

Lecture Three: Indigenous History

Australian Indigenous History

- **Charlie Perkins** was one of the first Indigenous graduates from the University of Sydney – led the Freedom ride
- Led a busload of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people into rural NSW to challenge unofficial social discrimination

The Great Australian Silence

- The idea that Aboriginal people are not talked or thought about by non-Aboriginal Australians as a way of denying their existence or their moral or legal claim to land. Was first used in 1968 by Professor Tanner
- People would talk about prosecution about Indigenous Australians in code to avoid prosecution. In 1960s and 1970s they were quite frank about the violence in Australia but there are real gaps and exclusions of Aboriginal people in Australian history. This is because people want to ride a progressive story of Australia, but this is hard to do if it is built on rape, murder and dispossession

Indigeneity - Definition

- Are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and
- Are accepted by the Indigenous community in which he or she lives

Context of Colonisation

Terra Nullius	Legal concept that when there is no clear ownership of land established, early colonists were unable or unwilling to see that Aboriginal people had systems of land ownership and use – the idea that Indigenous people did not have a concept of land ownership and there was no treaty, nothing needed to be negotiated because they never really owned the land
Pastoralism	Aboriginal people would see the animals and livestock before they would see a white person. White people had a strong sense that these animals were theirs, whereas Indigenous Australians felt as though they walked on their land and therefore it was their customary right. This led to violence
Gender Imbalance	There were a lot more white men than white women, which led to a lot of sexual violence against Aboriginal women.
Non-state Violence	The idea that the territorial acquisition of Aboriginal lands was led by unofficial groups in Australia. In 1880s and 1890s, Queensland there was more state sponsored violence, they hired one Aboriginal group to fight against the other. But the idea of warfare was hard to establish because it was non-state violence

Aboriginal Foodways

- **Firestock Farming** - practice that maximises the amount of produced edible plants to maximize that area for kangaroos etc. But this was not really extended to plants. They had good understanding of the land and knew how to maximise yield.
- Murnong
- Aquaculture
- Bruce Pascoe's Dark Emu

Other Stories

- The first contact between the Eora people of Sydney and white colonists in 1788
- The Black War and forced relocation of Aboriginal people in Tasmania
- The crucial role Aboriginal people played as guides and emissaries in Australian Exploration
- The abduction and 'black-birding' of Aboriginal people to work as pearl divers in Broome
- The important role that Aboriginal people played in developing the cattle industry in the NY
- Jandamarra's guerrilla war of resistance in the Kimberly

Aboriginal Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Batman – in 1835 illegally settles Melbourne and tries to make a claim on Indigenous land but does so without the authorization of the crown. • Wanted to avoid warfare with the Indigenous people – he was a veteran of the Black Wars in Tasmania and was known to have wounded an Aboriginal man, but he also had lifelong friendships with Indigenous people • This gave way to some Indigenous leaders – this gave them a way of getting back Aboriginal women who had been abducted to the Bass Coast Islands and created a formal alliance for things like Tomahawks and farming, and visiting rights to visit in another people's land. But this was not a sale of land – only paying for visiting rights.
Frontier Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to direct conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people • It includes things such as denying Aboriginal people access to a water source, deliberately spreading disease, cultural destruction, arming Aboriginal people so they can fight their own Aboriginal traditional enemies • Often committed by farmers and was often hidden because it was illegal and could get a trial for murder • Three reasons battle for land, punitive regime raids (white person killed by an Indigenous person and then another group of white people would indiscriminately kill a bunch of Indigenous people), large scale killings (group of 50-100, which was more genocidal in intent eg. Angus MacMillan organized the Highland Brigade)
Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White people realized they were unable to wipe them out and developed unconscious that it was unethical • Therefore a mission system was set up • Bill John and John and Mary Green worked with Indigenous people as partners, they worked in fields with them. • Ramahyuck Mission in Gippsland. The Aboriginal men and women were segregated, they were not allowed to sleep together, they were not allowed to learn Aboriginal languages, they were intent on destroying

	Aboriginal culture. However, while they did try to destroy culture, it did protect Aboriginal people from settler violence. This was a safe place.
Aboriginal Protection Act 1886	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White people got jealous of the farms and had an ideology arose that Aboriginal people should be controlled • There was an Aboriginal Protection Act 1998, controlled who they would marry, where they could work, defined Aboriginal people by blood for the first time. • If led to the removal of half castes because they were only considered Aboriginal if they were fully Aboriginal

Driving Race theory, “Breeding out the Colour” and the Stolen Generation

- Scientific Racism
- Dying Race
- Breeding out the colour
- Stolen Generations

Controlled by Boards and Caste Barriers

- 1915 Act in Victoria made Aboriginal people less in control with their lives and it more strictly defined who was Indigenous
- Thought that Aboriginal people should disperse into the white community and assimilate into the broader Australian culture.
- Aboriginal people served in the WW1 – there was a soldier settlement scheme where veterans could gain access to farms (but Aboriginal people were denied this)

Board Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1915 Act • Continuing control of work and marriage • Dismantling reserves • Service in WW1
Caste Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluded from pubs • Denied access to employment • Unable to use public swimming pools • Difficulty securing housing • Shanty Towns

Aboriginal Activism

- Dismantling Boards
- Civil Rights
- Return to land
- Universal voting rights
- Challenging Social Exclusion

1967 Referendum

- Removal of discriminatory references to Aboriginal people from Constitution
- Allow Aboriginal people to be bounded in census
- Not about voting rights