

NEW SOUTH WALES

1824 - 1825

October 16 - July 2

L. E. Threlkeld

LAKE MACQUARIE

1. Stockhold

Mission to the Aborigines New South Wales. Established
by the Deputation from the London Missionary Society
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takes a lively interest in the Aborigines. Reid's Mistake or Maquis Lake was a place strongly recommended by him as there the natives can procure an abundance of fish and Kangaroo which with the little assistance we could render in furnishing them with corn meal would induce them to reside there permanently. We fully acquiesced in his opinion. The natives do not appear so vitiated here as at Sydney but only from the fact that there are so few opportunities here in comparison to what is afforded them at Sydney. The town has more the appearance of a deserted village than any thing else and there are not more than thirty four persons resident in it if our information be correct. There is a confidence manifested in the Europeans by the natives which it is to be wished may never be violated. We gave some tobacco to a Native a little time elapsed when he returned complaining that a white man called him to fetch a bit of buisnet and that when he went to him for it he snatched the tobacco out of his hand and kept it. Suffice it to say it was one of the jail gang. It is pleasing to observe the interest that many take here in the aborigines although that interest is manifested not in the most beneficial way to them for instance supplying them with spirits &c. &c. We came to the conclusion of forming our station in some part of the vicinity of Reid's Mistake.

January 10th We embarked for Sydney and arrived in safety on the same evening rather late gratified with the prospect of our voyage proving successful sea sickness was the only drawback with which I am at all times much troubled.

21st Waited on the Governor with a letter respecting being allowed to occupy that part of the colony on behalf of the natives to which he replied that after he had consulted the attorney general an answer should be given but was pleased to observe that he had no doubt but that it would be favourable and that about ten thousand acres would perhaps be sufficient to try the experiment. The documents &c. of this correspondence are with the Deputation.

February 24th Received Instructions from the Deputation to enquire in the Mipim at Reid's mistake recommending also that a voyage should be taken for me to search out the most eligible situation for the erection of the house and for agricultural purposes. Not being a good judge of land it was deemed necessary to have a person with me in whose judgment we could confide.

March 4th Sailed from Sydney to Newcastle in company with Mr J. Brindell Mrs G's brother in whom we could place confidence respecting the Land. He being an agriculturist on one of the most fertile parts of the Colony. It requires much care in the choice of good land to prevent future expenses in removal and economic that must necessarily occur. The Rev. G. A. Middleton kindly offered to accompany us on the following Monday. Lieutenant Owen in the absence of the Commandant Captain Allman, rendered every assistance. It is pleasing to observe something like a kind feeling towards the blacks.

Sunday March 6th Attended divine service in the forenoon there was not half a dozen free persons there there being no other service, in the afternoon we visited the jail distributing some good tracts, which we happened by mere chance to have, to the prisoners. They appeared thankful for them and promised not to destroy them. There is but one bible for the jail and that very old and very much torn. Have made an application to the Bible and tract societies for a small grant from each for gratuitous distribution.

Monday 7th Gladly rain waited in hopes of its clearing up but the rain increased. The natives on the preceding evening were dining and singing, enquired the cause was informed it was in consequence of our coming among them.

8th Rain increasing heavy equally weather no appearance of amendment all the natives went into the bush for shelter.

Monday 9th Night cessation of rain made application for horses but none could be obtained save one which Lieut Owen kindly offered prepared to go early in the morning we intend to sleep out in the woods and supply ourselves with animal food ~~from~~ by our fowling pieces. we expect to be out a week or ten days at least.

10th The Rain fell in torrents. thick haze stormy weather could not see 1/2 a mile before us. felt not a little thankful were not out in the woods as the flood might have prevented our return. we are informed that up the river it has risen twenty four feet above the usual height. Two women completely naked and shivering with cold and wet came and asked for a piece of tobacco. supplied their wants they went away well pleased. Many of the women have lost the first joint of their little finger on the left hand. some girls not above five years old had undergone the operation. Upon enquiring, the males told me, it was because they were fishermen. No dependence can be placed on their account as they speak broken English. Many of the women have a scar on the outside of their thigh halfway between the knee and hip. it is about three inches long and is occasioned by the application of a fire brand at several times on the death of a brother or other relation.

