Chapter 6. Life on Reserves and Missions

Numbers have been quoted but it is not clear just how many Aboriginal reserves and missions were established in NSW. In 2003 the **NPWS** (National Parks and Wildlife Service) decided to try to list all former Aboriginal living places that had been called "missions". There were only about a dozen real church missions in NSW but the word "mission" had become a common label for places where Aborigines had been grouped or herded together, implying some outside control of their life and affairs - and this control often included a push to adopt "Christian values and life styles". However, many of the places listed by the NPWS were neither formal Missions nor Aboriginal Reserves, but shantytowns or pastoral camps where Aboriginal people already lived and worked and sometimes still do so.

A listing of reserves and missions in Brewarrina Shire was attempted for this study but not completed for lack of time to follow the many winding paths to try to find what were the **real** stories. But there are published studies and reminiscences relating to of some of the larger ones in the Shire and these are summarised and discussed here.

6.1 Brewarrina

It is thought that in the early days of Brewarrina Town, some 300 Aborigines lived near the river or in the town. As noted in the previous chapter, they were in 1878 forced to move to the bank opposite the town and allowed to visit the town only during the day (Dargin 1976: 60-61). In 1885 the area north of the fisheries (= **Barwon 4**) was declared an Aboriginal Reserve, but in 1886 **Brewarrina Mission** was established 16km to the east. Not everybody moved. Some old people stayed camped north of the river (B&D.H.S. 1992:p.58, and the fisheries still provided fish and occasions for feasting and corroborees (Dargin 1976:61). This pattern kept on until about 1915. In the 1950s there was another period of Aborigines living near the fish traps and using them (Walsh 1992). Numerous traces of past Aboriginal life near the fisheries and in the Old Park have been surveyed and mapped (Maps 7 - 8) by Littleton and Hudson (1997).

The **"Old Mission"** or **"Brewarrina Mission"** is still hugely important in people's minds though nobody lives there any more. There are still people around who were born there and grew up there. Memories are powerful. Life on the mission has been compared to life in a concentration camp. But patterns varied a bit over time, as is clear from recollections told or printed, as were those of Jimmie Barker (1977).

His story was published with the help of Janet Mathews who added some useful data quoted from public records. Most of the data quoted here outlining the history of the Mission/Aboriginal Station come from her appendix to Jimmie's story or from his own descriptions. For the early years she used the records of the NSW Aborigines' Protection Board and the Aborigines' Welfare Board and for the final years a survey published in 1970 (J.P.M. Long). June Barker, Jimmie's daughter-in-law, who lived on the Mission as wife of Jimmie's son Roy, is writing up her own memories. June helped prepare a map of the layout of the Station area in its later days, used at the Exhibition "In Living Memory" at the State Archives in 1906 and included below as Map **10**.

Map 10 Brewarrina Station Plan (during the Barkers' life there) Source: June Barker

Trying to trace the history of the Mission we have to go back to 1882 when a census of the Western Police District had shown 175 Aborigines as living around Brewarrina. Many were employed on stations but the older people and women were said to 'live on charity.' There was a need for food, clothing and blankets. Neither schooling nor medical attention were available although there were problems due to venereal disease and alcohol.

As noted above, in 1884/5 the Board moved Aboriginal people (including 14 adults) to a reserve two miles from town. As some of the women were employed as domestics in the town they had to walk to and from work. And in 1886/7 the Aborigines Protection Association set up a Mission on 5,000 acres of land at a site 10 miles (16km) east of Brewarrina, on the north bank of the Barwon River. (Records vary with regard to the size of the area.) The land was partly open country and partly thickly timbered with box scrub. Lignum swamps covered about 200 acres but there were well grassed areas. The area was prone to flooding and it had to be evacuated several times during its use.

In 1888 the Station held 56 adults and 27 children, most of them coming from Bourke or Milroy. It was meant to be run as a sheep station (with a bit of agriculture) and was stocked with 2,000 head. This seemed to work OK for some time but floods in 1890 caused significant losses in beasts and produce.

The APB had a set list of rations to be issued to managers and other officers on the Board's Stations (and paid for by the board):

flour	8 lb. per week	tea	!/4 lb. per week
white sugar	2 lb. per week	meat	7 lb. per week
potatoes	7 lb. per week	soap	1 lb. per week
butter	1 lb. per week	jam	1 lb. per week

When the Station could produce its own butter or potatoes these were cut from the APB rations. Aged, infirm or sick Aborigines would be issued flour, sugar and tea. School children could be issued half rations that would be withheld if they did not attend regularly. Able-bodied Aborigines could not get issued rations but had to work to support their families and themselves.

The Barkers noted that, in their time, with regard to meat, the Aborigines got all the poor cuts but never got a roast - that went to the manager.

The Boards listed also clothing that could be supplied if applied for and considered necessary.

Supplies could also be sold at the Station store, but only for cash. Able-bodied residents were all expected to do work as instructed by the manager and the rate of pay set by him. Persistent refusal to do so could mean that all supplies for him or his family could be withdrawn until work was resumed, and could, if severe, mean removal from the Station.

A Provisional School was established in May 1889 and a schoolhouse built. Such Provisional schools did not have to have trained teachers. On Mission Stations the Manager or his wife would usually take on the job. By 1890 the Mission had a 5-room Superintendents house, a girls' dormitory, a store and bark gunyahs for the Aborigines. A boys' dormitory was being built, and some areas of land cleared and fenced. Gates and sheds were built.

Little was stated officially about attitudes to Aboriginal traditions but it is clear that Christian religious practice was encouraged and probably dominant. Duncan Ferguson built the Station church from bush timber, corrugated iron and with a dirt floor. The place stopped being a mission in 1894 when the Protection Board took over its management and it became a "Staffed Aboriginal Station". But the old name stuck.

By 1893 the Mission Station had been reduced to 600 acres. No explanation found. But a larger area was still managed by the Station in 1897.

By 1894 the problem of mismanagement of some stations had to be looked into. Many complaints regarding the management of Brewarrina Station were found to be justified. Local Boards for advice and management were then set up for the stations. (These functioned until 1910.) By 1897 reports stated that conditions were improved and that Aboriginal inmates were well satisfied...

But the reports over later years show conditions as variable, much dependent on the personality, attitude and interest, or lack thereof, of the manager. An early manager, Mr. Hopkins, was seen as keen and good. He died in 1900, and was buried in the Station cemetery, the first and apparently only non-Aborigine there.

The number of inmates increased but fluctuated. Some moved in from outlying areas, such as Byrock, apparently pressed to do so. There were at times more children than adults. Increased numbers of children meant that the school was upgraded to a Public School but it is not clear whether a qualified teacher was employed. More buildings were erected and some were given verandas. The schoolhouse accommodation became inadequate and by 1908 a new house had been built.

By 1910 Local Committees and Guardians were appointed by the Board to advise on management. By now there were 88 adults and 93 children, the school roll being 44. Children at 12 years old had to leave school, being old enough to be sent to work. Girls were being trained as domestics and most young men were employed on the station nearby. The station reported running 1,388 sheep, 50 cattle, 1 bull and 6 horses. If you could not get work on the station you had to walk to work elsewhere which was difficult given the distances involved.

In 1912 the manager developed typhoid. No source found. There was an outbreak of measles and trained nurses were brought in from Sydney.

Measles continued into 1913 and there were some cases of diphtheria. An assistant teacher was appointed and the scope of education broadened.

Jimmie Barker and his family arrived in early 1912 and were put into a one-room timber hut with iron roof and dirt floor. There was an opening in one wall to be used as a door but no windows and no fireplace or chimney. The two improvised beds provided lacked mattresses, so blankets and bags had to be used, the bags to be filled with straw or grass.

At that stage there were about 50 boys on the Mission whose job it was to gather wood and cart water from the river to fill the tanks and water the manager's garden. The manager at the time would use his stockwhip "if in a bad mood".

Jimmie remembered the place as a small community that apart from the huts had a stable, slaughterhouse and shearing shed some few hundred yards from the school-house. The storehouse was part of the boys' dormitory. The Manager's house and office was set a short distance from the rest.

The Aborigines from the Culgoa River and Gongolgon camps were persuaded to move to the Station ("though very loath at first").

By 1915 there was some building activity but the population was recorded as only 44 with a school roll of 11. Health was said to be good.

Little was recorded for the years 1916 -18. In 1919 there was a state-wide epidemic of influenza. Reserves were quarantined. But no information listed for Brewarrina.

In 1920 - 21 there was severe drought followed by severe floods. Stock was reduced to 200 sheep. The Station population had to move temporarily to a ridge near town.

In 1922-23 Station stores stocked a broader range of goods, reputedly at cost price. This was meant to reduce the temptation to go to town to shop - and where alcohol could be bought...

Report from later years are irregular, brief but usually positive except for repeated mention of eye problems.

By 1935 there is mention of a policy to supply gardening tools, flower and vegetable seeds and trees, and to encourage gardening to assist self-sufficiency.

In 1936 the eye problems were still severe and widespread.

After a special inspection of eye problems at Angledool it was decided to close the Station and on 26th May 1936 the whole of its Yuwalaraay population was forcibly moved to Brewarrina where, according to the Board, there were better facilities and a proper treatment room (but eye problems rampant). The people did not wish to move and it seems clear that "eye-problems" were simply an excuse for a move already decided on for economic reasons.

At about this time the whole Wangkumara population in Tibooburra was also, but for unknown reasons, forcibly moved to the Old Mission. Many fled the Mission in 1938, due to the poor management and ill-treatment, and a portion of them ended up, and remain, in the Bourke area (see Chapter 4).

As a result of these moves and the increase in numbers there was great pressure on the limited facilities at Brewarrina. The addition of unrelated strangers from groups with different languages (and possibly hostile attitudes) also caused problems.

In 1937 a Parliamentary Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the way Brewarrina Station was run. Sister Pratt who had run the eye clinic complained that trachoma and impetigo were common and caused by lack of hygiene. Of about 100 persons living at the Station some 60-70 turned up as patients each day. Conditions and people were dirty. There were 15 - 20 houses and a number of tents. Food was inadequate and though seeds were distributed there was a need to teach gardening. Whooping cough, sores and boils were common and there was some tuberculosis. One manager had helped as much as he could, but his successor did not care for the well being of the natives. Sister Pratt ran the Station for three weeks while the manager was away. She had nothing but praise for the skills of Jimmie Barker and the immense amount of help he had given her.

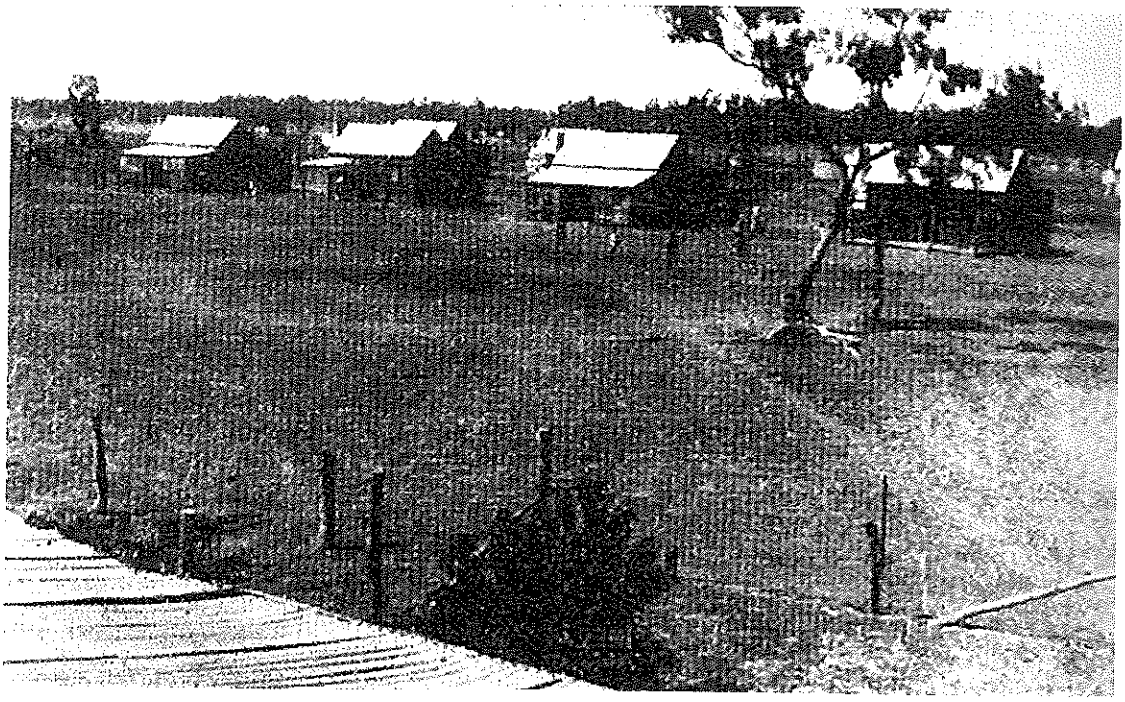


Fig. 10 View of the Brewarrina Mission Station taken from the roof of Jimmie Barker's house, c.1930 (Source: Barker 1977: 164)

When the Angledool Aborigines were added to Brewarrina there were 212 Aborigines and less staff. The manager, Mr. Brain, was dismissed, the official reason being repeated neglect of correspondence, accounts, submission of claims for family endowment, returns and other matters connected with administration of the Station. The Board found that his neglect caused people to be deprived of endowments and conditions to become dilapidated.

When questioned Mr Brain described the situation at Brewarrina Station as follows:
Housing: Unsatisfactory. Huts were built in 1934 of iron with board floors. Two to three families might live in a four-room hut.
Religious teaching: Presbyterian minister from Bourke came once a month to hold a service. Other ministers or preachers were, if available, invited to visit. The people were fairly amenable but like singing hymns.
Employment: Neighbouring squatters applied for men to do stock work.
Sanitary conditions: Pit system. These had to be a reasonable distance from the houses but people would not walk that far at night.
Baths: Conditions impossible. People will not bathe in the river in winter.
Rations: No trouble with the Board. All people (apart from those ill or elderly) had to work for their rations.
Ill-treatment: That would depend on the individual manager. The manager had the authority to punish, and on one occasion he had himself had to use a baton.
Water: There were five taps, including one at the manager's house. The furthest distance of a tap from a house would be 50 yards. Women had to carry their water to do the washing.
Community garden: Grew vegetables with the work done by the natives and supervised by the manager.
Doctor visited the Mission once a month. There were about 212 - 300 people at the Mission.
Stoves: Only a couple of houses had them. People cooked on a camp oven or open fire.

Windows: The windows of the huts were the type called shutters. They slide out. There was no glass. Very unpleasant if they had to be closed because of bad weather. Most huts had cement floors, some were partly wood, partly dirt. A number of people had beds, others did not.

This list gives a picture far different from some more positive ones given in earlier yearly reports. And conditions certainly varied with the manager in charge. The 1937 Committee questioned also Mr. E.C. Smithers, Inspector of Aborigines, who affirmed that quite remarkable improvements had been effected by a Mr. Danvers, the predecessor of Mr. Marshall who was then followed by Mr. Brain. Mr. Danvers in his three years as manager 'turned the place into an oasis.' Improvements had included:

Subdivision fencing and gates.
Planting of orchard and community vegetable garden.
Establishment of lucerne plot of more than half an acre.
Erection of cow bails and slaughterhouse.
Putting gauze on meat house.
Engine room, two tank stands and tanks.
Handyman's quarters (Jimmie Barker's house).
14-15 huts, using new or old materials.
Lavatories, reticulation of water.
Renovation of the manager's residence.
Alterations to dormitory.

The tank stand to hold the 20,000 gallon tank was designed and built by Jimmie Barker who was invariably praised by staff for his skills and efficiency.

Danvers found the residents ill-nourished. He instituted that meat for the inhabitants would be bought directly or come from the sheep raised on the Station, and so he could provide them with about three times as much meat (mutton) at no greater cost to the Board.

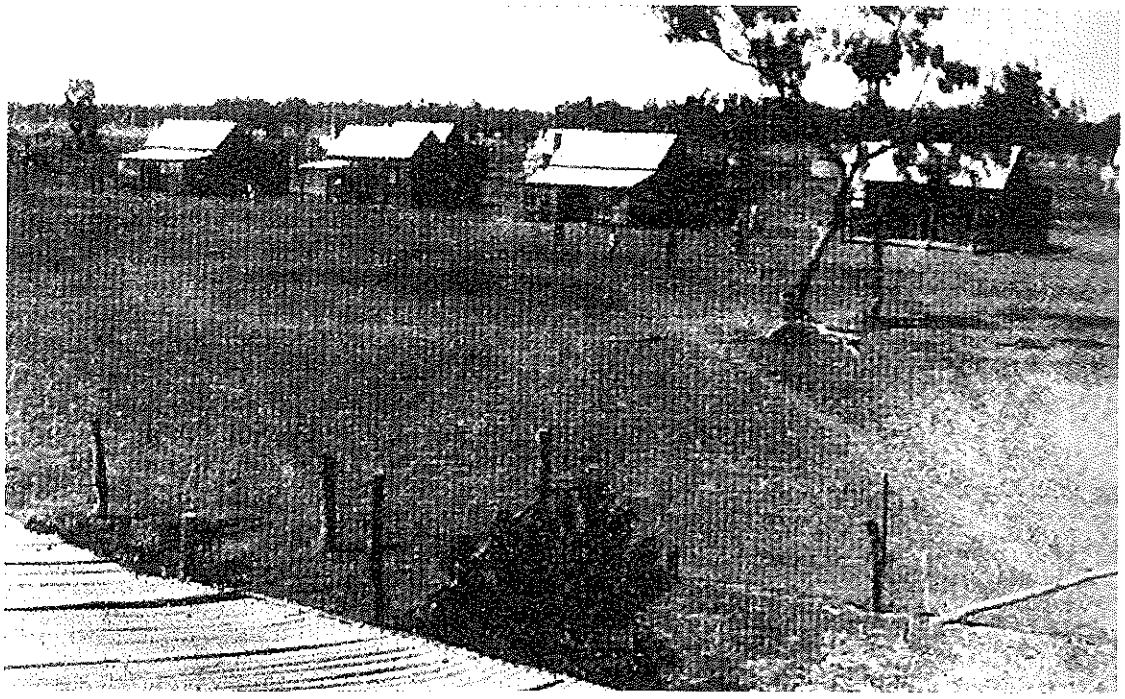
The community vegetable garden flourished and they got prizes at the local show for their produce. People worked willingly and could use and enjoy the results of their work. He also helped organize that they could grow vines on their verandas to create shade and have little private gardens.

Some other managers had private gardens - worked by the Aborigines - but they sold the produce (including eggs etc.) away from the Station, for private gain rather than sharing it with the Aborigines who had helped produce it.

Judging from this testimony, many of the improvements in living conditions created by Danvers seem to have been lost or diminished during the reigns of his successors Marshall and Brain.

However, Jimmy Barker's reminiscences, dating from 1912 onwards, show that the Aboriginal people at the Station were generally strictly regulated. Severe restrictions were placed on practicing their cultural traditions and they were not to use their own language. He also showed up the dishonesty of some managers.

In the 1920s Jimmie Barker worked in various Station jobs as handyman and undertaker. The cemetery was a short distance from the Station. It is no longer used but is fenced. It is still important to the Aboriginal community - members try to visit e.g. on Mother's Day, if it is possible to get there.



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In 1922 Jimmie Barker and Dudley Dennis installed a windmill and in 1925 they installed a pump to draw water from the Barwon River to the Station for piping to taps near the houses. Under Danvers time as manager in the 1930s a new pump and piping was installed. An electricity plant was installed in 1933 and houses connected to the supply.

Jimmie was self-taught but grew up as a natural technological whiz kid. He found solutions for most practical problems. As a reward for his assistance he was allowed to build a three-room house for himself and his family near the riverbank. He planted roses in front. His wife had died in 1941 and was buried in the Station cemetery.

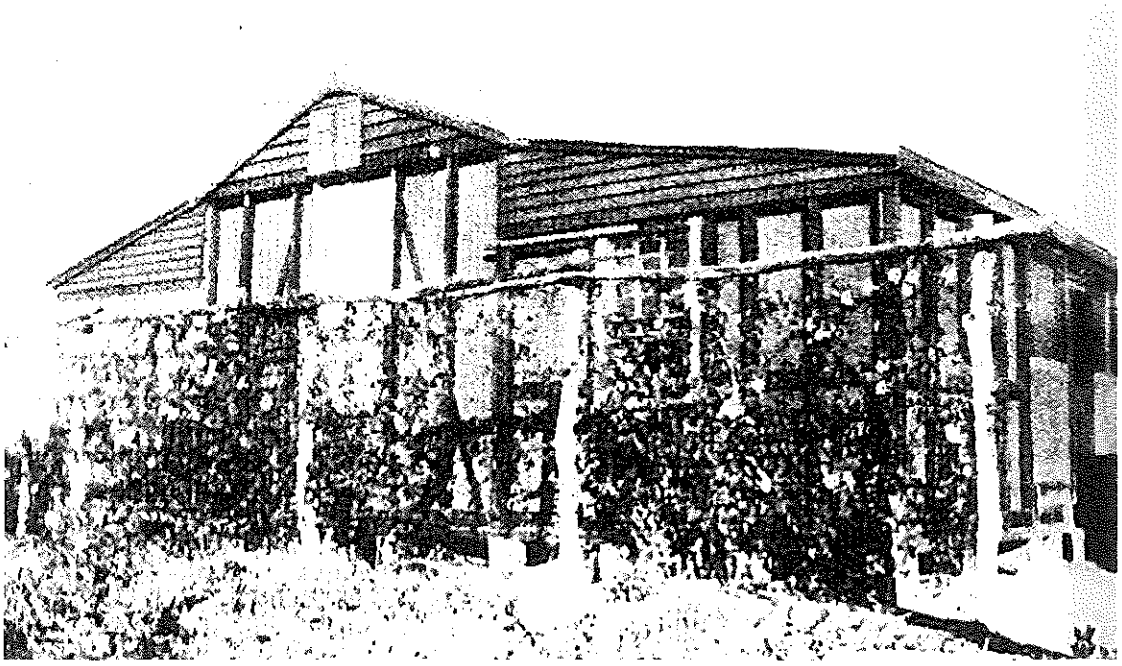


Fig. 11 Jimmie Barker's house at Brewarrina Mission Station, 1935. The roses planted by Jimmie can be seen in front of the house (Source: Barker 1977: 164)

When bullied by a new Assistant Manager in 1942, Jimmie resigned his position and left the Station, but while getting ready to leave he had to watch this man have his beautiful roses dug up, his pot plants removed and the electric wiring in his house ripped out - all items that Jimmie had paid for himself and that could have been of use and pleasure to the next inhabitant.

The quality of the managers varied. Most were disliked, considered rigid and mean, likely to keep for their own use much of the supplies provided for the station and certainly the best pieces of anything. To get a feeling of how it was, it is well worth reading Jimmie's book and/or the reminiscences by E. Crawford (1993).

In 1939 the Station, with a population of 324, was described as the largest in the State. But after Danvers from 1934 on there was a long period of mostly inefficient, uninterested and sometimes downright cruel managers, and not just at Brewarrina.

Reports issued by the Board changed to focus more on policies and functions, giving statistics rather than detailed reports of its Stations and Reserves.

By 1945 the number of people living on Stations had gone down considerably but the numbers on Reserves had increased as Aborigines here had some control over their

lives. The 1945 Government grants of £3,000 to enable Aboriginal owned housing were not taken up as much as expected due to post-war restrictions on materials and the difficulties of finding land to buy. The Board's new powers to buy land, build houses to sell or lease were put to use. Plans were made to rebuild parts of the Station and to build some houses in town. In 1953 The Mission Station was reduced to a mere 638 acres with but few acres used for the Station buildings and the cemetery.

Two gate posts showing the past entrance to the Station stand forlorn in a paddock well before you reach the present gates. Bits of wire remain to show a former fence line.

Fig.12 Gate posts showing former reserve entrance

During 1955 the site was inundated by a flood and it had to be evacuated for eleven weeks. The Station school did not reopen - no teachers were available. Children had to (somehow) attend school in Brewarrina until 1957/8. The school then reopened with an enrolment of 42 children.

A population of 114 in 1960 had dropped to 35 in 1965/6. The people preferred to live closer to employment and services. By then facilities comprised 11 small cottages, a school building, a garage, a treatment room, a hall, the manager's office and house. Buildings were poorly maintained, not much being done since the mid-30s, and each hut housed about five persons. Only two had bathrooms, the rest relied on outside coppers and tubs for washing and bathing. A handyman looked after garbage and sanitary services (a pan system). There was no store and daily trips to town in the Station utility were needed to get supplies. There were no private cars. A single teacher taught 25 children.

The Station closed in early 1966. The residents moved to the 15 acre Western Brewarina Reserve known as 'Dodge City', on the outskirts of Brewarrina where 30 houses had been built. Part of the Station is said to have been bought by an Aboriginal person under the Western Land Lease. Little remains of the Station apart

from the cemetery and, in the Station area, sixteen white posts with interpretation panels created by June Barker.

Fig.13 Signposts showing the former location of the Mission School.

There are 90 graves in the cemetery and a list of names near the entrance. Fifty graves are marked with timber crosses or head stones. Names are by now mostly weathered away but there is a plaque listing persons known to be buried there.

Figs.14 - 16 Mission cemetery and some graves

The latest burials were in 1971 and in 1972 (Jimmie Barker). Near the cemetery there are two interments of returned ancestral remains.

The Station and its cemetery have been declared of State Significance and included in the NSW Heritage Inventory (SHI No. 5053415).

6.2 Angledool

The history of the township seems a bit confused. Angledool was originally named "Mugarrie". The **Eather brothers** from the Liverpool Plains district were the first to settle on the Narran River in the **1840s.** Several members of the family joined them. The **Eather** family were still there in the **1880s**. In **1879** (during a drought) **Hatfield** and **Jacobs** settled on 1,100 acres of freehold land that was to become **Angledool**. The town was established by the **1890s**.

The name **New Angledool** was given to the **Post and Telegraph Office** previously known as Angledool. A fire destroyed house and Post Office at New Angledool on 29th. March **1963**. A **Receiving Office** known as "Meehi" was renamed **Angledool** and a **Telegraph Office** established. The **telephone line** to Goodooga was completed in **1885**.

New and Old Angledool are only 1 mile apart. Map 11 showing the township in the 1920s is included as relevant to an understanding of the environment of the **Aboriginal Station.**

The account below draws mainly on a study prepared by Marisa Menin (1996), working with the local Aboriginal community, especially Mrs Flossie (Florence) Kennedy who is seen by the Aboriginal community as their trusted repository of memories of life on the station, the person who has the best store of memories and stories that one should listen to. She told of her memories to Marisa Menin and she has been writing them up herself. Some of her documents are held by the National Library in Canberra.

Accounts of Angledool history have been published by Pat Cross (1997). Additional information has come from discussions with Pat and her husband George Cross.) Flossie's mother was Mary McDonald Field and her father worked on Bangate Station. The family moved to Angledool for Flossie's schooling. After a forced stint at Brewarrina she came back up north.

The **Angledool Aboriginal Station**, on the outskirts of Angledool township, was gazetted on 7 November 1906 as an Aboriginal Reserve. The details given were: 'The Parish of Biruma, County of Narran with an area of 25 acres 2 roods 27 perches', and was known as the **'Angledool Aboriginal Reserve**.' It is now recognised as an Aboriginal Lands Trust.

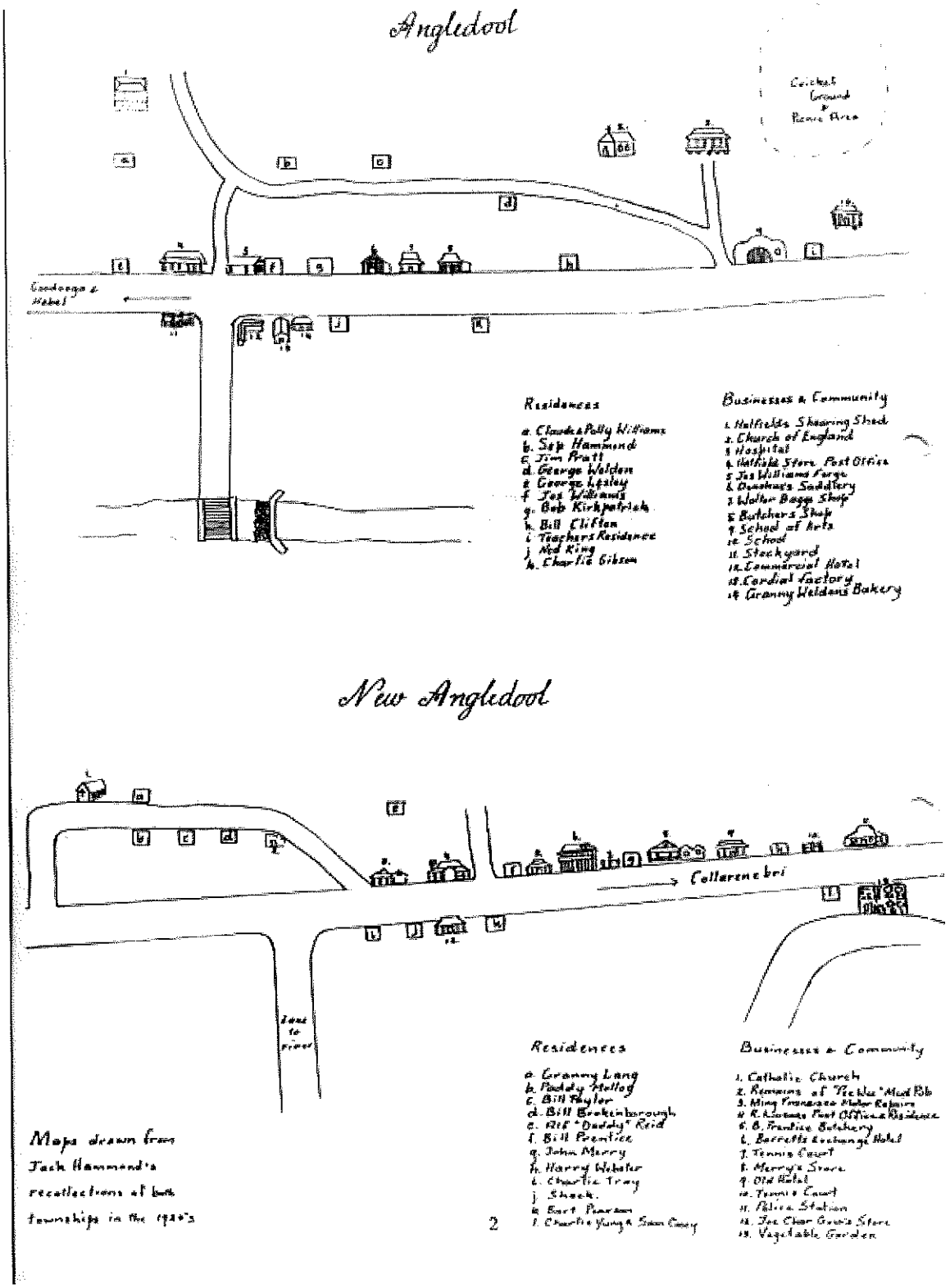
Though used as a reservation it had no facilities or structures until 1910 when the erection of huts on the land had begun. By 1911 the area had been fenced, a school house completed, other huts and water closets had been erected and the site had become a permanent Aboriginal settlement.

In 1912 it was officially reported as an Aboriginal Station. Being an **APB** Station it had a local committee that would visit several times a year and report to the board on the "progress" of the residents.

In 1911 the committee included F.H. Hossick, Arthur Paddison (the Angledool school teacher), Josiah Williams and J.J. Carter, all local residents and businessmen. In later years members included A.J. Sheridan, E.J. Roberts and Colin Campbell.

