

Mapping Attachment

A spatial approach to Aboriginal post-contact heritage



Denis Byrne & Maria Nugent

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Department of
Environment and Conservation (NSW)

Heritage Council



of New South Wales

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Photograph on front cover: Aboriginal boy jumping into the
Manning River on the Taree side, 2001

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Foreword

Mapping Attachment encapsulates two vital features of Aboriginal cultural heritage conservation and management in New South Wales. *Attachment* epitomises what cultural heritage means to Aboriginal people. For them, the places that comprise their heritage are not museum objects: they are a living part of Aboriginal culture. They are, in a very real sense, a lifeline between living generations and the country they belong to. This is strikingly clear in the voices of the Biripi and Worimi people who speak from the pages of this book. Their memories, stories, histories and emotions are, and always will be, intimately associated with the places they describe. Indeed, this is what connects them to their part of the state.

In order to acknowledge, respect and thus 'conserve' Aboriginal people's attachment to country we need to find ways to map it. *Mapping* helps make attachment to country visible. We are now adept at mapping the natural environment in ways that assist conservation. We have also successfully mapped Aboriginal 'sites' in NSW, mainly recording what is visible on the ground: the stone artefacts, the shell middens, the rock art. The mapping of attachment, however, presents a unique challenge because it is subtle and personal. Uppermost in my mind, in commending this book to you is the methodology presented for mapping attachment.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Aboriginal people who have contributed to this book and especially for their efforts in making the idea of attachment so accessible.

JASON ARDLER
Executive Director
Cultural Heritage Division
Department of Environment & Conservation (NSW)

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Betty Bungie and Fay Pattison generously allowed us to view their wonderful personal collections of photographs and to reproduce some of them for this book. Patricia Davis-Hurst kindly gave us permission to use images from her own book, *Sunrise Station*, and drew upon her deep knowledge of local history to correct some errors of fact in earlier drafts. Faith Saunders kindly gave us permission to quote from Ella Simon's autobiography, *Through My Eyes*.

We thank the Greater Taree Council and the Wingham Historical Society for allowing us access to their archives and historical libraries.

Several staff members of the Cultural Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW (formerly the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) assisted with this project. Chimin Chan carried out the GIS mapping, with John Beattie and Aling Hsu providing technical advice and support. Rodney Harrison, while Historical Archaeologist at NPWS, provided valuable advice and comment regarding Aboriginal post-contact archaeology and particularly post-contact artefacts. Paul Houston provided data from the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management

System (AHIMS) register. The Department's Executive Director of Cultural Heritage, Jason Ardler, supported and encouraged the research for this book over a number of years.

During several periods of fieldwork on the lower North Coast of NSW, Vienna Maslin (Purfleet-Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council) and Robert Yettica (Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council) made an invaluable contribution to the project. Without their local knowledge, tactical support, and enthusiasm the project would not have been possible; without their companionship it would have been much less enjoyable. We also thank the two LALCs for allowing Vienna and Robert to spend so much time with us. In the early days of the project Gillian Donovan (Purfleet) and Mick Leon (Forster) provided valuable assistance.

Johanna Kijas and Gabrielle Werksman carried out research on documentary history sources. Johanna also read a complete draft of the book and provided insightful comments on it. Vienna Maslin, Martin Thomas, and Robert Yettica assisted with the oral history recording. Heather Pearce skillfully transcribed the oral history interviews. We thank them for their input, along with Peter Johnson who prepared most of the maps for publication.

Research for this book was aided by a grant from the NSW Heritage Council. Maria Nugent received support from the School of Historical Studies at Monash University in the book's final stages. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, kindly allowed Denis Byrne to work on the book during the first half of 2004 while he was Guest Scholar there.

Sabine Partl helped see the book through its production stages and Sharon Veale kindly took management responsibility for it over the final six months.



Introduction

Cultural mapping

In October 1999 a group of people gathered around a big laminated enlargement of an aerial photograph that was laid out on the grass above the sand at Pebbly Beach, Forster, on the lower North Coast of NSW. Two of them, Mick Leon and Robert Yettica, Aboriginal heritage officers with the Local Aboriginal Land Council, were speaking into a tape recorder, telling about how, when they were kids, they would walk down to 'Pebbly' from the 'mission'¹ and spend their day swimming, fishing, and sitting in the shade of the trees. Those trees are gone now but they marked them on the aerial photo with a felt-tipped pen. They also drew a dotted line showing the pathway they had followed along the creek behind the mission, through the scrub that later became part of the golf course, and down past the school to the beach.

In the two years that followed, similar aerial photos would be unrolled on beaches, riverbanks, and kitchen tables elsewhere in the study area. Onto these maps Aboriginal people would mark pathways, houses, favourite old fishing spots, places where they had jumped fences to swim in a farmer's dam, places they had hunted in the bush. It became clear that Aboriginal people had their own map of this landscape that was different from the 'official' maps that you could buy at local newsagents and petrol stations. Their map was one they kept in their heads. It did not exist on paper but it was accurate, it was continually updated, and it was passed on from one generation to the next. In the course of our project, people chose to put parts of this map on paper in order to demonstrate to the larger world that the landscape in which they lived was full of places that meant something special to them.

The project

The project began in mid-1999 when the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (now the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW), with funding assistance from the NSW Heritage Council, began working with the cultural heritage staff of the Purfleet-Taree and the Forster



Local Aboriginal Land Councils to record the post-contact heritage of their communities (see Figure 7 showing LALC boundaries). The project arose out of concern at the relatively very small number of Aboriginal post-contact (post-1788) period heritage places recorded in NSW and a desire to provide an exemplar case study showing how such places can be documented. For their part, the two Land Councils were keen to have places from this period recorded to supplement the several hundred pre-contact heritage places already on record for their area.

The two Land Councils have adjoining territories on the lower North Coast of NSW that stretch back from the coast up into the Great Dividing Range, some 150 kilometres inland. The Land Councils are based at the two largest Aboriginal settlements in the area, at Purfleet and Forster. These settlements are situated on former Aboriginal Reserves that passed into Aboriginal ownership after the NSW Land Rights Act was passed in 1983. There are strong kinship ties between the Aboriginal communities in the two areas and a long history of interaction. In the present day, they work closely in the conservation of cultural heritage.

Right page Fig. 1: The study area.

This page Fig. 2: Aerial view of the Forster Aboriginal settlement, the large rectangular portion of land, bounded by roads on four sides, centre frame. © Department of Lands.



The study area

The two dominant landscape features of the area are Wallis Lake in the south and the Manning Valley in the north.² The two are separated by low, mostly bush covered hills. In the north, the study area is bounded by the Bulga and Comboyne plateaus and in the west by the high ranges of the Eastern Highlands. The climate is sub-tropical and these days the area has a rapidly expanding tourism industry as well as a fast increasing coastal population. The inland town of Taree (population 16,000) is the area's oldest but it has been overtaken in size in the last few decades by Forster-Tuncurry (population 20,000).

Place-based oral histories

The work of the project proceeded on two fronts. The first consisted of recording the oral histories of a small number of people in each of the two areas. The intention was never to attempt a comprehensive coverage of the two Aboriginal communities – this would have meant recording oral histories from hundreds of people. Instead, working with a small number of people, we focused on developing a place-based approach to oral history recording that was able to map people's histories across the landscapes in which they have lived. Our aim was to bring oral history recording into the mainstream of Aboriginal heritage work as a source of knowledge about places that have been significant in Aboriginal history, and to Aboriginal people, over the last hundred years or so. We present this place-based approach in Parts 2 and 3 of *Mapping Attachment*. We do not believe that the seven people whose oral histories are presented in Part 3 would consider



their lives to have been more significant or interesting than those of other Aboriginal people in the two areas. Nor would they necessarily see their lives as 'typical' – we assume they would share our view that everybody's life story is unique and different. Having said that, we expect that many of the Aboriginal people of the study area will be able to relate to the events and the places described in these stories, though we have no doubt their own stories would add new dimensions to these places and include additional places not covered by our book. We thus urge the reader to approach the book not as a 'total' post-contact history of the area but as set of windows onto that history.

The written record

While the oral history recording was progressing, a search was begun for documentary historical records. This involved working with local archives in the study area, such as those of the Wingham Historical Society, and with library and archival collections in Sydney and Canberra. The results of this work are set out in Part 1. The written historical record has been especially important in the quest to find where Aboriginal people were in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century landscape of the study area. Since this period lies beyond the range of the oral histories we were heavily dependent on the written record. We have put this historical material into the first chapters of the book (Part 1) because it sets the scene for the oral histories (Part 3) and for

This page Fig. 3: Aerial view of the Purfleet Aboriginal community. The former Pacific Highway cuts through the settlement. © Department of Lands.

Fig. 4: Betty Bungie being interviewed by Maria Nugent at Purfleet, 2001.

Right page Fig. 5: Vienna Maslin, 2003
Fig. 6: Robert Yettica, 2001



our reconstruction of the landscape of the mid and late twentieth century (Part 2).

Ella Simon and Patricia Davis-Hurst

Two Aboriginal authors have produced local histories for the northern half of the study area and we recommend these to readers interested in obtaining an inside view of Aboriginal life there. Ella Simon's book, *Through My Eyes*, was published in 1978 and tells the story of her life from the time of her birth in Taree in 1902 (see Chapter 16).³ The book provides a wonderful insight into Aboriginal life lived 'under the Board' (the NSW Aborigines' Protection Board) in and around Taree in the early and mid-twentieth century. Patricia Davis-Hurst's book, *Sunrise Station*, published in 1996, provides additional insights into this period as well as taking up the story for the 1960, 70s, and 80s.⁴ The many old photographs included in *Sunrise Station* give the reader a wonderfully graphic and intimate impression of Aboriginal life in this later period. In October 2003 Patricia Davis-Hurst was awarded an honorary doctorate from Newcastle University in recognition of her work for her people.

Vienna Maslin and Robert Yettica

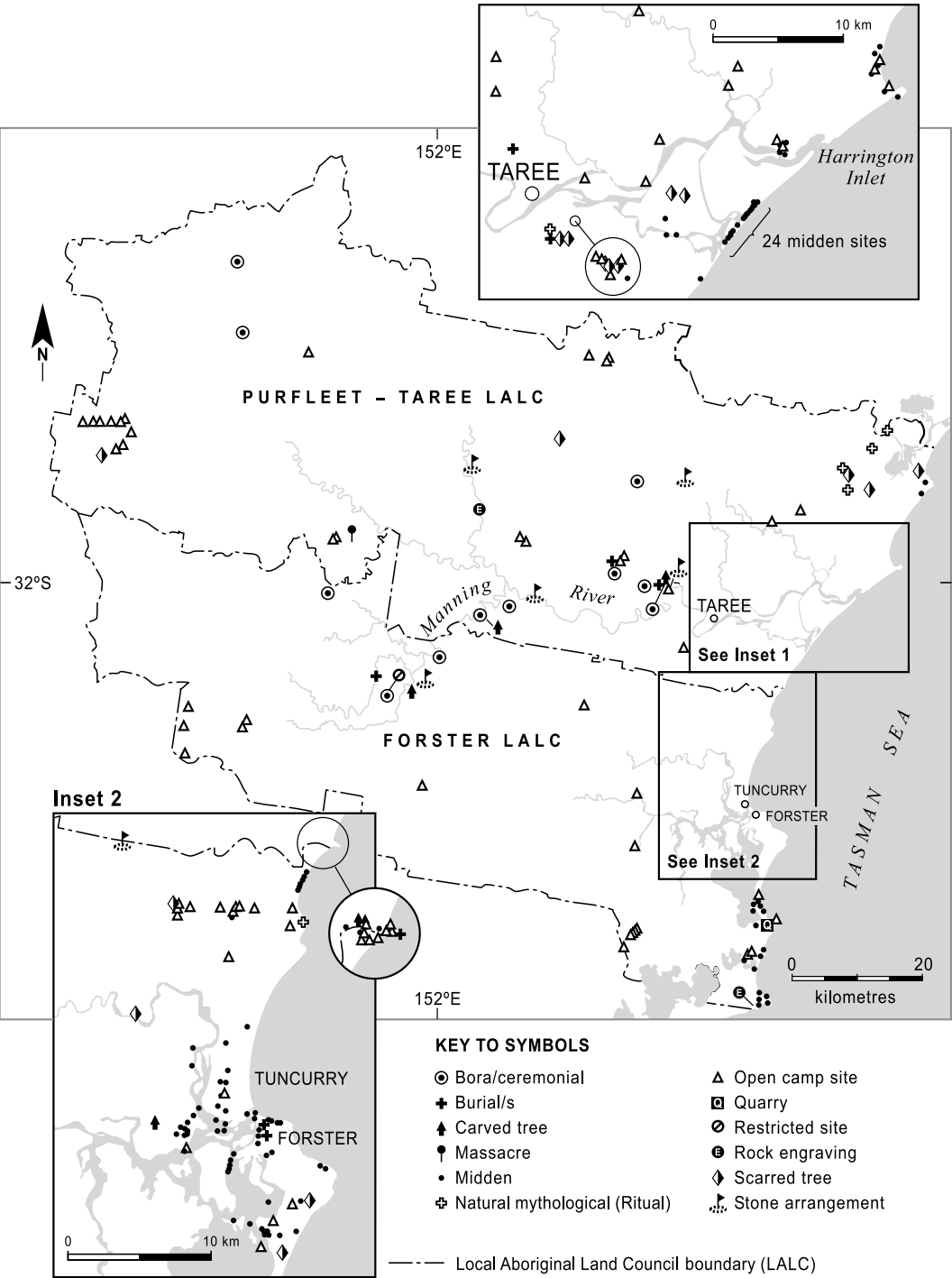
Over the four years of our study, two local Aboriginal people have taken a leading role at the local level. Vienna Maslin (Purfleet-Taree) and Robert Yettica (Forster) are each Heritage Officers for their Local Aboriginal Land Councils. They introduced us to their communities and to their local landscapes, conducted oral history interviews, and provided ongoing liaison between local Aboriginal participants in the project and ourselves. In the first year of the project, Gillian Donovan (Purfleet-Taree) and Mick Leon (Forster) also had a close involvement in the project.



Denis Byrne and Maria Nugent

Denis Byrne is Manager of the Research Unit in the Cultural Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW (formerly the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service). His background is in archaeology but in recent years he has had a strong interest in the social significance of heritage places and in the history and development of cultural heritage management in Australia. Maria Nugent is an historian who worked for several months on this project, carrying out most of the oral history research, before taking up a position in the School of Historical Studies at Monash University. Her previous major research in Aboriginal history consisted of her doctoral project on 'history making' in the Aboriginal community at La Perouse on Botany Bay.

Denis and Maria are not Aboriginal. It has been clear to us, during the writing of this book, that we are not writing our own history in the sense of being able to provide an insider's view of the Aboriginal post-contact experience. Such a perspective would have resulted in a different book. The perspective we have brought to the research and writing reflects our disciplinary backgrounds, our involvement and particular interests in Aboriginal history and heritage, and also, we trust, our commitment to enhancing the recognition of the importance of Aboriginal post-contact history in the field of heritage conservation. There are many books still to be written about Aboriginal history and heritage in NSW; this book, with its limitations, is our contribution.





Aboriginal historic heritage

Since there are no written records for Aboriginal history before the time of European contact we can only record and study Aboriginal heritage places for that time through archaeological means or by studying Aboriginal traditions that have been passed down about some of these places. When people refer to the 'historical period' in Australia they mean the period since writing was introduced. The term 'historic heritage' covers the cultural heritage of both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people during the historic period.

Our aim in this book is to promote the recording of those Aboriginal heritage places and landscapes that belong to the historic period. In our study area, this means the period since the first white explorers passed through in 1818. Since that point in time, a documentary historical record has existed for the area and this written record sheds light on the lives of the Aboriginal people whose country the writers invaded. While the information written about Aboriginal people, beginning in 1818, is specific to the study area, the style of writing and its characteristic biases – the things it focuses on and the things it leaves out – share a lot in common with the documentary history of other parts of NSW and Australia in general.

Heritage divided

In the early decades of cultural heritage management in NSW (1970s-1990s) a division of heritage into 'Aboriginal' and 'historic' was institutionalised, with different people working in each area and, for the most part, different legislation applying to each.⁵ One of the problems with such

a division is that it implies the two are mutually exclusive: it implies that Aboriginal heritage has no place in the historic (post-contact) period. It implies, in other words, that Aboriginal heritage properly belongs to the time before 1788, as if Aboriginal culture and history after that date are no longer authentic or 'real'.

Unfortunately there has been a self-fulfilling aspect to this. Almost all the work of those involved in the cultural heritage field was directed either to recording and managing pre-contact ('prehistoric') Aboriginal heritage and non-Indigenous historic heritage. There came to exist a 'heritage landscape'⁶ that was populated by thousands of pre-contact Aboriginal heritage sites (e.g., shell middens and rock art) and thousands of non-Indigenous heritage sites (e.g., homesteads and courthouses). While it can be argued that many of the non-Indigenous heritage sites had Aboriginal associations – that they constitute a shared heritage – the point here is that these associations, and this sharing, were almost never acknowledged in heritage work. The artificial division of heritage into 'Aboriginal' and 'historic' fields brought into being a heritage landscape in which Aboriginal people, far from sharing the post-1788 landscape with white people, seem to have permanently departed the scene.

Left page Fig. 7: The distribution of pre-contact Aboriginal sites in the study area. Note that only recorded sites are shown – many sites remain unrecorded.

This page Fig. 8: Maria Nugent, 2004
Fig. 9: Denis Byrne, 2004



Aboriginal heritage of pre-contact times

The setting

People of the Biripi and Worimi language groups in the study area led a lifestyle which took them at different times of year into every part of their country. This included the rugged foothills of what we now call the Great Dividing Range, the lower bush covered hills, and the open woodland of the Gloucester Valley. It also included the bands of rainforest (or 'brush') on the alluvial soils along the Manning River, its major creeks and the large flat islands in the estuary. The luxuriant rainforests contained huge fig, tamarind and cedar trees with vines, ferns and shrubs. There were also the great and small swamps near the river and coast, and the long sandy beaches with their dunes and rocky headlands.

The sites of the pre-contact

The distribution of sites where archaeological traces of pre-contact people have been discovered and recorded (see Figure 7) gives us some insight into Aboriginal lifestyle and pattern of occupation although we appreciate that the blank areas on the map are more likely to be a reflection of the lack of recording work in these areas than of any lack of Aboriginal presence there in the past.

Most of the sites shown in Figure 7 have been recorded by consultant archaeologists, who, working with local Aboriginal people, have carried out surveys of land on which developments have been proposed (e.g., motorway construction, housing subdivision, sewerage infrastructure). Copies of reports on these environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies are held by the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW. Overview

studies, prepared for Greater Taree City Council, summarise existing knowledge of the area's Aboriginal heritage.⁷

Almost all the 'sites' shown in Figure 7 consist of locations where archaeological remains have been found. The great majority consist of scatters of flaked stone artefacts (whose uses included the shaping of wooden artefacts, such as spears and boomerangs, and the butchering and skinning animals) and shell middens (containing shellfish remains, fish bones, and other remains). It is important to remember that these sites were merely points in a network of movement, often places where people stayed for only a few hours or a few days. Sadly, very few sites representing the social or spiritual life of the Biripi and Worimi of pre-contact times are known to have survived. This part of their lives – what to them may have been the most important part – remains mostly invisible to us.

Continuity and change

Even after the white invasion, Biripi and Worimi people continued to use many of the same 'sites' (e.g., camps) they had used in pre-invasion days. Some of these places would have been visited regularly for thousands of years. Some places, including the camp at Saltwater (south of Old Bar – see Figure 62) continue to be used to the present day. Many other post-invasion Aboriginal places, however, represented a new way of living or surviving in the landscape. These 'sites', like the camps of Aboriginal people working on white settlers' farms, the fringe camps on the edges of Taree and Wingham, and the reserves at Purfleet and Forster, represent a very different lifestyle from that in pre-contact times. The geographic location

of these sites reflects the exclusion of Aboriginal people from most parts of their former country (now privately held by non-Aboriginal people).

The book's structure

The book is divided into three main parts: Archives, Landscapes, and Lives. Each of them represents a different way of approaching, or researching, the Aboriginal post-contact heritage of the same geographical area.

Part 1: Archives

This first part reviews the documentary evidence available for the history of Aboriginal people in the area from 1818 when the first white explorer, John Oxley, travelled through it. The emphasis is on what the historical records can tell us about where Aboriginal people were in the landscape of the area at different times: where their settlements were, what their settlements were like, and how they managed to move through and find a place for themselves in a landscape – their own traditional country – that increasingly took the form of a grid of white-owned properties. In other words, the focus is on those aspects of history that are of most importance to those engaged in heritage work. Part 1 confines itself to the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The reason for this is that this is the period that is back beyond the range of oral history. Parts 2 and 3 continue the story, picking it up in the twentieth century. While they draw on documentary history sources they mainly tell the story through the memories and the words of Aboriginal people themselves.

Part 2: Landscapes

During the period after the white invasion of the study area in the 1820s, there were four core areas of Aboriginal settlement. Part 2 describes each of these in turn. A key theme is that the Aboriginal presence in these core areas was not confined to the 'sites' of the camps, huts, and houses where they lived. Radiating out from these sites, and integral to them, was a complex web of Aboriginal movement and activity. Using a 'cultural landscape' approach, Part 2 encourages heritage workers to conceptualise Aboriginal post-contact heritage at a landscape scale.

Part 3: Lives

Part 3 is concerned with oral histories and oral history recording. The oral histories of seven Aboriginal people are presented, each of them accompanied by a map showing many of the places and pathways mentioned in their oral history recording sessions. We make the point that since no two lives are the same, everyone will have their own individual map of the landscape. Part 3 shares with the other two parts an over-riding concern with spatiality. While hundreds of Aboriginal oral histories have been recorded in NSW over recent decades very few of these include sufficient spatial detail for them to be directly useable for recording heritage places and landscapes.

Left page Fig. 10: Robert Yettica sketching a plan of the Forster Aboriginal Reserve as it was in the 1950s.

Fig. 11: Russell Saunders being interviewed by Maria Nugent in 2002.

- 1 'Mission' was the term many Aboriginal people in our study area used to refer to the Aboriginal settlements on the former Aboriginal Reserves at Forster and Purfleet. While there had been a Christian missionary presence at the Reserves at various points in their history, neither place had been a religious mission in any institutional sense.
- 2 For an excellent account of the geography of the Manning Valley area see W. K. Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, Jacaranda Press, Sydney, 1987.
- 3 Ella Simon, *Through My Eyes*, Seal Books, Sydney, 1978.
- 4 Patricia Davis-Hurst, *Sunrise Station*, Sunbird Publications, Taree, 1996.

- 5 Denis Byrne, The ethos of return: erasure and reinstatement of Aboriginal visibility in the Australian historical landscape, *Historical Archaeology*, 37, 1, 2003, pp.73-86.
- 6 The term 'heritage landscape' here refers not to the real landscape of the past but to the presentation of that landscape in heritage work and heritage discourse.
- 7 J. Klaver and K. Heffernan, Greater Taree Aboriginal Heritage Study (unpublished report, 1991); Louise Gay, Greater Taree Local Government Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management (unpublished report, 2000).

PART 1 Archives



1 Heritage through documents

In Part 1 we focus on the contribution of documentary history sources, as distinct from oral history sources, to the work of mapping attachment.

What records exist?

Beginning in 1818, when the first white explorers moved through the study area, a documentary record was created. Some written records have survived into the present. They include explorers' accounts, government papers, maps and plans, newspaper articles, and printed reminiscences. In drawing on these records to map an Aboriginal presence in the landscape, we make no claim to have exhausted the archives. There are certain to be written reminiscences of nineteenth-century life in the area which we have not found just as we know there are government records and other archival collections that we have either not examined or have delved into only superficially.

Gaps in the records

At least one commentator on heritage practice in Australia has voiced concerns about the disproportionate attention given to the listing and conservation of nineteenth-century non-Indigenous heritage places compared to those of the twentieth century.¹ In the case of Aboriginal post-contact heritage the problem might be said to be the opposite: very little is known or 'mapped' for the nineteenth century (or the years 1788-1900), attention having focussed mostly on the twentieth century.

A factor contributing to thus unbalanced coverage is the comparative scarcity of historical documentary records bearing upon Aboriginal life in the nineteenth-century landscape. Most government records were about documenting such matters as

agricultural production, the buying and selling of land, and the exploitation of timber resources. The position of Aboriginal people in the local colonial economy was a marginal one: they worked as farm labourers and timber cutters but were not land owners or timber exporters. Consequently, they have little or no visibility in these records.

Written reminiscences of people who lived through the nineteenth century are a significant historical source. While there are several of these for our area, they are all by settlers and not Aboriginal people.² The reasons Aboriginal life stories were not written down in the nineteenth century include Aboriginal people's lack of access to schooling, and thus literacy, until the 1880s, and the cultural factors inclining them to tell their life stories orally rather than in written English. While a few of the nineteenth-century settler reminiscences do dwell in some detail on the lifestyle of local Aboriginal people, others are silent about them. This silence becomes the norm for local histories in the twentieth century.³ While lack of access to the major archival sources pertaining to Aboriginal people, such as the records of the NSW Aborigines' Protection Board (which only begin in the late nineteenth century), might have contributed to this, it is also certainly the case that Aboriginal people were not seen as having great relevance to local histories, histories which essentially are narratives about the 'progress' of white occupation of the area.⁴

Partial and fragmentary accounts

The result is that the written records pertaining to Aboriginal people in the Forster-Taree area in the nineteenth century are extremely partial and fragmentary. There is little exaggeration in saying that Aboriginal people are virtually invisible in the local post-contact landscape as described in archival records, in settler reminiscences, and in local histories. An illusion is created that they had vacated this landscape, leaving it as an open field for intensifying white occupation. This is an illusion that heritage practitioners should be careful not to perpetuate.

