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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

'No Pangs of Conscience': Nostalgia, Race, Masculinity, and the Emergence of Australian Rules Football in Rural South West Victoria

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‘No Pangs of Conscience’: Nostalgia, Race, Masculinity, and the Emergence of Australian Rules Football in Rural South West Victoria

Abstract

For over 140 years Australian Rules football has been one of the most popular sporting past times in the rural south west of the Australian state of Victoria. Yet the meaning and impact of this football code in regional Australia remains relatively uncharted. This paper begins the process of redressing this by examining recollections of the emergence of the sport in south west Victoria produced in the late 1930s by a writer with the pen-name ‘Old Eaglehawk’. ~~Although purportedly facile, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’~~ These nostalgic reminiscences touched on broader issues including masculinity, race, rural pioneers, and colonial violence, which shaped both the game locally and the region more broadly. Central to ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ articles was the sentiment that pioneers of the region were exemplars of white Australian masculinity whose influence benefitted not only football, but the south west region more generally. As a result of such influence, local football was perceived as a space that cultivated traits that white rural pioneers were celebrated for such as discipline, toughness, and resilience. But a deeper examination of ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ articles suggests that the largely elided frontier violence perpetrated by Australia’s pioneers also permeated the game at a local level.

Keywords: Australian Rules Football, Race, Masculinity, Nostalgia, Rural History, Indigenous Australians

Introduction – On the Need to Consider Rural Pioneers

In 1935 a writer with the pen-name ‘Old Eaglehawk’ added to the interwar chorus of rural Australians reflecting nostalgically about the past. Amidst a world that appeared to be transforming too rapidly, many people turned to memories of seemingly more stable times: some wrote glowingly of the former innocent beauty of the countryside, others of the industrious gardening of old ladies, and the social life of rural communities.¹ In the south west of the state of Victoria, newspapers frequently told stories of how Australian Rules football used to be played with writers like ‘Old Player’, R.B. Prouse, and ‘Wanderer’ reminiscing fondly about their favourite players from bygone eras.² ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ yarns also focussed on Australian Rules football, but like the wistful interwar writers chronicled by Marc Brodie, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ wanted to link his topic to the spirit of the early pioneers of country Australia.³ Published in a local newspaper, the *Mortlake Dispatch*, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ recollections were ‘read with wide interest and intense pleasure’.⁴ Indeed, so popular were these beguiling tales that three years later revised versions were published by another local paper, the *Terang Express*.⁵ Although ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ accounts of the emergence of football in south west Victoria are not necessarily factual accounts, the connections they make to narratives of Australian pioneers remain of interest both for what they celebrate and for what they elide. In particular, they allow for an examination of how pioneer narratives could shape the circulation of Australian sporting pasts in the present.⁶

~~In 1935 a writer with the pen-name ‘Old Eaglehawk’ reminisced about the foundational years of the development of Australian Rules football in the rural district of south west Victoria, Australia from 1880 until the start of the First World War. Published in a local newspaper, the *Mortlake Dispatch*, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ recollections were ‘read with wide interest and intense pleasure’.⁷ Indeed, so popular were these beguiling tales that three years later revised versions were published by another local paper, the *Terang Express*.⁸ These newspapers~~

~~observed that ‘Old Eaglehawk’ was somewhat of a ‘facile writer’.⁹ But his tales of the emergence of football in a small pocket of rural Australia frequently touched on broader issues of masculinity, race, rural pioneers, colonial violence, and the role of memory in disseminating popular narratives of the past in the present.¹⁰ And it is the chance to begin an exploration of these rarely critiqued themes in the historiography of Australian Rules football that has led us to write this paper examining the articles of ‘Old Eaglehawk’.~~

As Richard Cashman has noted, by the time Australia was federated in 1901 pioneering ‘bBushmen’ and ‘home-grown Australian sportsmen’ were already being celebrated as national heroes.¹¹ The pioneering bBushmen were lauded in art, literature, and poetry for taming Australia’s wild landscapes and helping bring economic prosperity for all.¹² ~~The sportsman~~Sportsmen were similarly extolled for showing that white men born in Australia were equal too, if not better than the men born in Britain.¹³ Yet few historians have explored the connections between Australian sport and the rural pioneers. In a notable exception, Robert Pascoe and Gerardo Papalia~~Papaplia~~ have argued that the development of Australian Rules football was shaped by the ‘frontier wars’ fought between white settlers and Indigenous Australians.¹⁴ However, like most historians of Australian sport, Pascoe and Papalia focus on the metropole, in this case Melbourne. Indeed, while general histories of rural Australia such as Richard Waterhouse’s *The Vision Splendid* have acknowledged that sport has played a prominent part of rural life since the late nineteenth century, regional and rural Australia has largely been neglected by historians of sport.¹⁵

Studies of Australian Rules football history have followed a similar trend towards metro centric narratives of the game. Since spreading from its metropolitan birthplace in Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Rules football has become one of Australia’s most popular pastimes.¹⁶ As a consequence of such popularity the code’s history has been the focus of extensive scholarship.¹⁷ Yet despite this wide-spread popularity, most scholarly research

considers only the elite metropolitan growth of the game, leaving rural football narratives on the margins of the code's history with much about what the game has meant to rural Australian communities remaining uncharted.¹⁸

~~This paper takes 'Old Eaglehawk's' memories of local football in south west Victoria as a launching place to begin the process of studying how the powerful narratives around Australian sport and Australian pioneers have intersected. This paper takes 'Old Eaglehawk's' memories of local football in south west Victoria as a launching place to begin the study of the sporting activities and attitudes of rural pioneers and settlers, and to explore how these were remembered.~~ Notions of masculinity, race, civility, and violence are central to this analysis. As Kate Murphy has observed, in the early twentieth century many Australians 'saw the nation's future as vested in its rural spaces' believing that regional Australia should be filled 'with a virtuous citizenry' of white male farmers.¹⁹ In the small rural space of south west Victoria, 'Old Eaglehawk' upheld these ideals, looking back fondly on the local pioneers and settlers noting that their influence in 'not only sport but in every form of life has created far-reaching benefits'.²⁰ Nevertheless, as this paper will show, 'Old Eaglehawk' was also troubled by the effects that the often-violent settlement of Australia had on Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Historical studies of the engagement of Indigenous Australians with ~~Australian Rules~~ football have tended to focus on the contested connections between ~~Australian Rules~~ football and the Indigenous Australian ball game known as Marn-grook, along with studies of particular Indigenous Australian ~~Rules football players~~footballers.²¹ One key issue has been the relationship that Tom Wills – a 'founding father' of Australian Rules football – had with *Djab Wurrung* ~~Aboriginal people~~Indigenous Australians of Western Victoria.²² Yet as Gorman et al. note in their study of the literature, the intersections of race and Australian Rules football in rural Australia remain relatively neglected.²³ Notable exceptions include

