

Chapter 29 - Reflection

Industry and Perseverance is about the ambition, hope, hard work, unfortunate situations, and difficult times, determination and courage that formed part of the Brown family's pioneering effort. Their story is indicative of many who came to this land to begin a new and better life for themselves and those who were to come after.

Each generation of the Brown family experienced their share of industry and perseverance. Some seemed be luckier than others. Some were more astute and were able to minimise or avoid the difficulties, or were able to recognise opportunities that confronted them, and had the wherewithal to do something about it. Some were tougher in mind and not therefore 'winded' by adversity as much as, or long as others.

Browns interacted with many other families of the Hawkesbury and Hunter. The Capp, Loder, Onus, Eather, Clift, and other families of the Hawkesbury and Hunter all have a story to tell. Often their story is likely to cross over that of the Browns. As a consequence, it is likely that information pertinent to Brown history not canvassed in this volume will surface in time to come from research of those other families.

For most settlers, regardless of how much land or livestock they possessed, they still had a constant struggle to get ahead.

Death, tragedy, and difficult times always seemed to be close at hand through disease or risk of accident.

Drought, fire and flood came and went; and the threat of it was always present.

Courage occurs where you least expect it - Elizabeth Brown and the Government Servant in facing the 'Bush Rangers'; and Thunderbolt in his attempting to rescue his junior accomplice at 'Millie'. This account only picks up a few of the events that thankfully are recorded.

The cattle drives into regions well beyond the nineteen counties to establish a station also had their share of bravery. In addition to banditry and hostile Aborigines there were the elements of the weather (which could be contrary enough in themselves), and the largely unexplored bush and its hazards. Any sense of threat or vulnerability these represented was compounded by the inevitable isolation.

Right from the beginning of the colony's foundation and up to today, fate often posed tests. Pioneers had to face and deal with them as best they could. Some dealt much better with the tests that confronted them more than others did. Some made better use of the talents and resources available to them. For many just when things were looking to go their way, they would go sour. Some were in a better position, often through good management.

The hand that each was dealt along life's way varied considerably - How they responded to their particular situation is a point of interest. Generally, a tremendous resilience was apparent on the part of these people.

In the gathering of the information that tells this story, the idea of stewardship often came to mind. The question arose, as to what extent were the various individuals dealt with in this saga, good stewards with the resources and opportunities that came their way?

Women of this story, Catherine McMahon nee Mooney, her daughter, Elizabeth Brown, and Ann Shepherd are independent, capable, strong, and resourceful. No doubt they are indicative of very many pioneering women of this country.

During this research it became a source of some fascination for me to discover how much of what we see today, in the way of towns and roads, came into being in the first fifty years of colonisation.

This history of the Browns over the nineteenth century reflects growth of Australia from a struggling colony to nationhood.

There were times of deep disagreement in the family that brought about division and consequent adversity. Where the family persistently working together gave assistance and support, they were strong.

As said at the beginning, David's story and that of those who followed him, is very much a story about inheritance. In the material sense, it is about inheritance lost, denied/deprived, and disputed. It is about building a new inheritance. Whatever old David might have left behind in the way of inheritance, there is no doubt he and his children, and grandchildren, made up the loss in a variety of ways.

Aside from inheritance of wealth, property, and connections, one has to wonder about inheritance in the way of physical, mental and health characteristics that have been passed on e.g. tall, short, thin, fat, heart, lungs, attitude, intellect, talents, wisdom etc? The non-material aspects of inheritance can have a major bearing on the quality of life, and the provision and acquiring of a material inheritance.⁹¹⁹ What genetic liabilities and blessings came with the Browns is yet to be established.

David has many descendants. Good and bad, the nation as it is today, is built on the foundations laid by the Brown family and those like them.

⁹¹⁹ An example of this is Hannah Blair who was one of the female convicts aboard the Earl Cornwallis in 1801. She was transported for theft. However, a bigger issue for Hannah was that she carried the gene that was the cause of a rare and crippling disease - Hereditary Sensory Neuropathy Type-1 (HSN1). The disease causes breakdown of the central nervous system, such as with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and motor neurone disease. The disease usually stays hidden for the first 20 years of life. Hannah Blair married Thomas Moran, a landholder of the Goulburn region of NSW, and they produced a big family, many of whom carried the HSN1 gene. It has taken another two hundred years for that particular family to become aware of source of their inheritance and to find a solution.