

BRITISH MIGRANTS IN POST-WAR
SOUTH AUSTRALIA: EXPECTATIONS
AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

The expectations and experiences of British migrants in South Australia between 1945 and 1982 were highly varied and in some ways have been misunderstood both by scholars and the general public. This thesis uses previously unexamined archival sources as well as new interviews conducted with British migrants to analyse the key factors that influenced migrants' expectations of Australia and experiences in South Australia.

Chapter one traces the history of immigration to the Australian continent from the start of the twentieth century until the post-war period. It examines the existing literature on the subject of British migrants' expectations and identifies important factors for understanding migrants' experiences in South Australia. It summarises existing scholarly literature which has commonly associated negative British migrant experiences with misleading publicity distributed by Australian governments in Britain but notes that this perception has not been subject to sufficient analysis.

Chapter two documents the aim of Australia's post-war governments—and specifically the Commonwealth Department of Immigration—to provide British migrants with accurate information about Australia. It reveals that a concerted effort was made to provide migrants with information that would help them successfully settle in Australia and that this information was not intended to deceive potential migrants. On the contrary, the publicity to attract and inform migrants was designed and administered by governments with positive intentions, against a background of not wanting to repeat mistakes of the past including provision of misleading information to migrants.

Chapter three analyses key variables which influence migrants' expectations, relating to migrants' backgrounds in Britain, including physical location, financial capabilities, age, gender, family structure and experiences of war. The testimony of the migrants quoted in this chapter highlights that their expectations of Australia were formed primarily by variations in the abovementioned factors. They were not built solely—or even most significantly—on the publicity to which they were exposed regarding Australia prior to migration.

Chapter four explores several locations in South Australia to which many British migrants moved in order to show the effects that those locations had on whether migrant expectations were met when settling in the State. It comparatively examines the stories of British migrants who stayed in migrant hostels and then moved to the suburban area of Glenelg or the newer 'satellite' town of Elizabeth. It demonstrates the variance in experiences that occurred based on the locations which migrants inhabited. Some migrants' experiences in the hostels were positive, while others were negative. Suburban areas like Glenelg shared commonalities with the urban environments from which most British migrants originated. Consequently, they were often easier locations for migrants to settle. Elizabeth was a new town that created polarizing views. Some migrants embraced the open spaces and lack of population density, while others were unsatisfied with it due to factors including a poor transportation system and the area being heavily populated by other British migrants.

In summary, this thesis contributes to existing literature on migrant experiences in Australia and calls for more attention to the experiences of British migrants in Australia whose triumphs and trials as migrants have sometimes been overlooked in favour of migrant groups of other various ethnicities.

Thesis Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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List of Abbreviations

ARC	Australian Research Council
DP	Displaced Person
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
NAA	National Archives of Australia
SRSA	State Records, South Australia
DOI	Department of Immigration
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
IPTB	Information Publicity and Tourist Bureau
BBC	British Broadcasting Commission
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
DOIN	Department of Information
ANFB	Australian National Film Board
US	United States of America
CIACPC	Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Publicity Committee
NIB	News and Information Bureau
CBD	Central Business District
DIMASS	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Statistics Section