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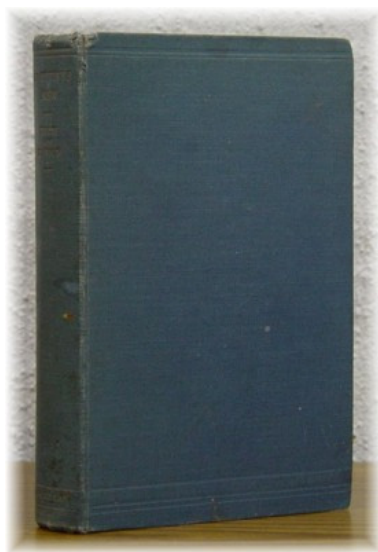
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## **Pastures New: An Account of the Pastoral Occupation of Port Phillip**

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# PASTURES NEW

AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
PASTORAL OCCUPATION  
OF PORT PHILLIP

BY  
R. V. BILLIS and A. S. KENYON

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
GENERAL SIR HARRY CHAUVEL, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

MELBOURNE:  
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HEAD OFFICE - - - LONDON

1930

## PREFACE

The intention of this work is to relate the story of the pastoral settlement of Port Phillip.

With this publication, we are permitted to include extracts from diaries and notes left by pastoral pioneers as well as passages from letters written by Messrs. Thomas and James Henty and by Mr. John Cotton, of Doogallook. Some of them, particularly Mr. Cotton's letters, not only carry us in fancy to the early scenes and life in the bush—for they breathe the very spirit of the times—but they are of historic value, and whatever may be thought of the rest of the publication, we are sure these extracts will be appreciated.

Also we have attempted an account of the merino sheep and the wool-growing industry as it was developed by the pastoral pioneers, known in their day as the squatters of Port Phillip.

There can be no room for doubt that the pastoral occupation of Port Phillip, that is, from the first permanent settlement following the landing of John Batman in 1835, till the gold rushes in the early 'fifties, was the most remarkable colonisation feat in the annals of the British Empire. Some historians point to it as one outstanding performance with no parallel since the wonderful achievements of the ancients, when the work of colonisation was an art embodying "the highest principles of forecast and completeness." Others claim that for effective land-settlement results, even ancient history furnishes no similar example.

A second publication will issue very shortly and will contain a record of all properties held under depasturing licenses with the names of the occupants.

To those who made available old documents, diaries and letters for our inspection, we desire to tender our grateful thanks, and to say that without their assistance, it would not have been possible for us to complete our task.

R. V. BILLIS and A. S. KENYON.

*Melbourne, July 1930.*

# CONTENTS

---

Foreword by General Sir Harry Chauvel, G.C.M.G., K.C.B. . . . .	ix
--	----

## CHAPTER I

Land Laws and Regulations—The First Pastoral Association—The Orders-in-Council—Sale of Land—The Pastoral Districts—The Nomenclature of Port Phillip—Squatting and the Squatter—Runs and Stations . . . . .	I
--	---

## CHAPTER II

Early Knowledge of Port Phillip—First Settlement of Port Phillip—Stocking up the Runs—The Beginnings of Bureaucracy . . . . .	24
---	----

## CHAPTER III

The Search for Runs—The Overlanders—Charles Bonney—Gardiner, Hawdon, and Hepburn—The Second Wave of Invasion—The Third Wave . . . . .	42
---	----

## CHAPTER IV

The First Land Boom and the Collapse . . . . .	64
--	----

## CHAPTER V

Pastoral Companies — Station Hands — Bushranging, Transportation and Immigration—Occupation of Gippsland—Stocking the Wimmera Plains . . . . .	75
--	----

## CHAPTER VI

The Misfits — Boiling Down — Exports — Secondary Industries — Stock Diseases — Sport — Prosperity Regained . . . . .	90
--	----

## CHAPTER VII

Early Land Deals—Pioneer Women . . . . .	107
--	-----

## CHAPTER VIII

Learning the Lesson—Original Appearance of the Country .. .. .	119
--	-----

## CHAPTER IX

The Gold Diggings—The Demand for Meat—Shorthorn Cattle .. . . .	125
---	-----

## CHAPTER X

Surplus Stock—The Frozen Meat Trade—Land Selection—The Riverina .. . . .	149
--	-----

