THE WIDOW AND THE CHILD

Jack Brook

Turandurey and Ballandella quietly entered Australian history on the 2 May 1836 through the journal of the Surveyor General, Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell. Here is part of what he wrote for that day:

... having found two ponds of water we encamped beside them, the local name of the situation being Combedyega. A fire was burning near the water, and at it sat a black child about seven or eight years old, quite blind. All the other natives had fled save one poor little girl still younger, who, notwithstanding the appearance of such strange beings, as we must have seemed to her, and the terror of those who fled, nevertheless lingered about the bushes, and at length took her seat beside the blind boy ... a dog so lean as scarcely to be able to stand, drew his feeble body close up beside the two children, as if desirous to defend them. They formed indeed a miserable group, exhibiting, nevertheless, instances of affection and fidelity, creditable both to the human and canine species. An old man came up to the fire afterwards, with other children. He told us the name of the water-holes between that place and the Murrumbidgee, but he could not be prevailed on to be our guide. Subsequently, however, a gin¹ who was a widow, with the little girl above-mentioned, whose age might be about four years, was persuaded by him to accompany us.²

The little girl was called Ballandella and her mother Turandurey, whom Mitchell in his journal usually called 'the widow'.

Barney, one of the Aboriginal guides, deserted the party on 7 May because he was anxious to have a *djin*.³ The sexual urge is a powerful emotion. A thick fog on the morning of the 10 May prevented the men of the exploration party getting the cattle together as early as usual so delaying their journey towards the Murrumbidgee, approximately eight miles distant. The delay proved providential, for it afforded Mitchell the opportunity to sketch 'the native female and the scenery around'.⁴ Turandurey with her daughter sitting upon her shoulders was captured on paper for posterity (Figure 1).

Eleven days later at a water crossing, an unfortunate almost fatal accident occurred. Ballandella fell from the cart upon which she was travelling. Some sudden fright caused her to turn round quickly and in so doing she became entangled with the bullock team and was

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¹ *Gin*. The spelling of this word varies; Mitchell spells it *gin* or *djin*, Stapylton either *gin* or *jin*.

² Mitchell 1839, II:60.

³ *Ibid.*:67.

⁴ *Ibid.*:69.

Mitchell's drawing of the widow and the child.
Courtesy Mitchell Library.

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thrown down under the draywheel, which passed over her thigh fracturing it in two places.⁵ The Major immediately rode to the scene of the accident and found Turandurey 'in great distress, prostrate in the dust, with her head [sic] under the limb of the unfortunate child'. Acting quickly, he ordered the expedition's medical attendant, John Drysdale, to set the bone. But, owing to the thigh having broken so close to the socket, difficulty was experienced bandaging the limb so as to keep the bone in place. Showing more than a hint of tenderness, Mitchell wrote, 'Every care, however, was taken of the poor little thing that circumstances would allow, and she bore the pain with admirable patience ...'⁶

Granville William Chetwynd Stapylton, surveyor and second-in-command of the expedition, noted that Turandurey showed 'true concern' for her child, and 'her language of endearment and soothing is peculiarly soft and musical'. He also recorded, she was 'now a feature' and it was his responsibility 'to keep off the Black Gentry'.⁷

When the Surveyor General departed for the Darling River on 23 May he directed Stapylton, who was to stay at the depot camp, to ensure the widow had rations and that every care should be taken of the child. Furthermore, Turandurey was to be prevented from 'going back', for to move the child could prove 'injurious' to her.⁸ Stapylton carried out his duties and tended to the needs of the 'poor piccaninny'. He lamented Ballandella's accident but believed it could 'prove somewhat providential and tend in a great degree to prevent collusion between the mother & some wild tribes of which there were evident signs of a commencement'.⁹

Even though Ballandella's patience and endurance to pain were exemplary, she was very uneasy on the 2 June, heaving and lifting the splints of her thigh and leg continuously. Possibly it only indicated boredom and the return of unbounded energy. Nevertheless, Stapylton was compelled to act as surgeon and readjust the splints but, sadly he noted, the foot was out of its proper position.¹⁰ From the surveyor's remark, one must conclude that Ballandella walked with a limp for the remainder of her life.

