

1983

The first South Westerners : Aborigines of South Western Australia

Lois Tilbrook

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Tilbrook, L., (1983). *The first South Westerners : Aborigines of South Western Australia*. Perth, Australia: Western Australian College of Advanced Education.
This Book is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/7067>

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

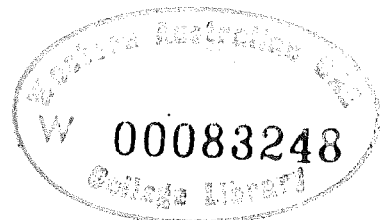
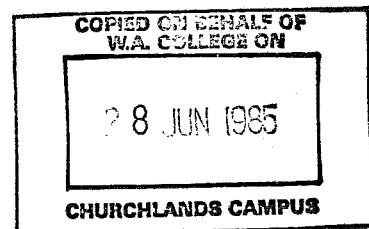
TILBROOK, L.

The first south westerners.

Q
994
.100499
15
TIL

176
Gordon

The First South Westerners: Aborigines of South Western Australia by Lois Tilbrook



Q
994
1004 99
15
TIL

COPIED ON BEHALF OF
W.A. COLLEGE ON

8 JUN 1985

CHURCHLANDS CAMPUS

ISBN 0 7298 0014/8

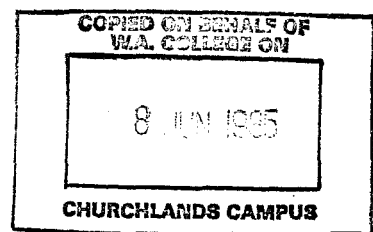
Copyright 1983 : Western Australian
College of Advanced Education and
Lois Tilbrook

No part of this book may be reproduced by
any process without permission of the
copyright holders.

Design: W.A. College
Illustrations: Lois Tilbrook
Printing: Duncraig Press

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	4
Acknowledgements	5
List of Figures	6
List of Photographs	7
Introduction	9
Population	10
Language	13
The People	15
Social Organisation	17
Beliefs	20
Birth and Childhood	23
Adolescence	26
Marriage	27
Adulthood	31
Old Age	32
Death	34
Life	37
Notes	38
Bibliography	39
Reading List	40



PREFACE

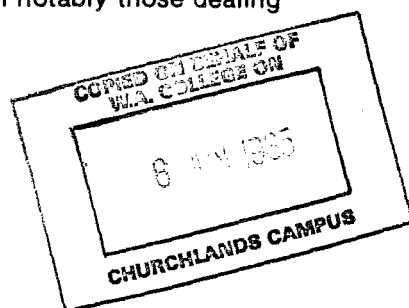
The task of preparing material on the Aboriginal inhabitants of the south western region of Western Australia before 1827, is both a fascinating and a challenging one. Fascinating, because these people lived in a unique part of the continent and were amongst the most remote of all the Australian Aborigines, pursuing their traditions in the wet forest lands and open bush country. Challenging, because so little is recorded of them in a way which paints a clear picture of their lives.

The main observers of Aboriginal life and customs in the early days of European settlement of the region were settlers and Government officials. From their accounts and records, shadowy images of traditional Aboriginal life emerge, gaining focus in some aspects which have been described more fully, and blurring and hazing in other areas of life that remained unknown to the newcomers.

With the exception of such people as Bishop Salvado, Dr. Alexander Collie, Sir George Grey, Ethel Hassell and Jessie Hammond, these accounts are written from a totally European perspective, which views the Aborigines from the outside, and which makes little attempt to see and understand them through their own eyes.

Other records exist which mention Aboriginal contact with Europeans, as it affected the latter. In particular, some individuals felt moved to write to the Government about their experiences, whether motivated by concern for the plight of the Aborigines they came in contact with, or by self interests. These form the inward correspondence of the Colonial Secretary's Office.

In preparing this picture of Aboriginal life in the south west prior to European settlement and the dramatic changes which followed, my principal sources have been those authors mentioned above, together with the diaries of G. F. Moore, and contemporary publications on the region notably those dealing with pre-history and language.

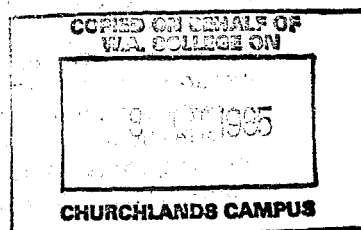


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the following:—

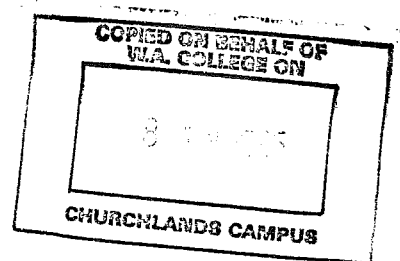
The South West Aboriginal Studies Project, Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, Mount Lawley College (now Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley Campus), under which auspices much of the research that went into this work was made possible.

Johann Willis and Marj Cook for typing the manuscript.
Professor R. M. Berndt for reading the manuscript.



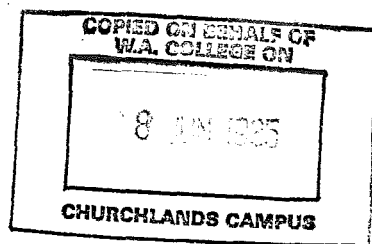
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Map of South Western Australia.....	9
Figure 2	Map of Archaeological Sites.....	10
Figure 3	Census of New Norcia and Surrounding Areas, 1858.....	11
Figure 4	Examples of Early Attempts to Transcribe Aboriginal Language in the Perth Area.....	13
Figure 5	Description of Aborigines, by Sir George Grey, 1841.....	15
Figure 6	Map of Tribal/Cultural Boundaries.....	17
Figure 7	Family Tree by Bishop Salvado.....	22
Figure 8	Aboriginal Skin Cloak from South Western Australia.....	25
Figure 9	Map of Aboriginal Camp Site, Albany Region, by Gyllipert, 1833.....	26
Figure 10	Return of Natives of Toodyay District, 1st March, 1840.....	29
Figure 11	Description of a Corroboree by Captain T.T. Ellis, 1833.....	32
Figure 12	Description of Punishment by Spearing, by Sir George Grey, 1841.....	35



LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Aboriginal Man — (courtesy of Battye Library, Perth)	12
Aboriginal Mixed Group (courtesy Battye Library, Perth)	16
Aboriginal Woman — (courtesy Battye Library, Perth)	33
Aboriginal Men — (South West Aboriginal Studies Photograph Collection, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Perth)	37



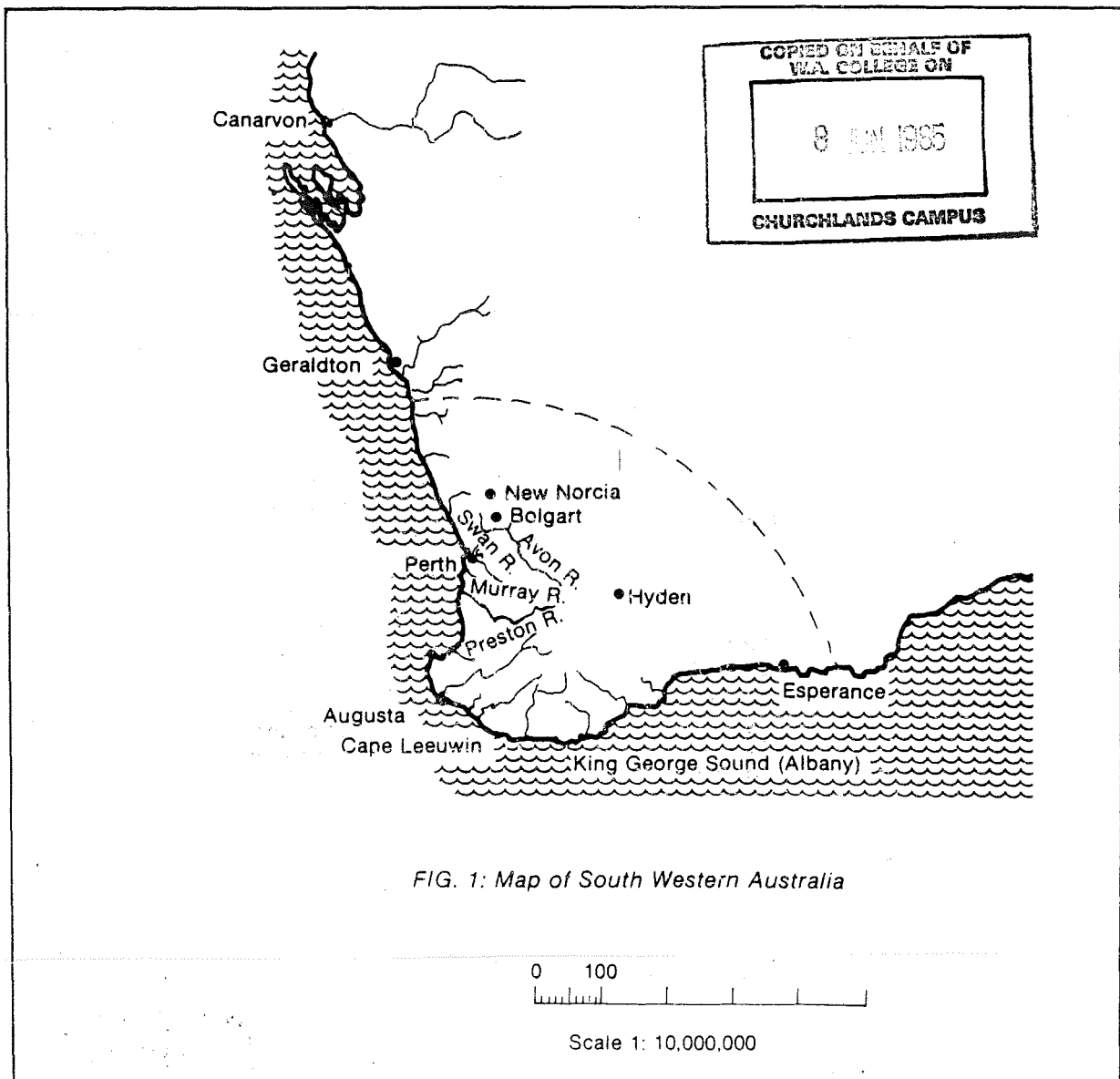
THE FIRST SOUTH WESTERNERS

INTRODUCTION

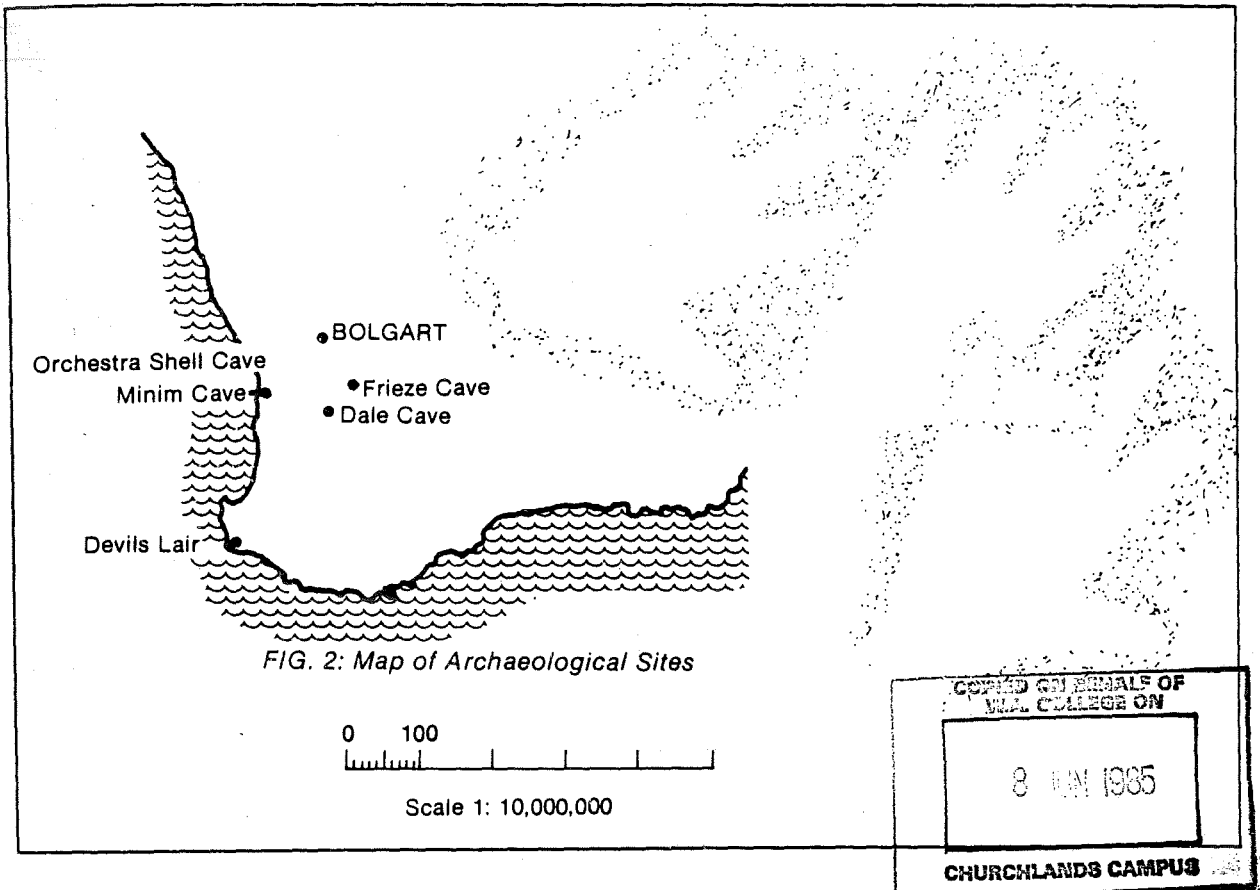
The first settlers of the south western region of Western Australia, the Aborigines, came to the area at least 37,000 years ago. Over thousands of years they gradually occupied the land. They moved into the southermost tip journey by journey, until finally they were spread throughout the fertile plains and the heavy rain forests of the south west.

Legend has it that people in the mountainous hills of the Darling Scarp, moved down onto the coastal plains in the Perth area. Similar movements took place throughout the entire region, and memory of them was passed on in stories, growing clouded over the succeeding generations. Over time, these people, bringing their way of life from other parts of Aboriginal Australia, adapted to local conditions and incorporated the flora and fauna to be found there into their beliefs. In this way they developed their own regional and local variations on the general Australian Aboriginal theme, weaving this together with their unique traditions as these grew over time.'

The area of the south western region includes the whole of the south west corner of the state, extending from south of Geraldton in the north, in an arc south-eastwards to the coast east of Esperance. This includes the wet rain forests of the southern corner of the region, the grassy coastal plains, and the drier country further inland behind the Darling Fault to the fringes of the arid interior of Australia. All around, the region is bordered by desert and semi-desert, and by treacherous coastline butting onto the Indian Ocean. It covers an area of 150,000 square kilometres. Native animal life abounded in the more fertile parts, especially along the coastal plain which is crossed by several rivers flowing across the Darling Fault to the sea. This huge fault extends 2,000 kilometres in a north to south direction following the coastline, emerging from the sea north of Carnarvon and joining it again at the fiords of King George's Sound.



