

SENIOR HISTORY TOPICS

Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788-1900 by Sean Glynn

A History of Trade Unionism in Australia by Dr Ian Turner

Edward Gibbon Wakefield: His Influence and Ideas
by Dr June Philipp

In SENIOR HISTORY TOPICS the emphasis throughout is on the presentation of ideas, the raising of issues for discussion and the demonstration of historical method rather than the conveying of facts. Where historians differ the various arguments are discussed and a feature of each title is the very comprehensive bibliography.

The titles have been chosen to examine aspects of Australian history relevant to senior syllabuses which are not adequately covered in existing texts. The student can familiarise himself with the aims and methods of history from books which are closely related to his course of study.

SENIOR HISTORY TOPICS will be of interest also to the professional historian. Because many of the titles focus attention on areas which have been relatively neglected the authors have been able to suggest new approaches to some longstanding historical problems and new attitudes to some legends. Moreover the choice of authors, with multi-discipline specialisation for some titles, has emphasised the theoretical and iconoclastic nature of the series.

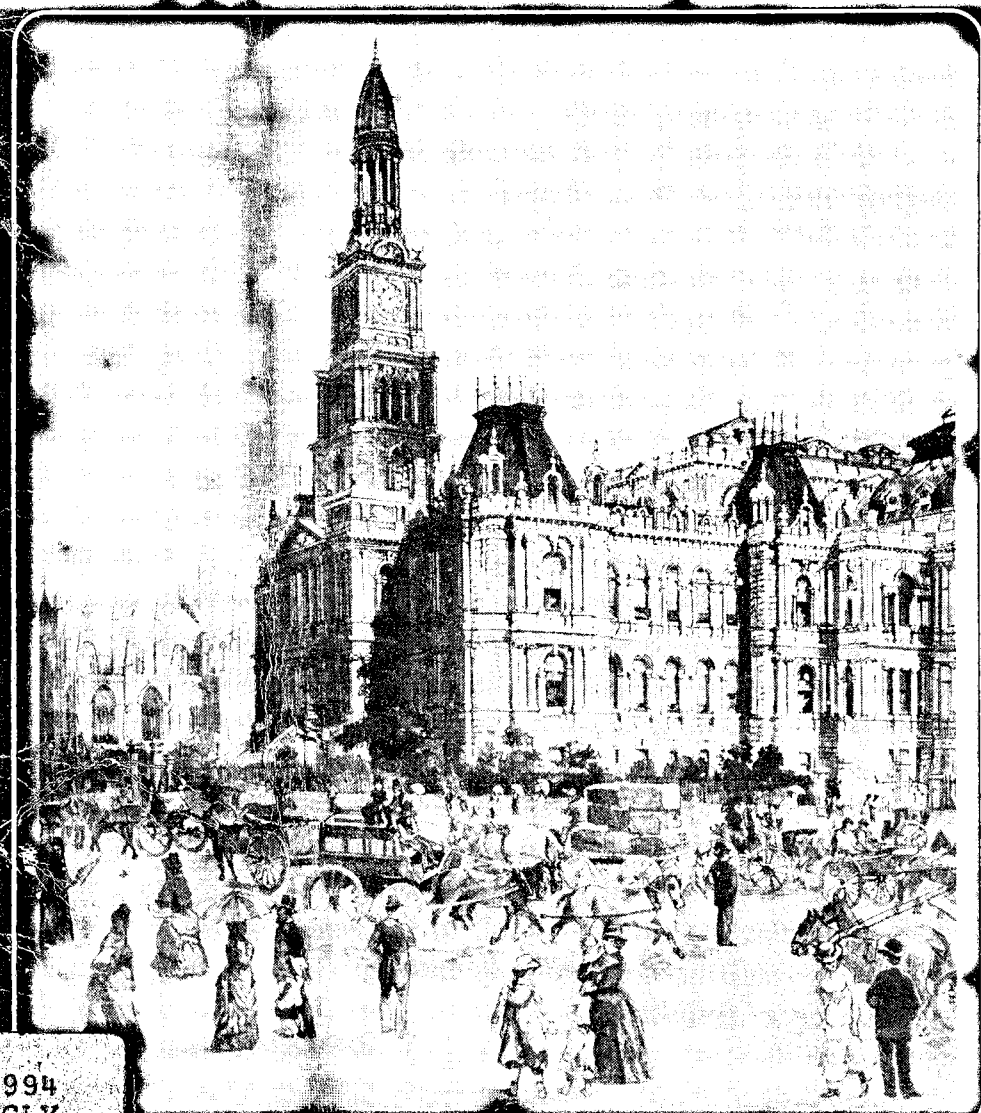
Thomas Nelson (Australia) Limited

597 Little Collins Street Melbourne 3000
403 George Street Sydney 2000

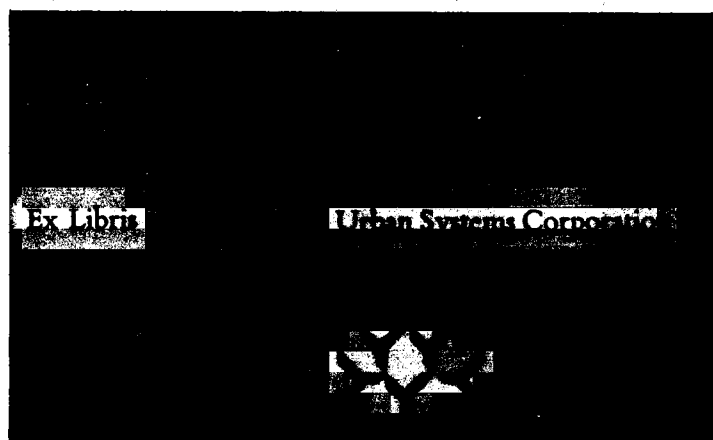
SBN 17 004838

Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788-1900

Sean Glynn



994
GLY



UDC

Acc No

Date

UNIVERSITY 
CO-OP. BOOKSHOP.

5/7/71
**Urbanisation
in Australian
History,
1788-1900**

George Clarke

Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788-1900

Sean Glynn

And her five cities, like five teeming sores,
Each drains her: a vast parasite robber-state
Where second-hand Europeans pullulate
Timidly on the edge of alien shores.

A. D. Hope, *Australia*

Nelson

THOMAS NELSON (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED
597 Little Collins Street Melbourne 3000
403 George Street Sydney 2000

Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
36 Park Street London W1Y 4DE

Thomas Nelson and Sons (South Africa) Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 9881 Johannesburg

Thomas Nelson and Sons (Canada) Ltd
81 Curlew Drive Don Mills Ontario

© Thomas Nelson (Australia) Ltd 1970

National Library of Australia registry number Aus 69-846
SBN 17 004838

Typesetting by Computer Type-Setters Pty. Ltd., Mile End, S.A.

Printed by Kerton Bros. (S.A.) Pty. Ltd., Edwardstown, S.A.

Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a book

- Weber, A. F., *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics* (1899) (republished by the Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y. 1963).
- Weber, Alfred, *Theory of the Location of Industries*, University of Chicago Press (1929).
- Weber, Max, *The City*, Collier-Macmillan, New York (1958); Heinemann, London (1958).
- Wells, W. H., *A Geographical Dictionary; or Gazetteer of the Australian Colonies* ... W. and F. Ford, Sydney (1848), in National Library, Canberra.
- White, H. L. (ed.), *Canberra: A Nation's Capital*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1954).
- Whitlocke, P. N., *The Streets of Sydney on the Shady Side* (1885), in National Library, Canberra.
- Whitworth, R. P. (comp.), *Bailliere's New South Wales Gazetteer and Road Guide*, Bailliere, Sydney (1886).
- Wilkes, J. (ed.), *Australian Cities: Chaos or Planned Growth?* Proceedings at the Australian Institute of Political Science 32nd Summer School, Canberra, 1966, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1966).
- Wilkins, W., *Australasia: A Descriptive and Pictorial Account of the Australian and New Zealand Colonies, and the Adjacent Lands*, London (1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *The Geography and History of NSW*, Sydney (1863), in National Library, Canberra.
- Williams, M., 'Gawler: The Changing Geography of a South Australian Country Town', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1964).
- , 'The Parkland Towns of Australia and New Zealand', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 56 (1966).
- Williamson, J. G. and Swanson, J. A., 'The Growth of Cities in the American North-East, 1820-1870', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. 4 (1966).
- Wills, N. R., 'The Rural-Urban Fringe—Some Agricultural Characteristics, with special reference to Sydney', *A.G.*, Vol. 5 (1945).
- Winston, D., *Sydney's Great Experiment*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1957).
- Withers, W. B., *History of Ballarat, Ballarat Star*, Ballarat (1870), in National Library, Canberra.
- Woolmington, E. R., 'Metropolitan Gravitation in Northern N.S.W.', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1965).
- Zierer, C. M., 'Brisbane—River Metropolis of Queensland', *Economic Geographer*, Vol. 17 (1941).
- , 'Broken Hill, Australia's Greatest Mining Camp', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 30 (1940).
- , 'Industrial Area of Newcastle, Australia', *Economic Geographer*, Vol. 17 (1941).
- , 'Land Use Differentiation in Sydney, Australia', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 31 (1941).
- , 'Melbourne as a Functional Centre', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 32 (1942).

- Steffens, Lincoln, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904) (Published as a paperback by Hill and Wang, New York, 1959).
- Stephensen, P. R., *The History and Description of Sydney Harbour*, Rigby, Adelaide (1966).
- * Stephenson, G. and Hepburn, J., *Plan for the Metropolitan Region of Perth and Fremantle, WA*, Government Printer, Perth (1955).
- Stewart, C. T., 'The Size and Spacing of Cities', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 48 (1958).
- Still, Bayrd, 'Patterns of Mid-Nineteenth Century Urbanization in the Middle West', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 27 (1941).
- Sydney University Geography Department in Conjunction with the Geographical Society of N.S.W., *Readings on Urban Growth*. Selected papers from ANZAAS Conference, Section P, 1962.
- Taylor, T. Griffith, *Australia. A Study of Warm Environments*, Methuen, London (1940, 7th ed. 1959).
- , *Urban Geography*, Methuen, London (1949).
- Thomas, L., 'The Development of the Labour Movement in the Sydney District of N.S.W.' (Thesis, University of Sydney, 1919).
- Thompson, W. R., *A Preface to Urban Economics*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore (1965).
- Thomson, K. W., 'The Settlement Pattern of the Barossa Valley, SA', *A.G.*, Vol. 7 (1957).
- , 'Urban Settlement and the Wheat Frontier in the Flinders Ranges, South Australia', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 60.
- Troy, P. N. (ed.), *Urban Redevelopment in Australia*, ANU, Canberra (1968).
- Turner, F. J., *The Frontier in American History*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York (1921).
- Twopeny, R. E. N., *Town Life in Australia*, Elliot Stock, London (1883), in National Library, Canberra.
- Urban History Newsletter*, No. 1, Department of Economic History, The University, Leicester (1963).
- Victoria, *Votes and Proceedings*, Report of the Select Committee on Drift of Population from Country Districts (1918), in National Library, Canberra.
- Wade, R. C., *The Urban Frontier*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1959).
- Walker, Alan, *Coaltown: A Social Survey of Cessnock*, Melbourne (1945), in National Library, Canberra.
- Wallace-Crabbe, C., 'Melbourne', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol. 32 (1963).
- Wallace van Zyl, F. D., 'Adelaide and the "Gridiron" Plan in History', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol. 52 (1963).
- Walsh, G. P., 'The Geography of Manufacturing in Sydney, 1788-1851', *B.A.H.*, Vol. 3 (1963).
- Ward, J. M., *Empire in the Antipodes: the British in Australasia, 1840-1860*, Edward Arnold, London (1966).
- Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne (1958).
- Wardlaw, H., 'Sydney District Centre Surveys', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 3 (1964).
- Warren, W. H., 'History of Civil Engineering in N.S.W.' (Report on A.A.A.S., 1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- Waters, E., 'Some Aspects of the Popular Arts in Australia, 1880-1915' (Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U., 1962).

Preface

This book deals with a much-neglected aspect of Australian history which is likely to receive a great deal of attention in the future. Traditionally, historians have looked to the outback for an explanation of Australian development and for the ideas and beliefs which make up the Australian heritage. While it is suggested that this approach is incomplete, if not erroneous, it should not be inferred from this that the rural aspects of Australian history are regarded as unimportant.

In writing the book, the major problem has been one of compression. The aim throughout has been to present ideas and to raise issues for discussion, rather than to survey facts, and it is hoped that not too much violence has been done to an extremely important, complex and under-researched subject.

The book assumes an outline knowledge of Australian history and is aimed at helping to bridge the gap between school and university work.

S.G.

Australian National University
1968

Edgar

Acknowledgements

We should like to thank the following for permission to reproduce illustrations: State Library of Victoria, Plates 1 to 9; Mitchell Library, Sydney, Plates 10 and 11.

- Rural Reconstruction Commission* (7th Report) ('Rural Amenities'), Commonwealth Government Printer (1945).
- Ryan, Bruce, 'A Paradigm of Country Town Development in N.S.W.', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 2 (1964).
- , 'The South Coast of N.S.W.: A Regional Survey of Urban Growth', *B.A.H.*, Vol. 6 (1966).
- Sands and Kenny's Commercial and General Sydney Directory* (1858/9-1932), in National Library, Canberra.
- Sands New Atlas of Australia* (1886), in National Library, Canberra.
- Schlesinger, A. M., *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898*, Macmillan, New York (1933).
- Schnore, L. F., 'The Statistical Measurement of Urbanisation and Economic Development', *Land Economics*, Vol. 37 (1961).
- Scobie, J. R., *Argentina: A City and a Nation*, Oxford University Press, New York (1964).
- Scott, D. R., 'The Suburbanisation of Manufacturing Industry in Perth, WA', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1963).
- Scott, G., *Sydney's Highways of History*, Georgian House, Melbourne (1958).
- Scott, Peter, 'The Australian Central Business District', *Economic Geography*, Vol. 35 (1959).
- , 'Hobart: An Emergent City', *A.G.*, Vol. 6 (1955).
- , 'The Hierarchy of Central Places in Tasmania', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1964).
- Self, N., 'Sydney, Past, Present and Possible', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vol. 1 (1906).
- Shaw, A. B., 'Port Jackson—Its Romantic Growth', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vol. 35 (1949).
- Shaw, J. H., *The Urban Evolution of Wagga Wagga*, University of New England, Armidale (1960), in National Library, Canberra.
- Simon, H. A., 'Effects of Increased Productivity upon the Ratio of Urban to Rural Population', *Econometrica*, Vol. 15 (1947).
- Sinclair, A., *A Clip of Wool, from Shearing Shed to Ship*, Sydney (1899, 2nd ed. 1913), in National Library, Canberra.
- Skinner's N.S.W. Gazetteer* (1885), in National Library, Canberra.
- Slessor, K., *Portrait of Sydney*, Ure Smith, Sydney (1950).
- Smailes, A. E., *The Geography of Towns*, Hutchinson, London (1953).
- Smith, Bernard, *Place, Taste and Tradition*, Ure Smith, Sydney (1945), in National Library, Canberra.
- Smith, H. N., *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1950).
- Smith, R. H. T., *Commodity Movements in Southern New South Wales*, Department of Geography, ANU, Canberra (1962).
- , 'Sydney's Area of Influence', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 1 (1961).
- , 'The Development and Function of Transport Routes in Southern N.S.W., 1860-1930', *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 2 (1964).
- Solomon, R. J., 'Broken Hill—The Growth of Settlement, 1883-1956', *A.G.*, Vol. 7 (1959).
- , 'External Relations of the Port of Hobart, 1804-1961', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1965).
- Spate, O. H. K., 'Bush and City; Some Reflections on the Australian Cultural Landscape', *Australian Journal of Science*, Vol. 18 (1956).
- , 'Factors in the Development of Capital Cities', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 32 (1942).

- North, D. C., 'Location Theory and Regional Economic Growth', *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 62 (1955).
- Northcott, C. H., *Australian Social Development*, Columbia University, New York (1918), in National Library, Canberra.
- Oakshaw Annual of N.S.W.* (1897), in National Library, Canberra.
- Packer, D. R. G., 'Data on Victorian Population, 1851-1861', *H.S.*, Vol. 5 (1953).
- Palmer, Vance, *The Legend of the Nineties*, Melbourne University Press (1954).
- Parris, J. R., 'The Melbourne Exhibition, 1880-1881' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1955).
- Pearl, C., *Wild Men of Sydney*, W. H. Allen, London (1958).
- Peyser, D., 'A Study of Welfare Work in Sydney, 1788-1900, Parts 1 and 2', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vols. 24, 25 (1938, 1939).
- Phillips, H., *Sydney N.S.W., 1788-1938* (1938).
- Phillips, P. D. and Wood, G. L. (eds), *The Peopling of Australia*, Melbourne (1928).
- Pownall, L. L., 'Metropolitan Auckland 1740-1945: The Historical Geography of a New Zealand City', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 6 (1950).
- , 'The Origins of Towns in New Zealand', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 12 (1956).
- , 'Surface Growth of N.Z. Towns', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 13 (1957).
- Pred, Allen, *The External Relations of Cities During 'Industrial Revolution'; With a Case Study of Goteborg, Sweden: 1868-1890*, University of Chicago (1962).
- Priestley, Susan, *Echuca: A Centenary History*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane (1965).
- Pringle, J. D., *Australian Accent*, Chatto and Windus, London (1958).
- Pulsford, E., *The Rise, Progress and Present Position of Trade in N.S.W.*, Sydney (1892), in National Library, Canberra.
- Redfield, R. and Singer, M. B., 'The Cultural Role of Cities', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3 (1954-5).
- Reeves, J. H., 'Transport Costs and the Location of Industry in Victoria', *E.R.*, Vol. 27 (1951).
- Reeves, W. Pember, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, Richards, London (1902), in National Library, Canberra.
- Regier, C. C., *The Era of the Muckrakers* (1932).
- Reissman, L., *The Urban Process*, Free Press of Glencoe, New York (1964).
- Roberts, S. H., *History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920*, Macmillan, Melbourne (1924).
- Robinson, A. J., 'Regionalism and Urbanization in Australia: A Note on Locational Emphasis in the Australian Economy', *Economic Geography*, Vol. 39 (1963).
- Robinson, K. W., 'Population and Land Use in the Sydney District, 1788-1920', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 9 (1953).
- , 'Processes and Patterns of Urbanisation in Australia and New Zealand', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 18 (1962).
- , *Sydney*, Longmans, Melbourne (1959).
- , 'Sydney 1820-1952: A Comparison of Developments in the Heart of the City', *A.G.*, Vol. 6 (1952).
- Rose, A. J., 'The Border Between Queensland and N.S.W.; A Study of Political Geography in a Federal Union', *A.G.*, Vol. 6 (1955).
- Rowe, J. B., 'The Form and Function of the Rural Township', *A.G.*, Vol. 4 (1944).

Contents

Preface	v
1 The Importance of Urbanisation	1
2 Economic and Geographical Factors in Australian Urban Growth	10
Economic factors	10
Geographical factors	19
3 Demographic, Political and Social Factors in Australian Urban Growth	25
Demographic factors	25
Political factors	31
Cultural and Social factors	39
4 Towards an Urban Interpretation of Australian History	42
Select Bibliography	54

- McIlroy, W., 'Melbourne's Land Sales', *Victorian Historical Magazine* (November 1937).
- McIntyre, J. J. & A. J., *Country Towns of Victoria*, Melbourne U.P. and O.U.P. (1944).
- McKelvey, Blake, *The Urbanization of America, 1860-1915*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J. (1963).
- Mackenzie, Jeanne, *Australian Paradox*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1961).
- McKnight, Tom, 'Elizabeth, South Australia: An Approach to Decentralisation', *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 3 (1965).
- MacLean, R. (ed.), *The New Atlas of Australia* (1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- Maclehose, J., *Maclehose's Picture of Sydney and Strangers' Guide in N.S.W.* (1838), in National Library, Canberra.
- McLeod, A. L. (ed.), *The Pattern of Australian Culture*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y. (1963); O.U.P., Melbourne (1963).
- Maddock, W., *Visitor's Guide to Sydney* (4th edition, 1872), in National Library, Canberra.
- Madgwick, R. B., *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851*, London (1937), in National Library, Canberra.
- Mann, G. V. F., *Municipality of North Sydney* (1938), in National Library, Canberra.
- Mansfield, Ralph, *Analytical View of the Census of N.S.W. for the Year 1846 . . .*, Sydney (1847), in National Library, Canberra.
- Masters, D. C., *The Rise of Toronto, 1850-1890*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto (1947), in National Library, Canberra.
- Mathieson, R. S., 'Socio-Economic Contact in the Melbourne-Sydney Penumbral Zone', *A.G.*, Vol. 7 (1958).
- Meinig, D. W., 'Colonisation of Wheatlands: Some Australian and American Comparisons', *A.G.*, Vol. 7 (1959).
- Miller, J. D. B., *Australia*, Thames and Hudson, London (1966).
- Moore, R. J., 'Marvellous Melbourne' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1958).
- Morrill, R. L., *Migration and the Growth of Urban Areas*, Gleerup, Lund (1965).
- Morris, A. and Byron, J., *N.S.W.: Its Progress, Present Condition and Resources* (1886), in National Library, Canberra.
- Morse, R. M., 'Some Characteristics of Latin American Urban History', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 67 (1962).
- Mumford, Lewis, *The City in History*, Secker and Warburg, London (1961).
- Nadel, George, *Australia's Colonial Culture: Ideas, Men and Institutions in Mid-Nineteenth Century Eastern Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1957).
- Neale, E. P., 'The Size of Towns', *E.R.*, Vol. 28 (1952).
- Neutze, G. M., *Economic Policy and the Size of Cities*, Australian National University Press, Canberra (1965).
- Neville, R. J. W., 'The Changing Population of Wellington City: 1926-1956', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 16 (1960).
- Newnham, W. H., *Melbourne: The Biography of a City*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1956).
- New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory* (1832-).

