

French–Australian Shared Histories

2018 Symposium

Imagination | Exploration | Memory



Discovering France in the National Archives of Australia

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Introduction

French people have been exploring, visiting and settling in Australia since the earliest days of white settlement. While the numbers of French people in Australia are generally small, their influence can be great. In Australia, our shared histories are documented in libraries and archives around the country. The holdings of the National Archives of Australia relate mainly to the 20th century relationship because the Archives acquires and preserves records of the Commonwealth government, which was created by the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901.

The Archives' holdings relate especially to the mass movement of French and Australian people generated by war and migration in the 20th century, but our records demonstrate that there are many other ways in which our people have met, interacted, shared experiences and gained insight into our cultures and histories. This paper offers a brief overview.

International expositions

Records in the Archives' collection document Australia's involvement in a number of international expositions in France. These significant events offered an opportunity for Australia to promote its culture, manufacturing and primary produce. In 1924 Australia was invited to participate in the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. This image is from a brochure published to promote the exposition to countries considering their involvement.



NAA: A595, BT1924/319

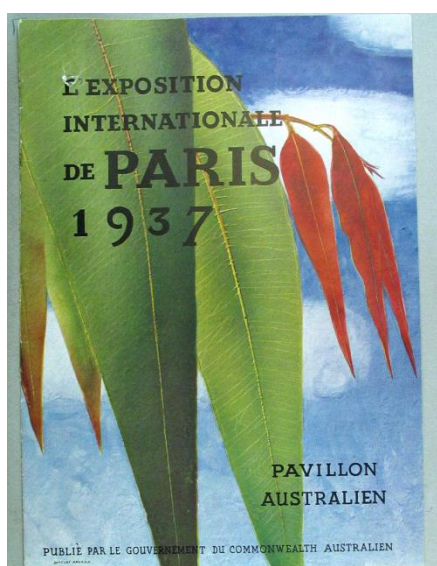
Australia was urged to join by the French Consul-General in Australia and the matter was passed around various agencies of government until eventually it was decided that the invitation would be declined. Australia was then heavily committed to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924–25, and supporting both was thought to be too much.¹

Ultimately this was unfortunate because Australia missed the event that made 'Art Deco' so famous as a beacon of style at that time. And the decision, while pragmatic, does also underline Australia's greater tie with Britain than with France and Europe.

At the next opportunity however, for the exposition of 1937, Australia did join in. France's representative in Australia this time, MP Suzor, was enthusiastic and observed in 1936 that:

It is obvious that an Australian exhibit at an international event, which will be attended by millions of people, not only from France but from all countries ... should be a very effective way of promoting internationally a better knowledge of Australia.²

This is the cover of the brochure offered to visitors at the Australian pavilion:



NAA: A601, 666/6/17

Design for Canberra, Australia's capital city

In 1911 an international competition was held to decide the layout and planning for Australia's national capital, Canberra. Entry No. 29 was from the American architect and planner, Walter Burley Griffin, and it won the design competition. Second and third places were awarded to entrants No. 18 Eliel Saarinen and No. 4 Donat-Alfred Agache. The finalists' entries are now held by the National Archives of Australia.

A French architect–urbanist, Agache (1875–1959) was a graduate from the École des Beaux-Arts and is best known for his 1930 master plan of the city of Rio de Janeiro. In his plan for Canberra, Agache divides the city into quarters along social and occupational lines. Industrial workers are housed next to the gas and power station, with their own 'people's palace' and gardens. On low-lying ground by the Molonglo River, the industrial quarter stood

¹ Comptroller-General, Department of Trade and Customs to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 3 December 1924, NAA: A595, BT1924/319

² Memorandum, M.P. Suzor (Consul General of France) to Right Hon. J.A. Lyons, Prime Minister of Australia, 25 August 1936, NAA: A981, EXH8

at substantial risk if the river flooded, which, as Canberra residents know today, it does. He recognised the relationships between the culture of a society and its physical surrounds. His goal was to transform social ideals into good urban form.

However, Agache's entry was not successful and Canberra therefore was developed along the principles of American design, not French. Still, the records of Agache's entry allow us to imagine how Canberra may once have distinctly had a French air to it.



NAA: A710, 9

World War I

Perhaps the most significant exchange at a personal level between the French and Australian people has been in the context of war, especially World War I. During their time in France, members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) would have travelled extensively in France and discovered French places, culture, food, and language. Tens of thousands of young Australians are buried and commemorated in France. In addition to this, about 150 French-born people enlisted in the AIF in Australia.