Following Mitchell's return to the depot on 10 June the explorers continued their journey southward, moving far beyond Turandurey's tribal boundaries. It was surely no surprise to members of the party when, on the night of 1 July, mother and child, aided by Piper's wife Kitty, stealthily left camp. Their escape was cunningly executed during a very severe frost for they were aware that by morning it would be almost impossible to track them. Mitchell showed some vexation when the matter was reported to him. His second-in-command could not conceive why, for he was of the opinion the Aboriginal women were 'utterly useless' and 'a severe Tax' upon the food supply.¹¹ The following day Piper tracked the runaways to the previous encampment and found them suffering from 'shockingly frostbitten' feet. Piper made a curious decision, for he left Turandurey where she was and returned to the camp with his wife and Ballandella.¹²

Stapylton believed Turandurey would die during the night alone in the bush without a fire and little protection against the severe cold. 'What then shall we do with the Picaninny',

⁵ Stapylton in Andrews 1986:74.

⁶ Mitchell 1839, II:86-7.

⁷ Stapylton 23 May, in Andrews 1986:74.

⁸ Mitchell 1839, II:88-9.

⁹ Stapylton in Andrews 1986:74.

¹⁰ Ibid.:93.

¹¹ Ibid.:124-5.

¹² Ibid.:124.

he confided to his diary. To let them go when they so desired would have been much wiser, thought the surveyor, 'and damn their collusion with the tribes'. As he saw it, the party was now 'saddled with two useless devils who must be carried on the Drays for the next fortnight'.¹³

The following morning, Turandurey returned 'with her feet in a most deplorable state'. She had survived the elements. It quickly became apparent that Piper's wife had urged the widow to leave the exploration party 'with the prudent intention of returning herself in order to sack the other ration of flour and meat'. Kitty was a thorough bitch in Stapylton's opinion. Turandurey held a similar belief for she 'sorely reproved' the other *djin* for her 'treacherous conduct'.¹⁴ In his memoirs Mitchell did not actually state that Turandurey ran away; he wrote that 'the widow was inclined to go back' for she was 'far beyond her own country'. He continued:

I intended to put her on a more direct and safe way home after we should pass the heads of the Murrumbidgee on our return, I could not detain her longer than she wished ...[She] seemed uneasy under an apprehension, that I wanted to deprive her of this child. I certainly had always been willing to take back with me to Sydney an aboriginal child, with the intention of ascertaining, what might be the effect of education upon one of that race. This little savage, who at first would prefer a snake or lizard to a piece of bread, had become so far civilised at length, as to prefer bread; and it began to cry bitterly on leaving us.¹⁵

On the cold, clear morning of 4 July Mitchell took the decided step of leaving Turandurey and Ballandella behind. Only after the 'earnest intercession' of Piper was his wife 'madame Kitty' permitted to accompany the expedition as it moved towards the southern coastline of the continent. Before departing, Mitchell gave the two abandoned Aboriginal females a present of shirts, flour and meat. Turandurey also acquired a tomahawk, and with it, she informed the party, she would cut a piece of bark from tree, place her daughter upon it, and, by swimming herself, gently push Ballandella across the Millewa (Murray River) and then make her tribe in four days. Fate decreed otherwise.¹⁶

Two days later, out of the darkness, Turandurey with her precious child clinging to her back, shuffled up to the expedition's evening camp fire. Stapylton was amazed and was of the opinion that the widow had crawled about 15 miles (25 km) on her hands and knees.¹⁷ If so, Turandurey's feat of endurance, determination and courage must take its place in the annals of Australian history as a feat of some magnitude.