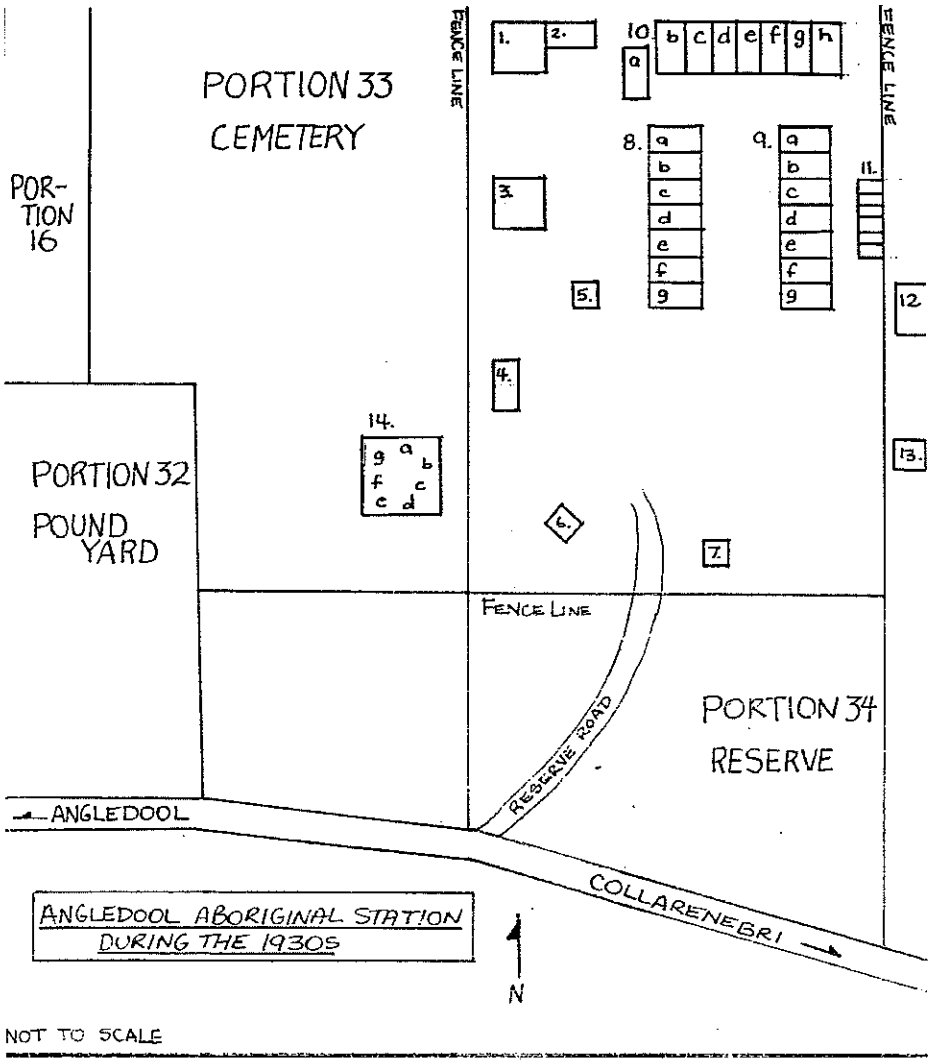
The only white people permitted on the station were members of the Board, police officers, and prospective employers. Race relations seem not to have been a major problem. The station was physically close to the town, and close social and economic relationships were maintained. (George Cross, owner of Mehi Station

nearby, says that his mother regularly rushed off after school to play with the Aboriginal kids.)



Map 11 Angledool in the 1920s (From P. Cross: History of Angledool)

Map 11a Angledool Village source: BSC



Map 12 Layout of Angledool Aboriginal Station, sketch by Flossie Kennedy.

(The lists for Blocks 8, 9, 10 and 14 below, were supplied to go with the map, and name the families that resided in the houses during the 1930s:

Residential Block 8

8a	Arnold (later Zilla McDonald
8b	Field
8c	Walford
8d	Sands
8e	Granny Leonard
8f	Dixon
8g	Weatherall

Residential Block 9

9a	Trapman
9b	Mason
9c	Peters
9d	Leonard
9e	Boney

Residential Block 10

Residential Block 14

10a	Titella	14a	Sands
10b	Rose	14b	Arnold
10c	Winter	14c	Picton
10d	Sharpley	14d	Sands
10e	Simpson	14e	Field
10f	Frail	14f	Bloomfield
10g	Murray	14g	Lamb

All people who wished to come onto the station or wanted to leave it, had to report to the manager. This applied to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. One case is quoted where relatives wishing to visit were refused permission because of the paleness of their skin...

It has been said that Aborigines could never be sure of their position in society as their Aboriginality could either be invoked against them or ignored. In Angledool racial differences appear to have been of concern mainly to the authorities: the APB, the police force and the Department of Education. But the people on the reserve - often called the Mission - were important to the local economy. Their presence and input, in terms of money and work, was needed by shop keepers and pastoralists.

Judging from local memories, events such as race meetings, sporting events and pantomimes, usually included all local residents, regardless of colour. It is said that at big festivities held at the local hall, a ribbon would be stretched across the hall, the area between this and the stage reserved for the "nobs" and the back of the hall for the "plebs". It is not clear to what extent this division related to money or colour or both.

Fig.17 Angledool Hall

On the whole the atmosphere seems to have been fairly tolerant, an apparently unusual situation and possibly a major reason why the local Aborigines later resisted (fruitlessly) being moved to Brewarrina Mission.

The numbers of Aborigines living at Angledool varied. Census figures from the APB for 1905 - 1915 fluctuate between 85 and 145. There was considerable mobility as families moved around to find employment. Demand for workers fluctuated, going down during drought and war years. After 1915 the station was fairly stable and well settled. Some families moved in to take advantage of schooling for the children.

But there is little in the way of formal reports to the APB to go by. Two researchers, Taylor and Jardine visited in the 1920s to study racial mixture and prepared some genealogical information of interest to the community.

The buildings used by the former inhabitants on the reserve are no longer there, only traces of fireplaces and the odd broken utensil left. Aborigines in Angledool now live in the town itself or its surroundings.

The **Angledool Aboriginal Cemetery** occupies Portion 33 in the Shire of Walgett, Parish of Biruma and County of Narran. It is situated on the western border of the Aboriginal reserve, behind the former police station and pound yard. The area set aside was about 200m by 470 m. The area used for graves and carefully fenced is about 100m by 200m, but some vandalism has taken place. Surroundings are open woodland, used for grazing. The cemetery is now protected as an **Aboriginal Relic** site. (The land is recognised as a Freehold Grant under the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission.)

Individual burials have no name markers to identify the person but are distinguished by the decorations placed as markers and as part of burial ceremonies. They form an important reminder of past generations and traditions and must be approached with respect. Some tentative identifications of persons buried have been made, e.g by the Elder Ted Fields.

He listed: Mullee (his grandmother), Arthur Dixon, Major Murrey, Bilbo (male), Tyngee (female), Bertie Rose (infant) and Danny Sands (infant).

The graves show what Aborigines in northern central NSW considered appropriate as grave markers and decorations - traditions that are still followed where possible. (Aborigines are nowadays generally buried in town cemeteries that may have rules and regulations saying what is allowed.)

The people on the station had little freedom to follow traditional practices. Christian concepts and practices were stridently impressed on them; burials had to be in restricted areas, six feet underground and preferably associated with a ceremony performed by clergy.

But they still managed to keep some of their own and to develop new ones. The graves are mostly low mounds decorated with river stones, broken glass, pottery and coloured bottles. The broken glass follows Chinese traditions but had become associated with traditional beliefs, and techniques had been developed to get pretty colours and suitable breaks. The body would be placed facing east. Some graves were marked with wooden posts.

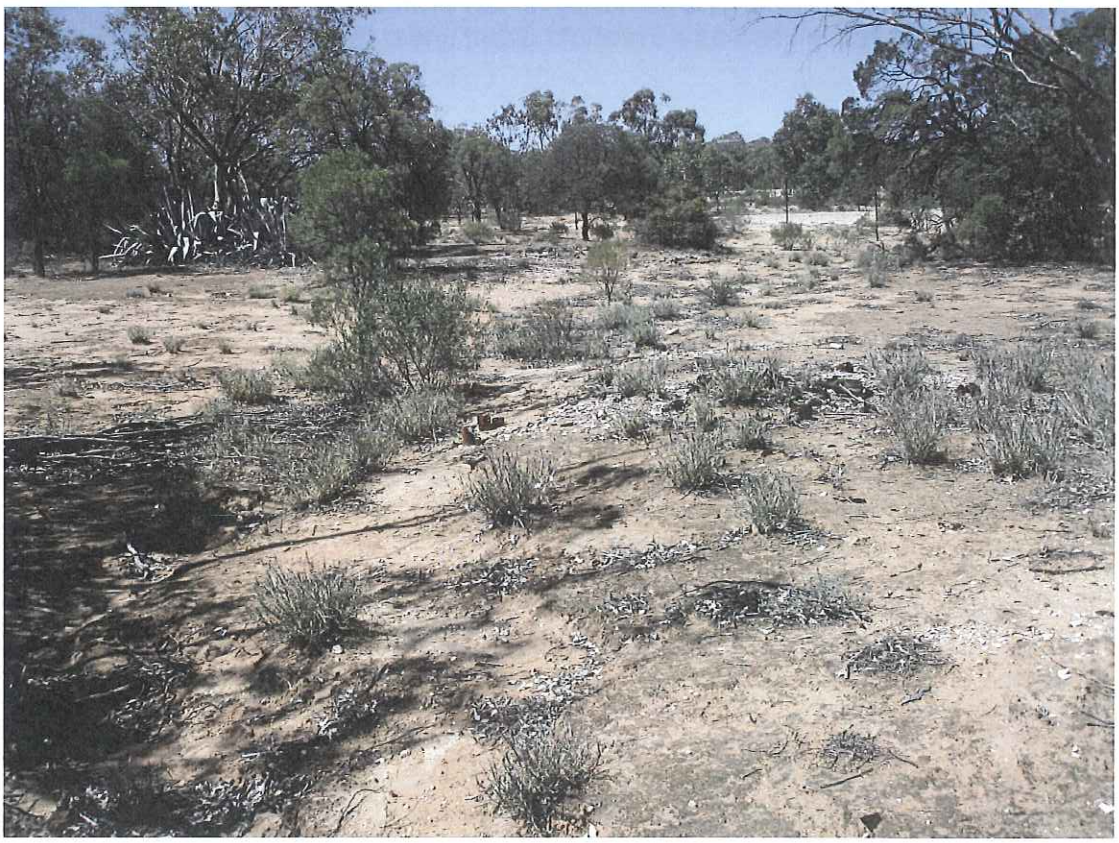
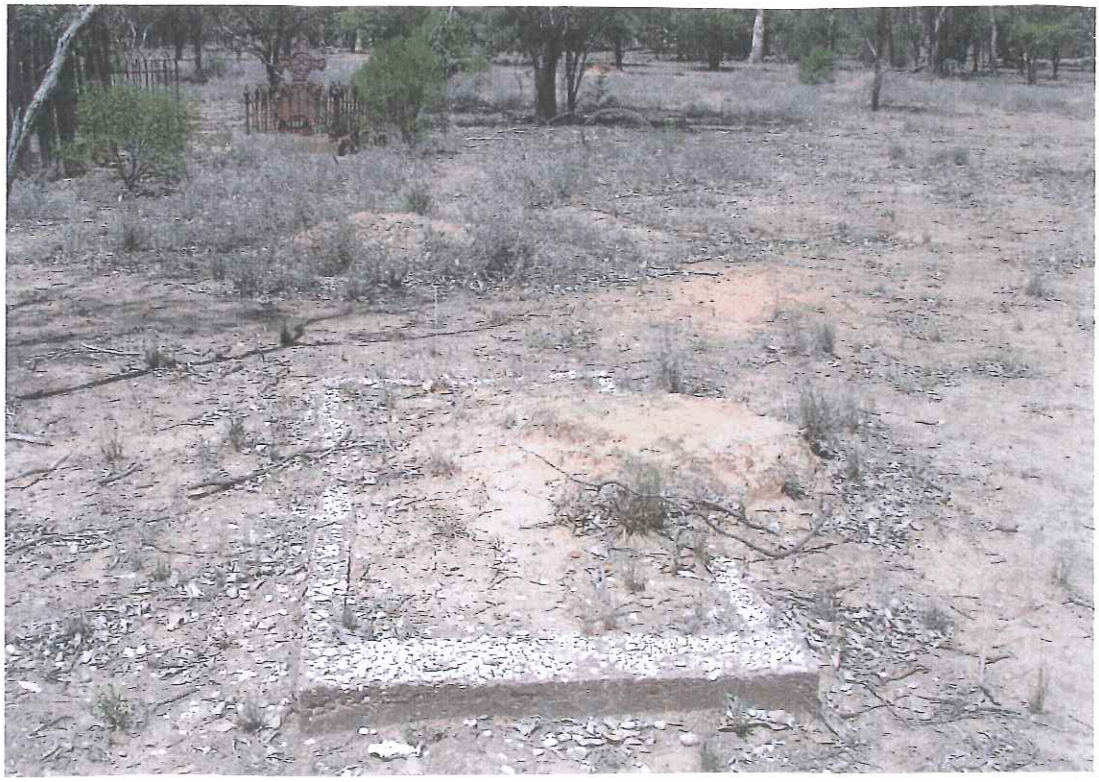


Fig.18-19 Angledool Aboriginal cemetery

The graves are mostly low mounds decorated with river stones, broken glass, pottery and coloured bottles. The broken glass follows Chinese traditions but had become associated with traditional beliefs, and techniques had been developed to get pretty colours and suitable breaks. The body would be placed facing east. Some graves were marked with wooden posts.
There were members of other tribal groups at the Aboriginal station, but the dominant group spoke Yuwaalaraay and the cemetery was reserved for them and very much a

Yuwaalaraay matter. Non- Yuwaalaraay speakers (seen as not really members of the community) were buried in the European cemetery some distance to the northeast. This cemetery is much overgrown and has a mixture of typically angular and elaborate graves for settler families and patches of Aboriginal graves, some marked with scattered pebbles.



Figs.20-21 Angledool Settlers Cemetery

But what about life on the station? Through the APB the State had constant control over its Aboriginal people. It saw it as its concern to supply free rations of food, basic

clothing and blankets to aged and infirm Aborigines who were living on government settlements. Able-bodied men must obtain employment and could then buy such supplies fort their families from the settlement store. As at Brewarrina Old Mission, the rations were regulation. They were the same for each settlement - though the quality could vary with the supplier contracted. School children who kept going to school regularly could be issued with half rations.

In 1893 the APB had decided that Aboriginal children should not receive the same standard of education as white pupils because they were never likely to use it, and got the Department of Education to water down requirements. Subjects taught should be just reading, writing, dictation and arithmetic. By 1913 inspectors had created a basic syllabus for Aboriginal provisional schools. A 1916 set of instructions made it clear that the aim was for the teachers to assist the boys to become capable farm or station labourers, and the girls to become useful domestic servants.

There was also a naïve suggestion that "the beautiful mornings, the glorious sunsets, the bountiful harvests and other attractive phenomena should be noted and discussed in order to develop a love and reverence for the Creator."

School work should consist of gardening, needlework and basic sewing, and mental and written exercises that dealt "with objects on or connected with the settlement." It was not an education that would prepare them for life anywhere but on the reserves. Efforts to bring Aboriginal and white education to the same level did not come about until the 1940s.

R.A. Nossiter, a missionary, petitioned for a school to be established on the reserve (13.1.1911. It was needed because Aboriginal children had three years earlier been excluded from the Angledool town school "under instructions from the Minister." He stated that there were 110 people of Aboriginal descent living in the area and that there would be an average of 15-16 children attending the school. He listed the children for whom he was pleading: Ernie and Artie Cubby, Bertie, Paddy and Eileen Murray, Edgar Mason, George and Roley Rose, Jimmie Foster, Lorrie Trapman, Tom Winters, Alfie and Gracie Bullamon, Jubilee and Eveline Whitton, Ida Foster, Dora Green, Emma Downey and Doris, Cilla and Mary Peters, all aged between 4 and 15 years, and whom he had been teaching for four months before submitting the application. He included a sketch map of where the school would be located.

His plea was supported by Mr. A. Paddison, the teacher at the town school, who affirmed the strong desire of the Aborigines to have their children taught. He also noted that Mr.Nossiter had brought about an improvement in the general appearance of local children, white and black.

Nossiter ws appointed teacher of the **Angledool Aboriginal Provisional School** (AAPS) when it was established in 1911. He stayed on until transferred to another station in January 1914. The APB report for 1911 notes that the school was established, the children were regular in attendance and fairly clean and neat. A garden was begun. A badly needed school building was erected in 1912 and later reported as well built and attractive. The curriculum for 1913 included boot mending, boat repairing, fretwork, gardening, raffia, network, sewing and carpentry. The school roll was 24 children, with an average attendance of 18.9. A teacher's residence was built.

The presence of the school was seen as important by the Aboriginal community in the area and led to a number of families moving to or closer to Angledool to be able to access education, particularly when the Walgett school was segregated in 1917,

leaving the schools at Angledool and Pilliga as the closest Aboriginal schools. Some twenty children were added to the school this way.

The school had at least 11 teachers between 1911 and 1936, when it was closed. The Census of Teachers has some gaps but some seem to have stayed for two years or more. At least one of the teachers complained of her working conditions. Teaching Aboriginal children was not seen as prestigious - you were generally not seen as needing or having the standard or range of skill needed to teach in white schools. Teachers in Aboriginal provisional schools were not required to have teaching qualifications. Mr W.G Harvey, Inspector of Schools, commented in 1915: "*Instructors for Aborigines are not so important as teachers for ordinary schools.*"

A number of the teachers were also managers of the station. This could - and probably did - interfere with their work as well as the teaching. The latter was sometimes largely ignored. And managers were not necessarily trained to teach.

A school day started with a warning bell at 6.30 am, assembly at 6.45 am and actual start at 6.50 am. Instruction was broken by breakfast at 8.15 - 9.15 and by recess at 10.45 -11. School finished at 1 pm. School regime is said to have been very strict. The early morning bell for school was heard all over the station. The early start was needed because of daytime heat. The children also had jobs to do in the afternoon: collect water and firewood for their families.

The conditions at school depended very much on the quality of the teacher.

In 1926 when Mr. John Milne was the teacher, the School Dental Officer reported to the Medical Officer that he had found conditions at the school very excellent, the school neat, clean and well cared for, as were the children. Although most of the children needed some dental treatment their mouths were reasonably clean and well cared for.

But in 1932, Mr. F.C. Cavill, a Teacher/Manager, was transferred to Gingie as he was found to have had (contrary to specific instructions) financial dealings with Aborigines
by selling certain goods to them. It is not stated what the goods were.

Some former pupils remember fondly the fun of taking part in school plays with costumes made of crepe paper. The plays were performed in the school bough shade that was transformed to a stage. These performances were great social events and residents of the whole township could attend.

Sunday school was also held on the station.

In May 1936 Mrs E.G. Clark was the Teacher/Matron. An outbreak of serious eye infections caused her transfer to Toomelah to take charge of the treatment of patients there. On the date of her transfer, 26.5.1936, the school was permanently closed as a merger of the Angledool and Brewarrina Aboriginal Stations was planned.

Though authorities stated that the move was agreed to by the Aborigines, it was in fact forced on them, and was clearly unpopular although they were told that lovely homes were being built for them in Brewarrina - which turned out to be far from the truth.

Aborigines in the general area of Angledool had been living and working on pastoral properties where they had managed to hang on to some of their cultural traditions and life-styles. There was contact between them and those living on the station and a certain amount of movement back and forth. Management of the reserve appears to have been on the whole less repressive than many others with regard to traditional culture. People on the reserve therefore had managed to keep some knowledge of Yuwaalaraay traditions and language. Life at Brewarrina would be very different - and rumours about life there and racial conflicts in Brewarrina itself had spread and were known to the people at Angledool.

And as Flossie Kennedy remembered, life at Angledool had advantages: The Chinese gardeners, the Baker and the Butcher would bring their goods to the "mission" and Donoghue, the fruitshop owner, came with his fruit cart. The residents could shop in town, putting purchases on tab. The accounts would be paid by the station manager with money from their Child Endowments. The shop ledger books list the many Aboriginal families involved. A food hawker who came all the way from Walgett to Angledool with his tinned food and vegetables would also come to the "mission".

Flossie commented that "even if living on the mission at Angledool was terrible, people were happy there. Angledool was a happy home, but Brewarrina wasn't even a home."

The incidence of eye complaints was given as the reason for the move - but the situation was known to be as bad or worse at the Mission. The reasons for the move were probably largely economical. Rural employment opportunities were seen to be dwindling in the Narran area as many landholders had been and were being forced to subdivide their properties. As land sizes and stock numbers decreased there was less need to maintain an Aboriginal workforce on a station and less pressure on the APB to supply services such as segregated schooling and rations to keep a potential work force going during periods with less employment.

What was not expected or taken into account was that the closure of the Aboriginal station would mean the demise of Angledool as a town. The move meant a loss of a major part of the town's economic basis.

However, the move took place, in part supervised by Roy Bain who had been acting as manager of both Angledool and Brewarrina Stations. It seems to have been absolute shambles.

On 26 May 1936, semi-trailers arrived at Angledool and the people were moved that day. Each family was given a hessian bag to pack household items. They were told to take clothing, bed linen and mattresses. All bigger items, such as furniture, were left behind, to be brought later, which never happened.

The trucks left in the evening. Flossie notes that they were told to sing and cheer as they passed through Goodooga so it would appear that they were happy to go. They got to the Old Mission around three or four in the morning. It was bitterly cold.

When they got there, they found that the promised "lovely houses" resembled horse stables with holes for door and windows and no fireplaces. Though they did have cement floors, not dirt. But cement is colder than dirt to sleep on. There was no furniture and sheets of tin had to be found to cover the doors and windows. In the street there was firewood and a heap of straw and a pile of hessian bags to make mattresses.

The houses are remembered as "two-roomed tin shacks, half built...about ten feet by twenty.

And so a part of Angledool history was taken over by Brewarrina.

But Flossie left in 1938 when her mother died in childbirth. Her father moved his children into Brewarrina town to avoid having them taken away by the authorities, and then the family returned to Angledool. The mission was gone, the buildings bulldozed. Her father got permission for the children to go to the local school - the first Aboriginal children to do so since the early 1900s.

A number of Aboriginal families stayed on in Angledool and area. For example: The former police station/court house (with its free-standing lock-up) is now Aboriginal owned.

Fig.22. Angledool Old Courthouse and police station, now a private home with Aboriginal residents. It is close to the Aboriginal Cemetery and the former Aboriginal Station, now demolished. The small building to the left, is the former lock-up.

Fig.23 The former lock-up. It would have been most uncomfortable: no heating or cooling arrangements, no water, little light. Food was delivered through a small opening in the padlocked door.

Some Aborigines had not been APB targets for removal to Brewarrina. They were mainly middle aged and working in pastoral employment. Flossie listed as those able to withstand the APB: the Sands, MacDonald, Winters, Murray, Simpson, Rose, Boney, Trapman, Mason, Peters and Leonards. Some of these were living to the west of the "mission" when she returned. She later made her home at Walgett. But many Yuwaalaraay settled at Goodoga.

From memories and written records a list has been put together of families that resided at Angledool, relating particularly to the 1920s and 1930s. It is quoted below but does not claim to be exhaustive:

Abey, Adams, Arnold, Boney, Bloomfield, Bowman, Buckenbone, Bullaman, Butler
Chapman, Combo, Coombs, Cubby, Dixon, Dodd, Downey
Eckford, Fernando, Fields, Flick, Foster, Frail, Green, Hall, Hardy, Hibb(pp)ett, Hill,
Lamb, Leonard, Mason, McDonald, McRae, Mills, Murray, Nean, Norman, Owens
Page, Peters, Picton, Reece, Rose, Sands, Sharpley, Simpson, Thurston,Titell(a)er, Trapman
Walford, Weatherall, Winter(s), Whit(t)ford, Whitton

As a postscript to the reserve story should be mentioned that the Bohda Aboriginal Corporation in 1975 managed to buy Tucki Property (next door to the old reserve area) using Aboriginal Development funding. It started with an ardent plea from Ernie Skuthorpe published in the Aboriginal Human Relations Newsletter. He then lived in Goodooga and could well describe the problems caused by dwindling employment opportunities. Ernie died in 1995, but could spend twenty years playing a major role in the development of his dream.

The Public Register of Indigenous Corporations now lists Bohda Pastoral Company as covering Willoring Station and listed to Rex Skuthorpe 28.10.1996. Bohda uses a mixture of traditional land management practices, developed with the assistance of community elders, in combination with modern technological tools, providing training and work opportunities.

6.3 Goodooga

Unlike those at Brewarrina and Angledool, the reserve at Goodooga (Parish Cowga, County Narran, Portion 73) was not managed (though listed as such in a NPWS document prepared by P. Thompson).

(There may be some confusion in official records between Aboriginal reserves in Goodoga and that at Denawan further west, described later in this chapter.)

The Aboriginal Reserve in Goodooga, set on the bank of the Bokhara River just west of the town itself, was semi-independent and largely composed of self-constructed houses made with bush logs and new and second-hand corrugated iron, though some of the initial buildings, so-called "mission homes" had been constructed for them. The houses were sited and designed by the occupants to suit their particular needs and desires rather than according to white building regulations.

The reserve probably dates back to the 1930s. There was in the 30s a general movement of Aboriginal populations from traditional camping places and pastoral stations to more central places such as Goodooga. This was at least in part driven by a reduced need for farm labour as already seen for Angledool. The need for training and education seemed to provide some justification for a push to remove Aborigines from traditional camping places and pastoral stations.

Though the authorities preferred to get them to formal reserves like at Brewarrina, Aborigines generally preferred to continue camping on pastoral stations or to move to unmanaged reserves where they had more freedom to decide over their lives.

Buildings on the reserve at Goodooga were apparently preceded by a camp on the other side of the Bokhara River. Housing consisted of so-called "mission homes" of corrugated iron, tents and gunyahs. The corrugated iron housing was dismantled before the move to the present reserve and all the materials sold.

As can be seen from the names of resident families in both places, many residents in the new area of housing came from Denawan reserve (discussed in the next section of this report). This is located some 40km further west and closer to Weilmoringle. The population appears to have been a mixture of three groups that had traditionally intersected in the Goodoga area and had a tradition of interaction, the Morrawarri (to the west), Yuwaalaraay (to the east) and Guwamu (to the north).

For some time white people (and some town Aborigines) sneered at the "Tin Camps" but they are now gradually coming to be recognised as models to be studied for the principles on which they were based and which suited Aboriginal needs far better than standard white housing.

Residents tended to remain on the reserve although many of the old houses have now been replaced with more standard housing. Stephanie Smith (2000) has made a careful study of the reserve and discussed with the older people their memories of what used to be. Many of her points deserve to be quoted here.

The Goodooga builders, by her referred to as "ethno-architects" to show them due respect, were self-taught and ingenious, adapting old bush techniques and fencing techniques for use with what modern materials could be got hold of. And materials were not necessarily easy to get, nor money to buy any.

The five government houses ("mission homes" - tin sheds - erected on the reserve already in the late 1920s, remained at least until 1979. Early houses were small with a whole family generally sharing one unfurnished room. The early self-constructed

houses on the new reserve were apparently kerosene tin huts similar to those at Denawan (see later in this chapter).

However, a new policy of "assimilation" developed and townships were encouraged to promote integration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. Whitlam's time of government saw a development of housing cooperatives. Funding could go straight to Aboriginal communities by-passing state government bureaucracies.

The Bohda Housing Co-operative in Goodooga was formed in the early 1970s and run mainly by the Skuthorpe family. Aboriginal families were encouraged to accept housing in town even if it meant separation from family links. But Ernie Skuthorpe warned against prejudice against those who chose to remain on the reserve. He was much worried by the division and ill-feeling developing between "Town and Reserve Blacks."

People who moved to town lost their important continuous visual contact with the community and the social support they were used to. The security and warmth of the reserve settlement became a thing of the past. And this emphasis was very important in the design of the reserve housing.

By 1982 most of Goodooga's Aboriginal families lived in town. Only six houses remained. But by 1992 the number of households had increased to nine and several more houses built in 1996. Many town residents were keen to move back to the reserve, longing for the sense of community and support they had lost. On the reserve the drinking of alcohol was discouraged - a contrast to the drunkenness and aggression commonly met in town.

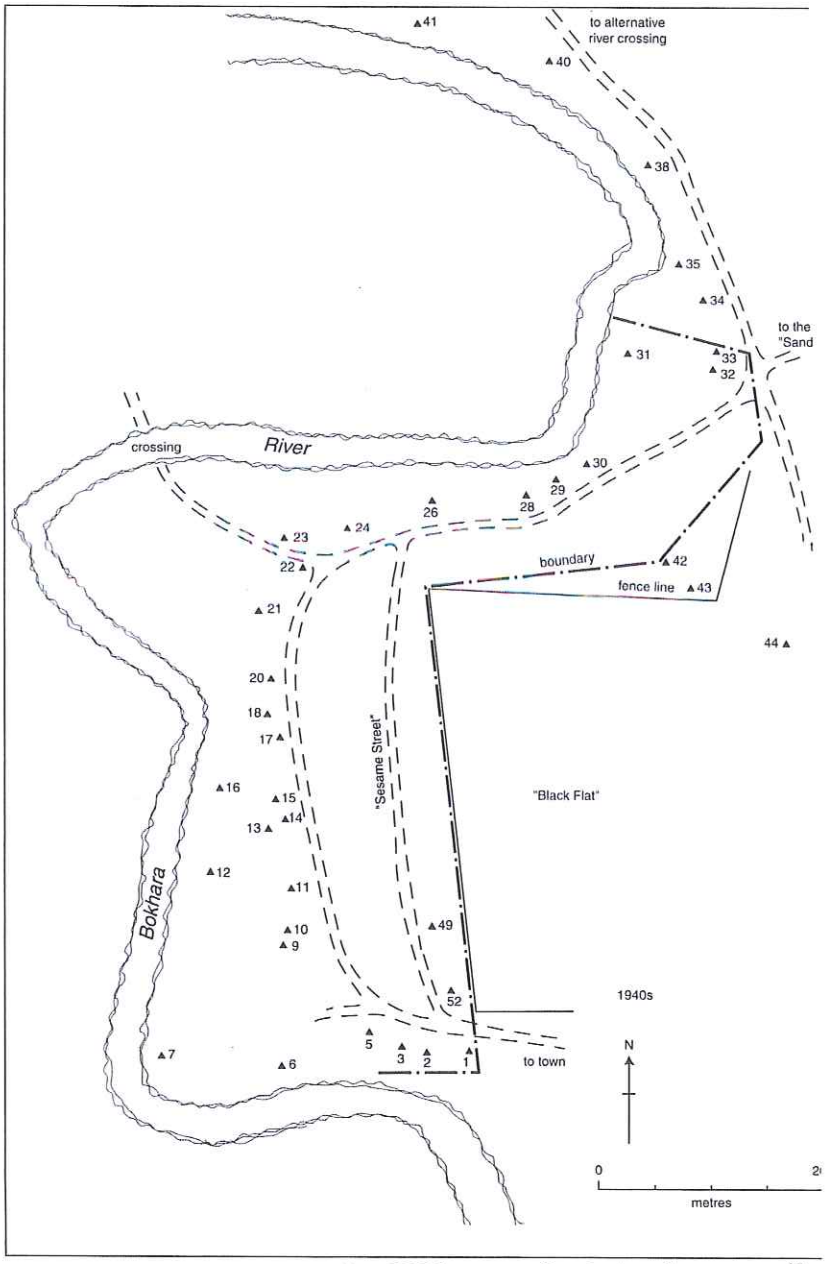
As shown by maps 12 and 13 the layout of housing remained the same over time - forming an arc following a slight ridge. All houses were placed to face each other so that members of all households could see each other and "keep track of what was going on." This is typical of a number of Aboriginal settlements built taking Aboriginal concerns into account.

This "keeping in contact" is important to community well-being and extends beyond the close family. It can include anybody who has become involved with a community in some capacity. The Aboriginal "Bush Telegraph" is remarkably effective.

