

According to Samuel Shumack, who said Dick Lowe visited his farm *Springvale* a number of times for hay, Dick had his own bullock team.¹²⁴

Dick, Harry and their families and friends had camps at Little River (near the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Gudgenby rivers at Cuppacumbalong), Naas, Cooleman, Gurrangorambla and many other places up in the mountains and on the plains (see Maps 14 and 15). Both identified strongly with the mountain districts in particular and acted frequently as mountain guides for De Salis and his guests. They showed George some sites that might now be considered sacred, including caves with drawings, old Aboriginal camps and the burial places of blackfellows deep in the mountains.¹²⁵

From George's diaries it is clear that both Dick and Harry were close friends with many of the Australian families of European descent in the high country. They may have all been playmates as children and grown up together. Many of the families who settled in the Tharwa district were originally assigned to James Wright at *Lanyon*,¹²⁶ who later established 'Cuppercumbalong'.¹²⁷ Dick and Harry were particularly friendly with Charles McKeahnie, an early settler whose family had bought *Booroomba* from the Wright family. McKeahnie had taken his family to Kiandra in the 1850s to provide supplies to prospectors hoping to get lucky on the newly-discovered Kiandra goldfields. He made a sizeable profit during this time, possibly with the help of Dick and Harry who knew the mountain tracks well.

'Black Dick' Lowe

Richard 'Black Dick' Lowe was born in Kiandra circa 1845.¹²⁸ Kiandra was on the frontier between the Kamberri and other Walgalu-speaking communities and Ngarigo-speaking communities on the Monaro (see Map 2) so Dick could have belonged to any one of those groups. By the 1860s, the frontier between the Kamberri and individuals and groups in the mountains and plains beyond the upper Murrumbidgee and the Monaro may have become quite fluid.

Dick and Sarah Duncan, the second youngest daughter of Nanny, became a couple at *Cuppacumbalong* in the 1870s when Dick was in his thirties and Sarah was in her mid-teens. Such an age difference between Kamberri men and their much younger wives was quite common. Dick and Sarah's eldest child, Mary Effie, was born in Tharwa in 1874.¹²⁹

124. Papers of Samuel Shumack, diaries, NLA Manuscripts MS 1643.

125. Diaries of George De Salis, *op. cit.*

126. Diaries of George De Salis, *op. cit.*

127. This is how the Wright family always spelled the name of the property and the area.

128. Death registration of Richard Lowe, Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 9357. His father was a 'white' man, also called Richard Lowe according to Dick's death certificate, but his mother was recorded as 'unknown'. It is unlikely that she was unknown to Dick.

129. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW: the marriage registration of Mary Effie Lowe and Alfred Merritt, No 4180, contains details of the bride's birth date and place (see Plate 15).



Plate 14: Eucumbene River at Kiandra
Photo by Reg Alder.

Dick and Sarah's family and friends

Dick and Sarah had eleven children: Mary Effie (born 1874), Nina (1876), William (1878), Phoebe (1879), Herbert Richard (1882), Elizabeth (1886), Sarah Jane (1887), Henry William (1888), Florence Ellen (1889), Adelaide (1893) and Hubert (1899).¹³⁰ Henry William and Florence Ellen may have been named after Sarah's and Dick's close friends, Henry 'Black Harry' Williams and his wife, Ellen Grovenor (see profile on Henry and Ellen below).

The births, baptisms, deaths and marriages of the Lowe children are recorded in various church registers in the Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass districts, both Catholic and Anglican, which suggests that the various priests from those districts were urging the Lowes to become members of their respective parishes. The baptisms of some of Dick and Sarah's children, for example, appear in the registers of Christ Church, Queanbeyan and the Anglican Church of Canberra and Queanbeyan (St John's) as well as in the registers of both St Clement's Anglican Church and St Augustine's Roman Catholic Church in Yass.

Dick's extended family included a Jerry Lowe, who was working at *Cuppacumbalong* throughout the 1880s and early 1890s. Unless he was using a 'nickname', he was not one of Sarah's eleven children. He may have been a child of Dick's from a previous wife or his younger brother. Jerry and his wife, Christine Lowe, had a baby, Richard, for whom George's sister, Nina De Salis, and their brother, Henry De Salis, were godparents when the child was christened on 9 March 1891.¹³¹

One of the sons of Dick and Sarah, Dicky Lowe, was also working for the De Salis family doing odd jobs by the time he was eight or nine years old. In 1893, Dick Senior was pressured by Sergeant Nelson, the local constable, to send his elder children to the local Barnes Creek school. Sgt Nelson promised Dick he would give each of the children who went to the school a brand new suit.¹³² Judging by the fact that most of the elder children of Dick and Sarah signed their marks, not their names, on their marriage certificates, Dick must have passed up the offer of the new suits. No doubt, like Dicky, the children were all working locally from quite a young age and did not put a priority on schooling.

Some of the Lowe children died young. Nina Lowe (identified as 'Aboriginal', not by the offensive term 'half caste') passed away at Queanbeyan Hospital on 12 Sep-

130. Compiled from church and other records for the Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass districts. A twelfth child, Richard, born in 1891, was the son of Jerry and Christine Lowe but his death registration claims Dick and Sarah as his parents. Perhaps they brought him up. It is possible that some of Dick and Sarah's younger children were also grandchildren as the records may not be entirely accurate.

131. George mentions this in his diaries but so far I have found no records that give better clues to the identity of Jerry and Christine Lowe. Sometimes Aboriginal people use different names, such as nicknames, that have nothing to do with their birth names, so it is possible that Jerry had a different birth name. Further research may turn up clues sometime in the future. As noted above, when Jerry's child passed away 14 years later his parents were recorded as Dick and Sarah, perhaps because they brought him up.

132. Diary of George De Salis, *op. cit.*, 1 October 1894.

tember 1899 at the age of 22 of phthisis (tuberculosis).¹³³ One wonders if the Matron of the hospital, who provided the background information on Nina for the registration of her death, even bothered to contact Nina's family because the death certificate contains inaccurate information. Dick, Sarah and other members of the family would have been in Yass at this time. Their youngest child, Herbert, was born in Yass that year. No minister was present at Nina's funeral but she was nevertheless afforded a 'Christian' burial in the Church of England section of the Queanbeyan cemetery on Riverside Drive. Hopefully, some members of her family attended.

The newspaper account of Nina's death was very brief but at least identified her as Aboriginal:

Lowe, a young aboriginal woman, died at Queanbeyan Hospital on 12th September 1899.¹³⁴

Nina is probably the girl on the right, standing at the back closest to her father (right), in Plate 2. Nina may have been named after Nina De Salis, for whom Dick and Sarah worked for many years when Nina was still at *Cuppacumbalong* with her family.¹³⁵

Nina's younger brother, William, also died of phthisis.¹³⁶ William passed away on 25 January 1900, also in Queanbeyan Hospital, aged 20 according to his death certificate (he was actually 22). His place of birth is recorded as Tharwa. Unlike that of his sister, William's funeral ceremony was conducted by a Church of England minister. William was buried the day after his death, on 26 January 1900, exactly 112 years after the First Fleet landed. The report of William's death in the *Queanbeyan Observer* was as anonymous as that of his elder sister:

Lowe, an aboriginal, died at Queanbeyan hospital 24th January 1900.¹³⁷

William is not in the photograph of the Lowe family with Nellie and King Billy (Plate 2). He was a labourer and was probably working at the time this photograph was taken. William, like Nina, is also identified on his death certificate as 'Aboriginal' and was identified as such in the newspaper report of his death. After his death, his younger brother, Henry William, was known as William Lowe.¹³⁸ Henry William is probably the boy who is sitting beside Nellie in the front row in Plate 2. He was then about seven years old.

Phoebe Lowe was the next member of the family to pass away, also in 1899,¹³⁹ aged about 20. Phoebe may be the girl standing next to King Billy (left) in Plate 2.

133. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 10679.

134. *Queanbeyan Observer* 15 September 1899.

135. Nina De Salis married William Farrer, the wheat specialist. They moved into Lambrigg on the Cuppacumbalong Estate, which was owned by Leopold De Salis, on their marriage.

136. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 3115.

137. *Queanbeyan Observer* 26 January 1900. His death certificate records, however, that he had died the day before.

138. His age is recorded, erroneously, on his father's death certificate as 38 in 1916. He was actually about 28 years old at that time. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 9357.

139. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 8014. I do not have a copy of her death certificate.

Young Richard Lowe passed away at the Yass District Hospital on 26 June 1905 at the age of 14 years.¹⁴⁰ The cause of death, recorded by the local medical attendant, Dr English, was 'tubercular meningitis'. His father's name was recorded as Richard Lowe and his mother's as Sarah McCarthie¹⁴¹ but, as noted earlier, his parents were actually Jerry and Christine Lowe. There is no other identifier of his Aboriginal roots. His funeral ceremony was conducted by a minister and he was buried in the Church of England cemetery at Yass the same day he died. His death registration claims Yass was also his birthplace, but he was born in Tharwa according to George De Salis's diaries. George's sister, Nina, and his brother, Henry, were the child's godparents (see above).