## CHAPTER XI

The Merino Sheep—Competition for Spanish Merinos—Foundations of Australia's Flocks—Origin of Some Port Phillip Flocks—The Camden Flock—Improvement of Flocks—The Skipton Shows—Intercolonial Exhibitions .. . . .	160
---	-----

## CHAPTER XII

The Merino Sheep (continued): The Mudgee Challenge—Hints from Overseas—Other Exhibitions—Leading Breeders—Victorian Supremacy Challenged—Wool Sales in Australia—Market Forecasts—Depressions of the Past—High Production Costs—Control Schemes—The Problem .. . . .	189
--	-----

## CHAPTER XIII

The Letters of a Pioneer .. . . .	225
-----------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIV

Conclusion .. . . .	268
---------------------	-----

SETTLER.	DATE OF ARRIVAL.	STOCK.	REMARKS.
Brodie, Richard	May, 1836	1092 sheep	Acre and half under wheat ; garden. Sheep owned by Brodie Bros.
Barclay, David	1836	120 sheep	Barclay was Superintendent for Mr. Thompson
Buckley, William	1803	None	Half an acre garden. Wattle and shingle hut
Cook, Richard	April, 1836	1300 sheep	Lived in tent.
Cotter, Barry	Nov. 5, 1835	2500 sheep	Agent for Mr. Gellibrand.
Clarke, Kenneth	May, 1836	2386 sheep	In partnership with McLaughlin and Dobson. Of the sheep, 275 were the property of Mr. D. McDonald.
Darke, John C.	Feb. 1836	1030 sheep	Agent for Reed, Bell, Cartwright & Allport.
Evans, Geo.	Aug. 20, 1835	210 sheep	Lived in sod hut.
Flitt, James	Feb. 15, 1836	1750 sheep 14 head of cattle	Mr. Swanston's Agent
Ferguson, E. L.	Dec. 1835	3700 sheep 13 head of cattle	Agent for self and one Solomon.



But to some of these pioneers the idea of civilisation implanting its orderly stamp rather marred their fantasies. As one of them expressed it :—

“There is a wonderful charm in exploring country thus uninhabited except by the natives and wild birds and animals. Herds of kangaroo roamed in the forest, and emus grazed on the plains, in some cases so tame as to approach the rider with a strange gaze of curiosity. The creeks were then all fringed with reeds and rushes undevoured by hungry cows and gaunt working bullocks. These reeds and rushes formed a beautiful edging to the dark solemn pools overhung by the water-loving gum trees where wild fowl abounded, as the plains did with quail and turkeys.”

Or, as another put it :—

“It has often been a source of regret to me that all the charms attending the traversing of a new country must give way to the march of civilisation ; the camp on the grassy sward is now superseded by the noisy roadside inn ; the quart pot of tea by the bottle of ale. All the quiet security of an Australian bush as we have known it has yielded to the demands of population, and this though a necessary change is not the less to be regretted.”

### THE OVERLANDERS

If the excursions of the new colonists in search of runs ever lacked romance, that deficiency was made up by the overlanders. The term “overlander” pervades most of the literature dealing with the early development of Australia. It really originated with the first settlement of Port Phillip. Actually, Hume and Hovell may be claimed as the first overlanders, though that word was not used directly to describe those brave pioneers until 1855, when the “Brief Statement of Facts in connection with an Overland Expedition to Port Phillip in 1824” was issued. Previous editions describing the expedition simply call it “A Journey of Discovery to

introduced nearly 50,000 sheep into the colony and taught the wiser colonists the necessity of looking to pastoral pursuits for the safe investment of capital."

## CHARLES BONNEY

Charles Bonney, a friend of both Ebden and Hawdon, was the Marcus Superbus of the overlanders. Before the middle of 1836 he went as far as the Hume at Ebden's, marking out a practicable route from Yass for his herds ; but the then flooded state of the main stream and of its tributaries barred his progress. Awaiting a more favourable time, he did not cross the river until December of that year, being beaten by Hawdon, Gardiner and Hepburn for the distinction of first crossing the Murray with cattle. It is likely that then the friendship, even partnership, into which Hawdon and he were later to enter, was in contemplation, and that Hawdon benefited by Bonney's earlier researches. Bonney got through safely with his cattle—it was all cattle at the start—and almost immediately returning, earned the distinction of being the first to overland sheep, bringing a flock of Ebden's 10,000 strong, to his No. 1 Station on the Goulburn, leaving Mungabareena, Albury, on the 2nd March, 1837. Bonney had his triumph later. This time, in company with Hawdon, his erstwhile victor, he snatched from Sturt the honour of being the first to overland stock to Adelaide.

