

This publication acknowledges the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pays respect to the elders past and present.

Aboriginal people are advised that the publication contains images of people who have died.

# Wellington



Ernest Moulton 1905-1966  
Editor / Proprietor Wellington Times 1945-1966

Wellington, N.S.W., AUSTRALIA

Mathieu Gallois  
Wellington Project 2005-2012

## COUNTRY, SPIRIT AND BELONGING THE WIRADJURI IN WELLINGTON VALLEY

### Introduction

Wellington, a small town in central Western NSW Australia, is located at the junction of the Bell and Macquarie rivers. The masthead of the town's only newspaper, *The Wellington Times*, reads 'Where the Two Rivers Meet'. It could well be 'Where Black and White Australia Meet', for Wellington's historical and ongoing significance lies in its race relations. With just over 8850 inhabitants (2011), one quarter of whom are Aboriginal, Wellington's Local Government Area (LGA) is the site of many significant developments in race relations in Australia.

Wiradjuri nation occupies many municipalities including the Wellington LGA and claims a total massive land area that is three-quarters the size of England: a staggering 97,100 sq. km.

Wellington Valley was colonised in 1817 and for the first 20 year period of its settlement represented the furthest outreach of the British colony.

This early settlement had Australia's first Anglican mission. The Wellington Valley Mission Papers represent one of the largest and most important sources of colonial frontier history in NSW. These records are highly significant for local Indigenous people as well as historians, as the geneological records they contain prove the continuity of Indigenous presence that stretches from settlement to the present day (see pages 32, 33).

Mission records from those times also reveal Wellington Valley Mission 'procured' Wiradjuri children for re-education and separation from their families and cultural milieu. Thus the sad history of the stolen generations had its beginning six generations, or close to 200 years ago, in this valley (see pages 8).

The first stop and intervention of the 1965 Freedom Ride, led by Charles Perkins was in Wellington (see page 21).

In 1993 Australia's first Native Title claim was lodged by members of Wellington's Aboriginal community under the *Native Title Act* (1993) (see pages 32, 33).

Today Wellington appears to be a town struggling on many fronts. The Council's *Economic Development Plan* (2011-2015) outlines many of the challenges faced by the local economy and community, not least the predicted steady decline over the next few decades of Wellington's population (the only demographic predicted to grow is the Indigenous community). Wellington has never had an Indigenous council member, let alone mayor – an indication of the state of political and social reconciliation between Indigenous and non Indigenous communities.

'Introduction' is continued on the back page of this publication.

### Survival

Joyce Williams is the most senior Wiradjuri woman of the Wellington Valley. Along with Violet Carr and Betty Ferguson, she is an elder of the Gallangabang Aboriginal Corporation. Black snake, possum and echidna are Gallangabang's totems and are among many totems Wiradjuri people identify themselves with in the region.

Joyce, Violet and Betty have collectively lived more years than Australia has been a British colony and nation. Through their extended family trees, these three women represent the great majority of Wellington's traditional Aboriginal families. In this capacity and as elders, they are the Applicants of the Wellington Valley Native Title claim.

Joyce's extraordinary life story, the places where she has lived and worked, the fights for self-determination and equality she has participated in and led, closely mirror the wider story of race relations and Aboriginal survival in Wellington over the last century.

Joyce was born in a small makeshift tin hut on the banks of the Macquarie River in Mission Camp (now called Nanima) in 1926. She is one of the last living links to the Wiradjuri language in the Wellington area (she knows just a few dozen words). Her mother Margaret Riley (maiden name Margaret Cecilia May) worked on stations in the local area and sometimes

worked as a midwife. Joyce's father Herbert Riley (known to many Aboriginal people as Boney Riley) was a shearer before he volunteered to serve in WW1 when he was 19 years old. As an Aboriginal man, Private Riley was not recognised as an Australian citizen when he enlisted in the army, he could not drink beer in a bar in Wellington, nor was he a part of the federal government soldier settlement program when he returned to Australia (see page 30). Private Riley was wounded in battle at Hermies, a small rural town not much bigger than Wellington in northern France in 1916.

Joyce Williams (2011). Photographer: Mathieu Gallois.  
(The people represented in the photo frame are listed on page 15)

'Survival' is continued on page 2 of this publication.





# 1817 - 1957

## 140 Years of Aboriginal Land Dispossession

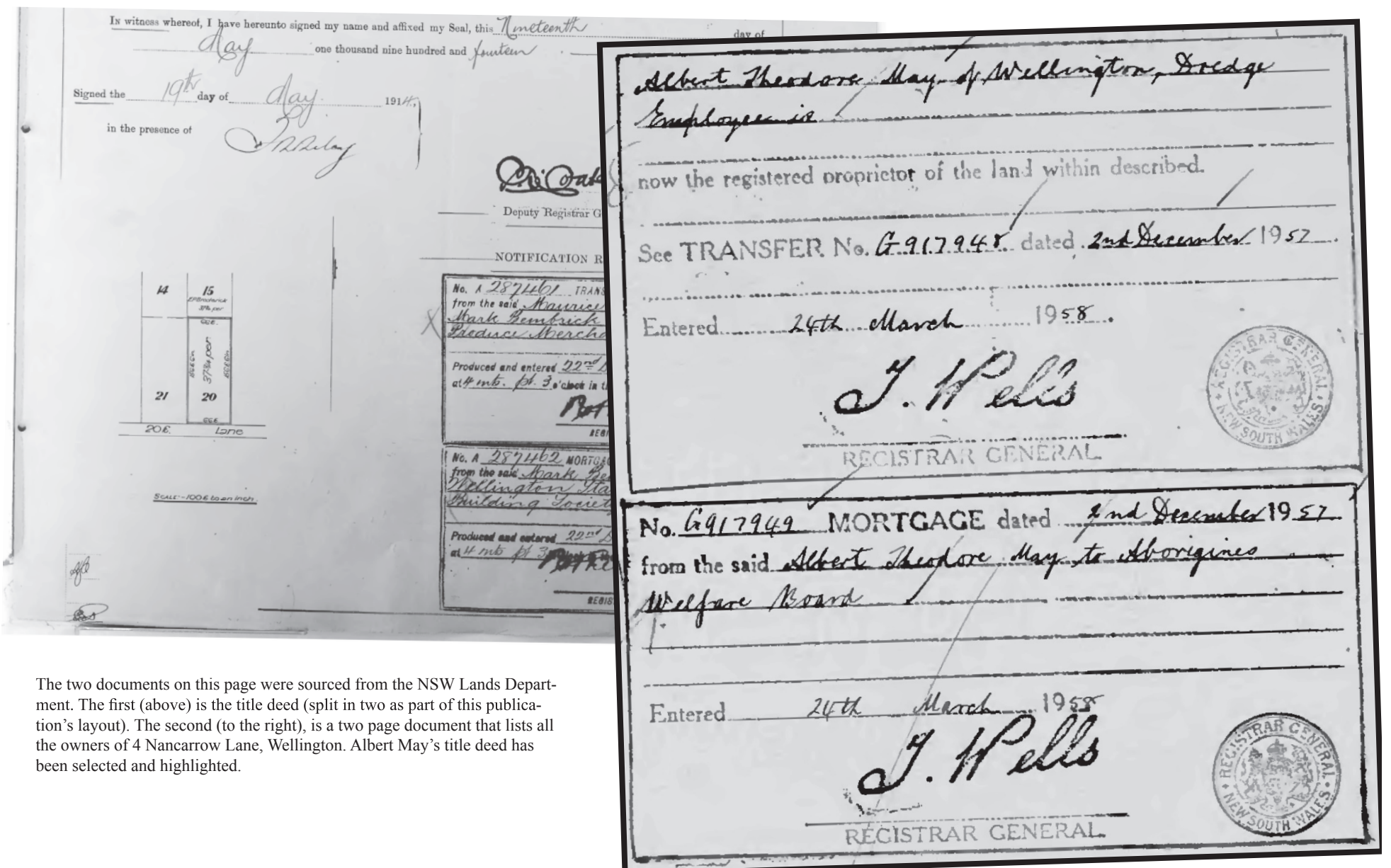
The first person to identify as Aboriginal to purchase land in the Wellington area was Albert Theodore May in 1957



