

BOOK REVIEWS

Christine Eslick, Joy Hughes, R. Ian Jack. *Bibliography of New South Wales Local History.*

Joy Hughes. *New South Wales Directories 1828-1950: A Bibliography.* Kensington, New South Wales University Press, 1987, 435pp. ISBN 0 868401544. Soft cover.

Until quite recently the field of local history has been seen, to some degree, as the poor relation of Australian historical study. Historians were, it seemed, exclusively concerned with trying to define the essential Australian experience through what may be termed "macro-histories" of the nation. Local studies were all too easily dismissed as a soft option.

Fortunately, the recent upsurge of interest in family and social history has revived the flagging stocks of local studies but has also highlighted the lack of research aids available to workers in this field.

Assistance is at hand, however, from a recently-published book containing two valuable bibliographies. The book is basically two volumes in one, the first being a *Bibliography of New South Wales Local History* by Christine Eslick, Joy Hughes and R. Ian Jack, bound together with Joy Hughes work *New South Wales Directories 1828-1950: A Bibliography*. The former presents a "full listing of relevant secondary published work . . . which is useful for the study of a locality viewed from an historical, archaeological and heritage perspective." The latter is intended to provide "a working guide to published directories for New South Wales". This timely publication fills a long-neglected gap and will be welcomed by many.

In his introduction to the *Bibliography of New South Wales Local History* R. Ian Jack quite correctly points to the paucity of bibliographical assistance available to researchers into local history in NSW. In response to this lack the compilers have put together a comprehensive bibliography, describing almost 2600 secondary works. Prominent among these entries are the out-pourings of numerous regional historical societies, school and church anniversary committees, municipal councils, services and sporting clubs and informed "locals" from throughout the state. Indeed, one may readily find within this volume anything from *Bowls in Beecroft: being the official history of Beecroft Bowling Club from 1913 to 1946* to the perhaps more sobering work, "Moral Capitalism in the Hunter Valley".

Part one of the Bibliography covers the Sydney metropolitan area and

is divided into three sections. Section one presents works that refer to the metropolitan area in general, section two deals with the central city area and the final section lists the metropolitan suburbs in alphabetical order. Part two covers the rest of the state, including Lord Howe Island and Canberra, again listed alphabetically by locational name. The entries are extensively cross-referenced.

Over ninety-nine per cent of the entries have been located and a brief but informative annotation is provided of the contents and inclusions (maps, tables, indexes, etc) of each item sighted. Included at the back of the main section is a useful list of serials published by local historical organisations and by religious organisations. Naturally, articles from these serials have not been included in the Bibliography. This volume is made complete by a handy index which cross-references all the entries by subject (e.g. land grants, Anglican Churches, etc).

Bibliographies often suffer if the criteria for the inclusion of work are ill-defined or too broad so as to make the final product unwieldy and difficult to use. This volume, however, was intended specifically for published secondary works and its compilers have addressed themselves well to their task by excluding biographies, theses, newspaper articles, purely pictorial works, published source material and secondary sources covering much of the state in general. The Bibliography is concise, well structured and a pleasure to use. The forthcoming supplement, dealing with works published after 1982, is eagerly awaited.

The second part of this bibliographical "double-header" is Joy Hughes' work *New South Wales Directories 1828-1950: A Bibliography*. This bibliography is presented as a practical working guide to published directories and should prove invaluable to a wide range of users. Also included in this work are almanacs, gazetteers and year books as well as the published edition of the 1828 Census and certain interstate directories which include NSW towns near their borders. Excluded from the Bibliography are telephone, street, government and local government directories and those that refer only to one particular profession.

The entries are arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title within each year. The user is aided by a careful annotation of the entries, which includes the years of publication and/or the issues cited; a general description of the contents; the area covered; the use of maps and whether the residents are listed by street. The "Ferguson" number is also included to refer the user to additional biographical information. For ease of use the bibliography is followed by two detailed indexes.

The inclusion of the 1828 Census, which initially may seem an incongruous deviation from the inclusion criteria, is justified by the fact that, unlike more modern censuses, it provides information that very closely approximates the content and format of most early directories.

It also gives a solid statistical overview of the colony at the beginning of the work's chronology.

Both bibliographies deserve to become standard reference works in the field of local history. Having them both together in one volume will prove an added bonus for researchers, libraries and archival repositories.

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A Bicentennial Keepsake Log. \$29.95
Angus and Robertson, 1987, 184p.
ISBN 0 2015499 6. Hard cover.

Anyone who did Year Nine History at school will know the story of the First Fleet in some detail. Most of the rest of us will know the basic facts: — eleven ships, under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, left Portsmouth, England in May 1787, and arrived in Botany Bay, Australia in January 1788.

'A Bicentennial Keepsake Log' is more than just a fancy diary for 1988. The Log tells the familiar story of the First Fleet and the early days of settlement, but in a slightly different way.

Scattered throughout the Log are excerpts from diaries of people on board. These add a very human dimension to the story, preventing it from reading like a history text-book. They also add to the Log in that their very presence will remind users of the importance to future generations of what they are doing, in compiling and keeping such a Log.

The Log has space within it for records of personal thoughts throughout 1988, as well as what life today is like in general, including details of dress, travel, leisure hours and work. There are suggestions as to the type of information the user might like to include, and ample blank space for photographs and other articles of interest.

The Log is beautifully illustrated with both colour plates and black and white line drawings and sketches which carry explanatory captions. These give a pictorial record of settlement which complements the written record.

There are, however, some less commendable aspects to the Log. The most notable is the lack of genuine information about the aborigines and the impact of settlement upon them, which becomes apparent as you read about the first days of the colony. The aborigines are portrayed as bloodthirsty savages. We are told of incidents in which convicts were either

injured or killed by natives, but there is no hint of the number of aboriginal deaths caused by English diseases, nor is there any mention of the times when settlers were helped by aborigines. In view of the stated attitudes of the Aboriginal community to the Bicentennial celebrations, this lack of balance is, to say the least, unfortunate.

Overall, the Log is very well done. However, it would have been nice to have a few details as to the materials used in the construction so it would be possible to judge if the Log is really going to last for the next 100 years. Also to this end, suggestions such as which type of glue to use for sticking in photographs, and where to keep the Log so it is not damaged by light or pests would also not have gone astray. Such basic tips would help to ensure that the work the user will put into keeping the Log so that our descendants might have some personal knowledge of our time will not be wasted, and that the Log will reach the hands of those for whom it is intended.

The Log is aesthetically pleasing, and has been laid out in such a way as to be easy and interesting to use. If the suggestions for keeping it are followed, and it is carefully looked after once it is completed, it will be a thing of great value and interest to future generations of Australians.

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