BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aborigines Act Amendment Act, no. 14 of 1939.

Aborigines Act, no. 2154 of 1934.


The Aborigines Act, no. 1049 of 1911.

REMINISCENCES
OF EARLY DAYS

G.G. Hackett

Hackett wrote these reminiscences in 1915 for the Narrung Alpha. This unique magazine, compiled by the residents of the Narrung area in South Australia's lower Murray River region, was usually hand-written and only one copy was produced for each issue. This was circulated amongst interested families with the following plea for it not to sit on one family's shelf for too long:

I am the Alpha and I make this stipulation: that members won't retard my proper circulation; I must visit member's homes throughout the coming year. Now please don't shelve me - pay attention - then my path is clear.

Leta Padman, author of several books on the history of the Narrung area, kindly allowed us to use this paper, taken from one of several Narrung Alpha's that she has been able to trace. She recently produced a contemporary version of the original Alpha, entitled Narrung Alpha: Old Tales and New. It is still available in some book shops and makes interesting reading.

Hackett's reminiscences contain a version of the 'Maria incident'. It is interesting to compare it with an Aboriginal version of the story written by Leta Cameron-Bonney and published in last year's Journal. Hackett's comments about the local Aboriginal people provide an important insight into European attitudes towards the Aborigines.

In the transcription of the reminiscence we have retained all original spellings, capitalisation and grammar.

Steve Hemmings
If one learns not from the past what has happened before then in mind he is always a child, but if he learns only from the past he gains not the mind of a man.

When and where shall one begin to write theirReminiscences, is a question difficult for the present writer to decide, for I fear that if I record the various episodes that occur to one's memory, I shall bore and tire the Readers of this magazine, and one in cleaving into memory's storehouse, has to keep in mind and avoid a repetition of incidents, which previously have been given to members of this society.

Usually one's stories of the past are reserved for a fireside evening with a Friend, where sympathy and humour render them easy to recount, but I trust that in confining my reminiscences to happenings in our local surroundings, they may be of interest to members reading the magazine. To get to the beginning of my stories, I must quote a little of the history of this State, and which has a little romance attached to it.

Several Gentlemen in England arranged to form a Company to found a settlement in this State. A great deal of difficulty occurred in devising a scheme of settlement that would attract a better class of people than had obtained in the other states. While meetings were being held, a series of letters appeared in the Times newspaper, referring to the opening up and settling of new countries under British rule, and were written so ably that they seemed to be inspired by one who had some experience of colonisation. The Letters attracted the attention of the Directors of the Company, who approached the Editor of the Times and asked for an introduction to the author.

At first the Paper declined to do so, but later, under a promise of secrecy agreed to arrange an interview between the Directors, and the writer of the letters.

It was then ascertained that the writer of the Letter was undergoing a term of imprisonment.

It so happened that he was a young Gentleman of prepossessing appearance, who became acquainted with a heiress of great wealth, and becoming enamoured of each other they eloped.

The Lady however was a ward in Chancery and it being a criminal offence to marry such without the Royal consent, they were brought back to England and the young man was imprisoned where he might have languished for life, had his articles on colonisation not been accepted by the leading paper of England.

After an interview the directors interested themselves in securing the release of the young man, and he became associated with the company which became practically the Founders of the State of South Australia. There are a good many names of places called after the Young Gentleman referred to in this state and he did good work in giving this state a start in its early days.

My reason for referring to this Company is that it is concerned in a measure with our own locality. It took up land in various parts of the state among which was included an area around Lake Albert and what was practically the whole of the Hundred of Baker. There were certain conditions of stocking these lands which if not carried out on a specified time, rendered them liable to resumption.

It so happened however that the company, which was establishing settlers on its other properties and stocking them failed to comply with the conditions on the country here up to time.

A Canny Scotchman noting the position, bought some sheep and started out on the Quiet to jump the company's claim. The company got information of the Scotchman's destination and gathering a few hundred head of cattle from one of their other properties started to make their claim.