Lowe family camps

It is evident from the various registers that record the births, deaths and marriages of their children that Dick and Sarah included the Yass district in their regular travels from the 1880s onwards, but they still maintained their home base in the Tharwa district for many years. During the New South Wales census of 1891 'Black Dick' Lowe was visiting Cooma with another male, possibly Jerry Lowe. Dick told the census collector that his wife and children were at Cuppacumbalong. This was confirmed by another collector, who recorded Sarah and the rest of the Lowe family (two males and six females inclusive, 'all half-caste') as residing near the *Cuppacumbalong* and *Naas* stations.¹⁴²

After the De Salis family left *Cuppacumbalong*, the management team of Santille, Besnard and Middlemas managed the property for the bank from October 1894. James Middlemas fathered a child, James Lowe, with Mary Effie Lowe, Dick and Sarah's eldest child. James Lowe was born at Tuggeranong on 14 April 1896.¹⁴³ In the registration of his baptism at St Clement's Anglican Church at Yass on 5 March 1898, however, young James was identified as James Middlemas. Perhaps he used both names. Meanwhile, Leopold and George moved the De Salis family to *Lambrigg*. For a number of months, George barely knew what to do with himself and joined both Black Dick and Black Harry in prospecting for gold.¹⁴⁴ In the early 1900s, Andrew Cunningham Junior, who had inherited *Lanyon* on the death of his father, employed local Aboriginal people (including 'Black Dick') on his station and also at the 'Black-White Mine' located at the East gate of his homestead.¹⁴⁵

140. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 11259.

141. As explained previously, Sarah used both Duncan and McCarthie (or McCarthy) as a surname. She was fostered by the McCarthy family at *Glenwood* when she was younger, possibly even before Nanny died.

142. Census of NSW, 1891.

143. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 15697 55.

144. Diaries of George De Salis, NLA Manuscripts. *Cuppacumbalong*, *Naas* and *Cooleman* stations were later purchased by Fred Campbell.

145. Avery, Steven, 1994. Avery quotes as his source Bert Sheedy, a long-time Queanbeyan resident and descendant of a Tharwa family, whom he interviewed in 1994.

MARRIAGE REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

**CERTIFIED COPY FURNISHED UNDER PART 8 OF THE
REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT, 1995.**

Date and place of marriage	Name and surname of parties	Civil status	Birthplace	Usual occupation	Age	Usual place of residence	Father's name mother's name and maiden surname	Father's occupation
16 June 1897	Alfred Merritt and Mary Effie Lowe	undrowned & single	Mudgee N.S.W.	Labourer	27	2400	George Merritt Elizabeth Ann Richardson	Labourer
	Quarantined Mary Effie Lowe in Sydney				25	2400	Richard Lowe Sarah Merritt	Labourer

The Marriage was solemnized between us (Mary Effie Lowe) and (Alfred Merritt) in the presence of us (Mr J. Merritt) witnesses Henry J. Merritt

By (Signature) and (Signature) Officiating Minister

I, BARBARA FLETT, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF PARTICULARS RECORDED IN A REGISTER KEPT BY ME.

ISSUED AT SYDNEY. 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1997

REGISTRAR

Plate 15: Marriage certificate of Mary Effie Lowe and Alfred Merritt



Plate 16: Mt Burbidge and Mt Namadgi across the Gudgenby Valley

Photo by Reg Alder.

According to Lily Brown, who grew up at Lanyon in the early twentieth century:

They [Aborigines] used to camp up from us, up in the paddock above Lanyon there. I can't remember what they call the paddocks now — the Ford. They used to have a big camp up there. Old Black Dick was their leader. Old Mr Andy Cunningham was very good to them. He looked after them, and gave them a horse and buggy, and they used to drive to Queanbeyan ... there was a lot of women... Perhaps when Jimmy came [Andrew's brother James inherited the property when Andrew died in 1913] he might have cleared them out, I don't know. He was a little stricter than Andy.¹⁴⁶

Dick, probably more than Harry, liked to drink when he was not working. George De Salis expressed in his diaries his increasing annoyance at the large numbers of visitors Dick entertained at his camp and the noise. Dick hosted a number of large parties of Aboriginal friends at his camp on the Ford Paddock, located on South Lanyon on the Murrumbidgee River opposite Cuppacumbalong (see Map 15).¹⁴⁷ He

146. *Ibid.* Avery quotes as his source Brown, L in Withycombe, S, 1988, unpublished oral transcript, ACT Department of Environment, Land and Planning, Canberra.

147. *Ibid.*

was 'run in' a number of times for being drunk in Queanbeyan and occasionally, but not often, missed work because he was in gaol sleeping it off.¹⁴⁸

Dick was clearly used by a number of his 'white' contemporaries in those desperate financial times. For example, Dick and his family had lived on and farmed the Aboriginal reserve granted to 'local Aborigines' in the Queanbeyan district in 1895 (see Map 16). Three years later, however, when a local property owner expressed an interest in renting it, there was an official inquiry into the use of the reserve by local 'Aborigines'. According to George De Salis, a local man eventually bribed Dick and his family to leave the reserve: 'Lees bribed Lowe and family to leave there, gave them £25, some rations and the old [?] buggy'.¹⁴⁸

Yet George himself was sometimes guilty of bending ethics. Following the introduction of the various Free Selection Acts from the 1860s, the De Salis family had organised for a number of their workers to 'dummy' for them, which means they bought land in their name on behalf of the De Salis family.¹⁴⁹ When his family fortunes began to fail in the late 1880s, George may have asked Dick Lowe to dummy for him as well. Dick's name appears with that of De Salis and other men known to have been dummied for the De Salis family in a list of land applications published in the *Yass Courier* in 1890.¹⁵⁰ Dick and, by extension, De Salis, faced controversy when Dick's land application for 200 acres in the Parish of Tharwa was considered at the Land Sale at the Queanbeyan court house. This question was covered by the local *Goulburn Herald* as follows:

LAND SALE on last Thursday caused our spacious court premises to be comparatively speaking packed with anxious intending purchasers of the soil, as evidenced by the fact that close upon £3000 passed into the coffers. One of the purchasers is an aboriginal, and I have heard the question raised, as to his being legally in possession of the land, he not being a naturalised British subject. I contend however that he having been born under the British flag is to all intents and purposes a British subject, and therefore entitled to all rights and privileges enjoyed by those natives of other portions of the British dominion. What is your opinion? (Undoubtedly).¹⁵¹

It appears, however, that Dick's land application was unsuccessful as I can find no record of such a land grant being made.

From the 1880s onwards the Lowe family began to include Yass in their travels, visiting Sarah's relatives who had settled in that district. Sarah had siblings who had well established families in the Wallabalooa area at that time and she maintained her contacts with them. A number of her children had found (mostly Aboriginal) partners in the Yass district, where they married and settled. It appears that Sarah remained in Yass with her family from the turn of the century while Dick and Harry preferred to return to Kamberri country, particularly after the death of Harry's wife Ellen in 1903.

148. Diaries of George De Salis, 20 May 1898.

149. Diaries of George De Salis.

150. *Yass Courier* 8 August 1890. I am grateful to Steven Avery for sending me a copy of this and other related information and for his generosity in sharing his original research with me throughout the years I have been working on this history.

151. *Goulburn Herald* 9 August 1890. My thanks again to Steven Avery for sending me a copy of this article.

Edward Lee, son of Marmaduke Lee who owned Gudgenby station from 1907 to 1920, recalled 'Old Black Dick and Black Harry' camping out at Yankee Hat, in Rendezvous Valley and at Nursery Swamp during this period. According to Lee, they continued looking for that large nugget of gold that 'Queen Nellie' supposedly lost. Lee claimed they continued holding corroborrees in those areas. Said Lee:

Old Black Dick and Black Harry used to wander through [Gudgenby] with their gins and pickanninies and their score of mongrel dogs calling at the stations for beef, flour, tea, sugar and tobacco and old cloathes [sic] for the gins and all the tribe. They always got a good handout.¹⁵²

Dick and Harry made regular visits to Yass to visit their families in the early 20th century.

Following the establishment of Edgerton Aboriginal Reserve (see Map 15), near Murrumbateman (in Kamberri country), the Lowes moved in and, later, Dick joined them. While he was there, Dick's mental health declined. In 1916, the manager of the 'Aboriginal Station at Yass' accompanied by Dick's son-in-law, Alfred Merritt, took him to the 'Mental Hospital' at Kenmore, in the Mulwaree district of Goulburn.¹⁵³ Between them, perhaps with some help from Dick, they managed to fill in some of the details later required for his death certificate, including his place of birth, his estimated age, the name of his father and the names and ages of his children. Perhaps Dick was able to provide these basic details himself, although apparently he forgot the names and ages of some of his children (see Plate 17). He had also forgotten the name of his wife, Sarah. The only clue on the death certificate that he was Aboriginal was the reference to the fact that he had been living on the 'Aboriginal Station', Edgerton.

