

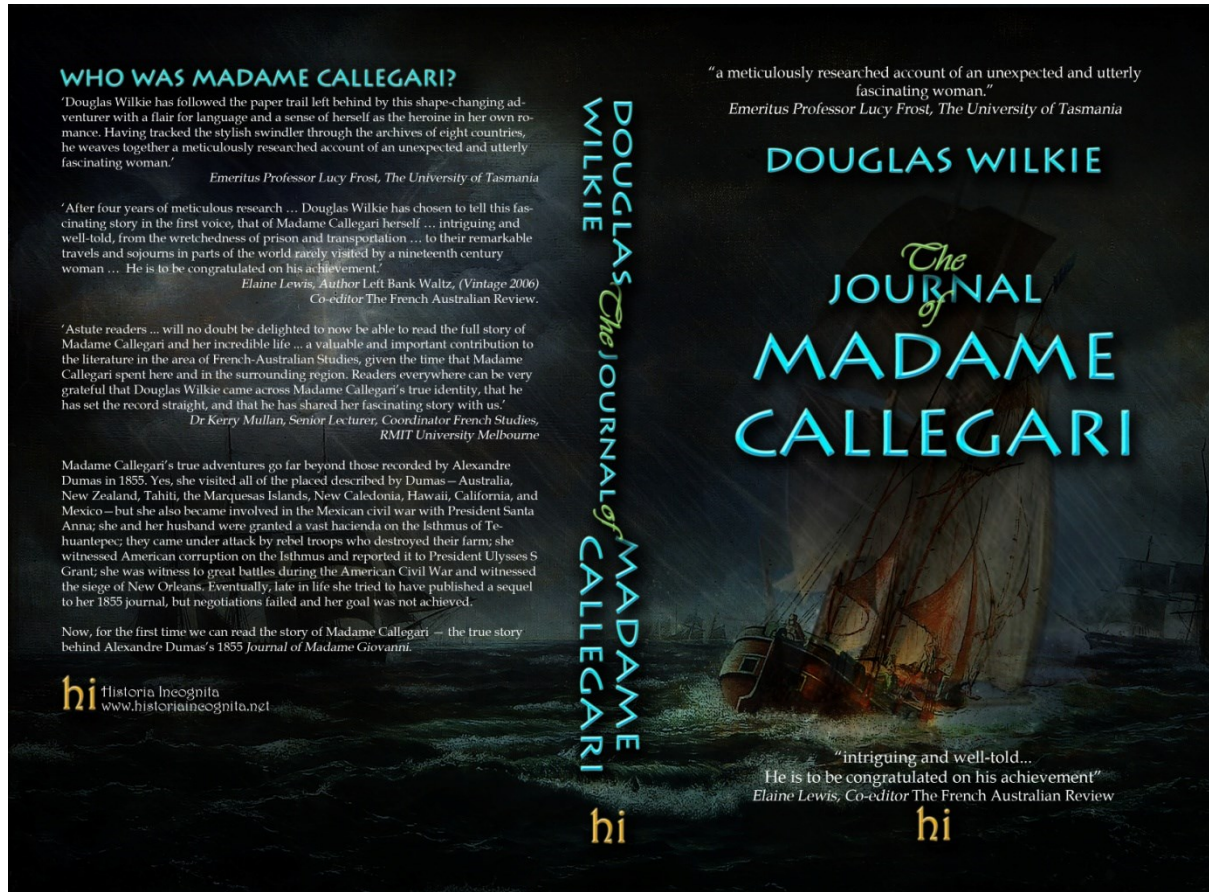
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE JOURNAL OF MADAME CALLEGARI



Who was Madame Callegari? Was she one of these?

*The Transported Convict*  
*The Venetian Merchant's Wife*  
*The Heroine of the Californian Goldrushes*  
*The Adventurer of the Mexican Jungles*  
*The Celebrity of European Literary Circles*  
*The Plantation Owner of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec*

No. Madame Callegari was not just one of these. In fact, she was all of these.

---

Early in 1855, a thirty-six-year-old French woman approached Alexandre Dumas in Paris, and asked him to edit, and publish, her account of ten years spent travelling in Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, California and Mexico. Dumas agreed to her request, because her story was one of adventure and romance, and took this young lady, and her husband, to places seldom visited by young women. However,

she insisted that, in publishing her story, her true identity should not be revealed. To achieve this they chose the pseudonym Madame Giovanni, and changed, or omitted, certain parts of the narrative which could have identified her.

Since first publication, the true identity of Madame Giovanni was cause for speculation, and readers could not decide whether the story was true at all, or whether it was a mixture of fact and fiction. The *Journal of Madame Callegari*, researched over four years, and using archives from at least eight countries, reveals that Madame Marie Giovanni was in fact Madame Marie Callegari.

Madame Callegari's true adventures go far beyond those recorded by Alexandre Dumas in 1855. Yes, she visited all of the places described by Dumas—Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, the Marquesas Islands, New Caledonia, Hawaii, California, and Mexico—but she also became involved in the Mexican civil war with President Santa Anna; she and her husband were granted a vast *hacienda* on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; they came under attack by rebel troops who destroyed their farm; she witnessed American corruption on the Isthmus and reported it to President Ulysses S Grant; she was witness to great battles during the American Civil War and witnessed the siege of New Orleans. Eventually, late in life she tried to have published a sequel to her 1855 journal, but negotiations failed and her goal was not achieved.

Now, for the first time we can read the story of Madame Callegari — the true story behind Alexandre Dumas's 1855 *Journal of Madame Giovanni*.

---

## REVIEWS OF THIS BOOK

"*The Journal of Madame Callegari* ... is a fascinating story from start to finish: not only the very notion that the true identity of Madame Callegari has remained hidden until now, but also the incredible story of Madame Callegari's life and travels. ... the author's choice to write the journal in the first person adds greatly to the pace and personal nature of the story and draws the reader in from the very beginning.

We are immediately taken into Madame Callegari's confidence as she starts to narrate her adventures and confides in us that there were several errors in the original journal by Alexandre Dumas. We are subsequently introduced to Madame Callegari as Louise Mirabello in a courtroom. (This will be the first of many variations on her true identity.) The descriptive passages in those early scenes bring the characters to life and we are as equally impressed by Madame Callegari's well-to-do acquaintances (who include Napoléon Bonaparte's niece and Émile de Girardin), as we are by our heroine's improbable adventures which will lead her and her future husband to Australia.

Astute readers ... will no doubt be delighted to now be able to read the full story of Madame Callegari and her incredible life. This complete account is meticulously researched and a valuable and important contribution to the literature in the area of French-Australian Studies, given the time that Madame Callegari spent here and in the surrounding region. Readers everywhere can be very grateful that Douglas Wilkie came across Madame Callegari's true identity, that he has set the record straight, and that he has shared her fascinating story with us."

*Dr Kerry Mullan, Senior Lecturer, Coordinator French Studies, RMIT University*

“The Governor of London’s Coldbath Fields House of Correction remembered his young French prisoner as ‘a treacherous, bad woman’. Though ‘by no means handsome’, she possessed a ‘very high talent, remarkable for eloquence and tears’. Three decades later the same woman, now with an Italian name, introduced herself by letter to the American president Ulysses S. Grant, saying she was returning to Europe as a ‘traveler who certainly will be believed’. When Alexandre Dumas published in Paris the journal of her earlier travels, he may or may not have ‘believed’ her, but as one of the most famous writers of his day, he had an eye for a good story and hers was a dramatic tale of adventure and romance across continents and overseas. Douglas Wilkie has followed the paper trail left behind by this shape-changing adventurer with a flair for language and a sense of herself as the heroine in her own romance. Having tracked the stylish swindler through the archives of eight countries, he weaves together a meticulously researched account of an unexpected and utterly fascinating woman.”

