

Uses of the Past: Settler Culture, Regional Identity and the Modern Nation

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Over six days from the eighteenth to the twenty-third of March in 1924 the regional city of Grenfell coordinated a sustained civic celebration that it called the 'Back to Grenfell Week'. A commemorative festival of substantial proportions, 'Back to Grenfell Week' was intended to encourage former residents to return to the district, honour the pioneers, and promote the central New South Wales region.¹ The week of celebrations incorporated all the generic features of the civic festival: processions, art, craft and sporting competitions, race meetings, carnivals, concerts and street entertainments. To mark the event and confirm for posterity the historical claims of the place two monuments were unveiled. The first of these was a memorial to the pioneers of the district; the second, an obelisk marking the birthplace of Australia's most popular national writer, Henry Lawson.

Settler-invader cultures such as Australia have always had a particularly urgent need for a past. The process of discovering an autonomous field of historical reference has been one important move in the gradual development of a claim to national legitimacy.² Early days in a colony are full of speculations over prosperous futures. A glance backwards is a recollection of 'Home': England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales; or else an intimidating experience of an ancient but timeless land. The regional pioneering festival in Australia represents a particularly significant use of the past as a putatively ethical claim to land stolen from its traditional custodians, the indigenes. More often than not such a claim takes the form of the celebration of a race for its successful transformation of an unfamiliar place.

In 1924, Grenfell used its pioneering past to write itself into a national history of enlightened and industrious development, which presaged for the place a bright and prosperous future. In the late fifties and early sixties, however, the town was forced to return to this theme for quite different reasons. In the intervening thirty odd years economic and cultural shifts and an associated population drift towards the coast had left little hope for the expansive development claimed in 1924. Contemporary Australian rural and regional cultures have themselves been relegated to 'History' by a nation increasingly obsessed with modernity, the metropolis and the cultures of its coast. My discussion of the 'Back to Grenfell Week' Festival of 1924 and the 'Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts' from 1958 is an exploration of the expressed tension between these two imperatives and their effects upon the strategically shifting social identities of a regional Australian culture.

Local History in the Image of the Nation: Back to Grenfell Week 1924

W.A. Holman's 'Foreword' to the 1924 'Back to Grenfell' souvenir program presents an historical narrative which simultaneously situates Grenfell as a centre for the Nation's heroic

pioneering past and the modern moment of its ultimate achievement. Holman, a former Labor State Premier and a distinguished son of the district, compiled a colourful account of the history of the town that placed its roots in a romanticised frontier past that served as the ideal foil for his contemporary vision of a thriving, modern regional centre:

No region's records show more of both the poetry and prose of Australian history than those of Grenfell. Seen as it is at the earliest in the first dim light of Australian exploration, it has been the scene of every kind of event, and the theatre of every kind of exploit with a claim to romance. Every picturesque figure in our chronicles has appeared there in turn. The Squatter King, with his attendant satellites of shepherd and drover, the bushranger, the gold digger, have all successively come upon the scene. It has experienced to the full the great vicissitudes -- those marked by extremes of good fortune and calamity -- so characteristic of our country ... droughts ... fire ... The celebrated struggle of Lambing Flat ... Few regions, too, are more typically representative of the staple wealth of our country; and the gold which has been won around Grenfell in its darker depths is only representative of the golden fleece and the golden grain which have flourished in its sunlit valleys.³

Holman regards the artistic and biographical connections with Grenfell of two of Australia's most famous nineteenth century writers, Henry Lawson (1867-1922) and Rolf Boldrewood (1826-1915), as appropriate testimonies to the colourful history of the region. Literary representation confirms the existence of a useable past and this past is a prerequisite for the culture and civilisation of contemporary life. The coming of the railway and the beginning of the industrial era has 'smoothed down' some of the 'rugged individualities' of the town and 'Grenfell is no longer a remote and slightly sleepy repository of quaint survivals, but a brisk, modern and flourishing town; the centre of one of the largest wheat fields in Australia, and the home of one of its most enterprising populations'.⁴ The sign of modern civic prosperity is an appropriate relation to the past as well as a particular function of the present:

Grenfell, always as its public monuments attest, grateful in its recognition of its worthy sons, will not fail to cherish and respect all its benefactors, all its leading spirits. Long may their work be manifested, with that of their predecessors, in its increasing greatness and prosperity!⁵

The regional centre, he argues, is a civic success because of the virtues that its contemporary citizens share with their pioneering forebears and this correspondence is available for public scrutiny because of the historical consciousness of its community. Hard work, initiative and enterprise will see Grenfell's citizenry join their forebears, as the region's never to be forgotten progenitors. The festival thus deploys the narrative of pioneering tradition to help fashion an appropriate citizenry for the town and its region. More than this, however, it represents a claim to a place -- a claim which has a particular urgency in settler-invader cultures.