Archaeological evidence for the occupation of the south west is drawn from a number of different sites. The most spectacular of these, in archaeological terms, is Devil's Lair, first excavated in 1975. This is a limestone cave near Augusta in the extreme south western tip of the region. It was in use over 30,000 years ago and contains engravings over 20,000 years old. Tools at Minim Cave near Perth date to 10,000 years ago, and those located at a site on the Avon River date back 8,000 years together with smaller tools dating 5,000 years ago. These smaller tools reflect an Australian-wide innovation in technology at the time, away from the use of larger tools in favour of more miniaturised ones. These same small tool types have also been found at Northcliffe, south of Devil's Lair, and near York in the Frieze Cave. Paintings occur at two sites near Hyden in the north east of the region, and in the Dale Cave and Frieze Cave near York. Engravings are found at Bolgart, and the Orchestra Shell Cave at Perth.²



POPULATION

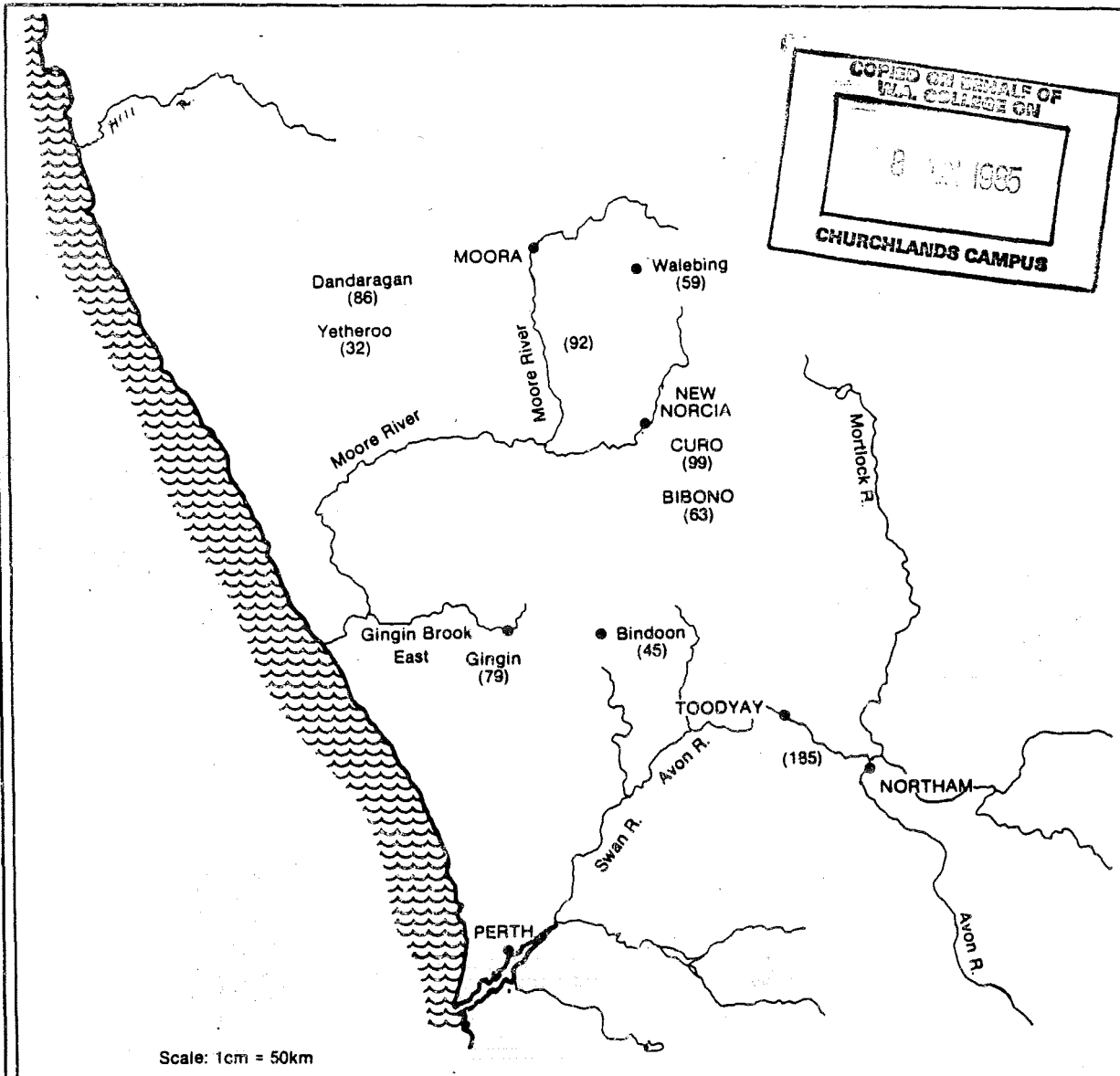
The Aboriginal inhabitants of the south western region lived there for over 35,000 years before the next influx of settlers, the Europeans, arrived in the nineteenth century AD. They were a non-literate people, relying on oral tradition to pass on their knowledge and customs through the generations spanning this long period of habitation. What is known of them today, is drawn from observations written by these early European visitors and settlers, together with the archaeological evidence that has been discovered to date.

It seems that the south western region never sustained many people. In 1832 Governor James Stirling, the founding Governor of the Swan River Colony, estimated that for the localities where British settlement had spread in the colony, the Aboriginal population was one person to every square mile. However, during even the first decade of European settlement the impact of change was being experienced by Aborigines in the region, and having a bearing on the population at this early date. The population for the entire area in the 1830's is estimated at around 6,500. Heavier concentrations of people occurred in the coastal regions where food was readily obtainable, and correspondingly fewer in the less fertile and inhospitable areas. Using early records for the Perth area for the years from 1829 to 1839, the population ratio is estimated at one person per four square miles. Regardless of this, areas with this many people per square mile were probably those of the highest population density for the entire region, with generally a much lower person to land ratio overall, especially in the dense rain forest of the deep south and in the semi-arid zones.³

Families were small, and women had two or three surviving children each as a general rule, with long spaces between. The number of male children apparently exceeded female children at the rate of between three and eight male children to every two female children. However, the balance which had been maintained for centuries between population and environmental resources, was severely disrupted immediately the effects of European occupation began to be felt.⁴

FIG. 3: Census of the New Norcia District and Surrounding Areas, 1858

Salvado's 1858 census was prepared 10 years after he established the Benedictine Mission at New Norcia in 1848. By that time, the Perth area had been settled by Europeans for 29 years, having profound effects on the Aboriginal population throughout the entire Perth-Toodyay-Northam district and areas north of New Norcia. As well as small total numbers of people in the district, Salvado's figures show a low ratio of children to adults. However, no firm conclusions can be drawn about how these figures relate to the traditional Aboriginal situation, because of the intervening years of European influence.



Area	Men	Women	Children	Total
Maura (Moora)	28	28	36	92
New Norcia vicinity				
Bindoon	13	16	16	45
Gingin	23	27	29	79
Yatheroo	9	11	12	32
Walebing	21	21	17	59
*Curo	23	29	47	99
Bibono	14	18	31	63
Dandaragan	24	25	37	86
Toodyay and Northam				185
				740

(Russo, G. 1972:56 after Salvado 1858) *Curo was an outstation of New Norcia in the nineteenth century. It should not be confused with the township of Coorow over 300 km to the north.



LANGUAGE

The people spread throughout the south western region, speaking a number of different languages and dialects which have been classified by linguists as belonging to the Nyungar group of languages. This classification came at the end of the long period of Aboriginal occupation of the region, and nothing can be deduced about the origins of the languages nor how they might have affected each other. They may have been a number of languages which further subdivided into dialects and finally languages; or several different languages some of which 'picked up' similarities from each other. Some of these languages were mutually intelligible to speakers of neighbouring land groups while others were so different they were incomprehensible to outsiders.

Knowledge of the languages of the south west has been drawn from attempts by early European observers to write down an Aboriginal language and use it in their dealings with Aborigines. These transcriptions were mostly done by untrained people, and while a number of European settlers learnt to communicate with Aborigines in the local Aboriginal language, difficulties of arriving at a standardised set of symbols to use in writing the unfamiliar sounds were generally too great. Consequently, the understanding gained of Aboriginal languages went unrecorded for the most part.

Linguists working with Aborigines in the twentieth century have attempted to record what people remember of the languages spoken in their youth. Where linguists have worked with Aborigines to record their language, their efforts have been preceded by the effects of at least three quarters of a century of European settlement, during which time Aboriginal languages have undergone enormous modifications. Whole languages have been forgotten as the last speakers passed away, and as English has been adopted as the general means of communication, albeit with certain modifications common to Aboriginal speakers.⁵

FIG. 4: Examples of Early Attempts to Transcribe Aboriginal Language in the Perth Area.

In 1835 Francis Frazer Armstrong was appointed Native Interpreter, based at the Mt. Eliza Native Institution (located between the West Perth Barracks and Crawley, at what is now known as King's Park). His qualifications for this position included his knowledge of the Aboriginal language spoken in the Perth area. His duties involved informing Aborigines of Governmental regulations and proclamations and making them aware of the intentions and wishes of the British settlers and Government. The translation below, clearly reflects this aspect of his work.

LANGUAGE

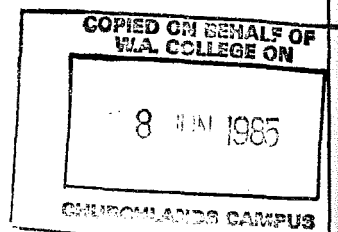
"There are three dialects used in the neighbourhood of the settled districts: the Lowland, the Mountain, and the Northern, — besides the Champion Bay dialect.

The English Translation

Of the Language runs thus, and does not always appear to advantage, and in regular order:-

Examples

<i>Where are you going?</i>	<i>Nbyn-nee yaan bard-din?</i> <i>You (are) where going?</i>
<i>Why are you going?</i>	<i>Nyte-juk nbynnee bard-din?</i> <i>Why or what for (are) you going?</i>
<i>For Kangaroo</i>	<i>Yowart uk.</i> <i>Kangaroo for.</i>
<i>For Mullet</i>	<i>Gal-gudda uk.</i> <i>Mullet for.</i>
<i>For Spears</i>	<i>Gid-jee uk.</i> <i>Spears for.</i>
<i>When will you return?</i>	<i>Myre-a nam-un/garoo mun bardin?</i> <i>(Fingers or) days how many/return.</i>
<i>Are you sulky or not?</i>	<i>Nbynnee gurrang gaduk ka yoo-a-da?</i> <i>You anger have or not.</i>
<i>I am not sulky, merely going along.</i>	<i>Anya gurrangbroo; yag-ga bard-din.</i> <i>I/anger have not (am)/merely going.</i>
<i>Have you a cloak or not?</i>	<i>Nbynnee booga gaduk ka yoo-a-da?</i> <i>You cloak have or not.</i>



EXERCISE

When we first landed here we wanted to be friendly with you natives. Why were you so angry. Why did you spear the white people? We did not want to kill you, or hurt you in any way. Why would you not be friends and let us learn your language? We could show you how to use a gun, make nets, boats, and many other things, but you set yourselves against us for years, until you found we were the strongest; otherwise you would have killed us all, as you killed the other white people.

Nganneel ingar-ingar nhalla bart nginnaga, nganneel gurrangbroo na-broo;

We at first here came reside we angry not, and so on;

goordoo gwabba nurang-uk; nurang nyte-juk gnalleckuk delluk-a bart?

heart good you to; you why us hate?

Nyte-juk nurang nganneel in yaga yaga daanugga? Nganneel nureel en gurrang

Why you us/without cause/speared? We you in anger

katteenge-broo booma-broo na-broo. Nurang nyte-juk goordoo wendang?

Thought not beat not, and so on. You why heart bad?

Nganneel garoo nureeluk mya gete katteege met-in. Nganneel garoo

We then your language soon understand correctly. We then

nureelin gun gwabbyne wurrung-un; net, na may wurrungun, boat ware

you gun good (use) show or tell; net, and such like, show tell, boat and

na ware nyteby nyteby na gwabbyne ware warra. Garoo nureel

such (like) and numerous nameless things, good and common. But you

nganneeluk gurrang moordooit. Muggore, Beroke, boola, garoo ngallutta

us angry strong. Winter, Summer, many, then we

boondooit bukadge; nureel garoo wangga — Nah! Djanga moordooit-jil,

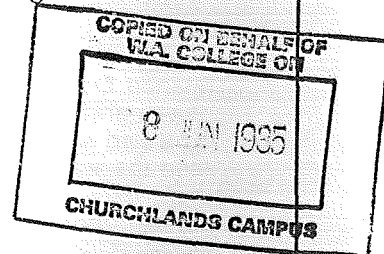
really fought; you then said — Ah! The whites strong.

Minning ngullata habba, nurang goora ganeel in booma, moondang-un-un

If we weak, you long time ago us kill, all

waam-ma mogin,

others like."



FRANCIS FRASER ARMSTRONG,

Government Interpreter to the Native Tribes of Western Australia
(Western Australia 1971:28)

Sir George Grey visited the Swan River Colony between 1837 and 1839. During this time, he went on a number of exploratory journeys, and was assisted by Aboriginal guides. He compiled a vocabulary of the Perth Aboriginal language, consulting with Armstrong and with G. F. Moore who also compiled his own comprehensive vocabulary.

The imaginary speech made by Miago, a Swan River Aboriginal, is a series of admonitions to other local Aborigines to live peaceably. This speech was made 10 or so years after European settlement, at a time when the effects of the changes it wrought on Aboriginal society and culture were being felt most acutely in the Perth area. Miago was worried that the elder senior men were reacting to these unsettled times by quarrelling, fighting and attempting to enforce their authority too harshly, and that this was adding to the difficulties already being experienced.

"Speech that the native Miago⁶ would have addressed to the Aborigines of Perth, if he had landed as Governor, instead of His Excellency, Mr. Hutt. He came into my room directly after the Governor had landed, and made this imaginary address:

'Yiee, naga yongar Perth bak-ad-jee yuado-Moon-dee Moondee gurrang, gurrang boola: Yal-gon-ga, Yal-gon-ga, gurrang, gurrang boola; yarn bai?

Buck-il-bury Wattup gidjee, yam bal gurrang boola?

Bun-bury gurrang, gurrang boola.

Golam-bidie gwabba: Mam-me-rup wan-gow-een boola.

Goo-lam-bidie wilgey nab-bow, yago mial, Goo-lam-bidie donga broo: mam-me-rup meno been boola, mam-me-rup gurrang gaduck, golambidie gidjee; Dule.

Waumma Governor yool: yahi Perth yongar bak-ad-jee yu-a-do; gwab-ba-litch.'

(English Translation):

'Henceforth this people of Perth must not fight. Moon-dee, Moon-dee, you are always quarrelling — Mir-ga-na, Mir-ga-na, you are always quarrelling — Yal-gon-ga, Yal-gon-ga, you are quarrelsome — what is the reason of this?

'Bucklebury speared Wattup, what reason had he to be is such a passion, (or, why was he so very angry)?

'Bun-bury, you are very quarrelsome.

'The young men behave very well, the old ones are always wrangling.

'The young men paint themselves, and the women look at them; the young men are not aware of this, but the old men are very jealous — and being in a passion spear the young men — this is very wrong.

'Now another Governor is come, and you people of Perth must fight no more — This is very good.'

(Grey, Sir George, Vol 2, 1841:345-6)

THE PEOPLE

Recorded observations have been made of Aborigines in the south west from as early as 1658, when Dutch sailors landed at Cape Leeuwin. While this is a considerable period, it should be remembered that Aborigines were in the region for an estimated 31,000 years before this time, and that no descriptions of them in the form of drawings or statues have survived. Hence, European descriptions are of people at the end of an era of exclusive Aboriginal settlement over many generations, spanning centuries and centuries. Hands were stencilled on the walls of some caves. Dale's Cave, located north east of Perth on the Avon River, was called the Moon Cavern by the Perth Aborigines because, people said, the moon once entered there to rest while on her journey across the sky. She leant against the wall of the cave, and left the impression of her hand, which has survived even to this day.⁶

When Europeans described the Aborigines of the south west they compared and contrasted them with their own ideas and ideals of personal attractiveness. They praised traits that they themselves had been taught to regard as marks of beauty, and criticised other features they found 'strange' or uncommon. Hence, Dampier wrote that they had 'pretty, full lips' while Powell said that they had 'large mouths'. There was a great deal of variation both between people living in different areas of the south western region, and also within groups. However, overall the Aborigines were not tall people, the men being around 1.6m and the women a little shorter than that. Generally speaking, they were of slight build, with curly dark hair, dark skin and large eyes with thick lashes. Their features were often fine, and they had high cheekbones. Nevertheless, some families were taller than others, or had browner skin or lighter hair, or were heavier built. Salvado described the women in the New Norcia area as the same in appearance as those of his homeland Spain, except for their skin which was darker, and their hairstyle and dress.⁷

When the British established a military garrison at King George's Sound in 1826, administered from New South Wales, and then colonised the Swan River three years later in 1829, several people attempted to describe the general appearance of the Aborigines to their friends and relatives back home in England or elsewhere. Some observers compared and contrasted the physical appearance of different groups of Aborigines from various areas of the south western region with each other, or with Aborigines from other parts of Australia, making generalisations about such physical traits as height and build, as well as adornments. These people were writing in the light of the knowledge of the day and as such, their descriptions and interpretations are clouded by the biases of the times in which they lived.