He passed away on 30 March 1916 at the age of 76.¹⁵⁴ He was buried on 3 April 1916 in the Roman Catholic section of the Kenmore Hospital cemetery, with Fr Michael Carey presiding. Hopefully, Dick's wife and his surviving children were present to mourn him at his funeral.

Both Dick and Sarah and at least seven of their children, with Black Harry and others, carried the Kamberri torch well into the 20th century and have hundreds of descendants, most of whom continue to identify as Aboriginal. A few later descendants have reignited their identity with the Indigenous people of the Canberra district and surrounds in modern times.

Henry 'Black Harry' Williams

While 'Black Dick' Lowe was able to pass on details of his paternity to his family and had his father's name recorded on his death certificate, there is no existing evidence to confirm the details of 'Black Harry's' parents. 'Black Harry' was classified as 'half-caste' on the first of his two marriage registrations to Ellen Grovenor (*nee* Howe)¹⁵⁵ and may, in fact, have had a mixed heritage, yet he was clearly identified as 'Aborigi-

152. Lee Marmaduke, n.d., 'Marmaduke Lee', Cumpston Collection, NLA Manuscripts MS 8390.

153. This is mentioned on his death certificate.

154. His death certificate claims he was 'about 70'.



DEATH REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

CERTIFIED COPY FURNISHED UNDER PART 8 OF THE
REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT, 1995.

No.	Date and place of death	Name and occupation	Sex and age	Cause of death	Name and occupation of father	Name and occupation of mother	Informant	Particulars of registration	When and where buried: name of undertaker	Name and religion of Minister and names of witnesses of burial	Where born and how long in the Australian Colonies or Status	Place of marriage: age and to whom	Children of marriage
9357	19 th March 1906 20 th March 1906 Mental Hospital New South Wales Sydney	Richard Lowe	Male 70 years	Stroke (1) Stroke (2) Stroke (3) Stroke (4) Stroke (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)	Richard Lowe (1) Richard Lowe (2) Richard Lowe (3) Richard Lowe (4) Richard Lowe (5)

I, BARBARA FLETT, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF PARTICULARS RECORDED IN A REGISTER KEPT BY ME.



Barbara Flett

REGISTRAR

ISSUED AT SYDNEY, 11th SEPTEMBER, 1997

Plate 17: Death certificate of Richard 'Black Dick' Lowe

nal' on his death certificate in 1921 (see Plate 21).¹⁵⁶ The priests who married him did not ascertain the names of his parents, either, and so his parents were marked as 'unknown' on his marriage certificate. When he was received into the Roman Catholic Church on 30 October 1892, just before his marriage, Black Harry gave only the possible surname, Williams, of his father, but not the name of his mother. A number of orphans were included on the 1838 blanket distribution list but Harry was then only about a year old and his mother may still have been alive at that time. Perhaps for reasons of his own Harry did not feel like talking about his parents to his family or to the priest. It is possible his mother passed away when he was a small child and that he never knew much about either of his parents, although it does seem unlikely that his extended family did not tell him.

Ellen Grovenor did know her father and stated his name, Charles Howe, a white man, when she married Harry. Her mother was a Wallabalooa woman named Kitty.¹⁵⁷ She was named after her 'white' father's mother.

Who was Harry's family? I have tried to follow a number of leads that might shed some light on Harry's origins. I have rejected most of them for various reasons but two or three lines of argument still leave me wondering which trail to follow. The most promising is the track left by Harry himself.

Harry closely identified with the high country all his life, particularly with the Brindabella and Namadgi ranges, Goobarragandra, Coolemon and Yarrangobilly. These were the same areas of personal identification as those of the Harry who was sitting with Noolup at *Yarralumla* when the Chief Protector, George Augustus Robinson, visited in 1844.¹⁵⁸ In fact, Noolup's areas of identification were identical to those of Black Harry. The Harry on the 1844 list at *Yarralumla* was 19 years old, according to Robinson, but he may have estimated his age. Since Harry was born about 1838, he would have been only six in 1844, but it is tempting to think there may have been some connection between the two Harrys. Noolup's group may have identified closely with this mountain area and expanded their country when the group merged with Onyong's group in the 1840s (see Part I).

For both Dick and Harry, the Murrumbidgee, Goodradigbee and Goobarragandra rivers (see Map 15) were their highways. As Noolup and his group had done before them, they would have followed these rivers from the mountains to get to the Canberra, Yass and Tumut districts respectively and they also frequently visited the Monaro and even the south coast. Members of the Kamberri had done the same in earlier years and also hosted visitors from those areas, possibly for local important

155. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, St Clement's Anglican Church, Yass, 4 August 1888. They were married again by a Catholic priest from St Augustine's, Yass, in 1892.

156. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, 17 August 1921, No 10711.

157. Her mother and father are listed on her death certificate, NSW Registration No 16496, and in the register of St Clement's Anglican Church, Yass. Ellen died in 1903. It is possible that her mother was Kitty King, daughter of Billy the Bull who will feature in volume II.

158. Clark, Ian, 1998.

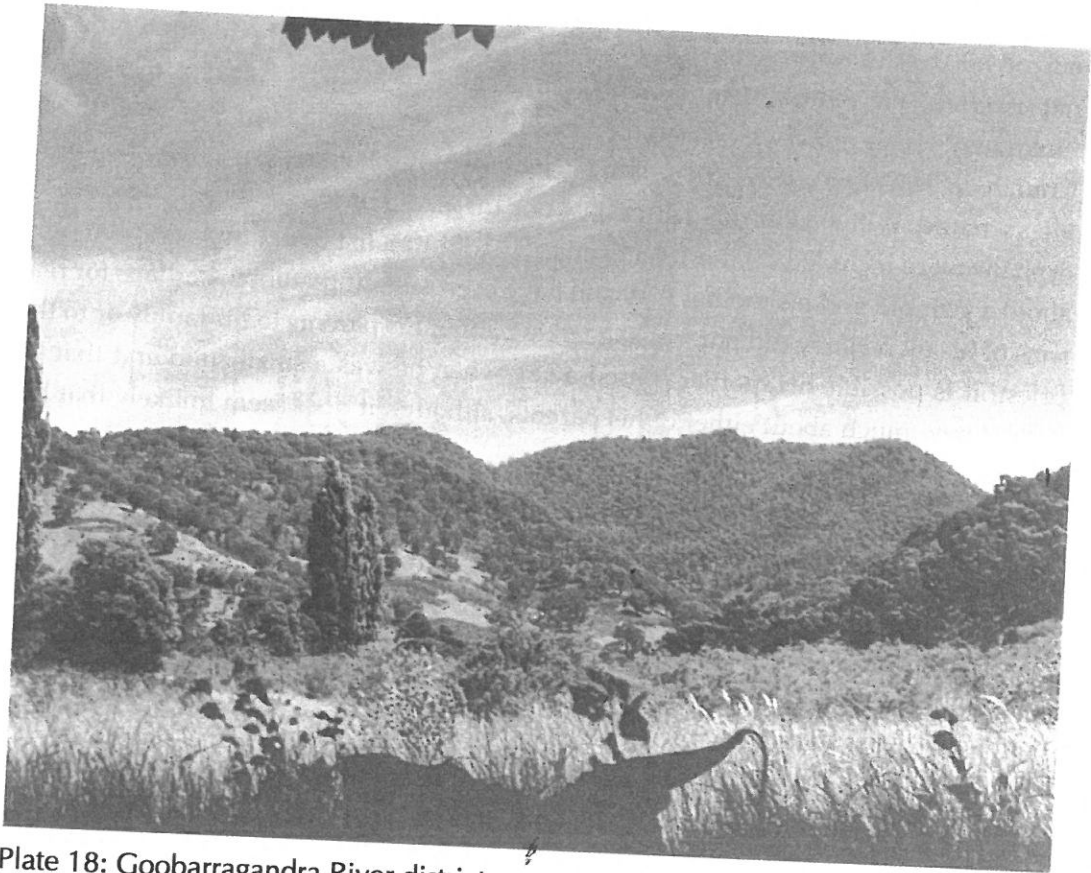


Plate 18: Goobarragandra River district

Photo by Reg Alder.

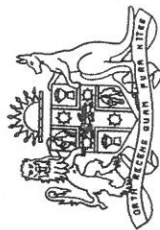
ceremonies in which many Aboriginal groups in the southeast region of New South Wales engaged.

Since 'Black Harry' Williams clearly had easy access to Tumut from his beloved mountains and since the Kamberri were so closely connected to the Tumut- and Tumbarumba-based Walgalu communities, we must ask if he was related to the Tumut-based Billy Williams.¹⁵⁹ The historical records reveal they knew each other because members of their families (and stepfamilies) intermarried;¹⁶⁰ however, this fact supports the theory that they were not closely related through their Aboriginal relatives because, traditionally, close relatives such as first cousins were forbidden to marry. Were they perhaps related through their 'white' progenitors?

'White' settlers named Henry Williams and William Williams established themselves in the Tumut and lower Murrumbidgee districts between Yass and Gundagai

159. Descendants of Billy's line have asked me the same question. This Billy Williams should not be confused with the Billy Williams from the Shoalhaven district. They are two separate identities.

