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THE WAYFARER

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POETS PAYING TRIBUTE TO POET GORDON

The photo below was taken at the annual pilgrimage to the grave of Adam Lindsay Gordon at Brighton Cemetery in 1938. Pictured from left to right are Edward (Ted) Philip Harrington, Ted Turner and Nathan Frederick Spielvogel. In a remarkable coincidence, our very own patrons, Prof. Weston and Janice Bate wrote the entry to Spielvogel in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*;

"SPIELVOGEL, NATHAN FREDERICK (1874-1956), teacher, writer and historian, was born on 10 May 1874 at Ballarat, Victoria, son of Newman Frederick Spielvogel, pawnbroker, and his wife Hannah, née Cohen. Newman, an Austrian, and Hannah, a Prussian, were typical of the strong Jewish community on

the Ballarat goldfields. Nathan attended Dana Street State School and trained there in 1892-95 as a pupil-teacher. He taught at several schools in the Wimmera, including Dimboola (1897, 1899-1907).

A small man, with sharply chiselled features, a wide forehead, big ears, warm eyes, a jutting chin and a beard that became golden, Spielvogel was adventurous and imaginative. In 1904 he spent his savings of £120 on a six-month journey through Egypt, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Britain. He had begun his writing career in 1894 with a Christmas story for the *Ballarat Courier*...but was probably best known for his first book, 'A Gumsucker on the Tramp' (1906). It sold 20,000 copies. He also published 'The

Cocky Farmer' (1914), 'A Gumsucker at Home' (1914), 'Old Eko's Note-Book' (1930) and a volume of poetry called 'Our Gum Trees' (1913).

He loved a beer (not lager) and around 1908 dined every Thursday at Fasoli's café, Melbourne, with writers and artists such as Norman Lindsay and C. J. Dennis. Later he was close to J. K. Moir, and R. H. Croll of the Bread and Cheese Club. Croll thought him 'offensively Australian' yet proudly Jewish, a conjunction that rent Spielvogel in 1901 when his love for a Gentile conflicted with a promise to his mother not to marry out of the faith. He remained steadfast and on 6 September 1911 at the Great Synagogue, Hyde Park, Sydney, married Jessie

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POETS PAYING TRIBUTE TO POET GORDON...CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

Muriel, daughter of Henry Harris, publisher of the Hebrew Standard.

After further postings to other Victorian schools, Spielvogel returned to Ballarat to be headmaster of Dana Street in 1924-39. Inspiring, sympathetic and methodical, he was immensely popular: a phalanx of pupils usually escorted him into the grounds. As president of the revived Ballarat Historical Society (1933-56), he developed a passion for local history. He published vignettes of early Ballarat life and a popular monograph, 'The Affair at Eureka' (1928). After retirement he was largely responsible for managing the local museum and for placing plaques and monuments at historic sites. His broadcasts and press releases increased historical awareness.

A sharp mind lay behind his lifelong interest in chess: he was secretary (1894) and president (1939) of the Ballarat club and represented Victoria in 1921 and 1925. He was instrumental in sustaining the Ballarat synagogue between 1941 and 1953 and wrote Jewish stories with a tenderness and strength that drew from Judah Waten the remark that Jewish literature in Australia began with him. Spielvogel died on 10 September 1956 at Ballarat and was buried in the old cemetery."

And Ted Harrington;

"HARRINGTON, EDWARD PHILIP (1895-1966), balladist, was

born on 28 September 1895 at Shepparton, Victoria, fourth child of Philip Harrington, a farmer from Ireland, and his Victorian-born wife Margaret, née O'Brien. On 22 February 1917 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force; he was then 5 ft 3 ins (160 cm) tall, his chest measured 32 ins (81 cm)...Harrington sailed to the Middle East and in August joined the 4th Light Horse Regiment in Palestine. He took part in the charge at Beersheba (31 October) and in the 1918 advance to Damascus, Syria, before being discharged in Australia on 24 August 1919. For much of his remaining life he required medical attention and received a repatriation pension.

