

# “Among the Boer Children” Australian women teachers in South African concentration camp schools, 1901-1904

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – There exists no detailed account of the 40 Australian women teachers employed within the “concentration camps” established by British forces in the Orange River and Transvaal colonies during the Boer War. The purpose of this paper is to critically respond to this dearth in historiography.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A large corpus of newspaper accounts represents the richest, most accessible and relatively idiosyncratic source of data concerning this contingent of women. The research paper therefore interprets concomitant print-based media reports of the period as a resource for educational and historiographical data.

**Findings** – Towards the end of the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) a total of 40 Australian female teachers – four from Queensland, six from South Australia, 14 from Victoria and 16 from New South Wales – successfully answered the imperial call conscripting educators for schools within “concentration camps” established by British forces in the Orange River and Transvaal colonies. Women’s exclusive participation in this initiative, while ostensibly to teach the Boer children detained within these camps, also exerted an influential effect on the popular consciousness in reimagining cultural ideals about female teachers’ professionalism in ideological terms.

**Research limitations/implications** – One limitation of the study relates to the dearth in official records about Australian women teachers in concentration camps given that; not only are Boer War-related records generally difficult to source; but also that even the existent data is incomplete with many chapters missing completely from record. Therefore, while the data about these women is far from complete, the account in terms of newspaper reports relies on the existent accounts of them typically in cases where their school and community observe their contributions to this military campaign and thus credit them with media publicity.

**Originality/value** – The paper’s originality lies in recovering the involvement of a previously underrepresented contingent of Australian women teachers while simultaneously offering a primary reading of the ideological work this involvement played in influencing the political narrative of Australia’s educational involvement in the Boer War.

**Keywords** Frank Tate, Australian women teachers, Boer War, Concentration camp schools, Frederick Bridges, Joseph Chamberlain, Orange River colony, Sir Alfred (Lord) Milner, Transvaal Colony, Walter Bethel

**Paper type** Research paper

The relatively large body of scholarship concerning the various concentration/refugee camps established by the British prior to, and after, the Boer War chiefly focuses on the highly problematic conditions of these camps and the suffering, disease and high mortality rates experienced by its detainees, particularly the children held within these camps. Without attempting to discount the significance of this narrative in the historiography concerning imperial concentration camps in South Africa, this paper situates the participation of the 39 Australian women teachers who worked within these camps against the backdrop of this politicised setting. While some view the strategy to dispatch Australian female teachers to South African camps as an imperial attempt to “anglicise” the Boers (Ellis, 2010; Davidson, 2012), the contention of this examination of their significance is twofold. First, that their involvement represented as



much an imperial enterprise of educational endeavour as an ideological enterprise of Australian women and war. Second, and by extension, that the commitment and contributions of the 39 Australian women teachers serving in the Imperial concentration camps in South Africa merit inclusion in a reappraisal of Australian women's involvement in Boer War historiography; "Trade follows the flag, and the school-book the sword" claimed the *Bendigo Advertiser* in its article entitled "The Concentration Camps. Australian Teachers Selected", asserting that this contingent of women would "not fight for the Empire with sword, but to complete the mission begun so well by the soldier" (*Bendigo Advertiser*, 1902b).

While Upshur Jiu-Hwa *et al.* (2012) claim "The major military confrontation in Africa prior to World War I was not between European and African forces but between the British and the Dutch Boers in South Africa" (p. 730) – the so-called "Boer War" between 1899 and 1902 – there had been earlier Australian colonial involvement in British Imperial war-making in Africa when Australia dispatched to Africa a battalion of over 700 to fight in the Sudan conflict in 1885 (Breen, 2008, p. 11). According to Lyons and Dimock (2007), "when Australia contributed to the British forces fighting in South Africa. However [...] Australia's interests in Africa were, through most of the twentieth century, indirectly through London and British colonial links. Perhaps it is no great surprise that Australia has little diplomatic interest in Africa, outside of Commonwealth responsibilities" (p. 316). The Boers were agrarian Dutch settlers who "resented both British domination and British emancipation of their African slaves" and resisted the British expansion into the Boers' two independently created nations; "the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, which Great Britain did not recognize" (Upshur Jiu-Hwa *et al.*, 2012, pp. 730-731).

This examination adopts a form of case-study research for evaluative purposes to examine the effects of the scheme to send Australian women teachers to South Africa both professionally and culturally. Further, since contemporary print media of the period offers a rich source of detailed data particularising the women who volunteered as Australian agents of an Imperial scheme, this study utilises a large body of newspaper accounts digitised by the National Library of Australia as a resource for educational and historiographical data. In this sense, the work is "Trove-enabled" in that it harnesses this invaluable resource to shed light on a largely unexamined chapter of Australian women's educational history. The dearth in official records about Australian women teachers in concentration camps is not particularly surprising given that; not only are Boer War-related records difficult to source; but also that even the existent data is incomplete with many chapters missing completely from record. Thus the existent contemporaneous print media-based data unties a form of public record about these women directly with developing an underrepresented chapter in the historiography of Australian education and the Anglo-Boer War. Therefore, in order to unify these women into the history of Australia's educational involvement relative to the Boer War and carry forward the scholarship about these women as teachers, the discussion begins by briefly contextualising the development of educational services within the British concentration camps, before charting the agents tasked with the Australian recruitment of teachers towards implementing this scheme. The analysis will then present a more detailed discussion exploring the cultural and professional effects of their participation on the lives of the Australian women teachers in the years leading up to the end of the Boer War and immediately thereafter.

**Concentration camp schools: an imperial initiative**

“Just fancy leaving genial, hospitable, civilized Australia to be buried for two years, isolated from the others, in some remote inaccessible settlement on the veldt” was the rhetorical view posed by the *Daily Express* reporting from Cape Town in September 1902 (*Daily Express* via *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 1902b). Alternatively, a “rough and picturesque start for a State system” was how one Australian account described British-laid plans for instituting a future educational policy within the 33 so-called “concentration camps” established to reportedly house Boer women and children beginning in 1900 (Hobart *Mercury*, 1904). The camps had been initially established for the interment of “captured Boer burghers” but following the British declaration of martial law as a result of continuing burgher insurgency, “[w]ithin a matter of months, thousands of women and children were homeless and dependent on others” (Hasian, 2003, p. 145)[1].

One of the more comprehensive accounts of the establishment of schools in Boer-War detainee camps is William Basil Worsfold’s (1906) *Lord Milner’s Work in South Africa from its Commencement in 1897 to the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902*. British High Commissioner Lord Alfred Milner recruited one Edmund Beale Sargant (1855-1938), Education Adviser to the Imperial Administration, “to organise the work of education reconstruction in the new colonies in the autumn of 1900” (Worsfold, 1906, p. 520). Sargant arranged to establish camp schools, initially from Bloemfontein and thereafter from Pretoria, and quickly discovered an acute demand for teachers given the total number of children in camp schools in May 1901 numbered 4,000. While Milner invested time into recruiting “well-trained teachers from England, and subsequently from the over-sea colonies” (p. 522), Sargant also visited Australia in 1900 in his capacity with the British Department of Education on a recruitment drive. Once the scheme was established and with the steady arrival of British and foreign women teachers “the camp schools steadily extended; and on May 31st, 1902, the date of the Vereeniging surrender, when the attendance reached its highest point, more than 17,000 Boer children were being thus educated in the Transvaal camps, and more than 12,000 in those of the Orange River colony” (Worsfold, 1906, p. 528).