*Emeritus Professor Lucy Frost, The University of Tasmania*

“After four years of meticulous research during which he was able to trace her movements around the world, Wilkie was able to reveal that Madame Marie Giovanni was certainly Madame Marie Callegari, a real woman who had visited most of the places described in Dumas’ book. ... Douglas Wilkie has chosen to tell this fascinating story in the first voice, that of Madame Callegari herself, so we find her writing posthumously, telling why she chose to publish under a pseudonym and introducing us to her former self, the young woman known as Louisa La Grange ... intriguing and well-told, from the wretchedness of prison and transportation followed by a pardon in Australia and then marriage to fellow-convict, the Venetian merchant Pietro Callegari, to their remarkable travels and sojourns in parts of the world rarely visited by a nineteenth century woman. ... The original Dumas journal is written in the first person but here we find the voice enhanced with detailed facts and insights, drawn from Wilkie’s meticulous research. This remarkable attention to detail successfully draws the reader deeper into Madame Giovanni’s story, thus dissipating any initial unease; the end-notes are crucial as evidence of Madame Callegari’s claims. Wilkie writes ‘The Journal of Madame Callegari is what I believe Madame Callegari would have told us if she had the opportunity.’ He is to be congratulated on his achievement.”

*Elaine Lewis, Author Left Bank Waltz, (Vintage 2006); Co-editor The French Australian Review.*

*The Journal of Madame Callegari, The True Story Behind Alexandre Dumas’s 1855 Journal de madame Giovanni, Douglas Wilkie, Historia Incognita, 2015, pp.410.*  
[ISBN 9781320395878](https://www.douglaswilkie.com/9781320395878)

Review in [History News](#), Issue No.322, Feb-Mar 2016 (Newsletter of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria), p.10.

“[Using]... soundly based historical method and not fictional imaginings ... [the author] ... takes the reader on a fascinating trail of historical detection ...”

The author convincingly shows that Madame Giovanni, the author of Alexandre Dumas’s publication of her journal, was not a fictional character but Madame Callegari whose travels took her away from Paris in 1843 to 1853. Convicted in London, sent to Van Diemen’s Land, she briefly visited Melbourne in 1848 and 1849. the journal is mostly about Van Diemen’s Land, and then the South Pacific,

California and Mexico where her 'adventures' took her after serving her sentence. Wilkie has reconstructed Callegari's life and rewritten her journal in the first person in what he shows to be soundly based historical method and not fictional imaginings. The journal first translated in 1944 is not well-known and the author has not only revealed its content but also takes the reader on a fascinating trail of historical detection.

---

#### [PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

*The Journal of Madame Callegari* can be purchased through the links on the *Historia Incognita* website.



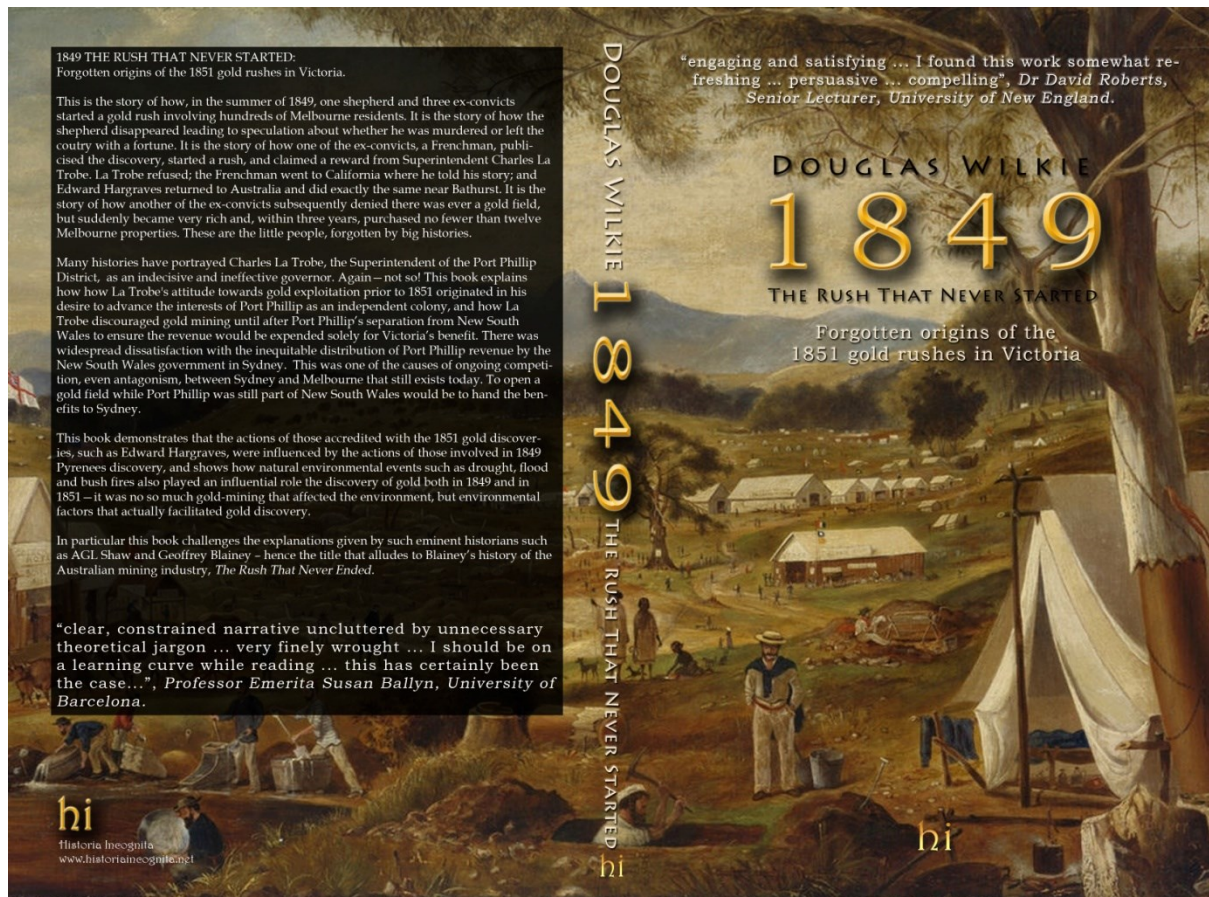
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

## RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

### 1849 THE RUSH THAT NEVER STARTED: FORGOTTEN ORIGINS OF THE 1851 GOLD RUSHES IN VICTORIA



*Professor Emerita Susan Ballyn, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain:*

"...covers new and unexplored ground regarding the first discovery of gold in Australia and of the socio/politics of the time that left this event relatively unexplored and relegated to mere references even in the work of historians such as Blainey."

*Dr David Roberts, Senior Lecturer, University of New England, Armidale, NSW:*

"... engaging and satisfying ... I found this work somewhat refreshing ... it demonstrated an intimacy and depth of knowledge that was persuasive and sometimes compelling ... allowed us to get beneath the skin of the people, and to see possible connections between a variety of episodes, many of which have certainly been underappreciated and misunderstood in existing literature."

Many people have the impression that the Victorian gold rushes not only began in mid-1851, but also occurred in response to discoveries earlier in that year near Bathurst, west of Sydney. Not so! The Victorian gold rushes of 1851 were a direct consequence of a largely forgotten gold discovery two years earlier in the Pyrenees Ranges of the Port Phillip District. This is the story of how, in the summer of 1849, one shepherd and three ex-convicts started a gold rush involving hundreds of Melbourne residents. The story of how Charles La Trobe, the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, discouraged gold mining until after Port Phillip's separation from New South Wales to ensure the revenue would be expended solely for Victoria's benefit. To open a gold field while Port Phillip was still part of New South Wales would be to hand the benefits to Sydney. It is the story of how those accredited with the 1851 gold discoveries, such as Edward Hargraves, were influenced by the actions of those involved in 1849 Pyrenees discovery.

---

#### [PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

*1849 The Rush That Never Started* is available for purchase through the *Historia Incognita* website.

# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE SINK OF INIQUITY : A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE AMHERST AND TALBOT DISTRICTS BETWEEN 1836 AND 1862

In 1836 the nearest white settlers to the site that later became the town Amherst, in central Victoria, were some newly arrived squatters – John Hepburn to the south east, William Coghill to the south and a few others. As more settlers took up the land, small towns grew up at Burnbank and Buninyong. With the growing population came families, and children needing education.

At first many of the squatters were single men with no children, but later, those with children either sent them 'home' to England or Scotland to be educated, or employed governesses and tutors, or sent them to boarding schools. One of the first boarding schools was at Buninyong.

During the early 1850s the peaceful isolated life of the squatters was shattered by tens of thousands of gold seekers. At first they came alone, but soon they brought their families and children, and with the children came a need for education – at least in the eyes of some.

Itinerant tent schools followed the rushes around the gold fields, then, when towns looked like becoming established more permanent, schools were established, either under the National Schools Board, or the Denominational Schools Board. One of the towns developed on the old Daisy Hill goldfield at Amherst. Another grew up at nearby Back Creek, and was later renamed Talbot.

This study looks at the history of education in the area that eventually centred on Amherst between 1836 and 1862 when the two competing schools boards were combined into a Common Schools Board.

The study includes a comprehensive history of the early gold discoveries in the Amherst, Back Creek and Talbot districts, and the people and events that led Back Creek to be referred to as a 'sink of iniquity' at the height of gold fever in 1859.

hi [historia.incognita](http://historia.incognita.net)  
[www.historiaincognita.net](http://www.historiaincognita.net)

DOUGLAS WILKIE

*The SINK of INIQUITY*

hi

DOUGLAS WILKIE  
A History of Education on the Goldfields of  
Amherst and Talbot between 1836 and 1862

*The SINK of INIQUITY*



Picture this – Back Creek, as Talbot was then known, in April 1859:

“Crime is alarmingly on the increase, and although the police force has been enlarged, it is still far below the requirements of the immense population. Inspector Ryan has joined the force, and his office is no sinecure; garrotte robberies, sticking-up, and fights are becoming alarmingly common. Several cases of shoplifting may be added to the category of offences and one or two cases of selling spurious gold.”

*Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser* quoted in *Argus*, Wednesday 20 April 1859, p. 7.



“Crime is frightfully on the increase in this district, and the hordes of thieves and murderers on the rush are becoming emboldened from the comparative immunity which they enjoy. At present Detective Slattery and a handful of constables are the only men to keep down hundreds of villains of the deepest dye. The report I have forwarded you, of the murderous attack on Mrs Ross, is only one of several crimes ... Several cases of sticking-up have come to our knowledge ... A butcher named Wills was pounced on by four armed men near Sault’s Hotel ... A woman was stabbed in the face on Wednesday night ... On Tuesday night a man had his jaw broken ... The feeling among the inhabitants is one of great insecurity. A Court of Petty Sessions will be held daily at Wrigley’s Hotel, on and after Monday.”

*Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser* quoted in *Argus*, Monday 16 May 1859, p. 5.

Back Creek was experiencing a massive gold rush. The population had reached 30,000. Not only were there murders, robberies and all kinds of other lawlessness, but Back Creek was described as the very sink of iniquity.

In the midst of all this were the children and the desire to provide them with some form of education to prevent them falling into heathenism and barbarianism. But the Denominational Schools argued with each other. The Presbyterians would not allow their children to attend the Anglican schools. The teachers were often untrained and just as susceptible to the lure of gold as the parents. The Boards of Education took months to pay bills and salaries.

This is the story of how education was provided to the children of this district, from a time long before the gold rushes, a time when the only children were those of the squatters and their servants, through to 1862 when the Common Schools system established in an attempt to overcome the inter-Denominational rivalries, and to avoid wasteful duplication in communities that could barely sustain one school, let alone two or three.

---

[PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

The *Sink of Iniquity* is available for purchase through the *Historia Incognita* website.



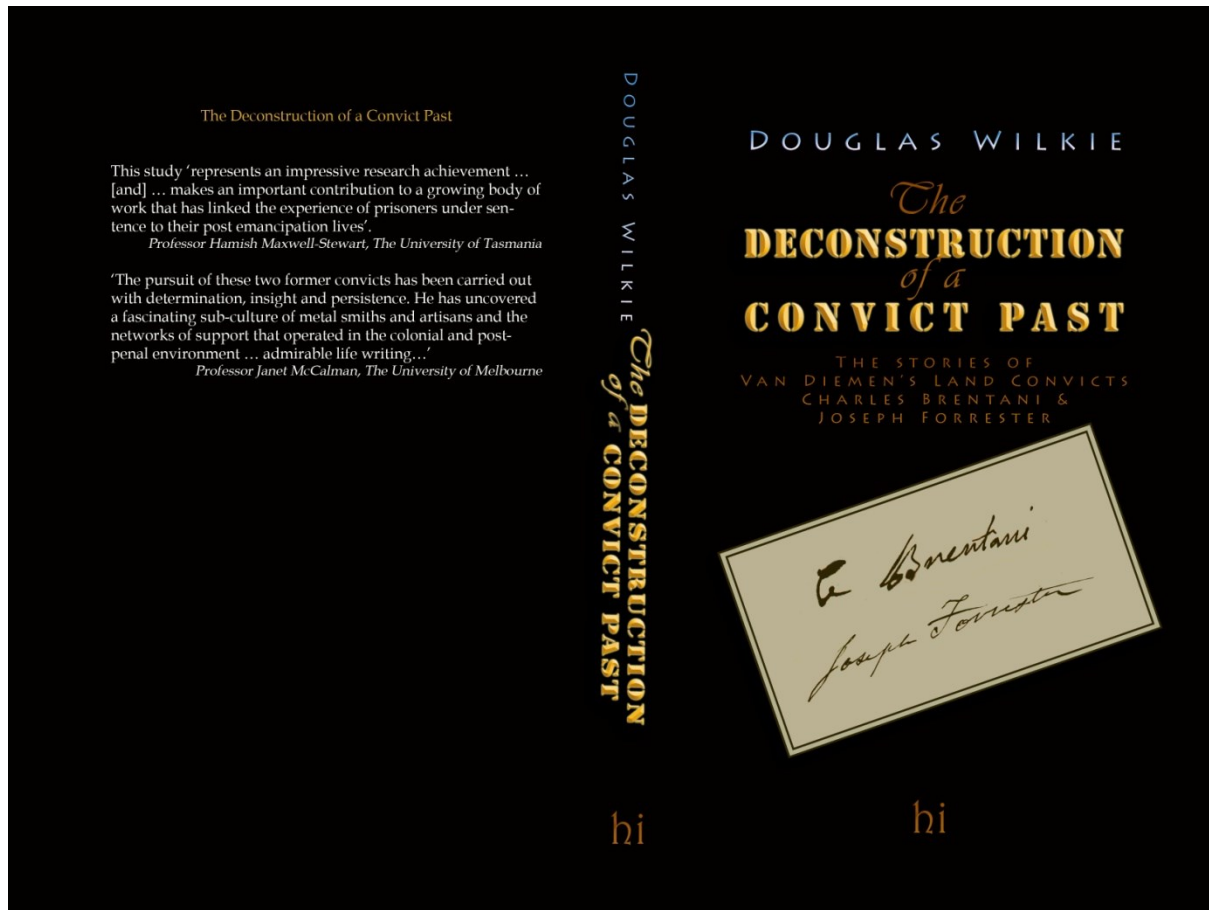
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE DECONSTRUCTION OF A CONVICT PAST



Joseph Forrester, a silversmith, was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1828 after being caught stealing diamonds from a West End London jeweller.

Charles Brentani was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1834 after being caught stealing silver from a Sheffield clergyman.

Brentani was assigned to various employers and eventually set up his own business in Launceston before marrying and moving to Melbourne in 1846 where he established a business as a retail jeweller and watchmaker.