FIG. 5: Description of Aborigines

"...round his middle is wound, in many folds, a cord spun from the fur of the opossum, which forms a warm, soft and elastic belt of an inch in thickness, in which are stuck his hatchet, his kiley or boomerang, and a short heavy stick to throw at the smaller animals. His hatchet is so ingeniously placed, that the head of it rests exactly on the centre of his back, whilst its thin short handle descends along the back bone. In his hand he carried his throwing-stick, and several spears, beaded in two or three different manners, so that they are equally adapted to war or the chase. A warm kangaroo skin cloak completes his equipment.

These weapons, although apparently so simple, are admirably adapted for the purposes they are intended to serve — the spear when projected from the throwing-stick, forms as effectual a weapon as the bow and arrow ... and possesses ... the advantage of being useful to poke out kangaroo rats and opossums from hollow trees, to knock off gum from high branches, to pull down the cones from the Banksia trees, and for many other purposes.

The hatchet is used to cut up the larger kinds of game, and to make holes in the trees the owner is about to climb. The kiley (boomerang) is thrown into flights of wild fowl and cockatoos, and with the dow-uk, a short heavy stick, they knock over the smaller kinds of game, much in the same manner that poachers do hares and rabbits in England.

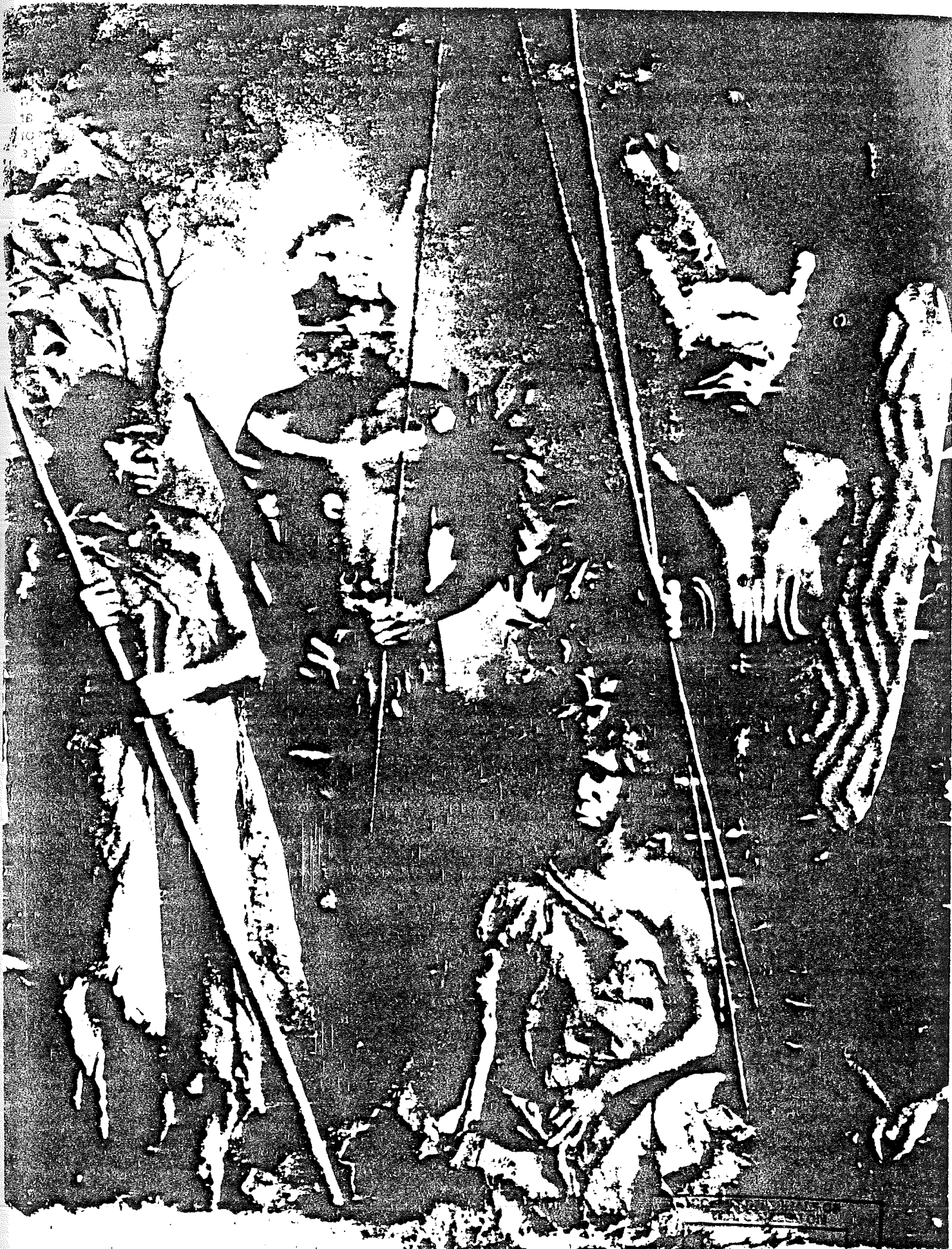
Thus equipped, the father of the family stalks forth, and at a respectful distance behind him follow the women; a long thick stick, and point of which has been hardened in the fire, is in each of their hands, a child or two fixed in their bags or upon their shoulders, and in the deep recesses of these mysterious bags, they carry moreover sundry articles ...

In general, each woman carried a lighted fire stick, or brand, under her cloak and in her hand."

(Grey, Sir George, Vol. 2, 1841:264-7)

When Europeans first began to come in contact with Aborigines in the south west, they did so under a number of different circumstances. Parties of Aboriginal men were observed wearing ochre and feathers, and carrying long spears. These men had gathered for some ceremonial purpose, either concerned with conflict with other groups, or possibly with purely religious matters. On other occasions, small bands of Aborigines were glimpsed, generally a party of men hunting; a group of women, youths and children foraging for berries or fruits; or a small cluster of men, women and children fishing along the edges of a stream or lake. At times a family group would be seen, the man walking ahead carrying his spears and weapons while his wife trailed behind with a small baby slung on her back and carrying other bundles and bags.

COPIED ON BEHALF OF
W.A. COLLEGE ON



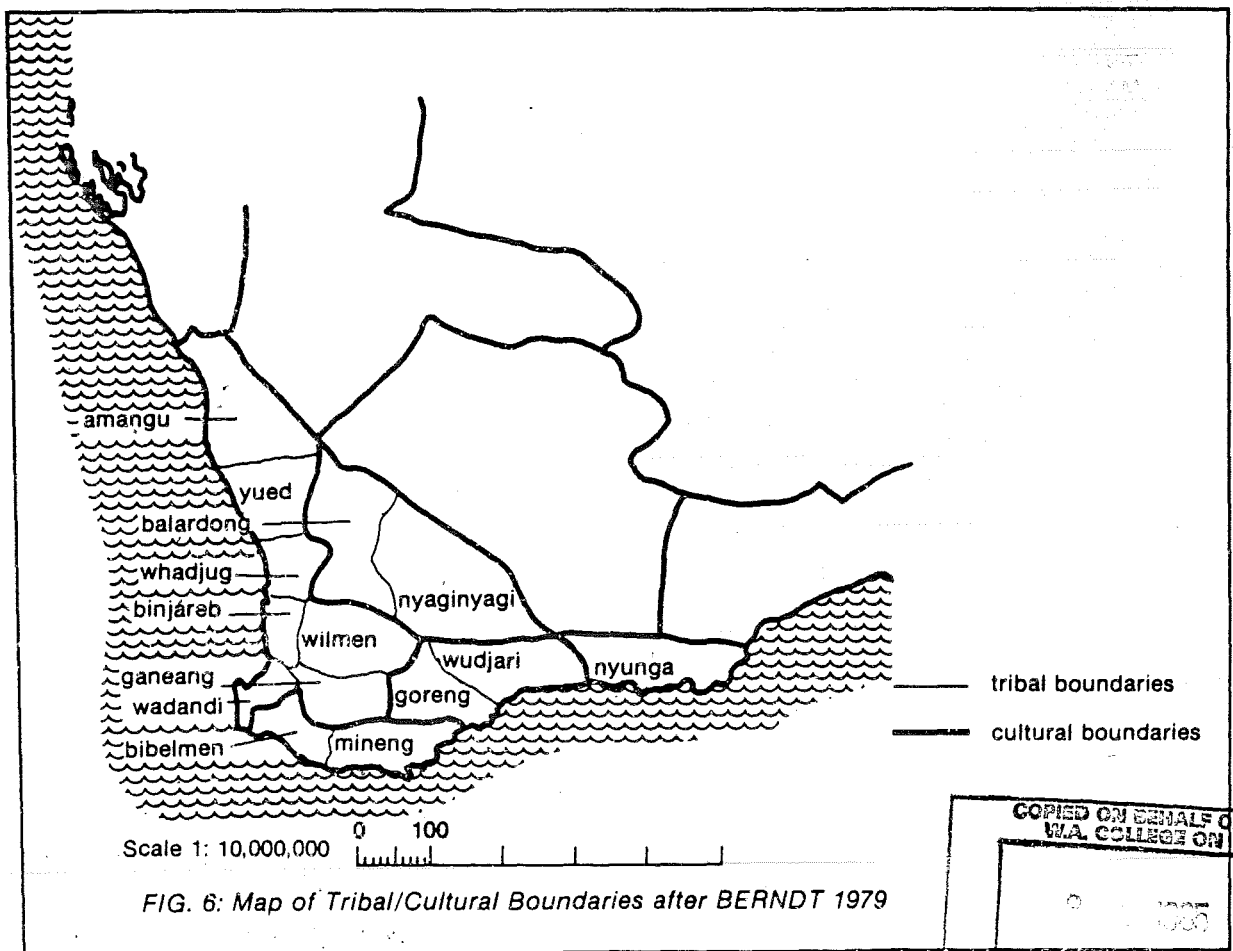
THE UNIVERSITY OF
THE CARIBBEAN

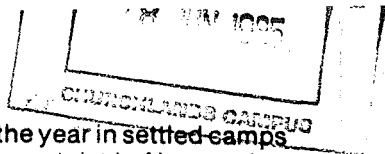
ANDRE GARCIA

Early observers often commented on the absence of women from parties of Aborigines with whom they came in contact. Preston, among others, described how he was taken by the men of the Preston River area, through bush tracks and undergrowth, to where the women and children were waiting to look at him. It is clear that the Aboriginal women took pains to keep out of sight of Europeans until the intentions of the newcomers could be ascertained. However, while this may have been an established custom to avoid danger such as being captured as wives by men of another foreign group, it may also have been a response to the presence of Europeans in the area. Evidence of capture by European whalers and sealers in the Bass Straits exists in Tasmanian records, and similar accounts are to be found in the oral tradition of the south west. These marauding sailors abducted women and kept them aboard ship as workhands and sexual partners while they were in the area, either abandoning them or returning them to their homes when it was time to sail to the northern hemisphere with their catch at the end of the season.⁸

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The Aborigines of the south western region were divided into a number of loosely organised tribes, distinguishable by language, a sense of separate identity, and the territory they occupied. In addition, these groups differed from each other according to the stress they placed on descent through the female line, that is matrilineal descent, or on patrilineal descent traced through the male line. Also, they varied in the detail of a number of ritual practices. For example, there were several variations in the minor details of mortuary rites as these were carried out in different parts of the region. Moreover, the resources within tribal territories differed from area to area, rendering certain groupings of people more advantaged in particular commodities, such as clay and ochre deposits, and lacking in others, like stone quarries. The sense of separate identity of the various tribal groupings was reinforced by their myths and stories, which emphasised the strangeness of outsiders, and the dangers of venturing into alien lands. The Aborigines of the York district believed that the people living far away to the east were cannibals, and that at birth they marked the children who would be eaten later on. This gruesome tale made the York people very fearful of strangers from the east, and caused them to hope that they would never come in contact with anyone from there.⁹





Aborigines of the south west were semi-nomadic, living for substantial parts of the year in settled camps of several families. The divisions between tribes was not rigidly clear cut, and a great deal of interaction took place between members of different tribes, especially those whose territories adjoined. In all, a total of 13 tribal units have been identified for the entire region. These were sub-divided into smaller entities based on the right of access to tracts of land, reckoned both patrilineally and matrilineally. It is doubtful if the distinction between adjoining tribes was ever a very firm one, within the region. The members sometimes inter-married; and they also traded, fought, passed on information, and held joint religious ceremonies and other festivities from time to time.¹⁰

On occasions, Aborigines belonging to a certain tribal unit or number of land groups would identify with a larger social category comprised of one or more other similar units. For example, the Perth Aborigines acknowledged a kinship with the hills tribes to the east of their territory, and also with the Murray River Aborigines to the south, although regarding them as separate social and land groups. But they were very fearful of the Murchison tribes further away to the north, and thought of them as foreign to themselves and to the hills and Murray River people.¹¹

The resources of neighbouring land groups were called upon in times of shortage, but this was a temporary expedient which ended when the seasons became regular and bountiful again. In addition, goods were traded between tribes, at times over great distances along established trading routes. For example, ochre and seashells were traded from Perth, eastwards towards New Norcia; spears were traded from the south, northwards to the Perth area along with stones for use as axe heads; and pearl-shell was traded into the south western region from the northern coastline of Australia.¹²

The right to areas of land within a broad territory was associated with localised family groups. Individuals belonging to these kin groups, either through rights of birth or marriage, had first access to the resources of these lands as their 'home'. On marriage, a couple moved throughout the lands which they had first access to. Hence, conceptions and births tended to take place in a couple's country, sometimes that of the mother, and other times the father's own land. These events, and the locality in which they took place, were believed to have particular religious and spiritual significance for the individual who, through them, was seen to be intimately associated with the lands of his or her father and mother. In this way, sites within the territory of their parents came to hold special significance and meaning for children and they were regarded as belonging to that land which was their special hearth. They shared jointly the right of access to foods and other resources available there.

Usually, a father and his wives, their sons and their wives and children, and sometimes father's or mother's brothers and their wives and children were the people regarded as rightfully belonging to that tract of territory. Land belonged to the tribe only in the sense that all members acknowledged a series of rights and obligations towards each other but not to outsiders. Land was never owned communally by the tribe, although certain sites of religious significance were equally accessible to all members, and all members of the tribe had a natural right to the land provided they acknowledged the rights of individuals. Moreover, the fluid nature of boundaries between groups made it difficult to determine rigid tribal perimeters.¹³

Rights to land were vested equally in the local group, with authority determined according to sex and seniority, depending on the situation. Boundaries between individual or family occupied tracts of land overlapped to some extent. In addition, small groups of people combined resources to collect foods at certain times of the year, and to hold religious ceremonies and group entertainment. People were obliged to share the produce of their lands with neighbouring groups, but permission always had to be asked for, and all the forms of protocol carefully observed. Individuals who were reluctant to share were ridiculed by others, while those who assumed a right without asking beforehand, chanced being speared as a mark of shame for their impropriety, and as a future reminder. Moreover, they ran the risk that their intentions would be misconstrued, and that people would think that they planned to do some harm. In this event, future misfortunes would be certain to be blamed on them.

The basic land occupying unit was based on the nuclear family of a husband and wife, or wives; their children; and occasionally relatives such as an aged parent, uncle or brother. Co-wives were frequently sisters, who had known each other all their lives and were good friends. This small group hunted and gathered as a unit for part of the year, especially during the winter months, and joined the main camp for the rest of the year. While people lived in the large camps they carried out tasks requiring a lot of labour such as firing the countryside in kangaroo drives. To hold one of these kangaroo drives a group of people would assemble and set alight to areas of the bushland. As the animals fled from the flames, men who had been waiting concealed in the thicket would leap out and spear or club them. Meanwhile, the women and children would try to capture the smaller animals as quickly as they could.

When a kangaroo drive was particularly successful, messages would be sent to neighbouring groups to come and join in a huge feast, and there would be much singing, dancing and festivity. In addition to these large drives, kangaroos were speared by individuals. In some areas of the region, pointed stakes were fixed in the ground as kangaroo traps. The animals were driven towards them by the hunters who would shout and gesticulate to cause them to panic and rush headlong onwards.¹⁴

Collecting banksia flowers also required a lot of work by a group of people, as this flower was seasonal and had to be gathered while it was in bloom. The flower was then soaked in water to make a sweet drink. Certain types of fishing were other activities in which the whole group participated. Fish traps, built like weirs out of stones, or sticks, were constructed along the seashore or across rivers and lakes. As the fish became caught in these traps they were speared. This type of fishing occurred seasonally, while other types of fishing took place throughout the year when different catches were available.



