

**First contact/frontier expansion in the Wingecarribee  
area between 1798 -1821: Exploration and analysis.**

Kim Leever 2006

## Synopsis

The Wingecarribee area in New South Wales is within 120 kms of the Port Jackson penal colony established in 1788. However, the British did not intrude upon the area until 1798. This research seeks to understand the first contact and frontier experiences between the British and the Gundungurra people of the area. This geographical area and time span have not been subject to rigorous historical analysis, particularly from a post-colonial perspective. There is currently no identified population of Gundungurra people living in the Wingecarribee area. It is unusual in Australia, for the Indigenous people not to still be on their ancestral lands. This research will seek to explore and analyse the lack of explanation for the absence of the Gundungurra people within the historiography of the area. The Gundungurra people will be located and described by drawing upon the contemporaneous records of the colonial government, explorers, and the military and early settlers. In the absence of definitive information, this thesis will draw upon a variety of local settler histories and literature, and analyse them with reference to Indigenous decolonization, frontier and other historical theories. This research will place the Gundungurra people into the historiography of the Wingecarribee area and ensure their memory is not erased from histories of the area or nation.

## Declaration

'I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work except where I have given full documented references to the work of others, and that the material contained in this thesis has not been submitted for formal assessment in any formal course and the word length is 19,308'.

Signed:.....

12<sup>th</sup> May 2006

This modified version includes Gundungurra words in brackets and italics. This vocabulary is from "The Last Kooradgie" by John Meredith and is compiled from three sources: Major Mitchell, Werriberri (Billy Russell) and A. L. Bennett.

## Table of contents

Title Page	i
Synopsis	ii
Declaration	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Warning	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One – First Contact	18
Chapter Two – Frontier Expansion	43
Chapter Three – Aftermath	67
Conclusion	80
Bibliography	85

## **Acknowledgements**

I would firstly like to thank the Wodi-Wodi people for the opportunity of studying on their traditional lands at Wollongong; the Tharawal and Dharuk people on whose land I work, and the Gundungurra people on whose land I live. I do this to respect those peoples who have preceded me and in the hope that my effort will in some small way be an acknowledgement of their presence and loss; and contribute to their remembrance.

I would also like to thank the staff of the School of History & Politics, especially my Supervisor Dr Glenn Mitchell, for their support, understanding and inspiration throughout my studies and research.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Bronwyn, my children Jethro and Hannah for their forbearance while I engaged in this work; and also the many friends who have offered assistance, advice, leads and encouragement and who are looking forward to reading this final thesis.

## **Warning**

**This thesis contains the names and accounts of deceased people  
that may offend some people.**

## Introduction

This thesis examines various historical and narrative accounts of the Gundungurra people, whose ancestral lands encompass the Wingecarribee area of the NSW Southern Highlands, between 1798 – 1821. The central argument of this thesis is that the limited contemporaneous information sources and the previous historical analyses of them have contributed to a very narrow understanding of the Gundungurra people, their culture and way of life, and the effects of the first contact/frontier expansion on them. By re-examining some of these limited sources, I will attempt, using different methods of analysis, to reread these sources to identify the gaps, the omissions and silences and extract alternate information from the texts, to develop new knowledge and understanding, however inadequate and imperfect, that will contribute to new dialogues and shared histories.

I am writing this thesis in the present tense, as I believe that all history is written in the present about the past. In doing so, I am acknowledging the Dreaming, and what Stanner describes as the “everywhen”<sup>1</sup>, and also accepting the challenge of Nandy to disrupt the historical colonization of those cultures and societies that have different methods of engaging with and relating to, their pasts. Peoples ‘outside of history’ whose concepts of time may be disreputably nonlinear, cyclic or even timelessness.<sup>2</sup> This may lead to some linguistic aberrations for which I apologise if I create offence.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Dreaming’ in *Traditional Aboriginal Religion; a Reader*, edited by Edwards, W.H., Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1987, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Nandy, A., ‘History’s Forgotten Doubles’ in Pomper, P., Elphick, R., and Vann, R., (Eds), *World history: ideologies, structures and identities*, Blackwell, Malden Massachusetts, 1998 p. 46

The Wingecarribee area, also known as the Berrima district or the Southern Highlands, is a region that lays approximately 120 kms to the southwest of Sydney.<sup>3</sup> The area extending from Camden and the Blue Mountains in the north, the Illawarra escarpment (Merrigong) in the east, to Goulburn in the south is the land of the Gundungurra people. The Wingecarribee area is centrally located within these Gundungurra lands. The first recorded British excursion into this area occurred in 1798<sup>4</sup>, ten years after the establishment of the British colony at Sydney. Another expedition followed in 1802<sup>5</sup>. Oddly enough, there were no further official movements into the area until 1814<sup>6</sup>. From 1815, there was increasing pastoral expansion into the area led by Surveyor-General John Oxley. It is this geographical area, from the time of the first recorded British excursion, until 1821 when the colonial powers officially opens up the area for settlement, upon which this research focuses.

The early British explorers recorded meeting family groups of Gundungurra people as they traversed the area, though no total population figures are compiled. The report of the 1830 Battle of Fairy Meadow suggests that several hundred warriors (or up to fifteen hundred) of the 'Bong Bong tribe' (Gundungurra) and Wodi-Wodi people took part.<sup>7</sup> By 1833 however, the Gundungurra people as recorded in the Blanket Returns, comprised of forty people at Berrima, ten people at Stonequarry (Picton) and fifteen at Burragorang,

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<sup>3</sup> Plate 1. Map of Wingecarribee Shire LGA on following page.

<sup>4</sup> *Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Volume II 1797-1800*, The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament. 1914, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Volume V, July 1804- August 1806*, The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament. 1915. p. 586-589.

<sup>6</sup> Prest, J., *Hamilton Hume & William Hovell*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1963, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> 'Report of interview in 1897 of Mr Martin Lynch, eyewitness, by Archibald Campbell MLA' in Organ, M. (Ed.), *Documentary History of the Wingecarribee & South Coast Aborigines 1770-1850*. Aboriginal Education Unit, University of Wollongong Press, 1990. p. 157-159.



# Wingecarribee Shire

With surrounding Local Government Areas



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Produced by the GIS Section, WSC.

Plate 1. Map of Wingecarribee Shire LGA

totalling sixty-five people.<sup>8</sup> The apparent rapid decline in the population over a relatively short period remains unexplained. This lack of adequate explanation, together with the absence of recorded resistance of the Gundungurra people to the pastoral expansion from 1818, is at odds with earlier reports (1814-16) of the ferocity, numbers and strength of the 'Mountain tribes' (Gundungurra).<sup>9</sup> This inadequacy of explanation and knowledge of the circumstances of the Gundungurra peoples is the driving force behind this thesis.

The sources of information about the British expansion into the area are seriously limited. There are the official records such as explorers' journals, maps and diaries and there are a number of papers and books about the early British occupation of the area. Many of these reports are based on similar primary and secondary source material. The prospect of identifying new primary source materials is limited.<sup>10</sup> The intention of this research is to revisit those primary and secondary sources, and by subjecting them to a new analysis, referring to Indigenous decolonization theories, and methods of reading history, such as 'history from below', to reveal through the British invaders' and settlers' accounts, part of the story of the Gundungurra people. Through the silences, omissions and gaps, and through the language of their accounts and their descriptions of the conditions of their lives, the British stories will reveal their understanding, attitudes and relationships with the Gundungurra people.

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 4 June 1814, 9 March 1816, 30 March 1816.

<sup>10</sup> Observation made by Dr Maryanne Larkin, Librarian, Mitchell Library, Sydney during educational visit 22 April 2005.

As there is no identified community of Gundungurra people in the Wingecarribee area today, and as there is no written history to explain the absence of the Gundungurra people from the area, this thesis will attempt to fill that gap and identify areas for further research. The research is conducted in a manner respectful of the culture of the Gundungurra people, taking into account Indigenous theories of decolonization, while attempting contributing to a decolonization process. This thesis sits within postcolonial studies. By taking ownership of the British and colonial history of the region, reassessing it in the light of postcolonial theories, and by identifying cultural bias, triumphalist and racist tendencies, a more accurate, balanced, specific and accessible history of the first contact and frontier expansion into the Wingecarribee area is constructed.

However, before I begin the exploration, it is important to set the scene and imagine what this country was like at the end of the eighteenth century and how the inhabitants, the Gundungurra people, lived. This is problematic in that any description will be necessarily a partial and incomplete portrayal of the thousands of years that the Gundungurra people have existed within this land. As there are limited written records from this period, I need to draw upon whatever sources I can, and use my imaginations to describe the landscape.

To begin I need to strip away all of the signs of the past two hundred or so years of European presence. Imagine there are no roads, no houses, shops or factories, there are no farms and fences, no horses, sheep or cattle, no dams, no powerlines,

no railway lines, no aircraft leaving vapour trails overhead, no artificial lights and no satellites blinking in the night (*burri*) sky. There are no European people or introduced diseases.

There are no European and other introduced species of deciduous trees such as poplars, elms and oaks. No Monterey pines, hawthorns and privets lining the roadways. No introduced weeds like ivy and blackberries. No imported flowers, no grasses such as paspalum and kikuyu. No animal pests such as rabbits, foxes, cats (*cundra-curwa*) or rats competing with the local fauna, and no carp in the streams and rivers (*tooluan, dulang*). As I scan the horizon there are no power poles, no TV antennae, no mobile phone towers and navigation lights on Mt Gibraltar, no satellite dishes, no billboards, no nightglow of ambient light detracting from the vista.

There has been no land clearing for towns, villages, farms or sporting fields and there are extensive forests of varying densities such as the Yarrowa Brush that extends in the rich volcanic soils from the Wingecarribee Swamp (*boombi*) to the escarpment at Robertson. This rainforest, (a very small remnant of which exists in the Natural Forest reserve at Robertson), includes leatherwood, sassafras, cabbage palms, tree ferns, lilli pilli, messmate, and many large eucalypts intertwined with vines and creepers.. On the rocky sandstone and shale ridges, there are areas of smaller, scrubbier bush with acacias, banksias, hakeas, grevilleas and callistemons, scribbly and snappy gums.

Around Sutton Forest, Berrima, Moss Vale and Bowral there are hundreds of hectares of rolling grasslands where numerous kangaroo (*binaro, burru, wambuyn*), wallabies (*bindang, burri*) and emu (*birriban, mewer-re*) graze. It is on these grasslands that the Gundungurra hunters use their 'fire (*canbe, gumbee*) stick farming' techniques to assist their hunting and to regenerate new grass (*burrangurang*). Mulvaney & Kamminga write 'Forests, scrub and grassland were torched to keep open travel corridors or pathways and provide more general access to hunting and collecting areas.'<sup>11</sup> This deliberate clearing technique creates a mosaic of areas, at various stages of recovery from the fires (*canbe, gumbee*), which provides food and shelter for a wide variety of birds (*budgang, bootyan*), reptiles and animals, including koalas, wombats (*goolung*), quolls, and many other marsupial species, as well as establishing a system of fire (*canbe, gumbee*) breaks in case of a major fire (*canbe, gumbee*).

The location of the Wingecarribee area, adjoining the coastal escarpment (Merrigong) together with the elevated ranges of hills, ensures that the region attracts considerable rainfall from both the coastal and inland directions. The covering forest canopy restricts evaporation, and the soil retains much moisture that contributes to the retention of perennial water (*nadgyung*) flow in many streams. The rivers (*tooluan, dulang*), swamps (*boombi*) and wetlands, and the numerous creeks (flowing into the Nattai, Wingecarribee, Shoalhaven, Kangaroo and Wollondilly Rivers, are sources of permanent water (*nadgyung*), providing breeding places for a wide variety of waterfowl, platypus (*pala-an*), fish (*waak*), molluscs, eels (*cunark, melanghan, moyolong*), yabbies (*magurrung*) and frogs.

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<sup>11</sup> Mulvaney, D. J., & Kamminga, J., *Prehistory of Australia*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1999, p. 60.

There are swans (*gin-yuk, kinyeac, maikatong*), myriad varieties of ducks (*puktanbang*), pelicans, egrets, waders, storks, and broilgas (*burulga, curratok*) foraging for food in the pristine wetlands surrounded by water lilies, sedges, reeds, paperbarks and ti tree.

The sounds of the forest and woodland birds (*budgang*) including the many galahs, cockatoos, finches, lyrebirds (*jakular*), kookaburras (*branghur*), wattle birds, magpies (*kurra-gang, gerre-gang*), currawongs, pigeons and the raucous cry of the crows (*wogolin*) creates a music that is uninterrupted by cars, trucks, trains, planes, radios and televisions. There is the “cooee” of the people calling to one another, the sounds of laughter of people going about their daily tasks of hunting and collecting food, of teaching the young, of telling the ancient stories and planning the rich ceremonial and spiritual life.

Mulvaney & Kamminga explain

It is difficult to envisage now, after so much of the natural vegetation has been modified during the last 200 years, but pre-European landscapes were sometimes quite different and more congenial to the Aboriginal inhabitants. Some areas were easier to traverse on foot, had more natural water sources and a far greater variety of plant and animal food than could be imagined today.<sup>12</sup>

The Gundungurra people have lived in this area for arguably 30,000 years. Every piece of ground has been walked upon, every plant and animal has a name, and a place, within their cosmology, every landform is known.

