenslanders" (3). I follow him in adopting these criteria as the basis for the films discussed in this article, in looking at fiction feature films since the World War II. Fiction features, however, did not form the beginnings of cinema, so I pause first to overview some milestones in the early history of cinema in Queensland, which largely comprised non-fiction films of industry and culture in the colonial state.

The early history is sketchy and we have much to thank the efforts of film historians, Pat Laughren and Chris Long, for compiling a documentary, *Queensland's First Films* (Laughren 1996), that gives some chronology to this history, and some background on the identities of the pioneer filmmakers. The information that follows in this section is largely drawn from their documentary. Motion pictures appeared in Queensland via several technologies from 1894. Brisbane seems to have been the site of first showings before the 'pictures' would tour around Queensland. In 1896, Lumiere's cinematographe, a hand-cranked machine for shooting, printing and projecting film, was introduced to Australia, enabling the first films to be made here. Queensland's first film is said to have been shot in 1897 but no print of it survives. Queensland's oldest surviving film, dating from 1898, was made on Murray Island and featured Islanders' ceremonies and dances (Laughren 1996). The film was shot by Professor Alfred Haddon, who led a Cambridge University expedition to the Torres Strait (Laughren 1996).

However, the earliest films to be made by Queenslanders were government productions, notably those of the Queensland Agriculture Department that were shot by Fred Wills, an official government artist and photographer (see also <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10346b.htm>). Wills worked with a cinematographe and was sent to Sydney to train in the use of it. His first film of Queensland was of the opening of Parliament by the Governor, Lord Lamington, in 1899 (Laughren 1996). Among his other surviving films are scenes of Queen Street and the Roma Street Railway, in Brisbane; of wheat harvesting on the Darling Downs; the sugar industry around Eumundi and Nambour; and of a parade of Boer War troops, among other subjects (Laughren 1996). North Queensland regions appear in Wills's films of the Cairns and Mareeba Railway; of Torres Strait Islanders;

and of ships at sea off Townsville. In November 1899, a collection of Wills's films was screened privately to government officials before it was sent to London for use by Queensland's Immigration Lecturer, George Randall (Laughren 1996). Wills eventually gave up filmmaking as Moran records that Wills left his post in 1901 (Laughren gives 1904) and moved to Toowoomba where he operated a photographic studio (12).

Another major producer of films in Australia in this period was the Salvation Army Limelight Department based in Melbourne under Joseph Perry. The Salvation Army came to Queensland in June 1899 to film the Riverview Boys Home in Moggill, Brisbane, and these films were incorporated into the Salvation Army's touring lecture presentations (Laughren 1996). The Limelight Department became Australia's first registered film production business under Perry, who was assisted from 1901 by the English-born Queenslander, Sidney Cook as second cameraman. While most of the films are lost, the Limelight Department filmed the first federal parliament and Federation events in Melbourne, in 1901. The Salvos also held the quirky distinction of shooting Australia's first bushranging film in Winton - which is said to have been made two and a half years before the *Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait 1906), which is thought to be the oldest extant *Ned Kelly* film - and, in Hughenden, the first film of shearing in Australia (Laughren 1996). Among some footage of the Brisbane ports that was shot by Cook were images of the *Yongala* three years before it disappeared off Townsville. Sidney Cook eventually left the employment of the Salvation Army in 1905 to become a commercial picture showman, screening first at His Majesty's Theatre in Brisbane, in 1906. Two years later, in 1908, he screened films in London on behalf of the Queensland Government at the Franco-British Exhibition. According to Laughren, Cook was among the most prolific filmmakers of his Edwardian era. He died in 1937. Among his rival filmmakers was another Queenslander, Bert Ive, who was a Government cinematographer from 1913. In 1910, Ive covered the visit of Lord Kitchener to Brisbane, creating almost a feature-length record of this event. Government projects, civic works, Indigenous culture, local histories, and colonial administration thus constitute the early screen consciousness of Queensland.

Queensland goes to Hollywood

The more compelling fact of our early cinema history is that by the 1920s, Hollywood was by far the main source of all fiction films screened in Australia. The occasions were extremely rare in which Australia or Queensland figured in Hollywood films. *Sister Kenny* (Dudley Nichols, 1946), a biopic about Sister Elizabeth Kenny (played by Rosalind Russell) made by RKO Studios is a rare exception. *Sister Kenny* was based on the book, *And They Shall Walk* written by Kenny and Martha Ostenso during the years that Kenny lived in the United States. In *Sister Kenny*, the narrative place is initially suggested by a map of Australia that appears after the opening titles, followed by a zoom-in on the big eastern state, with 'QUEENSLAND' appearing in block letters across the screen (in fact, Kenny was born in New South Wales but had a lifelong association with Queensland, through her family home in the Darling Downs district, and her clinic in Townsville; she died in Toowoomba in 1952). Queensland is referred to in dialogue in the early stages of *Sister Kenny*, which concern Kenny's ambitions to work 'in the bush' and as a 'bush nurse'. The 'bush' is visually suggested as a land seen from within the family homestead, beyond a verandah and a picket fence, the site of the heroine's dreams. Kenny's work takes her away from the bush as she develops her controversial treatment of children afflicted by polio. Queensland thus acquires meaning in this film through its indistinct setting as a rural place with heroic settlers, a pioneer myth. The name on the map stands for Kenny's obscure background and her rise to controversial prominence.

The visual trope of Queensland as a rural setting or landscape, its cinematic territories pegged out with fence lines that disappear in the sightlines of the *mise-en-scene*, recurs in other Australian films where the fence imposes a sense of a colonial space, a settled territory that is separated from the wider land. When location markers fail in evoking a sense of place, myths rush in to fill the void. Myths of Queensland have also evolved from literature and folklore that inscribe the relationship of Queensland to the nation, and mythologise the character of its inner regions and social microclimates.

Mythic Queensland: All Around the Tropic

In 1976, the late Thea Astley confessed to a Sydney audience that her love affair with Queensland became most intense when she moved to the southern states (Astley 1978). Musing on what marks Queensland as different from the South, and considering that Queensland was originally part of New South Wales, from which it separated in 1859, she noted that the convict history and the treatment of Aborigines were no different in the two states. Apart from “isolation” and “monstrous distances”, and “suspicions of political neglect . . . by a federal government located two thousand miles [sic] away” (3), Astley found answers in the obvious: Queensland architecture (houses on stilts); Queensland dress (“more casual”); and Queensland manners (“indifferent, laconic”); and “tougher sunlight, slower-moving people and a delicious tendency to procrastinate” (4). Astley admits that her reminiscences of Queensland are more oriented to the north, where she was a teacher for some years (in Townsville). “These virtues”, she says, “were raised to the nth power north of Rocky” (4), and she expresses amusement at the far-northern tendency to refer to even nearer Queenslanders as “southerners” (3). As one of her oddball characters, Leo, in *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*, says, “when I say southerners I mean anyone below the tropic” (Astley 1979, 139), a reference to the Tropic of Capricorn. In spite of her expressed love, Astley nevertheless parodied Queensland in her fiction (see Astley 1979; 1997), and her imaginary Queensland bristles with grotesque characters. She also speaks of how Queensland has “always suffered from being a cultural joke to southerners” (Astley 1978, 12). She praises the novels of David Malouf, especially *Johnno*, as “a beautiful evocation of the Queensland wound” (9)¹.

Perhaps what Astley characterises as the wound is a quality that emanates as the otherness of Queensland in cultural discourses beyond literature, such as Bruce Molloy’s (1990) observation of “depiction[s] of eccentricity or excess, emphasising bizarre behaviour” (69) in a number of feature films set in, shot in or referring to Queensland from the silent era to the late 1980s, including the first *On Our Selection*, made in 1919 (72). With a touch of Astley’s Leo, Molloy attributes this pattern to “outsiders” defining how Queenslanders look at themselves (69). It is a view he adapts from James Michener’s complaint that Texans are subject to myths imposed by non-Texan movie-makers, and Molloy is invoking the folklore that Queensland’s distinction from southern Australian states, like Texas in the United States, is the result of its size (67). Apparently without irony, in 2008, the former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd publicly recalled this folk narrative by complimenting the then American President George W. Bush as an honorary Queenslander, apparently owing to Bush’s Texan background. Not only a reminder of the persistence of folklore, the

¹ The essay from which these quotations are taken (Astley 1976) was republished twice, in *Southerly*, Volume 36 No. 3, 1976, pp 252-64; and in *Eight Voices of the Eighties*, edited by Gillian Whitlock (University of Queensland Press, 1989, pp 169-79). In the latter version, Astley omitted the comments on David Malouf’s novels and the ‘Queensland wound’.

incident also goes to the role of Rudd, a Queenslander, in overcoming the wound in rising to national leadership.

The wound has also afflicted Queensland's relationship to the film industry at times as Queensland seems to have been regarded as a backwater for film production since the 1960s, even as its landscapes were incorporated into 'parts' in Australian films, and other places have 'played' Queensland at times. Various myths have emerged in these representations, in Molloy's view, such as Queensland as either "exotic background to conventional stories", or "a site of rich resources for the taking. . . through hard work" (68). This latter theme he says is often associated with "Queensland as a mythic destination, the object of a journey of epic proportions" (68). *The Overlanders*, made in 1946 by Ealing Studios, and *Sons of Matthew*, completed in 1949 by Charles Chauvel, are two such films that "celebrate the spirit of enterprise and the virtues of hard work" (Molloy 70). In both of these films, Molloy argues that the success of pioneering characters in Queensland settings contrasts with the "pessimistic thesis" of Australian literature and film, in which the protagonists experience disempowerment and impotence in encounters with the bush (71). *Sons of Matthew*—which was made with the support of the then Queensland Government, and in picturesque locations in the Numinbah Valley and around Beaudesert near Brisbane—captures this pioneering spirit in dual senses. It is a story of a family who migrate from New South Wales to Queensland to establish a pastoral dynasty; and the production itself was pioneering in that it took two years to produce in challenging conditions, including a flood, conditions that somewhat mirrored the drama of the elements in the film as Matthew's family contend with a cyclone and a bushfire.

In addition to eccentricity, epic journeys and Queensland as 'reward', another key myth identified by both Molloy and Moran is that of Queensland as 'paradise'. In a number of films, Moran suggests "Queensland is an Eden held out to the characters as they undergo a narrative of events that are situated elsewhere" (24). This mythic Queensland is "a goal, a heaven on earth that the characters hope to reach in the future" (24). Molloy also discerns myths of Eden in Queensland, in *Age of Consent* (Michael Powell 1969) and, more ironically, in *Walkabout* (Nicholas Roeg 1971) (Molloy 70). This mythology of paradise seems to have become more prominent and more contentious since the 1980s, in films based on screenplays written by prominent non-Queenslanders, notably *Buddies* (Arch Nicholson 1983), *Travelling North* (Carl Schultz 1986)—based on a David Williamson play of the same name—and *Radiance* (Rachel Perkins 1998; based on *Radiance*, the play by Louis Nowra). But whereas *Travelling North* adopts these patterns sentimentally, *Radiance* contests them through allusions to Native Title, *terra nullius* and the Stolen Generations (see Craven 2008; 2010). Views of horizons in these films contribute in diverging ways to senses of desire for and desire to contest the myth of paradise in Queensland. The vividly sunlit horizon of the water on which Frank fishes in retirement in *Travelling North* implies the nearness to heaven for Frank, who dies – contented – after a relatively brief retirement somewhere around Port Douglas (see Craven 2010). In *Radiance*, the horizon-trimmed views of Nora Island - offshore from the home of Nona, Cressy and Mae, that is implied as somewhere around Rockhampton - figures the ancestry that inspires the sisters' rebellion against the landlord who mistreated their mother and evicts them from her house. Comparison of these films shows that the mythos of 'paradise' is unstable; it is not only a means of idealising Queensland.

