

# Aboriginal History

Volume eight 1984

# ABORIGINAL HISTORY INCORPORATED

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## ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1984

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*Aboriginal History* aims to present articles and information in the field of Australian ethnohistory, particularly in the post-contact history of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Historical studies based on anthropological, archaeological, linguistic and sociological research, including comparative studies of other ethnic groups such as Pacific Islanders in Australia, will be welcomed. Future issues will include recorded oral traditions and biographies, vernacular narratives with translations, previously unpublished manuscript accounts, resumes of current events, archival and bibliographical articles, and book reviews.

*Aboriginal History* is administered by an Editorial Board which is responsible for all unsigned material in the journal. Views and opinions expressed by the authors of signed articles and reviews are not necessarily shared by Board members. The editors invite contributions for consideration; reviews will be commissioned by the review editor.

Contributions, correspondence and inquiries about subscriptions should be sent to: The Editors, *Aboriginal History*, C/- Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Australian National University, G.P.O. Box 4, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601.

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Cover: Designed by R.E. Barwick, from the engraving in R. Brough Smyth's *The Aborigines of Victoria*, 1878, depicting the memorial design carved in wood for Thomas Bungeleen (1847-1865), the son of Bun-geel-leen, a headman of the central Kurnai.

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1984

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During the field excursion following the ANZAAS Congress of January 1967 John Mulvaney discusses the finds from Green Gully, Kellor, on site, with (from left) Edmund Gill, Dermot Casey and Lord Casey.  
Photograph: Isabel McBryde.



## ABORIGINAL HISTORY VOLUME 8 –

### ABORIGINAL SOCIETY IN SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA

#### DEDICATED TO PROFESSOR D.J. MULVANEY

##### DEDICATION

At the end of 1985 John Mulvaney retires from his position as Foundation Professor of Prehistory in the Faculties at the Australian National University. When discussing plans for this thematic volume with the Editorial Board I proposed that it should be dedicated to John Mulvaney in recognition of his great contribution to Aboriginal studies. It is also appropriate for us to dedicate this south-eastern volume to him as his teaching of Prehistory began at Melbourne University and his archaeological field work in the south-east. Before the famous excavations in the north at Kenniff Cave and at Ingaladdi that demonstrated unequivocally the Pleistocene antiquity of Australia's Aboriginal past, there were those at the Fromms Landing rock shelters on the Murray, at Glen Aire and Keilor, and field survey work on the Glenelg. From the Australian National University he returned to field work in the south-east with investigation of sites at Lake Mungo, again uncovering material older than any previously recorded.

Research on the history of anthropology and archaeology in Australia has always held a particular interest for John Mulvaney. Here the south-east again is appropriate. The key figures in his studies, Alfred Howitt and Baldwin Spencer, were giants in Melbourne's intellectual world at the turn of the century. Their researches, like those of John Mulvaney, were not in any sense local or parochial, but Australia-wide. Yet they also had their intellectual roots in the scholarly activities of the southern capital which his research is now illuminating for us. His biography of Baldwin Spencer *So much that is new – Baldwin Spencer 1860-1929* written with John Calaby as co-author is due for publication in July 1985 by Melbourne University Press.

So it is with tremendous pleasure that I, as Editor for Volume 8, join with members of the Editorial Board in dedicating this volume on the Aboriginal History of south-eastern Australia to Professor John Mulvaney. It is some small tribute from us to mark his outstanding research and leadership in studies of the Aboriginal past, and to express our deep respect and affection for him as a colleague.



Photograph: Isabel McBryde.

John Mulvaney at Murrumbidgee, New South Wales, talking to a student group about problems of site interpretation and conservation.

## INTRODUCTION

This volume of *Aboriginal History* is devoted to studies of the south-eastern corner of the Australian continent. In the past some volumes have concentrated on a single theme, edited by members of the Editorial Board with a particular interest in that topic. In 1981, for example, James Urry edited volume 5 with its theme of Aboriginal-Asian contact.

The prehistory and recent past of the south-east all suggest that this area was one of intense cultural development in the later stages of its prehistory, especially the centuries immediately preceding the European colonisation of Australia Felix and the foundation of the colony of Victoria. These developments invite research by archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnohistorians, historians and linguists. Yet particularly they invite inter- or cross-disciplinary research. The papers in this issue arose from a series of meetings which I convened with Professor R.W. Dixon in 1981. They involved scholars from the disciplines listed, all concerned with the south-east. As an informal group we gave ourselves the name South-East Australia Study Group. We each discussed common issues from the perspectives of our own discipline; yet from the experience of seeing the issues assessed from differing vantage points came new insights and new interpretations. These meetings were exciting inter-disciplinary experiences, which we hope to share with readers through the papers presented in this volume and later issues.

A series of unavoidable difficulties in production has delayed this volume, dated 1984. The winter of 1985 will be well advanced when it appears. However, there is some timely recompense in the delay. The volume appears in the year Victoria remembers the establishment of pastoral settlement in the environs of Melbourne and can join the body of research and publication marking that event and examining its impact on the Aboriginal societies of the region.

Isabel McBryde  
June 1985

**CHARLES DUNFORD ROWLEY**  
**1906–1985**

As this volume went to press we learned with deep regret of the death in Canberra on 18 September 1985 of C.D. Rowley, a member of the Editorial Board 1977-81. Among his many achievements was a virtual transformation of Australian historical writing about Aborigines following publication in 1970-71 of his *The destruction of Aboriginal society*, *Outcasts in white Australia*, and *The remote Aborigines*. In his books, and scores of journal articles, letters to newspapers, reports to government and public lectures, C.D. Rowley demolished prejudice and suggested practical ways to improve the political and economic opportunities of Aborigines. What he fought for was summed up in the title of his 1978 book: *A matter of justice*. In his last weeks he was able to correct the proofs of his final book: *De-colonising Australia: the politics of Aboriginal recovery*. In Papua-New Guinea and in Australia Charles Rowley fought injustice with honest anger and gentle humour for over forty years. He will be remembered.

A fuller appreciation of his contribution to Aboriginal studies will be presented in a later issue.

## INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Manuscripts must be typewritten, double-spaced and with ample margins to allow for editorial marking. Submit two copies and keep a carbon. Footnotes should be as brief as possible, typed on a separate sheet and numbered consecutively throughout the paper. A short form of citation should be used for references to literature (for examples see current issue). The bibliography, on a separate page, should show the author's name and full publication details as given on the title page of the work, listed alphabetically by author and chronologically for each author. Tables and maps should be submitted in final form (except for size), on separate sheets, numbered on the back, and accompanied by a list of captions and photographic credits.

Authors should follow the usage of *Style manual for authors and printers of Australian government publications* except for numbers: use numerals for all requiring more than two words (e.g. 105, five thousand). Express percentages as: 45 per cent.

### Footnote style:

- 1 Rowley 1971:107; see also Elkin 1965.
- 2 Colonial Secretary to Denison, 7 January 1850 (TSA CSO 24/93/3033).

### Bibliography entries:

Author's first name or initials must appear as on title page; do not abbreviate to initials.

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# ABORIGINAL HISTORY



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Detail of incised decoration on a wooden shield from the south-east. Collections of the Sheffield City Museum, England.

Photograph: Isabel McBryde.

Scale:  centimetres.

## A MEMORIAL FOR THOMAS BUNGELEEN, 1847-1865

R.E. Barwick and Diane E. Barwick

The cover design for Volume 8 of *Aboriginal History* comes from a small engraving in R. Brough Smyth's *The Aborigines of Victoria*, depicting the memorial proposed for an early victim of Victoria's nineteenth century assimilation policy. This wood carving by a man of the 'Yarra tribe' was commissioned by Smyth, secretary of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines 1860-76, and William Thomas, Protector and later Guardian of Aborigines in the Melbourne-Western Port region 1839-67. The artist had died before Smyth belatedly queried the meaning of his design, and the manager of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station had to report that the surviving:

Aborigines of the Yarra do not know what meaning he attached to the several figures; but they suppose that the men represented in the upper part . . . are friends who have been appointed to investigate the cause of the death of Bungeleen; the figures of the birds and animals (emus, lizard, wombat (?), and kangaroos) indicate that he did not die for lack of food; and the strange — somewhat obscure — forms below the hollow band are those of *Mooroops*, or spirits who have caused the death of the Aboriginal by their wicked enchantments.<sup>1</sup>

Unpublished records<sup>2</sup> suggest the artist was Simon Wonga (Wonga, c. 1824-1874), favourite son and heir of Billibillary (c. 1799-1846), *ngurungaeta* (headman) of the Wurundjeri-balluk clan of Woiworung. Under Wonga's leadership the Woiworung and neighbouring Bunurong clans began in 1847 to negotiate new alliances with the remote and previously hostile Kurnai people of Gippsland. This drawing commemorates the beginning of contact and intermarriage between Kulin and Kurnai, as well as a Woiworung leader's kindly concern for a lonely lad who had spent his life among alien people.

Hysterical rumours of a 'captive white woman' in Gippsland (caused, Thomas was certain, by sightings of fair-skinned offspring of coastal sealers) prompted a number of 'rescue' expeditions in 1846 and 1847. In February 1847 a private party brought back two Kurnai: Boondarral, 'their young king' aged twenty, and Kurrowbeek, aged nineteen, who begged Protector Thomas to stop the killings in Gippsland. But he could not prevent the official expedition led by Native Police officers which returned in July 1847 bringing three mummified hands (Kurnai charms) which were soon on sale in a chemist's shop, 'six quite young (literally children) lubras' and five hostages, Bungeleen's young family. Kin remembered him as Bunjil Laen-buke, known to frequent the lakes' outlet, headman of the Waiung clan about Lake King and Bairnsdale ('Brabralung' of central Gippsland). He died in custody at the Narre Narre Warren Native Police Barracks on 22 November 1848, aged about fifty-six. A wife aged sixteen, Moombulk, had died there in August; a second wife known as Kitty and her sons, aged two years

<sup>1</sup> Smyth 1878, I: 288.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Papers; Howitt Papers; Board for the Protection of the Aborigines, Records.

and six months when seized in Gippsland,<sup>3</sup> were then placed at the Merri Creek school under Thomas' supervision.

By March 1850 Harry and Thomas 'Bungeleen' — a corruption of their father's title and name — were the only scholars; in April Kitty 'deserted' her children to marry one of the Native Police. She died a year later. In January 1851 the boys were placed with Melbourne school teacher John T. Hinkins, whose reminiscences provide a painful record of their tuition in European habits. Harry, renamed John, and Thomas were publicly baptised 29 August 1852 with much fanfare; but after John's death on 9 January 1856 Hinkins found his brother increasingly 'uncontrollable'.<sup>4</sup> When placed with the Lands Department as messenger he made several bush journeys with Protector Thomas to Wonga's camp, while the surviving Woiworung and Bunurong were vainly petitioning for a reserve where they could farm for themselves. The Protector's correspondence commended this twelve-year old 'gentleman', but when he 'got into bad company' after hours, Thomas and Hinkins squabbled about his fate. By government decision he was bonded in August 1861 to three years' service on the steamship *Victoria* and forbidden shore leave. He proved 'very useful' when the ship went to the northern coast to search for the missing Bourke and Wills Expedition, but was bitterly unhappy; the Protector urged that he be sent to the reserve on the remote Acheron river where the Woiworung had chosen to live, but by official fiat this experiment in assimilation continued. The ship's company was disbanded in August 1864 and Thomas Bungeleen

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, Journal, 10/2/47-3/3/47; 12/7/47-28/9/47; 5/8/47-30/11/48; Howitt Papers; Howitt 1904; Howitt in Smyth 1878: I, 56-57. Contemporary records are quoted in discrepant accounts by Cuthill (1960, citing an 1875 newspaper) and Garryowen (1888: II 610) who notes that 'Boondowal' and 'Karrowutbeet' accompanied the final official expedition.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, Journal and Correspondence 1850; Hinkins 1884.



## MEMORIAL FOR THOMAS BUNGELEEN

was placed with Smyth, Secretary for Mines, to train as a draftsman.<sup>5</sup> He again boarded with Hinkins, who encouraged his ambition to join the Independent Order of Odd-fellows; his admission in December 1864 was, he said, a high honour for 'the first of my race'. On 3 January 1865 he died of gastric fever, aged eighteen. He was buried in his brother John's grave at Melbourne General Cemetery.<sup>6</sup> Hinkins records that children of the Sunday school he had attended 'subscribed among them enough to erect a tombstone' — 3 5s 6d.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, Journals and Correspondence 1858-64; Hinkins 1884; Smyth 1878, 1: 23-25; Board for the Protection of the Aborigines, *Annual Report* 1861-1864.

<sup>6</sup> Hinkins 1884.

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## A CLOSER LOOK AT CULTURAL CONTACT: SOME EVIDENCE FROM 'YAMBUK', WESTERN VICTORIA

Jan Critchett

The Western District of Victoria has been a favoured area of study for academics interested in the archaeology, prehistory and race relations aspects of our past. Corris, Reece, Christie, Barwick, Marcard, Massola, Critchett, Lourandos, Coutts, as well as others from the Victoria Archaeological Survey, have published work concerning the District. Yet despite the large amount of research undertaken there are many gaps in our knowledge. This is particularly so if one wants to know in detail of relations between the two cultures, of anything more than the most general outline of racial conflict, or of Aboriginal responses, of adaptive behaviour by which Aborigines attempted to establish a new life-style for themselves. To find answers to such questions new sources will have to be examined. A source area so far neglected is the diaries and journals kept by many station owners and individuals. It is true that not all have been overlooked: a selected few have been over-worked. Yet there has been no systematic attempt to study these station by station. The aim of the piece of research which led to this paper was simply to take one such source, a fairly detailed one, recording events in a key area of the District and examine the extent to which it could throw further light on race relations and provide new details of Aboriginal culture.

The main source used is the diaries of Annie Maria Baxter (later Dawbin).<sup>1</sup> Annie was the wife of Lieutenant Andrew Baxter who in 1843 took up 'Yambuk', a small squatting property in the Western District of Victoria. Annie's diaries are a mine of information. They bubble with descriptions of station life, social activities, the day to day events as well as being a record of her private feelings and thoughts. The location of 'Yambuk' gave Annie special opportunities to record the effect of European settlement on the Aboriginal people of the area. 'Yambuk', lying between the Shaw and Eumeralla Rivers, sixteen miles from Port Fairy, bordered the scene of the most violent and prolonged racial conflict in the Western District.

*Jan Critchett lectures in the Faculty of Teacher Education at the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education, and has made a special study of Aboriginal history in the Western District. She has written on the history of the Framlingham community, as well as editing the facsimile edition of James Dawson's 1881 Australian Aborigines (See Reviews).*

<sup>1</sup> Annie is included in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* where she is described as 'a woman of outstanding personality with intellectual gifts and education well above the average'. Her diaries consisting of 32 volumes are part of the Dixon Collection, Mitchell Library. A novel Annie wrote based on the diaries, *Memories of the Past by a Lady in Australia*, was published in 1873.



The Baxters arrived after racial conflict had already begun; they witnessed and took part in the increased violence of the mid to late forties. November 1834 is commonly given as the date of the first permanent settlement in the Port Phillip District. Ten years later when the Baxters arrived, Europeans had taken up most of the land. William Learmonth, arriving in the area in the same year, counted himself lucky to obtain a run at Darlot's Creek: 'the only reason why this fine run had not been occupied long before was on account of the natives, who are said to be very troublesome here harbouring in a country close by [Mt. Eels] . . .'.<sup>2</sup> Thus by mid 1844 two races were in direct competition for the land and its resources.

Aborigines lived on the land before it was taken up by the Baxters and continued to live there afterwards. Lourandos assessing the resource potential of various zones in the Western District for hunter-gatherers concluded that, 'The densest populations could be expected in areas of perennial wetlands, waterways and fertile coastal (e.g. estuarine) regions'.<sup>3</sup> This was such an area and Annie's diaries support Lourandos' conclusion regarding the high resource potential of the environment. The Aborigines were able to exploit food from the sea, the lake just behind the coastal dunes and the fresh water rivers. Extensive middens are proof of the use of food from the sea. Fish, black swans and wild duck were caught at the lake. Other birds in the area were the wood duck, snipe, quail and pigeons. The fish in the fresh water river were plentiful: Annie's black boy could catch a large fish in a few minutes. At the mouth of the river, eels and mullet were easily caught. There were many dingos. Kangaroos and possums were also available. A pioneer remembers the Aboriginal meaning of the word Yambuk as 'red kangaroo' and mentions the large numbers that existed in the 1840s.<sup>4</sup>

Who were the Aborigines and how many were there? The work of Lourandos would seem a likely place to look for answers. Using records made by George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector of the Aborigines, Lourandos had identified 158 bands in south-western Victoria and has placed these on a map. Unfortunately, as he states, only one-third of these can be given a precise location.<sup>5</sup> It is not clear from his work who these Aborigines were. Nor can one learn who the Aborigines were from Annie's diaries. What one can be certain of is that there were two distinct groups of Aborigines; those who lived on the property or in the general area, and second those from the Mt. Eels area. The only identifying reference made by Annie is to indicate clearly when the Aborigines concerned are what she calls 'the Mt. Eels tribe'. While Annie's diaries alone do not allow the band to be named they do identify distinct groups. It is hoped that by using the original survey maps of the area in conjunction with information from a large number of diaries and journals, it will be possible to locate accurately Robinson's south-western Victoria bands.

The question of the size of the Aboriginal population in Western Victoria at settlement or in 1841, before the worst of the racial conflict occurred, is a question of

<sup>2</sup> Learmonth 1983: 223.

<sup>3</sup> Lourandos 1980: 46.

<sup>4</sup> Bennett 1887.

<sup>5</sup> Lourandos 1980: 52a.

national relevance. Butlin, in *Our Initial Aggression* has used Western District population figures as part of his argument to convince the reader that the commonly accepted figure of 300,000 Aborigines in Australia at settlement is far too low. He has seized upon Lourandos' estimate of 7,900 for the Western District (as opposed to 3,000 accepted by Radcliffe-Brown for a comparable area) to persuade readers of the likelihood that the Aboriginal populations in south-eastern Australia in '1788' were 'of the order of five (or more) times the number proposed by Radcliffe-Brown'.<sup>6</sup>

The size of the Aboriginal population is an important question but Annie's diaries do not help in any conclusive way. She writes of 'a large camp' on the far side of the river opposite the homestead. Soon after her arrival twenty three Aborigines walk uninvited into her home. In early 1846 upwards of one hundred Aborigines passed by on their way into Port Fairy for a corroboree. Perhaps the most interesting reference is to a hunting party Annie came across when she was horse-riding on the run. The Aborigines numbered a few more than twenty.<sup>7</sup> They were carrying fire sticks and spears. Lourandos' estimate according to Butlin means 'roughly 1 person per 1.5 square miles (3.9 km<sup>2</sup>)', that is a 'one hundred square mile property would encircle about seventy - odd blacks - perhaps something of the order of 15 spear-carrying adults'.<sup>8</sup> The Baxter property consisted of 10,000 acres or 15.6 square miles. Unfortunately it is impossible to make much of this. Butlin's figures are statistically derived. The Aborigines were not so evenly distributed. Some locations were obviously very popular, for example Mt. Eels and a swamp south of Mt. Napier, others were unimportant. There is no way of knowing where Annie's hunting party had come from or whether there were many more, or no more, groups nearby.

In accounts of Aboriginal resistance to European settlement the Port Fairy district is famous for the high level of violence. Settlers in 1842 petitioned La Trobe asking for protection against the Aborigines whose 'numbers, . . . ferocity, and . . . cunning, render them peculiarly formidable'.<sup>9</sup> Christie writes, 'In the Western District guerilla warfare reached its height in the early forties'.<sup>10</sup> It was a campaign which, he admits, was maintained for several years with the Aboriginal attacks in 1844-5 being so constant that Browne described the hostilities as 'the Eumeralla War'. Annie's diaries provide detail of this period giving information on the length of the resistance, the importance of individuals as leaders, the nature and frequency of Aboriginal attacks and of the retaliation of the Europeans. Annie's diaries show that the Aboriginal resistance which had flared up in 1842 began again in mid-1845 and continued till 1847. Soon after the Baxters' arrival Annie records in her diary that the local Aborigines are 'quietly disposed'. However in April 1845 she comments, 'The blacks are busy with his [Mr J. Brown's] and the Umeralla cattle; spearing and killing them - and are likely to be troublesome all the winter.'

<sup>6</sup> Butlin 1983: 175.

<sup>7</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 21 May 1846.

<sup>8</sup> Butlin 1983: 142.

<sup>9</sup> Settlers and Inhabitants of the District of Port Fairy to La Trobe, 1842.

<sup>10</sup> Christie 1979: 62.



Drawing of an Aboriginal 'village' in south-western Victoria. From manuscript by William Thomas in the Smyth Papers, La Trobe Library Melbourne. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Library. For discussion see paper by Williams in Part 2.

The 'Dunmore' Journals ('Dunmore' was located just north of 'Yambuk') indicate that the first violence since July 1843 (when the Journals started) took place in March 1845. From then on there is little relief for the European property owners until 1847. Annie's diaries reveal a consistent response from the Aboriginal population. There is no seasonal pattern. In every month from April 1845 to May 1847 there is mention of being harrassed by Aborigines except for July, November and December 1845 (no entries in Annie's diary and no mention of violence in 'Dunmore' Journals) and October, November, December, January 1846 (no entries in Annie's diary; 'Dunmore' Journals make it clear that the Native Police were staying there).

There are twenty one mentions of Aboriginal violence in the eighteen months for which there are diary entries in this period (March 1845-April 1847). The activities of the Aborigines consist of spearing and killing cattle, killing sheep, running cattle about including off the run, stealing potatoes and ransacking a hut, threatening settlers including spearing a man in the head, hanging around the house at night, lighting a large fire on the run, confronting individual settlers. Again, as in the Port Fairy settlers' 1842 petition to La Trobe, it is the number of incidents which stand out.

The Aborigines threatened individuals to a greater extent than Annie's diaries reveal. The 'Dunmore' Journals list the following incidents:

- May 1845 — Crawford comes and makes out an affidavit regarding a skirmish with the natives.
- June 1845 — Peter and James attacked by the Blacks and forced to fly — on the return with arms the Blacks have disappeared.
- 22 July 1845 — Blacks chased Mr Cunningham, threw spears at him.
- 5 January 1846 — Pye came to get warrants for Blacks who had attacked his hut and tried to spear his wife.
- 10 August 1846 — Putting cattle together — disturbed by blacks.

How seriously such activities harmed the economic interests of the squatters (and threatened their lives) can be gauged by the level of their reaction. They banded together to protect themselves, organising armed hunting parties to deal with the Aborigines. Annie who heard what they had to say wrote, 'If *half* is done or carried into effect, that they purpose — why, I would not wish to be one of the Mt Eels tribe of blacks'.<sup>11</sup>

Thirteen hunting parties are mentioned by Annie between June 1845-April 1847. Most of these consisted of five to six armed gentlemen. These hunting parties are quite separate from the activities of the Border Police or the Native Police — both in the area at various times during the period. Only in two cases is an individual recorded as hunting the Aborigines. Not surprisingly armed hunting parties are not mentioned as much in the 'Dunmore' Journals though some incidents are mentioned. However there is more mention of the activities of the Native Police and Border Police. When the Aboriginal leader is caught in April 1847 Annie comments, 'The settlers about here are determined to hang him if they can'.<sup>12</sup>

To what extent did such hunting parties harm the Aboriginal population? Of thirteen

<sup>11</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 27 June 1845.

<sup>12</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 18 April 1847.

incidents, Annie makes no mention of the result of five. Of those whose result is recorded, we learn 'the birds have flown', the Aborigines couldn't be found, only women and children were in the camps. Compared with the successful 'outrages' of the Aborigines, the results of European 'outrages' make odd reading. Whereas the Aborigines knew exactly where to find the Europeans and how to harm them, the Europeans it appears, often could not find the Aborigines let alone physically harm them. The only descriptions of confrontations between the two races are ones which occur unexpectedly and in which Annie is involved. But Aborigines are killed. Annie reports the shooting of two Aboriginal children, one of whom died, by Mr Cunningham from a nearby station. The reaction of local Aborigines to the presence of the Native Police is one of fear indicating that their methods are violent. Annie wrote, 'The Lubra Lizzy came in great distress to tell me that some Black Policemen were at St Kitts'.<sup>13</sup> At least once the 'Dunmore' Journals state, 'Went out and frightened Aborigines'.<sup>14</sup> In cases where the Aboriginal men are not met with, other damage is inflicted: three spears taken,<sup>15</sup> several spears taken, others burnt,<sup>16</sup> 'burning of mia-mias, killing of puppies, breaking of spears and bottles; bags, rugs, everything pitched into the fire'. On this last occasion Annie wrote, 'I saved some bags and two spears jagged with glass — which I bore off in triumph. Some good Kangaroo skins too . . .'.<sup>17</sup> Such activities would have been harmful at a period when replacement of these items could have been becoming even more difficult. The Native Police contributed to such destruction, 'they brought some good axes and spears'.<sup>18</sup> The entry in the 'Dunmore' Journals mentioned above reads in full, 'Went out after the Blacks and frightened them — took their weapons . . .'.<sup>19</sup>

These comments are taken from the records of two pastoral stations only. If such activities were occurring throughout the District the effect on the Aboriginal society would have been considerable.

Annie makes very little comment about the Aboriginal way of life or changes to it, but her diaries provide some evidence of the destruction of Aboriginal society that was occurring. Strangely, she never mentions seeing Aboriginal women collecting food. If the basis of the Aboriginal diet was the plant food, especially roots and tubers, collected by women, as stated by Lourandos,<sup>20</sup> one would have expected that Annie in her many outings would have come across women carrying out their daily tasks. She certainly comes across a group of Aboriginal men hunting. One would expect that the chance of coming across women involved in the time-consuming task of obtaining a large quantity of plant foods would have been much greater. Unfortunately the close

<sup>13</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 18 September 1846.

<sup>14</sup> Dunmore Journals: 23 July 1845.

<sup>15</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 16 January 1846.

<sup>16</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 1 March 1846.

<sup>17</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 4 June 1846.

<sup>18</sup> Dunmore Journals: 23 July 1845.

<sup>19</sup> Dunmore Journals: 23 July 1845.

<sup>20</sup> Lourandos 1980: 47, 102.



settlement<sup>21</sup> of the District, and the presence of sheep in large numbers would have drastically lessened the quantity of plant foods available.<sup>22</sup> The squatters' view that Aboriginal use of fire sticks and presence on the run were harmful to their enterprise and hence to be actively discouraged, would have also lessened the possibility of collecting food in the traditional manner. That Annie, who frequently rode on the property and helped with the work, fails to mention women seen collecting food indicates a substantial change in diet and also in the role of women in the crumbling society. Annie's comments also indicate other ways in which Aboriginal society was crumbling. The sick are being abandoned and left unburied. Dawson mentions killing of the aged or infirm as a normal procedure and explains the ways of burial. But the Aborigines are no longer always carrying out their customs. In the case of one poor sick woman, abandoned by all, Annie has her buried. Increasing levels of disease in the population are also obvious from Annie's diaries. The 'large camp across the river' of 1844 has by 1847 become the 'Camp Des Invalides'. 'Poor things!' she writes, 'they really don't remind me scarcely of human beings'.<sup>23</sup> The context implies that the sick people are women.

It is the women that Annie feels for most. That women suffered from venereal disease caught from Europeans is well known. But it is the details of what this means to an individual that brings home the outrage of the disease for those women who caught it. Annie tells the story of an attractive woman who became diseased as a result of sexual relations with shepherds from Mr Ritchie's station 'Aringa'. The disease took the hideous form of the woman losing her palate and she was reduced to speaking in a whisper. Her former lovers at this stage put her into a 'tub of sublimate, used for sheep dressing, after which she fell into a rapid decline'. Annie is appalled at her appearance, 'I never could have imagined it possible to (sic) anybody to exist in such a state. She made Baxter so sick'. When she dies, Annie muses for some time in her diary,

Neglected, unattended, almost starved at times — not a soul to care for her, or mourn her! . . . Man (I mean white man) in this instance, as in many more, has been only the means of making this poor woman's condition worse than it originally was; all she knew of him was to bring her to that fearful state in which she suffered and eventually died.

Annie's commentary also records the ending of the Aboriginal violence with the capture of the leader of the Aborigines, Cocknose, in April 1847. The combination of the efforts of hunting parties, Border Police, Native Police, with other factors meant that the Mount Eels Aborigines had come to accept that nothing they could do would reverse what had happened. For years, despite the closeness of the local Aboriginal group, Annie had let only 'Old Man Jack' come to the house. By early 1846 a black boy 'Tommy' is on hand often doing errands and helping with the station work. With the cessation of hostilities on the part of the Mt Eels tribe, a more friendly attitude is taken to the local Aboriginal people. For example, in April 1849, Baxter and Dr Aplin go down to the cave at the mouth of the river to see Old Man Jack catch eels and

<sup>21</sup> Kiddle 1961: 44.

<sup>22</sup> Lourandos 1980: 105.

<sup>23</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 13 May 1849.

<sup>24</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 26 May 1847.

mullet. Dr Aplin walks down with the Blacks, while Baxter rides. Annie records that seventy nine eels were caught and 'every one of them is killed by the Black biting its head!'; one of the few instances in the diaries where interest in the Aboriginal way of doing things is shown and a comment made on the method.

What the diaries make abundantly clear is the closeness of the lives of black and white in the pioneering years, the inter-connectedness of their lives yet the very great distance between the two groups of people. Annie has Aborigines living close by, meets Aborigines while out horse riding, hunts for Aborigines responsible for outrages, has a trusted Aboriginal in her home, cares for and buries a sick, abandoned Aboriginal woman. Aborigines are a part of her day to day life. The cause of her personal unhappiness is her husband's spending a night with a lubra.<sup>25</sup>

Aborigines are a familiar sight in the Port Fairy district. They take messages to nearby squatters and into Port Fairy. They take letters to be posted. They guide Europeans who have lost their way. Old Man Jack waits at the Rutledge 'Big House' to take Annie's horse and puts it away for her when she visits Port Fairy. The one more civilised member of the Aboriginal hunting party Annie encountered on her property was called Merryjig Charlie after the Port Fairy hotel, the Merryjig. In February 1846, over one hundred Aborigines cross the 'Yambuk' and 'Aringa' runs on their way into Port Fairy for a 'Corrobory'.

The 'Aringa' shepherds are the lovers of the poor lubra who died in the dreadful state described by Annie. Annie's servants warned Annie that one of the 'Yambuk' men, Stevens, was 'partial' to the Black women. One incident, the shooting of two Aboriginal children by a local squatter, highlights both aspects — the close contact yet the great gulf. The death of one Aboriginal child, the wounding of the other is reported to Annie by Old Man Jack. Annie visits the Aboriginal camp. The Aborigines name a well-known local squatter Mr Cunningham as the man who fired the shots. Her reaction? 'It's too bad to shoot the unfortunates like dogs and I'll write to the man or speak to him of it.' But Annie's mischievous sense of humour takes over. She travels into Port Fairy and obtains a summons. Forging a signature, she delivers the summons to Mr Cunningham. She tells the story this way:

I told him if he liked, I would lose it etc — but he said 'No! I'll go thro' with it, it was quite a mistake my shooting the children, but my father said I should be hanged and now I'm for it!' I told him not to think too much of it, that perhaps he would only be tried for Manslaughter and transported! He said, 'I'll go anywhere, I'll do anything they wish, but it must be alone, without a Policeman and handcuffs — if it comes to that, I'll cut my throat'. I told him if he refused to go, that they would send him by water; that I should probably be in Melbourne about the time and would visit him in goal, and if necessary attend to his last requests! He seemed to feel the attention and in a manner half promised me 'Jupiter' and his dog.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Dawbin MSQ181 Item 7: 41. This occurred in New South Wales before the Baxters came to 'Yambuk' but changed their lives tremendously. Annie could never forgive the man 'who could lessen himself and me so tremendously'.

<sup>26</sup> Dawbin MSQ181: 20 September 1846.

The 'joke' continued for several weeks with Mr Cunningham worrying about his situation. At last he decided to 'go down to Belfast to answer the summons'. On his way he stayed overnight at 'Yambuk'. He was much disturbed, he 'sat by the fire rocking himself to and fro in an agony'. Not till the morning, when the man was ready to leave did Annie tell him the truth. It was just a joke. The man became extremely angry and threatened to report Annie, but as she pointed out he could hardly do that without harming himself. It was a good story; such a good one, that Rolf Boldrewood stole it and uses it in *Old Melbourne memories* giving the credit for the joke to a fellow squatter. But as a story it also comments on the European attitude to the Aborigines held at this time. Annie believed it was wrong of Mr Cunningham to shoot the Aboriginal children but her actions reveal that it was not as wrong as killing European children. The crime remains unreported. Despite Annie's sympathy for the Aborigines, the 'other' remain 'the other'.

In the Western District of Victoria in the 1840s two groups of people fought for possession of the land. To study a record of that struggle from one side only limits the information available but is preferable to denying the possibility of knowing anything. Like the anthropologist I would have liked to make available 'the answers that others guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given' about the deepest questions of life.<sup>27</sup> The ethno-historical material examined does not allow this. But it does provide a glimpse of what was happening to a group of people as they tried to guard their sheep and their valley.

<sup>27</sup> Geertz 1973: 30.

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# WHAT'S IN A NAME? AN ETYMOLOGICAL VIEW OF LAND, LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION FROM CENTRAL WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

Tamsin Donaldson

Prehistorians, historians, linguists — people working in each of the disciplines represented at meetings of the Southeast Australia Study Group — are all interested in finding answers of one kind or another to the question 'Who was where when in southeast Australia?' This paper is about Aboriginal views of Aboriginal distribution. In it I draw heavily on what I have learned from a small group of people who still speak their ancestral language, and from their descendants, who do not. I would like to acknowledge their contribution, and hope that this account of their experiences provides a helpful form of purchase on their past.

Much of what documentary evidence there is for relations between people and place since the arrival of Europeans consists of tribal maps, or accounts of 'the dispositions and boundaries of the tribes'<sup>1</sup> which might serve as a basis for such map-making. The map-maker's preoccupation, largely dictated by the medium, is to distribute named groups of people (or the languages spoken by them) mutually exclusively over the entire territory chosen to be mapped — say the State of Victoria, or the State of New South Wales.<sup>2</sup> There are no *a priori* reasons why some of the assumptions useful to makers of tribal maps should coincide exactly with Aboriginal people's perceptions of how they inhabited their own world, or rather worlds. Indeed there are several reasons why they might not. Why, for instance, should people with an orally-transmitted culture necessarily be interested in achieving a taxonomy of territorial or linguistic groups which are mutually exclusive? (They have no need to insert

*Tamsin Donaldson is a linguist with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. She has written a grammar of Ngayampaa as spoken by Wangaaypuwan people (1980). This paper was conceived while compiling a dictionary of the language, as a means of presenting its vocabulary for designating social groups. While writing the paper she was a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, with funding from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. The Map was prepared by Val Lyon, Department of Geography, Australian National University.*

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is A.P. Elkin's, from a letter to W.E.H. Stanner, dated 29 March, 1934. Stanner is asked to visit the 'large camp of natives' at Menindee to get information needed in the preparation of a 'map of the tribes of this State [N.S.W.] . . . You should find some who could give the dispositions and boundaries of the tribes from Ivanhoe to Broken Hill and further'. (MS. 10, W.E.H. Stanner Papers, A.I.A.S.) I am grateful to Diane Barwick for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> The irrelevance of state boundaries to Aboriginal social organisation does not seem to have been a deterrent to this sort of choice. See Note 1.

precise boundary lines on maps.) Or, more importantly for this essay, why should they be interested in achieving a uniform taxonomy, a taxonomy which implies a consensus of mutual recognition and shared nomenclature between all the groups included on the map, however different their languages and cultures, and regardless of the larger maps being likely to include, from the perspective of any one group, other groups living beyond the known world of its practical experience? (They have no need to account for what goes on far away in the same fashion as they do for what constitutes their lived experience.)

The maps we have tend to vary considerably from one another, sometimes in their designation of 'tribes', and sometimes in the allocation of their boundaries. Given that they normally aimed at excluding the effects of post-contact disruption, this alone suggests that there were indeed some failures to come to grips with Aboriginal perceptions. How are we to assess the discrepancies today? More fundamentally, can we still uncover any principles of Aboriginal perception which will point towards there being particular types of systematic misrepresentation reflected on the maps?

Throughout south eastern Australia, people of Aboriginal descent, apart from those trying to 'learn back' an Aboriginal language, perforce from elsewhere in Australia, are now speaking English exclusively, even if the odd word or conversational convention from an ancestral language survives in it. The southernmost exceptions in the 1980s are half a dozen people who call themselves and their language *Ngiyampaa*. They were born around the turn of the century and grew up in their ancestral country between Sandy or Crowl and Willandra creeks, well south of Cobar and just north of Ivanhoe, in western central New South Wales. None of them still live there. These few, formerly with the help of relations of theirs who are no longer alive, have been working with me for some years to record their language. If one asks *Ngiyampaa* speakers, as I often did in the early days of our collaboration, map-makers' questions about 'the dispositions and boundaries of the tribes', one gets an even more bewildering array of answers than is already available from earlier investigators' writings and maps (and their information is confusing enough; hence my questions). If on the other hand one analyses the terms available to the *Ngiyampaa* in their own language for naming speakers of languages and people associated with certain tracts of land, one begins to get insights into how the map-makers achieved the variety of results they did; and into how today's *Ngiyampaa* speakers and their descendants, as a result of their own and their neighbours' histories, have come to use the nomenclature in the kinds of ways they do.

The first part of this paper shows that *Ngiyampaa* speakers (who have no equivalents for either 'tribe' or 'boundary') make use of several etymologically distinct naming systems, and that different contexts call forth names from different systems, according to who, if anyone, is to be contrasted with those being talked about. It then becomes clear how some investigators, in their reduction of the social universe of the *Ngiyampaa* and their neighbours to map form, made certain specific kinds of mistake, for lack of etymological expertise. They did not know enough about the relevant languages, or the relations between them.

The second part of the paper looks at changes in the ways in which people of *Ngiyampaa* descent perceive their social world — changes which have taken place as a result of their physical displacement from their ancestral country and along with their changeover from speaking *Ngiyampaa* to speaking English.

NGIYAMPAA<sup>3</sup> AND NGURRAMPAA: 'LANGUAGE', 'COUNTRY' AND  
NAMES FOR PEOPLE

Speakers of *ngiyampaa*, if asked to explain the name, say it means 'the language' or 'the lingo'. They call the area they come from their *ngurrampaa*, which they translate as 'country'. Both words consist of a root followed by the same suffix *-paa*, and other English equivalents can be found to draw attention to this structure. It is hard to translate *-paa* consistently in all contexts since the notion it represents is rather more abstract than 'time' or 'place' but subsumes both — let us try 'world'. Examples are *yurrumpaa*, with *-paa* attached to the word for rain, which is equivalent to 'rain-world' or 'rainy weather'; and *tharriyalpaa*, with *-paa* attached to *tharriyal* 'heat', the 'world of heat' usually translated as 'summer-time' or 'summer'. In the word for 'country', *-paa* is attached to *ngurra*, which means, as in so many other Australian languages, 'camp'. It is also used as an equivalent for 'home' in the affective sense ('house' is *kunytyi*) and for 'bed'. So *ngurrampaa* is literally 'camp-world', 'camp-place' or 'home-land'. The *ngurrampaa* of surviving *ngiyampaa* speakers is the world in which they once used to 'camp about'. It is represented in Figure 1 by the shaded area, which encompasses every place for which someone has been able to tell me a *ngiyampaa* name, names learnt in the course of 'camping about', many of them also 'sung out' by participants in the last *purrrpa* or 'school for making men' in 1914, as they leapt forward announcing themselves in the preparatory gatherings. In the language name, *-paa* is attached to *ngiya*, homophonous with the root of the verb 'speak, talk, say', a nominal which is translated according to context as 'talk, saying(s), word, law': *mayingku ngiya*, '(Aboriginal) people's *ngiya*', for instance, is very often translatable as 'the blacks' law', and *kuuyngku ngiya*, 'white men's *ngiya*' as 'the whites' talk' or simply 'the whites', when used in reference to English, or as 'the whites' sayings' when the reference is to non-Aboriginal lore and belief, say about predicting the weather. The best literal equivalent for *ngiyampaa* might be 'talk-world', or 'world of the word'.

So far, what we have is a picture of the *ngiyampaa* inhabiting their own 'camp-world' and perceiving it in terms of the 'word-world' which makes them who they are. Beyond their camp-world, and sometimes camping within it, were people seen as other people, and classified according to two kinds of difference — they either had different territorial associations or they spoke differently. These taxonomies included the *ngiyampaa* themselves, distinguishing both all the 'other' people and various *ngiyampaa* from one another by means of the same type of criterion.

The classification according to territorial associations involves adding a suffix *-kiyalu* to a word indicating some feature of the terrain with which the group is associated. On present-day evidence, the type of association specified by *-kiyalu* is hard to define. In addition to being used to form names in this way, it is attached

<sup>3</sup> In this section, names are in italics — without initial capitals. This is to draw attention to their being analysable words in the language from which they come; the same suffixes which are used to derive them are also used, with varying productivity, to create other words which do not correspond to English proper names. It will be noticed that a nasal sound (*m*, *nh*, *ny* or *ng*) precedes suffixes added to some roots, e.g. *ngiya-m-paa*. For a detailed explanation see Donaldson (1980:31-35). *ngiyampaa* words are spelt according to the practical orthography adopted in Johnson et al. 1982.

to *ngurra* 'camp' to make a term which can be used for referring to women. Women were the '*ngurrangkiyalu*, the camp pigeons, the home ducks' as one person put it to me, by contrast to the men, in that if women wanted to talk about something, they'd visit from camp to camp, while men would go to their *ngulupal*, a 'big sort of shed'.<sup>4</sup> During the removal of the young boys who were to be made men at the *purrrpa*, the women, referred to in this context too as *ngurrangkiyalu*, were covered up with leaves and forbidden to peep on pain of death. At the same time, the *puupuu*, the beings whom they understood to be carrying off the boys, would punish them for any past transgressions against male prerogatives by flattening their camps and scattering their possessions. Today, *ngurrangkiyalu* is often translated as 'housewife'.<sup>5</sup> The only other word not referring to some feature of a terrain to which I have heard *-kiyalu* attached spontaneously is *purrrpa*, the 'school for making men' itself. *purrrpangkiyalu* are initiated men who 'have been through the rules', or, to give the *ngiyampaa* way of expressing it in literal translation, men who have been 'tied into the *purrrpa*'.

The *ngiyampaa* whose *ngurrampaa* is shown on the Map (Figure 1) are of two kinds according to the classificatory system involving the suffix *-kiyalu*. Both 'woodlanders', those associated with the eastern part — including all today's *ngiyampaa* speakers — are *pilaarrkiyalu* or belar people (belar\* trees being a conspicuous element in the landscape) while those associated with the western part, who used to camp mainly around Marfield station in the northern west of the *ngurrampaa*, were known as *nhiilyikiyalu* or 'nilyah tree\* people'.<sup>6</sup> People associated with the stony country to the north of the *ngurrampaa* were called *karulkiyalu*, *karul* being the *ngiyampaa* word for 'rock' or 'stone'.

The associations of all three of the groups mentioned so far, of the two woodlander groups and of the *karulkiyalu*, are with terrain which lacks permanent watercourses. The *ngiyampaa* speakers I have worked with often refer to all those who camped in the *ngurrampaa*, whether belar people or nilyah people, as 'drylanders' by comparison with the two kinds of 'river people' whose descendants still live to the east and the west of their *ngurrampaa*. The *ngiyampaa* word is *kalinytyalapangkiyalu* — *kali* means 'water', also used for 'river'; and *-thalapaa*, or *-tyalapaa* when the preceding vowel is *i*, is the privative suffix meaning 'without' — literally 'waterless people'. Doubtless the *karulkiyalu* would also have been so described in the context of such a comparison, but today's *ngiyampaa* speakers know very little about their erstwhile northern neighbours, except for a story about their green body paint leading to the discovery of copper at Cobar. This discovery probably contributed as much as

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy and Donaldson 1982:7.

<sup>5</sup> Hampton and Kennedy 1980:308-9.

<sup>6</sup> While the whole shaded area of the Map (Figure 1) is *ngiyampaangu ngurrampaa*, the 'camp-world of *ngiyampaa* speakers' within living memory, it is subdividable into an eastern *pilaarrkiyalungku ngurrampaa*, the 'camp-world of the belar people' and a western *nhiilyikiyalungku ngurrampaa*, the 'camp-world of the nilyah tree people'.

\* The belar tree is *Casuarina cristata*. 'Nilyah', spelt 'nelia' in many reference books, is the local English name for *Acacia loderi*, and presumably comes from its *Ngiyampaa* name *nhiilyi*. Other *Acacia* species are sometimes called 'nelia' in English, but not by people who also speak *Ngiyampaa*.

anything to cause their disappearance from the area.<sup>7</sup>

The two groups of 'river people' are the *kaliyarrkiyalu*, people associated with *kaliyarr*, the Lachlan River (sometimes pronounced *kaliyarra*); and the *paawankay*, the very different and traditionally hostile people of *paawan*, the Darling River.<sup>8</sup> In the latter term, it will be noticed that the suffix to the name for the Darling River is no longer *-kiyalu* but *-kay* which appears to have a similar meaning, 'belonging to'. (*paawankiyalu* is perfectly intelligible as a synonym; *paawankay* is simply more institutionalised, conventionally preferred). The only other *ngiyampaa* word to which I have heard *-kay* attached is *kurraarr* 'far away'. *kurraarrkay*, like *kurraarrkiyalu*, is a term used for referring to people who come from far away, people from *kurraarrpaa*, the world beyond the known, precisely identified worlds of particular peoples, as the following anecdote reveals. For a traditionally-minded *ngiyampaa* person, willy-willies are one of the special means by which *wirringan* ('doctors' or 'clever' people) travel. Once on a rabbiting expedition, someone disturbed in the bush by a willy willy passing very close to her rushed to rejoin the rest of us, saying she was frightened that a *wirringan* was after her. I asked who. '*kurraarrkay*, might be from Queensland' was her reply. In any case 'belonging to the Darling River' is the literal meaning of the *paawankay*'s own name for themselves, and for their language too. They are *paakantji*, *paaka* being what they call the Darling River, and *-ntji* their suffix meaning 'belonging to'. Like *-kiyalu* among the *ngiyampaa*, *-ntji* also forms a number of *paakantji* terms for identifying groups associated with contrasting territories — *paarruntji* the 'Paroo River people' further north, and *parrintji*, '*parri* or scrub country people' to the south east.<sup>9</sup>

It would appear that the *paakantji* (and for that matter the *paarruntji* and *parrintji* too) regarded differences in territorial association labelled according to this principle as automatically linked with speech differences. These varieties of speech were referred to eponymously — so that the *paarruntji* were said to speak *paarruntji* just as the *paakantji* spoke *paakantji*, and so on. How do *ngiyampaa* speakers perceive linguistic differences and institutionalise them in their terminology for distinguishing different kinds of people?

*paakantji*, *paarruntji* and *parrintji* were linguistically very similar (and equally unlike *ngiyampaa*). Speakers of all three varieties used the same set of names to refer to themselves and each other by, and the suffix *-ntji* had the same form and meaning in each variety. When *ngiyampaa* speakers distinguish between themselves and other groups perceived as speaking differently despite overall similarities in their speech, they have available a terminology based on different principles. In this terminology, each name, which can refer either to the way of speaking itself, or to members of the group identified by their use of it, demonstrates a single linguistic difference which has been selected as criterial. This criterial difference is the word which the group concerned uses for 'no' (and to form negative sentences, derive a verb meaning

<sup>7</sup> Harris forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> Though beyond *paawankay* territory, the Barwon River is also *paawan*, being, according to *ngiyampaa* speakers, the same river. For *ngiyampaa* attitudes to the *paawankay*, see Kennedy and Donaldson 1983:17.

<sup>9</sup> Hercus 1982:96-7. My spellings follow the practical orthography used in Jones et al. 1981. See also Note 24.



'deny' etc.). The name for each variety consists of the particular word for 'no' used by the group, followed by its own form of the comitative suffix meaning 'having' or 'with', a suffix which occurred with approximately the same range of functions in all of them (as far as it is still possible to tell). The important thing to realise about this nomenclature, important in that it is unexpected from the point of view of people familiar with naming systems where a given language variety has one name and one name only, is that when *ngiyampaa* speakers consider themselves in terms of this taxonomy, they no longer name themselves *ngiyampaa*, but *wangaaypuwan*. *wangaay* is their word for 'no' and *-puwan* is their form of the comitative suffix. Other 'no-having' groups were once immediate neighbours of the *wangaaypuwan*. There were the *wayilwan*, who said *wayil* for 'no' and used *-wan* for 'having' after an *l* sound, instead of *puwan* (whereas *wangaaypuwan* use *-puwan* in all circumstances). And there were the *wirraathurray*, whose word for 'no' is remembered by the *wangaaypuwan* as *wirray* or *wirraay*, and whose comitative was *-thurray*, or *-tyurray* after the vowel *i*.<sup>10</sup> When further characterising other 'no-having' groups' peculiar ways of speech, *wangaaypuwan* typically picked on certain other synonyms besides their words for 'no', synonyms which are clearly cognate to a linguist but vary partially in their pronunciation from *wangaaypuwan* speakers'. The only *wayilwan* speakers whom today's *wangaaypuwan* recall were people who came to live in their *ngurrampaa* after the creation of a government-run Aboriginal Station at Carowra Tank in 1926. They are remembered as having said *kumali* for 'hit', and *wala* for 'head' (whereas *wangaaypuwan* say *pumali* and *pala* respectively). The feature of *wirraathurray* speech which sticks most in *wangaaypuwan* speakers' minds is the occurrence of an *ng* sound at the end of many words in other respects identical to their own — for instance 'They'd say *palang*' (for 'head'). *wangaaypuwan* people might also discuss the relative 'lightness' or 'heaviness' of the different varieties. It is unclear with what particular properties of the varieties (if any) such judgements were originally associated. The surviving evidence for both *wayilwan* and *wirraathurray* pronunciation, which includes Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies archive tapes of several speakers and isolated words still remembered by people of both descents, is not particularly suggestive. Nor do I know whether *wayilwan* and *wirraathurray* people also ranked the different varieties in the same way. One of today's *wangaaypuwan* speakers who regards her own variety as 'lighter in the tongue' than the others supposes that anyone would consider 'their own' lighter in the tongue than any other language, taking the phrase to mean 'easier to pronounce'.

When it comes to distinguishing the way in which the *paawankaay*, the Darling River people, speak, the *ngiyampaa/wangaaypuwan* speakers have no name for their language which characterises it by the word they use for 'no'. They simply call the

<sup>10</sup> Some speakers of *wirraathurray* appear to have allowed the final *y* of their word for 'no' to condition a *-tyurray* pronunciation of the suffix, instead of dropping the *y* as did those known to today's *wangaaypuwan*. It is in an anglicised version of this pronunciation [wirædzəri] that the name is most widely used today. The anglicisation 'Wiradjuri' is perhaps the commonest spelling now, probably as a result of its use by Tindale (1974). (The long *aa* of *wirraathurray* does not prove that *wirraay* and not *wirray* was the form for 'no' used by *wangaaypuwan* speakers' acquaintances; it may result from a lengthening of short *a* in the presence of the suffix.)

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language of the *paawankay* *paawankay* too, thus calquing the *paakantji*'s own way of referring to their language as well as to themselves as 'belonging to the Darling River'. Used in this way, *paawankay* is translated into English as 'Darling talk'. Nor do the *ngiyampaa* characterise 'Darling talk' in terms of synonyms resembling words in their own language, since the two languages are so very different. Such synonyms are few and far between. Instead they mention homonyms with different meanings. Regardless of whether they have ever learnt any of the language of the *paawankay* (which they would never have been able to understand simply on the basis of knowledge of their own language) they are all familiar with at least one word which sounds similar in both, but, because of having different meanings in each, could, at least theoretically, give rise to risible misunderstandings between *paawankay* and themselves. The most frequently cited is *kali*. 'They call a dog *kali*!'<sup>11</sup> (*kali*, it will be remembered from the word for 'drylander', means 'water' in *ngiyampaa*.)

In the case of the *paawankay*, linguistically and culturally very different from themselves, the *ngiyampaa* name for them remains the same, as we have just seen, whether the focus is on their language or on their territorial associations. Name-formation is based not on *ngiyampaa* onomastic principles but on the *paakantji*'s own. How did the two *ngiyampaa* taxonomies — the sets of people designated according to their association with land by terms formed with *-kiyalu* and the sets designated by speech variety according to their words for 'no' — relate to one another? This is set out in Table 1:

TABLE 1  
Names by Territorial Association Linked to 'no-having' Names

People named by territorial association	English Equivalent	People named by word for 'no-having' in their language
<i>pilaarrkiyalu</i>	belar people	<i>wangaaypuwan</i>
<i>nhiilyikiyalu</i>	nilyah tree people	<i>wangaaypuwan</i>
<i>karulkiyalu</i>	stone people	<i>wangaaypuwan</i>
<i>kaliyarrkiyalu</i>	Lachlan river people	<i>wirraathurray</i>

Some comment is needed on these correspondences. Firstly, a distinction needs to be drawn between language ownership and simply being able to use a language. Belar people regularly describe the nilyah tree people as having spoken 'Darling talk as well as their own' — they lived in close enough contact with the *paawankay* to be bilingual, unlike the belar people, few of whom today know more than a few words of it. Belar people however do not seem to have *spoken* their riverine neighbours' talk, *wirraathurray*, in addition to 'their own' though members of these two groups also spent time in each other's countries. They claim rather that they *understood* it, with

<sup>11</sup> Actually *karli*, with a retroflex lateral *rl*. Lacking this sound in their own language, *ngiyampaa* speakers hear it as an apical-alveolar *l*.

remarks like 'They can't fool me with that *wirraathurray*'.<sup>12</sup> Close association, with members of each group speaking 'their own', could lead easily to mutual comprehension. Secondly, the Table represents what a few *belar* people have remembered from their childhoods at the beginning of the century. As I said earlier, their knowledge of their one-time neighbours to the north is slight. They have not been consistent in their judgements as to how far north 'stone country' extended or as to whether the *wayilwan* they knew were also 'stone people' or not. My basis for saying that at least some (and therefore probably all) of them were *wangaaypuwan* is a manuscript word-list of sixty 'Wongiwoibon' words collected from 'Old Nanny', reputed to be the last speaker of the local language at Cobar. She died around 1914.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, a point of a quite different kind. The 'no-having' varieties *wangaaypuwan*, *wayilwan* and *wirraathurray* were similar enough to have a great deal of shared vocabulary. Among the words they shared were *ngurrampaa* for 'camp-world' or 'country' (*ngurrampaang* in *wirraathurray*) and also (more confusingly for the map-makers) *ngiyampaa* for 'word-world', 'the language'. Not only *wangaaypuwan* speakers, but *wayilwan* speakers also, referred to their language and to themselves, except when distinguishing themselves from speakers of other 'no-having' varieties, as *ngiyampaa*. (It would appear that *wirraathurray* speakers also had the word *ngiyampaang* at their disposal, though the evidence is less conclusive.)<sup>14</sup> The name 'Ngiyampaa', by which I first introduced the people whose social nomenclature I have been describing, and by which they introduced themselves, a decade ago, to me, does not serve to single them out from everyone else in their social universe from whom they would see themselves as distinct on either territorial or linguistic grounds.

I have outlined the various ways in which those *ngiyampaa* who are also *wangaaypuwan* and *pilaarrkiyalu* name themselves and others, and described also how these 'others' in turn made use of the same names and sometimes of different ones. It will, I hope, be clear from this account that map-makers and other non-Aboriginal investigators who have asked Aboriginal people in the central west of New South Wales such questions as 'What is your language?' 'Where is it spoken?' 'What is your tribe?' 'Where is its country?' could get a variety of answers even from the same person, depending on the way that person assessed the context and purpose of the question. In addition, certain questions such as 'Where is the country of the *ngiyampaa*?' or 'What is so-and-so's language?' might also meet with different answers from different people, depending on the identity of the person asked.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> In *ngiyampaa* speaker's English, this is equivalent to the passive 'I can't be fooled . . .'. No one actually speaks *wirraathurray* in their presence any more. *ngiyampaa* was the *lingua franca* at Carowra in *ngiyampaa* country (Table 2). But it is no longer possible to find out in exactly what circumstances people who knew other forms of language used them.

<sup>13</sup> Mathews and Mathews c.1914. One *pilaarrkiyalu* woman married a man from Cobar, the late Bill Williams. Mrs Williams says that he was *wangaaypuwan*; and that he also said *kumali* for *pumali* (also associated with *wayilwan* speech) but not *wala* for *pala*.

<sup>14</sup> Günther 1892:92.

<sup>15</sup> It is clear from the Berndts' report on their visit to Menindee (Berndt and Berndt 1943) and from related correspondence in the Elkin Papers that they commonly found the same

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Can we attribute the enormous variation in different investigators' assessments of 'the dispositions and boundaries of the tribes' in western New South Wales to any systematic failures to appreciate the logic behind the information they gathered? The answer is a straightforward 'yes'.

There are at least three kinds of systematic misinterpretation, each hingeing on different preconceptions about the use of the names which identify people in terms of language, their relation to each other and to other names.

The most predictable and persistent mistake was to assume that the term *ngiyampaa* was equipollent with the 'no-having' terms, and therefore used in the same way to distinguish a separate variety of language and its speakers. This led to attempts to map three separate tribal territories, one each for the *ngiyampaa*, *wangaaypuwan* and *wayilwan*. Norman Tindale's map, a summarising of his sources which marks 'Ngemba', 'Wongaibon' and 'Weilwan' countries, reflects this tradition.<sup>16</sup> If there ever were any group calling itself *ngiyampaa* which did not have either *wangaay* or *wayil* for 'no', one would expect it too to have an alternative 'no-having' name. There is no evidence for any such group. Had those who made this kind of mistake understood the etymology of the 'no-having' names and the usage of the term *ngiyampaa*, one would expect, instead of three territories, either two (*wangaaypuwan* and *wayilwan*), or else one, encompassing all the people who referred to their own language as *ngiyampaa*, without reference to their different words for 'no'.

The second type of mistake was made by people who understood the etymology of the 'no-having' names but not the way in which the term *ngiyampaa* was used. It was to assume, not that *ngiyampaa* was an equipollent term with respect to the 'no-having' ones, but rather that it was a subordinate one in an onomastic hierarchy where groups distinguished by their terms for 'no' were sub-divided into groups with local associations. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown produced a tribal map showing two rather than three territories, 'Wongaibon' and 'Weilwan',<sup>17</sup> and offered the suggestion that 'the Njambar' were a 'local division of the Weilwan'.<sup>18</sup>

The third type of misinterpretation is best illustrated in terms of the set of 'no-having' names. It stems from an extremely commonly felt need on the part of non-Aboriginal analysts of Aboriginal matters to create superordinate cover terms where Aboriginal taxonomies do not have them. This is typically achieved by selecting one term from a set of (from the Aboriginal point of view) equipollent terms and giving it generic status. R.M.W. Dixon describes how linguists have tended to fairly arbitrarily select the name of one of a group of closely-related speech varieties distinguished by Aborigines and use it as a cover term for reference to the grammatical system common to them all — 'a linguistic abstraction, and one which is not necessarily regarded as

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individual being identified in different ways, the terms chosen varying both from person to person and occasion to occasion. See for instance p.3 of the report, where it is noted that 'a Wongaibon would often identify himself as a 'Nii:amba and *vice versa*'.

<sup>16</sup> Accompanying Tindale 1974.

<sup>17</sup> Radcliffe-Brown 1918:226.

<sup>18</sup> Radcliffe-Brown 1923:433.

particularly felicitous by speakers of the language [concerned]'.<sup>19</sup> An excellent example of the same sort of procedure being applied to the 'no-having' terminology for naming language varieties and their speakers occurs in A.L.P. Cameron's 'Notes on some tribes of New South Wales'.<sup>20</sup>

The linguist's need for a cover term arises from the desire to make a hierarchical distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. If the differences between a number of speech varieties to which Aboriginal people give different names are small scale and systematic enough for all the variation to be adequately described within the context of a single general description, then the named varieties are regarded as 'dialects' of a single 'language' — for which a name then has to be found. Cameron feels the need to make a similar hierarchical distinction between 'tribe' and 'nation', a distinction which he explains as follows:

When the word ['tribe'] is used in this paper it refers to a whole community of people, whose language, laws, institutions, ceremonies, and customs are the same, and who call themselves by a certain name. The word "nation" will be applied to a group of kindred tribes, who are on friendly terms, and whose language and laws are somewhat but not altogether similar.

From the point of view of linguists like those referred to by Dixon, the tribes within one of Cameron's 'nations' might well be described as speaking dialects of a single language. Though Cameron's 'nation' consists of a *group* of tribes, and as such is less of an abstraction than the linguist's 'single language', the same problem arises of finding a name to call it by. Cameron adopts the same solution — taking one of the 'no-having' terms — by his own definition all 'tribal' names — and using it as a cover term to name a 'nation'. When he 'enumerate[s] the nations and tribes', he writes *apropos* of the *wangaaypuwan*: 'It seems to me probable that the Wonghi or Wonghibon tribe . . . was in fact a branch of the Wiradjeri [*wirraathurray*] nation'.<sup>21</sup>

Cameron goes on to quote a conversation with a Wathi-wathi man to support the idea:

In speaking of a Wonghi black to one of the Wathi-wathi tribe, who had referred to him as a Wiradjeri — I said, "He is not Wiradjeri, he is Wonghi", and my friend replied, "It is all the same, only they talk a little different; Wiradjeri blackfellows say 'Wira' for No! and Wonghi black fellows say 'wonghi', but they are all friends".

All friends, yes, but all Wiradjeri? The Aborigine's response to Cameron's challenge makes nonsense of the latter's usage of the name as a cover term. The similarity between the *wirraathurray* and the *wangaaypuwan* which Cameron conceptualises

<sup>19</sup> Dixon 1980:43.

<sup>20</sup> Cameron 1885:345. All quotations from Cameron are from this and the following page. Tindale draws attention to a number of such 'nations' of 'dubious origins' (1974:156).

<sup>21</sup> For background to the spelling 'Wiradjeri' (one of over sixty used in the literature!) see Note 10. The selection of this and particular other names as cover terms by researchers is usually not so much arbitrary as governed by the course of contact history (including of course the contacts of the researchers) — in other words, by who learnt what from whom first, and where. 'Wiradjeri' people were encountered before *wayilwan* or *wangaaypuwan*, living as they did over an extensive area much closer to Sydney. It is a sign of their greater prominence in non-Aboriginal experience generally that it was their words rather than cognates from the more westerly varieties that passed into Australian English (Donaldson 1985).

as shared nationhood is recognised — 'It is all the same . . .', but the idea is not expressed by giving a single name to all those who are 'friends', let alone one of the names used to distinguish between them. The sense of shared sameness is not lexicalised, but made explicit by all the groups who are 'friends' sharing a single derivational mechanism in the formation of their names, adding the suffix '-having' to the word for 'no'. The Wathi-wathi man whom Cameron quotes was not a Lachlan but a Murray River man. The language by which he is identified is in turn formed according to a different etymological principle, one also used in the formation of the names of *his* neighbours' languages, this time reduplication of the word for 'no'. *wadi* means 'no' in *wadiwadi* (Wathi-wathi), so does *madi* in *madimadi*, *wemba* in *wembawemba* and so on. Cameron classifies the Wathi-wathi and Muthi-muthi (*madimadi*) along with the Ithi-ithi (*yidayida*) as tribes belonging to another 'considerable nation' 'adjoining the Wiradjeri' to the south.<sup>22</sup> In the case of this 'nation' he says that he has 'not yet succeeded in finding any common distinguishing name' by which to call it. Once again, the sense of shared sameness (and differentness from the peoples to the north) is not given lexical acknowledgement in a single superordinate name, but is expressed in the sharing of a single derivational process for forming names. While noting this sub-lexical type of Aboriginal identification of similarity between groups, it is important also to realise that it does not lead either to categories of groups which correspond exactly to Cameron's 'nations' or to members for them which correspond exactly to his constituent 'tribes'. For instance, not all the people with 'no-no' languages fall into Cameron's (unnamed) 'considerable nation'. And there were also several more groups to the north and east of the *wirraathurray*, *wangaaypuwan* and *wayilwan* whose languages were named on the same 'no-having' principle. Cameron selects the name for one of these (with *kamil* for 'no') as the superordinate cover term for his 'Kamilaroi nation'. Nor do sets of speech varieties named according to the same etymological principles necessarily coincide with sets of dialects which can conveniently be described as belonging to a single language. From a linguistic point of view, though the 'no-having' languages are all much more closely related to one another than to any named according to other principles, it would have been an extremely complex task, judging from the available evidence about what they were like<sup>23</sup> to write a combined grammar of all of them. On the other hand, the *paakantji* 'belonging to the Darling River' had many other neighbours speaking closely-related dialects besides those already mentioned as having names constructed on the same pattern, the *paarruntji* 'belonging to the Paroo River' and the *parrintji* 'belonging to the scrub country'.<sup>24</sup>

If one approaches the literature for southeast Australia, especially the discussion of tribes and boundaries and the maps, with an awareness of the possibility that one or more of these three types of departure from Aboriginal perceptions and naming practice may have influenced authors' attempts to organise the information available

<sup>22</sup> Hercus 1969:454. The spellings are those to be used in a revised version (Hercus forthcoming). The italics for the language names (on Hercus' Map 2) are mine.

<sup>23</sup> Summarised in Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980.

<sup>24</sup> For other *paakantji* neighbours with differently constructed names, see Hercus 1982:7-13.

to them, it becomes much easier to make sense of inconsistencies in their results. Names from different types of naming systems may have been thought to belong to the same set; and names, whether from different systems or the same one, may have been improperly related in a hierarchical fashion, a given name being mistakenly made subordinate or superordinate with respect to some other or others.

If groups as Aboriginally-defined can be successfully identified, there are still likely to be problems in gaining a detailed understanding of how they were associated with certain stretches of territory. In concluding this section, it is worth mentioning a different kind of clue to Aboriginal distribution – the etymology not of group names, but of place names. Today's *wangaaypuwan* speakers of *ngiyampaa* define their *ngurrampaa* or 'camp-world' as the area where they know place names. Since the 'having' or 'with' suffixes of the 'no-having' languages were also commonly used in the formation of place names, including many which have been taken into English, we can at least tell where speakers of *wirraathurray* have been responsible for certain place names, and where speakers of one or the other kind of *ngiyampaa* have – whether of the *wangaaypuwan* or *wayilwan* variety cannot normally be deduced since the most frequent form of the suffix in *wayilwan* is also *-puwan*.<sup>25</sup> 'Quambone' for instance can be traced to *kuwaympuwan*, meaning 'blood-having' in both. Quambone has a more southerly counterpart ending in what is phonetically a common Anglicisation of the *wirraathurray* equivalent of the suffix. Possibly also once called 'blood-having' (*kuwanytyurray*), it is now the site of a wheat silo with a name more suited to the kind of puzzle I have been trying to unravel – 'Quandary'.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For a list of place names which, 'with varying degrees of certainty' show the *-thurray/-tyurray* suffix, see Nash 1974.

<sup>26</sup> Annette Hamilton (1980) is concerned, as I have been in this section, with disparities between various writers' accounts of 'the allocation of people to land' (p.85), (in her case in the Western Desert where linguistic differences are institutionalised under 'go-having' rather than 'no-having' names). She also attempts to explain the disparities through an appeal to 'the perspectives of the Aborigines themselves' (p.90). But her particular task leads her to focus not on a discussion of systems for naming groups, nor on associations between named groups and particular stretches of territory, but on a quite different mechanism for connecting people to land – patrilineal descent – in a part of Aboriginal Australia in which she sees change 'from a place-based to a father-based system of definition of rights' (p.106).

For Quandary, see Map. The basis of my guess at its former meaning was a *wirraathurray* cognate for *ngiyampaa* *kuway* 'blood', spelt *guán* by Günther (1892:87), and the knowledge that place names in both languages often refer to body products. A recent visit to the area cast doubt on this part of my etymology, revealing a tradition, recorded by a local historian, that 'Quondary [as it was first spelt] . . . is the aboriginal word for "place of the possum"'. It formerly named the spot, three miles away on Mirrool Creek, where the first buildings in the district were erected, before 1850 (Webster 1956:45). The 'having' suffixes of place names are often rendered into English as 'place of'. But the widely remembered *wirraathurray* word for 'possum' is *wilay*. I have not found evidence of any other word for 'possum' which might be spelt *quon* by an English speaker, unless it is present in the first part of Günther's *gummil* 'thread from possum wool' (1892:88).

NGIYAMPAANHThALAPAA, NGURRAMPAANHThALAPAA: *SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION 'WITHOUT LANGUAGE', 'WITHOUT COUNTRY'*

In this section I want to set the search for an accurate reconstruction of past Aboriginal views of Aboriginal distribution in its contemporary social context. I have explained some of the kinds of difficulties non-Aboriginal observers have had in coming to grips with Aboriginal social nomenclature, and have suggested one potentially helpful approach to the quandary posed by their often mutually inconsistent accounts of who was once where – examining the etymology of the names. As late as the 1970s it was still possible not only to discuss Ngiyampaa<sup>27</sup> nomenclature with speakers of the language, but also to hear them use it with each other in accordance with their childhood memories of a now vanished social world. Further south and east even the oldest Aboriginal people have lost touch with the equivalent parts of their ancestral pasts, as have many of the descendants of the oldest Ngiyampaa, so that they are no longer able to straighten out the historical record from their own experience. But everyone's sense of who is who in their lives today derives ultimately from those earlier social views, however much of the vernacular nomenclatures of their rationales may have been adaptively forgotten by successive generations who have reshaped their means of identification in response to later events.

There are many differences of detail between the experiences of Aboriginal people in western New South Wales within living memory and those of earlier generations south of the Murray. But in both areas colonisation resulted in constant pressure on those associations between people and place and between people and language which had formerly been basic to the distinction and naming of social groups. Under such pressure, what features of the old naming systems can usefully survive? What new naming strategies do people adopt for organising their altered social universes? The following sketch of how the people of Ngiyampaa descent have responded is offered in particular to those who cannot easily appreciate their own forebears' versatility precisely because they were versatile; to the people who have to rely for knowledge of their vernacular heritage on occasional documents, often with failings of the kind discussed in the previous section. Their current historical view of themselves, and others' of them, has to depend to some extent on speculation. But perhaps the speculative element can be refined by looking at one example of how adaptive changes happen from generation to generation.

Today's oldest Ngiyampaa, born at the turn of the century, know what it was like to grow up in their own country, named with names in their own language. But control over it had long since passed into the hands of station owners; and their neighbours' territories, which were, for one reason or another, more highly valued by

<sup>27</sup> In this section I revert to spelling those names for languages and their speakers which are now used by people speaking English according to English spelling conventions, with initial capitals (c.f. Note 3). Like Peter Read (this volume) I shall also use the now popular spelling Wiradjuri (rather than Wirraathurray), which represents the pronunciation used when English is spoken (see Note 10). 'Ngiyampaa', unless otherwise indicated, always refers to the language with *wanguay* for 'no' belonging to the people from the shaded area on the Map, or else to the people themselves. *Ngiyampaa* is used where the reference is specifically to the language.



the invaders, already had sizeable towns on them.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless some of the patterns of intergroup relations associated with ceremonial life in the area were maintained, at least until the last *purra* or 'school for making men' was held in Ngiyampaa country in 1914. The Ngiyampaa were later to be physically removed from their *ngurrampaa*, in circumstances which would lead to the increasing and eventually exclusive use of English amongst their descendants.