There is evidence of 570 sites including rock carvings, grinding grooves (*gum-bal-bal*), art sites, carved and scarred trees, middens, stone

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 64.

arrangements, campsites, ceremonial sites, quarries, burial mounds and potential archaeological deposits in the area<sup>13</sup>. Lawrence writes “For at least 4000 years the Aborigines camp(ed) by the spring (Chalybeate Mineral Springs, Mittagong) and drink the mineral water. They used the iron deposits to make red (*bulber*) and yellow ochre paints”.<sup>14</sup>

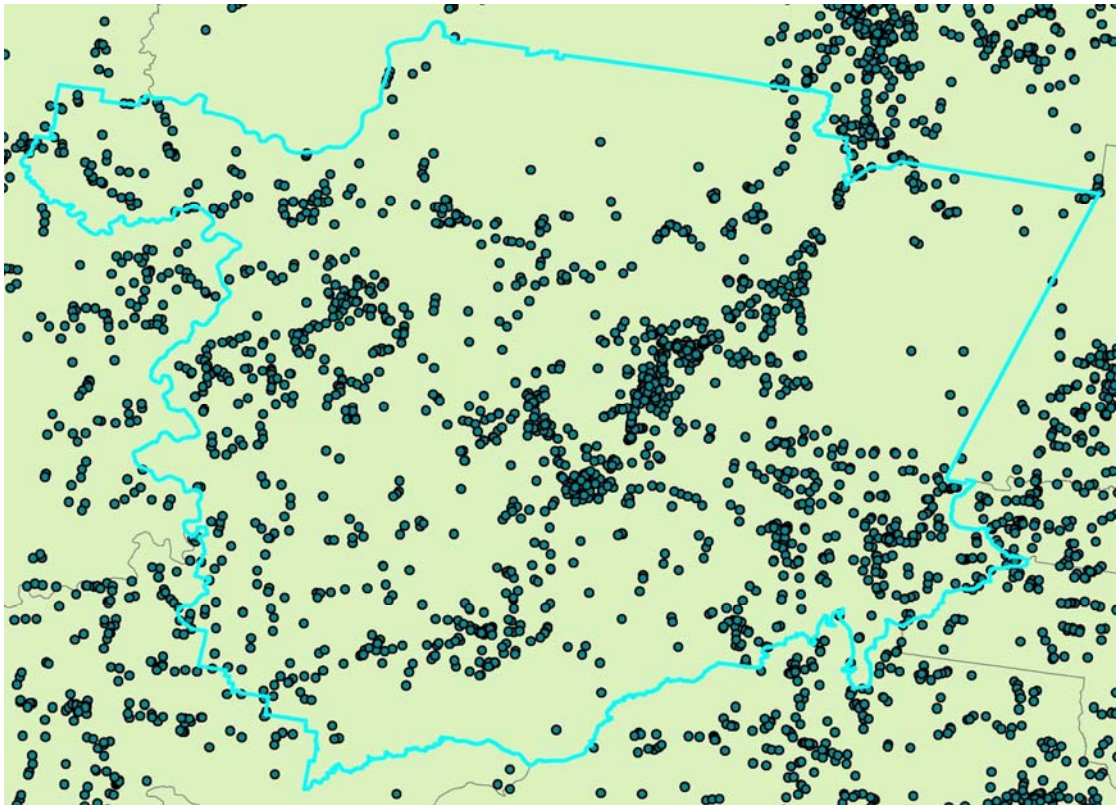


Plate 2. Map of distribution of identified Indigenous sites in the Wingecarribee Shire LGA provided by Aboriginal Heritage Information Management Section, NSW Department of Environment & Conservation.

Life is a rich continuation of generations of accumulated knowledge, the Gundungurra people live in rhythm with the variations in the landscape brought about by the changing seasons that are themselves heralded by plant

<sup>13</sup> Map and spreadsheet provided by Aboriginal Heritage Information Management Section, NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence, J., *Fitzroy Iron Works: Student Project Book*, Jon W. Lawrence, Parramatta, 1988. pp 5-6

flowerings, animals' behaviours and migrations, and explained through the belief system of the Dreaming.

There is abundant food in the region. The perennial water (*nadgyung*) supply, the shelter of the forests and the open grasslands carries many species of edible animals, birds (*budgang*), eggs (*gubbu-gang*), snakes (*mugga*) and lizards, fish (*waak*) and plants, tubers, grubs, berries and honey that provide an accessible and plentiful supply of food. Possums (*wella*) are an important part of the diet for the Gundungurra people who locate and capture the nocturnal possums (*wella*) sleeping in hollow trees. The possum (*wella*) skins are used to make the large cloaks (*carreng*) that provide warmth and protection from the elements.

According to the laws of Indigenous society, the family groups all participate in the hunting and gathering processes.

Prior to the European settlement of Australia, the working life of Aboriginal society was already highly organised and structured. Hunting and gathering, manufacture of tools and weapons and other artefacts required a knowledge of the country and its resources, as well as a definite set of skills. There was also a clear division of labour between men and women and a complex, kinship based system of services established. No one was exempt from work and everybody made some contribution to the material and social livelihood of the community.<sup>15</sup>

There are no definitive accounts of the belief systems of the Gundungurra people prior to contact with the British. Any record that does exist is therefore from the post-contact era, and while it may have been faithfully and

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<sup>15</sup> The Committee of Review, *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs*, Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1985, p. 27.



genuinely collected, the veracity of the information must always be questioned and the cultural bias and the paradigm, such as “the dying race” or “the noble savage”, that motivated the interest in accumulating this knowledge must be taken into consideration. The effects of invasion and colonisation cannot be ignored, because the destruction they bring to the Indigenous societies results in the loss and change of much of the knowledge. It is not until much later in the colonial period that anthropologists such as R.H. Mathews and A.W. Howitt attempt to record the society of the Indigenous people.

However, Watkin Tench, a captain in the marines of the First Fleet, made contemporaneous observations of the Indigenous people living in Port Jackson between 1788 and 1791. When he “tried to gain information from them (about their belief system)...we were repulsed by obstacles, which we could neither pass by, or surmount.” Tench however, deduces that there is belief in a “superintending deity”, in spirits (*bulan*), that religious ceremonies are performed, and “when asked where their deceased friends are, always point to the skies.”<sup>16</sup> The people that Tench observed are not Gundungurra people, but as they live relatively near to one another with both shared and common languages, social discourse, trade and ceremonies, they may share many similar beliefs.

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<sup>16</sup> Tench, W., *Sydney's First Four Years: A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson 1788-1791*, Reprint Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1979, p. 280.

In the absence of specific information about the Gundungurra peoples' belief systems, it is necessary to draw on knowledge about the Dreaming from other Indigenous people in Australia. The "Dreaming" was first termed as such by Professor W. E. H. Stanner in 1956<sup>17</sup> to describe the "creative epoch", and is a notion very different to western concepts of time. The western lineal concept of time establishes the Dreaming as a period that occurred in the far distant past while in Indigenous concepts of time, that are circular or spiral, the Dreaming is ongoing and continuous, ever-present and directly linked to the present.<sup>18</sup>

Within this Dreaming are the creation beliefs linking the people to the beginning. The creation stories tell of spirit (*bulan*) ancestors who shape the land, create the people, the animals, the vegetation and all that belongs in, on, or within the land, sea (*gadung*) and sky.<sup>19</sup> Through totemic connections to their ancestors, Indigenous people see themselves as closely related to the land. They have sacred places and a responsibility to the land as custodians of those sacred places.

R. H. Mathews, in around 1900, over one hundred years after the first contact, gathered information from the Gundungurra people on Aboriginal Reserve No 26 at Byrne's Creek, Burratorang Valley. The Gundungurra Dreaming story collected, set in *gun-yung-ga-lung* (Dreaming) times of the *Burrin-gilling* animal-men (spirit (*bulan*) ancestors), tells of the battle

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<sup>17</sup> Stanner, W.E.H., 'The Dreaming' in *Traditional Aboriginal Religion: a Reader*, Edwards, W.H., (ed.), Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, W.H., *An Introduction to Aboriginal Societies*, Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, 1988, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p. 12.

between *Mirragan* and *Gurangatch* that describes the creation of the Wollondilly and Cox's River valleys, Wombeyan (*wam-bee-ang*) and Jenolan Caves and many other features of the landscape. The Dreaming story of *Mulleum* and *Dyirrl-dyir-ratch* (the eaglehawk and the willy-wagtail) pertains to the Gundungurra marriage system, avoidance relationships and prohibitions.<sup>20</sup> Other creation or Dreaming stories of the Gundungurra people, including those concerning the legend of the waratah, and how the waratah became red, have also been collected.

These stories are only remnants of a rich and diverse tapestry of understanding that underpin the Gundungurra peoples' way of life. Within them are explanations of the laws, the totemic relationships, the kinship system and clan boundaries. That they are still being told is testament to the power of the stories and the traditions that have maintained them for thousands of years. Through these totemic relationships and their societal structure, the Gundungurra people are responsible as custodians for particular areas of land. This is known to all who live on it, and is part of the organisation around which clans and family groups are based. This section of land, this part of the Dreaming, is their "country".

The "country" of the Wingecarribee area is the sacred responsibility of the Gundungurra people and as they go about their daily lives, they feel their interconnectedness with the landscape, the animals, the plants, the stars (*cuangy, jerra*), the sun (*bunyal, bundil*) and moon (*tyeluck*). The "country"

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<sup>20</sup> Johnson, D., *Report concerning Gundungurra Native Title Claim (Federal Court File No: NG 6060/98)*, pp 9-19, 143 at <http://www.gundungurra.net.au/gundunguraa.htm> [Accessed on 26 April 2006.]

talks to them and provides the script for their oral traditions, histories and stories. It is the blackboard for their learning, the site for the generational transmission of knowledge and ceremony.

As well as this spiritual relationship to their “country”, the Gundungurra people live, survive and prosper in this land for countless generations. Their attachment to the “country” is grounded in that it sustains them with food, shelter, water (*nadgyung*) and all the necessities of life. They have, in western terms, an economic relationship to the land. As hunter-gatherers, the Gundungurra people travel over the land in premeditated patterns, conducting the everyday tasks of hunting, fishing, gathering roots and tubers, creating shelter, cooking, making and repairing implements.

Travelling in groups or clans ranging from a few people to a few families, following familiar paths and using regular camping spots and shelters, they never exhaust a food resource in one area before moving to the next; firing the land as they go to stimulate regrowth. The seasons, water (*nadgyung*) and food availability, periods of abundance and trade, law, ritual and ceremony determine these patterns.

There is trade and social intercourse with neighbouring clans, the Dharuk and Dharawal to the north, the Wiradjuri to the west, the Yuin and Wodi-Wodi on the coast and the Ngunawal to the south. Tracks exist down the escarpment in the area of the Macquarie Pass and down through Meryla to Kangaroo Valley and the coast. The tracks through river valleys of the

Shoalhaven, the Wollondilly, Cox and Nattai provide opportunities for communication over a large area of south eastern New South Wales from the western plains to the Blue Mountains, to Port Jackson, the Illawarra and the south coast, and down to the Snowy Mountains.

The Gundungurra people are in their own “country”; it sustains them, and has done so for countless generations, socially, economically and spiritually. They have a social system based upon the belief system as handed down from the ancestors in the Dreaming. The landscape in its pre-contact state is populated by the Gundungurra people moving through it with a sense of belonging and interconnectedness.

The stories of the strange visitors who moved along the coast in their large boat to Botany Bay and beyond are shared around the fire (*canbe, gumbee*), but their effect is yet to be felt. Life goes on within the circle of time as it has always done. However, whether or not the passing of this strange vessel with its white cloud-like sails forebodes change within the Gundungurra peoples’ way of life, soon tumultuous change will be inflicted upon them. Within fifty years their very existence will be under extreme threat. This research thesis is an attempt to place the Gundungurra people back into the memory of the contemporary society that has developed on their ancestral lands.

The term ‘first contact’ is used to describe the initial meeting of the colonizers and the colonized, people from both sides of the colonial experiment. In many instances in Australia this first contact is between the

Indigenous people and the official colonial expeditions, resulting in there being numerous descriptions of these encounters in the official reports of these major events, commencing with the first landing at Botany Bay. These official descriptions are revealing of the attempts of the British to gain the confidence of the Indigenous peoples by giving them gifts. Often the meetings result in close scrutiny of all parties, sometimes in the removal of pieces of clothing and occasionally in bloodshed with gunshots or spearing punctuating a breakdown of unknown protocols. These initial meetings are significant in that when the exchange appears cordial and satisfactory from both sides, it contributes to the development of shared understanding, making further occasions less difficult.

However, for many Indigenous peoples the ‘first contact’ experience with the British is not face to face, but through diseases including smallpox, measles, venereal disease, tuberculosis, influenza and whooping cough. In April and May 1789, a smallpox epidemic swept through the Indigenous population of the Sydney region with Tench describing ‘our boats...finding bodies in all the coves and inlets of the harbour’<sup>21</sup>, and ‘at least half the population was dead...whole families were wiped out.’<sup>22</sup> Butlin describes this contact and its devastating effects in *Our Original Aggression*.<sup>23</sup> Campbell also discusses the origin and extent of this first smallpox epidemic, stating, “The uniformly low immunity of Aborigines and their lack of experience of smallpox meant that it spread within and between groups more easily...and it spread in more

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<sup>21</sup> Tench, *op cit*, p. 146.

<sup>22</sup> Organ, M. & Speechley, C., ‘Illawarra Aborigines,’ in Hagan, J. & Wells, A., (Eds), *A History of Wollongong*, University of Wollongong Press, Wollongong, 1997, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Butlin, N.G., *Our Original Aggression: Aboriginal Populations of Southeastern Australia 1788-1850*, George Allen and Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1983.

spectacular fashion.”<sup>24</sup> The full extent of the transmission of the 1789 smallpox epidemic is unknown, but it is highly probable that the Gundungurra people, who live in close proximity to Sydney and the Illawarra where smallpox is present, suffer exposure to the disease. Their ‘first contact’ most likely has fatal consequences.

The Indigenous peoples’ accounts of these ‘first contacts’, passed on through the traditions of storytelling, song and dance, are much more difficult to locate. The effect of colonization upon the functioning of the Indigenous society is immeasurable. This confines my knowledge of these occasions to the British perspective, and this one-sided view, no matter how objective the author, limits my capacity to understand and historically evaluate these events. This is a feature of ‘first contact’ histories. It is, however, incumbent upon historians to seek a multiplicity of viewpoints in attempting to reconstruct events from the past. To these ends, oral histories from Indigenous sources need to be considered. As Dr Ian Crawford recently stated, “Unless we include Indigenous people in the narrative, unless we come to grips with Indigenous peoples, it is only half the story.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Campbell, J., ‘Small pox in Aboriginal Australia, 1829-31’ in *Historical Studies*, Vol 20, No. 81, Oct 1983. pp 536-556.

<sup>25</sup> Crawford, I., Lecture, *History Kaleidoscope: Diverse perspectives on the history of Bathurst and Region*. Bathurst City Library, Bathurst, October 2004.

## Chapter One – First Contact

As the first account of British contact with the Gundungurra people is attributed to John Wilson, the record of his 1798 exploration is of particular interest.<sup>1</sup> The reason for the exploration is equally interesting. Wilson, convicted of a felony in 1785 in Wigan, Lancashire, received a sentence of seven years. He was transported to New South Wales on the *Alexander*, part of the First Fleet to arrive in 1788.<sup>2</sup> When his term expired in 1792, “he took to the bush and lived with the Gundungurra people in the Bargo district on and off for several years” and “was known as Bun-bo-ee.”<sup>3</sup>

In May 1797, Governor Hunter issues an instruction naming John Wilson as one of four men seen in the company of natives who had been committing acts of depredation including robbery of livestock, burning of houses, wounding and sometimes murdering defenceless settlers. Wilson and his cohorts are given fourteen days to present themselves or they will lose the protection of the law, and be liable to immediate execution without trial.<sup>4</sup> In November 1797, ‘clad only in kangaroo (*binaro*) skins, and with his body scarred by ritual markings’<sup>5</sup> Wilson gave himself up.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Journey into the Interior of the Country New South Wales’, *Historical Records of NSW, Volume III*, pp 820-828.

<sup>2</sup> Cobley, J., *The Crimes of the First Fleet Convicts*, Angus & Robertson, Melbourne, 1982, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith, J., *The Last Kooradgie: Moyengully, Chief Man of the Gundungurra People*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1989, p.16.