11th We intended to go very early this morning but it turned out the most rainy day of any. we were again most reluctantly confined to the Inn. It appeared to break up a little in the afternoon but very heavy rain set in at night.

Saturday March 12th The Lord Liverpool packet from Sydney arrived having Captain Atkman and two other small Government vessels put in one in distress. The rain cleared off at about 1 o'clock when we proposed to walk as far as we could to have some view though but distant of Heidi's Mistake. Lieut Owen accompanied us we went about 9 miles to place some distance beyond a mountain called Red head. The walk was very fatiguing as we had to travel over a very rocky part of the sea shore one part and a deep sand the other part on the level and steep hills to encounter before we got to the place proposed to visit. At length we were gratified with a very extensive view of Macquarie Lake to appearance about 5 or 6 miles off. in ~~the~~ we judged it to be full 16 miles long having a bar of sand at the entrance from the sea allowing 4 feet water only for boats to enter. The Sugar loaf a large Mountain forms a western boundary. but the land is generally very indifferent. These days would hardly be a

sufficient time to perambulate the vast cove or Lake. We saw a large sagoon which was literally covered with wild geese and a water fowl called Redbills. The natives took our guns and a hot swim, three of which they secured when the flock crossed the place had the appearance, as to numbers, of a well stocked rookery. We returned in the evening completely wet being overtaken with the rain which fell in torrents. Kangaroos were very abundant from the numberless tracks we saw of them.

March 13th Sunday.

Morning fine and kept fair all the day we have again made arrangements to proceed on the narrow at an early hour. we have also obtained two hours we hope the waters will have subsided and allow us to cross the creeks a thing we were informed could not be accomplished yesterday. The Aborigines are arising in different parts of the settlement in small groups. their tune is rather dismal they begin high and end in about an octave below the pitch. Some have attempted with no bad effect to imitate the sacred music of the church but how different this state to that of their sable brethren in the South Seas. Now striking to me the contrast. Thus the pleasing Song to our Redeemer entitles the shades of the evening, the very remembrance of which kindles a hope that these Gentiles shall also stretch forth their hands unto God. The general opinion with respect to the Mission to the Aborigines is that the attempt is utopian some few and very few individuals view the subject in a proper light knowing that omnipotent power must be exerted or all our attempts will fail.

March 14th

The Rev. G. A. Middleton accompanied us on our journey to Neid's Mistake we had but two hours between three persons. we were accompanied by some natives. We walked about three or four hours when we had a fine view of part of the bay. The situation appears very eligible for a native settlement there is abundance of fish and wild animals this will tend to localise the natives. There were a few natives, not more than twenty on the spot who appeared pleased with the idea of my settling among them. Their appearance is most disgusting. Maja when you come? how many moons? one finger was up two fingers were up as an enquiry. Two moons were to die they were given to understand and then Maja would come and stop with them. Indeed my three dear little girls being expected daily from the Islands is the only reason of our embarking immediately. It is impossible to choose a spot until a more particular examination takes place this part is too swampy and too difficult to arrive at to form the settlement here. When I ~~arrived~~ ^{removed to} Newcastle a more close scrutiny can take place.

15th. Wrote on the Commandant in order to obtain the loan of a Government cottage until one can be built for me at the Missionary station. Captain Allman very readily granted the use of one and the only one that could at all be obtained until ours is finished at the same time expressing every good will toward the undertaking. The vessel sails to day for Sydney this occasions our return sooner than we otherwise should from surveying the Lake. The wind shifted south the night appeared stormy the Captain deemed it prudent not to put to sea.