Table 2  
Ngiyampaa Institutionalisation and the Transition to English

Date	Where the Ngiyampaa lived	In whose country (by language)	Use of Ngiyampaa	Use of English
1900	Their <i>ngurrampaa</i> , 'camping about' on pastoral stations	Ngiyampaa	First and main language	With pastoralists (mainly by men)
1926	Carowra Tank, isolated 'mission'	Ngiyampaa	<i>Lingua franca</i> between Aborigines (mainly Ngiyampaa)	And with 'mission' management
1933	Menindee, 'mission' town	Paakantji	Domestically among Ngiyampaa	And <i>lingua franca</i> between Ngiyampaa and Paakantji and in town
1949	Murrin Bridge, outside town (Lake Cargelligo)	Wiradjuri	Privately among oldest Ngiyampaa	Main or first language of all (Ngiyampaa, Paakantji and Wiradjuri descent) And at town school

Table 2 shows how three successive governmental moves institutionalised the Ngiyampaa on 'Aboriginal stations' or, as the people themselves called them, 'missions', at first within their own country and then in other people's.<sup>29</sup> At the same time it indicates the way in which these moves promoted the changeover from speaking *Ngiyampaa* to speaking English. The Map (Figure 1) shows where these institutions were, and also towns in or near which Ngiyampaa people unwilling or unable to live in them have resettled themselves at various stages. Towns marked with black dots show where people with some claim to the language were living at the beginning of the 1980s. Others have gone off the map, especially to Sydney, or were taken away as children and have not returned. The Map shows a fourth move as well, in the 1970s, of people from Murrin Bridge to Wagga Wagga, where they were offered Housing

<sup>28</sup> The consequent paucity of contact between the Ngiyampaa and their northern neighbours has been mentioned above.

<sup>29</sup> For an account of 'the dispersal policy in New South Wales' see Read 1983. For its effects in Wiradjuri country see Read (this volume). Ngiyampaa people were less immediately distressed by the dispersing effects of government policy than by being transported to live at close quarters with people of other descents (Kennedy and Donaldson 1983:17).

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

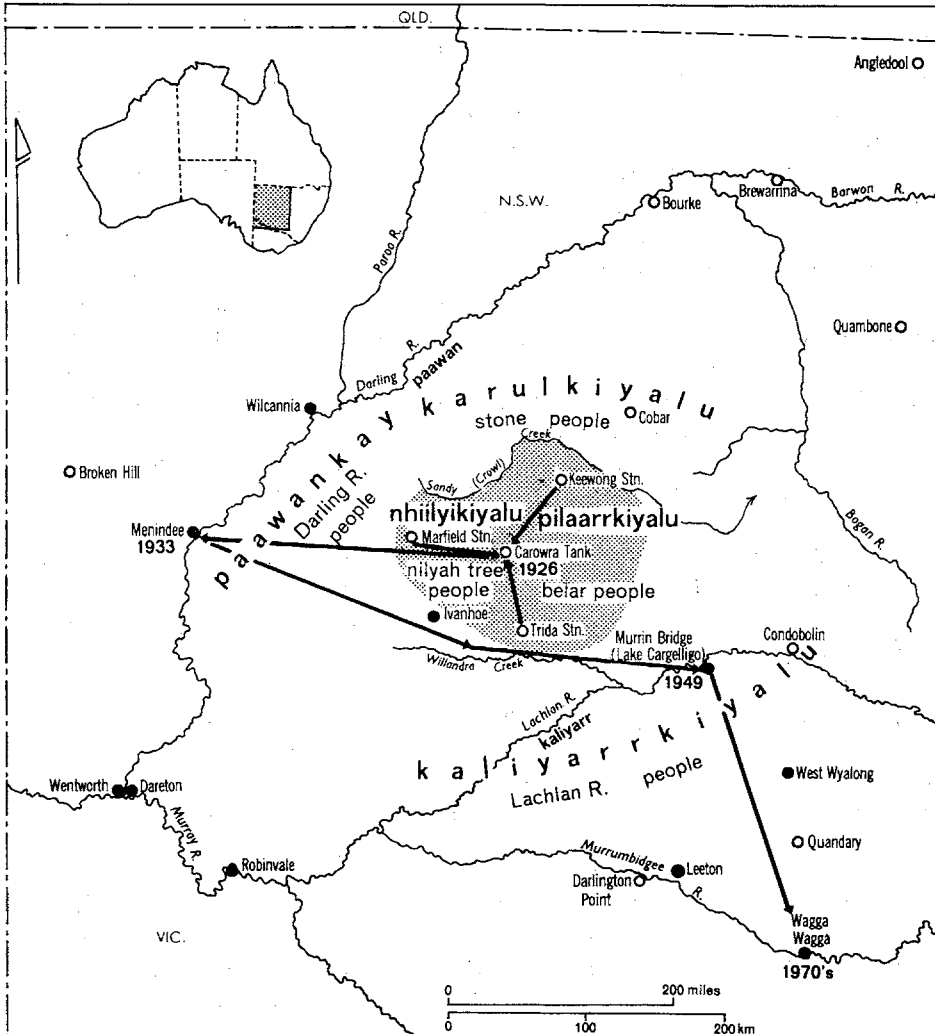


Figure 1 – The *ngurrampaa* or ‘camp world’ of today’s *ngiyampaa* speakers, with arrows showing how they have been moved away from it. Their *ngiyampaa* is *wangaaypuwan*, that is ‘with *wangaay*’ as their word for ‘no’, while that of some more northerly speakers was *wayilwan*, ‘with *wayil*’ as *their* word for ‘no’. Groups placed on the map are named according to territorial, not linguistic, associations.

Commission homes in various suburbs under The Voluntary Family Resettlement Scheme.<sup>30</sup> This further scattered the remaining *Ngiyampaa* speakers, but the exclusive use of English, marked as their own by occasional private words of 'lingo',<sup>31</sup> was already established amongst their descendants.

The places where people of *Ngiyampaa* descent have by now lived and the linguistic resources they now command are extremely various, varying hugely from person to person. But the four different modes of life which have replaced each other within living memory may serve to distinguish four core 'generations' from each other in terms of a degree of commonly shared experience. It can be seen in Table 2 how those born at the turn of the century have known all four ways of living; those born in the mid-twenties three different kinds of institutionalisation; those born in the mid-thirties two 'missions', both outside their own country; and those born from the fifties on 'mission' life at Murrin Bridge only.

All four generations are now *ngurrampaanhthalapaa*, 'without (their) country' (-*thalapaa* meaning the opposite of the by now familiar 'having' or 'with' suffix -*puwan*). They are united in their landlessness, but divided in what it means to them. By virtue of enforced inexperience, those generations brought up at Menindee and Murrin Bridge cannot feel the same sense of severance from particular social associations with a particular territory that those who 'camped about' in their *ngurrampaa* or grew up at Carowra Tank do, except vicariously, through listening to the old people. In this they differ little from younger people of other descents, (such as, say, Paakantji from Murrin Bridge) who have never lived in their ancestral countries. The Murrin Bridge Paakantji, however, are in constant touch with other 'Darling River people' who do still live on their ancestral river, since most of the Paakantji who were moved to Murrin Bridge refused to stay there and are now at Wilcannia. No such spontaneous mass return to their townless dryland was ever possible for the *Ngiyampaa*.

A new division based on language has also arisen between the generations of *Ngiyampaa* descent. They are divided into those who are actually *ngiyampaampuwan* 'with *Ngiyampaa*', speakers of the language, and those who are without it, *ngiyampaanhthalapaa*, the '*Ngiyampa*less' generations born since the shift to Menindee who cannot speak it, though many who were small there still understand a good deal.

This progressive twofold loss of land and language, with its attendant inter-generational tensions, has also been paralleled in the experience of the traditional neighbours of the *Ngiyampaa*, though details of their stories differ. For instance, the relative isolation at Carowra enabled people to remain *ngiyampaampuwan* while most speakers of other languages were already experiencing a severe restriction of the contexts in which theirs could appropriately be used.

<sup>30</sup> Read 1983.

<sup>31</sup> And also by other, less carefully controlled, features with wider Aboriginal currency. As a teenager explained recently about a likewise exclusively English-speaking friend (with a different ancestral language from her own): 'She's black, but she's white, so they [strangers in public places] don't know she's black. But when she talks you'd know she's black'.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Nevertheless, many of the old land- and language-based names have retained some usefulness for social identification today, often in changed form, and sometimes with changed reference because of the modern irrelevance of others in the systems to which they once belonged.

Of the names which designated people according to their associations with territory, those with enduring relevance have been calqued into English, with the English equivalent of the first part of the name being followed by 'people' or 'mob' used in place of *-kiyalu* or *-kay*. Thus people who may not even know that their ancestral language had the terms *kaliyarrkiyalu* and *paawankay* still talk about the 'Lachlan mob' at Condobolin, or the 'Darling River people' of Menindee and Wilcannia. These are the people into whose territories the Ngiyampaa were moved and with whom they have come to mix. But some names were never translated. I have never heard the vanished *karulkiyalu* ('rock' or 'stone' people) referred to in English, and it is doubtful whether young people have heard of their having existed. As for the names which people of Ngiyampaa descent might use in reference to themselves, *pilaarrkiyalu* ('belar people') and *nhiiyikiyalu* ('nilyah tree people'), the younger people who speak English only are not familiar enough with the ecological characteristics of their ancestral homeland to know whether their own forbears came from a part of it where belar trees dominate or a part where nilyah trees are plentiful. The old people themselves, when talking in English about the past, do not either retain these names in their *Ngiyampaa* form or translate them. Instead, they use names which link people with parts of the country by reference to pastoral stations. Thus the *nhiiyikiyalu* are referred to as the 'Marfield mob' (or the 'Geordie mob', after Geordie Murray, their 'clever man'); and the *pilaarrkiyalu* as either the 'Keewong mob' or the 'Trida mob', depending on whether those referred to camped predominantly around the northernmost or the southernmost of the two stations.<sup>32</sup> So these are the names through which the younger people may take hold of their history. Other names for 'mobs' or groups of people associated with particular places (as named in English) allow for the designation of new social associations which cut across the old territorial distinctions. 'Carowra Tank mob', for instance, designates a social grouping which is not equivalent to the *pilaarrkiyalu*, or even to the *pilaarrkiyalu* and *nhiiyikiyalu* combined, though the 'mission' was placed in belar country near where it merges with nilyah country. In 1938 a petition was sent from the Menindee 'mission' under the heading 'Carowra Aborigines' suggestion through Dr. Elkin to the Chief Secretary Mr. Gollan' (relating to the composition of the Aborigines Protection Board). Among the signatories were people with quite other backgrounds, including someone originating on the Murrumbidgee, displaced to Carowra on the closure of Warangesda 'mission' at Darlington Point (but none of the Menindee Paakantji, who had not been at Carowra).<sup>33</sup> The name 'Menindee mob' likewise allows people of different territorial origins to sink their differences in recognition of an era of historically shared experience.

<sup>32</sup> Trida people and Keewong people had a very small number of minor differences in their *Ngiyampaa*, but there were no institutionalised names in the language for distinguishing regularly between the two groups – though the suffix *-kiyalu* could of course be attached to the vernacular names of the stations, just as it could be to any place name.

<sup>33</sup> Ferguson et al. 1938.

And the name 'Murrin Bridge mob' can serve a similar contemporary purpose. The old Ngiyampaa naming system — by social association with place — continues today amongst people with a different language and different kinds of social associations with different kinds of places, lent resilience no doubt by the common readiness of people of other Aboriginal descents to also persist in viewing social allegiances in terms of territorial associations.<sup>34</sup>

What has happened with the names for languages and their speakers is more complicated. The language called *paawankay* in Ngiyampaa is referred to in English as Paakantji, or as 'Darling River talk'. None of the 'no-having' names has ever been translated into English, if only because to do so would of course remove the differences between them — their meanings being all identical. Their pronunciation has, however, tended to become Anglicised.<sup>35</sup> Ngiyampaa, as we have seen, translates as 'the language' or 'the lingo'. But the habit of referring to it as 'the lingo' when speaking English is less likely to result from translation than to reflect the usage of those who first brought English to the area. Aboriginal people whose languages' names have quite other meanings also commonly refer to them in English as 'the lingo'. The name Ngiyampaa is in any case still in common use amongst people who speak only English, and know it only as the name their elders use for themselves, and for their language when pressed to give it a specific name. But its etymology may have had something to do with its survival in preference to 'Wangaaypuwan', among the generations speaking English only, when they began to assume, like the map-makers whose earlier mistakes were eventually enshrined on Tindale's map,<sup>36</sup> that a language will have one name and one name only under all circumstances. It was probably also significant that when the Ngiyampaa were first moved it was not into the territory of another 'no-having' group where the name Wangaaypuwan would naturally be used for purposes of contrast. Descendants of speakers of the Wayilwan variety, also, as we have seen, alternatively called Ngiyampaa, now live mostly in the Coonamble — Walgett — Brewarrina — Bourke area. Among them, both the name meaning 'language' and the 'no-having' name seem to have survived, though not necessarily together with an awareness that they were used to refer to the same language. But here again, the name Ngiyampaa appears to have the edge on the 'no-having' name, probably helped by the long isolation of people of Wangaaypuwan and Wayilwan descents from each other, and the consequent lack of need to distinguish between them by appealing to the difference between their words for 'no'.

The result of this process taking place independently for both groups can be confusing when contact is renewed, as I learnt as long ago as 1971 in Wilcannia. I had met there for the first time a few people from the 'Carowra Tank mob' who were able to teach me some Ngiyampaa. I also met Bert Hunter, originally from the Walgett area, who insisted that what he remembered of his own rather different

<sup>34</sup> Quite a different source is being tapped, however, when the Aboriginal residents of a certain suburb in Wagga Wagga joke about their new home as 'Vegemite village'.

<sup>35</sup> See Note 10.

<sup>36</sup> Tindale 1974.

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Plate 1 – Carowra Aboriginal Station, October 1929. Gidgett Williams (Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa), left, and Ned Rogers (from Queensland) in front of a signpost indicating Swan and Rock Wallaby Streets (*thanthuu*, here spelt *dunthoo*, means ‘swan’ in *Ngiyampaa*). The corrugated iron cube, rear right, is a *kuny tui* ‘house’ supplied by the government. To the left is the back of a *nganu*, ‘miamia’, or perhaps a *katurr*, ‘windbreak’, with firewood in front of it.

Photograph: AIAS N1601-3. Original photograph from the Aborigines Welfare Board Collection in the State Archives Authority of New South Wales. Supplied by AIAS.



Plate 2 – Menindee Aboriginal Station, January 1934. A group photograph taken in its early days for the *Adelaide Advertiser*.

Photograph: Courtesy of Ronald Berndt.





Plate 3 – Menindee Aboriginal Station, December 1935. Left to right: Albert Sheppard, Geordie Murray, Leslie Sheppard and Rosie Murray. Geordie was a highly respected *nhiileyikiyalu*, and the 'nilyah tree people' were also known as 'Geordie mob'. He and Rosie always preferred their own camp on the bend of the river to the government's 'houses'.

Photograph: J.E. Keating, the *Adelaide Chronicle*, courtesy of Aileen Morphett. AIAS N3577-97.



Plate 4 – Menindee Aboriginal Station, 1930s. A group of children in front of one of the houses. In the back row are friends of the photographer on a visit to the 'mission', including the Bush Nursing Sister from Menindee, Sister Kessell, far right.

Photograph: Aileen Morphett (then Underhill). AIAS N3577-6A.

language was 'real Ngiyampaa', but that my *Ngiyampaa* teachers were not his people. Though I occasionally came across the name Wangaaypuwan too, used in reference to the language I was learning, the puzzle remained unsolved at the time, since no one produced the name Wayilwan by which to distinguish Bert Hunter's language from it. (Nor had I then recorded his word for 'no', or any instances of *-wan* meaning 'with'.) The only clue immediately available in Wilcannia was that Elsie Jones, with a Paakantji background, could remember having been told as a child that there were two sorts of *Ngiyampaa*. She was able to pronounce the name in two slightly different ways to show a small variation between them in the phonetic contraction of the sequence *iya*.<sup>37</sup>

People nowadays who are familiar with any of the 'no-having' names do not necessarily know enough of the language they designate to be able to analyse them, even when they contain the word for 'no' in their own ancestral language. People who regard themselves or their elders as Ngiyampaa may not also be able to spot the *wangaay* of Wangaaypuwan as a word of their elders' languages. They are even less likely to realise that the forebears of people they know to be of Wiradjuri descent said *wirraay* for 'no'.<sup>38</sup> A Ngiyampaa person who is *ngiyampaanhthalapaa*, 'without the language', or even one who is *ngiyampaampuwana*, who has it, but does not approach the name Wangaaypuwan analytically may assume, on the one name per language principle, that it refers to some quite other people. I recall asking two sisters who identified themselves as Ngiyampaa who the Wangaaypuwan were. The older of the two answered 'Reckon we might be' while the younger suggested they might be 'that Angledool mob'. Angledool was way out of her 'beat'<sup>39</sup> for the latter, who tended to say 'from Angledool' in much the same way as someone speaking Ngiyampaa would use *kurraarrkay* 'from far away', as a vague location for the unknown. The etymological argument — 'But we say *wangaay*' — with which the older sister retorted is no longer widely appreciated.<sup>40</sup>

On another occasion I was offered a speculation about the identity of the Wangaaypuwan whose ingenuity proves the practical irrelevance of the issue at Murrin Bridge today. There is a song still sometimes nostalgically sung by a few of the old people there which parodies another more widely known one about a different girl, 'My girl, she's no high-born lady . . .':

<sup>37</sup> A.I.A.S. Tape Archive No. LA 9111. Some people of Wayilwan descent currently favour the spelling 'Ngemba' for the name.

<sup>38</sup> In his 1947 article 'Wiradjeri Magic and "clever men"', R.M. Berndt quotes extensively from his main informants Jack King and Fred Biggs. He was similarly unaware that their use of *wangaay* identified them as Wangaaypuwan rather than, as they would have said it, *wirraathurray*; and that this is the first substantial committal of their language to print. There are frequent occurrences of *wangaay* throughout the article (*wonai* in his transcription, which makes use of phonetic symbols), included in the first two passages quoted, on pages 335 and 338.

<sup>39</sup> Normal travelling range. See below, and Beckett 1965:20.

<sup>40</sup> 'Wangaaypuwan' can even seem to contrast directly with 'Ngiyampaa'. One of the sons of Mrs Williams (see Note 13) remembers his late father saying that he was Wangaaypuwan. Since he came from Cobar, not his mother's country, he assumes that he differed in this too from his Ngiyampaa mother.



My girl, she's Wangaaypuwan lady  
 She's dark but she's not too shady  
 Feather like a peacock, just as gay  
 She's coloured but she's born that way  
 I'm proud of my black Venus  
 No coon will a-come between us  
 Along the lane we'll cut a shine  
 With this Wangaaypuwan gin of mine.<sup>41</sup>

The people who are best remembered as having sung it in the past came originally from Darlington Point. Therefore, it was suggested, the Wangaaypuwan were most likely to belong somewhere around there, on the Murrumbidgee (also outside the 'beat' of most of the Ngiyampaa from Carowra).

Among the languages the oldest Ngiyampaa have come across in their lifetimes, *Paakantji* is now the only one besides their own of which more than isolated words and phrases are remembered — and that only at Wilcannia. If 'Wangaaypuwan' has lost its distinguishing power as a language name for quite elderly people, there is little practical need for children with a grandparent or great-grandparent who can 'talk lingo' to give the language any distinctive name. Whether or not particular language names continue to be used depends, ultimately, as with the territorial names, on whether or not they identify a group of people with some current social reality, or with some past shaping importance which those looking back over their lives still recognise. For the *ngiyampaampuwan*, there is no more intimate social tie linking them to contemporaries than having shared their early experience of the world in a unique language now known by so few. To be Ngiyampaa means in effect to have shared a childhood, and 'our people' and 'Ngiyampaa' are synonymous among the oldest generation. But there is a mechanism for identifying 'our people' down through the generations which endures irrespective of linguistic change and loss of country, and irrespective of the confusion of old social categories founded on language and land — to which it may even contribute — and that is kinship. 'Our people' and 'Ngiyampaa' are synonymous for the *ngiyampaampuwan* because they are all related to one another — that is how they have come to grow up speaking the language. Despite changes in how relationships are appraised, and in the terminology used (which is now English), genealogy is still the central means of classifying people, of distinguishing 'our people', that is those with whom a relationship can be traced, from others.

Jeremy Beckett has described how Aborigines' kinship behaviour in western New South Wales, given the history of their 'aggregation and dispersal' has led to ever more widely dispersed and heterogeneous 'constellations of kin'. In 1965 he found that, generation by generation, marriage partners were being found further and further afield, and that 'beats', the localities where a person has kin, is 'known', and can feel at home, were becoming more various and extensive.<sup>42</sup> The process has continued.

<sup>41</sup> As sung by Eliza Kennedy, A.I.A.S. Tape Archive No. LA 9110.

<sup>42</sup> Beckett 1965, especially pp.17-23. I have borrowed his phrase 'aggregation and dispersal' (p.13) in the sense of 'being aggregated and dispersed'. Many of his 'prognoses' (p.21) have become realities since the article was written.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As a result 'our people', for a given person of Ngiyampaa descent, can include many of other descents,<sup>43</sup> with inherited claims to other languages and other territories. But conversely, anyone genealogically established as 'one of our people' can properly take a proprietorial pride and interest in *Ngiyampaa* and in the *ngurrampaa* in which its speakers used to camp.

<sup>43</sup> Including, of course, non-Aboriginal descent. It has not however been necessary to my argument to discuss this, since it is not relevant to the Aboriginal views I have been trying to explore. What Beckett wrote in 1965 remains true today: '... in most situations the important distinction lies between those who have some Aboriginal ancestry and those who have none' (p.1) – witness Note 31.

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Plate 5— Murrin Bridge, 1983. A panoramic view taken from the water tower.  
Photograph: Wayne Nelson. AIAS N3577-3A.

**'BREAKING UP THESE CAMPS ENTIRELY':  
THE DISPERSAL POLICY IN WIRADJURI COUNTRY**

**1909-1929**

**Peter Read**

In my paper 'A rape of the soul so profound' I sketched out what seemed to me to have been the major theme of European/Aboriginal relationships in New South Wales this century: the attempts of successive governments to disperse Aborigines from their living areas and from each other, and the Aborigines' response to that policy.<sup>1</sup> I described two principal techniques of dissociation - the removal of children from their parents, and the expulsion of adults from the reserves, stations and fringe-camps. In this paper I examine the working of the second of these techniques to see what dispersal actually meant to the Aborigines subjected to it. The area of investigation is eastern Wiradjuri country in the first two decades after the passing of the Aborigines Protection Act in 1909.

The Act formally established the Aborigines Protection Board and declared the responsibility of the New South Wales government towards the relief, maintenance, custody and education of Aborigines. Aborigines were defined as people of the full descent and persons having an 'admixture of Aboriginal blood' who were in receipt of government rations or who resided on a reserve. Under other provisions, only Aborigines so defined were allowed on stations and reserves, but men, who in the opinion of the Board ought to be earning a living elsewhere, were debarred, or might be expelled.<sup>2</sup> The new Act was greeted with enthusiasm by the Board, which announced that radical changes in methods of dealing with Aborigines would now be proposed. Attention would be directed particularly to compelling the able-bodied to shift for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Within the Act and Regulations the government's intention, 'in a few years to come, of breaking up these camps entirely' was apparent.<sup>4</sup> For example, the definition of Aboriginality was intended to restrict the categories of people entering the reserves. In practice however it proved to be clumsy: people living on rations outside

*Peter Read wrote his doctoral thesis on the history of the Wiradjuri people and has since been a co-worker in Link-Up. This Aboriginal agency works at the request of former state-wards or their families to re-unite them. This paper is a sequel to the discussion of dispersal policy published in 'Aboriginal History' 7.*

<sup>1</sup> See Read 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Aborigines Protection Act, No.25 of 1909, ss. 3, 8 (1), (2).

<sup>3</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, *Annual Report*, 1909, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase was Mr Flowers', speaking for the government during the debate on the Amendment to the Act which would allow the removal of children without their parents' permission; N.N.S.P.D. 2/56, 1914-15, L.A., pp.1353-4.

a reserve, for example, could apply to live on one. A temporary solution was the instruction to managers in the Regulation of 1910 to 'discourage the further introduction of half-castes'. However by 1914 the Board had begun plans to have the definition tightened.<sup>5</sup> In 1918 an Amendment narrowed it to 'any full-blooded or half-caste Aborigine who is a native of New South Wales'.<sup>6</sup> Specifically excluded were those whom the Board called 'quadroon' and 'octoroon'; such people might also now be expelled by managers. By what seemed to be a simple legal manoeuvre, the Board had absolved itself of responsibility for all non-reserve Aborigines. To both the government and the local councils of country towns it proposed to argue that it was not responsible for the fringe-dwellers of the state. Legally once a person was expelled from a reserve, he or she ceased to be Aboriginal. This arbitrary pronouncement was accepted neither by Aborigines nor the local councils, and we shall see how in 1927 the Condobolin municipal council made nonsense of the legal definitions.

Section 14 of the Act allowed for the compulsory shifting of Aborigines from near a reserve and from a township. The provisions looked rigorous enough, but concealed the fact that the principal agents acting upon the Board in framing its Act were at cross purposes. The government wished to save money and eventually close the reserves. The local councils wanted control over local Aboriginal populations, preferably by closing local reserves. The aims looked almost identical. Most officials in 1909 probably thought they were; but practice showed them to be the reverse. The Board failed in its purpose of reducing the reserve populations and revoking the reserves partly because the aims of the state and the local councils were irreconcilable. Twenty years passed before this simple fact became apparent. In that time the Wiradjuri were harried from station to reserve to fringe-camp in a futile exercise in human engineering which was doomed from the start.

A further internal difficulty facing the Board was that in 1909 it had virtually no agents to execute its policies except the station managers. These officials, with the co-operation of the police and magistracy, could be very powerful figures locally, but they were far too busy to visit the unmanaged reserves. The police, already responsible for ration distribution in these areas, could not be expected to enforce the major changes embodied in the Act. In Wiradjuri country only Warangesda on the Murrumbidgee and Brungle near Tumut had managers. In effect, despite the Board's promise of a new regime, it was possible to begin the reserve-clearances in 1909 on only a tenth of the Wiradjuri reserves.

The administrative system of 1909 was superimposed upon Wiradjuri movement patterns which had shown great resistance to change. As far as can be ascertained from the records, European settlement in the nineteenth century had greatly disrupted the lives of the surviving Aborigines, but had not succeeded in moving them very far. Numerous camp sites along the river system had lost their Aboriginal populations by 1909 to the larger centres of Warangesda and Brungle. Yet these new stations were largely within the compass of the local groups before the European invasion, most were within a few days' walking distance. Recently archaeological evidence has identified some traditional patterns of contact and movement which can be shown to have

<sup>5</sup> Regulations Under the Aborigines Protection Act, No.14 (c) issued 8 June 1910.

<sup>6</sup> Amendment No.7 of 1918, No.2 (i) (a).

survived the upheavals of the Act to the present day. For instance, McBryde has demonstrated that the most important destinations of tools made from the greenstone outcrops of the Tumut district were the upper Murrumbidgee and the south coast.<sup>7</sup> The distribution patterns coincide neatly with the missionary J.B. Gribble's estimate of the origins of the Brungle population in 1890: some from Warangesda, some from Lachlan and some from the different coastal districts.<sup>8</sup> Similarly the earliest station records of Warangesda and Brungle in the 1880s and 1890s show regular movement between what became in the twentieth century the major Wiradjuri population centres, but very little from other areas.<sup>9</sup> Therefore when the expulsions took more systematic form after 1909 the Wiradjuri continued to do as they had previously done when confronted by local settler hostility: they made their way to what were known to be safer areas within the traditional compass of marriage, movement and kinship patterns.

The results of the new legislation therefore were predictable. The expulsion of people from one reserve caused an influx of refugees to the next. The common result was that the Europeans, alarmed at the population increase, demanded action of the Board. The Board responded; the Wiradjuri moved on in groups and directions which were familiar to them, until the cycle was repeated in another town a few months or years later. After twenty years of extraordinary upheaval, some reserves were smaller, but some were larger; five or six had been revoked, but three new unofficial living areas were occupied; the self-identifying population was greater and the links between the old Wiradjuri population centres had been reinforced by the compulsory migration.

The removal of adults and children from the reserves after 1909, though apocalyptic in its effects on the people concerned, has as yet found little place in the history books. To the extent that the dispersal policy was known and understood, it seems to have found general approval.<sup>10</sup> Indeed on paper the Board's achievement looked to be impressive. One Wiradjuri reserve community had shrunk from 188 people to none at all in fourteen years. The Wiradjuri population in a single town had diminished from seventy nine people to only one in six years.<sup>11</sup> The peak year for expulsions was 1915, in which a single order contained the names of twenty adults from Warangesda and twenty three from Brungle, a seventh and a third respectively of the entire populations.<sup>12</sup> Nor do these figures include the number of people who left voluntarily to avoid having their children taken from them. This number is unknown but is likely to be almost as large as the number expelled: by 1922 the Board admitted that this was

<sup>7</sup> McBryde 1979:122 and 1984:285.

<sup>8</sup> Gribble 1890.

<sup>9</sup> The sources are 'Warangesda Mission: managers' diary, March 18, 1887-April 1897' (typescript in A.I.A.S. Library) and the Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, State Archives of N.S.W.

<sup>10</sup> P. Read, op.cit., pp. 25, 27-28, 30.

<sup>11</sup> The town was Forbes 1909-1915; figures collated from tables in *Annual Reports*.

<sup>12</sup> Circular No.51, 7 January 1915, Aborigines Protection Board, Copies of Letters Sent, 1914-27.

the principal reason why the reserve populations were dropping so fast.<sup>13</sup> Only a year after the passing of the Act there were complaints by the residents of Darlington Point, the town nearest to Warangesda, that people from the station were gathering near the town. They were believed to have fled the reserve for fear of the implementation of Section 13A of the Act.<sup>14</sup>

It may be wondered why the Board was so concerned at the exodus of families since many of them, under other provisions of the Act, were not legally entitled to stay. The answer lies in the unresolved tension already noticed, between the Board's twin roles of reducing the reserves and placating the citizens of country towns. Over the two decades the Board had no answer, and little understanding, of the administrative tangle which it had created. In the case above, the Warangesda manager was directed to encourage the Wiradjuri to return, pointing out to them the likelihood of their children's committal for neglect should they remain.<sup>15</sup> Yet Regulation 14(c) instructed him to discourage Aborigines of several categories from returning, including those who looked more European than Aboriginal.<sup>16</sup> It was the Aborigines, not the Board, who were caught in the tangle. They could not remain on the station, they could not remain in the town; and already there were rumblings of discontent from citizens of other towns within the traditional ambit.

At Yass there had been tension in the town for several years before the Act was passed. In 1905 in an effort to placate residents the Board made a tentative attempt to persuade the Aborigines of the town reserve to move to the farming allotments at Rye Park.<sup>17</sup> These were unsuccessful, the town population remained, so that when the refugees from Warangesda and Brungle began to arrive in 1909 antagonism sharpened immediately. The *Yass Courier* of that year contained inch after column inch of accounts of confrontations between the police and the Wiradjuri.<sup>18</sup> In July a magistrate described three people before him as 'a menace and a curse to the town' and thought that the sooner the Aborigines were moved from Yass the better.<sup>19</sup> In October the town clerk announced that the Aborigines were too close to the town.<sup>20</sup> In March 1910, six men were arrested for the murder of a European man, a charge subsequently dismissed by the jury after only a twenty minute deliberation.<sup>21</sup> The shire council, probably unaware that it was official policy to reduce the reserve populations, redoubled its efforts for the Board to open a new one. In January 1910, publicly

<sup>13</sup> Circular dated 13 September 1922, Copies of Letters Sent.

<sup>14</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, 18 August 1910, Register of Letters Received. At this time s.13 allowed for the removal of children only with the parents' permission.

<sup>15</sup> Under the Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act (1905) children could be declared state wards for living without visible means of support or abode.

<sup>16</sup> This rough and ready method was commonly used by officials to determine whether a person was 'quadroon', hence to be ejected from a reserve, or 'half-caste', to be allowed to remain.

<sup>17</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 7 December 1905.

<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed discussion of events in Yass at this time see Read 1982.

<sup>19</sup> *Yass Courier*, 20 July, 23 July 1909.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 5 Oct. 1909.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 8 March, 6 May 1910.

acknowledging these demands the Board agreed to buy 275 hectares at Blakney Creek, twenty five kilometres from Yass.<sup>22</sup> The new station was to be named Edgerton and forced removal began immediately.

The new station had a brief and inglorious career. Since Edgerton was within walking distance of the town, and very few people evidently wished to go there, the result was foregone. Passive resistance to managerial rule and the continual movement of Edgerton residents back to Yass made the station uncontrollable. Alf Williams dimly remembered a mass walk-off: 'they didn't like the manager or something so they all just walked off into town.'<sup>23</sup> On Edgerton station two contradictory policies were pursued. At the height of the exodus, the manager insisted on enforcing the Sections of the Act relating to expulsions. For example, in 1911 Frank Bolger was refused permission to rejoin his family on the station, then all were ejected on the grounds that they were not Aborigines.<sup>24</sup> In 1914, thirteen men were expelled for refusing to work, then in February 1915, another thirteen.<sup>25</sup> Altogether about thirty people are noted to have been expelled from the station in three years. One can only marvel at the idiocy, as well as the cruelty, of such a policy. Edgerton was doomed. By 1916 the schoolroom was empty, the farm overrun with weeds. In 1919 the Board sold the land back to the local farmers. Meanwhile the same catch-22 already familiar at Darlington Point was invoked soon after the establishment of the station. In 1912 Yass residents began to complain of Aborigines, doubtless including some recently expelled from Edgerton, begging on the streets.<sup>26</sup>

The demise of Edgerton spelled out even more forcibly that legislation alone was insufficient to disperse a strongly self-identifying population, particularly when revocation ran counter to the wishes of the local townsfolk. The shortcomings of Section 14 were now glaringly apparent. Managers were instructed to discourage 'half-castes' from entering reserves; yet the townsfolk of Yass could not allow those same people, who by association and culture were commonly regarded as Aborigines, from entering the town. By 1919, Yass was becoming too unpleasant a place for most Wiradjuri to remain.

Only a few years after the passing of the Act, three major living areas had become virtually uninhabitable. It was apparent that what had hitherto been regarded as safe areas - the towns with an unmanaged reserve - could no longer be considered to be so. Thus at about this time the Wiradjuri began to move to two new living areas, away from major towns, isolated from Europeans. One of these was a quiet flat on the Murrumbidgee about eight kilometres from Narrandera. It became known as 'the

<sup>22</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, *Annual Report*, 1910, p.5, 1911, p.9.

<sup>23</sup> Recorded conversation Alf Williams, Swan Hill, 17 September 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Register of letters received, 1910-1913, 24 April 1911; Minutes of Meetings, 25 May 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, *Annual Report*, 1914, p.9; Circular to Managers, 17 February 1915.

<sup>26</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 9 May 1912.



Sandhills' and was first settled, principally by former Warangesda residents, in about 1916. By 1941, 30 dwellings were on the site.<sup>27</sup> The other new living area was outside the tiny town of Gooloogong, some thirty five kilometres from Cowra. The first official notice of an Aboriginal presence at Gooloogong was 1912.<sup>28</sup> For three years the Board attempted to drive the Wiradjuri to other towns, until in 1915 it bowed to the inevitable. A new official reserve was declared at Gooloogong in the very year that the expulsions from the managed stations reached their peak. In 1919 a visitor commented on the tidy, permanent appearance of the reserve.<sup>29</sup> Both the Sandhills and Gooloogong, which can be seen as precursors of Northern Territory out-stations of the 1970s, were successful Wiradjuri attempts at keeping the administration at bay. Largely because there were few Europeans bothering the Board, the officials seldom bothered the camps. No forced dispersals were attempted after 1915. No children are known to have been removed.

The two 'outstations' and the collapse of Edgerton were the only tangible victories of the Wiradjuri at the end of the first decade of the Act. Less than a year after the sale of Edgerton the Board began to consider ways of selling off Warangesda also. In January 1920 it resolved to make a list of its most valuable possessions with a view to leasing them to farmers. In January 1921 Inspector Donaldson was asked to find out how many Warangesda Aborigines were prepared to move to other stations. On 17 October 1924 the Board decided to close the station forthwith and to send the 'few remaining Aborigines' elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> A tradition among Darlington Point Wiradjuri, most of whom are descended from Warangesda residents, is that the last resident defended his home at gun-point until finally the roof was pulled off. Thus ended the occupation of Warangesda station after forty one years.

The former residents had now to do what other Warangesda refugees had done since 1909: they made their way into the district.<sup>31</sup> The family of Edgar Howell left Warangesda 'just before the roofs were pulled off'. They went to live for some years near Darlington Point, and by 1930 they too were living at the Narrandera Sandhills. Beckett noted the arrival of several families from Warangesda at Euabalong in the early 1920s.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the Yass community, which had spent only a few years at Edgerton, Warangesda people went to the new living-areas less through attachment to particular areas, more through economic forces, ties of kinship, and the knowledge of which local councils and police forces tolerated an Aboriginal population. Thus the combined

<sup>27</sup> Aborigines Inland Mission, *Our Aim*, XXX/4, (16 December 1941) p.9.

<sup>28</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, *Annual Report*, 1912, p.17.

<sup>29</sup> *Our Aim*, XII/9, (31 May 1919), p.5; XIII/3, 31 December 1919, p.5 refers to a population of over 100 Aborigines.

<sup>30</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 2 January 1920, 12 January 1921, 17 October 1924.

<sup>31</sup> Hetty Charles remembered the roofs pulled off the houses. With other families, she said, her parents wandered the district for years, living in tents or tin sheds; sometimes she lived in station accommodation while her father worked as a boundary-rider.

<sup>32</sup> J. Beckett 1958: 125.

effect of the expulsions, the flight of people from Section 13A of the Act and the local councils' attempts at reserve-clearing served to increase the population, not only at the 'outstations', but at safe towns like Euabalong, Cowra, Condobolin and Hillston. The old farming reserves at Grong Grong near Narrandera and Coobang Creek near Parkes, and certain towns like Eugowra and Forbes all suffered a drastic decline. Yet the population had not, of course, diminished, nor had it been dispersed. People merely had been uprooted and now lived, less permanently, in make-shift encampments, in a greater number of areas.

It is now possible to see some of the more far-reaching consequences of the reduction of the reserves, the farming communities and the fringe-camps. One result was the reinforcing of the Warangesda-Brungle-Yass-Cowra axis. The expulsions from the south-eastern reserves in the 1920s threw the focus of the victims on to Erambie, at Cowra. Thus when the four children of Jack and Elizabeth Ingram left Warangesda in the early 1920s, three of them, James, Jack and Lachlan, went to Erambie. Lachlan married Louisa Simpson to form one of the most powerful and durable of modern Erambie families. At about the same time May Richie of Euabalong came also to Erambie, partly because there was no work at Euabalong and partly because her aunt lived at Cowra. She married James Ingram, and the first child, Ossie, was born in 1922. The first Erambie manager, appointed in 1924, declared that James was too fair to remain on the station so the whole family left. They went first to Wagga, then settled at the Narrandera Sandhills where some of James Ingram's relatives, also expelled from Warangesda, were already living. Alf Williams was another reared at Warangesda. With Archie and Alfie Bamblett he was ordered to leave there in about 1916. Williams went shearing and general labouring; then in the early 1920s someone suggested that he go to Cowra because there were some 'nice dark girls there'. He went to Erambie and married Annie Murray, a member of one of the oldest and most respected Erambie families. When fourteen years later Annie died, Williams left Erambie. After 1930 he too was living at the Sandhills.<sup>33</sup>

In this way the links between the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee, were reinforced at Cowra in the 1920s. A relationship by birth or marriage, once established, remained as long as the individual desired it. Ossie Ingram, born at Cowra, did not retain a close relationship with the reserve because he did not wish to live there permanently, but his uncle Lachlan did so and established with his wife a powerful dynasty. The dispersal policy strengthened rather than weakened, the links between the Wiradjuri population centres.

A now familiar pattern of behaviour emerged almost at once amongst Cowra residents. They began to object to the growing number of Aborigines in what had until then been regarded by the Wiradjuri as a 'safe' town. For a decade after 1914 the townspeople began to demand that a manager be appointed or the reserve closed. Early in 1924 matters came to a head. In January an Aboriginal, described as 'a beastly Queenslander' was charged with assaulting a young girl. The *Cowra Free Press* headed

<sup>33</sup> Recorded conversation Ossie Ingram, Narrandera, 19 September 1980, Euabalong, 19 October 1980; Alf Williams, tape cited.

up its account, 'The black menace'. The Board gave way. The Erambie reserve, augmented almost daily by arrivals from the south, the south west and the west, was placed under the control of a manager '[a]s a result of complaints by the townspeople . . . regarding the necessity of resident supervision'.<sup>34</sup> Cowra could no longer be considered safe. The populations of Gooloogong and the Sandhills grew steadily.

Out on the plains the town of Condobolin was already emerging as the focus of the western Wiradjuri; for this economic forces as much as Board policy were responsible. Soon after 1900 many small towns in the area declined. For instance, Euabalong was in the 1890s a stock-crossing and the centre of various mail and telegraph routes. Yet in 1888 the District Inspector of the Department of Public Instruction had estimated that the town would grow no bigger. His prediction was accurate.<sup>35</sup> In 1928 the local teacher reported that the town population was rapidly dwindling as work became available elsewhere. 'The rabbits have failed' he lugubriously told his department, 'and my school with them'.<sup>36</sup> In the south and east of Wiradjuri country work was more readily available to Aboriginal men in the 1920s. Therefore, although in the north and west of Wiradjuri country the effects of the dispersal policy were less noticeable, and there was less public pressure to drive out the fringe-dwellers, economic pressures were forcing the Wiradjuri to 'safe' towns like Condobolin as effectively as did official pressure in the east.

Yet in 1924 the reputation of Condobolin as a safe town was fast evaporating. The growing Aboriginal population was not unnoticed by other residents. So it was in the mid 1920s that the contradictions in Board policy, exacerbated by economic conditions out west, truly came home to roost.

The first reference to the large and growing population was made in the *Lachlander* in 1926, probably shortly after refugees expelled from Erambie began arriving at the town. On 19 March the municipal council formally protested to the Board over the state of the reserve. The Board replied that it would be difficult to force Aborigines to leave the reserve, especially as they had already refused an offer to move to Euabalong.<sup>37</sup> No doubt mindful of its painful experience at Edgerton, it pointed out to the council in April that it was its experience that Aborigines could not be coerced into living in a particular area. It warned that if removal of the Aborigines were insisted upon, they would leave the reserve, as they had in other places, and make unauthorised camps near the town, their last state being worse than the first. The Board seemed to have caught a glimpse of why its dispersal policy was failing. The municipal council, motivated by purely local concerns, was unmoved. The Board's offer to build another reserve was categorically refused,<sup>38</sup> and in June its offer to send Inspector Donaldson to discuss the matter was also refused. The tone of the meeting showed that Condobolin's reputation as a safe town was increasingly misplaced. An Alderman May told

<sup>34</sup> *Cowra Free Press*, 8 January 1924; Aborigines Protection Board, *Annual Report*, 1924, p.1.

<sup>35</sup> Euabalong School file, District Inspector, D.P.I., 13 September 1888.

<sup>36</sup> Teacher to District Inspector, 20 August 1928, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 19 March 1926.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; Report of the Municipal Council correspondent, *Lachlander*, 14 April 1926.

the councillors it was time they fought: 'the blacks' were 'getting thicker in the town'.<sup>39</sup> In August the Board stated that since it had failed to persuade the residents to move, it would call for tenders to rebuild the reserve. The council again rejected the proposals and sought legal opinion as to whether it possessed the power to evict the Aborigines.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime it insisted that the reserve be closed. In October 1926 the Board informed the council that when all the possibilities (such as rebuilding the reserve) were exhausted, it would then be necessary to revoke the reserve, its responsibility would then cease, and the council would then have to find its own solution.<sup>41</sup>

Back in Condobolin the feelings of townsfolk were running very high. The Board's announcements were rightly interpreted as thinly veiled threats. One alderman exclaimed that the council wanted the reserve closed on the grounds of public health, but the Board had never given the impression of sincerity in helping the council accomplish its desires. Then came 'this threat'. Some councillors thought that the Board's bluff, if it were a bluff, should be called; others warned that if the reserve were closed, Aborigines would then live in the town and its surroundings where it would be impossible to enforce clean and healthy conditions. An Alderman Condon's emotional speech carried the day. He claimed that a new reserve would be as bad as ever. The motion was carried that the council again insist on the removal of the reserve.<sup>42</sup>

It was typical of local councils throughout Wiradjuri country that the Condobolin aldermen insisted myopically on the Aborigines' removal, giving no thought to where they might go so long as it was outside the unit of administration. The Board at least by now understood what would happen if the reserve were closed. The Wiradjuri would congregate in a new town like Forbes, whereupon the same pattern of local hostility, expense and abuse of the Board would be repeated. Nevertheless its bluff had been called. The state would not be allowed to absolve itself of the responsibility it owed, in the eyes of the townspeople, through a merely technical definition of Aboriginality. The abolition of the reserve would, without absolving it of *de facto* responsibility, solve nothing. Very belatedly it reminded the council that Aborigines did have certain rights. Council would please furnish the Board with a list of requirements. In the meantime it took legal advice to see whether it could recondition the buildings regardless of the council's wishes.<sup>43</sup> The answer appeared to be in the affirmative. Legally the Condobolin council was beaten.

Caught in the crossfire were, of course, the Wiradjuri, some of whom had been on the run all their adult lives. The official reserve was unsafe, for dozens of people are recorded in the Board's Minutes to have been expelled between 1920 and 1929. There was nowhere to go. The implacable council hounded anyone Aboriginal, by its own definition, not that of the statute book, who did not live on the reserve, and the Board

<sup>39</sup> *Lachlander*, 9 June 1926.

<sup>40</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 27 August 1927; *Lachlander*, 29 September 1926.

<sup>41</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 15 October 1926.

<sup>42</sup> *Lachlander*, 10 November 1926, 8 December 1926.

<sup>43</sup> Aborigines Protection Board, Minutes of Meetings, 4 February 1927.

hounded most of those who did. In May 1927 the Health Inspector complained of Aboriginal camps above the trucking yards. The Aborigines Protection Board had no intention of protecting such Aborigines. The council resolved that 'necessary action' be taken to have the camps removed.<sup>44</sup> The fear of Aboriginal community continued to haunt the Europeans. And the chilling finality of the resolution indicated that, in the last resort, the popular definition of Aboriginality was the one that counted. Local councils could very well do as they pleased to the fringe-dwellers expelled by the Board from the Board's own reserves.

On the Condobolin reserve itself, conditions were so disgraceful that only the knowledge that life above the trucking yards was worse must have stayed the resolve of the people to leave. In May 1826, just as the controversy between the Board and the council erupted, the teacher at the reserve school complained to her Department that the roof leaked, the room was unlined against the frosts and there was no fire-wood. The Chief Inspector replied that the matter appeared to be the business of the Board.<sup>45</sup> In June 1927 the teacher again pointed out that all the children had had colds and earache and cried with pain in the head or face in the middle of lessons. The children 'go deaf, dull and seem too cold, too dull, half-fed, badly clothed, living in tents and falling-down houses, poor little things ended up in a cold schoolroom'. She declared that only four of the elder girls could read or write anything and they were all now in domestic service. A diagram appended showed the places where one could put a hand through holes in the floor; cold air poured down upon the children's heads and hands. Their feet were stiff with cold and on the day she wrote, a child was admitted to hospital with congestion of the lungs. In August 1929 she wrote a most emotional letter, in pencil and barely decipherable. She reported that the children had had a dreadful year. Practically every child had been in hospital, nearly all had flu. Only five were well out of a class of seventeen. The response of the Department of Public Instruction was to transfer the teacher to Gulargambone.<sup>46</sup>

So ended the Board's last attempt at the dispersal of the Wiradjuri before the Depression. Two decades of the implementation of the Act had caused the great majority of people to move from where they had been living in 1909. In terms of policy, not much had been achieved for all the brutality, expense and hostility incurred. A number of families in 1929 were living by themselves, but probably not so many more than had once lived on the now revoked and forgotten farming allotments. There were more Aborigines living at Darlington Point, Gooloogong, Cowra and Condobolin than there had been; only in a few towns like Euabalong, Eugowra, Forbes and Parkes were there significantly fewer. The Wiradjuri had been dispersed, but only to new living areas within their own country, and the vilifications of one set of town councils had been replaced by those of another. Aboriginal determination to remain

<sup>44</sup> *Lachlander*, 11 May 1927.

<sup>45</sup> Condobolin Aboriginal School file, teacher to Chief Inspector, 8 April 1926, file note annotated.

<sup>46</sup> Teacher to Chief Inspector, 22 June 1927, 25 August 1929.

united through kinship and association, and the cross-purposes of the officials, had combined to defeat the policy utterly.

Condobolin was not, however, the last Wiradjuri town to feel the sting of the Aborigines Protection Board. After the Second World War dispersal began afresh and this time there were exemption certificates and town houses to reinforce the blade of the bulldozer. By 1970 Brungle was reduced to four decrepit houses, a third reserve at Yass had come and gone, one of the two reserves at Condobolin was reduced to rubble, Gooloogong was deserted and the Sandhills bore no sign that it had ever been inhabited. Only Erambie and a new reserve at Griffith were stronger than before.

Wiradjuri community was still strong. In 1980 there were new living areas among the streets of Condobolin, Tumut, Leeton, Griffith, Cowra and Redfern. Yet the victory of the Wiradjuri was a pyrrhic victory. The smashed houses, the lost homelands, the depressed morale, the stolen children were the terrible cost of survival. And although it appeared that dispersal had failed, it was not yet quite discredited as an instrument of policy. Who could be sure that it would not come again?

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# THE MARAWARA LANGUAGE OF YELTA: INTERPRETING LINGUISTIC RECORDS OF THE PAST

Luise Hercus

Because of the loss of the majority of the languages of the south east of Australia we have to turn towards the information collected last century with gratitude. But we are tempted to ask for too much from some of these sources, particularly the word-lists: the people compiling them had difficulties that it is hard to appreciate now in the age of electronic recording equipment. The aim of the present paper is to attempt to elucidate some of the problems involved.<sup>1</sup>

Gaining fluency in any language has been and remains a difficult task, with or without the use of tape-recorders. But when it comes to collecting basic vocabulary and a few sentences, tape-recorders allow a dramatic improvement.

Modern linguistic maps would show many blank areas without the vocabularies published in R. Brough Smyth's 1878 compilation *The Aborigines of Victoria*, George Taplin's *The folklore, manners, customs and languages of the South Australian Aborigines* (published posthumously in 1879), and E.M. Curr's 1886-87 volumes *The Australian race*. In evaluating these materials we must remember that most of the contributors to the compilations did not have a deep commitment to the study of Aboriginal languages, and were not fluent speakers of the languages they recorded. In the absence of tape recordings they had no chance to correct their initial mistakes.

There are a few instances where, thanks to the survival of the languages into the 1960s-1970s, we can examine the nineteenth century word-lists in the light of a much larger body of knowledge and we can reconstruct what actually happened during the recording process. This paper attempts to elucidate some of the problems involved, using information on *Marawara* collected by John Bulmer over the years 1855 to 1860 at Yelta, and modern studies of *Pākantji* (often called *Barkindji* in the ethnographic

*Luise Hercus is Reader in the Centre for South Asian Studies, Australian National University. She is well known for her pioneering work on the languages of Victoria, published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in 1969. She is now working on the languages of the Darling and Lake Eyre basins.*

<sup>1</sup> In this paper a practical orthography has been used for *Pākantji*: Plosives have been written as unvoiced, (*k, p, th, t, rt*), except in the nasal-plosive clusters *mb, nb, rnd*.

Retroflexes have been written as *r* + consonant, i.e.

*rl* is retroflex *l*

*rn* is retroflex *n*

*rd* is retroflex *t*

Interdentals have been written as consonant + *h*, hence *nh, th*.

*ng* has been used for velar *n*.

Long vowels are indicated by a superscript line, *ā*.

literature) the language of the Darling River people. *Marawara* was the southernmost dialect of *Pākantji*.

The questionnaires sent to pastoralists, magistrates and missionaries by Smyth in 1863, by Taplin in 1874-75 and by Curr from 1878 yielded four Marawara vocabularies and fragmentary information about the local and social organisation of this group of Aborigines. They are mentioned in most histories of southeastern Australia, but identified only as the anonymous 'blacks' who reportedly menaced the explorers Sturt and Mitchell and were killed by Mitchell's parties, by some pastoralists using the overland route to Adelaide from 1838, and by South Australian punitive expeditions in 1841-42. The *Marawara* vocabularies discussed in this paper were written down by three inexperienced lay missionaries, recruited at public meetings of the Melbourne Church of England Mission Committee to staff the Yelta Mission, located on a square mile of reserved land immediately southeast of the Murray-Darling junction. Up to 150 Aborigines visited in 1855 but Yelta was finally abandoned because of depopulation, exacerbated by the rapid growth of the adjacent New South Wales town of Wentworth.<sup>2</sup>

The description of *Marawara* discussed here was entitled 'Native language, Gippsland and Murray' in Smyth's *Aborigines of Victoria*. The 'Murray' language referred to was *Marawara*. Internal evidence suggests that Smyth solicited Bulmer's comparison of the Gippsland and 'Murray' languages some years later than the 4 July 1863 questionnaire which produced other word-lists in Smyth's volumes.<sup>3</sup>

Marawara people drawn to Yelta originally occupied the lower Murray from the Darling-Murray junction downstream to the Rufus river and Lake Victoria, and extended northward on the Darling to Avoca station, according to N.B. Tindale.<sup>4</sup> They also called themselves *Wimbaya* 'people' and are sometimes referred to by that name. The only major work on their language is by Tindale.<sup>5</sup> He was able to make a study of a text in *Marawara* in 1939. The language became extinct soon after with the death of 'Auntie Polly', the last Marawara speaker, who was looked after for many years by the Lawson family, speakers of Southern *Pākantji*. They could understand everything she said, but they found her pronunciation a little different: *Marawara* and Southern *Pākantji* from Pooncarie were closely-related dialects of one language, *Pākantji*. Fortunately I was able to collect an extensive amount of information on Southern *Pākantji* during work on the Darling between 1964 and 1981: the information came from descendants of people who had originated from Pooncarie and Menindee. We can therefore examine the vocabulary given to Bulmer by people at

<sup>2</sup> Information from Diane Barwick. Published contemporary accounts of the 'wanton slaughter' of the Marawara include Moorhouse in Taplin 1879, 115-123; Jenkin 1979, 283-284; Eyre 1845, 11: 212; Sturt 1849, 1: 90-93. G.A. Robinson's 1846 manuscript cites the toll from South Australian Government papers and reports from personal observation that 'All the males excepting boys had gunshot wounds and other marks of violence on their persons . . . Bleached human bones lay on the surface and craniums perforated by bullets were seen by me'.

<sup>3</sup> Smyth 1878, 11: 33-37, 67. In response to Curr's 1878 questionnaire Bulmer also provided a vocabulary containing some 124 words (Curr 1886-87, 11: 238-241), labelled 'Marowera Language'.

<sup>4</sup> The location of the Marawara is discussed by Tindale (1974: 130-131, 134, 196, 211).

<sup>5</sup> Tindale 1939.



Yelta between 1855 and 1860 in the light of the language material which we have learnt from Pooncarie people.<sup>6</sup> This enables us to see some of the problems involved in the study of early vocabularies.

## 1. BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS

Bulmer clearly got his information from highly intelligent speakers who were doing their utmost to make their language understood by that relatively rare person, a white man who took a genuine interest in their culture. There are only a few occasions when there was some breakdown in communications. This is always likely to happen, particularly when a person is asked to translate a question: he is apt to think that he is meant to translate an answer. Mistakes of this kind are generally absent from the pages by Bulmer. However there is a curious entry (p.37):

'Arn akie' — 'Whose is this?'

The rendering we would expect is:

*windjikana* *ithu*  
whose this

It is possible that 'Arn akie' may be *nhanganja kiki* 'how is this?'.  
'What name you?' (p.33) is rendered by 'Wingi a nimba'.

This is no doubt *windjika ngimba* 'who are you?'

Sometimes there is confusion as to who is being talked about:

'Paddy urta, Go we', is in fact *Pariwurtu* 'you (pl.) go'.

This plural form occurs also on p.34:

'Purragia urta, lie all (or you all lie)',

i.e. *Parkayaurta*, 'you (pl.) lie'.

It seems that owing to some breakdown in communication, Bulmer thought that 'urta' implied 'all', whereas it is the second person plural subject-marker. He continues with:

'wilka wilk urta'

Hungry all (or, all are hungry)'.  
This should be translated as 'you (pl.) are hungry'. There are also some breakdowns in communications regarding tense.

## 2. REPETITION

In his efforts to make himself understood, the *Marawara* speaker(s) resorted to the device of saying things in another way, hoping that would prove more comprehensible. This happened to such a degree that Bulmer wrote (p.35): 'One thing I have observed with regard to the language — it is a double language. They have two words to express everything'. In his list of words and sentences Bulmer gives near synonyms as equivalents and this underlines his comments on a 'double language'. Thus *wanga*, the word for 'meat', and *manba*, which means 'flesh', are treated as synonyms, as are *kulpera*, which means 'to speak' and 'parel go', *parlku* - which means 'to make a noise'.

<sup>6</sup> Hercus 1982.

## 3. SPELLING OUT

The speaker has obviously tried to improve Bulmer's comprehension by talking slowly and splitting up words into syllables which Bulmer then probably repeated, syllable by syllable. In *Pākantji* there was (phonetic) doubling of consonants other than *d*, *r*, *y* and *w* at the end of the first syllable; Bulmer's vocabulary splits up words at that point as can be seen from the following examples:

'Thul-lagga	Bad'	for <i>thurlaka</i>
'Mel-inya	Fingernails'	for <i>Milinja</i>
'Tar-lin-ya	Tongue'	for <i>tharlinja</i>
'Young-oly	Swan'	for <i>yunguli</i>
'Yap-pera	Camp'	for <i>yapara</i>

The emphasis goes even to the extent of pre-stopping certain consonants, or inserting a *d* before an *l*, a feature that is more characteristic of adjoining South Australian languages:

'Kad-dely	Dog'	for <i>karli</i>
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'Spelling out' is noticeable particularly where personal endings are concerned, as in the examples with 'urta', 'you pl.' quoted above. Sometimes verbal suffixes are separated off along with the bound person markers, as in:

'paddy-wappa'	for <i>pariwapa</i>	'I'm going'
'Go- I'		

and

'Illa parel go rimba' for *kila parlkurimba* 'you're not uttering a sound'

'Do not speak you'

and

'Uring ato' for *yuringkathu* 'I think'

'Think I'

The participial ending *-na* may also be split off along with parts of the verb or verbal suffixes, as in:

'Yaton uri wanna' for *ithu yuriwana*

'He thinks'

This unnatural 'spelling out' may render individual words almost unrecognisable:

'Kate-wail-yo' for *katjiluku*.

'Little'

The false divisions created in this manner have a more general effect; they distort the whole of the verbal system, and obscure a major grammatical rule: in the present tense, in the absence of bound pronouns, the participial ending has to be used.

## 4. EXTREME EMPHASIS AND OVER-SIMPLIFICATION

In his attempts to make himself clear the speaker often used highly emphatic expressions rather than normal ones. Particularly noticeable in this regard is the use of free pronominal forms, *in lieu* of the ordinary bound markers, as in:

'Ninnin kambia'

'our father'

This is *nginina kambiya* 'that very own father of ours' where *kambiyinina* 'our father' is the normal expression.

'Gnoo-yal nappa' *ngūyala ngapa* 'I am the one that is afraid'  
'Afraid I'

where *nguyalapa* 'I'm frightened' is more usual.

Similar comments apply to 'Gnooyal nimba', which means 'you are frightened'. There are many other examples.

There are cases where this over-emphasis does not simply reflect an uncommon usage, but is completely ungrammatical. The speaker resorted to a kind of pidgin for the benefit of the learner, with sentences of the 'me see you' variety, as in:

'Nindu kulpera gnana'

'You spoke to me'

This is *ngindu kulpira nganha*  
you speak me

which is ungrammatical, because the present tense form cannot stand on its own without a participial marker. Moreover it is highly unusual for two emphatic free pronouns to occur in one single sentence. The sentence

'Minna uring nindu'

'What think you'

is of a similar kind; it does not obey the rules of *Pākantji*, presumably because the speaker has tried to 'put it in an easy way' for his European interviewer.

## 5. SPELLING PROBLEMS

The contribution by Bulmer suffers from spelling problems in the same manner as many other early works, to the degree that without a knowledge of the language it would be impossible even to guess the correct pronunciation. It would, for instance, be impossible to decide whether 'i' was to be pronounced as a short 'i' as in English 'bit', or as a diphthong 'ai', resembling the 'y' of English 'by'. Thus Bulmer's 'Uri-uri' 'spirit' is really for *yuri-yuri*, but 'Yapperi' 'my camp' stands for *yaparai*, and 'Kambe i' 'my father' for *kambiiai*. *ai* in the last two cases is the possessive marker of the first person singular. The confusion is considerable, especially when the diphthong *ai* is spelt not only as 'i', but also as 'ie', for instance in 'Gnie' *ngai* 'mine'.

'ie', however, can also stand for:

'i', which in turn has other spellings such as

'y' in 'Murndy' *marndi* 'earth',

'ey' as in 'Murney' *marni* 'fat',

'ee' as in 'Thingee' *thingi* 'knee'

and

'ai' as in 'Paddy waimba' for *pariwimba* 'you are going',  
and even as

'a' in 'Makega' for *mikika* 'doctor'.

Besides this there is the usual problem that 'u' is used to represent the sound 'a' as in English 'cut' as well as for the 'u' of English 'put', but in addition 'o' is often used to render 'u'. No distinction is made between the two 'r' sounds that occur in *Marawara* except that the flapped r is occasionally written 'dd', as in 'Paddy' for *pari* 'to go', for example.

Final vowels have sometimes been misheard or not heard at all, and *ng* and *n* are

confused. It is easy to recognise the words if one knows them, and despite the inconsistencies there is no gross misrepresentation.

## 6. RELIANCE ON OTHERS AND HANDWRITING ERRORS

In Bulmer's work there is a curious spelling (p.36):

'Hippy yhuko Sundown'

This is obviously meant to render

*ipi yuku*  
lay down sun

It is the use of 'h' in this expression that is perplexing: it is not clear what the function of the 'h' is meant to be. Nor is this apparently random use of 'h' an isolated one, as it is also used in 'Bick-ho' for *piku* 'forehead'. This same use appears in an identical entry 'Hippy yhuko' in the article by the Rev. R.W. Holden, 'The "Maroura" tribe, lower Darling',<sup>7</sup> which is the only other major nineteenth century source on *Marawara*. In fact Holden has the identical spelling of *Hippy yhuka* for 'Sundown'. But this and other evidence suggest that Bulmer and Holden either copied from one another or utilised a common source. R.W. Holden actually succeeded the Rev. Bulmer and was at Yelta from 1860 to 1864.<sup>8</sup> It would be altogether too much of a coincidence if they had both independently arrived at this quite extraordinary spelling, and further investigation shows that there are indeed a number of identical spellings in Bulmer's and Holden's words, but also a few divergences. The correspondences are too great and too unusual to be accidental, particularly spellings like:

'Burley Star'

'Gnie Mine'

Holden's vocabulary is longer than Bulmer's, but there are good reasons for thinking that he was the borrower. He probably utilised some basic materials left behind at the mission; these basic materials could have been from his immediate predecessor, Bulmer, or from the most literate and senior of the missionaries, T.H. Goodwin. The secondary nature of some of Holden's work is shown by the fact that he misread some items. Thus Bulmer writes, as quoted above:

'Illa parel go rimba'

'Do not speak you'

for

*kila parikurimba* 'you are not uttering a sound'.

Holden writes (p.24) 'panelgorimba you speak', 'panelgorappa I speak' and 'panelgorana to talk or be noisy', evidently having misread 'r' as 'n'. On account of the problems of handwriting we have therefore a type of error that is of a different magnitude compared to mere spelling confusion. Even someone who knew the language would have difficulty understanding Holden's word 'panelgorimba'. 'panelgo-' being tri-syllabic would not be acceptable as a *Pākanti* verbal root in any case. It is only through a comparison with Bulmer's work that the situation becomes transparent.

<sup>7</sup> In Taplin 1879. See p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Massola 1970: 19.

Bulmer, like Holden and T.H. Goodwin (who contributed a very brief word list to R. Brough Smyth,<sup>9</sup> p.75) spent years at Yelta and obviously knew the people he was learning from. He did not encounter any of the other common hazards that await the less well-informed, such as inadvertently mixing-in information from the language of a person from another area who happened to be visiting. Bulmer's work is superior in quality, less sketchy and better thought-out than many of the contributions to the works of Taplin, Smyth and Curr. Yet, as shown above, it is beset by problems. The aim of the present paper is to emphasise the difficulty of using material from these works. As shown by the example of Bulmer and Holden we must beware even when authors corroborate and confirm each other: they may simply be copying, or even mis-copying a common source. For many parts of the southeastern areas of Australia we do *not* have a larger body of information which would enable us to correct and interpret the evidence of the contributions to Curr and Brough Smyth. We therefore have to leave many linguistic questions unanswered and admit that we simply do not know, and never shall.

<sup>9</sup> T.H. Goodwin, 'Yelta' pp.74-76 in the section devoted to 'Language' in R.B. Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria* 1878, II: 1-220.

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## BATHURST PLAINS AND BEYOND: EUROPEAN COLONISATION AND ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE

Michael Pearson

The Bathurst Plains, located 150 kilometres due west of Sydney, were 'discovered' by Assistant Surveyor, George Evans, in December 1813, and in 1815 the first European settlement west of the Blue Mountains was established there. The colonisation of the Bathurst Plains and adjacent areas on the upper Macquarie River and Lachlan River tributaries incorporated reciprocal processes; the gradual modification of the coloniser's British land use pattern into a recognisably Australian pattern, and the gradual erosion, followed by the rapid collapse, of the Aboriginal land use pattern.<sup>1</sup>

The European colonisation of the Bathurst Plains elicited one of the strongest Aboriginal reactions met with to that date. The analysis of that resistance gives an insight into both the nature of Aboriginal settlement in the area, and the changes taking place in the European settlement pattern, and shows that while in some ways the Bathurst experience differed substantially from later conflict on the pastoral frontier in New South Wales, it does help to explain that subsequent contact history.

### *ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS, 1815-1824*

The reconstruction of Aboriginal settlement patterns as they existed at the time of the first European occupation of the Bathurst Plains is based largely on evidence from later periods, and is therefore to some degree tentative.

The early observations of Aboriginal settlement, before the 1824 violence, are of limited value in establishing patterns of occupation. Governor Macquarie was met by 15 Aborigines (men and boys) when he visited the tiny Bathurst settlement in 1815. Captain Antill, a member of Macquarie's party commented that

... at first they [the Aborigines] appeared very much astonished at us, and not a little alarmed at our reception, but in a short time by kind treatment they became more reconciled to us, and seemed to cast off all fear. Our people received strict injunctions to use them kindly, to put no restraint on their movements but to let them go and come when they thought proper.<sup>2</sup>

At this period unstudied observations of Aboriginal life-style were the rule, such as the comments by Lesson in 1824 that they were

*Michael Pearson's doctoral research was a study of Aboriginal and early colonial land-use and settlement in the Upper Macquarie, New South Wales. He now concentrates on historical archaeology as head of that department of New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service's Cultural Resources Section.*

<sup>1</sup> Elaborated in Pearson 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Antill 1815:83.

... true nomads, who have no fixed abode, but who for the most part follow the banks of the rivers and streams . . . Hence comes that absence of art and the wretched state in which they stagnate, especially when their primitive and barbarous customs are compared with the semi-civilisation of the happy inhabitants of the Polynesian Islands . . .<sup>3</sup>

Groups of up to 20 Aborigines were met with by early explorers and settlers in the area around Bathurst, and gatherings of 100 and 150 people were recorded on special occasions.<sup>4</sup> The observations of James Gunther, the C.M.S. missionary at Wellington Valley from 1837 to 1843, give a good picture of the nature of Aboriginal group movements and their frequency.<sup>5</sup> Gunther paints a picture of a highly mobile population and flexible group size.

The evidence given by these and other nineteenth century observers suggests that the upper Macquarie was inhabited by large localised groups of Aborigines, who in normal conditions of daily life were divided into small groups of up to twenty individuals. These small groups could coalesce relatively quickly into groups of from 80 to 150 people to take advantage of a guaranteed or desirable resource (such as seasonal food resources or the goods offered by the Wellington mission), for ceremonial or social obligations, or for special events (such as a pre-arranged gathering to see an explorer or first settler in an area). There seem to have been no over-riding seasonal factors affecting Aboriginal movements in the well-watered upper Macquarie.

The ethnohistoric evidence from the upper Macquarie suggests that recognisably distinct local communities existed, which were larger than the groups which were observed hunting and gathering at normal times. There is no direct evidence as to the size of these groupings, nor as to the extent to which their numbers were stable or fluid. An attempt, however, is made below to deduce the scale of the groups from ethnohistoric statements. There is also no evidence available to indicate that the 'boundaries' between the larger groups were fixed, or that they were even recognised as a concept. Again, the attempt below to draw lines between 'clans' is merely to differentiate the three areas that the ethnohistorical evidence suggests were inhabited by distinct groups. It does not imply that these lines necessarily represent actual boundaries.

In the ethnohistoric record, it would appear that it is the larger groups to which 'territories' were assigned. These larger groups correspond with Meggitt's 'community' unit<sup>6</sup> or with the 'clan' unit, the group who controlled their own land or 'estate'.<sup>7</sup> The smaller self-sufficient groups are commonly referred to as 'bands', a number of which, as a group, constitute the clan or community.<sup>8</sup> The terms 'clan' and 'band'

<sup>3</sup> Lesson 1824:158, 163, February 1824.

<sup>4</sup> Cox 1821, 10 December; Lawson 1822, 23 January; 'Colo' 1826.

<sup>5</sup> Gunther 1836:41.

<sup>6</sup> Meggitt 1962:51.

<sup>7</sup> Stanner 1965.

<sup>8</sup> Peterson 1976:68.

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are used here in their loosest form, to differentiate between the larger and smaller groups referred to in the ethnohistorical record.

The local ethnohistorical sources use the term 'tribe' very loosely, obviously not to refer to the linguistic tribal grouping known as Wiradjeri, as this would imply a huge area of land including the whole of the upper Macquarie. Most of the references to 'tribe' probably refer to the large local groupings (clans), which, being seen by nineteenth century observers as separate entities from their neighbours, were labelled with the only commonly understood term for the primitive organisational unit – the tribe.

Barron Field in 1822 recorded one of the first statements of territoriality in the Bathurst area:

Their numbers are diminishing. Not that they retreat before the settlements of Europeans, this they cannot do: the different tribes (few as their numbers are) would resist the invasion of each others territory. Thirty or forty miles will reach the circumference of each family's peregrinations.<sup>9</sup>

'Colo' writing in 1826 agreed with Field's estimate of clan area:

It is difficult to ascertain the exact extent of each tribal area. I should suppose it does not exceed a radius of forty miles.<sup>10</sup>

'Colo' went on to suggest that eight 'tribes' lived in the area between Wellington Valley, the Coal River (the Hunter), and the Lachlan River. These 'tribes' were named for the part of the country they most frequently inhabited; they were the Parramatta or Bathurst tribe, Muc-are or Kings Plains tribe, Billabearra (Bellubula?), Wellington Valley, Bingum, Mudgy, Mundowry and Pialong tribes. However, another author (admittedly less reliable than 'Colo') claimed that in 1827 five 'tribes' existed in the Wellington Valley alone, split up into groups of 60 or 70 people.<sup>11</sup> Other statements of the existence of 'tribal' (or clan) boundaries on the upper Macquarie were made by Henderson, Hale, Gunther, Meredith and Graham.<sup>12</sup> Hood<sup>13</sup> claimed that 'tribal areas' were 30-40 miles square, with a population of 50 to 100 persons to each 'tribe'. Table 1 presents the evidence from five authors who make estimates of clan territory size. It will be noticed that these estimates vary widely and all can be challenged. Some, such as those of Hale and Strachan, are obviously far off the mark, and may be put down to unfamiliarity with the local area and its Aborigines. The more likely estimates appear to be those of 'Colo' and Field. Field perhaps came to his estimate by chance, but 'Colo' had a long association both with the local district and the Aborigines, having given a home on his property 'Bruceedale' to some of the defeated leaders of the local 'Black War' of 1824. The estimated size of these territories, where it is given by the sources quoted in Table 1, is usually in the form of an estimated distance to the boundary of the territory from a centre. The centre from which the radius of this territory is measured is never given as a geographical place, nor is it

<sup>9</sup> Field 1822:432, 10 October 1822.