The home Albert Theodore May purchased in 1957: 4 Nancarrow Lane, Wellington. Photo: Mathieu Gallois, 2011.

‘They stole our land and now we have to buy it back’

Joyce Williams, Wiradjuri elder. 2011



The two documents on this page were sourced from the NSW Lands Department. The first (above) is the title deed (split in two as part of this publication's layout). The second (to the right), is a two page document that lists all the owners of 4 Nancarrow Lane, Wellington. Albert May's title deed has been selected and highlighted.



# Freedom Ride 1965

## First Stop Wellington

Mathieu Gallois

In 1965 a group of civil rights activists set out from Sydney on a road trip across northern New South Wales to investigate and challenge discrimination against Aboriginal people.

Inspired in part by civil rights movements in South Africa and the United States of America, the action that became known as the Freedom Ride, was initiated by Sydney University's newly formed Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA).



The Courthouse Hotel, Wellington. Photographer and date unknown.

The group of 29 mainly non-Indigenous Sydney University students, was led by former Indigenous soccer star, and then 3rd year Arts student Charles (Kumantjayi) Perkins. The group also included Ann Curthoys who would later write *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers*, Jim Spigelman who would become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and Darce Cassidy, an arts student and part-time reporter for the ABC.

The group's first stop was Wellington, NSW where the group conducted surveys and challenged the local Courthouse Hotel's publican who had a reputation for refusing entry to Aboriginal people.

## The Freedom Ride's 'Aboriginal Questionnaire' Wellington

Excerpt from *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers*, Ann Curthoys, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002.

Thirteen of the completed survey forms for the 'Aboriginal Questionnaire' in Wellington survive\*; nine from women and four from men...

It's difficult, now, to know what to make of these answers, so hard to tell what the students and the

Aboriginal people of the settlement understood what each wanted of the other, or thought the other could do.

While the respondents varied in their answers to the question 'Are the white people giving the Aborigines a fair chance?', all agreed 'the Aborigines should stand up to their rights' rather than 'accept the situation as it is'. Only two thought Aboriginal people should 'preserve some of the old customs'; the others agreed they should 'adopt all the new ones'. All said Aboriginal people should live in the towns rather than on reserves. Clearly, the question of

acquiring houses in town was uppermost in these answers; when asked how they thought 'the Aboriginal situation could be helped' or how the health standards of Aboriginal people could be raised, answers ranged from 'better housing', 'build more homes', 'nice homes with water etc.', 'do away with missions and put Aborigines in towns, mixing', and 'put them in town'. When asked for examples of discrimination, the answers included from 'up to 12 months ago not allowed in pubs', 'Court House hotel', 'hotels, shops', 'employment', 'putting them out of town' and 'won't let them live in town even if (they) can afford (it)'.

\*The Freedom Rides surveys can be accessed at The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. AIATSIS is the world's premier institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present.

AIATSIS web site: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/library.html>

## Kumantjayi Perkins (AO) and Wellington

Excerpt: Ann Curthoys, *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002.



Kumantjayi (Charlie) Perkins (AO). Approx 1965. Photographer unknown.

While we had been interviewing people at the settlement, Jim and Charlie and some of the others had been in town. They asked some local Aboriginal people about which pubs discriminated against them, and went to the one named 'The Courthouse', which some Aboriginal people said refused to serve them. Jim started capturing the events of the Freedom Ride on super8 film, to which he added a commentary in 1987. His film shows Darce interviewing an Aboriginal man, whom we then see outside the Courthouse Hotel, talking to Darce and Charlie. It seems from my diary that this man was allowed in, but only because he was with the students: 'the publican said he only prevented Aborigines from coming in "if they were disorderly"'. Charlie then went in to the same hotel, and there was some discussion between the barmaid and the publican before they served him. When Darce interviewed him outside the hotel, an interview captured on Jim's film, Charlie reported:

"Oh well the lady, the barmaid, asked me what I wanted and then went over, very reluctantly went over to the tap to serve me and then stopped serving, pouring out the beer, and went and asked the manager. The manager came over and had a conference and they both looked at me very slyly and then decided that I was a possibility, a doubtful case and so they decided to give me a glass of beer. Very reluctantly, after asking me twice, the manager himself that is. "

This meant that the students did not have direct evidence of racial discrimination in the hotel, making it difficult to demonstrate the matter.

Many years later Charlie recalled that the students hadn't been able to take the matter further, partly because he, Charlie, had in fact been served in the hotel, and partly because:

"There weren't enough Aboriginal people around to support us, and we wanted to get Aboriginal people to support the things we did. So after a while we decided to leave it at that and go on. We went on to the next town. But there was discrimination in the pubs there, but it was more sophisticated, it wasn't so blatant, and we wanted a clear-cut case of discrimination."

And with that, at around 5.30 pm, the bus left town for the nearby large town of Dubbo.

We had been in Wellington for a total of five, perhaps six, hours. We were learning a lot, and indeed it could be argued that it was in Wellington that we started to become a group. Jim Spigelman later said: 'At the outset we were not yet a unit - and didn't become one till Wellington'.



Freedom Riders. 1965. Photographer unknown.

## They Came to a Valley. Wellington's 'Official' History of the Freedom Ride

*They Came to a Valley*, written by, D. I. McDonald, is a history of Wellington commissioned by the Wellington Historical Society in 1968 to celebrate the town's Sesqui-centenary.

This 'official' history records the Freedom ride as follows:

In many respects the aborigines were better off than their white brothers, for, contrary to opinions expressed, there were many peoples concerned gravely about their welfare. Housing was one question, but the austere houses being provided were only symptomatic of other more difficult problems. Of these,

the most urgent was that of assimilation and the removal of social barriers, but little was achieved by a visit to Wellington in 1964 by a group of university students, who had hoped to draw public attention to the plight of the aborigines. Their conclusions were the result of inadequate research often directed towards supporting pre-determined conclusions: prepared only to examine (and that superficially) one side

of a problem, they were unable to achieve their objectives, but merely aroused on both sides many latent prejudices.'