In contrast to these regional dramas of Queensland that uphold and contest the myth of paradise, Queensland territories have been adapted to stand for the nation of Australia as a whole in the films discussed hereafter. *The Irishman* (Donald Crombie 1978) was shot mainly in and around Charters Towers, but the film barely references

the place of its setting and is remembered as one of the nationalist period films of the New Wave of Australian cinema in the 1970s.

Nationalist Queensland: *The Irishman*

While it is credited as a production of the South Australian Film Commission (SAFC), *The Irishman* was generated under the overarching influence of the Australian Film Commission (AFC). The AFC was established under the Whitlam Government in 1975 (originally as the Australian Film Development Corporation or AFDC) in response to a prolonged lobby in support of the arts and film industries, in a period in which Australia was emerging from the grip of its colonial past. The 'New Wave' is the name now given to the crop of films that emerged in the late 1970s, which have come to be seen as national cultural landmarks, irrespective of the regions of production. *The Irishman*, however, was written, made, and partly financed and produced in Queensland, and largely by Queenslanders. Donald Crombie, the director, grew up in Central Queensland, and the film was based on Elizabeth O'Conner's Miles Franklin Award-winning novel, *The Irishman: A Novel of Northern Australia* (O'Conner 1960) (see Craven 2011). O'Conner was the pseudonymous Barbara McNamara, the wife of a station manager in the Gulf Country, and the novel is based on the relationship between her husband and his father, who ran a horse team between Georgetown and Croydon during the gold boom years. The novel tells of young Michael, son of Black Paddy the Irishman, during the decline of gold mining in the region, when horse teams were giving way to motorised vehicle transport.

While the Queensland settings of the novel are said to be Georgetown and the Atherton Tableland (Cheryl Taylor, Personal Communication, 2003) there are also brief references to Chillagoe, Georgetown and Normanton. Crombie's film, however, was shot in Charters Towers and near Cardwell and these locations were chosen partly because of the proximity to Townsville as a supply point for film stock and production resources (Audio Commentary 2002). Elsewhere (Craven 2011) I have discussed the ways in which regional signs in the film locations were adapted to the aura of national heritage as local properties in Charters Towers were used as sets, and Gill Street, Charters Towers, was made-over as the fictional township. The design of the interior scenes in *The Irishman* was inspired, according to Crombie, by the work of the North Queensland artist, Ray Croke, in particular, the manner in which the luminous exteriors are sometimes shot from within the gloomy indoors of the timber dwellings. Fences - which appear in the form of the stockyards and boundaries ridden by Michael and his boss, Dalgleish - figure the manly culture of station management in which Michael is apprenticed. But Michael's quest for manhood leads him to the bush camp of the itinerant Chad Logan, and in these and other passages of the film, the spacious landscape meets horizons. Thus *The Irishman* exhibits the landscape aesthetic that became a distinct element of the New-Wave cinema, and which has gained both praise and criticism (see Turner 1989).

Among its other distinctions, *The Irishman* is one of a number of films that have been wholly or partly made in or around regional towns in Queensland. Gayndah and Bundaberg featured in another New-Wave film, *The Mango Tree* (Kevin James Dobson 1977). *Radiance* was also largely shot around Bundaberg, Childers and Hervey Bay. The practice of adapting small towns to national visions has persisted in more recent films. *Australia* (Baz Luhrmann 2008) and *The Proposition* (John Hillcoat 2005) were made in and around Bowen and Winton, respectively, and the town of Emerald in central Queensland became the production site for scenes in *Charlie and Boots* (Dean Murphy 2009) - and this is not to mention the collaboration of Cardwell folk in the production of *Nim's Island* (Jennifer Flackett and Mark Levine 2008) on Hinchinbrook Island, well pre-Cyclone Yasi. Most of these films also feature livestock

spectacles of one kind or another: the crossing of the Burdekin river by Paddy's horse-team in *The Irishman*; the drive through the town in *Australia*; the Western-style drama of *The Proposition*; and the rodeo in *Charlie and Boots*, in which local riders, horses, bulls and announcers participated.

The Irishman is also a testament to the inhospitality of the state of Queensland to filmmakers in the era of its production. Crombie tells a story about the producer, Anthony Buckley, meeting with the then Premier, Joh Bjelke Petersen, to seek funding for *The Irishman*, only to be asked - it is alleged - "what's in it for me?" (Audio Commentary 2002). Perhaps apocryphal, this story nevertheless reminds that there was once a time in which it was nigh impossible for local filmmakers to make a movie in Queensland. The courageous filmmaker, Jackie McKimmie, for instance, owing to the difficulties of production in Queensland, made *Waiting* (1986), which is set in Crow's Nest near Toowoomba, in a location near Wollombi in the Hunter Valley. With funds gained from a combination of national and international interests², a property was purchased and adapted to resemble a Queenslander house, in a location that most resembled the Darling Downs setting of the story (Yeates and Fox 1993, 95). Thankfully, this situation is much changed today. The most recent era of cinema in Queensland is one in which the state government and various interests have actively sought to attract film production to Queensland, most notably with the establishment of the Pacific Film and Television Commission (PFTC) some years ago, now known as Screen Queensland. This body and the now well-established presence of the Village Roadshow studios on the Gold Coast has transformed the in-state capacity for film production. The current era is therefore emerging as one of transformation in the relationship between Queensland and the international film industry, and a prime example of this mature trend is *The Proposition*.

Transnational Queensland: *The Proposition* and the Australian western

The award-winning *The Proposition* was co-produced with international interests and written by Nick Cave and directed by (the Queensland-born and Canadian-raised) John Hillcoat, both Australian artists with international reputations. The lands and skies of Queensland appear as those surrounding the fictional town of "Banyon", in which is centred the chilling drama of Captain Stanley and the vicious bushrangers, the Burns Brothers. The film was shot in locations around Winton, including Bladensburg National Park, and some private station properties. It is a region known for grazing and agriculture that has more recently also become the destination for tourist pilgrimages to dinosaur tracks. The haunting adaptation of these regions to the plot of *The Proposition* therefore bespeaks both the transitional economies of regions as well as the profound illusion of place in cinema. Temporary sets were constructed and the shoot took place in broiling Queensland conditions in the summer of 2004. According to locals, the sets of Banyon were either dissolved by the heat or destroyed by termites soon after, so no trace of it remains.³

The proposition of the title is the bargain offered by Stanley (Ray Winstone), an English colonial police officer, to Charlie Burns (Guy Pearce) to spare his brother, Mikey (Richard Wilson) from a death sentence if Charlie will hunt down and kill his other brother, Arthur (Danny Huston), the leader of the Burns Brothers gang. Charlie grimly agrees, but his quest is fraught with his residual family loyalty tempered by

² Funding for *Waiting* was sourced jointly from Australian (Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Film Finance Corporation) and British (Film 4 and Channel 4) interests (Yeates and Fox 1993).

³ My thanks to Ms Linda Elliott and Ms Margaret Oxley for sharing their recollections of the production of, *The Proposition*.

conscience for Arthur's appalling violence, and Charlie's own mistrust of the police. As this plot suggests *The Proposition* has generally been received as a 'Western' (Schembri 2005; Urban 2008) or as a "take" on the Western (Carruthers 2005). Vince Leo (2006) compares it to *High Plains Drifter* (1973) and *Unforgiven* (1992), and Jon Fortgang describes the "visceral" violence of *The Proposition* as the influence of Sam Peckinpah; the film critic, David Stratton, found some passages "unwatchable" (Pomeranz and Stratton 2005). While shoot-outs form the climax in most westerns, in *The Proposition*, gun-slinging is less featured than other forms of brutality: people are flogged, kicked, beaten and knifed to death as well as shot. But the American Western is not simply understood as a pageant of violence, but rather as a myth of origin of the American nation, and this is its relevance to *The Proposition*. Hillcoat himself has reflected that "nation building is founded on violence. . . we definitely wanted to look at. . . how it actually affects people" (qtd in Pomeranz 2005). *The Proposition* is therefore more appropriately described as a "pastiche" (Hart 2005) or post-colonial western as it blends Australian colonial settler history and bushranging folklore with the eschatological overtones of the classic Western; as Fortgang says, though "set against the birth of modern Australia" there is "a strong sense that these are the last days" (3).

Some hold that "although it has a bush tradition, Australian cinema has no genre to compare with the Hollywood Western" (Collins and Davis 2004: 96). Others, like Peter Limbrick (2007), argue that the Western has been appropriated in various national cinemas for decades (for example, in Sergio Leone's 'spaghetti westerns,' and German westerns of the 1960s), including in Australia, and because the Western represents "a settler colonial mode of cinema" that is part of a cultural project of "grounding white settler cultures within colonized landscapes" (69). Limbrick identifies a number of Western-style films in Australian cinema history. He refers to: *Greenhide* (Charles Chauvel 1926), a so-called 'kangaroo western'; the 'cattle duffer' and 'bushranger' films of the 1900s-1920s, including *Thunderbolt* (John Gavin 1910) and *Robbery Under Arms* (Kenneth Brampton 1920), that were patterned in ways familiar to cinema goers from the American silent Westerns of the same period; and a subsequent group of pre-World War II films, including *Girl of the Bush* (Franklin Barrett, 1921) and *The Squatter's Daughter* (Ken G. Hall 1933), which established, Limbrick argues, the "racialized nature of the outback, and set white settlers, Aboriginals, Chinese, and even Afghans in asymmetrical relations of gender... labor, and property" (71-72). Carol Hart nominates *40,000 Horsemen* (Charles Chauvel 1941), *The Man from Snowy River* (George Miller 1982), and "numerous versions of *Ned Kelly*" as Australian inheritors of the Western (Hart 2005); and the handful of films made by the British Ealing Studios in Australia in the mid-twentieth century, including *Bitter Springs* (1950) and *The Overlanders* (1946), also adapted the Western code, but "[rewrote] white conquest as peaceful coexistence" according to Limbrick (87). He argues that the adaptation of the Western is not simply evidence of mimicry or appropriation of "an exclusively American frontier mythology" but concerns the "negotiation of the tensions and contradictions of building 'home' in a disputed space, the demarcation of territory between European settlers and indigenous inhabitants" (70).

Limbrick's view suggests a way of seeing *The Proposition* as a work of negotiated and parodic adaptation of the Western. This occurs especially through the powerful use of landscape, which plays on both the conventions of the Western, and the landscape aesthetic of Australian cinema. Land occupies a central place in the mythic structure of the Western, even if there is some variation in its perceived meaning. Jane Tompkins (1992) argues that the main premise of the classic Western concerns death and transcendence; to "go west" is to die -- death, she says, "is everywhere" in the Western (24). In this fatal landscape, men may dominate women,

animals, and each other but “they never lord it over nature”; nature is the “one thing larger than man” and it is “constantly portrayed as immense” (72). In a divergent account, Virginia Wright Wexman (1993) argues the Western is structured through an agrarian “ideal of the family farm”, the “object of which is to make use of land to build a patrimony for future generations” (81), and which often becomes contaminated by the rivalries of brothers (82). In her view, the bucolic landscape with wagon trains suggests harmony between human and nature, and the landscape becomes the ‘metaphorical “face of the country’ that returns the Europeans’ gaze” (78-79). Arguably, both Tompkins’ and Wexman’s views, and their respective traditions of interpretation of the Western are referenced and parodied in *The Proposition*, and with a deeper additional reflection on the meanings of land and dispossession in Australian colonial history.