<sup>10</sup> 'Colo' 1826. 'Colo' was the *nom de plume* of George Sutton Jnr of 'Bruceedale'.

<sup>11</sup> Strachan 1870:229.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson 1832:151-152; Hale 1846:109; Gunther nd; Meredith 1844:100; Graham 1863:113.

<sup>13</sup> Hood 1843:157-8.



TABLE 1  
Estimates of Clan Territory Size

Source	Estimated Size of Territory in Miles	Area
Field (1822)	<i>30 mile radius</i>	7323 sq km
	<i>40 mile radius</i>	13019 sq km
'Colo' (1826)	<i>&lt; 40 mile radius</i>	<i>&lt; 13019 sq km</i>
'Colo' (1826) <sup>a</sup>	<i>28 mile radius</i>	<i>6475 sq km</i>
Hale (1840)	<i>50 mile radius</i>	20342 sq km
Hood (1842)	<i>30 miles sq</i>	2331 sq km
	<i>40 miles sq</i>	4144 sq km
Strachan (1827) <sup>b</sup>	<i>7 miles radius</i>	<i>414 sq km</i>

Original information supplied by each source is italicised.

<sup>a</sup> based on 'Colo's' claim of 8 'tribes' between Wellington, the upper Hunter catchment area and the Lachlan, an area of roughly 160 x 125 miles or 51800 sq km.

<sup>b</sup> based on Strachan's claim of 5 'tribes' in the Wellington Valley, an area of at most 40 x 20 miles or 2072 sq km.

given any special significance. Such statements of territory size use the radius as a convenient measuring stick only.

Further evidence on the nature of Aboriginal territories may be extracted from historic references to Aboriginal warfare, much of which seems to have been based on the defence of traditional land rights. Louisa Meredith, for example, claimed that warfare was often precipitated by the breaking of rigid laws relating to tribal boundaries, or by the inter-tribal abduction of women.<sup>14</sup> Hood<sup>15</sup> believed that trespass was usually occasioned by hunting beyond the tribe's own ground, while Gunther, who spoke with more authority, claimed that though fights were often caused by trespass, more often they were over women.<sup>16</sup> The territorial information comes from the identification of the antagonists on such occasions. Opponents included: a combination of the Mudgee and Wellington 'tribes' against the Castlereagh and Lower Macquarie 'tribes';<sup>17</sup> the Wellington 'tribe' against a more westerly 'tribe';<sup>18</sup> the Mudgee 'tribe' against the Bathurst 'tribe';<sup>19</sup> the Lachlan River 'tribe' against the Macquarie 'tribe' (i.e. Bathurst).<sup>20</sup> These various reports suggest that three clans existed in the upper Macquarie, in the general areas around Bathurst, Wellington and Mudgee/Rylestone. These were surrounded by other clans, the Lachlan clan to the south-west, the Bogan clan to the west, Lower Macquarie clan to the north-west and

<sup>14</sup> Meredith 1844:100-101.

<sup>15</sup> Hood 1843:158.

<sup>16</sup> Gunther nd:43-4.

<sup>17</sup> Gunther nd:45-6.

<sup>18</sup> Henderson 1832:151.

<sup>19</sup> Cox 1912.

<sup>20</sup> Graham 1863:133-141.

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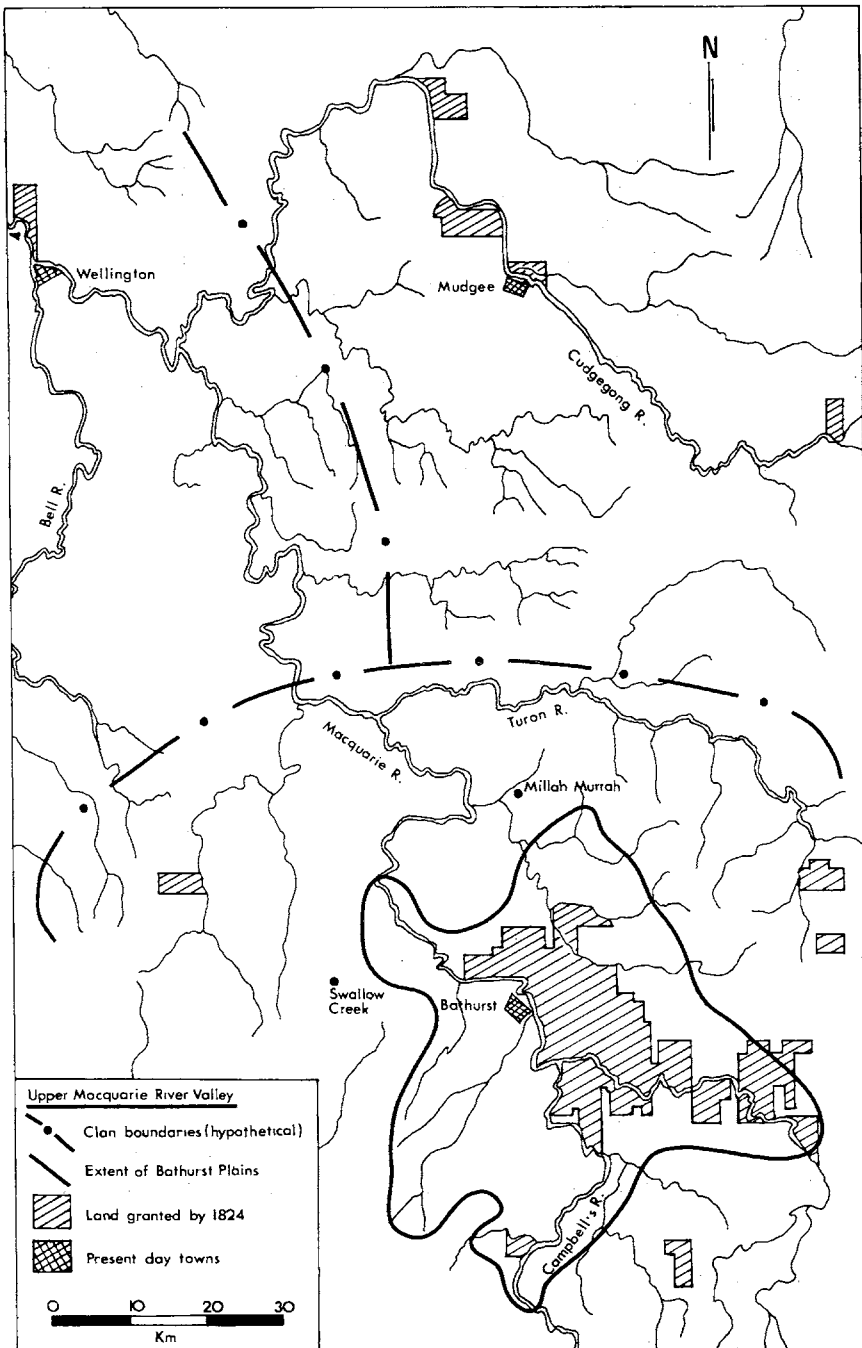


Figure 1 – The Upper Macquarie River Valley showing major tributaries, the location of the Bathurst Plains and hypothetical clan boundaries for the early nineteenth century.

the Castlereagh clan to the north. These clans fought their neighbours at times, and at other times combined with them against a common enemy. The major causes of these conflicts were said to be trespass and abduction of women. It is worth noting that these two causal factors were in evidence in Bathurst in 1824 when martial law was declared. In Aboriginal terms, the Europeans were guilty of trespass and abduction on a grand scale, but unfortunately the traditional amicable solution to the conflict after a minimum amount of bloodshed was not part of the ground rules for the new cross-cultural conflict. It has been suggested that the European invasion of some areas of Australia caused Aboriginal groups to be more assertive about possession of clan territories;<sup>21</sup> I will argue later in this paper that such a response can be observed in the Bathurst area after 1821.

The existence of three clan territories in the upper Macquarie is supported by evidence that three distinct dialects of Wiradjeri occurred. These dialects were used in areas around Wellington, Dabee/Capertee and Bathurst.<sup>22</sup> The evidence from the various ethnohistoric sources suggests that these three territories may have had a radius of about 25-40 miles (40-64 km), though they were not of regular shape. This tripartite subdivision of the upper Macquarie would help explain many of the unanswered questions regarding ethnographic observations of differing customs; it would also explain the regionalised pattern of Aboriginal-European aggression in the mid 1820's.

It has been hypothesised that natural boundaries may have separated the clan territories. If that is the case these boundaries for the upper Macquarie may have been the Turon River, the western edge of the Oberon and Hill End Plateaux, the Goulburn River and Talbragar River to the north, the Lachlan Valley to the south, the Great Divide to the east, and the Bogan River and the Plains to the west and north-west. Each of these three proposed clan territories occupies a drainage catchment area of one of the three main tributaries of the upper Macquarie. As Peterson<sup>23</sup> has pointed out drainage basins appear to have an important bearing on the location of cultural boundaries in other parts of Australia.

The population for the upper Macquarie (above Dubbo), based on various estimates might have been between 500 and 600 at contact. This gives a population density of from 1:41 km<sup>2</sup> to 1:35 km<sup>2</sup>, falling between the densities estimated for the Northern and Southern Tablelands of New South Wales by Flood.<sup>24</sup>

#### EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS 1815-1824

The pressures which drove the infant English colony clustered around Port Jackson to venture over the Blue Mountains have been closely studied by Perry and others.<sup>25</sup> Perry suggests that the expedition of Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813 was

<sup>21</sup> Reynolds 1982:66.

<sup>22</sup> Gunther nd:64-55.

<sup>23</sup> Peterson 1976: *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Flood 1976:39.

<sup>25</sup> Perry 1953-5; 1957; 1963; Jeans 1972.

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prompted by the loss of stock carrying capacity in the Cumberland Plains due to a deterioration in natural pasture, overstocking, a series of droughts and a plague of caterpillars. It was not the lack of available land, but the shortage of adequate fodder which made the discovery of new grazing lands a necessity.<sup>26</sup>

The settlement of the Bathurst Plains in 1815 with the Government Stock Establishment was Macquarie's response to this need.<sup>27</sup> However it remained a tightly government controlled settlement as regards land, labour and markets. Convicts provided labour, and access by other than government officials was restricted.<sup>28</sup> Stock could be grazed under permit by a few, but land was not open to occupation. This deliberately restrictive policy established by Macquarie ensured that the Bathurst Plains remained the 'government grazing frontier' and that growth until 1822 was slow. It also minimised cross-cultural conflict and competition for land and its resources.

The impact on Aboriginal traditional life made by the European settlement of the relatively small area settled up to 1821 appears to have been slight. Most of the Bathurst Plains was visited on a non-permanent basis by free-ranging flocks seeking good grazing, requiring few permanent stock-keeper's structures and few fences or yards. Also, the small European population was living off the commissariat, which provided few incentives to lure Aborigines from a traditional lifestyle, and reduced the European demand on the local game, at least for a time. The presence of an unusual community in their midst may not have disturbed the Aboriginal view of the ability of the district to continue to support their own economic system, but increased aggression in the early 1820's may mark the awakening in Aboriginal consciousness of the real threat the Europeans posed to their continued use of traditional lands, and to the realisation that Europeans did not share Aboriginal views on reciprocity.

The crucial period in the development of the Macquarie Region frontier was the decade after Governor Macquarie's departure in 1821. In this period land grants were made for the Bathurst area and Cudgegong district to individuals, ensuring land tenure. In addition Government holdings also increased, with a number of new Government Stock Stations opened, such as the Wellington Agricultural Station of 1822 to 1831. All these changes had implications for Aboriginal/settler relations.

### WHITE COLONISATION AND BLACK RESISTANCE, 1822 to 1825

In the period 1815 to 1822, then, two land settlement regimes were in force on the upper Macquarie, one expanding at the ultimate expense of the other. The Aboriginal pattern, it is hypothesised from the ethnohistoric record, consisted of the division of the region into three 'clan' territories, centred at Wellington, Mudgee/Rylestone and east, and Bathurst. These three territories shared the estimated 500-600 Aboriginal inhabitants at contact. The primary economic resource zones in each territory were the mixed woodland/grasslands which skirted the Bathurst Plains and predominated in the Bell River Valley above Wellington and the Cudgegong River flats and upper Capertee Valley around Mudgee.

<sup>26</sup> Perry 1963:27-29; 1957:4.

<sup>27</sup> Ritchie 1971, vol. 1:178, Blake's evidence.

<sup>28</sup> Macquarie 1815:72-3; Field 1822:134.

The European settlement pattern up to 1822 consisted of the open-range grazing of sheep, carried out by a small population concentrated on Bathurst, numbering 287 by 1821. This land-use regime resulted in little modification of the Bathurst Plains as a whole, due mainly to Macquarie's policy on land alienation. There was minimal fencing and few other improvements; little conflict with the Aboriginal land-use regime emerged. In the early 1820s a series of events reflected important changes in the settlement patterns of both Aboriginal and European societies of the upper Macquarie. The events outlined below were symptoms of reciprocal processes; the expansion of European grazing inside the Bathurst Plains, and the rapid reduction in the area of land available to Aborigines for traditional land-use.

European grazing was disrupted by wandering groups of Aborigines who disturbed flocks and herds and who occasionally hunted domestic animals as well as wild ones. Stockmen were often disconcerted by meeting armed groups of Aborigines while miles from the support of other Europeans. The Aboriginal practice of burning off was also considered undesirable with so many scattered flocks and herds. These problems were mainly minor irritations; but many Europeans saw no reason to put up with the 'nuisance' caused by Aborigines. The Aborigines began to see similar problems. Their traditional lifestyle was threatened in a very real way by the European presence. Stock and stockmen disturbed game, and disrupted hunting and gathering activities. Fences broke up the land and made traditional land-use difficult. Guns were owned by the Europeans which were far more effective against game than were spears, and put the European in direct competition with the Aboriginal for the rapidly dwindling game numbers.

Fried<sup>29</sup> has isolated three factors which affect the outcome of a meeting between two cultures. First, geography, the spatial distribution of natural features, influences the intensity and continuity of culture contact. In New South Wales, the inability, or more likely the lack of incentive, to cross the Blue Mountains, protected the Macquarie Aborigines from contact with Europeans for nearly thirty years. Also, partially because of geography, the Bathurst settlement was stagnant for the first five years of its existence. Once settlement commenced in earnest, the geographical distribution of natural resources meant that the Europeans were primarily interested in only three areas ideal for grazing in the upper Macquarie, the Bathurst Plains, Cudgegong Valley and Bell River Valley. Unfortunately these areas appear to have been of major importance to the Aboriginal economy as well.

Fried's second factor is ecology, 'the interaction of man as a cultural animal with his environment through the medium of technology'. Here there was no point of mutual interest between Europeans and Aborigines. Aborigines lived with a very simple technology, but backed up by an expert knowledge of their environment. Europeans on the other hand had a complex technology which to a degree allowed them to modify the unfamiliar environment to meet their needs. There was nothing that the Aboriginal could contribute to the European economy which would give their society a place in the new regime. Aboriginal culture was therefore given no value at all on the frontier.

<sup>29</sup> Fried 1952.

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The third factor affecting cultural contact is social organisation, especially in terms of land tenure. As Spoehr<sup>30</sup> points out a society interprets its resources within the framework of its own social structure. To the European mind, the Aborigines had no actual tenure over the land, as Aboriginal social organisation imposed a form of land 'ownership' so different from that of the Europeans as to go unrecognised by them. Aborigines were seen as 'nomads' with no fixed abode; therefore they had no land rights. The nature of their social organisation left the Aborigines virtually powerless to retaliate to invasion in a collective way. On the other hand, the failure of Europeans to recognise Aboriginal social structure led to their unwitting breach of Aboriginal laws and vice versa. This often resulted in bloodshed and retaliation in the form of guerilla warfare, which the European settlers found difficult to counter.

Despite the enormous differences between the two cultures and the growing economic competition between them, it took eight years for race relations to deteriorate to the point where open conflict was inevitable. Macquarie's official attitude to Aborigines has been analysed and reduced to four points by Bridges:<sup>31</sup>

- (i) subjugation and conciliation
- (ii) encouragement and help to become farmers and fishers
- (iii) extension of European influence through tribal leaders
- (iv) recognition of those who helped Europeans

It would appear that Macquarie was successful only in subjugation.

As with many policies thrown up by the Colonial Government, Macquarie's plans for Aboriginal conciliation had little practical effect out on the frontiers where the contact between the races occurred. However, Macquarie's policies restricting expansion of settlement at Bathurst kept racial strife to a minimum. Occasional attacks (such as the spearing of William Lawson's best brood mare in 1819) did occur,<sup>32</sup> but it was not until the accelerated expansion of the early 1820's that the situation became serious. The European population of the district in 1820 stood at only 114 persons; this had trebled to 392 in 1822. By 1824, the worst year of racial strife, the population of Bathurst district had rocketed to 1267 persons. The amount of alienated land and numbers of stock increased proportionately. Alienated land increased from 2,520 acres in 1821, to 91,636 acres in 1825 in the Bathurst district. Combined numbers of sheep and cattle increased from 33,733 in 1821, to 113,973 in 1825.<sup>33</sup> This rapid increase to some degree reflected the overall increase in the colony's population, which had reached 33,595 in 1824, but was primarily influenced by the change in policy towards settlement at Bathurst after Macquarie left in 1821. This is clearly seen in the increase in the area of alienated land by a factor of 36 times.

These changes between 1820 and 1824 proved critical to the continuance of the Aboriginal lifestyle in the Bathurst area. Friction was inevitable. Contact between the expanding Europeans and the Aboriginal society on the retreat became unavoidable. Aborigines learnt the value of European goods, developed a growing dependence on

<sup>30</sup> Spoehr 1956:97.

<sup>31</sup> Bridges 1966:256.

<sup>32</sup> *CSIL* 1819, Hassall to Macquarie, 16/6/1819 (AONSW 4/1742).

<sup>33</sup> Compiled from relevant *HRA* volumes and *NSW Returns*.

European food, and sought ways of acquiring these. With the disruption of native game on the plains, the use of European stock for food became a temptation which most Aborigines saw little reason to refuse. The European stockmen on the other hand had increasing difficulty maintaining control over expanding flocks and herds, which was not lessened by the Aboriginal practice of 'rushing' stock. In a heavily male-dominated society, convict stockmen and Aborigines alike saw a chance for a primitive barter system, exchanging European goods for the favours of Aboriginal women. Excesses by either party, such as Aborigines stealing goods or spearing cattle, or stockmen abducting or raping women, or otherwise maltreating Aborigines, led to retaliation by the other side. This exchange of women for goods has been seen in other parts of Australia as an attempt by Aboriginal groups to involve Europeans in the Aboriginal system of reciprocal obligation, the misunderstanding of which could also lead to conflict.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the immediate cause of the 1823-24 'war' can be found in the coincidence between the area settled by Europeans in 1824 and the area of one of the three Aboriginal clan territories identified earlier. The spread of European settlement, as shown in Map I, had, by 1824, covered most of the cleared and semi-cleared land in the Bathurst Clan territory. While this area had probably been grazed by European stock for some years prior to 1824, it was then that European ownership, rather than mere use, was being stressed. Claims of ownership were reinforced by the fencing of pasture land, increased stock numbers, an expanding European population, and the exclusion of Aboriginal land-use techniques. While there appears to have been reasonably flexible movement of one clan into the territory of adjacent clans (as noted above) it is unlikely that flexibility would have extended to absorbing the whole of a displaced clan. It is therefore likely that the progression between 1822 and 1824, from reasonably compatible low-key land-use by Europeans to the exercise of exclusive proprietary rights over a large and vitally important part of the territory of the Bathurst clan, forced the Bathurst clan to retaliate as best it could.

Coinciding with the rapid filling of the Bathurst Plains by European stock was the drought of 1822-4 which would have put pressure on both Aboriginal and European land-use techniques and probably contributed to the breakdown of already strained relations between the races.<sup>35</sup> The final collapse of good relations can be dated from 1822. In April 1822, William Lawson reported the murder of a convict named William Maybow, by the 'natives'. Lawson, however, thought that there must have been some provocation for this act.<sup>36</sup> In October of the same year Barron Field rode to the west of Bathurst and

returned by the huts of a sheep-location, and found them deserted by reason of a recent plunder on the part of the native Indians. These and a few accidents more

<sup>34</sup> Ryan 1982:67-9; Reynolds 1982:70-72.

<sup>35</sup> It is worth noting in this regard that the trouble in the Cudgegong Valley to the north may have been a reaction by local Aborigines after seeing in their own clan territory the beginnings of what was happening in Bathurst. However, in the Wellington area, where European settlement was still very scattered and low-key, no aggression occurred.

<sup>36</sup> *CSIL* Bathurst 1815-23, Lawson to Goulburn, (AONSW Reel 598:135-8).

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serious will happen till the natives become more domesticated among the settlers themselves (their servants don't know how to treat them); but their thefts are generally confined to a tomahawk or an axe, the temptation of possessing which is too irresistible for black human nature. But the aborigines of this new country very rarely appear in combined numbers; and are easily scared by guns, horses, or even English dogs.<sup>37</sup>

Governor Brisbane followed Macquarie's policy regarding the Aborigines, or so it would appear from the instructions given to Percy Simpson for the establishment of the Wellington Government Station in January 1823:

You will take an early opportunity of establishing a friendly intercourse with the neighbouring Blacks. Whenever they apprehend stray cattle or Runaways, small presents are to be made to them of wheat, Tomahawks, or Fish hooks, and you are to punish very severely any ill treatment of them.<sup>38</sup>

However, events at Bathurst were compounding, showing that policy and practice in this case were incompatible. John Maxwell, Superintendent of Government Stock at Bathurst, reported that Aborigines were becoming troublesome at the Swallow Creek station, between Bathurst and the site of the present town of Orange, in August 1823. By November, Maxwell had to report the abandonment of the Swallow Creek station 'on account of the Hostile Natives'. Two stockmen had been killed at Marsden's property nearby the week before, and Maxwell's men refused to work.<sup>39</sup>

In October 1823 Judge Wylde's overseer report trouble near Bathurst, with the spearing of cattle belonging to Wylde and G.T. Palmer. Huts had also been robbed of provisions at Wylde's run at King's Plains. Lawson kept control over the European reaction to the situation by sending out one of Wylde's overseers with four soldiers. His instructions were as follows:

You will proceed with four soldiers and a party of prisoners in pursuit of the hostile black natives, and in the event of your falling in with Jingler's tribe, you are not to fire upon them, only in case of actual necessity in self defence, but to secure as many of them as possible and to bring them before me to be dealt with according to law, and you are to be very particular not to offer any violence to the native Women, or destroy them or their children.<sup>40</sup>

Wylde himself reported the affair to Goulburn in November, stating that in a skirmish at a hut one Aboriginal was shot dead. His men then deserted the run in fear for their lives. Wylde requested immediate military protection.<sup>41</sup> There is no evidence that Lawson's hunt located any Aborigines connected with the Wylde incident, but Lawson himself remained unconvinced that the recent outbreaks of violence were one-sided. Reporting on the killing of the two men on Marsden's property, he wrote: 'I have

<sup>37</sup> Field 1822:135.

<sup>38</sup> *NSW Governors Despatches* 1832-5: Colonial Secretary to Simpson 1/1/1823 (A 1297-13:1363).

<sup>39</sup> *CSIL* Assignment & Employment of Convicts 1800-1819 Letter 21/8/1823 (AONSW Reel 593); *CSIL* Bathurst 1815-1823, Maxwell to Goulburn 26/11/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:315-17).

<sup>40</sup> *CSIL* Letter 12/10/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:337).

<sup>41</sup> *CSIL* Wylde to Goulburn 19/11/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:311-13).



not yet learnt the causes, but I fear the white persons in the first instance have been the aggressors . . .'.<sup>42</sup>

Lawson resigned his post as Commandant at Bathurst late in 1823. The new commandant, Morriset, was more open to pressure from Judge Wylde, who not only called for a military operation, but also suggested that a reward be given to the tribe that turned-in 'Saturday' (Windradyne), identified as one of the leaders in recent troubles.<sup>43</sup> Morriset sent a small military force to follow up a report of cattle spearing on the eastern side of the Macquarie in December. A couple of Aborigines were taken prisoner. Although it could not be shown that they had anything to do with the spearings, Morriset thought that the fright would do them good.<sup>44</sup>

The *Sydney Gazette* of 8 January 1824 reported on the recent disturbances at Bathurst, and on the capture of 'Saturday' — 'one of the Chiefs of a desperate tribe', who was arrested and put in chains for a month. The *Gazette* found it of light comic relief to point out 'the natives urge that the white men have driven away all the kangaroos and opossums, and that black men must now eat beef!' Amusing as this may have appeared to the editors of the day, there was more truth to the claim than the writer knew.

In January and February 1824 Judge Wylde's cattle were again attacked; he once more called for military action.<sup>45</sup> It seemed that this time his demands were met. Nelson Lawson, son of William Lawson, noted in April two obviously related observations: 'The natives is [sic] very troublesome over the mountains, there has been several of them shot and two of them committed . . . to the criminal court, and is likely to be hanged . . . The time passes very pleasant over the mountains. The sport is getting very scarce . . .'.<sup>46</sup> Referring to the same incident, Nelson's brother, William Jnr, wrote 'there has been several [Aborigines] recently shot by soldiers which were stationed at the Judges station . . . We have now commenced hostilities against them in consequence of their killing a great number of shepherds and stockmen, but afraid we shall never exterminate them, they have such an extensive mountainous country for them to flee from their pursuers. The party which is in quest for them fell in with a horde of their women and dispatched them in return for the men, they are in guard of the city . . .'.<sup>47</sup> This last sentence is confusing, but it appears to mean that women were being held hostage for the men's surrender, not that the women were killed.

The reason for this manhunt, referred to by the Lawsons, was the killing of seven stockkeepers in two days in May 1824. One man was killed by a group of Aborigines at a mill near Bathurst. The group then went on to 'Millah Murrah' near Wyagdon, where three stock keepers were killed, and to 'Warren Gunyah' at Wattle Flat, where

<sup>42</sup> *CSIL* Lawson to Goulburn 27/11/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:319).

<sup>43</sup> Wylde to Goulburn 1/12/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:335).

<sup>44</sup> *CSIL* Morriset to Goulburn 26/12/1823 (AONSW Reel 598:373-4).

<sup>45</sup> *CSIL* Wylde to Goulburn 22/1/1824 (AONSW Reel 1257:3-5).

<sup>46</sup> Beard 1967:34.

<sup>47</sup> Beard 1967:37-8.

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three more stockmen were killed.<sup>48</sup> This particular series of attacks may have been related to the building of the homestead at 'Millah Murrah' on, or near to, a ceremonial ground. Further, a rumour was current that poisoned flour had been given to local Aborigines there.<sup>49</sup>

Also in May, Hassall's property on O'Connell was attacked, and a stockman badly wounded. A revenge party of stockmen were reported to have killed three Aboriginal women near 'Raineville', which led to a trial in Sydney of five men on charges of manslaughter. All of them were acquitted.<sup>50</sup> Four more stockmen were killed on Lawson's property at Cambell's River after July.<sup>51</sup> Reports of retribution killings were, for obvious reasons, less exact than reports of Europeans killed. However, rumours reached Sydney of massacres of up to 60 or 70 Aborigines, although the *Sydney Gazette* preferred to believe that only eight or nine Aborigines had been killed.<sup>52</sup> Reverend Walker believed that at least 100 Aboriginal men, women and children had been killed in 1824;<sup>53</sup> massacres were reported at Billiwillinga, Wattle Flat, Capertee and Clear Creek, but no details recorded.<sup>54</sup>

Attitudes towards Aborigines were hardening, even in official circles. On 10 June 1824, Governor Brisbane requested of the Colonial Secretary, Bathurst, that a troop of colonial cavalry be raised 'not only with a view of keeping the Aborigines in check against whom Infantry have no chance of success, but also for the general Police of the Country'. The strength of the troop was to be 29 men and three officers.<sup>55</sup> This was the foundation of the Mounted Police.

Feelings were running very high in Bathurst, and at a Public Meeting, William Cox is reported to have argued that 'the best thing that could be done, would be to shoot all the Blacks and manure the ground with their carcasses, which was all the good they were fit for! It was recommended likewise that the women and children should especially be shot as the most certain method of getting rid of the race'.<sup>56</sup> The petition from this meeting, signed by William Cox, Robert Lowe, William Lawson, Archibald Bell, G.T. Palmer, John Wylde, Samuel Marsden and others, demands:

that in as much as the Black Natives are understood to be still found collected in numbers and so advancing upon various cattle stations to the great hazard of life and property, such a large Military Force be sent out . . . as may at once overawe the natives and lead to the hope by taking prisoners, or otherwise, of bringing them at once to a state of due Subjection and Innohensiveness.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *CSIL* May 1824 (AONSW Reel 1257:29-30); *Sydney Gazette* 10/6/1824; Horton 1825: 1359-1360.

<sup>49</sup> Salisbury & Gresser 1971:23.

<sup>50</sup> Salisbury & Gresser 1971:26; *Sydney Gazette* 10/6/1824.

<sup>51</sup> Salisbury & Gresser 1971:26; Fisher T. 1824.

<sup>52</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 22/7/1824.

<sup>53</sup> *Bonwick Transcript* Box 53:1433.

<sup>54</sup> Suttor 1887; Salisbury & Gresser 1971:31.

<sup>55</sup> *Governors Despatches*, Brisbane to Darling 10/6/1824, Vol. 5:555-7.

<sup>56</sup> Gunson 1974, Vol. 1:49.

<sup>57</sup> *CSIL* 16/7/1824 (AONSW 4/1799:74-5).

Governor Darling finally took decisive action, proclaiming Martial Law west of Mt York, on 14 August 1824.<sup>58</sup> Under this authority a vigorous military campaign was launched against the Aborigines of the district. The first major incident occurred when about 30 Aborigines attacked and drove off a large herd of cattle, belonging to Cox, in the Mudgee district. A battle broke out between three of Cox's men and the Aborigines, in which it was claimed that 16 Aborigines were killed. The Bathurst Commandant, with four magistrates, forty soldiers and six settlers raced from Bathurst in pursuit. The *Gazette* comments that 'there is every reason to hope that they will come up with the natives, and put an end to this sanguinary and desultory warfare'.<sup>59</sup> However, one of the magistrates, George Ranken, wrote on 28 September that groups of soldiers had been sent in different directions but 'None of us succeeded in seeing the enemy, except Walker, and that was only in the shape of one black gin and a picanniny'.<sup>60</sup> Other reports suggest some other groups of soldiers did make contact with Aborigines. Threlkeld claimed that one group was driven into a swamp where all were shot, after which 45 heads were cut from the bodies, boiled down, and the skulls taken back to Britain by Commandant Morriset as souvenirs.<sup>61</sup>

In marked contrast to the situation in Bathurst and Mudgee was the peace which reigned at Wellington Valley. The *Sydney Gazette* reported that while 'an exterminating war' was being pursued at Bathurst, the kind treatment shown the Aborigines at Wellington had led to a harmonious coexistence. Wounded Aborigines from Bathurst occasionally turned up at Wellington for medical help.<sup>62</sup> The real factor of importance at Wellington, besides good relations with the Government station there, was that only a small percentage of the land had been taken over by Europeans when the Bathurst hostilities broke out. This, and the small numbers of Europeans in the district, meant that the shock of land alienation was delayed for at least a decade. In addition, because of the long association with Europeans, and the ameliorating role the mission played in the Aboriginal economy, the impact of contact took a different, mainly non-violent form.

Meanwhile, the Bathurst and Mudgee Aborigines, despite the importance the Europeans placed on 'Saturday' (Aboriginal name 'Windradyne'), and 'Jingler' (Aboriginal name 'Morall'), lacked cohesive leadership and organisation. The identified 'leaders' of the 'uprising' were probably in fact leaders of individual bands, who happened to be particularly effective at organising their groups in guerilla warfare. It would seem unlikely that the Bathurst clan as a whole could gather in large enough numbers to be co-ordinated by a single overall leader once hostilities broke out in earnest. A counter-attack as a unified group was made impossible by continued European harassment which kept groups scattered and small. These small bands escaped into the gorge country of the Capertee, Turon and Abercrombie Rivers when the European offensive reached its peak. Subsistence in these areas was hard, and,

<sup>58</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 19/8/1824.

<sup>59</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 16/9/1824, 30/9/1824.

<sup>60</sup> Ranken 1916:20.

<sup>61</sup> Gunson 1974, Vol. 1:49.

<sup>62</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 14/10/1824.

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as Governor Darling put it, the Aborigines were kept 'in a constant state of alarm'.<sup>63</sup> Gradually, as the situation eased, groups emerged from hiding and began to arrive in Bathurst in increasing numbers, although 'Saturday, who has rendered himself so notorious in the aboriginal annals, still thinks it prudent to keep out of reach, and has not even been heard of'.<sup>64</sup> However, even the mighty 'Saturday' had a limit to the amount of hiding he could endure, and his presence was noted with some awe at the Parramatta Blanket Feast on 25 November 1825.<sup>65</sup> The situation having calmed down, the Martial Law Proclamation was repealed on 11 December 1824, four months after its introduction.

Despite the relatively rapid collapse of Aboriginal opposition to European expansion, some short term effects were felt. The abandonment of the Swallow Creek Government station has been noted, and the desertion of stockmen from many of the Bathurst properties was a common occurrence in 1824. The 'war' coincided with over-stocking and bad seasons at Bathurst, which encouraged further extension of settlement to new areas. This movement, however, was thwarted for a time. As William Lawson Jnr noted 'We would have sent our wether flock further into the interior if the aborigines were inclined to be peaceable'.<sup>66</sup>

On the northern extension of settlement, at Mudgee, Cox met with reversals. Much of his stock had been moved to 'Gunatawang', north of Mudgee, in 1824, but extreme aggression on both sides led to the abandonment of the run in early 1825. Expansion northwards was stopped, at least for a while, but Cox simply moved the stock east, (to 'Rawdon' in the Rylestone district) where Aboriginal opposition was less effective.<sup>67</sup>

Estimates of loss of European lives vary. The 'official' toll was 19,<sup>68</sup> but by counting up individual reports the number comes to at least 22. The toll of Aboriginal lives is impossible to calculate. It was estimated by some as being 'over 100'; however it may have considerably exceeded this figure. The Bathurst clan never recovered from this population loss. Their subsequent decline was accelerated by the despair consequent on the loss of land, kin and traditional lifestyle, and the ravages of European diseases and the poor conditions attending their acquired position at the very bottom of the new social order.

In the decades following the 1824 war, a few cases of renewed Aboriginal aggression were noted, such as the killing of cattle at Wellington in 1835 (in response to the abduction of women)<sup>69</sup> or the killing of a shepherd and 80 sheep at 'Bimbijong' near Mudgee in 1840.<sup>70</sup> Yet most references are to vaguely reported

<sup>63</sup> HRA XI:431.

<sup>64</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 21/10/1824, 28/10/1824.

<sup>65</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 30/12/1824; Tyerman & Bennett 1840:193; HRA XI:431.

<sup>66</sup> Beard 1967:37.

<sup>67</sup> Cox 1912; Anon 1859; Hume n.d.:4-5.

<sup>68</sup> HRA XXI:5778.

<sup>69</sup> Backhouse 1843:323.

<sup>70</sup> Cox 1912.

massacres of Aboriginal groups by Europeans. Reverend Gunther, from the Wellington Mission, claimed in 1841 that extermination by violence occurred more often than was commonly known, and that the rest of the Aborigines were being taken off by drunkenness and debauchery.<sup>71</sup> Other massacres were reported in the Mudgee-Rylestone area.<sup>72</sup>

In conclusion, we can see that, in the Bathurst Plains/upper Macquarie River area at least, the onset of aggression on the part of both Aboriginal and European was a response not to the arrival of European land-use, but to its escalation to the point where it was incompatible with the viable continuation of the traditional Aboriginal land-use of one clan group. Eight years of comparatively peaceful coexistence was followed by two years of violence. An as yet untested hypothesis based on observations of subsequent contact conflicts on the pastoral frontier beyond Bathurst, is that the reaction of both Europeans to Aboriginal groups and Aboriginal groups to European graziers, was to some degree based on the Bathurst experience, and that the reaction time between first settlement of an area and the period of racial conflict was reduced. This response was probably partly due to the European perception that land-use conflict with Aboriginal groups was inevitable and partly to the Aboriginal perception that the coming of graziers claiming land ownership was a direct and immediate threat to their traditional land-use. These lessons were learnt at Bathurst.

<sup>71</sup> HRA XXI:737; Gunther's report of 1841.

<sup>72</sup> Armstrong 1905.

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# ABORIGINAL BOUNDARIES AND MOVEMENTS

## IN WESTERN PORT, VICTORIA

Denise Gaughwin and Hilary Sullivan

The existence and nature of tribes and tribal boundaries in Australia have been controversial issues for some time. Peterson<sup>1</sup> has outlined this debate regarding the existence of tribes, their usefulness as an analytical concept and the nature of tribal boundaries. In southeast Australia the effects of early European contact have made the resolution of these problems particularly difficult. This paper presents the historical evidence relating to one 'tribe', the Bunurong, who inhabited the Western Port and Mornington Peninsula areas of Victoria. The evidence presented on this 'tribe', its boundaries, local organisation and movements, is predominantly derived from one observer — William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines, supplemented by the observations of early settlers and visitors. Thus we are seeking to elaborate upon the work of Tindale<sup>2</sup> in an attempt to discover the nature of the boundaries. In particular we aim to isolate local groups to ascertain how they used their local area and the kinds of movements made both within and beyond these areas. The contemporary documents provide some evidence of the organisation of a specific tribe, its use of relatively small area and its relationships with neighbouring groups.

The historical sources were investigated to supplement archaeological field surveys of the Mornington Peninsula and the Western Port catchment undertaken for environmental impact studies and cultural resource management. The surveys were directed toward the location of archaeological sites to assist management of sites under threat in these rapidly developing areas. The historical documents were read to obtain information on site location and settlement patterns, concentrating on evidence relating to

*Denise Gaughwin is a tutor in the Division of Prehistory, La Trobe University, and Hilary Sullivan an archaeologist with the Australian National Parks based at Jabiru in the Kakadu National Park, Arnhem Land. Their interest in Bunurong country developed during field surveys for environmental impact studies both undertook in Western Port and the Mornington Peninsula.*

<sup>1</sup> Peterson 1976: 1-11.

We would like to thank Diane Barwick for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper and for sharing her detailed knowledge of Kulin anthropology with us. We do, however, take responsibility for our use of this evidence. Peter Coutts assisted with comments on an earlier draft, Jane Wesson and Nick Shaw assisted in editing, while Leigh Hawking typed the manuscripts and assisted with the various drafts. The work of Gaughwin was carried out with the financial support of the Ministry for Conservation, Victoria. The contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the official view of the Ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Tindale 1974.

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the patterns of exploitation of the environment; that is an economic focus on foods, seasonality of occupation and movements, group size, and material culture. Unqualified use cannot be made of the documents. They are therefore presented in some detail especially as the Thomas papers contain interesting evidence which has not been published previously. The documents were not read in order to reconstruct the ethnography of the area; information such as kinship relations, language and religion were only briefly noted. This study of movements both within and outside of the area is therefore based primarily on the information which relates to economic patterns.

### *THE AREA STUDIED*

The Western Port and Peninsula area is immediately southeast of Melbourne and includes some of the city's suburbs (see Figure 1). It is circumscribed by a series of hills, including the Dandenong and western Strzelecki Ranges, from which many streams

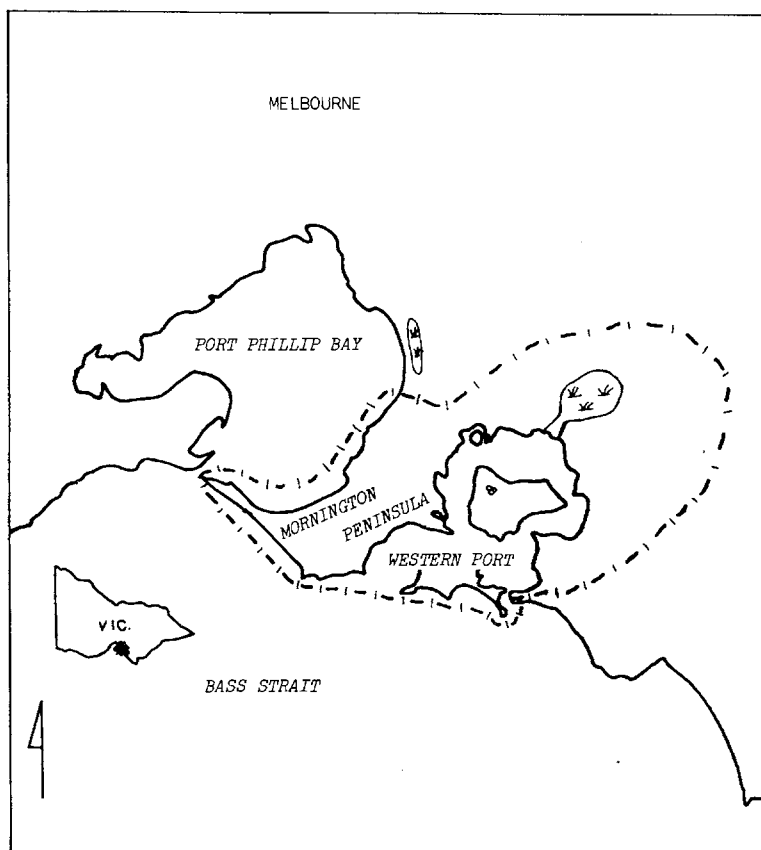


Figure 1 — Location of the area studied in detail.



descend to enter the sea. These ranges were densely forested in the past providing an upland forest resource zone.

The uplands rise fairly abruptly from the coastal plains. Open forests predominated on the well-drained areas of these plains while on areas of poor drainage, dense scrub occurred. The drainage of the plains was disrupted with the marine incursion which formed Western Port and Port Phillip Bays. This formed two extensive swamps, the Koo-wee-rup Swamp at the top of Western Port and the Carrum Swamp on Port Phillip Bay, as well as numerous small swamps.

The coastal margins of the area are diverse. Low-energy, mangrove lined coasts predominate in Western Port Bay including the shores of French Island and the northern margins of Phillip Island. Medium-energy coastlines occur in Port Phillip Bay and at some exposed locations in Western Port Bay. High-energy coastlines are present on the Bass Strait facing areas of the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island.

The area would have provided very good conditions for hunters and gatherers as a variety of environments were available with concomitant diversity of food resources. The economic potential of each environmental zone has been described elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

### *THE EARLY CONTACT PERIOD*

Western Port was visited by the crews of many ships on their way to and from London or engaged in exploratory trips to Tasmania and Bass Strait between 1797 and 1803. These visits were generally short and had little impact on Aborigines in the area, although on two occasions altercations took place between Aborigines and Europeans.<sup>4</sup>

Following the reports by the explorers Bass and Flinders of large seal colonies in Bass Strait, Western Port appears to have been frequented by sealers. The earliest record of their presence in the area dates to 1812<sup>5</sup> although it is likely that they had been coming to Western Port since the turn of the century. By 1826 sealers were living year-round on Phillip Island exploiting the fur seal colony at Seal Rocks.<sup>6</sup>

It has been argued for Tasmania that the presence of sealers had a disruptive effect on the local tribes due to their practice of removing the young Aboriginal women by barter or force.<sup>7</sup> Competition over resources and warfare between the two cultures appears to have resulted from the presence of the sealers.<sup>8</sup> In Western Port there are suggestions that relations were not always amicable. No Aborigines were ever seen on Phillip Island by Europeans. In 1826, d'Urville<sup>9</sup> thought that this was due to the presence of the sealers. In addition, there is a report of one Aboriginal, a man, who returned to Western Port after many years. He had been taken by sealers to an island in Bass Strait.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Gaughwin 1981: 230-238; Sullivan 1981: 127-150.

<sup>4</sup> Gunson 1968: 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Bowden 1964: 100.

<sup>6</sup> Wetherall 1826: 204; Cunningham 1966 (1827): 71.

<sup>7</sup> Plomley 1966: 3.

<sup>8</sup> Gaughwin 1978: 17-20.

<sup>9</sup> d'Urville 1830: 128.

<sup>10</sup> Haydon 1846: 118.

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Warfare between the Western Port Aborigines and those inhabiting the area to the east seems to have greatly affected population numbers. In 1840 Thomas<sup>11</sup> indicates that the population

have suffered severely from the Two Fold Bay Blacks is evident, some of their songs . . . upon their sufferings about four years back seventeen were killed not nine miles from Melbourne. About nine years back two were killed where we was (sic) encamped by Western Port and about 28 or 20 years back nearly half the tribe were killed between Kangerong and Arthurs Seat.

The latter fight is likely to be the same one described to Haydon<sup>12</sup> by an elderly man who said:

Look at my people, said he, where are all my brothers? do you see any old men? I talk with the young men. My old companions sleep at Monip.

Twofold Bay is the name of the bay in New South Wales near Eden, which makes this attack seem most unusual as the whole of Gippsland had to be traversed. However it is possible that 'Two Fold Blacks' was a general name given to all Gippsland Aborigines as the term Gippsland was not then used and the nearest substantial European settlement was Twofold Bay. Another raid was said to have occurred in 1833 or 1834 by the Gippsland people 'who stole at night upon the Western Port or Coast tribe and killed 60 or 70 of them'.<sup>13</sup> All the writers of the time stress the long standing enmity between these two groups. The possibility that these conflicts increased due to the effects of the sealers' presence must be considered. It is also possible that the area was depopulated creating a buffer zone between the two groups. The nature of the evidence does not allow for resolution of this problem.

Permanent European settlement in the area began with the establishment of Melbourne in 1835. Grazing licences were taken up from 1837 onwards. The depletion of traditional foods was rapid and had far reaching effects on the Aborigines.

From 1839 to 1841 Thomas was pointing out the lack of food in the district. In August 1839 he observed that sheep and cattle were responsible for the decline in the numbers of kangaroo and emus.<sup>14</sup> The hoofed animals not only reduced the native fauna but had disastrous effects on plant foods, particularly yams. Thomas<sup>15</sup> recorded an Aboriginal viewpoint:

No Murnong, no yam all Port Phillip, No much byone white man Bullock and sheep, all gone Murnong.

That this situation occurred early and was widespread is also attested to by Thomas<sup>16</sup>:

. . . I do not think that of the five tribes who visit Melbourne that there is in the whole five districts food to feed one tribe . . . they say 'no country, no good pickaninny'.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, Original MS, Mitchell Library, Uncatalogued set 214, Item 8, Letter to G.A. Robinson, 6 June 1840.

<sup>12</sup> Haydon 1846: 152.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas ML Item 21. Language and Customs of Australian Aborigines, Miscellaneous papers: 88.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas ML Item 9. Letter to Robinson, 6 August 1839.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, La Trobe Library, Original MS, undated, in the R.B. Smyth Papers, Box 1176/6a. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas ML Item 3. Journal, 11 August 1844.

As a result the Aborigines had to interact more with the European settlers and the Protectors of Aborigines. Potentially the most disruptive of these effects, in terms of defining tribal boundaries and traditional movements, was the Melbourne settlement itself. Thomas continually tried to prevent the Aborigines going to Melbourne. He was concerned that they had access to alcohol and that fighting occurred. Aboriginal population numbers were reduced after the establishment of the Melbourne settlement. By 1863 there were only eleven Bunurong surviving; all were adult.<sup>17</sup>

It is considered unlikely therefore that the evidence recorded even in the earliest sources fully reflects the traditional situation. The combined effects of the reduced population, depletion of bush foods and the attractions of Melbourne must have changed the traditional patterns of movement. The degree of change is difficult to measure and it is with this caution that the following evidence is presented and discussed.

### INFORMANTS

The main informant is William Thomas who took up his duties as Assistant Protector of Aborigines in 1839. He left a wealth of both official and personal papers which are now housed in the Mitchell Library, Sydney (ML), the La Trobe Library, Melbourne (LT) and the Public Records Office of Victoria (PRO). These papers include a daily journal (which Thomas kept for the whole of his working life) correspondence, official reports, note books and a draft of a book entitled 'The language and customs of the Australian Aborigines'. This manuscript unfortunately is not dated but as it is a synthesis it appears to have been written in his later years when he had gained a great deal of knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

From 1839 to 1843 Thomas spent a great deal of time with the Aborigines in Western Port, setting up stations at Arthurs Seat (1839-1841), on the Mornington Peninsula and later at Narre Narre Warren (1841) on the Dandenong Plains. He hoped that these stations would encourage Aborigines to settle into an agricultural lifestyle, away from the damaging effects of the European settlement. However, in 1843 he was forced to leave the Bunurong and go to Melbourne to the neglected Woiworung.<sup>19</sup>

The records of his early years with the Protectorate contain the most information regarding traditional activities. He also recorded reminiscences by the Aborigines of 'how things used to be'. However Thomas' major preoccupation was the administration of the settlements and the material in his papers regarding the traditional activities of Aborigines takes the form of brief comments and descriptions interspersed with administrative matters.

<sup>17</sup> Barwick 1971: 292.

<sup>18</sup> This book is now with the Brough Smyth papers in the La Trobe Library, Melbourne (LT).

The other sources which have been used are the diaries, publications and letters of early explorers and settlers including Hovell 1826-7, Tuckey 1803, Haydon 1846, Rawson 1839-40, Jamieson 1839, Gellibrand 1836, McCrae 1911, Flemming 1803 and d'Urville 1830. These men did not have long contacts with the Aborigines nor did they leave substantial records of their observations. However they are useful for additional facts and to supplement Thomas' reports.

<sup>19</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

## BOUNDARIES AND MOVEMENTS, WESTERN PORT

Thomas did not travel extensively through the area. Although there are records of several trips around the Mornington Peninsula in 1840, he only twice ventured to the east of the Koo-wee-rup Swamp. There is also evidence that the Aborigines did not always reveal the true nature of their activities to him, especially those of which they knew he would not approve, such as fighting and possibly religious activities. For example, in February 1840, he accompanied some Aborigines on a trip to Western Port. While he was told by the men that they were travelling to the east on a hunting trip he later discovered that their prime purpose was to raid the Gippsland Aborigines.<sup>20</sup> His attempts to keep the Aborigines out of Melbourne failed. By 1843 he was almost totally occupied keeping order in the camps which sprang up around Melbourne, keeping the Aborigines out of the settlement itself and visiting the gaol.

### *THE TRIBE AND ITS BOUNDARIES*

The tribe which inhabited the lands around Western Port Bay was given a variety of names by Thomas: the 'Boonurong', the coast tribe, the Western Port tribe, the Port Phillip tribe, or 'one of the two Melbourne tribes'. He seems to have used the term 'tribe' for named localised land-owning groups properly called clans.<sup>21</sup>

Later Thomas learned from Robinson that 'tribe' was the encompassing dialect unit and 'sections' were the land-owning territorial units, now called clans. These clans derived their names from the locality in which people were born, the places to which they usually resorted<sup>22</sup> and frequently from their language or a mythological reference.<sup>23</sup>

It is likely that there were five clans in the area. The Yallukit-willam was based around St Kilda and their territory probably extended from the Werribee River to Mordialloc. There is no clear mention of this group in Thomas' accounts. A group called the Bonkoolawal appear to have inhabited the land east of Western Port.<sup>24</sup> However, little is known of this group and in 1840 Thomas<sup>25</sup> stated that the area to the south of the Bass River was not frequented by Aborigines. It is possible that this is a valid clan or it may be that it was a geographical label of a patriline.<sup>26</sup> Another group seems to have occupied the area near the Tarwin River, adjoining the westernmost Kurnai. Members of this group were named the Yowenjene. They are identified in the following passage from Robinson<sup>27</sup> who travelled through the area in 1844:

West of Wilsons Promontory or Wommum as called by natives is the country of the Yowenjene (now extinct) a powerful section of the Boonwerong nation at Western

<sup>20</sup> Thomas ML Item 8, Letterbook, 27 February, 1840 and Thomas, Original Ms., PRO. Letter to Robinson, 6 June, 1840.

<sup>21</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Lt, Ms: 105.

<sup>23</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.; see also Howitt 1904.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas ML Item 21, Language and customs of the Australian Aborigines: 14.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas ML Item 8, Letterbook, 28 February 1840.

<sup>26</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>27</sup> Robinson in Mackaness 1941: 8.

Port, who have (with the exception of two individuals) been exterminated by their neighbours the Gippsland Aborigines.

Little else is known about the latter two groups. Although Howitt tried continually to check the existence of these groups with surviving Kulin people, they were reluctant to mention extinct clans and deceased estates.<sup>28</sup>

We do, however, know quite a lot about the Bunurong-balluk, said to occupy the area from Mordialloc to the Tarwin, including all of the Mornington Peninsula. Thomas mentions some 'principle families' and the lands they claimed.<sup>29</sup> This listing includes some clans and also known leading men thus indicating that he did not differentiate between them. However, at least one is likely to have been a clan. The Yallock Bulluk, literally the river people, were said to claim the area between the mountains to the top of Western Port. This area was very well watered with various small rivers and swamps and covered an approximate area of 380 km<sup>2</sup>.

This evidence indicates that the whole district was occupied in an organized fashion. It is not known whether the groups which claimed rights in various parts of the landscape were also the land-using units. What is interesting, however, is that all the known clans had territories which contained varied resource bases such as different coastline types and inland areas, or uplands and plains areas as well as coasts. Some clans obviously must have had more of one type of landform than others, thus explaining Thomas' separation into the 'coast tribe' or the 'Western Port Blacks' or the people's name for themselves as the river people.

Thomas<sup>30</sup> gives a clear account of the Bunurong tribal boundaries (Figure 2):

The geographical limits of the two Melbourne tribes may be said to extend from the source of the Yarra Eastward, the Tarwin River South East - the Dividing Range between the Yarra and the Goulbourne River - North South by the sea coast and west the river. I would here state that the Aboriginal boundaries of countries are judiciously defined by Mountains, Creeks and Rivers which I believe is general thro'out the Aborigines - for example, the Yarra tribe claim all the country North and South of the Yarra - the Coast Tribe on the other hand claim all lands from the Dandenong Range, because all the creeks and waters from those parts fall into the sea . . . the character of the region is diversified, containing rivers, swamps, Ranges, creeks and abundance of yams, roots, etc. for all the necessities of life.

The situation on the eastern boundary with the Kurnai speakers is the least clear. Both Thomas and Robinson noted that the area west of the Tarwin was inhabited by people who were a part of the Bunurong tribe. Although Smyth claims that this area was disputed land<sup>31</sup> it is clear from the earlier accounts that it was Bunurong land which was probably under dispute by the surviving groups of Bunurong and Kurnai people. It is probable that the query regarding the status of this area arose after the

<sup>28</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas ML Item 23. Language and customs of the Australian Aborigines, Miscellaneous notebooks, book A: 66.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas ML Item 21. Language and customs of the Australian Aborigines, Miscellaneous papers: 91-2.

<sup>31</sup> Smyth 1878, II: 14.

## BOUNDARIES AND MOVEMENTS, WESTERN PORT

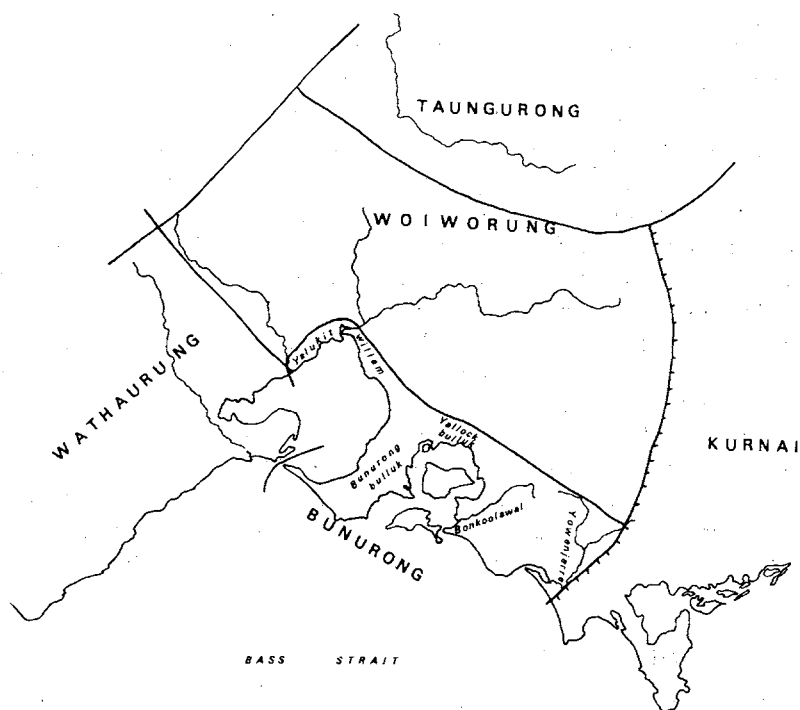


Figure 2 – Social groups in the south central region of Victoria.

extinction of its Bunurong inhabitants and with an increase in hostilities between Bunurong and Gippsland Aborigines as a result of the years of contact with sealers and the later settlers. To the north, the boundaries are delineated by the sources of streams in the ranges. For example, east-west running river valleys such as the La Trobe, which rises in these ranges but runs northeast of the Tarwin, were in the Kurnai area. Thus the boundary must have been the top of the catchment. In the west of the area it appears that the boundary ran from the Dandenong Ranges south to Mordialloc or thereabouts. However the later evidence suggests that the Bunurong also had claims in land around the Port Phillip coast to the Werribee River.

### POPULATION SIZE

Thomas<sup>32</sup> thought there were about 500 people in the Bunurong and Yarra (Woiworung) tribes prior to the Melbourne settlement and the known Kurnai raids. If we assume that half of this number were Bunurong, then the population before the Kurnai raids c.1810 would have been approximately 250. An estimate by an early settler was 'upwards of 300'.<sup>33</sup> As both reckonings were made after the sealer incursions and the possible effects of new diseases, three hundred people may be thought to be a conservative estimate of the pre-contact Bunurong population. If however, we use this figure for the total population of the whole of the tribal territory, the population density is one person per 26 km<sup>2</sup>. This figure would be very low for a rich coastal environment. We feel that these estimates relate only to the western part of the tribal territory. If so the population density of the whole of the western half of the tribal territory would be approximately one person per 9 km<sup>2</sup>. If, as is likely the figures refer only to the Mornington Peninsula as far as Tooradin and Mordialloc, an area of 1250 km<sup>2</sup>, the density would have been in the order of one person per 4 km<sup>2</sup>. This figure of 0.25 people per square kilometre is reinforced by consideration of the size of that area said to belong to the Yallock Bulluk. This area is 380 km<sup>2</sup>. If the clan which stated it owned the land was a large group of up to one hundred people the figure of one person per 3.8 km<sup>2</sup> emerges.

All these postulated densities are suggestions only, presented to give some idea of the nature of land use. Barwick has highlighted the pitfalls in these types of calculations by pointing out that Thomas counted Woiworung as Bunurong when they were in the latter's territory.<sup>34</sup> However, as we are also concerned with the numbers of people who used the landscape, the tribe of their affiliation, while significant, does not alter the densities of people who live in the area under study.

### ECONOMY AND MOVEMENTS

Here we present briefly the patterns described in the documents to ascertain whether the usual food gathering activities were contained within the boundaries of the Bunurong. It would appear that the observed movements made in the company of Thomas (but not when he was providing food) were generally within the tribal territory he described. He stated<sup>35</sup> that the regular route had been around the Mornington Peninsula, starting along the Port Phillip Bay coast, then moving to the Bass Strait coast, then to the coast on Western Port Bay and along it, returning across the plains to Dandenong (see Figure 3). As far as we can ascertain these travels were predominantly made by members of one clan although members of other clans and tribes were also present.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas ML Item 24, Language and customs . . . 1858: 6; ML Item 21, Language and customs: 170.

<sup>33</sup> Jamieson 1839 cited in Gliddon 1977: 222.

<sup>34</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>35</sup> Route 1, Thomas ML Item 12, Letter to La Trobe, 15 July 1850; Route 2, ML 1, Journal 2-15 May 1840; Route 3, ML 1, Journal 12 July-1 August 1840; Route 4, ML 8, Letter to Robinson, 27 February 1840.

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Although Thomas did not mention the types of food obtained on these journeys, his general comments indicate that a variety of food resources would have been exploited. Recent archaeological surveys in the area indicate a much more extensive use of the Port Phillip and Bass Strait coastlines than of the mangrove coast of Western Port Bay.<sup>36</sup> Over 600 sites were recorded; none showed evidence of exploitation of low-energy coasts nor were any sites located directly on those coasts. It appears that of marine shellfish there was a distinct preference for rock platform species and that land and freshwater resources in the Western Port coastal plains were far more intensively exploited than marine resources in this area.

The regular movement between the Peninsula and the top of Western Port Bay would indicate that the existence of the land owning groups described by Thomas did not preclude access to these areas by other Bunurong people, at least in the western half of the tribal territory. If this was due to his presence or some change in response to European settlement, it is not stated. The situation to the east is unclear. Although Thomas<sup>37</sup> recorded one journey with the Aborigines from the Mornington Peninsula to the east of the Koo-wee-rup Swamp (see Figure 3) the main purpose of this journey, as indicated earlier, was to raid the Gippsland people. It is possible that the presence of this extensive swamp restricted movement, but it is more probable that the possibility of conflict with the Kurnai prevented use of this area.

Some preliminary archaeological evidence indicates that the swamp may have restricted movement between the eastern and western parts of the tribal territory. Tertiary silcrete, which is available on the Mornington Peninsula is present in large quantities on sites west of the Koo-wee-rup-Swamp but is found in only small quantities on those to the east.<sup>38</sup> A similar distribution pattern is evident for greenstone artefacts from the Mt William quarry situated to the north-west in Woiworung territory.<sup>39</sup>

The writers have so far located only three references to seasonal movement. Thomas<sup>40</sup> noted in March 1841,

Their fare at this time of the year in migrating from water to water is chiefly eels. Although eels appear to have been more numerous and easier to catch in late summer, eeling was carried out from December to July.<sup>41</sup> Eels are noted as an important food

<sup>36</sup> Sullivan 1981; Gaughwin 1981.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas ML Item 8, Letterbooks, 27 February 1840.

<sup>38</sup> Gaughwin 1981: 105.

<sup>39</sup> McBryde 1978.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, PRO Box 2, 12 March 1841.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*; Thomas ML Item 2, Journal 13 February 1841.



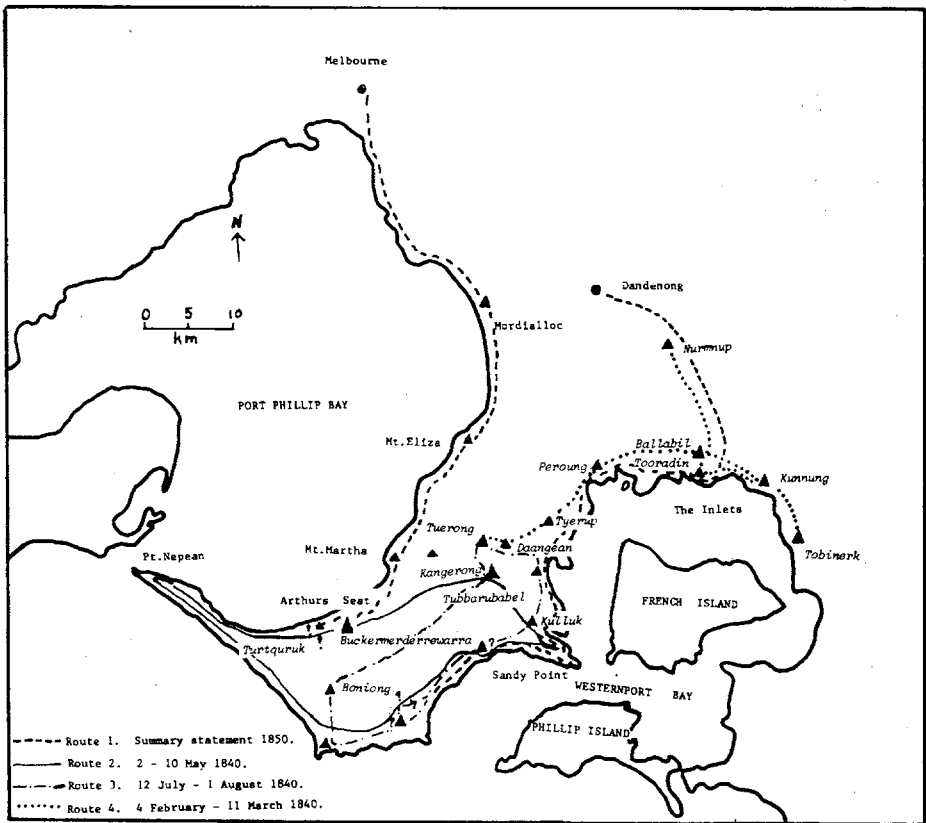


Figure 3 – Routes of movements and site locations.

resource which allowed people to camp for long periods as Thomas commented when attempting to have the Bolin Swamp on the Yarra reserved for Aboriginal use:<sup>42</sup>

Bolin . . . 'supported the yarra blacks from its abounding in eels one month in the year'

In winter, some groups travelled to the ranges to the north to hunt lyre birds.<sup>43</sup>

It is possible that this movement was not as extensively undertaken before the advent of Europeans for whom the feathers were prized items; they paid for the colourful tail feathers and gave guns to assist with the hunting.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, Petition to the Governor, 22 June 1841.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas ML Item 10, Report on the state of encampments in the vicinity of Melbourne, 31 July 1846.

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In addition to these movements, Thomas observed<sup>44</sup> that the Bunurong were predominantly land-based in their economy:

[they] have no intercourse by sea with other countries — the coast tribe however used in former times to make very large canoes and go over to French Island at certain seasons after eggs.

Despite the existence of the two large bays, there does not appear to have been extensive use of canoes for transport or fishing. Apart from the account quoted above of the canoes on Western Port in 'former times', canoes were only observed in use on rivers.<sup>45</sup> Therefore sea-going canoe travel was either not commonly practised or this technology was very vulnerable to the changes brought about by the European presence. If marine transportation had been an integral part of traditional economies permitting a different movement pattern it seems strange that it was given up so quickly. Therefore we think that canoe travel on the bays was not commonly practised.

The historical documents stress the use of land mammals for food. This may be due to observer bias as these foods were more noticable and were hunted by men. It is likely that there was a sexual difference in diet with women and children who 'subsist principally on roots which during the summer and autumn ripen in succession'.<sup>46</sup> Those land mammals seen to have been of particular importance were the kangaroo and the possum, both of which were described as principal food sources. Thomas<sup>47</sup> believed that the availability of kangaroos was the main consideration when selecting campsites, or in causing people to shift camp, noting that when no kangaroos were available near a camp 'they are compelled to go thro' the range of their country perpetually, perpetually shifting'. Bunce, who travelled predominantly in the uplands, thought that possums provided the main source of food,<sup>48</sup> predictable in these densely forested slopes.

Thomas considered the Aboriginal so accustomed 'to his pursuit that he never seems more at home' than while climbing trees to catch possums.<sup>49</sup> If movements were made on a regular basis to gather plant foods, these were not recorded in the documents consulted. To place this in an environmental context it should be stated that the open forests interspersed with swamps and wetlands. This would have made these resources commonly available within very short distances of each other. Each of the clan areas contained these landforms with the exception of uplands in the Yallock bulluk area.

The regular foraging territory of the Bunurong-Bulluk therefore appears generally to have been within the clan area described by Thomas. As we have little information relating to the other areas this pattern cannot be confirmed for other clans.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas ML Item 21, Language ...: 44.

<sup>45</sup> Tuckey 1803: 119; Grant 1803: 138-9.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas LT Ms: 97.

<sup>47</sup> ML Item 24, Letter to Mr Duffy, 28 April 1858.

<sup>48</sup> Bunce 1859: 72.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas LT Ms: 93.

Aboriginal movements over the land appear well organised, with the activities of each group known to other members of the Bunurong. Thomas noted this and concluded they were a socially cohesive group.<sup>50</sup>

I have been out journeying with perhaps not 1/3 of the tribe for it is seldom that more than that number can keep together . . . asked them where the rest of their tribe is when they commenced and told me not less than 12 parts of the country and some may be 80 or 90 miles off. The Aborigines may be called truly a social compact community, they know too when each will return.

This indicates the regular patterns of use of the Western Port area in contact times as well as the social networks of the foraging groups. That people knew where other bands were likely to be located further reinforces the idea that they usually resided within well known areas.

Throughout the area paths were observed apparently well-used. Near Tooradin Hovell noted that native paths made travel through low-lying areas much easier and quicker.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Gellibrand commented on tracks along the Port Phillip coast which made travel easier and led to a 'native well' on the beach.<sup>52</sup> Paths were also observed along the banks of rivers by Murray<sup>53</sup> in 1801 and by Bass<sup>54</sup> on the Bass River in 1798. As areas of continual or regular use might be thought to develop into paths, this further supports the notion that movements were methodical.

Although the evidence is limited and made difficult to interpret as food was supplied by Europeans, the normal size of a food-gathering party appears to have ranged from small fishing groups of a few women and children up to groups of 20 or 30 people. However larger groups would congregate at favourable locations for short periods. These camps were not, however, comprised entirely of Bunurong-bulluk, the land-owning group, but included other Bunurong and some Woiworung. In February 1840, for example, 101 people were encamped near the waterholes at Tubberrubabel for 14 days. They moved a few miles northeast to another waterhole at Tuerong where they stopped for 10 days.<sup>55</sup>

beginning to find some difficulty in procuring food for so many they held a council which ended in an understanding to separate. 44 were to remain and divide themselves into 6 parties traversing the country from Mt Martha to Cape Schank. 57 were in one body to cross the country to Western Port.

This demonstrates the gregarious nature of these people as after twenty four days together they were unwilling to separate. It further serves to indicate the patterns of movement onto the Mornington Peninsula in one direction and out across the Western Port plains in the other. It could be suggested that as these waterholes were at the

<sup>50</sup> Thomas ML Item 22, Language . . . : 334-336.

<sup>51</sup> Hovell 1826-27, original Ms, ML: 39.

<sup>52</sup> Gellibrand 1858: 70.

<sup>53</sup> Murray 1915 (1801): 101.

<sup>54</sup> Bass 1895 (1798): 312.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas ML Item 8, Letter to Robinson, 27 February 1840.

boundary of two clan territories and that this splitting represents the clans or those with rights in territory returning to their lands. However to support this suggestion it would be necessary to further investigate those individuals present at Tuerong and their affiliation.

Over a decade earlier Hovell<sup>56</sup> had met with a group of people near the Carrum Swamp which numbered 'more than 100 men, women and children'. The composition of this group is not known, but as some of the men and boys had a front tooth missing while others did not, it is likely that more than one clan was present. This observation confirms that large groups were not necessarily related to European settlement. Barwick<sup>57</sup> suggests that the Bunurong-bulluk area was sacred ground that many clans visited for ceremonial activities. So some of these large groups may have been associated with ceremonies. However it was still necessary for them to find food within the district. Thomas provided some interesting statistics on movement. Kangaroos again are seen to initiate this, as<sup>58</sup>

on entering their New Encampment and often while pitching my tent and the blacks their miams hut had kangaroos running amongst us as th' unconscious of our intrusions, after three days stay, have been out with them not seen a kangaroo within their daily range, thus their migratory moves. . .

When travelling, Thomas found that a group of Aborigines rarely moved more than eight or nine miles (12-14 kilometres) a day 'having their food to procure as well as to journey'.<sup>59</sup> In another account he elaborated on the logistical details:<sup>60</sup>

they generally averaged 2 and a half miles in an hours good walking through the bush and deduct a quarter for going round and over dead logs which reduced travelling time thro' the day to less than 2 miles the hour, this may seem strange but such was the case in 1838, 39 and regularly understood by white bush travellers.

He also found that they seldom camped more than three nights in one place and often only one night.<sup>61</sup> However, on the trip to Western Port noted above, the group were encamped ten days at Tuerong before they began the journey and for eight days at Kunnung and four at Tobinerk, although at the seven other camping places their stay was for three nights or less.<sup>62</sup>

It seems that while travelling the people were busy but the day was not long:<sup>63</sup>

all are employed; children in getting gum, knocking down birds etc; women in digging up roots, killing bandicoots, getting grubs etc; the men in hunting kangaroos, etc, scaling trees for opossums etc. They mostly are at the encampment about an

<sup>56</sup> Hovell 1826-27, original Ms, ML: 71.

