

# 3 Official records of Aboriginal groups southwest of Weereewaa, 1830s–1840s

In 1818, Governor Macquarie had proposed that an annual issue of clothing be distributed to Aboriginal communities, a practice adopted throughout the settled parts of the continent of 'New Holland' (Macquarie asked for it to be renamed Australia in 1817<sup>1</sup>). Later, Governor Bourke added blankets to this issue. At first, the blanket lists did not reflect actual local Aboriginal population figures because so many members of the groups were still afraid to venture near Europeans. By the 1840s, just when a new generation of Aboriginal communities had become more accustomed to the Europeans and, with the older members of their group, plucked up courage to come back out into the open to receive the blankets and other gifts, Governor Gipps was taking steps to abolish the practice.

In 1841 the Queanbeyan magistrate, Captain Alured Tasker Faunce, requested 50 additional blankets for 'Aborigines' in the Queanbeyan district (which also included, at that time, the territory that later became the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)). Gipps responded that Faunce seemed to be under the impression that every person who wanted a blanket could have one. Gipps told Faunce he intended to abolish the practice of 'presents to natives' as quickly as possible so that only those who worked for blankets would receive them.<sup>2</sup> For this and other reasons, some of which have been suggested above, the names and numbers listed on the blanket distribution lists did not necessarily reflect the actual numbers of Aboriginal individuals and groups in the district southwest of Weereewaa at that time.

Despite the problems of compiling accurate lists from such distributions, the blanket lists and other contemporary official records do leave us with important historical records. They assist historians in determining the identity of the Aboriginal peoples in the districts they are studying and provide at least a few names that can be

- 
1. Macquarie to Bathurst, 21 December 1817, *HRA*.
  2. Letter from Sir George Gipps to Captain Alured Tasker Faunce, 1841, included in the bundle Blankets for Aborigines, AONSW 4/7230, 1835–1857.

linked to their modern descendants, some of whom may still reside in the country of their ancestors today. This is certainly the case in the ACT and surrounds.

I shall now examine some of the most important sources of official information about the regional and local identity of Aboriginal groups southwest of Weereewaa.

### Blanket distribution lists

The blanket distribution lists for 1834 (see Plate 7) prove the Kamberri and others were quite clearly at home the year Lhotsky came to visit their country, and for many decades later. This list was compiled at *Janevale*, near Tuggeranong, which Lhotsky had visited a couple of months earlier (see Chapter 2).

### Noolup's group

Let us begin by considering the first group, led by 'Newlop' or 'Noolup', also known as 'Jemmy the Rover'.

Samuel Shumack noted in his memoirs that 'Jemmy the Rover' was not originally from the Canberra district.<sup>3</sup> According to the 1834 blanket distribution list, however, Noolup was from the district that included the Limestone Plains (Canberra-Queanbeyan), the Condore Mountains (west of the Brindabella mountains) and the Murrumbidgee (meaning the upper Murrumbidgee district and surrounding mountains). This was the same district with which Onyong identified, but Noolup's group was designated 'Hagen Hope' and Onyong's group was designated 'Namwich' (probably Namadgi), so at this time the two groups seemed to recognise separate local identities. Both men were designated 'chief' of their respective groups, which suggested at the very least that they both were considered to be group leaders by local Europeans and had probably been of some help to them. It is curious that neither was referred to as the Kamberri at this time, even though the children of contemporary settlers described them as such in their later memoirs (see Chapter 4).

The designated tribal name of Hagen Hope, like Good Hope, may be the English rendition of a contemporary Aboriginal name for a geographical 'line' that stretched from the (south) Yass Plains-Wee Jasper-Goodradigbee River districts to Adaminaby and Kiandra. The actual location of 'Condore' is not clear, either. There is a Condor Creek on the Brindabella Road, which may give an indication of its general location – especially since this is still on the same 'line' mentioned above. John Gale, who wrote a number of articles on the mountain districts in this area, refers to a Mt Condore near the Yarrangobilly Caves<sup>4</sup> (see Map 12). This agrees with descriptions by Stewart Mowle<sup>5</sup> of routes he and/or Aubrey Murray took across the mountains in the 1830s. Mowle argued that 'Condore' should be pronounced 'Condhoware',

3. Shumack, Samuel, Shumack family archives, NLA Manuscripts MS 1643, MS 1861, MS 3199. Mentioned also in one of his articles as 'Weetangera Correspondent' (no date) and in Shumack, 1977.

4. Gale, John, Gale family archives, NLA Manuscripts MS 212. A serialised account of his trip to the Australian Alps, *Queanbeyan Observer*, 13 February 1903, also mentions 'Mt Condor'.

5. Mowle family papers, NLA Manuscripts MS 258.

**Plate 7: Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Janevale  
[Wanniassa/Tuggeranong], Murray Shire, June 1834**

Noolup's Group							
English Names	Native Names	Appx Age	No of Wives	Boys	Girls	Tribe	District
Jemmy the Rover (chief)	Newlop [sic]	30	1	2	2	Hagen Hope	Lime-stone Plains, Condore Mountains, Murrumbidgee
Neddy	Cheemutt?	17					
	Chukube?		1				
Jacob	Pendau	58	1	1	2		
	Bikko	26	1	2	2		
	Naungo?	27					
	Boenda?	18	1		2		
	Mittu-mungallee	20	1				
Charley	Muntu-morko?	21					
	Muntu-macka?	24	1	1	1		
Billy		27	2	1	1		Total: 29 <sup>a</sup>
		29	1				
Tommy Hamilton	Tomima	37	1				
Captain Brooks		60	1				
Old Cry							

a. With women and children this is actually a total of 43 people.

#### Onyong's Group

English Names	Native Names	Appx Age	No of Wives	Boys	Girls	Tribe	District
Chief	Hong Kong [sic]	30	2	2	1	Nam-wich[?] [Namadgi?]	Mountains beyond the Murrumbidgee, Lime-stone Plains, sometimes reside about this part of the country [Tuggeranong]
Charley		20	1				
Tommy							The probable numbers of this tribe about 60 or 70 men, women and children, most part of them wild blacks who seldom go near the haunts of white men. Total: 6 [actually 11 + 60 or 70!]
Neddy							
Mr Davy							

(Plate 7 cont. next page)

(Plate 7 cont.)

## Visiting groups

English Names	Native Names	Appx Age	No of Wives	Boys	Girls	Tribe	District
Parramatta (chief)	Bindin	22	2	1	1	King	
Gilbert	Billy	14					
Billy Buckley		16					
Cullernuny (young girl)		13					
Charley Liverpool		27	2				

English Names	Native Names	Appx Age	No of wives	Boys	Girls	Tribe	Dist
Jemmy		20	1	1	1	King of Maroma [sic]	[Seems to have been recorded while travelling between Jerra-bomberra and Yass]
Cukambro		17					
Belango		21					
Koetya		22					
Iregueritit (young girl)		12					
Koetyango		25	1				
Kaerenicke		57	2				
Waengo		30					
Keiributta (Tommy)		74	1				
Benda							
Yanly							
Urrabang		35	1				
Bangyarra (old woman)		60					
Tommy Bingan-qunky		18					
Billy Butt [on?] [says 'belongs to Monaroo']		14					

Source: AONSW 4/2219.1, 34/5379.

