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Janette-Susan Bailey

# Dust Bowl

Depression America to World War Two Australia

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*For Jean Bailey, née Russell, a deserving and truly remarkable Australian woman of great intelligence, integrity, and imagination, with love, always.*

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so much inspiration, I thank my beloved friend, the late, and very highly regarded Sydney actor and accent and dialect coach George Leppard who shared with me a love of storytelling, character transformation, film, voice, accent and dialect, and a love of Sydney and who knew I would write this. He was with me in my front pocket near my heart while I wrote this, as he is right now.

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Last but not least, I want to pay tribute to two of my ancestors. One of the last and treasured conversations I ever had with my father, Kenneth John Bailey, was about Jack Bailey. Dad had told me stories of Jack Bailey all my life and now in the last days of my father's life, I found myself telling them back to him as he lay quietly. Jack was my paternal great-grandfather, Labor politician, and an Australian Workers Union (AWU) man; John (Jack) Bailey, (1871–1947), whose story I tell in the coming chapters in order to introduce some important aspects of Australian national myth.<sup>1</sup> He is well placed to tell that story and I thank him for speaking to me in such a personal voice as I finally trawled through his memoirs at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, thinking of my father, Ken. I could have sworn his words were written just for me. And finally, our shared great-grandfather, Thomas Boyd (1798–1885), who brought us to Australia from Dublin arriving on the “Isabella” in 1821 and who crossed many borders. Today, he is buried in the Tumut Pioneer Cemetery, along the Snowy Mountains

Highway. Thomas was selected to travel with the Hume and Hovell expedition in 1824 and became one of the first Europeans to enter what is now known as Victoria, and to see and settle in Tumut. Sixty years later, he was invited to turn “the first sod of the construction bridge across the Murray River,” at Albury and was invited to the bridge opening. Here, when the Governors of New South Wales and Victoria introduced him and made tribute to him, they described Thomas as:

the only survivor of the Hume and Hovell exploration party who crossed the Murray near Albury in 1824 and made their way to Port Phillip, thus opening up the magnificent Riverina country, and laying the foundation for the future colony of Victoria.

...When sixty years ago, Mr Boyd stood on what is now the Victorian side of the Murray, being the first white man that ever planted his feet there...

Old as he is, he may yet live to participate at the federal city the consummation of this great political event towards which the Australian colonies are thought to be rapidly tendering – Federation.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas missed Federation by only twenty-five years. I wonder what he would think of this story. I thank him for bringing me here and I am sorry for him that he was forced to leave his family, and come to Australia, and that it was so very hard for a young Irish ploughman.

## NOTES

1. The spelling (Labour or Labor) has varied over time. This spelling was common in his time.
2. From an original address by Lord Augustus Loftus, *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus, 1862–1879* (London: Cassell and company, 1894) quoted in John (Jack) Bailey “Reminiscences of John Bailey,” (1947). State Library of New South Wales. Item: A2595.

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction: The World Is a Dust Bowl</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>New Deal Era Storytelling: A Rich Blend of Ideas that Converged in US Dust Bowl Imagery</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Ideas: American Exceptionalism, Social Realism, Women, Deserts, Documentary, Soil, and Civilization</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Three Dust Bowl Narratives: Farmer Attitudes, Human Erosion, Women, and Natural Disaster</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Soil and the US Dust Bowl: American Imagery Converges with the Australian</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Battlefields of the South-West Pacific: Australian Soil Erosion, Enemies, Graziers, and Traitors in “Dust Bowl” Imagery</b>	<b>105</b>

5	The Australian Constitution and State Politics: Creeping Deserts and Human Extinction in “Dust Bowl” Warnings of Impending Doom	155
6	Dust Storms and “the Despair of the Housewife”: War-Time Wind Erosion as “Natural Disaster”	203
Part 3	Water and “Dust Bowls”: American Imagery Converges with the Australian	235
7	“Battle of the Rivers,” Battle of the Stories: Dust Bowls, Dams, TVAs, and a Snowy Mountains Scheme	237
8	Conclusion: “Just a ‘Bloody Duststorm?’”	285
	Bibliography	291
	Index	341



