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The Move Down Under: Portrait of the Dutch Migration

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The Dutch in Multicultural Australia

History

The Dutch Role in the Discovery of Australia

Suggested author Dr. Bruce Donaldson University of Melbourne
(Challenging the Anglo-centric view of Australian history.)

The Dutch Post War Diaspora

(Why the Dutch left their home country. The role of the Dutch and Australian Governments and religious groups in encouraging migration.) Suggested author: Dr. J. Elich or Prof. W. Blauw, University of Rotterdam.)

Why the Dutch came to Australia

(How many Dutch came to Australia. When they came, Where they settled. The reasons why the Dutch migrated to Australia. Reasons why they stayed in Australia "De wissel emigrant." Author: Dr. J. Elich.)

Dutch Australians from the East Indies

(Dutch who came to Australia by way of the East Indies and Indische Nederlanders. Suggested author: Dr. Janet Penny BIMPR or Dr. Alphons van der Kraan University of New England)

Demography

(A general overview of the demography of the Dutch in Australia and trends over time. Main topics include fertility, age structure, marriage, intermarriage, mortality and health. Author: Dr Christabel Young, ANU.)

Proposal for a Book about the Dutch Australian Community

Working Title: The Move Down Under: Portrait of a Migration

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Between the end of the Second World War and 1970, it is estimated that some 160,000 persons born in the Netherlands migrated to Australia. Some returned and some have died, but today there are still some 95,000 residents of Australia who were born in the Netherlands and a further 140,000 Australians claim to have at least one Dutch parent. Despite having been, until quite recently, one of the largest ethnic groups in this country, the story of the Dutch migrant experience in Australia has not yet been fully explored.

The social, political and economic significance of post-war immigration to Australia is now widely appreciated, but the significance of emigration from Europe in the years just after the War is not well understood. For the Netherlands the emigration wave of the 1950's was a unique episode: about five percent of the population of a country without any history of emigration to speak of, decided to leave their country for good and settle elsewhere. It is striking that scant attention has been paid to this aberrant phenomenon in The Netherlands. The largest group of those migrants settled in Australia.

But why of all the ethnic communities in Australia choose to write about the Dutch and why now?

In some respects the Dutch Australian community provides an ideal subject for study. The Dutch were heralded as model migrants of their day - moderately successful and well assimilated. In fact they were seen to be so well assimilated that they became known as the "invisible migrants." However, it is becoming increasingly clear that this picture of the Dutch is seriously flawed. Rather than well assimilated, the Dutch only appeared so in public. In their private and personal lives, the lives they lived beyond the front door, they remained very Dutch. This has led some researchers to speak of the Dutch as retaining the Dutch culture as a "closet culture." This phenomenon also makes us look much more critically at the achievements of the assimilation policies in place at the time of the Dutch migration and at what exactly we mean when we speak about assimilation.

Of all the ethnic communities, the Dutch were the most ready to give up their language and speak English. As this group has become older there is significant evidence that Dutch Australians are again beginning to speak their mother tongue in preference to English. There is even the suggestion that they are losing their ability to speak English. This phenomenon has also been noticed in other ethnic communities. The practical implications of this for the provision of all sorts of services are enormous. Much of the

research on language shift, loss and reversal in this country has been done on the Dutch community. As the community is planning to develop services for its older members, now is an ideal time to bring together the results of this research.

Migrants have brought various religious traditions and churches to Australia. The Dutch brought the Reformed Christian churches. These churches, however, had to adapt to the new environment, just as the existing churches have had to adapt to the influx of immigrants. The Dutch, with their religious diversity and their religious seriousness provide an excellent case study of these various processes

The Dutch are one of the first immigrant communities in Australia to grow old in this country. Together with the Italians, Greeks and Poles they are pioneering aged care services for their community. The services the Dutch Australians are now developing provide models for other ethnic communities.

