



Book Review

Perfumed Pineries

Environmental History of Australia's *Callitris* Forests

John Dargavel, Diane Hart and Brenda Libbis (editors)

Published by Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, in association with Australian Forest History Society Inc. and Department of Physical Geography, Macquarie University. 209 pp.; black and white photos

The Australian Forest History Society was established 'to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forests and woodland environments'. Its success in fulfilling this aim is already attested by several of its past publications reviewed in previous numbers of this journal. It is confirmed even more strongly by 'Perfumed Pineries' - a name for the cypress pine forests usually attributed to E.H.F. Swain, successively head of the State forestry departments of Queensland and NSW in the first half of last century, probably correctly given his propensity for 'apt alliteration's artful aid' in initiating colourful common names for forest species in Australia. These *Callitris* forests occur mainly in a long discontinuous belt, some kilometres inland, throughout the eastern states of Australia and are long known for their production of aromatic oils and resins.

The resistance of its timber to termites, which are common in many of the areas in which cypress occurs, has been a very important factor in human development in those areas, in turn promoting studies over a wide range of related aspects. The Society was prompted to bring these together, supported by various Departments of the Australian National University and Macquarie University, at a conference in Coonabarabran in NSW central to the extensive cypress forests of that State, in November 2000.

'Perfumed Pineries' comprises twenty-three papers presented at the Conference, variously by individual and joint authors - a total of thirty-six contributors. These papers cover a very wide range of interests and span an extended length of historical time. I doubt if anyone interested in any particular aspect of the environmental history of this genus in Australia will not find something particular to that interest in this collection, or will not be prompted to expand that interest by the extensive range of information the collection presents.

The book is most attractively produced, the type and layout well chosen for easy reading. Since the articles cover such a wide range of information and interests, and naturally, as an environmental history, an extensive period of time, the editors thoughtfully included a comprehensive glossary of terms and a geological time scale - at least this reviewer found both very useful indeed.

The Society is to be congratulated on the obvious success it is having in promoting this important, and hitherto rather neglected, aspect of forestry and for its continuing contributions to it.

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