



Dr Bottoms recognition by his fellow historians  
is demonstrated by their reviews of his work.

### ***Reviews***

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**CAIRNS City of the South Pacific, a History from 1770-1995** (Bunu Bunu Press, 2015, 2016):

See Nicolas Rothwell, 'A Northern Star Is Born' review, in *The Weekend Australian*, 6-7 June 2016, see:

<http://cairnshistory.com.au/content/uploads/2020/02/PDF-A-Nothern-Star-is-Born.pdf>

- ...when it comes to documenting the city's history, it seems Cairns – ...has stolen a march on its southern rival [Townsville]. Timothy Bottoms' "Cairns: City of the South Pacific" is as impressive in its range and depth as in the weight of its 600 pages. Its ten chapters cover the story of a city which, in the author's words, transformed itself "from a boisterous, hard-drinking frontier port ... to an international tourist destination."

Moreover, ... he pays due reference and respect to a far older history: a time when the region was simply the Bulmba (or homeland) of the Bama rainforest people, and the emerging city was not even a tiny outpost on a remote shore. His opening chapter, with its title "Not a virgin land" (a clear challenge to the doctrine of 'terra nullius'), employs an unusual device in a historical work: the blending of actual events and recorded observations with imagined, fictional scenes in which the Bama watch the passage of Cook's mysterious vessel and have their earliest encounters with Europeans. This bold start is made all the more authentic by the author's extensive research and earlier writings on the culture and history of the Djabugay-Yidiny peoples. It ensures readers will hold the images of that unwritten history in their minds as they follow the remarkable changes in land and people that are recounted in the following chapters.

And it is a recounting which has won accolades from fellow historians and writers. "Impeccably researched and written with an appealing narrative verve" says Henry Reynolds. "A great piece of history – at once local and national," writes Nicholas Rothwell. Review by Miniata for JCU Library News, June 14 2019

<https://jculibrarynews.blogspot.com/2019/06/telling-cairns-story-timothy-bottoms.html>

- ...well written and weaves an enormous amount of detail into a compelling narrative. There is much hidden artistry in it. It is in every sense a fine local history which bears comparison with the best examples of the genre...Cairns has been well served by their chosen historian.

**Professor Henry Reynolds, *University of Tasmania***

- This history is of great quality, vastly accessible, very well founded, and really in-tone and method unlike any other piece of Australian history I've come across: precise, sane, generous... A great sustained tour de force, almost every footnote I read with pleasure... A great piece of history- at once local and national.

**Nicolas Rothwell, *The Australian***

- ...clear, vivid and interesting...there could be very few readers who could not find some area of compelling interest in this book: most will

be fascinated by it all...It is likely to become a classic in Queensland history writing.

**Dr. Helen Gregory, University of Queensland**

- It is amazing that someone who wasn't actually there at the time could be so spot on with all the nuances of that era. I personally had to almost pinch myself to make me remember that you were not one of us.... Absolutely spot-on!

**Mr. Bruce Downie** who was stationed in Cairns during the Second World War and supplied many of the historic photographs for Chapter 9. Letter to the author, 16 July 2006.

***Djabugay Country, an Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland***  
(Allen and Unwin, 1999):

- Bottoms has worked diligently to produce a study of the Djabugay people of the Cairns hinterland ...which covers their pre-contact history, their frontier and post-frontier relations with the European land-takers, their experience of segregation struggles and triumphs ... Sure, there is talk here of frontier battles, massacres, forced removals and a swag of sundry other brutalities, but they are not laid on too thickly. There is just enough for even the most obdurate of intellects to be stirred by the suspicion that it may not have been all 'beer and skittles' under the tropical Queensland sun...

**Raymond Evans**, *Queensland Review*, Vol.7, No.2, October 2000, (pp.107-08)

- The triumphalist view of the past - based solely on pride in achievement and frontier bravery and perseverance - must now contend with stories of frontier cowardice and inhumanity. These truths are uncomfortable for Australians who have been fed on jingoistic histories... For north Queenslanders, ... Bottoms's book ...reveals a jarring new view of a familiar landscape, which will be alien to most north Queenslanders...Supermarkets and cane-fields now sprawl over the sacred places, the byways, homes and meeting places of the Djabugay... Good history is the pursuit of truth. Reconciliation is, above all, a test of maturity. For Australians generally ...it will mean coming to terms with the past that Timothy Bottoms describes.

**Noel Pearson**, *The Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1999, p.13

- ...to quote the Djabugay elders from the foreword of this timely book, nothing of how "we as Aboriginals experienced and remembered those early days". The Jilli Binna display [in Kuranda]...failed to show how much suffering was inflicted on the Aboriginal people by government policies of that time. Timothy Bottoms' *Djabugay Country* has rectified this shortcoming. He has given us not only a local historical perspective but an opportunity to confront the uncomfortable truth of our troubling past...Bottoms has made an important contribution to illuminate some of our darker secrets and in this Aboriginal history of Tropical North Queensland he has preserved vital memories for future generations of indigenous people.

**W.(John) Kotow**, *Barfly Book Review*, 6 May 1999

- This book is very thoroughly researched and copious quotes from newspapers, government records and oral history as well as photographs and maps piece together a documentary style history... as an account of what might be termed 'mainstream Djabugay', this book is an important addition to our understanding of Aboriginal history.

**Elisabeth Patz**, *Aboriginal History* 1999 Vol 23 (pp.128-29)

***Conspiracy of Silence, Queensland's frontier killing times*** (Allen & Unwin 2013):

*Conspiracy of Silence* (online documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQI5ySAAhYg>

*Massacre Recollections with the Elders* (online documentary)

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=massacre+Recollections+with+the+Elders](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=massacre+Recollections+with+the+Elders)

- What has been lacking is a detailed overview of all documented encounters that resulted in the multiple deaths of the Aboriginal peoples. Not anymore. Bottoms' work admirably fills this gap. [*Conspiracy of Silence*]...makes an important contribution to understanding Australia's part, in particular the complex relationships between Europeans and Aboriginal people on the frontier. It provides a synthesis of scholarship from the last 30 years and dispels beyond the myths that the 'settlement' of Australia was a peaceful process.

**Thom Blake** *Review in Aboriginal History - Volume 37, 2013*

- This book brings us several critical insights... Bottoms has unearthed and collated the history to give a coherent picture - not of accidental by-product or unfortunate consequence, but of active, murderous brutality... [he] lays out noisy piece of evidence after noisy piece of evidence that the movement of indigenous people from their lands in Queensland was nasty, brutal and murderous...[and] earlier history in NSW and Victoria would tell the same story... This is not a case of "lest we forget" but a case of never acknowledged, let alone forgotten or remembered.

**Crispin Hull** *Canberra Times*, July 6, 2013

- A feature of ... *Conspiracy of silence* about violence on the Queensland frontier is [a] retention of oral knowledge by many Aboriginal communities of the terrible massacres perpetrated on their ancestors...The unsettling factor is that the stories are little realised outside of Aboriginal communities...Bottoms' comprehensive delineation of the Queensland massacres clearly demonstrates that the reality of violence can no longer be denied. It is a story that needs to be told.

**Michael Bennett** *JRAHS Volume 100, Part 1 (pp.117-118), June, 2014*

- Bottoms makes a valuable addition to a growing body of research into the violent history of northern Australia... he shows that colonial Queensland was a landscape of deep trauma that persists to this day...



This book is an eloquent refutation of that [peaceful] conception of our past. [This] is a powerful and much-needed presentation of this approach to frontier violence... Bottoms shows how many of the pastoralists came to Queensland after experience in Victoria, but armed with new guns and the ideology of scientific racism. In *Conspiracy of Silence*, Bottoms uses the kind of historical detective work that is the trademark of a local historian, and successfully applies it to a colony-wide study. This is a gruesome and disturbing history, but it is our history, and it demands to be read.

