

OXFORD

ANGELA WOOLLACOTT

# SETTLER SOCIETY *in the* AUSTRALIAN COLONIES

*Self-Government and Imperial Culture*



SETTLER SOCIETY IN THE  
AUSTRALIAN COLONIES



# Settler Society in the Australian Colonies

*Self-Government and Imperial Culture*

ANGELA WOOLLACOTT

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of  
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Angela Woollacott 2015

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published in 2015

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in  
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the  
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted  
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics  
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the  
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the  
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014948841

ISBN 978-0-19-964180-2

Printed and bound by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and  
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials  
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

For Carroll, Becky, and Matt



## *Acknowledgements*

I gratefully acknowledge the Australian Research Council for the Discovery grant, which funded research for this project.

I am indebted to two stellar research assistants for their hard and painstaking work locating materials for this project: my warm thanks to Leigh Boucher and Carolyn Skinner for all of those hours of discovery; this book owes much to their efforts. Thanks go to Abby Waldman for some very useful early bibliographic research. I was also fortunate to have the assistance of an MA research intern from Gröningen University in the Netherlands; not only were Margriet Fokken's contributions to research for the sections on women valuable, it was a sheer delight to have her at the Australian National University (ANU) for a few months.

The project benefitted significantly from the allied doctoral research conducted by Catherine Bishop, and I thank Macquarie University and ANU for the scholarships that supported Cath's work. Her creative and wide-ranging research for her thesis shed light on issues central to Chapter 5, helping me to see that women's paid work in this period was ubiquitous and significant. Blake Singley kindly gave me the benefit of various aspects of his doctoral research on cookery books and settlers' cookery practices.

This book is much the better for thoughtful suggestions and insightful advice from anonymous readers and from Stuart Ward, and I am greatly indebted to them. The editors at Oxford University Press have all been a pleasure to work with. I thank Cathryn Steele for her assistance, and Marilyn Inglis for sharpening and tightening my prose. I thank also, for various pieces of collegial help and advice, Shaunnagh Dorsett, Cecilia Morgan, Heather Goodall, Frank Bongiorno, and Anne Rees. I have benefitted, too, from the comments and advice of audiences at many seminar and conference presentations over the past seven years. And more generally I thank my colleagues, both staff and postgraduate, in ANU's School of History for creating an intellectually supportive environment.

It is a joy to acknowledge that this book and I have been sustained on a daily basis by Carroll Pursell's wisdom and advice on matters large and small, his humour, and his superb cooking.





# *Contents*

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xi
Creating Settler Society: An Introduction	1
1. Settler Family Networks, Imperial Connections	12
2. Systematic Colonization: From South Australia to Australind	37
3. Settler Men as Masters of Labour: Convicts and Non-white Workers	67
4. Responsible Government in an Imperial Context	98
5. Settler Women, Work, and Debating the Gender of Citizenship	123
6. Frontier Violence and Political Manhood	152
7. The Australian Colonies and Imperial Crises: The Indian ‘Mutiny’ and the ‘Maori Wars’	179
In Conclusion: Staking Claims to Land, Labour, and Self-Government	206
<i>Bibliography</i>	211
<i>Index</i>	223



