



### THE GUMLEAF ARTIST

*Alfred William Eustace*

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*“With a box of oils in my swag  
To snatch the spirit of the bush  
On leaves of the red and white box tree  
I share my wonders with all of thee.”*

*From the poem: A Tribute to “AW”, Kenneth Eustace, 2024.*

### A Biography of Alfred William Eustace

Written by his great-great-grandson, **Kenneth Eustace**, this book traces the remarkable life of a pioneer bush artist whose work grew directly from the Australian landscape. What began as a journey into family history became a deeper exploration of colonial life, regional creativity, and the cultural history of North-East Victoria. He painted landscapes on gum leaves as well as board, tin and Ostrich eggs. Alfred William Eustace (1820–1907) was a pioneer artist, poet, and naturalist whose life spanned the transformation of colonial Victoria from immigrant settlement to Federation in 1901. Drawing on historical archives, family records, newspapers, and museum research, the book brings together the many strands of Alfred’s life, from the gold rush years around Chiltern, enduring the challenges of pioneer settlement, the creation of gumleaf landscape paintings – *beginning on the stem*, his poetry and stories of colonial bush life, through to the legacy of his artwork today. Alfred Eustace was not only a painter. He was also a **taxidermist**, a musician, a taxidermist, preserving bird specimens of the local

Australian bush, a **poet**, recording local events and everyday life and a **pioneer settler**, witnessing the transformation of a community at ‘Black Dog Creek’ (Chiltern) in colonial north-east Victoria.

### A Window into Colonial Australia

From the excitement of **1851 gold discoveries** to the optimism of **Federation in 1901**, *The Gumleaf Artist* offers an engaging portrait of a changing nation seen through the eyes of a creative observer of the bush. Through Alfred’s life, the book reveals the wider story of the region — the struggles and achievements of settlers and families who built communities during the gold rush era and witnessed the birth of modern Australia under the rule of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) to the disruption of the first nations already systematic land management with patterns created by the use of fire, dams and ecological timing to maintain all habitats and open grasslands, with well-spaced trees.

### Why This Story Matters

Early colonial bush artists have often been overlooked in Australian art history. Yet their work captured the landscapes, wildlife, and communities that shaped the nation. The ‘*Gumleaf Artist*’ restores Alfred William Eustace to that story by revealing how creativity flourished not only in major cities but also in the small regional communities of colonial Australia. Today his landscape paintings are held in esteem by private collectors and by local regional collections including the Chiltern Athenaeum Trust, Burke Museum, Beechworth, Murray Art Museum, Albury, and the Jindera Pioneer Museum where they continue to inspire new audiences.

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#### Oil on Gum leaf lake scene



[297 pages, 77,720 words. 141 References]

### Contact & Further Information

**Author:** Kenneth Eustace

**Email:** [ken.eustace@gmail.com](mailto:ken.eustace@gmail.com) **Phone:** +61 413 363 229

**Website:** <https://eustace.au/alfred>

**Available for:** author talks, history, museum & arts events, schools, community groups.