Piper translated the exhausted woman's tale for Major Mitchell. She said that when she returned to the last encampment numerous Aborigines were gathering on the opposite bank of the river. When the tribesmen called out angrily 'who had made the fires' she was afraid, hid herself and remained silent. Receiving no reply the men 'danced a corrobury [sic] in a furious style'. While the men were so occupied, mother and child crept away. They had since spent two nights without fire in the rain. Crawling and stumbling throughout the daylight hours in much pain, she had doggedly followed the tracks of the white men to ensure for her child the comparative safety of the exploration party. Piper gave the impression of being

¹³ Ibid.:124-5.

¹⁴ Ibid.:126.

¹⁵ Mitchell 1839, II:162-163.

¹⁶ Ibid.: 163 and Stapylton in Andrews 1986:126.

¹⁷ Stapylton in Andrews 1986:127 and Mitchell 1839, II:165-6.

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'angry' at the widow's return. Mitchell insisted Turandurey be treated with as much kindness as before, remarking 'she was a women of good sense'.¹⁸

Shortly after the return of the widow and child two male Aborigines tried to decoy the women from the camp. The 'insidious wooers' were foiled when Turandurey gave the alarm.¹⁹ Four days later she fell off the dray and was lucky not to injure herself. Ballandella held on firmly, remembering her earlier mishap.²⁰

Leaving his second-in-command at the base camp, a decision which irked Stapylton, Mitchell travelled on and reached the coast of what is now Victoria at Portland. He was staggered to find the Henty brothers already established there. For one Aboriginal with Mitchell, 'Tommy-Came-last', it was his first view of the sea.²¹ On the explorer's return to base camp, and on previous occasions, Turandurey and Ballandella with uncanny senses gave notice of the party's approach long before men and horses appeared. Commenting on this Mitchell wrote, 'their quick ears seemed sensible of the sound of horses' feet at an astonishing distance, for in no other way, could the men account for the notice which Turandurey and her child, seated at their own fire, were always the first to give, of my return ...'²²

A week later, on the 7 September, the knowledge of the Aboriginal women, and their knowledge alone, helped solve a 'mystery' puzzling to both the European and Aboriginal men. A small bower of twigs was found, the floor of which was hollowed out and filled with dried leaves and feathers. The ground around had been cut smooth, several boughs also having been bent over it, so as to be fixed in the ground at both ends. 'The whole', recorded Mitchell, 'seemed connected with some mystic ceremony of the aborigines, but which the male natives, who were with us, could not explain'. On questioning the women they revealed 'it was usual to prepare such a bower for the reception of a new-born child'.²³

By the 17 September the expedition cattle were exhausted from continued heavy dragging through the muddy terrain and badly needed a period of time to recover. Mitchell, after 'mature deliberation' hit upon a plan. The plan was that he would proceed back to Sydney with the freshest cattle drawing the light carts loaded with a month's provisions. The remaining two months' provisions would remain with Stapylton's party, who were to camp beside a freshwater lake for a fortnight before following their leader. The lake was named Lake Repose (see Figure 2). Close to Mt. Abrupt, it was ideally suited for a rest camp. The Aboriginal guides arranged amongst themselves that 'Tommy-Came-first' and Turandurey, 'who most required a rest, having sore feet', should remain with Stapylton while the Aborigines, Piper, Kitty and 'Tommy Came-last', would accompany Mitchell.²⁴

When the expedition's leader wrote in his journal, 'we hit upon a plan', one would assume he had consulted his second-in-command and they had come to a mutual agreement. However, Stapylton's diary reveals this was not so, and he was suspicious of Mitchell's intentions. On hearing the news that he was to remain at Lake Repose, Stapylton angrily put pen to paper, writing:

18 Mitchell 1839,II:165.

19 Ibid.:180.

20 Stapylton in Andrews 1986:141.

21 Mitchell 1839, II:239.

22 Ibid.:244.

23 Ibid.:251-2.

24 Ibid.:262-4.

Route of Mitchell's exploring expedition 1836.