Leon Elie Turbé was one of these French volunteers. He was accepted into the AIF in November 1916, aged 33. Until then he had been working in a Sydney abattoir. He was born on Île d'Yeu, off the Vendée coast of western France. It is not known why Turbé was in Australia but he stated that he had served two years in the French army and three and a half years in the French navy.


Assigned to the 34th Battalion, Private Turbé left Sydney on 25 November 2016 and, after training in England, arrived in France in June 1917. He would have been with his unit for some of the most significant engagements on the Western Front in early 1918. His battalion was part of the force deployed to defend the approach to the city of Amiens. On 30 March it took part in a counter-attack at Hangard Wood, and on 4 April helped to defeat a major drive on the village of Villers-Bretonneux by German forces.

Private Turbé was reported missing on 9–10 May. No remains were ever found, but eventually a court of inquiry found that Turbé was last seen on 5–6 May by fellow soldiers while they were defending a trench near the road between Corbie and Bray-sur-Somme,

north-east of Villers-Bretonneux. His official date of death was eventually recorded as 5 May 1918.

Private Turbé is commemorated at the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, and he is remembered at home on Île d'Yeu where his name is listed as Elie Turbé on an honour roll in the Catholic church of Eglise Notre-Dame-du-Port. His sacrifice for Australia is documented on his personal service record, held at the National Archives of Australia.

Widow's Copy

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. N. 58647 Name TURBE, Leon. Elie.
 2863 Unit 6/31/1916
 Joined on 6/11/1916

8/2/16

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

- What is your Name? Leon. Elie. Turbe
- In the Parish of St. dieux. France in or near the Town of Vendie in the County of French Subject.
- Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown) French Subject.
- What is your age? 33 1/2 yrs
- What is your trade or calling? slaughterman
- Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? Yes - 3 yrs in London, France.
- Are you married? No
- Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) (The answer to this question shall not be constructed as in the nature of a will.) Brother (Adami Lebe) 3089 (Ragonite) Ancer. Pien. Corrie. St. dieux. Vendie. France
- Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No
- Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? No
- Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. 2 yrs French Army. 5 1/2 yrs Navy. Some - expired.
- Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes
- Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No
- Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with Pay would reach eight shillings per day? Yes
- Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small-pox and enteric fever? Yes

I, Leon. Elie. Turbe do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

* And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children three-fifths

Date 6/11/1916 Leon. Elie. Turbe
 189d Signature of person enlisted.

* This clause to be amended where necessary and should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.

NAA: B2455, Turbe Leon Elie

Immigration

French immigration to Australia may have been small by comparison with other nationalities but it is a longstanding phenomenon, with the first French settlers arriving soon after European colonisation in the late 18th century. After World War II, Australia was keen to attract skilled European migrants and offered France several assisted migration schemes. Despite various limitations and constraints, including the lack of a formal migration agreement between the two countries, more than 10,000 French people settled in Australia in the 30-year period following the end of the war.

The National Archives of Australia holds records documenting these initiatives, including policy documents, draft agreements and promotional literature. At an individual level there are personal case files of French immigrants, passports, alien registration, and shipping lists.

An unusual story is that of Eugene Landa, his wife Emmanuele and daughter Ruth. The family's arrival in Melbourne in August 1960 is recorded in their 'alien' application registrations ('alien' simply meaning 'non-British'). Eugene was a Seventh Day Adventist missionary who had been working in a number of countries, including France, Algeria, Israel and Tahiti. Like many French migrants, the family had contacts in Australia who helped them find their feet, and Pastor Landa had a successful career in the church in Melbourne and Brisbane. Many of the worshippers at his churches were new immigrants like himself.

MN

Form RA 2 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION Aliens Act 1947-1959. REFERENCE O 809789

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION BY ALIEN ENTERING AUSTRALIA.

S.S. ORONTES 22-8-60. MELBOURNE
(Name of ship or identification marks of aircraft) (Date of disembarkation.) (Port of disembarkation.)

SURNAME or MAIN NAME. (In Block Letters) **LANDA** CHRISTIAN or OTHER NAMES. (In Block Letters) **EUGÈNE JOSEPH**

I, the above-mentioned person, being an alien who has entered Australia, hereby make application to be registered under the Aliens Act 1947-1959 as an alien and for the purpose of this application I hereby furnish the following information:—

Previous name or alias (if any) **NONE**

Intended address in Australia **VICTORIAN CONFERENCE OF S.D.A. 8 YARRA STREET HAWTHORN E.2. VICTORIA**

Nationality **FRENCH** Previous nationality (if any) **ROUMANIAN**

Birthplace { Town or City **BRICENI** Country **ROUMANIA** } Date of birth **JUNE 24, 1908** Sex **Male**