Note: The actual homestead was not built until 1836.



suggesting it was originally an Aboriginal name that became corrupted into English. The Chief Protector of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson, identifies the location of the western Condor Mountains, which he writes as 'Kunder wast', with the area 'opposite Broadribb's' in the Adaminaby district (see the section on the Chief Protector's report, below). This suggests that Noolup's country may have included the district across and west of the Brindabella Mountains and the Goodradigbee River, probably as far as Wee Jasper, the south Yass Plains and Tumut districts. Perhaps Noolup's area of identity was not, then, exactly the same as Onyong's. It seems more likely that Noolup had kinship networks with Onyong's group and hence, perhaps, permission to share or visit the 'Limestone Plains'. Both groups were Walgalu-speaking and possibly shared some country in the mountains. On the other hand, Noolup also visited districts at least as far as Goulburn. Old Cry, who was visiting Noolup's group, was from the Goulburn district (see Chapter 1), while Hamilton, another visitor of Noolup's, was from Tumut (see below).

A decade later, Noolup's group had merged with Onyong's and Noolup's authority – at least in the eyes of the observers – had been subordinated to that of Onyong (see below), yet the designated name of this group in 1841 was the Hagen Hope, which was Noolup's group. We know that Neddy, a member of Noolup's group, was a relative of Noolup's because when Neddy was accidentally killed by Long Jimmy, a member of Onyong's group, at Queanbeyan in 1852, Noolup was nominated to fight Long Jimmy as Neddy's closest relative (see Chapter 4).<sup>6</sup> In the 1834 list, Neddy's 'native' name was rendered as 'Cheemutt', which could have meant 'Tumut' or 'Dumut' as it was originally written in English. The inquest that recorded Neddy's death refers to him as 'Chippendale Neddy',<sup>7</sup> which suggests he was also associated with Thomas 'Naas' Chippendale at Naas. This may have been another seasonal visiting site of Noolup's group. During the fight, Long Jimmy escaped with his wife to the Tumut district. Clearly, the Kamberri had very close connections with other Walgalu-speaking groups across the mountains as far as Tumut.

According to the Register of Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries, 'Captain Brooks', who was recorded on the 1834 list with Noolup's group, was burned to death accidentally in the Illawarra district, with which he was associated, in 1857.<sup>8</sup> The Aboriginal Captain Brooks may have travelled with the Illawarra workers of his European namesake, Captain Richard Brooks, who had property at Bungendore as well as in the Illawarra district, and camped with the local group, or he may have already been on friendly terms with the Kamberri.

It is difficult to find any other contemporary information about Jacob (Pendau), Bikko, or any of the others mentioned in Noolup's group. Pendau, who was 58, may

---

6. Wright, WD, 1923, p 62. Wright says the fight took place in 1850 but the contemporary inquests record it as 1852.

7. Register of Coroner's Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries, 1834–1859, AONSW, Queanbeyan district, 15 November 1852, mfm N229, 4/66111 – 1-6613.

8. *Ibid*, no 10379.

have been Noolup's father. A number of contemporary Aboriginal people used the English names Billy, Tommy and Charley but even matching their Aboriginal names to other contemporary lists has so far proved futile. Charley, Tommy and Neddy were also included on Onyong's list so perhaps the groups were not recorded altogether at the same time. Men with the names of Tommy, Charley and Billy are also recorded with Onyong's and King Jamie's groups on the 1841 list (see below).

Hamilton was a frequent visitor to the Canberra-Queanbeyan district, but was not a local. Both Hamilton and his contemporary, Wellington, were more closely associated with the Tumut district according to Thomas Wilkinson, who knew them well.<sup>9</sup> Wilkinson lived at Gundaroo for a time before obtaining a grant for *Yallowin* in the Tumut district in 1840. According to Wilkinson, Hamilton 'was civilized, having been reared by the family of another Tumut settler, George Shelley'.<sup>10</sup> He said 'blacks' used to come to his property from Yass, Wellaregang, Omeo and Mitta Mitta (all located to the northwest, west and southwest of the mountain ranges) and hold corroborees at *Yallowin*.

After some time, according to Wilkinson, the 'blacks' increased in number, coming in from Tumbarumba, suggesting many Aboriginal people still hiding from the Europeans in the mountains were fleeing to the Tumut district. Hamilton may have reassured these people that station owners such as Wilkinson and Shelley were friendly. Wilkinson says Hamilton was 'possessed of wonderful control over the tribe, and certainly was the means of preventing them from committing depredations'. He also notes the different 'tribes' in the Tumut district but states they were all friendly to each other. 'Hannibal' Hamilton died, aged 50, in 1854. He was then known as the 'chief of the Tumut tribe' and had, for some years, been in the service of Mr EG Brown of Blowering. He was buried on the Blowering Road, which is now under the Blowering Dam. An elm tree planted on a large mound by Mrs FW Vyner marks his grave.<sup>11</sup>

There were many contemporary Aboriginal people in the districts surrounding the Canberra-Queanbeyan area who used the European name of 'Hamilton', but they are not necessarily related. It is possible that some of them had in common the fact that they used the first name of Hamilton Hume, but this would be difficult to prove. There were Aboriginal identities who used the surname 'Hamilton' in the Goulburn district from the middle of the 1820s but they may have adopted the name of the Reverend William Hamilton, who lived locally.

### Onyong's group

Onyong, or 'Hong Kong' as he is recorded on the 1834 list, had, at that time, two wives and three children, two boys and a girl. He is designated 'chief' of the 'Nam-

9. Wilkinson, Thomas, 1904.

10. George was the son of William Shelley who established the Parramatta Institution for Native Blacks during Macquarie's administration.

11. Wilkinson, Thomas, 1904. According to a clipping in the Tumut Library, the *Tumut Times* also recorded Hamilton's death in 1854 (no exact date recorded).

wich tribe' (Namadgi?) and the district he frequented included the mountains beyond the Murrumbidgee and also the 'Limestone Plains'. He 'sometimes' resided 'about this part of the country', which was a reference to Wanniasa, in the Tuggeranong district. An estimated 60 or 70 other members of Onyong's group were still hiding in the mountains at that time 'and seldom [went] near the haunts of white men'. Mr Davy and his wife, recorded on Onyong's list, were more frequently associated with contemporary blanket distribution lists for the Monaro district.

The lists, without telling us much about Onyong or Noolup and their respective groups, do locate them in time and place. This information, when combined with earlier and later contemporary records, does support my argument that Onyong's and Noolup's groups were consistently identified with the area that is now the ACT and surrounds from the time of European settlement. The records are not precise enough to separate the individual and group relations that linked one Aboriginal group with another in specific areas in the 1830s. Similarly, it is not possible to say with any precision whether Noolup was indeed the 'chief' or leader of a significant group in the Kamberri district or merely the head of a family group that was recorded, along with other visitors, as a distinct group at the time the local magistrate was distributing blankets. It is probable, though, that all members of the two groups spoke a mutually intelligible language and that they were linked, to some degree, through kinship networks. Contemporary historical records in the 1830s and 1840s suggest individuals as well as groups travelled extensively (see, for example, the section on the Chief Protector's Report, below), perhaps reflecting their individual kinship ties.

According to Alfred Howitt:

One of the old men of the Wolgal<sup>12</sup> said that 'the place where a man is born is his country, and he always has a right to hunt over it, and all others born there had also the right to do so.'<sup>13</sup>

If only ascertaining an Aboriginal person's or group's identity were that easy!

