

FOOTPRINTS

*The Journey of
Lucy and Percy Pepper*



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The Journey of Lucy and Percy Pepper

National Archives of Australia
and
Public Record Office Victoria

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Public Record Office Victoria

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Foreword

It gives us great satisfaction to publish *Footprints*. We hope that it will inspire and inform the search for reconnection to family, land and culture for all Aboriginal people and will encourage many to find their own family history.

The story of Lucy and Percy Pepper is an illustration of what Aboriginal people may find in the archives. Government records show the prevailing attitudes in the past and the many challenges Aboriginal people like the Peppers faced in their life journeys. Archival records show the relationship between Aboriginal people and the government, as well as the dramatic effects that laws and policies had upon their lives. Through this evidence, we can come to understand something of the experiences of Aboriginal people throughout Australia's history.

Footprints is an important collaboration between the National Archives of Australia and Public Record Office Victoria. Aboriginal records in Victoria are shared between the collections of both our organisations. This book shows the relationships between our two collections and their relevance to those searching for their family stories in Victoria.

We are particularly grateful to the descendants of the Pepper family for their generous contribution in telling this story. We also wish to acknowledge Stolen Generations Victoria Ltd, which provided funding for this book.

FOOTPRINTS

As you read the Peppers' story, you will be moved by the often unhappy circumstances of their lives but also inspired by their strength and strong family bonds. The National Archives of Australia and Public Record Office Victoria are proud to be able to bring it to you.

ROSS GIBBS PSM
Director-General
National Archives of Australia

JUSTINE HEAZLEWOOD
Director and Keeper of Public Records
Public Record Office Victoria

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The authors would like to thank Rita Watkins, Glenys Watts and all the other descendants of Lucy and Percy Pepper. They also thank the State Library of Victoria; the Hon. Jenny Lindell, MP (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly); Marion Holding and Lakes Entrance Regional Historical Society Inc.; Tsari Anderson; Jane Lydon; Merryn Apma; Emma Toon; Ross Latham; James McKinnon; Shauna Hicks; Anne Lyons; Derina McLaughlin and Hilary Rowell.

This publication was made possible with funding made available by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria through Stolen Generations Victoria Ltd.

Cultural warning

This book contains references to and images of deceased persons.

It also includes transcripts of some government records that contain language that is disturbing and offensive, particularly to descendants of Lucy and Percy Pepper.

The language used in the records provides evidence of past attitudes held by government officials and other Australians. In this book, we have chosen not to alter the language of the original records in order to maintain the integrity of the historical record.

The views expressed in these historical documents are not endorsed by Public Record Office Victoria, the National Archives of Australia nor any descendants of the Peppers.

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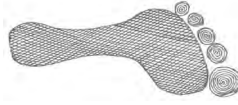
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Studio portrait of the Pepper family, circa 1912. Left to right (back row): Dora, Percy with Sam; (front row): Gwendoline, Alice, Sarah, Lucy, Phillip. The youngest daughter, Lena, was born in 1915.

Courtesy of Watkins family

Introduction



Tracing a family's history in the archives

ARCHIVAL RECORDS can help Aboriginal people connect with their histories, trace the experiences of ancestors, and learn about the times and places in which they lived. Archives provide evidence of past policies and practices that still affect the lives of Aboriginal people today.

Footprints tells the story of one Aboriginal family from Gippsland in south-eastern Victoria, that of Lucy and Percy Pepper. The story is told through the records of Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. Some of these records are letters from Lucy and Percy, which help tell the story in their own words. The presentation of the Peppers' journey brings together government records and a family's own private photographic collection and memories.

As well as telling one family's story, *Footprints* illustrates many of the issues that Aboriginal families faced in early twentieth-century Victoria. These records will help readers to understand how various laws affected the daily lives of Aboriginal people.

These documents show the Pepper family's struggles with poverty, Lucy's ill-health and the needs of seven children as they moved across Victoria seeking work, opportunities and a better

climate for Lucy's health. They tell of Percy's enlistment in World War I, his efforts to make good on his soldier settlement block, and his attempts to keep his family together after Lucy's death.

Living under the Aborigines Acts

Most of the records that appear in this book were kept by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, a Victorian Government agency established in the 1860s to manage Aboriginal people in the state, following their forced removal from traditional lands. These records include letters written by members of the Board, public servants and Aboriginal people themselves.

The Victorian Government, through the Board, had power over many aspects of Aboriginal people's lives. These powers had been defined through a series of laws passed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to protect and manage the Aboriginal people of Victoria. The Victorian *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* created the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (replacing the Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of the Aborigines).¹

Regulations passed in 1871 gave the Board the power to specify where Aboriginal people could live, the terms on which they could enter into work contracts and how their earnings could be distributed, and responsibility for the care, custody and education of Aboriginal children.² The 1869 Act also formalised the operation of reserve stations where Aboriginal people could live and work.³

During its 88-year existence, numerous changes were made to increase the Board's powers. By and large, these amendments maintained the principles for the Board's activities that were established in 1869.

These Acts and regulations limited the freedoms of Aboriginal people in Victoria in several ways. Visits to Aboriginal reserves were strictly regulated, and this meant that maintaining family ties was effectively at the mercy of the Board. Many people were forced away from their homes and families on reserves over a number of years.⁴ Acts passed in 1886 and 1890 created divisions within families by distinguishing between 'full-bloods' and 'half-castes': those people considered to be Aboriginal could receive support and remain on reserves, while 'half-castes' were asked to

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leave reserves and fend for themselves. Under regulations of the 1869 Act, children deemed to be neglected could be removed from their families and placed on reserves or in industrial or reformatory schools.⁵

A further change to the law took place under the *Aborigines Act 1910* (Victoria), which gave the Board further powers with respect to ‘half-castes’. These new provisions formalised government assistance to ‘half-castes’ in need.

The *Aborigines Act 1915* (Victoria) brought together many of the earlier provisions that defined Aboriginality, and further restricted freedoms. Under this Act, only those people categorised as ‘full-blood Aborigines’ could reside on Aboriginal mission stations, unless special approval was given through a licensing system that allowed some who were considered ‘half-castes’ to live on reserves temporarily. Regulations under the Act placed severe restrictions on contact between those people defined as ‘half-castes’ and those who lived on the stations.

The *Aborigines Act 1915* contributed to much hardship and the fragmentation of some families and communities. It defined Aboriginality narrowly and thereby excluded many people of Aboriginal descent from eligibility for government assistance, despite the disadvantages they suffered from loss of their land, traditional lifestyle and community support. This had a dramatic impact upon the lives of many Aboriginal people, such as the Peppers. Under this Act, the Peppers fell within the category of ‘half-caste Aborigines’.

Between two worlds

In the early 1900s, Aboriginal people dealt with this distinction between ‘half-caste’ and ‘full-blood’ on a daily basis. In many respects, it was more of a hindrance to be seen as a ‘half-caste’ than a ‘full-blood’. A ‘half-caste’ Aboriginal person was expected to leave his or her mission station home and extended family and make their own living. However, it was often difficult for people of Aboriginal descent to gain acceptance from the wider community and obtain employment. They were generally viewed as being Aboriginal, not white. They were, in a sense, between two worlds: regardless of how white their skin looked, they were not equal members of white society and, because they were not black enough, they were unable to access the government

assistance that was granted to ‘full-blood’ Aboriginal people and were separated from family and community.

Today, government archives in Victoria have many records about people who were defined as ‘half-caste’. These people often required assistance and wanted to maintain contact with loved ones on mission stations. For these reasons, their lives were documented in records created by the Victorian Board for the Protection of Aborigines, which are now in the collections of Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia.

Life on an Aboriginal station

Stations are an important part of the history of the Pepper family and other Aboriginal people in Victoria. The regulations made under the 1869 Act recognised three Christian-controlled mission stations (Ebenezer, Ramahyuck and Lake Tyers) and three government-controlled stations (Coranderrk, Lake Condah and Framlingham). All stations received funding from the government and had similar ideals – essentially to ‘civilise’ Aboriginal people into European, and particularly British, ways.⁶ Aboriginal people gathered on stations to receive basic rations, clothing, housing and education. In return, they were expected to work, often with minimal or no wages.⁷

Although many things were provided, living on an Aboriginal station was not necessarily easy. Facilities were basic, and restrictions placed on Aboriginal people through laws and regulations administered by the Board often made life difficult. Families were under the strict control of the station manager, who directed all aspects of the lives of those under his care. Station managers reported monthly to the Board for the Protection of Aborigines on matters such as clothing needs, requests for visits and even requests to marry.⁸

Many found living on a mission station a struggle. They had to make do with little food or money, and endure poor living conditions. This was particularly the case in the Gippsland region where the Lake Tyers station, the reserve with which the Pepper family was most closely associated, was located. The cold and wet Gippsland climate could worsen common respiratory conditions and diseases such as tuberculosis. The health of many people on

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the stations was poor, and the Pepper family was no exception. Lucy Pepper in particular suffered from very poor health until her death at the age of 39.

The Peppers were not eligible to live on the stations, although they sometimes stayed on them for short periods. As the records in this book show, the Pepper family continually moved across Victoria. This was common for Aboriginal families, who had to follow seasonal and train gang work in order to survive. They made temporary homes in tents, on river banks or, where possible, on and near various mission stations. They also had to live daily with prejudice, the loss of Aboriginal cultural identity and connection to land, along with restrictions on contact with extended family. However, even with these hurdles in their everyday lives, the Pepper family managed to persevere.

The records

The journey of the Peppers introduces readers to the variety of information on Aboriginal people available in government archives. In particular, the book demonstrates the wealth of information available in government records about Aboriginal people that can be found at Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. Visitors to these archives can view original records relating to Aboriginal people in Victoria.

As well as providing an insight into government attitudes and policy, these records also contain letters written by Aboriginal people themselves. The Peppers are not unique in this regard. These records document hardship, but they can also tell positive stories about perseverance, sacrifice and love of family. They show the circumstances in which people lived and how laws and government policies affected their daily lives. Archival records can provide insights into Aboriginal cultural kinship ties and may become sources of pride to descendants.

Each chapter in *Footprints* focuses on a particular period or episode in the lives of the Pepper family. A brief introduction to each chapter sets the general scene for the record transcriptions that follow. Each transcription is also introduced briefly to help readers to understand who wrote the records and how they fit into the story of the Pepper family. A list of the main individuals who appear in the records is at Appendix A.

All transcriptions included in this book have retained the spelling and punctuation used in the original documents. This gives readers a more accurate picture of the records and allows them to hear the words of Lucy and Percy Pepper, and other letter-writers, more directly. This can sometimes make reading the letters more difficult. For example, Percy often wrote long letters with very little punctuation. Reproducing Percy's letters as he wrote them preserves a sense of his personality and avoids the possibility of misrepresenting his meaning.

The records included in *Footprints* are a sample of those held by the National Archives of Australia and Public Record Office Victoria. The information contained in the records reflects the beliefs of their creators or prevailing attitudes, and sometimes may not accurately describe events in the Pepper family's history.

A resource for researchers

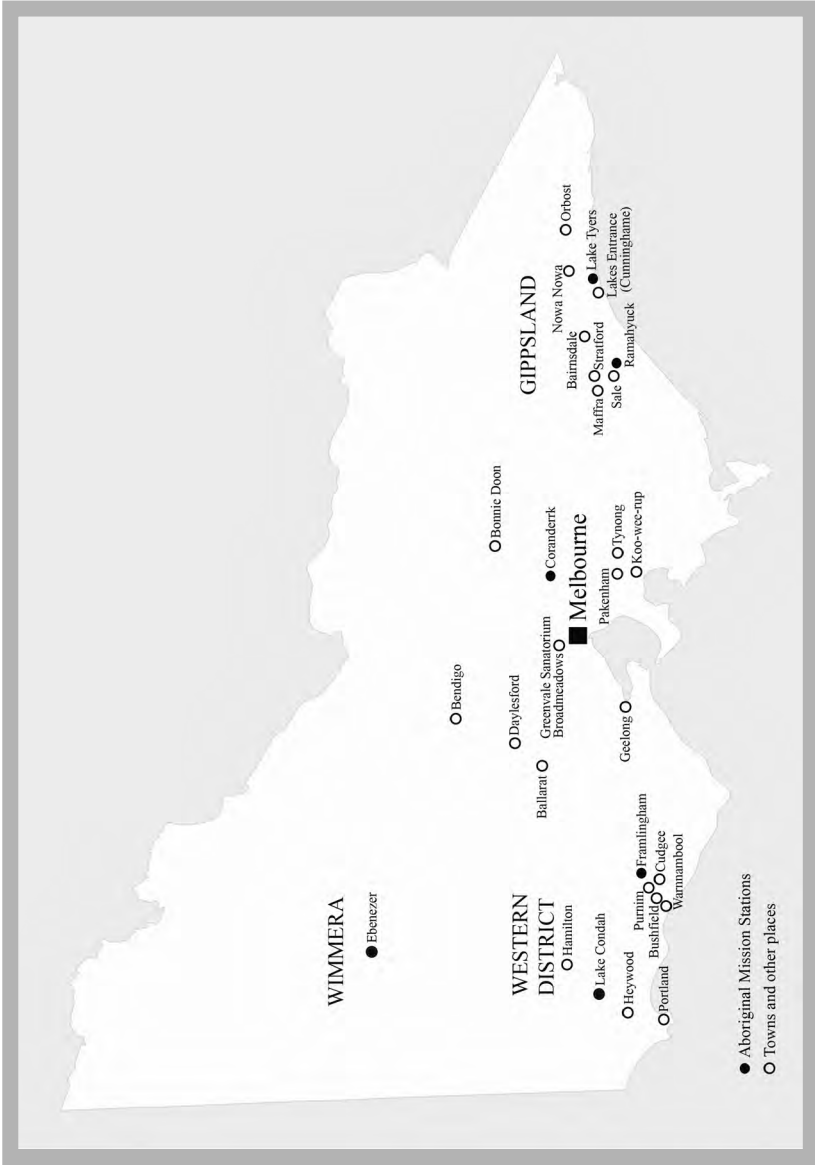
There has been an overwhelming demand from the Aboriginal community to know more about records and information that are available to them. *Footprints* adds to a range of resources about government records held by Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia. These resources include publications such as *Finding Your Story*, *Tracking Family* and *My Heart Is Breaking*. The Koorie Index of Names (KIN) and the Bringing Them Home Name Index can help Aboriginal people retrace family connections. For more information about these resources, see Appendix B.

Note on the authors

Footprints grew from a project initiated by Simon Flagg. Simon is a descendant of the Wemba Wemba people from the Swan Hill region. He has worked at both the National Archives of Australia and Public Record Office Victoria to help raise community awareness about records about Aboriginal people held in their collections and to increase access to these records.

Simon's co-author Dr Sebastian Gurciullo has been working at Public Record Office Victoria as a researcher, editor and curator since 2002. He is currently the editor of *Provenance: The Journal of the Public Record Office Victoria* and curator of online exhibitions.

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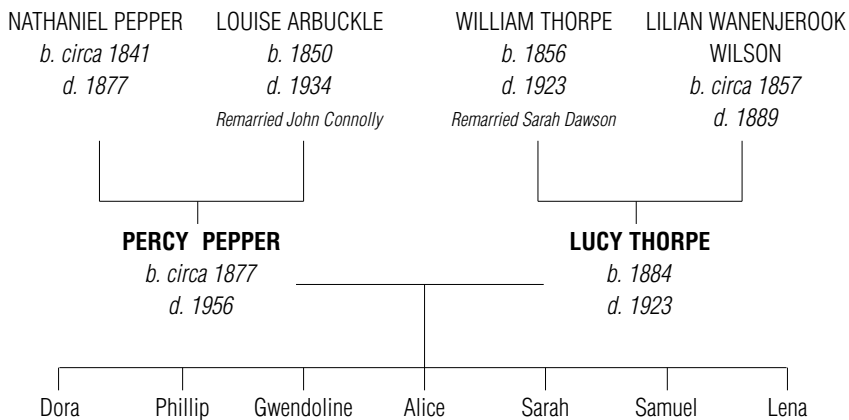


Aboriginal mission stations, towns and other places referred to in this book.

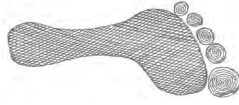
Public Record Office Victoria

Family tree

of Lucy and Percy Pepper



Chapter i



Introducing the Pepper family

LUCY THORPE was born in 1884 at Lake Tyers Aboriginal station in East Gippsland, Victoria.¹ She was the daughter of well-respected William and Lilian Thorpe and one of five Thorpe children who grew up at Lake Tyers and nearby Cunninghame.² Lilian Thorpe died in 1889 at the age of 32, leaving William to care for their young children, including five-year-old Lucy. Sarah Dawson helped William raise the children, and Sarah and William later married and had another daughter, Alice.

Percy Pepper was born at Ramahyuck mission station in Gippsland in about 1877 to Nathaniel and Louise Pepper. Nathaniel was originally from the Wimmera region in western Victoria and had grown up on the Ebenezer Mission where he married his first wife, Rachel, in 1863. She died of consumption (now known as tuberculosis) six years later. After his heartbreaking loss, Nathaniel decided to follow a missionary from Ebenezer, Freidreich Hagenauer, to Gippsland, where he set up Ramahyuck station on the banks of the Avon River near Lake Wellington. Here Nathaniel met Louise Arbuckle, and they married in 1870. They lived happily at Ramahyuck and had four children. In 1877, Nathaniel died of tuberculosis, the disease he

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had battled for many years. He had been very active in the church and local community and was well-regarded by the Aboriginal and European people of the area. Louise later married John Connolly, with whom she had five more children.

Lucy and Percy grew up in a period when the lives of Aboriginal people were tightly controlled by the government. It is difficult to find information in government records about Lucy and Percy's childhoods, and this could indicate that their parents had been able to take good care of them without government intervention. Information was usually recorded about children when station managers, welfare workers or the Board for the Protection of Aborigines thought that their health and welfare were unsatisfactory. Family stories, photographs and documents indicate that Lucy and Percy went to school, attended church services and weddings, and joined in mission activities.



Lucy Pepper (centre), with her children: (clockwise from top left) Gwendoline, Phillip, Alice, Sarah, Lena and Sam.

Courtesy of Watkins family

Lucy and Percy

In 1903, 19-year-old Lucy married Percy, aged 25.³

Records show that Lucy and Percy moved around south-eastern and western Victoria looking for work and a place that was better for Lucy's poor health. Percy had been apprenticed as a baker, and according to a family history by Phillip Pepper (Lucy and Percy's son), he was sent to Lake Boga near Swan Hill to work in a bakery. However, hearing news from home, Percy grew homesick and returned to Gippsland.⁴ For a time, he worked as a baker in Stratford, but, as the records in this book show, he also had a variety of other jobs to support his family – from cutting timber to working on Victoria's developing rail network.