**Thomas James Rogers** *Melbourne Historical Journal* 2015, Vol. 43.1

- Particularly impressive is the way Bottoms has mapped what he has collected, making visual the extent of the violence ... If anecdotes out on the edge of the frontier are easy to ignore, the total picture Bottoms provides through this graphic visualisation is an entirely different matter... It was a labour of life, an important landmark in a journey of personal enlightenment through experience and study, which amply demonstrates the quality of work being done in this country by professional historians on a mission... 'the awful truth' has to be acknowledged, not only because history demands it but because there are ramifications of relevance for contemporary Australia.

**Nikki Henningham** *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol.45, Issue 1, March 2014

- Bottoms goes further [than Richards' book *A Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police*, by], giving us what is arguably the most detailed account yet of frontier violence in Queensland... The idea of "peaceful settlement" is a fiction and Bottoms explains how the brutal dispossession of Aboriginal people occurred over decades, and was worst in Queensland... As tough as Bottoms' book is, it's also a fascinating look at the colonial period, a time when many voices were raised against what was going on. Timothy Bottoms' book is sobering but important.

**Phil Brown** *Queensland Life*, *Courier Mail*, Saturday, June 8, 2013 (pp.20-21)  
<https://cairnshistory.com.au/content/uploads/2020/03/Courier-Mail-History-tainted-by-dirty-deeds-June-8-2013.pdf>

- ...*Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times* provides a systematic account of the mass killings of Aboriginal people that accompanied the expansion of the Queensland frontier in the nineteenth century... Bottoms has comprehensively mapped these killings, charting some 140 frontier massacres that occurred between 1831 and 1918. Bottoms examines these killings alongside settlement patterns, concluding that the escalation of violence in the mid- to late-19th century traced the pathway of pastoralist expansion, coinciding with Queensland's emergence as a separate colony and the arming of the Queensland Native Police Corps with more efficient weaponry. *Conspiracy of Silence* marks a significant contribution to the historiography of the dispossession of Queensland's Aboriginal communities.

**Hannah Baldry, Ailsa McKeon, Scott McDougall,**  
<https://law.uq.edu.au/files/1263/Queenslands-Frontier-Killing-Times-Facing-up-to-Genocide-Baldry-McKeon-McDougall-2015.pdf>, pp.92-113.

Other Reviews by:

- **Nicolas Rothwell** in *The Weekend Australian*, 29-30 June, 2013  
<https://cairnshistory.com.au/content/uploads/2020/03/Weekend-Australian-Mapping-the-Massacres-29-30-June-2013.pdf>
- **Stephan Gray**, <https://www.altlj.org/news-and-views/law-and-culture/law-and-culture-vol-38-3/614-conspiracy-of-silence-queensland-s-frontier-killing-times>

In 2013 Allen & Unwin published *Conspiracy of Silence* and since then it has sold 4,578 copies in print edition and 687 copies in ebook edition. Elizabeth Weiss (Publisher, A&U) observed that "in our small market, this is a very solid result, and it shows that your book has had a significant influence on the public understanding of frontier violence in Queensland." (see p.16)

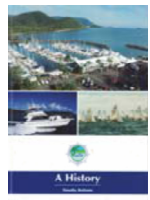
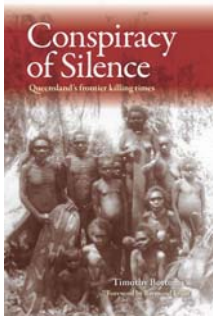
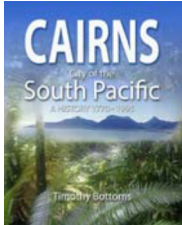

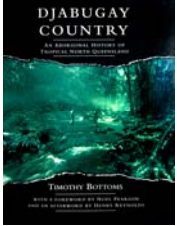
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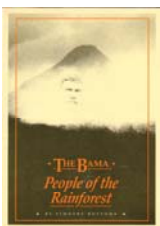
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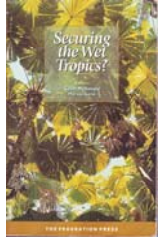


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## ***Publications:***


<p>Published by Yorkeys Knob Boating Club - <i>A History of Yorkey's Knob Boating Club</i>, YKBC, Cairns, May 2016. This is an example of historical research which demonstrates the historical expertise and critical evaluation of primary sources and oral history. 148 pages with 111 photographs.</p>	
<p><i>Conspiracy of Silence – Queensland's frontier killing times</i>, Publishers: Allen and Unwin, released 27 May 2013. Paul Davey wrote in the <i>Guardian</i> (4 March 2019) "[Henry] Reynolds, now 81, also praises the importance of the writings about the Queensland frontier by ... historians Timothy Bottoms - especially his book <i>Conspiracy of Silence</i>..." Pages 288, 5 Maps, 26 historical photographs.  <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/04/as-the-toll-of-Australia-s-frontier-brutality-keeps-climbing">http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/04/as-the-toll-of-Australia-s-frontier-brutality-keeps-climbing</a></p>	
<p><i>Cairns, City of the South Pacific, A History of Cairns 1770-1995</i>, Bunu Bunu Press, Cairns, 1st ed. Nov. 2015, 2nd ed. May 2016. This was also my PhD with Central Queensland University (CQU) and was completed in July 2002 and awarded a doctorate in August 2003. Pages 609, 11 Maps, 211 historical photographs.</p>	
<p><i>Bama Country – the indigenous Rainforest People of Tropical North Queensland</i>. This book covers the Indigenous rainforest people's traditional use of plants, the pharmacopoeia and seasonal movements in the FNQ rainforests. Published by Fishtail Solutions, March 2008. Pages 46, 1 Map, 14 historical photo's, 6 colour photo's.</p>	
<p><i>Djabugay Country – An Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland</i>, for the Djabugay Elders and Mantaka 'Shanty' Aboriginal Corporation. (January 1998). Published by Allen &amp; Unwin in May 1999. Pages 138, 9 Maps, 71 historical photographs, 6 colour photographs.</p>	

<p><i>The Bama – People of the Rainforest</i> – published in Cairns by Gadjia Enterprises (December 1992). Pages 32, 3 Maps, 21 historical photographs.</p>	
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### Articles in Journals:

<p>Q150 History Conference, 3 Sept. 2009 - <b><i>Conspiracy of Silence - the colouring of Australian history, Queensland's 19th century frontier</i></b> - at Session II, Marque Hotel, Brisbane. Pages 203-221, published by PHA(Q), as <i>Journeys through Queensland history: landscape, place and society</i>. One of 21 contributors, 341 pages.</p>	
<p>Chapter 3 “Bama Country – Aboriginal Homelands” in <i>Securing the Wet Tropics – A Retrospective on Managing Australia’s Tropical Rainforests</i>, Federation Press, Sydney, 2001. Among 16 contributing authors.</p>	
<p><i>An Historical Overview of Land Use at Mona Mona Mission, 1913 to 1963</i> was produced for the Mona Mona Community Development Strategy, sponsored by ANCA &amp; Mona Mona Aboriginal Corporation. (November 1994). Published in the <i>Journal R.H.S.Q.</i> (Issue 10 – May 1998).</p>	
<p><i>From Bama Djumburru to Gadjia Roads – A Profile History of Towns &amp; Roads on the Atherton Tablelands, F.N.Q.</i> commissioned by Northern Archaeology Pty Ltd., for Telecom Australia. (May 1992). Published in the <i>Journal R.H.S.Q.</i> (Issue 13 – November 1995).</p>	
<p><i>A Short Walk On the Wild Side</i> – an audio-commentary on the Red Arrow Walking Track in the Mt. Whitfield Environmental Park. It dealt with the history of the Cairns area, botany and the Aboriginality of the landscape. Also published as a 20 page pamphlet. Funded by the Wet Tropics Management Authority for the Queensland Education Department and the Flecker Botanic Gardens. (August 1993 discontinued in 1999).</p>	






