Significant individuals - Frank Hurley

Stage 3
History: Year 6

**Topic:** Australia as a Nation
The development of Australia as a nation, particularly after 1901. Students explore the factors that led to Federation and experiences of democracy and citizenship over time. Students understand the significance of Australia's British heritage, the Westminster system and other models that influenced the development of Australia's system of government. Students learn about the way of life of people who migrated to Australia and their contributions to Australia's economic and social development.

**Key inquiry question #1:** What contribution have significant individuals and groups made to the development of Australian society?

Featured Content

Animation: An episode after the Battle of Zonnebeke

Video of Animation: An episode after the Battle of Zonnebeke
Content Summary

The contribution of individuals and groups, including Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders and migrants, to the development of Australian society, for example in areas such as the economy, education, science, the arts, sport. (ACHHK116)

Background Notes for teachers

James Francis 'Frank' Hurley could probably be called an 'extreme' photographer nowadays. He went to extremes of environment and danger to obtain his famous images.

Born in Glebe in 1883, by the early 1900s he was a talented amateur photographer and by 1910 a reputable professional. He had built his experience and demonstrated his talent with various Studio employers before his daredevil nature led him to stand on train tracks in the path of oncoming steam engines and take a series of risky photos that brought him to prominence.

In 1911 the great Australian Antarctic explorer, Douglas Mawson, was preparing a major expedition to the frozen continent. A photographer was considered essential to record the exploration and Hurley put his name forward and was accepted. The expedition departed Hobart and did not return until March 1913. Two members of the expedition lost their lives and Mawson was left stranded in Antarctica. Hurley distinguished himself by recording numerous remarkable still photographs and thousands of feet of film. Again his fearless nature meant he was willing to obtain his photos, even if perched in rigging or standing on treacherous sea ice.

When Hurley returned to Sydney he was a man of much greater experience and confidence and much in demand. He went to Java in 1913 to take promotional tourist photos and then in 1914, he accompanied the adventurer Francis Birtles on a 6,000 mile trek by car into the outback and produced a film of their various encounters along the way.

Later that year, as World War 1 broke out, he joined the ill-fated expedition of the British explorer Ernest Shackleton to Antarctica. Their ship, Endurance, became stuck in the ice and was eventually crushed, leading to some of Hurley's most striking photographs. At great risk, he rescued his glass negatives and other photographic materials from the ship before its final moments. Living in boats and on drifting ice floes, the expedition reached barren Elephant Island. After much hardship they were rescued in August 1916.

His next, and perhaps most significant contribution to both photography and history, was when he was appointed the first official Australian war photographer in 1917. Hurley produced many classic images of the conflict on the Western Front and in the Middle East, as well as making a number of controversial 'composite' pictures when he thought reality could be better shown by a dramatic montage of photos. He would go on to work on various feature and documentary films and be appointed an official war photographer in the Second World War as well.

A remarkably talented man, Hurley was also a relentless self-promoter and energetic adventurer who always seemed destined to place himself and his camera in the right place in the right moment in history.
Student Activities

- Activity 1

Activity 1

Famous Australians [2]

Students use sources and their own research to prepare an interview with Frank Hurley.

Number of set tasks: 2
Resources

- The Australian Dictionary of Biography (online). A. F. Pike, *'Hurley, James Francis (Frank) (1885–1962)'* [3], Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University,
- Recreation of how Hurley’s Zonnebeke composite photo was made [4]

NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum History K - 10

- **Outcomes**
- **Historical Skills**
- **Historical Concepts**
- **LAC**

Outcomes

A student:

- HT3-3 identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society
- HT3-5 applies a variety of skills of historical inquiry and communication

Historical Skills

Students:

Research

- identify questions to inform an historical inquiry (ACHHS100, ACHHS119)
- identify and locate a range of relevant sources to support an historical inquiry (ACHHS101, ACHHS120)

Analysis and use of sources

- locate information related to inquiry questions in a range of sources. (ACHHS102, ACHHS121)

Perspectives and interpretations

- identify points of view in the past and present (ACHHS124, ACHHS123)

Explanation and communication

- develop historical texts, particularly narratives and descriptions, which incorporate source materials. (ACHHS105, ACHHS124)
- use a range of communication forms (oral, written, graphic) and digital technologies (ACHHS106, ACHHS125)
Historical Concepts

- **Significance:** the importance of an event, development or individual/group

LAC
Learning across the curriculum

- Literacy
- Work and enterprise
- Personal and social capability

Student Activities

- **Activity #1**

Activity #1

**Famous Australians [2]**

Students use sources and their own research to prepare an interview with Frank Hurley.

Number of set tasks: 2
Source URL: https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/significant-individuals-frank-hurley

Links