Because of this constant movement, Lucy and Percy's seven children were born in four different Victorian towns. Lucy Dora (also known as Dora) was born in Sale in 1903, William Phillip (also known as Phillip) was born in Cunninghame in 1905, as was Louisa Gwendoline (Gwen), in 1907. Alice Ethel was born in 1908 in the Gippsland town of Stratford, Sarah Lillian in Orbost (in 1910), Samuel Joseph (Sam) in Sale (1911), and Lena Mary was born in 1915 in Stratford.⁵

Lake Tyers station

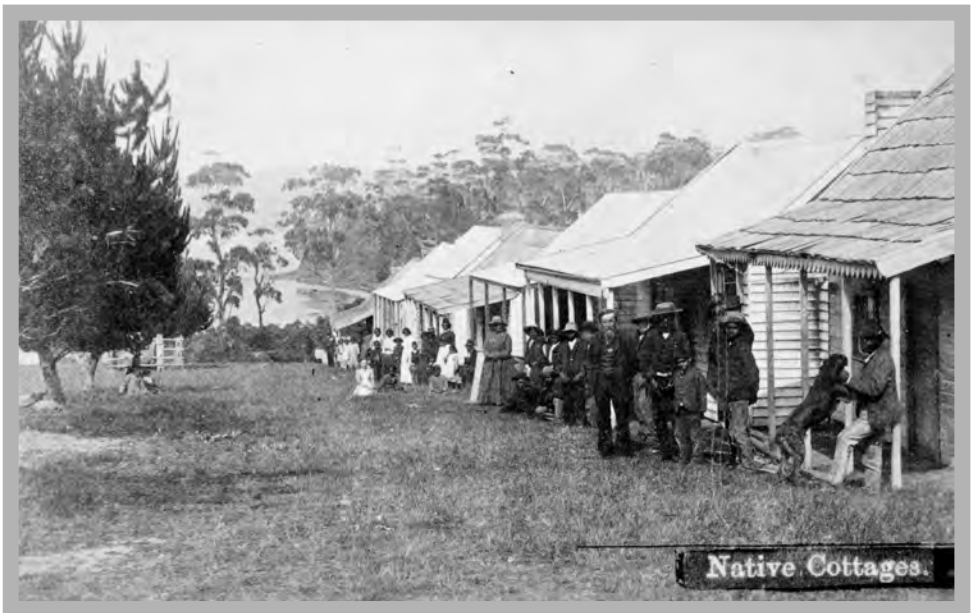
The Aboriginal mission stations are an important part of the Peppers' story. Lake Tyers station, where Lucy was born, was established in 1861 by Church of England missionary Reverend John Bulmer. The station's original name, Bung Yarnda, came from the GunaiKurnai people whose traditional lands are located in eastern Gippsland. In 1863, the Victorian Government granted a temporary reserve of 2000 acres for the mission station and in 1889 the temporary reserve was increased to 4000 acres.⁶ The station soon became home to Aboriginal people from across Victoria, providing a refuge to families that had been forcibly removed from traditional homelands. By 1876, the station had 94 residents living in huts and traditional camps. The station had a boarding house, school, store and houses for the manager and schoolmaster; a church was built in 1878.⁷ Under regulations introduced in 1871, any boy under the age of 14 or girl under 18 could be required to reside at the boarding house to be educated, an arrangement that tended to weaken kinship ties.⁸

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One of the features of life at Lake Tyers station was that residents had a sympathetic and tolerant manager in John Bulmer. He had a genuine interest in traditional Aboriginal culture and allowed residents to practise traditional customs, such as mourning ceremonies and corroborees.⁹

Bulmer also encouraged residents to supplement their food rations by continuing their hunting practices, and he tried to support these activities by requesting the creation of an exclusive area of waters that residents could use for fishing. He did not succeed in creating the exclusive area and many residents had to find other ways to subsidise their rations and make a livelihood.¹⁰

In 1907, management of the station passed from Bulmer and the missionaries to government officials appointed by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. In January 1908, Captain RW Howe was appointed as station manager after serving as assistant manager for almost three years.¹¹ Bulmer kept in contact with the residents as a spiritual guide until his death in 1913.¹² With the change in management, the freedoms and opportunities that



Aboriginal residents outside their homes at Lake Tyers station, 1886. Lucy Pepper was born at the station two years earlier. Station manager John Bulmer is in the group of men in the foreground.

Photo: Nicholas Claire, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

INTRODUCING THE PEPPER FAMILY

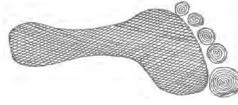
the residents had previously enjoyed were reduced. They could not leave the station without permission and, if they did, risked being refused permission to return. The school curriculum focused on subjects such as carpentry for boys and sewing, cooking and domestic duties for girls. Daily religious instruction remained a feature of life under the new management.¹³

The effect of the *Aborigines Act 1915*, and the Acts that came before it, was that many descendants of the families on the stations were forced to leave the places they considered their home and to assimilate into townships because the Act defined them as 'half-caste'.

The Board for the Protection of Aborigines introduced what it referred to as a 'Concentration Plan' in 1917. The aim was to close all remaining stations across Victoria, remove Aboriginal people from these locations and concentrate them at Lake Tyers. By 1921, this policy had made Lake Tyers by far the largest of the remaining Aboriginal stations. It provided a home for 154 of the 331 Aboriginal people under the care of the Board.¹⁴

Many of the letters included in this book document the Pepper family's need for relief and shelter at Lake Tyers station. They document Lucy's illness and desire to live with family where she could get support.

Chapter 2



A family's cry for help

IN 1907, THE PEPPER FAMILY was experiencing hard times while living in the East Gippsland town of Stratford. Percy had lost two fingers in a work accident and Lucy spent time in hospital with tuberculosis. Percy requested assistance from the Board for the Protection of Aborigines to support his family while he recovered from his injuries, and for medical treatment for Lucy.

The letters in this chapter show Percy's love for his family, his wife's illness and the need for support. The persistence with which Lucy and Percy Pepper asked for assistance shows that they were determined to secure the means to provide for themselves and their children. Unable to find permanent work, they were often at the mercy of the Board, which was sometimes reluctant to help. When the Board did grant assistance, it usually came with conditions that made it difficult for the Peppers to determine the direction of their own lives.

This chapter also demonstrates the strength of the bonds holding the Pepper family together, and gives an insight into the ways in which family kinship is a major part of Aboriginal life. The Pepper family was no different to many families of the time: they were hard working and determined to support each other. What set them apart from Aboriginal families allowed to remain on

stations was that they were thrust into Western society and had to make a go of life as best they could without the support of family and community.

The letters in this chapter show what it was like for Aboriginal families who needed to ask for help from authorities. All requests had to be passed up the public service hierarchy and approved by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Even if the Board granted assistance, it could often be weeks before a decision was made or the relief was granted. Such delays could be very distressing or even dangerous for Aboriginal families needing urgent help.

Lucy and Percy often wrote to one of the many public servants that managed the daily lives of Aboriginal people in Victoria. John Bulmer, the Lake Tyers station manager, often wrote on the Peppers' behalf to William Ditchburn, the Acting Secretary (and later Secretary) of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Many of the letters in this chapter were written to or by Ditchburn, and indicate the power he held within the bureaucratic structure. In 1907, the Board had 10 members, with the Chief Secretary, Sir Alexander James Peacock, as Chairman. HP Keogh, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Gippsland North, was Vice-Chairman of the Board. From January 1908, Captain RW Howe was manager of the Lake Tyers station.

Much of this correspondence relates to Lucy's poor health. She had tuberculosis, a disease which usually affects the lungs but can also affect other body organs and systems. It was very common in the early twentieth century and was usually associated with poverty. Many Aboriginal people suffered and died from the disease, and it was one of the main causes of their short life expectancy. One of the standard forms of treatment was time at a sanatorium, a hospital for people with long-term illnesses like tuberculosis. Lucy was treated at Greenvale Sanatorium, which was located in Broadmeadows, north of Melbourne. Before the arrival of antibiotics, treatment for tuberculosis typically involved exposure to as much fresh air and sunshine as possible.

During the years covered in this chapter, the Peppers moved between Stratford, Cunninghame and nearby Bunga Creek.

1907

**Percy Pepper requested help for his family from
HP Keogh, Vice-Chairman of the Board for the
Protection of Aborigines (BPA), 11 November 1907¹**

TO MR KEOGH

Dear Sir

I am writing to you asking you to give me a little help I have had a accident and had to have two of my fingers taken off. I have been 4 weeks in the hospital and it will be another four weeks before I will be able to work I have a wife and three children to support and it is more for their sake I am writing my wife is not able to work as she has been bad this last four months her lungs are effected she just left the hospital a few days ago I have had plenty of work I am very sorry to have to trouble you for help but it is far better as the saying is it is better to beg than to steal.

I remain
Your humble servant
PERCY PEPPER

My Address
Mr P Pepper
C/O Mrs J Connolley
Tyers Street
Stratford
Post Office

P.S: I am a Aboriginal half cast earning my own living.

**Constable Mansfield, Cunninghame Station, reported
Percy Pepper's circumstances to the Secretary, BPA,
27 November 1907²**

Re: Percy Pepper, this man met with an accident whilst working on the SS Queenscliff at Sale. He has had two of his fingers taken off and is unable to get a living for his wife and children. What he states in his letter is correct, he is an Aboriginal half-caste.

Percy Pepper wrote to John Bulmer, manager of Lake Tyers station, 18 December 1907³

Dear Sir,

I have just received a letter from Lucy, she is in the hospital again, the doctor told her she would have to go away to the Sanatorium at Broadmeadows about 13 miles from Melbourne. Well Mr Bulmer I am not able to get her to that place and the doctor says she can get treatment there that will all probability cure her. It is all out door treatment. I would like to get her away as soon as possible as every week she is getting worse, I am going to ask you if you could get me a pass to take her down as I cannot do much work yet as my fingers are not healed I will be out Sunday to see you and let you know everything as I am going to Sale tomorrow my self to see about her Alice has got the Typhoid Fever, Billy has gone up as he is bad again, I am just up to my eyes in trouble no about the children hear and their. I have nothing more to say hoping you will be able to help me in some way.

Your trustworthy

PERCY PEPPER

Excuse writing in pencil.

John Bulmer forwarded Percy's request to the Acting Secretary, BPA, 19 December 1907⁴

Sir,

I have the honour to forward the inclosed from Percy Pepper who was brought up at Ramahyuck and is living at Cunninghame. He some time ago lost some of his fingers while at work on the wharf at Sale, he wishes as you will see by this letter to get a pass if possible to Melbourne to take his wife to the Sanatorium at Broadmeadows. You will also see that the Thorpe family are in great straits, Thorpe himself having to go to the hospital and his daughter is laid up with Typhoid. As they are in great poverty they are likely to be in want. If anything can be done for them legally I am sure it would be a great blessing.

I have the honour to be
Your most obedient servant
JOHN BULMER

**John Bulmer wrote to the Acting Secretary, BPA,
30 December 1907⁵**

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have given Percy Pepper the railway pass you sent in letter of the 24th Decr 1907. It appears he has the opportunity of getting his wife into the Broadmeadows Sanatorium. Dr Alexander Reed one of the health officers of Melbourne has promised to help him in the matter.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient servant
JOHN BULMER

1908

**John Bulmer made a request to the Acting Secretary,
BPA, 17 January 1908⁶**

Sir,

The woman Lucy Pepper for whom I wrote to you some time ago has had a favourable reply from the Secretary of the Greenvale Sanatorium. So they will start next week for Melbourne. In order to enter the Sanatorium the patient requires this enclosed list of articles. All on the list can be purchased at the Sanatorium. So if the Board can grant them authority to purchase what is needed Lucy will be able to live there with comfort. I think the couple will be in Melbourne by next Wednesday.

I have the Honour to be
Your most obedient servant
JOHN BULMER

A list was enclosed with above letter

Clothing etc required for Sanitorium for a woman

- 2 complete sets of under flannel
- 4 pairs woollen stockings
- 3 night gowns
- 1 pair woollen bed boots for winter

- 1 pair slippers
- 1 pair galoshers
- 1 yard of stout calico
- $\frac{3}{4}$ yard waterproof material
- 1 clinical thermometer

Lucy Pepper's arrival at Greenvale Sanatorium was recorded in a memo, 22 January 1908⁷

Memo.

Dr Norris of the Department of Public Health telephoned today, that the woman Pepper would be admitted to the Sanatorium on the following day, for educative purposes. She would be kept there for a fortnight.

WM J DITCHBURN
The Vice Chairman
Board for Protection of the Aborigines.

Lucy Pepper wrote to William Ditchburn, Acting Secretary, BPA, asking about clothing for her stay, 29 January 1908⁸

To Mr Ditchburn,

I write these few lines asking you if you sent me out those things which you said you would. As I am in great need of them and would you kindly send me a makintosh out as well and the things must be flannel and oblige.

I remain
MRS PEPPER
Greenvale Sanatorium
Broadmeadows

Ps. Could you send it out Thursday or Friday and oblige.

L. P.

FOOTPRINTS

Lucy Pepper thanked William Ditchburn for the clothing, 12 February 1908⁹

Mr Ditchburn,

I received the clothes on Monday and I thank you very much for them. Percy is not working yet as his hand broke out again a piece of bone came out of his finger.

I remain,
LUCY PEPPER

Percy Pepper, Stratford, requested assistance from HP Keogh, Vice-Chairman, BPA, 7 September 1908¹⁰

TO MR KEOGH

Dear Sir,

I write a few lines to you asking you if you could help as my wife is not well. I want to know if you could give me two months help as I am in great need I can't go to [work] as I can't get no one to look after her. The doctor in Stratford wants her to go into the hospital in Stratford, but I cannot afford to pay while she is there. He wants her to go in for two or three weeks. I was sorry I was not at home when you was in Stratford you saw two of my little one on the fence when you passed. My wife was not well enough to come out and speak to you I am sorry to trouble you again, but times are so hard down here.

I remain
PERCY PEPPER

My address
Mr Percy Pepper
C/O Mr J Connolley
Tyers Street
Stratford P. O.

William Ditchburn asked Constable Rogers, Local Guardian of Aborigines in Stratford, for a report, 9 September 1908¹¹

Memo.

The attached letter from Percy Pepper, is referred for report. It is desired, if the case is a deserving one, to know whether rations should be supplied.

W. J. DITCHBURN
Acting Secretary

Const. Rogers
Local Guardian of Aborigines
Stratford.

Constable Rogers replied on the back of the memo, 14 September 1908¹²

I have to report that this mans wife is consumptive and is also said to be carrying a child. He is in need of some assistance as he is unable to earn sufficient to keep his children and his sick wife.

W. H. ROGERS
Local Guardian

William Ditchburn added a further note to the memo, 21 September 1908¹³

Rations have been approved for a period of 2 months to Pepper, wife and family.

WM J DITCHBURN

1912

Dr WA Reid, Sale, wrote to the BPA about Lucy Pepper's condition, 7 June 1912¹⁴

Mrs Pepper has been under my care for a number of years on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and at one time was in the Government Sanatorium at Greenvale. She is unable to fully carry out her household duties and frequently has to lay up.

W. A. REID
M. R. C. P + D. P. H

1913

Percy Pepper, Cunninghame, appealed to John Murray, Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government, for help, 22 September 1913¹⁵

TO THE CHIEF SECTORY

Dear Sir,

I am a half cast Aboriginal and have a wife and 6 children to support I find it very hard to make things meet as my wife is suffering from Tubical Lungs and often has to lay up in bed for a week. Some times she has been under Dr A Reid Sale for the last six years off and on, I have no chance of making a home. As I have had the dypherea through the family also the wife has got 2 acres of land given to her and that is under cultervation we have a nice garden, but cannot get enough to build a house. I have be trying to build for the last 12 months and all I have is enough poles to make a 2 roomed place. I cannot go any further than that I would like to put up a 4 roomed house as the wife must have comfort we have been living in a tent 2 years and she is always bad. Cunninghame agrees with the wife we have tried other places, but we have always been ordered back here on account of her health. My oldest child is ten years and is going to school 3 miles to Cunninghame and when I am away the wife is in the tent herself with the children. If the Government could help me to finish building by letting me have the material I am willing to pay back in time payments as I cannot go far away to

work. The local police know my hardship and the trouble I am having also my character, I would like to finish my house before the harvest comes on and the shearing season so I can away. I really do feel things hard just trusting you will consider my case as I am really in need of help.

I remain your humble servant,
PERCY PEPPER
Cunninghame

**RW Howe, manager of Lake Tyers station, forwarded
Percy Pepper's letter to William Ditchburn, BPA,
29 September 1913¹⁶**

Sir,

I beg to impart that the man Pepper is a son in law of Wm Thorpe and resides with him at "Bunga Creek". Pepper is a strong healthy man and could make a good living if he chose as he is a "Baker" by trade. He has lived with Thorpe ever since I have been in the district and half his time has been idle and while his father in-law was able to work he allowed him to do most of the providing for the family. I suppose now that Thorpe is unable to work Pepper thinks it is time for him to look elsewhere for assistance.

His wife is not very robust but she is just as strong as many others of them and she is never alone as she always has her father, mother and sister with her.

Finally do not think that Pepper is a deserving case and I cannot recommend it.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant
R. W. HOWE.

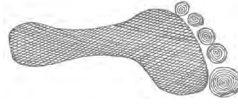
**William Ditchburn replied to Percy Pepper's letter,
8 October 1913¹⁷**

Memo.

In reply to your letter of the 22nd ultimo, addressed to the Honourable the Chief Secretary, asking that you be supplied with material to erect a four roomed house, I am directed to inform you that it is considered you should be manage your affairs without Government aid.

D
Secretary

Chapter 3



Across the state

IN FEBRUARY 1915, the Peppers were camping out at Hospital Creek, about eight kilometres east of the town of Nowa Nowa in East Gippsland. They were following Percy's work with the construction of the railway line.

Lucy wanted to go to Purnim, a town located outside the reserve of the Framlingham Aboriginal station in the Western District, north-east of the coastal town of Warrnambool. She believed that the climate there would be better for her health, and she also needed help to look after her children. By the end of the year, she had convinced the Board to issue rail passes for her and two of her children to travel to Purnim, where she stayed at the home of Ellen Good, an Aboriginal woman.

