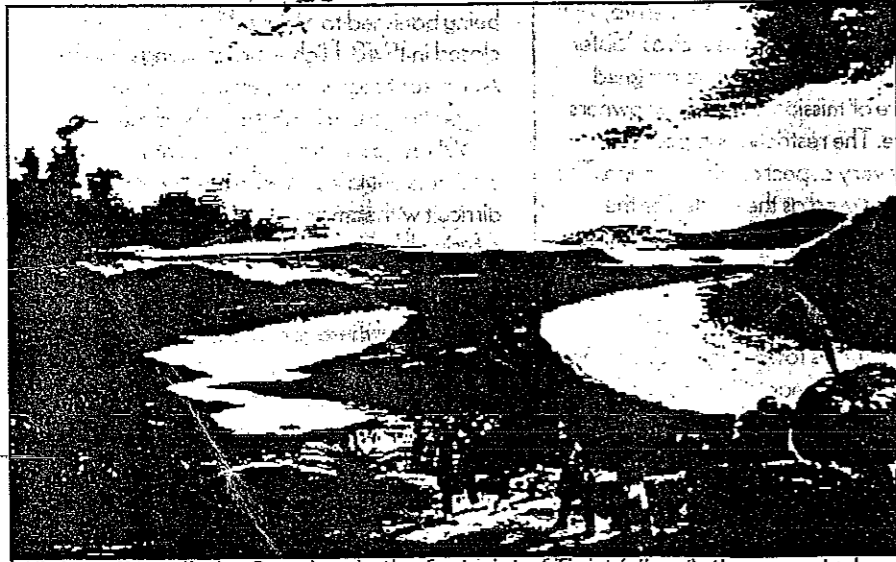


A Noongar Geography of Albany

and A Noongar History of Strawberry Hill



Tjuirtgellong (Lake Seppings) - the footprint of Tjuirt (*djarat*), the ancestral hero who created the South Coast - from a painting by de Sainson Courtesy National Library of Australia

Noongar is the collective name of the Aboriginal people of the south west. The Noongar people were a confederation of 11 (possibly more) independent communities. Noongar names for places were often recorded by early settlers but not always adopted officially.

The names on the map come from two sources. One is a list collected in the 1870's by A.Y. Hassell (original source unknown). The other was recorded by Mrs Augusta Bird at Strawberry Hill in conversation with Wandinyil probably around the turn of the Century. Most of the translations are by Bob Howard and are derived from a variety of sources.

Noongar words in *italics* are from the 1992 Noongar Dictionary which has the first realistic lexicography. The original spelling in the above sources has been retained (in **bold type**) except for Binalup (Middleton Beach) which has replaced Beermoulop in current documents.

Kincinnup or (Kin-gil-yilling in Daisy Bates' work) is a Noongar name for Albany first recorded in 1840. The name is thought to derive from *kin* (nothing dead), *ken* dance. It is thought to refer to the Sunday Parade of soldiers organized by Mathew Flinders (the first British person to contact the local people), which was later commemorated in a dance performed by Noongar people up until the 1930's.

