

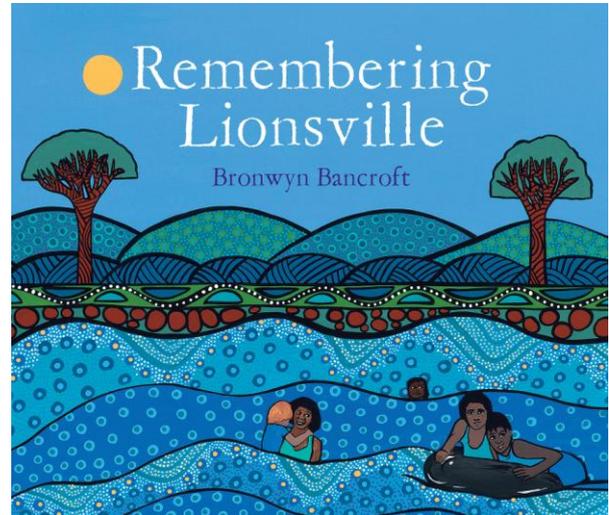
Teachers' Notes
by Dr Robin Morrow
Remembering Lionsville
By Bronwyn Bancroft

ISBN 9781742373201

Recommended for ages 5-8 yrs and older

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INTRODUCTION

This richly layered picture book has much to offer to readers of a wide age group. It is a family memoir about the way of life of Bronwyn Bancroft's father's people in remote and challenging Lionsville. Beautifully designed illustrations in luminous colours depict the house and garden, work and play at Lionsville. Bronwyn Bancroft states 'I have been preparing for this book all of my life.' She also expresses the wish that this book will help achieve 'a greater level of understanding around the complexity of Black and White relations.' The text reflects the author's respect for her ancestors and extended family, and for the values and stories she has learned from them.

CURRICULUM TOPICS

Although this an accessible picture book with appeal to children from 5 years of age, it is also suitable for use throughout primary school and into years 7 and 8. Areas of study for which it is recommended include:

- Indigenous Perspectives
- English language and literature
- Visual literacy
- Art
- HSIE
- Science/Health and wellbeing

The suggested activities are for a wide age and ability range. Teachers should be able to adapt them to suit the demands of their class level and curriculum requirements.

THEMES

- Indigenous history and culture
- Inter-racial relations
- Memory
- Family history
- Survival in rural Australia
- Visual literacy
- The idea of home

NOTES

1. Bronwyn Bancroft is both writer and illustrator of this book
2. The pages in picture books are not usually numbered, so pages are identified in these teachers' notes as 'spread 1' etc. Students can learn to identify the double-page *spread* as the key unit in a picture book.

FIRST READING

This picture book is a work of art, and its integrity should be respected by initially sharing the book with the class in an uninterrupted reading-aloud session.

Students can be asked to anticipate from the cover and title page what type of book this is. Brainstorm the word 'remembering' in the title. Older students can be taught the word 'memoir' for a book about personal history.

Next look at each spread as both a visual and a verbal text, noting that each advances the story as chapters do in a longer book. Older students can work in small groups to produce their own summary of each spread, but a sample summary is provided here:

1. Introduction to the house.
2. The garden and the creek.
3. The kitchen and bottling of fruit.
4. Other rooms; the verandah, where kids slept and the post office was run.
5. The night sky; Lionsville as a special place, secure until white people came.
6. Family tree from the 1850s, with some complex relationships.
7. Hard work at goldmining meant Pa could afford to buy the land.
8. Managing during and after the War.
9. When the writer's grandfather died.
10. Journeys to Lionsville: homecoming.
11. Swimming, eating, listening to adults talk.
12. Grandmother and her locket with a picture of the writer's great-grandfather.
13. Uncle Pat telling stories about the past under the old pear tree.
14. The dream: Uncle Pat and the bridge.
15. Cherishing links to the past, and passing on the stories.

Discuss other picture books the class is familiar with, in which each spread contributes to the story.

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

This book subtly opens up the topic of 'the complexity of Black and White relations. The writer's own father was Aboriginal, and it is his family that features in this book (her mother's family was Scottish and Polish). Spread 6 documents some complex relations in her father's family. Teachers can sensitively guide students to be attentive to such details as the picture on spread 11 of people of different coloured skin swimming together in the creek.

There are several ways in which the writer shows her respect for her grandparents and extended family. The words tell of their hard work and generosity. The illustrations show children listening respectfully to their elders (see spread 13).

Spreads 13 and 15 show lines of stylised figures in a kind of human chain. Students can discuss who these figures represent. An awareness of the presence of ancestors is an important aspect of Indigenous spirituality.

Indigenous art and literature often emphasises the importance of *home*. The class can look for clues to the importance of home in *Remembering Lionsville*, especially in spread 10, and in some of the other books in the booklist.