<sup>4</sup> *Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Volume II 1797-1800*, The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1914, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, R., *Currency Lad: The story of Hamilton Hume and the Explorers*, Sands, Melbourne 1982, p. 10.



At this stage in the penal colony, Governor Hunter is having considerable trouble with the Irish convicts. Many do not speak English, and in Hunter's words are "turbulent", "dissatisfied", "extremely insolent, refractory and troublesome" as well as being "ignorant, obstinate and depraved." They are attempting to escape while promulgating the "opinion that there was a colony of white people", presumably over the mountains who "receive all of the comforts of life without necessity of labour."<sup>6</sup>

Despite attempts at disavowing them of this notion and subjecting them to "severe corporal punishment," they persist in their belief. Hunter formulates the plan of allowing them to select four representatives to participate in a journey of discovery with "three people, long accustomed to the woods, and acquainted with some of the mountain savages, to accompany them; these men had also a little knowledge of the language of the savages, having lived some months among them."<sup>7</sup>

Another motivation for Hunter in launching this journey was the discovery of the wild cattle in the Cowpastures. Five cows (*gumbuck-gooluk*) and two (*pulla*) bulls had escaped from Port Jackson in 1788. When now located, they are a herd of approximately one hundred and seventy cattle, wild in the area that becomes known as the Cowpastures (near Camden). Wilson gave the information of the cattle's whereabouts.<sup>8</sup> Hunter is concerned that as knowledge of the herd spreads, the cattle will be subject to theft by "lawless

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<sup>6</sup> *HRA, op cit*, p. 129.

<sup>7</sup> *HRA, op cit*, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> *Historical Records of New South Wales, Volume III*, p. 203.

deserters.”<sup>9</sup> Hunter is only too cognisant of the fact that the herd is of great potential value to the colony and is anxious to protect it from poaching. Thus, the journey begins with Wilson as the guide.

As Wilson is illiterate and thus unable to keep a written record of his journey, John Price, a young man associated with Hunter, accompanies him and records the events of the journey. Price’s record is the first documentary account of contact between the Gundungurra people and the British.

On the second day of departure from Mt Hunter the expedition “fell in with a party of natives which gave a very good account of the place we were in search of that there was a great deal of corn and potatoes, and that the people were very friendly”<sup>10</sup>. These “natives” are most probably the Cubbitch-Barta people of the Cowpastures area, and not the Gundungurra people.

The provision of this information about the unofficial settlement raises the issue of whether this convict rumour has a basis of truth. Possibly, there are white people, who have absconded from the penal colony, that certainly has no walls to hold them, and who have been successful in establishing a small community beyond the purview of the colonial authorities. Interestingly, Bass and Flinders, when they landed at the entrance to Lake Illawarra two years earlier in 1796, received similar information from Dilba of Port

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<sup>9</sup> *HRA, op cit*, p. 134.

<sup>10</sup> *HRNSW, op cit*, p. 820.

Jackson, of “some white men and two women being amongst them: who had Indian corn and potatoes growing.”<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, Oxley in his account of his explorations into the interior in 1817-18, describes “where to our great surprise we found distinct marks of cattle tracks: they were old, and made when the ground was soft from rain”<sup>12</sup> in a remote and unsettled area “in a direct line between eighty and ninety miles” from Bathurst. This provides further evidence that there may indeed be adventurous and enterprising settlers who have taken some of the wild cattle from the Cowpastures and moved through the Burragorang Valley to the western plains beyond the official boundaries of the colony.

In discussing this meeting, historians such as Cambage and Brownscombe conclude that the information about the colony of white people with corn and potatoes given by the Indigenous people is untrustworthy and deduce that the Indigenous peoples either “easily duped”<sup>13</sup> the explorers, or are “as usual, ready to reply in the affirmative to any leading question asked them.”<sup>14</sup> They discount the information as being false. They readily accept the official colonial position that Governor Hunter (and others before and after him) is trying to circulate, to assist with the management of the convicts. If there are

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<sup>11</sup> Organ, M. (ed.), *Documentary History of the Illawarra & South Coast Aborigines 1770-1850*. Aboriginal Education Unit, University of Wollongong Press, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Oxley, J., *Journal of two expeditions into the interior of NSW 1817-18, undertaken by order of the British Government in the years 1817-18*. Reprint of the 1820 ed. published by J. Murray, London, Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1964, p. 173.

<sup>13</sup> Brownscombe, R., (ed.) *On Suspect Terrain: Journals of Exploration in the Blue Mountains 1795-1820*, Forever Wild Press, Sydney, 2004, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Cambage, R. H., ‘Exploration Beyond the Upper Nepean in 1798’, *The Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Vol VI, Part 1*, Sydney, 1920, p. 4.

such successful settlements, the possibility of the convicts absconding will greatly increase. It is certainly Hunter's desire to have such ideas quashed.

On this occasion however, Wilson and Price seem happy to take the Cubbitch-Barta people's advice and accordingly alter their course. Strangely, there is no further mention of this original reason for the expedition in the rest of the account of the journey.

Three (*colleurr*) days later on 28 January, near what Cambage<sup>15</sup> calculates to be the present town of Mittagong, they "saw a party of natives". This party are in all probability a family group or clan of Gundungurra people. Wilson ran and caught one of them, a woman, supposedly with then intent of learning something from her. However, her language "was so different from that one which we had with us that we could not understand her." They held her all night (*burri*) but she cried and fretted so much that they gave her a tomahawk and let her go in the morning, and "sent her to the rest of the natives, which were covered in large skins (*carreng*), which reached down to their heels."<sup>16</sup> This "first contact" encounter requires some more detailed analysis.

Wilson, who has spent several years living with Indigenous people must have some understanding of their law and accepted behaviour. In running after them and capturing a woman, is Wilson relying on the practice of sharing

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<sup>15</sup> Cambage, *op cit*, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> *HRNSW, Vol III, op cit*, p. 821.

and reciprocity. Is the tomahawk he gave her part of that reciprocity? It would seem that the other people the young woman is travelling with are nearby and could have interceded on her behalf if they so desired. Are they afraid of the British firearms? Are they familiar with Wilson? Does she cry and fret all night (*burri*) because of fear or mistreatment, more than being held against her will, by white men whom she does not understand? Taking into account that two (*pulla*) years later, the fatal spearing of Wilson, for taking sexual liberties with a young woman against her will<sup>17</sup>, it is reasonable to conclude that his behaviour on this occasion is similarly unwelcome.

Price is very scant in his details here. It is true that Price is young, is not a trained anthropologist or journalist, influenced by the older and certainly worldlier, and seemingly more knowledgeable Wilson, who is the expedition's leader. It would not be expected that he would record, in a journal of an expedition, that Wilson is taking advantage of a young woman he has captured. It is not necessarily the type of thing that is recorded.

He also provides no further information about the make up of the rest of the clan. He does not give a number, even a rough number or any break down of the ages of men (*nain*), women or children. This omission sadly reflects that the British had very little interest in knowing more about the Gundungurra people. The explorers only value them if they can provide information that the explorers want, on demand, which on this occasion they do not.

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<sup>17</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, p. 84.

Brownscombe suggests that there was an unnamed Indigenous person travelling with them.<sup>18</sup> Maybe this is why the Indigenous people did not interfere. Possibly, they know this guide. Cambage however, drawing upon former Judge Advocate and Secretary of the Colony, David Collins' interview with Price after he returns to England, speaks of a woman and child (*coota*) being captured, and that Wilson is the only interpreter.<sup>19</sup> There is no mention elsewhere of there being any other in the party than Wilson, Price and Roe.

The report of this incident also highlights the gender inequities that exist in the colony at the time and shows that the status of women, especially Indigenous women, is not highly respected. Unfortunately, this inequity is perpetuated in Cambage's (1920), Jervis's (1962)<sup>20</sup>, Webster (1982)<sup>21</sup> and Brownscombe's (2004) analyses. They do not (*burrall*) question Price's reporting or Wilson's behaviour on this occasion. In their silences, they matter-of-factly accept that this is some necessity, a price to be paid, for the greater good of the colonial venture, which further contributes to the continuation of the colonial perspective that this is acceptable. Other historians such as Rose urge us to challenge this perspective by arguing that when the intention of the colonizers is to take advantage of the colonized, in this case by abduction, that the perpetrators deliberately and "actively

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<sup>18</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Cambage, *op cit*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Jervis, J., *A History of the Berrima District 1798-1973*. Berrima County Council, Bowral. 1962

<sup>21</sup> Webster, *op cit*, p. 11.

constructed silences through a variety of practices”<sup>22</sup> which includes omission.

Brownscombe unfortunately argues that such explorers and explorations, because common men such as Wilson conduct them, are not part of a “grand scheme of imperial history”<sup>23</sup> and are not part of the intention of colonialism to dispossess people of their lands<sup>24</sup>. Even Turner, the acclaimed American frontier historian acknowledged that the frontier is “the outer edge of the wave - the meeting point between savagery and civilization” and “the hither edge of free land.”<sup>25</sup> Brownscombe’s failure to recognize that this exploration, this act of discovery, this conquering of land and the Indigenous people is an essentially masculine pursuit; an act of force, dominance and power - and that his failure to challenge the colonial perspective perpetuates the colonial paradigm. Wilson in this ‘first contact’ with the Gundungurra people characterizes the act of colonization as capture, abduction and possibly rape.

It is not surprising that the explorers see no other Gundungurra people during their journey. This does not indicate that there are no Gundungurra people in the area. It most likely means that the Gundungurra people prefer to remain a safe distance away from the explorers, and that the explorers’ movements are

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<sup>22</sup> Rose, D., ‘Oral histories and knowledge’ in Attwood, B., & Foster, S. G., (Eds.), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, F. J., *The Frontier In American History*, Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company Inc., Malabar, Florida, 1985, p. 3.

most probably being closely watched. The expedition continues for another ten days.

A second expedition commences on 9 March 1798 with Wilson, Price and Collins accompanied by Henry Hacking, the quartermaster of the *Sirius*, who goes along to assess the salt (*bulling-gang*) discovered on the first trip. Hacking returned to Sydney on the 14 March and the others headed off for the southwest for nine or ten days. On 20 March Price notes, “We have not seen a native since we left Sydney” and on the 23 March “we really believe that there never was a native in this part of the country.”<sup>26</sup> They have covered the distance from Prospect to Mt Towrang near Goulburn and have seen no Gundungurra or other Indigenous people in twenty-five days travel. This is what the contemporaneous documentary record shows. Even at the time, its veracity is questioned.

In July 1801, former Governor Hunter in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks stated “Altho’ we may suppose both to be a little incorrect” with a footnote “Hunter was right in this conjecture; it is almost impossible on any other supposition to follow their movements.”<sup>27</sup> Brownscombe questions the reliability of the second journey’s record and whether or not Price was the author of both.<sup>28</sup> Cambage has done extensive and exhaustive fieldwork to interpret the journals and to plot the routes with the advantage of modern maps and instruments, and to make sense of the record. They continually question the distances and often the bearings. What other portions are suspect?

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<sup>26</sup> *HRNSW, Vol III, op cit*, pp 826-827.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 819.

<sup>28</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, pp 69-81.



When the veracity of some aspects of the report is questioned, it does cast doubt on other areas. Parts of the report could be fabrications. The difficulty of course is in knowing which parts. Without other accounts of the same journeys, without the Gundungurra peoples' versions of these events, we have only part of the story. The Indigenous people's versions can provide what Samuels described as "an invisible corrective and check. It can help to expose the silences and deficiency of the written record...It serves as a measure of authenticity."<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, we do not (*burrall*) have those correctives to balance this account.

There are no further recorded excursions into the Gundungurra country until 1802. This expedition, led by an officer of the NSW Corps, Ensign Francis Barrallier, has a very different character and purpose than the previous ones. It is based upon a plan, with the support of Governor King as his 'emissary to the King of the Mountains', is well provisioned with stores, a wagon drawn by two (*pulla*) bullocks (*gulung-gooluk*), and a party comprising of four (*borre*) soldiers and five convicts. Barrallier, educated in France, has navigation and mapping skills, and maintains his own thorough journal in French. Barrallier has earlier reconnoitred the prospective route and is determined to set up a depot at a site called Nattai.

It is evident within a few days that Barrallier is interested in learning from the 'natives' and, throughout the exploration, records Indigenous names for

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<sup>29</sup> Samuels, R., 'Local History and Oral History' in *History Workshop*, Issue 1, 1976, p. 204.

people, places, animal, tools and activities. In his seven week excursion into the Nattai and Wollondilly river valleys of the great Burragorang Valley, he maintains extensive records of his first contact experiences, meetings and interactions with the Indigenous people, including several different clans of the Gundungurra people.

His initial guide is Gogy, from the Cubbitch-Barta clan of the Cowpastures area. Barrallier demonstrates candour in stating that he is “interested in preserving his (Gogy’s) confidence by my good treatment, thinking he would be useful to me when I advanced further inland”<sup>30</sup> which inadvertently accords with the concept of reciprocity, there being some mutual benefit within the relationship.

While much of this journey is within Gundungurra country, it is mostly outside of the Wingecarribee area, which is the focus of this research. Barrallier’s observations are most helpful in creating a more detailed image of the Gundungurra people, while his use of Indigenous names indicates respect for their knowledge and way of life.

Additionally Barrallier’s observation of the effects of the wild cattle on the terrain in the Cowpastures is possibly the first recording of the environmental damage that the introduced cattle and sheep wreak upon the Australian landscape. Later, Surveyor-General Mitchell makes similar observations on the Goobang Creek in 1845. When he first passed there in 1835, there was

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<sup>30</sup> Barrallier, F., ‘Journal of a the expedition, undertaken by order of His Excellency Governor King, into the interior of New South Wales’, *Historical Records of NSW, Volume V. Appendix A*, p. 749.

clear water (*nadgyung*) and the banks covered with luxurious grass (*burrangurang*). Now it is a series of muddy holes churned by the squatters' cattle.<sup>31</sup> This is an example of one way in which the resources of the Indigenous people are destroyed; with their water (*nadgyung*) contaminated by cattle.

At the swamps (*boombi*) of Manhangle and Carabeely, Barrallier provides information about the “enormous eels, fishes and various species of shells....which are sometime used as food”<sup>32</sup> and further describes a group of hunters forming a large circle, and using fire (*canbe, gumbee*) to contain and kill large numbers of kangaroos (*binaro*). This shows the social and economic organisation that the Indigenous people use, and the use of fire (*canbe, gumbee*), a part of their firestick farming, in hunting. He provides further descriptions of the river (Nattai) “teeming with fish (*waak*) of various species, and especially black bream, weighing from 4lb to 6lb,”<sup>33</sup> which shows the abundance of food available and reflects the pristine qualities of the river (*tooluan, dulang*).