# My Home - Nanima

“By writing this article I aim to acknowledge Nanima and the people living at Nanima. I am hoping that the Wellington community will have an insight into life on the Reserve.” Melle West

Melle West

Is Nanima the laughing stock of Wellington?

Occasionally I hear people mention Nanima as an ‘uncivilised place to live’. I can’t count how many times growing up that I have heard people say ‘Nothing good will ever come out of Nanima.’

I was raised on Nanima Reserve since the age of two, and within that time I have found a strong connection with the land; however I struggled to be taken seriously because of where I lived. The wider Wellington community disregards the values that Nanima holds and only looks at it as a place of embarrassment. The opinions people have about Nanima and the opinions they have about the people living at Nanima made me feel embarrassed.

The first two years that I spent at high school were the hardest times. Students would laugh at me and say “Ha! You’re from the mission”. Comments like ‘Do you still live in huts?’ and ‘Is there any water out there?’ were comments I would hear on a daily basis. I look back now and realise that most of the kids who made fun of Nanima were Aboriginal. I didn’t understand why they were embarrassed of Nanima; the majority of their parents and their grandparents grew up on Nanima or the Common. Nanima’s history is important, it is part of our culture and survival.

I found myself put in an awkward position during the six years I spent at Wellington High School. I was made fun of because I lived on Nanima, whilst some kids who weren’t Aboriginal didn’t even know Nanima existed. Growing up in Wellington, it was hard to be seen as an individual without the negative stereotypes and racism that came with being Aboriginal. But on top of the issues society had with my Aboriginality, I also had to deal with the issues society had with where I lived.

I see the same thing happening to the kids living on Nanima today. They are being made fun of the same way that I was made fun of when I was in high school. It’s not a good feeling to be embarrassed of where you live, especially when you’re a child. You want to be proud to acknowledge where you come from. I think as you mature you get used to it, and find it less offensive but you will never forget the impact it had on your life.

Today, if Nanima isn’t being made fun of, it’s being ignored. There still isn’t a street sign heading out to Nanima that acknowledges that it exists except the sign that says ‘Garbage depot’. Nanima Reserve has such a significant history, it should be acknowledged and respected.

Who is responsible for Nanima’s downfall? Today I have nothing but sympathy for Nanima. In all the years I have grown up on Nanima, it has reached its worst point. Some of the issues that have occurred over the last few years include:

- The street lights are not working, families and children are walking around in the dark. It’s an accident waiting to happen. It is obvious that the Aboriginal Land Council does not see this to be a big problem.
- The Nanima public school (which I and many others attended) has been shut down and now vandalised. The school is the most

important historical feature that Nanima holds and it’s slowly burning to the ground.

- The Nanima hall recently collapsed. The hall was the heart of Nanima. It held many community celebrations, programs and church services. However over the years the hall had been vandalised by the children living at Nanima. I believe it was because there was nothing else for them to do. The vandalism got so bad all that was left of the hall was the roof and frame. Years had passed before anything was done about it and just a few months ago strong heavy winds had blown it to the ground and pulled my auntie’s fence down with it. I thought to myself. ‘What if one of her kids were playing alongside the fence when it happened? Who would be responsible?’

and whose responsibility is it to fix them?’ Is it the people living at Nanima? Is it the Aboriginal Land Council(s)? Or is it the Wellington council? This is a controversial and complicated issue. However, one thing that can be said is that the people living at Nanima are often blamed for the problems. I can’t help but feel that the people living at Nanima are sometimes abandoned and are obligated to deal with the community issues themselves.

There are people living at Nanima who are busy with their jobs, others are single parents, some suffer from mental illness, alcoholism and drug addiction. From what I have seen, these people are overwhelmed with their own lives: they cannot be expected to address the town’s issues on their own.



Melle West with her son Alister outside their Nanima home.

- Vandalism has become a huge issue over the years I’ve lived at Nanima. Nanima is an isolated area and the children have nothing to keep themselves occupied. The park at Nanima is not in a good enough condition to have children playing in it. I believe to solve the issue of vandalism the playground needs to be centrally located (so parents can supervise their kids) and the park’s play equipment needs to be fixed up and improved.

- Driving out to Nanima, there is a bend that is very dangerous due to the pine trees which have grown too close to the road and block clear visibility. Over the years there have already been a few accidents and something needs to be done in order to prevent any more. Noticing these issues, I always ask myself these questions: ‘Who is responsible for these issues

## It isn’t easy!

Many people have this narrow-minded view that Aboriginal people have it easy. But if you’re growing up surrounded by these issues, it’s far from easy. It’s hard to have big dreams let alone achieve them, especially when you know that the people within your community have achieved very little. Aboriginal people only make up 2.5% of the total Australian population, yet are over-represented within the criminal justice system, have poorer health than non Indigenous people and are more likely to die 10 years younger than non Indigenous people. On top of this we have to deal with racism and discrimination on a daily basis. *It isn’t easy!*

From my personal experience, my decision to go to university was not easy. I was the first person

to consider the option of attending university and it was unusual for me and for my family. I always found myself thinking, ‘This isn’t me. This isn’t what I have been brought up around. I’m not smart enough to go to university. Us black fellas just aren’t smart.’ I look back now and think to myself, ‘I was so narrow-minded’. I didn’t realise I was discriminating against myself and my own race. I think when you are constantly looked down upon because of your race you began to start to believe other people’s negative perceptions. Being Aboriginal, you’re always brought down because society perceives us as being drunks and bludgers. Today, most Aboriginal people run each other down; we are becoming our own worse enemies. Nanima is always looked down upon by a majority of Aboriginal people living in Wellington. What people fail to understand is that these perceptions of Aboriginal people have been constructed by the history of colonialism.

It is time that we start to learn the history behind Wellington.

My three years at university have transformed the way I think about issues affecting Aboriginal communities today and how policies contribute to these issues. Studying a major in Aboriginal studies has broadened my knowledge of the importance of understanding history from an Indigenous perspective. I believe in order for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people to move forward in reconciliation, Indigenous perspectives of history need to be taught. The fact that Aboriginal studies is not a part of the school curriculum is unacceptable. It can be chosen as an elective in years 11 and 12 however it is not taught with appropriate cultural sensitivity. If it was taught properly, I believe it would change the attitude and behaviour of students, especially the Aboriginal students, just as it changed my views.

One thing I have learnt at university is that the enduring psychological and social impact of colonisation is still being felt today and is often expressed through unemployment, poor health outcomes, poor housing, incarceration and poverty. I believe we have lost sight of the historical context, and too often the issues faced by my people are seen as ‘Aboriginal problems’. We cannot ‘move on from the past’ until it has been recognised, acknowledged and respected. Since studying a Bachelor of Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts, I have found a deep passion for creating change in Aboriginal communities. When I complete my degree I would like to help Nanima get back on its feet because it’s a place that has got so much potential. I want to see the school transformed into a community centre because I believe it is just what we need and I know it will address a lot of the community issues.

