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Australian Men of Mark published by Charles F. Maxwell, Sydney
1889-1890.

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Everard Digby - Editor *Australian Men of Mark***Publisher's Preface**

"This work is placed before the public of the Australasian Colonies as an historico-biographical record of their growth and progress, and of the lives of those of their representative men who have achieved prominence or distinction during the first hundred years of our history.

For this purpose representative careers have been selected from every walk of Colonial life, with a view to presenting a thoroughly complete reproduction of our social and political conditions at this important epoch in Australian history.

Treated in this way, the memoir of a prominent politician becomes a history of the national events in which he took part, and of the public business of the people who confide to him the trust of their political representation.

The biography of the founder of a flourishing industry will present the record of that particular department of the industrial and trading interest.

The life-story of the successful emigrant reproduces the difficulties and hardships of early settlement, and the labours of pioneer enterprise, traced through the circumstances and period in which the subject lived.

As this work, therefore, proposes to present within its scope a complete record of State growth, it deals with the lives and careers of all classes of prominent colonial men. The representative politician is found side by side with the professional man in its pages, the merchant with the pastoralist, the capitalist with the representative of labour, and the man of letters with the minister of religion.

The comprehensive task thus placed before the Editor resolves itself into a continuous history of the Colonies dealt with in the present volume, in their political and social development, their wealth, industries, and general representative interests.

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This method of treatment includes an analytical examination of the social and political forces that have been active in forming our present social and political conditions, which will be, it is hoped, not the least valuable outcome of the work and research put into these volumes, which embody the results of many months' careful labour.

Each memoir is accompanied by a faithfully-executed full-paged Portrait, by well-known artists, in the best available style of lithographic art.

No expense has been spared in the binding, quality of paper, printing, or artistic work to make these volumes really creditable specimens of the publishing art, and worthy repositories of the records of our first century of Australasian history."

Capturing the Text and the Data for the Biographical Database of Australia

Keith Johnson & Malcolm Sainty believe that they own the only full set of the seven known variations of volume 2 of *Australian Men of Mark*. The National Library of Australia and the Mitchell Library, Sydney, hold only a few copies of these volumes.

Gould Genealogy www.gould.com.au scanned the Johnson/Sainty set and gave permission for the Biographical Database of Australia (BDA) to incorporate the biographical sections of these variations into the Database. The CD produced by Gould contains all sections from the volumes and is fully searchable. It is available from BDA [Shop](http://www.bda-online.org.au/shop) <http://www.bda-online.org.au/shop>

BDA extracted names and vital data from the volumes so that linking could take place, which enables the user to view a biography published in these volumes, as part of a BDA Biographical Report on the selected individual.

The complexities of these two volume published works of 1889-1890 are explained in the following article and table published in *Descent* magazine, December 2005. It is published here with minor modifications with permission.

An Introduction to *Australian Men of Mark*

by Keith Johnson, (Fellow SAG)

This was a commemorative work published in Sydney in 1889-1890 under the editorship of Everard Digby. In his Publisher's Preface to Volume 1, C.F. Maxwell wrote:

"This work is placed before the public of the Australasian Colonies as an historico-biographical record of their growth and progress, and of the lives of those of their representative men who have achieved prominence or distinction during the first hundred years of our history.

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For this purpose representative careers have been selected from every walk of Colonial life, with a view to presenting a thoroughly complete reproduction of our social and political conditions at this important epoch in Australian history.

... The representative politician is found side by side with the professional man in its pages, the merchant with the pastoralist, the capitalist with the representative of labour, and the man of letters with the minister of religion.”

In the Introduction to the appendix to Volume 2 that appeared in four of the seven variations of Volume 2 known to exist, the publisher wrote:

A biographical work must of necessity be of great value when it is properly constructed and when it embraces the lives of many men whose work has been of importance in the formation of the life of a country. The vast number of sketches collected and arranged in this work of *Australian Men of Mark* enables the reader to perceive how, in every walk of life, men have been busy in building up this Australian nation: and to the future historian this record will be of immense value, in providing him with materials for the chronicles of this great Southern land. A particular interest must necessarily be attached to the lives of many over and above the majority of those here given, and it is hoped that these biographies have been made as perfect as it was possible by using the best matter that was obtainable.