By 1902, the camps had evolved to some degree into more humane and benevolent centres responsive to concerns expressed by women such as Millicent Garret Fawcett (1847-1929), widow of British statesman Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), who had sailed to South Africa in July 1901 entrusted with the task of investigating the accuracy of British campaigner Emily Hobhouse’s (1860-1926) condemnation of the appalling conditions apparent in imperial concentration camps. One Australian report however discerned a somewhat “ominous note is struck in the promise of the Imperial authorities that ‘medical attention will be given free of charge [to the foreign teachers] during the period of engagement’”, implying that the issue of sanitation and infection was still a pressing problem within the camps (Grafton *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 1902). The same report also noted, optimistically, that the Anglo-Boer War may in fact be over by the time the women arrive. Recruited foreign teachers reportedly “filled the gap left by the Hollander teachers, who had returned to Europe after the outbreak of the war” (Worsfold, 1906, p. 523). According to Worsfold’s interpretation of attendance statistics, that in 1898 the number of children enrolled in the government schools of the Orange Free State totalled 8,157 translated to the British Administration of that colony educating “one-third more Boer children in the camp schools than the Free State Government had educated in the time of peace” (Worsfold, 1906, p. 528, fn. 2).

### The Australian contingent of women teachers

“Sending Australasian teachers to South Africa for the Dutch children in the concentration camps” was, for one editor, “An interesting experiment [...] made by the Imperial authorities” (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 1902). Yet, aside from Walter Bethel’s (1902) report entitled “Selection of Teachers for South Africa. Report by W.E. Bethel”, a very brief reference by Alfred Emmott (1858-1926), recorded in the UK Parliament Hansard (1903), and a House of Assembly report by the member for Torrens (South Australia) John Greeley Jenkins (1851-1923), little more official records exist as to the efforts and involvement of the 39[2] Australian women teaching in the camp schools. In contemporary terms, there is no mention or accounting for the Australian women teachers on the Australian Government’s “The Boer War” website and neither are they mentioned on the Australian Government’s “Women in action – nurses and serving women” portal. Similarly, the same level of the exclusion of Australian women teachers appears on the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (1901/1913) “Gallipoli and the Anzacs – Researching Australians at Gallipoli and Australians at War: Australians at War 1901–2000” website. The trend is replicated on a number of other state websites such as the South Australian Government’s “South African War Memorial” which similarly notes the involvement of nine South Australian nurses but not the six South Australian women teachers. Similarly, the ANZAC day Commemoration Committee (Qld) Incorporated website entitled “World War I – The Nurses” makes mention of the involvement of Queensland nurses but not the four women teachers hailing from Queensland. The Department of Veterans’ Affairs has however produced a teaching resource which makes references to Australian women teachers and the Boer War; specifically quoting passages from Eliza Riedi’s article “Teaching Empire: British and Dominion Women Teachers in the South African War Concentration Camp” (Riedi, 2005, pp. 1330-1 and 1333-4). Other sources considering women generally (Heyningen, 2011) and Australian women teachers specifically are beginning to emerge, including Chris Schoeman’s (2013) monograph, *Angels of Mercy: Foreign Women in the Anglo-Boer War*, which includes a section on South Australian teacher, Margaret McInnes.

From the existent sources most tend to perpetuate the view that Australian women teachers arrived in the aftermath of the Boer War. One source for instance claims “When the war was over Australian school teachers, mainly women, helped build the education system of the Transvaal and Orange Free State” (National Boer War Memorial Association, 2011). This view is also promoted on another site (SMSA). Ferguson (2012) concurs, also maintaining that the Australian contingent arrived at the end of the Boer War to provide for the educational needs of the Boer women and children interned in British camps. However, a report entitled “School Teachers in South Africa” printed in Perth’s *Inquirer and Commercial News* on 15 February 1901 claimed that “Miss Ferks [sic], head mistress at the Central Infants’ School, and Miss Holbrook, first assistant at the same school, have accepted appointments to assist in organising kindergarten teaching in the Transvaal and Orange River States”. These women employed by the Department resigned from their positions to join a scheme under the purview of Mr E.B. Sargent, MA, whom had “received the appointment of the departments named in South Africa [for the Transvaal and Orange River colony schools]” (*Inquirer and Commercial News*, 1901). Thus, Trollope’s (2006) contention that the South African camp schools were “set up by several hundred enterprising teachers towards the end of the Boer War” (Trollope, 2006, p. 72) more accurately tracks Australian women teacher’s involvement previous to wars-end; particularly when taking into account the reported appointments of Ellen M. Firks and Lillie A. Holbrook in 1901.

Dagg (2001), in referring to non-Australian women teachers asserts that the 40 Canadian female teachers chosen to work in the concentration camps “were later joined by teachers from New Zealand and Australia” (Dagg, 2001, p. 116) therefore implying that the Canadians were among the first arrivals. While Jeffery contends that colonial contributions to Boer War efforts were not exclusively male – supporting the view with the claim; “Some 60 Australian, 12 New Zealand and 8 Canadian nurses took part and 20 women teachers were sent from New Zealand to help with the education of children in the concentration camps” (Jeffery, 2000, cited in Lowry, 2000, p. 189) – that Jeffery’s account makes no mention of the involvement of Australian women teachers as a manifestation of colonial contribution implies that either their participation was unknown or that the scholarly accounts detailing New Zealand’s women teachers’ involvement are more apparent. In fact, according to Riedi (2005):

Of the Australian teachers most came from New South Wales and Victoria, with four from Queensland and six from South Australia (the selectors considered Tasmania and Western Australia too remote). Ten of the New South Wales teachers worked in state schools while five were described as “teachers of high attainment and long experience outside Dept” [...] Indeed, while a significant number of Australian applicants were British born, economic necessity as much as patriotism seems to have been a common factor. Unusually, several of the Australian teachers were married women, presumably widows thrown on their own resources (Riedi, 2005, pp. 1330-1 and 1333-4).

