

The authoritative book on the life of Tom Wills: a great Australian story

TOM WILLS: HIS SPECTACULAR RISE AND TRAGIC FALL

Greg de Moore

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MEDIA RELEASE

First wild man of Australian sport or genius? Champion cricketer or rabble-rouser? Charismatic leader of men or drunken scoundrel? Inventor of Australian Rules football? Tom Wills was all of these things.

A champion cricketer, he had been exposed to the game of rugby when he was at Rugby School in England. In Melbourne in 1858, with several other men, he organised the first football match, thinking the sport was a great way to keep fit between cricket seasons. The rest is history.

But the Tom Wills story goes well beyond the sporting field. His father was killed in outback Queensland during the largest massacre of Europeans by Aborigines. Yet five years later, Wills was coaching Aboriginal cricketers who became the first Australian cricket team to tour England. Tom Wills - who had strong family links to western Sydney - brought this aboriginal cricket team to play on the parklands of Parramatta. He seemed fearless, strong-willed and indestructible, a man who had it all.

Yet at 44 years of age, Tom Wills stabbed himself three times in the heart with scissors. He had nothing left to live for. Greg de Moore's meticulous research provides a completely new perspective on the dramatic life of this extraordinary man.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg de Moore is a consultant psychiatrist at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, and his study of Wills's life stems from his interest in male suicide. His ten years of research has unearthed original medical records, letters, text books and notes that were previously believed to have been lost or destroyed.