Forrester, on a life sentence, worked as a silversmith in Hobart until he was granted a conditional pardon, set up his own business, then moved to Melbourne where he did work for Brentani.

This is the story of how they tried to put their convict past behind them and establish new and respectable lives.

This book is based upon a Master of Arts thesis successfully submitted to Monash University. The examiners of that thesis had this to say:

This study 'represents an impressive research achievement ... [and] ... makes an important contribution to a growing body of work that has linked the experience of prisoners under sentence to their post emancipation lives'.

*Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, The University of Tasmania*

'The pursuit of these two former convicts has been carried out with determination, insight and persistence. He has uncovered a fascinating sub-culture of metal smiths and artisans and the networks of support that operated in the colonial and post-penal environment ... admirable life writing...'

*Professor Janet McCalman, The University of Melbourne*

---

#### **PURCHASE THIS BOOK**

The original thesis can be purchased through the *Historia Incognita* web site.

# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE LIFE AND LOVES OF EUGENE ROSSIET LENNON

### Eugene Rossiet Lennon

Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professor of Languages, educated at the University of Paris, came to Australia in 1843 as a convict.

He had been convicted of inciting one young woman, Louisa La Grange, to commit a crime by robbing the jewellers of London's West End of their diamonds. Louisa was also transported and soon became Madame Callegari – whose story is told in the *Journal of Madame Callegari* and is also available through Historia Incognita.

But Eugene Lennon embarked upon a very different career to that of his former accomplice, Louisa La Grange. He was tutor for the Cotton family at Swansea, on the remote east coast of Van Diemen's Land. And after father Cotton, a devout Quaker, banished him for taking too much interest in his twenty-year-old daughter, Lennon became tutor to the Pillinger family at Antil Ponds. The Pillingers were much more understanding.

Returning to Hobart with a ticket-of-leave, Eugene was almost banished again when he became attached to James Dickinson's twenty-year-old daughter, Sarah. But Sarah was pregnant and Lennon did the right thing and married her.

After several years of self-imposed exile at Southport, a long way south of Hobart, the Lennons and the Dickinsons moved to Victoria where Eugene soon became headmaster of the Flinders National Grammar School in Geelong. His career became illustrious with the school gaining a reputation as a model for teaching excellence. After many years, Lennon and the Education Department could no longer see eye-to-eye. So Lennon parted ways with the National School and established the Geelong High School across the street.

But all of this, and more, can be read in *The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Convict School Teacher*.

historia incognita



DOUGLAS WILKIE  
Eugene Rossiet Lennon

hi

DOUGLAS WILKIE

### The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon Professeur Extraordinaire



What they said about Eugene Rossiet Lennon:

He dressed with “remarkable elegance” when appearing at the old Bailey in October 1842 — *London Morning Chronicle*, October 1842.

He displayed “manly and intrepid conduct” in saving children, “at the imminent peril and risk of his own life” — *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 1858.

They wanted to sack me in order to obtain “the more brilliant services of Mr Lennon” — George Hanson, Teacher, *Geelong Advertiser*, 1862.

Lennon showed “untiring zeal in the cause of education” — *Argus*, 1878.

Lennon was “the father of popular education” in Geelong — *Geelong Advertiser*, 1884.

Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professor of Languages, educated at the University of Paris, came to Australia in 1843 as a convict. He had been convicted of inciting one young woman, Louisa La Grange, to commit a crime by robbing the jewellers of London's West End of their diamonds. Louisa was also transported and soon became Madame Callegari – whose story is told in the *Journal of Madame Callegari* and is also available through *Historia Incognita*. But Eugene Lennon embarked upon a very different career to that of his former accomplice, Louisa La Grange. He was tutor for the Cotton family at Swansea, on the remote east coast of Van Diemen's Land. And after father Cotton, a devout Quaker, banished him for taking too much interest in his twenty-year-old daughter, Lennon became tutor to the Pillinger family at Antil Ponds. The Pillingers were much more understanding. Returning to Hobart with a ticket-of-leave, Eugene was almost banished again when he became attached to James Dickinson's twenty-year-old daughter, Sarah. But Sarah was pregnant and Lennon did the right thing and married her. After several years of self-imposed exile at Southport, a long way south of Hobart, the Lennons and the Dickinsons moved to Victoria where Eugene soon became headmaster of the Flinders National Grammar School in Geelong. His career became illustrious with the school gaining a reputation as a model for teaching excellence. After many years, Lennon and the Education Department could no longer see eye-to-eye. So Lennon parted ways with the National School and established the Geelong High School across the street. But all of this, and more, can be read in the forthcoming book, *The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professeur Extraordinaire*.

---

#### [PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

*The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professeur Extraordinaire* can be purchased through the links on the Historia Incognita website.



# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE COSSTICKS 1700-1900



Between the time of their marriage in 1818 and 1846 Samuel Cosstick and Mary Weller had thirteen children. They were living at Croydon, Surrey – then a small town south of London.

As their children grew up social conditions in England worsened and news arrived of wonderful new opportunities in the colonies of Australia.

Many took the chance and travelled half way around the world to start a new life. For those who had doubts the announcement of gold discoveries in the Port Philip district during the early 1850s was hard to resist.

Six of the Cosstick sons and one daughter decided to go to Australia during the 1850s.

Henry and William made a respectable living both looking for gold and servicing the needs of other goldseekers.

John tried his luck in New Zealand for several years before returning to Victoria. Charles also went to New Zealand and then to Canada.

George and Sam, especially Sam, left the gold for others and played cricket instead. This is the story of the Cossticks.

---

Much of this story relates the adventures of six Cosstick brothers who came to Victoria during the 1850s, and, where possible follows some of their descendants down to the year 1900 – because after that there were just too many descendants to do justice to them all. The book does not comprehensively covering all possible branches of the family or all possible stories.

One family is inevitably related to many others and brief excursions are made into the stories of other families which were related to the Cossticks — the Shove, Henderson, Martin, Matthews, and Reeves families for example. The Hamilton family, connected to the Cossticks through marriages to John and William Cosstick in the early 1860s, have had their story told in [THE HAMILTONS 1762-1862](#).

A third edition is being prepared and includes new details about Samuel Cosstick's last years in Croydon, Surrey; new information about Henry Cosstick's last years after leaving Amherst and returning from Queensland; and new details of what Charles and John Cosstick did in New Zealand and Charles' business interests and reasons for leaving New Zealand.

There has been substantial rewriting and extensive new information about Sam Cosstick, his wife Annie Shove and her father Andrew Shove, and an expansion of the section on Luke and Ruth Martin whose granddaughter Lusy Elizabeth Martin married James Edward Cosstick. There are also additional chapters about the descendants of John Cosstick and Hannah Best, including the family of Edwin Chapman Cosstick.

The story of the Cossticks in the Australia of the nineteenth century is inseparably linked to the story of the town of Amherst. A substantial chapter on the development of that town and the events of the 1850s and 1860s has been included. Those who have a greater interest in the history of the town might like to refer to [The Sink of Iniquity : Education in the Amherst and Talbot Districts 1836-1862](#).

The story of the Cossticks is not just a family history, it is a social history.

---

#### **PURCHASE THIS BOOK**

The 2nd Edition of [The Cossticks](#) can be purchased through the *Historia Incognita* web site.



# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE HAMILTONS 1762-1862



James Hamilton was born around 1740. He married twice and had several children including John Hamilton, and Richard Hamilton.

John Hamilton went to sea and became involved in the Battle of Camperdown in 1797 then was later in charge of the Dover to Calais ferry, with his regular passengers including British and Belgian Royalty. He was knighted for his services during the 1840s.

Richard Hamilton became an apprentice tailor and set up business in the same street as his older brother John in Dover.

Both John and Richard had families, the descendants of whom are spread around the world today. This book follows the story of Richard's children – in particular Richard Hamilton the Second who, after following his father's trade as a tailor for some years eventually decided to emigrate with his family to South Australia .