Dave Nadel's examination of an Aboriginal-Indigenous Australian football team that played in rural south west Victoria in 1923, and Roy Hay and Athas Zafiris' recent chronicle of some games played by Aboriginal-Indigenous Australian teams before the First World War.²⁴ Moreover, Hay has also charted many reports of football games played by Indigenous Australians in Victoria in the late 1800s and early 1900s.²⁵ While the deeds of these players often received 'grudging recognition' in press reports, the Indigenous Australian players were frequently belittled by newspaper correspondents, and the games were soon forgotten.²⁶ ~~Nevertheless, historians are yet to explore how Australian Rules football was a site of engagement between rural pioneers and Indigenous Australians, and how these encounters were later remembered. The recollections of 'Old Eaglehawk' provide a rare chance to explore later memories of these encounters. In exploring examining the stories of these encounters, via the memories of 'Old Eaglehawk' we are~~ this paper is also following the call of Gorman et al. for histories of Australian Rules football that 'incorporate Indigenous Australian stories' which have until recently been suppressed or elided completely.²⁷ For as Darren Godwell has argued, a lack of critical engagement 'has enabled assumptions about the Indigenous experiences in sport to go unevaluated' and therefore undervalued.²⁸

~~Our aim is not~~ This paper does not aim to provide a substantive history of the encounters on the football field between rural pioneers and Indigenous Australian men in the south west of Victoria, but rather to begin the process of exploring them. 'Old Eaglehawk' constructed narratives focused primarily on local football heritage, but the implicit connections between pioneers and Indigenous Australians that they illuminate make his memories invaluable as a starting point for historical examination. As Stephen Townsend, Murray Phillips, and Gary Osmond have noted in their exploration of social memory, the past 'is not remembered as it was but rather as a version of history that is curated in a way that best serves the cultural requirements of people in the present'.²⁹ It is important then to read

‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ memories as not simply a reconstruction of the past, but as configurations of the past shaped by the concurrent context of his social surrounds. Taking this into account, it is possible to recognise that his memories speak to more than just the origins of football in south west Victoria, but to social issues from both the late colonial and interwar periods in rural Australian settings more broadly.

Tracking the Memory of ‘Old Eaglehawk’

To foreground the early years of football in rural south west Victoria, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ began his commentary from the end of the Ballarat and Bendigo gold rushes of the 1850s when the region became one of many attractive locations across the entire colony of Victoria for new settlers and selectors to take up plots of land under the Duffy Land Act of 1862.³⁰ Charles Gavan Duffy, who was responsible for the act, indicated that a driving motivation for opening up lands across Victoria was in part to provide a ‘healthy and pleasant pursuit’ at the end of the gold rush to former diggers willing to become farmers.³¹ In her classic history *Men of Yesterday*, Margaret Kiddle has provided detailed insight into the impact of the Duffy Land Act and the settlement of squatters prior to its enactment in south west Victoria.³²
~~To foreground the early years of football in rural south west Victoria, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ began his commentary from the end of the Ballarat and Bendigo gold rushes of the 1850s when the region became an attractive location for new settlers and selectors to take up plots of land under the Duffy Land Act of 1864 and the Grant Land Act that followed it in 1866.³³ In her classic history *Men of Yesterday*, Margaret Kiddle has provided detailed insight into the impact of the Duffy and Grant Land Acts on south west Victoria, indicating that they were introduced and developed as a measure to provide a ‘healthy and pleasant pursuit’ at the end of the gold rush to former diggers willing to become farmers.³⁴~~ However, like many Australian historians, Kiddle was largely silent on the dispossession of Indigenous

~~Australians from their Aboriginal~~ land which enabled ~~thise~~ 'healthy and pleasant pursuit' ~~of settler life, and seemingly simply~~ detailing 'conflict between Aborigines and Europeans as a natural part of the pioneering experience'.³⁵

South west Victoria was a site of prodigious wool production in the mid nineteenth century and by the late nineteenth century it became prominent dairy country as well.³⁶ According to Kiddle the opportunities for employment in the district increased significantly in the late 1870s as agriculture in the region thrived.³⁷ Crafting an initially plain, pastoral account of the region's past 'Old Eaglehawk' noted that the former gold diggers who made the transition to become settlers and selectors 'led the simple life and bred large families of the same type as themselves'.³⁸

As 'Old Eaglehawk' told it, an apparent consequence of the population growth in the district was the growing number of young men who were 'naturally of a virile nature' and who 'as they grew to manhood, required some kind of sport which would keep their virile proclivities as transmitted to them by their parents, under normal control'.³⁹ ~~These young 'virile' Australian-born (white) men offered a sense of the nation's burgeoning potential as it was gradually shedding the British (and more global) perception that Australia was just 'a little boy'~~ ~~These young 'virile' Australian born white men offer an implicit contrast to the British (and more global) perception of Australia at the time as a nation too young to defend itself and or prosper without the constant support of the imperial motherland.~~⁴⁰ As such, they represented a rural depiction of the ideal (white) 'Coming Man' whom many commentators in the late 1800s hoped would advance the nation and the 'Australian race'.⁴¹ At the same time, the Australian '~~B~~ushman' was beginning to be lionized as a figure of national identity through the works of writers such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson and painters like Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin.⁴² Above all else these settlers and pioneers in the rural regions of Australia were admired for their embodiment of idealistic qualities much

favoured by white Australian society such as, ‘independence, manliness’ and ‘a fondness for sport’.⁴³

The ~~b~~Bushmen ~~that~~who were ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ heroes, were also heavily involved with local football competitions~~were football players~~, and as he saw it, the game had aided their status as~~helped them become~~ admirable pioneers whose influence in ‘every form of life has created far reaching benefits. It is a pity that such men should ever die’.⁴⁴ In one way then, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ was celebrating a version of the now familiar refrain that sport imprinted in young men the favourable qualities of ‘fair play, stoicism, leadership, determination and discipline’, as Martin Crotty has put it.⁴⁵ But what might have drawn ‘Old Eaglehawk’ to publish these recollections of the late 1800s in the 1930s?~~Our interest though, lies in why ‘Old Eaglehawk’ published these recollections of the late 1800s in the 1930s.~~

A core element of ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ articles was a yearning for a past that he remembered as less complicated than the present. In sharing his recollections of football in the south west of Victoria ‘Old Eaglehawk’ provided a ‘nostalgic creation’ of the game’s early development in the region. Fred Davis, in his ~~seminal~~germinal work on the sociology of nostalgia, has argued that one of its primary functions is ‘constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing’ individual and/or collective identities.⁴⁶ In a sense, these types of whimsical narratives are ‘associated with the impulse to conserve and recover’ aspects of the past and reintroduce them into to a socially and culturally transitioning present.⁴⁷ Like the writers studied by Brodie, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ was seeking to conserve a valuable characteristic of the pioneering era that seemed threatened by the turmoil of the 1930s.~~Mare Brodie has observed that the interwar period in Australia saw a powerful form of remembering which attracted political attention towards the country areas of the nation.~~⁴⁸ In particular ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ memories focussed on the men whose masculinity he wanted to preserve – pioneers, squatters, and Bushman. Yet, his articles also alluded to more troubling aspects of the

pioneering men. In rural Australian settings, conservative ideals of establishing ‘tradition and stability’ were iconic qualities of pioneering men, for which they were celebrated.⁴⁹ However, as the push for modernity crept into the national psyche after World War I, ‘tradition and stability’ were threatened by the insecure economic circumstances of the depression, which had serious consequences in both rural and urban environments.⁵⁰ In regards to local football traditions, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ bemoaned the decline in football niceties throughout the district that were being lost in the modern form of the game. As an example, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ expressed much disappointment that customary formalities such as the half-time interval that were once upon a time frequently observed at local football matches during the late nineteenth century had almost completely faded from existence. He stated:

‘It seems a pity that this old homely style of treating the visitors has really disappeared—it is quite a treat to attend a match ... where the old customs still prevail and the interval at half time is spent in talking with old and new friends over that friendly cup of tea which does not create arguments’.⁵¹

Acknowledging apparent social transitions in the game, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ memories provided a noteworthy point of entry into the game’s social and cultural prominence throughout the district prior to World War I and highlighted aspects of the game which led to its continued popularity through until the 1930s and beyond. In particular ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ memories highlighted the influential role of men who he perceived were among the most esteemed members of the local community—pioneers, squatters, and bushman. Yet, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ representation of these local men as the preeminent embodiment of manliness is somewhat blurred by his wistful recall, and hence their contribution to the game locally was likely more complex than was implied. It is this complexity that this paper will draw on in exploring the cultural role of Australian Rules football in this rural setting.

Davis has argued that:

‘the proclivity to cultivate appreciative attitudes towards former selves is closely related to nostalgia’s ... tendency to eliminate from memory or, at minimum, severely mute the unpleasant, the unhappy, the abrasive, and ... those lurking shadows of former selves about which we feel shame, guilt, or humiliation’.⁵²

In the case of ‘Old Eaglehawk’, although he appeared to describe the district’s late colonial past as a prelapsarian time, innocent and unspoilt, it was not without its own troubling and complex history. Historically, pioneers, squatters, and **B**bushmen were celebrated for their contribution to the district’s – and the nation’s – growth, but they also significantly contributed to regimes of Indigenous Australian dispossession, an aspect of Australia’s pioneering heritage that has until recently remained relatively overlooked by historians. As ‘Old Eaglehawk’ **s’ articles illuminated-explored** connections between pioneers and football in the district **they** ‘unmuted’ some localized examples of dispossession, utilising memories of a local All-Indigenous football team called the ‘Framlingham Blacks’ to foreground his commentary.⁵³ ‘Old Eaglehawk’ noted that imposing various virtues and cultural activities of white Australia on the land had had a significant impact on ‘the original occupier of the country’, a consequence of European settlement that he articulated with a seemingly conflicted conscience.⁵⁴ As an example in one of his articles he considered the following:

‘We took his [Indigenous Australian **s-peoples**] country, rung his possum trees, and stole the carvings from his father’s tombs; and gave him in exchange for this, a blanket and the whisky of his down; then turned him out a wanderer and a wreck’.⁵⁵

These words align with an observation of Richard Waterhouse who noted that in regards to the frontier wars between Europeans and Indigenous Australians in the early nineteenth century that ‘Australians were in no doubt that slaughter on a large scale had taken place’ which had critically impacted Indigenous Australians’ occupation of the land.⁵⁶ However,

memories of these confrontations had been collectively repressed in white Australian culture.⁵⁷ As Nicholas Gill has outlined, the legends of the pioneer:

‘draw on a highly selective recollection of the past that is not simply an outcome of colonialism but is constructed from the mythical foundations that have informed, driven and justified non-indigenous settlement in Australia and the dispossession of indigenous people.’⁵⁸

From these evasive memories of Australia’s past, pioneers and squatters arose as the embodiment of the typical Australian, a character that was celebrated and revered until the commencement of the Great War when such men were encouraged to transform themselves into soldiers and defenders of the ~~white Australian race~~ British Empire. During the late colonial period, aspects of manliness that were connected to white settlement were central to beliefs of Australia’s future prosperity and the nation’s identity more broadly.

By the turn of the twentieth century many white Australians were was projecting concerns that migrants from Asia would ‘invade’ Australia and precipitate the racial ‘decline’ of the nation, regarding invasion from non-European — generally Asian — settlers who would potentially dilute the Anglo-Saxon racial identity of the nation.⁵⁹ While Asian settlers were feared, Waterhouse has indicated that at the same time Indigenous Australians were beginning to be framed in ‘nostalgic terms as a mere “dying race”’, due in part to the now nullified threat to the Anglo-Australian culture which had been quashed by European settlers in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ ‘Old Eaglehawk’ seemed fully aware of the implications associated with European settlement as he stated ‘to see [the district] now makes one think of what civilisation means as understood by human beings, and its ultimate end’.⁶¹ These sentiments were featured again in a revised version of an article from ‘Old Eaglehawk’ published in the *Terang Express* where he offered this additional thought:

‘The survival of the fittest seems to be the universal law of nature, but even if it is found impossible to preserve the aboriginals (rather late in the day as far as Victoria

is concerned) it is to be hoped that the remnants of the race will be allowed to disappear from the land of their forefathers in a manner that we, as a nation called Australia, will have no pangs of conscience in the future, as to the way in which it was done².⁶²

Popularized ideas of eugenics and ~~s~~Social Darwinism²s such as ‘survival of the fittest’ were socially accepted patterns of thought in white Australian society at the time, and the declining population of Indigenous Australians was viewed by many Australian²s as an inevitability of the nation’s development and progress.⁶³ As Warwick Anderson has surmised, ‘the march of [white] civilization had been viewed as little more than an inevitable biological process, not as a phenomenon that might be judged as good or bad’.⁶⁴ As a result of this ‘biological process’, during the 1930s ~~A~~Aboriginal people Indigenous Australians tended to be perceived in the white Australian psyche as ‘visible yet invisible’, to quote Frazer Andrewes.⁶⁵ This was certainly true for the south west of Victoria for as early as the 1880s, and certainly by the 1930s, any remnants of ~~A~~Aboriginal–Indigenous Australian communities or ‘camps’ were scarce, isolated, and their history relatively suppressed from the thoughts of white Australians in the region.⁶⁶

During the interwar period, it was only on rare occasions in the district that the public was made aware of Indigenous Australians’ connection to the land. These sentiments of invisibility and an accepted ambivalence towards this presumed ‘dying race’ in south west Victoria were succinctly captured in a *Terang Express* article written by Annie S. Evans, who in 1923 observed a local ~~A~~Aboriginal–Indigenous Australian picnic that took place in Framlingham on the banks of the Hopkins River:

‘The aborigines of Framlingham celebrate the festival of Foundation Day by an annual picnic, not altogether for the reason that they have much cause for thankfulness to celebrate the event that marks this holiday. But each year from far and

near their kinsfolk gather on this day and renew old acquaintances, and talk of the good old camp days of the past.⁶⁷

Although Evans appeared to acknowledge Indigenous Australians' dispossession from the land and wrote fondly of the congregational environment she experienced at the picnic, she also clearly regarded them as inferior and childlike, claiming that 'before the advent of the whites, the native never had to exercise his mind ... the mind of the aborigine is only opening'.⁶⁸ Furthermore, in stating the belief that 'Aborigines when they have become Christianised make good helpers and workers' Evans presented what she considered a generalized white Australian consensus that if Indigenous Australians could only adjust to white Australian values they would be an asset rather than a burden to national progress. Indeed Evans provided examples of Aboriginal-Indigenous Australian assimilation that were valued by white Australians such as the fact that 'several Aborigines from here served in the Great War', or that some of 'these men are good cricketers and footballers', which by Evans' account made them worthy of adoration/commendation.⁶⁹

