

Article

War People: Punitive Raids, Democracy and the White Family in Australia

Paula Jane Byrne 

Department of History and Classics, University of New England, Armidale 2351, Australia;
paulajanebyrne22@outlook.com

Received: 2 July 2020; Accepted: 9 October 2020; Published: 14 October 2020



Abstract: Apart from descriptions of ideas of race, Australian historiography has not perceived acts of violence to Aboriginal people in their wider social and political context. Analysis of perpetrators has derived from family histories but this, so far, has been limited to studies of emotion. One family's and one area's experience of frontier violence shows that it was thought about in terms of 'volunteering' and democratic participation. The new technology of the telegraph brought violence and its description closer and 'brave' and 'gallant' men sought to involve themselves in war. They also recognized political divisions among Aboriginal people and negotiated a complex realm of 'friendly blacks'.

Keywords: family; democracy; punitive raid

1. Introduction

There has been extensive work done on the extent and duration of punitive raids in Australia. However, the connection between these raids and wider social change and proclivities has yet to be analyzed¹. A punitive raid was an attack by a group of whites, usually at night, on an Aboriginal camp. It involved killing, often of those slow to escape such as old people and children, and destruction of property. Such violence has been difficult to comprehend. Perhaps because of this cruelty, settlers are often portrayed in a one-dimensional manner in the history of the frontier and one way to avoid this has been for the historian to approach research through their own family history². Such an approach, deriving from Pierre Nora, engages the historian's emotions and leads to deeper thought about the violence of perpetrators and their motivations³. Family history, however, can entrap the researcher into a story that excludes the wider polity and that deals *only* with the emotions of researcher and subject. Critical family history, as described by Christine Sleeter, is concerned with the work of contextualization, whereby family is located in wider socioeconomic and political history. This work can destabilize national narratives⁴ and the separate history of family, democracy and violence in Australia is challenged here. This paper examines my family and the region of land they occupied in northern New South Wales, just under the Queensland border, in order to understand their role in the wider polity and the cultural dimensions of their lives. This is a contextualization of my family in the wider social currents of democracy and the punitive raid. The link between the punitive raid on Indigenous camps and representative democracy in America has recently begun to be explored⁵. Such

¹ The Centre for Violence at the University of Newcastle, NSW has been involved in mapping massacre sites. <https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au>.

² (Schlunke 2005; Krichauff 2011; Clements 2014).

³ (Nora 1996).

⁴ (Sleeter 2016).

⁵ (Mann 2005).

work has yet to be considered in Australia. This paper locates my family in the political mentality of the period in order to understand exactly how we colonized and exactly why violence against Indigenous people was enacted.

This is also a story about technology because, from 1858, the world that people felt they inhabited was determined by the telegraph and there was a great and sudden impact of the speed of information dispersal that technology allowed. The newspapers began to report international events as they happened, rather than months later. The world suddenly felt instant. Claudia Verhoeven, writing of the emergence of telecommunications in this period, says the telegraph connected ‘what has happened, is happening and will happen elsewhere. Doing so it produces history and positions people in relation to history’⁶. People felt themselves part of a global community. This does not mean that all newspaper reports were true, but that people thought they were and, most importantly, they acted from their understandings of this truth. The reality people lived in involved stories of gallantry in fighting an Indigenous foe. This is how people understood the world that they lived in—the foe was across the colonies, into Africa, and this foe was to be eliminated in Australia by punitive raids.

In all reporting of international conflict with Indigenous peoples read for this paper and as yet unexplored by Australian historians, one of the most important words was ‘volunteer’ and punitive raids in all countries were conducted with the aid of the ordinary citizen who volunteered to assist Native Police or the military. Citizen involvement bound people together and such joint action contributed to the kind of state non-Indigenous people felt they inhabited and participation was part of their participation in a democracy. Involvement in the punitive raid was a part of the formation of the Australian citizen. The rightness of raids was, however, disputed in the press in both an international and Australian context. Opposition to violence also bound people together and also contributed to the making of citizens. This contradictory position is important to acknowledge because it allowed support for one Aboriginal group and hostility to another. There was no one Aboriginal group—to the colonizers, there were many.

This research depends upon the historical records relating to my family held by the Tweed River Historical Society: a handwritten family tree, newspaper articles by Jack Byrne from the 1940s, a newspaper interview with him from 1952 and records of enlistment from the Boer War and WW1. It also relies on the diaries and letters of the Bray family, my family’s landlords who lived nearby. These are held by the Mitchell Library in Sydney. I can track the movements of my family through these records and ascertain some of their perspectives from my uncle’s newspaper articles. My grandfather’s diaries do not begin until 1908 but I can surmise from them that the family had a lively interest in science and crop experimentation, they were active in spiritualism and were critical of government control⁷. The work of locating my family’s psyche and attitude towards settler violence in the nineteenth century is based on the kind of world that they thought they lived in, as described in the newspapers they read. Newspapers they read are held at the State Library of NSW and I read them, as my family would have done, from cover to cover. Important in the analysis of these records is the recognition of their contradictory nature, aggression to one Aboriginal group combined with close relations with and public support for other groups.

My great uncle, Jack Byrne, recorded my great grandmother giving bacon to an Aboriginal woman, Ninglin, on the rented family farm at Boatharbour. This occurred after a night of ceremony at the temporary camp near the house and my great grandmother complained about the noise.⁸ This would have occurred in the 1870s and shows my family knew this Aboriginal woman’s name and that ceremony continued in the 1870s. In the 1880s, my great uncle Tom was a witness in an inquest on an Aboriginal woman who had drowned near the farm⁹. Aboriginal people were thus still living

⁶ (Verhoeven 2009).

⁷ Charles Byrne Diaries, Byrne Family Papers John Oxley Library, Brisbane, Box 17736.

⁸ J.J. Byrne, ‘Customs of the Tweed Aborigines’, Newspaper cuttings Tweed River Historical Society.

⁹ Register of Inquests, Joshua Bray, Bray Family Papers, Mitchell Library, ML MSS 1929.

near the farm in the 1880s. Close living at home did not prevent interest in violence against other Aboriginal groups in Queensland by other young men of the Tweed and this paper investigates the climate my family lived in during the late nineteenth century. My father's and mother's generation lived through the protection and assimilation era in Australian history, the former favoring segregation on reserves from 1900 to the 1940s and the latter favoring Aboriginal people becoming like white people. The state was regarded as more hostile and powerful than today even by whites¹⁰. Public rhetoric and racism concerning Aboriginal people mixed uneasily with close relationships and there were still Aboriginal camps on the Tweed in the 1960s. In the 1980s, I returned home to find a complete shift, where Aboriginal people were regarded as a separate local political interest group and their wishes were listed by my family, an attitude far in advance of my Sydney paternalism and far more conducive to Land Rights.

