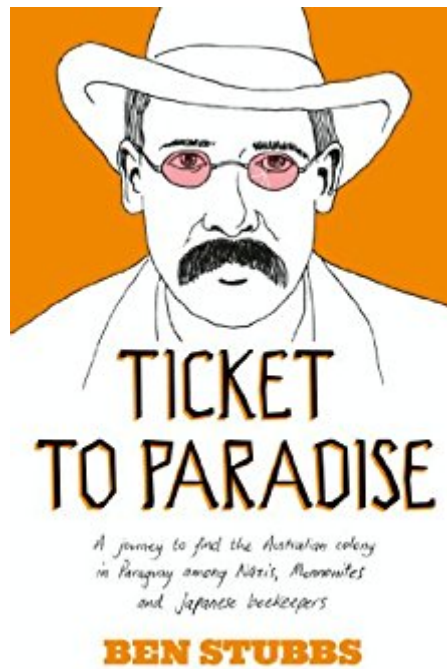


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Ticket To Paradise: A Journey To Find The Australian Colony In Paraguay Among Nazis, Mennonites And Japanese Beekeepers



Synopsis

In the wilds of Paraguay live blue-eyed South Americans with surnames like Smith and McGreen. 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

Ticket to ParadiseA Journey to find the Australian colony in Paraguay among Nazis, Mennonites and Japanese beekeepersby Ben StubbsOn 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.

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