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South Australian Government Geologist, H. Y. L. Brown, on field work
near Charlotte Waters, Central Australia ca.1900

SPECIAL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ISSUE

Edited By

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PREFACE

Australia and New Zealand are relatively recent contributors to Western Science, and this collection of papers is the first to deal with the geological contribution from the region. Coincidentally 1788 saw the publication of Hutton's 'Theory of the Earth', the foundation of a British colony at Sydney and the birth of Johannes Menge who was destined to become the first to be employed as a "geologist" in Australia.

Early geological writings on Australia and New Zealand showed little native influence. Until the second half of the nineteenth century, these consisted of European (dominantly English) perspectives of a strange land which nevertheless furnished confirmation of geological concepts that had been established at home.

With the creation of permanent museums, geological surveys and universities, resident geologists began the systematic study of this vast region, a task hampered by isolation, parochial attitudes and the economic stringencies of government. In the case of de Vis, Howchin, Howitt and the Gregorys, to name only a few from the following papers, their achievements were truly remarkable. This small geological community underwent slow expansion and development until after World War Two, when the value of science and technology was more widely appreciated and geological research blossomed.

This collection of papers resulted from an invitation to all foundation members of the Earth Sciences History Group of the Geological Society of Australia Inc (founded 1984). The overwhelming response to this call has meant that some papers need regretfully to be held over to a subsequent issue of this Journal. If all these papers provide Australians and New Zealanders, as well as "overseas" readers with a greater appreciation of Australasian geologists then we as Editors will be well satisfied.

Barry J. Cooper
Colin G. Gatehouse
Editors

COVER ILLUSTRATION

A perspective of the pioneer Australian geologist in the outback. South Australian Government Geologist, H.Y.L. Brown, (front) accompanied by camel driver and Aboriginal assistant about 1900. For discussion of Brown's work see paper by R.C. Sprigg in this volume (Courtesy Mortlock Library, State Library of South Australia).

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY FOR 1985

1985 will be remembered as the year we broke "400"; membership at the close of the year was 412. Of these, 315 members reside in the United States and 97 throughout other parts of the world. In all, 20 countries are represented among the membership. During the year, member Clifford J. Awald died.

In addition to membership, 87 copies of the journal go to libraries in America and 42 to other countries. Although it is pleasing to recount these figures, they do not provide any reason for complacency. Members should actively encourage their professional associates to participate in our society. They should also check to confirm that their institutional library subscribes to Earth Sciences History.

Five copies of the journal are sold to libraries in the People's Republic of China. The two biggest geographic gaps in distribution are to India and throughout eastern Europe. In view of currency exchange difficulties, it is unlikely that either members or libraries will be obtained from these regions in the near future. Should anyone in the society wish to enroll a member and pay his dues, the society will be pleased to make special arrangements.

Two issues of the journal, and the ballot and dues notice were mailed during the year. With the assistance of C. Worden, a membership list was prepared and distributed. While this does not loom large in the annals of publication, it was another first for the society. One member is "lost"; anyone knowing of Gary Hendricks is asked to contact the Secretary.

This division of responsibility between Treasurer and Secretary, begun last year, has gone smoothly.

Several society members have been involved in planning the program in history for the 1989 International Congress of Geology to be held in Washington, D.C. The event should be noted on your calenders.

In summary, nothing outstanding occurred during the year, but there has been steady growth. As was noted previously, "so far, so good" with our fledgling society.

Ellis Yochelson

The REPORT OF THE SECRETARY FOR 1985 will appear in Volume 5, Number 2, 1986.