

BORDERLINE NEWS

Newsletter of the Wodonga Family History Society, Inc. Est. 1987

Next meeting dates & Guest Speakers

Nov 17 Centenarians lives

Carolyn Renfrey and Pam Nulty - present their mother's lives (100 years) plus members' Show & Tell night

Dec 21 Christmas breakup and Trivia

Research area:

The WFHS Research Area is open at Hyphen Wodonga Library Gallery for members and visitors on:-
Tuesdays - 1pm to 4pm;
Wednesday and Thursdays - 11am to 3pm

Contacting us:

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www.wodongafamilyhistory.org
www.facebook.com/WodongaFamilyHistory/
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From the Editorial Team: *Welcome to the 180th newsletter of the Wodonga Family History Society Inc. This month we share our member's response*

*to the challenge to write their family's **military history and to acknowledge those who fought for their country.** We hope you enjoy this edition.*

The Martin Family During World War 1 by Heather McCall

James and Maggie Martin arrived in Melbourne from Scotland in 1879. The first two of their nine children were born in Richmond then the family moved to Ballarat East where they settled. In 1897 Maggie was widowed and mother to seven boys and two girls, aged from 16 to a newborn.

Maggie remarried in 1911. By the outbreak of WW1, six of her children were married and living in Ballarat. For an unexplained reason, Maggie and her husband, along with her unmarried children moved to Clifton Hill (Melbourne) where they remained throughout the war. Also, her now widowed daughter and child moved to Richmond (Melbourne). It seems that the single family members moved between the two Melbourne addresses throughout the war, as indicated by electoral rolls.

Roy, the youngest child enlisted in Melbourne on 12th July, 1915 with a letter of permission from his mother. By February 1916 he was in Egypt then he departed for the Western Front. Within four months he was wounded in action in France and evacuated to England for treatment of gunshot wounds.

He re-joined his battalion in France in January 1917 where, just over six weeks later he was wounded and died on 11th February, not yet having reached twenty years of age.

His family was informed by telegram of his death on 22nd February but that same day the published casualty list named a Sgt R J Martin as dangerously wounded. Samuel Martin, one of Roy's older brothers wrote on behalf of his mother, *'I think it is possible that some mistake has been made...if you inform me if t*



Committee Members

President and Projects Officer:

Pat Hopkins - and GSV rep.

Vice President: Janette Griggs

Secretary & Public Officer:

Wendy Cooksey - contact
secretary@wodongafamilyhistory.org

Treasurer: Sue Jarvis

Program Co-ord: Janette Griggs

Librarian: Christine Young

Fundraising: Pamela Nulty

Publicity Officer : Ann Kerin

Research Officer: Alice Lindsay

Minutes Secretary & VAFHO rep:

Carolyn Renfrey

New members: Alice Lindsay

& Carolyn Renfrey

Editor: Maureen Cuskelly

editor@wodongafamilyhistory.org

Membership Benefits:

- ✦ Access to all the resources on the Society's library.
- ✦ Quarterly newsletter
- ✦ Access to other family history news through shared newsletters from other family history groups
- ✦ Monthly meetings with family history tips, news and guest speakers
- ✦ Contact with other family historians, researchers and members who share your interest in family history

Subscriptions:

New members -Joining fee
\$10.00 plus \$25 membership fee
Annual Membership- \$25.00
Part-year Membership -(join
between 1st April - 30th June)
\$10.00 plus joining fee.
Research request -\$30.00 or
\$5.00 for simple check of the
WFHS records

there is any hope that the telegram did not refer to my brother...'

Two weeks later they received confirmation the telegram was correct. And, that the Martin referred to in the telegram was *another* soldier on the casualty list. In July 1917, a letter was sent by Samuel Martin, on behalf of his mother, requesting a certificate of death from the Defence Department for Roy, in order to be able to claim on insurance in the Australian Mutual Provident Society.

Roy's brother Allan, a fitter and turner aged 19 years, enlisted in August, 1915. Four months later he was discharged as *'his services were required as a munitions worker.'* His enlistment papers have 'Cancelled' in red ink across the first page. In a letter, from France in June, 1916, Roy responded to a letter from Allan, telling him of an experience of being accused of not playing his part in the war, he wrote,

"Did you to speak to that useless idiot who called out to you in the street? I don't think I would have spoken, I would have made a fool of myself and lobbed him one. I can well imagine your disappointment at being told to start work again. I hardly think I would have pulled in on myself. But then again if you had come you might not have had the luck of some of us. I am sorry that you are not here with me, it would have been the experience of a lifetime for you to go and see the sights..."

