Chapter 4

Stephen Spurling 3rd (1876-1962) – wilderness photographer

Introduction

His [Stephen Spurling 3rd’s] record of the Tasmanian environment is a very significant heritage, covering many key regions of Tasmania as they were during the early years of the twentieth century.¹

The intention of this chapter is to place Stephen 3rd’s wilderness photography within the context of his whole life. It begins with a summary of his early years, outlines his introduction to photography, and acquisition of bush-craft and survival skills. This chapter also provides an overview of his significant treks and wilderness photographs, but does not consider them in detail, as this will be the subject of the next chapter. While a series of events and circumstances provided the conditions that enabled him to undertake his journeys and procure his images, Stephen 3rd was not just a wilderness photographer. Although he considered his skills lay in scenic photography rather than portraiture, some of his most famous (and controversial images) were of people – not places. There were other controversies. His image of Dilston Fall caused a furore, the repercussions of which lasted for over a century.

Although Stephen 3rd’s life revolved around his photography, he had many other interests. He participated in a number of sports, and was amongst the first Tasmanians to own a motorcycle, and subsequently a motorcar. These early vehicles provided both an adrenalin rush, and further opportunities for his camera and his pen. For Stephen 3rd did more than just photograph Tasmania’s scenery; he also wrote prolifically for newspapers and magazines about his wilderness treks, motoring exploits, and, towards the end of his life, reflections on his experiences. He was also

active in promoting change. He was proud of his Australian heritage and joined, or helped found, a number of clubs and societies.

Despite his apparently idyllic existence, unfounded gossip impinged on his happiness and he decided to retire to Melbourne. For many of his contemporaries this represented a betrayal of his roots. Although Stephen 3rd had written accounts of many of his journeys, these gradually faded from the public consciousness. With his photographic collection dispersed, Stephen 3rd almost became a forgotten man. This chapter concludes with the re-discovery of his photographic legacy.

The early years

Stephen Spurling 3rd was born in the flat above his father’s photography studio in St Johns Street, Launceston on 28 October 1876. Although the records are not entirely clear, it seems the family continued to live at this address for the next few years. Stephen 3rd’s early childhood evidently passed uneventfully, and when he was old enough to attend school his parents sent him to a privately run establishment at the back of St John’s Church in Elizabeth Street, Launceston. In making their decision, his parents may have been influenced by the fact that up until the 1880s Tasmanian state schools had the reputation of being inadequate, in terms of their tuition and facilities. The 1881 Tasmanian census showed nearly a quarter of primary school children attended private schools, a sixth were taught at home, just over a third attended state schools and the remaining quarter received no education.

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2 Stephen Spurling 3rd, Birth certificate (Rgd no. 33/54, Registration no. 2665, Launceston, 1876, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office – hereafter TAHO).
3 Emails from Jenny Gill, D V Gunn Archivist, Launceston Church Grammar School, to Christine Burgess, 24 March 2004 and 1 April 2004. Ian Terry and Nathalie Servant, Launceston Heritage Study, Stage 1: Thematic History (Launceston, 2002) p. 66 claim St John’s Schoolroom was a public school – not private.
Stephen 3rd made good progress and in 1885, at the age of eight, he enrolled at the privately run Launceston High School – or as it was usually known, ‘Nat’s High School’.\(^6\) At this time, students proceeding to secondary level had to attend a private school. The public system provided only elementary and tertiary education.\(^7\) It is possible that towards the end of his time at Nat’s, Stephen 3rd had some contact with Richard Ernest Smith. Smith was appointed to the position of senior classics master at Nat’s in 1890, and was a keen bushwalker. With his brother Alf, William Weston and Ernest Law, Smith made a number of forays into the bush – including a successful expedition to the summit of Cradle Mountain 1890-91.\(^8\) If Stephen 3rd did have contact with Smith, he probably also heard about his bushwalking exploits, and this may have inspired Stephen 3rd to venture into Tasmania’s wild places.

Stephen 3rd attended Nat’s High School until he reached the then official leaving age of fourteen.\(^9\) On leaving school he had hoped to train as a chemist,\(^10\) but, when these plans failed to eventuate, in mid-1891 he started work at the Citizens Life Assurance Company. Two years later, on 3 May 1893, he joined the Launceston Volunteer Artillery Corps.\(^11\) While serving with the corps he learnt to use firearms and the fundamentals of bivouacking. That same year he took his first professional photographs, during a trip to some newly-discovered caves at Mole Creek. His photographs were sufficiently successful to prompt his father to forward a selection to the then Premier, Henry Dobson.\(^12\)

\(^6\) Steve Spurling, ‘It was strictly “men only” at the city’s first baths’, (Dated 23 June 1956; publication details unknown – copy held by Christine Burgess); Email from Jenny Gill, D V Gunn Archivist, Launceston Church Grammar School, to Christine Burgess, 24 March 2004.


\(^9\) Stephen Edward (hereafter Ted Spurling) of Devonport, Tasmania, Recollections as told to Christine Burgess. Fourteen years was the standard school leaving age at this time. Phillips, *Making More Adequate Provision*, p. 58; Spurling 3rd, ‘It was Strictly Men only …’.

\(^10\) Email from Nic Haygarth to Christine Burgess, 9 March 2008.

\(^11\) Stephen Spurling 3rd, Notes on Employment (Undated, copy held by Christine Burgess).

\(^12\) Photos [Stephen Spurling 2nd]. ‘A Visit to the New Caves at Mole Creek’, *Examiner*, 15 April 1893, p. 3 c. 6; Letter written by Stephen Spurling 2nd to the Hon. Henry Dobson, 20 March 1893 (PD 1/60 file 103/93, TAHO).
Stephen Spurling 2nd, Portrait of Stephen Spurling 3rd, c. 1890s, b&w photograph.

Stephen 3rd resigned from the Citizens Life Assurance Company on 31 August 1893 and four days later, on 4 September, he officially began his photographic career.13 In March the following year he undertook one of his earliest photographic assignments when he accompanied a group on a sailing expedition around the Furneaux Islands in the Bass Strait.14 During this trip he took what were ‘probably the first photographs

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13 Spurling 3rd, Notes on Employment; Ted Spurling, Notes (Undated, copy held by Christine Burgess).
14 Ringtail, ‘Sailing Times’, Examiner, 31 March 1894, p. 7 c. 1; Trixie, ‘Our trip to the Straits Islands in a yacht’, Examiner, 7 April 1894, p. 10 c. 3-4.
of Flinders Island mutton-birders at work'. For the next three years, Stephen 3rd appears to have been mainly involved in studio photography. However, he made a trip to Ben Lomond early in 1896 and continued to train with the Launceston Volunteer Artillery Corps until 20 August 1896.

The wild west

A week after his resignation from the corps, Stephen 3rd departed for Waratah on Tasmania’s west coast. As there was no road to Waratah at this time, he probably made the journey by train. His first job was with David Jones, the District Surveyor based in Waratah, who was engaged in surveying ‘prospecting tracks in the mineral country between Waratah and the Pieman River’. On 13 September 1896, he wrote to his mother from a camp near Whyte River, a tributary of the Pieman:

My word the scenery upon the river is something magnificent [,] very precipitous cliffs right down to the river, covered in one mass of man-ferns & huge myrtle-trees. I was wishing I had a camera with me but I could not manage with one just at present.

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17 Spurling 3rd, Notes on Employment.
19 A railway line from Emu Bay (near Burnie) to Waratah was completed in 1884. Lou Rae, A history of railways and tramways on Tasmania’s West Coast (Hobart, 1984) p. 18.
21 Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to his mother, Marie Spurling, 13 September 1896 (Held by Christine Burgess) p. 2.
Stephen Spurling 3rd, *Pieman River at Railway Bridge*, c. 1920s, gelatin silver photograph.

The scenery may have been magnificent, but the working conditions were extreme. In 1904, Stephen 3rd wrote a short story entitled ‘Bill’s Warning’, in which he described the life of a ‘new chum’ working as a surveyor’s assistant near the Whyte River ‘on the wild, wet, West Coast of Tasmania’. He described:

[a] toilsome round of tramping through wet and muddy tracks, toiling from daylight until dark, fighting the scrub with axe and billhook, and dodging falling timber; that daily dodging of grim death which forever faces the axeman in the forest, the falls from the slippery logs, the brief halt for ‘crib’, when a few minutes’ spell was allowed the party to bolt a morsel of bread and bacon, then toil again until darkness fell, then the weary drag campwards, all wet through, hungry, and slimy from contact with the damp growths of the gloomy forest. This was the daily round of the surveyor’s party, and was faced for the most part with stolid indifference.

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23 O’Hara [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ANA Prize Story, 1904, ‘Bill’s Warning’, (Publication details unknown – copy held by Christine Burgess).
After their stint on the Whyte River, the survey planned to move to nearby Heazlewood River and then around three weeks later to ‘some forsaken hole near Mt Wedge’. Later that year Stephen 3rd commenced work with another surveyor, C S (Selby) Wilson, who was based in Zeehan. Wilson went to the west coast in 1889, and became involved with much of the mineral development in the area. During his time with Wilson, Stephen 3rd spent some months in the bush east of Mount Read, Mount Murchison and Mount Tyndall, where survey parties were engaged in cutting bush tracks. One of his assignments was to tramp from their camp to the isolated community of Mount Read, where he stowed up to thirty kilograms of supplies into his knapsack, which he then lugged back to camp. This gruelling task was made more difficult by the frontier environment at Mount Read. Years later, he compared the conditions at the settlement to those at Zeehan, where although the living was ‘hard … it was almost a luxury compared with [the] living and working conditions at Mt Read mining centre’. Situated at 1000 metres above sea level, this township ‘was the highest settlement in the island and almost certainly the coldest and wettest. Often the village would be buried under deep snow, and there were weeks when the clouds did not lift from the mountain’.

While working in this area Stephen 3rd twice spotted the Tasmanian tiger or Thylacine. By the 1890s, Thylacine numbers were in decline, due in part to a bounty system established, on the probably mistaken belief, that Thylacine were responsible for sheep attacks. In 1943, Stephen 3rd described his encounters with the Thylacine

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24 Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to his mother, Marie Spurling, 13 September 1896 (Held by Christine Burgess) p. 2. Mount Wedge is to the north of present-day Lake Pedder. According to Chris Binks, the Heazlewood field extended westwards from Waratah to the Savage River and southwards to the Pieman. Email from Chris Binks to Christine Burgess, 3 April 2009.
25 *Mercury*, 1 September 1932, p. 10 c. 8.
in an article for the *Journal of Bengal Natural History Society*. He also described witnessing a bounty claim during a visit to Stanley in 1902, when he observed cattlemen arriving at the local police station with two sacks containing around twenty Thylacine heads. Although such bounty payments ceased in 1909, it was not until 1936 that the authorities recognised that culling, along with habitat reduction, disease and wild dog attacks, could lead to the Thylacine’s extinction, and it was decreed that the animal should be fully protected. However, this was not sufficient to save the species and two months later, the last captive Thylacine died in the Hobart Zoo.

After his stint in the Mount Read area, Stephen 3rd spent some time working in the Silver Queen Number Two mine. This mine operated from around 1890 until 1909 at the junction of the Trial Harbour Road and the road to Zeehan Cemetery. Today little evidence remains of the mine’s operations, but in its heyday it produced high quality silver-lead, which was economically viable to export. Stephen 3rd’s new job proved arduous. The process for extracting ore ‘was simple, effective and back-breaking’. He endured the hardships for a time, but was back in Launceston by March 1897, when he wrote an article for the *Examiner* about a trip to Mount Arthur. In May of that year, he undertook a trip to the Western Tiers and Great Lake, and in July, he visited Mount Barrow. The following year he made a holiday excursion to Mole Creek and visited Baldock’s Caves. Here Stephen 3rd once again used an early form of flashlight to photograph the subterranean wonders. Although their terrified guide feared an explosion, Stephen 3rd continued photographing until he ‘nearly suffocated

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32 Pink, ‘Photography was an Art’, p. 13 c. 2-3; Email from Greg Dickens, Mineral Resources, Tasmania to Christine Burgess, 8 April 2004.
34 The Wandering Six [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ‘Across Mount Arthur’, *Examiner*, 15 March 1897, p. 6 c. 5-6.
35 Union Jack [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ‘Our trip to the Western Tiers and Great Lake via Cressy’, *Examiner*, 14 May 1897, p. 7 c. 2-3.
the whole party by setting fire to all the coloured lights’.\textsuperscript{37} It was worth the risks. Underground photography expert, Chris Howes has described Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}'s images as ‘cave photographs of quality’.\textsuperscript{38}

![Image of a cave interior]

Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Baldock’s Cave – the Menagerie, date unknown, gelatin silver photograph.

