Teacher Resource
If walls could speak
5 stories from the Destitute Asylum
eBook

This eBook can be used as a resource for students and teachers to explore the stories of people who lived in South Australia between 1800 and 1918. It aims to personalise history using primary and secondary sources from a variety of South Australian and interstate government agencies and private collections.

It has been published by the Department of Education and Child Development in collaboration with the Migration Museum through the History Trust of South Australia and links with the exhibition *In this place: a history of the Migration Museum site*.

Year levels: Year 9 HASS (History), SACE Stage 1 Modern History and Year 6 HASS (with support). Teachers will need to determine whether their students are able to benefit from engaging with the content and discussing the key concepts.

Big idea

South Australia was established as a 'just and prosperous society' but within 10 years of white settlement, poverty and homelessness was found. The fledgling government established the Destitute Board in 1849 to manage the problem and the Destitute Asylum in 1851 to provide support and relief.

Using primary and secondary sources, *If walls could speak* guides students on an inquiry into the lives of 5 people who relied upon government welfare and were affected by government legislation during this time.

An inquiry into:

- **Destitution: Who were the destitute and how did they become destitute?**
  Abandoned women, wards of the state and neglected children, elderly and infirmed men and women, sick and convalescent, pregnant women, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and children born outside of marriage.

- **What are the stories?**
  George "Fireball" Bates
  Born in London in the early 1800s, George Bates started sailing the world at 11 years of age. He jumped ship in 1824 and spent most of his life on Kangaroo Island. He relied on outdoor relief from the age of 70 and in 1894 he was admitted to the Destitute Asylum, where he died the following year.

  Kudnarto
  Kudnarto was the first Aboriginal woman to marry a non-Aboriginal man in South Australia. For 3 months in 1847 she attended the Native School Establishment which was located on the site where the Destitute Asylum was later established and it was there that she learned to read and write in English.

Topsy Lacey

Topsy Lacey was handed over at the Adelaide Railway Station at two months of age by her mother who was too poor to look after her, and again by her adopted mother when she was 13 because she was "unmanageable". At 14 years of age she was sent to the Industrial School as a neglected child. In 1907 she had her first baby at the Destitute Asylum.

Alfred Stokes

Alfred Stokes was an Aboriginal boy who was sent to the Hulk *Fitzjames,* a floating reformatory for boys when he was 10 years old for stealing a watch. Instead of serving the original 3 years of sentence, the Destitute Board sentenced him to serve 6 years as he had no parents.

Edmund Williams

Edmund Williams was born to an ummarried mother and the father was not listed at the Destitute Asylum in 1900. His mother was not able to look after him and from the age of 1 year and 3 months he became a ward of the state. By the time he was 18 years old he had lived with 10 different foster families in various towns across South Australia.

- **How did the government of the day respond? Which Acts were written and what was the impact of these Acts?**

  A Legislation Timeline is included at the end of the book for reference.
  The following key Acts and events directly affected the people whose stories are told.
  1842   Deserted Wives and Children Act
  1846   Land Grants Act
  1849   Destitute Board established
  1851   The Government Location and Destitute Asylum established
  1866   Destitute Persons Relief Act
  1877/78 Lying-in Home erected
  1909   Invalid and Old Aged Pensions Act
  1912   Payment of Maternity Allowance introduced
  1942   Widows Pension

How to access and use the eBook

- *If walls could speak* is a multimodal resource which is best read on an iPad, and downloaded through itunes via this link: http://itunes.apple.com/au/book/id1313570266
- Short videos, audio recordings, letters, photographs, architectural drawings are featured throughout and information is conveyed through interpretive text and inquiry questions are presented throughout and at the end of each story.
- The eBook also features a video which explains how to make the most of the interactive features, such as highlighting and taking notes, and looking up words.

Hints for use

- *If walls could speak* can be used as part of a wider unit of learning of History, depending on a teacher's knowledge of their class and the needs of different students.
- It could be used chapter by chapter with a teacher dividing their class into 5 groups and each group choosing and following a story and then comparing the 5 stories as one large group OR
- Students could read all 5 stories and develop an understanding of different experiences of poverty in the early days of the colony depending on gender, class and Aboriginal identity.

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Australian Curriculum outcomes

Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
The eBook provides an opportunity for students to gain insight into the experiences of Aboriginal people since European colonisation.