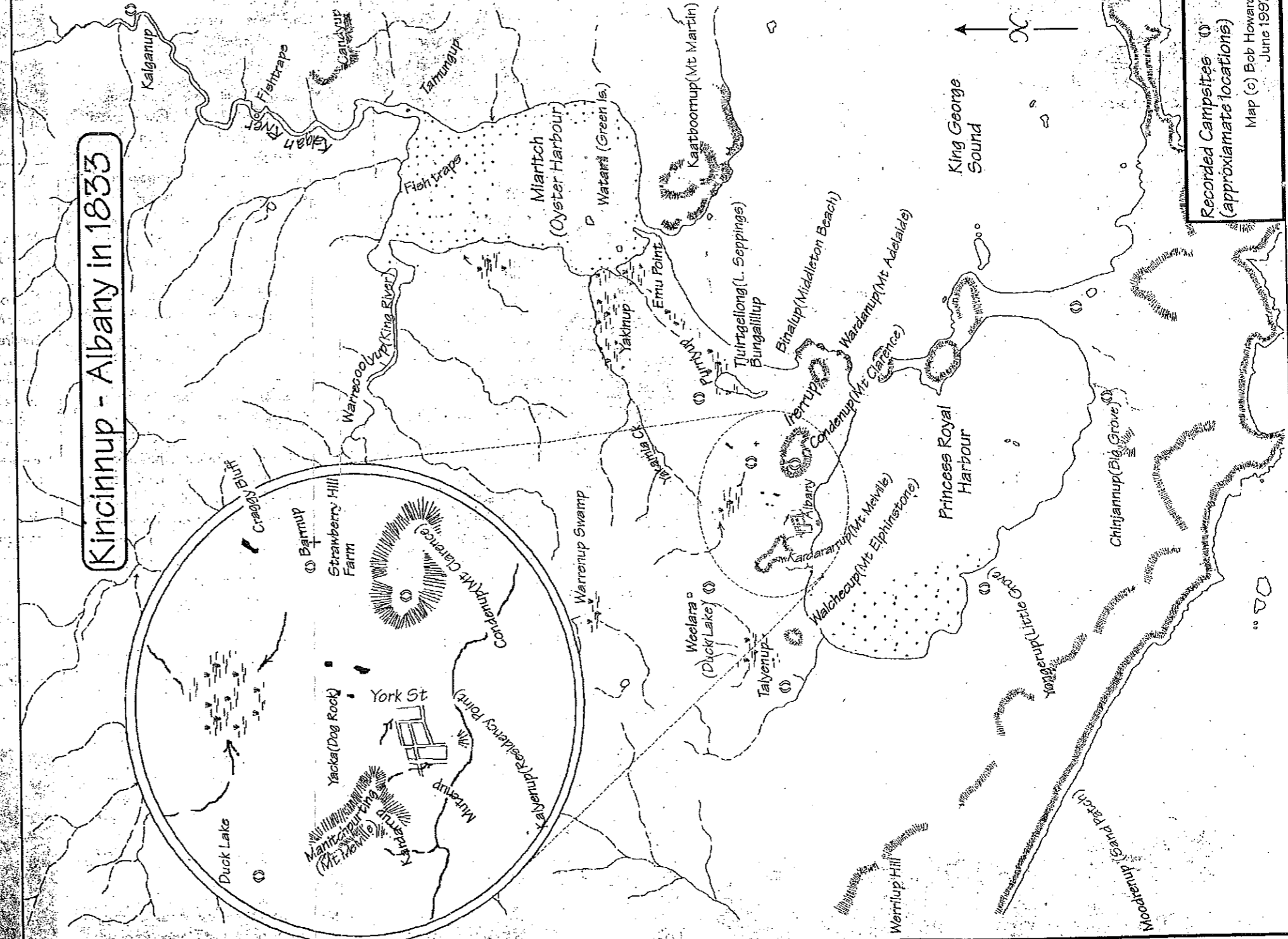
Special thanks to the Elders of the Albany Noongar community for their guidance and comments, also to Harley Coyne, Brenda Dean for their support, the members of the Strawberry Hill management committee and Shirley Gallagher at Edith Cowan University for her patience. The map and history are the work of Bob Howard. The project was supported by a grant from the Australia Foundation.

Tjuirtgellong, the mouth of the **Kalgan River**, means 'receding (i.e. tidal) waters'. **Kalganup** means either 'first camp (*kaigan* = fire-one) or is a corruption of *kaida* = salmon. This camp marked the meeting place for locals and visitors from the north and east. This camp site on the site of the present day **Kalgan Hall** has been dated back to 18,850 years b.p. and is the oldest continuously used meeting place in Australia.

The places around the **King River** and **Oyster Harbour** are associated with a Dreamtime story about 'Wart' and 'Watami', the bronze winged pigeon couple, who fought over food at her camp near Mt. Barker (*Yokerlip*, Mt Barrow). Watami the wife was clubbed and chased by her husband, Wart. She dragged herself (*Warrecoolyup* walked badly) her tracks making the **King River** until she eventually died at **Green Island** (*Watami*). Her dog and son went searching for her and the dog dug out **Oyster Harbour** in pursuit of his dead mistress. The tears (*Miaritch*) of her son filled the harbour. The son pursued his father to avenge his mother and speared him in the **Stirling Ranges** at **Youngmerre** ('man spear').

Kaat-boornup (**Mt Martin**) translates as wooded head (or hill). The land on the Eastern side of the Harbour belonged to Mokare's uncle, **Oolibun**. One of his descendants known as **Candyup** 'Bobby' was fighting for the return of his ancestral land around the turn of century. Candyup is probably of Noongar origin although local historians have argued that it was named after 'Glen Candy' by **Yakinup** refers to the lower reaches of **Yakamia Creek** and refers to the long necked tortoise (*Yakin*) found there.

Binalup (**Middleton Beach**) comes from *'bina'* meaning 'morning light'. **Tjuirtgellong** means 'where Tjuirt (*djarat*) walked (*koorliny*)' and refers to the shape of Lake Seppings which resembles a footprint. **Tjuirt** (*djarat*) was the ancestral hero whose travels created the South Coast. **Bungallilup** is an alternative name for Lake Seppings, possibly meaning 'separated by a short distance (from the sea)'. **Purrilup** (the swamp downstream from Lake Seppings) meaning is unknown.



