

Notes for Teachers

Oral History Study

of

STORIES ABOUT THE EUROBODALLA BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

2006

Eurobodalla Shire Council / NSW Department of Environment & Heritage / Susan Dale Donaldson of Environmental & Cultural Services.

This booklet has been compiled using publicly available documents, as acknowledged.

It is a comprehension and teaching study using actual stories by local Eurobodalla Aboriginal elders, aimed at Stage 4 and lower Stage 5 students.

There are multiple purposes for the booklet.

It is designed, firstly, to educate all students about the history of some recent descendants of the original inhabitants of the Eurobodalla, to look at the social history of the area through the eyes of Aboriginal inhabitants and to create talking points in classrooms about various issues.

Secondly, the booklet aims to provide comprehension exercises based around an oral history tradition, which is an unusual opportunity for students given that prepared teaching materials using this methodology are few.

Thirdly, it is written so that class discussion around questions that are not explicitly answered in the text will provide teaching opportunities about post-first contact history, changing public perceptions about Aboriginal Australians, government doctrine and policy and historical prejudice.

Finally, and just as importantly, the booklet is expressly written so as to try and engage Aboriginal students in English comprehension as well as the history of their families and relatives in the Eurobodalla. It is hoped that it also encourages a sense of pride in the Aboriginal community.

The booklet has been prepared with the utmost respect for the persons interviewed, their ancestors and their descendants. It is written on and about land that is the traditional home of various clans of the Yuin nation, but predominantly the Walbanja and Brinja-Yuin people.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The booklet contains references to Aboriginal people, some of whom are deceased and others who live in the region.

STORIES ABOUT THE EUROBODALLA BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE I

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Lionel Mongta

Lionel Mongta was born in Orbost, Victoria, in 1936. Lionel would have been born at Tilba Tilba, but his mother, Zeta Andy had to go south when she was 6 months pregnant. Tragically, Lionel's mother was unable to care for him so Nurse Smith cared for Lionel during the first few years of his life. At the age of two Lionel's mother's sister, Lizzie Davis [nee Andy] took him to 'the Pines', a farm at Central Tilba, where he lived with his mother's family.

Zeta Andy was born at Potato Point and his father Les Mongta from East Gippsland. They married in Central Tilba in the early 1930s. Lionel's mother's father was Bob Andy, a well-known tracker and his maternal grandmother was Mary Ellen Piety, an Aboriginal midwife who worked at the Corkhill's farm in Tilba Tilba.

Lionel recalls camping along the Tuross River at the Lavis's farm, in the late 1940s picking peas and beans and fishing. Bob Andy, Lionel's grandfather also camped there, they were ploughmen, and every farm needed them. They used Clydesdale horses to pull the plough, Lionel remembers having the task of picking up the rocks behind them. They would drag the rocks in a sledge type frame made from a fork in a tree. To keep the kids interested in the job, Bob Andy would ask the kids to 'go and spear some fish for lunch', so after lunch the kids would work again. Bob Andy told Lionel of how generations of Koori families camped at the same location.

In 1942 at the age of 6, Lionel moved to Moruya, to live with his grandmother's family the Brierley and Davis'. Throughout his childhood, Lionel travelled regularly between Garland Town and Central Tilba, schooling at Newstead when in Garland town and at Wallaga Lake School when living at Central Tilba. In 1946 Lionel and his brothers, Lyle [dec] and Wally [dec] attended Central Tilba School for two hours. Due to racial segregation the boys were forced to walk daily to the Aboriginal School at Wallaga Lake. It was in Moruya that Lionel first met his sleeper-cutting father; Lionel was 15 at the time.

Lionel often stayed with the Duren and Sutton families in Sydney. Throughout his life Lionel has camped and fished at many places along the coast including Poole's Point, Tilba Lake, Wallaga Lake, Jamison's Point, Brou Lake, Whittakers Creek, Corunna Lake, Potato Point and Blackfella's Point. Lionel continues to live in Bodalla with his wife Mary.

1. With whom did Lionel live after the age of 2, and why?

2. Mary Ellen Piety was an Aboriginal midwife. What does a midwife do? Why do you think an Aboriginal midwife was so important to local communities?