160. For example, Agnes Williams, the daughter of Billy Williams, was the first wife of Harry's stepson, Isaac Grovenor.



MARRIAGE REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

CERTIFIED COPY FURNISHED UNDER PART 8 OF THE
REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT, 1995.

Usual occupation Age Usual place of residence Father's name
mother's name and
maiden surname Father's occupation

No.	Date and place of marriage	Names and surnames of parties	Conjugal status	Birthplace
7981	30 October 1997 Queensland	Harry Williams Ellen Howe	Bachelor Spinster	Queensland Queensland
<p>Married in the presence of us { Harry & Ellen } According to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church</p> <p>This Marriage was solemnized between us { Harry & Ellen } By (or before) me { Barbara Flett } Officialising Minister or Registrar</p>				

I, BARBARA FLETT, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF PARTICULARS RECORDED IN A REGISTER KEPT BY ME.



Barbara Flett

REGISTRAR

ISSUED AT SYDNEY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1997

Plate 19: Marriage certificate of Black Harry Williams and Ellen Howe

from the 1830s.¹⁶¹ Some members of these 'white' families moved between these districts and Canberra, Queanbeyan and the Monaro during this period. Some of them worked alongside 'Black Harry' on properties such as *Gezezerick* on the Monaro and *Cuppacumbalong* in Tharwa.¹⁶²

When we take up the trail of a man whose name Black Harry is most likely to have adopted, we find he also spent time working for William Broadribb in the lower Murrumbidgee district of Gundagai and at Mannus in the upper Murray River region. Broadribb had purchased Mannus from Terence Aubrey Murray. This was all Walgalu country at that time. The 'white' Henry 'Harry' Williams appeared in Part I of this volume as a worker for Terence Aubrey Murray and other Lake George property owners in the 1830s. This Harry was a contemporary of the 'white' Richard 'Dick' Lowe, who may also have worked for Murray at Lake George and *Yarralumla*. Williams and Lowe moved on to the Monaro around the same time and both worked for Richard Brooks on his *Gezezerick* run.¹⁶³ It might have been the 'white' Harry Williams who became known on the Monaro as 'Old Harry' or 'Old Williams' while he was still quite young. Harry Williams was born in 1811 and was only 17 years old when he was transported in 1828. As 'Old Williams', he worked with William Broadribb for many years. Onyong, Noolup and their group were regular visitors to the Adaminaby station, across the Murrumbidgee from Yaouk on the southwest Kambarri frontier, which Broadribb managed for William Bradley of Goulburn from the late 1830s.¹⁶⁴ Adaminaby was not far from *Gezezerick* in the modern day district of Berridale and it was also quite close to Kiandra.

Broadribb and his workers used to take stock through Yarrangobilly Gap to Melbourne. Broadribb claims he and his men marked this run but Terence Aubrey Murray and Stewart Marjoribanks Mowle were also following that route around the same time. Some time after this, Broadribb bought Murray's Mannus station on the western side of the mountains and later moved to Gundagai. At the Gundagai station, Broadribb employed local 'Aborigines' to help him wash and shear ewes.

When Broadribb moved to Melbourne in the late 1850s his drover, 'Old Williams', was still with him. Despite his nickname, which may have referred to his length of employment rather than his age, Harry Williams had not then reached the age of 50. Williams made periodic returns 'in easy stages' from Melbourne to the 'Limestone Plains', where he bought sheep from the Palmer and Campbell families on Broadribb's behalf.¹⁶⁵ It appears that 'Old Williams' returned with Broadribb to the Monaro around the time that Black Harry was at *Cuppacumbalong*.¹⁶⁶ George De Salis

161. The registers of births, deaths and marriages at St Clement's Anglican Church and St Augustine's Roman Catholic Church at Yass record all these families and their locations.

162. Brooks and De Salis family papers, NLA Manuscripts.

163. Brooks family papers, Box 1, NLA Manuscripts MS 7207.

164. Clark, 1998.

165. Broadribb, WA, 1883, p 110.

166. Broadribb was asked to run in the Monaro election in 1864.

mentions in his diaries that 'Old Williams' had a hut at Binda, near Bombala, for a time. It seems unlikely that Black Harry never met him.

I cannot help returning to Black Harry's strong connection with Broadribb's employee, 'Old' Williams, whom I believe was the man I will refer to as 'White Harry' to distinguish him from his possible progeny. As noted above, the Kamberri were regular visitors to the station where White Harry worked near Adaminaby. Black Harry was born about 1838 (his death certificate claimed he was 84 when he died in 1921, which is very precise), during which time 'White' Harry Williams was still at Broadribb's station near Adaminaby. There is a strong possibility that Black Harry was a product of a relationship between White Harry and a Kamberri woman while the former was working at Adaminaby. It seems likely that Black Harry had a white father, even if, like Black Dick, he had strong and dark Aboriginal features. The strong emphasis on Nellie Hamilton being the 'last pure-blood' Aboriginal in the Queanbeyan district suggests that Black Harry, like Dick Lowe, Nanny and his other contemporaries, had a mixed heritage. On the other hand, perhaps, like Jimmy Taylor and others, Black Harry was merely given this name as a mark of friendship between the Kamberri and the white Harry Williams. We may never know for sure.

Was 'Old Harry' Williams, the employee of Broadribb, the same Henry 'Harry' Williams who established a property in the lower Murrumbidgee district (around Gundagai)? Did he also father the Aboriginal Billy Williams, possibly with a Walgalu-speaking Gurmäl woman? Clearly, more research needs to be done in an area outside the focus of this volume to ascertain more clearly Black Harry's connections to the Williams family in the Tumut district.

It is just as complicated trying to ascertain whether Black Harry himself fathered Billy Williams with a Gurmäl woman, which is possible. Billy was a lot younger than Black Harry and the Tumut-based Aboriginal Billy Williams' line carries the name 'Henry' through a few generations, perhaps in honour of Black Harry Williams or perhaps in honour of Billy's white father, or for other unrelated reasons. It would seem strange that, if indeed Billy was his son, Black Harry would allow Billy's daughter to marry his stepson, but since Isaac Grovenor and Agnes Williams were not related through blood, perhaps this marriage was acceptable within Aboriginal tradition. I have not pursued this line in any detail to date because Billy did not identify with the Kamberri. By the 1880s, this family was identifying as Wiradjuri.

According to one local story, members of the Tumut Williams family were the only survivors of a massacre that occurred in the Tumut Valley, 'into the hills to the East of Brungle, at a place known as Murder Creek', where many Aboriginal people were allegedly killed by 'whites'.¹⁶⁷ This would be somewhere in the Adjungbilly district, which is not far from the Darbalara property frequented by Billy Williams.¹⁶⁸ Frederick Freeman told a different story about this massacre to WS Parkes. According

167. Sams, DEJ, 1982.

168. Billy and other members of the Williams family were at Darbalara at the time of the NSW census of 1891.

to Fred's story, a fight occurred between the two Tumut 'tribes'. One of these was Wiradjuri and the other was the 'now vanished Gurmál', also referred to as 'the Tumut blacks'. This was almost certainly a Walgalu-speaking group. Fred said the Gurmál used to live up in the Bogong Mountains and 'spoke a lot like the Ngunuwal', whose territory was adjacent to their own, and some 'lads' from the two tribes had killed each other off at Lacmalac, a place just outside Tumut.¹⁶⁹ The Wiradjuri referred to the Gurmál as 'gurái', meaning 'hostile people'.

We can surmise that Black Harry grew up with the Kamberri because he hinted this was so when he was interviewed about the Brindabella 'Hairy Man' by his friend, George Webb, at Uriarra station in 1903. Black Harry told George a story about a 'Hairy Man' who was killed by his Elders below the junction of the Yass and Murrumbidgee rivers when he was about ten years old.¹⁷⁰ This area would have been close to the modern Burrinjuck Dam, between the Goodradigbee and Murrumbidgee rivers, an extension of the Brindabella Range just west of the area now called Murrumbateman. This was within the northern Kamberri frontier and also within the area with which Black Harry closely identified personally. Aboriginal people, as well as some non-Aboriginal residents of the area, believed hairy men inhabited the Brindabella Range.

It could be argued, I suppose, that Tumut-based groups also used the area identified by Black Harry in the hairy man story. It was a northern frontier between the Kamberri and other Walgalu-speaking groups from Wee Jasper to Brungle and Tumut. The Yass River also marked a frontier between the Kamberri and Yass and Wallabalooa groups. It was only after he married Ellen Grovenor that Black Harry stayed in the Yass and Wallabalooa districts for any period of time.

Did Black Harry belong to the Kamberri or the Gurmál, or both? The records about him suggest strongly that his country was in the eastern mountain districts and surrounds, including the Brindabella and Namadgi ranges, and in the districts surrounding the upper Murrumbidgee as far as its junction with the Yass River. This was also country frequented by Noolup and Onyong, so perhaps the distinctions between the two groups were minimal — even irrelevant? All the supporting information available concerning Black Harry's origins points to his associations with the mountains, the Cuppacumbalong, Tharwa and Naas districts and, to a lesser extent, with the mountain district east of the Tumut River, just as Noolup's and Onyong's did. He was also closely associated with Kamberri families and may have been brought up as part of Onyong's and Noolup's united group. Cuppacumbalong was the last camping place where the Kamberri were all together. Onyong passed away there circa 1852, just a few years before Black Harry appeared in the De Salis records. He had already been working there for some time. The De Salis family purchased the property from the Wright family circa 1856.

