

our sunburnt country

An illustrated history of Australia

Revised and expanded edition

Author **ARTHUR BAILLIE**



Illustrated by MOLLY G. JOHNSON A.R.A.S.

HOMESCHOOLING DOWNUNDER

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Publisher's Note

I first became aware of *Our Sunburnt Country* about five years ago when I was looking for an Australian history book to read aloud with my two oldest children, then aged 6 and 8. One of my friends recommended it and handed me her copy. She said it was very popular amongst home-schoolers as an excellent narrative-style account of our history.

So the kids and I sat on the couch and learned together our Australian history. The children loved the exciting stories and enjoyed the illustrations. My goal was to read one chapter per sitting but often I was begged for another chapter or two. I didn't mind at all; it was a good read; and I was sounding quite knowledgeable at dinner parties.


When I was asked by others parents what I would recommend for teaching Australian history, I would unequivocally recommend *Our Sunburnt Country*, with the additional apology that it was out of print and they would have to hunt around and find one secondhand.

I was so excited when Arthur Baillie agreed to allow us to republish *Our Sunburnt Country*. I was even more excited when I read through his updated and revised version and I thank him for making this book available again.

Arthur is still passionate about Australian history and has been able to thoughtfully update his original version with added information that was not publicly known and new historic events that have occurred since 1964.

This book will be enjoyed by young and old. It can also be used as the basis for studying Australian history with children. Visit our website for more ideas.

Michelle Morrow
Publisher
Homeschooling Downunder
October, 2013.



*Foreword
to the
first edition*

INTEREST in the story of Australia has increased steadily during recent years. Many migrants, in particular, desire to gain sound knowledge concerning this "new" country, and at the same time lots of "home-grown" Australians have come to realize that if they are to say with pride, "This is my own, my native land", they should possess reasonable knowledge of the country's picturesque record.

"Can you give me," an elderly Sydney woman asked recently, "a short account of events that took place at Botany Bay and Port Jackson in the days of discovery? I'm sorry to say I always get Captain Cook and Governor Phillip mixed, and that's because in my school days I was taught much about happenings in Britain long ago, but very little about the history of Australia."

The book here presented should be of great help to such seekers for local knowledge. In the nature of the case, its author could not include much detail in any section, but he gives, simply and clearly, an informative summary of Australia's progress from the Dreamtime of the Aborigines to the remarkable developments of today.

Accordingly, the book merits a most friendly reception, especially from the youth of the land.

*History House,
Sydney.
January, 1964.*

ALEC H. CHISHOLM, O.B.E.

Preface

When this book was first written I was endeavouring to meet two major needs which I considered to exist. The first was the need to provide primary-aged children with an easily-read, short account of Australia's early history and the second was to help readers to feel that those who from the very beginning shaped our nation were not merely names on pages of history but were living, breathing, feeling human beings, with personalities of their own.

While the book was written primarily for students I have been delighted to learn that many adults have derived pleasure from reading its pages.

In writing the preface for the original publication I expressed my thanks to Betty Boaden, then the librarian at North Sydney Demonstration School, for her assistance in research and her advice regarding the text; to Marilyn Stacy for her careful editing of the completed text; to A. G. L. Shaw, then Senior Lecturer in History at Sydney University, who checked the material to ensure historical accuracy and to countless friends and teaching colleagues who were so generous in their encouragement of my endeavours. These expressions of appreciation are extended once more.

I wish again to acknowledge my gratitude and to include a special word of thanks to the well-known Australian artist, the late Molly Johnson, who illustrated this work so beautifully. Her delightfully delicate interpretation made the completed text not merely a short history of Australia, but a work of art.

Sincere thanks are extended to Michelle Morrow of Downunder Literature for enthusiastically offering to arrange for this little book to be available once again. Amendments and broad-outline additions have been included to bring the detail up to date.

ARTHUR J. BAILLIE
B.A., M.Ed. (Sydney)

My Country

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes.
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins,
Strong love of grey-blue distance
Brown streams and soft dim skies
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror —
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon,
Green tangle of the brushes
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops,
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,
We see the cattle die —
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back threefold —
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land —
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand —
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.

