

interwar Galicia. Born into a Chassidic landowning family, Verstandig trained as a lawyer at the University of Cracow, survived the horrors of wartime Poland, and emigrated with his family to Melbourne in 1952. His autobiography, which provides insight into the complexity of Polish-Jewish relations before and after World War Two, concludes with an adroit summary of Verstandig's involvement in Yiddish journalism, B'nai Brith, the Zionist movement and the Kadimah in Australia.

Maurie Hoffman was also born and raised in Galicia. His memoirs, which he compiled while in Italy in the late 1940s, are written in the third person, and document his upbringing and his exploits with the partisans in Poland during World War Two. Hoffman's decision to emigrate to Australia in 1949, his marriages, his working life and a return visit to Poland in 1994, are all covered in a twenty-page epilogue.

A return visit to her native Bialystok in 1993 similarly provided the impetus for Keila Pruzanski's more modest *Sunshine and Shadows*. This unpretentious desk-top publication makes effective (and quite poignant) use of family photographs and genealogical tables to reinforce the author's descriptions of everyday life in pre-war Poland, exile with her parents to Siberia, and their experiences in Europe after 1945. (The family emigrated to Australia in 1949).

Malcolm J. Turnbull

NEWCASTLE SYNAGOGUE 70TH ANNIVERSARY & NEWCASTLE BICENTENNIAL 1997

Lionel E. Fredman (Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1996, 16pp; \$10)

This informative booklet is a revised and expanded edition of the pamphlet produced to celebrate the Newcastle Synagogue Jubilee twenty years ago. Dr Fredman chronicles (briefly) the progress of Newcastle Jewry since the 1970s and provides an updated listing of congregational leaders as well as a number of additional photographs.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

THE JUDY CASSAB DIARIES

Judy Cassab; Lynne Segal, ed. (Alfred Knopf, Sydney, 1995, 518pp, \$45)

Early in her diaries, Judy Cassab quotes from an old friend who had just returned from visiting Matisse. Matisse, she was told, though ailing and bedridden, still painted by "lying on his back with a brush tied to the end of a bamboo pole on a canvas stretched on the ceiling". This image of Matisse, still painting on regardless, is an appropriate one for Cassab, because like him, she is a driven artist who must paint, no matter the difficulties.

The *Judy Cassab Diaries* were written between 1944–1994, and tell of Cassab's experiences in Nazi-occupied Hungary, of her arrival in Sydney in 1951, and of her growing success as a portrait painter. (She has twice won the Archibald). They also tell of her family, of her two sons, and of her long and happy marriage.

In reading the *Diaries* I could not help but be impressed by Cassab's energy, enthusiasm and drive. No cattiness or bitchiness here. On the contrary, Cassab is revealed as an

optimistic and positive woman who displays a great willingness to accept people for what they are. She is rarely judgmental. Unfortunately, this is the great weakness of both her writing and of her portraiture. As a painter of the rich and famous she was in an ideal position to observe and comment on the workings of power, but she gives little insight. Her main concern is to create a likeness. Despite her husband's plea to "Work, and don't live on the surface", she is unwilling, or unable, to follow his advice. But there may be a reason for this.

On the very first page of the *Diaries*, Cassab describes how in May 1944 her family was deported to Auschwitz. She was able to avoid deportation by taking on the identity of her maid. In August 1944 she writes: "So, four months ago I shed my old self. I now live as Maria Koperdak. I have taken on the identity of Mariska, my old maid. I have her papers ..." At first, she was afraid. Her landlady and son were suspicious ... "They asked questions. I answered, guilty and frightened" ... but later on we read ... "I am becoming used to it".

Perhaps it was because of this war time experience that Cassab has such a respect for people's facades. She does not like to pry or ask embarrassing questions, and appears to have not the slightest interest in discovering what her subjects may have done in order to get where they are. Qualities which, no doubt, help partly explain her great success as portrait painter of people in high places.

Judith O'Donnell

OUR LIPPMANN FAMILY: A CHRONICLE SPANNING THREE CENTURIES AND THREE CONTINENTS

Kurt E.B. Lippmann (the Author, Melbourne, 1996, 86pp, \$25)

Kurt Lippmann, in compiling this family chronicle, has made a real contribution to both Australian Jewish history and genealogy. The book is particularly interesting to me as our kinsfolk both came to Australia from Germany in 1852 — we remained while some of the Lippmanns returned to Europe. In the century that followed, their achievements and our achievements were entirely different. After commercial success on the Victorian Goldfields, members of the family returned to Germany and developed successful commercial enterprises in Hamburg.

Julius Lippmann (1820—1872) remained in Australia. He was responsible for obtaining German migrant workers to develop the Melbourne and Mount Alexander railway and to work in Northern Victoria. Where the workers settled was known as Germantown. Julius' sons William and Henry were eminently successful in banking and farming. Fanny Lippmann emigrated with her brothers to Australia and in 1853 married Louis Loewe in Sydney. They had three daughters who married in Australia and have numerous descendants.

One interesting aspect of the book is how very quickly the early Lippmanns lost contact with both their Jewish and German backgrounds and became part of mainstream Australia. For many years, little contact existed between the Australian and German branches of the family; a letter, sent overseas in 1914 and found among the late Joseph Lippmann's papers in 1928, ultimately rekindled correspondence. It is worth noting, however, that Australian relatives proved very helpful and actively renewed their family association when called upon to assist their German Jewish cousins with migration permits in 1938.