

**DOUGLAS PIKE (1908-1974):
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AND AUSTRALIAN HISTORIAN**

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ABSTRACT

THESIS TITLE

Douglas Pike (1908-1974) South Australian and Australian Historian.

Douglas Henry Pike was born in China in 1908, the second of five children, whose Australian parents were missionaries with a Protestant interdenominational faith mission, the *China Inland Mission*. Following graduation from an English style mission boarding school at Chefoo in northern China, Pike came to Melbourne in 1924; and from 1926 spent twelve years jackerooing on various New South Wales country properties. He returned to Melbourne in 1938, trained for the ministry in a Churches of Christ College, graduated in November 1941, married Olive Hagger and was sent to Adelaide. During pastorates at Colonel Light Gardens and Glenelg he studied at the University of Adelaide for his BA. He achieved History Honours, resigned from the ministry, taught briefly in Adelaide and at the University of Western Australia then returned to Adelaide as Reader from 1950 to 1960. Pike obtained his MA, then the D. Litt. for *Paradise of Dissent*, a history of South Australia. During the 1950s he wrote a series of newspaper articles, 'Early Adelaide with the lid off'.

In 1960 he was appointed to the Chair of History at the University of Tasmania and published his second book, *Australia: The Quiet Continent*. In 1964 he moved to the Australian National University and commenced his pioneering task as founding editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Therefore the most significant period of his working life in history and historiography covers the years from 1948 until his sudden illness in November 1973, and death in May 1974.

The Second World War at first slowed but then stimulated the teaching and writing of history in Australia. Pike commenced his university studies during the war; his research and writing followed in the post-war period. His years in academia witnessed the

establishment between 1946 and 1958 of four more universities in Australia, including the *ANU*, where he spent the last ten years of his life. However, apart from book reviews, obituaries in newspapers and journals, biographical paragraphs and the *ADB*, Pike's contribution and significance to Australian historiography has been largely neglected.

My thesis is based on personal interviews and correspondence with people who knew Douglas Pike, including family members, together with archival material from the Australian National Library and the universities where Pike worked. Printed sources include newspapers, journals, and Pike's own published writings.

THESIS DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now or hereafter known.

John D. Calvert

30 September 2008

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Without the permission and willing participation of the Pike family this thesis would have lacked much 'inside' information. Therefore I am grateful to Douglas Pike's sons, Douglas and Andrew; his younger brothers Walter and Alfred (both now deceased); and his nieces, Elizabeth Ives, Marjorie Keeble and Kaysie Skansebakken.

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As a part-time student much of my writing was done at home. My wife Jenny and my three sons; Peter, Dean and David, plus their families will now breathe a sigh of relief, as will I.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page vi of the print copy of
the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 1: Professor Douglas Henry Pike (1908-1974)