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Aboriginal History aims to present articles and information in the field of Australian ethnohistory, particularly in the post-contact history of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Historical studies based on anthropological, archaeological, linguistic and sociological research, including comparative studies of other ethnic groups such as Pacific Islanders in Australia, will be welcomed. Future issues will include recorded oral traditions and biographies, narratives in local languages with translations, previously unpublished manuscript accounts, resumes of current events, archival and bibliographical articles, and book reviews.

Aboriginal History is administered by an Editorial Board which is responsible for all unsigned material in the journal. Views and opinions expressed by the authors of signed articles and reviews are not necessarily shared by Board members. The editors invite contributions for consideration; reviews will be commissioned by the review editor.

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Editorial

This issue contains obituaries of three key figures in Aboriginal Australia, an important bibliographic collation, and an account of consultative processes involved in the production of a historical exhibition. There is a plea for considering afresh the Aboriginal contribution to contact history, an Aboriginal text about seeing the first motor car, new evidence about the Pilbara walk-off and the first detailed account of the Tent Embassy. There are accounts of the Aboriginal cricketer Johnny Mullagh and of little-known but important events in southern Western Australia.

The volume begins with a controversial account of the life of the late Kevin Gilbert. Gordon Briscoe's article contains many challenges and insights; but, such was the controversial nature of the article, the editors and editorial board invited responses which we have printed without alteration. Although, regrettably, distress was caused in some articles while the article was circulated during 1994 before publication, we took the view that all national figures are likely to attract controversy, and that Kevin Gilbert had been already a controversial figure in his own lifetime. Most, perhaps all, people reconstruct their identities in the course of a lifetime. To suggest that an Aboriginal person might have done so is not to suggest that that person was not 'really' Aboriginal, but rather that identity is a more complex matter than is often supposed. Does it matter if an Aboriginal person who adheres to one identification is descended also from other groups or communities? We answer: no it doesn't.

Given that such divergent opinions are represented in the original article and in the responses, the Editorial Board recommends that all five articles be read together, providing as a group a broad context for consideration of such issues.

Peter Read
Ewan Morris