

Preface

This volume marks a new phase in the editorship of *Aboriginal History*. In early 2010 the Aboriginal History Inc board appointed us as the new editors. This year we have had the pleasure of working with the outgoing editor, Peter Read, in putting this volume together. We have also benefitted from the tireless efforts of both the book reviews editor, Luise Hercus, and the production editor, Tikka Wilson, as well as the advice and guidance of the Aboriginal History Inc board and the copyediting expertise of Geoff Hunt.

Volume 34 reflects *Aboriginal History's* continuing commitment of exploring diverse aspects of Indigenous Australian history in original ways. Many of the contributors have uncovered new histories and sources, while others have re-interpreted more familiar sources in fresh and innovative ways. All of the articles offer new insights into the Aboriginal past and present.

In the first essay, 'Why didn't you listen: white noise and black history', Mitchell Rolls reconsiders the question of silence in Aboriginal history by examining a wide range of literature on Indigenous themes which was produced during the period dubbed by WEH Stanner as the 'Great Australian Silence'. In their contributions, Felicity Jensz and Ann McGrath both explore histories of Aboriginal marriage but in very different ways. Jensz uncovers the significance of matrimony in Moravian missionaries' attempts to Christianise Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century, while McGrath traces the history and continuing legacy of relationships between Aboriginal and Irish people in Australia.

The next two articles examine historical figures who had a major impact on Aboriginal experience and attitudes towards Indigenous people. Meg Parsons' study is focused on Sir Raphael Cilento, an often overlooked figure who oversaw Queensland's Aboriginal leprosy management strategies in the 1930s and the establishment of the Fantome Island leprosarium. Pamela McGrath and David Brooks examine William Grayden's 1957 film *Their Darkest Hour*, and how it was interpreted by contemporary audiences, Indigenous activists, and finally, the Ngaanyatjarra people's perceptions of the film now.

Martin Thomas then explores similar themes in his article on the 1948 American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land. Highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of this expedition which amassed a vast collection of natural history specimens and Aboriginal artefacts, Thomas also sheds light on the Indigenous response to it and its continuing legacy.

In 'Aboriginal Enterprises: negotiating an urban Aboriginality', Sylvia Kleinert discusses the little known history of Bill Onus's Aboriginal Enterprises, a tourist outlet which fostered an influential Indigenous art scene in Melbourne. Her overarching theme is its impact on Aboriginal identity formation in south-eastern Australia. Jessie Mitchell also examines questions of Aboriginal cultural performance, although a century earlier, in her study of the Aboriginal reception

of Prince Alfred's 1868 royal tour. Finally, Petter Naessan gives a rich linguistic history of the name Coober Pedy, evaluating a range of sources each claiming different Indigenous etymological origins of the name.

Although volume 34 is a very diverse collection, the articles all share an interest in exploring cross-cultural interactions and negotiations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, through both intimate and public relations as well as through knowledge production, be it cultural or political. The articles admirably demonstrate how these key themes can be explored through the historical archive, whilst also revealing the sheer diversity of the archive which includes material culture, still and moving images, language sources and performances. Some of these articles also illustrate the rich research produced through working collaboratively with Indigenous communities in order to reinterpret and historicise archival images or objects, or meticulously track changes in language use. Meanwhile other authors have emphasised Indigenous performativity. They have teased out the delicate and complex negotiations Aboriginal people have engaged in, either willingly or under duress, in order to satisfy demands from audiences for expressions of culture and identity, while also using those opportunities for self-expression.

As the new editors of *Aboriginal History* we look forward to maintaining the journal's strong tradition of engaging with Indigenous Australian history in an interdisciplinary way, drawing the disciplines of history, archaeology, linguistics, and so on into conversation with each other. Our goal is also to carry on the journal's role in showcasing innovative scholarship and fostering new debates on the Indigenous past and its impact on the present. Finally, we hope that our scholarly conversation about Indigenous history will become more international, and look forward to future volumes including comparative studies which consider Indigenous history in Australia and overseas.

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