It is poignant that he refers to his 'luck' as he was wounded the following month.

In 1916, two more brothers, James, aged 28 and Norman, aged 23, both married, volunteered as munitions workers in England. Both men's occupations are listed as 'fitter and turner'. They embarked the Orontes in December 1916. Both were employed at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich until May 1919 when they returned to Australia on the Kursk. A note appears on James' record in January, 1919, *'Would be very glad to go as early as possible owing to bad news from home'*.

I only discovered that James and Norman were in England during the war through a note written in July, 1917, requesting information about the burial place of Roy which states, *'I have two brothers in England, at present, who wish to visit his grave before returning to Australia, after the war...'*

I am grateful that WW1 records were so well maintained and available to us today. After the war, Maggie and her husband and other members of the family returned to their homes in Ballarat East. *Maggie and James were my great grandparents.*

*'Researching family history is a good start, but writing about it makes it history.'*¹

PRESIDENT'S

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

It gives me great pleasure to present this Report although the year covers ten months and with luck, the next President's report will also cover ten months as we get our AGM back to the right month. Like 2020, this year has been restricted by Covid rules and regulations and only five General meetings were held at Felltimber. It was very disappointing that the Programme Janette organised for 2021 was not fully presented but our guest speakers, Kate Eastlick (Midwives), Matt Bennett (Albury-Wodonga links with WW1), Ann Copeland (State Library Victoria), Gail Holstock (Vanish) and Leonie Goynes (Leneva) were well received as were the opportunities members had to tell their own stories and seek research advice.

We were excited to return to the library in High Street in February and then to the Hyphen Wodonga Library Gallery in August. However, both venues had limits on the numbers who could attend so our long awaited desire to open our research library is still not possible.

The highlight of the year was the luncheon we had at the Albury Golf Club in April to recognise the contribution made by our retired Librarian and President: Lyn, after 26 years in the role and Norma, 9 years, and also to Wendy as Secretary (25 years and still going) and Christine as Newsletter editor (20 years). A presentation was also made to Warren Embury at the following General Meeting

to acknowledge the contribution he makes providing plants for sale. This year the plant sale and raffle were our main fundraisers. We raised \$2,794.50.

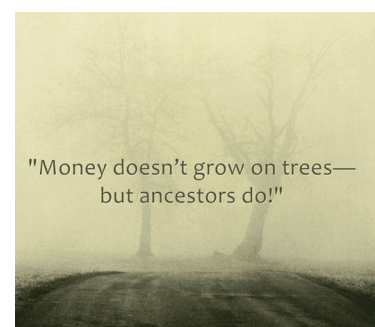
The Committee continues to work hard, from organising meetings, to keeping members informed and providing research opportunities. The business material used by the Society has been streamlined so that all material looks the same and we have a new look Newsletter and Facebook page. We appreciate the work Mary did keeping our Facebook page but, as she is no longer a member, the ownership needed to return to the Society. Work is underway to improve our web site and research facilities at the Library.

Three other points of interest. In February Wendy and I visited Don Cummins and Alice had a chat at a later date in reference to Leneva's history; in April, Lyn and I, visited a group of family historians at Chiltern at the invitation of Shirley Williamson and in May, Wendy and I produced a presentation for GSV to show case our Society which can be viewed on their website.

I wish to extend a very special thank you to all who have contributed to our work this year. It has not been easy for the Committee conducting meetings on Zoom and it was certainly disappointing that there were few general meetings; even so, we were able to welcome six new members. Welcome to our new members. *Let's hope this year will be "almost back to normal"*.

Patricia Hopkins

President, WFHS
Inc.