The next month Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} set off with a contingent from the Examiner newspaper to inspect progress on the Mole Creek track. As official photographer, his task was to provide a visual record of the trip, and a number of his images appeared in Examiner supplements in 1898 and again in 1900.\textsuperscript{39} Other trips followed. These included a holiday trip in early 1900 to the Gulf and Westmoreland Falls.\textsuperscript{40} Probably around this time he also visited the Fish River Gulf.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Union Jack [Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}], ‘A holiday trip to Mole Creek’, Examiner, 22 June 1898, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{38} Chris Howes, To photograph darkness: the history of underground and flash photography (Carbonvale, c. 1989) p. 196.
\textsuperscript{39} Examiner Supplement, 9 July 1898, pp. 1-3, 6, 8; Examiner Christmas Supplement, 19 December 1900, pp. 23-25. For a more detailed account of this trip, see Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{40} Union Jack [Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}], ‘A trip to the Gulf and Westmoreland Falls’, Examiner, 30 January 1900, p. 7 c. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{41} S Spurling Jun., ‘On the Western Tiers: Trip to the Fish River Gulf’, (Date and publication details unknown – copy held by Christine Burgess). The Fish River Gulf is south of Devils Gullet.
The Dilston Fall affair

One of Stephen’s early camera assignments was to travel down the River Tamar and photograph a ship due to dock in Launceston. The hours ticked by, with no ship in sight, and he became restless. He discovered that positioning his camera at a particular angle could make a cascade tumbling over a silt bank appear to be a sizable waterfall. He named the resultant photograph ‘Dilston Fall’. In 1899 this image appeared as ‘Dilston Falls’ on a Tasmanian postage stamp – one of a series of eight pictorial stamps published to promote the island’s scenic potential. The stamps circulated from 1899 to 1913. Initially, the English security printers De La Rue

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printed the stamps using a line engraving process, but after Federation a Melbourne firm printed the stamps using a less detailed, lithograph process.\footnote{Richard Breckon and Georgia Cribb, \textit{Tasmania 1804-2004: History, people and landscape of the island state on Australian stamps} (Melbourne, 2004) p. 2; P Collas, \textit{Australian Postage Stamps} (Brisbane, 1965) p. 17.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{waterfall.jpg}
\caption{Collection of Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW (Call no: Slides 17, Image 8)\newline
Stephen Spurling 3rd, \textit{Dilston Fall}, c. 1898, lantern slide.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{stamp.jpg}
\caption{Private Collection\newline
\textit{Dilston Falls Stamp}, c. 1899.}
\end{figure}

In recent years there has been controversy regarding the sources of the images. According to philatelic historians, Richard Breckon and Georgia Cribb, the official government photographer John Watt Beattie campaigned ‘for a set of postage stamps to showcase the beauty of Tasmania’s landscape’.\footnote{Breckon and Cribb, \textit{Tasmania 1804-2004}, p. 2.} These authors claim that of the eight images used, seven were based on Beattie’s photographs. However, the philatelic historians, John Shepherd and Malcolm Groom believe only five of the stamps were based on Beattie’s photographs. According to Shepherd and Groom, a sixth stamp (the two-penny Hobart image) ‘has masqueraded as a Beattie photograph when in fact the true source of the view appears to be Haughton Forrest’.\footnote{John Shepherd and Malcolm Groom, ‘The Source of the Designs of the 1899 Pictorial Issue’, A Orchard (ed.), \textit{The Courier: special edition to mark the centenary of the issue of Tasmania’s pictorial postage stamps}, \textit{Research Journal of the Tasmanian Philatelic Society}, no. 28, December 1999, p. 45.} Art historian, George Deas Brown confirms this view, pointing out that the photographic
original shows Haughton Forrest’s signature in the left-hand corner.\footnote{George Deas Brown, *Haughton Forrest 1826-1925* (North Caulfield, Victoria, 1982) p. 101.} Shepherd and Groom believe the seventh stamp was probably based on a Beattie photograph, and the eighth (Dilston Falls stamp) was based on a Spurling image.\footnote{Shepherd and Groom, ‘The Source of the Designs of the 1899 Pictorial Issue’, pp. 32- 46.} While it seems likely that most of the images did emanate from the Beattie studio, this does not necessarily imply Beattie was the photographer.\footnote{See discussion in Chapter 3.} In particular, Shepherd and Groom’s assumption that the existence of a Beattie postcard of the one-penny Mount Wellington stamp implies Beattie’s authorship is debatable.\footnote{Shepherd and Groom, ‘The Source of the Designs of the 1899 Pictorial Issue’, p. 32. See discussion in Chapter 3 on the ‘Beattie’ postcard of Martin Cash.} Further, to attribute the two-and-a-half pence stamp of Tasman Arch to Beattie on the basis that he took some similar photographs seems difficult to justify.\footnote{Shepherd and Groom, ‘The Source of the Designs of the 1899 Pictorial Issue’, p. 42.}

This is not the only controversy surrounding the stamps. Soon after they went into circulation, it became apparent that of eight stamps issued, only one depicted a scene from the north of the state. The implied insult magnified when, by the turn of the twentieth century, northerners started to query the location of the falls. On 9 June 1900, the *Examiner* claimed the falls were ‘more like Clarke’s Ford, St Leonards, than Dilston Falls’.\footnote{*Examiner*, 9 June 1900, p. 9 c. 4.} An unknown photographer\footnote{F Vaudry Robinson may have had some input into the image. In 1900 he was an apprentice at the Spurling studio. Later he became known for his images featuring superimposed photographs. Chris Long, *Tasmanian Photographers 1840-1940: A Directory* (Hobart, 1995) p. 96; Jack Cato, *The Story of the Camera in Australia*, 2nd edition (Melbourne, 1977) p. 169. The photograph in question shows the same falls (from a slightly different angle) with three men standing across the top. It is possible Robinson superimposed the men on to a Stephen 3rd’s photograph.} produced another photograph with three men astride the falls – thereby suggesting the height of the falls was around two metres.\footnote{Peter Richardson (ed.), *On the Tide 2: More Stories of the Tamar* (Launceston, 2003) pp. 64-65.} Controversy reigned. On 18 June 1900 the *Examiner’s* edict on the stamps was that ‘as usual, the south of the island has the lion’s share of the views’. This article went on to describe some of the stamps as ‘wretched daubs’ and concluded
‘it cannot be said that northern residents are envious’. Perhaps wisely, the Spurlings refrained from entering into the debate.

The repercussions of the Dilston Fall affair reverberated for a century. Philatelic historians puzzled over the location of the falls, and for many years there was uncertainty about photographer. In 1983 stamp columnist John Avery theorised that Beattie probably took the photographic original for this stamp, but this was refuted in 1985 when L C Viney discovered a Spurling photograph of the falls in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston (hereafter QVMAG). Theories also abounded as to the whereabouts of the falls. Stamp collectors, O Ingles and

55 Examiner, 18 June 1900, p. 4 c. 4-5.
56 Ted Spurling, Recollections.
58 Shepherd and Groom, ‘The Source of the Designs of the 1899 Pictorial Issue’, p. 42. Although the QVMAG once held a poor quality print of Dilston Fall, this image is not currently showing on their database. Email from Danielle Grossman to Christine Burgess, 30 May 2006. Other copies of this image are held by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (Q1994.37.25- Albumen print) and the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW (Call no: Slides 17, Image 8).
K Lancaster, suggested the falls might have been a mud bank that subsequently washed away. Lancaster also postulated that the photograph was taken during a flood. In an article for the London Philatelist in 1989, Dr Jean Alexander refuted the mud bank theory. Then in May 1999 Malcolm Groom, George Brown and Richard Doak scoured the Lady Nelson Creek, which they believed to be the site of the falls. They found ‘no landmark similar to the Spurling photograph’, and concluded the falls had disappeared during works to reduce flooding in the early twentieth century. However, they did find some other falls, quite unlike the Spurling image, which the locals called ‘Dilston Falls’.

The recent discovery of the Spurlings’ 1901 registration of the Dilston Fall image with the Copyright Office in England resolves the controversy. In registering the image, the Spurlings also revealed the falls’ location as being ‘on Dilston Rivulet tributary of River Tamar, Launceston, Tasmania’. Although the Nomenclature Board does not recognise ‘Dilston Rivulet’ as a landmark, the only rivulet near to Dilston is Lady Nelson Creek. Presumably this is the creek the Spurlings referred to as ‘Dilston Rivulet’. Certainly the landmarks around this area bear a close resemblance to those featured in the image. The fact that there is no similar waterfall in the vicinity confirms the Spurlings’ version of events. However, just how and why this image became a postage stamp remains a mystery. Perhaps, as historian Nic Haygarth has suggested, Beattie deliberately included this image as a disservice to the Spurlings; perhaps, it was a youthful prank; or perhaps, the Spurlings circulated the image as a honey-trap to ensnare photographers who copied their images. In view of subsequent events, this latter possibility seems credible.

63 Email from Nic Haygarth to Christine Burgess, 6 February 2008.
Promoting fitness and change

As a young man, Stephen 3rd participated in a number of sports and sporting clubs. Apart from bushwalking, swimming, horse riding, bike riding, amateur boxing and sailing, he was also a member and instructor at the Union Jack Gymnasium Club. In 1895 he became treasurer and his brother-in-law to be, Leslie Lakin, was a committee member. In thirteen years later Stephen 3rd was instructing the men and ladies’ divisions and presenting trophies. In addition to these sports, he was also a member of the Tamar Rowing Club. Fellow club-member and photo-historian Jack Cato recalled how, as a coxswain, he was ‘greatly envious of the muscular arms and bodies of the young men in the senior eights. One of them was Stephen Spurling III (always called Steve)’. While there were advantages in having a muscular, wiry physique that belied his real weight, there were also disadvantages. For this generation, a lithe body was associated with tuberculosis. One of the reasons Stephen 3rd kept himself fit was to guard against this disease. Although in this era smoking was not considered a health risk, in later years he gave up the habit, choosing to chew gum instead. He was also opposed to intoxicating beverages. The only alcohol allowed in his house was a small quantity of brandy – strictly for medicinal purposes.

Stephen 3rd also promoted progress and development. Like his father, he saw tourism as the key to the future, and, to achieve this, he believed Tasmania’s scenic attractions should be more accessible. One of his earliest campaigns was for a road to Great Lake. In his 1897 recount of a trip to the Western Tiers and Great Lake, he described how, during a ten-mile trek though the countryside, he and his companions gazed in wonder at their ‘first glimpse of the lake … [which presented] the finest

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64 *Tasmanian*, 18 May 1895, p. 6 c. 4
67 Hazel McCammon (née Spurling), Hobart, Tasmania, Recollections as told to Christine Burgess.
68 Hazel McCammon, Recollections.
scenic panorama in Tasmania’. On arriving at the lake, their yachting companion ‘gave vent to his feelings, and abused the slothfulness of Tasmanians for not making their beauty spots known to visitors’. Stephen 3rd agreed, stating he had ‘good cause for complaint in this instance, as a splendid carriage drive could easily be made from Blackwood creek right up to the shore of the Great Lake’.

As well as promoting his island home, Stephen 3rd became involved in organisations dedicated to initiating social change. For example, around the turn of the century he became a member of the Australian Natives’ Association (hereafter ANA). This association had its beginnings in Melbourne in 1871, and a branch had formed in Launceston by 1899. Although it is uncertain when Stephen 3rd joined, he was a committee member of the Launceston branch by 1902. Membership of the ANA was limited to Australian-born males who, for the first time in Australia’s history now outnumbered the overseas-born (and in the minds of many, superior) members of the community. While the ANA was essentially a friendly society, it was also committed to nationalism and played an active role in the movement towards federation. When on 26 January 1901 the Australian colonies united, ANA members turned their attention to promoting such events as the celebration of Australia Day, supporting local industries, and encouraging ‘the conservation of water, land, forests, flora, fauna, history and places of natural scenic beauty’. In Tasmania, the ANA was closely associated with moves to protect forests, a subject

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69 Union Jack [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ‘Our trip to the Western Tiers and Great Lake via Cressy’, Examiner, 14 May 1897, p. 7 c. 2-3. In this account, Stephen 3rd mentions they ‘were without their photographer’ – presumably, this is a reference to his father, who specialised in panoramas.