16th. A heavy Gale from the Southward accompanied with heavy rain proved the correct judgement of our obliging Captain Living-

stone for the sea ran so high that had we sailed last night we could not have contended against it but must have returned. This month is generally tempestuous and may be expected the more so now on account of the long draught no rain having fallen here for three months past.

March 19th The Gale continued until this day, when supposing the wind favourable we set sail for Sydney arrived in perfect health and safety save the sea sickness, which always annoys me not most grievously. Had the mortification to find that during my absence our house had been entered into, only on the preceding evening, and robbed of articles to the amount of upwards of twenty five pounds and a draft for forty five pounds which fortunately was a duplicate to Mr. Hankey. My writing desk was taken away but found broken open and all the papers scattered to the winds on the race course the next morning. Our servant man, a prisoner, who was left in charge is strongly suspected of being accessory to the robbery. Mrs. J. was up the country with her friends during my absence for the benefit of her health having been seriously ill for several weeks past.

April 5th Mr. German called on us and surprised us with introducing Mr. Pittman from England he felt much pleasure and were exceedingly glad to have an opportunity of hearing from England. Mr. Pittman not knowing of our being here had gone up to Parramatta to Mr. Marden we had the pleasure of his company in the evening. That they will prove successful highly acceptable to the Nation in the South Seas I feel no hesitation whatever in asserting accompanied with the wish that blessing of the most High may be upon them in their work.

April 8th The Bontus arrived from Tahiti the vessel so long expected with my children. went immediately on board touched at Raiatea although they sailed past the Island. Mr. Scott was on board on his voyage to England and Mr. Sam^l Henry Jun^r. The Lynx is now the only chance for my children to come up and she will be many months yet before she comes.

In consequence of this disappointment have made up my mind to embark for Newcastle and begin the mission at once as it would be a waste of time and money to remain longer at Sydney on this account. two kind friends have also engaged to take charge of them until I fetch them this eases the mind on their account and leaves me at liberty to pursue my Missionary pursuits.

The Nimroa was another vessel by which I wrote for my children to be sent up by her, but she was unfortunately upset in a hurricane a few degrees from Tahiti the captain of which returned in the Bontus.

Another perplexing case arises respecting a house, which would prove the most economical plan of putting one up. One Method is to apply for prisoners, carpenters, and employ them, the other is to employ carpenters free men ~~or~~ either by day work or contract for the job. I waited on his Excellency stated my wants but he was pleased to observe that he was very sorry that no assistance could be afforded from Government as they had not hands enough to carry on their own works but were obliged to contract themselves.

Sunday April 10th Visited a Man of the name of Bates in jail who is cast for death for the murder of his wife, whom he chopped to pieces with an axe. I knocked at the jail door was admitted and requested to see the unfortunate man. The jailer observed that he did not know what to do as Bates had said he did not wish to see any one but the two Clergymen Mess^{rs} Cooper and Hill. However he would send and ask him. The under jailer went and returned saying, "If I had a word of good advice he, the prisoner would hear it. Passing through the yard the usual scene of drinking but made it have more the appearance, but for the fetters, of a public house than a prison. In the condemned cell Bates stood up at my approach. I am sorry to see you in this situation was my address to him. With rather a peculiar look he replied, "It cannot be helped Sir." A thrill ran through me. I proceeded to point out the way in which a repentant sinner may be saved through faith in the Blood of Christ, in the purport of my visit. "O I know all that" replied the criminal without the least appearance of feeling the awfulness of his situation although tomorrow's sun would be the last that would rise on him. I am not come under the supposition of your ignorance but hoping to speak a word of comfort to a suffering fellow creature. "O Sir there is no harm done was the reply". Shocked at the Man I knew not what to say. He asked him, well but how is the state of your mind in the sight of God as a condemned sinner? "O I am quite happy and comfortable, never more so in all my life." A cold perspiration seized my whole frame and by a complete effort I could but just enquire, what is the ground of your ~~belief~~ comfort and happiness. "My belief" was his answer. Urging him to look to the atoning blood of Christ and praying that God would make him really so happy as he appeared professed to be I withdrew perceiving that such was his state of mind that my conversation was only injurious. The impression on my mind was that the Man was not free from the effects of intoxication. As I went out Beer was being carried towards his cell. He suffered on the following morning and went up the Gallows steps with the same expression the Captain, "never more happy in all my life!"