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This Homo is the most impenetrable I ever (heard) knew. He appears to be meditating me mischief notwithstanding he converses with me in a friendly manner -

His Despatch will settle this point, however I still Have the painful suspence to endure of being wholly ignorant of its contents untill I reach Sydney for he will take especial care (and I think I know the man pretty well by this time) to keep me in the dark on the subject until the last moment.²⁵

Stapylton's fears were unfounded, for he received a glowing report from his superior, who stated that he 'had reason to be well satisfied with the zeal and perseverance of Mr. Stapylton on all occasions'. Later, on being informed that Mitchell had spoken highly of him, Stapylton calmly wrote that 'if so some of my invective must be erased from this journal I dont like him notwithstanding ...'²⁶

With the departure of Mitchell on the 19 September the life of both the widow and her child took a dramatic change. Following the Surveyor General's departure from the Lake Repose camp, Stapylton jotted down in his journal 'the Mother Jin has (to me most unaccountably), made a present' of the picanninny 'to Major Mitchell (at least so I am informed)'.²⁷ Once again Mitchell did not inform Stapylton of what had transpired. This was one of Mitchell's shortcomings. He seldom consulted his subordinates and had a 'fatal inability' to delegate responsibility to them.²⁸

Granville Stapylton therefore was not to know the events which led to the parting of mother and child, but Mitchell reveals the scenario. He explained in the following entry from his journal dated 19 September:

When about to set out I observed that the widow 'Turandurey', who was to remain with Mr. Stapylton's party and the carts, was marked with white round the eyes (the natives' fashion of mourning), and that the face of her child Ballandella was whitened also. This poor woman, who had cheerfully carried the child on her back, when we offered to carry both on the carts, and who was as careful and affectionate as any mother could be, had at length determined to entrust to me the care of this infant. I was gratified with such a proof of the mother's confidence in us, but I should have been less willing to take charge of her child, had I not been aware of the wretched state of slavery to which native females are doomed. I felt additional interest in this poor child, from the circumstance of her having suffered so much by the accident, that befel her while with our party, and which had not prevented her from now preferring our mode of living so much, that I believe the mother at length despaired of being ever able to initiate her thoroughly in the mysteries of killing and eating snakes, lizards, rats and similar food. The widow had been long enough with us to be sensible, how much more her sex was respected by civilized men than savages, and, as I conceived, it was with such sentiments that she committed her child to my charge, under the immediate care, however, of Piper's gin.²⁹

This is a convincing and, I believe, a genuine report of what transpired at Lake Repose between the widow and the expedition's leader.

²⁵ Stapylton in Andrews 1986:186.

²⁶ Ibid.:234.

²⁷ Ibid.:187.

²⁸ Baker 1967.

²⁹ Mitchell 1839, II:265-6.

Continuing their homeward journey to Sydney, Mitchell's party took two days' rest near the Murrumbidgee River at a station under the care of a stockman named Billy Buckley. He gave them a cordial welcome whilst beating the ashes from a newly baked loaf, nearly two feet in diameter. While there, 'Little Ballandella' was taken great care of by 'Mrs. Piper' and feasted with milk. Her guardian wrote that she 'seemed quite happy'.³⁰ The last stages of the journey took the returning expeditionaries through the Yass, Bredalbane and Goulburn Plains and the towns of Berrima, Campbelltown and Liverpool (See Figure 2).

Stapylton and his group had cheerfully departed from the Lake Repose camp on the 3 October, and wended their way towards Sydney. By the 11 November they had reached the Murrumbidgee, and camped near 'Guy's Station'. The final passage in Stapylton's journal reads:

Turandurey has grown enormously fat which should speak well of the care we have taken of her & to the best of my recollection no improp[r]ieties with her as a female have ever taken place She was married the night before last to King Joey & she proceeds with him to his friends on the Lachlan I have given her two blankets having a superfluity now that the weather has become so hot The Piccaninny is kidnapped away to a station 10 miles distant. with this I have nothing to do [or much to] say nor will I let those who projected the measure & who carried it into execution be responsible to themselves and to the comments of the Public.³¹

In more recent years, when Stapylton's journal was published in book form, for the first time, a certain amount of controversy arose over the statement concerning the kidnapping of the piccaninny. The State Historian of Victoria, Dr. Bernard Barrett, described Stapylton's journal as putting 'a dent in Mitchell's halo'.³²