CHURCHLANDS CARPUS
60 PIND 60 PIND
WIA 60 PIND

Large groupings of people averaged around 200 men, women and children, although in the New Norcia district up to 400 people were observed shortly after European settlement of the district. At other times, smaller groups of 100 or so camped together, representing somewhere between 20 and 30 family hearths.¹⁵

The further away from his or her own territory an individual moved, the more alien he or she felt. For example, when a man from the Murray River district wished to visit a group north of the Perth area, he would approach members of the Perth district first, and then be accompanied on the second stage of his journey north by one or more people belonging to this group. Other people belonging to tribal groups in the south, would not travel northwards through the Murray River district for fear of the people there, whom they regarded as dangerous.¹⁶

All of this changed as soon as European settlement took place, and Aborigines journeyed with explorers and adventurers into distant tribal territories, protected by their European companions from the strangers they came in contact with. In this way, Aborigines travelled between King George's Sound and Perth; up into the Murchison; even into the Kimberleys in the far north; and through the eastwards country of the desert people of the interior. While on these early expeditions Aborigines always had deep feelings of dread. They felt it next to a miracle when they eventually returned to their home base unharmed. One of these persons was Kaiber, who accompanied Grey to the Murchison, and who narrowly escaped with Grey from the vigorous and warlike Murchison tribesmen. Another was Wylie, who was taken by Eyre to South Australia and then walked overland to King George's Sound, pursued by Western Desert Aborigines who killed several members of Eyre's party.¹⁷

BELIEFS

The Aborigines believed that people came into being at the time of creation, when the land forms were sculptured and shaped from existing matter by the great Spirit Beings. These Beings were believed to be powerful supernatural forces, equipped with all the traits of living people such as capacity for love, jealousy, meanness, vengeance and warmth. Through their actions, they were said to have given rise to people, plant and animal life located within tribal territories. Sometimes, legend had it that people were brought to their land by these Beings who assumed animal forms, and the Perth Aborigines believed that Great Crows carried some of them on their backs, while the others sprung from Giant Emus. The Aborigines of the New Norcia district believed that the land and sky and all living things were created by a supernatural being who finally died an old man. A great serpent was believed to still live in water holes and rivers, and an evil spirit was blamed for inclement weather and other calamities.¹⁸

All living things were believed to share a spiritual force, or life, because of their origin from these Dreaming Beings. Individuals were regarded as being particularly close with certain animals or plants because of this, as though they were soul brothers and sisters. This was the totem system, joining people and the natural world in a particularly close and meaningful way. As an expression of this affinity, people generally did not eat the flesh of that animal or plant with which they shared this special spiritual affinity. However, on certain ceremonial occasions this rule was reversed, and they ate their totem as a demonstration of the closeness of their bond. Each individual could have several spiritual associations with nature, corresponding to his or her family grouping within the tribe to which he or she belonged; special localities within the tribal territory where significant events had taken place, such as where that person had been born; plus totems associated with certain religious categories and progression in religious knowledge.¹⁹

All the members within a geographical area had a natural right to the resources available within their own territorial tracts, in the lands in which they and other members of the tribal group were believed to have originated during the Dreaming. They also had a special responsibility to ensure that spiritual matters were attended to, so that this relationship between mankind and the natural environment was maintained. However, they did not share a right to the resources of other's tribal territories, and land was not seen as a commodity which could be acquired. Right to land was a matter of birthright, and birthright alone, explained and justified by the Dreamtime stories.

All the members of a tribe belonged to the totemic moiety system by right of birth. This was a means of categorising everyone into two major categories, or moieties, further sub-divided into several smaller sections or classes. Each moiety and class was associated with a particular plant or animal life form. All the members of each of these social divisions, moiety and class, shared a life force or soul equally with each individual representation of the Plant or animal. This life force was believed to have resulted from the common supernatural origin of all the members of that moiety or class, both human and animal or plant, during the Dreamtime.

Rules for marriage were embodied in the moiety and class system, and members of one class within a moiety could only marry into other specified classes. Mostly, people belonging to one moiety could only marry into the opposite moiety. However, in some areas people married into their own moiety. Their children were categorised as belonging to the opposite moiety. This was an alternate generation system, where moiety membership alternated each generation for both the matrilineal and the patrilineal line.²⁰ Wrong marriages, that is, marriages between people belonging to classes or moieties which should never marry each other, were severely punished. Marriage or sexual relations between members of very close classes, or within a person's own class, were punished by death, because they were so highly disapproved of and held in opprobrium. Sexual relations between members of 'incorrect' but not close classes, were punished fiercely and sometimes the woman was killed. In the New Norcia district, a six class system operated within an overall moiety division. Sections and classes did not give their members occupancy rights over any tract of land, other than in the broad sense of tribal territory.

COPIED ON 10 JUN 1985
VIA COLLEGE OF

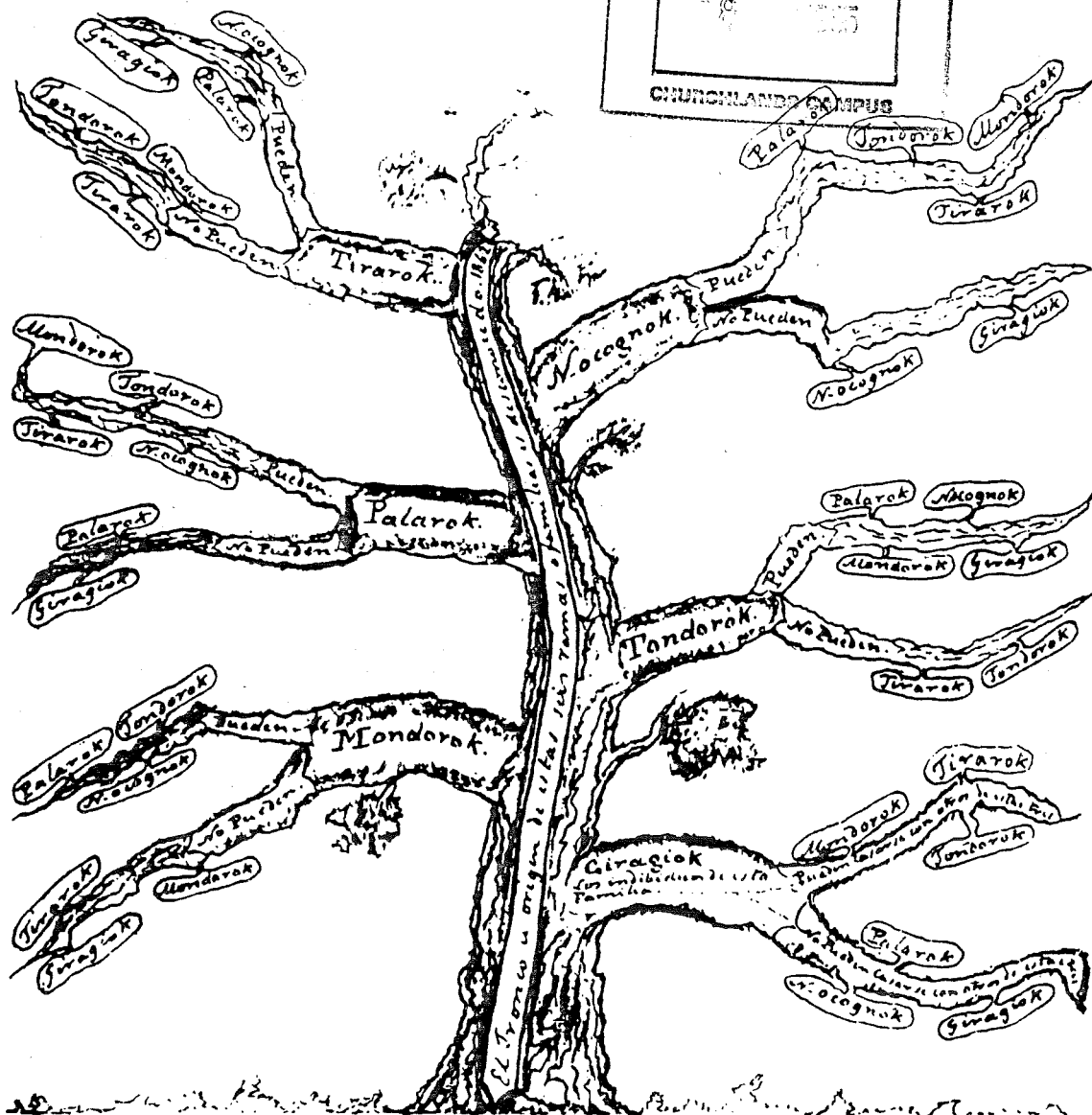
986 JUN 8



COPIED ON BEHALF OF
W.A. COLLEGE ON

1985

CHURCHLANDS CAMPUS



- Cairagiok, Mondorok, Tondorok, Palarok, Nocognok, Tirarok -
 Las familias siguientes originales & primitivas de Australianos.
 Todos los Aborígenes Australianos de la parte Occidental pertenecen a ellas y el nombre de cada una de ellas se propaga no de Padre pero si de Madre a hijo e hija. Los individuos de cada una de ellas no se pueden casar indistintamente con los de otra, mirase el Arbol.

In the New Norcia district there were 6 classes, or sections of people. Membership was inherited through the mother, accordingly to carefully defined rules. People could never marry or have sexual relations with anyone belonging to the same class as themselves or their mothers. The Benedictine missionaries respected these marriage laws and were careful to observe them when encouraging Christian marriage between their converts at New Norcia.

Following the moiety and class rules laid down by the Great Ancestors, the Aborigines of the south western region lived in their tribal and family lands, made theirs during the Dreaming. This pattern continued undisturbed for century upon century, giving the people a profound sense of security and certainty about the validity of their beliefs and their place in the universe. Sudden change came in the nineteenth century with the next wave of immigrants to these Dreamtime lands.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Throughout the warmer seasons of the year, several members of an area of land lived together in large camps, the whole group shifting from one site to another if a move became necessary. Individual family groups split from the main group for short periods, but always returned after a brief spell.

This semi-nomadic pattern of living ensured that women could generally remain in the main camp when they were drawing close to giving birth. During a woman's pregnancy, she carefully avoided eating certain foods which were believed to be harmful to herself or the baby, and ate others which were reputed to be beneficial and strengthening. She also observed a number of other local customs which were thought to help her and the child during this period, such as never stirring the fire with a pointed stick lest it cause an illness.

As the expectant mother felt the first signs of labour, she withdrew to a specially built birth hut, set a little distance apart from the main camp. At this time, she was attended by other women, usually her own mother or mother-in-law and other close female relatives such as co-wives who had already had the experience of childbirth themselves. They prepared her a bed of soft leaves, and also a pile of fine, carefully burnt and sifted ashes. The woman lay on the bed to give birth, and afterwards used the ashes to powder the newborn child, giving the infant a grey-white appearance until the soft dust wore off.²¹

Sometimes, a woman fell into labour while she was away from the main camp, and had to tend to the birth herself. As this was considered strictly women's business, the men did not participate.

The father, and other men of the tribe, took no direct part in childbirth when it occurred in the camp. The father was informed by the other women as soon as the child arrived, and experienced the joy and pride of the event, sharing this with his wife when she returned to her own hearth. The new mother set about her daily tasks soon after the birth of her child, carrying the small infant carefully wrapped in a soft skin in her left arm, although she continued sleeping in the birth hut until a suitable period had elapsed.

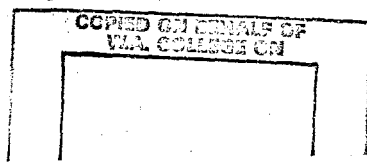
The father's role at this important time was to consult with other men of the tribe, especially the native doctor and the senior men, to determine the significance of various signs which appeared to him throughout the pregnancy and birth, and which were believed to indicate the individual totemic spirit of the new baby. These signs were usually such things as the appearance of a particular type of bird or animal, which would be taken to mean that this creature shared in common a spiritual bond with the new child. This totemic spirit was in addition to the bond between the infant and his or her parents' lands, although the two were inseparable.

It was believed that the spirit of the child entered the mother from certain places in the environment where several of these spirit children were to be found; or that spirit children came from across the sea to find their earth mothers. The child then developed as a baby in the mother's womb, but even at birth it was very close to the world of the supernatural, having only just emerged into the domain of the living. For this reason, newborn children sometimes slipped back to the land of the spirits. The father's role was considered necessary to the development of the child during pregnancy particularly in looking after the mother, and most especially after birth, but the father was not considered to be the cause or source of the child's soul.²²

It was regarded as more fortunate to give birth to a baby boy, although all children were loved by their parents and other relatives. Sometimes, when a mother had two children too close together, or when the seasons were particularly poor, the youngest child would be allowed to die. This happened more readily in the case of girls, although infanticide was never a very common practice. Deformed or sickly babies were also permitted to die, or were killed, preferably at birth and before the mother had developed a strong emotional bond with her child and might oppose this action. It was considered that the mother could not care adequately for children born too close together, and go about her daily chores at the same time. Also, it was easier for an infant to re-join the spirit world, because it had not yet taken on its social, or earthly, personality. This did not mean that the parents and especially the mother did not feel a close loving tie with the new baby. But it was thought that this bond had not had time to mature, and in any event the spirit child might come back to its earth mother at a later time.²³

A child was given a name at birth, and this was used throughout infancy. Should another member of the tribe die who had the same name, or a similar one, the child's own name was immediately changed. This was because it was forbidden to use the name of a deceased person for many years after he or she died, for fear that the spirit of the deceased would hear it and would be attracted to come back to the land of the living. Children's names were also changed at several other points in their lives, particularly around puberty when boys commenced their long period of initiation. The significance of this phase was underlined by giving them a new name, as their status within the tribe changed from child to initiate. At birth or soon afterwards, baby girls were promised by their parents as future wives to certain men. This arrangement set up a series of mutual obligations between the parents of the baby girl, and the future husband, which bound them in a close relationship over the years the girl was growing up. In particular, the husband-to-be was expected to provide gifts of food to his future in-laws, and to do certain tasks at their request, especially for his mother-in-law whom he had to treat in a very respectful and courteous manner. Often these arrangements broke down over the years, sometimes because one or other of the parties changed their minds; although more commonly because the husband-to-be died, became too enfeebled to keep up with his obligations, or had entered into too many of this type of arrangement and could not honour them all.

In this event, the parents sought an alternative husband for their daughter, and the same type of reciprocity was once again established. At times the husband-to-be did not wish to carry on with the



arrangements, when he preferred another similar bond with someone else, or because he had a disagreement with the parents of his promised bride, or for some other personal reason. In this situation, he could only be released from his duties towards the girl and her parents if one of his kinsmen would take over these responsibilities on his behalf. A girl sometimes upset her parents' marriage plans for her by eloping with her lover, or abandoning her husband to run away with another man. Carefully planned reciprocal relations based on marriage were also set in disarray in cases where a woman was enticed or forced to accompany a man from a remote land group, or even another tribal group.²⁴

Babies were carried on their mothers' backs in bags made of possum skins, the soft fur turned inwards. They either rested their heads against their mothers' shoulders, or slumped down and hung their heads backwards. In this way, a small baby was always close to its mother, and could feel the warmth and the gentle swaying movement as she went about on her daily chores. Children were breast fed for several years, and as they grew they were gradually introduced to solid foods, with much petting and cajoling. They were also warned of the foods they must not eat, and which were considered bad for children because they stunted their growth, or made them ill, as well as the foods which were generally inedible because of poisons they contained. During infancy and early childhood, children were indulged and petted by their parents and other relatives. Because families were small, there was always plenty of time for an adult to pay attention to any child who demanded it, and most adults were only too pleased to spend a few minutes playing with a child.

Adults were very particular about teaching children the correct ways to behave, especially how various members of the tribe were related to them through the kinship system. This included teaching them the rules of the section system. They also taught children the skills they would need to survive in the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the tribe. In order to do this, they modelled small toy spears, spear-throwers and digging sticks and other tools used by adults, for children to play with. Children imitated the grown-ups, pretending to do all the things they would be required to do in later years. Little girls spent hours playing at homemaking with dolls and 'pretend' cloaks and tools, having 'adventures' as they searched for vegetables and small animals; while boys went on imaginary hunting trips pretending to stalk fabulous game as they chased after lizards and small animals, and bring 'gigantic' feasts back to the camp.

In order to lay emphasis on the importance of behaving in the correct manner, adults told children many stories which contained a lesson on 'proper' behaviour, in addition to being entertaining stories which captured children's imaginations. When children hurt themselves, or had stomach aches or other childhood ailments, adults sometimes said this was because they had done something they should not have done, like the nasty or foolish characters in such-and-such a story they had been told. To see these stories actually appearing to come true to them, always ensured that children would be on their best behaviour for a short while, at least. When they grew up, they would then practice the same tricks on their own children to make them behave.