- , 'County, Town and Shire in N.S.W.', *A.G.*, Vol. 6 (1954).
- , 'The Urban Hierarchy of the Southern Tableland of N.S.W.' (Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U., 1956).
- , *The Urban Pattern of the Hunter Valley: A Study of Town Evolution, Morphology and Aspect*, Hunter Valley Research Foundation Monograph No. 17, Hunter Valley Research Centre, Newcastle, NSW (1963).
- , 'Whither Urban Geography? Some Signposts from the Australian Scene', in Norborg, Knut (ed.), *Proceedings of the I.G.U. Symposium in Urban Geography—Lund, 1960*, Gleerup, Lund (1962).
- Knibbs, G. H., *Local Government in Australia*, Government Printer, Melbourne (1919).
- Lampard, E. E., 'The History of Cities in the Economically Advanced Areas', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3 (1954-5).
- La Nauze, J. A., 'A Social Survey of Sydney in 1858', *H.S.*, Vol. 2 (1943).
- Langford-Smith, T., 'The Physical Setting of the Sydney Region', Section P, ANZAAS (1962).
- Larcombe, F. A., *The Development of Local Government in N.S.W.*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne (1961).
- Lavery, J. R., 'Development of the Town of Brisbane, 1823-1859' (Thesis, Queensland, 1955).
- Lazlo, I. M., 'Railway Policies and Development in Northern N.S.W.' (M.A. Thesis, University of New England, 1956).
- Learmonth, N. F., *The Story of a Port: Portland, Victoria*, Portland Harbour Trust, Portland (1960).
- Leigh, S. T., *Leigh & Co.'s Handbook to Sydney and Suburbs...* (1867), in National Library, Canberra.
- Linge, G. J. R., 'Manufacturing in Auckland: Its Origins and Growth, 1840-1936', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 14 (1958).
- , *The Delimitation of Urban Boundaries for Statistical Purposes with Special Reference to Australia*. A Report to the Commonwealth Statistician, Australian National University Press, Canberra (July 1965).
- Loesch, August, *The Economics of Location*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. (1954).
- Logan, L. A., 'Industrialisation of the Perth Metropolitan Region', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 2 (1962).
- Logan, M. I., 'Implications of Population Changes in N.S.W. Country Towns, 1954-1961', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 3 (1965).
- , 'Industrial Location Trends in Sydney Region', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 2 (1963).
- , 'Manufacturing Decentralisation in the Sydney Metropolitan Area', *Economic Geography*, Vol. 40 (1964).
- , 'Suburban Manufacturing: A Case Study', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1964).
- Lyne, Charles, *The Industries of N.S.W.*, Sydney (1882), in National Library, Canberra.
- McCarty, J. W., 'The Staple Approach in Australian Economic History', *B.A.H.*, Vol. 4 (1964).
- MacDonnell, F., *Before King's Cross*, Nelson, Melbourne (1967).
- McGowan, R. M., 'A Study of Social Life and Conditions in Early Melbourne Prior to Separation, 1836-1851' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1951).

Illustrations

1	George Street, Sydney: showing the Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral, 1866	3
2	A view of Newcastle in the 1860s	5
3	A view of Ballarat in the 1860s showing mining operations	8-9
4	A rural factory	18
5	The Quay at Hobart in the 1860s	20
6	Two modes of transport: A bullock team, 1840 A wool barge on the Darling River	22 23
7	Assisted immigrants	26
8	The Supreme Court, Adelaide	33
9	The coastal shipping service: the <i>SS You Yangs</i>	35
10	Map showing the railway systems of Australia, 1888	36
11	Portrait of C. J. Dennis	45

- , 'Geographic Factors in the Economy of Sydney', *ANZAAS Handbook* (1932).
- Hood, John, *Australia and the East*, London (1843), in National Library, Canberra.
- Hoover, E. M., *The Location of Economic Activity*, McGraw-Hill, New York (1948).
- Hyttén, T., 'Some Problems of Australian Transport Development', *E.R.*, Vol. 23 (1947).
- International Urban Research, *The World's Metropolitan Areas*, University of California Press, Berkeley (1959).
- Irvin, Eric, 'A Plea for Regional Histories', *H.S.*, Vol. 7 (1956).
- Isard, Walter, 'Transport Development and Building Cycles', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 57 (1942).
- , 'The General Theory of Location and Space-Economy', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 63 (1949).
- , *Location and Space-economy*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. and John Wiley (1956).
- , *Methods of Regional Analysis*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. and John Wiley (1960).
- Jackson, John, and Associates, *Multiplier Effects of Industry in Country Centres*, Division of Industrial Development, Treasury, Sydney (1962).
- James, J. S. (alias Julian Thomas, 'The Vagabond'), *The Vagabond Papers* (Melbourne, 1877), republished (Cannon, M., ed.) Melbourne University Press (1969).
- Jeans, D. N., 'Town Planning in New South Wales, 1829-1842', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 3 (1965).
- Jeans, D. N. and Logan, M. I., 'A Reconnaissance Survey of Population Change in the Sydney Metropolitan Area, 1955-1959', *A.G.*, Vol. 8 (1961).
- Jervis, J., *The Cradle City of Australia: A History of Parramatta 1788-1961*, ed. G. Mackaness, Parramatta City Council (1961).
- Jevons, W. S., *A Social Survey of Sydney in 1848* (MS Mitchell Library, Sydney).
- , *A Social Map of Goulburn (1859)* (MS Mitchell Library).
- Johns, J. R. H., *Metropolitan Government in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia, Perth (1950).
- Johnston, R. J., 'The Distribution of an Intra-Metropolitan Central Place Hierarchy', *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 4 (1966).
- Jones, Emrys, *Towns and Cities*, Oxford University Press, London (1966).
- Jose, A. W., et al., *N.S.W.: Historical, Physiographical and Economic*, ed. T. W. E. David, Whitcombe and Tombs, Melbourne (1912), in National Library, Canberra.
- Juppenlat, M., 'Some Observations on Rural-Urban Interdependence in Queensland', *Queensland University Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1961).
- Kelley, A. C., 'Demographic Change and Economic Growth: Australia, 1861-1911', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. 5 (1968).
- , 'International Migration and Economic Growth: Australia, 1865-1935', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25 (1965).
- , 'Long Swings in Australian Output and Investment: 1860-1935' (Ph.D. Thesis, Stanford University, 1964).
- King, Hazel, 'Problems of Police Administration in NSW, 1825-1851', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vol. 44, pt. 2 (1958).
- King, H. W. H., 'The Canberra-Queanbeyan Symbiosis: A Study of Urban Mutualism', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 44 (1954).

1 The Importance of Urbanisation

Much of the interest of history lies in its relevance to our own time. While we should not necessarily expect to solve current problems by historical investigation, the most interesting history is usually written with an eye on the present and future, as well as the past. Inevitably, the selection of historical themes and the emphasis of written history will reflect contemporary interests, attitudes and thought, and the burning issues of each generation may be dull and disregarded in the next. While a continuous link between historiography and current ideology is vital to historical interest, there is always the danger that historical objectivity will be sacrificed in the process. This book has been inspired by a belief that the major part of Australian historical writing, relying heavily upon imagination and current ideology, has neglected an extremely significant area of historical evidence. In particular, the vital fact that, from the earliest times, a very large proportion of the Australian population lived in urban areas has been largely ignored.

We live in a rapidly urbanising world in which the dominant social, political and economic forces appear to be essentially the products of an increasingly urban environment, and mankind's efforts to come to terms with that environment. The struggle against nature is giving way to a struggle against an urban environment created by man himself. While the trend towards urbanisation is almost a universal phenomenon, occurring even in the most primitive economies, there appears to be some correlation between urbanisation and our concept of 'development' in the broadest sense. The most highly developed countries of the modern world tend to be the most highly urbanised.

We are aware of the existence of important cities and towns in medieval Europe and, centuries earlier, the 'classical' civilisations of the Middle East, southern Europe and South America were notable, *inter alia*, for their urban achievements. But these cities, the products of relatively highly organised but essentially agrarian societies, were specialised, exceptional and relatively small by modern standards. Contemporary urbanisation is almost entirely a product of the past one hundred and fifty years—a post-Industrial Revolution phenomenon resulting from increasing commercial-industrial specialisation. At the end of the eighteenth century the world had less than fifty towns containing more than one hundred thousand people. Today there are at least a thousand such centres, including sixty or more cities with populations in excess of one million.

- Gouger, R., *A Letter From Sydney: The Principal Town of Australasia* (London, 1829), in National Library, Canberra.
- Gould, Nat., *Town and Bush: Stray Notes on Australia*, London (1896), in National Library, Canberra.
- Grant, J. and Serle, G., *The Melbourne Scene, 1803-1956*, Melbourne University Press (1957).
- Green, C. M., *American Cities in the Growth of the Nation*, Harper and Row, New York (1957).
- , *The Rise of Urban America*, Harper and Row, New York (1965) (published also by Hutchinson, London).
- Greenwood, G. and Laverty, J., *Brisbane, 1859-1959: A History of Local Government*, Brisbane City Council (1959); Ziegler (1960).
- Greville, E. (ed.), *The Official Directory and Almanac of Australia*, Sydney (1883), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *The Official Directory and Year Book of Australia*, Sydney (1884).
- Hainsworth, Roger, 'The Story of Sydney Cove', *Hemisphere*, Vol. 6 (1962).
- Hall, A. R., 'Some Long Period Effects of the Kinked Aged Distribution of the Population of Australia, 1861-1961', *E.R.*, Vol. 39 (1963).
- , *The London Capital Market and Australia, 1870-1914*, Australian National University Press, Canberra (1963).
- Hall, E. S., *The State of N.S.W. in December, 1830* (1831), in National Library, Canberra.
- Hall, P., *The World Cities*, McGraw-Hill, New York (1966); Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London (1966).
- Halsey, T. H., 'Decentralisation—Its Social and Economic Implications' (Mimeo; Commonwealth Division of Regional Development, 1949; Menzies Library, Canberra).
- Handlin, O. and Burchard, J., *The Historian and the City*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1963).
- Hansen, A. H., 'Extensive Expansion and Population Growth', *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 48 (1940).
- Harper, N. D., 'The Rural and Urban Frontiers', *H.S.*, Vol. 10 (1963).
- Hartwell, R. M., *The Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1850*, Melbourne University Press (1954).
- Hauser, P. (ed.), *Seminar on Urbanisation in Latin America*, Santiago, 1959, UNESCO, Paris (1961).
- Hefford, R. K., 'Decentralisation in South Australia: A Review', *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 3 (1965).
- Henry, F. J. J., *The Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage of Sydney*, Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, Sydney (1939), in National Library, Canberra.
- Herman, M., *The Architecture of Victorian Sydney*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1956).
- , *The Early Australian Architects and their Work*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1954).
- Hitchcock, J. K., *The History of Fremantle*, Fremantle City Council (1929).
- Hogg, G. D., 'A History of Port Macquarie' (M.A. Thesis, University of New England, 1948).
- Holmes, J. M., 'Factory Orientation in Metropolitan Sydney', *A.G.*, Vol. 5 (1947).

By any standard of international comparison contemporary Australia must be ranked as one of the most highly urbanised countries in the world. According to the 1961 census, nearly 83 per cent of Australians lived in cities or towns with a population of more than one thousand and 57 per cent lived in the capital cities. Not only is Australia a very highly urbanised country, it is most remarkable for an exceptionally high degree of metropolitanisation, with more than half its population living in the metropolitan areas of the six state capitals and Canberra.

There is irony and significance in the fact that this overwhelmingly urban nation apparently prefers to present its image to the world very largely in terms of rural symbols—particularly marsupials, Aborigines, and aboriginal artifacts—which, in the natural state, are rarely encountered by the average Australian. (It is, perhaps, doubly ironical that marsupials and Aborigines appear to be treated with scant respect by the small minority of Australians who do encounter them regularly.) The world may be forgiven for its erroneous vision of the typical Australian—in caricature, a tall, lean, bronzed, wide-hatted horseman, followed by two faithful aboriginal trackers and a herd of kangaroos, riding silently through a brilliant sunset towards the 'pub with no beer'! This legendary, but highly unrepresentative, figure is more a creation of Australian imagination, or lack of it, than of overseas ignorance. Australians, traditionally, have preferred to see themselves in a rustic and heroic, but atypical, mould. Our concern is with the possibility that this attitude has had a profound and longstanding effect upon the interpretation of Australian history.

In the nineteenth century, almost without exception, the high income countries of the world began to experience a pronounced trend towards increasing urbanisation, and Australia, one of the richest nations in terms of income per head, was in the vanguard of this process. In a classic comparative study of international urban growth, published in 1899, Adna Weber pointed out:

The most remarkable concentration, or rather centralization, of population occurs in the newest product of civilization, Australia, where nearly one-third of the entire population is settled in and about capital cities.¹

By 1890 approximately two-thirds of Australians lived in areas which, for census purposes, were classified as urban.

While Weber attempted to place Australian urbanisation in a world context, there were important differences between urban growth and structure in nineteenth-century Australia and elsewhere. In the Australian urban hierarchy there was a comparative absence of urban centres between the large metropolitan capital of each colony and the small bush township. In other countries a more regular urban hierarchy extended from large

- Farwell, G., 'The Towns that Grew in a Desert', *Hemisphere*, Vol. 10 (1966).
- Feldham, J., *The Expansion of Sydney 1840-1914. A Pictorial Contrast* (1914), in National Library, Canberra.
- Finn, Edmund ('Garryowen'), *Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835 to 1852, Historical, Anecdotal, and Personal*, 2 Vols., Fergusson & Mitchell, Melbourne (1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- Fisher, A. G. B., 'The Drift to the Towns', *E.R.*, Vol. 5 (1929).
- , 'Urbanisation: Peril or Bogey?', *Australian Quarterly* (June 1933).
- , *The Clash of Progress and Security*, London (1935), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *Economic Progress and Social Security*, London (1945), in National Library, Canberra.
- Fitzpatrick, B., 'The Big Man's Frontier and Australian Farming', *Agricultural History*, XXI (1947).
- Forbes, G., *History of Sydney*, Sydney (1926), in National Library, Canberra.
- Ford, J., *Sydney: Old and New* (1903), in National Library, Canberra.
- Forsyth, W. D., *The Myth of Open Spaces*, Melbourne University Press (1942).
- Foster, A. G., *Early Sydney*, Sydney (1920), in National Library, Canberra.
- Foster, Mrs A. G., *Odd Bits of Old Sydney* (1921), in National Library, Canberra.
- Fowles, J., *Sydney in 1848* (1850) (published by Ure Smith, Sydney, 1962).
- Franklin, S. H., et al., 'Demographic Structure Within a New Zealand Metropolitan Area', *Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol. 4 (1963).
- Franklyn, H., 'A Glance at Australia in 1880', *Victorian Review*, Melbourne (1881), in National Library, Canberra.
- Freeman, J., *Lights and Shadows of Melbourne Life*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, London (1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- Friedmann, J., 'Cities in Social Transformation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. IV (1961).
- , 'Locational Aspects of Economic Development', *Land Economics*, Vol. 32 (1956).
- Fry, E. C., 'The Condition of the Urban Wage Earning Class in Australia in the 1880s' (Ph.D. Thesis, ANU, 1956).
- Gentilli, J., 'Australian Rural Population Changes', *E.R.*, Vol. 25 (1949).
- Gibbs, J. P. (ed.), *Urban Research Methods*, Van Nostrand, Princeton, N.J. (1961).
- Gilmore, H. W., *Transportation and the Growth of Cities*, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois (1953).
- Glaub, C. N. and Brown, A. T., *A History of Urban America*, Macmillan, New York (1967).
- Glover, A. T., 'The Pattern of Population Change in Australia', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vol. 32 (1946).
- Gollan, Robin, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, Melbourne University Press (1960).
- Golledge, R. G., 'Sydney's Metropolitan Fringe: A Study in Urban-Rural Relations', *A.G.*, Vol. 7 (1960).
- Goodrich, Carter, 'The Australian American Labour Movement', *E.R.*, Vol. 4 (1928).
- Gordon and Gotch, *The Australian Handbook* (Annual, 1871-1906), in National Library, Canberra.

¹Weber, Adna Ferrin, *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York (1963), p. 138 (originally published 1899).

- , 'Occupations of the People of Brisbane: An Aspect of Urban Society in the 1880s', *H.S.*, Vol. 10 (1961).
- Crowley, F. K., 'The British Contribution to the Australian Population, 1860-1919', *University Studies in History and Economics*, Vol. 11 (1954).
- , 'Working Class Conditions in Australia, 1788-1851' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1949).
- , *Westralian Suburb: The History of South Perth*, Rigby, Adelaide (1962).
- Cumberland County Council, *County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Report* (1948).
- , *Economics of Urban Expansion*, Sydney (1958).
- , *The Effects of Urban Decentralisation on the City and Suburban Business Centres*, Sydney (1958).
- , *Growth of Population in Australia and the County of Cumberland*, Sydney (1959).
- Daly, M. T., 'Comparative Growth of Newcastle and Wollongong', *A.G.*, Vol. 9 (1964).
- Davies, A. F. and Encel, S. (eds), *Urban Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1965).
- Davies, A. G., 'Genesis of the Port of Brisbane', *Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, Vol. 2 (1935).
- Davies, K., 'The Origin and Growth of Urbanisation in The World', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 60 (1955).
- Davies, K. and Golden, H. H., 'Urbanisation and the Development of Pre-industrial Areas', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3 (1954-5).
- , 'The World Distribution of Urbanisation', *Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute*, Vol. 33 (1954).
- Davies, R. E., 'The Clarence River and the City of Grafton: Economic and Social Development, 1830-1880' (M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1953).
- de Reuck, A. and Knight, J. (eds), *Conflict in Society*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston (1966).
- Devery, P. J., *Canberra and the Canberra Region*, National Capital Development Commission Canberra (1964).
- Dick, R. S., 'Five Towns of the Brigalow Country of South-Eastern Queensland', *University of Queensland Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1960).
- , 'Variations in the Occupational Structure of Central Places of the Darling Downs', *University of Queensland Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1961).
- Donohoe, F. J., *The History of Botany Bay* by A. Gayll (pseud.), *The Bulletin*, Sydney (1888), in National Library, Canberra.
- Dowling, E., *Australia and America in 1892: A Contrast*, C. Potter, Sydney (1893), in National Library, Canberra.
- Duncan, R., *Armidaale: Economic and Social Development, 1839-1871*, Armidaale (1951).
- Dunn, Edgar S., 'The Market Potential Concept and The Analysis of Location', *Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association*, Vol. 2 (1956).
- Dyos, H. J., 'The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Review of some recent writing', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 9 (1966).
- , (ed.), *The Study of Urban History*, Edward Arnold, London (1968).
- Eggleston, F. W. (ed.), *The Peopling of Australia, Further Studies*, Melbourne U.P. and O.U.P. (1933), in National Library, Canberra.
- Exley, H. J., 'Population Trend in Australia', *E.R.*, Vol. 9 (1933).