The Irish Burns brothers undoubtedly embody the fateful threat of fratricide, and, indeed, the dead are everywhere, in *The Proposition*. Human and animal corpses appear in many scenes, imposing a sense of moribund futility on Captain Stanley’s grim program of “civilis[ing] this place.” The more potent cinematic effect is to deconstruct the landscape myth by confronting the “splendour-image of the landscape” with the “action-image of [colonial] violence” (Collins 2008: 65-66). The squalid mining community of Banyon grotesquely parodies the bucolic agrarian myth as the placid wagon trains of Wexman’s description are transmuted to prison wagons, in which brutalised criminals and Aborigines are rolled into town. The economics of Banyon are thus subordinated to a struggle over civility and justice, which thinly conceals the deep divisions of two acute racial conflicts that permeate the imaginary community and hence the view of colonial Australia, in *The Proposition*: divisions between blacks and whites, and between English and Irish settlers. The combination of Stanley’s proposition to Charlie, his vague sympathy for the enslaved Aborigines, and his deep affection for his genteel wife, Martha (Emily Watson), marks him as a complex and somewhat doomed figure. In offering the proposition to Charlie, Stanley says: “I know where Arthur Burns is. It is a god-forsaken place. The Blacks won’t go there. Neither will the trackers. Not even my own men.” The Aborigines believe Arthur is a spirit or “dog man”, half-human, half-animal. As Charlie heads out in search of Arthur, he is depicted against the horizon, moving into the country. At first the landscape seems naturalistic but his greater distance from the town is suggested by more visible horizons that signify his crossing into a gothic, territory - a kind of *mundus subterraneus* - inhabited by Arthur.

Fence lines and horizon lines thus stake out the mythic terrain of the action and social divisions, and are hauntingly incorporated into the *mise-en-scene* (see Craven 2010). These boundaries mark mythic borders between the ‘civilized’ terrain of Stanley’s jurisprudence, and the “fresh hell” beyond, the vast territory inhabited by bushrangers and Aborigines. An ornate picket fence surrounds the Stanley’s house and rose garden, or what in colonial times was called a ‘homesick’ garden, reminiscent of England. At home in their bedchamber, or taking breakfast on the veranda, Captain and Mrs Stanley appear to live the agrarian myth, reminiscent of outback pioneers. But they are childless with no prospect of patrimony, and the ‘homesick’ garden is a travesty of Eden. Toby, their Aboriginal servant, in heading back to country while the Stanleys celebrate Christmas, removes his shoes before passing through the picket gate as if acknowledging his passage between the two worlds. More ominously, horizon lines rim the arid territory in which Charlie searches for Arthur, marking Charlie’s shift between the town of Banyon and the wild world, and invoking the haunting allusions of horizons, in classic Westerns, to quest and eschaton (Melinda Szaloky 2001). A gruesome showdown takes place at the Stanley residence on Christmas Day, with dying Arthur departing bloodily through the ‘homesick’ garden until, joined by Charlie, he sits to die, facing away from both fence

and horizon. The skill and sophistication with which the transnational conventions of the Western are disturbingly blended with colonial myths and histories in *The Proposition* marks a rite of passage in Australian filmmaking. It deeply challenges the landscape tradition in Australian cinema, and contrasts with the sentimental nationalism of New-Wave films like *The Irishman*, and both of these films are a long way from the playful regional politics of the tropic. Such are the expanding passages of Queensland in transnational cinema.

Conclusion: Queensland Unfenced

There is some irony in that while Moran's once unlikely definition of a Queensland film - one wholly made and produced in the state - is now a viable product, the film industry has transformed making transnational co-productions like *The Proposition* more the norm, and the spectacle of a genuinely regional feature film seemingly redundant. More positively, however, the capacity for Queensland people and places to participate in this transnational industry is now relatively established. The efforts of the PFTC and Screen Queensland, in the offering of Queensland locations for runaway production has resulted in a growing number of films made and produced throughout Queensland, including: *Nim's Island*, *Fool's Gold* (Andy Tennant 2008), *Triangle* (Christopher Smith 2009), *Sanctum* (Alistair Grierson 2011), and *The Tree* (Julie Bertuccelli, 2010) to mention a few titles of recent years. Among the more recent films, *Beneath Hill 60* (Jeremy Sims 2010) stands out as a local story. Based on the diaries of Oliver Woodward, a civilian engineer who participated in the campaign on the Western Front in 1916, *Beneath Hill 60* was made in Townsville, in locations in Kelso and Garbutt, out of a production office in Vincent. This film portrays the national aura of Australia's participation in World War without eclipsing regional perspectives on the story. Local extras participated and local investors supported it, and this input and the production locations were acknowledged in the gesture of a premiere screening in this city. *Beneath Hill 60* was subsequently screened at the Cannes Film Festival, and - again ironically - an Australian-French co-production, *The Tree*, which was shot in south-east Queensland gained a place in the final of the competition at Cannes, in a year in which several Australian films participated at Cannes. If *Sister Kenny* was a rare instance in the inter-war years, in which Queensland figured in a Hollywood film--and with connotations of obscurity--then that situation is now dramatically changed. Although still something of a fledgling player in the global Hollywood industry, collaborations between governments and independent interests continue to bring diverse visions of Queensland to the screen. Mythic Queensland, the paradise 'up north', the frontier land of reward for enterprise and hard work, the dystopian land of oppression and exile, continues to transform. Fence lines and horizon lines still mark the dimensions and the illusions of the place, and the limitlessness of Queensland in the imaginary geographies of cinema.

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‘Black Troopers’: Native Police operations in the Townsville district

Dr Jonathan Richards

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A brief overview of the Native Police

European colonisation of the Australian continent, beginning at Sydney in 1788, reached the northeast quarter (today's Queensland) fifty years afterwards. The land was not, as some Europeans initially thought, an empty un-owned territory. First Australians - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people - often resisted the invaders' arrival. Calls for protection from 'attacks,' by these 'natives' prompted colonial governments to search for solutions. One practical and cheap answer, already used in other colonies, was the deployment of native troops to protect settlers. In Queensland, these soldiers were called Native Police.

The Native Police, a paramilitary unit first created by the New South Wales government in 1848, and transferred to the Queensland government in 1859, was not like today's police. The formation had only one function, which was to crush any Aboriginal resistance to European colonisation. The Native Police were deployed in mounted detachments (usually consisting of about six Aboriginal troopers led by a White officer). When aspiring settlers complained about 'attacks' or 'depredations', the force went into action, 'punished the offenders', and made the country 'safe' for Europeans. They were the 'defenders of colonisation'.¹

After the 1880s, as colonisation spread north and west, 'ordinary' white Police stations gradually replaced the Native Police across Queensland. Unarmed Aboriginal 'trackers' were often attached to each Police station to care for horses, to cut wood, and to assist in the location of missing persons, stolen livestock, or wanted criminals. Sometimes, in public statements, the troopers of the few remaining Native Police detachments in North Queensland were referred to as 'trackers'. Mounted and fully armed, these Indigenous men were sent on bush patrols into the colony's rugged and isolated tropical districts. These 'Black trackers' were really 'Aboriginal troopers'.

Cape Cleveland, the Burdekin River and Townsville

European settlers reached the Burdekin in 1860 and Cardwell soon afterwards. Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Bowen, reported to London in 1860 after George Dalrymple returned from his first expedition to the Burdekin: 'Dalrymple's party, though often attacked, were able to force their way through all opposition without the loss of a single individual of their number. Consequently, there is every reason to expect that a few detachments of the [Native] Mounted Police Force, in aid of the energetic measures of self-defence adopted by the colonists themselves, will in that quarter as elsewhere, suffice for the protection of any new settlements'.² Detachments of Native Police accompanied the first wave of colonisers in each district, arriving in the Townsville area during the mid-1860s.

The first settlement at Cleveland Bay, established in late 1864, was, according to local historian Dorothy Gibson-Wilde, visited by a detachment of Native Police in November of that year.³ She says the unit, led by an officer named 'Kennelly', was still at Cleveland Bay in December. There was no Native Police officer named 'Kennelly', but there was one named Edward Kennedy, the author of several books,

¹ Jonathan Richards, *The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2008).

² Governor Bowen, (12 April 1860), Queensland State Archives, (QSA) GOV/22, Despatch 34.

³ Dorothy Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to a Golden Land: Townsville to 1884* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1984), 37.

including one titled *The Black Police of Queensland*.⁴ This individual, who only served in the force for several months and resigned soon after his appointment in 1865, had a very limited knowledge of the force.



Details from John Melton Black's 1864 map
Queensland State Archives, LWOA16 Letter 2205 of 1864A



Details from John Melton Black's 1864 map
Queensland State Archives, LWOA16 Letter 2205 of 1864B

The first European settlers at Townsville (initially named Cleveland Bay) camped near the sea, beside a lagoon situated in the present-day suburb of North Ward. This

⁴ Edward Kennedy, *The Black Police of Queensland* (London: John Murray, 1902).

location, as noted below, may have been an important cultural site for Aboriginal people (possibly known as 'Hambeluna'), and was also valuable for European colonists. Early surveys of the town showed the lagoon as part of a 'water and recreation reserve'.

Resistance to European colonisation during this period helped encourage panic among colonists and misleading media stories. In 1865, one newspaper correspondent wrote from Port Denison (Bowen) saying that the reported assembly of blacks 'in great numbers' at Cleveland Bay and Rockingham Bay (Cardwell), and the 'killing or driving away of all the settlers', was a hoax.⁵ Media-created racial hysteria based on erroneous stories was not uncommon on the Australian frontier.

The papers reported on the district in 1866, saying a settler's camp had been attacked at Cleveland Bay.⁶ Dorothy Gibson-Wilde notes that Aboriginal people were, at the time, forced to retreat to Cape Marlow (today's Cape Pallarenda), north of the fledgling township.⁷ It is likely that the troopers of the Native Police assisted with this removal. European settlement at Townsville continued to expand, and a vineyard was established at Kissing Point near North Ward during this period.⁸

In early 1867, a newspaper correspondent wrote from Cleveland Bay, saying some horses were speared by Aborigines, but 'Mr. 'Poind'Esterre (sic) of the Native Police Force' was in pursuit of the culprits.⁹ Lyndon Poingdestre, appointed to the Native Police in 1865, was an Acting Sub Inspector at the time and well-connected in colonial society. His sister Laura married pioneer road engineer AC Macmillan, who lived at Townsville during the 1870s. In December 1866, Inspector John Marlow of the Native Police reported from Port Denison to Brisbane, forwarding a letter from Mr I.M. Dillon in the Upper Burdekin district.¹⁰ Dillon, who wrote to Marlow in September 1866, said that Poingdestre's arrival was 'most timely, as the hostile natives were again assembled here in large numbers' and he was 'indebted for the zeal he manifested'.¹¹

An attack at the Herbert River in early 1867 was reported to have been repulsed by troopers under Sub Inspector Shairp.¹² Charles Norman Shairp, also appointed to the force in 1865, was sent to Rockingham Bay one year afterwards. In 1872, a magisterial inquiry was held into the death of an Aboriginal woman, killed by Shairp and his troopers.¹³ The case was debated in Parliament and Shairp was subsequently dismissed. He died at Townsville in 1884.¹⁴

In 1867, Inspector Marlow recommended the removal of all Aboriginal women and children from the coast between Mackay and Townsville to an island as one way to stop Indigenous resistance.¹⁵ Although the government thought the idea had some merit, they decided that his proposal would cost too much. Others agreed with Marlow however, and various proposals to place Aboriginal people on an island were

⁵ *Brisbane Courier* (22 April 1865).

⁶ *The Queenslander* (23 June 1866).

⁷ Gibson-Wilde, op. cit., 38.

⁸ *ibid*, 56.

⁹ *The Queenslander* (16 February 1867:9).

¹⁰ Inspector Marlow to Inspector Murray, QSA, A/40323, letter 2187 of 1866.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *The Queenslander* (16 February 1867:5).