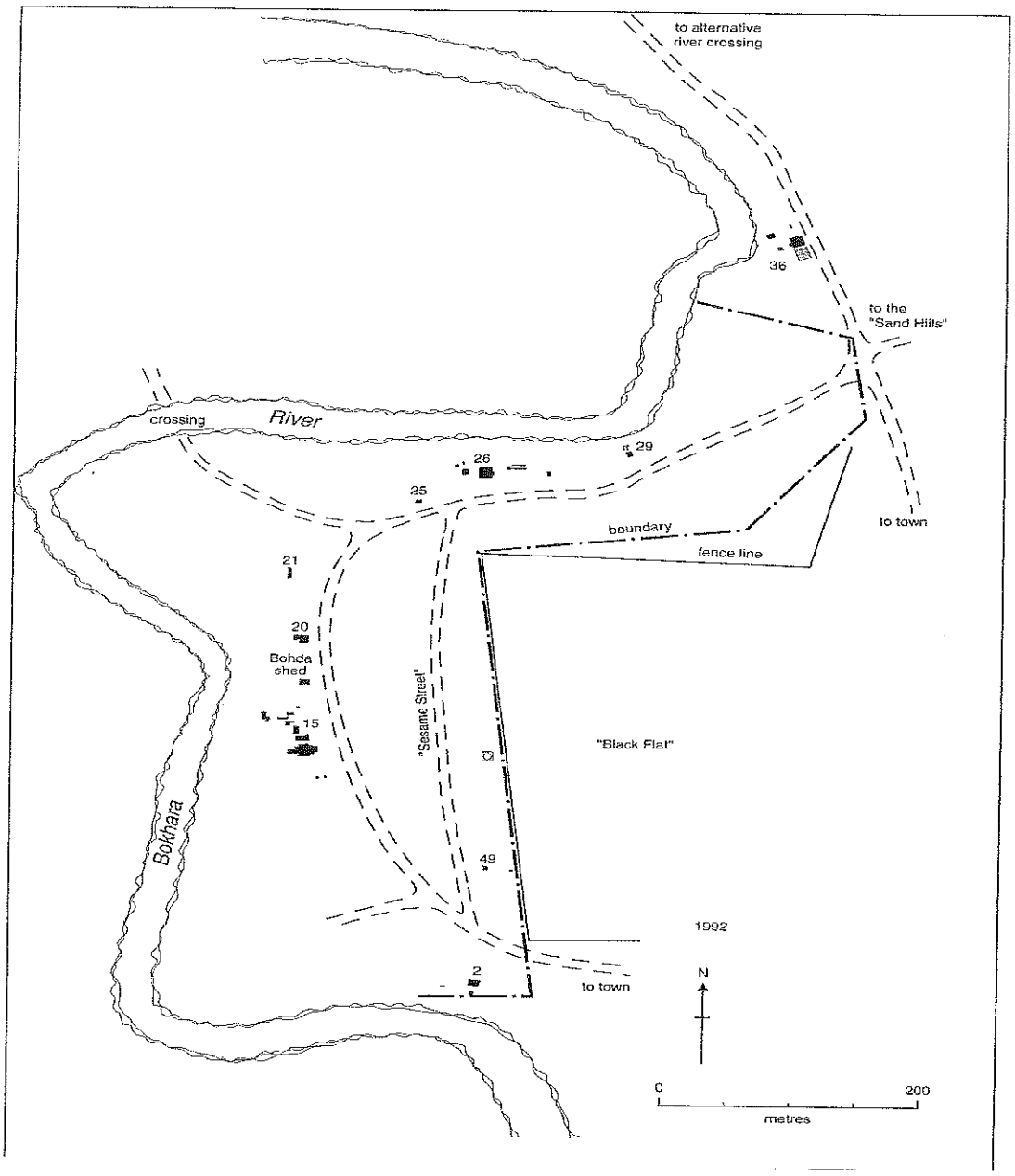
The buildings were organised in kinship clusters and these were retained over time,. Some buildings did disappear over time, due to factors such as death, migration, the 1950s flood etc. The empty spaces between remaining houses showed that a certain cluster had moved away - but the others remained in place.

Five men were the main creators of the renewed tin camps: Clem Orcher, Curtis Orcher, Ernie Skuthorpe, Marty Waites and Edward Boney. Each of them built at least one of the houses on the reserve between 1992 and 1995.

There was an overall similarity in housing style and a common attribute of flexibility, but there was also great variation in spatial relationships and a lot of diversity in design and methods of construction. The houses show the advantages coming from using local technology in combination with accessible (and affordable) materials. These made them easier to erect but also to alter and modify according to need. Materials could be hard to get. Suitable cypress trees (resistant to termites) could not be logged just anywhere. It grows straight and tall and there is an extensive belt locally. Its main disadvantage is that it must be worked while fairly fresh to prevent splitting.



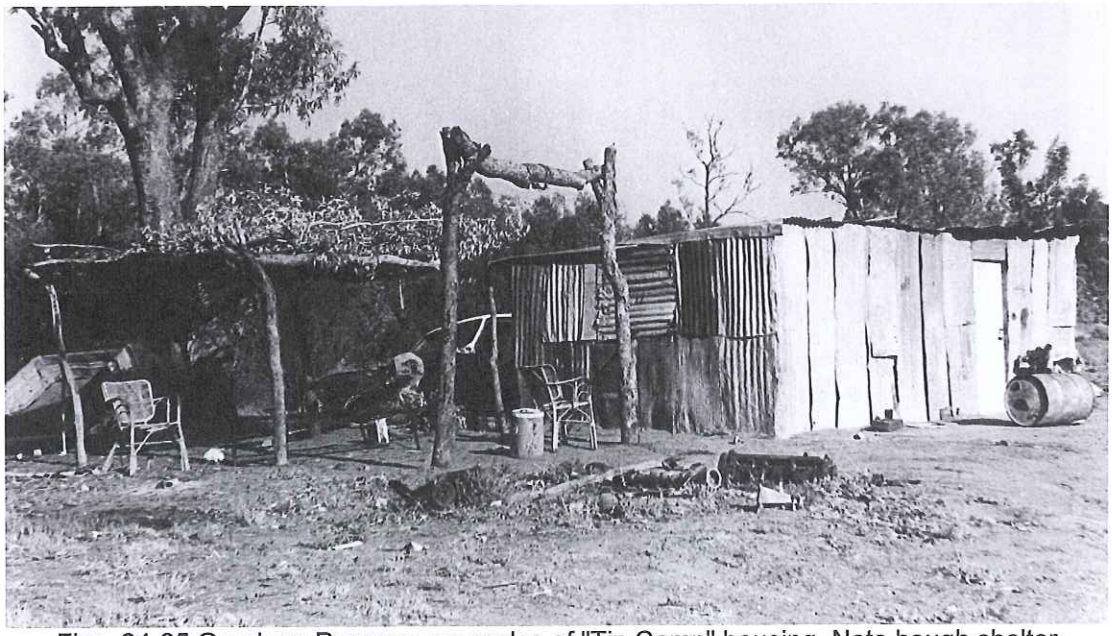
Map 13 Goodoga in the 1940s according to local memory (from S.Smith's study)



Map 14: Goodooga Reserve in 1992 (from S.Smith's study)

There was not much money about. Materials might have to be dragged from the local dump or scrounged from demolition sites. But the building style also allowed much flexibility in design and ease of repair. Usually only very basic tools were available for use. Ingenuity and practical skills were needed.

According to S. Smith, the main structure of a house comprised a pole frame system using posts, rafters, roof battens and girts (= horizontal members between posts at various levels above the floor). The builders used different techniques for making the connections between the various parts: twists of wire or notching the posts to receive the girts. Western techniques could also be used, such as using nails or flat straps of galvanised iron. Almost all cladding was corrugated iron, usually second-hand. The method of fixing varied. Roofs were low-pitched, slopes ranging between 1 and 11 degrees.



Figs. 24-25 Goodoga Reserve, examples of "Tin Camp" housing. Note bough shelter. Photos lent by V. Mason

The types and locations of openings varied from house to house and from room to room. They were placed to make use of breezes, cut down on entry of dust, provide views and communication between households to the degree wanted as well as privacy and security. The choice of cladding was generally restricted to corrugated iron (second-hand), opened out kerosene tins and hessian.

The earlier houses usually had dirt floors but by 1992 all the tin camps had concrete floors, usually a thin slab, about 50mm thick and covered with carpet. The floor was usually level with the ground outside, in spite of the risk of flooding.

The houses were frequently modified, added to, replanned in terms of family needs and circumstances. Smith cites Clem Orcher as stating that between 1968 and 1992, he had built at least ten houses, all in the same spot! But the Skuthorpe house was the result of additions over time.

The tin camps varied considerably in size: a house could have one room or up to fourteen. Any building with more than one room would have spaces designated as

bedrooms and containing beds. They might also be used to store clothes - on the floor or in wardrobes, to play computer games, watching TV or videos or for doing schoolwork. But even the so-called living rooms could be used also as bedrooms according to need. In Aboriginal families living arrangements tend to be flexible, as there tends to be a lot of visiting.

Furnishings for storage were varied: shelves fixed to walls, mobile cupboards and boxes. Food could be hung from rafters, inside the house or on verandas. Valuable items would be hidden away to be unnoticed and out of reach for those who should not have access. The general pattern of sharing (typically within the extended family) did not necessarily extend to rare and valuable items such as rifles or expensive machinery.

Fig.26 Reserve house interior. Photo lent by V. Mason.

Some houses had elaborate internal fireplaces or woodchip stove but fires could also be made on a sheet of tin or could be a pile of sticks on the ground, according to mood, need and the weather.

Most of the houses were decorated, inside and out. Inside there might be posters and photos on the walls, and cabinets with china and glass. Some houses had painted fence posts, boulders, sheep skulls and tyres round the garden. Tubs and drums could be painted and used as planters. Some houses used the colour scheme of a favoured football team.

But much of the daily life happened out of doors. There were verandas, bough shades, breezeways and sleep-outs.

As mentioned above, family links are important to the people and family memories are retained over generations. People who had reason to move away remember it fondly and wish for at least some of the 'Tin Sheds' to be retained and looked after

also for future generations to visit. Dixie Skuthorpe, for example, has expressed a wish that the Skuthorpe house, though not inhabited, should be kept.

S. Smith has created a tabulation of the population of the Reserve over time, based on local memories. It can be found on a web site, *my connected community (mc2)* , funded by the Victorian Government and coordinated by *Vicnet*. This website also contains some genealogies for the families involved.

The lists of residents are quoted below (slightly abbreviated) as they are available to anybody with a computer and able to download to it. The house numbers listed in the tables can be found on maps 11 and 12.

Residents at Goodooga Aboriginal Reserve

House	Name	Comments
		1940s, population c.120
1	Donald Byno	
	Toddie Byno (nee Bailey)	sister of Johny Bailey, Auntie of Felix hooper, later moved to Weilmoringle.
	5 children	
2	Harry Waites	(House originally belonged to Ron Sharpley)
	Betty Waites,b.1929	sister of Felix Hooper, d.of Sam and Nora Hooper
3	Victor McDonald	From Walgett
	Ruby Hooper	sister of Felix Hooper5
5	Felix Hooper	'Wiggity' from dennowan, son of Sam Hooper, Cunnamulla
	Edna Hooper	
	Patsy Hooper	daughter b.1946 = Patsy Bishop
	Evelyn Hooper	daughter b.1947 = Evelyn Coffee
6	Mathhew O'Neil	fr.Qld
	Eyvone (Yvonne) O'Neil	'Bonny', sister of Victor McDonald
7	Alec Jackson	son of Shillin Jackson
	Doreen Jackson	sister of Felix Hooper
9	Percy Hooper	'Cookie', brother of Felix Hooper
	Mavis Cubby	daughter of May Cubby
	Roger Cubby	son, born, 1949, plus 2 older brothers & sisters
10	Frankie Cubby	brother of Mavis Cubby
	Margie Powell	niece of Benny Shillingsworth
11	Walter Cubby	son of Charlie Cubby &Hannah Skuthorpe
	May Cubby	d. of Annie Bottle & Thomas Richardson, mother of Mavis Cubby and Frankie Cubby
12	Jonny Bailey	brother of Ruby Bailey
	Lilly Dodd	
	Jeannie Bailey/Dodd	daughter
	Charlie Bailey/Dodd	son
13	Jacky Sullivan	Grandfather of Eileen Skuthorpe. Water tank = house.
14	Violet Skuthorpe (Guwamu)	nee Whitford, mother of Ernie and Margie Skuthorpe
15	Arnold Francis	brother of Ivy Shillingsworth. Later to Weilmoringle.
	Margaret Francis	
16	Ernie Skuthorpe	son of Violet Skuthorpe
House	**Name**	**Comments**
	Eileen Skuthorpe	'Tiny", nee Sullivan, fr. Brewarrina Mission, sister of Austy Sullivan
17	Annie Jackson	'Hoppin nnie', Queen of the Culgoa,'married' a squire from England, fathered Cyril Jackson (Lord Jackson)
18	Cyril Jackson	'Shillin' or 'Lord", Annie's son

	Winnie Jackson	'Winnie-bo'
20	Alex Welsh	m.to Clara Bardon who left him 1935/36
	Dotti Cubby	sister of Walter Cubby. Had been m. to Harold West, had daughter Gwen West (Cubby?) with him.
21	Benny Shillingsworth	'Shiny Ben'
	Ivy Shillingsworth	nee Francis, sister of Arnold Francis
	Joycie Shillingsworth	daughter, mother of Georgie Shillingsworth 6 other children
22	Donald Shillingsworth	'Gugibar', cousin of Clara Bardon
	Ruby Shillingsworth	nee Bailey
	Ellen Shillingsworth	daughter
	Essey Shillingsworth	daughter, later Essey Coffee the 'Bush Queen' plus 6 other children
23	Hogan Shillingsworth	brother of Donald Shillingsworth
	Ruby Eulo	niece of Jonny Bailey
24	George Leonard	
	Clara Bardon	m. of Dulcie Nean, cousin of Donald Shillingsworth
	John Bardon	'Jack', brother of Clara
	Len Bardon	brother of Clara
	Dulcie Welsh/Bardon	daughter of Clara w. Alex Welsh
26	Bindi West	
	Teresa West, nee Cross	'Granny Bindi', related to the Shillingsworths
28	Mervin Orcher	uncle of Clem Orcher
29	Wlily Willis	(dthadtha)
	Ginny (Jenny?) Rose (Guwamu) 5 children	'bulimba'=rose. Grandmother of Garnet Bishop, mother -in-law of Bob Bishop. Sister of Susan Mitchell.
30	Bobby Toogula	
	Susan (?)	
	Clara Foote	D. of Edna Gibb, nee Collis, father?
	Ronny West	son of Bindi West
31	Podgy Harper	in the 1950s?
32	Bertie Powell	'Murri Murri'
33	Oxer Murray	'Combo'
34	Archie Murphy	'Digger', lived on a returned soldiers block granted him
35	Donald Johnson	
	Venus Johnson (Guwamu)	nee Powell, sister of 'Murri Murri', daughter of Julia Powell
38	Arthur Hooper	
	Cila Boney	
	Thomas Boney	brother of Cila
40	Jim Watson	brother of Annie Jackson
41	Joker Grimshaw	(Guwamu)
42	Jack Bell	
	Claris Collis	'Nugget', mother of Edna and Clarence, grandmother of Clara Foote
	Susie Bishop	
43	Fred Homeville	
	Emily Homeville	
44	Hervey Wallace	
	Madeline Wallace	nee Witford
House	**Name**	**Comments**
	Boy Boy Wallace	son
	Arthur Wallace	son (moved to Garnet Bishop's place)+ 2 other children
49	Booker Baker	
	Dolly Hooper	sister of Felix Hooper
52	Evelyn Bailey niece of	Jonny Bailey, cousin of Felix Hooper = 5 children

	1960s households, population then about 177	
2	Harry Waites	
	Betty Waites	sister of Felix Hooper, d.of Sam & Norma Hooper+ 12 children
3	Victor MacDonald	from Walgett
	Ruby Hooper	Sister of Felix Hooper, daughter of Norma Bailey
	Eyvone MacDonald	daighter
4	Jonny Bishop	brother of Garnet Bishop
	Patsy Bishop	nee Hooper, daughter of Felix Hooper
5	Felix Hooper	'Wiggity' from Dennowan
	Edna Hooper	
	Evelyn Hooper	daughter + 2 brothers, 3 sisters
6	Matthew O'Neil	from Qld
	Eyvone O'Neil	'Bonny',nee MacDonald,sister of Victor MacDonald, mother of Judy O'Neil + 6 children
7	Alex Jackson	son of Shillin Jackson
	Doreen Jackson	sister of Felix Hooper
	Lance Jackson	son
	Alan Jackson	son
	Timothy Jackson	son
	Carol Jackson	daughter
	Cheryl Jackson	daughter
	Roslyn Jackson	daughter
8	Jessie Foote	mother of Harry White
	Jimmy Johnson	
9	Percy Hooper	'Cookie', brother of Felix Hooper
	Mavis Cubby	d. of May Cubbie + 10 children incl. Roger Cubby
10	Frankie Cubby	brother of Mavis Cubby
	Margie Powell	niece of Benny Shillingsworth+11 children incl. Serena Cubby
11	May Cubby	nee Richardson, born in Dennowan, m.of Mavis Cubby and Frankie Cubby + 6 children
13	Jacky Sullivan	grandfather of Eileen Skuthorpe.Black tracker house made of water tank.
14	Violet Skuthorpe	nee Witford
15	Ernie Skuthorpe	son of Violet Skuthorpe
	Eileen Skuthorpe	'Tiny', nee Sullivan, from Brewarrina Mission, sister of Austy Sullivan + 8 children incl. Clarence Collis
18	Cyril Jackson	'Shillin' or 'Lord', son of 'Hoppin' Annie Jackson
	Winnie Jackson	'Winnie-bo' + 3 children
19	Rita Beckett	nee West
	Charlie Beckett	+ 4 children
20	Jimmy MacDonald	brother of Victor MacDonald, brother of Eyvone O'Neil from Walgett
	Jessie MacDonald	from walgett
		Later in the 1970s:
House	**Name**	**Comments**
	Albury Weatherall	
	Margie Weatherall	nee Skuthorpe, sister of Ernie Skuthorpe
21	Joycie Shillingsworth	mother of Georgie Shillingsworth
		Later
	Raymond Orcher	brother of Gladys Orcher
	Janie Jackson	daughter of Shillin and Winnie Jackson
24	Clara Bardon	mother of Dulcie Nean + 4 children?
25	Tex Skuthorpe	grandson of Violet Skuthorpe
	Judy O'Neil	daughter of Eyvone 'Bonny' O'Neil

		Later
	Rex Skuthorpe	brother of Tex. Later moved to Angledool
	Dawn Cochrane	sister of Alfie Cochrane
26	Bindi West	
	Teressa West	'Granny Bindi'
	Keith West	son
	Ray West	son
	David West	son
	Nita West	daughter
	Robert West	son + 2 other children
		Later
	Billy Nean	
	Dulcie Nean	nee Bardon, d. of Alex Welsh & Clara Bardon
27	Annie Jackson	'Hoppin Annie' Queen of the Culgoa. Had been living here w. Jim Stevens who used to sell food fr. house.
28	Mervin Orcher	uncle of Clem Orcher
29	Gladys Orcher	mother of Clem Orcher + 4 children
30	Bobby Toogulla	
	Clara Foote	daughter of Edna Gibb
	Bonny West	son of Bindi West
31	Podgy Harper	
32	Kronji Green	
	Edith Boney	(mother of Cila Boney)
	Lloyd Boney	grandson?
33	Oxer Murray	'Combo'
35	Donald Johnson	
	Venus Johnson	nee Powell, sister of 'Murri Murri' + 6 children
37	Ginny Rose	grandmother of Garnet Bishop, sister of Susan 'Granny' Mitchell, Cunnamulla
	Bob Bishop	son-in-law of Ginny Rose, father of Garnet Bishop
38	Arthur Hooper	
	Cila Boney	= Priscilla, mother of Lynette Boney
	Thomas Boney	brother of Cila
38	Veronica Boney	daughter of Thomas Boney, sister of Lloyd Boney
39	Curtis Orcher	brother of Clem Orcher
	Lynette Boney	daughter of Doolan Boney and Cila Boney, cousin of Veronica Boney
	Clem Orcher	
40	Hervey Wallace	'Boy Boy', sol of Old Hervey Wallace
	Patsy Boney	sister of Cila Boney + 3 children
42	Mackie Gibbs	
	Edna Gibbs	nee Collis, cousin of Gladys Orcher, mother of Clara Foote, sister of Rudy Collis
43	Fred Horneville	
	Emily Horneville	
House	**Name**	**Comments**
44	Hervey Wallace	
	Madeleine Wallace	
45	Nellie Winters	'Toota' daughter of Donald and Ruby Shillingsworth.
46	Cyril Jackson	'Shillin' or 'Lord', son of 'Hoppin' Annie Jackson
	Winnie Jackson	
47	Daniel Forester	
	Beverley Forester	'Nooni', nee Hooper
		Later in the 1980s
	Greg Merritt	fr. Walgett, Gingy? Mission
	Veronica Boney	cousin of Lynette, sister of Lloyd, daughter of Thomas
48	Valerie Jackson	'Georgina', daughter of Thomas Boney and Winnie Jackson

	Moreen	daughter of Valerie Jackson ans Alfred Orcher
49	Booker Baker	
	Dolly Hooper	sister of Felix Hooper
	Percy Cubby	
	Bo Cubby	
50	Teressa West	*Late 1960s.*
51	Toddie Byno	nee Bailey, sister of Jonny Bailey, aunt of Felix Hooper
52	Evelyn Bailey	niece of Jonny Bailey, cousin of Felix Hooper
	Pauline Bailey	daughter of Evelyn Bailey & Sonny Orcher (son of Jack Orcher)
Goodooga Reserve Housholds December 1992, population 38		
2	George Waites	'George Box', son of Betty & Harry Waites
	Margaret Hunter	
	Elizabeth Waites	daughter
	Kimberley Waites	daughter
15	Ernie Skuthorpe	son of Violet Skuthorpe
	Eileen Skuthorpe	'Tiny' nee Sullivan, fr. Brewarrina Mission
	Ken Skuthorpe	son
	Linda Tratten	daughter-in-law
	Luke Skuthorpe	grandson
	Crissa Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	Peg Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	David Skuthorpe	grandson
	Shelby Skuthorpe	granddaughter
20	Garnet Bishop	son of Bob Bishop and Amy Rose
	Arthur Wallace	'Archie', brother of Boy Boy Wallace, son of Hervey and Madeleine Wallace
21	Bradley Orcher	brother of Clem Orcher
	Debbie Wilson	
	Coralie Orcher	daughter
House	Name	Comments
21	Gladys Orcher	daughter
	Bradley Orcher	son
Spend most of their time in Brewarrina as house not quite finished.		
25	Lisa Orcher	daughter of Isobel and Clem Orcher
26	Clem Orcher	
	Isabel Orcher	nee Nean, daughter of Dulcie Nean
	Geoffrey Orcher	son
	Duane Orcher	son
29	Tony Orcher	brother of Clem Orcher
	Judy Wood	sister of Karen Wood
	Isabel Orcher	daughter
House	**Name**	**Comments**
	Cheryl Orcher	adopted sister of Tony Orcher, d.of RudyColliss
35	Burnt down, used to be Curtis Orcher's place, new house built closer to the road.	
36	Michael Boney	son of Curtis Orcher and Lynette Boney, nephew of Clem Orcher
	Karen Wood	sister of Jody Wood
	Nathan Boney	son
	Clayton Boney	son
	Greg Merritt	
	Veronica Boney	de facto wife of Greg Merritt, daughter of Thomas Boney, cousin of Lynette Boney
	Nellie Merritt	Greg's daughter
	Neil Boney	Veronica's adopted son
49	Alfred Orcher	'Audy', uncle of Clem Orcher, brother of Gladys
Goodooga Reserve Housholders February 1994, population 29		

2	Kenny Waites	brother of George Waites
15	Ernie Skuthorpe	son of Violet Skuthorpe
	Eileen Skuthorpe	'Tiny', nee Sullivan, from Brewarrina Mission
	Ken Skuthorpe	son
	Linda Tratten	daughter-in-law
	Luke Skuthorpe	grandson
	Crissa Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	Peg Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	David Skuthorpe	grandson
	Shelby Skuthorpe	granddaughter
20	Garnet Bishop	son of Bob Bishop and Amy Rose
	Arthur Wallace	'Archie', brother of Boy Boy Wallace, son of Hervey and Madeleine Wallace
24	Dulcie Nean	mother of Isabel Orcher
25	Lisa Orcher	daughter of Isabel and Clem Orcher
	Alfred Green	'Peter'
26	Clem Orcher	
	Isabel Orcher	daughter of Dulcie Nean
	Duane Orcher	son
28	Bradley Orcher	brother of Clem Orcher
	Debbie Wilson	
	Coralie Orcher	daughter
	Gladys Orcher	daughter
	Bradley Orcher	son
		spend most of their time in Brewarrina
29	Jody Wood	sister of Karen Wood
	Isabel Orcher	daughter
36	Michel Boney	son of Curtis Orcher and Lynette Boney, nephew of Clem Orcher
House	Name	Comments
36	Karen Wood	sister of Jody Wood
	Nathan Boney	son
	Clayton Boney	son
Goodooga Reserve Housholders February 1995, population 27		
2	Kenny Waites	brother of George Waites
	Katie Colliss	from Cunnamulla
15	Eileen Skuthorpe	'Tiny', nee Sullivan, from Brewarrina Mission
	Ken Skuthorpe	son
	Linda Tratten	daughter-in-law
	Luke Skuthorpe	grandson
House	**Name**	**Comments**
	Crissa Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	Peg Skuthorpe	granddaughter
	David Skuthorpe	grandson
	Shelby Skuthorpe	granddaughter
20	Garnet Bishop	son of Bob Bishop and Amy Rose
	Archie Wallace	brother of Boy Boy Wallace, son of Hervey and Madeleine Wallace
24	unoccupied, Dulcie Nean had moved back to Walgett	
25	(Lisa Orcher)	Lisa and Peter studying in Armidale
26	Clem Orcher	
	Isabel Orcher	daughter of Dulcie Nean
	Coralee Orcher	niece
	(Duane Orcher)	gone to Coffs Harbour
28	unoccupied	Bradley Orcher, Debbie Wilson and son Bradley in Brewarrina
29	unoccupied	temporarily used by non-Aboriginal builders as site shed

36	Michel Boney	son of Curtis Orcher and Lynette Boney, nephew of Clem Orcher
	Karen Wood	sister of Jody Wood
	Nathan Boney	son
	Clayton Boney	son
48	Edward Boney	brother of Michael Boney
	Marion Wood	'Bub', sister of Karen Wood and Jody Wood
	Hayden Boney	son
	Lionel Boney	son
	Jody Wood	sister of Marion and Karen Wood
	Isabel Wood	daughter of Jody Wood
	Anthony Wood	son of Jody Wood

North of the Reserve there are two cemeteries, no longer used except by special application. The oldest, west of the river, is marked on maps and has been fenced to keep stock out, but it had been much disturbed and trampled before this. Graves are marked with glass, but there are no names.

Fig.27 Old cemetery, much trampled, now fenced.

The second, east of the river, is well looked after, with a shade shelter for a visiting vehicle over the track leading to it, and good fencing. Graves are marked with broken glass and ceramics and sometimes with items that are decorative or may have been treasured by the deceased, such as little silvery horses of plastic that used to be for sale in stalls at the race course. This is no longer in use but going to the races was a great treat and fondly remembered. Some graves are outlined with a row of beer bottles stuck neck down in the soil.

Fig.28 The "Sandhills Cemetery". Note the access track and shade shelter to the right.

There may be more graves, no longer visible, in the more overgrown part of the cemetery. There is also thought to be graves in the sand hills between the cemetery and the main road north to Queensland. Nowadays the residents of Goodooga township and the reserve are buried in Goodooga cemetery, east of Goodooga and close to the road to Lightning Ridge. There seems to be some attempt to continue some traditional grave decorations.

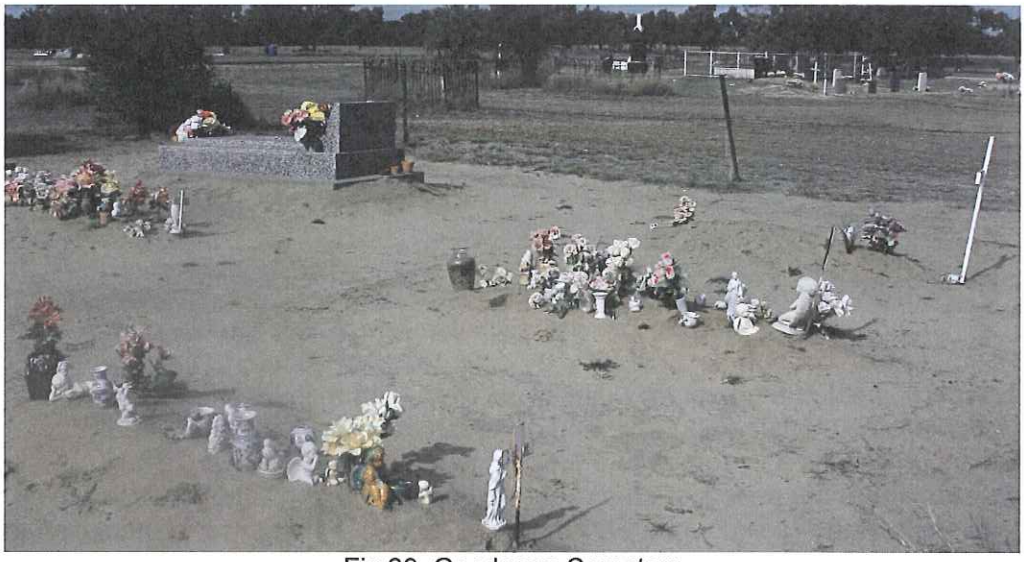


Fig.29 Goodooga Cemetery

6.4.4 Dennawan

Note that the photographic maps etc. are borrowed from Harrison 2004 with his gracious permission - and greetings to all those who helped him in the field.

Early days

The story of Dennawan starts in the early stages of the pastoral push into this northern part of the Shire.

In 1845 Roderick Mitchell, Commissioner of Crown Lands in this area, set about exploring the area along Culgoa and Balonne Rivers. His favourable reports spurred

prospective settlers into the area, particularly from 1850 on when it became possible to get 14-year leases to take up runs of up to 50 square miles in unsettled areas. The plains along the Culgoa were seen as particularly promising, excellent for fattening your beasts.

By 1861, possibly earlier, the run named Tattala, later **Tatala**, had been taken up and was managed by Frederick Wherrit, who (in an area that had seen much strife, murder and massacres) had unusually good relations with the Aboriginal groups in the area. He was apparently tactful and considerate of their needs. This they repaid by being helpful.

A pattern of permissive occupancy developed along the river. Aboriginal camps became pastoral labour camps - as long as a core group remained to provide labour when needed, people could go about their traditional business, move about to visit, perform their ceremonies, move around to different properties to see kin and friends.

Men were mainly farm workers - some became expert shearers - and women were mainly domestics though some worked as farm labour. Farm work became so much part of their world that their Moorawarri language acquired some words relating to it.

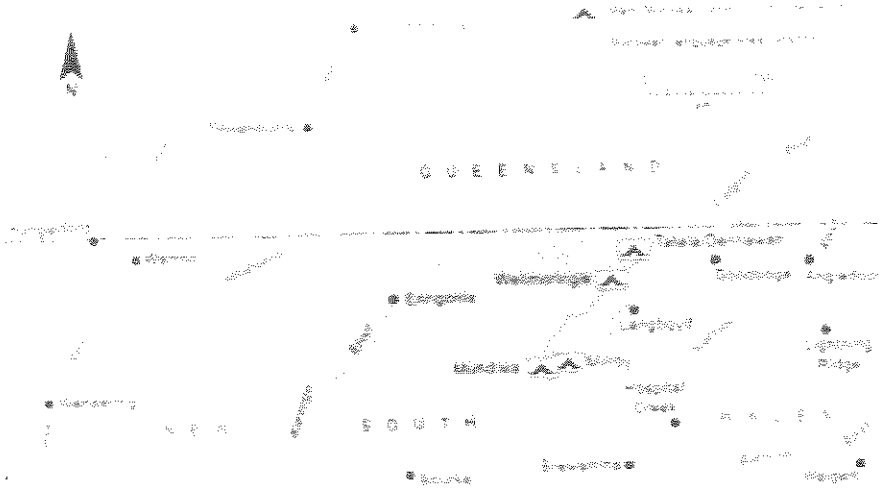
This history has been studied by NPWS staff or consultants, e.g. S.Veale and A.English, as the Culgoa National Park was established just to the north of Tatala.

Access to wild food was important, though some needs were met by the employers in the form of rations or pay. They fished in the river, mainly yellowbelly and cod, snared emus, hunted birds, goannas and some snakes. They dug for yams and waterlily roots, gathered some grasses. They collected plenty of wild fruit from trees along the river and swamps.

Life was not exactly easy - farm work could be heavy going. Some had tents and some made shelters - wurlies - of bark to live in. For the wurlies they preferred the bark of the red box, scraped, heated and rubbed with goanna fat. Canegrass was a good waterproof roofing. Cooking was mostly done outside, and water had to be carried.

Dennawan had been a favoured camp site even before it became a labour camp. It had a natural water supply and a good position on a natural route along the river, a route that had become a stock-route and watering place. Though there is little to see now, it was once a bustling village.

The four main Aboriginal labour camps on the Culgoa were those established at Dennawan/Tatala, Milroy, Mundiwa and Weilmoringle.



Map 15: Important post-contact Morrowarri settlements and their approximate language area (shaded grey)

In the 1880s and in response to increased settlement along the Culgoa, a small settlement grew up at Bourbah (Bowra) at the junction of two stock routes and an official watering point. A pub, Edward Ryan's Hotel, was in place by 1882, providing a watering place also for the men droving the stock.

In July 1889 the Brewarrina Progress Committee requested a postal service to go up along the Culgoa and on to Bowra. In 1890 John Nowlan from Bourke was awarded the tender to carry mail to Brewarrina and up to to Bowra once a week. A receiving office was established at the pub.