## Looking at the strengths of the community

Aboriginal people have a history of survival, and there are many stories of strength at an individual, family and community level. Aboriginal people have survived policies such as assimilation, that tried to deny my people their Aboriginal identity. Strength such as humour and creativity can help communities overcome adversity. All of these strengths have helped Aboriginal people withstand the devastating effects of colonisation. Aboriginal culture stands strong. If Indigenous Australians can overcome and survive colonisation, they can do anything.

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# Mission Report

*The Wellington Valley Papers* have been transcribed and are available online through an initiative of Newcastle University in 2005 lead by Hilary M. Carey and David A. Roberts (eds.).

*The Wellington Valley Papers* introduction.  
Hilary M. Carey and David A. Roberts

**T**he Church Missionary Society (CMS) for Africa and the Far East, established in 1799, has to date sent some nine thousand men and women to serve as missionaries throughout the world.

The one mission conducted by the Society in the British colony of New South Wales during the early colonial period, was to the Wiradjuri people of Wellington Valley in the newly opened districts west of the Great Dividing Range. It was a relatively belated effort, and rather short lived. Nevertheless, from 1832 until its withdrawal amid acrimony and regret twelve years later in 1844, the four missionaries produced dozens of letters, in addition to around 1,000 manuscript pages of journals, diaries and reports which were returned to the Society in London.

The Wellington Valley Project has made available a full, critical edition of these records, which represent one of the largest and

most important sources for the history of the colonial frontier in New South Wales. They are particularly significant for the account they provide of Wiradjuri society before the destruction of full ceremonial life. Collectively, the Wellington Valley papers provide a wealth of information about the missionaries and their troubled encounter with a people staggering under the impact of European occupation.

The Wellington Valley mission papers consist of just under 1,000 pages of manuscript from the archives of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), housed in the Heslop Room of the library of the University of Birmingham. In addition to the copies of the missionary journals

and correspondence which made their way to the CMS archives, a number of other papers were retained in Australia. There is a more or less complete copy of the journals of James Günther (1806-1879) held in Mitchell Library, as well as some papers relating to William Watson (1793-1866). The Watson papers held in Mitchell library are particularly interesting as they gives an account of the independent mission conducted by Watson after his final exodus from the CMS Mission station including reports of the Apsely mission, 1842-44, and a diary dated 1 August 1849 - 6 May 1850. The notebook came into the Mitchell Library in the 1950s when it was donated by the Offner family who owned the land on which Watson's Apsley mission once resided.

## Wellington Valley Mission's First Report

*Report of the Mission to the Aborigines of New Holland Station Wellington Valley.*  
1832 - 1833

**T**he Missionaries Revd. William. Watson and Handt with their wives arrived at Wellington Valley 3 October 1832 accompanied by eight Natives who had joined them on the road. A few Days after their arrival they were visited by more than sixty Natives many of whom were Wild, and had come from 50 to 70 miles distant. They were supplied with food, a small quantity of Tobacco and a few pipes. They were then interrogated as to their knowledge of who had made them, the sun and Trees &c of this they appeared to be entirely ignorant; nor had they least idea of a Supreme Being, of the immortality of the soul, or of a future state of existence. They were then informed that the Missionaries had been sent by the King of England to teach them the great truths of religion and to make them acquainted with Arts and Civilization. They answered to these things Budgery Budgery (good, good). They did not remain many days but have since paid several visits to the Mission.

The Missionaries very speedily discovered that the Natives had been prejudiced against them by the Stockmen in the neighbourhood who told them that the men would be yoked and made to work as Bullocks and the children would be sent to Sydney and put in prison.

A School was established at the commencement of the year and has been continued. Here from twelve to twenty children have been under instruction at one time some have occasionally left and others have their place. These have been taught to read and, spell, and have been regularly instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. It has not been discovered that these children & youths are in any degree inferior in intellect or ability to learn to those of civilized countries they learn their lessons, hymns, Prayers & as readily as children in general in an English School.

That some moral reformation has been produced by the labours of the Missionaries among these degraded and unlettered Tribes is evident from this one circumstance viz. That swearing in the English language which is grown prevalent is never practised in the hearing of the Missionaries by any Native who has occasionally been at this station. Instances have occurred of the Mission boys correcting adult Natives for swearing even at the expence [sic] of a good beating for their friendly admonition. Sometime ago a Native youth who was so deeply diseased as to render his recovery exceedingly doubtful came to Mr Watson for medical aid. He was at the time notorious however, after being at the establishment for some time he recovered and returned to his Brethren 40 miles distant. Shortly

after his return an English Stockman swore at an unruly Cow in the hearing of this Native youth who reproved him and said it was "no good to swear". He was asked why? He replied "Because you will not go to heaven if you swear." He was then asked who told him so? He answered God and Mr Watson talk that way and good many books he have too which talk that way all about": The Englishman acknowledged that it was very wrong to swear and would try to do so no more.

Female prostitution is practised to an extent that finds no parallel in the history of savage Nations: The female infant is given to some adult Native his

### They were then informed that the Missionaries had been sent by the King of England to teach them the great truths of religion and to make them acquainted with Arts and Civilization.

future wife; he is then at liberty to take her when he chooses which is generally at the age of five or 6 years. She then accompanies him his wanderings or becomes the property of a Native for a season or is lent to some white man who perhaps has three or four of these young girls from eight to twelve years of age with whom he lives in a state of adultery. If she remains in the possession of her husband whenever they have a Native Dance she is probably prostituted to all the youths in

### Idleness in both sexes has led to their so common intercession between white men and Native females that now the former seem to think that they have a right to any one and if she is not given up readily she is frequently taken by force, and the Native husband is put in jeopardy of his life.

the company. No class of human Beings on the earth can possibly be in a more wretched and pitiable condition than the Aboriginal females of New Holland compelled for look out for food for themselves and sometimes for the men: and in their journeyings forced to carry many of his weapons and it may be added sometime compelled to yield to the baser desires of white men against their will. Idleness in both sexes has led to their so common intercession between white men and Native females that now the former seem to think that they have a right to any one and if she is not given up readily she is frequently taken by force, and the Native husband is put in jeopardy of his life. The cruelty of some of these Stockmen to the Natives of both sexes it is to be greatly feared even ultimately led to revenge on the part of the

Natives and the result may be the murder of any or of every white man they meet with common as female prostitution where the Missionaries are happy to say that one female who has been under religious instruction at the Mission house has since that been known repeatedly to refuse the solicitations of white men and has told them as a reason for conduct that God would see them and that God who sit down in heaven would be angry.

That the Children instructed at the Mission house believe the fundamental Doctrines of the Christian religion is evident from the very

interesting questions which they are constantly in the practice of asking.

In the month of April 1833 Mrs Watson rescued an half cast infant from immediate Death. Its unnatural mother had so treated it as to impress her own mind that it was already dead and her female companion another yinnar was preparing its grave when Mrs Watson discovered them. By the attention paid to it it revived and lived three

fluctuating and their stay very variable sometimes twenty or thirty will remain for a fortnight and then take their Departure. In a Day or two some of them perhaps all will return and remain for a short time. But the very most of them attend morning and evening worship in the family and at the Church on Sundays we have had several visits from large numbers of Natives have made several Tours into the Bush.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the Natives have no Desire to emulate white men except in their vices. It is only by Kind treatment and trifling rewards that even the young are brought to attend to their Sessions ever. Were this desire to learn equal to their [-] they would soon make great proficiency. After the experience of every act of kindness for twelve months it is a lamentable fact that the Natives even in this neighbourhood are afraid that the Missionaries have some evil intentions towards them. it is rather surprising that they will believe what the Stockman say rather than be convinced of the priority of the intending [sic] of the Missionaries when they have received so many acts of kindness from the latter.