Percy asked for rail passes so that he and the five remaining Pepper children could join Lucy in Purnim, arguing that he was no longer able to cope on his own. He promised to pay the cost back, in instalments if necessary. However, the Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines decided that the government was not responsible for paying for Percy's passage west and turned down his request. Lucy was forced to ask for rail passes to return to Gippsland so that Percy could find work.

FOOTPRINTS

Eventually, the Board gave permission for the Peppers to stay at Lake Condah Aboriginal station in the Western District until January 1916, because Percy had found work on the railway at nearby Heywood.

It was while he was in the Western District in 1916 that Percy enlisted for service in World War I (see Chapter 5 for records about this part of Percy's life).

Lucy's struggle with tuberculosis continued after the family returned to Lake Tyers. In 1917, she wrote to the Board to request that the family be granted a small block at Purnim so she could be in a climate better for her health. The request was declined.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Lucy Pepper, her youngest daughter Lena, niece Alice and daughter Gwendoline, early 1920s.

Courtesy of Watkins family

1915

Lucy Pepper, Hospital Creek, requested help from John Murray, Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government, 15 February 1915¹

MR MURRY

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you for a little help as I want to leave Gipps-land before winter sits in I have been suffering for the last 7 years with tubical of the left lung and also bleeding lungs and in winter I am subject to hemmerages, and the Dr says a change would do me good I would like to go over to the Western District Purnim at Easter once I get over to Purnim I can get a little help with my children I have six and the eldest is only eleven and they cannot do for themselves when I am sick and my husband has to knock of work to look after me and over at Purnim I have relations that would help me a lot my husband is working on the railway line to Orbost but that wont last long and he cannot leave me by myself. I am camped out with him as for himself he suffers at times and cannot get full time. Time it is only hand to mouth and we have a very hard struggle to get a living I am compelled to write to ask you if you could give me and family a pass at Easter to go to Purnim both my husband and myself are half caste Aborigines my Husband to get work on the railway line over there the police in Cunninghame can let you know what a hard struggle we have with sickness as I never know when I take bad and I dread to stay in Gippsland for the winter the Dr ordered me away to another climate in winter hoping you will help me and give us a pass trusting to hear from you shortly as I would like to go away at Easter there is always a drawback if my children are not sick I am and oblige.

Your humble servant
LUCY PEPPER

Address
Mrs L Pepper
C/O Hospital Creek
Post Office
Vic Nowa Nowa
Gippsland

William Ditchburn, Secretary, Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), referred Lucy Pepper's letter to RW Howe, manager of Lake Tyers station, 15 February 1915²

MRS LUCY PEPPER
Hospital Creek,
Via Nowa Nowa.
(Hon. J. Murray)

States she is in bad health and asks for a pass to go to Purnim at Easter.

Referred to Mr Howe for enquiry and report.

WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

RW Howe added his report on the Pepper family situation, 20 February 1915

Lucy Pepper is a delicate woman and frequently she has to go to the hospital suffering from lung trouble her last visit there was about six back. Percy Pepper, her husband is working on the railway line near Hospital Creek and gets 9/- per day, but like all the rest of the Aborigines he is troubled by laziness otherwise he could make a very good living.

Lucy Pepper is a daughter of Wm Thorpe, but her husband has fallen out with all her relations and when she has to go to the hospital at any time he cannot get any of them to look after his children.

R. W. HOWE

William Ditchburn added a further note to RW Howe, 23 February 1915

What assistance – if any – do these people require?

WM J DITCHBURN

**RW Howe replied on the reverse side of the note,
27 February 1915³**

They say they want railway passes from Melbourne to the station nearest Purnim.

R. W. HOWE

**William Ditchburn made a recommendation below
RW Howe's note, 3 March 1915**

This young woman was at the Greenvale sanatorium a few years ago. As she is very frail and tubercular it would be much better to let her remain near her parents at Cunninghame. Her husband Percy Pepper is a strong fellow and as he is engaged at the railway construction works, it would mean unemployment if he were to remove to Warrnambool district.

If these people were in need of food and clothing I would be prepared to grant it, but I cannot recommend this request.

WM J DITCHBURN

**Lucy Pepper, Hospital Creek, wrote again to John
Murray, Chief Secretary, 10 March 1915⁴**

MR MURRAY

Dear Sir,

Have you given my case a consideration as I never herd from you I though I would write to you again it is four weeks since I wrote to you hoping you wont over look this letter and I am anxious to get away from Gippsland I am suffering again with my lungs and I would like to get away before the winter set in I would like you to give me a pass to go to Purnim and my husband will try and get on the Hamilton line I also will have help over there with my 6 children as at times I am not able to look after them myself. We find things pretty hard and I am sure we will be able to make a do over there we have found things pretty hard at times when I am bad with my lungs my husband has to stay home and look after me and the children has to go very short of food when their

FOOTPRINTS

father is not able to go to work trusting you will help us by giving us a pass I would like to go away Easter week

I remain yours
LUCY PEPPER

P.S – I am a half cast Aboriginal

My Address
Mrs L Pepper
C/O Hospital Creek P.O.
Via Bruthen

An unknown writer made a note on Lucy Pepper's letter, 15 March 1915⁵

If her husband earns enough to pay their fares there is nothing to prevent his spending the money in that way, but there is no reason why the Govt should supply passes.

William Ditchburn sent a memo to Lucy Pepper, 16 March 1915⁶

MRS LUCY PEPPER,
Hospital creek
Via Nowa Nowa.

Memo.

In reply to your letters of the 15th ulto and 10th instant, addressed to the Hon. J Murray I am directed to state that if your husband earns enough money to pay your fares to the Western District there is nothing to prevent his spending the money in that way, but, there is no reason why the Government should supply passes as requested.

SECRETARY

William Ditchburn informed William Johnstone, Local Guardian of Aborigines at Bushfield, of Lucy Pepper's impending arrival, 25 November 1915⁷

Dear Sir,

I have given permission to Mrs Lucy Pepper and her daughter aged 8 years, to visit Framlingham for two or three weeks. She intends to stay with Mrs Good – if that can be arranged – and you will please issue orders for one and a half rations to her, for the next fortnight.

Yours faithfully,
WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

Percy Pepper, Lakes Entrance, asked for help from Donald McLeod, Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government, 7 December 1915⁸

MR MCLEOD

Dear Sir

I am a half caste and as I have had a lot of trouble with my wife on account of her ill health and have a large family I am wrighting to see if you will give me any assistance I was down to Melbourne 2 weeks ago I am the man that called on you at the Exhibition Buildings and you asked me to see you next day but as I got a days work in Melbourne that day I called on the Saturday and you was away on a weekend so I was told I had to work my wife passage down by boat and also my own Mr McLeod I am now in a fix I have the wife over at Purnim and 2 children with her and the other 5 are with me and as the wife wrote a letter to me and tells me their is plenty of work over their I would like to go as soon as I can but I cannot I would also have to take my children as the wife intends to live over their the doctor ordered her away from hear it is hard here as I cannot go far away for long from my children. As their mother is away and I am sure once I get to the Western District Purnim I will get plenty of work as I am willing to work if I can only get their I am willing to pay for the pass for me and my children when I can as I cannot get on without my wife help The children are not left

FOOTPRINTS

school yet and when they are with their mother I can leave them the Police in Cunninghame will give you my character and he also know how I have fought agains sickness with all my family I would not like to see my children starve and if you will help me I am sure I will get on after this as the place agrees with my wife I am willing to pay bit by bit for the pass for my children and myself trusty to hear from.

you I remain
your
PERCY PEPPER

HE Macdowell, Chief Clerk of the Chief Secretary's Department, referred Percy Pepper's letter to the Vice-Chairman, BPA, 7 December 1915⁹

PERCY PEPPER
Lakes Entrance
Gippsland

Asks for assistance to enable him to convey self and family to Purnim.

Referred to the Vice-Chairman, Aborigines Board.

(Signed)
H. E. MACDOWELL
For under Secretary

William Ditchburn added a note below HE Macdowell's referral, 10 December 1915

This man and his wife called on me on the 25th ulto. They stated they did not intend to return to Lakes Entrance as Mrs Pepper had been ordered to leave that district on account of her health. She is a delicate woman and as she desired to go to Purnim, where they have some friends, I issued a pass to Cudgee for herself and a child age 8 years, and instructed the Local Guardian to supply them with rations for three weeks – so that they could have a short holiday.

Pepper is an able-bodied man and was recently employed by Mr R Bulmer of Lakes Entrance to fell timber at the L. Tyers station, for poles and piles, permission having been given him to do so. His wife's parents are living at the Entrance and there should be no difficulty as to the care of the children for a week or two. He has no claim on the board for assistance and I cannot therefore recommend that he be given a pass to remove to Purnim – which practically means the Framlingham Camp.

WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

Mrs Ellen Good, Framlingham, wrote to William Ditchburn, 10 December 1915¹⁰

TO MR DITCHBURN

Dear sir,

Just a line to you I got your letter and I had Mrs Pepper here for a fortnight, now and in a weeks time her time will be up so you would try and send her a pass as she has no other way to get home. She wants to go home today week so don't fail to send her a pass as my place will be full here by then. And I will have no room and she wants to get home to her children. So Mr Ditchburn I would like you to send her the pass, I think she has benefited by being here, so this is all wishing you compliments of the season.

With best wishes hope
you will oblige,
E GOOD

Lucy Pepper asked William Ditchburn for help to return to Gippsland, 10 December 1915¹¹

MR DITCHBURN,

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you asking you if you could kindly give me a pass to go home as Percy wont be able to come over and he has not got settled up yet and I must go home so he can go and look for

some work, the change has done me a lot of good and I thank you very much for helping me over here. I would like to stay here as the place agrees with me, but I cannot see our way clear of shifting over here so would you kindly give me a pass to go back home again, so Percy can go to look for harvesting.

I remain
Sincer,
LUCY PEPPER

**CL Greene, acting manager of Lake Tyers station,
reported to the Secretary, BPA, 12 December 1915¹²**

Sir

Re: Mrs Percy Pepper

I have to report that I have made some inquiries about this woman, but have been unable to see the doctor, who has been attending her. Also that I have not seen Percy Pepper for over a month although I have been expecting him out at this station. I went into Lakes Entrance to see him and he was away in Melbourne on the Wyrallah and I understand his wife was with him.

There is no doubt that the woman is very ill, and probably has tuberculosis and they say that this district is not suitable for anyone with that complaint.

I have the honour to be
Sir
Your obedient servant,
C. L GREENE
Mngr.

**William Ditchburn replied to Percy Pepper about his
earlier letter to Donald McLeod, requesting assistance
to relocate to Purnim, 13 December 1915¹³**

Memo.

Your letter addressed to the Hon. The Chief Secretary has been considered and I have to inform you that your request has been refused.

William Ditchburn wrote to WL Galbraith, manager of Lake Condah station, 18 December 1915¹⁴

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that Mrs Lucy Pepper and 5 children have permission to stay at L. Condah station until the 8th January next. Her husband Percy Pepper is going to work on the proposed line from Heywood, and has leave to visit the station at weekends, while his family is there.

Yours faithfully,
WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

WL Galbraith replied to William Ditchburn on the reverse of his letter, 22 December 1915¹⁵

The Pepper family arrived here yesterday, have fixed them up to stay here until the 8th of next month as instructed. (7 children)

W. L. GALBRAITH

The Stationmaster's Office at Spencer Street Station sent a memo to William Ditchburn, 19 December 1915¹⁶

Dear Sir

Percy Pepper called tonight and presented warrant for 3, 2nd singles Heywood and I stated that he had 6 children over 3 years. His wife had no money to pay for another ticket. He had order from Labor Bureau for his own ticket, in the circumstances I accepted his statement and altered the voucher to read 4, 2s and trust you will agree in the action taken.

Yours ty
BROADBENTSIN

William Ditchburn wrote to the Passenger and Freight Agent, Railway Department, Melbourne, requesting credit for unused rail fares, 20 December 1915¹⁷

Sir,

I enclose herewith a voucher for 1½ second single fares from Cudgee to Bairnsdale, and beg to request that credit be allowed for the portion Melbourne to Bairnsdale as the holders did not travel beyond Melbourne. Possession of the voucher was obtained by me on the 18th instant.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

Lucy Pepper, Lake Condah station, wrote to William Ditchburn, 29 December 1915¹⁸

MR DITCHBURN

Dear Sir,

Just a line to let you know we arrived here and thank you very much, but there is one thing I would like to mention is I get very little milk and if I do not send the yard I get none at all. As the Dr said I ought to get plenty of milk we are all very bad with the influenza. Percy is very ill with it and I want to know if you will let us stay a bit longer, till I am a bit stronger and also Percy he feels to weak to start on the line just yet trusting you will let us stay a bit longer.

I remain
your sincere
LUCY PEPPER

1916

William Ditchburn forwarded Lucy Pepper's letter with a note to WL Galbraith, manager of Lake Condah station, 25 January 1916¹⁹

Will Mr Galbraith let me have his opinion as to these requests.

WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

**WL Galbraith reported to William Ditchburn,
28 January 1916**

I gave these people permission to remain another week. They were driven to Heywood on the 16th inst and might also mention they had every attention while staying here. Milk is given to all natives every morning and I think they got their share. Gratitude is unknown here, the natives have all had influenza and Pepper would have still been here as he had no intention of going until I told him.

W L GALBRAITH

**John Murray, Warrnambool, requested assistance for the
Pepper family from WA Callaway, Under-Secretary of
the Chief Secretary's Department, 31 March 1916²⁰**

Dear Mr Callaway,

There was a half-caste here today of the name of Pepper who is practically stranded at Framlingham where he wife and seven children are staying at the camp with Mrs Good an Aboriginal.

His home is at Cunninghame and he had been working at Portland – enlisted, but has not been sworn in. He left his job and like the patriarchs of old started on his travel with these foresaid domestic encumbrances. He has a house and bit of land at Cunninghame and is a native of that part of the country. I understand that the defence Dept. is not going to accept the service of half-caste or full-blooded blacks and I thought perhaps the Board for their protection might give this family passes to their home. It would be a charity to do so. I forget or am not sure of the Christian name of Pepper. Will you see if the Minister will grant the passes and allow them sustenance at the camp till they can leave. Ditchburne I should say will know who they are.

With Kind regards Yours Sincerely
J MURRAY

William Ditchburn sought information from Percy Pepper, Purnim, 4 April 1916²¹

MR PERCY PEPPER
Purnim.

Memo.

A request has been made by the Hon J. Murray for a pass to enable you and your family to return to Gippsland.

When you were here in December last, you said you did not intend to return to the Entrance and that you had sold your home. Will you be good enough to let me know where you will live, if the passes be granted.

The Board is also anxious to receive from you an explanation of the reason you left the railway works at Heywood.

SECRETARY

William Ditchburn wrote to William Johnstone, Local Guardian of Aborigines at Bushfield, 4 April 1916²²

Dear Sir,

Will you please issue to Mrs Percy Pepper, for herself and children, orders for a double ration, until further advised.

Yours faithfully,
WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

William Johnstone made a note to William Ditchburn, 8 April 1916

I will attend to the above,

WM W JOHNSTONE.
Local Guardian.

**Phone message from Construction Branch, Victorian
Railways recorded by William Ditchburn, 17 April 1916²³**

RE PERCY PEPPER

Reply received that Pepper reported at work on 22.12.15 and left on 3/2/16. He had been employed at shovel work in ballasting – only known reason for his leaving was on account of his hand and work too arduous. Pepper subsequently obtained work at the new pier at Portland.

D.

1917

**Lucy Pepper, Lakes Entrance, appealed to John Gray,
Member of the Legislative Assembly for Swan Hill,
30 April 1917²⁴**

MR GRAY

Sir,

I am writing to you again as I cannot stand the winter here at the Lakes, I am not too well just now I would like to get away from here before the very cold weather comes, my little boy is not too well either and I think it would save the Dr bills as I do not get too much to live on, I hope you have not forgotten my case. I have been waiting patiently for an answer hoping to hear from you soon is there any land available over at Purnim or around there. As Clarks and others have a lot of land and do not make any use of it, I would not care if it was only a acre or 2 to make a home on as the Western district agrees with me. I would be very thankful.

I remain
Your Sincier
MRS L PEPPER

**AE Parker, Secretary BPA, replied to Lucy Pepper,
9 May 1917²⁵**

Memo,

With reference to your letter of 30th April last, addressed to Hon J. Gray M. L. A., stating that you wished to remove from Lakes Entrance to Purnim and applying for a block of ground at Purnim. I have to inform you that your application has been considered by the board and cannot be granted.

SECRETARY



Lucy's lost letter

**William Ditchburn, Secretary BPA, sent a memo to
CL Greene, acting manager of Lake Tyers station,
10 December 1915, about a letter from Lucy Pepper
that he had forwarded to Greene in November²⁶**

Memo.

Will Mr Greene please return file 15/1170, which was forwarded to him on the 12th ulto, for report, relative to Mrs Percy Pepper.

**CL Greene made a note to the Secretary on reverse of
the memo, 28 February 1916²⁷**

The report was sent as requested in Dec, but I am afraid Mrs Peppers letter was destroyed with some rubbish in my waste paper basket.

C. L. GREENE

**William Ditchburn replied underneath CL Greene's
note, 1 March 1916**

Has an official letter been destroyed without the Board being apprised of the fact? This letter was sent to you on the 10 December last and your reply after a further reminder is dated 28th February.

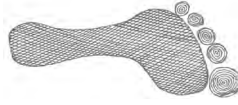
WM J DITCHBURN

**CL Greene sent a further note to William Ditchburn,
6 March 1916**

I regret the loss of Mrs Peppers letter and have nothing further to add to my memo of 28/2/16.

C. L. GREENE

Chapter 4



The timber pole dispute

THIS CHAPTER demonstrates another aspect of the government's involvement in the daily lives of Aboriginal people. The bureaucratic procedures of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines transformed apparently simple requests into long exchanges of letters. Decisions on some matters could sometimes take years.

The records presented in this chapter focus on Percy's work cutting timber between 1915 and 1918. In 1915, he requested approval from the Board for the Protection of Aborigines to cut and sell timber poles from the Lake Tyers Aboriginal mission station. Percy had struck an arrangement to supply 200 poles to Robert Bulmer, a timber merchant at Cunninghame.

Percy had to negotiate with the acting manager of Lake Tyers station, CL Greene, as well as the Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, William Ditchburn. The records in this chapter indicate that Greene was opposed to Percy doing the work because he would have to give Percy permission to stay at Lake Tyers. He suspected that Percy was trying to use the work-stay as a way of getting his family into Lake Tyers station.

THE TIMBER POLE DISPUTE

Ditchburn took Percy's side on this issue, observing that Percy found it difficult to provide for his family.

