

REMEMBERING TIN TOWN:
IDENTIFYING AND VALUING ABORIGINAL RESERVE SITES OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

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FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF ARTS

2019

Abstract

Researchers of Indigenous places in Australia have written extensively about many missions, reserves and stations. Their discoveries have provided solid foundations for further studies of other forgotten places, similar to Tin Town, Coonamble, New South Wales, the focus of this study and the primary location of my research.

The project engages on a personal level: it uses autoethnography to explore my sense of identity, connection to Country, experience of racism and cultural pride through truth telling. There is a mistaken belief that the church, government and land holders who directed missions, reserves and stations had done so in a method that was acceptable to Indigenous people.

The project has located sources of information that give an alternate version of Indigenous missions, reserves and stations by concentrating on one forgotten place, Tin Town. I am very thankful for its existence because its story is central to this historical dialogue of truth telling. Other known and forgotten places relevant to this autoethnography are identified and described. Recognition bestows on them an unprejudiced place in Indigenous history.

After identifying Tin Town and surveying the field of available resources, I uncover the untold, and sometimes hidden, truths behind what forced Indigenous people to the segregated areas. Missions, reserves and stations became the final refuge for our people, where communities and families endured poverty, racism and neglect. They suffered in third world living conditions - makeshift dwellings put together with scraps of materials to form a home for themselves, their old people and their children. My research shows that not all segregated areas were safe havens; mistreatment of Indigenous people was, in most cases, no different whether they were placed on missions, reserves or stations.

There are no residual signs showing the presence of most sites, so it is important to acknowledge them, for they are markers on our story line. Most have been destroyed in the attempt to erase any evidence of their existence and to counter claims of their existence of Country ownership. At present, governmental records only acknowledge Indigenous placement areas that still show the structures of buildings, built by previous governments, churches and pastoralists, rather than Aboriginal people's ongoing use of and connection to the land.

At the heart of my thesis is the chapter in which I truth tell parts of my family's story of resilience and survival. I validate Indigenous families who have suffered loss of Country, but

still fight to rebuild their culture. My personal journey has unearthed historical writings about my ancestry and my connection to Country.

Apart from self-discovery, my hope is that other Indigenous people will find themselves in what I have researched and written, so I also explore similar places to Tin Town where those who were marginalised, like my family, survived and rebuilt community. I hope a broader audience, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, will walk the walk through Country that I have experienced.

The dissertation applies historical methodology as the clearest method to identify and value Aboriginal reserve sites of New South Wales. They are investigated by probing into their historical past and searching for what little evidence there is for these known and unknown places (except in the memories and stories of the local people). Autoethnography allows a voice to personal experiences with the aim of increasing sociological interpretation. I explore the relationship between both methodologies and show that bringing these styles together has established greater insight.

I am writing from an Indigenous perspective, not from a Western cultural viewpoint. However, I hope to achieve understanding, balance and acceptance in both cultures to heal, forgive and grow. The exploration of one forgotten area and similar ones will contribute to recognition and respect for Indigenous placement areas not currently accounted for.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

This Thesis is entirely the work of William Alfred Rutherford except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award.

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Date: 17 October 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In particular I extend my thanks to my beloved Aunty Jean Hamilton, whose book, *Just Lovely*, is a non-judgemental account of Aboriginal life in north-western New South Wales during the 20th century. It has been a source of inspiration to pursue this project. I also acknowledge my family whose story is told in the following pages. At the University of Southern Queensland I have appreciated the interest and guidance of Assoc. Professor Libby Connors, Dr Kathryn Gilbey and Dr Stephany Steggall. Other staff members over the years of my tertiary studies have also contributed to this culminating work: Martha Collier and Wendy Ambrose.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

My Connection to Tin Town

Born of Kamilaroi/Gamilaroi heritage, my connection to land is on Wailwan Country where the Indigenous settlement of Tin Town is located, and where I was born and spent the early years of my life. Therefore, my project is focused on Tin Town, sometimes referred to as the Mission or the Island. I will try to discover what differences in treatment, laws and policies were imposed on missions, reserves and stations in controlling Indigenous people, while the invading European settlers continued to claim their Country.

Tin Town will not be found on any map of Australia. Even the current and previous generations of Coonamble's population, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, may not know that this reserve once existed on the edge of a town. Researchers of Indigenous places have written extensively about many of the missions, reserves and stations; their findings provide solid groundwork for investigating Tin Town, one of the forgotten places. In this project the researcher and the readers will move from the seen to the unseen; from the known to the unknown.

My project will focus on one location, Tin Town, Coonamble (or 'Gunambil', local Wailwan meaning 'full of dirt'), New South Wales. I will engage on a personal level about my sense of identity, belonging and cultural pride. The intention is to challenge the historical misconstruction, which has its origins in the colonising of Indigenous people, that church, government and land holders conducted Missions, Reserves and Stations in a manner acceptable to Indigenous people in recognised locations.

With attention on one specific place, Tin Town, I will locate sources of knowledge that give an alternative interpretation of Indigenous Missions, Reserves and Stations by exploring one forgotten place in particular, recognising its existence and including it in historical discourse. Known places are described to background other forgotten places which will be identified and given their rightful place in Indigenous history.

The project is a personal journey as I seek to know who I am and where I come from. Apart from self-discovery, it is my hope that other Indigenous men and women will find themselves in what I have researched and written. I want a wider audience, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to walk the walk through Country that I have experienced.

Background

The idea to pursue a master's degree was not a difficult decision to make. Inspiration came from my Aunty Jean Hamilton, whose book (1989) was based on her life. Although she experienced hardship and prejudice, she titled her book *Just Lovely* in recollection of the happy times of her childhood. Personally, *Just Lovely* is the foundation for uncovering many answers to questions that have never been adequately addressed. My aim is to write like my Aunty Jean Hamilton, without blame or recrimination, yet articulating significant impacts of the prejudices and injustices Indigenous people faced during that period of forced segregation and/or assimilation in Australian history.

The story told in *My Place* (1987) resonates, because the author's family, like mine, was impacted by prejudices and injustices. The author, Sally Morgan, like me, takes a journey of self-discovery. She writes from the perspective of an Indigenous woman who grew up in Perth rather than in her own unknown Country. Even though my early experience was the opposite of Morgan's, we are both searching for the true story of our lives; answers to questions that we were denied.

Morgan never experiences displacement of Country like her parents or grandparents. She finds the truth was hidden from her by them, only to understand later that the real reason was to protect her from the law, the authorities and the prejudices of being black. My mother also felt the need to protect us. She knew her people's language and culture, but the fear of losing her fair-skinned children to the authorities, in the same way she lost her full-blooded sister Alice, forced her to deny her children their true birth identity. We did not learn how to speak our own language. She obeyed this law of secrecy to her death.

Morgan (1987) was thought by others to belong to another race. I too was looked upon as someone of European descent. Some, like my two sisters, because they were fair skinned were sent at an early age to an institution. Sister Wilma went to the 'Westhaven Association School' in Dubbo, because she did not fit within the structures of the conventional education system. Wilma has told members of my family about the sexual abuse she received there. She was not released until her late teens. Alice was taken at a very early age to live with a minister and his family. Alice and Wilma have struggled in their older lives to reconnect with family because of the lost decades of absence. Morgan had to find out and search to reconnect to Country and her people.

A few months prior to enrolling in the Master's course, I went home and spent time

with family back on Country. While yarning, I realised that it was the first time we were able to share our own experiences of growing up together in Tin Town on the edge of Coonamble, New South Wales. We shared our memories, good and bad.

Just Lovely because it is the only known personal account of Tin Town provides significant details to investigate. In other secondary sources, Tin Town receives only occasional references. Aunty Jean Hamilton's description of Tin Town allows me to reminisce about the time when I was a small child and what I recall from when I lived there. I have been searching for answers as to how and when my family arrived there and *Just Lovely* gives an indication. Aunty's family first arrived in Tin Town at about the start of the 1940s.

Aunty Jean's half-sister, Ruby, is my mother. The term 'half-sister' is an expression of how non-Indigenous people relate in a type of relationship where siblings do not share both biological parents. Those with a Western cultural background, when researching family, search for their forefathers; whereas Indigenous people follow the lineage of the women. For Indigenous people, it does not matter if you have different fathers; if you were conceived in the same woman's womb, you are classified as full blood siblings. Also note that the colour of your skin makes no difference. I have blue eyes and white skin, while my older brothers are the opposite in appearance, but we have always been known as full brothers.

Personal Perspective

For me, it is easy to write about experiences in designated places. If you are white, you do not understand what Indigenous people have suffered, because you have not walked in their shoes. What I am endeavouring to do in my project is to bring recognition to forgotten places like Tin Town. Recognised 'Missions, Reserves and Stations' are acknowledged because of the structural remains; whereas places like Tin Town have nothing that proves their existence except for the memories of those who lived there. I am not writing from the Western cultural aspect, but from the Indigenous perspective. However, I hope to achieve understanding, balance and acceptance from both cultures to heal, forgive and to grow. The exploration of one forgotten area, and similar ones, for Indigenous people, endeavours to bring a disappearing historical time capsule to the psyche of the Australian people. I hope to achieve recognition and respect for Indigenous placement areas that are not currently accounted for.

Chapter Summaries:

Chapter 1. Introduction:

- My Connection to Tin Town – An insight to my identity and connection to Country, and understanding the importance of why such places like Tin Town should be acknowledged.
- Background – highlighting the importance of writing this thesis from an Indigenous and Western viewpoint. Introducing my early life experiences and memories as a child born of two cultures, living my early years on Tin Town.
- Personal Perspective – Aiming to achieve understanding, balance and acceptance from both Western and Indigenous cultures concerning segregated areas, and to acknowledge, heal, forgive, and to grow to become a nation of unity.

Chapter 2. Methodology and Literature Review:

- Methodology – Uncovering written information by researchers who acknowledge the existence of Tin Town and other Indigenous segregated areas, predominantly known as missions, reserves and stations. The findings by researchers also provide solid groundwork for investigating and locating Tin Town. Also examining two styles of methodology, Western and Indigenous. Autoethnography brings them together for a greater understanding of both cultural historical recordings.
- Literature Review - Uncovering the differences in treatment, laws and policies which were imposed on missions, reserves and stations to control Indigenous people, compared to the invading European settlers while they continued to invade Indigenous Nations.

Chapter 3. Finding ‘Safe Havens’: The Known Places

- Historical Background – The background to the establishment of missions, reserves and stations from the arrival of Captain Cook and the declaration of *terra nullius* through to the segregation of Indigenous people by law.
- Locations and Labelling of Known Places – Definitions of missions, reserves and stations with descriptions of three typical locations.
- Treatment of Inhabitants – The bad treatment of Indigenous people is

exemplified by discussing the experiences of returning Indigenous service men.

- Living Conditions – Describes the inadequate dwellings, medical services, the effects of introduced alcohol, the treatment of women and the lack of employment available.
- Involvement and Behaviour of Missionaries – Discusses the involvement and behaviour of missionaries and recognises that not all missions were safe havens.
- Defiance by Indigenous people against Regulations and Removal from Country – Explains the resistance of the Indigenous people who fought hard, physically and mentally, against the white man's cruel treatment in the process of claiming the nation.

Chapter 4. Tin Town: Memories of a Forgotten Place

- My personal story and the shared memories of my family about Tin Town.

Chapter 5. Bag Town and Other Forgotten Places

- Acknowledges the importance of other forgotten places and identifies their location; whether occupied by Indigenous, non-Indigenous or both. Their existence is as valuable as that of Tin Town. Also exposes the fate of some segregated areas and explains why most cannot be located or identified.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology and Literature Review

Methodology

The methodology chosen for the project is historical methodology because it provides the best way to investigate the major research topic of 'Indigenous Missions, Reserves and Stations'. The historical approach will be supplemented by Indigenous research methods including autoethnography. It is important to note that a meaningful discussion must allow me to explore from an Indigenous perspective and to consider that the earliest Indigenous history was oral. Having the methodologies of both cultural societies, I shall endeavour to bring them together, giving greater understanding to their different teachings to align them for the project.

In simple terms historical methodology presents information on a topic, considered from its earliest phases and followed in an historical course through all its stages. In Western memory, history is a written record of the stages since invasion. The known Indigenous Missions, Reserves and Stations will be investigated by probing into their historical past and searching for what little evidence there is for the unknown places.

Corrine Glesne explains, 'to understand a phenomenon you need to know its history.' In her book *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*, Glesne devotes a whole chapter to 'Being There: Developing Understanding through Participant Observation'. She says that an historical thinker seeks documents, letters, photos and other artefacts; he/she looks for different respondents and different patterns of behaviour. 'Historical documents give context to your study' (pp.85-86).

Historical research has value in that it provides understanding of contemporary problems by examining the past and may offer solutions after study of what has already happened. The research can also illuminate the effects of past interactions within a culture and sub-culture; in the case of the subject to be researched, this has relevance. Clive Seale confirms this by saying that 'the researcher appreciates any historical evidence relevant to the current issue or research problem of interest' (p.571).

The historical researcher needs to know precisely what is meant by history. Robert Jones Shafer gives a few meanings to guide the researcher: firstly, significance of events of the past to the actual happenings; secondly, a record or account of events; and finally, history means 'a discipline, a field of study that has developed a set of methods and concepts by which historians collect evidence of past events, evaluate

that evidence, and present a meaningful discussion of the subject' (*A Guide to Historical Method* p.2).

The Pursuit of History by John Tosh (2010) is an exceptional book, with its introduction to historical methodology giving any researcher an advantage for topics like 'Missions, Reserves and Stations'. Tosh puts forward his view that 'history is a coherent discipline which still bears the imprint of its nineteenth century origins'. With the early Indigenous methodology being oral, this statement allows the researcher to investigate and understand the obstructions given by Western historians, especially in findings affecting Indigenous history.

Tosh examines in depth the practice of oral history, where people are interviewed about their memories. He notes that oral history has had a major influence on societal history and on pre-colonial history. His book gives meaning to the importance of collective memory, showing that individual voices, especially those of Indigenous people, are often lost, because the past is not the property of the individual but a community possession. An important statement like this informs me as I work on the project, for it is centred on my firsthand memories, and those of other Indigenous people.

The Pursuit of History highlights the need for oral history, the voice of the people, even though today the mainstream historical profession remains cautious, especially when studying Indigenous people. Tosh suggests that 'personal reminiscence is viewed as an effective instrument for *re-creating* [emphasis added] the past – the authentic testimony of human life as it was actually experienced' (p.318). Tosh also covers other areas that are of great importance: oral history as cultural memory, interpreting oral history and the limitations of oral history.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies – Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (a Maori writer), talks about the colonists' historical recordings of Indigenous people. She says that the colonists' views were 'clearly "primitive" and "incorrect", mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonization' (p.29). The view from an Indigenous historical perspective is challenging because there is a shortage of writings by Indigenous people. Smith claims that if Indigenous people were to try and justify their historical events by writing, they had only 'the use of literature to write about the terrible things which happened under colonialism or because of colonialism' (p.36), all recorded from the colonist's historical perspective. Joan Winch and Ken Hayward, in *Doing It Our Way: Can Cultural Traditions Survive in Universities?* (1999), give a better understanding of Indigenous methodology with

an example from Kwagley, a Yupiaq scholar from Alaska (1995), who states that researchers need to ‘redefine the way research is done using our terms of reference’ (p.25).

Winch and Hayward provide a comparison between Western and Indigenous perspectives: ‘Indigenous life relates to the symbiotic relationship of people and their world emphasising the connection of the individual and one’s cultural setting. In contrast, western models of education are based on the dynamics of continued change and progression’ (p.26). Winch and Hayward also say that Indigenous world views are ‘interactional and in tune with external senses of perception while the western world view is predominantly transitional with ruling of unending desires causing a detachment from nature’ (p.26).

They quote Stringer and Abdulluh (1997), who emphasise that: ‘Indigenous peoples...social and cultural perspectives and the system of meaning inherent in their daily lives are the product of life-worlds dramatically different from the Euro-centric perspectives that tend to predominate in academic circles’ (p.26). They suggest that the past traditions of Indigenous people have stood the test of time for thousands of years, exceeding far beyond that of the Western cultural presence. They argue that with Indigenous methodology, ‘the only people who are able to describe within context are the ones who have the lived experience of those being researched’ (p.25), which resonates with this project and its author’s life experiences.

Doing It Our Way explains how Indigenous methodology uses natural methods of data collecting: observation, listening, talking, participating and interpreting through art, dance and song. It also highlights the differences between the Indigenous and Western cultures, when at times these teachings appeared to be ignored by non-Indigenous people. Winch and Hayward make it clear that, when dealing with Indigenous methodology, the researcher must understand that community input is required to enable the lived experience to be conveyed and articulated by Indigenous people: ‘the Indigenous experience is unique; for example, an existential experience of life on missions and the restrictions of the reserves’ (p.26). They suggest there are important issues to be considered at all points in methodology; furthermore, this research not only means writing from the Western cultural aspect, but also ‘the consideration of an Indigenous world view’ (p.26).