The expenditure of the Mission has during its first years been unavoidably heavy and indeed it must continue to be so if as has been the case during the past year all the supplies needed for the establishment in future have to be procured in Sydney or at Bathurst indeed if they will have to be purchased at all. The Missionaries aware of this have availed themselves of the facilities afforded them by the generous [sic] act of His Excellency Governor in offering a certain portion of land at Wellington Valley for the use of the Mission. Accordingly in the month of July last Twenty acres of wheat were sown which however from the unparalleled dryness of the Season has all perished, about Ten Acres of Maize corn has since been planted and is in a promising state.

When there has been raised at Wellington Valley a sufficient number of Stock and Grain enough to warrant such a proceeding the Missionaries think it highly desirable to form a station amongst the Wild Black Natives, where they have not been corrupted by intercourse with the Europeans, such a station might be conveniently supplied from Wellington Valley where Missionary efforts will still be in operation and as diligently attended to as at present, a vocabulary of the Language is in a state of preparation [sic].

Mission House Wellington Valley  
14 Dec 1833  
Signed: William Watson, J C S Handt

*The Wellington Valley Project.* Letters and Journals relating to the Church Missionary Society Mission to Wellington Valley, NSW, 1830-45. A Critical Electronic Edition. 2002.  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/research/publications/the-wellington-valley-project>

Besides those who were under regular instruction there are generally several other youths and adults at the Mission House. Their number is very



# Native Title

When Australia was invaded by the British in 1788, they claimed sovereignty without recognising the legitimacy of pre-existing Aboriginal sovereignty and land laws.

## The Land



Aaron's Pass, looking towards the creeks which feed the Cudgong River. 2009. Photo by Gaynor Macdonald.

### Wiradjuri as country

Wiradjuri as ecology was integral to social life and cosmology and vice versa. Its rivers and hundreds of creeks flow inland to join the Darling and Murray Rivers. When Wiradjuri people refer to their 'Country of the Three Rivers', they mean the catchments, not just the main rivers, of the Murrumbidgee, the Lachlan, and the Macquarie/ Upper Bogan. The total catchment of the Wiradjuri-language area is about 200,000 sq kms, the largest language country on the continent.

Every river and creek was a pathway of creative spirit activity, social interaction and a source of sustenance. Each person, man and woman, had a responsibility to maintain, for the welfare of all, each part of this landscape. On their initiation, young men were assigned a portion of the river system and they owned the designs associated with it which they carved on their boomerangs and shields, and painted on their bodies for ceremonies. These designs would be carved on their burial tree when they died. These burial trees were evident everywhere once but the few that remain.

Compared with much of inland Australia, this is a region of rich resources, the need to adjust to irregular flood and drought notwithstanding. The wide river plains were fired to produce grasslands attractive to kangaroos; water could be found without much duress even during drought, and fish were caught using nets and stone fish traps, large game was hunted with spears. An instrument like a small didgeridoo was used to mimic and attract emus, and returning boomerangs would hover like a hawk over waterways frightening ducks and swans into flight so they could be killed over land. Hunting and gathering rather than cultivation were the principal means of procuring food and provided the materials for manufacturing items such as possum skin cloaks, bone tools and threads. The predominantly meat and fish diet was supplied by men and women alike. Nerurr grass seeds were ground for flour to make ngardu (seed cakes or damper) and in season there were plentiful gwan - nuts and fruits - including gwandang (the quandong plum) and cootum (yam). With land use changes, these plants are now hard to find. It is still possible to find some of the plants used for medicinal remedies but knowledgeable Wiradjuri people in Wellington today are reluctant to point these out for fear they, too, will disappear through over-exploitation.

Even if sovereignty had been won legally by war or treaty, that would not mean Aboriginal law collapsed or was without legitimacy within the framework of international law at the time. This is because an incoming Colonial Government had to change a pre-existing law in order to extinguish it. Only if land

### Wiradjuri as ritual

An old Wiradjuri man who had been moved out to Menindee in the 1930s told anthropologist Norman Tindale that Wiradjuri country could be defined by its round of ceremonies.

Ceremonies which brought people together to initiate young men and women, to settle disputes, to enjoy good seasons of valued foods, exchanging items that could not be found locally, such as ochres or hardwoods, catching



A sacred carved burial tree. Date unknown. Image courtesy of Wellington Council.

up with gossip and celebrating new babies. Each ceremony brought different people together who walked vast distances.

Kin had special roles to play and needed to be present. Now they come in cars and they still gather for the most important of ceremonies: funerals. In the past, the man-making ceremonies of initiation into adulthood were also important.

A range of other events continue to bring people together: visiting family, attending meetings, sports and cultural festivals.

ownership was formally transferred was Aboriginal land law extinguished. If the tenure of land was not changed by the incoming power, it remained Aboriginal-owned. This should have been recognised from 1788 but it was only in 1992 that the High Court determined, in the 'Mabo

### Wiradjuri dharuwaay

The Wellington Valley claim map is based on the Wiradjuri waterways of the past - although this is not so evident when looking at a map of roads and towns. Each person was born with a spiritual and kin relationship to a particular dharuwaay, which remained part of his or her identity through life. Dharuwaay were based on a tributary catchment and were large enough to sustain about 50 to 70 people in most seasons. Each creek or river would have dharuwaay along it. The Wellington Valley dharuwaay included all those along the Bell River, the Little River and the Cudgong River. All these people saw themselves as a 'locality grouping.' They travelled downstream to meet in what is now the town of Wellington. They continued to do so when blankets were being distributed. Eventually most of the small families of survivors were forced to move off their dharuwaay in the late nineteenth century. They clustered in Wellington, re-forming themselves as the Wellington Wiradjuri. Travelling from one dharuwaay into another means the water changes direction. This can be seen at Aaron's Pass (see photo to left): north are the creeks forming dharuwaay whose waters flow into the Cudgong River, behind the camera are those flowing south to the Turon.

### Wiradjuri as 'nation'

When Crown Commissioner Mayne called Wiradjuri a 'nation' in the 1850s, he was looking for a 'bounded group' or single 'society' which would indicate how people were organised in relation to place. He was used to named villages and villagers, towns and townfolk. What mystified the newcomers was the identification of certain territories, with harsh penalties for trespassing without permission, yet people also seemed to travel seamlessly and often. There seemed little agreement about who was a leader and for whom, and yet there were respected and authoritative men and women.

The government tried to impose British-style order on a system that it would take well over another century to begin to understand, by calling authoritative people chiefs or kings/queens. They referred to local groupings as 'tribes', or 'clans', which they were not. To this day, Aboriginal social organisation is complex, multi-layered and difficult for outsiders to grasp without a commitment to doing so.