<p><i>The World of the Bama</i> – a synchronised audio-visual presentation, for the Pre-Separation Conference held by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland on August 10 1991. Later published in the <i>Journal R.H.S.Q.</i> (Issue 1 – February 1993).</p>	
<p>MED 287 'Politics and Change', wrote course for TAFE, Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Community Ranger Program. (July 1992).</p>	

### Online Video's & Commercial Films:

<p>In 2019 (19 July) produced and voiced the voice-work for <i>Massacre Recollections with the Elders</i>, which was recorded 23 years ago with Elders who have since died (apart from Dr. Ernie Grant and Willie Brim). Their stories needed to be told. The segment was uploaded to <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rvYW5eaQZI">Youtube</a> and located at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rvYW5eaQZI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rvYW5eaQZI</a></p>	
<p>In 2018 interviewed for a documentary for the UK series entitled <i>Secret Railways</i> (1 of 6 worldwide). In a paperbark swamp at the back of the Cairns Cemetery, Dr. Bottoms' talked about the first section of the Cairns-Kuranda Railway. Broadcast on SBS last October (2019). PHOTO CAPTION: UKTV documentary team Curtis, gofer, Adrienne Doyard, Director, &amp; Dave Michin, cameraman, interviewed Dr. Bottoms on the construction of the Cairns-Kuranda railway, for <i>Secret Railways</i>, 10 August 2018.</p>	
<p>In 2017 <i>A War of Hope</i> (Baconfactoryfilms, 2016) interviewed Dr. Bottoms in relation to the 1942 transfer of the whole of Hopevale (just north of Cooktown) to Woorabinda, over 1,585.6 kms away. A callous disregard of the Indigenous community, at gunpoint, they were herded down south to the chilly central Queensland reserve of Woorabinda. Broadcast on NITV in 2017, 2018 &amp; 2019. <i>Trailer:</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ4Np5r0XLQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ4Np5r0XLQ</a></p>	
<p>For the 2014 Myall Creek commemorations, Dr. Bottoms completed a DVD on <i>Conspiracy of Silence</i> where he prepared the text and was the narrator for this 30 minutes programme, online film documentary. May 2014 (Savannah Productions). First shown at the Myall Creek commemorations(2014). <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQI5ySAAhYg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQI5ySAAhYg</a></p>	




### Awards:





<p>2019 (23rd September) the Cairns Historical Society presented the S.E. Stephens Award in recognition of Dr. Bottoms valuable contribution to the collection and dissemination of North Queensland History.</p> <p>Photo Caption: President of the Cairns Historical Society, Clive Skarott A.M., presenting Dr. Timothy Bottoms with the S.E. Stephens Award, at the AGM, 20 September, 2019.</p>	
<p>2009 (Feb-April) Visiting Fellowship at the National Museum of Australia. (Photo Caption) Dr. Peter Stanley, Director of the Centre for Historical Research offering a 2009 fellowship to Dr. Bottoms at the National Museum of Australia.</p>	
<p>August 2003 - Doctorate from Central Queensland University (presented at the Queensland Performance Arts Centre, Brisbane).</p>	

### Citations:


<p>To week ending December 22, 2019 <a href="https://www.researchgate.net">ResearchGate.com</a> recorded that Dr. Bottoms' research items reached 31 citations and 700 reads.</p>	
<p><a href="https://www.academia.edu">Academia.com</a> Dr. Bottoms' research items reached 44 citations.</p>	



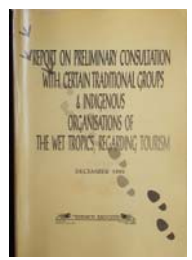
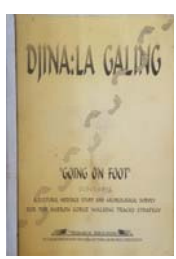

### Lectures:

<p>Guest Speaker at the Myall Creek Memorial Commemoration Ceremony 8 June 2014.</p> <p><a href="https://honesthistory.net.au/wp/bottoms-timothy-myall-creek-and-beyond/">https://honesthistory.net.au/wp/bottoms-timothy-myall-creek-and-beyond/</a></p>	
<p>JCU Lecture for the School of Education, on the 'History of Cairns to 1906' (11 July 2012). This two hour lecture included 122 historical images which were shown as Dr. Bottoms progressed with the lecture.</p>	
<p>JCU one hour Lecture about the History of Cairns to 1906 (21 July, 2011), with a 15 minute period to consider how to assess primary sources.</p>	
<p><i>Conspiracy of Silence – Queensland's frontier killing times,</i></p>	




<p>as Visiting Fellowship at the National Museum of Australia;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lecture &amp; Powerpoint presentation at the NMA (May 2009);</li> <li>• <i>Conspiracy of Silence - the colouring of Australian history, Queensland's 19th century frontier</i> - Q150 History Conference (3 September 2009), with Powerpoint Presentation, at Session II, Marquee Hotel, Brisbane, 3 September, 2009. Published by PHA(Q), pages 203-221, as <i>Journeys through Queensland history: landscape, place and society</i>. One of 21 contributors, 341 pages.</li> <li>• <i>Cairns Institute Racism Conference</i>, Cairns Institute, Pacific International, Cairns (31 August 2012)</li> </ul>	 
<p><i>A Brief History of the Cairns Aquatic / Yacht Club</i>, a 30 minute presentation at the Cairns Yacht Club on 2 August 2008, backed with a Powerpoint presentation of historical images.</p>	
<p><i>Defending the North – Frontline Cairns 1940-1946, an historical overview</i> – guest lecturer at the University of Queensland Art Museum, 13 August 2005. A 30 minute image Powerpoint presentation converted to a DVD. Also presented at Artspace Mackay(9 December 2005).  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7h-0S_n_f0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7h-0S_n_f0</a></p>	
<p>Lecture on Federation in Far North Queensland, presented at the Cairns Regional Gallery as a part of the Centenary of Federation Queensland Far North celebrations. (4 September 2001)</p>	

### **Consultancies:**




<p>Completed an Historical Overview of [14] Cape York Peninsula Community Indigenous Towns for the <i>Education Queensland's Indigenous Schools Support Unit (ISSU)</i>. December 2013.</p>	
<p>Researched an interpretation of primary source documents for Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU, Education Queensland) relating to massacres, missions and government policy in North, Central and Southern Queensland &amp; the Gulf. It was scanned for a Powerpoint presentations, for the Cross-Cultural Awareness Program. This was part of a program which was expected to become</p>	

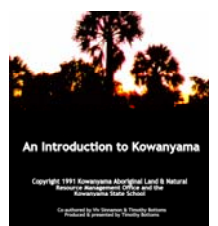

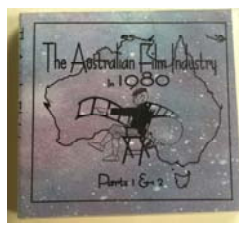
mandatory for all Queensland teachers. (Oct 2003-Aug 2005)	
Heritage interpretational signage for DotDash Pty Ltd (Brisbane based) for the Cairns Esplanade Development for the Cairns Regional Council. (2001-2003)	
"Indigenous Issues in Regional Planning", for the Royal Australian Planning Institute Conference, Cairns Convention Centre, 2 August, 1996.	
"Urban Design, Indigenous Approaches to Housing & Other Structures" (TG5603:03) at JCU, Centre for Tropical Urban and Regional Planning, James Cook University, Cairns Campus, 24 June, 1996.	
"Report on Preliminary Consultation with Certain Traditional Groups & Indigenous Organisations of the Wet Tropics, Regarding Tourism", prepared for the Wet Tropics Eco-Tourism Strategy Interim Steering Committee (T.D. Nevard, Director, CNT Tropical Urban and Regional Planning, JCU). December 1995.	
A Preliminary History of the Djabugay was produced as the basis for the Historical Film Theatre presentation for the Tjapukai Cultural Park. (August 1995)	
In the "Path of Buda:dji" was produced as one of six chapters in <i>Djina:la Galing – 'Going On Foot'</i> , a Cultural Heritage Study & Archaeological Survey for the Barron Gorge Walking Track Strategy, Q.N.P.W.S. (June 1995)	
'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire' was commissioned by Pawsey & Prowse, Landscape Architects, for the then Mulgrave Shire Council (April 1995).	
'A Preliminary Historical Overview of the Muluridji Tribe' for the Muluridji. (May 1995)	