## *List of Illustrations*

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| Fig. 1.1 J. M. Skipper, 'Indian ship letter rate'.<br>Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, SLSA: PRG 72/13/2— <i>South Australian Almanack</i> , 1850 (J. M. Skipper, artist).  | 13  |
| Fig. 1.2 Robert M. Westmacott, 'From Sydney Cove, Government House with Harbour, New South Wales', 1840–46.<br>National Library of Australia, an3678265.   | 20  |
| Fig. 1.3 Colonial Secretary's House, Bridge Street, Sydney, 1826–1830.<br>Artists Frances Leonora Macleay and Gerard Krefft.<br>State Library of New South Wales, PXA 707/2 Digital a965001.   | 30  |
| Fig. 2.1 S. T. Gill (1818–1880) Australia. <i>Captain Davison's house 'Blakiston' near Mount Barker</i> (1848), Adelaide (Watercolour on paper 21.3 cm × 33.8 cm).<br>South Australian Government Grant 1979. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.              | 48  |
| Fig. 2.2 J. M. Skipper, 'South Australian Club'.<br>Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, SLSA: PRG 72/13/1— <i>South Australian Almanack</i> , 1841 (J. M. Skipper, artist).  | 49  |
| Fig. 2.3 'Plan of the intended town of Australind on Leschenault Inlet'.<br>State Library of Western Australia, Acc 336A/28.   | 51  |
| Fig. 2.4 T. C. Dibdin, 'A View of Koombana Bay, or Port Leschenault' from a sketch by Louisa Clifton c.1840 (London: Smith, Elder, & Co. for the Western Australian Company).<br>National Library of Australia, an6016139-V.   | 61  |
| Fig. 3.1 Robert Dowling, <i>Mrs Adolphus Sceales with Black Jimmie on Merrang Station</i> (1856). (Oil on canvas mounted on plywood, 76 cm × 101.5 cm).<br>National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased from the Founding Donors Fund 1984.                    | 75  |
| Fig. 3.2 S. T. Gill, 'Bush Mailman', from <i>Australian Sketchbook</i> (Melbourne: Hamel & Ferguson, 1865).<br>National Library of Australia, an7149190.   | 76  |
| Fig. 3.3 J. M. Skipper, 'Unavailable scrub'. The figure in the tub may well represent an Indian indentured labourer.<br>Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, SLSA: PRG 72/13/1— <i>South Australian Almanack</i> , 1841, p. 56 (J. M. Skipper, artist). | 92  |
| Fig. 4.1 William Strutt, sketch of the opening of the first Victorian parliament under responsible government, 25 November 1856.<br>Reproduced with the Permission of the Victorian Parliamentary Library and Information Service.                                   | 100 |
| Fig. 4.2 J. M. Skipper, 'Office hours from ten to four'.<br>Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia. SLSA: PRG 72/13/2— <i>South Australian Almanack</i> , 1850 (J. M. Skipper, artist).  | 105 |

Fig. 4.3	Stuart A. Donaldson, first premier of New South Wales (portrait, c.1860). State Library of New South Wales P1/484 Digital. a4214084.	113
Fig. 5.1	S. T. Gill, 'First subscription ball, Ballarat, 1854'. State Library of New South Wales DG V*/ SpColl/ Gill/19 Digital. a1528401.	128
Fig. 5.2	Caroline Chisholm, lithograph portrait by Thomas Fairland (published by M. I. Laidler, 1851). National Library of Australia, an9267591.	131
Fig. 5.3	Catherine Helen Spence, 1865, unknown London photographer. State Library of New South Wales P1/1610 Digital. a4363010.	137
Fig. 6.1	William Strutt (1825–1915), 'Bushrangers, Victoria, Australia, 1852' (1887). Oil on canvas, 73.0 cm × 154.0 cm. The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973. 1973.0038.000.000.	155
Fig. 6.2	Godfrey Charles Mundy, 'Encounter. Mounted police and blacks', 1840. Drawing: pen and ink. National Library of Australia, vn6149301.	158
Fig. 7.1	Caroline Carleton, c.1830, portrait. Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia. SLA: B 6675.	187
Fig. 7.2	John Skinner Prout, 'Port Jackson from Dawes' Battery', oil. State Library of New South Wales ML 625.	201

## Creating Settler Society: An Introduction

Visiting Hobart in 1829 from India, East India Company official Augustus Prinsep found Van Diemen's Land surprisingly attractive and civilized: 'You have never supposed that it has a beautiful harbour, a fine metropolis, with towns, streets, shops, and pretty shopkeepers, like some of the larger towns of Devonshire or Sussex'. Moreover, he noted, there were counties and farms, the shops were well supplied with goods at reasonable prices, and there were not only several chapels but a number of schools, even a well-regarded girls' boarding school. Tasmania, in Prinsep's view, had wonderful prospects, so much so that he contemplated returning in a few years, and even concluded that 'I could willingly change India for Tasmania, and fall from diplomacy to farming with content'.<sup>1</sup> Prinsep was not the only Briton based in the Indian colonies who visited the Australian colonies in the early to mid-nineteenth century for reasons of proximity or as a health cure, only to discover their attractions.

