Conclusion

Governance of Melbourne and Victoria profoundly altered during the 1880s. The generation of Port Phillip’s civic boosters was passing at the moment that gaining hereditary allegiance and respect for the colony’s order became a complex, bureaucratic proposition. Materially, the first generation of colonists had developed a metropolitan superstructure that looked marvellous—but had based it on a fragile infrastructure, which was exposed in the late 1880s. In this precarious environment, a now-extended web of metropolitan leaders, including the ageing statesmen, the highest central city officers and titular heads, key government and institutional office-bearers, businessmen, journalists, and the colony’s vice-regal leaders, began to use history to boost the economic, racial, gender, generational and governmental arrangements of their order. They began to historicise particular aspects of the past, including their own work, as the public’s naturally-evolving, politically-transcendant lineage, cementing the longevity and specific historical indigeneity of the present at the point where these attributes seemed most threatened. They marked the civic landscape with monumental object lessons in the colony’s lineage, demanding public understanding, endorsement and emulation of the struggles and actions of their chosen historical exemplars. Melbourne’s boosters looked especially to two major, complementary but distinct forms: the temporary, international stage of the International Exhibition, and the more localised, permanent form of statues and monuments. The colony’s collective history was born public, and far from the colony’s central civic sphere being historically-silent, many object lessons are still there.

In the 1888 Exhibition and the ‘open air museum’ outside it, they developed a chronological and political hierarchy of historical themes, characterised by inflated, monumental narratives of individuals who replaced primordial wilderness with the grand accoutrements of civilisation in single, sweeping moments. The settler hierarchy ensconced Australia’s lineage in imperial conquest, race, masculinity, generational order, government and rule-of-law, silencing convict and bushranger histories which would have nullified history’s ‘boostering’ work. Melbourne’s history-makers first and
foremost attributed colonial foundation to a handful of explorers, with the imperial possessor Captain James Cook at the top. Cook especially became a symbol of the unassailability of the colony's Britishness. Statesmen were the second thematic, generational rung, which placed local foundation and development in the hands of a few metropolitan 'fathers', and emphasised white indigeneity and longevity in the face of the colony's perceived 'newness' and Aboriginality. The third rung was the more amorphous, politically-malleable theme of pioneers. It provided a bridge between the few single foundation actors and the first mass generation of British sons, and with some adaptation, it would be the only settler theme to carry through to modern history-making. The pioneer theme, which in the 1880s was about establishing the right generational sequence, allowed a level of pluralism within Melbourne's monumental landscape, but after WWI, in a post-settler context, class differences overrode generational sequence, and Melbourne's civic officials became increasingly uncomfortable with diversity of historical accounts in the public sphere.

The public had always had a complex relationship with metropolitan history-makers, showing a range of levels of complicity in and resistance to public history-making and its boosterizing role. The Melbourne public consistently enthusiastically embraced central city history-making as momentary spectacle. They could not get enough of the 1888 Exhibition. They turned out in their thousands to watch the rites of unveilings of statues and monuments (and indeed of processions, funerals and the like). And, after a considerable period of marginalisation and Depression, they took to the streets in their hundreds of thousands during the 1934-35 Centenary Celebrations. However, their patronage of the development of history-making ventures varied greatly: the extent of public sponsorship of the Shrine of Remembrance across Victoria stands out as an exception to their relative indifference to the development of other monuments and historical works. So too, the public's long-term intellectual and emotional reception of object lessons often did not match and occasionally defied or questioned the boosterism around the history. In other words, the public always had a mind of its own, and chose what history-making ventures it would invest in or jointly 'boost' over the long-term.
Thus when WWI overtly severed the relationship between metropolitan leaders and local publics, the latter began to invent their own language of public history-making. The local war memorial movement changed Victoria’s monumental landscape. It told of and mourned for a new, contemporary history of nation-making, in which every locality had made a mass human sacrifice, the effects of which would be felt for many decades. In the central city too, the War pioneers successfully pushed for acknowledgement of the mass local contribution to nation-making efforts in the metropolis’s traditional monumental language, and by 1934 the Shrine of Remembrance overwhelmed Melbourne, symbolically, geographically and politically. Its language was of death and the cost of progress, coming closer to the critical histories which implied suffering and the desire for deliverance, and which would especially begin to appear after WWII.

In the face of this and other shifts, history began to lose its boosting, moral role. Public history itself declined after WWI, to be resurrected in a very different language in the 1960s and 1970s. The main makers of history were shifting from central city boosters—state and local politicians and bureaucrats, titular heads, board members and businessmen who undertook history as amateurs—to ‘professional’ history-makers, who were, nevertheless, more concerned than ever to bolster settler narratives, but in new forms. History-making was devolved, politically, geographically and institutionally, especially moving into the schools, rural Victoria, libraries, and later museums, in moves which would come to characterise both professional and amateur historical work for the latter half of the twentieth century.