My initial aim in this research was to personalize settler aggression through the medium of my own family in order to show how many ordinary people lived in a climate where punitive raids were thought to be positive rather than secret and how widely the idea of volunteering on raids was embraced. Katrina Schlunke, in her work, identified with indigenous people through her own personal history of oppression, thereby rejecting identification with her violent forbears; Nicholas Clements explained his family's actions as motivated by fear and Skye Krichauff explains that her family were not violent to Indigenous people, they having settled well after dispersal¹¹. Studies of descendants of perpetrators show that a wish to identify with victims is one response, but that this involves talking over victims and not making space for victims' voices¹². In my view, explaining the mentality of our forebears is part of the way to making space for Aboriginal people to be politically heard and to hear them ourselves in the static of colonization¹³. I see that my family and their landlords were wired differently to today, that they were in the thick of violence, that they were not afraid at all but imagined themselves as gallant and using critical family history methods of locating them I show why they felt this. Ross Wilson has written of the cultural shift in the late twentieth century, where passive suffering and vicarious victimhood were thought to be desirable qualities and these have fed into a new nationalism in Britain surrounding WWI¹⁴. In Australia, this shift has led to many people seeking Aboriginal ancestors, wishing to obtain Aboriginal identity or to write as if they could adopt an Aboriginal perspective and seeing settlers as 'others'. This paper partly reacted to that tendency by transforming others into 'ourselves' through family history. Family allows that shift in perspective and this account broadens the history of aggression to include formative democracy, showing that the whole nation was framed in terms of violence to Indigenous people. Family brings home the past in a way general history cannot. Being related to people who inhabited this culture is a cause of grief which will only become productive when a just peace is made with Aboriginal people on their terms¹⁵. Such an engagement also creates knowledge—one part of the way towards that just peace. This research began with the Bray family, my family's landlords, and slowly moved upriver to my family and the culture they inhabited.

2. Family and Country

My family examined were both pre- and post-famine free Irish—my great grandfather James Byrne came free to Australia in the mid-1840s and my great grandmother, Bridget Clear, arrived in 1853. They married and lived originally in Murrurundi and moved from there to the Clarence River and then to the Tweed Valley in 1869, 'flocking' as the police described the travels of the lower classes

¹⁰ (Park 1993).

¹¹ (Schlunke 2005; Clements 2014; Krichauff 2011).

¹² (Bar-On 1996).

¹³ (Weiner 2011).

¹⁴ (Wilson 2010).

¹⁵ (Park 2015).

to and from Australia, Otago, California, and Africa¹⁶. They had six sons, Ambrose, Tom, Jack born at Murrurundi or the Clarence and William, Charles and Hugh, born at the Tweed River and five daughters, Mary, Margaret, born at Murrurundi or the Clarence, and Ellen, Sarah and Clara. All children were born between 1861 and 1883. Charles, born in 1876, was my grandfather. The family travelled up the Tweed River in a Carvel boat, a large rowing boat. They clambered up the steep slippery river bank to a small hut, the condition of which made my great grandmother's face seem miserable. It was full of 'vermin'—bandicoots, bush rats and possums¹⁷. From this, I can tell that my family was not truly poor, that they had lived in better conditions and that, in a landscape of tents, their hut may well have seemed luxurious to others. They were renting land from Joshua Bray, having been told about it by Paddy Smith, Bray's Irish servant. Joshua Bray, along with Samuel Gray his partner, from squatting families, had moved in next to an Aboriginal camp, *Duroby*, *Wallambin*, *Coolamon* or *Jegiga* in 1863. Squatters were young men who set out to mark boundaries of land which they then stocked with cattle or sheep. A long struggle with government resulted in them obtaining leases to 'runs'. The squatting 'runs' changed hands frequently, individuals forming themselves into companies and engaging in speculation¹⁸. The land Bray occupied is today called Kynnumboon. The Byrne family rental agreement with the Brays does not survive. Thomas Kelly's agreement on land two kilometres east is to be found among the Bray papers¹⁹. It shows that rental agreements included the stipulation that the land had to be cleared and this is one way those squatters who had occupied the land by conditional purchase were able to meet the obligations of their occupation.

Joshua Bray obtained his labour primarily from the Aboriginal camp but that camp was also part of a broad network of transit places for Aboriginal people from the Richmond River, the Logan River, Brisbane and Terranora. All through the 1860s and 1870s, five to six hundred people camped there at any one time. Ceremony was held there²⁰. This history of Aboriginal people is the province of Aboriginal people themselves, particularly those of the Ngarakwal/ Githabul, Arakwal and Minjunbal, Bandjalung Groups. The histories of these people, with their separate ontology, belong, as Aileen Moreton-Robinson writes, to the Aboriginal peoples involved²¹. Information can be found at their websites, *Arakwal People of Byron Bay*, *Minjungbal Aboriginal Museum* and *Githabul Nation*.

The Bray family diaries indicate there was non-Aboriginal recognition of different Aboriginal groups in the 1860s and 1870s. Such descriptions, as Luise Hercus and Peter Sutton have shown, are no guide at all to the way Aboriginal people described themselves²². In contemporary non-Aboriginal records, there were three different groups of Aboriginal people. There were 'the Blacks', large groups of Aboriginal people, up to five or six hundred, who came and went from the camp called *Wallambin*, *Coolamon*, *Duroby* or *Jegiga*. Secondly were the group Joshua Bray employed—nineteen Aboriginal men—in clearing and drainage because most of the land was a swamp. He also travelled with them; no self-described white man would travel without 'his Blacks'. He employed Aboriginal women in husking corn and processing arrowroot, but not in housework, which was the field of the plain cook Mrs Smith, Paddy's wife²³. Thirdly there were named Aboriginal individuals who travelled through, sometimes picking up work and camping with white people. These were, among others, *Wallambin Johnny*, *Abraham*, *Sandy*, *Bucky Jack*, *Mickey the Priest*, *Merrylegs*, and *Mary Ann*. These people travelled widely—*Casino*, *Lismore*, the *Logan River*, *Wee Waa* and *Bungaree Johnny* travelled up

¹⁶ Suptd. Girand to Colonial Secretary, 6 December 1866, Police Superintendent of the Western Districts, Copies of Letters Sent, SR 4/10757.

¹⁷ J.J. Byrne, 'Hundreds of Blacks on the Tweed River', Byrne family papers, Tweed River District Historical Society.

¹⁸ (Roberts 1964; Waterson 1968).

¹⁹ Rental Agreement Thomas Kelly, Bray Family Papers.

²⁰ These gatherings are referred to in the Bray Family Diaries, Bray Papers.

²¹ (Moreton-Robinson 2003).

²² (Hercus and Sutton 1986).

²³ Joshua Bray Letters, Bray Family Papers.

from Sydney²⁴. They were also identified according to place—Tweed Blacks, Logan Blacks, Richmond Blacks. They travelled for their own purposes. These named people had status among the whites and might be seen as having, in white eyes in the 1860s, ‘respectability’, a notion that Michael Sturma has well explained as a unifying concept in rural New South Wales²⁵. This was not middle-class town respectability but a system of regard and honour, which among whites was given and taken according to relative power positions, not status. Aboriginal people held power positions in rural Australia at this time because of their knowledge of land and climate. In the Tweed Valley, they were consulted as to whether it would flood²⁶. How Aboriginal people registered or utilized respectability is a subject for consideration²⁷ as long as we understand that the concept, along with ‘character’ is entirely non-Aboriginal. This respectability to a certain extent incorporated Aboriginal people into the polity. In a particular crisis involving a boy named Jimmy in 1866, two elders came to the Bray farm to ask for an explanation²⁸.