<p><i>Bunda Dibandji - Site Management Proposal</i>, prepared by NQ Research Associates for the Djabugay Ranger, Land &amp; Natural Resource Management Agency, April, 1995.</p>	
<p><i>The White Sands People – An Historical Overview of the Wuthathi, at Cape Grenville F.N.Q.</i> Commissioned by Mr. Roy Turner, lease-holder of Haggerstone Island, off Cape Grenville. (May 1992)</p>	
<p>'The River' – developed the structure for a community-based curriculum, in close consultation with the Kowanyama Land &amp; Natural Resource Management Office, Elders, Council and State School. (January 1991)</p>	

### **Radio Documentaries:**

<p>Sharon Malloy from ABC Far North Queensland (Cairns) engaged Dr. Bottoms for a 10 minute segments about Cairns history, every Saturday morning for three months (up to Christmas time 2017). Seven of the segments can be heard at:  <a href="https://youtu.be/v513bMg2tbs">https://youtu.be/v513bMg2tbs</a> -The First People Cairns Region  <a href="https://youtu.be/enATQYYd6lg">https://youtu.be/enATQYYd6lg</a> - European Explorers  <a href="https://youtu.be/gZhh9LuO40o">https://youtu.be/gZhh9LuO40o</a> - Cleveland Bay Expedition  <a href="https://youtu.be/-GDRzWKDbIM">https://youtu.be/-GDRzWKDbIM</a> - Chinese &amp; Sachs Street  <a href="https://youtu.be/NNJMAMHqT6Y">https://youtu.be/NNJMAMHqT6Y</a> - Frontier killing times  <a href="https://youtu.be/Vt0bmzBGv5c">https://youtu.be/Vt0bmzBGv5c</a> - Cairns gets underway  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jtn_1_QwpK0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jtn_1_QwpK0</a> - Plantations</p>	
<p><i>Hindsight</i>, ABC Radio National Program: 'The Journey of King Billy Jagar's Breast Plate' – consultant historian – contextualized events of King Billy's life from c.1876 to 1930. Primary source quotes supplied were re-voiced by producer to enrich the presentation. Broadcast 4 November 2006. <a href="http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery">http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery</a></p>	
<p><i>Inan Nayee Aurukun Wik Kath – Listening to the Aurukun Story</i>, a radio documentary history produced in conjunction with Elders and Rangers for the TAFE Ranger Program and the Aurukun Shire Council. (June 1991)  <a href="http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery">http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery</a></p>	

<p><i>An Introduction to Kowanyama</i> – a radio documentary on the history and culture of the indigenous people of Kowanyama, west coast Cape York Peninsula. Commissioned by the Kowanyama Aboriginal Land &amp; Natural Resource Management Office, in consultation with the Elders. (April 1992) <a href="http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery">http://cairnshistory.com.au/audio-gallery</a></p>	
<p><i>The Role of Community Rangers on Cape York Peninsula</i> – an audio documentary where Rangers from around the Cape introduce their community and their role as Rangers to a broader audience. Thursday Island. (September 1991)</p>	
<p><i>A Short History of Australian Radio Advertising</i> – produced and presented on AWA Network Radio 2GN (1982). Deposited with the National Film and Sound Archives (Canberra).</p>	
<p><i>Radio Oz – A History of Australian Radio</i> – a four part half-hour series, first broadcast in 1981 on 2 SER-FM (Sydney). This won an Award for Creative Use of the Medium in the Australian HI-FI Radio Awards (1981). Deposited with the National Film and Sound Archives (Canberra).</p>	
<p><i>The Australian Film Industry in the 1980s</i> – researched, produced and presented a six part half-hour radio documentary series, first broadcast on 2SER-FM, Sydney (September 1980). Deposited with the National Film and Sound Archives (Canberra).</p>	



18 February 2020

Tim Bottoms  
5 Montrose Ave  
Edge Hill Qld 4870  
[tim@timothybottoms.com](mailto:tim@timothybottoms.com)

Dear Tim

Letting you know that your book, *Conspiracy of Silence*, has sold 4,578 copies in print edition and 687 copies in ebook edition since we published it in 2013.

As you will be aware, in our small Australian book market, this is a very solid result, and it shows that your book has had a significant influence on public understanding of frontier violence in Queensland. *Conspiracy of Silence* continues to sell between 20 and 50 copies each month, which is good to see.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Weiss  
Publisher  
[elizabethw@allenandunwin.com](mailto:elizabethw@allenandunwin.com)  
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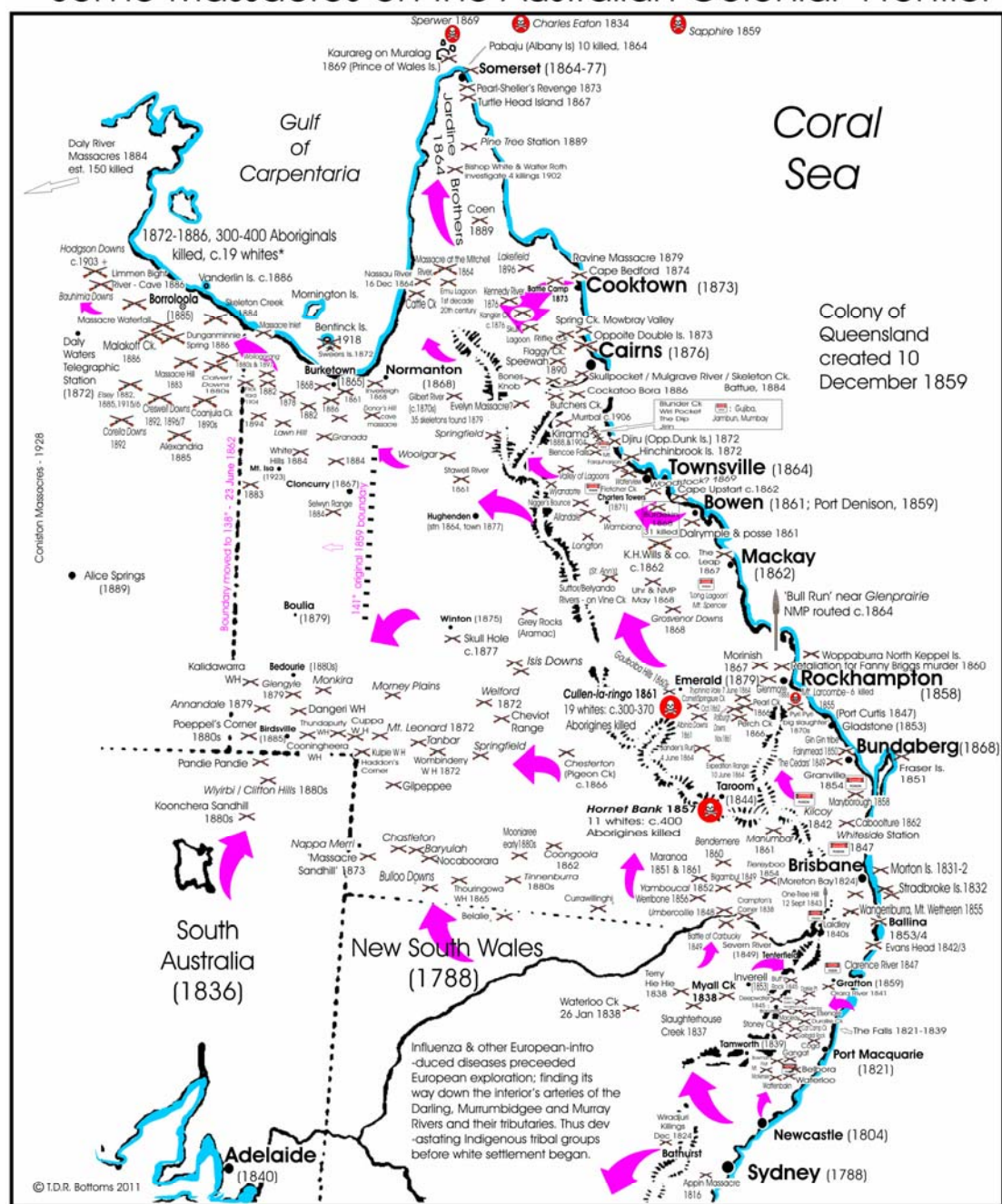




See also Chart One from MA(Qual) thesis: Annual Cycle of Activities, Based Upon, and Regulated by, Seasonal Changes (p.94).