There is no 'nation', if by this we mean a political entity, even though people have been forming themselves into regional entities in recent years, such as the Wiradjuri Council of Elders. Wiradjuri is a huge area throughout which people share laws and customs, historical experiences, and interact but each of them identifies with specific localities, such as Cowra Wiradjuri, Wellington Wiradjuri, Condobolin Wiradjuri. These 'local Aboriginal communities' were created in the early twentieth century when people were forced off their own dharuwaay and nearby camps and expected to live on government reserves. Small family groupings from the dharuwaay on the Macquarie tributaries which flowed into the river near the town, such as the Bell, Little and Cudgong Rivers, were closely associated with each other and had long intermarried. They continued to associate and marry but were now brought together into a larger settlement by the government to form what we refer to today as 'the Wellington community'. Wellington, the town, is not the only 'place' from which Wellington Wiradjuri come, and calling their claim the Wellington Valley Wiradjuri has allowed them to better take in the shared social history of people on these inter-related rivers and creeks of the mid-Macquarie.

case', that not to have done so was wrong - it was 'racial discrimination.' Australia's Racial Discrimination Act was only passed in 1976 so discrimination was not illegal before that. The Mabo case ruled that land which has never had a change of land title is still Aboriginal-owned land.

## Law and Custom Wiradjuri Law

Like any system of law, Aboriginal laws are often not 'visible' until someone breaks them and disputes arise.

There are various laws, customs and protocols known and practiced by people throughout the Wiradjuri region, and well beyond it, which cause conflict when they are broken. There are kinds of insults that must be retaliated against if one is to not lose 'face'; there are ways to

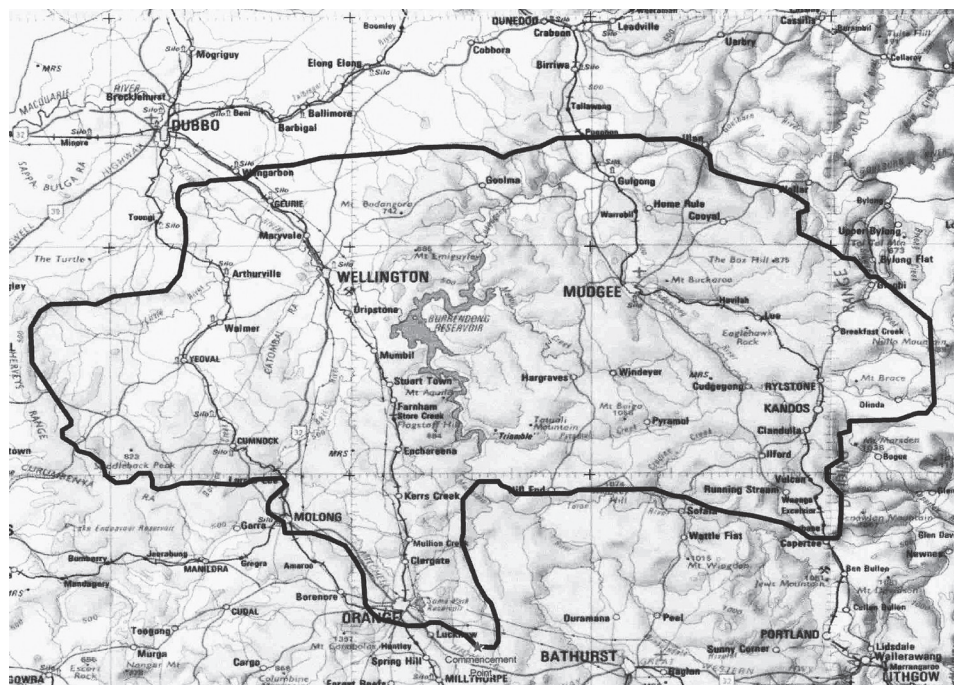
introduce yourself; ways to use language and body language across a range of gender and age relations, and many more.

See Wiradjuri Designs - to right.

Aboriginal land resumed by government after 1976 has lost its native title but the owners should have been subject to compensation, as with any resumption of private land. Many native title holders have been able to benefit from the economic as well as cultural base that native title recognition and compensation allows for.

Australian law courts attend to). Sometimes conflict arises when a person wants to go 'whitefella way' when it suits them but then goes 'blackfella way' another time. Being a colonial subject means living with two laws, even after two hundred years. So life continues to be full of contradictions that have to be managed daily. The law by which someone can sav. 'I am Wellington Wiradjuri', rests on having that right to

This means one's parent had to be recognised by others as having identified and as having engaged with the community of kin and other Wiradjuri people. At the very least this would mean making sure you attend funerals, the rituals in which the community is reaffirmed in the loss of one of its own. You cannot be Aboriginal anywhere in Australia unless you have 'kin and country'. Every claimant in the Wellington Valley will be a part of networks of Wiradjuri people, and will engage with their country, even if they live in Sydney or Wagga Wagga.



Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Native Title Claim map. 2009. Created by Geospatial Services. Made available by the Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation.

The above claim map is based on Wiradjuri waterways of the past, which explains its strange shape. Each dharuwaay or hunting territory included all or part of a tributary catchment. A large tributary might have several dharuwaay along it. 'Wellington Valley Wiradjuri', as a 'local division', includes all the dharuwaay catchments of the mid-Macquarie, Bell, Little and Cudgong Rivers. There were many gatherings where these rivers meet - around the town of Wellington. Some people were able to

stay on their dharuwaay as these were turned into pastoral stations but were moved off at the end of the 19th century. 'Wellington' for these Wiradjuri people has always been a broader experience of country than the town itself.

The claim map doesn't mean all land within the map is being claimed, only that available under native title (not very much). The map does show the whole area with which Wiradjuri people have identified over time.

The foundation of Wellington's historic native title claim was based on meeting the following three criteria:

1) There is land in the Wellington Valley which has not changed ownership since colonisation. Regardless of whether it has

### Wiradjuri as Language

Wiradjuri (Wirraathurray) is first of all the name of the language which the ancestral spirits gave to a vast area of country in the creation era. It means the language characterised by the use of *wirad* for the negative 'no.' Likewise, *gamil* and *wangaay* mean 'no' in Gamilaraay and Wangaaybuwan, language countries to the north and north west of Wiradjuri. Language adheres to country, not to people: it can't move. When people travelled they had to switch language. Language is therefore about identity with country, even if a person can't speak it or doesn't use it for communication. The Wiradjuri language area is vast but each local area had its own specific linguistic characteristics.

### Wiradjuri Designs

Sacred design among Wiradjuri was based on intricate carving, in contrast to the bark and sand paintings of central and northern Australia. Wiradjuri men were given a personal sacred design at their initiation which symbolised their relationship with country. It was their 'signature', used in ceremonial body painting, on weapons like this woomera (spear thrower - to left) and, when they died, on their carved burial tree (their 'tombstone').(Woomera photo, Gaynor Macdonald, 2003, of a woomera then held by the Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council).

### A Brief History of Wellington's Wiradjuri Native Title Claim

Wellington's first native title claim was submitted by Rose Chown in 1994, on behalf of people who had lived on the Wellington Town Common.

