



**The People's Health: Public Health in Australia,
1788-1950 [Part of two volume set]: 001
(Contributions in Medical Studies,)**

Milton J. Lewis

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A comparative history of public health, this volume begins with the first European settlement on the Australia's east coast in 1788 and follows developments into the aftermath of the Second World War. In contrast to the last 50 years, which have been characterized by a focus on chronic, degenerative diseases of an aging population and emerging infections, such as AIDS, the first era of Australian public health grappled with disease and mortality patterns shaped by communicable diseases. Lewis uses the American and British experiences with public health during this period to place the Australian effort within a global context, providing the reader with a veritable history of the evolution of public health on a worldwide scale.

After discussing the emergence of public health in Europe between the 16th and 19th centuries, Lewis details the terrible impact of European infections on virgin, indigenous populations of Australia and other parts of the New World. He explores the opposition of private medical practitioners to the full provision of public health services in the early 20th century. As in the U.S., the Federal structure of government made creation of an effective national public health presence difficult. It would require the reforming Federal Labor administrations of the 1940s to make a serious attempt to integrate preventative and curative services?an attempt that ultimately foundered due to constitutional obstacles and an electoral backlash against government controls. By the 1950s, public health would nearly disappear from community and government awareness.

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