[illegible]

## Some Massacres on the Australian Colonial Frontier



This was the original map sent to Allen & Unwin in 2012 which became four separate maps in the front of *Conspiracy of Silence* published in 2013.



## Booklet aims to balance early black-white history

UNTIL white Australians acknowledged the atrocities committed against Aborigines by early settlers, the nation would always struggle for its own identity, according to the author of a new booklet on the rainforest Aborigines of Far North Queensland.

The Bama - People Of The Rainforest is Cairns-based historian Timothy Bottoms' attempt to balance the "atrociously documented and incredibly racist" history of early contact between settlers and Aborigines in and around Cairns, the Tablelands and Port Douglas.

"People don't see that (history) for what it can mean in terms of a positive identity of who we are as Australians," Mr Bottoms said.

"If we are just 'football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars' then God help us. We're more intelligent than that."

"There's nothing wrong with football, of course, but it's just infuriating that there's all this support for sport but nothing for something like this," he said, referring to the refusal of "40-odd" publishers and the local businesses he approached to back the project.

Eventually 'The Bama' was produced with a loan from a friend and a grant from the Regional Arts Development Fund, and was launched in Cairns last night (Wednesday).

Mr Bottoms said the booklet was a "distillation" of a 30,000-word thesis he completed in March 1990 for his Master of Arts qualification at James Cook University. Already a film producer is looking to turn it into a documentary.

"I've had so many people pestering me for information I thought the easiest way to get the message across was with a booklet."

It covers the area from the Mossman River mouth in the north to the Johnstone River mouth in the south and the tribal groupings of Djabugay-Yidiny-speaking bama (people) who inhabited the region: the Djabuganydji, Nyagal, Guly, Biduwayndji, Yirrganydji, Gunganydji, Yidinydji, Madjanydji and Wanjuru.

It also includes a map of the area, giving Aboriginal and European place names, photographs of Aborigines in their

natural environment, and a bibliography.

"I'm attempting to change people's conception of what has gone on in the past so we can look towards a different psyche," he said. "Until we have come to terms with our past we won't know who we are as Australians."

"What I'm trying to make people aware of is that there were misunderstandings."

Those "misunderstandings" were at times genuine but at other times were seized upon by people like explorer and Lands Commissioner George Elphinstone Dalrymple and the chairman of the Select Committee of the Native Police, R R MacKenzie, to propagate a myth of Aboriginal barbarism and atrocities against whites. This, Mr Bottoms said, made it easier for authorities to justify the murder or displacement of the traditional landowners so they could open up the region for public selection.

It appeared that the custom of some Aborigines of carrying around the bones of dead relatives in their shoulder bags was evidence enough for some that Aborigines were cannibals, while the tradi-

tional duelling challenge which greeted white intruders upon Aboriginal camps was licence enough for the intruders to open fire.

"Had the bama wished to attack the gadja (Europeans) they would have ambushed them, not approached them in the open manner of the duelling contest," Mr Bottoms wrote.

It is likely that the theft of food by a party of

loggers from a bama group at what is now Port Douglas would have had repercussions for future explorers and settlers in the area, he said. An earlier attack on the same party at Russell River was probably retaliation for the theft a year before of a mummified female body by Robert Arthur Johnstone, a sub-inspector of the Native Mounted Police, he said.

Mr Bottoms' interest in Aboriginal/European

contact was sparked by the stories he was told by a university lecturer in politics of Europeans' mistreatment of Aborigines and his subsequent teaching of Islander children near the Simpson Desert.

When he arrived in Cairns he found that the area's history was "atrociously documented and incredibly racist, so I chose the Cairns rainforest area as a topic".

"I noticed that books hadn't looked at what was here for the European invaders to have an impact on," he said. "It was assumed there was some culture here, but I wanted to establish just what was here so we could assess what went on."

If demand for this booklet warrants it, Mr Bottoms plans another, this time dealing more with the lifestyles of the local Aborigines.



● HISTORIAN and author Timothy Bottoms (centre) discusses his booklet with Warren Martin (Gunganydji), Jeanette Singleton (Yirrganydji), Barry Hunter (Djabuganydji) and Ross Verevas (Mona Mona Corporation). Photo: GARY HERBERT

## Letters to the editor

— THE AUSTRALIAN Friday June 21 1996 —

### Native Title history lesson

IN relation to the current debate over the Wik and Thaarre court cases, regarding whether leases extinguish Native Title or not, it would seem pertinent to consider the comments of the editor of the Cairns Argus on 8th May, 1895.

"A spectacle was witnessed on the first day of the present month—a kind of government function, that certainly was not creditable to the authorities and should bring a blush of shame to the cheeks of every colonist."

"About 150 Aborigines assembled in the police paddock, and the officers of peace opened a bale of blankets containing fifty, tore them in halves, and distributed them amongst the dusky natives ..."

"There seems to have been some qualms of conscience passing through the official mind in Brisbane in connection with this half-blanket distribution farce, for at the very time grinning recipients were clutching their coverings a telegram came through from the capital stating that every Aboriginal in the colony, except those permanently employed on stations, was to receive a whole blanket."

"Astounding magnanimity! We have taken from the

Queensland natives no less than 428,663,360 acres of land. Out of this vast and luxuriant area about 10 million acres have been sold for six and a quarter millions cash. Another three hundred millions of acres have been leased, from which the State derives an annual rental of 332,800 (pounds).

"In return ... the governments, past and present, have given this black-skinned, patient, uncomplaining children of the soil one whole blue blanket per year, costing perhaps five shillings each!"

"And yet we profess to call ourselves Christians, and even set about in a spasmodic way to try and save our black brothers' souls!"

"Can anything be more pitiful, more degrading to our boasted civilisation, more fiendishly selfish, more devilishly unjust, more indicative of British national greed?"

It seems that we have learnt little over the past 101 years, except perhaps, that it is now Australian national greed, which has always been fuelled by ignorance and compounded by a legacy of disempowerment.

TIMOTHY BOTTOMS  
 Cairns, Qld

Page 8 — The Cairns Post, Monday, August 9, 1999



By Roz Pulley

AS A 17-year-old at Albury Grammar, Timothy Bottoms was surrounded by history text books. Leading up to the all important Higher School Certificate exams, his bedroom took on the look of a library.

Today, at his home in Cairns, nothing much has changed. His many desks are still covered by history texts, papers and documents. But these days, he is writing them himself.

The historian and author has devoted his life to a field he became interested in at school.

"I had a brilliant history teacher who we called Rocky because his name is Loring Hudson and he was American. With his teaching and anecdotes about his experiences, he really inspired me to read."

It helped that his history teacher, now 95, was on the spot when much of history was being made. He was there when Hitler and Mussolini made their speeches, got out of Manchuria just before the Japanese invaded and was at Pearl Harbour when the bombing began.

Today, the pair of history buffs still have regular chats over the phone and the younger of the two would like to write a book about his mentor. But having just completed *Djabugay Country — An Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland* and become engrossed in a new book on Cairns, it will have to wait.

Tim, 44, has not always been bound to his desk. At high school he was a sprinter and cross-country runner. Today, he goes bush walking or on long rides on his bike. There has been the odd tussle with barramundi too.