71 Weekly Courier, 23 August 1902, p. 393; Tasmanian Mail, 23 August 1902, p. 18.


75 Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts, Australian citizenship (Victoria, 2004) p. 126; Menadue, A centenary history, p. 277.
Stephen 3rd would later address in his writing. Stephen 3rd’s involvement in ANA activities included entering, and winning a prize, in an ANA sponsored short story writing competition in 1904, and contributing a stand and photographing an ANA exhibition in Albert Hall in 1908. The ANA continued to sponsor community events, as evidenced by a Spurling photographs in the Weekly Courier depicting the celebrations and a water carnival held to celebrate Foundation Day in 1919.

Perhaps Stephen 3rd’s passion for his country of birth led him to form a friendship with Norman Lindsay, his brother Daryl and ‘Archie’ Archibald. For many years Archibald was responsible for publishing the Bulletin magazine. Stephen 3rd later recalled his incredulity that the Bulletin ever reached the printing press on time, given the lively gatherings at the Lindsays’ home. Despite their bohemian lifestyle, the Bulletin contributors, along with the Heidelberg painters, had a serious agenda. Although academic Leigh Astbury, argues that only some artists agreed with the ‘ethos propagated by the Bulletin’, according to Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill, the Heidelberg artists ‘were engaged in the nation-building task of tackling the “cultural cringe” towards all things English’. Historian Geoffrey Serle explains that the Bulletin ‘promoted a version of history which exposed the sham and horror of the English convict-transportation system and glorified the digger and Eureka’.

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77 O’Hara [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ANA Prize Story, 1904, ‘Bill’s Warning’.
78 Weekly Courier, 26 March 1908, p. 18; Menadue, A centenary history, p. 152.
81 Hazel McCammon, Recollections; Ted Spurling, Recollections.
The wilderness years: 1902-1913

The year 1902 brought a significant change in the structure of the Spurls’ business. In this year, Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} officially joined the firm. Father and son moved into a new studio at 93 Brisbane Street, Launceston, which they had built to their specifications. There were areas dedicated to re-touching, mounting and colouring photographs, and a glass-roofed studio at the rear.\textsuperscript{84}

Prior to becoming a partner in his father’s firm Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}, accompanied by a fellow photographer/ artist possibly called Dunlop, had spent some months travelling around the island in a horse and cart.\textsuperscript{85} According to family anecdotes, Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} took the photographs, which Dunlop hand-coloured.\textsuperscript{86} It is possible that a series of images, featured in the \textit{Weekly Courier} throughout 1902, were taken during these travels.

\textsuperscript{84} Ted Spurling, Notes; \textit{Examiner}, 11 March 1922, p. 33 c. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{85} Ted Spurling, Recollections; Pink, ‘Photography was an Art’, p. 13 c. 4. Despite an extensive search no other records of Dunlop have been uncovered. It is possible Ted was mistaken about the name.
\textsuperscript{86} Ted Spurling, Recollections.
These photographs included views of the northwest coast, the central lakes district in winter and the east coast. With the formation of the partnership and a new building to fund, Stephen 3rd now shared responsibility for the financial viability of the firm. While his father was content to concentrate on the portrait side of the business, Stephen 3rd assumed the task of supplying the increasing demand for scenic views.

Over the next twelve years Stephen 3rd, accompanied by various companions, undertook a series of photographic expeditions into some of the state’s most inaccessible regions.87 While all these trips resulted in photographs of wilderness areas, some also had historical significance. For example, in 1903 he and his companions undertook a pioneering ascent of Ben Lomond in mid-winter, and in doing so became the first to photograph it covered with snow.88 More snow scenes followed, when in the following year he and his party battled extreme conditions during a winter trek to the Chudleigh Lakes.89 His photographs taken during his 1905 trip to Cradle Mountain resulted in the first publicly exhibited wilderness images of this region.90 These images subsequently came to the attention of Gustav Weindorfer, and were instrumental in his decision to visit the area.91 Around 1906 Stephen 3rd undertook an extended tour of Tasmania’s west coast, during which he recorded the settlements and mining activity, and ventured up the Gordon and Franklin Rivers. His photographs of the Franklin are the earliest known images of this river.92

87 For a list of Stephen Spurling 3rd’s major photographic trips, see Appendix 2.
90 Advocate, 5 October 1962, p. 19 c. 2; Examiner, 5 October 1962, p. 2 c. 6-7.
91 Stephen Spurling 3rd in Waldheim Visitors’ Book, Book 1, 7 February 1921 [sic], p. 39 (QVMAG); Haynes, Tasmanian Visions, p. 166.
Other trips followed. In 1908 he photographed the interiors of some newly discovered caves in the Gunns Plains area,\textsuperscript{93} and came close to starving on an expedition to capture the first images of the mountains and lakes on the central plateau. During this marathon, he discovered and named a previously unmapped lake.\textsuperscript{94} In 1913 he and his friends became the first to entice packhorses into the rugged country north of Lake St Clair.\textsuperscript{95} During this trip Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} took the first photographs of Hartnett Falls.\textsuperscript{96} Local prospector Paddy Hartnett had found these cascades just days earlier, and when he guided Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} and his companions to the spot, they named the falls in Hartnett’s honour.\textsuperscript{97} Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s image, which includes tiny figures at the base of the falls, emphasises the sublime aspects of nature.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{waterfall.jpg}
\caption{Collection of the National Library of Australia}
\end{figure}

\begin{center}
Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, \textit{Hartnett Falls, Mersey River}, 1913, gelatin silver photograph.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{94} S Spurling, Jun., ‘Across the Plateau’, (c. 1908, Unpublished document in Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s scrapbook – copies of several drafts held by Christine Burgess); \textit{Advocate}, 5 Oct 1962, p. 19 c. 2; \textit{Examiner}, 5 October 1962, p. 2 c. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{96} Nic Haygarth, ‘carbs & cameras: how petrol heads and plate technology drove some of Tasmania’s early wilderness photography’, \textit{Tasmania: 40\textdegree South}, issue 32, Autumn, March 2004, p. 16.
During this trip Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} also took the earliest motion pictures of Hartnett Falls, Mt Gould and Lake St Clair.\textsuperscript{98} When these movies were subsequently screened at the Academy of Music in Launceston, they were hailed as reflecting ‘the greatest credit on Messrs Spurling and Son’.\textsuperscript{99} Since these movies appear lost to posterity, they may well have been amongst some Spurling film segments purchased by the Tasmanian Tourist Department, which proved so popular with interstate audiences they eventually disintegrated.\textsuperscript{100}

Apart from taking photographs, Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} and his companions left other records of their treks. On some of their trips, they named a number of geographical features and the Nomenclature Board has since recognised the majority of these names.\textsuperscript{101} In addition, written accounts of their journeys appeared in local papers. Although Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} penned most of these accounts,\textsuperscript{102} over time his writing style changed. In his early accounts he wrote under a pseudonym, and, to complete the anonymity, he bestowed sobriquets on his companions. These accounts were not only anonymous, but also reflected a light-hearted celebration of his outdoor adventures. For example, in 1897 he described how he and his party took the Denison Gorge excursion train to Lilydale, before beginning their ascent of Mount Arthur:

the guard bundled us and our kits into the empty luggage van, where we were soon followed by several ladies with sundry babies … [our trip] was enlivened by songs and choruses by the company, and tin whistle solos by The Doctor, much to the entertainment of our fellow passengers …\textsuperscript{103}

Eleven years later his writing was more serious and purposeful:

When our small party elected to cross [the] plateau from Ironstone Mt … to Lake St Clair, we could get no reliable information as to

\textsuperscript{98} Spurling, ‘Tasmanian Scenes’, p. 13; Letter written by George Perrin to Hazel McCammon, 8 February 1968 (Copy held by Christine Burgess), p. 2.
\textsuperscript{99} Mercury, 21 October 1913, p. 5; Weekly Courier, 23 October 1913, p. 35 c. 1.
\textsuperscript{100} Weekly Courier, 31 August 1916, p. 27 c. 4.
\textsuperscript{101} For a list of Tasmanian place names with a connection to Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, See Appendix 3.
\textsuperscript{102} On some occasions, another member of the party recorded the trip.
\textsuperscript{103} The Wandering Six, ‘Across Mount Arthur’, 15 March 1897, p. 6 c. 5.
what lay before us, and were not encouraged by rumours of precipitous valleys and impassable bogs, dense belts of scrub and other obstacles to progress …

While in his early recounts Stephen 3rd wrote under an alias and referred to himself in the third person, once he started writing under his own name, he recorded his exploits in the first person. These changes were significant. He was no longer an anonymous identity writing amusing anecdotes, but an expeditionist recording his achievements.

Despite these changes in tone and purpose, his recounts continued to contain humorous elements – often at his own expense. For example, in his 1898 trip to Mole Creek, he recounted how James Ure (referred to as ‘Ridmar’ in the text) had joked somewhat ironically ‘that the struggles of our fat man with the camera reminded him of an amateur lunatic’.

Many years after the event, when he recounted his circa 1906 trip up the Gordon River, he could not resist recording how:

in the dead of night, the skipper, who was addicted to sleep-walking, jumped on deck clad in shirt only, calling loudly for help, as the boat in his disordered imagination was sinking fast. I saved him from the watery grave of his dreams with the aid of a wet mop judiciously applied, but his gratitude was not overpowering.

The images taken on these trips featured in a number of papers, but most frequently in the Weekly Courier. Lugging his heavy photographic equipment with him meant that he was unable to carry sufficient food for his journey, and he had to depend on either shooting or catching native animals to supplement his cooking pot. There were occasions when his snares remained empty, sometimes for days on end, and he came perilously close to starvation. Many years later he told his family how, on one journey, he survived by tearing the bark from trees and devouring witchetty grubs.

105 Union Jack [Stephen Spurling 3rd], ‘A holiday trip to Mole Creek’, Examiner, 22 June 1898, p. 7 c. 3-4.
107 Hazel McCammon, Recollections.
He also described how, on three occasions, he sustained snakebites. Each time he survived by lying down and resting until he felt well enough to continue his journey. Since all Tasmanian snakes are venomous, it is possible his leggings provided some protection, and only a small amount of venom entered his blood stream.\(^{108}\)

Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} acquired his knowledge of bush craft from a number of different sources. As mentioned earlier, he learnt many survival skills during his time with the Launceston Volunteer Artillery Corps, and subsequently with survey parties on the west coast.\(^{109}\) He also learnt skills from his walking companions. Although he usually he relied on maps and a compass to find his way, on some occasions he employed a guide. These guides often lived in the area he was visiting, and knew the local tracks, many of which may have originally been Aboriginal ‘corridors kept open by firing and marked by broken branches’\(^{110}\). It seems he also learnt skills from Aboriginal descendants. In his account of his 1897 trip to Mount Barrow, in which he refers to all his companions by pseudonyms, Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} refers to one companion as the ‘Aboriginal’. He goes on to describe how, when they were attempting to find their way by ‘the struggling moonbeam’s misty light’, the Aboriginal ‘following the custom of his ancestors, lighted up a bark torch’.\(^{111}\) Nic Haygarth records how inland tribes of Aboriginal Tasmanians ‘bark[ed] trees for use as torches’\(^{112}\). Perhaps his Aboriginal companion also taught Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} how to make the traps he later used to catch birds and small animals, and to find bush tucker such as witchetty grubs. Although the last full-blood Aboriginal Tasmanian died in 1876, their descendants ‘retain[ed] their identity as Aborigines’\(^{113}\).

\(^{108}\) Hazel McCammon, Recollections. Ted Spurling confirmed the accounts, stating that he was told that fang marks were found on Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s soft leather leggings. Ted Spurling, Notes.

\(^{109}\) Cato, \textit{The Story of the Camera in Australia}, p. 166


\(^{112}\) Haygarth, \textit{A View to Cradle}, p. 12.

\(^{113}\) Lyndall Ryan, \textit{The Aboriginal Tasmanians}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition (Crows Nest, NSW, 1996) p. 1.
While Stephen 3rd preferred to concentrate on the landscape side of the business, he did take some notable portraits. One of his early triumphs was an image of Lord Kitchener, taken during his visit to Tasmania in February 1910. Kitchener had an aversion to being photographed, and gave orders to this effect. However, Tasmanian photographers saw this as a challenge rather than a deterrent. In his autobiography, Jack Cato described how he called on his relatives in high places to arrange for the official car to stall at prearranged locations in front of his hidden camera.