Mitchell, I am convinced, did not have Ballandella kidnapped nor did he coerce Turandurey into placing her child into his care. Turandurey, who Mitchell had said was a woman of good sense, had a problem. Before releasing her daughter into the Major's care she had considered her own position and particularly that of her child. Stapylton stated that Ballandella was 'kidnapped away to a station 10 miles distant', which indicated the Surveyor General had left the child, probably in Kitty's care, at the station close to the Murrumbidgee River, while he journeyed on to Sydney. If he had intended 'kidnapping' Ballandella he would have taken her with him to Sydney. Mitchell gave Turandurey every chance of reclaiming her daughter. Considering Turandurey's determination only five months earlier when she twice struggled valiantly, in sheer agony, for the sake of her daughter, what then motivated her to leave the child in the care of a white man? I suggest she was pregnant.

Let us look at the facts and circumstantial evidence in an endeavour to substantiate my hypothesis.

If pregnant was she in that condition before she encountered Mitchell's party or had someone taken advantage of her since that time? She joined the expedition on 2 May; therefore, by November, Turandurey would have had to be at least six full months into her confinement.

The Aboriginal guide Barney deserted the expedition on the 7 May only days after Turandurey became attached to the party. He absconded because he was 'anxious to have a *djin*'. Had he already satisfied his sexual desires by having intercourse with the widow? If this were the case, his sudden departure from the scene makes one suspect he may have

30 Ibid.:311.

31 Stapylton in Andrews 1986:235.

32 Barrett 1986.

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taken advantage of the widow and made his exit in fear of the repercussions if his actions were revealed.

I do not suspect a white member of Mitchell's expedition. In such a close-knit group, travelling through unknown country, it would be foolhardy and extremely difficult to get the closely guarded woman into a compromising situation. I submit the Aboriginal guide Piper as the other likely candidate.

On 1 July, mother and child absconded after Piper's wife had persuaded them. Piper may have told his wife to plant the idea of escape in the widow's mind. The only occasion he had Turandurey in a situation, without witnesses, was on 2 July, when he tracked down the escapees. To separate the widow from her daughter and his wife would not be difficult for the cunning guide. Callously he then left the woman to perish in the night. Stapylton believed she would die.

It was Piper's story, and his alone, that Turandurey's feet were so badly frostbitten she could not be moved. Yet, almost immediately after Piper left with her child she must have started to follow them. When the brave woman returned unexpectedly, Piper was reported to be 'angry'. His anger was vented upon himself. Fear and a guilty conscience were veiled as anger. He was afraid his actions would be reported to the Surveyor General.

One can now fully understand why Turandurey gave the alarm when the 'insidious wooers' attempted to decoy her and the other Aboriginal woman away. Three months later, with the knowledge she was pregnant and her daughter showing every indication of being a virtual cripple, Turandurey decided to release Ballandella to Major Mitchell's care.

Over five months had elapsed since the 2 July when Piper may have taken advantage of Turandurey, when Stapylton observed the widow had 'grown enormously fat'. His next statement was, 'to the best of my recollection no improp(r)eties with her as a female have ever taken place'. He was fully aware of Turandurey's condition. She had been under his supervision and it had been Stapylton's responsibility 'to keep off the Black Gentry'. Although he was blameless, he wasn't about to admit to the Surveyor General he had failed in one aspect of his duty. Turandurey's marriage to King Joey was a happy and convenient occasion for more than the bride and groom.

Mitchell was to write that he 'felt a degree of loss' in respect of the widow but was pleased she had remarried.³³ There is no material available concerning Turandurey's life following her marriage to King Joey. They probably returned to the Lachlan to eventually become 'lepers' in their own land when white settlers moved in with their sheep and cattle.