But Victoria’s and Melbourne’s Centenaries in 1934 and 1935 almost demanded that Melbourne’s leaders resurrect the central civic sphere and history’s boosting role. This occurred during the Depression, where the very notion of progress which enabled monumental history was difficult to sustain. The Centenary’s history-makers—a hybrid of public officials and ‘professional’ history-makers, used history differently in the 1930s, distancing the relationship between the past and the present. In particular, they took recourse in the pioneer theme, which had always been, ostensibly, the most

democratic, malleable and localised of public history’s themes, and reluctantly opened it up to women. Nevertheless, the pioneer theme was nostalgic, and it distanced history, temporally and geographically. Further, history-makers were more playful, populist, and materialist with their historical forms, removing history’s gravitas, and therefore the weight of its contemporary role. Both the themes and the forms, and the very role of history itself, differentiated the history-making of the 1934-35 Centenary Celebrations from earlier history-making projects. Its language foretold of modern themes and forms encapsulated in the post-WWII heritage movement: especially the dominance of the pioneer theme, and popular and materialist forms of history-making.

Cooks’ Cottage was an aberrant Centenary project, conceptualised in national terms. It was a project that occurred on the cusp of shifts from settler to modern, signalled in its juxtaposition of traditional monumental theme and modern form. The Cottage’s major patrons had difficulty sustaining its monumental associations, and gave it its historical legitimacy through new ‘scientific’ methods of exact reconstruction, strict provenancing and dating of its materials, while it was placed in a nostalgic, domestic setting. It became an antiquarian undertaking and, like the hundreds of historical houses which developed after WWII, it demanded conservatism and reverence for the past. The form of Cooks’ Cottage and the theme of the Shrine, coupled with the themes and forms of the 1934-35 Centenary’s other history-making projects, reflected a modern language of public history-making across Victoria. It would be a complex inter-mingling of critical and antiquarian histories, made by both metropolitan professionals and amateur locals, interspersed occasionally with older monumental forms and themes, especially in the 1970s when a new nationalism and monumental frame for history-making re-asserted itself.\textsuperscript{731}

\textsuperscript{731} Davison, Graeme, ‘Use and Abuse’, p.75.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Archives and Public Records

Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS 1095, Unit 28, Governor’s Office, Governor’s Special Files, Melbourne Exhibition 1888

Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS 3992/P, Units 261, 330 and 390, Chief-Secretary’s Office, Inwards Correspondence

The University of Melbourne Archives, Grimwade Papers, Third Accession, Cook’s Cottage

The University of Melbourne Archives, Pioneers of the Eight Hours’ Day Collection

The University of Melbourne Archives, Victorian Trades Hall Council Collection

The University of Melbourne Archives, Pioneers of the Eight Hours’ Day Movement National Monument Committee Collection

Newspapers and Journals

The Age, 1887-89, 1903, 1934

The Argus, 1854, 1856, 1887-8, 1891, 1903, 1914, 1924, 1934-5

The Arrow, 1888

The Australasian, 1888

The Australasian Sketcher, 1888

Building, 1918

The Bulletin, 1888

The Herald, 1856, 1934

The Illustrated Australian News, 1886

Government Records

Government of Victoria, Census, 1854 and 1901
NSW Parliamentary Debates, 1886

Trustees of the Public Library, Museums, and Art Gallery, Annual Reports, 1888-1900

Articles, Pamphlets and Books


Barry, Redmond, An Introductory Lecture on Architecture, Sculpture and Paintings delivered at the Melbourne Mechanics’ Institute, Gazette Office, Melbourne, 1847


Executive Commissioners of the Centennial International Exhibition, Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne 1888-1889, Official Record, Sands and McDougall, Melbourne, 1890

Executive Commissioners for the Centennial International Exhibition of 1888, Report, Victorian Parliamentary Papers, Volume 4, 1891

Gill, Hermon, Captain Cook’s Cottage, Lothian, Melbourne, [1934]

Historical Sub-Committee of the Centenary Celebrations Council, Victoria: The First Century: An Historical Survey, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1934


LaTouche Armstrong, Edmund and Robert Douglass Boys, The Book of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, 1906-1931, Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1932


McCoy, Frederick, *On the Formation of Museums in Victoria*, Goodhough and Hough (Printers), Melbourne, 1857


Murphy, W.E., *History of the Eight Hours' Movement*, Volume Two, J.T. Picken, Melbourne, 1900


Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery, *Guide to the Collections*, Trustees of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery, Melbourne, 1934


Selby, Isaac, *The Old Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne from the Discovery of Port Phillip down to the World War*, Old Pioneers' Memorial Fund, Melbourne, 1924


Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, *National Gallery of Victoria Catalogue, 1911*, Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1911


Victorian Chamber of Manufactures and the Australian Natives' Association, *Centenary All-Australian Exhibition Official Souvenir Catalogue*, Victorian Chamber of Manufactures and the Australian Natives’ Association, Melbourne, 1934

