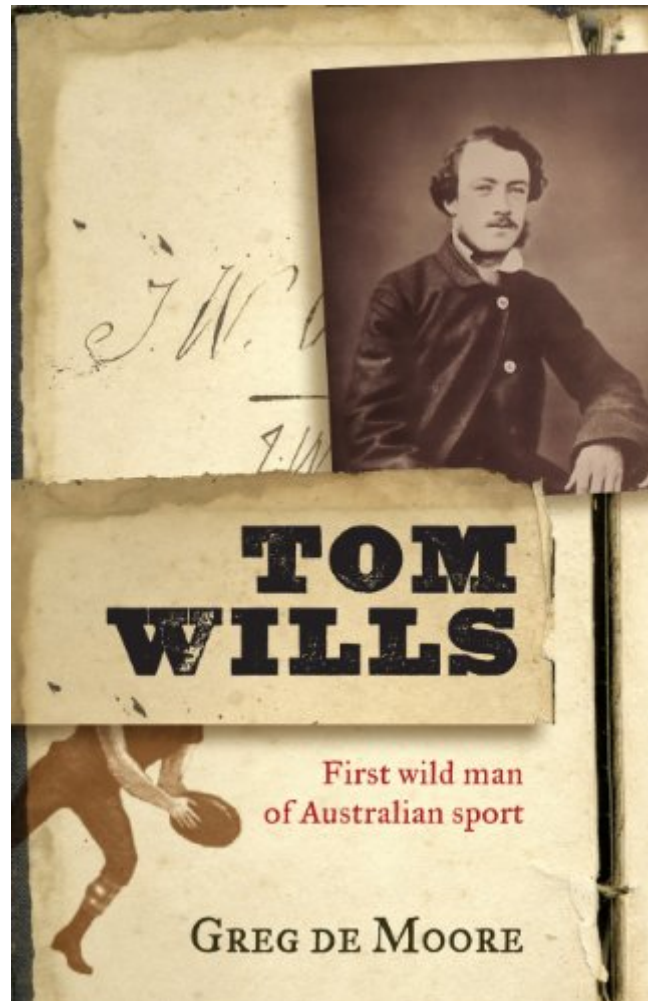




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Tom Wills



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Synopsis

This is the story of Tom Wills - flawed genius, sporting libertine, fearless leader and agitator, and the man most often credited with creating the game we now know as Australian Rules football. Sent to the strict British Rugby School in 1850 at fourteen, Tom returned as a worldly young man whose cricket prowess quickly captured the hearts of Melburnians. But away from the adoring crowds, in the desolation of the Queensland outback, he experienced first-hand the devastating effects of racial tension when his father was murdered in the biggest massacre of Europeans by Aboriginal people. Yet five years later, Tom coached the first Aboriginal cricket team. Tom Wills lived hard and fast, challenging authority on and off the field. But when his physical talents began to fade, the psychological demons that alcohol and adrenaline had kept at bay surged to the fore, driving him to commit the most brutal of suicides. He was forty-four and destitute. Greg de Moore has carefully pieced together Tom's life, giving us an extraordinary portrait of the life and times of one of our first sporting heroes, a man who lived by his own rules and whose contribution to Australian history has endured for more than 150 years.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

So much promise, so much wasted. Tom Wills is little known in Australia, but had a great influence on both Aussie rules and cricket in Australia in the 19th century. Just wonder what he could have achieved with the help of modern medicine. A good read for those interested in the early days of sport and life in the colonies, let alone how people lived with mental illness years ago. Tom Wills, a life blighted by inner demons.

People do have a great respect for Australian Rules Champions because of their physical attributes and athletic skills. Greg de Moore is a friend of ours and draws great respect for his own talents as Historian, Writer, Clinical Psychiatrist, Associate Professor in his chosen field of Medicine, Coach of cricket, Organiser in Education, Wonderful Parent and all-round Family-man, and in "Aussie terms", a Good Mate. Tom Wills's Story is regarded as one of the Main Histories in Australia from many viewpoints and not only about his sporting prowess and the "Invention of Australian Rules Football". His own life experiences reveal the many hardships common to families who migrated to "this new-world". Tragedies embraced confrontations between the peoples and communication was difficult between several cultures. Greg's pictures of sporting interests and competition is a very good platform on which to observe the eventual blending of these cultures that the Gold-Rush Era presented in Australia in the formative mid-19th century years. Tom Wills had returned to the "Old Country" with a team of Aboriginal Cricketers to show their skills at Cricket at a time before any other. This was a true experiment in many ways. The outcome may well have assisted in the establishment of the multi-cultural community that now exists in Australia. READ Greg de Moore's book, "Tom Wills". It is well written, educational and very interesting. To me it is a 5-star special. Regards, Ken Osgerby.

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