1 George Street, Sydney: showing the Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral, 1866

cities to large, medium and small towns and villages. In Europe a predominantly agricultural population was being drawn into urban centres largely as a result of increasing industrialisation, rapid population growth and changes in the agricultural sector. In Australia this process was, to some extent, reversed, in that cities and towns developed *in advance* of both industrialisation and rural settlement and played a vital role in channelling population movements and promoting these activities. Urbanisation was not a new phenomenon to late nineteenth-century Australia, nor was it the result of any sudden population shift. The Australian continent had been settled *via* cities and towns and, from the earliest times, a relatively large proportion of Australians had lived in urban areas. For some years after the first settlement, the town of Sydney was synonymous with Australia, and at no time since 1788 has Sydney contained significantly less than one-quarter of New South Wales' population.

In the years before 1860, the urban jail, Sydney, was transformed into an administrative and commercial centre which played a crucial, if insufficiently recognised, role in the settlement and exploitation of the

south-eastern part of the continent. Similar centres were established at Hobart, in 1804; Brisbane, in 1824; Perth, in 1829; Melbourne, in 1835; and Adelaide, in 1836. In each region, or Colony, the dominant role of the capital was facilitated by its links with lesser urban and quasi-urban centres in the interior. Primary production was administered, serviced and supplied with overseas labour and capital through these urban centres and end-products were transhipped, stored, processed and exported through them. The long-run effects of the gold discoveries of the 1850s extended and enhanced these functions and enabled Melbourne to replace Sydney as Australia's leading city. After 1850 Australian economic development took a more complex form, but the importance of urbanisation in this process was increased rather than diminished. Of the period 1860-1900 Professor N. G. Butlin has said:

The outstanding characteristic of Australian economic history was . . . the exceptional rate of urbanisation of the local population and the extraordinarily early orientation of economic activity towards commercial-industrial specialisation and the tertiary services of urban society. By 1891, two-thirds of the Australian population lived in cities and towns, a fraction matched by the United States only by 1920 and by Canada not until 1950. Most of Australian capital equipment went into growing towns, most of the expanding work-force was employed in urban occupations and the greater part of gross product came from urban activity. . . . The process of urbanisation is the central feature of Australian history, overshadowing rural economic development and creating a fundamental contrast with the economic development of other 'new' countries.²

By 1900 Australia's modern urban pattern was indelibly established in the sense that most of the important townsites were developed and of long standing, and the demographic dominance of urban over non-urban areas was already substantial. In the present century this pattern has simply intensified (except during the years of economic depression and world war) at a fairly steady rate into increasing metropolitan dominance over other urban and rural areas. Apart from suburban spread from centres which existed before 1900, very few new urban areas have developed—the exceptions include the planned cities (Canberra and Elizabeth), mining centres and tourist resorts. However, in some states important non-metropolitan industrial centres, such as Newcastle and Wollongong, have greatly increased in status.

Australian urbanisation owes its origin and much of its character to the nineteenth century. At the same time, Australian nineteenth-century history owes much to urbanisation. Yet, with the exception of N. G. Butlin, Australian historians have either ignored urbanisation almost totally, or assumed it to be entirely a feature of the post-1900 period.

²Butlin, N. G., *Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900*, Cambridge University Press (1964), p. 6.

- , 'Growth in a Trading World: The Australian Economy, Heavily Disguised', *B.A.H.*, Vol. 4 (1964).
- , 'Long-Run Trends in Australian Per Capita Consumption', in Hancock, K. (ed.), *The National Income and Social Welfare*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1965).
- , *Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900*, Cambridge University Press (1964).
- Butlin, S. J., *The Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851*, Melbourne University Press (1953).
- Buxton, G. L., *The Riverina, 1861-1891: an Australian Regional Study*, Melbourne University Press (1967).
- Cameron, K. T., 'Early Road Transport', *Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, Vol. 5 (1953).
- Cannon, Michael, *The Land Boomers*, Melbourne University Press (1966).
- Careless, J. M. S., 'Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History', *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 35 (1954).
- Checkland, S. G., 'The British Industrial City as History', *Urban Studies*, Vol. 1 (1964).
- Clark, C. M. H., *Select Documents in Australian History, Vol. I 1788-1850*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1950).
- , *Select Documents in Australian History, Vol. II 1851-1900*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1955).
- Clark, Colin, 'The Distribution of Labour between Industries and between Locations', *Land Economics*, Vol. 26 (1950).
- , 'The Economic Functions of a City in Relation to its Size', *Econometrica*, Vol. 13 (1945).
- , 'The Urban Population Capacity of Australia' (Paper read to Section G of ANZAAS Conference, Brisbane, May 1941).
- Clark, Percy, *The New Chum in Australia: or, the Scenery, Life and Manners of Australians in Town and Country* (1886), in National Library, Canberra.
- Coghlan, T. A., *Childbirth in N.S.W.: A Study in Statistics*, Sydney (1900), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *Decline in the Birth-rate of N.S.W. and other Phenomena of Childbirth*, Sydney (1903), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *General Report on the Eleventh Census of N.S.W.*, Sydney (1894).
- , *Labour and Industry in Australia . . .*, 4 Vols, Oxford University Press, London (1918).
- , *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand, 1903-4* (1904).
- Connell, W. F., et al., *Growing up in an Australian City* (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1957).
- Cook, W. E., 'House Sanitation in Sydney' (Report of the Proceedings of A.A.A.S. 1891 Meeting).
- Copland, B. D., 'A Practical Application of the Theory of Hinterlands', *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 120 (1954).
- Crago, E. A. and Lowndes, A. G., 'Port Kembla and its Harbour', *A.G.*, Vol. 1 (1931).
- Craig, G., 'Early Town Planning in Hobart', *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* (1944).
- Crook, D. P., 'Aspects of Brisbane Society in the 1880s' (B.A. Thesis, University of Queensland, 1958).

- Bhagat, G. S., 'Redevelopment of the Sydney City Centre' (Dip.T. and C.P. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1960).
- Birch, A., 'The Sydney Railway Company 1848-1855', *J.R.A.H.S.*, Vol. 43 (1957).
- Birch, A. and Macmillan, D. S. (eds), *The Sydney Scene, 1788-1960*, Melbourne University Press (1962).
- Blainey, G., 'Scissors and Paste in Local History', *H.S.*, Vol. 6 (1953-5).
- , 'Technology in Australian History', *B.A.H.*, Vol. 4 (1964).
- , *A History of Camberwell*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane (1964).
- , *The Rush that Never Ended*, Melbourne University Press (1963).
- , *The Tyranny of Distance*, Sun Books, Melbourne (1966).
- Bland, F. A., 'The City and its Government', *E.R.*, Vol. 4 (1928).
- Blechynden, K., 'An Economic Base Analysis of Hamilton, 1961', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 20 (1964).
- Bogue, D. J., *Population Growth in Standard Metropolitan Areas, 1900-1950, with an Explanatory Analysis of Urbanised Areas*, US Housing and Home Finance Agency, Division of Housing Research, Washington (1953).
- Bold, W. E., 'Perth—The First Hundred Years', *J.W.A.H.S.*, Vol. 3 (1939).
- Bolger, P. F., 'Hobart Town Society, 1855-1895' (Ph.D. Thesis, ANU, 1968).
- Bolt, F., 'Metropolitan Planning for Hobart', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 3 (1965).
- Bolton, G. C., 'Australia's Urban Society', *Hemisphere*, Vol. 6 (1962).
- Borrie, W. D., 'Bibliography of Australian Urban History' (Menzies Library, ANU, Canberra, 1960).
- , 'The Peopling of Australia', in Arndt, H. W. and Corden, W. M. (eds), *The Australian Economy*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1963).
- Boyd, Robin, *Australia's Home*, Melbourne University Press (1952).
- , *The Australian Ugliness*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1960).
- Brady, E. J., *Sydney: The Coommercial Capital of the Commonwealth* (1904), in National Library, Canberra.
- Brennan, T., 'A Sociological Contribution to Urban Studies', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 2 (1962).
- , 'The Pattern of Urbanisation in Australia', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 4 (1963).
- Briggs, Asa, 'Historians and the Study of Cities' (George Judah Cohen Memorial Lecture, University of Sydney, 1960).
- , 'The Sociology of Australian Cities', *Outlook*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1961).
- , *Victorian Cities*, Odhams, London (1963).
- Brodsky, I., *Sydney Looks Back*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1957).
- Bruns, G. R., 'Some Neglected Aspects of Melbourne's Demography' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1949).
- Buckley, K. A. H., 'Urban Building and Real Estate Fluctuations in Canada', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 28 (1962).
- Budenbaugh, Carl, *Cities in the Wilderness. The First Century of Urban Life in America* (1938), in National Library, Canberra.
- Buley, E. C., *Australian Life in Town and Country*, Newnes, London (1905), in National Library, Canberra.
- Bunker, R., 'Comparative Analyses of Urban Workforces', *A.P.I.J.*, Vol. 2 (1963).
- Butlin, N. G., 'Colonial Socialism in Australia, 1860-1900', in Aitken, H. G. J. (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth*, Social Science Research Council, New York (1959).



2 A view of Newcastle in the 1860s

Without exception, the general histories of Australia by Shann, Hancock, Fitzpatrick, Ward, and others are remarkable in this respect. Although urban history has been of interest to geographers for some years, it has only recently attracted the attention of professional historians, and there is as yet very little Australian urban historiography of any significance. Despite the enormous long-run importance of Australian capital cities, not one of them has received even remotely adequate historical treatment. While many nominal histories of lesser urban centres have been written, these are overwhelmingly council-commissioned works of the 'scissors and paste' variety, owing more to antiquarianism than to analytical historical investigation. In the future this situation is likely to change as Australian historians become more aware of growing overseas interest in urban history and increasingly critical of traditional interpretations of Australian history. At present a 'frontier mentality' holds sway over Australian history in much the same way as F. J. Turner's frontier thesis dominated American history before World War II.

The lack of interest, hitherto, in urban history is, in itself, revealing—a reflection, in part, of the straitjacket of Australian ideology and of the problems of research in this area. Urban history fails to emerge distinctly from the usual national, regional or social class approaches to Australian history, and the few competent historical and social studies of small urban areas which have been written fail to throw much light on urban themes in general. Even if such studies were multiplied many times they would constitute little more than an amorphous mass of *ad hoc* commentary. As Professor S. G. Checkland has suggested, urban historians must commit themselves to a more 'scientific history', which

involves the testing of clearly defined general concepts and quantitative analysis:

Cities comprise so complex and varied a range of problems that historians interested in them do not find it easy to formulate their attack. Though urban historians are beginning to draw together, there is, rightly, a great deal of misgiving that effort may be wasted if greater clarity about objectives and method is not forthcoming.³

In Australia these problems may be less serious than elsewhere, in the sense that we are dealing with a simpler social and economic structure with remarkable regional uniformities. Australia is relatively rich in historical evidence and the history of its cities can be traced in considerable detail from their very beginnings. (In this sense Australia presents special opportunities in the field of urban history.) The rural-urban division in official statistics dates back to early colonial times, and newspaper coverage of urban affairs has been prolific. However, there are problems in attempting to distil vast quantities of information drawn from newspaper and other sources, and in deriving consistent statistical series. There is no generally accepted definition of a city, or of an 'urban' as opposed to a 'non-urban' area. An arbitrary element, inevitably, enters into any attempt to measure urban population.⁴ Some areas regarded as agricultural in Asia are more densely populated than Australian metropolitan areas. Australian nineteenth-century census figures for urban population have been based upon administrative boundaries which were arbitrarily determined, subject to periodic changes, and did not truly represent the real extent of urban areas. For this and other reasons, census figures are not strictly comparable between cities, between colonies and states, and over time. The Australian census practice of defining all incorporated areas and towns with more than five hundred people as 'urban' tends to overstate the degree of Australian urbanisation in relation to other countries using different classifications. In the United States census returns, for instance, centres with less than eight thousand people were not counted as urban.

Despite these and other methodological problems, it is essential that historians address themselves to the question of urbanisation if they are to produce a better understanding of Australian economic, social and political development in the nineteenth century. Some indication of the role of urbanisation in Australian economic development has already been given, and this will be taken up at greater length in Chapter Two. In relation to political, social and cultural development urbanisation is perhaps even more important than in the economic sphere; yet few historians in these fields have undertaken specifically urban studies.

³Checkland, S. G., 'The British Industrial City as History', *Urban Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1964, p. 34.

⁴See Linge, G. J. R., *The Delimitation of Urban Boundaries for Statistical Purposes with Special Reference to Australia*. A Report to the Commonwealth Statistician, July 1965, Australian National University Press, Canberra (1965).

- Allen, H. C., *Bush and Backwoods: A Comparison of the Frontier in Australia and the United States*, Michigan State University Press (1959).
- Allen, J., *History of Australia from 1787-1882*, Mason, Firth & M'Cutcheon, Melbourne (1882), in National Library, Canberra.
- Alonso, W., *Location and Land Use: Towards a General Theory of Land Rent*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1964).
- American Urban History Newsletter* (University of Wisconsin).
- Anderson, N., 'Urbanism and the American Frontiers', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 6 (1965).
- Andrews, J. (ed.), *Frontiers and Men: A Volume in Memory of Griffith Taylor, 1880-1963*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1966).
- Andrews, R. B., 'Mechanics of the Urban Economic Base: Historical Development of the Base Concept', *Land Economics*, Vol. 29 (May 1953).
- Armstrong, R. W., 'Auckland by Gaslight: An Urban Geography of 1896', *N.Z.G.*, Vol. 15 (1959).
- Arnot, R. H. M., *Growth of Population in Australia and in the County of Cumberland* (Cumberland County Council, 1959).
- Austin, A. G. (ed.), *The Webbs' Australian Diary, 1898*, Pitman, Melbourne (1965).
- Australian Town Planning Conference, 1917, Official Volume of Proceedings (1918).
- Bach, J. P. S., 'Land and Sea Communications between Sydney and Melbourne, 1837-1864' (M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1954).
- Baker, C. J., *Sydney and Melbourne*, London (1845), in National Library, Canberra.
- Baker, W., *Australian Atlas* (1846), in National Library, Canberra.
- Balfour, J., *A Sketch of New South Wales*, Smith, Elder, London (1845), in National Library, Canberra.
- Barnard, Alan (ed.), *The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900*, Melbourne University Press (1958).
- Barnard, Marjorie, *Macquarie's World*, Melbourne University Press (2nd ed., 1949).
- , *The Sydney Book*, Ure Smith, Sydney (1931), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *Sydney: The Story of a City*, Melbourne University Press (1956).
- Barry, J. A., *The City of Sydney: the story of its growth from its foundation to the present day*, N.S.W. Bookstall Co., Sydney (1902), in National Library, Canberra.
- Bate, Weston, 'The Good Old Cause in Local History', *H.S.*, Vol. 11 (1963).
- , *A History of Brighton*, Melbourne University Press (1962).
- Bedford, Ruth, *Think of Stephen*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1954).
- Belcher, W. W., *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (1947), in National Library, Canberra.
- Bell, A. P., *Melbourne: John Batman's Village*, Cassell, Melbourne (1965).
- Berry, B. J. L. and Pred, A., *Central Place Studies—A Bibliography of Theory and Applications*, Regional Science Research Institute, Philadelphia (1961).
- Bertie, C. H., *Stories of Old Sydney*, Ure Smith, Sydney (1918), in National Library, Canberra.
- , *The Story of Sydney*, Shakespeare Head, Sydney (1933), in National Library, Canberra.

Select Bibliography

No comprehensive bibliography of Australian urban history has yet been published, despite a growing need for bibliographical information in this field. While the following bibliography is far from being comprehensive, it may be of use to students, teachers, and those interested in undertaking research.

The material included is biased towards the pre-1900 period and towards New South Wales and Sydney. Official papers, and works purely or largely of local or antiquarian interest, have been excluded. Overseas works have been included where it is considered that they may offer methodology, insight or analogy useful in Australian circumstances.

Abbreviations

A.A.A.S.	Australian Association for the Advancement of Science (later A.N.Z.A.A.S.)
A.G.	Australian Geographer
A.P.I.J.	Australian Planning Institute Journal.
B.A.H.	Business Archives and History
E.R.	Economic Record
H.S.	Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand.
J.R.A.H.S.	Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society.
J.W.A.H.S.	Western Australian Historical Society: Journal and Proceedings.
N.Z.G.	New Zealand Geographer

Abrams, C., *The City is the Frontier*, Harper and Row, New York (1965).

—, *Housing in the Modern World*, Faber and Faber, London (1966).

—, *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanising World*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1964).

Adams, F. W. L., *Australian Essays*, Inglis, Melbourne (1886).

—, *The Australians: A Social Sketch*, London (1893), in National Library, Canberra.

Aird, W. V., *The Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage of Sydney*, Sydney Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board (1961).

Allen, G. W. D., *Early Georgian: extract from the journal of George Allen*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney (1958).

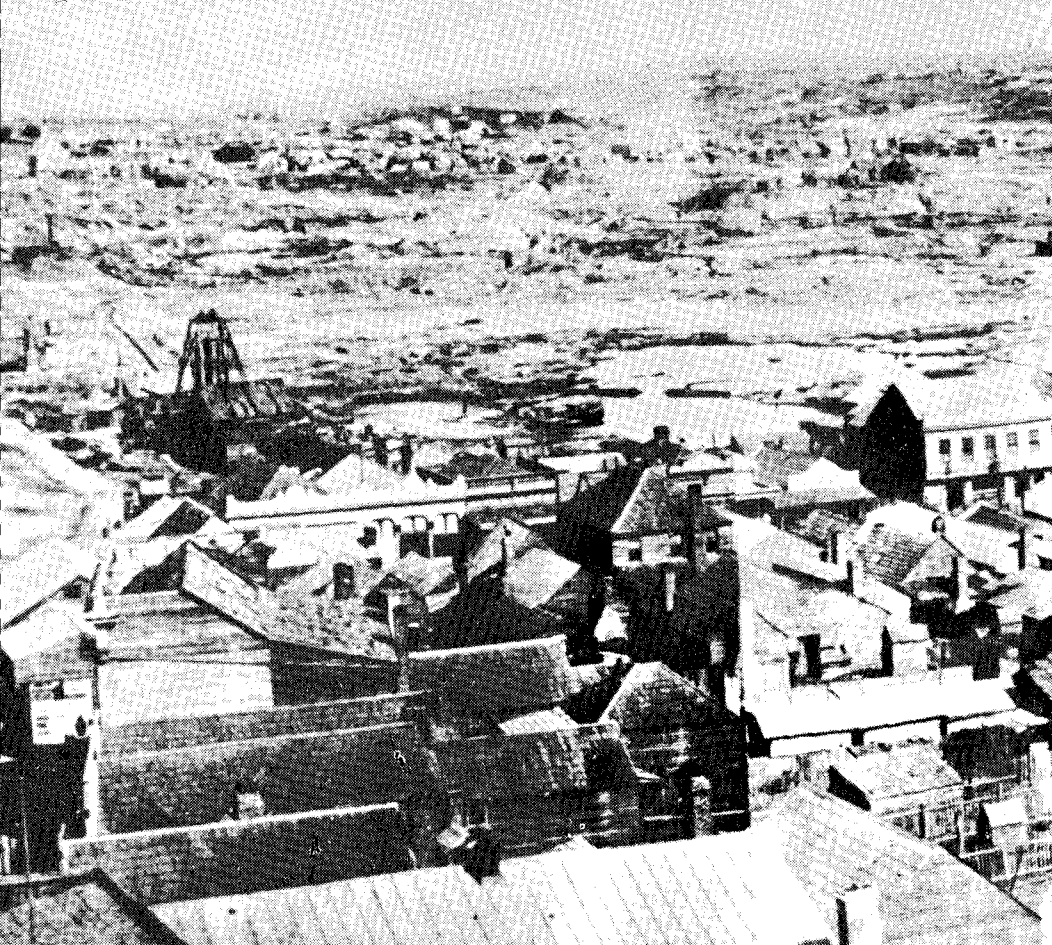
While the political influence of urban groups has been recognised by several writers, this recognition has not given rise to systematic study of the structure of Australian politics. As H. C. Allen has pointed out, 'Australian radicalism has had, not so much rural, as urban roots.'⁵ In their struggle against colonial autocracy, in the 1830s and 1840s, the graziers relied heavily upon urban middle-class support. Even before the brief struggle for self-government was won, these two groups became engaged in a struggle for political power which the graziers lost. The issue was decided, essentially, by the ability and willingness of the urban middle class to rely upon urban lower-middle-class and artisan support. Manhood suffrage enabled liberal urban groups to dominate Australian politics in the second half of the nineteenth century. Australian trade unions originated amongst urban artisans and the trade union movement, in terms of organisation and numbers, has always been overwhelmingly urban. While rural workers, particularly in the late nineteenth century, exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numbers, it is important to remember that the groups mainly concerned—miners and shearers—were in a special category. Mining employment, where highly unionised, took place in camps, settlements and towns with urban rather than rural characteristics. The shearing gangs—in effect, small mobile factories—were organised and to a large extent staffed from permanent bases in country towns and capital cities. While union activity extended to the most remote areas, its organisation and inspiration depended upon an urban environment both in Australia and overseas. Unfortunately, the influence of this environment has hardly attracted the attention of political and labour historians.⁶ It was the urban proletariat, and not the bush workers, who made the rise of the Australian Labor Party possible. Yet, as W. A. Sinclair has pointed out, 'The squatter's run has proved more evocative than the Collingwood sweat-shop.'⁷ If the factory workers had their equivalent of the bush ballads, they were not sufficiently 'Australian' to deserve attention.

