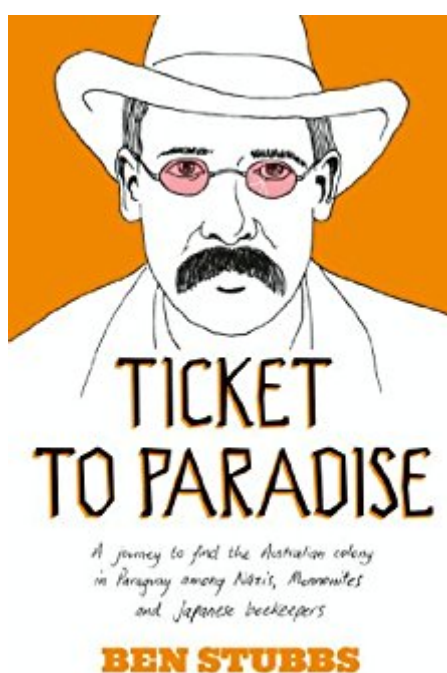


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Ticket To Paradise: A Journey To Find The Australian Colony In Paraguay Among Nazis, Mennonites And Japanese Beekeepers



Synopsis

In the wilds of Paraguay live blue-eyed South Americans with surnames like Smith and McCreen. This is the intriguing story of their ancestors, an idealistic Australian journalist called William Lane, and a colony called New Australia. In 1893, Australian journalist William Lane dreamed of creating a utopia where his socialist ideals could flourish, far away from his home in Queensland. He enlisted 238 followers and convinced them to sail across the Pacific with him to Paraguay, where he intended to create a paradise where brotherhood would be the order of the day and where hard work would reap its own rewards. And then reality set in. Expecting green and fertile fields, the New Australians found instead a dustbowl; expecting wine, women and song, they realised that their leader wanted them to remain abstemious and monogamous. This was not paradise but a kind of hell and Lane would face open rebellion from his followers. In 2010, Australian travel writer Ben Stubbs made his own trek to the wilds of central Paraguay to discover the remnants of New Australia and to search out the stories of those who stayed behind. He discovers a series of utopian colonies, including New Japan and New Germany, and their inhabitants, who lead strange double lives, caught between the countries they think of as home and the one they live in every day. Funny, unexpected and fascinating, this is an adventure travel story with a difference.

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Customer Reviews

As a Paraguayan, I understand that there is a lot of things that are not right in my country, but I must say that I found it highly offensive and quite sad that this author is trashing Paraguay in a way that makes it look better for him to justify the failure of the Australian colony. Firstly, he is generalizing Paraguayans as ignorant, illiterate, lazy and, most of all mediocre. Also, he's describing behaviors of whole tribes based on one single visit with to a native settlement in which he didn't even have a conversation with the locals. He calls Paraguay's main cities "dirt holes", "contraband paradise" and even worse things that maybe for him are "normal" but they completely lack respect and, most of all, they don't speak the truth about what Paraguay really is. I can't believe that this author didn't even get the time to get his facts straight (lies about folklore, about traditions...and pretty much he makes up details just to make his book a bit more interesting). Secondly, there are a lot of lies about the Paraguayan culture (things that as a Paraguayan I've never heard about in my life) and even the name of a lot of cities he mentions are not correctly spelled. I found this very shameful. And last but not least, I don't know who is going to read this book but the only thing I would like to make very clear is that this author speaks of nothing but assumptions and generalizes the whole country out of just a few comments from peculiar people or maybe telling the story, as I said before, to make Paraguay look like a piece of dirt that should be erased from the planet just to glorify the failed effort of Australia to survive in the country. Shame, shame, shame...

I am a Hispanic Australian. I can relate to the author's observations about the Paraguayan sided Australians, and the cultural traits of Latin American subjugated proletariat. I enjoyed the account of the lost Australian tribe in the Paraguayan wilderness. My only observation is that it was so typical of Latin American regimes of late 20th century to favour foreigners to the detriment of its indigenous people. And it also typical that the favored foreign groups sided with the dictator. You scratch my back....

Ticket to Paradise
A Journey to find the Australian colony in Paraguay among Nazis, Mennonites and Japanese beekeepers by Ben Stubbs
On 16 July 1893, the 600-ton tall ship "Royal Tar" sailed from Sydney Harbour for the long trip to Paraguay carrying the first 220 of more than 500 Utopian pioneers to set up a socialist collective away from the 1890's political troubles in Australia. This seemingly romantic footnote in Australia's history, the reverse of the modern "boat people", was

lead by inspirational writer William Lane and made up of bushmen, labourers, artisans, sailors, and a sprinkling of professionals. This was not the first or last socialist utopia envisaged, not even to Paraguay. Poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's fresh start in the wilderness on the banks of the Susquehanna River in the United States and Ayn Rand's laissez-faire community in "Atlas Shrugged" both reflect similar thinking. Ben Stubbs' insightful history and modern travelogue would comprehensively dampen the enthusiasm of any modern socialist utopian. Rather than a paradise or Garden of Eden, the enterprise started falling apart soon after clearing the Heads over "canoodling" by single women; and later shore leave on arriving at Montevideo capital of Uruguay; alcohol; and fornicating with the Paraguay natives. By May 1894 the group had split in two: Lane's puritanical Royalists at Cosme and the opposing Rebels at New Australia who took issue with his unbending rules. Jaguars, anteaters, cannibals, mosquitos, disease, and a recent bloody war in Paraguay added to the sad tale documented in detail and clearly related. The story is filled out with other Paraguay utopian groups of variously Jesuit, Japanese, German, the Mennonite sect from the Netherlands, Canada and Russia, plus information on the local AchÃ© tribal people. Perhaps the book should carry a "Health Warning" for the utopian 27% of Australians still supporting the ALP Government who, toying with the "Ticket to Paradise" option, may find this book confronting and disillusioning. Malcolm Cameron 7 May 2012

Yet another cowboy hat goes to Paraguay and tells the same ridiculous story. You aren't cool, you weren't in danger and you failed at even the most basic adaptations to Paraguay. Most of all you failed at gaining any insight into Paraguay and it is a shame the author thought they needed to share this failure.

Ben Stubbs book is a very informative read on the history surrounding the Australians who set off 120 years ago in search of creating their own utopian society. The book provides a clear indication that the rash decisions made all those years ago, have created a collective of people living in a far off land who still have a bond to Australia, the land of their ancestors. Being an Australian who is married to a Paraguayan, and having spent significant amounts of time there including visiting the original settlement, it was an entertaining and informative read which accurately describes arriving at this strangely enthralling country as an Australian visitor. I found the background information provided relating to Paraguay's history very educational, whilst being presented in an interesting and quirky manner. Ben has done a great job in immersing himself in the country and culture and giving an accurate representation of life in Paraguay, and presented it in a fashion which made the

book hard to put down.

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