These are but some of the reasons why the Dutch, rather than another ethnic community make an excellent subject for a book. But why write a book *now*? First, as the Dutch community gets older there is a growing interest to make sense of their migration experience. There is some regret that their story hasn't been told and that there is little on the public record to pass on to their children. In the meantime The Netherlands has also become a land of immigrants. (Paradoxically a process which began at just that time when the Dutch Government was encouraging its own citizens to make a new life for themselves away from their home country.) There are signs of a growing interest in The Netherlands about their own ex-patriot communities. As the Dutch struggle with immigration issues in The Netherlands, they look at the experience of other countries and in particular at how they have handled the issues raised by Dutch immigration.

We propose a book consisting of a collection of essays, incorporating original research, on all the major aspects of the Dutch Australian community. We hope to commission recognised authorities to write about 5,000 words about that aspect of the Dutch Australian community within their field of expertise (See attached proposed table of contents.) The approach of the book is not just to illuminate some aspect of Dutch Australian society but also to say something of a general nature about the migrant experience and the issues facing the established ethnic communities today.

The book is aimed not just at the educated lay reader in the Dutch Australian community and in The Netherlands, but also at members of other ethnic communities and students of Australian studies, multiculturalism and migration studies. Our experience is that there is an interest in this sort of work and that it would be well received by these various groups.

Assimilation

The Invisible Dutch

(Are the Dutch really assimilated? Why do they appear to be assimilated? In what ways aren't they assimilated? What do we mean by assimilation? Author: Prof. Desmond Cahill, RMIT.)

Dutch Migrant Women

Why they came. Associational migration. Their role in settlement. Their role in maintaining the Dutch culture in Australia. Author: Dr. Wendy Walker-Birckhead, LaTrobe University.)

The Later Generations

(Educational and occupational outcomes. What aspects of Dutch culture have Dutch parents passed on to their children. The psychological effect of migration on children now and in adult life. Author: Prof. Desmond Cahill, RMIT)

Social Influences

Dutch Australian Society Life

(The history of Dutch-Australian society life. Its role in assisting or hindering assimilation and creating cohesion within the Dutch Australian community. Its links and impact, if any, on the wider community and on other ethnic communities. Author: H. Overberg, Deakin University.)

Religion among Dutch Migrants

(The history of Dutch-Australian religious life. Its role in assisting or hindering assimilation and its impact, if any, on the wider community. How the Dutch adapted their religious traditions to the Australian environment and how the Australian churches dealt with the influx of Dutch immigrants. Author: Prof. G. Bouma, Monash University.)

The Dutch Media

(How have the Dutch Australian community been portrayed in the Dutch Press, the Australian Press and how do they portray themselves in the Dutch Australian media. Author: Bert van Bedaf)

Cultural Imprint

(The influence of Dutch culture and Dutch-Australian culture on the wider Australian community. Prominent Dutch Australians Author: Dr. E. Duiker.)

Economic Impact of Dutch Migration

Earning a Living

(How the Dutch earned their living. Their role in the professions. Income distribution. Suggested author: BIMPR)

The Dutch Australian Commercial Community

(The history, activities and influence of Dutch and Dutch-Australian businesses in Australia. Dutch Australian businesses as a springboard for trade with The Netherlands.)

Issues Facing the Dutch Australian Community

Language

(The Dutch language in Australia. "Strutch." Dutch and English language loss generally and with special reference to the elderly. Author: Prof. M. Clyne, Monash University.)

Health

(Both physical and mental health problems of Dutch Australians. The question of mental health problems caused by the migration experience and war experiences. Author: Dr Wendy Walker Birkhead, LaTrobe University.)

Poverty and Social Security,

(Is there poverty in the Dutch community? Social Security Agreements between Australia and other countries. The obligation of other countries to support their expatriots. Is the Social Security Agreement between Australia and The Netherlands working?)

Ageing in Ethnic Communities

(The particular issues facing immigrants as they age. Providing services for older migrants. Suggested author: Dr. D. T. Rowland ANU)

The Future

(Will the Dutch-Australian community survive the death of the first generation? Suggested authors: The editors)