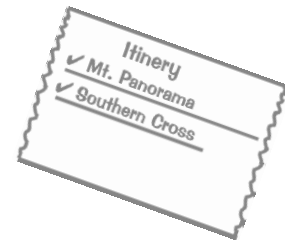


Weather – Warm & sunny
Bathurst, New South Wales
Sunday afternoon



We drove west along the country roads and eventually arrived in the town of Bathurst. Located in a flat basin of the Macquarie River beyond the western foothills of the Blue



Sculpture along the Macquarie River in Bathurst

Mountains, this small town of 28,000 people was the first inland settlement in Australia. Fruit trees were in bloom everywhere, and the whole place had a small town feeling and atmosphere that made me feel very much at home.

We drove to a "Heritage Home," one of the houses that had been built in the early

1900s. This was the place where I was to spend the night. We were welcomed by a couple named Doug and Lyn. I found them delightful, proud of their home and hometown, and eager to show me the sights of Bathurst before sundown.

Rosaleen and David bid us farewell as they had a long drive back to Sydney. I jumped into Doug's jeep for my quick tour of Bathurst. As he drove, Doug told me about the early history of this town.

The Founding of Bathurst

In 1813, the Governor ordered an army officer to take a gang of convicts and build a road starting in Emu Plains, a town west of Sydney. They were to cross the Blue Mountains and end up in the area beside the Macquarie River which is now known as Bathurst. Thanks to hard convict labor, the road was completed in 1815. I was told that the Governor (who was from England) named the town in honor of the English Lord Bathurst.

At first no one was allowed in the town except military officers, soldiers and convicts. Three years later, the first land grants were issued so people could settle on the eastern side of the Macquarie River. It took another 10 years before access to the western side of the river was allowed. By the 1830s the sale of town blocks began, and the building of this small town started in earnest. The town experienced a gold rush period and a series of economic ups and downs. By the early 1900s the wealth of many families in the town increased and much of the beautiful architecture in the town was built during that time.

At present, the industry is approximately one-third farming (as evidenced by the sheep and cattle I had seen as we drove into town), one-third secondary industries that come directly as a result of the farming (such as food producers and the manufacture of small tools) and one-third the service industry (including education) which meets the day to day needs of the people living there. It seemed that this place was both small enough and isolated enough for this rather simple economic structure to work quite well.

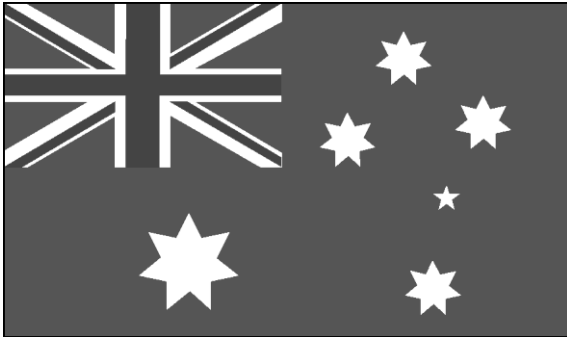
Bathurst has one outstanding topographical feature, Mt. Panorama. This is of great importance, because it is where the famous Bathurst 1000 kilometre touring car race, the Bathurst 1000, is held during the second weekend in October. Doug told me the race is usually referred to as "*The Great Race*" and only V8 supercars are allowed to participate. The race track is an actual road around the mountain that anyone is allowed to drive on. So Doug drove me around the racing car circuit which went up and around Mt. Panorama. I could feel the excitement and atmosphere of the race just by riding around the circuit in the Jeep. It was fun!

Many of the old homes and buildings in Bathurst have been restored, and this accentuates its historic flavor. We drove through the town square, up to the top of another hillside to see the historic Holy Trinity Anglican Church which was founded in 1825, and finally to the Bicentennial Park located along the Macquarie River. Seeing the river and looking eastward toward the mountains, I could picture the convict gang building the road that made all of this possible.

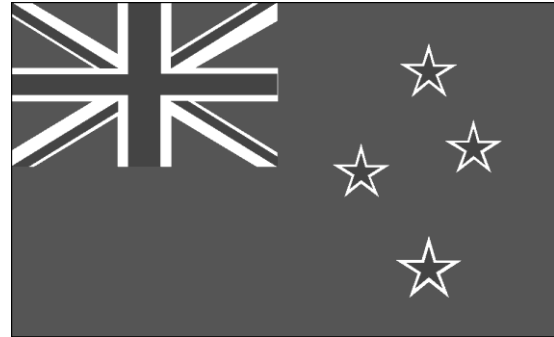
By this time the dusk had turned to darkness, and we headed back to Lyn and Doug's home for supper. In depth conversations on the state of education in Australia, the arts, and small town life made for a challenging and enjoyable evening.

After the sun went down, the air turned much cooler, almost as it would in a desert area. I decided I wanted to go outside and look at the southern stars and had to put on a jacket in order to feel warm enough. This place was far enough away from city lights, and it was a very clear night, just perfect for stargazing. I walked down the deserted street, away from the lights of the house and town, and looked up.

Such an array of stars greeted me! The patterns and placement of the stars in the sky was totally different from the Northern Hemisphere because, of course, they were different stars! The most famous constellation in the southern sky is the Southern Cross, and I could see it plainly. It is by far the most obvious group of stars in the sky. The moon was the only object in the sky that looked the same as it looks at home.



Australia



New Zealand



Western Samoa



New Guinea

I returned from my walk and decided it was time for bed. The electric blanket had been turned on for me, so even though there was no central heating I was warm and comfortable all night.

The flags of Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea and Western Samoa reflect the significance of the Southern Cross on those countries.