Autoethnography brings Western and Indigenous cultures together for a greater understanding and insight of both historical recordings. Carolyn Ellis (2012), discusses

how autoethnography refers to ‘ethnographic research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political’ (p.2). Autoethnography is hearing the voice of those who have lived the experience that is written about in historical academia literature, bringing another dimension to the shared historical stories.

Ellis gives insight to how autoethnographers apply skills in research and writing: ‘Firstly, they look through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience. Secondly, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretation’ (p.2).

This suggests that the historical approach already described will be influenced by Indigenous research methods including autoethnography. Ellis describes this by stating: ‘Indigenous ethnographies are stories about cultures that have been marginalized or eroticised by others, now written by Aboriginal researchers who now interpret their own cultures for others’ (p.6). As I identify myself as an Indigenous man, Ellis’s explanation of how she became an ethnographer is interesting. She constructed her ‘own cultural stories (often focusing on her own autobiographies), [raising] serious questions about the interpretations of others who write about them, and [using] their dual positionality to problematize the distinction between observer and observed, that is, between insider and outsider’ (p.7).

Susan O’Hara agrees with Ellis in her reference to autoethnography. She writes that ‘Autoethnographic writing is a scientific method which contextualizes experiences in cultural, social, political and personal history’ (p.14). She also says that ‘[t]hrough an evidence based approach, professionals in academic practice, and research can bring their past experiences to a place in the present, and provide direction for future professionals’ (p.14). This works well for future Indigenous research scholars who wish to write their stories.

O’Hara states that the writer must start with a ‘story that has stayed with you, inspired you, or occurred in a period in your life that affected your future work, whether in your practice or academic experience’ (p.15). She asks the question of the autoethnographic writer: ‘What is it about your past narrative that you can share to change your own practice or provide a connection to others?’ (p.15). She explains that autoethnography is not an autobiography; it is ‘a story presented in a scholarly and evidence-based way: one situated in culture, politics, and society’ (p.15).

The acknowledgement of *story* by O'Hara and Ellis, taken in conjunction with the work of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), paves the way for my research. AIATSIS is a reputable world-renowned research, collection and publishing organisation. It promotes knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present. I shall be using its resources in the following chapters. AIATSIS provides a useful interactive map highlighting most of the Aboriginal Missions, Stations and Camps in New South Wales. The map identifies the locations of sites and provides information about Aboriginal places as well as some unofficial settlements operating under the tenure of the Aborigines Protection Board (which was replaced by the Aboriginal Welfare Board in 1940) during its active years. The map was developed by:

AIATSIS researcher Lachlan Russell...Professor John Maynard at the University of Newcastle...Professor Victoria Haskins, Dr Lawrence Bamblett, Dr Lorina Barker, Professor Jakelin Troy, and Dr Ray Kelly...Aborigines Protection Board annual reports, the Aboriginal Places map of the NSW State Heritage Inventory, Department of Lands (NSW) Parish Maps, and a list of reserves from government gazettes provided by the NSW Department of Community Services. It also draws on previous research by Peter Tobin, A. McGuigan and Heather Goodall who all added to the information about Aboriginal reserves in NSW. Research by former Welfare Officer the late Philip Felton expanded greatly upon the Department Of Community Services Reserves and Stations list and was foundational to this mapping project.

(<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/mapping-nsw-aboriginal-missions-stations-and-camps-1883-1969>)

The details from the map, while sometimes limited, are important because they are an acknowledgement that the places existed and are identified in public records. They also provide a starting point to find out more about each named place.

Philip Felton was a former Welfare Officer in the Department of Community Services, he compiled a comprehensive treatise titled *The 'Lost' Aboriginal Reserves Of New South Wales What Became Of The Former Aboriginal Reserves Of New South Wales, 1883 - 1980?* (2013), a valuable primary resource, as yet unpublished. It was edited by his son Richard Felton who lodged the work with AIATSIS after his father's death in 2013. According to the title page, the treatise provides 'A Review of the Recorded

Information on Aboriginal Reserves in New South Wales’.

Felton’s work is pivotal in offering a non-Indigenous researcher’s primary historical findings on the topic of ‘Missions, Reserves and Stations’. He concluded that ‘accurate information on the history of Aboriginal reserves is important to the heritage of Aboriginal people in New South Wales’ (p.5).

Interestingly, Felton references my Aunty Jean Hamilton, whose book *Just Lovely*, was the key that unlocked memories of my earlier life. This dissertation is intended to contribute to our heritage by telling my personal experiences of some lost places.

Literature Review

My literature review explores important work on segregation and displacement, responses and reprisals, survival and safety. A starting point is made with *Invasion to Embassy – Land in Aboriginal Politics in New South Wales, 1770-1972*, by Heather Goodall (1996), which clarifies the struggle over segregation in rural New South Wales townships by the Indigenous people, against the white squatters and settlers. One of the main complaints by whites during Goodall’s visits to the townships was the increased number of Indigenous people living in designated town camps. Goodall notes how the white residents voiced their prejudiced belief that their housing and facility centres were for white people, not to be shared with Indigenous people.

One of the towns that Goodall visited was Coonamble, my hometown. She observes how the requests made by Indigenous people to move into town are ignored, to be quashed by the white councillors’ votes. *Invasion to Embassy* provides an understanding of my family’s life experiences at Tin Town, for it reveals such underlying influences, the suppression when they arrived at Tin Town, and the nature of Coonamble where racism was prevalent.

The concept of white inhabitants insisting upon what Tracey Banivanua Mar (2012) calls ‘segregated space’ is shown in her study of its white inhabitants’ treatment of Indigenous people. She describes a fringe camp near Bundaberg: ‘[i]t was in this marshy scrub ... Aboriginal people, camped in makeshift and selectively ignored communities’ (p.178). She also claims that in Bundaberg, ‘narratives of a “dying race” ensured the town was viewed as having emerged triumphant to erase Aboriginal space and reduce traditional owners to little more than “decaying tribes”’ (p.178).

It seems not all Indigenous people tolerated the authority’s rules and regulations imposed upon them. *Our Stories Are Our Survival*, by Wiradjuri man Lawrence

Bamblett (2013), tells how his people had stood up to the township of Cowra and its authorities. Bamblett notes that the local Erambie reserve was a rare unmanaged place and this was the attraction for other Wiradjuri people to move there. As Erambie grew, it became a major issue for the white people of Cowra who hoped to relocate the reserve at least another thirty kilometres out of town. Unlike the outcome for Coonamble, this time the white townsfolk were not victorious.

The Aboriginal Protection Board, created in 1883, realised it could not continue destroying reserves or other authorised places for Indigenous people because of white people's complaints when indigenous people moved too close to towns. Still, the Board declined requests from people on the reserves to move into town. Banivanua Mar agrees with Bamblett that 'town camps were sites that facilitated and enabled the production and maintenance of race-based power relations ... they were also sites of resistance and survival' (p.190). 'Segregated spaces' were home to Indigenous people, which helped and enabled them to have a place of community and self-identity.

Banivanua Mar provides insight to the beginning of 'segregated spaces' where Indigenous people were placed, during 1891, around the Bundaberg region. She divulges settler angsts concerning the Indigenous people, whose land they had taken in the erection of white settlements. She brings to life the experiences of the Indigenous people within 'segregated spaces' and those of Asian and Islander heritages who were sharing these spaces. She notes that not much has been written in their own accounts about the existence of separated people and their life experiences in 'segregated spaces'.

Our Stories Are Our Survival is inspiring, as its title says it all. My story of Tin Town will offer historical Indigenous knowledge for our people. There are other works by Indigenous writers that provide comparisons with my family's life experiences in Tin Town, with titles that are equally appropriate for our collective experience. Stephen Hagan, in *The N Word – one man's stand* (2005), refers to the isolated areas of placement as 'fringe camps', rather than as missions, reserves or stations.

In his description of his family's fringe camp near Cunnamulla, Queensland, I can see the similarity with the positioning of Tin Town. Like many other forgotten locations, his camp was built near a rubbish dump. Others were forced to live near sewage treatment works, cemeteries and other unpleasant places. Tin Town's location is by a river which joins a creek, flooding annually, and beside a rubbish dump. I remember the fenced areas of barbed wire where cattle or horses occasionally graze. I intend

finding out the significance of these areas. Hagan explains how his father would pack the family up and they went with him to work on stations; unlike Aunty Jean Hamilton's father, who would go off on his own in search of work, leaving his family at Tin Town. This is an indication that he thought of it as a safe place for his children while he pursued work at various stations.

After leaving Tin Town, my family were like gypsies in our own Country, because my father had to pack us up and move from one place to another. When the local authorities found out where we were, they came out and told my father to move on. For Hagan's father, it was his decision based on work; his family returned with him once the jobs were finished to the camp near Cunnamulla. We did not have that choice, probably because we were camped in unauthorised areas.

The fate of displaced Indigenous people is important in my investigation. Hagan tells of his father's return to Cunnamulla from one job, when he notices that most of the new Indigenous people living there have been displaced from their own Country. This scenario happened in all those placement areas for Indigenous people after white settlers arrived.

Both Aunty Jean Hamilton and Hagan share their memories of growing up on designated areas for Indigenous people. They highlight the discrimination that 'fringe dwellers' faced when entering the local townships for supplies, work or for just being in the area. Aunty gives some examples of discrimination. Once when visiting Pilliga, she is told Aborigines must be out of town by four o'clock; she suffers racial ridicule when going to work in Coonamble. Hagan also voices his feelings about how the local proprietors were vocal in expressing their determination not to have 'blacks' enter their businesses. Proprietors placed signs on windows and doors expressing their refusal of blacks entering. There are Indigenous people who have experienced displacement in previously mentioned areas allocated to hold them, so that a sense of shame hangs over them with the denial of being there. I have seen and heard of Indigenous people denying their early beginnings at such places, even to the point of denying their heritage to conceal their true identity; for most, it was the feeling of 'shame'.

In comparison, Len Waters and his family were always proud of their Indigenous identity. Len's story is told in *The Missing Man*, by P. Rees (2018). Waters refers to the crude shacks on their reserve as a 'shanty town', another term frequently used for the places allocated to the Indigenous families. *The Missing Man* also acknowledges some of the dreadful conditions faced by them. I hope to discover exactly what the

conditions were like in Tin Town. Waters makes the decision to pack up his family and leave the Toomelah Aboriginal Reserve community in the far north of inland New South Wales, near Boggabilla, located in the Moree Plains Shire. He hopes to find a better life for his family, beyond the reach of the reserve authorities who forcibly removed children from their parents as they saw fit.

The pressure on Indigenous people to survive and keep the family intact must have been horrendous. Having two sisters taken from my family, I know what my parents went through, and I know the effect it had on my two sisters. The authorities wanted to eradicate the children's Indigenous identity, by making them think, look, and act 'white'. Rees quotes a statement made by a missionary from the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home near Nowra New South Wales, who claimed that Indigenous people were 'looked upon as a race the white people cared little for, and for whom God cared just as little' (p.17). This confronting statement by a man of the cloth makes one question how Indigenous people on missions were treated in the name of their keepers' God.

Rather than recriminating or condemning the missionaries, Nancy Cato's book, *Mister Maloga* (1976), enables us to see a different view of them. When young, Cato was deeply prejudiced against the missionaries, thinking they were interfering people who enforced their Christian beliefs and values, destroying local cultures and customs. I have shared the same opinion, but I will not hold resentment towards them, for not all were cruel in handing out punishment in the name of their God. Cato acknowledges the appalling policies of the Aborigines' Protection Association, the government, and the hierarchy of the church shrugging off the Aboriginal 'problem' with the attitude that they would be, predictably, annihilated.

I have travelled around rural Australia and I have seen the deterioration of our people's culture in favour of the white man's God. *Mister Maloga* is based on the story of pioneering evangelical missionary, Daniel Matthews, and his Mission near Echuca, Victoria. *Mister Maloga* is a descriptive account of the life faced by Indigenous people placed at the Maloga mission. Maloga mission is acknowledged by the remaining Indigenous people interviewed by Cato, as 'that happy place' (p. xiv). No doubt there were some designated areas that did protect our people. Cato says missions were looked upon as safe places where they would be protected from harassment by police or trigger-happy squatters.

I understand now why Indigenous men would leave their families at these places

before they went to look for work, knowing it would be the safest place for their protection, just like Aunty Jean Hamilton's father did. It was not all perfect for the Echuca mission; Matthews, for example, encountered anger and violence for protecting 12-year-old Indigenous girls from the white men in the shearing shed and sawmill camp. This is the scenario of how my own mother and father met, as my father worked on the Pilliga sawmill.

Having previously shared the same views of missionaries as a young Cato, my opinion changed when I had the opportunity to visit the Hermannsburg mission in the Northern Territory. I was able to observe the old classrooms and see how Lutheran missionaries had worked with the Indigenous people. They appeared to be the least racist and repressive, for it seems that all they wanted to do was teach the word of the white man's God to the Indigenous people. By my observation, they appeared to have taken the time to understand and write the local language, and in doing so, interpreted the word of their God to the local Indigenous people in a way they could understand.

Hermannsburg: A Vision and a Mission, (Lohe, Albrecht, Leske, Benz and Radke, 2016), gives precise details of the missionaries' experiences setting up the mission. It notes the continuous conflicts with stations over the use and control of the local Indigenous people. It highlights the annoyance and frustrations of the graziers, for the missionaries had more control over considerable land leases granted by the governments, enabling them to have influence over the Indigenous people.

Not all missions were safe places like Maloga and Hermannsburg. Andrew Markus's book, *Governing Savages* (1990), highlights some of the atrocious punishments issued to Indigenous people by missionaries. He says most of the missionary punishments were no different to those given by white pastoralists. Markus declares that the missionaries, like the pastoralists and whites, assumed the role of judge, jury and executioner of Indigenous people. Markus's awareness of the physical punishments in missions indicates that in general there was no difference in the treatment of Indigenous people in reserves, stations and any other designated areas.

There are Elders who remain silent in fear of the white man's old law, afraid to tell the truth of their experiences at the hands of those in charge. They remained silent, like my mother Ruby. Alexander Harris (1847), in *Settlers and Convicts: Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods*, gives details of the actions taken by the whites against the Indigenous people during early settlement. Harris describes some of the traumatic things that took place in the removal of the Indigenous people

from the land. I'm beginning to understand the thought processes of other Indigenous fathers, leaving their families at designated areas when working for periods of time. They men knew what the white folk would do to their families, if they were to leave them alone on Country.

Many Indigenous people had been forcibly removed from Country by the rapid white wave of settlement, forcing them to retreat to designated areas in fear of starvation. Some moved to desolate places now forgotten and/or unnamed. Those who moved to missions did so in the belief that they would be protected and fed, and allowed to continue a communal life and identity. As any normal parent would know, during hardship, one of the most important things is to make sure there is food on the table. Unbeknown to the Indigenous families, food supplies had been an enticement the white settlers used to gain their free labour.

As Peggy Brock notes In *Contested Ground – Australian Aborigines under the British Crown* (McGrath, 1995), this was a common procedure nationwide for white pastoralists to gain workers. Brock says that in South Australia, pastoralists demanded food supplies from the government to lure 'Aborigines to their properties, so they would have a ready-made workforce' (p.223). Many Indigenous people left their children at missions, in the hope they would not be taken away and with fear about their loss of culture, which is precisely what the missionaries were hoping to eliminate from them: their culture.

Brock highlights the attitude of the authorities during that period. Indigenous people should be placed on reserves controlled by non-Indigenous authorities because they were incapable of living independently. Yet Indigenous people had survived on the continent for tens of thousands of years before white settlement. Brock tells of how white men would take the law into their own hands, because they felt empowered to conquering the land from Indigenous people. Legal authorities seldom intervened, providing unspoken approval of such actions. Brock indicates that different styles of violence were used. With community acceptance, the violence was so widespread that those who rejected it were branded fanatics.

Ward McNally clarifies why Indigenous people were able to survive (*Goodbye Dreamtime*, 1973). Before the white man, Indigenous people had already developed a social code of high order and an understanding of environmental science. They also had a complex method of marriage to eliminate in-breeding which recognised the Indigenous people 'genetically as the healthiest race known to mankind. Diseases such

as venereal, smallpox, leprosy, and even the common cold, were unknown until white settlement' (p.1).

McNally also explains why reserves were originally established: cases of mass slaughter of Indigenous people and rape and torture becoming too common. The poor excuses given by the offenders could not be further justified so Indigenous people were forced to reserves to keep them 'out of sight and sound of their conquerors' (p.1).

Like McNally, Henry Reynolds, in *Dispossession – Black Australians and White Invaders* (1989), provides a reason for the setting up of reserves. He explains that in all parts of Australia, Aboriginal reserves were created during the latter half of the nineteenth and the early parts of the twentieth centuries. However, they were thought of as gifts given to the Aborigines, rather than compensation for the loss of Country. Reynolds notes how reserves were used as 'places of permanent imprisonment for Aborigines who had committed crimes, were considered dangerous or had been "cheeky" to an official or an employer' (p.199).

