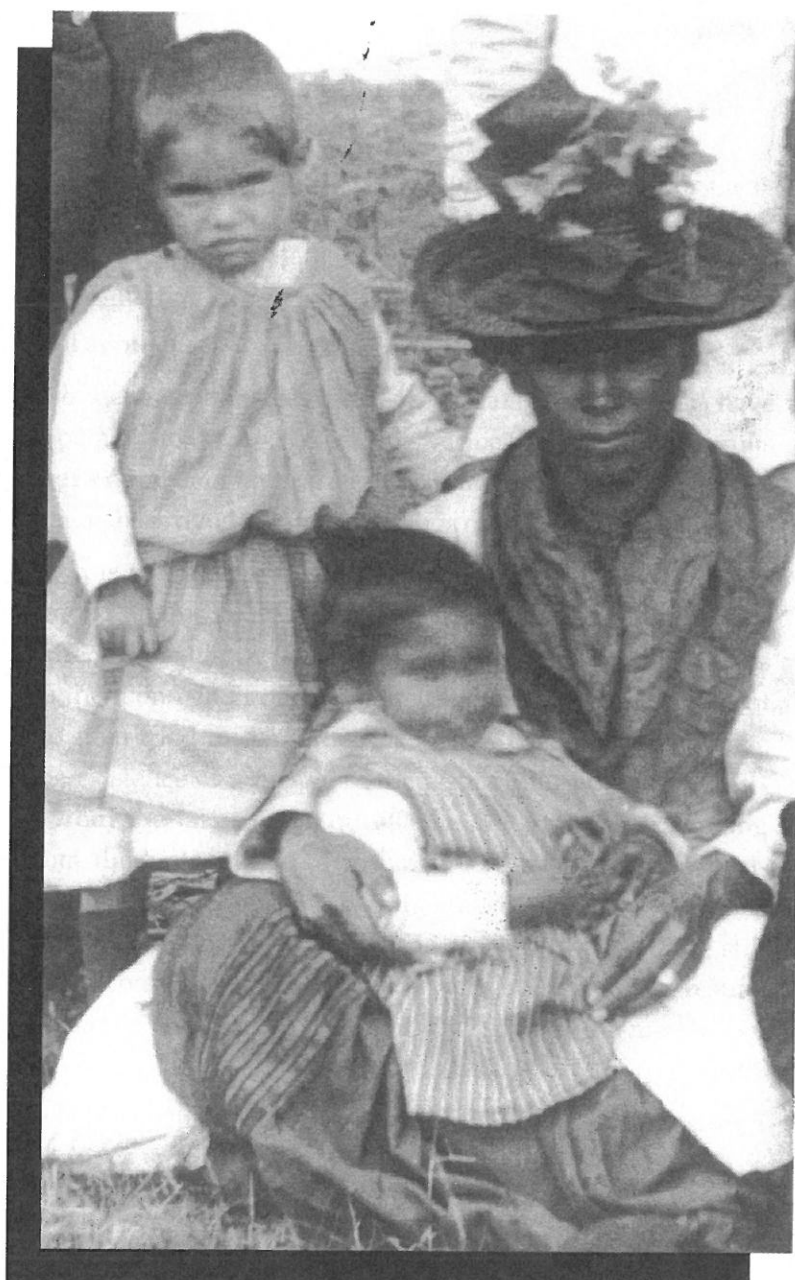


Part I

The Kamberri 1820s–1860s



1 Weereewaa Aboriginal communities, or the so-called 'Lake George Tribes'

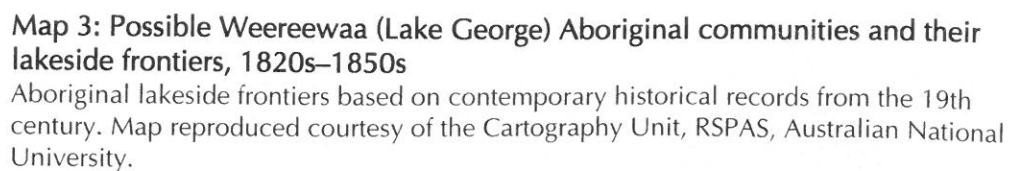
Introduction

Weereewaa, or Lake George as it was renamed by New South Wales Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1820, is thought by some to be an eerie place. The waters, like the different family groups who have performed on or around the Weereewaa stage over the past few centuries, have had their exits and their entrances, rendering the lake empty during some seasons and full at others.

Climatologists, geologists, geomorphologists, prehistorians and archaeologists have worked both together and separately to discover Weereewaa's ancient secrets. The results of their work show clearly that a number of natural and unnatural dramas were acted out around the lake long before humans arrived and for thousands of years afterwards.

My quest as an historian is to bring to life the Aboriginal individuals, families and communities that depended on this lake for sustenance at the time the Europeans arrived and for some time afterwards. I hope that by so doing I can appease the spirits of the lake and apologise to them on behalf of other Australians of European descent who dispossessed them and then tried to deny their existence. I realise that a single historian acknowledging the existence of a people of the past would not entirely dispel the sullen atmosphere from the lake so the quest does not stop there. Having identified, as best I can from the historical records available, first generation post-European Weereewaa families and/or groups, I follow the tracks of their descendants to discover their fate and to calculate how many of them have survived and are still living in or near their ancestral 'country' in the 21st century. By presenting the results of this research I hope to persuade residents in this region today that the memory of these groups is worth preserving.

When I began this research over a decade ago many people told me my search would be futile. Various historians writing about regions around the lake would have us believe that the Aboriginal groups that included the lake in their 'territory' became extinct soon after the Europeans arrived. Numerous different dates have been suggested by Australian scribes of European descent for when Weereewaa Aboriginal



individuals or groups supposedly vanished from the face of the earth, but their own historical records prove otherwise. In fact, I will demonstrate that not only did the Weereewaa groups not become extinct but so many of their descendants are still living in or around their traditional country in the 21st century that their histories cannot be contained in one volume. This volume is therefore dedicated to only one of those groups, the Kamberri, who lived to the west and southwest of the lake in the district that now incorporates the capital of Australia. It is the place I have been calling home for the past 15 years so this research, for me, is a journey of self-education. I hope it will be so for you, too.

In Part I of this volume I identify the Weereewaa groups and introduce the community of people who identified with the Kamberri district with the help of a selection of historical resources available. The written history of the lake dates back to 1818–1820, so this is the point at which the modern history of the Kamberri begins.

The European advance on Weereewaa

According to the historical records, Joseph Wild was first told about the big lake, Weereewaa, and the big river, Murrumbidgee,¹ by Gundungurra-speaking Aboriginal groups between Bong Bong, where he lived, and the Goulburn Plains.² Wild was an experienced bushman who had forged friendly relations with Aboriginal families local to the Wingecarribee district, where he formerly had a hut, and the Sutton Forest district where he and his employer, Dr Charles Throsby, later resided. Throsby was a medical doctor who had financed a number of explorations southwest of Sydney after the official crossing by Europeans of the Blue Mountains in 1813.

Explorers financed by Throsby had come quite close to Weereewaa in 1818, after Throsby and his party set off from Throsby's station at Sutton Forest to explore the Shoalhaven River. The party had split into two after a quarrel: Throsby, Wild and others headed downstream towards the coast while James Meehan, the Deputy Surveyor-General, and the young Hamilton Hume, already a noted explorer, headed upstream with two of Hume's Aboriginal friends and guides, Cookoogong and Taree. According to Hume family oral history, at the time of the quarrel they had reached the district of Tallong (see Map 4).³

Hume and Meehan may have abandoned their trip up the Shoalhaven at the bend in the river near Bungonia, which, had they continued, would have led them to today's district of Braidwood. Meehan, an ex-convict, may have heard tales of Francis

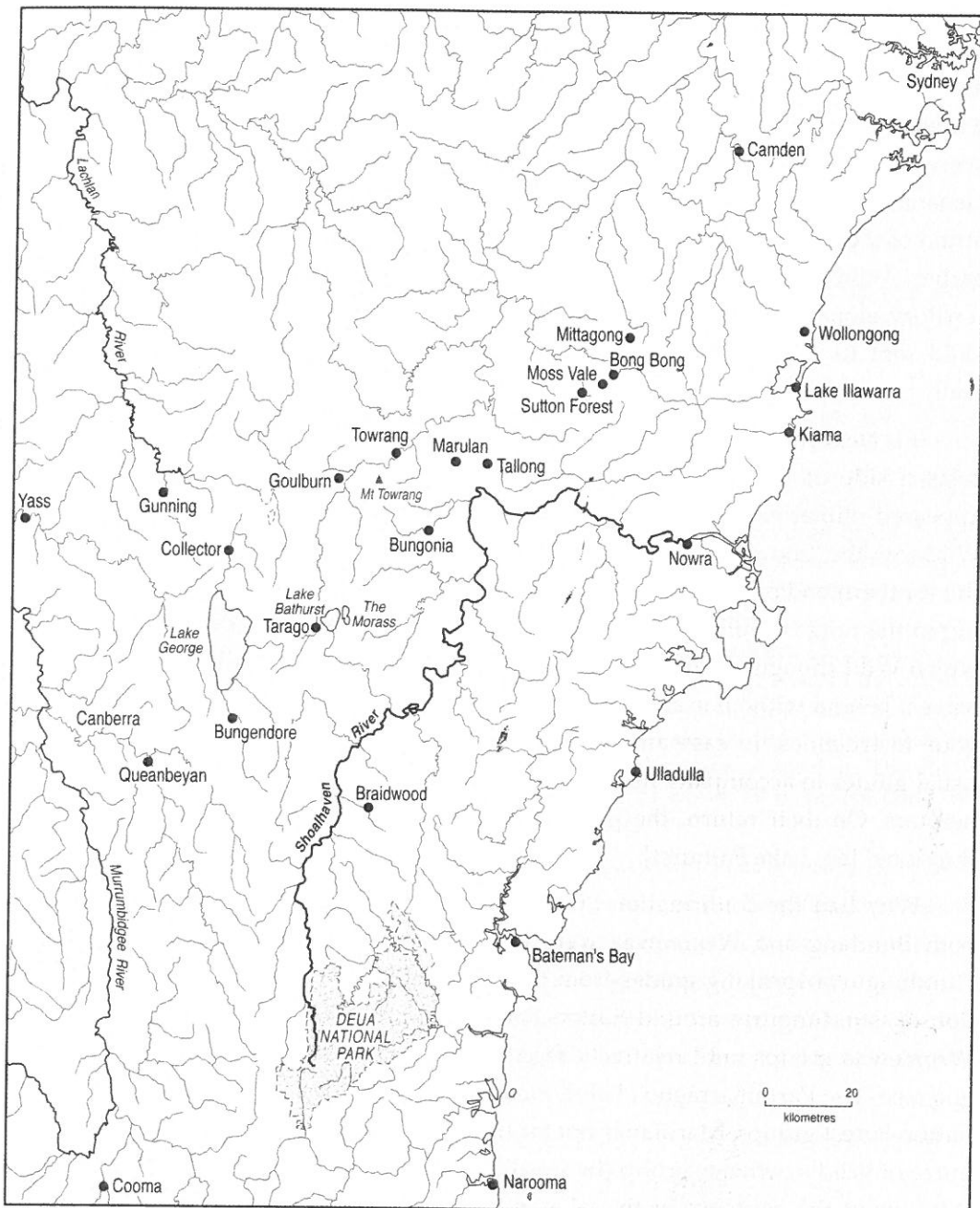
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1. According to Stewart Marjoribanks Mowle, who lived for many years in Kamberri country and spoke the local language, the correct rendition into English of this river was Murrumbidghee. See the Mowle family papers, National Library of Australia (NLA) Manuscripts MS 258/11.
 2. Throsby, Charles, letter to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 25 August 1820, quoted in Woolley, John, 1984. Throsby was Wild's employer and, just before his visit to Weereewaa, Wild was overseeing the building of a road towards the Goulburn Plains on Throsby's behalf. For the history of the Gundungurra-speaking groups, see the works of Jim Smith, some of which are quoted throughout this chapter.
 3. Hume, Stuart Hamilton, 1991, p 33.