Left page Fig. 13: Extract from papers re Aboriginal Reserves in the vicinity of Taree, 1912, NSW State Records, 3/2422.2.

Heritage practitioners, confronted by the silence about nineteenth-century Aboriginal lives in published local histories, may assume there is no available historical documentation about Aboriginal people, or perhaps more seriously, that Aboriginal people were not present in the nineteenth-century local landscape. It is not difficult to see how this then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. It can lead to the following circularity. By not examining the documentation that does in fact exist for this nineteenth-century Aboriginal presence, an archaeologist would not be alerted to the locations where Aboriginal people are known to have been present (i.e., fringe camps, farm camps). In the absence of this knowledge, the chances of such places being recorded on the ground as heritage places would be slight. So the danger is that heritage practitioners may not merely fall under the illusion of an Aboriginal historical absence in the landscape but actually assist in perpetuating that illusion.

People and place

Our focus in the following pages is on the information that historical documents can give us on heritage places and the context of these places in Aboriginal post-contact life. For our study area there are references to Aboriginal post-contact camps, ceremonial sites, burials, and work places, but the references tend not to contain precise locational details (for advice on locating Aboriginal heritage sites from documentary information see pp. 55-60). They can still be extremely valuable, however, especially for the period of the nineteenth century. This is beyond the range of Aboriginal oral history and it is often the case that these references – fragmentary and vague as they mostly are – provide our best chance of knowing where Aboriginal people were in the landscape.

It must be stressed that Part 1 is not a history of Aboriginal life, or of race relations, in the study area in the nineteenth century.⁵ Instead, using the Manning Valley and Forster area as a case study, it attempts to show the way that documentary history can be used as an aid in recording Aboriginal post-contact heritage places and landscapes. We are thus concerned with the spatiality of history or, one might say, with the potential for historical documents to provide spatial evidence.

Waves of change

There is sometimes a tendency on the part of heritage practitioners to treat the post-contact period as almost a single moment in time. Heritage places are often simply categorised as ‘post-contact’ without any effort to place them even approximately within the specific context of the time to which they belong. In the following pages we try to point out some of the major phases in the Aboriginal post-1818 history of our study area. Aboriginal life there underwent a period of radical change after 1826. In the Manning Valley the impact of this change accelerated through the 1830s, 50s and 60s until almost every aspect of Biripi culture had been altered, in many cases quite dramatically. Change was slower in the Forster area but in both places by about the 1880s Aboriginal people had lost access to many of the more productive parts of their environment and had become dependent on the settler economy. It is important to remember, though, that major waves of change continued to wash through the area after the 1880s and into recent times. These included the institutionalisation of segregation which began in the 1880s with the establishment of the major Reserves at Forster and Purfleet, the economic changes of the 1930s and the Second World War years, the changes that came with the assimilation policy in the 1960s, and the era of self-determination beginning in the 1970s.

A note about interpreting the records

The non-Indigenous early writers (whether of histories, records, or documents) had a vested interest in creating an impression of contrast between themselves as advanced and the Aboriginals as primitive or degenerate – this helped give a semblance of legitimacy to the seizure of Aboriginal land and to violence against Aboriginal persons. The written record is further distorted by the gaps and silences in it.

The main point to bear in mind is that the observers and writers were understanding Aboriginal life in terms of their own culture, filtering what they saw through the concepts and theories available in Western culture at the time for thinking about the people of the ‘other’ world (the non-West). However, it was not simply a matter of a cultural filter. In terms of nineteenth-century cultural-evolutionist thought, Northern European society was believed to stand at the top of a evolutionary ladder on the lower rungs of which were societies believed to be less developed culturally, intellectually, and even physiologically. Aboriginal people were seen as occupying the most

'primitive', least evolved end of this spectrum.⁶

The early writers of histories and other accounts were deeply disinclined to see Aboriginal people as capable of innovation or creative adaptation.⁷ Many of them took an interest in 'traditional' Aboriginal ceremonies and artefacts but saw the changing Aboriginal lifestyle as simply a degenerate culture which was neither truly Aboriginal nor truly white. They were typically uninterested in describing the way Aboriginal people were modifying elements of European material culture (e.g. bottle glass, sheets of iron, nails, wire) to make new and original hunting and fishing implements, or new forms of shelter.

There are plenty of descriptions of Aboriginal drunkenness and 'rude' behaviour but few if any references to the rape of Aboriginal women, forced or coercive sexual liaisons, or indeed to the murder of Aboriginal people during the frontier phase of the invasion. Similarly, our study area is typical of other areas in that, though there are several references to killings and massacres of Aboriginal people, they are hedged by vagueness to the point that it is impossible to identify the sites of these events or to locate of the graves or remains of those murdered. A further examination of these issues is provided in Chapter 2.

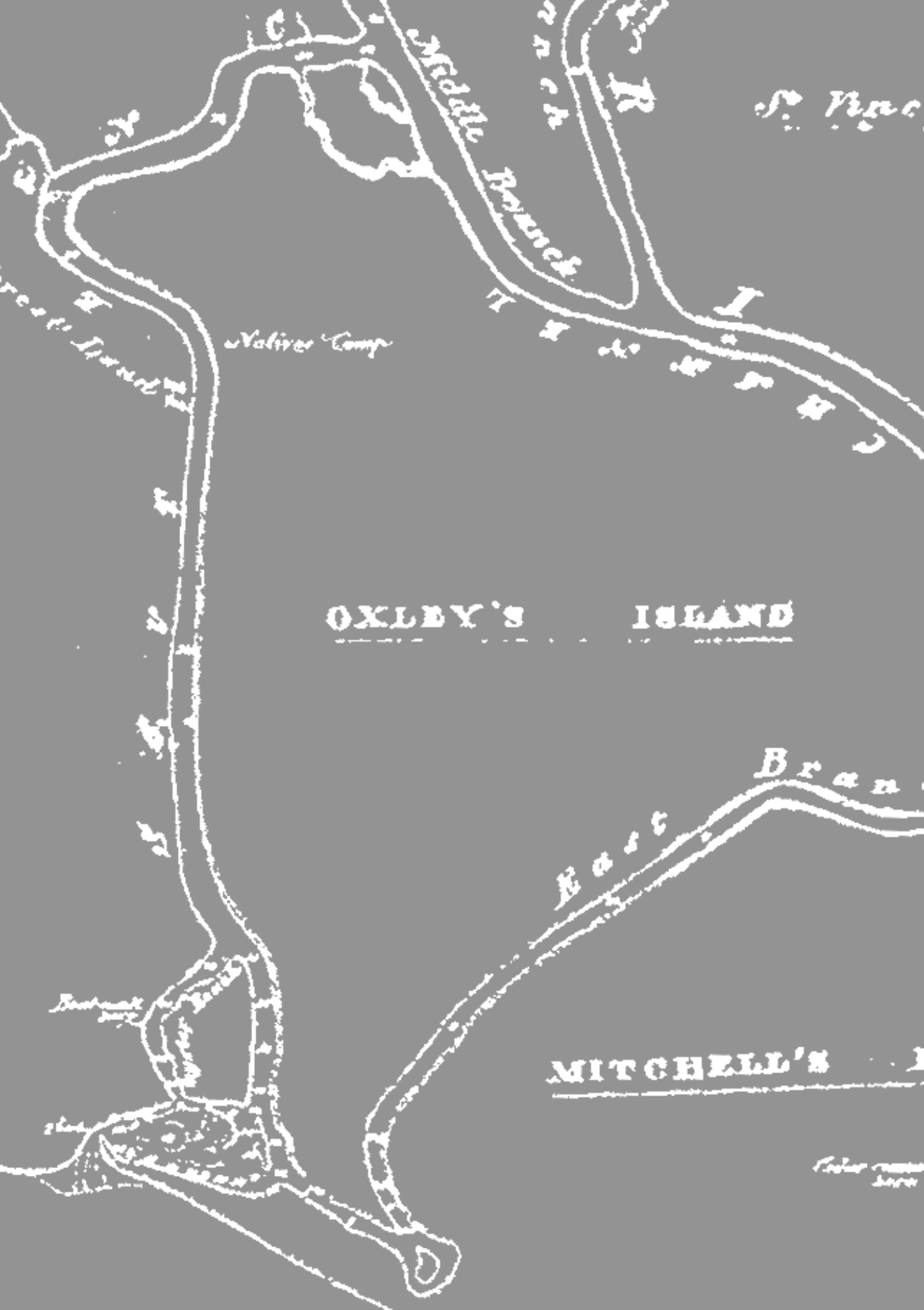
The scope of Part 1

Part 1 is for the most part confined in its coverage to the nineteenth century. It also mostly confines itself to the Aboriginal side of post-contact life and heritage in the study area. We recognise that Aboriginal lives were in many ways entangled with the lives of white people. We also realise that Aboriginal people were associated with many of the places in the area which are now thought of as 'white' or non-Indigenous heritage places. We only concern ourselves with these places, however, when we find explicit historic evidence for such associations (as, for instance, in the case of certain schools, hospitals, and shops).

As noted earlier, we have not attempted an exhaustive coverage of documentary records.

The aim of this book is to show the potential that history has to be a resource for heritage rather than to produce a comprehensive history as such.

The focus in the following pages is on the northern end of our study area. The fact that white invasion of the Manning Valley was earlier and on a much larger scale than it was in the Forster-Wallis Lake area means there is a much greater body of historical information for the former, more northern area. This has meant we are able to say much less about the Aboriginal nineteenth-century presence in the Forster-Wallis Lake area.



S. River

Middle Branch

Native Camp

OXLEY'S ISLAND

East Branch

MITCHELL'S ISLAND

Water course shown

2 Voyagers & visitors 1770-1830

This chapter presents what we know of the first white presence in the study area for the period up to 1830 and what implications this had for the area's Aboriginal population.

The Biripi and the Worimi

The Aboriginal people whose country the first Europeans entered were the Biripi, in the north of the study area, and the Worimi, in the south.⁸ There is some variation of opinion among Aboriginal people and others as to exactly where the boundary between the two tribal groups lay. But as noted by Gay, 'today, there is general consensus in the local Aboriginal communities of Purfleet, Taree and Forster that both Worimi and Biripi descendants have attachment to the land along the coast between Cape Hawke and Wallaby Point (Saltwater Reserve)'.⁹

Visitors

Though Captain James Cook never landed on this part of the coast in 1770 his voyage along the coast of the study area can be thought of as a visitation. It was a visitation both in the sense that he and his officers made detailed observations of the coastal part of the country (and saw smoke from Aboriginal fires) and in the sense that some Biripi and Worimi almost certainly observed the *Endeavour* as it sailed past.

The first visit to the actual surface of the country itself was by the surveyor-explorer John Oxley and his party as they moved south along the coast in October 1818. In some ways they were as distant from the country's Indigenous occupants as Cook had been. They did not speak to the Aboriginal owners of the country. They did, however, see two sets of footprints along the bank of the Manning River and when they reached Wallis Lake one of their party, in the act of cutting down a cabbage tree palm, was speared by an unseen assailant.



The same evening, on the Forster side of the Lake's entrance, they observed from a distance Aboriginal people around several camp fires.¹⁰ The distance Aboriginal people kept from the explorers meant the explorers learnt almost nothing about them.

Mapping productivity

The British government granted a huge block of land (1,000,000 acres) to the Australian Agricultural Company (AA Co) in 1824. The grant extended from Port Stephens northward to the south bank of the Manning River (see Figure 18) and was primarily intended for the grazing of sheep, despite Oxley's caution that the humid climate there might be unsuitable for that purpose. The first of the Company's surveyors to explore the northern reaches of the AA Co grant was Henry Dangar who passed along part of the upper Manning River in 1825.¹¹ He returned in 1826 and traced the course of the river to the sea. But it was not until the following years that the river was actually mapped. Dangar, along with the surveyor John Armstrong and others made a more comprehensive assessment of the AA Co grant in 1826. Their observations on the potential of the

Left page Fig. 14: Detail of John Armstrong's 1827 map of Oxley Island (reproduced by courtesy of the State Library of NSW)

This page Fig. 15: Early European visits to the study area

land for farming were included in Armstrong's 1829 map (the map classified land into three types depending on its assumed potential to carry sheep).¹² Similar assessments of agricultural productivity were carried out by surveyors and explorers across NSW, a mapping project that had immense importance for the reshaping of the cultural landscapes of the colony.

The Biripi and Worimi had already (for thousands of years) mapped the country's productivity in terms of their own hunter-gatherer economy. They 'mapped' it in the sense of accumulating detailed knowledge of the spatial distribution of wild food resources. To some extent these two maps – the hunter-gatherer and the agricultural – coincided. The alluvial land along the Manning River, for instance, was fertile agricultural land as well as being highly productive in the Aboriginal economy because of the game and plant foods it supported.

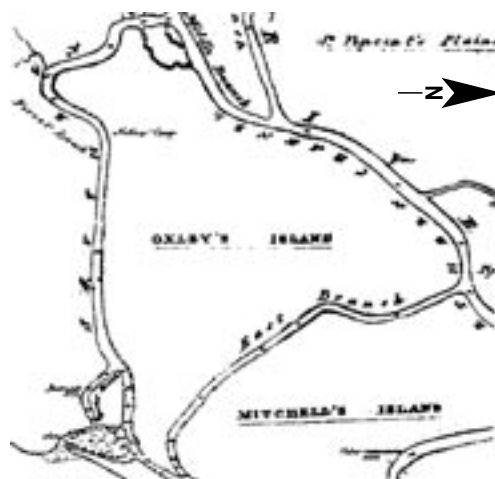
Foreshadowings

But elsewhere the maps diverged. A number of categories of land that had little value to white settlers were highly productive in the Aboriginal economy. These included the mountain forests, the sandy and rocky shores, the estuarine areas, the swamps and the coastal lakes. They were rich in fish, shellfish, water birds, reptiles, and amphibians as well as offering many types of plant food. Most of these areas remained accessible to the post-invasion Aboriginal population and they no doubt were critical to the latter's survival in the middle and late nineteenth century. Many of them remained accessible through the twentieth century, during the first half of which they provided an essential supplement to government rations and the mission diet.

We return now to the white explorers and their assessment of the productivity of the land for agriculture. There is no question that these assessments foreshadowed the map of white occupation – they identified the areas where farms would be located and where the villages and towns would spring up. But they also, of course, foreshadowed the map of the protected area system that would come into being in the latter part of the twentieth century. They did this by 'mapping' those parts of the landscape that would be marginal to agriculture and urban development. And here there are two factors that are often overlooked. The first is that the protected area system (i.e. national parks and other conservation reserves) would include many of the environments of highest productivity

in the 'traditional' Aboriginal economy. The second is that these same environments continued to be critical to Aboriginal people during the post-contact period and into the present day. In the present day, these places are valued by Aboriginal people not only for the wild foods they continue to supply but because they represent most of the only remaining parts of their country that are in an uncleared and, in a sense, 'uncolonised' condition.¹³

The maps produced by surveyors like John Armstrong are thus highly significant heritage items in terms of both Aboriginal and settler history. They are a perfect example of those heritage objects and places whose Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal significance is inseparable. They represent a shared heritage.



A Biripi camp

A more detailed, localised mapping exercise occurred in the study area in 1827 when John Armstrong produced a map of the estuary of the Manning by 'boat survey' for the AA Company. The survey was carried out in a small boat which moved along the various arms of the river, charting the edges of the islands and the river banks. The words 'native camp' are inscribed on the map on the southern edge of Oxley Island (see Figures 14 & 16). The fact that this is the only such camp mentioned on Armstrong's map might indicate that only one major camp was occupied in this area at one time. No description of this camp has survived in the records. The area is now covered by thickly grassed farmland – no traces of the camp were visible there in 2002.

This page Fig. 16: John Armstrong's 1827 map of Oxley Island on the lower Manning River, showing location of the 'native camp' (reproduced by courtesy of the State Library of NSW)

Right page Fig. 17: Oxley Island showing present-day cadastral grid. Inset shows the vicinity of the 'native camp' recorded by John Armstrong in 1827.

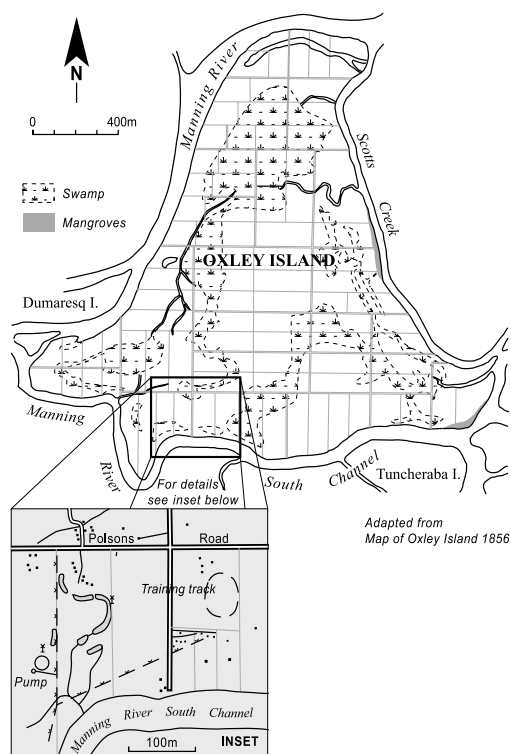
Early exchanges

These early visitors brought with them new technologies which Aboriginal people appear to have readily borrowed. One of the first European objects acquired were steel fish hooks which appear to have been adopted 'wholesale' by Aboriginal people in our area immediately they became available.¹⁴ The Aboriginal preference for steel fish hooks as objects of presentation and exchange is evidenced in the (apparently) large numbers of them distributed by John Armstrong during his survey of the lower Manning in 1827. His diary records a visit to his camp by a group of Aboriginals he had previously given tobacco and fish hooks to: 'this renewal of acquaintance cost me some more hooks etc.'¹⁵ This illustrates what should be obvious: cross-cultural borrowing was commonplace, but it was always selective and culturally mediated.

The first planting

Accompanying the AA Company's survey party was John Guilding, a 29-year-old free English immigrant who, when the party discovered two grassy plains on either side of what is now Dickenson's Creek, decided to return there to settle. These plains, of 4,000 and 5,000 acres apiece, more or less surrounded by gallery rainforest growing on the levees of the river and creeks, were very likely a product of regular burning by the Biripi. Before he left, and presumably unbeknown to the Biripi, Guilding named this place Jamaica Plains in memory of the West Indies where he had previously settled (Figure 15). He also, on the 28th of October, 'planted many sugar canes, put in several holes of maize and sowed a few garden seeds and tobacco seeds' on this grassy plain.¹⁶ This was the first planting of exotic species in the country of the Biripi. We do not know whether these few plants survived and grew but it seems quite likely the Biripi would have discovered and examined them. Despite the fact that the exact spot of the first planting cannot be identified, the symbolic importance of the event makes the location of Jamaica Plains a significant place in the shared heritage of the Manning Valley.

Jamaica Plains no longer exists as a place name. It was located in the vicinity of the present-day settlement of Ghinni Ghinni. This first planting had implications which would change the map of Biripi country: the cultivation and harvesting of crops on any one piece of Biripi land would produce a quantity of food greatly exceeding the wild food products the Biripi were themselves able to draw from the same land. Whether it would be able to



Adapted from:
1:25 000 NSW topographic map series, sheet
9434-3-S, Cundletown.

do so sustainably, though, is another question – a question that farmers across NSW would be pondering into the early twenty-first century as they witnessed the impact of salination and soil erosion in the farming landscape.

The immediate effect of the introduction of agriculture, however, was a greatly increased population in the study area. The geographer, W. K. Birrell, suggests the pre-contact population of Aboriginal people in the Manning Valley was in the range of 800 to 1,000 people, a figure that was surpassed by the white population of the valley within about fifteen years of 1827.¹⁷

The first trickle of white settlers

John Guilding was permitted to select 2,560 acres on Dickenson's Creek. When reports of his discovery of good farmland on the lower Manning began circulating in Sydney a small number of other pioneer farmers, in the years 1827-30, followed him there.¹⁸ The census of 1828 records Guilding as having cleared 500 acres, cultivated forty acres, and

as grazing 400 cattle on his land.¹⁹ Figure 18 shows the location of the first farms in the valley.

By-passing the Forster area

On October 29, 1818, John Oxley was in the vicinity of Wallis Lake. In his account of his explorations he recorded the following:

*The natives are extremely numerous along this part of the coast; these extensive lakes, which abound with fish, being extremely favourable to their easy subsistence; large troops of them appear on the beaches, whilst their canoes on the lakes are equally numerous. In the morning their fires are to be observed in every direction; they evidently appear to shun us and we have no wish for a further acquaintance.*²⁰

There would, in fact, be little acquaintance between the Worimi and Europeans in the area of Forster and Wallis Lake until about the 1850s.

The pre-conditions for an agricultural economy in this part of the colony were the presence of rivers with arable land along them and coastal access for shipping out export produce. These were a focus of Oxley's explorations and their absence in the Forster-Wallis Lake area explains why it was initially by-passed by the white invasion. It was an area that remained one of the backwaters of white settlement on the North Coast until the mid-twentieth century. With its mostly sandy soils but good stands of timber, the area did, however, attract early logging and ship building activity.

3 Resistance, accommodation & frontier violence 1830-1850

The period up to about 1850 represents the frontier phase of white occupation. It was a period when although the impact of white settlement on Aboriginal life was great the impact on the physical landscape of the study area remained relatively minor.

In this section we look at the patterns of settler occupation in the study area and the effect this had on Aboriginal use of the landscape. In particular, we examine Aboriginal responses to these incursions. While white incursion and occupation intensified and expanded through the thirty years after 1830, it did not cause total disruption of the Aboriginal lifestyle. It can be described as a time of 'dual occupation'. The historian, Heather Goodall, elaborates the 'dual occupation' concept in her book, *Invasion to Embassy*, a key text for any study of Aboriginal post-contact heritage in NSW.²¹

As elsewhere in NSW, race relations on the lower North Coast frontier spanned the spectrum from friendliness and cooperation to open violence. Aboriginal people's responses ranged from resistance and violence, to curiosity, accommodation and active participation in the settler economy.

First settlers

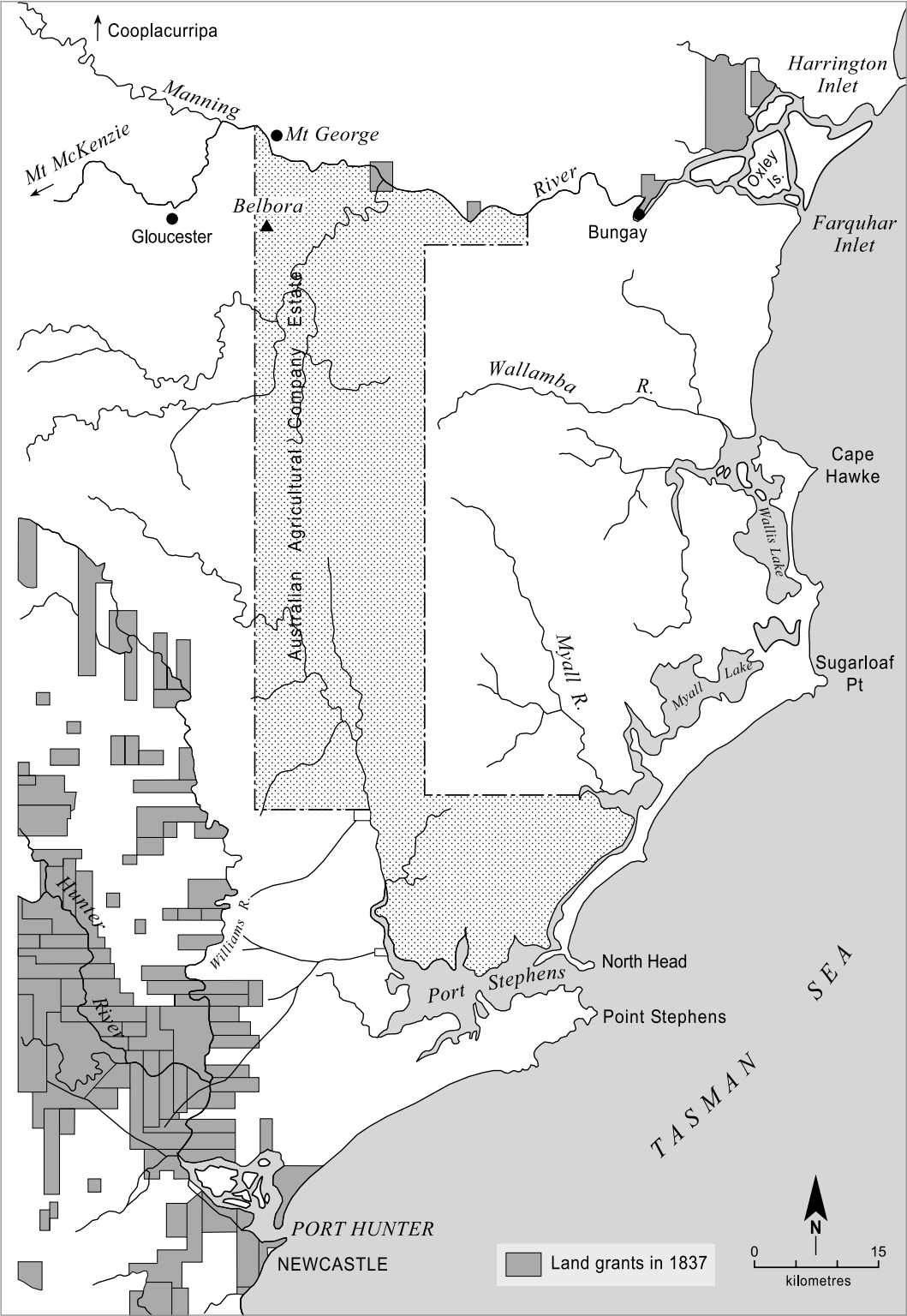
In the late 1820s four white migrants acquired land on the lower Manning River and were growing crops and grazing cattle there. The grants totalled some 22,040 acres but only a small fraction of this would have been cleared and, in fact, only one of the settlers remained in residence by 1830.²² The selected land mainly comprised alluvial flatlands on the north side of the Manning. On the ground, this represented only a very small amount of activity, with only a minor impact on the natural environment and presumably a relatively minor impact on the lives of the Biripi.