Football as a Site of White Cultural Adoption

Andrewes has argued that during the 1930s it was a common belief amongst white Australian society that 'whites' were the superior race in the nation, evinced by a perception of modernity and that their 'gentlemanliness' distinguished them from other cultures.⁷⁰ As an example of Anglo-Australia's perceived racial superiority Bruce Pascoe has examined in detail how white settlers actively ignored the successful agricultural ingenuity of Indigenous Australians, instead using traditional European farming methodologies on land that could not sustain such techniques.⁷¹ Such a dismissive attitude towards Indigenous Australians permeated throughout the late colonial period and featured in other aspects of race relations. It is through this lens of presumed racial superiority that 'Old Eaglehawk' provided his

representation of the 'Framlingham Blacks' football team of the 1880s. 'Old Eaglehawk' emphasized that many members of the Framlingham team had adapted and adopted white Australian values such as 'manliness' and 'sportsmanship' and hence recalled that they received creditable recognition from the public when they competed against white teams from the district. With these articles written primarily for a white Australian audience, such representations of Indigenous Australians which tended to imply an affable existence continued to obfuscate the complex history of the Australian frontier, and thereby simplified the social environment that encompassed football's formative years in the district.

Local newspaper reports published in 1885 that discuss the Framlingham team exemplified the blatant belief that Anglo-Australian men of British heritage were greatly superior, both physically and mentally, to their opponents, 'the dusky sons of the soil'.⁷² A Warrnambool correspondent reporting on the build-up to the inaugural match of the Greening Trophy competition between Warrnambool and Framlingham wrote:

“The dusky sons of the soil are engaged in active training for the contest, some of them, I hear, running as much as ten miles a day. However, I don't think there is much probability of the darkies wresting the laurels of victory from the Warrnambool Club. Pluck is as great a factor of success in contests of this kind as speed and endurance, and for that quality the British lion and his descendants still stand pre-eminent among the nations of the world”.⁷³

Beliefs such as these from local newspapers of the 1880s provided a sense of the social environment ~~where much of that shaped~~ 'Old Eaglehawk's' ~~prejudicial~~ views of Indigenous Australians ~~were likely raised~~. As already noted ~~above~~, though his own articles were written close to 50 years later, 'Old Eaglehawk' surmised for readers of the 1930s that the declining number of ~~Aboriginal people~~ Indigenous Australians from the region was a direct result of white settlers' pursuit of 'civilizing' the land. Yet, like Evans who advocated the benefits of 'Christianising' ~~Aboriginals~~ Indigenous Australians, rather than advocate an attempt to

~~address~~redress the pioneering acts of dispossession and violence, the declining Aboriginal population, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ outlined how sport, and football in particular, ~~had become a prominent site for~~could help the ‘original occupier of this country’ to embrace the ideals of ‘white people’.⁷⁴ ~~It was here that ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ concerns that were detailed earlier in this paper, were overcome by a belief that assimilation was beneficial for Indigenous Australians in the district with the Framlingham players most fondly remembered being those that within just ‘one generation ... learned how “to play the game”’.~~⁷⁵

Why some Indigenous Australians participated in white sporting culture is difficult to ascertain as there are no doubt innumerable motivations for such action. In research exploring the athletic career of Indigenous Australian Albert ‘Pompey’ Austin in the late nineteenth century, Roy Hay has acknowledged the difficulty in identifying a singular reason. Hay offers two possible explanations, firstly that participation may have been utilized as a means of cultural accommodation, or secondly, and equally as likely, a form of protest.⁷⁶ ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ comments seemed to suggest that for the ‘Framlingham Blacks’ participation in the local competition was a sign of their attempt to accommodate and adopt white values in order to ‘better’ themselves. Sport, and football more specifically, was one of just many forms of white Australian culture which was inculcated upon the Indigenous population, and amongst these reflections it was observable which characteristics of sport the white population in this rural district cherished and privileged.

‘Old Eaglehawk’ declared that it was via ‘every class of sport’ that many of the Framlingham Black footballers excelled in adapting to the white Australian modes of ‘gentlemanly’ behaviour.⁷⁷ As has been illustrated by multiple historians, fears of white racial degeneration were an ever present concern in Anglo-Australian society prior to and following the turn of twentieth century.⁷⁸ In particular, Anderson argued there was a social perception that ‘white destiny in southeastern Australia was gradually condensing down to a matter of

bad, impervious heredity – bad seeds – and the social life of germs – more bad seeds’.⁷⁹ To ameliorate this supposed threat sport was seemingly positioned as a vehicle that channelled the idealized masculine identity of white Australian culture. Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz contended that ‘physical courage’ was a key element of this ideal throughout this period in Australia.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Booth and Tatz emphasized that sport, in particular football, was one domain in Australian society where a man’s physicality could be tested and measured.⁸¹ In a sense, sport nurtured Anglo-Australian traditions and associated models of manliness which were disseminated and propagated across rural and urban regions nationwide. As intimated by ‘Old Eaglehawk’, traits of fairness, sportsmanship, and humility were central to such gentlemanly ideals and features of the better-quality teams in the district.

What is most poignant in these reflections of the ‘Framlingham Blacks’ is that in general the stories being told of their existence in the district were those of assimilation. In a sense the only recognition they received was linked to an ability to adapt to the cultural expectations of the white settlers and perform behaviours associated with ‘gentlemanliness’.⁸²

‘Old Eaglehawk’ proclaimed with a patronising sense of surprise in one article, ‘what an assortment of sports, and how remarkable that in one generation, they had assimilated the idea of the white people and learned how “to play the game”’.⁸³ ‘Old Eaglehawk’ noted that ‘aAfter years of playing with them and against them, I rarely saw one of the mse men ever do an action in the sporting line that you could not call “cricket”’.⁸⁴ In ‘learning how to play the game’ it seemed ‘Old Eaglehawk’ was pleased that a select number of Indigenous Australians had been able to adopt Anglo-Australian qualities such as sportsmanship and obedience to rules.

‘Old Eaglehawk’ thus depicted football as a tool that aided assimilation and a site for which men of the district could measure and compare their own ‘manly’ virtues and character. Highlighted in these articles was the fact that the only players from the

'Framlingham Blacks' ~~that-who~~ received acknowledgement were those ~~that-who~~ were able to play in a manner that exceeded the expectations of the white observer. Indeed, according to 'Old Eaglehawk' the playing style of some of the Indigenous Australians was considered more in line with his expectation of a "gentleman's" game' as a direct contrast to the 'win, tie or wrangle players of the present day_[- 1930s]'.⁸⁵ In light of the broader attitudes that some of 'Old Eaglehawk's previous commentary on Indigenous Australians were a less evolved, dying race, which tended to undermine their history and indeed portray them as an 'uncivilized' peoples, such a comment could have been taken as a direct and offensive indictment of the current corps of local footballers. Stating that present day (1930s) white footballers were less 'gentlemanly' than representatives of the Framlingham Blacks served as an explicit example that expressed fears of the game's local decline. To avoid such a decline in standard, 'Old Eaglehawk' eulogized the pioneer gentlemanliness that he felt characterized local football of the late nineteenth century and promoted a return to this model that he remembered so fondly. Yet, in doing so, he overlooked more complex attributes of the pioneer, squatter, and Bbushman identity that had inconspicuously impacted the game's early development.