Some of the lives that are chronicled in the portion of the work that follows (i.e. Appendix) cannot claim the same interest as those of well-known men whose names have become household words. Though they are the lives of private individuals only, they have, in their way, an appreciable value, in that they form a record of those who have been instrumental in forming the character of the colony, and in aiding its advance... Each of these men shows in himself a characteristic phase of the advancement of the colony..., although they may not appear to be of the country - yet, in time to come, the facts of their lives will be treasured as of incalculable price, in that they show what was the country's life in her early years, and how her personality and character were formed by her pioneers. This future value is what makes such a record of so much importance.

On first encountering the work, it appears to be two large, ornate leather-bound volumes, containing 300-400 individual biographies. The 100 biographies contained in Volume 1 were identical in all editions. The Index is arranged differently: In the order of appearance of the biographies in 1889 and strictly alphabetical in the 1890 printing. Of the variations of Volume 2 that were published, three are dated: Sydney, March 1889; May 1890 and July 1890, some contain an Appendix which lists hundreds of pocket biographies or “small lives” as the Editor labelled them in his notebook. These Appendices differ in their biographical content.

To date, seven variations of Volume 2 have been uncovered. Two do not contain an Appendix and others are quite deceiving in that the Appendix appears to be the same as that in another variation but changes part way through to a different set of biographies. These variations can only be established by reference to the first name of the Appendix index. The table sets out the variations so far uncovered and the method of identifying one variation from another.

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| Series No. | Main Index Starts | Ref. No. On Main Index page | Appendix Introduction Date | Appendix Index Starts | Appendix Biography Starts | Ref. No. on Page 1 of Apdx. | Pages in Apx. | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | Allt, T.R. | Nil | March 1889 | Abbey, W'm. | Norton, J. | B* | 48 | |
| 2 | Arneil, J. | 5-Vol. II. | May 1890 | Ackerman, M. | Willman, T. | 5-Vol. II. A. | 35 | |
| 3 | Abel, C.B. | 4-Vol.II. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Nil | |
| 4 | Archer, W. | (3) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Nil | |
| 5 | Allt, T.R. | Nil | March 1889 | Abbott, J. | Russell, W. | (2) A | 48 | |
| 6 | Allen, Eli | Nil | July 1890 | Abbott, G.A. | Brown, H. | 6-Vol. II. A. | 10 | |
| 6 | (2nd Appendix - repeat of Series 1) | | | | | Abbey, W'm. | Norton, J. | B* 48 |
| 7 | Allt, T.R. | Nil | March 1889 | Abbott, Rbt. | Norton, J. | B* | 48 | |

The known variations of the work record more than 3,200 biographies and are therefore far more extensive as a biographical reference source than is widely appreciated.

Everard Digby - Editor *Australian Men of Mark*

Everard Digby (1854-1922) Barrister-at-law, editor and solicitor (from 1890) was born on 3 June 1854 at Drumdaff, County Roscommon, Ireland, one of five children of George Digby, landowner and farmer and his wife Catherine, nee Hawkes. His father died at Drumdaff House in 1856 and was buried in the family vault nearby as was his elder brother Thomas George (b. 9 January 1850) who died in infancy, and his younger brother George Joseph (b. 31 October 1856) who qualified at Trinity College, Dublin as a physician and surgeon in 1895. His mother died at Drumdaff in 1892 and his two sisters Caroline (b. 21 May 1851) and Mary (b. 9 August 1852) who never married, died in Dublin during the 1920s.

Digby was educated in the Classics and linguistics at Stonyhurst College (the famous Jesuit College established in 1794) in Lancashire, England, from which he matriculated in 1874 and at Trinity College Dublin, where he graduated in law and was admitted to the King's Inns Ireland as a Barrister-at-law in November 1880. He practised for only a short time at 74 Lower Mount Street, Dublin and came to Australia in 1881, arriving as a first class passenger in the Orient liner S.S. *Cuzco* on 20 November 1881. A notebook of verse, now in the possession of his grandson, Mr Michael Digby of Glen Innes, N.S.W. includes a poem dated 5 July 1882, Yamma (?) Station (near Forbes in the Lachlan District of N.S.W.). Later in 1882 he commenced practice as a Barrister at 83 Elizabeth Street, Sydney continuing until November 1889 when he made application to become a solicitor. He was admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 29 November 1890.