Duck Lake (recently renamed **Weelara**) was, historically, the focus of the main Noongar town camp and a traditional camp site.

Manichpurting (**Mt. Meiville**). Manichpurting means 'cockatoo boasting'. The white cockatoo (little corella) was widespread in the SW prior to European settlement. There is a story of the cockatoo and the eagle boasting to each other about who had the better home and life.

Walcheup (**Mt Elphinstone**) (eagle = *warrily*) is the eagle's home and from Frenchman's Bay one can see, in the shapes of the rocks, the two eagles sitting on their nest of stone eggs.

Kardarrup is another name for Manichpurting which is where the racehorse *goanna* (*Kardarr*) still lives. **Mutenup** refers to small black ants and may relate to the Kardarr's habit of burying its eggs in certain varieties of ants nests.

Kayenup is probably a reference to European occupation. ('*kal*' = camp site, home, fire) since **Reedency Point** is not recorded as a Noongar camp site. However, **Condenuup** (**Mt. Clarence**) which refers to huts (*kont* = camp, nest, hut) may well refer to a Noongar camp site on the summit painted by Ensign Dale in his panorama painted in 1835.

Barnup is the name of Mullet's camping ground next to **Strawberry Hill Farm** camping ground and also refers to the hill (**Craggy Bluff**) - its meaning is uncertain.

Yacka (**Dog Rock**) refers to wild dog, originally recorded as 'yaccan toort', the site was regarded as dangerous and sacred. It is said that certain elders from the Kimberley Region regard Yacka as an originating point for some of their Dreaming stories.

Watonup (**Mt Adelaide**) is derived from *'Wairiny'* meaning 'looking for', which is related to **Wardang** the crow. An alternative name for Mt. Adelaide is **Irenup** derived from *'yira'* meaning 'light' or 'above'. **Wardang** (the crow; the watcher) and **Manitch** (the cockatoo; the manager) were symbols of the universe totemic division of the universe and family relationships into two halves, here represented by the two hills **Mt. Adelaide** and **Mt Meiville**.

Yonglirup (**Little Grove**) refers to the male kangaroo and **Warrenup** (Swamp) refers to the female kangaroo. **Chinjannup** (**Big Grove**) is derived from *'jin'* foot, *'jank'* ghost and possibly refers to Vancouver's arrival in 1792. He did not meet any people but visited and had a sketch drawn of the village at Big Grove and presumably left plenty of footprints.

The meanings of **Moodrenup** (**Sand Patch**) and **Weelilup** are uncertain.

A NOONGAR HISTORY OF THE OLD FARM AT STRAWBERRY HILL (BARMUP)



Pen and ink sketch by G. Scott Morrison (1831) of wattle and daub cottage at Strawberry Hill built by Dr. Collie. Courtesy Strawberry Hill Farm

Around the time (1827) that Major Lockyer was establishing the first British military garrison in the west at Albany, a Noongar boy was born and named Wandinyil by his parents. He was, possibly, a child of Mullet and Nulloch, Mokare's sister and brother-in-law who lived at Barmup, the Noongar camping ground that was adjacent to the site of Strawberry Hill Farm.

Mokare is remembered because of his linguistic skills and his work as a guide for the newcomers. Such was the impression he made that the first Government Resident, Dr. A. Collie, requested that he be buried next to Mokare when he was dying of Tuberculosis in 1833.

Initially, Lockyer established a garden on Green Island in Oyster Harbour where the soil was enriched by copious bird droppings. However the limitations of the island soon became apparent and Captain Wakefield, who took over after Lockyer departed, set about clearing the land at Strawberry Hill because the soil was the best available.

Wandinyil's brothers and uncles helped the soldiers and convicts clear the land in return for rations and there began a relationship between the people of the farm and the traditional owners.

Mokare and his brothers were the owners of the land around King George Sound at the time of Lockyer's arrival. According to Nebinyan, talking to Daisy Bates around 1907, there were three main family groups, that made up the Mineng community; Wandinyil's (Mokare's) family which owned the land around Princess Royal Harbour, Wabbinyet's family which was based to the east around between Torbay and Denmark (Warrangain) and Nebinyan's family which was based at Yilbering (Two People's Bay).

Collectively, these people were the Mineng Noongar. Mineng means south and also refers to Meen, the red root of *Haemadorum spicatum* which grows prolifically around Albany.

