**Essays on Mount Crosby - Frank Hurley at Mount Crosby 1958**

Frank Hurley (1885-1962) was one of Australia's most accomplished and daring photographers, and even if you haven't heard of him, it's likely that you know some of his famous images. Hurley was born at Glebe and started work at the Lithgow Steel Works at the age of thirteen. It was there that he developed an interest in photography, encouraged by his first foreman (and how we owe that otherwise unknown gentleman).

Hurley returned to Sydney in 1905, where he taught himself the finer photographic techniques and secured a job with local postcard makers Cave &Co. Soon he was known for the quality of his photos and the risks he was willing to take to get them - a good thing too, for the road he was going down.

In 1911, Douglas Mawson selected Hurley as photographer for the Australasian Antarctic Expedition. In all, they shared time on four Antarctic expeditions which, among other scientific advances, showcased Hurley's capabilities with the camera. Subsequently, Ernest Shackleton engaged Hurley as photographer for the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1914-16, the result being some of the greatest photographs ever taken. I urge you to Google the story of the *James Caird* and study the photograph titled "Launching the *James Caird* at Elephant Island 1916".

After his Antarctic exploits, Hurley travelled widely as a war correspondent and photojournalist, taking long stints at the western front, Palestine, and Turkey and later venturing to wild places like the Torres Strait and New Guinea, long before it was usual for Europeans to be there.

It happens, I suppose you were wondering, that he also came to Mount Crosby and took a couple photos that are now held in the National Library of Australia, dated generously sometime between 1910 and 1962. It's nice to look at the master's photographs and try to see what makes them different - being taken on glass plate negatives certainly gives them contrast and a clarity that digital cameras would die for. But for me, there is another thing - and it helps me get closer to the supposed date. In the picture (see the link below), Hurley has captured the small weeping bottlebrush that grew at the western end of the weir through the fifties and sixties until, when I was ready to cross the bridge to school in 1968, it was almost daily ready to offer me a bunch of red flowers for mum. I suppose she liked them despite their promise to shed leaves and fine petals wherever they were put.

Looking at that tree, I think it's 1958 (which by the way, is years before I was born).

Because it is under copyright, you will need to view Hurley's photograph here at the National Library Australia website:

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an23478000>

(happy viewing)

Col Hester