There was nothing for those living on the reserves to do, or nowhere they could go because of the loss of Country, culture and freedom. Places like Tin Town were not always happy places, because the inhabitants resorted to drinking, with the alcohol came violence and fighting among themselves. I can still recall the old McWilliams flagons, the smell and the dark red poisonous liquid that was changing the psyche of my people's lives.

Under the influence of alcohol brought to segregated areas primarily by white men, they began to forget about family security. Consumed by the effects of the grog, they became more violent and aggressive towards each other and fights would break out. Banivanua Mar recounts a significant episode in the Bundaberg 'marginalised scrub' when a diverse group started drinking heavily. She points out that 'The source of illicit alcohol suggests that reduced culpability arose from...susceptibility to alcohol' (p.189). The violence was inevitable:

As they ate and drank together Lifu and others started drinking gin, a drink that those around him knew, often made Lifu 'cranky'. After three bottles were shared Lifu was drunk and challenged Charlie Eureka and Hawaiian Captain Cook to a fight. Both Charlie and Captain Cook refused, but when Lifu challenged Kitty Eureka, Charlie stepped in to defend her. Charlie and Lifu fought, and following a confusion of blows and verbal challenges Lifu retrieved a tomahawk and lunged at Charlie, partially disembowelling him (p.179).

The local Aboriginal man, Charlie Eureka, was murdered. 'The illegal supply of grog

and opium to Aboriginal people ... preoccupied Bundaberg's police court in the 1890s'...Significantly therefore, debates about and concern over the supply of alcohol and opium lumped together crime, alcohol, prostitution, opium and disorder in a wider discourse about miscegenation and racial heterogeneity' (p.186). Banivanua Mar also highlights the neglect of Indigenous people in hospitals and the policing of 'segregated spaces' where racial restrictions were taking place.

Reynolds (1989) says that because the Aborigines could no longer live off their land, and because of the lack of work available for them, begging and prostitution became part of their lives, which provided insufficient and uncertain incomes to survive. Reynolds notes that 'disease and malnutrition were rife, mortality high and addiction to alcohol or opium were becoming commonplace' (p.152) on Aboriginal placement areas.

Reynolds states that the most serious grievances of the Aboriginal men were 'the treatment of their women. This grievance is 'as old as settlement', claims Reynolds (p.134). He says that on many Western stations, 'there were no white women at all, and the Aboriginal women were at the mercy of anybody, from the proprietor, manager, stockmen, cook, roustabouts or jackaroos' (p.134). If the Aboriginal women had husbands, then their husbands would be 'sent away' (pp.134-135), in most cases never to return. I can understand why my people, especially the men, would turn to substance abuse, for it was a way of escaping the reality of losing everything.

Another book by Henry Reynolds, *With The White People* (1990), has similarities to Hagan's *The N Word – one man's stand*. Reynolds, like Hagan's father, refers to placement areas for Indigenous people as fringe camps. Reynolds says while the invading Europeans squatted on Aboriginal land, creating hundreds of towns, the Aborigines in turn established just as many fringe camps on the outskirts of townships. Reynolds notes how appealing to the white settlers this was, as easy access for cheap labour and no need to supply any form of housing for the blacks.

He explains that many townships had Aboriginal placement areas, and 'the bigger towns would have had two or three' (p.135). One point Reynolds makes of significance to this project is that 'very little information about these "camps" has survived...they varied considerably in size from one or two families, to communities of a hundred or so' (p.135). Reynolds also gives valuable information on where Aboriginal placement areas were located, in addition to their being at least a few miles out of the townships. They were situated on 'the other side of the river, down in the dry creek-bed, out

beyond the graveyards... the slaughterhouse or the rubbish-dump' (p.135); above all, on land that no white man wanted because of the lack of water resources. Reynolds refers to the time restrictions placed on Aboriginal people, just as Aunty Jean Hamilton noted, saying that 'blacks were to be out of town between sunset and sunrise, regardless of the legal niceties of the situation' (p.148).

Reynolds (1990) describes the dwellings as no more than humpies, made mostly from discarded materials by the white town's folk and land holders. This is what I remember of Tin Town, the discarded timber scraps, corrugated iron sheets that structured our dwellings, the dirt floors and torn hessian bags for a door. Placement areas provided inadequate protection against severe weather conditions, inhabitants were vulnerable to disease, malnutrition and death. Aboriginal clans who had come through violence, disruption and disease in the first years of invasion tried to live as best as they could in fringe camps to survive. Reynolds' findings will provide important data when considering places similar to Tin Town.

He also writes about how the pastoralists, after working the blacks for many years, believed they owned rather than employed the ones who worked for them, regarding them as their property and resenting action by any Protector who dared to question their ownership of the Aboriginals. Stuart Macintyre (1986) reinforces the treatment of Indigenous people as the pastoralists' cheap labour force, explaining that pastoralists used the reserves and some missions as areas where 'the Aboriginal family produced labour for the stations and to which they were returned when no longer needed' (p. 110).

I can recall as a little boy, when we would all be sent to Wee Waa to pick cotton by hand. The spiky cases that surrounded the cotton caused pain when scratched or pricked trying to pull the cotton out of its casing. It indicates how designated areas of missions, reserves and stations had their ways of working together in exploiting Indigenous people for their own benefit; maybe not all, but there were many designated areas for Aboriginal people nationwide that did form cohorts.

Rednecks, Eggheads and Blackfellas – A study of racial power and intimacy in Australia, by Gillian Cowlshaw (1999) further highlights the treatment of Indigenous people on remote stations. Cowlshaw acknowledges the horrific cruelty and violence. Pastoral managers built fear and control over them by gifts and the threat of a gun. Cowlshaw exposes the financial motives of pastoralists, who would strong-arm Indigenous people into working for them. Totally deceiving the Indigenous workers,

they would underpay and undersupply their rations, a custom generally branded as 'nigger farming' (p.88).

The forceful removal off Country to the confinement of pastoral properties, missions and reserves was having an even more dramatic effect on Indigenous people. Bruce Pascoe touches on this in *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* (2012). He explains that because of their dispossession, Indigenous people had little or no access to their usual 'bush foods, bush medicines and water sources' (p.88). They had to rely and survive on the rations given 'by missions, the managers of government reserves and pastoralists' (p.89). There were many times I recall as a child when we had nothing to eat. Our only option was to scrounge around the local rubbish tip for food scraps, mouldy or soiled, it made no difference; we ate what we could for we were denied access to our traditional food sources.

Pioneers & Settlers – the Aboriginal Australians, by Catherine and Ronald Berndt (1978), gives understanding to the life and culture of Indigenous Australians prior to the European intrusion. It also shows the issues faced by a new generation of Indigenous people, who have only known life on one or more of the areas. With restrictions easing, most young Indigenous people have moved to larger towns or cities. Those remaining continue to live in small townships that previously segregated their people. This is how I see my family in Coonamble. Some of us left our town, while others remain to be a part of the township.

Deborah Bird Rose explains the silence of the old Elders about their treatment in *Hidden Histories* (1991). She tells of how, during the recordings with some of the old Elders, a dark deep seriousness or sadness came over them, showing that the old memories still tormented them. *Hidden Histories* contains graphic messages of survival and existence. Stories from the Yarralin people of the Northern Territory tell of massacres, governmental manoeuvrings, treatment in working life and insights to stations. Those dark tormenting memories that old Elders have carried for so long still resonate in the lives of young Indigenous men and women. Torment takes the form of anger. Loss of culture and Country, giving birth to white men's children and enforced living on designated areas by the white authorities, have been the main causes.

Ruby Langford Ginibi, *Haunted by the Past* (1999), acknowledges this in an account of her son Nobby and his personal journey to find identity. Nobby struggled with his identity because of his white skin. I can relate, for we both have Indigenous mothers but white fathers. Despite this, we both share the sentiment that we are black men

wrapped up in white skin. Nobby's problem was anger, caused by the loss of his history and identity which led him into trouble with authorities.

The first reactions of authorities towards an angry Aboriginal were to have him or her incarcerated. *Haunted by the Past* talks about jail, juvenile incarceration and institutionalisation of Indigenous people, especially the young. My brother Lawrence at an early age experienced institutions and jail until his death. Not long after my father's death, I myself almost became one of the statistics. Most young Indigenous people who are incarcerated suffer abuse or die in custody.

Indigenous deaths in custody have been happening for some time. Jeremy Long gives evidence of this in *Aboriginal Settlements – A Survey of Institutional Communities in Eastern Australia* (1970). Long describes how, in 1829, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur approved a 'supervised' community for Aborigines on Bruny Island, Tasmania. Arthur was convinced that removing the Tasmanian Indigenous people away from white settlements was necessary, until they could 'become more civilised' (p.11). After unsatisfactory trials, the Indigenous survivors became inmates of the Asylum on Flinders Island, leading to their early deaths. Long provides an important account of the procedures undertaken to move Indigenous people from Country to designated areas provided by government authorities.

What the white colonists did not understand about Indigenous people was their yearning to retain culture to survive. Dance, song, art and storytelling are the basis of their being. I remember as a child the secret corroborees at dusk, within the sandy bed of the old Castlereagh River, out of sight of the white townsfolk. The law back then was that Indigenous people were not allowed to teach cultural practices to their children; if they did, the children would be taken from them.

Banivanua Mar endorses this: 'In 1897, Indigenous Australians, and anyone deemed to be Aboriginal, became subject to arbitrary removals ... a trooper or policeman with a rifle evoked terror in the nineteenth century; in the twentieth century it was a policeman with a removal order' (p.190) and the appearance of one or more governmental vehicles, usually black in colour. It was a major fear of my mother, as it was something she experienced in the loss of her own sister.

In White Man's Dreaming (1994), Christine Stevens writes about the missions and the punishments the baptised Aborigines faced when caught performing their cultural practices. Out of sight of the missions, baptised Aborigines would sneak away to join the traditional rituals; when discovered, they were accused of heathen behaviour and

faced the punishment that missionaries deemed necessary to their sacrilegious acts.

In my endeavour to understand the treatment and the life of Indigenous people on designated areas, I can see what others who lived there experienced, especially missionary families. For this, *A Life Together, A Life Apart, A History of Relations Between Europeans and Aborigines* (1994), is useful. It gives an account of the Burrage children growing up on Aboriginal Reserves in New South Wales, their parents being white missionary teachers. They talk about the awful procedures of the Aborigines Protection Board and governmental policies about the treatment of Indigenous people.

The Burrage stories tell of a happy life in the missions, due to their parents' colour and position. No authority would bother interfering when a white person was in control. As I see it, fortunately for them, they were not Indigenous. If these places were controlled by authorised white people and they were Indigenous, their story would have been very different.

CHAPTER THREE

Finding 'Safe Havens': The Known Places

Historical Background

There is ample evidence on the historical record of British colonisation of Australia written mainly from a white Western perspective. The reason for repeating the well-known story here is to meet the expectations of many Elders whom I have met and with whom I have worked during my extensive travels around Australia. They have a thirst to know the whole story from the perspective of a man born of both cultures. They inspired me to write it, for this is not only my personal story; this is also their historical journey, requesting that I write it from the arrival of the white man.

While the stories of Captain Cook and Governor Phillip are now afforded legendary status by Westerners, they have only been half-heard, half-understood, even misunderstood by many of my 'old people'. Writing from the beginning accords with my desire to check my own memories and understanding against the recited facts that are given by the white man.

The first British contingent led by Captain James Cook, arrived on the shores of Botany Bay in 1770, when the east coast of Australia was claimed for the English Crown. Governor Arthur Phillip followed in 1788, which marked the beginning of European settlement in Australia. The arrival and takeover conducted by the white trespassers had happened quickly, and even though the Indigenous people stood strong against the invasion of their lands, they could not combat the onslaught of the metal weaponry that the British possessed.

England needed new penal colonies, for they had just lost the American colonies through the War of Independence, and they had nowhere else to dispose of their convicts. The first shipload of Australian settlers were convicts, arriving with Governor Arthur Phillip.

Before white settlement of Australia, and the declaration of it as a sovereign nation of the Commonwealth, a protocol was in place to make sure that Australia was uninhabited and belonged to no one. *The Australian Law Reform Commission – Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Laws (ALRC) at Common Law: The Settled Colony Debate* (1986) reports that at the time:

[I]t is clear that these rules were the vehicle by which recognition of Aboriginal laws was denied. From the first days of settlement, the interaction of British administrative policies and legal principles relating to the colonies provided the foundation for asserting of English law at the expense of the customary laws and practices of Aboriginal groups (report no.5)

On this assumption, Cook reported that Australia was *terra nullius*, or no-one's land. He had to prove it by reporting what he saw, judging it by the current European standards of occupied land. This style was based upon finding evidence of occupation by sighting buildings and farming practices, which included crops, animals and fencing. Cook and his officers could not or would not see such signs and so believed the land was open to ownership.

Here the difference between the cultures of two nations began. The style of farming Europeans applied was to fence areas for crops and livestock to notify ownership of land. The farming style of the Indigenous people was to live and work with nature. No fences were needed, allowing native animals to pass through areas freely, with seasonal controlled burning to keep grasslands maintained to entice grazing animals. The Indigenous people's natural boundaries were highlighted by rivers, waterways, tree lines, hill/rock formations and distant mountain ranges which all hold significant ancestral values to their culture and Lore. The culture of the Indigenous people was also opposed to that of the European style, including religious beliefs and laws; hence there is still no Treaty established.

However, in the early stages of contact between the British and the Darug and Eora nations, no conflicts were reported, for Governor Phillip had based the settlement on the assumption of 'understanding the terms of trading and encouragement of friendliness' (AIATSIS, 2015, para.2) towards the traditional owners. Unfortunately, this assumption did not go to plan and conflicts began. The settlers of the First Fleet 'did not understand the ways of the local Indigenous peoples' (para.2) and the absence of respect given to the traditional owners by many settlers caused friction between the two cultures.

The detail given by AIATSIS is used in the following explanation. Through the early years of settlement, Governor Phillip was facing many major problems. He found it difficult to control the convicts, including their absences from the settlement, not knowing where they were going and what they were doing. Charis Chang gives the

example of prison escapees: ‘they were technically supposed to be in a prison but some still managed to get out’ (para.2). With this uncontrolled freedom the convicts were experiencing, they would often raid small Darug and Eora family clans, stealing their weaponry.

The early conflicts between the escaping convicts and the local Indigenous people marked the beginning of the destruction of early Indigenous nations. Loss of life and forceful removal from their Countries occurred more intensely. The British were ignorant of the Lore of the Indigenous people. They had their own way of punishing their own when laws were broken; so too did the Indigenous nations. Their Lore was to apply the same punishment to those who committed crimes in the same way as they would their own. ‘Aboriginal Australian attacks initially focused on individual Europeans, either for taboo behaviour or the killing of kin, both of which would have been punishable in pre-contact tribal society’ (para.5).

Regrettably, with the lack of women available to the convicts, their sexual desires were also driven towards the local Indigenous communities. In surprise attacks, ‘they raped the women ... their sexual violence led to a lot of conflict’ (para.2). Watkin Tench, an officer of the First Fleet describes these horrendous attacks towards the Indigenous people, noting ‘that the unprovoked outrages committed upon them, by unprincipled individuals among us, caused the evils we had experienced’ (1788, p.91).

As more settlers arrived in Australia, the push to claim land for farming placed stress upon other Indigenous nations as they fought to keep their land, especially around the natural waterways. The new squatters were instructed to push forward and make new settlements, and often with no authority figure or policing within these settlements, these settlers set their own rules. Ann McGrath says: ‘[T]here was a lot of bloodshed as the colony spread, as they were dividing up land for agriculture’ (cited in Chang, 2018, para.2), and from this point on, history has noted that there were ‘a lot of massacres in Victoria and NSW’ (para.2) of the Indigenous people to remove them off the land.

The attitude of William Cox, who arrived in Sydney in 1800, provides just one example of the vicious disregard that many settlers harboured. Governor Macquarie had placed Cox in charge of constructing a road over the Blue Mountains in July 1814. Michael Pearson (1981), describes a public meeting in Bathurst when Cox argued that ‘the best thing that could be done, would be to shoot all the Blacks and manure the

ground with their carcasses, which was all the good they were fit for! It was recommended likewise that the women and children should especially be shot as the most certain method of getting rid of the race' (1981, p.75).