While the Brays were my family’s landlords, this was not necessarily an oppositional relationship. Landlords and tenants were not automatically in dispute in Ireland. The folklore archives in Ireland explain of Wicklow, where the family came from,

The local landowners were wealthy and ruled as benevolent despots. Evictions were almost unknown under the Fitzwilliam and Meath Estates²⁹.

Joshua Bray forgave my family rent until they were able to successfully make money at Dunbible growing sugar cane. He is regarded highly in both Aboriginal and local history on the Tweed and ‘benevolent’ is a word that describes him well³⁰.

The 1860s brought news of the land wars and the local paper read

The organized system of agrarian assassination came to a head after the publication of our last . . . two proprietors in County Cork, Messrs Leahy and Gadgery received letters of more than lurid character containing threats of assassination and bedaubed with drawings of pistols, coffins, deaths heads and cross bones. Similar letters were addressed to their wives. One of the MacDonald’s daughters cursed Mr Leahy so bitterly he had to call in the market Beadle to restrain her . . . another daughter of MacDonald’s accosted Mr Gadgery, went with a book in her hand and prayed that the grass and corn might not grow and that her curse might light on him and his children, she cursed him by the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve Apostles³¹.

The combination of religion and folkways would have been well understood by my family and it is the first indication that these people were wired differently to non-Aboriginal people today. As small farmers, they would have been in skirmishes with their neighbors over money, boundaries and property and they would have been subject to curses³² My family was educated, the Irish Hedge Schools giving them fine cursive handwriting, and discussions of pens and writing style formed part of the family history. This, however, did not make them unsusceptible to curses³³.

The Bray family were originally squatters from Brungle and Tumut in southern New South Wales. They were educated in the ways and manners of gentlemen, holding an aesthetic of landscape and

²⁴ 24 May 1865, 16 August 1866, 25 Jan 1865, 9 June 1866, 26 May 1865, Joshua Bray Diary, Bray Family Papers.

²⁵ (Sturma 1983).

²⁶ *Tweed Chronicle*, 7 September 1907, Consultations are also discussed in Krichauff (Krichauff 2011) p. 198.

²⁷ Tim Rowse is currently engaged in this work.

²⁸ October 2 1866, Joshua Bray Diary, Bray Family Papers.

²⁹ (Poirteir 1995).

³⁰ (Nayutah and Finley 1988)

³¹ *The Advocate and Advertiser for the Clarence, Richmond and New England Districts*, 1 September 1862.

³² Lismore Bench Book SR NSW 4/5579.

³³ (Byrne 2006).

wilderness and its appreciation. As squatters, they were also party to a way of relating to Aboriginal people peculiar to this class. There was a fascination with Aboriginal culture, a desire to collect items and to write about culture, an inclusion of Aboriginal people into their social circle as confidants and companions, and a willingness to commit violence on these same people with humorous recounting. This is apparent in the sections of the *Maitland Mercury* provided by members of this class which tried to incorporate as many classical references as possible alongside jokes about Indigenous people and humorous recounting of 'summary justice'³⁴. Joshua Bray was not a brutal employer by the standards of the day, but James Bray prayed that he might forgo his 'sins' one day after he had travelled with Aboriginal women and returned covered in nettle rash³⁵. These people have largely 'written' Australian history because they donate records to libraries. They, too, were wired differently to people today, intimacy combined with violence.

3. The History of Local Raids

There were two punitive raids recorded in local history and diaries, the 'Murdering Creek' raid of 1845 and the 'Dunbible Affair' of 1866. In 1845, all the white men on the Tweed raided an Aboriginal camp as revenge for the murders of two sawyers. The raid was on an Aboriginal camp near Byron Bay, or in other accounts the camp near Boatharbour, which was two kilometres from where the Bray house would later be built. There were two deaths described by Tweed white men. They shot the Aboriginal guide, Commandant, and an old Aboriginal woman hiding under a blanket who was 'mistaken for one of the murderers'³⁶. The 1866 punitive raid was by the Bray family on an Aboriginal camp near Dunbible. As usual in these accounts, 'nobody' was injured and all the Aboriginal people managed to escape³⁷. The 1845 raid was inscribed in the landscape in the name 'Murdering Creek' near Murwillumbah which remained until 1970. For contemporaries of the 1860s and 1870s, the name stood for both the treacherous murders of the sawyers and the punitive raid. Later, the raid disappears from accounts of the Creek's name³⁸. Both Bray and Jack Byrne refer to the murders and Joshua Bray has some of 'the murderers' working for him in the 1860s and 1870s³⁹. The story of this raid became a foundation myth of the settlement⁴⁰. The 1866 punitive raid does not appear in any historical record or in any newspaper, only the Bray diaries. The formality of the entry in Joshua Bray's work diary and his signature under the account suggests that he expected some kind of investigation, but that did not eventuate⁴¹. This further underlines the hazy legal position of punitive raids.

The 1866 punitive raid was not instigated by the Bray family alone. It was a sudden skirmish from the dinner table by the Brays after they had been informed by Harry Clarke, one of their contracted employees, that some Richmond Blacks and Tweed Blacks had left their women behind at Tyalgum and gone to Dunbible and perhaps planned to attack James Bray's house there⁴². Harry Clarke 'volunteered' to go on the raid with them. The Brays were not popular on the Tweed at the time of the incident. They had lost some of their cedar logs to a fresh on the river and went they went down river to get them they were rebuffed by the Boyd's at the rooming house at Coojen. Mrs Boyd was saucy. Paddy Smith and Peter Skinner, cedar getters, were told by the Bray's they would pay for the logs they had cut on Bray's land, something that offended them very much. Terranorra cedar

³⁴ Billy Cubby, tried for sheep stealing was 'taken outside and summarily disposed of' *Maitland Mercury*, 22 October 1867, see also 28 September 1867, 3 October 1867, F. Bray, *Tales My Mother Told Me*, self published, Sydney, 1981, held in the Mitchell Library.

³⁵ Diary of James Bray 16 September 1866, held by Tweed River District Historical Society, Tweed Heads.

³⁶ (Harpur 2004).

³⁷ Diary of Joshua Bray and Samuel Gray, 16 September 1866, Bray Family Papers.

³⁸ *Murdering Creek Walk*, Murwillumbah Historical Society web page. Accessed 8 August 2008.

³⁹ Bray Family Papers.

⁴⁰ (Harpur 2004)

⁴¹ Diary of Joshua Bray, 16 September 1866, Bray Family Papers.