Through rough weather they were delayed in crossing the River for a couple of days, with the result that the Scotchman reached where Campbell House now stands at 12 noon, and the Company's Cattle arrived there at 4 pm the same day, and passed on down to where Mr G. Baker's homestead is situated. Application were made for right of occupation with the result that it went against the Company, the large portion going to the Sheep, the smaller to the Cattle, and so Campbell
House and Narrung Station became established. Subsequently the Company went out and the late Hon. G. Baker took up Narrung. At these times the land was all subject to leasing system but the Govt. of the day decided (much against the desire of the leasees) to sell the land and consequently the Leasees were compelled to purchase, which in many cases laid a burden of mortgage on some, who never were able to release themselves.

THE ORIGIN OF POLTALLOCH

Poltalloch as the name implies is of Scotch nomenclature. Fired by the example of others a Mr Malcolm of Scotland had a special survey of land made of Poltalloch. He imported stock, started a dairy, engaged Doctors and scientific men and made every preparation for establishing a rural population, from some of his Estates in Scotland. When matters where completed the people whom he desired to serve refused to come to settle there and he was forced to turn it into a Cattle Station. Later he purchased Campbell House and established on the two properties the finest herd of cattle in Australia.

Later it was sold to Bowman Bros. who sold the Cattle and Horses and made them into Sheep Stations. I have written at some length in respect to White civilisation but I feel that this paper will not be complete without reference to the Aboriginals who first peopled the Country.

In the Writer’s earliest recollections they were very numerous around the Lakes. The Boundary of the Lake Tribes extended from Wellington on the North, to about midway between Meningie and McGraths Flat. It was noticeable that the natives on the north and south boundaries were of a more wild and aggressive temperament, no doubt due to the fact that they were in that position that required they should be always on guard to repel a Raid from either the River or Salt water natives.

The Salt-water natives were regarded as Cannibals by other natives on the Lakes and I may give an instance bearing this cut.

THE WRECK OF THE MARIA AND WHO WERE THE PERPETRATORS OF THE MASSACRE

This little vessel sailed from Tasmania carrying a party of men, women and children. The vessel was driven ashore at Maria Creek, a small outlet near Kingston of the drainage waters and the writer had observed the wreck a few times. The party obtained the assistance of some Natives and they travelled from Kingston towards Meningie along the Coorong arriving at the Southern boundary of the Lakes tribes. The Salt Water natives were in a dilemma, they could not enter into other territory as they were barred by the warning fires of other natives so they thought they would cross over to the Hummock side of the Coorong. Just opposite to where the Coorong School is situated. However no doubt the cupidity of the natives were aroused and they were afraid the Lake Natives might reap a reward if the white people got in their hands. So the whole with the exception of two girls were murdered. Later one of these girls was murdered near Wellington Lodge.

An old native woman told the writer she ate a portion of one of the children as she knew no better.

A MISCARIAGE OF JUSTICE

Subsequently a party of Police came to the vicinity of the massacre and rounding up some of the Boundary tribes killing several as an example near the spot of the most agressive and truculent looking natives and their bodies were suspended until decay and storm let them fall to the ground. It was reported that the party had a Bag of Gold but no trace of such was discovered. I may state however that a Relative of the writer one day walking along the shore where the massacre took place picked up a sovereign in the water of a very old date. There was also a subsequent wreck to the Maria in which the party concerned travelled down the Coorong and reached the Whaling station at Encounter Bay among them was a lad named Longbottom who was associated in business in Adelaide for many years. I believe this episode is related in Mr Simpson Newland’s book, Paving the Way.
The customs of the natives were somewhat different in regard to burial between the Salt Water and Lake Tribes.

The Lake Tribes dried and put their dead in trees, and often carried them about but the writer is of opinion that their reason for carrying them about was to hide a Neiyeri. A Neiyeri is a small dagger of hardened wood placed in the decaying body and absorbing the poisonous substance became a deadly scalpel in the old natives hands and were used as a means to keep the younger members of the Tribes under control.