The hotel caused problems for the Aborigines camped on the stock route at Tatala nearby. This camp had probably been there already before 1861. It was the job of the local police constable to dole out rations to the old and infirm, but also to control any gambling and drunkenness. The police station at Tatala was established by 1833 and functioned, with some interruptions, till it was closed in 1920. It was located immediately south of the pub and receiving station, on the stock route.

Goodooga police reports show that a few old and infirm Aborigines at Tatala were receiving rations at about. 1900. Providing alcohol to Aborigines was illegal and was apparently a constant problem at Tatala. Settlement relations with the Aborigines had become problematic, involving sexual exploitation of women and drunkenness among men.

The hotel burnt down at the turn of the century and a new one was built in 1901, about 2km further south, near where the Aboriginal people camped at a small lagoon and close to Tatala police station. A this time mail was received through the police station. In 1907 the receiving office became known as Dennawan Post Office.

Constable Venables had been asked to put it to the Aborigines still camping at Tatala that they should move to the managed "mission" at Brewarrina. He reported back to the APB that they did not wish to do so - and it would probably be impossible to get them to move except by force.

In 1912 about twenty were still camping in the area. It was argued that if an area was reserved exclusively for Aborigines, and fenced, the constable could help keep any undesirables out. Dennawan was officially surveyed in 1912 and gazetted in

September 1913. It was midway between pub and police station, and was to be serviced by the police station, the pub and Mrs Gaffney's store at Tatala which provided rations due to Aborigines but also sold food to supplement the diet of farm workers, plus boiled lollies and various practical items needed by people.

The receiving office and telephone exchange were relocated to a building next to the store. This closed in 1940 and the post office building was sold. This probably contributed to the fading away of Dennawan as possibly also the influenza epidemic in 1919. Two cemeteries have been located at Dennawan and it is thought that the northern one is for ten burials resulting from the illness. There were another 10-12 deaths at Weilmoringle.

Missionary workers from the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM) came to the area in 1931 when people were facing starvation because of the difficulties they had in gathering food. Miss Ginger was one of the first missionaries to work at Dennawan. She described being hemmed in by mud and water. Mail could be delayed by weeks. Conditions continued to be periodically difficult with floods around and sometimes through her camp, clouds of mosquitoes and sandflies - and weeks of isolation from the outside world.

The missionaries Miss Ginger, Mr Blunt and Miss Bailey lived in tents or bough sheds near the post office. A house was built for the missionaries between 1936-1937. A little before this, Duncan Ferguson and his wife Blanche, Aboriginal AIM workers arrived with their young that included June Barker, now an Elder and one of the pillars of Brewarrina Aboriginal communities. She remembers the homes as being huts and sheds made from whatever scrap metals and bits could be found, but also how neat and clean the camp was, swept clean every morning.

Duncan built a kerosene tin house for his family. In the late 1930s they moved into the mission house. But in late 1938 or early 1939 the Ferguson family was moved to Brewarrina. Duncan himself continued to act as a missionary at Dennawan and various AIM field stations.

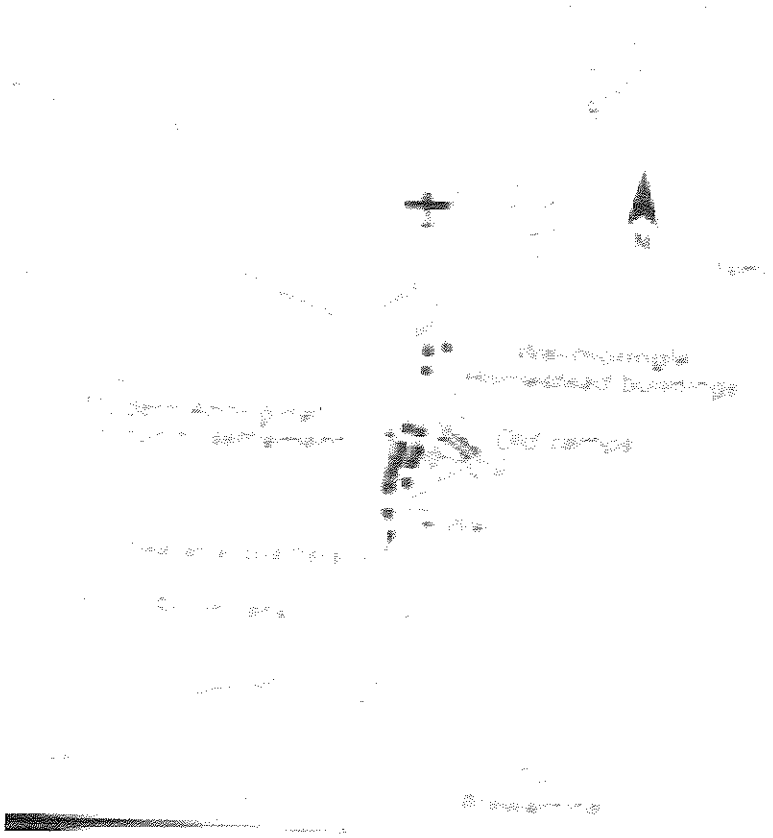
At Dennawan church was held in a bough shelter in the middle of the settlement. Particular favoured hymns are associated with Miss Ginger and Miss Bailey. Miss Ginger and Miss Bailey also taught the children in a school held under a large tree. The women were taught sewing and many learnt to read.

The church, school and the missionaries are still important in the memories of many, a point of connection when talking about olden days. Moorawarri people who are descendants of Dennawan residents talk of themselves as Dennawan people.

End of the camp

The closure of the store and post office meant the end of services to the outlying area. This was coupled with a long period of severe drought. Though the residents had refused a move to the Old Mission in Brewarrina, there was a gradual drift away from the camp to places like Goodoga, Brewarrina and Enngonia.

The list of residents of Goodooga Reserve carries many names recognised in stories about the Culgoa area. Some Dennawan people went to the camp at Weilmoringle. This used to be east of the river and is well remembered but carries little surface evidence.



Map 16:. Weilmoringle: note old camps east of the river.

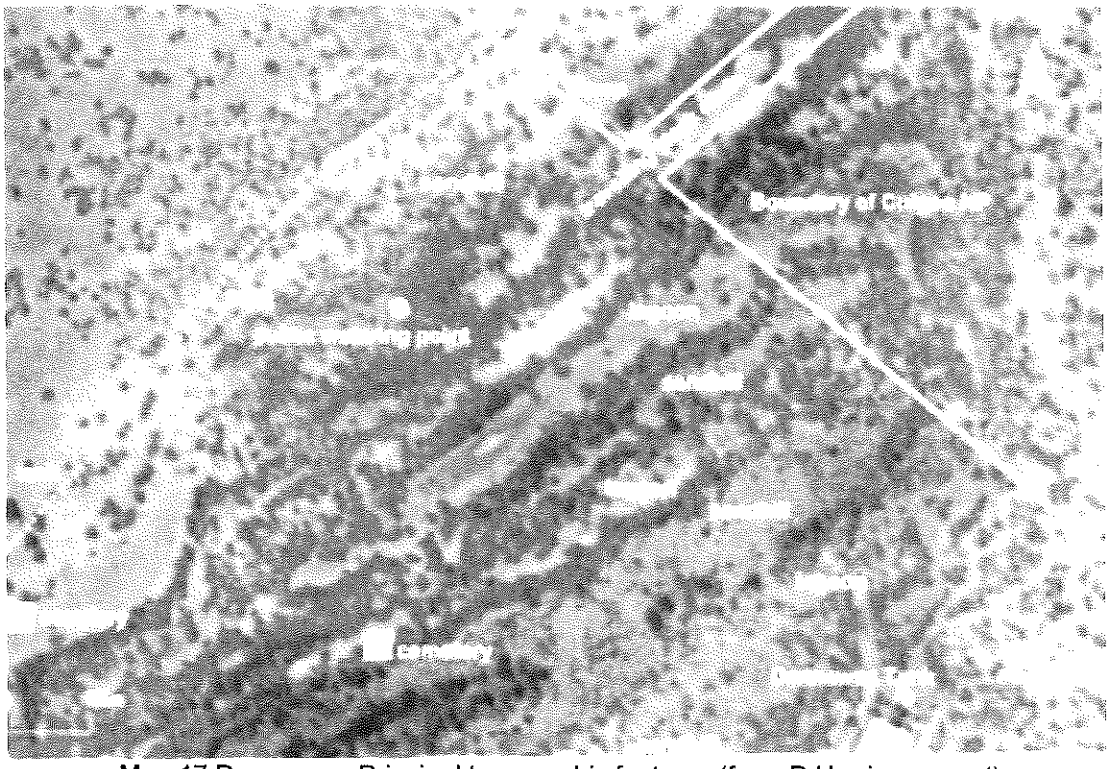
Dennawan camp investigated

This was a big undertaking and with "Dennawan people" coming from various parts of the Shire taking part. The people taking part are all listed in Harrison's report - names well known in the Aboriginal community. A lot of interest, effort and emotion was part of the work - recovering memories and life histories. It became an intense experience.

The reserve is located on ground that slopes gently to the south. Several sand dunes cross it, aligned to the north-east. They carry mainly tussock grasses, some lignum, narrow-leafed hopbush, scattered acacias, coolibah, gidgee, black and bimble box and some river red gum. Suckers and young trees show that there has been some regrowth.

There are several flat claypans and clearings that are prone to flooding, and a small lagoon in the centre is semi-permanent. It grows and dwindles seasonally. It has on one side a flat cleared area that contained a large scatter of artefacts. On the sand-hills there were, in the northwest and south-east parts, remains of structures. (According to Josie Byno, recent flooding has done considerable damage.) Two dams provided water for sheep, one in the south and one to the north of the site.

Two former cemeteries had been located and reported to DECC staff that organised fencing to protect them from trampling by sheep. One cemetery is on the north sand-hill, the other on one of the southern ones.



Map 17 Dennawan: Principal topographic features (from R.Harrison report)

The site was recorded over 22 days and the data recovered were mapped and listed on a data base, later to be plotted on air photos

The evidence was divided into categories so that it could be analysed to become verbal as well visual pictures of the past.

Structural remains included standing and fallen wooden posts, flattened kerosene tins and corrugated iron sheeting. Some pieces are fairly certainly parts of Mrs Gaffney's shop, the second pub, the post office and the store.

But most of the remains seem to derive from the Aboriginal home-made housing, especially on two southern sand hills where there was also domestic debris. The houses were often constructed on a bush pole frame held together with twisted fencing wire. The walls could be made of lime-washed hessian bags and flattened kerosene tins, while the roof would be pitched and also made of kerosene tins.

One set of remains was singled out as probably of the mission house built for the AIM and possibly using bits from the by then demolished police station. It was cypress pine framed and north of the settlement close to the former police station.

It was notably placed immediately outside the gazetted reserve boundary. The AIM archives document tension between the AIM and the APB regarding construction of mission buildings on reserves. The placing of the building was one way of avoiding a direct clash. But oral accounts suggest that Miss Bailey mostly camped on the stock route so she could live amongst the Aborigines on the reserve.

Where possible floor plans were interpreted from the remains, and many could be allocated names of owners. The reconstructions suggest that there were at least 18 dwellings on the site, not including the formal buildings such as pub and store.

Remains of eleven bed frames were found, mainly in association with traces of dwellings.

Maps 18 and 19 below attempt to map the development of an occasional camp into a labour camp, and Map 20 shows the recording of structural remains.

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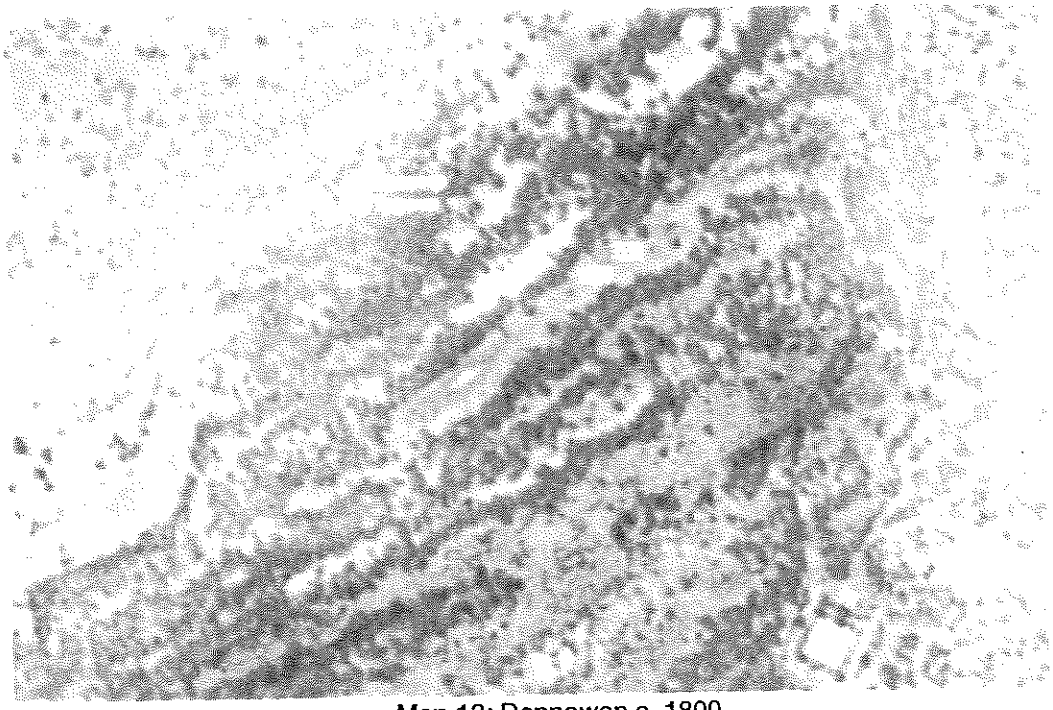
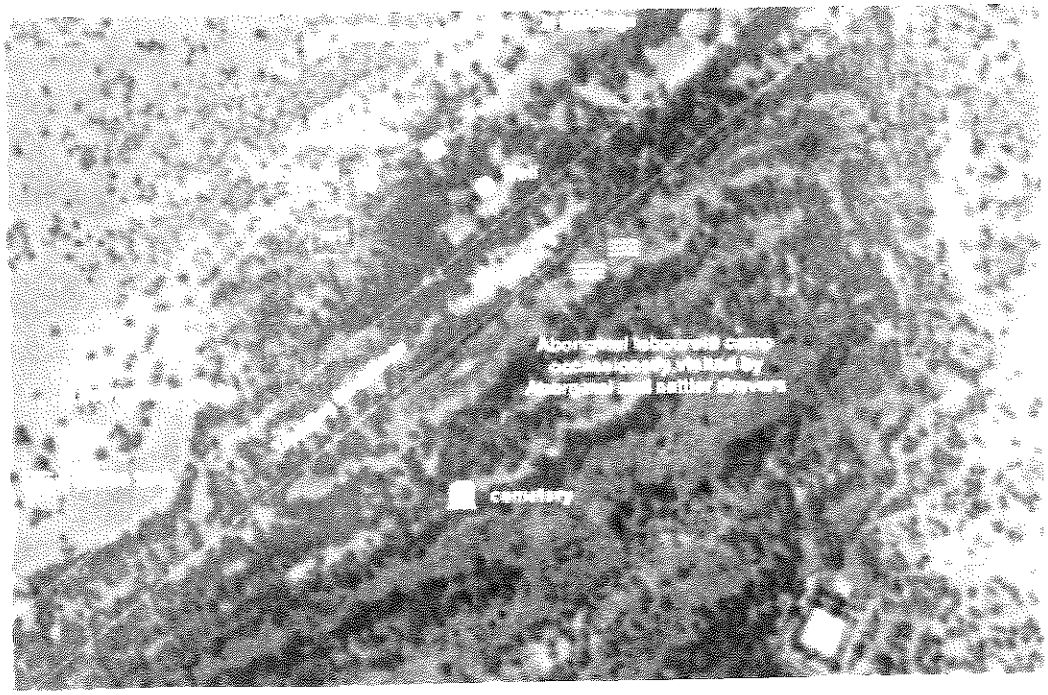
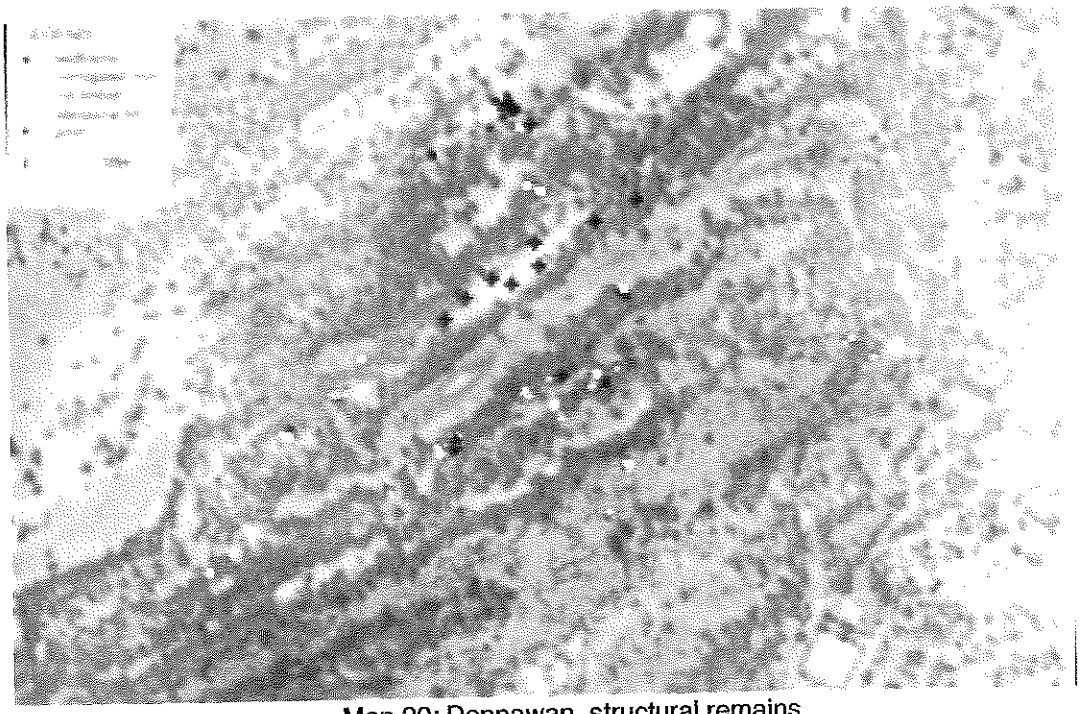


Map 18: Dennawan c. 1800



Map 19: Dennawan c. 1890

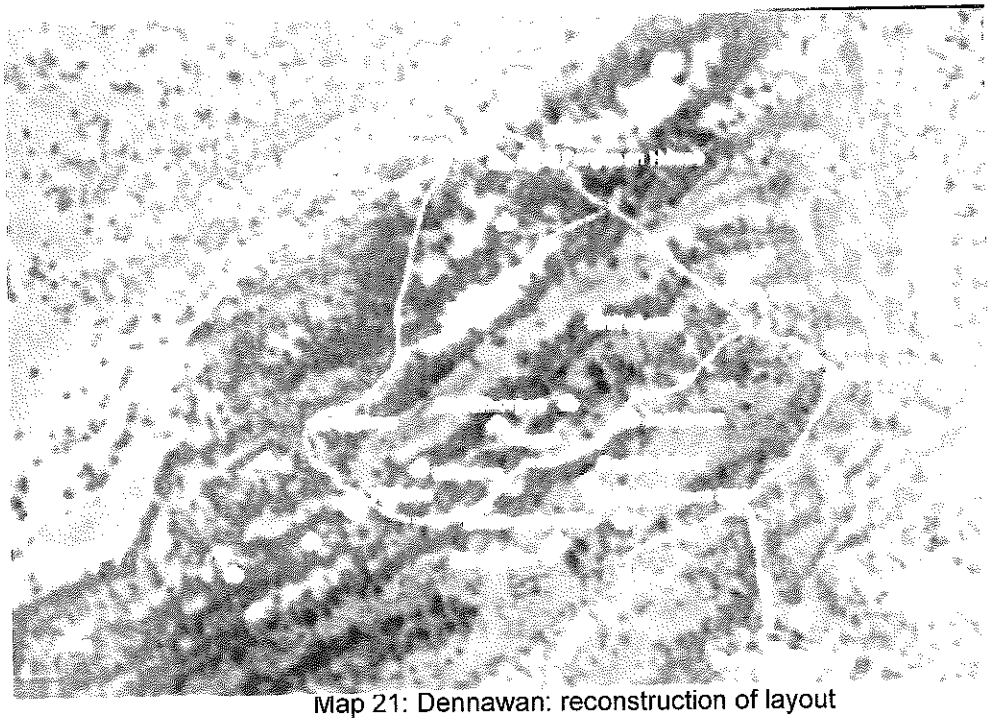
(Note: Maps 17-22 all reproduced from R. Harrison's report)



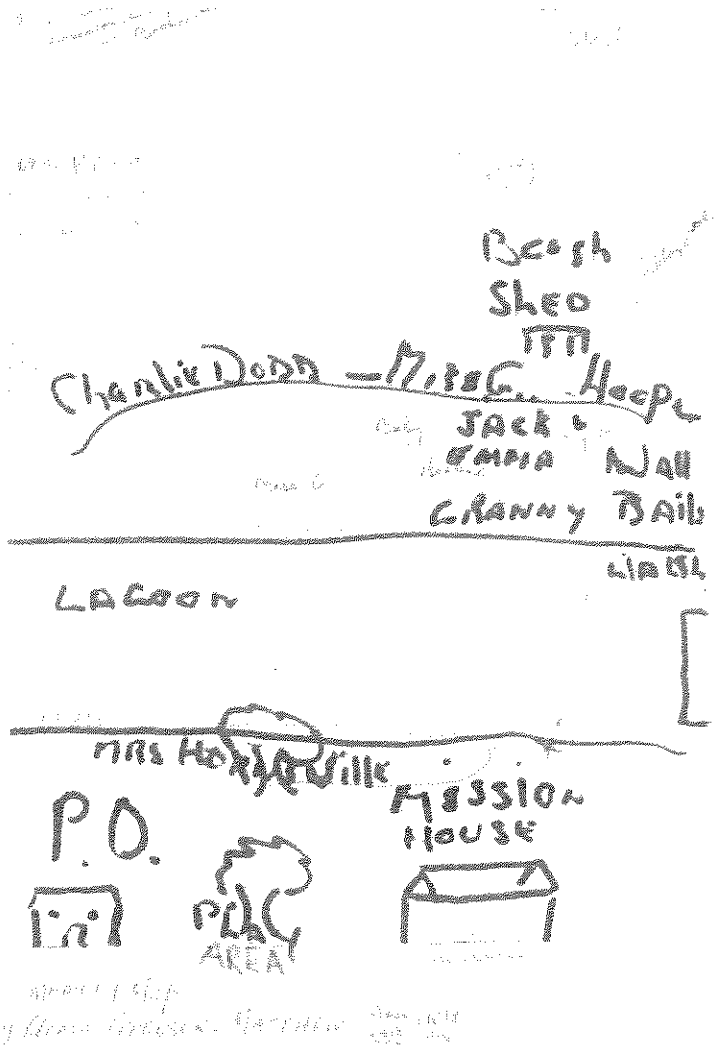
Map 20: Dennawan, structural remains

Map 21 below shows a reconstruction of the location of house sites based on the recording of structural remains and peoples memories of who lived where. Such memories seemed quite firm and shared by the group.

Map 22 shows a sketch of the reserve layout made by Gloria Matthews from her memory of the place.



Map 21: Dennawan: reconstruction of layout



Map 22: sketch by Gloria Matthews.

The categories of finds recorded reflect daily life in the camp - and there were lots of bits and pieces from which memories and stories could be drawn.

Starting with items of traditional character:
177 flaked and 14 ground **stone artefacts** were recorded, almost exclusively found on the flat open area bordering the large lagoon on the stock route and in the middle of the site.

There were 5 artefacts of chert but all the rest were silcrete, a rock common in the area. Some were finished tools but there was also what is called debitage - the bits that come off when you are making a tool.

Quite a few were upper grindstones - grinding seeds to flour has a long tradition in Aboriginal society. There were also adzes and scrapers, probably for wood working or dealing with bark or leather, as well as cutting tools such backed blades.

Broken **bottle glass** was much more common - 5188 pieces - and found all over the settlement, but especially in three main locations: a bottle dump near the hotel site, the hotel site itself, and on the flat clearing by the lagoon. Glass can to some extent be dated e.g. by colour, shape and makers' marks. Harrison gives a list of common diagnostics, but dating can be tricky. Most of the glass dates from 1880 to 1940,

though the presence of some black glass could date to 1860 to 1900. Bottle glass was less common on the sand hills - which could because it there would more easily get buried... Some of the glass bottles were probably discarded at the settlement after use as drink containers, some appear to have been flaked into tools. It has a higher fracture toughness than most of the stone materials available and can provide very sharp edges, used for cutting and scraping. Glass was attractive because it was easy to get, easy to flake and a curved shape could be useful. Broken glass can accidentally get an edge that looks worked, but people remember watching the use of glass tools, for example when giving wooden implements a good finish.

Of **tin cans and containers**, 850 were recorded, spread all over the settlement, but especially on the sand hills and the flat by the big lagoon. Most common were

- "hole-in-cap tins", common from the 1840s until about 1910 -1920, and;
- double-seam sanitary cans of varying size, common from about 1910 -1920 onwards.

There were also:

- key-wind opened oval tins, which usually held fish, common after 1895;
- hole-in-the top, e.g. of condensed milk type, dating from 1900;
- tins with press tops, commonly for powdered milk, common in Australia form 1890 on.

Other than food containers, there were tobacco tins and tins for wax matches.

Many tins were from recognisable firms and time periods.

Some tins had when empty been modified for other uses. Addition of wire handles provided mugs, billies and buckets. Car toys had empty tobacco tins for wheels. The inside cap of hole - in-cap tins were sometimes used as gambling tokens if coins were lacking.

Kerosine tins flattened for use on dwellings were counted as structural material. But kerosene tins had lots of uses. They were given handles for use as buckets, made into fire-buckets by chopping holes in the sides with a hatchet and filling it with coals. It was then used as a heater, and with a grill on top, for cooking. Some were made into meat-safes: a square cut out of each side, the holes covered with mesh and wet cloth. The safe was hung in a tree - in shade and away from animals. 28 buckets and fire buckets were recorded as well as four meat-safes.

One group of items was classed as table-ware: ceramics and enamelled pieces, cutlery and cooking and kitchen equipment. They were widely spread.

Ceramics: 464 pieces of broken ceramics and 16 pieces of insulator porcelain were recorded. Ceramics were widespread but much was found on the flat area by the lagoon. It was not possible for the team to record all pieces so a representative sample was recorded in detail. Some ceramics and almost all the insulator porcelain had been knapped or had edges used in the manner of stone artefacts. Much of the ceramic ware was of the plain white kind, relatively common and cheap, but there were also fragments of more expensive decorated wares.

Enamelware: 43 pieces of enamelled metal tableware were recorded. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a unit of enamelware was more expensive than its ceramic version. Items found included 12 cups, 2 washbasins, a bowl, a milk jug, 7 plates and 20 other pieces. They were distributed right across the settlement.

Cutlery: 2 forks, 2 knives, 1 teaspoon and 3 spoons.

Cooking related items: a number were found and included 2 hand mincers, 3 cast-iron camp oven lids and 2 cast-iron frypan pieces.

Personal items: These included clay pipes, clothing fasteners and items related to producing music.

Clay pipes: 6 fragments found, four being stem parts and two bowls. Four of the pieces were found on the flat by the lagoon others on the northern sand hill near the cemetery. Some stems had traces of makers marks, but too fragmentary for identification.

Clothing related items: Metal boot plates, buckles and work trouser buttons. They were mostly on the flat by the lagoon and near the post office and store. There were also bases of irons for ironing clothing, and more fancy and private things like a brooch, pieces of a pocket watch and glass beads.

Music related: There was a distinct Aboriginal music tradition in Western New South Wales. European instruments were incorporated in traditional ceremonies and songs. Remains of old records and harmonica pieces were frequent finds at Dennawan. Finds included a gramophone arm and spring in one place and gramophone handle in another. Musical instruments were probably played in several places.

Metal objects: Metal hand tools, including shovel blades, hand cut from kerosene tins, and car springs used as digging and adzing tools were found but also manufactured hand tools such as axe heads, shearing blades and files. Machinery bits included car parts from at least two Model T Fords and two other unidentified vehicles. They were spread fairly widely over the reserve.

321 pieces of wire were recorded. Wire was important and used in many ways: in building construction, as billy handles and fire hooks. Short bits were used for pegging out kangaroo and possum skins

Other Items:
Several pieces related to handling and harnessing horses - a blinker, metal rings and buckles, a stirrup, horse-shoes and a buggy wheel.

Comments:
As mentioned, this survey was of great importance and emotional significance to Aborigines in the area. To remove material recorded was definitely not to be considered - but even seeing and recording plans of houses remembered, or just touching an item used by past residents, feeling its presence, could bring a feeling of strength and connection with their people and the past. And, for once, the community had been able to take an active part in a comprehensive recording of its past, not just hear about it from a couple of representatives or see it published as a report - useful but as an experience less tangible and direct. Members of the community are still revisiting the area. Recent flooding has done some damage, but the records and the memories are there.

Judging from some evidence such as weathered stone artefacts, the camp by the lagoon was well established and probably used seasonally, perhaps even for hundreds of years before it became a labour camp. People simply stayed on and showed themselves resistant to any attempts to move them to managed reserves. There were at least two unsuccessful attempts by the authorities in the early 1900s.

It was clear from some of the items recorded, such as car parts and decorated china, that at times the residents had a fair amount of money. There was in the 1920s and 1930s, some car ownership by residents on the reserve even if most people rode horses. Having access to vehicles made it easier to maintain community kinship ties, so important to Aboriginal communities. At times there had been and still could be periods of hardship, particularly in times of severe drought when resources and work opportunities shrank. Farm work could be hard but it brought pay in cash - notably in more recent times when award wages were paid - and there was not much to spend the money on, though hawkers would at times make their way up the river. Gambling was a major entertainment.

The situation at Dennawan contrasted with life on managed reserves that often had a pattern of controlled poverty and cultural restrictions. But in the end people started moving away, some only as far as a now deserted camp at Weilmoringle, shown in Map 15.

6.5 Weilmoringle.

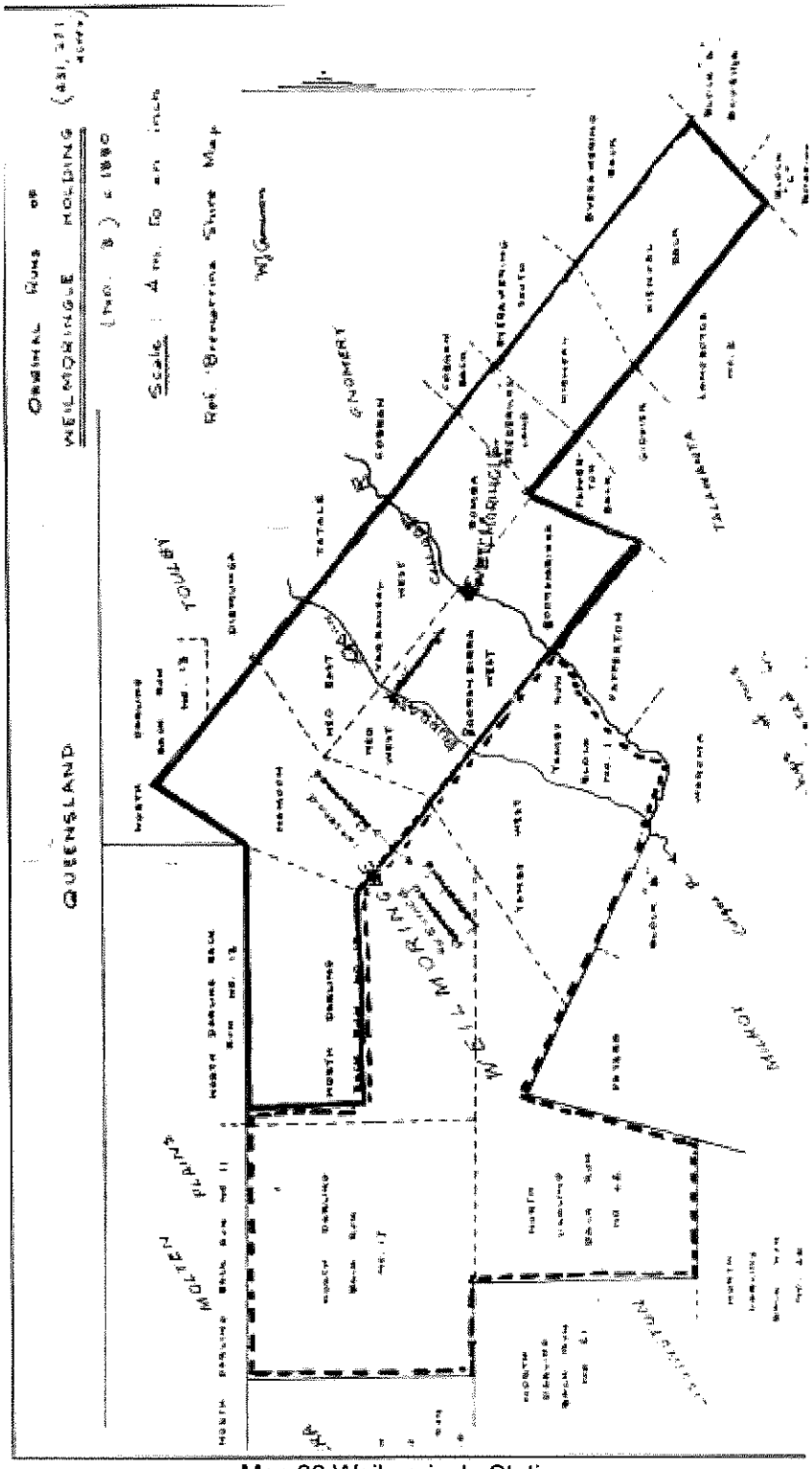
Weilmoringle as a location goes back to when the Scotchman Colin Kenneth Mackenzie built up a holding in the Culgoa area. After his death in 1874 his widow Catherine acquired the property.