Cedar getting

The major European presence in the area at this time took the form not of farming but of cedar getting. The cedar-getters arrived on the Manning in 1833 and within 'a short time cedar getters' camps were located along both sides of the Manning upstream from the entrance for some thirty-two to forty-eight kilometres'.²³ The great cedar trees (*Toona australis*) which were avidly sought by the early building and furniture industries in Sydney grew on the deep alluvial soils bordering rivers like the Manning. The cedar-getters cut the trees and used bullocks to haul them out of the forest to the river or to the edges of streams where, when the floods came, the logs would wash down to the river. But, even minus the cedar, the forests still covered the alluvium as much as two or three kilometres back from the river.

The cedar-getters were themselves something of a 'nomadic tribe'. Most of those on the Manning were freed convicts and were treated as being of a class well below that of the farmers. They lived in camps 'of about eight or ten huts or tents' in small forest clearings, surviving partly on fish, kangaroo, and birds'.²⁴ It is possible the Biripi did not regard this 'tribe' of people as being all that different from themselves.

In the Manning in the 1830s the cedar-getters 'cut their way steadily along the banks of the main waterways and larger tributaries, shifting their camps when it became necessary'.²⁵ There is no question that the rainforests of the Manning remained a major potential source of wild foods for Aboriginal people during the twenty or so years the cedar-getters operated on the Manning and after they had moved on to the Macleay and the rivers further north.²⁶ We know that some Biripi people worked with the white cedar-getters in exchange for tea, flour, rum and tobacco. The cedar-getters 'frequently had to depend upon aborigines to lead them to these trees'.²⁷ The latter was especially true of cedar stands in the more inaccessible locations.



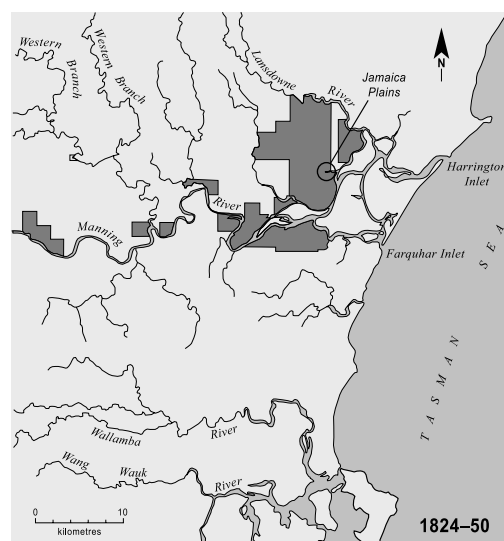
The documentary evidence for Biripi engagement with the cedar-getters is, however, scant and to date there is no archaeological evidence relating to it. It is an aspect of Aboriginal-white heritage which has virtually no visibility either on the Manning or the other rivers where the cedar-getters operated on the NSW North Coast. This is unfortunate because it represents a phase in the history of race relations where there seems to have been a significant degree of cultural borrowing on both sides, a phase in which the intruders were not there to appropriate Aboriginal land. It was a phase in which Aboriginal people seem to have been prepared to allow white access to at least some of the resources of their country and were able to do so without their whole existence being placed under threat.

White migrant farmers

In 1830 the 'limits of location' set by the colonial government were extended to the north of the Hastings River. From this time, white migrant settlers could legally buy or lease land throughout the area covered by our study.²⁸ The first sales of land in the Manning Valley were made in 1837.²⁹ The farmers arrived either overland via Gloucester with bullock teams or by a boat trip of some thirty-six hours from Sydney. The pattern at this time was for a settler to take out a lease for grazing stock and to purchase, separately, a small farm for agriculture. The leased land was left mainly uncleared and the stock was grazed on grass clearings in the forests. By 1841 some 300 white people were resident in the Manning (237 men, 63 women) and twenty-three houses were in existence.³⁰

The Australian Agricultural Co in 1830 surrendered most of the coastal part of its land holding, including most of the south side of the Manning River, acknowledging that the country was too humid and thickly vegetated to be useful for grazing sheep. Further inland in NSW, where open woodland country required no clearing, pastoralism spread extremely rapidly across millions of hectares. Near the coast the 'progress' of pastoralism was slow, though it remained the mainstay of farming on the Manning till the 1850s when, with the arrival of the first real wave of farmers, it was overtaken by agriculture.

Although in the first couple of decades after 1830 great stretches of land along the river were surveyed and appropriated by settlers, the only manifestations of this on the ground were the appearance of a few dozen clearings in the forests along the river where the first huts were sited. Additional huts appeared



on the pre-existing bladey grass clearings that some settlers had acquired.³¹ On paper the surveyors had begun to produce plans showing the distribution of the settlers' selections along the river, but on the ground the property boundaries were marked mainly by pegs and marks on trees – wooden fences were few and far between.

The clearings steadily grew but for a considerable time a large proportion of the rainforest with its rich plant and animal food resources would have remained available to the Biripi and indeed to white migrants emulating Biripi bush skills. The settlers might well have appeared to be more like a throng of swidden agriculturists who had strayed into the valley than the advance guard of an agricultural industry destined to remake the valley as lush and productive farmland.

We should avoid polarizing white migrant settlers and the Biripi in a way that presents the former as purely settled agriculturalists and the latter as constantly mobile hunter-gathers. Again, as in the case of cedar-getting, it is unfortunate that this historical situation has so little visibility as heritage, given that it represents a period of much greater racial 'equality' than existed later on.

Bungay and Chatham

In the 1840s Bungay Bungay (later known simply as Bungay) was the first village-like settlement on the Manning (see Figure 18). It was located

Left page Fig. 18: Total land grants made to 1837 (after Birrell 1987)

This page Fig. 19: Appropriation of land by settlers in the period to 1850 (after Birrell 1987)

adjacent to the river, south of the present town of Wingham. As well as the few buildings associated with the 'Bungay' farm, the settlement contained a constable's hut which served as a 'courthouse' for the Port Macquarie police magistrate.³²

The site of the new village of Wingham had been surveyed in 1843, but in 1850 Chatham (near present-day Taree) was still the only village on the Manning 'to have at least both a general store and an inn'.³³ In this period almost the whole of the modest white population of the Valley was located on the small farms being cleared at intervals along the river.

Communications

With the arrival of the cedar-getters, trading vessels began to visit the Manning regularly. In 1827 the first seeds of maize had been planted in Biripi country. In the 1830s and 40s not only were exotic plants such as maize and wheat successfully grown to support the white settlers but surplus was available for export by sea to Sydney. The river was the key to communication between settlers in the Valley who were 'Separated from each other by dense forests and isolated by an almost complete lack of effective land communication'.³⁴

Massacres

Though not officially documented, there are persistent references in local history sources for the Manning Valley to at least two massacres of Biripi by settlers in the 1830s. One of these occurred in 1835 at Belbora, on the Australian Agricultural Company land grant on the upper Wallamba (Figure 18). Damper, laced with dingo poison, was given to a group of Aboriginal people by stockmen said to have been besieged in a hut.³⁵ One account mentions 'several' deaths occurring as a result, another has it that 'In every creek and in every gully lay dead blacks', with the death toll amounting to 'hundreds'.³⁶

Geoffrey Blomfield, citing a 1964 source and 'oral tradition', describes how in 1835 a large group of Aboriginal people were driven to their deaths off a cliff at Mt McKenzie in present day Barrington Tops National Park near the headwaters of the Gloucester River (Figure 18).³⁷ This massacre is reputed to have followed the spearing of five shepherds, after which a mounted posse of settlers pursued a band of Aboriginal people into the mountains.³⁸

Perhaps the killing that is best documented is that of an Aboriginal man who Europeans called 'Mickey Ugly' (frequently the names white people gave to Aboriginal people were belittling or derogatory).

He was murdered in the bush at Mt George (Figure 18) on the middle Manning River by the migrant settler, John Chapman, and three of his men on the first day of January 1843.³⁹ Despite eye-witness evidence of the murder and an investigation by a local magistrate that resulted in the four men being arrested and committed to trial, the four were later discharged without trial by the colonial government.

There are several other extremely sketchy references to white settlers killing Aboriginal people. F.W. Connors, for instance, refers in his reminiscences to an incident at Kundle Kundle, six kilometres northeast of Taree: 'In 1838 one of these family groups was massacred close to the south eastern corner of Brimbin'.⁴⁰ This single sentence is the only reference to this incident known to us in the literature. The paucity of information on massacres and the difficulty of locating the sites where they occurred will be discussed later (see Chapter 7).

We have no documentary information relating to possible European violence against the Worimi people in the Wallis Lake section of the study area. This may reflect the fact that settler incursions into this area were much less than in the Manning Valley, with a correspondingly lower potential for conflict. On the other hand, the sparsity of white intruders there may mean that violence simply went unreported.

Armed resistance and harassment

An incident in the late 1840s, reported in the *Maitland Mercury*, provides a unique insight, for our area, into the extent to which Aboriginal people resisted settler encroachment. Three brothers of one settler family, the Fenwicks, were running cattle on a property on the banks of the upper Manning. The report states that a group of Biripi twice attacked their cattle, on the second occasion leaving 'cattle laying dead on all parts of the run, and others running about much cut and wounded. Losing heart at last, the Messrs. Fenwick abandoned the station, taking with them what cattle they could collect'.⁴¹

The article continues:

Prior to this, about 30 blacks had encamped at the station of William Johnston, esq., having with them 20 stands of arms, and five canisters of ammunition; they did not show any hostile intentions, but seemed rather prepared for the mounted police. They, however, visited another station, where they knocked down a hut, killed some pigs, and cut up a great many hurdles [section of a type of fence], taking away every nail

Right page Fig. 20: Diagram showing the pattern of white settlement in the 1830s, prior to large scale land clearance

that was in them, which they cut into shot with their tomahawks.

The exact location of the Fenwick property is not provided in this account.

Other references support the impression that at least some of the Biripi carried guns in the mid-nineteenth century. An 1849 account describes a group of Biripi men threatening to shoot a white settler who had 'come upon them' after they had killed one of his cattle. The writer continues: 'The system of giving fire-arms to the blacks is greatly to be deprecated; scarcely a black is to be met in the bush who is not provided with a musket and plenty of ammunition'.⁴² A year earlier, a correspondent reported on an enquiry into the killing of an old Biripi man by the police on the Manning River. Two settlers, giving evidence against the police, noted that the old man was 'perfectly helpless and imbecile'; that he posed no threat to anyone: 'neither of them had seen him carrying a gun for some time'.⁴³

A reminiscence by Robert Hewkes, who came to the Manning aged fourteen in 1842, is suggestive of a 'balance of power' that oscillated situationally. He was returning from Bungay (on the Manning near Wingham) to Dingo Creek when, as he states:

*[I] came suddenly upon two blacks roasting a calf. I pulled up my horse some little distance from them, and as soon as their attention was attracted to me they gave me orders, in their own way, to clear out. I hesitated for a while – but not for long. One of the blacks poised a spear and sent it whizzing through the air towards me. It went too high. I made myself scarce, however.*⁴⁴

This account suggests that Aboriginal people in the Manning Valley in the 1840s (and perhaps later), even if not in a position to drive the newcomers out of their country, were by no means passive in the face of this presence.

Introduced diseases

So far, no documentary records have been found for the study area giving evidence of epidemic diseases which are known to have swept through the Aboriginal population of NSW, beginning in the Port Jackson area in 1789. It is likely, though, that introduced diseases such as smallpox reached the lower NSW North Coast in advance of the arrival of the first settlers there. Even if the resulting death toll was lower there than in the Sydney area, it would still imply that the Aboriginal population of our study area in the 1820s and 1830s would have been reduced from what it had been forty or fifty years earlier.

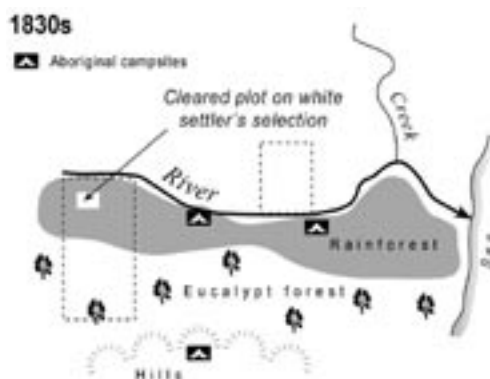
Accommodating the new arrivals

While some Biripi resisted the incursions of whites through armed resistance, we also know, from reminiscences written by early white migrants, that some of them were assisting new settlers to open up clearings in the rainforest and the bush for the cultivation of crops. William Wynter, for instance, employed Biripi people on the 'Tarree' estate, in the area of present-day Taree, in the 1830s.⁴⁵ It is reasonable to think that, as elsewhere in the early colony, some of these people would have camped on the white farms they worked on. At this stage they still had access to most of their country and its resources and however much they were interested in white foodstuffs and products they were not yet dependent upon them.

If Aboriginal people entered the company of white farmers as labourers, some individuals among the settler population entered Aboriginal company for adventure and friendship. There is the case of William Wynter who was seven years old when his family came to settle on the Manning: 'The natives took the boy with them on their hunting expeditions along the valley'.⁴⁶ Wynter is said to have learnt their language and maintained a lifelong association with the Biripi.

Perhaps the most decisive change would have been a break in the previous Aboriginal pattern of movement. By no means would this pattern have been shattered. But equally, the time spent working for settlers would have cut across the seasonal round of hunting and food gathering and would have cut into their ritual and ceremonial life.

The position of the Biripi



The diagram shown here (Figure 20) depicts the position of Aboriginal people in relation to the early white settlers. In this model, Aboriginal people still had the freedom of movement that allowed them

to access much of the river frontage as well as the higher country behind it. There was contact between them and the white farmers who were opening up agricultural clearings in the riverside gallery rainforest (dark shading in the diagram). In the following chapter a comparative diagram depicts the situation thirty years later, in the 1860s (Figure 25).

White enemies and allies

In May 1848 a police magistrate held an inquiry at Bungay Bungay into the killing of an eighty-year-old Biripi man during a police raid on an Aboriginal camp (probably somewhere near the south bank of the Manning). According to a newspaper report, during the raid 'a little girl was also wounded by a shot, and...the police amused themselves by destroying the camp, burning the clothes left behind, and killing the puppies'.⁴⁷ The inquiry was instigated by a complaint by William Wynter who, along with George Tilney, gave evidence at the inquiry that the dead man (Tombai) had been 'well known to them' and that he was 'perfectly helpless and imbecile'.⁴⁸ After the raid, Tilney had discovered Tombai lying wounded in the bush near the camp and had tried to aid him.

This incident illustrates the way in which white people, in their relations with the Biripi, ranged from those who were extremely hostile to those who were 'neutral' and those who were actively friendly and could be treated as allies in times of need. Since most white people were owners or occupiers of farms, this spectrum of 'attitudes' could be mapped as a mosaic that was likely to affect the way Aboriginal people moved through the landscape. It is likely that they maintained an extensive knowledge of the disposition of white people, in terms of both location and temperament, and that this knowledge became one of the necessary skills for survival.⁴⁹

The concept of land ownership

At this early stage, however, the Aboriginal people of the Manning may not have seen white settlers as a threat to their own lifestyle and culture. They are likely to have still outnumbered the settlers and in the early stage of white occupation the Biripi may have thought of the white presence as a passing thing and not a threat to their whole lifestyle.

In these first years of settlement, even when they were camping on white farms, we should not assume they understood or conceded that these areas were 'owned' by the settlers, the European legal construct of exclusive ownership or 'title' not being one they shared. Aboriginal people never relinquished any of this land, in any legal sense at all, and they were never paid for any of it when it was taken from them.

The cadastral survey grid of property boundaries was a template for the settlers' progressive appropriation of Aboriginal country (see the following chapter for a more detailed account of the cadastral grid). The mapping of the grid by surveyors happened in advance of the land being sold, taken up, and cleared. In this sense it represented the 'writing on the wall' for the total loss of Aboriginal country. The writing, in fact, was on the face of the country, taking the form of survey lines, survey pegs and surveyor's marks on trees. But the whole idea of individual private ownership of land may have seemed so preposterous to Aboriginal people that the reality of their own dispossession may have taken some time to grasp. It is uncertain whether any of them were even shown the cadastral survey maps in these early years.

Cross-cultural exchanges

Aboriginal people gave their assistance to settlers in exchange for tobacco, tea, rum, steel hatchets, fish hooks and other goods they judged to be desirable. They gave advice on the uses and whereabouts of indigenous plants and animals, perhaps out of friendliness or in the context of cross-cultural 'gifting'.⁵⁰ As noted above, these early settlers had a very tenuous hold on an environment that was strange and sometimes hostile. It was a time of discovery and rapid learning on both sides: the Biripi were picking up the English language and experimenting with new products; the settlers were learning a legion of things about the new environment and at least some of them were learning about the culture of the Biripi.⁵¹ None of this is to suggest that these exchanges always or normally occurred in an environment of mutual courtesy and friendliness. It is instructive to bear in mind that they occurred through the same period as the frontier violence (described above). Yet it is important to acknowledge that such exchanges did take place.⁵²

Similarities	Differences
cedar-getters' mobility – shifting camps	settler agriculture demanded settled rather than mobile existence
cedar-getters and settlers living partly off wild foods	settler system of individual, 'private' land ownership
both whites and Biripi travel up and down the river by boat/canoe	settlers use the river also to export produce to Sydney
White migrant settlement is concentrated on agricultural land where the Biripi also begin to concentrate	Aboriginal settlement comes to be focussed on agricultural land but coastal and mountainous areas still used for hunting and gathering

An aspect of cross-cultural exchange or learning often overlooked is the extent to which many white homesteads, villages and other key sites were superimposed on old Aboriginal camp sites. To some extent this came about because both populations were responding to the same environmental constraints and opportunities (i.e., the presence of well-drained land and proximity to water). It would be naïve, though, to think it did not also reflect the close attention paid by settlers to Aboriginal environmental knowledge in the 'frontier' phase of white settlement.

The position in the Wallis Lake area

In this period white settlement of the Forster-Wallis Lake area had not yet begun. The Aboriginal people there may have had dealings with escaped convicts and certainly with boats touching on their shores but their country was not considered to have potential for either pastoralism or cropping. By 1850 only

seven pastoral leases existed on the Wallamba and Wang Wauk rivers (both of which fed into Wallis Lake). No farms had been purchased in the area by this time.

White coastal settlement in NSW in the nineteenth century was almost completely focussed on rivers. Until the construction of the railway network, coastal shipping remained fundamental to the movement of goods and was essential to the coastal economy. The Forster-Wallis Lake area remained one of those 'gaps' between the major rivers and ports where white people were thin on the ground.

Summary

In this chapter we have been concerned with the Aboriginal cultural landscape in the period 1830-1850. To reiterate a point made earlier, heritage practitioners should not think of the post-contact period as constituting a fixed cultural landscape. Rather, it comprises a cultural landscape that was being constantly reconfigured through time. The entry of white settlers into the northern half of our study area unquestionably had a radical effect on Aboriginal culture there. In the twenty years after 1830 the impact on Aboriginal people in terms of their 'persons' was also great and even catastrophic: people died of disease and were killed, sometimes in large numbers, by white settlers. The enormity of these changes was not, however, reflected in great changes in the physical landscape of the area – it remained substantially unchanged. It was in the fifty years that followed that one sees the physical landscape dramatically transformed, with all the implications this had for Aboriginal lifestyle and, indeed, Aboriginal survival.



4 Moving in & taking over 1850-1870

This period might be described as that in which Aboriginal people's country was truly taken over. The first major 'wave' of white settlers enter the Manning Valley and while white incursions in the Forster area were still on a very small scale, on the Manning a decisive line had been crossed. White settlers there were now behaving as if they owned the place.

In the 1860s there was a quantum leap in white settlement in the Manning Valley.⁵³ By the early 1860s in the lower Manning alone the settler population had reached around 3,000 people.⁵⁴

The Biripi, far outnumbered by settlers, in practical terms had lost control of their country. There is no question that this was a time of great loss for the Biripi, a situation slightly tempered by some new opportunities.

Expansion of agriculture

In the period 1850-70 the number of surveyed portions of land appropriated by settlers in the Manning increased to an average of over fifty per year (compared to less than ten per year for the period 1825-50).⁵⁵ Agriculture took over from pastoralism in the lower Manning as the basis of the local white economy.

The bands of 'jungle-like' rainforest along the river, from which most of the cedar had already been removed, were broken by areas of open forest, much easier to clear than the rainforest. They were also broken by clearings of bladey grass. Both the open forests and bladey grass clearings are likely to have been created by the firing of the natural vegetation by Aboriginal people over thousands of

years. This firing, or 'fire-stick farming', was carried out as a hunting tactic in which fire was used to drive medium sized marsupials into nets. But over time this firing also had the effect of increasing the areas where hunting would be most profitable. It was these more open areas which were 'eagerly sought' by this first wave of white farmers.⁵⁶ By the end of the 1850s most of the 'favourable agriculture land' had been appropriated by settlers.⁵⁷ As John Ramsland observes,

*On arrival at their selected farm portion the settlers erected rough slab or bark huts to provide shelter for their families and then began the arduous task of clearing the thick tangle of brush and large trees before cultivating a small area of soil to provide their immediate food needs.*⁵⁸

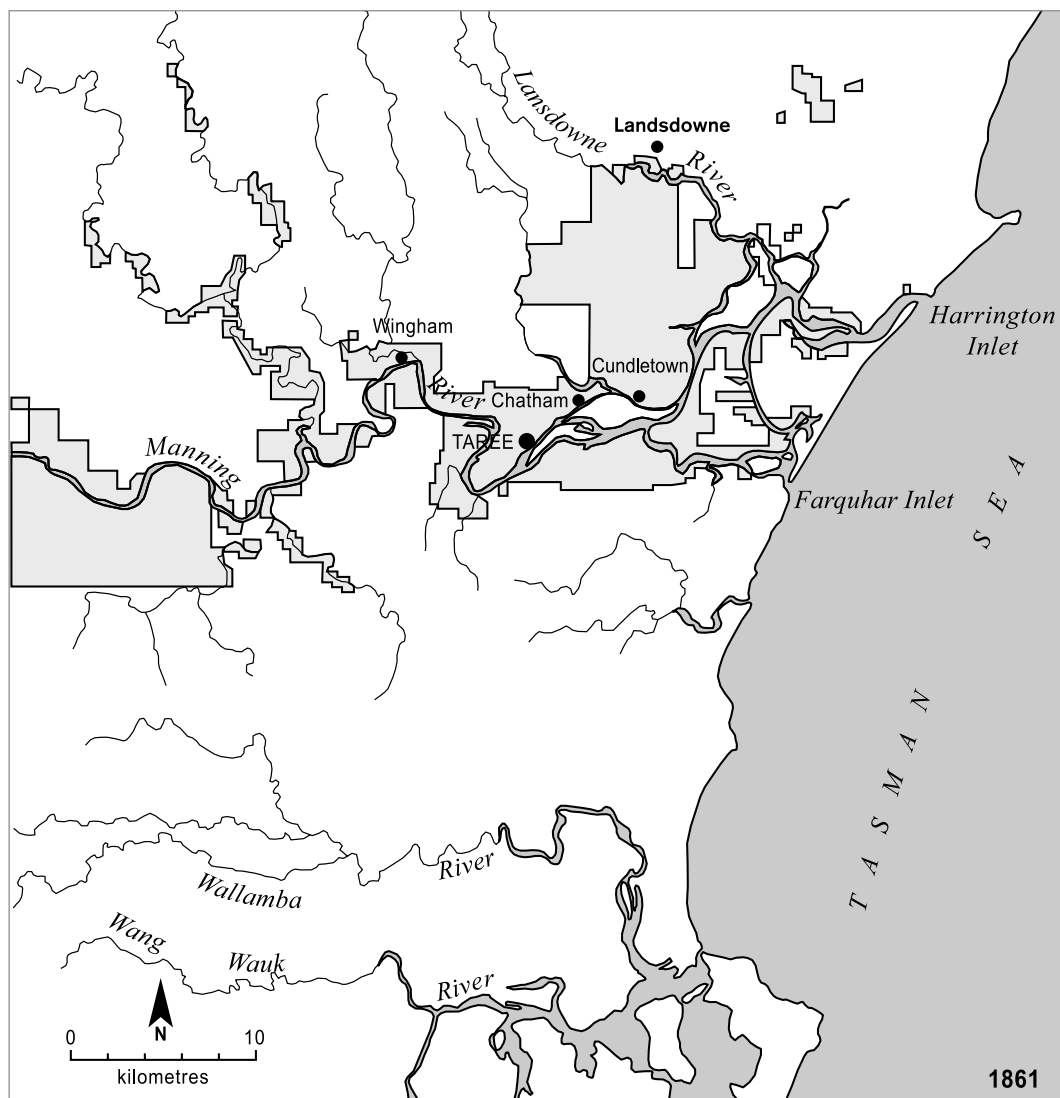
Yet, however strong the settlers' desire to clear the land, their actual ability to do so was limited by the primitive technology at their disposal. They had little more than axes and hoes with which to turn a mostly heavily wooded valley into productive farmland.