Barallier's unofficial trip across the Blue Mountains in 1802,⁴ in which a group of convicts and others had explored the district at least as far west as the hill now known as Mt Towrang. From here, they allegedly looked south and saw the Gundary Plains and a lake, probably Bundang — later renamed Lake Bathurst (see Map 4). Now, perhaps quite by accident, here was Meehan close to those very plains of popular rumour. He, too, may have glimpsed Bundang at this time. Certainly, he is given credit for the first sighting of it and for renaming it 'Lake Bathurst'.

Bundang is only a few kilometres to the east of Weereewaa (see Map 4). If Meehan and Hume indeed glimpsed this lake, why did they not keep going west to find the bigger lake? Their Aboriginal guides, Cookoogong and Taree, who were from Gundungurra-speaking groups to the west and east of the Blue Mountains respectively, had by then ventured into country quite some distance from their own and may not have known about either lake. Or they may have been afraid because they were in country unfamiliar to them, and/or their groups may have had hostile relations with the group who claimed that territory. Consequently, they were probably anxious to persuade Hume and Meehan to head back in a northeasterly direction towards more familiar territory and so Weereewaa remained undiscovered by Europeans at this stage. On their return home, the party passed through the district southeast of modern-day Goulburn on the Mulwaree Plains, which the Europeans later referred to as the Goulburn Downs.⁵

A year later, in 1819, Cookoogong and an Aboriginal guide local to the Camden district, Dual, assisted Throsby and Wild to open up a route from the 'Cowpastures' [Camden] to Bathurst.⁶ For their efforts, Cookoogong and Dual both received gifts from Governor Lachlan Macquarie. Cookoogong was appointed 'Chief of the Burrah Burrah tribe, to which he belongs' by Macquarie.⁷ According to Jim Smith, an historian of the Gundungurra-speaking groups, the country of the Burra Burra was much further north of Weereewaa and included Burra Burra Lake, the O'Connell Plains and the Abercrombie River districts.⁸

4. Cabbage, RH, 1940. A boy named 'Barracks', who accompanied Barallier, was in the group that allegedly climbed Mt Towrang and wrote a diary of the trip, which is in the Mitchell Library. Barracks claimed that from Mt Towrang he saw the features that were later named the Goulburn Downs and Lake Bathurst. Quoted by Wyatt, Ransome, 1941.
5. According to Charles MacAlister, the Goulburn district was 'discovered' by Hamilton Hume. See MacAlister, Charles, 1907. According to Ransome Wyatt, Throsby and Meehan agreed Meehan was the first white man to discover 'Lake Bathurst' and the 'Goulburn Downs'. Hamilton's lateral descendant Stuart Hamilton Hume makes no claim on behalf of the Hume family for Hamilton being the discoverer of either 'Lake Bathurst' or 'Goulburn Downs'. See Hume, Stuart Hamilton, 1991. Ransome Wyatt (1941) claims John Oxley was the first white man to pass over the site of the present city of Goulburn. I am not an expert on this area so I am not sure of the circumstances under which the Mulwaree Plains were named. Certainly, they seem to be located some distance from the area frequented by the group for whom they may have been named.
6. Throsby, Charles, 'Report of a Journal of a Tour by way of the Cowpastures to Bathurst in the newly discovered country west of the Blue Mountains', 31 May 1819, *Historical Records of Australia [HRA]*, vol X, January 1819 – December 1822, Series I (Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1917).
7. *HRA*, vol X, *ibid.*



Map 4: The Shoalhaven River near Bungonia, and Bundang and Weereewaa
Reproduced courtesy of the Cartography Unit, RSPAS, Australian National University.

In August 1820, Throsby financed Wild and a couple of other 'white' men 'at a trifling expense' to find the lake called Weereewaa.⁹ It is unusual that, although 'native guides' had been employed to guide Wild, Throsby and others on earlier trips, it appears that Wild was accompanied only by other Europeans during his search for Weereewaa. We learn later, during a visit to the area in 1828 of the then Surveyor-General, Thomas Mitchell, that Aboriginal groups to the east of Marulan were quite afraid of the so-called 'Lake George Tribes'.¹⁰ Their fear may explain why, eight years earlier, Wild and his two European companions had to venture into uncharted territory alone and why Wild had trouble finding the lake, as indicated in a letter Wild sent to Throsby after his visit to Weereewaa, which he dictated to Silvester Hall.¹¹

It is clear from his letter that Wild and his party limited their explorations to the eastern side of the lake. They saw from the hills 'the Fires of the Natives who appeared numerous'.¹² From one hill, probably that now known as Governor's Hill, Wild saw the 'Snowy Mountains' to the southwest and 'superior land' running from the southern end of the lake 'upwards of twenty miles'. The party saw also the opening in the range of hills on the southwest bank of the lake, now called Geary's Gap, which Wild thought might be a river (it is an ancient river bed). Wild was 'sorry to leave it behind without examination; the party being small he did not wish to disobey your Instructions, in case an accident might happen'.¹³ Perhaps the refusal of his usual guides to accompany him on this trip had made Wild and his party unusually nervous. On their return, the party saw 'Mr Meehan's plains and a lagoon called Bundong' [*sic*, Lake Bathurst].

Why had the confirmation of Weereewaa's existence taken so long? Although both Bundang and Weereewaa were beyond the territories familiar to the young Gundungurra-speaking guides from the Blue Mountains, perhaps the older generation of Gundungurra around Sutton Forest had had friendly communications with Weereewaa groups until relatively recently. The western frontier of the Parramarragoo (see 'The Parramarragoo', below) may have been shared with the Moss Vale and Sutton Forest groups. Marulan is not far from Moss Vale. Perhaps it was the Gundungurra of Wild's own age group (he was 66 when he found Weereewaa) who had told Wild about the existence of the lake and about the great river, the Murrumbidgee, which allegedly flowed to the western sea.¹⁴ The younger generation of Gundungurra to the east and north of the Weereewaa groups might not have known about either the lake or the river because relations between Weereewaa and other Gundungurra-speaking groups had deteriorated only relatively recently, within a

8. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 4.

9. Throsby, Charles, letter to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 25 August 1820, quoted in Woolley, John, 1984.

10. Quoted in Smith, Jim, 1992, p 13.

11. Wild, Joseph, letter to Dr Charles Throsby, 28 August 1820, dictated to Silvester Hall. NLA Manuscripts MS 351.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

generation or two, in 1820. Perhaps Cookoogong's and Taree's groups in particular were on bad terms with Weereewaa groups?

It is important to ask ourselves these questions, even if immediate answers do not present themselves, in order to consider the social relationships that might have existed between Weereewaa and surrounding groups in 1820 and any possible distinctions between them. The least we can do is file away such thoughts and questions and see if possible answers to them later emerge. History is not an exact science.

From the description in his letter to Throsby, as dictated to Hall, Wild was quite taken by the beauty of Weereewaa. It is thanks to him that we have a description of the lake on the brink of a European invasion:

at the N. end about two miles across but widening to about ten miles, full of Bays and Points on the East side, very beautiful; only one Island perceived, near the Mouth of a creek, inhabited by great multitudes of white Sea Gulls; — the wood in general Box and Blue Gum with a little Stringy Bark. Emu very plentiful and seen in small Flocks — tracks of some large Kangaroos found but none seen in the Neighbourhood — Swans, Geese and Ducks of different kinds in abundance, but it was too cold to catch Fish. The Floods had been very high, numbers of Egg Shells were found supposed to be those of Ducks destroyed by the Water and the Crows — also claws of large Craw Fish. The Stones in the Points on the Eastern Bank are a kind of Slate — the Western Bank appears to have a straight uniform bold shore (except the opening mentioned) very lofty Hills, nearly alike in Height, rocky but good pasturage; — the Grass had been burnt in the neighbourhood of the Lake by the Natives and was springing into nice feed — three Creeks run into the Lake at the S.E. The Plains towards the Eastward are of immense Extent, clear of wood, all beautiful Land, not swampy, though many small Lagoons of fresh Water.¹⁵

The use of the lake by Aboriginal groups is clear from Wild's letter. In spite of any possible hostilities between the Weereewaa and some of the Gundungurra-speaking groups to their east and the consequent threat this could pose to Europeans led by unwelcome Gundungurra-speaking guides, Throsby wanted to explore beyond the lake and find the Murrumbidgee. He was eager to please Governor Macquarie and quickly informed him of Wild's discovery¹⁶ of the lake and his own desire to explore the district further.¹⁷

On receiving Throsby's letter, Macquarie decided to travel to Weereewaa and see the area for himself and also, if possible, the big river. It was on this trip to Weereewaa in October 1820 that Macquarie renamed the lake in honour of 'His current Majesty', the British monarch, George IV, and Bundang became 'Lake Bathurst', named by Meehan after the British Secretary of State and endorsed by Macquarie.¹⁸

14. Throsby, Charles, to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 4 September 1820, *HRA* series 1 vol X. The sea mentioned was on the coast of South Australia. Clearly, Aboriginal groups from the lake area had travelled all the way down the Murrumbidgee as far as Lake Alexandrina and the South Australian sea. Some historians quote Taree as the source who told Wild about Weereewaa.

15. Wild, Joseph, letter to Charles Throsby, 28 August 1820, dictated to Silvester Hall. NLA Manuscripts MS 351.

16. I am using the term 'discovery' in the context of the Europeans seeing it themselves for the first time.

17. Throsby, Charles, to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 4 September 1820, *HRA* series 1 vol X.

Macquarie's party was guided by Taree and also, probably, by Cookoogong. Although they had been reluctant, previously, to guide Wild to this same area, the 'guides' may have felt more confident in leading a well-guarded party of dignitaries across territory that was probably as unknown to them as it was to Macquarie. When they passed through the Cookbundoon Range, members of Cookoogong's family group, the Burra Burra, including Cookoogong's father, Nagaray, also joined the official party.¹⁹ Perhaps these neighbouring groups were as excited and as curious as the Europeans were about the area and peoples to the west of Weereewaa.

Where were all the Weereewaa Aboriginal communities at this time? October was the time for their annual spring trek up to the Snowy Mountains for the bogong feasts. Perhaps the Gundungurra guides had been informed of this by their Elders and thus suggested October might be a good time for the Governor to visit the lakes, knowing most of the local groups would be up in the mountains. Or was the timing just a lucky coincidence for the Europeans? If so, groups with whom the Weereewaa communities were friendly were probably in the mountains with them so they may have had no advance warnings about the Governor's visit. Since the Governor's party was heavily armed, it is unlikely the Weereewaa groups would have offered much resistance in any case.