However, words have always been a passion. It was a skill he developed at school, when his surname earned him nicknames he will not reveal and he found himself dwarfed by his fellows.

"I reached a realisation in Grade 9 or 10 that everybody else

# Past always his passion



1974: Partying at university in Armidale as a 19-year-old member of the Pension Pixies Association.

was growing faster than me and the only way around that was to be able to utilise words effectively." Books were also major players in his life.

"My father was an orthopaedic surgeon and my mother was a doctor, so there were books and encouragement to read and look things up in an encyclopaedia."

There were also fervent discussions around the dinner table, with a politically aware older brother ready to crush any illogical arguments from Tim.

"I was very well versed by the time I got to university. I didn't realise it till I got to orientation week and all the first year students thought I was a fourth year student."

But he was not entirely bookish

at the University of New England in Armidale, where he lived at Drummond College and studied for a BA and Dip Ed. "I was the typical under-graduate. You worked hard and you played hard."

There were college cabarets, like the one themed as a Pensioners Convention — where he adopted the attire of the Pension Pixies Association, of which he was a hardcore member.

There were hilarious days as publicity officer for Lord Cholmley's Touring 8th XI cricket side. "We were a bunch of hippy university students who didn't take cricket seriously, but got out there for fun."

It was a time for growing hair long, bucking the establishment



1972: Aged 17 and studying for Higher School Certificate at Albury Grammar.



Today: Historian and author Timothy Bottoms, 44.

and resisting conformity. "Australia was still very conservative, even though we had a new Whitlam government and there was a feeling on all campuses that Australia was changing for the better."

But the socialising has gone by the board now. Besides writing another book, Tim is also working toward a PhD.

"I don't have a social life. I'm just totally obsessed with what I'm doing and I'm working seven days a week on it. I've almost cut myself off from all my friends, which I think is probably to my detriment. Everything one does, there's a price to be paid. But I hope a short-term price. Hopefully, I can get back to being a bit normal and complete."



# Bringing Cairns to life

**THE most comprehensive history of the Cairns region is in its final stages. ROB SYME spoke to historian and author Timothy Bottoms about the five-year project.**

**I**t is said that the trouble with history is that it is written by the victor.

Where victors are thin on the ground and civil war or invasion have not steered the course of a nation's development, where to start becomes the problem for any historian.

So it was with Cairns author Timothy Bottoms when he took on the task of writing *The History of Cairns* — a Cairns City Council and Centenary of Federation-backed project that is in its final stages.

There have been various histories of Cairns, the best known and most contemporary being *Trinity Phoenix*, written by Dorothy Jones in the 1970s.

Timothy Bottoms' approach was always going to be different. Here was a Master of Arts in History who felt that Australia was not understood by youngsters, that history books had never really "got behind the scenes" and who wanted to counter ignorance of the area's history and "get as close to the truth as possible".

Bottoms' 10-chapter book — to total an expected 110,000 words, more than 100 photographs, 21 maps and a number of historical drawings — begins with *Not A Virgin Land* — The Bulmba of the Bama (1770-1875) and covers European expansion into North Queensland, the creation of "Queensland", the Green Island tragedies and both inland and coastal exploration of the early 1870s.

The *Trinity Bay Country* (1876-1882); *Frontier Cairns* (1883-1887); *Turning of the Tide* (1888-1893); *The New Century* (1894-1907); *The Advancing Century* (1908-1919); *The Nineteen Twenties; Depression & Recovery* (1930-1939); *Front-line Cairns* (1940-46) and *Post War & Changes* (1947-1995) follow.

Bottoms refers to "broad brushstrokes" in his



**HISTORY in the making . . . Author Timothy Bottoms is writing the History of Cairns.**

handling of post-World War II Cairns — the years that included the centenary of Cairns in 1976 and the amalgamation of the former Mulgrave shire and city of Cairns in 1995, the year that brings his book to a close.

Bottoms is well-versed in the pre-white history of the Far North. His MA Qualifying thesis at James Cook University in 1990 was titled *Djarrugan* — *The Last of the Nesting*, a 30,000 word revisionist interpretation of Aboriginal-European relations in the Cairns rainforest region up to 1876.

The prolific author has also produced and presented many radio programs on Far North Aborigines and his Preliminary History of the *Djabugay*, produced as the basis for the Historical Film Theatre presentation for the Tjapukai Cultural Park can be heard nine times daily at Tjapukai's Caravonica site. He also produced and presented the award-winning *Radio Oz* — A

History of Australian Radio first broadcast in 1981.

Bottoms was born in England 46 years ago. He studied at the University of New England at Armidale, NSW, where he attained his Bachelor of Arts, majoring in medieval history, and gained a Diploma of Education. It was at university that Bottoms had his first taste of Aboriginal heritage during political science studies for his BA.

So it was inevitable that Aboriginal heritage would feature strongly in the *History of Cairns*. In fact, Bottoms goes back 6000 years to how Australia's original inhabitants saw the formation of the Far Northern landscape in their Dreamtime and Storywaters.

For a man who in his schooldays found Australian history "boring" the cultural beginnings of the island-continent were of prime importance when planning his tour through Cairns' history. It's basic to what he sees as

describing the "big picture".

"Most people don't see the big picture," he said in the research-cluttered office of his Edge Hill home. "They just see what is now."

"I would like to see the Aboriginal perspective adopted and blended into the national psyche."

But don't worry that the growing of Cairns commercially and culturally over the years will be buried under a concentration on indigenous Australians.

The author felt there was a dearth of real history in Australia. In his approach that history, while importantly factual, should be a good yarn. Bottoms has brought us face-to-face not only with the native tribes but the polyglot of Chinese, Japanese, South Sea Islanders, Indians, Javanese, Italians and more who make up the colourful tapestry of the Far North.

And there are the characters — and crocodiles.

He writes of one George Martin who was camping on the banks of the Barron at old Smithfield during the 1890s Depression. Feeling like a fish for breakfast George tossed in a line, filled his pipe and stuck his knife into the log he was sitting on.

The "log" exploded into action, George was tossed up the bank and the "log" disappeared into the river with a mighty splash.

According to tale-teller Mabel Oldebirde, George didn't stop running until he reached Atherton where he lived "ever since".

Bottoms' fine taste of history extends to his personal life.

A handy man with home renovations and extensions, his own "back verandah not a patio" is floored with silky oak and pine planking from the old Central Hotel on the corner of Lake and Spence streets, when it was gutted and rebuilt in 1987.

● **People who want an early taste of Timothy Bottoms' approach to history, before his book's publication next year, should get along to the Cairns Regional Gallery on September 4 from 1.30pm.**

There, Bottoms will speak on *Federation and North Queensland's pivotal role in the success of that crucial nationwide vote.*

## R10 BOOKS

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, APRIL 20-21, 2002

### Nicolas Rothwell senses a new trend in indigenous history

**A**FTER two centuries of bemused contact, and 10 years of well-meaning reconciliation, how should Australia write, or rewrite, its indigenous history? With the cool eye of the distanced observer or the passionate engagement of the sympathetic friend? As one wades through the torrent of recent titles on the Aboriginal past, it becomes clear that a new trend is abroad in our imagination, and recreation, of this ever-present, ever-haunting domain.

The grand overviews and survey histories of the past decade have taken their place on the bookshelves: books such as Anna Haeblich's *Broken Circles* have provided a synoptic account of the stolen generations; the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* will deepen popular knowledge of this chapter in the national history. Henry Reynolds and his school (and, now, his critics) have triggered a wholesale discussion of the "frontier" period in Australia's development.

But the latest testimonies come from a different level: the local, the regional, the particular. They relate what happened to small groups of Aboriginal families in obscure corners of the country; they offer ground-level versions of the details in the broader canvas. Local history, by its nature, dignifies the individual: Aboriginal men and women of strong character and charm speak from the pages of such trail-blazing books in this style as *Djabugay Country*, Timothy Bottoms's Aboriginal history of tropical north Queensland, or *Frontier Lands and Pioneer Legends*, Pamela Lukin Watson's chronicle of the channel country.