3. Why did Lionel and his brother go to school at Wallaga Lake? How did they get there?

4. Under what circumstances do you think that Lionel had not gotten to meet his father until he was aged 15?

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Note: Be aware that Aunty Coopy passed away in 2016.

GEORGINA 'COOPY' PARSONS

Georgina Parsons was born in the 'Batemans Bay bush hospital' in 1939. Georgina presumes she was born in the 'bush' in the Hanging Rock area [Catalina] where her family lived at the time of her birth. Her sister called her 'Coopy' because she had a black curl in the middle of her forehead, like a Kewpie doll. The name has remained ever since. Georgina's mother was Jessie Chapman and father George 'Bimmy' Parsons.

In 1921 when Jessie Chapman was 8 years old, government officials took her away from Wreck Bay where she was living with her family. She was taken to Cootamundra Girls Home; they cut her hair, so she looked like a boy. She lived in the home until she was 14 at which time the government had her do domestic work for white families. She made her way home, back down the coast, stopping with family along the way, meeting George Parsons in Nowra. She was pregnant at the time from her former 'white boss' and married George Parsons in 1937.

George Parsons was born behind the Eden wood chip mill, whilst George's father, Daniel Parsons was a Whaler from Eden, living for a period of time at 'Millards' camp in Milton. Jessie Chapman was born in Batemans Bay and died at Nerrigundah, whilst she was working there. Jessie Chapman's mother, Amy Hayes was from Lake Tyers, Victoria; Jessie's father was William Chapman born in Moruya. Amy Hayes and William Chapman married in Moruya on the 18.9.1895. Georgina's great great great grandfather was Paddy Haddigaddi; he was married to Sarah Haddigaddi and was shot in the Wallaga Lake area.

Georgina grew up along the coast including at places such as Hanging Rock and Catalina in the Batemans Bay area; Ryan's Creek and Pedro Point in the Moruya area, and Congo, Kelly's Lake, Meringo and Shelley Beach, where Georgina's father made a bush hut for his family. In 1952 aged 13, Georgina moved to Wallaga Lake with her family where she attended Wallaga Lake School. With her mother and father, Georgina travelled along the coast between Eden and Ulladulla, camping at 'main' campsites such as Bingi, Mystery Bay, Congo, and Tuross. Pickers and growers would transport the family on their way to the next farm.

The family worked in the seasonal farming industry as well as saw milling. They picked peas at Nerrigundah, tomatoes at Bingi and peas and beans in Moruya. In 1955 George Parsons worked at the Dignams Creek Sawmill and the family worked at a near by farm. Georgina recalls travelling from Nerrigundah to the Monarch Hotel, Moruya when she first turned 18. She was not served alcohol because she did not have an 'exemption certificate' or 'dog tag'. As a result of the prejudices experienced at the public bar, Georgina returned to Nerrigundah.

1. What are the various jobs that Georgina' family worked at?

2. Why do you think Georgina can only presume where she was born?

3. Why do you think Georgina's place of birth, the 'Batemans Bay bush hospital' referred to in inverted commas?

4. Referring to Sheet I of this booklet (Stories About the Eurobodalla – Lionel Mongta), what medical care do you think might have been present for Georgina and her mother at Georgina's birth?

5. In your own words, recount Jessie Chapman's story as revealed in the text.

6. What are some of the jobs that might be involved in Jessie's "domestic work for white families"?

7. The Monarch Hotel still exists in Moruya. Why do you think that Georgina was refused alcohol there when she turned 18 years old?

8. In your opinion, would this still occur in modern times? Justify your answer (that is, answer why or why not).

9. Describe the barriers to full participation in society experienced by Georgina and her family.

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MAUREEN DAVIS

Maureen Davis was born in Moruya in 1952. Her mother, Amelia 'Millie' Ann Andy was born in Central Tilba in 1928 attended school at both Wallaga Lake and Turlinjah. Millie was the eldest child of Zeta Andy and Les Mongta. Zeta's mother was Mary Ellen Andy [nee Piety] and her father was Robert 'Gorry' Andy. Mary Ellen was a midwife who delivered her grand daughter Millie. Millie's guardian was Mary Elizabeth Davis [nee Andy] and husband Edward (Gundy) Davis, 'Aunty Lizzie' to Maureen. Aunty Lizzie also took responsibility for Walter, Lionel and Lyle Mongta. Millie also spent much of her growing up years at Wallaga Lake with Ernest Andy and Winifred Bloxsom, Beryl Brierley's parents.