Weilmoringle Pastoral Holding No. 3 was gazetted in 1885.

In 1888 Jamieson and Keats purchased the property and started to run sheep. This meant they needed a wool shed so in 1884 with 40,000 sheep they built a 48 stand woolshed. The shed burnt down but was rebuilt and 34 Wolsley Shearing Machines installed. Weilmoringle also had a woolscour and a sheep-bridge across the river.

Keats left Weilmoringle in 1900, the year a Receiving Office opened for mail services twice a week. In the 1870s there had been a mail service between Brewarrina, Talawanta and Brenda via Langboyd, Weilmoringle, Tatala, Gnomery and Biree Stations once a week on horseback. From 1901 a telephone office was run from the local store. Hotels proliferated till there was one every 40km or so, and grog seeped into the community, including the Aboriginal, although this was illegal. There was one pub in Langboyd but never one in Weilmoringle.

Weilmoringle Station employed Aborigines from Dennawan. In the 1930s a station manager, Frank Webb, allowed their families to live on the Travelling Stock Reserve at Weilmoringle. In 1954, because of flood water they moved their humpies to the west side of the river and in times of a big flood they moved to the sand-hill. A wash-room was built and bore water laid on with drought relief money.



Map 23 Weilmoringle Station

Map 24 Weilmoringle camp

Merri Gill included in her book details of how a humpy would develop - a pattern that can be recognised at Denawan and Goodooga.

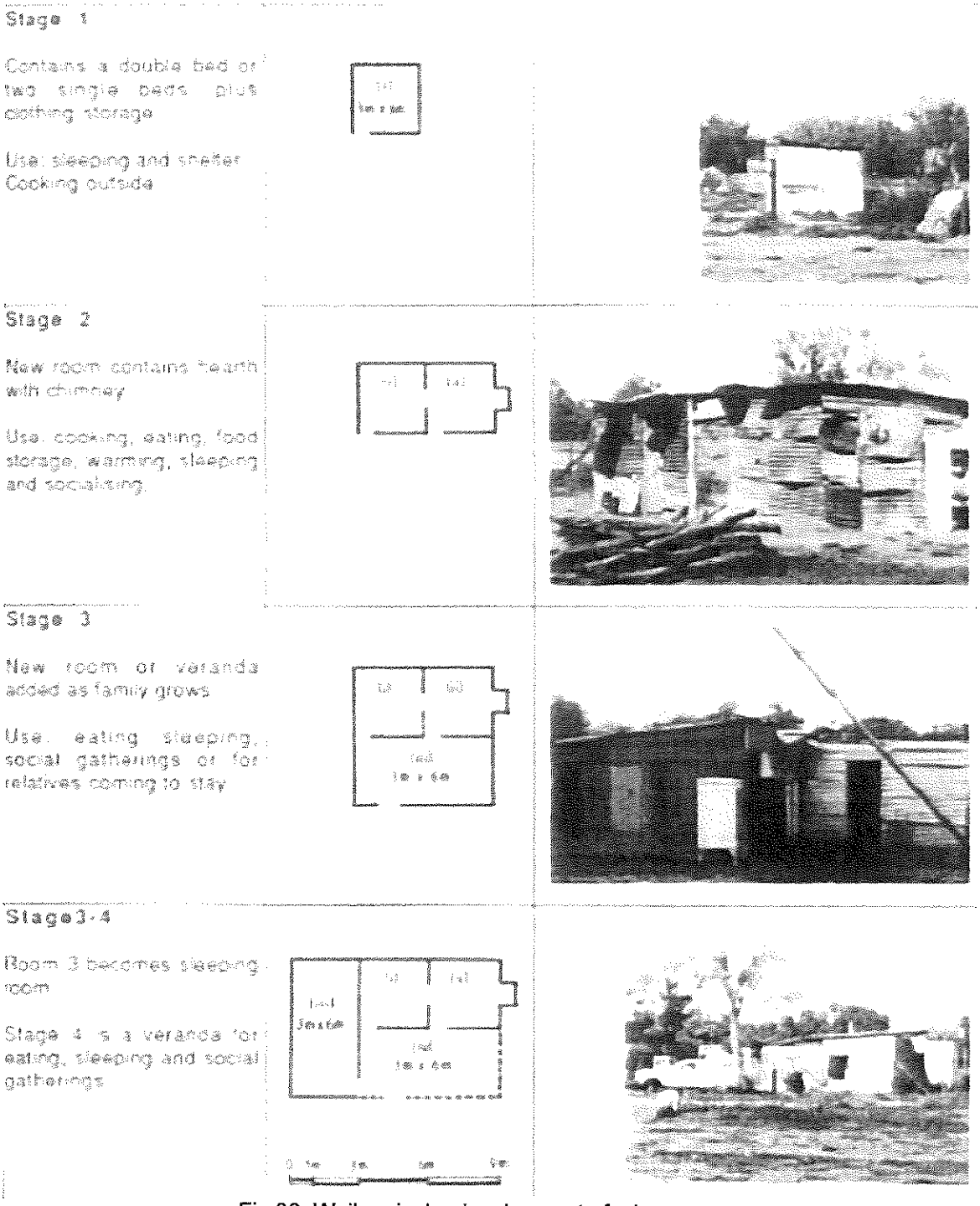
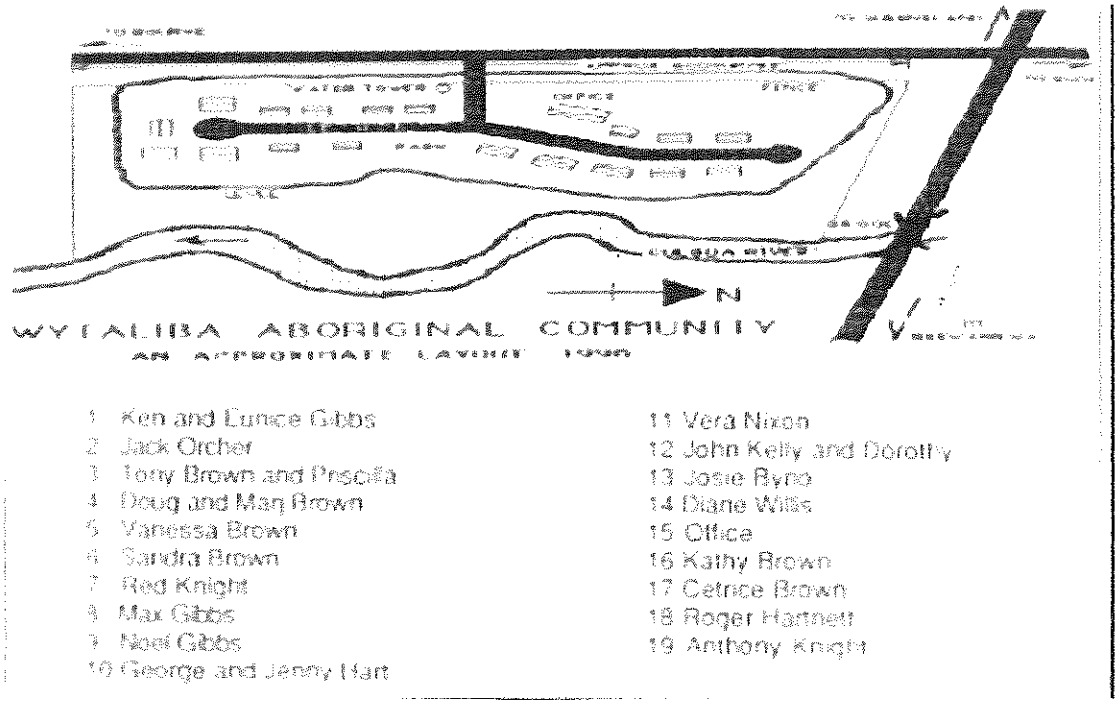


Fig 30 Weilmoringle, development of a humpy.

George Magill and the McKay Brothers bought Weilmoringle In 1910, followed by The New Zealand and Australian Land Company whose lease expired in 1964. The property was split in half, the homestead area bought by Rens Gill who later made over an area to the Aboriginal residents, on which the "Wytaliba Co-op" was formed.

Map 25: Airphotograph showing the layout of the Wytaliba community housing with the woolshed to the far left.



Map 26: Plan showing the layout of the Wytaliba community housing.

Over time there have been improvements: Brewarrina Council installed a sewerage scheme for the Wytaliba Co-op and an area taken from the lease of Weilmoringle became a sports area. Council also constructed tennis courts opened in 1970.

Wurlies - bark shelters - were used and made as at Dennawan. The structure of the camp would allowed families to cluster together - daily contact being important.
A mixed, but still spatially segregated, community developed over the years.

Farmwork remained central to this community.

Weilmoringle Station employed Aborigines from Dennawan. In the 1930s a station manager, Frank Webb, allowed their families to live on the Travelling Stock Reserve at Weilmoringle. In 1954, because of flood water they moved their humpies to the west side of the river and in times of a big flood they moved to the sand-hill. A wash-room was built and bore water laid on with drought relief money.

As has been mentioned, farm work became so much part of the lifestyle that the Moorawarri language soon developed its own words for some aspects. Examples were recorded by Oates (1992.36):

kuwinja	white man (means ghost)	*kitatal*	cattle
watjin	white woman	*yarraman*	horse
path	boss	*thumpa*	sheep

Crane & Co. of Brewarrina supported Bernard and Dorothy Hauville opening a shop and Post Office at Weilmoringle when the Land Company decided to close the Post and telephone operations at the homestead at the end of 1954. Bernard obtained a lease of about 5 acres about a quarter of a mile from Weilmoringle homestead and in 1955 he became the Weilmoringle postmaster. He built a house and shop where he sold food and petrol and combined with running a taxi service and being a stock and station agent with running the post and telegraph office. In 1963 his wife Dorothy became postmistress. In 1968 the premises were burnt down and rebuilt.

The Weilmoringle school opened in February 1961 as a result of the local community applying for a school from the Education Department. Local people (including the teacher and children) built a small fibro school room which was used until towards the end of 1962 when the department built a school. Funds came from the Sports meeting held each year at Weilmoringle. This school was not segregated. It became important to the whole community and has just celebrated its 50 year anniversary.

Merri Gill, the wife of Rens Gill, has written a detailed account of local history and community life, starting by telling how the story came about being told (Gill 1996). The maps shown in this study are borrowed from her account. This gives rich detail of life in Weilmoringle and was triggered by an Aboriginal lady and her son coming asking for information needed for a school project on his Aboriginal family history. This started what became a major joint effort, Merri searching through papers and community members pooling their memories. A remarkable amount was then still remembered.

This, just as other communities in the Shire, is proud and very aware of its history. Members of the community have become well known for their knowledge and talents, for example the famous Weilmoringle Rainmakers: Robin 'Quartpot' Campbell, Bertie Powell, Jack O'Lantern and 'Shillin' Jackson, now sadly missed in times of drought.

And there was the film maker, the late Essie Coffee, the "Bush Queen" and her forceful daughters. But in a world of television, internet and worldwide connections, keeping the younger generations aware, interested and willing to keep the knowledge alive, has become a major concern.

Some account of this knowledge of the Moorrawarri cultural traditions as practised also at Weilmoringle is given in Chapter 7.

Over their thirty years on the property, the Gills saw their relationship with Aborigines becoming closer. There was formal employment, on the farm and as domestics. The Byno girls would often baby-sit, which was enjoyed by them as well as the children. There was also friendly exchange of help and favours from both sides.

Rens Gill would help to get things fixed, perhaps give a small loan or drive people to the hospital some 100km away. Aborigines moving around in the landscape - collecting firewood, chasing echidnas and looking for emu eggs - might also be keeping an eye on the Gills' cattle, sheep and children, occasionally saving the latter from harm, and dealing with and/or reporting animal problems.

Creative talents were plentiful and enjoyed - there were good musicians, craftsmen and sculptors, sporting events and races, performances to watch or perhaps take part in. The Gills were always invited and there was generally quite a lot of community participation. Gill comments that some corroborees poked (gentle?) fun at white people in the bush: dancers imitated their use of guns, tobacco, horses - and their stupid habits in the bush. Mock battles were danced with half of the performers imitating men with guns. The men with spears always won.

At the 1965 event organised by the Sports Association, the highlight was what was to be the last fully traditional performance of a Moorawarri performance at Weilmoringle. The four rainmakers danced in the dust before a campfire, clicking boomerangs and chanting. They were wearing emu and fowl feathers stuck to their bodies with their own blood. The rain making ceremony, hugely important in an area prone to drought, was the most requested of ceremonies. The rainmakers, now all deceased, were important men and held in great respect. They used 'rain stones', crystals held to have magic properties and not to be touched by women.

As is traditional, women did most of the gathering of plant food and men did the hunting. Emu was a favourite meat - and may still be enjoyed at times. They had a very special, strictly followed (and still remembered) tradition of how to cook it.

Fights could happen but life was generally peaceful, more likely to be disturbed by natural events or, occasionally, by official interference. If you fought you had to fight fair. Fights other than domestic ones, had to follow certain rules. Sorting things out through meetings and negotiation, for example at corroborees, was generally preferred.

Communication was important. If leaving a camp, others could be informed of the groups movement by a stone marker left in a certain way. Smoke signals were used over short distances and a sign language could be used if people did not speak the same language.

Gambling was, as mentioned, very popular though the tokens could consist of a bag of seeds, or pieces that were not actually money, as some of the items found at Dennawan (p.122). They could sit up all night, gambling away quietly, and get up and go to work in the morning. Card games and dice were popular and the women often played bingo. Gambling stops after a death.

Though life was seen as on the whole not too bad, Jimmie Barker mentions that drugs and alcohol were beginning to have a bad effect. There was some smoking of opium, supplied by the Chinese, but this was stopped in 1912.

On the whole order was until he died in 1930, kept through the influence of 'King' Billy Bailey, a man highly respected for his intelligence and knowledge. Before he

died he called people together and gave them a farewell speech full of good advice about how to live. At the request of his people he was given a burial with Christian service. He left many descendants.

Gangs of Chinese were employed as ringbarkers and were supplied by a contractor, Ty Choon, in Brewarrina. About 60 Chinese would appear on the job and the cook would organise a vegetable garden to produce greens. He would take them lunch every day. They worked during the hours of light. Quite a few died during heatwaves in 1894 - 1896. They were buried in the sand hills but their bones in 1920 dug up and brought back to China by relatives. The Chinese were sometimes employed as cooks and gardeners. Some did fencing and sheep work but they rarely worked with horses.

Aboriginal station hands were served the same food as the jackeroos etc. but ate theirs outside. There was a hut for Aboriginal employees but most preferred to live in the camp.

Though Aboriginal pastoral labour mainly came from the camps in Brewarrina and Dennawan, there were for a time also important camps at Milroy (about 50km downstream from Weilmoringle) and Mundiwa along the Culgoa.

People at the **Milroy** camp worked mainly for the Armstrong family on Milroy Station who had had family connection with the McKenzies on Weilmoringle.

Emily Horneville who was born at Milroy in 1883 and grew up there described her life there as a happy childhood swimming and fishing, gathering nardoo seed, honey and doing some hunting (women did take small game with their digging sticks). She did not go to school but learnt from her mother traditional standards of behaviour, rules of conduct and kinship obligations. The camp was swept clean daily, yard and all.

The Armstrongs were on friendly terms with the Moorawarri. During the 1890 flood everybody, white settlers, their stock and the Aborigines all took refuge around Milroy Station, the only dry ground for miles.

However, this camp may have faded or been deserted after 1910 (Gill 1996:32).

Jimmie Barker was born at **Mundiwa** 1900 and lived there fairly much in traditional style until he was eight when he with his mother and brother moved to Milroy. Here he helped Mrs Armstrong with small jobs like watering the garden. He played with toys that she put in the summerhouse for him and his brother. Being born inventive he soon started creating his own out of scrap. This camp was deserted after the death of Jimmie Kerrigan in 1908.

When **World War I** started, a number of young men went off to fight. Weilmoringle supplied many horses to go to the 12th Light Horse Battalion in Mesopotamia.

The devastating **influenza of 1919** was brought back by soldiers returning from the war. It killed many Aborigines. Ten died at Dennawan and ten at Weilmoringle. No doctors visited the camps. The hospitals were far away and full of sick Europeans. The camp was smoked to deter the spirits of the dead from taking their loved ones with them.

The official Australian deathrate was 2.3 per thousand, but Aboriginal deaths were not counted. The epidemic killed many full-bloods, some in their 40s and 50s. Much

of the language and culture died with them. The few 'full bloods' left were mostly unwilling to pass certain knowledge on to mixed bloods.

In the 1920s many Aborigines at Weilmoringle camped in The Little Paddock, just behind the station buildings, in gunyahs made of old galvanised iron and bags, sleeping on the ground. Some had their own camp in other places that they had chosen.

The Land Company (full title: The New Zealand and Australian Land Company) had bought up vast tracts of land in Australia, but there were massive resumptions of land by the government after World War II. It bought Weilmoringle in 1926. Its policies included paying award wages, training its own men, looking after old retainers and keeping high standards. The Company brought in an outside contractor to shear, but sometimes local men were employed. The Aborigines worked, ate and slept in the shearers' hut with the team, although they preferred to be outside.

Fig.31:Weilmoringle Aboriginal Shearing Team 1978

The station store sold groceries such as flour, baking soda, tea, sugar, tins of bully beef and sardines and tobacco. And meat could be ordered. It stocked aspirin, bandages and chlorodyne (for diarhorrea). Also some clothing. For some reason green dresses were reserved for white people though much desired by the Aborigines.

The Depression had its effect on Australia, but at Weilmoringle things were not too bad. All the station staff not under the award had their wages reduced by 10%, but the five or six Aborigines employed as stockmen stayed on full wages. The station was largely self-supporting in terms of food and tried to help those tramping the roads.

Some of these became professional itinerants and would turn up regularly for a bit of work and food, in return sharing out news from round about the area.

Station life was to some extent patterned by access to transport and what this could be. Roads were little more than wheel marks on the land.

Station transport was fairly limited and kept for its use. In the 1930s some of the Aborigines had old motor cars or utility trucks. Most rode or used horse and cart. They would walk long distances without a fuss, going up to Goodooga for the pictures on Saturday night - a walk of some 40km that took all day. The shortest way was to cross the river at Weilmoringle, walk across a claypan at Bullabelalie homestead and then follow the Gnomery bore drain before crossing to Goodooga.

The lack of cars meant that landholders had to collect their workers. And everyone had to have a day off a month. They were then lent the station utility to go to town for supplies and gear. Passengers piled into the back.

Travelling was an adventure because of the state of the roads. And there were sixty gates to open between Weilmoringle and Brewarrina. The road is now sealed but can still be cut by floods.

Just before and during World War II, land withdrawals changed the size and running of Weilmoringle Station. This meant that a number of smaller holdings were formed and settled by families rather than almost all male staff the station was used to. Some Aborigines found work with the new settlers but the camp remained home.

Eight former employees of Weilmoringle enlisted. One Aborigine wished to go but was advised not to as it was felt that the change of life style would be too abrupt and daunting for him.

The 1950s were boom years for wool. There were then some 200 Aboriginal people living in the pastoral camp, including 12 Shillingsworth families!

By 1964 the Land Company's lease was expiring and there were only four of their employees left on the station. What remained of the station was split in half. Rens Gill bought the homestead half and Heather and Tom Stalley the other, which they called Orana. In 1969 Rens bought a small portion of Narrawandi and in 1982 he acquired Orana.

Life went on fairly peacefully for many years, but as speculators started coming and proposing developments the Aborigines started feeling insecure. Their camp was not on a government reserve but on private property as were all the other places where they had shelters and humpies. Though the Gills were friendly and they were clearly welcome to stay and move about on the property, future owners might not feel that way. There was simply no security.

Ken Gibbs, Arnold Francis and Herbie West went to a conference in Sydney to work out what could be done. The "Saltbush Committee" was formed with Ken Gibbs as Chair.

A letter to Rens Gill from the Director of Aboriginal Affairs stated that the Department was planning to erect some housing for Aborigines at Weilmoringle and would he be willing to relinquish his leasing rights to a part of his land. He took legal advice on how best to organise legal and secure tenure for the Aborigines.

In 1974 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs helped setting up the Wytaliba Housing Committee. This replaced the "Saltbush Committee". An area of 6.58 hectares was given over to the Aboriginal Lands Trust, to be sublet to the Housing Association.

Wytaliba Ltd was incorporated in 1992 as Wytaliba Housing Co-operative. Cecil Brown was in charge of the housing construction. A phone was laid on and a bus acquired providing community transport. There was some concern about building on the floodplain, but this location was seen as essential because of their traditional association with the river. It was agreed that levee banks would solve the problem and building plans went ahead.

Planning for the houses then went on through 1975-6 (see p128). In 1977 the Wytaliba applied for and got a grant to start a market garden next to the housing area. The proposed garden was fenced, most of the work being done by the women, but the garden never made as the area was found to be an old burial place!

The first houses were put up in June 1977. To be fair houses were allocated by ballot. Six pit toilets were dug; not until 1982 did Public Works organise a reticulated water supply and sewerage. More prefabricated houses arrived in December 1977. Electricity was connected in 1979. The levee banks were started in 1980. Houses arriving in 1981 completed the building program.

As well as the housing cooperative, Weilmoringle school has achieved some fame.

A move to start a school goes back to 1959. It was pushed by the community as well as some officials. In 1960 the Department of Education agreed to provide a teacher if the community would provide the facilities. In 1961 the community donated money and built a temporary fibro school, 30ft x 10ft. And in 1962 the community built a new school, officially opened 28.11.1962. Next year a second teacher was appointed. Electricity was connected in 1968.

The first teacher was Brian Pettit, straight out of Teachers College and a stranger to the bush. He had much to learn and did. His time there made a deep impression on him and he made firm friends. He published reminiscences, "The Weilmoringle Kid" (Pettit 1997). With time the Education Department decided to appoint a married couple of teachers, hoping that a family might find it easier. Peter and Pat Dargin arrived in 1968. They had to live in a schoolroom until a residence was completed.

Facilities and provisions were very basic at first, but the Weilmoringle Sports Association (an offshoot of the P&C) kept working to get funds and help out. The school was the first in western NSW to get reverse cycle air-conditioning.

The school became a focal point for the community. The curriculum was a standard one but old Australian ways were also taught: bird mimicry, carving designs on emu eggs, rhythmical singing, painting...There was an interchange between two cultures making both richer. The children loved school. Some came from properties far away and had to be driven to school - on almost non-existent roads - by their parents. For some time there was a school bus but that stopped in 1973 when the population in the area dwindled.

Fig.23. Official opening of Weilmoringle school.

In 1963, out of an enrolment of 57, only 6 were Europeans.

Peter and Pat Dargin in 1970 introduced what was called the Compensatory Assistance Scheme. With volunteers they formed the AEC = Aboriginal Education Committee to try to organise greater opportunities for the educational advancement of Aborigines. They wrote to various voluntary organizations to get financial support. One donation provided Swaab Reading Laboratories. The AEC with its donations managed to buy small items such as books, tapes, sewing materials and even a Language Master and pay for the children to go to Stewart House for a holiday.

The AEC funding was important and benefited the whole community but more and steady funding was needed. Peter Dargin managed to get Weilmoringle and other country schools included in the Disadvantaged Schools Program previously including mainly city schools.

A study in 1976 showed that geographical isolation should be seen as an additional disadvantage and the program was extended with federal funding, becoming the Country Area Program.

Another innovation was the Aboriginal Teacher Aid Scheme. Vera Byno who was doing secondary school by correspondence was the first appointment and in fact the first Aboriginal Teacher Aid in NSW. At Weilmoringle she was followed by her sister Josie Byno.

The school had library from which children could borrow. They had special bags for taking library books home.

Gill (1996,p.71) lists all the school staff from 1961 to 1995.

The Dargins felt that there was not enough reading relevant to the Aboriginal children's lives and experience and so encouraged the children to write, illustrate and print their own stories, using handset type and lino blocks.

A program for pre-schoolers was started in 1972, first once a term, then once a week. The bigger children helped the small ones. There was also an introduction of some adult education. Over time the school became seen as a leader in innovatory education.

A number of pupils went on to secondary education. Getting an education and a profession became important.

Chapter 7. Aspects of Traditional Culture

7.1 Introduction

As mentioned in earlier chapters, trusted white people could be told about some aspects of Aboriginal culture, and interested observers recorded what they saw or thought that they saw. There were mistakes and misunderstandings, but at least some aspects were recorded and some mistakes have been corrected by later generations of Aborigines who still hold knowledge.

Sharon Sullivan (1970) made a major tabulation of records collected from a great number of sources, manuscripts and published works. She brought together records relating to tribes and groups along the upper and mid parts of the Darling River and in adjoining areas to the west and east. They are grouped in terms of content but sources for each are noted.

Sullivan (1970) comments that, in broad terms, beliefs, ceremonies and many other aspects of culture seem to have been shared by the different tribes and groups in this area. Some differences are mentioned - they may be real but some may depend in part on who wrote the description and when.

The results of her work will therefore be described here in relation to the various aspects of many and complex cultural traditions. To sort out what refers to individual groups at certain times - and the probable reliability of each record - would be a major task.

There are on the other hand some good and lively descriptions relating to the Ngyiampaa/Ngemba, Moorawarri, Yuwalaaraay and Nhunggal. These are discussed in greater detail. But first the general descriptions. They have, where possible, been grouped in what seemed logical categories.

7.2 The general Upper to Middle Darling areas

Ceremonial life

In the eastern parts **initiation ceremonies** included preparing two circles joined by a path, building a brush fence to keep secret aspects out of sight, drawing symbols on the ground and carving or painting patterns on trees. Removing an incisor and/or some hair was also practised. Boys to be initiated were removed from their mothers (and the company of women), spent weeks or months isolated in the bush with their instructors and observed certain restrictions especially about food. It is also hinted that women had their own ceremonies.

Magic and **clever men** were found all over the area. Magic could be productive (especially rain making), protective (healing) or destructive (sorcery). Clever men were highly respected. Healing could be straight medical practice, e.g. using certain plants or techniques such as splints and manipulation of limbs, or rely on what was seen as magic, possibly combining medical and psychological treatment.

Rain making ceremonies were common and, in an area like this, often badly needed. Some have been described in great detail. Some persons were famous for their rain making skills. **River levels** did not always depend on rain, so there were special ceremonies to get the rivers to rise. Sadly, train makers are no more.

The **death** of somebody was of concern to his/her whole group. Death was thought to be due to sorcery that should be punished. And the spirit of the dead person might

have become, or might become, discontent and malignant. The body was usually bound, wrapped in a rug or bark, and buried in a sitting position in soft sand and usually not far from the camp. Graves were 5-7 feet deep and covered with timber to keep animals out. There might also be a brush or log fence and a hut. There could be grave markers, sometimes of kopi. Women and children might be put in a hollow tree rather than the ground. There were elaborate ceremonies for finding who was the sorcerer. Relatives carried out the ceremonial punishment, in this area usually mainly symbolic.

Mourning ceremonies: Relatives and friends would cut themselves to show grief and let the blood drip into the grave. The dead body was believed to have great magical power and pieces might be removed for future use. In the areas of the Narran and the upper Darling Rivers the dead person's private possessions were burnt or buried with him/her. There was always much wailing and often protective cleansing by smoking; this would help to keep the possibly malignant spirit away. The camp where the people lived was also moved away from the grave, at least for some time. Ceremonies could last for months. They included scarification and daubing oneself with gypsum. Women might make and wear caps of kopi (burnt and powdered gypsum) plastered into and onto their hair.

Stone arrangements are known in the area but little known about their role. Some survive in protected locations such as the snake and tortoise in the Aboriginal cemetery at Angledool. A probable site was recorded close to the Old Mission Road, but it has not been relocated (McBryde 1973).

There are also **art sites,** mainly paintings and stencils, but mostly outside the Shire as this has few suitable rock formations. There are some important examples in the Gunderbooka Mountain area. This is Ngyiampaa/iNgemba territory but they were of importance also to other groups.

Equipment and Ornaments

Sullivan quotes detailed descriptions of implements and ornaments used in the general Darling River area and described by early travellers. (Tribal group names were rarely mentioned in this context). Few, if any of these items, are likely to be in use now, or even remembered. Some techniques described are very complicated and elegant.

Equipment:

Nets were used both for hunting and fishing and were very important in the economy. If food supplies were scarce in times of drought, nets could capture several animals or a shoal of fish in one go, and they could sometimes be put in place and left while people looked for other food.

Nets ranged from very small to very large. A lot of skill, labour and time went into preparing the fibres and then making the nets. The thickness of the fibre yarn and the size of the mesh were carefully calculated to suit the purpose, e.g. the size of fish present and to be caught.

Fishing nets, small or large, had to be almost invisible, with fine mesh and made with thin yarn. They were sometimes smoked to darken them and make them less visible to the fish in muddy water.

Hunting nets had to be stronger, made of thicker yarn. They had larger mesh and could be very large. Small nets could be carried around by the owners but the large ones were apparently owned by the group, kept in camps and could be lent out on

request. A lot of knowledge and strategy went into their use - where to place them and when. Using the bigger ones required teamwork or careful planning.

Brush fences or stone traps were also used for fishing when river conditions were right.

Spears, **boomerangs and clubs** were also used for hunting but apparently not as much as in some other areas. The suggestion is that these would only kill one animal at a time and this would be less productive than using nets, seeing that they were so good at making them. In times of drought animals would crowd together where there was access to water, and such locations would be good places for using nets.

Other tools used for getting animal food included **emu horns** (as lures), **grub hooks**, wooden **spades** and **digging sticks**. The emu horns (which make a particular type of sound) and grub hooks seem to have been specialities of the area.

Spears, special **boomerangs**, **clubs** and **shields,** narrow or broad, were used by men for fighting while women used **digging sticks**. But the tribes in this area do not seem to have had much interest in serious fighting or warfare. Travellers commented that the people they saw seldom carried spears or weapons. Women seem to have fought each other, not men.

Containers for storage and transport: Oval wooden **coolamons** were used for digging and shovelling as well as to hold food, water or babies. Deeper round ones were used for water. S**kin bags** were used for water or to store seeds. Skins were first cleaned and tanned, probably using Emu Bush (Erimophila longifolia). Women also made **net bags** to carry small things on their backs; a baby could be perched on top. Men might also carry net bags, but usually smaller, with important private property.

Grinding stones: These were heavy but valuable as vital to food preparation. Big ones would be carried to important camping places, especially those near the main seed harvesting areas, and left there for future use.

Women often carried smaller ones for everyday use; the **muller** (upper grindstone) could also be used as a pestle or hammer-stone. Suitable stone mostly had to be imported from some distance away.

Stone knives were used but few are described. The edges may have been ground rather than chipped.

Rugs of kangaroo or possum skin were used extensively and in several ways: as clothing for warmth, as sleeping or floor covers, to wrap and carry babies, to store food, or to cover a hut to stop rain from leaking in. They are often described as large and very well prepared.

Huts: these were built with boughs or bark. The main huts could be large and were meant to keep out rain but camps usually had some smaller, less solid, huts or bough shelters used to provide shade on hot days. In good weather there might only have been windbreaks to keep out sand and dust. In the Darling area hut making is stated to have been women's work.