¹³ QSA, JUS/N35, inquest 218 of 1872.

¹⁴ QSA, SCT/P121, case 4201.

¹⁵ Inspector Marlow to the Commissioner of Police, QSA, COL/A100, letter 56 of 1868.

made from the late 1870s. Eventually, this concept of an off-shore detention centre was realised when Palm Island was proclaimed as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1918.

Chief Inspector George Murray, who reported to Brisbane in early 1867 after a recent inspection tour of northern police stations, described the Bowen River barracks as 'satisfactory'.¹⁶ The Don River station would 'not be removed without instructions' from the Commissioner of Police, as it was 'necessary for the safety of the district' and it was 'a splendid position for the Inspector in charge of the North District. Men and horses were 'in good order' and had 'plenty of work to do on both sides of the town along the coast, south to Port Mackay and North to Cleveland Bay'.

No mention was made of the Native Police after Townsville was 'devastated' by a 'terrible hurricane' on 3 March 1867.¹⁷ However a report from Townsville's paper (the *Cleveland Bay Express*) in September said 'the continual destruction at Woodstock station is so serious, that the owners will either have to get proper protection from the Government or take the law into their own hands and exterminate every black within the limits of their runs, or abandon the country to the aborigines'.¹⁸ Chief Inspector Murray reported to the government in December, saying 'at present' the Blacks 'give the most trouble' near Bowen, so a Native Police station there was essential.¹⁹ He also recommended two more stations, one at Dalrymple and another 'half way between the Cape River and Bowen'. Bowen with nine troopers, Cape River (six troopers) and the Herbert (six troopers) were, for many years, the closest Native Police camps to Townsville.

Six months later David Seymour, the Commissioner of Police, visited the district. He told the government that an officer and six troopers would be based at the Cape River, with other troopers on the gold escort to Townsville.²⁰ The coast between Townsville and Mackay was, Seymour said, 'inhabited by blacks of the most hostile character' so he was 'unable, as intended, to remove the Native Police from those districts'. Two 'flying detachments, having no settled camp or barracks, would patrol constantly' from Townsville to Mackay.

In late 1868, settlers in the Townsville district called for a greater Native Police presence. One station owner from the Bowen district went to Brisbane, complaining that the district had been left 'entirely unprotected owing to the withdrawal sometime ago of Deputy Inspector Thompson and the native troopers under him to the township of Dalrymple on the Upper Burdekin where, he informed me, Inspector Marlow was stationed with a number of troopers'.²¹ The country between Bowen and Townsville was described as 'unsafe owing to the absence of the Native Police; some murder had been committed and a large amount of property destroyed'.

The Police Commissioner, asked to give his reasons for this change, replied he was aware that the Aborigines between Mackay and Townsville had become 'bold and daring', but a shortage of Native Police troopers and the lack of horse feed in the district meant patrols were not possible at present.²² Floods in March 1870 destroyed

¹⁶ Chief Inspector Murray to Commissioner, QSA, A/36335, letter 23 of 1867.

¹⁷ *Brisbane Courier* (27 March 1867:2).

¹⁸ *The Queenslander* (7 September 1867:11).

¹⁹ Chief Inspector G.P.M. Murray to Commissioner of Police, QSA, A/36335, letter 221 of 1867.

²⁰ Commissioner of Police to the Colonial Secretary, *Queensland Parliamentary Votes and Proceedings* (1868).

²¹ Colonial Secretary to Commissioner, QSA, COL/Q5, letter 89 of 1869.

²² Commissioner Seymour to Colonial Secretary, QSA, COL/A117, letter 473 of 1869.

the Native Police camp at Dalrymple, where Inspector Marlow, Acting Sub Inspector Ferdinand Thompson and fourteen troopers were stationed.²³

In 1872, a Cardwell resident complained that Thompson, 'a good officer', was replaced by a junior officer 'who has very little experience of blacks or the management of troopers, and no knowledge of their language' and 'is utterly unable to cope with the blacks of this district'.²⁴ A new officer, Belgian-born William Armit, arrived at the Herbert in 1873. Three detachments combined to 'drive' large numbers of Aboriginal people from the Herbert towards the Burdekin.²⁵

It was generally accepted that Indigenous resistance was a real threat to European colonisation. When C.W. Bowly arrived at Townsville in late 1873, he said he had been told 'the aboriginals were a treacherous lot' and 'to never allow one of them to follow me'.²⁶ An attack on St Anne's cattle station near Dotswood, inland from Townsville, in September 1874, resulted in several deaths.²⁷ A second attack was also reported from the Burdekin where 'large number of blacks who are able to speak good English are camped nearby and attacking cattle'.²⁸ One of the greatest fears in colonial Queensland was the prospect of deserting troopers from the Native Police using their knowledge of European ways to bolster Indigenous resistance.

Deserting troopers was not the only problem. Settlers and publicans were prone to giving alcohol to the troopers. In September 1870, trooper Oliver died 'while drunk' at Townsville.²⁹ Some officers of the Native Police also caused similar problems for the government. For example, when Sub Inspector Henry Finch of the Native Police committed suicide at Gray's cattle station on the Flinders River in July 1875, his death (after a heavy drinking session at Charters Towers) was reported in the papers.³⁰ At the time, his brother Edward was a bank manager in Townsville. Another former officer, Wallace Bayley, who resigned in 1865, was believed to be living in the Townsville area, and to have 'given way to intoxication' in the late 1870s.³¹

Several Indigenous men were attached (as trackers) to the Townsville police in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Others were recruited in the area and sent to different places in the north. In October 1878, Sub Inspector Moore reported from Townsville to Inspector Aulaire Morisset at Bowen. 'Police', he said, 'were asked to remove the blacks' from Magnetic Island before a party of immigrants from the Quarantine Station were taken there, so three constables and two Aboriginal troopers went to clear the island'.³² However the police were not taken off before the immigrants were landed, so were forced to remain with them on the island. Moore was warned that in future he should 'act under instructions of his superiors' rather than medical authorities.³³

The histories of other government institutions also intersected with the Native Police. An early survey of the rugged headland named Kissing Point north of Townsville was

²³ Executive Council minute, QSA, COL/E5, Minute 122 of 1870.

²⁴ *The Queenslander* (6 July 1872:2).

²⁵ QSA, COL/A184, letter 1354 of 1873.

²⁶ Bowly Papers, p155

²⁷ *The Queenslander* (19 September 1874).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *The Queenslander* (3 September 1870).

³⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald* (19 July 1875:1).

³¹ *Queensland Police Gazette* (1877:149).

³² Sub Inspector Moore at Townsville to Inspector Morisset at Bowen, QSA, A/40063, letter 3354 of 1878.

³³ QSA, A/40063, letter 653 of 1879.

completed in 1885. The plan shows both Botanical Gardens and Grammar School reserves crossed out, and a building 'in course of erection by Inspector of Police'. A Defence Reserve (gazetted in 1886) and a Botanical Gardens Reserve (proclaimed in 1887) replaced two grammar school reserves, gazetted in September 1885. Later the two sections of land, along with a third Reserve for Defence Purposes, passed to the control of the Commonwealth.

Why was that site chosen for a police residence? Was the commanding position selected because it allowed senior police to supervise Aboriginal camps at North Ward, Rowse Bay and Cape Marlow, as well as offering isolation from the main settlement at Ross Creek? The Kissing Point cliffs also allowed police to watch for vessels from the north (including those using the important Torres Straits shipping route) and Magnetic Island. Lastly, the location was well away from the main settlement, a necessary pre-requisite for Native Police camps. According to Dorothy Gibson-Wilde, there were few houses beyond Kennedy Street in the 1870s, although the township's beachfront boulevard ('The Strand') was extended to Kissing Point soon after.

Which Police Inspector lived in the house at Kissing Point? John Marlow, appointed to the force in 1860 and promoted to the rank of Inspector in 1864, was in charge of the Townsville district for many years. 'Cape Marlow', at Pallarenda, was named after him; today Marlow Street remains as a marker. Writer W.J. Doherty claimed Marlow formed a Native Police camp 'in the locality', but he resigned in 1874 so could not have lived at Kissing Point. Isley Street, adjacent to the school reserves, was named after John Isley, appointed to the Native Police in 1865. He served at various North Queensland stations from 1877 to 1886, and reached the rank of Inspector in 1875. He was not sent to Townsville until 1886, so also could not have been there at the time of the survey. According to John Mathew, Isley was living in 1888 'near the junction of Eyre and Howitt streets', close to but outside the reserve.

Ferdinand Tompson, appointed on Marlow's recommendation, joined the force in 1866 and served in North Queensland until the mid-1880s. In 1873, he was the senior Native Police officer at Cardwell, and was placed in charge of George Dalrymple's northeast coastal expedition to Cooktown. He was promoted to Inspector in 1884, but served in the Georgetown area during this period. The last possible candidate is Alexander Douglas, appointed to the Native Police in 1872 and promoted to Inspector in 1884. He was stationed at Townsville between 1883 and 1885, and may have been the only police occupant of the Inspector's Quarters at Kissing Point. Douglas was one of the few Native Police officers to have charge of a government ship, the steamer "Vigilant".

It appears that Queensland's colonial army took charge of the site in the late 1880s. In 1895, a foreman at the Department of Public Works wrote to the Government Architect regarding 'the quarters built for Inspector of Police lately occupied by the Queensland Defence Force as Officers' Quarters' (Kissing Point).³⁴ The quarters were at the time, he said, currently unoccupied but were being 'looked after by one of the soldiers'. Minor repairs to the building were recommended as the building was intended to be used by an official of the Northern Supreme Court. The site, subsequently used by military forces until the early years of the 21st century, was one of the few remaining connections between the Native Police - Queensland's infamous "Black Troopers" - and the Townsville area.

³⁴ QSA, JUS/A90, letter 4744 of 1895.

SS Gothenburg 1854 - 1875: The ship as “safe as the bank”

Dr Vivienne Moran

Vivienne Moran is a maritime archaeologist and museum professional. As a maritime archaeologist, Vivienne has worked on three Pandora expeditions, written the training manual for those interested in training in maritime archaeology, and developed management plans for some of Queensland's historic shipwrecks, including that of the *Gothenburg*. She has also worked in Guam compiling a database of shipwreck sites around the island. She is passionate about underwater cultural heritage and is a councillor for the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology. She is currently working at the Museum of Tropical Queensland, developing Public Programs with a focus on the 'non-visiting' demographic, which includes new migrants and young people.

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The loss of the steamship *Gothenburg* in February 1875 was one of the worst recorded maritime disasters to have occurred along the east Queensland coast. In a tragedy that took many hours to unfold, just 22 of the 125 passengers and crew who had been on board the vessel survived.

Built in London in 1854 and rigged for both steam and sail, the 674 ton *Gothenburg* was a familiar sight along the east coast of Australia. Well known for its modern, comfortable accommodation, *Gothenburg* was fast and dependable. It was lengthened and refitted in the South Australian government dockyards in 1873 to allow for greater distances to be covered in the coastal trade, and the carrying of more cargo and passengers. The following year, the vessel was one of several to be contracted for two years by the South Australian Government to provide ten round trips between Adelaide and its furthest outpost in the Northern Territory of South Australia – Palmerston.

Palmerston had grown from a small 'base camp' established in 1869 for the surveying of the recently annexed territory. It continued to grow following the discovery of gold south of Palmerston, and with the construction of the overland telegraph line linking the north with the southern states. Palmerston was also the place where the new subterranean telegraph cable from Java would emerge onto Australian soil, effectively connecting Australia with the rest of the world when completed in 1872.