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114 Mercury, 5 February 1910, p. 6; Mercury, 8 February 1910 p. 6 c. 4; Mercury, 9 February 1910, p. 6 c. 3-4.
Somehow or other, but possibly partly obscured by a tree, Stephen 3rd also secured a shot of Kitchener, mounted on Colonel Cameron’s horse during a visit to Mona Vale, Nile. Stephen 3rd’s photograph evidently caused Kitchener’s career little damage. He continued his military service and, with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, became the British Secretary of State for War.

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**Early motor vehicles**

Although Stephen 3rd was a dedicated bushwalker, he also embraced other forms of transport. By his mid-twenties he could ride a horse, drive a horse-drawn buggy, sail a yacht, row a scull and pedal a bicycle. When in the early twentieth century mechanisation brought new forms of transport, Stephen 3rd replaced his horse with a

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116 Ted Spurling, Recollections.
succession of motorcycles.\textsuperscript{119} Perhaps his most successful motorcycle was the 5 hp Vindec Special, which he rode to victory in the 1908 Evandale hill climb, organised by the Tasmanian Automobile Club (hereafter TAC), of which he was a foundation member.\textsuperscript{120} Although each new motorcycle had improved features and reliability, it was an expensive hobby. For example, in 1909 a 5 hp Vindec, complete with ‘Traffult Spring Fork Magneto, Foot Rests and Stand’ was advertised for sale in Launceston for £75.\textsuperscript{121} This represented around nine month’s work for an unskilled labourer.\textsuperscript{122}

\textbf{Spurling & Son, \textit{Stephen Spurling 3rd, winner Evandale Hill climb contest, 1908}, gelatin silver photograph.}

\textsuperscript{119} Ted Spurling, Recollections; Kerry Pink, ‘Spurling captured an unseen Tasmania’, \textit{Advocate Weekender}, 26 October 1991, p. 9; Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, \textit{Album of motor vehicles} (Copy held by Christine Burgess).


\textsuperscript{121} Tasmanian Automobile Club, \textit{Annual Reliability Trials}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{122} The first basic wage, set by the Harvester Judgement in 1907, was 7 shillings per day for an unskilled labourer. Gavin Souter, \textit{Acts of Parliament: a narrative history of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia} (Victoria, 1988) p. 99.
Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s passion for motorised transport did not end with motorcycles. He also embraced another new invention – the motorcar. Although it is uncertain who owned Tasmania’s first car, four-wheeled motorised vehicles began appearing on the island’s roads in the early twentieth century. Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} was eager to experiment with these new contraptions. While motorcycles might have provided thrills and spills, cars proved invaluable for travelling around the state and transporting his camera equipment.  

Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s first car was an American Waltham Orient Buckboard, which he purchased around 1904 for £50. This vehicle resembled a cross between a horseless carriage and a motorcycle and was steered by means of a tiller. In October 1905 Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} drove this car in the TAC’s first outing from Launceston to Perth. A newspaper account of the event described his vehicle as a ‘novel mount’, which caused a ‘big share of approbation’.

Spurling & Son, *Stella and Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd} (8 hp Orient Buckboard) with Lilla Spurling and P G Harrison (Minerva motorcycle and sidecar),* 1905, gelatin silver photograph.

\footnotesize

125 Spark, ‘Motoring’, *Examiner,* 18 October 1905, p. 3 c. 3.
Stephen 3rd’s next car was a De Dion. He was impressed with the success of these cars when he acted as an official observer in the 1906 Dunlop Reliability Trials in Victoria.126 These cars were more substantial vehicles than the Orient Buckboard, and bore a closer resemblance to modern vehicles. They even boasted a steering wheel instead of a tiller.127 Stephen 3rd’s De Dion car was registered in 1909, the first year of motor registrations in Tasmania, and bore the number plate ‘324’.128 He drove this vehicle in the TAC’s November 1909 annual reliability trials from Launceston to Hobart.129 It proved its worth again when he accompanied the Scottish Agricultural Commission on their tour of northeast Tasmania, during their 1910-1911 investigation into land usage and agricultural practices in Australia.130

In December 1911, Stephen 3rd purchased a 20 hp 4 cylinder Hupmobile.131 This vehicle proved extremely reliable and over the next eleven years he drove it more than 160 000 kilometres over un-sealed roads without experiencing any major mechanical problems.132 Stephen 3rd was determined to test his Hupmobile to the limit. In May 1913 he and his friend Chas Saul drove from Melbourne to Sydney and return. In this era such an undertaking was sufficiently newsworthy to warrant a full written and photographic coverage in the local newspapers.133 The public wanted to know exact details of the road conditions, routes, distances, points of interest and the idiosyncrasies of state-by-state transport regulations. For the unwary the journey was a minefield of pitfalls – or more specifically potholes. Tasmanians undertaking such

126 ‘The Motor trial: an observer’s experiences’, Examiner, 23 November 1906, p. 3 c. 4-5.
129 Tasmanian Automobile Club, Annual Reliability Trials, pp. 6, 22; Weekly Courier, 18 November 1909, p. 22.
130 Scottish Agricultural Commission, Australia: its land, conditions and prospects: the observations and experiences of the Scottish Agricultural Commission of 1910-11: a report with numerous illustrations (Edinburgh; Melbourne, 1911) pp. 9-10-.
131 The car’s registration number was 986. Police Gazette, Tasmania, 5 January 1912, p. 6.
a trip had an additional hurdle. They had to ship their vehicles to mainland Australia on a coastal trader, a prohibitively expensive exercise. Stephen 3rd's trip took four weeks and he and his companion covered 2,600 kilometres. Highlights included visits to the Jenolan Caves and the Blue Mountains. For Tasmanians this was the dawning of a new era – a motorcar holiday on mainland Australia.


Stephen 3rd’s photography, writing and obsession with motorcycles and cars formed a symbiotic relationship. Cars helped him carry his photographic gear and reach destinations relatively quickly and easily. For example, in February 1911 he was able to take his car to cover the beaching of some whales at Perkins Island near Smithton. Motorcycles and cars also provided subjects for his pen and camera. His participation in the formation of TAC also led to photographic opportunities. Stephen 3rd provided images of club activities to papers such as the *Weekly Courier*, and written accounts of his exploits to daily and weekly papers, and magazines.

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134 In 1910 the cost of taking a car from Tasmania to the mainland was £10 return, a price that was widely regarded as exorbitant. *Weekly Courier*, 17 November 1910, p. 12 c. 3.
Family commitments

Up until his early thirties, Stephen 3rd’s life had centred on his photography, his sporting activities, club memberships, treks into wilderness areas and his adventures with early motorcycles and cars. He had little time for romance. Then around 1907, a Launceston newcomer, Marie Cuttle137 walked into the studio and requested a portrait. Stephen 3rd photographed her draped in a fur stole, with a fur pillbox hat perched jauntily on her head. Although he was captivated, Marie’s interests were on the high seas, and her sea-faring fiancé. However, Stephen 3rd did persuade Marie and a friend to attend the Union Jack Gymnasium where he was an instructor.138

![Portrait of Marie Cuttle](image)

Private Collection

*Stephen Spurling 3rd, Portrait of Marie Cuttle, c. 1907, gelatin silver photograph, oval, 13.5 x 9.5 cm.*

137 Marie’s full name was Amelia Marie Cuttle, but she was always known as Marie.
Marie was born on 10 May 1884 in Williamstown, Victoria. Her parents were Charles Edward Cuttle and Elizabeth Ann (née Shaw) of Geelong, and she was the second of their four daughters. Ann died soon after childbirth in 1892, and from then on the extended family took turns in rearing the girls. In 1903, when Marie was nineteen, her father died of a stroke. As it was imperative that she was able to support herself, she trained as a milliner in Melbourne, and subsequently worked in Sydney. Then, around 1907 (and newly engaged) she went to Launceston to establish a millinery shop.

It seems there was no hurry to marry, and by 1909 Marie’s fiancé was, allegedly, an officer on board the Waratah. On 26 July this ship departed from Durban, South Africa, heading for Cape Town. It never arrived. In 1910 an official report concluded that the ship had capsized in an exceptional gale, but many people were incredulous that such a well-appointed vessel could have disappeared without a trace. Over the years there have been various theories as to what became of this ship, but the hull continues to defy discovery in the ocean depths.

Marie waited for several years hoping her fiancé would reappear. When she finally resigned herself to the fact that he was lost at sea, Stephen 3rd proposed and Marie

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139 Amelia Marie Cuttle, Birth certificate (No. 13462, Williamstown, 1884, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Melbourne, Victoria); Examiner, 25 September 1958, p. 6 c. 6.
140 Known as Ted and Ann respectively.
141 Victorian Federation Index, 1889-1901 (Melbourne, Victoria, 1997).
142 Ted Spurling, Notes; Victorian Edwardian Index 1902-1913 (Victoria, 1997). Marie’s cousin, George Robin (Robin) Cuttle was in the Royal Air Force in the 1914-1918 War. He died in air combat on 9 May 1918 near Wiencourt, and his memorial is at Arras, France. He was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery at the Somme in November 1916. The township of Robinvale, Murray Valley, Victoria was named in his memory. In 1984 Robinvale was twinned with Villers-Bretonneux, France and Robin Cuttle’s family donated his uniform to the town museum. Tonie and Valmai Holt, Major & Mrs Holt’s Pocket Battlefield Guide to the Somme 1916/1918 (Great Britain, 2006) p. 77.
143 Hazel McCammon, Recollections; Ted Spurling, Notes.
144 Hazel McCammon, Recollections; Ted Spurling, Recollections.
145 Mercury, 11 August 1909, p. 5 c. 3.
accepted. She subsequently returned to Victoria to prepare for their wedding. Just
days before the ceremony, Marie was horrified when she saw her ex-fiancé walking
down a Melbourne street. He implored her to stop, saying he could explain
everything. Marie kept walking, but she was plagued by nagging questions. Had he
survived the sinking of the Waratah, or was his supposed position on the ship a ruse,
and was he actually involved in some clandestine mission? Since he had not
drowned, why had he not contacted her? She never learnt the answers to these
questions, and the mystery haunted her for the rest of her life.147

Marie and Stephen 3rd married on 21 March 1914 at the home of Marie’s
grandmother in Geelong.148 At the time of their marriage, Stephen 3rd was thirty-
seven and Marie was nearly thirty. Amongst their wedding gifts was a sketch from
Stephen 3rd’s friends at the Bulletin, which proclaimed, ‘may 1914 bring you a skin
full of comfort’.149 Perhaps ignoring this advice, the newlyweds embarked upon a
honeymoon to Mt Buffalo, Victoria in Stephen 3rd’s Hupmobile car.150

During the seven years he waited for Marie to agree to the marriage, Stephen 3rd
undertook some of his most gruelling expeditions and produced some of his most
significant wilderness images. It is perhaps reasonable to argue that, had Marie
agreed to marry soon after they met, family commitments might have prevented him
from making these trips. In addition, the fact that his father was still actively
involved in the business gave Stephen 3rd the freedom to spend extended periods
away from the studio. These factors, combined with the fact that the Weekly Courier
offered an outlet for publishing his images, provided a unique set of circumstances
that allowed Stephen 3rd’s wilderness photography to flourish.