The Salt water natives buried their dead in trees and all their implements of war, fishing nets, etc. were put in another bundle alongside of them. The writer remembers discovering a veritable treasure trove for the scientist in a dense forest of Ti-Tree on the upper Coorong. There were a number of remains buried in the thickly grown trees and in hooking one of the Bundles down there I saw spears, waddies, womeras, nets made for fishing, which would today be invaluable. I was very young and Boy-like. I was for commandeering [the] spears and waddies to try my skill, but a Native boy whose only wearing apparel was a shirt, seeing my intentions, begged me to take them back or their owners or the devil would come to the camp and get them. I was not afraid of the owners or the other fellow, but taking pity on the fears of the Black Boy I reluctantly abandoned my prizes. One other night I passed in the locality of this place alone with a native man herding a large number of cattle while a terrific thunderstorm raged overhead. Later some idiot set fire to this thicket to destroy the remains and so some valuable relics were lost to the scientific world.

HUNTING WILD CATTLE ON THE MURRAY
CONCENTRATION OF ANIMAL MIND
VIVID ABORIGINAL IMAGINATION

Extending from Talia Bend for some two hundred miles along the River upwards was a tract of land on which Wild Cattle and Horses abounded, certain small stations here and there assumed the right of securing these cattle as being wanderers from the few they kept in spots along the River. It happened that the writer was one of the party who usually during the summer months set out to capture wild cattle.

The method was to take a mob of quiet cattle along the River and watch for [the] Tracks of wild cattle coming in to the River to drink. There were two parties made when [the] scene of operations was reached, one to bring along the quiet mob and the other a scouting party to which I was attached. We reached a spot on the River which was an ideal spot to make a depot, which was done by making a rough stockyard during the afternoon and night of our camping there. On the opposite side of the River was a Little Bark Hut and at the evening fireside the older Stock Riders were reciting some blood-curdling stories about this hut for the Jackaroo, but which of course I being a Boy absorbed in my mind the most vivid details.

However, the next morning the order was given to move on and scout for Tracks. After we had travelled some 20 miles or so I overheard the Head Stockman say we will go on a little further and if I don't see any traces I will send one of [the] Boys to meet the others and tell them I am going on to a specified place before turning back. He can camp where we stayed last night and go on back till he meets the other party. Well I thought to myself. I hope it won't fall on me or if it is I hope he will decide soon as I bad fully made up my mind that I was not going to put in a night opposite that old hut with my nearest neighbour, so far as I knew some 30 miles distant.

However the choice fell on myself and I was called forward given my instructions, and reluctantly turned my horses head on the backward track, but I may tell you I let it appear to the others as if it was the Picnic I was out for. I had to exercise care and patience with my Horse as if he failed me it was a case of carrying the saddle and bridle myself till I could strike another mount.

Well I got back to the camp of the night before just as the sun was dipping below the horizon and after a look at the old Bark Hut decided with the little daylight I had I would seek a camping place further down the river. Travelling a couple of miles I came to a favourable spot nobbled my steed, made a fire, boiled my quart of tea and after a meal of Dampier and Salt Beef, made a bed of such leaves as I could gather spread my blanket and lay down and slept.

How long I slept I cannot say but I awoke suddenly with every sense of my being on the alert. I had an intuition something was looking at me.
and thought was it a ghostly visitor from the Bark Hut or a black fellow, I also had an impression that so long as I kept my eyes closed, I would not be attacked. It so happened that I had arranged my saddle for a pillow that one of the flaps fell over my face to shelter me from the moon's rays and it occurred to me that I might be able to get a glimpse of my surroundings without [discovering] to the intruder that I was awake. Carefully I made the experiment when Lo and Behold I found I was the centre of a hundred pair of living eyes and each pair was staring at me with an intensity as if they would burst out of their sockets.

A mob of Wild Cattle had surrounded me some of which probably had never seen a man during their lifetime and were no doubt wondering what the object lying on the ground was. When I saw it was cattle I was not afraid and I had sense enough young as I was not to attempt to frighten them. I lay quiet and by and by I heard a low call like a moan, with which cattle always herald a movement and they disappeared back in the scrub.