Governor Macquarie was not the most compassionate man, and I feel like he would have given this message from Cox some thought considering his views of Indigenous people. Michael Organ (2014) clarifies this by noting Governor Macquarie's orders to his regiments stating:

on any occasion of seeing or falling in with the Natives...to surrender themselves to you as Prisoners of War. If they refuse to do so, make the least show of resistance, or attempt to run away from you, you will fire upon and compel them to surrender...such natives as happen to be killed on such occasions, if grown up men, are to be hanged up on trees in conspicuous situations, to strike the survivors with the greater terror. On all occasions of your being obliged to have recourse to offensive and coercive measures, you will use every possible precaution to save the lives of the Native Women and Children, but taking as many of them as you can Prisoners (p.4)

Not everyone in the white community shared William Cox's extreme attitude or that of Governor Macquarie. 'There were growing concerns in some parts of the community about the fate of Aboriginal people who, it was assumed, were dying out' (AIATSIS, 2019). According to the explanation given in 'Remembering the Mission Days' (sub headed 'Protection laws: the beginning, AIATSIS 2019), the concerns led to the creation of Aboriginal reserves as 'a political response to the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land'. Protectionism was also a way that the government's actions and policies could restrict or restrain Indigenous people through dispossession and containment.

The Aboriginal Protectorate, under George Augustus Robinson, was the government's 'first attempt to control the "dying" population', followed by The Aborigines Protection Act (Vic) 1869, which established an Aborigines Protection Board in Victoria purportedly to manage the interests of Aborigines. The NSW Aboriginal Protection Board was created in 1883 to look after the welfare of Aboriginal people and provide grants of land for them to live on (AIATSIS, 2019). Unfortunately, the grants of land were never given to the Indigenous people, it remained in the control of the governments for this represented a new phase of control over their lives. Other colonies followed these procedures, but most attention will now be focused on New South Wales, because that is where I have my connection to Country.

The government reserved land for the exclusive use of Indigenous people and assigned responsibility for their welfare to a Protection Board. The management of the reserves was provided by government appointed managers or missionaries who received government subsidies, and the enforcement of the protectionist legislation at the local level was the responsibility of the protectors.

Acknowledgement and memories of these sites of segregation, about to be identified by name, are only left to those of us who lived on them. While many choose to forget, because of the suffering or other heinous scenarios, I choose to write about it to give a better understanding of what did take place in governmental segregated spaces.

Locations and Labelling of Known Places

Indigenous people had little choice but to live on the reserves or in missions and it is true to say that they often developed very deep attachments to them. Some did not live on Aboriginal missions, reserves or stations, but in towns, or in fringe camps on private property or on the outskirts of towns, on beaches and riverbanks mostly in extremely poor living conditions. Over time, many of these places across Australia became important to Aboriginal people (*Why were Aboriginal people moved into reserves or missions?* AIATSIS, 2019) and Indigenous people were giving these places their own place name. Stephen Hagan refers to isolated areas of placement as ‘fringe camps’ (2005, p.9). Rees describes to the crude shacks on the reserve as a ‘shanty town’ (2018, p.3), and the isolated area my family lived on was known as ‘Town Tin’ also ‘the Island’ because of its location being split by two waterways.

Philip Felton found that there had been several previous attempts before his own to list all the Aboriginal Reserves of New South Wales. For example, in 1972, Peter Tobin provided a valuable list, which he knew was incomplete. He pointed out that:

No exhaustive list of Aboriginal reserves exists, many old Lands Department files have been lost, some old reserves appear not to have been fully revoked and *there are probably Aboriginal reserves of which no-one today is aware* [emphasis added] (‘Aboriginal Land Rights in NSW’, cited Felton, p.5).

‘These various materials are useful,’ says Felton, ‘but are also very incomplete, and sometimes contain significant inaccuracies’ (p.5).

Before identifying some of the known places identified by Felton and others, it is necessary to define missions, reserves and stations. The AIATSIS 2019 site, *Missions*,

Reserves and Stations, provides a summary of each. Firstly, missions by churches or religious individuals were created:

to house Aboriginal people and to train them in Christian ideals and to also prepare them for work...[m]ost of the missions were developed on land granted by the government for this purpose. Some of these Christian missions did protect Indigenous people from the extremes of violence experienced...at the hands of pastoralists and others. Approximately, there were ten missions established in NSW between 1824 and 1923...[m]any Aboriginal people have adopted the term 'mission' or 'mish' to refer to reserve settlements and fringe camps generally.

Felton (p.55) explains that Aboriginal people in New South Wales often colloquially described the place of residence where they lived as a 'mission', even though no missionary person had been associated with the place. From my own memory, 'Tin Town' was also referred to as the mission, whether because of the Christian beliefs that were changing our cultural beliefs for I do recall and, have seen photographs of a black Santa on 'Tin Town' surrounded by Indigenous children of families that occupied this segregated area:

The word might have been used for a government Aboriginal station or an Aboriginal reserve, or sometimes for a town housing estate. The same term was sometimes applied to an informal settlement or camping area, but there was no consistency. This usage was often misleading to non-Aboriginal people who did not understand the difference between the various places of residence

Secondly, what were the reserves? Larissa Behrendt (2012) says that 'the governments started establishing reserves as safe havens for Aboriginal people' from the mid-1800s onwards (p.108). From my own and my family's experiences living on 'Tin Town', and that of other Indigenous peoples experiences living on reserves, they were not the safe havens that the government assured they would be.

Before 1850, reserves were not managed by the government or its officials. From 1850, it is estimated that 'thirty-five small Aboriginal reserves were created, known as the squatting districts of NSW' (AIATSIS, 2019). Spaces used for reserves were allocated agricultural land, 'which at that time covered most of NSW, except Sydney and part of the coastal district' (AIATSIS, 2019). The majority of these allocated reserves were non-arable; the land was either swampy, brackish, parched or infertile. Aunty Jean Hamilton states that some 'clung for a time to their Aboriginal traditions

on poor land not occupied by the Europeans' (p.91).

Hagan (2005) describes the conditions of his father's family reserve and of that particular country they were living on:

The camping area was located on black-soil country. When the country was dry, any traffic, including horses and horse-driven sulkies, would create dust. It was [a] source of annoyance but something the fringe dwellers learnt to live with. When it rained the area became muddy, too boggy for any form of transport. There was no water drainage or bitumen road to the camp from town and the conditions were generally atrocious. If the rivers flooded the whole camping area would be underwater (p.10).

Thirdly, stations or rural properties in New South Wales also had camps or separate places for Indigenous people to live. They were managed and tightly controlled by the Aboriginal Protection Board (APB) from 1883. Indigenous people were forcibly moved on to and off stations; 'similar control was also in place on Missions and Reserves' (*Missions, Reserves and Stations*, AIATSIS, 2019). Felton (2013) also notes that:

Aboriginal people were encouraged (or sometimes directed) to live on reserves and at other stages, they were encouraged (or forced) to leave reserves. In several instances, the whole population of an individual station or reserve was removed by the Protection Board to another station or reserve in a distant location (p.71).

From my own memories and the oral history spoken to me by my mother and those Elders I had the privilege to have met on my travels, have all lived on either one or more of these three categorised places. From those Indigenous people I had spoken to, all agree with Andrew Markus (1990) previous statement 'that in general there was no difference in the treatment of Indigenous people in reserves, stations and any other designated areas' which were officially set aside by the government at the time explicitly for Aboriginal people to live on.

Although there were variations this appears to be the case in all states and territories. For example, in the Northern Territory, station owners managed most of the land surrounding the Hermannsburg Mission, and they seemed to have the full support and assistance from the police in controlling or removing Indigenous people.

For the purpose of my research, I have chosen three out of the many sites identified, which are relevant to my family: a reserve near Brewarrina, close to Coonamble, Pilliga and Coonabarabran.

Firstly, the reserve near Brewarrina, according to the map details, was named Dodge

City. Further research reveals that this was the Country of the Muruwari mob, and this reserve was inhabited by other Indigenous people for other nations. Their website describes their Mission Days:

The gunjabul (policemen) and the mission (kuwinj) controlled our lives on the missions. We were not allowed to speak our language or practice our culture. We were told that we had to learn the 'new way' of life. We had to hide our things from the gunjabul and kuwinj including our children so they would not be taken away. To alert each other, we had special songs and signs that would alert us that the mission gunjabul was approaching. But it was not all bad, some gunjabul helped us and we helped them

(http://www.muruwari.com.au/index.php?p=1_9).

The dispersal of Muruwari people out of their mayi (land) occurred in the 1970s. People continued to move as far away as Sydney, Wee Waa (New South Wales), Cherbourg (Queensland) and Alice Springs (Northern Territory). They had no choice but to move into towns and cities because work on the pastoral stations stopped and it was difficult for the Muruwari people to obtain jobs on their Country.

(http://www.muruwari.com.au/index.php?p=1_9)

Secondly, the Pilliga Reserve was formed in 1902, and is more commonly referred to as the Minnom Mission by the people who are also known as the Gamilaroi, Gomeroi and Gamilaraay people. Aunty Jean Hamilton writes that 'during 1910, Aborigines from Coghill Creek and Wingadee reserves were moved to this mission' (p.92). The Minnom Mission is located on Kamilaroi Country and its purpose is described as follows:

In the early years people moved a lot between Pilliga, a big camp at Wingadee and Cuttabri. In 1912 a school was set up at Pilliga and the Aborigines Protection Board used that to push people onto the reserve. In 1923 the Board made the reserve into a station and had a manager put on. A timber mill was built there and it became a big producer of timber for the Board's stations and reserves throughout the area

(<http://www.coonamble.org/murries/history/missions.htm>).

Aunty Jean Hamilton describes the Pilliga mission as having 'good houses...a sawmill next to the manager's residence...a few cows for milking and sheep for eating...a store and the Aborigines received a pension once a fortnight...everything had to go

through the manager...there were corroborees held at the mission' (p.44). She also remembers attending school on the mission and makes note of the time restrictions placed on Indigenous people living there.

Thirdly, the Burra Bee Dee Mission was founded in 1908 and has been recorded as a Station approximately 11 kilometres from Coonabarabran. In the early 1900s it was brought under the control of the Aboriginal Protection Board and became a managed station. Burra Bee Dee was originally known as Forky Mountain, after the hill that dominates the landscape. The name Burra Bee Dee is an Aboriginal word meaning 'flying mice' (Office of Environment and Heritage - History, 2004, para.2).

The Mountain is a significant and organising feature of the landscape, particularly the language and the stories of Burra Bee Dee. Forky Mountain was important to the Indigenous people of Burra Bee Dee as it was a birthplace, a place for burials and a food source. The first hut on the mission was built, 'a boarded house with tin and bark and a dirt floor, followed by other dwellings known as bag houses made of hessian bags, tents, and bark and kerosene tin shacks' (Office of Environment and Heritage - History, 2004, para.3).

The area is outstanding as it is able to demonstrate the principal characteristics of the Gamilaraay people. The site of the original settlement at the base of Forky Mountain and then later the gazetted 'Mission' site, the area shows the way of life and customs of the Gamilaraay people and their cultural heritage values. There are no physical buildings remaining; only the original cemetery, still used by the local community (Office of Environment and Heritage, 2004).

Although Missions, Reserves and Stations were the official government terminology for sites, Indigenous people labelled them by other names not mentioned by white writers. This is quite noticeable in Indigenous writings about these locations; for example, 'Tin Town', my own site, and the three previously identified sites, were chosen to acknowledge the difference between white recordings and Indigenous oral history of place name referencing.

Unfortunately, there are not many Indigenous people left who have experienced living in segregated areas. There are some who hold on to the memories through oral history passed down from their Elders, yet some of the old people choose to be silent because of the atrocities that they had experienced. There are members from my own family who have chosen to be silent, mainly my older sisters. Many Indigenous people,

feeling shame, moved away from these segregated areas to start a new life with possibly a new identity. Sally Morgan (1987), on her own journey of self-discovery, says her mother encouraged her, if she was ever questioned about being Aboriginal, 'to describe herself as of Indian origin' (p.38).

Treatment of Inhabitants

The treatment of most of the Indigenous people on segregated areas was dreadful. At this point, an example about their treatment will be taken from the experiences of Indigenous soldiers who returned from service in the First and Second World Wars. In recognition of their service in the armed forces, John Maynard (2015) notes:

People tend to forget that Indigenous Australians were in uniform since the 1860s in this country. So there were Indigenous Australians in Light Horse Units. These men would have come out of a community, they would have basically joined the military, served overseas as part of that unit as an equal, then they would have come back to Australia and probably disappeared back into their community (p.155).

Acknowledgement of their achievements during the war meant nothing to most of the white folk in the country towns to which the diggers returned. They realised that their treatment was no different from when they first left to serve with the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF).

John Moremon (2018) confirms that after the war, 'Indigenous veterans found that their war service counted for little...Douglas Grant, for example, involved himself in ex-service affairs but was continually frustrated by racism and lack of recognition. Very few Indigenous veterans were granted a soldier settler block. They were not given full citizenship and rights and still had to live under the so-called 'Protection Acts'...Despite having been prepared to fight and die for their country, war service again failed to translate into full citizenship and recognition for Indigenous Australians. Indigenous veterans could still be denied a drink in pubs, which was potentially an issue if they attended unit reunions, and they felt marginalised by conservative ex-service organisations that frequently railed against Indigenous rights. For the Indigenous men, the idea of going to war is typified by John Maynard (2015), who says that it had:

a widespread demonstrated sense of patriotism within Aboriginal

communities, with many supporting the war effort through contributions to war fund appeals. This support was girded by a belief (although in hindsight on the First World War clearly misguided) that military service might also make an impact on improving the social, political and economic well-being of Aboriginal people, their families and communities (p.145).

My grandfather, my mother's father, Ranji Alfred Freeman (also known as Dodd), was a returned soldier. Grandfather, at the age of 22, joined the AIF in 1917, serving in the 19 Rft 18th Battalion. In 1966, Grandfather Ranji passed away, when I was a few years old. Unfortunately I was too young to sit and yarn with him about his experiences that would be vital to my future research. Aunty Jean Hamilton notes that her father, Archibald Henry Lawrence Leonard, also served in the AIF during WWI (p.13). Both men, my Grandfather Ranji and Archibald, were Indigenous Servicemen.



Photo One: Grandfather Ranji

Sally Morgan's father, William Joseph (Bill), was a returned soldier from the Second World War, but 'suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome following the war, which led him to drink heavily with his brothers and fellow ex-servicemen, alienate himself from the family, take little interest in Sally's education or art, steal her savings to spend on alcohol, and frequently to fight with her mother' (Indigenous Australia, 2012-2019). Morgan writes that when her father had died, the coroner 'attributed Dad's suicide to the after-effects of war' (Morgan, 1987, p.50).

For most of the returned Indigenous soldiers this was the type of men they had become. Post-traumatic stress syndrome for returning Indigenous soldiers was not only caused by the war, but by the situations and restrictions forced upon them and

their people by the government once they had returned to their Country or segregated areas. Their land was taken, and even though they fought side by side and got the same respect in the battlefield as equals to the white soldiers, nothing changed for them when they returned.

ABC reporter Tim Lee, in an episode of 'Landline' (2019), discussed the returning Indigenous soldiers of the First World War. Lee says that after the First World War, tens of thousands of returning white soldiers were granted blocks of land to farm, but only a handful of the 800 Indigenous soldiers who fought for their country would receive this opportunity. In general, being Aboriginal made them ineligible for those farming blocks. For the Indigenous soldiers, despite their service, Australia was still deeply divided by colour.

This could not be more obvious than the government's decision to grant land to former wartime enemies during this period in Australia. Katrina Power (2019) writes that 'even the former enemies of war would be granted automatic Australian citizenship and be given free parcels of land to migrate to Australia post first and second world wars' (p.22).

Although there were some Indigenous soldiers who were lucky enough to be granted land, they soon found that their blocks were unworkable, being too swampy, salty or barren. Even Indigenous soldiers who served in the Second World War were rarely considered for the purchasing of those blocks. Such incidents of ignorance and prejudice destroyed the cultural role of Indigenous men. It seemed that the white law, with the use of suppression, was doing everything possible to stop them from reclaiming their own Country

(<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/landline>, episode Sunday 14 April 2019).

While these experiences were bad enough, governmental laws that were in place really applied great pressure on the Indigenous men's cultural role, especially when confined to missions, reserves and stations. Their Country was divided into pastoral lots given to the returning white soldiers, fences were in place and no hunting and gathering were allowed on these properties. If Indigenous men were caught crossing those fences into properties to participate in their cultural practices, harsh penalties were applied, even the possibility of being shot on sight. There was no easy access to sacred men's sites or ceremonial sites that are so important to our culture. Like so many other

young Indigenous men and women who grew up on segregated areas, I am saddened that I was never able to see and experience the places of my people, due to the white man's control of our Country.

Losing access to Country was not the only thing that these returning Indigenous soldiers had come home to, with new laws restricting them. It was the loss of family, especially their children. The Australian Human Rights Commission ('Bringing them Home- Colonisation', Ch.2, 1997) states that during this period of decision making by the government, its laws practices and policies included the forcible removal and separation of Indigenous children in each State and Territory, from their families and communities. It also notes that 'Indigenous children were kidnapped and exploited for their labour. Indigenous children were still being `run down' by Europeans in the northern areas of Australia in the early twentieth century' (n.p.).

