

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Princes Bridge & the River Yarra, Melbourne, Victoria

Date

1930s

Primary Maker

Rose Stereograph Co

Medium

Photographic print on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 87 x 139 mm

Name

Postcard

History

Rowing was a popular sport in colonial Australia from the early nineteenth century. Informal contests were held between crews of whaling ships and shore stations on Sydney Harbour while the first regatta was held on the Derwent River, Hobart in 1827. Crew rowing at colonial regattas included races for amateurs, 'all comers', young rowers and novelty events. These regattas has a carnival atmosphere and drew large crowds of spectators. Amateur rowing was fostered by colonial and imperial rivalries and was formalised in the 1860s through the formation of clubs. Distinctions between professional and amateur rowers were essentially social. Professionals were paid to train or were former watermaen who developed their skills at work. Amateurs argued that manual labourers had an unfair competitive advantage because their work meant they were physically fit. The Henley-on-Yarra was founded in 1904 as a showpiece for amateur Victorian rowing and was intended to be a glamorous occassion in the tradition of Henley-on-Thames. Houseboats, marquees, fireworks and illuminations created a carnival atmpsphere and guests were encouraged to wear formal attire. Winning rowers received trophies made as facsimilies of the English originals for races names after their English counterparts. Henley-on-Yarra remained the premier event on the rowing calendar until the competition declined during World War II Rowing began as a leisurely pursuit for women in the nineteenth century but competitions and clubs were established by the beginning of the twentieth century. The first exhibition of women's sculling took place on Albert Park Lake in May of 1901 as part of gala celebrations for a royal visit to Melbourne by the Duke and Duchess of York. Albert Park Lake was also home to the Albert Park Model Yacht Club which was formed in 1903. From the 1830s sculling contests became a feature of organised rowing regattas and as spontantious match races. By the 1850s professional sculling championships were introduced to formalise wager boat racing although informal

contest were still arranged. Large crowds were attracted to major sculling contests because of international successes of Australian professional scullers between 1876 and 1907, when seven Australians held the world title for twenty-two of those thirty-one years. Australian professional sculling declined as a mass spectacle in the early 1900s while horse-racing and cricket became the major spectator sports.