Relations between Mokare's family and the newcomers were uniquely friendly for a number of reasons. The garrison that was here for three years provided protection from the raids of lawless sealers and whalers and occupied only 40 acres of land. (In comparison, the Swan River colony had occupied 1000 acres within six months of its establishment.) The Mineng people, as a group, were relatively small in numbers compared to their neighbours. Mokare, in particular, welcomed them after Lockyer dramatically rescued his sister, from Michaelmas Island where she had been kidnapped and 'grievously abused' by a sealer only days before Lockyer's arrival.

A consequence of Mokare's friendship with the *djangs*, the ghosts, was that he was increasingly ostracized by the wider Noongar community. Influenza and whooping cough came with the first troops and had spread quickly with fatal results. Unfamiliar deaths were uncommon and were normally attributed to sorcery and were the occasion for revenge attacks.

In September 1830 a few months after the Swan River colony was established there was a gathering of Noongar elders and doctors at Kojonup from throughout the south west. This meeting appears to have been called to acknowledge the true source of these new diseases. In all probability it also marked the beginning of organized resistance to the invasion of their ancestral land. Following the meeting Mokare informed Captain Barker that he could no longer leave the settlement for fear of his life.

By 1833, Wandinyil, still a young boy, had probably already acquired the European name of Tommy. He helped Sir Richard Spencer plant a Norfolk Island Pine tree in the grounds of his newly acquired farm at Strawberry Hill. The Pine tree is still standing today and is the oldest exotic plant in Albany. Sir Richard Spencer died in 1838 soon after establishing the first sheep run in the district at St. Werburgh's on the upper Hay River.

In the same year (1838) fighting broke out in the hinterland as Noongar warriors attacked the farm at St. Werburgh's spearing sheep on what they regarded as their land. A pitched battle was waged against the Wilmen near Mt. Barker in 1840 where they were taught a 'terrible lesson' the numbers killed is unreported. By 1840

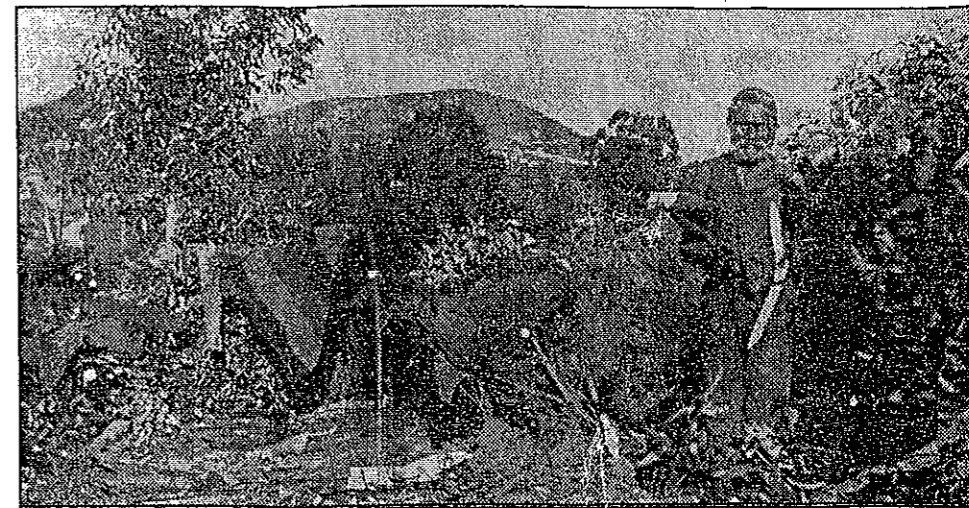
the military was employed full time protecting the various small holdings that were being established throughout the hinterland. Guerrilla war continued up until 1890's with sporadic reports of atrocities and occasional massacres of Noongar people. Oral Noongar tradition has it that the Denmark area was taboo for many years following a massacre around the 1880's.

In 1851, a school (Native Institution) was established by the wife of the Government resident, Mrs. Camfield to teach reading and writing to Noongar children. The school struggled on for the next 15 years - relying on charity for its work. Tommy (Wandinyil) was briefly one of its students. Like many other young men he found himself a prisoner on Rottnest Island for a couple of years.