For all of their unlikely penal origins and strategic imperial value, by the 1820s the Australian colonies had become a settler destination. Operating as largely open-air gaols, the settlements' foundation was the convict system that increasingly included assignment to private masters and mistresses, and thus offered settlers the inducement of unpaid labourers as well as the availability of land on a scale that defied and excited the British imagination. British settlers, to varying degrees, understood the expansion of imperial territories occurring through violence and forced acquisition in places stretching around the globe, as Britain used its naval and military power to build its global imperial ascendancy. With the wars against revolutionary and Napoleonic France finally over, and the massive consequent demobilization of soldiers and sailors, British aspirations for land, affluence, and salubrious climates leapt. Months-long voyages to start a new life became more imaginable. By the 1830s schemes for founding new kinds of colonies, not least those on the lines of Edward Gibbon Wakefield's (1796–1862) systematic colonization, gained attention and support. In Australia, these idealized and elaborate schemes meant new settlements in South Australia in 1836 and at Australind in Western Australia from 1840, settlements that were seen as uplifting new ventures for Australia, places for aspiring landowners and hard-working free labourers.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs A. Prinsep (ed.), *The Journal of a Voyage from Calcutta to Van Diemen's Land: comprising a Description of that Colony during a Six Months' Residence, from original letters* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., Cornhill, 1833) pp. 55, 78, 89, and 107.

The decades from the 1820s to the 1860s constitute a foundational period in Australian history, arguably at least as important as Federation. Industrialization was transforming Britain, but the southern colonies were in a pre-industrial state, with economies driven by pastoralism, agriculture, mining, mercantilism including whaling and sealing, commerce, and the construction trades, as well as imperial government expenditure. Convict transportation had provided the labour on which the first settlements depended until it was brought slowly to a staggered end, first in New South Wales in 1840 and last in Western Australia in 1868. At the same time, the numbers of free settlers rose dramatically, surging from the 1820s and again during the 1850s gold rushes. In the 1850s most colonies achieved responsible government, a radical shift from penal settlements to self-governing societies that is at the heart of this book. Yet we know little about how inhabitants of the Australian colonies perceived the growth of a free settler society from its convict origins, how 'Australians' understood their rapidly evolving place in a profoundly changing world.

The core of this study is the rapid expansion of settler society in Australia in these crucial decades, when the weight of the British population shifted from unfree to free, when colonies dramatically expanded their territorial control (even though viewed in terms of the whole continent they remained small), and settlers and officials alike had grand plans for colonial possibilities. Knowledge, both tacit and articulated, of frontier violence in Australia shaped the settlers' lives; as also, for many, did more peaceful interactions with Aboriginal people. *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies* considers gendered conceptions of the free settler, along with ideas about what it meant to be a free 'white' settler in an empire based on racial hierarchies. A particular focus is the settlers' dependence in these decades on intertwined categories of unfree labour, including that of poorly compensated Aborigines, and indentured Indian and Chinese labourers, alongside that of convicts. My interest in gender includes the conception of political manhood (male suffrage)—by the 1850s men were endowed with political authority and the right to vote, and women were excluded from both. In order to understand contemporary perceptions of the colonies taking shape, I consider settlers' and residents' knowledge of and reactions to specific events around other parts of the British Empire, reactions to frontier conflicts and wars in other colonies, and commentary on political developments elsewhere. But perhaps above all, I hope to challenge assumptions that this was a clear and simple process of migration. Instead, I wish to evoke the ways in which settlers were mobile, often with short-term objectives, changing goals, and evolving conceptions of themselves and their societies.

From our own contemporary perspective, travel means the relative comfort of airplanes and airports that combine shopping malls and hotels. So it is perhaps surprising to realize that settlers in the early to mid-nineteenth century could be globally mobile. Despite the cramped and often smelly conditions on board wooden sailing vessels (the only choice until the introduction of iron steamships around the 1840s), the inevitability of seasickness, the poor quality of food, the danger of shipwreck, and the months it took to sail from Britain to its Antipodes, settlers not infrequently moved on, took trips, or returned to Britain for a visit or for good.