How Local Pioneers Played the Game

'Old Eaglehawk' considered that the 'gentlemanly' standing of these local Aboriginal Indigenous Australian football-~~players~~ was simply a natural outcome of being introduced to a sport played in manner that was based on the characteristics of the district's most revered white men. In the 'Framlingham Blacks' team there were six white-Australians, nicknamed the 'white blackfellows', who 'Old Eaglehawk' stated had 'far-reaching influence' and whose impact on the 'evolution of the game in the Western District ... was well worth recording'.⁸⁶

But aside from elements such as sportsmanship and discipline what other characteristics did these pioneer and settler types imprint on the game locally?

Angela Woollacott has critically explored the way that pioneers, squatters, and ~~B~~bushmen of the nineteenth century have generally been presented historically as embodying masculinized traits of ‘responsibility, self-discipline, independence, and reason’.⁸⁷ In ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ evocative reflections it was these traits that he clung to so fervently when describing the south west district pioneers’ manly influence on football’s development. Other traits of masculine identity were also presented by ‘Old Eaglehawk’, but he passed over them quickly. More specifically, ‘Old Eaglehawk’ tended to downplay the violent side of early pioneers.

Woollacott has suggested that the masked violent history associated with pioneers and settlers, which was in some ways stifled by the lens of nostalgia, was in fact an additional feature of the pioneers’ masculine identity.⁸⁸ Moreover, Pascoe and Papalia indicate that the accepted roughness of early football matches in Melbourne reflected an attitude held by a society that was likely desensitized to the violence associated with the ‘deterritorialisation’ of Indigenous Australians committed by British settlers throughout frontier confrontations.⁸⁹ In ~~respect to a similar manner,~~ ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ ~~localized recollections, the violence and roughness of the sport that was an implanted feature of the game, was similarly~~ downplayed ~~the violence and roughness of football~~ as ~~merely part an accepted aspect~~ of the game’s manly character. As Woollacott concluded, this type of violence ‘could be accepted as part of respectable manhood, especially if it remained understood but not articulated’.⁹⁰ ‘Old Eaglehawk’ ~~frequently accepted that~~ characterized football ~~was~~ a rough game during its early years ~~in the district,~~ but rarely did he consider this uncouth or unnecessary.⁹¹ ~~R~~ Rather the roughness of some teams was represented as strategic and understood. For instance:

‘Shoving [from] behind was also allowed and instead of getting ahead of your man it paid you to be behind him, a man with good shoving power soon cleared a space around him and quietly marked the ball on his own’.⁹¹

While this passage hints at some of the rough tactics common in football during the 1880s, the description could also be seen as a metaphor of the way the violence perpetrated by squatters, settlers, or Bbushmen to clear land populated by Indigenous Australians was frequently diminished in (white) accounts. More broadly speaking, rough play was openly accepted as a memorable feature of Australian Rules football ~~in the south west region of Victoria~~ even when the game was supposed to be facilitating the development of ‘civility’. Indeed it seems that white Australian footballers in ~~this south west Victorian~~ e-district were forgiven for acts of brutishness. ~~As an~~For example, a Camperdown team in 1884 were remembered as being so ‘rugged’ in their play that they reportedly earned the nickname ‘The Savages’ from local spectators. Despite the negative connotations of ~~the term~~ ‘savages’ – characterized as a sign of barbarism or lacking in civility – ~~‘Old Eaglehawk’ the players were~~ still deemed these players ‘a decent lot of fellows’ due to the fact that ‘a lot of them belonged to the squatting fraternity’.⁹² Hence, their rough conduct on the field was seemingly understood and accepted as part of the masculine identity of their pioneering ancestry;⁹³ if not fully articulated as such. As ‘Old Eaglehawk’ noted of local football pioneers that he was celebrating these laudable gentleman, in the early days of ~~local~~ football ‘the main consideration was’ that players use ,-by-‘any means to stop’ you#their opponents ‘from getting the ball’-if you could not get it yourself’.⁹³ Be it marking a playing football or settling land, the methods ~~described-deployed to obtain such desired outcomes~~ were later moderated through nostalgic creation which belied the understated acceptance of the violence of white colonial men.

For Waterhouse the ‘simple reading of the Bush’ that tended to ignore the atrocities committed by European settlers on Indigenous Australians provided a seemingly

unblemished canvass on which positive memories of pre-war Australia could be painted for post-war audiences.⁹⁴ 'Old Eaglehawk' did, in a limited degree, recognize an invasion based connection between pioneers and Indigenous Australians, but the contextual implications of war and the inclement suffering from the major economical strife of the depression that framed the local rural landscape of the 1930s were likely a more pertinent concern of the district. Henceforth, 'Old Eaglehawk' provided an largely idyllic construction of local pioneers and as he explained their role in the early development of football in the district the memories would have likely resonated with the local community as they reflected a 'simpler time' when 'gentlemen were gentlemen'.⁹⁵

Conclusion – A Not So Simple Past

This paper has begun the process of studying how the powerful narratives around Australian sport and Australian pioneers have intersected. As part of the nostalgic movement that swept rural Australia during the interwar period 'Old Eaglehawk' stories reveal vital cultural patterns of thought around notions of masculinity, race, civility, and violence that permeated the early history of football in rural south west Victoria. Like his contemporaries he reminisced about great players and former glory days, but also linked these to the celebrated spirit of Australia's pioneers. According to the editor of the *Mortlake Dispatch* the articles written by 'Old Eaglehawk' had been 'read with wide interest and intense pleasure' throughout the district hinting that his views had genuinely resonated with the local community.⁹⁶ Furthering its local resonance was the fact that 'Old Eaglehawk' was not alone in his praise of local football's burgeoning past. In 1937 a correspondent in the *Camperdown Chronicle* called 'The Wanderer' wrote an article that noted football's raw beginnings where 'pushing, backing, tripping, elbowing, rabbiting and slinging were allowed'.⁹⁷ Yet, like 'Old Eaglehawk' the article focused more on the men that played and the celebrated attributes that

~~they exuded through play, a ‘fine body of footballers’ and ‘good men’ which were praised for their cleverness, fairness, and strength—pioneers of local football that appeared to mimic the ideal attributes of the regions pioneering men.⁹⁸~~