On meeting Bungin, is described as a “mountaineer” of the “Canambaigle tribe”, who is therefore from the Gundungurra people. Barrallier attempts to exchange a new axe for his “mantle made from the skins of various animals.” (*carreng*)<sup>34</sup> Bungin declines that trade, but Barrallier mindful of the advantage he could gain from befriending Bungin, offers him the head

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<sup>31</sup> Baker, D. W. A., *The Civilised Surveyor: Thomas Mitchell and the Australian Aborigines*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1997, p.151.

<sup>32</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 753.

<sup>33</sup> *HRNSW, Vol V. op cit*, p. 761.

<sup>34</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 753.

(*bubyong*) of a kangaroo (*binaro*) that he gratefully receives and then exchanges his old axe for the new one. Barrallier clearly indicates here that he is prepared to negotiate sharing and reciprocity. Bungin reciprocates later when builds Barrallier a hut (*gunge*) for the night (*burri*), which signifies receiving him as a friend into his “country”.<sup>35</sup>

Barrallier shares food with the “mountaineers”, offering them boiled rice and pork soup, and then accepting some roasted lizard, which he prefers to possum (*wella*). He describes their method of extracting edible grubs, a delicacy, from within certain trees. When he sees fires (*canbe, gumbee*) in several places, Bungin advises him that Canambaigle is hunting and is setting the country on fire (*canbe, gumbee*). This is clearly Gundungurra country, west of the present day Picton.

Other Gundungurra people including Bulgin, Wallarra (who has never seen a white man before), their wives and two (*pulla*) children join the party. This implies that the Gundungurra people are comfortable with Barrallier and his party, and feel secure within their own country. Barrallier continues to record his encounters with the people he meets. Brownscombe notes that while Barrallier names many of the Indigenous people, he neglects to name any of the soldiers or convicts in his party.<sup>36</sup>

While Barrallier makes a point of recording many of the names of the Indigenous people he meets, he reinforces the gender inequity by failing to record the

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<sup>35</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 755.

<sup>36</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, p. 99.

women's names expect for one occasion. He continually refers to the women as being someone's wife, and possibly, because of the gender and kinship relationships from within the Indigenous society, he does not have many direct conversations with the Indigenous women. This obviously influences Barrallier's interpretation of events, with only the male viewpoint being considered.

Notwithstanding this, Barrallier reveals the complex relationships that exist between and within the various clans. Without going into an anthropological analysis of these relationships it is appropriate to explain how complicated the first contact experience can be. Barrallier's recording of his experiences with the Indigenous people and his behaviour under various circumstances indicate that while he is sensitive in observing obvious elements of the Indigenous life, such as names or people and of places, clothing, tools, hunting, ornamentation, food preparation, eating and camping; he is excluded from knowing about the more complex organisational aspects of the Indigenous society.

He is also exposed a number of times to the responsibilities within the extended family of the Indigenous people where younger men are accompanying, presumably their 'uncles', as they participate in various events. In taking some responsibility towards some of these people Barrallier himself inadvertently becomes enmeshed in these social relationships and therefore is presumed to have certain roles and responsibilities, many of which he is completely unaware.

Barrallier becomes aware of the various clans' territoriality and he does understand that within various areas, different people hold sway but he fails to

realise that by aligning with one or another person or group, he may in fact be affecting his relationship with another. Barrallier seems naively unaware that Gogy, his initial guide from the Cubbitch-Barta clan, could be manipulating him in his relationships and obligations towards Goondel and the Gundungurra people in the Burragorang.

This is an example of what decolonization theorist Ashis Nandy<sup>37</sup> argues regarding the effects of colonization. He argues that “The colonized...do not remain...simple-hearted victims of colonialism: they become participants... They make choices.”<sup>38</sup> When Gogy approaches Goondel with Barrallier’s “gun in his hands to show them that he could make use of our arms,”<sup>39</sup> he is clearly aligning himself with Barrallier and attempting to utilise his relationship with Barrallier to intimidate Goondel. Barrallier seems oblivious to this. The imposition of the firearm and Gogy’s attempt certainly complicates this first contact between Barrallier and Goondel. On this occasion, however, Gogy is unsuccessful with Goondel deliberately insulting him by excluding him from sharing food.

Mootik further ignores him when he will not answer Gogy’s questions about the “new settlement...on the other side of the mountains.”<sup>40</sup> It is of interest, that at a point when Gogy is unsuccessfully trying to assert himself and fails to influence Goondel and the Gundungurra people, he tells Barrallier that Mootik knows about a settlement over the mountains. This is the first and only mention of this settlement in Barrallier’s journal and begs the questions as to whether Gogy

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<sup>37</sup> Nandy, A., *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1983.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, Preface p. xiv.

<sup>39</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 771.

<sup>40</sup> Barrallier, *ibid*.

hopes this will strengthen his ties with Barrallier. It also raises the issue as to whether Gogy was involved in telling Wilson and Price of the settlement in 1798. It was, after all, in his “country” that they learned of it.

Another aspect of this encounter is that both Bungin and Wallarra are also present. It is indeed Bungin, who is of the Canambaigle Gundungurra clan, and makes initial approaches to Goondel and his group, reassuring them that Barrallier has no intention of doing them harm. It is also Bungin to whom, according to Gogy, Goondel promises his young daughter Wheengeewhungee, “to retain him in his tribe.”<sup>41</sup> It would appear that there is some serious Gundungurra business taking place here.

Is Barrallier inadvertently interrupting some ceremonial aspect of the Gundungurra people, of which he is being told nothing? He makes the note here that the men (*nain*) are painted the “same way as those of Sydney, and wear the same ornaments, *with the addition of one composed of a part of the female kangaroo (binaro)*”<sup>42</sup> (my italics), which indicates that they are dressed for ceremony. Is Barrallier stumbling into the middle of some sacred ceremony that is the preserve of only certain, initiated men? Is the promise of Wheengeewhungee to Bungin a further part of this ceremony?

These questions will unfortunately remain unanswered but highlight the complexity of first contact. They are in Goondel’s “country”; Bungin, a Gundungurra clansman, is being offered an inducement to stay with Goondel

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<sup>41</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 773.

<sup>42</sup> Barrallier, *ibid*.

thereby leaving Barrallier. Wallarra, also a Gundungurra clansman, acts as an intermediary for Gogy. Gogy is clearly out of favour with Goondel, refuses food from Barrallier and then advises him that if he “spent the night (*burri*) on this spot, Goondel and his party would kill him (Gogy).”<sup>43</sup> This implies that Gogy is being held responsible for bringing Barrallier into a place where he should not be, and as he is transgressing the law, he will be punished.

Barrallier accepts Gogy’s advice and decides to return to the camp of the previous night (*burri*). As they do this, they observe Mootik and others shadowing them with weapons raised. After travelling this way for a considerable distance, when they are out of the particular ceremonial area the escort ceases and Gogy is relieved. This episode highlights, as Nandy asserts, that at the complex meeting of cultures, new codes of shared behaviour come into being,<sup>44</sup> and these codes function to “alter the original cultural priorities on both sides”<sup>45</sup> which contributes to the shifting of power, influence and contributes to the erosion of the traditional society.

From this point in his explorations, Barrallier’s relationships with the Indigenous people seem to be more problematic. On one hand, the Indigenous people are comfortable with the explorers being in their midst, and continue with their everyday lives, becoming more visible in family groups wherever he goes. Nevertheless, there also seems to be a breakdown in some areas of respect. In Barrallier’s absence from the depot, discipline diminishes and misunderstandings between the British and the Indigenous people develop. There are incidents of

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<sup>43</sup> Barrallier, *ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> Nandy, *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Nandy, *ibid*.



attempted theft from the depot that result in the firing of shots. Bulgin deserts the depot and encourages his wives “to make for the woods.”<sup>46</sup> There is an incident involving Gogy’s wife who accuses Witthington, one (*medung*) of the soldiers, of attempting to seduce her, which is a most unsavoury episode exposing some of the harshness and brutality that occurs in first contact encounters.

Barrallier insists to Gogy “the thing was impossible”<sup>47</sup>. Barrallier does not attempt to speak with Gogy’s wife about the incident, or with any other possible witnesses. He dismisses without question that the event occurred. The status of Indigenous women in colonial times is once again shown to be considered of little consequence except where it affects the conduct of the expedition or the men. Barrallier effectively ignores the woman and he does not intercede on her behalf. He is more concerned that in his anger Gogy, who has already attempted to grab a musket, will commit a further act of violence on someone other than his unfortunate wife, and appoints a sentry to watch him and shoot if necessary.

Disappointingly, Barrallier, in a regrettable echo of the Wilson abduction of the young woman, fails to record whether the accused Witthington is even questioned about the incident. This is a silence, an omission. Then Barrallier, for the first time in his notes, makes derogatory observations about the Indigenous people, especially about how the men treat the women violently and engage in wife stealing, rape and other forms of violence<sup>48</sup>. That Barrallier choses this point of his journal to bring this information to light implies that he is attempting to cover up any misdemeanour of Witthington’s by suggesting that what the

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<sup>46</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 779.

<sup>47</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 781.

<sup>48</sup> Barrallier, *ibid*.

Indigenous men (*nain*) do is far worse. Is Barrallier actively constructing a silence surrounding this reputed event?

As Gogy appears to be Barrallier's main source of information regarding the behaviour of the men (*nain*) and women, Barrallier is hostage to this singular point of view. As many historians know this does not constitute sufficient information to deduce the immutable truth of such matters. It is definitely gender-biased and does not seem to reflect the behaviour of others such as Bulgin and Wallarra and their wives who are in Barrallier's camp. Bungin's behaviour, in caring for Gogy's wife, also demonstrates a different attitude towards women. On this occasion, it suits both Barrallier and Gogy for Barrallier to accept that his behaviour is the norm. This is another example of how the presence of the colonizers affects the original culture, and how the colonizer Barrallier, and the colonized Gogy, become complicit in a new code.

Further information about Gogy indicates that he has reputedly been involved in the murder of a number of women, one of whom was Goondel's sister.<sup>49</sup> In accordance with Nandy's theory, Gogy aligns himself with Barrallier making him invaluable to Barrallier as a guide. He occupies a new centre of power between the Indigenous people and the colonizers that has its "own socio-economic and psychological rewards and punishments".<sup>50</sup>

Maybe Barrallier's alignment with the Gogy of the Cubbitch-Barta also contributes to the souring of his relationships with the Gundungurra. It appears

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<sup>49</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 821.

<sup>50</sup> Nandy, *op cit*, p. 2.

that Barrallier or some of his party have transgressed the law and some of their social and kinship responsibilities and obligations, those protocols of reciprocity and respect. The maintenance of sound relationships between the explorers and the Indigenous people is fraught with ignorance, confusion, misunderstanding, compromise and inconsistency. The first contacts with the Gundungurra people show “interference into the rule and culture”<sup>51</sup>, the “cycle of perfection is broken”<sup>52</sup> in what Mudrooroo, describes as the “Aboriginal system...harmony and balance”.<sup>53</sup>

However, we are able to glean material from Barrallier that contributes to our knowledge of the Gundungurra people. We can ascertain that there are at least two (*pulla*) clans within the Picton, Nattai and Burragorang area. There is Canambaigle’s clan and Goondel’s clan who control their own “country”, who communicate between one another, collaborate in hunting, sharing food and ceremony, with Bungin, Bulgin and Wallarra, for example, being comfortable within both territories. They use fire stick farming.

The Gundungurra people have similar dress, tools, weapons, ornamentation, food, and customs, as do those Indigenous people nearer Sydney. The Gundungurra people are distinguishable by their full-length cloaks (*carreng*) or mantles made from possum (*wella*) and other animal skins. They use the woomera (*boolang*) and the boomerang “which is even unknown to the natives of

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<sup>51</sup> Childs, P. & Williams, P., *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory*, Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 228.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Mudrooroo, *Us Mob*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 1995, p. 207.

Sydney.”<sup>54</sup> They have the custom of clans coming together to share new songs and dances. Trade is demonstrated by the fact that although many of the Gundungurra have not met the British, they seem to have English axes (*dowin*). Their ‘first contact’ has been technological through the artefact of the axe. This artefact would signify to the Gundungurra that the colonizers had good tools and weapons.

The ceremonial life, the protocols when meeting, and the behaviour of Goondel’s clan when Gogy is present, indicate that the Gundungurra people are practicing religion and law. Bungin shows considerable healing skills that demonstrate the accumulation and transmission of knowledge of this highly skilled field. There is evidence of the extended family responsibility for young people through education and sharing. All this suggests a highly organised, socially responsible society operating within the law as laid down by their ancestors in the Dreaming.

Barrallier and his expedition most probably bemuse and amuse the Gundungurra people. He wanders searching in a landscape that they know. He shows some understanding of protocols and appropriate behaviours regarding social obligations and responsibilities with his capacity to share but does not understand the law, the ceremonial and intricate details of the culture. He is aligned with Gogy of the Cubbitch-Barta, a man (*murrin*) they are familiar with and wary of. He is quite a good hunter with his gun but is loath to raise it against people. He knows people by their names and makes efforts to communicate with them. He listens and tries to comprehend but as the purpose of his expedition is beyond the

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<sup>54</sup> Barrallier, *op cit*, p. 771.

reasoning of his hosts or his explanation, he seems unable to gain information from them about a route through the valleys and the mountains of their “country” which they know so well.

Following Barrallier’s departure, the Gundungurra people are able for some time to return to their normal life. Apart from the occasional absconder, explorer or hunter encroaching upon their territory, they remain outside the main activities of the colony in Sydney and Parramatta. However, there is one (*medung*) other adventurer, George Caley, Sir Joseph Bank’s botanist and specimen collector, who makes a useful record of a meeting with some Gundungurra people in 1804.

While travelling between Stonequarry Creek (Picton) and Picton Lakes (*narre-gar-rang*) (Thirlmere) Caley learns that Cannabaygal (Canambaigle) is hunting in the vicinity. This is near where he was hunting when Bungin informed Barrallier of his presence. The Cubbitch-Barta people, who believed he is “invincible and more than mortal”, hold Cannabaygal in awe.<sup>55</sup> Utilising the skills of the “chief of the local tribe”<sup>56</sup> to interpret (this may be Gogy again), Caley converses with Cannabaygal and his four (*borre*) companions, three (*colleurr*) men (*nain*) and one woman.

He describes them as being “of gigantic stature in comparison with the rest; their hair (*darreng*) being long and flowing upon their shoulders (*parowra*),

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<sup>55</sup> Webb, J., *George Caley: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Naturalist*, Surrey, Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton, 1995, p. 65.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

and their features in general gave them a frightful countenance, though I must own that Cannabaygal had something pleasant in his while conversing with him.”<sup>57</sup> He describes the woman as wearing a kind of cloak (*carreng*) made of animal skins and the men naked expect for a belt (*gnollieng*); and that “none of them had ever seen a white man before.”<sup>58</sup>

Caley is so impressed by them that he advises Banks some time later, that they seemed “quite a different race...not only by their features but in size...they were about 5 feet 10 inches and very stout made.”<sup>59</sup> This is another ‘first contact’ between the Gundungurra people and the British, and on this occasion possibly the brevity of the event assures that there is apparently no offence on either side. Caley demonstrated his firearm by shooting a bird (*budgang*), but while surprised, they did not appear frightened.