The heritage of clearing

By the end of the 1850s most properties in the Manning Valley were still small freeholds only partly 'improved' (cleared or cultivated).⁵⁹ The project of clearing that part of the valley with farming potential still had a long way to go. By the early 1860s cultivated areas on the farms of the lower Manning rarely exceeded ten to fifteen acres.⁶⁰ But land clearance accelerated steadily and Aboriginal people assisted in the process, providing much of the necessary labour.⁶¹

An Aboriginal man known to white settlers as 'Bony' is reported to have 'felled about 30 acres for the late Mr. Joseph Andrews for 2s 6d and rations and a pair of moleskin trousers'.⁶² In his reminiscences, John Allan recalled that an Aboriginal man named Jailbah, or Paddy, 'felled about 29 acres for us [at Kimbriki] for 2s 6d, and used to go out splitting with me'.⁶³ At the 'Dunvegan' farm, two kilometres north

Left page Fig. 21: Photograph of the Allan farm in the Manning Valley, late nineteenth century (reproduced by courtesy of the State Library of NSW)



of Tinonee, a farmer called McLeod employed Aboriginal axemen in felling trees as he cleared the land he had acquired (Figures 23 & 24).⁶⁴

The engagement of Aboriginal men in land clearing also occurred in many other parts of NSW. It was, in fact, a normal part of the European colonial pattern to enlist colonised peoples in converting their country for the benefit of the new economy. But there is scant acknowledgement in local white histories of the role Aboriginal labour played in this process. The impression created is that the 'taming' of the bush was the work of whites only. This is part of a wider tendency to exclude Aboriginal people from the 'progress narratives'

which have been written for local areas. Local development is presented in these narratives as being the achievement of the white pioneers and later settlers – Aboriginal achievements, where they are acknowledged, are confined to pre-contact times and to the realm of traditional culture. The net effect is to create an artificial separation between Aboriginal and white history, as if the two belonged to different times and different landscapes.

This page Fig. 22: Land appropriated by settlers in the period to 1861 (after Birrell 1986)

Right page Fig. 23: The former Dunvegan farm which Aboriginal people helped to clear in the nineteenth century

Fig. 24: Location of Dunvegan farm



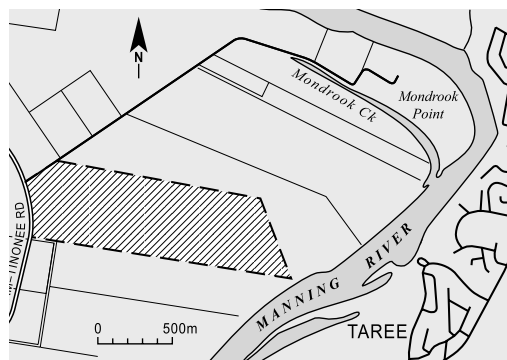
The impact of ring-barking

The technique of killing trees by stripping a circle of bark from around the trunk was widely practised in the valley from the 1860s.⁶⁵ In the Bowman and Gloucester Valleys it was first carried out in 1845 by the AA Co. and by 1872 it was a 'general practice' on pastoral properties in the region.⁶⁶ Parts of the study area by then featured flats and hillsides with thousands of dead trees stretching to the horizon (see Figure 29).⁶⁷ Over large parts of it – as elsewhere in the east of the continent⁶⁸ – the native tree cover was wiped off the map, producing a clean slate for the lines that would be drawn by the wire fences introduced from the 1870s. The fertile ground in the valley was all taken up by the 1880s, by which time a continuous mosaic of white farms (most smaller than 2000 acres) extended along the bottom of the valley and over the lower foothills of the eucalypt-forested ranges aligned east-west on either side.

Ring-barking, and bush-clearing in general, meant that Aboriginal people were not merely dispossessed of their land, they also became visible in it in a new and presumably quite disturbing way. The term 'bush cover' is normally used in Australia to refer to the way trees and shrubs clothe parts of the terrain, but for Aboriginal people exposed in the post-contact landscape it took on an added meaning of providing refuge from the white gaze. The progressive reduction of bush cover reduced the opportunities for escaping this surveillance.

Upper Manning pastoralism

In the upper Manning in this period – including the upper Manning Valley itself plus the valleys of the Gloucester, Avon, Barnard and Nowendoc rivers – there were widely spaced pastoral stations based in the valley bottoms. Apart from the homesteads and stock yards the only noticeable change which



pastoralism made to the environment of this region was caused by the grazing of cattle and sheep in the pre-existing grasslands and woodlands. The country was unfenced and the stock grazed more or less freely.

Early villages

As larger numbers of settlers began arriving on the Manning, tiny villages and towns took shape along the river. In 1854 a portion of the 'Tarree Estate' was sub-divided as the basis of a private town which by 1866 had a white population of 150 people. By 1859 the village of Wingham had a courthouse and lockup and by 1866, when its population numbered ninety people, the town had a separate police lockup, a number of churches, a post office and a bank branch.⁶⁹ The 'townspeople' who occupied these villages were in the shipbuilding and coastal shipping industries, and they were store owners, blacksmiths, timber millers, and shoe makers. The fact that by the end of the 1860s there were fifteen public schools in the valley is indicative of the extent to which it was, by then, a colonised landscape.

Communications

Exports of cedar were beginning to be replaced by exports of hardwood and there was a steep increase in the export of maize. For white people, sea transport was still the main method of travel to Sydney and other coastal destinations (in 1866 a regular weekly steamship service to Sydney began operating). There were wharves on the river at Taree, Wingham, Tinonee and Cundletown. Aboriginal people worked on these wharves, 'unloading and loading the endless cargo and freight going to and from Sydney'.⁷⁰

Aboriginal people themselves may have begun to travel these coastal maritime routes on a very occasional basis. For them the major implication

mountains to the river and beaches. By the mid-nineteenth century it was becoming, or had already become, impossible for the Aboriginal population of the Manning Valley to live entirely on bush tucker, even if they had wanted to. In the Forster-Wallis Lake area this was not the case until somewhat later.

Working for the white man

From the earliest days of white settlement a large proportion of Aboriginal people in our study area appear to have lived and/or worked on farms. This aspect of the Aboriginal post-contact experience is mentioned only fleetingly in white local history.

In John Allan's reminiscences, for instance, his brother William and 'Bony' (presumably a Biripi man) are described as having worked together: 'William and Bony had felled a strip through the brush on the bank of the river'.⁸³ Elsewhere he notes that Bony 'was a good worker, and did a lot of work for us'.⁸⁴ Later in his narrative (of the late 1850s or 1860s) John Allan and 'Black Paddy' go together to look at some land on the Cooplacurripa River (a tributary of the Manning).⁸⁵ He also refers to Jimmy, a 'blackfellow my mother employed' at Mt George (1850s) who 'used to collect firewood and carry water for us'.⁸⁶ Another Biripi man, Johnny Martin, on one occasion was given a gun to go out and shoot pigeons for the Allan family. In the same passage he makes mention of 'one of the No.2 blacks', presumably Biripi people attached to the pastoral property of that name on the Cooplacurripa River.⁸⁷

A number of Aboriginal people formed close relationships with white farming families and lived on their farms. Jacky Davis and his wife Mary, for instance, were part of the group camped at Lansdowne in the lower Manning Valley (see Figure 22). 'When all of his tribe was gone this old leader...had built a shack on Ben Saville's farm and lived out his life there with his last wife...Mary. They were buried on the Saville farm, beside the bank of the Lansdowne River'.⁸⁸ The relationship between Davis and Saville went back to the late 1830s when they both worked on the Brimbin property near where Saville eventually had his own farm.⁸⁹

These details help form a picture of where Aboriginal people were in the landscape during the period from the 1850s to the 1870s. As mentioned earlier, white colonisation of the country of the Biripi and the Worimi entailed a reclassification or re-mapping of that country, a re-mapping based on its agricultural productivity. In order to survive in the colonised landscape, Aboriginal people had no choice but to recognise the existence of this new 'map'. The fact

that many or them began to work and even live on white farms reflects an incorporation of Aboriginal people into the agricultural economy and into the core agricultural terrain of the area. This was, for them, a matter of survival, but it also represented a way of retaining contact with their traditional country.

Unfortunately, none of the historical sources have provided us with enough information to locate any of the sites of the Aboriginal camps or huts located on white farms in this period.

Aboriginal funerals and graves

It is clear that in this period Aboriginal funerary practices combined a reworking of 'traditional' practices with a reworking of European ones. From the mid-1860s we have the following account of an Aboriginal man buried at Cundletown (five kilometres downriver from Taree), apparently in the village cemetery. 'In conveying the body to a place called a burying ground, in Cundle Town, a large procession of boats was formed, in which were the deceased gentleman's relations and friends'. A pile of saplings was placed on the grave a month after burial.⁹⁰ The 'procession of boats' may have been a normal feature of Aboriginal funerals in earlier and pre-contact times on the lower Manning. There is also a reference to heaps of burning or smoldering fungus being used to smoke the grave at Aboriginal funerals in the Manning Valley and of men carrying 'large pans of burning fungus' as the body was taken to the grave.⁹¹

In this area, as elsewhere in Australia, white settlers and amateur scientists 'obtained' Aboriginal skeletons for private and public collections, often by robbing graves.⁹² In his reminiscences, John Allan refers to 'Crammering Mickey' who he believed was killed by other Aboriginal people near Bo Bo Creek. 'We got Mickey's skull and last time I was in Sydney I saw it in the Museum'.⁹³ The appropriation of Aboriginal remains as specimens has been an enduring source of outrage and grief to Aboriginal people.⁹⁴

The cadastral grid

The importance of the cadastral grid of property boundaries was mentioned in relation to the previous period (1830-1850). From 1825 the colony of NSW was divided into parishes of twenty-five square miles each. Between 1822 and 1855 a rectangular survey grid was laid down over the settled parts of NSW. Within this grid surveyors divided up land into 'portions' for the purposes of sale. In 1854, for instance, 191 portions were

surveyed and sold on the deltaic plains of the lower Manning.⁹⁵ Over subsequent years, these portions were themselves often subdivided into smaller rectangular units.

From the mid-1800s there were several government and private surveyors operating in our study area mapping the boundaries of properties. They can be seen as an essential part of the machinery of colonisation, facilitating the intensification of white settlement in the sense that land could not be sold, cleared, and farmed (particularly in this relatively lush and closely settled part of the country) until the property boundaries were established.

It is likely to have been some time, however, before Aboriginal people realised that this largely invisible rectangular survey grid had been laid down over their traditional country. And even when they did become aware of it, they may have regarded it simple as a fancy image or notion in some white person's head, or just a complicated drawing on a sheet of paper. And yet soon these rectangular lines on paper would be manifest on the ground as fences, representing boundaries not to be crossed except at the risk of being chased or shot at. So the survey grid quickly came to have as many implications for Aboriginal people as it had for settlers and it is a key aspect of the heritage of both.



Gridlocked or 'in-betweeness'?

The diagram shown here (Figure 25) depicts the intensification of white settlement on the Manning in the mid-nineteenth century. It shows the disappearance of the gallery rainforests (the 'brush') along the lower Manning; it shows the 'filling in' of the landscape as the rectangular surveyed portions were appropriated and as they began to form a continuous grid of farmland along either side of the river.

Large swaths of Aboriginal country now became difficult or impossible for them to access. Many of the old camp sites, resource places, Dreaming and

ceremonial sites were now inside blocks of white owned 'private property'. The grid of privately owned properties was never, however, completely continuous across the landscape. There were always those blocks and corridors of land that had been set aside as town commons, water reserves, road reserves, travelling stock reserves, or other categories of Crown Reserve. These acted as 'openings' or gaps which Aboriginal people used to move through the grid and get access to the river and other places of importance to them (the dotted line in Figure 25 indicates Aboriginal access to the river via such 'openings'). Aboriginal people were not, then, entirely 'gridlocked'.⁹⁶

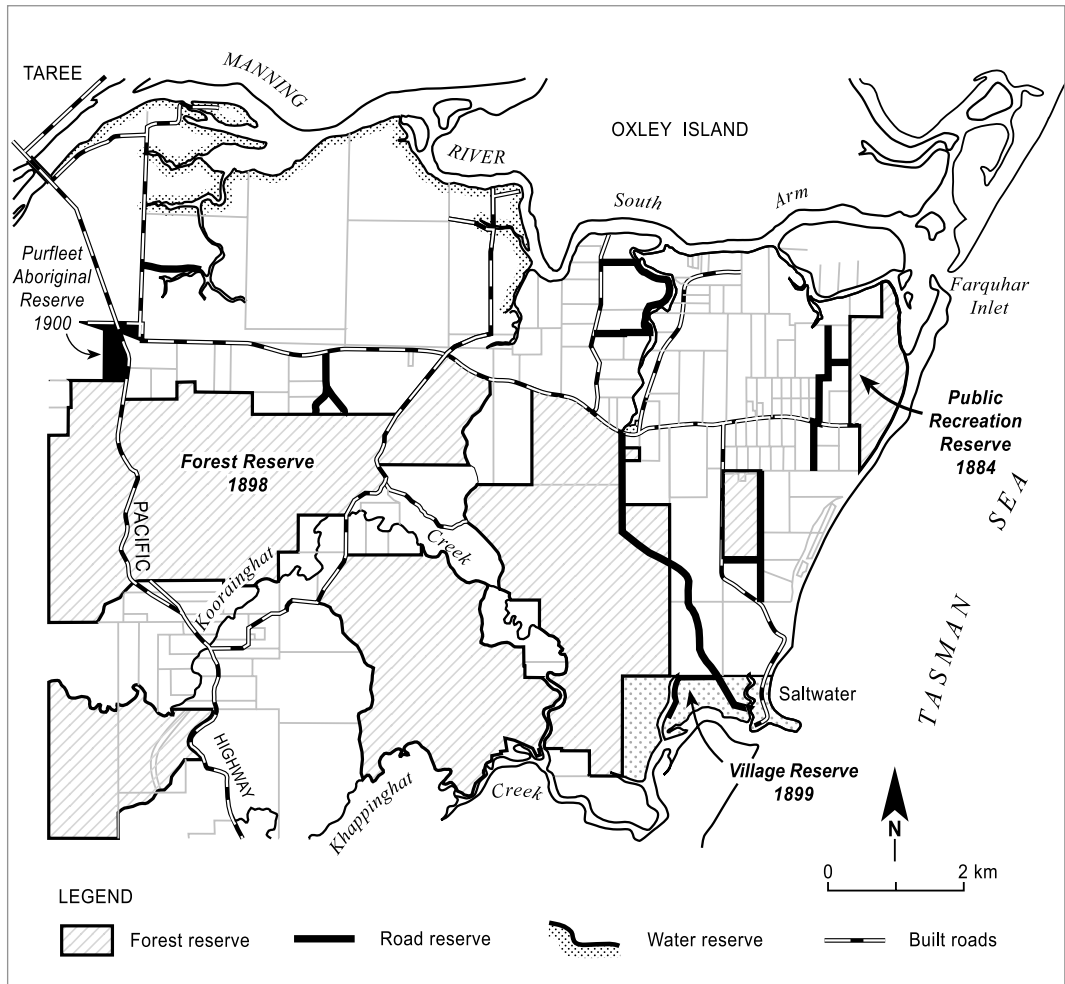
A category of camps came into existence which were situated in these 'openings' in the grid (see the list of camp types in Chapter 7 where they are referred to as 'pocket camps'). In some cases these particular 'openings' may have been chosen because they were surrounded by farms where Aboriginal residents of the camps could obtain casual work.

Those who kept their distance

As a general statement, the pattern of Aboriginal settlement in the area by the 1860s was one in which people were concentrated in the white farming terrain and on the fringes of the towns. But they were also still regularly accessing bush country for food and other resources as well, perhaps, as for the escape that the bush offered from the increasingly pervasive presence of white people in the valley. There appear to have been some exceptions to this, however, in the form of a (probably small) minority of Aboriginal people who declined in 'come in' to the areas of white settlement. There was an incident reported in 1863 in which a 'wild blackfellow' was brought to court at Wingham on a charge of spearing cattle on Dingo Creek. He was reported to have been living alone in the hills and 'he had not even an iron tomahawk or blanket, his hatchet consisting of pieces of hard stone fastened in a cleft stick'.⁹⁷ It was said that at Wingham 'even the blacks are unable to identify him'.⁹⁸ He was acquitted for lack of evidence. Apparently in reference to the same incident, John Allan states that the man had been building a stockyard in the bush for the cattle he had acquired.⁹⁹ Allan, who settled at Kimbriki in 1851, also refers to a 'Long Jacky' who 'seldom came near any house, but kept to the bush and the camp, living on what he could get by hunting'.¹⁰⁰ Given that wild foods would have been increasingly depleted in a

Right page Fig. 26: Map of Bohnock Parish showing cadastral grid and various categories of Crown Land

This page Fig. 25: Diagram of the pattern of white settlement in the 1860s



zone along either side of the river, those who wished to 'keep their distance' would have had more scope to do so in the higher country back from the river.¹⁰¹

Ceremonial life

An impression is given in the historical literature that 'traditional' ceremonial life disappeared from the landscape around this time. This impression was partly created by a deliberate policy on the part of older Aboriginal people of not talking about this aspect of their life to white settlers. The ethnologist, W.J. Enright cites a reference to Aboriginal people in the Paterson area being 'loath to speak' on the subject of ceremonial sites.¹⁰²

Allan refers to 'bull roarers' and 'cabra stones', both associated with male initiation rites, still being used in the mid-late nineteenth century in the Manning

Valley.¹⁰³ The first cabra (male initiation) ceremony that he witnessed took place in the 1850s or 1860s and was attended by Aboriginal people from Port Macquarie to Forster.¹⁰⁴ The cabra ground consisted of two rings and was surrounding carved trees. Allan also mentions coming across trees in the mountains at Cooplacurripa (see Figure 18) whose bark had been fairly recently carved for such ceremonies.

It is clear, though, that ceremonial life was in the process of rapid change. It appears the practice of scarification had virtually ceased by this time. The location of ceremonial venues must have undergone changes as large parts of Aboriginal country became impossible to access. Also, the fact that many young men were engaged in farm work is likely to have placed a constraint on the formerly elaborate and time-intensive nature of ceremonial life.

There is evidence, however, of Aboriginal people's frustration at the way curious white settlers tried to 'gatecrash' initiation ceremonies, cutting across the protocols of secrecy surrounding these rites. Such exclusiveness did not apply to occasions such as corroborees. Ella Simon describes the friendship between the white settler, Thomas Trotter, and Aboriginal families who lived in the Purfleet area prior to the establishment of the Aboriginal Reserve settlement there in 1900.

*Old T.D. Trotter, who lived to be nearly a hundred, told me of the big corroborees they had there when he was a boy. He used to help them build up their fires and think it was a great privilege. They were very fond of this little white boy and he was very fond of them. He wanted so much to see them dance, but they always started well after he had been called home.*¹⁰⁵

Impact and agency

It is probable that there were Aboriginal people who modified their lifestyle radically to accommodate the constraints and possibilities that came with white settlement, but there were also those who chose to remain closer to the old lifestyle. Yet by this period there can have been few Biripi who had not sampled and adopted elements of the material culture of the white settlers, be it steel axes, guns and horses or tea, tobacco or rum. While we have stressed that both cultures – the Aboriginal and the European – learnt from each other, this is not to suggest that cross-cultural exchanges and dealings took place in a climate of equality. No matter how the Biripi responded, the presence of white settlers in their country was always something imposed rather than invited. Effectively it was a case of invasion.

By the 1850s the pressure on the whole way of life of the Biripi was intense on all fronts. They were having to make huge and rapid changes to their diet and their pattern of seasonal movement. Their bodies were being assaulted by introduced diseases and in some cases by European weapons; they were having to revise many of their deepest beliefs about the nature of the world.

Cultural change, however, is never driven purely by external pressure. In Marshall Sahlins' words, it is a process that is 'externally induced, yet internally orchestrated'.¹⁰⁶ Even where external influence is massive, uninvited and unwelcome, people still have agency in how they respond to it.¹⁰⁷ We use the term 'agency' instead of, say, 'choice', because it stresses that even under great external pressure there is always a strategic dimension to people's response to pressure. Their actions are always 'willful'.¹⁰⁸ While

individual Aboriginal people must surely at times have felt despair at what was happening there is no reason to think that at other times they did not respond with imagination and humour to the changes. It is important, also, to remember that cultures are made up of individuals and that while some individual Aboriginal people may have resisted change it is likely that others were stimulated by it. What is critical to keep in mind here is that people are always conscious of themselves as individuals as well as members of a culture. As individuals, they 'invent' or build their lives and their futures, moving forward from day-to-day according to the opportunities that open up, the setbacks, the bits of wisdom acquired, the risks taken. On the nineteenth-century NSW lower North Coast, this applied as much, say, to an eighteen-year-old Aboriginal boy as it did to an eighteen-year-old white settler's son.

What is culture?

It has often suited the purposes of colonists to describe the colonised as have unchanging and unchangeable cultures which can only collapse or erode upon contact with the so-called 'progressive' cultures of the West. Aboriginal culture in the nineteenth century, like all cultures, was not a structure or 'thing': it was a way of life, a way of understanding the world, and a way of dealing with change. Aboriginal culture did not collapse upon contact with settler society. It underwent radical change, just as settler culture in the colony was also undergoing rapid change, by which process it became increasingly distanced from nineteenth-century metropolitan English and Irish ways of life.

Cross-cultural exchanges

The mid-nineteenth century was a period of rapid learning for both the Biripi and the white settlers. The Biripi were learning to relate to a foreign culture and society, the settlers were learning to relate to a foreign environment. The following table indicates some of the things the two cultures borrowed and learned from each other.

We should remember that in this period, as in the previous one, many of the white settlers experienced a hard and frugal existence and although they may have imagined their lives as utterly different from their Aboriginal neighbours, in fact (on the surface at least) they were not. The first shelters built by pioneer families in Taree township we know to have been temporary huts made of 'locally collected bark or tents made of calico... soon replaced by split slab

Borrowings by Blacks	Borrowings by Whites
English language	some settlers learn to speak Biripi language. ¹⁰⁹ Aboriginal place names and other words (e.g. early settlers in Manning call their huts gunyahs) ¹¹⁰
horses, guns, steel fish hooks	Aboriginal artefacts collected, heritage sites appropriated into the national heritage
farming know-how and use of domesticates (wheat, maize, vegetables, fruit trees)	knowledge of wild foods, use of bark for building huts
consumables (tea, flour, sugar, tobacco, alcohol)	
rites and celebrations (e.g. Christmas, agricultural shows)	borrowing of Aboriginal objects as emblems (e.g. the Boomerang Theatre in Taree)

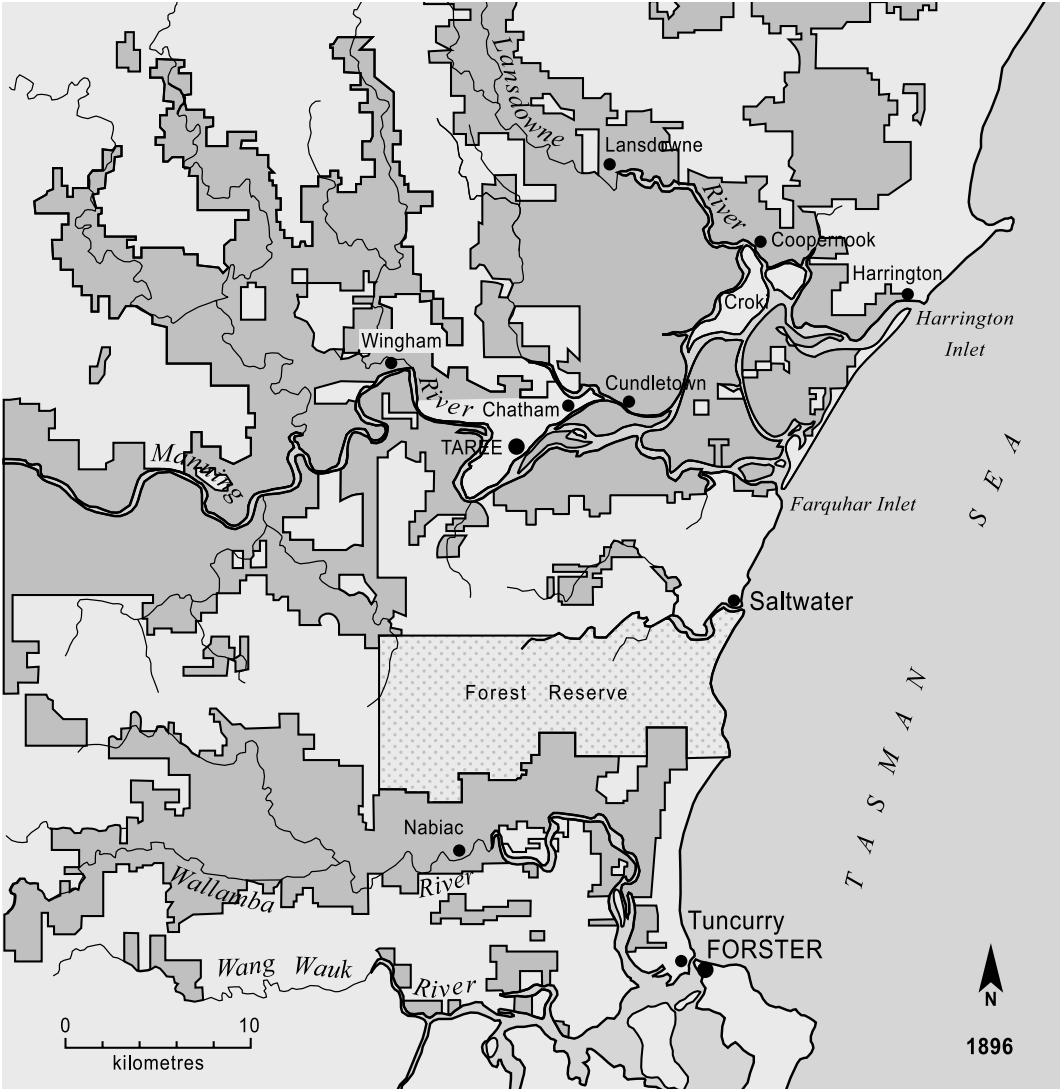
huts with bark roofs and dirt floors’.¹¹¹ In the second half of the nineteenth century Aboriginal people and white settlers both hunted and ate paddymelon (a small marsupial). As Ella Simon pointed out in relation to the early years of the twentieth century in the Manning Valley: ‘You know, in those days, in many things, there wasn’t much difference between us and poor white people’.¹¹² There was always more overlap between the two groups than many people wanted to admit. One of the weakest areas in current heritage practice is our understanding of the overlap and sharing that existed between the colonised and the colonisers.¹¹³

For some new settlers to the area, the process of cross-cultural exchange began from the moment they arrived. Allan records that when, as a boy, he set foot on the beach at Harrington in 1851: ‘I had my first experience of the blacks there as I gave one a waterproof coat for two big mullet that he had speared. I was about half starved and they did go down well after I roasted them on the coals as I saw them doing’.¹¹⁴

Such exchanges of objects and ideas did not stop at the beach. They continued across many aspects of Aboriginal and settler life, making the subsequent history and heritage of each culture inseparable.