<sup>57</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas ML Item 24, Language: 1.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas PRO, Letter for the blacks of the Mt Macedon District, 3 July 1840; 1854: 399.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas ML Item 24, Language . . . : 10.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas 1854: 398.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas PRO, Return to Robinson, Journeys made with the number of days at each station, 1 September 1839 to 29 February 1840.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas 1854: 399.

hour before sundown — the women first, who get fire and water, etc. by the time their spouses arrive . . . In warm weather, while on tramp, they seldom make a miam — they use merely a few boughs to keep off the wind, in wet weather a few sheets of bark make a comfortable house. In one half hour I have seen a neat village begun and finished.

He describes these huts and the numbers of people involved, in some detail:<sup>64</sup>

Their habitation is frail but answers well their purpose, a few slabs of bark cut in a few minutes and erected is their habitation, these slats of bark are about 6' long oblique raised to the angle of about 90 degrees windward, every alternate sheet is reversed so that no rain can enter, the sides are filled up with short pieces of bark and brush and a sheet of bark at the top . . . A good Miam (a hut) will hold 2 adults and 3 children — they are not permanent are knocked down or burnt on breaking up the Encampment — they consist of one apartment only. In a large encampment they are divided into hamlets — some influential black taking charge of six or eight Miams, and so on say 5 Hamlets. These hamlets are 50 yds or more from each other, while miams in a single hamlet is (sic) not more than 3 or 4 yds apart merely sufficient to avoid danger from each others fires.

Taking his figures for the large encampment it is possible to see that each 'hamlet' under the leadership of one man would have had from 30 to 40 people in it while the total numbers of people in these camps would have been between 150 and 200. Unfortunately we do not know which encampments he is referring to; that is, whether this pattern was observed in the combined camps of several tribal groups or whether it was the pattern at one of the Mornington Peninsula camps. The numbers of people would seem to suggest one of the larger camps around Melbourne.

While encamped in one location, the Aborigines exploited a range of approximately ten kilometres radius around the camp. Thomas, when discussing kangaroo hunting, describes:<sup>65</sup>

a body of Natives dividing themselves into portions of 5 or 7 leaving an Encampment in the morning diverging (according to the direction of their chief) in various directions scouring their bounds for 5 or 6 miles around the Encampment.

### EXTERNAL RELATIONS

This section investigates movements which were not expressly seen to relate to the Bunurangs' daily food gathering activities within the tribal areas, but took them outside their usual range into the territory of their neighbours. In this section we have relied heavily on the later work of Howitt and information supplied by Diane Barwick. Nevertheless Thomas makes a number of relevant statements. He described the Bunurong's relationships with their neighbours as follows:<sup>66</sup>

There was a kind of confederacy between the five tribes near Melbourne which I doubt not but is carried thro' the length and breadth of Australia — viz the Yarra, coast, Barrabool, Goulburn and Devils River tribes — the blacks do not marry from

<sup>64</sup> Thomas ML Item 21, Language . . . : 88.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas ML Item 24, Language . . . : 1.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas ML Item 21, Language . . . : 94.

their own tribe, but must get a lubra from another, and this runs thro'out the tribes, for instance a Yarra black must get his wife from the Goulburn, Barrabool, Devils River or Coast tribe, others in like manner, thus a kind of Social Compact is kept up against any far distant tribe who may in a body intrude on either of their country — these five tribes not withstanding are (or used to be) in continual frays with each other mostly arising from lubras.

Thomas did not use the names of the tribes correctly or consistently. In this passage the 'Yarra' tribe would be more correctly termed the Woiworung. They occupied the land on either side of the Yarra River.<sup>67</sup> Tindale has termed this group the Wurundjeri although he also states that the language name Woiworung is a valid alternative.<sup>68</sup> His 'Goulbourns' were several clans of the Taungurong who constantly visited Melbourne but usually lived west of Seymour and around Kilmore. The 'Barrabool' are several clans of the Wathaurung some of whom resided near Geelong while others were situated inland as far as Ballarat. The 'Devil's River' were two clans of the Taungurong who were situated on the Broken River above and below Benalla and on the Delatite River about Mansfield.<sup>69</sup> Howitt unites these tribes into a larger unit, the Kulin nation, based on their common language, intermarriage and social organisations.<sup>70</sup> While Thomas' omissions and inconsistencies are obvious, it should also be remembered that Howitt, while working with the advantage of the new concepts of anthropology, was nevertheless unable to make any direct observations of the Bunurong people.

To understand the relationships between the Bunurong and other tribes we must define the moieties to which each clan belonged. Both the surviving Bunurong clans were *bunjil* so they could only marry members of *waa* clans following the rule of exogamous patrilineal moieties.<sup>71</sup> As each of the surrounding tribes (to the west) had *waa* clans, these groups were in constant contact and travelled to each other's lands. Examples of these reciprocal movements are found in Thomas' journals,<sup>72</sup> which suggests that while the visiting groups were able to use local resources, the gaining of additional food was not the prime motive for the travels. Given that the visits were between intermarrying clans it is most likely that the travels were undertaken to visit relations.

The *bunjil* Bunurong had also to keep up contact with the neighbouring *bunjil* clans for the proper performance of ceremonies.<sup>73</sup> Thus Thomas<sup>74</sup> noted that the Bunurong held a ceremony with the Woiworung people after which both groups said they had to go to help the Taungurong people hold a ceremony. In other cases, the neighbouring

<sup>67</sup> Howitt 1904: 71; D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>68</sup> Tindale 1974: 208-209, 310.

<sup>69</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>70</sup> Howitt 1904: 70-72.

<sup>71</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas ML Item 1, Journal, 11, 22 May 1840; ML Item 2, Journal, 22 June 1841.

<sup>73</sup> D. Barwick pers. comm.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas ML Item 2, Journal, 14 March 1841.

clans visited the Bunurong to hold ceremonies.<sup>75</sup> Although it is difficult to quantify in terms of number of visits, it is clear that as Thomas suggests the Bunurong had closer relationships with the Wathaurung of both clans than with other groups.<sup>76</sup> Thus more movements were made to the west than to the north.

Some external movements appear to have been in response to the European settlement as, for example, the gathering organised late in 1838 to welcome the Chief Protector, G.A. Robinson. On this occasion messengers with invitations were sent to 'all' the tribes. Four to five hundred Aborigines attended.<sup>77</sup>

While the constant movement into and out of Melbourne after European settlement appears to have been primarily in response to the availability of food, alcohol, and other goods, Melbourne was also the traditional meeting place of these tribes. Thomas stated:<sup>78</sup>

By what I can learn, long ere the settlement was formed the spot where Melbourne now stands and the flat on which we are now encamped [on the banks of the Yarra] was the regular rendezvous for the tribes known as *Warorongs*, *Boonurongs*, *Barrabools*, *Nihunguons*, *Goulbourns* twice a year or as often as circumstances and emergencies required to settle their grievances, revenge, deaths etc.

At these meetings, the Bunurong-bulluk camped south of the Yarra River, either on the bank or on the beach near the mouth of the River. It is only in later years when Thomas lived at Merri Creek that they camped on the west bank of the Yarra River.<sup>79</sup> That is, they tended to camp closest to their home territory.

The only example we have noted of movement to the east was related to warfare. The Kurnai called the Bunurong, Thurung or 'tiger snakes' because 'they come sneaking about to kill us'.<sup>80</sup> In 1839 a group of Bunurong women, children, and old men were left at the station of Samuel Rawson and Robert Jamieson at Yallock for a period of five weeks. When the able-bodied men returned they told the settler that they were responsible for many deaths in Gippsland.<sup>81</sup> This hostility would appear to have been longstanding. If this is the case it might be expected that some demographic effects would have been manifest.

As the years passed, this enmity appears to have dissolved and marriages were contracted between the two groups.<sup>82</sup> By 1850 the Bunurong were said to be more often in Gippsland than in their own territory.<sup>83</sup> By this time the dispossession and depopulation of the Bunurong was nearly complete. It seems that some members of the tribe

<sup>75</sup> Thomas ML Item 1, Journal, 18 May 1840.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas ML Item 2, Petition to Governor Gipps, 22 June 1841.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas W.T. ML Item 27: 44.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas ML Item 8, Letterbooks, 8 April 1840.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas ML Item 3, Journal, 1 July 1844.

<sup>80</sup> Howitt 1904: 41.

<sup>81</sup> Rawson 1839, original Ms., N.L.A.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas ML Item 21, Language . . . : 93; ML Item 11, Draft letter to Robinson, 12 September 1848; McCrae 1911: 25.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas ML Item 12, Letter to La Trobe, 15 July 1850.

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moved out of their territory into formerly hostile lands in search of a continuation of their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Other members of the tribe remained on a small reserve at Mordialloc living a partly traditional life supplemented by selling ducks and eels to the European settlers.

### DISCUSSION

It is clear that the historical sources are not comprehensive, so the description given here is very patchy. In attempting to discover the nature of the tribal boundaries in this area, movements of groups noted in the literature were compared with the stated tribal boundaries. This indicated that while movement of a primarily social and ceremonial nature did occur across these boundaries, normal economic and subsistence activities were broadly contained within the tribal boundaries described by Thomas.

Overall the documents leave the impression of a very gregarious society which often gave their reasons for travels in social rather than economic terms. They preferred to be in large groups. Also, the network of relationships kept up with the surrounding Kulin tribes and the necessity of regular attendance at meetings and ceremonies, further illustrates that they were engaged in extensive and regular social and ceremonial activities.

Unfortunately the lack of information for the eastern part of Western Port leaves the particularly interesting situation of the Kulin-Kurnai border unresolved. Archaeological techniques will be required to establish if this area was a 'disputed border' for a long time previous to European contact or an established part of the Bunurong tribal territory.

The historical sources, however, do provide valuable contemporary information into the use of the western part of the area. They show that a wide variety of resources was exploited, far more than archaeological evidence would indicate. In addition, the evidence on the methods of exploitation of this area and details such as the foraging radius from a camp, and the usual length of stay at a camp, provide valuable information for archaeological interpretation.

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# ABORIGINAL HISTORY



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# MAPPING THE PAST: AN ATLAS OF VICTORIAN CLANS

1835-1904

## PART 1

Diane E. Barwick

This abbreviated account of a long-term study of the Victorian ethnographic record is necessarily a preliminary description, published during Victoria's 'sesquicentenary year' in the hope that my findings may assist other researchers struggling to reconcile the amateur ethnography of nineteenth-century pastoralists, parsons and public servants with modern anthropological accounts of territorial and linguistic boundaries elsewhere in Australia. A listing of the names, location and leaders of land-owning groups at the time of the colony's foundation may, perhaps, encourage public sympathy for the justice of Aboriginal claims for 'land rights' and compensation, recently recognised in Parliamentary reports and draft legislation published by the Victorian government.

The best-known map of Victorian 'tribes' is the continental 'tribal map' published in 1940 by South Australian Museum biologist and ethnologist Norman B. Tindale, which was explicitly 'based principally on recent fieldwork with additions from the literature'.<sup>1</sup> Dr Tindale's unparalleled record of ethnographic publications dates back to 1925, but it appears that the Victorian fieldwork which shaped this map was undertaken when he and Dr Joseph Birdsell were co-leaders of the 1938/39 Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition.

Tindale's 1940 tribal labels were admittedly the basis for more recent maps of language distribution in Victoria – with some amendments resulting from linguistic research during the 1960s and/or consultation of the original notes compiled by amateur ethnographers A.W. Howitt, R.H. Mathews and John Mathew, which were not accessible for scholarly study until the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Tindale's 1974 revision of his 1940 map incorporated

*Diane Barwick of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is known for her research and deep knowledge of the anthropology and history of Aboriginal societies in south-eastern Australia. Her forthcoming book 'Rebellion at Coranderrk' is an account of how the Kulin have fought for their land.*

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<sup>1</sup> Tindale 1940: 141. The extent and context of the Tindale-Birdsell survey of Australian 'hybridisation' is described in Tindale 1940, 1941, 1981 and Shanklin and Mai 1981. In 1961 Dr Tindale kindly gave me access to his manuscript records of visits to Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station 5-13 January 1939 preceded by research among Victorian emigrants and their neighbours at two New South Wales reserves: Wallaga Lake (1-4 January 1939) and a longer stay at Cumeruogunga in late May 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Hercus 1969, Dixon 1980, Wurm and Hattori 1981.

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available information from recent research but necessarily relied upon published material, mainly the writings of Howitt, Curr, Smyth, R.H. Mathews (whose reliability he had questioned in 1940 but now acclaimed), and the few accessible Protectorate records from the 1840s. His tentative boundaries in central and northeastern Victoria were admittedly deduced from discrepant published sources and he stated that: 'The triangle between Melbourne, Echuca and Albury remains one of the problem areas . . .':

. . . the five tribes in the vicinity of Melbourne, those listed in this work as the Taungurong, Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Wathaurung, and Kurung, developed under the influence of a patrilineal dual system of social organisation. They had well-developed arrangements for intergroup marriage, seemingly crossing the bounds of the units called tribes in other areas. Unless further documentation is discovered it now seems late to learn whether it is correct to regard the members of these five units as belonging to groups other than tribal ones. Differences of language seem to justify their separation and in the present work they are listed as tribes.<sup>3</sup>

This paper tries to explain how patrilineal moiety organisation – a rarity on the Australian continent – shaped marital and political ties in central Victoria, and to identify the land-owning units and linguistic groupings from unpublished records inaccessible to Tindale, notably A.W. Howitt's original notes of interviews with William Barak and other Kulin elders on reciprocal visits totalling many months between 1880 and 1903. Their information clarifies and is confirmed by manuscript records compiled by officials of the Port Phillip Protectorate between 1839 and 1849. Ten years of daily contact with the surviving Tasmanians had equipped Chief Protector G.A. Robinson to ask questions eliciting indigenous distinctions between clan membership and linguistic identification, and to perceive broader regional groupings defined by common ancestry, speech and customs (each a 'nation' in the terminology of his day). Robinson had mastered southern Kulin concepts and achieved some fluency in the Woiworung dialect by 1840. However the journals describing his 1840-47 journeys among their more or less alien neighbours reveal his initial difficulties in determining whether a newly-heard name was that used by a clan (his 'tribe', later tribal 'section') or all speakers of a common dialect (his 'tribe') or was merely a geographical reference or descriptive label (sometimes pejorative) applied by their neighbours. Robinson certainly understood clan exogamy (always identifying the natal 'tribe'/'section' of wives in his censuses), but was apparently unaware of the existence of moieties and the principles of moiety exogamy in Victoria.<sup>4</sup>

As footnotes identifying the precise source of each item of information would make this paper impossibly long, I have instead used a superscript letter for the most important writers. These are identified below in an alphabetical key providing biographical notes and a description of relevant records. The main published sources used by Tindale and later researchers are the contributions by Victorian pastoralists and missionaries solicited 1861-1877 for the 1878 volumes compiled by geologist Robert Brough Smyth, Secretary for Mines and honorary secretary 1860-75 of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines; stock inspector E.M. Curr's 1883 reminiscence of his

<sup>3</sup> Tindale 1974: 131-132. This 1974 publication includes a comprehensive bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson's ignorance means that moieties may also have existed in Tasmania although he merely reported that the named local groups he then called tribes married 'distant tribes'.

career as a pastoralist and his 1886-87 compilation of replies to a questionnaire circulated at Board expense when he was a member in 1878; police magistrate A.W. Howitt's two books, forty-six articles and contributions to the Smyth and Curr volumes, all published 1876-1908; clergyman John Mathew's 1898 book and several articles, mainly linguistic material based on correspondence and brief visits to Victorian reserves; and the nineteen brief repetitive articles published 1898-1908 by New South Wales land surveyor R.H. Mathews.

Because R.H. Mathews' publications have been the main source for Tindale's maps and modern language distribution maps I cannot ignore them, but I must point out that his sometimes ignorant and sometimes deliberate distortion has so muddled the ethnographic record that a detailed review of his research is needed. Mathews' insistence in every publication from 1898 onward that all his Victorian information was collected firsthand 'in the camps of the natives' is proven false by his own diaries, correspondence and notebooks. These prove that he had no contact with Aborigines at or south of the Murray river before his grossly inaccurate 1898 article mapping the 'class divisions' of Victorian 'nations' was sent to press in August 1898. Indeed, his 1897-98 correspondence with police posts on the Murray and staff at Victorian reserves and at Cumeroogunga, New South Wales, reveals that he knew nothing about the surviving communities, not even their location. His biographer A.P. Elkin reports that the 1898 paper relied on earlier publications, and Mathews' Victorian fieldwork was limited to Easter holiday visits in 1902, 1903 and 1904 totalling only ten weeks. Linguists who have compared Mathews' notebooks and publications echo R.M.W. Dixon's conclusion that Mathews 'frequently doctored his field notes for publication, and, as Schmidt [1919] warned, all his work must be treated with caution'.<sup>5</sup> My own comparison of his published work with his scanty notes (and other records of informants named therein, all of whom were also interviewed by Howitt or John Mathew), indicates that he embroidered and unfortunately distorted what little information he collected firsthand, and his publications dealing with Victoria and adjacent areas of New South Wales rely heavily on unacknowledged material from published sources, altered to his own style of orthography and amended to support his own theories.

Mathews' almost pathological jealousy of Howitt, well known to contemporaries, is mentioned in a recent biography of Howitt.<sup>6</sup> This forgotten feud is relevant to my paper only because Mathews' publications from 1898 onward contradicted, ridiculed or ignored Howitt's careful ethnographic reports, and in particular his evidence (published as early as 1882 but most fully in 1888) that the Kulin people of central Victoria had patrilineal moieties. The R.H. Mathews Papers contain letters from his friend John

<sup>5</sup> R.H. Mathews Papers; Dixon 1976: 263, Eades 1976, Kesteven 1975, Donaldson 1985. Although Tindale (1940: 141) commented that Mathews' publications were of 'unequal merit' he later praised the 'integrity and zeal' displayed in his 'more than 185 papers' (1974: xi-xii). Elkin's (1975/76: 146) biography, a rejoinder to Mulvaney's (1971) criticisms, dates various fieldtrips from the 1893-1908 volume of Mathews' diaries but his transcript lodged in the Mathews Papers breaks in mid-page to omit all entries between 19/9/98 and 29/3/04, when Mathews began his third Victorian tour, totalling 12 days at five reserves (including Cumeroogunga) over four weeks.

<sup>6</sup> Walker 1971, including Mulvaney's careful assessment of contemporary anthropological arguments.

Mathew who repeatedly, from June 1898, confirmed Howitt's finding and accurately defined the boundary of this form of social organisation. Other letters from the Cumeruogunga teacher T.S. James in 1897-98 confirmed Curr's definition of Pangerang territory and explained that surviving 'Yota-Yota' considered the Wiradjuri language and section system as alien as the *bunjil* and *waa* moieties of their southern neighbours. Despite this evidence, Mathews' 1898 paper and map depicted a supposed 'Bangarang Nation' extending over the whole of central and northeastern Victoria (the boundaries, he said, were adopted from Curr's map with 'certain modifications') and argued that Howitt was wrong about patrilineal inheritance of their 'Boonjil and Wah' moieties.

The nineteenth-century gentlemen whose ethnographic publications influence modern research were not mere scribes: their jealousies, ambitions, loyalties and roles in colonial society shaped their inquiries and the content of their publications. They cannot be blamed for the ignorance which blinded them and others of their time to the complexity of indigenous concepts of identity and land ownership. But we should not forget that they wrote for a contemporary audience and their views were, sometimes, mere propaganda in the contemporary political context of Aboriginal dispossession. Colonial gentlemen like E.M. Curr and his friend A.A.C. LeSouef, who remembered the pastoral invasion of the 1840s, did not trouble to investigate indigenous systems of land tenure, denied the existence of effective leadership by 'chiefs', and despised the liberal views of 1850s immigrants such as Smyth and Howitt, who could not get truthful answers to their queries about the disappearance of Victoria's Aboriginal population. Smyth had fought pastoralists' opposition to help Kulin leaders secure the Coranderrk reserve, but their protests when he, Curr and LeSouef resolved to sell their land divided the Board and led to Smyth's (and finally Curr's) resignation. Curr's ambition to succeed Smyth as secretary in 1876 was thwarted by Board colleagues and the government, and his policies were rejected by an 1877 Royal Commission which included Howitt. Curr's preposterous statements about smallpox in Victoria, aired in an 1877 *Argus* debate prompted by public hysteria about an outbreak in Sydney, were publicly ridiculed by another member of the Royal Commission, while Curr's incompetence was meanwhile protested by his public service staff. Curr's ignorance of Aborigines was publicly criticised in a series of official investigations of Board policy, culminating in an 1881 Parliamentary inquiry. This public humiliation, described in press reports and government files of the day, obviously influenced the content of his books, which mocked (usually unjustly) the ethnographic expertise of Smyth and others he blamed for this embarrassment. Better-informed contemporaries (notably Howitt, who demolished Curr's false statements about kinship and leadership in 1889) attacked his self-serving propaganda until his death when, as convention required, criticism ceased. Recent reprints have made Curr's books widely accessible and his views are often uncritically quoted by modern writers unaware of their falsity. As Curr's papers have not survived it is impossible to assess his editing of questionnaire responses in his 1886-87 volumes; where his summaries and quotations can be checked against published material it is clear that he distorted sources in a most unscholarly fashion to support his arguments.

A.W. Howitt's academic reputation suffered, as Mulvaney has noted, when the theory of group marriage he imbibed from correspondence with Lewis Morgan and

Lorimer Fison was dismissed by later anthropologists. Unfortunately his 1904 book omitted most, and muddled some, of the information preserved in the Howitt Papers, a detailed record of firsthand interviews with the elders of most Victorian communities between 1872 and 1907. Tindale was apparently unable to examine these notes (or, indeed, R.H. Mathews' unpublished records) and had to rely on Howitt's 1904 book, which misquoted his original lists of the moiety identification of Kulin clans and also rendered unintelligible his description of how Kulin used the terms *kulin* (=man, people), and other labels ending in the suffixes *-(w)urrung*, *-balluk*, or *-(w)illam*. Robinson had long before tried to teach his subordinates these distinctions and one of them, E.S. Parker, had published these linguistic clues in an 1854 paper, reprinted by Smyth in 1878. But Howitt's idiosyncratic and inconsistent use of his own terms — 'horde', 'clan', 'tribe' and 'nation' — continues to baffle modern researchers. Howitt's 1904 list of 'tribes' composing a 'Kulin nation' is in fact a list of all *-(w)urrung* (and some of their component clans) who shared a patrilineal form of moiety organisation, including two clans northeast of the Kulin cultural bloc whose speech was utterly different but who had intermarried with Kulin neighbours since pre-contact times. Howitt's 'Kulin nation' included all speakers of what modern linguists classify as the 'Eastern Kulin Language': the Bunurong, Woiworung, Taungurong (Thagunworung) and Ngurai-illam-wurrung, plus two neighbouring *-(w)urrung* considered friendly and marriageable, the Wathaurung and Jajowrong, whose speech is classified with the 'Western Kulin' languages used throughout most of Western Victoria.<sup>7</sup> Similarities in speech plus initiation and burial practices, together with kinship ties resulting from marriages known to date at least three decades before 1840, linked all of the local land-owning groups on the Yarra, Goulburn, Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca, Werribee and Broken rivers, and marriage linked some with neighbours beyond the Ovens.

But to the Woiworung and Bunurong clans about Melbourne in 1836 other neighbours were *mainmeet*<sup>R</sup>/*meymet*<sup>H</sup> ('no good'<sup>R</sup>, 'foreign'<sup>R</sup>, 'regarded as wild men'<sup>H</sup>).<sup>8</sup> In 1880 William Barak told Howitt that in his boyhood the Pangerang about the Murray-Campaspe junction, the Kurnai of Gippsland, and all those to the south and west of the Wathaurung were all *meymet*. On his 1841 journey through the Western District Chief Protector Robinson found that his Wathaurung and 'Jarcoort' guides labelled

<sup>7</sup> Because Howitt's (1904: 70-71, 126-127) published lists are incomplete and inaccurate my map and description rely on data in the Howitt Papers, carefully checked against 1840s records of the clan identification of husbands and wives in the G.A. Robinson Papers. In this paper Tindale's (1974: 131-133, 203-209) spelling of most *-(w)urrung* names has been used to assist comparisons with his map, but I have retained the names Woiworung (his Wurundjeri and Kurung tribes), Jajowrong (his Jaara) and Ngurai-illam-wurrung (his Ngurelban) as these were the forms specified by Howitt's Kulin informants and used by Protectorate officials 1839-49. Hercus (1969: 5-7, Map 1) follows Capell in classifying coastal Wathaurung as Eastern Kulin; Dixon (1980: 241) classifies 'Wathawurrung' or his Language H2 as a separate language genetically related to the eastern dialects (H3) and those to the northwest, his H1 or 'Wemba-Wemba' language.

<sup>8</sup> Superscript letters are identified in the key below. See pp. 110-112. Robinson, Journal, December 1836; Parker, Journal for 1/6-30/8/41, and other statements reprinted in Morrison 1967a: 52; Howitt Papers, The Kulin Tribe. Presland 1977b, 1980 and Lourandos 1977 provide detailed accounts of Robinson's 1841 journey.

their coastal neighbours, of alien speech, *mainmeet*. In the same year his subordinate Parker reported that the Jajowrong also used this label for all groups, regardless of geographical location, whom they did not marry: ‘“Mainmait”, i.e. “strange” blacks practised the “wooreet” [sorcery] against them’.

By 1863, when the surviving Kulin settled on their chosen land at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, they had long since begun to marry all of these neighbours, but were still influenced by ancient rules governing marriage, land ownership and political authority. They identified themselves as Kulin – as members of a regional cultural bloc or ‘confederacy’ – maintained by intermarriage, a common language and mutual interests of various kinds. One of the bonds maintaining this confederacy was moiety affiliation: Kulin divided their world into two halves (moieties) labelled *waa* (crow) and *bunjil* (eaglehawk). Individuals were identified with one or other of these moieties, which both shaped the patterned intermarriage of specific clans and transcended local allegiance when the Kulin met for religious rituals or the settlement of disputes or simply chose teams for a ball game.

Individuals might also choose to emphasise a narrower district or ‘tribal’ loyalty. Within the Kulin bloc clusters of adjacent clans which shared a common dialect or manner of speaking, and some degree of mutual political and economic interest because of their geographical contiguity, distinguished themselves by a ‘language’ name with the suffix *-w/jurrung* (meaning mouth or speech). But the strength of such ‘tribal’ allegiances depended upon a number of things, including the disposition of neighbouring clans. The cell-like structure and political autonomy suggested by the term ‘tribe’ is an inappropriate description of the *-w/jurrung* groupings. After resettlement at Coranderrk *-w/jurrung* names were still used by individuals to indicate their district of origin and something of their history, but the deliberate maintenance of speech differences to demarcate district loyalties or comply with mythological sanctions had less importance. Most Kulin adults were multi-lingual, and etiquette demanded that residents of another clan’s territory should use the speech of its owners. Available records suggest that social identity beyond the clan level was situational, but the scanty evidence is so flawed by observers’ ignorance and misconceptions that we have only hints of how nineteenth-century Kulin perceived social boundaries and used language and other devices to maintain or cross such boundaries.

Yet neither dispossession nor migration altered the importance of clan and moiety membership, which influenced marriage arrangements and the resulting rights of inheritance affecting the political and economic opportunities of individuals. The discreteness of the *-w/jurrung* had always been limited by laws forbidding marriage between persons who were of the same clan or the same moiety or who were reckoned near kin by any traceable genealogical tie. Each clan belonged either to the *waa* or *bunjil* moiety (in modern anthropological terms each territorial patriclan was also a localised moiety segment whose members were recruited by a rule of patrilineal descent). Clan members had to find spouses from some clan of the opposite moiety, either within or outside their own *-w/jurrung* but preferably at some distant locality. District loyalties were thereby extended and travel and trade with more remote areas were encouraged by the resulting web of kinship ties uniting all Kulin clans in a far-flung confederacy.

The basic unit of Kulin society was a named localised patrilineal descent group



(clan) whose members had an historical, religious and genealogical identity. Clan territories were defined by ritual and economic responsibilities. Clan names were distinguished by the suffixes *-balluk* or *-bulluk* meaning a number of people and *-(w)illam* (in northern dialects *-yellam*) meaning dwelling-place; *-bulluk* or *-goondeet* and *-lar* were the Jajowrong equivalents.<sup>9</sup> Most nineteenth-century observers ignored or were bewildered by the various levels of Kulin identification because they did not grasp the underlying principles. A few perceived dialect and language differences and labelled the populations thus distinguished as tribes or nations, but most used the label 'tribe' to designate the small named groups occupying particular localities. The names they recorded were those of land-owning clans, yet clans as such were apparently invisible to Europeans because all members did not live together permanently as an observable residential unit on their jointly-owned estate. Clan lands were exploited by residential groups (now termed bands) whose membership changed over time as nuclear families formed, aged and were replaced, and over the course of each year because the families and individuals entitled to make use of a specific clan estate were sometimes together, sometimes dispersed, sometimes journeying to other localities to fulfil the religious and family obligations of responsible adults in Kulin society.

Over a lifetime a person might successively join bands in various localities, utilising various rights to make use of land owned by others. But clan membership was fixed at birth. Each person inherited clan (and moiety) membership from his or her father and retained that membership until death. The patrilineal clans so recruited were stable units owning particular territories: their members' sense of identity derived from their own recognition, and public acceptance, of their inherited responsibility for that land. Because religious duties tethered men to their own clan estate the bands residing in any locality usually had a core of male clan members, with their wives, sons, unmarried daughters and other relatives whose rights of access were acquired by descent or marriage. These relatives were most commonly the husbands, children (and grandchildren) of daughters who had married men of other clans yet retained and transmitted various rights to use and care for the resources of their natal clan. Near kinsmen of women married to men of the owning clan were able to visit this territory and use its resources, and members of associated clans of the same moiety also had certain privileges of access. The land tenure system of the Kulin permitted individuals to make claims on various relatives in order to use land beyond their own estate. Individuals 'born' on the land of another clan had lifelong access but did not acquire clan membership. Visitors who had no entitlement could also seek formal permission from clan-heads for temporary access. The safety of all approved visitors was guaranteed. The system worked because reciprocity was the guiding principle of land and resource management. Europeans, who did not grasp this concept but merely noticed the fluctuating size and variable

<sup>9</sup> Robinson's journals of his 1840-44 journeys note that the suffix *-mittong* (meaning a number of people) was used throughout northeastern Victoria (and that the people beyond the Ovens courteously substituted the Kulin suffix *-balluk* when in Kulin territory), and that 'sections' (clans) of the Wiradjuri tribe beyond the Murray also used *-mittong*, as did the different linguistic groups in the New South Wales highlands and about Cape Howe. Howitt (1904: 78) independently concluded that *-mittong* was the equivalent of *-balluk*, and noted that the Kurnai equivalent was the suffix *-wurk*. Curr (1886/87: III 525) noted that the Pangerang *-pan* or *-ban* termination was translated as *yellam* or *illum* meaning camp or 'the people who dwelt in any land'.

composition of observed groups without understanding the principles of recruitment, were prone to assume that Aborigines were nomads incapable of the responsibilities of owners and proprietors.

John Batman's 1835 'treaties' with the leaders of clans near Melbourne are an example of how permission for temporary access was granted in a ritual exchange of gifts and formal presentation of tokens (soil, plants, water, food) symbolising the owners' hospitality. Batman's escort of 'Sydney' Aborigines were familiar with such ceremonies, and Batman's overtures were no doubt perceived by the Woiworung and Bunurong clan-heads as a rather puppyish eagerness to initiate the required *tanderrum* ritual. Five of the eight 'chiefs' Batman named can be identified; they and other participants recalled the occasion for Robinson and his subordinate William Thomas. Half a century later William Barak, an eleven-year-old witness, named the clan-heads for Howitt. Many historians have ignorantly ridiculed this encounter, usually quoting Wedge's letter, written two days after his arrival at Port Phillip, reporting William Buckley's opinion that 'there is no such thing as chieftainship among them'; but Wedge's diary, published in 1883, shows that he quickly learned to respect the authority of Kulin clan-heads.<sup>10</sup> The colonists who followed Batman were quickly made aware that Kulin *ngurungaeta* had authority over their own clans and often had influence over distant groups. For a few years after 1835 Europeans had to negotiate with these leaders, but when squatters outnumbered the Kulin they sneered at the tattered dignity of landless chiefs.

Howitt's records of the names of clans and clan-heads remembered by Kulin elders agree with Protectorate records of the 1840s unknown to him. The Woiworung leader William Barak explained, and earlier records confirm, that Kulin clans were governed by senior men, one or several of whom represented the component patrilineages in the formal office of clan-head designated by a title: *ngurungaeta*<sup>H</sup> among the Woiworung, Taungurong and Ngurai-illam-wurrung; *neyerneyerneet*<sup>P</sup>/*kneyerkneyerneet*<sup>Pa</sup> among the Jajowrong; *noure-nit*<sup>R</sup> among the northern Wathaurung and *arweet*<sup>R</sup> among the coastal Wathaurung and their Bunurong neighbours; *gnern neetch*<sup>Da</sup> among the Chaap-wuurung<sup>Da</sup> and Pirt pirt wuurung<sup>Da</sup> west of the Wathaurung; *nge-im-etch*<sup>H</sup> among the Wotjoballaiuk west of the Jajowrong and *gnernick gnernick* among the 'Wamba' about Lake Boga.<sup>11</sup> A clan-head had effective authority within his own group and was considered its rightful representative in external affairs. All clan-heads were men of distinguished achievement; certain of them were so eminent that their wishes were obeyed

<sup>10</sup> See Bonwick 1883: 174-219, 247-279 for Wedge and Batman records; Howitt 1904: 71-72, 309-310; Smyth 1878: I 134-135. William Thomas' journals provide eye-witness accounts of many such ceremonies when distant clans first visited the Woiworung during the 1840s. His description in Bride 1898 was known to Howitt, who collected more details from Barak (Howitt Papers).

<sup>11</sup> Stone (1911: 438) identifies 'gnernick gnernick' as 'chief or headman of small local tribe'. See Stanner (1965; 1969: 157-161) for an account of the distinction between clan and band. I have adopted Stanner's term clan-head to describe the representative role or office designated by these titles, which Howitt (1889, 1904) translated as headman. Robinson's 1841 journal reveals his elicitation technique among distant groups about Portland who did not understand his Woiworung terms: 'When I was taking down the names of the strangers yesterday evening I asked for the chief, the head man or gentleman of the tribe, when the interpreter said they were all poor men there was no gentlemen among them' (Presland 1980: 8).

by all clans comprising a *-w)urrung* and their religious authority was acknowledged far beyond the region. Officials who saw daily evidence of their leadership in the early 1840s had no doubt that Billibellary was the 'paramount chief' among the southern Kulin while Munangabum held sway as 'neyerneyerneet or chieftain over most of the Jajowrong people'. The Protectors used the words respect and obedience to characterise the loyalty shown to all clan-heads. Reverence was the term used for the reception accorded to two aged and far-famed chiefs who visited Jajowrong and Woiworung assemblies: one was head of the Peeruk-el-moom-bulluk clan of Wathaurung and the other was the clan-head Kallakallap of the Buffalo river, far beyond the Kulin pale.

Information on most Kulin clan-heads is scanty because they died only a few years after Europeans occupied their land. But the censuses and genealogies compiled by the Protectors confirm what William Barak and other Kulin elders later told Howitt: in the 1830s and 1840s the *ngurungaeta* of the southern Kulin clans were closely linked by kinship ties resulting from past marriages (in part because prominent men acquired more wives and thus more children to be deployed in politically advantageous marriages). These records also confirm Barak's statements suggesting that a *ngurungaeta* was 'made' by other men — the men of his own patriline and clan and the leaders of neighbouring clans and other clans of the same moiety. Although genealogical seniority was here important in clan government and a *ngurungaeta* could confidently name a particular son or brother as his heir, hereditary succession was not automatic. Aspirants had to prove their competence and, as Barak indicated, win endorsement from other clan-heads of the region. It was their support which enabled younger men to acquire religious knowledge, wives, and entrée to the political forums where opinions, oratorical skills and influence were tested. 'A *ngurungaeta* is like a Governor', Barak told Howitt. He spoke also of the three young men he had named to follow him as *ngurungaeta* of the Kulin clans represented at Coranderrk.

Anthropological and historical analysis of Victorian clans and their leaders is extraordinarily difficult, mainly because of the rapidity of European usurpation and the government's failure (unique in British colonial administration) to negotiate treaties of cession and pay compensation in order to legitimise European 'settlement'. Colonists began their illicit occupation of Kulin land in 1835; within six years almost 12,000 Europeans had appropriated the estates of most Kulin clans and dispossessed the owners. By 1851 the newly-separated colony of Victoria was occupied by 77,345 Europeans, 391,000 cattle and 6,590,000 sheep. The new proprietors did not enumerate the surviving Kulin or count those who had been killed, but their written records carefully tallied the loss of several thousand sheep and cattle and the 'murder' of fifty-nine

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Europeans in the Port Phillip District.<sup>12</sup> Experienced colonial officials investigating these deaths usually reported that European lust or cruelty had prompted retribution and decided that many reports of stock 'theft' were falsified or exaggerated in order to excuse delinquent employees or justify demands for government compensation. Certainly hungry Aborigines did harvest some of the introduced animals denuding their land and polluting their waters, but drought, diseases and dingo depredations were the main causes of stock losses during the 1830s and 1840s.

By 1861 some 540,000 Europeans immigrants had claimed all of Victoria except for the mountains and the mallee country they considered uninhabitable. Fewer than 2,000 of the original owners had survived what eye-witness accounts called 'wanton slaughter', starvation, and the effect of European-introduced diseases, notably influenza, measles, tuberculosis and the venereal infections then labelled 'syphilis' (the symptoms in fact suggest a combination of syphilis and gonorrhoea).<sup>13</sup>

Names of the clans composing each Kulin *-(w)urrung* are listed alphabetically below, preceded by a brief description of the sources of information and special problems in analysis. Their location (where sufficient description exists) is indicated on the accompanying map. The geographical base map is that published by R. Brough Smyth in 1878, since it shows Victorian streams before most were dammed or diverted and provides contemporary locality names. Nineteenth-century gazetteers and the index of pastoral holdings published by Billis and Kenyon were used to check locality references. Superscript letters, identified in the following key, are used to indicate the source of clan, 'language' and personal names and additional information.

<sup>12</sup> Serle (1963) provides census totals for Europeans and stock numbers at various dates. Nance 1981 (see also her thesis, Blaskett 1979) identifies 59 European deaths, usefully criticises historians' errors, and assembles evidence on internecine 'killings'; but her uncritical grouping of incidents labelled 'inter-tribal clashes' and obvious confusion of actual violence and sorcery accusations caused a grossly exaggerated estimate of 'the level of violence' 1835-50. Calculation of the causes of mortality based on Aboriginal reports is difficult everywhere in Australia because all deaths except those of the very young and very old were attributed to malevolent sorcery. In colonial Victoria and New South Wales pastoralists' reportage was always dubious because they risked cancellation of their squatting licences if they or their servants were proven guilty of homicide, mistreatment or prostitution of Aborigines. Although the Protectors and Crown Land Commissioners were well aware of the blatant falsehood of many sworn statements they were helpless to convict because Aboriginal evidence was not acceptable in courts.

<sup>13</sup> See Barwick 1971 for an account of population decline. In this paper I cited Radcliffe-Brown's view (based on Curr's inflated population estimates and reports of smallpox before contact) that the Victorian population was 11,500 at 1835. Butlin's (1983) admittedly speculative theories about smallpox prompted me to re-examine the belated reportage and the biographies of the 26 gentlemen who wrote about 'smallpox' in Victoria, mostly during the hysterical press campaign which followed an outbreak in Sydney and coincided with an 1877 Royal Commission on the treatment of Aborigines. Analysis of the reported incidence of remembered pockmarking, together with the voluminous medical evidence on skin diseases among Victorian and other Aborigines, convinced me that all reports of Victorian epidemics resulted from medical and ethnographic ignorance. The rarity, seasonality and geographical peculiarities of reportage by these 26 observers suggest that they were reminiscing about outbreaks of *impetigo contagiosa* (the medical diagnosis, from the 1860s, of what laymen called 'native pock'), a streptococcal or staphylococcal infection; the staphylococcal form, if untreated, may cause the severe generalised disease *pemphigus acutus*, commonly known as 'butcher's fever'.

# KEY TO SUPERScript IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES

- B *Dr W.H. Baylie*: Medical registration as Mr Baylie 1840, Protectorate medical officer based at W. LeSouef's Goulburn depot (at Murchison) November 1841-1843, also visited Parker's Loddon depot. Description of Taungurong and Ngurai-illam-wurrung published February 1843.
- Bu *John Bulmer* (1833-1913): Carpenter who immigrated in 1852, served as Anglican lay missionary at Yelta 1855-60, and manager of Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station 1861-1908. His 1872-1907 correspondence in A.W. Howitt Papers contains useful information on the lower Murray and Gippsland; his published work includes contributions to volumes by Smyth, Curr and Howitt and one article.
- C *E.M. Curr* (1820-1889): Tasmanian-born but at school in England and France until 1839, moved to Victoria to manage father's run at Heathcote 1841, claimed Tongala and later Lower Moira runs in Pangerang territory where he resided intermittently 1841-50; returned to Victoria 1862 after pastoral ventures in New South Wales and Queensland failed, by patronage acquired post as Sheep Inspector and later Chief Inspector of Stock. Solicited appointment to Board for the Protection of the Aborigines 1875, resigned 1883 after a series of inquiries in which his ignorance of Aborigines was publicly mocked. In his 1883 and 1886-87 publications admitted that his interest in ethnography began in '1872' and his account of Victorian 'tribes' relied on the memories of 'old settlers' rather than records of the 1840s.
- Ca General reference to variant transcriptions listed in general and name indexes of *Historical Records of Victoria*, vols. 2A, 2B, edited by Cannon.
- D *James Dredge* (1796-1846): London school teacher and Methodist lay preacher recruited as Assistant Protector 1838; formed Goulburn depot at Mitchellstown May 1839-June 1840 then resigned; his diaries (excerpts in publications by Parris, Bossence, Blaskett and Cannon) provide some information about the southern Kulin and their neighbours.
- Da *James Dawson* (1806-1900): Immigrated from Scotland 1840, farmed near Melbourne before and after his 1844-66 tenure of the Kangatong run north of Port Fairy; his 1881 book relied upon reminiscences collected after January 1876 from the few aged survivors near his Camperdown farm with the help of his daughter Isabella Taylor (1842-1929), who acquired some fluency in Kulin and Mara dialects before leaving Kangatong to be educated in England.
- H *A.W. Howitt* (1830-1908): Immigrated 1852 with journalist father William Howitt, on Ovens goldfield 1853-54, gained fame for Victorian exploration 1854-60 and 1861-62 Burke and Wills rescue expeditions; Mining Warden and Police Magistrate at Omeo 1864-66 then at Bairnsdale and Sale in Gippsland until 1889, ending his career as Secretary for Mines. His anthropological research began in 1872 among Kurnai employed in his hop garden but extended throughout Victoria 1877-1907. His main Kulin informants were William Barak (Beruk, c.1824-1903), the *ngurungaeta* of the Wurundjeri-balluk clan of Woiworung; Dick Richards (Wyerdierum, 1838/9-1907) of the Nira-balluk clan of Taungerong and his wife Ellen (c.1848-1921) of the Borumbeet-bulluk clan of Wathaurung; Thomas Avoca (Deardjoo Warramin, 1834/8-1894) of the Burong-balluk clan of Jajowrong; and Sergeant Major (c.1838-1903), born at Inglewood on the Loddon but a member of his father's Wangaro-bulluk clan of Jajowrong at Marr near St Arnaud, adjoining the Wotjoballaiuk of the Wimmera from which his mother and paternal grandmother came. As the Howitt Papers in the Victorian Museum and La Trobe Library are fully indexed I give only a general reference.
- Ha *Adolphus Hartmann*: Moravian missionary at Ebenezer (Lake Hindmarsh) 1864-72; his mapping of Wimmera groups for Smyth's 1878 volume (probably obtained from his superior Rev. F.W. Spieseke, missionary at Lake Boga 1850-55, at Ebenezer from 1858 until his death in 1877) agree well with Robinson's 1845 journal and accounts from many Wotjoballaiuk in the unpublished Howitt Papers..

## MAPPING THE PAST

- J *T.S. James* (1859-1945): Tamil from Mauritius, studied medicine, volunteered 1881 as teacher at Maloga Mission where he married a member of the Wollithiga clan of Pangerang, and served as teacher at Cumeroogunga Aboriginal Station until his retirement in 1922. An 1897 publication in *Science of Man* prompted an 1897-98 correspondence preserved in the R.H. Mathews Papers.
- Le *A.A.C. LeSouef* (1829-1902): Educated England and Germany, in 1841 joined father, new Assistant Protector William LeSouef, at the Goulburn depot (at Murchison); after father's 1845 dismissal for embezzlement and cruelty was employed droving stock, then part-owner of the Tallygaroopna run in Pangerang territory 1855-57, and later secretary of the Zoological Society and Usher of the Black Rod. Solicited membership of Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in 1875 and shaped its policies until 1902. His inaccurate reminiscences of Pangerang, Taungurong and Ngurai-illam-wurrung in Smyth's and Curr's books were written after the 1877 smallpox hysteria; his memories of 'smallpox' and his grotesquely false map of clan locations, attributed to a Nattarak-bulluk named 'Ned Narrabin' (a Native Police constable at the Mitchellstown and Murchison depots 1839-41) are proven false by the contemporary records of Protectorate officials.
- M *R.H. Mathews* (1841-1908): New South Wales land surveyor who began recording rock art and ceremonial sites in 1893; following an 11-day visit to Warangesda and Brungle reserves in 1896 he published extensively on southern Wiradjuri initiation rituals and in 1897-98 began soliciting further information from police and staff at Aboriginal reserves in Victoria and adjacent areas of New South Wales. Their replies, and seven notebooks (internally dated 1900-1904) recording brief visits to many reserves, are preserved in the R.H. Mathews Papers, a more reliable source of information than his publications.
- Ma *John Mathew* (1849-1929): Immigrated from Scotland 1862, employed on pastoral stations and later teacher in Queensland to 1875, then trained and employed in Melbourne as Presbyterian minister. The John Mathew Papers preserve notes of visits to Victorian reserves 1906-09; his 1895-1909 correspondence located in the R.H. Mathews Papers gives information on other visits, and on contemporary anthropological debates.
- P *E.S. Parker* (1802-1865): London-born printer's apprentice turned teacher and Methodist lay preacher, appointed Assistant Protector in Loddon District 1839-49, based in Woiworong territory about Sunbury to November 1840, then at a site four miles west of Mt Tarringower until June 1841 and finally at Franklinford, where he farmed a portion of the former reserve until his death. Only his 1842 census and vocabularies (Great Britain 1844: 309-319), his 1854 lecture and the sections reprinted in Smyth's 1878 volume were accessible until extracts from his voluminous official reports, preserved in the Public Record Office, Melbourne, were published by Morrison and by Cannon.
- Pa *Joseph Parker* (1829-1917): farmer son of E.S. Parker, provided a brief and inaccurate account of Jajowrong clans for Smyth's 1878 volume; other writings are quoted by Morrison.
- R *G.A. Robinson* (1788-1866): Self-educated London bricklayer, emigrated to Tasmania 1824, employed from 1829 to 'conciliate' and collect surviving Tasmanians at island refuges; first visited Port Phillip District 1836, employed as Chief Protector 1839-49. His voluminous and embarrassingly critical reports of his journeys were often summarised or censored before his annual reports were forwarded in the Governor's Despatches, and his private papers and journals left Australia in 1850 and were not returned until 1948. Before these were indexed by Plomley, editor of the Tasmanian journals, scholars only had access to published extracts of official reports on his 1841, 1842, 1843 and 1844 journeys (Kenyon 1928, Great Britain 1844: 253-255, 279-282, Mackaness 1940) but transcripts of an 1840 visit to the Jajowrong, his 1841 tour of western Victoria, and his 1846 tour of the Murray have since been produced (Presland 1977a, b, 1980, National Museum of Victoria n.d.).

- T *William Thomas* (1793-1867): Educated in Spain, owner of private school and Wesleyan lay preacher, recruited as Assistant Protector in the Westernport District 1839-49, retained as court interpreter and Guardian of the Aborigines in the Melbourne region until his death. Rarely left Woiworung/Bunurong territory and apparently never grasped clan/language naming principles but genealogical data in his 1839-67 journals is independently confirmed by detailed notes from William Barak in Howitt Papers. Extracts from journals published in Cannon.
- Tu *Francis Tuckfield* (1808-1865): Methodist missionary at Buntingdale near Colac 1838-48, discouraged Wathaurung attendance from 1839; his surviving 'Kolijon' and Wathaurung linguistic records were published by Cary. Vocabularies collected on April-May 1842 journey to Murray published with official report (Great Britain 1844: 224-226).

This superscript identification of sources helps to make sense of the variant spellings which discourage accurate identification of 'language', clan and personal names appearing in the historical and anthropological literature. Much of this variation is due to haphazard attempts at phonetic transcription by nineteenth-century gentlemen unacquainted with any foreign languages, except the Latin taught to British schoolboys. Yet my (admittedly incomplete) examination of G.A. Robinson's manuscripts suggests that his variable spellings record differences in pronunciation by speakers of different dialects. The problems of historical research are compounded by new orthographies used by some modern researchers. I have adhered to authors' original spellings and listed all variants in manuscripts plus the best-known published form. Since published versions of Protectorate records are generally unreliable, spellings given below are mainly from the Robinson and Thomas papers held by the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Alphabetical listing is of course complicated by writers' differing perceptions of the phonetic equivalence of vowels a/u and consonants b/p, d/t, c/g/k. Many writers, including Robinson, were deaf to initial 'ng'.<sup>14</sup>

Personal names present special problems. Ethnographic evidence from all over the continent suggests that individuals had several names: those given in infancy and acquired at initiation, nicknames, and names bestowed on namesakes (names borne by living and dead clansmen were publicly given to young kinsmen as a mark of fondness, and adults could 'exchange' names to indicate a special bond). Regional practice varied, but generally names were clan or private property. Some were 'secret' names known only to persons of equivalent religious stature. Even where 'public' names were used to refer to a person, etiquette dictated that a kin term or reference be used as a term of address. Hints of these conventions appear in the Robinson and Thomas papers (where, for example, the aged leader Berberry is mentioned as 'Wigegulk marmum' i.e. father of Wigegulk), which also show that names were bestowed on namesakes when the original holder was living or only recently dead. All replies to Smyth's 1863 questionnaire asking whether names and related words were 'disused' after death suggest (and

<sup>14</sup> Tindale 1974 discusses variant orthography and explains his own transliteration of 'tribal' names into Geographic II spelling and an adaptation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (thus the Yota-Yota of Curr and R.H. Mathews becomes Jotijota). Rather different orthographies are used by the linguists Hercus and Dixon. Common transcription errors in published versions of Protectorate manuscripts are confusion of L/T/Y, N/M/W, w/v/u, r/n/m/w and g/y. Robinson's handwriting is notoriously difficult, but it is unfortunate that Thomas' very clear 1839 census of the 'Waworong' and 'Bonurong' (Thomas Papers, Set 214, Item 9, pages 41-47) which distinguishes family groups, is unrecognisable in a recent publication (Cannon 1983: 603-609) which omits 36 names from the 'Waworong' (sic) and 'Bonurong' lists and garbles the rest.

## MAPPING THE PAST

Thomas explicitly asserts) that name avoidance after death was brief and that this custom was a negligible source of linguistic change among the Kulin of central Victoria. The prevalence of namesakes within and beyond the clan (although we can only speculate about genealogical connections) and use of the same name by father and son, uncle and nephew, brothers, and sisters, means that construction of genealogies from the Protectors' censuses and journals is essential before an individual can be identified with any certainty. Even so, many uncertainties remain.

Elders listed under Howitt's entry in the above key specified the moiety of most Kulin clans; their identification was checked by an analysis of marriages contracted c.1800-1890. Because Robinson named the natal clan of wives, his records are useful for moiety identification even though he was unaware of the moiety principle. Some Wathaurung clans cannot be labelled for lack of such information, but there is no doubt that the western boundary of the bunjil-waa moieties was at Fiery creek, where Wathaurung adjoined the Utowolbulluk and other Pirt pirt wuurong<sup>Da</sup> clans who traced moiety membership matrilineally. Two June 1898 letters in R.H. Mathews' papers prove that the Coranderrk manager twice confirmed this boundary with assembled elders for him and for John Mathew before Mathews posted his erroneous 1898 paper. Mrs Richards, the only Wathaurung met on Mathews' Victorian tours (his 1902 notes record her statement that her brother Jack Phillips died in 1901), told him the Wathaurung were bunjil and waa. She gave more detail to John Mathew in 1909. I cannot find any evidence, either in Mathews' records or elsewhere, to support statements he published in 1898 and 1904 about moiety boundaries, marriage, or initiation ceremonies among the Kulin.<sup>15</sup>

The clan lists which follow are merely a reconstruction from available evidence, offered as a gloss or 'crib' for other scholars searching the archival evidence, in the hope that further work will expand and correct my attempt at mapping the past. European writings are but a flawed and partial record of Kulin land ownership: by ancient convention only clan owners could publicly 'speak for' their land. G.A. Robinson understood this convention: his 1846 list of clans composing the 'Boonwurrong Nation' notes that 'Benhow gave names as a favour'. In the 1880s Barak gave partial lists of the Kulin clans to his friend A.W. Howitt, but it is clear that he spoke only of those clans which he had some rightful authority to 'speak for' — either because of his own kin ties to the clan owners or because he, as *ngurungaeta*, was responsible for the survivors now gathered on his land at Coranderrk. From 1875 to 1884 Barak and the younger Kulin assembled there, born of Kulin women on Kulin land, fought the schemes of Board members Curr and LeSouef to sell the only land reserved for Kulin use. Coranderrk became a permanent reserve but already the Board was implementing an 'absorption' policy (enforced by 1886 legislation) which exiled all young 'half castes', including two men Barak had named to succeed him as *ngurungaeta*. The new manager who implemented their dispersal admittedly knew nothing of the Kulin, and they despised him: these facts shaped his replies to ethnographic queries preserved in the John Mathew, R.H. Mathews and A.W. Howitt papers. When Howitt wrote in 1900 seeking further information about clans, the manager replied that the few remaining

<sup>15</sup> Mathews 1898; Mathews 1904: 294, 297-298; Mathews Papers, John Mathew Papers.



residents 'cannot give any other name than Boonoorung for Pt Nepean and Western Port Bay blacks'. Of course Barak and other elders he assembled for questioning could remember neighbouring clans and roughly define their estates. What the manager interpreted as ignorance was in fact adherence to the convention that only descendants of male and female clan members inherited various rights to care for and speak for the land. Their silence was deference to the rightful heirs — those exiled 'half castes' whom Barak had sheltered and trained as custodians of Kulin lands and traditions. But the heirs they acknowledged were already dispersed in camps on the rubbish tips of Victorian towns, where their landless children and grand-children of necessity remained until the 1960s.



Plate 1

Top: Mor-rer-mal-loke/King Billy (ca. 1806-1867), Yowung-illam-balluk clan of Taungurong. Captured in Lettsom raid 1840, sentenced to transportation but 'jumped overboard and escaped to Healesville'.

Lower: Bundowrok/Mr Cotton (ca. 1806-1871), Waring-illam-balluk clan of Taungurong. Believed 'oldest native in colony' 1866/7.

*Charles Walter photographs 1866/7 from John Green's Coranderrk album, courtesy of John Green Parkinson and Museum of Victoria.*

## APPENDIX I: BUNURONG AND WOIWORUNG

Versions of these *-(w)urung* or language names have been used to label separate Coast and Yarra 'tribes' since 1837, when missionary George Langhorne arrived to supervise them at a reserve near the junction of the Yarra and Gardiner's creek. This usage was continued in the censuses and journals compiled by officials of the 1839-49 Port Phillip Protectorate, but comparison of the various censuses and journals compiled by Assistant Protector William Thomas reveals that individuals he labelled Bunurong when in the vicinity of Western Port bay were re-classified as 'Port Phillip'/Yarra/'Waworong' tribe (or even Barrabool, the contemporary label for coastal Wathaurung clans between the Werribee and Barwon rivers) when met west of Mordialloc. Robinson's 1846 list of clans composing the 'Boonwurrong nation' defined their territory by place-names located in a narrow coastal tract stretching eastward from the Werribee (Exe) river around Port Phillip and Western Port bays to the Tarwin river watershed. Howitt's information from Woiworung and Kurnai elders independently confirmed the Werribee boundary while suggesting an eastward extension to 'Yanakie' (from 1850 a pastoral run covering Wilson's Promontory), but identified several clans in Robinson's list as Woiworung. The discrepancy is explained by Barak's definition of the bounds of the 'marine-bek': from the mouth of the Yarra inland to Gardiner's creek and via the creek eastward to 'Dandenong' then south by the 'Mordialloc' creek ('Mordialloc itself, Brighton, St Kilda and Sandridge were "half-bad" country'); the 'bad country' proper extended from Mordialloc Creek to the Mornington Peninsula, inland as far as Cranbourne, and eastward around Western Port bay to the sources of the Latrobe river and to 'Wa-mung' (Wilson's Promontory) where the creator-hero Lohan ended his journey from the Yarra flats. Barak explained that any newcomer to the marine-bek had to obey various ritual prohibitions and 'must also learn the Bunwuring language which is spoken there and which is the language of Lohan who lives at Wilson's Promontory and who made this custom'.

It was R. Brough Smyth, considered the colony's most brilliant young scientist in the 1860s, who first collected and published evidence that these supposedly separate tribes spoke 'the same' dialect, differing only by a few words, together with the myth of 'Loo-errn' which was the rationale for a particular form of speech and behaviour in the 'marr-ne-beek' country between the Yarra and Latrobe rivers, adjacent to Loo-errn's home at 'Wamoom'. Artist George Haydon published a puzzled account of the ceremonious observances of the (mostly young Woiworung) Native Police accompanying G.A. Robinson's 1844 expedition through Western Port to Gippsland. Robinson's official reports merely note that the region between the Tarwin and Port Albert (where the Kurnai had been 'dispersed' by squatters) seemed uninhabited. He argued that the impenetrable scrub which had defeated occupation from Melbourne (and forced Land Commissioner Tyers to sail to his Port Albert post in 1843) was evidence that the owners had been exterminated by sealers and the still-unknown Kurnai. This deduction was based on a false analogy with examples of 'unnatural ground' (his term for the neglected estates of clans exterminated or driven elsewhere by squatters) seen on his 1841 tour of western Victoria.

Howitt's notes indicate that the Bunurong form of speech was required usage only within the coastal 'bad country' adjacent to the hallowed ground around Western Port bay where Bunjil, Loän (his rendering of the Kurnai pronunciation) and Jato-wora-woroi rested at sacred sites which marked the end of their journeys when creating the Kulin and Kurnai world. But the Yallukit-willam clan stretching west of the Yarra called themselves Bunurong because a portion of their territory lay within the 'half-bad' country; so did that of several Woiworung clans called Bunurong by Robinson. The owners of course controlled access by more distant Kulin groups. Thus use of the speech-label Bunurong is a statement about religious and political authority. Howitt's notes suggest this was also true in Gippsland, where the 'Nulit' form of Kurnai speech was required usage in the 'wea-wuk' coastal tract stretching south of the Latrobe river and the lakes as far as Lakes Entrance, where the owning clans (identified by the suffix *-wurk*) likewise controlled access to the sacred sites at Wilson's Promontory.

Unfortunately Howitt's 1904 book merely noted that the ritual behaviour required in the 'bad country' was known to distant Kulin (also to the Pangerang) and Kurnai but did not mention Bunurong speech. Nor did he challenge Smyth's false conclusion that the area east of Western Port

bay was 'debatable ground' held sometimes by Kulin and sometimes by Kurnai, although his notes proved that the Kulin-Kurnai boundary was clearly defined and that the reciprocal raiding of the 1830s and 1840s was not over land but a 'blood feud'. Barak explained that the Kurnai raids (including that on 'Jamieson's house' in 1840) stemmed from one incident 'long before the white men came to Melbourne' when 'Mordiallock people went down to the Tarwin to feast on native cabbage' then followed and killed some of the Port Albert Kurnai who had consumed this resource without permission. The Kurnai had raided Western Port to avenge these killings and 'the Gippsland and Westernport blacks were never friends after'.<sup>16</sup>

Protectorate records of the numbers of Woiworung and Bunurong and their ties with other Kulin groups are flawed by William Thomas' ignorance of clan names (he used only European-imposed geographical labels such as - 'Yarras', 'Westernports', 'Mt Macedons') and by artificial boundaries dividing the four assistant protectors' districts. Thomas' duties as court interpreter and clerk limited surveillance of his Western Port district to the immediate vicinity of Melbourne after government policy limiting rations disrupted depots formed on the Mornington Peninsula 1840-41 and at Narre Narre Warren near Dandenong 1841-43. The western Woiworung and Bunurong clans (between the Maribyrnong and Werribee rivers and extending north to Mt Macedon) were the responsibility of Thomas' colleague E.S. Parker, whose incomplete 1840 lists of 'Marinbulluk' and 'Konongwillam' in fact include members of other clans. After his depot was moved from Sunbury to Jajowrong territory on the Loddon in November 1840 their fate was virtually unrecorded. Some of their prominent members, but few Woiworung from the sources of the Yarra, appear in Thomas' November 1839 'district' census naming 124 'Waworong' and 83 'Bonurong' and estimating that they totalled 230. New names appear in his January 1846 census of the 'Yarra and Westernport tribes' (99+61, but still omitting western Woiworung in Parker's district) and in subsequent censuses to 1863 when the listed survivors (22+11) included several Kurnai spouses. Because he failed to distinguish clans, an estimate of their respective size could only be made by laborious analysis of genealogical data in the Thomas, Robinson and Howitt papers. All contemporary reports 1803-38 declare the inhabitants healthy, except for several puzzling skin diseases thought indigenous by physicians.<sup>17</sup> Robinson noticed evidence of venereal disease in 1836, when Derremart and William Buckley told him it was 'new'; by May 1839 the Medical Officer reported great mortality from 'syphilis', typhus and epidemic influenza; by 1840 many were 'spitting blood' and dying from respiratory disease, probably tuberculosis.

16 Smyth 1878: I 453-455, II 13-14; Howitt Papers. Smyth (1878: I 32), who worked with Thomas for seven years and acquired a portion of his papers, was sure Thomas exaggerated casualties; he mentions Thomas' hearsay report that half a 'tribe' was killed at Western Port in 1834, presumably the incident described in Thomas' (Legislative Council 1859: 62) reminiscence of a carved tree at Little Brighton marking the site where 'sixty or seventy' were killed by Kurnai in '1833-4'.

17 The only contemporary evidence for pre-contact 'smallpox' is Fleming's journal of Grimes' 1803 expedition, mentioning that two of 35 men encountered 'appeared to be marked with the smallpox', and Tuckey's note that one of over 200 men seen 1803-04 'was deeply pitted as if from the small pox' (Bonwick 1883: 7-17, 19-35). Buckley's memoirs (Cannon 1982: 185) say 'cutaneous disorders' were common before 1835; neither he (a smallpox victim) nor Captain Foster Fyans, acquainted with endemic smallpox from a decade's service in India and Burma, nor the experienced ships' surgeons employed 1835-1849 as medical officers in the Geelong-Melbourne region, mention smallpox. The early medical records suggest a combination of impetigo and ringworm to modern diagnosticians; either could account for the Fleming/Tuckey observations and later reminiscences about pockmarking.

## MAPPING THE PAST

### BUNURONG<sup>H</sup>

— (Bunwurung<sup>H</sup>, Boonoorung<sup>H</sup>, Boonworong<sup>D</sup>, Boonwerong<sup>R</sup>, Boonwurrong<sup>R</sup>, Bonurong<sup>T</sup>, Western Port tribe<sup>T</sup>, Port Phillip tribe<sup>T</sup>, Bunwurru<sup>M</sup>, Bonourongs<sup>Ca</sup>)

Description: a *-w/urrung* or speech name defined, as explained above, by the special religious significance of the coastal tract about Western Port bay.

*Moiety, clan name, location, clan-head*

#### 1. waa BURINYUNG-BULLUK<sup>R</sup> (Bunwurung-balluk<sup>H</sup>)

Location: 'belonging about Pt Nepean'<sup>R</sup>; Bunurong about Cape Schanck, waa moiety, 'good friends' of Woiworung clan 5.

Arweet: Bobinuren<sup>T</sup>/Bupinnoreng<sup>R</sup>/Bobbinnary<sup>T,H</sup> (c. 1799-July 1849), famed healer and sorcerer able to 'charm away rain'; heir was son Yal Yal<sup>T,R,D</sup>/Mr Ewan<sup>D</sup>/Mr Merrick<sup>R</sup> (1821/6-March 1852).

#### 2. bunjil MAYONE-BULLUK<sup>R</sup> (Bunurong-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Westernport<sup>T</sup>)

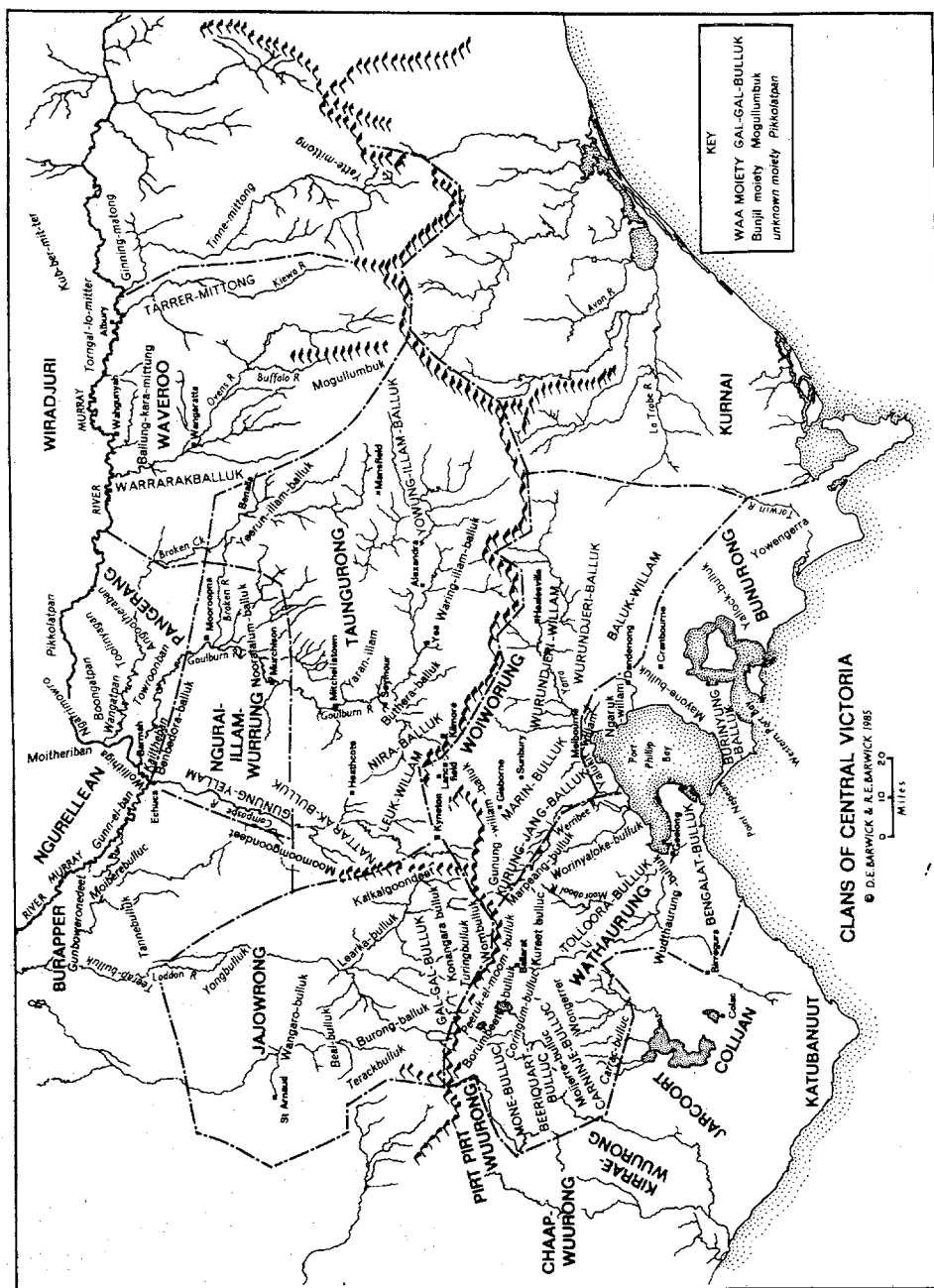
Location: 1846 list of Bunurong clans identifies Budgery Tom as arweet of 'Mayone-bulluk at Mr Ruffy's, Mr Ruffy's called Baloke-willum'<sup>R</sup>; (baloke = swamp + dwelling place, see Woiworung clan 1, 5), located about Carrum swamp, Ruffys' Tomaque/Mayune runs and their Cranbourne Inn, and coastal strip at head of Western Port bay, also upper portion of Mornington Peninsula, where Burenun<sup>T</sup>/Boorumen<sup>T</sup>/Booronung<sup>D</sup>/Jack<sup>D</sup>/Mr Dredge<sup>T</sup> (1809/11-February 1846), an influential healer married to Wigal, a daughter of Billibellary of Woiworung clan 5, and his brother Munmun-ginna<sup>T,D</sup>/Manmangenur<sup>T</sup>/Dr Bailey<sup>D</sup> (c. 1821-August 1845) had recognised authority but were not named as chiefs.

Arweet: Mortrungo<sup>R</sup>/Muduringu<sup>D</sup>/Moderangore<sup>T</sup>/Mooderrogar<sup>T</sup>/Mooderangore<sup>R</sup> Darngeerer<sup>R</sup>/Budgery Tom<sup>R,T</sup> (1897/8-March 1848);; heir was Buggup<sup>T</sup>/Bagup<sup>R</sup>/Buckup<sup>D</sup> (1820/3-September 1848), Corporal in Native Police.

#### 3. bunjil NGARUK-WILLAM<sup>H</sup> (Ngarruk-willam<sup>H</sup>)

Location: (ngaruk = stones, rocky<sup>H</sup>, see clan 5 reference to 'Bunjil rocks'<sup>H</sup>); Brighton and 'Morde-alloke' identified as 'Billy Lonsdale's country' in 1846 Bunurong list<sup>R</sup>, but Barak identified Lonsdale's clan as Woiworung, in the 'half-bad country' from Gardiner's creek to 'Dandenong', S of 'Dandenong mountains'. Magistrate William Lonsdale's name was reportedly conferred on Poliorong by the visiting Governor in 1836<sup>T</sup>; Lonsdale's Dandenong run was managed by his Langhorne nephews 1838-41. Missionary George Langhorne's reminiscences identify his namesake Tukulneen as a 'former chief', 'superseded owing to his advanced age' before 1837 but still 'next in command' to Jika Jika (Billibellary) at Langhorne's mission site S of the Yarra adjoining Gardiner's run. The young Billy Lonsdale and 2 sons of Langhorne's namesake Old George (by widow Kadergrook<sup>T</sup>/Kardaruck<sup>D</sup>) were closely associated with clan-heads Billibellary and Ningulabul who with 'Billy Lonsdale' presided at Barak's initiation at 'South Yarra' ca. 1836-38<sup>H</sup>. Relative ages suggest Barak spoke of Poliorong's father, named in Thomas' 1839 journal as Nommiditulong (d. by November 1839, but Thomas' 1839/40 return of deaths lists only Tuolwing or Old George at the appropriate time). The inadequate 1836-40 records suggest that Poliorong was either a son of Old George by another widow, Koonmerrong<sup>T</sup>/Kurnmuran<sup>T</sup>, or a brother's son considered the appropriate heir because of his achievements.