Reynolds (1990) writes:

the greatest advantage of young Aboriginal servants was that they came cheap and were never paid beyond the provision of variable quantities of food and clothing. As a result any European on or near the frontier, quite regardless of their own circumstances, could acquire and maintain a personal servant (p. 169).

The Australian Human Rights Commission (1997) also reports that missionaries and 'protectors' employed on behalf of the government also targeted Indigenous children for removal from their families. The reason given was to 'teach European ideals and to instil a work habit in the Indigenous children, to be labouring in services to the colonial settlers' (Ch. 2, n.p.).

The Australian Human Rights Commission goes further to explain that, in the name of protection, Indigenous people were subject to near-total control. Their movements were regulated, as was their everyday life, their right to marry and their employment. To encourage the conversion of the children to Christianity and to distance them from their Indigenous lifestyle, children were housed in dormitories and contact with their families was strictly limited ('Protection and segregation of Indigenous people in the nineteenth century', para.5, 1997).

It is interesting to note, when dealing with the treatment of Indigenous people that most of those who were forced off their Country onto missions, reserves and stations, looked upon them as safe havens. They were informed that they would be protected

from the settler's onslaught of clearing them off the land. The AIATSIS report, 'Missions, Reserves and Stations' (2019), asserts that Aboriginal areas of restriction were publicised as safe havens which defended Aboriginal peoples from encroachments by settlers. 'In reality this meant total control of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lives including legal guardianship of their children' ('Remembering the Mission Days Stories from the Aborigines' Inland Missions - Protection laws: State by State').

This also meant that in most of the 'safe havens' the white authorities threatened the Aboriginal people with severe punishment if they disobeyed their laws, and did not go to segregated areas.

On the Muruwari Home Page (2019) this explanation is given:

when the kuwinj and watjiin (white man and white woman) came to our mayi (land), Muruwari people had to move into pastoral stations, reserves and missions. Muruwari people moved to Goodooga, Dennawan, Mundiwa, Brewarrina, Weilmoringle, and Angeldool. At these missions and reserves, kuwinj and watjiin prevented Muruwari people from speaking our language and we were told speak English and learn their way of life else you would be severely punished

(http://www.muruwari.com.au/index.php?p=1_9).

The website also details how the Muruwari people were taken from local stations, reserves and missions at Dennawan and Toulby, and sent to Cherbourg or Barambah Aboriginal Mission in eastern Queensland. Kawinj also loaded Muruwari people onto cattle trucks, where they were taken to Cunnamulla where they were put on trains and taken east to Cherbourg Mission. This was a sad time for the Muruwari people, for they were their Elders and family members who had great knowledge of mayi (http://www.muruwari.com.au/index.php?p=1_9, 2019).

The removal of Indigenous people across state borders was unusual, according to the white man's documentation, but Indigenous people know that this had happened. It had also happened to their children who were placed under state control. Unlike white children who came into the state's jurisdiction, there was greater attention undertaken to make sure Aboriginal children would never see their parents or families again. Linda Briskman (2003) says; 'They were often given new names, and the greater distances involved in rural areas made it easier to prevent parents and children on separate missions from tracing each other' (p.6).

A possible reason for this is that ‘White Australia’ saw Indigenous people as one nation with the same colour skin, but there were ‘over 500 different clan groups or “nations” around the continent, many with distinctive cultures, beliefs and languages’ (Australian Government, n.d., ‘Indigenous peoples and cultures’, para.2). It was all a part of the process to eradicate the Indigenous people’s existence.

Living Conditions

The living conditions endured by Indigenous people in segregated areas were bad. There were four structural problems to consider: the inadequate construction of their dwellings; the lack of medical services; the effects of alcohol; the conflicts caused by differences of cultures, with the inclusion of other excluded groups of colour within these confined spaces; the effects of limited or no work at all; and the treatment of the women.

Firstly, the 'homes' were little more than the type of poor, makeshift places to be found in slums, made from inferior materials. Heather Goodall (1996) describes the dwellings on the Coonamble reserve, ‘built by the Aboriginal people themselves from flattened kerosene tins and bush timber.



Photo Two: My second birthday picture taken beside humpy, Tin Town

There was no electricity or water supply at all’ (p.284). Larissa Behrendt (2012) says that dwellings were made of ‘any available material, such as bark, hessian bags, wood and corrugated iron. The floors were made of either dirt or pieces of linoleum or carpet’ (p.364).

Henry Reynolds (1990) corroborates Behrendt:

The architecture varied as surviving photographs from all parts of Australia indicate... the use of local building materials such as thatch, bark, reeds or leaves laid onto a framework of saplings...With growing knowledge of European bush carpentry Aborigines began to build structures that looked increasingly like the slab huts of miners and selectors (pp.135-137).

Stephen Hagan (2005) describes the construction of his father's family dwelling on the banks of the Warrego River, two kilometres upstream from Cunnamulla: 'of kerosene tins and scraps of iron sheeting, gathered from the rubbish tip and fastened with wire onto bush timber' (p.10).

The sub-standard dwellings and their unpleasant locations led to the next problem, medical neglect. Because most segregated areas were commonly placed near rubbish tips, lacking water or sanitation, health problems were inevitable.



Photo Three: Some of my older siblings taken near the rubbish tip



Photo Four: my sisters Jane and Sidona with the puppies

With rubbish tips close by and with the weather often bringing flood or drought, segregated areas were no place for any human to live. Sickness among Indigenous people was common, but medical help was rarely available, and if it was, being Aboriginal meant there was a waiting time imposed.

Behrendt (2012) says that:

Historically, Indigenous people weren't given adequate access to doctors and were, for example, given medical attention on the verandas of hospitals but not allowed in beds in the wards. The long-term effect of this discrimination in the provision of health services meant that Indigenous people had poorer health levels and this was further compounded by poorer access to doctors and hospitals (p.360).

Goodall (1996) also writes about the neglect of Indigenous people needing medical assistance: 'The Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) was still giving tacit support to the segregation of hospitals into the late 1960s, as Aboriginal women continued to give birth in segregated labour wards, or on hospital verandas or sheds in the grounds' (p.290).

Ann McGrath (1995) gives another example of neglect:

hospitals had been closed down to Aborigines...white townspeople demanded that labour wards must be denied to them. Many Aboriginal women remember the discomfort and humiliation of birthing on the veranda or in a makeshift area at the rear of the main building (p.94).

There would be many stories of neglect covered up by the medical system towards Indigenous communities, and many deaths through negligence left unrecorded.

The third factor relevant to living conditions was alcohol abuse, causing demand for non-existent or minimal medical service. Maggie Brady (2008) says:

Aboriginal knowledge of natural resources as well as the surprising fact that traditionally, before the arrival of Europeans in Australia, there was knowledge of fermentation in some regions...sugars, are converted into alcohol, and this process can occur naturally (p.9).

She also gives examples from three different Indigenous nations of their naturally occurring alcoholic drinks: firstly, Mangaitch, from 'the south-west of Western Australia...made from the flowering cones of a banksia plant' (p.4); Secondly, Way-a-linah, a drink from the Tasmanian Palawa people, 'a drink made from the sap of a

gum tree (*Eucalyptus gunnii*) that grows high up on the central plateau of Tasmania' (p.6); and thirdly, Kambuda, from the Yanyuwa people living in the Borroloola region of the Northern Territory. Kambuda was made 'from the crushed nuts of the spiral pandanus' (p.8).

Brady says that '[t]here is no written description of people fighting or arguing after consuming these drinks' (p.8). This statement is crucial in understanding the difference between the natural alcoholic drinks Indigenous people made, to the alcohol that was introduced to them by the European colonists. On segregated areas, Indigenous people were not able to access their natural sources to produce their own alcohol.

Reynolds (1990) explains what effect the European alcohol was having on Indigenous people, especially those who were isolated on segregated areas. European alcohol led to 'violence that accompanied and furthered social breakdown...Camp dwellers were also prey to the random brutality of the Europeans and raids by drunken louts bent on sexual pillage' (p.154).

Bruce Elder (1988) suggests that Indigenous people, especially the men, 'resorted to alcohol to kill the pain' (p.47). He also says that there is 'an extraordinary amount of evidence that, when contact was made between Aborigines and European society, the results - including prostitution, alcoholism, violence and self-destruction - were devastating for the Aborigines' (p.281).

The problem of alcohol may be linked to other unacceptable living conditions. Banivanua Mar (2012) describes the problem of cultural conflict, when confined areas became home not only to local Indigenous people, but to others from different nations, including Chinese and Polynesians. They were thrown into the 'mix' of living in segregated spaces. When alcohol was consumed, fighting erupted over the slightest misunderstanding about tribal and cultural differences (p.179).

Lawrence Bamblett (2013) says that 'even though traditional kin relationships remained, the changes brought a much larger group of people together in a very small space. Along with the introduction of alcohol, this has undoubtedly increased the incidences of fighting' (p.109). The fighting was not restricted to the men; sometimes the women would fight each other, or like the example given by Tracey Banivanua Mar (2012), a man against a woman (p.179).

The problem of work, or the absence of it, associated with alcoholism, contributed to

the general unpleasant conditions. Elder (1988) writes that 'alcohol had so lowered self-esteem that fighting and brawling had become the norm' (p.16). One of the main factors contributing to the norm was not being able to gain employment or to receive a permanent wage.

Behrendt (2012) writes that 'Indigenous people had a long history of being excluded from the workforce by often being paid with rations and kept as a pool of cheap labour. Indigenous girls were trained to become domestic staff and boys to undertake manual labour' (p.373). Reynolds (1990) reports that 'blacks had been employed as shepherds, bullock drivers, stock and hut keepers, messengers, domestics, sheep washers, whalers, collectors of skin and guides' (p.157).

Women were also undervalued and their maltreatment is the last of the factors discussed here that contributed to the dehumanising living conditions. Goodall (1996) describes Aboriginal women, 'widely employed for their skills as domestic and childcare servants...particularly valued in the general absence of white women' (p.60). She writes about the eventual reliance on Aboriginal women's domestic labour, but it was often confined to heavy cleaning and laundering, rather than the more intimate childcare which was so frequent an occupation on pastoral runs' (p.72).

Another scenario is provided by Hagan (2005), with an example from his own family. His great-grandmother was a full-blood Aboriginal woman of the Kullilli tribe...one of the fortunate women who were spared the indignity of being a victim of the 'gin kidnapping' ('gin' being a derogatory term for Aboriginal woman) that occurred throughout the State (p.17).

Although it could be termed as a different scenario, Aunty Jean Hamilton tells of the time my Aunty Alice was taken. 'Allie was about eleven years old a shiny black police car came and brought a lady to our camp...they wanted Alice to go work for this old lady...The police and the lady came back several times...one day we were sent away to play in the sand in the creek and when we came back Allie was gone' (p.46). Knowing that my Aunty Alice at such a young age, was soon faced with being isolated from her family. Her life would change dramatically from being a free spirited young Indigenous child to now taking over the role of house cleaner, milking cows morning and evenings and rounding up cattle. I know my mother Ruby, who was two years older than Alice, never saw her sister again until the last few hours before Alice's death. In that time period, approximately sixty years had passed.



Photo Five: Aunty Alice as a young woman

Involvement and Behaviour of Missionaries.

Although some Christian missions did protect Indigenous people from the extremes of violence experienced (as pointed out earlier in the chapter) the evidence is strong that they were not all like Maloga mission, ‘that happy place’ described by Cato (see chapter 2, p.14). The Lutheran missionaries of Hermannsburg worked harmoniously with the Indigenous people, but not all missions were safe havens.

According to the Office of Environment and Heritage (2012), ‘Most of the missions were developed on land granted by the government for this purpose. Around ten missions were established in NSW between 1824 and 1923’ (para. 3). Soon more missions would follow, including those of other religious denominations and from other Western countries. The involvement and behaviour of the missionaries were not always angelic or God-like.

Andrew Markus’s book, *Governing Savages* (1990), highlights some of the atrocious punishments inflicted on Indigenous people by missionaries. As already explained by Rees (p.12), Rees give a reason why it was not an issue for missionaries to inflict these punishments, for they claimed that Indigenous people were worthless in the sight of God and white man.

Max Lohe (1977) quotes a Hermannsburg pastor, Wilhelm. F. Schwarz: 'there were serious outbreaks of hostilities between the Aborigines and white station owners; in self-defence and reprisals, the latter mercilessly shot down natives...the police...shot a number of natives around the neighbouring cattle stations...they also visited Hermannsburg' (p.17). On arriving at Hermannsburg, they captured four Aboriginal men, but even at the request from the missionaries to return them, only one was returned, the others shot. For most of the time, the outcome was never favourable towards Indigenous people, for the debased whites it was a form of entertainment. John Harris (2013), says 'many brutal acts were committed against Aboriginal people in the name of "sport" (p.89).

One of the brutal acts committed by white men was the raping of Indigenous women, and age did not seem to matter to them, when at times, abuse was committed by more than one man upon a single Indigenous woman or child. Nancy Cato speaks of the arrival of Aboriginal women within the first years at Maloga:

the younger women, their fate was to become the mothers of a new tribe of half-caste...Each station had its Blacks' camp, with its quota of young girls for the use of the station hands, and sometimes the squatter's sons...every young woman admitted to the mission had a part-white baby, though many were only thirteen or fourteen years old (p.33).

Cato quotes a statement from the Maloga Mission Annual Report, 1883: 'every girl who entered the Mission had been victimised...by white men, and reached us as mothers of illegitimate offspring or soon to become so...girls of tender age' (p.44). Rapes and impregnating of Indigenous women were not only committed by the white working men; there were also some missionaries who had relationships with them.

John Harris (2013) states it was 'common practice for white men to keep multiple Indigenous women captive for sexual purposes' (p.54). The practice is also noted by Joanna Cruikshank (2014), who says that the 'earliest missionaries to Pacific islands were single men...However, after a number of the first missionaries formed sexual relationships with Indigenous women, missionary societies began to see missionary wives as an essential guard against temptation' (*Early Protestant Missions*, para.2), and later missionary societies made it a requirement that missionaries must be married prior to their posting.

It would be interesting to know how many of these Indigenous women fell pregnant

to missionaries, and to know just how many of their children were either protected from the authorities or taken from their mothers never to be seen again, and to never know their Indigenous identity.

There are many historical records about the hard work performed by the missionaries, and their endurance in the extreme isolation of outback Australia, while working with the Indigenous people; for example, their efforts to preach, teach and train and to win converts to their God. Some missionaries would protect the Indigenous people from the brutality and abuse of the white station owners, regarding their missions as 'safe havens', but this was not always the case.

Defiance by Indigenous people against Regulations and Removal from Country.

Despite the destruction of the Indigenous nations, their defiance against the white man's abusive treatment, the government regulations and their removal from Country remained strong. They fought hard, physically and mentally, and many of their Elders tried to bring peace before they were all annihilated, but peace was elusive.

With the removal of Indigenous people onto segregated areas, there were those who were lucky enough to be placed on one that was unmanaged, enabling them to continue their cultural practices. An example of this defiance and continued cultural practice is given by Bamblett (2013), who says 'old ways flourished unnoticed by outsiders' (p.43). Unmanaged segregated areas allowed the old ways to continue.

Behrendt (2012) writes that:

Indigenous people still live right across Australia in a diversity of circumstances. Close-knit communities thrive in urban areas, clusters of communities have grown on the outskirts of towns where missions or reserves once were, and some Aboriginal people live in remote communities and on remote outstations, where usually a family group sets up camp...separate from the broader community (p.67).

On a positive note, evolving technology has enabled Indigenous people, who had been taken from family as children and those forcefully removed from Country by settlers and government intruders, to reconnect with family and to regain cultural knowledge and identity.

Conclusion

The survival of Indigenous people, despite the treatment on missions, reserves and stations, is extraordinary. By the middle of the nineteenth century the protectorate experiment had failed and the very survival of Indigenous people was being questioned. Forced off their land to the edges of non-Indigenous settlement, dependent upon government rations if they could not find work, suffering from malnutrition and disease, their presence was unsettling and embarrassing to non-Indigenous people. Governments typically viewed Indigenous people as a nuisance (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-chapter-2>).

The violence and disease associated with colonisation was characterised, in the language of social Darwinism, as a natural process of 'survival of the fittest'. According to this analysis, the future of Aboriginal people was inevitably doomed; what was needed from governments and missionaries was to 'smooth the dying pillow'.

(<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-chapter-2>).

CHAPTER FOUR

Tin Town: Memories of a Forgotten Place

‘In New South Wales, if I asked "What picture do you have of where the Aboriginal people used to live", some would say, "In the camp on the riverbank" and some would say, "On the reserve" or "Down at the mission". But many would probably be unclear what a reserve or "mission" was.’ This is how Philip Felton introduces his treatise on the *‘Lost’ Aboriginal Reserves of New South Wales* (2013, p.4). He then proceeds to answer his big question, ‘What became of the "lost" Aboriginal Reserves of New South Wales?’

