

1987/021.90 Oral history of the Australian fishing industry

Introduction

In recent years increased competition for scarce fisheries resources has led to new challenges for fisheries managers. An historical perspective can be of considerable value in the development of sustainable management strategies, especially if it provides a means of tapping into the experience and deep ecological knowledge of the fishers themselves. Unfortunately, with the exception of whaling and pearling, remarkably little has been written on the history of the Australian fishing industry. In recognition of the neglected state of fishing history, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) in 1988 commissioned a project to record the oral history of the fishing industry. Oral history is an important source of information because it provides a record through the eyes of the people involved.

Between November 1989 and June 1990, Mr Jack Darcey, an oral historian, interviewed a wide cross-section of men and women involved in various aspects of the fishing industry throughout Australia. He travelled over 26,800 kilometres around Australia to record the interviews, often in remote locations. Mr Howard Smith who conducted 3 interviews and Mr Brian Tate who was involved with one, also made contributions. A total of 165 interviews was completed, each containing valuable and sometimes colourful insights into the development of the industry. All of those interviewed received a copy of their transcript. The tapes and transcripts of all the interviews were deposited in the relevant state archives so that they could be preserved for posterity and made available to fishers, historians and others interested in the history of the fishing industry.

In the years since the project was completed, FRDC has received many requests for the material to be made available in a more accessible form. In 1999 they commissioned Murdoch University's Teaching and Learning Centre, under my direction, to transfer the transcripts to CD ROM. I believe the transcripts are an important record of the history of one of Australia's key maritime industries and thanks to modern technology they are now accessible to anyone with a computer.

I would like to thank Mr Alex Wells, Project Manager, FRDC, for his support and review of the project and the staff of the Teaching and Learning Centre at Murdoch University for their enthusiasm and skill in producing the CD ROM.

Associate Professor Malcolm Tull

Murdoch University

November 1999

Suggestions for further reading

Broeze, F., *Island Nation. A History of Australians and the Sea*, (St Leonards, NSW, 1998).

Gray, H., *The Western Rock Lobster. Book2: A History of the Fishery*, (Geraldton, WA, 1999).

Kailola P. J. [et al.], *Australian Fisheries Resources*, (Canberra, 1993).

Pownall, P., *Fisheries of Australia*, (Farnham, Surrey, England, 1979).

Smith H. and Tull, M., *The Australian Fishing Industry: A Select Historical Bibliography*, (School of Economics, Murdoch University, Research Monograph Series, Perth, 1990).

Tull, M., 'Maritime History in Australia', in F. Broeze, (ed.), *Maritime History at the Crossroads: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography*, (St. John's, Canada, 1995).

Tull, M., 'The Development of the Australian Fishing Industry: A Preliminary Survey', *International Journal of Maritime History*, V, No.1 (June 1993), pp. 95-126.

AN
HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE
OF THE
AUSTRALIAN
FISHING
INDUSTRY . . .

*Oral
History*
OF THE
AUSTRALIAN
INDUSTRY

© 1999 Murdoch University



FISHERIES
RESEARCH &
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION



In recent years increased competition for scarce fisheries resources has led to new challenges for fisheries managers. An historical perspective can be of considerable value in the development of sustainable management strategies, especially if it provides a means of tapping into the experience and deep ecological knowledge of the fishers themselves. Unfortunately, with the exception of whaling and pearling, remarkably little has been written on the history of the Australian fishing industry. In recognition of the neglected state of fishing history, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) in 1988 commissioned a project to record the oral history of the fishing industry. Oral history is an important source of information because it provides a record through the eyes of the people involved.

Between November 1989 and June 1990, Mr Jack Darcy, an oral historian, interviewed a wide cross-section of men and women involved in various aspects of the fishing industry throughout Australia. He travelled over 26,800 kilometres around Australia to record the interviews, often in remote locations. Mr Howard Smith who conducted 3 interviews and Mr Brian Tate who was involved with one, also made contributions.

A total of 165 interviews was completed, each containing valuable and sometimes colourful insights into the development of the industry. All of those interviewed received a copy of their transcript. The tapes and transcripts of all the interviews were deposited in the relevant state archives so that they could be preserved for posterity and made available to fishers, historians and others interested in the history of the fishing industry.

In the years since the project was completed, FRDC has received many requests for the material to be made available in a more accessible form.

In 1999 they commissioned Murdoch University's Teaching and Learning Centre, under my direction, to transfer the transcripts to CD ROM. I believe the transcripts are an important record of the history of one of Australia's key maritime industries and thanks to modern technology they are now accessible to anyone with a computer.

I would like to thank Mr Alex Wells, Project Manager, FRDC, for his support and review of the project and the staff of the Teaching and Learning Centre at Murdoch University for their work in producing the CD ROM.

Associate Professor Malcolm Tull *Murdoch University*

AN

HISTORICAL

PERSPECTIVE

OF THE

AUSTRALIAN

FISHING

INDUSTRY