Ngurungaeta: Tuolwing<sup>T</sup>/Toogloom<sup>D</sup>/Tukulneen/Tukulveau<sup>Ca</sup>/Old George the King<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1770-August 1839); sons Nunnuptune<sup>T</sup>/Nalnaptune<sup>D</sup>/Mr Langhorne<sup>T,R</sup> (1821/4-August 1849) and Mumba<sup>T</sup>/Mumbo<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1825-December 1846) in Native Police.



## MAPPING THE PAST

Ngurungaeta: from late 1839 – Poliorong<sup>H</sup>/Pole-orrong<sup>T</sup>/Billy Lonsdale<sup>T,R,H</sup> (c. 1815-1849/50). Although generally unsympathetic to Aborigines, Capt. Lonsdale gave clothing to his namesake Poliorong until 1846.<sup>T,R,Ca</sup>

### 4. bunjil YALLOCK-BULLUK<sup>H</sup> (Yaloke Bulluk<sup>R</sup>, Bonkoolawol<sup>T</sup>)

Location: 'at Massie and Anderson's'<sup>R</sup>; territory about Bass river occupied 1826-28 by military post sited at Corinella, and 1835-50 by pastoral runs claimed by Anderson and his partner Massie. The term Bonkoolawol<sup>T</sup> heard by Thomas on his February 1840 journey to Tobinurruck, and interpreted as the name of an 'extinct' group on the eastern shore of Western Port bay, may have been merely a reference to this portion of the marine-bek<sup>H</sup>; on his October 1841 journey to Bass river he was in fact guided by the lad whom other Bunurong leaders identified in 1846 as the rightful clan-head.<sup>R</sup>

Arweet: in 1846 Worindidjolong<sup>R</sup>/Warendedolong<sup>T</sup>/Warrengittolong<sup>T</sup> (1826/8-January 1848).

### 5. bunjil YALUKIT-WILLAM<sup>H</sup> (Yal-lo-ge<sup>R</sup>, Yallo-ge-te<sup>R</sup>, Yalloget-leete<sup>R</sup>, 'Port Phillip tribe'<sup>T</sup>, Barraboos<sup>T</sup>, Bunurong<sup>T,R,H</sup>)

Location: coastal tract at head of Port Phillip bay extending to 'river Ex called Weeripbe Yaloke'<sup>R</sup>, at Williamstown<sup>R</sup>, 'Sandridge and St Kilda'<sup>H</sup>; (St Kilda = You-ruk, stony or rocky, 'from the Bunjil rocks which are there, where Bunjil stopped the approach of the sea by these rocks'<sup>H</sup> – see also adjoining clan 3). Eurernowel and Derremart (with his younger brother War-de-len-ne-yoke<sup>R</sup>/Wool-delaruck<sup>D</sup>/Ingreanowl<sup>D</sup>/Ninggeranowl<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1814-July 1844) and sister's son Dal-ler-gal-deth<sup>R</sup>) were interviewed December 1836 about wives kidnapped 1833 by sealers at Pt Nepean but 'Buckley and Batman' dissuaded them from joining rescue expedition<sup>R</sup>. Derremart and his brother, with Eurernowel or Benbow, and Billibellary of Woiworung clan 5 famed for protecting Fawknor's hut from rumoured attack by distant clans October 1835. Territorial division uncertain: 1836 notes identify Derremart's country as the sea-coast<sup>R</sup> (Bunce called him 'king of the Werriby district' on an 1836 visit to Tasmania) and imply Eurernowel's was the river (i.e. the 'half-bad country' E of Yarra) but Derremart and Benbow identified as Yal-lo-ge<sup>R</sup> in 1839 and 1840.

Arweet: Derremart<sup>R</sup>/Derrimot<sup>D</sup>/Derrahmart<sup>T</sup>/King Derrimut/Deremaro<sup>R</sup> (1809/14-1864) whose mother Dindo<sup>T</sup>/Dendru<sup>D</sup> (d. 1847) was identified as belonging to 'Narm-nup – Melbourne'<sup>R</sup>; and Arweet: Eurernowel<sup>R</sup>/King Ningerranaro<sup>T</sup>/Mingaragon<sup>T</sup>/Mungarer<sup>R,T</sup>/Old Mr Man<sup>T</sup>/Benbow<sup>R,T</sup> (c. 1771-October 1847), described in 1839 as 'a man of some importance . . . seldom visits the settlement, unless something of importance is going on that requires the whole of the Tribe'<sup>T</sup>; his elder sons were Par-tour-weer-rop<sup>R</sup>/Baddoorup<sup>T</sup>/Budderup<sup>T</sup>/Big Benbow<sup>T,R</sup> (d. 1852+), the Chief Protector's messenger; Bullourd/Bollut/Boollut/Little Benbow<sup>T</sup>/King Benbow<sup>H</sup> (1807/11-July 1852), briefly a sergeant in Native Police; and Mungara<sup>R</sup>/Mangerer<sup>T</sup>/Myngerra<sup>T</sup>/Young Mr Man<sup>T</sup>/Benbow<sup>R</sup> (1813/8-1863+).

### 6 bunjil YOWENGERRA<sup>R</sup> (Yowengarra<sup>R</sup>, Yowenjerre<sup>R</sup>, Jota-wara-wara-thun<sup>H</sup>, Tarwinthun<sup>H</sup>, Jato-wara-wara<sup>H</sup>)

Location: bunjil clan of Tarwin watershed<sup>H</sup> wrongly identified in 1904 book as Jato-wara-wara division of southwestern Kurnai<sup>H</sup>; identified 1844 as Yowenjerre, W of 'Wilson's Promontory or Wommum', a 'powerful section' of the Boonwerong nation at: Western Port who have (with the exception of two individuals) been exterminated<sup>R</sup>; in 1846 as Yowengerra E of 'the Tarwin who have been, with the exception of two youths, annihilated by the Gippsland Aborigines'<sup>R</sup>. Kurnai (one the son of a 'Cranbourne' woman captured before 1836) explained that Jota-wara-wara-thun (name of ancestral creator + thun = speech) was the 'name of the Tarwin river and also of the people living there' who spoke Bunurong and 'a little Nulit' – the form of Kurnai speech required in the *wea-wuk*<sup>H</sup>.

# WOIWORUNG

— (Woëworung<sup>H</sup>, Woiwurrung<sup>H</sup>, Waworong<sup>R,T</sup>, Wauerong<sup>R,P</sup>, Wawoorong<sup>T</sup>, Woororong<sup>B</sup>, Woiwurru<sup>M</sup>)

Description: a *-(w)urrung* or speech name for clans occupying the Yarra and Maribyrnong watersheds, bounded on N by Dividing range from Mt Bawbaw westward to Mt William and Mt Macedon, and on W by Werribee river, defined by Robinson and all of Howitt's Kulin informants as the boundary between Woiworung and Wathaurung. Tindale's 1974 use of a Woiworung clan name to label a separate 'Kurung tribe' between the Werribee and Geelong presumably rests on Thomas' 1862 manuscript record of a mixed vocabulary collected at Bacchus Marsh (named Pul-ler-bo-polloke<sup>R</sup>/Boolook-ba-Boolook<sup>T</sup>), territory of the Marpeang-bulluk clan of Wathaurung adjoining Woiworung clans 2,3.

Genealogical evidence<sup>H,R,T</sup> is the basis for my tentative revision of the inadequate description in Howitt's 1904 book. In this alphabetical listing I have artificially distinguished Baluk-willam, but Barak's evidence shows this was part of the Wurundjeri-balluk clan.

*Moiety, clan name, location, clan-head*

1. waa BALUK-WILLAM<sup>H</sup> (Bülük-willam<sup>H</sup>, Baloke-willam<sup>R</sup>, Pul-loke-wil-lam<sup>R</sup>, Pul-lok-willam<sup>R</sup>, Westernport tribe<sup>T</sup>)

Location: 'Pul-loke-wil-lam, name of a tribe at Westernport<sup>R</sup>; (baloke<sup>R</sup>/pul-loke<sup>R</sup>/bullook<sup>T</sup>/boolook<sup>T</sup>/baluk<sup>H</sup>/bülük<sup>H</sup> = swamp + dwelling place), a locality name distinguishing the Wurundjeri-balluk patriline which occupied ranges and swamps S of 'Yering' on upper Yarra, extending SE to Koo-wee-rup swamp and headwaters of Latrobe river, SW to adjoin Bunurong clans 2, 3 about Cranbourne and Dandenong.<sup>H</sup> Barak's account of the Baluk-willam, whose *ngurungaeta* he identified as 'Mr De Villiers', mentions the 'marup-brarn' area about Yering; this term is presumably the source of Thomas' label for the 'Murry family' who frequented Ryries' run in the 'Yarra ranges' as well as 'Westernport' (and were thus erratically labelled Woiworung/Bunurong); further research may establish the relationships of various men he labelled Old and Young Murray and De Villiers. Late in 1837 C.L.J. De Villiers had recruited 15 Native Police, mostly 'Worworong' he had lived among since 1836 plus sons of other clan-heads; stock in charge of an overseer named Mooney were then evicted from their preferred camp site near Dandenong, in Baluk-willam territory. It became the Narre Narre Warren depot 1840-43 and afterwards the Native Police base. De Villiers, inn-keeping nearby, kept in touch with some former recruits; but not all forgave him and magistrate Lonsdale for the capture and deportation of various prominent men when colonists' hysteria about the 1838 'Faifull Massacre' was at its height.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In April-May 1838 the senior men of every Kulin and Waveroo clan, accompanied by their wives and children, were travelling throughout central and northeastern Victoria to attend a scheduled series of male initiation rites, each requiring the attendance of members of distant clans — both kin by descent and the men who were potential kinsmen as sponsors and future 'in-laws' of initiates to whom their sisters and daughters had been betrothed in infancy. This journeying dictated by religious and family obligations was not deterred by long-continued drought or the depredations of overlanding pastoralists, but in 1838 (and again in April-October 1840) fearful squatters and ignorant officials misinterpreted the necessary travels of messengers and the resulting 'inter-tribal' assemblies as planning for 'concerted warfare'<sup>Ca</sup>. Overlanders's journals, depositions and reminiscences reveal that planning for a series of initiations involving Taungurong, neighbouring Waveroo clans, and adjacent Wiradjuri about Albury was underway by January 1838 but in April Wm Faithfull's unsupervised convict servants disrupted a large-scale gathering at Benalla (see Taungurong clan 8); on 11 April they shot some participants and were themselves speared. Several punitive expeditions followed, including George Faithfull and Peter Snodgrass' massacre of another ceremonial gathering near Wangaratta (see Cannon 1982 and Bride 1898).

## MAPPING THE PAST

Ngurungaeta: Morunduk<sup>T</sup>/Morundal<sup>T</sup>/Mooney Mooney<sup>T,Ca</sup>/Old Murry<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1773-February 1840), jailed and deported to Sydney May 1838-September 1839, on return reminisced about guiding Batman's June 1835 party to winter camp where treaty was negotiated<sup>R</sup> (with Wurundjeri-balluk clan-heads, see clan 5); described as King 1839-40<sup>T</sup>; son Bolete<sup>T</sup>/Polite<sup>T</sup>/Bolee<sup>D</sup>/Mooney Mooney<sup>T</sup> (1819/22-August 1845) unmarried, in Native Police.

Ngurungaeta: Warrowark<sup>T</sup>/Warworruk<sup>T</sup>/Warah<sup>T</sup>/Old De Villiers, listed with 2 wives and 'Young De Villiers' among 'Principal Families' at Westernport February 1840. A Warrowark aged 28 died 1843/44; a Warworruk<sup>T</sup>/Warwarorook<sup>T</sup> died June 1850, killed by Kurnai at the Mitchell River; a Warworong<sup>T</sup>/Young Murry<sup>T</sup> captured in the 1840 Lettsom raid was aged 27 when he joined the Native Police 1842, died 1849/50 in the Yarra ranges<sup>T</sup>.

2. bunjil GUNUNG-WILLAM-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Kurnung-willam<sup>H</sup>, Kony-en-willun<sup>R</sup>, Kone-nen-willums<sup>R</sup>, Konung-willam<sup>P</sup>, Mt Macedon tribe<sup>T</sup>, Way-re-rong-goon-deetch<sup>Pa</sup>)

Location: kurnung = creek<sup>H,R</sup>; occupied eastern drainage area of Dividing range about Mt Macedon, extending S to Werribee river boundary with Wathaurung, on NW adjoined Taungurong and Jajowrong on sources of Coliban and Loddon. One patriline headed in 1840s by Murrum Murrumbean identified with area about Toolem creek (Thallin-willum, Bullengerook<sup>H</sup>; Talenwillum yaloke<sup>R</sup>) and other streams draining into Werribee near Bacchus Marsh. Area controlled by senior patriline headed by Ningulabul<sup>H</sup> (= stone tomahawk<sup>H</sup>, Jajowrong song about Ning-cal-ler-bel known at Mt Ararat in July 1840<sup>R</sup>) extended N to Mt William quarry near Lancefield and NW to adjoin Jajowrong near Kyneton. Custodians of sacred sites near Gisborne (Howey's run 1836-41) important to many Woiworung, Jajowrong and Wathaurung clans.<sup>H,R,P</sup> Owner-manager bonds resulting from marriages with adjacent *waa* clans meant that Mt William quarry was managed in 1840s by old Ningulabul, his sons and Murrum Murrumbean, plus Bunerim of clan 4 and Billibellary and Bebejan of clan 5 who were the sons of 'heiresses in quarry rights' identified as 'sisters' of old Ningulabul<sup>H</sup>. His paramount religious authority and 'family connexion' through marriage enabled his sons: the younger Ningulabul, Winberri<sup>H</sup>/Windberry<sup>T</sup> (shot in October 1840 Lettsom raid) and Ner-rim-bin-uk<sup>H,T</sup>/Nurmbinuk<sup>T</sup>/Young Winberri<sup>T</sup>, all famed song-makers, to 'pass safely through different remote tribes'<sup>T</sup> – but their travels as Billibellary's messengers summoning distant clans to a large-scale initiation at Melbourne in October 1840 were misinterpreted by officials as incitement to 'war'.

Ngurungaeta: Poer-roen-gy<sup>R</sup>/Ningulabul<sup>H</sup>/Ninggolobin<sup>D</sup>/John Bull<sup>P,T</sup>/Captain Turnbull<sup>H,P,R,T</sup> (ca. 1771-1847/51). Thomas' December 1851 district census notes that his son and heir 'Ninggollobin is not included, having been made a king and residing in his own country'; Ningulabul<sup>H</sup>/Ninggollobin<sup>T</sup>/Nangolibill/Turnbull<sup>H,P,T</sup> (1809/12-ca. 1853); *and*

Ngurungaeta: by 1838 Murrum Murrumbean<sup>T,D</sup>/Nurrumbeme<sup>T</sup>/Nurrum-nurrumbain<sup>H</sup>/Thurrim<sup>D</sup>/Mr Hill<sup>D</sup> (1812/3-October 1849) had succeeded his aged father Nerm Nerm<sup>T</sup>/Nerren Nerren<sup>T</sup>/Old Billy<sup>T</sup> (d. June 1848), who spent much time at Western Port with his new wife, widow of Tuolwing (Bunurong clan 3); Murrum Murrumbean gaoled 1838, deported to Sydney<sup>Ca</sup>, member of 1842 Native Police<sup>T</sup>; influence in camps about Melbourne second only to that of his 'cousin' and brother-in-law Billibellary of clan 5.<sup>H,T</sup>

3. waa KURUNG-JANG-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Kurang-gerung-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Koring-koring-gee-bulluc<sup>R</sup>, Mt Macedon<sup>T</sup>, Bunurong<sup>T</sup>, Barrabool<sup>T</sup>)

Location: 'Bet banger's country' – Mt Cottrell<sup>R</sup>; 'kurung-jang = red ground'<sup>H</sup>. Inland from Bunurong clan 5 at Werribee river (boundary with Wathaurung clans 8, 14), adjoined Woiworung clan 2 at Toolem creek, clan 4 about Kororoit creek. The few survivors of violent dispossession 1835-38 found refuge among various clans of the opposite moiety where they had kinship ties resulting from intermarriage (Bunurong clans 3, 5 and the inland Wathaurung called 'Bunninyongs'<sup>T</sup>). Young clan-head Betbenjee and his kinsman 'Derrimut, king of the Werriby district' taken to Tasmania by Fawcner, subsequently member of 1837 Native Police, married sister of Kunin-gum-ber-ergowin<sup>R</sup> of Wathaurung clan 7 and was influential mediator of Wathaurung access to the 'marine-bek' during the 1840s but his role was misinterpreted by Thomas, whose records often label him 'Bunurong' or 'Barrabool'.



*Ngurungaeta*: Bet banger<sup>R</sup>/Benbenger<sup>T</sup>/Bedbenji<sup>D</sup>/Baitbanger/Neronger<sup>R</sup>/Nerongho<sup>T</sup>/Robert Webb<sup>D</sup> (1814/5-July 1847).

4. waa MARIN-BULLUK<sup>P</sup> (Boi-berrit-thun-willam segment of Wurundjeri-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Mt Macedon<sup>T</sup>)

Location: between Kororoit creek and Saltwater (Maribyrnong) river and Jackson's creek, 'head-quarters' about Sunbury<sup>H</sup>. Estate was site of Parker's 'Terrawait' depot October 1839-November 1840 but his lists of Marin-bulluk include kinsmen from clan 2; 18 survivors with Bungirey 1844<sup>T</sup>; identified as chief belonging to 'a great family' of Mt Macedon<sup>T</sup>, guardian of Mt William quarry<sup>H</sup>. Name recorded as Bungarie on Batman's 1835 treaty<sup>H</sup>.

*Ngurungaeta*: Bungarim<sup>T,P</sup>/Bunggureen<sup>R</sup>/Bunguren<sup>D</sup>/Bunggerin<sup>T</sup>/Bungiring<sup>R</sup>/Kone-nul-ler-gil<sup>R</sup>/Kounnallajil<sup>P</sup> (1800/2-March 1848); son Marmbul<sup>R</sup>/Marmbole<sup>T</sup>/Marmvool<sup>T</sup>/Tommy (c. 1822-September 1848).

5. waa WURUNDJERI-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Wurunjerri-baluk<sup>H</sup>, Urundjeri-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Yarras<sup>T</sup>, Waworong<sup>T</sup>)

Location: clan named for wurun (white gum tree), composed of two patrilineal occupying adjacent localities: the Wurundjeri-willam on the Yarra from its northern sources at Mt Bawbaw to its junction with the Saltwater (Maribyrnong) river at Melbourne, and the Baluk-willam extending S to Dandenong, Cranbourne and swamps at head of Western Port bay. Further search of the Robinson Papers may refine or correct my revision of Howitt's 1904 description, which garbles unpublished notes from William Barak discussing the 'marup-brarn' and 'kurnaje-berrang' areas adjoining at Yering or 'de Castella's' (the Yering-Dalry runs occupied by the Ryrie brothers from 1837 and acquired by the de Castella family from 1850) where Wurundjeri-balluk survivors secured the Coranderk reserve in 1863. E.M. Curr's 1886-87 volumes assert that the 'Yarra tribe' had never inhabited the ranges about Coranderk and anyhow became extinct in the 1840s; he was simply reiterating his propaganda for the sale of Coranderk, disproved by Kulin residents and their friends during 1877 and 1881 inquiries into Curr's administration of Board policy. William Thomas' 1839-67 journals prove that the Yering area was constantly visited by this and other Woiworung clans; other records suggest there were important sacred sites in the vicinity. Genealogical evidence in the Howitt, Robinson and Thomas Papers confirms the linkage between Wurundjeri-balluk patrilineal and shows that the *ngurungaeta* prominent 1839-49 were also linked by maternal descent from women of clan 2 who were 'sisters' or 'half-sisters' of the elder Ningulabal. These records identify the 'brothers Jagajaga' who conducted the *tanderrum* ceremony by which strangers were allowed temporary access to clan resources; Batman and his backers misinterpreted their symbolic handing-over of 'portions of the soil' as acquiescence to his 'purchase' of their land by the mediaeval English ritual of 'enfeoffment'. Four of the eight men named by Batman were *ngurungaeta* of clans whose estates he claimed; a fifth, 'Cooloolook', was the influential elder Kollorlook<sup>T</sup> who died at Geelong in May 1848. Batman's 'Doutigalla' tribal label was corrected by the Bunurong elders Robinson met in December 1836: 'Doot-ty Galler' was the name of the 'first woman the settlers met': presumably the senior woman of those Batman's party encountered near the Werribee river, whose news of this intrusion no doubt prompted the assembly of Woiworung leaders to which Batman was guided by another *ngurungaeta*, Morundulk or Mooney Mooney<sup>R</sup>.

The unpublished records suggest that related Wurundjeri-willam *ngurungaeta* controlled specific tracts in the 1830s, although the pre-eminence of Billibellary was universally acknowledged by 1837. Available evidence<sup>R,T,H</sup> suggests the following subdivision:

5. waa WURUNDJERI-WILLAM<sup>H</sup>

- (a) tract on S bank of Yarra, from Gardiner's creek upstream to Yarra flats and N slopes of 'Dandenong mountains'<sup>H</sup>.

*Ngurungaeta*: Bor-run-up-ton<sup>R</sup>/Boronuptune<sup>R,T</sup>/Borungyupton<sup>T</sup>/Burrenupton<sup>T</sup>/Jacky Jacky<sup>R,T</sup>/Jaga Jagga<sup>R</sup>/Mr Walpole<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1793-1851+), oldest brother of Billibellary; a Jakka Jakka who signed treaty<sup>H,T,R</sup>; heir was son Bor-rer-bor-rer<sup>R</sup>/Burborough<sup>T</sup>/Borro Borro<sup>T</sup>/Jaga Jagga<sup>R</sup>/George<sup>R</sup> (ca. 1818-August 1852), jailed in Lettsom raid 1840, briefly in 1842 Native Police, killed by father's brother's son Kalkallo.

## MAPPING THE PAST

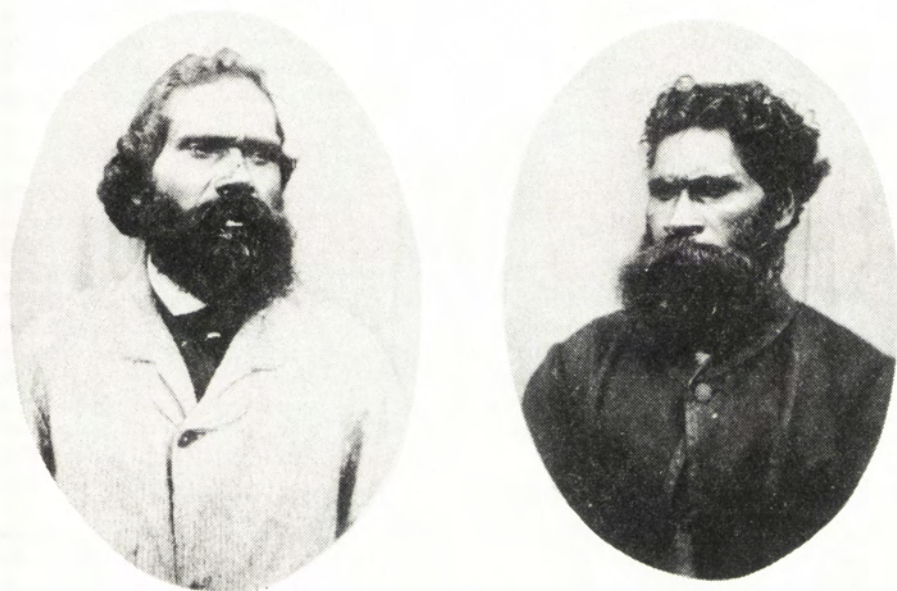


Plate 2 – Two *ngurungaeta* of the Wurundjeri-balluk clan of Woiworung.

Left: Simon Wonga (c. 1824-1874), son of Billibellary.

Right: William Barak (c. 1824-1903), son of Bebejan.

*Charles Walter photographs 1866/7 from John Green's Coranderrk album, courtesy of John Green Parkinson and Museum of Victoria.*

- (b) tract on N bank of Yarra 'about Kew'<sup>H</sup>, at Melbourne<sup>H</sup>, W of Darebin creek to E bank of Saltwater (Maribyrnong) river and Jackson's creek, N to near Mt William quarry.

Ngurungaeta: Billibellary<sup>T,H</sup>/Billbilyear<sup>T</sup>/Bil-bil-yer-ry<sup>R</sup>/Jika Jika/Jacky Jacky/Jakka Jakka/Jaga Jaga<sup>T,R,H</sup> (ca. 1799-August 1846), universally identified as a signer of Batman's treaty. Succeeded 1846 by brother Berberry<sup>T</sup>/Bearberry<sup>T</sup>/Barberra<sup>R</sup> 'the man who showed or was said to show Batman the land'<sup>R</sup>/Bar-ber-ry<sup>R</sup>, 'his country towards Mt Macedon' 1839<sup>R</sup>/Old Jacky<sup>T</sup>/Mr Bateman<sup>T</sup>/Old Malcolm<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1797-1851+). But in 1847 'the would-be chief of Yarra had lately turned a regular drunkard'<sup>T</sup>. His sons Wigeculk<sup>T</sup>/Wadegulk<sup>D</sup>/Edward<sup>D</sup> (ca. 1821-1846+) and Kalkallo<sup>T</sup>/Kal-kaller<sup>T</sup>/Kulkloo<sup>T</sup>/Henry<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1824-August 1852, killed by own 'tribe' for murder of father's brother's son<sup>T</sup>) had little influence. By 1851 the rightful heir, Billibellary's eldest son Wonga<sup>T</sup>/Wongu<sup>T,R</sup>/Simon Wonga (ca. 1824-1874) had married a Wathaurung; he was recognised as *ngurungaeta* until his death.

- (c) tract 'at Hydleburg'<sup>H,T</sup>, up Yarra to Mt Bawbaw<sup>H</sup>, about Yering<sup>H</sup>.

Ngurungaeta: Bebejan<sup>H</sup>/Bebejern<sup>H</sup>/Jerrum Jerrum (n.d. ~ca. 1835), whose 'brother' was identified as Old Jack Weatherly<sup>H,T</sup>/Old Murry<sup>T</sup>/Tuat<sup>T</sup>/Tuart<sup>T</sup> (d. Jan. 1849) prominent at Western Port and Yarra ranges through 1840s; heir was son Beruk<sup>T</sup>/Barak<sup>T,H</sup>/William Barak (c. 1824-August 1903), next in influence to his 'cousin' Wonga 1851-74, and the sole Woiworung *ngurungaeta* after Wonga's death. Howitt's 1880/2 notes record his decision to name as his successors three younger men who helped him defeat Curr's scheme to sell Coranderrk: 'When I go I shall leave the word that my sister's son shall be Ngurungaet with him two others': he named his nephew Wandoon (Robert Wandin 1854-1908); the Taungurong Birdarak (Thomas Bamfield 1839/44-1893); and Thomas Dunolly (1856-1923), spokesman for the Wathaurung and Jajowrong survivors who inherited from their mothers rights to 'speak for' Wurundjeri-balluk land.

## APPENDIX 2: TAUNGURONG AND NGURAI-ILLAM-WURRUNG

These two -(w)urrung have been loosely labelled 'Goulburn tribe' since the 1840s; their dispossession and near extermination by pastoralists who occupied the Campaspe, Goulburn and Broken rivers 1837-41 is documented in archival records only recently publicised by historians. Participants' reminiscences and discrepant contemporary depositions, together with Aboriginal testimony recorded by Protectors, suggest that large numbers were killed in several reprisal raids led by Col. White, Peter Snodgrass, George Faithfull and other overlanders after the April 1838 'Faithfull Massacre' at the Broken river crossing; in F.M. Mundy's 1838 attacks on Taungurong and Jajowrong; and in various 1838-41 encounters with clans on the Coliban and Campaspe by squatters C.H. Ebdon, W.H. Yaldwyn, Charles Hutton, and Henry Munro (when 18-24 men were shot). R.P.D.B.Ca Protectorate records for this region are poor; Dredge was only intermittently resident at his Goulburn depot at Mitchellstown (the 'old crossing place') August 1839-June 1840; his successor William LeSouef's depot at Murchison 1841-43 was often deserted because of his harsh treatment. Only Robinson and Dr Baylie, at Murchison 1841-43, recorded clan names, and Baylie transposed the location of Taungurong clans 6-9. Baylie's 1843 guess that 12 named Taungurong, Ngurai-illam-wurrung and Pangerang clans totalled 'about one thousand' was quickly corrected: Robinson's 1843 enumeration of all 11 Pangerang clans totalled only 200; and in 1845 he and Parker counted only 302 survivors of 9 Taungurong and Ngurai-illam-wurrung clans.

While the Protectors' investigations of squatters' killings remained inaccessible, researchers necessarily accepted the disingenuous 'disease' explanations of Aboriginal mortality offered in Bride's *Letters from Victorian pioneers* (Hutton, for example, says the 'Campaspe tribe' had 'suddenly disappeared' during an influenza epidemic) and elaborated in books by E.M. Curr, occupier of the Heathcote portion of Hutton's run 1841-43. Curr's 1883 memoir tells how he acquired pastoral runs stretching from Heathcote to the Murray-Edward junction - the estates of seven clans - but his 1886-87 'scientific' volumes mention only A.A.C. LeSouef's 1877 memories of contact 1841-43 as authority for his inaccurate map of Taungurong/'Ngooraialum' territory.

Relying mainly upon Curr's published vocabularies, modern linguists have defined Bunurong, Woiworung, Taungurong and Ngurai-illam-wurrung speech as one language. The latter two are grouped as a northern dialect. Curr's vocabulary of the 'Ngooraialum language' he had last heard

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spoken 'thirty-four' years earlier subsumes Taungurong territory in defining its extent: 'Seymour to Murchison, part of Goulburn River, Whroo, etc.' Robinson's 1845 annual report describing his and Parker's census of the Goulburn region specifically says 'There are two dialects in use among the Goulburn natives, the Taoungerong and Taoungbut, some peculiar customs in their social condition in connection with this variation in their language indicates a different origin to the Tribes on the upper parts of the River'. This may mean only that he and Parker perceived that the Taoungbut/Ngurai-illam-wurrung speech used by clans north of the Taungurong was influenced by the unrelated language of their Pangerang neighbours, or it may indicate the kind of speech differentiation dictated by mythological sanctions which is suggested by Barak's explanation of Woiworung / Bunurong forms.

Modern linguistic analysis of Tuckfield's 1842 vocabularies does resolve another ethnographic confusion: his 'Jhongworrung or Goulburn' word-list, presumably obtained from Taungurong who guided him from the Murchison depot, belongs to this language, but his 'Gnurelleian . . . West of Campaspee' vocabulary is classified with Curr's word-lists from 'Piangil' as a dialect of the western Kulin language on the lower Murray.<sup>19</sup> The Gnurelleian words came from 'two tribes' living up to '20 miles' west of the Murray-Campaspe junction (totalling 130 persons, including 27 women of the 'Gunn-el-ban tribe'). Tindale's 1974 description of a 'Ngurelban tribe' on the Campaspe merges Tuckfield's report with Curr's and Howitt's descriptions of clans speaking a different language at and east of the Campaspe. A 1902 map of the Murray by a Jajowrong, Sergeant Major<sup>H</sup>, distinguishes the 'Wore-yellam', adjoining the Pangerang on the Goulburn, from the 'Ngari-lei-an' occupying the Murray between the 'Woola-thara' and the 'Buraba'. In March-April 1843 Robinson listed and visited the 'sections', including Gnorillum and Tongwillum, of a 'Nat-po-bo nation' occupying the Murray downstream from the 'Walledigun' at the Campaspe-Murray junction to the 'Gunbower-onedeet' and other clans of 'Barappur' on the Murray and Loddon west of Gunbower. Howitt's notes do not explain the label 'Kani Kani' placed at the Campaspe-Goulburn-Murray junction on Sergeant Major's map; in 1898 the Cumeroogunga teacher mapped 'Kyanee'<sup>J</sup> as neighbours of the Yota-Yota, but R.H. Mathews' published mentions of the 'Giani Giani' give no location.

### NGURAI-ILLAM-WURRUNG<sup>H</sup>

— (Nguraiwurrung<sup>H</sup>, Wor-rile-lum<sup>R</sup>, Woralim<sup>D</sup>, Ooraloom<sup>P</sup>, Ooraialum<sup>Le</sup>, Ngooraialum<sup>C,Le</sup>, Taoungbert<sup>P</sup>, Taoungbut<sup>R</sup>, Wore-yallum<sup>H</sup>, Orilims<sup>B</sup>, Kani Kani<sup>H</sup>, Kyanee<sup>J</sup>, Giani Giani<sup>M</sup>)

Description: a *-(w)urrung* composed of three clans occupying the lower Campaspe and Goulburn rivers between the Taungurong, with whom they shared a common language, and the Wollithiga<sup>C</sup> and Kailtheban<sup>C</sup> clans about the Murray junction, whose unrelated language was termed Pangerang by Kulin neighbours and European observers in the nineteenth century. The most reliable sources are the 1840-45 reports of Protectorate officials, and descriptions given to Howitt by William Barak, whose mother had belonged to clan 3.

#### *Moiety, clan name, location, clan-head*

1. bunjil BENBEDORA-BALLUK (Benbidores<sup>B</sup>, Boenbedore<sup>R</sup>, Bane-be-doo-ro<sup>R</sup>, Benbedor<sup>R</sup>, Bane-bo-do-ra<sup>R</sup>, Benebedorro<sup>R</sup>, Benebedour<sup>P</sup>, Pimpandoor<sup>C</sup>, Brimbudoses<sup>D</sup>)

Location: S of Wollithiga<sup>C</sup> (see Pangerang) at Murray Junction, on both banks of Campaspe to 'Postlethwaite's run' S of Restdown Plains (modern Elmore-Goorngong area where squatter Hutton and Border Police killed 14 in 1839)<sup>B,R,P</sup>; on Campaspe and Curr's Coragorag and Colbinabbin runs 1840s<sup>C</sup>; remembered as far E as 'Mooroopna' in Barak's youth<sup>H</sup>; much reduced by 'contentions with squatters' and disease by 1843<sup>B</sup>; 27 enumerated 1845<sup>P,R</sup>.

Ngurungaeta: probably Woer-gon-mill/Wore-gon-but/Gine Gine/Mr Clarke<sup>R</sup>, jailed in October 1840 Lettsom raid when attending Woiworung clan 5 initiation, but no record of trial<sup>R</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Great Britain 1844: 224-227, 253-255, 279-282; Robinson Papers. I am indebted to R.M.W. Dixon and Jennifer Laycock for information about Tuckfield's vocabularies.

2. waa GUNUNG-YELLAM<sup>H</sup> (Coningalum<sup>B</sup>, Connigallum<sup>B</sup>, Konongillam<sup>R</sup>)

Location: lower Campaspe between clan 1 and Taungurong clan 4, reduced by violence and disease to 30 by 1843<sup>B</sup>, 27 enumerated 1845<sup>P,R</sup>. King Charles Tattambo's family camped Rushworth, Whroo, Murchison, Molka Station 1860s; grand-daughter who joined Coranderk in 1872, Mrs Lizzie Eylet Davis (1857/9-1957), identified clan in 1900 as Gunung-yellam<sup>H</sup> (gunung = creek + dwelling place<sup>H</sup>).

Ngurungaeta: Chimbri 1842<sup>B</sup>; 'chief of Coningalums' d. 1842 Murchison depot<sup>B,R</sup>; King Charles Tattambo d. September 1866 Murchison; son Captain John d. 1874 Murchison.

3. bunjil NOORAIALUM-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Ngurailum<sup>H</sup>, Ngooralung-boola<sup>H</sup>, Ngouraylung-bulla<sup>H</sup>, Ngooraialum<sup>C,Le</sup>, Oorilim<sup>Le</sup>, Ooraialum<sup>C</sup>, Wor-ile-lum-buluc<sup>R</sup>, Woo-ril-lum<sup>R</sup>, Woo-ral-lim<sup>D</sup>, Wo-ra-lims<sup>D</sup>, Worailim<sup>T</sup>, Orilims<sup>B</sup>)

Location: on Goulburn river N of Mitchellstown, at Murchison, to within 40 miles<sup>B</sup> (Toolamba<sup>Le</sup>) of Goulburn-Murray junction<sup>B,H,R</sup>, W to 'creeks'<sup>R,D</sup> (Curr's runs<sup>C</sup>), E toward Violet Town and Euroa 'where they met the Upper Broken River and Ovens Blacks'<sup>Le</sup> (i.e. Taungurong clan 8 and Wavoroo clans to N)<sup>R,H</sup>. Little contact before visiting Mitchellstown depot February 1840<sup>D</sup>, still numerous and healthy except for 'local diseases of the skin' at Murchison depot 1841-43<sup>B</sup>; 53 enumerated 1845<sup>P,R</sup>.

Ngurungaeta: Weeng-her-bil/Wang-her-bil<sup>R</sup> in 1840.

## TAUNGURONG

— (Thagun-wurung<sup>H</sup>, Tong-worrung<sup>D</sup>, Thong-worrung<sup>D,Tu</sup>, Dareoongrong<sup>R</sup>, Darngoorong<sup>R</sup>, Taoungurong<sup>R,P</sup>, Tarounwarong<sup>R</sup>, Jhongwurrong<sup>Tu</sup>, Thaguwurru<sup>M</sup>, 'Goulburn and Devil's River tribe'<sup>T</sup>)

Description: a -(w)urung composed of 9 clans occupying the Broken, Delatite, Goulburn, Coliban and Campaspe watersheds, bounded on the south by the Dividing range; on the east and northeast by Wavoroo clans occupying the Buffalo, King and Ovens rivers; on the north by the related Ngurai-illam-wurrung; and extending west 'over to Sandhurst [Bendigo]'<sup>H</sup> to meet the Jajowrong on the Loddon and its sources.

*Moiety, clan name, location, clan-head*

1. bunjil BUTHERA-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Butherabulluk<sup>D</sup>, Butherabulluc<sup>R</sup>, Butterabulluk<sup>R</sup>, Budderbullocks<sup>B</sup>, Bootheerboolok<sup>C,Le</sup>)

Location: on Goulburn river about Seymour or 'new crossing-place'<sup>H,B,D,R</sup>; dispossessed from 1838 by overlanding pastoralists, notably Col. White whose false complaints<sup>R</sup> helped provoke October 1840 Lettsom raid when several elders were jailed<sup>R</sup>; mostly refugees among clan 5 1841-43<sup>B</sup>; 26 enumerated in 1845<sup>P,R</sup>. Falsely reported and mapped as located upstream from Yea<sup>Le,C</sup>.

Ngurungaeta: probably Cor-me-wor-rer-min/Charlie/Mr White<sup>R</sup>, captured in Lettsom raid, freed before trial<sup>R</sup>. Unnamed 'Seymour King' had sufficient influence to halt April 1844 spear duel when various Wathaurung, Taungurong, Bunurong and Woiworung clansmen related to 'Warralim' lad Peter of Echuca punished the young *ngurungaeta* Lonsdale (Bunurong clan 3) and De Villiers (Woiworung clan 1) for killing him at Western Port in September 1843<sup>H,T</sup>.

2. waa LEUK-WILLAM<sup>H</sup> (Lookyellam<sup>D</sup>, Lookillum<sup>R</sup>)

Location: 'near Campaspe, near Kilmore'<sup>H</sup>; at Mt Alexander initiation January 1840 with clans 3, 4, 5, asked news of named Woiworung and Bunurong clan-heads about Melbourne whom they frequently visited<sup>R</sup>; visited Mitchellstown depot 1840<sup>D</sup>; not listed 1845 enumeration<sup>R</sup>.

Ngurungaeta: aged Wy-er-ro-loon/Juggy Juggy<sup>R</sup>, probably the Jacky Jacky who with 2 other leaders forced Grice from Mt Alexander area (a major ceremonial site) in 1841<sup>P</sup>.

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3. bunjil? MOOMOOMGOONDEET<sup>P</sup> (Moo-moom-conedeet<sup>R</sup>, Moo-er-wil-lum<sup>R</sup>, Moo-ger-re-gon-dee<sup>R</sup>)

Location: country W of Campaspe, 'NW' of Mitchellstown<sup>R</sup>, 'wild men' from N camped with Learka-bulluk Jajowrong (bunjil moiety) apart from clans 2, 4 (waa moiety) at January 1840 Mt Alexander initiation when 4 shot by Munro<sup>R,P</sup>; some killed 1839 by Hutton and Border Police<sup>P,R</sup>; after Grice forced from Mt Alexander 1841, Jajowrong messengers searched 'NE' (Bendigo area), reported clan no longer 'sulky with white men' and 8 of 15 named survivors joined depot October 1841. Not listed 1845 enumeration of Goulburn district<sup>P,R</sup>, no record at Loddon after 1842<sup>P</sup>.

*Ngurungaeta*: Kerrepn-enin<sup>P</sup> 1841-42.

4. waa NATTARAK-BULLUK<sup>D</sup> (Nat-ter-ac-bulluc<sup>R</sup>, Nitterackbulluk<sup>R</sup>, Netterackbulluk<sup>P</sup>, Nattrapbullocks<sup>B</sup>, Natrakboolok<sup>C,Le</sup>)

Location: Coliban and upper Campaspe<sup>B,R</sup>, N of Mt Macedon<sup>D</sup>, W to Mt Alexander<sup>R</sup>; killed or driven away by Hutton, Munro, Grice 1838-41<sup>B,P,R</sup>, survivors with clan 5 or 'Orilim' neighbours 1841-43<sup>B</sup>; 5 of 20 named joined Jajowrong at Loddon depot November 1841<sup>P</sup>; 35 enumerated 1845<sup>P,R</sup>; falsely reported and mapped on Goulburn between Yea and Mitchellstown<sup>C,Le</sup>.

*Ngurungaeta*: Jille Jille<sup>P</sup> in 1841; with Jajowrong, aged 50, in 1863.

5. waa NIRA-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Neri-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Neera-balluk<sup>H</sup>, Nearabulluk<sup>D</sup>, Neenbullocks<sup>B</sup>, Neer-bul-luc<sup>R</sup>, Neerer-bulluk<sup>R</sup>, Nerabulluk<sup>R</sup>, Neribullok<sup>Le</sup>, Nerboolok<sup>C,Le</sup>, 'Goulburns'<sup>T</sup>)

Location: (neri, neera = cave or gully<sup>H</sup>); adjoining Woieworong at Dividing range, on creeks and hills about Kilmore, Broadford, Pyalong, W towards Mt Macedon, N to 'Dindelong' creek near Heathcote (Hutton's run 1838-40, occupied by Curr 1841)<sup>H,B,D,R,Le,C</sup>. *Ngurungaeta* Billy Hamilton prominent at all religious ceremonies organised by Taungurong and Woieworong; at Mt Alexander initiation January 1840<sup>R</sup>, jailed in Lettsom raid during October 1840 initiation at Melbourne<sup>R</sup>, jailed February 1843 by Protector LeSouef for threatening language at Murchison depot but immediately released by Protector Parker and several squatters who offered to pay bail as his character was so good<sup>P</sup>. Clan numerous and 'peaceable' 1841-43<sup>B</sup>; 74 enumerated in 1845<sup>P</sup> (probably inflated by some from omitted clans 2, 3).

*Ngurungaeta*: Yabbee<sup>R</sup>/Yearba<sup>T</sup>/Billy Hamilton<sup>B,T,R</sup>/King Billy of the Goulburn (d. by 1859); wife Sally and 6 children to Acheron, later to Coranderk.

6. bunjil WARING-ILLAM-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Waring-willum<sup>H</sup>, Waringillum<sup>H</sup>, Warring-yellam<sup>D</sup>, Worrinellams<sup>D</sup>, Wurnigullums<sup>B</sup>, Waringillum<sup>R</sup>, Warrenillums<sup>R</sup>, 'Goulburns'<sup>T</sup>)

Location: upper Goulburn river and its southern sources, adjoining Woieworong clan 4<sup>D,B,H,R</sup>; at head of Muddy creek, at Yea and Alexandra<sup>H</sup>; with clans 8, 9 intermediaries when Mogullumbuk of Buffalo river first visited Woieworong at Melbourne 1845<sup>T,R,H</sup>; 14 enumerated in 1845. In 1859 deputation from this and neighbouring Taungurong clans petitioned for land 'to farm like white men', selected acreage near Cathedral Hill sacred site but their Acheron reserve soon lost to colonists, moved to Coranderk 1863.

*Ngurungaeta*: Bunderboweik<sup>T</sup>/Baundaurrong/Bundowrok/Old Man Murry<sup>T</sup>/Mr Cotton (c. 1806-1871). Photographed 1867, believed 'oldest native in colony'.

7. bunjil YARAN-ILLAM<sup>H</sup> (Yarranillums<sup>B</sup>, Yarring Nellams<sup>D</sup>, Yeranillum<sup>R</sup>, Yar-re-nil-lum<sup>R</sup>, Yare-re-nil-lum<sup>R</sup>, Yarrerwillums<sup>R</sup>, Yerra-willum<sup>P</sup>)

Location: E side of Goulburn 'below' Seymour<sup>H</sup>, at Mitchellstown<sup>R</sup>, at Aitken's station, Yea<sup>H</sup>, probably extended E toward Broken river where Beer-ret met in May 1840<sup>R</sup>; 1 killed and several jailed in Lettsom raid at Melbourne October 1840, when Robinson learned that 'Berrut, chief of the Yarrerwillums, killed Waugh's men' (in May 1840 attack on new run at Delatite or Devil's river)<sup>R</sup>; 22 enumerated in 1845.

*Ngurungaeta*: Berrut<sup>R</sup>/Beer-ret<sup>R</sup>/Berret<sup>T</sup>/Billy<sup>R</sup>/Dr Billy<sup>T</sup> (ca. 1805/16-1865), joined Acheron 1861, Coranderrk 1863, survived by daughter and 2 grandsons.

8. bunjil YEERUN-ILLAM-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Yeerungillam<sup>H</sup>, Yirun-illam-baluk<sup>H</sup>, Yarrun-illum-balluk corrected to Yeerun-illum-balluk<sup>H</sup>, 'Maragan tribe', 'Devil's river'<sup>T</sup>, Goulburns<sup>T</sup>)

Location: Broken river above and below Benalla<sup>H</sup>, 'by swamp below Benalla<sup>H</sup>: site of April 1838 'Faithfull Massacre' (see fn 18), locality named 'Maragan' in some local histories. Survivors of retaliatory massacres subsequently refugees among clan 9 kinsmen. Baalwick, remembered by Bon family as 'chief of Broken river tribe' and 'chief of Delatite tribe' took survivors to John Bon's portion of Hunter and Watson's Wappan run c. 1844/7; son (named for Bitteruc of clan 9?) led group to Acheron reserve 1861, to Coranderrk 1863.

*Ngurungaeta*: Baalwick; son Birdarak/Petrark/Bertdrak/Thomas Bamfield/Thomas Mansfield Punch Mickie (1839/44-1893) was named by William Barak as 1 of 3 *ngurungaeta* to come after him<sup>H</sup>.

9. waa YOWUNG-ILLAM-BALLUK<sup>H</sup> (Yauung-illam-baluk<sup>H</sup>, Yow-ong-il-lum<sup>R</sup>, Yowenillum<sup>R</sup>, Yower-nil-lum<sup>R</sup>, Youngillum<sup>B</sup>, Yowang-illum<sup>B</sup>)

Location: (Youang-illum = stone camp<sup>H</sup>, i.e. Howqua river quarry); at Alexandra and upper Goulburn, at Mansfield<sup>H</sup>; sources of Goulburn<sup>B</sup>; met at Mt Battery 'their country' May 1840<sup>R</sup> and Hunter and Watson's Wappan run, adjoining Mogullumbuk in mountains to E<sup>R,H</sup>; 24 enumerated 1845.

*Ngurungaeta*: Bitteruc<sup>R</sup> (other name Powerlite/Boyolite<sup>R</sup> name for Mt Battery<sup>R</sup>) aged 50 in May 1840, 3 sons named; by 1859 Moornalook<sup>T</sup>/Mor-rer-mal-loke<sup>R</sup>/Bill<sup>R</sup>/Mr King/King Billy of the Upper Goulburn (ca. 1806-1867), captured in Lettsom raid October 1840, sentenced to 10 years transportation but escaped<sup>R</sup>; 1867 photograph labelled 'once in the hulks for being concerned in a murder, jumped overboard and escaped to Healesville'. Barak identified him as the chief who killed his son Banjam for taking a Wangaratta girl 'who was like a daughter'; this occurred in a camp 'near where Ned Kelly's father had a station'.<sup>H</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Part 2 of this paper to appear in a later volume will discuss the Wathaurung, Jajowrong, Pangerang and other groups in eastern Victoria.

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## EXCHANGE IN SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA: AN ETHNOHISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Isabel McBryde

Systems of simple barter between tribes have been reported from many parts of Australia, but they have been inadequately studied. The primitive economics of the Aborigine have been so imperfectly recorded as a whole that complex institutions of the *merbok* type may well exist over a much wider area. The fact that they are not recorded and not reported proves very little. For the *merbok* does not obtrude itself upon the attention of the alien in the same way as the Melanesian *kula* which it in so many ways resembles.

W.E.H. Stanner.<sup>1</sup>

Most general accounts of Aboriginal society of the late nineteenth century refer to 'barter', 'trade' or 'commercial transactions'. The discussion however, is not elaborate and is couched in terms that seem to us deliberately quaint. They reflect current perceptions of nomadic hunting society and assumptions about the level of economic, commercial organisation considered appropriate to its social status as exemplar of early primitive social organisation. So the accounts of the late nineteenth century contrast transactions appropriate to the savage with those of civilised society.

Unlike the civilised and partially civilised people of the earth, the natives of Australia have not current tokens or representatives of value, exchangeable for other commodities, whereby commerce is facilitated, and settlements of accounts are made easy. They traffic only by exchanging one article for another. They barter with their neighbours; and it would seem that as regards the articles in which they deal, barter is as satisfactory to them as sale would be. They are astute in dealing with the whites, and it may be supposed they exercise reasonable forethought and care when bargaining with their neighbours. The natives of some parts, however appear to be reckless traders.<sup>2</sup>

The literature of this synthesising period (for example the works of Dawson, Howitt, Mathews and Smyth)<sup>3</sup> establishes clearly the existence of exchange between

*Isabel McBryde is Reader in Prehistory in the Faculties, Australian National University. She has undertaken field survey and excavation in New England and western New South Wales and is currently researching the archaeology and ethnohistory of exchange in south-eastern Australia.*

<sup>1</sup> The quotation comes from Stanner's paper on the Merbok, 1933-4: 157. I am grateful to Diane Barwick, John Bradley (A.S.S.A. Darwin), Bob Tonkinson, James Urry and Isabel White for discussions on the themes of this paper, and to Joan Goodrum who redrew the maps for publication. Special thanks to Mr Bradley of Costerfield for permission to quote from William A. Bradley's *Daily Journals* 1838-1868.

<sup>2</sup> Smyth 1878, 1: 180. cf. Wheeler 1910: 93.

<sup>3</sup> Dawson 1881; Howitt 1904; Mathews 1897; Smyth 1878. Aspects of their evidence have been surveyed on a continent-wide basis by McCarthy (1939) and later Mulvaney (1976).

individuals and between groups. It emphasises certain aspects:

1. That the goods 'traded' are those distinct to particular 'countries', that is, they assume tacitly a certain necessity in the transaction related to resources or economic needs, also that it is inter-tribal in character.
2. that exchange takes place at large gatherings, inter-group meetings, especially those at which initiation ceremonies are performed. Classic examples are Howitt's accounts of the Yuin barter in south-eastern New South Wales, and of the Wotjobaluk meetings in north-western Victoria, also Dawson's descriptions of the meetings at Mirraewae and Mt Noorat in the Western District of Victoria.<sup>4</sup>

The vocabulary used to describe the transactions derives from Victorian merchant economics. Does it act as a distorting lens through which we view events and activities that were short-lived? Were the perceptions of the recorders distorted, or did they merely lack the vocabulary to describe the complex transactions and relationships they observed? For example, Beveridge, discussing the people of the Murray, refers to '... their tribal and commercial communications (even the Australian tribes have commercial relations with each other ...'.<sup>5</sup> He continues:

The articles of commerce which the aborigines exchange with each other consist of reeds for spears, red ochre and chalk for painting purposes, stone for tomahawks, fibre for nets and cord, opossum cloaks, wood for weapons etc. Some of these articles are peddled backwards and forwards, even as far as the Tropic of Capricorn, each tribe gladly exchanging its local productions — of which it has abundance — for such commodities as are the produce of other tribal territories, and in which their own locality is altogether lacking. At first, this doubtless seems a very primitive kind of commerce, but really, it was ample for all the simple requirements of these savage tribes, the advent of the civilised race gave to them tastes and wants which, until then, were altogether foreign to their nature.<sup>6</sup>

Isaac Batey, another Victorian pioneer, was told in 1862 by an Aboriginal stockman from the Lachlan that stone for hatchet heads came 'from a hill down in the Melbourne country'. He learnt 'our aborigines went inland carrying stone implements with other things. What they brought was exchanged with remote tribes for what they produced, hence it appears that ... [they] ... have what I shall call the commercial instinct'.<sup>7</sup> So Smyth's summary need not surprise us, nor the assumption by other writers that the items exchanged are those particular to each group's country. The ecology and resources of different regions are seen as major factors determining the nature of exchange and the goods exchanged.<sup>8</sup>

These accounts were put together towards the end of the century. Aboriginal societies had already suffered tragic transformations; few writers obtained their information from those who had experienced pre-contact situations except as children or

<sup>4</sup> Howitt 1904: 718-9; Dawson 1881: 78.

<sup>5</sup> Beveridge 1883: 19.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*: 20.

<sup>7</sup> Batey n.d.: 129-30.

<sup>8</sup> Curr 1883: 273; Dawson 1881: 78; Krefft 1866: 366-7; Mathews 1897: 150-151; Stanbridge 1861: 296; Taplin in Woods 1879: 40.

very young adults. So we might ask whether the same emphasis appears in the accounts dating to the immediate contact period? The records of the classic ethnographers may reflect adaptation by Aboriginal societies to European settlement with its restrictions on their activities, economic regimes and freedom of movement. They may also reflect preconceptions held by the writers themselves concerning the nature of 'primitive society', as well as on the nature of 'trade' in such societies. Such filters may well leave us a version lacking both complexity and diversity, removing the small scale pervasive processes in favour of the large scale, isolated, dramatic event. Stanner's comment that Aboriginal exchange 'does not obtrude itself upon the attention of the alien'<sup>9</sup> could well be relevant. It comes from his study of *Merbok* exchange in the 1930s; he felt then that Aboriginal exchange was as yet incompletely recorded and understood.<sup>10</sup>

Exchange itself encompasses a diversity of activities and processes. In this paper the term is used in an entirely open sense as 'reciprocal traffic, exchange, movement of materials or goods through peaceful human agency' (Renfrew 1979: 24). Goods also must be defined loosely for they include both the tangible and the intangible – services, knowledge, even rituals as well as material items, consumable or durable.

From the ethnographic research of Stanner, Thomson and Berndt,<sup>11</sup> in northern Australia, observing exchange in action, one may derive a model of Aboriginal exchange in that part of the continent. Its major components are:

1. small scale individual or group transactions in diverse situations rather than large scale commercial transactions of a market kind. Trading centres as such do not feature. However transactions may become aggregated, for they often take place in areas of dense population or in the context of inter-group meetings or large gatherings held at traditionally sanctioned locations, particularly meetings for ceremonies;
2. the direction of exchange may be determined by the social affiliations of the individuals or groups involved. So, over time (if these change relatively little) consistent patterning may emerge to be reflected in the archaeological record. Direction may also be determined by conventions on the directions in which certain goods should flow;
3. goods may travel great distances, but this results from an agglomeration of short distance transactions rather than bulk movement of goods to distant market centres along established trade routes;
4. the determinants of exchange may be as much social and ceremonial as economic or ecological. Exchange may serve purposes beyond compensation for inequalities in the local resource-base or the drive for economic gain. Beyond the 'ostensible lack of real gain' in the transaction may lie important returns in prestige, status, security and influence valuable to individuals and to their society as a whole.

In this survey of the ethnohistorical evidence for exchange in south-eastern Australia I have two aims:

1. to examine the processes involved in the transfer of goods, to establish what items

<sup>9</sup> 1933-4: 157.

<sup>10</sup> 1933-4: 157.

<sup>11</sup> See Stanner 1933-4; Thomson 1949; and Berndt 1951. For the situation a generation later in an area of Arnhem Land see Altman 1982.

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- are exchanged and under what circumstances, and to explore the significance of such transactions in the life of Aboriginal societies in the south-east;
2. to apply the model derived from recent ethnographic work among Aboriginal societies of the north to the historical evidence from the regions of the temperate south-east. Will application of the model provide greater understanding of this fragmentary evidence, enable certain apparent anomalies to be explained?

To test the proposition that exchange conducted by societies in the south-east may have been characterised by the same complexity and diversity as that recorded for those of the north and north-west of the continent, I have paid particular attention to evidence from the immediate contact period, especially that of the late 1830s and 1840s. This evidence includes the records left by early settlers, by George Augustus Robinson and his Assistant Protectors and by William Buckley. Buckley was scorned by the gentry of Port Phillip, but at least spoke from the knowledge and experience of thirty years spent living with the people of that district. These early observers, for example Robinson and Thomas, presented accounts little illuminated by theory, and certainly not dominated by preconceptions about Aboriginal society as a type of primitive social order. They recount the activities and events of their daily contact with Aboriginal groups from direct participation and observation. So their evidence has particular value, the more so as it records transactions without attempting to interpret these in terms of trade, barter or primitive commerce.

### ITEMS FOR EXCHANGE

What goods move in inter-group exchange? Our synthesisers stress material goods, especially those products distinct to particular group territories. There is implicit a sense of exchange as an adaptive mechanism, compensating for ecological inequalities between such 'countries'. The goods include raw materials and finished products, e.g. stone, stone hatchets, cord or net bags, bundles of reeds or spears.<sup>12</sup> Surveying the literature a wide range emerges. It includes consumables (food), tangible goods and intangible items such as songs, dances, names or services, as well as the living (women in marriage exchange). Marriage is regarded as an exchange; its arrangement also involves forms of transfer of goods and gift-giving between the families concerned. William Thomas specifically mentions 'purchase of a wife' and lists the bride price.<sup>13</sup> Among material goods European items such as clothing, handkerchiefs, tomahawks, twine, sugar, flour, and rice early join the hatchet heads, spears, opossum rugs, nets and mats that feature in the records of exchange.

Given the range of goods and local products is there evidence for specific production for exchange? Do those preparing for an inter-tribal meeting work to ensure that they have an adequate stock of goods to meet likely obligations? Comments by Howitt and Stanbridge as well as Krefft's descriptions of the feverish craft activity preceding the meeting at Yelta in July 1857 suggest that this is so.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Curr 1883: 273; Krefft 1866: 366-7; Mathews 1894: 303 and 1897: 150-1; Stanbridge 1861: 296; Taplin in Woods 1879: 40. See Figure 1 summarising visually ethnohistorical information on exchange of goods.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas in Bride 1898: 67.

<sup>14</sup> Stanbridge 1861: 295; Krefft 1866: 386.

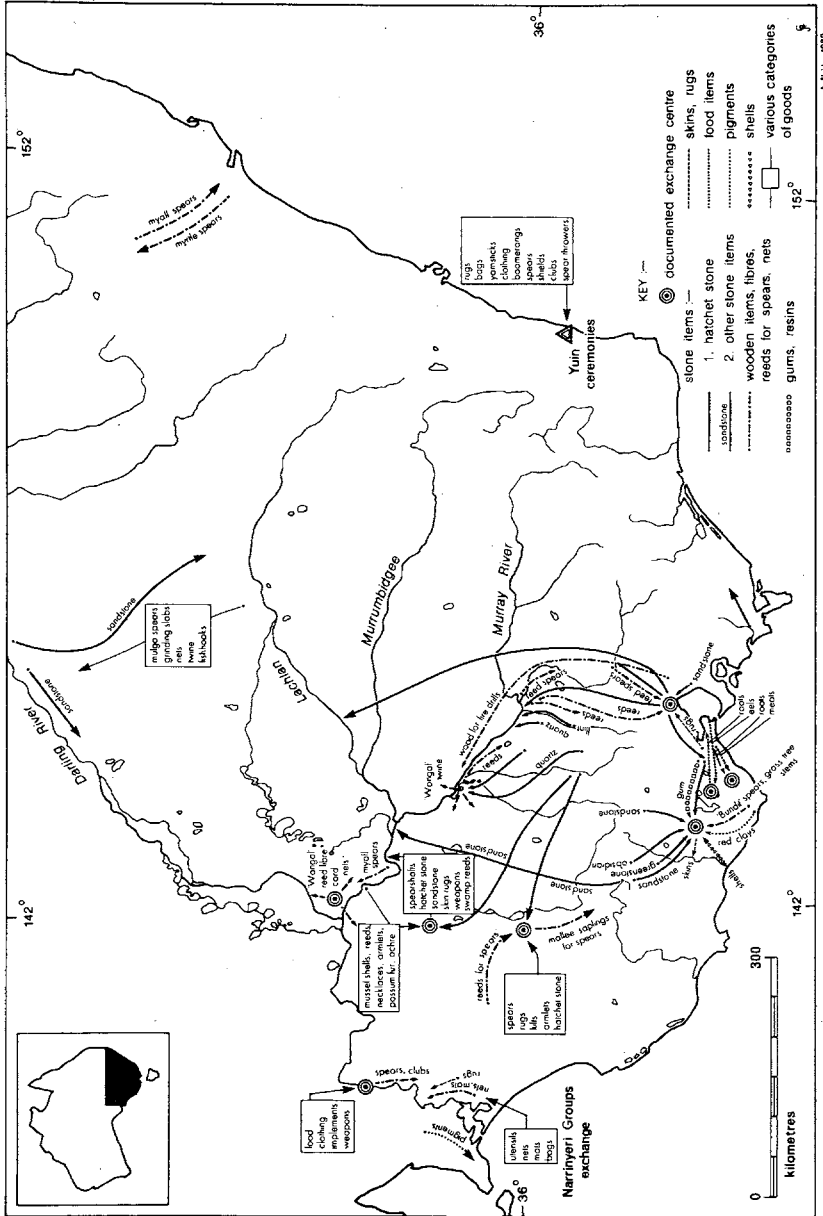


Figure 1 -- Summary of the major ethnohistorical information on the range of goods exchanged in south-eastern Australia and their movement from source to exchange centre.

However, this drive need not be directed to economic gain from the transaction. Similarly the records of the 'ownership' of certain resources and the strict control of their use need not imply protection of their commercial potential as such. One of the best examples of such control and restriction is provided by the conventions pertaining at the Mt William stone quarry (see Howitt's account of this).<sup>15</sup> Resources important for subsistence were also often regarded as 'owned' by specific local groups, e.g. fishing rights on certain stretches of the Hopkins River near Hexham in the Western District of Victoria. Members of other groups could only catch fish or eels with permission.<sup>16</sup>

In the literature movement of goods is documented but no information given on whether conventions controlled its direction. Such conventions are stressed in the accounts of exchange in north Australia by Stanner and Thomson.<sup>17</sup> In Stanner's account of the *Merbok* a relentless imperative seems at work; nothing is more offensive than a pile of foreign goods with nowhere to go.<sup>18</sup> Do we therefore assume that no such conventions prevailed in the south-east or that this aspect was unobtrusive to the alien observer and so escaped the record? The archaeological distributions of greenstone artefacts from the Mt William quarry certainly show clear directional trends.<sup>19</sup> However these may reflect other factors, embedded in the social controls of exchange such as group relationships, marriage rules, associations for ceremonies and other alliances. Knowledge of the direction from which long-travelled goods came certainly existed. For example, Isaac Batey's Aboriginal informant of c1860 on the Lachlan knew that hatchet heads came 'from the Melbourne country' as did the people of Guichen Bay in South Australia far to the west.<sup>20</sup>

Do conventions also control who exchanges with whom? In other parts of Australia they do; a formalised relationship is involved as in *Merbok*.<sup>21</sup> Our sources for the south-east, both those from the immediate contact period and later, are silent on this. Yet some incidents they record could be so interpreted. The only recorded formal relationship of this kind is that noted for the Narrinyeri. Two boys from different groups are designated partners as tiny infants. Later, as adults, they are 'agents', promoting and organising inter-group exchange.<sup>22</sup>

### THE CONTEXTS OF EXCHANGE

What are the occasions for exchange – or, how are goods acquired? Examination of this question may provide insight into the roles of exchange, whether economic or

<sup>15</sup> Howitt 1904: 340-341 and Notes on the Kulin in the Howitt papers; McBryde 1984.

<sup>16</sup> Dawson 1881: 94-5.

<sup>17</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 162, 168; Thomson 1949: 61-81.

<sup>18</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 170.

<sup>19</sup> McBryde 1978 and 1984. Figure 1 shows the importance in certain regions of exchange linkages and their comparative absence from others.

<sup>20</sup> Batey n.d.: 129-40; *The Star* 22 September, 1855. cf. Wheeler 1910: 95; Tindale 1974, 1: 80-81.

<sup>21</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 157-8, 164-7.

<sup>22</sup> Taplin in Woods 1879: 32-34 and in Howitt Papers Box 9 Folder 2 Paper 2; Smyth 1878, I: 181-2, cf. Wheeler 1910: 95; Tindale 1974, I: 80-81.



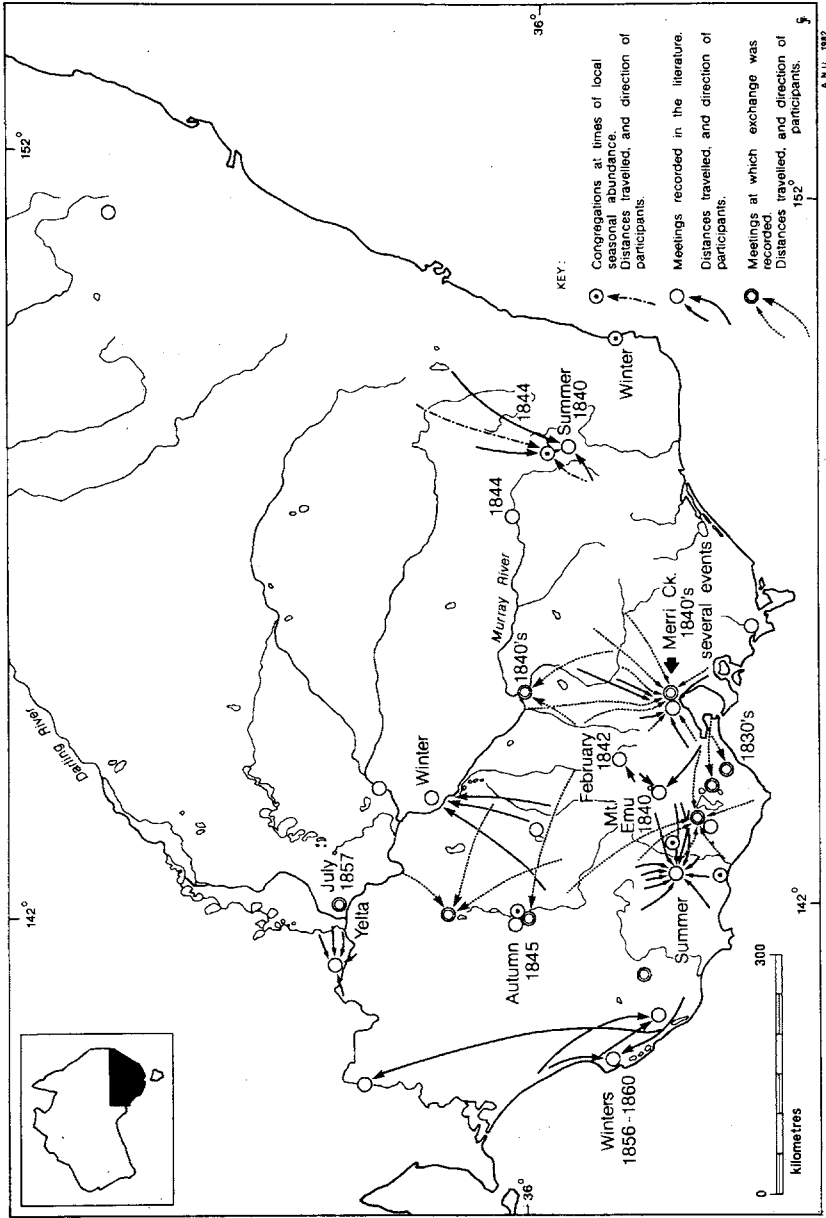


Figure 2 — Summary of the major ethnohistorical information on location of organised meetings or large gatherings and the documented movements of people to attend these.

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social. Goods may be acquired by exchange, by gift, or as the result of special expeditions to the source, where negotiation with its owners may be involved. Large inter-group gatherings seem to have been a prominent feature of the life of societies in the south-east. These meetings were carefully organised, scheduled to coincide with times of abundance in local food resources; participants were invited by messengers who travelled from group to group. The messengers became men of importance.<sup>23</sup>

At certain seasons of the year, usually in the spring or summer when food is most abundant, several tribes meet together in each other's territory for the purpose of festivity or war, or to barter and exchange such food, clothing, implements, weapons, or other commodities as they respectively possess; or to assist in the initiatory ceremonies . . .<sup>24</sup>

Eyre witnessed such meetings between the Moorunde groups and people from Lake Bonney and district. Seasonal abundance of fish and eels at Lake Bolac and the seasonal 'treats' such as the exudate from eucalypts in the Wimmera/Mallee, called La'ap, or the Bogong Moth in the southern uplands also provided foci for such meetings.<sup>25</sup> 'The festival of the La'ap is an occasion of great interest to the natives when they assemble in large numbers to settle their disputes, and adjust other matters' (Robinson referring to the country near Lake Hindmarsh in 1845).<sup>26</sup> Robinson particularly comments on the social and political importance of these gatherings.

These masses are a collection of representative tribes and the eeling and whaling seasons are wisely taken advantage of by them for holding their great social and political meetings. Of all the places I saw, Lake Boloke was the most interesting. This spot, celebrated for its eels and its central situation, appears to have been fixed upon by general consent for the great annual meeting of the tribes of the interior, and it is for the same reason the sections in and near the coast assemble at Tare-er during the whaling season.<sup>27</sup>

Of Lake Keilambete he said the 'tribes met here to settle their disputes and transact other business connected with their political relations'.<sup>28</sup>

Thomas reported eight hundred people from seven clans of the Woiwurrung, Taung-erung, and Bunerung of central Victoria congregating near Melbourne. This was 'to witness the judicial proceedings' against two men accused of murder.<sup>29</sup>

So, though later writers stress the ceremonial occasion for inter-group meetings, those of the immediate contact period emphasise their social, judicial, and political

<sup>23</sup> Beveridge 1883: 19; Curr 1883: 281-2; Dawson 1881: 74-5; Eyre 1845, II: 219-220; Fison and Howitt 1880: 193; Howitt — Papers Box 7, Folder 2, Paper 2 and Notes on the Kulin p. 56; Morgan 1852 (1980); Robinson Journals 11 May 1841 in Presland 1980: 92; Smyth 1878, I: 181; Thomas in Bride 1898: 94. See Figure 2 for the locations of recorded meeting places and the documented movements of people to attend gatherings.

<sup>24</sup> Eyre 1845, II: 218-9.

<sup>25</sup> Robinson 1841 in Kenyon 1927-8: 146; Robinson 1844 in Mackanass 1942: 328.

<sup>26</sup> 1845: 307.

<sup>27</sup> Robinson April 1841 in Kenyon 1927-8: 146.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*: 143 dated to 1841. Cf. Parker 1839-1840 in Morrison n.d.: 14.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas in Bride 1898: 96.

functions. Meetings held primarily for exchange seem to be rare and fall into one or other of the following categories:

1. those concerned with fulfilling marriage arrangements, the occasions on which girls betrothed in infancy joined their husbands. Curr described such a meeting held near Tongala in the 1840s. Other items might be exchanged at such meetings also, as Curr records,<sup>30</sup>
2. those for exchange of food, such as the meetings Buckley attended.<sup>31</sup>

Otherwise exchange was subsidiary to social or ceremonial activities, carried on 'in the shadow of more impressive events' as Stanner says of *Merbok* exchanges.<sup>32</sup>

Some aspects of these meetings have given the locales chosen the status of 'trading centres' in the literature. For example:

1. the extent of exchange recorded, for example at the meetings held at Mt Noorat in the Western District or by the Wotjobaluk near Lake Hindmarsh in the Wimmera/Mallee.<sup>33</sup>
2. the great numbers attending such meetings from widely separated localities, such as the impressive list of groups who came to Mirraewuae near Caramut.<sup>34</sup>

Certainly such centres act as nodes in distribution networks. Yet this need not imply that their primary function was as market, nor that the routes travelled by participants should appropriately be seen as 'trade routes' (see Figure 2).

