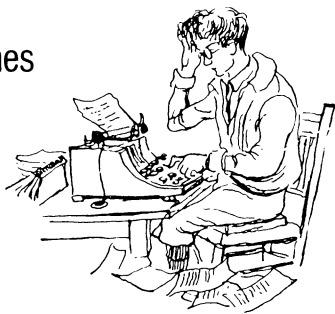


THE SOURCE

David J. Jones



Happy hunting ground

Genealogy in Australia has generated a fair number of how-to-do-it guides, but there have been few handbooks of sources for the family historian. The most ambitious was probably Niel T. Hansen's *Guide to genealogical sources Australia and New Zealand*, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Melbourne in 1963 and long out of print. Nick Vine Hall has now set about filling this vacuum with the publication of *Tracing your family history in Australia: a guide to sources*.

This is a substantial offering of 324 pages from an author with impressive credentials, having been Director of the Society of Australian Genealogists for the past eight years and a searcher of no mean experience himself.

After a stimulating introduction, in which Vine Hall presents some sobering statistics on the extent of genealogical research in Australia (a market of great potential for libraries and archives), and some preliminary remarks on how to start head-hunting, he launches into the meat of his text.

This is a state-by-state exposition of the main information sources for genealogists, describing the major collections and providing some information on the main types of record. Here Vine Hall has been remarkably thorough, giving guidance on location of records as diverse as change of name, bankruptcy, undertakers' records, manuscripts, family bibles, newspapers, electoral rolls and plans. He cannot of course go into extensive detail about every type of record, but provides enough leads to keep the most ardent genealogist busy until, at least, well past the millennium.

Very useful listings of local historical and genealogical groups are given too, together with full names and addresses of relevant collections (which are referred to within the text by abbreviations). The whole is rounded off by a 327-item bibliography. An index is a notable omission, and one which I hope will be corrected in future editions — in this edition the very full contents pages are some consolation.

Every Australian library should get at least one copy of Vine Hall, preferably two (one for the reference shelf and the other for loan). Nick Vine Hall's *Tracing your family history in Australia* was published last year by Rigby and retails at \$19.95.

A second printing has already been necessary and at the time of going to press new supplies are reaching the bookshops.

Copies can be obtained from the usual sources or for \$24.00 including postage from the Society of Australian Genealogists, 120 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. (ISBN 0 7270 1953 8).

Barry's brief lives

I can remember some of the mixed reviews about the first edition of the *Macmillan dictionary of biography*, which appeared in 1981. One of its co-authors, the omnivorous Barry Jones, even dissociated himself from it. The other editor associated with the work, which was conceived in 1959, died in 1967. Now a 'fully revised and updated edition' by Barry Jones and M. V. Dixon has been published, and it doesn't look too bad. It is readable. It looks pretty accurate. It seems well-balanced (110 lines on Marx, 11 lines on the Marx brothers), and has good coverage of contemporary figures. Of course with only 7,500 entries Jones *et al* have had to be selective.

This is an essential purchase for all reference collections. Barry Jones and M. V. Dixon's *The Macmillan dictionary of biography* was published earlier this year by Macmillan Australia and costs \$39.95. (ISBN 0 333 40036 4)

Genealogical giant

The first volume in a mammoth genealogical publishing project has recently been launched by an Australian organisation with which many librarians may be unfamiliar.

The Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record is a non-profit, independent research unit established to co-ordinate and compile biographical and genealogical details

about Australians. The aim of series one of the *Record* is to provide brief biographical information on 'every person who lived in mainland eastern Australia between 26 January 1788 and 31 December 1841'. This ambitious project will be fuelled by descendants and other interested persons providing information, and from data deriving from transcripts of major source records. The scope of the project is breathtaking, and the response from contributors and sponsors seems to be excellent. Volume 1 of series two of the *Record* is actually the first to appear, and contains pocket biographies, and some photographs, of 1,500 individuals from all walks of life who arrived in or were born in the target area between 1842 and 1899.

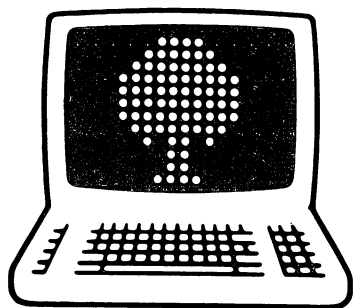
This is an essential work for any library serving the growing ranks of genealogists and local historians — but leave plenty of shelf space for future volumes!

Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record: series 2: 1842-1899: volume 1 was edited by Kenneth J. Cable and Jane C. Merchant and was published by ABGR in association with the Society of Australian Genealogists in 1985. It costs \$29.50 (hardback) and \$19.50 (limp) and is available from ABGR, PO Box 1788, North Sydney, NSW 2060. (ISBN 0 949032 01 8 (hardback)). To keep abreast of the project as a whole, you may find it useful to become an associate member of the ABGR (at \$4.50 per annum) and receive its regular newsletter.

Don't spill the coffee on these

Two nicely-illustrated editions of Australian classics, published just in time for last year's Christmas stocking market, have come my way from Lansdowne. Dee Huxley's atmospheric illustrations adorn a treasury of Henry Lawson poems and short stories, and Hugh Sawrey's bright and evocative style accompanies a selection of Banjo Paterson's poems chosen by the poet's grand-daughters. The selections are a good introduction to the talents of Lawson and Paterson, and may well whet the appetite of those discovering them for the first time.

The Banjo's best-loved poems, chosen by his grand-daughters and illustrated by Hugh Sawrey, costs \$15.95 (ISBN 0 7018 1724 0), and *Henry Lawson: an illustrated treasury*, illustrated by Dee Huxley, costs \$14.95 (ISBN 0 7018 1935 9). Both were published last year by Lansdowne.



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