169. Parkes, WS, 1952, letter to Norman Tindale. It is unclear if this is the same battle, but it seems likely. The Tumut Williams family may have originally identified as Gurmál and joined the Wiradjuri after the massacre. Certainly, members of the Tumut-based Williams clan intermarried with Wiradjuri families from the 1880s.

170. *Queanbeyan Observer* 7 August 1903. I am grateful to Graham Joyner for drawing my attention to this article.

Harry's skills

Black Harry had had much experience as a 'farmer' and stockman, having worked, on and off, for stations in the upper Murrumbidgee, Uriarra, Brindabella, Yaouk, Adam-inaby and Berridale districts during his lifetime. At least 30 of those years had been spent at *Cuppacumbalong* and other De Salis stations and runs. Like 'Black Dick' Lowe, Harry had a wide range of skills and could do any job asked of him by his employer. George De Salis highly regarded both 'Black Dick' and 'Black Harry'. He was also jealous of Harry's sporting skills and was always challenging him to races. Harry was an excellent horse racer and George could never quite beat him:

27th November 1875: Informal races at the flat. Black Harry's horse won by ½ mile and that finished the day's sport.¹⁷¹

24th December 1882: Henry¹⁷² has decided to let Black Harry run in Queanbeyan on Boxing Day. I gave him a short run and he is too fast for me to run without practice.¹⁷³

26th December 1882: Black Harry rode. Ran in first heat but being put on scratch he did not take a place, the reason being he got a bad start and got battered among so many runners. He ran in the 200 yards race and having a good handicap doubled his lead before reaching the rope. Everyone was delighted to see him win. I think he was the fastest runner on the ground.

30th December 1882: Black Harry has been matched to run Blewitt for fifty pounds a side to take place on 26th January 1883.

13th January 1883: Henry and others take Harry up to the big yards to give him a trial run of 200 yards, which he did in less than 22 seconds. Grady is here training Harry.

26th January 1883: Received a telegram to say Black Harry had won the match for fifty seven pounds aside from Blewitt.¹⁷⁴

George and Henry even went so far as to pay for Black Harry to go to Sydney to race on their behalf:

2nd April 1883: Met Henry and Black Harry at Hunter Street ... Henry bought for Harry some clothes and then put him on the bus.

3rd April 1883: Boarded the *Eleanore* at the wharf. Black Harry aboard also.¹⁷⁵

Black Harry was obviously very fit. He was in his mid-forties in the period to which De Salis refers above. He must have enjoyed the racing otherwise he would not have done it, one would imagine. He was no white man's stooge, as George De Salis noted when Grady, another of De Salis's workers, was teasing Black Harry in their camp up at Old Cooleman in May 1876:

15th May 1876: Grady is carrying his jokes too far, raises the temper of Black Harry, who hits him several blows.

Harry's friends and family

Black Harry and Black Dick had camps all over the highlands as well as in the valley – camps that were frequently populated with visitors, both black and white (see Map

171. Diary of George De Salis, NLA Manuscripts mfm G20727.

172. George's younger brother.

173. George was ten years younger than Black Harry!

174. George doesn't say who received the money, himself or Harry.

175. George does not record the result of Harry's race.

15). A number of Tumut as well as Canberra-Queanbeyan based settlers had runs up in the mountains and it is possible that the 'blacks' they employed on both sides of the mountains headed up to the high country to help their employers keep track of their stock (see Map 15). Aboriginal individuals and groups would have met up there as they had always done. Tumut and Kamberri families shared the same Walgalu dialect and probably had close kin networks. Most of them may have been killed in the massacre mentioned above, but some Gurmali survivors who intermarried with the Wiradjuri nevertheless may have maintained their kin connections to the Kamberri.

As also noted above, Black Harry married a Wallabalooa woman, Ellen Grovenor, who was also known as Helen and Nellie. There are records of two marriage ceremonies: one was performed by an Anglican priest from St Clement's Church, Yass, on 4 August 1888 and the other by a Catholic priest from St Augustine's on 30 October 1892. Ellen was 36 and Harry 49 at the time of the first marriage, in 1888, but since their eldest daughter, Daisy, was born in 1886 they were obviously a couple before they married in the European sense. When she was 15 years old, Ellen had become the wife of Jack Grovenor, also from the Wallabalooa group.¹⁷⁶ Historical evidence suggests Ellen was close to the core Wallabalooa group that settled at Pudman Creek, as members of that community were consistently witnesses at the births, marriages and deaths of Williams and Grovenor families long after Ellen passed away.

Ellen was born in Bowning, near Yass.¹⁷⁷ She was the daughter of Kitty, who belonged to King Andy Lane's Wallabalooa group.¹⁷⁸ Her father was Charles Howe, from a prominent local European settler family. There must have been strong affection between Charles and Kitty because their daughter was named after Charles's mother.

The registration of Harry's first marriage to Ellen suggests that, unlike Ellen, he had never been married before. According to George De Salis, however, there were always women at Black Dick's and Black Harry's camps, including Black Dick's wife, Sarah, and their children. In 1875, for example, De Salis noted that 'the gins' at one of these camps 'had a great row with Mrs Willson [sic] and Mrs Dyball'.¹⁷⁹ A number of the women from the camps worked occasionally for the De Salis family as domestics and some of the men helped the local police sergeant track suspects in various local crimes.

In August 1892:

Sgt Nelson came out to get the measurements of the blacks. It is for someone who is writing about the Aborigines of this colony. I assisted him. We weighed and measured three men, three women and three boys. The measurements were round the

176. They may not have married officially.

177. Information from her death certificate. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 16496.

178. There were a number of Wallabalooa women with the name 'Kitty' so it is difficult to identify which one of them was Ellen's mother. It may have been Kitty King, daughter of Billy the Bull, who will feature in more detail in volume II.

179. Diary of George De Salis, 28 September 1875.

chest, from ground to calf, to knee, to fork, to navel, to chin, to full height. We did some here and some at the camp.¹⁸⁰

Although it is hard to imagine that a healthy and fit man such as Harry would not have had a previous 'wife' or two before he married Ellen, only the three children he had with Ellen are recorded on his death certificate.

At the time of the New South Wales census in 1891, Henry 'Black Harry' Williams and his family were at the 'Blacks Camp' at Yass. His 'household' or family group then consisted of seven males and four females inclusive of Harry and Ellen. Ellen had five sons and four daughters with her previous husband, Jack Grovenor, and, at the time of the census, also had a three year-old daughter, Daisy, and a year-old son, Harold, with Black Harry. Members of the Duncan and Lowe families were recorded as sponsors or witnesses at the baptisms of Harry's children, as were members of the Pudman-based Wallabalooa group, with whom Ellen was associated. It is possible that two of Ellen's elder children, who were already in their late teens at that time, were away from home during the census. Overall, including Black Harry and Ellen, this household, after some of the adjustments mentioned above, would have totalled around seven males and four females, which agrees with the number in the household recorded at the time of the census in 1891.

Black Harry became close to all his stepchildren and taught the boys in particular tracking and other skills. He may have also taught them about his own country, taking the elder boys with him on his trips back to Tharwa, the Brindabella Ranges and other mountain areas via the Goodradigbee River after his sporadic trips to Yass. The Grovenors, as well as his own three biological children (Joseph Roderick was born in 1894), were with him at Boambolo when he was farming there with another of his close friends, the black tracker Jack Sheahan (see Map 17).¹⁸¹

From 1895 to 1903 Harry farmed a total of 200 acres in Boambolo, west of Murrumbateman, near to where he saw his Elders kill the 'hairy man' when he was a young boy. There were two reserves here, one of which was granted to Sheahan 'and others' and the other to Harry (see Map 17). In 1895, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines reported:

An Aboriginal, his wife and seven children have been placed in occupation of this reserve. This land has been enclosed with a good fence and is being cleared, rations being issued by the Board to the family while work is going on.¹⁸²

He was still there in 1900.

John Glover, former Mayor of Yass, told me in an interview that Harold 'Harry' Lightning Williams, Black Harry's son, and 'some of the Grovenor boys' worked for his grandfather at Cave Flat, Burrinjuck, which is now below Burrinjuck Dam. According to John, they would run cattle from Jindabyne on the Monaro down

180. *Ibid*, 2 August 1892. It is frustrating that George is not so diligent about the details of the research for which they were conducting these measurements!

181. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1895, VPNSWLA, 1896, vol III. Jack was from the Tumut district.

182. *Ibid*.