Adults had very strong beliefs about the presence of evil spirits, and told children a great many stories about demons, in order to warn them of the dangers of the supernatural world. The small child's twilight, after an evening meal and as sleep spread across the camp, was full of spirits which would capture them if they strayed too far from the adults, and of little hairy men who were sure to come close to the campfires if they cried at night. Adults, too, believed in the presence of spirits and their own fears reinforced those of the children.

Young children went with their mothers and other women during the day, playing and learning to identify animal tracks, spot edible plants, and recognise signs of danger. They dug alongside the grown-ups for tubers, and burrowed at the roots of shrubs and trees for insects, ants and larvae. They chased small animals, and threw their short spears and digging sticks into the water in attempts to spear fish. At evening when they returned to camp they played together as their mothers prepared the meal, chasing each other, climbing on their fathers, and being spoilt and loved. Eventually they fell asleep, as they listened to the conversation of the adults around the campfires after everyone had eaten.

As they grew, boys began to accompany their fathers and other men on hunting expeditions, and longer spears were fashioned for them to practice with and acquire the skills of the men. In this way, they learnt to stalk game quietly without revealing their presence; to set traps and snares; and to discipline themselves to remain very still for long periods of time as they crouched down, waiting for kangaroos or other game to appear.

Girls continued to go with the women on their daily chores, becoming adept at such tasks as identifying animal tracks, imitating bird calls, climbing trees to extract honey from the nests which bees made high up in the hollow tree-trunks, pounding and preparing seed cakes, and caring for smaller children and babies. They also learnt to pluck and spin possum fur into wool; and to sew kangaroo skins together using long sinews drawn from the base of the kangaroo's tail as thread, and a sharp piece of kangaroo bone as a needle to puncture slits in the tough hide. They gained skill in using the sharp flinted hand saw, or taap knife, and the long digging stick, and soon became almost as quick as the women in piercing the earth for tubers and cutting, sawing and slashing in their quest for food.

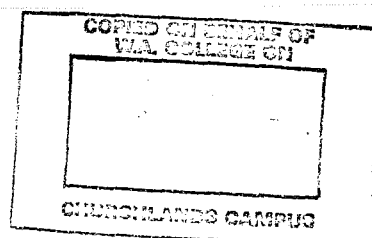
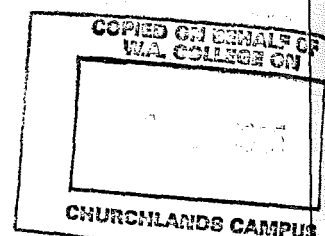
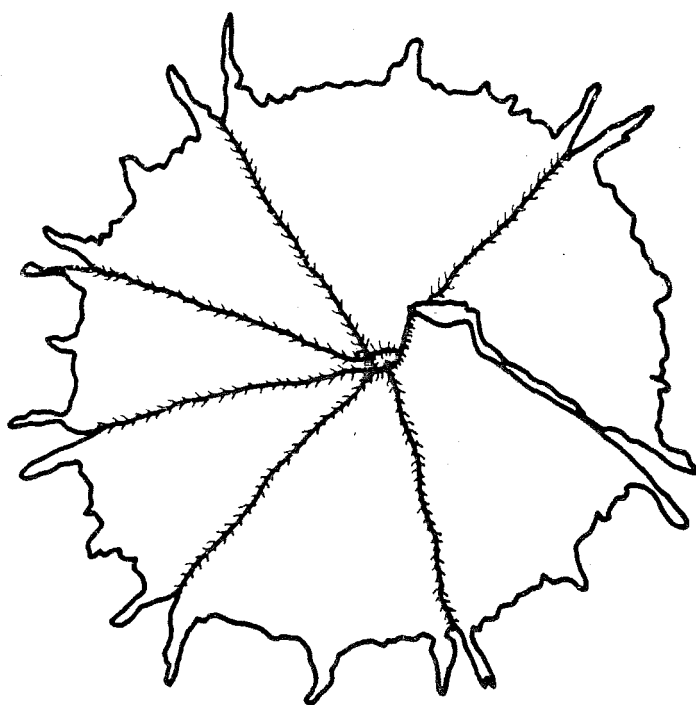


FIG. 8: Aboriginal Skin Cloak from South Western Australia

Skin cloaks were sewn from several kangaroo or possum skins; stretched, dried, scraped and trimmed and then fitted together. The hems were left untrimmed and fell unevenly around the thighs or ankles depending on the length of the cloak. Slits were punctured along the seamlines, using a small hollow bone from a kangaroo leg to make crescent shaped openings. The skins were then joined with a type of blanket-stitch, to make strong, waterproof seams. Kangaroo sinew, or long reeds, were used as the thread.



Cloaks were fastened at the neckline with thonging, or a kangaroo bone pin. They were worn over one shoulder and around underneath the other arm to leave one arm free; drawn over and around the shoulders to make a snug canopy; or flung back over both shoulders from the neck, falling down the back. Men abandoned their cloaks when giving chase to animals, and in other situations requiring maximum freedom of movement, such as in combat. Cloaks were worn with the fur turned in, except in wet weather when the fur was turned out so that the rain ran off and the skin of the cloak remained dry and comfortable. A person's cloak was placed on the grave when he or she died.

During this period, boys and girls learnt many of the rules of the tribe, especially the various rules of kinship with the associated totemic ties. Kinship in Aboriginal society was classificatory, for example mother's sisters were all called 'mother'. There was a special term to denote 'real mother', but all the other women called by the same term as mother were held in deep affection. Likewise, father's brothers and sisters, and mother's brothers, stood in a very close relationship to the child. This too was expressed through the kinship system, in rights and obligations towards these people as well as in the special terms used when referring to them or calling them. For example, generally mother's brother played a very important role during the initiation of a boy, and may have been the one to officiate over certain rites marking the occasion. As well as directing these activities, it would be his responsibility to ensure that they were carried out properly and that no major mistakes were made.

Children learnt who they would be expected to care for, and in the case of boys who they would be required to share their catch with and how it should be apportioned. They also learnt who were considered suitable partners, and which people belonged to the sections they should never have a sexual relationship with. They were told of the dangers of foreign groups, and how strangers who were spied in their family lands would be sure to be out to avenge a death, because that could be the only reason for their clandestine presence. Girls were warned of the possibility of capture by these tribesmen, when they would be taken to live with people they did not know and would have to make the best of it in unfamiliar country away from the ones they loved, and where they would not know the best places to look for food.

In this way, Aboriginal children slipped through childhood, gradually taking on some of the responsibilities of adulthood, but overall enjoying a free and indulged existence in the warmth of the clusters of kin in which they were brought up.

ADOLESCENCE

For both boys and girls, adolescence marked a sharp break from the childhood past, and also a separation of their respective roles. Girls, already promised in childhood as marriage partners, moved to their husbands' camps at the onset of puberty. Sexual relations did not necessarily commence straight away, but did soon afterwards as the girl matured. Frequently after marriage a girl lived quite near to her own mother, or made regular visits back home, especially when she became pregnant. This was more so in the likely event that her husband was from the same tribal grouping as herself, and his land was near to that of her own parents.

In the case of boys, adolescence saw the first weaning from the family hearth, as youths camped together some distance apart from the married men, women and younger children. Visitors from other groups also slept in these boys' camps if they were not accompanied by their wives. However, if their wives were with them, they slept in the main camp near the other married men and their families. These adolescent boys were largely self-supporting, hunting and gathering for themselves, and learning to live as adults before they were permitted to take on the responsibilities of a wife and children.²⁵

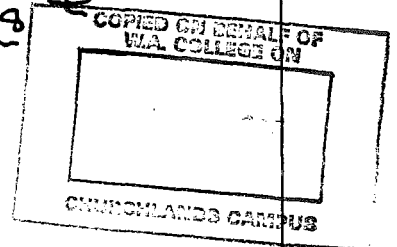
FIG. 9: Map of an Aboriginal Campsite, Albany Region, Drawn by Galliput (Gyallipert) of Albany, During a Visit to the Swan River Colony in 1833, using a Quill and Ink.

(Swan River Papers Vol. 15:64)



LEGEND:

- No. 1 Camping or sitting place of women, children and babies.
- No. 2 Single men's and boys' camp.
- No. 3 Fire, where kangaroo is roasted.
- No. 4 Not identified.
- No. 5 Place where kangaroo may be caught.
- No. 6 Lake, where the men and boys go to catch fish.
- No. 7 Place where the married men camp or sit.



Note: This is the only known piece of Aboriginal artwork for this period, to survive to the present day. The figures resemble early Aboriginal artwork from other parts of Australia, but do not appear to have any of the characteristic features of the later X-ray style. However, it should be remembered that much of the artwork done in Aboriginal society had a religious intent, and formed part of religious ceremonies. This small drawing is strictly secular and limited in scope and design by the intentions of the artist, Gyallipert, and as such cannot be taken as representative of anything but illustrative artwork in the region.

Adolescence also marked the commencement of a series of initiation ceremonies which extended throughout the entire period of several years, and signified the gradual achievement of full adult status. The actual ceremonies, as they took place, were the culmination to a period of learning. This was in part one of religious instruction during which youths gradually had revealed to them the religious mysteries, which were jealously guarded and withheld from women and children. The instructors were older adult men, who themselves had been through the same initiation trials in their youth.

Girls, too, underwent some initiation ceremonies, but by no means as many, nor over as long a period, as those their brothers endured. The transition from childhood to maturity took place abruptly for girls and they avoided the protracted period of 'in-between' that was a feature of boys' growing up. They soon became engrossed in matters relating to childbirth. Women had their own secret knowledge, and held their ceremonies at their own fires away from the men.

Cicatrication marked a number of these ceremonial stages for both boys and girls. Whelts were cut in the skin on the chest, back, arms and thighs, gradually building up a pattern over the years as more cuts were added. Ashes were then rubbed in the wounds, so that as they healed they formed raised scars. Both men and women considered these to be features of beauty and pride because of what they stood for. One of the most spectacular and earliest circumcision rites reserved for youths only, was the piercing of the nasal septum. This was done with a fine kangaroo bone, inserted through the wound which was left to heal with the bone in it. Afterwards, throughout the life of the individual this kangaroo bone was worn for ceremonies on religious occasions, and was a mark of pride and status. It was particularly important during inter-tribal meetings. Young men, once they had completed this stage of their initiation, were sometimes sent as messengers between groups, and while they wore their nose bones they were immune from hostilities.²⁶

As messengers, youths were introduced to an undertaking that was important to the tribe as a whole. In this way they were gradually led to experience the weight of group responsibility as they interacted with strangers on behalf of their own groups, albeit in a very limited context. Message sticks were carried by the young men. These were short pieces of wood which were carved with a set of symbols which indicated the matter over which the tribe wanted to make contact with the neighbouring tribe. These message sticks were used to convey information between different groups within the tribal territory, as well as in dealings between tribes.²⁷

The Aborigines of the south western region of Western Australia contrasted with the rest of Aboriginal Australia in that they did not practice circumcision or sub-incision of the penis. Both of these ceremonies were mandatory for youths during initiation in the Western Desert region to the east, while the people of the Murchison to the north practised circumcision. This gave the south westerners a sense of real difference from their remote tribal neighbours.

During the length of their initiation, young men let their beards grow and bound their heads with wool made from possum fur. Feathers were used as decorations, and were stuck in bunches on their headbands and tied to their arms. Flowers were also used for this purpose, and fine leaves and little gumnuts. At times a headband was made out of native dog skins with the tails left dangling down in a fringe around the face and head. In the Albany district youths and men sometimes cut a spiral strip of leather from a kangaroo hide, and then stretched this and wound it around and around their heads. The young men also wore necklets of flowers. The women did not decorate themselves to the same extent, although they wove flowers into their hair which they wore cropped short, or small globules of clay stuck to the ends of their hair which clicked together as they walked. It is not known if women's hair was used in making woollen belts, as it was in other regions of Australia where it was prized because of its strength and elasticity.

All the members of the tribe used a mixture of ochre and grease to smear over their bodies. This kept the skin soft and attractive, and helped ward off insects. It also had an insulating effect, an important consideration at times of the year when there was wide variation between night time and day time temperatures. Young men practised the various designs used for body decorations during ceremonies, painting each other carefully with clay, ochre and charcoal, and closely observing their elders preparing for these events. They also spent considerable time learning the various dance steps, and imitating animal postures and calls to use in their performances. In addition, as hunters they gradually built up skill and discipline as they tracked, stalked and finally speared their prey.

Marriage was barred to the young initiates for the entire length of the drawn-out period of male initiation. Nevertheless, flirtatious glances were directed at the young women, as the initiates tried to out-do each other dancing around the campfires during the evening ceremonies and festivities. Hurried rendezvous were plotted, perhaps to meet together in the shadows of the bushes, where further encounters could be planned. These brief romances were never formalised or solemnised into marriage arrangements. The moiety rules determining eligible sexual partners were carefully and meticulously observed, even in the case of these casual flirtatious encounters, and any infringements were punished severely. Gradually, the young men spent more and more time with their seniors, until the completion of this period of their lives when, at last, they were regarded as having passed into manhood, and were permitted to have a wife and an individual hearth of their own. By this time, their beards were long and their skills in hunting were sharpened. They had the maturity to be able to conduct themselves as adults in the company of other married families, and to take part in the adult life of the tribe.

MARRIAGE

Marriage always marked a change in status for the bride and groom, and was an important event in their lives. Certain rituals were observed by the relatives of both the bride and the groom at the time the girl went to her husband's camp, but this did not involve any feasting or festivities. In the case of promised marriages made in the young wife's early infancy, the couple simply began to share a hearth and live together. This occasion was unmarked by any particular ceremonies, as the relationship had been well established over the girl's entire life and the husband had faithfully carried out his obligations to her parents and made several ceremonial observances towards them during this period. Generally, the groom's mother prepared the nuptial hut, kindling a fire, and settling the bride down to await the groom's homecoming. At times, the couple went off on their own for a short period, living away from the main camp, in the land of the husband.²⁸ Marriage was considered to be the natural state for women, and it incorporated them into a network of relationships with their husband's kin in addition to their own, which was maintained without interruption should their husband die. A widow automatically became the wife of



COPIED ON BEHALF OF
WLA COLLEGE ON
CHILDS CAMPUS

her husband's brother, although others in the preferred marriage category might attempt to win her. In this way, a woman remained in a marriage relationship, with all of its attendant rights and obligations towards various kin, throughout her entire life.

At times, a woman would elope with a man from a neighbouring tribal group, going to live with her new found husband in his land. In areas where moiety and class membership was inherited through the mother, the children of these women, and also women who were captured as wives by neighbouring tribesmen, took their section membership through their father for that generation. The system reverted to the matrilineal form in succeeding generations.²⁹

A wife who was captured by a strange tribesman, was separated from her own kin. In addition to the loneliness of this, she faced the difficult task of building up familiarity with the new country. At times these women became very unhappy indeed, especially in cases of unwilling wife capture, and they attempted to run away and return to their home territory. In such instances they were pursued by their husband and his kin, but if they managed to avoid their pursuers they were generally safe. Wife capture was much talked about, but was certainly not the usual or most common method of acquiring a wife. However, it was one way, and in a system that limited the range of possible marriage partners very severely, sometimes it was the only immediate hope for a young initiated man whose own promised wife was still an infant, or whose marriage arrangements had broken down.

As baby girls were generally promised to adult men, by the time they grew up their husbands were often getting on in years. Younger men, having completed their initiation, sometimes were caught in the situation of having no one to marry, or if no arrangements had been formalised on their behalf by their kinsmen, of having to come to fresh agreements which would not yield a bride for several more years. Often, these younger men inherited the responsibility of a deceased brother's wife, as their first wife. These wives might be the same age as their young husband, and the couple may have been firm friends over many years, having played as children and grown up together.