Exchange of goods often concluded such meetings, to confirm or cement 'friendships', as our sources (both early and late) recount. Whether those involved stood in any special relationship to one another is not recorded. Howitt gives the following account of the conclusion of the Bunan ceremony held by coastal groups in southern New South Wales.<sup>35</sup>

At the end of the Bunan, when the boys have gone off by themselves and before the different lots of peoples return to their own localities, a kind of market was held, in some clear space near the camp where the people laid out the things they had brought with them. A man would say 'I have such and such things', another would bargain for them. A complete set of one *ngulia* (belt of possum fur cord), four *Burrian* (kilt), one *gumbun* and one complete set of *Kul butgun*, that is corroborree things. It was the rule that complete sets of things went together, weapons might be given in exchange. A complete set of weapons was ten fighting boomerangs (straight going ones) warangun, ten grass tree and jagged wood pointed spears (gumma), one of each shield — for stopping spears (bembaia) — for club fighting (Millidu), one Knib dub (*gug-ju-rung*) or (Bundi) and one spear thrower (wommerera). The women also engaged in this trade exchanging possum rugs, bags — yamsticks (tuali).

<sup>30</sup> Curr 1883: 128-134.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan 1852 (1980): 56-59; Howitt — Notes on the Kulin, Howitt Papers pp. 59-60.

<sup>32</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 160. Cf. Berndt and Berndt 1964: 41, 114-17.

<sup>33</sup> For Mt Noorat see Dawson 1881: 72-78, for Lake Hindmarsh, Howitt 1904: 717-718, and Papers, La Trobe Library, Melbourne.

<sup>34</sup> Dawson 1881: 3.

<sup>35</sup> Howitt Papers Box 8, Folder 5, Paper 12. Cf. Howitt 1887: 47.

Similar exchanges also marked the end of meetings of the Wotjobaluk, the Jupagalk and members of the Kulin group of tribes, Howitt's 'Kulin nation'. On such occasions, as well as exchanging goods of various kinds, participants made gifts to visitors. In the words of Barak, Howitt's informant, this was designed 'to make friends'.<sup>36</sup> Does this practice differ from Robinson's experiences in the Western District in 1841? On leaving a camp shared with local Aborigines for some time the two groups exchanged gifts. 'This is their custom', commented Robinson, noting that 'much feeling was exhibited on this occasion'.<sup>37</sup>

Howitt, the synthesiser, stresses the 'auction'/'market' aspects of such an event rather than its social/bonding qualities which were emphasised by Robinson, the direct observer. We have few other observers or recorders. Mathews attended initiation ceremonies in various parts of New South Wales. He gives no detailed description of exchange at their conclusion, but does make general reference to this context for exchange.<sup>38</sup> The ceremonies he observed were held in the 1890s; so this may not fully reflect the associated activities of earlier times, nor earlier social and economic milieux. One aspect he does record which eludes other late observers is the formal exchange of gifts between the initiates' families and sponsors. These, he describes for both Wiradjuri and South Australian groups,<sup>39</sup> for whom tooth evulsion was an important part of initiation ritual.

After a time, which may be only a few months duration, or it may be a much longer period, the headman who took the tooth away sends messengers to the tribe to which the owner of the tooth belongs, stating that it will be brought back at such a time. On receipt of this message, preparations are made to meet the strange people at the time appointed. On these occasions it is the custom for each tribe to make presents to each other, which takes the form of exchange or barter. Supposing, for example, that there is plenty of suitable stone for making hatchets and whetstones in the country belonging to one tribe, they will exchange these commodities with the men of another tribe, in whose country there may be suitable wood for making spears and other weapons. People who have coloured clays will exchange them for skins of animals not plentiful in their own country. Others will have string made of the bark of certain trees, richly coloured feathers of rare birds, reeds for making light spears, and so on, which they exchange for other articles. It may be that some of the men and women exchange exactly similar articles with the people of another tribe merely as mementos of their meeting.

At these gatherings, the hosts arrange themselves in a line, with their presents and other commodities lying on the ground near them. The visitors advance and form into a row opposite the hosts, and display their presents in a similar manner. The headman who has brought back the tooth returns it to the boy's father, who subse-

<sup>36</sup> Howitt 1904: 717-718.

<sup>37</sup> Robinson Journal for 12 May 1841 — Presland 1980: 93. Cf. entry for 2 April 1841 — Presland 1980: 18.

<sup>38</sup> Mathews 1894: 303.

<sup>39</sup> Mathews 1897: 150-151 and Notes in Mss Folder C. Cf. Notebook No. I pp.67-71, referring to the Wongumuk ceremony of Darling River groups.

quently hands it over to his son. After some time it is buried in the ground.<sup>40</sup>

One of the earliest records of an inter-group meeting at which goods were exchanged comes from the journal of William Bradley, who settled near Tinpot Creek in the Costerfield district, Victoria, and established good relations with the local Aboriginal groups. On 12th November 1838 he recorded:

Today two groups of blacks met at the encampment by the deep hole in the creek, they at first appeared to act as strangers but it soon became apparent that there were indeed individuals in either group who were familiar with each other. Both groups it would appear were happy to see each other. The stranger group as I will call them had travelled from the south and they had carried with them a number [of] . . . stone hatchets . . . . Some of these hatchets were polished while others were still quite rough and I imagine still require further work. The group of blacks who are camped on the creek were eager to obtain these hatchets and in return for one polished axe they gave two of their opossum skin covers. For a hatchet still in a roughened state they gave in return a number of their light bamboo spears. This bartering as I shall call it went on for some time, but only amongst the menfolk, the women and children stayed behind the men with only some of the older women having anything to say.

(William A. Bradley — Daily Journals 1838-1868)

In the entry for 14th November Bradley noted that the encampment had broken up — only the old men with the women and children remained. The others, he was told, had gone into the hills to the north 'for the young men.' This comment may indicate that the meeting was associated with certain stages of initiation rituals. Bradley's description is of particular interest not only for its early date. It is a rare direct account of exchange within the context of a small inter-group meeting and cites the exchange value of hatchet heads (both complete ground examples and pre-forms) at some distance from the likely source quarry (cf. p. 148 for Barak's memories of exchange value for Mt William artifacts at source). That the hatchets came from 'near Lancefield' (i.e. the Mt William quarry) Bradley learnt later (entry for 5th May 1862). 'Bamboo spears' are presumably the reed spears from the wetlands of the Murray and its tributaries (See Figure 1).

Obviously inter-group meetings, which may or may not involve ceremonial, are important occasions for exchanges of many kinds. They provide the context for exchange, even if exchange is not a primary purpose for the gatherings. There are parallels here with the exchange Stanner observed in the Daly River region, an important activity, yet performed 'in the shadow of more impressive events'. Such meetings provided foci for the dissemination of ideas, of new materials and new items of material culture. So information on which groups meet for these occasions, and the locations to and from which they travel are significant for interpreting the diffusion of cultural traits, as well as the social and political relationships between societies. They also suggest potential routes by which goods move across a landscape.

<sup>40</sup> Mathews 1897: 150-151.



Plate 1 – W.A. Cawthorne's depiction of corroboree, the dancing and singing performances that were features of inter-group meetings. Reproduced by courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

# GIFTS

Goods also change hands as direct gifts. In the literature of the late nineteenth century prestation receives scant attention compared with that given the direct and immediate reciprocity of barter, though recorded observations of the 1840s give it prominence. Reciprocity however may not be entirely absent. Such gifts could represent delayed reciprocity or exchange of goods for services, even knowledge. The recorder may not have observed, understood or perceived the transaction in its entirety. Gifts seem to have been of importance; they involve prestige or valued goods such as opossum rugs, hatchets, hatchet stone, or the rare 'Bundit' spears from the Otway forests. This type of spear was considered:

so valuable that it is never used in fighting or hunting, but only as an ornament. It is given as a present in token of friendship or exchanged for fancy maleen spears from the interior.<sup>41</sup>

Gift-giving marked or formalised particular occasions such as the arrival or departure of a visiting group. It is described for the contact period by Batman, Buckley, Robinson, Sievwright and Thomas.<sup>42</sup> In illustration one could cite a few examples from Robinson's journals and reports for his 1841 travels in the Western District:<sup>43</sup>

1. I explained the object of my visit and deputed them to deliver my message to their tribe and my wish to meet the Boolucburrers [people of Lake Buloke] at Kilambete. I gave them some trifles I had in my valise and eels and native weapons were given to me. The strangers and my natives exchanged raiment, a custom prevalent among the Aboriginal tribes.
2. Preparing to depart. The shirts I had given to my natives they gave to those strangers and received spears or other trifles in return, as I remember. This is their custom and it matters little to me as all the natives were under my protection and guardianship. Some gave their blankets and a few gave away trousers and other articles they had obtained. Much feeling was exhibited on this occasion.
3. I desired . . . alias Tom Brown to give the big man his blanket and in return the one gave me a large jagged spear. The woman gave us three eels and Brown exchanged his shirt for a kangaroo skin mantle. We then parted with the best possible feeling and with an understanding that we were to meet the following day.

The practice was not confined to the groups of the Western District met by Robinson. Batman had distributed presents before the formal meeting he held in June 1835 with leaders of the Kulin clans living near the site of modern Melbourne to discuss purchasing a tract of their country. On the day following the formal discussions he recorded in his journal:

Just before leaving, the two principal chiefs came and brought their two cloaks, or royal mantles, and laid them at my feet, wishing me to accept the same. On my

<sup>41</sup> Dawson 1881: 88.

<sup>42</sup> Bonwick ed. Sayers 1973: 99; Morgan 1852 (1980): 92; Robinson in Kenyon 1927-8: 143; Sievwright 1840-5-6; Thomas in Bride 1989: 97-98. For later instances see Curr 1883:268 and Stanbridge 1861: 296.

<sup>43</sup> April 1841 in Kenyon 1927-8: 141; 12 May 1841 — Presland 1980: 93: 2 April 1841 — Presland 1980: 18.

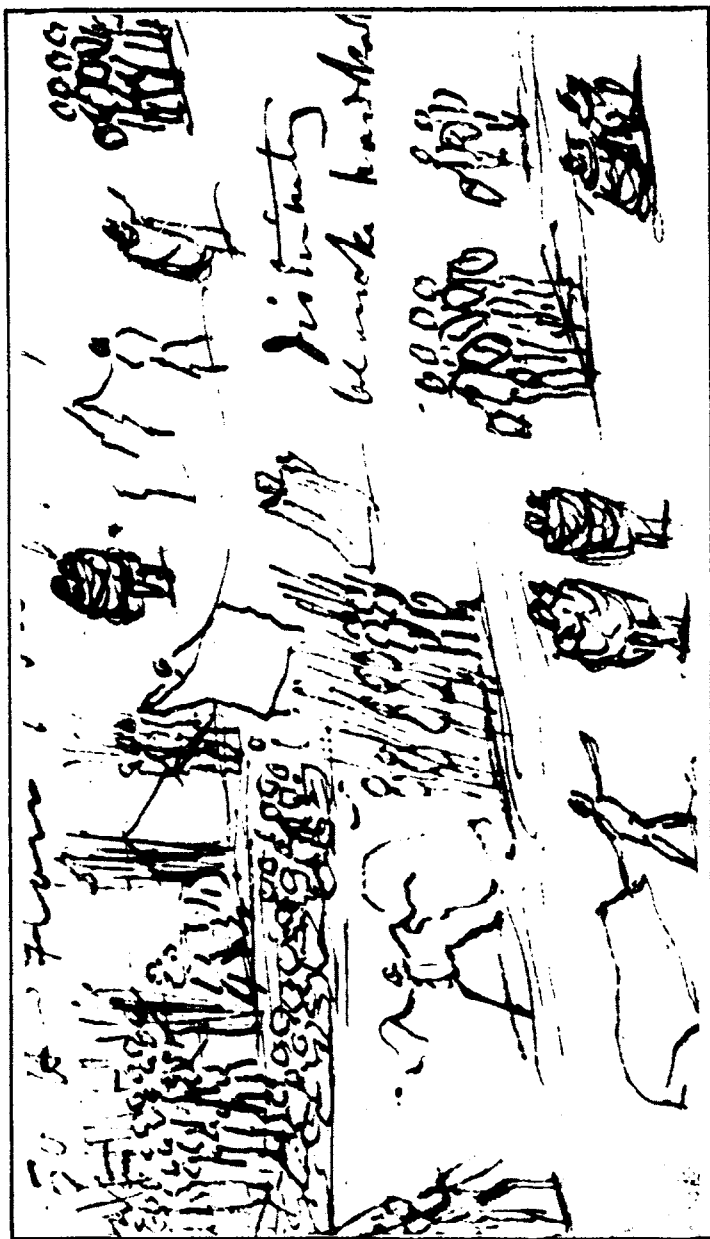


Plate 2 - George Augustus Robinson describes a number of meetings both between Aboriginal groups and between Aborigines and his party. Here he illustrates his journal entry on the distribution of blankets and handkerchiefs, as gifts to leaders ('chiefs and delegates') of Western District groups in August 1841. Reproduced by courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.



consenting to take them, they placed them round my neck and over my shoulders and seemed quite pleased to see me walk about with them on. This exchange of gifts is also recounted in Batman's report of 25th June completed on return to Hobart. He says:

the chiefs, to manifest their friendly feeling towards me, insisted upon my receiving from them two native cloaks and several baskets made by the women, and also some of the implements of defence . . .<sup>44</sup>

Such exchanges are very formal. Thomas describes what he calls 'a ceremony of mutual friendship' between groups from the Devil's River (a clan of the Taungerong) and from the Yarra (a clan of the Woiwurrung) at his camp just outside Melbourne in 1847:

. . . some Devil's River blacks arrive . . . Sunday March 21, 1847. Early proceed to erect [encampment] which I find much excited. One Bunhile (Davy's son) had lost his lubra who had eloped. Am much affected by a ceremony of mutual friendship. The Devil's River gave the Yarras 7 koogra [possum skin cloaks] and a number of spears. The Yarra blacks give 5 splendid koogra and bundles of pocket handkerchiefs and European articles (all new) given by Old Borinuptune, brother to the late chief [Billibellary].<sup>45</sup>

Gifts may also be given to 'create friendship' in the terms of the late nineteenth century writers.<sup>46</sup> Yet, complex personal relationships may be involved, including the acquisition of clients or of influence. Men of power receive many gifts, but in turn often redistribute them.<sup>47</sup> Those who act to settle disputes are loaded with gifts (or perhaps payment for services rendered?). Stahle, a Moravian missionary with long experience of work with Aboriginal societies, said of such a senior man in south-western Victoria:

The men of the tribe were under an obligation to provide him with food, and to make all kinds of presents to him, such as kangaroo and opossum rugs, stone tomahawks, spears, flint knives etc.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly those who exercised power through magic and ritual received gifts — either in payment, in anticipation of assistance or in anxious propitiation, — from both, 'those who benefitted and those who feared' as Howitt put it.<sup>49</sup> Dawson refers to a leader of the Spring Creek group of Mara-speakers, who arbitrated in disputes: 'In reward for his services he returned home laden with presents of opossum rugs, weapons and ornaments'.<sup>50</sup> Gifts may repay obligations, as well as promote social or political influence. Buckley perceived this aspect of Aboriginal social relations among the Wathawurung.

<sup>44</sup> Journal entry for Sunday 7 June 1835, quoted by Bonwick (ed. Sayers 1973: 99). Report of 25 June quoted in Billot 1979: 118. Perceptions of the purpose and results of the meeting may of course have been different for the two parties involved in the discussions. See Diane Barwick's discussion in this volume (pp. 107 and 122).

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Journal for 1847, March 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> For example see Howitt — Papers Box 8, Folder 6, Paper 1. Cf. Curr 1883: 268.

<sup>47</sup> Howitt — Notes on the Kulin. p. 50A in Diane Barwick's transcript.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Fison and Howitt 1880: 277.

<sup>49</sup> 1887: 47. See also Dawson 1881: 59.

<sup>50</sup> 1881: 75.

On finding a cask washed up on shore he removed the iron hoops which he 'knew were valuable to the natives':

Having broken up the iron hoops into pieces, I some days after divided them amongst those who were most kind to me, and by these presents added greatly to the influence I had already acquired over them.<sup>51</sup>

Gifts were usually made to those who sponsored young men in initiation, or so we may infer from several references which relate to widely separated areas. Howitt records that Barak presented Billibellary with an opossum rug following his investiture 'with the insignia of manhood'. Mathews notes formal but delayed exchanges between sponsors and the families of initiates after the Wiradjuri Burbung and after the Kannetch ceremony in South Australia.<sup>52</sup>

Marriage arrangements also involved much giving of gifts between the families as well as the individuals involved.<sup>53</sup> The arrangement itself was a form of exchange, whose agreement was binding. There is the record by Thomas of a 'bride price' (Thomas in *Bride* 1898:67). In most instances however, the reciprocity was not an immediate but a continuing obligation.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes the return was in kind, another marriage arrangement. Customs such as the *Kue* of the Daly River people are not recorded by our sources, but food is often mentioned among the gifts listed on these occasions. An event unobtrusive to the alien? The importance of gifts and exchanges of this kind seems universal throughout the south-east, with the possible exception of the Kurnai.<sup>55</sup>

Both exchange and gift-giving involve obligation. To fail in this was a serious offence, and a cause of disputes. Sievwright comments on a fight — 'this dispute was owing to the latter tribe having neglected to furnish the accustomed presents on the preceding night'.<sup>56</sup> We are reminded of Stanner's report that non-fulfilment of *Merbok* obligations bore serious consequences, ranging from loss of status and humiliation to death. For Arnhem Land Thomson recorded the same inner compulsion to meet exchange obligations and the shame that followed failure to do so.<sup>57</sup>

One of the incidents which triggered the Rufus Creek massacre in south-western New South Wales seems to have been the failure of European shepherds to keep a promise to supply certain goods in return for the services of Aboriginal women. Clearly they had been expected to conform to the rules governing such exchanges.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Morgan 1852 (1980): 113-4.

<sup>52</sup> Howitt — Notes on the Kulin, p. 8; Mathews 1897: 150-151 and Ms Notebooks.

<sup>53</sup> Wedge 1836 in Morgan 1852 (1980): 165-171. See also Buckley's evidence on p. 95.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas in *Bride* 1898: 67-8; Beveridge 1861-65: 17 and 1883: 23-25; Smyth 1880: 3; Smyth 1878, I: 76-77, 79; Morgan 1852 (1980): 58, 83; Curr 1883: 248. Cf. 128-9; Howitt *Papers*, Notes on the Kulin, p. 34B.

<sup>55</sup> Dawson 1881: 28; Howitt, *Papers* Notes on the Kulin, p. 34B; Wedge 1836 in Morgan 1852 (1980): 167, 177; Sievwright 1842; Smyth 1880: 3.

<sup>56</sup> Sievwright. Entry for April 14, 1841.

<sup>57</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 161, 167, 170-2; Thomson 1949: 4, 35-6, 38-9.

<sup>58</sup> Moorehouse 1841 quoted in Massola 1969: 119.

*SPECIAL EXPEDITIONS*

This survey has concentrated on the acquisition of goods by exchange and prestation, usually in the context of an inter-tribal or inter-group meeting. Goods were also obtained by making special expeditions to their source, often in alien, if allied, territories. These were usually to acquire items important for subsistence or technology, especially raw materials not available locally such as fine grained hard greenstone for hatchet heads like that quarried from the outcrops on Mt William, or reed stems for spear shafts.<sup>59</sup> However, these expeditions do not seem comparable in significance to those made by the Dieri and Yantruwunta of Eastern Central Australia, who travelled hundreds of miles beyond their country to collect red ochre, sandstone slabs or the narcotic pituri.<sup>60</sup> Nor of course do they involve such long and hazardous journeys, Buckley's description of the trip to the tomahawk stone quarry notwithstanding. In many instances these expeditions also involve exchange, for goods must be bartered to acquire the commodity from its owners. For example, at the Mt William stone quarry strangers were not permitted to work the outcrops, but must negotiate a price for their needs with those who had the right to do so. Reed spears from the Goulburn reed beds and opossum rugs are recorded exchanges for Mt William stone.<sup>62</sup> The opossum rug was the value at source of three pieces of Mt William stone. At times a messenger was sent to acquaint the owners of rare and valued resources that such needs existed. Arrangements could then be made to meet them.

*DETERMINANTS OF EXCHANGE*

It is only this last aspect (the acquiring of goods by specific journeys to the source) which seems to be dominated by the demands of subsistence or technology, and so divorced from 'the shadow of more impressive events' or from social imperatives. From the fragmentary ethnohistorical evidence can we make any statements about the factors determining the form of exchange and the commodities exchanged? Is the economic motive reflected? Are the needs for access to rare resources as strong as the general statements and the implicit arguments of the late nineteenth century commentators suggest? If we seek examples of exchange involving items that may be scarce or totally absent from the receiving areas we do not scan a wide field. Quartz and fine-grained siliceous rock are not found in the country of the Murray people but are acquired through barter; the Wongul twine made from typha root fibres is an important product gained by those who exchange with the groups of the Murray/Darling junction; reeds for spears are prized items acquired from people living near the reed beds of the Goulburn and Murray; hard rock for hatchet heads so rare in the riverine

<sup>59</sup> Howitt *Papers* – Notes on the Kulin; Morgan 1852 (1980): 23-4, 79-80; Clow in *Bride* 1898: 109; Parker in Morrison n.d. (1972?): 22 and in Smyth 1878, II: 154; Krefft 1866: 366.

<sup>60</sup> Howitt 1904: 710-713.

<sup>61</sup> Morgan 1852 (1980): 79-80.

<sup>62</sup> Howitt 1904: 311-12, 340-1, 689-690, 718; and *Papers* – Notes on the Kulin; Smyth 1878, I: 161 and II: 298-9.

plains is obtained by exchange. Similarly the Murray people acquired the special wood needed for fire drills from those of the Yarra (Corranderrk).<sup>63</sup>

The list, although neither impressive nor long, yet demonstrates that ecological determinants cannot be dismissed. However, the situation is more complex. Why should Bundit spears, so highly regarded, be exchanged for maleen spears, also highly regarded?<sup>64</sup> Why should the archaeological distribution of greenstone artefacts from Mt William and Mt Camel show concentrations in areas where not only is high quality basalt abundant, but greenstone itself is available?<sup>65</sup> Why are the artefacts made of Central Belt greenstones found in such numbers in the Western District of Victoria? Why did Geelong people travel to the Mt William quarry to acquire hatchet stone when their own territory held greenstone quarries as well as basalt sources? Mathews noted and was puzzled by the exchange of like for like in southern New South Wales.<sup>66</sup>

The unimpressive list of rare commodities, plus the enigmas listed above raise questions concerning the social and symbolic value of the act of exchange or of particular goods involved. Certain items seem to have special value, or so we may infer from the context, especially descriptions of the giving of gifts on formal occasions. These are hatchet stone, rugs, and spears. Craftsmanship as well as the prestige of the source may impart value. Elsewhere I have argued from the archaeological evidence that the Central Belt greenstones acquired such status outside Kulin territories.<sup>67</sup> This survey of the historical evidence does not discount the hypothesis. One may well consider that the 'axes' Dawson tells us the Geelong people brought to Mt Noorat to exchange were not made from Geelong greenstone (metagabbro) but from Mt William greenstone (amphibole hornfels). They could have been acquired on one of those special expeditions so that a valued item could be offered in exchange at important meetings, or used in individual situations where such a gift was necessary to create or repay some social or ceremonial obligation. Among such important occasions were initiation ceremonies and the fulfilment of marriage arrangements. It is not then unexpected that the densest areas of distribution for artefacts made from Mt William greenstone coincide with the territories of groups who intermarried with the Kulin people who owned or had rights in that quarry.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> For quartz and other stone see Curr 1883: 273 and Stone 1911: 460; for Wongal twine Krefft 1866: 360-1; for reed shafts Curr 1883: 273; Smyth 1878, II: 295-9; for hard rock Curr 1883: 273; for wood to make fire drills Hercus 1969, II: 367.

<sup>64</sup> Dawson 1881: 88.

<sup>65</sup> McBryde and Harrison 1981.

<sup>66</sup> 1897: 150-151.

<sup>67</sup> McBryde and Harrison 1981.

<sup>68</sup> McBryde 1984.

*COMMENTS ON THE MODEL AND ROLES OF EXCHANGE*

Let us return to the aims outlined earlier. The model of Aboriginal exchange in northern Australia has tested well against the ethnohistorical evidence from the southeast in spite of its derivation from situations distant in time and space. It seems both appropriate and applicable. The components are all represented in the exchange transactions recorded for the societies of the south-east. To look to the ethnography from which the model derives we may feel that the studies of exchange in action given by Stanner, Berndt and Thomson provide insight into the processes involved and so widen the range of interpretive hypotheses to set against our elusive evidence. This has proved a rewarding exercise, especially in relation to the first aim of this study, the exploration of the processes involved in the transfer of goods. These are far more complex and diverse than would be anticipated from the discussions in the literature of the late nineteenth century, especially if one reads carefully the accounts of the early period of contact. Several aspects documented in the writings of this period emerge as significant, particularly gift-giving. It is a major, previously unexamined, element in this reconstruction. Diversity characterises not only the range of commodities exchanged, but also the ways in which these change hands, and the uses to which they are put. Material goods serve social and symbolic functions as well as the technological and economic. However, though exchange involves primarily material items, it is clear that women, services, songs, names, and dances also change ownership. The evidence for the south-east offers fewer instances of songs, dances and corroborees changing ownership than does that for Central Australia. Whether this is a function of the nature of our evidence and its collection or of the societies concerned remains to be determined. Even when material goods change hands the significance of the act may not be so tangible. The gains go beyond the economic and technological towards social commitment and prestige.<sup>69</sup> Exchange may also provide a medium for settling disputes, between individuals or between groups. Such transactions may go on 'in the shadow of more impressive events';<sup>70</sup> they may not constitute the 'trade' conceived in the economic model of the late nineteenth century synthesisers. Yet exchange in south-eastern Australia, as Stanner recognised in the *Merbok* at Daly River, becomes a vital part of the life of both individuals and the society. It is at once more complex and diverse, indeed more pervasive, than the models of the classic ethnographers for the region allow.

This diverse and complex pattern of exchange and the production of goods it stimulates is an essential component of the social networks and political hierarchies of the

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Stanner 1933-4: 169, 170.

<sup>70</sup> Stanner 1933-4: 159.

societies of south-eastern Australia. Lourandos has linked this social complexity and its alliance networks with economic intensification which he considers emerged in the more recent periods of Holocene prehistory.<sup>71</sup> To document changes in such social complexity over time, and changes in alliance networks is a challenge to the prehistorian. Much of Lourandos' argument derives from essentially ethnohistorical evidence. The ethnohistorian documents such aspects from their images in the literature of historical contact between cultures, so the record may belong to the period of contact alone. However, it does provide a base-line for further investigation. Given that the distribution of greenstone artefacts from the Mt William quarry (last used in the 1830s) matches with the historically documented alliance and exchange relationships of the Kulin peoples<sup>72</sup> perhaps there will emerge an archaeological answer to the problems of change in these over time and their first development. In mapping changes in the distribution arrays of hatchet stone from the various major quarries we may therefore be mapping changes in the social relationships these distributions reflect. Yet much archaeological field research must precede this answer, for it depends on the existence of many dated assemblages containing these artefacts.

Diversity and pervasiveness characterise exchange in the life of Aboriginal societies of south-eastern Australia as revealed in the historical records of contact. These are also features of exchange in northern Australia. The model of exchange derived from the ethnography of this region was found applicable to the south-east, in spite of disparities in time and space. Does this raise questions about the regional diversity of Australian culture, the uniqueness of developments in certain areas (such as the south-east) and the nature of exchange in Australian, or in hunter-gatherer societies in general? My own approaches to Australian prehistory have always been based on assumptions of regional diversity and a wariness of the pan-Australian generalisations that pervade much of the literature. So I found the applicability of a northern ethnographic model to the evidence from the south-east disturbing. The parallels between the practices and values recorded for north and south could call into question some of those assumptions. They demand further investigation. There are indications that similar parallels exist between the south-east and other areas, such as the Lake Eyre/Cooper basin where exchange networks extended north to the Gulf of Carpentaria and south to the Flinders Ranges. Further, the exchanges recorded by Daisy Bates in the south-west of Western Australia show remarkable similarities to those of the south-east. There are parallels in the range of goods involved, the distances over which they travel, the contexts in which exchange takes place, its association with ceremonial events and inter-group meetings and in the importance of gift-giving. There was also local group control

<sup>71</sup> Lourandos 1983.

<sup>72</sup> McBryde 1984.

over certain resources and strict conventions on access to them, such as those regulating the rights to fish caught in the weirs at Mandura.<sup>73</sup> Many questions of importance for our understanding of the socio-cultural forms of Australian societies and the interaction between Australian societies arise and remain to be investigated. Exchange seems to be a vital component of both. Though it may not 'obtrude itself upon the attention of the alien' it may yet hold significant clues to their interpretation.

<sup>73</sup> The situation at Mandura exactly parallels that on the Hopkins River near Hexham described by Dawson (1881: 94-5). The Daisy Bates Papers are held in the National Library of Australia. They have recently been edited for publication by Isobel White. She most kindly directed me to Daisy Bates' important evidence on exchange and allowed me to consult the relevant chapters of her edition. This publication is in press and should be released by the National Library in 1985.

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# INTENSIFICATION, POPULATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTHEASTERN AUSTRALIA: THE SKELETAL EVIDENCE

Stephen Webb

## INTRODUCTION

The pathology of a society reflects its general conditions and growth, and offers, therefore, valuable clues to an understanding of the total society.<sup>1</sup>

It is with such statements in mind that physical anthropologists have used the principles of palaeopathology to try to understand more about human disease, ecology, behaviour and demographic organisation in the past.<sup>2</sup> Statements can be made, not simply about the evolution and history of disease, but also concerning the morbidity, nutrition, adaptation, and health and social conditions of a particular population.

Cemetery populations from many parts of Europe have made invaluable contributions to our understanding of the health and disease of people inhabiting commercially settled towns in the past.<sup>3</sup> The mainstay for palaeopathological research has, however, been Amerindian populations.<sup>4</sup> These people, representing hunter-gatherer, semi-sedentary and farming people, have provided a model on which palaeoepidemiology has been largely constructed. Australia too provides a most suitable place for the investigation and reconstruction of health and stress in past hunter-gatherer people, but until now this opportunity has been almost totally ignored.<sup>5</sup> Aboriginal people have inhabited the Australian continent for at least 40,000 years occupying a diverse range of temperate, tropical and arid environments. With the benefit of palaeopathological methodology we are now in a position to determine the broad pathological, demographic, cultural and adaptive characteristics of Aboriginal groups inhabiting each environmental niche. Because there is such diverse environmental variation within the Australian continent, it is reasonable to assume possible variations in patterns of pre-contact stress and disease.

Previously, insights into past societies have nearly always been achieved through archaeological investigation, but by studying skeletal rather than cultural remains it is possible to make substantial additions to this knowledge. This is especially so in regard to the evaluation of environmental pressures exerted on individuals living a hunter-

*Stephen Webb has just completed a doctoral thesis on the health, nutrition and demography of past Aboriginal societies as reconstructed from the skeletal evidence. He lectures in prehistory and biological anthropology at the Australian National University.*

<sup>1</sup> Ackerknecht 1953: 120.

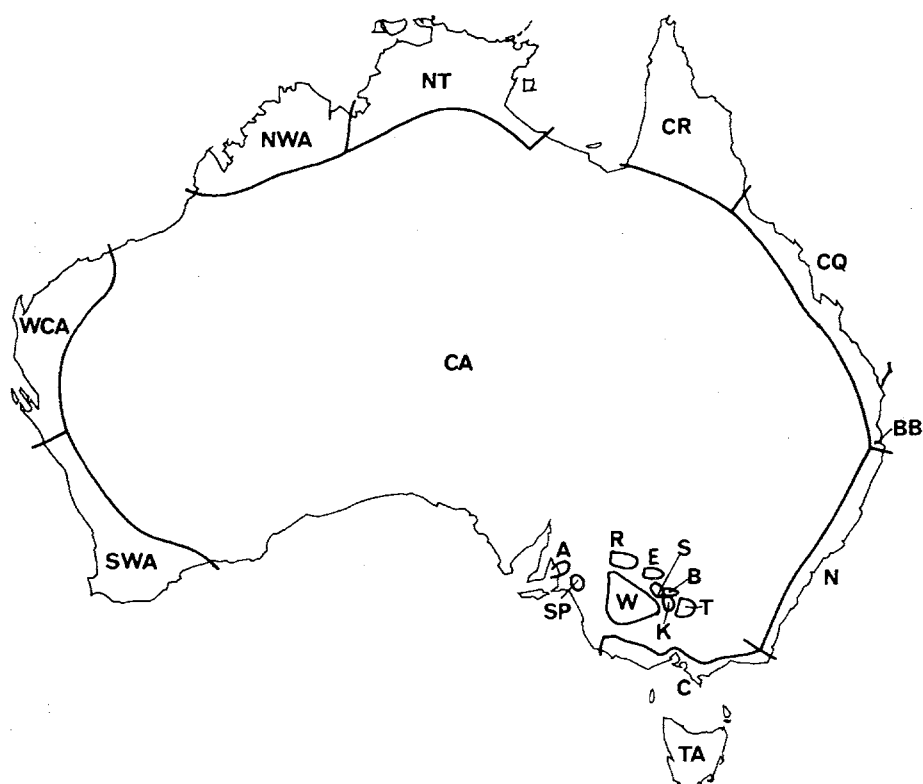
<sup>2</sup> Buikstra and Cook 1980; Ubelaker 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Møller-Christensen 1978; Wells 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Cook 1979; Huss-Ahmsore et al. 1982; Mensforth et al. 1978; El-Najjar 1976 and 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Sandison 1980; Prokopec 1979; Webb 1981.

# INTENSIFICATION, POPULATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE



Map 1. Sample locations used in this study (see also Table 1).

TABLE 1. Location and Area Codes

## Locations:

T	- Tocumwal, Echuca and Deniliquin
K	- Kow Swamp (modern)
B	- Baratta
S	- Swan Hill
E	- Euston
R	- Rufus River
M	- Precise location unknown but from the Murray River
SP	- Swanport
A	- Adelaide
C	- Coastal Victoria
W	- West central Victoria (Wimmera)
N	- Coastal New South Wales
CA	- Central Australia
WA	- Western Australia
NT	- Northern Territory (tropical)
AT	- Northern Territory (including arid area)

## Locations (cont.)

TA	- Tasmania
CQ	- Coastal Queensland
CR	- Cape York and Cairns
BB	- Broadbeach collection
QB	- Coastal Queensland and Broadbeach
P	- Pleistocene sample (includes Kow Swamp collection, Cohuna and Coobool Crossing series)

## Areas:

CM	- Central Murray (K,B,S,E)
MUY	- Murray Valley (T,CM, R, M)
R	- Rufus River
SC	- South coast (SP, A, C)
DES	- Desert area (CA, NWA, WCA)
TRO	- Tropics (NT, CR)
CTL	- Eastern coast (QB, N, SWA)

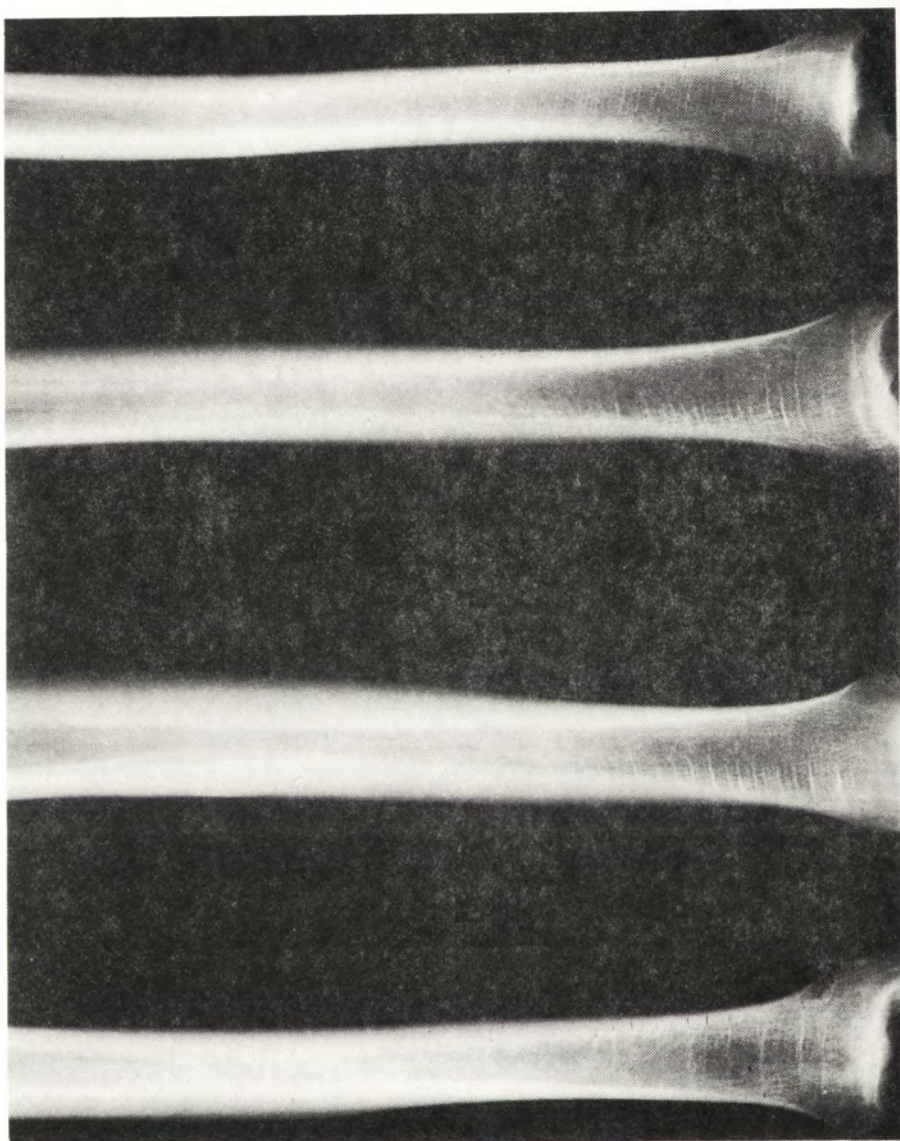


Figure 1. The 'step-ladder' effect of Harris lines in distal tibiae.

gatherer lifestyle. Such biological studies also add further dimensions to the investigation of prehistory. It is, after all, people, not their tools and chattels, that suffer the vagaries of the environment in which they live, and these vagaries are often reflected in the form of diagnosable traits within the skeleton.

In this paper I have asked three basic questions: (1) are there differences in health and stress patterns between Aboriginal groups inhabiting different ecological zones? (2) can the answers to these questions tell us more about Aboriginal society and life-ways? and (3) does the health status of Australian hunter-gatherers differ from similar people around the world?

### *Stress Indicators*

I have surveyed Aboriginal skeletal material in various collections around Australia in order to derive some general patterns of precontact Aboriginal health and disease. Nine major pathologies were recorded which can be divided into two main groups: stress indicators and general pathologies (Table 1). In this paper I will be discussing the former only.

Two of the three stress markers discussed here occur during the time of skeletal growth, the third can appear at any time: they accumulate when the individual experiences bad nutritional and physiological states. These indicators can be divided into two categories: those that represent acute or transitional stress, such as systemic disease and malnutrition (Harris Lines and Dental Hypoplasia) and those showing chronic or long term stress such as anaemia (*Cribra Orbitalia*).

### *Harris Lines*

Harris lines (Figure 1) have no single cause but systemic disease such as measles, whooping cough, influenza and chicken pox, trauma (such as appendectomy and immunisation), and malnutrition have been cited as causal agents.<sup>6</sup> These lines are networks of trabecular bone spanning the medullary cavity of the long bones. They are formed by a two-part process. The first part reduces the thickness of the epiphyseal cartilage plate beneath which osteoblasts form a layer of bone. The individual's recovery from the stress episode initiates bone laydown on the inferior surface of this plate, thickening it and producing the thin line of bone visible under X-ray examination. A semi-permanent record of acute, transitory metabolic insults is more, therefore, left behind. In the adult these lines can be seen in a position along the shaft of the bone approximating the age at which disturbance occurred. By dividing the distal end of the tibia into three growth stages, or age groups, a longitudinal study can then be made of Aboriginal childhood stress. This type of study can reveal: the age at which children were most vulnerable to stress; the persistence of stress; comparisons between the susceptibility of males and females, and the general expression of disease and stress in temporally and spatially disparate people.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that only those tibia with associated crania can be sexed.

<sup>6</sup> Steinbock 1976; Garn et al. 1968.

<sup>7</sup> McHenry 1967; Clarke 1980.

*Dental Hypoplasia*

Dental hypoplasia (Figure 2) in some ways is similar to Harris lines. Some stresses disturb tooth enamel laydown, resulting in a thinner than normal band of enamel on the tooth.<sup>8</sup> This distinctive band, however, is unlike Harris lines in that a certain degree of severity can be inferred from the type of hypoplasia present. I have distinguished two degrees of severity: lines and grooves, and pitting. For this particular exercise, however, except where otherwise stated, these have been combined to form a single frequency. Unlike Harris lines, only the presence or absence of hypoplasia has been recorded, not the number of times it has occurred on a given tooth.

By surveying the permanent canine tooth, the enamel of which is formed between four months and six to seven years, it is possible to pinpoint stresses occurring during the first six years of life. Similarly, by looking at the third molar, which develops between six and seven years and fourteen years, a second age group can be monitored for stress events.<sup>9</sup> By surveying adults, in which both of these teeth have erupted, I have been able to look back at the individuals' first fourteen years of life. Sex identification is possible only in adults, but indirectly this has enabled me to make comparisons between male and female children.

*Cribra Orbitalia*

Cribra Orbitalia (Figure 3) is the pitting of the orbital plate of the frontal bone caused by chronic iron deficiency anaemia.<sup>10</sup> Three basic types of lesion represent mild, intermediate and severe forms of the condition.<sup>11</sup> Here I have combined the three to form only the categories of present or absent. Five age groups can be monitored: 0-5 years, 6-11 years, 12-20 years, young adults (21-35 years) and old adults (>35 years).

*POPULATIONS*

Over 1,000 individuals were X-rayed for Harris lines and about 2,000 surveyed for dental hypoplasia and cribra orbitalia. These have been divided into populations according to ecological, cultural and demographic parameters. For the purposes of this paper, however, I have merged various groups so that only six basic populations are represented (Map 1). Of these only the south coast (SC), central Murray (CM) and east coast (CTL) will be contrasted with brief mention of other populations when necessary.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Sarnat and Schour 1941 and 1942.

<sup>9</sup> Wells 1967.

<sup>10</sup> Cockburn 1977; Hengen 1970; Angel 1967; Cybulski 1977; Webb 1982.

<sup>11</sup> Nathan and Hass 1966.

<sup>12</sup> The seven populations discussed here are denoted thus: central Murray (CM), Murray River (MUY), Rufus River (R), south coast (SC), Desert (DES), Tropics (TRO), east coast (CTL). (see Map 1 and Table 1).



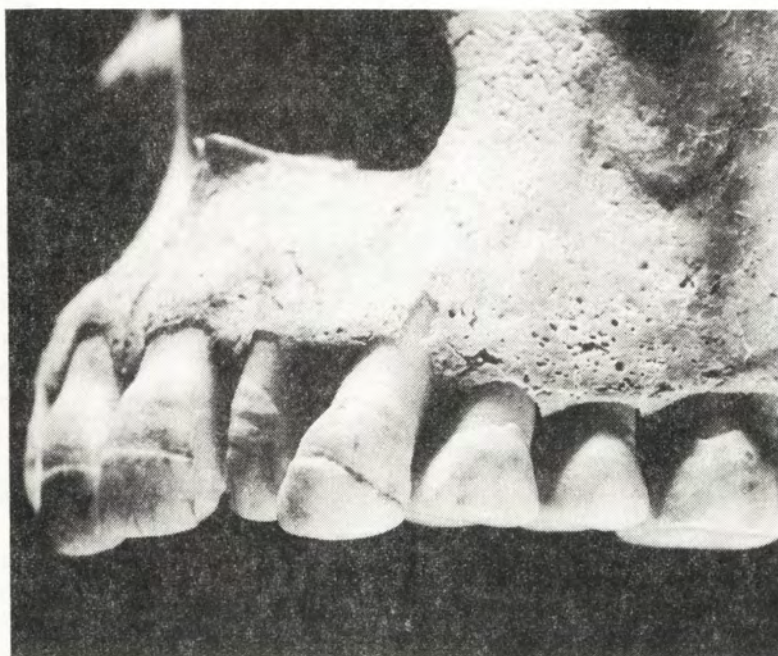


Figure 2. Dental hypoplasia indicated by the indented lines in the enamel of the incisor and canine teeth.



Figure 3. The porous morphology of Cribra Orbitalia, an anaemia related condition affecting the orbital plate of the frontal bone.

### *STRESS EVIDENCED IN SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS*

I have used an Index of Morbidity to compare populations for Harris lines. This index is formed by dividing the total number of lines in a given population by the number of individuals (or tibia) X-rayed. This will be referred to as 'index'.<sup>13</sup> Two major features are immediately evident. The Murray people and, in particular, those of the central Murray show greater incidence of Harris lines than any other populations examined except those of the south coast which display an inordinately high index. Figure 4 shows the percentage of individuals in each area without Harris lines. It is notable that only 21.5 per cent of the Murray people escape this form of stress, compared with 54.4 per cent at Rufus River and over 55 per cent of the eastern coastal group. It seems likely that the 45 per cent of people affected in the eastern coastal population might either represent individuals from a particularly disadvantaged group (females?) or, a group living at a particularly stressful time. The latter is possible because there is a lack of adequate time reference for this skeletal sample. But with over 80 per cent of individuals from the south coast having Harris lines, stress for them seems to be omnipresent, temporally and throughout the population.

Who, then, is being affected by this type of stress? The 0-5 year old group suffers fairly equally in all populations with the exception of the south coast people (Figure 5). Within the central Murray people stress continues at the same rate into the 6-10 year age group; it vastly increases on the south coast but significantly drops in other populations after the 0-5 year old period. The age group including those older than 11 years experiences the lowest amounts of stress in any population at any time during childhood with the eastern coastal people enjoying substantial decreases at both the 6-10 year and >11 year stages. The two outstanding populations are the central Murray and south coast. Ages 6-10 in the latter group seem to be the most vulnerable, but a trend is evident here. All age groups in the south coast population are experiencing stress rates somewhat greater than the same age group in any other population.

For dental hypoplasia in the 0-7 age category there are highly significant differences between people in the central Murray (CM) and Rufus River (R) ( $p < 0.001$ ) and significant differences between the central Murray and the Desert (DES) ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Figure 6). All other populations have similar amounts of hypoplastic incidence with males generally having greater frequencies than females.

The older age group (7-14 years) shows a substantial drop in dental hypoplasia for both sexes in all populations except females at Rufus River. A highly significant amount of stress remains, however, in the central Murray region, 25 per cent, as opposed to the rest of Australia which has a combined frequency of nine per cent ( $p < 0.001$ ). Such non-alleviation of stress is reminiscent of the pattern observed for Harris lines, whereby lines are formed throughout sub-adulthood. There is no significant difference of dental hypoplasia between males and females in either age group in any population. Further, the south coast region does not stand out for this stress in-

<sup>13</sup> The index of morbidity as developed by Calvin Wells is arrived at thus:

$$\frac{\text{number of lines}}{\text{number of bones}} = I \text{ of } M$$

# INTENSIFICATION, POPULATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

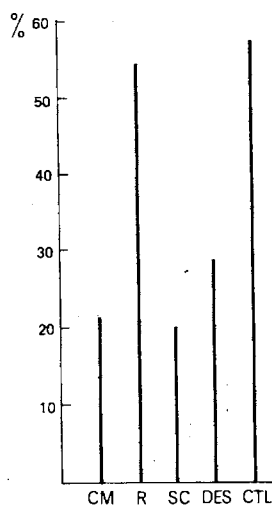


Figure 4. Frequency of individuals without Harris lines.

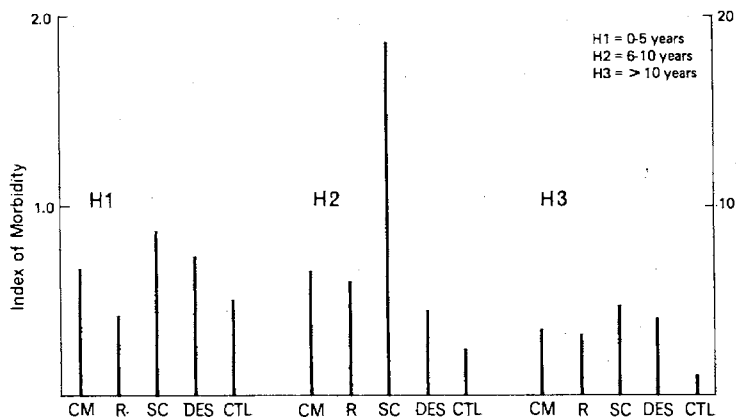


Figure 5. Harris line distribution in three age grades, by Area.



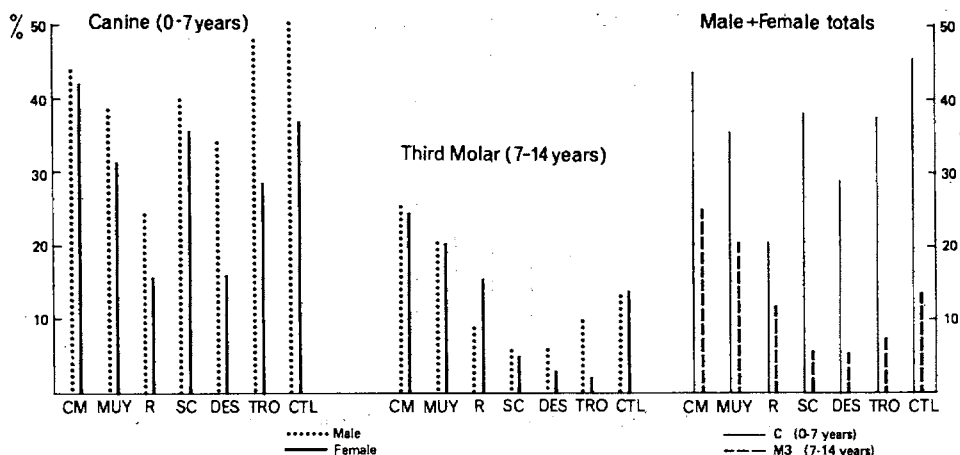


Figure 6. Individuals with dental hypoplasia, by Area.

indicator as it did for Harris lines. The implications of these frequencies will be discussed later.

The survey of Cribra Orbitalia (iron deficiency anaemia) has produced results similar to those already seen for the other two stress markers. The frequency of all juveniles affected in the central Murray (CM) population is 59.3 per cent, significantly different ( $p < 0.001$ ) from the 42.6 per cent for the combined juveniles from all other groups (Figure 7). Figure 8 show the sequential progression of anaemia in sub-adults and two adult age groups from the south coast, central Murray and east coast populations. This highlights the sub-adults of the central Murray which have very high rates of anaemia that drop to around 33 per cent in adults. It should be noted, however, that 73 per cent of children under 11 years in the central Murray collection show this condition, while for the south and east coast populations it is seen in only 38.9 per cent and 40.9 per cent respectively. There is, then, an obvious difference between the central Murray and coastal people as regards this form of stress.

Generally, those populations having high rates of sub-adult anaemia have also high numbers of adults with this condition. Secondly, significantly higher incidences of anaemia occur in adult males and females from the central Murray region than in any other area. Finally, there are always more females than males affected in all populations in this study but this seems to be the general trend world wide.

## DISCUSSION

To give some idea of the occurrence of Harris lines in Aborigines, I have compared the results here with two other morbidity indices. That for a Saxon population from Burgh Castle in England sits at the 2.6 level: these people were part of a substantial population, living in squalid and cramped conditions with open cess pits and a lot of infectious disease to cope with.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, a Bronze Age group from Dorset, enjoying a healthier lifestyle with better nutrition, much less infectious disease, and smaller numbers of people has an index of 0.8. Although a direct comparison of these people with Aboriginal groups cannot be made, the figures illustrate that changes in the frequency of Harris lines are tied directly to the social and pathological ecology of the individuals having them.<sup>15</sup> Such a comparison also highlights the fact that Aboriginal people do display a high variability of this stress related trait.

Because we are talking about Aboriginal society we are able to eliminate automatically almost all of the causes of Harris lines cited above. Also, by looking at their pattern of placement and interval within the bone and combining this with other pathological data we can throw more light on causal differences between populations.

When we look at the rates of non-specific infection in the areas under discussion it is possible to find out more about the health of the people and what may be causing Harris lines. The south coast region has one of the lowest frequencies for non-specific infection; the highest frequency is seen in the central Murray. The small size of available samples from the tropics (TRO) necessitated my omitting this area from discussion.

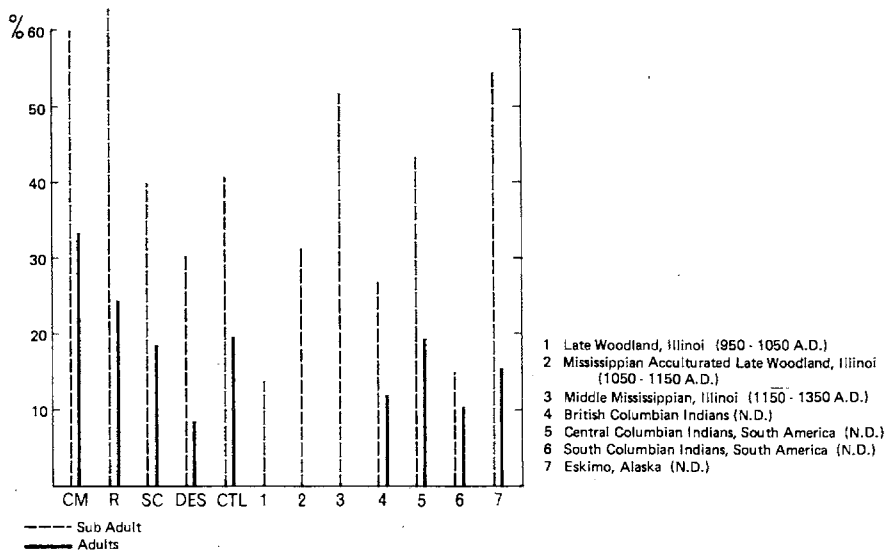


Figure 7. Comparison of cribra orbitalia frequencies in Australian Aborigines and some groups of American Indians.

<sup>14</sup> Moller-Christensen 1978.

<sup>15</sup> McHenry 1967.

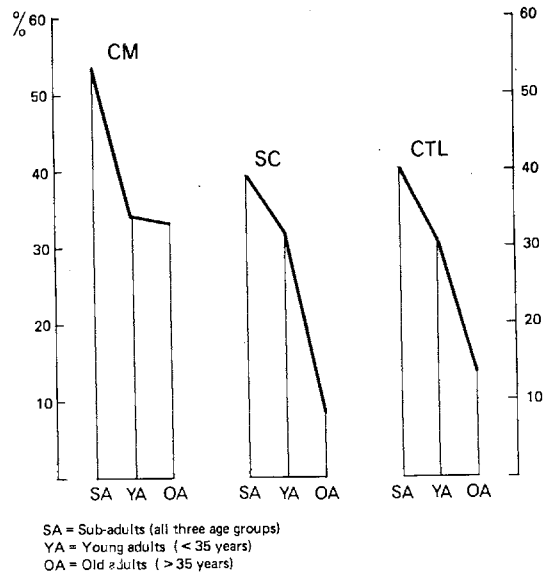


Figure 8. Decrease in incidence of cribra orbitalia (anaemia) with age.

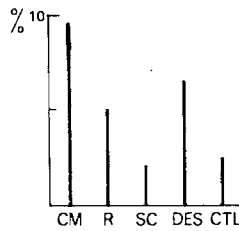


Figure 9. Non-specific infection of the six major long bones, by area.

The pattern of lines in the tibia of people from the south coast shows an equally spaced, 'step ladder' pattern. It points to their regular production in a manner rather reminiscent of an annual, or even biannual, stress period (Figure 1). This leads me to suggest that regular, seasonal episodes of nutritional stress rather than an annual disease were more likely to have been experienced by Aboriginal people showing this regularity of line formation. Harris lines can be traced from birth, throughout the growing life of the particular bone. To account for the high rate of lines in the 6-10 year age group we must look at physiological, nutritional and social factors. Most of the nutritional needs of the 0-5 year age group are met for the first two or even four years of life by full or partial breast feeding. This buffers infants from any nutritional stresses experienced by the wider community. Members of the over 11 year old age group most likely fend for themselves and, in some cases, are attaining an age at which they are traditionally accepted as members of the adult group and benefiting from all the nutritional and social advantages this brings. The 6-10 year age group, however, will, as the major body of children, be the survivors of the 0-5 year old group, carrying with them the effects of stress from two or three post-weaning years. Also they are the group in which the growth spurt begins at around seven to 10 years putting physiological demands on the body. This, in turn, renders children vulnerable to dietary changes and environmental insults.<sup>16</sup> They as well as adult females, may be subjected also to certain food taboos, and still have a great reliance on adults for their dietary needs.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, regular episodes of famine seem to occur on the south coast throughout life; this is demonstrated by the higher amounts of Harris lines on an age for age comparison with sub-adults from other areas.

In people from the central Murray area line patterning is not quite the same as it is for those from the south coast. The regular spacing of lines, although seen, is not the same nor, of course, is their frequency although the central Murray is second highest for this trait. The non-regularity in occurrence and spacing of lines is thought to represent a different aetiology for their occurrence in this area from that of the south coast. When we look at the amount of non-specific infection in the seven populations it is possible to find out more about the health of the people and the background to possible causes of the frequencies of Harris lines. In Figure 9 we can see the different frequencies of non-specific infection and observe that the highest rates occur in the Murray (the Tropics can be ignored because of sample size). This amount of non-specific infection suggests that there are some significant differences between the Murray people and those of the south coast. High levels of infection are to be found in groups of American Indians inhabiting the Georgia coast.<sup>18</sup> These people, however, were maize farmers and subject to the health changes settled community living brings. The frequency of non-specific disease in the pre-agricultural phase of the Georgia community was 1.7 per cent which is comparable to that found in the Aboriginal group from the south coast. What are we seeing, then, in the Aboriginal groups from the River Murray? I will return to this later.

<sup>16</sup> Black et al. 1938; Harrison 1977.

<sup>17</sup> Elkin 1979; Dawson 1881; Spencer and Gillen 1969.

<sup>18</sup> Larsen 1982.

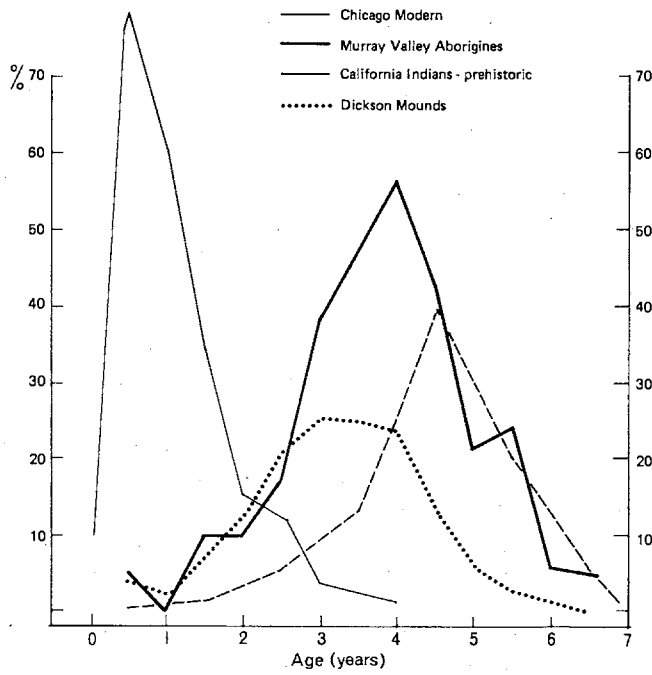


Figure 10. Distribution of dental hypoplasia during the first five years of life. (After Goodman and Armelagos 1980 cited in Huss-Ashmore 1982, and Green 1982).

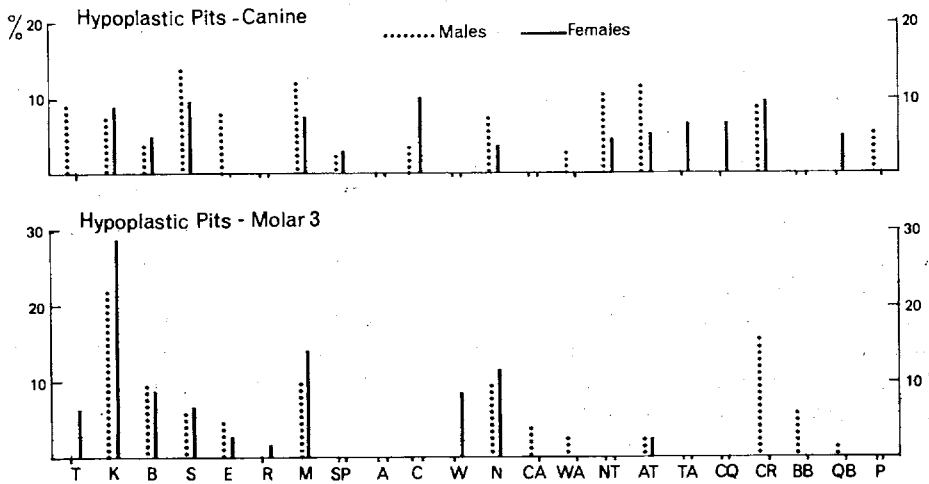


Figure 11. Frequencies of hypoplastic pit defects, by location.

## INTENSIFICATION, POPULATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

On a microscopic level dental hypoplasia can show how many stress events have taken place during the time of enamel formation. The macroscopic level of investigation used in this study allows us to see one event only.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, exact correlation between Harris lines and dental hypoplasia cannot be expected, for undoubtedly each has its own triggering mechanism which changes with the individual's response to a particular stress. It has been argued elsewhere that events causing Harris lines do not necessarily initiate corresponding bouts of dental hypoplasia and when they do the latter often lags the former by up to six months.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, resorption of Harris lines due to endocrinal, mechanical and ageing processes will further confuse any attempt to correlate these two stress markers to any degree even on a microscopic level. The resorption with age process also provides an underestimation factor in the assessment of numbers of Harris lines. The true frequencies of Harris lines, therefore, will be greater in the living than those presented in this study.

The occurrence of hypoplastic events across a large portion of the youngest age group in both hunter-gatherer and historic societies has the effect of reducing the percentage of individuals affected at any one time. In contemporary society the contraction and concentration of hypoplastic events pushes the peak of children affected very high. These patterns follow the norms in the various societies for time of weaning. It seems, therefore, highly likely that dental hypoplasia in the 0-5 year age group is a product of this stressful time. Further, the position, height and spread of the susceptibles curves for hunter-gatherers in Figure 10 reflects more protracted weaning at a greater age in those societies. Green shows that dental hypoplasia in a prehistoric Aboriginal 0-5 year age group peaks between 3 and 4.5 years with a highest frequency of around 50 per cent (Figure 10).<sup>21</sup> In my survey Aboriginal children in the young age group vary from as little as 16 per cent in Desert females to 50 per cent in eastern coastal males, with the central Murray at around the 44 per cent mark. The peak age for hypoplastic events demonstrated by Green fits that of other groups from around the world. However the frequencies arrived at in his study and this survey are as high or even higher than those recorded for hunter-gatherer and settled groups elsewhere.

Although in the 7-14 year age group the Murray River people undergo a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of hypoplastic stress, this does not compare to the vast stress alleviation that takes place elsewhere for this age group. If we look at the type of hypoplasia occurring in this age group in the central Murray it can be seen that although substantial amounts of lines and grooves are forming, pits are forming also. These are most common in the Kow Swamp, Loddon and Kerang areas (K) (Figure 11). Therefore, although the central Murray maintains the greatest hypoplastic stress with respect to other areas, certain small localised groups within this larger area emerge as particularly subject to stressful events (Table 1).

The overall predisposition of males to higher frequencies of hypoplasia than females may be a reflection of the trend for males to be more susceptible to metabolic insults

<sup>19</sup> Rose 1977.

<sup>20</sup> Clarke 1980 and 1982; McHenry et al.

<sup>21</sup> Green 1982.

during the formative years. This phenomenon is seen throughout the world.<sup>22</sup>

Anaemia can be caused by genetic, metabolic, pathological and nutritional factors.<sup>23</sup> No genetically induced blood diseases such as sickle cell anaemia or thalassemia have ever been detected in Aboriginal people; therefore, this cause can be eliminated.<sup>24</sup> Menstruation, lactation and breast feeding immediately predispose females to greater iron losses than males and this is the likely explanation for greater frequencies of cribra orbitalia in females, not only in Australian Aboriginal populations but also in other groups around the world.

Pathological and nutritional factors such as weanling diarrhoea, parasite infestation, the introduction of adult food and a lack of dietary iron often work synergistically, thus making it hard to evaluate the contribution of each to the aetiology of anaemia.<sup>25</sup> For small children, especially those at time of weaning, any or all of these processes can have dire effects on their general health and leave some individuals with generally weak constitutions.<sup>26</sup> Protracted weaning without suitable weaning foods can result in dietary insufficiency and weanling diarrhoea, and this is exacerbated by parasite infestation.<sup>27</sup> Helminth infestation prevents the body using ingested iron by causing nutritional malabsorption, even if those so infected enjoy a well-balanced diet. Further, iron loss can result from internal haemorrhaging through parasite related damage to the intestinal wall. The diarrhoea and sickness that nearly always accompanies such infestation exacerbates any existing enteropathy, dietary setback or infection. The Murray Valley provides a natural environment for the support of various species of intestinal parasites such as *Strongyloides stercoralis*, *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Trichuris trichuris* and *Enterobius vermicularis* all of which can produce the above symptoms to varying extents.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely, then, that high amounts of parasite infestation would have been experienced by the Aboriginal people of this area.<sup>29</sup>

It is clear from the frequencies of cribra orbitalia that anaemia is prevalent among Aboriginal juveniles from all parts of Australia. However the greatest amounts are found in children's remains from the Murray River region. The results of this survey show that the vast majority of these children was being subjected to stresses similar to those mentioned above. This trend was maintained into adulthood with the Central Murray showing frequencies of 29.7 per cent and 40.3 per cent for males and females

22 Goodman et al. 1980.

23 Robbins and Cotran 1979; Krupp and Chatton 1980.

24 Kirk 1981; Horsfall et al. 1953 and 1956.

25 Robbins and Cotran 1979; Krupp and Chatton 1980.

26 Moodie 1973.

27 Annette Hamilton (1981) discusses extensively the social, psychological, behavioural and nutritional effects of weaning on Anbarra children. Although this group is somewhat removed both temporally and spatially from the area under discussion here, it is thought that a similar situation at weaning time would be applicable to most Aboriginal groups, Australia wide.

28 Sweet 1924; Johnston and Cleland 1937.

29 For a fuller discussion of the possibilities of helminth infestation and its consequences in a tribal context see Webb 1982. For an extensive review of parasitic disease in contemporary Aboriginal society see Moodie 1973: 127-142.

respectively. The frequency of *Cribra Orbitalia*, as that for dental hypoplasia, diminishes somewhat in adults but not to the same extent as it does in other parts of Australia. This non-amelioration highlights the fact that anaemia is an ongoing phenomenon conditioned not just by the general susceptibility of the young but by aspects of this particular society which affect all its members.

Comparing the frequency of *cribra orbitalia* in the Murray people with that for other populations from around the world we can see the group is subjected to larger amounts of this type of stress than is usual for hunter-gatherer communities. The frequencies rank with some of the highest amounts anywhere. In fact, frequencies of *cribra orbitalia* comparable to those of the Murray are rarely, if ever, found in hunter-gatherer groups and resemble those in people who have taken up a more sedentary life-style. This is illustrated clearly in Figure 7. In three groups of Indian remains representing hunter-gatherers (Late Woodland), transitional hunter-gatherer/agriculturalists (Mississippian Acculturated Late Woodland) and agriculturalists (Middle Mississippian) there is a steady increase in the frequency of anaemia both in juveniles and adults. Increases in anaemia have, therefore, been seen to coincide with increasing sedentism.<sup>30</sup> The clustering of people into large groups and extended family situations; a general increase in population, and the lowering of sanitary standards are all features of increasing sedentism. From the above data it seems that the human ecology of the Murray shows similar characteristics, providing a catalyst for the growth and maintenance of large helminth populations. Moreover, even in an area providing a rich biomass the existence of large numbers of people could produce such intense exploitation that nutritional inadequacy might arise with comparatively small fluctuations in seasonal abundances and river levels. This would compound any pathological circumstances similar to those outlined above.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The extraordinarily large amounts of regularly spaced Harris lines seen in the south coast people suggest seasonal stress in the form of feast and famine. The situation, however, has not affected the general health of these people as shown by low frequencies of dental hypoplasia, *cribra orbitalia* and non-specific infection. Although such palaeopathological data do not show up all the possible reactions that an individual might have to intermittent famine, it seems likely that some physiological adaptation to this situation could have taken place, equipping these people with a means of coping with such events. This could be supported by the general good health of the population in this region.

The data from the Murray Valley, on the other hand, provide us with a very different picture. Here we can see greater evidence of stress than for any other population except that shown by Harris lines in the south coast group. The highest amounts of any stress discussed in this paper are found in the central Murray, and this population stands out as having greater frequencies of stress-related skeletal markers than any

<sup>30</sup> Lallo et al. 1977.



other Aboriginal group anywhere in Australia. The patterns and frequencies of stress and disease found in the central Murray indicate a lifestyle distinctively different from that of many other Aboriginal groups. This distinctiveness does not match well with our expectations of small numbers of hunter-gatherers roaming widely and enjoying a continuing abundance of food. Instead, it is more reminiscent of the evidence provided from large numbers of sedentary, or at least semi-sedentary, people living in close proximity to one another and sharing plentiful, but heavily exploited, food resources which, when less abundant, causes serious hardship for the whole population already under some stress.

This conclusion may differ substantially from previously held beliefs about pre-contact Aboriginal demography. Recent research published by Butlin, however, has postulated that some rethinking about the palaeodemography of the Murray and south eastern Australia might be appropriate.<sup>31</sup> The findings of this survey strongly suggest that Aboriginal society in the central Murray was not only sedentary but must have been far higher in numbers than anything previously suggested or associated with this part of the Murray River. How far this population density extended is not known at this time. The evidence for coastal New South Wales must also, to some degree, be taken to indicate a similar situation.

My results were formulated concurrently but separately from those of Butlin, and even though they may be incongruous to our present understanding of precontact Australian Aboriginal population composition further human biological and interdisciplinary research is needed to bring together a fuller understanding of the lifestyle of the Aboriginal people inhabiting the Murray Valley and South Eastern Australia.

<sup>31</sup> Butlin 1983.

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DOCUMENTATION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
INVESTIGATION OF AN ABORIGINAL 'VILLAGE'  
SITE IN SOUTH WESTERN VICTORIA\*

Elizabeth Williams

The route to a richer archaeology must not be through either the *data* or *theory* of anthropology but via the *archaeology* of ethnography-rich regions.

Les Groube 1977:69

During the first few years of contact between Aborigines and Europeans a number of European explorers, overlanders, and settlers observed, in certain parts of Australia, Aboriginal campsites which consisted of substantially constructed huts.<sup>1</sup> Some observers termed these settlements 'villages'. In order to find out more about Aboriginal settlements, especially 'villages', we can follow Groube's advice quoted above, use the historical record as a guide, and attempt to find an archaeological example of a settlement complex.