⁴² Diary of Joshua Bray, 16 September 1866.

getters made frequent visits to Tyalgum after the Brays had argued over their logs. The Bray's seem to have been shifting their role in the economy, moving away from trust and favor and into more commercialized arrangements. Perhaps there was much talk at Tyalgum. Joshua Bray also accused Mary Ann, an Aboriginal woman from the camp, of stealing corn, a crop he had formerly grown for the sole use of the *Wallambin/Duroby/Coolamon/Jegiga* camp. The Brays were perhaps unpopular at the camp. If Aboriginal people were involved with the sawyers, it would not be first example of such behavior. The magistrates at Nymbodia on the Clarence were told in 1857 in the case of the murder of an Aboriginal servant, Black Peter, 'Shea used to send the Blacks to kill my father in law's cattle' and 'Shea had tried to criminate him about firing at some blacks some time ago' meaning that such collaborations were within the realm of possibility⁴³.

The 1866 'Dunbible Affair', as Joshua Bray described the punitive expedition⁴⁴, gives us some idea of the shifting power nexus on the Tweed, where no one is in absolute command, no matter how many offices they accumulate, magistrate, postmaster, coroner as the Bray's did. The poorer population of self-described white people were active in their local area, they struggled with each other and asserted themselves against Bray, and they may have combined with Aboriginal people in doing so.

In discussing incidents such as the 1866 raid, Riley Young Winpilin, speaking to Deborah Bird Rose about the Northern Territory in the 1930s, describes such activities as 'law', thereby incorporating violence into legitimacy. For him, there are not two systems—one the legal system the other an informal killing arena—but one because exactly the same people are responsible for both⁴⁵. There is no *Murrell*, no *Brown*⁴⁶ in this perspective; they are irrelevant to the true nature of the state. The fickle station owner, or farmer, or farm employee is authority, that is all there is. One night, like the Bray's, they will scramble for guns, ride through the night to a sleeping Aboriginal camp. It is only white people who would agonize over the difference between this behavior and 'law'—who would vomit and sit down to write to the authorities⁴⁷.

As Henry Reynolds and Nicholas Clements have recently written, night raiding was the prime mode of warfare for whites⁴⁸. So much of the Dunbible Affair finds its echo in other accounts of raids of the 1860s and it is as if the participants were acting from a script. The guns, the rush, the uncertain outcome, lack of clarity as to who was tied up, who got away all appear in newspaper accounts of such raids. We have to look wider for this script and we can see it retold, re-enacted, reproducing itself. The squatters and these flocking people, my family, who may well have travelled to Otago or California next, saw themselves in a particular way which was largely determined by the newspapers. The newspapers provided a template, not only of who you were, but also of how you should act in relation to Indigenous peoples.

4. The Newspaper

The Dunbible Affair derived from Clarke's indication that Aboriginal men had left Tyalgum without their women. There were other places where the arrival of Aboriginal people was regarded as suspicious. At Falconer, near Armidale in August 1862, the *Advocate* reported,

Some three weeks ago the Blacks assembled to the numbers of about 80 at Falconer with what object it was not known. After conducting themselves peacably for a few days the greater party scattered into smaller parties . . . two troopers came up from Armidale as a precaution . . . we are informed that Mr Reay of the Falconer Inn has an Aboriginal woman in his employ who is able to read and write English and is a very good sempstress and domestic servant it

⁴³ R vs. Robert Ward, alias Robert Cooper alias Bob the Lawyer, Supreme Court Depositions, 1857 Grafton, 2, SR NSW, 9/6410.

⁴⁴ Joshua Bray Diary 2 October 1866, Bray Family Papers.

⁴⁵ (Bird Rose 1991).

⁴⁶ Key cases that were used to establish terra nullius in *Millirrpum v Nabalco*, 17 FLR 14.1971.

⁴⁷ Katrina Schlunke writes of this response in (Schlunke 2005) p. 218.

⁴⁸ (Clements 2014; Reynolds 2013).

was believed it was at her instance the Blacks were assembled, as she paid a visit to their camp ...⁴⁹

This is a remarkable report because it is so contradictory. The implied suggestion that the servant, unnamed, was engaging in politics, the recognition of her skill and loyalty, which counters the former suggestion, and the setting out of the perimeters of warfare, feared attack, precaution and then dispersal. This one report encapsulates all of the contradictory reporting of the newspapers of the time; attitudes to native peoples everywhere on the globe were reported in such a contradictory way. Kate Fullagar noted in her introduction to *The Savage Visit* that the Grub Street reporting of English expansion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was also contradictory, colonization was both applauded and wrong⁵⁰. She writes that the two separate discourses can be identified. However, I would argue that colonizing people flitted between the two discourses, sometimes within the one sentence. A single discourse was not adhered to and to separate both is historically inaccurate. It was not how these people *felt*.

Newspapers were extremely important in public houses. They were read out, perhaps, for example, by the Aboriginal servant at Falconer. She would possibly have been heartened by the news she conveyed because in every continent, it seemed, Indigenous peoples were trying to drive out the occupiers and they were increasingly successful in their attempts in the 1860s and 1870s.

Newspapers also bear some relation to the cultural activities of my Irish family. The major source for the history of my family comes from the records of Jack Byrne's articles for the local newspaper in the 1940s. In looking for the derivation of his mode of thinking and his self-positioning on the Tweed, the Irish notion of the 'throng', discussed by David Lloyd, is illuminating. Pre-famine Irish held gatherings where newspapers were read out, where theories were developed and where history and myth were told⁵¹. The most important invitee to a throng was the local schoolmaster and it was from him that information was also obtained; it was a schoolmaster that my grandfather desperately wanted to be but the family remembers we were not 'able to afford the textbook'. The 'throng' I think is the basis of the kind of knowledge exhibited by my great uncle Jack Byrne, who wrote his newspaper articles after he had returned from the Northern Territory⁵². These articles combined first-hand accounts of relations with Aboriginal people with scientific notions of the 1880s, ethnographic interest combined with a sense of Irish myth. The 'throng' was where people made sense of what was happening to them and who they were.

Information from the newspaper press of the 1860s and 1870s gives some idea of how events concerning Aboriginal people were mapped onto the throng. This article concentrates on the press that was available on the Tweed, the local *Clarence Advocate and New England Advertiser* for the North and North West printed in Grafton and sent also to London and Dublin coffee houses, and the *Illustrated Sydney News*, similarly widely available, which was posted to Joshua Bray.

The articles my family were reading gave them a sense of the political landscape they inhabited. The *NSW Police Gazette* had reported in 1865,

A party of the Manning River tribe of Aborigines were attacked at Purfleet near Taree by a party of the Macquarie or Macleay Tribe when one of the former, named Williams was shot dead supposedly by one of the latter tribe. J.P Cornish found in the Coroner's Inquest that there was no evidence to show by whom the fatal shot was fired⁵³.

In September 1865 the *Sydney Illustrated News* reported

⁴⁹ *The Advocate and Advertiser for the Clarence Richmond and New England Districts*, 11 August 1862.

⁵⁰ (Fullagar 2012).

⁵¹ (Lloyd 2011).

⁵² Jack Byrne, Newspaper articles held by Tweed River Historical Society, Tweed Heads.

⁵³ *NSW Police Gazette*, 19 April 1865.

On the night of the 12th ultimate a party of Willandra Blacks attacked a party of Darling Blacks encamped about 100 miles from Boolgal and killed one of their number who was pierced three or four times in the body with spears. The attack is supposed to be in retaliation for one of the Willandra men having been killed some months previously⁵⁴.

