Pulletop and Thornthwaite: Photography, Taste and Class Mobility in 19th Century New South Wales


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Abstract

This paper will explore how two different photographic accounts of working landscapes in nineteenth-century New South Wales reveal changing social identities and preferences for cultural artefacts between 1860 and the mid 1890s. Joseph and Ernest Docker’s photographs of their own property (c. 1860-1869) disavow details of labour and land productivity in favour of producing picturesque landscape photographs. Both Dockers were educated amateurs, producing delicate, hand-made photographs demonstrating their cultural sophistication.

The photographs of Pulletop Station (c. 1886-1891), in contrast, celebrate conspicuous leisure, depict employed labour and articulate class relations. The owner, Edmund Westby, commissioned the photographs to celebrate the productivity and cultural refinements of the property (including photographs of the garden and the broader landscape). The photographer, Charles Bayliss, was a commercial views photographer based in Sydney: the cultural depiction of the landscape, as well as the labour that made the economics of the landscape possible, is passed to skilled operators. Shunning a traditional painted commission, Westby’s interest in a photographic celebration of the landscape suggests that he was concerned with new representational forms, creating a link between his economic and social mobility and the means by which it was represented. The explicit visualisation of leisure and class relations in the later photographs of Pulletop arguably reveal how Westby was able to position himself within a social elite associated with the formation of an identifiable Australian social hierarchy. Significantly, the exposure of class relations was not distasteful him, creating a record of changing tastes in the landscape photography specific to Australia.

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Clearly the answer is New South Wales. Queensland isn't really a separate State - it's more like an outpost of New South Wales with pretentions of grandeur. I mean it looks like for sure: some good beaches, a few theme parks, a bit of nature - p... I do know that both NSW and QLD currently have conservative Governments so I imagine regulation isn't high in each country. QLD does have an enormous history of corruption at all levels of Government however so regulation isn't that important Cost of living is similar in both States. It's more expensive in the larger centres like Sydney and Brisbane. Approximately 224 km north of Sydney, just off the New England Highway, in New South Wales, Australia, is a hill that has been burning for the last 6,000 years. The fire burns underground, at a depth of about 30 meters, fueled by a coal seam that runs through the sandstone. The aborigines called the mountain Wingen, which means 'fire', and used its heat for warmth in the winter months, for cooking and for the manufacture of tools. They believed that the mountain was set on fire by a tribesman to warn others when the Devil carried him off deep into the earth. European explorers and ea