It is also interesting to note that in the references that do exist there is a bifurcation of, on the one hand the teachers’ pedagogic purposes, and on the other the mythologies emerging from their presence. Lord Milner, after all, invested an ideological onus in the scheme by “employ[ing] teachers only who are animated with truly patriotic sentiments” (Worsfold, 1906, p. 53). Similarly, a number of reports observed that English suffragists such as Millicent Garret Fawcett (1847-1929) contended that the stringent selection of teachers rested with the objective “that the teachers’ views shall harmonise with the views of the [presumably English] parents” (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, 1903); given Boer children were not exclusive detainees in the main (camps also included the children of displaced British settlers as an influential minority). Not only was this patriotic sentimentality to harmonise expressly with imperial loyalties it was also expressly anti-Catholic. The recruitment process itself privileged non-Catholic candidates and eliminated this religious affiliation entirely from the pool of successful applicants. In fact, South Australian applicant and head teacher at Harrogate school, Mary Catherine Carew for instance, had been eliminated from selection based on her Catholic religious affiliation (Chamberlain, 1903)[3]. Non-denominational religious instruction was however provided in the camp schools; reportedly modelled on the New South Wales curriculum (Charters Towers *Northern Miner*, 1902; Hobart *Mercury*, 1904).

Three men were responsible for selecting the successful candidates; Frederick Bridges (1840-1904) of the New South Wales Education Department, Frank Tate (1864-1939), Victorian Director of Education and Walter Edmund Bethel (1863-1941) of the Education Department serving as secretary (*Brisbane Courier*, 1902a). The many notices appearing in the classified sections of contemporary newspapers directed interested candidates from Queensland and New South Wales to address their applications to Frederick Bridges and those from Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia to Frank Tate. Key selection criteria included, among others, the mandate that all successful candidates be certified teachers, under the age of 40 years old,

unmarried, preferably with four to five years' experience in teaching young children, and with the ability to teach singing *sine qua non* (Scott, 1902, p. 7). The terms of employment offered to successful applicants included the offer a 12-month appointment (with the option of contract renewal and salary increase), a starting salary of £100, second-class return fares, medical services, and camp accommodation and rations. While the original contingent of successful candidates numbered 40, that one of the nominees suffered "ship hysteria" during the voyage from Sydney to Melbourne (Bethel, 1902, p. 8), reduced by one the final number of Australian women teachers arriving at Cape Town on 24 August 1902 to a complement of 39. Mrs Heapy (nee Maloney), from New South Wales, was sent back to Sydney both on the advice of the ship's doctor (Dr Philips) but also given the ship's captain, Lieutenant Aitkin, R.N., refused to take her on to Cape Town (Bethel, 1902, p. 8).

Information supplied by the Minister for Public Instruction, Labour and Industry Cr. John Perry (1845-1922), to the Legislative Assembly on Thursday 10 July 1902 claimed that of the 89 applications received from women employed in NSW to-date, seven were selected, with the stipulation that upon acceptance of the posts, the candidates were required to resign from the Department prior to departure for South Africa under agreement that no re-offer or no guarantee of an offer of re-employment would be extended upon their return (*Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 1902). It appears however from reports appearing thereafter that some exceptions to this proviso were possible. According to one report "The Education departments have decided that as the terms of the engagement are for one year, that those who are going to the Transvaal will receive one year's leave without pay" (*Bendigo Advertiser*, 1902a, b). Additionally, speaking at New Plymouth the Premier of New Zealand, the Hon. Richard John Seddon (1845-1906) urged teachers against accepting appointments if their departmental positions offered superior terms and forewarned against the harsh and "extremely rough" conditions in the camps (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1902a; *Adelaide Observer*, 1902). Chairman of the Board of Inspectors for the Education Department, Lionel W. Stanton (b. 1843), argued that the £100 per annum salary was hardly an incentive for the South Australian teachers to volunteer in the scheme (*Adelaide Advertiser*, 1902b). Another account noted somewhat disparagingly that the Australian women "will have to serve two masters [...] under the general supervision of the Acting Director of Education for the Transvaal and the Orange River Colonies, and [...] be required to comply with the military regulations in force in the different camps" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1902a).

However, the fact that over 400 applications were received for some 40 appointments suggests that the attraction among women to volunteer their services extended beyond purely economic or remunerative grounds. Indeed, that women such as Elizabeth Jane Vaughan Boulger (d. 1911), wife of Dr Edward Vaughan Boulger (d. 1910), former professor of classics and comparative philology and literature at Adelaide University, submitted an application (*Adelaide Register*, 1902a) – unsuccessfully as it turned out – suggests the opportunity appealed to a variety of women from the various stratum of the middle-classes. Interestingly, these women seemed not to be dissuaded by forecasts of the aftermath of the cessation of the conflict. One Australian report for instance cautioned that "it may be found inadvisable or even impossible to break up at an early date the camps in which women teachers concerned are asked to work" (*Grafton Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 1902). Having said this, the factors motivating these women to apply may have included considerations such as career advancement, fiscal rewards, marriage prospects and/or travel. South Australian teacher Margaret McInnes had after all, claimed in a letter to her mother

dated 2 April 1903 “How the Education Dept are slaughtering the salaries at home. I’d have not got my rise this year if I’d been there. Don’t think I’ll ask man Stanton [Chairman of the Board of Inspectors] for his £80 a year” (McInnes, 1903d). A number of newspapers regularly updated readers concerning the teacher’s career advancement. May Volwes, for instance, was reported as having not only “passed a severe examination in the Taal or Boer language, and is now qualified to teach it in schools”, but had “also been chosen to take charge of the highest class in the gymnasium at Pretoria” (*Queenslander*, 1905). And in the case of Ida Roberston, she not only “decided to stay in South Africa indefinitely”, but was in fact joined by her sister, Jessie, whom reportedly “received an appointment as a State teacher in Heidelberg, South Africa” (*The Newsletter: An Australian Paper for Australian People*, 1903). With respect to marrying, a number of accounts observe that at least two women of the Australian contingent “in their spare time secured well-to-do-husbands” (*Portland Guardian*, 1903; *Kilmore Free Press*, 1903). While I have identified at least five women who married (Bertha Jones, May Vowles, Frances Alys Williams, Maud Eaton and Edith Boroondara Bonney), some publications of the day in fact promoted the South African colonies as a ripe market for teacher’s marriage prospects:

Forty shillings a week with board and lodging is an inducement to many girls, but the inducements of marriage are greater still in the newly conquered Boer provinces, and there is a good prospect of Australia being called upon for further supplies of female teachers to replace those who are sure to form matrimonial alliances. Australia can easily spare 20,000 educated single women (*Melbourne Table Talk*, 1902).

