
This book is one in a series which includes studies of the Afghans, the Cornish and the Lebanese in Australia. The series will eventually run to over thirty volumes and will be an invaluable reference for ethnic studies in Australia. *The Scottish in Australia* has been written by one of the leaders in Scottish-Australian studies, Dr. Malcolm Prentis, who is lecturer in history at the Catholic College of Education in Sydney. It is based largely upon the author's Ph.D. thesis for Macquarie University and on *The Scots in Australia* published by Sydney University Press in 1983. It is written for a popular audience, lacking any footnotes and featuring a reduced bibliography. All of this adds to its readability and should ensure wide sales.

This book is divided into chapters which deal with all the areas in which Scots have made a major contribution to Australian society. Prentis looks at the Scottish background and immigration to Australia and then at everything from the Scottish contribution to commerce and industry, through the armed forces, sports and culture, to religion and society. He claims that he will deal with the failures as well as the successes, but it appears that very few failed. A good measure would have been to check those who returned to Scotland after some years, either because they had failed or were disillusioned with the Australian environment.

One of the most interesting and most important chapters is that on Scottish immigration. Prentis breaks it down into several eras, tracing the trends in Scottish migration to Australia and considering settlement patterns and such things as political affiliations. Most Scottish immigrants, he concludes, have come from the urban industrial Lowlands and have settled in urban Australia. By contrast, the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders were a small and declining minority from the middle of the nineteenth century. As the percentage of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders declined, the Scottish group as a whole became less distinctive and more integrated into Australian society. Prentis illustrates this later in discussing rural immigrants.
Scottish settlers generally did not attempt to recreate rural Scotland in Australia, but to improve both their rural heritage and the new land to which they came. Farmers and graziers were shaped by their new social and material surroundings; they were shaped by, and they reshaped, their Scottish heritage.

There was always, of course, the eccentric, and Prentis notes:

One misguided, homesick squatter in Victoria planted thistles, which rapidly became a noxious weed. He was the exception; for most Scots on the land, survival and profit were more powerful influences on agricultural and pastoral practice than sentimentality.

The key to Scottish ethnicity, according to Prentis, was their Presbyterian ethos. Throughout the book he uses Presbyterianism as a standard by which to measure Scottishness. Like many authors before him, he equates success and Calvinism, as he emphasises what he calls 'that elusive Protestant ethic'. Since the whole book is built upon this thesis, the principal chapter is perhaps that on religion and society.

The Presbyterian Church,' Prentis writes, 'was by far the most important Scottish institution brought to Australia.' He goes on to suggest that even non-Presbyterian Scots were affected by the Presbyterian ethos. The Presbyterian Church throughout the nineteenth century, he argues, was a Scottish ethnic shelter with the more theologically and socially conservative branches providing the greatest resistance to assimilation.

In the church union movement which began in the 1920's and was completed in 1976, comparisons can be made with the formation of the United Church in Canada. With the 1970's movement towards church union, Prentis suggests that those who remained Presbyterian were attempting to retain their ethnic identity, while those who entered union had become fully Australianised and recognised the need for a national institution. 'Some believe,' he writes, 'that the minority 'continuing' Presbyterian Church represents in part a rearguard action for Scottish identity.' While there was a small element who fought union on the basis of 'Kirk of our Fathers' the main concern was theological rather than ethnological.
The conclusion raises a number of interesting points, suggesting future studies. First, like Charlotte Erickson, Prentis makes the point that only successful immigrants write home. This has given 'a misleadingly optimistic impression of the personal adjustment of Scottish immigrants' and must have often attracted immigrants who, on arrival, were disappointed with what they found. Second, he looks at the number of Scots and Presbyterians in prisons as an indication of those who have not adjusted and have turned towards a life of crime. Figures on this are, however, unsatisfactory and no adequate conclusions can be drawn from the evidence available. Third, he sees intermarriage as the best method of measuring whether Scots were fully integrated into the Australian nation. He concludes that the Scots had a higher rate of inter-marriage outside of their own ethnic group than any other nationality.

Finally, the question is asked by Prentis: What happened to the invisible Scots? Here he refers to women, the unsuccessful, radicals, drunks, criminals, spendthrifts, atheists. He does not attempt to answer the question because perhaps, once again, there is no evidence. Studies of the Scot overseas have for so long dealt with biographies of the successful, as indeed does Prentis' book. In posing this question, however, Prentis shows that he is not seeing history through tartan-tinted spectacles and is aware that the majority of Scottish immigrants were not the powerful and successful, but the weak and the ordinary.

All the areas touched on by Prentis in this book need more work before final conclusions can be reached on the Scots ability to change and be integrated into Australian society. The facts will probably demonstrate the conclusion already reached by Prentis and a former Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, the Scot has 'a memory, but no regrets'.

In conclusion there are many parallels that can be drawn between the Scot's experience in Australia and Canada. This, therefore, is a book well worth reading by anyone interested in the Scottish contribution overseas.