Palmerston's community was presided over by a Government Resident, but with the increasing influx of labourers and gold prospectors, swelling the population to approximately 600 by 1875, it was decided that the general 'frontier' nature of the Territory required a more 'on the spot' system of government. This resulted in the transfer of officials and administrative staff from Adelaide – a system of government that would remain in place until 1911 when the Territory was officially transferred to the Commonwealth Government, and Palmerston renamed 'Darwin'.

With the arrival of the *Gothenburg* into the waters of Port Darwin, many of those temporarily abiding in Palmerston made ready for their return to Adelaide. Included in the broad spectrum of travellers were members of the Supreme Court of South Australia who had conducted the first circuit court sittings in late 1874. Also bound for the journey south were several prisoners who had just been found guilty at the proceedings and were now destined for the Adelaide gaol.

Others preparing to depart included the French Vice-Consul Mr Durand who was also the agent for the *Gothenburg* in Palmerston; members of the overland telegraph construction party; the editor of the *Northern Territory Times*; gold prospectors with heavily laden, gold filled belts, ordinary families with children and several young school girls on their way to finishing their schooling in Adelaide. Thomas Reynolds, a former premier of South Australia and a Mr Shoebridge arrived late and very nearly missed the vessel, but unfortunately for themselves they managed to board.

The ship as safe as the bank

Alongside the crew of 37 and 88 passengers, *Gothenburg* was also carrying the Royal Mail, a cargo to be delivered with all possible speed. On deck were the remains of the wreck of a schooner called *Enchantress*, the spars lashed to *Gothenburg's* hull. In the captain's cabin was a chest containing political papers, 2,500 – 3,000 ounces of gold and the South Australian government revenue. Not only was governance delivered through South Australia, but all finances were managed in Adelaide with Palmerston's bank shipping its money southwards at

regular intervals. The revenue was not insured, the *Gothenburg* being regarded as being 'safe as the bank'. Ironically, on the same day of the wrecking, the Government Resident in Palmerston was instructed that after March 1, all monies collected were 'to be banked in Palmerston and cheques used'.

With all on board ready for departure, Captain James Pearce navigated *Gothenburg* out of Port Darwin on 17 February 1875 bound for Adelaide via Newcastle.

The vessel covered 900 miles in three days, arriving at Somerset where it stopped to take on ballast. However, deteriorating weather resulted in the vessel losing both bower anchors, forcing it to leave before having taken on board all the necessary ballast. It steamed out seven miles before being brought up for the night in calmer waters. Sailing next morning, the vessel is recorded as having passed Cooktown at about 2pm on 21 February.

On the same day, a vessel called the *Western* had just sailed from Cooktown, and passing the southbound *Gothenburg*, exchanged signals. The *Western's* captain informed Pearce that he had noted strong currents setting seawards from the mouth of the Burdekin. *Gothenburg* continued southwards.

This was the height of the monsoonal season, and the heavy rains in north Queensland had resulted in the Burdekin and the Wickham rivers breaking their banks, sending huge volumes of fresh water pouring into the ocean. Brisbane was also experiencing flooding and the heaviest rains ever known, the storms causing telegraph communication failure between Brisbane and the northern ports. Thus Brisbane and the south would not hear of *Gothenburg's* demise and loss of life until more than a week after the tragedy.

The winds were freshening from the north-west and the weather had become squally and threatening as *Gothenburg* continued south along the north Queensland coast. The fore, top, and mainstay sails were all set, the engines at full speed. Unable to see land through the blinding rain, Captain Pearce altered course, a decision which was to eventually place the vessel 16 miles too far east.

At 6.30pm on the evening of 24 February, with strong winds from the north-west, *Gothenburg* slammed onto Old Reef. It was low tide and although the vessel drew 16 feet, the force of the impact left the bow lodged high on the reef in only two feet of water. The captain was sure it would refloat itself at high tide, and most of the passengers were so reassured they returned to their cabins to sleep.

In an effort to lighten the bow for the approaching high tide, some passengers along with water casks used as ballast were taken aft and the engines reversed – but to no effect. No attempt was made at this time to lower the boats; nor was any attempt made to knock the remnants of the *Enchantress* into makeshift life rafts because of the confidence that Pearce had in the vessel refloating itself.

Several hours later and still stuck on the reef, the engine fires were doused by breaking seas and rising internal water. Realisation finally dawned that the *Gothenburg* was not going to be saved. The entire complement of four life boats were quickly lowered to the gunwale and provisioned in readiness - was not compulsory for vessels at this time to carry an adequate number of lifeboats for all on board; nor were any life rafts carried.

In the early hours of the morning, the wind suddenly changed direction. It slewed the vessel broadside onto the reef, where it began to keel over into deep water.

The two port boats – a gig and a lifeboat – were lowered with four crew members in each. The lifeboat broke its painter and was carried away; the gig, attempting to manoeuvre to take on passengers, was also swept away. This left the two starboard lifeboats for over 100 people – but they were both jammed in the davits, with the port side of the vessel awash. Eventually they were released and lowered - and rushed in panic. Huge seas quickly washed the occupants overboard, along with most of those still on the deck. Amongst them was the French Consul, who refused to release the heavy bag of gold he held under his arm. Those still on the deck noted how their fellow passengers struggling in the water remained calm in the face of death, and wished others 'good luck' as if parting for only a few days. A sea of heads could be seen between the two upturned lifeboats before each one slowly disappeared.

Several men had managed to lash themselves to the rigging. Fireman Robert Brazel managed to rescue three others by throwing the signal halyards to those in the water while he clung to the davits. Passenger John Clelland was washed overboard, but managed to maintain a grip on the rope he had been holding. Managing to swim to one of the overturned lifeboats, he attached the rope to it and - against all odds, made it back to the ship. Those on the deck pulled the lifeboat in and secured it, and then waited for morning.

At daybreak only 14 who had lashed themselves to the rigging were still alive. Setting to work on the lifeboat they found it still contained its oars, and managed to launch it. They eventually made Holbourn Island where they found the four crew from one of the two lifeboats that had previously been washed away from *Gothenburg*. The lifeboat had been smashed on Holbourne's rocks but the four had managed to save themselves.

The following day, 15 set out for a larger island about 20 miles from Holbourne which they considered was closer to the shipping routes. They were eventually seen and towed into Bowen up by a fishing vessel owned by a man called Heron, engaged in the search.

The three men remaining on Holbourne Island continued to hoist flags and keep signal fires alight, surviving on the rich pickings of bird eggs. The *Bunyip*, also engaged in the search out of Townsville later picked them up. One of the survivors, JJ Fitzgerald, handed to his rescuers two mail bags and a turtle shell. He had inscribed onto one surface of the shell the names of the Holbourne survivors; on the other side he gave their location and the details of the tragedy, fearing they would die and their identities and circumstances of the tragedy remain unknown. The shell was presented to the Art Gallery of South Australia in 1931, where it remains.

En route from Cooktown to Brisbane was the vessel *Leichardt*. It found the four men who had been washed away in the gig, having reached a small island in the Whitsunday Passage. The *Leichardt* then sailed to Bowen to report the wrecking. It later returned to the scene, sending a boat out to look for survivors, but to no avail. They managed to salvage the ship's bell, a tomahawk, a lady's shawl and two scarves, probably used as distress signals. They reported that *Gothenburg* had sunk to the eyes of the lower rigging, the funnel had gone and the foremast had toppled into the sea. It had also slipped off the reef into deeper water.

The Marine Board of Enquiry

The Marine Board of Enquiry held on 1 March 1875 found that the loss could

'be attributed to an unexpected offset seawards, caused by heavy floods in the Burdekin and other rivers discharging themselves into the sea at that portion of the coast. At the same time they do not consider that due caution was observed in the navigation of the vessel...and some attempt should have been made to sight Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse or Cape Upstart and failing that, that the lead should have been used, which on this part of the coast, is a sufficient guide for keeping clear of the Barrier; a vessel carrying a depth not exceeding 15 or 16 fathoms being well clear of that danger, while a less depth would show an approach to the shore of the mainland' (Marine Board of Queensland, 1875).

The quest for salvage begins

When news of the wreck reached Brisbane in early March, local hard hat diver James Putwain immediately organised to undertake the salvage the site. He contracted the vessel *Florence Irving* bound for Cooktown and joined as a passenger for Bowen, arriving on 6 March. Once there, he organised for the *Bunyip* - then on charter - to proceed to the site on its return to Bowen. Plans were also made for another vessel, the *Henry and Albert*, to proceed to the site and assist. In the meantime, he found a suitable boat from which to mount a diving operation – the same leaky boat that had rescued the 15 after Holbourne Island. In the absence of any professional divers in the area, Putwain located and persuaded survivors Brazel, Marks and Reynolds to accompany him to the site of the wreck. He was depending on their knowledge of the layout of the vessel to help with locating the captain's cabin which contained the chest of gold and revenue. He would also have to teach them how to operate the air pump upon which his life would depend once in the water.

On 7 March, the *Florence Irvine* left Bowen with the diving party and Herons' boat on board. On arrival at the site, Heron's boat was cast off allowing the *Florence Irvine* to continue north for Cooktown and the diving crew to begin their work.

With directional help from his three companions, Putwain successfully located and retrieved the chest of gold. However, once raised and on board the little boat, the additional weight threatened to sink them all. Realising they would not reach land, Putwain asked Brazel to stay behind in *Gothenburg's* crow's nest until he could be rescued once again, to which Brazel agreed. Finally they set off but were soon intercepted by the schooner *Diamond*, arriving just in time to take them all on board. Meeting up later with the *Bunyip* and the *Henry and Albert*, they transferred to the *Bunyip* and proceeded to Bowen towing Heron's boat.

The gold was deposited with the sub-collector of customs where it was later claimed by the English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank. Putwain eventually received nine thousand three hundred pounds, which was one third of the agreed value of the gold.

Two weeks after this salvage expedition had taken place, a Captain William Collin of the ketch *Dawn* obtained a wrecker's licence from the Collectors of Custom in Brisbane. Intending to salvage the vessel and its contents, he employed the services of hard-hat diver Samuel Dunwoodie. They arrived at the wreck on 26 March, nearly three weeks after Putwain's visit.

Undeterred, they recovered some jewellery, parts of the cargo, fittings and winching equipment. Not satisfied with this, they returned to the site several days later in order to search for a gold belt known to have been carried by one of the passengers. However, during his first descent to search the surrounding seabed, Dunwoodie

described falling through a mass of branching coral. Unable to move freely about the site for fear of damaging his air hose, he kept within the confines of the vessel and salvaged items remaining on the wreck. Not satisfied with what he had found, he later fished for the large sharks in order to remove from their bellies any valuables found therein. He returned to Brisbane where the Collector of Customs held the material for the relatives to claim.

For many years the ship's masts protruded above the water before collapsing. As a consequence, the most readily visible signs of its location were eventually lost.

Site discovered by local divers

The site remained quietly undisturbed until recreational divers from Bowen accidentally found the wreck in 1971.

The identity of the vessel was initially thought to be that of the Queensland government steamer *Llewellyn*, which had disappeared in 1919. This error was attributed in part to the presence of broad arrows found stamped on the portholes and glass which indicated it was a government vessel. However, further research showed it to be the wreck of the *Göthenburg*, previously refitted in the South Australian government dockyards in 1873.

Souvenir hunters enjoyed the rich pickings until 1981 when the site was declared a protected site under the *Historic Shipwreck Act* 1976. Some of the objects souvenired from the site were later donated to museums for public display.

Site Management

All shipwrecks 75 years and older are automatically protected under the commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act* 1976. The *Act* states that protected vessel are not to be interfered with nor associated objects removed. Until recently, these wrecks were managed through the Maritime Archaeology Section of the Queensland Museum, although this management has now been transferred to the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management in Brisbane.