One story of extensive mobility was that of Captain Charles Hervey Bagot who, in 1840, emigrated to South Australia with his wife and children. Irish-born Bagot had already travelled the world during his career with the British Army. From 1804 for at least the next fifteen years, his military service took him to South America, the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), Mauritius, and India. In South Australia, he became a sheep farmer and one of the first owners of a copper mine at Kapunda. Presumably the money he made from copper helped to facilitate his subsequent travel. In 1846 he took his wife on a trip to other Australian colonies, in which they visited Launceston, Melbourne, Sydney, and other parts of New South Wales. In 1853–54 they returned to England and Ireland for an extended visit, and after a further five years in South Australia returned to England yet again.<sup>2</sup>

The Bagots were not alone in this mobility, even if for others it was on a more modest scale. Kathleen Lambert, who arrived in Sydney in 1843 as a teenager with her parents, brothers, and sisters, lived in Australia for forty-five years before returning to England. Lambert experienced changes of fortune in her own material circumstances and those of her immediate family; for six different periods between the mid-1840s and early 1860s she worked as a governess (four in different parts of Sydney, one at Morpeth in the Hunter Valley, and one near Mudgee). For another stretch she served as her brother's housekeeper on his station at Montefiores near Wellington in central New South Wales, performing arduous domestic labour. While Lambert's mobility was on a smaller scale than Bagot's, during her decades in Australia she also visited Tasmania for four months. When she returned to England for good in 1888, she sometimes wondered whether she should not have stayed in Australia, commenting that other returnees had the same thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Some, indeed, returned again to the colonies. Chapter 1 takes up the theme of mobility and connections in order to establish the settlers' global conceptions, not least with regard to racial hierarchies and labour systems.

A point of departure for this book is the goal of taking a wide view of the Australian continent. Much of the history written about the Australian colonies for this period has focused on New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land, or both. Thus Australian colonial history has revolved around the topics of the convict system, the battle to end transportation, the status of emancipated convicts, the gold rush, and political fights over land, as well as the urban agitations for self-government. When we widen the focus out to include the whole continent, the story becomes more varied and more complex. The wider lens compels us to consider how vast the Australian continent is, and how tiny, isolated, and tenuous the first British settlements were, even as the settlers used force to take land from the Aborigines. Frontier violence has increasingly been documented by historians and must remain central to our field of vision. Here, it is inextricably interwoven with the topics of land and labour.

<sup>2</sup> *A holograph memoir of Captain Charles Hervey Bagot of the 87th Regiment* (Adelaide: Pioneers Association of South Australia, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> 'Lyth' [Kathleen Lambert], *The Golden South: Memories of Australian Home Life from 1843 to 1888* (London: Ward and Downey, 1890).



In the period covered by this text, British colonialism spread out from the first settlements dotted along the east and south coasts and in Van Diemen's Land. Pastoralism pushed colonial frontiers west, north, and south from Sydney, and across the fertile regions of Van Diemen's Land. In 1829 the Swan River Colony extended the earlier small military bases in Western Australia with a fledgling settlement that would develop only slowly. In 1835 settlers in Van Diemen's Land crossed the Bass Strait and rapidly began to grab land in the Port Phillip and western districts of what in 1850 would become Victoria, against the wishes of colonial authorities. In 1836 the first Wakefieldian experiment was launched in South Australia, a systematic colony that sought to turn the messy processes of settler colonialism into an orderly political scheme of migration that would benefit landowners and labourers. If South Australia did not live up to its notions of its own moral exceptionalism, its sibling colony at Australind, begun in southern Western Australia in 1840, would attain only a fraction of the vision of its founders. And from the 1850s, in the northern reaches of New South Wales, the huge area that would become Queensland, the settled areas rapidly expanded with a moving front of bloody warfare. By taking this broader look at the continental spread of the Australian colonies in these early, formative stages, we can consider the varied nature of settler colonialism and the ways in which it subsumed what had been penal colonies.

At the same time, it is important to see these fledgling colonies not only as a connected continental network, but as part of the globally expanding British Empire. While the British in Australia were expanding their territorial grasp, so were British settler colonies in Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, even as Britain maintained its Indian Ocean footholds. The British took Hong Kong as a prize of the Opium Wars with China in the early 1840s, and then with great difficulty suppressed the Indian Rebellion of 1857–58, before going to war with the Maori of the North Island in New Zealand in 1860. At the time British settlers saw these enterprises and fights as expanding their empire, which was why they occasionally moved from one colony to another, or in some instances volunteered to serve in an imperial battle elsewhere. As Chapter 7 will discuss, settlers in Australia understood that their own prosperity and security were linked to the fortunes of the British Empire in other colonies, and directly identified as Britons when imperial interests were attacked. This sense of colonial connectedness has often been overlooked in Australian history in recent decades, and is crucial to apprehending the settlers' world views at the time. Settlers' placing of the maturing Australian colonies within the imperial and global context casts light on their push for self-government and manhood (adult male) suffrage, as well as their claims to land and conceptions of warfare.