May 7th Saturday. Took leave of the Deputation and other friends and sailed from Sydney for Newcastle. Myself wife son a Man and woman which constitutes our Missions family at present. The vessel obtained her loading sooner than usual and could not take all the passengers luggage with her part was therefore to be brought in the Sloop another vessel on the following day. We had a smooth passage and arrived at Newcastle on the following day. Sunday took up our abode at the Inn.

Monday 9th. Called on the Commandant who informed me that the cottage was at my service. Sent up part of our goods and entered the cottage on Tuesday evening. It is in a very lonely situation, a mile and a half from the town, and our greatest danger is from Robbers Newcastle having but just emerged from being a penal settlement the most choice rogues are of course here.

Wednesday 11th. The Sloop had partly unloaded. The Government Gony were at work in Irons on board loading her with coals. They took the advantage of the men being below, covered up the hatch, raised the anchor or slept it, made sail and the tide and wind serving was out to sea in ten minutes or less. When safely out they ordered the captain and crew into a boat

sending them on shore with their compliments to the Commandant and to say that they would not trouble him for a pilot. No other vessel was in the harbour to pursue them of course they got safely away. It was their intention they say to take the Lord Swallow the vessel we came down in. A few trifling articles belonging to us was in the vessel when they went off with us. This is the third time we have lost by Robbers since we have been in the Colony. The first was a box of Mrs J. clothes taken out of a cart on the Road. The second was when they broke into the house, and lastly the few articles in the Sloop. We are now in perils of Robbers every night. We have been in perils by sea, we have been in perils by land. Our lives have been several times in ~~peril~~ jeopardy but hitherto the Lord has helped us.

Wednesday Evening. The natives assembled to the number of about 40 persons round our house and looking their kungaroo into they had satisfied their hunger they came requesting us to see their dance which was on account of our arrival among them. This dance was performed in exact time to the beating of 100 pieces of stick one upon the other by an old man who sings also during the performance the whole while in the time which begins high and sinks gradually rising again, the compass is perhaps two octaves. The women join in the dance and song but all are naked not in consequence of the dance but because they are always so. My mind turned upon Paul in the language of the Apostle. "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." and that "they should turn from their vanities to serve the true and living God." When they had concluded they thanked us for our visit and wished us a good night.
 Perunday May 15th Had some conversation with 4 or 5 natives who

could speak a little broken English. questioned them concerning who made the Sun, moon, Stars &c. One of them replied that long while ago one black fellow threw the remains from his hearth into the fire and they jumped up, (for became) those things. When they were informed God made them. We dont see was the reply for I do not know. Endeavoured to make them understand the object of my mission. They appeared pleased and asked where we should reside in the interior.

May 20th Went part of the way to the place where we expect to reside until we come to a creek. Here it was necessary to make a bridge and our servant man with the assistance of three natives cut down trees and we accomplished one in two days so that we could go over on horse back. A Government stock keeper is informed us of a situation which was superior to what we had already seen. We intend to visit it.

21st Took with us a trusty native who speaks good English and went in search of the situation described after a five hours and a half journey, passing through bays, round lagoons over steep & almost inaccessible hills we arrived at the place described. The situation is hilly but very swampy there is fresh water and it can be approached by a boat going out to sea but there must be a cart road to the settlement, the ^{distance} being so very uncertain to trust to water conveyance we returned in the evening but in a more direct line which saved us one hour. We intend to examine if a road can be obtained by going a different route we heard in the evening a most melancholy noise among the

natives upon enquiry found it was owing to a poor girl being ill and on the point of death.