FIG. 10: Return of Natives of Toodyay District 1st March 1840

(Whitfield Resident) (CSR 1840, Vol. 85)

Names of Men	Names of Women	Children		Names of Men	Names of Women	Children	
		Boys	Girls			Boys	Girls
Narane	Berregon & Yonlegon	—	—	Belgap	Durrapan & Niagam	—	—
Thacker	Nalgan	—	—	Dulabah	Buggegon	2	2
Carrabunga alias Tom	—	3	—		Noondang	1	—
Qhitewood alias Bonaparte	Nannigan	—	—	Dewar	Nondally	2	1
Annipert	Nalganna	1	—	Nannepirt	—	—	—
Melap	Welbaggan	1	—	Coorecap	Yandibing	2	—
Wingewood	Walligan	1	2		& Nevagon	1	—
(Charley)	—	—	—	Youral	Doonbong	—	—
Carrypirt	—	—	—	Sebang	Budedong	—	—
(Captain)	—	—	—	Miam	—	—	—
Werite	Menamang	—	—	Wobat	Midegan	—	—
	& Mirringam	—	—		& Ninegan	2	1
	(an old woman)	—	—	Hooran	—	—	—
Mogan	—	—	—	Gooridebong	—	—	—
Dalup	—	—	—	Namip	Youndanna	4	—
Walgerwood	Darganna	4	1	Derlebah	Noonda	1	—
Cattingwood	Narrane	1	—	Macop	Goola	1	1
Mangap	Nitangal	—	—				
Melich	Yandang	1	—				
Naligan	—	—	—				
(Alluk)	—	—	—				
Yarringan	Yendebong	1	—				
Bindal	Gimmegom	—	—				
Cowgan	—	—	—				
TOTAL				29		31	8

Note: This list was compiled 11 years after Europeans first settled on the Swan River and began to journey inland, over the Darling Ranges to the plains. In that time, enormous changes had taken place in the lives

of Aborigines. Many of these had a direct effect upon marriage customs, such as an increased death rate among men in particular, leaving fewer men to assume kinship responsibilities associated with proportionately more women. Other changes were more subtle, such as the effect of farming and grazing upon traditional food supplies which had far reaching implications throughout the entire Aboriginal society. Many of these changes may be reflected in this list from the Toodyay District, although it is not possible to determine which variations from the traditional pattern are reflected here.

In these cases, when a husband's promised wife reached maturity, she was supported in her new role by the first wife, who in turn was helped by the younger woman as she grew older. This older wife often took a motherly interest in a promised wife, while the latter was a young child. At times, she cared for the small girl, fostering her if the child's own parents died or were unable to care for her. Often, a man had marriage arrangements with two sisters who, as co-wives, understood each other very well and remained the best of friends throughout their entire lives. While generally it was expected that a man would have more than one wife, polygamy was not the most common form of marriage. However, just as re-marriage was the norm for women who lost their husbands, it was expected that a widower would remarry provided there was someone for him to marry.³⁰

Wives had the responsibility of collecting and preparing food for their husbands and immediate families. They also sewed kangaroo skin cloaks and bags, spun wool, wove fishing nets in areas where these were used, and for most of the time looked after the small children, leaving their husbands to hunt game and attend to other business. As they grew older, women increasingly became involved in the religious activities of the group and in inter-group and inter-tribal affairs, especially in the area of conflict or feuding. They were particularly concerned to see that the laws were observed and that justice was done. In addition, over the years women built up a store of medical and spiritual knowledge which they put to use in curative and love magic, often vying with their male counterparts, the native doctors, for authority and standing and a reputation for possessing effective magical and supernatural powers.

While husbands and wives were expected to remain faithful to each other, in practice there were plenty of opportunities for romances. Wives were punished for their infidelity, although the severity of this depended on whether the illicit romance involved the honour of the husband alone, or that of his kin as well. Where the kin group was affected, the husband was under great pressure to inflict punishment. Husbands, too, were criticised and at times punished sharply, for their amorous exploits. An affair could imply a slur on the honour and reputation of the whole group or tribe in cases of intergroup elopement or wife capture. At these times severe punishment was inflicted on the couple by members of the woman's group if they could be found. However, sometimes the romance was considered to be a matter of purely individual concern, for example an affair between a wife and a younger man belonging to the 'correct' or permissible marriage category. In these instances punishment might be token, depending on the extent to which the husband personally felt aggrieved, and how much he cared. On certain occasions when an amount of licence was permitted, such as during large ceremonies and festivities, casual romances went ignored as long as they did not infringe the marriage rules.³¹

Spearing was the usual form of punishment, and a husband frequently speared his wife in the leg to prevent her running away again, and to remind her of the wrong she had done. This was a means of inflicting physical hurt on the offender, without causing serious bodily harm. The male partners in these affairs were also ritually speared, the husband hurling his weapons at the culprit who tried to dodge them, until finally a wound was received. This type of punishment was always public, and was carefully monitored by the kinsmen of both parties, the aggrieved and the offender. Punishment of a wife was considered more of a private matter for the husband. However, the extremes of this were dictated by the degree to which the group's honour had been involved; and by the extent to which the group would give its tacit approval by condoning the husband's actions. Husbands who were felt to be excessive in the punishment of their wives, met with strong group disapproval, and as well faced retaliation by the wife's kinsmen.³²

Women also inflicted physical punishment on each other, and where a wife suspected another woman of paying too much attention to her husband, or of using love magic to attract him away from her, she would pick a fight with the suspect. The two women would hit each other with their long digging sticks, while the others gathered around, sometimes joining in, until the combatants had had enough or one ran away. The wounds received in these fights could be very severe, and although they generally did not cause death they could make the loser ill for some while afterwards.

At times, fights broke out between women over other types of disagreements, such as when one woman felt the other had not met her obligations to her own kin, or those of her husband.

When a couple broke a serious tribal law by having an illicit romance and violating the marriage rules embodied in the moiety system, they were put to death. In such an event, the pair would be crept up upon and speared quickly and quietly by an individual or group of people appointed by senior members of the group to carry out the task, or on whose shoulders this responsibility fell.

Much consultation and discussion always preceded the decision to inflict extreme punishment, with the elders, including the women, taking a lead. People who had broken tribal laws always knew the dangers they were placing themselves in, and could hardly hope to escape for long. Their only option was to run away, and live a lonely life as outcasts. While some couples attempted this, they could not expect to survive for long. Some may have trusted that after a suitable period of banishment, they would be accepted back into the tribe. However, this was hardly a realistic hope for the woman, who stood a better chance of survival were she to be captured as a wife by another tribe, for death would be her certain reward if she returned to her own group.

Copyrighted material

1985

ADULTHOOD

In addition to the responsibilities of marriage, adulthood carried with it the burden of decision making on important concerns affecting the whole group. At least in early adulthood, women's decision making revolved around the immediate family, in dealing with the crises of birth, pregnancy, illness and death; teaching children rules of behaviour as well as practical skills; and keeping order among the younger girls and women and acting as chaperones to them. Older women had the task of directing the younger women in ceremonies on those occasions when they took part with the men, and when they held their own women's ceremonies. In old age these responsibilities were extended considerably, and encompassed many of the tasks also falling to the men. Some older women took direct part in the dances and performances normally performed exclusively by men away from women and children. Older women had a special responsibility to encourage the men to act in the correct way especially in matters affecting relations with other groups, for example to ensure the men carried out retribution for a death.

For men, adult decisions largely related to such matters as determining the reason for death, which was always seen as having an indirect supernatural cause brought on by the actions of some other person, or by the deceased him or herself; when to hold particular religious ceremonies including rites contained within initiation ceremonies; interpreting the signs which would indicate the individual conception and birth totems of children; and deciphering, from all the signs, the best possible time to conduct inter-group business such as trade, warfare and religious ceremonies. However, in all of these areas the voices of women were heard and, at times, were dominant in influencing events.

Men also had the role of inflicting discipline on their juniors, and at the domestic level, on their wives; in addition to the task of looking after the interests of their various kin, taking their side in arguments and disputes when called upon to do so, and of avenging their death.

Younger people felt extremely uncomfortable if force of circumstance required them to deal with crises normally handled by adults, such as burying the deceased. They would go to extreme lengths to avoid taking on adult roles. This was because they were not considered spiritually mature enough to perform these tasks, and hence might be exposing themselves to malevolent supernatural influences by attempting to carry them out. Under normal circumstances young people would be punished severely, and ridiculed, for attempting to assume adult responsibilities before their time.

Adulthood brought with it the challenge of dealing with distant groups. Trade and religious ceremonies were the focus of this interaction. While youths were sent as messengers to other group territories as part of the organisation of these activities, adult men carried the burden of actually visiting in neighbouring territory. When such visits were made, usually two men, or a small party, set off. Similarly, visits from small groups of neighbouring tribesmen would take place. While groups of men and women assembled from time to time at the perimeters of their lands, men alone journeyed into strange territory, while women went there as elopements or captured wives.³³

During these exchange visits, a great deal of business was transacted. At times, the visits were made specifically to avenge the death of someone which was believed to have been caused by the neighbouring group. In this event, the journey was undertaken in secrecy, and once the execution had been exacted, the tribesmen returned home as swiftly as they possibly could. They travelled by night as well as day to carry out their mission, risking encounters with supernatural forces which were believed to be about at night, and refraining from lighting comforting fires lest they reveal their presence to the enemy. These journeys were never happy events, and the men returned to their homes as soon as their errand was completed.

At other times, visits were made to neighbouring lands to arrange larger meetings between groups so that trade items could be bartered, religious ceremonies held, and information and ideas exchanged. Trade was very important, as certain localities had their own scarce resources which were needed for use in other areas. Over the years, a pattern of relationships was built up between groups that traded regularly. Regular partners-in-trade formalised this into a mutually beneficial arrangement, calling each other 'trade brothers'. These couples always sought out each other when the two groups met, and regarded themselves as being bound in a special relationship that was also meant to preclude hostilities between the individuals concerned.

When groups came together to exchange tools, they took the opportunity to hold religious conventions. The men held a number of these ceremonies in secret, away from the women and children, and the women had their own private ceremonies.

These times were generally occasions of great fun for everyone, and the camps assumed an air of festivity. People painted their bodies with patterns representing their totems, smearing themselves with grease and drawing designs on their faces and torsos in ochre and clay. They were careful to adorn themselves with headdresses made of feathers and leaves, and carried special ceremonial spears and throwing sticks carefully crafted and stained with red gum. Feasts were held, and the men danced in large circles imitating animal postures and calls, while the women sat around and kept time, chanting and calling. The dancers emerged in a line, their bodies glistening darkly while the painted patterns stood out starkly.

Some of these body designs were only displayed during ceremonies for men where generally no women attended, while others could be seen by both men and women and were worn proudly on these mixed occasions. Children joined in the fun, imitating the designs and decorations of the adults and dancing around joyfully. Sometimes masks were worn, made out of animal skins scraped white on the underside and worn white side out, with holes cut for the eyes and mouth.

In the flickering campfire lights, with shadows stretching across the dance ground, the atmosphere became alive. The chants and shrill shrieks of the women rose and the ground seemed to shake as the

male dancers lifted their thighs high and stamped their feet hard; then paused, suddenly to leap and twist in the air. Their skins gleamed with body sweat and oil as they caught the flicker of the fires, throwing shadows high until the whole scene distorted into a cacaphony of movement and rhythm. A caller, sometimes an older woman and at other times a senior man, gesticulated and sung out to the dancers, directing them and conducting the whirling and leaping; then suddenly commanding still silence; repeating this pattern time and again throughout the performance.

FIG. 11: Description of a Corroboree

"This corroboree was extremely well got up, the spectators being seated in a semicircle with a number of small fires in front resembling the stage lights in a theatre. It was the first at which I have seen a woman perform — Gibban's wife advanced reciting and waving her arms as if to excite the performers, who came forward in a band of eighteen young men with spears poised. They danced forward, formed a circle then a line and after a number of manoeuvres retired out of sight until the next act. During the interval a man sung remarkably well and accompanied himself with a callee struck against a neero so as to produce the effect of castanets. The same air, correct to a note, was answered by the band behind the scenes, first faintly and then increasing as they advanced to the stage or foreground."

(Ellis, Capt. T. T. CSR 1833, 29:158)

Note: Callee — kylie or boomerang.

Neero — Spearthrower.

T. T. Ellis arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1830, and was appointed Government Resident in Kelmscott. In 1833 he was made Superintendent of Native Tribes, in charge of the mounted Native Police, a division of the 63rd Regiment, based at Mount Eliza (Kings Park). He led a punitive expedition against Aborigines in the Murray River District the following year, and died as a result of a fall from his horse during this foray (the Pinjarra massacre, or, as it is sometimes referred to, the battle of Pinjarra).

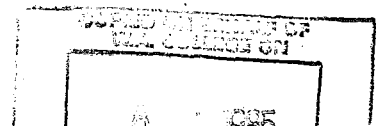
OLD AGE

Old people were held in deep affection by the other members of their group, and great care was taken to see that they received enough to eat and were looked after. When they were sick, the native doctor was called, and the advice of other people was also sought so that the source of the ailment could be determined. Even when an old person contracted a cough or an attack of rheumatism the cause was thought to lie in the evil doings of some other person. When the group moved camp, old people were carried if they could not walk the distance. Most frequently they were sat high on the shoulders of a younger person, in the same way that bigger children were carried.

Certain people were believed to have special knowledge of the supernatural world, and hence to have special supernatural powers. These were adults who had gained considerable knowledge and experience throughout their lives, in addition to the specialist learning they had acquired and which was believed to give them access to the supernatural world. They were credited with being able to direct illness or death to others; determine the cause of death or misfortune; drive sickness out of a patient's body; coax spirit children to enter the womb of a woman wanting to become pregnant; influence people to become deeply infatuated with their would-be lovers; and bring rain. These people were the native doctors of the tribe, and it was considered important for every group of several families that one of these specialists should live with them.³⁴

The knowledge that the native doctors possessed had been built up over the years, and was a great asset to others. People brought them gifts of food and carried out tasks for them, in return for the services they provided. They also feared the powers they believed the native doctors possessed, and took care to be very polite and respectful towards them. Some native doctors had a reputation for being more skilful than others, or more dangerous. Some were known to be evil and jealous people, while others were considered to be benign by nature.

While some old women vied with the male native doctors for knowledge and influence, their position was never as formalised as that of the men. However, in practice their power and influence was as great, and they were held in as much awe and fear and played as big a role in directing the affairs of the tribe. Native doctors possessed a number of stones which they believed contained special forces or powers, and which were used to assist them with their work. These stones were kept in a special little bag, which was always carried around by the owner. Frequently, white quartz stones were used as they were believed to have magical properties. At times stones were passed from one native doctor to another, across tribal boundaries, and may have originated considerable distances away. Because of their unusual appearance, these foreign stones were considered to be extremely powerful, and were very precious. Powerful old women also possessed a collection of stones which they carried around with them. Their stones were carefully wrapped and placed in the bag in which they also carried their domestic and household effects. On death, all the personal possessions of a native doctor or old woman, his or her tools, weapons, cloak and bags, were buried with the corpse or left on the grave, except for the valued collection of stones. This was claimed by another person who was believed to have similar powers, and who was to carry on the work of the deceased. Sometimes this person was a younger man who had been working with the native doctor for a number of years, patiently learning from him as an apprentice to the art. In this event, he was likely to be a close relative, and possibly even a son, or a sister's son of his tutor. At other times, someone with these powers joined the group of the death of the native doctor. Old women may have transferred





their collection of precious stones before they died, as they did their knowledge, or the stones may have been claimed on their death. The early European observers of Aboriginal life were mostly men, and as such they came to know and record much more of men's lives than they did of women's.

These inherited stones were believed to be as potent in the hands of their new possessors as they were in those of their old. They were used in treating the sick, by rubbing them over the skin or placing them in the mouth of the patient. They were also used in rain-making ceremonies, where the native doctor would bend all his powers towards encouraging rain to fall, by concentrating very hard and chanting. This activity was believed to draw up the forces which caused rain and encourage them to produce it in that area. The reputation of the rainmaker largely depended on his ability to bring about a result, and so he had to be particularly observant and to learn all the very early tell-tale signs of the approaching change of weather well before they were spotted by the other people. Only in this way, could he be sure his activities would result in rain. Even if the rainmaker could not actually produce rain on demand, his actions were considered very important in encouraging it to come. Older women, too, were active in this sphere.

When someone became sick, the native doctor would often rub parts of the person's body, and suck or blow as though drawing the evil spirit believed to be causing the pain, out through the skin. In fact, this was the explanation given, and the patient and those attending to him or her, all felt much better after this treatment. The concern and love felt by those present towards the sick person, was shown in their care and attention and the lengths they went to in order to offer comfort to him or her. This strengthened the emotional bonds between the members of the group. Sick people were carried with the group if there was a change of camp, or if they were with a party away from the main camping site. In a number of areas there were tribal burial grounds near to the main camping locations, and efforts were made to ensure that anyone who showed the signs of approaching death, were brought home to die there. Otherwise, the body of the deceased would have to be carried back. This was believed to place the bearers in severe supernatural danger, as the spirit of the deceased was not properly released from the flesh until after full burial rituals had been observed.