¹ Bill Barlow, Book Reviews, GSV news, 12 Oct. 2021, <https://www.gsv.org.au/welcome-to-the-gsv-blog>

Program Co-ordinator's

Report for the AGM: October 19 2021

I like to think that we were fairly lucky to hear almost half of our program during 2021, considering that so many lock downs and different border rules have made having meetings a strange occurrence. When we were able to get together we heard from the following speakers:-

Kate Eastick, curator from Albury Library Museum spoke to use in February about the "Nurses and Midwives" exhibition and possible sources of research for family history.

Anne Copeland from the State Library of Victoria gave some really great clues for anyone starting out on the family history journey on where to look and research in March

Matt Bennett, local Military Historian drew a big crowd in April with his topic of links to World War 1 from Albury Wodonga, this was a very timely presentation to Anzac Day

In June Gail Hostock spoke to us about forced adoption practices. Gail and her colleague were from Vanish Victoria. This session was also well patronised and highlighted the difficulties adoption practices have created for many people.

Sadly, due to Covid we have had to postpone July, August, September and October speakers and we are working with them for the 2022 programme.

However many of you have been taking part in zoom sessions and dusting off some of those folders and getting ready to memorialise some stories – our editor waits to see those. I



2021 is just about over and now is the time to start organising 2022 so I need your input for ideas for the year ahead.

What topics or skills would you like to hear or learn about at meetings?

Are you new to family history researching and would like to know how best to organise yourself or update your skills?

Would you like to have some hands on sessions using your genealogy software program or how to get the best out of those tricky websites. Are you still confused with what to do with your DNA results or perhaps you would like to know how to write your family story, these and stacks of other topics can be covered in our 2022 program.

Please send us an email letting us know how we can best help you get the most out of the Wodonga Family History Society in 2022.

I hope many members can make the next session when Carolyn and Pam present the lives of their mothers who are both turning a hundred this year. What an interesting presentation this will be.

Janette Griggs, Program Co-ordinator

Research Enquiries - we can help

Our Research Assistant can undertake research for you (see fees on page 2). Send your request via post or email detailing the topic you want addressed on your behalf ie. your query in detail.

Include everything you know:- names, areas, any birth, deaths or marriage details you may have. *NB there is no point paying for what you already know.* Please send business size self-addressed envelope with your enquiry.

Fees due - Friendly reminder:

Subscriptions were due in July. If you have not paid as yet please pay by direct banking include your name with the deposit transfer:



Hume Bank
BSB 640000
Account 111115547
Donations are tax deductible.

Biography of a Soldier: Sergeant George John Tate - Maureen Cuskelly

Sergeant George John Tate was born 20 June, 1894 to George and Martha Tate, in Kerang, Victoria. He served in the 38th Battalion, Australian Infantry Force (AIF) in France in 1916. He was wounded in Armentieres shortly after arriving and subsequently evacuated. Due to the extent of his injuries he did not return to the Western Front. He was repatriated back to Australia and discharged as medically unfit on 6 Feb, 1918. He received the Victory and British War medals.

The oldest of eight children George lived and worked with his parents on the family farm in Kerang. At the time the area was struggling with water restrictions due to severe drought. Irrigators were not exempt. It was a tough time for the large Tate family.

George John Tate enlisted on 2nd Feb, 1916 entering the AIF as a Sergeant. Prior to this he served three years in the 17th Light Horse Brigade, participating in training camps in regional Victoria. They practiced 'dismounted work and musketry'. This earlier military experience possibly influenced his decision to enlist. He joined the newly formed 38th Battalion, training in Bendigo, until an outbreak of measles and meningitis infected the division. They were urgently relocated to Campbellfield. All leave was cancelled. Shortly after when the men received their embarkation orders the families were alarmed as they had not had the opportunity to say goodbye. Nevertheless they rallied to support their men lobbying the AIF to grant the men leave; and the local women formed a committee to send comforts to the soldiers. Additionally, the public donated books for their impending journey: 'I should like to have

a supply of reading matter for the men of the 38th Battalion ... theological treatises... a supply of Sankey's hymn books' advertised Chaplain Gunson.

On 20th June 1916 Sergeant Tate embarked on the 'S.S. Runic'. From a distance it appeared majestic 'draped in khaki' as they departed. They sailed via Cape Town. There was a measles outbreak and Sergeant Tate was hospitalised en route with measles but recovered. However two soldiers unfortunately died from complications. In early October the first soldier's letters posted in Cape Town arrived in Bendigo. They were received with great anticipation. The news reassured the families that the soldiers were now in good health.