I found next morning I had camped opposite a stoney ravine where the cattle had passed down and the scoot has missed the tracks. I met the other party next day and plans were laid to trap the cattle I had seen a couple of days after the cattle came down the ravine to drink. The quiet cattle were left opposite and once the wild ones got among them the stockmen kept them mixed up till the dawn of day when they were hustled into one of the depots and kept in hand. Among them were many old scrub warriors, horns sprawling and every man was always on the lookout for a strong rail to jumpr at when working them in the yards to steady them down for the journey home.

There is a sequel to this but I have already taken up too much space on the subject.

Among the party was a strong Aborigine - a good Rider and Stockman. A few nights before our departure from the locality with our cattle this native had a piece of a duck or rather the whole of a duck for his supper. It happened to be his nglatye or totem. Well, according to rule he should have burnt all the bones to ashes. However he overlooked that detail till the morning when he discovered that some of the Bones were missing. He went to the Head Man and said some enemy native had come and stolen these parts and was practising sorcery against him. The Leader pointed out that such a thing could not happen as two men were always on watch at night but it was no avail and so pining away he reached home some fortnight after and died on the evening of his arrival. His imagination was too vivid and his fears too great for him to overcome them.

Our locality has some Historical events in the year 1867. The Duke of Edinburgh landed at Womeran and a Kangaroo hunt was organised for his amusement. The Duke was a brother to the late King Edward. Later the Princess Edward and George, the latter our present King, paid a visit and on that day a drive of kangaroos was organised and some 600 were killed during the day. The writer had the honor of replying to a question asked by the present King of England.

Those who are here today can never realise the condition of this country in the early days. Kangaroos abounded in thousands on the two stations some 25,000 were destroyed under the Varmint Act. In the mallee parts there was the native pheasants whose nest and habits of incubation are a wonder to naturalists. Alas Kangaroo and pheasants have vanished and as years go on their habits and appearance will be as legends.

The Wombat and Emu were also plentiful but they have disappeared before civilization methods. I have given one incident of events that were referred to in Mr Simpson Newland's Book called Paving the Way.

I may also give one that is referred to In Robbery Under Arms, by Rolf Boldrewood. In this book the Hero is accredited with lifting a mob of cattle of some 1000 or 1500.

I may state that the facts on which this was founded was associated with Narrung. A schoolmate of the writer's was one of the Stockman who was engaged on the work and 500 of the Cattle were brought to Narrung. We mustered them some few times for identification but the facts set out in Robbery Under Arms prevented any action being taken to recover them.

I am afraid my article is rather lengthy but, I must ask for the
forebearance of members as other matters of business has not allowed me to condense or write it in the way I would like to present it to Readers of the Magazine.

**PUBLICATON AND SECTION 35 OF THE ABORIGINAL HERITAGE ACT 1988**

Phil Fitzpatrick

The Aboriginal Heritage Act came into operation on 1 March 1989.

Section 35 of the Act makes it an offence to divulge information relating to Aboriginal sites, objects, remains or traditions in contravention of Aboriginal tradition. The Section should not be confused with Section 10 which deals with the confidentiality of information entered in the central archive, local archives and the Register of Sites and Objects set up under the Act.

The intent of Section 35 is to validate in law the variety of traditional Aboriginal sanctions imposed upon the use of secret or restricted information. In plain terms this means that if Aboriginal tradition demands that information be kept secret then that demand applies to everyone, including non-Aboriginal people. The Section particularly makes it an offence to publish such information without the authorisation of traditional owners.

An example of the type of information covered by the Section is the traditional Arabanna account of the creation of Lake Eyre. Various versions of the mythology have appeared over the years, notably in Ekin's *The Australian Aborigines* in 1945. A version recently appeared in a Department of Education Aboriginal Studies course booklet which was distributed to primary schools throughout the State including many with Aboriginal students. The myth contains a great deal of information, including nomenclature, which is traditionally secret and possibly "dangerous". Most Arabanna people are aware of the restrictions of the myth even if they do not know the fine details and are careful to ensure they do not breach them. That the myth, complete with restricted nomenclature, has been provided to the schools which their children attend obviously creates a major problem.