Under the law, Percy was defined as a 'half-caste' and was therefore expected to be independent of the government and to earn his own living. He relied upon irregular or seasonal employment and, through his timber proposal, was trying to work within the system to keep his family out of poverty. He had gone to the effort of establishing work networks and finding a merchant willing to purchase the timber poles from Lake Tyers. He offered to pay the Board royalties from the sale.

In April 1916, despite Percy's efforts, a dispute arose between Robert Bulmer and the station manager, CL Greene, about the arrangement, and the sale was never completed.

In 1918, after his return from service in World War I, Percy raised the matter with the new Secretary of the Board, AE Parker, and the new station manager at Lake Tyers, Bruce Ferguson. Percy pointed out that he had not been fully paid for the work he had done. Eager to secure some income, he offered the Board a way of selling the timber, which had been left unused for several years as a result of the dispute.



While farming his soldier settlement block at Koo-Wee-Rup after World War I, Percy Pepper supplemented the family's income by selling bicycles in Tynong.

Courtesy of Watkins family

1915

Percy Pepper, Cunninghame, wrote to John Murray, Chief Secretary, Victorian Government, about cutting timber poles on the Lake Tyers station, 12 September 1915¹

Mr Murry,

as I have not recieved an answer to my last letter about the timber on Lake Tyers I thought I would try and wright again things are pretty hard with me as my wife is ill and if you want my character wright to the Cunninghame Police and see if I do deserve a little help trusting to hear from you

I remain you
PERCY PEPPER

Percy Pepper sent a further letter to John Murray, 27 September 1915²

CHIEF SECRETARY,

Dear Sir,

Just to see if there is any possible chance of you coming to my help I want to get a few piles at the mission station Lake Tyers. I have a order from a contractor to get some and as their is very little work about and I have a wife and 7 children to keep. If I could get the poles it will be a good help to me, I went and seen the manager Mr Green, but he told me he could not sell them without permetion. So I am wrighting to you, if you will do me the favour I am willing to pay royalty. It can be kept out of the timber that is the only thing I can do in the way of timber cutting. Getting piles as I can cut sleepers I am a half-caste and I am willing to work if I can get it now I have got the work I cannot get the timber, trusting to hear from you I remain your

PERCY PEPPER
C Harbeck
Store Keeper
Cunninghame

William Ditchburn, Secretary, Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), referred Percy Pepper's letter to CL Greene, acting manager of Lake Tyers station, 28 September 1915³

Referred to Mr Greene for report.

WM J DITCHBURN

CL Greene reported to William Ditchburn, 30 September 1915

This man is a half-caste and being related to some of the blacks on this station might cause a lot of trouble if allowed on the station. It is well known to all the half-castes that they must have the permission of the board to remain over night on the station and if he were allowed to cut piles here I could be powerless to turn him and his family off in the event of trouble, therefore I would not support his application.

C. L. GREENE

William Ditchburn added some comments below CL Greene's response, 15 October 1915

Submitted,

I think the managers view is a wrong one. Pepper evidently finds it difficult to provide for his family and as the timber is available he should be afforded an opportunity of earning sufficient to support his wife and children.

I see no objection to the man being permitted to fell the trees, so long as he only cuts timber marked by the manager and not more than the quantity determined.

WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary

A note by an unknown official beside William Ditchburn's note, 15 October 1915

If the manager is satisfied that Pepper has a contract to supply timber which can be spared from the reserve. He can be allowed to cut for such terms as Mr Greene thinks is reasonable, if under supervision, provided he obeys orders. It does not seem necessary for his wife and family to be on the station.

William Ditchburn wrote to CL Greene, 20 October 1915⁴

Sir,

With regard to the application of Percy Pepper for permission to cut a few poles on the reserve I have to inform you that if Pepper has a contract for the supply of the poles, as to which you should be thoroughly satisfied, and that they can be spared from the reserve. The board has no objection to him cutting the timber, but only on such terms as you consider to be reasonable, that he obeys your orders, acts under your supervision and fells only those trees marked by you.

You will please ascertain the nature of the contract he has made with Mr Bulmer, the number of poles he wishes to obtain, and make such arrangement with him as to terms etc, as may be desirable. I shall be glad if you will let me have particulars as soon as possible.

There is no necessity for Pepper's wife and family to be at the station.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

**William Ditchburn replied to Percy Pepper,
20 October 1915⁵**

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 12th ultimo, asking for permission to cut some poles at the Lake Tyers station, I have to inform you that the manager of the station has been requested to make certain arrangements with you, which he will explain if you will call on him without delay.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

**Robert Bulmer, timber merchant and contractor, wrote
to CL Greene, 27 October 1915⁶**

Dear Sir,

I understand Percy Pepper has arranged with you for some timber on the reserve.

I am prepared to accept 200 poles I gave him this order some time ago, Royalty 8/- each.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BULMER

**CL Greene reported to William Ditchburn,
29 November 1915⁷**

This is a very unsatisfactory affair. The only agreement that Pepper can get from Mr Bulmer is the letter attached and as the Royalty mentioned is too low according to the Crown Lands Ranger whom I consulted, I have demurred about accepting it. In the meantime Pepper who had cut a few poles has knocked off cutting. It seems as if Bulmer will only take the 200 poles at his own price which is about 50% below market price. I am sure that from the start Pepper has merely been trying to get a standing on this station and I know that on several occasions his relatives here have supplied him with rations and having run short themselves have come to me for more.

C. L. GREENE

1916

Robert Bulmer wrote to William Ditchburn about his agreement with Percy Pepper, 14 April 1916⁸

Dear sir,

... I wish to draw your attention to the fact that Percy Pepper cut some poles or piles which for keeping his wife and family in, food cost me £4.00. ...

Your faithfully,
ROBERT BULMER

William Ditchburn asked CL Greene for a report on the matter, 18 April 1916⁹

Sir,

... With regard to the poles cut by Percy Pepper as stated by Mr Bulmer, I shall be glad if you will furnish me with full particulars of the circumstances so far as you are aware, and a statement as to whether you made any verbal or other agreement with Mr Bulmer in connection with the cutting of the poles on the reserve.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

CL Greene replied to William Ditchburn, 22 April 1916¹⁰

Bulmer's letter received as advised and contents noted. Before furnishing full particulars of the circumstances I would like to inspect the official file on the subject and would be glad to receive same from you for perusal and return.

C. L. GREENE

William Ditchburn added the following observation to CL Greene's response, 26 April 1916

From the [correspondence] it appears that the arrangement was made with Pepper and the manager should remember if he had any conversation with Bulmer in the subject.

William Ditchburn wrote again to CL Greene, 28 April 1916¹¹

Sir,

With reference to your request for the official papers relating to the question of Mr R Bulmer's connection with the cutting of poles on the reserves by Percy Pepper, I have to point out that the correspondence shows the arrangement was made with Pepper.

You should remember whether you had any conversation or communication with Mr Bulmer on this subject, and I have therefore to ask that you will let me have your reply as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

CL Greene replied to William Ditchburn, 3 May 1916¹²

I made no arrangements with Mr Bulmer about the poles – verbal or otherwise. I did have a conversation with him about the royalty he was to pay as it was unsatisfactory with regard to price, but nothing was ever arranged or agreed between him and me.

C. L. GREENE

**William Ditchburn sought further information from
CL Greene, 9 May 1916¹³**

Sir,

Adverting to previous correspondence relative to the poles cut by Percy Pepper, as to which Mr Bulmer has made a claim, I am directed to ask that you will let me know what you consider a fair sum to charge Mr Bulmer as royalty.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

**RM Lachlan, Forest Officer at Nowa Nowa, wrote to
CL Greene about the price of sleepers, 22 May 1916¹⁴**

Sir,

Yours to hand re price of poles charged as royalty by my Dept. On Octagon poles Iron bark and box the royalty rates are: 30 ft 12/6 each 35 ft 15/ each and 40 ft 17/6 each.

Anything over 12 inches in diameter in the small end selling as piles we charge 6 d per lineal foot.

Telegraph poles we charge about 9/6 for 30 ft 18/6 for 35 ft and 7/6 for 25 ft.

Trusting that this is what you want.

I am
Yours respect
R M LACHLAN
F O.
Nowa Nowa

N.B.

I am Sorry I forgot to post you this before

**CL Greene forwarded the timber prices to William
Ditchburn, 29 May 1916¹⁵**

I wrote to the Forest Officer for this district to find out the prices charged by that department and I have received the attached reply from him. I think these prices should be charged to Bulmer.

Yours faithfully,
C. L. GREENE

THE TIMBER POLE DISPUTE

CL Greene added a report on the same document, at William Ditchburn's request, 20 June 1916

I have gone carefully into the counting and measuring of the poles cut by Pepper for Bulmer, they are as follows:

20 Poles	30 ft long x 15" large end x 9" small end
15 Poles	35 ft x 15" x 9"
11 Poles	40 ft x 16" x 10"
<hr/>	
46 total	

William Ditchburn wrote to Robert Bulmer, 23 June 1916¹⁶

Sir,

With reference to previous correspondence relative to the poles cut by Percy Pepper at the Aboriginal station Lake Tyers in October last, I am directed to inform you that the 46 poles cut by Pepper, may be had by you on payment to me of the royalty as follows:-

<u>Length</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Royalty</u>	<u>Amount</u>
30 ft	20	12/6	£12:10:0
35 ft	15	15/-	11:5:0
40 ft	<u>11</u>	17/6	<u>9:12:0</u>
Total	46		<u>£33:7:6</u>

If you decline to accept these terms the poles will be disposed of by the Board.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

**Percy Pepper sent Robert Bulmer's prices to the BPA,
7 September 1916¹⁷**

Attached received from Percy Pepper-

These are Mr R Bulmers inquires as to the amounts he would pay for the various sizes of the poles felled

16"-10"

G 40 ft = 3/6

35 ft 6 x 10 = 3/-

30 ft 15 x 9 = 2/6

On 1 August 1916, Percy Pepper enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force to serve his country. He left Melbourne in September 1916 and, after service in France, returned to Australia in late July 1918. (See Chapter 5 for more information.)

1918

AE Parker, Secretary BPA, wrote to Bruce Ferguson, manager of Lake Tyers station, 19 September 1918¹⁸

Sir,

A half-caste named Percy Pepper called in to this Office yesterday and asked that he be allowed to negotiate with an outsider for the purchase of timber piles.

He states that he cut piles for Mr Robert Bulmer in 1915 for which he was paid only £4. From the file in this office it appears the 46 piles were cut (20 thirty foot, 15 thirty five foot, and 11 forty foot) and that a royalty of £33.7.6 was asked. As Mr Bulmer refused to pay that amount the piles were left on the station. Percy Pepper wishes to sell piles, and proposes to pay £4 received from Bulmer back, and also to pay above royalty.

I have by direction to inquire as to whether piles are still on the station and if so, in what state of preservation. Further whether they would be of use to the Board in connection with the new cottages. If they are of use will you kindly place a valuation on them.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

An attachment to AE Parker's letter summarised Percy Pepper's claims¹⁹

PERCY PEPPER

Half-caste

(Discharged from A.I.F. Family reasons)

(1915) Was granted permission to cut piles from the Lake Tyers Reserve for Robert Bulmer, for which he states he should have been paid at rates of 3/6, 3/- and 2/6 each according to length of pole. Altogether 46 poles were cut and Bulmer's indebtedness totalled £6.13.6. Pepper states he was only paid £4.

The royalty on timber due to the board amounted to £33.7.6, which was disputed by Bulmer and in consequence the timber was left lying on the Reserve.

Thus there is an amount outstanding of £2.13.6 to Pepper and £33.7.6 to the Board.

Pepper has just been discharged from the A.I.F. and states that he can sell the poles, which are apparently still lying on the Station. He is willing to repay Bulmer the £4 received from him and also the Royalty due to the Board, on condition that he receives the Balance.

I informed Pepper that if he submitted an offer in writing to the above effect accompanied by an offer from a firm willing to take poles stating amount firm was prepared to pay, matter would be considered by Board.

A. E. PARKER
Secretary.

Percy Pepper, Lakes Entrance, wrote to Bruce Ferguson, 7 October 1918²⁰

MR FERGUSON

Dear Sir,

About the piles I cut on Lake Tyers 2 years ago with Dan, I saw Bulmer and he told me the royalty was too much Mr Greene put the royalty on himself. I made a price with Mr Greene I think it was about 8- per pile when I was last in Melbourne. I went to Mr Parker about the timber I cut and he showed me the price of the Royalty, I think it was £33-0-0. Now as Bulmer wont take

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the pile I have to go to Melbourne about land I will try and get another firm to take them. I would have been out this week, but I am not to good and as I have to go to Melbourne Monday would you do me a favour to get Dan to measure each stick. The length of the piles also the thickness at the head also the butt and take the number of piles as one firm wanted to know the size of each pile I may do business with them. I will go to Mr Parker again and see him if I do business with this firm. Mr Greene said their was 41 poles, but I thought their was more perhaps some got burnt Dan will know, I think the Chief Sect will come down with the royalty. So I can make wages out of the piles if you do not mind, sir you could send the list of the measurements on to Mr Parker and I will get it from him Wednesday as I promised the firm I would take the measurements with me. Trusty I am not asking to much as the measurements must be right, trusting to hear from you.

I remain yours from
PERCY PEPPER

Bruce Ferguson reported to AE Parker, 7 October 1918²¹

Sir,

Re piles cut on the reserve about two years ago by Percy Pepper and Dan Cortwine:- Only 39 could be found today, but in the thick forest growth it would be easy to miss several.

Approximate measurements:-

Number of piles	Length	Butt	Top
21	30 ft	12 in.	10 in.
12	35 ft	14 in.	10 in.
6	40 ft	16 in.	10 in.

Poles cut for special work are of comparatively little value when cut shorter, and used for other work. Their value consists largely in the fact that they are long and straight.

Heavier trees are usually cut for sawmill work, and less valuable shorter timber for blocks for cottages, so that if used for the cottages, they are only worth the labour of cutting and carting.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager

**AE Parker wrote to Robert Bulmer, Lakes Entrance,
14 October 1918²²**

Sir,

I have to inform you that Percy Pepper has made application to this Board for permission to sell a number of piles (about 46) which he cut in 1915 on your behalf. This Board claimed royalty to the extent of £33.7.6 and as same was not paid, the piles still remain on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station. Pepper is willing to refund £4 which he states you paid him, and also to pay royalty outstanding to the Board.

I have by direction to request that you will inform this Board whether you are willing to pay the outstanding royalty or whether you are willing to relinquish any claim on the piles subject to a refund of £4 from Pepper.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

**AE Parker sent a further letter to Bruce Ferguson,
29 October 1918²³**

Dear Mr Ferguson,

With reference to previous correspondence re piles cut by Percy Pepper and still at Lake Tyers, I have by direction to state that offers are to be called for sale of same from two or more persons, when the question of royalty to be paid and conditions of sale can be considered by the Board. I have written accordingly to Pepper and shall be glad if you can submit any local offers.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

AE Parker wrote to Percy Pepper, 29 October 1918²⁴

Dear Mr Pepper,

I have received a reply from Mr Robert Bulmer stating that he is willing to forego all claim on piles at Lake Tyers on receipt of £4. The Vice Chairman directs me to say that two or more offers must be submitted for the piles, when the Board can consider the question of what royalty must be paid and arrange sale of the piles.

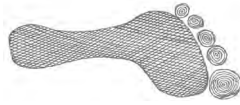
Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

Mr P. Pepper
People's Palace
Exhibition Street
Melbourne

(If not at this Address now, kindly forward to Lakes Entrance)

There is no record in the correspondence of the Board of whether Percy Pepper ever sold the timber poles and received payment for his labours.

Chapter 5



Percy answers the call

DURING WORLD WAR I, Percy applied to join the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and passed a medical examination on 5 May 1916 in Warrnambool. On 1 August 1916, at the age of 38, he was approved for active service in the 21st Infantry Battalion.

Aboriginal servicemen

Men from Victoria's Aboriginal community joined the AIF in roughly the same proportion as the rest of the male population. Aboriginal servicemen came from Lake Tyers, Coranderrk, Lake Condah and Framlingham stations, as well as many other places across the state.

Commonwealth legislation only permitted people who were substantially of European origin or descent to join the defence forces. At the start of World War I, Australian governments moved to exclude enlistment by people who were not of substantially European origin. As the war progressed and more recruits were needed, these restrictions were loosened and Aboriginal people were allowed to enlist, sometimes by claiming that they were of Indian or Maori descent.¹ Richard Broome estimates that there were 120 eligible men of Aboriginal descent in Victoria – this figure excludes men defined as 'full-bloods', who were discouraged from enlisting. At least 42 Aboriginal men joined the

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defence forces, and received the same pay and treatment as their fellow servicemen.²

Percy Pepper saw active duty in France and in 1917 received head wounds caused by shell blast. In March 1918, he was transferred to the Australian Employment Company. In May that year, he was given permission to return to Australia to care for Lucy, who was unwell, and their seven children.³

Letters in this chapter document Percy's concern for his family as he prepared to depart for the war. He asked that his family be allowed to live on Lake Tyers Aboriginal station while he was away. Due to her poor health, Lucy needed help to bring up the children. Without such support, Percy's family would have struggled to survive during his absence.

Aboriginal servicemen returned to the country they had fought for to find themselves in the same disadvantaged position they had left years earlier, without many of the rights possessed by fellow Australians.⁴



Percy Pepper's AIF regiment at 6th training base, Salisbury Plains, England, in 1917. Percy is on the far right of the front row.

Courtesy of Watkins family

Soldier settlement

Percy did try to take advantage of one of the few opportunities that his service opened up. Upon his return to Australia in September 1918, he secured a soldier settlement block in Koo-Wee-Rup, located south-east of Melbourne and north of Westernport Bay. The area had previously been a large swamp, much of which was drained for farming.

The soldier settlement scheme was an attempt by the Victorian Government to provide thousands of returned soldiers with a livelihood. The Victorian *Discharged Soldier Settlement Act 1917* provided for the settlement of returned soldiers under a long-term lease arrangement. The scheme was administered by the Victorian Lands Purchase and Administration Board and, from 1918, by the Closer Settlement Board.

Records in this chapter document the application and approval process. Applicants needed letters of support to vouch for their farming experience and a reference from local Repatriation Committees, which were voluntary organisations established through the federal Repatriation Department to help servicemen readjust to civilian life. With the support of the local Repatriation Committee and his referee letters, Percy acquired a qualification certificate and, following recommendation from the local land board, was given a block of land on lease. Under the conditions of the settlement scheme, he did not have to make repayments for the first three years.