Recent work in imperial and world history has refocused attention on the category 'settlers', a term that has been reinvigorated through the imperative to better understand historical processes of colonialism. James Belich in his 2009 book on the Anglophone world uses the terms 'settlerism' and 'Settler Revolution' to encompass the massive territorial expansion of Britain and America combined in the nineteenth century, and the huge migrations of Anglophone populations to the

newly conquered frontiers.<sup>4</sup> As Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen have argued, settler colonialism continued through the twentieth century, was conducted by a range of states (including, for example, Singapore and Israel) and ethnic groups, sparked continuing struggles over land, and has fundamentally structured the contemporary world.<sup>5</sup> Studying settlers and settler colonialism is a major component of modern world history. Settlers have been at the core of imperial expansion, the dispossession of indigenous peoples, and the establishment of new states and racially stratified societies.

From the 1820s onwards, the process of rapid settler expansion in the Australian colonies comprised one part of the vastly expanding British Empire and other empires around the globe. Lisa Ford argues that between the specific years of 1822 and 1847, settler colonies in the Anglophone world articulated their own sovereignty by asserting their jurisdiction over indigenous peoples. Ford demonstrates that in the US state of Georgia and in New South Wales, as well as in colonies ranging from Canada to New Zealand, settler courts defined indigenous violence as crime and asserted their right to punish it; in so doing, they conflated sovereignty, territory, and jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup> Ford's evidence suggests that settler colonialism expanded and changed in fundamental ways from the 1820s. This book contributes to the current interest in historicizing settler colonialism and in showing the significance of its massive expansion in the early to mid-nineteenth century. It seeks to do so by drawing connections between political, cultural, and social aspects of settler society in Australia.

This volume is concerned, amongst other topics, with the connections between rapidly expanding settler colonialism and the establishment of historically and geographically specific racially stratified societies. David Lambert's study of Barbados during the rise of the abolition movement from the 1780s to 1833 charts what he sees as a white creole identity shaped through the politics of resisting the abolition of slavery. In Lambert's view, whiteness in Barbados was shaped through contested political discourses, in a specific historical era when the British metropole and one of its successful colonies struggled over moral, political, and economic issues. A familiar term in Caribbean studies, the 'creolization' of colonizers refers to the process in which they developed a distinctive culture and polity, and the mutual articulation of difference between metropole and colony. Seeing white West Indian culture as 'creole' signifies its blending of various elements on Caribbean soil, a metropolitan view of the negative transformation of colonizers through the colonial encounter, the sense of difference white West Indians developed from their metropolitan counterparts, and the participation of non-white groups in defining white 'creole' characteristics.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-world, 1783–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (eds), *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 1–3.

<sup>7</sup> David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 37–9.

The term 'creole' has not been applied to settler colonialism in Australia, yet several of the above elements were present in its establishment. Settlers in Australia quickly developed a culture based on land grants, the exploitation of convict labour, the dispossession of Indigenous people, and the establishment of the pastoral industry, as well as whaling and sealing; a culture shaped through adaptation to the Australian landscape, coastline, climate, and topography. The settler polity grew through dependence on and resistance to military rule, reliance on government for the supply of labour and the provision of buildings and roads, claims for land grants, the obfuscation of frontier violence, and demands for political representation that were fulfilled gradually in the 1840s and 1850s. As in Barbados, political claims were couched in terms of English liberties and rights. Australian settler identities and characteristics were shaped, in part, through the resistance of subordinated groups, particularly Aboriginal people, and the claims of ticket-of-leave and emancipated convicts.

The pivotal development of these decades and the political events that form the backbone of this story were the Australian colonies' gradual attainment of representative and then responsible government. Through a process of political struggle and negotiation in which Australians looked to the developments in Canada for their model of political progress, settlers slowly became self-governing. The first step was the principle of partially elected legislative councils to advise the governor, first achieved in New South Wales in 1842 with the other colonies following. Next the 1850 Australian Colonies Government Act gave South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria legislative councils that were two-thirds elected, and lowered the property qualifications for voting in all the colonies.<sup>8</sup> Then in the 1850s, continuing colonial demands for self-government on the Canadian model resulted in new fully articulated constitutions for each colony: constitutions for New South Wales, Tasmania, and Victoria were enacted in 1855, for South Australia in 1856, and in 1859 for Queensland when it separated from New South Wales. For various reasons, Western Australia's evolution was slower; it would not achieve responsible government until 1890.

