

# Australia 1788-1988: A Bicentennial History Historical Bibliography Volume Progress Report

John McQuilton

Assistant General Editor (Reference)

The Historical Bibliography volume has come quite a way since it was first mooted by Professor Crowley at the ASA Conference in May. The response of archivists and librarians has been good, allowing the establishment of a structure to get the volume underway.

Working parties have been set up, or are being finalised, in each of the States and the ACT and include archivists, librarians and academics as members. A full list of convenors will appear in the next issue of the project's *Newsletter*. By the end of October, all working parties will have met at least once, many of them twice. National working parties are also being established and their foundation meetings are scheduled for early 1980.

Several major trends and decisions are already evident. The working parties will deal with all material housed within their State boundaries, irrespective of content, to allow acknowledgement of material housed in one State that deals with another. One of the first tasks of the working parties is the identification of archives, collections and so on within their States.

The Bibliography has been divided into three sections and in its final form will present a guide to archival materials (both official and private), a guide to Australia's manuscript collections and a selective bibliography of published works dealing with Australia's past.

Because of the broad scope of the Bibliography, it will consist of at least two volumes, one devoted to archives and manuscripts, the other to published works and ephemera. Most of the working parties feel it would be worth considering a volume for each State, each volume being divided

into archives, manuscripts and published works and the merits of this proposal are currently being evaluated.

The question of approach has been quickly resolved with working parties agreeing that archival and published work entries will need different approaches. Entries for published works will follow the standard practice of subject entries although, because of the multi-disciplinary nature of the project, the traditional subject areas associated with historical bibliographies will need to be expanded. Archival entries will adopt an entries by institution approach. The advantages are fairly obvious — it will be easier to compile entries and will obviate the need for multiple entries caused by a subject approach. It will also prepare users for the way material is arranged in individual institutions. To direct users to specific records, a subject index will be compiled. No firm decisions have been made about manuscript entries and the working parties would like to hear from manuscript librarians on this issue.

The possible use of data retrieval systems in compiling the Bibliography have been discussed by the parties and they have endorsed serious consideration of their use. Libraries have had experience in this field, particularly the National Library, and the project hopes to draw on that experience. While it remains a relatively new field for archival entries, the working parties are keen to devise programmes for the archival section of the Bibliography.

By December, the first issue of the Bibliography's bulletin should be published. The bulletin will function as a forum for ideas and discussion, will publish bibliographies, bibliographical exercises and essays, and progress reports from each working party. As well, by January 1980, the Senior Research Officer will have taken up his or her appointment to work with the Bibliography.

A time-table has also been established for the volume(s). By the end of 1981, the working parties will have decided on the approach to be used, the number of volumes and a structure for the Bibliography. Areas requiring special or substantial searches will have been identified. By the end of 1985, the Bibliography should be ready to go to the printers.

In conclusion, the working parties would welcome any new members interested in the project. If you have any ideas, or know of subject areas neglected and relevant to the Bibliography, let the project know.