The Aborigines had a number of remedies which they used to cure minor illnesses. Eucalyptus leaves were stuffed in the nostrils to form a plug which was left there for a day or so, in cases of cold or sinusitis. When the plug was removed the nose ran copiously and the ailment passed. Headaches were treated by applying various forms of pressure to the cranium, whether by a tight ligament or by bumping the head. Snakebite was treated by tying a tourniquet above the bite and lacerating the wound. Paper bark was used as bandaging, and clay and eucalyptus gum also used to cover wounds on occasion. Herbs and grasses were employed in the treatment of physical ailments, as well as in magic designed to bring about particular results, such as love magic.³⁵

Spear wounds were treated by drawing the spear tip through the body and removing the barbs, then retracting the spear shaft. This required a great deal of skill, and was carried out by a senior man of the group. The wound was then plugged with eucalyptus and fat, and bound with paper bark or other bark, sometimes sealing the whole bandage with clay or gum. Generally the patient recovered, even though the wound was traumatic. The care taken by other members of the group, plus the method of treatment which had been developed as tradition over countless generations, infused the wounded with confidence and the will to recover. However, wounds inflicted with quartz tipped spears were much harder to treat, as the quartz pieces came apart from the spear shaft and spread inside the wound. Injuries inflicted with quartz tipped spears were intended to kill.

DEATH

Death was always believed to be caused by the evil doings of another person, usually belonging to a different group or tribe, regardless of the physical circumstances surrounding it. Individuals carried out spiritual practices directed against their enemies, and those they wished to avenge, and believed these to be very effective in causing illness and death. Sometimes their efforts were backed up by those of the native doctor, or he was employed to direct his magic powers against the object of revenge. In the same way, when a member of that person's group became ill, or died, it was assumed that some other person had caused the misfortune to happen, either by his or her actions now or at some time in the past. Revenge was planned and executed, in the form of retaliatory killings.

Group responsibility, and group culpability, were values very firmly entrenched and it was not important to single out the actual individual who had been blamed with causing the misfortune, as all the members of the group were deemed responsible. In this way, each person was to blame, in one sense, as all persons in the group were held responsible for the actions of the others, even if they could not possibly have influenced the course of events. Individual intent did not play a part in establishing guilt. adolescents, adults and sometimes even old people were all considered appropriate targets for retaliatory killings. At times the group held responsible was another tribe. Sometimes it was another group belonging to the same tribe, such as a kin group occupying a different tract of tribal territory. On occasion the victim was sought within the deceased's own group, but belonging to a different category of kin to that of the deceased and those carrying out the retaliation on his or her behalf.³⁶

Often relatives of the deceased conferred to determine which group was responsible for a death, especially when this was the result of an assassination. On other occasions, the services of the native doctor or other respected elders were sought, particularly where the cause of death was not clear-cut. Signs in nature were believed to be clues to who was to blame for deaths that took place, and these were thought to be especially manifest at the time the spirit of the deceased was leaving the body, that is, shortly after burial. The grave was swept clean, fires were lit, and over a period extending at times for

several days, the area was scrutinised carefully for these signs. Senior women, often the mother of the deceased, played an active role in this. Once the signs had appeared and their significance had been deciphered and established, the close kinsmen of the deceased made preparations for a retaliatory killing of someone belonging to the party held responsible. The victim was generally agreed upon at this point. This was often a person against whom a kinsman of the deceased had a long standing grudge, or who had had a disagreement in the past with the deceased him-or-herself. However, this was not always the case, and at times the victim chosen was someone standing in a particular kinship relationship to the individual believed to have actually caused the death. On other occasions, the victim was the first person belonging to the guilty group, that the aggrieved relatives came upon.

The plan of execution may have been carried out straight away. However, the aggrieved might also have had to wait their opportunity for months, or even years in the case of a distant tribe or tribal group. Magic to bring misfortune to the culprits was widely practised, and should that person have an accident or become sick or die through whatever means, even at some considerable time in the future, this was taken as proof that the magic had worked. Nevertheless, a good many deaths were avenged with direct killings, especially where important members of the tribal group were concerned, such as native doctors and old women, and other senior people of influence not yet of advanced age.

When retaliatory killings were undertaken, the avenging party tried to come upon the offender unawares. An individual might trick the intended victim into believing that his intentions were totally peaceful, and then when the opportunity arose, such as when the person fell asleep, suddenly leap up and spear him or her. When this happened, it was taken as a matter of course as the only thing that could have happened given the circumstances that prompted the killing, and the executioner was seen as acting in the correct and proper manner in avenging his kinsman. Quartz tipped spears were generally used for this purpose. This pattern of revenge or retaliatory killing, was in sharp contrast to situations in which only punishment was being inflicted. On these occasions, individuals fought in the full view of other members of the group, throwing and parrying spears and insults until one of the combatants fell with a non-fatal wound. Spectators were drawn to the fray as kinsmen joined in to side with their own kin, or those to whom they held greatest allegiance.

A general melee involving several people was likely to develop, as people became caught up in arguments and took the opportunity to air some of their own grievances and complaints. A number of people could be wounded in these heated exchanges. If by chance a death took place, this was immediately avenged. If either the person who had caused the first death, or his close relatives, managed to escape, revenge was plotted immediately. In the final analysis, no death was ever regarded as 'accidental'.

It appears that men were always the ones to carry out revenge killings, when either their male or their female relatives died. They were also the ones given the task of inflicting punishment. Although, certain cases when women fought were, in fact, punishments being administered to wrongdoers, in much the same way as the ritualistic spearings that were carried out by the men.

At times, culpability for a death was laid with someone in a group close to that of the dead person, such as with members of a kinship group occupying a tract of territory adjacent to the deceased's own family land, and who had ties of marriage with him or her. In this event, kinsmen of the deceased had to be physically restrained when they saw any of the members of the offending group. In effect, this was a public demonstration of their grief and their determination to exact revenge. This same pattern of behaviour took place when a disagreement broke out between individuals. The kinsmen of each would hold the agitated rivals, talking soothingly to them and sympathising with them until the heat of the moment had passed, and ritualistic combat could be arranged.

FIG. 12: Description of Punishment by Spearing

"When a native, after having absconded for fear of the consequences of some crime which he has committed, comes in to undergo the ordeal of having spears thrown at him, a large assemblage of his fellows takes place; their bodies are daubed with paint, which is put on in the most fantastic forms, their weapons are polished, sharpened, and rendered thoroughly efficient; at the appointed time young and old repair to the place of ordeal — and the wild beauty of the scenery, the painted forms of the natives, the savage cries, and shouts of exultation which are raised, as the culprit dexterously parries, or by rapid leaps and contortions of his body, avoids the clouds of spears which are hurled at him, all combine to form a singular scene ... If the criminal is wounded in a degree judged sufficient for the crime he has committed, his guilt is wiped away; or if none of the spears thrown at him (for there is a regulated number which each may throw) take effect, he is equally pardoned.

But no sooner is this main part of the ceremony over, than two or three duels take place between some individuals, who have quarrels of their own to settle; after these combatants have thrown a few spears, some of their friends rush in and hold them in their arms, when the etiquette on such occasions is to struggle violently for a few minutes, as if anxious to renew the contest, and then to submit quietly to superior force, and cease the combat."

(Grey, Sir George, 1841:243-4)

The whole group participated in the discussions concerning who was to be held responsible for a death, with those holding greatest authority taking the lead. At times the cause of death was very clear cut, and not much discussion was needed. However, at other times the signs were not all that clear, and a great

deal of debate was held. Finally, a consensus was arrived at, or an authoritative person made a pronouncement that was not disputed. The matter was then settled and it remained only to carry out the revenge.

Retaliation for death was a matter that concerned the living. The deceased was not seen to have any interest in this activity. In some areas of the south western region, trees near the grave were marked at the time of burial, as markers to the grave and possibly also as a sign that revenge was about to be taken. Often, the victim selected for a retaliatory killing was of lesser social standing and influence than the deceased had been, this meant that the relatives of this victim would be less inclined to go to great lengths to carry out their revenge, in turn, and might select a victim of even lesser standing. In this way, a series of retaliatory killings between two groups could gradually wind down and finally end with the killing of a minor individual.

On death, the spirit was believed to depart from the body slowly. Observance of all proper ceremonies at the burial were considered vital to the easy and smooth passage of the spirit of the deceased, away from the land of the living and on to the land of the dead. Otherwise this spirit, whose proper place was with the dead, would linger to bring bad fortune to those remaining behind. The spirit of the dead was believed to go on a journey, west or north, where the land of the dead lay. There, it might meet other spirits of deceased whom it had known in life, but the chances of this were considered to be extremely slight. When someone was dying, close relatives sat with him or her, and other relatives and friends visited from time to time, offering comfort and showing their grief by weeping. Mostly, the important task of sitting with the dying was the responsibility of the women and children. The native doctor and other knowledgeable people were called in to do what they could, and to relieve the person of suffering. In this way, the individual died in an atmosphere of affectionate concern, secure that the survivors would see to it that his or her spirit was looked after throughout the funerary rites and that he or she would reach the land of the dead safely.³⁷

Immediately the individual died, people broke out into loud wailing, led by the mother and other female relatives. Women scratched their faces, cheeks, noses and foreheads until blood ran, hitting their heads and limbs as an expressing of their grief. Others were caught up in this emotional scene and joined in the general lamenting and crying. The women smeared their faces with clay and charcoal as a sign of their mourning, drawing arcs along the sides of their foreheads down under their eyes, following the contours of their cheekbones. Women played a major role in ritual associated with the deceased. The corpse was laid out by the older women, with the arms and legs bent in a foetal position. Depending on locality, certain other rites were also observed. In some areas the finger and thumb of the right hand were bound together, in others the limbs were broken, or particular nails were removed. In all cases, something extra was done to the corpse as a symbolic gesture to prepare the spirit of the deceased for its next phase of existence, and to discourage it from remaining in the realm of the living. The corpse was then carried carefully to the graveside by a party of male relatives, accompanied by a stream of mourners comprising men, women and children.

The grave was dug as a shallow depression. People were very particular to mound the earth onto one side. The corpse was laid down, either on one side or on the back depending on the custom followed in that particular area. Green boughs were placed in the grave, and the deceased's weapons and personal possessions were put in the grave, or else placed alongside it, including kangaroo skin cloak and bags, except for the personal bag of a native doctor. The grave was then filled in, using fresh earth that had not come out of the cavity, and taking care not to mix this earth with any that had been removed from the grave as it was being dug. This was a very important rite which was carefully observed as the correct way to bury someone. Any variation would have caused offence and upset to the living, and been an insult to the dead. Rocks were used to cover the body as well as soil, and these acted as weights preventing the native dogs from digging up the grave and worrying the corpse.

During all of this time, mourners expressed their grief by wailing and weeping. Everyone became affected by the sadness of the loss of a valued member of the group, and their common grief bound them together with firm ties. Children were present throughout the entire funeral services and rituals, and were impressed deeply as the combined expression of group solidarity brought home to them the value placed by the group on each individual, and the importance of the spirit world to the living.

After the burial, fires were lit on or around the site, and the grave was swept so that signs indicating responsibility for the death could be looked for. Sometimes the process of clearing the grave and looking for signs lasted for several days. At other times, a sign might be revealed during the actual grave digging so that any further efforts in divining the cause of death were unnecessary. When this question of culpability was decided, the men commenced action to ensure that the spirit of the deceased was properly avenged.

In some instances, it was thought the spirit of the deceased remained very close to the land of the living for a considerable period, and the sounds of particular birds or animals, possibly the totems of the deceased, were believed to be messages from the dead person that his or her spirit had not departed entirely. In some areas, people acted out a symbolic scene of catching the spirit of the deceased. They spread out in a long line, and then moved forward as though herding it along the pathway towards the land of the dead. This took place shortly after burial, and assured everyone that the spirit really had set out on its long journey to the hereafter. When a death took place the relatives of the deceased never camped at that location again for several years, because of its sad memories and its associations with the dead person. Loved ones were mourned for long periods and when in the vicinity of a grave, close relatives

would visit there and weep as they recalled the departed. Often, gifts would be left at the graveside, such as certain types of foods, as symbolic gestures to make absolutely certain that the deceased had everything he or she needed.

When an infant died, the small corpse was often carried around by the mother in a special skin bag for several months while she mourned and fretted over the loss of her baby. This was believed to encourage the return of the spirit of the child to the woman as a new baby, as well as ensuring that the spirit of the infant remained near to its earth mother for as long as it needed to. Through conception and birth, women were considered to be very close to the world of spirits of the unborn.

Many stories existed of spirits of the dead causing mischief for the living. It was believed that the most dangerous time for these and other spirits, was in the night. However, as the spirits did not like fires, people were safe as long as they kept their hearths burning and did not wander alone unless they took very special precautions; or under exceptional circumstances such as when travelling by stealth to seek revenge.

It was believed that as young children were very close to the spirit world, it was not surprising that they sometimes died and their spirits returned to that plane of existence. In these instances, retaliatory killings generally were not carried out against members of another group, as the death was understood to be a natural occurrence. However, the mother and sometimes the father too, were ritually punished for the death, although never severely enough to cause death or serious injury. However, older children and adults, especially aged people, were seen to be fully a part of the world of the living, and as such their deaths had to be avenged.

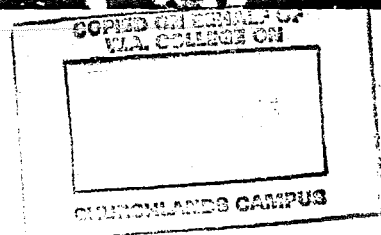
Revenge killings were carried out for the sake of the living, to establish an equilibrium between people. They were not deaths to avenge the dead in the sense that procession to the land of the dead was hindered or aided by the revenge, or that the dead would haunt people if the retaliatory killing was not carried out. Hence, at times revenge could be delayed for long periods, at no risk to the deceased, or to the living from the dead. However, when people were killed, for example in retaliation for a death, they were left to lie and no burial ritual was carried out unless their relatives found the corpses. This accounted in part for many of the malignant spirits of the dead believed to be present, as they had not been properly despatched to the land of the dead.

LIFE

The Aborigines of the south west, the first south westerners, lived out their lives following the rhythms of the seasons, and the traditions that had been handed down over the countless generations. Many of these traditions were similar to those of Aborigines in other parts of Australia, while others set the south westerners apart and gave them a distinctiveness, making them unique in the overall Australian pattern. The lives these people led were full, burgeoning with meaning as the spiritual significance of the world around them was revealed to individuals over the years, and as they grew and matured in the meanings of their culture. People struggled to keep a balance with nature, and an equilibrium between social groups, as they strove to lead good lives by following the laws of their tribes. They took heed of the lessons contained in their myths about the Dreamtime Characters, and sought to avoid human tragedy and to re-establish balance when foul deeds were done. They paid regard to the world of the supernatural, and did their best to please and placate forces felt to be greater than they themselves. At the same time they sought to bend and influence these forces in the interests of the living.

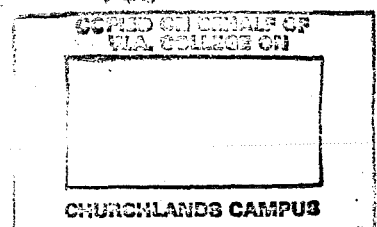
They experienced the full joy of life, birth, love, and maturity, and felt the heartbreak and distress of death, illness, disappointment and frustration as they went about their daily tasks. They fell in love, had successes and failures, grew jealous and ambitious, felt unequal to tasks before them but accomplished others with ease, experienced the ecstasy of religious and sexual pleasures, and felt pain in illness and grief. They were joyful in the delight of their children, the company of friends and they revelled in the beauty of the environment in which they lived.

This pattern remained virtually undisturbed until the arrival of the British colonists in the nineteenth century, when changes almost too enormous to realise, took place with dramatic ferocity and altered forever the life of the south westerners and the world they had known.