Opportunities for extensive travel was a given. Before returning to South Australia, Lucy Maria Frick, for instance, visited Johannesburg, Mauritzburg and Durban (*Adelaide Register*, 1903). Another South Australian, Kassie Gordon Wylie visited Groote Schuur, the home and estate the late Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) bequeathed to South Africa, where she encountered Dr Jameson (Sir Leander Starr Jameson (1853-1917) aka “Dr Jim”) as he sat writing in the billiard room (Wylie, 1902). In fact, Mary Wright indicates that some of the women were entertained by notable guests, seemingly as an exercise in public relations, the “distinguished visitors” including; “The Duchess of Westminster, Lady Tweedale, and the Countess of Airlie [Mabell Ogilvy]” as well as an expected “visit from Mr. Chamberlain when he arrives” (*Brisbane The Telegraph*, 1903). Margaret McInnes[4] also offers this account of witnessing Chamberlain addressing the crowd in Johannesburg on 10 January 1903:

On Thursday all J’burg went mad over the arrival of Chamberlain. He held a reception on the oval. Only a limited number of the elite of J’burg were admitted to the place from which he was to address the crowd and these by ticket. We couldn’t get tickets though our friends tried hard. At any rate at the appointed time Miss Young & I walked calmly on to the stand. Nobody told us we mustn’t & after a while we found ourselves in the very first row. In fact I believe I was the woman closest to the noble Joe while he made his famous speech to the J’burg citizens. He is a wonderful speaker and sways the crowd just as he likes. By the time he had finished his speech they were ready to pay any tax he asked for (McInnes, 1903d).

### Departures

Accounts reveal that the organisational strategy of actually getting the women teachers to South Africa was fraught with bureaucratic difficulties from the outset. On the one hand, the imperial government argued that the question of responsibility regarding the women’s travelling expenses and disbursements for personal incidentals

rested with the federal government. On the other, the federal government insisted that advancing such remuneration was impossible without Parliamentary authority. Bethel “urged the Federal Government to advance the money but Mr. Deakin fully explained the constitutional difficulties of the situation which rendered it impossible for the Federal Government to take up any responsibility in the matter. That responsibility he explained was now vested in the two Commissioners and the Federal Government was merely the channel of communication between them and the Imperial Government” (Bethel, 1902, p. 3). The confusion motivated the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* (1903) to observe “No one seems to know who is to pay their passage” further pondering “whether the Imperial Government wishes them to be shipped as passengers or merely as cargo”. The reporter had a point. Various allusions to the bureaucratic handling of the women as freight imply a sense of their commodification as property. Indeed, Bethel pointedly states in his report that he “subsequently learned that the Canadian teachers came over first-class to London and that the English and Scotch teachers, and I believe the New Zealanders also, travelled most comfortably to Africa at from £25 to £30 per head” whereas the Australian contingent travelled second-class at only £18 to £19 per head (Bethel, 1902, p. 7).

The issue of fiscal responsibility was however eventually resolved with a compromise: the Australian government would outlay the initial funds and recoup the deficit from British authorities (*Melbourne Argus*, via *Adelaide Advertiser*, 1902). Walter Bethel sailed from Sydney with the Queensland and New South Wales teachers on 25 July 1902 (Bethel, 1902, p. 6). This group joined successful applicants from South Australia (who had travelled overland) and Victoria in Melbourne and thus the Australian delegation of women teachers departed Melbourne aboard the *White Star Liner, the Medic*, on 31 July 1902[5]. Their formal send-off in Melbourne included addresses by the Minister of Education, Arthur Otto Sachse (1860-1920) and Frank Tate (1864-1939), Director of Education (L’Amico, 1902, p. 3). Their Australian departure motivated hundreds of visitors to crowd Port Melbourne Pier and trains crammed with well-wishers joined the horde:

The throng was perhaps chiefly remarkable for the preponderance of ladies and children. At noon, the hour fixed for the departure of the *Medic*, the scene presented was very animated. Friends of the departing teachers and of other passengers swarmed the vessel’s decks, and lingered there exchanging farewells until the last moment. A few minutes after noon the gangway was hauled inboard, and the engines of the mammoth vessel started their work (*Portland Guardian*, 1902).

Earlier, in May, the contingent of 20 New Zealand teachers had docked in Melbourne on route to South Africa having farewelled cheering spectators at the Alexandra Pier, Wellington, with three rockets fired from the deck of the steamer *S.S. Westralia* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1902b).

Walter Edmund Bethel (1863-1941) and his wife Edith as representatives of the Department of Public Instruction accompanied the 39 strong delegation on the 24-day voyage to Cape Town, South Africa (*Colac Herald*, 1902). The passage was reported by one teacher as incredibly rough, with heavy gales, violent swells and a very severe storm (on 13 August 1902). Edith Bethel tended to the many teachers who suffered ill-health on-board and the couple also chaperoned and entertained delegates upon their arrival in Cape Town (*Brisbane Courier*, 1902d, e) (Plate 1).

### Life in the Boer-War camp schools

Mary Wright, a teacher from Queensland identifies “Burgher Camp” (sometimes called “Irene Burgher Camp” near Pretoria) as a major designation and dispersal centre



**Plate 1.**

“Australian lady teachers for South Africa gathered at the Training College, Carlton, on 30 July”



**Notes:** As pictured in the *Australasian* (1902). Also see Appendix for a table accounting for known information about the Australian teachers

claiming; “This is the chief distributing camp for sending teachers out and is also a sanatorium for invalided teachers” (Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, 1903a). The bureaucratic systems in place did provide support for the teachers in terms of allowances and rations. Vowles who “was then in charge of the teachers to be employed in the Mafeking district” claimed “The Government was liberal in the matter of travelling expenses [for teachers], allowing 15s. a day, besides providing hampers filled with excellent food for use in transit” (*Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, 1902). McInnes’s observation of bureaucratic systems in the more isolated camp schools is also telling; “There’s no notice taken of rules and regulations. They’re altered to suit the times” (McInnes, 1903d). Another teacher noted “there is not the extreme of scarlet tape one is accustomed to see in some places” (*Brisbane Courier*, 1902f). However, in the less remote camp schools teachers appeared to be under vigilant bureaucratic scrutiny. New South Wales teacher Ida Robertson for instance, claimed; “The ‘home’ authorities had anxious eyes on us and what we were doing” (*Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 1923). This situation appeared to emerge consequential to:

A conference of teachers held at Bloemfontein in December 1903, under the presidency of Mr E.B. Sargant, [which] resulted in the publication by the Department of a Code of Regulations for elementary schools, which, while embodying the collective experience of the teachers as a whole, allowed the headmaster or mistress an unusual discretion in the management of the individual schools (Worsfold, 1913, p. 83).

However, the system assigning and dispatching teachers to teaching posts either delayed teaching work for the women, or, allocated schools in an often unpredictable and seemingly haphazard manner (presumably based on need). The letters of a number of women regularly commented on confusion around their assignments and also some anxiety about the three types of school to which they could be assigned – sometimes

“camp”, or “farm” (or so-called “provisional” schools) or “town” schools. This unpredictability is consistent with a telegraph Bethel received on 2 July 1902 from the Department of External Affairs in accordance with a missive from the High Commissioner in South Africa stating that Australian teachers “should be informed however that the conditions of the work may be found extremely difficult owing to the breaking up of the camps and that they must hold themselves in readiness to teach on isolated farms or wherever else they may be sent” (Official Secretary of the Department of External Affairs to Walter Bethel 2 July 1902. N[ational] A[rchives of] A[ustralia], 02/262/56).

