

*World of Australia*

by G. McKenzie

# THE AUSTRALIANS

## *The Australians*

### NEW SOCIETY, NEW BABIES

It is a fact universally acknowledged that wherever men and women mix in large numbers, they will make babies.

The Australians were the children of the British. But more than that, they were the children of convicts, for 90% of Australian babies in the first few decades had convict ancestry.

Being born in a convict society to convict parents affixed them with the so-called convict stain and marked them out for prejudice and discrimination. They would carry this stain in shame for nearly 200 years. The association of Australia with convictism was so strong that in later decades the stain came to affect everyone in the society.

Australia was held to be a place of the vilest inhabitants and was condemned for allowing children to grow up amidst “the grossest profaneness and debauchery.” That Australia was formed from the refuse of another society was a fact conveniently ignored, and so began a never-ending tradition of blaming the Australians for their own existence.

And so the first Australians were “a new generation two-thirds made up of bastards raised at the public expense”, of “lesser value”, “a set of idle, worthless, dishonest, drunken and unchaste animals”, part of a “lower order” of life, “degenerates”, and “abominations”.

To be an Australian was a bad thing.

But if the British colonies had failed, as they almost did, then the children born in them would have been of little consequence; and if Australia had not prospered, then 'being Australian' would have remained as the name of an obscure 'native white' ethnic group, living on the very edge of civilisation, in the distant lands of Australasia.

Today, millions of people call themselves Australians. No-one ever wonders why anyone would want to do so. And that is remarkable: for they all owe it to a small group of men, born to robbers and prostitutes in exile, who decided to very literally make it a name for themselves.

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### EMANCIPISTS VS EXCLUSIVES

As all prisons are inherently divided between those imprisoned and their wardens, so did early Australia manifest the same division.

Former convicts were known as emancipists. Convicts, emancipists, and their Australian children made up the vast majority of inhabitants.

They were kept from power and influence by a coalition of free settlers, military men, and civil servants that aimed to keep power exclusively in their own hands and out of the hands of those tainted by convictism.

For this reason, this faction was known as the Exclusives.

The Exclusives ran early Australia for their benefit. Governors that went against them risked their position. It was Governor Macquarie who most strongly sought to end the factional divide, but an Exclusive plot saw him withdrawn.

The Exclusives came to an end when the Emancipists joined with free settlers from lesser backgrounds to form the Australian Patriotic Association, which lobbied the British government for self-rule.

Exclusivist attempts to convince the Imperial government to prohibit Emancipist participation in the new parliament failed and they dissolved. Australia was open for business.



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*An Australian Native*

Tom Roberts, 1888



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The Australians were famous for their love of the great outdoors: swimming, running, horse-riding, boating, and outdoor sports.

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*The Sunny South*  
Tom Roberts, c. 1887