Instances of nostalgic reflection, such as those from ‘Old Eaglehawk’, ~~and ‘Wanderer’~~ provide a valuable ~~insight-entry point~~ for historical exploration as they tend to be shared as a response to changes that were occurring in their ~~author’s~~ present. However, as has been shown, such contemplative creations which present a seemingly simple construction of the past have the potential to reveal far more than was likely intended. The ‘simple’ past shared through these memories of rural south west Victorian football development provide a rich insight into the complex narratives of Australia’s colonial heritage. From his recollection ‘Old Eaglehawk’ positioned the pioneers, settlers, and ~~b~~Bushmen of the district as the benchmark for masculine ideals and that it was their influence across all parts of rural life that provided prosperity to the region. Australian Rules Ffootball ~~being an example of was~~ just one part of late colonial countryside lifestyle in which ~~celebrated-notable~~ characteristics – discipline, toughness, and resilience – were seen to aptly reflect ideals associated with the pioneer and settler spirit of the region. However, coupled with these positive images of the game were more violent attributes that meant football was at times rough and brutal, and although these attributes were not grandly celebrated throughout these memories they were accepted as part of the game’s character. This attitude towards football violence paralleled the way the violence of Australian pioneers against Indigenous Australians was at once accepted and largely unarticulated~~This acceptance of violence seemingly imitated concurrent attitudes towards the masculinised character of pioneers and settlers who themselves had an understood, but suppressed history of violence. A history which was responsible for the dispossession of Indigenous Australians from their lands nationwide.~~

As a sort of compensation for this dispossession ‘Old Eaglehawk’ saw football as a valuable instrument for race relations in the region, in which Indigenous Australian communities of the Framlingham Reserve were encouraged and even celebrated for their engagement with the burgeoning form of the game. Interaction between Indigenous Australian communities and white settlers in this district were becoming increasingly rare, but football was seen as a space for connection. However, rather than critique the inculcation of white settler culture upon this particular Indigenous community ‘Old Eaglehawk’ perceived this sport based adoption of white gentlemanly behaviour as another ‘benefit’ of pioneer endeavours. It seemed by ‘learning how to play the game’ the local [Aboriginal Indigenous Australian](#) men were seen in a positive light and the obfuscated reality of their fading presence in the district continued to predominate the attitudes of Anglo-Australian society.

As can be seen from these observations, ‘Old Eaglehawk’s’ recollections publicized more than just the origins of football in rural south west Victoria. A deeper inspection of the articles highlighted football’s association with the pioneers and settlers of the region who championed the sport as a recreational pursuit to develop their progeny. Through the influence of pioneers and settlers football seemingly reproduced a type of masculinity that resonated within the region. Skimming over the complex narratives associated with the pioneers and settlers these detailed positive memories connecting idyllic rural men to the foundations of football in the district, demonstrate how the game itself became a localized symbol of Anglo-Australian prosperity, a symbol which could remain a mainstay of this rural Victorian setting throughout the interwar years and beyond.

¹ [Marc Brodie, ‘The Politics of Rural Nostalgia Between the Wars’, in Graeme Davison and Marc Brodie \(eds\), *Struggle Country: The Rural Ideal in Twentieth Century Australia* \(Clayton: Monash University Press, 2005\), 9.1-9.13.](#)

² [See for example, Old Player, ‘Past and Present’, *Camperdown Chronicle*, June 24, 1920, 4; R.B. Prouse, ‘Football – Past and Present’, *Camperdown Chronicle*, June 26, 1920, 3; and The Wanderer, “‘Magpies’ of the Past’, *Camperdown Chronicle*, September 2, 1937, 5. For the purpose of this article south west Victoria](#)

is defined as a region of the state of Victoria bounded by the townships of Warrnambool, Terang, Mortlake, Camperdown, and Cobden approximately 220 kilometres south west of the state's capital city, Melbourne.

- ³ Brodie, 'The Politics of Rural Nostalgia Between the Wars'. For brevity Australian Rules football will generally be referred to as football throughout this paper.
- ⁴ Ed. "D", '(To be continued)', *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, 3. Through descriptors in the various articles attributed to 'Old Eaglehawk' it was possible to discern that the correspondent was writing from the perspective of a non-indigenous Australian male of at least 50 years of age, if not reasonably older. This is evinced by references he makes to his 'boyhood days', and personal reflections referring to Indigenous Australians as 'they' and 'them' that date back to the 1880s. See: The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3.
- ⁵ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football In Its Infancy', *Terang Express*, May 6, 1938, 8; The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football In Its Infancy', *Terang Express*, May 13, 1938, 8; The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football In Its Infancy', *Terang Express*, May 20, 1938, 8; and The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football In Its Infancy', *Terang Express*, June 3, 1938, 8.
- ⁶ For more on the circulation of the sporting past in the present see Linda J. Borish and Murray G. Phillips, 'Sport History as Modes of Expression: Material Culture and Cultural Spaces in Sport and History', *Rethinking History* 16, no. 4 (2012): 465–77.
- ⁷ Through descriptors in various articles attributed to 'Old Eaglehawk' it was possible to discern that the correspondent was writing from the perspective of a non-indigenous Australian male of at least 50 years of age, if not reasonably older. This is evinced by references he makes to his 'boyhood days', and personal reflections referring to Indigenous Australians as 'they' and 'them' that date back to the 1880s. The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3; and The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, 3.
- ⁸ Revised versions of his articles were also printed in the *Terang Express* in 1938.
- ⁹ The Old Eaglehawk, 'The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District', *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 21, 1935, 3.
- ¹⁰ For brevity Australian Rules football will generally be referred to as football throughout this paper.
- ¹¹ Richard Cashman, 'Australian Sport and Culture before Federation', in Richard Cashman and Robert Hess (eds), *Sport, History and Australian Culture: Passionate Pursuits* (Sydney: Walla Walla Press, 2011), 15.
- ¹² J.B. Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend', *Historical Studies* 19, no. 71 (1978): 316-37; Russell Ward, *The Australian Legend* Second Edition (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1966); and Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (North Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).
- ¹³ W.F. Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 59, no. 4 (1973): 225–46; and W.F. Mandle, *Going it Alone: Australia's National Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Ringwood: Allen Lane, 1977).
- ¹⁴ Robert Pascoe and Gerardo Papa, "'A Most Manly and Amusing Game": Australian Football and the Frontier Wars', *Postcolonial Studies* 19, no. 3, (2016): 270-90. For more on Australia's frontier wars see Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006); John Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars, 1788-1838* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002); and Jan Critchett, *'A Distant Field of Murder': Western District Frontiers, 1834-1848* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1990). Jan Critchett, *'A Distant Field of Murder': Western District Frontiers, 1834-1848* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1990).
- ¹⁵ Richard Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid: A Social and Cultural History of Rural Australia* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2005), 131-43.
- ¹⁶ Rob Hess and Bob Stewart, 'Introduction' in Rob Hess and Bob Stewart (eds), *More Than A Game: An Unauthorised History of Australian Rules Football* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 1.
- ¹⁷ Leonie Sandercock and Ian Turner, *Up Where Cazaly? The Great Australian Game* (London: Granada, 1981); Rob Hess, Matthew Nicholson, Bob Stewart, and Gregory de Moore, *A National Game: The History of Australian Rules Football* (Camberwell: Penguin/Viking, 2008); Rob Hess and Bob Stewart (eds), *More Than a Game: An Unauthorised History of Australian Rules Football* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998); and Geoff Slattery (ed.), *The Australian Game of Football: Since 1858* (Melbourne: Geoff Slattery Publishing, 2008).
- ¹⁸ Only a small selection of scholarly works have broached the topic of rural football history. See for example Paul Daffey, *Behind the Goals: The History of the Victorian Country Football League* (Ballarat East: Ten