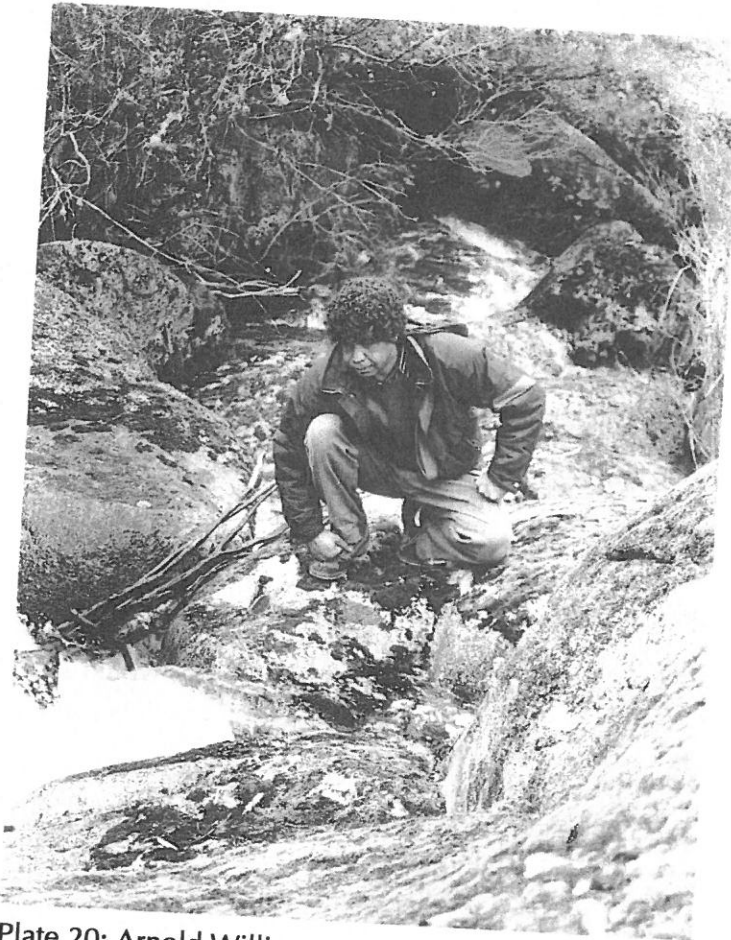


Plate 20: Arnold Williams, great-grandson of Black Harry Williams, studying axe grinding grooves at Middle Creek, Namadgi National Park, 1991
Photo by Reg Alder.

through the Brindabella ranges in winter.¹⁸³ Glover's grandfather learned much from Black Harry and his contemporaries and also from Black Harry's son, Lightning Williams, about the local Aboriginal language, culture and traditions, some details of which he passed on to John himself on the understanding that the information was to be kept secret.

Harry's last years

Black Harry abandoned his Boambolo farm in 1903 following the death of Ellen in Yass in 1903. She was then 51. The cause of her death was a hydatid liver and acute pneumonia.¹⁸⁴ Harry went back to the Brindabella district and found

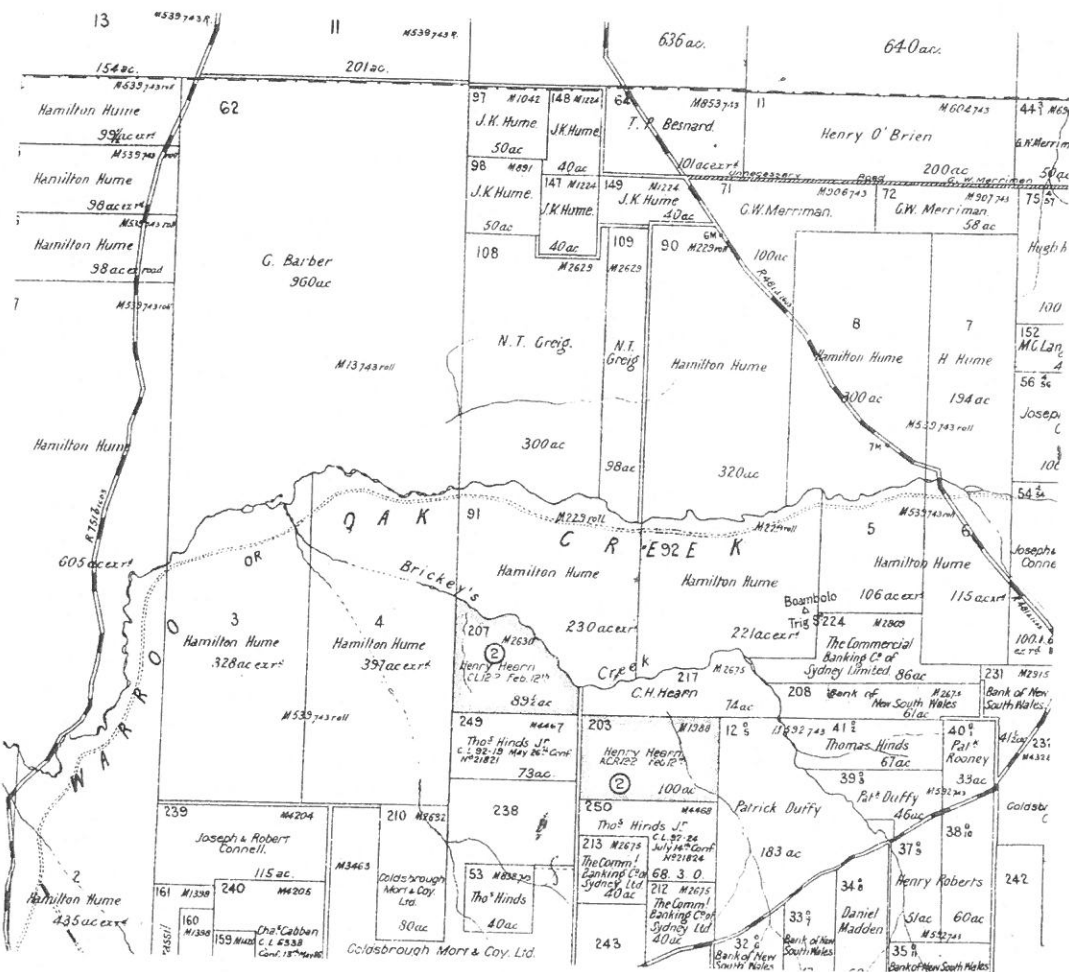
work at Uriarra station with his old friends, the McDonald family. He was then 66 years old. He had worked all his life. His stepchildren and children were all mostly adults then but it is clear that he was also close to his older grandchildren.

A few years later, young Edward Lee, whose father owned Gudgenby station between 1907 and 1920, began to see 'Old Black Dick' and 'Black Harry' wandering through Gudgenby 'with their gins and pickanninies with their score of mongrel dogs calling at the local stations for beef, flour, tea, sugar and tobacco and old cloathes' [sic].¹⁸⁵ The so-called 'gins' and 'pickanninies' would have been their adult children and grandchildren at that stage. It was only when he was in his mid-seventies that Harry was forced to beg for food. Given his age, he could have sat back peacefully in a rocking chair at Edgerton supported by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines.

183. Jackson-Nakano, Ann, 1993a, interview with John Glover, Yass.

184. Information from Ellen's death certificate, Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, NSW, No 16496.

185. Lee, Edward, n.d.



Map 17: Location of the two Boambolo Aboriginal reserves, Murrumbateman, south of the Yass River

Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

Black Dick Lowe took this option shortly before his demise in 1916, but Black Harry held on to his freedom for as long as he could.

Black Harry Williams died at the Yass District Hospital on 21 August 1921. He had an enlarged prostate and uraemia, which had caused him to suffer for some years.¹⁸⁶ He was 84 years old but his occupation was recorded as 'labourer', so he might have still been working even then. His family would have barely had time to be notified as he was buried the next day at the Roman Catholic cemetery, opposite the place that was to become known as the Hollywood Aboriginal Mission a decade later. Counting children, stepchildren and grandchildren, Black Harry and Ellen Williams had 40 immediate descendants.

186. Details from the death registration of Henry Williams, Aboriginal, NSW Registration No 10711.



DEATH REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

CERTIFIED COPY FURNISHED UNDER PART 8 OF THE
REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT, 1995.

No.	Date and place of death	Name and occupation	Sex and age	Cause of death	Name and occupation of father	Name and maiden surname of mother	Informant	Particulars of registration	When and where buried: name of undertaker	Name and religion of Minister and names of witnesses of burial	Where born and how long in the Australian Colonies or States	Place of marriage: age, and to whom	Children of marriage
10711	1921 14 August Yass District Hospital Yass Municipality	Harry Williams (Aluminate) Labourer	Male 84 years	Enlarged prostate (1) Uroemia (2) Some years (3) English (4) Prostatectomy 17 August 1921	—	—	certified by F. M. H. H. H.	1921 18 August 1921 Yass	1921 18 August Roman Catholic Ministry at Yass	(1) J. J. Hartley (2) Roman Catholic (3) W. Burden W. Smith	W. Wales	(1) Yass M. H. H.	Daughter Harold 28 Roderick 25 Living None deceased

I, BARBARA FLETT, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF PARTICULARS RECORDED IN A REGISTER KEPT BY ME.