The newest books in this vein, though, plunge boldly into a period of white-black contact often, until now, regarded as of little interest: mission times, roughly the first third of the 20th century. *A Dumping Ground*, Thom Blake's history of Cherbourg settlement near Murgon in mid-central Queensland, and Christine Choo's *Mission Girls*, a recreation of the lives of Aboriginal women in the Kimberley missions of Western Australia, bring this intriguing phase into focus.

Both are solid, well-researched accounts that encourage the reader into warm concern for the families corralled into these odd, authoritarian institutions. Both illustrate the means Aboriginal people used to protect their traditions and adapt to new circumstances. Both give unsparing details of the attempts by priests and reserve superintendents to exploit the labour, or control the habits, of those in their charge.



# Better late than never

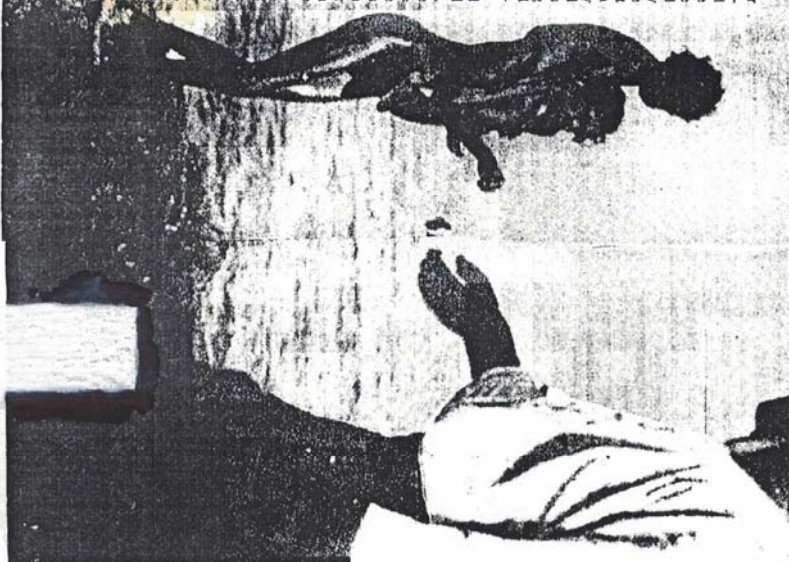
Nicolas Rothwell welcomes Henry Reynolds's guide to the past and future of north Australia

**North of Capricorn — The Unfold Story of Australia's North**  
 By Henry Reynolds, Allen & Unwin,  
 205pp, \$49.95

**T**HERE is another Australia, far beyond the settled southern seaboard, with a past at once rich and shimmering and full of strange episodes of endurance — a past whose story cries out to be told and known. This scintillating account by Henry Reynolds, a revisionist history in the best sense of the word, is a door opening wide on to that world. North of Capricorn at once serves as a guide to the record of tropical Australia only now being written, and provides the general reader with a new understanding of Australia's southern past. It is also the narrative of a road long delayed, on which the country has embarked again with a degree of life-changing enthusiasm that of northern multiculturalism.

Success in style, handsomely illustrated and produced, Reynolds's book focuses on social experience in the little cities of the far north, and demonstrates how vital to each was the contribution of a particular group of immigrants: the South Sea Islanders in Malaya, the Chinese in Cairns and Darwin, the Filipinos, Malays and Japanese on Thursday Island and in Broome. And everywhere across the higher latitudes of Australia, as Reynolds makes plain in a summary chapter, the Aboriginal presence was critical. The weight, though, of this book falls less on the indigenous turmoil of those years, which the author has traced previously in detail, than on the fate of Asian and Pacific communities in the far north.

This stage of Australia's development has been the subject of a remarkable set of historical studies in recent years: the royal accounts of Broome by writers such as John Bailey and Susan Sclater, the magnificent portrait of Cairns by local chronicler Tim Bottoms, the detailed Top End historical study hunched from the archives. A common story for north Australia is being slowly stitched together, as musical, artistic and social traditions are traced and culminated. Hence the timeliness of this book, which synthesises this evidence and makes the case



that Australia took a 100-year-long wrong turning at the outset of the 20th century. "While Australians were quite unable to see that there might be advantages of having resident Asian and Pacific Islander communities — or that their grandchildren and great grandchildren would turn their backs on the legacy of white Australia and that the country would eventually come to reflect its geography as much as its history."

Reynolds gives the figures, and they are stark. Around 1900, the population of northern Australia may have been about 200,000, perhaps half of them Europeans, and almost all of those clustered in four Queensland towns. In the Northern Territory and the far northwest, the 4500 Europeans were perhaps one tenth of the total. This meant there was an urgent need for a subject workforce. Aboriginal people, 10,000 of whom were pressed into service in the plantations, on stations and coastal settlements, played a key role in the life of the early

of Chinese Australia lies in the shadows here. Thursday Island figures as a "multicultural Gibraltar", a rutted, jumbled, intriguing place, much as it is to this day.

But the story of these societies is also the story of the multiracial reaction to them in the days of Australia's first, self-conscious assertions of national identity. Rather than regarding the presence of Polynesians and Asians as a boon to trade and development across the Torres Strait, early 20th-century politicians saw a menace. Japanese lugger captains opening up the pearling industry were deeply unpopular and were viewed as stronger threats to the more economically potent, they became. The Chinese in Darwin, too, felt the lash of prejudice. They were able to shoot back at one of their most aggressive critics in fine style. "We are more Territorian than he, despite our nationality. We have lived here, most of us for over 20 years, our interests are all here, and it is a much more vital matter to us that the



Contact: An Aboriginal woman and child, left, retreat from a white man to the water's edge on Beinfleck Island, Queensland, in 1901. He offers 'one hand in friendship while his other holds a rifle. Broome pearling masters in formal attire, above, and the same group in saloons?

north. But as government began to establish a tented pattern of control over indigenous society, this pattern shrank the age of missions and reserves began. The past generation, of course, has seen a return by many Aboriginal people to the small towns of the north, as their nation employment has ended and the missionaire closed. Equally, the descendants of the Asian communities of the Top End, in north Queensland and the Kimberley have gained greater prominence from Broome's recreation of the social fabric of the old north. Reynolds offers a set of acute case studies. He traces Mackay's engaging Islander community, with its intricate work ethic and eager adoption of Western ways. Cairns is simply the Chinese capital: the Chinese are the "pioneers" of the region, on the ground, working the gold, growing the gardens. Eric Roll's vast account

These decisions had broad consequences. By far the most important pages of Reynolds's survey are the last, to which he draws out the north's fine, federated skilled emphasis to the zones of southern power. "Cut off from fruitful and productive relationship with its geographically and environmentally north Australia sagged. It became a backwater — increasingly monocultural, socially conservative, provincial — which is the way it was seen by outsiders during much of the 20th century. It also became more racist than it had ever been in the past, to be eventually condemned and patronised by the urban southerners who rarely knew anything about the multiracial society that had been deliberately undermined." Darning words. And all this was unnecessary, for the north had been evolving into the kind of multicultural society only now emerging nationwide. Indeed, the author even argues, with a fine flourish, that the precursors of today's nascent Australia were the men and women of diverse back-

grounds who first learned to live and work together in the north. There remains, though, in Reynolds's view — for he is never sanguine — a disquiet about diversity lurking in the Australian heart. The white population of northern cities is still "remarkably transient" and even long-time residents are likely to flee south to retirement. The shadow of the Tampa affair and the federal Government's robust approach to border protection are enlisted to argue the point. "Ancestral unease about an empty and vulnerable north continues to reside just below the surface of the Australian psyche, ready to re-emerge when conditions are propitious."