Canoes: Two types were used:
- quickly made light bark canoes used for crossing flooded creeks and

- more solid and well made canoes made by steaming and shaping the bark. These were probably mainly used for fishing in cold weather.

Fig.33 below illustrates Dunbar's description of the process of canoe making. Canoes don't seem to have been used for travelling up or down rivers; they were probably too dangerous if rivers were high, and too difficult to use if rivers were low and had turned into a series of water holes.

Tools and **implements**
Metal was introduced very early and adopted very quickly so stone tools were rarely seen in action by the time records were written. We know from finds and comments that ground or chipped stone tools remained in at least occasional use, some of them used for making other tools and some for cutting, scraping or engraving. And, as seen at Dennawan, glass could be put to the same use.

The **materials** used have been listed as:
wood for spears, shields, boomerangs, clubs, handles for axes, chisels, engraving tools, fire making equipment, firesticks, decoy horns, fish hooks, grub hooks, digging sticks, poles for duck nets, paddles for canoes, spear throwers, canoes, wedges, needles, spades, huts and sticks for carrying fish nets;
bark for nets to catch ducks and to make canoes, fishing line and twine;
grass and **rushes** were used for six types of net, and for hooks, pegs for making rugs, twine, decoration;
leaves were used for tanning skin;
gum (usually beefwood gum from Grevillea striata) used for cementing possum teeth, axe heads, barbs, adzes, chisels and knives, and for making emu horns, needles and spear throwers;
fur was used for clothing and decoration, making cords and twine, binding axe to handle and for winding round a knife (probably to get a safe grip);
skins made clothing, water and seed containers, binding for knife, rugs, fans, hut covers and play things like balls;
sinews were used for making containers, binding axe head to handle and barbs to spears, and for sewing;
bone was used for decoration, engraving tools, needles and knives (two types);
teeth for decorations and engraving tools;
feathers for decoration and emu lures, fans, fly switches;
human hair was used for five types of decoration and for twine;
stone was used for adze flakes, scrapers, engraving tools, chisels, spear barbs, knives, wedges, and axe heads;
stone was also used for fish traps and traded (e.g. to be used for axes and grinding stones); and
shell was used for pendants, knives and for making fish hooks.

Some materials or implements were **imported** from outside the area:

Stone for axes, shields (of better wood than available locally), blue pigment, pituri, grass tree gum,

and some implements and materials were **traded out** of the area: boomerangs and stone for making grinding stones.

Some of this **trade or exchange** may have been a matter of choice or keeping social connections: Beefwood gum was available all through the area but grasstree gum was imported from the Narrabri area in exchange for boomerangs.

A discussion on the conduct, ethics an proprieties of trade is included later in this chapter.

Ornaments:
Belts could be made of skin, of sinews or of netted twine made from human hair or fur. Some were made specially for tightening around you to stop you feeling hunger pains!

Headbands were made of twine made from human hair or fur and sometimes decorated with kangaroo teeth attached with beefwood gum.

Tufts of feathers or "nightcaps" of netted human hair and fur decorated with feathers were worn by some men.

Balls of pine gum might be stuck onto the hair all over the head as decoration.

Bracelets could be made of fur or hair woven into cords.

Necklaces were made of shells, reeds, fibres and fur.

'Aprons' consisted of narrow strips of possum fur.

Nose sticks were usually of bone.

Paint and feathers used in various ways.

Foodstuffs

This section is based on a listing of early observations of Aboriginal groups in the Darling River area. It is likely to be skewed because men's hunting and fishing would have been more visible, probably seen as more interesting, and more often recorded by male travellers. Women's gathering went on during the day, usually away from the camp. They would be moving in small groups spread over, and covering, a large area, and would therefore have been less noticeable. Recent studies of groups still relying on bush foods stress the very great importance of gathered foods with hunting seen as adding less reliable treats.

According to Sullivan's table, meat from hunting (including birds), accounted for > 20%. Vegetable food, usually gathered by women, is listed as making up at least 39%. To these percentages should be added other stuff gathered by women (and sometimes by men) such as eggs, honey, small animals, grubs and insects.

The list refers to:

Fish	Macropods	Frogs
Mussels	Small marsupial mammals	Honey
Crayfish	Possum	Eggs
Shrimps	Reptiles	Insects
Birds: Ducks	Monotremes	Gum
Emu	Carnivores	Manna
Others		

Vegetables: Seeds, ground and eaten raw or baked as "bread".
Root stock

Leaves, tops & flowers
Fruit, seeds & pod
Underground parts

Note: For animal foods we should probably consult also the listings in Section 3.4 in Chapter 3 and for plant food Table 11 in that chapter.

Cooking methods:
Cooking was done in the ashes or using an earth oven. Large game was first singed or had feathers removed before being covered with hot ashes. Innards were removed through a small opening before the cooking. Small animals and small items were cooked in the ashes. Birds and fish might be covered in mud before baking to keep juices in.

Elaborate **earth ovens** could be used:
This one was made for cooking cress:
A circular hole was dug about 3 feet across and 2 feet deep and large pebbles placed on the bottom. A fire was lit and kept going till the stones were red-hot. The embers were removed, sticks laid across the hole and covered with reeds or damp grass. The cress was arranged on this with the root-ends to the outside and then covered with and surrounded by more grass. A "yam stick" was pushed down through the centre and then removed; water was poured through the hole made, raising steam on contact with the rocks. The cress would be well cooked within an hour.

Food division:
The main meal was in the evening and men were served first, women and children getting the leftovers. The men would probable have had little or nothing to eat during the day while women could eat while gathering and preparing food. Children would be out with the women and soon learnt to find tasty tid-bits to feed themselves. This all probably meant that men ate more meat and that women and children had a more varied diet. There were also some foods that were forbidden or restricted and some foods were kept for 'old men'.

Vegetable food:
Several parts of a vegetable might be used: pigweed tops were eaten raw, but also the root and seeds were used.

Seeds were an important staple food for long periods and were gathered from annual grasses, or from some trees. Grass seeds ripened in summer and were gathered extensively. They normally grew on floodplains and riverbanks. Seeds from trees may have become important when grass seed stores ran out. Grain was the one food that could be stored for worse times (in skin bags after de-husking). Some seeds were eaten raw but seeds were usually ground on stone slabs, often found in old camping places. Roots were usually eaten raw or cooked in hot ashes.

Farmers' fields may have a scattering of grindstones along fence lines, the stones flung there when hit by the plough.

Cooked rootstock could be pounded, rolled into balls and stored for a while.

Species listed by Sullivan as known to have been used are listed below. (Scientific and language names below are those found in records.) Table 11 in Chapter 3 probably gives a better idea as it was compiled by a panel of Aborigines and professional botanists.)

Seeds used:

Pigweed (Portulaca oleracea)
Barley grass (Hordeum glaucum or H. leporinum): yarmmara?
Native millet (Panicum decompositum)
Nardoo (Marsilea quadrifolia) (drought food only)
Whitewood tree Atalaya hemiclauca)
Gum trees (Eucalyptus rostrata)
Box trees (Eucalyptus microtheca)
Acacias
(Mysombrathemum??)
Small leafed salt bush
Sterculia
Dheal

Rootstock used:

Yams (Dioscorea transversa)
Waterlilies (Nymphaea gigantea)
Barilla plant (Salsola kali or S. soda)
Marsdenia creeper (Marsdenia Leichardtiana)
Bullrush (Typha angustifolia)
Pigweed (Portulaca oleracea)
Wild geranium
Jao (a kind of vetch?)

Fruit, seeds (unground) and seedpods were eaten in season:

Native orange (Capparis Mitchelli)
Mulga apple (Acacia aneuria)
(Acacia stenophylla) seed pods roasted
Pigface two kinds, large and small
Convolvulus
Potato plants (Solanum aviculare)
Quandong (Fusanus acuminatus)
Toorkkaa not identified: a small fruit
Mistletoe
Colane Tree/Gruie apple (Owenia acidula)
Emu apple (Erimophila longifolium)
Beans?

Tops, flowers and leaves (usually eaten raw):

Chives
Spinach? = Warrigal Cabbage
(Chenopodium auricomum)
Cress (Lepidum ruderale?.) could be cooked, cleaned and stored
Marshmallow (Tundilta?)
Convulvulus
Sour grass (Oxalis corniculata?)
Trefoil (Australian Hollyhock?) (Lavatera plebeia?)
Crows Foot (Geranium dissectum?)
Sow Thistle (Sanchus oleraceus)
Cress (Lepidum ruderale?) (steamed)
Rush, large
Creaper with reddish brown flowers
Gum from Leopard wood and from other trees and bushes
"Manna" from leaves and young branches and from Coolibah and Bibble trees.

Fishing:
Fishing was difficult when rivers were in flood. Nets, net scoops and stone fish-traps were used when floodwaters subsided. Spears were used when the water was low and clear. Men could grease themselves before diving into cold water with their spears and spear held upwards. Fishing was mostly a communal activity until hook and line became common.

The common catch comprised Murray cod, Black bream (preferred) and Yellowbelly.

Mussels and crayfish were gathered by the women - large heaps of shell left by lakes and rivers show their importance.

Hunting:
Kangaroos were stalked and hunted with spear and dogs, but also trapped by large nets, brush fences or nooses. This was easiest in dry periods when the kangaroos were thirsty and weak. Rock wallabies were caught in nets put across their paths. Emus were stalked by hunters, often using the emu's innate curiosity to trick them e.g. by using emu callers or lures such as bunches of feathers. They could be herded into enclosures or nets.

Small marsupial mammals could be dug out or smoked out of burrows. Possums were caught mainly where there were large trees near water. Birds were often caught with nets. Insects, especially grubs and caterpillars, were important and the main types eaten are listed below. Some came from trees, others were hooked up from deep in the ground using special hooks and lines. Ants were dug out with wooden shovels.

Game

Kangaroos	Rock wallabies
Dingo (and pups)	Echidna
Builder rats	Small kangaroo rat
Carpet snake	Snakes
Lizards	Goanna
Frogs	
Native cat	Domestic? cat

Grubs came from
White wood (Atalaya hemiclaucia) (in roots and wood)
Leopard wood (Flindersia maculosa)
Mulga (Acacia aneura and other species of Acacia)
Or from deep in the ground, such as:
Kopudger Soft white chrysalis

Collected were also various chrysalis, shorter, brownish, and found under bark, and Caterpillars, found on mulga and other bushes.

Ants were eaten by women and children

Other foodstuffs:
Bee-bread and honey were gathered and eaten or honey made into a drink.
Flowers from the Coolibah and Bibble trees were also made into drinks (for special occasions).
Water:
A good knowledge of water sources and their characteristics was important. Water could be transported in skin bags. Holes to capture and hold water were sometimes

cut into rock or dug into the ground. Water could also be got from the roots of Eucalypts, especially from:
E.microtheca
E. paniculata
E.populifolia
E.uncinata and
Needle bush (Hakea leutcoptera)

7.3 The Ngiyampaa/Ngemba

The account below is based mainly on articles by G.K.Dunbar who owned Yanda Station near Gunderbooka Range. These were published in the journal **Mankind** between 1943 and 1945 as "Notes on the Ngemba tribe of the Central Darling River. Where Dunbar has used anthropological terms they have here been written in italics, e.g. *sections.* Dunbar himself spent a lot of time with the people in the area, walked with them and hunted with them. He apparently learnt quite a bit of language, was a keen and careful observer and was, it seems, able to get involved in their lives and to some extent in their thinking. The name Ngemba is used here as by Dunbar.

The tribe was run through campfire discussions strongly influenced by the old men and women. They made decisions about what to hunt and where, and about when and where to camp next. Women did not discuss matters of law and ritual, that was men's business, but they were in charge of keeping track of relationships, kinship and the strict rules guiding these.

Punishment for serious crime was mainly banishment or death. The group would share the responsibility if the latter had to be imposed.

Spiritual

Creation stories:

A story relating to tribal areas and boundaries tells that long ago Aborigines formed one big tribe that lived close to the seashore. One summer an infectious disease came to them in the form of a beetle. It worked its way into their kidneys and killed them. They fled inland to escape the beetle plague, but where a person was attacked and fell ill, the family would stop and stay behind to nurse the sick one. This was the origin of the tribes and their tribal territories.

Dunbar quotes the Darling River Story in a form similar to that given in Chapter 2.

Each clan had an acknowledged **reciter of stories** who would be asked to recite to the group.

Ceremonies:

Initiation ceremonies and associated festivities could take from a week to months, depending on rainfall, water and food supplies available. The Ngemba used several different places for these ceremonies. Dunbar mentioned one somewhere near the Coronga Peak and areas near the Warrumbool (probably at Coorigal Springs, see Chapter 4 and Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006:63-68). Dunbar gave this description:

"*Reaching the age of maturity, the boys, of which there might be quite a number, were gathered from all the hordes, and the whole tribe and its friends assembled together for the Initiation ceremonies which might take from a week to one or more months, depending on the rainfall, what water was available, and the supply of food. In a dry time, the ceremonies were curtailed, and lasted only the period during which water and food were easy to obtain. On the other hand, in a good season, with game*

plentiful, the festivities would be continued for long periods…A piece of level ground was cleared of all timber, grass, leaves, bark, stones, etc, and swept clean. A ring, roughly about 90 feet in diameter around this clear space, was made by means of a shallow trench in the ground some three to four inches deep, and the earth from the trench banked up so that the ring was clearly defined. Quantities of wood were brought, and the ceremonial ground was invariably located in scrubby country so as to provide the necessary secrecy for the initiates to be hidden apart in a secluded camp. The Goondi or huts housing the women and children were located some distance from the initiation ceremonial ring, the name of which was not pronounced except by the fully initiated men, and then only to each other.

The spectators, and those not taking part in the ceremonies, were seated outside the ring, the men facing the east, and the women and children on the opposite side facing west. The men spectators held a boomerang in each hand, grasped by the middle, and beat time to the chants by striking together the top and bottom of the boomerang like cymbals. The women beat time by striking two balls of opossum skin together, or by slapping the thigh with the palm of the hand. Spectators all sat in the posture adopted by our tailors.

Approaching the ring on the evening of the opening ceremonies, all men and initiates carried a small leafy bough of the gum tree. These boughs were stripped, and the leaves scattered inside the ring. The boys to be initiated were suitably dressed or decorated with kopi and ochre, and on entering the ring were seated facing the east.

On the first night of the ceremony, ceremonial dancing was carried on, and the bards recited incidents in the life of the tribe. The men were decorated with ochre, kopi and feathers. The cave drawings of Gundabooka Mountain show the posture of the ceremonial dance, the legs bowed, knees bent, and arms akimbo. boomerang in the right hand, shield in the left. The dancer made his legs tremble at a rapid rate, and at a given signal each dancer took three rapid short leaps sideways at an angle of 45°, at the same time crying out at the top of his voice at each leap a series of place names such as Yanda Yanda, Kai, Billa Billa Kai, the Kai an exclamation accompanied by the stamp of the foot. Each place name was repeated, probably the origin of dual words, because aboriginal place names, such as Mogil Mogil, etc., are quite common in N.S.W. Dual names were not used in conversation. This was carried on nightly until the initiates were ready, and on a suitable night a bullroarer sounded. This was a flat stick carved conventionally with a serrated edge and swung rapidly around on a string of human hair; it created a humming sound, varying in pitch with the speed, audible in the still night for a long distance. This was a signal for all women, children and uninitiated males to hide their heads beneath the opossum or kangaroo skin rugs or blankets, because the "Wanda" or night spirit was abroad. During the sounding of the bullroarer, the boys to be initiated were removed from the custody of their mother and taken to a secret camp in the scrub.

As evidence to the women and the younger children of the mighty forces at work which spirited boys out of the camp, the following morning burning logs from the camp fires would be found up trees, and the cooking fires scattered about, thus destroying any tracks which might have been left by the abductors. The bullroarer was sounded at intervals all through the night.

In this hidden camp the boy's left front incisor would be removed. This was done by the insertion of two wedges of wood placed between the tooth to be removed and the adjacent teeth, a stone was held inside the mouth against the tooth, which was broken off with another stone. The boy was held by his maternal uncle, failing that an uncle by his nearest relative on the maternal side. After this tooth removal, the initiate

was not allowed to attend any of the festivities around the fires within the ring already mentioned, but was kept hidden away in the scrub, where various secrets were imparted. It was at this stage he was given his secret name, known only to himself and other initiated men of his totem, and it was during this part of the ceremony that he was taught a secret language and its use. I understood that this secret name given to an initiate was related to the cicatrices on his chest.

The secret language seemed to me to be the use of common words, with new meanings. I cannot recollect many words; one I remember, Wok-er, the name for tomahawk, was the initiated man's name for the female vagina, and I have a general recollection that the initiates had some difficulty for some time after initiation in memorizing the new meanings for the words.

Ceremonial marked trees were shown to the initiate on his journeys to and from the ceremonial ground. The designs were drawn in charcoal and kopi, and as far as I can recollect, they were similar to the conventional marking on weapons, and some were like the markings on an adult's chest.

The tree designs were not cut into the trunks but painted on them. Because the ceremonies were carried out in the red country, there were no trees large enough growing in the scrub. The biggest of the trees would not be more than eight inches in diameter.

At night, plays or corroborees would be enacted - some traditional like the emu, the kangaroo, the brolga-corroboree, some portraying hunting, etc., and other in the form of plays portraying some comical incident which had happened to someone of their own people while hunting, or anything else which appealed to the aborigine's sense of humour."

When somebody died, **mourning** involved all the family and all of that totem that were in the area. A widow or the widows would plaster their heads with kopi, cut chest and arms and rub in ash to raise scars. The dead person would be bound twice in the "twice-bent" position until rigor mortis set in, buried in a grave dug four/five feet deep, facing east and with personal possessions at the feet. Over a covering of bark the grave was then filled in. Burial in the "twice-bent" position was part of a belief in rebirth somehow related to totemic animals. After the burial, the huts in the camp were burnt. The relatives and others moved to a new camp.

Graves were where possible dug into sandy soil or sand-hills. Men's graves were sometimes marked by their widow(s) with oval pieces of kopi. In some cases a tree south of the grave was carved with patterns belonging to a dead man who had been initiated.

Organisation

Tribal structure:

The tribe was divided into four ***sections***: Ippai, Kumbo, Murri and Kubbi. Each had mythical ancestors and was linked to an animal. (Dunbar suggested emu, black bream or echidna, black kangaroo and grey or red kangaroo for these four sections.) Each person would belong to the same section as his mother's mother. Each section took special care of its animal representatives. It could be eaten freely by the other three sections but only sparingly by its own section.

The sections had common ancestors but were linked two and two: Kubbi and Ippai lived mainly in the back country away from the river, while Kumbo and Murri in the other group lived along river frontages. The sections were further divided into clans,

each with its own totem (animal or other foodstuff). You should care for your animal or plant and eat it only sparingly.

Female children were promised to a husband at birth and grew up knowing who their husbands would be. Reaching marriageable age was celebrated for both sexes. Girls were often married to older men and initiated young men to an older woman but would or could end up with additional partners.

Marriage rules were similar to those described for the Yuwaalaraay later in this chapter. Some connections were forbidden, but some apparently irregular marriages were sanctioned as described by R.H.Mathews (Thomas 2011:334-5) and agreed by Elkin (1945) and for the Nhunggal by Skuthorpe.

Comments by Mathews are used below: The Ngemba had an additional system of classifying kin that was different from that of moieties, sections and totems. *"The whole community is further divided into what may, for convenience of reference, be called "castes". These castes regulate the camping or resting places of the people under the shades of large trees in the vicinity of water or elsewhere. The shadow thrown by the butt and lower portion of a tree is called 'nhurrai'; that cast by the middle portion of the tree is 'wau-gue'; whilst the shade of the top of the tree, or outer margin of the shadow is 'winggu'."*

Mathews claimed that these castes were, like moieties, sections and totems, taken into account when marriages were being arranged. But their influenced extended much further. They were expressive of the locative dimension of the culture and they influenced the very basics of social responsibility and interpersonal association.
"Again, the men, women and children, whose prescribed sitting places are in the butt and middle shades of the tree are called 'guai mundhan', or sluggish blood, while those who sit in the top or outside shade are designated 'guai'gulir', or active blood. This further bisection of the community into Guaimundhu and Guaigulir, which be referred to as 'blood' divisions, has happened so long ago that the natives ahave no explanation regarding it. The Guaigulir, those who occupy the 'winggu' or outer margin of the shade - are supposed to keep a strict watch for any game which may appear in sight, the approach of friends or enemies, or anything which may require vigilance in a native camp'"
Mathews later reported that the Kurnu to the west, the Kamilaroi to the north-east and other neighbours of the Ngemba also had blood and shades.

Good manners:
Approaching a a camp a visitor would carry a bunch of burning gum leaves that would create smoke to precede him to make sure he was noticed and would be welcome. There were rules about looking at people - or not - when talking to them.

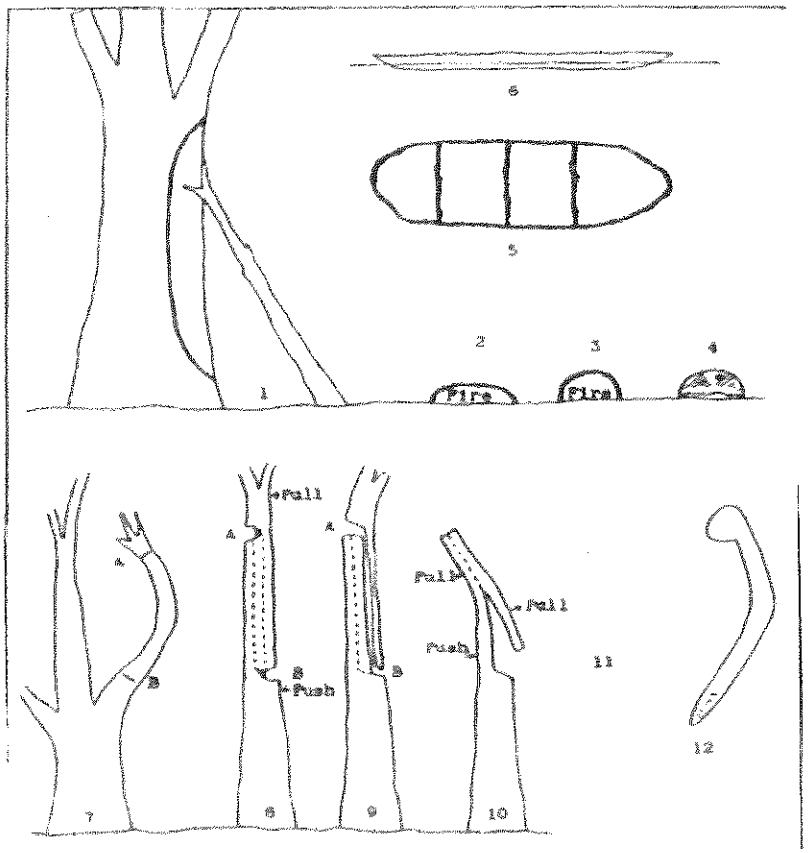


Fig.33 Canoe making, from Dunbars articles on the Ngemba

Travel:
This was apparently mainly on foot. Canoes seem to have been used mainly for crossing rivers or fishing.

Canoes were made of bark from the River Red Gum (Eucalyptus rostrata). A straight tree would be selected and the outline of the canoe (about 6-8ft by 4ft) marked by cutting a narrow channel through the bark. The bark was gently peeled off with digging sticks and the sheet of bark placed over a small fire, sap side down. As the sheet started drying and curling, stretchers were inserted and the sheet again placed over the fire to make the ends contract and curl, creating a flat dish-like vessel. On the water it was propelled with a long stick used as a punt-pole or a paddle. Dunbar included drawings of the process of canoe making, shown in Fig.33 above.

Daily life

Fire making:
Friction and tinder were used. A dry log with a crack was chosen, the crack filled with powdered grass or bark and the edge of a boomerang drawn quickly backwards or forwards over the crack or the sharp point of a club twirled until smoke came up and gentle blowing could fan the flames. When on the move, a firestick could be carried: a root of redgum, shiny leaf box or coolibah. It would be twirled at times to keep the fire alive.

Cooking:
This was done by the women. Food was broiled on the coals or cooked in the ground using hot stones or embers. Birds were not plucked but the innards were removed by sticking a piece of stick inside, twirling it around and extracting it with attached guts.

If mud was available, fish and birds would be encased in mud before baking - the meat would keep its juices and scales and feathers would stick in the baked mud and come off with this.

Getting and eating the food:
All food was shared and the main meal was in the evening. But men were fed first and leftovers given to women and children. Children would do a great deal of gathering to feed themselves during the day. Men, women and children were all skilled trackers, taught from childhood also about the habits of all live foods. Their lives would depend on it. Children had no totemic food restrictions until girls reached marriageable age and boys reached initiation age.

Hunting was the men's business. Kangaroo was hunted in the normal way by creeping up on the animal and spearing it. Emus were brought to come close by playing on their curiosity (using tricks or emu horns as lures) or by herding them towards large nets. Ducks were also caught with nets and the use of sounds and/or low-flying boomerangs. Men might also swim towards ducks using a camouflage, then dive and catch them by the legs, pull them under, wring their necks and keep on moving under water as long as they could.

Dogs were used to find possums but were not much used in hunting except to catch wounded game.

Some smaller animals were also caught, e.g. the bilby (sometimes dug out of its burrow by women), echidna, goanna and carpet snake.
Fishing: Fish could be speared or caught with either a set net or a hand-held line. The hooks were of mulga wood, attached to a set line and embedded in a mussel. If swallowed by a codfish, the hook would be straightened out by his digestive juices and so the fish would be stuck.

Mussels were collected and **crayfish** caught by puddling the water so they would come out of their holes.

Grubs were an important part of the food supply and cut out of wood or dug out of the ground.

Bees were tracked back to their nests and the bee-bread collected (balls of pollen coated with wax).

Gathering: women brought the main food supply, setting off in the morning and spreading out over and through the chosen area. Everything edible was collected and stored in the net bags carried on their backs. On the way back to camp, seeds were gathered for making bread. Large husks were removed, the rest ground up, mixed with a little water and baked in the ashes.

Grinding stones were left for use at permanent camping or watering places, and a smaller pair carried along for use when needed.

Fruit gathered included the wild orange (Capparis Mitchelli), wild lemon (Canthium oleafolium), emu apple ((Eremophila longifolium), gruie apple (Owenia acidula), also called colane tree, quandong (Fusanus acuminatus), seeds of cottonpod vine and kurrajong seeds. Roots gathered included those of waterlily, yams and mulga apples. Warrigal cabbage, sourgrass, trefoil and crowsfoot were also eaten. Some roots could provide drinking-water; bits were cut off and the sap blown into a coolamon.

Relationship to water: Dunbar mentions that women of the Kuppi and Ippai sections did not swim and suggests there may have been totemic reasons for this. Kubo and Murri men and women could all swim and all sections were expert canoe makers and fisherwomen.

Rainmaking ceremonies were practised to attempt to end periods of drought. Billy Coleman, a Ngiyampaa 'clever man' or 'wirringan mayi' from Byrock recalled that, *"...the head man of the camp would go away some little distance from the Camp lie down on the ground and speak to Mooka [Biame] by means of the stone in his head...Mooka would direct him to come along a road to a mountain at the bottom of which there was supposed to be a door in perpetual motion always opening and shutting* (Plim 2007)."

By means of communications with Mooka's wife, rain, wind or other things would be requested and the man would then return to the camp. It would then rain two or three days after his return (Main 2000: 22-23].

Marie Reay (see Main 2000:23) recorded a Ngiyampaa rainmaking ceremony which involved two 'medicine-men' using a rain-stone which was a large stone of white, glass-like quartz. The ceremony involved singing over the stone on the river bank and in a special waterhole. Dancing then took place on the bank.

Reay also noted that excessive periods of rain were dealt with by the burning of a 'midget tree' (Acacia oswaldii) accompanied by singing and dancing. And Tamsin Donaldson, a linguist, reported that Ngiyampaa people from the country southwest of Gunderbooka burned the warrior bush (warriyar or Apophyllum anomalum) to 'ward-off' rain (Main 2000: 23].

To **prepare a skin for clothing** it was stretched and dried in the shade, rubbed with ashes, then with some emu oil or goanna fat, and pulled back and forth around a smooth-barked tree to make it more pliable.It was then roughly trimmed and stitched together with kangaroo tail sinews. Skins were also sewn together for use as blankets.

In the winter or cold, windy and wet weather they wore a **skin cloak** (mostly possum or kangaroo) over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free. In very cold weather the cloak was worn with the fur inside. The right arm needed to be bare and free for use.

Both men and women wore **a belt** of human hair with an attached **pouch** of possum or kangaroo skin or of netted twine or hair. They would also wear a **headband** of plaited human hair or possum fur. Both men and women had the septum of the **nose pierced** and decorated with a turkey bustard quill or a stick with carved decoration. Women also used small shells for necklets.

For **ceremonial occasions** they used red ochre, pipe clay, kopi and charcoal to make patterns. Down and feathers would be attached with human blood or attached in other ways for decoration. They would also use necklets, anklets and armbands of netted hair, possum or bilby fur.

Equipment:
Men fought each other with **spears, nullas and boomerangs** whilst women fought each other with **digging sticks**. Dunbar comments that the women were good fighters and could do each other much damage, often more so than the men.

Weapons were often also tools and usually well made, often decorated, and counted as **personal possessions**.

Spears were made of saplings, mainly mulga or gidgee, with the grip end roughened. (Fighting spears tipped with stone barbs apparently belonged mainly to areas west of the Darling.) Hunting spears were plain or had a wooden barb. Fishing spears had two prongs, barbed or serrated.

Points of spears were hardened in the fire before barbs were attached with beefwood gum. **Spear-throwers** were used. These could be broad or narrow. The propelling point was fastened with beefwood gum. There would be a blob of gum and kopi at the other end: they were always decorated.

Two types of wooden **shield** were used (both cut from trees): the wider and flatter to ward off spears and a narrower to ward off boomerangs and throwing sticks. The latter could be crested and blackened with charcoal and fat.

Boomerangs could be in a range of shapes and sizes and had different qualities.
Tools and utensils:
Awls were made of the thighbone of kangaroo or emu.
Knives were made of mussel shell or stone. Both awls and knives would have a grip of string wound around a part and cemented with beefwood gum.
Grub-shovels, shaped like a paddle, were cut out of trees, a major job: the blade was up to 14 inches by 6 inches and the handle about 2 feet. It was made by the men for women to use to dig food out of the ground.
Digging sticks of mulga wood (and about five feet long) were much stronger, hardened and pointed at both ends. They could be used as weapons but were mainly used for digging out bilbies, yams and roots, as a staff, and for handling the fire when cooking.
Ground-edge axes were made to have the sharp edge in the middle. Some were mounted across to be used as adzes. The mounting on of handles used kangaroo sinews and beefwood gum. But stone axes were quickly replaced by the shearing blades discarded by shearers. Axes were used for cutting and shaping containers for water and seeds but water was generally carried in skin bags.
Large **netbags** were used by the women to carry quite large loads including babies (until they could toddle and ride on the hip). The net was slung across the back over one shoulder leaving the right arm free, and knotted across the chest.
Twine making: Fishing line and twine for nets was made from possum fur or from the inner bark from kurrajong trees (Brachychiton populneus). The latter had to be well chewed to make it pliable. The fibres were spun on the hip and the women would switch from hip to hip. They would produce thousands of metres each per year. Nets were made by the women and meshed with gauge and needle.
Decorations:
Some was made from your own hair turned into twine.

Medicine & Magic:
Wounds: These were treated with eucalyptus leaf poultices. Blowfly larvae were used to clean wounds that were getting gangrenous.
Aches, pains and swellings: a hole was scooped in the ground, a fire lit and a steam-bath created with the help of hot stones or hot ashes and gum leaves. The patient had to lie over this steam, covered with leaves and then with a layer of earth on top until well steamed.
Broken bones: Treated with a splint. The limb was straightened out, soft bark wound around it and kept in place with a mixture of blood and beefwood gum.

Dysentery: The sap from the inner bark of a gum (Eucalyptus intertexta) was scraped off and eaten.
Constipation: The fruit of the colane tree (Owenia acidula) was used as medicine.

Life/death magic: This power was believed to belong to one or more of the older men in every clan. The main form used was bone-pointing (with a piece of thighbone off a human, emu, kangaroo or brolga). Dunbar describes some of the ritual. The victim could be male or female. Other forms of magic used applied psychology and were used for healing.

Communications:
The so-called message sticks were badges of authority but did not themselves carry messages. The message was recited by the bearer.

When moving around through the day, women would sometimes call out to keep contact.

Time keeping:
In the day time by the sun, at night by the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters. Days were counted by the moon.