Digby became associated with Charles Frederick Maxwell, a member of the famous law publishing family, an agent for Sweet & Maxwell, London, who operated a law bookselling business at 81 Chancery Lane, Melbourne and from the late 1880s at Victoria Arcade, 79 Elizabeth Street, Sydney. In 1888 Maxwell appointed Digby as Editor of his special Centennial work *Australian Men of Mark*, in two volumes "which

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embody the results of many months careful labour” and which were further described by the publisher as “credible specimens of the publishing art, and worthy repositories of the records of our first century of Australasian history”. Maxwell, the publisher, died on 4 June 1889 and Digby, as Editor, completed the works for publication. He was assisted in the editing of the biographies by another barrister, George C. Addison, who became in the 1890s a professional assistant to the parliamentary draftsman at the Attorney-General’s Department in Sydney and later in his career, Chief Industrial Magistrate in New South Wales. Correspondence and the original manuscript biographies submitted to the Editor have not survived. Maxwell’s law bookselling business in Sydney was sold in 1891 to Arthur & Ernest Hayes and in 1901 it became known as The Law Book Company of Australasia Limited.

The small notebook containing some of E.D.’s verse, following his arrival in New South Wales, is the only item extant relating to the editing of *Australian Men of Mark* and it contains tabulations concerning proofs of biographies returned to the publisher during 1888-89. There are accounting details of payments from Maxwell to Digby totalling £694 and outgoings paid for assistance with the “small lives at £3 per week and sixpence each”. Reference is made to payments to “Edie”, who it is believed became Mrs Digby in 1891. Everard Digby and Edith Veysey MacKnight, daughter of Alexander MacKnight, Mayor of North Sydney in 1893-94 and his wife Mary, nee Moran, were married at St. Augustine’s Church of England, Neutral Bay, N.S.W. in 1891. Two sons were born at “Suramma”, 38 Kurraba Road, Neutral Bay: John Lloyd (b. 19 March 1892) and Gerald (b. 21 December 1894) who were enrolled at S.C.E.G.S. (Shore), North Sydney in April 1903 and January 1905 respectively. Everard Digby practised as a solicitor from 1892 until 1922 at 76 Pitt Street and at Ocean House, 24 Moore Street (later Martin Place), Sydney.

As well as writing verse and plays, he compiled the articles for “Hunting in Australia” for *The Field*, the country gentlemen’s newspaper, for a number of years from 1900. He inherited the Digby estate in Roscommon, Ireland, and progressively sold it off to his tenants, the last segments being disposed of in the mid 1920s. Early in 1896 the Irish Rifles were formed in Sydney. Digby was second in command with the rank of Captain (Commission granted 14 May 1896). He served with the N.S.W. Irish Rifles until 11 August 1900 when he was placed on the Reserve of Officers. He was in Port Said en route to Ireland at the commencement of World War 1 in 1914 and offered his services to the British Army. He was promoted to the rank of Major in the 7th Bedfordshire Regiment in the same year. His elder son, Lieut. John L. Digby E.D., M.B., Ch.M. served in France and Mesopotamia with the Royal Army Medical Corps and his second son, Gerald, joined the 12th Aust. Light Horse and served 7 months on Gallipoli.

Everard Digby died on 18 August 1922 at St. Ives Private Hospital, North Sydney and was buried in the Church of England Cemetery, Northern Suburbs. His wife, Edith, died on 30 January 1941 at “Rosecroft” Glen Innes, survived by their two sons, J.L. Digby, then a medical practitioner of Tenterfield, and Gerald Digby, farmer and grazier of Glen Innes, N.S.W.

The assistance of Mr. Michael Digby of Glen Innes, N.S.W., in granting access to family papers is appreciated.

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