Sgt George John Tate (1894-1961)
By Unknown Photographer 1916

On arriving in Salisbury, England, the battalion trained 'for three months solid' under the perfectionist General John Monash 'who wanted an efficient fighting machine with all parts in good mechanical order'. When they received their marching orders in November 1916, Sergeant Tate was in fine physique and along with his Battalion ardent to enter the fray. After the channel crossing and a 40 hour train trip they disembarked. Then they undertook a three day arduous march with a full pack of ammunition, blankets, clothes and rifles to Armetieres arriving on the night of the 26th November into the worst winter France had experienced in 40 years. The soldiers took in the first sounds of war. The next morning they faced

the desolation of No Man's land disfigured with barbed wire entanglements. They spent three days preparing and were issued with gum-boots before entering the trenches. As their Sergeant, Tate was responsible for the men in his platoon '*responsible for everything*' from ensuring the men rose when called, received their rations and regularly rubbed whale oil vigorously into bare feet to prevent foot blight. The 1916 winter was so cold, without care, the men could perish. In Houplines this was his first exposure to the unnerving sounds of war; the smoke, mud and the stench. The trenches were full of slimy mud and so narrow in places his soldiers could barely get through. The Battalion's orders were to relieve the New Zealand troops on the front line.

At regular intervals they undertook raids through No Man's Land to the enemy trenches negotiating barbed wire and treacherous mud so deep it could entrap them, all the while staying low to avoid sniper fire.

The enemy reciprocated. It was one such raid by a German soldier on 9th December which created the skirmish Sergeant Tate was involved in. The sound of the enemy's wire cutters in the dead of night gave way to suspicion and the Australian soldiers used a flare gun to illuminate the area. They spotted the enemy soldier, fired but missed their target. He retaliated with a French mortar when a dozen more German soldiers broke through and bombed the trenches. Instead of scattering, the Australian soldiers mounted the parapet and launched a defensive attack.

They 'drove them off with rifle fire into the blackness of No Man's Land'. One digger was killed and three others injured in the fray. General Monash mentioned him in despatches: 'for coolness and determination in repelling a raid..2 '

Sergeant Tate was carried by the mortar blast landing heavily, deep in a crater in No Man's Land. He may have been unconscious for many hours while waiting for help as was common in the circumstances. He later told his family 'it was the fall in an icy puddle which saved me'. Sometime later, with shrapnel wounds to his left foot, and arm and thigh injuries, he was assisted to the Aid Post station nearby then relocated by ambulance bearers to the Advanced Dressing station. After

each bombardment the first aiders 'worked over mangled humanity' from dawn until dusk.

Once stable he was evacuated by train to Boulogne then by ship, the 'Jan Breydel', arriving in England on

17 Dec. 1916. When he arrived at Edmonton Military Hospital, unable to ambulate and with gaping wounds, his injuries were listed as 'mild'. Ostensibly the need to get soldiers back to the front may have contributed to this assessment; as well as the likely comparison to the more life-threatening injuries of his comrades. The doctors acknowledged 'that medicine had to play a role in maintaining manpower' so when there was conflict between the military's imperative or the patient's interest the military won out.

Mr. Tate received a telegram from the Commonwealth of Australia:-



Edmonton Military Hospital WW1
Unknown Photographer

² Australian War Memorial.
Borderline News

‘Regret reported son Sergeant George John Tate wounded. Will promptly advise anything further received’.

Sergeant Tate had been at the Western Front only one week when he was injured. He was evacuated on 10th December just as his Battalion were given leave. This meant he did not even get to retire to the ‘rear area’ for recovery. *His time at the front was over.* At one point there was concern he would never walk again however, after seven months hospitalisation he was repatriated back to Australia on the 31 October 1917. The Kerang community acknowledged all soldiers; those killed and those returning home:

‘...A very warm welcome home was accorded a number of returned soldiers at the Mechanics’ Hall by a large and enthusiastic gathering of residents... who presented each of the men with a certificate issued by the council... (and) suitable mementos in the form of gold medals to the following Sergeant G. J. Tate’...