While Macquarie's party was travelling to Bundang, Charles Throsby, accompanied by Joseph Wild, James Vaughan (a constable) and the 'two native guides', Taree and Cookoogong, ventured beyond the Cullarin²⁰ Range to look for the Murrumbidgee River.²¹ On this trip they were unsuccessful, which reinforces my belief that neither Taree nor Cookoogong was familiar with the country around or to the west of the lake.

Who were, then, the Aboriginal groups that claimed Weereewaa as their territory? Contemporary Europeans in the 19th and early 20th centuries might have imagined that the 'Lake George Tribe' or 'Tribes' would all be found camped permanently around the lake. In fact, the historical evidence suggests that different parts of the lake marked the furthestmost frontier for a number of hunter-gatherer groups whose main territories stretched much further afield.

The 'Lake George Tribes': east and west of Weereewaa

Historical records suggest that a number of Aboriginal communities shared Weereewaa when the Europeans first arrived, including the Parramarragoo, the Mulwaree (also spelled Mulwarrie), the Cookmai, the Pajong, the Wallabalooa,²² the

18. Summary of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's administration, Notes on Despatches, HRA series 1 vol X.

19. Macquarie may not have stopped and chatted so amiably to this group if Cookoogong had not been in the party and introduced them.

20. Cullarin may have been a corruption of Kalara, the Aboriginal name for the Lachlan River, the headwaters of which commence behind it on the west of the Breadalbane Plains towards Gunning.

21. Quoted from paper by AR Jones, 1952.

Moolinggoolah (a Molonglo Plains group) and the Kamberri (see Map 3). The Parramarragoo, Mulwaree and Cookmai groups may have also shared Bundang [Lake Bathurst]. These three groups, in fact, were so closely related that they may have only recently split into sub-groups. They were linked in particular through a man named 'Old Crie', who, at various times, was identified as the chief of each of these groups. Old Crie and his son, John Crie (also spelled 'Cry'), were also frequent visitors of the Kamberri to the southwest of the lake.

The Parramarragoo

According to Jim Smith, an historian of the Gundungurra-speaking groups in the Goulburn and other districts, the country of the Parramarragoo stretched as far as Bungonia and Marulan and may have included country from the Wollondilly River to the Shoalhaven.²³ The blanket distribution lists for the Parramarragoo suggest that this group gathered for their blankets at Lumley, Inverary Park and Reevesdale up until 1843, when the blanket distribution was centralised at Goulburn.²⁴ Reevesdale was originally named *Parramarragoo*.

We learn more of the Parramarragoo people through the records of the Surveyor-General, Thomas Mitchell. It would have been Parramarragoo warriors who left a hostile message on behalf of the 'Lake George tribes' on the tree near Marulan Hill, mentioned by Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell when he was camped there in 1828.²⁵ Perhaps this was the Parramarragoo's eastern frontier and Parramarragoo warriors were warning neighbouring groups with whom they may have been at war to keep out.

The hostile message certainly frightened Mitchell's guide, Primbrubna, who left Mitchell's party the following day on the pretence of going to see friends at Tongobidya [Mt Towrang],²⁶ also in Parramarragoo territory but at least closer to territory where the Wollondilly and Tarlo groups held sway. Mitchell does not mention to which group Primbrubna belonged, but he may have been friendly with or belonged to the Wollondilly, Tarlo or Burra Burra groups to the north and northwest of the Wollondilly. Clearly, a distinction remained between the Parramarragoo and their neighbours to the north, northwest and east for at least 20 years after the Europeans arrived at Weereewaa.

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22. I am not certain that the Ngoonawal-speaking Wallabalooa were originally a Weereewaa group. The group had access to the lake via the Lachlan River but had to pass through either Pajong or Mulwaree territory to get to it. The Wallabalooa may have exerted supremacy over the Pajong in later years, having been pushed out of much of their own territory west of the Boorowa River by Wiradjuri groups in historical times. The history of the Wallabalooa will be included in volume II of the Weereewaa History Series.
 23. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 48.
 24. Blankets for Aborigines, Archives Office of New South Wales (AONSW), 4/1133.3, and Smith, Jim, 1992, p 22.
 25. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 13.
 26. *Ibid.*

Some government blanket distribution lists show that the Parramarragoo and the 'Gundarru' received their blankets together on some occasions, at which times, again, 'Old Crie', 'Old Cry' or just 'Crie' was designated the 'chief'.²⁷ This may have been because James Styles, an early settler in the Bungonia district and the owner of *Reevesdale*, also had property at Gundaroo, which was the European corruption of the Aboriginal word for the place, 'Condariro'. I can find no other evidence confirming there was one single Aboriginal community called the 'Gundaroo'. The Gundaroo plains were included in the country of the Kamberri, although linguists might wish to investigate whether there was a connection between 'Gundary' and 'Gundaroo', which were the names of the plains to the east and west of Weereewaa respectively.

The Kamberri group was on very good terms with the Parramarragoo. As I have already indicated, Old Cry was a regular visitor to the Kamberri. Conversely, Onyong, a young Kamberri warrior at the time the Europeans arrived at Weereewaa, was occasionally included with the Parramarragoo on the contemporary blanket distribution lists at *Inverary Park* near Bungonia and with the Mulwaree at *Tirranna*, south of Goulburn.²⁸

The Parramarragoo enjoyed mostly good relations with other Weereewaa groups and, according to Norman Tindale, utilising the research of the nineteenth century ethnographer, Robert Hamilton Mathews, with Wodi Wodi communities at the mouth of the Shoalhaven River.²⁹ Mathews linked most of the Aboriginal communities in the southeast region of New South Wales through their *bunan* initiation ceremonies.³⁰ Judging by the evidence suggested in the historical records for the Weereewaa groups, however, having *bunan* ceremonies or even a language in common did not necessarily mean Aboriginal groups in this region were always on good terms with each other.

Some of the claims made by Mathews, on further investigation, are a little far-fetched yet Tindale did not question his claims. Still using Mathews as his source, Tindale suggested, for example, that the linguistic group the *Ngunawal* was also known as the Ngoonawal, Wonnawal, Nungawal, Yarr, Yass tribe, Lake George tribe, Five Islands (Illawarra district) tribe, Molonglo tribe and the Gurungada (Gundungurra?). Based on this information he thus claimed for the *Ngunawal* the entire Lake George-districts as far as Marulan.³¹ In fact, Marulan was the Parramarragoo's eastern frontier but the Parramarragoo group was only one of the so-called 'Lake George Tribes'. It is unclear what original common language they might have spoken, but

27. Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/7092 and 4/6666B3. See for example Parramarragoo and Gundarru, Lumley, 7 August 1834. It is possible, I suppose, that this referred to Gundary, meaning the Gundary Plains, rather than Gundarru, meaning Gundaroo, but James Styles had properties in both areas so there is a clear link between the two. Perhaps the Gundaroo group was visiting at that time, designated as such by Styles, who may not have known the Gundaroo group was part of the Kamberri group.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Tindale, NB, 1974.

30. Mathews, RH, 1896 and Mathews, RH, 1898b.

31. Tindale, NB, 1974.

their language was almost certainly Gundungurra. It would not have been so unusual for groups who shared the same language to be at war. Conversely, although some of the Weereewaa communities spoke different dialects to each other and had obviously reformed as separate and distinct groups by 1820, it seems they enjoyed mostly good relations with each other. In turn, as a conglomerate or as distinct groups they would have enjoyed good relations with other neighbouring communities, as the Parramarragoo did with the Wodi Wodi of Nowra. Ethnographers such as Mathews, who did not begin to interview survivors until at least the 1870s, may have assumed the Weereewaa and the Wodi Wodi were all one group known by a variety of names. The Wodi Wodi and the Weereewaa communities may have attended each other's initiation ceremonies and also traded with each other along the Shoalhaven River. No doubt their languages or dialects were not dissimilar.

The breastplate of King John Cry, son of Old Cry, was found in a field near Tirranna Church, Tirrannaville, 10 kilometres south of Goulburn, in 1901.³² Tirranna was, and still is, the property of the Gibson family, established by Dr Andrew Gibson, who was responsible for the distribution of blankets to Mulwaree groups — of whom Old Cry was also often designated 'chief' — until the early 1840s. As already noted, the Parramarragoo, Mulwaree and Cookmai were so closely related they could almost have been the same group, the confusion emanating from European observers. To confuse matters further, however, King John Cry's breastplate claimed he was 'Chief of the Duedolgong tribe, Argyle'.³³ Clearly, there is much research still to be conducted in order to distinguish all of these groups more clearly.

The Mulwaree [also spelled 'Mulwarrie'] and the Cookmai

Jim Smith places the country of the Cookmai across both sides of the Wollondilly River west of Goulburn and between Gundary Creek and the Mulwaree River to the southeast.³⁴ His reasoning for this demarcation of the Cookmai/Mulwaree territory may be based on information included on contemporary blanket distribution lists for the 'Mulwaree tribe' in the 1830s, which identified the usual residence of this group as in the districts of Tarlo, Wollondilly and Lake Bathurst.³⁵

The township of Goulburn was established on the Mulwaree Plains in 1832 at the junction of Mulwaree Ponds (Mulwaree River), Gundary Creek and the Wollondilly River, so all Aboriginal groups in its immediate surrounds might have been designated the Mulwaree by contemporary Europeans.

It is confusing that the country of the Mulwaree group was not necessarily located in the area the Europeans originally identified as the Mulwaree Plains (later renamed the Goulburn Plains), which they extended to the district northeast of the township. The breastplate of Mulwaree Tommy, 'King of Cookmai', was found in

32. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 32.

33. Reproduced in Smith, Jim, 1992, p 34, and held at the National Museum of Australia.

34. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 48.

35. Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/1133.3.

1902 on a property southeast of Taralga, which is 40 kilometres northeast of Goulburn in the traditional territory of one of the Wollondilly communities.³⁶ Taralga is in the modern shire council district of Mulwaree, which may have been designated as such by non-Aboriginal authorities when the Goulburn township was established. Since my main focus in this volume is on the Kamberri, I have not conducted extensive research on the eastern side of Weereewaa. Consequently, I do not know yet whether Mulwaree Tommy was so named because he belonged to the earlier or later place named Mulwaree. On the other hand, the fact that he was also designated 'King of Cookmai' suggests that the Mulwaree may have expanded their territory, moved or been moved between the 1830s and 1840s. Perhaps a split occurred between the original Mulwaree at this time, with King John Cry (see above), son of Old Cry, designated chief of a sub-group, the Duedolgong, and Mulwaree Tommy designated chief of the expanded Mulwaree. More research is required on this group to find answers to these historical questions.

William Govett, a surveyor, wrote some beautifully descriptive articles about 'Aborigines in the County of Argyle',³⁷ an area he had helped survey, in an illustrated series published in England's *Saturday Magazine* in 1836-37.³⁸ He wrote of the Mulwaree Plains:

These, but twelve years ago, were in the quiet and undisturbed possession of the humble native tribes, and the animals indigenous to the county. Then might have been seen the black, proud of his territory, wandering in full freedom and independence, contented with the supply of nature's wants by the means which nature afforded him. Then, too, the explorer might have beheld a herd of kangaroos frisking together playfully in some rich and sequestered part of the forest, — the emu majestically stalking over the plain, the heavy-winged turkey selecting carefully his choice food, and various other birds and animals all enjoying themselves as if unconscious of being disturbed. Then he might have heard the very trees themselves sounding with life; parrots of all colours rushing through the foliage, the frequent flap of the pigeon's wing, and the *wanga wanga* (large blue pigeon), and flocks of the cautious snow-white cockatoo. Of the wild pigeon there are two different sorts, 'the bronze wing,' and that called by the blacks the 'wanga wanga ...