147 Hazel McCammon, Recollections; Ted Spurling, Recollections.
148 Stephen Spurling 3rd and Marie Cuttle – wedding invitation (Held by Christine Burgess); Examiner,
12 May 1914, p. 1 c. 1.
149 Ted Spurling, Recollections.
150 Ted Spurling, Notes.
The First World War

After their marriage Marie and Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} lived in a flat before moving to their newly-completed, Federation-style home at 61 High Street.\textsuperscript{151} It was here that their first child Stephen Edward (Ted) was born on 21 January 1916.\textsuperscript{152} Meanwhile, world politics were in turmoil. Within six months of their marriage, in August 1914, the First World War erupted in Europe.\textsuperscript{153} As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Spurlings found the anti-German hysteria generated by the war meant they had to remove all German-manufactured cameras from their displays.\textsuperscript{154} There were other repercussions. Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} was friendly with Gustav Weindorfer, and for around five months his sister Stella boarded with Weindorfer and his wife at Kindred.\textsuperscript{155} Rumours were rife that Weindorfer was a German sympathiser engaged in espionage.\textsuperscript{156} Although these insinuations were unfounded, the gossip affected him deeply, and by implication his friends and associates. As Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} was already unpopular due to his preference for German cameras, it is likely that his (and his sister’s) relationships with the Weindorfers added to community disapproval of the Spurlings. Author Nicholas Shakespeare refers to this anti-German feeling as a ‘mania [which] raged through Tasmania before and during the First World War’.\textsuperscript{157}

A series of letters written by Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} to Weindorfer during this period indicate they had a mutually beneficial business arrangement. Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} directed intending Cradle Mountain tourists to Weindorfer, and Weindorfer acted as an agent for

\textsuperscript{152} \textit{ Examiner,} 25 January 1916, p. 1 c. 1.
\textsuperscript{153} Michael Eliot Howard, \textit{The First World War} (Oxford, 2002) p. 34.
\textsuperscript{154} Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’.
\textsuperscript{155} Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’; Papers of James ‘Philosopher’ Smith (NS 234/27/1/5, Gustav Weindorfer Diary, 2 April 1915-31 December 1915 – ten entries, TAHO); Haygarth, \textit{A View to Cradle}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{156} Haygarth, \textit{A View to Cradle}, pp. 129-130, Margaret Giordano, \textit{A Man and a Mountain, the Story of Gustav Weindorfer} (Launceston 1987) p. 47; Sally Schnackenberg, \textit{Kate Weindorfer: the woman behind the man and the mountain: a biography of Kate Julia Weindorfer wife of Cradle Mountain pioneer Gustav Weindorfer} (Launceston, c. 1995) p. 45.
\textsuperscript{157} Nicholas Shakespeare, \textit{In Tasmania} (NSW, 2004) p. 257.
Spurling postcards. By July 1915 the tone of their correspondence had changed from a discussion of their business transactions to a more personal interchange. Stephen 3rd thanked Weindorfer for his ‘offer to provide the necessary provisions etc at the camp’, but regretted he would be unable to make a proposed trip due to ‘several matters [that] have cropped up’, and that he was ‘disappointed to find that I have no chance of making a trip to the Cradle this winter’. Perhaps an astute biographer might interpret these ‘matters’ as a reference to the spy rumours, but perhaps it was just as Stephen 3rd claimed, and the pressure of work and business prevented him from making the trip. Stephen 3rd explained by August he would be ‘too busily engaged with the new theatre, business & orchard development to take even a day or two off’. However, he also stated that, ‘I would like to run out during the coming summer & make arrangements for a winter trip next year’. He concluded, ‘I am sorry to disappoint you & was looking forward keenly to the outing’.

Stephen 3rd’s reference to his orchard was discussed in the previous chapter. He and his father had acquired their first orchard in 1908, and continued to expand their holdings for some years. However, the new theatre was an imminent venture. In December 1914 Stephen 3rd had signed an agreement to take out a ten-year lease on the National Theatre, then under construction on the corner of Charles and Paterson Streets. On 27 July 1915, six days after his letter to Weindorfer, he finalised the agreement. The theatre opened on Saturday 25 September of that year. For some years it proved a popular venue for interstate, overseas and local productions.

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158 Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to Gustav Weindorfer, 29 October 1913 (NS 234/12/3, pp. 397-398, TAHO); Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to Gustav Weindorfer, 4 November 1913 (NS 234/12/3, p. 402, TAHO).
161 Examiner, 16 December 1914, p. 4 c. 6.
162 Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, General Law Index, Tasmania (27 July 1915, Lease no. 1811, Registration v. CCXXIV Fol. 200, p. 229). Annual cost of the lease was £550.
164 Webb, A century of competitions, p. 120; Email from Nic Haygarth to Christine Burgess, 10 August 2004.
While used principally for live performances, the theatre also showed movies, including Stephen 3rd's films of Tasmanian scenery. Although he had initially agreed to sign a ten-year lease, by 1920 the theatre was leased to the Majestic Theatre Company. It is possible Stephen 3rd was part of this syndicate, which also leased the Majestic Theatre in Brisbane Street. This theatre opened in Launceston on 2 June 1917, and Stephen 3rd recorded the event by taking a flashlight photograph. According to his daughter Hazel, Stephen 3rd's involvement in theatres was not a financial success because the takings barely covered the costs. Launceston historian Raymond Ferrall was even less charitable, describing the National as 'melancholic white elephant from the start'. Stephen 3rd was not alone. Many other theatre entrepreneurs suffered financially, particularly during the depression years. Perhaps a venture into the theatre might seem strange for someone who was by nature reserved, but, despite his quiet demeanor, Stephen 3rd enjoyed theatricals and reciting Australian bush ballads.

While Stephen 3rd delighted in the theatre, he also supported Tasmania’s economic development. One of his chief concerns was the construction of a road network to isolated regions. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, he started agitating for access to Great Lake in 1897. Eighteen years later his dream was about to become a reality – a road linking Deloraine and Great Lake was nearing completion. One sultry

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165 Weekly Courier, 31 August 1916, p. 27 c. 3-4; Weekly Courier, 30 September 1915, p. 37 c. 3.
166 Walsh’s Tasmanian Almanacs (Hobart, 1920).
167 Walsh’s Tasmanian Almanac (Hobart, 1920); Launceston Assessment Rolls, 1925/26 (TAHO).
168 Examiner, 4 June 1917 p. 7 c. 4; Weekly Courier, 14 June 1917, p. 22; Examiner, 21 September 1994, p. 9.
169 Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’.
170 R A Ferrall, Partly personal: recollections of a one-time Tasmanian journalist (Hobart, Tasmania, 1974) p. 117.
afternoon in 1915, he set out by car to check on the progress. He discovered the new ‘thoroughfare … [was] a solidly-constructed, well-graded, and broad highway’.\textsuperscript{173} It extended almost as far as Mount Projection and would shortly reach Great Lake. The possibility of having ‘[b]reakfast at Launceston [and] lunch at Great Lake’\textsuperscript{174} would, he predicted, soon be possible.

![Image](Image.png)

Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Quamby Bluff from Great Lake Road, 1915, gelatin silver photograph.

The following winter Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} accompanied by several friends including the American dentist Ray McClinton, made another trip along the road. This time deep snow drifts prevented them from driving past the eighteen-mile peg, but undeterred they checked out the recreational possibilities on frozen Pine Lake. During this trip Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} took several still images, many of which later appeared in the \textit{Weekly


\textsuperscript{174} Spurling Jun., ‘New Great Lake Road’. Images of the new road appeared in the \textit{Weekly Courier} on 1 April 1915, p. 17; 8 April 1915 p. 17; 23 December 1919, p. 17.
Courier. He also recorded several movie sequences. When the National Theatre screened these movies on Thursday 24 August 1916, they were hailed as ‘excellent examples of photographic art’.

Towards the end of 1916 the road from Wynyard to Waratah, via Hellyer Gorge, was nearing completion. Stephen 3rd was eager to drive his Hupmobile along the new route and record his journey with his camera. It seems that from Waratah he then made his way southwards, possibly by train, visiting the King River, the Mount Lyell region and nearby Lake Margaret. Here he photographed the Lake Margaret power station, commissioned for the Mt Lyell Mining Company in 1914. Situated to the north of Queenstown, the station generated electricity for local mines and townships. During this trip, Stephen 3rd also trekked to Mt Jukes. From here he photographed Frenchmans Cap and Mount Huxley. While his images of roads, railways and power stations symbolised development and economic progress, his scenic images were more concerned with the wonders of nature. However, unlike modern wilderness images, these pictures often included some element of human intervention – either a human figure, or some man-made construction.

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175 Photographs appeared in the Weekly Courier on 29 June 1916, p. 17; 20 July 1916, p. 17; 10 August 1916, p. 20; 17 August 1916, p. 17; 24 August 1916, p. 20. The movie sequences were: En route to Pine Lake; A Picturesque Bend Near Quamby Bluff; A Winter Camp, Great Lake Road; View of Projection Bluff from the Camping Ground; Heavy Going, a 20 hp Car Breaking a Trail Through Heavy Snow; Arriving at Pine Lake; Skating and Ice Yachting; Nature’s Handiwork; A Forest Glen in Winter; A Study of Snow-Clad Foliage (Weekly Courier, 31 August 1916, p. 27).

176 Weekly Courier, 31 August 1916, p. 27 c. 4.

177 This date is based upon an early Spurling photograph of the Waratah-Wynyard Road published by the Weekly Courier on 28 December 1916, p. 18.

178 This link was proposed in 1882, but work did not commence until 1885/1886. By 1915 over thirty kilometres southwards from Wynyard were still under construction. Email from Judy Jensen, Transport Library, Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, 13 January 2005.


180 For the image of Frenchmans Cap, see Chapter 1.


These images demonstrate that Stephen 3rd was equally adept at photographing a range of subjects. His scenic images show strong elements of the picturesque; a foreground of foliage, a middle distance (which might include a lake or river) and a background of peaks. The image *Mt Huxley and King River Gorge from Mt Jukes* depicted an isolated, ramshackle cottage. Such depictions of rustic structures were a popular picturesque motif. His occasional inclusion of a figure was partly to convey a sense of the scale, but was also integral to the overall composition. His image, *Waratah to Wynyard Road*, which included his car in the middle distance, and the new road disappearing into the horizon, symbolised progress and the way forward – literally and metaphorically. In her thesis, academic Julia Peck discussed how the depiction of a road, especially one that curved away from the viewer, was ‘a picturesque device for moving through space’.  

She further postulated that the depiction of a road in a photograph served a more utilitarian purpose – it implied the government’s economic investment in making remote places more accessible.

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High-flyer

The end of First World War brought new challenges and opportunities. In 1919 Tasmanian-born Arthur Long returned from the war with a Boulton and Paul biplane, and proceeded to give demonstrations of aeronautical stunts and conduct joy-flights. He also offered to take photographers on aerial photographic trips. Stephen 3rd accepted the challenge and described his experiences for the local press: 182

Occupying the back seat on the aviation field, it did not seem a very difficult task to stand up, and, leaning over … direct a weighty camera downward and press the lever; but with 2 000 feet of undiluted atmosphere under one, and the boatlike lift and sway of the ‘plane, added to the terrific rush of air induced by propellers and speed, which tore at head and shoulders and camera like a fury as one emerged from the cockpit, it was, the passenger quickly found, anything but a picnic … [From 4 000 ft] the panorama of the northern capital and surroundings was simply superb. 183

Long went on to create aviation history. On 16 December 1919 he made the first aircraft crossing of Bass Strait. 184 Meanwhile, when Stephen 3rd’s photographs appeared in the Weekly Courier they were hailed as the ‘first aerial photographs taken and published in Tasmania’. 185 As discussed in the Introduction, some writers incorrectly attribute this achievement to Herbert John (Herb) King and Frederick Smithies. 186 In fact, King’s images appeared in the Courier Christmas Number nearly a month after the Spurling photographs. 187

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184 Advocate, 17 December 1919, p. 3 c. 1-2; Pink, ‘Photography was an Art’, p. 13 c. 4; Pink, ‘First Bass Strait Flight’, p. 18 c. 1-7.
186 Ian Terry and Nathalie Servant, Launceston Heritage Study, Stage 1: Thematic History (Launceston, 2002) pp. 85, 86; Giordano, A Man and a Mountain, p. 64.
187 Courier Christmas Number, 18 December 1919, p. xii.
Spurling & Son, *Lieutenant Long and Stephen Spurling 3rd after the flight during which Stephen 3rd took Tasmania’s first aerial photographs*, 1919, gelatin silver photograph.

