

OTHER NATIONS

Israel's wars have buttressed the emphasis on "macho" men and supportive women. The story of Golda Meir may remain a fluke, unrepresentative of most Israeli women's possibilities, says Brandow, until permanent peace comes.

Australia's Big Myth

"Towards Demythologizing the 'Australian Legend': Turner's Frontier Thesis and the Australian Experience" by Ronald Lawson, in *Journal of Social History* (Summer 1980), Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213.

In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner told Americans to look to the newly closed frontier for the origins of their national character. More recently, many Australian scholars have viewed the rugged "bushworkers" who manned the vast farms and sheep ranches of the arid Outback during the 19th century as the source of their country's own indigenous ethos—egalitarian, collectivist, and fiercely patriotic.

Yet Lawson, a Queens College, New York, historian, argues that almost from the outset, city folk had the greater influence on Australia's outlook. By the 1890s, he notes, Australia boasted a larger percentage of city-dwellers among its population than any other continent. Unlike the American West—where settlement began before the advent of modern communications—Australia's hinterland was speedily connected during the 1880s and '90s to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and other cities via telegraph, railway, and telephone.

City culture displayed little bushworker influence. Between 1881 and 1891, the population of Brisbane, for example, shot up 174 percent (to 101,554). Immigrants (mainly from the British Isles) accounted for most of the increase and encountered little discrimination from the native born. In fact, the city's civic leaders were mainly foreign born; *Who's Who*-like directories for the decade show that the proportion of native Australian entries increased from only 21 to 30 percent. Brisbane's theaters presented foreign productions. School children studied British texts.

Colonial Australia was far more than a scattering of ranches and field hands, Lawson writes. Like U.S. historians, Australian scholars are now shifting their attention from the frontier. If Australia has a strong egalitarian tradition, he suggests, it came as much from the fluid social structures of its cities as from the camaraderie of the bush.



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*Outback bushworker—
the quintessential Aussie?*