Maureen's father was Walter 'Roy' Davis, born in Sydney in 1927. He attended school at Newstead School and the Moruya Catholic School. Roy's father was Walter Davis and mother Elizabeth Jane Davis [nee Brierley], 'Nan and Pop' to Maureen. Roy was a fisherman, a saw miller, cedar cutter and a mechanic, growing up at Garland Town, Moruya.

Elizabeth Jane was born in Moruya and was known by her second name [different person to Jane Hickey (nee Brierley) who was Walter Brierley's sister]. Jane also attended Newstead Public School. Jane's father was Walter Brierley and mother Catherine Duren, 'Ma and Pa' to Maureen. Ma Brierley was the daughter of Jane Duren [nee Piety] and John Duren. Pa Brierley's father was Oswald Walter Brierley and mother Elisa Penrith daughter to Elizabeth Penrith [nee Mumbler] and William Penrith.

Maureen grew up in Moruya until the age of 14, around 1966 moving to Sydney. Maureen returned to Moruya at the age of 16 in 1968 and had 3 children Ursula, Craig and Paul. Later, Maureen had a further 3 children, Julie, Robert and Kerry. Maureen currently lives in Moruya with her extended family.

1. Who were Maureen's grandparents?

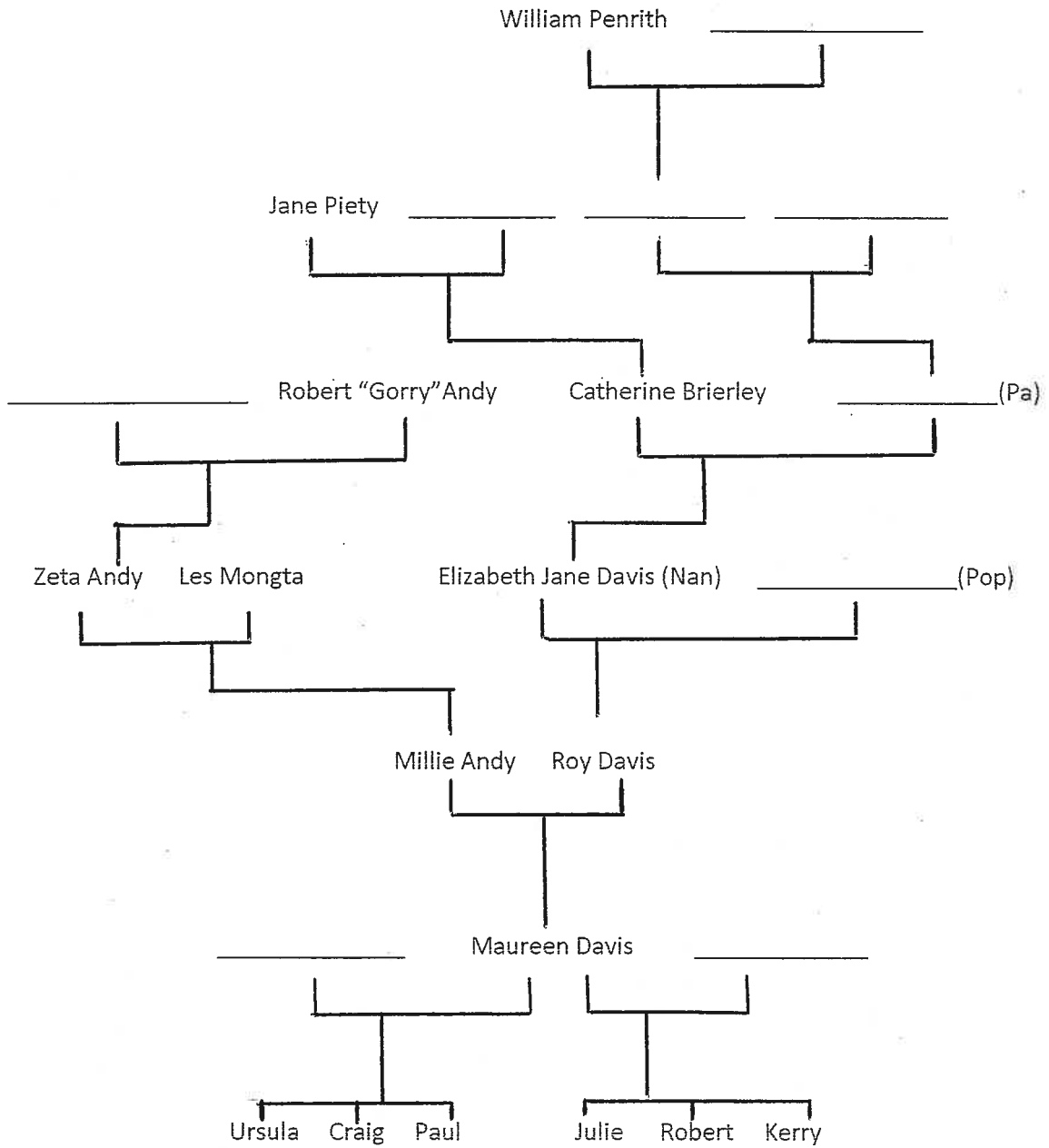
2. What was Maureen's Aunty Lizzie's real name? _____
3. As well as Maureen, which kids did Aunty Lizzie also look after?