Stephen Spurling 3rd, *Aerial view of Launceston*, 1919, gelatin silver photograph, 15.5 x 21.0 cm.\(^{188}\)

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\(^{188}\) In late 1921 the Launceston Corporation contracted Herb King to make an aerial survey of Launceston. The fact that a non-professional photographer was contracted to undertake this survey prompted Stephen 3rd and Harold C Andrew (on behalf of the Professional Photographers’ Association) to write a letter of complaint to the Mayor and Aldermen. Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd and Harold C Andrew to the Mayor and Aldermen, City of Launceston, 12 January 1922 (LCC3: 41/1.1, QVMAG).
The roaring twenties

The following decade brought many changes. This was the era of the art deco movement, which introduced new ideas in fashion and design that challenged traditional concepts of taste and style. In Europe and America these changes became associated with symbols of freedom and the questioning of the status quo:

Our image of the ‘roaring’ decade is dominated by ‘the flapper’, a young woman in a knee-high chemise, smoking a cigarette, dancing the Charleston, and swinging her long beads. That image embodies our collective sense that the Twenties were a time of bold change; the war was over, the Victorian era was past, and modern life had begun. In fact … the Twenties were a time of intense negotiations between a world we view as ‘traditional’ and a world we recognize as ‘modern’.189

Australians were not immune from these influences. While many embraced the new freedoms, others viewed the focus on materialism with concern and feared for the moral degeneracy of young people.190 Although shocked, ‘no one seemed to know how to check this revolution in dress, conduct and morals’.191

For Stephen 3rd the decade began with his last significant wilderness trek. In February 1920, he and two companions departed for Frenchmans Cap. It proved a harrowing, and in some respects professionally disappointing trip.192 Then on 1 September of that year his second child – Hazel Marie arrived.193 Around eighteen months later Stephen 3rd spent some time at Gustav Weindorfer’s Waldheim chalet, and took an extensive series of images around the Cradle Mountain area.194 During this period Stephen 2nd’s health started to deteriorate, and on his return from Cradle

190 L L Robson, Australia in the Nineteen Twenties: Commentary and Documents (Melbourne, 1980) pp. 42-68.
191 Robson, Australia in the Nineteen Twenties, p. 46.
192 See Chapter 5.
193 Examiner, 4 September 1920, p. 1 c. 1.
194 Stephen Spurling 3rd in Waldheim Visitors’ Book, Book 1, 7 February 1921 [sic] – should be 1922.
Mountain, Stephen 3rd and his father re-registered their firm as Spurling’s Propriety Limited.\textsuperscript{195} Two years later Stephen 2nd died.\textsuperscript{196} The cumulative effect of these changes meant Stephen 3rd had to focus on his family responsibilities and assume the full burden of making the business viable. Soon after his father’s death he dispensed with the portrait side of the business,\textsuperscript{197} and focussed on the view trade. He produced large stocks of postcards of Tasmanian scenery, which he distributed to various tourist outlets throughout the state. He also enlarged of some of his more popular Tasmanian scenes, which he displayed, along with imported prints, for over-the-counter sales. Business tended to be seasonal, with the busiest periods in the summer months. During quiet times the staff engaged in stocktaking, printing postcards and cataloguing. Stephen 3rd also completed special orders for authorities such as the tourist department, railways, marine board and other similar agencies.\textsuperscript{198}

Another important aspect of his business was the supply of cameras and equipment to amateur photographers. He entered into a dealership arrangement with Kodak, imported a range of other photographic equipment, and offered associated back-up services. These included same-day development and printing of photographs and advice to amateur photographers. A further innovation was the promotion of home movies and equipment. In 1912 Spurling and Son had secured the Tasmanian agency for the ‘Pathe Home Cinematograph’.\textsuperscript{199} However, it was another eleven years before Kodak introduced ‘safety’ 16 mm film, and home movie making became popular. In order to support would-be moviemakers, Stephen 3rd fitted out a projection room at the rear of his shop. Here customers could view their movies after development.\textsuperscript{200}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{195} Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to the City Manager, Town Hall, 25 February 1922 (LCC3: 15/2.1, QVMAG).
\textsuperscript{196} Examiner, 6 February 1924, p. 1 c. 1.
\textsuperscript{197} Stephen Spurling 3rd subsequently recommended clients to fellow Launceston photographer, F Vaudry Robinson. Long, Tasmanian Photographers, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{198} Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’; Ted Spurling, Notes.
\textsuperscript{199} Mercury, 15 October 1912, p. 4.
\end{flushleft}
While business and family commitments consumed much of his time, Stephen 3rd also had other interests. In 1921 he joined the northern branch of the Royal Society of Tasmania, and a few years later the Fifty Thousand League. This organisation had its beginnings in December 1925. Although in later years many people believed the organisation’s name reflected their aim to swell Launceston’s population to 50 000, according to the original manifesto, this figure was actually the target membership. The founders of the league intended to model the league ‘on the lines of a military army’, and attract membership through a pyramid-style recruiting drive. The league aimed to ‘promote the progress and prosperity of Launceston in particular, and Tasmania in general’. Intended projects included attracting tourists through advertising, developing tourist attractions, attracting new industries, encouraging settlers (particularly British subjects), welcoming distinguished visitors, undertaking improvement projects, organising carnivals, sporting, musical and artistic events, and establishing facilities for mothers.

Sometime during the 1920s Stephen 3rd also changed his religious affiliation from Church of England (Anglican) to Presbyterian. He subsequently devoted considerable energy to supporting his local church, St Andrew’s. Although it is not clear why he made this change, contributing factors may relate to the fact that his son Ted attended Scotch College, and his daughter Hazel attended the Methodist Ladies College.

In mid-1920 Spurling’s Studios released what was probably their most famous, and certainly most financially rewarding photograph. The photograph in question was an

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201 List of members’, Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania for the year 1921, 28 February 1922, p. 212; Mercury, 31 May 1921, p. 2 c. 8.
204 Ted Spurling, Notes; Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’; Letter written by Jo Oliver, Archives Assistant, Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston to Christine Burgess, 15 January 2004.
image of the Prince of Wales (later to become Edward VIII, before his abdication)
doffing his hat to well-wishers during his visit to Launceston in 1920.\textsuperscript{205} This image is
still in use, and it appeared in the \textit{Bulletin} magazine as recently as 2007.\textsuperscript{206} Although
there is no question the image came from Spurling’s Studios, there is debate as to the
identity of the photographer.\textsuperscript{207} In 1995 Chris Long claimed Leonard Ferrall (the
Spurlings’ darkroom manager) was responsible for the image.\textsuperscript{208} Long provides no
source for his claim,\textsuperscript{209} which conflicts with a statement made by Stephen 3rd in an
interview with reporter Kerry Pink in 1961. When asked to describe his most
memorable photograph Stephen 3rd replied:

As one who had to make a living from photography, I very well
remember one photograph … It was a very natural picture of the
Prince of Wales taking off his hat to acknowledge the crowd during
his visit to Tasmania in 1920. Professionally, that was probably the
most successful photograph I ever took. I sold £700 worth of prints
from the one negative.\textsuperscript{210}

It seems unlikely that Stephen 3rd, who had taken thousands of photographs, would
single out one taken by his darkroom assistant, as his most memorable shot. In his
book \textit{Partly Personal}, Raymond Ferrall\textsuperscript{211} confirms Stephen 3rd’s statement:

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{Weekly Courier}, 29 July 1920, p. 21; \textit{Mercury}, 19 July 1920 p. 5 c. 1-5; Robson, \textit{A History of
\textsuperscript{207} To add to the controversy over this photograph the picture in the \textit{Weekly Courier}, 29 July 1920, p.
21, states the photograph was taken outside the Anzac Hostel, yet other accounts state the photograph
was taken outside either the Anzac Hotel or the Brisbane Hotel. According to the \textit{Tasmanian Post
Office Directory for 1920}, the Brisbane Hotel was at 70 Brisbane Street and the Anzac Memorial
Hostel was at 49-53 Patterson [sic] Street. As these two addresses are quite close to each other, it is
possible there was some confusion at to the exact spot the photograph was taken. Other images in the
\textit{Weekly Courier} 29 July 1920, p. 30 show the Spurling camera was at both venues.
\textsuperscript{208} Long, \textit{Tasmanian Photographers}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{209} Ted Spurling repeated this claim in his notes, stating: ‘Took [a reference to Stephen Spurling 3rd] \textfrac{3}{4}
Portrat of Prince of Wales (Duke of Windsor) outside Anzac Hostel (actually taken by his darkroom
foreman Len Ferrall). Ted gives no source for his claim, but it is possible he heard it from Chris Long
(who was in contact with Ted in the early 1980s, when he was researching the Spurling story). It is
unlikely Ted was writing from first-hand experience – he was four years old when the Prince visited.
\textsuperscript{210} Pink, ‘Photography was an Art’, p. 13. £700 is the equivalent of in excess of $14 000 in today’s
terms.
\textsuperscript{211} Raymond Alfred Ferrall (1906-2000) and Leonard Gordon Ferrall (1891-1953) were second
cousins. Email from Michael Ferrall (son of Raymond Ferrall) to Christine Burgess, 7 January 2009.
Mr Stephen Spurling, who never claimed to be more than a run-of-the-mill portrait photographer … was waiting with his assistant perched on a step-ladder near the curb outside the Brisbane Hotel. He had waited patiently – and uncomfortably too – because slung round his neck was a heavy half plate Graflex camera … As the Prince stood up before alighting, he lifted his head momentarily and smiled at the crowd. Spurling clicked the shutter – and made the picture that made history.²¹²

![Image of Stephen Spurling with crowd]

Stephen Spurling 3ª, *Portrait of the Prince of Wales acknowledging the crowd*, 1920, b&w print.

In this account, Raymond Ferrall is in no doubt as to who took the photograph. He also explains how, in subsequent reproductions of the shot, the background was obliterated ‘to concentrate attention on the central figure’.²¹³ Raymond reinforces the credibility of his account by stating in the preface to this book, ‘I have written almost entirely only of men I knew and to the best of my knowledge all events described actually happened’.²¹⁴ Raymond also refers to the

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event in his book *Notable Tasmanians*, where he describes how, when the Prince stayed overnight in the Brisbane Hotel, he gave the proprietor Miss Elvie Quigley, her ‘greatest moment’. He goes on to state, ‘Stephen Spurling, enterprising Launceston photographer, snapped the smiling Prince as he stood at the hotel entrance and Launceston thereby bestowed on the young man the sobriquet of Prince Charming’.\(^{215}\) Other writers, such as the photo-historian Jack Cato, agree that Stephen 3rd took this image. He states ‘[a]mongst Steve’s “press-scoops” was … the famous picture of Edward, Prince of Wales (Windsor in his prince-charming period) when he visited Launceston.\(^{216}\)

Given this weight of evidence, why does Long claim Leonard Ferrall took the photograph? Although Long provides no source for his information, he presumably based his claim on information supplied to him during the course of his 1981-82 research. This source obviously had reason to believe Leonard deserved credit for the image. As the darkroom manager, Leonard may have been responsible for the blurring of the background. He may have also been the assistant referred to in Raymond’s account of the event. Perhaps he had been charged with carrying all the heavy equipment – in other words, doing all the hard work. Many years later, another Spurling employee, Bob Mackrill stated when ‘the Duke and Duchess of York came to Launceston in the late 1920s, I had to carry the tripod all around the parks and gardens while my boss took photos. I think my job was even harder than his’.\(^{217}\) Perhaps, like Mackrill, Long’s source believed Leonard had played a significant role in the production of the Prince of Wales image, and therefore deserved recognition.

During the 1920s Stephen 3rd’s fascination with cars continued unabated, and he enjoyed testing these early vehicles to their limits. Around 1922 he drove an Overland car on a promotional trip from Upper Esk over Roses Tier to Upper

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Blessington.\textsuperscript{218} The so-called ‘road’ was no more than a bush track. Some years later, when various options were under consideration as access routes to the Ben Lomond snowfields, the Roses Tier road was discounted because it was ‘not practical for motor cars’.\textsuperscript{219} In another escapade, in April 1924, Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} joined a group of motor enthusiasts on one of the earliest car trips to Cradle Mountain. The party travelled in two vehicles. Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} and his group left Launceston in a Maxwell car, and the other group, with Latrobe motoring enthusiast Roy Lade at the wheel, travelled in a Citroën-Kégresse. From the front, this vehicle resembled an early model car, but the rear had a set of caterpillar-like wheels. After a series of mishaps, both parties eventually arrived at Gustav Weindorfer’s Waldheim Chalet.\textsuperscript{220}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Collection of the St Helens History Room

Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, \textit{The Citroën-Kégresse carrying a load},\textsuperscript{221} 1924, b&w print.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{218} Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McAmmon’; Email from Anton Lade to Christine Burgess, 31 March 2004. Roses Tier was a sawmilling township surrounded by forests.

\textsuperscript{219} Branagan, \textit{Frederick Smithies}, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Examiner}, 19 April 1924; \textit{Advocate}, 19 April 1924; \textit{Mercury}, 8 February 1935, p. 7 c. 3.