A significant aspect for this research is that Caley, who as a botanist and naturalist is a trained observer, makes quite definite remarks about the Gundungurra people that highlight their physical difference to the other Indigenous people that he has encountered. Without more evidence, it is difficult to generalise, but the Gundungurra people may have been taller and stouter because the area they lived in had better supplies of food contributing to a better all-round diet and health. Their distance from the main colony, with minimal interference, has protected them from exposure to the worst

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Else-Mitchell, R. “George Caley: His Life and Work”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 25, 6, 1939, p. 489.

effects of colonisation thus far. Caley does not refer to any of them having signs of smallpox scars.

Additionally the weather conditions in the Wingecarribee area, which is generally cooler and damper than the coastal areas, may explain the longer hair (*darreng*), and certainly the animal skin cloaks (*carreng*) that are a distinguishing feature of the Gundungurra. That the Cubbitch-Barta hold Cannabaygal in awe is in all probability associated with him being a highly esteemed leader, with great knowledge of the oral traditions, initiated into the secrets of the Dreaming and the law. The British have identified him as a leader since at least 1790.<sup>60</sup> Cannabaygal is most likely, a “kooradgie”, a traditional skilled healer or doctor.

The demonstration by Caley of his prowess with his firearm is also an interesting incident that can be viewed in several ways. Firstly, he may have, similar to Gogy with Goondel, been trying to impress Cannabaygal and his clan with his weaponry, to show that he was armed and therefore able to protect himself, or even attack them.

Although Cannabaygal and his people have not seen a white man before they are no doubt aware of guns. It is 15 years since Tench noted, as he stood on the banks of the Nepean River, that “Nothing is more certain than that the sound of a gun had never before been heard within many miles of this

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<sup>60</sup> Webb, *op cit*, p. 65.

spot.”<sup>61</sup> Since the days of Wilson’s hunting and Barrallier’s exploration in their “country,” they have known about guns, their noise (*cookunday*) and their capacity to wound and kill game. Caley may have been revealing his own fear and his desire to show he had power when confronted by their “frightful countenance”.

How Cannabaygal and his companions understand this we may never know. Nevertheless if we consider that they live with a complex belief system that sees them intricately related through totemic association to many plants and animals; and who do not (*burrall*) kill except for food and other necessities of life; Caley’s wanton killing of a bird (*budgang*) may well surprise them more than the sound of his gun. Unfortunately, we do not (*burrall*) know what species of bird (*budgang*) it is. It may be of their totem, which is most offensive. It may be of a species that they know to be very poor for eating, so they think that he is rather silly. It may be a female on a nest of eggs (*gubbugang*), or feeding young.

This leads us to realise how a possibly simple innocent gesture by Caley can be misunderstood, remembering that Caley is the visitor, the guest in their “country”. As a first contact experience, it signifies to the Gundungurra people that the British have guns and they are not opposed to using them indiscriminately. Caley, on realising that his company is no longer welcome, departs.

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<sup>61</sup> Tench, *op cit*, p. 154.



## **Chapter Two - Frontier Expansion**

Caley's departure marks the end of explorations into the Wingecarribee area for several years. Other explorers such as John Warby and John Kennedy roam through the bush in the Bargo area but provide no documentary records of these ventures and no accounts of any further contacts with the Gundungurra people. Other than Wilson and Price, none of the explorers reached the Wingecarribee area. Their reports, however, are significant in that they do have "first contact" with the Gundungurra people whose "country" includes the Wingecarribee, providing accounts that enable some scant knowledge of the Gundungurra people and their way of life.

In the official records, no reason is provided for the cessation of exploration into the Wingecarribee. Reasons suggested include the notion that the Governors, from Hunter until Macquarie, are all naval officers and they are more inclined to naval and coastal exploration. At the time of Barrallier's journey, Flinders is sailing up the east coast as part of his circumnavigation of Australia. In the scheme of colonial life, this appears much more significant. The demands for expansion of the productive lands remain limited, curtailing the impetus for discovery.

In a broader context, there are significant events occurring around the western world, that influence the instructions from the Colonial Secretary in London. The United States of America purchases Louisiana from France in 1803. Lewis and Clark make their epic journey of discovery into the American West from 1804-06 which opens up that frontier. There is tumult

in Europe following the French Revolution in 1792, the execution of King Louis XVI and the rise of Napoleon.

As the dominant naval power, the British are involved with fighting the republican French under Napoleon, culminating in the Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805. The ongoing war with France, for example, greatly affects the life of Matthew Flinders, held hostage in Mauritius, delaying his eventual publication of *A Voyage to Terra Australis* until 1814. The abolition of the slave trade by the British Parliament occurs in 1807. News of such events eventually reaches the colony in New South Wales, which as a British outpost, is greatly influenced by the happenings on the other side of the world.

The colony's population and the population mix of free settlers, soldiers and convicts is not yet at such a critical mass as to encourage the governors to make more land available. Incidents such as the Vinegar Hill convict uprising in 1804 indicate that the British have much more on their hands in controlling the existing settlements. There are ongoing attacks by the Dharuk people on outlying farms around Toongabbie and Richmond, as the fertile plains of the Hawkesbury River are the Dharuk yam beds.<sup>1</sup> Pemulwuy leads these attacks until his execution by the British in 1802. His son, Tedbury continues these attacks until his capture in 1805.<sup>2</sup> There are also floods along the Hawkesbury that continually disrupt the agricultural pursuits of the settlers.

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<sup>1</sup> Goodall, H., *Invasion to Embassy: Land in Aboriginal Politics in New South Wales, 1770-1972*. Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Wilmott, E., *Pemulwuy: The Rainbow Warrior*, Weldon, McMahons Point, 1987, p. 299.

Jervis, in his earlier historical accounts of the area, found it astonishing that there is no expansion into the Wingecarribee and Southern Highlands after Barrallier, and concludes that it is the desire of the government to protect the wild cattle in the Cowpastures from interference, with Governor King forbidding access to the area.<sup>3</sup> Brownscombe believes that the granting of land in the Cowpastures to John Macarthur in 1805, “sitting as it did squarely astride the route taken by Wilson & Price, Barralier, the cattle-hunters and Cayley...effectively sealed off access to the Cowpastures and the south-west to all except those with John Macarthur’s blessing to pass through”<sup>4</sup>. Webster contends that the “occupiers did everything they could help the authorities enforce the ban.”<sup>5</sup>

Macarthur provides further distractions for governors King and Bligh; with the trade in spirits, coin currency, plots and claims of favouritism among other things; which contributed to the Rum Rebellion mutiny and Governor Bligh’s arrest in 1808, by the NSW Corps. For two years the colony is administered, firstly by Lieutenant-Governor Foveaux, and then by Lieutenant-Colonel William Paterson, until the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1810.

Macquarie, being a military officer, brings a different perspective to the colony. Within months, he set out on a series of journeys throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> Jervis, J., ‘The Wingecarribee and Southern Highlands District,’ *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Sydney, 1937, Vol. 23, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> Brownscombe, *op cit*, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, R. *Currency Lad: The story of Hamilton Hume and the Explorers*, Sands, Melbourne, 1982, p. 13.

colony to assess the situation. In November 1810, accompanied by his wife in his carriage, with a entourage of servants following, Macquarie travels to the Cowpastures, visits Elizabeth Macarthur at Camden Park, the wild cattle in the Cowpastures, and travels as far south as Stonequarry Creek.

Oddly enough, the next wave of movements into the area does not occur until 1813. The Blue Mountains are eventually crossed and the colony is soon to reach the western plains. Cedar-getters are operating along the Illawarra escarpment, sealers are in operation at Twofold Bay and there is conflict at Jervis Bay. The Gundungurra people, through their extensive communication networks, are aware of all this activity. The ramifications of the growth and expansion of the settler presence on the Gundungurra people are becoming increasingly obvious. By 1813 Oxley, the Surveyor-General, with Macquarie's permission, has his starving cattle moved from Kirkham at Camden into the Bargo Brush.<sup>6</sup>

In 1814, Hamilton Hume, a seventeen year old "currency lad,"<sup>7</sup> who grew up with the Dharuk and Tharawal people in the Toongabbie, and more recently Appin locales, is familiar with Dharuk and Tharawal languages and customs. Hamilton, reputedly an expert bushman, decides to make an exploration southwards. In the company of his younger brother John Kennedy Hume and Indigenous friends Taree, Dual and Bien, Hume travels to the Wingecarribee as far as Bong Bong, Berrima and Moss Vale<sup>8</sup>, coming upon the grasslands that

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> The nickname given to the first generation of European Australians born in the colony.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson-Nakano, A., *The Pajong and Wallabalooa: A history from the records of Aboriginal farming families at Blakeney and Pudman Creeks, 1820-1945, and historical overview 1945-2002*. Weereewaa History Series Vol. II, Aboriginal History Monograph 9, Aboriginal History Inc. Canberra, 2002, pp. xxii-xxv.

Wilson and Price saw in 1798<sup>9</sup>. Unfortunately, Hume keeps no journals of this trip and there are no accounts of his contact with the Gundungurra people. A key impact of this journey is that it foreshadows the next phase in the encroachment onto the Gundungurra lands.

The settler demands for more lands are growing. The expansion along the existing colonial boundaries is escalating the friction, between the British settlers and the Indigenous dispossessed, from Appin to Mulgoa. In 1814, drought further aggravates the tensions. The mounting numbers of settlers are putting increasing pressure on the Indigenous peoples whose access to their ancestral lands and food sources is consequently further restricted. Their economic life is under extreme duress.

European colonisation in many areas brought about the rapid removal of the (Indigenous) means of production. The introduction of animals and crops and the destruction of forests and plains occurred in order to accommodate agricultural and (eventually) industrial needs. This severely restricted the Aboriginal mode of hunter-gather existence and forced Aboriginal people to become increasingly dependent on the introduced economic structure.<sup>10</sup>

Harvesting by the Gundungurra, Tharawal and Dharuk peoples for food from their ancestral lands, as well as the crops and livestock of the settlers is becoming more regular, and particularly, when the moon (*tyeluck*) is full and the maize is ripe. Within the Gundungurra cosmology, this rich harvest, this period of abundance is their birthright. The “increase” ceremonies they perform in accordance with their ageless rituals to encourage plenty are having the desired results. The land brings forth sufficient food for many different clans to gather

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<sup>9</sup> Webster, *op cit*, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> The Committee of Review, *Op cit*, p. 27.

together, to harvest and share. At this time of celebration, of corroboree, of ceremony (*yabbun*) and of trade, people travel from down the coast and inland areas to participate.

The settlers are anxious about the increasing numbers of Indigenous people gathering on the fringes of the settlements. The settlers become more agitated by the moonlight raids. The Sydney Gazette of 4 June 1814 reports, “the natives of Jarvis Bay...have coalesced with mountain tribes...have declared a determination...that they will commence a work of desolation, and kill all the whites before them.”<sup>11</sup> Inevitably, overreaction by some settlers results in deaths of Indigenous people, including the violent murder and mutilation of Bitugally’s wife and two (*pulla*) children. Relationships that are accommodating and sharing begin to break down.

In response, Macquarie requests the Judge Advocate to investigate the murders. Issued a week later, a General Order admonishing the settlers, states that “the first personal attacks were made on the part of the settlers”<sup>12</sup> and acknowledges that even while the settlers have grounds for complaint about their corn being stripped they are not to take matters into their own hands. Macquarie attempts to reassure the settlers and encourages them to re-establish good will. He advises that they will receive protection, and that any hostilities will be punished. He also assures the Cowpastures people and “natives of the Interior”, that anyone found

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<sup>11</sup> *Sydney Gazette*, 4 June 1814.

<sup>12</sup> *Sydney Gazette*, 18 June 1814.

mistreating them will be punished.<sup>13</sup> Regrettably, no one is held accountable for the murders of Bitugally's family.

Such acts of violence reinforce colonialism as a system. Decolonization theorist, Frantz Fanon describes colonialism as “not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly the decolonization theorists, Albert Memmi<sup>15</sup> and Paulo Freire,<sup>16</sup> agree that the impact perpetrated by the colonizers is achieved by the “objectification” and “dehumanization” of the colonized.

The brutality and mutilation associated with the murder of Bitugally's family reveals the dehumanization of the Gundungurra people; not only by some of the settlers, soldiers and colonial officials; but also by the whole process of colonization. The failure of the colonial authorities to uphold the law, to pursue and arrest the murderers, leaves them complicit in the continuation of the injustice. This is devastating to the colonized Gundungurra people; undermining their law, their relationships to their land, and their social and economic organization that are all subject to ongoing contempt. Within a month, revenge-based reciprocal violent reprisals against identified settlers, who participated in the earlier atrocities, occur.

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Fanon, F., *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York, 1963, p. 61

<sup>15</sup> Memmi, A., *The Colonizers and the Colonized* (translated by Howard Greenfield), Beacon Press, Boston, 1967.

<sup>16</sup> Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1993.

Now, asserting his power for British justice (for the settlers), Macquarie forms an armed punitive expedition, led by Warby and Jackson, against the five Gundungurra men Goondel, Bitugally, Murrah, Yellaman and Wallah<sup>17</sup> he holds responsible, with instructions to “take them alive” and bring them to Sydney for punishment. There is no report of the activities of this punitive expedition, but after three (*colleurr*) weeks they return, reporting that they have made no contact with the “hostile natives”.<sup>18</sup> Somehow, truce is restored and hostilities ease for the time being. The inability of Macquarie to bring the force of justice to any of the perpetrators, on either side of this divide, is unsatisfactory to all concerned.

In this example, Macquarie’s inability to prosecute justice highlights the lack of capacity or determined will on the part of the colonial authorities to exercise judicial control over the settlement. It is not until 1838, after the infamous Myall Creek massacre, that any British settlers are convicted of the murder of any Indigenous people.<sup>19</sup> Though allegedly protected by the British law, the Indigenous people are unable to give evidence or defend themselves in court as they are considered heathens and unable to swear on the Bible.<sup>20</sup> This discrimination, based upon race and using racism as a tool of colonialism to subjugate the Indigenous people, is an example of the arguments of decolonization theorists, Edward Said<sup>21</sup>, Frantz Fanon<sup>22</sup>, and Ashis Nandy<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Organ, *op cit*, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Vale, M., *Warby, My Excellent Guide*, Michelle Vale, St Ives, 1994, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Goodall, *op cit*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Organ, *op cit*, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Said, E., *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Fanon, *op cit*.

<sup>23</sup> Nandy, *op cit*.