Games:
Ball games were popular and the ball usually made of possum skin. Wrestling was also popular.
A type of dart game used a wooden dart shaped like club but with a very thin handle. It was thrown to bounce as far as possible.
There were competitions in spear-throwing and contests involving throwing a play (returning) boomerang and seeing how many times it would return to the thrower who would jump over it.

Art & Music:
As has been mentioned there are fine cave paintings in the Gunderbooka Mountains. These show corroborees, kangaroos, emus, lizards and carpet snakes. There are also drawings and stencils made with kopi or red ochre. Much of this almost certainly had religious significance.

Happenings of general interest to the tribe, tragic or funny, would be celebrated with a **song**.

Trade:
Pitjuri was apparently traded from the Barkundji across the river who probably got it from Aborigines further northwest. For the pitjuri they got in exchange stone suitable for axe and adze heads and for chipped implements.

Dunbar suggested that exchange of personal property was considered dangerous as some of the spirit personality of the owner would remain with an item and could put the original owner in danger if it came into the hands of an enemy.

7.4 The Moorawarri

The traditional lands of the Muruwari people were described in Chapter 4. Their neighbours to the east were the Yuwalaraay. The groups understood each others languages, shared legends and sometimes met for corroborees (Barker 1977: 29).

"The Two Worlds of Jimmie Barker: The life of an Australian Aboriginal 1900-1972, as told to Janet Mathews" (1977) gives a lively account of the lives, culture and traditions of his people, as he learnt about them as a child and young man.

Jimmie Barker, a Moorawarri man, was interested in all aspects of his culture and passed this on to his children. In his later life (from 1971 on) he recorded memories and language on a series of tapes, encouraged and helped by Janet Mathews, the daughter-in-law of R.H. Mathews who had done so much recording in the area (see his comments on the Ngunnuh as an example).

The Moorawarri seem to have managed to maintain their traditions and language longer than some other groups in the general area. Pastoralists left them to live in traditional groups and interfered less in their lives than had occurred in other areas. The stories of Dennawan and Weilmoringle quoted in Chapter 6 are good examples.

Barker who was born in 1900, had a traditional childhood living with his mother and brother, camping out and hunting. He learnt about the environment and the laws and cultural traditions of his people. Much of the information in this section of the study is drawn from Jimmie Barker's recollections. We must remember that other Moorawarri people had rather different experiences and descendants may have other views of their culture.

But here an account, as noted, largely based on Jimmie's recollections.

Religion

The religious beliefs of the Moorawarrii people were strong and integral to their culture and way-of-life. They have been mentioned elsewhere in this study but are outlined here as Jimmie learnt them.

Bida-Ngulu, or *Wi-Bida-Ngulu*, was the creator of all things. He could never be 'looked upon' and he would protect them from evil. The symbol for *Bida-Ngulu* was a circle surrounded by rays resembling the sun. It represented his 'countenance' and this was described as 'like fire'. Religious beliefs were explained though dreaming or creation stories and were used to teach life skills and tribal law (Barker 1977: 31).

Some of the stories of the people in western NSW were shared. There are minor variations to the stories, but many underlying themes are the same, as are some of the messages conveyed by them. *Bida-Ngulu*, the Moorawarri creator of all things, gave the Aborigines their *'duwadi'* or living spirit and is connected to dreams. The creator also gave the spirit of life or *widji bidjuru* to animals, birds, fish, reptiles and insects (Barker 1977: 15, 31).

Bida-Ngula gave people their totems, or *bidjuru*, which were the spirits of animals, reptiles and birds. Totems could be referred to by the word *widji* meaning 'meat'. Emu, kangaroo and goanna were considered to be superior totemic groups (Barker 1977: 32). There were also bad spirits such as *'Brena:di'* who had broken Aboriginal law and so had been punished.

Jimmie Barker learnt as a child about his environment, the seasons as well as the movement of the sun, stars and moon (known as *giyan*) through stories told by the elders of his group. He learnt that the movements of the planets, Jupiter and Venus were important. Their position in the night sky and in the morning was essential for finding ones way through the bush. Barker recalled being taught about the names of the stars and the animals they represented. There were numerous stories based on the night sky and over the years he learnt many of them (Barker 1977: 13).

It should be mentioned here that Aboriginal astronomy is now attracting a lot of attention. Their knowledge and beliefs were detailed and complex. Their generally superior eye sight, and patient observation through long nights by a camp fire, had made them note many details rarely noticed by Europeans. Even some of the dark patches in the night sky have names and stories attached.

Moorawarri language

It has been suggested that the original pronunciation of Moorawarri was Muruwurari, meaning 'fall with fighting club'. Several groups speaking the language went by different names and occupied different areas around the Darling, Culgoa and Barwon Rivers. Some of the words and the pronunciation differed slightly between groups, especially along their boundaries and from those in the central areas (Barker 1977: 29).

Jimmie Barker recorded a great deal of the Moorawarri language and its dialects. The tapes and transcriptions are held by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

Barker pointed out that the word '*gari*' means 'belonging to' and is a suffix on most names of groups in the area. The people of the lower Culgoa, known as the Nandugari, occupied an area that extended from about 40 miles (64.37kms) above Brewarrina down the Culgoa River to its junction with the Darling River, and then extended down the Darling to North Bourke.

The word '*nandu*' means 'at times there is nothing' and also appears in the name of another group, the Dinandu. This small group lived near the Barwon River near its junction with the Culgoa River (Barker 1977: 27-8).

The territory of the Gandugari (North Culgoa) people extended to the Queensland border to the west of Toulby Gate and to the Birrie River in the east.

Their pronunciation of the language differed from that of the southern Moorawarri people. Jimmie Barker himself was descended from the Gangugari who came from an area near Ford's Bridge at North Bourke and extending south to Dry Lake. The Baragari or Badaragari group occupied an area between Yantabulla north to the Paroo, while the Dinigada group centred on Ledknapper Tank, extending north to Boneda. Brinundu was the name of a small group near the northern boundary of the territory occupied by the Moorawarri. The word 'bri-' translates as 'acacia' and the name means 'at times there are no acacia' while the word 'brewarrina' means 'the place where acacias grow' (Barker 1977: 27-8).

The various groups might speak the same language, but still followed very strict laws when travelling to, or through, the territory of other groups. Visitors would stop at some distance from the camp of another group until invited to join them. They might be invited to hunt with their hosts or they might ask permission to hunt alone (Barker 1997: 177). This is a typical example of the many customary laws based on showing respect.

The Moorawarri language continued to be widely spoken until the early 20th century. Following the forced resettlement of Aboriginal people onto missions, fewer people spoke in language except privately. In many cases harsh mission managers and employers prohibited its use. Over time, fewer and fewer people spoke in language. This made it very difficult to pass on their culture to future generations in the form that it had once existed.

Songs and dance
The Moorawarri used song to celebrate, to thank the spirits for good hunting and to ask them to provide for them in times of need. A number of songs, for example songs asking for rain, were recorded by Jimmie Barker in language and are now held at AIATSIS.

Moorawarri dances related to their way-of-life. They included mime and varied in speed and movement types. Accompaniment included tapping on a variety of instruments or clapping boomerangs together. Kerribree Creek is named after the word giribiri which means 'dancing place' and this was once the site used for many corroborees (Barker 1977: 30, 36-7).

Technology
The Moorawarri people used local resources to make tools, weapons, domestic implements and canoes.

The Moorawarri **weapons** were similar to those of other groups.

Wooden weapons were treated with goanna fat and left in the sun to dry, then baked in the ashes of a fire. The procedure was repeated several times, to help preserving the timber and make it suitable for use.

Stone axes were once used. These would sometimes have wooden handles made of tea tree. Jimmie Barker knew of several large **granite grinding stones** (located on a ridge between Barwon Bridge and Brewarrina Mission) that were used for the sharpening of axes (Barker 1997: 79, McBryde 1973).

Canoes or *mungar* were cut from tree trunks and sealed with natural gums or resins. A small number of tree trunks along the Callewatta and its tributaries (usually River Red Gum or Eucalyptus camaldulensis) bear scars where canoes were cut. Robin 'Quartpot' Campbell, a Moorawarrii, recalled his father cutting out a '*toongoon* bark' in 1911, at the Gooramon swamp off the Culgoa River. At the time his father was employed to burn charcoal for Weilmoringle Station's blacksmith's shop (Dargin 1976: 31).

Bush medicine
The Moorawarri used medicine found naturally in the bush. Bark from the **leopard wood tree** was used for tooth ache, and if the tooth had fallen out, the cavity would be packed with **beeswax**. **Whitewood gum leaves** were used to cure gastric problems and the leaves of the **dogwood tree** when boiled were rubbed into sores. These are only a few examples of Moorawarri remedies that have been documented (Barker 1997: 85-6).

(See also Comments)

Food and water
The Moorawarri made use of a diverse range of **food sources** found in the locality in which they lived. They used it economically and their diets varied according to the seasons. The individual totem was sacred and its owner did not kill or eat it. Most observed traditional law well into the late 1900s (Main 2000: 21])

In traditional life **food and water** were critical resources essential to survival. In times of shortages ceremonies would be performed to ask for rain or give thanks for periods of good hunting.

Children were taught a number of methods for finding **drinkable water** or a **water substitute** when out in the bush. Jimmie Barker recalled being taught that the roots of *mundiling* or *buga*, a vine with potato-like roots, could be used to quench thirst as could the bulbous root of the kurrajong (Barker 1977: 48).

Identifying the various trees, plants and insects that could provide food or moisture was essential to survival. These skills among others would traditionally have been taught to all Aboriginal children. In the early 20th century Jimmie Barker was one of the fewer and fewer children being taught these skills and who were able to pass them on to succeeding generations.

(See Table 12 at the end of this section for further comments)

Significant Places
Places of special significance to the Moorawarri people are Tinnenburra and Yantabulla with Enngonia, Maranoa and Barringun also holding some importance.

Burials
The Culgoa River sand-hills on Culgoa Downs were recognised by Moorawarri as an Aboriginal burial ground. Burials at this site continued into the early 20th century. Children were not allowed near it and did not attend the burial.

Following a burial, adults returned to the camp and burnt green branches and leaves which created a lot of smoke. This, they hoped, would prevent the dead person's spirit from returning to the camp. Sometimes they left the camp for a short while after the burial and smoking ceremony (Barker 1977: 21).

Moorawarri and Ngiyampaa people were reluctant to venture near burial grounds as they were reputed to be protected by the spirit dogs *Jugi* or *Mirijula*, (Barker 1977:33).

The people buried their dead in a horizontal position. The orientation of the grave was reputedly based on the location of a person's homeland, with their head pointing in that direction. They were wrapped in bark and sandy places were preferred for the burial due to the ease of digging.

Jimmie Barker recalled that there was a large burial ground on Nulty Station on the northern side of the Darling River near Bourke; as well as one at Yarrawin, 40 miles (64.37 kms) from Brewarrina. Another large, and possibly the oldest burial ground, was at Goombalie (Barker 1997: 132).

Carved trees often designated the site of a nearby burial place of an important man. Jimmie Barker recalled that there were many marked trees at the bora grounds near Cumborah as well as others around the Culgoa River (Barker 1997: 132).

Post-contact Conflict
Jimmie Barker documented some instances of conflict between European settlers and the traditional owners that he had heard of from others during his life-time. They include the Hospital Creek Massacre about 11 miles from Brewarrina (17.7 km); killings at the Butcher's Tree, three miles (4.8 km) from Brewarrina Mission; killings on the northern bank of the Barwon about four miles (6.4 km) above the fisheries; and numerous other attacks 'along the Barwon and Narran Rivers as far away as Walgett'. Given the locations in close proximity to Brewarrina it is possible that the killings were of Ngiyampaa people, not Moorawarri. But it was assumed that similar

attacks took place in Moorawarri country (Barker 1977: 123-125).

7.5 The Yuwaalaraay/Euahlay

What is quoted below comes mainly from K. Langloh-Parkers book: The Euahlayi Tribe, first published in 1905. Location and connections of the tribe were discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 of this study.

Creation stories:
There was a time when only birds and beasts were on earth; a colossal man and two women came from the far northeast, changed birds and beasts into men and women and made other folk of clay or stone. They taught them everything, left them laws for living and then went away.

The great creator being called *Byamee* (Parker's spelling) may be the colossal man in the first story. He is, as his name says, the great one, loved and respected, as a father to his children. His laws and wishes have to be obeyed. He is the source of totems and of rules that go with them: the marriage laws and food restrictions. At funerals a little prayer would be said to *Byamee*.

Women did not mention his name but used another name for him, *Boyjerh* (which means father).

His wife *Birragnooloo*, has like *Byamee* a totem for each part of her body. She is the mother of all. They live together in a sky camp. Neither can be claimed as ancestor by any one clan. He has a second wife, *Cunnumbeillee*, who is less elevated and deals with practical tasks on their behalf.

Byamee created (with the help of his two giant sons and taking care to teach the local people) the fish traps at Brewarrina, establishing the rule that during the fishing festival this area should be a common camping ground. Peace should be kept so all could enjoy the fish and help to keep the fish traps in good repair.

There are many stories about the stars in the sky: the Laughing Star (Venus) is still laughing at his own rude jokes, and the Milky Way is a *warrambool* (water overflow). The stars are fires that the dead have lit on their way across the sky. The Pleiades are seven sisters, beautiful ice maidens. Parker learnt a lot of language and talked to the old people. She wrote down and published many stories as they were told to her.

People were thought to have **dream spirits**, *Doowee*, which may wander away when you sleep and may be captured, causing the owner to fall ill and perhaps die, and **shadow spirits,** *Mulloowil*, which can also be stolen, causing sickness.

Women have **spirit women**, who are regarded as sisters-in-law. They are beneficent and may bring gifts of food.

Clever men or *wirreenuns* would select young boys to learn their craft and put them through quite frightening tests and ceremonies to see if they were worthy. Their training could take some years, starting with conjuring tricks and progressing through faith healing and medicinal lore.

A *wirreenun's* dream spirit, a *Mullee Mullee* could be sent to get a captured *Doowee* back. A *wirreenun* had a special tree (*Minggah*) or stone (*Goomah*) where his own and friendly spirits lived and he might go to this to consult. A *wirreenun*'s shadow and head were taboo and to be avoided. A *wirreenun* could perform good and helpful

magic and treatments but could also be full of ill-will and keep bad spirits to create dangers for others. Some were very good doctors. Most were men but women could also be members of this profession and very good at it.

Ceremonies:
Corroborees combined music, dancing and feasting. Messengers would be sent to other groups to come and join in and the reasons for a meeting up could vary: to arrange marriages, discuss problems, exchange presents.... Painted sheets of bark or painted poles would set the stage. Corroborees could illustrate happenings: Parker saw a dramatic one about the coming of the first steamer up the Barwon.

Sometimes there was a huge alligator figure of logs plastered with earth and painted. This would usually mean that this particular event would relate to a *boorah*, a special **initiation** ceremony. Parker gives a long, detailed description, too long and detailed to quote here in full but see description of Coorigal Spring initiation ground on p.78 (Parker 1905:70-78, 79-81). Yuwaalaraay and Ngyiampaa/Ngemba ceremonies were similar, but judging from Parker's account, there were important differences.

A boy going through the **boorah** must definitely not show curiosity, fear or surprise, nor flinch at the pain of having an incisor knocked out. There were special songs and much use of bull-roarers. A boy would need to go through several *boorahs* before being considered fully initiated, each time learning more and losing one food taboo.

Life and death:
Birth and childhood:
Bahloo, the moon, created **girl babies**, sometimes with the help of *Wahn*, the crow. The girl souls were sent to a spirit who would hang them here and there on the branches of trees. There a soul would wait for a woman to walk below her and grab the woman as a mother. But babies might sometimes be sent directly to their mothers. If two babies came along at the same time, that was terrible. To have twins was a disaster and one child would be exposed to die. It was usually the duty of the mother's brother to make the decision and carry it out. Clearly no woman could move about to gather food carrying two small babies on her back - and perhaps having a toddler to mind as well.

Women would hide from whirlwinds and avoid drooping Coolabah trees to avoid the risk of mothering twins. Nor did they wish or afford to bear children too frequently. There were plants considered to have contraceptive effects and children were breastfed for several years which tends to have a contraceptive effect.. They were also careful not to look at the full moon or let their babies do so as that could give them thrush. The bronze mistletoe branches with orange-red flowers are the souls of disappointed babies who have given up waiting for a mother to come along.

Hot gum leaves were pressed on the nose of a baby to make it flatter, a sign of beauty. A baby who would not sleep would have its head rubbed with red powdered stuff from the needlebush tree. If babies cried too much this meant that they had evil spirits that must be smoked out over a fire of Budha twigs. There were several rules about how to avoid evil spirits entering a child and how to teach them to be kind and generous - and good swimmers.

Baby girls could be promised in marriage to some man but she would not be claimed for wife until she had grown into a woman girl. If the man already had a wife, the girl would have to obey the wife as well as her husband.

There was a special set of **initiation ceremonies for girls**. A girl would be supervised by an older woman, probably a grandmother. The girls had to live at a special camp and were usually glad when the ceremonies were over. A girl would be decorated with feathers and flowers and sent to rejoin the main camp where she would briefly meet her husband to be, but she would then run to a separate camp which was gradually, over some months, moved closer to that of her husband. The man would hand wedding presents to his mother-in-law (to whom he must never speak) or failing one, to a woman nearest of kin to the wife.

The Wood Lizard was the main **maker of boys**, though the moon might help out at times. Up to a certain age boys were trained the same way as girls to be generous, honest, good swimmers and so on. But then they were moved to the bachelors' camp to be trained to be men. At about seven years of age a boy would be allowed watch fire being made, and to go hunting with the boys and men in the camp. No boy who had not been to a *boorah* would dare to try to make fire. At some stage the old men would approach the main camp making *boorah* sounds and singing *boorah* songs, spreading the message that it was time for *boorah* ceremonies. Messengers would be selected and given message sticks to take along to help spread the invitation message.

Death may be announced by wailing. The dead person could be put in a coffin of bark, watched over by a relative and surrounded by small fires of budtha until carried to the burial place, preferably a sandy area not far from the camp. A grave was dug, the coffin put down beside it, watched over by close female relations. Men and women went off in separate groups, women to gather branches of Budha and Dheal, men to bring pine saplings to line the grave.

Private possessions of a dead person were placed in the grave, the coffin lowered into it and covered with bark, branches and earth. Other personal possessions might be burned. Mourners would wail, sing, cut themselves to let blood drip onto the grave to show their affection and smoke themselves to keep the spirits from following them. The grave would be covered with logs and the surface around it swept. (In the past dead women and children might be put in hollow trees.) The group would usually move camp soon after the burial.

The grave might be marked with lumps of kopi or by a cap of kopi worn by a widow to show mourning. There were rules about how a widow should behave for sometime after her husband's death. On the Narran a grave might be marked by a few painted upright posts.

Organisation:
The tribe had two main divisions and these divisions applied to all things, not just people. It is not clear whether these are of the same kind as Matthew's description of blood and shades, as it would seem from their names, or refer to the sections mentioned below. (Their original ancestors were said to be a red-skinned race coming from the west and a dark-skinned race coming from the east.) :

Gwaigulleeah = light blooded and *Gwaimudthen* = dark blooded

People belonged to groupings referred to by anthropologists as *sections or phratries or moieties*. You inherited your mother's section. Marriage rules were strict and based on sections - you should not marry anybody from your own section. But the quite complex rules went beyond this and had to be remembered.

There were also "**marriage classes**", four for each sex. The names for these classes were the same as those used by the Gamilaroi/Gamilaraay:

(male and female)		(male and female)
Kumbo and Bootha	The children of Bootha will be:	Hippi and Hippitha
Murree and Matha	The children of Matha will be:	Kubbee and Kubbootha
Hippi and Hippitha	The children of Hippatha will be:	Kumbo and Bootha
Kubbee and Kubbootha	The children of Kubbootha will be:	Murree and Matha

So **girls** took the class names of their grandmother and her sisters, and **boys** took the class name of their grandmothers' brothers.

These **class names and lots of relationship term**s could be **used instead of personal names** when people were talking to each other. This helped people to learn and remember how they were related.

This was very important in terms of **marriage rules**:
Bootha could only marry Murree, Matha could only marry Kumbo, Hippitha could only marry Kubbee and Kubbootha could only marry Hippi. Boys and girls of the same totem counted as brothers and sisters, so they could not marry.

There were **other divisions** that did not influence marriage rules but **showed links to locality**: A Noongahburrah belonged to the Noongah (= Kurrajong) country; Ghurreeburrah to the orchid country; Mirrieburrah to the polygonum country and so on.

The **totem system**, *Dhé*, was important and unusual. The major totems had sub-totems that belonged to them - they were part of the same kin-group. The sub-totems could be animals, plants, natural phenomena or spirits.

People could kill and eat their totems, but not misuse them or be disrespectful.

Some special people, such as clever men, could have been given individual totems called *yunbeai,* and these were very special and must **not be eaten** by them. Any damage to the *yunbeai* will also hurt his owner. These totems did not influence marriages and were not inherited.

Food taboos did exist and mainly applied to the young; one taboo after the other was removed as a boy went through *boorahs* or a girl developed into a woman.

Ownership: Some items such as certain weapons or a woman's digging stick were seen as personal possessions. But tools and utensils were often shared, lent and borrowed. The big nets made for hunting and fishing, the result of much labour, were usually seen as owned by the group.

Good manners:
You were expected to give advance warning of your presence and direction of movement if approaching a camp or meeting. There were rules about whom you could speak to (or not), when and where you should camp in relation to other persons, depending on sex, age and relationship. There were also rules about gift-giving and barter.

Travel:

Most travel was on land, the men setting off to hunt and women setting off with the children to gather food. Women and children would during the day eat some of what they gathered while the men usually came back hungry,

They had canoes but used them mainly for fishing or crossing rivers - rarely for travel.

Daily life:
Cooking: Old men would not eat bread prepared by women, or certain small animals if a woman had removed the innards. This they did themselves. But then women were allowed to do the cooking (if they were not pregnant or had small children).

Earth ovens were made and used for cooking game. They liked their meat juicy. Kangaroos were singed, innards removed, the inside filled with hot stones and the animal the put on the burnt down fire with hot ashes heaped over it. Emus were plucked, innards removed, the inside filled with hot stones, box leaves and some of their own feathers. Echidnas were smoked to make it easier to remove quills, the innards then removed and the animal put in a little hole beside the fire and covered with hot ashes. Other small animals were treated the same way. Ducks were usually plucked before cooking.

They had strict rules about who would be given what part of an animal to eat, and such rights were inherited and could not be changed.

The innards of fish and goannas were removed in one go.

Mussels and crayfish were cooked in the ashes, and so were emu eggs, till the content was firm.

Yams were also cooked in an earth oven.

The seeds of Noongah (a sterculia) and Dheal, were ground and made into cakes which were baked, first on bark beside the fire to harden them, and then in the ashes.

The older people had very good teeth; they would never finish a meal without rinsing the mouth afterwards. Charcoal could be chewed for cleansing. They never drank hot drinks.

Food quest and preparation:
Seeds of the barley-grass (yarmmaraa) were gathered in plenty at harvest time. A space would be cleared and surrounded by a brush-yard. The harvested grass was collected here. When they had enough, they removed the yard, the grass was set on fire (still green), and turned over with sticks to let the seeds fall out. When all done, seeds were collected into a big possum skin rug and brought back to camp. Some seeds were poured into a square hole in the ground and trampled, and some poured into a round hole and stirred with a stick so husks would fly away.

Seeds would then be collected in a large canoe shaped trough, one end lifted up so all dust and dirt collected at one end where it was blown off. The clean seeds were then stored in skin bags to later be ground and cooked as cakes.

Yams were dug.

Some vegetables were eaten raw: thistle tops, pigweed and crowfoot.

Apart from water the were two special drinks used on special occasions such as corroborees:
- water sweetened with honey, and
- water in which flowers of the Coolabah or Bibbil tre had been soaked.

Trapping game:
At the favourite water holes of the animals they wanted, they would make rough brush breaks to either side of the access track. Across the track they would put a net with one end in the water and some sticks for birds to rest on while drinking. A hole would be dug on either side of the net and a man would hide in each.

The first day's catch had to be brought back to the camp alive, so that day they would only take small animals but thereafter they could take larger game too, and kill it. If lots of game settled on the net they would catch hold of the ends of the net and flip it back over the game, catching a lot in one go.

Some animals would water during the day, others at night, so the net was being watched over long periods to get a variety of animals.

For ducks they might put a net over part of a waterhole and frighten the birds into this. Some could even kill a duck with a well-thrown boomerang.

Another trap used a fence around a waterhole with a nose (with a slip knot) lying on the ground to be stepped into, or hanging at emu head level.

To lure emus to come they could use *bobeens*, emu horns with a sound like an emu's cry, or tie feathers to the tip of a spear, climb a tree, dangle the spear to lure the emu to investigate and then spear the emu when it was below the tree.

Emus were also caught with heavy duty nets. A nesting emu would be frightened off the nest (with a great deal of ceremony), killed, and the nest robbed of eggs.

For fishing the nets were usually slung between two sticks, mostly of eurah wood, and held by one man. They would wade into the water, let others drive fish towards the net and then move to close the net with fish in it. Nets could also be slung across the flow of water to act as a kind of bag in which the fish would be caught. They also made stone fish traps. Fish caught in the traps were speared or taken by hand. The traps could be extensive and each tribe had its own from which other could not take fish. (As mentioned earlier, there were special rules for the Brewarrina traps, given by Byamee.)

Crayfish and mussels had to be dug for - but women caught shrimp by sitting naked in the water and waiting for them to nip!

Dingo pups (though considered dangerous food for women), ant larvae and frogs were seen as delicacies.

Tool making:
Nets for catching emus were made of Kurrajong bark or grass; the latter was easier to work after softening it in an earth oven with heat and water. Emu nets could be 200 - 300m long! Nets for fishing (of thinner twine) were always smoked before use and had a charm sung over them.

Utensil making:

Water was carried in bags of possum skin - the hair was plucked off, the skins rinsed well and sewn together with sinews, leaving only the neck open. The bag would be filled with air and hung to dry.

For mixing drinks or medicines they used vessels of wood or bark and smaller versions for drinking out of (*Binguies, Coolamons* and *Wirrees).*

Grinding stones: These flat slabs were personal possessions and handed down within the family from generation to generation. They had magical power.

Clothing and decorations:
A woman's costume consisted of a *goomillah*, a string around the waist, made of possum sinews, with a small apron of twisted strands of possum fur hanging down in front. A bone or a green twig would be stuck through the cartilage of her nose (the bone would at times be used as a needle).

On her head she might have a net or a fillet, a kangaroo tooth on a front lock and balls of gum on side locks. She might have a possum hair armlet, a reed bead necklet and her black skin polished with fat. Her possessions might be carried in netted bags that she made.

A man's costume comprised the *waywah*, a broad belt of twisted sinews and hair, with long tufts of kangaroo or paddymelon skin hanging from it, front, back and sides.

Men and women used possum skin rugs for warmth in the winter.

For decoration they might wear strings of kangaroo teeth fixed with gum as headbands or necklets, or forehead bands with suspended kangaroo teeth. They also made balls of pine-gum to stick onto their hair where they stayed till they fell off. Shells were highly prized and the *wongin* decoration consisted of cords round the neck and under the arms, crossing the chest with a shell pendant at the cross.

Feathers could be tied to little sticks and stuck in the hair, or swansdown fluffed into balls to put in the hair.

For corroborees paint was the main item used; the colour range used to be white, red and yellow, the colours available in the area as earth pigment or from wood ash. Blue was occasionally imported. The laundry blue bag became popular as did raddle (a red paint used for marking).

Scarification was also used. Some scars were tribal marks, some for mourning, and some were ceremonial or for decoration. Parker was not given clear explanations.

Weapons:
Boomerangs, ordinary and returning, the latter usually made of Gidgee (acacia) or Myall (drooping acacia). They had many uses: as a music instrument, for hunting and in war.
Spears: made of Belah (swamp oak) or Gidgee. They were shaped in stages, given a soaking in water between each stage. Some were decorated, some given barbs cut down one or both sides (and sometimes pointing back and forward so spear would be stuck fast). Some were darkened with poison tips. The *billah* were war weapons; *moornin*, larger, were used to spear emu.
Hatchet-shaped **fighting clubs**, *woggarah*, were made of wood and were, like boomerangs, carved with favourite designs by the maker.

They had three kinds of **shields:** (*boreen*) narrow and of hardwood, a broad and flat one made of Kurrajong and a medium sized one of whitewood (*birah*), all painted in colourful designs.
Wooden clubs of different sizes and shapes were used: plain *waddies* were used in warfare and for killing game and smaller *bodthuls* thrown for fun. Heavy headed *boondees* were used in wars.
Their **stone axes** had heads of a dark green stone that was not local. A handle was fastened over one end with beefwood gum and sinews of emu, possum or kangaroo.
Knives were simply sharpened bits of stone.

Games, some examples:
Skipping was a favourite game, very skilled and with complex variations; loved by the old men who were very good at it (particularly those over seventy, Parker comments).
Bubberah, throwing the returning boomerang, was also very popular and skilled.
There were several competitions that involved **throwing spears** or ***waddies***, and there were **sham fights**.
Boogalah was a ball game, the ball made of sewn up kangaroo skin; it would be thrown into the air, persons of a totem acting together as a team to catch it - and the totem that kept is the longest would win.
Goombooboodoo - wrestling - was done family clan against family clan. Bodies would be greased to make them more slippery.

They were also fond of **riddles** and you could become famous for making good ones.

Trade:
The stone for axes was obtained by barter. So were the broad flat shields from Queensland and the grasstree gum from the Narrabri mountains (with Gidgee boomerangs given in exchange).

Language:
Parker gave a list of language words. This has been included in Chapter 4, for possible comparison with what is provided by more modern linguists, probably more extensive and with a different spelling, following modern rules of transcription (Ash.A 2003) et al. The early recorders did their best, but it would take time to work out good ways of writing sounds that were a little different to what they were used to.

7.6 Comments based on Nhunggal traditions

In the book by by Sveiby and Skuthorpe (2006), Tex comments on some aspects not discussed above but relevant to Aboriginal traditions of the area.

The lack of agriculture and animal domestication in Aboriginal society have been seen as evidence of a 'primitive economy'.

However, the Aboriginal land management traditions were in terms of effort and result more efficient, given the Australian climate, and better for the environment than agriculture would have been. It caused little or no interference with the fragile top soil.

There were no native animals that would have been suitable for domestication - and the carefully patterned hunting and fishing, which precluded 'over-kill' - there must

always be a breeding population left - produced what was needed with relatively little time and effort. This was noted and commented on by early explorers who could observe the pre-settlement life style.

Aborigines did in fact nurture plants through their 'firestick farming', by spreading seeds in ashes after burning, by spitting seeds from fruit trees in shell middens full of nourishment and by leaving parts of certain plants in the ground to encourage regrowth.

They did deliberately increase fish populations by creating areas where fish could spawn and the offspring start growing without being eaten. This could be done by for example felling a couple of tree trunks across a river and filling the space between them with tangled brush providing shelter for the young fish. Settlers cleared such "impediments" to traffic from the rivers - and as a result lost much of the fish supply. Fish were sometimes caught and planted in wells and waterholes for further growth - 'living larders'. Some settlers commented that when the Aborigines left, so did the fish...

Another aspect that needs discussion is trade. It has long been known that trade routes crossed the country and that trade items could move over huge distances and relatively fast. The trade was matter of barter - but not necessarily in terms of always calculating equivalent values. Skuthorpe sees it as a matter of building up trust and describes a pattern of leaving trade items in a neutral place from which they would be collected by the trading partners who would then leave in their place items that they wished to trade. No discussion, no haggling, no confrontation. And it would occur to anybody to steal such trade goods. It was a matter of good manners for the trading partner to accept and take away all that was offered and for the trader to accept all that was left in exchange. It was not so much a matter of what was wished for or needed - it was the gesture of handing something over, a sort of mutual gift giving, a social gesture. If things were not needed by the recipients they could be sent off along a trade route to another group as trade goods.

And gift giving was not just a matter of physical items. Also intangibles, cultural aspects such as stories, dances, songs were eagerly offered for sharing and eagerly accepted. Such matters which might be in a language not understood as it moved on to other groups were still accepted and could move across the country quite rapidly. It was the gesture that counted. There are reports of such items moving very fast over long distances.

As has been mentioned earlier, there were four levels of learning but Tex describes also how a story could be generally known at the first level, but that each significant story had four parts and four owners, each responsible for knowing and teaching one part correctly. As an extra insurance, each owner had a '*tuckandee*', by Langloh-Parker described as a young man of the same totem, reckoned as a sort of brother. Your *tuckandee* had to know your part of the story and it was his responsibility to step in and teach it as appropriate, if something happened to you, the real owner. This system long ensured the continuation of traditional culture.