Yet if we are to gain a better understanding of Australian political history we must know more about the economic, social and cultural characteristics of urban groups. The dominant political issues of the nineteenth century—tariff and land policies and public works—were raised in the streets of Ballarat, Melbourne and Sydney rather than on the ranges. Political decisions were reached in the capital cities and, on the whole, tended to favour the urban interests to such an extent that colonial political policies during the second half of the nineteenth century can be

⁵ Allen, H. C., *Bush and Backwoods: A Comparison of the Frontier in Australia and the United States*, Michigan State University Press (1959), p. 21.

⁶ The few important exceptions include: Fry, E. C., 'The Condition of the Urban Wage Earning Class in Australia in the 1880s' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1956).

⁷ *Dissent*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Spring, 1963.



broadly described as 'metropolitan aggrandisement'. Inevitably these urban interest groups were influenced by their location and environment—but to what extent? To what extent did the nature of urban culture, occupations and housing patterns influence working-class and middle-class political aspirations? To what degree were political decisions on public works, transport and other matters specifically metropolitan, rather than regional, in approach? How far were urban interests promoted at the expense of rural? These and similar questions are important and can only be answered by a consciously urban approach.

The avoidance of such an approach, by so many for so long, can be attributed to that El Dorado of Australian culture and historiography—the search for distinctively national characteristics and character. The determination to be 'Australian' at all costs has led to a desperate search for something which, if it really existed, was not truly representative. Urban

feelings of insecurity and distrust. The reaction took the form of rural fundamentalism and nationalism. In the 1890s small-farming developed more rapidly than in earlier decades; net population movement from urban to rural areas and from eastern capitals to Western Australia and Britain took place, but on a relatively small scale. The majority made do with a sustaining legend created by Lawson, Paterson and other writers. In their search for a contrast with the urban way of life and a distinct national type, these city-bred writers turned increasingly, although not exclusively, to the simple folk in the bush. The legend thus created met the emotional demands of urban escapism and the need for a distinct national identity which was apparently lacking amongst the urban majority. At the same time the bush workers were flattered and confirmed in their belief that they were a superior type of 'Australian' and they were, perhaps, the *Bulletin's* most avid readers.

The Australian legend—or the idea of a truly distinct and unique national character and culture—was created suddenly, at a critical time, on a somewhat flimsy and unrepresentative basis.

The attempt to see Australian history in terms of the evolution of a national character (distinct from British character) and the establishment of a culturally independent nation is a misleading and impossible historical exercise. Because of the nature and timing of its settlement, and the continuing importance of overseas connections, Australia—far from being or becoming a nation apart—was really one small part of an international urban, or suburban, culture, created by western civilisation. Metropolitanisation and the brief span of Australian history before 1900 gave the majority of the inhabitants of this continent insufficient time, opportunity or inclination to develop a truly distinct way of life. In fact, the major part of Australian effort was directed towards the precise opposite—an attempt to create provincial England in the Antipodes. This process was promoted by a continuous flow of people, capital, ideas and techniques from Britain. The urban areas which dominated Australian culture were most receptive to this inflow and made fewest concessions to the Australian environment. Inevitably, the inhabitants of Australia developed their own geographical, class, and—eventually—political loyalties, although not without much prompting. Whether or not these loyalties add up to 'nationalism', and to what extent they were contrived, is a matter for debate. But social and economic historians might more usefully concern themselves with those factors which have given rise to the remarkable similarities—in popular culture, technology, social structure and way of life—not only between Australian cities, but between Australian, British, American and other cities of the western world.

Whether or not we accept this view, the fact remains that the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Australia, both immigrant and native-born, have been 'Australianised' in urban areas, and not in the bush.

Although Australia forged a national legend based in the bush, the acceptance of this legend must be related to the ideological needs of a highly urbanised population. As world urbanisation progressed in more affluent countries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an increasing number of people found themselves living a somewhat monotonous, highly-regulated way of life in an 'unnatural' physical environment, subject to economic controls which they neither trusted nor understood. The emotional needs created by this environment were met in many ways: drink, evangelical religion, Marxism, aspirin tablets, and a variety of other means, provided emotional outlets or dulled the senses. Above all, however, there was a desire for escapism—which should not be confused with a desire to escape. Urban escapism went hand in hand with a steady increase in nationalistic sentiment. In Britain (and other European countries) there were two obvious outlets for these feelings: the glories of the past were made known in popular histories and literary works; and for the present and the future Rudyard Kipling and others pointed to the far-flung Empire which offered salvation to the religious, death or glory to the adventurous, and economic gratification to the avaricious. The areas newly settled by Europeans—North and South America, South Africa, Australasia—had neither empire nor an heroic and glorious past. In Australia the convict past, far from being glorious, was, in the opinion of the *Bulletin* editors and other nationalists, best forgotten. In these areas the urban masses found their equivalent of Robin Hood, Marlborough or Robert Clive in the 'noble frontiersman'—the cowboy, the gaucho, the trekker, and other, lesser, rural mortals.²¹ In the United States the cowboy hero, laden with morals and physical prowess, was created by popular writers to meet popular demand.

In Australia there is not a great deal of evidence of demands of this kind being made or met before 1890, while civic pride and prosperity prevailed. At the same time, there was much more contact between Australian capitals and the bush than between American east-coast cities and the western frontier. The inhabitants of Australian towns and cities were well aware that the bush nomads, who periodically appeared to 'blow their cheques', were far from being heroic or laden with morals. Nor did the city-dwellers envy them their way of life. Yet in the crisis of the 1890s, drought, economic distress, industrial and political unrest and social changes (including decisions to have fewer children) gave rise to a changed Australian attitude towards urban life. The earlier pride and faith in cities, which was particularly apparent in the 1880s, gave way to

²¹ See Smith, H. N., *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1950).



3 A view of Ballarat in the 1860s showing mining operations

Australia was and is too much like Europe to meet this need for a national identity and, in order to find a really distinct 'Australia', most writers have turned to the bush. Where urban types have come into the picture at all, they have generally been members of the lower and, again, atypical social strata—larrikins and militant unionists. The majority of urban people apparently fail to qualify as Australians because of their essentially European characteristics. Yet it is to this unrecognised urban Australian that we owe the acceptance of the Australian legend. In Chapter Four the origins of the Australian legend will be re-examined, from an urban viewpoint, and it will be argued that the 'bush hero' was to some extent a creation of the Australian urban environment, just as in the United States the 'cowboy hero' was created in cheap novels and endless motion pictures to meet an insatiable demand in the less heroic cities of the eastern seaboard.

2 Economic and Geographical Factors in Australian Urban Growth

The aim in this chapter and the next is to suggest ways of attempting to explain Australian urban structure, including the relatively high degree of metropolitanisation, in the nineteenth century. It must be emphasised, however, that in view of the complexity of the subject, the limited space available, and the small amount of historical research which has been undertaken so far, any comment at this stage can only be tentative, generalised and brief.

The term 'urbanisation' embraces a complex and ill-defined variety of characteristics and influences in human organisation and the arrangement of physical assets. In an attempt to introduce some order into the discussion, the possible causes of Australian urbanisation will be examined under five main factor headings: economic, geographical, demographic, political, and social or cultural factors. However, these divisions are neither rigid nor watertight and it must be emphasised that any attempt to isolate single, or even basic or primary, causes is a meaningless exercise. Inevitably we are concerned with the operation and interaction of a variety of influences. As a simplification, it will be suggested that economic factors were fundamental in determining urban structure, and that, apart from a few exceptions, non-economic factors were a powerful reinforcement.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Cities may be regarded as, essentially, a form of economic organisation which give rise to extremely important consequences for the non-economic (social, political, cultural) aspects of human life. A substantial degree of urbanisation is possible only in a society which has progressed beyond the subsistence level to a high degree of occupational specialisation and exchange of goods and services. If the workforce is unable to produce a surplus of food and other primary goods beyond its own immediate needs, or an export surplus which can meet the cost of imports, then urbanisation (apart from the agricultural village) is unlikely, although it may occur on the basis of capital inflow. For some years after 1788 Australia was in something like this position, being deficient in food and commodity exports, and heavily dependent on the inflow of British funds. Alternatively, it may be argued that Australia from the beginning was, in fact, an export economy. Because of its virtually unrivalled remoteness from Britain and its supposedly harsh environment, Australia

contradicts this assumption. In Australian nineteenth-century circumstances it is easy to mistake provincialism for nationalism. It could be argued that the cultural differences between London and Cornwall, or London and Yorkshire, were greater than the differences between London and Australia. Yorkshire had its own distinctive dialect, stereotyped character (a taciturn, blunt, thrifty man with a dry sense of humour), local literature and xenophobia and it shared Australia's economic interest in a particular product—wool. In terms of this discussion, the only important difference between Australia and Yorkshire was distance from London. While Yorkshire could be efficiently governed from London, Australia could not. The emergence of Australia from colony to nation owes more to distance and regional provincialism than to the way of life in the bush.

Regional provincialism in England and Australia was closely related to urbanisation and the claims of particular cities to particular areas. Australian effort, talent and aspiration, instead of being united and made manifest on a national basis, was divided and spread between six rival provincial capitals which were relatively self-sufficient. Insofar as these cities looked beyond themselves, they looked to London rather than to any other Australian city. No city was great enough to take precedence over all others, although Melbourne came close to doing so, and no city was willing to yield to any other. Whether or not this pattern meant a sacrifice of quality in favour of quantity in certain areas of activity (art, politics, overseas representation), it clearly delayed the desire for national unity and conditioned the eventual expression of it.

By 1890 urbanisation and, to a lesser extent, suburbanisation had begun to dominate the day-to-day life of a majority of Australians. Suburban life—conformist, rigid, materialistic, complacent, semi-puritan and withdrawn—had given rise to the ancestor of Barry Humphries's 'Mrs Everage', with her monotonous daily routine in 'Moonee Ponds'. The 'suburban pioneers' of the late nineteenth century developed into what J. D. B. Miller has described as:

... a typically Australian middle income group, numerically vast, often socially indistinguishable, and displaying a character which is petty-bourgeois, self-centred, sectional, small-minded, but instinctively generous, mildly xenophobic, and attuned to prosperity and increasing opportunities for social mobility.¹⁹

While this may appear to be a far cry from the 'noble bushman', one writer has dared to suggest that bush and suburbia may have had certain similarities in their influence upon attitudes and social patterns:

In the atmosphere of suburbia, the unorthodox, let alone the eccentric, is frowned upon, and Australia is strikingly lacking in social 'mavericks'. Opportunities for the socially or intellectually deviant are limited; there is little inclination ... to be different from the 'mob'. There is a shared and recognised pattern of behaviour.²⁰

¹⁹ Miller J. D. B., *Australia*, Thames and Hudson, London (1966), p. 24.

²⁰ Mackenzie, Jeanne, *Australian Paradox*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1961), p. 125.

The feeling that there was a distinct Australian future was nurtured in the cities; culture not nature was to make it. At a time when the Australian landscape was felt to be greatly inferior to that of Britain, the cities were already believed to have a superiority of their own...¹⁶

This view is supported by the quantities of 'booster' literature issued in praise of the various colonies and their capitals; by the attitude expressed, almost without exception, in the larger-circulation colonial newspapers; and in the opinions expressed by a succession of overseas visitors to Australia.

The proudest capital of all was, of course, Melbourne, which in terms of population-size, functions and civic self-confidence outshone all other capitals. The confidence and bustle of 'Marvellous Melbourne' of the 1880s was frequently contrasted with the staid languor of its nearest rival, Sydney: 'If you wish to transact business well and quickly, to organise a new enterprise—in short, to estimate and understand the trade of Australia, you must go to Melbourne and not to Sydney. ...'¹⁷ Since 1890 Melbourne and Sydney appear, in the popular imagination, to have changed roles and nowadays we hear much comment upon the 'American' brashness of Sydney, and the 'British' Victorian respectability of Melbourne. However, it might be argued that the character differences between Australian capital cities have been exaggerated out of all proportion. The similarities between capitals have been and are much more pronounced and significant than the differences—which reflect size rather than functional variations. Nevertheless, in order to understand Australian nineteenth-century attitudes we need to know much more about urban character—the character of the people who lived in towns and cities and the character of the towns and cities themselves. The key to the cultural changes of the 1890s lies in Australian urban mentality rather than in the views held beyond the ranges. As Asa Briggs has suggested:

It is just as necessary to relate the new pattern of the 1890s to the eclipse of Melbourne in the years that follow the boom, to the increasing pull of Sydney as a 'cultural centre', and to the changing images of Melbourne and Sydney, as it is to relate it to what was happening or what had happened in the outback.¹⁸

The nearest equivalent to the life of the two-thirds of Australians who, by 1890, lived in capital cities and larger country towns was to be found in provincial England rather than on the wheat frontiers of Canada and the United States. Up to that time the majority of adult Australians were British-born and in terms of culture, attitudes and institutions, Australian society was overwhelmingly British. Rather than seeking corroborating evidence of an assumed nascent Australian character or nationalism, it is much more rational for historians to assume that colonial Australians were Englishmen or Irishmen, unless they can find substantial evidence which

had a comparative advantage in the export of an invisible item—jail services! The purchase of this invisible export by Britain permitted the first settlement to take an urban form.

The penal settlement gradually gave way to a private enterprise economy and a free society. As exploration and settlement extended from Port Jackson, the proportion of New South Wales population living in Sydney inevitably declined, from 100 per cent to approximately 25 per cent in the late 1830s and early 1840s. From this point onwards the trend was reversed and Sydney tended to absorb an increasing share of total population.¹

Urbanisation depends upon the development of non-agricultural economic pursuits which tend to use land simply as a site, rather than as an intrinsic part of the productive process, and use relatively small quantities of land in relation to labour and capital. Most secondary (or manufacturing) and tertiary (or service) activities can facilitate specialisation and derive economies in production by operating in close spatial proximity to other productive processes, transport facilities, markets and input-sources including labour. These economies tend to be self-reinforcing and increase as the technical aspects of economic organisation, including transport, become more effective and as the scale or size of operations increases. External economies (arising from proximity to transport facilities, markets, technical 'know-how', labour and other input-sources) and economies of scale (arising from the increasing size of operations) are most readily available in urban areas; in the long run the attraction of these areas is likely to prove irresistible to most non-primary economic activities. Urban location of population and production gives rise to great efficiencies in the provision of secondary goods and services and in the processing and marketing of primary produce. While urbanisation has frequently been deplored on non-economic (particularly aesthetic) grounds, and does give rise to some diseconomies and disadvantages—such as traffic congestion and pollution, the economic advantages of urbanisation remain overwhelming and the costs of large-scale decentralisation prohibitive. This point has been insufficiently appreciated by a long succession of Australian advocates of decentralisation.

In terms of economic efficiency, Australia has probably gained a great deal by developing a few large cities rather than many smaller ones (assuming that this was the alternative). The growth of New York, London, Tokyo and other cities, which are very much larger in population than any Australian capital, tends to deny the existence of any permanent economic or physical upper limits to urban size or efficiency. In the past century, transport, health and other problems, or diseconomies associated with urban growth, have been met by innovation and regulation, rather than by the more costly alternative of decentralisation. For example,

¹ See Coghlan, T. A., *General Report on the Eleventh Census of N.S.W.*, Sydney (1894), Table p. 120.

¹⁶ Briggs, Asa, *Victorian Cities*, Odhams, London (1963), p. 302.

¹⁷ Twopeny, R. E. N., *Town Life in Australia*, Elliot Stock, London (1883), p. 2.

¹⁸ Briggs, A., *op. cit.*, p. 301.

travel by foot and horse-drawn vehicles might have imposed absolute limits on the size of London had not other means of transport, both above and below the ground, been forthcoming.

In relation to economic functions, there are two basic aspects of urban growth: first, growth resulting from the economic relationships between a city and its hinterland, and, second, growth resulting from the city's internal economy. In explaining the origin and early growth of cities the former aspect is normally most important, but in the long run the latter may dominate.

In the city-hinterland relationship, production techniques (including methods of transport) and consumption patterns appear to be particularly important. In Australia, at least during the second half of the nineteenth century and in the present century, increments in non-metropolitan population and income appear to have been accompanied by *proportionally* greater increments in metropolitan population and income. Ignoring demographic factors, there are two possible economic explanations for this phenomenon. First, a relatively large part of increases in rural and urban income was spent on urban goods and services (in other words, the income elasticity of demand for urban goods and services was higher than the income elasticity of demand for rural products) and, secondly, urban production techniques were more labour-intensive and less efficient than rural (marginal productivity in urban occupations was lower than in rural). Apart from these possibilities, the flow of investment funds and the operation of the price mechanism may also be important, but will not be discussed at this point.

In any city a number of people will inevitably be employed in performing economic services and producing goods for other city dwellers ('taking in each other's washing!'). For technical reasons this type of activity tends to increase with population-size and density and is an important source of urban employment. Compare, for example, the profit prospects of a window-cleaning service in central Sydney and in a rural area with widely-dispersed homesteads. When a large number of people live very closely together they create special needs and at the same time derive opportunities as a result of economies which are less apparent, or non-existent, in lesser concentrations. Roads, public buildings and institutions, sewers, piped water, lighting, power and other facilities and services are more likely to be provided, or will be of better quality, in urban areas partly because they are cheaper on a *per capita* basis, and partly because facilities of this kind are more essential and in greater demand (and more profitable) in urban areas than in rural.

While urban growth may be said to have both internal and external economic aspects, the two are, in fact, closely related. An increase in a city's economic activity and population resulting from expansion in the urban hinterland is likely to promote growth in the internal urban economy. This growth, in turn, may extend the city's economic

broader support. It was not by chance that the first serious moves towards federation took place in the early 1890s when severe depression affected or threatened all capital cities except Perth.

The assertion of Australian nationalism through urban literary media in the nineteenth century took place in two widely separated periods: the early 1840s and the 1890s. In each of these periods economic depression affected most of Australia. Deep and prolonged economic crisis sapped the confidence of colonial materialism particularly in the cities and gave rise to a temporary and introverted search for new values. In rural areas periods of drought and low prices were a fact of life and the attitude towards economic adversity was perhaps more philosophical. The nationalistic phase of the 1840s has received little attention except in the work of George Nadel:

The climax of this patriotic mood . . . came with the *N.S.W. Magazine or Journal of General Politics, Literature, Science, and the Arts* (1843). It declared its first principle to be the unity of all classes and the avoidance of controversy, without which the great aim 'Advance Australia' could never be realised. Enough of religious and political truth was held in common by all classes—it was the age of Irish mass migration—to prevent dissention in the colony, whatever the state of the old world. It paid much attention to the depression of the times, and sought to illuminate all aspects of colonial existence, the colonial muse as well as the colonial economy.¹³

This mood vanished in the gold boom of the 1850s and the succeeding three decades of prosperity. During the long boom period between 1860 and 1890 the energies, aspirations and loyalties of colonial Australians were channelled into a system of metropolitan provincialism which in local Australian terms was largely self-sufficient. In the 1890s a second deep and prolonged depression and another intensive search for new values coincided with a radical change in the attitude towards capital cities. The pre-1890 boom reached its climax in the capital cities in the 1880s, with feverish speculation in urban buildings and land. In the collapse which followed Australians did not need 'muckrakers'¹⁴ or Henry Lawson to tell them that something had gone wrong with their cities in political and moral, as well as economic and financial, terms. The optimism and provincial metropolitan pride of the 1830s disintegrated during the scandals, hardships and uncertainties of the 1890s.¹⁵

Before 1890 the nearest approximation to nationalism in Australia took the form of metropolitanism, and Asa Briggs in *Victorian Cities* has made an interesting comparison between nineteenth-century Australia and provincial England. As Briggs points out:

¹³Nadel, George, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹⁴A group of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American writers who pointed out the evils of city life and government.