Changing material culture

Aboriginal use of their ‘own’ artefacts continued, variably, well into the post-contact period. Speaking of the 1850s and 60s in the Manning Valley, John Allan recalls that he ‘never saw a blackfellow... unarmed. They always had a tomahawk in their belts, no matter what they were doing, and mostly had a nulla nulla also’.¹¹⁵ They were still using hunting, fighting, and fishing spears as well as shields and boomerangs. Allan also notes that in the nineteenth century the coastal Biripi used ‘flint’ and quartz flakes to fashion ironbark points for their fishing spears.¹¹⁶ It is probable that at least some of the stone artefact scatters recorded by archaeologists in our study area date from the mid- and even late-nineteenth century and that they represent activities of this type.



5 Separation & co-existence 1870-1900

From an Aboriginal standpoint, and in terms of race relations, perhaps the most important trend in the period 1870-1900 was the increasing separation of black and white people in the landscape. This was partly to do with the simple fact that an increasingly large part of the landscape came to be privately owned (i.e. white owned) and thus inaccessible to Aboriginal people. It is also the case that this separation underlined the nature of race relations in rural NSW in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The increasing separation of black and white populations that resulted is discussed in the following pages as well as the ways by which Aboriginal people were able, at least to some extent, to counteract this.

Separation and segregation

Separation and segregation, along with dispossession, accommodation and resistance, are unquestionably key post-contact heritage themes. But what do we mean by separation and segregation? In general terms they refer to efforts to keep Aboriginal people at a distance from white society. However, there is an important distinction to be made between 'separation' and 'segregation'.

Explicitly segregationist policies and practices, both formal and informal, were not implemented in a significant way on the NSW lower North Coast until the end of the nineteenth century (they are examined in greater detail in the following chapter). Yet there were efforts to separate Aboriginal people from the mainstream of society in the period immediately prior to this, and these were underwritten by humanitarianism.¹¹⁷ This humanitarian concern about Aboriginals emerged in the context of growing concerns about contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and the perceived threat of degeneration and contamination as a result of such contact. We note here, in relation to the treatment of Aboriginal people, that nineteenth-century humanitarianism incorporated the belief that Aboriginal people were vulnerable partly because they were believed to be more 'primitive' than white people. Many people today would regard this as fundamentally racist. However, the difference between humanitarians and others in defining the 'Aboriginal problem' in this period was that the former believed that Aboriginal people could be improved and uplifted through education and evangelism, while the others believed they could not.

Separation and segregation are unquestionably key post-contact heritage themes. It is hoped that what follows will stimulate further and more detailed work in NSW drawing on historical records to map these themes at a landscape level.

Humanitarian separation

So the last decades of the nineteenth century were marked by a greater separation of Aboriginal people, both spatially and socially, from the mainstream of life in our study area. The beginning of Christian missionary activity on the lower North Coast in this period promoted or reinforced the idea among the area's white population that Aboriginal people should be kept at a distance from white society 'for their own good'. The missionaries were particularly concerned

Left page Fig. 27: The appropriation of land by settlers in the period to 1896

at what they saw as the corruption and exploitation of Aboriginal people. In particular, the 'evils' of alcohol and sexual liaisons with whites were key missionary concerns. Humanitarian concerns about contact between blacks and whites, and the perceived threat that 'white' vices posed to the survival of Aboriginal people, developed in tandem with changes in the nature of Aboriginal settlement. As Aboriginal people were increasingly dispossessed of their land, with the intensification of white settlement in certain areas, the former mostly came to be occupying camps on the fringes of white townships.

This humanitarian strand in white society provided the background to the establishment of the NSW Aborigines' Protection Board (APB) in 1883. The APB was involved in establishing separate Reserves for Aboriginal people, many of which included Aboriginal-only schools. For instance, a school for Aboriginal children at Barrington was opened in 1890 and another at Forster in the same year. These were significant steps in the process of separating the Aboriginal population from the non-Aboriginal population.

Intensification of white settlement

By 1872 'an almost continuous line of settlements occupied the alluvial soils along some 290 kilometres of river frontage along the Manning River and approximately 153 kilometres along the frontages of the Dingo, Bow Bow, Burrell, and Cedar Party Creeks'.¹¹⁸

'Free selection' of land in NSW began in 1861 with the passage of the Robertson Land Acts but did not really take off until 1871.¹¹⁹ In our area in the 1870s and 80s four times as many portions of land were appropriated for white settlement than in the previous two decades.¹²⁰ The effects of this can be seen by comparing Figure 27 with the equivalent map for 1861 (Figure 22).

Virtually all the bottom land of the Manning valley and its tributaries was taken up in the course of this expansion of white settlement. The population of the lower Manning almost doubled between 1872 and 1896.¹²¹

White Population

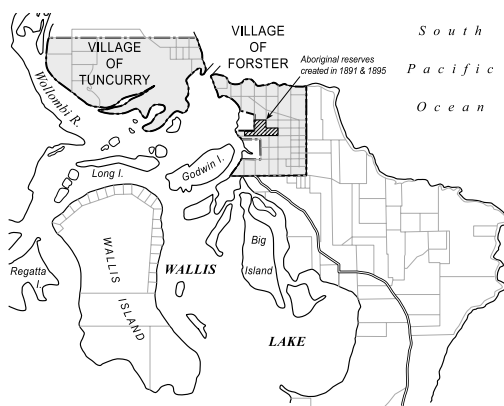
1872	5170 (Manning)
1873	5500 (Manning)
1896	10 000+ (lower Manning)

White settlement in the Forster area

Earlier it was noted that the Forster-Wallis Lake area represented one of those 'backwaters' on the NSW coast which attracted very little white settlement, this settlement being concentrated along the valleys of the major coastal rivers. The area of present-day Forster remained a backwater, as far as white settlement went, until the 1870s.

The first white migrant to the area did not take up land at Forster until 1859 (until 1869 the village was named Minimbah). Two or three others acquired land between Forster and Cape Hawke over the next five years and a plan for the village of Forster was drawn up by a government surveyor in 1869.¹²²

This plan shows two settler landholdings of forty acres each abutting Wallis Lake in the area of the present town. The first saw mill began operating in 1870, the same year that work at the first shipbuilding yard began. Timber production, shipbuilding, fishing and shellfishing were to be the mainstay of the local economy for the next several decades – in fact, until tourism began to become significant around the 1920s. While we have found no documentary evidence for Aboriginal employment in any of these industries in the nineteenth century it is highly likely that their labour was sought in a situation where white labour was scarce and Aboriginal people had existing skills in wood-working and bushcraft.



The first public school opened at Forster in 1872 with a roll of only twenty-seven students. Even by the 1890s, white settlers in the area numbered only in the hundreds rather than the thousands.

Whereas in 1872 only a few farms existed along the Wallumbi River (the northernmost drainage system feeding into Wallis Lake; 'Wollombi' in Figure 28) by 1896 the river valley was almost completely settled

and farming along the Wang Wauk valley was also extensive. There was no permanent white presence on the Tuncurry side of Wallis Lake until 1875, some fifty years after the beginning of white settlement in the Manning Valley. By 1877 there was a timber mill there and a general store.¹²³ Tuncurry had developed a village centre by 1892.

There is scant documentary historical information on the Biripi people of the Forster area for the last decades of the nineteenth century (see Chapter 13).

Wire fencing and ring-barking

As mentioned early, the technique of ring-barking was introduced to the area in 1845 (see page 29). In association with the intensification of white settlement in the decades after 1870, ring-barking and another new 'technology', wire fencing, had a major impact on the appearance of the landscape in this period.

In the early years of white farming, fences were built from the timber cleared from the land. Needless to say these mostly post-and-rail fences were extremely labour intensive to build and consequently were normally confined to the boundaries of cultivated fields, stockyards and home paddocks. Fencing wire became available in Australia in the 1870s and barbed wire 'came into common use' in the 1890s.¹²⁴ The introduction and spread of wire fences through the study area allowed greater management of stock, especially in the more densely settled areas such as the lower Manning. In the pastoral country of the upper Manning wire fencing was in general use by the 1880s, the fencing of paddocks becoming particularly important when sheep were reintroduced and shepherds were found to be unavailable.¹²⁵

The cadastral grid of property boundaries which formerly was only visible in map form (e.g. on parish plans which showed the grid of 'portions' and town blocks) now became visible across the landscape as a grid of fenced boundaries. For many Aboriginal people the truth may only now have sunk in that country which formerly appeared to be open space – land distant from the villages, in the smaller valleys and on the hillsides – was actually owned by white people.

In practical terms, the fencing of farms would have made it significantly more difficult for Aboriginal people to move across the country. They would have found that many of the Dreaming sites and ceremonial sites (e.g. bora grounds) were now fenced off from them. One of the ironies of the

situation was that in their quest for employment Aboriginal men helped construct many of these fences. It is no exaggeration to say that the introduction of wire fencing represents one of the most consequentially significant moments in post-contact history.

Ring-barking intensified this sense of a landscape domesticated rather than just occupied. During this period (1870-1900) the valley bottoms in the upper Manning were 'denuded' of forest cover through ring-barking.¹²⁶ Ring-barking gradually extended up the sides of the valleys though by the end of the century this still affected only about ten percent of the total area of the upper Manning and Gloucester areas (i.e. only that much of the landscape had been cleared).¹²⁷

Open space and 'privacy'

From the earliest days of white settlement Aboriginal people were able to use the bush as a place to withdraw from the white presence and even, on occasion, to flee from it. As the bush disappeared from a great expanse of the landscape, however, the ability of the bush to shelter people from the white gaze diminished (see also page 29). Aboriginal people moving across hillsides that had been ring-barked would be exposed to the often hostile gaze of white landowners in a way that they had not been previously. These cleared areas now became 'open space' in the sense of being a space where there was no privacy. Aboriginal people who sought the cover which the bush offered would have to find it further away from the centres of white settlement. In our area and in most of eastern NSW this meant away from the flatter country and into the surrounding hills.

It is in this context that some of what we have termed the 'autonomous' post-contact camps have a special significance (see page 57). A case in point is the coastal camp at Saltwater (see Figure 62). When local Aboriginal people speak of the Saltwater camp they frequently cite its seclusion from white people as one of its key attractions and values. Until the bush there was 'cleaned up' (thinned out) by the local council in the 1970s the area of the camp was thickly vegetated with large trees, vines and shrubs. People cite the loss of this bush 'cover' as a major blow to their enjoyment of the place (see Chapter 10 for oral history records of Saltwater).

Despite the intensification of white settlement during the period 1870-1900 there were still a number of

Left page Fig. 28: Forster and Tuncurry in 1869 showing villages and surrounding land appropriations



zones or categories of land with little or no white presence – places that Aboriginal people, if they chose, could withdraw to. These were the bush covered hilly or mountainous lands between the creeks, the swampy areas of the lower valley and the sandy country backing the beaches as well as those beach areas relatively unfrequented by whites.¹²⁸ This was the country that was mapped as unproductive in terms of the agricultural economy but which remained productive in terms of hunting and gathering (see Chapter 2).

The hilly bushland part of this terrain did, however, shrink during these last decades of the nineteenth century as farmers acquired areas of hill-slope bushland behind their farms (which fronted the rivers and creeks) in order to run stock on it. White settlement was thus expanding sideways from the settled strips along the valley bottoms.

Separation in the landscape

We have argued that increasingly intensive occupation of the landscape by white settlers had the effect of marginalising and excluding Aboriginal people from progressively extensive expanses of the same landscape. An increasingly large fraction of the landscape came under the category of private property, a category of land that became a hard reality on the ground as it was cleared of bush-cover

and fenced. Progressively, the white population lived in that part of the landscape that was private property and Aboriginal people lived in that part that remained in the form of various categories of Crown Land reserve – e.g. town commons, forest reserves, stock reserves, road reserves, Aboriginal reserves.

This expansionist history is generally seen exclusively as a theme of non-Indigenous heritage. There is a strong case to be made, however, that it is equally a key theme for Aboriginal heritage – in other words, for the heritage of those who were on the receiving end of the process. It is a theme, moreover, that is well documented in government land administration archives, historical Parish Plans, and in other readily accessible forms. Unlike many other post-contact heritage themes (e.g. frontier violence), it is eminently mappable on the ground.

The pattern of movement

The impression one often receives from books and articles on local history in NSW is that from the late nineteenth century Aboriginal people lived on ‘missions’ (mostly Aboriginal Reserves) and were more-or-less absent from the rest of the landscape. This impression is reinforced by the tendency of historic heritage inventories to consist almost

This page Fig. 29: Ring-barked country in the Manning Valley, late nineteenth century (reproduced by courtesy of the Gloucester Historical Society)

entirely of non-Indigenous heritage places.¹²⁹ The larger landscape is 'filled up' with the history and heritage of white society and Aboriginal people rendered largely invisible in it. Throughout this book we have presented evidence showing that Aboriginal people, in various capacities, were present across the landscape even after the establishment of Aboriginal Reserves. However, it was not a case of them simply being present at a multitude of points rather than at a single point. Movement through the landscape, between these points, is a key element of the post-contact story. In what follows, we list some of the types of Aboriginal movement through the landscape of our study area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Long distance visiting

Frequent visiting took place between Aboriginal people from Forster and those in the Manning Valley. An insight into the larger scale pattern of Aboriginal movement in the study area is provided by an 1893 reference to Aboriginal people from Forster having made it 'a practice to visit Taree during show time'.¹³⁰ (The Taree Show was inaugurated in 1878.) The teacher at the Forster Aboriginal school wrote on January 31, 1893: 'During the last week I went to the Trouble to try and bring them back from the Manning River; I could only get two to come; the others have no intention of coming back'.¹³¹ An 1876 report mentions an Aboriginal group from Cooplacurripa (on the upper Manning) being on a visit to their 'sable brethren' at Wingham.¹³² These are suggestive of a pattern of comparatively long-distance visiting that may have operated on a quite regular basis, underwritten by an obviously long-established Aboriginal custom of long-distance walking. Changes in this pattern of movement would have been brought about, among other things, by the possession of horses (and sometimes buggies) by a significant number of Aboriginal people. The introduction of the pneumatic tyred bicycle in Australia in the 1890s is also likely to have had an effect.¹³³

Mutual visits between kin on the different Reserves

During an inspection of the Forster Aboriginal Reserve in 1911, Robert McDonald, a member of the Aborigines' Protection Board said he met 'several of the aboriginal residents of the Sawyers' Point Reserve [Karuah] at the Forster Reserve (they were visiting their relations at the latter place...)'.¹³⁴ This pattern of inter-community visiting persists into the present day (see below). The *Manning River Times* reported in 1901 that an Aboriginal woman, Mrs Bugg, had died at the Wingham fringe camp:

'The deceased lived for many years on the outskirts of Taree, and only recently went to Wingham to stay with her sons'.¹³⁵

Shifting residence by family groups

A 1905 report on the situation at the Dingo Creek Aboriginal Reserve noted that while three families were present there at the time of the inspection, over the previous twenty years or so the number (of families) camped there fluctuated from five or six to only one or two.¹³⁶ In 1911 the Wingham police reported that though two huts had been erected on the Dingo Creek reserve they 'had trouble keeping them occupied, as they [the Aborigines] are continually moving about o'possum trapping and shooting'.¹³⁷ The Wingham police in 1911 claimed the Killawarra Reserve was 'used principally as a camping ground for the Aborigines when travelling up and down the river'.¹³⁸ A police report on the situation at this Reserve in 1915 states: 'There is nearly always one or two families on the Reserve, and when there are not it is handy to them when they are travelling about which they frequently do from the lower to the Upper Part of the Manning'.¹³⁹ What this suggests is that, in the late nineteenth century, Aboriginal family groups may have continued to move fairly extensively between several camps and reserves even though they may have maintained a 'base' at one of these locations.

Constant itinerates?

A 1906 inspection report on the Killawarra Aboriginal Reserve states that apart from William Rush, 'very few other aboriginals use any part of this area with the exception of spending a day or two with Rush when passing'.¹⁴⁰ However, an inspection report on the same Reserve, dated 1911, records 'there were some 30 or 40 individuals including 14 children up to the age of 16 years who were quite without any fixed abode... They say they are hunted about like beasts when they camp on the roads...'.¹⁴¹ What this hints at is the possibility that a portion of the Aboriginal population at this time may have lived an almost completely itinerant existence. The life of Percy Mumbler, on the lower NSW South Coast, is illustrative of this mobile lifestyle as a persistent theme in the lives at least some Aboriginal people through into the late twentieth century.¹⁴²

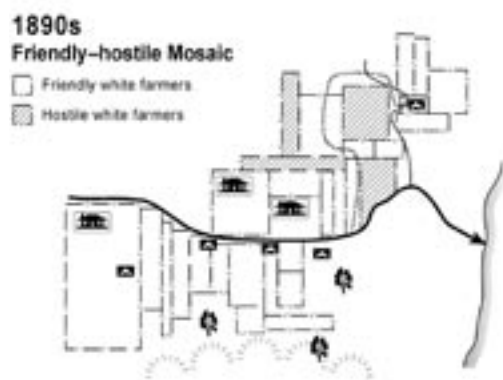
Localised movements

Aboriginal residents of the Purfleet Reserve used boats for fishing and are likely to have ranged in their movements along the lower reaches of the river and along the nearby coastline in a pattern of day trips and overnight trips. Pertinent here is the 1912 response from the Wingham police to the

suggestion that Purfleet Reserve be closed and the Aboriginal residents be moved to Dingo Creek: 'No doubt some trouble would be experienced removing the Aborigines from near Taree, it being their home in most cases from birth, also they are within a few miles of the ocean and it is said they visit it frequently'.¹⁴³ Oral histories of Aboriginal people recorded for our project indicate that a day-to-day pattern of walking over the landscapes surrounding the 'missions' (Reserves) at Forster and Purfleet was a normal part of life up until the 1970s. Aboriginal car ownership has increased sharply since about the 1970s but it is arguable that Aboriginal people even today still move on foot through the local landscape to a much greater extent than their white counterparts.

Travelling for seasonal and other work

From the mid-nineteenth century seasonal farm work was an important part of the Aboriginal economy on the lower North Coast. This included fruit and vegetable picking both on farms that were within walking distance of Aboriginal settlements and those that were further away and where people camped for the duration of the picking. In the 1950s and 60s Aboriginal people (individuals and families) from the area took part in the long-distance picking 'cycles' in NSW which saw people from Forster Reserve, for instance, travel to and from the picking camps around Nowra on the NSW South Coast.¹⁴⁴ The participation of Aboriginal men in the shearing industry was another aspect of this pattern of movement.



Moving through the grid

The oral histories collected for this project (see Part 3) show an often detailed knowledge by Aboriginal people of the 'map' of white properties in the areas around the Purfleet and Forster 'missions'.¹⁴⁵ This knowledge is most often articulated in terms of whether the landowners were friendly, neutral or



hostile to Aboriginal people. In practical terms, it was this knowledge that largely dictated the paths that Aboriginal people took through the agricultural part of the colonised landscape.

Figure 30 represents, in diagram form, the idea that, for Aboriginal people, the agricultural landscape had increasingly become a mosaic of white farms that, in the way described above, were open or closed to them. People might be able to cross the paddocks of friendly landowners but would have to go around the fences of hostile ones or risk trespassing. This aspect of the Aboriginal cultural landscape can, obviously, only be 'mapped' by Aboriginal people themselves.

Another way of moving through the privately owned agricultural landscape, as mentioned earlier (Page 32 & Figure 25), was via the various Crown reserves – e.g. water reserves, road reserves (see Figure 26). The location of these reserves is shown on Parish Plans and, in less detail, on 1:25,000 topographic maps. These constitute an indicative map of Aboriginal movements through the landscape.¹⁴⁶ By 'indicative' we mean that in most cases Aboriginal people would have had access to these reserves and there is plentiful evidence that, in general in NSW, they commonly did use them. The question of whether they used them at any specific time and place in the past can only be answered by reference to place-specific documentary or oral history evidence. The usefulness of such indicative maps in helping to locate the remains of Aboriginal post-contact sites is discussed later (see pages 59-60).

Change in the Aboriginal economy

The changing landscape of the study area meant changes in the way Aboriginal people made a living. By this period, for instance, the logging and milling of hardwood timber had become a major industry on the Manning. By 1872 some one and a half million feet of sawn timber was exported.¹⁴⁷

Even before the arrival of chain saws and tracked vehicles, this logging obviously changed the nature of the forests, diminishing their potential to sustain Aboriginal people who wanted to live off the bush. Hunting and gathering native animals and plants by this period had inevitably become a marginal, though valued, part of Aboriginal life.

At the same time, the introduction and spread of exotic animals provided new possibilities. It is clear from both the documentary and oral history for the lower North Coast that rabbits were hunted on a widespread basis by Aboriginal people both for sale (of skins) and for food. Some Aboriginal people on the lower Manning and at Forster were able to make a living by fishing and there is no question that fish and shellfish continued to be a mainstay of Aboriginal diet. A few Aboriginal people also took up farming.

It would certainly be a mistake to think that Aboriginal people during this period were totally dependent on government rations or handouts. As Goodall notes, in 1880 in NSW eighty-one percent of the Aboriginal population was economically independent.¹⁴⁸

In the following pages we look at some aspects of the new economy.

Aboriginal farming

By the early 1890s virtually all the alluvial soils of the lower Manning Valley had been cleared and ninety-one percent of the agriculture land was sown with maize.¹⁴⁹ For this period we have the first documentary evidence of Aboriginal farming in the area. The evidence gives only glimpses of this aspect of life but it allows us to guess at the wider picture. Billy Johnson, born at Curricabakh, who worked as a tracker on the Clarence before returning to the Manning began farming at Killawarra (see Chapter 12) in the early 1880s.

According to Ramsland,

*On an unused Reserve for Aborigines at Killawarra about six miles from Wingham he set up a family residence in the early 1880's and attempted to grow maize, potatoes, and tobacco which he surrounded with a sapling fence. He put about two acres under cultivation. He was still there in 1895 with three other adults and seven children.*¹⁵⁰

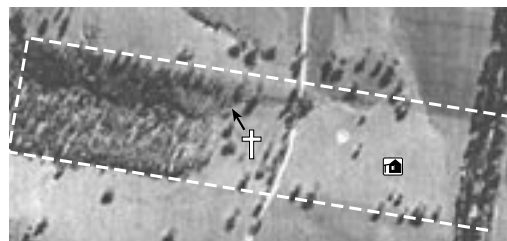
From a note in the minutes of the Aborigines' Protection Board for 1911 we know that Aboriginal

people were still using the Reserve at that time: 'request by Aboriginal for material to add to his house'. Most of the land had been leased by the Board to white farmers by 1918 and in 1921 the APB minutes record that the land was handed over to the Lands Department for disposal 'in view of the fact that this land is never used by Aborigines'.

Until the work of the historian Heather Goodall few white people in NSW knew that Aboriginal people in the State had a long history of farming and that in many areas they had lobbied and harassed the authorities in order to acquire land to farm.¹⁵¹ Much of the despair and demoralisation in Aboriginal communities by the mid-twentieth century appears to have stemmed from losing the struggle to keep land they had cleared and farmed. They had to watch as Aboriginal Reserves were revoked and either sold or leased to white farmers.¹⁵²

We know that an Aboriginal settlement existed in the Barrington valley, in the upper Manning, by the late nineteenth century. The Aboriginal people of Barrington were farmers in their own right as well as doing stock work and providing agricultural labour for white pastoralists and farmers in the area. It is known that 'a few agriculturalists' had selected portions of land on the narrow strip of alluvial soil along the Barrington river in the 1880s.¹⁵³ It is likely that it was at this time that the Barrington Aboriginals gained access to the land that subsequently became Aboriginal Reserve 35673 (see Figure 32). The Cook family (Aboriginal) were ultimately forced off this land when the Reserve was revoked in 1957. As often occurred, the loss came in increments. The ABP minutes for 1928 record that the twenty-five acre 'back half' of the Reserve was leased a Mr Higgins (presumably a white farmer).