While under the management of the Queensland Museum, several site inspections at the *Göthenburg* site were undertaken in order to determine the condition of the remaining fabric and develop appropriate and effective management options. The first inspection was made in 1991 and a site recording drawn up. The inspection showed that significant damage had been caused to the remains of the vessel. The damage was suggestive of anchors being dragged through the water in order to locate the site with the high profile sections, upon which the anchor had caught, then used as an anchorage.

In response to the findings, the wreck was given additional protection to reduce the risk of further damage and illegal souvenir hunting. It was recommended that a protected zone, centred on the stern of the wreck and being a circle of 200 metres radius, be implemented. This recommendation was approved and the zone, with access by Permit only, was gazetted in April 1992 under Section 7 of the *Historic Shipwrecks Act* 1976.

Site inspection findings

Museum based maritime archaeologists diving on the site for the first time in 1991 noted that the vessel had sunk and remained upright, determined by the position of

remaining structural components. The length of the site extended over an area measuring 63 metres bow to stern, by 18 metres across the site. This length agreed with the overall length of the vessel suggesting it remains in one piece. However, the breadth of the site was nearly twice the breadth of the intact vessel indicating collapsed outwards to both port and starboard.

It was found that a considerable portion of the ship's structure and machinery remained intact:

'Much of the vessel's cargo is believed to remain on site despite contemporary and more recent salvage attempts. The hull has opened outwards with the downward collapse of the plating, which has settled on material and machinery within the hull. The wreck forms a discrete body within which many components retain their integrity. This is particularly obvious in the engine and boiler room section of the wreck and at the stern of the vessel where a large portion of the counter and steering gear remains intact.'

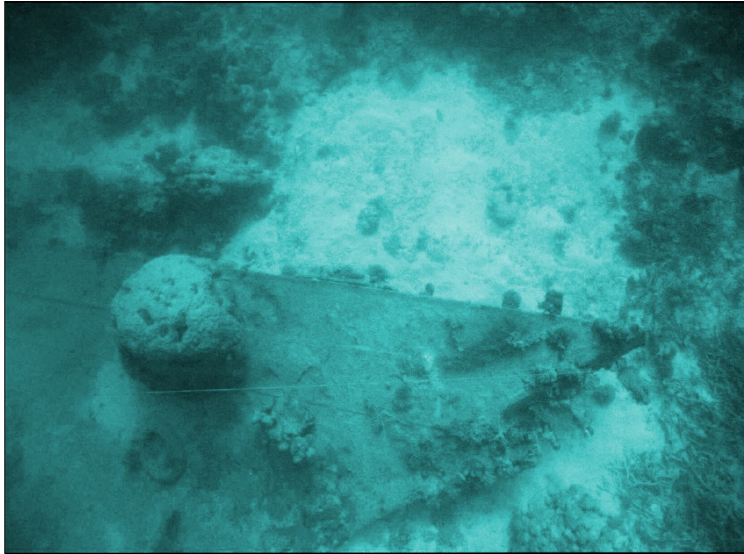
'The site is littered with modern glass bottles and other rubbish. A large diameter rope hawser was found attached to one of the boilers. This suggests its use as either a permanent mooring for fishing trawlers, or an attempt to salvage the boiler.'



Gothenburg's boiler dominates the site.
Photo Bill Jeffery

The last site visit occurred in 1999 and although some evidence of new and active corrosion was seen, the vessel appeared to be largely untouched and in similar condition as when first inspected.

During this inspection, scientists from AIMS were also carrying out scientific experiments. A large porites coral - growing on the forward bow plate (below) was cored for later analysis into the effects of El Nino and climate change on the Great Barrier Reef.



**Large coral porites growing on forward bow plate.
Photo Viv Moran)**



**Removal of core for scientific investigation into climate change.
Photo Viv Moran.**

The ratio of the elements strontium to calcium as a proxy for sea surface temperature found in the core would allow for comparisons to be made with other corals to determine whether there had been climate changes in the past. This is possible

because corals are temperature dependent: the colder the water, the higher the concentration of strontium found in the calcium-based coral skeleton; the warmer the water, the lower the strontium concentration, a simple yet accurate way of determining the temperature of the water when the coral was growing.

Today, the *Gothenburg* remains protected under the *Historic Shipwreck Act*. Old Reef itself has been classed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as a 'Yellow Zone' which limits some fishing and other activities, thus complementing the protection afforded by the shipwrecks' Act. Now home to many species of fish and corals, few know the extent of the tragedy that unfolded so many years ago.

Australian Safari: Hunting dangerous game in Australia's tropical north

Dr Claire Brennan

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Australian Safari: Hunting dangerous game in Australia's tropical north

Tropical Australia has, at various times, been perceived as a place to have adventures. Often the people who wished to participate in those adventures came from other parts of Australia, and were drawn to the North by its reputation as a wild and exciting place. One of the things that created this reputation was the opportunity to hunt big game, in particular crocodiles. Elsewhere in Australia wild animals are available for hunting, but the potential to hunt dangerous man-eating species is somewhat limited.

In this lecture I am going to talk about a particular type of crocodile hunting in the north. There was what I like to refer to as a 'Crocodile Bubble' in Northern Australia from just after the Second World War until the 1970s, when crocodiles became fully protected. During the time of the Bubble many people came north to hunt them. Some came roughing it, and made a profit by doing so. Some came roughing it, had adventures, but didn't make a profit. Some came roughing it, and had dreadful experiences. I'll mention some of those people in passing, but none of them are the people I want to talk about here. Instead I want to talk about a safari experience in northern Australia that didn't just draw on a tradition of hunting large and dangerous game, but that also drew on a tradition of living luxuriously while doing so. In particular I am going to focus on organized safaris, and on the work of the Australian Crocodile Shooters' Club that was actually established in Melbourne by a French ladies' hairdresser called Rene Henri.

The Safari

It is worth considering where the idea of safari comes from. The safari has roots in Africa, and, I would argue, in British India. As Northern Australia became more accessible to the rest of the continent as a result of air travel the safari took root here as well. The term 'safari' has developed a meaning based on a particular type of hunting expedition in East Africa, although the word itself comes from Swahili and means 'journey'. As a result of that East African origin our impression of what constitutes a safari is bound up with European colonialism. Rather than simply being a journey, as in the original instance of the word, by the twentieth century the safari was a large scale hunting expedition. Safari participants aimed to kill large animals while experiencing if not luxury at least not great privation as a result of the work of myriad African staff. Participants expected regular, tasty meals, alcoholic drinks, large furnished tents, and, usually, the presence of a canvas bath.¹ Theodore Roosevelt's 1909-1910 safari set the standard for African safaris in the twentieth century. His expedition, undertaken after the end of his presidency, was enormous and extremely well publicized. His safari travelled extensively, included very large numbers of African staff, and shot many animals that then became Smithsonian exhibits.

Not all safaris were as large as Roosevelt's. A variety of different journeys were undertaken—some were more focused on the pursuit of game, some were more focused on luxury and did not travel so extensively or hunt so thoroughly. They all benefited from improved transport to Africa and within Africa, from the commercial safari supply companies that had established themselves, from the availability of trained and untrained African staff, from the specialist taxidermy companies that helped to create spectacular trophies, and from the value of the trophies collected, particularly ivory. Safaris could pay for themselves; if a hunter were skilled and

¹ Ernest Hemingway's account of his safari, *Green hills of Africa* originally published by Jonathan Cape in 1936 contained all these elements. Hemingway traveled two decades after Roosevelt (returning for a second safari two decades later), and was also an important publicist for the safari experience.

focused on collecting saleable trophies such as ivory.² Thus the safari had the attraction of hunting large and dangerous animals in a not unluxurious manner at a not prohibitive cost. Earlier sport in India had had similar attractions and in 1871 Lt Colonel William Gordon Gordon Cumming advised his readers that, 'the cost of such a trip as I have described would not be much more for the season than that of a moor in Scotland; certainly less than a deer-forest.'³ After his safari Roosevelt gave much the same advice with regard to East Africa, stating that it was better and cheaper to buy an African farm than to maintain a deer forest or grouse moor.⁴

Roosevelt was not the first sportsman to go on safari in Africa, but his safari attracted immense attention and confirmed the form of the hunt that had developed in the previous fifty years. His safari attracted attention even before he left the United States: prospective articles he might write while on safari were the focus of a bidding war between two newspapers.⁵ In addition he deliberately sought sponsorship from both the Smithsonian and private benefactors to cover the cost of preserving the animal 'specimens' that his safari killed.⁶ After Roosevelt the safari was popularized by Hemingway, who went on safari in 1933 and published an account of his experiences in his book *The Green Hills of Africa*. He returned to Africa in 1953, again attracting attention to the safari by his presence and his enjoyment of the typical safari elements of luxury, sexual tension, and abundant large prey animals. His second safari took place during the Mau Mau uprising and some of his shooting took place in a game reserve as the colonial government wished to demonstrate that the country was still open to sportsmen.⁷

This African activity is significant for Australian crocodiles because by the late 1940s and 1950s the safari was a well-known event. The safari had benefited from the publicity of Roosevelt and Hemingway, and had become established as a manly adventure involving large and dangerous prey animals and a fair degree of luxury. Despite their aura of exclusivity, safaris had become reasonably common in Africa by the start of the twentieth century, increased in number throughout the century as travel improved, particularly with the rise of air travel, and still exist today although they have commonly reduced the amount of hunting they contain.

I would argue that while the term Safari draws on these African precedents and was popularized by this twentieth-century activity this type of hunting trip has older roots in British India. In the mid-nineteenth century, before the development of the typical African safari, British officers serving in India also undertook extensive hunting trips. Hunting was the major pastime of soldiers stationed in India: it was actively encouraged among officers, and it was responsible for attracting many recruits to the Indian service, eager to hunt tigers and participate in pig sticking.⁸

² John M. MacKenzie, *The empire of nature: hunting, conservation, and British imperialism*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, p.116.

³ William Gordon Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men & Wild Beasts*, New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1872, p.6.

⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *African game trails; an account of the African wanderings of an American hunter-naturalist*, London: John Murray, 1910, p.43.

⁵ Kate M. Stewart, 'Theodore Roosevelt Hunter-Naturalist on Safari', *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, Vol 27, No. 3. (July 1970), p.246.

⁶ Ibid, pp.246 and 254.

⁷ Lawrence H. Martin, 'Safari in the Age of Kenyatta', *The Hemingway Review*, Spring 2006; 25, 2, p.102.

⁸ An example of the recruiting power of India's wild animals was J. D'Ewes recollection of his motives in departing for India at age seventeen on a cadetship: 'I am sorry to confess, even at this distant period, that military glory, in its legitimate sense, formed no very great portion of

The key factor to note is that these hunting safaris depended on big game to provide their excitement and appeal. Elephants in particular helped to finance the trip, but other large game also helped to provide the safari with its thrill. In particular, species that could be characterized as 'man-eaters' were central to the safari. Lions in Africa, tigers in India, eventually bears in Alaska attracted the attention of sportsmen and women and dominate their written memoirs. Other big game species took their toll on hunters but those that also threatened to devour them were the star attractions. And that idea brings us to Australia's crocodiles and the evolution of this form of adventurous hunting in the North.

The Australian Safari

I am choosing to focus this lecture on the safari hunting of the 1950s. This choice is based on the establishment of the Australian Crocodile Shooters' Club, the Australian Crocodile Bubble, and the easy availability of searchable newspaper records from this period through the National Library of Australia's website. That choice should not obscure the presence of earlier attempts to hunt big game in tropical Australia. In particular the earlier part of the twentieth century saw the development of buffalo hunting in the Northern Territory. Buffalo hunting provided the opportunity to shoot large animals and to profit from their skins. But during this earlier period of Australian big game hunting the conditions experienced by hunters were generally more primitive. Tom Cole wrote about his experiences first on a remote cattle station and then as a buffalo hunter and noted that a diet of meat and damper required regular large doses of Epsom salts.⁹ Crocodiles were also shot in this period, but the difficulties of traveling to big game country meant that the luxurious tourist safari that I am talking about here could not exist.