### The visiting group

Billy Buckley and Gilbert appeared on contemporary blanket lists for the Monaro and Tumut districts, and Parramatta and Charley Liverpool appeared frequently on contemporary lists for the Wollongong-Illawarra districts – although their names suggest they were more closely associated with the Parramatta and Liverpool districts! Perhaps they belonged to both? Both Terence Aubrey Murray and Stewart Marjoribanks Mowle knew Parramatta, who may have been introduced to them by Hamilton Hume.<sup>14</sup> Some Aboriginal identities had travelled extensively as guides with the European explorers and settlers in the early days and either stayed on with the settlers or visited their European friends who settled in areas not local to their own. On the other hand, the Shoalhaven communities were on good terms with the Weereewaa communities (see Chapter 1).

12. This was Howitt's name for the Walgalu.

13. Howitt, AW, 1904, p 83.

14. Murray family papers, NLA Manuscripts MS 565, series I, box 2.

'Maroma', the named 'tribe' of young 'King' Jemmy and his group, may have been a corruption of 'Narooma' on the south coast. However, George Augustus Robinson records a man named 'Nummer', who used the English name 'Jemmy', in the Nimmitabel district of the Monaro (see the section on Robinson below). The group appears to have travelled down the permitted route from the Monaro via Michelago and had just camped at Jerrabomberra when the 1834 blanket list was recorded. From Jerrabomberra they were reportedly heading off towards Yass. Perhaps 'King' Jemmy had business with the 'Yass blacks'. According to George Augustus Robinson, who visited the southeast region in 1844, the 'Yass blacks' frequently terrorised groups along the southeast coast as far as Eden and Bega.

Although the Kamberri had frequent quarrels with their southern neighbours, there were also many occasions when they were quite hospitable. King Jamie Gilbee and his group arrived in Queanbeyan from faraway Delegate (on the New South Wales-Victorian border) and received blankets in Queanbeyan in 1841. The women of his group were all listed with the two Kamberri groups, led by 'Hong Gong' and 'Newlop', which suggests they were all quite friendly at this stage (see Plate 8).

A number of men on the 1834 Monaro blanket list, including Boney Jack, Solomon, Cockatoo and 'Blewskin' (also spelled Blueskin) were visited in the Cooma district by Kamberri survivors in later years and/or figure prominently in the history of the Monaro district. Cockatoo also appears in blanket distribution lists in the Braidwood area, perhaps reflecting either his own or his group's good relations with the upper Molonglo and Braidwood area communities.

The young men, Dick and Harry, of the Monaro group, both listed as eighteen years of age, are unlikely to be Black Dick Lowe and Black Harry Williams (see Part II) as the latter two men were born circa 1837 and 1841 respectively.

### **The 1841 blanket distribution list**

The 1841 list (Plate 8) is the first that records the members of 'Hong-gong's' and Noolup's groups in any detail.

In this list, 'Hong-gong' was designated 'chief' of the Limestone Blacks and Noolup no longer had a title, although both had breastplates (as do others in the group). Some of Onyong's group are now identified with particular mountain and/or plains areas in the upper Murrumbidgee district. 'Hong-gong', Noolup and Micky are associated with the Condor region, whereas Tommy is identified with the 'Bolero', which is a mountain area in the same district. In the 1841 list Jimmy Gigeline (husband of Biddy but mistakenly identified as Tommy) is identified with the Lanyon area (Gigeline was the Aboriginal name for that area) and Mickey Ginninderry would be associated with the modern area of Ginninderra — although only his wife was on the list: Mickey himself was not. Mickey was more closely associated with Monaro groups in later life, suggesting he may have fled that way as the Europeans encroached on his country in the Kamberri districts. Perhaps the Monaro was his wife's country? As I have argued before in this volume, members of Aboriginal groups in the Kamberri



district had individual as well as group associations with a place, some of which were quite complex.

While interviewing informants on the Monaro and surrounding districts, Alfred Howitt was told that claims to particular tracts of country arose in certain of these 'tribes' by birth:

When a child was born among the Yuin,<sup>15</sup> its father pointed out some hills, lakes, or rivers to the men and women there present as being the bounds of his child's country, being that where his father lived, or where he himself was born and had lived. It was just the same with a girl, who had her mother's country, and also that in which she was born. Besides this the father took the country where his child was born, if away from his own locality, and the mother took that where her daughter was born under similar circumstances.

A leading man of the Snowy River Krauatungalung, who acted as my messenger to the Yuin, concerning the holding of a Kuringal, was born in their country, and therefore claimed it as his; his mother was a Ngarigo woman, and therefore he claimed her country.<sup>16</sup> He was the accredited messenger between the Krauatun Kurnai and the Ngarigo and Yuin.

The son of one of the headmen of the Theddora was born in Ngarigo country, to which his mother belonged. It was therefore his country, and, as he put it, it would be just the same for any one who was born there.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1841 list, some of the men had two wives, others had only one. Noolup had one wife, Maria, although he later took others.<sup>18</sup> 'Hong-gong' had two wives, Mary and Nanny, the latter being the alleged daughter of Ainslie (see Chapter 2). What happened to the two sons and daughter of 'Hong-gong' and the two sons and two daughters of Noolup, who were on the 1834 lists, between 1834 and 1841? Who were they? Perhaps, like Nanny, they were listed as adults in 1841. It is frustrating that not all the relationships that link the people in these groups are recorded. It is also amusing to find that, although 'Hong-gong' has aged by only five years between the 1834 and 1841 lists, Noolup has not aged at all! It is probable that although both men were in their forties by 1841 they were still extremely fit and looked much younger.

Some of the women mentioned in 'Hong-gong's' group belong to King Jamie's group. The fact that the women from both groups are listed together suggests friendly relations between the Monaro and Kamberri groups at this time. Due to the practice of 'wife-snatching', which William Romaine Govett claimed was a prevalent custom

15. According to Howitt, the Yuin are associated with the South Coast from Merimbula to Port Jackson. According to Robert Hamilton Mathews (see Chapter 1), the customs of Aboriginal groups throughout southeast New South Wales were very similar.

16. Presumably, Howitt means the man claimed an identification with each of these countries — not 'ownership' as an individual.

17. Howitt, AW, 1904, p 83.

18. One was a nine year old white girl, according to contemporary writers. He was said to have rescued her when the rest of her family were killed in a battle between settlers and 'Aborigines' in a district far from Canberra. Her name was Jinnie [Jenny?], which was also the name of the later Kangaroo Tommy's wife who is buried with him at Glenwood (see Part II). It is more likely that she was of mixed heritage and may have been a little older than nine.

in the Weereewaa districts (see Chapter 1), a few people from both groups were probably closely related.

**Plate 8: Return of Aborigines to whom blankets were distributed at police office, Queanbeyan, 5 May 1841**

Maneroo Tribe from Currawong [near Delegate] — the men						
No	English Names	Native Names	Possible Age	No of Wives	Children Male	Children Female
1	King Jamie Gilbee, Plate for Currawang	Jemmygoba	30	1		1
2	Harry Smith, with plate	Dooladwary	30	1		1
3	Boney Jack	Warajola	20			
4	Charley	Monaboja	20			
5	Caraty	Coromary	18			
6	Joe	Hoojarah	18			
7	Tommy	Tommyma-ciel?	20	1		
8	Solomon	Moniary	18			
9	Able	Tomba?	20	1		1
10	Dickey	Hoboboo	18			
11	Harry Maneroo (Plate)	Balliaron	20	1		
12	Harry	Benape	18			
13	Jacky Jacky	Gumallau	30	2		2
14	Billy	Garook	25	1		
15	Cockatoo	Biyadory	30	1		
16	Blowskins?	Curedory?	18			
17	Jemmy?	Newhadallah	30	1		
18	Dick	Wandra	38	2	1	1
19	Jacob	Yayaga	18			

(Plate 8 cont. next page)



(Plate 8 cont.)