The pioneer legend 'celebrates courage, enterprise, hard work, and perseverance; it usually applies to the people who first settled the land, whether as pastoralists or farmers... It is a nationalist legend which deals in a heroic way with ... the taming of the new environment to man's use'.⁶ In short, it is a conservative liberal myth that celebrates the sufficient individual, and it tends to operate in opposition to the radical nationalist historian's systemic critiques of social, cultural and political exploitation.⁷ Its historical mode is nostalgic and it is democratic in

the sense that it singles out the ordinary Australian as a popular hero.⁸ Further, it is frequently used, as is often implicitly the case in its performance through the Grenfell Festival, to stress the British identity of Australia.⁹

The settler-invader claim to place is vitally performed in the Monster Procession which wound its way from the Council Chambers to the Show Ground to mark the opening of the 'Back to Grenfell Week'. The procession was arranged in a significant order with the Mounted Police and the Town Band leading the soldiers returned from the first World War, the Red Cross workers, and the schoolchildren. Next came the primary products of the district, bullock and horse drawn wagons of wheat, chaff, timber and wool. These were followed in turn by the Trades, Storekeeper and Industrial Turnouts, Pageants of more wheat, wool and primary products, winding up with the best goat turnout; the best decorated umbrella, and the Friendly Society's displays. On arrival at the Show Grounds the civic procession saluted the Union Jack, the Mayor and Shire President welcomed 'all returned Grenfellites', and the company sang 'Home Sweet Home' and 'God Save the King'.

The British 'symbolology' of the occasion is more than colonial deference to the mother country. The transportation of convicts in the nineteenth century established amongst the British middle-classes a clear association between criminality and colonial identity.¹⁰ The belief that crime was not a social issue, but the genetic destiny of a particular class, created doubts about the future respectability of the colonies. Consequently, there was a sustained public forgetting of convict origins in the early 20th century as was demonstrated by the systematic dismantlement of the Port Arthur convict ruins.¹¹ In the colonial situation, the assertion of Britishness was, therefore, in part an assertion of immigrant respectability. In the colonies, as in Britain, it served to distinguish an imperial-national identity from the contradictory associations of the penal stain.

Viewed in this context, the Festival's ready identification of the region with bushrangers, who in days gone by plied their trade from bases in the Wedding Mountains, seems contrary. The relegation of criminality to the past, however, permits the respectable contemporary citizen to distinguish themselves through the acknowledgment of their poor start. Such a confession refutes the pessimistic predictions of the nineteenth century British middle-class with a public demonstration of contemporary prosperity. Lingering doubts, however, are clearly one of the driving forces behind the need regularly to celebrate successful development. A convict past can be a marker of subsequent achievement that dovetails nicely with the grand historical narrative of an emerging nation. It is this movement which has made convict ancestry a fashionable claim for the contemporary Australian bourgeoisie, and it represents a use of the past which is an integral part of the Festival's claim to the achieved respectabilities of a civilisation.

The attribution of criminality to a genetically degenerate class was not abandoned in the colonial situation; rather it was adapted in the service of racial purity. The fear of the relationship between degenerate races and criminality -- a key incitement for the Lambing Flat massacre of Chinese diggers in 1861, which Holman celebrates in his Foreword -- prompted an emphasis on the physical vitality of the district in both the Monster Parade and the Festival.¹² The connection of race and culture to climate was a strategic feature of the initial colonial settlement and the later national reappropriation of the Australian continent. In the nineteenth-century Social Darwinist ideas associated morality with climate and genetic stock, and this led to fears that in the colonies the white races could degenerate -- particularly in the hotter inland areas and in the tropical and sub-tropical climates to the north. The fear was that if the so called inferior (black and yellow)

racers were the products of their 'hot' environments then the European presence in Australia might be expected to result in stock degeneration. Signs of this impending genetic deterioration were often read into the frequent outbreaks of disease in the nineteenth century colonies. The assertion of a history of European genetic prosperity became, consequently, an essential feature of any region's claim to successful settlement.¹³