¹⁵See Cannon, Michael, *op. cit.*

children or minors, and in terms of influence the natives were easily outweighed by the overseas-born. Of people entitled to vote in 1891, only 36 per cent had been born in N.S.W.; a further 8 per cent had been born in other parts of Australia and New Zealand; the rest were British or foreign-born. It should also be borne in mind that of the Australian-born a very large proportion were children of immigrants. Birthplace, of course, is not necessarily a good indicator of national sentiment—particularly in Australian circumstances. The national hero—Ned Kelly—was born in Australia yet in the ‘Jerilderie Letter’ he speaks as an Irishman rather than an Australian; and in the present century at least two Australian-born Prime Ministers have been accused of being more English than Australian.

While we may question some of the inferences and methodology of Australian social historiography and commentary, and while we may remain a little sceptical of literary and statistical evidence as to the dominance of a particular type of national character by the 1890s, this does not detract from the great significance of that decade in Australian history. What emerged from the economic distress, droughts, industrial unrest and political flux of the 1890s was not republicanism, or even extreme nationalism, but the partial subjugation of inter-metropolitan rivalry and the emergence of a weak federal structure which still reflected this rivalry. The features of Australian settlement, which have been touched upon in the two previous chapters, gave rise to a series of widely dispersed coastal urban clusters which developed in relative isolation from each other. In a vast continent with inadequate transport facilities, this was perhaps the most efficient means of promoting rapid regional development. The metropolitan capitals looked to London rather than to each other and there was little functional specialisation between them. Yet, as development progressed, regional or metropolitan provincialism, while remaining basically viable and dominant, became increasingly inadequate and inefficient in certain areas of economic and political activity. Transport and other links between cities developed and economic functions, especially in the larger capitals, began to reach a level of sophistication which demanded a wider market than the immediate metropolitan hinterland. Banks, finance houses, marketing establishments, trade unions and political groups gradually widened the scope of their activities by developing agencies, affiliations and outlets in other capitals. As communications improved inter-colonial activities extended and some signs of urban specialisation began to emerge. In the path of these tendencies, *piecemeal* and varied tariff, fiscal, loan, labour, land and migration policies in different colonies became increasingly vexatious if not disadvantageous. Vested interests in different sections of the community began to realise that a political compromise with metropolitan regionalism could convey substantial benefits. While these tendencies were apparent before 1890 they were of only minor influence. The events of the 1890s were a catalyst in promoting a reaction which gave them

relationship with its hinterland. However, in Australian circumstances this process was to some extent reversed, in that cities developed *in advance* of their hinterlands. With the possible exception of wool, most Australian rural industries developed, initially, in order to supply an existing urban market.

While economic forces were a vital element in determining Australian urban structure and growth, the response to those forces was neither simple nor pre-determined. If Australia had been settled at an earlier time than 1788 (say, at the same time as North America), it is unlikely that two-thirds of the population would have been urban-dwellers by 1890. Some Australian economic historians have implicitly regarded the developing Australian economy in the nineteenth century as a colonial sheeprun forming part of the effective hinterland of Britain’s growing industrial and commercial cities. While this simplified view is not acceptable, it may still contain an element of truth. Australia was settled at a time when economic changes in Britain and Europe were transforming the international economy. Instead of developing a semi-subsistence or peasant-type economy, rural Australia developed, at least from the 1820s onwards, a high degree of occupational specialisation which reflected its comparative advantages in international trade. Land use was dominated by the wool industry which was highly productive, specialised and commercialised. Australia had no equivalent of the peasant masses in Europe who, despite their inertia, were slowly driven from the land by economic adversity and the relative attractions of urban employment. As Weber pointed out:

... the nineteenth century requires few workers on the land. In European countries the process of agglomeration proceeds more slowly because the superfluous agriculturalists have been brought up on the farm, and have to overcome the inertia of their position in order to find their true place in the industrial organism. ... But in Australia the mass of the population has been in the seaboard cities, where the immigrants land, and consequently has no such inertia to overcome. Australia is therefore the representative of the new order of things, toward which the modern world is advancing.²

The work of Professors Butlin, Blainey and others has shown that earlier historians tended to exaggerate and misunderstand the role of the wool industry in Australian economic development. In the period before 1830, jail services, commissariat-supply, and whaling and sealing were at various times more important than wool as a source of employment and earnings (and in promoting urban growth). For at least two decades after 1850 wool was superseded by gold, and even after 1870, when wool became the leading export-earner, it did not dominate employment or the course of Australian economic activity. If there was any period in

which Australia rode heavily 'on the sheep's back' it was during the two decades after 1830. It is interesting to note that at this time Sydney's share of New South Wales population reached a minimum level of approximately 25 per cent.

While we cannot adopt a 'blanket' explanation in terms of wool, the industry undoubtedly played a significant role in Australian urbanisation. It was a highly productive and profitable industry with low and declining labour requirements in relation to capital investment and land use. It was a major source of export earnings and attracted labour and, particularly, capital from overseas. Wool was produced by widely-dispersed individuals and small groups who created relatively little scope for the development of substantial inland urban centres. Rather than dealing in country towns, graziers tended to collect their annual wool cheque in a coastal capital before disappearing into the interior with six months' or a year's supplies. The transport facilities and long routes which served the wool-grower tended to converge on the coastal capitals, and activities which serviced and supplied the industry and marketed its produce concentrated in the capital cities.³ The earnings of these metropolitan activities, together with government revenue (including the proceeds of land sales), formed an increasing share of the cost of wool production.

Where and when non-pastoral primary activities (mining, agriculture) developed, the population density of rural settlement was usually higher and local economic linkages were stronger and more extensive. In these circumstances country towns occurred more frequently, in spatial terms, and had better growth prospects. Largely because relative profitability was so heavily in favour of wool, and because employment opportunities were available in urban areas, the extent of non-pastoral rural activity before 1890 was limited. Mining, where it persisted on a substantial scale, tended to become an urban industry.

In the period after the goldrush Australia's greatly increased workforce was absorbed, very largely, by urban areas. The important point to note is *not* that people were kept off the land by graziers, but that they were able, because of urban employment opportunities, to avoid becoming emigrants or a deprived, semi-subsistence peasantry.

The work of N. G. Butlin has shown that it is more meaningful to interpret Australian economic development in terms of factor mobility (the inflow of labour and capital) and investment and employment patterns, than as a direct function of wool exports.⁴ Throughout the nineteenth century, except during depression periods, and particularly during the prosperous years between 1850 and 1890, Australia was a heavy net-importer of capital. This heavy importation of capital meant

they have been ignored by historians who give a good deal of attention to other literary works. Yet it could be argued that, as a social commentary, the work of a writer who has successfully catered for popular taste should, other things being equal, be more useful than a literary work which represents only the inner thoughts of a gifted individual. However, the temptation to use the work of Dennis and other writers in order to define an Australian urban character must be resisted. The use of literature as historical evidence (as opposed to illustration) is not an adequate substitute for lack of information. Would it be possible, for instance, to write an accurate social history of the English Industrial Revolution in terms of its contemporary poetry? Or a social history of the 1960s on the basis of the songs of the Beatles and other groups? Could we get a fair sample of Australian contemporary thought by taking a cross-section of the sentiments expressed in songs sung on the nation's most popular radio station? The Australian nineteenth-century bush songs and ballads collected by Paterson and others may or may not represent Australian rural values. Paterson was interested primarily in 'Australian' songs, yet it seems quite possible that English, Irish, Scottish and American songs, which Paterson did not collect, were much more widely known and sung. In fact many of the songs which are regarded as Australian were, in origin, neither Australian nor rural. The most popular songs of the early nineteenth century were 'street-ballads' written by professional and semi-professional balladists in Dublin, London and other lesser cities including Sydney. Later in the century entertainment in taverns and 'music hall' theatres in British, American and Australian cities became perhaps the major source of popular song. While some 'street-ballads', sea shanties and music hall songs were adapted to suit bush settings and characters, their themes as well as melodies tended to remain intact. Where adaptation took place it seems not unreasonable to suspect that rhyme often took precedence over reason—particularly since the adaptors were not aware that they were writing social history!

Literary evidence of the emergence of national character is suspect and dangerous. While more reliable types of historical evidence exist, these too must be handled with extreme caution. For example, much has been made of the declining proportion of immigrants in Australian total population. By 1890 nearly three-quarters of the inhabitants of Australia were native-born Australians. In 1894, T. A. Coghlan pointed out that in New South Wales: 'Not until the year 1861 did the Australian-born exceed those of British birth, and not until 1871 did the Australasian-born exceed those of British and foreign birth together; but there is practically no such thing as yet as an Australian type, although there is one in the process of making.'¹² At the 1891 census in New South Wales, 72 per cent of the population were native-born Australians, but the majority of these were

¹²Coghlan, T. A., *General Report on the Eleventh Census of N.S.W.*, Sydney (1894), p. 181.

³See Barnard, Alan (ed), *The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900*, Melbourne University Press (1958).

⁴Butlin, N. G., *op. cit.*

largely as a convenient and colourful means of portraying social extremes of various kinds.

Australia's most widely-read poet in the past was not Henry Lawson or A. B. ('Banjo') Paterson, but C. J. Dennis, whose most popular works dealt with larrikin types. Born in Auburn, South Australia, in 1876 and raised in country towns by his maiden aunts, Dennis went through many vicissitudes and occupations in early manhood, before retreating to a bush shack at Toolangi—forty miles east of Melbourne. This introverted bachelor of modest physique, in a somewhat strange bush setting, made his reputation by writing poems about a manly urban type with whom he had neither familiarity nor much in common.¹⁰ A little earlier, a perhaps equally eccentric character, Henry Lawson, haunting the lanes and hotels of Sydney, had made his reputation largely by writing about 'the spirit that is roused beyond the range'.

Dennis's best known works had little literary merit and were written to meet popular taste rather than to express his own views on larrikins or life in general.¹¹ His portrayal of larrikin character owed more to imagination and the works of Louis Stone and others than to authenticity. In doggerel verse making use of stylised dialect, and in a highly sentimental and somewhat condescending fashion, Dennis presented his readers with a series of larrikin characters who were almost saintly by comparison with the types portrayed by other writers—including Lawson. Ginger Mick ('A rorty boy, a naughty boy, wiv rude ixpressions thick') was a rabbit hawker ('e pencilled fer a bookie; an' 'e 'awked a bit, did Mick') with a rough exterior which hid a soft heart.

The immense popularity of Dennis's larrikin poems (which were staged, filmed and recorded, as well as read) is attributable in part to the skill with which he was able to meet the demands of popular taste, and to the fact that during the 1914-18 war he had a captive and somewhat deprived market in the trenches. The decision to enlist Ginger Mick in the A.I.F. and send him to war, and the decision of his publishers to issue pocket editions for men in the trenches, added greatly to his success. In his portrayal of the courtship and marriage of 'The Bloke' and Doreen, the army life and death of Ginger Mick, and the life of Digger Smith on his soldier settlement block, Dennis touched upon issues and sentiments which interested and appealed to the average Australian. In other works of greater literary merit, such as the *Glugs of Ghosh* (1917), where Dennis did not strike these chords, he met with little popular success.

Despite the undoubted appeal and success of Dennis's larrikin poems,

¹⁰Chisholm, A. H., *The Making of a Sentimental Bloke. A Sketch of the Remarkable Character of C. J. Dennis*, Melbourne University Press (1946), and McLaren, I. F., *C. J. Dennis, His Life and Work*, Hallcraft, Prahran, Vic. (1961).

¹¹His works dealing with larrikin types included: *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* (1915; pocket ed., 1916); *The Moods of Ginger Mick* (1916; pocket ed., 1916); *Doreen* (1917); *Digger Smith* (1918).

that Australia was able to obtain a large volume of imported goods and services which were not being paid for by *current* export earnings. Without capital inflow Australia would not have been able to sustain such a large non-export (and increasingly urban) workforce at a level of income which, by any international comparison, was extremely high.

In any newly settled area there is likely to be a shortage of capital equipment; the large aggregate population increase in Australia during the 1850s, and succeeding decades, greatly intensified this shortage at a time when British investors were becoming increasingly willing to make funds available to Australian borrowers, and particularly to colonial governments. During the period 1860-1890 overseas borrowing was more important than domestic savings as a source of investment funds. Urban house-building, the construction of transport and communications facilities, grazing, and local authority works (in that order of magnitude) absorbed the major part of Australian investment. Each of these main avenues of investment, in one way or another, tended to promote urbanisation, and a very large part of total investment was directly concerned with the physical extension of urban areas. Thus the process of urbanisation was perhaps the dominant influence on the pattern of Australian capital investment in this period.

A detailed examination of capital inflows, the mobilisation of funds, and investment processes is not possible here and readers are referred to the works of N. G. Butlin, A. R. Hall and A. C. Kelley.⁵ However, one general hypothesis put forward by Hall is directly relevant and should be mentioned. The suggestion is that in a situation of substantial and sustained capital and labour inflow, in an export-orientated economy such as Australia, a bias in favour of non-export (largely urban) activity may develop as a result of relative price changes. Whereas non-export industries may be able to pass on cost increases by raising their prices, export industries selling into competitive world markets are unable to do so. If production costs in export industries rise in relation to overseas prices, the profitability of export activity may decline and relative profitability may shift in favour of non-export activity:

A reduction of profitability in the initial field of investment might not ... of itself bring the process of capital importing to an end. The profit opportunities generated by the relative shift of prices in favour of non-traded goods (building in particular) might be sufficient in themselves to act as a magnet for further capital inflows, ...

If the autonomous element is investment in land (wool in Australia, beef in the Argentine, wheat in Canada); if the consequential process of production from land is not of a labour-intensive character; and if there are simultaneous inflows

⁵See Bibliography.

of labour and capital; then the technical conditions are likely to be such that urbanisation is an inevitable consequence.⁶

The economics of Australian urbanisation have, then, been approached implicitly by economic historians from two angles:

First, in terms of a non-labour-intensive but highly profitable form of land use—grazing. It has already been suggested that, as a means of explaining Australia's high degree of urbanisation, this approach is inadequate. An economic system which requires few people on the land does not necessarily require many in the city. Also, we cannot ignore the importance of non-pastoral primary activities which appear to have had important economic linkages with urban areas—these include whaling and sealing, mining and agriculture. In fact, if there was any correlation between urbanisation or metropolitanisation and dependence on the wool industry in particular colonies, the correlation was, in the long run, inverse. The most highly metropolitanised colonies in 1901—South Australia and Victoria—were probably less dependent upon the wool industry than were the other colonies which had proportionally smaller urban populations.

The second angle of approach by economic historians has been in terms of capital and labour inflow and investment patterns. While this second approach is much more useful than the first, it must be supplemented by direct investigations of specifically urban economic activities. An examination of the structure of urban employment is one of the best indicators available of urban functions, economic and social structure, and the elements of urban growth. So far, few studies of this type have been undertaken. While employment information is obtainable from later nineteenth-century census returns, its usefulness is limited by unsatisfactory and inconsistent classifications of occupations and industries.⁷ The most important source of urban employment in Australia—tertiary or service activity (administration, professional, personal and domestic services, distribution, transport and communications)—has received insufficient attention from theoretical and applied economists, as well as from economic historians. However, N. G. Butlin has drawn attention to the economic role and previously unrecognised importance of two major sources of urban employment in the secondary sector: manufacturing and building.

While the development of manufacturing in Australia during the second half of the nineteenth century was subject to a number of retarding influences (smallness of scale; high and rising costs, especially of labour; technical inefficiency; increasing import competition; shortage

⁶Hall, A. R., *The London Capital Market and Australia, 1870-1914*, Australian National University Press, Canberra (1963), pp. 195-6.

⁷See Crook, D. P., 'Occupations of the People of Brisbane: An Aspect of Urban Society in the 1880s', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 37, November 1961, pp. 50-64.



11 Portrait of C. J. Dennis

in attention. In poems, plays, novels and music hall productions, larrikin types were used to portray brutality, sex, crime and 'low life' in general. At the same time there was an element of sympathy with the larrikin, and many productions featured a larrikin humour which has been compared with slum wit in the London cockney or costermonger tradition.

As a whole, the larrikin literature is highly imaginative rather than descriptive, and of doubtful worth as historical evidence. In *Bulletin* poems, by Lawson, Dennis and others, in Phil May's cartoons, and in poetic works and novels published elsewhere,⁹ larrikins were used very

⁹Apart from *Bulletin* publications and the works of C. J. Dennis, the best known larrikin literature includes: Pratt, Ambrose, *The King of the Rocks*, London (1900) and *The Great 'Push' Experiment*, London (1902); Stone, Louis, *Jonah*, Sydney (1911); Dyson, Edward, *Fac'ry 'ands*, Sydney (1912).

local character, which went hand in hand with chauvinism, was by no means entirely directed towards the bush, nor was it entirely a product of the 1890s.⁶ Historians have largely ignored the substantial literary attention given to the urban larrikin—perhaps the closest city equivalent to the bush workers.

The street gang was a common phenomenon in cities throughout the world and the larrikin was perhaps the Australian version of the English hooligan, the American 'Bowery Boy' or the French 'Apache'. The first Sydney larrikins were 'currency lads', known in the 1840s as 'the Cabbage Tree Mob'. The gang or 'push', which the larrikin moved in, existed primarily for amusement which varied from violence, rowdiness and petty crime to dances, picnics and excursions. In the 'push', quite distinctive patterns of speech, dress and behaviour developed. At one time larrikins appear to have favoured a dress which featured, for women, feathers and high-heeled shoes and for men 'a short coat with a velvet collar, an open vest, and a narrow neck-tie, bell-bottomed trousers, and a soft felt hat with a broad stiff brim.'⁷ But by the 1890s this particular distinctiveness had largely disappeared. Nevertheless, from the early 1890s, larrikinism began to attract an increasing amount of attention.

The term 'larrikin' is of obscure origin and was used somewhat indiscriminately and applied equally to playful youths, teenagers, gangs, louts, loafers, rogues, thugs and tearaways. Certainly larrikins were drawn from the lowest social strata in Australian cities. While their ranks included professional thieves and people living off casual or immoral earnings, the majority were almost certainly wage-earners in more respectable full-or part-time employment. In its most particular sense the term 'larrikin' was applied to members of the street gangs which harassed and terrorised respectable citizens in streets and public places especially after dark. Nat Gould, who attributed larrikinism to cheap meat, was particularly forthright in his condemnation: 'These human brutes look like some foul excrescence upon the earth when seen in the Botanical Gardens.'⁸ To Gould the larrikins portrayed every kind of human vice and dissipation, and were 'idle, dissolute youths' who combined together for the purpose of waging war on society. Gould's views have a familiar ring and may be attributed in part to the perennial clash between older and younger generations, and perhaps also to an excessively narrow definition of the type. In its early and less radical days the *Bulletin* attacked larrikins and in 1882 its editors were jailed as a result of legal proceedings arising from one of these attacks.

As a literary and theatrical theme larrikinism rivalled the 'bush hero'

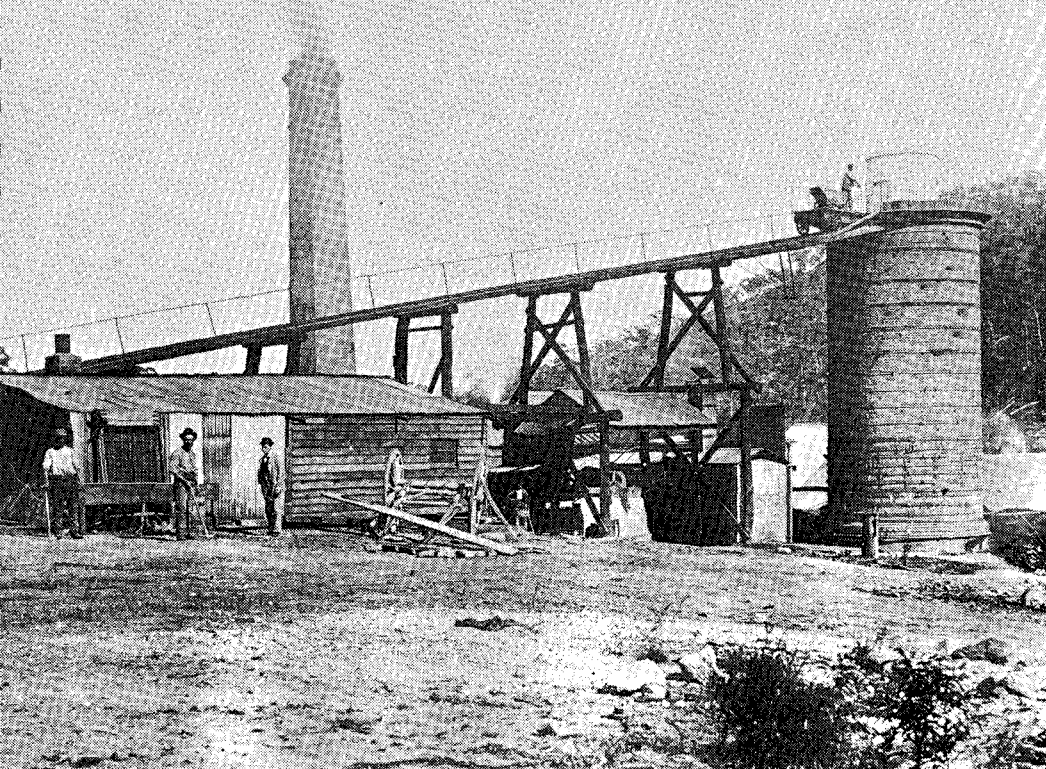
⁶ For example Furphy J., *Such is Life* (1903); O'Dowd, B., *The Bush* (1912); see later comment on C. J. Dennis.