When the rest of the Reserve was disposed of, members of the Cook family moved to Armidale, Kempsey, and elsewhere. They preserve memories of life on the Barrington farm as part of their family history and have on occasion gone back to visit the old farm. The graves of three family members are present, outlined with stones, below a tree on the



Left page Fig. 30: Diagram showing the pattern of white settlement in the 1890s

Fig. 31: A road reserve in farmland near Purfleet

This page Fig. 32: Aerial view of former Cook family farm at Barrington; the family cemetery is indicated by a cross
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back half of the old farm (see Figure 32). Down the hill towards the Barrington River a crepe laurel and an old orange tree mark the site of the old Cook homestead. The old house was demolished decades ago and a new house stands on the same site. When Cook family members return to look at the farm, the crepe laurel and the orange tree trigger memories of the old farm life (interviews conducted with members of the Cook family in 1998).

In both the Killawarra and Barrington cases it has been an easy matter to locate the former Aboriginal Reserves from cadastral information in published lists of Aboriginal Reserves¹⁵⁴ or in the Aborigines’ Protection Board archives. No search has been made for physical (archaeological) traces of Aboriginal farming at either Barrington or Killawarra.

Aboriginal people in the fishing industry

There are enough references to Aboriginal people fishing from bark canoes on the Manning River to indicate that this was a major part of the Biripi food economy and that it continued to be so during the first decades of white settlement. There are numerous references in white settler reminiscences to the skill of Aboriginal people in spearing fish from bark canoes on the Manning.¹⁵⁵ Fishing boats operated by white people were present on the lower Manning by 1882 and in Wallis Lake and the Wallamba River by 1889.¹⁵⁶ It is evident that Aboriginal people both on the lower Manning and at Forster wanted a part of this industry, presumably using the fishing skills they already possessed and drawing upon a vast accumulated knowledge of the coastal and estuarine fisheries.

In the table below, a summary of references to Aboriginal fishing boats in the Aborigines’ Protection Board archives is provided. These mostly comprise requests to the Board from local police for money for the maintenance or purchase of boats and gear. It is known that some Aboriginal fishermen also built their own boats.



Taree	Forster
1890 – Taree police: ‘oars needed for the Aborigines’ boat’	1891 – Forster police: ‘repair and repaint the Aborigines’ boat’
1891 – Taree police: ‘repairs to the boat used by the Manning River Aborigines’	1892 – Forster police: ‘repainting the Aborigines boat’
1893 – Taree police: ‘replacing the Aborigines’ boat’	1894 – Forster police: ‘repair and repaint the Aborigines’ boat’
1895 - R.A. Price MP: recommends that ‘Aborigines at Taree be supplied with a boat & gear’	1895 - Forster police: application by Aborigines ‘for a fishing net and an additional boat’
1895 - ‘Tenders for construction of a boat for use by Aborigines at Taree’	1895 - Forster police: ‘boat needs repair, cannot be used’

The white settler practice of dredging oysters from the river channels along the lower Manning rapidly expanded from the beginning of the 1860s until by 1882 some fifty to sixty boats were engaged in this enterprise.¹⁵⁷ It was an inherently short-lived approach to oyster harvesting, however, as the beds were rapidly exhausted. It was soon replaced by oyster farming. In 1882 the first lease for oyster racks was issued on the Wallamba River. As white oyster farmers ‘staked out’ the productive estuarine and lake environments we can assume that Aboriginal shellfish gathering was increasingly pushed into those oyster habitats that were not commercially attractive or viable.

The founder of the fishing industry at Tuncurry was Philip Sciacca who arrived there from Italy in 1889.¹⁵⁸ The following year he was joined by his countryman, Vincenzo Fazio, whose family regularly bought fish from Aboriginal fishermen both at Purfleet and Forster. The focus of Aboriginal fishing at Tuncurry-Forster was Wallis Lake rather than the open sea.



The Aboriginal fishermen of Forster operated from boats built for the conditions of the lake and not the conditions of the sea.

Documentary material relating to the history of Aboriginal post-contact fishing mostly relates to the provision by the government of boats or funds for boat construction and for the provision of boat and fishing gear. A rich oral history exists for Aboriginal fishing (both subsistence and commercial) for our study area. Some indication of this richness is provided in Chapters 10 & 19.¹⁵⁹

Freedom on the waterways

In a period in which Aboriginal people were increasingly restricted in their movements on land, and increasingly subject to white surveillance there, the waterways of the coast, the rivers, and lakes provided greater scope for freedom of movement. The waterways of the lower Manning had been the highways for white settler movements in the mid-

nineteenth century, but as the area's road network expanded these same waterways receded into the background of settler existence. Frequented mainly by commercial fishermen and oyster farmers, to a certain extent they became a refuge for Aboriginal people.

The waterways around the deltaic islands of the lower Manning and the islands and margins of Wallis Lake are an important 'landscape of reference' in Aboriginal oral history (see Chapters 13 & 19). Even today, the margins of many of these waterways are densely vegetated and provide a myriad secluded spots for resting, picnicking, camping, and carrying out the various chores associated with fishing. Crown water reserves (100 feet wide) along the edges of some parts of the river provided sufficient access to the river bank for Aboriginal people to moor their fishing boats and dry their nets on the wooden racks they constructed (see Figure 35).

Boat building

Aboriginal fishing and boat-building went hand-in-hand on the NSW lower North Coast. The table above testifies to the role of the Aborigines' Protection Board in supplying fishing boats and

This page Fig. 33: Part of the former Killawarra Aboriginal Reserve (photograph 2001)

Left page Fig. 34: Remains of a boat at Warner Saunders' mooring site on Stitts Creek

Fig. 35: Remains of a wooden ramp at Warner Saunders' mooring site on Stitts Creek

equipment. But it is also clear from Aboriginal oral histories recorded that, at least in the mid- and late-twentieth century, a number of Aboriginal men built their own boats. It is reasonable to think that in doing so they drew upon a long tradition of skill in woodworking. We know that many of the pre-contact stone artefacts present on archaeological sites throughout the study area had been used for the manufacture of wooden spears, shields, canoes, boomerangs, nulla nullas and other wooden implements. In a sense, the pre-contact stone tool kit was replaced with the metal one that was used in boat building, house building (especially at the fringe camps), and furniture manufacture (e.g. the cane chairs made by Aboriginal people at Forster). Evidence for this aspect of Aboriginal heritage resides mainly in oral history rather than in the documentary record.

Aboriginal funerals and graves

In the 1870s, when the Aboriginal man 'Tommy' died at Krumbach, his body was carried on a sheet of bark to a grave where he was buried with his knees tied to his chest. Placed in the grave with him were a new blanket 'and various weapons common to the race'.¹⁶⁰ Krumbach, on the upper Wallamba River, was a small white farming enclave fairly remote from the main hub of settlement on the lower Manning. In such areas 'traditional' burial practices may have endured longer than elsewhere in the region. By the late nineteenth century Aboriginal people were establishing their own cemeteries on the fringes of white towns such as Taree.

By the early decades of the twentieth century Aboriginal people were burying their dead in coffins in European-style graves. A special Aboriginal cemetery was established a few kilometres south of the Purfleet Reserve in the early twentieth century (see Figure 56). The transition to European-style burial practices had been partly forced by government health regulations and, from the 1930s, by the supervisory role of the white manager at Purfleet.

An Aboriginal burial ground was established in the late nineteenth century in what is now suburban Wingham, most likely by residents of the fringe camp on the Wingham town common. A local white author recorded that, 'Aboriginal warriors and elders were buried in a sitting position with the chin resting on the knees. These graves can be identified years later by the short sunken indentation in the earth'.

He continued: 'A good example can be seen behind the saw mill in Lambert Street, Wingham. This plot next to a small gully among a few gum trees should be fenced and reserved for posterity.'¹⁶¹

The above two cases indicate the sort of spatial detail present in the available documentary sources. In the former case, the only detail we have is the place name 'Krumbach' – the grave in question might lie anywhere within the area of about ten square kilometres known by that name. In the Wingham case, by contrast, the reference takes us almost directly to the site. Here we are fortunate in that an early Parish Plan for Wingham (pre-1920) shows a small rectangular reserve (approx. ten by twenty metres) gazetted in 1908 'for preservation of graves'. The reserve is situated on Lambert Street on the western edge of this small town (see Figure 36).

Ceremonial life

The most detailed account of a Biripi male initiation ceremony is that by the ethnologist R.H. Mathews for the 1889 event held on Stony Creek about two and a half kilometres upstream from Kimbriki on the mid reaches of the Manning River. Situated in 'thickly wooded country', two raised-earth circles were constructed for this ceremony. Around these circles were twenty-one trees carved with ritual designs.¹⁶² Mathews provided a detailed description of the ceremonies and the venue and included drawings of the designs on the carved trees. He describes the location as being 'about three-quarters of a mile up Stony Creek from the crossing-place over that creek of the public road from Tinonee to George Town' (on the south side of the Manning River, about twelve kilometres southeast of Wingham).¹⁶³ He does not say on which side of the creek the ceremonial ground lay, nor how far distant it was from the creek. This site has not been recorded on the ground.

These initiation ceremonies appear to have been modified versions of pre-contact ceremonies. Certain ritual acts, such as body scarification and the knocking out of a (boy's) front tooth, appear to have ceased very early in the contact period.

In his 1905 reminiscences, John Allan refers in passing to a male initiation ceremony held 'at the back of Purfleet'.¹⁶⁴ At what he refers to as 'the last ceremony at Kimbriki' (likely to be the 1889 ceremony described by Mathews), he relates trying to take a photograph of the 'grand finale' but being stopped from doing so by one of the men.¹⁶⁵ His locational descriptions are too vague to provide a basis for an on-ground search to relocate the

Right page Fig. 36: Location of Aboriginal graves at Lambert Street, Wingham
© Department of Lands

ceremonial sites ('back of Purfleet', for instance, presumably means somewhere on the forested hill slopes in Kiwarrak State Forest south of Purfleet). He is even less specific in regard to dates. The events he describes are left to 'float', as it were, in the span of the second half of the nineteenth century. This is typical of a certain type or genre of local historical writing, often in the form of reminiscences, which refer to 'the old days' as an undifferentiated bloc of time.

It is clear that corroborees continued to be held well into the post-contact period. These were ceremonial dance events which were comparatively frequent and unrestricted (i.e. not surrounded by the secrecy of initiation rites). Ella Simon mentions a corroboree ground at Gillawarra, near Purfleet, which she was told about by a 100-year-old white landowner who remembered it being in use when he was a boy.¹⁶⁶

Obviously, by this time, many Aboriginal Dreaming sites were no longer accessible to Aboriginal people; with the breakdown of the initiation process the transmission of precise knowledge about these places was curtailed. This did not mean, though, that the places ceased to be a living part of the Aboriginal cultural landscape. In *Through My Eyes*, for instance, Ella Simon describes a Dreaming story which relates to a rock in Wallis Lake, the rock being the embodiment of a clever woman. It was known to contemporary Aboriginal people as 'Granny Rock'.¹⁶⁷



She also mentions a lone mangrove tree on the beach near Blackhead (south of Saltwater): 'We were told not to touch this tree. If we did it would bring very heavy rain'.¹⁶⁸

Totemic beliefs and practices continued into the twentieth century on the North Coast and in other parts of NSW.¹⁶⁹ Recent research commissioned by the Cultural Heritage Division of the Department of Environment and Conservation, has demonstrated that totemism continues to be a living force in Aboriginal NSW.¹⁷⁰

in another locality. Instructions to this effect were issued on the 25th instant.

I have the honor, etc.,

A. C. PETTITT,
Secretary A.P. Board.

Railway Sleepers.

that it is proposed to remove the Aborigines, who are now living in the vicinity of Wingham to reserves in another locality. Instructions to

who had significant, were u

An apology absence of Mr.

The Chairman a copy of the ing the advertising.

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Other Taree

6 Segregation & entanglement 1900-1940

As we move into the twentieth century we take account of the policy and practice of racial segregation as an increasingly important factor in shaping the cultural landscape as it was experienced by Aboriginal people.

White settlement consolidated

During the early 1900s pastoralists extended their leaseholds into the rugged forest country between the creeks and rivers of the Manning Valley.¹⁷¹ Birrell describes the situation in the valley in 1896:

*Thus, in the lower valleys a patchwork of cleared, cultivated, cropped and temporarily grassed fields extended over the alluvial soils adjacent to the major streams; small discontinuous patches of cultivation and cleared land, interspersed with forests, extended into the upper reaches of the small tributary creeks; and on the lower slopes of the valleys the hardwood forests had been ringbarked or cleared to form a rough pasture of native grasses.*¹⁷²

Figure 27 shows the extent of white settlement by 1896. By this time appropriation of land for farming and other purposes associated with white settlement approximated the situation in the present day.

It was remarked for the previous period (1870-1900) that Aboriginal people occupied and utilised gaps and openings in the cadastral grid. Having been dispossessed of their country, they had to live around and in-between the privately owned properties of white settlers. This remained true for the present period, though what changes is that the grid of privately owned land extends further into those areas previously considered marginal or completely unfit for white landuse. A comparison of the map in Figure 22 (1861) with that in Figure 27 (1896) shows an

expansion of land appropriation in coastal areas. Despite this, there remained substantial tracts of coastline which remained unsettled and hence more-or-less available to Aboriginal people as places to camp and visit, places to obtain seafood and enjoy the coastal lifestyle. Along with the bush covered hill country, these were places where white surveillance could largely be avoided. They were areas that were marginal to the settler agricultural economy and they remained unsegregated insofar as they were freely available to both Aboriginal and white people, both of whose activities there remained largely uncontrolled by white authorities. This category of coastal terrain included the coastal swamplands north of Harrington, the Nine Mile Beach strip north of Tuncurry and the tract of coastal and forest land north of Saltwater.

The consolidation of white settlement in our study area in the period 1900-1940 is reflected in the growth of Taree's population which doubled from 871 in 1901 to 1,539 in 1911.

Race and space

In our coverage of the nineteenth century, the focus of our attention has been on 'spatialising' historical records of the post-contact period, using them to build up a picture of where Aboriginal people were in the landscape both in terms of their activities and their patterns of movement. With the onset of the twentieth century it becomes increasingly important to acknowledge the role of racial segregation in shaping the cultural landscape. We note that racism always has a spatial dimension and that racial segregation specifically concerns itself with the issue of how close people of different races are permitted to be to each other.¹⁷³

The period 1890-1940 has been described as that which witnessed 'the flowering of racial consciousness' in Australia.¹⁷⁴ The separation of Aboriginal people from the white mainstream which earlier had been driven by 'humanitarianism' (see above) was now driven by explicitly racist thinking. Intensification of white settlement meant increased white control and administration of space. This, in

Left page Extract from "Wingham Chronicle"

turn, enabled segregation, because you could not separate people spatially in the landscape until you had administrative control of it. The police, health and education officials, land surveyors and administrators, all had a role in this and the documentary records they left behind help us to 'map' how racial segregation operated at a local level.

This control of space enabled segregation but what motivated it was a complex of specific anxieties and prejudices among white settlers in relation to Aboriginal people. This drew upon a long established tendency by Western society to associate the dark skinned people of the world with dirt, moral degeneracy, and disease.¹⁷⁵ In Australia in the decades after 1850 the 'problem' of what to do with Aboriginal people who had survived the process of dispossession coincided with a 'refinement' of racial thought in the Western world generally.¹⁷⁶ The most marked element of this refinement was in the form of the 'scientific' arguments that emerged to justify racial discrimination. The result was that in the last decades of the nineteenth century there came to be greater pressure, at a local level, to separate Aboriginal people from the mainstream of white settler life. This culminated in the establishment of the Aboriginal Reserve at Purfleet in 1900. At a broader level, governments increasingly regulated Aboriginal life separately from the way they regulated white people's lives; Aborigines, for instance, were disqualified from receiving the old age and invalid pensions that were established by Commonwealth law in 1908.

The situation on the lower North Coast mirrored the situation elsewhere in NSW. According to Henry Reynolds,

*Access to small towns was restricted and curfews were imposed. The officials of the Aborigines' Protection Board were stunned by "the vehemence with which whites demanded that Aborigines be excluded from schools, shops, the streets and indeed the very boundaries of their towns".*¹⁷⁷

Segregated landscapes

The settlers of John Allan's generation, who came to the Manning in the 1850s when they were still young, often had close associations with Aboriginal people, formed in the course of working on the land. By the turn of the century these settlers were old and dying as were the Aboriginal people they grew up with. The landscape of their old age was an increasingly segregated one, very different from

that of earlier years. A newspaper description of the Aboriginal woman, Mrs Bugg, at the time of her death in 1901, as 'a well-known identity', is suggestive of a level of familiarity (which is not to say equality) between older black and white people which was becoming a thing of the past.¹⁷⁸

Pressure for removal

The new stridency in local race relations which underpinned government segregation policies is exemplified in our study area by the intensity of white pressure on Aboriginal people to move on from wherever it was they happened to be living at any particular time. In the first years of the new century, Aboriginal fringe camp dwellers in the Manning Valley were under intense pressure to move to Purfleet Reserve, gazetted in 1900. The *Wingham Chronicle* in June 1901 editorialised: 'We consider it high time that some steps were taken to have the blacks removed to the reserve at Purfleet where the Government have built houses for them'.¹⁷⁹ The fact that a large part of the town's white population was, in 1915, after several years effort, still trying to have the people living in the fringe camp on Wingham Common moved out is testament to the tenacity of the fringedwellers' will to stay put. It also underlines the fact that the dispersed nature of the Aboriginal population in the Manning at this time was a product of an Aboriginal will to occupy diverse 'sites' rather than some accident of history. The pressure on the Wingham and Taree fringe camp residents represented a white movement to concentrate what remained a dispersed Aboriginal population into fewer locations. To this extent reserves like Purfleet were like 'concentration camps' or gulags.

But even those Aboriginal people who had already moved onto Aboriginal Reserves could not live in peace; they were subject to the harassment of local whites who wanted the Reserves moved somewhere else. In a letter received in May 1895 by the Aborigines' Protection Board, a resident of Forster urged that the Aboriginal people on the Forster Reserve be removed to an island in Wallis Lake. In 1906 the Board received an application by the Forster Progress Association for removal of Aborigines to Taree. Between 1906 and 1919 an Italian neighbour of the Aboriginal Reserve at Killawarra made repeated requests to the APB to be permitted to lease part of the Reserve. There was also pressure in the 1910s from some white residents in the Purfleet vicinity to have Purfleet mission removed to Dingo Creek; there was a counter petition from Wingham Council and 'certain residents' who opposed this shift to their

area. It should be noted that, at least at first, the APB resisted most of this pressure.

The pressure to concentrate the Aboriginal population in the Manning Valley onto the Purfleet Reserve was accompanied by the revocation of two of the smaller Reserves that had existed in the Valley: the six acre Reserve at Tinonee (AR13011) was sold in 1910 and the Killawarra Reserve (AR19861) was disposed of by the Protection Board in 1921 (see Chapter 12).

A people who only eighty years previously had enjoyed sovereignty over their own country could now find virtually no foothold in the same landscape where they could exist free from harassment.

White allies against exclusion

Even in the darkest days of segregation Aboriginal people were not without their allies or supporters in the local white population. George Hill of 'Bungay', near Wingham wrote to the Aborigines' Protection Board in 1911 to 'strongly protest' that 'another attempt is being made to deprive the aboriginals of their reserve in the Parish of Killawarra'.¹⁸⁰ The police on a number of occasions recommended against disposing of Reserve lands to white farmers when the APB was pressured to do so. In *Through My Eyes*, Ella Simon wrote that the McClennans, a white family in the Purfleet area, invited her family to move from the Browns Hill fringe camp in Taree (Figure 43) to 'a little corner of their own land' in 1902. Three or four Aboriginal families moved there.¹⁸¹

Segregation and the reality of entanglement

One of the ironies of the segregation period is that by the early twentieth century Aboriginal and white people in the area were more closely related by 'blood' than ever before. A growing number of people in the area were descendants of cross-cultural unions and, even despite segregation, there continued to be men and women on both sides of the racial divide entering into casual or, often, long-lasting or permanent relationships. Those of mixed descent whose skin was sufficiently light in colour might choose to identify and live as white. Given the level of prejudice against Aboriginal people, it is not difficult to understand why many chose to 'pass' as whites. The politics of colour often resulted in families being split, the darker children going on to lead quite separate lives from their lighter brothers or sisters. Often the authorities specifically targeted lighter skinned children for forced separation from

their parents and families. As the *Bringing Them Home* report shows, many of the 'stolen', as a result of institutionalisation and of fostering or adoption by white people, completely lost contact with their Aboriginal kin.¹⁸² Some, later in life, were able to trace their kin and be reunited with them.

Ella Simon, whose father was a white man from Wingham, chose not name him in her book 'because of his relatives and because I loved my father'.¹⁸³ As a girl she used to go from Purfleet to visit him in Wingham and he came to live with her when he was old. Despite the obviously close emotional bond between them, his family prevented her from attending his funeral.

*One of the greatest trials of my life was to try to forgive these people for that. They had nothing to do with my father when he was living. And there I was, so much in his life over the last few years, and yet I wasn't deemed good enough to be able to go to his funeral. I had looked after him as best I could. I had told the authorities where to find these people so that they could be notified of his death. I had shown the place where he wanted to be buried. And more than all that, I had loved him; he was my father. It didn't make the slightest difference to them. I couldn't even stand by and just watch. I was still a secret that had to be kept from the world.*¹⁸⁴

Segregation of learning

The old public school at Glenthorne, on the Purfleet side of the Manning River, opposite Taree, was closed in 1917. In the previous year, Mr Black, the local school inspector, had written: 'I visited Glenthorne public school for inspection purposes to-day, and found an extraordinary state of affairs, owing to the attendance of the aboriginal children from the Purfleet Mission Station all the white children have been withdrawn. The effective enrolment at present is 13, all Aboriginal.'¹⁸⁵ He recommended that the school be closed. The parents of the white students had, indeed, earlier in the year petitioned the Minister of Education, threatening to take their children out of the school unless the Aboriginal children were immediately withdrawn. 'It is well known', they claimed (in reference to Purfleet Reserve), 'that these children come from a camp that is not healthy'.¹⁸⁶

Goodall notes that Aboriginal parents had been keen to enrol their children in the public schools of NSW which, under the terms of Henry Parkes's education system, were to be open to all. She continues:

In later years, when white parents were forced to explain just exactly what sort of a threat they

*believed Aboriginal children posed, they would usually refer to the threat of infectious diseases. Whenever investigations were held, however, Aboriginal children were shown to suffer only from the same diseases of poverty as most of the white children at the school. The real anxieties of white parents were usually revealed to be fears that their children would grow up to form social or sexual relationships with Aboriginal people, which in the rigidly stratified world of country towns represented a major threat to social status.*¹⁸⁷

Segregation as heritage

In summary, segregation is nominated here as a major theme of post-contact Aboriginal heritage, firstly because it was a major feature of Aboriginal life experience in the post-contact period and, secondly, because it relates so closely to place and landscape. The policy and practice of segregation is often the key to explaining why Aboriginal people were present in one part of the landscape and not in another. At a micro-geographic level, it often explains why Aboriginal people were present in one part of a building or built complex and not in another. Why, for instance, they sat only in the front rows of the Boomerang picture theatre in the 1950s and 1960s (see Chapter 11 and Figures 64 & 68) or why Aboriginal patients were to be found on the verandah of the Taree Hospital and not in the interior wards (see Chapter 11 and Figure 64).

Aboriginal people in the larger economy

The mainstay of Aboriginal involvement in the cash economy remained the work they did for white farmers, including the picking of fruit and vegetables, stockwork, and shearing. In addition to this, the timber industry was beginning to be a significant employer of Aboriginal labour, a situation which would endure through the twentieth century. There were eight steam timber mills operating in the lower Manning by 1896.¹⁸⁸ Aboriginal men worked in the mills as well as in logging teams in the forests. Sleeper cutting for the new North Coast railway supplemented the cutting of mine props and fence posts. Along with ceramic tiles, corrugated iron roofing had come into general use by this period, replacing bark and shingles, much of which in earlier days had been supplied by Aboriginal people.

The arrival of rail

The North Coast rail line was significant to local Aboriginal people both in terms of their role in its

construction and in the way the new line facilitated a change in their pattern of movement within the study area and the wider world outside it. The railways helped bring into being the extensive networks of far-flung kin that characterise Aboriginal Australia in the present day. The tender for the Gloucester-Taree section of the line was let in 1909 and soon over 2,000 men were employed in its construction.¹⁸⁹ Temporary canvas townships grew up along the route.¹⁹⁰ The line was completed to Taree in 1913. The railways would continue to employ Aboriginal people in various capacities in the following decades



Aboriginal funerals and graves

By this period it appears that most Aboriginal people were being buried more-or-less according to the European conventions. In November 1918, in one of her regular bulletins to her Sydney headquarters, the missionary stationed at the Purfleet Reserve reported that 'Little Vera has been "called Home"... all the relations of Vera were present, and heard the message. The church was decorated with white flowers'.¹⁹¹ In October 1926 the missionary wrote that two burials had taken place within the Purfleet Aboriginal cemetery (Figure 56). 'One was a child, which died two days after birth. The other was Mr. John Cook, of Barrington, who died in Taree Public Hospital. To the mourning friends we extend our sincere sympathy'.¹⁹² These quotations come from one of the newsletters circulated by Christian missionary organisations working among Aboriginal people in NSW. Each issue contained a 'roundup' of brief reports by individual missionaries working at various Aboriginal Reserves across the state; they are a valuable supplement to the information contained in the Aborigines' Protection Board archives.