Said and McGrane<sup>24</sup> argue that the western construction of the 'Other', creates a discourse and a classificatory system placing western belief systems at the epitome of human development. The British colonizers, filled with their own cultural, religious, moral, technological and legal superiority, believe that the Indigenous peoples' belief systems are in an inferior position to theirs. To perform the acts of dispossessing the Indigenous peoples of their lands, destroying the economic base of their lives, killing and mutilating the women and children, and dominating them by deprivation; the British colonizers need to rationalise their justification. The British colonial system sees the Indigenous people as inferior, sub-human heathen savages; and while subjecting them to these degrading negative racial stereotypes, they excuse their own behaviour.

The attitudes of some of the British, such as the Humes and Throsby, do vary but inevitably, the Indigenous people are seen and treated as second class. This is reflected in contemporaneous accounts of the time where the Indigenous people are referred to only as 'blacks', 'black natives' or 'natives' and rarely are they given names. Stereotyping the Indigenous people by assuming that all Indigenous people are alike, an undifferentiated "Other",<sup>25</sup> is another example of colonial racism. In cases where the people are named it is often with a derogatory colonial name, not the person's Indigenous name. This emphasizes the notions of the racial superiority of the British and reinforces the degradation and denial of the Indigenous people and their culture.

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<sup>24</sup> McGrane, B., *Beyond Anthropology*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Langton, M., *Well, I heard it on the radio and I saw it on the television...*, Australian Film Commission, Woolloomooloo, 1993, p. 27.

The Indigenous people are also horrified to see the treatment of the convicts by the soldiers and settlers, with chains, floggings, murders and hangings commonplace. For twenty-six years, since the foundation of the colony at Port Jackson, there have been many opportunities to see the devastation perpetrated on the Indigenous people of that area, and others, as the colony expands. They realise the British are not going away, that significant change is occurring. They are wary of the pastoralists and their expansionary objectives. The 'frontier' is spreading outwards from the colony.

The concept of "frontier" and "frontier history" arises from the work of F. J. Turner, especially the essay *The significance of the frontier in American History*<sup>26</sup>. First delivered in 1893, Turner states that the "perennial rebirth", "the continual beginning over again"<sup>27</sup> of the American frontier is the most significant aspect in the development of an uniquely American character. He also describes the frontier as 'the outer edge of the wave - the meeting point between savagery and civilization' and was 'the hither edge of free land.'<sup>28</sup> Turner's hypothesis has been the subject of much debate since then, attracting criticism for being simplistic, triumphalist, monocausationist, and exclusionary.<sup>29</sup> This hypothesis did however contribute to a growing scholarship of frontier histories that has led to the increasing interest in local and regional histories that often may run counter to the dominant national histories. Through analysis of the events of the frontier, and in Australia's case, also 'the other side of the frontier', new histories have emerged.

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<sup>26</sup> Turner, *op cit.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> The extent of the influence of Turner's hypothesis is revealed in an Google search for 'Turner F. J. and frontier thesis' on <http://www.questia.com/sm.qst> [Accessed on 10 May 2006] that indicates 222 books, 24 journal articles and 3 magazines.

Alexander<sup>30</sup> applied the theory to the Australian colonial expansion and concluded that Turner's hypothesis did not reflect the Australian experience, partly through the impact of different geographies, differing population sizes and spreads of both the colonizers and the colonized, and the roll out of the pastoral frontier over a considerably longer period. The Australian frontier was not a single line or wave moving across the land. It was more irregular, porous and on a smaller scale with less protagonists.

West in *The Oxford History of the American West* proposes that there are five paramount defining characteristics of the frontier. These include "human diversity", "an intricate set of power relations", "a diversity of appealing resources", "the symbolic significance of the evolving economic meaning" and "a region of dynamic changes...a competitive arena".<sup>31</sup> While these characteristics are not solely definitive in describing the frontier, by applying them to the expanding frontier in the Wingecarribee, it will assist us to understand the forces in action.

Between 1810 and 1821, the European population of the colony increases by over 27,000. The number of cattle increases nine times to 102,939 and sheep numbers explode by a factor of ten to 290,158.<sup>32</sup> Macarthur is running a successful sheep-breeding program, developing high-grade wool for export.

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander, F., *Moving Frontiers: An American Theme and its application to Australian history*, Kennikat Press, Port Washington, New York, 1969.

<sup>31</sup> West, E., 'American Frontier' in Milner II, C., O'Connor, C., & Sandweiss, M., (Eds), *The Oxford History of the American West*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1994, pp 115-116.

<sup>32</sup> Crowley, Frank, (ed.), *A Documentary History of Australia*, Vol. 1, Nelson, West Melbourne, 1980, p. 289.

Gregory Blaxland is grazing large herds of cattle in the Cumberland Plains that are subject to “over-stocking, periodic droughts and floods, and occasional plagues of caterpillars.”<sup>33</sup> The demand for more land for the increasing population intensifies. The wealthy landowners who enjoy much political power and influence quickly move their herds and flocks into the newly located grasslands. This exemplifies the economic significance of the push for more grazing lands that drives the frontier into the Gundungurra lands.

By 1815, the ongoing drought, together with Hume’s earlier report, to Fletcher, Oxley’s stock keeper, of the good grazing land in the Wingecarribee, results in the movement of some of Oxley’s herd from the depleted pastures of the Bargo Brush to the open grasslands of the Wingecarribee. This is especially significant considering Governor King’s forbidding of settlers access to these areas beyond the Nepean River. This prohibition officially remained in force until 1821.

On this occasion, with approval from Macquarie favouring Oxley, the Surveyor-General, a senior government official, the prohibition is obviously ignored. The extenuating circumstances created by the drought providing the justification. Similarly, in 1815, Throsby’s cattle are moved into the Illawarra before the area is officially opened up to settlers. The “diversity of appealing resources” that the colonizers locate and exploit, including the grasslands and the water (*nadgyung*), is a clear point of conflict between them and the Indigenous peoples as it reduces their access to their traditional hunting areas, food and water (*nadgyung*) supplies.

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<sup>33</sup> Crowley, Frank, (ed.), *A New History of Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, p. 46.

As this pastoral expansion shifts the frontier deeply into the Gundungurra lands, it is well and truly beyond the purview of the colonial authorities. Oxley's men and cattle probably moved into the area, now known as Bowral around the Wingecarribee River and Mittagong Rivulet, near the location of the former Oxley homestead, "Wingecarribee" which nestles into the base of Oxley Hill. What Oxley's stockmen did in this area and what their interactions with the Gundungurra people of the area were, is unfortunately one of those spaces beyond the historical gaze. This is indeed a complex and as in West's argument, an "intricate set of power relations".

This group of men, beyond the official purview, probably convicts, ticket-of-leave men, or recently released prisoners, who live a harsh and remote life, are the very people, the so-called "lower orders of white society", in Windschuttle's view, whose violence, the government officials and the squatters protect the Indigenous people from.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, he does not explain how they do this or clarify the inconsistency between his argument and the actions of the armed white men, competing for the control of the land with the Gundungurra people.

Considering the lowly status of women in the colony, the objectification and dehumanization of the Gundungurra women and the loneliness and isolation of the stockmen, it would be interesting to know how Windschuttle's officials protected the women. There is no contemporaneous record of the behaviour of Oxley's stockmen, beyond the effective rule of law, essentially a law unto

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<sup>34</sup> Windschuttle, K., 'Doctored evidence and invented incidents in Aboriginal historiography' in Attwood, B, & Foster, S. G., (Eds.), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p. 100.

themselves. However, considering the settler anxiety and the events preceding their movement to the area, do they in fear, ignorance and the belief that their's is a superior right, engage in conflict, or reach amicable and friendly compromise with the Gundungurra people?

Quite probably, the Gundungurra hunters see this further encroachment of the stockmen and the herds onto their traditional hunting grounds as a threat to the economic base of their livelihoods. However, with their belief system of sharing and reciprocity, do the Gundungurra hunters simply see the cattle as fair game for food; after all, it is on their land. It is obvious that the Gundungurra people's use of firestick farming is a threat to the stockmen, their dwellings and the herds of cattle.

It is known how quickly the cattle affect the waterways with defecation, their hard hooves breaking down the banks and stirring up the mud in the water (*nadgyung*). This immediately contaminates the drinking water (*nadgyung*) of the people and the fauna, and destroys fish (*waak*), fowl, crustacean and plant habitats. The loss of clean drinking water (*nadgyung*) is an immediate assault on the Gundungurra people's health and amenity of life.

These are all clearly examples of potential conflict and areas of contestation in "a region of dynamic change" which creates "a competitive arena" involving "human diversity". There is no contemporaneous record that can clarify this period, and while it is easy to believe one thing or another, the complexity of these frontier spaces cannot be ignored. It is important to point out that violence

is not dominating all aspects of the frontier, although there is undoubtedly conflict and resistance.

In her recent work, Jackson-Nakano argues eloquently in *The Pajong and Wallabalooa: A history from the records of Aboriginal farming families at Blakeney and Pudman Creeks, 1820-1945, and historical overview 1945-2002*<sup>35</sup>, that there are many stories from the frontiers describing more complex negotiated solutions and outcomes for many groups on the frontier. This theme is also pursued by Griffiths who explains, “many scholars, including Reynolds...argued that the frontier was more intimate and personal...there was much sharing and accommodation between black and white cultures”<sup>36</sup>. This acknowledges the contribution to the settler economy of the Indigenous peoples and undermines the ‘imperial triumphalist’ history of rugged pioneers battling alone against the odds in an always hostile and often treacherous landscape.

Claude Lee, a former Town Clerk of Mittagong, renowned bushman and poet-raconteur, in an example of settler memory through literature, a form of ‘history from below’, reinforces this viewpoint when he states in his homage of remembrance to the Burratorang Valley and the Gundungurra people of that area.

Those who remained learned the white man’s ways and became proficient stockmen, shearers and horsemen...became integrated naturally peaceful – there can be no argument about this. The story was told in the features of many of the old pioneer families and proved itself in the prowess in sports and games of their descendants. Many of the men who came up the valley to Bullio (west of Mittagong) for seasonal station

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<sup>35</sup> Jackson-Nakano, *op cit*.

<sup>36</sup> Griffiths, T., ‘The language of conflict’ in Attwood, B, & Foster, S. G., (Eds.), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p. 148.

work, had dark faces, and English or Irish names – fine fellows, competent workers, good natured, full of fun and laughter.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the inherent racism in Lee's remarks, his reminiscence describes one form of accommodation that occurs between the Gundungurra people and the settlers. The Gundungurra people assimilated into the dominant white culture, and as in Blakeney and Pudman Creek areas of Jackson-Nakano's research, they remained and continued to live and work in their traditional lands. Their attachment to their land, their sense of belonging to the place, and their intricate knowledge of that place enables them to become valuable parts of the new settler economy.

However, as the maize ripens to harvest in 1816 unrest is developing. In March, the *Sydney Gazette* reported of Fowler's farm at Bringelly being "plundered by a group of 20 or 30 natives"<sup>38</sup>. The "natives" ambush a settler group in pursuit, killing four (*borre*) men. The plunderers, now reportedly, a group of sixty, then return to the farm and destroy the enclosures, stripping the house and carrying off all the corn and provisions.

Threats and rumours of further attacks, of plunder and murder, on Macarthur's (Camden Park), Oxley's (Kirkham) and Hassall's (Macquarie Grove) farms at Camden, and others at Appin, encourages the settlers into forming a vigilante party. "About forty armed men" pursue the "savage natives" with the "intent only to act on the defensive and if possible take them prisoners, that being

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<sup>37</sup> Lee, C., *A Place to Remember: Burragorang Valley 1957*, Second, Revised and Enlarged Edition, Claude N. Lee, Mittagong, 1971, pp 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> *Sydney Gazette*, 9 March 1816.



Government Orders”, but is forced to retreat.<sup>39</sup> Mr Oxley and a party of soldiers pursue the “natives” into the night (*burri*) but return “without doing an execution re the natives”.

By now, the report is of “upwards of two hundred natives”.<sup>40</sup> Macquarie decides it is “absolutely necessary to inflict exemplary and severe punishments on the Mountain Tribes”<sup>41</sup>. These are the Gundungurra people.

The *Sydney Gazette* by the end of March, in reporting of another attack at the Nepean, acknowledges that “as soon as the maize is off the farms it is likely the present hordes of offenders will retire...this is the only grain they can make use of, and it affords so strong a temptation.”<sup>42</sup> This clearly supports the frontier hypothesis of conflict over “appealing resources”, effectively food. The competition between the settlers with their flocks and herds, and the Indigenous people is one for economic survival. The Indigenous people are starving as the colonial expansion disrupts and destroys their traditional food sources.

Throsby remonstrates by letter to D’Arcy Wentworth, chief magistrate at Sydney. Throsby argues that the “natives of the place where Mr Oxley’s stock are”, that is the Gundungurra people of the Wingecarribee area, have many opportunities to murder Oxley’s stockmen if so inclined. Throsby asserts that revenge in retaliation to the barbarity of the murder of Bitugally’s family two (*pulla*) years before is understandable. He is concerned that vigilante mobs of

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<sup>39</sup> Organ, *op cit*, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> *Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Volume IX*, The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament. 1917. pp 53-54.

<sup>42</sup> *Sydney Gazette*, 30 March 1816.

“ignorant white people will lead them to accuse the whole, indiscriminately”, and that all Indigenous people including those who have taken no part in any hostilities will be randomly and ruthlessly attacked.<sup>43</sup> Wentworth apparently ignores his appeal.

Throsby here succinctly identifies the racism, dehumanization and objectification of the Indigenous people in the course of the process of colonization. The undifferentiated “Other” is the enemy. He also expresses the fears of the Indigenous people he knows, (including Gogy and his family), within his own household and neighbourhood who live in trepidation of random violence and death at the hands of vigilantes. This type of harassment and intimidation effectively forces these Indigenous people into submission, threatening their self-belief and psychological well-being.

The next day, the *Sydney Gazette*<sup>44</sup> carries a notice from Mr Oxley that anyone trespassing on the grounds of Kirkham Farm will be prosecuted. Macarthur provides Macquarie with his list of eight hostile natives. Despite this, on the 9 April 1816, Macquarie declares his Second Punitive Expedition against the Hostile Natives issuing detailed instructions to Captains Schaw and Wallis, Lieutenants Parker and Dawe of the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the NSW Corps.

Macquarie, the military governor, launches this major military offensive against the whole of the Indigenous people, not only against Macarthur’s named suspects. There is a force of armed soldiers extending from the Nepean, Grose

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<sup>43</sup> Organ, *op cit*, p. 61.

<sup>44</sup> *Sydney Gazette*, 6 April 1816.

and Hunter Rivers through the Cowpastures to the Airds and Appin Districts and down into the Illawarra. The detailed military instructions reveal a well-prepared and long considered strategic plan for “driving them to a distance from the settlements of the white men...to strike them with terror...some signal and severe examples being made.”<sup>45</sup>

Apart from directing the military manoeuvres, these instructions give explicit directions such as

In the case they make the smallest resistance or attempt to run away after being ordered by the friendly Native Guides to surrender themselves as Prisoners, you are to fire upon them, saving the women and children if possible.