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# ABBREVIATIONS

## USA

AAA	Agricultural Adjustment Administration
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
FERA	Federal Emergency Relief Administration
FSA	Farm Security Administration
LOC	Library of Congress
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
RA	Resettlement Administration
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

## AUSTRALIA: STATES AND TERRITORIES

NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld.	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas.	Tasmania
Vic.	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

## AUSTRALIA: OTHER

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AGNSW	Art Gallery of New South Wales
ANFB	Australian National Film Board
AWM	Australian War Memorial
CP	Country Party
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CWA	Country Women's Association
MDBA	Murray Darling Basin Authority
MIA	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MVDL	Murray Valley Development League
MVWUA	Murrumbidgee Valley Water User's Association
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NFSA	National Film and Sound Archive, Australia
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NLA	National Library of Australia
NSWSCS	New South Wales Soil Conservation Service
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SLV	State Library of Victoria
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
UAP	United Australia Party
VCP	Victorian Country Party

## MEASUREMENTS

1000 ft is equivalent to 304.80 m  
100 miles is equivalent to 160.93400 km  
1000 acres is equivalent to 404.6863 ha

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1	Tractors are juxtaposed against shots of army tanks in <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i> (Farm Security Administration, 1936). As this sequence unfolds, Lorentz' army of tractors are obscured by the dust they raise	68
Fig. 3.2	Sand drift in <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i> (Farm Security Administration, 1936)	68
Fig. 3.3	From Jack Glenn's short film, <i>US Dust Bowl</i> (Time Inc., 1937)	74
Fig. 3.4	Arthur Rothstein, <i>Steer Skull, South Dakota Badlands</i> (1936). Library of Congress	77
Fig. 3.5	Arthur Rothstein, <i>Farmer and Sons Walking in the Face of a Dust Storm</i>	78
Fig. 3.6	Dorothea Lange, <i>Destitute pea-pickers in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children</i>	80
Fig. 3.7	Desert contradictions. Dust Bowl refugees portrayed in Pare Lorentz' <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i>	87
Fig. 3.8	In <i>US Dust Bowl</i> . Once signs of American progress, "rusted and sand-blocked farm implements" are "now scrap iron in a new American Desert." Jack Glenn, <i>US Dust Bowl</i> (Time Inc., 1937) (Image, HBO Archives)	89
Fig. 3.9	A mother in tidy frock and heels picks up her child to take him in from an approaching storm as blowing sand sweeps around the corner of the house in Jack Glenn, <i>US Dust Bowl</i> (Time Inc., 1937) (Image, HBO Archives)	90
Fig. 3.10	As "new dust storms sweep Dalhart" the camera captures the figure of a man. He appears tiny as he races toward a house—away from the camera—for shelter	92



Fig. 4.1	Janette-Susan Bailey, “Australian Dust Storm locations 1943 and New South Wales land divisions based on the NSW Crown Lands Acts”	110
Fig. 4.2	“When the Soil Dies,” <i>Western Mail</i> (Perth, WA), December 31, 1942	125
Fig. 4.3	Grant McIntyre, Beralli Station (J. M. Leonard image, <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , December 20, 1944)	128
Fig. 4.4	John B. Davies, “Prosperity can return to tragic dust-bowl,” <i>Australian Women’s Weekly</i> December 9, 1944	128
Fig. 4.5	<i>Drought Grips Riverina</i> (1943), National Film and Sound Archive, Australia	130
Fig. 4.6	“The nation riding on the sheeps back”? Turning national myth on its head	131
Fig. 4.7	“Ants in his Eyes.” Suffering a cruel and lonely death on Australia’s other “battlefield.” The viewer is forced to look into the living eyes of the dying	132
Fig. 4.8	The expert portrayed as facing an erosion problem of massive proportions (J.M. Leonard image. <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , December 20, 1944)	133
Fig. 4.9	A review of Jock Pick’s <i>Australia’s Dying Heart</i> showed the painting, <i>Dust Bowl</i> (1933) by Texan artist, Alexandre Hogue in “A MAN-MADE DESERT,” <i>Western Mail</i> (Perth, WA), February 4, 1943	136
Fig. 5.1	<i>Above</i> : Taking Part in the modern American exodus. <i>Below</i> : Migrants from Oklahoma to California. Images by Dorothea Lange in Fred Alexander, “Human Erosion,” <i>West Australian</i> , March 1940	164
Fig. 5.2	The banks of the Darling River in western New South Wales	168
Fig. 5.3	“Landscape of death,” in “Need we fall as Rome Did?” <i>Pix</i> , July 27, 1946	169
Fig. 5.4	Almost identical to the US imagery (Fig. 3.3). Australian “dust bowl” refugees in Cinesound Productions, <i>Drought Grips Riverina</i> (1943), National Film and Sound Archive, Australia	174
Fig. 5.5	Almost identical to US Dust Bowl imagery (Fig. 3.3). Australian “dust bowl” refugees in Cinesound Productions, <i>Drought Grips Riverina</i> (1943), National Film and Sound Archive, Australia	174
Fig. 5.6	<i>Above</i> : “The desert has come up from the good earth and stands at the settler’s door.” <i>Below</i> : “Death is in the air.”	176