ISSUED AT SYDNEY.

16TH

JULY, 1996

Plate 21: Death certificate of Black Harry Williams



Barbara Flett

REGISTRAR

'Census of Aborigines' in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district from the 1880s to the 1920s

The annual Census of Aborigines, conducted for the NSW Board for the Protection of Aborigines, was always sporadic in the Queanbeyan Police District. The Board noted a large increase in the number of Aboriginal people receiving rations 'at public cost' in 1889 and ascertained this was due mainly to the increase of aged and infirm 'Aborigines' who were unable to work. Another reason, it noted, was that when it became known that the Government was making such provisions, assistance was asked for in the case of old 'Aborigines' who had hitherto been provided for by station owners on whose properties they were camped.¹⁸⁷

The census for the 'Queanbeyan district' and surrounds for 1889 yielded the following information:

Queanbeyan

1 woman, full blood, between 40-60 years [Nellie Hamilton]

1 'half caste' male between 40-60 years [Dick Lowe]

1 'half-caste' woman between 20-40 years [Sarah Lowe]

7 'half-caste' children [the elder Lowe children, probably minus Mary Effie who was then 15 years old and was probably working]

The Queanbeyan census therefore included Nellie Hamilton and most of the Lowe family, a total of ten. Black Harry was not included because, at that time, he was with his young family in Yass.

Michelago

A 'full-blood' male aged between 20-40 was working at Michelago at this time.

There were other Aboriginal people in the Canberra-Queanbeyan-upper Murrumbidgee district whose names and activities were unrecorded by contemporary local Europeans between the 1880s and the 1920s. A few of them appear to have been 'migrants' (like Jimmy Parker, below) who had moved to the district with recently arrived new station owners or had been looking for work where they could find it in areas of southeast Australia.

Apart from Black Dick and Black Harry, Aboriginal workers mentioned by George De Salis¹⁸⁸ between 1869 and 1889 included Jimmy Parker, Jimmy Bonaparte (alias Magrolma), Simon the Blackfellow, Gorkey the 'black boy', 'Farrer's blackfellow' (unnamed), Charley,¹⁸⁹ Constable Donning's 'black tracker' (unnamed - he was recruited from Dick and Harry's Cooleman camp), 'Peter the black boy', also known as 'Black Peter', and Mirallee, also spelled Mirally.¹⁹⁰

Jimmy Parker was from Dubbo. He had worked for a surveyor by the name of Thompson and had arrived in the district in the 1870s to look for work as a stockman.

187. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1889, VPNSWLA, vol VII, 1890.

188. They were not necessarily working for De Salis.

189. This may have been Nanny's son.

190. Diaries of George De Salis.

He was a partner to Nellie Hamilton for a time but was said to have been violent, which may be why Nellie left him. Jimmy was, like Black Harry Williams, a fine athlete. George De Salis mentions him in his diary as follows:

28th January 1873: Athletic meet. Jimmy Parker racing George De Salis and R Edwards. The darkie soon took the lead. George De Salis came second. The darkie is blowing greatly at having beaten me in the hurdle race.¹⁹¹

Jimmy Bonaparte had been working on the De Salis property in Queensland when George De Salis mentioned him for the first time in his diary on 20 May 1874. An eight year-old boy by the name of Bonaparte was included in the blanket distribution list for the Braidwood district in July 1837, although his 'native name' was recorded as Minja.¹⁹² This boy would have been 45 years old in 1874. George had a high opinion of Jimmy, who, he said, was very religious and had been to England. George claimed Jimmy was always very remorseful after he sobered up from drinking at the 'black' camps.

I am unable to find much information about 'Simon the Blackfellow', Charley or 'Peter the Black', also known as 'Black Peter'. Charley may have been Nanny's son. Dick Lowe often recruited Aboriginal men he knew from other areas to help him with some of his *Cuppacumbalong* contracts and the local constable and/or police sergeant often recruited 'black trackers' from Dick and Harry's camps.¹⁹³

'Gorkey' may have come to work at *Cuppacumbalong* from the Queensland properties of the De Salis family. George De Salis took Gorkey to Sydney in 1877, perhaps accompanying him part of the way home to Queensland. George was quite amused by the spectacle he and Gorkey presented to the passengers on the train to Sydney:

13th April 1877: Took a coach to Goulburn, en route to Sydney, accompanied by Gorkey. Had reserved seats. One woman wanted a box seat but she was quite indignant to find young Gorkey there, and remained where she was. A Chinaman took possession of our seats at Tango so we lifted him up and placed him on top of the coach. The crowd gathered around Gorkey, who had a loose blanket on one arm and with the other hand he carried the pup by one leg. One boy remarked, 'Isn't he black?' Another asked where his father lived, but Gorkey treated them all with silent contempt. My wallaby coat also attracted attention.¹⁹⁴

The 'full-blood' black at Michelago in 1889 could have been any one of the Aboriginal people mentioned by De Salis in his diaries. Further research is required to ascertain his identity.

The census for key districts surrounding Queanbeyan included 78 men, women and children at Tumut and 97 at Yass. As indicated previously, a number of Kammerri left their country at various times and camped with other groups at Yass, Brungle (Tumut), Cummeragunja (on the Murray River near Echuca and Moama) and Warangesda (further down the Murrumbidgee at Darlington Point) (see Map 13).

191. *Ibid.*

192. Blankets for Aborigines, 1837-43, AONSW, 4/1133.3, 37/8350.

193. Diaries of George De Salis.

194. *Ibid.*

The census for the same districts in 1890 yielded similar results. The same group of 10 was recorded at Queanbeyan as in 1889. The 'full-blood' man at Michelago had been joined by a 'full-blood' woman aged between 40 and 60 years old and two 'half-caste' men aged between 20 and 40 years old. The woman was not Nellie Hamilton, who was recorded in Queanbeyan. The Yass Aboriginal group had grown to 101 and the Brungle group had been reduced to 88, which may suggest that people were moving around.¹⁹⁵

In the general New South Wales census for 1891, two unnamed Aboriginal males and two unnamed Aboriginal females were then recorded as working in the household of Leopold Fane De Salis at Tharwa. Meanwhile, Sara Low [*sic*], a 'half caste', headed a household of two males and six females at Cuppacumbalong, which would have referred to the camp at Little River¹⁹⁶ nearby, not the property.¹⁹⁷ The De Salis workers were probably from one of Black Dick's and Harry's camps (see Map 15) and may have included Dick's elder daughters and surviving sons, who also worked for the De Salis and other families. The 1891 census recorded Dick at Cooma with one other male, probably Jerry Lowe. The collector noted that Dick had told him his wife and the rest of the family was at Cuppacumbalong.¹⁹⁸ Two unnamed Aboriginal females were working for Mr Massey at Dairy Creek.

Jack McGuinness and his family (three males and three females: Jack, his second wife Rachel Cooper, and their two elder sons and elder daughters) were working at Stammers Forest in the Brindabella Range for the Ledger family in 1891.¹⁹⁹ The name of this property was later changed to *The Mullion*. A white man by the name of Robert Ledger died, aged 27, at Hay and is buried among Aboriginal graves.²⁰⁰ Jack was a Wiradjuri speaker from the Tumut district and lived at Brungle. Formerly the Walgalu-speaking Tumut-based families had had close connections with the Kamberri but after they were 'wiped out' by the Wiradjuri, some Wiradjuri families ventured across the mountains in the early 20th century and found work in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district and surrounds. Jack and his family were also regular visitors to Warangesda Aboriginal Mission at Darlington Point but maintained a base at Brungle. Jack's then wife, Rachel Cooper (a Wallabalooa woman) was a friend of Ellen Grovenor who became the wife of Black Harry Williams. Rachel appears as a witness to the baptisms of some of Ellen's children. Jack and Rachel did not stay long at Stammers Forest. Rachel died at Brungle giving birth to her sixth child with Jack in April 1899. The baby

195. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1890, VPNSWLA, vol VII, 1891-2.

196. Either the Gudgenby or the Naas River.

197. Census of New South Wales, 1891.

198. *Ibid.*

199. *Ibid.* I am grateful to Stephen Avery for helping me with further research on this property and its owners.