In Joshua Bray's letters, there is recognition of similar political differences among Aboriginal people. He, like the *Illustrated News* and the *Gazette*, divided Aboriginal people according to place—the *Richmond Blacks*, the *Logan Blacks*, the *Coojen Blacks* and others. All of these groups were at different times in dispute and there were killings that he, as magistrate, unlike the Coroner at Kempsey, did not interfere with. Lisa Ford has discussed the halting, uneven expansion of settler sovereignty and from her work we would expect such inconsistencies in magisterial practice⁵⁵. Jack Byrne centers politics on Kings and their subjects. Aboriginal Kings are 'unlike ours, he writes, they must obtain the consensus of their people'. These kings are, however, described in the manner of Irish folklore—they undertook feats of endurance which he and his brothers sought to imitate. Kings were taken very seriously by the white residents of the Tweed and were recorded for many years in the local newspapers⁵⁶.

Much was made of 'friendly' Blacks in the newspaper accounts. In Melbourne in 1864, a monument was erected to an Aboriginal man, Derrimart, in Melbourne cemetery. He 'had saved the first colonists from being massacred by the natives'⁵⁷. When a party at the Dawson River in Queensland in 1867 found themselves accidentally resting near an Aboriginal camp and being watched, the rush to arms was halted by a stockman who went to check whether there were any friendly Blacks at the camp first⁵⁸. People act on the understanding there were such people as 'friendly Blacks'. So there was not one group, 'the blacks', but many different groups—some friendly, some armed with guns. All of these groups were located geographically. They were from particular local areas.

Contradictory reporting then was productive of the idea of 'friendly blacks' and this was tied to recognition of political difference. One group of people could be attacked at night, like the camp at Boatharbour, while the Murwillumbah blacks were left alone.

International news was incorporated into even the smallest local newspaper and so we read of the New Zealand wars of the late 1860s, dividing Maoris into friendly tribes and the rebels and fanatics of the Hau Haus who sought, according to Divine Prediction to drive the Pakehas into the sea. Divine intervention was also to be found among the Xhosa of the African continent who also sought in the 1870s to drive the whites into the sea⁵⁹. All whites were threatened by these specific groups. In New Zealand, great detail was provided about the emotions of Maori leaders, their thought processes and their changes of mind. The only solution, according to the excerpts of the New Zealand papers, was to have Maori-designated seats in the Assembly and this idea should not be thwarted by those who had 'a vulgar antipathy to Black skin'⁶⁰. The New Zealand wars were fought by English Regiments and reported in exactly the same way as European wars with minute accounts of battle formations, numbers of troops and gallantry. The troops were supported by friendly Maoris, the Forest Rangers, who seem similar to the Native Police in Australia, and 'volunteers'⁶¹.

5. Extreme Violence

Attacks on whites in New Caledonia, Queensland, California, Western Australia, America, Africa and New Zealand were all reported with emphasis on exactly the kind of injuries received. A shepherd's

⁵⁴ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1865.

⁵⁵ (Ford 2010).

⁵⁶ J.J. Byrne, 'Hundreds of Blacks lived on the Tweed in the Early 70s', Newspaper Clippings, Tweed River Historical Society and *Tweed and Brunswick Advocate*, 6 January 1904, 17 February 1904.

⁵⁷ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1864.

⁵⁸ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 December 1867.

⁵⁹ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 1866–1868.

⁶⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 5 November 1867.

⁶¹ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 7 November 1864.

brains were left 'laying about' after an attack on Rowley's station near Roma in Queensland in 1867 in the same year a German shepherd's skull was split open and his body thrown in the water at Bungalon Station at Taroom in Queensland. In New Zealand, in the case of the missionary Volkner in 1865, his brains were 'ritually eaten'⁶². Injuries to the head had particular resonance in Western societies, the head being the locus of the person and thought to be most likely injured by those regarded as 'savage' who themselves valued the head in other ways⁶³. Cattle at Roma in Queensland were left alive with their kidney fat taken, and this, according to the remembered history of the Tweed Murdering Creek killings of sawyers, was what occurred there. This utilizes another notion, that Aboriginal people saw kidney fat as spiritually significant⁶⁴.

The detail of injuries received and the treatment of bodies were related by contemporaries to the veracity of the report, the more violent the detail, the more likely the account was. Shocking accounts of violence occurred in a society where great attention was paid to proper rituals of death and burial. In Victoria, a Board of Inquiry was established to report into the mutilation of the body of the bushranger Morgan and the conduct of Inspector Cobham and the Coroner was severely condemned⁶⁵. In Wee Waa, a squatter spent a considerable amount of money lining an expensive coffin with Black silk for a stock worker killed by Aboriginal people⁶⁶. In Victoria, the Aboriginal King of the Colac tribe was given an elaborate funeral by a squatter who held him in great esteem, with carriages for relatives⁶⁷.

War reporting was particularly bloody in a way it is not today unless in photographic imagery. War in the 1860s and 1870s was therefore more likely to be a tale of sickening horror and this horror is recounted by most Australian historians of the 1960s and 1970s, a time of opposition to war⁶⁸. That the occupation was about much more than killing and being killed is something Australian historians have difficulty with. This was not helped by Keith Windschuttle's inflaming of historical scholarship in the 1990s, when he claimed there was little or no evidence for extensive violence against Aboriginal people⁶⁹. His work left a legacy which made it even more difficult to move outside the notion of the horror of war, body counts and brutality. For some years, historians reacted to what they considered his provocation in what were called the 'history wars'. Indigenous people responded with more complex analysis. Dirk Moses quotes Pat Dodson, Indigenous representative,

While the 1788 invasion was unjust, the real injustice was the denial by Governor Phillip and subsequent governments of our right to participate equally in the future of a land we had managed successfully for millennia. Instead, the land was stolen, not shared, our political sovereignty was replaced by a virulent form of serfdom; our spiritual beliefs denied and ridiculed; our system of education undermined . . . the introduction of superior weapons, alien diseases, a policy of racism and enforced biogenetic practices created dispossession, a cycle of slavery and attempted destruction of our society.

Dirk Moses sees this description as a more accurate description of the genocide practiced in Australia⁷⁰.

Newspapers also provided reports of police atrocities and were critical of violence and defensive of Aboriginal groups that should not have been attacked

⁶² *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 May 1867, 12 November 1867, 15 April 1865.

⁶³ (James 2005).

⁶⁴ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1867, Harpur, op.cit.

⁶⁵ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 September 1865.

⁶⁶ Wee Waa Bench Letter Book. State Records of NSW.

⁶⁷ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 October 1865.

⁶⁸ (Blomfield 1981; Reynolds 1981; Reece 1974; Millis 1992).

⁶⁹ <https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php> accessed 20 April 2020. Lyndall Ryan, *History of Violence Website*, University of Newcastle.

⁷⁰ (Moses 2013).

The bodies of two Blackfellows have been found, pierced with bullets on the Stanton Harcourt Run in the Wide Bay district. Mr Hirst was directed by the Government to further investigate the affair . . . we believe the inquiry will be fruitless . . . it is alleged the two Blacks were identical with two lately seen in the custody of Sgt Brown who were never delivered up⁷¹.