Charles Bonney, who perhaps did more than any of what may be termed the official or recognized explorers to open up new country for settlement and to make tracks for his fellow settlers to follow, was then a young man. A son of the parsonage, he was born in 1813 at Stafford, and landed in Sydney when he was 21, in the same year and possibly by the same boat as Joseph Hawdon. He had come to Australia to fill an official position, but, not caring for the shackles of the Sydney Government routine, went

## CHAPTER V

Pastoral Companies—Station Hands—Bushranging, Transportation and Immigration—Occupation of Gippsland—Stocking the Wimmera Plains.

### PASTORAL COMPANIES

The most important pastoral company in the early years of Port Phillip settlement was the Clyde Company. Other companies started with greater pretensions but they ran a shorter course, notably the first one, the Port Phillip Association, and the Derwent Company. The latter was formed by some members of the former when the Port Phillip Association dissolved. Those who took the leading part in the formation of the Port Phillip Association were Captain C. Swanston, Messrs. John Batman, J. T. Gellibrand, J. H. Wedge, James Simpson, George Mercer, M. Connolly, H. Arthur, J. and W. Robertson, J. T. Collicot, W. G. Sams, T. Bannister, McArthur, J. Sinclair, A. Cotterell, and later several others, including Mr. Learmonth, sen., joined it.

When the proposed arrangements to acquire land from the blacks round the shores of Port Phillip Bay were found to be abortive, some members of this association sold out; others stuck to it, and the chief remaining members were Messrs. Learmonth, sen., Mercer, Swanston and Captain Montague. Under the name of the Derwent Company they continued till 1847. The company bought land at auction sales held at Sydney, one of the purchases being a large run in the Barwon Valley, the cost of some of this land reaching 25/- an acre, though the upset price was only 5/-. The high price paid was caused by com-

13. The latter is growing fast and will be the tallest of the family I apprehend.

July '44.

Having now been resident in the colony of Port Phillip upwards of 14 months, and my affairs having assumed a somewhat settled appearance, I can give you some idea of my present expenses and receipts, and of the probable progressive increase of the latter to a greater extent than the former. The expenses of this station for the current year will be nearly as under :—

Overseer or superintend-	Income—
ent .. .. . £65	About 4000 lbs. of
Two shepherds & hut-	wool at 1s. per lb. £200
keeper including rations 93	Between 30 and 40
Bullock driver ... .. 31	head of cattle at £3
Man cook .. .. . 31	each .. .. . 105
Assessment .. .. . 15	About 200 wethers
License .. .. . 10	at 6s. .. .. . 60
Extra .. .. . 50	Interest on mortgages 270
Stores .. .. . 50	—————
£345	£635

From the Devil's River Station I shall have about 2000 lbs. of wool, out of which is to be deducted half the expenses of that station. Now you are well aware of the rapid increase of sheep, and if they continue to rise in price as they have done within the last few months, and should wool also rise, we may look forward to a larger return under this head. At the same time the flocks are of greater value, independent of the annual increase they yield. I do not expect that cattle will rise much above their present value, but neither can they fall below it, for moderately fat cattle will yield £3 worth of tallow. As I have not yet sold any of the herd, it is of course increasing, and I did not give more than £3 a head for them.

I have now let the dairy to a man and his wife who supply us with all the milk and butter that we require, break in the heifers, thrash the corn, do the washing for the family and take care of the pigs. By this arrangement I save the expense of two men at least. You may say under the circumstances we squatters

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- use the “Match whole word” option to eliminate unnecessary items in your results list, e.g. to eliminate all the blacksmiths and tinsmiths etc when you only want the name Smith.
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  - › look for others who lived in the same place or street
  - › who was the postmaster or police officer in the town?
  - › how often and at what time did the coach arrive in town?
  - › what churches were there and what time were services held?
  - › what other activities were there in the community?
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