Ballandella 'was a welcome stranger' to Mitchell's children while the family resided in Sydney. Her guardian noted that she 'seemed to adopt the habit of domestic life *con amore*, evincing a degree of aptness which promised very favourably'. Seemingly she had her mother's good sense. When Mitchell left Sydney on 9 May 1837, to take eighteen months leave in England, the young Aboriginal girl was placed in the care of Dr. Charles Nicholson, later to become Sir Charles Nicholson. The expense of taking a large family to England was Mitchell's excuse for leaving poor Ballandella in Sydney.³⁴ Regretfully, one must conclude that the infant, although given love and attention by her guardian, was but an 'experiment' to him. He never intended her to be an adopted daughter. During Mitchell's absence Dr. Nicholson undertook the superintendence of Ballandella's education. Mitchell did

³³ Mitchell 1839, II:336.

³⁴ Ibid.:336.

Mitchell's drawing of John Piper alias Jemmy, 'Conqueror of the interior', 1836.
Courtesy Mitchell Library

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not return to Australia until 1841. Whether he showed any interest in her following his return is unknown.

At this juncture Ballandella becomes 'lost' to Australian history. However, Presbyterian Church records show she was baptised on 17 December 1839, Parish of Wiseman's Ferry, in the County of Lower Hawkesbury. Her christian name was given as 'Balendilla', and the record states: '(Supposed to be 8 years old, an Aboriginal girl, brought from the interior)'. The sponsor of the child, at her baptism, was a Mrs. Ascough.³⁵

Over a century passed before the next piece of information concerning Ballandella surfaced. An article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1952, written by Elene Grainger and titled 'Faithful Friends', referred to those Aborigines who had befriended a number of early explorers. The author concluded her article by asking, 'What became of Ballandella?'.³⁶ Mrs Kathleen Dansay from Gordon, Sydney, wrote two informative letters to Mrs Grainger answering her question. She explained that her mother was born in 1843 and her nurse was Ballandella and 'how they loved her'. Continuing, she wrote 'Nicholson was my grandfather's cousin (James Ascough). Sir Charles sent the girl up to my Grandmother, and she (Ballandella) was nurse to my mother and aunt. Afterwards she married a man called Barber and lived on the Hawkesbury River near Wiseman's Ferry. There are many of her descendants living on the Hawkesbury. One used to be a cricketer and played with Windsor cricketers'.³⁷

Pieces of the jigsaw were coming together. Any research involving Australia's indigenous people is fraught with problems. Invariably many of the records which did exist have been lost or destroyed. For instance, the bulk of the records of the infamous Aborigines' Protection Board was lost in a fire. Few detailed records were kept by white Australians in their dealings with the 'natives' from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

The man who married Ballandella was John Luke Barber, an Aboriginal born in the MacDonald Valley, north of Wiseman's Ferry, about 1825. The marriage therefore, in tribal terms, was between a Wiradjuri woman and a Darkinjung man. When and where they married is unknown. Both were 'full blood' Aborigines therefore a church marriage would have had little or no significance to them, although with the Christian names, John Luke, there is an implied connection with Christianity in some form or other. The bonding of Ballandella and John Luke Barber took place between 1847 and 1850. My educated guess is that John Luke was brought up from childhood with a European family. Their first child, a boy called Andrew, was born about 1850 on John Smith Hall's property, 'Lilburndale', West Portland Road, Sackville Reach.³⁸

Astonishingly, Ballandella was already a mother having given birth to a baby girl on 22 December 1846. The child was christened 'Mary' at a Church of England ceremony performed in the 'District of McDonald and Colo, County of Cumberland' on 27 December 1846. Mary's father was Joseph Howard; a labourer, and his, or the couple's, abode was the 'Lower Hawkesbury'. William West Simpson, MA, performed the

³⁵ New South Wales, Births, Deaths and Marriages, Baptism 8180, vol.45, 1839.

³⁶ Grainger 1986.

³⁷ ML Document 2345. Two letters from Mrs Kathleen Stella Dansay to Edith Elene Grainger. From these letters it seems likely that the Ascoughs lived at Wiseman's Ferry on land granted in 1837 to James Ascough's uncle, Captain Ascough, as a reward for bringing out convicts.

³⁸ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 31 October 1924; 'Barney' Morley, pers. comm.

