Station life

In Australia, a large land holding used for livestock production is known as a 'station' – this originally referred to the main residence and outbuildings of a pastoral property but now generally refers to the whole land holding. Most stations are stock specific – classed as either sheep stations or cattle stations depending upon the type of stock raised – which is, in turn, dependent upon the suitability of the country and the rainfall. The owner of a station is known as a grazier, or pastoralist and, in most cases, Australian stations are operated on a pastoral lease.

Australian sheep and cattle stations can be thousands of square kilometres in area, with the nearest neighbour hundreds of kilometres away. Cattle stations in the inland regions of most states (excluding Victoria and Tasmania) can exceed 10,000 km; Anna Creek station in South Australia (approx. 34,000 square kilometres or 8,400,000 acres) is the world's largest working cattle station. Such large, often unfenced, properties use mounted workers to tend livestock scattered across vast distances.

[a939021h.jpg](1)
Dr Doyle's sketch book / John Thomas Doyle & Samuel Thomas Gill - p21
The role of mounted stockmen took on great importance in early nineteenth century Australia, following the spread of settlement into the interior of the continent after the successful 1813 crossing of the Blue Mountains. As farmers moved westward, many settled (or squatted) on huge selections of land, the rolling plains being ideal for grazing sheep and cattle. With the high value of early imported livestock, stockworkers needed to be trustworthy and self-reliant, and good stockmen came to be highly regarded.
Supplement to the
AUSTRALASIAN PASTORALISTS REVIEW.
March 12th, 1897.

LAND TAX

LOCUSTS
VICTORIAN STOCK TAX
MARSUPIALS
NOXIOUS PLANTS
DROUGHTS
TICKS

UNSECURITY OF TENURE
INSECURITY OF TENURE
GOVERNMENT NEGLECT
GOVERNMENT NEGLECT
HIGH RENT
HIGH RENT

"THE BACK COUNTRY SQUATTER"
Brought Up to Date.
The back country squatter [picture] : brought up-to-date.

[View collection item detail](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/collection-items/46556/a6953001h)
Australian aborigines played a large part in the successful running of many stations, especially in northern Australia. Using their local knowledge of the land, Aboriginal stockworkers became increasingly important after the gold rushes, when white labour was expensive and difficult to retain.

All stock workers need to be interested in animals and handle them with patience and confidence. They need the skills to make accurate observations about livestock like judging an animal's age by examining its teeth, and experience in treating injuries and illnesses as well as routine care requirements such as feeding, watering, mustering, droving, branding, castrating, ear tagging, weighing, vaccination and dealing with predators.

Those caring for sheep must also deal with flystrike treatments, worm control and lamb marking. Pregnant livestock need special care in late pregnancy and stockmen may have to deal with difficult births.

Apart from livestock duties, a stock person will also to inspect, maintain and repair fences, gates and yards damaged by storms, fallen trees, livestock and wildlife.

a7866001h.jpg
Stockmans Hut, Victoria [a view], 1800-1899 / Samuel Thomas Gill

Share [2]

"type": "image", "clickUrl": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\collection-items\stockmans-hut-victoria-view-1800-1899-samuel-thomas-gill", "thumbnail": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\thumbnail\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=P97_i48Z", "thumbnailLarge": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\large\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=P97_i48Z", "large": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\large\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=MoKe4-qV", "mediaDerivativeUrls": {"thumbnail": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\thumbnail\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=P97_i48Z", "large": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\large\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=MoKe4-qV", "responsive__quarter_hd": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\responsive__quarter_hd\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=jYneYoIX", "responsive__half_hd": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\responsive__half_hd\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=r4BAHISY", "responsive__full_hd": "https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au" [3]\sites\default\files\styles\responsive__full_hd\https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/prod--slnsw-corporate-site\uploads\2018-06\collection-items\46566\a7866001h.jpg?itok=ThOsBKLi"}, "mediaUrl": "https://ws3-ap-southe
Station life continues with little seasonal variation beyond the occasional break in routine brought about by colt-breaking, mustering, cutting out, and branding. Then, all hands not actually engaged in boundary or outpost work assemble at the homestead, their ranks swelled by the arrival of the colt-breaker or the stock workers from neighbouring stations.

Musterimg on big stations used to mean long days spent in the saddle, camping out in isolated areas and sleeping in a swag (bedroll) on the ground – these days larger cattle stations use helicopters or light aircraft as well as stockmen mounted on horseback or motorbikes and trucks.

Traditionally, stockmen used stockwhips and working dogs to herd stock together, driving them to holding yards or paddocks for drafting (ie. selecting stock out of a flock or herd) prior to branding, shearing or other routine care practices.