One of the Queenslanders, Mary Wright, identified a “farm” school as “marquees pitched near a farm house, and the girls [teachers] also live in a marquee”, and described their “kit” for the farm school as including “novels and other reading matter” (Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, 1903a). “Farm schools” appear to have been highly undesirable. McInnes claimed in a letter; “We are still threatened with a farm school. There are several near here and not a teacher will volunteer. The authorities say now they’ll have to compel the teachers to go or else ask them to resign. They have promised, though, that a teacher will not be asked to go alone. They’ll send two together so that it won’t be so very bad perhaps” (McInnes, 1902g). While McInnes was later “transplanted to a farm school away in the wild of the Transvaal beyond Ventersdorp” (five hours by cart from Potchefstroom) (McInnes, 1903a, b, c), an extract of a letter by Maud Eaton however indicates that teacher-choice could occasionally influence the type of school assigned; “Miss Eaton could have gone to Johannesburg [‘town’ schools], but she preferred tent life” (*Kiama Independent, and Shoalhaven Advertiser*, 1902). Kennedy and Grayfer were initially assigned to schools within Johannesburg and in Kennedy’s case “there [we]re 92 children, all of English parentage, their fathers being workers in the mines – with the exception of a Dutch boy 4 years old” (*Argus*, 1902). This implies that the Australian teachers were dispatched as needed, at least in the interim, both within and beyond the Boer concentration camps.

Once assigned however, circumstances within the camps as documented in letters by a number of Australian women teachers appear to accord with the popular view of harsh conditions. While Lucy Frick explains that “If it rains or is dusty the school is closed, as the shed are not suitable for rough weather teaching” (Mount Gambier Border Watch, 1902a), Margaret McInnes observed of her experiences in Bloemfontein camp; “The wind & dust here are awful. The first night I was sure the tent [30 ft long & 4 of us live in each] couldn’t withstand it. Crawled out at midnight & put on my stockings. If it did blow up I was prepared for the worst then” (McInnes, 1902b). The account of one teacher’s preparations to “trek” to her concentration camp school is particularly descriptive:

The chief inspector and a sub-inspector came out [to Brugher Camp, Transvaal] last week to take one of our girls off. They arrived in mule waggons [sic], and after dinner informed Miss [Fanny] Davis [a New Zealander] that she had better sleep down near the spruit [Afrikaan meaning small stream or watercourse] as they wanted an early start. We escorted her down to where the waggons had been left and she made her bed up in the waggon, which is a covered affair. Then the inspector threw a huge piece of canvas over her waggon and pegged it down on one side so that it formed a tent, under which they put their stretchers (Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, 1903a).

Similarly, the written accounts of the women often dispelled myths about the Boer children within these camps. Bertha Jones for instance claimed according to one report that “the Boer children are very anxious to learn. They especially wish to acquire the

English language, picking it up in a month or two. Not only the young children are anxious to learn, but so are the young Dutch men and women” (Barcaldine *Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts*, 1904). An additional report publishing extracts of a letter written by another teacher claims the writer (an unidentified South Australian[6]) “contradicts a general impression that prevails in Australia, and won’t admit that the Boer children are ill-mannered and dull” (*Border Watch*, 1902b). Indeed, when Frances Alys Irvine (nee Williams) returned to Australia for a short holiday she received numerous and affectionately written letters from Boer children, many of which were reprinted in a number of contemporary newspapers (*Kapunda Herald*, 1904). Grayfer’s efforts at instructing the children do however indicate that pedagogic methods employed by Australian teachers sometimes failed. In attempting “drills”, a technique unfamiliar to her pupils, Grayfer, a teacher from New South Wales wrote; “It was like trying to drill a lot of babies, the boys and girls are so dense, but ‘they are so attentive that when once they are told what to do they never forget it” (*Argus*, 1902). Grayfer’s account also suggests the children responded very well to “an oral lesson, everyone pays the best attention and seems so interested. One always feels that what has been taught has been well learned” (*Argus*, 1902). Music as a gateway to English language learning also appeared as a favoured pedagogical approach; “first the tune is taught and then the words” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1903).

However, in one such case, Ida M Robertson’s efforts in teaching her class the National Anthem upon the occasion of Empire Day motivated an unexpected outcome:

I had taught the children the National Anthem, and we sang it, and then began the toy distribution. Quite designedly I gave the best toys to the Dutch youngsters, and the tea party was going quite well when suddenly a big Dutch girl – Anna Nenoff – threw down her gifts at my feet, and called out in Dutch to her class mates. They rose in a body, and followed her out singing, “God Save Oom Paul” [...] I was very unhappy at the time, and hated writing to Lord Meath the real story of Empire Day on the veldt in 1903 (Robertson, 1923)[7].

Robertson had clearly underestimated the patriotism of Boer children in the context of their everyday lives. As McInnes observed “Nearly everybody you see here is maimed in some way – all been in the war. Why, I’ve actually two boys in my class who were out with the [Boer] troops right through” (McInnes, 1902e). Other reports confirm that the Australian teachers’ proximity to Boer troops was also occasionally quite close. A reproduction of a letter by Queensland teacher May Vowles, stationed at Vryburg, Bechuanaland Protectorate, is particularly illustrative of this point:

She met Cronje’s men at Kimberley, some of whom presented her with a crochet-hook, a brooch, and several pen-holders carved by them when they were prisoners of war at St. Helena. They are a fine lot of men, she says, and wish to be remembered to the Australian boys they have fought against. “Make our children Afrikanders or Australians, but not Englishmen,” they say, “and we shall treat you kindly.” They are very childish, and often ask us “if we like them” (*Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, 1902).

It is an experience with the Boer soldiers also recalled by Mary Wright, who suggested after meeting “Cronje’s men [...] it is hard to realise that they were our one-time enemies, as they pressed brooches, pen-handles, &c., carved by themselves, on us as souvenirs, and cheered us frantically as we left them” (Wright, 1902). This perceived desire on the part of the Boers to be “liked” by the Australian teachers is also noted by McInnes, who illustrates the politicisation of the women’s work in her claim (in October 1902) that; “The Boers, or Dutch as they like to call themselves now, are very nice to us.

I fancy they think we sympathise with them. Of course we carefully avoid politics” (McInnes, 1902e). It is interesting to note that encounters between Boer troops and Australian teachers also presented opportunities to exchange information of another kind. May Vowles for instance had personally received a military document in the form of “a copy of an original document on the geography of St Helena handed to [her] by one of General Cronje’s men” (Rockhampton *The Capricornian*, 1902).

A number of other letters also clearly indicate that the bureaucratic context demanded the women be highly adaptive in other ways given the hardships within and beyond their professional roles within the Boer concentration camp schools. As suggested by William Scott in 1902:

There can be no doubt that when the lady teachers arrive at the refugee camps their genteel manners and other attractions will be sure to capture the Boers, young and old; for the Boer mind is pretty sharp at recognizing what is worthy of admiration or the reverse (Scott, 1902, p. 7).