Dorothea Mackellar

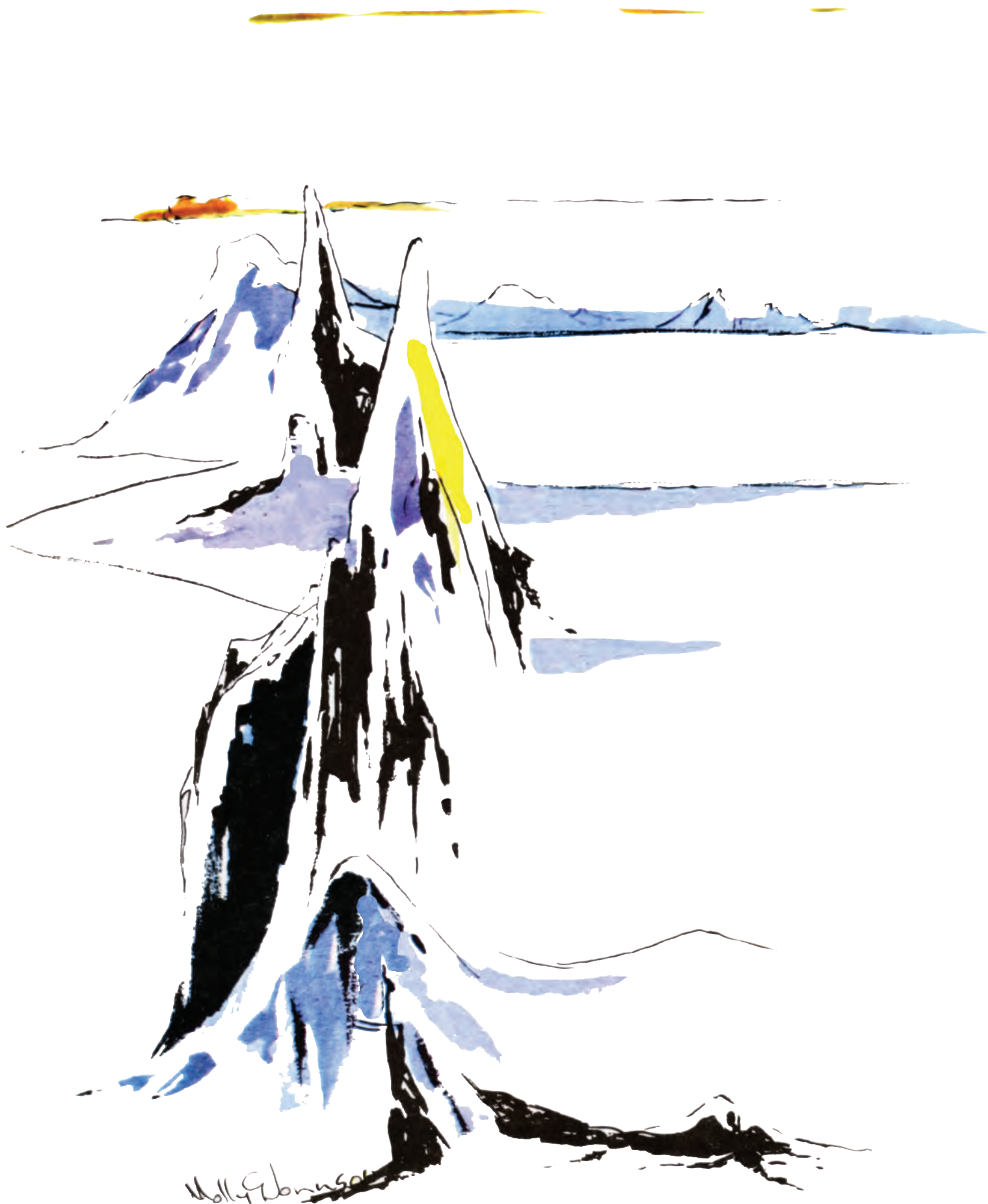


Contents

Page

<i>Chapter One</i>	The Land of the Dreamtime	9
<i>Chapter Two</i>	New Visitors to an Old Land	21
<i>Chapter Three</i>	They Came – and Stayed	38
<i>Chapter Four</i>	Rum and Rebellion	46
<i>Chapter Five</i>	Bass and Flinders Map the Coastline	53
<i>Chapter Six</i>	Over the Barrier	64
<i>Chapter Seven</i>	The Riddle of the Rivers	71
<i>Chapter Eight</i>	New Colonies in Australia	90
<i>Chapter Nine</i>	Days of Gold	94
<i>Chapter Ten</i>	Men of Industry	106
<i>Chapter Eleven</i>	Birth of a Nation	111
<i>Chapter Twelve</i>	A Nation at War	115
<i>Chapter Thirteen</i>	After World War 1	120
<i>Chapter Fourteen</i>	The Second World War	126
<i>Chapter Fifteen</i>	Advance Australia	131
	Index	140 - 141





Molly Gibson

Chapter One

The Land of the Dreamtime

DO you know what our Earth looks like? I'm sure that you can tell it is like a huge ball, spinning around in space. The "top" and "bottom" of this gigantic ball each has a thick covering, or cap, of ice. These ice caps are very important in the story of our world.

Long, long ago – when the world was very young – the two ice caps were much bigger and the Earth was a lot colder than it is today. Snow fell over the two frozen areas and the snow, too, became ice. It did not melt and flow back into the sea from where it had come. So much water stayed on the land in the form of ice that there was much less water in the oceans. As the level of water in the seas and oceans fell, some of the Earth's area that had been covered by water then became dry land. This was the time of a great Ice Age.





Can you see on the map that there are many islands between Australia and the mainland of the Asian continent? In the times of the great ice caps there was much more land exposed and less sea between Australia and Asia. It was quite easy for people to row across the narrow stretches of water. We believe that it was about that time that brown-skinned people began to cross from Asia to Australia. In dug-out canoes they came, bringing their weapons, dogs, and a little food. These people were the first Aborigines to live in Australia and they came many thousands of years ago. They came long before the birth of Christ or Buddha and even long before the pyramids were being built in Egypt.

The Aborigines tell many wonderful stories about these early times which they call the days of the *Dreamtime*. One of the stories told by the Aborigines was about Bohra, the Kangaroo.