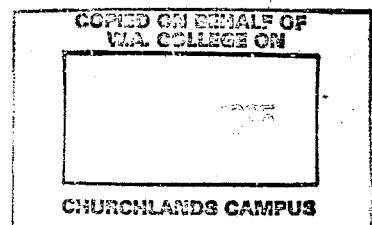
NOTES

1. Lofgren, Mans. personal communication based on carbon dating of Devils Lair. For a more detailed account of this excavation site see Dortch, C. E. 1976.
2. Hallam, S. J. in *Western Australia*, 1979. Dortch, C. E. 1976.
3. Berndt, R. M. in Merrilees, D. et al 1973:50 estimates the Aboriginal population of the south west at between 6,000 and 7,500.
Hallam, S. J. 1977 discusses population estimates for the region, and explains the basis for the Perth area estimate of .25 people per square mile over 1,900 square miles.
Stirling, Governor Sir James, in the *Swan River Papers* 1832 Vol. 9 pages 36-9.
4. Hallam, S. J. 1977:27 draws attention to the imbalance in the sex ratio for the Perth and New Norcia areas, while not suggesting how an excess of males over females was achieved, except to note that it occurred early in life.
Estimates of family size are provided by a number of observers including Grey, Sir George, 1841: 250-251; Armstrong, F. F. 1836; Curr, E. M. 1886:338; Salvado, R. 1851: 130, 137; Colonial Secretary's Office, Received, 1840 Vol. 85 Whitfield Report for the Toodyay District.
5. Douglas, W. H. 1976: 5-8.
6. Armstrong, F. F. 1836 tells the legend of Moon Cavern (Dale's Cave).
7. de Heeres, J. E. 1899-10; Powell, Rev. J. Giles 1831-35; Dampier in Major, R. H. (ed) 1859:8; Salvado, R. 1851:116; Hassell, E. 1975:13-18,44,79; Nind, J. Scott 1831 are amongst those describing the appearance of the Aborigines of the south west.
8. Preston, also see Breton, W. H. 1834; Flinders, M. 1814; King, P. P. Cpt. 1825.
Ryan, Lyndall, 1977 deals in detail with European-Aboriginal contact in the Bass Straits and Tasmania; also Mollison, Bill and Coral Everitt 1978. See Gilbert, A. H. in Hay, J. G. 1906, and Rintoul, J. 1973 for material relating to Western Australian southern coastline.
Tilbrook, Lois 1983. Contains material on Aboriginal oral tradition of this contact.
9. Curr, E. M. 1886:342. Similar accounts exist for Aborigines in other parts of the south western region and their neighbours outside the region.
10. Berndt, R. M. in *Western Australia*, 1979:33. For a discussion on the relevance of the concept of 'tribe' in Aboriginal Australia see Peterson, N. (ed) 1976.
11. Accounts of Aborigines from one area of the south west being very fearful of Aborigines from other areas exist in a number of reports and journals, including those by the following: Grey, Sir G. 1841; Colonial Secretary's Office, Letters Received; Salvado, R. 1851.
12. Moore, G. F. 1884-336; Armstrong, F. F. 1836; Salvado, R. 1851:130-1; Roth, W. E. 1902:57-8 lists items traded in return for spear-wood by the Aborigines of the Port Leschenaultia district (Bunbury).
13. Armstrong, F. F. 1836 and Salvado, R. 1851 both speak of land rights being vested patrilineally; however, a certain amount of evidence in the Colonial Secretary's Office records, and Grey, Sir G. 1841 suggests that this patrilineal principle was not so well established at least in the Perth area. The patri-amphasis in European thought of the day may have caused observers to superimpose a patri-dominant pattern on Aboriginal society, which may not necessarily have been present there, at least to the same degree.
14. Roth, W. E. 1902:47.
15. Moore, G. F. 1884: Colonial Secretary's Office — Letters Received; Hassell, E. 1836; Salvado, R. 1851:134.
16. Colonial Secretary's Office, Letters Received.
17. Eyre, E. J. 1845; Grey, Sir G. 1841.
18. Roth, W. E. 1902; Salvado, R. 1851:126,136.
19. See Berndt, R. M. and C. H. (eds) 1979, especially Berndt, R. M. pages 81-9; also see Berndt, R. M. in *Western Australia* 1979; Hassell, E. 1975; Salvado, R. 1851; Grey, Sir G. 1841; Armstrong, F. F. 1836 for accounts of Aboriginal beliefs and social organisation.
20. Salvado, R. 1864; Berndt, R. M. 1979.
21. Hassell, E. 1936:681-3 provides one of the best accounts of birth practices in the south west; other observers such as Armstrong, F. F. 1836, mention some beliefs surrounding birth, while Grey, Sir G. 1841 deals with this topic in greater detail.
22. Armstrong, F. F. 1836.
23. Hassell, E. 1975; Salvado, R. 1851; Grey, Sir G. 1841.
24. Hassell, E. 1975 gives an account of marriage by wife capture.
25. Grey, Sir G. 1841:252.
26. Brown, J. 1856; Armstrong, F. F. 1836.
27. Brown, J. 1856; Armstrong, F. F. 1836.
28. Grey, Sir G. 1841; Hassell, E. 1936:682.
29. Hassell, E. 1975:104.
30. Hassell, E. 1936:682.
31. Hassell, E. 1975 deals in some detail with the question of romance, wife capture and elopement, both in accounts of this that she was aware of, and in the myths she recounts.
32. Grey, Sir G. 1841; Hassell, E. 1975:99-105.
33. Colonial Secretary's Office — Letters Received contain accounts of elopements from the Perth district into the Murray River district, and of visits to the Perth district by Murray River tribesmen.
34. Hassell, E. 1975 mentions the native doctor throughout her work, and also the role of older women in curative practices; Elkin, A. P. 1945, 1977 places south west Aboriginal ritual practices in an Australia-wide context of supernatural knowledge and learning.
35. Illnesses suffered by Aborigines, and cures, are commented on in passing by a number of observers, although no systematic study of this aspect of traditional life has come to light. Those who comment on illness and cures include: Armstrong, F. F. 1836; Brown, J. 1856; Hassell, E. 1975; Collie, Alexander, 1834.
36. Retaliatory killings attracted the attention of European observers and are mentioned by almost everyone who wrote on Aborigines during the period of early European settlement. Numerous references are to be found in the Colonial Secretary's Office — Letters Received in addition to the major references on the area: Grey, Sir G. 1841; Moore, G. F. 1884; Salvado, R. 1851; Hassell, E. 1975 and 1936.
37. Death and burial practices constitute one area of activity which has been reasonably well documented by numerous observers and writers of the period. Basic research has been carried out by Meagher, Sarah, 1973. Notable descriptions of Aboriginal burials include those by Collie, Alexander 1834; Moore, G. F. 1884; Grey, Sir G. 1841.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armstrong, F. F. 1836 'Manners and Habits of the Aborigines of Western Australia'. Perth Gazette. Battye Library, Perth.
- Berndt, R. M. 1974 in Merriees, D. Dix, W. C. Hailam, S. J. Douglas, W. H. and Berndt, R. M. 1973 'Aboriginal Man in South Western Australia'. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia*, Vol. 56 parts 1 and 2.
- Breton, W. H. 1834 *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Dieman's Land, during the years 1830-33*. Bentley, London.
- Brown, J. 1856 'The Aborigines of Australia'. *The Nautical Magazine & Naval Chronicle*, typescript, Battye Library, Perth.
- Colonial Secretary's Office, Letters Received (C S R) Battye Library, Perth.
- Collie, Alexander, 1834 *Anecdotes and Remarks Relative to the Aborigines of King George Sound*, typescript, Battye Library, Perth.
- Curr, E. M. (ed), 1886 *The Australian Race*, Government Printer, Melbourne.
- Davidson, D. S. 1949 'Mourning Caps of the Australian Aborigines', *Proceedings of American Philosophical Society* 93, 1.
- Dorch, C. E. 1976 *Devil's Lair: A Search for Ancient Man in Western Australia*, Western Australia, Museum Press, Perth.
- Douglas, W. H. 1976 *The Aboriginal Languages of South-West Australia*, Australian Aboriginal Studies No. 14, Linguistic Series No. 4, Australian Institute of Aboriginal studies, Canberra.
- Elkin, A. P. 1945, 1977 *Aboriginal Man of High Degree*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane.
- Eyre, E. J. 1845 *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia, and Overland from Adelaide to King George Sound, in the Year 1840-41*, T. & W. Boone, London.
- Flinders, M. 1814 *A Voyage to Terra Australia*, Nicol, London.
- Gilbert, A. H. 1906 "An account of the expedition of H.M.S. "Success", Captain James Stirling, R.N., from Sydney to the Swan River in 1827, in Hay, J. G., *The visit of Charles Fraser, the colonial Botanist of New South Wales, to the Swan River in 1827, with his opinion on the suitability of the district for settlement*, J. G. Hay, Perth.
- Grey, Sir George, 1841 *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North West and Western Australia during the years 1837, '38, '39*, T. & W. Boone, London.
- Hallam, S. J. 1975 *Fire and Hearth: A Study of Aboriginal Usage and European Usurpation in South-Western Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Hallam, S. J. 1977 *Population and Resource Usage of the Western Littoral*, Paper read to ANZAAS Conference, Canberra.
- Hallam, S. J. 1979 *In Western Australia: An Atlas of Human Endeavour 1829-1979* Education and Lands and Surveys Departments of Western Australia, Government Printer, Perth.
- Hassell, Ethel, 1936 Notes on the Ethnology of the Wheelman Tribe of South Western Australia, selected and edited by D. S. Davidson, *Anthropos*, extract 31.
- Hassell, Ethel, 1975 *My Dusky Friends: Aboriginal Life, Customs and Legends and Glimpses of Station Life at Jerramungup in the 1880's*, Hassell, Perth.
- De Heeres, J. E. 1899 *The Part Borne by the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia 1606-1765*, Luzac, London.
- King, P. P. (Capt.) 1825 *Narrative of a Survey of the Inter Tropical and Western deserts of Australia, Performed Between the Years 1818 and 1822; with an Appendix Containing Various Subjects Relating to Hydrography and Natural History*, J. Murray, London.
- Major, R. H. (ed) 1859 *Early Voyages to Terra Australis, now called Australia: a collection of documents, and extracts from early manuscript maps, illustrative of the history of discovery on the coasts of that vast island, from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the time of Captain Cook*, Holvyt Society, London. (Reprint Adelaide Heritage Press, 1963).
- Meagher, Sarah 1973 *A Reconstruction of the Traditional Life of the Aborigines of the South West of Western Australia. Being a Study of their Material Culture and the Manner in Which They Utilised Their Physical Environment*, M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Western Australia.
- Mollison, Bill & Everitt, C. 1978 *The Tasmanian Aborigines and Their Descendants (Chronology, Genealogies and Social Data)*, University of Tasmania.
- Moore, G. J. 1844 *Diary of Ten Years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia*, Walbrook, London.
- Nind, J. Scott 1831 "Description of the Natives of King George's Sound (Swan River Colony) and Adjoining Country", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 1.
- Powell Rev. J. 1831 *The Narrative of a Voyage to the Swan River with an Account of that Settlement from an Authentic Source, containing useful hints to those contemplating emigration to Western Australia*, F. C. Westley, London.
- Peterson, N. (ed) 1976 *Tribes and Boundaries in Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Rintoul, J. 1973 *Esperance: Yesterday and Today*, Service Printing Co., Perth.
- Roth, W. E. 1902 Notes of Savage Life in the Early Days of Western Australian Settlement based on reminiscences collected by F. R. Austin, *Royal Society of Queensland: Proceedings*, Volume 17.
- Russo, G. H. 1972 *Bishop Salvado's Plan to Civilise and Christianise the Aborigines 1846-1900*, M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Ryan, Lyndall, 1977 *The Aborigines in Tasmania 1800-1974 and Their Problems with the Europeans*, Ph.D. Thesis, School of Historical Philosophical and Political Studies, McQuarrie University, New South Wales.
- Salvado, Bishop R. 1851 *The Salvado Memoirs: Historical Memories of Australia and Particularly the Benedictine Mission of New Norcia and of the Habits and Customs of the Australian Natives*, Edited and translated by E. J. Stormon, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.
- Salvado, Bishop R. 1864 *Family Tree for Natives at New Norcia*, Battye Library, Perth, Western Australia.
- Tilbrook, L. J. 1983 *Nyungar Tradition: Glimpses of Aboriginal Life in South Western Australia 1829 to 1914*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.
- Western Australia, Information Respecting the Habits and Customs of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Western Australia, compiled from various sources, 1871 presented to the Legislative Council by His Excellency's Command, Government Printer, Perth.
- Western Australia: An Atlas of Human Endeavour 1829-1979, Education and Lands and Surveys Departments of Western Australia, Government Printer, Perth.



READING LIST

- Berndt, R. M. (ed). 1969 *Thinking About Aboriginal Welfare: with particular reference of Western Australia*, Department of Anthropology, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Berndt, R. M. (ed). 1977 *Aborigines and Change: Australia in the 70s*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Berndt, R. M. & Berndt, C. H. (eds). 1979 *Aborigines of the West: their past and present*, University of Western Australia Press, for the Education Committee of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations, Perth.
- Berndt, R. M. & Berndt, C. H. 1979 *The Aboriginal Child: Selected Australian Aboriginal Social and Cultural Resource Materials — Traditional and Changing for Teachers*, Prepared by the Sub-Committee on the Aboriginal child for the IYC National Committee of NGOs, Perth.
- Bisкуп, P. 1973 *Not Slaves, Not Citizens: The Aboriginal Problem in Western Australia, 1898-1954*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia.
- Sunbury, H. W. 1930 *Early Days in Western Australia*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Dortch, C. E. 1976 *Devil's Lair: A Search for Ancient Man in Western Australia* Museum Press, Perth.
- Douglas, W. 1968, 2nd ed. 1976 *The Aboriginal Languages of South West Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Australian Aboriginal Studies No. 14, Linguistic Series No. 4, Canberra.
- Douglas, W. 1982 *Writing the South West Language*, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Perth.
- Eyre, E. J. 1845 *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia, and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound, in the years 1840-1*, T. & W. Boone, 2 Vols. London.
- Green, N. (ed). 1979 *Nyungar the People* Creative Research, Perth.
- Grey, Sir George, 1841 *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North West and Western Australia during the years 1837, '38 and '39*, T. & W. Boone, 2 Vols. London.
- Hallam, S. J. 1975 *Fire and Hearth: a study of Aboriginal usage and European usurpation in south-western Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Pre-history and Material Culture Series No. 8, Canberra.
- Hasluck, Paul 1942, 1970 *Black Australians: A Survey of Native Policy in Western Australia 1829-1897*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.
- Hassell, Ethel 1975 *My Dusky Friends: Aboriginal Life, Customs and Legends and Glimpses of Station Life at Jerramungup in the 1880's*, Hassell, Perth.
- Haebich, Anna and Tilbrook, Lois, 1980 *South West Aboriginal Studies, Bibliography with Annotations and Appendices*, Mt. Lawley College, Perth.
- Haynes, B. T., Barrett, G. E. B., Brennan, A., Brennan, L. (eds). 1972 *W.A. Aborigines, 1622-1972: Themes from Western Australian History: a selection of Documents and Readings*, W.A. Newspapers Pty. Ltd., Fremantle.
- Hill, K. F. 1975 *Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty: A Study of Aboriginal Poverty in Two Country Towns*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Hill, Marji and Barlow, Alex 1978 *Black Australia: an annotated bibliography and teachers guide to resources on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders* Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- Lofgren, M. E. 1975 *Patterns of Life: the story of the Aboriginal People of Western Australia*, Western Australian Museum Information Series, Perth.
- McNair, William and Rumley, Hilary, 1981 *Pioneer Aboriginal Mission: the work of Wesleyan Missionary John Smithies in the Swan River Colony 1840-1855*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.
- Moore, G. F. 1884 *Diary of Ten years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia and also a Descriptive Vocabulary of the Language of the Aborigines*, London. Walbrook, 1978 facsimile edition, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Russo, G. H. 1980, *Lord Abbot of the Wilderness: The Life and Times of Bishop Salvado*, Salvado. Polding Press, Melbourne.
- Salvado, R. 1851, 1977 *The Salvado Memoirs: Historical memoirs of Australia and particularly the Benedictine Mission of New Norcia and of the Habits and Customs of the Australian Natives*, edited and translated by E. J. Storman, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.
- Tilbrook, L. J. 1977 *Moora: Aboriginal Children in a Wheat Belt Town*, Mount Lawley College, Perth.
- Tilbrook, L. J. 1983 *Nyungar Tradition: Glimpses of Aboriginal Life in South Western Australia 1829-1914*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.