The Monster Parade accordingly offered best-dressed prizes in the categories of Australian Infantry Forces (AIF) Officer, AIF Member, National Costume, Boys and Girls Fancy Costume, and Sportsperson. Additional awards were given for the best looking single man and woman, schoolboy and schoolgirl, boy and girl, and baby boy and girl. The host of physical activities, sporting contests and military displays at the Festival also served as signs of the area's genetic hygiene. Good health was also always a good place. Like many other features of the pioneering festival of 1924, the celebration of the hygienic settler body was to become an important feature of the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts and its promotion of the town's civic community from the late 1950s.

The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts: Civic Culture as Successful Settlement

In 1958, Harold Goodwin, the newly appointed headmaster of the local high school, initiated an annual civic campaign to remember Henry Lawson. Goodwin cited Grenfell's Lawson memorial as evidence that in earlier years 'civic minded people revered his memory'.¹⁴ An annual festival in the famous writer's honour would 'bring the town together once a year in a Civic Festival' and at the same time 'keep the spirit of Lawson alive, not only in Grenfell, but throughout the country'.¹⁵ The Mayor called a public meeting and a group of people representing over twenty organisations agreed to pool their resources in the interests of the celebration. Any funds that they might raise would be used to develop a collection of Australian books in the town library as a memorial to Lawson. Thus began the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts, and every year since it has been 'appropriately' celebrated on the Queen's Birthday long weekend which precedes the anniversary of Lawson's birth.¹⁶

The pioneering narratives through which Henry Lawson was remembered when his monument was unveiled in the 'Back to Grenfell Week' of 1924 were resurrected for the annual celebrations in his name as they took place from the late 1950s, through the 60s, 70s and 80s, and into the 90s. The Children's Cultural Activities Day, The Roaring Days Fancy Dress Dance, The Procession, and The Lawson Concert were important moments in this resurrection. The opening day of the early festivals was devoted to the performances and cultural displays of the local school children. The rural setting and the pioneering themes of Australian art and the work of Lawson were focal points for these displays, and through them the children were invited to place their own local experiences in relation to the heroic pioneering history of the region and the nation. In a film made on the history of the Festival in 1993, John Hetherington, a teacher in the nearby Wirrimbah School, insists that education is still about the three Rs and the social graces and that recitation remains an important vehicle for the latter. As his young students act out Lawson's verse for the camera, he encourages them to use the narratives to imagine the 'tough old days' when Europeans pioneered the district.¹⁷ Hetherington's wife, Jenny (nee Moffitt), a local taught by Goodwin, the festival organiser in the 60s, recalls her annual involvement in the Festival as a characteristic of her life from girlhood. A notable feature of this involvement is her family's continued custom of billeting many of the Festival's distinguished visitors. For Jenny

Hetherington and her peers, the Festival is an important part of their identification of self and family with a particular place.

The Henry Lawson Concert maintained for the adult citizenry the local as well as the national emphases of the Lawson heritage. Here the locals mixed with distinguished visiting actors such as Chips Rafferty, Leonard Thiele, and Ed Devereaux, for music recitals, patriotic sing-a-longs, musical renditions of Lawson verse, and recitations of both the verse and the short stories. In 1958, for example, the local dramatic society put on a play especially written for the Festival. 'The Last Review' consisted of the dreams of an old man who dozed beside the reception desk of the hotel in which he was staying for the duration of the Henry Lawson Festival. Henry Lawson visits the Old Man's dreams where he is visited in turn by a procession of the writer's celebrated characters: Joe and Mary Wilson, Mrs Spicer, The Drover's Wife and her son Tommy, Mr and Mrs Baker, and Mitchell. A few days later the local paper gave a detailed assessment of the historical performances of the local actors.

Pioneer role playing through performance and costume is an integral part of many aspects of the Festival and it features in particular in the opening procession and the Roaring Days Fancy Dress Dance. Lawson characters and more general pioneering themes are a prize category in the Festival procession which shares strong similarities to the Monster Procession of the 'Back to Grenfell Week' of 1924. The practice is also energetically redeployed in the Roaring Days Fancy Dress Dance where prizes are awarded for the best male and female period costume and the best portrayal of Henry Lawson. In 1959, Chips Rafferty attended the Dance as Henry Lawson. The practice of historical fancy dress represents the Festival's penchant for affirming both the link to the past as it is represented in Lawson's work and in the same moment the contemporary community's modern distance from those times.

