

BOOK REVIEWS: By QATSIIC

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BAGMEN millionaires: life and people in outback Queensland.
by John Anderson. Viking O'Neil, 1988.

A well written and carefully researched publication which reflects the true character of outback Queensland and the people in its cattle industry.

Through the reminiscences of these people, we are given an account of the atrocious treatment Aborigines received at the hands of some non-Aboriginal people, as well as the exploitation of Aboriginal people by the cattle industry generally. Mention is also made of past government legislation in the form of the Preservation and Protection Act and how this gave the 'protector' absolute control over the lives of Aborigines.

There are some areas of concern, however, which need to be noted. While the author recognises Joe Flick's actions were probably the result of the provocative behaviour of non-Aborigines toward him, some unacceptable terms are used. On p.28 he uses the term half-caste and on p.38 full-blooded. Aborigines are offended by attempts to quantify their Aboriginality. Aboriginal men have also been referred to as 'boys' in some sections of the book. The term is offensive when used to refer to Aboriginal men who are parents and in some cases even grandparents.

Rod Dixon's comments on p.113 regarding government assistance to Aboriginal high school students and to Aboriginal people in general are ill-informed.

Overall, a valuable resource which provides a new perspective on one section of the Australian community.
RECOMMENDED - LS-US.

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Symbols: MP:Middle primary; UP:Upper primary;LS:Lower secondary;
MS:Middle secondary; US:Upper secondary; TR:Tertiary.