Sergeant Tate, and four others were mentioned in despatches by General Monash ‘for coolness and determination in repelling a raid’.³ He was discharged medically unfit on 6 Feb, 1918. Although plagued by pain throughout his life he continued to work on the family farm, and later his own property. He married Ruby Myrtle Nancarrow in Kerang on 4 June 1924. As a couple they were successful in business, establishing a caravan park and opening the first bakery in Rosebud, Victoria.

They had one daughter and three sons. Sergeant Tate died suddenly on 12 August, 1961 at Wandella aged 67. His war service is recognised on the school Honour Board: ‘Past Scholars of Wandella SS No. 3331 who enlisted in Active

Service Abroad: Sgt. G. J Tate’. He is buried in the Kerang cemetery.

George John Tate was my maternal grandfather.

Family Genealogy resources of interest:

Australian Services Nurses National Memorial lists the names of the nurses who are commemorated in the Australian Services Nurses National Memorial

<http://www.members.optushome.com.au/lenorefrost/nurses.html>

Mostly Unsung Military History Research & Publication

This website lists a large range of documents and books for researching war history. To find out further information, request catalogues or place orders, contact Mostly Unsung: through their website <https://www.mostlyunsung.com.au/>

The **First Fleet Fellowship** is an organisation comprised of descendants of those who arrived in Sydney Cove with the First Fleet on 26 January 1788. The Fellowship was formed in 1968 and since then 9,079 descendants have established their lineage.

For more information check out the website:

<http://www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au>

Find My Past has some good ideas for when you are struggling with your family history. Ideas include looking at name variations, using newspapers, following siblings lines etc. For ‘20 tips for when you are stumped’ see:

<https://www.findmypast.com/content/20-things-to-do-when-you-are-stumped>

³ Australian War Memorial.
[Borderline News](#)

Born 1903: The Sacrifice, sadness and Tragedy of War - Christine Young

My paternal grandmother, Minnie [Nan], was born in 1903. She was the 12th and youngest child of Alfred and Susan. Alfred and Susan had their 1st child Adeline in 1876. Tragedy visited these 1st time parents as Adeline died 11 months later. Their 10th child Gordon was born in August 1896 and died 41 days later. Tragedy struck again.

When WW1 started, in 1914, Nan was 10 yrs old.

Three of her brothers enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force [AIF] in WW1 and one of her brother's in law also enlisted.

On 19 Jan 1915 Nan's brother in law Clarence enlisted in the AIF [he was 21 yrs old]. He was granted leave to get married. He married my great aunt Phoebe [aged 22] on 4 March 1915. He was killed at The Dardanelles in September 1915 [aged 22], during the Allied invasion of Gallipoli.

Phoebe and Clarence had only been married for 6 months. There was no child born from this marriage. Clarence does not have a grave and is honoured through The Lone Pine Memorial in Turkey. Phoebe never remarried; she died in 1969 aged 77.

On 7 Aug 1914 Nan's brother Albert enlisted in the AIF [he was 27 yrs old and unmarried] and was sent to Gallipoli. He survived the Allied invasion of Gallipoli – he was a bomb thrower. His military record indicates

that he was wounded on 20 Aug 1914 and was sent to Egypt to recover; eventually he returned to Gallipoli; after several months in the trenches he developed blood poisoning in both legs and was sent to England to treatment; he returned to service in May 1915; was promoted to Lance Corporal in Aug 1915; back in hospital in London by Sep 1915 - blood poisoning had developed (after he had returned to the front line) in his legs, where he was previously wounded, and his health broke down completely. He also suffered from Impetigo [a highly contagious skin infection that causes red sores on the face.]

After four days at Lemnos, and 18 days on board a hospital ship, he landed in London. In Oct 1915 the Dept. of Defence notified Albert's father that his son was in hospital in London. Albert wrote to his parents to let them know that he was being well looked after with the best food and attention; that he could walk a little and that the hospital was being run entirely by women. He said that the Australians were treated exceptionally well.

When he recovered he returned to Egypt, and subsequently, was sent with his battalion to France [Mar 1916]. He was killed in action in France on the 26 June 1916 aged 29.