Henry (Harry) Barber.
Courtesy 'Barney' Morley.

Andrew Barber.
Courtesy 'Barney' Morley.

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ceremony.³⁹ Ballandella Howard was no more than fifteen years of age. On the baptismal certificate it is stated that she was an 'Aboriginal Black from the Murrumbidgee'. A marriage certificate has not been located.

The question is raised: was Ballandella taken advantage of by a white settler, as was the fate of many Aboriginal women in Australia? One can only guess what a commotion Ballandella's pregnancy caused in the Ascough family. Nevertheless, it was probably they who guided the family nurse into a settled relationship with John Luke Barber. Presumably he also took responsibility for the bringing up of young Mary.

The marriage produced two sons, Andrew (Andy) and Henry (Harry). When Andrew died at the Hawkesbury and District Hospital, Windsor, on 27 December 1943 he was reputed to be 104 years of age. However, the facts do not substantiate such longevity, evidence indicating an age of between 90 and 93 years.⁴⁰ Following his death the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* reported that Andrew was 'one of the best-known residents of the district, in which he had been a popular figure for almost a century'. One local farmer remarked that Andy 'could turn his hand to anything, and did as much work as a man and a half'. Ploughing, fencing and horsebreaking he performed with equal facility. He appears to have been quite a character. Local publicans were not allowed to sell Aborigines liquor, but Andy and a Windsor publican foiled a police charge in court pleading the drink consumed by the Aboriginal, and served by the publican, was not a beer but a shandy. Actually, he was a good Christian man of temperate habits.⁴¹

Andrew's wife predeceased him by some fifty years. Her maiden name was Sally or Sarah Cox, and in all probability she was a woman of his own race. Of their two children, the daughter died while only a young woman, and the son Albert passed away in 1935 aged 57 years.⁴² Father and son were buried at the Church of England cemetery, Windsor. According to 'Barney' Morley, a well-known identity of Windsor today, Andrew was given a pauper's burial. The Barber family lived on the Sackville Reach Aboriginal Reserve and Andrew was the last indigenous Australian to reside there. Martha Everingham, who died in 1926, is reported to have been the 'last of the full blood tribe' of the Hawkesbury. Andrew, although born on the Hawkesbury, had no ancestral ties to the local Dahrug tribe.

At this time information concerning Henry Barber, Ballandella's younger son, is proving to be elusive. His wife Annie was a 'full blood' Darkinjung Aborigine from Wollombi (spelt Wallembar on her death certificate) who died in 1915.⁴³ Her final years were spent at the La Perouse Aboriginal Mission, Sydney. She was endearingly known at the mission as 'Granny' Barber. She and Henry were married at Maitland, New South Wales. A marriage certificate has not been discovered.

The marriage produced seven children of whom only two males survived their mother. The two boys were Frederick and Wesley. Frederick's nickname or Aboriginal name was 'Yeri' while Wesley was called 'Muckeye'. Both men were well-known cricketers as was Albert, Andrew's son. All three played for Oakville in 1897 and earlier for Sackville Reach Cricket Club in the Windsor area. But Fred and Wesley were the talented ones. Playing for Botany in 1907 Fred won the batting average with runs per innings, and secured the Hill,

³⁹ NSW Births, Deaths, Marriages, Baptism 1420, vol.31.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: Death Certificate, Andrew Barber, No.24303-42.

⁴¹ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 31 October 1924 and 6 Oct. 1943.

⁴² NSW Births, Deaths, Marriages: Death Certificate, Albert Barber No.21911-217, 28 Nov. 1935.

⁴³ Ibid.: Death Certificate, Annie Barber No.464-489, 10 February 1915.