At Morinish in Queensland, there was considerable outrage at a barbarous attack on unoffending Blacks by Native troopers when Aboriginal people were ‘butchered whilst sleeping’ in a camp on the outskirts of town. This report would ‘cause horror throughout the colonies’ and a public meeting was held in the town⁷². This was also an act of citizenship and violence as well as opposition to it was productive of citizen responsibility.

Outrage was a recurring theme in Australian history dating from the 1830s. Tension and competitiveness, petty cliques among squatters would give rise to accusations of violence to Aboriginal people⁷³. In some ways, late twentieth-century Australian history was a product of the squatter mindset. Their memories informed and silenced and concealed. They also had a remarkable tendency to blame the servants, and to blame the Native Police⁷⁴. This quarantined blame. It made violence towards Aboriginal people a kind of deviance, the activity of dull illiterate animal-like people, the stereotype of the Irish as described by Dianne Hall⁷⁵. However, if we look closely at the records, it appears that violence was not at all the province of any one group.

People read of horrific violence directed at whites across the Empire by specifically delineated groups. They also read of equally horrific violence by whites against ‘friendly blacks’. The idea of appropriate action could be incorporated into the notion of gallant civil-minded people. The worldwide climate was, however, one of war.

6. War

For people reading the newspaper press of the 1860s, the entire world was at war in one place or another and war was a natural state of existence in societies that were still colonizing, New Zealand, the Pacific, America, and Southern Africa. It was inevitable that the language of war elsewhere would shape understandings of actions in New South Wales. Lt Poulding led his native police to an attack on three camps on the Macleay River near present day Kempsey, NSW, in 1860. The Sydney Morning Herald wrote

Too much credit and praise cannot be given to this energetic young officer (a Crimean hero having been twice wounded on an attack on the Redan) and his party . . . finally proving the utility of this body. It is argued that for months they have not had any active duty but it might well be argued that because we had a time of peace therefore soldiers and sailors are of no use, no white man could have followed those tracks, besides the natives are all armed with our firearms and attack in ambush⁷⁶.

In this account, Kempsey Aboriginal people were joined by a large number of the ‘New England Blacks’ who ‘had come with the intention of evitably joining them’. If these people were part of African history, there would be whole books written now on the relationship between Dhungutti, Kamilaroi/Gumeroi or Anaiwon, whole books describing conflicts, mediations, and leaders. In Nigeria, such works, deriving from the perspectives of sea captains, traders and missionaries, were rejected by the Ibadan school of Indigenous history⁷⁷, but we do not even have that beginning in Australian

⁷¹ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 November 1864.

⁷² *Illustrated Sydney News*, 15 September 1867.

⁷³ For example: Edward Parry to Colonial Secretary, 19 October 1833, A.A. Company Papers, Noel Butlin Archives.1/38.

⁷⁴ (Millis 1992).

⁷⁵ (Hall 2014).

⁷⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May 1860.

⁷⁷ (Nyamnjoh 2011).

historiography. This is where Australian historians differ from contemporaries such as Byrne and Bray. Contemporaries had political recognition and Aboriginal people were seen as *political* foes. They were graphed onto the land in a political manner.

What also does not survive in the contact historiography is much of a trace of the military nature of colonial society. Both Alan Atkinson and John Ferry make this point about the militarized nature of both education and public life but they do not make the connection between these aspects of society and the punitive raid⁷⁸. English generals were feted. General Chute on his return to England from New Zealand disembarked in NSW and marched from Sydney to Melbourne for no other reason than a show of strength and bravery⁷⁹. Sir J. Hope Grant, 'gallant general of the last Chinese campaign' gave a public address in Perth referring to his activities on 'grouse shooting day (great laughter)' and related how the Chinese were 'frightened by machines (great laughter)'⁸⁰. In South Australia, there were requests for an English military force to go to the north of the colony⁸¹. Military terminology was used for the Native Police in Queensland, they were 'stationed' at particular places, they received 'intelligence' and, always, in the 60s and 70s three or four members of any group described were white men who formerly served in the military⁸². The *Armidale Express* wrote of the Dhungutti raid 'a decisive blow cannot be dealt to the savages, for if routed in one encounter they can easily avoid another'⁸³. This was the language of war applied to people three hundred miles from Sydney as late as 1860. Much was made of the death of Crimean veterans at the hands of Aboriginal people, as if extra damage was done⁸⁴.

Militarism pervaded society in another way. In accounts of punitive expeditions the word 'volunteer' frequently appears. Though the Volunteers, a colonial military force began in the colony in 1860 with varying degrees of interest and an emphasis on rifle matches these volunteers are a different group. In 1867 a man passing Hinchinbrook Island on the Queensland coast noticed white men standing in a line at an Aboriginal camp. 'Ten gentlemen and a black boy have volunteered to go in search of the white men reported to have been seen by Captain Major on Hinchinbrook Island . . . several merchants of the town contributed provisions'⁸⁵. These volunteers were not farm servants; they were also townsmen, gentlemen, who choose to go. In accounts of revenge expeditions in Queensland from the 1860s to 1900, we find the words 'and volunteers'⁸⁶. The Native Police, just as they were not untrammelled by military links or language, were also not an impermeable group. The word volunteer seems to carry the same emotional connotation as it does today in, for example, firefighting. They were 'brave' and felt themselves so. They are not furtive, ex-convict sadists as they have been represented in the historiography. They were also from all classes. From the Tweed Valley Louis and Fred Nixon, Fred Loder, James Bray, all wealthy men, travelled to Queensland. Fred Loder returned with an Aboriginal baby who was found after his group of surveyors had been 'attacked' by Aboriginal people in North Queensland⁸⁷. Of poorer people, Jack, Ambrose and Hugh Byrne travelled to Queensland

⁷⁸ (Ferry 1999; Atkinson 2014).

⁷⁹ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 27 August 1867.

⁸⁰ *The Clarence and Richmond Independent*, 9 December 1861.

⁸¹ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 November 1864.

⁸² Mr Johnstone, *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 November 1867, Captain Towns, *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 February 1865, Frederick Walker, Macallister, Richard Houghton, John Hoizfeldt, *Clarence and Richmond Independent*, 30 September 1861, Lt Phibbs, Mr Johnson, Sgt Allen, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 28 October 1861, Cadet Johnson and two sergeants one trooper, 11 November 1861, Mr Murray, Mr Patrick, Mr Gregson 'had only one black police with them', *Clarence and Richmond Independent*, 11 November 1861.

⁸³ *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 2 June 1860.

⁸⁴ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 December 1867.

⁸⁵ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 16 December 1867.

⁸⁶ *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 11 November 1861, *Illustrated Sydney News*, 15 April 1865, *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 5 April 1865, *SMH* 8 April 1865 14 February 1874, *Portland Guardian* 24 Feb 1874, *Brisbane Courier* 2 February 1875, *SMH* 17 December 1881, *SMH*, 9 January 1886, *SMH* 14 July 1888, *Northern Territory Times* 26 December 1890, *SMH* 3 August 1900, *SMH*, 11 August 1900, *SMH*, 14 August 1900.