The events of the extended political drama that resulted in responsible government have been well covered by other historians.<sup>9</sup> Aspects of that story are integral to Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 shows that this was an inherently imperial drama, one that cannot be seen as exclusively Australian, and that some of the leading proponents of self-government in the Australian colonies brought their advocacy and their experience from elsewhere in the British Empire. Moreover, we need to

<sup>8</sup> K. S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: An exploration of social history 1788–1870* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1974), p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> Recent work in this area has included Peter Cochrane, *Colonial Ambition: Foundations of Australian Democracy* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2006) and Terry Irving, *The Southern Tree of Liberty: The Democratic Movement in New South Wales before 1856* (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2006), while important earlier work includes John Hirst, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy: New South Wales 1848–1884* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 1988), J. M. Ward, *Colonial Self-Government: The British Experience 1759–1856* (London: Macmillan, 1976), and A. G. L. Shaw (ed.), *Great Britain and the Colonies 1815–1865* (London: Methuen, 1970).

see the ways in which arguments for self-government and political manhood—which were pioneered in the Australian colonies with their early achievement of male suffrage—were tied to settler colonial conceptions of claims to land and the dispossession of Indigenous inhabitants. The significance of the exclusion of women from political rights and authority, women's challenges to that exclusion, and the debates about gender that percolated through the Australian colonies and beyond in consequence, form much of the subject of Chapter 5. While the term 'responsible government' refers primarily to the executive (the premier and cabinet ministers) being responsible to the lower house of parliament, it had resonances for all those who became voting political subjects in the new system, and for those excluded. If, as David Denholm has suggested, the 'traditional proposition' was that 'freedom was for free men, a self contained definition that variously excluded servants, soldiers, convicts, and lesser subjects such as Irish peasants and Indians', by implicitly dividing society into 'responsible and irresponsible men' on the basis of the 'alleged capacity of a man to participate in the governance of freedom by free men', male suffrage in the Australian colonies from the mid-1850s was a symbolic development indeed.<sup>10</sup> It meant that significant numbers of men who had previously been held 'irresponsible' now became imbued with responsible manly authority that could be exercised and displayed as voting subjects. Manhood became a political status as well as the benchmark of social independence, while womanhood connoted its apolitical opposite. The Australian colonies acquired not only self-government but international visibility as electoral pioneers.

Preceding settlers' claims to self-government were their aspirations and claims to land. It was the promise of land that attracted settlers to the Australian colonies. Land grants were made from the first founding of New South Wales. In the first decades of the colonies' settlement, grants were predicated on turning emancipated convicts into yeomen farmers, encouraging retired soldiers to stay in the same capacity, and enticing some free settlers with lots of 130 acres. Between 1792 and 1795 civil and military officers also obtained the privilege of land grants of 100 acres.<sup>11</sup> In the 1820s the system of land grants changed at the same time that convict transportation increased greatly in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. The number and size of land grants increased dramatically, as did the assignment of convicts to private masters and mistresses, thus facilitating the rapid expansion of large pastoral estates. In 1820 the lands beyond the Cumberland Plains of Sydney were officially opened to pastoralism. Between 1822 and 1828, four times the area of land was awarded in grants as had been awarded between 1788 and 1821.<sup>12</sup> In Van Diemen's Land, which was established as a penal colony in 1803, land grants were made on a similar basis to New South Wales. In the southern colony, too, the 1820s saw a dramatic expansion of grants. The watershed year was 1823 when a

<sup>10</sup> David Denholm, 'Some Aspects of Squatting in New South Wales and Queensland, 1847–1864', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1972, pp. xviii–xix.