Clark and Co.'s medal; Wesley won Mr Swinbourne's gold medal for the most double figure innings - fifteen out of sixteen.⁴⁴

The Barber family was quite a sporting family. At a regatta on the Hawkesbury in 1901, Fred and John Edward took out prizes in the double sculls.⁴⁵ Henry Barber played cricket for Sackville Reach Cricket Club and later Riverstone Cricket Club. He was a fine wicket keeper and on one occasion his keeping was compared 'to a kingfisher sitting on a tree and darting down for a fish'.⁴⁶

Fred Barber was closely involved with the Australian Aborigines Mission and in 1910 was selected as 'the first of our native helpers (on trial)' to become a missionary. His first post was at the Burnt Bridge Mission (Macleay River) assisting Miss Telfer, the missionary in charge there. Not only was he a talented cricketer, he was an accomplished singer and sang a solo at the annual Australian Aborigines Mission Conference held during November 1909.⁴⁷ According to Ernest another member of the Morley family, Fred Barber was an excellent violin player who 'made the instrument talk'. His favourite tune was 'Under the Double Eagle'.

At this stage my research is incomplete. Therefore I am unsure if there is a continuing direct genealogical line back to Ballandella and John Luke Barber. To my knowledge Fred and Wes Barber were bachelors.

Ballandella's passing is somewhat of a mystery. If she died after 1856, when the recording of births, deaths and marriages became compulsory, the record of her death has eluded me. Perhaps she died prior to 1856 and the Church record, if indeed there was one, was lost. Did she die giving birth to her son Henry or some subsequent child? Whatever, the chequered life of 'the widow's daughter' ended while she was a relatively young woman. At best she reached her late thirties; that is if she died say twelve months prior to John Luke's marriage to Eliza Cox. She almost certainly lies at rest somewhere in the Hawkesbury Valley. The tapestry of her life is one of much sadness.⁴⁸

May she rest in peace.
Ballandella - Born circa 1831
Died circa 1867

44 *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 25 July 1908.

45 *Ibid.*: 6 April 1901.

46 *Ibid.*: 10 January 1891.

47 *Australian Aborigines Advocate*, November 1909 and 31 January 1910.

48 When Ballandella's husband John Luke Barber died at Windsor on 15 February 1905, reputed to be 80 years of age, the local paper claimed he had been married three times and was the father of 29 children. At the time of his death he was married to Elizabeth Ann Morley, who became his wife at the Wesleyan Church, Sackville Reach, on 1st June 1878. John Luke Barber's second marriage was to Eliza Cox, and they had at least one child, John Edward Barber, born 1868. He was unfortunately drowned in the Hawkesbury River at the age of 45 years in January 1913, and he was a bachelor (NSW BDM Death certificate J.L. Barber No.3545-85; *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 25 February 1905; NSW BDM Marriage certificate 5158-962: J.L. Barber - Elizabeth A. Morley); NSW BDM Death Certificate 4809-89 John Edward Barber, 5 January 1913). The descendants of John Luke Barber and Elizabeth A. Morley are numerous and many reside in the western suburbs of Sydney.

THE WIDOW AND THE CHILD

Fred Barber (Yeri)

From the original watercolour by Herbert Beecroft (1864-1951).

Photo: Ellen Waugh, 1989.

Courtesy Randwick and District Historical Society.

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BOOK NOTE

Appropriately for the theme of this volume the Royal Australian Historical Society has recently produced an addition to its Technical Information Series (No. 22) on Aboriginal family history. Entitled *Tracing Koori ancestry*, it was prepared by James Miller, lecturer in Multicultural Studies at the University of New England (Rusden Street Campus). He is the author of *Koori: A will to win*, a history of his own family background.

In the booklet he discusses the significance of tracing family origins to Aboriginal people and offers guidance on procedures to follow and sources of information. Valuable advice is given on where to seek the written and pictorial records in official registers, archives and libraries, as well as in the periodical and daily press. Addresses of major sources are listed. The work of Link-Up is noted here, not only in assisting the re-uniting of broken families, but also for its research in official documents.

The booklet ends with comments on the importance of oral history, some hints on its practice, and a list of readings. In a short space this bulletin offers much valuable information, and is a useful starting point for all who wish to research their family history. It is available from the Royal Australian Historical Society, History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney N.S.W. 2000 at a cost of \$3.50 plus \$1.50 for postage and packing.

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