These records reveal the difficulties Percy faced trying to make the farm viable. They include letters he wrote to public servants responsible for soldier settlement matters in the Department of Crown Lands and Survey. He also sent letters to members of local committees, such as John James in Koo-Wee-Rup, who advised soldier settlers on the development of their farms and the purchase of stock and equipment. These committees also made recommendations to government officials on matters brought before them by soldier settlers.⁵

Percy was not alone in his difficulties on the farm: many returned soldiers had a tough time with their blocks. The Victorian Government set up a Royal Commission to inquire into the reasons for these failures. In its final report in 1934, the Royal

Commission found that there were a number of reasons for the failure of the scheme: the inexperience of the settlers who acquired farming blocks, their lack of capital, the small size of blocks and unsuitability of the land for farming, and the low prices received for agricultural products.⁶ The records of Percy's struggle provide evidence of these problems.

Note on the records

Some letters in this chapter are signed 'pro Secretary'. This indicates that they were written or signed on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey by another officer. It has not been possible to identify their name or position.



Percy Pepper is among the World War I servicemen named on the Roll of Honour at Lake Tyers.

Photo: Simon Flagg, Public Record Office Victoria

1916

In April 1916, William Ditchburn, Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA) had written to Percy, asking why he wanted railway passes to return to Gippsland from the Western District and seeking an explanation of why he had left his job on the railway line at Heywood (see Chapter 3).

Percy Pepper, Warrnambool, replied to William Ditchburn, Secretary BPA, 22 April 1916⁷

MR DITCHBURN

Dear Sir,

I only received your letter on Thursday asking the reason why I want to go home I have inlisted about a month ago. The recruiting officer that I inlisted with told me he could get me cooking on a transport or in camp, so when the Dr examined me I passed for active service and another thing the recruiting sargent told me that he could get me a pass for the family home. I was down at Portland at the time as he kept putting me off all the time and I wrote to Senator Pearce and I never got a answer yet so I went to Hamilton to see the Lieutenant there and he said that the Sargent could not do such a thing and I could not leave Lucy and the family here amongst strangers. I think it will be better for them home, thank you very much for your kind help in giving us rations, as I was very ill. Both me and one of the boys, we got poisoned with eating tin fish, I will explain to you when I see you why I left the Heywood line, it was as though my hand the one with the fingers off and do you think you could get me cooking in the camp I have not sworn in yet and I am not intitled to a pass so please try and do your best and send us a pass I intend to leave Lucy in Stratford. While I am away I am camping here in Warrnambool, I will explain to you when I see you, too much to write so thank you very much for your kindness for helping us so far the change over there has done Lucy the world of good.

I remain
Yours sincere
PERCY PEPPER
C/O Warrnambool P. O.

William Ditchburn wrote to William Johnstone, Local Guardian of Aborigines at Bushfield, 1 May 1916⁸

Dear Mr Johnstone

I have forwarded to Percy Pepper a railway pass for his wife and children to return to Gippsland as Pepper has enlisted.

Yours faithfully,
WM J DITCHBURN
Secretary.

Attended to
Wm. W. Johnstone

Lucy Pepper wrote to Donald McLeod, Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government, about Percy Pepper's enlistment, 1 May 1916⁹

Mr McLeod

I received a letter from Mr Ditchburn asking me where I wanted to live. If a pass was sent to us to go away from here, as my husband has enlisted and has to be in camp by the end of the week and I think it is better for me to be at home amongst my own people at Stratford as I am amongst strangers over here, hoping to hear from you soon.

I remain
Sincere
MRS L. PEPPER

On 8 May 1916, Percy Pepper enlisted for active service in the AIF and took an oath to serve his country.¹⁰

1918

**Memo recording Percy Pepper's discharge from the AIF,
May 1918¹¹**

From: 5677 Pte. Pepper late 21st Bn. Att. Aust. Employment Co.
To: Baths Officer. Aust. Corps. Hdqrs.

Would it be possible please for me to be returned to Australia? I have received advice that (enclosed) that my wife is very ill.

I enlisted on 8th May 1916 and came to France in November 1916 I was hit on the head by a piece of shell in Oct. 1917 and after evacuation to hospital was boarded at the Base in March last and classified B.3.

In consequence of the injury to my head and chronic rheumatism, I am quite useless at times and have to lie down.

I am 40 1/12 years of age and have seven children. I do not necessarily ask for me discharge but desire to be near my wife owing to her condition of health. Would you please return letters to me

(sgnd) P. PEPPER.
14.5.18

D.A.G.

The attached application is forwarded. Discharge is recommended.

(sgnd)

Approved return to Australia for discharge. File to Defence.

(sgnd. T.H.D)

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Hdqrs A.I.F
Att. Aust. Corps.
21.5.18
Camp Commandant
Aust. Corps. H.Q.

No. 5677 Pt. P.Pepper. Aust. Employment Co Late 21st Bn

Approval is given for the return of the abovenamed man to Australia for discharge.

Please send him to report to Admins Hdqrs. A.I.F London for passage accordingly

Private correspondence attached to his application is forwarded herewith for return to him.

(sgnd) Colonel
D.A.AG
A.I.F

Admins Hdqrs. London

For information and necessary action. File attached for transmission to Defence. Melbourne.

(sgnd) H.D.WYNTER LT.COL.
31.5.18
D.A.G
A.I.F

In late 1918, Percy Pepper applied for a soldier settlement block at Koo-Wee-Rup and provided three letters in support of his application.

**Letter from Joseph Coate, Lakes Entrance,
9 September 1918¹²**

This is to Certify that I have know Private Pepper for ten years & he has worked on my land and worked satisfactory and I consider he is a fit Person to work a Small Block of Land.

JOSEPH R COATE
Local Repatriation

**Letter from John Rawlings, Lakes Entrance,
10 September 1918¹³**

This is to certify that Percy Pepper is known to me for ten years during that time he as been working on my Farm I always found him a good worker and trustworthy he is capable of taking on a Farm.

JOHN RAWLINGS
Lakes Entrance

**Letter from Jos. (Joseph) Ward, Bunga Creek,
11 September 1918¹⁴**

I have known Percy Pepper for the last fourteen or fifteen years. I have always found him a straight forward, hard working and steady man. He has also been working for me, and I have been quite satisfied with the work done on the farm.

JOS. WARD

**Percy Pepper was issued with a certificate of
qualification to apply for land on 13 September 1918
(see page #).¹⁵**

**Notes of evidence to the Local Land Board to support
Percy Pepper's case for a soldier settlement block at
Koo-Wee-Rup, 19 October 1918¹⁶**

Present married 7 children, eldest 15, 5 girls and 2 boys – eldest a girl – all depend upon me – I am a farm and general laborer – living at Lakes Entrance. Have had experience in cultivation potatoes, beans, peas, maize etc and also keep a couple of cows – no land – wife had the use of an acre of land neither of us have any land – Have always worked in the Country so has my wife – I was on service 829 days 675 aboard discharged as medically unfit and owing to family reasons the wife being ill and 7 young children – I hold a qual cert for a mixed farm I inspected Tahara Estate but prefer this which I inspected – will use it for potatoes,

onions, etc & maize and will run a few cows – Have £8 back pay due to me get pension of £2.3.6 per fortnight for self – wife and family – owe about £24 wife has had to work stripping wattle bark etc I have not been doing anything since my return – was in bed a fortnight – I am capable of working a farm and my neighbour will assist me – the farmers union will do my first plowing. Have a pony and jinker and few fowls and about £5 worth of furniture had a lot of sickness in family – we are all anxious to get on the land will want full advance from the Board for a house 5 rooms cows – (3) seed, horses (2) plough & other implements etc. I will go on to the land as soon as possible & live with my neighbour until the house is erected.

Annotation by Local Land Board official on Percy Pepper's statement

Recommended

Percy Pepper, Koo-Wee-Rup, wrote to the Land Purchase and Management Board about construction of his house, 18 November 1918¹⁷

Dear Sir

Would you kindly give give me an idea when the house on my block will started as I would like to get my family down as soon as Possible it would be more help to me my family is now in the Bush on their own and as the house they are living in is not to good Well I would like to have them down and I also want to know if I could use that Order for Potatoes & Chaff get them Chaff later on Potatoes I will only be able to put in a ton as they have gone up in Price I was thinking of only getting 1 ton now of Potatoes and a few Pease as the Order will not be enough for 2 tons as long as I do not go over the amount of the Order can I get any other Seed

I wish to
remain your Obident
PERCY PEPPER

Percy Pepper requested help from AE Parker, who was now the Secretary of the BPA, 27 November 1918¹⁸

Dear Sir,

I am wrighting to you to ask your Permission as I am a Half-Cast Aboriginal with a Wife and Seven children and have returned about 10 week from Active Service. As I have taken up Land hear and I have had the misfortune to have my Boy in the Bairnsdale Hospital I also have a delicate Wife and my house is not built yet. My wife's father and mother is on Lake tyers I am wrighty to see if they can stay at Lake Tyers for a while they have no one to be near them if they stay at Lake Entrance and I should like some one near them and as they have a lot of relatives at Lake Tyers mission who will help them. My wife cannot manage the children as she is not to strong also the house she got built was only made of rubber roid and is damp. She is willing to buy her own food as long as she stays at Lake tyers till I can get her down will you be kind enough to wright to the manager also let me know if you will do this as I am in a fix at present trusting

You will
be in favour I remain
You obident
PERCY PEPPER

AE Parker referred Percy Pepper's request to Bruce Ferguson, manager of Lake Tyers station, 28 November 1918¹⁹

Referred to manager L. Tyers for report.

E. PARKER
Secretary

**Bruce Ferguson reported to AE Parker,
30 November 1918**

Pepper is a returned soldier who wishes his wife and family to remain at Lake Tyers until there is a house on the land which he has taken up at Koo-wee-rup. Pepper and his wife are fair halfcastes, and were at one time residents of Lake Tyers Aboriginal station. Perhaps the erection of his house could be expedited, in the meantime I see no reason why his wife and family should not remain here for a few weeks.

BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager

**AE Parker advised Percy Pepper about his request for
his family to stay at Lake Tyers temporarily,
7 December 1918²⁰**

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter undated asking that your wife and family be allowed to reside at Lake Tyers for a few weeks while you are getting settled at Koo-wee-rup and in reply have by direction to inform you that your family may reside at Lake tyers for a term of six weeks. I have advised the manager of the Station accordingly. Kindly write Mr Ferguson when the family may be expected to arrive.

Yours faithfully
SECRETARY

Mr Percy Pepper
Post Office
Koo-wee-rup

1919

Bruce Ferguson wrote to AE Parker, 9 January 1919²¹

The Pepper family have now gone to Koo-Wee-Rup.

BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager

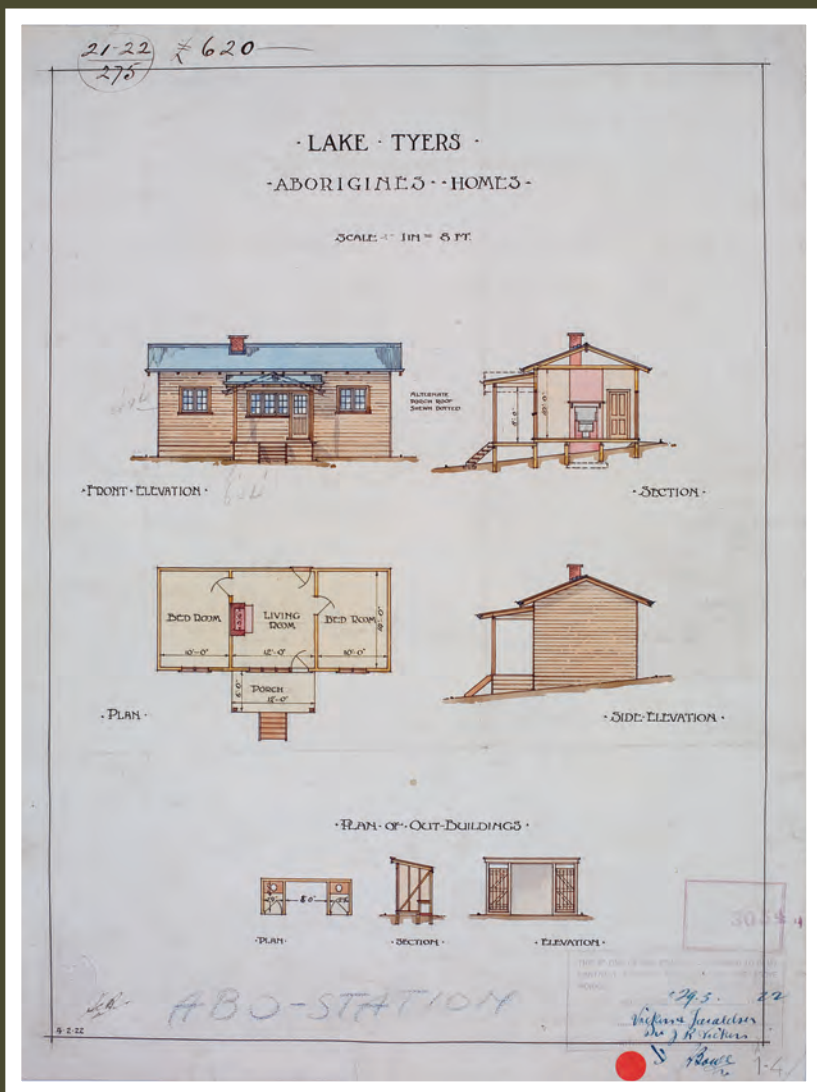


PLATE 1 Designs showing the typical housing for Aboriginal people at Lake Tyers, circa 1922. The designs were very simple; toilets were located in the separate 'out-buildings' shown at the bottom of the drawing.

No. 2610

An Act to consolidate the Law relating to the
Aboriginal Natives of Victoria.

Enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the *Aborigines Act*
advice and consent of the Legislative Council and the Legislative ^{1915.}
Assembly of Victoria in this present Parliament assembled and by the
authority of the same as follows (that is to say):—

1. This Act may be cited as the *Aborigines Act* 1915, and shall ^{short title and}
come into operation on the first day of October One thousand nine ^{commencement.}
hundred and fifteen.

2. The Acts mentioned in the Schedule to this Act to the extent to ^{Repeal.}
which the same are thereby expressed to be repealed are hereby ^{Schedule.}
repealed. Such repeal shall not affect any regulation order or
appointment made or declared or any licence granted under the
said Acts or either of them before the commencement of this Act.

3. In this Act—

"Board" means the Board for the Protection of the ^{Interpretation.}
Aborigines. ^{JA. s. 2.}
^{"Board."}

4. The term "half-caste" whenever it occurs in this Act ^{Meaning of half-}
includes as well half-castes as all other persons whatever of mixed ^{caste.}
aboriginal blood; but when used elsewhere than in this and the next ^{JA. s. 4.}
succeeding section the term shall unless the context requires a different
meaning be read and construed as excluding such half-castes as under
the provisions of this Act are to be deemed to be aboriginals.

5. The following persons shall be deemed to be aboriginals within ^{Who to be}
the meaning of this Act:— ^{deemed}
^{aboriginals.}
^{JA. s. 5.}

- (i.) Every aboriginal native of Victoria;
- (ii.) Every half-caste who habitually associating and living with
an aboriginal within the meaning of this section

PLATE 2 *The first page of the Aborigines Act 1915.*

Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 14558/P3, Unit 1, Act No. 2610 *Aborigines Act 1915*. Reproduced by permission of the Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Hospital Creek
March 10th 1915

Mr. Murry

Dear Sir

Have you given my case a consideration as I never heard from you I thought I would write to you again it is four weeks since I wrote to you hoping you would look this letter and I am anxious to get away from Gipps-land I am suffering again with my lungs & I would like to get away before the winter set in I would like you to give me a pass to go to Purnim and my husband will try &

PLATE 3 Lucy Pepper asked the government for help to move from the humid coastal climate of Lake Tyers during winter to help ease her tuberculosis. This letter is transcribed in full on pages 29 and 30.

A 68186 b
2270/1

(P/W)

Alcy

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.



AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 5677

Name PEPPER Percy

15th Rifle's Aust. Employment Coy
21st BATTN.

Unit 21st Battalion

V 18888

Joined on AUG 1 - 1916

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

- 1. What is your Name? ... PEPPER Percy
- 2. In the Parish of ... in or near the Town of ...
Ramatyuch Victoria
in the County of ...
- 3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ... Natural Born British Subject
- 4. What is your Age? ... 38 years 4 months
- 5. What is your Trade or Calling? ... Cook
- 6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... No
- 7. Are you married? ... Yes
- 8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ... Mrs Lucy Pepper
LAKES ENTRANCE VICTORIA
- 9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... No
- 10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? ... No
- 11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... No
- 12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... Yes
- 13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... No
- 14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mothers)— Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? ... Yes
- 15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and ~~other~~ fever? ... Yes

I, Percy Pepper do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than ~~one-third~~ three-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date 8/5/16

P. Pepper
Signature of person enlisted.

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

PLATE 4 Percy Pepper enlisted for service in World War I.

National Archives of Australia: B2455, Pepper Percy

CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTING OFFICER.

The foregoing questions were read to the person enlisted in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to by him.

AK I have examined his naturalization papers and am of opinion that they are correct.

(This to be struck out except in the case of persons who are naturalized British Subjects.)

Date

8/5/16

Maister *Scour*
Signature of Attesting Officer.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY PERSON BEING ENLISTED.*

3, *Percy* *Pepper* swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the Australian Imperial Force from *8/5/16* until the end of the War, and a further period of four months thereafter unless sooner lawfully discharged, dismissed, or removed therefrom; and that I will resist His Majesty's enemies and cause His Majesty's peace to be kept and maintained; and that I will in all matters appertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty according to law.

So HELP ME, GOD.

Percy Pepper
Signature of Person Enlisted.

Taken and subscribed at *Melbourne* in
the State of *Victoria*
this *5th* day of *August* of
1916, before me—

Maister *Scour*
Signature of Attesting Officer.

*A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Act, and the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialed by the Attesting Officer.

PLATE 5 *Percy Pepper* swore an oath to serve the King.

National Archives of Australia: B2455, Pepper Percy

Description of Percy Pepper on Enlistment.

Age 38 years 7 months.
 Height 5 feet 6 inches.
 Weight 188 lbs.
 Chest Measurement 35-37 inches.
 Complexion Dark
 Eyes Brown. Both 4
 Hair Black
 Religious Denomination C.P.C.

DISTINCTIVE MARKS.