The Festival's claim to an achieved place within the modern Nation is clearly articulated in the opening speech of the inaugural festival, where a prominent Sydney publisher declared that:

A hundred years ago there was little on this spot that had its origin in the European mind. For thousands of years only the wandering feet of stone age men had passed this way. Ninety years have passed since the birth of the man in whose name we are met here today... How many could have dreamed that this baby, the son of a poor Norwegian digger, should become the first and still the most inspiring representative Australian.¹⁸

The Henry Lawson Festival uses the past as a part of a civic claim to place, but this use is interestingly inflected as social, cultural and economic pressures from the 50s through to the 80s begin to threaten the viability of the 1924 Festival's assertion of the town's prosperous future. The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival, like its 1924 forebear, always carried the promotion of the district as one of its intentions.

The Festival Program for 1961 spells out the purpose of the Festival in the form of an acrostic of the 'Lawson Festival':

Why does Grenfell hold this festival?

L iterature of Australia

A rts of Australia
 W elfare of Australians
 S ocial conscience of Australians
 O rganisation of true 'community'
 N ational development

F riendship--Mateship--Loyalty
 E ducation to Live and look forward
 S ociety to take stock
 T own improvements and Amenities
 I mprovements in our way of life
 V alues in our everyday lives
 A dvance Australia
 L ove of country-- of our fellow men.¹⁹

Encapsulated in this acrostic are the civic aspirations for the Festival. Grenfell promotes itself as the ideal site for the exemplary Australian citizen. The important emphases in this claim are an assertion of respectability through civic community, individual fidelity and an appreciation of the arts, and a corresponding determination to improve the material prosperity of the Town and the Nation. Grenfell's ethical and material celebrity establishes the place as a legitimate site for genetic as well as commercial investment, and the following appeal thus appears below the acrostic:

Businessmen

Visitors

Investors

Grenfell is a fine, healthy town with a vigorous spirit and sound district. Industries are wanted--Every opportunity given to help new businesses. Area is flood free and land is cheap -- Ample labor available. Invest in Grenfell and help de-centralisation bring fresh vigour to our nation -- Inquiries welcomed by civic authorities and Chamber of Commerce, Rotary or Apex Clubs. **WATCH GRENFELL GROW. YOUR CHILDREN WILL GROW UP STRAIGHT IN GRENFELL.** Here is a happy community -- Join us?

Through its Festival, Grenfell, the birthplace of Henry Lawson, uses the status and reputation of the National poet and its pioneering heritage as sources of capital for civic, regional and national self-promotion.

Happy Hygienic Bodies: The Bush Legend and a Coastal Strip

Despite the wonderful ingenuity behind this strategy it was difficult to see a regional festival having any lasting success in turning around the massive coastal drift which has characterised population movements in Australia since the end of the nineteenth century. There is recognition of this trend in the 1966 Festival, which sought to articulate its historically based claim to the National imaginary with the developing tourist campaigns of a number of the increasingly popular coastal centres.

The 1966 Festival program features a map of eastern Australia that represents Grenfell at

the centre of crossroads linking Sydney to Adelaide and Brisbane to Melbourne (**fig 1**). The caption accompanying this map reads: ‘Grenfell --Birthplace of Henry Lawson--at the Crossroads between all Capital Cities--at the heart of the Australian Legend’. On the following page are photographs of the successful beauty contestants, Miss Sydney Surf and Miss Gold Coast Aquabelle, who attended the Festival to represent the two highways (**fig 2**). The captions, which framed the full-page photographs of the bikini girls, encourage motorists to use the highways that intersect in Grenfell as preferred routes to the beaches of their choice. ‘Save a day -- Go Henry Lawson Way North or South,’ anchors a photograph of the bikini clad Miss Gold Coast Aquabelle, invitingly resting against the trunk of a distinctively tropical palm tree.²⁰

The beach joined the bush as a site for the representation of Australian images when the youthful, wholesome, cheerful, innocence of the 1920s was replaced by the 1930s preference for modern metropolitan sophistication, a move which, according to Richard White, was in the interests of both the manufacturing industry and the increasingly academy-based Australian intelligentsia.²¹ In this period, the lifesaver became the embodiment of the beach going Australian male. As a new image of national virility, he (re-)presented the legendary characteristics of the traditional digger/bushman as a contemporary metropolitan phenomenon. It was not that the bushman/digger was no longer Australian so much that the lifesaver became his more modern incarnation. Both images were able to coexist within the same space because their representativeness was displaced temporally. The lifesaver was the dynamic *now* to the bushman’s nostalgic *then*, a relationship which allows the lifesaver to claim a tradition and kinship which acknowledges and appropriates the bush, and then pushes it aside.

