



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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REVIEWS

*D.B. Barry

Besworth, Michal

200 Years Series, North Ryde, Melbourne 1983

The series *Project Australia - 200 years* contains eight books. Each book has 25 pages filled with drawings, diagrams, maps, key facts, dates and suggested activities. There is a "Further Reading" and "Further Thinking" section in the back of each book as well as a song on the back cover.

Titles in the series are - *Clothes, Communications, Food, Migration, Resources, Shelter, Technology, and Transport.*

Generally the books are well presented. However, there are a few comments that should be made from an Aboriginal perspective.

The book on Clothes has no mention or illustration of such Aboriginal garb as public aprons or armlets etc.

Migration has a major flaw on page 2, where it reads "In one way or another everyone who lives in Australia today (including the Aborigines) is a migrant". The text on pages 4 and 5 further compounds this fault. It is only an hypothesis not a fact that Aborigines migrated from the north. The belief that Aborigines were created here in Australia is a general and important factor of Aboriginal religions.

The second sentence on page 4 of *Shelter* reads, "They were nomadic moving on when food became scarce or the climate too harsh". The work "nomadic" is inappropriate as it suggests aimless wandering. Semi-nomadic is more appropriate because Walkabout occurs within each group's own territory, often following the circuit of the Dreamtime Ancestors. Thus the need to perform certain religious ceremonies at a certain place and time is another.

Each of the books in the series could have been improved by the author writing about Aborigines in the present rather than the past tense. Aborigines still live all over Australia with people still practising traditional culture in such places as Arnhem Land. It would have been best if the author had used the word "groups"

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rather than "tribes" to describe Aboriginal social structure. "Tribes" suggests one chief, whereas Aboriginal groups have a set of Elders.

Congratulations to the author. If teachers heed the preceding comments then the books are well worth having in your classroom.

Lower Primary through to Lower Secondary - \$3.25 each.

Recommended.

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Wangka, Pipa

Tjukurpa Putitja. Automatic Printing, Port Pirie, S.A.
1980, ISBN 0959326812, b & w photos.

The stories contained in the book were written by year 8 students from Port Augusta High School. The stories describe a camp the students took to study the Pitjantjatjara people. The book will not only be interesting to students. It will be of interest to teachers and liaison personnel who are intending to organise an Aborigines' Studies Program which could include a similar camp. Section one of the book sets out the purpose for the camp and briefly some of the things the students achieved.

Middle Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary - \$2.00

Highly Recommended.

Wangka, Pipa

Yolngu Painting. Transcontinental Newspaper, Port Augusta, S.A. 1979. 12pp. b & w photos, maps, activities.

Yolngu Painting is a well presented book. The story is told in the language of four adolescent girls who have been taught to paint in the traditional Aboriginal way by a woman from Yirrkala on the Gove Peninsula. There are sections on preparing the bark, making a hair brush, the paintings and their stories, Yirrkala stories, the final product, and activities for readers. On page 8 there is "The Milky Way Story", which is an outside Yolngu story. Outside stories are those which can be told to the uninitiated.

Middle Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary - \$2.00

Highly Recommended.

Wangka, Pipa

Workers in the Community - An Artefacts Maker. Automatic
Printing, Port Pirie, S.A. ISBN 0959326804. b & w photos.

The book starts out by introducing the community artefacts maker. It then goes into how he makes the artefacts. How he is involved in the school is then discussed. The games in which the school children use the artefacts are also looked at. A "For You to Find Out" section is included near the end of the book.

Middle Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary - \$2.00

Highly Recommended.

Wangka, Pipa

Celebrating National Aborigines Week in Schools. Empire
Times Press, Bedford Park, S.A. 1983. ISBN 0959326820,
b & w photos. 36pp.

The book is an account of National Aborigines Week Celebrations in the schools of the Port Augusta area. It outlines ways in which schools have joined, and can join, with Aborigines in celebrating National Aborigines Week. Teachers are advised on how to fit the suggested activities into their programs. There are sections on classroom activities; special activities in schools; activities outside of schools; community celebrations and guidelines for planning.

Upper Secondary, Teacher reference - \$1.00

Highly Recommended.

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Lofts, Pamela

The Echidna and the Shade Tree. Ashton Scholastic, Sydney.
1984, illustrated.

A Western Australia Dajaru group tale of how the Echidna got his spikes. The storyline is brought to life by the vibrant illustrations, adapted from the pictorial representations of children from Halls Creek, Western Australia.

Recommended for children in the area of Early Childhood Education.

\$2.00

Resource Material Book for a School Project

Aborigines Yesterday 1. - Traditionally Oriented Culture.

Even though the publication has improved since it was last reviewed, the focus of the colour spread needs to shift from the economic aspects of daily life to the spiritual emphasis of traditional culture. The author(s) unfortunately, adheres to the migration hypothesis which has never been unarguably proven. The migration theory conflicts with the traditional religious beliefs of the Aborigines.

Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary \$0.69

Aborigines Today 2. - Contemporary.

Although the publication is a fair attempt to cover the contemporary Aboriginal situation, it is marred by a number of ethnocentric generalisations. The incorrect and derogatory terms 'primitive' and 'tribe' are unfortunately used. It would have been beneficial if the author(s) had included all of the Commonwealth Government's definition of who is an Aborigine and the explanation of the spirit of the land could have been expanded.

Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary \$0.69

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McKellar, Hazel

Matya-Mundu: A History of the Aboriginal People of South-west Queensland. Edited by Thorn Blake. Cunnamulla. Cunnamulla Australian Native Welfare Association, 1984 99pp. illus. maps. ISBN 0-9590173-0-5.

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| 1. <i>Aborigines - Queensland</i> | I Title |
| 2. <i>Aborigines - History</i> | II Blake, Thorn ed. |

A detailed look at the nine Aboriginal groups who lived in South-west Queensland before the coming of white settlers destroyed their traditional way of life. Original source material, personal anecdotes and the retelling of legends add interest. The contributions made by many Aborigines to the area in recent times are enumerated in the final chapter of this much needed work.

Upper Primary, Secondary \$7.00

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Down There with Me on the Cowra Mission

An oral history of Erambie Aboriginal Reserve, Cowra, New South Wales. Edited by Peter Read. Pergamon Press (Australia) Pty Ltd., 1984. ISBN 0 08 029856 7

Through a series of interviews with various Aboriginal people who have ties with Erambie, the reader is able to recount the history of this Mission. The memories of growing up in an Aboriginal Mission; daily life, work and, more recently, life under white managers; distribution of rations, house inspections, the effects of the Great Depression and World War II. Interviews reveal other issues such as racism, employment, education, health, assimilation, the police, and contemporary Aboriginal lifestyles and desire for self-determination.

Suitable for local history case study, comparable to Queensland situation. Note that the book contains some language suitable for older readers only.

Upper Secondary/Tertiary

Recommended

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Suter, Keith D. and Stearman, Kaye
Aboriginal Australians. London. Expedite Graphic Limited, 1982. 20pp. select bibliography, contents, map.
ISBN 0 903 114 77 1.

Human Rights. Suter and Stearman have produced a brief, solid publication covering demographic, pre 1788, contact and contemporary Aboriginal events. There are, however, a couple of points which mar their work. They are, the inappropriate use of the words "tribes", "chief", and "ethnic", the misspelling of Dreamtime with a small 'd', and an adherence to the widely held but unproven migration theory. If the reader is able to mentally correct these faults then he will be reading an excellent publication.

Upper Secondary/Tertiary \$3.00

Highly recommended.

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