The claim included people who did not have ancestry back to the colonisation of the Wellington Valley in 1823, and omitted people who did. This did not conform to the Native Title Act, which requires a claim to be inclusive of all people who have rights under Wiradjuri law. The friction this caused locally took years to sort out, until the NSW Government handed over the Town Common under land rights legislation.

A new claim was prepared. Some people didn't realise that 'Wellington' included people with ancestors throughout the Valley so a new map was done to reflect the ways Wiradjuri of the Wellington Valley would have understood their country in the past.

The claim now includes all people with ancestors in the Valley, who are recognised as Wiradjuri people who have identified with 'kin and country' in every generation since 1823, when the British moved into Wellington. The new claim was submitted in 2009 and registered.

The story is not over. The claim is challenged by people whose immediate ancestors have not identified as Wiradjuri but who have been able to trace distant ancestors in the region. This opens up the question as to who has the right to identify as Wiradjuri under Wiradjuri law, and how to understand the substance of that law today.

Even though the Town Common has been extensively occupied since the 1920s and used for stock and quarrying, archaeologist Wilfred Shawcross, was able to find evidence of flints and stone tool making in the late 1990s. Wiradjuri ancestral presences remain in country.

specific historical and economic value, it remains Wiradjuri-owned land.

2) Wiradjuri Aboriginal people in the Wellington Valley are able to trace their ancestry back to the colonisation of their country.

3) Aboriginal people in Wellington can demonstrate that they have lived, on each generation, according to ongoing and widely shared Wiradjuri laws and customs relating to land ownership.

## The People



Namima School's First Committee. 1950s. Photographer unknown.(courtesy Joyce Williams).

Back row: Billy King, Jackie West, Micky Daley, Bill May, Gladly Bell, Vera May, Mandy Daley(Smith), Laura Ah-See. Second Row: John May, Jessie May, Ida May, Reaneane Stanely. Front row: Julia Stewart, Maggie Riley, Joyce Williams, Emmy Stanely.

### Wiradjuri Ancestry

A 'Wiradjuri person' is a person who knows and lives 'kin and country'.

The ancestry of the Wiradjuri people in the Wellington Valley region today has been remarkably well recorded, in part because of missionary records from the early days, and annual blanket returns. Probably the family tree which goes back the furthest would be that of Evelyn Powell. Evelyn, her children, grandchildren and now great grandchildren are directly descended from Jemmy Buckley sr. Jemmy, whose Wiradjuri name was Goongalbool, was born about 1784 in the Wellington area. He had two wives, Poll from Wellington (born c1800) and Mary, from the upper Bell River (born c1804). His son, Jemmy Goongen Marshall Buckley, was born about 1817, and he and his wife Jane were married by the missionaries in Wellington in 1842.

Benjamin Holland was born a year after Jemmy Goongen, in 1818, and Daniel Weldon a year after that. Benjamin died at Black Rock in 1861. His granddaughter, Margaret 'Mary' Ellen Holland, married Edward Dawkins (in 1878) and then John King (in 1895). It is probable that John's grandfather was Buoneparte King, who died in Wellington in 1896. His father was 'King Billy' of Nanima. John and Margaret's son, William, also called 'King Billy' is pictured above. There are still many Wiradjuri people named Weldon but they are no longer associated with Wellington, having married Wiradjuri people elsewhere.

Margaret and Edward Dawkins had two daughters, one of whom was Jessie who married John May, affectionately known to younger family as 'Farb' (Grandfather May). Their daughter, Margaret 'Maggie' married Herbert Riley, and their daughter, Joyce Williams, is the most senior member of the Wellington Valley Wiradjuri today.

Kitty (Catherine) Carr was born on the Meadows Station in 1841. Her mother was a Wiradjuri woman and her father, Michael Carr, was a shepherd. Kitty had a child to Edward Williams before she married him, so her first child was called Edward Carr. Edward Williams was born in Bawstrip in Somerset in 1808. These are

the ancestors of Violet Carr and Wayne Carr. Kitty and Edward's daughter, Joanna Williams, married George Daley, a Wiradjuri man from the Lachlan River. Their son, Jimmy, married Bessie Stewart, who was the granddaughter of Micheal Mickey, nicknamed '4 Corners' because he lived at a 'crossroad' on Goobang Range, where he worked on the Springs and Meadows stations, and of Alexander Stewart, originally from the Bell River, who also worked on the Springs.

Wiradjuri people's names were often difficult for English speakers, and their normal use of kin terms wasn't appropriate for these new relationships. They took English names from stations owners (Baird), lovers (Carr), fellow workers (Stewart) or were given nicknames which in turn became surnames, such as Nelson, Solomon and Waterloo.

Emma Holland married Jack Stanley - another name which endures among Wellington Valley Wiradjuri today. It was their daughter, Matilda Stanley, who was the last resident of the old hut still on the Wellington Town Common. Albert Theodore May, who was the first Wiradjuri person since 1823 to own his own home in Wellington, was the son of Jack and Jessie (Dawkins) May, the grandson of Margaret Holland, and the great grandson of Benjamin Holland whom we met earlier.

These are just a few of the amazing stories of people-in-place, traditional owners who are direct descendants of the Wiradjuri who were dispossessed of their dharuwaay within the Wellington Valley from the 1820s. In each generation they have continued to identify with their country and its laws, and with the vast networks of kin who constitute the world of Wiradjuri then and now.

Dr Gaynor Macdonald is the author of the Wellington' publication's Native Title summary. She also co-wrote the Colonisation article, and assisted with other parts of the 'Wellington' publication. Gaynor is a Senior Lecturer and Consultant Anthropologist with the University of Sydney. She has worked with Wiradjuri people for three decades to understand their culture past and present; their historical experiences, and present struggles. She is currently completing a book on what it has meant to different generations of Wiradjuri people to be colonial subjects.



# Soldier Settlement

Mathieu Gallois

In communities across Australia, the participation and sacrifice of grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers and mothers in both world wars is one of the most revered and sacred foundations of Australian values and culture. Indigenous Australians also participated in the epic war efforts of the 20th century, only under different terms and conditions. In Wellington, Indigenous descendants of the First World War veterans honor their forbears' military legacy, but also rail against the injustices they endured and question why their fathers and grandfathers were not part of the great nation building Soldier Settlement programs of both World Wars. The history of home and land ownership (and race relations in general) in the Wellington district could conceivably have been radically different if WW1 local Indigenous veterans like Private Elijah Joseph Coe and Private Herbert Riley had been granted land after the First World War.

## Indigenous Service in WW1

Mathieu Gallois

Over 1000 Indigenous Australians, roughly 1.25% of the Indigenous population of 80000, fought in the First World War. The army did not note aboriginality in their records and as such the final number of enlistments with indigenous ancestry may never be known. In the Wellington district, eight Indigenous men have been confirmed to have served in WW1 from a total of 1500 local recruits.

Gary Oakley, the Indigenous Liaison Officer at the Australian War Memorial explains the legislative context of WW1 recruitment as follows: 'In 1903 the Defence Act was amended to both stipulate that all males aged from 12 to 25 (Cadet Corps for the under 18) would receive military training, and also that 'Persons who are not substantially of European origin or descent shall be exempt from service in time of war.' He notes that it was 'not until 1949 that Indigenous Australians had all restrictions lifted on being able to freely join the Australian Defence Force'.