All such grown men as may happen to be killed you will direct to be hanged on the highest trees and in the clearest parts of the Forest where they fall. Such Women and Children as may happen to be killed are to be interred wherever they may happen to fall.<sup>46</sup>

It is obvious that Macquarie is prepared to use whatever force is necessary to prosecute his military action. He applies the *force majeure*, gives explicit instructions for the taking of prisoners of war, men (*nain*), women and children, including the procuring of twelve boys and six girls between the ages of four and six for the Native Institution in Parramatta.<sup>47</sup> This is an attempted round up, an concerted effort to herd the Indigenous people like animals, denying their humanity and supposed protection under the British law; explicitly designed to strike terror into the hearts and minds of the Indigenous people. This is military law. Macquarie will not countenance defeat.

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<sup>45</sup> *HRA*, Vol IX, pp 53-54.

<sup>46</sup> *State Records NSW: Colonial Secretary; 4/1734*, pp 149-168.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

It is not the purpose of this research to explore in detail Macquarie's punitive expedition but as much of it is directed at the Gundungurra people, the extent of this venture needs to be understood. This is a crucial time for all involved in this frontier conflict.

In the moonlight, before dawn on the morning of the 17 April 1816, Captain Wallis and his detachment surprise a camp of people in the Broughton Pass area, near Appin, and with guns firing and dogs chasing, "the natives fled over the cliffs". Fourteen people were counted as being killed, consisting mainly of older men (*cayen*), women and children. This infamous massacre results in the death of the highly respected Gundungurra man, Cannabaygal whose body is "hanged on a conspicuous part of a range of hills."<sup>48</sup> This inglorious end for a wise, educated, knowledgeable and revered elder highlights the disrespect that the British colonialists hold for the Gundungurra people and their culture.

On 21 April, Captain Wallis and Lieutenant Dawe join Captain Schaw at Mr Oxley's Kirkham farm. Coincidentally, the next day they are "informed by Mr Oxley's stockmen, that a large body of natives had driven them from their huts (*gunge*) in the Wingie Wingie Charabie and plundered them of every article they possessed."<sup>49</sup> By Thursday 25 April, the combined detachments of Wallis, Schaw and Dawe, accompanied by Mr Oxley and his stock keepers, and an unknown number of other settlers, arrive at Callumbigles (Cannabaygal) Plains<sup>50</sup>, identified by Jervis as being Little Forest, between the present villages of

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<sup>48</sup> *SRNSW: Colonial Secretary; 4/1735*, Captain Wallis' Report, pp 50-59.

<sup>49</sup> *SRNSW: Colonial Secretary; 4/1735*, Captain Schaw's Report, pp 33-41.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

Yerrinbool and Aylmerton<sup>51</sup>. Oxley and his stock keepers go ahead to the huts (*gunge*) in the Wingecarribee and return without discovering any of the Gundungurra plunderers. The detachments remain in the area, based at the Callumbigles Plains, for six days scouring the area for the Gundungurra people.

Dawe found a camp where he located items stolen from the stockmen's huts, but no Gundungurra people are seen. Once again, the Gundungurra people retreat into the vastness of the Wingecarribee. With expert and intimate knowledge of their surroundings, their familiarity of the landscape, together with their ability to travel light and move quickly, they evade the marching soldiers of the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the mounted Oxley and his men.

Oxley's contribution to the effort is acknowledge by Wallis who states "I feel most indebted to him for his assistance and this as well as every other occasion where his services could be rendered to me and my detachment."<sup>52</sup> It can only be wondered what the assistance and service Oxley provided to the military, but undoubtedly he is a willing party to the military action against the Gundungurra people whose livelihood he undermines and whose land he covets. The punitive expedition draws to a close. The Appin massacre being the most notorious outcome with fourteen Indigenous people officially killed. Very few prisoners are taken.

The military, the guides both British and Indigenous duly receive their rewards in cash, spirits, tobacco and clothing, and later land. Such is the currency of

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<sup>51</sup> Jervis, 1962, *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *SRNSW, op cit*, Wallis.

colonial life. While there are some further incidents of plundering and other hostilities, Macquarie seems content that his goal is achieved, calling off the troops. Presumably, Oxley's cattle continue grazing in the Wingecarribee, and his stockmen go about their duties unmolested. All is quiet on the Wingecarribee frontier.

In 1816, Throsby was shown, more than likely by his faithful guides Broughton and Bundle or other Indigenous people, a track from the Illawarra over the escarpment to the Bong Bong<sup>53</sup> area. This track is probably through what is now known as Macquarie Pass. He now is the most active explorer in the Wingecarribee area. In 1818, he found a route via the present towns of Moss Vale and circuitously, Exeter and Bundanoon, into Kangaroo Valley and onto Jervis Bay. James Meehan, on the same expedition, finds his way to the Goulburn Plains. In 1819, Throsby returns through the Wingecarribee and is guided on the route through to Bathurst, which opens up the "new country", connecting the Wingecarribee and Argyle (Goulburn) areas to the western plains around Bathurst. A circle is complete. The frontier is now moving past the Wingecarribee towards Goulburn and beyond.

Macquarie determines to build a road to the "New Country" in 1819, engaging Throsby and Wild to supervise its construction. By November 1820, the Great South Road from Stonequarry Creek (Picton) to over the Cookbundoon Range is completed. How the Gundungurra people viewed this incursion through their lands is not recorded, however they "frequently came to watch the progress of

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<sup>53</sup> Jervis, 1962, *op cit*, p. 10.

the road, they did not interfere with the men...they sold kangaroo (*binaro*) skins and bought tea and sugar.”<sup>54</sup> This shows their increasing dependence on the new settler economic structure.

Throsby receives the reward of a 1,000 acre land grant, now known as “Throsby Park”, near Moss Vale. A new settlement is set up near Sutton Forest. Six settlers are given grants and in 1820 on his tour of the district Macquarie enthuses about the settlement as a “sweet spot...particularly beautiful and rich – resembling a fine extensive pleasure grounds in England”<sup>55</sup>. The colonization is complete. Remarkably, within a year or so of the settlers’ occupation it is so like England. Unfortunately, the dispossessed Gundungurra people, whose fire stick farming practices helped create these verdant fields, so reminiscent of the old country, are nowhere to be seen.

All that remains is for the division of the spoils. In 1821, Macquarie instructs Oxley to commence the measurements of farms between Bargo and the Cookbundoon River. Taking these grants up quickly the settlers move into the newly acquired lands. The Gundungurra people receive no lands. They are further pushed to the margins of their ancestral lands, to the most remote, infertile and unproductive areas where the inability for them to maintain their traditional hunter-gatherer way of life forces them to become increasingly dependent on the settler economy. Within a period of 23 years, from 1798 to 1821, from first contact to occupation, the colonial frontier has expanded throughout the Wingecarribee bringing the dispossession, destruction and

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<sup>54</sup> Jervis, J., ‘The Great South Road’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Sydney, 1939, Vol. 25, Part 4, p. 413-414.

<sup>55</sup> Jervis, 1962, *op cit*, p. 15.

marginalisation of the Gundungurra people and their culture; and handed their lands to colonialist settlers.



## Chapter Three – Aftermath

While this research focuses on the period 1798 – 1821, there is no doubt that the history of the Gundungurra people, and their ancestral lands of the Wingecarribee area continues. This research has described some the events of the period. It has introduced some knowledge of the Gundungurra people gleaned from the contemporaneous records of first contact. This is, however, extremely limited and it is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this sparse information. It is a small slice of life in the context of the whole of the Australian landscape, and the history of Australia since the British invasion of 1788. This, however, does not make it any less valid, as similar events have occurred all through out the country, and are the beginnings of modern Australia.

It is important to remember that the Gundungurra people have lived in this place for possibly 30,000 years. When forced to describe the Gundungurra people from such a narrow perspective, the twenty or so years covered by this research pales into comparative insignificance. Without being able to draw on a wider body of information, I am aware of the need not to contribute to the construction of a Gundungurra identity that reinforces homogeneity and an undifferentiated “Other” as highlighted by Langton,<sup>1</sup> and not to reinvent some concept of the “noble savage”. It is important to remember, and keep remembering, that the people of this research are individuals with all the feelings, needs and wants of people everywhere. This humanity drives the need for better explanations as to the absence of the Gundungurra people from their “country”.

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<sup>1</sup> Langton, *op cit.*

A deep part of the tragedy of this invasion is that Indigenous peoples' knowledge about this country was so quickly lost and destroyed before it was even recognised. This is the tragedy of British racism and the inherent belief in their cultural superiority. Their desperate need, as aliens far from home, to replicate Britain in this place, which strangely is known still as New South Wales, is a sad reflection of their insecure psychological state and well-being.

Nandy explores this with regard to the British Raj in India and his thoughtful analysis, from an Indigenous perspective, is a constant source of encouragement to seek out the flaws and weaknesses in the British colonial venture. He describes the hyper-masculinity, and the discipline, so often lampooned as the stiff upper lip of the British male. This discipline, which is driven by self-denial, leads to dehumanization and objectification of the self. This in turn enables the dehumanization and objectification of others.<sup>2</sup>

Macquarie, the military man and Oxley, the naval officer are two actors on this stage who deploy these attributes. The punitive expedition is a demonstration of this disciplined hyper masculinity. While the expedition doesn't officially have a massive death toll, or take many prisoners, as an action it sends a very powerful and terrifying message to the Indigenous people that they will be hunted like dogs, treated indiscriminately, be stripped of their rights and their lands, and then be held responsible for it.

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<sup>2</sup> Nandy, *op cit.*

On the Indigenous side of the frontier, there are no explanations provided as to the British invaders' good intentions. It is not explained that they are now a British possession, supposedly protected by the British law. The explanation that they have gathered, experientially, is that they will be dispossessed of their land, punished for harvesting food from their ancestral lands, further punished for applying reciprocal justice in accordance with their laws, be degraded and vilified and then be held responsible for their own parlous state. This is the harsh reality of colonization.

I am also aware that this thesis, with the information coming mainly from British colonial sources, has the possibility of contributing to a British or Eurocentric view of this period. I have attempted to counter this potential bias by critically analysing the information gathered against some Indigenous theories of decolonization. By exposing the bias in the text and seeking meaning in the omissions and silences, I have interrupted the colonial paradigm, drawing alternate and subversive meanings from the colonizers' own words and explanations.

In conducting this research, I have been acutely aware of the lack of sources of information from the Gundungurra people and other Indigenous people. This is clearly a weakness, which as Crawford points out leaves me with less than half the story.<sup>3</sup> However, as discussed, this lack of information about the Gundungurra people drives the research. Nevertheless, as Nandy argues, not everything and everyone comes within the realms of history, and nor should they.

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<sup>3</sup> Crawford, *op cit.*

Nandy also contends that certain types of history, especially those reinforcing the dominant cultures, are complicit with the nation/state in the colonial conquest of Indigenous people.<sup>4</sup> Historians who participate in the perpetuation of the colonial myth of peaceful settlement while failing to acknowledge that colonization is always a violent act, continue the process of colonial conquest.

The addition of Gundungurra voices into the discourse will assist to achieve a greater balance. However, this is inherently difficult, raising further questions and identifying further areas for much more detailed complex and sensitive research, which are outside the bounds of this thesis. One possible response is to gather, from diverse Indigenous people, their stories of the Gundungurra people. The descendants of the Gundungurra people, who through the processes of colonization, have assimilated into the settler society and no longer identify as Gundungurra people could be encouraged to share their histories. Likewise, seeking out the histories of descendants of the Gundungurra people no longer living in the area, whose diverse oral histories could contribute to the development of a repository of Gundungurra knowledge, in a culturally appropriate keeping-place.

Nevertheless, this raises another raft of issues that is the subject of research by Fourmile as to who “owns the past” and has the right to that knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup> Nandy, A., ‘History’s Forgotten Doubles’ in Pomper, P., Elphick, R., and Vann, R., (Eds), *World history: ideologies, structures and identities*, Blackwell, Malden Massachusetts, 1998, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Fourmile, H., ‘Who owns the past? Aborigines as captives of the archives’, in Chapman, V. & Read, P., (Eds) *Terrible Hard Biscuits: A Reader in Aboriginal History*, Allen & Unwin and the Journal of Aboriginal History, St Leonards, 1996.

Gundungurra people or their descendants are under no compulsion to share their histories with me. If I wish to contribute to decolonization, I must acknowledge that if within the Gundungurra people's cultural law I am not authorised to have access to this knowledge then I will respect this cultural requirement.

Foucault also challenges historians to accept that they have limited rights "to impose their tastes and preferences when they seek to determine what actually occurred in the past"<sup>6</sup> and that they have a restricted capacity to construct "a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development"<sup>7</sup>. Denning also reminds me that I should "be a very humble man....humbled by living and knowing only vicariously and distantly what their (my) subjects of inquiry had lived and known immediately and fully before them."<sup>8</sup> To write this history is a privilege, a responsibility and an honour.

With this in mind and with respect to the Gundungurra people, I must state that my research leaves the question of the absence of the Gundungurra people inconclusive. This does not mean that nothing is conclusive about this research; it simply means that there is no simple, single answer to the question of the absence of the Gundungurra people. There are many answers. The broad answer is that colonization and dispossession from their traditional lands led to the destruction of the pre-contact Gundungurra society.

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<sup>6</sup> Foucault, M., 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history' in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 157.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, pp 153-154.

<sup>8</sup> Denning, G., *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas 1774-1880*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1980.

The many specific and diverse answers are that some people died from introduced diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis, measles, influenza, venereal disease and whooping cough. Renegades and outlaws killed some people. Settlers, stockmen, colonial officials and soldiers killed others. Some people, through their kinship and familial relationships, moved from the area to join other clans. Some people, herded up like cattle were shipped to other places such as missions. Yet, some others found compromise and remained in the area, gradually assimilating into the settler society. There were also those who held to their traditional ways as long as they could before starvation and deprivation forced them to the fringes of the settler communities. In this regard, the history of the post invasion Gundungurra people is similar to many other Indigenous people throughout Australia, and indeed the world.

This did not all happen within the period that is the focus of this research. In local settler literature, echoes of these multiple and diverse answers are found. Coincidentally, a highly literate family were early settlers in the Sutton Forest area, taking up a grant adjoining Mt Gingenbullen between Sutton Forest and Berrima, named Oldbury. This is the Atkinson family. James wrote *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales*<sup>9</sup>, the first and most influential book concerning agriculture in the colony, published in 1828.

He devotes very little of his book to the Indigenous people but he reassures his readers that they are peaceful, living comfortably among the settlers, being intermixed and connected. Occasionally there are quarrels with settlers but it is

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<sup>9</sup> Atkinson, J., *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales*, Facsimile Edition, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1975.

usually due to some aggression or ill treatment by unprincipled settlers that has set off hostilities and retaliation.<sup>10</sup> James, a beneficiary of the colonial system is keen to see a peaceful occupation, and has no qualms about receiving the grant of Gundungurra land. He obviously seems to believe it is his right, as a superior British gentleman, to have such things. The Gundungurra people will, in his view, be absorbed in to the settler society.