*Chest + legs covered with
 black hair.
 Brown patch in R. flank
 Lost two distal phalanges
 3rd + 4th fingers L. hand.*

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I HAVE examined the above-named person, and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz. :-

Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; hæmorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked* with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date MAY - 5 1916

Place Wassenaarhoek

J. E. Littlewood Capt
 Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him

to 15th Rnfct's
21st BATTN.

Date AUG 1 - 1916

Place ROYAL PARK

S. S. Smith Gordon Lieut
 Commanding 15th Rnfct's
21st BATTN.

PLATE 6 Percy Pepper's service record notes the injury he suffered in 1907, resulting in the loss of two fingers.

National Archives of Australia: B2455, Pepper Percy

B. 103 ^{Eng}
link of

Statement of Service of No. 5677 Name Pepper, Percy

Units in which served.	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of service in each rank.		Remarks.
		From—	To—	
<i>Altop</i> 22 nd Depot Batta Royal Park <i>(Depot) Batt. A.I.E.</i> ROYAL PARK.		22/5/16	26.5.16	<i>Trans to 22nd Batta</i>
21st Battalion <i>15th Avn's</i> 21st BATTN.		26 MAY 1916	AUG 1- 1916	<i>15th Avn's 21st BATTN.</i>
<i>Embarked.</i>	<i>H.M.F.T. Shropshire</i>	SEP 25 1916		
	<i>D.C. Troops Embarked Melbne 25-9-16 Shropshire; Disembkd Plymth 11-11-16</i>			
<i>21st Bn.</i> NE	Proceeding Overseas to France per <i>FRANCEISS</i> <i>ENRIETTA</i>	Falkstones	13/2/18	<i>FR 2538*</i> 6-1-18.
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>20d from 10/21</i>	France	26-1-17	<i>FR 2538*</i> 20 1/9/201 31.12.17
	<i>21st Bn. To Hosp: Sick</i>	"	26.12.17	
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>Re-employment pay</i>	France	11.3.18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	"	12-3-18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	"	8-4-18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	England	28.5.18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	"	10-6-18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	"	24.5.18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	England	6.6.18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>
<i>21st Bn.</i>	<i>21st Bn. of Avn's Camp</i>	"	14/5/18	<i>20 1/9/201 31.12.17</i>

Discharged 3 M.D. *14/5/18*

I have examined the above details, and find them correct in every respect.

Discharged 3 M.D. 31/7/18

PLATE 7 Percy Pepper served in France and Belgium.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT ACT 1917.

2608

Application for Qualification Certificate to Apply for Crown Land.

(a) Insert name in full. I, ^(a) Percy Pepper
(b) Give full Postal Address. ^(b) Lakes Entrance, Gippsland.

hereby notify that I desire to obtain the necessary Qualification Certificate entitling me to apply for a holding under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act 1917. If such certificate be granted to me, the class of holding, area, and locality I would prefer is :-

(c) For Dairy Farming. For Mixed Farming. For Wheat Growing. For Poultry Raising. For Fruit Growing. For Pig Raising. Class of Holding ^(c) Mixed Farming. Area Locality Warm climate. North.

In support of this application I have made the Statutory declaration within.

Signed this 16th day of August 1918.

Signature P. Pepper

TO THE SECRETARY QUALIFICATION COMMITTEE, CROWN LANDS DEPARTMENT, MELBOURNE.

Received 16 — 8 — 18
Entered 16 — 8 — 18
Notice to attend 29 AUG 1918
Date of Inquiry 19 SEP 1918 2 15

DECISION.

Issue mixed
Return to P. Pepper regarding to be placed on 50 acres in the
Parsons District 14/2/18

Certificate Issued

PLATE 8 Percy Pepper's application for a qualification certificate for a soldier settlement block.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT ACT 1917.

CERTIFICATE OF QUALIFICATION TO APPLY FOR LAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY,
Melbourne, 13 SEP 1918

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Percy Pepper
of Lakes Entrance
who has duly registered his desire to become an applicant for
land set apart under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act
1917, and who has written his signature at the foot hereof,
appeared before this Committee on the 13 SEP 1918 day of
19 and that the Committee is satis-
fied that he possesses the necessary qualification entitling
him to apply for land.

DATED this 13 SEP 1918 day of 19

*Small based James
Special
Inspector*

Nm Cattamach

*Chairman of Committee
(appointed under the Dis-
charged Soldiers' Settle-
ment Act 1917.*

Signature of person to whom this certificate applies.) *P. Pepper*

Witness to signature *Smulcahy*

PLATE 9 This certificate allowed Percy Pepper to apply for land.

This is the Exhibit marked "A" referred to in the annexed
 declaration, dated 19th day of October 1918
 of Percy Pepper

F. D. Taylor
 Commissioner for taking Declarations and Affidavits.

LAND ACT 1915.

Case No.

Corr. No.

LOCAL LAND BOARD.

At Hallowmire On 19th October 1918
 Name Percy Pepper Parish Koo wee weep
 Area 56 a.
 Allot. 26 of J.

NOTES OF EVIDENCE.

I, Percy Pepper, married, 7 children, eldest 15, 5 girls & 2 boys - eldest girl - all depend upon me - I am a farm & general laborer - living at Lakes Entrance. I have had experience in cultivation, Potatoes, beans, peas, maize & also keep a couple of cows - no land ^{at home} had an acre of land & neither of us have any land - have always worked in the Country so has my wife - I was on service 829 days 675 abroad - discharged as medically unfit and owing to family reasons the wife being ill & 7 young children - hold a qual. cert. for a District farmer. Inspected Tahara State but prefer this which I inspected - will use it for Potatoes, onions & maize & will run a few cows - have £8 back pay due bene get pension of £2.2.6 per fortnight for self, wife & family, wife has had to work stripping wattle bark. I have not been doing anything since my return - was in bed a fortnight - I am capable of working a farm & my neighbours will assist me - the Peninsula Union will do my farm ploughing - have a pony & jinker & few fowls & about £5 worth of furniture - had a lot of sections in plenty - we are all amound & get on the land will want full advance from the Board for a house 5 rooms - Cows (3) feed, horses (2) plough & other implements etc. I will go on to the land as soon as possible & live with my neighbours until the house is erected.

Recommended
 F. D. Taylor

PLATE 10 A record of Percy Pepper's evidence to the Local Land Board, 1918. This document is transcribed on pages 65 and 66.

28

E "F."
Soldiers Settlement Act 1917.

**Acceptance of Application for Conditional Purchase Lease
and Permit for Immediate Occupation of Allotment.**

To PERCY PEPPER,
of LAKES ENTRANCE

Estate— Thompsons
Parish— Koo-wee-rup
Allotment— 26
Section— 1
Area— 56 0 0

TAKE NOTICE that your application for a Conditional Purchase Lease for the Farm Allotment referred to in the margin has been granted, and that a lease will issue to you in due course as and from the Nineteenth day of October 19 18 from which date your tenancy will run.

Pending the execution by you of the lease the Lands Purchase and Management Board hereby grants you permission and authority to enter upon and occupy the allotment referred to on the conditions provided by the *Closer Settlement Act 1915*, as varied by the *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1917*.

The substance of some of the more material covenants and conditions which will be incorporated in the lease to be issued, with which it is desirable that you should be acquainted pending its issue, are printed on the back for your information and guidance.

Dated this Thirtieth day of October 19 18

For the purpose of lease
Robert Dodd
19. 11. 20

[Signature]
Secretary, Lands Purchase and Management Board.

I, the above-named PERCY PEPPER hereby acknowledge myself a tenant of His Majesty the King (as from and inclusive of the date indicated when the tenancy is expressed to run), in respect of the allotment above referred to as a tenant and Conditional Purchase Lease to be issued to me in due course.

Dated the 2nd day of November 19 18

Signature Percy Pepper

Witness H. S. Barke

11435.

26-12-19
6-1-19
26-1-19
[Signature]
For Keenan
31.3.20

PLATE 11 *Percy Pepper's acceptance of the land at Koo-Wee-Rup.*

Lake Tyers Mission Station
Nov 25th 1923. [P]

432

Dear Friend Mrs Bon

Just a short note as a
favor from the relatives of the deceased (Mr T. Pepper)
who has fallen asleep in Jesus Christ and whose
wish was that if anything should happen
to her that her remains should be laid along
side of her dear father. (Mr. Thrope) who is
fallen asleep in Jesus and who remains are
laid in the Lake Tyers Cemetery and the
relatives are sending a request to the Hell.
Sec. that her remains should be removed
from Takinham Cemetery to the Lake Tyers Cemetery
as dear Mrs Bon you know Percy Pepper well and
his dear wife as who has left him and 1910 has
been a sufferer and now she is gone. But not forgotten
and pray that the deceased (Mrs Pepper) wish and her
relatives be granted

Trusting you will sympathize
with us in our deepest sorrow
Yours faithfully
Edward Mullett

PLATE 12 Edward Mullett wrote to Anne Bon, a prominent campaigner on behalf of Aboriginal people, to request that Lucy Pepper's body be laid to rest alongside her father's grave at Lake Tyers.

3748
866

NAME *Percy Pepper* ESTATE *Thompson's*

Recommended that lease be *declared void for*
non payment of instalments Land to be
Sold by Auction J W Wuchitch

Description—Allot. *26* Sec. *J* Area *50.0.0*
Parish *Koo-wee-rup*

Capital Value £*1650* Half-Yearly Instal. £*49.10* Deposit £

Improvements valued at £ *J. G. Sharpin 8/5 per*

Shire and Water rates owing

Instalments owing

Advance obtained Due on advance

*Noted and please
cancel the
9/5/24
Mr Meyer*

LEASE ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS DRAFT IS
MARKED ~~declared void~~ AT OFFICE OF TITLES
ON *3.6.24*
cancel

*cancel lease
J W Wuchitch
9.5.24*

*XC. 24312.
Lease declared void by the
Governor in Council on 19.5.24
As Gazette of 28.5.24*

*A Meyer
12.5.24*

*Recd Branch for
Cancellation please at
Office of Titles
J W Wuchitch
3.6.24*

*Lease received for
cancellation at 05,
Collins
3.6.24*

PLATE 13 Percy Pepper's lease on the farm at Koo-Wee-Rup was cancelled for non-payment of instalments.

G.



R.

Closer Settlement Act 1915, Section 86 (1).

SALE OF CROWN LANDS IN FEE SIMPLE BY PUBLIC AUCTION.

A Sale of the undermentioned Crown Lands, in Fee Simple, by Public Auction

WILL BE HELD AT THE

ROYAL HOTEL,

KOO-WEE-RUP

On Wednesday, the 27th day of August, 1924,

AT HALF-PAST TWO O'CLOCK P.M.

To be conducted by E. T. A. WILSON, Esq., Land Officer.

Auctioneers: Messrs. WITHAM & KAVANAGH, Koo-wee-rup, Garfield, and
99 Queen-street, Melbourne.

The land will be sold in fee-simple, subject to conditions which will be read immediately before the sale.

A deposit of one-tenth of the purchase price must be paid to the officer conducting the sale.

The balance of the purchase money will be payable in 40 equal half-yearly instalments on the last day of each successive period of six months from the date of sale, or at any earlier time or times, together with interest calculated on the unpaid balance at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum.

The purchaser may pay up the full balance of purchase money at any time, with interest to date of payment only, or at any time prior to the final payment of the purchase money may transfer his interest in the purchase. The fee for such transfer shall be ten shillings.

Buildings to be insured in favour of the Closer Settlement Board.

Immediate possession, Crown grant on completion of purchase, free from any residence restriction.

COUNTRY LOT.

PARISH OF KOO-WEE-RUP, COUNTY OF MORNINGTON.

Area 56 acres, being allotment 26, section J, situated 2½ miles from Koo-wee-rup Railway Station, recently occupied by Mr. P. Pepper.

Improvements consist of five-roomed weatherboard house, also cow-shed, dairy, stable, feedroom, and small shed.

The land is of good quality, suitable for mixed farming (principally dairying and potato growing).

Plans showing the land may be inspected and particulars obtained at the offices of the auctioneers, or at Crown Lands Inquiry Office, Treasury Gardens, Melbourne.

H. S. BAILEY,
Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.
Melbourne, 29th July, 1924.

By Authority: H. J. GREEN, Government Printer, Melbourne.

11971.

PLATE 14 Notice of upcoming auction of Percy Pepper's farm, issued by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey, 1924.

To the Premier

Koo Wee Rup

18-7-24

Mr Prendergast

I am pleased to see by to day Paper that you are Premier wishing you and Party very success I now am writing to you again as Weight tells with us Struggling Soldier Settlers and shall give you in the full details of my Experience at Koo Wee Rup also the Struggle I have had for the last 6 years I took over this Block October 1918 and was rather late as the Land had to be fallowed no house was on it I was staying with my family at another Return Soldiers Place the Soldier has left his Block on account of Floods 3 of us came on to the one Estate and 2 have gone I was left struggling along as I had a family of 4 children also a Wife who suffered from then to the 29 of November 1923 when she died my oldest when I can hear was a girl Age 15. My Oldest

PLATE 15 Percy Pepper wrote to the newly elected Premier of Victoria, George Prendergast, asking for help to stop the sale of his soldier settlement block.



PLATE 16 TOP LEFT: *Lucy Pepper, 1910s, drawn by an unknown artist.*

TOP RIGHT: *Percy Pepper, circa 1954.*

Courtesy of Watkins family

BOTTOM LEFT: *Lucy Pepper's grave at Pakenham cemetery.*

BOTTOM RIGHT: *Percy Pepper's grave in the Presbyterian section of Melbourne General Cemetery in North Carlton.*

Photo (left): Simon Flagg, Public Record Office Victoria

Photo (right): Diane Gardiner, Public Record Office Victoria

**Percy Pepper requested an order for cows from the
Land Purchase and Management Board,
28 January 1919²²**

Dear Sir

Could you Kindly forward me the orderse for the Cows as I have Plenty of Grass and my Family is hear I think it is Better to have the cows now and also Potato tops and Small potatoes that my mates do not want my house is not started yet and I am living with my next door neighbour McGree he has been good enough to let us stay with him he has a cow shed so that will be handy.

I remain
your obident
PERCY PEPPER

**Percy Pepper wrote to an unknown person, requesting
help with an order for supplies, 6 March 1919²³**

Dear Sir,

I wrote some time ago to the Gippsland Northern Corporation Coy. To send me a statement of the produce also manure I have received through their Agent At Koo Wee Rup I saw him yesterday and he told me he saw the Manager of the Gippsland Northern and he said the the board says the was only an order for a certain amount of Potatoes also some other manure & Pease and Chaff well sir as I was rather late hear I did not get amount of Potatoes that was on the order I got other seeds which I have down in my book also chaff and Manure which I got through the agent hear I gave him the orders and what I wanted to do was to get the Balance in Manure an Oats I wrote a letter some time ago asking if this would be done when I found out that I was to late for Potatoes as I only got 8 acrs in all together on McGrees Block now I have my turnips and Pease in I want to see what Balance of the H Order is left and I can get Oats also Manure with it would you Kindly See into it as I am anxious to get my oats in so I can feed it off as I have cows I will feed it off untill I have my gras redy trusting you will oblig

PERCY PEPPER

Annotation at top of page

I wrote some time ago to M Kalhoun he told me to use the order to Best of my Ability so I got what I really wanted so nothing was waisted

Percy Pepper wrote to an unknown person, requesting help with an order for supplies, 6 March 1919²⁴

Dear Sir,

I also got a H order from you for cows to the Value of £48 Pounds now I got 3 Cows for £41 and I am sending the Order Back to you to get fixed up trusting you will let me have it Back as soon as Possible I have the Cows but since I have get no satisfaction from the Gippsland Northern about the Balance I will get you to alter this order to £41 Pounds as they wrote to me about it and I should like to know about the other order as I am waiting on the Manure and Oats trusty you will fix this matter up for me I remain you

Obident
PERCY PEPPER

I really forget the amount of the other 2 orders But I know that I did not get it is Pos as it was two Late so I received other trusty you will let me know as soon as Possible.

Pro Secretary, Department of Crown Lands and Survey, wrote to Percy Pepper about his request for a wagon, 3 May 1919²⁵

Sir,

In reference to the authority to purchase a wagon, which document has been signed by you and returned to this office, I have to inform you that it will be necessary to have the vehicle inspected by a representative of the local Council and his report forwarded here, before the account can be paid.

The name and address of the vendor are also necessary.

Yours obediently,
PRO SECRETARY.

Percy Pepper sent a letter to JS Calhoun, a local district officer for the Department of Crown Lands and Survey, about a horse he had purchased, 13 October 1919²⁶

MR CALALHOUN

Dear Sir

You letter to hand I received the 3 tons of Potatoes from M Giles also the horse from Mr Brien the only brands on the horse I see is white Blaze on forehead also a White streak on nose and it is a Bay Horse as to Address of Levien and Company well Mr Levien is dead and Mr Giles is his Brother in Law He I think was in Company with Levien as he looke after Mr Giles Place when Mr Giles was away no Levien in dead M Giles will be able to give you Information he lives in Koo Wee Rup

Trusty you
Will oblig
PERCY PEPPER

JS Calhoun reported Percy Pepper's purchase to the Secretary of the Repatriation Committee, Koo-Wee-Rup, 17 October 1919²⁷

Sir,

Re P. Pepper, Koo-Wee-Rup.

I have to inform you that the above named dis-soldier was supplied with a horse for £15. from M. Giles. The Closer Settlement Board would be pleased if you could make arrangements to have this animal inspected and the approval to the purchase by a representative of your Committee forwarded to this Office.

This Lessee has purchased seed from Mr. Levien, who he informs me has since died. Would you let me know to whom the amount owing for this seed should be paid and the address to which payment should be forwarded.

Yours obediently
J S CALHOUN
PRO SECRETARY

1920

John James, Koo-Wee-Rup, wrote to JS Calhoun about Percy Pepper's horse, 3 February 1920²⁸

MR J S CALHOUN
Closer Settlement Board
Melbourne

Dear Sir

This Horse is well known to me It was sold to Mr Pepper by the Late L N Morton in whose favour an H order was issued Presented to the Bank endorsed by A W Giles Deceased Brother in Law The Bank instructions are to collect and pay into Deceased account

The Horse is about 7 or 8 years old bay Gelding star no brands the value is reasonable and I on behalf of the Local Committee approve of the purchase.