But how has the scene been changed within the last few years? There is now not a section of land in the whole County of Argyle that is worth possessing, but what is in the occupation of the white man. The tide of civilized population has already swarmed into that county; houses and elegant cottages are everywhere to be seen; farms are fenced in, cultivation has made rapid progress; a township has been established, a court of justice erected, and the very spot which but two years before might have been admired for its solitary natural beauties, was soon disgraced by the *gibbet*!...

The kangaroos have either been killed, or have fled in search of more retired forests. Sheep and cattle have taken their place, the emu and turkey are seldom seen, the millions of parrots have even become scarce, and the few harmless blacks remaining,

36. Smith, Jim, 1992, p 32. His original source was the *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* 19 April 1902.

37. Goulburn and the eastern and northeastern parts of Lake George were in the county designated 'Argyle' by colonial authorities.

38. Govett, William Romaine, 1836, *Sketches of New South Wales, Saturday Magazine*, 1836-37. Published in 1977 as Govett, William Romaine, *Sketches of New South Wales* (Gaston Renard, Melbourne).

having lost their native energy, now even here court the white man for his rum, his tobacco, and his bread!³⁹

Although Govett writes of the Mulwaree in the vicinity of Lake George, he does not identify any particular boundaries. It is often difficult to know the location of the particular groups he terms generally as 'the Argyle natives', although it is clear from his articles that he is aware of 'tribal' differences around the lake.

Up to about 1837 the Mulwaree received their blankets from Dr Andrew Gibson at Tirranna, which suggests their group held sway in the area now known as the Gundry Plains and on both sides of the Mulwaree Ponds or Mulwaree River (see Map 3). The Mulwaree probably had rights to the eastern side of Weereewaa as well as Bundang. These lakes are separated by the Allianoyonyiga hills and the Great Dividing Range. Mulwaree access to Weereewaa may have been along Allianoyonyiga Creek (see Map 3). Surplus blankets were forwarded by Dr Gibson to Terence Aubrey Murray at *Winderadeen*, a property located at the foot of the Allianoyonyiga mountain range close to Collector Creek.⁴⁰ Murray was Gibson's closest neighbour to the southwest – but clearly these blankets were for distribution to another Aboriginal group local to Murray's property near Collector. Unfortunately Murray's blanket distribution lists do not appear to have survived, so we cannot be sure which group he serviced in those early days. I suspect it was the Pajong group.

In his *Report on Aborigines in the Goulburn District* in 1846, the Reverend William Hamilton suggested that the 'remnants' of several Aboriginal groups in the Goulburn district included the Mulwaree, Burra Burra, Bungonia, Lake George and Fish River⁴¹ 'tribes'.⁴² It is interesting that he distinguished only one of these groups as being from Lake George. Perhaps his 'Mulwaree' were a group from the area the Europeans called the Mulwaree Plains, as explained above. It is not clear whether he was identifying the groups by name or by the areas where they were thought to reside. A quarter of a century after Europeans arrived in the district, the eastern Weereewaa Aboriginal communities had been seriously disrupted and, possibly, had dispersed to some degree.

In his reminiscences of Goulburn, published in 1907, Charles MacAlister claimed the three 'tribes' of Argyle were the Mulwaree, the Tarlo and the Burra Burra.⁴³ He also mentioned the 'Wollondilly Tribe', who, he said, used to bury their dead on the hill above Lansdowne House on the Mulwaree (close to the Goulburn township to the southeast), where 'old Kugolgong' was buried.⁴⁴ He mentions Kugolgong in his recollections of other 'Argyle natives', the others being Yarraginny, Mulwarrie [sic] Tommy and Miranda, Chief of the Burra Burra. Perhaps 'Kugolgong' and Cookoog-

39. Govett, William Romaine, 1836, 16 July.

40. Blankets for Aborigines, 1837–43, Mulwaree Tribe, Goulburn, 20 June 1837, AONSW 4/1133.3.

41. This is the name Joseph Wild had given to the Lachlan River near Gunning. He referred later to the Queanbeyan River as the 'South Fish River'.

42. Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines. See Historical Records relating to NSW, 1845 and 1846.

43. MacAlister, Charles, 1907, chapter X.

44. *Ibid.*

ong, who accompanied Macquarie's party to Weereewaa two decades or so earlier, were the same person? Governor Macquarie had designated Cookoogong 'Chief of the Burra Burra' on Throsby's advice and rewarded his service to the Europeans with a breastplate.⁴⁵ Yet by the 1840s, according to MacAlister, Miranda was Chief of the Burra Burra and Yarraginny was Chief of the 'Wollondilly tribe'. Ironically, if Kugolgong and Cookoogong were indeed the same person, 'Kugolgong' was buried in the country of one of the 'Lake George tribes', whose territory he had been afraid to guide both Hume and Wild through only 20 years before.

Although distinct groups at one time, some of which were hostile to other groups in the same region, Aboriginal survivors of 'Argyle' communities had clearly regrouped by the 1840s.

The Pajong, Wallabalooa and Yass communities.

In 1821 Cookoogong and Taree or Dual probably guided their friend Hamilton Hume, and a party of his relatives and friends, from Appin to the district now called Gunning via the Breadalbane Plains and through a gap in the Cullarin Range (see Map 3). This route reflects that of the modern highway that still bears Hume's name and may have carefully followed routes that led through the territories of groups with whom the Burra Burra were then friendly, avoiding Lake George. Hume received land in this district and built his first station in this area at *Wollawardella*,⁴⁶ about eight kilometres east of Gunning near Lerida Creek, part of which became the later *Collingwood* estate.

Hume and his party pushed on from Gunning, possibly heading southwest through the Mundoonen Range, to the junction of the Yass River and Murrumbidgee Creek (see Map 3). It was there, according to his brother-in-law George Barber, who was also on the expedition, that Hume and his party 'discovered the Yass Plains – freshly burnt by blacks'.⁴⁷ The modern Hume Highway from Gunning to Yass still follows this route and also the route Hume, William Hovell and their party took from Hume's station at 'Lake George' (Gunning) to open up an inland route from Sydney to Port Phillip (Melbourne) in 1824. For at least a decade or more, visitors and early settlers, whose destination was the country of the Kamberri, followed the route to Gunning and then headed south through Gundaroo to get to the Limestone Plains.

The Pajong

Dr John Lhotsky, a Polish naturalist, followed this route from Goulburn to Gunning while on his way to the 'Australian Alps' in 1834. On the way to the Fish River (the headwaters of the Lachlan River at Gunning), Lhotsky and his party were told that there was 'a tribe of about 60 Papuas' camping near the place where he intended to stay the night.⁴⁸ He pitched his tent nearby to communicate with them. In response to

45. Throsby, Charles, Journal of a tour to Bathurst, 31 May 1819, HRA series I vol X.

46. Also spelled Woolloobidallah.

47. Quoted in Hume, Stuart Hamilton, 1991, p 34. A history of the Wallabalooa will be included in volume II of the Weereewaa History Series.

48. Lhotsky, John, 1835, pp 40–45. Lhotsky referred to Aboriginal Australians as 'Papuas'.

his question regarding the extent of their territory, they told Lhotsky, through a 'white' interpreter who had previously 'lived among them', that they 'go as far as Goulburn, and Yass Plains, but not so far as Limestone'.⁴⁹ According to Lhotsky, the group referred to itself as the 'Pajong tribe'.⁵⁰

This is the first and only reference I can find to this group. The names of some of the individuals as recorded by Lhotsky are Mr Tommy, the chief, Kegg and Wullumwudalla. There is no Kegg or Wullumwudalla listed on the Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Yass on 1 May 1844,⁵¹ a decade after this encounter. There are three men by the name of Tommy on the 1844 list, the eldest of whom is then only 30 and is not designated 'chief'. Hamilton Hume and his brother, John Kennedy Hume, both of whom had properties at Gunning, could have shed some light on the identity of the Pajong group, but they left no such records. In fact, I suspect it may have been the Pajong group who received blankets from Terence Aubrey Murray at *Winderadeen* and also, perhaps, at *Wollogorang* and *Kippilaw*, the latter being properties owned by John and James Chisholm respectively. Caroline Chisholm, Edward Wedge, Clara Woodhouse, Selina Gibson, James Dixon and John Bell, dominant Aboriginal personalities who will feature in volume II of the Weereewaa History Series, may have been members of this group Lhotsky referred to as the Pajong. All except John Bell had European fathers who were early settlers in the Gunning district.

The historical records confirm that John Bell married a local woman of European descent, Janet Bush, whose family lived close to Jerrawa Creek (see Map 3). He received a land grant at Blakney Creek and maintained a self-confident identity that was quite distinct from the Wallabalooa community at Pudman Creek.⁵² His associations were closer to Goulburn than to Yass. Similarly, the children of Edward Wedge and Clara Woodhouse also settled at Blakney Creek and, with others, maintained, for some time, a distinct identity from their Wallabalooa neighbours.

If the areas of close identification by John Bell, Edward Wedge and others are a guide, the country of the Pajong probably stretched from the eastern side of Goulburn, across the Breadalbane Plains to Gunning, as far as Bevendale on the left bank of the Lachlan to the north-northeast, then circled southwards towards Blakney Creek and Jerrawa (see Map 3). According to Lhotsky, the Pajong group told him they also roamed as far as the Yass Plains. They may even have shared amicably parts of Gundaroo with the Kamberri, but their main access to Lake George may have been via the Breadalbane Plains and Collector.

Caroline Chisholm grew up at Gunning and maintained her Goulburn connections even after she married Albert Lane, son of 'King' Andy Lane, who became a 'chief' of the Wallabalooa. Caroline, Albert and their children were among the families who were

49. *Ibid.*, p 41.

50. *Ibid.*, p 43.

51. Blankets for Aborigines, 1835-1857, AONSW 4/7230.

52. His namesake who became the partner of two of the children of Caroline Chisholm and Albert Lane at Pudman Creek was no relation.

jointly given land grants at Pudman Creek, where they settled from the 1860s. Other members of the Pajong group also intermarried with, and gradually became absorbed into, the larger groups in the Yass and/or Goulburn districts by the 1840s.

The close associations of the original Pajong group with Goulburn leads me to suspect that, unlike their Wallabalooa neighbours, their language was indistinguishable from Gundungurra.

The Wallabalooa and Yass communities

The country of the Wallabalooa originally centred on Boorowa and stretched both sides of the Boorowa River, perhaps at least as far west as Young and Cootamundra, as far east as Pudman Creek, as far north as the junction of the Boorowa and Lachlan rivers and as far south as Bowning and Yass. The group may have extended the frontiers they shared with the Pajong as they, in turn, had their territory encroached on by their northern and western Wiradjuri neighbours.

