

ANME *News*

ANME | AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF EDUCATION

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Latest Acquisitions

The Museum was most delighted to receive the generous donation of a valuable collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century school textbooks, school readers, exercise books and writing artefacts from the estate of retired NSW school teacher, Mr Douglas Adams. His niece, Mrs Denise Scanlon, kindly donated the many items to the ANME collection. These items will add considerably to the strength of the Museum's collection in the area of NSW State school educational history during the period 1870-1930. Mr Douglas Adams taught at Gardner Road Primary school in Mascot, Sydney and at Bundock Public School. Our thanks go to Mrs Scanlon for her interest and thoughtfulness. Thanks also to Mrs Noreen Riordan, widow of the late C.J.Riordan, former Principal of City Beach High School in Western Australia, the museum collection now has an electronic/mechanical clock, which was used at the City Beach school until 1992, at which time it was replaced by a digital clock. Manufactured by the Plessey Company in France, clocks of this type were sophisticated, reliable timepieces. It was presented to Mr Riordan, on his retirement in 1993, by the office staff.



Nineteenth Century School Geography Textbook Collection in the ANME

The school geography textbooks in ANME's research collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century school textbooks make a significant contribution to the understanding of the history of the school curriculum during the period 1800-1900. The ANME Research Collection contains approximately 6000 primary and secondary school textbooks in all subjects of the school curriculum. At present, our school geography textbook collection numbers about 300 publications, over half of which were published in Britain. During the first half of the nineteenth century almost all of the geography school textbooks used in the few Australian secondary schools then existing, were written and published in London, Edinburgh and Ireland, largely for use in English grammar schools. They dealt mainly with British and European countries and their landscapes, there being little mention of the geography of the Australasian and Pacific regions. The ANME holds a number of examples of these types of textbooks including, Thomas Ewing's *A System of Geography for the Use of Schools and Private Students* (London 1844); James Thompson's *An Introduction to Modern Geography* (Belfast 1838), and

the popular, *A Class-Book of Modern Geography*, by William Hughes (London) which went through many editions during the mid decades of the nineteenth century.

These early school geography textbooks rarely contained maps or illustrations and were largely concerned with place descriptions in Britain, Europe, Africa the Americas and a few Asian countries such as India and China. Until the latter decades of the nineteenth century there were few secondary schools (grammar schools) in the Australian Colonies thus it was not until the second half of the century that there was a demand for school geography texts adapted for Australian conditions and Australian students. The first school geography textbook to be written to meet this need was that by James Bonwick, titled, *Geography for Young Australians* (Hobart 1847) now a very scarce item. William Wilkins, a NSW school inspector wrote a most popular geography textbook titled *Geography of New South Wales* first published by J.J.Moore in Sydney, 1863, reprinted many times over the decades. ANME is fortunate to have copies of various editions of this reference, illustrated. James Smith, a Melbourne State School teacher wrote *Outlines of General Geography*, issued by the Victorian Department of Education in 1873 and published by George Robertson of Melbourne. One of the most popular school geography texts held in the ANME collection was *A New Geography for Australian Pupils*, written by a Victorian Grammar School Headmaster, Alexander Sutherland, in 1885, a traditional but detailed senior school reference which contains six chapters on Australian geography. By the end of the century British publishers such as William Collins were publishing school text books specifically for the Australian Colonies in their Collins' School Series, including *Geography of the Australian Colonies and Pacific Island*, (circa. 1880s) a copy of which ANME holds. The above examples comprise a very small sample of the variety of school geography texts in our collection.

The ANME welcomes readers' inquiries regarding our holdings of nineteenth and early twentieth century school textbooks, not only in Geography but in all subjects of the curriculum. The ANME does not have a copy of the book by James Bonwick, mentioned above but would be most grateful to receive a donated copy of this reference in any edition.