⁷ Buley, E. C., *Australian Life in Town and Country*, London (1905), p. 86.

⁸ Gould, Nat, *Town and Bush: Stray Notes on Australia*, London (1896), p. 77.

of capital; and lack of skilled labour) these retarding influences appear to have been outweighed by favourable influences (the existence of a prosperous and increasingly-concentrated consumer market; the inflow of labour, capital and 'know-how' from overseas; the existence of relatively cheap female and juvenile labour in urban areas; government assistance in the form of revenue and protective tariffs and contracts; protection from import competition afforded by distance, bulk and perishability; repair and servicing needs of imported equipment; and stimulus from other economic activities—agriculture, mining, grazing, transport and building). Manufacturing rose from insignificance to become a major contributor to National Product (10.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1900), but was most significant as an employer of labour. By 1891 manufacturing employed approximately 17 per cent of the total Australian workforce and employed a much higher percentage of workers in urban areas. While the relationship between manufacturing and urbanisation is basically one of circular causation, there is some evidence for an argument that, in Australia, urbanisation gave rise to manufacturing—contrary to the situation in Britain and other countries. In British economic history it is possible to talk of factories giving rise to towns; in Australia towns appear to have given rise to factories. Certainly a high degree of urbanisation had been achieved in Australia long before manufacturing became significant. In 1861, when approximately 40 per cent of Australians lived in cities or towns, manufacturing accounted for less than 4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. The subsequent growth of manufacturing must have played an important part in raising urbanisation well above the already high level of 1861.

Manufacturing activity was by no means entirely metropolitan, or even urban; flour mills, tanneries and other such establishments were more frequent in rural areas. Nevertheless, the pull of metropolitan areas was apparent and in terms of manufacturing output and employment, if not in number of establishments, they became increasingly dominant. Manufacturing establishments tended to be small-scale, technically primitive and inefficient. Production was labour-intensive and relied to some extent upon relatively cheap labour. One of the largest sectors—textiles and clothing—relied heavily on low-cost female labour. The dominant manufacturing groups were: textiles and clothing; metals and machinery; building materials; and food, drink and tobacco. However, the relative importance of these groups varied between colonies and cities and over time. In terms of output, employment and number of establishments, 'Free Trade' New South Wales and 'Protectionist' Victoria dominated the manufacturing scene and were close rivals in this sphere as in most others. Each colony claimed to be doing better than the other in industrial development, and each accused the other of including lemonade bottlers, retail establishments and the like in its factory statistics. Unfortunately, these accusations were not without



4 A rural factory

foundation. At the present time, given the need for further research and the poverty of available data, it is impossible to be very specific about the course of urban manufacturing development. Nevertheless, the aggregate importance of manufacturing has been made clear by N. G. Butlin and the contribution of this sector to urbanisation during the second half of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly large.

The building industry absorbed about one-third of total Australian investment (more than any other single activity) during the period 1860-1890, and in 1891 directly employed approximately 14 per cent of the workforce. If we bear in mind the important economic linkages (building supplies; financial institutions and agencies; wages) and note that the building boom was overwhelmingly urban and increasingly metropolitan, the importance of this sector in the urbanisation process will be obvious. As Butlin points out, in the nineteenth century housing development raced ahead of the provision of other urban facilities: 'Australian towns and cities grew primarily as a sprawl of detached cottages with only primitive commercial, industrial and social equipment.'⁸

⁸Butlin, N. G., *op. cit.*, p. 213.

fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when these qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable, and, above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he thinks they may be in the wrong. No epithet in his vocabulary is more completely damning than 'scab', unless it be 'pimp'. . . . He tends to be a rolling stone, highly suspect if he should chance to gather much moss.²

Statements of this kind may or may not produce an emotional response; but even in these days of opinion surveys, when quantitative information about social and political attitudes is frequently obtained, they remain as untested, impressionistic generalisations:

Considered as empirical assertions about Australian society or Australians as a set of persons, these statements are, in the strictest sense, meaningless: there is no way of giving empirical content to them as they stand. To do so would require changing them to statements like 'a random sample of adult Australians, answering questionnaire items from the F scale, had an average score for authoritarianism which was x points lower (or higher) than the average score of a random sample of Americans (or Germans, Britons, etc.)'—which is a very different matter.³

In view of the hackneyed, ill-defined and untestable nature of the characteristics which are attributed to the national type, historians may perhaps be forgiven for not having taken them seriously, or for regarding them as being, very largely, a literary creation with little real historical basis. However, Russel Ward has shown that throughout the nineteenth century the characteristics *attributed* to bush workers add up, more or less, to his (previously-quoted) definition of the traditional view of the national character. Thus he suggests a *real* historical basis for this character ('ethos', 'mystique', 'legend') in the behaviour and attitudes of bush workers from pre-goldrush times. What Ward does not attempt to explain is how, or why, the 'bush virtues' came to be accepted by the nation as a whole. Why, paradoxically, did one of the most highly urbanised countries in the world seek its national inspiration in the bush?

The ideas of Russel Ward and his precursor, Vance Palmer,⁴ rest heavily upon folksong and literary work published, particularly, by the *Bulletin* during the 1890s. The *Bulletin* romanticised Australian rural character, with particular emphasis on 'mateship', and argued the politics of nationalism and republicanism. In the opinion of some, 'The symptoms of republicanism and extreme nationalism at this time have probably been dwelt upon since by historians to such an extent that they have loomed out of all proportion in our times.'⁵ Yet the literary search for distinct

²Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne (1958), pp. 1-2.

³Connell, R. W., 'Images of Australia', *Quadrant*, March 1968, p. 18.

⁴Palmer, Vance, *The Legend of the Nineties*, Melbourne University Press (1954).

⁵Birch, A. and Macmillan, D. S. (eds), *The Sydney Scene, 1788-1960*, Melbourne University Press (1962), p. 177.

4 Towards an Urban Interpretation of Australian History

If Victoria in 1900, instead of joining the Australian federation, had become an independent republic, historians might now be tracing and finding the origins of Victorian nationalism in the goldrush period or even earlier. In history it is possible to find *supporting* evidence for almost any remotely reasonable hypothesis. It would be possible, for instance, to gather voluminous evidence *in support* of a view that in the nineteenth century Australia was a rabidly anti-Catholic, or anti-Irish, country; but in order to test such a view properly, it would be necessary, and much more important, to examine contrary evidence.

Any historical quest for the Australian nation or national character should be extremely wary of contemporary definition and prejudice and should examine contrary, as well as supporting, evidence for the existence of certain characteristics in the past.

In a brilliant pioneer work,¹ published in 1930, W. K. Hancock gathered together a number of generalisations and impressions relating to Australian society and character, and put forward a collection of hypotheses. Since that time, a long succession of writers—all of them lacking Hancock's historical insight and skill in presentation—have rendered these generalisations stale by frequent repetition, magnification and misuse. In popular mythology Australians are supposed to be identifiable by a set of characteristics, variously defined and sometimes contradictory. Russel Ward has outlined these attributed characteristics as follows:

According to the myth the 'typical Australian' is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing 'to have a go' at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough'. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is 'the world's best confidence man', he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he is a great 'knocker' of eminent people, unless, as in the case of his sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a

The goldrush left Australia with an intense shortage of housing. In the three decades after 1860 there were three successively larger building booms in urban areas, culminating in the major metropolitan booms of the 1880s and over-supply of houses and collapse of the market in the early 1890s. Building reached a peak in different cities at different times; the major boom affected Sydney in the first half of the 1880s, and reached incredible heights in Melbourne in the late 1880s. In each city the boom went far beyond the housing market and became an urban land boom, with suburban subdivision and land speculation extending far ahead of building. Collapse gave rise to a desperate scramble for funds amongst the financial institutions concerned and widespread frauds and bankruptcies.⁹

While shelter is a basic human need, the way in which the demand for houses becomes economically effective, and is supplied, is an extremely complex process which depends upon a variety of demographic influences (marriages; migration, and natural increase in population; age structure; and distribution) and economic or social influences (headship-rates; vacancies; rents; prices; incomes; building costs; technology; taste; and the availability of credit), and in changes over time in the relative importance of these influences. While these are matters for future investigation and debate, it seems likely that any long-run explanation of building activity will rest most heavily on demographic influences. However, in the short run economic and social influences appear to have dominated the course of activity.

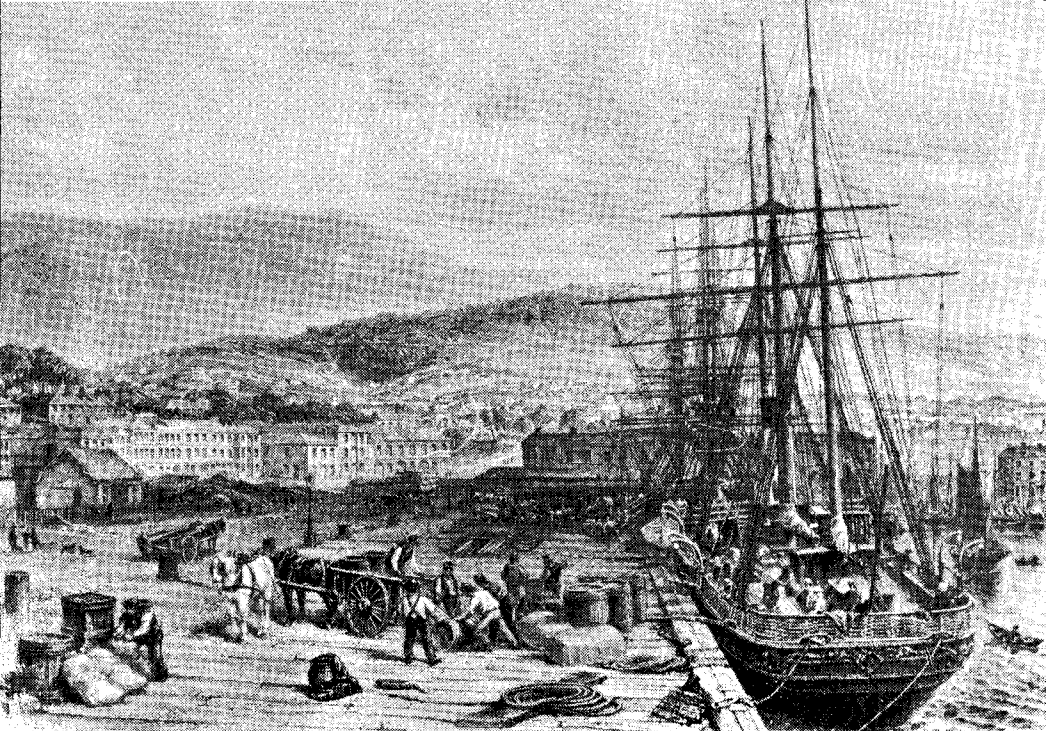
The building boom was the most important physical manifestation of Australian urbanisation. When historians can explain why the building boom occurred, and why it was overwhelmingly urban, they will be approaching an understanding of the urbanisation process in general.

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

If the Chinese, instead of the British, had settled Australia, physical geography would have been the same but the degree and pattern of urbanisation might have been quite different.

Influences such as rainfall (and lack of it), temperatures, soil fertility, relief, geology, coastal morphology, and distance have made their contribution to Australian urbanisation; but these influences only achieve significance in relation to other, non-physical, factors. Natural resources such as, for example, iron ore can only be assessed in terms of markets and technology; in the absence of demand and technical means of exploitation, they are worthless.

While geographical influences are not basic, they cannot be dismissed as unimportant. If the interior of Australia had been wetter, milder and more fertile; if the narrow coastal plain of eastern Australia had not been overhung by 'mountain' barriers; and if there had been several long and



5 The Quay at Hobart in the 1860s, drawn from one of the earliest photographs.

easily navigable rivers, or inlets, extending into the interior, then the pattern of settlement would not have been as it was. In these terms we can begin to explain why Australian land use took a predominantly pastoral form, and why settlement clung to the coastal fringes, but we cannot explain the degree of urbanisation and the nature and extent of urban growth simply in terms of geographical influences.

Geographers have given a great deal of their attention to location patterns and urban functions. While there is a substantial and growing volume of literature on abstract and applied location theory, its direct usefulness seems limited in Australian circumstances.¹⁰ In the majority of cases Australian urban sites were selected *in advance* of settlement in surrounding areas, and subsequently irrelevant considerations determined many locations. Many Australian urban centres seem to have grown in spite of, rather than because of, their location. Once sites had been determined, institutional influences (especially political) were often sufficiently strong to overcome relative locational disadvantages.

The original capital city sites were chosen by men who had to make hasty decisions on the basis of very limited and sometimes inaccurate information. If Captain Phillip had sailed south, instead of north, after rejecting Botany Bay as a suitable site for settlement, the capital of New

during the nineteenth century were not, as a rule, noted for their appeal to the eye, each Australian capital had its river, bay, parks, beaches and garden suburbs which remained relatively free from the scars of industrialisation. While Adelaide alone could be described as a planned city—and even there only in loose terms—in all capitals attempts were made to preserve recreational areas which compensated for the ugliness and monotony of real estate development. In Sydney, where urban planning and supervision of expansion were least extensive and effective, the extraordinary beauty of the site survived man's efforts to destroy it.

Apart from their aesthetic appeal, the capitals offered comfort, contact and security which were highly prized by the immigrant population. The standards of urban amenities, particularly housing, were far superior to those in rural areas. Above all, however, the cities offered a richer way of life in terms of recreation, entertainment, culture and educational opportunities at all levels. By 1890 the range of opportunities offered in these fields by Sydney and Melbourne compared more than favourably with those of any English city apart from London. Australian workers were more affluent and worked shorter hours than their British counterparts. The popular institutions of the day—theatres, hotels, clubs, institutes, sporting clubs—tended to concentrate and proliferate in metropolitan areas which served non-metropolitan as well as metropolitan populations. It is worth noting at this point that graziers, shearers and other rural wage-earners visited metropolitan areas more frequently than small farmers, and many of them maintained dwellings and families in the capitals.

While the country towns also fulfilled important recreational, social and cultural functions,¹³ the capital cities did so out of all proportion to their size. The work of George Nadel has given some indication of the rich urban field which awaits exploration by Australian social historians.¹⁴ Urban cultural and recreational institutions did more than attract people and keep them in the cities—they influenced the way of life and the national character. These matters will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹³For an account of such activities in country towns see Buxton, G. L., *The Riverina, 1861-1891*, Melbourne University Press (1967).

¹⁴Nadel, George, *Australia's Colonial Culture: Ideas, Men and Institutions in Mid-Nineteenth Century Eastern Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1957).

¹⁰See Bibliography, in particular works by E. M. Hoover, Walter Isard, August Loesch and Alfred Weber.

home country, the heavy boots, the misshapen, unbecoming *[sic]* waistcoats, and trowsers *[sic]* ...?¹²

Slowness of adaptation was easier as well as more evident in urban areas—which represented the closest approximation to England in an alien land. The immigrants landed in urban areas and were inclined to remain there; however, they were prodigal in their use of urban land. The cheapness in relation to incomes, of urban and suburban land and building materials, permitted an increasing number of urban families to acquire their own houses on one-quarter and one-eighth acre blocks in outer-urban areas. By 1890 each Australian capital had its collection of sprawling suburbs which sacrificed some of the economic and other advantages of high-density living in the interests of space and privacy. However, the extent to which mushrooming suburbs dominated Australian nineteenth-century urban growth can easily be exaggerated. Before the advent of motor vehicles centrifugal tendencies in population distribution were constrained by the limitations of suburban employment and by public or private transport facilities linking suburbs with central business districts and industrial areas. While rail and tramway connections with outer suburban areas developed, it seems probable that the majority of wage-earners walked to work. While better-off urban-dwellers moved to attractive outer-suburbs, high density terraced housing (often for rental) was built to meet the needs of lower income groups in more central areas—which, because of administrative boundaries, were nominally suburban.

There is much historical evidence to support the view that many people preferred living in cities rather than in the bush or in country towns. Governments frequently deplored the unwillingness of immigrant and native-born workers to seek rural employment, even when urban areas were seriously oversupplied with labour. (High unemployment in urban areas was usually of short duration.) Even in these days of rapid transit and the extension of modern amenities such as electricity into rural areas, urban workers rarely retire to the bush and rural workers still, frequently, retire to urban areas. This pattern contrasts with retirement preferences in Western Europe. In the nineteenth century differences between the comforts of urban and rural living were much greater than at the present time. The 'subtle and not immediately apparent beauty' of the Australian bush was not appreciated by the British forebears who shied away from the discomforts and supposed terrors of life in the continental interior: extremes of heat and cold, flood and drought, loneliness, monotony, flies, snakes, hostile natives and bushrangers. While the bush offered neither comfort nor aesthetic consolation, the cities put forth these attractions in relative abundance.

Although the industrial cities which developed in Western Europe

¹²*New South Wales as it is: Or, the Adventures and Experiences of John Snodgrass*, Printed for the Author, Dublin (1864).

South Wales might have been situated at Jervis Bay, Twofold Bay, or elsewhere. Nowadays it seems beyond argument that Port Jackson was the best possible site, yet it has been pointed out that Sydney might have been better located at the mouth of the fertile Hunter River Valley, where access to the interior was easier.¹¹ The sites of Perth and Hobart, from the point of view of sea transport and land settlement, were possibly inferior to those of Launceston, Albany and Fremantle, yet Perth and Hobart prevailed. Perth was not even on the coast and the harbour at Fremantle (twelve miles downstream) was quite inadequate until extensive harbour improvements were carried out in the 1890s. Despite its fine harbour and closer access to main shipping routes, Albany was eclipsed by Fremantle as Western Australia's major port, yet Fremantle was unsuccessful in its attempts to replace Perth as the colonial capital.¹²

The magnetic advantages of an early start, coupled with the politics of vested interest and inertia, were sufficient to overcome relative locational disadvantages.

Australian country towns developed under government supervision in a relatively short span of years to fulfil broadly similar functions. As a result, they were and are still remarkably similar in character and appearance. Although a number of private townsites were established on private land, the great majority resulted from government or official survey, siting and subdivision.¹³ While town areas were, in theory, selected and reserved in advance of settlement, many of these reserves never became towns, and in many other cases townsites were surveyed and officially established after urban activities had commenced on unreserved land.