The British Government was keen to establish a colony in South Australia to discourage the French from doing the same. There was nothing there and the Hamilton family and their fellow travellers became true pioneers in a new land.

---

The 2012 2nd Edition is a revised version of the book first published in 1997 and contains a number of new details about the Hamilton family not included in the first edition. A further revised 3rd Edition is currently being prepared to answer a number of questions and ambiguities arising from the earlier editions.

---

#### **PURCHASE THIS BOOK**

The 2012 revised edition of *The Hamiltons* can be purchased through the *Historia Incognita* web site.



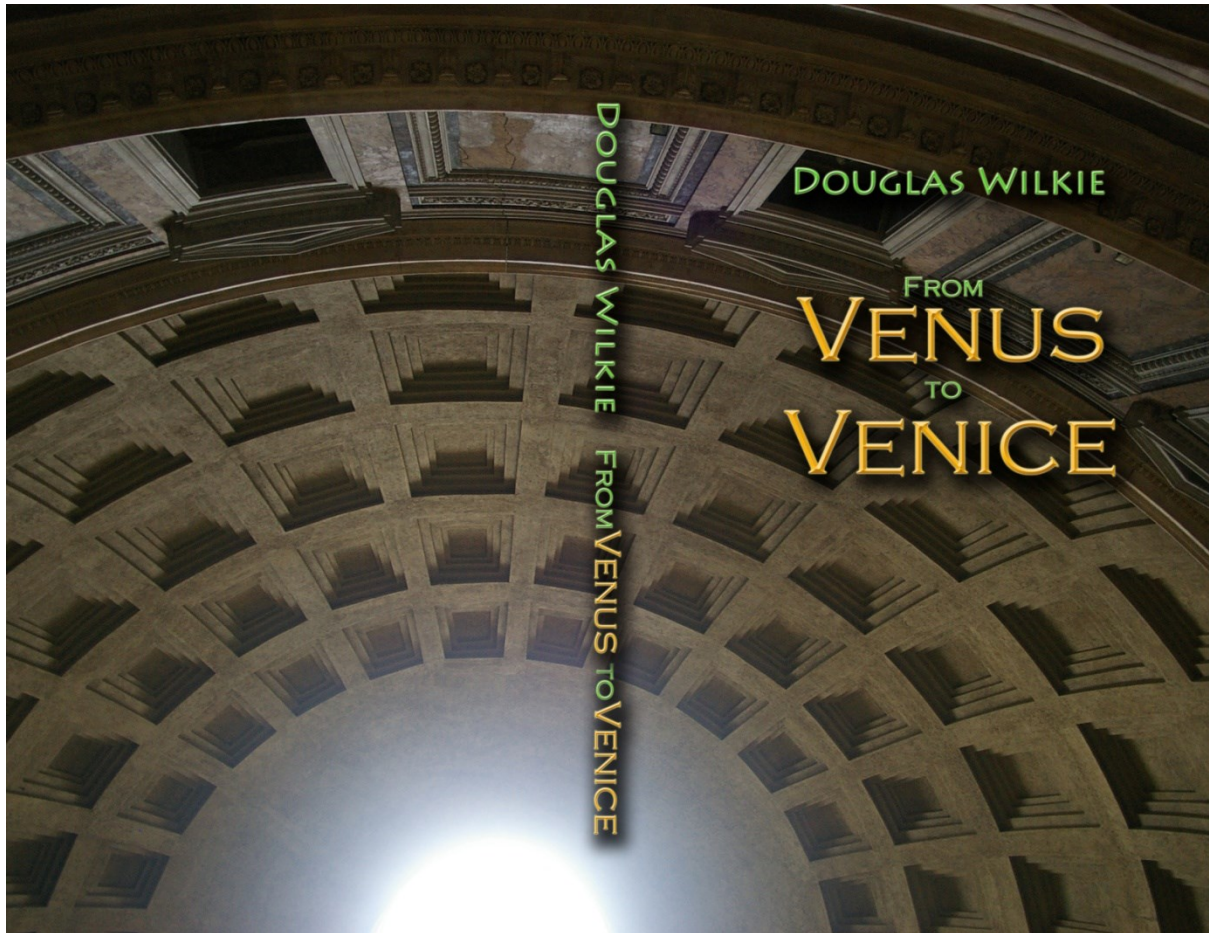
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## FROM VENUS TO VENICE



History is not simply to be read about. It is something to be experienced. Wherever we go, and whatever we see, we can choose to experience the outcomes of history, or we can choose to be blind to the history that surrounds us.

This is the story of a journey – a journey into history. It is also a journey into the present, and the future. For what we understand about the past, influences the way we think about the present, and what we plan to do in the future. Eventually, in a few seconds time, the future becomes the present, and then the past. Present, past and future are constantly in a state of transition from one to the other.

This is the story of a journey. A transit. And a transition. It involved Venus, and Venice. A Transit of Venus, or of Venice; a transition from one to the other. Here is the first chapter...

MELBOURNE—ROME

SATURDAY 26 DECEMBER 1998

Some months ago, at the beginning of 1998 I decided to travel half way around the world and back again.

That, in itself, is hardly a startling event. Millions of people have done it. But why me? Why would I decide to do such a thing?

Well, all I can say is that in 1768 Captain James Cook was commissioned by the Royal Society to sail a diminutive wooden boat called the Endeavour around the world in order to observe the transit of the planet Venus across sun in the southern sky. It came to me, possibly in a dream, that I should also travel to the other side of the world to observe Venus.

The problem with all of this is that my dream was rather vague, and I have never really been too sure whether it was Venus or Venice that I was to go to observe. In fact, I am not even certain whether it will be a transit or a transition that I will be observing most of.

So, here I am at the airport. I am off to observe the Transit of Venus; or the Transition of Venus; or possibly the Transit of Venice; or maybe even the Transition of Venice. Which it will be I am yet to discover.

It is six-thirty in the evening of Saturday the twenty-sixth of December. I am boarding a KLM Boeing 747-400 at Sydney airport and flying to Milan in Italy. The plane will leave at about seven.

Five hundred years ago, when working for the Duke of Milan, Leonardo da Vinci designed a machine that he hoped would enable a man to fly through the air like a bird. He carefully studied the flight of birds and the mechanics of their wings and applied this knowledge to his designs. Leonardo's flying machine never actually took off, but that is probably not the point. The wonderful thing is that he bothered to spend the time investigating such a thing; to spend the time working out the reason that things stay up or don't stay up. The reason that things fall out of the sky. Perhaps that was for Newton to discover.

Is it the ability to reason that man shares with God and makes us different to other creatures? The ability to recognise the laws of nature and to explain the world around us? Leonardo, were you at the forefront of this investigation of the universe? Was it men like you who began the age of reason? The age where everything had to have a reason. The age where anything that could not be explained in rational terms was not worthy of consideration. Perhaps we would be better off sometimes if we didn't want a reason for why things happen.

Why am I going to Milan? Is there a reason? Perhaps I will know the answer only when I discover the nature of the question.

Leonardo did not plan his flying machine to have on-board films, toilets, lunch, dinner and breakfast, and a multitude of other services. Today my flying machine has all of these.

I have never been in a 747 before. I am impressed by its size, but disappointed by the cramped conditions. I have the impression that there are too many passengers. There are close to four hundred. There are too many seats crammed into the plane. Take out eighty or a hundred seats. Make more space. It would be much more comfortable. But, this is the way it is, and I find my seat. It is about half way along the plane. Row forty-five. Seat 'B'. That makes it the centre seat of three next to the left-hand windows. It is just in front of the wing.

I am apprehensive as we take off and steadily climb to a height of over 11,000 meters above the ground. Yes, I have flown before. But this is something different. There is always the possibility that the gravity of the earth will do what it is meant to do and pull this relatively inconsequential cylinder of metal towards the ground at a velocity that will inevitably result in a million fragments being spread over a very wide area.