<sup>11</sup> Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question*, p. 73.

total of 441,871 acres was allocated in 1,027 grants; by the early 1830s most of the island's land suited to agriculture and pastoralism had been granted or sold.<sup>13</sup> The halcyon days for military settlers—retired officers and those on half pay from the army—were the years from 1826 to 1831, when they were given land grants on superior terms to non-military settlers. In 1831, influenced by Wakefield and his supporters of systematic colonization, the Ripon Regulations sought to abolish land grants throughout the empire, creating systems of land sales in their place.<sup>14</sup> From 1831 even military officers had to purchase land, though they were given special reductions on the price of land correlating to their length of service.<sup>15</sup>

From the 1830s the occupation of land by squatters spread voraciously up and down eastern Australia. While squatting was at first frowned on, under Governor Bourke it was sanctioned through regulation, licensing, and the introduction of Commissioners for Crown Lands whose duties included monitoring squatters. Those who engaged in squatting were a diverse group, including established landowners who held mixed-farming estates in the more densely settled areas, and large pastoral runs further out. In the 1860s land reforms were enacted to redress the balance of land ownership and to open up more land to small farmers.<sup>16</sup>

The settlers' desire for land drove the slow and arduous processes of settlement. Often in small groups—sometimes several men cooperating, sometimes in families, and occasionally individual men alone—new arrivals moved inland with their bullock drays and horses to stake out land claims and begin to occupy them in rough shelters and huts. Commonly, the sparseness of the settler population meant that they were dependent on each other for assistance, such as routinely offering travellers the comfort of food and shelter in huts and homesteads, and even medical assistance, as they made their painstaking journeys from coastal towns inland and back again.

But it was not only other settlers with whom they developed relations of reliance and cooperation. The early settler frontiers were mixed places of violence and peaceful interaction with Aboriginal people, and the 'frontiers' were not just at the receding edges of settlement. As Penelope Edmonds has shown, we need to see the pervasiveness of these interracial interactions to recognize that: 'Colonial frontiers did not exist only in the bush, backwoods, or borderlands; they clearly sat at the heart of early town and city building'.<sup>17</sup> Aborigines who were displaced from their land, or forced to share it with these unwanted strangers, were often soon at least partly dependent on settlers for food and other goods, such as tobacco, which could be acquired through labour—though usually this labour was not properly compensated as that of white workers would have been. Thus interracial

<sup>13</sup> Sharon Morgan, *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania: Creating an Antipodean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 13, 22–3.

<sup>14</sup> McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question*, pp. 84–5.

<sup>15</sup> Christine Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire c.1820–40* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 19–20.

<sup>16</sup> McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question*, pp. 91–3, 220.

<sup>17</sup> Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), p. 5.

relations were often familiar, even intimate, as Aborigines and settlers lived and worked around and with each other.

Settlers learned Aboriginal people's names, or gave them names of their own attribution, often derogatory. They frequently learned a great deal from Aborigines, about the local topography and climate, and the plants and animals. Alice Hughes, in a memoir published much later, remembered life on her family's sheep station in the 1840s near the town of Wellington in South Australia, at the mouth of the River Murray. The family's interactions with local Aborigines were such that: 'We made great friends with the black fellows and were never tired of talking to them and seeing the strange things they did'. The Aborigines called her "Alith" or "Big Man's piccaninny". Hughes readily criticized these Aboriginal 'friends' in her recollections, condemning them as 'very idle people', even though 'sometimes they would do a little work for tea or sugar or a stick of tobacco', and a 'black lubra [did] washing for us'. Despite their supposed laziness, Hughes recalled them as 'a good natured race, at least the half civilised ones we knew were' and admitted that 'we got a good many hints from them in general which gave us a taste for outdoor life'.<sup>18</sup> Other settler reminiscences and accounts similarly document frequent and familiar interracial relations in these decades. A particular challenge inherent to understanding the Australian settler colonies in this period is to comprehend the simultaneous cooperation and violence between Europeans and Aborigines. It was the settlers' drive to take and claim the land that spurred the violence, and it was often their need for labour that underpinned the cooperation; for Aborigines, there could be little choice.

The pervasive violence of the frontier was not only interracial. Relations between masters and mistresses on the one hand, and their convict labourers and servants on the other, could be fraught and at times involved appeals to magistrates and the punishment of convicts, which could include flogging. On larger pastoral estates and farms, in Van Diemen's Land at least, convicts were locked overnight in rudimentary cells. To some extent, labour relations overlapped with penal or custodial relations. Not surprisingly, it was widely understood that convicts resented their masters and mistresses. It was also understood that, typically, convicts would not come to the aid of their masters and mistresses in the event of an attack by bushrangers.