The supersession of the bush by the beach was facilitated by its greater accessibility for a predominantly metropolitan masculine culture in search of an easy forum for the demonstration of ‘national’ virility. The role of woman in the masculine myth of the beach is largely decorative -- although she does play an important role in confirming the identity of the heroic male. The beach belle is an object of voyeuristic attention for the masculine surfer and the lifesaver. The display of virility that the dangerous surf permits, however, requires the admiration of the beach belle. It is this role of the female subject in the apotheosis of the masculine hero that is demonstrated in the use of bikini girls to promote the beaches of Sydney and Surfers Paradise in the late 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The bikini model offers the potential male tourist her admiring look as a promise that he is an alluring sexual prospect. This publicity narrative interpellates the young male tourist as the lifesaver/surfer; an image which became increasingly recognisable from the 1950s as a contemporary embodiment of the national character.²²

The promise of sex, as Alexander McRobbie points out in *The Real Surfers Paradise*, is integral to this form of advertising, and this promise sits awkwardly with the predominant forms and intentions which I have already described for the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts.²³ There appears to be a contradiction between the respective strategies of the 1961 and 1966 programs in particular. While the 1961 program uses the liberal civic virtues of the region to promote the city of Grenfell as an ideal site for the settler dreams of familial and financial prosperity, the 1966 program accepts the metropolitan cultural hegemony which locates the contemporary on the coast and the past in the bush. Further, the Festival accepts this hegemony in the form of its celebratory adoption of the contemporary promise of youthful sexual adventure, which is written into the publicity narrative of the beach.

The ethical and sexual strategies tend to coexist in the Festivals throughout the sixties, however, where their incompatibility is moderated by the active reframing which characterises

the Festival's use of the beach belles. The Festival uses the coast's appropriation of the contemporary, what Johannes Fabian has called the 'denial of coevalness', to write itself into the beach myth as its authenticating heritage.²⁴ The developmental path of the ideally *embodied* national form (male and female) is made to follow the road from Australia's capital cities through rural Grenfell to the beaches of Sydney and Surfers. By re-routing the beach narrative through the Australian Legend, the Grenfell Festival recontextualises the alluring bodies of Miss Gold Coast Aquabelle and Miss Sydney Surf in the terms of Grenfell's claim to genetic accomplishment. The beach girls are represented as contemporary exemplars of the hygienic success of the colonial dream -- a hygienic obsession that, as we have seen, remains an important feature of the pioneering myth which structures the Festival and its readings of the national poet and his work.

The 'white happy wholesome' images of Miss Sydney Surf and Miss Gold Coast Aquabelle, framed as they are by the myths and discourses of tourist promotion, national identity, pioneering heritage, and civic hygiene, insist upon the moral, physical and commercial enterprise of the city of Grenfell. This ingenious act of appropriation is beautifully demonstrated by the Festival's use of the models when they arrive in the town. The visiting beauties are used to complement the local entrants in the Festival's own beauty pageant. Furthermore, at the behest of a committee of local graziers, Miss Sydney Surf and Miss Gold Coast Aquabelle slip out of their bikinis and into the latest woollen fashions from Western Stores and Roberta Salon.²⁵ As the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts promotes the pioneering myth of nationalist endeavour, it reinscribes the white, wholesome bodies of the contemporary metropolitan Australian woman as the fashionable legacy of the bush legend. In this way, the apparently incongruous beach belles are recuperated into a pioneering tradition that the Festival's popular dramatic reproductions of Lawson's stories reaffirm as the authentic traditions of a local culture.

National Promotion and the Affirmation of Region: Arts, Celebrity and the Extended Civic Family

A subject to which I have yet to do justice is the strong focus upon the Arts in the Festival. Beginning in a period of Australian history when there was little official recognition of the value of Australian artistic product, Grenfell set out to establish a series of ambitious prize competitions. The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts Awards were not a regional set of prizes for local artistic production. These awards sought to recognise the artistic endeavour of the Nation. An annual Australian Arts Award for the most outstanding contribution to the Arts by an Australian has been awarded at the Festival since 1958, in addition to prizes for prose, verse, song, art and, from 1965, television.