The visual art in this book is based on traditional Aboriginal styles and techniques, but includes contemporary techniques such as the incorporation of photographs (eg. the children in beds in spread 4). Students can compare the art in this book with other examples of Aboriginal art (individual paintings, or in books such as those in the booklist below), noting similarities and differences.

ACTIVITY

Read *When I Was Little, Like You* by Mary Malbunka, an Indigenous memoir about growing up in a very different part of Australia. Discuss similarities and differences in the childhoods of Mary Malbunka and Bronwyn Bancroft.

Compare the final words of each book.

Malbunka: 'At night-time we sat around the fire with the old people and we listened to the *Tjukurrpa Yara*. . . All of us *piperrri* from that time are now grown up . . . Now we are the ones who show the children how to get *mangarri* and *kuka*. And we tell them the stories we learned when we were little. *Kala palya!*'

Bancroft: 'I've always been taught to cherish older people and their stories because they are a direct link to the past. I wanted to tell you this story now so that one day you might do the same.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

SHAPING THE NARRATIVE

This is a book about memory, and is shaped by taking the reader on a visual and verbal tour of the family house and garden at Lionsville.

USE OF FIRST PERSON AND SECOND PERSON

Spread 1 includes the words 'our,' 'my,' and 'we.' These are *first person* words. Older students can also learn the grammatical term *second person*. For example, on spread 9, *you* is used: 'Come on, let's have a swim and I'll tell you some more later'. It seems the reader is being directly invited to share the writer's experience. Discuss how this makes the reader feel (friendly, treated as an equal, 'as though the writer is talking to you'). Both first person and second person can be used in students' own writing tasks (see Activity 3 below).

METAPHOR

On spread 9, when telling of the death of her grandfather, the writer states 'Things were never the same after that. He was the cement that held everything together.' *Cement* is a metaphor, used as a word-picture to tell how important the grandfather was to the family. Brainstorm other metaphors that describe character (eg. rock, lion).

There are two turning points in the story, spread 5 (the coming of white people), and spread 9 (the death of the grandfather) and older students can have these pointed out to them, to develop an awareness of narrative structure.

Older students can discuss the dream described on spread 14, and its possible meaning. A bridge can be a *symbol* of crossing into a new stage of life.

ACTIVITIES

1. Make a list of adjectives to describe the writer's family. Here are some adjectives to start with:
 - hard-working
 - thrifty

Older students could give a reason for each adjective eg 'the family was *generous* because they would give food to swaggies'.

2. Research the meaning of slang words: *ticked up* and *swaggies* (spread 8).

3. (This activity could be combined with Art activity, see below). Write a paragraph about your bedroom, or kitchen or garden. . It could begin 'Come and have a look at my bedroom/kitchen/garden . . .'

Older students can be made aware of using first person and second person.

4. Brainstorm with the class some happy memories they have of holidays etc. Students then write a brief description beginning 'The best thing I remember is . . .'

VISUAL LITERACY

Some elements in the illustrations are photographs that have been brought in eg. the moon on spread 5, stones on spread 12, and a number of family portraits. Students can search for these photos and discuss why they think the illustrator has used this technique.

Borders: every spread has a decorative border. The motifs in the border are connected to the theme of this spread. Older students can learn to use the word 'motif', while younger ones can look for 'pictures' in the borders.

Discuss the colours that predominate on each spread. The spreads showing the outdoor world of bush and creek have a different colour palette from the spreads showing the interior of the house. What is the effect of this change?

Look at other picture books by Bronwyn Bancroft and by other Indigenous illustrators (see list below); identify and discuss some of the techniques used by them. These could include dot painting, the use of borders, X-ray art, and birds'-eye view perspective.

ACTIVITY

Students can work in pairs or groups to complete the following chart:

Spread number	Border motif	Why it is used
1	Tin cubby	They played in the cubby
3	Vacola jar, spoon	Aunt Dulcie bottled lots of foods
4		
5		
7		
8		
13		

ART

See notes on Visual literacy.

To show cultural respect, rather than imitating Indigenous art, students can be encouraged to make their own images of home.

ACTIVITY

Students make a picture, using pencils or paint, of their bedroom or kitchen or garden. Blackline Master 2, at the end of these notes, has a border marked out, and students can choose a motif of something important to their idea of *home*, and repeat it in this border space. (Print A3 size.)

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

The author writes in her postscript that Lionsville is 'nestled in the valley of the Washpool and Ewingar Forests.' The book provides much information about the gold mining in the area, the items built from local timber, and different kinds of work (some paid, some unpaid) done by family members.

Spread 6 gives a summary of a section of the author's family tree. Discuss family trees, and why a family tree chart for this family would be difficult to map.

Spread 8 tells of the author's uncles going to serve in the Second World War while the women 'looked after everything.' Many Indigenous Australians experienced equal treatment for the first time in their lives when in military service, but found they were treated with the same prejudice and discrimination when they returned home.