Aboriginal society changed greatly as a result of contact with Europeans and while the construction of substantial huts persisted in certain areas until well into the contact period<sup>2</sup> the use of 'villages' as a settlement form seems to have disappeared soon after first contact.<sup>3</sup> Despite this we have a detailed account, which dates to the early contact period, of one such settlement. The site was situated near Caramut in south western Victoria, a region in which apparently such settlements were especially common.<sup>4</sup> For over a century this settlement has been cited in the literature;<sup>5</sup> the primary documentation is listed below. It consists of descriptions, drawings and crudely-drawn maps showing the location of the site in relation to settlers' huts. Also listed is an extract from one of these descriptions, together with a brief comment on hut forms of the south western region.

*Elizabeth Williams is just completing doctoral research at the Australian National University on the archaeology of mound sites and settlements in the Western District of Victoria.*

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman 1982:6-7; Grey 1841, II:19-20; Lourandos 1970:104-116 and 1980:156a & b; Mitchell 1839, I:225, 240, 263; Mulligan cited in Jack 1921:444, 454; Roth 1899:107-110; Sturt 1833, I:89, II:100.

<sup>2</sup> See Massola 1971:138.

<sup>3</sup> Bonwick 1870:50; Smyth 1878, I:128 footnote; Lang 1847:402.

<sup>4</sup> See Lourandos 1980.

<sup>5</sup> Smyth 1878, I:125-126 footnote; Thomas 1906:72; Corris 1968:26; Christie 1979:8; Lourandos 1980:156b.

# *DOCUMENTATION*

1. Journal of William Thomas for the period 1st December 1843-1st March 1844, footnote. A copy is in the papers of William Thomas, Item 1.
2. Papers of William Thomas. Item 24, Number 11. 16pp. 'Aborigines: Superior Races' 13th July 1858. A copy is in Item 25.
3. Notebook of William Thomas, in the papers of R. Brough Smyth. Box 1176/6(b), pp. 80, 113.
4. Papers of R. Brough Smyth. Box 1176/7 folder (c) (see Plate 1).
5. Papers of William Thomas Item 22, p. 537 (see Plate 2).

## *Reference 2*

... by Mustons and the Scrubby Creek to the westward ... first settlers found a regular aboriginal settlement. This settlement was about 50 miles NE of Port Fairy. There was on the banks of the creek between 20 and 30 huts of the form of a beehive or sugar loaf, some of them capable of holding a dozen people. These huts were about 6' high or [a] little more, about 10' in diameter, an opening about 3'6" high for a door which they closed at night if they required with a sheet of bark, an aperture at the top 8 or 9" to let out the smoke which in wet weather they covered with a sod. These buildings were all made of a circular form, closely worked and then covered with mud, they would bear the weight of a man on them without injury. These blacks made various well constructed dams in the creek, which by certain heights acted as sluice gates at the flooding season ... In 1840 a sheep station was formed on the opposite banks of the creek to this Aboriginal village or town. My informant who was a well educated man and a nephew to the Recorder of the City of London, though a shepherd at the time gave me a drawing he had taken of the village ... These blacks used to live almost on fish, grubs and small animals and were perfectly harmless and stationary in 1841 or the end of 1840. My informant stated that the grass got bare or scarce on the side of the creek where the sheep station was, and one day while the Blacks were from their village, up the creek, seeking their daily fare, the white people set fire to and demolished the aboriginal settlement and it afterwards became the sheep farmers [?] ... What became of the blacks he would not tell but at the close of 1841 when he again went shepherding in that locality he could not trace a single hut along the whole creek.

Construction of this 'beehive'-shaped hut type seems to have been restricted to the south western region of Victoria.<sup>6</sup> It appears to have been associated with a lengthy stay and was also used during periods of wet weather.<sup>7</sup> We can contrast this form with that of a documented less-substantial structure, which consisted of a framework of boughs set into a dome shape (see Plate 3). The less substantial form was not waterproof and was used in fine weather or whilst travelling.<sup>8</sup> When wet weather

<sup>6</sup> Griffith 1845:152; Darlott in the Kenyon papers; Gisbourne 29 December 1839.

<sup>7</sup> Dawson 1881:10-11.

<sup>8</sup> Dawson 1881:10-11.

AN ABORIGINAL 'VILLAGE' SITE



Plate 1 – Drawing of the Aboriginal 'village'.

Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the La Trobe Library, Melbourne.

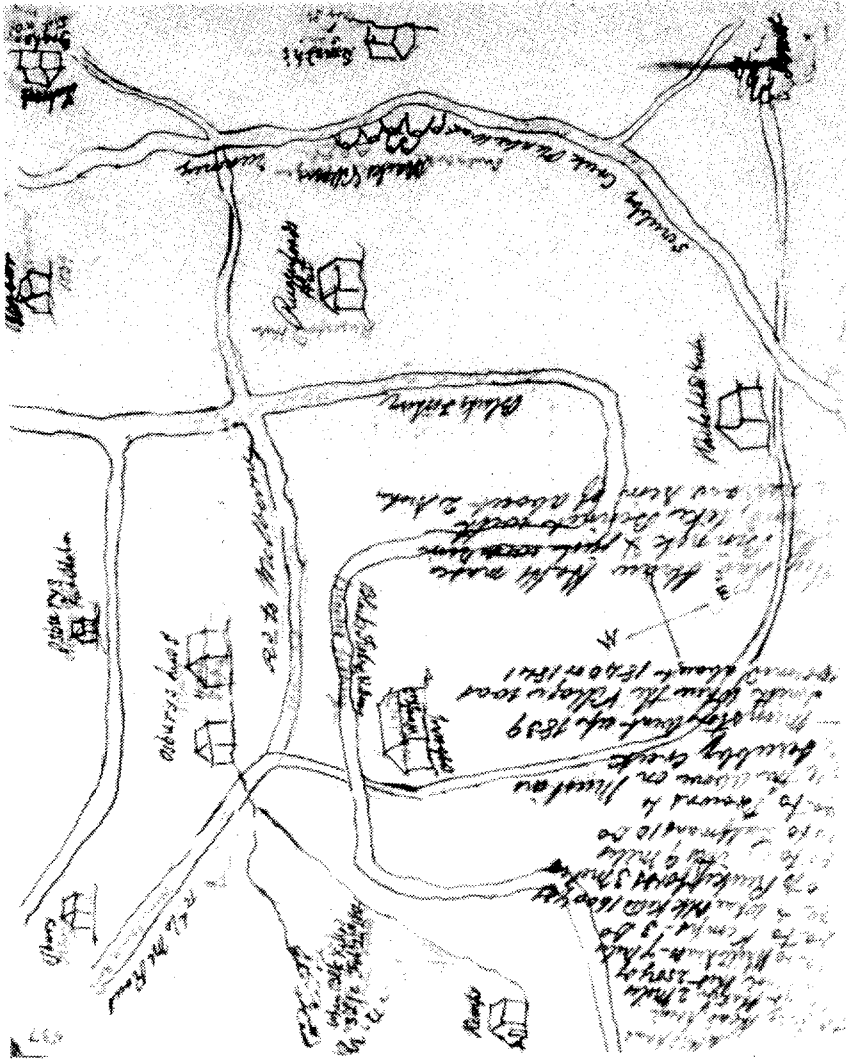


Plate 2 — Map dating to 1841-2, showing the location of an Aboriginal 'village' in relation to settlers' huts.  
Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

## AN ABORIGINAL 'VILLAGE' SITE

seemed imminent, the domed form could be converted into the more substantial beehive form by heaping earth and turf over the framework of boughs.<sup>9</sup>

We can determine whether this account is likely to be accurate by establishing the identity of the informant. This is difficult as none of the accounts names him. We can attempt to resolve the problem by determining who collected the accounts and seeing whether this leads us to the informant's identity.

Most accounts come from the papers of William Thomas; the remainder (now in the papers of R. Brough Smyth) can be traced to Thomas.<sup>10</sup> As all the documents are in Thomas' handwriting,<sup>11</sup> we may conclude that Thomas was the collector. William Thomas was the Assistant Protector of Aborigines in Victoria from 1839 to 1849 and his particular responsibility was the Melbourne and Western Port district.

The fact that Thomas collected reports of a settlement situated in the south western region seems strange given his responsibility for the south eastern districts. Since we know that Thomas never travelled as far westwards as Caramut<sup>12</sup> then how did he come to collect this information?

The answer lies with Thomas' informant and clues to his identity are in Reference 2. Thomas states that he obtained his information from an 'informant who was a well educated man and a nephew to the Recorder of the City of London, though a shepherd at the time'.<sup>13</sup> No further clues are found in the other accounts and Thomas' personal journal cannot be consulted as it was lost last century.<sup>14</sup> One clue lies however in *another* document contained in folder (c), Papers of R. Brough Smyth (see Reference 4). This is an account in Thomas' handwriting of a massacre of Aborigines. The document shows the location of the massacre relative to 'Osbery's home station'. Historical sources<sup>15</sup> state that a Thomas Osbrey and a Sidney Smith leased the 'Caramut' run. They took over this run situated near the present township of Caramut from the original leaseholder, John Muston, in 1841.<sup>16</sup> Christie<sup>17</sup> states that a massacre took place at Mustons Creek on Osbrey's 'Caramut' run, on the 24th February 1842. This incident became known as the 'Lubra Creek Massacre',<sup>18</sup> and we can conclude that the item in folder (c) is a representation of it. Unusually for the times, three Europeans were charged with murder and their trial received much publicity in the newspapers of the day.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Presland 1977:32; Griffith 1845:152.

<sup>10</sup> At the end of Reference 2 Thomas has added 'Send copy to Mister Smyth, 18th July 1864'.

<sup>11</sup> Carol Cooper pers.comm.

<sup>12</sup> Diane Barwick pers.comm.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Carol Cooper pers.comm.

<sup>15</sup> Billis and Kenyon 1974; Duff n.d.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> 1979:50.

<sup>18</sup> 'Garryowen' 1888:360.

<sup>19</sup> *Portland Guardian*, 10 June 1843; *Port Phillip Gazette*, 2 August 1843.



Let us now consider how this incident is linked with the identify of the informer and the documentation of the 'village'. A number of people gave evidence for the Crown at the trial. The two main witnesses were a Christopher McGuinness who at the time of the massacre was a carpenter on the 'Caramut' run,<sup>20</sup> and a George Arabin who was also employed there<sup>21</sup> (the newspaper reports do not state his occupation). The accused were tried in June 1843 but despite a seemingly strong case for the Crown, were acquitted. The newspaper report of the trial<sup>22</sup> states that Arabin and McGuinness were, at the time of publication (August 2, 1843), in the employ of Assistant Protector Thomas at the Western Port Protectorate Station. Why had these people moved from 'Caramut' to Western Port? In answer to this we can cite a report written by Thomas to G.A. Robinson.<sup>23</sup> Thomas states, in a review of his activities for June 1843:

I had [? . . .] to my charge also two witnesses for the Crown in the case of the Queen vs Hill, Beswick and Betts, on the 9th per your (Robinson) orders. I take them to the Central Station at Nerree Nerree [sic] Warren.

We may infer that after the acquittal 'Caramut' was no longer a safe residence for the two Crown witnesses. It appears that the Protectorate system took responsibility for them and moved them as far away from 'Caramut' as possible, to Thomas' Western Port station.

The link between Thomas and 'Caramut' is thus established. Who then was the informant — was it Arabin or McGuinness? We can again refer to Reference 2. Thomas states that his informant was a 'well educated man'. McGuinness can be excluded as he was illiterate.<sup>24</sup> Arabin however was literate<sup>25</sup> and we can conclude that George Arabin was Thomas' informant. Because Arabin had actually *resided* in the Caramut area then we may hope that his observations of Aborigines are likely to be accurate.

Since we have established the identity of the informant, we can attempt to determine the location of the settlement. This is no easy task when we compare Arabin's crudely-drawn maps, (which could be more accurately termed 'mud maps') with a present day map of the same area. There is little obvious correspondence; but this problem can be overcome by determining the position of settlers' huts and named creeks *independently*. We may then determine the location of the settlement *relative* to these features and transpose this information on to a present-day base map. To determine the position of huts and the names of creeks, we must first establish when the original map was drawn. Referring back to the historical accounts<sup>26</sup> we can conclude that Arabin's map dates to the period 1841-2. Since this is the initial contact

<sup>20</sup> *Port Phillip Gazette*, 2 August 1843.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Thomas to Robinson 5th September 1843.

<sup>24</sup> In the transcript of the trial — see N.C.R. Criminal Trial Briefs, June 1843. He does not sign his name and only gives his mark.

<sup>25</sup> He does sign his name in the transcript of the trial.

<sup>26</sup> See Reference 2.

period, it is difficult to obtain much detailed information on the location of settlers' huts and the names of creeks.

Some information does exist. This includes: maps held in the Historic Plans Section, Victorian Lands Department, Melbourne; Itineraries of Foster Fyans, the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the Portland Bay District; contemporary Directories;<sup>27</sup> manuscript material held by the descendants of the original settlers; information used by Kenyon in compiling his book *Pastoral pioneers of Port Phillip*;<sup>28</sup> observations made by George Augustus Robinson, whilst on a series of trips to the Western District<sup>29</sup> and sources such as the Clyde Company Papers.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 1 presents historical information compiled from these sources on the location of settlers huts and the names of creeks and swamps and it can be compared with Arabin's map (Plate 1). There are some minor problems involved with locating a number of features. The first concerns the identification of 'Scrubby Creek'. The creek so named in Figure 1 is known locally today as 'Scrubby Creek' and has carried this name since at least 1846.<sup>31</sup> While I am unable to determine whether it bore the same name for the period 1841-2, it is not unreasonable to assume that is the creek which Arabin refers to, especially as it feeds into Muston's Creek.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, it is not possible to determine the location of 'Ruggerford's' hut. Fyans<sup>33</sup> states that a 'Rutherford' was an overseer for Payne, who in 1842 took over part of Smith and Osbrey's 'Caramut' run.<sup>34</sup> This is possibly the 'Ruggerford' shown on the map. However there is no information available on where his hut may have been situated. Thirdly, it is difficult to determine the position of 'Smith's' hut. 'Smith' stands for a Charles and not Sidney Smith (who ran 'Caramut' with Osbrey). He seems to have been resident in the Caramut district for only a relatively short time.<sup>35</sup> Using both Fyans's *Itineraries*<sup>36</sup> and Sievwright's *Journal*<sup>37</sup> we may estimate the position of Smith's station (see Figure 2). This is also the area where the local landowner has ploughed up fragments of glass and pottery. The final problem concerns the position of the 'village' relative to the settlers' huts. Compared with a map contained within Reference 4, Figure 1 differs in the relative location of the settlement and Whitehead's and Smith's huts respectively.

<sup>27</sup> Kerr 1841; 1842.

<sup>28</sup> Kenyon Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Presland 1977; 1980.

<sup>30</sup> Clyde Company Papers (Brown 1958).

<sup>31</sup> Lands Department Map Number 336, Historic Plans Section, Lands Department, Melbourne.

<sup>32</sup> See Reference 2 and Figure 1.

<sup>33</sup> Fyans: Half Yearly Returns, 1st July-31st December 1842.

<sup>34</sup> Fyans: Itineraries, 26th-27th September 1842.

<sup>35</sup> Fyans, 'Itineraries of Foster Fyans 1st January to 31st December 1842'. Entry for 26-27th September 1842.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> 1842, pp.6-7.

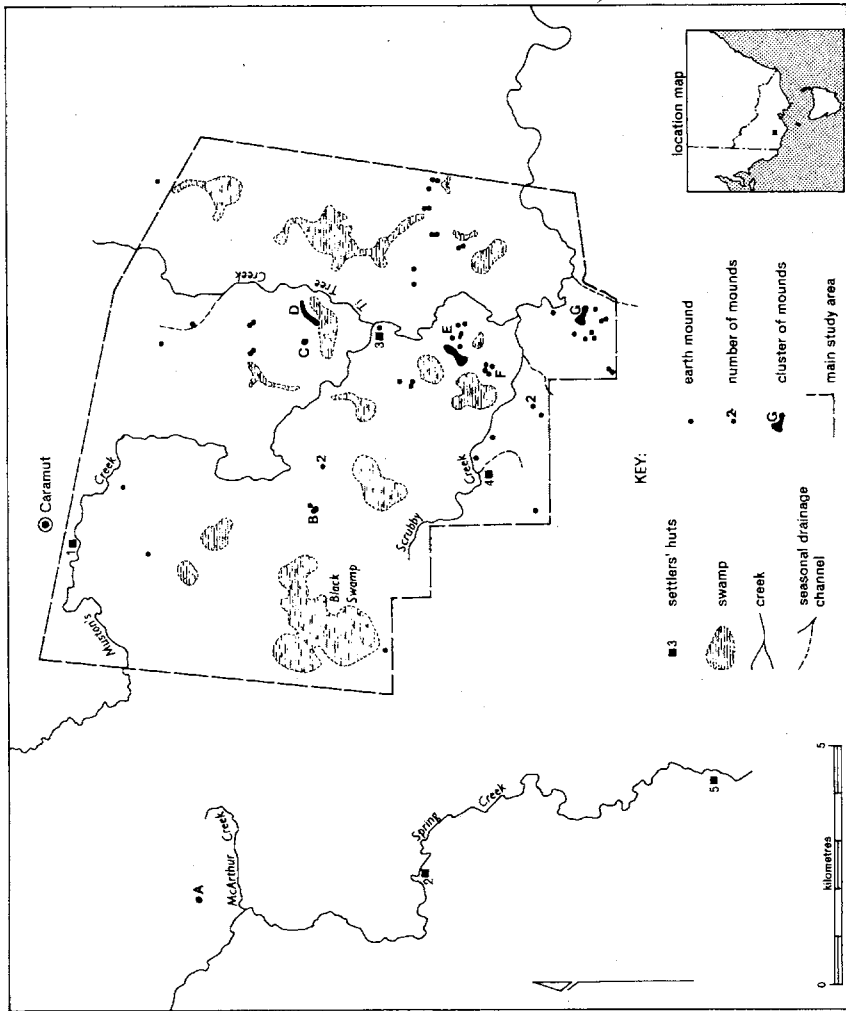


Figure 1 — Map of the Caramut area showing the location of settlers' huts and the names of creeks for the period 1841-2. The location of earth mound sites is also shown.

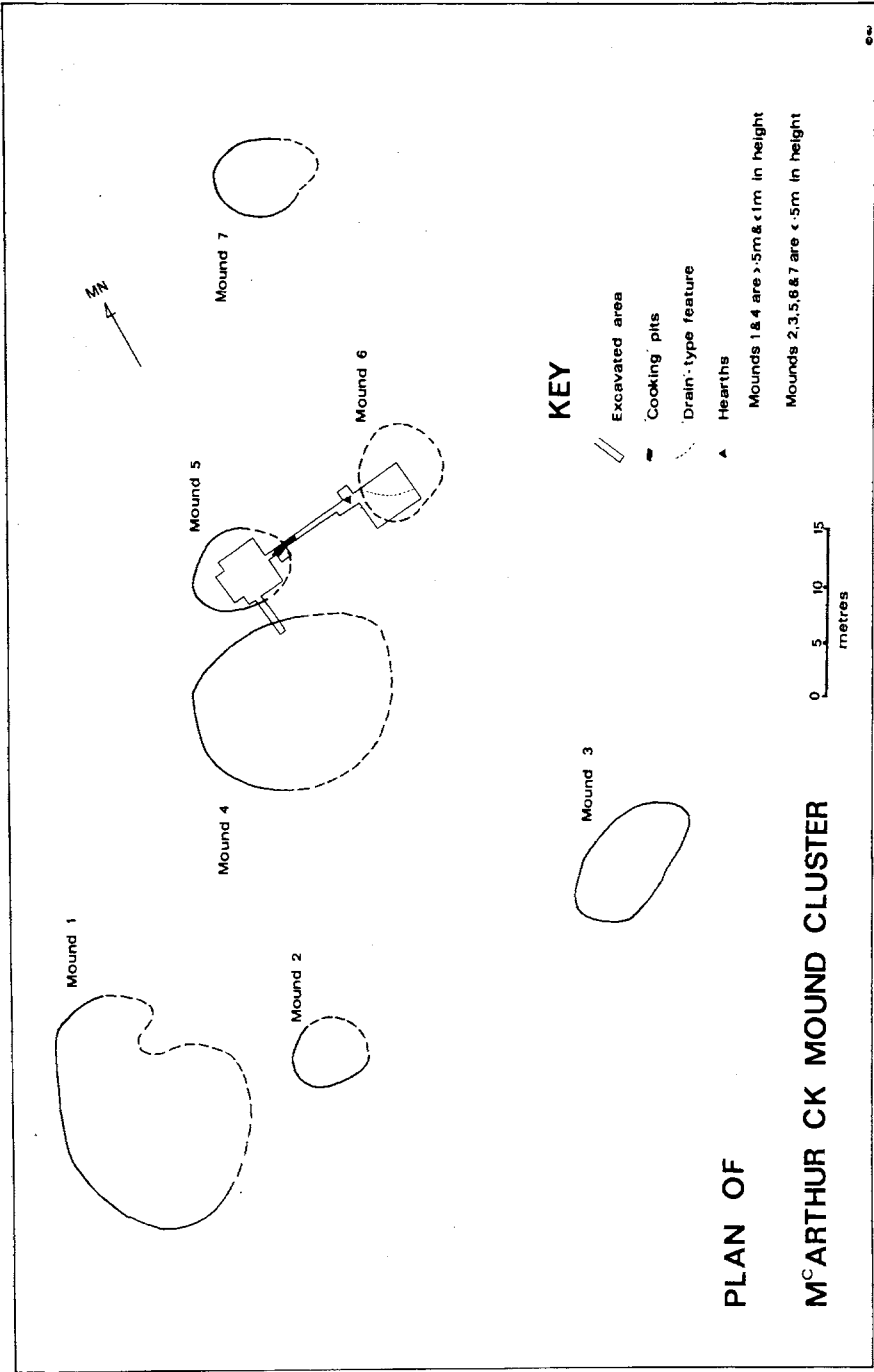


Figure 2 -- Plan of the McArthur Creek mound cluster site showing position of excavated trenches.

Despite these difficulties, the weight of evidence suggests that the settlement was situated on the north side of Scrubby Creek, near its junction with Mustons Creek. This location is supported by another line of evidence contained within Reference 3, an account stating that:

(p.80) . . . They [the huts] were situated in a very extensive [?] flat country full of [?] reeds — much frequented by . . . [number of words missing] of the surrounding country, as a . . . [number of words missing and then the account continues on p.113] . . . abounding with supplies of food, roots and game . . .

If we infer that the missing words refer to a 'meeting place', then we may look to independent sources on meeting places. Dawson states that 'great meetings' were held at 'Mirraewuae, a large marsh celebrated for emus and other kinds of game'.<sup>38</sup> From information which he provides<sup>39</sup> Mirraewuae marsh can be identified as the 'Black Swamp' which is situated just south of Caramut (see Figure 1) and is drained by Scrubby Creek. Dawson also records another meeting place on Muston's Creek, 'a few miles from its junction with the River Hopkins'.<sup>40</sup> This places the second meeting place in the area where Mustons Creek is joined by Scrubby Creek. Given that the location for each of these meetings is virtually identical, it is likely that Dawson is referring here to the one 'great meeting'. That this meeting site was located near Scrubby Creek's junction with Mustons Creek suggests (citing Reference 3), that this is also the area where Arabin's 'village' was situated.

Knowing the approximate location of Arabin's site, are other sites of this type common here? George Augustus Robinson, while travelling past the area where McArthur Creek joins Spring Creek (see Figure 2), noted that ' . . . the natives had their fixed residences or villages or homesteads'.<sup>41</sup> Although Robinson did not describe these settlements in detail, we may assume that his use of the term 'village' implies that they consisted of substantial huts. We can therefore conclude that this type of settlement was reasonably common in the Caramut area.

To support the accuracy of Arabin's account we may note that when observers such as Robinson<sup>42</sup> and Griffith<sup>43</sup> described substantial huts within the south western region of Victoria, these huts are virtually identical in form to those described by Arabin. We can conclude that Arabin's information is accurate and since we know the approximate location of the site we can attempt to investigate it archaeologically.

#### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENT SITES*

The major problem involved in the archaeological study and interpretation of Aboriginal settlements is the relative lack of recognisable house structures. Our study is made easier if we are investigating a site which contains the remains of these

<sup>38</sup> Dawson 1881:3.

<sup>39</sup> Dawson 1881:2.

<sup>40</sup> Dawson 1881:79.

<sup>41</sup> Presland 1977:73.

<sup>42</sup> Presland 1977:36, 44, 84-85, 87; 1980:70 Fig. 23.

<sup>43</sup> 1845:152.

## AN ABORIGINAL 'VILLAGE' SITE

structures, especially if it is documented as well. One problem remains — how do we identify these structures?

This is a difficult problem, although a number of researchers have been able to find such structures. Ranson<sup>44</sup> and Lourandos<sup>45</sup> have identified hut pits within shell midden sites while other workers such as Wesson<sup>46</sup> have identified stone hut foundations situated within areas of recent lava flows. A ground survey of the area outlined in Figure 1 found that neither shell midden sites or extensive areas of recent lava flows are present. It may therefore be difficult to identify the remains of huts. The survey *did* however find that earth mound sites and in particular clusters of such sites, were common. The largest series of clusters, that consisting of a total of 27 mounds, is located on the north side of Scrubby Creek, near to its junction with Mustons Creek.

We can therefore ask whether in the Caramut area, clusters of earth mounds represent at least in some instances the remains of clusters of substantial huts. This hypothesis is not a new one. Coutts,<sup>47</sup> Lourandos,<sup>48</sup> Williams and even Dawson<sup>49</sup> have all formed it independently. Historical accounts of mound function in Aboriginal society can be used to determine whether there is any support for this idea. In 1841 Robinson observed a hut constructed on the top of a mound,<sup>50</sup> noting also that a mound could result when a substantial hut burnt down.<sup>51</sup> However he also observed that mounds could be used as baking ovens and as camping places.<sup>52</sup> Archaeological excavation in south western Victoria has isolated examples of mounds used as 'general living sites'<sup>53</sup> but has not adequately resolved whether mounds were used as either hut foundations or as baking ovens as well. The Victoria Archaeological Survey's investigators documented features which they described as 'postmoulds', within a small mound near Chatsworth, about 20 kilometres north east of Caramut,<sup>54</sup> but it is difficult to assess this evidence as the site has not been published in detail. Clusters of mounds, therefore, may represent the remains of Aboriginal settlements which contained substantial huts, but the hypothesis has yet to be adequately tested using archaeological techniques.

To test this idea, I intended to excavate a section of the large cluster at the junction of Mustons and Scrubby Creeks. Before work commenced however, most of the site was ploughed up by the landowner. So another, smaller site consisting of a cluster of

<sup>44</sup> Ranson 1980:78.

<sup>45</sup> Lourandos 1970:82-113 and 1980:213-225.

<sup>46</sup> Wesson 1981.

<sup>47</sup> Coutts unpublished draft p.20.

<sup>48</sup> 1980:154.

<sup>49</sup> 1881:103-104.

<sup>50</sup> Presland 1977:91, Fig. 42.

<sup>51</sup> Presland 1977:48.

<sup>52</sup> Presland 1977:91, 124.

<sup>53</sup> Coutts et al 1976:1.

<sup>54</sup> Coutts et al 1977: Table 1.

seven mounds located at the junction of McArthur and Spring Creeks was instead chosen for analysis. This site is situated in the locality where Robinson had noted 'native homesteads';<sup>55</sup> for this reason I hoped that the site would represent the remains of a settlement which had contained house structures. This site, the McArthur Creek cluster, had never been ploughed.

A brief summary of the results of this excavation follows, illustrated by a plan of the site showing the position of the excavated trenches (Figure 2) and a more detailed plan of one of the excavated mounds (Figure 3). A detailed site report is presented elsewhere.<sup>56</sup> In accord with the wishes of the local Aboriginal community, no large mounds were disturbed. Instead, two smaller mounds (numbers 5 and 6) were partially excavated. The excavation technique used consisted of the removal of natural layers in units 5 centimetres in depth and 1.0 x 0.5 metres in extent.

The upper 5 centimetres of Mound 5 contained a series of large fragments of burnt wood up to 50 centimetres in length and 5 centimetres in width, which were located within an area traced out by a series of larger fragments of burnt wood situated within the 5-10 centimetre level. These larger fragments were plotted in Figure 3 and were found after removal to have been set into the surface of the mound. I have interpreted them as the foundations of a hut structure, where the upper level of burnt wood consists of the collapsed and burnt framework. The position of the foundations suggests that the hut was circular in plan and thus the upper framework consisted of boughs set into a domed shape. No remains of burnt earth were found plastered with mud as were those described by Arabin. The reconstructed form is thus similar to the less substantial type of structure pictured in Plate 3.

The stratigraphy of Mound 5 suggests that the hut is associated with a light-coloured gravelly deposit which seems to have been deliberately built-up to provide a well-drained foundation for the living area. The presence of the hut structure therefore demonstrates that huts were constructed on top of earth mounds. Thus ethno-historic information can be used as a guide to locating the remains of Aboriginal settlements and it can also be used as a means of investigating specific questions about these sites. While it is difficult to determine whether *this* site was the one observed by Robinson in 1841, the excavations have provided us with much information on earth mound sites as an example of settlement complexes. This information is briefly outlined below.

The different sediments which form the mound have been dated and these dates indicate that the mound began to be formed about 800 years ago.<sup>57</sup> Stone tools were found throughout the excavated profile, suggesting that occupation continued as the mound accumulated. The precision of present dating techniques is insufficient to enable us to determine whether this occupation was continuous or intermittent. It is also uncertain whether the mound accumulated naturally as a result of occupation or whether the inhabitants were deliberately adding to the mound over time. Preliminary analysis indicates that the latter was the case and this is discussed

<sup>55</sup> Presland 1977:73.

<sup>56</sup> Williams in prep b.

<sup>57</sup> 760±110 – (ANU 3585) and 870±150 – (ANU 3762).

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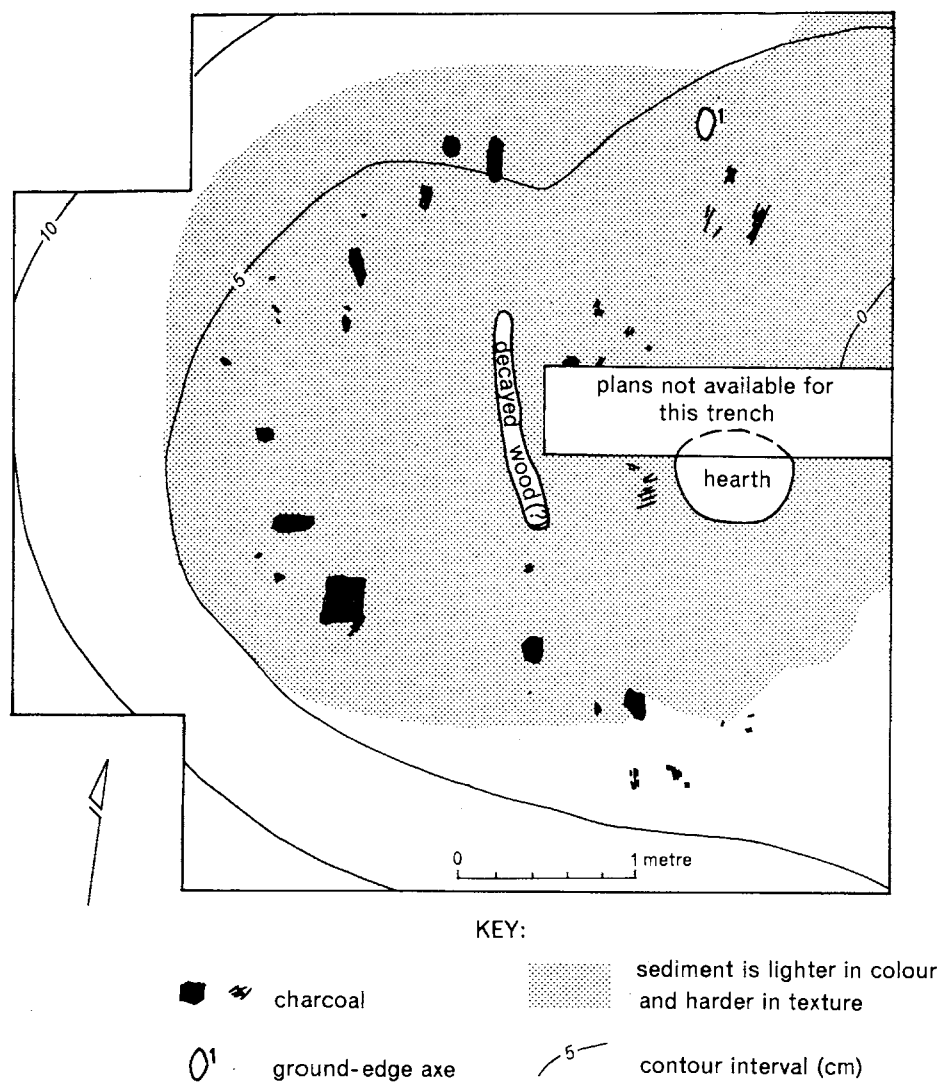


Figure 3 – Plan of the surface of mound 5, McArthur Creek cluster, after 10 cm of deposit had been removed.





Wilmont Strahan in his Mia Mia Warrnambool Vic.

Plate 3 – A copy of a postcard, showing 'Old Wilmont', (1834-1916), who lived at Allansford, near Warrnambool, South-west Victoria.

Photograph courtesy of Nicolas Peterson.

elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> The foundations of the hut date to 'modern',<sup>59</sup> a result to be interpreted as indicating occupation during the early to mid-nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> The construction and later destruction of the hut marks the final period of occupation of the mound as no post-contact artefacts such as flaked bottle glass were found during excavation of either Mounds 5 or 6. No evidence of earlier hut structures within the mound was discerned during investigation.

Mound 6 contained no remains of any structure. The only feature found was a narrow ditch, about 30 centimetres wide ringing the central area of the mound. Its narrowness and placement near the upper section of the mound suggest that it was a drainage feature rather than a borrow trench for construction on the site. That stone tools were found throughout the profile of this site suggests that it was used as a living area but that these activities did not necessitate the construction of a house structure. The initial period of mound construction dates to c.2200 years ago<sup>61</sup> and it appears that the site continued to accumulate during occupation. The upper layers of the mound, like those of Mound 5, are 'modern'.<sup>62</sup> Again this date is best

<sup>58</sup> Williams in prep b.

<sup>59</sup> Modern (98.8.1.2%M) – (ANU 3583), Modern (102.5.2.9%M) – (ANU 3584).

<sup>60</sup> My thanks to John Head of the Australian National University's Radiocarbon Laboratory for advice on this matter.

<sup>61</sup> 2170±200 (ANU 3833).

<sup>62</sup> Modern (103.9.3.3%M) – (ANU 3881).

## AN ABORIGINAL 'VILLAGE' SITE

interpreted as indicating occupation during the early to mid-nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> As with Mound 5, it is difficult to determine whether occupation was continuous or intermittent.

Evidence for the occupation of the McArthur Creek site is not restricted to the mounds themselves. A number of pits containing many fragments of burnt rock, which have been interpreted as 'cooking pits', were found in association with Mound 5 and a small hearth was located close to Mound 6 (see Figure 2). Stone tools were also recovered from the area between the two mounds. It seems that the mounds at this site were primarily used for general living activities and that more specialised activities, such as the cooking of food, were carried out off the mounds.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the excavation of the McArthur Creek cluster site. In the Caramut area the mounds were used as habitation sites and not as ovens. Not all mounds had the same function, as some sites were used as hut foundations whilst others were used as camping places, and the initial date of mound construction varies between mounds.

By using historical accounts of Aboriginal settlements as a guide to locating settlement sites, we have been able to increase our knowledge of both earth mound sites within south western Victoria, and of Aboriginal settlements. The success of this approach reinforces the usefulness of Groube's suggestion.<sup>64</sup> It should also encourage further work within Australia on the archaeology of such 'ethnography rich' areas.

<sup>63</sup> John Head pers.comm.

<sup>64</sup> Groube 1977:69.

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## THE ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA:

### AN INITIAL COMPARISON

R.G. Gunn

In 1981 I undertook an assessment of all of the known rock art sites in Victoria as a prelude to a program of detailed site recording.<sup>1</sup> In order that individual sites could be more adequately assessed it was necessary to establish a regional background of the range of styles present. The preliminary results of that analysis are presented here, with some discussion of the value of the methods used and its consequences for the recording program.

The total number of sites recorded during the survey was only sixty-seven; it is expected that even after detailed site surveys, this total will not exceed one hundred sites.<sup>2</sup> Only one of the recorded sites, Bunjil's Cave (Plate 1), has any ethnographic documentation<sup>3</sup> and so the majority remain as archaeological artefacts.

Over 80 per cent of these sites were recorded in the Grampians, a series of tightly defined sandstone ridges in the mid-west of the state (Figure 1). Of these, half occur in the northern Victoria Range within ten kilometres of the well known Glenisla I shelter<sup>4</sup> (Plate 3). Of the remaining thirteen non-Grampians sites (nineteen per cent of the total), seven occur as a loose aggregate in the north-east of the State, another two occur adjacent to each other in Central Victoria while the remaining four are isolated sites scattered throughout the State. With the exception of the open engraved site on Sutherland Creek,<sup>5</sup> all occur within the peripheral hills of the Great Dividing Range.

*Ben Gunn, himself an artist, is a consultant archaeologist specialising in rock art studies. He has recorded rock art complexes in the Cobar district of New South Wales and is currently engaged in surveys in Victoria.*

<sup>1</sup> Gunn 1981. This paper is a revised version of one that I gave to the South East Australia Study Group in December 1981. The survey was undertaken for the Victoria Archaeological Survey with the assistance of a grant from the Australian Heritage Commission. I would also like to thank Isabel McBryde for her encouragement in the preparation of this paper, Kym Thompson and Neils Becker for assistance with the statistics, and Peter Coutts, Andree Rosenfeld and Julie Gunn for comments on original manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> The total in June 1983 stood at 80 sites, an increase of nearly 20 per cent on the number used here.

<sup>3</sup> see Howitt 1904: 491, and Gunn 1983b.

<sup>4</sup> see Mathews 1897, and Coutts and Lorblanchet 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Boulger 1978.

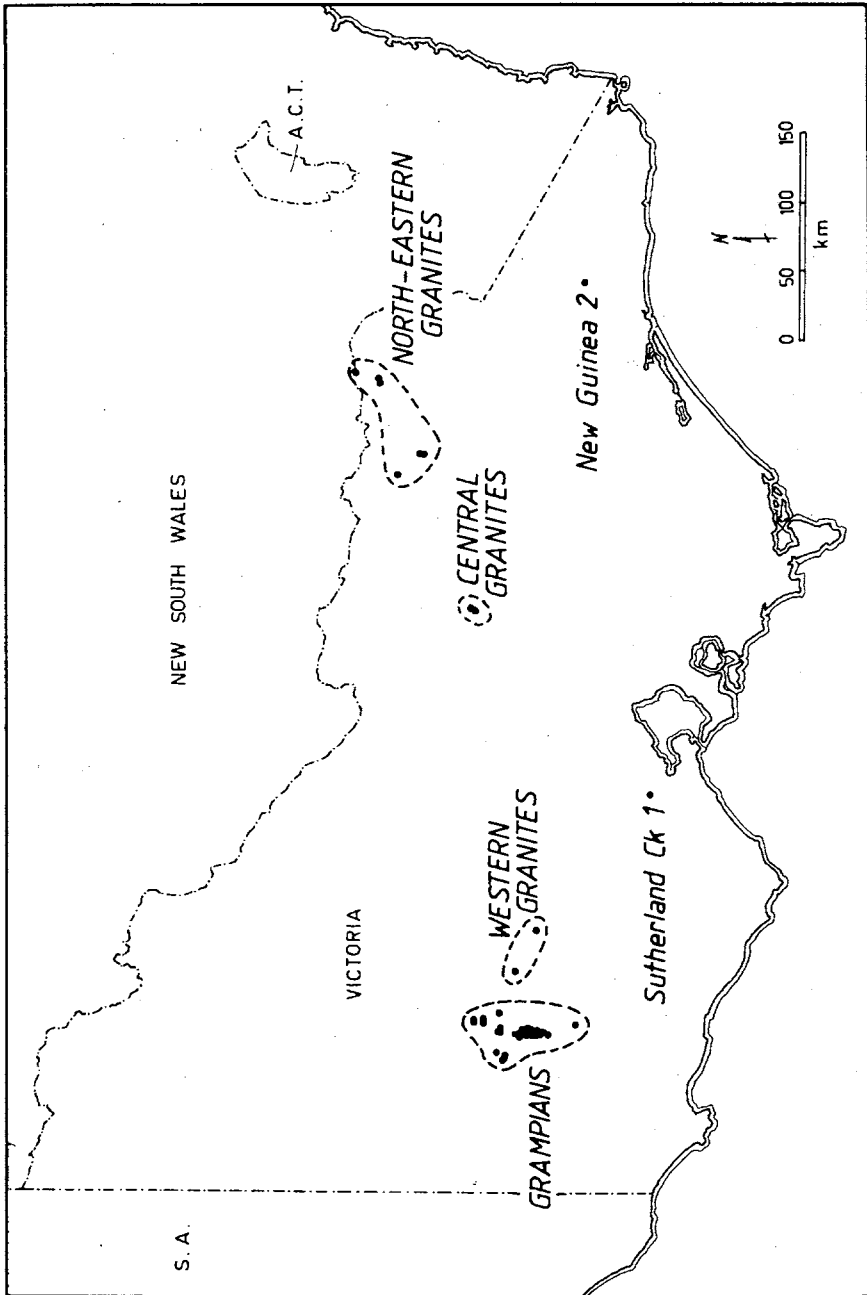


Figure 1 — Location of the rock art areas within Victoria.

## ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA

Geologically, the sites can be grouped into six discrete clusters consisting of four art areas (see Figure 1):

Grampians Sandstone (GR)	—	54 sites with 4296 motifs
Western Granites (WG)	—	2 sites with 29 motifs
Central Granites (CG)	—	2 sites with 148 motifs
North-eastern Granites (NEG)	—	7 sites with 362 motifs

and two single sites:

- Sutherland Creek 1 (SC1) with 3 motifs, and
- New Guinea 2 (NG2) with 20+ motifs.

The rock art of the Grampians consists mainly of small (<10 centimetres), red painted, linear motifs, most of which are either basic abstract elements (bars, lines, circles) or stylised variations on the stick figure motif (see Plates 2, 3 and 4). At the other end of the State the art of the North-eastern Granites area, while sharing many attributes in common with the Grampians, (mainly red linear paintings with a high proportion of basic abstract elements), appears to have a higher proportion of human figure and animal motifs as well as a higher average motif size.

In an attempt to define the significance of these apparent differences, the areas were compared using simple quantitative methods. Eight aspects of the art were selected to form the basis of the comparison:<sup>6</sup>

site form	—	motif sizes
motif numbers	—	pigment colours
motif types	—	technique
motif forms	—	probable chronology

Because of time constraints, the individual attributes within each aspect were limited to their basic types; hence all anthropomorphic figures were included within the single attribute group of human figure motifs, and all pigment colours from brown to orange were included within the one colour attribute group, red. Rather than selecting specific types to highlight particular regional differences here, basic types were used so that the comparison could be readily extended to include other art areas of Australia at some later date.

The low total number of sites (67) and motifs (4858) recorded, presented a major problem for the analysis, especially when it is realised that 40 per cent of all motifs studied occur within one rock shelter (Glenisla 1) and that of the rest many could not be classified according to many of the categories selected because of their very poor or fragmented condition (note the varying aspect totals within the tables). Further, (again in contrast to the Glenisla site) the particularly low number of motifs from the Sutherland Creek sites, New Guinea 2 and the Western Granites sites means that their percentage figures cannot be taken as statistically significant. The location of even a single further motif could appreciably alter their respective totals. Their inclusion here must therefore be seen essentially as indicating only either the presence or absence of any particular attribute.

It has been found that rock art sites in Victoria generally tend to occur in either local isolation or distinct geographic clusters centred on one particularly rich decorated

<sup>6</sup> The attributes were defined from the work of Maynard 1976, Clegg 1978 and Gunn 1983a.



shelter.<sup>7</sup> However, as there is often more variation in particular aspects between individual shelters within these clusters than there is between the overall tallies of two adjacent clusters,<sup>8</sup> a comparison of the latter should provide a more reliable evaluation of the homogeneity of the State's art, than would be achieved by simply comparing the contents of each of the sites individually. The analysis used the Robinson-Brainerd 'measure of agreement' method<sup>9</sup> to produce a numerical value for the degree of similarity between each art area according to the relative frequencies of each of the various attributes of the aspects examined.<sup>10</sup> The comparative frequencies for the areas are listed in Tables 1-7 and the Robinson-Brainerd similarity matrices in Tables 8-13. A score of 200 implies total similarity, while one of zero implies total dissimilarity. Areas were considered similar when their similarity coefficients exceeded the arbitrary limit of 150, or 75 per cent (Table 14). To give an indication of the real differences between the areas, the numerical frequencies of motif types in each area are given in Table 15. The deficiencies in this method of analysis become apparent when it is realised that the 'expected values' in many of the cells fall well below the acceptable limit of five, implying that any results from a  $\chi^2$  test of significant difference would be of little value.

Table 1: Percentage frequencies of site forms

	<i>Cave</i>	<i>Rock shelter</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR	2%	98%	.	(54)
WG	.	100%	.	(2)
CG	.	100%	.	(2)
NEG	.	100%	.	(7)
SCI	.	.	100%	(1)
NG2	100%	.	.	(1)

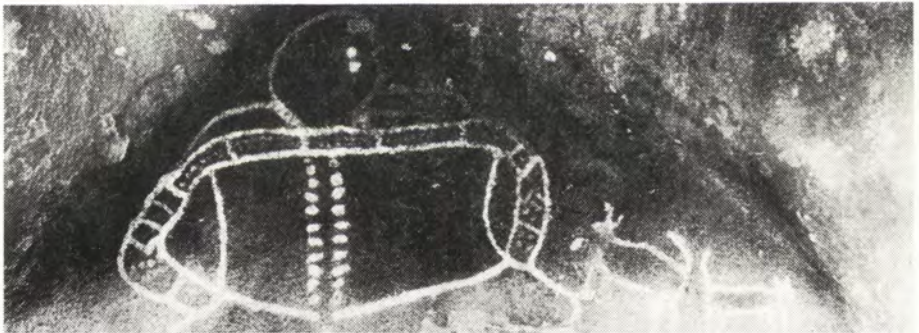


Plate 1 — Red and white painting of Bunjil from the Bunjil's Cave site in the western Granites area (WA). This is considered a particularly important rock art site in Victoria as it is the only one for which we have any ethnographic interpretation. The figure of Bunjil is 153 cm wide.

Photograph: R.K. Frank.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. Gunn 1983c.

<sup>8</sup> Maynard 1976: 120-122 and 153ff, and Clegg 1978: 11.

<sup>9</sup> see Frankel 1975.

<sup>10</sup> cf. the variance analysis method used by Maynard 1976: 155.

# ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA

Table 2: Percentage frequencies of motif types

	<i>Abstract elements</i>	<i>Abstract designs</i>	<i>Animal tracks</i>	<i>Animals</i>	<i>Human Figures</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR	75%	4%	6%	0.2%	12%	4%	(3739)
WG	.	73%	.	14%	14%	.	(22)
CG	23%	3%	6%	1%	66%	1%	(87)
NEG	66%	6%	4%	1%	21%	1%	(267)
SCI	33%	67%	.	.	.	.	(3)
NG2	.	100%	.	.	.	.	(20+)

Table 3: Percentage frequencies of motif forms

	<i>Linear</i>	<i>Solid + Linear</i>	<i>Solid</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR	90%	2%	3%	5%	(4083)
WG	69%	27%	4%	.	(26)
CG	82%	11%	5%	2%	(126)
NEG	84%	7%	5%	4%	(342)
SCI	100%	.	.	.	(3)
NG2	100%	.	.	.	(20+)

Table 4: Percentage frequencies of motif size (cm)

	<i>1-10</i>	<i>11-20</i>	<i>21-30</i>	<i>31-40</i>	<i>31-50</i>	<i>51-60</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR†	52%	26%	14%	4%	2%	1%	1%	(1784)
WG	.	5%	14%	23%	9%	.	50%	(22)
CG	17%	56%	16%	7%	3%	.	1%	(75)
NEG	69%	15%	6%	3%	1%	1%	5%	(268)
SCI	33%	67%	.	.	.	.	.	(3)
NG2	—	—	x	x	x	x	x	(20+)

† n.b. 1949 motifs from Glenisla 1 shelter not included



# ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1984 8:2

Table 5: Percentage frequencies of colours

	<i>Red</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Yellow</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR	94%	5%	1%	1%	0.3%	(4296)
WG	90%	.	.	.	10%	(29)
CG	100%	.	.	.	.	(148)
NEG	75%	20%	.	4%	.	(362)
SCI	.	.	.	.	100%	(3)
NG2	.	.	.	.	100%	(20+)

Table 6: Percentage frequencies of art techniques

	<i>Drawing</i>	<i>Painting</i>	<i>Printing</i>	<i>Stencil</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>(n)</i>
GR	5%	92%	0.5%	3%	0.3%	(4296)
WG	3%	97%	.	.	.	(29)
CG	.	99%	1%	.	.	(148)
NEG	4%	96%	1%	.	.	(362)
SCI	.	.	.	.	100%	(3)
NG2	.	.	.	.	100%	(20+)

Table 7: General art chronologies

	<i>Pre 6000 BP</i>	<i>6000-3000 BP</i>	<i>Post 3000 BP</i>
GR	.	.	x
WG	.	.	x
CG	.	.	x
NEG	.	.	x
SCI	.	x	.
NG2	x	.	.

Table 8: Site forms — matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficients

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	196	196	196	0	4
WG	196	.	200	200	0	0
CG	196	200	.	200	0	0
NEG	196	200	200	.	0	0
SCI	0	0	0	0	.	0
NG2	4	0	0	0	0	.

# ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA

Table 9: Motif types – matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficients

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	30	89	174	75	7
WG	30	.	35	42	123	145
CG	89	35	.	107	52	6
NEG	174	42	107	.	79	13
SCI	75	132	52	79	.	134
NG2	7	145	6	13	134	.

Table 10: Motif forms – matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficients

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	148	178	186	170	170
WG	148	.	168	160	138	138
CG	178	168	.	192	164	164
NEG	186	160	192	.	168	168
SCI	170	138	164	168	.	200
NG2	170	138	164	168	200	.

Table 11: Motif sizes – matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficients

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	51	128	158	118	<120
WG	51	.	59	39	9	<195
CG	128	59	.	86	146	<127
NEG	158	39	86	.	96	<116
SCI	118	9	146	96	.	0
NG2	<120	<195	<127	<116	0	.

Table 12: Pigment colours – matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficient

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	179	186	162	0	0
WG	179	.	180	151	20	20
CG	186	180	.	151	0	0
NEG	162	151	151	.	0	0
SCI	0	20	0	0	.	200
NG2	0	20	0	0	200	.



Plate 2 — Red painted 'lizard men', stick figures, emu track and line motifs superimposed at the Cultivation Creek 5 shelter in the heart of the Victoria Range, Grampians. Scale 5 cm.  
Photograph: R.G. Gunn.

# ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA

Table 13: Art techniques – matrix of Robinson-Brainerd similarity coefficients

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	.	190	184	191	0	0
WG	190	.	194	197	0	0
CG	184	184	.	193	0	0
NEG	191	197	193	.	0	0
SCI	0	0	0	0	.	200
NG2	0	0	0	0	200	.

Table 14: Art aspect groupings across the areas

	<i>site form</i>	<i>motif numbers</i>	<i>motif types</i>	<i>motif forms</i>	<i>motif sizes</i>	<i>pigment colours</i>	<i>art techniques</i>	<i>probable chronology</i>
GR	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
WG	a	b	b	a	b	a	a	a
CG	a	c	c	a	c	a	a	a
NEG	a	c	a	a	a	a	a	a
SCI	b	b	d	b	d	b	b	b
NG2	c	b	e	b	b	b	b	c

Table 15: Numerical frequencies of motif types

	<i>Abstract elements</i>	<i>Abstract designs</i>	<i>Animal tracks</i>	<i>Animals</i>	<i>Human Figures</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
GR	2753	166	221	6	447	146	3739
WG	.	15	.	3	3	.	22
CG	20	3	4	2	57	1	87
NEG	176	16	10	4	57	4	267
SCI	1	2	.	.	.	.	3
NG2	.	20+	.	.	.	.	20+





Plate 3 — Detail of the sets of red painted bar motifs from Glenisla 1 in the Grampians. The bars average 7 cm. in length. Glenisla, with some 1800 bar motifs, is the focus for this type in the Grampians.

Photograph: R.K. Frank.



Plate 4 — Red hand stencils at the Cave of Hands shelter in the Grampians. With eighty stencils this site is the focus for this type of motif in the Grampians. The knuckle size ranges from 7-10 cm.

Photograph: R.K. Frank.

## ROCK ART AREAS OF VICTORIA

Despite these problems, it is possible to produce a crude gauge of overall similarity by simply tallying the number of like groupings between each of these areas (Table 16). With a maximum possible value of eight, only scores of six (75 per cent) or more can be considered significant. It can be seen that while none of the areas are alike in all aspects, several appear to be totally dissimilar. In fact, only two significant similarities occur; one exists between the Grampians group (GR) and that of the North Eastern Granites (NEG). The second is between the North Eastern Granites (NEG) group and that of the Central Granites (CG). It is also obvious, however, that the four pictograph (painted) areas, the Grampians (GR), Western Granites (WG), Central Granites (CG), and North Eastern Granites (NEG), while not closely similar, constitute a loose block that contrasts distinctly against the two single petroglyph sites Sutherland Creek (SCI). The latter two, while distinct from the other areas, are also only marginally similar to each other.

Table 16: Overall similarity matrix

	<i>GR</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>NEG</i>	<i>SCI</i>	<i>NG2</i>
GR	8	5	5	7	0	0
WG		8	5	5	1	2
CG			8	6	0	0
NEG				8	0	0
SCI					8	4
NG2						8

The close relationship between the art of the Grampians (GR) and that of the North-Eastern Granites (NEG) implied by these results is, however, belied by examination of more specific features of the art in these two areas. The most obvious of these is the general coherence of the Grampians artwork, created through the repeated use of a number of distinctive motif types. For example:

- a unique, stylised representation of the human figure motif, the 'lizard-man' (Plate 2). This motif occurs at twenty sites focused on the large Cultivation Creek 5 shelter within the heart of the Victoria Range,
- the use of the hand stencil, a motif that has not been recorded elsewhere in the state. This motif occurs at eleven sites in the central and western areas of the ranges but only occurs in any number at the Cave of Hands shelter where eighty (or 73 per cent) have been recorded (Plate 4), and
- the bar motifs. This simple motif (Plate 3) usually occurs in horizontal sets of a dozen or so but at the Glenisla 1 shelter where its distribution is centred, some 1800 almost completely cover the rear wall of the shelter.<sup>11</sup>

Because little work has yet been done at this level of motif typology, it is not possible at this stage to incorporate these finer distinctions into the present analysis. It is clear

<sup>11</sup> Total taken from Gunn 1981: 115. Coutts and Lorblanchet (1982: 14) in their detailed recording of the Glenisla 1 shelter, give the total as 2575 bar motifs.

however, that such focalised motif types need to be given a degree of attention not possible when using compound area totals. It is also apparent from these results, that the difference between the pictograph (painted) and petroglyph (engraved) areas, mentioned above, is not simply one of technique. Significant differences exist in nearly all of the art aspect categories. Again, however, the low number of both motifs and sites among the petroglyphs, while being a significant aspect in itself, prohibits any greater degree of analysis.

In summary then the rock art of Victoria can be seen to consist of one major concentration, three smaller and distinct areas, and two anomolous sites. It is clear, however, that the present definition of the art of the Grampians, its quantity and formal variety, coupled with its locally cohesive structure, indicates that this area represents one of the significant, albeit small, rock art regions of Australia. Although not comparable with some of the other regions for spectacle, the Grampians can equate with regards to the type and amount of information it contains. The general lack of appreciation of the art of the Grampians to date can be seen to have stemmed from a simple lack of published objective recordings.<sup>12</sup> Now that more adequate recordings exist, the unique quality and further research potential of the area is becoming realised. To a lesser extent the location of further sites in the north-east of the state (North Eastern Granites —NEG) may yet show this area to be similarly amenable to regional pattern studies. The remaining six sites, while unsuitable for broad cultural studies,<sup>13</sup> can still provide an insight into the local level of artistic endeavour and information on their archaeological setting for comparison with the more concentrated areas.

This broad framework, although still requiring modification, now presents a baseline from which more specific research questions can be posed. From the results of the survey however, it is also clear that the main priorities of Victorian rock art research must now for the time be related to, and guided by, practical management. The recent rise in popularity of rock art amongst tourists, has meant that here, as elsewhere in Australia, such sites are under threat from the very people who come to appreciate them. Therefore, it is imperative that all those sites that are, or will be, opened to the public be recorded in detail. Even the most fastidious management controls cannot remove the threat of the vandal, and no conservation can fully replace a damaged or destroyed site. The undertaking of such a recording program will constitute a major task but not only will it provide a permanent record as a basis for informed management and public education, it will also achieve much of the ground work from which further research may extend.

<sup>12</sup> McCarthy 1979: 78.

<sup>13</sup> Clegg 1978: 59-60.



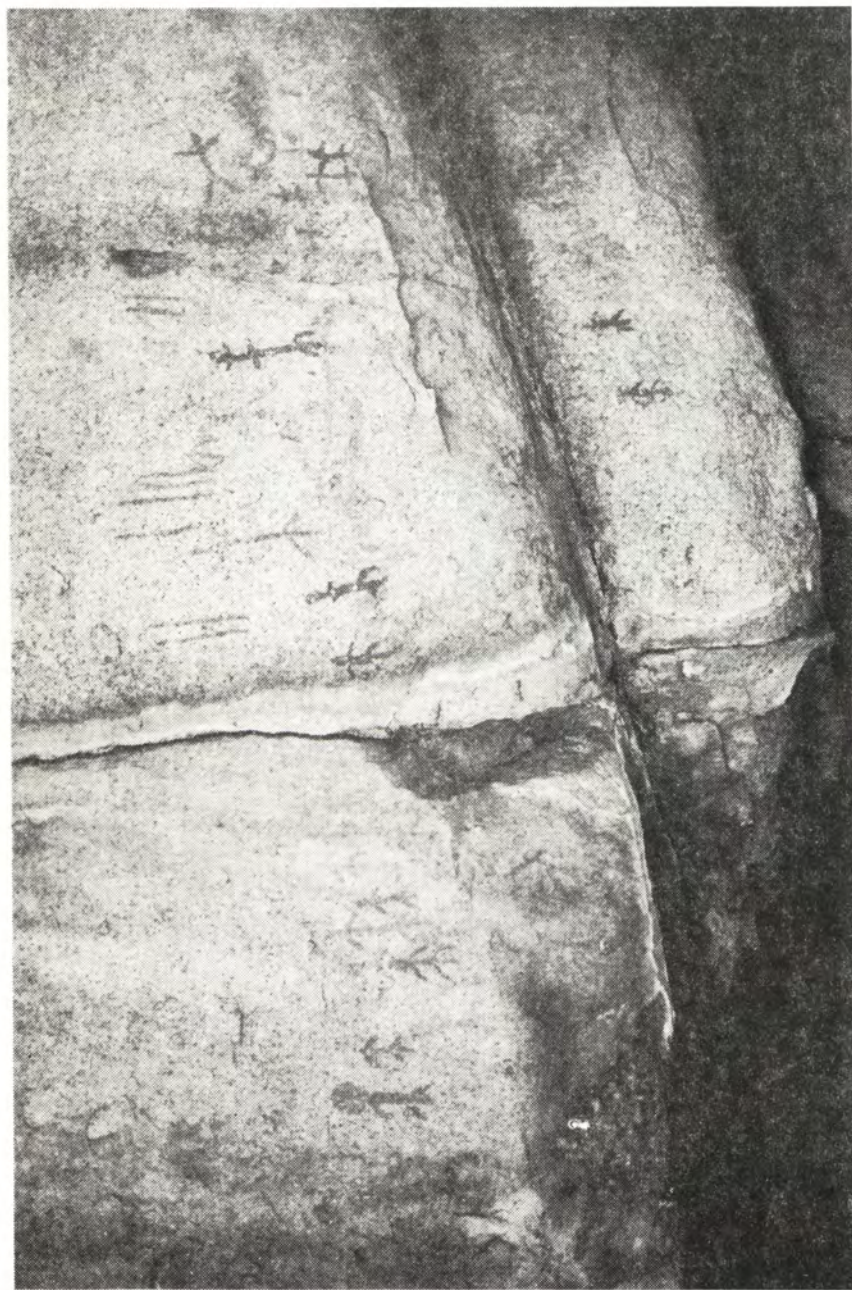


Plate 5 — Red paintings from the Garden Range 1 site in Central Victoria. The tall, dark figure at centre right measures 24 cm. Although four sites are now known from this region only a minute area of it has been surveyed as yet.  
Photograph: R.K. Frank.



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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### PERSPECTIVES ON LAND RIGHTS<sup>1</sup>

Brad Morse

Although the anthropological literature has been rich in local and regional descriptions and studies of the original inhabitants in Australia for several decades, relatively little existed in print in any discipline concerning the modern era of Aboriginal land rights. This situation has now significantly changed in the 1980s. The two volumes under consideration in this review have made a particularly dramatic impact on filling a critical void in our knowledge base, which has been subsequently enhanced by *Aborigines and the Law* (edited by Peter Hanks and Bryan Keon-Cohen), although most of the latter's contents relate to Aboriginal legal issues other than land rights.

*Aboriginal Land Rights: A Handbook* consists of selected edited 'background papers' which were originally presented at a land rights conference in Canberra in May of 1980 sponsored by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Nicolas Peterson describes the purpose of the book in the Preface as 'a handbook in the sense of an informational guide rather than an instructional text'. The book meets this modest objective very well. It contains separate chapters on every State and Territory with various papers in each outlining the legislative system in existence at that moment and movements then under debate. The collection also includes several useful historical overviews; those by Chris Anderson (Queensland) and Philip Felton (Victoria) are particularly worthy of mention in this regard. Finally, this edited work includes an excellent insider's description of the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission (and its many frustrating limitations imposed by the former Commonwealth Government) by its chairman, Professor Rowley.

The editor also prepared a bibliography (which is only partially complete) and a relatively thin introduction. Such a geographically disparate yet obviously related collection truly needed a comprehensive introductory essay to draw together the major themes from the subsequent specialised papers for the reader so as to indicate the common experiences, learning processes and cross-fertilisation that have occurred. Unfortunately, Dr Peterson chose not to seize the opportunity as editor to develop such a contemplative and insightful analysis to reflect the shared lessons generated by this mammoth conference.

*Brad Morse is Vice-Dean of the Law Faculty, Common Law Section, in the University of Ottawa, Canada. He has worked extensively on Land Rights problems in Canada and in Australia.*

<sup>1</sup> *Aboriginal Land Rights: A Handbook*, Edited by Nicolas Peterson, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1981. Pp. 304, maps, tables. p.b. \$9.90 and *Aborigines, Land and Land Rights*. Edited by Nicolas Peterson and Marcia Langton. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1983. Pp. 476, maps, tables, index. h.c. \$21.50. p.b. \$14.90.

Although these papers are naturally dated after five years (subject to a few touches of updating, e.g., Peterson's paper on South Australia refers to the passage of the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act* ten months after the conference), many nevertheless retain their vigour and utility. This book is the only source where one can readily find in print detailed analyses of each state's experience with the land trust model initiated by the Dunstan Government in South Australia in 1966. Even though that system has been criticised, and largely discredited by the 1980s, there are many important lessons to be learned from that experiment, as well as its assistance in obtaining a fuller understanding of why the land rights movement has taken the turns, and met the successes, that it has. The land trust 'experiment' continues directly to affect the lives of Aborigines in some parts of Australia and have an effect on patterns of thinking regarding regimes to administer title to land by the Aboriginal Development Commission or under land rights legislation.

*Aborigines, Land and Land Rights* contains a further twenty nine papers (out of a possible forty three) from the same AIAS conference in May 1980, which were originally grouped together under the headings 'Traditional Rights in Land'; 'Alternatives and Perspectives'; and 'Northern Territory Legislation and the Future'. This is a far more diverse compilation of essays than *Aboriginal Land Rights: A Handbook*. Rather than using a region-by-region descriptive approach, this second volume attempts to categorise the papers according to five themes.

Part One, entitled 'Traditional principles', consists of six anthropological studies, five of which concern specific Aboriginal groups. A particularly useful overview essay by Nicolas Peterson concludes this portion of the book. It is immediately followed by eight papers under the title, 'Interactions and adjustments: Aborigines, law and anthropology'. The first four of these comprise essays primarily focussing upon attitudes of particular Aboriginal groups towards land usage and ownership in traditional and fringe-dwelling situations. The latter four tend to utilise more of a multi-disciplinary methodology in the sense of analysing anthropological knowledge within the context of Aboriginal land legislation in Queensland (David S. Trigger and Jeremy Beckett), South Australia (Robert Layton) and the Northern Territory (Kenneth Maddock). The latter piece is especially insightful, perhaps due to Professor Maddock's training both in law and in anthropology as well as his personal involvement in land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (N.T.) Act 1976 (Cth.)*. As someone actively involved in land rights in Canada coming from a legal background, this reviewer found Professor Maddock's comments on the misunderstandings between lawyers and anthropologists, regarding their differing objectives and expectations within the context of the statutory directions at play in the Northern Territory, both fascinating and illuminating. The failure to have a 'meeting of the minds' in this situation is readily translatable to the conflicts and confusions which have existed in Canada and the U.S.A. among historians, sociologists, anthropologists and lawyers in litigation involving indigenous land rights.

Part Three groups together six papers under the rubric 'Modern structures'. This is presumably designed to indicate a common theme concerning the entities presently in operation engaged in meeting Aboriginal needs in relation to land. This possible theme is not apparent in all the papers.

The first essay by Bette Moore, who also contributed a very informative piece to

the first volume, is 'The Victorian Aboriginal Land Council 1975-77'. It is a good background piece explaining the importance of the Woodward Commission Report in triggering state-wide Aboriginal activism on land rights in Victoria (instead of just in Lake Tyers and Framlingham). It is disappointing only in its shortness of scope. This reviewer would wish that it continued its review past 1977. The second paper, by Colin Bourke, is also on Victoria and also suffers both from its brevity and a decision to limit the discussion to the period largely before the mid-1970s.

The latter four papers of Part Three are very good indeed. After reviewing a number of specific claims in the Northern Territory, Meredith Powell asks a number of critical questions concerning male domination of claims, why this is changing, and what the implications of this may be on Aboriginal society beyond claims. Geoff Eames follows with an insider's view, from the standpoint of a white lawyer actively involved yet attempting to avoid the politics, of the rebirth of the Central Land Council in 1975 until his resignation in June of 1978. This was a tumultuous era for land rights in the Northern Territory and the excitement, plus frustration, of the author is readily conveyed in a most interesting account. It is one with which this reviewer can easily identify and enjoy.

The next essay also provides an insider's perspective, but with a difference. Diane Bell writes of sacred sites legislation in force in the Northern Territory from the standpoint of an anthropologist with extensive fieldwork in The Centre and as one who was a senior administrator of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. By using a specific case she clearly illustrates the conflict in expectations of what legislation is to do and the difference in perceptions of how sites need to be protected. This excellent article by Bell, which was later updated to early 1982, is followed by another by Bill Edwards. Somewhat akin to Geoff Eames' essay, he traces the Pitjantjatjara land rights struggle, in which he was involved as an interpreter, from 1976 to early 1980. It is particularly unfortunate that this article was also not updated to carry the story through the passage of the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act* in 1981.

Part Four, which is exclusively on mining, opens with a joint article by two more individuals active in the land rights field, namely, Daniel Vachon and Phillip Toyne. Not only do they analyse the 1981 Act of South Australia, but they also accomplish what many of the papers omit. That is, they consider the political, practical and legal processes at play in a new form of competition for territory (with the wealth that it implies for white society) that Aboriginal land rights generates. The Noonkanbah dispute (which is later described in greater depth by Philip Vincent) is compared with the experience of the Pitjantjatjara in South Australia and the Central Land Council. It is the blending of disciplinary perspectives and the use of a comparative approach which particularly raises this chapter above the merely descriptive into the realm of the analytical. For a non-Australian, this essay is especially useful. It also demonstrates the degree to which the mining issue has and will continue to plague Aboriginal claimants in a manner similar to petroleum development in northern Canada. Nevertheless, the paper has an air of optimism in that acceptable resolutions of such conflicts have been achieved by the Pitjantjatjara once the people got title to the land. Multinationals are amazingly adaptable so long as profits can be made.

The balance of this Part is also very strong. Peter Carroll provides a very thorough overview of the Alligator Rivers conflict between Aboriginal land interests and the

uranium mining industry as well as summaries of major agreements. Sue Kesteven analyses the social costs for Aboriginal communities of success in the sense of royalties and payments resulting from land rights victories and subsequent developments. Marcia Langton confronts the issue of the impact of mining throughout Australia upon Aboriginal peoples and lands by proffering a national strategy to address the problem. This is a particularly creative and thought-provoking essay worthy of further reconsideration in the future.

The final section consists of four essays designed to present 'Canadian perspectives'. Two of these papers, both by Harvey Feit, are focussed upon the James Bay Agreement in Northern Quebec. These should be especially informative for Australian readers in illustrating the significantly different orientation of land claims agreements in Canada. The first paper describes the history of the claim and the negotiation process. Parallels between the pressures of hydro-electric development in northern Quebec with the Ranger Uranium project are readily apparent by comparing this essay to several of the earlier ones. Professor Feit's second paper concentrates on a unique element of the James Bay Agreement, namely, the creation of an income security plan for those indigenous people who wish to maintain their traditional economy of hunting, fishing and trapping. The only drawback to these two excellent papers is that Professor Feit has not described the full contents of the Agreement in detail. This would be useful for Australians in identifying the differences in land claims settlements. The Canadian approach is to emphasise cash compensation, guarantees of traditional economic foraging rights, regimes of self-government within the lands reserved for traditional owners, and special arrangements to regulate the interface between aboriginal and immigrant societies in areas of health, education, justice, culture and social services at the expense of large land areas being confirmed in aboriginal hands.

A further paper, by Noel Dyck, describes the successful negotiations in Saskatchewan among federal and provincial governments and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to implement in full the land entitlement provisions contained in treaties signed in the 1870s. Approximately one million acres is in the process of being set aside as additional Indian reserve land in the province. The agreement outlined by Dyck is still slowly being implemented on a community-by-community basis today.

The last Canadian paper, and probably the most interesting from an Australian vantage point, is Constance Hunt's analysis of the *Aboriginal Land Rights, (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. It is very difficult for a complete outsider to critique any agreement made in a completely different context. This is especially so in an extremely short essay. Nevertheless, it contains the basic observations that most Canadian experts can offer from our experience.

The Canadian situation has changed dramatically since this conference in 1980. Our new constitution, proclaimed in force on April 17, 1982, contains express provisions recognising and affirming the 'existing aboriginal and treaty rights' of the Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada in section 35 (1). These rights are also exempt from attack for violating any provisions within the Charter of Rights and Freedoms contained in Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. All land claim settlements previously signed or negotiated in the future receive constitutional recognition and entrenchment as 'treaty rights' within S. 35 (1) by virtue of an amendment to the constitution proclaimed in 1984 as well as exemption from an attack under the Charter (by virtue of

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SS. 35 (3) and 25 (b) respectively). Sexual equality amongst aboriginal male and female persons in regard to these guaranteed rights is also assured through a further constitutional amendment (S. 35 (4)). The effect of these provisions is that these rights are part of the constitution, the supreme law of the land, and cannot be infringed by federal or provincial legislation. The exact scope of these rights has yet to be determined by the courts.