I was born on one of the ‘lost’ Aboriginal reserves, a place known as Tin Town. I carry my own knowledge and experience of living there, along with the shared memories of my family. It was hard to find information on Tin Town to acknowledge its existence, like so many other forgotten segregated areas. Philip Felton recognises Tin Town and describes its location: ‘From the 1940s to the 1960s, Aboriginal people were camped on an island at the usually dry Warrena [sic] Creek; this area was known locally as "Tin Town" (p.149).

Tin Town was situated at the junction of the Castlereagh River and Warrana Creek surrounded by farms; the area was also used as the local rubbish tip. (See Map and Page.). The interactive map of New South Wales Aboriginal sites (AIATSIS, *Mapping NSW Aboriginal Missions, Stations, and Camps 1883-1969*) does identify a couple of sites near Coonamble and provides the coordinates, but not Tin Town.

In January 2019, I took a road trip back to Country to visit family and places of interest to this research. One of the highlights was visiting the site of our family dwelling on Tin Town with my sisters, Alice and May (Dorothy or Dot). Not much is left to identify our dwelling’s actual position, except the memories in our hearts and minds of our time there. The gum trees our father had planted are still standing, at the rear of the dwelling separating it from the Castlereagh River.



Photo Six: Brother Geoff points out our dwelling spot, in front of the gum trees our Dad planted

My family shared many hardships and occasional good times with others who once lived in Tin Town. Our stories echo what has been described already in the Introduction and Chapter 2. Our collective memory of Tin Town may best be explained by firstly talking about the conditions that we shared to survive. Secondly, I will tell the story of me and my family. Our stories are similar to others living at Tin Town, black and white families. We all suffered abuse in some shape or form, living in poverty, experiencing separation and racism. Nothing remains on Tin Town, 'the forgotten place', so my story is intended to restore a settlement that once existed.

One shared important experience I had was participation in my mob's secret corroborees. Little did I know at the time, corroborees had to be secret. It was only later that my mother and brother Tom informed me of the importance of not letting the townsfolk see or hear them, because they were forbidden. Corroborees were rare, but special.

I remember that evening vividly. My sister Sidona, who was only five years old, came running into our humpy calling out with such excitement, 'Quick! Come with me, we are having a corroboree!' Just as my mother was about to place me in bed, Sidona grabbed my hand and took me outside. She pulled me through the tall reeds and brushes which lined the small steep embankment, opening to a clearing on the sandy bed of the Castlereagh River, where finally we saw our mob. We sat near the glowing

fire, with family, sitting on old gum trees that had fallen during previous floods.

I recall sister Sidona's voice once again, 'Aunty Selina ("Slanty") can you teach us to sing and dance with you?' I can still see the gleam in the old Aunt's eyes, as she grabbed us both and began to teach us a dance and a song. This is something that amazed my brother Tom, when I told him of what I remember. He asked me if I could sing the song to him, which I did, but not expecting him to sing it with me. Now that was a privilege, singing with him. Brother Tom also confirmed that I would not have been more than two years old when that happened. Yet I do remember it.

Our home on Tin Town was like all the others. It was built by my father, consisting of just two rooms, with a timber frame, corrugated iron sheets for the walls, and no flooring except for the dirt beneath our feet. We all shared the one bedroom, where we were in constant fear of an infestation of 'bed bugs' and other vermin. The other room was the kitchen with a table and just two chairs, occupied by my parents at mealtimes. There were no doors apart from the hessian bags that were draped over the front entrance and divided the two rooms. If I went into another dwelling, it would have been similar.

In our home, sitting on the dirt floor, I recall my earliest childhood memory. Seated on the two chairs were my sister in-law Norma (who married my brother Tom), to my left and my mother sitting to my right. I know this woman on my right was my mother for she wore a white dress with large red roses, which she wore in most photographs.



Photo Seven: My brother Tom and his wife Norma

All of us on Tin Town were ever conscious of the river, for it was prone to flooding quickly. Our simple structures were constantly washed away. When thoughts about my

fear of deep flowing water come to mind, it just may be that experiencing flood waters on Tin Town at such an early age had impacted so much that fear remains.

The children of Tin Town were always careful when playing in the river, for sometimes there were areas of soft sand that pulled you under before you knew it. The old river was our bathroom, and bath times for us here were no different to other Indigenous children living on Country. Swimming in the river was bath time, except for the babies who were bathed in small tin containers with water boiled on the makeshift stoves. Bath time would definitely change as we moved from place to place. I remember living in an old condemned house in Warrie Street, Gilgandra, where everyone shared the same bath water. It was not fun being the youngest, for the water was always dirty and cold.

I don't remember exactly how many other families lived on Tin Town. Aunty Jean Hamilton (1989) mentions the arrival of her family and says 'there were only about six huts there...some white, old age pensioners lived there in little huts made of old tins and boards' (p.64). She says that her father, Archibald Leonard, built 'a log and tin hut there with two rooms and a kitchen' (p.65). When yarning with my older family members, especially those who were old enough to remember, we reminisced about the names of other childhood friends and their families who had lived there, and the fondness formed between the families.

Besides my own family, the other Indigenous names my siblings recalled were: Hall, Dodd, Welsh, Reid, Leonard, Boney, Doolan, Davis, McKenzie, Dixon, Foot, Simpson, Copeland, Caldwell, and a white man by the name of Alf Durham with whom my mother's mother, grandmother Isabel Dulcie Leonard (Yates née Neil, Larkins) eventually shared a place on Tin Town after leaving her husband Archibald.



Photo Eight: My Grandmother Isabel

Life on Tin Town was not always a 'safe haven' for the youngsters. Children were often taken away, causing great sorrow. My sister Wilma, as a child, was the only member of our family taken from us while living on Tin Town. She was sent to an institution only because she would not obey the school rules in Coonamble. Her life became a constant battle with inner demons that haunted her for the rest of her life. There is no doubt that it was caused by the abuse she experienced at the 'Westhaven Association School' in Dubbo.

A memory that will always be embedded in my psyche is when my sister Alice was taken from us. We were living in a condemned house in Gilgandra. The authorities came to take Alice away and it affected my family forever. I saw the sad face of my sister peering through the vehicle's back window, her hand pressed against it in acknowledgement of goodbye. As the vehicle drove away, my sister Jane (Thelma), just five years old and I, aged four, ran up the road chasing that vehicle all the way to the local railway station in Gilgandra, crying for her to come back. Jane in particular undoubtedly suffered from the immediate loss and separation from her big sister and not getting any answers to why Alice had to leave. After many decades of separation from family, Alice has finally been able to re-establish family, cultural and Country connection. During this same period of time, my brother Lawrence was also sent to different boys' homes. I recall his telling me of two places where he had stayed, Stuart Town and South West Rocks.



Photo Nine: My sisters Wilma and Alice with my brother Lawrence

Tin Town was not always a safe place either, especially for some children during nights

of drinking. I recall my brother Lawrence telling me about the night he was taken as a small child from our dwelling. He remembered being woken by a hand, reaching through the window where he lay, and placed over his mouth. My brother could not recall what had happened to him, for he had blacked out once the hand covered his mouth. I could tell that the incident still troubled him.

During times of drinking and sometimes gambling in ghettoized places, you would find men of different racial appearances, especially men who travelled the country searching for a wage. Many would have relationships with Indigenous people, but there were some who came to makeshift communities to prey upon the children.

My sister Alice at the age of four or five years became a victim of one man. Her recollection of a particular evening of the gathering is that those attending were not only family, but men who were passing through the township looking for a place to drink. Alice can still picture the man's face, remembers vividly what he had done to her. He was not family. He had led my sister away before anyone noticed she was gone. It was sometime later that they realised she was missing, and after several hours later of searching for her, my mother's brother, Billy Leonard, found her in an old burnt hole in a tree, where this predator had taken her and sexually abused her. The old tree stands there to this day.

Another major concern for Tin Town families was the lack of medical attention given to them by the local hospital. Goodall (1996) noted that the Indigenous people in general were 'gravely concerned about their communities' health and the segregation of hospitals' (p.155). Goodall was one of the first to identify the issues affecting the Indigenous people of Coonamble, even describing the dwellings and living conditions. Of significance to my family, Goodall describes how her colleague, Helen Hambly, returned to Coonamble during the 1960s, hoping to reconnect with two Indigenous women, Kathleen Boney and Lola Dodds (Dodd). They had previously shared their stories of living in the Coonamble Camp with Hambly.

Hambly's visit was to inquire if the health and living conditions for the two women had improved: 'After two years I visited up there...she [Kathleen Boney] was in a tent, in the rain and the cold, with all her furniture outside the tent, beside the river' (p.286). Hambly was devastated to hear the news of Lola Dodd, for on their previous meeting Lola had just passed her Leaving certificate and was now 'studying in a humpy, and was ambitious to really better herself, to help her family and her people' (p.286). Hambly recalls:

The first time I met Lola she was cooking on a little fire outside a humpy, and I went back a year later...Her mother was ill, she was looking after her mother when I met her. Her mother died and Lola had to look after the family, and then Lola died...people can't exist in that climate, badly fed, badly clothed and badly housed (p.286).

My family wish to inform Helen Hambly that Lola's death occurred during childbirth. My own memories of the living conditions in Tin Town are not as bad as the family photographs which show what it was like. My family knew firsthand how bad it was, especially for Indigenous people who needed urgent medical assistance. In 1964, my sister Ruby gave birth to a beautiful healthy baby girl, named Clara. My sister Ruby was also living in Tin Town at the time. Considering the poor hygienic location of Tin Town near the rubbish tip, and with the approaching winter of that year, Clara had come down with a fever. My sister May told me that after the first couple of days, Clara's condition worsened. May accompanied Ruby early the next morning to the local hospital, but once there, they were informed to sit in the back room until they could be seen to. It was late that evening when a nurse finally approached them, but it was too late; within moments of that nurse arriving, baby Clara had passed away in her mother's arms.



Photo Ten: Baby Clara with my mother at Tin Town not long before Clara's passing

Aunty Jean Hamilton recalls a similar incident when her four month old baby sister got sick. She and my Grandmother, Isabel Dulcie Leonard, 'ran a couple of miles for help to Cuttabri Post Office but she was dead when we got back' (p.48). She had died in my mother Ruby's arms.

My parents' first son, William Thomas, named after my father, died within a few hours of birth in 1943. There is no record of the cause of his death. There is no doubt my nephew Terrence, born to my sister Ivy within a year after Clara, had suffered a similar fate with the lack of medical attention, passing away within the first few weeks of his life. Many unrecorded deaths of Indigenous children and adults occurred during this period in history, due to neglect and indifference of their race.



Photo Eleven: Baby Terrence held by his mother, my sister Ivy

Attending school for my older siblings was a struggle. Even though at times they had faced racism with the white children, it was more about the brutal treatment handed out by teachers who had a very low tolerance for those of Indigenous heritage. My siblings were tough and knew how to look after themselves; living in the environment that we had, they learnt to defend themselves.

I remember my sister Lorna telling me of her experience at school when one teacher in particular would single her out. Lorna says that every day when she had attended school the teacher physically abused her, especially to get the attention of the class. The teacher often pulled her hair, slapped her face, threw and hit her with objects when she least expected it.

It was never easy for Indigenous children to attend school while living on segregated areas. Family members and others who had lived on Tin Town, all had similar experiences. The lack of interest in attending school by Indigenous people can now be partly understood and explained by the bad treatment they suffered.

Having a white father did not give you any protection or privilege while you attended

school, including those evenings at home when strangers arrived for a drinking session. My siblings had to keep their wits about them; being small children made them vulnerable. They had experienced enjoyable times, but they also had chores to do given to them by our father.

I never got to know my father; I only remember him through the eyes of a child. What I do know is from my memories of a gentle old man and the love he showed me.



Photo Twelve: Dad with my sister Jane and me. Our humpy is in the background

My father loved to play the harmonica, he was skilled in carpentry, and a jack of all trades, who used his skills to support his large family in Sydney. During hard times like the Depression, work for men living in cities was difficult to find. My father, like many others appeared in rural New South Wales to take up work at the Pilliga sawmill to send back money to his family in Sydney. It was during this period that he met my mother.

There is an old steam engine that my father used to operate at the Pilliga sawmill. When it was replaced, it was relocated a few kilometres south of Coonamble, close to the Castlereagh River on the Castlereagh Highway at a rest stop. As children, my siblings and I loved to climb the steam engine and pretended we were our father driving it. That rest area is no longer there and the steam engine is located at the rest area driving into Gulargambone.

William Thomas Rutherford (also known as Mock), the father I had known, was not the same father that most of my siblings remembered, but that is not to say I don't remember his drinking and fighting with my mother. It seems that most young boys

are influenced by the actions of their fathers and my brothers were no exception, for I have at times witnessed some of them being violent to their wives or partners. As I grew older, I understood the reasons behind my father becoming this kind of man. I was too young to learn my father's violent traits for he was getting too old. My father was 72 years old when it came time for me to attend school, and by then we were living in an old condemned house in Gilgandra.

All the children at Tin Town knew what it meant to be abused, physically, sexually or both. I know of the sexual abuse some of my brothers inflicted on my sisters, only to discover they too were victims of rape by male family members when they were only seven or eight years old.

The abuse that my sisters faced from my brothers had affected one particular sister, Lorna. As a child, I can recall many times when she had shown dislike to me, and never shown love to me, not like my other sisters, and I was always aware of it. When my father died and I was approaching puberty, his last words to me, while he lay in a hospital bed, were given when I leaned over to kiss him goodbye for the day. He whispered in my ear, 'Son, you look after your sisters, make them happy and stand by them.' His message has always stayed in my mind and as I grew older, I made it my ambition to honour my father's request, and in particular try to heal whatever it was that affected my sister Lorna's relationship with me.

It was not until I made my journey back to Country in January 2019 that the truth of why Lorna had been that way with me was revealed. She opened up and told me about the horrible abuse inflicted by her brothers, and she explained why she had so much disdain for me. She assumed that I would be just like all the other brothers. I am pleased to say that our loving relationship makes up for those lost years.

My father was a hard man, with an Irish temper, who had no time for his children if they did not react promptly to his orders. When my father called you, you'd better be there before he had to call you a second time. My older siblings knew never to say 'no' to him, for the consequences of not heeding his call, or saying 'no', left them with permanent scarring inflicted by him.

My older brother Robert (Bobby or Puddy) told me of one occasion when he was only six years old. He was helping my father repair the chicken run. My brother's recollection was that he had been tying wire to a post when Dad had asked him to pass him a pair of pliers. Without thinking, young Robert said no to Dad, only because he was preoccupied tying wire, but within seconds, my brother was knocked out cold. My

father had thrown a half-length star picket post and it connected with the top left side of my brother's head. To this day, Robert has a massive dent in his skull from the impact. Since that incident, until our father's death, Robert learnt never to say 'no' to our father again.



Photo Thirteen: Brother Bobby holding me at Tin Town

One major chore my siblings – Ivy, Allan, Robert, Ruby, May and Jeffery – had to do was to fetch water from the river. Dad would instruct them to dig a well in the Castlereagh River, and to keep digging into its sandy bed until water was reached. No water was to be wasted in the process or you felt Dad's wrath. My sister Ivy recalls the day when she was ten or eleven years of age, our father instructed her to collect water from the well in the river, fill each bucket to the top and bring it back without spilling a drop.

Ivy had gone to the well extracting two tin buckets full of water as instructed. While ascending the embankment back to our home, she slipped and lost only the slightest amount of water. My father, waiting for her, saw what had happened. Try as she may, there were no excuses to save Ivy; my father, true to his word, gave her a hiding that she would never forget.

By comparison, my mother (Ruby Elizabeth Canham, Rutherford, Doolan, Leonard, Freeman, née Dodd) was a strong Indigenous woman. The circumstances surrounding her names are complex and not required here.



Photo Fourteen: My mother Ruby

I was her last child and I grew up having her close to my side. From a very early age, I can recall many incidents of abuse by my father towards her. At times she would stand in our defence against his violent and angry outbursts, especially after a drinking session.

The worst time for children was to see a drunken man knock his wife about in front of them, occasionally turning the same punishment on them if they were in the way. My brother Tom when he was just a small child, experienced first-hand what would happen, when he tried to protect our mother during an argument between her and my father. This unfortunately seemed to be the norm for men when drinking back then, for my father was not the only man to treat women in this manner.

My mother's first husband, an Indigenous man named Walter Henry (Dan) Doolan, had treated my mother in the same way – he too was a heavy drinker. Aunty Jean Hamilton records my mother giving birth to her first child, my older brother Wally: 'Ruby was in strife giving birth to Wally...she had to have Wally taken from her as she was so small, being not yet fourteen...not long after Wally was born Dan used to knock Ruby and Wally boy about' (p. 47).

It still saddens me to hear stories of our Indigenous men under the influence of alcohol, for the grog continues to destroy our people's lives. The men, lost respect for their own women and for themselves; silently without them realising it, the grog was destroying their cultural knowledge.