Year 6 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)
The eBook content can be used in a unit of work to: • Explore the topic "Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world". • Develop humanities and social sciences understanding through key concepts including **significance; continuity and change; cause and effect; place and space; interconnections;** **Inquiry question explored:** How have key figures, events and values shaped Australian society, its system of government and citizenship?
Knowledge and Understanding: History The key concepts of **sources**, **continuity and change** and **cause and effect** can be examined to develop historical understanding.
Inquiry and skills **Researching** Locate and collate relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources ACHASS123 **Analysing** Examine primary sources and secondary sources to determine their origin and purpose ACHASS126 Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present ACHASS127 **Evaluating and reflecting** Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions ACHASS129
General Capabilities **Critical and Creative Thinking** Learn how to build discipline specific knowledge about history. **Personal and Social Capability** Gain an understanding about human experience, past and present, identify issues and others' perspectives which inform reflective practice, empathy, communication skills, teamwork and advocacy. Learn to appreciate the effects of civic and social decisions, and the effect of these on the lives of others. **Ethical Understanding** Critically explore character traits, actions and motivations of people in the past that may be the result of different standards and changing societal attitudes. Recognise that examining the nature of evidence deepens their understanding of ethical issues.

Australian Curriculum outcomes

Year 9 History

The eBook content can be used in a unit of work which addresses the following key inquiry questions

- **How did new ideas and technological developments contribute to change in this period?** (The emergence of a welfare system in South Australia)
- **What was the origin, development, significance and long-term impact of imperialism in this period?** (Expansion of the British Empire through colonisation and immigration. Legislation introduced to address the problem of destitution, and the treatment of Aboriginal people)

Historical understanding
Understanding Australia's past and its connections to the Modern World

- **Progressive ideas and movements (1750 – 1918)**
  The emergence and nature of key ideas in the period, with a particular focus on ONE of the following: (imperialism, Chartism) ACDSEH019;
- **Movement of peoples (1850-1901)**
  Experiences of slaves, convicts and free settlers upon departure, their journey abroad, and their reactions on arrival, including the Australian experience ACDSEH083.

Historical skills
Chronology, terms and concepts

- Use historical terms and concepts ACHHS165

Historical questions and research

- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry ACHHSS166

Analysis and use of sources

- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources ACHHS169,
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use of evidence in an historical argument ACHHS170,
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sourcesACHHS171,

Perspectives and interpretations

- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people in the past ACHHS172
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) ACHHS173

Explanation and Communication

- Select and use a range of communication forms and digital technologies ACHSS175

General Capabilities
Critical and Creative Thinking
Apply critical thinking in questioning sources, interpret the past from incomplete documentation, develop an argument using evidence, and assess reliability when selecting information from resources. Think creatively when developing new interpretations to explain aspects of the past that are contested or not well understood.

Personal and Social Capability
Gain an understanding about human experience and develop skills of historical inquiry. Reflect, develop empathy and appreciation of the perspective of others. Engage with understandings such as historical empathy, contestability, perspectives, cause and effect, and continuity and change.

Ethical Understanding
Critically explore character traits, actions and motivations of people in the past that may be the result of different standards and changing societal attitudes. Recognise that examining the nature of evidence deepens their understanding of ethical issues.

Modern History SACE Stage 1

***If walls could speak* can be a beneficial resource for students studying Topic 1: Imperialism, Topic 3: Indigenous Peoples, Topic 4: Social Movements, or Topic 6: Elective.**

In this subject, students explore the changes within the world since 1750, examining developments and movements, the ideas that inspired them and their short term and long term consequences for societies, systems and individuals.

Students build their skills in historical method through inquiry, by examining and evaluating the nature of sources. This includes who wrote or recorded them, whose history they tell, whose stories are not included and why, and how technology is creating new ways in which histories can be conveyed. Students explore different interpretations, draw conclusions, and develop reasoned historical arguments.

Skills of historical inquiry
- analyse evidence of and explore the historical concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, perspective and interpretation, and contestability
- recognise and evaluate differing perspectives on the past, such as different cultural perspectives, to understand the contestable nature of historical knowledge and interpretation, draw reasoned and supported conclusions, and develop empathetic understanding
- compare and contrast evidence to interpret and understand the past and present, and make predictions about the future
- practise ethical scholarship, including the use of appropriate referencing techniques.

General Capabilities

Critical and Creative Thinking
Think critically about who wrote or recorded histories, whose histories have been told, whose histories have not been included and why, and new spaces in which histories can now be told and heard. Analyse, evaluate and synthesize content as an interpretation of the past.

Personal and Social Capability
Investigate and appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others through the practice of empathy. Study how individuals, groups, and societies interact and influence change in history. Explore ideas that shaped developments and movements, and the growth of modern nations, and the impact of these events, experiences, and phenomena on people's ideas, perspectives, circumstances, and identity.