Charlotte, James' wife, is credited with writing the first children's book published in Australia. Her book, *A Mother's Offerings to Her Children, By a Lady Long Resident in New South Wales*<sup>11</sup> contains many snippets of colonial settler life based around life at Oldbury. Charlotte, from a mother's perspective, in discussion with her children about the Aborigines (Gundungurra people) at their estate, attempts to explain observations of the relationships between several Gundungurra mothers and their children.<sup>12</sup>

While the stories are sprinkled with cautionary messages to her children, and are within the dominant racist paradigm, Charlotte conveys information about Gundungurra practices of fostering of children, within which there are implied kinship obligations. There is information about death, funerary processes, loss, and grief, healing and mourning. This shows the Gundungurra peoples' respect for their dead, founded in the Dreaming, that their ancestors' spirits (*bulan*) are still present. Charlotte also mentions "the grave on the side of our hill, must

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145-146.

<sup>11</sup> Barton, C., *A Mother's Offerings to Her Children. By a Lady Long Resident in New South Wales*, Facsimile Edition, Jacaranda Press, Milton, Qld, 1979.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp 197-214.

have been made at least 23 years ago (approximately 1818); and yet the carving in many trees is quite visible.”<sup>13</sup>

In discussing the issues around death and loss, Charlotte is possibly reflecting the parlous status of the Gundungurra people in the Sutton Forest area around the 1840s, their lives being filled with loss, death, grief and mourning. On the other hand she could be merely underlining the “dying race” notion that seeks to justify the colonization as part of the natural order where the weak (Gundungurra) are replaced by the strong (British). However, considering that James, her husband had died suddenly she may have been using these examples to speak with her own children about mortality, grief and mourning.

When Charlotte informs that Governor Darling does not approve of miscegenation, and the blacks get angry when their women live among the whites, but despite this, children are being born,<sup>14</sup> she highlights the divergence between what is happening in the settlements and the official grasp. It also speaks of the personal and intimate compromise and accommodation discussed by Griffiths, Reynolds, Jackson-Nakano and Lee.

Louisa, James’ and Charlotte’s daughter continued the literary traditions and as a very young woman contributed regularly to the Sydney papers in the 1860s. Louisa wrote several novels, collected botanical and biological samples, drew exquisite drawings of birds (*budgang*) and animals, painting all of them and landscapes too. Elizabeth Lawson has written two informative books on Louisa,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 208-209.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 209.



*Louisa Atkinson: The Distant Sound of Native Voices*<sup>15</sup> and *The Natural Art of Louisa Atkinson*<sup>16</sup> and has analysed what she describes as the “Christian conscience” and the “pastoral consciousness” that underlies Louisa’s writings.

Lawson describes “pastoral consciousness” as the “conviction, virtually unquestioned and virtually endemic among the European colonists, of their right freely to resume the lands of the continent and transform them to pastoral use.”<sup>17</sup> This description reinforces the prevalence of the British notions of superiority referred to previously. Louisa, like her father and her mother is captive of the dominant racist colonial paradigm. It is not my intention to rework this aspect. I wish to examine two pieces of Louisa’s writing as examples of settler memory in literature.

The first is an episode in the novel *Cowanda: The Veteran’s Grant* describes an attempt of some stockmen, to creep in the night (*burri*), with loaded guns, to a gathering of Indigenous families around a campfire, and to murder them.<sup>18</sup> As Lawson argues this is “subservient to the plot” of the novel.<sup>19</sup> This may be the stuff of fiction but I wonder where a young woman like Louisa, aged about twenty-five, would have gathered such stories. I can only assume that she had been told of similar episodes, or had heard the men of the estate, or the Gundungurra people themselves describe such an event.

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<sup>15</sup> Lawson, E., *Louisa Atkinson: The Distant Sound of Native Voices*, Occasional Paper No. 15, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Lawson, E., *The Natural Art of Louisa Atkinson*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Lawson, *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Atkinson, L., *Cowanda, The Veteran’s Grant, An Australian Story by the Author of Gertrude*, J. R. Clarke, Sydney, 1859.

<sup>19</sup> Lawson, 1989, *op cit*, p. 24.

The second is a journalistic article and sketch published in the *Illustrated Sydney News* in 1853.<sup>20</sup> It describes a gravesite, arguably the same site mentioned by Charlotte. Louisa describes this site or tumulus in detail as being on the side of Mt Gingenbullen, behind Oldbury, surrounded by carved trees. It is approximately one hundred feet long and possibly fifty feet high. According to Charlotte, it was made around 1818. Louisa states that the last man interred was upwards of thirty years ago. On this occasion, it would seem that Louisa is repeating her mother's recollections, as she was not born until 1834. Records indicate that Atkinson received an initial grant of eight hundred acres in 1821 that was extended to two thousand acres in 1822 in consideration of his service in the Colonial Secretary's office.<sup>21</sup>

The size and location of this site has led to speculation that this is the burial site of victims of a massacre. The information provided by Louisa that "below the tumulus, on the slope of the mountain, there are extensive marks of excavations of the soil...the construction of this mound must have been a work of labour and time."<sup>22</sup> This does not equate with a massacre burial site. It is most strange to bury massacre victims, in a mound, on a terrace, on the side of a mountain and excavate the soil from below. The labour involved in constructing a soil mound of these dimensions is extensive. It is hard to imagine that such an earthwork could be constructed, even in the 1818 – 1823 period, without there being much wider knowledge and explanation of its purpose.

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<sup>20</sup> *Illustrated Sydney News*, 26 November 1853.

<sup>21</sup> Jervis, 1962, *op cit*, p. 17-18.

<sup>22</sup> *Illustrated Sydney News*, *op cit*.

Lampert, an anthropologist from the Australian Museum, who investigated the area in 1994, located the natural terrace, but was advised that a mound of about 1.5 metres (approximately 5 feet), had been bulldozed down the slope to build a dam.<sup>23</sup> There was no evidence of carved trees but that is not surprising after one hundred and seventy years or so. If the tumulus existed it requires a more detailed and forensic study to identify its location and contents. The desire to locate such a site is most probably formulated in the need for more knowledge about the absence of the Gundungurra people from the Wingecarribee area. The longer we remain in this place the more the past will become important to us.

However, these gaps in knowledge and understanding promote the question of whether it best to leave some areas of history unexplored and accept that some parts of the past are forever consigned to oblivion. By excluding some parts of history, simply because we do not (*burrall*) know what has happened, and include others just because we do, we will end up with only half the story, with a skewed vision. This skewed vision will favour the histories of the central, the powerful and the resourced, and deny the remote, the marginal, the underprivileged and the excluded. A skewed history will distort the construction of identity and nation, creating exclusions.

For history to be inclusive, the Gundungurra people, and many other excluded Indigenous people and other groups, need placing back into the collective memory. One means of doing this is through remembrance and memorialisation. As Inglis states “victory in frontier war was discomfitingly hard to interpret, let

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<sup>23</sup> Lampert, R. J., Mount Gingenbullen as seen by Louisa Atkinson and recent observers, Unpublished essay, November 1994.

alone commemorate.”<sup>24</sup> There are very few memorials in any form, especially in monuments, though recently a memorial has been constructed to commemorate the Broughton Pass massacre at Cataract Dam near Appin. This year marks the one hundred and ninetieth anniversary of that infamous massacre.

A memorial lookout is currently being constructed on Oxley’s Hill, overlooking Bowral that will have the names of some of the Indigenous guides who assisted the early explorers through the Wingecarribee. In Gibbergunyah reserve, between Bowral and Mittagong, an annual ceremony commemorating the Gundungurra people as the traditional owners of the land, with the raising of the Koori flag has occurred. Areas within the reserve have Gundungurra names and the ceremony, involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, occurs at *nin garang thurree currobung* (the place between the rocks). These are part of a reconciliation process.

The memory of the Gundungurra people will live on in the Wingecarribee area for many years to come. In the shire of Wingecarribee, in places including Bong Bong, Mittagong, Berrima, Bendooley, Yerrinbool, Wingello, Bundanoon, Merrigong, Bowral, Burrawang, Wombeyan, Wollondilly, and Gibbergunyah to name a few, words of the Gundungurra language are spoken, even if mispronounced. This will always signify that this is the land of the Gundungurra people, and will always promote questions as to the origins and meanings of the names, inevitably leading enquiring people to the Gundungurra people.

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<sup>24</sup> Inglis, K., *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian landscape*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 1998. p. 23.

Unfortunately, names and monuments will not compensate for the loss of the generations and the devastation of the Gundungurra people, their language and the culture. It is an enormous challenge to discover how to sustain a sense of humanity, stripping away the objectification and dehumanization that colonization has brought, and as a member of the settler society that has benefited enormously from the dispossession of the Gundungurra and other Indigenous people, reconcile the place of Indigenous people within contemporary society.

Decolonization is part of the processes of “stripping away the material effects and structures of the colonial power and period...(that) needs to be carried out at a psychological and attitudinal level also”.<sup>25</sup> Reconciliation can contribute to this decolonization and re-humanization, through the processes of sharing histories, through the recognition and valuing of the Indigenous cultures. The greater understanding of the histories of the diverse people and local places in which we live contributes to this process. By acknowledging and taking ownership of the settler aspects of our shared histories, our understanding of our current society, especially with regard to Indigenous peoples, is enhanced.

Bringing these arguments and debates to the forefront of historical and cultural discourses, creates the opportunity for new dialogues and further shared histories in decolonized spaces. The experience of understanding the effects of colonization gives opportunity for both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to resist neo-colonialism.

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<sup>25</sup> Childs, P. & Williams, P., *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory*, Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 228.

## Conclusion

This thesis has explored and analysed the first contact/frontier history of the Wingecarribee area between 1798 - 1821. By analysing the earliest known records of contact between the British invaders and the Gundungurra people, whose ancestral lands include the Wingecarribee area, information from a variety of sources has been compiled enabling some brief understanding of the Gundungurra people in that short period between contact and colonization. The paucity of evidentiary sources together with the limited time between these occurrences limits the extent of the body of knowledge assembled. References to other Indigenous people and sources external to the area under scrutiny are used to fill in gaps where generalist knowledge might help.

The early explorers', Wilson, Price and Barralier, accounts of their journeys and meetings with the Gundungurra people reveals a fiercely independent people, relatively untroubled by the colonial settlement at Port Jackson. However, a little over ten years later, Hume's visit to the area precipitates a period of rapid change. Within the next ten years the pastoral frontier extends through the Wingecarribee, the Great South Road is constructed to the "New Country" of Argyle; land grants are parcelled out to new settlers, placing the Gundungurra people under enormous threat.

The arrival of Oxley's stockmen and herds in the Bowral/Berrima area in 1815, well beyond the control of the colonial authorities, foreshadows conflict with the Gundungurra people. This reaches its climax in a punitive expedition when Governor Macquarie's red-coated 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment march into the Wingecarribee in

April 1816. This occurs within a week of the notorious Appin massacre at Broughton Pass where the red coats killed fourteen Indigenous people including highly esteemed Gundungurra elder, Cannabaygal. According to the official reports, no Gundungurra people are sighted during this week of occupation though traces of their camps are located. This reveals an area that requires further research. The reports of Captains Wallis and Schaw, Lieutenants Dawe and Parker provided to Macquarie that are now located in the Colonial Secretary's record of the State Records Office are extracts from their military journals.

While some effort was made to locate these original journals there seems to be no account of them in the official military records of colonial NSW. Quite probably, these records will have returned to the regimental headquarters, when the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment was recalled to England. Electronic searches failed to locate them. These military journals are an important part of NSW colonial and military history, and of the punitive expedition against the "hostile natives", and may assist in shedding more light on this period of altercation between the British invaders and the Indigenous people.

By 1833, the "Blanket returns", a form of census, for the lands of the Gundungurra people show only sixty-five people, men women and children living in the area. This is an extremely low number when compared to early reports of hundreds and possibly thousands of people living in these lands. While acknowledging that not all of the Gundungurra people necessarily participated in the blanket handouts, that some may be maintaining their fierce independence, this low number signifies the devastation that frontier invasion wreaked upon the

Gundungurra people. It does unfortunately also reveal another weakness in this research and identify another area for further examination.

The number of Gundungurra people remains at best an informed guesstimate. Further research is required to explore means of establishing more reliable figures of population, not only at the time of invasion on first contact, but also following through the Blanket returns and other records such as birth, baptism, marriage and death certificates as used by Jackson-Nakano in her research. The information and maps provided the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management Section, NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation showing the number and frequency of identified sites may be of assistance in this research. Not being a demographer, and not wishing to focus on the numbers, I acknowledge that this detracts from this thesis.

The last large gathering of Indigenous people that occurred in the Wingecarribee, probably in the 1860s, inspired the memory of a settler family member, Mr Webb of Moss Vale. In an account of his recollections, of seventy years previous, first published in the 1930s Mr Webb described the “Big Corroboree”, occurring along Whyte’s Creek in the vicinity of the golf course. For this event “blacks swarmed into Moss Vale in hundreds and hundreds” from “almost all parts of the State”

The men formed two long lines, reaching as far as the eye could see! Then the two at the end turned into the centre and the next pair followed them, and so on, and they all danced down the avenue until the other end of the line was reached; then they started back again. It was most spectacular. The men engaged in all kinds of strange aboriginal dances, their faces and bodies were streaked with coloured paint, and they made queer grimaces the whole time. The women didn’t dance at all. They sat on the ground, nearby, and made the music, and sang. The musical



instruments were possum skins, turned inside out, and held taut on pieces of timber. The women beat upon these, and the 'music' was similar to the sound of the present-day drums. They did not object to the white people being present at this great function. In fact, they invited the whites from all parts to attend and even prepared a nice, clean place for them on a green hill, close by.<sup>1</sup>

This corroboree, possibly the last large gathering of the Gundungurra people and the friends and neighbours, indicates that at least in the 1860s the culture was still vibrant. This may reflect that the Gundungurra people maintained a more viable, potent and independent force than the contemporaneous official records reveal. Possibly their disappearance from the Wingecarribee area occurred later, when the assimilationist policies of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century were enforced. That, however, is the subject for other research.

This thesis has examined various historical and narrative accounts of the Gundungurra people, of the Wingecarribee area, between 1798 – 1821. The limited contemporaneous information sources and the previous historical analyses of them, that have contributed to a very narrow understanding of the Gundungurra people, their culture and way of life, and the effects of the first contact/frontier expansion on them, have been re-examined. In this analysis, I have, using Indigenous decolonization theories, and other methods of interpreting the information, identified within the sources the gaps, the omissions and silences, and alternate and subversive understandings within the texts. I have developed new knowledge and understanding, however inadequate and imperfect, that forms a basis for new dialogues and shared histories for the Gundungurra people and settler society in Wingecarribee, and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> *Highlands Post* 11 April 1967

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