

Salute to Local historians

In 1961, four mates from Victoria, visited the site of the Battle of Marathon, famous now more for the Olympic race of endurance dating back to the original 'marathon' of Phidippides, than for the fact that the ancient Greeks defeated the invading Persians. This, and other episodes in ancient history, were recorded by the person regarded as the 'father of history', Herodotus. He was born



about the time of the Battle of Marathon, 490 BC, and in his 'Histories' was able to quote speeches from people who had been dead for hundreds of years. Nevertheless, Herodotus recorded important events and captured, often in poetic form, the Greek outlook on the world.

There are many local historians within the City of Greater Bendigo, who have diligently recorded the life and times of the history of this region. Some are from Latrobe University Bendigo, which has specialized in regional history, such as Charles Fahey, who, apart from supervising the work of PhD students, has recorded the work of people such as Richard Pope and IE Dyason; Ruth Ford has written extensively of the life of women in the farming areas of Victoria and Gerry Gill has been instrumental in bringing the stories of Jaara country to the notice of Bendigonians.

Many local historians have achieved doctorates under the supervision of Charles Fahey, such as the late Ralph Birrell, regarded as an authority on mining history and Valerie Lovejoy, who achieved her honour in writing on the life of Bendigo Chinese. Michele Matthews, now working at BRAC, has written widely on the life of famous Bendigonian Sir John Quick and more recently on the problems facing families before and during the Great Depression. Added to the list of doctorates is Penny Davies, recently the City of Greater Bendigo's Citizen of the Year.

A list of nearly thirty local historians may be added to the above academics, all of whom have told stories on people and places within the region. Many of these are members of the Bendigo Historical Society and are writing on a plethora of subjects ranging from mining disasters, Chinese history, cemetery history, inventors in the mining industry, stories from nurses, the origins of street names and the disappearance of well-known people. The need to answer some of the unsolved questions is a never-ending battle for these Bendigonians. There are other local historians who have recorded the stories of their local area, from Sedgwick, Lockwood, Eaglehawk, Marong, Huntly and Heathcote.

Local historians would not forget those writers from the past who have been instrumental in recording the story of Bendigo from the gold rush days, such as George Mackay and JN Macartney and more recently the late Frank Cusack and Edith Lunn. It is hoped that the stories of the region may be preserved and used in a history museum in the not too distant future.