



A Short History Of Australia

Manning Clark

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In 1688 William Dampier found the aboriginal inhabitants on the west coast of New Holland "the miserablest people in the world... setting aside their human shape, they differ but little from brutes". More than a hundred years later the British convict settlements on the east coast were still marked by misery: the harshness of a prison society, where "excessive tyranny each day prevails". Material growth was bought slowly and painfully by the forced labour of prisoners whose defiance might be punished by a thousand lashes. What lies between these beginnings and the wellfed Australian surfiders who gaze proudly into the 1970s? Manning Clark sees in the story of Australia not only the surface of progress, but also the debates and struggles which lie behind the smiling compromises of Australian society today. He discusses the decision to send Australian troops to Vietnam, and the British government's intended withdrawal from SouthEast Asia.

And

he celebrates the recent achievement of Australian artists such as Sidney Nolan, Judith Wright and Patrick White.

A Short History Of Australia Details

Date : Published by Not Avail (first published 1963)

ISBN : 9780140247473

Author : Manning Clark

Format : Hardcover

Genre : History, Cultural, Australia, Nonfiction



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From Reader Review A Short History Of Australia for online ebook

Bookwoman67 says

Brief overview, good intro but not a lot of depth.

Will says

It is what it says, a short history of Australia. I wanted to know more about the country, for personal reasons. Mr. Clark does a good job of explaining a lot about Australia and Australians. A good jumping off place to books about more specific subjects. (The First Fleet, Gallipoli, etc.) Not a great book, but a good one.

Jyv says

Took me ages to get through this book as I'd put it down and wouldn't feel like picking it up again. This should be called "A political history..". Too much dry politics for my liking. Towards the end I just skimmed the book, noticing how often politicians' names or political parties were mentioned. I would prefer a social history of Australia.

Phil Princey says

It took me a while to read this book as I had so many other books I was reading plus my initial interest had waned somewhat along the way of time.

I really liked how the book flowed with ease not slowing it's pace down too much or losing rhythm when certain political details or events were needed attention. For me it kept up a nice pace and didn't feel that much 'old style' having been published in 1969. Actually, I rather enjoyed his style.

There is a lot crammed in these pages, but from what I can gather, the intent was to give accurate information on the formation of Australia to his present writing at the time. It's focus is on the political and economics but is quite digestible. Names are introduced with brief background or in some cases, no background, perhaps for the space and effect of pace. If you're not familiar with Australian history, in some case you may find it helpful to check up on some names to get a better context, but otherwise, biography is not the point to the book, neither does it seem necessary when you are reading to get the understanding of how the nation formed and developed it's own uniqueness, distinct from Britain.

Martin Bihl says

Having not read any other histories of Australia, I'm not sure how evenhanded or accurate this is, but I found it extremely informative and eye-opening.

Nikolas says

Too heavy on political details. I wanted something with a sociological bent. A few good moments nevertheless but skipped the dreary bits.

I'd sooner recommend the documentary TV series 'The First Australians' produced by SBS in 2008.

Keith says

This book was almost impossible to read as Mr Clark felt it necessary to tell the story of Australia's history in a poetry that has no place in a history book. Half the time the facts were convoluted in the words and the other half it seemed that one needed to already know the history of Australia. Nothing was explained and nothing seemed important (although, when Aussies saw what I was reading the most common response was, "We have a history?"). I just wanted to know what formed the present country that I live in without having to say, "What the hell are you talking about?" or look up the events that he brushes on. Also, the addendum, written by his son for a reprinting, was also poorly written and filled with bias. Now I have to find another book on Australian history because this one was a waste of time.

Mike says

This book on the political / economic development of Australia was written for Aussies as the target audience.

It is straight forward, simply written and informative narrative.

If you know nothing about Australia, and are interested, this book will teach you a lot. If you know some about Australia, you may conclude that the book " is for Dummies".

The 4 is for exceptionally flowing narrative and for solid historical info.....,

Julian Bu says

Fatal Shore this is not.

Bonnie says

I read this because it was the only Australian history book I could get my hands on at the time. It's...a history. It gives you facts and data and if you want to know something about Australia's past and don't have other resources, it gets the job done. But if you want a GOOD history of Australia (read: interesting), try The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding. Bill Bryson's In a Sunburned Country is also sprinkled with fascinating, often humorous, bits of Australian history.

D. says

If you're desperate for a short history of Australia and can get past Clark's smarmy writing style, this one's for you.

Lasse Blond says

If you like history of politics this is a great book - it made me want to read and learn more about Australia and the Aussies' worldview (weltanschauung), which is quite unknown to Europeans e.g. the Australian defense policies and involvement in different wars. This book tells the story of White Australia - and thus must be complemented with other sources, if you're into the history of the Aboriginal Australians.

Grania says

a very short history, telling the story of the last two hundred years from the view of a bluff white australian man.

Velvetink says

He has been described as "Australia's most famous historian," but his work has been the target of much criticism, particularly from conservative and classical liberal academics and philosophers.

This is not really a novel, more like crib notes for high school ~ useful but not much depth.

Andrew says

The book is definitely worth reading for anyone concerned with Australian history. There is some useful class analysis, however from what I felt was quite a conservative perspective. Most of the history is told on the basis of what formed the political dialogue of the times.

As an overview it's a worthwhile book, but to fully understand the historical development of the state, the country's ruling class and the divisions in Australian society, much greater in depth study will be needed.