The historical records reveal that Wallabalooa leaders such as Billy the Bull, his brother, 'King' Andy Lane, and his son-in-law, Jack King, engaged in frequent raids on their Boree (Wiradjuri) and Burra Burra (Gundungurra) neighbours, which often resulted in wife-snatching. A Wiradjuri girl, Lucy, was snatched from the Molong area, near Wellington, circa 1850.⁵³ She was married first to Charley (also known as Billy Dolly), Billy the Bull's son, but when Charley accidentally killed the first wife of King Andy and was chased into exile, Andy took Lucy as his second wife. Following Andy's death, Lucy married Ned Carroll (who was originally from Delegate) and presided over a predominantly Wiradjuri-speaking settlement at Yass from the 1870s onwards.

In 1902, Robert Hamilton Mathews interviewed Lucy Carroll at Yass about the language spoken by the local 'tribe' and about the extent of the group's territory. According to Lucy, the language spoken by her former husband's community was *Ngoonawal*.⁵⁴ Her husband, Ned Carroll, whose first wife had been from the Goulburn district, told Mathews that the 'Ngoonawal language' was very similar to that of the Gundungurra.⁵⁵

Mrs Carroll also told Mathews that the territory of the Ngoonawal-speaking group extended to Lake George and to the Goodradigbee River.⁵⁶ This suggests that the Wallabalooa group had claimed the territory of the Pajong sometime between the 1840s and 1870s. The historical records do not necessarily support such a claim, however, as Pajong families and their descendants still lived self-confidently in their traditional areas at that time. Indeed, in the 21st century some Pajong descendants

53. Details of this will be included in volume II. The contemporary historical records on King Andy and others are quite extensive. Two articles that appeared in the *Yass Courier* on 2 and 9 June 1871 summarise some aspects of his life.

54. This was how Mathews rendered the name of this language into English at that time. See the notebooks of Robert Hamilton Mathews, 1868–1912, notebooks 6 & 7, NLA Manuscripts MS299. Copies of these notebooks are also held in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

still own the land purchased back or granted to their ancestors in the late 19th century. Descendants of Andy Lane and his first wife, Charlotte, intermarried with members of the Pajong group and lived in peaceful close coexistence from the 1850s. Perhaps the Pajong families had no objection to Wallabalooa families accessing the lake from that time.

By the 1840s, Wiradjuri groups had established major settlements beyond Yass as far as Tumut, Gundagai and Albury, allegedly crossing both the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee rivers in earlier times.⁵⁷ Some of these groups would have followed the Boorowa River from the Lachlan as far as Yass and then continued on to Tumut and Gundagai by crossing the junction of the Yass, Murrumbidgee and Goodradigbee rivers just south of Yass (before Burrinjuck Dam was built).⁵⁸ According to Fred Freeman, a Wiradjuri-speaking resident of Brungle Aboriginal Reserve near Tumut, the last of the 'Tumut blacks', which he referred to as both the Gurai and the 'Gurmäl' (the former a Wiradjuri term for 'hostile people'), were killed off at a place called Lacmalac just outside Tumut (circa 1880s).⁵⁹

These actions do seem to suggest that the Wiradjuri had overpowered Tumut family groups on the eastern side of the Tumut River by the 1880s, but there is no evidence that the same was true on the eastern side of the Goodradigbee River near Murrumbateman.

On the basis of Lucy Carroll's comments about the territory of the Wallabalooa extending to Lake George and to the Goodradigbee, Mathews – and Tindale after him – claimed the area between Lake George and the Goodradigbee River, which included the northern areas of the modern Australian Capital Territory, for the 'Ngunawal'. Obviously aware of the extent of the territory of the 'Lake George Tribes', Mathews and Tindale also scooped up for the Ngunawal the area as far east as Marulan, which was actually Parramarragoo territory (see 'The Parramarragoo', above).

Although the Pajong had enjoyed good relations with their Kamberri and Mulwaree neighbours, the Wallabalooa and, later, the Yass-based Wiradjuri-speaking community, continued to have hostile relations with Weereewaa groups at least until

57. I mean no disrespect to Wiradjuri groups by pointing out what the European historical records suggest. I have argued that the expansion and contraction of territories would most likely have been a constant feature of pre-European Aboriginal groups throughout this region as individuals intermarried with others, wives were stolen and then, perhaps, later joined by relatives, and as a result of internecine wars between the groups. Certainly, as early as 1844, George Augustus Robinson, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, noted that Aboriginal groups around Albury spoke the Wiradjuri language. I have not conducted any extensive research on the Wiradjuri and I accept it is possible that the Wiradjuri groups were already well established in areas southwest of the lower Murrumbidgee and north of the Murray at this time.

58. John Glover, whose grandfather owned a property in this district that is now under Burrinjuck Dam, confirmed this was the main Aboriginal route from Yass to Brungle, Tumut and Gundagai. Jackson-Nakano, Ann, 1993a, interview with John Glover, Yass.

59. Parkes, WS, 4 June 1952, letter to Norman Tindale outlining a conversation he had had with Frederick Freeman during the time Parkes was manager of the Brungle Aboriginal Reserve. In Tindale, NB, Manuscripts Documents on Tribes, AA338, South Australian Museum Archives.

the 1880s. From the 1880s onwards, survivors from a wide geographical area were being forced out of their traditional territory and on to various missions and reserves located throughout New South Wales, including Yass and Brungle.

At least up until the 1840s, the so-called 'Yass Blacks', who might have included Billy the Bull and other Wallabalooa warriors, terrorised other communities throughout the southeast region, including those on the Monaro and even as far as Bega and Eden.⁶⁰ Yet the historical records do not support the theory that Wallabalooa territory expanded; on the contrary, it began to contract from the 1870s.

In his earlier publication in 1940,⁶¹ Tindale had argued that the 'lines of communication and migration routes have tended to follow natural lines of least resistance across Australia, often clinging to open plains, creeks and rivers, and to lines of waters along ranges, shunning dense forests and rugged mountains'.⁶² He also claimed there was a high degree of correlation between tribal limits and ecological and geographical boundaries.⁶³ Even so, based mostly on Mathews' evidence, Tindale claimed for the Ngunawal an area represented by a broad sweep of European towns: Queanbeyan to Yass, Tumut to Boorowa and across to Gundagai.⁶⁴ Even in this earlier edition, he acknowledged there had been 'gross changes of boundaries in Post-European times' yet 'every endeavour has been made to indicate all these boundaries as they were immediately preceding the advent of white interference'.⁶⁵ This was certainly not true of his 'tribal boundaries' in the area around Lake George, even taking into account the fact that his boundaries were linguistic — or seemed to be so, according to the work of Mathews. Mathews interviewed survivors from various areas in Cooma, Tumut and Yass more than half a century after the Europeans arrived at Weereewaa. His notes suggest his informants were not necessarily the appropriate people to talk for this or that country and that there was still much dispute about traditional boundaries and languages even between the few individuals he interviewed.⁶⁶

Following the publication of the initial results of the research of the joint Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition in 1940, Tindale became enamoured of the lineal concept of boundaries after receiving a letter from WS Parkes, the former manager of Brungle Aboriginal Reserve, in 1952. In the letter, Parkes related to Tindale in full the conversation he had had with Fred Freeman (also mentioned above) concerning 'tribal lines'.⁶⁷ On the basis of Parkes' conversation

60. This was noted by George Augustus Robinson, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, who travelled throughout the southeast region to interview Aboriginal groups in 1844. See Clark, Ian, 1998. More details on this and other episodes in Wallabalooa history will be included in volume II.

61. Tindale, NB, 1940.

62. *Ibid*, p 149.

63. *Ibid*.

64. *Ibid*, p 193.

65. *Ibid*, Introduction.

66. Mathews, Robert Hamilton, notebooks, 1868-1912, *op. cit*.

67. The text of Parkes' letter suggests that Freeman was explaining initiation, rather than 'tribal' lines. I refer to this conversation in more detail in the section on the Weereewaa communities and their linguistic connections below and in the main body of this volume.

with Freeman and the work of Mathews, Tindale claimed even more country for the Ngunawal. In his 1974 publication his Ngunawal line stretched from the Marulan and Goulburn areas to the Shoalhaven and Molonglo rivers, including Lake George and Queanbeyan, across to the Goodradigbee and Tumut rivers, north to the Boorowa River and back across to Goulburn. He also argued that the Ngunawal had 'claims to have been [the tribe] actually on the site of the capital'.⁶⁸ Yet this claim reflects mid-20th century developments, not the frontier or territory of the Ngunawal at the time the Europeans arrived at Weereewaa.

In fact, while the Gundungurra-speaking Pajong group continued to enjoy good relations with other Weereewaa communities, the 'Yass Blacks' and the Wallaballoo maintained hostile relations with all their neighbours at least until the 1880s. These neighbours included the original Tumut groups and also the Kamberri – groups that Parkes claimed Freeman told him had 'now vanished'.⁶⁹

The Kamberri

Ten years or more after the Europeans arrived in his country, Onyong was the man recognised by most contemporary settlers who knew him as the leader of the Kamberri.⁷⁰ Both Onyong and Noolup (also known as Jimmy the Rover), another contemporary Kamberri warrior, had close relations with groups on the eastern side of Weereewaa and may have had individual rights to that area through their kinship connections.⁷¹ Onyong appeared with some frequency on blanket distribution lists at Goulburn, Inverary (near Bungonia)⁷² and also Mt Elrington (near Braidwood),⁷³ as did members of groups immediately east of Weereewaa as far as Marulan.

Onyong's name, even in its many corrupted forms, may contain some hint of his birthplace. It was not unusual for contemporary Aboriginal people to be named for the place where they were born. The notes made by surveyor Robert Dixon, who surveyed Weereewaa and districts to the southwest in 1828 and 1829, refer to the area northeast of the lake as *Oneonoyong*.⁷⁴ This is the location known on modern maps as Ondyong Point. On Dixon's later maps of the area (1825 and 1835) (see Maps 7 and 9), he names the hills between Kenny's Point that stretch towards the Mulwaree, *Onyongia*. On much later maps these are referred to as the Allianoyonyiga Hills. Clearly, Dixon's original names were a corruption of the Indigenous name for the point, the creek and the hills. Was a similar corruption made in the rendition into

68. Tindale, NB, 1974, p 198.

69. Parkes, WS, 1952.

70. Wright, W Davis, 1923. Wright grew up with Aboriginal children in the district that now incorporates the Australian Capital Territory and surrounds, knew Onyong well and referred to the local Aboriginal group as the Kgamberry, Kamberri or Kamberra.

71. As Sutton (1995) has argued in *Country*, not all Aboriginal groups owned their members exclusively. Some members of a group, or even a family unit, might have rights to areas that are his or hers alone.

72. Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/7092.

73. Aborigines: distribution of blankets, 1838–1843, AONSW 4/1133.3.

74. Dixon, Robert, 1829. NLA Manuscripts MS 660.

English of Onyong's name? Was his real name Allianoyonyiga and was he born at this place? It is possible.

Onyong's mother may have been from the Mulwaree group, for example, and his father was Kamberri. William Govett describes in detail the practice of 'wife-snatching' between neighbouring Aboriginal groups in this region,⁷⁵ as do many other contemporary writers who lived in the region in the first half century of its settlement by Europeans.