Urban functions contain the key to location and growth, but it must be remembered that urban areas attract functions which may not be directly related to their site, and the human element may outweigh geographical influences. In many Australian country towns, the energy and entrepreneurship of one or two outstanding individuals has been a vital element making for progress and expansion.¹⁴

While the origins and evolution of country towns varied, a number of basic general influences and patterns of development can be isolated and many of them are contained in the following description:

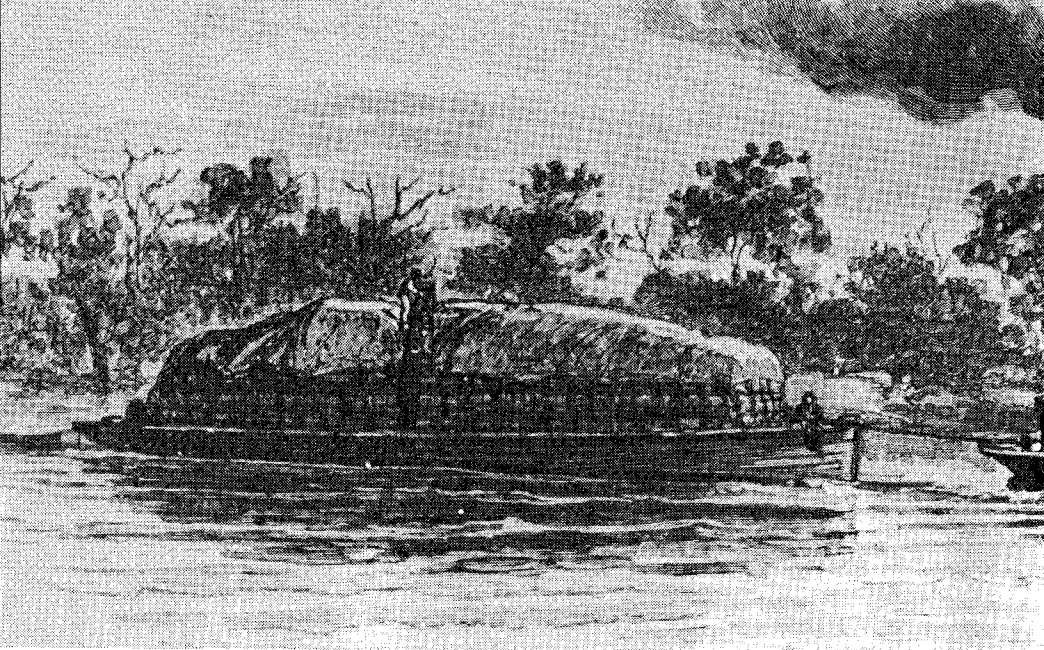
A 'bush' inn is established in some spot where some traffic passes, travellers require accommodation and there are settlers sufficiently near to ensure local custom. In a short time the same considerations

¹¹See Taylor, Thomas Griffith, *Australia. A Study of Warm Environments*, Methuen, London (1940, 7th ed. 1959).

¹²See Crowley, F. K., *Westralian Suburb: The History of South Perth*, Rigby, Adelaide (1962), p.1.

¹³Ryan, Bruce, 'A Paradigm of Country Town Development in N.S.W.', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Autumn 1964, pp. 2-19.

¹⁴See, for example, Priestley, Susan, *Echuca: A Centenary History*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane (1965).



success where economic and physical conditions favoured small-holdings (notably in parts of South Australia, Victoria and the Riverina) and promoted the development of country towns in such areas.

The overall failure of free selection is attributable to the relative profitability of the wool industry and the uneconomic nature of small agricultural and pastoral holdings, and to the ability of graziers to raise capital and to purchase their holdings in part or full. Many of those who succeeded in obtaining free selection blocks earned a miserable and precarious existence as 'cockies'—despised by town and country alike.¹¹ Those who did not abandon such holdings often survived by diversifying their activities and taking up non-farm work such as droving, shearing and contracting. (Some, including the Kelly family, diversified more dramatically than others.)

Despite government land policy, communities of small, independent farmers did not develop so extensively in Australia as in the United States, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, and the degree of nineteenth-century urbanisation in those countries (as a whole, but not necessarily in particular states or provinces) was much lower than in Australia. Carter Goodrich, Brian Fitzpatrick and others have argued that Australian circumstances gave rise to a 'Big Man's Frontier', in contrast to the 'Small Man's Frontier' of North America, and use this argument to explain not only Australia's relatively high degree of urbanisation but also its reputation for radical and collectivist tendencies. It has already been suggested that this view is an oversimplified one.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

It has already been suggested that if Australia, instead of being settled by the British and Irish, had been settled by a different nationality or race (the Spanish or the Chinese), the pattern of urbanisation might have been quite different. In this sense, cultural factors may be said to take precedence over all others. The people (convict and free) who settled Australia came from a rapidly urbanising society and the majority came from urban areas. They introduced a technology and a set of values which, in *Australian circumstances*, gave rise to a high degree of urbanisation.

While the British were responsive to the profit motive, in dress, housing and living habits they were slow in adapting themselves to Australian conditions:

How is it that Englishmen can be so stupid as to wear, in a climate where the glass is commonly at 90 in the shade, and sometimes even as high as 120, the black cloth frock and dress coat of the

¹¹ But made immortal as 'Dad and Dave' in Davis, A. H. ('Steele Rudd'), *On Our Selection* (1899).

given rise to particular land policies. In what may be an over-reaction to this approach, economic historians downgrade land policy to a position of virtual insignificance by arguing that economic circumstances dictated the course of development—making some land policies ineffective and others inevitable. In these circumstances the relationships (if any) between land policies and patterns of settlement are far from being clear.

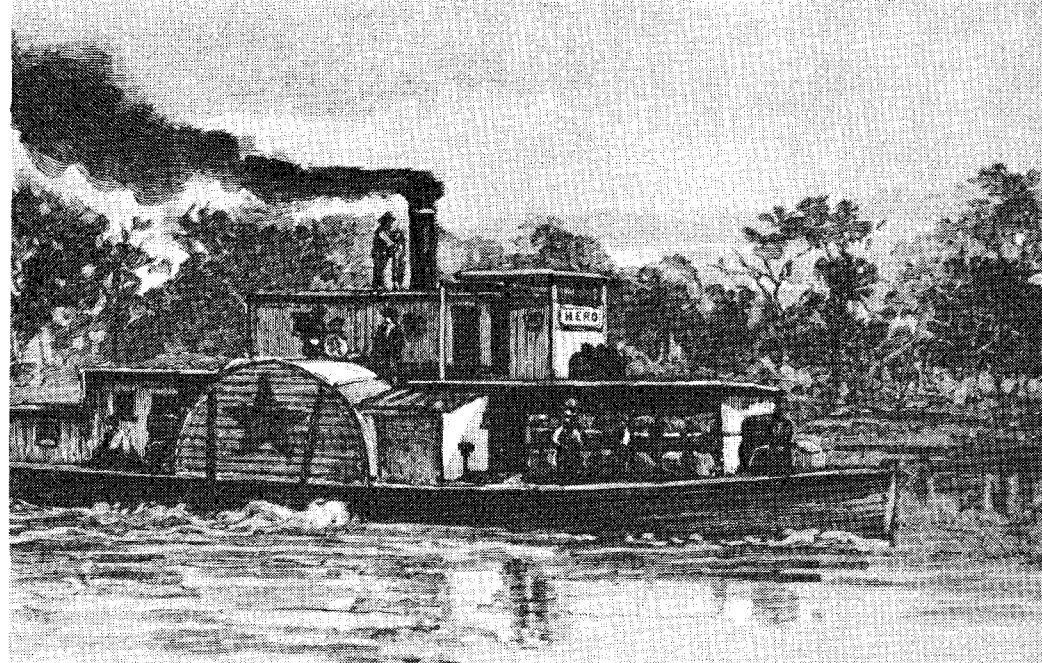
No Australian government deliberately attempted to promote urbanisation by its method of rural land allocation or disposal; in fact most land policies were aimed at settling more people on the land and thereby reducing the degree of urban population. Yet various types of land policy did have the effect of promoting urbanisation.

The attempts of the early Governors to establish emancipists and free settlers on small farms were not successful and subsequently land policy moved increasingly in the favour of large landholders. The pastoral leasehold system evolved partly as a result of economic circumstances, which favoured the meat and wool industries, and partly through the political influence and pressure of graziers against the opposition of colonial authorities. While grazing activity, through its economic linkages and profitability, promoted the growth of capital cities and the moderately high degree of urban centralisation before 1850, it is a misleading oversimplification to argue that graziers kept people off the land. In fact, wool-growing attracted labour and capital from overseas, opened up the interior, and promoted rapid inland settlement over a wide area. In the period before 1860 wool production was much more labour-intensive than it later became and graziers, generally, were undersupplied with labour. Nevertheless, the leasehold system gave rise to sparse, dispersed settlement, with limited local economic linkages, and may have been influential in delaying the development, in certain areas, of more intensive land use by small-scale agricultural proprietors.

Insofar as Wakefieldian principles were applied in Australia, they promoted urbanisation. Increased prices for Crown Lands after 1831 discouraged small-scale independent agricultural proprietors who could not afford the capital and land requirements of large-scale grazing. Rather than seeking wage employment in rural areas, many of those who were denied land preferred the urban alternative which was available.

The free selection Acts of the post-1860 period were promoted by urban interests and, ironically, their failure tended to enhance urban interests since graziers were compelled to purchase their leasehold areas at high prices. However, if free selection *had* taken place on a large-scale basis urban Australia might have made even greater absolute gains—Australia might have been able to support a much larger population, but with a lower *degree* of urbanisation.

While free selection, on the whole, was a failure, it achieved limited



6 Two modes of transport:
A bullock team, 1840
A wool barge on the Darling River

induce a blacksmith to settle down near at hand, and the attractions held out by these two having had the effect of drawing people to the locality, a store is opened. This increase of conveniences forms a great inducement to other people to take up their residence in the vicinity, and a post office is soon required for the augmented population. When this is secured, the town is regarded as being established; for the future it has only to grow. Other tradesmen follow; a second store is set up; another public house is opened; and the town assumes the appearance of a long straggling street with numerous gaps between the houses and a total disregard of style in the buildings. If, by any fortunate circumstance, the traffic through the town is materially increased, by so much does the town prosper through the extension of trade and addition to population. If there be also some local product, as timber, grain, or cattle; or should a manufactory be established, such as a flour mill or a tannery, the growth of the town is rapid. But should the local product be mineral—gold, silver, tin, or coal—the town ‘improves’ at an even quicker rate, and stores, hotels and workshops multiply as fast as the necessary buildings can be erected. All towns, however, are not thus fortunate. Some linger for many years in the earliest stage, and never advance beyond it, while others stop short in the march of improvement after having made considerable progress.¹⁵

Transport means and patterns were an important element in urban location and growth. Apart from mining centres such as Ballarat, the larger

¹⁵ Wilkins, W., *Australasia: A Descriptive and Pictorial Account of the Australian and New Zealand Colonies, and the Adjacent Lands*, London (1888), pp. 80-1.

centres were ports or had port facilities near at hand. As location theorists have pointed out, urban centres are most likely to develop in close proximity to the cheapest form of transport (water); where goods are transferred from one means of transport to another; and where the ownership of goods changes hands. Smaller inland centres developed at stopping places along transport routes, particularly where water was available and natural obstacles such as rivers were crossed. Bullock, horse and foot travel gave rise to small settlements and stopping places along routes. Some of these were able to develop into larger centres for their immediate localities, but the majority stagnated and decayed when railways, and at a later stage motor vehicles, became the dominant means of transport. In most parts of Australia, during the second half of the nineteenth century, when railways were built they followed existing land routes and connected existing urban centres. (The important exceptions were in wheat belt areas particularly in South Australia and Western Australia where railways gave rise to new towns at sidings and junctions.) Towns which were by-passed by railway links with coastal capitals were invariably doomed to relative oblivion.

The individual fortunes of particular country towns must be studied in relation to local conditions (site; transport; economic linkages with the region; local land use and the fortunes of dominant industries; local character) but these conditions in turn must be related to the broader framework of development. Because of the relative simplicity of such less studies, they have included some of the best works in Australian urban history. Unfortunately these are heavily outweighed by lesser works, of purely local interest, which fail to raise meaningful general questions and do not 'relate the parish pump to the cosmos'. While the general historians have, on the whole, failed to do justice to urban history, geographers have shown a more systematic and lasting interest in the subject. The application of their particular techniques has increased our understanding of Australian urban functions and structure and patterns of land use in central business districts, suburbs and country towns. Nevertheless, geographers are concerned with the present rather than the past and with a narrower range of activities than those which should interest the historian. Much of the urban history written by geographers has been largely descriptive and lacking in economic and historical insight. While the approach to urban history must, inevitably, be multi-disciplinarian, the present state of the subject in Australia suggests that economic historians have a special role to play in its future development.

towards Cunnamulla, with the same intention. Here was the 'vigorous policy of public works' which was to provide Australia with a heavy overseas debt burden and a cumbersome, inefficient and wasteful system of communications.⁹

Inter-city rivalry was seen at its keenest in the battle which raged over the trade of the rich Riverina district in southern New South Wales. Three cities had a claim to the trade of the area: Adelaide was situated near the mouth of the river system which provided the Riverina with its cheapest form of transport; Melbourne was more closely situated to the area than any other capital; yet, in terms of political control, the Riverina belonged to Sydney. Adelaide's links via the river system were eroded by railways connecting Melbourne with the Murray River, and the battle became essentially one between Melbourne and Sydney. In the long run Melbourne retained a dominant influence over the area, but its desire to extend not only railways but also its political hegemony north of the Murray was thwarted by Sydney.¹⁰

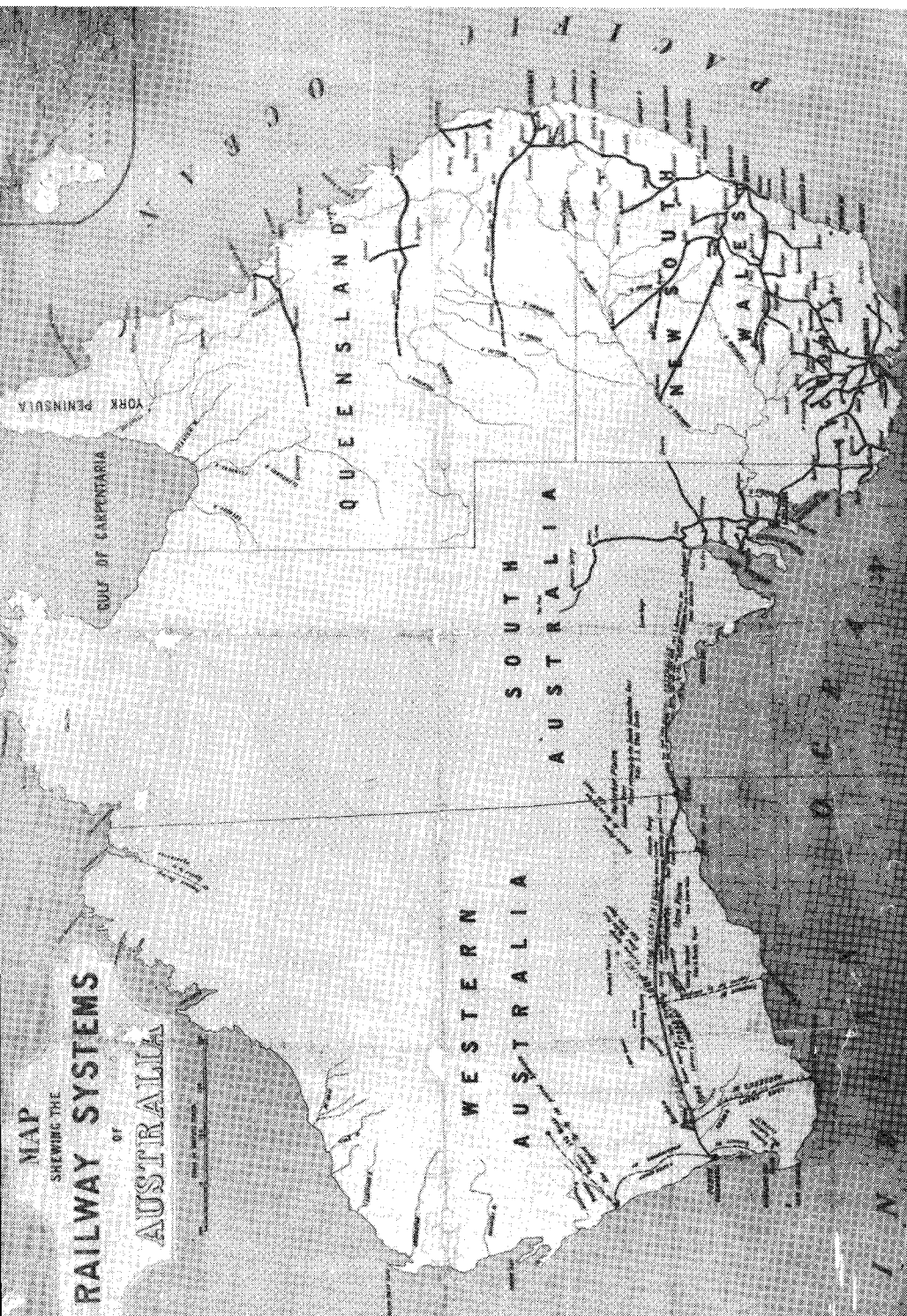
The tools of inter-metropolitan rivalry were not confined to transport networks. Differential railway freight rates and rebates, tariffs and other trade restrictions, shipping regulations and propaganda were all employed at various times. In the battle between capitals, the interests of smaller urban centres and ports in particular colonies were sacrificed.

Inter-city rivalry has been an important theme in American urban history and may be even more significant in Australian circumstances. As Asa Briggs has suggested, a large part of Australian history is 'A Tale of Two Cities'—Melbourne and Sydney—which were bitter rivals. In political and cultural terms metropolitan provincialism was (and still is) of great significance, and not least in the way in which it influenced, delayed and might, conceivably, have prevented federation. But despite the acute personal and political differences which emerged, particularly between Melbourne and Sydney, their rivalry was basically economic. In an evolving situation particular cities were able to make gains at the expense of each other, but in the long run the type of competition which took place was harmful to total (or national) economic interests. This lesson was realised during the 1890s and paved the way towards federation.

In any newly settled territory one of the most important functions of government is the disposal of land. In nineteenth-century Australia land policy was a leading political issue and has received much attention from historians. Political historians have tended to concentrate upon pre-determined political and social notions or influences which may have

⁹ Butlin, N. G., *Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900*, p. 367.

¹⁰ See Smith, R. H. T., *Commodity Movements in Southern New South Wales*, Department of Geography, Australian National University, Canberra (1962).



3 Demographic, Political and Social Factors in Australian Urban Growth

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Urban areas are usually assessed in terms of their population-size. Demographic variables (birth rates; death rates; age and sex structure of population; migration) are important not only in relation to other factors, but in their own right since the size of urban population may vary even if all other, non-demographic, factors are held constant.

The neglect of Australian demographic history can only be described as remarkable in view of the relative abundance of demographic data and the obvious importance of demographic influences in economic, social and political development. The major aspect of Australia's economic performance in the past century or more has been the absorption of a progressively larger and occupationally more diversified population. Whenever total Australian output has risen rapidly, population has also grown rapidly, and the result has been a muted growth performance in terms of output, or income, per head. The conventional approach to economic growth—which measures progress in terms of rises in output, or income, per head—tends to underestimate the Australian economic achievement. Australian average output per head has risen very slowly, by international standards, from the comparatively high levels of the mid-nineteenth century. This poor productivity performance is partially attributable to the rising share of total workforce employed in relatively less productive and increasingly urban activities.¹ In the future Australian economic historians may find it useful to develop an economic-demographic theory of growth taking formal account of the long-term political aim which has given population growth some precedence over economic growth in the strictest, short-run sense.

Population growth occurs as a result of natural increase (excess of births over deaths) and net-immigration (excess of arrivals over departures). In Australia during the nineteenth century these two sources closely rivalled each other in overall importance.

In the period before 1860 population grew rapidly in each decade from small bases, immigration being, on the whole, much more important than natural increase. Convict transportation was not very significant in long-run demographic terms since it gave rise to only a

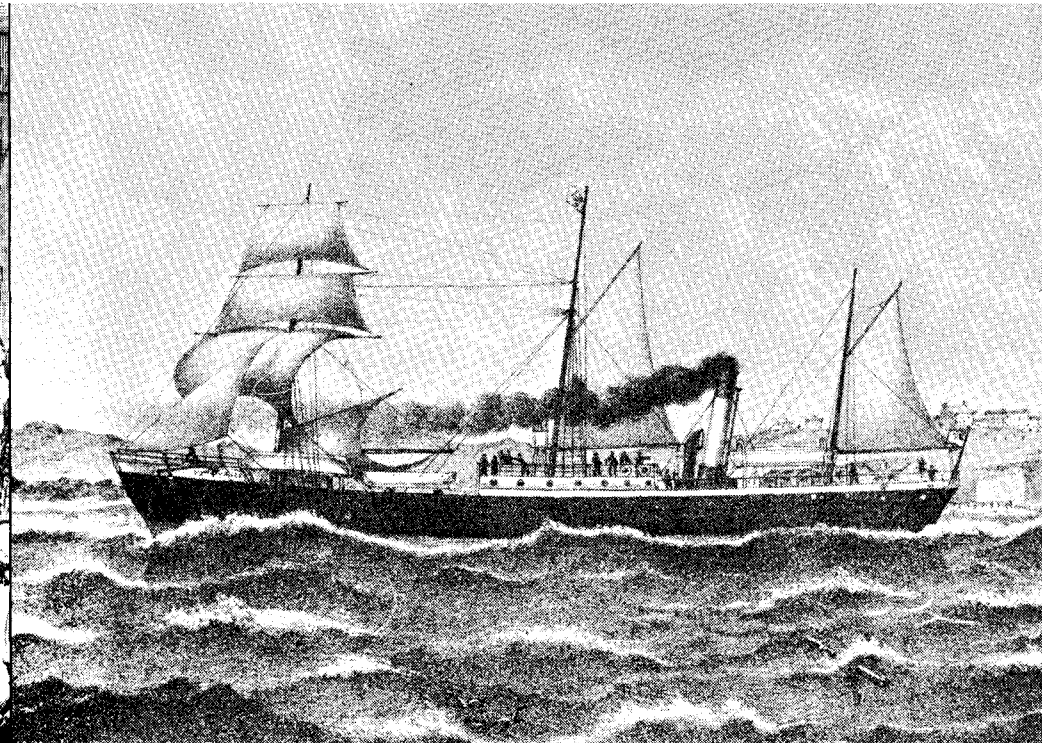
¹See Butlin, N. G., 'Long-Run Trends in Australian Per Capita Consumption', in Hancock, K. (ed.), *The National Income and Social Welfare*, Cheshire, Melbourne (1965).