First Ministers Conferences (FMC), consisting of the Prime Minister, the ten provincial Premiers, the two territorial leaders, and representatives of the Aboriginal peoples (through four national political organisations) are required to be held in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1987. The 1983 FMC led to the aforementioned amendments while the 1984 FMC focussed on the issue of aboriginal self-government and further equality issues (both sexual and among different classes of the aboriginal people, namely, the Indians, Metis and Inuit) without consensus being achieved. These issues are on the agenda for the 1985 FMC.

In addition, many small land claims have been settled as well as a massive land claim of the Inuit (the Inuvialuit group) to the Western Arctic. Other substantial land claims in the Yukon Territory, the Mackenzie Valley region of the Northwest Territories, and the Eastern Arctic are progressing towards a negotiated agreement-in-principle. An independent review of the federal claims policy will commence shortly.

Lest the foregoing description of the flurry of activity occurring in Canada paint too rosy a picture from afar, the 'progress' has been difficult, frustrating, slow and, sometimes, non-existent. We are increasingly looking to the Australian experience for inspiration and suggestions. The reverse is equally true, as each country is simultaneously well ahead and well behind the other in diverse fields affecting Aboriginal People. Books like these help promote that valuable information exchange.

*BRAD MORSE*

*UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA*

## REVIEWS

*We are bosses ourselves: the status and role of Aboriginal women today.* Edited by Fay Gale. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1983. Pp. 186. Numerous black and white illustrations. \$16.90 h.c. \$10.90 p.b.

Many voices speak in this book. Most pick up on an essential theme – the imposition of European values in interpretations and expectations of gender relations in Aboriginal society. The question is, who will hear and who will heed the critique?

The collection is drawn from contributions to a conference on Aboriginal women held in 1980 at the ANZAAS Congress in Adelaide. The editor, Fay Gale, writes:

This is a women's book; it is about women and mainly by women, and its most telling message is of the strength and solidarity of Aboriginal women in enormously different situations. (p. 1)

Most of the contributors are Aboriginal women. They came to the conference from various parts of the country, including remote areas, and from a great diversity of backgrounds. There are also papers from others but the conference was organised so as to make participation possible for Aboriginal women and to ensure that the information presented would be accessible to them. To this end, while there was a number of written papers there were also oral and taped contributions. Nor was it necessary to speak English in order to contribute as translators and interpreters were available. One presentation was both translated and interpreted thus spotlighting issues such as the possible loss of meaning in direct translation or the room for injection of meaning in interpretation. The latter has the plasticity to be made a vehicle for either quite specific messages or generalised discussion.

It is principally European participants who explicitly draw out the argument that the gender gulf and the restrictive and devalued position of women in European culture is inappropriately translated to Aboriginal society, with damaging consequences for both men and women. The point is, however, also strikingly embedded in the papers – written and oral – of the Aboriginal women who describe not only features of their role in traditional society and more recent and satisfying adaptations but their unhappy experiences of and critical reactions to a coercive behavioural model from another society.

An expectation of dependence of women on men, which has shackled Australian women of European descent in economic, political and general social terms has been part of the package of white ways thrust on Aborigines. The message in many of the papers is that this expectation was and is inappropriate in the context of traditional communities and has given rise to a number of social contradictions in that the position and role of both Aboriginal men and Aboriginal women has become grossly distorted. Boyle writes that Aboriginal woman may have coped better with the changes demanded of her:

But at the same time she has conflicting odds against her. She is being forced to play the role of the submissive sex in the wider society but at the same time forced to play the role of the dominant sex within the Aboriginal society because of the frustrations and alienation of the Aboriginal men, which has been brought about by the racism and class structure in this country. (p. 47)

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For Aboriginal women the conference obviously provided a sympathetic forum in which to express their concerns about Aboriginal society and their position in it. One of the threads drawn through the work is the socially corrosive effects of the unquestioned European assumption that ultimately social responsibility is vested in the individual. We see clearly that the stress on individualism generates difficulties and problems of many orders since Aboriginal values and behaviours are framed within a notion of the social collective and an understanding of collective responsibility.

Another theme, explicit in a number of papers, implicit in others, is the importance of land as a source of food, identity and social and spiritual belonging. That women have been virtually overlooked in non-Aboriginal views of Aboriginal/land relationships is a basis for misunderstanding of their position in traditional society and a source of frustration and anger for them. Other concerns, such as education and health and recognition of the importance of kin associations are commonly experienced and expressed.

Not all information presented, however, is coherently tied together. Different emphases may in part account for this. One of the papers is at pains to stress that women *contribute* to the ritual life of the group but, as described, their contribution appears secondary, their principle responsibilities being domestic. This interpretation sits uneasily with other arguments advancing the significance of women's social and ritual responsibilities. The community specifically cited is not what might be called a traditional community. It is, however, a traditionally oriented community adapting old behaviours and beliefs to changing circumstances. The apparent lack of coherence is, in this case, more than a difference in emphasis. It emerges because people are saying different things for different groups in quite different social circumstances. It is scarcely surprising that urban women would want to describe and stress some aspects of their life, women from dependent settlements others and women from independent communities others again. The incoherence reflects this diversity. It is an expression of the reality of Aboriginal existence today which does not diminish the binding force of common experiences and common concerns — the women's business — which is, after all, what the book is about.

GRETCHEN POINER

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

*Daughters of the Dreaming.* By Diane Bell. George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1983. Pp. 297. Black and white plates, index. \$14.95 p.b.

Diane Bell in this book has made significant contributions to various aspects of Aboriginal history. She writes that 'all the women I know at Warrabri who are over sixty can recount stories of the 1928 massacres' (p. 42), and that she 'was able to press older women for more life history material, to explore their memories of their first contacts with white men and to record their accounts of their role on cattle stations' (pp. 43-44). The women were a mine of stories and she pieced these stories together to recreate something of the women's life before the advent of Europeans and the enormous disruption that followed, including accounts of the 'killing-times' of the late



nineteen-twenties. The nineteen-forties memories are of the coming of the missionaries, the forcible gathering of most of the Central Australian people into settlements and the removal from their mothers of part-Aboriginal children. Finally to the settlement at Warrabri were brought Kaytej, Warlpiri, Alyawarra and Warumungu, speakers of different languages, who still keep mostly to themselves and distrust the others. Warrabri itself is on Kaytej land — a fact which was not considered when the administrators moved a mixture of language speakers there. This has been a continued source of tension.

Bell disclaims any intention to write the history of the peoples now resident at Warrabri, but rather 'I am exploring the context within which the shift was effected from a hunter-gatherer mode of existence to a sedentary life style . . . I am seeking answers to my questions concerning the nature of the changes in woman's worlds, and hence in her role and status' (p. 47). Bell claims that pronouncements by previous writers that Aboriginal men had a much higher status than women both in secular and religious affairs were because these writers, mostly male, assumed that such conditions were the same as in the society that they themselves inhabited. Moreover European settlers, missionaries and administrators allotted to Aboriginal men all the important tasks, while consulting them and not the women for all major decisions, so that women became only wives and mothers, subservient to their husbands, losing their previous role of essential food providers. Bell claims that neither the men nor the women she knew at Warrabri accepted the new differential status. This is where my own research findings did not coincide with hers. Looking back over my time spent with Pitjantjatjara speakers, I felt that the men took advantage of what the Europeans expected of them and asserted increased power over women, while the women in turn took advantage of European expectations to assert their power where they could — for example in supporting daughters who wished to marry the husbands of their own choice rather than the men to whom they were promised. The net effect was to increase tension between the sexes. However one should beware of the common mistake of assuming that all Aboriginal societies were similar and that all have reacted in the same way to European contact. I believe that the Yalata people, among whom I spent most time, suffered more drastic changes than the Kaytej.

Although Bell had worked hard to learn Warlpiri in preparation for her original plan of working with Warlpiri women, it was on Kaytej women that her study became centred, partly because they showed more desire to have her with them, and partly because she discovered that the Kaytej women's *jilimi*, 'the home of the ritually powerful and respected leaders, was the focus of activities in the main Kaytej camp for men and women alike' (p. 110). Others who have carried out research in Aboriginal communities have found that what they learn and from whom they learn is a function of their age, sex and marital status. A young male researcher will gain knowledge appropriate to young Aboriginal men, an older man may learn ritual secrets known only to older men. (It is of course for this reason that until recently so little was known about Aboriginal women, nearly all researchers having been male.) To Diane Bell, a woman with growing children but without a husband, were revealed the secrets of the *jilimi*, the area of the camp set aside for widows, women living temporarily or permanently apart from their husbands, and the daily retreat and meeting place for all the women. It is in the *jilimi* that women's affairs are discussed and women's rituals

planned. The Kaytej *jilimi* was the site for Bell of much essential learning about items of women's life and behaviour. Here she had lessons on how to behave properly as a Kaytej woman, and the more she imbibed this knowledge and acted accordingly the more the other women treated her as one of themselves. They expected her to join in all their activities, both in daily tasks and in women's ceremonies, according to the kinship status and subsection affiliation which she had been given.

An important part of this learning concerned women's ties to the land and the ceremonies they continue to perform for maintaining and caring for it. Rights are inherited from both parents so that a woman is *kirda* for her father's country and *kurdungulu* for her mother's father's. As *kirda*, women 'had to dance for the country and wear designs for the dreamings and places in the country. . . . The *kurdungulu* women had to sing, paint the *kirda*, and ensure that the law was correctly followed' (p. 20). Bell's knowledge of women's relationships to their ancestral land played an essential part in her success when, after completing her original research, she assisted various Aboriginal groups to present their claims before the Northern Territory land claim hearings. In a number of hearings women appeared before the judge to assert the claim.

It is not only to sustain their country that women perform ceremonies. They take responsibility for the nurturance, health and welfare of their community. Bell witnessed special rituals to heal the sick and to maintain good health, both physical and mental, as well as learning about medicinal plants and other cures. She discusses a further type of ritual, *yilpinji*, usually translated as love magic, though in fact possessing much more positive functions, such as maintaining proper relations between men and women.

The author, during her eighteen months' residence at Warrabri, participated with other women both in Warlpiri and Alyawarra initiation cycles and began to understand the complementary and cooperative roles of the women. Vital knowledge she gained at this time was the central part which the women play in arranging the betrothals of the boys being initiated. At the beginning of the cycle, during a night of dancing, the older women review each boy's potential mothers-in-law and finally each boy's mother chooses her son's mother-in-law, whose daughter should later become his wife. Bell's findings run counter to previous reports, by men who have witnessed initiation ceremonies, (e.g. Meggitt)<sup>1</sup> that it is the boy's male relatives who choose the circumcisor and thus settle the descent line of his future wife (or wives). Bell discusses this paradox at some length and admits she was not able to gain an entirely satisfactory answer except that the partners in the arranged marriage were left with a degree of choice.

Bell's book is significant not only for Aboriginal history, but also for the history of the anthropology of Aboriginal Australia. It is only the fourth book written by a female anthropologist about Aboriginal women. The forerunners are Kaberry, C.H. Berndt and Goodale.<sup>2</sup> In addition there have been collections of papers about various aspects of Aboriginal women's life, notably those edited by Gale<sup>3</sup> and a number of articles.

How then does *Daughters of the Dreaming* rate against previous writings? Kaberry opened a whole new chapter when she proclaimed unequivocally that Aboriginal women had economic autonomy, were individuals in their own right and not merely

their husbands' chattels. Moreover they performed significant religious ceremonies of their own, countering Durkheim's pronouncement that men could become sacred, women remained always profane. Catherine Berndt in her monograph on women's ceremonies goes further than Kaberry in exemplifying women's religious autonomy. Jane Goodale writing about her fieldwork on Melville Island in the late nineteen-fifties stressed that Tiwi women had secular and religious equality with men (on Bathurst and Melville Islands women do not have separate ceremonies as they do in the Centre and West). Diane Bell devotes some pages of her book to discussing existing literature about Aboriginal women, so I merely remark that Bell had these previous writings to build on and went further in annotating the significance for the whole community of the women's ceremonies, in caring for the land, in maintaining health and welfare and in the arrangement (and maintenance) of marriages. Her book therefore represents a major contribution to our knowledge of past and present Aboriginal societies and demonstrates the significance of women in every aspect of community existence. To quote her own words 'What I saw was a strong, articulate and knowledgeable group of women who were substantially independent of their menfolk in economic and ritual terms' (p. 231).

<sup>1</sup> See 1962: 299-300.

<sup>2</sup> Kaberry 1939; C.H. Berndt 1950; Goodale 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Gale 1970 and 1983.

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ISOBEL WHITE

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

*The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. Vol. III, No. 2 Special Issue: Development and Planning: After Land Claims. Editor Samuel W. Corrigan.

This volume of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 'examines concerns to land claim settlements in Canada, with a special emphasis upon the twin topics of long range planning and economic development' (Introduction). Why is there stress on 'economic development', and why is 'development' considered to be important following the settlement of claims? The reason in Canada is similar to that in Aboriginal Australia: without an adequate economic base, self-management will not be possible. And further, without an adequate concession to Native or Aboriginal structures, imposed political and economic structures are not only likely to fail, but are also contrary to the notion of self-determination.

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Native affairs in both Canada and Australia have many interesting parallels; both countries have political systems derived from British political structures. There are also differences. For example, unlike Canada, no treaties have been signed by the original inhabitants of Australia.

Many of the contributions to the Journal deal with particular cases (for example, Mineral Rights on Indian Reserves in Ontario; Algonquian Land Tenure and State Structures in the North; Planning and Development after the James Bay Agreement), and thus the reader who is not a specialist in Canadian Native studies, but is rather, say, involved in Aboriginal Australia, will get most interest from those articles which concern similar problems to those in their own fields, or supply relevant comparative material.

A most interesting article is that of Wertman (Planning and Development after the James Bay Agreement). This is in part because it articulates well with Australian Aboriginal situations, revealing similarities and contrasts, but also because it examines social history and the reasons for present-day structures and the problems encountered by the Cree after the James Bay Agreement. In Aboriginal Australia, just as with the Cree, it has been confirmed that comparative studies in, say, social impact assessment, are difficult, because each community has had a different contact history, can vary in mission (and other) affiliation, and therefore can vary in membership of external networks. These factors mean that negotiations for land settlements (of whatever kind) begin with little sense of regional, let alone national, identity. Wertman lists positive and negative outcomes of negotiations – and these are similar to Australian cases: the dependence on non-Native advisers, increase in bureaucratisation, increasing dependence on 'compensation' money to pay for basic services, and a lack of direction and objectives regarding development.

Dacks points out in his article (Worker Controlled Native Enterprises: A Vehicle for Community Development in Northern Canada?) that governments prefer to give economic rights to Natives, rather than giving them enduring legal rights or political institutions. At the same time, governments seem incapable of relating traditional values to the context of contemporary economic activity. The remedy, as Dacks sees it, is to form Native companies, which ensure there is no incompatibility of values between employer and employees, and no racial basis to that interaction. Nevertheless, there are still likely to be problems in the Native corporate structures that emerge – for example, the interests of the individual and those of the group need not be congruent.

Davidson (Indian Economic Development in *The Indian News* (1954-1982)) examines economic development as reflected in the 'flavour' of an Indian Affairs newspaper. The paper provided, in the 1950s, stories of Indians who made it, modelling themselves on other successful Indians (in whose terms?), and was a propaganda sheet for the Indian Affairs Bureau in the early 1960s, talking of Indian employment but not mentioning information related to wages, working conditions, safety standards, unions . . . When the newspaper was taken over by Indians from the late 1960s on, the information offered was expanded considerably, and drew in a wide range of Indian organisations. Information offered was expanded, and outside news of interest to Indians was also included. Ultimately the paper had to be severed from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, because the latter was accountable

to Parliament, yet this accountability placed the newspaper's independence in jeopardy. And one wonders in what ways the 'newsletters' of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Northern Territory's Department of Aboriginal Liaison are accountable to, or useful to, Aborigines. What purpose do they really serve?

Smith's article (The Role of Basic Needs and Provisions in Planning and Development) draws on experience in Jamaica. There are arguments presented concerning the measurement of 'development', particularly the inadequacy of GNP and GDP criteria, and an argument is put for the inclusion of services in the measurement of GNP. Modern society requires goods and planning, and so education, health, housing, legal structures, and so on are prerequisites of such a society, no less indispensable than energy or raw materials. Social services are required to allow people to participate in society and the economy, otherwise those people become marginal. One also should consider that sport and entertainment improve the quality of life (as well as forming minor industries), and therefore should be taken into account in measuring the well-being of a society. There is, however, no extrapolation made about preserving traditional values.

Following the Special Issue articles, there is a 'Policy/Discussion' section. Here, Hon. T.R. Berger, in describing the background to Native claims and drawing on his experience in the MacKenzie Valley pipeline inquiry, makes the point that Native claims are for more than just land; they also encompass resources (both renewable and non-renewable), education, health and social services, public order and the shape and composition of political entities. He also makes the point that by ensuring the rights of Indians, one is ensuring the rights of others (and not necessarily minorities) who want to be different.

In the section entitled 'Native Studies', the paper by McCaskill (Native Economic Development and Small Business Management Course: An Experimental Partnership Between a Native Association and a University) concerns local employment schemes. The problems in rural Canada are similar to those in rural Australia: since there are few business, accountancy and similar skills locally, either non-locals have to be employed, or unskilled people carry out the work. The former is of little benefit to the community, while the latter usually leads to failure of the project. Indeed, in Australia, unskilled non-locals often fill positions, and so both outcomes occur. McCaskill then goes on to describe a course in Native economic development and small business management, developed by the Department of Native Studies at Trent University, in conjunction with a Native economic development association, Native Five Alliance. There were a number of problems, including the diversity of backgrounds of the students, diversity of ages, academic skills, confidence. Major self-image changes were required: the disadvantaged had to become managers. The course included undertaking a study of needs and resources for economic development in a home community (in fact, one of the selection criteria for students was their desire to return to their community), identification of suitable financing sources, and the consideration of the relationships between Native traditions, and business development in Native communities. There were problems in the conflict between the educational norms of the University (such as in student selection criteria) and those of the Alliance (who were accused of political bias in the selection of the students). There were problems of outcome: a new cadre of skilled leaders, who were a potential threat to existing political

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leadership (in which case bias in the selection of students might be seen as maintaining the political peace of the community, or as self-interest in maintaining it). Nevertheless, the programme was judged to be a success, and this warts-and-all picture has interesting possibilities for the Australian situation.

The volume concludes with book reviews and reviews of other media, including films.

Other volumes of the Journal show that entire issues are sometimes addressed to particular topics (such as: The Metis since 1870, Learning for Self-Determination: Community-Based Options for Native Training and Research), also with Policy/Discussion and Native Studies articles. This Journal can be seen to have interesting possibilities in comparative Australian and Canadian Native studies, in showing up differences and similarities. One could only wish for the provision of maps for those unsure of all locations mentioned. The covers of the Journal are a delight.

SUE KESTEVEN

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES

*Australian Aborigines: the languages and customs of several tribes of Aborigines in the Western District of Victoria, Australia.* By James Dawson. George Robertson, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, 1881. Facsimile edition, plus new Introduction by J. Critchett. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Canberra, 1981. Pp. 112 + CIV. \$14.95 (hard cover).

Staunch defender of Aboriginal rights during unsympathetic times, James Dawson first arrived in the fledgling colony of Victoria (then Port Phillip) in 1840, a few years following the siting of Melbourne. He settled in the Port Fairy region of the Western District and with his daughter, Isabella, familiarised himself with the languages and customs of the local Aboriginal people, especially those who resided in the region between the Hopkins River and Portland. Dawson's public support of the Aboriginal people led him to criticise the attitude and behaviour of European society towards Aborigines, including the 'Religious advice from men holding Magnificent Estates from which the Aborigines were expelled and massacred wholesale' (Introduction). In spite of this, indeed as acknowledgement of his commitment to the Aboriginal community, he was appointed Local Guardian of Aborigines in the Camperdown area in 1876.

The Dawsons' accounts of Aboriginal languages and customs appeared in newspapers of the day, such as *The Australasian*; finally Dawson drew together this information for publication in the present volume. An amateur ethnographer, he relied closely on the testimony of a few key Aboriginal informants, such as Yuruun Parpur Tarneen, 'Chiefess' of the Mopor, or Spring Creek, people. He claimed to have double-checked all the text with his Aboriginal assistants, a process taking several years to accomplish. In this regard, he can be distinguished somewhat from his contemporaries, such as Smyth (1878), Howitt (1904) and Curr (1886-87), who relied heavily upon correspondence rather than direct interview when compiling their ethnographies.

Dawson was also a staunch critic of government policy concerning Aborigines. He

opposed, for example, the setting aside of reserves, (such as Framlingham and Lake Condah) to which Aboriginal people were removed from their traditional homelands. He was critical of the choice of location for the reserves, which were often on inferior ground, and of the restrictions to personal freedom imposed on Aborigines. He supported the Aborigines' claims for payment for labour carried out on the reserves. He felt that such reserves destroyed morale as well as Aboriginal society and culture. He opposed the later subdivision of Framlingham, an issue which has recently been revived (nearly one hundred years later) as a source of modern Aboriginal Land Rights claims.

In his day a rather unique humanitarian, Dawson was still fighting the good fight on behalf of Aborigines in his ninety-third year, as Victorian Parliamentary Debates record (Introduction).

For the most part, Dawson's account of Aboriginal life in the Western District of Victoria is detailed and informative, containing references to ceremonial performances and myths through to aspects of daily life which are often lacking in contemporary ethnographies. In these aspects his work was well received. His overriding aim was to counter the disparaging image of Australian Aboriginal culture as barbarous and inferior to the European, with few redeeming features.

In contrast, he presents a picture of a well-peopled district, involved in complex social relations. Intercourse between neighbouring and/or hostile groups, speaking different dialects and languages, was mediated by a complex of social, ceremonial and trading events. These included spectacular and large-scale mass hunts, held in the centre of the district in summer, involving large numbers of people drawn from a variety of language groups. Large groups of people were also observed on other occasions associated with the acquisition of key natural resources, such as eels, whales and native fruit. As well as extensive trading networks, exchange meetings took place, which involved the circulation of prestigious items, such as greenstone axes (Cf. McBryde 1978).

Dawson writes of the displays of shamanism, given by leading initiated men of influence, on occasions following inter-group festivities. These meetings were often arranged by such politically powerful males, as were the mass hunts. Competitive games, such as football and wrestling, were performed on these occasions. Dawson also describes the wide range of weaponry made and used by males of different social groups. This equipment included elaborately carved clubs, 'scimitars', boomerangs, war spears and shields. They were used as much for display as for combat. Obviously we have evidence here for complex territorial inter-group and inter-personal relations, which have been formalised to some extent by the development of a specific material culture.

Dawson writes at length of subsistence activities, and the range of technological equipment employed. Perhaps, the widest-ranging practices were associated with fishing which was performed in a variety of ways, and took place both in the day-time as well as at night. Eels of course were the prized species and captured in substantial weirs, traps and by large-scale excavated drainage ditches in areas of inundation.

Dawson emphasises the importance of vegetable foods, in particular the tuber, called 'muurang' (murnong), which can be identified as the yam-daisy, *Microseris scapigera*. 'When several families live near each other and cook their roots together,

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sometimes the baskets form a pile three feet high. The cooking of the muurang entails a considerable amount of labour on the women, inasmuch as the baskets are made by them; and as these often get burnt, they rarely serve more than twice' (p. 20).

Storage appears to have been attempted at times in association with eels and other meat (which were cooked or dried) whale meat (which was buried in quantity as were eels), and acacia gum, which was tapped from trees at the end of summer and stored in balls for winter usage.

Fire was used extensively to aid hunting and also as a land management technique. Open areas were fired to facilitate harvesting yams, and dried out overgrown swamps were cleared in summer to expose food for birds. Such practices must also have helped to extend areas of open vegetation, thus favouring certain species, among them tubers (see also Gott 1982), as well as rejuvenating swamplands. Today, the use of fire in a similar fashion is considered an ecologically sound practice in the management of wetlands.

By the time Dawson's book was published traditional Aboriginal settlement patterns had to be more or less reconstructed, with the inclusion even of archaeological information. He writes that earth mounds were still very numerous throughout the Western District, and that they 'were the sites of large, permanent habitations, which formed homes for many generations. The great size of them, and the vast accumulation of burnt earth, charcoal and ashes which is found in and around them, is accounted for by the long continuance of the domestic hearth, the decomposition of the building materials and the debris arising from their frequent destruction by bushfires' (p. 103). He denied that the mounds were ovens, which he explains as a popular misconception, and he tested his theories by the excavation of one large mound, sixty five feet in diameter and five feet high. In this way he can be acknowledged as one of our earliest amateur ethnoarchaeologists.

In his documentation of language groups and social relations, of subsistence and settlement patterns, and even of population estimates, Dawson's work can be supported by the written accounts of others, such as G.A. Robinson, who was Protector of Aborigines (1839-1849) and toured the Western District at the time Dawson first arrived there. Further support can be derived from the works of Smyth (1878) and Howitt (1904), which largely concern other parts of Victoria. Indeed, I have employed Dawson's work extensively in my own ethnohistorical research on southwestern Victoria (Lourandos 1977, 1980a, 1980b) and found him to be an invaluable source of information, as well as adhering quite closely in most respects to the accounts of the above writers.

In addition, Dawson provides us with a wealth of other information, including marriage systems, naming of persons, superstitions and diseases, death and burial, together with notes on the avenging of death, and myths. One intriguing myth may include a historical reference to megafauna. The extinct giant emu, it was stated, which was speared by hunters concealed in trees, was last seen near the town of Hamilton, during a time 'when the volcanic hills were in a state of eruption' (p. 92). Recent geomorphological evidence suggests that volcanoes were still active in the Western District even during Holocene times, thus lending some credence to these myths (Ollier and Joyce 1973). There is even a mythological reference to the bunyip.



Dawson also provides us with information on the spread of smallpox and of the resulting decimation of Aboriginal populations. He records Aboriginal songs and stories which told of this crisis and which were carried south into Victoria from affected regions in New South Wales.

Contemporary criticism of Dawson's work however, centred upon one key issue, and it has coloured to some extent the general evaluation of his work ever since. Dawson claimed that Western District Aboriginal society was socially stratified along class lines and that overriding authority was in the hands of hereditary chieftans. Curr vehemently opposed this contention, claiming that no such authority structure existed in Australian Aboriginal society and his viewpoint has remained generally accepted to this day. 'Chief' is a title usually reserved by present-day anthropologists for ranked societies such as those of Polynesia. In contrast, they point to the bulk of the societies which make up Melanesia (including Papua New Guinea) as being more egalitarian in structure and largely composed of autonomous units, bound by kinship but with power residing informally in the hands of prominent males or 'big men'. Australian Aboriginal societies share many similarities with the latter Melanesian groups; thus it is not surprising that Dawson's claim appears a little extraordinary. The task at hand, however, is surely to re-evaluate his information more carefully. He may have been documenting aspects of Aboriginal society concerning degrees of power, prestige and status, lost to us through the breakdown of their society during the volatile period of culture contact. The degree of complex social interaction, of corporate subsistence activities (such as mass hunts, large-scale excavated drainage systems, large dams and weirs) may have allowed for significant power and status to be exercised by prominent individuals. Extensive and prestigious trade (e.g. greenstone axes), shamanism, together with differing levels of polygyny (aspects of life in Victoria as well as other parts of Australia), may have served to intensify such concentrations of power. Dawson's ambiguous terminology ('chief' and the like) may be misleading us.

Anthropological case examples such as those of the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands, off the Arnhem Land coast (Hart and Pilling 1960), attest to the existence of authority figures, or 'big men', as the ethnographers referred to them. Such individuals, together with their power bases, also were to be found in other parts of Australia (e.g. Elkin 1945). Indeed, Dawson's claim of a hereditary transference of power was in some ways supported by Howitt who wrote of a semi-hereditary practice in other parts of southeastern Australia, such as among the *Wiradjuri* (1904: 303). Stahle (Howitt 1904: 305-6) independently came to similar conclusions for the *Gunditjmara* of south-western Victoria. Pilling (1968) argues for a general uniformity of social institutions throughout Australia, including the south-east, but he may have overlooked more subtle aspects of the power game. After all, the general 'big man' system of Melanesia includes a very wide range of variation, so it is not implausible to suggest that a broad range may have existed in Australian societies. Such fragile formations, lacking clear cut formal structures, would have been among the first aspects of Australian Aboriginal societies to disappear, long before the arrival of the anthropologist. The rather patronising attitudes of later Europeans towards Aboriginal society would also have served to eradicate the operation and perhaps awareness of past authority figures.

It is now time to assess this material more carefully in light of recent theoretical

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debates concerning the development of such power structures in non-stratified societies. Also important is the association between these social structures and the organisation of production. These issues concern hunter-gatherers just as much as Melanesian horticulturalists, as is exemplified by the connection between large-scale man-made drainage systems, eeling and inter-group occasions in the Western District of Victoria (Lourandos 1980a, 1980b, 1983).

Problems such as these raise doubts concerning the accuracy of our assessment or knowledge of traditional Aboriginal societies, especially those of the more Europeanised parts of the continent, such as southeastern Australia. The work of Dawson, among others, may lead us to accept that a wider range of societies and cultures existed in 1788, a conclusion arrived at by recent investigations (e.g. Butlin 1983). In such a climate of opinion even some of the more controversial writings of a man of conscience, like Dawson, may receive a more sympathetic hearing.

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HARRY LOURANDOS

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

*Australian Aborigines: The languages and customs of several tribes of Aborigines in the Western District of Victoria, Australia.* By James Dawson. George Robertson, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, 1881.

Facsimile edition, with new Introduction by J. Critchett. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1981. Pp. 112+ CIV. \$14.95.

This facsimile edition has been published one hundred years after the original edition. It would be difficult to think of a work that has stood the test of time to the same degree as Dawson's. When it was first published the book was outstanding: it was a sympathetic and detailed account of Aboriginal traditions and vocabularies from the Western District, well ahead of its time. A hundred years later the knowledge preserved in Dawson's book remains as a unique record of a culture that was.

The Introduction to the facsimile edition, written by Jan Critchett provides valuable historical information on James Dawson and gives a warm personal account of the man. She criticises him over his views on 'chiefs' and 'chiefesses' quoting both E.M. Curr<sup>1</sup> and the general evaluation of Dawson by P. Corris.<sup>2</sup> The situation is however not nearly as clear-cut as Jan Critchett would have us believe: Aboriginal society was not as universally egalitarian as Curr thought. There were always ritual leaders and men more equal than others, and this was presumably the case in the Western District. Dawson did not misrepresent the situation; he interpreted it in a European manner. The most recent analysis of the problem, by Hiatt,<sup>3</sup> shows that Dawson's views cannot simply be dismissed.

Dawson gives a sensitive and detailed description of customs, foods and kinships, the only topic on which his sympathies have obviously broken down altogether is music: 'Little can be said in favour of the Aboriginal music. The airs are monotonous and doleful, and there is no such thing as harmony' (p. 80). Nevertheless he gives an account of ceremonies and meetings and does much to document the sociology of the Western District Aborigines.

The second half of Dawson's book consists of a general vocabulary of three Western District languages, followed by specialised vocabularies of fauna, flora and kinship terms and finally there is a section 'Grammar and Sentences'. The three languages are:

- *Chaap wuurong*, 'soft lip' the language of the 'Kolor' tribe, who according to Dawson once occupied the Dunkeld, Wickliffe, Lake Boloke and Caramut areas;
- *Kuurn kopan noot* 'small lip', which was spoken further to the south-west;
- *Peek whurrong*, 'kelp lip', the language of the Port Fairy tribe, who lived still further to the south-west.

It is clear from Dawson's work that these last two languages were so closely related that they should in fact be considered as dialects of one language. R.H. Mathews<sup>4</sup> calls

<sup>1</sup> 1886, I: 55.

<sup>2</sup> 1968: 19.

<sup>3</sup> 1984.

<sup>4</sup> 1904: 57.

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this language *Dhauhurtwurru*. R.M.W. Dixon,<sup>5</sup> in a map showing the language distribution of the south-east of Australia, has included both under a heading which he calls F2.

*Chaap wuurong* was considerably different. It was a dialect of Western Kulin, which was spoken over a large area further north. R.H. Mathews<sup>6</sup> was already aware of this and R.M.W. Dixon<sup>7</sup> has dispelled subsequent misapprehensions on this matter. He has listed *Chaap wuurong* with the Western Kulin languages which he calls H1.

Dawson's testimony is all the more important since, tragically, all these languages are now extinct. In 1963, while searching for the remnants of Victorian languages I was fortunate enough to meet Mr Angus Alberts, from Lake Condah. This was very shortly before his death, and the recording, however brief, gives at least some indication of what the language of the Portland – Port Fairy area must have sounded like. There was no one who could recall *Chaap wuurong*, but it is possible to interpret data on this language in the light of the more northerly dialects of Western Kulin, particularly *Wergaia* from the Lake Hindmarsh area: in 1963 there still people who could recall an extensive vocabulary in *Wergaia*.<sup>8</sup>

Nothing can detract from Dawson's achievement in helping us, and hopefully future generations, to appreciate information that would otherwise be lost. The re-edition of the book provides a good opportunity for taking a closer look at the language material.

The weakest part of the work would appear to be the section entitled 'Grammar and Sentences'. The main problem was that Dawson could not get away from the idea, widespread in his day, that 'the Native Grammar is very meagre' (lxxxv). In spite of this a lot can be gleaned from the section: Dawson may not have been able to present a grammatical analysis, but he could obviously 'hear' the language and put down in a comprehensible fashion what he heard. He only gave sentences in *Kuurn kopan noot*, so we have a single system of internal evidence. How this can help to give the possibility of an improved analysis can be shown by the following examples.

We read (p. xcv):

They killed the dog.

*Burtanoot daaelakanare kaal.*

Killed        the                dog.

This analysis shows signs of the nineteenth century preoccupation with articles: Dawson here interprets the demonstrative (and third person) pronoun as an article 'the'. But he lists *daelakanaree* as the third person plural pronoun 'they', (p. lxxxviii).

We might therefore suggest an improved interpretation:

They killed the dog.

*Burtanoot daaelakanare kaal.*

Killed        they                dog.

<sup>5</sup> 1980: 241.

<sup>6</sup> 1902: 85.

<sup>7</sup> 1980: 263.

<sup>8</sup> Hercus 1969: 111.

In his *Dhauhurtwurru* grammar R.H. Mathews states<sup>9</sup> that 'verbs have the same numbers and persons as the pronouns'; in other words a bound pronoun subject marker is suffixed to the tense form of the verb.

This is exactly the same situation as in *Wergaia*, the Kulin language to the north of *Kuurn Kopan Noot*. The verb can appear in any position in the sentence. This is opposed to the more complex situation in the more north-easterly Kulin language *Wembawemba*, where the bound pronoun subject can appear only with the head-word of a sentence. Dawson's work is therefore vital in showing us there was some kind of regional similarity between the languages of the Western District. This regional similarity encompassed those which were genetically 'Kulin' languages, like *Chaap wuurong* and *Wergaia*, as well as those of the far southern coastal variety like *Kuurn Kopan Noot*.

Using the evidence supplied by Dawson himself in various other sentences we can see that there was a suffix -oot, sometimes written -oort and -uut which marked the third person plural:

They will burn down your dwelling.

*Pappakuut wuurn gnuutaeen.*

Burn wuurn yours.

We can also see from a number of other examples that -n- (Kulin -n-) marked the past and -k- the future. A more detailed analysis of the first sentence is therefore possible:

They killed the dog.

*Burtanoot daaelakanarae kaal.*

*burta- n -oot daaelakanarae kaal.*

kill - PAST - 3pl they dog.

Similarly for the second sentence:

They will burn down your dwelling.

*Pappakuut wuurn gnuutaeen*

*pappa-k -uut wuurn gnuutaeen.*

Burn -FUTURE - 3pl wuurn yours.

There is some inconsistency in the notation of final -a, nevertheless there is no doubt that -a, as noted also by Mathews marks the agent, the ergative case. This can be illustrated by a sentence from p.xci:

The dog bit him.

*Puundan deen kaal a.*

Bit dog

This can now be analysed as:

*puunda- n deen kaal- a.*

Bite PAST this dog - ERG.

Dawson thought that the grammar of *Kuurn Kopan Noot* was simple; he had no idea of its intricacies, but he wrote down what he heard. R.H. Mathews realised that the languages were very complex, and thought that the best way of explaining them was to simplify them. He says:

<sup>9</sup> 1904: 60.

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It should be stated that in all the expressions illustrating the several cases of nouns in this article the demonstrative pronouns are purposely omitted, for the two-fold purpose of saving space, and of avoiding confusion by introducing any more words than are really required . . .<sup>10</sup>

R.H. Mathews knew that languages had rules and systems and he was apt to get rid of irregularities. Dawson made no attempt to force any regularity. It seems that if one day he heard something sounding a little different, he simply put it down a little different. Despite the resulting inconsistencies we must thank him for it. What he wrote down gives the impression of living reality.

The type of inconsistency that appears in Dawson's work can best be seen from the vocabulary. It is well known that we cannot expect a word for word equivalence between English and Australian languages. By juxtaposing some of the items where there is an overlap we can see how Dawson proceeded:

English	<i>Chaap wuurong</i>	<i>Kuurn kopan noot</i>	<i>Peek whurrong</i>
Bad	<i>Pirnaewuuchuup</i>	<i>Warrakeek laeak</i>	<i>Gnumeen char</i>
Wild	<i>Pirna wuuchuup</i>	<i>Warrakeek laek</i>	<i>Warrakeek laek</i>
Anger	<i>Pirnawuchuup</i>	<i>Warrakealeek</i>	<i>Watee leek</i>
Wrong	<i>Porn porn jaa</i>	<i>Gnummee kuunan</i>	<i>Gnumme kuunan</i>
Bird	<i>Yowwir</i>	<i>Muttal</i>	<i>Muttal</i>
Body	<i>Pengneeung uratt</i>	<i>Turang muttnaen</i>	<i>Turang muttnaen</i>
Flesh	<i>Ping yin</i>	<i>Tuurap muttnin</i>	<i>Tuuramp muttal</i>
(for food)			
Flesh, human	<i>Beng guuk</i>	<i>Tuurap neung</i>	<i>Muttal</i>
Flesh of whale	<i>Banggok</i>	<i>Tuurap neung</i>	

These and many other examples could be cited to show how Dawson varies his spellings and readily splits up words. The *Chaap wuurong* words are particularly telling because we can analyse them in the light of first hand information on the closely related *Wergaia* language:

<i>Pengneeung uratt</i>	= <i>pengangurak</i>	'our body' :	Dawson 'body'
<i>Ping yin</i>	= <i>pengin</i>	'your body' :	" 'flesh'
<i>Beng guuk</i>	= <i>pengkuk</i>	'his body' :	" 'human flesh'
<i>Banggok</i>	= "	" "	" 'whale flesh'

Throughout the vocabulary possessive suffixes for various persons are used without any system, verbs appear in the imperative singular or plural, the present, the purposive, the present participle and the reciprocal, or even both of those last two as in:

Fight	<i>Tukcherrang</i>	i.e. <i>tak-tjer-ang</i> , 'hitting one another'
		hit-RECIP-PTC
Quarrel	<i>Challecharrang</i>	i.e. <i>tjali-tjer-ang</i> , 'abusing one another'
		abuse-RECIP-PTC

Because of its extent and total honesty however the work remains as a fund of information particularly on *Kuurn kopan noot*, for which we have so little else. The notes given here are meant not as a criticism of this pioneer work, but as an indication that much more could be learnt from a detailed linguistic study of the data given by

<sup>10</sup> 1903: 61.

Dawson. Hitherto, to my knowledge, there has only been one study, an unpublished honours thesis by M. Wilkinson, of the Australian National University. A more expanded and intensive study would be of great interest from the point of view of comparative linguistics, and it would be treasured by the descendants of the Aboriginal people who once lived in the Port Fairy — Lake Condah area.

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LUISE HERCUS

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

*Archaeology of the Dreamtime. The story of prehistoric Australia and her people*. By Josephine Flood. William Collins, Sydney, 1983. Pp. 288. Colour and black and white plates. \$14.95 p.b.

In the author's own words this book was written for 'the general reader, for Aborigines interested in learning more of their own heritage, and for secondary and tertiary students'. On the whole, the author has succeeded in these aims: I know several Aborigines who have read the book with interest; it does appear on university book lists as introductory reading material for prehistory students, and I often recommend it to members of the public.

The book's chief value is as a highly readable account of research into the Aboriginal past, bringing together a vast array of knowledge built up by research workers and presenting it in a manner that is understandable and interesting to the average reader. This has been achieved largely through summarising and paraphrasing the research papers of numerous scholars.

But the book has its faults too, one particularly infuriating one being the author's determination to fit in somewhere every fact and idea known to her, often halting the flow of what promises to be an excellent stretch of narrative to pop in a somewhat irrelevant snippet or two. The tone becomes quite garrulous at times, whirling from topic to topic at breathless pace to ensure that all the various crumbs of knowledge are

at least tasted if not consumed. As a result the book is uneven, some sections being quite splendid, others very curious mixtures.

The chapters are grouped into five major sections which are ordered chronologically. The first section begins by telling the reader how archaeologists learn about the human past by studying such objects as tools and food refuse that people left behind at their camp sites. This is illustrated by one of the author's own excavations, at Cloggs Cave in eastern Victoria. In descriptions such as this the author is at her best. We can share with her a sense of enthusiasm and excitement as cave deposits more than two metres deep are peeled slowly away, layer by layer, to reveal 17,000 years of human history. This section continues with a discussion of how Australia was originally colonised by the 'first boat people', and concludes with a description of Australia's best known archaeological site, Lake Mungo.

The second section, titled 'Human origins', deals with the variation discovered by physical anthropologists in ancient Aboriginal skeletal remains and traces the ancestry of the two main physical types to separate locations in Southeast Asia. This is pretty speculative stuff, the more so because some of the remains have not yet been fully reported on by the anthropologists involved. 'Human origins' is followed by 'Ice age beginnings', a section devoted by and large to the distribution of early sites and the presumed manner in which people spread across the continent. A description of early sites in Queensland is interrupted to tell us about the exciting find of a wooden boomerang on a rock ledge. Does this also belong to the ice age? We are not told it doesn't. And why in a chapter on the east coast during the Pleistocene does a photograph of a *Diprotodon* skeleton from Lake Callabonna suddenly appear, unrelated to anything in that chapter? 'The rising of the seas' follows, a section dealing with the time of post-glacial rise in sea level that separated Tasmania and New Guinea from the mainland. The possible effects on the Tasmanians of 12,000 years of isolation from the mainland are discussed, including a reiteration of the varied speculation on two well known, and probably unanswerable, problems, 'why did the Tasmanians stop eating fish?' and 'the decline in useful arts'. These the author finds too irresistible to omit. Included in this section is a chapter that deals mainly with the advent of a new stone technology some 4000 years ago, but is rather strangely titled 'The arrival of the dingo' even though discussion on the origins of this animal is a minor event towards the end of the chapter. The last chapter in this section, 'Harvesters, engineers and fire-stick farmers', together with the final section of the book, titled 'The last two thousand years', tell the reader about some of the vast number of different economic strategies that enabled Aborigines to subsist in a variety of environments.

This section relies for its information as much on ethnography and oral traditions as it does on archaeology. It deals also with other aspects of Aboriginal life, notably art and religion, but addresses some topics in too cursory a manner; the usefulness of a single sentence description of a complex subject like totemism is indeed questionable. The section also misses out on an opportunity to demonstrate how the various aspects — for example material culture, art, religion, social structure, — all articulate with each other to form the cohesive whole known as Aboriginal culture, and that archaeology is just one of the many windows through which we can view it.



*A prehistory of Australia, New Guinea and Sahul.* By J. Peter White and James F. O'Connell. Academic Press, Sydney, New York, etc., 1982. Pp. xiii + 286. Plates, diagrams, figures. \$18.15. p.b.

Australian prehistory is of world significance. It is not surprising then that an Australian archaeologist (who has worked mainly in New Guinea, once part of Greater Australia or Sahul) should collaborate with an American archaeologist who has worked in Australia to convey that significance, aiming certainly at Australian and American students of prehistory, and presumably a yet wider British, European and world audience.

Those of us who were brought up in Western industrial society and its offshoots are peculiarly ill-equipped for the study of hunter-gatherer prehistory, which comprises, after all, more than 99 per cent of the past of all mankind. Our academic traditions have urban roots. The 'civilisations' we cherish are the 'cultures of cities', and our urbanised societies rest upon the economic and cultural foundations of agricultural and peasant modes of life, with their virtues of hard work and thrift and respect for material possessions. In European-derived societies we are distanced by hundreds of generations from any understanding of the ways of life of foragers and fishers, hunters, harvesters and husbanders of wild animal and plant resources.

Australian prehistory can provide opportunities to escape the mental limitations imposed by the narrowness of our urban experience. The great significance of Australian archaeology is that it gives glimpses into the multitudinous possibilities of hunter-gatherer prehistories. So our chances of comprehension are heightened and enriched by the resources of Australian ethnographic and ethnohistorical materials. Yet in using ethnographic data we should not assume lack of change. Rather the ethnographies provide regional base-lines which represent the end points of processes of change, and so enable us to measure change. To comprehend the significance of the spectacular burials of around 7000 years ago at Roonka or Lake Nitchie we must appreciate that they are indeed 'forms unknown in the nineteenth century' (as White and O'Connell point out on p. 214) and indicators of *differences* in social structuring over time. There is no need to be apologetic about use of the *ethnographic* record. Of course it is 'inadequate as a direct guide' (p. 215). But without it we should be unable to assess the meaning of the *archaeological* record, or test and trace the trajectories of change made evident by the juxtaposition of evidence from different timespans, including the changes and processes of change within the period since first European contact.

By looking at the prehistories not only of Australia and Tasmania, but also of New Guinea, White and O'Connell give themselves the opportunity to consider the options and dynamics of the lifeways of foragers and hunters, and their reactions to and impacts upon changing environments. They also survey the differing options taken by those groups which, by developing horticulture, chose to intensify resource usage to support rapidly increasing population densities, rather than restraining population within the limits of available resources.

Here they touch upon one of the major themes of world prehistory — what determined whether societies found themselves on a *positive*-feedback treadmill of rising populations and labour-intensive resource usage, extracting more meals per square

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mile? or alternatively, how elsewhere did *negative*-feedback mechanisms operate to hold populations comfortably below the ceiling of carrying-capacity? Is the dichotomy absolute? Australia has many examples of intensive plant usage, including 'husbanding' of plants which are now cultivated in Southeast Asia. The early dates for drainage channels in New Guinea upland valleys show cultivation well under way before Torres Strait was established. What factors determined a southern boundary for such practices? Or, should we envisage a cline in plant manipulation? Is it possible that some mainland Australian groups moved towards sedentism, horticulture and high demographic densities; but from environmental necessity or cultural choice moved again towards using a wider spectrum of resources less intensively?

These are major questions which invite discussion of the evidence from Sahul and their bearing on world prehistory. There are others. What is the nature and date of the *Homo erectus* to *Homo sapiens* transition and its bearing on the colonisation of continents outside the main African/Eurasian landmass? What of the relationships between robust and gracile populations? What light can Australian colonisation throw on American prehistory and vice versa? Especially regarding questions of big game and megafaunal extinctions. What is the relationship (inverse or complementary?) between tuber-based and seed-based economies? broad spectrum and/or specialised subsistence patterns? How far can cultural change and activity patterns be understood by considering the occurrence and properties of particular formal tool types, or is it necessary to consider rather the properties of entire assemblages?

Some of these questions White and O'Connell tackle. I particularly appreciated the comparisons between Australia and the Americas. The subject is discussed twice – in the initial section on the 'Early Prehistory' of Sahul, and again in a final debate on 'Sahul in World Prehistory'. On the one hand, given the lack of visibility of big game in American caves and rockshelters, despite the clear evidence of open kill and butchering sites, should we put too much reliance on the perhaps exaggerated sparsity and ambiguity of Australian big-game evidence? – 'it is certainly not impossible that Sahulian and American mega-faunal hunting patterns displayed close similarities' (p. 217). On the other hand, while for Sahul we have dates approaching the 40,000 mark, none the less, 'prehistorians now suggest that . . . the amount of evidence for the early settlement period one can expect to find will be very small, given the small numbers of people' and 'belief in a slow rate of colonisation' with 'time needed for environmental adaptation' reinforces a similar argument for the Americas, and the likelihood that 'the northern continent, at least, was colonised no later than 20,000 years ago, and probably ten or more millennia earlier'. Even more forceful is the argument that if 'experimental plant manipulation' was occurring in the Americas by 9000 years ago (as also in New Guinea within Sahul) then 'the chronologies of American prehistory have allowed totally insufficient time for a long term secure environmental understanding to be developed' So a time scale similar to that of Sahul, could be envisaged.

Some problems are discussed not because they are held to be of world importance, but 'because they . . . have . . . generated their own literature' (p.73). Yet, just because rivers of ink have flowed over Tasmanian fish why pour away more? Perhaps the converse reasoning should be applied. Students should be stimulated to consider topics on which there are data, but inadequate discussion – for instance archaeological and ethnographic evidence for population distributions in relation to distribution of

resources such as tuberous plants; or regional and temporal variation in Pleistocene stone tool assemblages.

Although White and O'Connell choose to focus on tools as one of their three main topics for discussion (megafauna, waves of settlers, and stone tools), their section on flaked stone artefacts is very general, and considers the properties of individual artefacts rather than the characteristics of total assemblages. Nowhere is this discussion brought down to Australian brass tacks. Are 'Kartan' assemblages significantly different from other assemblages of comparable antiquity? Can we distinguish temporal differences? regional differences? activity differences?<sup>1</sup> differences due to raw material? and to distance from raw material sources? Byrne's study,<sup>2</sup> for instance, is concerned not just with the distribution of raw material from a source (p. 85), but with how distance affects assemblage composition and the sizes of the flakes and flaked pieces discarded to form those assemblages. It is an Australian study in assemblage taphonomy with lessons for understanding stone assemblage formation anywhere on earth.

In general the authors appear unaware of the detailed content of studies of Australian stone tool assemblages. They see Johnson's ideas on reduction in artefact size over time and increase in flaking control as original, and state (p.106) that these trends 'have not been studied or documented in detail'. What of Lampert's meticulous studies of the Burrill Lake material? or Jones on Rocky Cape? or Rosenfeld on 'Early Man Shelter' or Schrire on Alligator River? or the Jones/Lorblanchet study which they have previously cited (p. 86)? Stockton's ideas on 'intermediate' flake assemblages are ignored.

An example of the emphasis on 'stone tools as cultural markers' approach, is the discussion of the earliest dates for secondarily-trimmed points in Arnhem Land. This sort of detailed fascination with 'marker fossils' is surely inappropriate, when many wider questions are treated briefly, even brusquely (e.g. 'backed blades' in one paragraph). If the authors had looked at Kimberley material<sup>3</sup> they would see a wide range of ways of trimming (or not trimming) elongated flake blanks giving everything from a 'leilera' to a 'backed blade' to a 'pirri' or 'Kimberley point'. They would also realise that all or any of these possibilities can crystallise out of the multidimensional matrix of possible ways of retrimming and hafting a long flake. The exercise of isolating and considering only certain 'types' obscures the nature of *assemblages* which stress elongated flakes. The development of such flake assemblages is vital to understanding so-called 'small tool' traditions. It seems inconsistent to insist on *external*, sudden, origins for late Australian tool traditions while insisting on an *internal* gradual genesis for New Guinea horticulture (where at least some of the domesticates must have been brought in).

The discussions of colonisation, and waves of colonisation, wallow in difficulties that seem unnecessary if one assumes (as these authors do) a slow and rather sparse

<sup>1</sup> McBryde 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Byrne 1980.

<sup>3</sup> or Dortch 1977.

initial settling of most of the continent, by whatever routes; and if, additionally, we allow a sufficient timespan for an archaic group to have entered and completed its spread before a more modern group entered about 50,000 years ago. Duncan Merrilees was among the first to point out (pers. comm.— 1976) that the Asian skeletal evidence *necessitates* such a long timescale if we are to derive from it Australian populations with heavy skulls and skull ridges (binding will not account for these). The Lake George pollen evidence and the Murchison geomorphology certainly leave the possibility open. If these 'first wave' populations remained extremely thin over much of the continent, but achieved high densities in a few favoured areas (such as the middle Murray), there is no reason why a more 'modern' second wave should not have swamped the sparse older populations over much of the interior, but failed for a long time to sub-merge the characteristics of some relict enclaves in areas of highest density, particularly if *cultural* isolating mechanisms also operated. There is no 'problem [in] getting them ashore in sufficient numbers to replace earlier populations' if those earlier populations were sparse, and merging (rather than replacement) incomplete.

The authors dismiss the 'remarkably few serious attempts to claim that the pre-history of Australia is several hundred thousand years old' into the category of Tertiary man and a Central Australian Garden of Eden. They prefer to stick to 'a conservative guess' of 50,000 to 70,000 years for human presence in Australia. Yet the only argument advanced is the *lack* of archaeologically visible material in last interglacial coastal dunes and the Golgol deposits of the Willandra Lakes. We may expect populations to have always been heavier on the plant-rich alluvium of permanent rivers in well-watered areas than on the sandy margins of lakes fed by less dependable streams, within areas which themselves receive little rainfall. Early archaeological visibility is not necessarily to be expected from the Willandra system, nor the rather specialised immediate littoral. The lack should not justify closing our minds to the possibility that materials elsewhere may be early. White and O'Connell dismiss the Murchison in a few lines (p. 42) with no consideration of the nature of the artefacts or the geomorphology. The evidence is as good as that for artefacts 'found in sediments of the same age' as the Trinil fauna (p. 43).

Equally the account of colonisation is pinned to the antithesis between 'coastal colonisation' and 'rapid spread'; except in the addendum on Horton's 'woodland' model<sup>4</sup> it does not consider intermediate possibilities. In 1974 I envisaged 'an initial Australian settlement phase . . . with generalised subsistence patterns emphasising the plant component in the diet towards the equator and more specialised, hunting cultures over the more open lands further from the equator', or 'the semi-arid annulus around the arid centre', with only later penetration of the southwest and east coastal belts. Here 'frequentering and usage, including firing, may have opened up and improved the grazing in the initially unattractive, because heavily wooded, margins of the continent', while leading to degradation in the more arid interior.<sup>5</sup> Shawcross envisaged adaptation and spread through semiarid environments before 40,000 BP.<sup>6</sup> We must now en-

<sup>4</sup> Horton 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Hallam 1977a.

<sup>6</sup> Shawcross 1975; Shawcross and Kaye 1980.

visage a more complex interaction of environmental change and human impact over a much longer timespan than seemed probable a decade ago.

White and O'Connell realise that it is 120,000 years since coasts were as stable, and hence as productive, as in the last 6000 years. They do not deduce that the literally *extra-ordinary* situation of the last few thousand years cannot be extrapolated back over the previous tens of thousands. While it is a truism that the first settlers *must* have been 'people used to living by or from seas and coasts' (p. 31) it does *not* follow that we can speak of 'the *strongly* coastal adaptation of the earliest settlers' (p. 49 my emphasis). As the authors realise (p. 49) coastal plains, with their lagoons and interdunal swales, are richer in reliable resources than the actual beach while rivers or estuaries cutting through the coastal plain produce a concentration of resources.<sup>7</sup> There is a sort of sleight of pen in putting over the assumption that riverine equates with littoral. In fact, populations familiar with the resources of a coastal *plain* can move easily on to river alluvium. Penetration and adaptation to 'dry seasonal woodland ecosystems' and grassy tablelands could also come about gradually and easily, so long as we do not attempt to compress the processes into a short timescale.

White and O'Connell argue for a slow progress of spread; but they do not break up the pre-10,000 BP evidence into a sufficient number of environmentally different timespans. Which environments do we know to have been penetrated by the mid-thirty thousands? Which by the mid-twenty thousands? Which retained visible populations into twenty to fifteen thousand, while on the one hand game-rich tundra opened the uplands, and on the other aridity afflicted what had been well-watered savannah? While water is *the* crucial factor in human distributions, openness may be almost as important — it is the common factor between semiarid open woodland and cold upland grasslands. What shifts of population attended the spread of forests towards ten thousand years ago? By bundling their data into too few bags, the authors give us a muddled picture of a consolidated 'Late Pleistocene' then a hiatus in the story until about 5000.

However, when we *are* given a regional account, as in the section on local subsistence patterns, the treatment becomes unbalanced. Pages 133 to 157 deal exclusively with sites immediately on the east coast and the catalogue becomes tedious. Why not use more varied examples? Gould's Western Desert data? Dortch's Miriwun material?<sup>8</sup> Or McBryde's fascinating analyses linking assemblage patterning and subsistence patterning?<sup>9</sup> Similarly in the late New Guinea section we are given an exhaustive account of each individual tree, and lose sight of any wood there may be. No general contrasts are drawn between New Guinean and other Australian developments.

The shape of this book depends on the shape of arguments among a particular clique of Australian prehistorians. Where we are going is seen in terms of where we have been. There is nothing inevitable about this. Jones could have asked why the people of the southwest stopped eating shellfish. The Hallam/Shawcross hypothesis of

<sup>7</sup> See Hallam 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Dortch 1977.

<sup>9</sup> McBryde 1976 and 1977.

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savannah spread might have attracted a tithe of the attention which went to shell middens. We might not attach the importance we do to fish and islands and coasts and contemporaneity with megafauna. We might accord more importance to plants and less to game. We might not start from here.<sup>10</sup>

To write a prehistory of Greater Australia, need one start from the dilemmas which Australian archaeologists have created for themselves? To instruct the great uncatechised body of American, Australian (and British?) undergraduates, should one start with the same tired old questions which previous generations have faced in essays and examinations? Should one go back over the tracks of controversy, the mutual back-slapping of contrived debate? — single or multiple origins? coastal colonisation or savannah spread? did megafauna succumb to drought or degradation of the environment? do backed blades bespeak diffusion or invention? why did the Tasmanians stop eating fish?

Might we not, for a change, start with the *data*? Take a date — say 15,000 BP. What is the evidence for the shape of the continent? and, region by region, what do we know of localities in which artefacts were being deposited? in what geomorphic deposits and conditions — river deposits, lake-side dunes, cave sediments? which ecological zones had Aboriginal groups explored and used? under what varieties of climatic or vegetational conditions were they living? had climatic change or human firing extended or opened up the tundra of Tasmania or the forests of the southwest? what fauna were available? were utilised? what plant resources influenced distributions? what technologies? what evidence have we of the corpus of lore and law which structured Aboriginal grouping and spacing, maintained attachment to terrain or formed a basis for exploration and expansion? what sorts of sites did these activities generate? If indeed 'disputes . . . are resolved as much by the strength of competing models [or modellers?]' as they are by the data' (p. 54) then this is A BAD THING, and it behoves writers of prehistory to restore the balance in favour of data.

There are one or two startling infelicities. For instance (p. 87) 'flakes [were] used for scarifying, haircutting [and] circumcision and subincision. The degree to which flaked stone tools were used on other kinds of meat is unclear'! What is meant by an 'inverse correlation between body shape [*breadth* perhaps?] and mean temperature' (p. 75)?

One or two statements appear to be errors of fact. After discussing Miriwun White and O'Connell state 'No other material dating to this period [25,000 to 10,000 BP] has been found in the west' except Devil's Lair, yet only two pages later mention Ferguson's 'open sites' at Quininup. The walls of Devil's Lair have no engravings which could have fragmented into the deposit (p. 62). The suggestion that Pleistocene sites show a 'skew' towards small animals (p. 92) is again not supported by Devil's Lair. I have detected few errors of detail. On p. 196 should 'overtly' be 'overly'? On p. 55, what is meant by 'few adequated watered inland areas such as the eastern part of the south coast'? Some omissions are surprising. For instance Pearce's papers on Walyunga,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The village yokel, when asked the way to Nether wallop, replied 'If I were going to Nether wallop, I wouldn't start from here!'

<sup>11</sup> Pearce 1977 and 1978.

which relate lithological and typological change to rise in sea level. But then, the maps show hardly any sites in the west. Even Roonka is too far west!

This is Sydney—Canberra participant prehistory. Let us hope for a data-based prehistory some time this century. Perhaps we should not start from here.

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SYLVIA HALLAM

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*From bush to station: Aboriginal labour in the North Queensland pastoral industry, 1861-1897.* By Dawn May. History Department, James Cook University, Townsville, 1983. Pp. viii + 183, s.c. price unstated.

This monograph is one of a series published by the History Department at James Cook University; the series concentrates on studies in North Queensland history. Dawn May's study is an account of the development of the pastoral industry and the involvement of Aboriginal labour. It concentrates specifically on a period from 1861 (when sheep were first introduced to North Queensland) to the turn of the century. The underlying hypothesis that the author investigates is whether the social relations of production in the pastoral industry (particularly with respect to black labour) were exploitative.

The book begins with a brief investigation of the economic development of the pastoral industry in the region encompassed by the Cook, Burke and Kennedy pastoral districts. In Chapter 2, the pastoral labour market in this area from 1860 to the 1890s is analysed, although a discussion of Aboriginal labour force participation is eschewed from the analysis, possibly for analytical simplicity, but also because Aboriginal labour was non-unionised and outside the formal labour force. As the pastoral industry grew, demand for labour increased, but for a variety of reasons including climatic factors, isolation, disease and attractive alternatives like gold seeking, there was a perennial shortage of non-Aboriginal labour. Consequently, there was upward pressure on wages to the extent that pastoralists experimented unsuccessfully with imported indentured Melanesian labour and also with Chinese labour. By 1890, with increased northern development, northern migration and a slump in both the pastoral sector and the Australian economy, conditions of excess demand rapidly turned to excess supply.

Chapter 3 gauges, primarily from historical sources, the advantages and disadvantages of utilising Aboriginal labour. From the 1870s, Aboriginal labour was increasingly incorporated into the pastoral economy. Its advantages from the pastoralists' perspective were that it was readily available, cheap, and relatively immune to the contagious gold fever. May estimates that Aboriginal labour cost a mere 25 per cent of white or Melanesian alternatives although she notes that frequently it was used 'uneconomically' — because of its relative cheapness, more Aboriginal labour was employed than was necessary. Interestingly, the use of Aboriginal labour was quite acceptable to non-Aboriginal unionised labour whereas the importation of coloured labour was not. The disadvantages of Aborigines (as expressed by whites) included worker unreliability and lack of skills. However, as Dawn May notes, the economic benefits of using Aboriginal labour must have outweighed the costs, otherwise pastoralists would not have incorporated it into the pastoral economy.

In Chapter 4, a description is presented of labour conditions during those harsh pioneering days, a mere century ago. Aboriginal labour was acquired in a number of ways — by 'letting in' local Aborigines onto properties (that is, by allowing traditional owners to remain on 'their land'), by recruiting labour on the fringes of new towns (often by kidnapping) and by force (usually by kidnapping). Rather obviously, the first method was the most fruitful. May provides some anecdotal evidence of incredible brutality meted out to Aboriginal people, although she notes that such behaviour usually resulted in their leaving stations or less frequently retaliating in kind. May notes that there is evidence that the pastoralists used opium to both 'quieten' and reward Aboriginal labour; an unexplored possibility is that opium addiction trapped Aborigines at stations. The evidence on employment conditions is not clearcut, for while station owners rarely paid their Aboriginal workers with cash, they were rewarded in kind and with keep usually similar to that provided other labour. However, the dependants of workers were frequently uncared for; there was ongoing disagreement between pastoralists and the colonial government regarding responsibility for the care of non-workers.

A special mention is made in this chapter of the role of Aboriginal women in the pastoral economy. Females were frequently employed as domestics, and resided with Europeans; May suggests that pastoralists were more willing to incorporate female labour than male. This may have been linked to the rampant sexual exploitation of



Aboriginal women during this period, although the author notes that both European and Aboriginal men were involved in this practice. It is interesting that at some remote stations, Aboriginal women were also employed in stock work, thereby transcending the usual sexual division of labour in Victorian European society. May notes though that the different employment experiences of males and females did not result in any definite or discernible changes in gender status in Aboriginal society.

The book concludes with an attempt to broaden the significance of this regional, and time specific, study. In particular, the author attempts to utilise radical development theory (primarily dependency theory and Marxist articulation of modes of production analysis) to explain the North Queensland situation. For a number of reasons, the exploration of the relevance of these models is unsatisfactory and inconclusive. Firstly, the author makes little effort to differentiate each particular theoretical position she identifies and to systematically test their validity. Secondly, there is no analysis of the Aboriginal 'mode of production', beyond an acceptance of popularist depictions of the traditional Aboriginal economy being in a state of egalitarian primitive affluence. Thirdly, there is no attempt to provide historical information (if it exists) that the extent of capital accumulation in the pastoral economy was influenced by the use, abuse or non-use of Aboriginal labour. While there is no doubt that Aboriginal labour was incorporated into the capitalist world economy, there is limited clearcut evidence whether pastoralists set out to destroy the pre-contact Aboriginal economy, or whether they aimed to maintain it to reproduce cheap labour (in a Wolpian internal colonialism sense). The possibilities that Aboriginal subsistence activities continued and that the social relations of production remained unchanged within Aboriginal society are unexplored.

The book is a significant historiography of the pastoral industry in Australia at a particular place during a particular slice of time. The book is extremely thoroughly researched, and unfortunately this makes for somewhat onerous reading — 100 pages of text are followed by 44 pages of footnotes. There is also a great deal of direct quotation from historical sources. The material presented gives one a good feel for the frontier situation and the treatment of Aborigines late last century, yet it is also a little ambiguous. On one hand the information is extremely diverse (in both time and place) so that one is left with an impression of great variability. This diversity was partly the result of limited state intervention; pastoralists almost had a free hand. Its existence makes it difficult to explain the situation using any one particular model. On the other hand, the historical material presented could be more closely scrutinised — there is little attempt to differentiate nineteenth century dogma (as expressed by Europeans) from frontier practice. Ultimately, the book whetted my appetite to hear the Aboriginal point of view, that was not presented in this monograph, presumably because a written Aboriginal record does not exist. Still there must be opportunities to elicit oral history from those Aborigines who have continued to live on North Queensland pastoral properties.

JON ALTMAN

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## BOOK NOTES

*(Inclusion here does not preclude review in future issues)*

*Matya-Mundu: A History of the Aboriginal people of south-west Queensland*, By Hazel McKellar, edited by Thom Blake. Cunnamulla Australian Native Welfare Association, Cunnamulla, 1984. Pp. 99. Illustrated with maps, photographs and diagrams.

*Matya-Mundu* presents the results of Hazel McKellar's research into Aboriginal sites in the Bulloo, Warrego and Culgoa districts of south-west Queensland. This was a community project based in Cunnamulla. It developed from the concern of these people to record their history and put together the local knowledge of the sites that bear witness to the history of both recent and very distant times. The text summarises this and is complemented by an extremely useful series of maps and historic photographs. The resulting book provides a valuable summary of knowledge of the Aboriginal societies of this fascinating region, written, as Hazel McKellar says in her Preface 'as a tribute to all the old people who maintained their culture and language despite great difficulties' . . . and 'to help the present generation, and generations to come, to see and know there is much to be proud of'.

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*When the wattles bloom again: the life and times of William Barak last chief of the Yarra Yarra tribe*. By Shirley W. Wienke. Published by the author, Woori Yallock, 1984. Illustrated by photographs and line drawings. Pp. X + 110. Paperback \$10.00.

This life history of William Barak is woven around the brief account 'my words', reminiscences of Barak himself. The author has expanded on this brief account of Aboriginal-settler contact and taken the story on to Barak's life at Coranderrk as leader of that Aboriginal community. Important events in Aboriginal history are covered in this account written for the general reader. It is illustrated by an interesting series of line drawings and historic photographs.

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*Anthropological Literature: An index to periodical articles and essays*. Compiled by the staff of Tozzer Library, Harvard University and issued by the Library quarterly, also annually. Now available: Volume 6 (1984), U.S. \$35 (individuals); volume 6 (1985) U.S. \$40 (individuals).

This index gives a comprehensive, current coverage of articles in the discipline, surveying over a thousand journals and 150 collections of essays. It covers material in all languages with the emphasis on articles in English, French, Spanish, German and Slavic languages.

The new microfiche format gives access according to subject (e.g. sites, cultures, ethnic groups, linguistic groups), and sub-fields of the discipline of anthropology (archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, linguistics and theory and method), as well as author and title for works cited.

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*Who owns the past?* Edited by Isabel McBryde. Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne 1985. Pp. 198. h.c. \$29.00.

The essays in this volume survey the issues relating to the use, ownership and control of the past. This involves both the physical remains of the past (archaeological sites, artefacts, art treasures, museum collections) as well as the ideas and information that come to us from the past. The control or use of certain visions or versions of the past in dominating the present and the future must also be considered. These issues are surveyed in the chapters of the book from the perspectives of archaeologists, anthropologists, indigenous peoples, museum curators, art historians, historians, legislators and cultural resource managers.

The papers were given at the 1983 Symposium of the Australian Academy of Humanities. Contributors include Les Groube, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Isabel McBryde, John Mulvaney, Bernard Smith, Sharon Sullivan, Alice Tay, Wang Gungwu, Eric Willmot and Sir David Wilson.

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*Aboriginal Heritage Newsletter.* Aboriginal Heritage Section, Department of Environment and Planning, South Australia.

This newsletter provides information on the current work of the Aboriginal Heritage Section, on field projects undertaken, and conservation issues relating to Aboriginal sites in South Australia. The issue for March 1985 contains a report on work in the Yorke Peninsula by the Heritage Section and the Point Pearce community. As well there is a paper by the Section's historian, Peggy Brock who recently visited the United States to study the writing of American Indian history there. She surveys current work in ethnohistory in the United States and Canada in relation to the writing of Aboriginal history, particularly research in South Australia. This paper is of particular relevance for readers of *Aboriginal History*.

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*The mountains call me back. A history of the Aborigines and forests of the Far South Coast of N.S.W.* By Denis Byrne. N.S.W. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Occasional Paper No. 5, Sydney, 1984. Pp. 32.

In 1979 the proposed woodchip logging of forests on Mumbulla Mountain on the Far South Coast of New South Wales was opposed by the Yuin Aboriginal communities of the area. Their opposition rested on the fact that the mountain with its sacred sites had been and was of great significance. A series of studies was then initiated by the State Government to investigate the claim. This booklet summarises the results of these detailed studies of Mumbulla Mountain and the surrounding Five Forests area. It gives a useful summary of the evidence on prehistoric Aboriginal land use, the history of the contact period and the conflict over land use for the Mumbulla Mountain area from 1978 to 1980. Though, as Denis Byrne comments in this conclusion, this conflict was 'not so much a land rights issue as a question of Aborigines having the right to protect their sacred sites'. (p. 28). In 1980 the 7509 ha Biamanga Aboriginal Place was

## BOOK NOTES

established under the National Parks and Wildlife Service Act to preserve the sacred sites and archaeological sites in the Mumbulla Mountain area. The Forestry Commission, National Parks and the local Yuin Community are now all involved in the future management of this area.

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*European-Aboriginal relations in Western Australian history.* Edited by Bob Reece and Tom Stannage. Studies in Western Australian History VIII, December 1984. University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1984. Pp. 142.

This volume of essays on Aboriginal history in Western Australia presents the research of members of the history departments of Perth's two universities and of the staff of its Batty Library. The topics range from relations in the areas of early settlement ('The Battle for Pinjarra') to those in the far north-west in the more recent past. ('Forrest River massacres, 1926'). In addition there are papers on source material, and questions of historiography. Both editors discuss the approaches to the past in Western Australian historical writing — approaches dominated until recently by ideas of progress, the achievements of pastoral expansion, male values and a 'gentry' tradition. In the historical studies so produced Aboriginal history had little place. Recent work by both Aboriginal writers and academic researchers has aimed to redress the balance; the essays presented in this volume summarise some of the results from this recent work and the new approaches to the history of West Australians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. They will prove of value to all interested in the history of Australia's western state and certainly also have wider implications.

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*The Kurnai of Gippsland.* By Phillip Pepper in collaboration with Tess de Araugo. Hyland House, Melbourne, 1985. Pp. vi+ 336, with maps and black and white plates. h.c. \$30.00.

As volume 1 of a series entitled *What did happen to the Aborigines of Victoria* this book covers the history of the Kurnai people of Gippsland from 1835 to 1958. The authors spent twelve years preparing the volume and it presents a wealth of material on the Kurnai of the distant and more recent past. The illustrations, particularly the historic photographs, are of special interest and value.