**Onyong's Group — the men**  
**Murumbidgee Tribe, Hagen-Hope district**

No	English Names	Native Names	Possible Age	No of Wives	Children Male	Children Female
20	Hong-gong, Plate, Chief of Tribe & Newlop, Jemmy the Rover, Plate, Condore Mountains	Hong Gong	35	2		
		Newlop	30	1		
21	Tommy Bolera, Plate	Jumania?	35	2	1	1
22	Jimmy Gigeline?	Mory Bong?	38	2	1	
23	Jemmy	Bamilton	30	1	1	
24	Kangaroo Tommy, Plate, Boogolong	Monijary?	30	1		
25	Mickey	Condor	30	1		
26	Billy	Migarinyo?	28	1		
27	Jimmy	Alamoorda				
28	Johnny	Gluguga?	26	1	1	
29	Neddy	Judgabby?				
30	Jim	Hoola-mooditat?	16			
31	Joe	Jingiderra?	15			

(Plate 8 cont. next page)

(Plate 8 cont.)

## Onyong's and 'King' Jamie's Groups — the women and children

No	English Names	Native Names	Possible Age	No of Wives	Children Male	Children Female
32	Mary	Hongyong's gin	28			
33	Maria?	Newlop's gin	30			
34	Jenny	King Jamie's gin	35			
35	Jenny	King Jamie's mother	65			
36	Ladie	Able's mother	70			
37	Judy Gabaya	Dick's gin	30			
38	Jenny	Gigobigace	18			
39	Nanny	Hong yong's gin	16			
40	Matilda	Bamilton's gin	20			
41	Jenny	Mickey's gin	22			
42	Ellen	Kangaroo Tommy's gin	17			
43	Kitty	Billy's gin	19			
44	Eliza	Bolero Tommy's gin	23			
45	Kitty	Bolero Tommy's gin	25			
46	Maria	Tommy mariel?	17			
47	Maria	Mickey Gin-ninderry's gin	20			
48	Mary	Cockatoo's gin	28			
49	Biddy	Tommy Gige-line's gin	19			
50	Old Mary	Tommy Gige-line's mother?	45			
51	Young Mary	daughter	15			
52	Nari?	Jacky Jacky's gin	24			
53	Missus	Jacky Jacky's gin	24			
54	Betsy	daughter	12			
55	Jane	daughter	10			
56	Betty	Harry Smith's gin	19			

(Plate 8 cont. next page)

(Plate 8 cont.)

**Onyong's and 'King' Jamie's Groups — the women and children**

57	Mary	Daughter	7			
58	Cabon Mary	Able's gin	30			
59	Young Mary	daughter	8			
60	Sally	Harry Maneroo's gin	20			
61	Mary	Tommymariel's ?gin	18			
62	Young Joe	Son of Bolero Tommy	7			

Source: AONSW 4/1133.3.

**The Land Commissioners' Reports**

Following the publication of a Report by the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements) in England in 1837,<sup>19</sup> the Governor of New South Wales was asked to consider ways in which both immigrant and Aboriginal labour could be utilised in the colony. Such labour would have been deemed necessary to replace, eventually, that of the convicts since the British Government was at that time hoping to end transportation. As the favoured free settlers would be married couples with at least one child and also single women, the British Government felt it important to reassure them that 'Aborigines' in the remote areas to which they would be sent were friendly and would not hurt them.

Terence Aubrey Murray was one of the many 'landowners' who gave evidence at the Select Committee on Immigration in the NSW Legislative Council in 1841. Murray told the Committee he had always had difficulties hiring Indigenous labour and had never been able to establish [Indigenous labourers] permanently on his farm. He said that, in general, 'they' showed dislike for settled habits; he thought it would be impossible to make them useful labourers, 'their love of independence is too great'.<sup>20</sup>

Yet at this time 'landowners' who could not afford to pay for labour were losing their land to new immigrants. They were then forced to send their stock beyond the boundaries of settlement and 'squat' on these stations. As there was no supervision or

19. *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines*, 1837. See Historical records relating to Great Britain.

20. Murray, TA, 1842, p 19, VPNSWPC.

regulation at this time, lawlessness prevailed, but it was Aboriginal families rather than the squatters who usually suffered from this lawlessness according to the Commissioners of Crown Land who were based in these areas (see below).

The limits of the 19 counties announced by Government Order in 1829 had been expanded during the administration of Governor Bourke and a Native Police<sup>21</sup> force was formed to assist police to protect Aboriginal people (or new settlers?) beyond the limits of settlement. Commissioners of Crown Land beyond the 'Boundaries of Location' were therefore nominated as Protectors of Aborigines. Reports of these Commissioners in areas surrounding Kamberri country are included below.

**Reports of Crown Lands Commissioner John Lambie on Aborigines in the Maneroo [sic] district (based in Cooma)<sup>22</sup>**

Unfortunately, the reports of Commissioner John Lambie for the 'Maneroo' district were repetitive and inadequate. It is not even clear if the Kamberri district was included in Lambie's report or in that of Commissioner Bingham at Tumut (see below). In 1842, Lambie wrote that the 'Aborigines' in the Monaro district 'are almost in their primitive state. However, some are employed in sheep washing, hoeing maize and reaping'. Others were employed in whale fishing at Twofold Bay 'on the same terms as whites'. They were 'living in huts, sleeping in beds, using utensils for cooking, making flour into bread', but as soon as the fishing season was over 'they all return to their tribes in the bush'. According to Lambie, those in the western area (inland) preserved their original habits of hunting and were constantly moving from place to place. 'Natives want their children to read and write but don't want to be parted from them'. The 'Census of Aborigines' he collected for 1842 suggested there were 351 males and 230 females over 12 and 119 males and 88 females under 12 in his district, with a total of 55 living in the Snowy River area.

In 1843, Lambie claimed there had been little change in the previous three years. Lambie's subsequent reports up until 1847 are very similar. Reporting on Aboriginal groups was only a small part of his job. In his 1847 report Lambie said that deaths exceeded births among blacks in his district, mostly from old age, and that there had been 'no collisions' with the white population. A total of 649 'Aborigines' remained. For his 1848 report, he added that 'Many [local Aboriginal people] are moving to Gippsland. They are on friendly terms with settlers'.

In a letter to the Colonial Secretary in 1848, in response to a circular Earl Grey distributed via the Governor's office regarding the establishment of reserves for 'Aborigines', Lambie was slightly more informative. He reported that there were very few 'Aborigines' left who claimed to belong to the tableland of Moneroo and 'most of these have spent the greater part of the last few years in Gippsland, paying occasional

21. Australian-born people of European descent were also referred to as 'Natives' at this time. The police force referred to here was Aboriginal.

22. *Historical Records of Australia* vols XXI-XXVI.

visits to Moneroo'. He suggested that if a reserve was to be established it should be located at Bega or on Hickey's Crossing Place on the Snowy River.