Marital status (State whether married, single, widowed or divorced) **MARRIED**

Height **5' feet 8" inches** Colour of eyes **BROWN** Colour of hair **PARCE BROWN (TURNING GRAY)**

Marks or scars **NONE**

Passport No. **49458 - 49558** or Certificate of Identity No. **PAPEETE, TAHITI, FRENCH POLYNESIA**

Date of issue **DECEMBER 10, 1958** Place of issue **PAPEETE, TAHITI, FRENCH POLYNESIA**

By whom issued **THE GOVERNOR OF F. POLYNESIA** Date of last renewal (if any) **DECEMBER 10, 1958**

Visa number **57201 - 57202** Place of issue **PARIS (FRANCE)** Type of visa **MIGRANT**

Intended State of residence (if shown in visa) **VICTORIA N.S.W.**

Length of intended stay in Australia **UNDETERMINED**

Name and address of nearest relative, friend or business connexion in Australia **PAUL LANDA A.M. COLLEGE COORANBONG N.S.W. - PASTOR FRAME 148 FOX VALLEY ROAD WANDROONGA N.S.W.**

Name and address of employer (if any) **VICTORIAN CONFERENCE OF S.D.A. 8 YARRA STREET**

Occupation or profession **MINISTER OF RELIGION** Intended occupation in Australia **PASTORAL WORK**

Last permanent address overseas **PAPEETE, TAHITI, AVE. de l'UNION SACREE - (SINCE ONEYER 24, RUE de PARIS NICE FRANCE)**

Full name of father **JOSEPH CHARLES LANDA**

Full maiden name of mother **LIZA LANDA - LITCHITZ**

Details (if any) of accompanying wife or husband and accompanying children under the age of sixteen years—

Name	Sex	Birthplace	Date of Birth
Wife or husband EMMANUELE M.J. LANDA	F.	CONDÉ SMENDOU - FRENCH	October 29 - 1907
Children - BALDINO		NORTH AFRICA	

If previously resident in Australia, state last permanent address

Signature of applicant *[Signature]* Date of Signature **August 10, 1960**


FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

Reference Slip (numbered as above) and Notice of Obligations issued:

Initials (or stamp) of issuing officer **CHECKED IMMIGRATION 2**

Place **PERTH W.A.**

CARDER



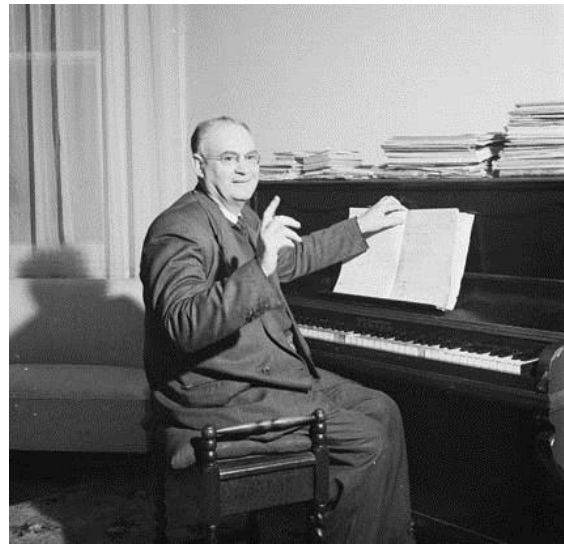
For instructions concerning the completion of this form see back hereof.

NAA: BP25/1, LANDA E J FRENCH

Australian government photographers looked to demonstrate how happily the new arrivals from France had settled into good jobs, and had established homes for families in sunny Australia.



Charly Vollerin arriving at his business in Adelaide.
NAA: A12111, 1/1968/16/132



French composer-conductor, Jacques Berlinski, settled in Melbourne.
NAA: A12111, 1/1964/6/23



French waitress Yvette Orioli at the French restaurant in Sydney where she worked.
NAA: A12111, 1/1971/16/76



Jacques Vasseur, an importer of French cosmetics, pictured with some of his stock.
1/1970/16/305



An unnamed French family settling into their new home in Sydney. NAA: A12111, 1/1969/21/56



Marie and Thomas Escribano and family. Marie was a French dressmaker specialising in formal wear. NAA: A12111, 1/1968/16/433

Performing arts

French cinema, music and fine arts continue to be highly popular and influential in Australia. The French Film Festival, visiting artists, musicians and exhibitions have drawn large audiences in Australia for over a century. The French cultural experience in Australia included tours of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in the 1930s, a concert tour by Maurice Chevalier in 1960, a visit by the Grand Ballet Classique De France in 1965, several tours by the Philippe Genty theatre company and Marcel Marceau.