When war broke out in 1914, many Aborigines who tried to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force were rejected on the grounds of race; it was usually left to the recruiting officer to make the decision whether or not to allow the person to enlist. By late 1917, after the Federal Government's failed conscription referendum, a new military order stated the following, 'Half-castes may be enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force provided that the examining Medical Officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin'.

At the time of WW1, Indigenous Australians were British subjects, but they were neither counted in national census as citizens nor able to participate in local, state or federal elections.

The Australian Imperial Force treated Aboriginal soldiers as equals, paid them the same as white soldiers and they were generally accepted while serving alongside their white mates without prejudice whilst in uniform.

## Soldier Settlement Scheme

Mathieu Gallois

The Soldier Settlement scheme provided land for settlement to WW1 and WW2 veterans. The program was a nationwide initiative that involved both federal and state governments. The Commonwealth Government's role involved purchasing land and selecting and releasing Crown Land for the program.

The state governments administered the scheme. In NSW, for WW1 veterans to be eligible for the program, it was required they had served in either the Australian Imperial Forces or the British Defence Service and that they had been honorably discharged.

To acquire land through the Soldier Settlement program ex service men were required to complete application forms. In NSW the program's main conditions stipulated that successful applicants had to occupy the land for a minimum of five years and to fence the property within three years of signing the agreement. Additional financial support in the form of low interest loans to help meet the costs of clearing land, building fences, drainage, securing water etc, were also available as part of the scheme. Only a small

percentage of WW1 and WW2 veterans received land under the scheme. In New South Wales 32,917 km<sup>2</sup> (8,134,009 acres) of land in the form of 6,448 settlement farms were awarded to returned WW1 soldiers. The program sought to reward and resettle soldiers, but it was also a nation building exercise aiming to populate large underdeveloped parts of Australia. As such, not all regions were part of the program.

In Wellington, Gobolion Station, consisting of 1053 acres was purchased as part of the Soldier settlement program. The station was divided into two farms and awarded to E. J Brennan and H. R. Robinson according to *They Came to a Valley*, D. I. McDonald. Wellington Historical Society, 1968 (Pages 174 - 175).

An estimated 3000 Aboriginal people and Islanders served as formally enlisted soldiers, sailors or airmen in the Second World War. To this date, the Military History Section of the Australian War Memorial has confirmed that only 3 Aboriginals received land under a 'soldier settlement' scheme for both world wars.

## Herbert Riley, Private 6332

Graeme Hosken with the assistance of Trevor Munro

'Herb' Riley enlisted on 10 May 1916. He was allocated to D Company of the Dubbo Depot Battalion to start his training. When moved to Liverpool Camp, Herb was appointed to the 20th Reinforcements of the 2nd Battalion, which by this time was serving on the Western Front.

'Herb' and his comrades joined the 2nd Battalion in France on 12 February 1917. The 2nd had just returned from the front line and had entered the Mametz Camp for a rest. The weather had been freezing, and with the thaw, the ground turned to mud and slush.

The 2nd Battalion re-entered the front line on 27 February near the shattered town of Flers. The water and mud made conditions awkward and uncomfortable while the unit stayed in the front line until 8 March, whence they moved to poor billets in Dernancourt. At 9am on 3 April, a full-strength battalion marched out to Ribemont to the strains of 'Colonel Bogey' played by the battalion band. They marched 11 miles to Montauban where they rested for the night. The next day the unit tramped through Le Transloy, and Barastre to positions at Haplincourt.

The 2nd Battalion attacked the village of Hermies on 9 April. At 3.30am the battalion commenced its attack from east of the Hermies-Doignes Road. It was not long before the battalion encountered a number of well dug-in enemy posts, with many of the Australians caught in a fusillade of machine gun and rifle fire, resulting in heavy casualties. At

this time Herb received a gunshot wound to his right wrist. After an hour, the village of Hermies was captured, at the cost of 60 killed and 120 wounded.

Herb was treated at the 3rd Field Ambulance. On 21 April he was put on the Hospital Ship *Viper* for the voyage from Rouen to England. Herb was admitted to the 3rd Southern General Hospital for treatment.

Five months later Herb boarded *Suevic* for return to Australia, which he reached on 20 November 1917. A train trip from Melbourne to Sydney was followed by discharge on 24 December. Herb Riley's part in the Great War was over.

Excrate: *Wellington's Finest*.2005.  
Published by Trevor Munro & Graeme Hosken,

Photographer unknown.  
Photo: courtesy Joyce Williams





# Sport 1857 & 1882

## Woggabaliri



**Engraving by Gustav Mützel after a sketch by William Blandowski made during the 1856-7 Murray River expedition. Domestic occupations in the summer season on the Lower Murray River. 1862. Courtesy Haddon Library, Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK.**

**In the lower centre part of Mützel engraving six Wiradjuri people are depicted playing Woggabaliri.**

Mathieu Gallois

**W**oggabaliri is a non competitive co-operative kicking volley game played Wiradjuri people. The ball was traditionally made with Bulrush roots

wrapped in Possum fur. Woggabaliri is the Ngunawal word for play. In the lower centre part of Blandowski's engraving six Wiradjuri people are depicted playing Woggabaliri.

The game is similar to the modern game Hacky Sack and Asian and South East Asian games such as Jianzi, Sepak Takraw, Sipa and Chaptch. Wikipedia

states in its summary of the history of soccer: 'Games revolving around the kicking of a ball have been played in many countries throughout history, such as Woggabaliri in Australia, Harpastum in the Roman Empire, and Cuju in China.'

The Australian sports Commission has recognised Woggabaliri and in 2010 it was

referenced by the Football Federation of Australian in its Australian 2022 FIFA World Cup bid as a traditional Aboriginal game that is similar to soccer. Woggabaliri has been reintroduced in some schools across NSW.

## Cricket 1882

**“The dusky sons of the soil marched off triumphantly victorious”**

Mathieu Gallois

D.I.McDonald, in his book, 'They Came to a Valley', which was commissioned by the Wellington Historical Society in 1968 to celebrate Wellington's sesquicentenary, reproduced records of an early cricket match between an Aboriginal team and the local 'white team' (pages 71- 72).

**C**ricket continued to enjoy a measure of popularity, and by the close of the 1870s the town boasted two teams - the Wellington and the Albert. In 1882 an Aboriginal team was formed, and they soon displayed a mastery of the game which embarrassed other players. On 17th February 1883, the local correspondent of the "Town and Country Journal" reported:

'The Gobolion team of Aboriginal cricketers having beaten the Wellington white eleven by 28 runs in the first innings, the Wellington team declined to finish the match. The blacks scored 63 runs against 35 made by the white men.'

'Shortly afterwards a return match was arranged and once more the Aborigines showed their superiority by winning the game by 5 runs.

"The dusky sons of the soil marched off triumphantly victorious", a newspaper report

noted, "quite prepared to beat the English eleven should they come this way.

'The English players did not take up the challenge and the Gobolion team was denied the opportunity to show that the claim was no idle boast.'