That the Australian women teachers in South Africa were predominantly middle-class meant their letters undoubtedly struck a chord in not only attracting the sympathies of their Australian middle-class readership given their struggles, but reinforced the affective spirit of feminine courage by virtue of that very class-belonging. The work was hard and undertaken in extremely difficult conditions necessitating these women living in tents, typically within camp compounds. Mary Wright proclaimed “we are quite experts at slackening and tightening tent ropes, driving in pegs, &c” (Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, 1903a). It is also interesting to note that the demands of the situation also required the women to become arguably more assertive. As McInnes offers; “The Inspector here is rather a bully and gives some of the teachers a bad time. He’s awfully civil to us, though. The others say he’s afraid of the Australians” (McInnes, 1902e).

The discourse stemming from their personification of Imperialist ideals – courage, tenacity, strength, commitment – invested the professional status of these women teachers with a particular brand of ideological authority. In fact, the press reports accounting for the conduct and efforts of Australian women teachers lauded their professional competencies, their discipline and their capacity to cope. According to a report printed in the *Age*:

[...] the Australians having given such satisfaction that they have been pressed by the South African education authorities to remain [...] The reasons given for the desire of the South Africans vehement to retain the Australian teachers is that they proved themselves better able to cope with the conditions of work than the teachers imported from England (Melbourne *Age*, via Launceston *Examiner*, 1903).

This sentiment belies their somewhat uneasy initiation into the scheme as recounted by Walter Bethel. Some of the women dined with other passengers onboard the *Medic* contrary to his instructions and motivated him to not only to report the offenders to educational authorities in Pretoria, but claim their behaviour “would be very unlikely to do credit to Australia in their new sphere of work” (Bethel, 1902, pp. 9-10)[8]. This was a view earlier promoted in a report printed in the *Daily Express* which claimed “They have taken on tasks that would destroy the sweetness of angels. Let those who failed to find favour with the selectors consider themselves lucky” (*Daily Express via North Queensland Register*, 1902a). However, reports following the Australian return of some of the teachers reiterated the view of their superior resilience, particularly as endorsed by Fabian Ware (1869-1949), the assistant Director of Education at the Transvaal who asserted that “the Australians showed more readiness, resource and ability to cope with the conditions of

camp schools than teachers from other parts of the Empire" (*Bendigo Advertiser*, 1903). One Australian observer located the origins of this stamina with the influence of the Australian topography on child development, concluding; "it is reasonable to suppose that teachers accustomed to our bush children would be more in sympathy with the little people of the veldt" (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 1902).

Accounts in personal missives also qualify that Australian women did encounter one another while in South Africa despite being assigned different camps. While reports state for instance that Bertha Jones had been stationed "the farthest inland of any of the Queensland teachers", she encountered two of her state compatriots, May Vowles and Mary Wright, prior to her departure for Australia (*Brisbane Courier*, 1904). Margaret McInnes, while stationed at Brugher Camp (Mafeking) in fact mentions encountering Ellen Firks, "Head of the Kindergarten in Bloemfontein" (McInnes, 1902b). Moreover, the emotional bond that developed between some of the women by virtue of their involvement in this scheme should not be underestimated:

Our party of five [...] hung together praying hard that we would not be separated. The suspense was awful. We stood there straining our ears to catch the names. The Mafeking list was read first; 10 go there, amongst them Miss Wylie & Miss Benson. Then came Pretoria – several names were read – we were gasping by that time. On went the voice – Miss Liebing, Miss McInnes, Miss Williams, Miss Young – then it stopped. All the rest go to Bloemfontein. Poor Miss Eddie [formerly from Port Melbourne State School] collapsed & the other four clung round Miss Noble (the lady in charge) imploring, beseeching & in fact refusing to be separated. At last she relented & said Miss Eddie could come with us. The relief was intense & we five straightway sat down & wept (McInnes, 1902c).

### **Conclusion: Boer concentration camp schools as domains for women's "patriotic action"**

This paper has drawn significantly from digitised press accounts detailing this period in the history of Australian women in education. "Trove-enabled" sources have proven invaluable in uncovering, recovering and connecting a chapter in the cultural history of education with the women's significance as volunteers in the Anglo-Boer War concentration camp schools established by the British. It is the contention here that the commitment and contributions of the 39 Australian women teachers serving in the imperial concentration camps in South Africa merit inclusion in a reappraisal of Australian women's involvement in Boer War historiography. While individual women may not merit attention as decidedly notable historical figures – unlike for instance British campaigner Emily Hobhouse (1860-1926) whom realised better conditions in the camps through, among other methods, exchanging correspondence with Lord Milner as well as meeting with him on a number of occasions – it can be argued from the existing ephemera, largely press accounts, that the Australian teachers were a remarkable if not memorable contingent of women.

Like the letters of Hobhouse, which were reprinted by the *Guardian*, the letters of Australian women as republished in newspapers also reported on conditions from inside the camps as well as sometimes offering counter-commentary to grand Imperial narratives. For instance Margaret McInnes offers a decidedly humorous albeit anti-Chamberlain reproach in describing the demands placed upon her given Chamberlain's proposed inspection visit of camp schools:

We were to stay here [Johannesburg] a fortnight more but yesterday a letter came from our inspector praying us to come back at the end of this week & get the school in working order

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for Chamberlain to see. Old fowl – what good will that do him? Great preparations are being made for his reception & entertainment [...] he's to spend a week in Potchefstroom & will occupy the house two doors from our mansion so we'll see plenty of him. The old cat though. I can't forgive him for spoiling our holiday (McInnes, 1903a).

Also like Hobhouse's missives, the letters of the Australian women teachers must be treated with some degree of caution. While they are personal recounts republished by the popular press of the day, as in part a human interest story, they also to some degree both explain and defend the women's participation in an Imperial scheme and are therefore highly politicised documents. As Lucy Frick (1902) proclaimed "The Boers [...] receive the most generous treatment from the British Government. They get rations, tent, coal, soap, parafine [sic], medicines, and clothing [...] The [Boer] men will not do a thing for the British unless they are well paid, and yet they are living here on British charity" (Frick, 1902). The undercurrent of paternalism is also apparent in McInnes's observation that "[the] Government's as good as a father to the people out here. The Boers are being sent back to their farms, provided with stock, food etc. If they wish to leave their families in town, Gov. keeps them [...] The British people are complaining bitterly" (McInnes, 1902e).

Together with their instrumentality in an imperial enterprise of educational endeavour, the Australian women teachers also personified an ideological enterprise of Australian women and war. Their experiences as reprinted in their letters reflect a professional and personal sense of homeland patriotism fundamentally built against the backdrop of this military conflict; "Nearly all the men here are lame or disfigured from wounds got in the war & almost everybody is in mourning", claimed McInnes, "We went over the cemetery. It is so sad so many new graves – some without a name, only the number on the tombstone" (McInnes, 1902c). "It is utterly impossible to get away from khaki, barbed wire, block-houses surrounded by sandbags, and saddest of all, graves" reflected Mary Wright (*Brisbane Courier*, 1902e). "Today we went to a meeting of ladies who have undertaken to look after the graves of the dead soldiers" wrote McInnes (1902b), "We have been given charge of the Australians. There are not [m]any I know but still they are Australians". In fact, the accounts of McInnes, if accurate, also claim that at least one Australian teacher died in South Africa. She states in her letter dated 4 December 1903 that; "We heard yesterday of the death of one of our Aust. teachers. She never got over the trip out and contracted enteric soon after she came. She was such a clever girl a B.A" (McInnes, 1903a).