But the engineers, the latter-day Leonardos, have worked it all out, and the jet engines manage to keep the plane flying through the air at a speed of nearly one million meters each hour. It's not easy to do that, and the sound of the jet engines make it quite clear just how hard they are trying in their battle against the forces of gravity.

There must be a better way. Somebody will invent an anti-gravity machine one day. Perhaps somebody will invent the means of sub-atomic particle transmission and we will simply disappear from one place only to reappear in another place. Perhaps even another time. Today I am travelling in space. Maybe I will also travel in time. I begin to think about the possibility of the plane crashing. It is not the first time. Several weeks ago I thought about it. If I am going to die what preparations should I make? I thought about that. And I wrote my Last Will and Testament. The emphasis is, of course, upon the word Last. But I want the emphasis to be on the word testament. I wanted it to be a testament to many things. So I wrote it, and rewrote it. It became something of an autobiography. It was long. In the end I sealed two versions of it in an envelope with the hope that, if it was ever read, people could actually work out what I really wanted. ... I sealed it up and left it on the shelf at home.

I had been reading Keats before leaving, because he went to Rome and wrote about his experiences. He also once wrote to his friend Fanny Brawne in 1820.

If I should die I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory—but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered.

I wonder about the same unanswerable question. Although, in the end Keats is remembered and his works are read, and loved.

Eventually I put my mind to thinking about other things—like the growing discomfort of sitting in a cramped centre seat for twenty-four hours. I settle down to reading; or watching the progress of the journey on the overhead video screens; or just looking out the window at the passing parade of clouds. The stewards seem to be constantly asking whether I would like another drink or something to eat. I always accept their hospitality and in this way I collect a number of bottles of French or Italian wine for later consumption.

Eventually the machine does allow gravity to take over and it descends rapidly toward the ground. Soon it lands on the tarmac at the Malpensa Airport just outside Milan—the place where Leonardo had designed his original prototype. It is a relief to be out of the confined space. It is a relief to walk on solid ground again.

But Milan is not my final destination, and the four hundred passengers of flight AZ797 are not the only people to arrive at Milan. Another three flights arrive within minutes of each other pouring out a thousand passengers in a mass that overwhelms the Italian customs officials. Accurate checking of baggage is forgotten. Stamping of passports becomes irrelevant. The officials simply wave the new arrivals through their checkpoints as quickly as possible.

I look at my watch. It tells me that the time is six-thirty on Sunday afternoon. The flight has taken nearly twenty-four hours. I look at the clock on the Milan airport wall. It tells me that the time is eight-thirty on Sunday morning.

Somewhere I have saved ten hours. How far would I have to travel to save a whole day? Or a week? Or a year? Can I travel back in time to an era long gone? I think of Umberto Eco's novel *The Island of the Day Before*. What has happened to time? I do not have time to consider the answer just now. Time flies and I must catch another plane.

---

#### **PURCHASE THIS BOOK**

The book *From Venus to Venice* can be purchased through the *Historia Incognita* web site.



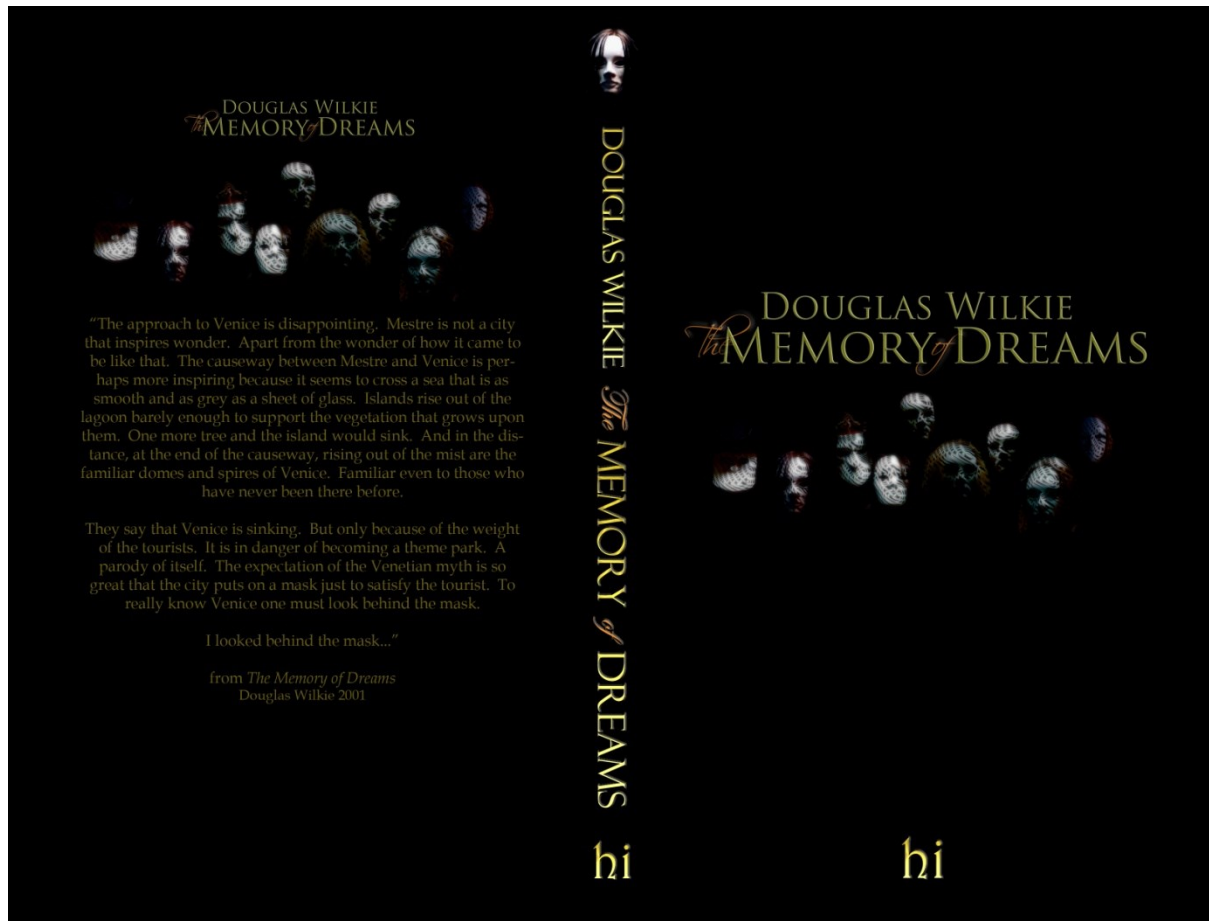
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## THE MEMORY OF DREAMS



The events of history are often masked by the myths, legends, and various revisions that the writers of history want us to read. So, too, are places that we visit. If we are not careful we will see, or be shown, only what the publicists, the marketing people, want us to see. They present us with a mask. Whether looking at the events of history, or visiting historical places, always look behind the mask. You may just be surprised.

---

“The approach to Venice is disappointing. Mestre is not a city that inspires wonder. Apart from the wonder of how it came to be like that. The causeway between Mestre and Venice is perhaps more inspiring because it seems to cross a sea that is as smooth and as grey as a sheet of glass. Islands rise out of the lagoon barely enough to support the vegetation that grows upon them. One more tree and the island would sink. And in the distance, at the end of

the causeway, rising out of the mist are the familiar domes and spires of Venice. Familiar even to those who have never been there before.

They say that Venice is sinking. But only because of the weight of the tourists. It is in danger of becoming a theme park. A parody of itself. The expectation of the Venetian myth is so great that the city puts on a mask just to satisfy the tourist. To *really* know Venice one must look *behind* the mask.

I looked behind the mask..."

from *The Memory of Dreams*

---

#### **PURCHASE THIS BOOK**

The book *The Memory of Dreams* can be purchased through the *Historia Incognita* web site.