My mother's life was restricted by my father. She could no longer continue her cultural practices because of her fear of him. On one such occasion while my father went into town for a drinking session, my mother had secretly taken my sister Alice out bush to

collect emu eggs, accompanied by two of my mother's younger sisters. Mum wanted to teach her daughter the technique of carving emu eggs, but unfortunately, this scenario was the last time my mother would teach a cultural skill to her children.

Alice was only a small child when my mother took her out bush. She recalls the fun and laughter of that day, while our mother taught her the art of carving. On returning, as they cut across the gully of the Warrana Creek, my drunken father approached them. The image is still clear in my sister's mind - the angry look in our father's eyes. Before she knew what was happening, our father had raised his fist in rage, knocking our mother to the ground, her mouth bleeding from the blow, while he verbally abused her before heading back to the pub.

I recall on many occasions, especially living in Dubbo, when the family was reduced to my father, mother, my sister Jane and myself, I would see and feel the deep sadness of my mother while she sat in her room in quietness, where I would find her crying silently. Those moments that caused the tears to flow from my mother's beautiful brown eyes were due to being so distant from her family and Country, something that I have grown to understand.

From the time our family left Tin Town, life was becoming even harder for my mother to see her family. Her movements controlled or monitored by my father, made it hard for her to intermingle with her own family. The contact became very limited. Often she was unable to attend family funerals, due to our distance, no finances and no vehicle. There was one member of her family she did get to see before her passing, her sister Alice. Separated as children, Alice had been sent away to work for a white woman.

The day had come when my mother heard the news of how sick her little sister was, so my older brother Allan drove her to see Alice in Bourke. It had been nearly sixty years since they had seen each other, and it was here that they were able to share their life journeys and reminisce about their childhood. Within a few hours of this reconnection, Aunty Alice passed away peacefully.

My mother had great knowledge of her people's Country and culture. Many people over the years, including family, could not understand why she had not passed on her knowledge. I did ask my mother this question and she told me it was mainly due to her fear of losing her children. She also said that if any white persons complained to authorities of seeing her teaching culture to her children in any form, they could inform the authorities who would come and take children away. Her greatest fear was thinking

she would never see her children again if they were taken.

This fear that my mother had was owing to having already lost Alice at such a young age. She could not bear the thought of the authorities taking her own children. Until her passing, my mother still would not tell us her knowledge, not realising that it was okay for her to do so. She still feared the authority figures, but like any true mother, the protection of children came first, no matter how old they were.

There were countless other Indigenous women who were not so fortunate when it came to keeping their children, especially those mothers of newborns. ABC presenter Natalie Kestecher (2016), interviewed Carol Kendall about being taken from her mother as a newborn. Kendall says she was what was known as a 'blanket baby': in those days' blankets were held over children destined to be taken away and raised by someone else. They were hidden from their mothers, supposedly to minimise distress but perhaps also as a way of punishing them' (para.3). Carol's mother was only fifteen years old. 'She actually tried to go around to the back of the hospital to where she presumed the nursery was to have a look in the window, and the blind was pulled down... There were quite a few attempts from my mother to try and make contact with me after my birth' (para.4).

An important decision my mother had made, to keep her children safe and out of sight of the authorities, was to place all of them under the name of Doolan when born. Walter Henry Doolan was the father of my first three older brothers, Walter, Alfred and Thomas. My mother's decision had protected all her children who followed, for we were born to a white man, and proof is on my birth certificate. She found a way to stop the inquisitive eyes of the authorities who would check the local hospital for the recent births of Indigenous babies. The threat to my mother was that if the authorities found that she had fair skinned children with blue eyes living in such conditions on Tin Town, they could come and take them away, any time and any age. She had found a way of keeping her children together, and a way to keep her children connected for generations to come.

My brother Tom also confirmed many years later the reason for our mother placing her children together under the same father. When I was born in 1961, Tom and my other two older brothers, Walter and Alfred, had already married and started their own families. It was important to my mother to keep her children together; even though they had different fathers; they were all her children.



Photo Fifteen: My three older brothers: Alfred, Walter and Tom

My mother was a clever woman who managed to keep us together, but in common with other families on Tin Town, we were an itinerant mob. Not long after little Clara's death in 1964, my father loaded us and everything we had onto the back of an old truck he had borrowed and moved us on. We all had to find a space on the back of the truck, between cages of chickens and ducks, along with what little furniture we had for the long journey to our next destination. When we left Tin Town, our dwelling became the family home of my sisters Ivy and May, who on separate occasions raised their families in it, while my sister Ruby raised her family in a separate dwelling close by. May remained at Tin Town until 1978-79.

Moving around did not happen frequently after I was born, for my siblings were beginning to start their own families. When we did leave Tin Town, most of the other places where we made camp were only for short periods of time. My own memories are of the last places we had moved to: living in a tent by the Macquarie River near the weir at Warren, the State Forest in Gilgandra, Eumungerie, then back to Warrie Street, Gilgandra, before eventually receiving a Housing Commission home in Hunter Avenue, Gilgandra. One of the reasons for keeping us within this area was because my sister Wilma was institutionalised in Dubbo; it was easier for her to visit when given time to see her family.



Photo Sixteen: Hunter Avenue, Gilgandra with sisters Jane and Wilma

I remember the experiences of living in a tent by the Warren weir, those mornings waking to find our eyes would not open due to conjunctivitis. My mother's remedy was to use a teaspoon of warm moist tea leaves, placing them over our closed eyes for a few minutes before wiping them off. For some strange reason, within a few hours the conjunctivitis was gone. This place had given our family access to more natural food sources: yellow-belly, yabbies, turtles and eels. Unfortunately, my father was told to move us on, and from my mother's recollection, it was because we were stopping the local whites from visiting the weir.

Living in Gilgandra was hard, because there was no money coming in, except for what little could be sent to my father from my brothers, Allan and Robert. Our survival mostly rested on what we could retrieve from the local rubbish tip. I recall finding mouldy stale cakes and biscuits, where we picked out the mould and ate the rest. Rotting fruit never escaped us either, for we just ate around the edges. We also looked for clothing and shoes. Of course, going to the local rubbish tip was never done in broad daylight. We went as a family group, sneaking into the compound on dusk, so no one would spot us.

It was while we were living in Warrie Street, Gilgandra that I first started school. I have many memories from my early school days; in particular, a visit to our school by the mobile dentist van. My sister Jane and I attended one of the lectures given by the dentist on the importance of toothbrushes. Jane and I look back on this with such fondness, for the following day we were at the rubbish tip where Jane found two old over-used toothbrushes, one yellow and one blue – one for each of us.



Photo Seventeen: First school photo. Me top row, second from right

It was here, while attending school in Gilgandra that I first experienced racism. I remember a white freckled faced boy who befriended me within the first days of school. The friendship continued until returning to school to begin third grade. During our first week back I had noticed he was avoiding me. I finally got the opportunity to ask him what I had done that made him avoid me. His reply was, 'Because you're black, you have a black mother.' He went on to say: 'I saw you holding her hand and kissing her, black people stink and are bad people, we don't like black people so I'm not your friend anymore.' Funny thing was I did not find this an insult, for even though people saw me as white, I saw myself as being black, belonging to my mother's heritage.

The interaction shown to white children was never given to Indigenous kids while attending school. In the classrooms, we were always seated close together, usually at the back of the room, and we were never really encouraged to participate in class activities. When the teachers talked about the arrival of Captain Cook, we would hang our heads in shame, feeling all eyes upon us as the teacher referred to our people as animal-like savages. There is only so much negativity children can hear about their people before it affects their lives.

While attending school in Gilgandra, a head lice inspection occurred. You knew Indigenous kids would be the ones sent home, whether they had lice or not. Teachers would call you out to the front of the class, use a large blackboard ruler to part your hair, and with a harsh voice belittle you by telling the other children you had head lice. Most of the time, your older siblings were sent to your classroom to pick you up. We were outcasts.

I have reflected on life for myself and my family, the suffering and loving moments

we shared. Memories of our living on a segregated place for Indigenous people, called Tin Town, have been accumulated and put together to restore a once forgotten place. Reflection has enabled me to understand more about my family and to understand why they became the people they are today. Knowing their personalities and behaviours, I realise now that what they went through had a long term effect on their lives. Having their approval, telling their experiences in my research, has helped them to heal. Future generations of family will know how life was for us and the other families who lived on Tin Town.

CHAPTER FIVE

Bag Town and Other Forgotten Places

Tin Town's fate was sealed around the time that my sister May left. She was the last person to leave the settlement with her children. The first change that took place was the construction of a levee around the township of Coonamble. A report by the Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW (2009) states that a 'seven kilometres long ring levee was constructed in 1975 to protect the town of Coonamble from flooding in the Castlereagh River and in Warrana Creek' (p.1).



Photo Eighteen: My sister May's children just before leaving Tin Town: Kenneth, Lynette, Angela, Tania, Sonia, Patricia and baby Belinda

I remember taking a walk during the late 1970s or early 1980s with my older brother Allan along the levee which follows Warrana Creek. We stopped only to glance at the bulldozers in progress pushing all that remained of my family's existence, and that of other Indigenous families, towards the old rubbish tip located on the 'Island', where the debris was eventually burnt. My brother and I felt deep sadness, knowing that our life there and what had remained, were all gone.



Photo Nineteen: My brother Allan holding me as a baby at Tin Town

It is clear to me that this is one of the reasons why most of the places where Indigenous people lived had faced the same fate, never to be identified or acknowledged. Their historical importance had vanished like so many of our sacred sites. However, reliving the memories of life on Tin Town with my family has given me a clearer picture of life for Indigenous people on forgotten places. The memories that my family have shared revitalised my own memory with passion.

The importance of my research extends to other forgotten places to acknowledge their existence as valuable as that of Tin Town. This can be achieved by people connecting with family. Even though our Elders grow old, the knowledge and whereabouts of forgotten places can still be obtained, knowing there will still be some that will never be recorded, recognised or acknowledged.

One site that has been misplaced is somewhere near Cryon, New South Wales. Cryon is a small rural town situated 52 kilometres east of Walgett on the Kamilaroi Highway in north-western New South Wales. I remember my mother told me about this place when I was a child. She was born there and it was also the birthplace of my grandmother, Isabel Dulcie. Unfortunately, there is no known site that is registered and no family knowledge of its location. I was too young at the time to venture out with my mother for her to pinpoint its placing.

Aunty Jean Hamilton identifies Cryon as the place of my mother's birth, but not the exact location of the Indigenous camp (p.11). In Felton's referencing (map and treatise) of reserves and missions within the Walgett/Cryon area, the location of my

mother's birthplace is not identified. I drove through Cryon in July 2019. Only a few buildings remain now, including a wheat silo and several storage sheds. This is flat country, and very dry, occupied by wheat farms and cattle. I can only assume that the camp had faced the same fate as Tin Town. My mother's birthplace has been fenced and ploughed over in the name of progress.

Some places have been forgotten by the choice of the Indigenous people who once lived there. They had escaped from a lifestyle they were forced to adopt. The decision to leave it all behind was due to the mental, physical and emotional cruelty they had suffered. The prejudices they faced by the white man's society, the governmental laws and policies that condemned them for being black, and looked upon as a society of 'savages', also played a major part in their decision making. For many, the feeling of 'shame' would hang over them, until they had an opportunity to start a new life and to be known by a different culture, distancing themselves from their heritage. Sally Morgan's story supports this theory, as she uncovers the truth about her parents and grandparents trying to cover up her identity, as discussed in the Introduction (p.11).

Although Felton (2013) does not categorise or pinpoint the position of Tin Town, except for his reference to my Auntie Jean Hamilton's description, he identifies two other places, a station and a reserve close to Coonamble. Firstly, he documents the existence of Youie station and Youie bore, located 'on the Castlereagh River, about 7 miles north of town. Actual location not ascertained but...shown on Parish map' (p.149). His second documentation is a reserve, located also 'on Castlereagh River, about 12 miles north-west of Coonamble, and at its junction with Mowlima Creek, on right bank' (p.148), its actual location and name unknown.

The memories of both segregated areas on the Castlereagh River are not included when local white and Indigenous people speak about the past. Even though they know about the sites, they can no longer identify exact locations. The Elders who knew of the places are deceased. My brother Tom confirmed these sites to me, because he used to visit them as a 'young fella'. He also remembered that a man by the name of Frank Fish used to own one of the sites. Nearing eighty years old now and not in the best of health, my brother Tom said it was a long time ago; his memory of their exact placement he too could not remember. The fate of Youie station/Youie bore and Mowlima Creek, regrettably, could soon be forgotten like many others.

One site that is not identified by Felton in his mapping and treatise of the Coonamble area is Tunda/Tunder station, near Polly Brewan, close to Carinda, situated approximately 68 kilometres north-west from the western side of the Castlereagh River directly at the end of its course. This site is where my great-grandfather, Harry Yates, and the Yates family had lived, until about 1900.

Aunty Jean Hamilton says that Harry Yates ‘was born in 1862 in a camp on the west side of the river [Castlereagh] near the berry bushes (box thorn)’ (p.69); he could see the location from Tin Town. From my own memory of Tin Town, looking towards the west side of the river, this could have been the Mowlima Creek reserve located 12 miles or just over 19 kilometres north-west of Coonamble. The similarities in landscape between Tin Town and Mowlima Creek are close to identical. Most of the landscape is generally flat and as I remember, box thorn bushes were scattered throughout the district.

My brother Bobby told me that the place our great-grandfather had originally spoken about was not where he was born. The place he referred to was at the opposite end of the ‘Island’ on which Tin Town stood. It was next to the rubbish tip. No doubt these two sites were very similar. Harry Yates was an old man, with his 93 year old memory fading.

Yates told my Aunty Jean Hamilton that this is where he ‘wanted to die near where he was born’ (p.69). This is such an important custom for our Indigenous people, to die close to where they were born: an example of the importance of Country and belonging for our people. While many Indigenous places are forgotten, they still exist in the memories of our Elders.

The spirits of Elders gone before us become part of all that is living and all that gives life. The spirits of our old people will constantly remain on Country and they will always be with us through what we see, hear and feel. This is why it is so important to Indigenous people to have the remains of our Elders, taken to be exhibited in foreign museums, returned. Simon Royal and Sarah Scopelianos (2018) report the importance of returning remains of Indigenous people to Country. They include a comment by Kaurna Elder:

During the late 19th and into the 20th centuries, thousands of sets of Aboriginal Australians' remains were collected in the name of science. The remains were

dispersed across the world into the collections of museums, universities and other institutions. Kurna elder Jeffrey Newchurch, who is leading the charge for ancestral remains to be returned, said the return of the old people to country today was an emotional and happy occasion. 'You can never explain in words what it's like' (para.3-6).

Just as it is important for the Elders' remains to be returned, it is important to me to restore my forgotten place. I can explain in words how memory has retrieved many of my boyhood experiences. I remember playing among the box thorns with their thorny stems. Brother Bobby told me that this is where my sister Ruby's husband, Maxy, when playing with other children, had lost his eye when a branch of the box thorn struck him in the face. The box thorns are gone now, bulldozed along with what remained of Tin Town and burnt at the rubbish tip.

There is a particular site of interest that has connection to the Yates family. This site is known as Bagtown (sometimes written as Bag Town or Bag City). It was located in Mt. Pritchard, close to Liverpool, an outer area of Sydney. Bag Town was a common name given to the shanty towns. For example, a site near Griffith, New South Wales, was also called Bag Town, occupied only by new immigrants who had also lived in makeshift dwellings.

Stan Grant (2016) identifies a place near Griffith where his 'father's family and the others who set out from Condobolin mission settled outside Griffith in a camp they dubbed "Condo Lane". Griffith was a magnet for Aboriginal people from across the state and even Victoria' (p.32). Grant also acknowledges that a 'new reserve was set up at the intersection of three bridges on the edge of town; we called it the Three Way mission' (p.32).

Information from the Griffith Genealogical & Historical Society ('Farm Land Holders 1912–1923, Griffith Settlers 1912 to 1923, The First 11 Years', 2019), acknowledges that the 'Bagtown' near Griffith was only occupied by immigrants:

'Bagtown', originally a Public Works Department Camp, was established in 1911. [It] eventually became known as 'Bagtown', though the early Settlers preferred the title 'Old Griffith'. Many of the camps were made up of empty cement bags, left over from the construction of the channels, hence it became known as 'Bagtown'.

Turning to an urban location adds an interesting comparison to rural places. The Mt. Pritchard location is described in an interview given by Dorothy May Burrows and her

brother Raymond Burrows, the grandchildren of Mary Yates, sister to great-grandfather Harry Yates. Dorothy and Raymond clarify that this area was called ‘Bag City’, describing the humpy their father had built of hessian bags with a ground floor, saying this was how other dwellings in the area were made. They said that there were many people out there, noting one ‘dark’ family with nine children. They do not mention other different ethnic inhabitants (Burrows, F c.1984, Interview with Dorothy May and Raymond Burrows).