Distinguished Australians, many of whom were patrician members of elite metropolitan traditions, were recognised and incorporated into the popular progressive narrative of the Festival. Recipients of the Australian Arts Award included Russell Drysdale (artist), William Dobell (artist), A.D. Hope (poet), Robert Helpmann (dancer), Patrick White (Nobel laureate), Douglas Stewart (poet), David Campbell (poet) and Sidney Nolan (artist). Prize winners often attended the Festival to collect their awards and together with a number of dignitaries (such as Chief Justice H.V. Evatt, who was later to become the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Governor Sir Eric Woodward, and the Norwegian Consul) who agreed to preside at the opening ceremonies and serve as competition judges, they represent an impressive list of celebrities for the Town. Having used the felt status of the birthplace of the National Poet to

authorise itself as a cultural centre, the town of Grenfell now confirmed that status on the basis of the celebrities it attracted.

The practice of billeting the celebrities for the duration of the Festival in the homes of Grenfell's residents and on family properties close to the town helped to distribute the prestige of the celebrities amongst the community. Gwen Moffit, surrounded by her grown children, flicks through a family photo album rich with images of the famous. Doc Evatt talked incessantly, she recalled, and he wouldn't get out of his pyjamas. Chips Rafferty (actor) was so tall that he had to sleep diagonally across the bed while his little wife curled up in one of the corners this created. Gwen narrates the Rafferty tale while she and her daughter make the bed in question for the camera. 'We've had a few famous visitors sleep in this bed and put their bottoms in our bathtub,' the daughter says. Later, Gwen Moffit is filmed by a beautiful orange tree ripe with fruit: 'I kept forgetting orange juice for breakfast and Patrick White was very keen on food. This little orange tree here ... had eight oranges on it so we had one orange every morning while he was here and I've called it the Tree of Man'.²⁶

If we see the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts as an attempt to promote a regional area in a time when such areas are declining under the influence of coastal migration then we might see the function of the celebrities brought to the Festival as the re-accreditation of the relevance of the lives of the locals to the modern moment of the Nation. Living in regional communities when centralised communications constantly present the metropolitan as the site of modernity is an experience of being behind the times. Grenfell uses Henry Lawson and the past it sees him celebrating to attract metropolitan figures known through their media celebrity. In this way, the residents of Grenfell confirm their lives, their community, and their place as significant and contemporary.

This is not to say that the celebrity is seamlessly incorporated within the civic community. Gwen Moffit's tales are often amused accounts of the celebrity's difference, such as Doc Evatt's pyjamas, Chips Rafferty's height, and the bawdy jokes of a 'tired and emotional' Gordon Chater (actor). Chater 'really shocked some people and so he was never invited back'.²⁷ Hilaire Lindsay tells a story concerning the actor and comedian Barry Humphries and novelist Patrick White. The two men were being driven through the Town as part of the Opening Parade when Humphries excitedly drew White's attention to a street called Holy Camp Road. They didn't realise, Lindsay observes, that it referred to an old miner's camp pocked with mining holes.²⁸

Those famous outsiders who bring their celebrity with them to the Festival do not live in the same place and with the same values as the locals, but by coming to Grenfell, they confirm the desirability of the place. The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts annually represents the area as desirable. This desirability brings the tourist whose wealth helps to support the civic community. It helps confer a contemporary legitimacy upon regional experience in the face of the dispossessing totalisation of centralised metropolitan cultural production. In an era when most of the young people must leave the region to find long term work, it also helps the local community to gather its far-flung relations about itself. As Margaret Jones, an elderly resident, puts it:

Grenfell is an ageing town. Only the elderly stay here. But the young people come back for the Henry Lawson Festival and it means that they still belong to Grenfell.²⁹

The pioneering festival as it has been practised in the central New South Wales town of Grenfell uses a particular history of settlement as a racially inflected claim to place. This history represents a specific form of social identity that enjoys social, cultural and political prestige in settler societies, but it is itself subject to a time and a place. As (post-)modernity shapes the settler nation in the global images of metropolitan culture, regionally located communities find their own social identities consigned to (an-)other time and (an-)other place. Regional settler identities may be rhetorically imagined as the custodians of an original time that erases the native population, but this has not stopped them, in their turn, being consigned to the custody of modernity's 'colourful' past.