- Fig. 5.7 Communist Party of Australia, *Victoria in Peril from Drought, Fires and Premier Dunstan* (Image courtesy Monash University Library, Rare Books Collection) 187
- Fig. 6.1 “Women’s courage shines in stark film,” *Australian Women’s Weekly*, 1940. Ma Joad is seen in the foreground in a scene from Zanuck’s film version of *The Grapes of Wrath* 205
- Fig. 6.2 The print in this 1945 newspaper story is very dark, but shows an Australian housewife in her “very best heels,” broom in hand, from “AUSTRALIA’S DUST BOWL,” Agricultural Section, Western Mail (Perth, WA), August 2, 1945 213
- Fig. 6.3 George. D. Butterworth, President, Hay (NSW) Chamber of Commerce, A dust storm descends upon Hay, in the New South Wales Riverina 214
- Fig. 6.4 Janette-Susan Bailey, “‘Dust Bowl’ imagery: wind erosion events [dust storms, sand drift] generated offsite and onsite: as located in New South Wales and Victoria by the Australian media, 1939–1947,” Sydney, 2012 215
- Fig. 7.1 Janette Susan Bailey, “Snowy, Murrumbidgee, Murray 1946 238
- Fig. 7.2 “Now it is part of a potential dust bowl.” Airborne dust captured on film creates a bleak grey haze in imagery suggesting salvation urgently needed for the nation’s Riverina food-bowl 248
- Fig. 7.3 Ken Hall’s image of a scaled-down model of Woronora Dam as seen in Cinesound Productions, *Australia is Developing a Dust Bowl* (1943). National Film and Sound Archive, Australia 249
- Fig. 7.4 Contrasting images in Mervyn Weston, “The ‘River Authorities’ Issue Comes to a Head in USA,” *Argus*, February 9, 1946. 257
- Fig. 7.5 The Tennessee and the Murray Valleys in the Melbourne *Argus*, 1945 258
- Fig. 7.6 “These are the problems of the Valley.” In John Heyer’s *The Valley is Ours*, long shadows and the skull of an Australian merino ram create a visual reference to Lorentz and to Arthur Rothstein’s Steer Skull (Fig. 3.4) and suggest quite a problem. National Film and Sound Archive, Australia 263
- Fig. 7.7 *Top*: Industrial sounds are part of this imagery suggesting an organic machine-like nature in Heyer’s *The Valley is Ours*

	1948, National Film and Sound Archive, Australia. Echoes of Lorentz' TVA imagery seen at <i>bottom</i> in <i>The River</i> (Farm Security Administration, 1937), NARA	265
Fig. 7.8	Closing imagery from John Heyer's <i>The Valley is Ours</i> , 1948, National Film and Sound Archive, Australia ( <i>top</i> ) is almost identical to imagery to that seen at <i>bottom</i> in Lorentz' <i>The River</i> , Farm Security Administration, 1937 (NARA)	266