Sunday, May 22^d. Went among the natives who encamp around our dwelling saw two who were ill administered to their wants. Perceived an old woman busily employed in dipping the end of a cord into a cup of water the vessel is simply a piece of bark tied up at both ends, went near to ascertain the nature of this performance observed a young girl very ill lying on the ground round her waist was twisted a cord made of opponium hair one end of which was what the old woman held in her hand dipping it into the water and rubbing the part she held between both hands stretched upon her under lip. The friction abraded the skin and blood appeared to flow rather copiously from her mouth into the vessel of water before her. The water imbued by the cord made the blood appear more copious than it really was. They suppose that the illness or the cause of it passes through the cord from the sick person in the blood which is spit from the operator's mouth. Surely the customs of the Heathen are vain. Supposing Eppies miserable dirty and stunted in appearance lying naked both men and women before a few lighted sticks with the canopy of heaven for their covering, would give a faint idea of the wretchedness of the natives, allowing for the difference of colour the Aborigines being quite black.

May 26th went out this day to Neidi's mistake to a place called Bad-debakh we were 4 hours going out and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ returning we found it very difficult in going there but not so much so on our return apprehend that it is possible over but barely so to get a cart out that way. On my return in crossing a creek my horse plunged in an unperceived hole and threw me off on the opposite side but providentially without any hurt although in recovering himself he came nearly over me. The situation appears very suitable as it respects water but the land is so marshy and hilly together with the necessity of making at least three bridges over creeks to get at the place that if another more suitable could be found it would be better. It is a most perplexing thing to decide on the precise spot for the missionary station when a road is found the choice will not be so difficult.

May 29th Tuesday. The natives have removed their camp a third time to a place a little more distant from our house the reason why they are so continually on the shift is not easily ascertained. One gave for a reason the quantity of fleas that accumulate when they continue long at one place. I have no reason to doubt the man's word both from the number of days which they have sleeping with them and from personal observation when standing among them.

June 3^d A terrible howl among the natives announced the death of one of them. A native female came and asked me if I would go and see her buried who was deceased. She led me to a spot in the bushes where we found about thirty natives men and women sitting in little groups of three or four in a group with a small fire to each party, it was mid day on a barren sand hill covered with burly scrub. There lay the dead body over which went in a equal posture the mother and grandmother weeping. The body was swept up in the bark of a tree which forms either their house, canoe, or coffin. The mother's appearance was truly horrid perfectly naked, covered from the forehead to the breast with a thick coat of pipe clay reaching over the back painted a white mass in contrast to her black skin save a broad stream of blood partly coagulating and partly flowing tremulously down between her shoulders from a large gash she had inflicted on her own

head. Her eyes presented two dark spaces where her black skin gave the white pipe clay the appearance of a mark upon her face. Four naked women were employed digging a hole in the sand, the man sat smoking with apparent indifference save one Dismal who was brother to the deceased he sat penive and observed to me that he was very sorry for her. The crying appeared to be performed in unison at intervals. After the completion of the grave 4 other women came with boughs and strowed them at the bottom of the pit. An old man then descended into it and four other women took up the corpse and gave it into his arms who endeavoured, but for the weight, to lay it down carefully. Still standing in the grave he put ~~carefully~~ the sand as it was thrown in by the four women between the feet which protruded out of the bark and was very particular in placing it all round the body until the grave was filled. A child crying took my attention, and to my surprise, it was an infant at the breast screaming for a pipe of tobacco which the mother was smoking. It obtained the pipe but owing to its infancy was not able to convey it to its mouth. The mother aided it and the little infant actually whiffed at the smoke coming out of its mouth and then as though exhausted by the effect of the tobacco fell back on the breast and coaxed it down with its mother's milk.