Ethical Understanding
Apply and extend skills in ethical understanding when investigating the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shape the actions and possible motivations of people and groups. Explore values, beliefs, and principles that formed the basis of judgments and actions of people in the past.

Teaching for effective learning (TfEL)

The content of *If walls could speak*, incorporate the three student- focused TfEL domains:

Domain 2: Create safe conditions for rigorous learning	Domain 3: Develop expert learners	Domain 4: Personalise and connect learning;
2.1 Develop democratic relationships 2.2 Build a community of learners 2.3 Negotiate learning 2.4 Challenge students to achieve high standards with appropriate support	3.1 Teach students how to learn 3.2 Foster deep understanding and skilful action 3.3 Explore the construction of knowledge 3.4 Promote dialogue as a means of learning	4.2 connect learning to students' lives and aspirations 4.3 Apply and assess learning in authentic contexts 4.4 Communicate learning in multiple modes

Follow up questions and debate topics

The Destitute Asylum
- Was the creation of the Destitute Asylum an effective way of providing relief to the destitute? What other measures could have been put in place instead of, or as well as the Destitute Asylum?
- What is poverty? How is it defined? How is it measured?
- What are the differences between being poor in the 19th Century and being poor in the 21st century? How does the South Australian government deal with poverty today?
- What groups are most likely to be poor in Australia? Why?
- What groups are less likely to be poor in Australia? Why?

George 'Fireball' Bates
- Should Fireball Bates be honoured as a hero or loathed as a scoundrel?

Kudnarto
- Was the land the colonial governments to give?

Topsy
- Debate: The government helped Topsy

Alfred
- Why did Alfred steal the watch?

Edmund
- Debate: Edmund was well cared for/Edmund was let down by the welfare system and should have been better cared for

Suggested follow up activities

Visit the Migration Museum, Kintore Avenue, Adelaide, specifically gallery 7 *In this place*

Visit the State Records' Research Centre 115 Cavan Rd, Gepps Cross, 5094

https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/research-centre

Visit the State Library of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide

Bibliography and further reading

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National Library of Australia https://www.nla.gov.au/

State Records of South Australia https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/

TROVE http://trove.nla.gov.au/

State Library of South Australia http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/

adoption
The term used when Wards of the State were permanently placed with families. The Adoption Act was not passed until 1925 and before then was only rarely implemented.

conjugal
Relating to marriage or a married couple

convalescent
Recovering from an illness or medical treatment such as an operation

destitute
Extremely poor, and having no access to resources

enciente
Pregnant

explicitly
In a clear and detailed manner, leaving no room for confusion or doubt

External relief system
A system of relief originating in Britain which provided money, food, clothing or goods to people living in poverty that did not require them to enter an institution. The Destitute Asylum provided this type of relief to people who brought their ration cards with them for verification.

foster
Temporary placement of children in a family environment, previously called Boarding out System

idle
Lazy, avoiding work

Indoor relief
A system of relief originating in Britain after the Industrial Revolution which revolved around workhouses, which assisted people in poverty in return for their labour. Australia did not have workhouses but institutions like the Destitute Asylum provided outdoor relief to people in poverty, especially those with disabilities, the elderly and children.

Industrial school
A school where state wards were sent to be housed and educated

infirm
Not physically or mentally strong, because of age or illness

oakum
Picking oakum was the practice of untwisting old rope which was used in shipbuilding.

primary sources
Original documents and objects which were created at the time being investigated. Examples are letters, reports, photographs and tools.

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Protector of Aborigines
1838, two years after the systematic colonisation of South Australia, a recommendation was made that a Protector of Aborigines should be engaged to watch over the rights of Aboriginal people, learn their language and protect them from acts of cruelty. The role came to include social control, including whom Aboriginal people were allowed to marry and management of their financial affairs.

putative
Thought or assumed to be

Reformatory school
A school for state wards who need to be reformed with a focus on behaviour management

Relief
A system of relief administered by the government to those in need. There were two types of relief- Indoor and Outdoor.

secondary sources
Accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated. They include writings of historians, encyclopaedia, documentaries, history textbooks and websites.

State Records of South Australia
State government archives (for more information https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/)

Talipes
A type of club foot where the foot is rotated at the ankle

Welfare or Welfare State:
A concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the social and economic well-being of its citizens.

If walls could speak – 5 stories from the Destitute Asylum was published by the South Australian Department for Education and Child Development in collaboration with the Migration Museum through the History Trust of South Australia.

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Department for Education and Child Development

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