200. Elphick, Beverley and Dan (compilers), 1996.

also died. They are buried together at Wagra cemetery near the Brungle Aboriginal Reserve.²⁰¹

In the 1891 census conducted for the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, the Queanbeyan group²⁰² had risen to eleven in number with the birth of another Lowe child, but no other Aboriginal people living in the district were recorded. Nellie Hamilton was living alone in a house in Morrisset Street, Queanbeyan. The whereabouts of 'King Billy' at this time is unknown, unless he was one and the same person as Billy Williams on the Shoalhaven. Black Harry, Ellen and their children were at the 'Blacks Camp' in Yass. There were 26 'full blood Aborigines' in the Cooma district and three 'half-castes', most of whom were working as stockmen. Thirteen adults and two children at Delegate were supported by the Board. There were 50 'full blood Aborigines' at Brungle and 43 'half castes'. A total of 80 'Aborigines' were recorded at the main Yass camp, plus others in the district who had established their own farms.²⁰³

By 1893, the Queanbeyan group had risen to 12 with the birth of yet another Lowe child. A 'full blood' man and 'full-blood' woman aged between 20 and 40 and their two children, plus one 'half caste' man aged between 20 and 40, were living at Cooleman.²⁰⁴ The 'half caste' man might have been Christy Goody, the Aboriginal stockman who broke his back and died at Thomas Oldfield's hut near Cooleman in 1896. The Cooma group had been reduced to one 'full blood' child, one 'half caste' male aged between 40 and 60 years and one 'half caste' woman in the same age group. Where did all the others go who were there in 1891? Perhaps visitors had come up from the coast in 1891 and returned? A total of 129 people lived at the main camp in Yass and 100 in Brungle.²⁰⁵

By 1894, the Board was increasing its efforts to grant reserves to 'deserving' Aboriginal families who were willing to till the land. At Brungle, Yass and Pudman and Blakney Creeks, Aboriginal families were establishing their own plots of land and making efforts to become self-sufficient. According to the Board reports, however, they were still holding their ceremonies in secret and drinking alcohol at their frequent group gatherings. We have seen how the Board granted an area of 100 acres at Boambolo in 1895 and placed Black Harry Williams and his family in occupation of it. Another reserve of 270 acres was granted to 'the Aborigines of the Queanbeyan dis-

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201. Death certificate of Rachel McGuinness, formerly Cooper and Davis (her father was Edward Cooper, a white man, and her mother was Mary Ann Davis, a Wallabalooa woman from the Pudman district), NSW Registration No 5763.
 202. This referred to the district, not the town. Although members of the Lowe family frequently visited Queanbeyan, and a number of Lowe children were buried there, the family was not considered by local residents of European descent to be part of the small group once known by them as the 'Queanbeyan Blacks'. As noted above, in 1891 Nellie was considered to be the only survivor of this group.
 203. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1891, *VPNSWLA*, 1892-3.
 204. I am assuming this is the Cooleman in the Murrumbidgee mountains and not the place by that name further northwest of New South Wales. The statistics for the other places mentioned are all recorded close together and the Cooleman referred to here is in this same region (see Map 15).
 205. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1893, *VPNSWLA*, 1894, vol III.

trict' at Cuppacumbalong that year, 'to enable them to carry on cultivation and make homes for themselves'.²⁰⁶ The number of Aboriginal people living at the reserve and at Queanbeyan had by then increased to 18, including Dick and Sarah Lowe, 10 of their 11 children (Hubert was not born until 1899), Nellie Hamilton, King Billy, plus Jerry and Christine Lowe and their small son, Richard. While Nellie and King Billy visited them occasionally, members of the Lowe family had long since been in residence in the Tharwa district and moved to the new reserve for a short period of time. The younger Lowe children plus Nellie and King Billy were the only ones supported by the Board in 1894 and 1895.

Other Aboriginal people in the district were not included in the Queanbeyan group. Apart from the family that had taken up residence at Cooleman, there were no other contemporary Aboriginal people recorded in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district at that time.

After the De Salis family fortunes declined, Dick Lowe was finding it more difficult to get work. He was forced through unemployment to accept support from the Board for his family from 1896.²⁰⁷ His extended family had by then increased to 21, which included 13 children, some of whom were Dick's grandchildren, including the children of Jerry and Christine Lowe. His older children were listed as adults in the census for that year. By 1897, the older members of the Lowe family had moved to Yass. The Cooleman family was still up in the mountains, consisting of one 'full blood' male aged 40-60 and three 'full blood' females aged between 20 and 40. It seems the so-called 'half caste' man had gone, so perhaps my theory that he was Christy Goody, who died the previous year, was correct. There was one 'full-blood' male aged between 20 and 40 in Cooma, plus 95 Aboriginal residents at Brungle and 117 at Yass. The Cuppacumbalong reserve was revoked in 1898 as 'there are no Aborigines left in the district', which, of course, was not true.

There was certainly a temporary exodus of Kamberri to the Yass district at that time but Black Harry, Black Dick and some of their children and grandchildren returned to the Canberra-Queanbeyan district in 1903, after the death of Ellen Grovenor. In truth, Black Harry had never left because Boambolo was south of the Yass River within the country of the Kamberri on their last known northwest frontier. It was only because Boambolo was included in the Yass district according to contemporary authorities that Black Harry and his family were incorporated in the statistics for that area from 1895 to 1903. The two Boambolo reserves were revoked in 1912.

In the 'Census Returns of Aborigines for the Year 1911',²⁰⁸ one 'full blood' male aged 20-40, plus one 'half caste' male aged 20-40, one 'half caste' male aged over 60, three 'half caste' females aged 20-40, one 'half caste' female aged 40-60, plus six children were back in the Queanbeyan district, a total of 13 for that year. I am unsure who the 'full blood' male was. Certainly, most of this group would have consisted of mem-

206. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1895, VPNSWLA, 1896, vol III.

207. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1896, VPNSWLA, 1897, vol VII.

208. Report of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, 1911, VPNSWLA, 1912.

bers of the Lowe, Merritt, Williams and Grovenor families, including Black Harry and the family of Mary Effie Merritt, nee Lowe, who had married a white man from Yass.²⁰⁹ Black Dick was temporarily in Yass at that time. It is not a full contemporary record of the Aboriginal people in the district. Black Harry, Black Dick and their extended family members were walking their country at that time without full employment and there were certainly other contemporary Aboriginal people employed in the area. It is possible that some members of Dick and Harry's families stayed at their camps while others, led by Dick and Harry, turned up at the police station to present themselves for the census and register for some support from the Board. Additionally, there was one male aged 20-40 working at Ginninderra, who may have been one of the Lowe boys. There was a young 'half caste' Aboriginal family at Wee Jasper plus a 'full blood' man aged between 20 and 40. Their identity is unsure. Members of the Brungle-based Freeman family as well as members of the Lowe, Grovenor and Williams families worked as black trackers and were based for varying periods of time at the police station in Wee Jasper. The 1891 census records John Miller as being the black tracker in residence at that time. It is possible he was the 'full blood' male who was still there in 1911.

It was reported in the *Queanbeyan Age* in 1915 that a 'darky and his gin and picaninny' had marched in the Australia Day procession in the town that year.²¹⁰ It is awful to learn that local Aboriginal families were still being referred to in such a degrading way in the early 20th century. Their anonymity may have been deliberate on the part of the reporter or it may be that the local Aboriginal people still living in the district at that time were unknown to most of the 'white' people living in the township. It was probably one of the Lowe families that took part in this procession. There was always a Lowe or a Williams presence in the district even then.

Dick Lowe passed away in 1916 and Harry Williams in 1921. According to his niece, Betty Homer, Roddy Williams — Black Harry's youngest son — lived in Canberra all his life. He camped on Red Hill, near the modern-day suburb of Narrabundah, with other members of his family when they visited but also maintained a room at a local working men's hostel.²¹¹ The New South Wales annual 'Census of Aborigines' for this district had lapsed by this time, perhaps because the district was in the process of becoming the Federal Capital Territory.

William P Bluett confirmed in 1927 that Kamberri survivors were still living and working in their country at that time, most of which had since been incorporated into the Federal Capital. He was careful, however, to toe the official line about their demise:

And what of the Kgamburri tribe today? Up to the acquisition of the territory by the Commonwealth there were some ten or twelve purebreds and lighter shades work-

209. James Middlemas and Bridgett, May, Mary and Alfred Merritt Junior, who were all children of Mary Effie Merritt, nee Lowe, were enrolled at Tharwa Primary School in 1911. See Higgins, 1999, p 73.

210. *Queanbeyan Age* 16 February 1915.

211. Jackson-Nakano, Ann, 1998a.

ing in their shiftless, spasmodic way on Yarralumla and surrounding stations. These have either died or drifted to other parts. Canberra knows them no more.²¹²

Bert Sheedy, a long-time Queanbeyan resident and collector of historical information, maintained that members of the Lowe family were still working in the Tuggeranong district in the 1930s.²¹³ Una West lived in the Tharwa district for all her 80-plus years and went to school with members of the Lowe family. Mrs West remembered the Lowes and other Aboriginal people she knew working on properties in the Tharwa district as well as at *Yarralumla* and Canberra when she was young.²¹⁴

As indicated by John Blundell, via William Bluett, there were still Kamberri descendants living and working in their country when it became the Federal, later the Australian, Capital Territory. Among these were the children of Black Harry and Black Dick, who continued to keep the Kamberri beacon alight even through this most difficult period, from the 1920s to the 1960s, until other members of their extended families could return, which eventually they did as we shall see.

212. Bluett, WP, 1927.

213. Avery, Steven, personal correspondence with Ann Jackson-Nakano, 5 July 1997. Steven includes the contents of his interview with Bert Sheedy in his thesis (Avery, Steven, 1994).

214. Jackson-Nakano, Ann, 1993b, telephone communication with Una West, Canberra. As Una Sheedy. Una would have been in her last year at Tharwa Primary School when Mary Effie's children were there in 1911. See Higgins, 1999, p 73.