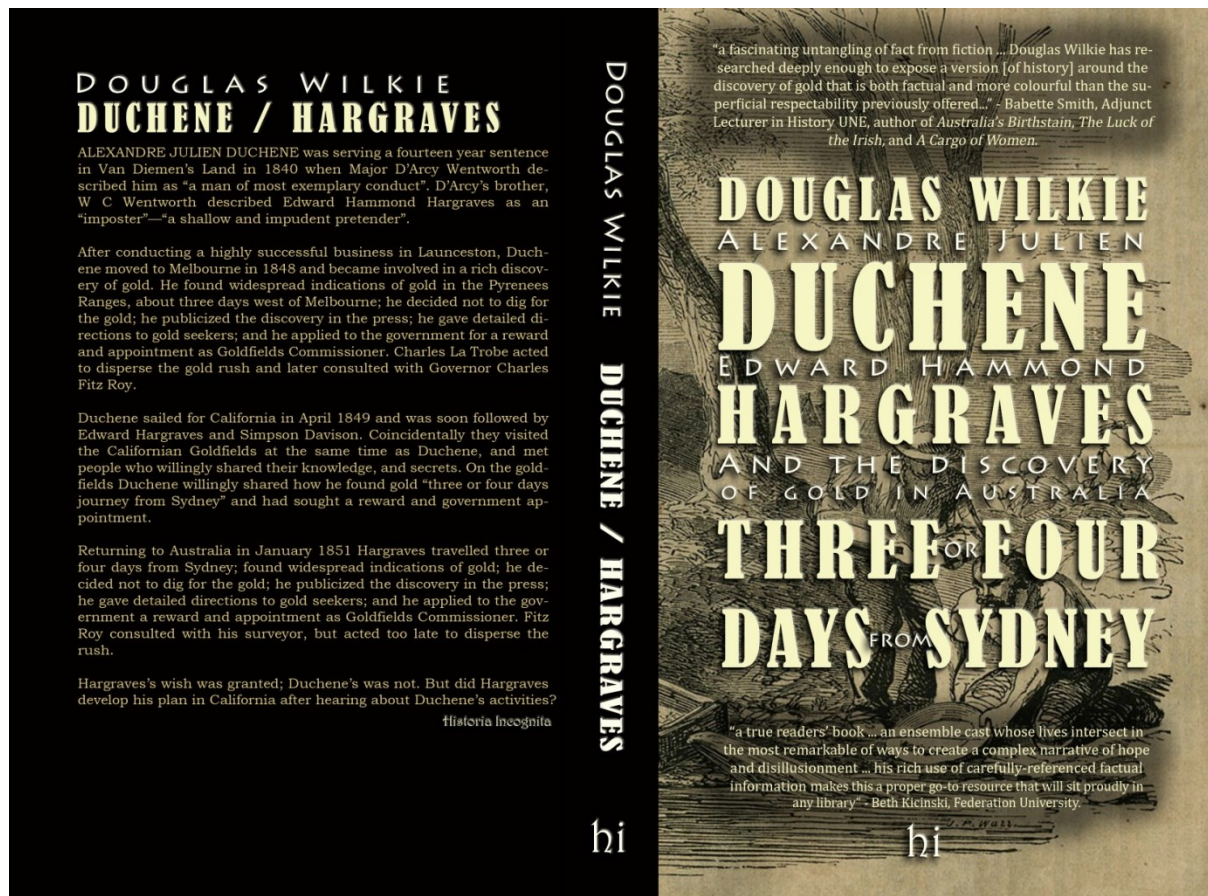
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

ALEXANDRE JULIEN DUCHENE, EDWARD HAMMOND HARGRAVES AND  
THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN AUSTRALIA THREE OR FOUR DAYS FROM  
SYDNEY (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS DUCHENE / HARGRAVES)



ALEXANDRE JULIEN DUCHENE was not even four years into a fourteen year sentence in Van Diemen's Land in 1840 when Major D'Arcy Wentworth, the Police Magistrate at Launceston, described him as 'a man of most exemplary conduct'.

Edward Hammond Hargraves, was less than two years into enjoying his claim to have started the Australian gold rushes, when, in 1852 D'Arcy Wentworth's brother, W C Wentworth, a member of the New South Wales Parliament, described Hargraves as an 'imposter' in support of George McLeay's opinion that Hargraves was 'a shallow and impudent pretender'.

After conducting a highly successful business in Launceston, Duchene moved to Melbourne in 1848 and became involved in the discovery of a rich goldfield in the Pyrenees Ranges, about three days west of Melbourne, but he decided not to dig for the gold. Instead, he publicized the discovery in the press, gave detailed directions to

gold seekers, and applied to the government for a reward and appointment as Goldfields Commissioner. Port Phillip Superintendent Charles La Trobe quickly acted to disperse the gold rush and later consulted with Governor Charles Fitz Roy, who refused Duchene his reward and commission, but secretly asked London to send a qualified minerals surveyor to ascertain the truth of such reports, not only at the Pyrenees, but also closer to Sydney.

Rejected by the government, Duchene sailed for California in April 1849 and was soon followed by Edward Hargraves, who was desperately looking for an easy way of making money—something that had eluded him for years. Coincidentally Hargraves visited the Californian Goldfields at the same time as Duchene, and met people who willingly shared their knowledge, and secrets. On the goldfields Duchene willingly shared how he found gold ‘three or four days journey from Sydney’ (most Americans had never heard of Melbourne) and had unsuccessfully sought a reward and government appointment. By remarkable coincidence, or perhaps not, Edward Hargraves now decided he would return to Australia where he would not only look for gold west of Sydney, but also ask for a reward and government appointment.

In January 1851 Hargraves travelled three or four days from Sydney, and with the help of others, found widespread indications of gold. Like Duchene, he decided not to dig for the gold himself, but publicized the discovery in the press, and gave detailed directions to gold seekers. Like Duchene, he also applied to the government a reward and appointment as Goldfields Commissioner.

Instead of immediately acting to protect the gold field, as La Trobe had done in 1849, Fitz Roy consulted with his newly-arrived surveyor, but by then was too late to disperse the rush instigated by Hargraves. Nothing could be done but allow the goldfield to be exploited. Within months the value of the goldfield originally reported at the Pyrenees by Duchene was also confirmed. In the end, Hargraves’s wish was granted; Duchene’s was not.

This book looks at the lives of Duchene and Hargraves, lived entirely separately, until they both arrived in San Francisco towards the end of 1849. It also looks at the reasons that Duchene was considered ‘a man of most exemplary conduct’, while Hargraves was dismissed by many as an impostor and impudent pretender. Importantly, this book also raises the question of whether Hargraves developed his plan to look for gold west of Sydney only after hearing about Duchene’s earlier quest.

---

## REVIEWS OF THIS BOOK

Reviewed by Babette Smith, Adjunct Lecturer in History, University of New England; author of *Australia’s Birthstain*; *A Cargo of Women: Susannah Watson & the Convicts of the Princess Royal*; and *The Luck of the Irish*.



Was Edward Hammond Hargraves, known to Australians as 'the discoverer of gold' in fact pre-empted by an ex-convict Frenchman named Alexandre Duchene?

Douglas Wilkie's research demonstrates he was. In a fascinating untangling of fact from fiction he deconstructs Hargraves claims and character by tracking him from his first decade as a free settler during the forties in New South Wales, through his time on the Californian goldfields and the familiar story of his return and the subsequent gold rush

Far from noting geological features in California that were similar to Bathurst, as he later wrote, Hargraves almost certainly heard Alexandre Duchene's story of his 1849 discovery and his rejection by the authorities in Victoria when both men were on the same goldfield in California. On returning to Australia, he even used Duchene's phrase about gold being 'three or four days' from Sydney. Duchene's find in Victoria started a 'rush' which was quickly squashed by Lieutenant Governor La Trobe. The Frenchman received no reward and his application for appointment as Gold Commissioner was rejected. A year later, Hargraves by comparison triggered an unstoppable 'rush' and gained credit as well as reward for his 'discovery'. No small factor in his success was how he ensured that the rush started on a grand scale before he negotiated with the authorities.