In Australia, a drover is typically an experienced stockman who may be an itinerant worker like the shearer. Droving is the practice of moving livestock, usually sheep or cattle, "on the hoof" over long distances in search of better feed and/or water during a drought, taking stock to market, or delivering animals to a new owner's property. While moving a small mob of quiet cattle is relatively easy exercise, moving several hundred head of wild station cattle over an unknown route is a highly skilled undertaking.
Station life can be lonely, especially in remote areas, as accommodation for couples and families is limited. Consequently, many station employees are seasonal workers and often young. The jackaroo (male) or jillaroo (female) is typically employed on a station for several years, as form of an apprenticeship, in order to learn how to become an overseer or rural property manager. These days, as pastoral properties face recruitment shortages, and many young men are lured into the booming mining industry, female workers are a more common sight on outback stations.

Station life

![Station life](a1568048h.jpg)
About this item:
Administrative / Biographical Note:
Edward ("Ted") Alexander Roberts was born in Arncliffe in 1907. He completed training to be a Methodist minister in 1935 and his first posting was to Wilcannia where he spent about two years. He died in 1974 having spent the whole of the intervening period as a minister in various parts of (mostly country) NSW and Darwin. He left a collection of glass slides and an album of prints from his time in Wilcannia. There is some overlap between the slides and the prints. The slides are mostly black and white, with a few coloured, and the prints are all black and white. There are a few slides of maps, illustrated religious sayings, a hymn by George Ellis Aickin, a swagman's poem by "Jump Off Joe" Simons and a "Finis" slide which were used as the introduction to talks. This is why the original numbering does not coincide with the digitised numbering.
The disc contains digital copies of the slides and prints, with the exception of a few which are of poor quality. They have been cropped to 5" x 7". The prints can be identified by the letter "p" after the number. Some of the slides have captions and they are on the digital copies in upper case. Where possible, further descriptive captions have been added and they are in lower case. A separate list of captions on the disc, was copied to become the basis of the Contents list. The Library is going to photograph all the glass slides; so the disc supplied will not be not loaded to the Library Catalog.
The photos are of a wide geographical area centred on Wilcannia. The district covered by the Wilcannia church, the Far West Mission, is shown on the digitised map. Also attached is a current map on which grazing properties mentioned in the photo captions are circled. These are Yantara O/S, Salisbury Downs, Bootra, Wonga Lilli, Black Gate, Tintinallogy, Mount Manara, Baden Park and Marfield.
Reference:
Library correspondence file

a5250018h.jpg [14]
Picture taken at Stoney Creek Homestead. The image depicts a pastoral scene with sheep grazing in a field. The background includes a fence and a line of trees, suggesting a rural setting.

The text snippet is not provided in the image.
Picturesque New South Wales / Kerry & Co., Photo., Sydney

Drafting Sheep, Canonbar Station.
Picturesque New South Wales / Kerry & Co., Photo., Sydney

"A Board of Shearers."
When the weather is suitable the shearing of the merino flock commences in a few days after weaning; this time allows the yoke to run in the ewes which is desirable after weaning. A sufficient number of sheep for shearing at one time, are run out from the yards, which is regulated according to the number of shears employed. These are driven to the shearing sheds, where they are placed in the catching pen as exhibited above, which is floored with bales as a raised grating, and where the shears repair forenschroom sheds. During shearing the main flock is shut into to graze, and when required a further supply is obtained. The above drawing exhibits the process of shearing, rolling up the fleeces, and sorting the wool. The figures in the foreground represent the place grooms who collect from the shears as taken from the sheep's back; when they are rolled up and tied by the figures in the left compartment of the shed, and afterwards arranged by the local sorter into the bales allotted for combing and carding qualities, after which the fleeces are packed into bales for the spinner.
ca. 1850-1857
Gardner, William, b. 1802
Call # A 176 / Vol 1

Digital ID: a5480146
View collection item detail

a1313024h.jpg
Series 01: Australian paintings by J.W. Lewin, G.P. Harris, G.W. Evans and others, 1796-1809 [32 watercolours]
Overlanders / Samuel Thomas Gill

Published on State Library of NSW (https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)
Picturesque New South Wales / Kerry & Co., Photo., Sydney

Kerry & Co.

Call # PXD 546 [18]

Digital ID: a5091008

View collection item detail [34]

a6242001h.jpg [35]
Droving, 1870? / Samuel Thomas Gill

Station life
Published on State Library of NSW (https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)
Picturesque New South Wales / Kerry & Co., Photo., Sydney

Musterling on a Cattle Station.
Pastoralist's map

In nineteenth century Australia, the method for establishing a pastoral run or station required the grazier to pay a certain price per head for the number of sheep or cattle on the property which was generally situated on Crown-owned land, and thereafter pay the government an annual rental for the lease on the property - which varied according to the situation and quality of the country - and ranged from £10 to £100 per block of 100 square miles.

In May 1880, depending to the quality of the run and the stock, the usual price for a station with 10,000 sheep was about £10,000, and about £3000 for a property with 1000 or 1500 head of cattle. Freehold estates could also be purchased outright in the settled districts near towns and railways from £1 to £5 pounds per acre.

a5006001h.jpg [43]
Map of New South Wales showing pastoral stations &c. [cartographic material] / by H.E.C. Robinson.
We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.

**Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation**


Links