After the war Harrington 'went broke on a Mallee farm'. In the 1920s he began contributing to the 'Bulletin' and 'Labour Call.' Widely described as the last of the bush balladists—a term which undervalues the range of his writing—he once said that he was 'a literary throwback'. One critic described his ballads as 'humorous, racy and realistic', but another, while agreeing that all Harrington's verse possessed 'a virile, singing, swinging quality', also pointed to the many poems with lyrical qualities. At least fifteen were set to music: eight of them (including 'My Old Black Billy') by Edith Harry, and others by Peter Dawson who recorded 'The Bushrangers' and 'Lasseter's Last Ride'. Harrington, nevertheless, made very little from any of his verses. A foundation member of both the Australian Poetry Lovers'

Society (1934) and the Bread and Cheese Club (1938), Harrington regularly visited J. K. Moir's weekend gatherings, always wearing a grey felt hat and often a dark blue overcoat, and never without a child's cardboard school-case which was referred to as his 'two-bottle case'. He was friendly but reserved, and only offered an opinion when asked directly.

In all, Harrington was the author of five collections of verse—'Songs of War and Peace' (1920), 'Boundary Bend and Other Ballads' (1936), 'My Old Black Billy and Other Songs of the Australian Outback' (c.1940), 'The Kerrigan Boys and Other Australian Verses' (1944) and 'The Swagless Swaggie and Other Ballads' (1957)—all noteworthy for their restrained social comment and humanism.

Seeing him at Jack Titus' pub in 1962, L. J. Blake observed: 'He looked spry enough but the dreadful cough was with him then. A tiny man with a coat too long and legs so short, but one could see him with emu feather jauntily in his hat and those legs in breeches, a light horseman of the first A.I.F. who fought once at Beersheba'. Harrington died of emphysema and chronic bronchitis on 28 May 1966 in North Melbourne and was buried in Fawkner cemetery. His estate was sworn for probate at \$4539."

(Source: <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120044b.htm> and <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140445b.htm>)

"A small man, with sharply chiselled features, a wide forehead, big ears, warm eyes, a jutting chin and a beard that became golden, Spielvogel was adventurous and imaginative"

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE SAINT 1857 TO 1867

Approaching Penola in the south-east of South Australia by road from the north, you travel past vineyards with entrances of pergolas covered with climbing roses and the occasional small limestone brick cottage with a slate roof. From the south there are lush green pastures stocked with sheep, and sprinkled with stately red-gum trees.



(above) Woods-MacKillop First Josephite School House at Penola

This is the area where Father Julian Tenison Woods, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Mary MacKillop carried out their professions. Priest/Geologist, Police Trooper/Horse Breaker and School Teacher, all young and facing the challenges of their surroundings.

Penola is now a small, rich town, the hub of the district, where, within walking distance can be found historical centres dedicated to preserving the history of these individuals.

Going back in time to the year 1857, we saw the coming together of Father Julian Tenison Woods and Adam Lindsay Gordon.

Then, we have the two men travelling the district on horseback in their tasks as travelling priest and horse breaker, meeting up with each other at stations, or along the roads, sometimes by accident and at other times by arrangement, and happily conversing on the subject of literature of which

they were both fond, like finding an oasis in a desert.

In a publication called *Life*, Woods describes his meetings with Gordon over a period of five years saying that he was Gordon's only close friend. Woods describes Gordon at the time of their first meeting: *"I met him on a cattle station near Robe where he was breaking in some horses for Mr Stockdale. He was at work in a stockyard on a colt that was trying hard to throw him. At last the girths broke and Gordon landed on his feet. After supper he found me on the veranda, and talked for an hour, not on usual topics at such places, but about poetry and poets. The next morning as I resumed my journey, he overtook me. He was going to a station forty miles away, and the same road that I was following. He wore the usual bush costume—a slouched hat, a blue jumper, with a pair of riding cords tucked into common Wellington boots. He was always neatly dressed and carried the air of a gentleman."*

In contrast to the two travellers we have Mary MacKillop, nine years younger than Woods, born and educated in Melbourne, the first of eight children in a poor family, but had to work from a very early age to earn money for the family. Her aunt Margaret on her father's side was married to Alexander Cameron, the

founder of Penola and Mary came to the Cameron's property as Governess to his children in 1860 at the age of 18. Mary enjoyed the social life of Penola with its Scottish traditions and was a keen horsewoman. She would have enjoyed the steeplechases and the exploits of the daring Adam Lindsay Gordon who visited the town often.