In various early histories of the Goulburn district and surrounds, Onyong was mentioned frequently as being in that area as well as at Bundang [Lake Bathurst]. One early settler, for example, writing in 1844, mentioned Aboriginal people she knew in the Goulburn and Murrumbidgee districts. She described 'Hongyong' as 'chief of a Maneroo tribe'⁷⁶ and Jimmy the Rover (Noolup) as the deputy chief. The writer claimed they hated each other:

Jimmy asked a stockman to give him and Hongyong two rifles, one with ball for Jimmy and one with only powder for Hongyong. The stockman didn't let him. Later, we heard that Hongyong had died and Jimmy succeeded him and took his gins. Then it was discovered that Hongyong was alive and well and he beat Jimmy up!⁷⁷

Noolup headed a second group west of Weereewaa whose area of residence was, like Onyong's, located in the region that became the future Australian Capital Territory. According to early blanket distribution lists, his usual places of residence included 'the Limestone Plains', 'the Murrumbidgee' and the 'Condore Mountains'⁷⁸ (west of the Brindabella Mountains), but he was also a frequent visitor to the eastern side of the lake. Obviously, judging by his nickname, he was a man who was accustomed to travelling great distances.

The Kamberri community was considered by the early European settlers to be as much a 'Lake George tribe' as a 'Murrumbidgee tribe'. Garrett Cotter, an 'assigned servant' at Lake George, was 'exiled' to the west of the Murrumbidgee at a time few white men had ventured there. He became a good friend of 'Honyong', who helped him out of many potentially disastrous predicaments. Garrett considered 'Honyong' and his group to be a Lake George as well as an upper Murrumbidgee community, according to Cotter oral history.⁷⁹ Terence Aubrey Murray befriended Onyong and his group long before he bought *Yarralumla*, which is deep in the heart of Kamberri

75. Govett, William Romaine, 1977. Charles MacAlister (1907) also refers to this practice. According to the comments of Governors Darling and Bourke, recorded in the *HRA*, the practice of snatching women for wives by neighbouring 'tribes' was one of the major reasons for conflict among Aboriginal groups, at least up until the 1840s.

76. The Kamberri were often referred to erroneously as 'the Monaro tribe' by early Goulburn residents and their visits to the Goulburn district and beyond for ceremonial visits were often recorded by European observers. The Monaro is actually much further south than the 'Limestone Plains' but many early settlers considered Queanbeyan to be the 'gateway' to the Monaro, and this is still considered to be the case today.

77. Meredith, L, 1844, chapter XI.

78. Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/7092, 34/5379.

79. Moore, Bruce, 1999, pp 9, 22 & 25. I am grateful to Greg Moore for generously providing me with relevant extracts from his father's manuscript before publication.

country (see Map 7). Murray spoke the common Aboriginal language local to his properties at Lake George, Yarralumla, Cooleman (in the Snowy Mountains) and Mannus (southwest of Tumbarumba). It may have been Murray who suggested to George Augustus Robinson, during the Chief Protector's visit to *Yarralumla* in 1844, that the language spoken to the east and west of Lake George as far as the Tumut River was similar to Gundungurra.⁸⁰

Blanket distribution lists for the Kamberri are recorded at Queanbeyan and at *Janevale*, which was a property near Wanniasa in the Tuggeranong district. The lists do not include Lake George, per se, in the designated country of this community. On the other hand, they do indicate that Gaurock [now spelled 'Gourock'], the collective local name for the Great Dividing Range, which runs parallel with the Shoalhaven River and then heads north on the eastern side of Weereewaa, may have formed the group's eastern 'boundary'.⁸¹ The Kamberri, therefore, may have had exclusive use of the western side of the lake and shared the south and southeastern parts with the Moolinggoolah (Molonglo Plains) community by the 1840s. Some members of the latter group merged with the Kamberri in historical times, so Kamberri territory may have subsequently expanded. A more detailed profile of the Kamberri will unfold within this volume.

The Moolinggoolah or Molonglo Plains community

The Molonglo Plains community, whose locality and name have also been rendered into English as Moolinggoolah⁸² and Molongler,⁸³ frequented the upper Molonglo, Queanbeyan and Shoalhaven river districts southeast of the lake — an area that includes the Tinderry Mountains, Bungendore and Captains Flat⁸⁴ (see Map 3). According to Joseph Wild, this area was referred to as 'Gaurock' in the early days. The Molonglo Plains Aboriginal communities had close relations with the Shoalhaven and Monaro communities and probably spoke the Ngarigo 'dialect', which was mutually intelligible to the Walgalu, Gundungurra and Ngoonawal-speaking communities. According to George Augustus Robinson, the 'Bimmer Mittong' on the Monaro were referred to by coastal 'natives' as the 'Bimmerigal'.⁸⁵ In his original notes, he referred to the (upper) Molonglo group headed then by 'King Bob' as Bim.mim.mi.gal.⁸⁶ These names may have originally distinguished the Monaro and

80. Robinson's formal account of this journey differs somewhat from his original notes (see Chapter 3). His comment that the people of the Tumut River spoke Gundungurra is included in Mackaness's edited version of Robinson's formal account of his journey around southeast Australia: Mackaness, George, 1978, p 26.

81. Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/7092.

82. This is the rendition of the name of the plains and the river adopted by Surveyor William Harper, quoted in Cabbage, RH, 1921, p 283.

83. The Chief Protector of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, referred to this group as such in his records of his visit to the Kamberri district in 1844: see Clark, Ian, 1998.

84. See Dixon, Robert, 1837, and other contemporary sources. Areas of the Canberra district are sometimes erroneously referred to as the Molonglo Plains, perhaps because the Molonglo River runs through the city.

85. Mackaness, George, 1978, p 26.

86. Clark, Ian, 1998.

upper Molonglo groups but European historical evidence suggests these two groups were very closely related to each other as well as to some of the Braidwood district groups on the east bank of the Shoalhaven. The extant road from Bredbo to Captains Flat via Jerangle may be built on one of their old bush tracks.

Joseph Wild led a number of explorers and visitors to the districts surrounding Weereewaa in the 1820s, including Brigade-Major Ovens and Captain Mark John Currie in May and June 1823. The route he took with Captain Currie followed the Murrumbidgee River southwards through the places now called Williamsdale and Michelago to the Umarella (Numarella) River beyond Bredbo. Near Michelago, they met 'a tribe of natives, who fled at our approach, never (as we learned afterwards) having seen Europeans before'.⁸⁷ Having subsequently persuaded the 'natives' to come closer, it was from them that Wild, Currie and their party learned through their interpreter that the 'clear country' before them (beyond Bredbo) was called 'Monaroo'. There is little doubt that the 'natives' they encountered were from upper Molonglo groups.

On their return from Bredbo, the party tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade one of the 'natives' to show them the way to Lake Bathurst via the route that would follow Margaret's Creek, a tributary of the Queanbeyan River, through Burra (see Maps 6 and 7). The next day, they met two more 'natives', who:

like the others, were much frightened; indeed more so than those, for they fled like deer the instant they saw us, and being pursued by us on horseback, ran with great agility to the tops of trees, whence it required no small degree of persuasion to remove them; but succeeding at last in getting them down, we compelled⁸⁸ one of them to go with us to show us the way to Lake Bathurst, they being invariably well acquainted with the best passes in the hills — the other returned to his tribe not far off in the bush.⁸⁹

Notwithstanding the terror suffered by the local Aboriginal people at this encounter with the Europeans and their horses, it is possible, also, that the territory of these upper Molonglo groups did not extend to Lake Bathurst. It seems likely that the Butmaroo and Mulloon creeks and ranges marked the extent of their territory towards Lake Bathurst (see Map 3) and that they were not on very good terms with their neighbours, the more dominant Mulwaree and Parramarragoo, at that time.

The Weereewaa Aboriginal communities and their social relationships with each other

Historical evidence suggests that the Weereewaa groups had as many clashes between themselves as they did with their respective neighbouring groups but that, in the early years of European settlement at least, they could rely on each other for mutual support when necessary.

87. Currie, Captain Mark, in Field, Barron, 1825.

88. Currie does not elaborate on how the 'native' was 'compelled' to go with them.

89. Currie in Field, Barron, 1825, 8 June.

In 1824, 1826 and 1828, Weereewaa communities banded together in large numbers to avenge the taking of their women by European stockmen at Lake George and Lake Bathurst. It incensed these groups enough when their Indigenous neighbours 'stole' wives, as Govett and others described, but they could not tolerate their women being taken by Europeans. In the first incident, two young Aboriginal girls had been abducted by servants of Captain Richard Brooks on his 'Bungendaw' run, which, at that time, was 'the southern most point to which stock keepers have penetrated', according to Allan Cunningham, a botanist and explorer, who visited the district that year.⁹⁰ Throsby, then a local magistrate for this district, ordered the stockmen to give the girls up, but they refused. In a letter to the Governor he said that relatives of the girls were assembling with large numbers of spears.⁹¹

In the second incident two stockmen, one of whom was Thomas Taylor, were murdered by Weereewaa warriors. Taylor had been an employee of a Mr Sherwin at Lake Bathurst. Perhaps as a joint statement against outrages on their women, the Weereewaa groups assembled at Lake George and at *Inverary Park*, the residence of David Reed (also spelled 'Reid'), the regional magistrate, near Bungonia.⁹² As a result, Governor Darling dispatched a detachment of troops to Argyle but advised 'landowners' in New South Wales by proclamation that they had to control their servants and prevent them committing outrages on the 'Natives'. Magistrates and settlers in remote districts were ordered to try and communicate with the chiefs and 'tribes' in their neighbourhoods and protect them from the outrages of 'all evil disposed persons'. 'Natives' were to be encouraged to deliver up men who mistreated them so they could be punished and chiefs were asked to refrain from all acts of violence on the part of their tribes and thus confirm their claim to its friendship and confidence.⁹³

It may be that it was because Captain Brooks was not legally in possession of this land even under European law at the time of the first incident that his wife, Christiana, kept quiet about it even in her personal diary. Brooks, then an absentee landlord who lived in the Sydney district, did not receive official permission to establish a run at Bungendore until 1825. Christiana was more vocal concerning the follow-up incident in 1826, when Thomas Taylor was murdered and, as ordered, she struggled to show sympathy towards the local 'Aborigines' who committed such acts:

May 12th 1826: The Aborigines Natives [sic], having assembled in unusual numbers in the Country of Argyle in the neighbourhood of Lake George, and having evinced some hostility to the stock keepers of particular stations, the Governor, in his usual prompt manner, has despatched a Detachment of the 40th and 57th Regiments with instructions to the Officers in Command to put themselves in communication with the Magistrates of that district.