**Report of the Crown Lands Commissioner Henry Bingham on Aborigines in the Murrumbidgee district (based in Tumut), 1842-1848<sup>23</sup>**

The reports of Henry Bingham from Tumut were, in contrast to Lambie's, far more descriptive and informative. In his first report in 1840, Bingham estimated there were about 1500 to 2000 'Aborigines' in the upper Murrumbidgee area, of whom 100 resided in the Tumut district.<sup>24</sup> By 1842 and 1843, they 'gladly receive fish-hooks, needles, thread etc but are not erecting huts'. They came freely to the stations to accept food. They lived on opossum, fish and roots and wandered from station to station. Though content to live this way forever, they could 'enjoy the advantages of civilization in the way of a dressed meal, fruits and vegetables'. He recommended that a portion of the territory be conceded to 'Aborigines'. Some 'black gins' had been killed by hostile tribes and two native black boys who were attached to settlers had been killed. Two young men, Matong Jamie and Tommy, the latter the son of the chief, Bengelimong, were murdered by treachery. The blacks, he said, were also killing 'half-castes' because the men 'can't bear to see half caste children and the gins destroy them in the wild bush'.<sup>25</sup> Settlers were killing blacks and blacks were killing blacks.

According to Bingham, not all female infants were brought up but he thought religious institutions might change this practice. Parents did not want their children sent to Sydney or Parramatta.<sup>26</sup> He recommended, therefore, that a settlement for the 'education and social institutions of native black children' be formed on the Hume (Murray) River, combined with a farm for boys and domestic work for girls.

Between 1844 and 1846, Aboriginal people local to Bingham's area were 'still getting shot in encounters with whites'. He praised the 'noble, kind and praiseworthy' conduct of Aboriginal 'natives' of the Tumut and Murrumbidgee rivers during recent floods. At that time, he estimated there remained still only about 100 'Aborigines' in the Tumut and Murrumbidgee areas. Bingham complained again that, between 1846 and 1847, local 'Aborigines' were still being shot. 'Acting on the general system, the Aboriginal natives are drove back to seek for food on other lands than those they were accustomed to hunt and fish over, and it may be the country of some dangerous Rival or Hostile Tribe, to which they fall victims or suffer much loss.'

23. *Historical Records of Australia* vols XXI-XXVI.

24. This is a curious estimation by Bingham of 'the upper Murrumbidgee' district; his European contemporaries referred to surrounding areas as 'the lower Murrumbidgee' districts as the river flowed downstream after its junction with the Yass River. Perhaps he included the Kambarri in his figures?

25. Following this and other such reports, Lord Stanley wrote to Sir George Gipps in 1845 recommending the establishment of an institution for 'withdrawing half-caste children from the dangers to which they appear to be subject and of endeavouring to civilize and educate them'. *HRA* vol XXIV, 31 August 1845.

26. There were 'institutions' in these districts for the civilisation and education of Aboriginal children.

Bingham reported there were about 500 'Aborigines' in the surrounding districts between 1847 and 1848, including 50 in the Tumut district and about 150 in the Deniliquin area. He requested medical relief for them. He claimed some servants at stations were cohabiting with Aboriginal women. Thomas Ward, a servant, was allegedly castrated by natives at Walla Walla station when caught in the act of intercourse with a 'gin'. 'Aborigines' were no longer remaining at the stations: 'The Chiefs seem to dread it as an innovation on their ancient habits, and the few, who may be employed shepherding or otherwise, are obliged to resume their original garb and migrate with the tribe'.

### The reports of Chief Protector Robinson

One recommendation of the findings of the British Select Committee was the appointment of a Chief Protector of Aborigines supported by four Assistant Protectors.<sup>27</sup> The Chief Protector selected was George Augustus Robinson, who had previously moved 'Tasmanian Aborigines' to Flinders Island. The Tasmanian survivors were to accompany Robinson to Port Phillip (Melbourne), where he was to be based.<sup>28</sup> The main task of the Protectors was to attach themselves to various 'tribes' and monitor, guide and educate them and induce them to assume more settled habits. The British Government had not yet ruled out the possibility of using Aboriginal labour and for this to be successful, Aboriginal people would be required to 'settle down'. For the time being, free immigrant labour could not be provided quickly enough to get on with the task of developing the colony. So there was a hidden agenda behind this expression of concern.

In 1844, Robinson set off from Port Phillip on a fact-finding expedition to interview Aboriginal groups throughout the southeast region of New South Wales for a report suggesting solutions for their welfare. His field data was much more detailed than those of the Crown Commissioners. Furthermore, he had no difficulty finding the group I am referring to in this volume as the Kamberri and other Aboriginal groups local to the Monaro districts. This was ten years after Lhotsky had declared that the 'natives' in these areas were either diminishing in numbers or were 'no more!' The names of Aboriginal people Robinson recorded in the Canberra-Queanbeyan-upper Murrumbidgee districts more or less matched those on the blanket distribution lists for the same area recorded four years previously.

Extracts from his diary entries from leaving the Monaro to travel through Kamberri country to Yass follow.

27. Lord Glenelg to Sir George Gipps, 31 January 1838, *HRA* series I vol XIX, July 1837 – January 1839, p 252.

28. *Ibid.* A number of the Tasmanians were later transferred to Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission in Victoria, from whence some descendants moved to Moama/Cummeragunja on the New South Wales side of the Murray River and intermarried with the Yorta Yorta.



**The journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector of Aborigines, extracts from entries made during his visit to the Canberra district, January 1844<sup>29</sup>**

(Please see Map 11 to follow Robinson's route in the areas mentioned.)

**Sunday 7 July 1844** [*Robinson has just entered the Maneroo from the Omeo district*]

Seven men, women and girl visited this afternoon [...] alias old Tom (chief) among them; the rest were firm young men; gave each a handkerchief and some medals; took their names and names of all the Natives in the tribe (see census [*sic*]). The language is the same as the Omeo Blacks; a messenger from Limestone near Yas [*sic*] was with them; took census of Limestone Natives, see ditto; obtained names of localities (see ditto).

[*Travelled on to Twofold Bay, where he found Maneroo, Limestone & Yass Blacks were known*]

**Tuesday 7 [*sic*] August 1844**

The Twofold Bay, Cape Howe [*sic* – Howe], Manerro [*sic*], Yass and other Natives have several times began an expedition to the westward to attack the Blacks and steal women but in general returned after leaving the old men conceiving some omen prejudicial.

Mr Weatherhead (Toombillicker station) said that the Yass Blacks had had the small pox.

**Sunday 12 [*sic*] August 1844**

Number of Maneroo Blacks at Bay, visited camp 1½ [*miles*] from beach, got an increase of 200 words to vocabulary [*of the*] Maneroo language, also names of Aborigines: Charley, Johnny, Billy Button, Bobby, Mr Conner, Neddy, Davy, Tommy, Charley, Nelly and Kitty.<sup>30</sup>

Took.e.yang, mittong: the Yass Blacks

Pang.er.re mittong: Limestone Blacks<sup>31</sup>

[*These may have been the names the 'Yass Blacks' and 'Limestone Blacks' were known by in the Twofold Bay area.*]

**Wednesday 14 August 1844**

This evening went on shore in South Twofold Bay and witnessed a very interesting corrobory by the Maneroo Natives, they were on a visit to their coast friends to introduce it, it was compared [*sic*] and arranged by Al.mil.gong, an Omeo Black from Tongio-mungie. There were about 60 or 70 Blacks present including the Twofold Bay [*tribe?*].