Photo Twenty: Dorothy May Burrows and her brother Raymond Burrows

‘Real Estate- Cabramatta and Canley Vale’, in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (9 April 1930, p.9), reads, ‘Mt Pritchard, a suburb of Cabramatta, has in the last two years developed from a “bag town” into a respectable residential quarter, about 80 new wooden dwellings having been erected’ (para.5). The reference to ‘bag town’ acknowledges the shanty town that once existed at Mt Pritchard.

Not much is known about the original inhabitants of the area prior to European settlement. However, Stephen Gapps in his documentation, ‘Fairfield: evolution of a migrant city’ (2008), says that ‘there were Cabrogal people still living in the area in the 1840s as they were mentioned in evidence given to a report on the condition of Aborigines’ (p.10). Gapps also says:

Cabrogal and Warmuli clan at Prospect were living something like a traditional life in the Fairfield area right up to the 1840s...some Aboriginal people from the Prospect and Richmond ‘tribes’ did survive and continue to live in the area...marrying with the colonisers (p.16).

Another interesting piece of information given by Gapps, is identifying the name Cabramatta:

Cabramatta is an interesting word...an Aboriginal word meaning something like ‘place or creek of Cobra worms’ ...Cobra (or Cabra) ...a worm—prized by

Aborigines as food – that burrowed into wood and lived in the estuaries and tidal creeks that feed into the Georges River (p.9).

The ‘Clan Names Chart’ by Val Attenbrow (2018) says that the local Indigenous ‘clan’ name for the area had been written in several different ways by the Europeans: Gahbrogal, Cahbrogal or Cobrakalls. Attenbrow also explains that ‘the Cahbrogal lived inland and ate estuarine teredo worms called cah-bro...the “Liverpool blacks” were called “Cobrakalls” ...Associated with the suburb Cabramatta’ (para.8).

Along with forgotten places and forgotten people are the lost or changed names that are still important to my people as places of the heart. To this day, there are still many words and place names that have been recorded by the early Europeans that have been spelt wrongly compared to the local Indigenous peoples’ pronunciations. For example; Kamilaroi is the name that most people recognise as my people’s Country. What non-Indigenous Australians need to understand is that the letter ‘K’ is not a recognised letter in our language. The ‘K’ was a pronunciation penned by the Europeans. Hilary Smith (2018) explains:

The languages were written down by Europeans according to what they heard. Languages have different sound systems and they did not realise that there is no difference between “k” and “g” in most Australian languages. These sounds are both pronounced in the same part of the mouth, but ‘g’ has voice added. You can feel this if you put your hand on your throat and say ‘k’ and ‘g’ in English. This difference does not happen in Gamilaraay language.

The Europeans thought they heard ‘k’ at the start of the word Gamilaraay and wrote it down as Kamilaroi. This spelling was used to name the Kamilaroi Highway, etc...Since then, linguists have analysed the language and written this sound as ‘g’ for all Gamilaraay words (para.3).

In addition to her explanation, Smith (2018) gives an example of what happens sometimes when we speak:

When we speak quickly, we sometimes miss out some of the sounds and the words become shorter. English examples are ‘can’t’ from ‘cannot’, or ‘o’clock’ from ‘of the clock’. So when the word Gamilaraay is spoken quickly it sounds like Gomerioi, and some people prefer the short form (para.5).

Kamilaroi, Gamilaraay or Gomerioi, are all correct, which could explain why there is recognition given to more than one name for most Indigenous Nations of Australia.

Returning now to the urban settlements, segregated areas where Indigenous people had lived, nearer to major cities, were often shared with immigrants, establishing a new

life in Australia. In *Looking Back at Liverpool – An Oral History of the Liverpool region 1900-1960* (1986), the researchers write:

Housing became a desperate problem during the depression years with constant evictions taking place. Legislation was indicated by the shanty settlements of make shift [sic] huts which grew on the outskirts of the larger towns. Liverpool's were 'Mount Misery' and Hillview (p.84).

The researchers also recorded memories of older locals who grew up in the Liverpool area between 1900 and 1960. Two of the locals describe a memory of the settlements of Mount Misery and Hillview. Firstly, Enid says:

out towards Hillview, during the depression years, when men were losing their jobs and their homes, to provide shelter for their families, they built these little humpies. They were made out of bags and mud and this section we used to always refer to, as 'Poverty Hill' or 'Bag Town' (p.91).

Secondly, Norm says:

Mount Misery was either known as 'Mount Misery' or 'Bag Town'. The houses were made out of bush timber frame, and then they were covered with corn bags, and done over with a mixture of lime and cement for weather proofing them. No-one had any money to buy timber, you just scrounged around and got what you could (p.92).

What is starting to become clear is that once European settlements were taking over areas close to cities, there were fewer Indigenous people living in the city areas. This was due to their being forced off Country, further away from development of European settlements. In the rural and remote townships, fewer white people lived on segregated sites. In my story about Tin Town, I explain that white people also lived there (p.43). Most of them were either poor or old people (pensioners). Banivanua Mar (2012, p.10) also mentions other people of different cultures who lived with the Indigenous inhabitants.

So it is important to note that some places were not solely occupied by Indigenous people. The places bore resemblance to our own, including the names as pointed out in discussion about 'Bagtown'. For example, there is also a Tin Town near Dubbo, New South Wales, which is on Wiradjuri Country. This particular Tin Town was built during the late 1920s, constructed at the start of the Great Depression. This Tin Town only existed for another 20 years, when development took over the site. Jessie Davies (2018), a reporter for ABC Western Plains, says:

while the people of Tin Town almost certainly lived in poverty throughout the 1930s, there was evidence to suggest a group of people lived on...land in more uncomfortable conditions...Historical documents refer to an area known as Bagtown because it was inhabited by a number of families who camped there in makeshift tents...it is likely these people included Aboriginal families but for the most part, Indigenous people lived in other camps such as the Devils Waterhole and at the Talbragar Mission ('Shanty life across the state', para.5-8).

Davies also interviewed Joan Beaumont, an Australian National University historian, who comments, 'evidence shows Tin Town housed families and pensioners...the people most likely to set up in shanty towns during this era were single men without strong family connections' ('Dubbo hits the brakes', para.6). Beaumont describes the dwellings:

Typically shanties were made from scraps of corrugated iron, hessian, wood and cardboard scavenged from the local area. Roofs were made from sheets of corrugated iron, and earthen floors were smoothed over and covered with calico flourbags or hessian sugarbags. In Sydney, large shanties appeared at La Perouse, Long Bay and Liverpool, and people also moved into squats in disused gun emplacements at Henry Head ('Shanty life across the state', para.1-4).

Beaumont's reference to Liverpool does not say exactly where it was positioned, but she could have been referring to Bag Town. There are a number of shanty towns identified in the Liverpool area, with similar stories and the same basic structure of dwellings.

Although the shanty towns set up by immigrants were made of the same materials, it is likely that they were built on sites originally used as camps by local Indigenous clans. These 'clans' would have been the original owners of the Country, forced off that particular area to make way for European settlements.

My own connection to the area of Liverpool, Cabramatta, Fairfield, Canley Heights and Canley Vale is strong within my memory. After the death of my father, when I was fourteen, I moved from Dubbo to live with my sisters Sidona and Jane in Canley Heights. By the time I was in my early twenties, my old school friend from Dubbo, Glen Stephens, and I decided to get a flat together in Cabramatta, during the early 1980s.

During my years in the Cabramatta area, I remember that it was populated by Greeks and Italian families, and you could see their footprint on the area by the styling of their houses and their technique of gardening. Within a year or two of Glen and I living in John Street, Cabramatta, the whole area had changed. There was not much left to identify that the Greeks and Italians had once dominated this suburb. Cabramatta had become home to a thriving Vietnamese community.

By living in Cabramatta, I recall the quick cultural shift from the Greeks and Italians to the Vietnamese community. My thoughts quickly turn to the arrival of the first European settlers, and how swiftly they had forced the original inhabitants (Cabrogal and Warmuli clans) from their Country. Most of the areas where Europeans settled were the original inhabitants' camps, one of the most important fact to be acknowledged in my research.

If more research can be conducted about segregated areas, it is possible that other similar names will be uncovered. It must be understood that when we do acknowledge which segregated areas was occupied by Indigenous, non-Indigenous or both, that recognition should be given to the cultural groups that remained on them. Though most of these places no longer exist, acknowledgement should be given to the original inhabitants of the area and the First Nations' Countries they were built/placed upon.

Another important aspect that needs to be recognised and accepted concerning the forgotten places is the children. During the time of early settlements many children were born on segregated areas, born of interracial relationships of Indigenous and non-Indigenous couples. Mention has already been made by Gapps' assertion that there were even examples of 'marrying with the colonisers' (p.16). My siblings and I were fathered by a white man. Our appearance could be looked upon and recognised by either culture, but we were considered white because of our father.

Stan Grant (2019) gives his view on identity and describes his own experience being of mixed raced:

The worst thing that happened to me was being born what was termed 'black'. It is also the greatest thing to happen to me. The worst is that my fate— at times in history whether someone like me would live or die— could be so arbitrarily decided by others...If I am the sum of genes, I'm as white as I am black. But I

learned a lesson very early on in life, one that is the most important lesson a person deemed black can learn: whiteness is not a colour (p.8).

Grant sums up exactly how the world perceived me: ‘To be born black meant having always to explain myself, because I wasn’t really black at all’ (p.8). I grew up surrounded by my own people who never looked at my colour; they knew who I was. Moving out of my Country and into the world, many times I had faced judgement, mockery and ignorance by both black and white people when questioned about my identity. Unfortunately they could only see the outside layer, never bothering to understand the old black soul of my ancestors which lay deep within my heart, which empowered me to hold my head high with pride, never to deny my true self. Grant writes:

Indigenous identity is not what I seek— I have that, I don’t need to give it a name. I look for my place in the world by tracing the footsteps of all of my ancestors. Yes, I am a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi person, I am Irish, I am Australian, I am Indigenous...There is a question far greater than, ‘Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?’ (p.26).

Like my own mixed race heritage, and the journey I am now taking under the guidance of my old people’s spirits, Stan Grant acknowledges his. It is clear that many children had been born through relationships formed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living on segregated areas. Gapps (2008) defines the mixed cultural relationships of Indigenous people of ‘Prospect and Richmond “tribes” as “marrying with the colonisers”” (p.5).

There is no doubt that there are still other people like myself and my siblings, born in segregated camps, who have faced similar circumstances. We are the children of a mixed cultural relationship and in some cases, we were denied our identity and connection to Country because of our colour.

When I was a young boy, my mother told me of my old peoples’ ways, how they were welcoming and generous to any newcomers (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to our Country. She said to me that for our people, it did not matter where you had come from, you were welcomed to Country and accepted, and there were never any hostile signs of racism shown.

One thing of importance to some Aboriginal cultures, that seems to be almost forgotten, is the significance of a child's birth upon a nation's territory. My mother told me that if a child is born on Country, that child would be looked upon as one of their own. She said that when a child is born, the old people looked at the new arrival as a sign of rebirth, connecting to our Country, a beginning of a new cycle, the return of an old spiritual ancestor who would bring knowledge, strength and leadership to our Country. My mother had said that there was no difference whether this child was Aboriginal or not, the child would inherit an old soul from Country. Our old people would observe and teach that child, encourage every characteristic to ensure that when the child reaches a certain point of maturity, the old soul that he/she had inherited will be seen and acknowledged by the clan.

The Diyari people from around the estuary of Cooper Creek to the east of Lake Eyre in the South Australian desert share their cultural beliefs about the birth of a child on Country. In *White Man's Dreaming* (1994), Christine Stevens says:

Aborigines believed that, either at birth or conception (the belief varied among tribes), a particular manifestation of a muramura entered a foetus or new-born baby as a 'spirit child' to animate it. Spirit-children were of the Dreaming itself and carried with them some of its essence, thus endowing all humans with special qualities and sacredness. The Diyari believed that spirit-children entered newborns at the place of birth, and because they were a patrilocal society, this birthplace would ideally be in the local group territory of the father so that the child could inherit its father's mythic association. As the child matured, it would learn that part of its totemic cult myth, with the associated ritual and knowledge of sacred sites, which constituted its secret cult life and that of its pintara group (p.26).

Stevens acknowledges this belief by telling of the Diyari people's involvement with a Lutheran missionary family, with the arrival of their new baby daughter. The missionary's wife, Luise Homann, wrote:

In July 1868...Elizabeth, was born at the station. 'When the natives heard the news they came from as far as 100 miles. They had to see the white child which they claimed as theirs because she was born on their soil...They were very astonished because she was a "Mittalali" ['Mangthanda pala'], which means a bald head. Elizabeth did not have a curly head like their few children who were born. She was blonde (p.62).

With the knowledge my mother had passed on to me comes the realisation of just how similar most Indigenous nations' beliefs are in what a birth of a child on Country means to them. My own mind wonders just how Australia's acceptance of Aboriginal people would be today, if only the British establishment had taken the time to understand us as a people, and as a Nation. Perhaps there would not have been any of the barbaric massacres. Perhaps the segregated areas we were eventually forced upon, to live in poverty and neglect, may have never existed. Maybe we could have been living in a united country, where the ideas of the new and old had melded to form a strong identity that would continue to manage and nurture our nation as the old people did for over sixty thousand years.

Conclusion

In the quest to uncover my lost culture and to appreciate how it all came to be, a flood of emotional memories locked deep within me was released. I have had the opportunity to uncover the fated trek of my people, once the British establishment had claimed our nation. Historically, I have considered the effect on Indigenous people of white settlement, beginning as the Elders have told me, from the arrival of the First Fleet, but with a focus on my own times.

The project has enabled me to explore two cultures through written documentations, compare them, and to write without judgement. I have brought together the methodology of both Western (written) and Indigenous (oral) cultures, not allowing myself to favour one side over the other, keeping an open mind. Authors of both cultures are showcased, collaborating with my truth telling. In the process, I have unravelled why missions, reserves and stations existed, and found out how life was for one family and one community in a place called Tin Town.

Many who experienced life on Indigenous segregated areas still find it hard to speak of what they suffered. I now understand why they have kept silent, but I hope what I have written will encourage them to share their story especially with their children, like I have done for my own siblings children. Remembering Indigenous places is important because they are a part of Australia's cultural and social history. Governmental documents only recognise missions, reserves and stations that have some type of structural form remaining to prove their existence. The acknowledged places with structured features are those built by previous governments, missionaries and other law makers.

The little known areas like Tin Town, with their third-world living structures, were easily dismantled, bulldozed and burnt. After sixty years or more, Tin Town returned to its original state before settlement and, like other segregated areas, memories of why and how it existed are fading. We, as a nation, build statues and display plaques in remembrance of early explorers, fallen soldiers, cultural and religious beliefs, but there is no acknowledgement of Indigenous segregated areas of yesteryear. Their existence deserves acknowledgement, for they represent the resilience and survival of our people in places of confinement.

My personal desire for recognition is because Tin Town is where my life began. Memories of my cultural experiences and the realisation that most Indigenous cultures had started to fall apart led to a journey of discovery. Due to the suppression caused by Western culture, our people were pushed onto segregated areas, facing separation, poverty, neglect and nowhere to go to continue practicing our cultural ceremonies and lore. Segregated places were all that was left for them to exist, or perish.

If the day comes when all Aboriginal reserve sites of New South Wales and other states have been identified, acknowledged and valued, then we as a people can be witnesses to non-Indigenous people who visit the places. Non-Indigenous people may walk where old spirit souls once walked: they are still present and will remain there forever, connected to Country. There will be the opportunity to understand Indigenous culture, to connect and to identify with a nation of dual cultures.

I have emphasised the importance of truth telling. I hope that other Indigenous men and women will find themselves in what I have researched and written. I am optimistic that they can experience the walk through Country as I have, and also understand without judgement. Truth telling is the key: recalling the old people's stories, to rebuild and reconnect a culture that almost vanished. The stories of Aboriginal communities and families are to be shared with everyone, to unite a nation.

It is time, after more than two hundred and thirty years, to acknowledge those who were and are born on Country. Whether Indigenous or not, they are connected and we must not discriminate or be judgemental, for to do so would be denying the presence of an old soul's rebirth. My project is an important part of the process which enables non-Indigenous people to understand that, despite the massacres and the mistreatment of our people, we can forgive through healing and we can nurture our Country as our Elders have before us.

I have endeavoured to meet the expectations of Elders, whom I have met and with whom I have worked, and to connect with my old people's spirits that have been with me throughout my life. They all want to know the whole story from the perspective of a man born of both cultures, a man who is proud of both his heritages. I will take them and everyone who shares my findings on a historical journey which has not ended yet. There is more of my own, and my community's story to be discovered and researched.

The Elders I had been blessed to have the opportunity to speak with, acknowledge that

the next step to this nation's unification is the education of our children. It is also important to educate non-Indigenous children so that they will come to know our peoples history prior to 1788, and discover their connection to Country. For in doing so, the greatest gift we could give to our old people is Australia's acknowledgement and recognition of its original nations.

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