

The two book reviews for this meeting both cover historical events of the expansion of the Colonial settlers into the land beyond Sydney.

Disregarding that the land was in fact inhabited by First Nations Peoples, colonialists forged inland in search of grassland to raise their sheep and cattle.

The resulting bloody and appalling violence that occurred went largely undocumented.

These two books offer a sobering reminder that history is often very much more complicated once we learn more.

Killing for Country by David Marr



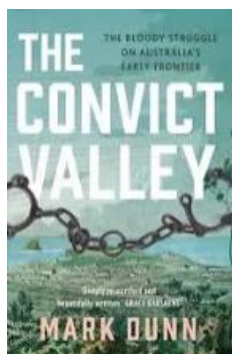
The book follows the expansion inland as the settlers moved west and then north into Queensland and then up into the Northern Territory.

The settlers took up vast grants of land which were issued to them by the British Government. The attempts of the First Nations peoples to halt this march resulted in bloody violence on the frontier.

In researching his family history David Marr found that some of his forebears had served with the Native Police. As part of his family history he acknowledged that these police were involved in some of the bloodiest events on the Australian frontier. A well researched and thorough account of this history is recorded in his book and it is written in an historical context & does not dwell on the horror.

Not all of the settlers were land hungry or brutal. Some had formed friendships and working relationships with the Native people and they were living in harmony. This did not always protect them from reprisals and raids by the Native Police and the many shocking acts of brutality that were carried out.

The Convict Valley by Mark Dunn



The Convict Valley was recommended to me by a SAG volunteer as I researched convicts listed in 1828 who were recorded as working in the Hunter Valley.

Mark Dunn documents in depth the early expansion into the Valley and provides a good understanding of the taking up of land in that area. While on a smaller scale than the outback the land was fertile land and very much sought after.

Governor Macquarie introduced a scheme to settle convicts, who had served their time or for good behaviour, on small holdings. The aim of the scheme was to encourage the convicts to farm the land and in doing so prosper which would in turn assist with supplying food to the colony.

This scheme however, did not sit well with the free settlers and wealthy merchants of Sydney who saw this fertile land as part of the expansion that they belonged to.

It was another violent frontier.