These images from 1963 show an unnamed dance piece by Robert Pomie, a dancer and choreographer born in Morocco.



NAA: B6693, 10/005376

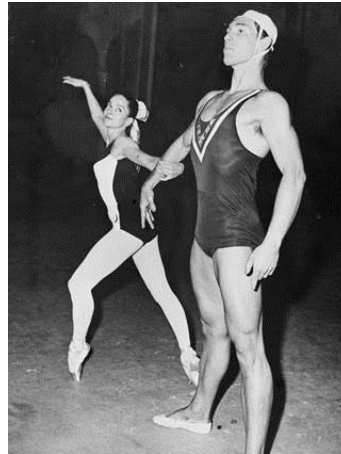


NAA: B6693, 10/005376

Pomie's work *The Surfers* was produced in 1961. His idea for the short ballet came when he was walking along Sydney's Manly Beach one day and saw a volunteer surf lifesaving team rescuing a swimmer in difficulties.



NAA: A1200, L37543



NAA: A1200, L37537

Sport

France and Australia share a love for sport. Tennis, cycling and rugby are common passions for both populations, which participate at the highest level of international competition including the Olympic Games. Australia's Minister for Immigration Hubert Opperman was a world cycling champion in the 1920s and 1930s, riding the Tour de France twice and competing in many competitions in France during his cycling career. Athletes and teams from both countries have made regular visits for numerous competitions, as have some individuals for personal goals such as French people cycling or running across Australia.

Opperman is seen here leading the field in the 1931 Paris-Brest-Paris race, which he went on to win.