In the same year, 1851, Lindool, a local Noongar, returned from a whaling trip with 15 Pounds in his pocket and threw a slap up meal for Noongar and Wadjila (white fella) alike that was the talk of the town for many years thereafter. This started a tradition of Noongar involvement in the on shore whaling industry. For the next 40 years, whilst the right whale lasted in the inshore waters, Noongar men made up a significant proportion of the local whaling crews. One of the most persistent figures in this work is Tommy (aka Billy) now known as Tommy King, the "King" of the Albany Noongars. In Daisy Bates work she often records his name as Wandinyil-mernong that is "Wandinyil of the Mineng"

In 1901, Tommy King was asked to address the crowd at Proclamation Day as a representative of his race where he asked for better treatment for his people and more rations. On another occasion he was introduced to the Governor of the day who was visiting Albany. He is reported as saying "You - all the same as me - you white fella king - I'm King Tom, tixty pibelsid years of age - an old chettler (settler). King of my tribe - very small tribe - getting very old like me"

Wandinyil was not the last of the Mineng nor indeed one of the last Noongars as was popularly believed at the time. He died in 1903. The imminent extinction of the Noongar people was widely predicted and used as an argument in support of independence from Britain and for the introduction of the draconian Aborigines



Wandinyil at a bush camp on Mt Melville possibly late 1890's. Photo courtesy Battye Library

Acts of 1905 (later the Native Welfare Act).

Many of the traditional camping sites were closed down and over the next 20 years Noongar people were herded onto Carrolup (near Katanning) and Moore River Missions. Families were broken up, with children being sent to homes such as "Sister Kates" in Perth and adults were assigned into the care of missionaries, station owners or the State. The restrictions imposed governed every aspect of Noongar life. The Act was later used as the model for the Apartheid Laws introduced to South Africa in the late 1940's.

Because of Noongar people's value as seasonal labourers town camps such as the one at Duck Lake near the corner of Albany and South Coast Highways survived but conditions were often desperate. With the coming of the railway and the opening up of the Great Southern, the remaining hunting grounds were alienated and the traditional culture and language were driven underground.

Although Noongar soldiers were denied the benefits given to other Australian soldiers the improved economic conditions after WWII meant that more and more Noongar people were able to find steady work in the broader community. Young men and women were no longer under threat of being banished to Moore River after it was closed in 1948. High court challenges to the Act meant that work permits were no longer necessary by the middle of the 1950's although equal pay was not available until 1966. Schooling was still difficult with some rural communities still refusing Noongar children access to school in the 1950 and 60's.

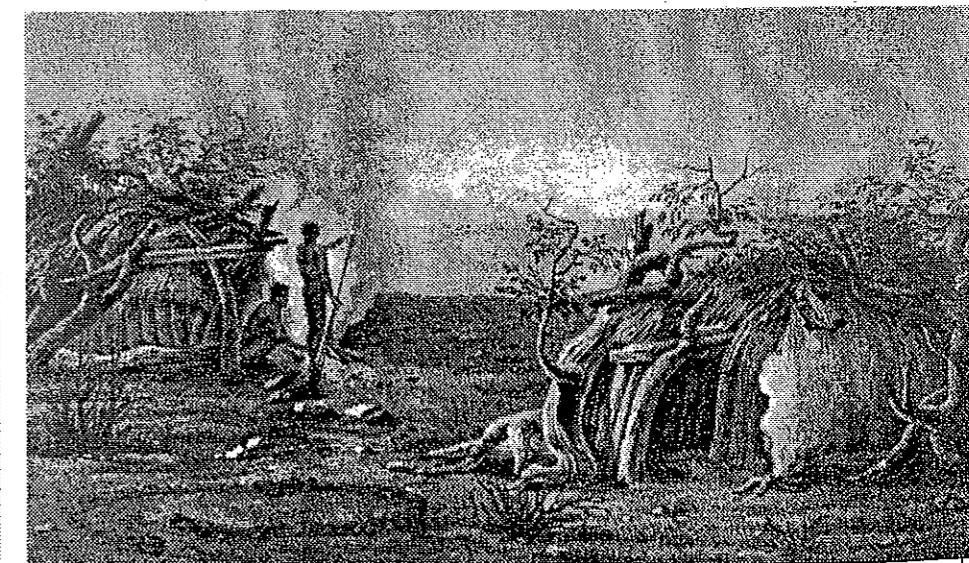
In spite of all these privations some local Noongar families were able to save enough money to put a deposit on their own home by this time. The first time since the previous Century. Noongar people acquired land in Albany under British Titles as early as 1840 and are consistently noted as landowners until the 1890's and the enforced dispossession that followed from the Native Welfare Act.

Bob Howard



The last harvest at Strawberry Hill in the early 1900's, the Barmup camp site was under the trees to the left of the farmhouse Photo courtesy Battye Library

Wandinyil around 1900 (note the kangaroo bone needle (puitt) holding blanket Courtesy Albany Library Local Studies Collection



De Sainson's painting of Noongar mias (huts) at Albany - note the use of grass tree stems in the hut on the left. Photo reproduction courtesy Battye Library