\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Weekly Courier}, 24 April 1924, p. 26 (4).
Throughout this era Stephen 3rd continued to make movies. Some of his most historically significant films included footage of the aviator Captain Lancaster and Mrs Keith Miller arriving at Mowbray Racecourse, near Launceston on 28 April 1928, in their biplane, the ‘Red Rose’. A week later, on 5 May 1928, he filmed Bert Hinkler and his wife arriving at Elphin Show Ground, Launceston aboard their Arvo 581 Avian biplane.223 A second segment, taken two days later, shows the couple leaving for Hobart. Hinkler had recently created aviation history by completing the first solo flight from England to Australia.224 Copies of these footages, along with various others segments including the 1928 Tamar Regatta and family holidays, are held at the National Screen and Sound Archive in Canberra.225

In April 1929, northern Tasmania experienced a catastrophic flood. Water surging down the South Esk River caused the River Tamar to rise to record levels and substantial damage to the Duck Reach power station.226 Completed in 1895, this station had survived floods in 1911, 1916 and again in 1922.227 However, the 1929 deluge proved unstoppable.228 For local press photographers, the disaster presented a number of challenges. Apart from the logistics of reaching a suitable vantage point, the sodden conditions caused their wooden cameras to swell – making them difficult to hold.229 Stephen 3rd had managed to record the devastation caused during the earlier inundations,230 and once again he made a visual record for the local press.231

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222 Argus, 30 April 1928, p. 15 c. 4.
225 Stephen Spurling 3rd, Red Rose Aeroplane arrives at Launceston [other segments] (Title no. 63068, ScreenSound, National Screen and Sound Archive, Canberra).
226 Jill Cassidy and Elspeth Wishart (eds), Launceston talks, oral histories of the Launceston Community (Launceston, Tasmania, c. 1990) pp. 93-107; Mercury, 7 March 1953, p. 15.
227 Lupton, Lifeblood, pp. 20, 76.
228 Lupton, Lifeblood, p. 100.
229 Cassidy and Wishart (eds), Launceston Talks, p. 101.
230 Weekly Courier, 16 March 1911, p. 20; Weekly Courier, 31 August 1916, p. 18; Weekly Courier, 15 June 1922, pp. 24, 27.
231 Weekly Courier, 17 April 1929, pp. i-iv, viii, x.
The depression years

The roaring twenties came to an abrupt halt with the Wall Street crash in October 1929.\textsuperscript{232} A worldwide depression loomed, but for some Tasmanians economic hardship was already a reality.\textsuperscript{233} While many suffered, not all sections of society faced a downturn. As discussed in Chapter 1, many photographic firms, both in Australia and overseas, survived by exploring new opportunities. Launceston photographer Charlie Burrows later recalled that, although ‘[t]hings were too hard and people were simply not having their photographs taken,’ his firm remained solvent by venturing into outdoor work, including press coverage for the

\textsuperscript{232} John Kenneth Galbraith, \textit{The Great Crash, 1929} (Boston, 1955) p. 86.

\textsuperscript{233} Robson, \textit{A History of Tasmania, Volume II}, pp. 409, 412.
Perhaps it was fortuitous that Stephen 3rd had dispensed with the portrait side of the business, and could generate income from presswork. In addition, commissions from companies, sales of views and cameras, along with earnings from photographic processing, continued to keep the firm financially viable. This was due in part to a fall in living costs, which meant that ‘Tasmanians who retained their jobs could buy more with their diminished wages and salaries’.

Consequently, many of those who had enjoyed photography before the depression could afford to pursue their hobby.

When the depression hit, Tasmania had ‘no regular scheme of unemployment insurance’.

As the lines of unemployed grew, the government created work opportunities by encouraging building and road construction. One of the roads built during this period linked the previously isolated west coast with Hobart. Prior to this, the only route from the south to the west was by sea, or overland via the Linda track. The new eighty-two kilometres of roadway followed this old track from Derwent bridge (near Lake St. Clair) to the King River bridge (Linda Valley). It took three years to construct and cost the state and federal governments £146 000. Apart from improved communications, the new road promised ‘incalculable benefit as a tourist attraction’.

Stephen 3rd visited the road works prior to the official opening to photograph the completed sections, and those still under construction. Many of his photographs featured his own car; a 1923 model, four-cylinder, four-seater Italian Ansaldo, purchased in 1928. Once again, the combined images of a road, and bridges, providing access to a previously remote region, and the car as a means of making the journey, had both literal and symbolic meanings.

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234 Cassidy and Wishart (eds), Launceston Talks, p. 99.
236 Hazel McCammon, Recollections.
238 ‘Users of the Linda Track’, Mercury, 1 September 1932, p. 12.
240 ‘Direct Communications with the West Coast Initiated’, Mercury, 1 September 1932, p. 10.
241 Weekly Courier, 5 May 1932, p. 25; Ted Spurling, Notes.
Stephen Spurling 3rd, Surprise Valley, West Coast Road, c. 1932, gelatin silver photograph.

Stephen Spurling 3rd, Collingwood Bridge, c. 1932, gelatin silver photograph.
The opening of this road meant that Hobart had a road link to the west, but there was still no road linking the west and Launceston. To address this problem, a group known as the ‘Missing Link Association’, formed to press for the construction of a road from Great Lake to Bronte. Many of those involved in this action group were also associated with the Fifty Thousand League. Although Stephen 3rd was an active member of both associations, when the route finally opened in 1937, fellow photographer Frederick Smithies recorded the event with his pen and camera.242

Despite the economic hardships during this period, many people enjoyed healthy, outdoor recreational pursuits.243 In Launceston, moves were afoot to establish an alpine club. The inaugural meeting, convened by the Fifty Thousand League on 16 September 1929, elected Charles Monds president, Frederick Smithies and Karl Stackhouse vice-presidents, with Stephen 3rd and George Perrin amongst those serving on the committee. The club’s official title was the Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club and their aims were to work towards ‘popularising and developing snow sport’, and to encourage mountaineering and bushwalking.244 Although areas such as Pine Lake had become popular for winter sports, the club planned to focus their activities on nearby Ben Lomond. In the summer of 1931-32 club members constructed a chalet just above the tree line on Ben Lomond, which they named ‘Carr Villa’.245

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242 Ted Spurling, Notes; Examiner, 16 February 1937, Examiner, 17 February 1937, pp. 13, 16; Mercury, 18 February 1937, p. 3 c. 1-4; Examiner, 3 September 1985, p. 23; Rae, ‘Lost province’, p. 244.

243 Stefan Petrov, ‘Wilderness’, in Peter Beilharz and Trevor Hogan, (eds), Sociology: place, time & division (South Melbourne, c. 2006) p. 34.


245 Branagan, Frederick Smithies, pp. 89-91; Examiner, 8 June 1968; Examiner, 8 July 2000, p. 27; Examiner Extra, 13 November 2007, p. A5.
Years later, Stephen 3rd’s son, Ted recalled how his father ‘took a keen interest’ in skiing and how during the season they stayed overnight at this chalet.²⁴⁶

As the years went by Stephen 3rd continued to rely on his cars in his quest for views. In 1933 he replaced his Italian Ansaldo with the latest model, six-cylinder, six-seater, American Plymouth 6. That same year he took his camera to the northern end of Great Lake to record its ever-changing moods.²⁴⁷ The following year he took his car on a motoring holiday to Canberra, accompanied by his wife Marie, eighteen year-old son Ted, and Marie’s twenty-two year-old nephew, Jack Jewell.²⁴⁸ In 1935, Stephen 3rd travelled to Tasmania’s northwest coast to take a large number of views for the Advocate Annual, which subsequently published in excess of seventy Spurling photographs. The following year the same annual published nearly ninety Spurling images and the Examiner Annual published in excess of thirty images.²⁴⁹

On 28 October 1936 Stephen 3rd turned sixty. His children were now approaching adulthood, and he decided it was time to wind down his commercial activities. Although his son Ted had worked for a period in the studio, he had decided to pursue a career as an electrician.²⁵⁰ Since no other family member was interested in taking on the business, the most obvious course of action was to sell. The following year Stephen 3rd entered into negotiations with Kodak Pty Ltd. The deal meant that, although Kodak now occupied the premises at 93 Brisbane Street, he retained ownership of the building. As Stephen 3rd still held large quantities of negatives, he relocated to 53 Paterson Street, Launceston where, with the assistance of his

²⁴⁶ Ted Spurling, Recollections. Jack Branagan makes no mention of Stephen 3rd’s involvement in this club. According to Branagan, ‘the earliest club records have gone astray’, so he had to write from memory. However, he gives an extensive list of the foundation members, other early members and the first office bearers. Stephen 3rd’s name does not appear on any of these lists. Branagan does acknowledge the idea for the club probably started with the Fifty Thousand League, but does not mention Stephen 3rd’s involvement with this association. Branagan, Frederick Smithies, p. 86-88.
²⁴⁷ Ted Spurling, Notes.
²⁴⁸ Ted Spurling, Recollections; Stephen Spurling 3rd, Family album (Copy held by Christine Burgess).
²⁴⁹ Advocate Annual, 1935 and 1936; Examiner Annual, 1936; Ted Spurling, Notes; Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’.
daughter, Hazel, he set up a smaller operation called ‘Spurlings Scenic Photographers’.251 As the name suggests, this new business was devoted to the view trade. In September of that year he negotiated to supply six Tasmanian views for display at the office of the Tasmanian Agent General in London and another large, framed image of Launceston to the Launceston Corporation for advertising purposes.252

In 1937 the Advocate and Examiner again published large numbers of Spurling images in their annuals, and in 1938 and 1939 more Spurling images appeared in the Advocate annuals. These photographs were a pot-pourri of cityscapes, public buildings, scenic attractions, rural pursuits, shipping, industrial plants, stately homes and wilderness scenes. While some of the images were new, others were recycled from earlier years.253 One even included his daughter Hazel and her friends posing behind a haystack.254 Such assignments demonstrate that even in his final years as a professional photographer, Stephen 3rd’s work was highly valued.

On 3 September 1939, Britain and France announced they were at war with Germany.255 For Stephen 3rd the declaration had professional ramifications. His business centred on his view trade, and photographs of subjects that might have military or strategic significance were now subject to censorship.256 There were other impacts, too. Around 1940, as part of a public awareness campaign, Stephen 3rd helped arrange a display of 340 photographs depicting Germany’s preparations and

251 ‘Business sold, Spurling Pty Ltd Progress Recalled’, (Unidentified, undated newspaper article – copy held by Christine Burgess); Letter written by Ted Spurling to Christine Burgess, 28 March 1999; Tasmanian Post Office Directory, 1938-39; Sandy Barrie, Australians behind the camera: directory of early Australian photographers 1841 to 1945 (Sydney, c. 2002) p. 177.
253 In 1937 the Examiner Annual published nearly twenty Spurling images and the Advocate Annual published nearly a hundred Spurling images. In both 1938 and 1939 the Advocate Annual published some eighty Spurling images. By 1940 less than twenty Spurling images appeared in this annual.
254 Examiner Annual, 1937, front cover.
256 See verso of Wynyard Wharf, 1938 (Cat. no. 854, Pioneer Village Museum, Burnie, Tasmania).
the allies’ response. In opening the display at the QVMAG, the Mayor declared the ‘exhibits clearly illustrate … our growing strength to meet the forces of barbarism unleashed to enslave Europe and destroy our Empire’.  

Retirement

In 1941, when the Second World War had been raging in Europe for two years, Stephen 3rd decided to retire. He was sixty-five and could have chosen to enjoy his retirement in Launceston. Apart from his friends and business acquaintances he had many local interests. For some years he had been a keen bowler at the East Launceston Bowling Club, and he enjoyed tending his fruit and vegetable garden. Instead, he and his wife Marie decided to retire in Melbourne.

For many Tasmanians, this move represented a betrayal of his heritage, but there was a reason for their decision. Marie was deeply unhappy. She had never felt accepted by the Launceston community, who regarded her fashionable clothes and delight in art deco design with suspicion. As an outsider from Victoria, she was the subject of ill-founded gossip and innuendo. One of the rumours spread about her was that she was an alcoholic. In fact, nothing could have been further from the truth. Except for the occasional medicinal brandy, both she and her husband were teetotallers. Stephen 3rd and Marie sold their house at 61 High Street, and with their daughter Hazel, moved across the Bass Strait. Their son Ted remained in Tasmania. How Stephen 3rd felt about this move is unknown. However, according to Hazel, even in his old age Stephen 3rd longed to be back in the mountains he loved, taking photographs.

257 ‘Impressive display organised’, (Unidentified newspaper article, dated 2 August 1940 – copy held by Christine Burgess).
258 Ted Spurling, Notes.
259 Letter written by John Symonds to Christine Burgess, 13 October 2006.
260 Hazel McCammon, Recollections.
261 Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’.
Creator unknown, *Marie and Stephen Spurling 3rd in Melbourne*, c. 1943, gelatin silver photograph, 13.2 x 8.2 cm.