⁸⁷ 'A New Member of the Family', *The Log Book*, September, 2002, p. 10. See also Loder Papers, Oxley Library Brisbane, AC00001927.

later and Jack Byrne spent much of his life in the Northern Territory⁸⁸. The Byrnes travelled to the Zulu Wars and were quick to enlist when the English government made a request for experienced bushmen fighters to travel to the Boer War⁸⁹. The young men of the Brays were considered restless and unable to settle—they were expected to go to war as well⁹⁰. Marilyn Lake best understands the kind of masculinity these men exhibit. They leave their women to run the house or farm; they would not be contained or restricted⁹¹.

The wish to fight or go to war was engendered by the newspaper reports that gave an idea of gallant young men fighting Indigenous peoples across the globe. Indigenous peoples were made complex by the idea of ‘friendly blacks’ and political differences between Indigenous groups were recognized. The notion of volunteering with others to undertake punitive raids introduced the idea of the gallant citizen.

7. Democratic Participation

The 1894 recount of the first punitive expedition on the Tweed to revenge the Murdering Creek attacks reflects every aspect of the newspaper reports of the 1860s and 1870s. Ned Harpur gives immense detail of the injuries suffered by the two cedar getters killed at Murdering Creek. He also details the number of men who ‘volunteered’ to go on the revenge expedition—13 of the 23 on the Tweed. Harpur relates the past through the prism of the narratives of the 1860s and 1870s. There is also another aspect to the account and that is its emphasis on equality. All of the men fired a shot into the Aboriginal guide Commandant, thirteen shots, all act as one without a leader. Harpur’s story is as much about democracy as it was about violence. This activity brought men together to act on behalf of the polity.

Ned Harpur had an Aboriginal wife and a son who acted as a tracker whom he was immensely proud of. It is important to remember of his class that they married Aboriginal women or had children with women from the camps. Vicki Grieves and Ann McGrath have written about such relationships⁹². It is also important to remember that Aboriginal society on the Tweed was as complex and as difficult to comprehend as present day Yolgnu society. Harpur had a son he was very proud of and at the same time could relate with enthusiasm and glee tales of Aboriginal deaths and poisoning. It is as if his persona incorporates this contradiction, or the deaths concerned only those who were not considered ‘friendly’.

In 1894, Harpur was living in a culture on the Tweed that was beginning to crow victory at the same time as they wrote about colonizing the rest of the north. The local newspapers were brutal, racist and full of jokes about local Aboriginal people. This is the atmosphere Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds give background to in *Drawing the Global Colour Line*⁹³. Nowhere is the racism they discuss more apparent than in the local newspaper press the family was reading in the first decade of the twentieth century. In its humor and derision it resembles the small reports written by squatters in the 1860s and 1870s. It is as if the squatter mentality engulfed the rest of society. However, in 1894, the story published in the *Queenslander* of the punitive expedition of the 1840s emphasizes equality, volunteering and representation, the discourse of the 1860s and 1870s, when Harpur was a young man.

The same men who were in the 1840s punitive expedition were parties to petitions, the most common means of having a voice in the 1860s and 1870s. Petitions were presented to Joshua Bray arguing for new services, better roads and in opposition to the appointment of Bray’s friends to powerful positions. An 1874 petition explains the nature of the Tweed polity:

⁸⁸ ‘More Natives Than Whites When He First Saw Tweed’, *Tweed and South Coast Daily*, 1952, undated in Collection of Tweed River Historical Society.

⁸⁹ Myles Byrne died in ‘the African War’, Charles and Hugh Byrne enlisted in the Boer War while in Queensland, Byrne Family Tree, Tweed River Historical Society and Australian War Memorial website.

⁹⁰ Mary Gray to Joshua Bray, Sept 20 1886, Bray Family Papers.

⁹¹ (Lake 1986).

⁹² (Grieves 2011; McGrath 2010)

⁹³ (Lake and Henry 2008).

That this meeting is of the opinion that Donald McLeod is unfit to conduct the post as returning officer at Terranora in consequence of his having intimated that he had written to the Colonial Secretary frustrating the appointment of and nomination of additional magistrates unanimously recommended at a public meeting. That he has without reason reported to the Minister for Lands that the conditions had not been complied with on two conditional purchases belonging to Mary McLeod at Tweed Junction for which declaration had been passed by John McLeod. And that he used false and slanderous language against a large proportion of the respectable inhabitants of this River. And that you will appoint another returning officer instead⁹⁴.

Of the signatures on this petition, five families were present on the Tweed at the time of the Murdering Creek punitive raid. The petition shows the contours of democracy on the Tweed with its interfamilial squabbles, emphasis on slander and respectability as well as the area's connection with the wider polity. What was unanimously voted for at two public meetings was meant to be adhered to by the local magistrate. Small farmers and workers were active in setting up schools and churches, even though such ventures led to quarrels and dispute⁹⁵.

The 1845 punitive raid was an important part of the story of local democracy. In the 1860s and 1870s people also volunteered to go on punitive expeditions. Gentlemen, townsmen volunteered to travel to the bush to fight Aboriginal people or to raid Aboriginal camps; this was part of 'going to Queensland'. People saw themselves as acting together in defense of the polity, a polity they were very much part of.

8. Conclusions

The young men of my grandfather's family grew up with tales of war and cruelty in the vivid accounts in the newspaper press. This gave them a sense of who and where they were. They felt war was something young men could gallantly achieve. These men would have understood that they were colonizing, that they were operating on behalf of the polity in which they were involved.

That the war was conducted through punitive raids on camps at night meant that the major victims were women, children and elderly people who could not escape quickly. Illustrations in the press portray men in readiness for attack in the foreground of the drawing. In the background, are depictions of women and children⁹⁶. Such actions were still incorporated into ideas of gallantry, though today that perception of bravery is contrary to our understanding of how war should be carried out⁹⁷. The name 'Murdering Creek', a symbol of unified action, was altered in 1970 to 'Mayal Creek' due to its unpalatable associations with a violent history. The recognition that our ancestors had different perceptions of killing other human beings, different ideas of what was just and moral is highlighted in adopting the perspectives of critical family history. This does not mean this work is an apologia but that how we came to be where we are today as colonizers has origins in feelings we find it difficult to recognize or comprehend. The power imbalance began with colonization and exploring the permutations of actions since then gives us an idea of the making of ourselves.

For Jack Byrne, Aboriginal people on the Tweed were 'all gone' when he wrote his newspaper articles, despite his niece later marrying into a Tweed Aboriginal family and the Aboriginal people from the camp, *Duroby*, having moved down to the sand dunes near Byron Bay⁹⁸. Such disappearing of Aboriginal people from local area history furthers the erasure attempted by punitive raids.

⁹⁴ Petition received 17 December 1874, Bray Papers.

⁹⁵ (Lester 2001).

⁹⁶ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 18 April 1865.

⁹⁷ (Sagan 2017).

⁹⁸ Bonnie Byrne, Jack Byrne's niece married into an Aboriginal family, the removal to the dunes is recorded in the *Arakwal Native Title Case* and these families obtained the title to Crown land around Byron Bay.