Because everybody owned one part of the common cultural tradition, everybody had the opportunity to at some stage play an important role, something that suited a tradition of not having chiefs or grandstanding bosses.

7.7 General comments

The descriptions in this chapter have been extracted from what was seen as the better accounts provided in existing records. More can surely be added or explained by Elders who have retained knowledge. And for aspects, e.g. Moorawarri kinship structure, not much discussed in Jimmie Barkers reminiscences, we can assume that there were strong similarities with those of the Ngemba and Yuwaalaraay.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the lists of plants of cultural value given in Tables 1 - 11, do not give details of actual preparation and use. Such knowledge could, for some aspects, be restricted and learnt only with permission.

But to give some idea of possible uses and methods, and trigger an interest to learn about those of the local cultural groups, Table 12 below quotes plant names recorded in Table 11 and give, for many of these, descriptions of Aboriginal use found in a number of books, often large and beautifully illustrated. Their authors and the titles are listed in the References. The information given comes from their own research and discussions with Aboriginal groups in other parts of Australia. It is quite possible that the Ngyiampaa/Ngemba, Moorawarri and Yuwaalaraay/ Euahlayi traditions could differ in detail and type of application, and that they had different rules about rights to knowledge and access.

So the list below should be seen as an indicator only. But in relation to bush medicine, here should be mentioned the research by Dr.Qian Liu. She selected some groups of plants known to have been particularly valued for their medicinal qualities and prepared fresh sample of plant these plants for chemical and medicinal testing.

Through careful analyses their chemical components were identified, and a number found to be known to have medicinal value. But she also decided to test whether they would have the same chemical/medicinal effects if prepared the Aboriginal way. So where she had detailed descriptions of this, she prepared fresh samples accordingly and tested their effect on bacteria etc.. She found the preparations to in most cases be as effective as her previous chemical distillations.

Table 12 Bush Tucker plants - known uses, descriptions and comments.

Common name(s)	**Scientific name**
Acacias	Acacia species
All Acacia seeds analyzed by the University of Sydney were found to be high energy providers rich in protein and fats. Many species bear large amounts of seeds and have been an important staple food.	
African Boxthorn or **Berry Bush**	Lycium ferocissimum
Berries sweet but may have bitter aftertaste.	
Beefwood	Grevillea striata
Reported to have edible seeds.	
Belah	Casuarina cristata
Leaves chewed?	
Bimble Box or **Boxwood** or **Poplar Box**	Eucalyptus populnea
Roots sometimes tapped for water.	
Black Box or **Swamp Box**	Eucalyptus largiflorens
The seeds from the small nuts have been soaked in several changes of water, then dried and ground to a flour.	
Black Orchid or **Native Arrowroot**	Cymbidium caniculatum
The "fruit" = pseudobulbs, is eaten raw or grated and boiled. This provides a thick starch.	
Bluebush or **Blueberry Bush**	Maireana species
Fruit eaten. (A different species, Qld Bluebush = Cheopodium auricomum, was in W.NSW eaten cooked as a vegetable.)	
Boobialla or **Western Boobialla** or **Native Myrtle**	Myoporum montanum
Fruits are purplish and bitter but edible, salty-sweet?	

Bulrushes or **Cumbungi** Typha species
Young shoots pulled up and eaten raw. The glutinous rhizome was roasted. It provided starch, sugar and fibre. The fibres left provided string.
Bush Tomato or **Bush Potato** or **Nightshade** Solanum species
There are several species. Some contain a toxic alkaloid but several are important as food, e.g. the desert raisin (S. centrale) and the desert tomato (S.petrophilum). When ripe the fruits look like small green tomatoes. Dried, raisin like fruits could be ground with water to a paste which was then made into large balls, covered with red ochre and sun-dried for later use. Fruits analysed were found to have carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C and thiamine. Solanum nigrum has glossy black berries, sweet and delicious.
Butterbush or **Mallee Willow** or **Butterwood Tree** Pittosporum phylliraeoides (or Bitter Bush?)
Seeds very bitter but were pounded to make flour. The tree makes good, edible gum, rich in carbohydrates.
Camel Melon Citrullus lanatus
Generally eaten but not very pleasant.
Common Reed Phragmites australis
Thick underground rhizome, taken from young plants it is white soft and pleasant to eat. Young shoots are delicious, taste similar to asparagus if boiled in salted water. Seeds eaten raw or cooked, sometimes ground. Very nutritious.
Coolabah Apple or **Apple Tree** Angophora melanoxylon (Water from roots?)
Congoo Mallee Eucalyptus dumosa
Bark from young roots eaten.Tree may also carry lerp.
Coolibah Eucalyptus coolabah (microtheca?)
Roots used as source of water. The tree may be a source of lerp. Galls eaten, called bush coconuts.
Crowfoot Erodium crinitum
Leaves and tuberous root eaten. Root cooked.
Dark Sago Weed Plantago drummondii
A Plantain.These can be used as salad greens or seeds boiled to make a jelly.
Darling Lily or **Narran Lily** or **Warrego Lily** or **Bogan Lily** Crinum flaccidum
Tubers eaten. They produce a fair arrowroot.
Desert Cow Vine Ipomoea diamantinensis
Fleshy tap roots roasted?
Dillon Bush or Native Grape Nitraria billardierei
Bright red fruits that taste rather like grapes dipped in salt water... Fruit may be plentiful.
Ellangowan Poison Bush or **Dogwood** or **Turkey Bush** Myoporum desertii
Yellow fruits are sweet.
Emu Bush Eremophila longifolia
Pleasant nectar?
Eucalyptus species: Eucalyptus species
May carry edible lerp
Gidgee Acacia cambagei
Seeds edible and nourishing. Also used to settle water for drinking.
Grass, Barley Astrebla pectinata
Relatively large seeds, much valued.
Grass, Fairy Sporobolus caroli
Seeds small but fall easily from the husk. Ground to made into damper.
Grass, Kangaroo or **Wild Oats** Themeda australis
Seeds collected and ground.
Grass, Mitchell or **Plains** or **Budgerigar** Astrebla species
A. pectinata, Mitchell Grass, was observed by Major Mitchell in 1835 as harvested by Aborigines and dried on racks. The seeds were then gathered, ground and made into damper.
Grass, Native Millet Panicum decompositum
Seeds milled with water and used to make damper.
Grass, Native Millet Echinochloa inundata

Edible shoots or leaves?

Grass, Neverfail or **Wire** Eragrostis setifolia
Seeds used for damper.

Grass, Nut Cyperus species
Tiny tubers eaten.

Grass, Spinifex Triodia mitchelii, breviloba
(gum producing)

Grass, Spinifex Triodia mitchelii, var. pubivagina
(seed producing)

Grass, Tall Oat or **Kangaroo** Themeda avenacea
Seeds collected, ground, mixed with water and baked into cakes.

Grass Tree Xanthorrhoea australis
Flower spike soaked in water to collect the nectar or nectar collected with a sponge made of stringybark.. The soft basal part of leaves and shoots were eaten. The soft heart of the stem was edible. Eating the tip of the stem was done but would destroy the plant.

Grass, Wire Aristida species
Edible seeds?

Grey Wattle or **Black Wattle** Acacia salicina
Seeds edible

Gruie or **Colane** or **Emu Apple** Owenia acidula
Fruits ripen after falling to the ground. Thirst quenching.

Gums from **Ironwood, Acacia** and **allocasuarina** trees is edible and a source of carbohydrate. Casuarina gums are sweet and much liked by children. Gum may be eaten direct from the tree or softened by soaking in water.

Gunderbluey Wattle, Prickly Wattle Acacia victoriae
Seeds edible.

Hop Bush Dodonea species
Seeds bitter. Have been used in beer making.

Hop Bush, Narrowleaf Dodonea viscosa
Seeds bitter. Have been used in beer making.

Ironwood Acacia excelsa
Seeds may be crushed and mixed with water.

Kurrajong (coarse and fine leaf) Brachychiton populneus
The seeds used to be gathered and eaten. They are hard and have to be crushed. They have been shown to be very nutrituos, as they contain about 25% fat and 18% protein. Young roots and gum are also edible.

Leafless Cherry or **Ballart** Exocarpus aphyllus
There are several varieties. Fruits are small and supported by fleshy stalk. When they turn pink or deep red in winter they become sweet and palatable.

Lignum Muehlenbeckia florilenta
Seed edible

Mallee Fringe-Lily or **Pupu Tucker** or **Yam** Thysanotus baueri
Tuberous root eaten.

Medicine Bush or **Spotted Fuchsia** Eremophila maculata
Nectar used.

Miljee Acacia oswaldii
Edible seeds.

Milk Thistle or Sow Thistle or **Prickly Lettuce** Lactuca serriola
Leaves edible (best cooked)

Mint Weed or River Mint or **Penny Royal** Mentha species
Leaves used. Generally milder than European species.

Mulga Acacia aneura
Seed pods are gathered, threshed and winnowed to get the seeds which may be ground to a coarse flour, eaten raw or cooked. The yield of seeds is great and the seeds high in energy, rich in protein and carbohydrate.

Nardoo Marsilea drummondii
The spores are held in pea-sized sporocarps. These have to be removed before using the yellow powder inside which swell when it is mixed with water to make damper.

Native banana or **Bush banana** Marsdenia australis

Young pods are eaten raw along with leaves and flowers. Mature fruits are cooked before eating. Honey from the flowers is eaten and leaves are steamed or cooked and eaten

Native carrot Geranioum retrorsum
Taproot roasted and eaten

Native carrot Daucus glochidiatus
Root eaten

Native lime Eremocitrus glauca
Lemony fruit eaten.

Native orange Capparis mitchelii + C.loranthifolia
A small desert fruit grows on a bush and is much liked but not very common in summer. It offers some energy, water and carbohydrate but is a good source of vitamin C and thiamine.

Native plum or **Sandalwood Plum** Santalum lanceolatum
The fruit is dark purple when ripe. They have a good water content, some protein and fat. Fallen dry fruit can be kept and then reconstituted by soaking in water.

Native Spinach or **Warrigal Spinach** Tetragonia tetragonoides
The young shoots are eaten as a green vegetable, cooked or raw.

Needlewood Hakea leucoptera
Root may produce good drinking water. Nectar from flowers eaten.

Needlewood, Hooked Hakea tephrosperma
Root may produce good drinking water.

Nepine or **Nipan** or **Native Passionfruit** Capparis lasiantha
Fruits are yellow, somewhat elongated and split open when ripe.

Paddymelon Cucumis species
Rind usually bitter, interior edible. Cucumis melo can be boiled or wrapped in paperbark and covered with hot sand to cook.

Pigweed Portulaca oleracea
The plant is succulent and the flower capsules contain many tiny black seeds. These can be used fresh or stored for some time. If ground they are so oily that the grinding stones become stained. Stems and leaves are also eaten as a green vegetable. They may be pounded into a green mush for eating. The mush can be rolled into balls and dried for eating later. The plant is rich in water, dietary fibre, protein and trace elements.

Prickly Pear or **Spiny Pest-pear** Opuntia stricta
Purplish fruits with black seeds eaten. Irritating hairs can be removed by rubbing with damp sand or fruit cut open an flesh scooped out.

Prickly Wattle or **Gunderbluey Wattle** Acacia victoriae
Seeds edible, ground and roated for damper. High enery food, rich in carbohydrates and protein. White gum exuded from trunk is also eaten.

Quandong Santalum acuminatum
Large, red, globular fruit, much loved. The ripe red flesh is dry but sweet. It can be dried and stored. The fruit is acid, rich in carbohydrates, protein and vitamin C. Some "good" trees have fruit with stones whose oily kernels can be eaten raw or pounded to get the oil. This may be used as a face lotion.

Quena or Bush Tomato Solanum esuriale
Fruit edible and eaten raw.

River Cooba or **Black Wattle** Acacia stenophylla
Seed pods roasted and seeds eaten..

River Red Gum or **Ghost Gum** Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Seeds edible.

Roly Poly Salsola kali
Edible shoots and leaves.

Saltbush Atriplex species
Several used and boiled as vegetables.

Saltbush, Climbing Einadia nutans
Both leaves and fruit are edible.

Saltbush,Old Man Atriplex nummularia
it is a perennial shrub with prolific seeds which may be ground, mixed with water and made into damper.

Saltbush, Ruby Enchylaena tomentose

Fruits (usually red but may be yellow) soaked in water to make a drink. Leaves could be used as a green. Used as a salt when cooking emus and to add vitamins.

Saltbush, Thorny or **Spiny** Rhagodia spinescens

The round, flattened, translucent fruit is sweet and palatable. The leaves may be boiled as a vegetable.

Sandhill Wattle Acacia ligulata

Gum eaten. Seeds roasted and eaten, ground and made into a damper. Grubs in roots eaten.

Shamrock (Sweet Fenugreek) Trigonella suavissima

Foliage edible and tasty.

Silver Wattle or **Western Golden Wattle** Acacia decora

Snotty Gobble Amyema lucasii or Amyema miraculosum or quandang

Stinging Nettle Urtica incisa

Leaves edible boiled.

Sugarwood Myoporum platycarpum

Sweet white exudate from damaged trunk edidle and popular.

Supplejack Ventlago viminalis

Species?? Flagellaria indica?

Tar Vine Boerhavia diffusa

High water content and carbohydrates. The starchy taproot is roasted and contains much potassium.

Warrior or **Blackcurrant Bush** Apophyllum anomalum

Fruit eaten after roasting with ash to remove toxin.

Waterlily Nymphoides crenata

The corms are gathered from the mud below the lily, washed and roasted under coals. They may be peeled and mashed into a paste for children and old people to eat. Seeds and stems are also eaten. Stems (peeled) and fresh seeds from the flowers are also eaten.

Yam (swamp) Triglochin species

Grow in billabongs, may produce lots of bullet shaped tubers on the roots. These may be eaten raw or cooked, tend to be crisp and refreshing but fibrous.

Note: As noted, the information listed above comes partly from books held by many libraries, but also from the internet, using Google, e.g Australian National Botanic Gardens online. Some Botanic Gardens have areas devoted to plants of Aboriginal Cultural value, and there are some gardens that have been especially created for them, eg. There are also public gardens created to teach the uses of many such plants. Some can be found online, e.g. http://SOE-Townsville.org/Town Common - Food Trail or Bushfoods RIRDC.pdf.

Chapter 8 Past and future - Discussion and Recommendations

Aborigines and the land

As was made clear at the start of this study, it has not been possible to cover all aspects that we wished to look at. For much of the time allotted to this study, extensive and repeated flooding made it difficult to get around, meet people and organise meetings. There were also social constraints, based on past history, to interfere with communication with members of Aboriginal communities.

But we hope this study can be seen as a part of a larger trend. There seem to be two major concerns here:

- preserving knowledge of Aboriginal culture and keeping such knowledge vital within the communities, and
- getting proper access to, and where possible, secure ownership of land.

Brewarrina Shire's large Aboriginal population and the growing number of youngsters becoming interested in and learning about Aboriginal culture, **their** culture, give hope. And Elders are keen to se them learn - and to become really proud of what they have learnt. Languages are taught in schools, groups of children have recorded their music and made it available to others. "Through Our Eyes," an information DVD produced by The Western Catchment Management Authority (ISBN 978-1-74263-075-5) is a good example of how culture can be explained and learnt.

The Information Centre in Brewarrina has for sale books telling some of their old stories, written and illustrated by members of the Aboriginal community. Art works showing the spread and range of talent are for sale and some decorate the town.

A painting by Tex Skuthorpe (NAIDOC National Aboriginal Artist of the Year 1990/91) was given to the Emperor of Japan. It was well received. This painting is now in the Emperor's private collection, to become part of the National Treasures of Japan. Tex has created many paintings illustrating stories and beliefs (see cover of this report and the illustrations in Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006).

To the various organisations trying to stop and reverse environmental degradation largely caused by over-grazing and misguided land and water use in recent centuries, it is increasingly clear that learning about - and from - Aboriginal land management practices has to be a very important aspect.

Their thinking, based on thousands of years of experience, could be applied not just to areas now handed over to or acquired by Aborigines, but also to the Australian landscapes in general which are after all also their heritage. The study of culturally valuable plants (DNR 1999-2006) is a good example of the sort of recording that needs to be done.

Knowledge still held by Elders can be used by *environmental* groups and government departments, if they are listened to as real participants of discussion groups, not just included as token representatives. This aspect is discussed in an important paper by Peter Thompson (1996) - almost twenty years ago - and the matter is getting urgent. The knowledge holders cannot live forever.

But Aborigines obviously wish to be in charge of land to which they have belonged for thousands of years. And why should they have to buy what was really theirs? And where would they get the money, given how most of them have been in what could be called controlled poverty?

The **Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983** provides a mechanism for compensating Aboriginal People of NSW for loss of their land. The preamble of the Act states that the land was traditionally owned and occupied by Aboriginal people and accepts that as a result of past government decisions, the amount of land set aside for Aboriginal people has been reduced without compensation.

To redress the loss of land, Aboriginal Land Councils can claim crown land, which if granted, is transferred as freehold title. There are 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council comprising of nine regional councillors that are elected every four years.

Additionally the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 established a statutory investment fund, managed by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council that invests and disburses funds to maintain the network of land councils, and when possible in other initiatives for the betterment of the Aboriginal people of NSW.

But the process of applying has become a maze of legal complications and issues set up to ensure that decisions are fair and legally correct - a maze that usually needs lengthy legal advice and a lot of time and paperwork. There appear to be no claims in Brewarrina Shire.

There are a few other avenues, mentioned below, and by now quite a bit of land is held and run by Aboriginal corporations, for example at Goodooga and Weilmoringle.

'The Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) was established by the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*. The Act also established the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority that is now known as the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA). The ALT became responsible for the administration of lands previously held by the Native Welfare Department and a number of other State Government agencies. The ALT provides advice to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on ALT land issues. It is a significant landholder with responsibility for approximately 27 million hectares:

1. Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) - The ALT is responsible for the administration of lands comprising approximately 11% of the State's land mass. These lands comprise different tenures including, reserves, leases and freehold properties. A significant proportion of this land comprises reserves, with their purposes mostly being for "the use and benefit of Aboriginal inhabitants" and which have Management Orders with the ALT (generally having powers to lease). These lands were previously held by the Native Welfare Department and a number of other State government agencies. There are also lands that remain registered in the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA).
2. Land Branch - DIA's Land Branch has a number of primary functions, including the day-to-day management and development of the ALT and AAPA lands, the management of Branch operations and strategic initiatives in accordance with the ALT Strategic Plan, facilitating the transfer of ALT land to Indigenous people and the provision of advice and support to the ALT, the Commissioner of AAPA, Indigenous people, the Minister, Government and key stakeholders in relation to management of ALT and AAPA lands.
3. Entry Permits - Information about getting permission to travel on ALT lands that are subject to Part III of the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972.*
4. Land Facts – Information on frequently asked questions about land tenure and Aboriginal lands.
5. Lost Lands - Lost Lands Report attempts to identify all lands originally set aside for Aboriginal "use and benefit" but which are no longer available and also provides an informative account of the changing legislative, administrative

and social contexts of these reserves. DIA has no legislative carriage over of any lands outside of the ALT estate unless there are Aboriginal heritage associations.

" **The Indigenous Land Corporation** (ILC) is an independent statutory authority of the Australian Government, established in 1995. Its enabling legislation is the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act (2005)*. Its purpose is to assist Indigenous people to acquire and manage land to achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits. The ILC has the following priority outcomes for achieving Indigenous benefits through acquiring and managing land:

1.Access to and protection of cultural and environmental values. 2. Socio-economic development 3. Access to education.

The ILC Board is the primary decision-making body, overseeing governance, considering Land Acquisition and Land Management proposals, and monitoring performance. The Board consists of seven Directors of which five, including the Chairperson, must be Indigenous.

The Board is appointed by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous affairs, in consultation with the Minister for Finance.

The ILC receives an annual payment of at least $45m, derived from investment returns of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Account. This payment is used to run the ILC and its programs (the ILC cannot access or use the capital of the Land Account because its purpose is to fund the ILC into the future).

Additional potential sources of funding for land acquisition are listed on Google under the heading 'Aboriginal Development Funds'.

As shown above, there are now avenues for regaining some Aboriginal land, but like everything organised by government authorities, most are hedged about by lots of legal paragraphs and paperwork. Legal advice is usually required to work out what avenue would be applicable and how to set about it.

As the examples below show, some success has been achieved.

Examples of Aboriginal Corporations:

Bohda Aboriginal Corporation is now registered as in charge of
Willoring Station, Goodooga
New South Wales 2831 Australia

The history of this corporation and its links to Angledool and Goodooga are mentioned in Chapter 6 at the end of the section on Angledool Aboriginal Station.

The **Bohda Housing Co-operative** in Goodooga, an Aboriginal organization, was formed in the early 1970s and run predominantly by the Skuthorpe family.

Just north east of Goodooga, **Mogila Station**, formerly run by Major Richmond and famous as a Merino Stud, was in 1996 bought with ILC money and is run as a Merino Stud. It was incorporated as Mogila Merino Stud Pty.Ltd. on 8.5 1997. To Mogila Station was added Currawillinghi, located in Queensland. The board of directors inludes representatives of the ILC/LEA, the property's traditional owners, the local Aboriginal Community and a neighbouring pastoralist. The property also runs training

courses in aspects of farm work, such as shearing.

The **Weilmoringle Land Holding Company** was established in 2002 on behalf of the Murrawarri peoples for the sole purpose of:

1. Holding Land Title on behalf of the members of the company,

2. Providing cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits to the members of the company.

Membership of the company is established in two ways:

Traditional membership: "An Adult Aboriginal person who is accepted as a member of the identified family which has blood ties to the identified groups forming Traditional Land Owners. Such person shall be admitted to membership in accordance with this constitution.For the purpose of membership in accordance with this constitution no person shall be classified as a member of more than one identified family which has blood ties to the identified groups forming the Traditional Land Owners. Traditional members shall have voting rights as outlined in accordance with this constitution."

Historical membership: "Any other person may become a Historical member of the company subject to their acceptance and classification as a member of an identified family which has blood ties to the identified groups forming the Traditional Land Owners. Such person shall be accepted and classified by his or her chosen family who shall submit his or her name to the board for approval. Historical members shall have no voting rights.

The company's goals are listed as:

- Gain ownerships of Weilmoringle from the Indigenous Land Corporation;

- Enhance and develop management structure for Weilmoringle Land Holding Company;

- To protect and manage Morowari sites and natural eco systems on the Property:

- License sections of Weilmoringle for at least the next 5 years to guarantie to pay required mandatory fees and charges;

- Develop Bi cultural Tourism Venture on the property that will be a feature tourism agenda of tourist visiting the outback, providing employment for members of the company, the Morawari and the Wytaliba community.

Heritage concerns:

As noted in the last paragraph above, there can be bi-cultural aspects of the properties mentioned here, and these may raise some problems, partly in relation to everyday use and partly in relation to eco-tourism which is seen as a promising income earner for the local community. In most cases, where a property developed settlers, is taken over by an Aboriginal corporation or community, this also inherits the buildings on the property, the main home as well as the usually quite numerous farm buildings.

Given the past employment histories of the relevant Aboriginal communities, some

members, or now deceased relatives, are likely to have emotional connections, pleasant or otherwise, to such buildings where Aborigines were used/employed as domestic staff or farm labourers.

Fig. 34 Weilmoringle Homestead building

This was certainly the case for the Byno girls who used to baby-sit the children of the Gill family. Male - and probably also female - members of the community would have and still do work in the magnificent shearing shed. There were quite a number of smaller sheds and cottages used by a mixed lots of workers.

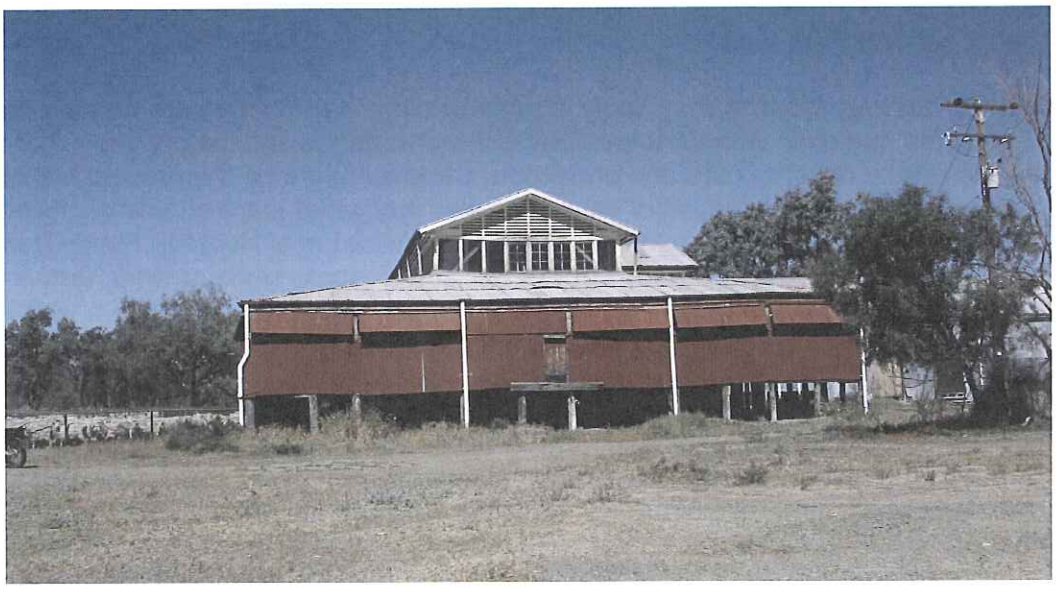


Fig. 35 Weilmoringle Shearingshed (with termite resistent gidgee enclosure to the left)

That the work force was often very mixed but could include a large proportion of

Aborigines is clear both from oral history and early photographs. See for example Fig.36 below.

Fig.36. Shearers at Quantambone Station (from E.Thompson collection)

Though there has been little chance for discussion, it seems fair to assume that the buildings on most properties, except for the more recently created, are likely to have some emotional significance to some members of the Aboriginal community. But the older properties are also likely to have some heritage significance in terms of the broader history of the area.

Such heritage significance may imply legal obligations if properties are formally listed as protected, but even without formal listing their existence and history imply that they are worthy of some care and protection, whoever might be the present owner or manager. An implied obligation of care does also imply that there should be access to funding set aside for such purposes, for example the Local Heritage Fund. This fund does not have a lot of money but can assist with some types of work, for example minor repairs and painting. Applications for funds are open once a year and advertised in the local paper. Funding is dollar for dollar, which means that the job has to be costed and the applicant able to pay half of the cost.

But there are also other places that may be of concern to the Aboriginal communities. **Ngunnhu**, the fishtrap area, is an obvious but well known case, and it is getting what some, but not all, members of the communities consider the appropriate attention. There are also the areas of bush land and Barwon 4 framing this, and the **Old Park**, areas known to contain burials and other sites (see maps 6-7).

A campsite has been set up at the **Fourmile Waterhole**, shown below, a place known to have a story connection that suggests some inherent dangers. Visitors are not told of this, nor is it known whether the Aboriginal community wishes there to be some information or has any opinion on the suitability of a campsite there.

Fig.37. Fourmile Waterhole

Significant story places in the Weilmoringle area are known and cared for by the Aboriginal community there. As described in the previous chapter, there are also important sites in the Narran River, Narran Lake areas. These are not generally known, nor is it clear what should be known or how, or if something needs to be done to prevent future interference. Some such sites are mentioned in the Ahims register.

These questions are matters for discussions involving Aboriginal communities, land owners and the Shire Council.

The following recommendations may be useful in the context of significant heritage.

Recommendations

Though it has not been possible to discuss these recommendations with the relevant communities, they may be useful as topics for discussion and eventual action:

a) As noted, properties now owned or managed by Aborigines/Aboriginal communities may meet the criteria for listing on the Local Environmental Plan or the State Heritage register. Owners/managers are advised to liaise with the Brewarrina Shire Council (BSC) via its Heritage Advisor to discuss whether and how to proceed with such listing.

b) The present revised Environmental Plan has been completed but consultation should be started soon to allowed documentation to be completed and decisions made prior to next revision.

c) The BSC should apply to the Office of Environment and Culture (OEC) to be given continuous access to the Ahims Register and its updates. This register

should be consulted by the BSC prior to any major development, and if this is to occur within or near an area with listed sites, the Shire should engage appropriate consultants and Aboriginal representatives to undertake an archaeological and cultural heritage assessment according to guidelines supplied by the OEH and any additional information or request from relevant Aboriginal groups.

d) BSC should involve the Aboriginal communities when developing cultural tourism plans. Aboriginal communities could find it useful to take the initiative and offer to develop their plans in conjunction with the BSC. There could be a number of joint projects and the BSC could consider helping with training and facilities.

e) The BSC should notify the relevant Aboriginal organisations when the Local Heritage Fund is to be advertised. The BSC could offer, through its Heritage Advisor, assistance and support in applying for such grants and in the administration and appropriate management of such grants, if obtained.

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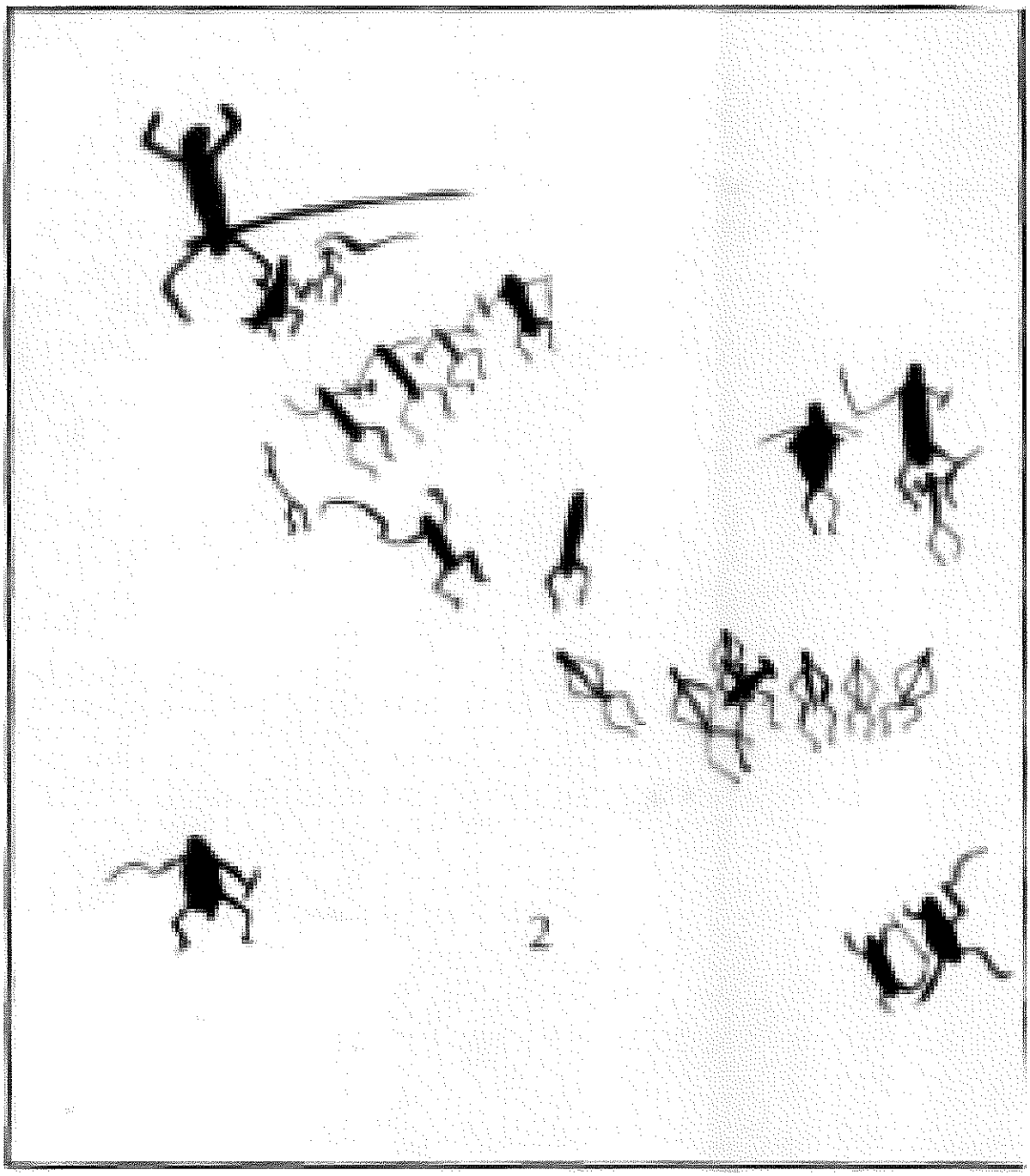

Malgowan painted art site showing figures with hunting equipment, in Gundabooka National Park.
Source: McCarthy 1976, Fig.68