¹ 'Back to Grenfell: Successful Opening,' The Grenfell Record, 20 March 1924.

² Tony Bennett, 'Out of Which Past?' The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.128-62. See also Tony Bennett, 'History on the Rocks,' in John Frow and Meaghan Morris (ed.), Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader, (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1993), pp.222-40.

³ W.A. Holman, 'Foreword,' Back to Grenfell Week Souvenir Program, (Grenfell, 1924), Roderick Papers, Northern Territory University Library, Darwin.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ J.B. Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend,' in John Carroll (ed.), Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity, second edition, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992). pp.14-15.

⁷ Radical nationalist historians in Australia produced an influential left wing account of Australian social development in the 1950s. The most famous example is Russell Ward, The Australian Legend, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958). There have been numerous critiques, the most readily available is John Docker, In a Critical Condition: Struggles for Control of Australian Literature Then and Now, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1984).

⁸ Hirst, p.29.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.35.

¹⁰ Beverley Kingston, 1860-1900 Glad, Confident Morning, Volume 3 in Geoffrey Bolton (ed), The Oxford History of Australia (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1986-1990). Allaine Cerwonka, 'Mapping Nation: Local Culture, Transnational Community and the Search for Australia', PhD Thesis, University of California, Irvine, 1997, pp.183-97.

¹¹ Robert Dixon, personal conversation.

¹² Manning Clark describes the campaign to drive from the diggings the "filthy, immoral treacherous and

quarrelsome heathen' Celestials, who wasted water, stole gold, ruined good digging ground, spread leprosy, and practised secret vices on the bodies of white women and white boys" in The Earth Abideth For Ever, 1851-1888, Volume IV of his controversial six volume epic A History of Australia, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1978), p.126.

¹³ For a discussion of the effect of these ideas on the development of the settler city see Christopher Lee, 'Toilet Training the Settler Subject: An Exercise in Civic Regulation,' Southern Review, Vol.29. No.1 (1996), pp. 50-63.

¹⁴ 'The History of the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts,' Grenfell Record, 8 June 1971.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Goodwin qtd in 'The History of the Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts.'

¹⁷ Henry Lawson's Grenfell, Directed by Bridget Goodwin, Bridie Films, 1994, Broadcast on 'Sunday Afternoon with Peter Ross,' ABC-TV, Australia, 3 July 1994.

¹⁸ Colin Roderick qtd in 'Lawson Festival is a Brilliant Success,' Grenfell Record, 17 June 1958.

¹⁹ Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts Program, Grenfell, 1961, Frederick Hancock Papers, MSS 772/27, Mitchell Library.

²⁰ Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts Program, Grenfell, 1966, Henry Lawson File, Meanjin Archives, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne. The section on the Melbourne to Brisbane highway from Young through Grenfell to Forbes was renamed Henry Lawson Way on August 31 1963 by the Commissioner for Main Roads Mr J.A.L. Shaw in response to a local campaign.

²¹ Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1981), pp.140-51.

²² John Fiske argues that the Lifesaver and the Surfer are distinct, often oppositional cultural identities. More recently, however, Edwin Jaggard has shown that in the period between the wars at least, they were the two sides of the one coin. See John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner, Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp.53-72, and Edwin Jaggard, 'The Australian Surf Lifesavers as a National Symbol 1920-1960', Paper delivered to the Australian Identities Conference: History, Culture and Environment, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland, 3 July 1996.

²³ Alexander McRobbie, From Seaside Village to International Resort: The Real Surfers Paradise, (Surfers

Paradise: Pan News, 1988), pp. 411-32. I am indebted to Ruth Barcan for this reference.

²⁴ Johannes Fabian, Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 25-35.

²⁵ 'Festival Fever Grips Grenfell,' The Grenfell Record, June 7 1966, p.1.

²⁶ Henry Lawson's Grenfell, Directed by Bridget Goodwin, Bridie Films, 1994.

²⁷ Gwen Moffitt speaking in Henry Lawson's Grenfell, 1994.

²⁸ Hilaire Lindsay speaking in Henry Lawson's Grenfell, 1994.

²⁹ Margaret Jones speaking in Henry Lawson's Grenfell, 1994.