



*ANZAAB Aspects of Book Collecting*  
**Australian trade and corporate histories**  
Berkelouw Books

**Background:** There has been a growing interest in Australian corporate histories and trade histories. Major Australian corporations and trades have considerably affected the lives and livelihoods of many Australians and are inextricably interwoven into the history of our society. These histories record the development of our towns and cities, our early businesses and our domestic life. They are both a genealogical record and a biographical record of our early businessmen.

Often these histories were published in small print-runs, typically as ephemeral pamphlets or printed soft covers. As such, many copies of these histories have perished over the years making the remaining copies very rare.

**Range:** Corporate, Trade and Company histories in Australia serve as an important record of our business heritage. They were usually published in pamphlet or booklet form making them perishable and therefore ephemeral. The companies published initially for their employees and their families. They also published their histories to impress their customers and their competitors. The commercial world in Australia began with Agriculture. Mining through to Banking and Law histories, as well as Merchant sample books and catalogues litter the collection. Examples range from Gregson's history of The Australian Agricultural Company 1824-1875 published 1907; The Victoria State Electricity Commission's Power & Heat: Victoria's National Scheme of Electricity of Briquette, 1928; Cobb & Co. Ltd., Coaching in Australia, circa 1917; The Story of the Wentworth Hotel, published 1946; Shannon's Colonial Australian Gunsmith. With a list of Convicts associated with the gunmaking trade, published 1967.

**Availability:** The bindings, usually paper boards, wrappers, stapled or sewn: Their values are dictated by their condition and print-run.

**Price-range:** The earlier the publication usually dictates a higher value. Australian Agricultural Company Reports (1825) fetched AUD\$20,000. A most desirable corporate history. A 1836 facsimile Catalogue of Seeds and Plants, Canberra 1994, AUD\$40.