**Secondary Sources**

**Articles, Papers, Theses, Catalogues and Talks**


Bennett, Tony, ‘Beyond the Museum?’, talk presented at ‘Re-inventing the Object?’ Conference, Museum Studies Unit, University of Sydney, 7 February 1997


Davison, Graeme, ‘Exhibitions’ in *Australian Cultural History*, No. 2, 1982-3

Davison, Graeme, ‘The Broken Lineage of Australian Family History’ in Merwick, Donna (ed.), Dangerous Liaisons: essays in honour of Greg Dening, History Department, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 1994


Davison, Graeme, ‘The Use and Abuse of Australian History’ in Janson, Susan and Stuart Macintyre (eds.), Making the Bicentenary. A special issue of Australian Historical Studies, Vol.23, No.91, October 1988


Dugan, Dennis, ‘Victoria’s Largest Exhibition’ in Royal Historical Society Journal, Volume 54, No.3, September 1983


Dunstan, Keith, ‘The Fall of the Temple of Labour’ in The Age Good Weekend, 10 June 1988

Fletcher, Brian, ‘History as a Moral Force: George Arnold Wood at Sydney University, 1891-1928’ in Macintyre, Stuart and Julian Thomas (eds.), The Discovery of Australian History 1890-1939, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995

Fox, Paul, ‘Memory, the Museum and the Post-Colonial World’ in Meanjin, Number 2, 1992

Fox, Paul, ‘Public Institutions and the City’ in Architecture Australia, July 1990


Goodman, David, 'Public Meetings and Public Speaking in Colonial Australia' in *Australian Cultural History: Intellect and Emotion*, No.16, 1997-98

Griffiths, Tom, 'Past Silences: Aborigines and Convicts in our history-making' in *Australian Cultural History*, Number 6, 1987

Hamilton, Paula, 'The Knife Edge: Debates about Memory and History' in Darian-Smith, Kate and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994


Healy, Chris, 'Histories and Collecting: Museums, Objects and Memories' in Darian-Smith, Kate and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994


Hutchinson, Mark, 'A Note on Nineteenth Century Historians and Their Histories: 1819-1896' in *Australian Cultural History*, No.8, 1989

Inglis, K.S., 'Memorials of the Great War' in *Australian Cultural History*, No.6, 1987


Kellaway, Carlotta, Unpublished paper, 'Melbourne Trades Hall Lygon Street Carlton', [Carlton], September 1988

Kociumbas, Jan, 'Science as Cultural Ideology: Museums and Mechanics’ Institutes in Early New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land' in *Labour History*, No.63, May 1993


Lowenthal, David, ‘Memory and Oblivion’ in Museum Management and Curatorship, No.12, 1993

Macintyre, Stuart, ‘Ernest Scott: “My History is a Romance” ’ in Macintyre, Stuart and Julian Thomas (eds.), Discovery of Australian History 1890-1939, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995


Murphy, John, ‘The Victorian Centenary of 1934/5: Celebration and Depression’ in Leeuwenburg, Jeff (ed.), The Writing of Victoria’s History, 1835-1986, Baillieu Library, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 1986


Speck, Catherine, ‘Women’s War Memorials and Citizenship’ in Australian Feminist Studies, Vol.11, No.23, April 1996

State Library of Victoria, 1934. A Year in the Life of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 1984

Thomas, Julian, ‘Citizenship and Historical Sensibility’ in Australian Historical Studies, Vol.25, No.100, April 1993


Books

Alomes, Stephen, A Nation at Last?: The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1988


Dunstan, David, *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne*, The Exhibition Trustees, Melbourne, 1996


Galbally, Ann and Alison Inglis with Christine Downer and Terence Lane, *The First Collections: The Public Library and National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s*, The University of Melbourne Museum of Art, Melbourne, 1992


Macintyre, Stuart and Julian Thomas (eds.), *The Discovery of Australian History 1890-1939*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995

McKernan, Michael, *Here is Their Spirit: A History of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990*, University of Queensland Press in Association with the Australian War Memorial, St. Lucia, 1991


Newspapers

The Herald, 1968

General References


Entries on Exhibitions, Historical Film, Manning Clark, Monuments, Pioneers and Robert O’Hara Burke in Davison, Graeme, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (eds.), The Oxford Companion to Australian History, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998

Kerr, Joan (ed.), The Dictionary of Australian Artists, Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992


Redmond Barry File, State Library of Victoria


Scarlett, Ken, Australian Sculptors, Thomas Nelson Australia Pty. Ltd., West Melbourne, 1980

Author/s:
McCubbin, Maryanne

Title:
Object lessons: public history in Melbourne 1887-1935

Date:
2000-05

Citation:

Publication Status:
Unpublished

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39464

File Description:
Conclusion-Bibliography

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.