Histories of Australia frequently claim that much of the violence of occupation was over by the end of the 1840s. It was not in the minds of most Australians who still read of violence in New South Wales and Queensland in the 1860s and 1870s. Such stories of violence invited the ‘volunteer’ to travel north to Queensland and later the Northern Territory into the 1880s to the 1930s, or to Africa. This was the direction the young men of my family went. The war of occupation of Australia went on and on in the telegraph-informed mind. This volunteering of young men was central to the emergence of democracy in Australia.

A family is the prime locus of affection in our society. This affection has been generated by our own historical period, where family is an important part of political rhetoric⁹⁹. This realm of emotion is questioned by critical family history. War pervaded the world of my family and the way they saw themselves. They also negotiated different Aboriginal groups and recognized political differences in a way that would not appear again until the late twentieth century. Understanding how they were wired lets us understand exactly how we colonized. Twenty-first-century racism in Australia involves a renewed paternalism, a failure to listen to Aboriginal people in public statements that they make. It also involves romanticism and a wish to become Indigenous¹⁰⁰. In some ways, late nineteenth-century people were clearer on Aboriginal politics, and their emphasis on citizenship, particularly where they opposed violence to Aboriginal groups, might inspire greater effort to secure a just peace.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to the two reviewers of this paper. This paper was given to the Australian Historical Association Conference in 2014 in Brisbane drawing from papers given in Dublin in 1997 and at the University of New South Wales in 2004 and I thank those audiences for their enthusiasm for this work. A number of Indigenous scholars have been positive about this research including Frances Peters Little and Vicki Grieves who both read this paper in 2014–15.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Atkinson, Alan. 2014. *The Europeans in Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press, vol. 2.
- Bar-On, Dan. 1996. Descendants of Nazi Perpetrators; Seven Years after the First Interviews. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 36: 55–74. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Bird Rose, Deborah. 1991. *Hidden Histories*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Blomfield, Geoffery. 1981. *Baal Belbora*. Melbourne: Alternative Publishing Co.
- Byrne, Kevin. 2006. *Doon Doon University*. Childers: Self Published.
- Clements, Nick. 2014. *The Black War*. Brisbane: Queensland University Press.
- Ferry, John. 1999. *Colonial Armidale*. St Lucia: QLD University Press.
- Ford, Lisa. 2010. *Settler Sovereignty*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Fullagar, Kate. 2012. *The Savage Visit*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 11.
- Grieves, Vicki. 2011. The McClymonts of Nabiac: Interracial Marriage, Inheritance and Dispossession in Nineteenth Century New South Wales Colonial Society. In *Rethinking the Racial Moment, Essays on the Colonial Encounter*. Newcastle on Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 125–156.
- Hall, Dianne. 2014. Now him white man, Images of the Irish in Colonial Australia. *History Australia* 11: 167–95. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Harpur, N. 2004. Going ... Six Feet Under. *The Log Book*, December. 5–12.
- Hercus, Luise, and Peter Sutton. 1986. *This is What Happened*. Canberra: AIATSIS, pp. 3–4.
- James, Regina. 2005. *Losing Our Heads, Beheading in Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, p. 13.
- Krichauff, Skye. 2011. *Memory, Place and Aboriginal—Settler History, Understanding Australians’ Consciousness of the Colonial Past*. London: Anthem.

⁹⁹ (Powell 2006).

¹⁰⁰ (Slater 2019).

- Lake, Marilyn. 1986. Historical Considerations IV, The Politics of Respectability, Identifying the Masculinist Context. *Historical Studies* 22: 116–31. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Lake, Marilyn, and Reynolds Henry. 2008. *Drawing the Global Colour Line*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Lester, Marlene, ed. 2001. *The Glasscott Diaries*. Sydney: Self Published.
- Lloyd, David. 2011. *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 65.
- Mann, Michael. 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: The Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing*. Los Angeles: UCLA.
- McGrath, Ann. 2010. 'Shamrock Aborigines. The Irish; the Aboriginal Australians and their children'. *Aboriginal History* 34: 55–84. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Millis, Roger. 1992. *Waterloo Creek*. Sydney: McPhee Gribble.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2003. I still call Australia Home: Indigenous belonging and place in a white postcolonizing society. In *Uprootings/Regroundings, Questions of Home and Migration*. Edited by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castaneda and Anne MareeFortier. Mimi Sheller Oxford: Berg, pp. 23–40.
- Moses, Dirk. 2013. 'Genocide'. *Australian Humanities Review* 55: 31–54.
- Nayutah, Jolanda, and Gail Finley. 1988. *Minjungbal*. Lismore: North Coast Institute for Aboriginal Community Education.
- Nora, Pierre. 1996. General Introduction: Between Memory and History. In *Realms of Memory*. Edited by D. Lawrence Kritzman. New York: Conflicts and Divisions, Columbia University Press, vol. 1.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis B. 2011. *The Postcolonial Turn*. Langaa, Leiden: African Studies Centre.
- Park, Ruth. 1993. *Fishing in the Styx*. Sydney: Penguin.
- Park, Augustine S. J. 2015. Settler Colonialism and the Politics of Grief, Theorizing and Decolonizing transitional Justice for Indian Residential Schools. *Human Rights Review* 16: 273–93. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Poirteir, Cathal. 1995. *Famine Echoes*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, p. 208.
- Powell, Elizabeth Caroline. 2006. The Political Use of 'Family Values' Rhetoric. Communication thesis, Scholarworks, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, USA.
- Reece, Bob. 1974. *Aborigines and Colonists*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Reynolds, Henry. 1981. *The Other Side of the Frontier*. Townsville: James Cook University Press.
- Reynolds, Henry. 2013. *The Forgotten War*. Sydney: New South.
- Roberts, Stephen H. 1964. *The Squatting Age in Australia*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Sagan, Scott D. 2017. The Face of Battle without the rules of War: Lessons from Red Horse and the Battle of Little Bighorn. *Daedalus* 146: 25–43. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Schlunke, Katrina. 2005. *Bluff Rock, Autobiography of a Massacre*. Curtin: Fremantle Arts Press.
- Sleeter, Christine. 2016. Critical Family History, Situating Family within Contexts of Power Relationships. *Journal of Multi disciplinary Research* 8: 11–24.
- Slater, Lisa. 2019. Good White People: Settler Colonial Anxiety and the Endurance of Racism. *Emotions, Culture, Society* 3: 266–81. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Sturma, Michael. 1983. *Vice in a Vicious Society*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Verhoeven, Claudia. 2009. *The Odd Man: Karakozov, Imperial Russia, Modernity and the Birth of Terrorism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. 7.
- Waterson, Duncan B. 1968. *Squatter, Selector, Storekeeper, A History of the Darling Downs*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.
- Weiner, James F. 2011. The appropriation of an Aboriginal Landscape in Northern New South Wales. *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 22: 189–202. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wilson, Ross. 2010. The Popular Memory of the Western Front, Archaeology and European Heritage. In *Culture, Heritage and Representation*. Edited by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson. London: Ashgate, pp. 75–103.

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



© 2020 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).