- Bags Press, 2017); Ashley Humphrey, “‘Like Flemington Road on Cup Day’: A Socio-Cultural History of the Early Development of Football in the Loddon Valley District, 1876-1903” (Honours Thesis, School of Sport and Exercise Science, Victoria University, 2012); R.A. Gillett, ‘Where the Big Men Fly. An Early History of Australian Football in the Riverina Region of New South Wales’ (Bachelor of Letters Thesis, Department of History, University of New England, 1983); and Dave Nadel, ‘Aborigines and Australian Football: The Rise and Fall of the Purnim Bears’, *Sporting Traditions* 9, no. 2, (1993): 47-63. Amateur historians have also attempted to address this gap in part with many rural football club and league histories being produced over recent decades, however they tend not to provide an in-depth critical contextual analysis of the social and cultural dynamics at play. For a full bibliography of such titles see Lionel Frost and Tim Hogan, ‘Clubs: Minor Leagues’, in Tim Hogan (ed.), *Reading Australian Rules Football: The Definitive Guide to the Game* (Sydney: Walla Walla Press, 2017), 43-54.
- ¹⁹ Kate Murphy, ‘The “Most Dependable Element of Any Country’s Manhood”: Masculinity and Rurality in the Great War and its Aftermath’, *History Australia* 5, no. 3, (2008): 72.1-72.20.
- ²⁰ The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Football Reminiscences’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, 3.
- ²¹ Barry Judd, *On the Boundary Line: Colonial Identity in Football* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008); J. Poulter, *Marn-Grook: Original Aussie Rules* (Melbourne: J. Poulter, 2003); Greg de Moore, *Tom Wills: His Spectacular Rise and Tragic Fall* (Melbourne: Allen and Unwin, 2009); Matthew Klugman and Gary Osmond, *Black and Proud: The Story of an Iconic AFL Photo* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013); Steve Hawke, *Polly Farmer: A Biography* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1994); Sean Gorman, *Brotherboys: The Story of Jim and Phillip Krakouer* (Melbourne: Allen and Unwin, 2005); Sean Gorman, *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011); [Trevor Ruddell, ‘The Marn-grook Story: A Documentary History of Aboriginal Ballgames in South-eastern Australia’, *Sporting Traditions* 32, no. 1, \(2015\): 19-37](#); [Trevor Ruddell, ‘Albert “Pompey” Austin: The First Aborigine to Play Senior Football’, in Peter Burke and June Senyard \(eds\), *Behind the Play: Football in Australia* \(Hawthorn: Maribyrnong Press, 2008\), 89-105](#); and more broadly see C. Tatz, *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995).
- ²² See Barry Judd, *On the Boundary Line: Colonial Identity in Football*, 1-76; and Greg de Moore, *Tom Wills: First Wild Man of Australian Sport* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2011), 17-8.
- ²³ [Sean Gorman, Barry Judd, Keir Reeves, Gary Osmond, Matthew Klugman and Gavan McCarthy, ‘Aboriginal Rules: The Black History of Australian Football’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 16 \(2015\): 1947-62](#); ~~Gorman et al., ‘Aboriginal Rules: The Black History of Australian Football’, 1957.~~
- ²⁴ Nadel, ‘Aborigines and Australian Football: The Rise and Fall of the Purnim Bears’, 47-63; and Roy Hay and Athas Zafiris, ‘Australian Football’s Indigenous History’, *Meanjin* 76, no. 3 (2017): 196–202.
- ²⁵ [Roy Hay, *Aboriginal People and Australian Football in the Nineteenth Century: They Did Not Come from Nowhere* \(Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019\).](#)
- ²⁶ [Hay, *Aboriginal People and Australian Football in the Nineteenth Century*, 53.](#)
- ²⁷ Gorman et al., ‘Aboriginal Rules: The Black History of Australian Football’.
- ²⁸ Darren Godwell, ‘Playing the Game: Is Sport as Good for Race Relations as We’d Like to Think?’, *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, nos 1-2, (2000): 12-9.
- ²⁹ Stephen Townsend, Murray G. Phillips, and Gary Osmond, ‘Remembering the Rejection of Muhammad Ali: Identity, Civil Rights and Social Memory’, *Sport in History* 38, no. 3, (2018): 267-88.
- ³⁰ [The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3](#); and [The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Football In Its Infancy’, *Terang Express*, May 6, 1938, 8](#). In these articles, Old Eaglehawk incorrectly stated that the so called Duffy Act came into effect in 1864.
- ³¹ [Charles Gavan Duffy as cited in Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890* \(Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1967\), 233.](#)
- ³² [Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, 233-62. Kiddle refers to these post-gold rush settlers that took up relatively small plots of agricultural and pastoral land via these parliamentary acts as ‘selectors’ as opposed to the earlier larger landholding settlers and pioneers of the district which she referred to as ‘squatters’.](#)
- ³³ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3.~~
- ³⁴ ~~Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1967), 233-62. Kiddle refers to these post-gold rush settlers that took up relatively small plots of agricultural and pastoral land via these parliamentary acts as ‘selectors’ as~~

~~opposed to the earlier larger landholding settlers and pioneers of the district which she referred to as 'squatters'.~~

³⁵ Critchett, 'A Distant Field of Murder', 2 and 120.

³⁶ Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, 362. South west Victoria saw significant growth in the dairy industry across the district after the 1890s, for further details see Norman Godbold, *Victoria, Cream of the Country: A History of Victorian Dairying* (Hawthorn: Dairy Industry Association of Australia, 1989), 36-39; and Mortlake Historical Society, *Pastures of Peace: A Tapestry of Mortlake Shire* (Mortlake: Shire of Mortlake, 1985), 54-6.

³⁷ Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, 468.

³⁸ The Old Eaglehawk, 'The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District', *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3. Kiddle also noted that corruption in the various Land Acts of the 1860s and 1870s prevented many would-be selectors from settling land that was offered by the government, but there were some that did manage to establish themselves through land selection schemes, see Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, 233-62.

³⁹ The Old Eaglehawk, 'The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District', *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3.

⁴⁰ K.S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 16-8.

⁴¹ White, *Inventing Australia*, 72-5. 'Coming Man' was a term – much like the national 'type' – which was used to identify the model citizen that represented the best in Australian values and which were idealized to uphold, propagate and maintain the Australian 'race', although there was vast debate about what this 'Coming Man' looked like exactly.

⁴² Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2007), 33-4, 182-5. See also White, *Inventing Australia*, 85-109; Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* Third Edition (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 130-3; Russell Ward, *The Australian Legend* Second Edition (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1966), 180-206; and for a critique of Ward's arguments in particular see Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend'.

⁴³ White, *Inventing Australia*, 76-7.

⁴⁴ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, 3.

⁴⁵ Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Carlton South: Melbourne University press, 2001), 73. For similar narratives that discuss sport based developments of colonial masculinity in the antipodes see Jock Phillips, 'The Hard Man: Rugby and Male Identity in New Zealand, in John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler (eds), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 70-90.

⁴⁶ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 31.

⁴⁷ Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 116. See also Clay Routledge, *Nostalgia: A Psychological Resource* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 34-7.