As agents of patriotic action, "who [we]re animated with truly patriotic sentiment" (Worsfold, 1906, p. 53), the existent ephemera about these women added a very public and intra-national discourse to the professionalism of Australian female teachers which resonated contemporaneously both domestically and abroad. These women both identified with and perpetuated the purpose of their mission in ideological terms: "It is just two months since the last contingent left Australia – not a fighting contingent, but one who went to carry peace and that weapon which is said to be 'mightier than the sword'" (*Brisbane Courier*, 1902f) – yet this ideological endeavour counterpoints the contemporary reality that few, if any, Australian government websites outlining the involvement of Australian women in the Boer War specifically account for the 39 Australian women teachers that worked in South African concentration camp schools. The hitherto under-observed story of the 39 Australian women teachers serving within the temporal scope of this military campaign reveals that Boer War historiography would be considerably enriched by both recognising their contributions and investigating them further.

## Notes

1. Elizabeth Van Heyningen (2009) examines the way in which the term “concentration camp” is highly politicised in reference to the Boer War, and also the term’s significance in shaping Afrikaner identity in the twentieth century.
2. Emmott claimed the “Other work that was put upon them [the Board of Education] unexpectedly was the finding of several hundreds of teachers for South Africa”, while Jenkins observed that more teachers from Victoria than South Australia successfully dispatched to the Anglo-Boer War camps (*Adelaide Advertiser*, 1903).
3. Chamberlain to Lord Hopetoun, 18 January 1902, “Confidential” Chamberlain to Lord Tennyson, 22 May 1903; Official Secretary of the Governor-General to Mary Carew, 1 July 1903. [National] Archives of [Australia], A6661, 554 (Riedi, 2005, p. 1328).
4. AngloBoerWar.com, “Margaret McInnes letters: Young Australian teacher teaching Boer children”, forum including a series of McInnes’s letters transcribed by her grandson Mark Wilkie, <http://angloboerwar.com/forum/13-miscellany/1202-margaret-mcinnis-letters-young-australian-teacher-teaching-boer-children?limit=6&start=6>
5. Bethel (1902, p. 4). The contingent included “Miss Stanley, Mrs. Heapy, Miss Wright, Miss Brown, Mrs. Salomons, Miss Crookbain, Miss Gayfer, Miss McEwen, Miss Kennedy, Miss Robertson, Miss Jones, Mrs. Halverson, Miss Hay, Miss Whitton, Miss Jackson, Mrs. Hunt, Miss Vowles, Miss Connell, Miss Eaton, Mrs. Beil, and Mr. And Mrs. W. Bethel” (*Evening News* [1902], “School Teachers for South Africa”, 26 July, p. 6). The *Maitland Weekly Mercury* (1902) also claims the date of the Australian contingent’s departure as 31 July 1902. Other publications claimed the date as 1 August 1902. *Adelaide Chronicle*, 12 July 1902, p. 24; *Bendigo Advertiser*, 1 August 1902, p. 3, among others, as well as Mary Wright, in her letter published in the *Brisbane Courier* (1902e), “Queensland Teachers in South Africa”, 3 November, p. 6. Frank Tate wrote to the Official Secretary of the Department of External Affairs on 5 August 1902 that “thirty-nine (39) women teachers sailed for Cape Town on the 31st in the S.S.Medic, under the charge of Mr. Walter Bethel of the New South Wales Education Department”. Frank Tate to Official Secretary of the Department of External Affairs 5 August 1902. NAA, 02/262/75 (Gen.02/25345. 02/11916).
6. The writer of the extract printed was likely Kassie Gordon Wylie. See *Border Watch* (1902b).
7. For more on Emily Hobhouse, see Seibold, Birgit Susanne (2011), *Emily Hobhouse and the Reports on the Concentration Camps During the Boer War 1899-1902; Two Different Perspectives*, ibidem-Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany.
8. Bethel termed the offenders – Wylie, Benson, Hay and Whitton – as “the recalcitrant clique” (Bethel, 1902, pp. 9, 11) Bethel’s however was a legitimate complaint given that onboard the vessel, as McInnes tells us, “We have reserved tables and special food is prepared for us” (McInnes, 1902a).

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## Appendix

State	Name of teacher	School/status (where known)	Notes
Queensland	Bertha Jones	Bundaberg East State School	Returned to Australia in February 1904 before returning to South Africa to be married in late April "having severed her connection with the Education Department" ( <i>Brisbane Courier</i> , 1904)
	May Vowles	Mount Morgan State School	Vowles married Stanley Guttridge, "chief clerk in the Lydenburg branch of the Law Department, Transvaal" on 7 June 1907 ( <i>Queenslander</i> (1907), p. 4). Guttridge "fought for the British in the South African War, and his intimate knowledge of the Taal and the Kaffir languages made him particularly useful as a scout" ( <i>Brisbane Courier</i> , 1907, p. 7). The obituary of her father (George Vowles "one of the most highly accredited head teachers in the service of the Department of Public Instruction") states he was survived by "one widowed daughter, who resides in South Africa" ( <i>Queenslander</i> , 1928, p. 22, 29 November)
	Mary Jane Crookbain	Leichhardt-Street State School for Girls	Initially assigned upon arrival to Barberton. Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Mary T. Wright	Zillmere State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source. Residents of Zillmere gathered on the evening of 18 July for her send-off ( <i>Brisbane Courier</i> , 1902c, p. 6)
South Australia	Kassie Gordon Wylie	Port Adelaide School (assistant)	Employed as a teacher at Perth's Central School upon her return to Australia in 1904
	Margaret M. McInnes	Gilles Street School (assistant)	Initially assigned upon arrival to Potchefstroom, thereafter to a number of other schools "A reunion of friends and family of Mrs Bruce Campbell (nee Margaret McInnes) was held at the Botanic Garden to bid her good-bye on her return to Johannesburg. Mrs H. Heinrich eulogized her former pupil in going to South Africa as a teacher many years ago, and in establishing on the high road to a successful career in the Education Department in Johannesburg her two daughters' Adelaide Advertiser (1933), "Farewell Party", 7 April, p. 14
	Eva Ellenor Benson	Unley School (assistant)	Benson abandoned teaching and forged a highly successful career as a painter and sculptress; her professional recognition peaking between 1910 and 1928. For more detailed information see <i>Sydney Mail</i> , "Women's Page", 2 February 1921, p. 20 among others

(continued)