Australian hunters who wished to shoot big game in reasonable comfort before the start of crocodile safari hunting tended to shoot overseas. New Zealand was the closest destination, offering the hunter the chance to hunt red deer, but Australian sportsmen traveled as far as Africa to experience big game hunting. After the Second World War air travel finally made Northern Australia readily accessible and the war also increased the supply of weapons powerful enough to kill crocodiles consistently. Among the southern sportsman who came north to observe professional crocodile shooters at work was Rene Henri. Henri had previously shot in Africa and had travelled widely. In 1948 he visited N. Giunio at his crocodile shooting operation on the Annie River near Coen and made a film about crocodile hunting.¹⁰ Henri enjoyed his experiences, returned to film animals in the north in 1949, and in 1950 founded the Australian Crocodile Shooters' Club to help other people from southern Australia experience what the north had to offer.¹¹

my inducements for the step I was taking. Adventure of any kind was the first object, and India was chiefly associated in my mind with nabobs, shawls, diamonds, and bayaderes, and with still greater temptations – elephants, tigers, leopards, and other *fera naturae* affording inexhaustible delights to the dreams of an embryo sportsman. My mind was absorbed in a confused dream of Williamson's *Indian Field Sports* and the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. J. D'Ewes, Esq, *Sporting in both Hemispheres*, 2nd ed. London: G. Routledge and Co, 1858, p.11.

⁹ Tom Cole, *Hell West and Crooked*, Sydney: Imprint 1990, pp.30-1.

¹⁰ 'Crocodile Hunting Film.', *Cairns Post*, 16 October 1948, p. 5.

¹¹ 'CROCODILE CLUB,' *Cairns Post*, 26 January 1950, p. 5, 'COLOUR FILMS', *Cairns Post*, 6 August 1949, p. 5. In 1952 Henri founded the Gulf Country Club to manage the Club's Karumba base: 'Game and Fish,' *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 11 August 1952, p. 1.

The Club established itself as an introduction to crocodile shooting in the north, and it profited from Henri's excellent salesmanship. Henri sold the Australian safari, crocodiles provided the necessary dangerous game, and the Club provided the necessary comfort. Right from the establishment of the Club its cruises were referred to as 'Safaris', and the provision of 'comfortable vessels' was part of Henri's vision of northern crocodile hunting.¹² The vessel that became central to the Club's operation was the Tropic Seas, captained by Vince Vlasoff. It was 50 feet in length with a diesel engine, refrigeration and radio and could accommodate six passengers as well as crew. In the early period of hunting on Cape York the club also provided land-based camps. Such expeditions cost £3 a day and trips lasted between two and eight weeks.¹³ Later the club established a permanent base at Karumba by leasing a former flying boat station. A Club supporter wrote to an Adelaide newspaper in 1952 to claim that "In their plans they see Queensland's forgotten land bordering the Gulf of Carpentaria as providing all the thrills which big game hunters the world over have now to seek on safari in Africa."¹⁴

A 1952 Brisbane newspaper article promoting the newly established base at Karumba emphasized that the safari had come to Australia. It specifically stated that Australians would no longer have to travel to South Africa to experience going on safari.¹⁵ Similarly an Australian Women's Weekly article read in part:

Experienced big-game hunters and deep-sea fishermen, as well as new chums who long to have a go at the big stuff, can now have the kind of holiday they've always wanted right here in Australia. For £102, including board, lodging, and air fares there and back, they can have a fortnight's holiday at Karumba with any amount of wild life right at the doorstep. They can shoot crocodile, wild boar, dingo, wallaby, and goanna, pheasant, duck, and turkey. They can harpoon dugong from lightweight boats like surf skis. They can fish for sharks, groper, sawfish, and stingray.¹⁶

This report on the Karumba base also promoted its luxurious accommodation (including specially planted grass and an on-site chef), its superiority to an African safari experience, and its ability to attract overseas sportsmen. A gossip column of the time suggested that the price of two weeks at Karumba was about equal to the amount needed to put a deposit on a house in Sydney.¹⁷

Crocodiles were essential to the development of the safari because they provided exciting sport. For Melbourne businessman Ron Didier, a member of one of Vlasoff's crocodile cruises, shooting a thirteen foot crocodile was a notable event because it was "The first time I have ever shot anything over nine feet."¹⁸ Henri promoted exactly this idea—that crocodiles were Australia's exciting dangerous game—publicly stating that "Australians had the idea that there was no such sport available within the Commonwealth, but crocodile shooting would provide any hunter with as many thrills as the more fashionable big game sports of other countries."¹⁹

¹² 'CROCODILE CLUB,' *Cairns Post*, 26 January 1950, p. 5.

¹³ 'CROC.SHOOTERS COMING NORTH,' *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 14 February 1950, p 6.

¹⁴ 'Brisbane Letter.', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA), 4 September 1952, p. 2.

¹⁵ 'Big game hunting the modern convenience.' , *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld.), 2 September 1952, p. 2.

¹⁶ All these facets are prompted in 'Worth Reporting.', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 6 August 1952, p. 15.

¹⁷ 'COLUMN 8' *The Sydney Morning Herald* Wednesday, 25 June 1952 p 1.

¹⁸ Quoted in 'LAUNCH CREW FOUND AT SEA.', *Cairns Post*, 26 October 1954, p. 1.

¹⁹ 'TO PROMOTE BIG GAME HUNTING,' , *Cairns Post*, 31 July 1950, p. 1.

Henri promoted the Club as making Australia's big game readily available to those living in the more populous southern states. As had happened with the African safari, the Australian safari boomed because of improving transport links. In Africa such links generally took the form of railways and the increased availability of automobiles, although air travel also came to play a part. In Australia air travel was an essential component as it brought the north within easy reach. Henri regularly promoted the idea that within twenty-four hours of leaving the city a hunter from Melbourne could be on board the Club's vessel and within two days he could be shooting crocodiles.²⁰ The Club also benefited from the infrastructure of air travel, using the flying boat base already established at Karumba as a Club resort. Many hunters drove north to find crocodiles, but for those seeking a holiday rather than a job the ability to abbreviate the journey north was vital.

Also vital to the safari were local guides and helpers. The Australian safari has struggled with the requirement to provide lavish quantities of indigenous labour. By the 1950s mechanical transport had relieved the safari of the need for native bearers, but people who knew the region well and who were willing to undertake the more messy tasks of hunting were still required. In the later period of safari camps in the Northern Territory the position of 'white hunter' existed, but Aboriginal people who knew their country were also used by both professional and safari hunters across the north. The Club made particular use of the skills, and public relations value, of an indigenous man called Toby Flinders. His presence on Club cruises was emphasized and he was presented to potential safari customers in both Melbourne and Adelaide on publicity tours. Many hunters preferred not to skin their own crocodiles as this was a difficult and unpleasant job and in the Northern Territory at least, Aboriginal people took on this work. Reports of safari hunting in the north record the presence of Aboriginal people, although they tend to form part of the assumed background, an unremarked essential element of the safari, even in Australia.²¹ The luxuriousness of the Karumba base meant that it had two buildings: one for guests, the other to house the necessary staff.²² Many of those staff would, by necessity, not be Aboriginal, but some Aboriginal people were essential to create the safari.

Rene Henri was a master of public relations. He appeared regularly in newspaper reports that concerned crocodiles or women's hairstyles. He clearly deliberately used each field of interest to reinforce his attractiveness to reporters in the other. For example, in an article promoting a particular style of haircut he is described as spending time hunting crocodiles. In articles about the Crocodile Shooters' Club his profession is regularly presented as notable. Henri's wife also played her part in promoting the work of the club. Her presence on a club shooting trip made the event newsworthy, only one of the many articles written about the trip noted that she shot only one crocodile.²³ After that expedition she also appeared in radio interviews to promote interest in crocodile hunting.²⁴ Henri's promotion of what the Club could offer prospective sportsmen was masterful—he emphasized that through the Club it was possible to shoot crocodiles within three days of Melbourne and that no time need be lost securing equipment as the Club was able to supply it as cost of only £3

²⁰ 'Club will simplify croc. hunting.', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic) 8 February 1950, p. 8.

²¹ For example, see below in the case of unlawful wounding. An Aboriginal guide formed part of a three man crocodile camp.

²² 'Big game hunting the modern convenience.', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld), 2 September 1952, p. 2.

²³ 'Beauty Experts Lead Hunters.', *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, NSW), 30 August 1949.

²⁴ 'GATOR HUNTERS FOR PENINSULA.', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 23 May 1950, p. 5.

per day.²⁵ Henri compared this cost to that of a hunter setting himself up, which he said would be between £1500 and £2000. Once the base at Karumba was established Henri claimed that, with the Club's help, an amateur sportsman could spend 15 guineas a week, spend three weeks at Karumba, and be sure of at least five to ten skins.²⁶

Unlawful Wounding

One of the few public relations failures of Rene Henri's Crocodile Shooters' Club was its association with an unlawful wounding in a crocodile shooters' camp.²⁷ Henri tried to distance himself from the incident, repeatedly claiming in the press that while the club's vessel had transported the men to their base they were not club members. However the men were from the south, had met through the club, one was a member of the club, and they were dropped off at their camp at the Starke River by the Club launch. The link was perhaps not as unfair as Henri claimed. He returned from Thursday Island over the incident, and at one point at least he was expected to give evidence at resulting trial.²⁸

The newspapers at the time made much of this incident, for all the same reasons that the Club was generally able to attract attention to itself: crocodiles, manly men, the jungle, and physical violence were a compelling combination. The outline of the events that occurred was revealed in court—two men, Colin Cox from New South Wales and John Scrimageour from Victoria had contacted each other through the Club and arranged to go on a six week crocodile shooting trip together. They traveled from Cairns to Cooktown, and then on to the Starcke River on the Club launch the Tropic Seas where they set up camp. They chose their campsite in part to try and shoot a particularly large crocodile. As was usual with crocodile shooting expeditions they made use of Aboriginal expertise—they were alerted to the location of the crocodile they sought by Aboriginal smoke signals,²⁹ and they were accompanied by an Aboriginal guide named Sammy (or possibly Stanley) Olive. There is no doubt that the two hunters had a falling out. Scrimageour went as far as disabling the boat he had bought in order to prevent Cox using it. In any case, Scrimageour decided to leave by walking back to Cooktown. Cox objected, and wanted to take Scrimageour's rifle in lieu of money owed. Scrimageour offered Cox his share in the crocodile skins instead, and Cox refused.³⁰ Scrimageour claimed that at this point Cox threatened to kill him. A scuffle broke out and Scrimageour stabbed Cox six times in the upper arms. He then walked back to Cooktown, a distance of seventy miles and five days, and went to the police station to send out a search party for Cox. Olive at first stayed at the camp with Cox, but then left, catching-up Scrimageour and accompanying him to Cooktown.³¹ Cox was found

²⁵ 'Club will simplify croc. hunting.', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 8 February 1950, p. 8.

²⁶ 'NO SHORTAGE OF CROCODILES IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA.', *Cairns Post*, 20 June 1953, p. 5.

²⁷ For example, 'Knife Wounds Could Not Stop Croc-hunter.', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August 1950, p. 5 states that the men were part of Rene Henri's party. Other reports of the time made the same connection.

²⁸ 'Face Crocs, Wild Pigs, Snakes In Search For Knife.', *The Sunday Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 27 August 1950, p. 3.

²⁹ 'ARMED POLICE TO RESCUE.', *Cairns Post*, 24 August 1950, p. 5. (It is unclear how effective a form of communication the smoke signals were as newspaper reports claimed they indicated the presence of a crocodile between 25 and 30 feet in length.)