After the ceremony of interment was over one came to me and in broken english begged I would not disclose where the body was ~~interred~~ laid. On enquiry for the reason of this injunction they told me they were afraid that white fellow come and take her head away. They were afraid it should not be disclosed by me and apparently satisfied they departed to their camp. The exposure of New Zealanders heads for sale at Sydney no doubt is ~~the cause~~ one of the causes of their fear.

June 6th Being informed of a more suitable situation for our suspending station it determined me to go and examine the spot. After a three hours ~~ride~~ and a half ride through the woods we arrived at the place described and it certainly is the most desirable of any we have yet seen both from the compactness of the land, its levelness, extent, and unavailability no bridges being needed to go to it nor get from swamps in the rear of it which was the case with all the other places we have seen. We were three hours in returning home. The Aborigines call the place Biddobar (Biddobar)

7th Went out to mark out the road to be able to find the place again this is done by clipping the bark of the trees as we proceed. find that by going on the mountains all the way a cart can be got out by a team of bullocks two days were occupied in marking the way through the forest.

Thursday, June 9th Our workmen accompanied with the natives. Ma'gill Dismal and another one went to fall the trees to make room for the erection of our house and prepare for planting some Indian corn. The natives appear suspicious for our settling out there.

June 11th Made an application to the Commandant for a carpenter but the reply was that government funds were so few here that not one could be spared. This being a fact and no free persons being here to employ as carpenters to put up ~~say~~ a house for us renders it necessary that a contract should be entered into with some person to build a cottage complete for myself and family at Biddobar. The Commandant observed that he thought that would be by far the most safe plan as then the expenses would be known at once and ~~so~~ I should not be subject to the impositions which are usually practised

Biddobar is not eligible
 Nelson Jan 1841 by Mr. [unclear]
 the site of the suspension
 station is not eligible
 Biddobar is not eligible
 Nelson Jan 1841 by Mr. [unclear]

Estimate for building the cottage
1392

June 28th Received an estimate of the building of a cottage of four rooms with four small ones under the verandah two on each side the estimate is given at three hundred and twenty two pounds. The house would be shingled on the roof weather boarded outside bricked and plastered inside the measure of the house would be forty by thirty feet. Have sent up the estimate to Sydney in order that the correctness of it might be ascertained.

June 30th Went out with a party of natives who were going a hunting of the ~~the~~ Bandicoot. by this means an opportunity is afforded of hearing them converse and thus a knowledge of their language may be obtained. Satorcourse is the principal means of learning it on any correct principle. Eight or ten natives with their waddies (a short stick) surrounded a high grassy place their dogs beating about in the mean time. The moment one of the animals appeared they threw their waddies at it and generally killed it at one blow. One once stood on the stump of a tree and threw his spear with the greatest precision, transfixing one to the ground through its back, although not much larger than a young rabbit.

July 2^d Yesterday went out to Biddobar. The two natives Ngil and Dimal continue with our man felling trees. There are several more there who remain with them but the whole are those who frequent the settlement at Newcastle. On my return my little boy Joseph was on the horse and turning on one side to avoid a large tree that had fallen. The horse trotted off and threw him, he pitched on his head and right hand which was strained very much, his forehead and cheek were also cut. It was a merciful interference of that providence that preserved his life. We had to carry him home sometimes the natives and sometimes myself. We trust that a few days will restore him to health.

Our Establishment consists at present of three Europeans and three natives besides the natives who are always coming for something or other. The number of natives at present do not exceed forty and it is well there are not more yet for they would expect something either food or clothing for their employment and until our house is put up we cannot get out to the spot where there employment would be to their own advantage. It is winter on the spot as soon ever circumstances will allow it. It would be far better for the advantage of the mission to put up a house by contract even if cost more than by engaging workmen from this consideration, the necessity of pushing forward the natives at the present moment they take it into their consideration to adopt any plan. They are at present very anxious and would grieve me exceedingly to loiter out their expectations. May he who has the heathen for his inheritance work effectual in their minds to bring them to himself. Amen.

Appears to have determined to employ the natives in the erection of a house for the mission.