⁴⁸ ~~Brodie, 'The Politics of Rural Nostalgia Between the Wars'~~ ~~Mare Brodie, 'The Politics of Rural Nostalgia Between the Wars', in Graeme Davison and Mare Brodie (eds), *Struggle Country: The Rural Ideal in Twentieth Century Australia* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2005), 9.1-9.13.~~

⁴⁹ ~~Brodie, 'The Politics of Rural Nostalgia Between the Wars'.~~

⁵⁰ ~~A brief account of the Great Depressions impact on rural towns in south west Victoria can be found in Mortlake Historical Society, *Pastures of Peace*, 79-81. For a detailed analysis of the economic issues associated with the Great Depression see C.B. Schedvin, *Australia and The Great Depression* (South Melbourne: Sydney University Press, 1970). For insights into real life experiences of people during the Great Depression and issues of the interwar period in Australia see Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Portrait of an Australian Working-class Community* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988).~~

⁵¹ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, 3.~~

⁵² Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 37.

⁵³ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3. The Framlingham Blacks were a team which fielded predominantly Indigenous Australians. In these reflections, it was recalled that the team consisted of 14 Indigenous Australians and six white men that were called the 'white blackfellows'.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

- ⁵⁶ Richard Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid*, 170-1. For detailed analysis of Frontier confrontations between white settlers and Indigenous Australians in the south west of Victoria see Critchett, 'A Distant Field of Murder'. For historical analysis of the Frontier Wars more generally across Australia see: Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*; and Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*.
- ⁵⁷ See for example Henry Reynolds, *The Whispering in Our Hearts* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998); and W.E.H. Stanner, *After the Dreaming: Black and White Australians: An Anthropologist's View* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1969).
- ⁵⁸ Nicholas Gill, 'Transcending Nostalgia: Pastoralist Memory and Staking a Claim in the Land', in Deborah Bird Rose and Richard Davis (eds), *Dislocating the Frontier: Essaying the Mystique of the Outback* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2005), 67-83.
- ⁵⁹ ~~See Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 141-9, for an extended discussion of the development of Macintyre provides insightful details on the impact and function of the 'White Australia' policies during the early twentieth century and its links to fears of invasion and racial decline. Although Indigenous Australians seemingly no longer posed a threat to the white Australian race a method of interbreeding and Aboriginal settlements and missions were developed by governments in an effort to dilute Indigenous Australian genes and eradicate their culture.~~
- ⁶⁰ Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid*, 192. ~~Although Indigenous Australians were no longer viewed as posing a 'threat' to the 'white' racial identity of Australia, Federal and State Governments continued to enact policies aimed at the genocide of Indigenous Australians. See for example Colin Tatz, 'Confronting Australian Genocide', *Aboriginal History* 25, (2001): 16-36.~~
- ⁶¹ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3.
- ⁶² The Old Eaglehawk, 'Football in its Infancy', *Terang Express*, May 13, 1938, 8.
- ⁶³ Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002). ~~See also Matthew Klugman, 'Genus barracker': Masculinity, Race, and the Disruptive Pleasures of Rowdy Partisanship in 1880s Melbourne, *Australian Historical Studies* (2019): DOI:10.1080/1031461X.2018.1561733.~~
- ⁶⁴ Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, 194.
- ⁶⁵ Frazer Andrewes, 'A Culture of Speed: The Dilemma of Being Modern in 1930s Australia' (PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 2003): 93.
- ⁶⁶ See Critchett, 'A Distant Field of Murder', 191-2; and Jan Critchett, *Our Land Till We Die: A History of the Framlingham Aborigines* (Warrnambool: Deakin University Press, 1992).
- ⁶⁷ Annie S. Evans, 'An Aborigines Picnic at Framlingham', *Terang Express*, April 24, 1923, 4.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Andrewes, 'A Culture of Speed'.
- ⁷¹ Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu: Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident?* (Broome: Magabala Books, 2014).
- ⁷² 'Warrnambool Letter', *Mortlake Dispatch*, July 18, 1885, 3.
- ⁷³ Ibid. Established in 1885, the Greening Trophy was reported to have been the first formalized inter town football competition in the south west of Victoria.
- ⁷⁴ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Roy Hay, 'Albert "Pompey" Austin and a Golden Age of Australian Pedestrianism', *Sporting Traditions* 34, no. 2 (November 2017): 39-58. Pompey Austin had a highly successful athletic career competing at athletic competitions in and around the western district of Victoria during the 1870s and 1880s.
- ⁷⁷ The Old Eaglehawk, 'Reminiscences', *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3.
- ⁷⁸ See for example White, *Inventing Australia*, 66-72, 81 and 127; and Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*.
- ⁷⁹ Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, 68.
- ⁸⁰ Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz, *One-Eyed: A View of Australian Sport* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 59-60.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 60.

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- ⁸² Indigenous Australians received very little attention from the local press, due in part to their marginal population, and on the occasions that they did feature it was often due to disorderly conduct within rural towns. See for example ‘Local and General Items’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, September 19, 1930, 2, when ‘pandemonium reigned’ in the Camperdown Mechanics Library after ‘an Australian aboriginal ... in the excess of high spirits which had been brought about by an over-free indulgence during the afternoon stumbled’ into the reading room of the establishment looking for a place to sleep before being escorted off the premises by the police.
- ⁸³ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Reminiscences’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3.~~
- ⁸⁴ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Reminiscences’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3. Ibid. See also The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Football in its Infancy’, *Terang Express*, May 13, 1938, 8, where these sentiments were reiterated following a recollection of the Indigenous Australian Framlingham team playing a football match against a combined team of men from the nearby Keilambete district. In stating that he played ‘with them’ it is possible that ‘Old Eaglehawk’ may have been one of the six white men, so-called, ‘White Blackfellows’ that played for the Framlingham Blacks in the 1880s. This is only speculative though.~~
- ⁸⁵ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Reminiscences’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, May 24, 1935, 3. Ibid.~~
- ⁸⁶ The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3.
- ⁸⁷ Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 177-8. See also Hirst, ‘The Pioneer Legend’. Hirst has addressed in detail the romanticized depiction of the iconic pioneer that has evolved and been adapted overtime to serve various means, politically, nationally, and socially, and how historians are now rethinking the image of the pioneer legend through explorations of their role in the dispossession of Indigenous Australians.
- ⁸⁸ Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*, 177.
- ⁸⁹ Pascoe and Papalia, “‘A Most Manly and Amusing Game’”.
- ⁹⁰ Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*, 177.
- ⁹¹ The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Early Football Days’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, July 12, 1935, 4.
- ⁹² The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 21, 1935, 3.
- ⁹³ The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3, *italics not in original.*
- ⁹⁴ Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid*, 192.
- ⁹⁵ The Old Eaglehawk, ‘The Evolution of Football in the Mortlake District’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, June 7, 1935, 3.
- ⁹⁶ ~~The Old Eaglehawk, ‘Football Reminiscences’, *Mortlake Dispatch*, August 9, 1935, p. 3.~~
- ⁹⁷ ~~The Wanderer, “‘Magpies’ of the Past’, *Camperdown Chronicle*, September 2, 1937, p. 5.~~
- ⁹⁸ ~~Ibid.~~