Canberra High School Celebrates its 75th Birthday

Canberra High School celebrated its 75th birthday on November 2, 2013, in conjunction with Canberra's 100th birthday. The highlight of the celebration was an Open Day, followed by a cocktail party, which three hundred people attended. The former school was located in the buildings now occupied by the Australian National University's School of Art and later moved to its present location in Macquarie. The ANME was pleased to assist in this celebration by providing items from its collection for display.



Headmaster's Desk 1939



Items on Loan from the ANME Collection

ANME Display at the Royal Australian Historical Society Conference

Senior Curator Dr. Geoffrey Burkhardt attended the annual conference of the Royal Australian Historical Society held at Katoomba over the weekend of October 30th -November 1st, where he arranged a display of school ephemera and school readers from the ANME collection. The display attracted quite a number of inquiries about ANME and we received offers of items for our collection.



Teachers who were Authors of School Textbooks - Stephen H. Smith

Stephen Henry Smith was born in 1865 at Wollombi. When his father, Stephen Sheldrick Smith, a teacher, was transferred to the position of Headmaster at Grafton Public School in 1870, young Stephen was enrolled at his father's school. He was an excellent scholar and in 1877 won the Lardner Medal, one of the awards given for outstanding students at Grafton Public School. According to the *Grafton Public School 150th Anniversary* book, young Stephen became a pupil-teacher in his fathers' school at the age of 14 years. In 1879, he went to Sydney Fort Street Training School to complete his teaching qualifications.

Upon completion of his teacher training program, Stephen Henry had a number of teaching appointments including Bourke Public School in 1884, Wollongong Public School in 1891 and from there to Neutral Bay Public School. He was then appointed one of the youngest School Inspectors, rising quickly up the administrative ranks to be appointed Director of Education in the NSW Department of Education in 1923. He was one of the most popular Directors of Education in NSW because of his great knowledge and experience at all levels of education and his great rapport with teachers and his administrative staff. During his eight years in this position he reorganized secondary education which improved the status of secondary schools in country districts in NSW. One of his greatest contributions was his establishment of the Correspondence School, centred at Blackfriars in Sydney, which enabled children in remote isolated parts of NSW to undertake formal schooling. (Obituary by J. Dennis). Other great achievements included the introduction of the NSW Department of Education's *School*

Magazine during his time as Staff Inspector at Head Office, Sydney. He edited this publication for some years. During the last few years of his Directorship, he enabled the establishment of the Armidale Teachers' College, which opened in 1928, the first non-metropolitan teacher training college in NSW and only the second departmental teacher training college to be established in the State. The Female Residence at the Armidale Teachers' College was named in his honour, S. H. Smith House.

During his long professional career, S. H. Smith also wrote a series of school textbooks, including *A Third Book of Geography for Young Australians*, which was published in 1910 in the Brooks Australian School Series. He was also co-author of the first comprehensive history of education in NSW to be written, titled, *History of Education in New South Wales 1788-1925*, (G.T. Spauull, co-author). S. H. Smith died in 1943.

Hall School Museum Display, Schools and Teachers of the ACT, 1913

On the weekend of 25th-27th October the Hall School Museum and the Village of Hall Community mounted a most outstanding display titled "Present at Birth: Schools and Teachers of the Capital Territory, 1913", which demonstrated the histories of the schools in the ACT in the year 1913. This display was arranged by the Friends of the Hall School Museum as their contribution to the celebration of Canberra's Centenary. Large display panels for each of the schools existing at the time contained photos of each school building, some of its teachers, school plans, and other associated documents relevant to each school, its community and its staff and pupils in 1913. The display was officially opened by the Minister of Education and Training in the ACT, Ms Joy Birch MLA, before a large crowd of Canberra and regional visitors. Great credit is due to the organizers of the display and the whole weekend of festivities, especially the Curator of the Hall School Museum Mr Phil. Robson and Mr Alastair Crombie together with a group of dedicated volunteers all of whom spent many months in preparing the exhibits and information panels for the display. A most significant aspect of the whole display was the great amount of education research that went into the preparation of each school's display panel. This research makes a most important and greatly appreciated contribution to the history of schooling in Canberra and district.