**Monday 19 August 1844**

Increased my vocabulary of Maneroo language from a Black called Num.mer, alias Jemmy,<sup>32</sup> alias Mr Robinson, age 22 years, country Bingerer, near Nimertebil [*sic*]

29. Clark, Ian (ed.), 1998. Reproduced with permission, with grateful thanks to Ian Clark.

30. Some of these names reflect those on the blanket distribution lists for Monaro groups visiting the Kamberri in 1834 and 1841.

31. In his formal report to the Governor, edited and published by George Mackaness a century later, Robinson said the Yammoit Mittong were the original inhabitants of the Limestone Plains, but he also said that the Yass Blacks were designated Onerwal and the Limestone Blacks as Koroinal. There were probably any number of different names for the same group, which was probably split into sub-groups known by different names yet again, e.g. the plains group, or the mountains or highlands group. Mackaness, George (ed.), 1941, pp 25–27.

32. See also 1834 blanket distribution list, Queanbeyan, above.

Mountains at Rocky Flat, a Bingerer mitung. Nummer gave me the following slopes to Tumut

Arrabel: Buckley and Hurst

Kolen dong: Mr Ryery [Ryrie]

Bo.lare.rer [Bolero]: Mr Broadrib [sic]

Ye.ac [Yaouk]: Mr Hall

Kol.ul.ler.min [Cooloolamine]

Tumut.

[From Twofold Bay and Bega, headed for 'Nimmitabel' Mountains]

#### Wednesday 4 September 1844

At the creek, foot of the mountain, my Native guide and wife said they were tired and wished to return back, they were scared of Yass Blacks.

A few miles from Robinson's station (Kal.lite.bar.ton) crossed swampy and marshy flats with boys horses bogged, cross Jumping Creek, the Brogo River and Panebooker River rises in these mountains and a branch of the Murrumbidgee; snow has been known to fall two or three feet deep here and they have had last two and a half months deal of rain whereas at Biggah [Bega] and other places there has been at best little very partial. Bob and Cockatoo claim this country but have not been here for one or two years [see 1841 blanket distribution list].

Pallender my guide said the Yass Blacks were enemies of the Biggah Blacks, came once and got on an island in rain, when Yass Blacks came they would not follow or they would have been speared in the water — they had wheat and stored on the island and could live.

#### Friday 6 September 1844

[Travels through 'Nimmitabelle' township towards Cooma]

Fine rise above rock flat, fine view of Yass Mountains. Course of travelling north west two miles east. Descended to A B Sparkes, now Bradley, part of Koomer [Cooma], and stopped for night. Travelled 18 miles, men walked, Met Mr Broadrib, senior who is head superintendent to Bradley ... Informed I cannot cross Tumut.<sup>33</sup>

#### Saturday 7 September 1844

Advised to travel by Yass on account of snow.<sup>34</sup>

#### Sunday 8 September 1844

Route over the mountains from Koomer to Bil.lare.ro from Yiyac [Yaouk], which is 40 miles from Coomer [sic], from Yiyac to Bingham on the Tumut is 60 miles, 100 in all, from Koomer to Yass is 114 miles.

#### Monday 9 September 1844

Distance, Broadrib's [sic] 18 miles from Coomer, Mittelago [Michelago] 20 miles from Broadrib's ... Cosgrove said the Maneroo Blacks were fine, well-behaved Blacks, never troublesome, the Yass Blacks were dreadful, settlers used to shoot them whenever they met them. Parties went out purposefully shot men, women, and children. Fine day, showery.

33. In early spring and summer, the usual route from Cooma to Tumut was through the mountains.

34. This was the long way round between Cooma and Tumut via Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass. Surely Robinson never intended to avoid including the Canberra or Yass 'blacks' in his consultations?

**Tuesday 10 September 1844**

Four miles, crossed the Breadbo [*sic*], a small running stream, the road lay between the Murrumbidgee mountains as skirted. At the flat by the river winding along and wooded hills, compared view, met Raymond's cattle from Wellington, in charge of Mr Hogarth, two Wellington Blacks and half cast boy, met Mr Boucher. Seven miles from Mittelago country falls perceptibly undulating grassy downs. Twelve miles from Cosgrove passed through young Billarero [*Bolero?*] open downs, came to Mittelago [*Michelago*], 20 miles from Broadrib's: pretty country, and generally fine from to this station, a running stream. Mittelago is the boundary of the colony. From [*there*] travelled over wooded ranges for six miles and came to open grassy plains and hills covered in water holes. Mr Campbell's sheep station, horses knocked up, stayed for night. Highland man named Campbell with eight children, rough lodgings, purchased land.

**Wednesday 11 September 1844**

From [*there*] went to Mr McQuoid's, son to sheriff McQuoid [*Tuggeranong?*]. Jerry Bunbery [*Jerrabomberra*] is eight miles from Booth's Flat on the Queenbeyan [*sic*] Road. From Mr McQuoid to Mr Murry [*sic*], member of Council, nine miles ... Rested and fed horses at McQuoid's, stopped for night.

**Thursday 12 September 1844**

Rode to Mr Murray's at Yarerer.lum.ler [*Yarralumla*], this is one of the best sites we have seen, a pretty place, good cottage grounds being laid out, fine view of mountains and the new church four miles distant at Limestone, Mr Campbell's [*St John's*]. The country from McQuoids is undulating open down and thinly timbered grassy hills, good road. The Queenbeyan River runs close by Mr Murray's house, fine stream, about 30 feet wide at crossing place. Mr Murray is member of Council for the Country of Murray, this is the county bounded I suppose by Murrumbidgee [*sic*]. The northeast extremity of the mountains, map called the Alp [...], almost skirted Murrumbidgee and would have been a good natural boundary. Mr Murray married a Miss Gibbs, daughter of Colonel Gibbs [*sic, Gibbs*]. Two of her sisters and brothers were there, also a Mr Male [*Mowle*] who wished to marry Miss Wilson, daughter of Dr Wilson, dead, invalid, bad manager, took taste of ametic [*sic, emetic?*], fainted, broke a blood vessel and died, 50 years old. Wrote a voyage around the world. A Mr Thomson [*sic, Thompson*], his brother-in-law, was there, and Mr Murray. Latter lives at Lake George. Dr Wilson's brother took his niece to Van Diemen's Land. Mr Murray said a few years ago eight half cast children were killed by Natives by Limestone on the Murrumbidgee, ages averaged three, four and five years. He had an examination and elicited enough to ascertain the facts from Stockkey [*Stuckey?*] and others that it had been done. Put them in a pen and killed them.<sup>35</sup>

35. In 1843 Murray married and also became a Member of the Legislative Council. He had arrived as a young 19 year old in 1829 and made close friends with Aboriginal groups in the localities of his properties. Perhaps, as he moved into more 'respectable' society, he wanted to end his association with his Aboriginal friends and the children with white fathers were thus killed. There is much to speculate about why some of the children (and not others) would have suddenly been killed. Robinson's description of this incident was slightly different in his formal report to the Governor. According to the latter report, Murray told Robinson that the Yammoit (Limestone Plains group) and the Molongler (Upper Molonglo) 'Tribes' had 'deliberately and barbarously murdered eight of their children of different sexes being half castes whose ages averaged three to five years. Conversely, he also said that Murray spoke in commendable terms about the local Aborigines. Mackaness, George (ed.), 1941, pp 25-26.