**Table A1.**  
Australian women  
teachers for South  
Africa: 1902

(continued)

State	Name of teacher	School/status (where known)	Notes
Victoria	Mary T.J. Liebing	Daveyston School (Head Teacher) "a conscientious and earnest worker at Daveyston for 10 years" ( <i>Advertiser</i> , 26 July 1902, p. 11)	Initially assigned upon arrival to Pietpotgieterust. She died in Pietersburg in 1942 having forged a 30-year teaching career in South Africa. For her eulogy, see <i>The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser</i> (1942), "Old Mount Barker Resident Dies in South Africa", 14 May, p. 2
	Frances Alys Williams	Uratdla School (acting assistant)	Initially assigned upon arrival to Potchefstroom, thereafter to a number of other schools. Married J. Buchnall Irvine, an Englishman (d. 1914), in Potchefstroom on the 31 August 1904 and died in Johannesburg in November 1926 (see Adelaide <i>Advertiser</i> , 1926). For the marriage notice, see Adelaide <i>Advertiser</i> (1904a)
	Mrs Lucy Maria Frick	"[...] formerly in service, and is now the wife of the head master of the Beachport school"	Frick returned to South Australia in October 1903 having served in the concentration camps at Norvalspont, Bloemfontein, Springfontein and Kromdraai, the latter reportedly one of the largest camps for indigent Boers (Adelaide <i>Register</i> , 1903)
	Nellie Allen Edith Boroondara Bonney	Long Gully School Carrum State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source Returned to Australia in 1903. Was reportedly offered a permanent position, but declined (Bendigo <i>Advertiser</i> , 1903). Bonney reportedly became engaged to the brother of South Australian teacher Kassie Gordon Wylie, who was a passenger aboard the same ship bound for London (Bethel, 1902, p. 11). They married in Sandringham, Victoria in 1907 and the marriage notice appears in <i>The Advertiser</i> , 15 February 1907, p. 4
	Eva L. Chadwick Engelborg Christensen Mary J. Cooke	South Yarra State School Flynn's Creek State School Camperdown State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source. Returned to Australia in 1903 and thereafter forged a meritorious career in education Initially assigned upon arrival to Pietpotgieterust Returned to Australia in 1903. Was reportedly offered a permanent position, but declined (Bendigo <i>Advertiser</i> , 1903)
	Ethel Cox Elizabeth Eddie	North Brighton State School Port Melbourne State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source Initially assigned upon arrival to Potchefstroom, thereafter to a number of other schools including Mafeking

Table AI.

Table A1.

State	Name of teacher	School/status (where known)	Notes
			Returned to Australia from South Africa in 1904. Retired after 40 years with the Victorian Education Department. Founding staff member of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy. Retired aged 60 and died in Melbourne in 1931. For her eulogy, see Melbourne <i>Argus</i> (1931).
	Jessie McPhail	Swan Hill State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Christina P. Phillips	Diggers' Rest State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Jeanne M. Phillips	Bulga State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Margaret Hill-Rennie	Collingwood State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Hilda F. Stach (sometimes "vonStach")	St Kilda State School	Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Hannah Valentine	Colac State School	The following death notice appeared in the Melbourne <i>Argus</i> (1945) and conceivably relates to the Australian teacher of the same name who taught in South African concentration camp schools: "VALENTINE – On August 21, Hannah Valentine, 38 years in Education Department" Melbourne <i>Argus</i> (1945), "Deaths", 24 August, p. 2
	Lilian C. Young	Amphitheatre State School	Initially assigned upon arrival to Potchefstroom, thereafter to a number of other schools
New South Wales	Mrs Gertrude Halverson		Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Mrs L.K. Salomons		Initially assigned upon arrival to Johannesburg, thereafter The Rand
	Emily Kennedy		Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
			Prior to her departure for South Africa, the <i>Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser</i> noted in 1902 that she (together with another staff member, Miss Grayfer) was to "proceed to South Africa for a twelve-months term to assist in re-organising the education methods in vogue in the newly acquired colonies" "Random Notes, Enmore Public School Teachers in South Africa", 8 November, p. 5. Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source

(continued)

State	Name of teacher	School/status (where known)	Notes
	Ida M. Robertson		Initially assigned upon arrival to The Rand. Thereafter to Benoni (Transvaal). The <i>Riverine Grazer</i> (1903) reported that "Miss Jessie Robertson, formerly of Hay, has received a Government appointment in South Africa, and is leaving Sydney for her new post in the Medic on Friday [22 May]. She is going to join her sister, Miss Ida Robertson, at Benoni, S.A." 20 May, p. 2. Of their cousin, Private Thomas Cunningham Robertson, who was killed in action on 21 November 1900, it was claimed: "When the Australians were offering for service he was living at Toganmain station, Hay district and enlisting he left with the Second Contingent under Colonel Knight. He was mentioned in the general orders for conspicuous good work and bravery in scouting, and other dangerous duties" ( <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 1900, p. 5).
	Miss Grayfer		Initially assigned upon arrival to The Rand Prior to her departure for South Africa, the <i>Babmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser</i> noted in 1902 that she (together with another staff member, Miss Kennedy) was to "proceed to South Africa for a twelve-months term to assist in re-organising the education methods in vogue in the newly acquired colonies" ("Random Notes, Enmore Public School Teachers in South Africa", 8 November, p. 5). Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Miss McEwen		Initially assigned upon arrival to Johannesburg, thereafter The Rand
	Miss E.J. Jackson		Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Maud Eaton	Corunna	Initially assigned upon arrival to The Rand
	Mrs Hunt		Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
			Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source

(continued)

Table AI.



Table A1.

State	Name of teacher	School/status (where known)	Notes
	Sarah J. Connell		Mafeking Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Miss S.E. Stanley		Mafeking Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Miss Hay		Bloemfontein Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Lizzie S. Brown		Heilbron Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Miss Whitton		Heilbron Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Miss A. Bell		Heilbron Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source
	Mary A. Heapy (nee Maloney)		Information regarding her post-South African experience difficult to source Information regarding her post-selection to South Africa difficult to source
			Heapy suffered from "ship hysteria" during the voyage from Sydney to Melbourne and was sent back to Sydney, both on the advice of the ship's doctor (Dr Phillips) but also given the ship's captain refused to take her on to Cape Town (Bethel, 1902, p. 8)
Total	40		

**Sources:** Names of Queensland teachers: see Brisbane *Courier* (1902b), Brisbane *Queenslander* (1902) 5 July, p. 55. Names of South Australian teachers: see Adelaide *Register* (1902b). Names of Victorian teachers: see *Geelong Advertiser* (1902), Bendigo *Advertiser* (1902b). Names of New South Wales teachers: see Charters Towers *Northern Miner* (1902). Also as identified in Bethel's (1902) "Selection of Teachers for South Africa. Report by W.E. Bethel". Since first submitting this paper to *History of Education Review* in December 2014, more and more fragments of information about these women are slowly becoming available as the National Library of Australia digitises more and more newspapers

### About the author

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