This hostility on the part of the Natives will I have no doubt be found, as it ever has been, to originate in outrages committed on them by the stock keepers, an ignorant

90. Quoted in Woolley, John, 1982.

91. Throsby, Charles, 1824, AONSW Reel 6034, 9/2744, p 33.

92. Government Notice, Colonial Secretary's office, signed by Alexander McLeay, 5 May 1826, HRA, series I vol XII.

93. *Ibid.*

and brutal race, who by their interference with the females of the aborigines [sic] provoke them to revenge. The Governor's Order upon this occasion is human and liberal, promising equal justice to all. I doubt not the sight of soldiers will strike a panic into these poor simple creatures and the Officer in Command is a man of experience, who will fully investigate the cause of their present hostility, and should he find that the stockmen and shepherds have committed any violence or ill treated any of these inoffensive creatures, he will I earnestly hope, bring them forward that they may receive the punishment due to their cruelty.⁹⁴

A few days later, Mrs Brooks' wrote:

May 17th 1826: My advice is from the Seat of warfare we learn that the Natives have for the present quietly dispersed, the sight of the Red Coats having had all the effect that could be desired, but a month's sojourn in the neighbourhood of Lake George will tend to insure safety to our Flocks and Herds in that part of the Country — and as the Army have very good headquarters at Throsby Park and as Kangaroo Hunting and Parrot Shooting are pleasant amusements in that cold country we may expect to see our friends return clad in kangaroo skins...⁹⁵

A few months later, Mrs Brooks still had mixed feelings about 'the natives':

September 18th 1826: The Aborigines Natives both at Hunter River and in the New Country (Argyle) are still very hostile. Several murders have been of late committed by them in the former District, and although the Mounted Police have been actively engaged in pursuit of them, and have in those affrays shot two or three, yet they seem so far from being intimidated that they become daily more and more daring — things indeed now have gone so far that something decisive must be done to stop the progress of this evil, or the Stockmen and shepherds will not readily be persuaded to remain at the distant settlements while exposed to the animosity of a set of untutored savages. As these Natives have never before been known to proceed to such extremities, there is reason to think some motive must exist for their present warfare, which if possible should be ascertained, and if six or eight of them could be brought in as prisoners, it is likely we should become acquainted with the cause of their animosity, and probably find it easy of remedy: perhaps our people have been the first aggressors, or possibly a want of food may drive them to desperate measures, for it is a fact well known that wherever our stockmen abide, the kangaroos and opossums disappear, our dogs destroying them; and thus being driven from the coast, and their usual sustenance destroyed, it is no small evil to these poor simple creatures to be deprived by the invasion of strangers of both food and raiment.⁹⁶

Peter Cunningham, a surgeon who passed through the Goulburn district later in 1826, claimed the 'Argyle natives' were cannibals and that the bones of the stockman killed at Lake Bathurst were found by Captain Bishop to be 'clean picked'.⁹⁷

It appears that the 'Black' accused of killing Thomas Taylor was jailed in Sydney but released a year later, as reported by Edward Smith Hall, a Lake Bathurst 'landowner' who was also editor of the newly-established Sydney *Monitor*:

To our regret and surprise the Black who killed poor Thomas Taylor, the white Stockman at Lake Bathurst, and afterwards eat him, has been turned out of gaol and is gone again to the Lake, no doubt to commit fresh murders, whenever he is hungry and wants a meal of human food. We are really afraid, however, the friends of Taylor will revenge the unhappy victim.⁹⁸

94. Brooks, Christiana, diary, NLA Manuscripts MS 2367.

95. *Ibid.*

96. *Ibid.*

97. Cunningham, Peter, 1827. This claim seems a bit far-fetched!

Contrary to Hall's expectations, in 1828 two of his own stockmen were killed near his Lake Bathurst property and were found in the bush. Some 'native blacks' were arrested on suspicion of committing or being concerned in the 'outrage'.⁹⁹

It is possible that, as more and more Europeans encroached on their country, the Weereewaa communities turned to each other for support against a common enemy. They had to fight not only isolated stockmen committing violence on their women but also numerous exotic diseases, such as influenza and smallpox, which depleted their numbers considerably by the 1830s.¹⁰⁰

Despite the sometimes violent British presence, it appears that the Mulwaree, Cookmai and Parramarragoo retained their good relations with each other at least until their numbers were depleted and they began to regroup in the 1840s. Old Cry and John Cry, who were identified as leaders of all these groups, were regular visitors to the Kamberri group and vice versa. The Kamberri group was also friendly with upper Molonglo families, survivors of whom joined the Kamberri at Yarralumla when the Chief Protector of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, mustered the local group together in 1844 (see Chapter 3).¹⁰¹

As indicated above, the Wallabalooa did not have very good relations with other Weereewaa groups in the first half century of European settlement of the areas beyond Lake George. They were the most recent newcomers to the Weereewaa conglomerate, having allegedly extended their country to include that formerly claimed by the Pajong group – although this extension of territory is open to question. The Wallabalooa themselves had been usurped by the Wiradjuri-speaking groups who settled in the Yass district from the 1840s. Historical records on the Kamberri contain accounts of numerous clashes with their 'Yass' neighbours (see subsequent chapters in Part I), but it is often unclear whether these clashes were between the Kamberri and the Wallabalooa or the Kamberri and the Wiradjuri-speaking groups at Yass. It may have been both.

In time, the European incursion on their lands broke up the close-knit Weereewaa communities and it appears that each community forged new relationships with other neighbouring groups.

Weereewaa Aboriginal communities and their linguistic connections

Norman Tindale's tribal map in *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (1974) has been the main source for mainly linguistic 'tribal' divisions in the southeast region of New South Wales. Unfortunately, as documented above, he relied for his evidence mainly on late 19th and early 20th century researchers who were neither trained anthropologists nor linguists.

98. The *Monitor*, 23 March 1827.

99. Reported in the *Australian*, 30 July 1828.

100. A number of visitors to the district in the 1830s and 1840s commented on the fact that the 'Aborigines' local to Lake George and surrounds included a number who had survived and been scarred by smallpox. See for example, Bennett, George, 1834.

101. Clark, Ian, 1998.

The work of these researchers was conducted long after the Europeans first arrived, so it is difficult to determine with exactitude the actual territorial or linguistic divisions that existed originally among Aboriginal groups around Lake George in 1820.

Tindale accepted that the shared language for Aboriginal groups from the northwest to the east of the lake was 'Ngunawal'.¹⁰² In fact, his published map claimed the entire lake and the area east as far as Marulan for the 'Ngunawal'. I accepted Tindale's assertion that the lake was part of the territory of the 'Ngunawal' at the time I wrote my thesis,¹⁰³ but after further research I wonder if he was correct.

Tindale's major source for his information on southeast New South Wales was Robert Hamilton Mathews. At the time he conducted his research, Mathews was a retired surveyor with an amateur's interest in anthropology and linguistics. He conducted a number of interviews with Aboriginal informants in camps, reserves and missions throughout southeast New South Wales more than half a century after the Europeans infiltrated and settled the Lake George district and regions further west. Unfortunately, Mathews did not always check whether his informants were appropriate people to interview regarding the areas he was asking about.

Through his research on initiation ceremonies in southeast New South Wales, Mathews concluded that Aboriginal peoples in this area were all closely related. He drew this conclusion after linking the Thunawall, Wodi Wodi, Jeringin, Ngarroogoo, Beddiwell, Mudthang, Dhooroomba, Gundungurra and 'Wonnawal' (which was his original rendition of 'Ngonawal' or 'Ngunawal') through the bunan initiation ceremonies.¹⁰⁴ He went further and claimed also that the customs and languages of these groups were so similar that they could almost be the same.¹⁰⁵ This may have been true, of course, but at that time, in the late 1890s, the 'Ngunawal'¹⁰⁶ people were unknown to Mathews so he was relying only on information given to him by one or two of those groups. It seems he did not interview informants from each of those groups for purposes of comparison.

The region he referred to was also quite a broad sweep, stretching from 'the southeast coast of New South Wales from the Victorian border, northerly to Bulli, a distance of about 300 miles, and extending inland from 80 to 100 miles'.¹⁰⁷ He claimed the bunan ceremony was practised also by 'tribes' that inhabited 'parts of the counties of Wallace, Cowley and Murray',¹⁰⁸ which would have included Aboriginal family groups to the southwest of Lake George who are the main focus of this volume.

102. Tindale, NB, 1974.

103. Jackson-Nakano, Ann, 1994b, *Death and resurrection of the Ngunawal*. I used the double 'n' spelling in my thesis.

104. Mathews, RH, 1896 and 1898b.

105. Mathews, RH, 1896.

106. I am using Tindale's spelling, based on a later one used by Mathews, since I am referring, overall, to Tindale's published work.

107. Mathews, RH, 1896, p 327.

108. Mathews, RH, 1896.

Tindale referred to most of these groups by different names. For example, the Thunawall were the Tharawal, the Ngarroogoo were the Ngarigo, the Wonnawal were the Ngunawal, and so on (see Map 1), but basically they were the same groups mentioned by Mathews in his research.

In 1901, Mathews claimed that the 'speech' of the Thoorga, 'Thurawal', 'Dharrook', Gundungurra and Ngoonawal was similar in grammatical structure, although it differed more or less widely in vocabulary.¹⁰⁹ In 1904, he published a paper on the Wiradjuri and other languages in New South Wales that included a vocabulary of Ngunawal words. It is interesting that Mathews included the 'Ngunawal' with the Wiradjuri even though the 'Ngunawal language' was more similar to Gundungurra. Mathews was quite precise about the country of the people speaking 'the Ngunawal tongue':

The native tribes speaking the Ngunawal tongue occupy the country from Goulburn to Yass and Burrowa [*now spelled Boorowa*], extending southerly to Lake George and Goodradigbee.¹¹⁰

This was the country of the Ngunawal as described to Mathews in general terms by his informant at Yass, Mrs Lucy Carroll. According to Mathews' field notebooks,¹¹¹ Mrs Carroll merely indicated that the country of the Ngunawal extended to Lake George and also to the Goodradigbee River. She did not suggest that it included all of Lake George, nor that it extended along a line from Lake George to the Goodradigbee River incorporating the area between the east bank of the Yass River almost to the west bank of the Molonglo River. Neither did she suggest it included Goulburn or the country as far as Marulan to the east.

As noted in the section on the Pajong and Wallabalooa groups above, Mrs Carroll was a member of the Wiradjuri-speaking group and had been brought to Yass as a wife around the 1850s. By then, Wiradjuri-speaking people had crossed the Murrumbidgee and moved southwards to areas such as Tumut. To get there from Yass, they used the route through Wee Jasper via the western side of the Goodradigbee River. This did not necessarily indicate that the country of the Ngoonawal-speaking people extended from Lake George to the Goodradigbee River. I believe that Tindale misinterpreted Mathews' research and the statement of his informant, Mrs Carroll, about the extent of the country of the Ngoonawal-speaking people. Her second husband, Ned Carroll, who was born in Delegate but had spent some time in Goulburn, where he married his first wife, commented to Mathews that the Ngoonawal language was similar to that of the Gundungurra around Goulburn.¹¹² He did not mention that the country of the people who spoke Ngoonawal extended to Goulburn either.

I have explained that, unlike in his earlier published work, which favoured following natural borders such as rivers and mountain ranges, Tindale favoured a linear concept of boundaries in his 1974 publication. Consequently, based on the information he obtained from the Carrolls via Mathews, he drew a line from Lake George to

109. Mathews, RH, 1901-02.

110. Mathews, RH, 1904, p 294.

111. Mathews, Robert Hamilton, notebooks 1868-1912.

112. *Ibid.*

the Goodradigbee River near the modern Burrinjuck district between Murrumbateman and Wee Jasper and claimed the northern districts of the modern Australian Capital Territory as the country of the Ngunawal. His delineations caused controversy and divisions among neighbouring Aboriginal groups in this area in the second half of the 20th century, and these continue into the 21st century.