Yours faithfully
JOHN JAMES

Percy Pepper requested an appointment with Mr Moore, who may have been a member of the local Repatriation Committee, about his financial trouble, 17 June 1920²⁹

MR MOORE

Dear Sir

Is it Possible for me to make an appointment Fryday Afternoon to see you as I am in a fix and should like a bit of advice money matters is the trouble as I have had a run of bad Luck I will bring down my Book to show you also Papers and you can look over them also Bills sickness in the family has hit me very hard as well as not to good a Potato Crop trusty you will be able to see me if you will Kindly let me know return of Post I remain your

P PEPPER
Fryday afternoon I will be down
Kindly let me know

PERCY ANSWERS THE CALL

**Pro Secretary, Department of Crown Lands and Survey,
wrote to Percy Pepper, 3 September 1920³⁰**

Sir,

I have to inform you that this Office has been advised that your War Gratuity Bond was issued to you on the 26th. Ultimo and to request you to forward the document to this Office in accordance with the arrangements made by you.

Yours obediently.

PRO SECRETARY



Percy Pepper (right) in his army uniform, with a fellow returned soldier in a souvenired German uniform, 1920s. The photograph was taken at the Pepper home at Koo-Wée-Rup; Pepper family members can be seen in the background.

Courtesy of Watkins family

Percy Pepper replied to the request for his war gratuity bond, 15 September 1920³¹

Dear Sir

I have my Gratuarity Bonds I will send it on to Mr Calahone at Present it is locked in a Box and my Daughter has the Key she is away as she has been ill and will be back next week as soon as ever she return I will send the bond down trusty this will suit you I have to hand over my Bond as Payment for £64 odd and the Bond is £70 odd pound.

I remain
your P PEPPER

Kindly let Mr Calahon see the letter.

Percy Pepper sent an inquiry to JS Calhoun about his war gratuity bond documents, 29 September 1920³²

MR CALAHONE

Dear Sir

Just a line in reference to the War Bond I left with you for Payment of Insurance also instalments I have not received receipt of the money on the Insurance Paper yet and the Balance what is left I can realy do with it at Present as funds are low have you Heard any thing of it yet

I remain you
obident
P. PEPPER

Percy Pepper asked JS Calhoun for relief on his repayments, 27 October 1920³³

MR CALAHON

Dear Sir,

I am wrighting to you to ask you if there is any Possible Chance of Having my Instalments let go for say 6 months longer as I have only got a few Pease in up to now My Place has Been poughed up twice 35 Acrs all ready for Potatoes and the water came also

PERCY ANSWERS THE CALL

Rain now I started to Plough the 3rd time I got 8 Acrs Plough but this last rain has put it back again it is Two soft to put a plough in the two front Paddocks have been under water of and on since Mr Chippendalk was hear and I also have lost my Beans and Onions which would have been Picking next month this is caused through the drain being Blocked above us and the water Commisiones will not be able to do any good till about March next year Mr Dixon my next door neighbour will tell you should you care to wright to him how I have been hit or if only one of the officiels could come and see the water this week trusty to hear from you I remain your obident.

P PEPPER
Await Mr Chippindall's
report re planting done
29/10 JNC

2 Acrs of Potatoes I got through the Board also have gone as they would not keep through Rain

1921

Percy Pepper wrote to JS Calhoun, 20 April 1921³⁴

MR CALAHONE

Dear Sir

I am forwarding in this letter a note and will you kindly let me know if their is any thing in it the Board does not approve off as you know We had a hard hit this year with the flood and late seasons than the dry spell I have 3 Acrs of Oats also about 2 to 3 Acrs of weeds comming on and will have about 15 to 16 Acrs of Oats in with 2 months as that will be the Cheepest Crop for me to sow I promised to pay £50-0-0 in about a month on What I owe and I can tell you I will do my best I have received my Bags through Mr Main for potatoes also he has helped me along now I owe him a Balance of £27. Twenty seven Pounds trusting the Board Will see into this I remain you

P PEPPER
Please would you kindly Post the letter on to Mr Main

**Percy Pepper explained his situation to JS Calhoun,
22 September 1921³⁵**

Urgent

MR CALAHONE

Dear Sir,

I am wrighting to you to let you know my Poresion I am not able to meet this notice for instalment of £214.13.4 Should I had a good season and we had no floods last year well I would have been up to the mark as you know McGree and Olsen have left through the Bad season and I lost just as much in fact more as you know I had more in when the flood did come and even after my Place was not fit to go on to with a Plough as it was the last to have the water as I am in the loest spot on Thompson Estate not only that my expenses with living a big also my wife sickly I have her away at Present also my oldest Boy this take keeping together after one bad season well sir I have up to date 46 Acrs ploughed up out of the 56 Acrs and a Half and already in 12 Acrs of Oats and also pumping in the garden and Carrots Parsnips and my seed tomatoes in Boxes also cabbage I can see my way clear to cultivate about 30 Acrs all told with mixed vegetables and Potatoes the Potatoes will run to about 6 Acrs now I have Picked them over and thrown out the Rubbish I will have a good lot of ground idle which I don't want to have I had a offer for a chap to rent 10 Acrs of me but I told him I would wright to you first and see the Land is in good order as it is Ploughed a long time and a lot of it been Ploughed twice over should I have say 3 More Tones of Potatoes while are cheep now and 4 Tons of manure well I would not have wrote to you about renting the spar Land but if the Board like to make this up for me well the have the lean over the lot as I promise I am going to stick hear as long as I can now the drain is pretty safe and I don't think we will have any more floods trusty you will see what can be done for me I wont rent it unless you say should the Board Care to lend me or give an order £28 Potatoes 4 ton manure well they have a lean you know on the lot as I have Promises but it is hard to see this land idle as I have so let it trusty you will let me know this week

I remain you P PEPPER.

1922

Percy Pepper asked JS Calhoun about further supplies for his farm, 1 September 1922³⁶

MR CALAHONE

Dear Sir

Have the Board discided about the Manure that I asked them to advance I am finished my first Ploughing and have the ground ready for 2nd Ploughing I have my seed potatoes maze and peas but no manure if it is Possible will I be able to know as soon as Possible.

I remain
your P PEPPER

PS. My oats are in and up out of the ground

Percy Pepper appealed for help to WW Marriott, President of No. 21 District Branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), after receiving a summons notification, 30 October 1922³⁷

CAP MARRIOTT

Dear Sir

I have received this sammons for Water rates I am only Battling along and am not able to meet it good know it take me all my time to keep on the Place I gave the Board a lean on my Crops this year I am keeping going on account of trusting to better time you tell me some time ago to let you know if I got Summons so now I am letty you know Kindly see what you can do for me as I am in a fix what to do as I cannot afford to pay the money I have had a lot of trouble with sickness of the Wife also Boy it takes all I know to keep our house going in food as their is 7 children Kindly advis me what you can do

I remain your
P PEPPER

**Pro Secretary, Department of Crown Lands and Survey,
wrote to the Secretary of State Rivers and Water Supply
about the summons, 8 November 1922³⁸**

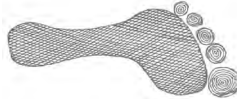
Sir,

I beg to forward, herewith copy of communication received from Mr. W. W. Marriott of Clyde. President of the No. 21 District Branch R.S.S.I.L.A and Mr. Percy Pepper the settler in question in connection with a summons issued by the States River & Water Supply Commission and have to request that you will be good enough to cause action to be deferred until Pepper is in a better financial position.

Owing to the flooding of his land in the early portion of his occupation and later to floods and bad seasons combined he has been unable to meet his liabilities to this Board and his arrears now total £389.12.10.

Yours obediently
PRO SECRETARY

Chapter 6



A death in the family

THIS CHAPTER BEGINS WITH a request for help from Lucy's sister, Alice Connolly (referred to as Mrs J Connolly in the records), at Lakes Entrance. In July 1922, she wrote to AE Lind, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Gippsland East and a member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, to ask for rations so that Alice and her husband could look after her sick mother and father, William and Sarah Thorpe. Both William and Sarah suffered from heart problems, and Sarah also had Bright's disease, a condition that affects the kidneys. In response to Alice's request, the manager of the Lake Tyers station, Bruce Ferguson, wrote that the Connollys were 'almost white in appearance', and were therefore not considered eligible to receive rations and to stay at the station.

Enquiries began into why William Thorpe was not receiving an old-age pension. Constable Shaw of Lakes Entrance reported that he had advised William Thorpe against applying, suggesting that Jack and Alice Connolly were being supported by their parents' pensions.

In April 1923, John Connolly and William Thorpe requested licences for themselves and their families to stay at Lake Tyers station. In May, the Board granted permission for William and Sarah Thorpe to reside on the station and for the Connollys to stay for a short time to help them settle.

FOOTPRINTS

William Thorpe, father of Lucy and Alice, died just over a month later. Following his death, the Connollys were asked to leave the station. Lucy and Percy were in a similar situation: Lucy was allowed to stay, but her husband and their children were instructed to return to the farm at Koo-Wee-Rup.



Percy Pepper with his son Phillip, circa 1920. Percy owned a bicycle shop at Tynong, south-east of Melbourne. Prior to its use by the Nazi Party in Germany, the swastika (as on Phillip's jacket) was a symbol of Hindu origin signifying well-being.

Courtesy of Watkins family

1922

Lucy Pepper's sister, Mrs J (Alice) Connolly, Lakes Entrance, asked for help for their parents from AE Lind, Member for Gippsland East and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), 3 July 1922¹

MR LIND

Dear sir

I'm writing to ask you if you could get us a bit of help from the board of protection of Aborigines. My mother Mrs Thorpe is ill again. She suffers with her heart the Dr Marchensia said he couldn't do anything for her as her heart was very weak and a touch of Brights disease. My father is suffering with his heart also and we can't go away and leave them alone. She is very low tonight you said when my husband asked you for help if we helped the old people you would do your best for us. As they have no one else to look after them, as our only brother was killed at the front. So I want to know could you please get us rations for a while as its very hard to live and we can't leave them as there is no work about here, so if you could get us rations just for a while I would be very thankful as we have had very hard struggle. My mother has been ill ever since last November. Hoping you will do your best for me as soon as possible.

I am
yours truly
MRS J CONNOLLY
Lakes Entrance
Po

PS: Of course you know we are both half caste born in Gippsland. Mr Lind there is a lot of half castes on the mission station getting kept so surely the board could grant us rations on account of sickness and if you can get rations for three of us could you get it as we could get it here at Harbecks. Hoping to hear from you soon.

AE Parker, Secretary BPA, added a note to Alice Connolly's letter, 17 July 1922²

Referred to the manager for a report as to:-

- (1) Colour of Mrs J Connolly
- (2) Whether he thinks provision should be made on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station
- (3) As to application generally

A. E PARKER
Secretary
17/7/22

Manager
Abo station
Lake Tyers

AE Parker wrote to AE Lind, 17 July 1922³

Sir,

With reference to your personal representation on behalf of Mrs J Connolly, Lakes Entrance, relative to a request that rations be granted her, I beg to inform you that the Manager, Aboriginal Station Lake Tyers has been asked for a report re this matter.

I will advise you further when the Manager's report comes to hand.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

A. E. Lind Esq. M. L. A.
BAIRNSDALE.

Bruce Ferguson, manager of Lake Tyers station, reported to AE Parker, 26 July 1922⁴

Sir,

I have to report with reference to:-

- (1) Colour of Mrs J Connolly :- Mrs Connolly, her husband and child, age about 3 yrs, are almost white in appearance. They call themselves half-caste, but there is no family so nearly white as they are residing on the Aboriginal station.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

(2) Whether I think provision should be made for them on the Aboriginal station. In view of the Boards instructions that no one – nearer white than half-caste is to receive assistance, the visits of this family to the station have not been encouraged. They usually appear after dark and seek permission to remain until morning, but it very rarely happens that they leave next day. If they were half castes I would recommend that provision should be made for them here, but being so nearly white they should be able to do better off the station.

(3) As to the application generally:- Mrs J Connolly's mother receives the old age pension. If her (Mrs Connolly's) father could also receive the old age pension, or clothing and rations from the Board that should make things easier for them. They (Mr & Mrs W Thorpe) are a highly respected couple who deserve all the assistance that can be given to them. He is an aged half-caste – their only son – Corporal Harry Thorpe M. M. died of wounds.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE FERGUSON mgr

**AE Parker requested information about Lucy Pepper's
parents from Constable Shaw, Lakes Entrance,
31 July 1922⁵**

Sir,

Application has been made by W. Thorpe, Lakes Entrance for assistance from this Board. I shall be grateful if you will advise whether he has ever made application for an old age pension and if not why not.

Information is also desired as to whether any of the Thorpe and Connolly families (living together) is in receipt of a military pension.

I understand Corp. H. Thorpe a son of the above died of wounds during the late war.

Yours faithfully,
A.E. PARKER
Secretary.

**Annotation by Constable Shaw on reverse side of
AE Parker's request, 12 August 1922⁶**

The Secretary
Board Protection Aborigines
Melbourne

Wm Thorpe about 18 months ago spoke to me about obtaining the Old Age Pension. Owing to being unable to definitely state his age, I advised him to wait for about 2 years as Mr T. Roadknight considered at the time Thorpe was applying he would be about 63 years of age.

Thorpe now intends applying for the Old Age Pension. Wm Thorpe receives a War pension of 14/- per fortnight (Through death of his son H Thorpe). Mrs Wm. Thorpe receives the Old Age Pension 30/- per fortnight.

J Connolly and his wife reside with Thorpes and no doubt the Connolly's are being partly maintained by Thorpe's.

L. SHAW
C 5680

Note added below the constable's report

No action at present 16/8/22

AE Parker wrote to AE Lind, 19 August 1922⁷

Sir,

With further reference to your personal representations on behalf of Mrs. J. Connolly, Lakes Entrance, relative to a request that rations be granted her, I beg to inform you that the Manager, Aboriginal Station, Lake Tyers, reports that Mr. and Mrs. Connolly are almost white in appearance and there is no family so nearly white as they are residing on the Aboriginal Station and being so nearly white they should be able to do better off the station.

Constable Shaw, Lakes Entrance, reports that Mrs Wm Thorpe receives the old age pension of 30/- per fortnight. W Thorpe receives a war pension of 14/- per fortnight and is making an application also for the old age pension. He also states that Mr and Mrs Connolly reside with Thorpe and no doubt are being partially maintained by Thorpe.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

In view of the above and the fact that they are not eligible for assistance under the Aborigines Act 1915, I am directed to inform you that it is not proposed to take action at present as regards the request.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

A. E. Lind Esq. M. L. A.
State Parliament House, Melbourne.



Some of Lucy and Percy Pepper's grandchildren picking beans in Orbost, circa 1934. Left to right: Lucy (daughter of Dora Pepper), Reg, Rita and Sheila (children of Gwendoline Pepper), and their cousin Eddie (son of Lena Pepper).

Courtesy of Watkins family

1923

**John Connolly and William Thorpe wrote to AE Parker,
16 April 1923⁸**

To The Secretary
B.P.A
Melbourne

Dear Sir,

I wish to make an application to the Board for a licence to be allowed to reside on Lake Tyers station for three months. Promising to abide by the rules and regulations thereby.

Yours truly,
JOHN CONNOLLY

I wish to make an application to the board for a licence for my wife and daughter (Mrs Connolly) and child and myself. To be allowed to reside on Lake Tyers Station for three months promising to abide by the rules and regulations thereby.

Yours truly
WILLIAM THORPE

Witness
EDWARD O'ROURKE
His Marks X

**Annotation by Bruce Ferguson at bottom of letter,
19 April 1923**

Thorpe and his wife are aged half-castes of good character, I recommend their application, but it would be a pity for such a white family as the Connolly's to become permanent residence of an Aboriginal station.

BRUCE FERGUSON. Mgr

Further annotation by Bruce Ferguson, 19 April 1923

Forwarded – Not recommended. Both Connolly and his wife are almost white in appearance.

BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager

**AE Lind gave advice to Alice Connolly,
30 March 1923⁹**

Dear Mrs Connolly,

Your letter of the 28th inst. to hand. I am very sorry to learn of your bad luck caused by the bush fire. However cheer up and make the best you can of it.

I think the station is the best place for your parents. I would advise you to go to Mr Ferguson and ask him to give them one of the cottages.

I am sure he will have no objection to you going there to help your parents to get settled in their new home.

I expect to be at Tyers early in April and will see you then and will also have a chat with Mr Ferguson.

Kindest regards
Yours Sincerely
A E LIND

**Annotation on reverse of AE Lind's letter by AE Parker,
3 May 1923**

Referred to the Manager L. Tyers.

At the Board Meeting held on 2nd May it was resolved to allow Wm Thorpe and his wife to reside at L. Tyers and to allow Mrs Connolly and her husband to help the old folk to settle. The stay of the Connollys not to exceed one month.

**AE Parker advised Bruce Ferguson of the decision,
3 May 1923¹⁰**

Sir,

At the meeting of the Board held on 2nd instant it was decided to allow W. Thorpe and Mrs Thorpe to reside on Lake Tyers Aboriginal station and that Mr & Mrs Connolly may help them to get settled by remaining with them on the Station for a period not to exceed one month.

Thorpe has been informed accordingly and has been asked to inform you when he is ready to take up residence on the station.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

Manager,
Aboriginal Station,
Lake Tyers.

**AE Parker wrote to William Thorpe, Lakes Entrance,
3 May 1923¹¹**

Sir,

I have to inform you that at the meeting of the Board held on the 2nd instant it was resolved to allow Mrs Thorpe and yourself to reside at the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station and that Mr & Mrs Connolly may help you get settled at the Station, by remaining with you on the Station for a period not exceed one month.

You are requested to inform the Manager when you are ready to take up residence on the station so that he may make arrangements.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

Mr Wm. Thorpe
Lakes Entrance.

**Alice Connolly reported William Thorpe's death to
AE Lind, 2 July 1923¹²**

MR LIND

Dear sir,

I'm writing to let you know we are in trouble again we have lost Father he died on the 2nd of last month and Mr Ferguson said our time was up. Jack and I would have to go, but my mother could stay. So he said to write to the board for permission to stay on here so Mr Lind I'm writing to you as we have all had the flue and am still weak and I am not fit to leave yet besides I couldn't leave my mother here herself. Jack could do some light work just for rations until we are fit to go hoping you will help us.

I am yours truly,
MRS CONNOLLY

Ps – Please address my letter to:

Mrs J Connolly
C/O Mr Alex Johnson
Butcher
Nowa Nowa

Annotation at top of Alice Connolly's letter

Dear Mr Parker, Don't be too hard on these poor people. I hope their request will be granted.

A E LIND

Annotation on reverse of letter, 8 August 1923¹³

Urgent,

Referred to the Manager of the Lake Tyers Aboriginal station for report as to the within letter.

I shall value an expression of opinion as to whether you consider this family should be allowed to remain on the Station and if so for what period.