Lawlessness and violence in the early Australian colonies included not only frontier warfare but bushranging, which began as early as the late eighteenth century. The violence woven into the fabric of settler society in these decades was a merging of these different forms, which helped to justify harsh measures of control and to some extent blurred the categories of crime and warfare. As Chapter 6 will discuss, bushranging was linked to the convict system in that escaped convicts often turned to bushranging to survive. But bushrangers were a diverse group: the first person to be identified as a bushranger was 'Black Caesar', a convict of African descent who had arrived on the First Fleet in 1788, escaped into

<sup>18</sup> Mrs F. [Alice] Hughes, *My Childhood in Australia* (London: Digby, Long, and Co., 1892), pp. 19, 28, 44, 47.

the bush around Sydney in 1795, and was shot in 1796. There were also Aboriginal men identified as 'bushrangers', even though in their cases the crime of bushranging is difficult to distinguish from resistance to British invasion. Bushranging and the settlers' fear of it pervaded the eastern Australian colonies in their early decades, reaching highpoints in Van Diemen's Land in the 1820s, in New South Wales in the 1830s and again in the 1860s, and in Victoria in the 1850s. Fear of bushranging in New South Wales was such that from 1830 to 1842 (when New South Wales incorporated much of the eastern part of the continent) the Bushranging Act empowered any person to arrest someone found on the road with a firearm who looked like they might commit a robbery. This extraordinary legislating of citizen arrest reflects the degree to which bushranging had produced a colonial panic.

Settlers in the Australian colonies were a heterogeneous lot, dominantly Anglo-British but including people of other ethnic origins from the first. The 1850s gold rushes brought prospectors from China, America (including some African Americans), Germany, and elsewhere in Europe, some of whom stayed after gold fever subsided. And if they were mostly drawn from the middling classes, those with family backgrounds in military or civil service, commerce, professions, and the skilled trades, they also represented a wide range of levels of material affluence. At least some were attracted to the Australian colonies for reasons of freedom of worship; nonconformists sought to escape the dominance of the established Church of England, such that varieties of Protestantism flourished on Australian soil, while the Irish minority and other Europeans brought Roman Catholicism. While settlers were surprisingly mobile, typically they selected a particular Australian colony as their new home and identified with it such that they became divided by colonial loyalties. And political disagreements abounded. Yet there were factors of commonality and shared interests, even in these decades well before Federation appeared on the horizon.

The terms 'Australia' and 'Australians' were current in this period. Perhaps one common bond was the very fact of having made the journey from Britain, or elsewhere, or having been born into a family that had been transplanted, even if not fully voluntarily. Their shared enterprise of shaping these new colonies, with a profound sense of their rawness and innovation, also united settlers. From early on settlers and visitors described common attributes of colonial Australians—a range of qualities from the flattering to the less so. One resident of the 1840s and 1850s commented on 'the active, intelligent and go-ahead occupiers of Australia', perhaps reflecting a shared sense of the energy and resilience it took to make a life in a fledgling colony.<sup>19</sup>

This volume presents stories and incidents from the lives of scores of individual settlers in these decades, a few of them familiar historical figures, but many who are not so well known. One of the book's goals is to juxtapose these stories in such a way that the evidence they present forms overlapping layers, in the hope that the layers cohere as linked political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of these

<sup>19</sup> *A holograph memoir of Captain Charles Hervey Bagot*, p. 31.

evolving colonies. If the political maturation of self-government lies at its core, this history of the Australian colonies from the 1820s to the 1860s traces the development of a settler society based on speculative land ownership, and mixed systems of unfree, indentured, and wage labour that connected the dispersed and disparate Australian settlements. Paradoxically, British settlers relied partially on convict labour to build societies whose maturation depended on the ending of convict transportation. Displacing and criminalizing indigenous people, and the violence requisite to establish their pastoral holdings, farms, and towns, were justified by the settlers' belief in the superiority of Christian white Britishness, and buttressed by the knowledge that they were part of a global British ascendancy. The settlers' willingness to support and fight for British interests elsewhere, such as against the Maori in New Zealand, and their expressions of outraged righteousness over the Indian Rebellion in the 1850s, show that they understood their actions and their culture within not just a larger continental but an imperial context. Their lexicon of their own rights, and the moral certainties that underlay their frontier violence and social hierarchies, drew on global examples. But the societies they forged on this vast continent were unlike any elsewhere in their blending of extensive penal labour with other unfree and unpaid labour, and their interwoven aspirations to land tracts, pastoral and mining riches, and, for white men at least, democratic rights (a limitation against which some women protested).