7 Assisted immigrants

small, predominantly masculine population which was subsequently swamped by free immigration. The first substantial increase in population came in the 1830s with the introduction of the bounty system and large-scale assisted immigration. The large influx of the 1850s brought Australian population to 1.2 million by the end of that decade. After 1860 the rate of population growth was slower but it remained very high by international standards. Population growth rates averaged 3-4 per cent per annum between 1860 and 1890, but fell to low levels in the 1890s as a result of economic depression, falling birth rates and the virtual cessation of immigration. In the 1860-1900 period, population increased by approximately three-quarters of a million as a result of net-immigration, and by approximately two million as a result of natural increase.

Immigration to Australia during the nineteenth century was heavily assisted (about one-half of all immigrants were assisted); closely associated with capital inflow; irregular in volume (large influxes in the 1850s and



9 The coastal shipping service: the *SS You Yangs*

Political influence is most apparent in railway building and operation which, after 1860, became almost exclusively a government concern. Between 1860 and 1900 Australia's trunkline system of railways was established in a manner which reflected and did much to promote metropolitanisation. Until the 1870s most lines were built with a view towards direct profitability; subsequently the desire to extend metropolitan economic interests and dominance over potential hinterlands overrode all other considerations. This pattern of development has been closely examined by N. G. Butlin:

So began, in the first half of the 'seventies, a remarkable process of railway investment, with lines projecting from the four main commercial centres of Australia; each project was undertaken in the expectation of controlling the traffic and trade of particular regions and, in each case, the effects of separate projects on the railway revenues of rival systems were disregarded or heavily discounted. The Victorian line to Wodonga and the N.S.W. line to Albury had identical major objectives, to secure the trade of the Riverina; the South Australian line to North-West Bend and the N.S.W. lines westward to Hay and north-west to Bourke were all designed to move freight off the Darling; and the N.S.W. lines to Bourke and Wallangarra made a bid for the trade of southern Queensland while the Queensland government forced a railway across the south

borrowed capital which was drawn from overseas sources. Because of land policy decisions taken as a result of pressure from urban groups in the 1860s, graziers were compelled to spend huge sums in purchasing land which they had previously held on cheap, leasehold terms. After 1860 the Australian system of government revenue raising was dictated by urban interests and tended to promote those interests at the expense of rural producers.

After the early penal period government investment was directed, overwhelmingly, into the provision of social equipment (roads, public buildings, bridges, railways, schools, telegraph and postal facilities) which, while not directly productive, was vitally important. Construction works of this kind required large gangs of unskilled workers on a temporary basis, and relatively few workers after building was completed. Before 1860, roads and road improvements appear to have absorbed a major part of government investment outlays. The efforts undertaken, even in relation to strictly limited objectives, were quite inadequate, but an embryonic system of public roads did develop and was extended rapidly during the 1850s. In the provision of public roads there were two basic objectives: first, to serve capital city areas and their immediate vicinities; and, secondly, to connect capital cities with important inland urban centres and areas of settlement. After 1860 a similar pattern is apparent in railway building, which absorbed the major part of government investment outlay, and in the provision of telegraphic communications (which promoted centralisation of marketing and decision-making processes). Australia developed a transport system regular and sufficiently symmetrical to delight any location theorist—were it not for the fact that political influences were of such large importance in location and development. Four roughly equi-distant maritime capitals, and an isolated capital on the western coast, developed a dual system of domestic transport with coastal connections between themselves and four, independent, radial land transport networks extending into the interior. (This ignores Tasmania and the rather different land transport pattern in Queensland.) The importance of the capital cities as focal points can hardly be overemphasised.

The concentration of government at these points from the early days of settlement stimulated the concentration of population and the convergence of land and sea routes at these points. The start thus gained by those places led inevitably to the appropriation of the main trading and manufacturing enterprises and, as a direct result, of the concentration of transport. . . . With the solitary exception of Newcastle, where singular advantages for the location of specific industries exist, the disposition along the east and south-east coast of interposts at regular sailing distances of about 500 miles is too remarkable to pass without comment.⁸

1880s); and biased towards young adult males. As a result of immigration Australian population tended to be irregular in age distribution and predominantly masculine. The structural and cyclical effects of immigration (and capital inflow) have not attracted as much attention as they deserve from historians, although A. R. Hall and A. C. Kelley have demonstrated some possibilities of this approach.²

With moderately high birth rates and relatively low death rates, nineteenth-century Australia had a fairly high rate of natural increase by comparison with most Western European countries. Crude birth rates fell from a high level of over 40 per 1000 in the 1860s to less than 30 per 1000 in the 1890s. Unfortunately, age specific figures are not available on a national basis, but figures for New South Wales suggest very high birth rates in the 1860s as the male influx of the previous decade married and settled down (there was a sizeable influx of wives and other dependants in this period). Fertility remained high until the early 1880s. There followed a fairly sharp and continuous decline in birth rates which was associated with a reduction in the size of the average family. This phenomenon gave rise to concern in official circles and in New South Wales T. A. Coghlan, and, at a later stage (1904), a Royal Commission were asked to investigate and report on the matter:

It was found that there had been a serious diminution of fecundity since 1889, due chiefly to the deliberate prevention of conception and the destruction of foetal life, and to pathological causes consequent upon the means used, and the practices involved. In addition to enumerating the causes which have led to the decline in the birth rate, the Commissioners tendered certain valuable suggestions as to the best means of counteracting the evil influences at work.³

Not only was a declining birth rate regarded as being particularly deplorable in a newly-settled country—where the 'populate or perish' idea was never far beneath the surface of popular opinion, the means and motivations which gave rise to family limitation were believed to be closely associated with moral and mental deterioration, and with urbanisation (decline was most pronounced in urban areas). In fact, declining birth rates occurred in most of the world's high-income countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the phenomenon became more apparent after World War I. Recent research in Britain has suggested that, in the late nineteenth century, the artificial means of birth control which Coghlan deplored, were not in such wide use as was once thought.⁴

²Hall, A. R., 'Some Long Period Effects of the Kinked Age Distribution of the Population of Australia, 1861-1961', *Economic Record*, Vol. 39, March 1963; Kelley, A. C., 'International Migration and Economic Growth: Australia, 1865-1935', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, September 1965, and 'Demographic Change and Economic Growth: Australia, 1861-1911', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. 5, Summer 1968.

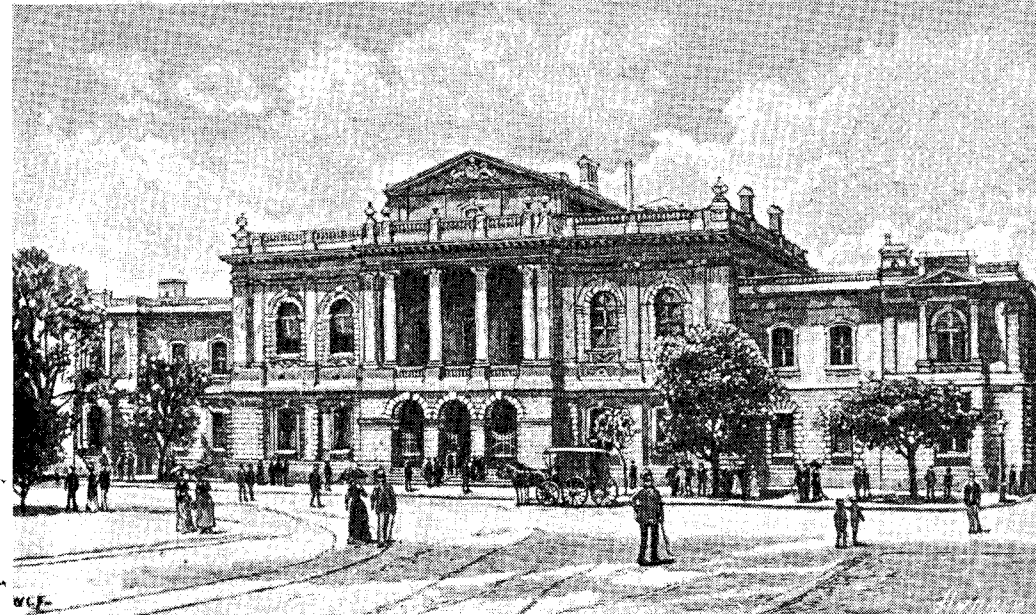
³Coghlan, T. A., *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand, 1903-4* (1904), p. 179.

⁴Taylor, A. J. P., *English History, 1914-1945*, Oxford University Press, London (1965), p. 165-6.

⁸Wood, G. L., 'Transport as an Economic Factor in Australia', *Economic Record*, Vol. 6, August 1930, Supplement p. 15.

Nineteenth-century Australia had a relatively affluent, well-housed, well-fed and healthy population and, in the most heavily settled areas, a healthy climate. As a result, death rates were low by almost any international comparison. Crude death rates fell from about 17 per 1000 in the 1860s to 13 per 1000 in the 1890s. In Europe the cities may be described as 'killers of men'—they drew population from the relatively healthy countryside and killed their inhabitants at a frightening rate by dirt and disease. In Australia the pattern was quite different. The cities, when compared with rural areas, offered a reasonably healthy environment and much better prospects of medical attention when needed. However, some Australian mortality figures reveal surprisingly high death rates in urban areas. In part this can be attributed to heavy infant mortality, retirement to urban from rural areas and the location of hospitals in urban areas. Nevertheless, epidemic diseases (including typhoid and cholera) were by no means absent from Australian cities. The battle for public health was waged in Australia as well as in Britain and declining urban mortality was in part associated with progressive improvements in water supply, sewerage, drainage and other facilities. The cost of providing these facilities varied inversely with the density of settlement, and in the straggling suburbs costs tended to be prohibitive. (Hence the Sydney suburbanite's longstanding dependence on the septic tank!) Perhaps largely as a result of the lack of facilities and public health supervision in outer-urban areas, death rates were quite often higher in suburbs than in central city areas.

In demographic terms there are three possible ways in which an increasing degree of urbanisation can occur: urban areas may gain proportionally more than rural areas from natural increase, or proportionally more from immigration, or there may be a net movement of population from rural to urban areas. Naturally, these three possibilities are not mutually exclusive; they may move in opposite directions and their relative and absolute importance will certainly vary over time and between different urban areas. However, we do have sufficient statistical information to begin to assess the approximately relative importance of these influences on the growth of particular Australian cities, at least during the second half of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately the data available is limited and suspect and its use involves heroic assumptions, technical finesse and painstaking effort. While any generalisation will conceal important differences between particular urban areas, and differences over time, the following broad observations can be made: During the nineteenth century as a whole, overseas migration was the most important source of Australian metropolitan population growth. Migration was followed in importance (fairly closely after 1860) by natural increase. Rural-urban drift of population was much less important, except during the goldrush and post-goldrush decade, and does not appear to have assumed substantial proportions until the early twentieth century.



8 The Supreme Court, Adelaide: a fine early colonial administrative building

government support, undertook the provision of roads, lighting, sewers, water supply, public buildings and other facilities. Between 1860 and 1900, local authority works of this kind were the fourth largest avenue of investment. However, the facilities provided were, on the whole, grossly inadequate and the authorities concerned were quite incapable of dealing with the problems and needs which arose, particularly in metropolitan areas. Large-scale public works, such as sewerage, water supply and transport facilities, which were needed in the cities, demanded centralised or co-ordinated authority. This need was increasingly realised and from the late 1880s metropolitan authorities were established to fulfil particular functions. However, the pattern of metropolitan government remained, basically, unchanged.

Colonial governments, including local authorities, were responsible for approximately half of total Australian investment in the 1860-1900 period. The manner in which governments raised and invested capital had an important bearing upon the course of total economic activity, and upon urbanisation. Capital was raised both on the British capital market and locally. While loans were issued in Australia, the main source of local funds was from land sales (especially in New South Wales) and tariff revenue (especially in Victoria). Revenue considerations played an important part in both land and tariff policies. Tariffs directly favoured urban manufacturing and labour interests (and, in some instances, non-exporting rural producers) and the cost increases which resulted from tariffs tended to be passed on to rural exporters. Land sales were, of course, a direct charge upon rural producers who purchased their holdings to a large extent with

global strategy, including naval protection, were important even though largely passive influences on subsequent development. By any nineteenth-century comparison the role of colonial governments in Australian economic and social development was large.⁷ Immigration and land settlement were closely supervised and at most times public activity played a large part in total economic activity. Governments were particularly important in promoting migration; as major employers of labour; as leading investors (responsible for nearly one-half of total investment in the period 1860-1900); and their activity played an important part in stabilising as well as promoting rapid economic growth in the three decades before 1890, and in producing the conditions which gave rise to severe depression in the early 1890s.

Australian political and administrative activity was highly centralised in each colony and undoubtedly this played an important part in metropolitanisation. Two of the most important non-material functions of cities are as places where information is obtained and exchanged, and where decisions are made. These functions attracted people (on both a temporary and a permanent basis), provided employment, and gave rise to ancillary activities including legal, financial, personal and commercial services. As with material functions, non-material functions gained considerable efficiencies by urban location and these efficiencies were centripetal and cumulative. In Australian circumstances the political and administrative functions of cities appear to have been an important causal factor in the growth of material or economic functions. The capital cities commenced as administrative and service centres which developed commercial and manufacturing activities at later stages.

The amount of political and administrative decentralisation which occurred in each colony was limited, but not without significance in local terms. Lands Commissioners, police establishments, post offices and courts influenced the location, functions and development of country towns. Similarly, local government was important in regional terms. However, local government institutions in colonial Australia developed late and were limited in extent and influence outside metropolitan areas. In the smaller towns, villages and rural areas, apathy and the desire to avoid local taxation delayed the establishment of local government bodies, despite some encouragement from central authorities. In the absence of effective systems of local government, the capital cities retained their political predominance over each colony as a whole.

Yet the capital cities themselves went to an opposite extreme by splitting themselves into numerous small, independent, suburban municipalities with separate authorities and functions. These councils, together with similar bodies in larger country towns, and with central

⁷See Butlin, N. G., 'Colonial Socialism in Australia, 1860-1900', in Aitken, H. G. J. (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth*, Social Science Research Council, New York (1959).

Table 1 indicates the increasingly metropolitan distribution of Australian population in the period 1871-1901:

TABLE 1—Percentage of Colonial Population in Respective Capitals

	1871	1881	1891	1901
Sydney	27	30	34	36
Melbourne	28	33	43	41
Adelaide	23	37	42	45
Brisbane	13	15	24	24
Perth	21	20	17	20
Hobart	19	18	23	20

These figures, drawn from census returns, are based upon administrative boundaries (defining both 'urban areas' and colonies) which quite clearly did not represent adequately the true size of metropolitan areas and their economic, as opposed to political, hinterlands. On the whole, but with some exceptions, census figures tend to understate metropolitan population, since urban settlement often extended ahead of boundary revisions and incorporation. However, in some cases urban boundaries were drawn ahead of settlement and enclosed rural areas and population. While census data can be manipulated in order to produce statistics for a *constant* area, this procedure is likely to give rise to an overestimate of urban population.

City hinterlands did not respect colonial boundaries and the higher degree of metropolitanisation in Victoria and South Australia is, in part, attributable to the fact that southern New South Wales was served by Melbourne and Adelaide. The location advantages and transport connections of these cities enabled them to forge stronger economic links than Sydney with the Riverina and Broken Hill areas. It would perhaps be wrong, therefore, to give much attention to the different percentage figures recorded for Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The very much lower figures for the smaller capitals—Perth, Brisbane and Hobart—reflect their inferior locations and less-developed hinterlands.

Metropolitan growth was neither regular nor uniform. Melbourne grew rapidly in the 1850s and 1880s, more slowly in the 1860s and 1870s, and hardly at all in the 1890s. Sydney's growth, overall, was much more consistent, apart from a relatively small increase in the 1860s. Adelaide grew very rapidly in the 1860-1880 period, and very slowly in other decades. Apart from Perth, all cities show a much reduced growth rate in the 1890s.

TABLE 2—Population of Capital Cities and Suburbs (in thousands)

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Sydney	54	96	138	225	383	488
Melbourne	23	140	207	282	491	494
Adelaide	15	18	43	104	133	162
Brisbane	3	6	15	31	94	119
Perth	—	—	5	6	8	36
Hobart	—	19	19	21	33	35

(Note: The early figures for Perth and Hobart were very small and no census figures are available.)

While these figures reveal the magnitude of overall metropolitan growth, it would be misleading to attempt to draw many conclusions from them since they represent only six spot (census) checks on the basis of administrative and census boundaries. Differential growth rates—between different cities at different times—can only be analysed in a useful fashion when further research into inter-censal growth rates and the boundaries problem has been undertaken.

It would be quite wrong to assume that Australian urban growth during the nineteenth century was entirely a story of metropolitanisation. This is the pattern of the present century rather than of the last. While Melbourne dominated Victorian population increase between 1861 and 1901, in New South Wales country towns, as a whole, increased their population by almost as much as Sydney, and in Queensland other urban areas grew more rapidly than Brisbane.

TABLE 3—Additions to Population, 1861-1901

	Victoria	New South Wales	Queensland
Metropolitan	371,133	410,997	103,159
Other Urban	185,933	366,934	144,653
Rural	104,953	230,542	226,808
Total	662,019	1,008,473	474,620

(Note: These figures do not, of course, indicate population growth rates, which tended to be highest for metropolitan areas.)

Between metropolitan, other urban, and rural areas there were significant differences in age structure, fertility, mortality, masculinity, marriage rates, and the ratio of immigrant to native-born population.

Urban areas throughout the nineteenth century usually had a larger proportion of immigrants (British and foreign born) than rural areas, and the ratio of males to females tended to be lower in urban areas. These differentials were of considerable economic, social and political significance and an exploration of them in qualitative as well as quantitative terms will add much to our understanding of Australian history.

POLITICAL FACTORS

Professor S. J. Butlin has said that 'Australian economic history is the major part of all Australian history; from the beginning economic factors have dominated development in a way that should gladden the heart of any Marxist'.⁵

However, this statement perhaps ignores or oversimplifies a complex and fascinating circular relationship between political and economic events. Unfortunately, in recent years Australian economic and political historians have shown scant respect for each others' interests and techniques, and mutual stimulus has been much less than it might have been. The political implications which might follow from the work of economic historians such as N. G. Butlin have not been taken up by political historians, and an interesting example of outright rejection of economic influence occurs in Robin Gollan's *Radical and Working Class Politics*:

Economic historians may speculate on what would have been the results of a more negative economic policy by governments [during the late nineteenth century]: less competition by governments on the loan market may have increased the amount of private investment, and less public investment may have meant a more competitive economy in which, amongst other things, the standards of hours and wages of the working class would have been lower, and the conditions for the growth of unions less congenial. But the outstanding fact is that the political demands of an enfranchised people *rendered any other course of development impossible*.⁶

In a similar fashion some economic historians have tended to ignore or downgrade political influences, arguing that they were either insignificant or dictated entirely by economic circumstances. While political decisions are made, one hopes, in the light of economic reality, the reality is open to varying interpretations.

The aims, methods and achievements of British and Australian governments must play a central part in any discussion of Australian development. Political decisions in Britain determined the nature and timing of the first settlement and British colonial policy, trade policy and

⁵ Butlin, S. J., *The Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851*, Melbourne University Press (1953), Preface.

⁶ p. 86 (my italics).