Saw a number of the Limestone Blacks at Mr Murray's, Mr Murray invited me to stay, took names.<sup>36</sup>

Tommy, Pun.bun.gurn.ber.ler	20
Biddy, Jem.umer.mor, <i>Omeo</i>	19
Mo.mim.booker	27
two last wives to above	
Maria, Ko.le.ger.bar, Din.der.re	27
Jemmy, Bo.lore.rer, Yamokey tower	14
Jemmy, Yal.ko, half cast	7
Billy Buckley, O.bun.by.wer, <i>Ud.jin.bil.le near Toomut</i>	19
Toomy, Joo.ler.gen.jan, Jow.ger.lyerer	21
Mary Jane, Bin.me.ang	17
Mary Mo.ner.run.gan, Booker	21
Jhonny [sic], By.woit, Bo.lare.rer	9
Money, Bud dat, Yare.run.gub.er.le	35
Joolee, Pul.gar.go, <i>Mun.nerth near Yass</i>	
Maggee, My.ac, Wol.lare.re.gil	15
Jacky, 1. U.re.mer 2. Tab.be.puss, Boo.rer [ <i>Bolero?</i> ]	35
Wellington, Mo.rid.jer.gong., my interpreter, Kundow.er.re	16
Jacky, Keer.ke.dong, Brar.mun.ye	12
Bobby, Min.yer.ne, Yi.oke [ <i>Yaouk</i> ]	14
Jacky, Jare.gowl, Hou.munje	16
Paddy, Tal.low.in.ne, Ko.ber.er.munje	27
Billy the Boy, Kubb.bert, son to above	6
Kangaroo Tommy, Murer.dun.min, Yar.ing guber le at Kennedy, 50 miles[?]	19
Kitty, Ky.min, Kallunder.er, wife to above	17
Neddy, Kud.jerbin, Yi.yac [ <i>Yaouk</i> ]	19
Jemmy the Rover, Noo.lup, Kunder wast Mountains opposite Broadrib's tribe Nam.mit.tong [West Condore Mountains, opposite Brodribb's]	50
Harry, Koo.ro.mun, Too.mut, Koo.ber.rer.dan.der.rer [ <i>Coolamon, Tumut and Gooberagandra</i> ]	19
Kitty, Mo.ker.much, Maneroo, Bul.er.rer.mang	15
Sally, Nor.er.nin.ye, Bogon.ger [ <i>Bogong Mountains?</i> ]	12
Sharlotte, Ky.wun, Jin.jeer.re [ <i>Gingera?</i> ]	16
Hammilton at Gippsland, Jim.mut, Yi.yac [ <i>Gippsland, Tumut and Yaouk</i> <sup>37</sup> ]	
Matilda, Buc.un.gang. wife to above	
Bolerer Tommy, Tummime.nile	
Burrer.mud.de. Jack, Beerre.naeng.gong, Limestone	

36. Not all of those mentioned on this list are from the Limestone Plains. Many of them are from the Tumut side of the mountains. This is not surprising, since Wellington was Robinson's guide and probably sent word for his group to be there. Hamilton was also a leader from the Tumut district. There are members of Monaro groups here.

37. It seems these areas indicate where 'Hammilton' had accompanied Robinson.

Ong gong, Jin.doo.mung,<sup>38</sup> King, Mr Broadrib [*Onyong*]

Nanny, Jun.in.mingo

Eliza, Bin.er.leet

**Molongler tribe** [*Molonglo Plains, upper Molonglo*]

Bob, Bim.mim.mi.gal,<sup>39</sup> King, country Molongler

Ireland, Il.bar.re.dit

Maria, Mut.ing.gal

Kitty, Bone.mal.mung, three above, wives to Bob

Jemmy, No.rung.gung

Kitty, U.al, Natives of sea coast

Old Man Joe, Dal.lal.ler

Molongler Kitty, Pal.ler, Kum.er gong

Joe, Bug.gal

Jacky Jacky, Cummer.cal

Mises, Dig.er.rid.je.ber, child, Little Mary

Bal.lare.rer Mittong

Til.le Mittong in mountains, Mr Murray

Tug.er.rer.nong: Mr McQuoid's station

Mount Tin.min.bil.le near Mr McQuoid [*Tidbinbilla*]

Mount Ten.nent [*Tharwa*]

Natives who inhabit the mountains called Kone.gal.ler

Five half cast children belonging to the Molongler tribe:

Kitty, Weel.bar.re.ned.it

Maria: Mud.jin.gal

Ireland: Pone.bal.long<sup>40</sup>

and 2 boys

Nelly<sup>41</sup>

Koo.roo.min.ki name of country at Mr Hall's [*Hall also had a run at Cooleman*].

'The Limestone Natives are a fine, stout, athletic race, men and women well-proportioned and finely limbed'.

**Friday 13 September 1844**

Wellington [*Tumut Black, mentioned earlier by Robinson as his interpreter*] accompanied me to Mr Hall's [*Henry Hall*], eight miles. The Queenbeyan [*sic*] River, a pretty little stream, runs past Mr [*James?*<sup>42</sup>] Murray's cottage [*Woden*], it was up to our saddle flaps in crossing, about 70 feet wide. The country, on first leaving [*the*] river, is open forest cross [*sic*] wooded ranges (low). The country between Mr Murray's and Mr