While funerals, especially those conducted by the missionaries, were in the European style, the decoration of the graves themselves is likely to have

followed a distinct and continuing Aboriginal pattern in which stones and seashells were used. Traces of such commemorative decorations are present at the old Purfleet cemetery (no longer in use); stones and shells continue to be used to decorate Aboriginal graves at Redbank, the cemetery used by most Aboriginal families in the Manning Valley in the present day (Figure 57). Segregationist practices excluded Aboriginal people from burial in the public cemeteries of the lower North Coast in the first half of the twentieth century. Even in the 1970s, when lack of space at the Purfleet Aboriginal cemetery led to a proposal that Aboriginal people be buried at the municipal cemetery at Redbank, one white citizen protested that this was inappropriate owing to the presence in the cemetery of the graves of white pioneers. Personal ties of friendship between certain white families and certain Aboriginal people could cut across segregationist conventions, however. When the Aboriginal man, Bungay Billy, died in the early twentieth century he was buried in the company of early settlers in the private cemetery on the Bungay property near Wingham.¹⁹³

There were individuals in the white community who expressed concern for Aboriginal graves. The author of a letter to the *Wingham Chronicle* in 1902, for instance, had been shown the Aboriginal graves at Wingham, situated ‘in a cleared spot in the bush’. He questioned whether it was fair that the last resting place of the people whose land had been taken by white settlers ‘should be left without the least care’. This, in his opinion, was ‘a standing disgrace to us’.¹⁹⁴ These comments may relate to the Aboriginal graves at Lambert Street, Wingham (Figure 36).

Participation in white cultural life

By 1891 the Salvation Army in the Manning Valley had its own Aboriginal contingent whose members played cornets and made regular visits to Wingham on Wednesday nights.¹⁹⁵ Sport provided a significant contact zone between Aboriginal and white society in the first half of the twentieth century, as it continues to do in the present day. Cricket was the most popular sport among Aboriginal people in the early twentieth century but football was a growing interest. In 1926 the ‘Sunrise footballers’ performed a concert

at the Majestic Theatre in Taree which featured a gum leaf band, singers and a ‘corroboree’. The APB Purfleet mission manager ‘amused the audience with his announcement of each item’.¹⁹⁶ These performances tended to caricature Aboriginal culture and hence reassure white society of its superiority at the same time as providing it with entertainment.

The distribution of people

The minutes of the NSW Aborigines’ Protection Board contain brief notes that shed light on the distribution of the Aboriginal population in our study area at various points in time from the late nineteenth century till the mid-twentieth century. The coverage is patchy and the notes are mostly fragmentary.

	Taree
1900	clothing for 28 adults and 24 children
	Purfleet
1901	material for erecting 10 dwellings
1943	Aboriginal population ‘Taree’ 141
	Wingham
1891	blankets to ‘3 old Aborigines at present camped at “Wingham”’
	Killawarra
1880s	Billy Johnson and his family cultivated 2 acres of maize, tobacco, potatoes. Still there in 1895 with 3 other adults and 7 children.
	Kimbriki
1894	(Nov) clothing, iron (roofing?), rations for ‘Aboriginal family at Kimbriki’
1894	(Dec) ‘hut occupied by Aboriginal family’; clothing for 2 children
	Barrington
1890	clothing to ‘seven old Aborigines’
1891	clothing ‘to 8 adults and the 23 children attending school at Barrington’
1892	clothing to 4 men, 6 women and 26 children at Barrington
1893	clothing to ‘the Aborigines drawing rations at Barrington (6 adults, 18 children)’
1894	(April) clothing for 6 adults and 18 children
1894	(Sept) clothing for 6 adults and 22 children
	Forster
1891	20 children attending the Aboriginal school
1943	Aboriginal population 68

Left page Fig. 37: The late John Saunders visiting a grave in the old Purfleet Aboriginal cemetery, 1998

54-
Commissioner Merewether
as.  Report on the
May District during the
54/1002

No. 54/3.

In compliance with the
instructions contained in your circular
letter of the 16th February 1859, I
have the honor to submit as my
my Annual Report on the State
the Aborigines in this District and
District; and also to

7 Identifying Aboriginal post-contact sites from written records

What is the quality of spatial information provided by documentary historical sources? Here we address this question with particular reference to Aboriginal post-contact camp sites.

The heritage of frontier violence

Frontier violence poses a uniquely difficult problem for heritage practitioners.¹⁹⁷ The Aboriginal spokesperson, Lois O'Donoghue, has recently called for memorials to be erected at massacre sites; but of the hundreds or thousands of places where killings took place across Australia only a mere handful are recorded with any exactitude on maps. The location of some others are known in a very general way, for instance, as having occurred somewhere along a certain river or creek. A haze has descended over the specifics of these events and this might simply be put down to 'memory decay' except that we know the perpetrators normally took care to burn or otherwise dispose of the bodies. And, as Henry Reynolds points out, while the killers often boasted of their deeds in private conversation there was a code of silence in frontier settler communities which kept information from circulating to outsiders.¹⁹⁸ The massacres may, at a local or personal level, have been committed to memory by individual people, apparently to the extent that the perpetrators were often haunted by their deeds later in life. But the same people took measures to prevent specific and detailed knowledge of individual events becoming a subject of public memory and to prevent them being available for commemoration.

This is reflected in the quality of spatial information on massacres in our study area. With the exception of Mt McKenzie (to the west of our area), it is not possible to fix the on-ground location of any of

the killings that took place there. At Mt McKenzie, the NPWS has erected an interpretive sign in the vicinity of the place on the cliff top from which the Aboriginal victims are believed to have been driven off to their death.

In the last few years the historical evidence attesting to frontier violence against Aboriginal people has been subject to an increasingly critical scrutiny (see recent books by Keith Windschuttle and his critics¹⁹⁹).

References to place

Documentary historical references to Aboriginal post-contact camps, ceremonial sites, burials, and work places tend not to contain precise locational details. Locational descriptions are commonly made by reference to a named white landowner or a named property. Here are two examples:

- '300 or more' Biripi people seen 'camped on a flat near the brush, close to Parkhaugh'.²⁰⁰ The 'Parkhaugh' property was on the edge of the Manning opposite Wingham.
- 'A few shacks of aboriginals were at The Bend, in the 1930s where a deep dip and bend in the road near Campbell's farm was at the entrance to Mt George'.²⁰¹

In each of these cases it is possible, by reference to early parish plans and other sources²⁰² to obtain the portion numbers for the farms in question. The tendency for local history writers to give directions by reference to landowners rather than geographical features reflects, of course, the nature of daily conversation in a local rural setting where people reference the cultural or social landscape as much, or more, than the physical landscape.

In previous chapters it has been argued that most of the areas of land in 'settled' landscapes that Aboriginal people had reasonably easy access to were Crown reserves of various kinds. The knowledge that a Crown reserve exists, or has existed, in a particular vicinity may thus help to narrow down the actual location of an Aboriginal camp or other post-contact site mentioned in the literature. The following reference may serve as an example: 'Tommy Boomer lived on the banks of

Left page Fig. 38: Report on Aborigines to Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands, 1853

Racecourse Creek, Old Bar' (this is likely to have been in the 1930s-1940s).²⁰³ Racecourse creek, on the south side of the coastal village at Old Bar (see Figure 41), is only about one and a half kilometres long and the small Crown reserve at its northern end, where the creek curves back on itself, has considerable potential to be the location of this camp.

Some descriptions simply name a large or 'continuous' geographic feature such as a creek. This applies to John Allan's recollection, for instance, of a mid-nineteenth-century camp in the Kimbriki area in the Manning Valley: 'I went up Stony Creek one day. There were a lot of blacks camping there'.²⁰⁴ Allan also refers to a later male initiation ceremony held 'at the back of Purfleet' (c.1890s).²⁰⁵ In each case the references indicate large areas of several square kilometres (e.g. Stony Creek runs for about eight kilometres). An on-ground search for physical (archaeological) traces over such an area would be difficult given that the traces in question would most likely to be less than spectacular (e.g. eroded traces of raised-earth circles, flaked glass artefacts).

Aboriginal post-contact camps

A summary of historical references to Aboriginal post-contact camps in our area may help to illustrate the nature and limitations of the historical record in relation to place. Before proceeding to this list, we have classified the camps into four broad types (below). While this typology may turn out to be applicable to post-contact sites in NSW generally we caution that it was developed only from information for our own study area. Having said that, we hope it may stimulate further interest in Aboriginal post-contact camps and their place in the landscape.

1 *Autonomous camps*

Locations chosen mainly in relation to the needs and desires of Aboriginal people. Many such camps may have been in occasional or cyclical use for thousands of years. They may be remote from white settlement and chosen partly in order to get away from white interference and surveillance. These are likely to have been more common in the nineteenth century and to have been located on land not yet surveyed or 'taken up' by whites. Some autonomous camps were established in the twentieth century by Aboriginal people hiding their children from Welfare and APB officials who sought to remove them for adoption or institutionalisation. An archaeologist who has worked extensively in the study area has noticed a tendency for these early post-contact camps to be located 'on low bedrock-soil spurs which interfinger with the alluvial plains'.²⁰⁶ She

points to the tendency for many pre-contact Aboriginal sites to also be located on such well-drained high ground close to water sources. The implication is that these 'autonomous' camps were located in the sort of places Aboriginal people had always favoured rather than being located in relation to white settlement.

2 *Farm camps*

These are Aboriginal camps located either on or adjacent to white farms and pastoral stations. They reflect interdependence between Aboriginal and white people: Aboriginal people were attracted by the availability of European foods and other products, white settlers were dependent on Aboriginal labour. In the more settled parts of NSW, such as our study area, these camps were common in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Often they were occupied on a seasonal or occasional basis. The farm camps in eastern NSW were smaller than the camps on pastoral stations in the west of the state.²⁰⁷ In later times these camps were replaced by houses (often former homesteads) made available for single Aboriginal families engaged in full-time work on particular farms.

3 *Pocket camps*

These were independent of any specific white farm or station, their locations determined by the availability of those 'pockets' of vacant land existing within the mosaic of white settlement (e.g. water reserves, town/village commons, travelling stock routes, reserves for roads not yet constructed or in use). Many of these camps came into existence in the 1850s-70s after Aboriginal people found the most productive parts of their country had been taken up by white settlers. They were often places where Aboriginal people themselves decided to try their hand at farming.²⁰⁸ In the late nineteenth century some of these were designated as Aboriginal Reserves in acknowledgment of their existing use by Aboriginal people. They were sometimes located centrally to a number of white farms which required occasional Aboriginal labour. These were common in the nineteenth century; some existed in the first half of the twentieth century.

4 *Fringe camps*

The term is used here in relation to camps specifically located on the edges of and sometimes 'inside' villages and towns. As with 'pocket camps', they were normally situated on land reserved for various purposes (e.g. water reserves, town

Right page Fig. 39: The distribution of Aboriginal post-contact camps in the Manning Valley



commons). Frequently the women and girls in these camps were employed as domestics by white townspeople. In many parts of NSW, including Sydney, fringe camps were established from the very moment that towns and villages came into being. Some of them existed into the 1950s and 60s at which point Aboriginal housing cooperatives and the State Housing Commission began providing houses for Aboriginal people in towns (the latter as part of the assimilation policy).

The following list brings together, under these four headings, documentary references to Aboriginal camps in our area. Locations are indicated in Figure 39.

Autonomous camps

Kundle Kundle

A camp called 'Goonal Goonal' that was 'used periodically by the tribe being central to good hunting grounds'.²⁰⁹ A massacre is reported to have taken place at this camp in 1838.

Stony Creek c. 1850s-1860s

'I went up Stony Creek one day. There were a lot of blacks camping there'.²¹⁰

Parkhaugh c. 1850s

'300 or more' Biripi people seen 'camped on

a flat near the brush, close to Parkhaugh, and they made the night hideous with their yells'.²¹¹ 'Parkhaugh' was the name of the property developed by Alex Lobban on Portions 10 and 147, Parish of Tinonee, in the 1840s and 50s on the south bank of the Manning opposite Wingham.

Kimbriki

A camp located 'in the Kimbriki Brush'.²¹² This implies a location on alluvial soils along the margin of the river.

Krambach

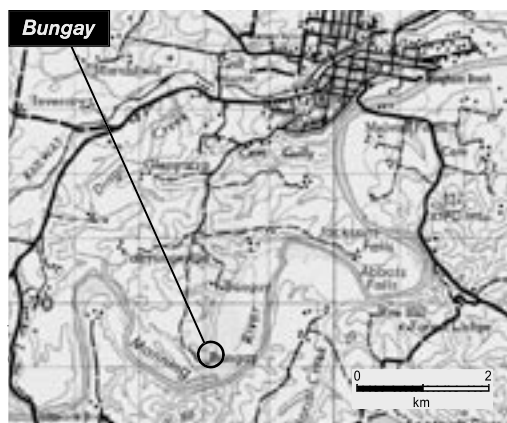
Earlier known as Larry's Flat: 'the black's camp there'.²¹³

Jones Island

1890s. Aboriginal elder, Horace Saunders, was told by long-time white residents of Jones Island that Aboriginal groups coming from Crowdy Head would visit their farmhouse 'to exchange ducks and other native foods for salt and tobacco. They would then travel northeast across Jones Island, camping overnight beneath a Moreton Bay fig tree before crossing the Lansdowne River near its confluence with the Manning'.²¹⁴

Oxley Island

The 1827 map of Oxley Island produced by the surveyor John Armstrong shows a 'natives camp' on the southern shore (see Figures 14 and 16).



Strike-a-Light camp

A nineteenth century camp located on flats adjacent to Rowleys River in deeply dissected forest country. No details available. The classification of this site as 'autonomous' is tenuous – it may have been situated to provide access to white farms.

Farm camps

Bungay

'I remember a lot of blacks being camped at Bungay on one occasion'.²¹⁵ This reminiscence by John Allan probably applies to the 1850s or 60s. There appears to have been a long association between the Biripi and the owners of Bungay Bungay farm on the north side of the Manning, about four kilometres upstream of Wingham. (The land was 'selected' in the 1820s.)

Lansdowne

'When Ben Saville moved onto his selection at Lansdowne [c.1848] the family group known as the Wallaby tribe made camp immediately south of the crossing and remained there'.²¹⁶

Coolplacurripa

Allan mentions a Biripi camp associated with his family's pastoral property here (c.1860s).²¹⁷

Burrell Creek

Allan refers to Aboriginal men who 'always worked' for the brothers George and Robert Easton, each of whom had farms on or near Burrell Creek in the 1860s (this may imply the presence of farm camps on these properties).

Pocket camps

The Bend

'A few shacks of aborigines were at The Bend,



in the 1930s where a deep dip and bend in the road near Campbell's farm was at the entrance to Mt George'.²¹⁸

Old Bar c.1930s-1940s

'Tommy Boomer lived on the banks of Racecourse Creek, Old Bar'.²¹⁹ This camp may have been located on a Crown Reserve (see Figure 41).

Dingo Creek

Prior to gazettal as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1906, a water reserve at Dingo Creek (Ashlea) appears to have been used by Aboriginal people as a camp – i.e. in the 1890s and possibly earlier (see Chapter 12).

Purfleet

An area of Crown Land at Purfleet which had been designated a Camping Reserve in 1880 was gazetted as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1900. There are indications that Aboriginal people were camping on the Camping Reserve (see Chapter 10).

Fringe camps

Wingham from c.1860s

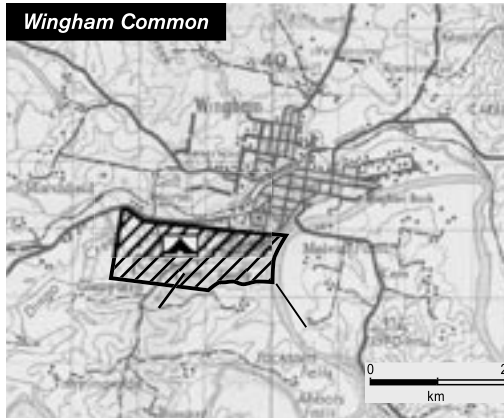
'About a mile along the road from Wingham was a very large camp of blacks'.²²⁰ An 1882 local newspaper refers to white residents of Wingham 'suffering annoyance from noise emanating from an Aboriginal camp'.²²¹ Police were supplying clothing to thirteen Aboriginal people at Wingham in 1893. A 1915 newspaper report states: 'The blacks made last night hideous near the Presbyterian Church. The Council, as Trustees of the Common, [should]

Right page Fig. 42: The location of the former Wingham Common (mostly now residential sub-division)

Fig. 43: The approximate location of the Aboriginal fringe camp at Browns Hill, Taree

This page Fig. 40: The location of the Bungay property, near Wingham
Fig. 41: The likely location of Tommy Boomer's camp at Old Bar (detail of the Bohnock Parish Plan, 1927)

Figs. 40-43 © Department of Lands



remove the camp from that area'.²²² In the same year the Mayor reported that, 'He had done all he could do to shift them, and had taken the police out several times'.²²³ It is likely this camp ceased to exist soon after 1915. However, in 1924 the records of the Aborigines' Protection Board note that the Wingham police were recommending the 'removal of undesirable Aborigines from vicinity of town'.

Richardson St, Wingham

In 1920 a hut and two tents 'on Richardson Street' were erected by an Aboriginal family, possibly from the Dingo Creek Reserve (approx. 7 kilometres away on the northeast side of town) in order that an old man could be near a doctor.²²⁴ The urging of one of the aldermen 'that every effort should be made to prevent them settling near the town' suggests the Council may have been successful in getting the camp on the Wingham Common closed by this time.

Taree showgrounds

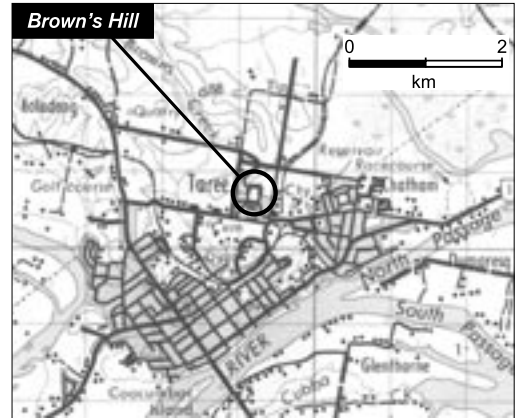
Aboriginal people had a fringe camp on the site of the present-day showgrounds.

Mills Creek, Taree

When the present day showgrounds were constructed (1900-05) the Aboriginal fringe-dwellers relocated their camp to the vicinity of a 'large waterhole on Mill Creek just below the intersection of Flett and Albert Street'. This was an area where, earlier, a Chinese market garden has occupied an area of three acres.²²⁵

Browns Hill (Browns Creek), Taree

In 1899 there were thirty-four adults and twenty-six children residing at this camp in 'small bark humpies'.²²⁶ In 1900 there were seventy Aboriginal residents there, occupying approximately eleven 'huts'.²²⁷



Patricia Davis-Hurst records her mother's (Margaret Marr's) memory of the camp around 1900: 'Mum packed our things and we all went to Browns Hill. It was all tea tree scrub and swamp. There was about 15-20 families living there at the time'. There were humpies and tin shacks all through the scrub, a great playground for the kids'.²²⁸ The late Margaret Marr's family had a vegetable and flower garden when they lived at Browns Hill in the early twentieth century.²²⁹ Aboriginal people were removed from the Browns Hill camp to Purfleet over a period of several years in the early 1900s. In the 1970s Aboriginal people returned to reside in the area when Housing Commission homes were built there. After Purfleet, the area presently represents the largest residential enclave of Aboriginal people in the Manning Valley.

Taree House, Taree

Connors states that the Mill Creek people later relocated to the area of Taree House, on the eastern side of the town.²³⁰

Happy Valley, Taree

During the Depression of the 1930s a camp of Aboriginal and white people sprang up beside the Taree-Wingham road (see Figure. 101). Poor families both black and white lived here in shacks.

Tinonee, 1871

'The blacks are now encamped about a mile from the township, and those who pass along after nightfall cannot but be struck with the picturesque effect of the great number of camp fires scattered through the bush.'²³¹

Crown reserves as indicators

Earlier we discussed the importance of Crown reserves as constituting 'gaps' in the cadastral grid of settler landholding that Aboriginal people could

use in order to both live in and move through the colonised landscape. To a considerable extent, the maps that show the location of these Crown reserves (particularly Parish Plans) are also indicative maps of where Aboriginal post-contact camp sites are likely to have been located in any particular landscape.

In areas like the NSW lower North Coast the Parish Plan for any one parish will have gone through a series of several editions beginning in the late nineteenth century. Each edition shows the categorisation and distribution of Crown reserves at the time the map was published together with hand-drawn modifications during the period through which the edition was in use. These modifications include the gazettal of new reserves and the revocation (for lease or sale) of pre-existing reserves.

In NSW the hard copies of these maps are held at the Land Titles Office in Sydney. Recently, though, scanned versions of most of the maps have become available on-line by courtesy of the NSW Land and Property Information (LPI) office's Parish Map Preservation Project (<http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au/maps/parish.html>). As indicative maps, the Parish Plans are an essential resource for anyone wishing to locate and record post-contact Aboriginal settlements in NSW.

Discussion

Fringe camps and other 'off reserve' enclaves of Aboriginal residency represent, to a certain extent, an Aboriginal desire for self-determination. As the anthropologist, Barry Morris, has observed, 'The "fringe camps" were one attempt to create "free space" away from institutional control and to defy the local authorities.'²³² Elsewhere in this book we have pointed to the mistaken perception by non-Aboriginal people in NSW that, during the post-contact period, most Aboriginal people in the state lived on Aboriginal Reserves. What is not widely appreciated is that, firstly, the Reserves only became major centres of Aboriginal population from about the 1890s. Secondly, even after the 1890s, a surprising number of Aboriginal people continued to live in off-Reserve camps. One of the surprises that our research in the Forster-Taree area held for us was the discovery of the extent to which Aboriginal people continued to be dispersed across the landscape right through the post-contact period.

The sites of many of the off-Reserve camps will, however, be difficult to identify and record on the ground. The documentary references, as can be seen from the above listing, are often too vague or approximate to allow the locations to be pin-pointed. The value of these references will often lie in their ability to indicate the general vicinity of a site to a sufficient extent for an archaeological survey to take over the job of pin-pointing the location.

8 Identifying Aboriginal post-contact sites on the ground

Here we look briefly at the archaeological ‘footprint’ of Aboriginal post-contact sites and consider some of the issues involved in the finding and recording of these sites in the field.

Introduction

This book is primarily about using documentary and oral history records in order that the Aboriginal post-contact experience may be mappable as heritage. It is not a book about how the places on such a map (e.g., fringe camps) can be identified and recorded archaeologically. We have not, ourselves, attempted to record archaeology traces – such as artefacts and remains of built structures – of the places mentioned in the book.

Our message for archaeologists is that unless they do their historical ‘homework’ there is relatively little chance of them being able to identify and record the majority of Aboriginal post-contact heritage places in the course of their fieldwork. Most of these places will slip through the net of archaeological field survey either because there are no archaeological traces present at them or because, where archaeological traces are present, they will not readily be distinguishable as Aboriginal (i.e. as representing Aboriginal presence). It seems important to make at least some preliminary observations here about this key problem of detectability and how historical sources (documentary and oral) may aid in resolving it.

The problem of detectability

A shared material culture

What makes Aboriginal post-contact sites, such as fringe camps and old Aboriginal Reserves, so difficult to detect using purely archaeological means is the fact that most of the material culture

of Aboriginal people during the historic period was shared with white people. The remains left on an abandoned early twentieth-century Aboriginal fringe camp are likely to be almost identical to those left at a camp used by itinerate white people. The remains left at a Depression era (1930s) Aboriginal fringe camp will look very much like those at one of the camps of unemployed white people which appeared on the edges of many towns at this time. A glance at the list of items on pages 62–63 shows the extent of this sharing of material culture.

Diagnostic flaked glass

An exception to the above rule comes in the form of flaked glass. Aboriginal people in the first decades of contact with white settlers used at least some of their pre-contact artefact types (e.g. flaked and ground-edge stone artefacts, wooden spears and coolamons) alongside items such as ceramic dishes and glass bottles ‘borrowed’ from white settler material culture. This mixing of the old and new in itself made for a distinctive ‘tool kit’ but it would be difficult to identify it archaeologically owing to the fact that Aboriginal post-contact camps were often located on the same spot as pre-contact camps. Except where there is stratigraphic separation of pre- and post-contact occupation the more recent artefact assemblage will be mixed with the older one. What is needed in such a situation is one or more diagnostic artefact type – an artefact that was used exclusively by Aboriginal people. Probably the only artefacts which are diagnostic in this way are those cutting and scraping implements (as well as spear points etc) made by Aboriginal people by flaking (knapping) European bottle glass.

Aboriginal flaked glass is receiving increasing attention in Australian archaeology and there is now enough published on the identification and analysis of glass artefacts to enable archaeologists in NSW to recognise and record it in the field.²³³

Characteristic features of post-contact camps

The presence of flaked glass almost certainly indicates Aboriginal post-contact presence at a site. There are a number of other characteristic

features of Aboriginal post-contact sites that – while not unique to Aboriginal post-contact lifestyle (e.g. poor or itinerate white people also lived in bark or tin huts) – are useful as approximate indicators of an Aboriginal presence (glass artefacts being definitive or absolute indicators). These characteristics include the following:

- The high incidence of pieces of fencing wire attesting to its extensive use in the building of huts, the making of domestic implements and children's toys, the staking out of animal skins, and in carrying out various repairs.
- Remains attesting to a high incidence of recycling – e.g., kerosene tins used as 'fire-tins' and meat safes or (flattened out) as roofing and cladding for huts; bottles and bottle glass used as commemorative decorations on graves.
- Remains of musical instruments such as mouth organs and the remains of wind-up gramophones and gramophone records.