As I also suggested, Tindale's preference for a linear concept of boundaries may have been strengthened by the letter he received from WS Parkes, the former manager of Brungle Reserve, in 1952, which Tindale mentions as a source in his 1974 publication. During his conversation with Fred Freeman of Brungle Reserve, Freeman had tried to explain to Parkes the concept of tribal (initiation?) 'lines'. This conversation had been in the context of whether Tumut was part of the 'Wiradjuri line', which Freeman, who identified himself to Parkes as Wiradjuri, said was not. Parkes, in his letter to Tindale, stated:

Frederick Freeman said that the Wiradjuri at Brungle and the Tumut River blacks (or Tumut blacks) were different lots altogether. The Tumut blacks were the now vanished 'Gu:rmal tribe'¹¹³ (Fred did not on these occasions use an initial NG, though I remember wondering whether I should write Gurmäl, Guremal, Gurumal, or Guralmal, and deciding that the emphasis on the first syllable suggested Gurmäl might be reasonably accurate). The Gurmäl were the ones who used to live up in the Bugang Mountains (Bu:ga:ng) and spoke a lot like the Nunuwäl (sometimes like Ngunawal), whose territory was adjacent to their own.¹¹⁴

The Gurmäl were called 'the Tumut blacks' because a portion of their territory ran all the way down the Tumut valley as far as Tumut town, about 70 miles of the river (as compared with probably less than 20 miles of the lower Tumut which Brungle dark people regarded as Wiradjuri territory). Far from being connected with the Tumut blacks, the Brungle Aborigines regarded that lot as a hostile people (guräl) and some 'lads' (clever fellows) from the two tribes had killed each other off at Lacmalac, a place just outside Tumut town.

The Wiradjuri line: Freeman said that 'the old people' referred to Wiradjuri territory as 'the line'. The Wiradjuri 'line', Freeman said, ran through the following places: Brungle, Gobarralong, Jugiong, Harden, Wellington, Orange, Condobolin, Hillston, Hay, Darlington Point, Wagga Wagga, Tarcutta, Adelong, 'this side' (north) of Tumut and back to Brungle.

I was surprised when Freeman omitted Gundagai, Cootamundra, Wallendbeen, Stockingbingal, Cowra (biggish reserve), Goolagong, and Dubbo (!): surprised about Gundagai for obvious reasons, surprised about the next three places because Freeman's people came from round there in the middle of the 19th century; and surprised about Cowra and Dubbo because there were strong Wiradjuri reserves there;

113. This group was almost certainly Walgalu-speaking, and was closely connected to the Kambarri. Both the Gurmäl and the Kambarri shared the mountain areas at least as far south as Kiandra and the upper Murray region and were regular visitors to each other's districts. They may have originally been one group who later separated into a number of groups who still had in common the Walgalu dialect which had allegedly developed from the Gundungurra language.

114. I have provided evidence above that suggests Ngoonawal was also a distinct dialect of the Gundungurra language at the time the Europeans arrived in their country. Like the Walgalu, the Ngoonawal may have once been a larger group who split into smaller family groups ranging between the Lachlan and Yass rivers and across both sides of the Boorowa River.

and about Gooloogong, too, if I'm right in assuming this settlement there is Wiradjuri. But your explanation shows me I was confusing territory with bora lines.

Unfortunately, before I could get round to questioning Fred about all these matters, I was transferred from Brungle.

The Gurmali 'line', Freeman said, ran this way: Bugang Mountains, Tumut, Cooma, Bombala, Twofold Bay then probably 'down Orbost way'.

The Ngunuwal line: Freeman said that the Ngunuwal spoke 'a lot like' the Gurmali and he seemed to associate them with the Gurmali in the mountains: Roseby Park, Burragorang (Fred pronounced it Berigerang), Yass, Cooma, Nimmitabel, Bega, Bombala, Twofold Bay ...¹¹⁵

Freeman said: 'At big meetings we Wiradjuri would camp nearest the Wongaibon because we could understand them; next would come the Ngunuwal because we could understand them, too;¹¹⁶ and after that the Gurmali, and last the Wadi Wadi'. What puzzles me is that Fred said that the Wadi Wadi were 'away out past Condobolin and Hillston'. If I'd had your book at the time, I could have cleared that up.¹¹⁷

Parkes gives the impression that Fred Freeman may not have had full knowledge of the extent of the initiation lines of his own or neighbouring groups, but he may have misquoted or misunderstood what he was told. In the conversation with Parkes, Freeman may have merely been trying to explain some examples of how the initiation and cultural 'lines' were connected.

In his 1940 publication, Tindale accepted his limitations regarding the accuracy of his [linguistic] 'tribal boundaries':

Since there have been gross changes of boundaries in Post-European times, every endeavour has been made to indicate all these boundaries as they were immediately preceding the advent of white interference. The detailed subject of recent historic tribal movements may be discussed more fully elsewhere.¹¹⁸

To improve his accuracy, Tindale would have had to use early primary as well as late primary and secondary sources. There is no indication that he used the early sources for his sections on the 'Ngunawal' in either his 1940 or 1974 publication, although he did refer to William Davis Wright's book on Canberra,¹¹⁹ which should have provided Tindale with some evidence of non-linguistic groupings. In this publication, Wright spoke of the 'Kamerry' or 'Kgamberry' extensively. Tindale did mention that Wiradjuri people had arrived in Yass after white settlement and that they were usurpers on the Lower Tumut River, but otherwise he depended on late 19th century sources for his conclusions. His 1940 publication determined the boundaries of the 'Ngunawal' to be 'Queanbeyan to Yass, Tumut to Boorowa and across to Gundagai'.

115. Some of these areas are quite some distance from Ngunawal country. Again, Freeman is discussing 'tribal lines' not country. Parkes may have misunderstood what Freeman was trying to tell him.

116. The Ngunawal would have incorporated a number of Wiradjuri words into their vocabulary following the establishment of Wiradjuri settlements in parts of their country from the 1840s onwards. Many Ngunawal families intermarried with the Wiradjuri, so that even modern descendants of King Andy Lane, one of the Wallaballoo leaders in the 1840s and 1850s, claim their families spoke Wiradjuri not Ngunawal.

117. Parkes, WS, 1952.

118. Tindale, NB, 1940.

119. Wright, WD, 1923.

This very precise broad sweep through the main European towns of the districts he mentions seems to reflect the dispersal of Ngunawal-speaking peoples in the first half of the 20th century, rather than their traditional country *per se*. Over half a century after the Europeans arrived at Weereewaa, Aboriginal groups all over New South Wales had been disrupted and had regrouped to some extent. Aboriginal 'refugees' were forced to travel the various circuits between disparate reserves and missions towards the end of the 19th century as a result of European encroachment on their lands.

As argued above, contemporary historical evidence suggests that Aboriginal communities who shared Weereewaa at the time Wild, Throsby and others arrived — and before Macquarie renamed this stretch of water Lake George — were the Parramarragoo, Mulwaree/Cookmai, Pajong (and, by extension, the Wallabalooa), Kamberri and Moolinggoolah (Molonglo Plains) groups. All these groups spoke a common language, possibly Gundungurra, but had by 1820 developed their own distinct dialects of that language. The Wallabalooa groups, who may have extended their territory through Pajong country in historical times to lay claim to parts of Lake George, spoke 'Ngonawal' — also rendered into English as 'Ngunawal' or 'Ngunawal', the two different spellings identifying each of the two politically separate groups in modern times.

During an interview with the linguist Janet Mathews in 1965,¹²⁰ Arthur 'Gowdger' McGuinness of Brungle claimed that the Ngonawal and Wiradjuri languages were very similar and that Ngonawal was derived from Wiradjuri.¹²¹ On the other hand, Freeman had argued to Parkes that the 'Ngunawal spoke a lot like the Gurmali', a reference to the Walgalu-speaking peoples. It is possible that both the Ngonawal and Walgalu dialects derived from Gundungurra. Perhaps further research by linguists can clarify whether Gundungurra was the language common to the Ngonawal, Walgalu and Ngarigo or whether these dialects were, in fact, distinct languages. Hopefully, such research will not provoke further disputes between now distinctly different Aboriginal groups in modern times.

Fred Freeman also told Parkes that the Gurmali were the 'now vanished tribe' who 'used to live up in the 'Bugang'¹²² mountains' and 'whose country was adjacent to' the Ngunawal.¹²³ The 'Gurmali', possibly a Wiradjuri term meaning 'hostile people', referred to the Walgalu-speaking Aboriginal groups with whom the Kamberri were closely linked. According to Freeman, the 'Gurmali' in the Tumut district had been overpowered by Wiradjuri warriors by the end of the 19th century, although descendants of both groups resided together at Brungle after the Reserve was opened in the 1880s. By that time, intermarriage between the two groups was common.

120. No relation to Robert Hamilton Mathews, as far as I know.

121. Mathews, Janet, 1965, transcript of interview.

122. Bogong.

123. Parkes, WS, 1952.

When Mathews conducted his interviews at Brungle Aboriginal Reserve in 1902, there was dispute among his Aboriginal informants about the identity of the Gormal (which Mathews also rendered into English as 'Goormull' and 'Goorimal'). One resident suggested 'Goorimal' was spoken by the blacks on the Goodradigbee and at Adaminaby and Kiandra, but another informant argued that the language of those districts was 'Ngarroogoo' (Ngarigo). Yet another resident claimed 'Goormull' was the language of the 'Wolgal [Walgalu] tribes' around the upper Murray, Murrumbidgee and Tumut Rivers and also 'around Yass and Gundagai'. Someone else argued that around Yass they spoke 'Woonoowal and Gundungurra'.¹²⁴

Mathews later claimed that 'Ngunawal' was a 'sister language' to 'Ngarrugu' (Ngarigo), a 'language spoken by the upper Molonglo and Monaro groups'.¹²⁵ Clearly, these were all dialects of a common language, most probably Gundungurra (linguists would have to confirm this). Since the linguistic work was conducted so late into the 19th century, even the dialects would have become more common with the merging of certain words and much of the original vocabulary of each of the dialects would have been lost.

Based mostly on the research of both Robert Hamilton Mathews¹²⁶ and Alfred William Howitt,¹²⁷ Tindale's 1974 publication claimed for Walgalu-speaking groups the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee and Tumut rivers, Kiandra, south to Tintaldra and northeast to Queanbeyan.¹²⁸ My own historical research leads me to believe that the Kamberri, whose country included the area south and west of the Yass River between Lake George and the Goodradigbee River, also used the Walgalu dialect. Certainly, the territory identified by Tindale above included that of the Kamberri, although his 1974 linguistic map (see Map 1) claims only part of Kamberri country as Walgalu-speaking.

Clearly, the evidence provided by researchers such as Mathews suggests that, at the very least, Gundungurra, Ngarigo, Walgalu and Ngunawal were all mutually intelligible. Perhaps anthropologists and linguists could build on the original research and conclusions provided by Mathews and others that suggest the Aboriginal peoples of the southeast Australian region were closely linked and once shared a common ancestry.

This volume focuses on one of the Weereewaa groups, the Kamberri, whose story from 1820 now begins to unfold.

124. Mathews, RH, 1868-1912, notebook nos 1 & 2, NLA. Copies are also held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

125. Mathews, RH, 1908.

126. *Ibid.*

127. Howitt, AW, 1904.

128. Tindale, NB, 1974, p 199.