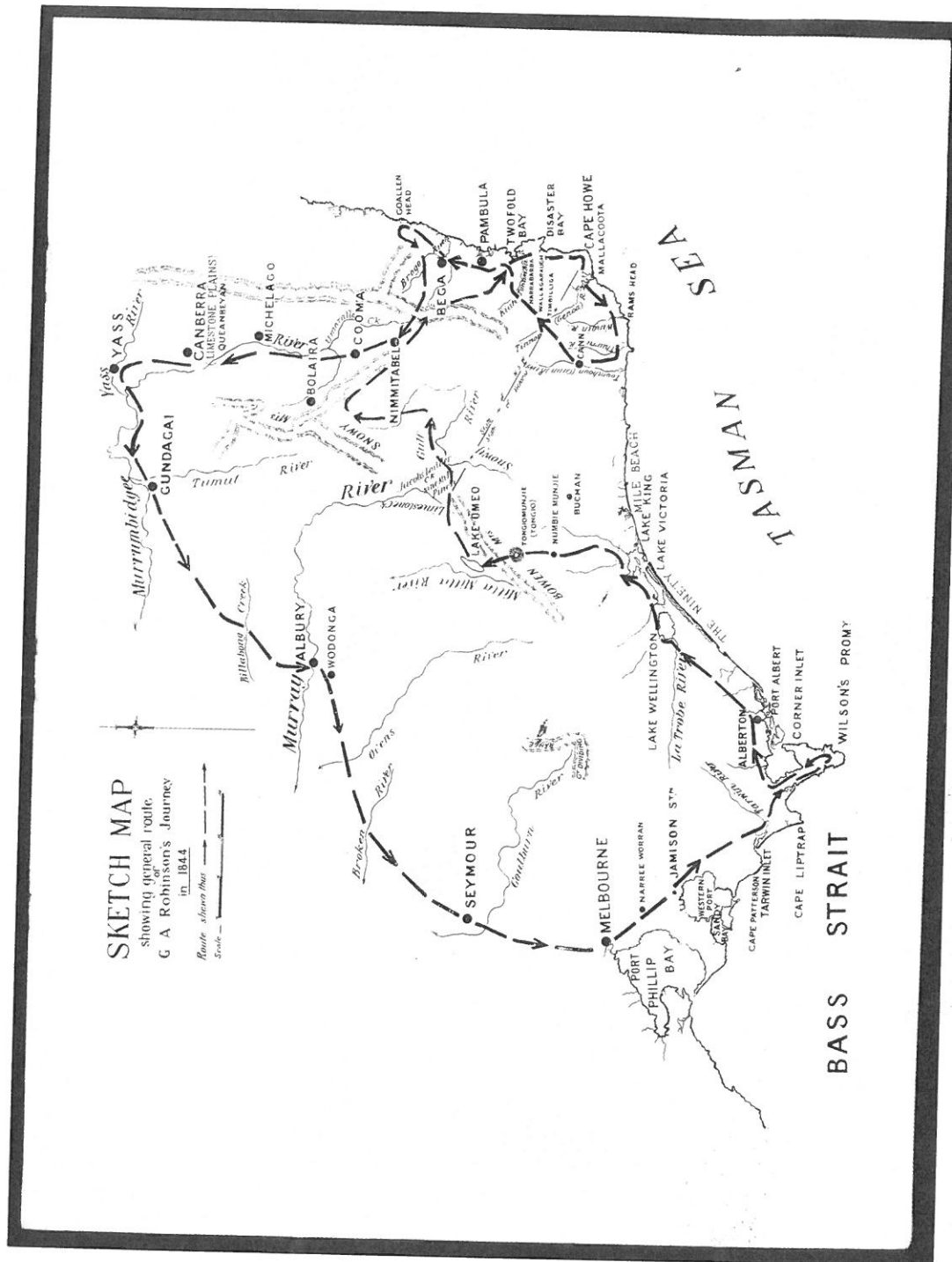
38. It's unclear what 'Jin.doo.mung' means.

39. In his formal report to the Governor, Robinson claimed 'Bimmerigal' was the name used by coastal 'natives' for the 'Bimmer-mittong, the 'natives of Monaro'. Mackaness, 1941, p 15. Perhaps the name Bimmimmigal distinguished the upper Molonglo group from the Monaro Bimmerigal or, conversely, identified them generally as the same group?

40. Maria and Ireland are also listed above as wives to King Bob.

41. The five so-called 'half cast' children are probably as listed, whereas the girl, Nelly, may not have been of mixed heritage. This is a total of six children, not five.

42. This was Aubrey Murray's brother, Dr James Murray, who owned Woden homestead.



Map 11: Route taken by  
George Augustus Robinson,  
Chief Protector of  
Aborigines, around  
southeastern Australia in  
1844

Source: Mackenness, George,  
1941, *George Augustus  
Robinson's Journey into South  
East Australia, 1844*  
(published by DS Ford,  
Sydney). Reproduced courtesy  
of the National Library of  
Australia.



Hall's at Koo.roo.nun [Cooleman] consists of undulating forest country and open downs. In crossing first down after leaving Murray's had a fine view of the great mountains. It rained nearly all this day.

[Robinson then moves on to Yass]

### The Report of Reverend Hamilton

Following Robinson's visit, yet another circular was sent round to magistrates and priests in each locality in New South Wales in 1846 asking them to report on the condition of 'Aborigines' in their area. The Reverend William Hamilton, who lived in the Goulburn district, sent a report on his area, which included Lake George (see also Chapter 1).<sup>43</sup>

Hamilton reported that in the district of Goulburn were the 'remnants' of several tribes, including the Mulwaree, Burra Burra, Bungonia, Lake George and Fish River tribes. At Lake George and the Fish River (the headwaters of the Lachlan River, near Gunning) there were 50 or more people, still numerous. They were decimated in numbers, he claimed, because of the 'vicious intercourse' of females with white men and diseases were contracted through indulgence and drunkenness. Their condition, according to Hamilton, was as 'rambling beggars'. They had no means of subsistence. Blankets had been issued for the past ten years.

Some [Aboriginal people] were occupied as employees to strip bark, cut up firewood, gather potatoes, carry messages, ride after cattle and so forth 'and are adequately remunerated with money, clothes or food'. A few were more regularly employed as shepherds, bullock drivers or black trackers.

There are quite a number of half castes, living as Aborigines. A white man living at the farm of Frances Cooper Esq at Lake George was married a few years ago by Reverend Cartwright to a female Aboriginal whom that clergyman had himself brought up and educated. They lived happily together for two to three years but are now separated due to her jealousy of a white woman. Now she is living as a hired domestic at Lake George. This female never associates with other Aborigines. She possesses intelligence and religious knowledge surpassing those of a large proportion of white females and has an excellent character. The blacks at Limestone Plains sometimes kill half-caste children, some as old as five to ten years.<sup>44</sup>

In 1846 Governor Sir George Gipps was replaced by Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, the first Governor-General of Australia<sup>45</sup> and the first Governor of New South Wales since Macquarie to explore systematically his administrative area. He visited some of the 'Aboriginal stations' established by the Protectors in Victoria but abolished the offices of Protectors under the orders of Earl Grey as the 'system has failed'.<sup>46</sup>

43. Hamilton, Reverend William, 1846.

44. This may have been only one incident, recorded by Robinson and told to him by Murray, which may have been limited to the children on Murray's properties.

45. Sir Charles administered the colony first as Governor-in-chief and Captain-General, and assumed the title of Governor-General as the new states of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and the Northern Territory were constituted. Provision was also made for the establishment of the colonies of Western Australia and Queensland. Van Diemen's Land already had its own government.

46. Sir Charles Fitzroy to Earl Grey, 17 May 1847, *HRA* vol XXV.

Grey did, however, agree with the idea of setting aside small tracts of land for Aboriginal people vested in trustees especially appointed. Such land was 'not for the maintenance of their savage condition but to be cultivated either for them or for their advantage by sale of produce, or for their own consumption, affording also sites of schools and whatever other fixed Establishments experience may recommend as most calculated to serve them'. He instructed Fitzroy that the establishment of 'depots' or reserves would be a priority, as well as schools for 'Aborigines' and training programs, particularly in Agriculture. Training, he believed, would induce 'them' to remain in a state of civilization and destroy the desire to return to a 'wild and roving life'.

In 1846 Fitzroy brought before the Executive Council the issue of rights of access for 'Aborigines' on unimproved Crown lands and ordered this advice to be inserted in leases for the occupation of lands beyond the settled districts. The response of the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General was that 'no condition securing to the Aborigines privileges of free access to lands remaining in an unimproved state could legally be introduced into the leases of Crown Lands proposed to be granted under the provisions of Act of Parliament 9 and 10'. They suggested that 'Her Majesty might in some future order in council authorise the insertion of such a condition in the leases'.

In 1855, the British granted the Australian colonies the status of 'responsible government'. From that date, therefore, each 'colony' determined its own policies and resisted as much as possible pressure from the British Government for the improvement of Aboriginal living conditions or access to land.

For the time being, in the Kamberri district at least, the only real protection offered to surviving Aboriginal groups was by local 'landowners' who genuinely cared about their welfare. This is ironic, considering that it was these local 'landowners' who had deprived the Kamberri of their lands and forced them into a dependent position in the first place.