The Spurlings were not the only Tasmanians to re-locate. Some of Stephen 3rd’s friends were also living in Melbourne. These included his life-long friend, Cecil Dyer, who was living in Elsternwick,262 and Jack Cato who was living in Elwood.263

On arriving in Melbourne, Stephen 3rd, Marie and Hazel lived in a succession of temporary residences before finally settling at 32 Byrne Avenue, Elwood. They soon established new networks. Stephen 3rd joined the Elwood Bowling Club and continued to enjoy the sport for many years.264 He also visited art galleries, although he objected to the trends in modern art.265 On 7 December 1941, the Japanese

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263 According to Ted Spurling, Jack Cato and Stephen Spurling 3rd remained in contact for many years.
264 Ted Spurling, Recollections.
265 Long, 'Interview with Hazel McCammon'.
invasion of Pearl Harbour brought the spectre of war closer to Australian shores, and, after some consideration, Hazel enlisted in the Women’s Royal Australian Navy. Throughout his retirement Stephen 3rd wrote articles and many of these appeared in newspapers and magazines. He also communicated with Jack Cato, who was writing *The Story of the Camera in Australia*. 

The final chapter

In 1957, Stephen 3rd and Marie returned to Tasmania. Although it was a heart-rending decision for Marie, they bought a house at 83 William Street in Devonport, just one street away from their son Ted, and his family. They had moved just in time, for early in 1958 Marie suffered a stroke and was bed-ridden for many months. She died on the 19 September 1958. Alone and lonely, Stephen 3rd remained living in his Devonport home for some years. He remained active. As well as tending his garden, he continued writing articles. Eventually, when his health began to fail, he transferred to a nursing home in Ulverstone. He died here on 3 October 1962, suffering from cerebral haemorrhage, arteriosclerosis, hypertension and bronchopneumonia – just days before his eighty-sixth birthday.

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267 Hazel Marie Spurling, Defence records (Series A6770, Item no. WR/1865, National Archives, Australia).
269 Ted Spurling, Notes; Ted and Marj Spurling lived at 62 Tasman Street, Devonport, Tasmania.
270 *Mercury*, 20 September 1958, p. 18 c. 1; * Examiner*, 25 September 1958, p. 6 c. 6.
271 Long, ‘Interview with Hazel McCammon’.
272 Ted Spurling, Notes.
273 Stephen Spurling 3rd, Death certificate (Registration no. 93/1962, Ulverstone, 1962, TAHO); * Examiner* 4 October 1962, p. 26 c. 1; * Examiner*, 5 October 1962, p. 2 c. 6-7; * Advocate*, 5 October 1962, p. 19 c. 2; * Mercury*, 4 October 1962, p. 25 c. 1.
His funeral was held at St Columba’s Presbyterian Church in Devonport on 6 October 1962, and his ashes were placed beside his wife at the Carr Villa Memorial Park in Launceston.\textsuperscript{274} Under the terms of his will his estate was to be divided equally between his two children.\textsuperscript{275}

The saga of the Spurling negatives and images

As discussed in earlier chapters, in 1876 the photographer Alfred Winter purchased the negatives from the Spurlings’ Hobart Town studio, and for the next ten years he sold re-prints and enlargements.\textsuperscript{276} The saga of what became of Stephen 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s images is more complex. From the 1870s to the mid-twentieth century, Spurling images from the Launceston studio could be found throughout Tasmania, mainland Australia and overseas. Spurling images featured in pictorial magazines and albums, on postcards, posters and tourist mementos. Framed Spurling images adorned the walls of Tasmanian homes and public buildings. In addition, between the years 1896 and 1940 thousands of Spurling images appeared in Tasmanian newspapers. These images covered a wide variety of subjects; everything from wilderness areas to local dignitaries, buildings, sporting events, royal tours and natural disasters. The majority of these images appeared in the Weekly Courier, an exceptionally well produced, magazine-style paper. Despite its quality, this paper, like all others, soon became yesterday’s news. Although Stephen 3\textsuperscript{rd} accumulated in excess of 2 000 scenic views,\textsuperscript{277} once he retired and his images no longer featured in local papers, the Spurling name started to disappear from the public consciousness.

\textsuperscript{274} Examiner, 5 October 1962, p. 22 c. 2; Advocate, 5 October 1962, p. 16 c. 2; Email from Craig Saunders, Manager, Carr Villa Memorial Park, Launceston, 13 November 2003.
\textsuperscript{275} Stephen Spurling 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Will and Associated Documents (AD 960/95, 105, 43622, pp. 105-107, 1962, TAHO).
\textsuperscript{276} Mercury, 16 May 1876, p. 4; Mercury, 18 May 1876, p. 4; Mercury, 19 May 1876, p. 1; Mercury, 27 July 1878, p. 1; Mercury, 15 May 1883, p. 1; Mercury, 21 September 1886, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{277} Spurling, ‘Tasmanian Scenes’, p. 12.
That some of Spurling negatives and images have survived to the present day is more a matter of fortunate coincidences than design. When Stephen 3rd retired the family retained a few albums and framed images; however, most of his scenic views were in private collections. His negative collection was a different matter. While in later years, he often used film negatives, for most of his career he preferred to use glass plates. Although heavy, cumbersome and easily broken, like Ansel Adams, he believed they yielded superior images. As the glass plate collection was too vast to be of interest to a single collector or business, it was divided and sold to a number of different entities. For instance, some of the Spurling panoramas, taken with a Cirkut camera, passed into the hands of a local collector in Launceston. Other large format materials, such as the full plate negatives, were purchased by Launceston photographer, Leighton Hudson. Over time, some of these plates were destroyed by water, but the remainder eventually passed to collector, Stephen Hiller of Devonport. Hiller currently holds approximately 300 glass plates 10 x 12 inch (25.4 x 30.5 cm) and 8 x 10 inch (20.3 x 25.4 cm), some panoramas from the 1930s and some ½ and ¼ plate negatives.

Other negatives went interstate. The Rose Stereograph Company of Melbourne purchased Stephen 3rd’s postcard stock of glass plates and film negatives, which they used for printing postcards until the 1950s. Although it is uncertain what became of the film negatives, by the 1960s around 550 of the glass plates were in the

283 Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to his daughter Hazel McCammon and family, 10 July 1960, p. 2 (Copy held by Christine Burgess).
possession of freelance photographer, and former Rose employee Darrell Green. For years Green stored the collection in a cellar, where they were subjected to floods. In the late 1970s, Chris Long discovered Green’s collection. After discussions between Green, Long and Stephen 3rd’s descendants, Green wrote to Hazel McCammon (née Spurling) on 11 August 1980:

I’ve placed the Spurling collection of negatives in Mr Chris Long’s care. This I have done because he is in the best position to make use of them in historical research projects in which he is engaged. He has given me an undertaking to look after the photos and give full acknowledgement wherever possible. He will return the full collection to you eventually.

Shortly afterwards it was agreed to allow the National Library of Australia to copy the collection. Long then visited Tasmania where he met with Stephen Hiller, who permitted him to copy his collection of negatives. Long also located and copied some 200 press shots and albums of images held by various family members. In 1981 the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board granted Long research funding and this enabled him to make several copies of each photograph, with one set remaining with the QVMAG, Launceston.

Other Spurling negatives have proved more difficult to trace. Prior to Stephen Spurling 3rd’s retirement, photograph collector Alf Rutland began assembling negatives of ships taken by various photographers including Stephen 3rd, John Watt Beattie and William Williamson. Stephen 3rd assisted Rutland by allowing his assistants to help with cataloguing during quiet periods. When Stephen 3rd retired, Rutland made his own arrangements for storing the negatives. According to the

287 Letter written by Darrell Green to Hazel McCammon, 11 August 1980 (Copy held by Christine Burgess).
289 Letter written by Stephen Spurling 3rd to Hazel McCammon, 10 July 1960, pp. 1-2 (Copy held by Christine Burgess).
collector Peter Williams, Rutland sold his collection to an American from California in the late 1930s. The whereabouts of these negatives is currently unknown.290

Over the years, many Spurling photographs have been re-discovered in private collections. Some of these have been donated to, or purchased by libraries, galleries, archives offices, museums and universities in Tasmania and on the mainland of Australia.291  In addition, Stephen 3rd's photographs are held by overseas institutions such as the George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, and the Boosé Collection at the Cambridge University Library.292  Many of these images are available on-line, and some have featured in exhibitions.293

Conclusions

Once re-discovered, it became apparent that the sheer volume of Stephen 3rd's images would make the task of analysing his contribution to Tasmanian photography extremely complex. However, there were a few clues. By checking the earliest date an image appeared in the Weekly Courier against its earliest known plate number294 and linking this to Stephen 3rd's accounts of his wilderness treks, patterns started to emerge. Then by placing this information in the context of his life as a whole, it became evident that his production of images did not remain constant, but passed through several distinct phases. The first phase extended from the time he left school until he officially joined his father’s firm. This was a learning period, when he honed

290  Telephone conversation between Peter Williams, Eaglemont, Victoria and Christine Burgess, 30 January 2005.
291  See Appendix 5.
293  For example, the ‘Picture Paradise’ exhibition, at the National Gallery of Australia in 2008.
294  Certain images appeared more than once in the Weekly Courier. Likewise, many popular images were re-cycled and given new plate numbers.
his photographic techniques, and acquired bush-craft and survival skills. The following years, from 1902 to 1913 proved to be his most important period of sustained wilderness photography. During this time he undertook most of his arduous treks and recorded the majority of his significant wilderness images. He continued to produce wilderness images for another decade, but by this stage family and business commitments consumed much of his time. By the mid-1920s he relied increasingly on presswork, commercial commissions and the proceeds of his photography store to generate income. Towards the end of the 1930s his business started to wind-down, and his creative output decreased and eventually ceased.

This rise and fall in production follows a similar trajectory to that described by psychologist John R Hayes in his study of painters and composers and their creative output. Hayes postulated that for many producers of creative works there was ‘an initial period of non-creativity lasting about six years … followed by a rapid increase in productivity over the next six years’. For the next thirty-five years, there was a period of ‘stable productivity’, and finally a period of ‘declining productivity’.\(^\text{295}\) John Szarkowski, who for many years was the photography curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, believes that photographers have the added disadvantage of having to contend with rapidly changing technology, which makes it difficult ‘to maintain the vitality and plasticity of their conception for a full working lifetime’. Although he cites some notable exceptions, he suggests that the ‘genuinely creative period of most photographers of exceptional talent has rarely exceeded ten or fifteen years’\(^\text{296}\). Ansel Adams’ biographer, Mary Street Alinder agrees, but argues that, while ‘[f]ew artists enjoy more than a decade of true creativity; Ansel had at least two’.\(^\text{297}\) According to Alinder, Ansel ‘believe[d] that all artists moved through these stages – rise, plateau and descent’ and eventually even he reached a point where it was more important to focus on ‘what he had already accomplished, … [rather than]


\(^{297}\) Alinder, \textit{Ansel Adams}, p. 321.
the increasingly futile effort to create new photographs. Stephen 3rd’s period of approximately twenty years of wilderness photography followed by a similar period of more functional photography fits into the framework described by these writers.

In many respects, Stephen 3rd’s life was full of contradictions. While his greatest love was roaming the mountain peaks and valleys of Tasmania’s wilderness areas; he was equally adept at running a successful business. He was a religious man, who eschewed alcohol and in later years, smoking; but enjoyed the company of bohemians and those who challenged the status quo. By nature he was retiring, gentle and somewhat introverted; yet he published stories about his exploits, punctuated with self-deprecating humour. He was a perfectionist, a man who would wait interminably for exactly the right cloud formations before taking a photograph. He would trudge for hours and endure extraordinary hardship to secure the perfect wilderness image. This same man, who had such patience and dedication, also loved the exhilaration of defying the speed boundaries in early cars and motorcycles. He was proud of his heritage, and fiercely supportive of all things Australian. Despite this, he felt alienated from many of the people in the island he loved, and eventually left. His return brought sadness, loneliness and ultimately death. While he achieved an extraordinary list of photographic firsts, and gave Tasmania a treasury of wilderness photographs, his memory came close to being forgotten and his photographs might have disappeared forever, had it not been for a set of fortunate coincidences. This thesis will now examine how, when and where Stephen 3rd procured some of his more significant wilderness images, and the deprivations he endured in securing them. It will also discuss the compositional aspects of these images.

208 Alinder, Ansel Adams, pp. 260, 269.
209 Hazel McAmmon, Recollections.