ACTIVITIES

1. Using an atlas or online maps, students can locate Lionsville and find the name for this area of northern NSW.
2. Research how goldmining is carried out today. What has changed since the method described on spread 7?
3. Students make a chart of the family members and their work, and discuss whether people do these kinds of tasks today.

Pa Bancroft	cut cedar boards for the house, made diningtable
Annie Alice	ran the local post office.
Auntie Dulcie	

4. Find out what these were used for and how each worked:
 - Vacola bottling kit
 - pit saw
 - an iron that had to be heated on the stove.
5. Students can interview their own family members, eg. grandparents, about ways of working in the past, and give a talk to the class about their findings.
6. Upper primary/secondary students can research war service of Indigenous Australians. See Australian War Memorial website as a starting point:
<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/>

SCIENCE/ HEALTH & WELLBEING

'They had to grow all their own food because town was a day away in those days' (spread 2). The family at Lionsville grew or caught their food. Discuss the concept of self-sufficiency.

ACTIVITIES

1. Make a list of all the foods mentioned in the book. The family did not have much money, but they had a healthy diet. What were some reasons for this?
2. Read the text carefully and list all the animals mentioned. Divide your list into animals native to Australia and those introduced (eg. horse).

RELATED BOOKS & FURTHER READING

PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT GROWING UP IN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA:

Abdulla, Ian *As I Grew Older* Omnibus Books 1993

Abdulla, Ian *Tucker* Omnibus Books 1994

Malbunka, Mary *When I Was Little, Like You* Allen&Unwin 2003

Papunya School *The Papunya School Book of Country & History* Allen&Unwin 2001

Russell, Elaine *A is for Auntie* ABC Books 2001

Russell, Elaine *The Shack that Dad Built* Little Hare Books 2004

Wheatley, Nadia (compiler) illus Ken Searle *Playground: Listening to Stories from Country and from Inside the Heart* Allen&Unwin 2011

SOME BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY BRONWYN BANCROFT:

Germein, Katrina and Bronwyn Bancroft *Big Rain Coming* Roland Harvey 1999

Germein, Katrina and Bronwyn Bancroft *Leaving* Roland Harvey 2000

Kidd, Diana *The Fat and Juicy Place* HarperCollins 1992

SOME BOOKS WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY BRONWYN BANCROFT:

Kangaroo and Crocodile: My Big Book of Australian Animals Little Hare 2012

Possum and Wattle: My Big Book of Australian Words Little Hare 2008

Why I Love Australia Little Hare 2010

TWO PICTURE BOOK MEMOIRS OF GROWING UP IN AUSTRALIA:

Cox, David *The Road to Goonong* Allen&Unwin 2011; an account of growing up in a (white) farming family in the Great Depression and World War II

Cox, David *The Fair Dinkum War* Allen & Unwin 2013; at the beginning of WWII, David's family moves into town.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

BRONWYN BANCROFT

Bronwyn Bancroft is a descendant of the Djanbun clan of the Bundjalung nation. Her passion for art began as a young child and her love of creating has remained with her throughout her life.

Bronwyn has illustrated more than twenty children's books, including *Stradbroke Dreaming* by Odgeroo Noonuccal and books by Sally Morgan. She has also created a number of books with her own text, such as the popular *Why I Love Australia* (Little Hare) 2012. Bronwyn Bancroft was awarded the Dromkeen Medal in 2009.

She has worked in a range of artistic media, including fabric design, jewellery, painting, collage and sculpture and has exhibited extensively around the world, and her artworks are included in many collections in Australia and overseas. She is a founding member of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, and holds board positions with a number of visual arts and indigenous bodies.

Dr Robin Morrow

Dr Robin Morrow is the national president of IBBY Australia (International Board on Books for the Young). She founded the first specialist children's bookshop in NSW and managed it for 25 years. She has taught courses in children's literature at a number of universities, served on judging panels such as the CBCA awards, and is a reviewer for *Magpies* and other journals. She has a special interest in the Australian picture book.

ANSWERS TO BLM 1 QUIZ:

1. miniature roses
2. because town was too far away
3. in syrup and cream
4. on the verandah
5. it was surrounded by rivers and mountains and no one knew it was there
6. from gold mining
7. she gave food to swaggies
8. seven years
9. in a gold locket
10. pear tree

Quiz

1. What were Annie Alice's favourite flowers? (spread 2)
2. Why did the family have to grow all their own food? (spread 2)
3. How were the oranges preserved? (spread 3)
4. Where did the kids sleep? (spread 4)
5. Why did Uncle Pat call their home a 'secret place'? (spread 5)
6. How did Pa make enough money to pay for the land? (spread 7)
7. How do we know Auntie Alice was generous? (spread 8)
8. How old was the writer when her grandfather died? (spread 9)
9. Where did Annie Alice keep a picture of the great-grandfather? (spread 12)
10. Uncle Pat would tell stories under what tree? (spread 13)