³⁰ 'QUARREL IN CROC SHOOTERS' CAMP.', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 17 October 1950, p. 1.

³¹ 'SIX STAB WOUNDS IN ARM.', *Cairns Post*, 17 October 1950, p. 5.

alive by searchers, and Scrimageour was acquitted in the subsequent trial for unlawful wounding.³²

The case was widely reported at the time, and the experiences of Cox and Scrimageour illustrate the difficulties facing those hoping to make a living from crocodile shooting. Both had come from the south, and both had invested considerable savings in out-fitting themselves to shoot crocodiles professionally. Cox had spent money on board in Cairns, paid for a tent, and bought other supplies to the value of 10 pounds.³³ Scrimageour had bought the boat and outboard motor the pair used. The incident is useful for us because it shows how economically fragile crocodile shooting was as a way to make a living. I am certain that the lack of hunting success fuelled tension in the camp—both men lost considerable money on their northern adventure. The reports of the court case that followed noted that the men had collected only four small crocodile skins.³⁴ This was a far cry from Club claims that it was possible for one man to shoot five crocodiles a day, and it would not be enough to meet the costs of the expedition. In addition there had been arguments at the camp about the amount of time that elapsed between the death of the crocodiles and the removal of their skins. This suggests to me that the skins had become degraded as crocodile skins need to be removed quickly or risk becoming second grade and much less valuable. Cox's decision to refuse the offer of Scrimageour's part of the skins as payment was probably a good reflection of their value. In addition, the men's decision to go after a large crocodile was economically unsound—large crocodiles have lived longer and generally have the scars to prove it, decreasing the value of their skins. Thus the men were caught between the need to make a living and the desire to pursue an adventurous lifestyle.

They were not the only would-be professional hunters to find that crocodile hunting did not provide easy returns. In 1950 the Northern Territory Administrator A. E. Driver issued a warning that crocodile hunting was an expensive and uncertain enterprise. A newspaper article about the warning used Driver's example of hunters of Brisbane origin operating in the Northern Territory. The party arrived with trucks, radios, ammunition and firearms. They expected to kill six crocodiles per man per day but the final tally was three months and 100 skins, at a time when a 'nice-sized skin' fetched about £4. The members of the expedition had initially contributed 250 pounds each. The article noted that hunting could pay, but that it was hard work, crocodile numbers were exaggerated, and that much crocodile country was inaccessible as it was inside Aboriginal reserves and permits were not readily given out by the Administration. In addition transport was difficult, and Aboriginal employees had their pay and conditions regulated by the Administration.³⁵

Generally hunters associated with the Club avoided this trap by virtue of being in the north for sport, not to make money. Early reports on Henri's interest in the north's crocodiles veered between his apparent concern to secure a supply of crocodile skin for beauty cases and his interest in pure sport. At times he even stated publicly that the high price of crocodile skins was not of great significance to him as his trips north were purely for sport.³⁶ Those going on Club trips paid a set rate and while it was suggested that skins might subsidize their sport it was not generally presented as a

³² 'Not guilty of wounding.', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld), 18 October 1950, p. 3.

³³ 'CROCODILE CAMP FIGHT.', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld), 30 August 1950, p. 3.

³⁴ 'CROCODILE SHOOTER REMANDED.', *Cairns Post*, 26 August 1950, p. 5.

³⁵ 'CROC. HUNTING.', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 24 February 1950, p. 6.

³⁶ 'TO PROMOTE BIG GAME HUNTING.', *Cairns Post*, 31 July 1950, p. 1.

commercial enterprise. They might use their skills to turn a profit later, but the Club itself was not a money-making operation for the hunters.³⁷ A typical Henri report from 1950 noted that his party of four 'bagged' 35 crocodiles during a four week cruise.³⁸ The report of their planned expedition noted that they had hoped to return with 200 skins.³⁹ In comparison professional hunters aimed to shoot a maximum of ten to twelve animals (six to seven feet in length) a day as that was the number they were able to skin, and they were able to procure that many crocodiles for at least some of the period of the Crocodile Bubble.⁴⁰

Southerners become tiresome

Henri's attention to advertising makes it clear that he targeted an audience of southern Australians. In 1949 he was already casting badges for Club members. He also printed 500 24 inch by 18 inch posters which read, "Do you want to go crocodile shooting?, when, where, how and to what benefit? Join the A.C.S.C. of North Queensland and contact the secretary, Mr. Jack Fearnley, Box 64, Cooktown, an energetic live wire who will put you right" The posters were to be distributed throughout Australia as well as in the United Kingdom and the United States.⁴¹ In addition the Australian Crocodile Shooters' Club held a series of dinners, first in Melbourne and then in Sydney. Henri's talent for promotion meant that a series of articles about the food to be consumed at these dinners ran in numerous newspapers in the lead-up to the actual dinner occurring. Meats that attracted attention included barramundi, dugong, and of course crocodile. The Club was successful with its southern publicity: on one Club cruise, reported because of aid given to another vessel, in addition to Vlasoff, his wife and Flinders the party consisted of four men from Melbourne and one from Cairns.⁴²

Despite aiming his publicity at city men in one newspaper article Henri commented on the difficulties this brought with it. He claimed that while Australians from country areas were easy to accommodate city tourists were "afraid to go into the mud and spoil their "beautiful" rifle". In addition he claimed that "they also liked to come back showing off skins which however, were shot by the guides." While the Club promoted a degree of luxury Henri stated that "the city tourist did not want to do any rough work but always wanted everything done for him."⁴³ Gunther Bahnemann, who ran some of the Club's crocodile safari cruises, assessed the Club's clientele in a similar manner. Bahnemann wrote that his passengers "came from the big cities in the southern states of Australia, seeking thrills by doing something unusual."⁴⁴ While he made good money running safaris Bahnemann clearly stated that he found four weeks too long to spend in the company of amateur hunters chose to turn instead to poaching crocodile skins from Dutch New Guinea.

The Australian Safari settles down

³⁷ 'Crocodile shooting taught—£75.', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 26 September 1950, p. 5.

³⁸ 'Crocodile party got bag of 35.', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld) 1 September 1950, p. 3.

³⁹ 'To Shoot Crocodiles.', *The Sunday Herald* (Sydney, NSW.) 23 July 1950, p. 6.

⁴⁰ G. Webb, S. Manolis, P. Whitehead and G. Letts, *A Proposal for the transfer of the Australian population of Crocodylus porosus Schneider (1801), from Appendix I to Appendix II of C.I.T.E.S.* Winnellie N.T.: Parks and Wildlife Unit Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, 1984, Appendix 2, p.35

⁴¹ 'CROCODILE HUNTING.', *Cairns Post*, 22 October 1949, p. 3.

⁴² 'LAUNCH CREW FOUND AT SEA.', *Cairns Post*, 26 October 1954, p. 1.

⁴³ 'NO SHORTAGE OF CROCODILES IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA.', *Cairns Post*, 20 June 1953, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Gunther Bahnemann, *New Guinea Crocodile Poacher* London: Jarrolds, 1964, p.11.

The establishment of the club base at Karumba in many ways foreshadowed the development of the Australian safari as permanent bases became established. Safari camp operations tended to cluster in the region of the Northern Territory that could be reached relatively easily from Darwin. By the 1970s four safari camps were operating in the Jim Jim area, each with a different clientele.⁴⁵ One of the best publicists for this style of safari hunting in Australia was Allen Stewart who established the Nourlangie safari camp in 1959. Stewart was helped by a background in advertising and, like Henri before him, regularly went south on publicity tours.⁴⁶ He explicitly linked the Northern Territory safari to that available in Africa and also noted the literary examples, such as the work of Rider Haggard, Hemingway and Ruark, that helped to make the safari attractive to himself and to his clients.⁴⁷

Stewart and his clients clearly continued to promote the idea of an Australian safari that was similar to that available in Africa. Stewart had a regular television slot, and reports his safari client 'Woody' Woodhill from California giving a television interview and saying, "You Aussies don't know what you've got. It's only a few hours travel to an Africa on your own front door step."⁴⁸ As with the Club, hunters at the Northern Territory safari camps often had African experience and the camps attracted an international clientele, fulfilling Henri's earlier aspirations. The cover of a c.1973 brochure for "Whitehunter Safaris" made the business's international aspirations clear by carrying testimonies from three citizens of the United States, one citizen of the United Kingdom, one German, one New Zealander, one Belgian, and one Swede.⁴⁹ In the Jim Jim area one safari business, that of Don McGregor, "catered mainly for the rich American hunter who preferred an exclusive hunt with personal attention."⁵⁰ Rose Opitz, who was involved in various tourist operations in the Jim Jim area, noted that "Croc hunting was much in favour with the many big game hunters who visited from the United States, keen to add a somewhat different style of Australian safari to their experiences. Taking home a treated crocodile head would be a trophy to later grace their homes."⁵¹

The safari business survived the banning of crocodile hunting in the 1970s by focusing on the other prey species available in tropical Australia. By 1983 it was largely based on buffalo hunting, although it included banteng, wild boar, dingo, wallaby, brumbies, donkeys, camels, goats and various bird and fish species among its prey.⁵² The Australian safari is now part of an international safari circuit—in an American context Australia has been set alongside Africa as the norm;⁵³ the possibility of again shooting Australian crocodiles is discussed internationally.

Conclusion

⁴⁵ Judy Opitz, *An English Rose in Kakadu: The Autobiography of Judy Opitz: Her Life Journey from English Manor to Northern Territory Frontier*, ed. David M. Welch, Virginia, N.T.: David M. Welch, 2009, p.84.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.70.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.149.

⁴⁹ Image reproduced in Opitz, *An English Rose in Kakadu*, p.17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.80.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁵² Col Stringer, "Northern Territory," in *The Sportsman's Guide to Australia and New Zealand: Fishing and Hunting Guide*, ed. Fenella Souter, Sydney: Murray Publishers Pty. Ltd, 1982, pp.28-31.

⁵³ Joe Rada, 'Southern Safari', *Southern Living*, September 1998, 33, 9, p.34.

The Australian Crocodile Shooters' Club has formed the focus of this lecture as its formation marked the start of the Australian safari. In the 1950s people came to Queensland in pursuit of an experience that was previously associated with more distant places and that relied on being able to hunt big game in comfort. While the Club was the first organization to take advantage of the new transport links to the north other organizations also came to offer a luxurious approach to crocodile hunting. In the Northern Territory a series of safari camps sprang up, also drawing on African precedents. Again, they offered luxury, dangerous wild game, the presence of Aboriginal workers and guides, and the provision of what were actually called 'White Hunters'. The safari is an internationally recognizable means of engaging with wilderness, and it found a second home here. While in the present the safari's focus, particularly in Africa, has broadened to include an engagement with the wild that does not involve killing the hunting safari still exists on both continents.

What has changed since the 1950s is the profile and acceptability of the safari itself. In current debates about again allowing safari hunting of crocodiles in Australia new attitudes towards hunting, crocodiles and the colonial institution of the safari itself all come into play. The open slather of the Crocodile Bubble will almost certainly never be repeated and crocodile farming has replaced professional hunting as the source of crocodile skins for commercial purposes. Yet the safari itself survives. Crocodiles remain potential man-eaters and their management in northern Australia remains an important issue for northern dwellers, scientists and environmentalists. The history of the Crocodile Bubble complicates discussions between these parties both because of the professional hunters who severely depleted the number of saltwater crocodiles in Australia, and because of the safari hunters who did not. The safari hunters killed far fewer crocodiles in the 1950s and 1960s but attempts to reinstitute limited crocodile hunting in Australia must look to them. The thought of a privileged and exclusive hunt with international connections and colonial connotations again operating within northern Australia is an uncomfortable one for many.