Structures and artefacts

The following Table is drawn from lists of artefacts and structures recorded by Peter Kabaila at the sites of former Aboriginal fringe camps at Oak Hill (Yass) and Narrandera sandhills and at the sites of Aboriginal Reserves at Brungle and Grong Grong.²³⁴ These places were recorded by him in the course of a survey of Aboriginal post-contact places in the Murrumbidgee Basin. Kabaila's work in the Wiradjuri country of central western NSW comprises the most detailed and comprehensive survey of Aboriginal Reserve and fringe camp sites available for NSW. We have provided this table in order to give readers an appreciation of the range of artefacts and other traces typically found at Aboriginal post-contact sites in NSW.

Category	Description of remains	
Shelter	Hut cladding (fragments and whole sheets): flattened kerosene tins with nail holes, ripple-iron with nail holes, ripple iron with window cut-out, flattened tin (e.g. Vacuum Oil Co) Terrace: Cut into hillside (overgrown with brambles etc) Rock used as seat next to house (granite) Fibro sheet Nails - 'Bullet head' Nails - steel spike	Roofing screw (capped head) Tent peg (fencing wire) Shards of clear window glass Remnant of stone footing (for hut?) Bush timber house frame-tie (fencing wire) Household dump (exposed on surface) Lock (Gal barrel bolt and padlock) Broken bricks Fragments of ceramic tile
Food Storage	Tea can (Robur brand) Glass fragment, poss. from preserving jar	Back panel from kerosene fridge (galvanised steel)
Food consumption	Pick-Me-Up sauce bottle Mug (ceramic or metal) Plate (ceramic or metal) Mixing bowl Tea straining spoon Kettle (cast iron)	Plated teaspoon Food cans Hinged lid of condiment jar Cake fork Manual egg-beater Saucer Fragments of animal bone
Heating and food preparation	Fireplace, hearth (pressed clay - machine made) Camp oven lid (iron) Wood stove front (enameled) Chimney flue (tin sheet and fencing wire) Clay brick (from hearth?) Campsite fireplace (circle of stones) Pot-hanging hook (fencing wire)	Steel sheet with iron knob (stove door?) Fragment of cast iron pot Handle attached to fragment of cast iron pot Meat grinder
Liquid refreshment	Beer bottles Tea cups Other bottles Mixing bowl Tea kettle	Softdrink bottle Bottle fragment Tinwear billy-mug Gallon wine flagon base
Medicine	Ointment bottle Cylindrical pill jar Hair dye bottle Kruschen Salts jar	Bonnington's Irish Moss bottle Glass stoppers Eichom's Remedy square ointment bottle

Bedding and furnishing	Bed ends (steel pipe with cast fittings) Folding single bed Wire mattress (woven wire)	Bed spring mattress Double bed head (30cm pipe, cast iron fittings)
Child care	Plastic doll's leg Pram frame Steel frame for woven cane pram Cot frame (cast iron) Wheel fragment (from doll's pram?)	Marbles (clay and glass) Tricycle frame (steel bars) Aboriginal school (at Brungle mission; after 1930s used as a dairy) Nappy pin
Transport	Buggy parts (including leaf springs, wheel hubs) Wagon harness coupling piece Horse harness buckle 'Footstep' from sulky or dray (brass with steel pin) Horse shoes Outrigger tie for extra horse to sulky (improvised - fencing wire brace attached)	Mission track (scar) Path to creek (faint scar) Car, sedan (Ford Customline c.1953, Plymouth 1939, Plymouth 1940s?, Nash 1940s) Front mudguard (A- or T-model Ford) Coil spring from car seat Bicycle pump frame clip (brass)
Gardening	Garden hedge ('Silver bush') Fruit trees (Plums, nectarines, apples, cherries - singly and in groves) Fruit picker (blade mounted on broom handle)	Rose bramble Rose brambles in hedge formation Jonquil and iris bulb clumps
Water storage and supply	Pitcher (enamel) Water bucket Water tank (fragment) (galvanized iron) Bucket (with bullet holes)	Footings for windmill (concrete) Footings for water tank Improvised bucket handle (fencing wire)
Abolution baths, showers etc	Portion of cement floor slab from shower huts	
Sanitation	Sanitary pan	
Laundering	Wash tubs 'Copper' tub	Folded steel stand (for 'copper?') Bolt in side of Kurrajong tree (for clothes line?)
Hunting and collecting	Rabbit trap Double barreled shotgun muzzle	Rabbit shooter's rifle shell (22 caliber - 1930s?) Millstone (ground down on one side - sandstone?)
Maintenance	Axe head Masonry trowel Steel file	Hammer head Patent cooking pot leak repair plug
Ornaments	Bowl with duck-shooting scene	Vase
Enclosure	Fence (farm machine axles as fence posts) Stone walls	Fenced yard with turkey and chicken run, child's swing Bed angle iron incorporated in fence
Clothing and footwear	Button from woman's frock (plastic) Woman's sew-through button (glass) Sew-through button (steel casing) Shoe leather, small eyelets for laces (woman's shoe)	Fragment of shoe sole (rubber) Stud, woman's corset fastening (brass) Trousers zip pull (brass)
Lighting	Buggy lamp Oil and kerosene cans	Kerosene can lid
Leisure	Fragment of mouth organ plate (brass) Tennis court (dirt)	Methylated spirits cigarette lighter (brass) Target: kerosene tin with bullet holes
Farming and industry	Stone-lined square pit (old well?) Plough share (from multiple-furrow plough)	
Religious	Church (location only) - Seventh Day Adventist Church - Catholic	Church - Aboriginal Inland Mission (AIM)
Valuables	Half penny coin (1943) Penny coin (1938)	Flap from coin holder (metal, gold or brass plated)

Other detailed inventories and analyses of artefact assemblages at Aboriginal post-contact camps in NSW include that by Harrison for the Dennawan pastoral camp on the Culgoa River in the northwest of the state.²³⁵

Triggering memory

We have suggested that the total number of Aboriginal post-contact heritage places recorded in NSW would be greatly increased if archaeologists were to review the historical records for an area before carrying out a field survey there. Things may also work the other way around: documentary and oral histories can be turned to for corroborating evidence where there is uncertainty as to whether artefacts or other traces, located during field surveys, have an Aboriginal or a non-Indigenous provenance (i.e. whether they were produced and/or used by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people). In the case of oral history, it is possible that Aboriginal people may fail to mention a particular place in the course of an oral history recording session either because they assume it would be without interest to the interviewer (e.g. it may seem to be too ordinary to mention) or because the significance of a place has been forgotten.

Such 'forgetting' is however often situational and reversible. Archaeological remains often act as a powerful trigger to memory. When returning to old places they may have lived in or visited earlier in life, people often find that the objects they see lying on the ground there spark detailed recollections of activities, individuals, and events. It may be years since they have spoken about or even thought about these things but the sight of the old object – be it a broken toy, an old oil lamp, the remains of a car, or a piece of crockery – can sometimes suddenly bring it all back.

The combination of history and archaeology

Post-contact heritage and EIA

By far the majority of known Aboriginal heritage places in NSW have been identified and recorded in the course of environmental impact assessment (EIA) surveys. Since this work began in the 1970s, accelerating sharply with the passage of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act in 1979, it has been carried out almost entirely by archaeologists.²³⁶

The EIA surveys have focused mainly on Aboriginal pre-contact heritage. This has been due partly to a heritage agency focus on Aboriginal pre-contact heritage and partly to the fact that the professional

training of most archaeologists working in the EIA field has been in prehistory and pre-contact archaeology.²³⁷ From about 1999 the NPWS (now the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW), the lead agency for Aboriginal heritage in NSW, began promoting a more balanced approach that gives equal attention to pre- and post-contact Aboriginal heritage and culture. This book is just one outcome of the new approach. It remains the case, though, that Aboriginal post-contact sites are radically under-represented in our heritage inventories in NSW.²³⁸

A better balance

The problem is compounded in that, while there are an increasing number of local Aboriginal people involved in EIA work, there appears to be a widespread belief among them that their own post-contact places do not qualify as heritage. This misapprehension is entirely understandable when the archaeologists coordinating the EIA projects have seemed only to be interested in pre-contact heritage (e.g. stone artefacts and shell middens).

One way of re-balancing EIA heritage work would be to integrate oral history recording as a standard component of the EIA process. This would enable local Aboriginal people to contribute their knowledge of landscape use for the period of their own lives (and that of their parents and grandparents lives, where this knowledge has been handed on to them). It is almost certain, for instance, that Aboriginal people alive in NSW today know the location and significance of hundreds of post-contact camps that have never been recorded for heritage conservation purposes.

Another way of ameliorating the neglect of post-contact heritage in EIA work would be to attract more historians to participate in this work. More specifically, though, what is needed is a type of historical work which is able to make the connection between documentary (and/or oral) historical sources and places on the ground. A great deal of work has been done in the field of Aboriginal history in the last three decades or so but it has resulted in very little recording of Aboriginal heritage places for the period researched. Often, while numerous places are mentioned in this history writing, and while the historical associations of the places are made clear, insufficient spatial detail is provided to enable the places to be pin-pointed on the ground or on topographic maps.

Background research in EIA

It has long been standard practice for archaeologists

working on EIA projects to consult the literature before going into the field. Typically this means reading the reports of archaeologists who have previously carried out EIA projects in the vicinity, reading other archaeological literature relevant to the vicinity, and reading 'ethnohistorical' sources. The latter include the observations made of Aboriginal people in the contact period by white explorers and settlers – these are mostly used as a way of making guesses about what Aboriginal people were doing in the landscape prior to white contact. In most cases, all this background research is aimed at helping to identify and interpret pre-contact heritage places in the EIA survey area.

Little or no background research, however, tends to be done to assist in the identification and interpretation of post-contact places. Our aim in this book is to

convince EIA archaeologists and others of the value of documentary and oral history for this purpose. One could go further and suggest that – as far as recording post-contact sites is concerned – there is little point in even carrying out archaeological field surveys unless the historical record has been consulted in advance. How often, one might ask, have archaeologists walked across paddocks in NSW and ignored pieces of rusting roof iron and old bottle glass on the presumption that they represent rubbish dumped by white farmers? In a such a scenario, a basic amount of historical background research might alert the archaeologist to the existence, in the 1930s, of an Aboriginal fringe camp in the same vicinity. Without this sort of background research, Aboriginal post-contact heritage will continue to be under-recorded in NSW.

- 1 Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of History*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, p.137. Davison's remarks relate particularly to built heritage.
- 2 See, for example, John Allan in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, first published 1914 from a 1905 ms, Classic Printers, Taree, 1986.
- 3 See, for example, *A Short Factual History of Taree 1854-1954* (a history published for the Taree centenary in 1954, Mitchell Library 919.443/7).
- 4 John Ramsland's book, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1987, is exceptional here in that it devotes a chapter to local Aboriginal post-contact history.
- 5 The most detailed such history available for the area is John Ramsland's, *Custodians of the Soil*, Greater Taree City Council, Taree, 2001. The coverage of this book is confined to the Manning Valley.
- 6 The American, Lewis Henry Morgan took this position in his book, *Ancient Society*, Holt, New York, 1877. The British anthropologist, Edward B. Tylor took a similar line in his 1881 book, *Anthropology*, Macmillan, London, setting out archaeological 'proof'.
- 7 See Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996; Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 28-31, 174-8, 191-4.
- 8 'Biripi' is sometimes spelt 'Birpai'.
- 9 Louise Gay, '(Draft) Greater Taree Local Government Area Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan', (unpublished report to the Greater Taree City Council, October 2000).
- 10 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 8.
- 11 For a discussion of the exploration and survey of the study area by Europeans in the first half of the nineteenth century see W. K. Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, Jacaranda Press, Sydney, 1987, pp. 42-55. Birrell's book represents a huge amount of work in sifting through early land transaction records. It is one of the few detailed regional works in human geography available for NSW and has been an invaluable source for our own study.
- 12 Armstrong's map, 'Australian Agricultural Company's Grant 1829', is in the collection of the Butlin Archives, Canberra (reference F15).
- 13 For an account of the mapping of Aboriginal wild resources in the Gumbaingirr country, north of our study area, see Anthony English, *The Sea and the Rock Give us a Feed*, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney, 2002. www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au
- 14 John Armstrong, *Journal of an Expedition to the Manning River Including a Boat Survey of the River Manning with its Branches, 1927*, transcribed and edited by Bill Birrell, privately published, Taree, 1996, p. 9.
- 15 *ibid* p. 53.
- 16 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 47.
- 17 *ibid*, p. 31.
- 18 *ibid*, p. 47.
- 19 *ibid*, p. 60.
- 20 Oxley's journal, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 177.
- 21 Heather Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996, pp. 57-72.
- 22 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 66.
- 23 *ibid*, p. 67.
- 24 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 25.
- 25 *ibid*, p. 25. See also James Jervis, 'Cedar and cedar getters,' *Royal Australian Historical Society*, No. 25, 1939, pp. 131-156. Jervis notes that the thickness of the 'brush' meant the cedar getters had to shift their saw pits after three or four trees had been cut in order to be close to where new ones were being felled.
- 26 See Denis Byrne, *The Aboriginal and Archaeological Significance of the New South Wales Rainforests*, Forestry Commission of NSW, Sydney, 1987, p.39-49. Byrne found that the subtropical rainforests of New South Wales contain an estimated seventy-four edible fruits, twenty-two edible roots and nineteen edible seeds, as well as animals ranging from pademelons and wallabies to possums, fruit bats, frogs and lizards, and pigeons, lyrebirds and brush turkeys among the larger birds.
- 27 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 25.
- 28 The Imperial Land Act of 1831 ended the granting of free land and provided for the sale of Crown Land.
- 29 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p.68.
- 30 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 74.
- 31 Most alluvial land on the Manning was taken up by about 1850.
- 32 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 42.
- 33 *ibid*, p. 44.

- 34 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 84.
- 35 The standard reference for settler killings of Aboriginal people in the region of our study area is Geoffrey Blomfield, *Baal Belbora*, Apcol, Sydney, 1981. In the present case, Blomfield's source is Fitzpatrick, *ibid.* See also Ramsland, *Custodians of the Soil*, p. 27.
- 36 Fitzpatrick cited in Blomfield, *ibid.*, p. 119; a verbal reminiscence cited in Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 9.
- 37 Blomfield, *Baal Belbora*, pp. 122-124
- 38 *ibid.*
- 39 Ramsland, *Custodians of the Soil*, pp. 28-30.
- 40 W.F. Connors, *Pioneering Days Around Taree – A Factual History of Exploration and Earliest Settlement of the Manning River Valley with a Detailed Account of the Life of Benjamin Saville, First Settler of Lansdowne*, Crusade Press, Queensland, 1985, p. 40.
- 41 *Maitland Mercury*, March 1, 1848.
- 42 *Maitland Mercury*, August 27, 1849.
- 43 *Maitland Mercury*, June 10, 1848.
- 44 Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 9.
- 45 *A Short Factual History of Taree 1854-1954* (a history published for the Taree centenary in 1954, Mitchell Library 919.443/7), p. 5.
- 46 *ibid.* p. 9.
- 47 *Maitland Mercury*, June 10, 1848.
- 48 William Wynter and his family were among the very first white settlers on the Manning, Wynter selected his property, 'Taree' in 1829. George Tilner owned land at Tinonee.
- 49 Denis Byrne, 'Nervous Landscapes: race and place in Australia', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 3, 2, 2003, pp. 169-193.
- 50 For an excellent discussion of cross-cultural exchange of objects and knowledge in the contact period at Port Jackson see Isabel McBryde, 'Barter...immediately commenced to the satisfaction of both parties': cross-cultural exchange at Port Jackson', Robin Torrence & Anne Clarke (eds), *The Archaeology of Difference*, Routledge, London, 2000, pp. 238-277.
- 51 The nineteenth-century failure of the attempt to establish sugar cane as a viable crop on the Manning illustrates the vulnerability of the settlers' economy and the 'learning curve' that characterised their farming efforts. Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 180, notes that sugar cultivation on the lower Manning had almost ceased by 1874.
- 52 McBryde, 'Barter...immediately commenced to the satisfaction of both parties'.
- 53 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 32.
- 54 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 118.
- 55 *ibid.* p. xiv.
- 56 *ibid.* p. xiv.
- 57 *ibid.* p. 89.
- 58 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 52.
- 59 *ibid.* p. 86.
- 60 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 121.
- 61 Ramsland, *Custodians of the Soil*, p. 40.
- 62 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering days on the Manning*, p. 35.
- 63 *ibid.* p. 36.
- 64 Connors 1985, p. 55. The quoted passage continues: '...and one day while inspecting the work he [McLeod] was struck on the head by a falling limb. He went home but died the next day.'
- 65 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 163.
- 66 *ibid.* p. 153.
- 67 Denis Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901*, Reed Education, Sydney, 1972, p. 59. Fencing wire became available in Australia in the 1870s and barbed wire 'came into common use' in the 1890s though the old style wooden post-and-rail fences were for a long time also common in the core areas of settlement.
- 68 Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2000, pp. 178-181.
- 69 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 43.
- 70 John Ramsland, *Custodians of the Soil*, Greater Taree City Council, Taree, 2001, p. 40.
- 71 *Manning River News*, March 21, 1868, p. 3.
- 72 John Allan, 'Pioneering on the Manning', *Newcastle and Hunter District Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, 4, 1950, pp. 184-190; 5, pp. 1-11.
- 73 For reference to the esteem that horses were held in by Aboriginal people elsewhere in NSW see Heather Goodall, 'Land in our own country: the Aboriginal land rights movement in south-eastern Australia, 1860-1914', *Aboriginal History*, 14, 1, 1990, pp. 1-24.
- 74 Ella Simon, *Through My Eyes*, Seal Books, Sydney, 1978, p. 23.
- 75 *ibid.* p. 30.
- 76 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 177.
- 77 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 65.
- 78 *Manning River News*, Oct 13, 1866, p. 3.
- 79 *Wingham Chronicle*, Feb 17, 1900.
- 80 See Jeremy Beckett, 'Kinship, mobility and community in rural New South Wales', in Ian Keen (ed.), *Being Black*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1988, pp. 117-136. Beckett coined the term "beat" to describe the networks of movement, involving road travel, between dispersed kin in western New South Wales and has written of how these "beats" have expanded over time.
- 81 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 185.
- 82 John Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 41.
- 83 Allan, 'Pioneering on the Manning', 4, p. 187.
- 84 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 35.
- 85 Allan, 'Pioneering on the Manning', 5, p. 3.
- 86 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 31.
- 87 *ibid.* p. 32.
- 88 Connors, *Pioneering Days Around Taree*, p. 92.
- 89 *ibid.* p. 40.
- 90 *Manning River News*, April 22, 1865, p. 2.
- 91 J.W. Fawcett, 'Australian Aborigines – a burial ceremony of the Maw Wyper tribe', *Australian Anthropological Society*, 1, 1897, p. 125.
- 92 See Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 1996.
- 93 John Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 35.
- 94 See Denis Byrne, *In Sad But Loving Memory*, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney, 1998.
- 95 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 91.
- 96 Denis Byrne, 'Nervous Landscapes', pp. 177-181.
- 97 *The Empire*, Dec 12, 1863.
- 98 *ibid.*
- 99 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering days on the Manning*, p. 63-64.
- 100 *ibid.* p. 37.
- 101 See Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 116. Birrell notes that by 1861 'The fauna of the dense brushes had disappeared and been replaced by the few domesticated animals, such as dogs, cats, pigs and milch cows brought into the valley by the settlers'.
- 102 W. J. Enright, 'The Kattang (Kuttung) or Worimi: an Aboriginal tribe', *Mankind* 1, 1932, pp. 75-77. P. 77.
- 103 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, pp. 54-55.
- 104 *ibid.* p. 71.
- 105 Simon, *Through My Eyes*, pp. 121-122.
- 106 Marshall Sahllins, *Islands of History*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1985, p. viii.

- 107 There is a large literature on agency in cross-cultural relations. See, for example, James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1988; Heather Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy*; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991.
- 108 For the concept of willfulness in social action see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977.
- 109 For instance, John Allan states that William Wynter, who took up land on the Manning in 1832, 'spoke the language of the blacks fluently' – see Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 73.
- 110 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 110.
- 111 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 49.
- 112 Simon, *Through My Eyes*, p. 26.
- 113 See for instance Rodney Harrison, *Shared Landscapes: Archaeologies of Attachment and the Pastoral Industry in New South Wales*, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation and University of NSW Press, 2004.
- 114 Allan, 'Pioneering on the Manning', p. 188.
- 115 Allan, in F.A. Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 39.
- 116 *ibid.*, p. 41.
- 117 For a discussion of humanitarianism in relation to the philosophy and practice of Aboriginal 'protection' see Bain Attwood, *The Making of the Aborigines*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989, pp. 82-85.
- 118 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 157.
- 119 Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901*, p. 209.
- 120 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 167.
- 121 *ibid.*, p. 208.
- 122 June Wright (ed.), *The History of Forster*, Great Lakes Historical Society, 1999.
- 123 A.G. Holman, *The History of Tuncurry*, Tuncurry, 1954.
- 124 Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1900*, pp. 204-205.
- 125 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 177.
- 126 *ibid.*, p. 177.
- 127 *ibid.*, p. 178.
- 128 It is not suggested that an Aboriginal society completely independent of white settlers was possible in these areas which, after all, consisted of limited tracts of land separated from each other by areas of white settlement. Rather, that Aboriginal people could withdraw into such country for periods of time, that they could go hunting and gathering there, or camp there, all with little chance of encountering whites. For some Aboriginal people it may have been part of an 'in between' existence where they were half in and half out of the colonised landscape.
- 129 Denis Byrne, 'The ethos of return: erasure and reinstatement of Aboriginal visibility in the Australian historical landscape', *Historical Archaeology*, 37, 1, 2003, pp. 73-86.
- 130 Letters filed under 'Aboriginal School: Forster 1876-1939', NSW State Records.
- 131 *ibid.*
- 132 *Town and Country Magazine*, June 27, 1876, p.1.
- 133 See John Lines, *Australia on Paper*, Fortune, Box Hill, Victoria, 1992, p. 31, who estimates that round 200,000 bicycles were purchased in Australia in the 1890s.
- 134 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree, notes of a visit of inspection to the Aboriginal Reserves at Forster, Purfleet, Killawarra and Ashlea by Mr. Robert McDonald, J.P., Nov 23, 1911, Land Board Office, Maitland, NSW State Records, Kingswood, 3/2422.2.
- 135 *Manning River Times*, Sept 7, 1901.
- 136 Papers re to Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree, surveyor Frank N. Harris to the District Surveyor Maitland, December 28, 1905.
- 137 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree.
- 138 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree.
- 139 *ibid.*
- 140 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree, surveyor Frank N. Harris to the District Surveyor Maitland, December 28, 1905.
- 141 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree, surveyor Hungerford to the District Surveyor at East Maitland reporting on an application to revoke part of Reserve 31598, July 14, 1911. A subsequent letter from the Wingham police claims the Aborigines 'are not in any way hunted about like beasts, they are always encouraged to go to the Reserves for their use and no restriction has been put on them'.
- 142 Lee Chittick and Terry Fox, *Travelling with Percy*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1997.
- 143 Papers re Aboriginal reserves in the vicinity of Taree.
- 144 For an account of South Coast picking and picking camps see Chittick and Fox, *Travelling with Percy*.
- 145 The terms 'mission' and 'reserve' are used interchangeably by Aboriginal people in NSW to refer to the old Aboriginal Reserves administered by the Aborigines' Protection Board and its successor the Aborigines' Welfare Board. Though missionaries operated at both the Purfleet and Forster reserves at various times neither was a mission in any formal sense.
- 146 Denis Byrne, 'Nervous Landscapes'.
- 147 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 159.
- 148 Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy*, p. 86.
- 149 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 181.
- 150 Ramsland, *The Struggle Against Isolation: A History of the Manning Valley*, p. 188.
- 151 Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy*.
- 152 For an account of the dispossession of Aboriginal farming people at Burnt Bridge, near Kempsey on the NSW North Coast, see Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy*, pp. 222-228.
- 153 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, pp. 169, 170.
- 154 Aboriginal Reserves of NSW, NSW Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Sydney, Occasional Paper, 4 (no date).
- 155 See, for example, 'Rustic', *The Manning in the Fifties*, 1902.
- 156 Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, p. 207.
- 157 *ibid.*, p. 208.
- 158 Holman, *The History of Tuncurry*.
- 159 For an account of the history of Aboriginal fishing on the NSW South Coast see Brian J. Egluff, *Wreck Bay: an Aboriginal Fishing Community*, Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1981.
- 160 Reminiscences of G.J. Martin, in Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, 1986, p. 162.
- 161 Connors, *Pioneering Days Around Taree*, p. 94. This place is listed on the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) as site 30-5-31.
- 162 R.H. Mathews, 'The Keeparra ceremony of initiation', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 26, 4, 1897, pp. 320-340.
- 163 *ibid.*, p. 320.
- 164 John Allan, Fitzpatrick, *Peeps into the Past: Pioneering Days on the Manning*, p. 71.
- 165 *ibid.*, p. 72.
- 166 Simon, *Through My Eyes*, p. 120. The site [AHIMS 30-5-18] was identified by Biripi elder, Bert Marr, in 1990 – see Elizabeth Rich, Pacific Highway SH No10 – Taree Traffic Relief Route: Archaeological Survey for Aboriginal Sites, unpublished report, 1990.
- 167 Simon, *Through My Eyes*, p. 23.
- 168 *ibid.*, p.32.
- 169 W.J. Enright, *Mankind*, 1, 10, pp. 239-240, 1934, here p. 240 mentions an Aboriginal informant in the Macleay whose totem was the bandicoot, 'and he stated he would not kill it even if he was hungry'.