Perhaps North of Capricorn is the book to help at least dispel that anxiety, and replace it with a fitting measure of excitement. 1900 455 191, Australian Books Direct, \$24.95



**Barfly** The Alternative, Issue 478 October 2003, p.3.

## Local history up for grabs

Cairns-based historian Dr. Timothy Bottoms' comprehensively researched work book, *A History of Cairns - City of the South Pacific (1770-1995)*, is still awaiting a publisher, despite being acclaimed by the academic world.

In August of this year Central Queensland University awarded Dr Bottoms a doctorate for his magnum opus, which took five years to research and write, plus some 10 years background research.

The book, a history of Cairns and district from Captain Cook's visit in 1770 to the end of the 20th century, aims to provide a balanced and inclusive history, rather than the usual eulogy of the pioneer spirit.

The Cairns City Council commissioned an independent reviewer of Dr. Bottoms' *A History of Cairns*, Dr. Helen Gregory, who enthused: "It is likely to become a 'classic' in Queensland history writing, and has the ability to find a wide readership."

Unfortunately the Council is unable to assist in publication.

Eminent Australian historian Professor Henry Reynolds, whose latest book *North of Capricorn* was released to acclaim recently, considered it to be "in every sense a fine local history which bears comparison with the best examples of the genre."

A respected writer for the *Weekend Australian*, Nicolas Rothwell, has described the book, as: "of great quality, vastly accessible, very well founded ... A great piece of history — at once local and national."

Federal member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, has added his voice to the academic appraisal of *A History of Cairns*: "I thought that it was going to be a typically boring history book. However, as I read it, I quickly changed my mind ... I was particularly

impressed with the way Timothy married up all the people involved in our history and brought them to life."

Dr. Bottoms has expressed an interest in establishing a pioneering heritage research centre in Cairns to co-ordinate a multi-disciplinary approach to Far North Queensland's past. The first step he felt

that the changes to Cairns' townscape and the ambience of the district over the last 20 years of the 20th century have been extraordinary. "The Cairns of today is a cosmopolitan international tourist destination, and a far cry from the sleepy provincial town it was until 1985.

Accordingly, *A History of Cairns - City of the South*

a port for the Hodgkinson goldfields and as the terminus of the inland railway bringing shipments of ore, agricultural produce and timber to the coast.

Sugar plantations soon diversified its economic base, operating with South Sea Islander labour until federation when forced repatriation sent most back home. It was the northern vote that carried Queensland's 'Yes' vote to federate and the face of the North irrevocably changed as white labour replaced black. The Sugar industry dominated the district throughout the 20th century, but by the start of the 21st century, it accounted for only 6% of the district's income. While tourism has always had a place in the make-up of both 19th and 20th century Cairns, it has skyrocketed along with the district's population, since the establishment of the International Airport in 1984."

PHOTO: Cairns historian Dr. Timothy Bottoms with his four year-old son, Louis, at the Central Queensland University, Brisbane Graduation Ceremony on September 5 at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre.



was to publish *A History of Cairns*, as soon as possible, in order that local residents can read about the fascinating history of the district. However, the difficulties of publishing such a book in the current economic environment and the disappointing lack of interest in Cairns, is forcing him to apply for work 'down south'.

The mooted heritage research centre would involve non-academic, academic and professional experts networking to bring the best interpretation to the history of FNQ. "There are a great many knowledgeable people in the community," Dr. Bottoms said, "and with increased international and national tourism, the demand for a more comprehensive approach to local heritage research is becoming more urgent."

Dr Bottoms points out

that the changes to Cairns' townscape and the ambience of the district over the last 20 years of the 20th century have been extraordinary. "The Cairns of today is a cosmopolitan international tourist destination, and a far cry from the sleepy provincial town it was until 1985.

Accordingly, *A History of Cairns - City of the South Pacific (1770-1995)*, is a contemporary history that reflects those changes, and presents a new perspective relating the district to the rest of the state, nation and international influences. "The old and well-worn narrative of the progress of pioneers struggling to overcome every adversity, has in the past tended to ignore many people, whose lives nevertheless have been a crucial part of the social, cultural and economic fabric of town and region. Within the framework of a readable and broad ranging account, this history seeks to address the imbalance."

To achieve this Dr. Bottoms has employed ethnographic and oral evidence in his book as well as previously unexamined manuscript sources.

"The town of Cairns took shape in the 1870s as



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## Why we ought to remember the frontier wars too

**A**t the Paris Peace Conference at the end of World War I, the irascible Billy Hughes responded to a jibe by President Woodrow Wilson stating that he spoke for 60,000 Australian dead. Upon his return, the Prime Minister claimed that Australia had become a nation that our soldiers had earned for us. This was, however, a war fought for questionable reasons that had little to do with the great Southland, except that our settler society was still incredibly loyal to the mother country.

Hughes, and our nation since, became conveniently adept at whitewashing our 19th-century history. Yet the frontier wars were fought for more than 80 years in all of the Australian colonies before 1914. In Queensland alone, it has recently been estimated that somewhere between 65,000 and 115,000 Aboriginal men, women and children were killed and perhaps 1500-2000 non-Aborigines.

This was an extended war between the original inhabitants, who knew the land intimately as their ancestors had occupied it for

To do so would be truly inclusive towards all Australians, writes **Timothy Bottoms**.

over 50,000 years, and newcomers who had a different perception of land-use and wanted to 'make good', creating monetary wealth, primarily for themselves.

The rapaciousness of the colonial frontier is well reflected in an advertisement in the *Cairns Post* (October 15, 1885) that proclaimed: "Englishmen, Irishmen & Scotsmen - what brings you to Queensland, leaving home in the dear old island 1000s of miles away? It is not for love of country, is it? No, plainly I can hear you answer. It is to make money, & at no distant date to return ... home." The mindset of 'getting rich and going home' pervaded the thinking of many 19th-century settlers.

Initially the combatants were comparatively evenly balanced, but as European technology rapidly developed, the advantage swung in favour of the newcomers with their repeating rifles, horses, steamships and trains as well as military-style, logistical organisations, such as the Native Police.

The evidence is there. Intrepid Australian historians began opening the whitewashed 'Pandora's Box' of frontier history from the early 1970s. At the start of the 21st century it really is time to acknowledge that Australians fought one another for this land. The fact that it was the original Australians versus the newcomers should not preclude this recognition, even if neither side necessarily perceived themselves as 'Australians'.

The war was long-lasting, extremely bloody and in the latter part of the 19th century, particularly one-sided; but the same traits that are promoted as admirable and deserving of respect during other military conflicts were nevertheless present. Nit-picking about whether the combatants wore uniforms and fought in a recognised European fashion is merely a red-herring. It denies the tenacity of the original Australians' fight for their territories and the fact that they saw their conflict with the new settlers as a kind of

war; a war that they lost, and for which they paid a very heavy price indeed. But then, what are Anzac and Gallipoli about?

Surely by acknowledging the frontier wars one is being more truly inclusive of all Australians. By not acknowledging the frontier wars, national institutions are confirming the colonial ideologies that underpinned the frontier violence as well as the denialism accompanying them and giving weight to the survival of these perceptions.

Recognition of the frontier wars does not detract from or in any way denigrate the role of our past servicemen and women in the 20th century. In fact it gives credence to our often quoted ideals of 'a fair go': honesty, egalitarianism, self-reliance and resourcefulness, along with a cheeky sense of humour. Recognition can only add to our sense of national integrity.

The Australian War Memorial proclaims that: "Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. It is the

day on which we remember Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. The spirit of Anzac, with its human qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity."

It therefore seems logical and balanced to include remembrance of those who died in the frontier wars. These were perceived by settlers at the time as a series of warlike conflicts and they are similarly regarded as such by most recent scholars and by contemporary Aborigines in general today.

So it behoves us all to abandon the partial and exclusivist attitudes of the 20th century, to embrace the truth about our history, and to begin to remember the frontier wars on Anzac Day.

Dr Timothy Bottoms is a Cairns historian and author of *Conspiracy of Silence, Queensland's Frontier Killing Times* (Allen and Unwin, 2013).

*Canberra Times 24 April 2015, also published in the Age and the Sydney Morning Herald*