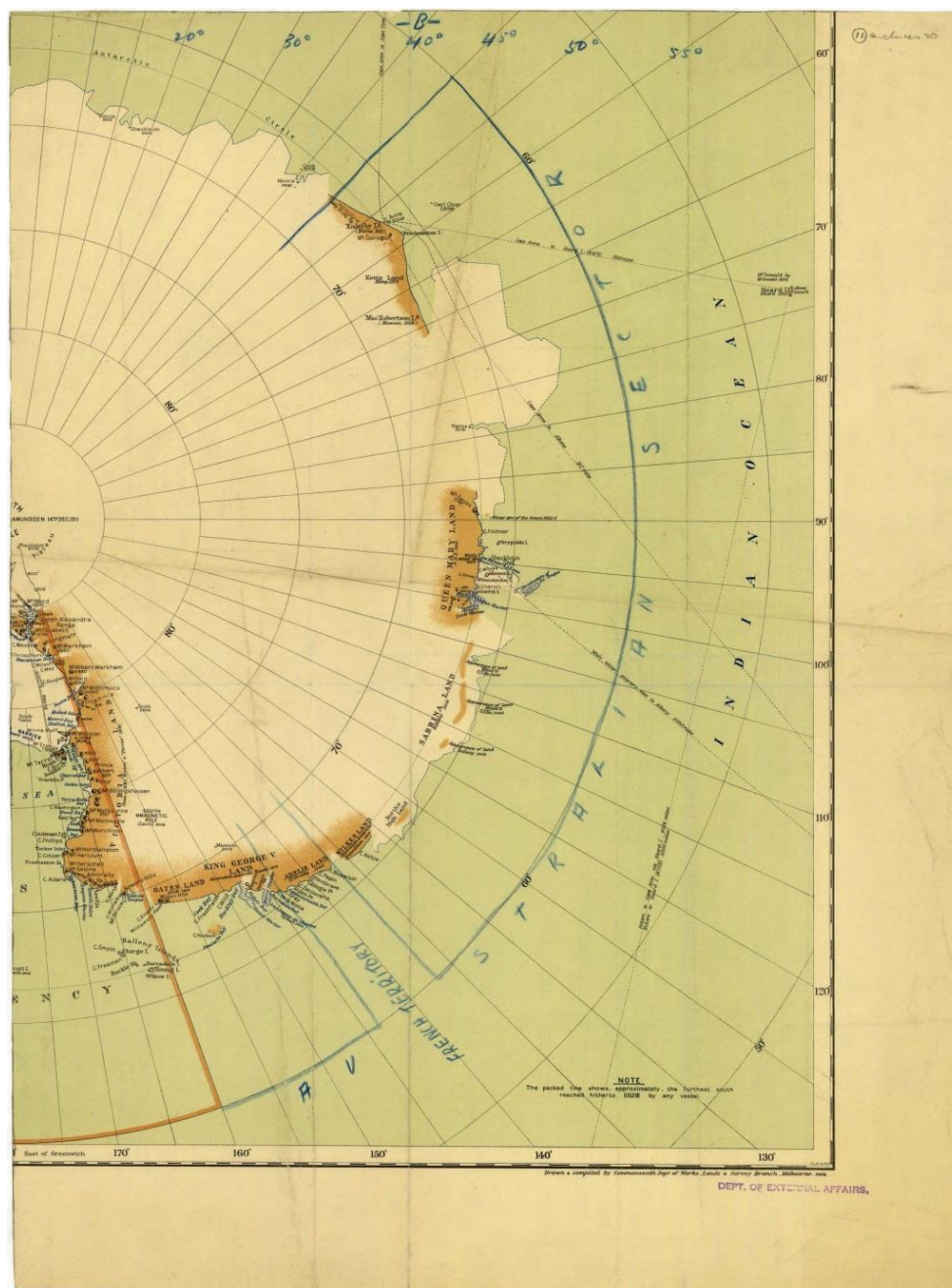


NAA: A12111, 1/1965/25/12

Antarctica

France has one of the longest and most involved histories in Antarctica of any country. It is one of seven nations (including Australia) that made a claim to land in Antarctica before the Antarctic Treaty which came into force in 1961. Along with Australia, France was one of the very first signatory nations of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959 and is a consultative party with voting rights able to make decisions about Antarctica. A number of French migrants have worked on the Australian bases in Antarctica.

This segment of Antarctica shows Australian and French Territories marked in blue pencil, 1929.



NAA: AA1964/7, 11

Other holdings in the National Archives include records which document an Australian perspective on French interests in Antarctica; French participation in the International Geophysical Year 1957–58; records relating to French expeditions to Antarctica in the 1950s and 1970s; and a sound recording of interview with expedition leader Mario Marret in 1973.

France has been importing Australian wool for over a century. Wool buyers for French and Flemish cloth manufacturers often lived in Australia with their families for long periods and became quite prominent, mainly in Sydney and Melbourne. The National Archives' collection

includes records related to French wool appraisers and buyers: personal immigration files, customs files, export files, and records relating to some of the more influential families.

A file for Charles Martel dates from his arrival in Australia in 1939 and shows that while he was obliged to register at first as an 'alien', he was naturalised (a process investing the person with the rights of a citizen) in 1941.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
National Security (Aliens Control) Regulation

Form of Application for Registration
(For Alien Resident in Australia)

This form is to be filled up (except as to signature and triplicate, and the Alien is to attend in person, with the triplicate, the member of the Police Force in charge of the Police Station, usual place of abode, and, in his presence, sign the application, and the impression of his finger prints to be taken if required.

Name (in full) MARTEL CHARLES LOUIS
(Surname to be underlined.)

Nationality FRENCH Sex MALE

Birthplace ANZIN NORD FRANCE Date of Birth 15th July 1886

Place of abode "MON DÉSIR" UPPER BEACONSFIELD

Place of business (if any) JO WENZ & CO THERIAULT COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE

Occupation WOOLBUYER Married ☒ Single ☐ (Strike out the term that does not apply)

Date of entry into Australia 13 September 1906

Name of Ship "INDIA" (P.O. Company)

SECURITY
NATIONAL SECURITY (ALIENS CONTROL) REGULATIONS

File V.I. or V.I.P. No. 4570

Name MARTEL Charles Louis

Investigated by C.I.B. and STATE POLICE

Date 28.6.40

Remarks and action taken

Naturalised
Leg No 113 63
23. 1. 41.
16. 11. 41

NAA: B6531, NATURALISED/1939-1945/MARTEL CHARLES

In return, Australians have been eager consumers of French haute couture. In the post-World War II period French fashion houses showed collections in Australia, such as this one by Patou in 1969. The show was jointly organised by the magazine *The Australian Women's*

Weekly and the Australian Wool Board, a Commonwealth government agency set up to encourage and promote the sale of Australian wool and woollen products. The Melbourne department store Georges hosted the show in its Collins Street store, in the heart of Australia's most glamorous shopping precinct at the time.



NAA: A1200, L81594



NAA: A1200, L81597

By contrast, the Paris–Rome Videowool shows are something of a mystery to us. The records held by the Archives are colour transparencies and come from the Australian Wool Board. The clothes would have been made from Australian wool and the context of the records suggest that they were by French and/or Italian designers. Most of the several hundred images are from the studio rather than the catwalk, and seem to have been produced for publication in the print media. If the historical detail is elusive, these superbly produced images offer much to enjoy for fashion and design addicts.





All images NAA: B2549, VIDEOWOOL PARIS ROME SPRING/SUMMER 1970