This is no simple story however. The detail Wilkie has uncovered reveals a complex situation in which politics, economics, greed and self-aggrandisement all played their part. Politically the separation of Port Phillip from New South Wales (1850) was a factor of local significance. London on the other hand was concerned that nothing should disrupt the profitable wool trade. At a personal level, achieving stability, let alone making a fortune, was a precarious business for free settlers in New South Wales who had arrived since the penal colony ended. Wilkie vividly portrays their interrelated land speculation, business opportunism, profits and bankruptcies, particularly on the Central Coast where Edward Hargraves was active.

Duchene, Hargraves and their claims about gold form a picaresque narrative of people surviving on their wits. Infused with Wilkie's humour and founded on deep scholarly research, it is a treasure trove of detail. For the specialist like this reviewer, every morsel of information is relished and potentially valuable. For instance, Wilkie's examination of European settlement on the Central Coast not only casts light on the tenor of Australian society in the forties, it also provides useful context for understanding early land speculation in New Zealand.

Mark Twain described Australian history as 'full of lies'. Unfortunately we didn't deconstruct the lies early enough. For too long we accepted a conformist pioneer story that emphasised exploration, 'tame' Aborigines, valiant European battles against an unfriendly wilderness and a parade of hollow heroes. Historians detected the lack of authenticity but could not explain it. Douglas Wilkie has researched deeply enough to expose a version around the discovery of gold that is both factual and more colourful than the superficial respectability previously offered.

---

Reviewed by Beth D Kicinski, *Content and Design Manager, Ballarat and District Industrial Heritage Project (Federation University Australia)*

“*Duchene/Hargraves* is a true readers’ book. And not just any old readers, but those who seek to lose themselves in the dark corners of intrigue. This is not the typical dry history of the genesis of Australia’s industrial heritage, but an absorbing “Who Dunnit?” styled unfolding of the past. What is revealed is an ensemble cast whose lives intersect in the most remarkable of ways to create a complex narrative of hope and disillusionment. Like all truly memorable crime thrillers *Duchene/Hargraves* resolves the central storyline through carefully constructed reveals, but happily leaves several incidental moments of the story unresolved. The reader is left with possibilities of more.

“This book is a firm move away from histories of the first and the greatest to stories of people who were just doing what people do. In Alexandre Duchene we see the way in which “the other” has become an integral part of us; and the sensitive re-presentation of the recognisable figure of Edward Hargraves subtly interrogates the role of such diabolical heroes in the Australian identity.

“Douglas Wilkie’s dedication to researching with carefully balanced heart and mind these two important figures in Australia’s nineteenth century history is obvious throughout *Duchene/Hargraves*. He cross-examines the evidence with the thoughtfulness of a well-trying barrister. He self-consciously pushes at, but never breaks, the boundaries of believability. And his rich use of carefully-referenced factual information makes this a proper go-to resource that will sit proudly in any library.

---

#### [PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

*Duchene / Hargraves* can be purchased through the links on the Historia Incognita website.

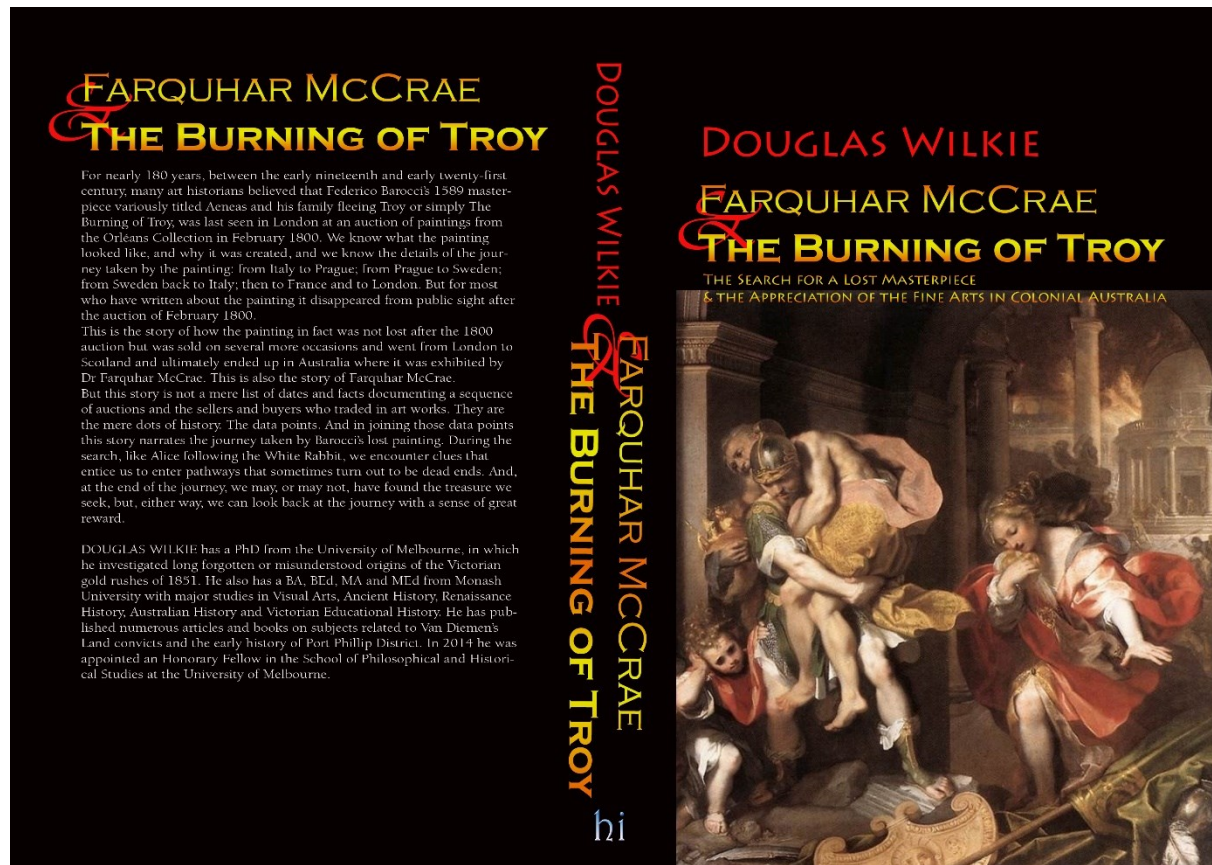
# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

<http://historiaincognita.net/>

[historia.incognita@outlook.com](mailto:historia.incognita@outlook.com)

## FARQUHAR MCCRAE & THE BURNING OF TROY: THE APPRECIATION OF THE FINE ARTS IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA



For nearly 180 years, between the early nineteenth and early twenty-first century, many art historians believed that Federico Barocci's 1589 masterpiece variously titled *Aeneas and his family fleeing Troy* or simply *The Burning of Troy*, was last seen in London at an auction of paintings from the Orléans Collection in February 1800. We know what the painting looked like, and why it was created, and we know the details of the journey taken by the painting: from Italy to Prague; from Prague to Sweden; from Sweden back to Italy; then to France and to London. But for most who have written about the painting it disappeared from public sight after the auction of February 1800.

This is the story of how the painting in fact was not lost after the 1800 auction but was sold on several more occasions and went from London to Scotland and ultimately ended up in Australia where it was exhibited by Dr Farquhar McCrae. This is also the story of Farquhar McCrae.

But this story is not a mere list of dates and facts documenting a sequence of auctions and the sellers and buyers who traded in art works. They are the mere dots of history. The data points. And in joining those data points this story narrates the journey taken by Barocci's lost painting. During the search, like Alice following the White Rabbit, we encounter clues that entice us to enter pathways that sometimes turn out to be dead ends. And, at the end of the journey, we may, or may not, have found the treasure we seek, but, either way, we can look back at the journey with a sense of great reward.

---

#### [PURCHASE THIS BOOK](#)

This 478 page book can be purchased online in softcover or eBook versions through the links on the Historia Incognita website.