At 19, Mary heard Father Woods from the altar speak of the disparity that existed between the children of the rich station owners and the poor working class and decided to offer herself as an aid to Father Woods in some poor Order, as far as her other duties would permit. Thus began their 'Dream' together. In 1866, after gathering the necessary teaching qualifications, Mary wore a simple black dress at the Feast of St. Joseph assembly in her school, renovated from stables by Mary's brother John. The black dress symbolised her intention of devoting her life to God through service to the needy.

Mary's commitment was recognised by Bishop Sheil when he visited Penola in January 1867 and addressed Mary MacKillop as Sister Mary.

(Acknowledgements: Shaw Fitchett, T. (ed.), "Life Magazine" (1909), Muller, M, historian, Penola)

"This is the area where Father Julian Tenison Woods, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Mary MacKillop carried out their professions"

VAE VICTIS!

THERE was revel on Flemington Course,
Clamour of tongues and clatter of feet,
Rider to rider and horse to horse,
' 'Twas a China orange to Lombard Street.'

There were bookmakers, trainers, touts,
Heavy swells and their jockeys light,
The man that drinks and the man that shouts,
Carrier pigeon and carrion kite.

Wheresoever the carcass lies,
There will the eagles gather together,
And the shambles swarm with the summer flies
That buzz and drone in the summer weather.

' Vae Victis ! Woe to the conquered !
Gone our luck is, lick'd we are ;
I warrant my friend "Mr. Peter Prankerd"
Would have made an investment safer far.'

For the partisans of Falcon quailed,
And the backers of Barwon felt a chill,
And the stride of Lady Heron failed,
And Cowra stopped, and Mozart stood still.

In the Stand the faces of many paled,
And the pulses of many stayed on the hill,
When through his horses the Exile sailed,
And raised the hopes he couldn't fulfil.

Tell it not in the city of gold,
In Dowling Forest publish it not,
How he flagged and tired, the four-year-old,
Long or ever a place he got.

[The full version of the poem "Vae Victis!" by Adam Lindsay Gordon can be viewed on our website:
http://adamlindsaygordon.org/works_vaevictis.htm]

THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL

Author Maldon Robb wrote this lyrical tribute to Gordon:

"And what shall we say of our debt to him? This at least- it can never be repaid.

Centuries hence, when men go up beside the banks of the noble stream of great poetry, which we believe will one day gladden the city and humanize and fertilize and deepen our Australian national life, as they climb...to its source, they will find on a broken memorial column, in letters that cannot fade, the name of ADAM LINDSAY GORDON"

Our committee would like to thank the 278 people who answered our call to keep the broken memorial column of Adam Lindsay Gordon (pictured, below) in letters that cannot fade, and who have enabled us to reach our goal of \$10,000 so that in centuries hence when people go up the banks of the noble stream of great poetry they will find our national monument still there as an inspiration to our Australian national life.

Foremost in our minds are the Low family, the holders of the

right-of-burial to the gravesites and descendants of the remarried Maggie, who have kindly given us permission to carry on with repairs into the future.

Lorraine Huddle, who gave her time freely as a heritage expert. The Hon. Peter Garrett for providing funds with a grant from the Commemoration of Historic Events and Famous Persons scheme. The restoration work was done by Lodge Bros (www.lodgebros.com.au) and the plants surrounding the monument were selected by Dave Hewitt of Valley Road Nursery, Highton, Geelong and to Elrae Adams who carefully did the planting.

Above all we would like to thank Vivienne and Travis M. Sellers for donating the proceeds from their cemetery research requests to our project. The funds are on Term Deposit with the Bendigo Bank where the seventh wonder of the world, known as 'compound interest' will see a healthy balance in the years to come.

- John Adams (Secretary)



(left) The restored grave Oct 2010, and (right) one of the broken panels before the restoration by Lodge Bros.