4. Who was Maureen's father and what jobs did he work at over the years?

5. Maureen's family history crosses over with that of another person in this booklet. Who was it and what was their relationship? What was the age difference?

Family Tree for Maureen Davis

Task: Fill in the missing people on Maureen's family tree



1. Could you complete every space on the family tree? _____
2. Why or why not? _____
3. Where do you think you might find the names of Maureen's missing ancestors?

**STORIES ABOUT THE EUROBODALLA BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IV
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MERVYN CHARLES PENRITH

Mervyn Charles Penrith was born in Berry in 1941. He would have been born in Nowra, but his mother, being Aboriginal, was not permitted into the hospital there. He was named after his mother's two brothers, Mervyn and Charles Penrith. His mother was Ruby Penrith. Ruby Penrith's father was Bert Penrith, born on the banks of Dignams Creek, which runs into Wallaga Lake. Mervyn's father was Hector Stewart from Batemans Bay. Hector's father was Henry Stewart. Mervyn came to Wallaga Lake to live permanently in 1953, aged 12.

Mervyn's grandparents, and others from their generation, worked for the farmers at Tilba Tilba. During the 1950s and 1960s Mervyn regularly walked through Wallaga Lake in search of oysters, Mussels, bimbullas. His elders took him up Gulaga, and passed on the cultural significance of the place to him.

Mervyn helped Ted Thomas and Percy Mumbler to protest against a Japanese company logging on Gulaga [and Biamanga] Mountains. The company was blowing up sacred rocks and knocking down sacred trees. Mervyn Penrith, Shirley Foster, Kevin Gilbert and Ronald McLeod took a signed petition to the Japanese Embassy in Canberra.

The logging was stopped and the process to return the ownership of the two mountains back to Aboriginal people began. Mervyn was delighted to speak at the recent hand back of Gulaga and Biamanga Mountains to Aboriginal custodians.

Merv and his partner Shirley Foster frequently take their children, and grandchildren to camp and fish at Tilba Lake. They also go to Mystery Bay and 1080 Beach and teach their children and grandchildren about the significance of the land, including Gulaga, Baranguba and Najanuka. Mervyn and Shirley continue to reside at the Wallaga Lake Community.

1. Describe the circumstances under which Mervyn came to be born at Berry.

2. In your own words, explain what the protest at Gulaga and Biamanga Mountains was about.

3. Why do you think Mervyn's elders took him up Gulaga? What sort of things do you think he might have learned?