He, along with three others, was in a trench dug-out when a shell pierced the roof and exploded, killing Albert and two other soldiers. He was buried in the Rosenberg Military Cemetery in Belgium which was located in the village of Ploegsteert in the Ypres Salient on the Western Front [Belgium]. This cemetery was used between Nov



1914 and Aug 1916. His remains were exhumed in 1930 [along with other soldiers' remains] and all were moved to the Berks Cemetery Extension which is also in the village of Ploegsteert.

In June 1918 Albert's parents, sisters and brothers placed a Memorial notice in the local paper to commemorate his death.

On 12 Sep 1916 Nan's brother Reginald enlisted in the AIF [he was 35yrs old]. My understanding is that he never married. His military record indicates he developed bronchitis in March 1917 and was sent to a Field Hospital; he was ill again in July 1917 and was treated for pleurisy at a Field Hospital. He returned to service in Jan 1918; contracted pleurisy again in Mar 1918; returned to service in Apr 1918. In May 1918 he was treated for scabies but returned to service in the July 1918. Finally he returned home to Australia in Feb 1919.

In 1916 Nan's brother Henry also enlisted in the AIF [he was 20yrs old]. My understanding is that he never married. Surprisingly, I cannot find his military record but I know that he also came home.

When the war ended Nan was 15yrs old. Like many others she never spoke about that war, or the next one.

I cannot even imagine the horrors, hardships and sacrifices that my great uncles and all the men and women who fought in WW1 and other wars endured on the battlefields and the many sorrows and anxious times their families endured at home.

Lest we forget

New Books in our Library - Book Reviews

If you are interested in these resources visit our library at Hyphen Wodonga Library Gallery. Thanks to **Christine Young** for the following review of our new books:

- The War to End all Wars
- Tracing your Great War Australian Military Ancestors
- Tracing your WW2 Australian Military Ancestors

The War to End War - Tracing your Great War Australian military ancestors written by Neil C. Smith

This small book outlines the progress of WW1 and then advises where to look for information and how to interpret that information. For example: what does the insignias on the uniform or slouch hat mean; what does the army badges of rank mean; what does the medical jargon on paperwork mean, etc.

It lists more than 50 websites to use; has a glossary of terms; battle locations and the period of time that the Australian military forces spent there and much much more information.

Australians in Peril - Tracing your World War Two Australian Military Ancestors written by Neil C. Smith

This book is easy to read and follow. It outlines the progress of WW2 and then advises where to look for information and how to interpret that information. For example: how to interpret service numbers through the services including the Nursing Service; how to search the Nominal Roll; what do the lapel badges of rank mean; an explanation of Routine Orders (RO's), etc.

It includes more than 40 websites to use; has a glossary of terms; battle locations and the

period of time that the Australian military forces spent there.

Nothing Short of War with the Australian Army in Borneo 1962-66
written by
Neil C. Smith

This book details the Borneo conflict; provides names of ships and identifies the Army personnel who served in Borneo. It lists hundreds of names of personnel who served in this war. And it includes all known Army members who received medals and tells the stories behind some of these soldiers as well as displaying photos of some of these soldiers. There is a lot more information in the book and definitely worth using as a resource in tracing your family history.

11 NOVEMBER
Remembrance Day



Sir by Damian (Dib) Morgan
1998

Dib Morgan is a young Queenslander from Condamine on the western Darling Downs. The following poem 'Sir' is a vote of thanks from him to the men and women who fought to defend Australia's freedom.

Dib is determined to play his part in helping to preserve the ANZAC Spirit.

Sir - would it help if I shed a tear
I swear it's the first time since this time last year
My spine is a tingle - my throat is all dry
As I stand to attention for all those who died

I watch the flag dancing half way down the pole
That damn bugle player sends chills to my soul
I feel the pride and the sorrow - there's nothing the same
As standing to attention on ANZAC Day

So Sir - on behalf of the young and the free
Will you take a message when you finally do leave
To your mates that are lying from Tobruk to the Somme
The legend of your bravery will always live on

I've welcomed Olympians back to our shore
I've cheered baggy green caps and watched Wallabies score
But when I watch you marching (Sir) in that parade
I know these are the memories that never will fade

So Sir - on behalf of the young and the free
Will you take a message when you finally do leave
It's the least we can do (Sir) to repay the debt -
We'll always remember you - Lest We Forget

Wodonga Family History Society

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www.facebook.com/WodongaFamilyHistory/