A E PARKER
Secretary

AE Parker replied to AE Lind, 9 August 1923¹⁴

Dear Mr Lind,

With reference to your personal representations on behalf of Mrs Connolly c/o Mr Alex Johnson, Nowa Nowa I have to inform you that these people were allowed on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal station for one month in June last to establish their father (W. Thorpe) on that Station.

I am forwarding the letter to the Manager for report and will advise you further when same comes to hand.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

A.E. Lind Esq. M. L. A.
State Parliament House,
Melbourne.

Bruce Ferguson wrote to AE Parker, 13 August 1923¹⁵

Sir,

With reference to Jack Connolly and his wife who came here with the late W. Thorpe, Mrs Connolly's father, and have been here since his decease on 2nd July. Owing first to the serious nature of her (Mrs Connolly's) father's illness, and in the second place to the Influenza Epidemic – they were amongst the first patients in June, they were allowed to remain longer than was expected when they came.

So far as I can judge they have now recovered their usual health, but Mrs Connolly's sister (Mrs Percy Pepper) who was also sent for when their father was not expected to recover, and who arrived here very seriously ill, and has not greatly improved except that like the rest of her family who are all here she has recovered from the influenza. Today there are on the station Mr and Mrs Percy Pepper and 7 children Jack Connolly, wife and child, Connolly's sister (Mrs Chapman) and three children, and Mrs Thorpe's grandson (Peter Mongta) whose father is an Indian residing at Bunga. All of the above are nearer white than half-caste and none of them have the Board's permission to be here.

Owing to serious illness they could not be removed, and being without food had to receive rations and medical comforts.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

The Medical Officer states that Mrs Pepper is too ill (consumption) to be removed.

I am afraid Jack Connolly who appears to have quite recovered from the Influenza would be useless as a worker here, and he would only hinder others from working. Being so nearly white he should do better for himself off the station. I do not think he desires only temporary assistance, permanent residence appears to be what is desired. The serious nature of Mrs Pepper's illness together with other unusual circumstances make this rather a difficult case to decide.

I recommend that he be granted permission to reside here for not more than one month, and that if an extension is desired, he should make early application for the same.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager.

AE Parker replied to Bruce Ferguson, 16 August 1923¹⁶

Sir,

With further reference to an application from J. Connolly for permission to remain on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station I have by direction to inform you that J. Connolly, wife and child are allowed to remain on the station until the end of the present month.

Mrs Percy Pepper is allowed to remain on the station and Percy Pepper and 7 children must return to Koo-Wee-Rup immediately.

Mrs Chapman and 3 children and Peter Mongta must also leave the station immediately.

Please arrange that this direction be carried out with as little inconvenience as possible.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.
Manager
Aboriginal Station
Lake Tyers.

AE Parker wrote to AE Lind, 16 August 1923¹⁷

Dear Mr Lind,

With further reference to your personal representations on behalf of J. Connolly and wife relative to an application for permission for them to remain on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal station I have by direction to inform you that the manager reports the following relatives of the late Wm Thorpe came to the station when W. Thorpe was dying on the Station and are still on the Station:

J. Connolly, wife and child	3
P. Pepper, wife and 7 children	9
Mrs. Chapman and 3 children	4
P. Mongta	1

17

None of the above is eligible for assistance under the Aborigines Act as all are much nearer white than half-caste standard.

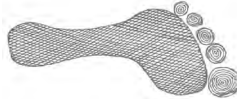
The manager has been instructed that J. Connolly, wife and child may be allowed to remain until the end of this month.

Mrs P Pepper who is consumptive is to be allowed to remain. The manager has been instructed that Percy Pepper and his seven children must return to his soldier's block at Koo-Wee-Rup and that Mrs Chapman and three children and P. Mongta must leave the station immediately.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

A.E. Lind Esq. M. L. A.
State Parliament House,
Melb

Chapter 7



A final request for Lucy Pepper

IN 1923, after years of ill-health, Lucy Pepper died at the age of 39. As one member of her family observed, ‘she has fallen asleep in Jesus Christ’. Lucy left behind her husband Percy and their seven children, Dora, Phillip, Gwen, Alice, Sarah, Sam and Lena. Because of the restrictions imposed by the *Aborigines Act 1915*, Lucy’s family had been unable to spend the last few months of her life with her at Lake Tyers station. After the death of Lucy’s father, Percy and the children had been asked to leave the station, causing Lucy great heartache, as one of her relatives, Edward Mullett, describes in a letter included in this chapter.

Shortly before her death, Lucy travelled by boat from Lake Tyers to join her family at Koo-Wee-Rup. She was buried at the cemetery in nearby Pakenham.

The letters in this section document the family’s efforts to have Lucy’s body removed from Pakenham so that she could be reburied at Lake Tyers cemetery, closer to her extended family and community. Lucy’s father, William Thorpe, was buried at Lake Tyers station and it had been her wish to be buried alongside him.

FOOTPRINTS

Percy wanted to relocate the family to Lake Tyers so that they could be with their elderly grandmother, Sarah Thorpe. Edward Mullett, a permanent resident at Lake Tyers, wrote a number of letters in support of Percy's requests.

Anne Bon, a prominent supporter of Aboriginal causes and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, also supported the family in the wake of Lucy's death. The Chief Secretary (who was also Chairman of the Board) expressed the government's wish to prevent the relocation of Lucy's body, as the Board did not want Percy and his children to move to the Aboriginal station as a result. The government preferred that her body remain in Pakenham, close to Percy's soldier settlement block at Koo-Wee-Rup.

Lucy's family was not given permission to re-bury her body at Lake Tyers. Her final resting place remains Pakenham cemetery.

1923

Edward Mullett, Lake Tyers station, wrote to Anne Bon, member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), 28 November 1923¹

Dear Friend Mrs Bon,

Just a short note as a favour from the relatives of the deceased (Mrs P Pepper) who has fallen asleep in Jesus Christ and whose wish was that if anything should happen to her that her remains should be laid along side of her dear father (Mr Thorpe) who is fallen asleep in Jesus and who remains are laid in the Lake Tyers Cemetery and the relatives are sending a request to the Chief Sec. that her remains should be removed from Pakenham cemetery to the Lake Tyers cemetery. Dear Mrs Bon you know Percy Pepper well and his dear wife who has left him and who has been a suffer and now she is gone: but not forgotten and pray that the deceased (Mrs Pepper) wish and her relatives be granted.

Trusting you will sympathize
with us in our deepest sorrow.

Yours faithfully
EDWARD MULLETT

Edward Mullett appealed to Dr Stanley Argyle, Chief Secretary, Victorian Government, for help for the Peppers, 29 November 1923²

THE HON DR ARGYLE CHIEF SEC

Dear Sir,

We the undersign relatives of Lake Tyers feel very much at the loss of her departed daughter. The deceased (Mrs Percy Pepper) who has fallen asleep in Christ Jesus whose wish was that if anything should happen to her that her desire was that her remains should be laid along side of her dear father. (Mr William Thorpe) who has been a Christian and we thank God for the even time of his life he has found Jesus and now he died in feaith in Christ Jesus the deceased (Mrs Percy Pepper) who has been a suffer in a long illness and while she was upon a bed of illness

FOOTPRINTS

Mr Ferguson got word through on the phone from Mr Parker that all her children had to leave the Lake Tyers Mission Station and a mother as love for her dear children who was her only help in such a time of suffering while she felt that her dear children could not remain she could not bear them to go away from her and she the deceased (Mrs Percy Pepper) was not able to walk down to the boat. But she was very weak that she had to be carried down on a stretcher by the aid of four men and was quite sorrowful to see her and the day was not a promising day. It a heart broken and the Doctor said that she had to remain at Lake Tyers and not to removed the deceased (Mrs Percy Pepper) leaves a dear husband and seven dear children who mourn for her loss. We the relatives feel very much in the midst of our sorrow that Mr Percy Pepper who has offered his service in the great war which was ended in year 1919 and who has sacrificed his life in the great war. He responded to the call of his King and country who went to fight for freedom and liberty and since he has come back home from the war he has not been well. We feel in our heart in the deepest of sorrow that he Mr Percy Pepper is not able to look after his children and he has a mother living here at Lake Tyers. The dear aged mother feel for the loss of their dear departed daughter (Mrs Percy Pepper) who has gone to be forever with the Lord as we feel for the motherless dear children that if they be allowed to come to Lake Tyers to reside with their dear aged Grand Mother and relatives trusting by the grace of God that you will sympathize with us in the time of sorrow and if you kindly help us in comforting the Husband and children who mourn for the loss wife and mother close with kindest regard.

Yours faithfully
EDWARD MULLETT
Lake Tyers
Mission Station

**Anne Bon forwarded Edward Mullett's request to
Dr Argyle, 7 December 1923³**

Dear Dr Argyle,

Many thanks for your kind letter, informing me of your intention of attending the next meeting of the Board. I regret I cannot be present, but hope you will see that a liberal supply of Christmas gifts are provided for those poor creatures who have so little to brighten their lives. I now enclose a letter re the burial of Pepper's wife, who called on me at the Windsor before entering the Sanatorium where I presume she died. She was an intelligent Christian woman and the mother of – I think – 6 children – Pepper spent some years at the front and is a superior man – A parallel case to this happened during Mr Bowers' term of office. At the request of the blacks I objected with the result that the body of Ernest Mobourne – who acted as Chaplain in the absence of a Christian Manager – died in the Bairnsdale Hospital and was buried there – was exhumed and re-interred at Tyers at a cost to the Govt. of £18.

“Alas”, we are lacking in sympathy. Lady Moran paid a flying visit to Tyers, after which I asked her opinion. She simply said “there is a want of sympathy – such a place should be founded on Religion –”

Our manager for 6 years has begun the work of the day without once engaging with the men in Prayer to God. How could we expect success?

With grateful thanks and best wishes.

Believe me

Very sincerely yours

ANNE F BON

The Hon
The Chief Secty.

**AE Parker, Secretary BPA, wrote a memo regarding
Anne Bon's request, 12 December 1923⁴**

Re letter Mrs Bon.

Mrs Pepper was almost white as is also her husband and children. None of the family is eligible for assistance under the Aborigines Act 1915. Pepper is a returned soldier on a block at Koo-wee-rup.

Owing to the serious illness of Mrs Pepper's father, Wm Thorpe, (also very light coloured) Mrs Pepper and family went to Lake Tyers and when her father died, Mrs Pepper was reported ill.

Seventeen relatives came to the station during the illness of Wm Thorpe, none of whom was eligible for assistance under the Act. In consequence instructions were given the Manager that Mrs Pepper might remain but that Percy Pepper and the seven children must return to Koo-wee-rup. Apparently Mrs Pepper accompanied them back as from the within letter it appears she died and was buried in the Pakenham Cemetery which is reasonably close to her husband's home.

There is only the statement of Edward Mullett that she desired to be buried at Tyers. In all probability if the body were exhumed and buried at Tyers it would result in the Pepper family desiring to transfer to that station to be near the mother's grave.

The case of Ernest Mobourne quoted by Mrs Bon was by no means similar. Mobourne was a full-blooded Aborigine who went from Tyers to the Bairnsdale Hospital. Mr Bowser, then Chief Secretary directed that the body should be exhumed and conveyed from the Bairnsdale Cemetery to the Aboriginal Station. All Mobourne's family were at Lake Tyers.

Percy Pepper is earning his own living at Koo-wee-rup.

A E P

AE Parker replied to Anne Bon, 14 December 1923⁵

Dear Mrs Bon,

I have by direction of the Hon. the Chief Secretary to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant and to inform you that at the last meeting of the Board approval was given for Xmas extras and that cakes, lollies and biscuits will be supplied as was done last year.

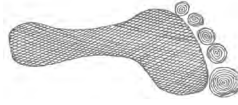
As regards Mrs Percy Pepper, I am to state that neither Mrs Pepper nor her husband were residents of the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station and that none of the family is eligible for assistance under the Aborigines Act 1915. Moreover Pepper is the holder of a Soldiers Block at Koo-wee-rup and from the letter from Edward Mullett forwarded by you it would appear that Mrs Pepper is buried at Pakenham, a few miles away. I have therefore by direction to state that the Chief Secretary regrets that he is unable to comply with your request that the body of Mrs Pepper should be exhumed and buried at Lake Tyers.

The case of Ernest Mobourne was different, as he was a full-blooded aborigine resident at Lake Tyers, where his relatives were also residing.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

Mrs A. F. Bon,
Wappan Estate
BONNIE DOON

Chapter 8



Life goes on for the Pepper family

AFTER LUCY'S DEATH in 1923, Percy's daughters visited Lake Tyers to see their grandmother, and the town of Orbost, where they picked beans on a farm with their aunt, Alice Connolly. The Board for the Protection of Aborigines watched their movements. When news of their visits to Lake Tyers and Orbost reached the government, the Secretary of the Board made inquiries about the girls' welfare and how they planned to support themselves.

Like many other servicemen, Percy was unable to succeed on his soldier settlement block. With pressure mounting from the Closer Settlement Board, Percy wrote to George Prendergast, the Leader of the Opposition (and, from July to November 1924, the Premier), and W McIver, Secretary for Lands, to plead for special consideration and more time to make the farm viable. Eventually, he was forced to try selling the land. On 9 May 1924, the lease was declared void for non-payment of instalments. The land was scheduled for auction on 27 August 1924, and Percy desperately tried to sell all his livestock and equipment before the auction.

The government believed that Percy wanted to relocate to Lake Tyers, and wished to prevent the Pepper family from living on the station because they did not qualify as Aboriginal under the

LIFE GOES ON FOR THE PEPPER FAMILY

Aborigines Act 1915. In his letters to the Chief Secretary, Edward Mullett had asked that Lucy and Percy's children be allowed to stay with their grandmother on the station.

Having lost his farm, Percy moved to Melbourne and for the rest of his life lived in the inner northern suburbs of Fitzroy and Carlton. This selection of records ends with a final request. In July 1927, with Percy in Carlton, the letter is addressed to George Prendergast, now Chief Secretary. In the hope that his case might receive renewed consideration, Percy pleaded for another block of land where he could bring his family back together.



Percy Pepper in the Fitzroy Gardens in East Melbourne, early 1940s.

Courtesy of Watkins family

1924

AE Parker, Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), wrote to Bruce Ferguson, manager of Lake Tyers station, 14 January 1924¹

Dear Sir,

I would be glad if you would advise me at your earliest as to whether the daughter (or daughters) of Mr Percy Pepper is at Lake Tyers and, if so, when she (or they) came and how long she (or they) desires to stay.

Yours faithfully,
A E PARKER
Secretary.

Bruce Ferguson replied to AE Parker, 14 January 1924²

When travelling from Koo-Wee-Rup to Orbost all his daughters spent two or three days with their grand mother (Mrs Thorpe) at Lake Tyers. They have visited twice since then, from Saturday to Monday. I understand that with their aunt (Mrs J Connolly) they have taken a house at Orbost and are fairly comfortable. The Police at Orbost are in a position to give more definite information about the family.

So far they have not expressed any desire to remain at Lake Tyers except for a brief visit to their grandmother.

BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager

AE Parker wrote to Percy Pepper, Koo-Wee-Rup, 22 January 1924³

Dear Sir,

With reference to our recent telephonic conversation I have to advise you that the Manager at Lake Tyers reports that all of your daughters stayed there en route to Orbost.

The Manager further states that he understands that they are now residing at Orbost with their aunt, but should you desire

more definite information, doubtless it could be obtained from the Police at Orbost.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY

Mr P. Pepper,
Koo-Wee-Rup.

AE Parker sent a request to the officer in charge of police at Orbost, 22 January 1924⁴

Dear sir,

I would be grateful if you would furnish me with a report as to the circumstances etc. of the family of Mrs J. Connolly and the Pepper girls, which I understand is residing in Orbost.

I particularly desire information as to how they propose to support themselves, probable earnings etc.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

AE Parker wrote to Bruce Ferguson, 22 January 1924⁵

Dear Sir,

During a telephonic conversation with Mr Percy Pepper recently he informed me that he was endeavouring to sell out his soldier's farm at Koo-Wee-Rup.

From your report on my letter of 14th instant it would appear that Pepper's daughters and Mrs Connolly are residing at Orbost.

Pepper, later, may desire to reside with his family at the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station and I am to direct that, as all of the family are nearer white than half-caste standard, none of them be allowed to take up residence without the written consent of the Board.

Yours faithfully,
SECRETARY.

**Constable AJ Simpson, Orbost, reported to AE Parker,
31 January 1924⁶**

Connolly was until recently employed as a farm labourer by Mr E P Boucher, Orbost and resided on Boucher's place with his wife. 3 girls named Pepper were with them for a few weeks and during that period earned good money picking green beans for market, anything from 10/- to 20/- per day. The bean picking is now over and the Connolly family with the Pepper girls have left the district and I have been informed they are at Lake Tyers Mission Station.

Percy Pepper the father of the girls was recently here from Koo-Wee-Rup, but do not think he assists them in any way as he is a selfish drunken fool.

A J SIMPSON
Const 576

AE Parker wrote to Bruce Ferguson, 5 February 1924⁷

Sir,

The Officer-in-Charge of Police at Orbost has reported that he has been informed that the daughters of Percy Pepper are at Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station and I have to inquire whether they have been allowed to remain on the station, in view of a previous instruction that, as the Pepper family were nearer white than half-caste standard, they were not to be allowed to take up residence there.

Yours faithfully,
A E PARKER
Secretary.

**Report from Bruce Ferguson at bottom of AE Parker's
letter, 9 February 1924**

The Pepper family are at Lakes Entrance with Jack Connolly and his wife. When travelling from Orbost to Lakes Entrance they called at Lake Tyers, but left most of their luggage at Nowa Nowa to be carted later to Lakes Entrance. On their arrival here they

LIFE GOES ON FOR THE PEPPER FAMILY

were informed of the Board's decision. Owing to the heavy and continuous rain they found it inconvenient to continue their journey for a few days. On receipt of this letter tonight I inquired as to whether Mrs Thorpe or Mrs Connolly sen, expected this family to return to Lake Tyers. They state that the family is not expected to return except for parts of their luggage, which is still on Mrs Thorpe's veranda. Mrs Thorpe however has her grandson (Peter Montga) staying with her. She makes a very eloquent appeal for this boy to remain at Lake Tyers as she has had charges of him since infancy, when his mother died. He is a quadroon or octoroon. His father is an Indian living at Lake Bunga, about four miles from Abor. Stn.

BRUCE FERGUSON
Manager



Members of the congregation of Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls in Fitzroy, circa 1945. Percy Pepper is located in the back row at far right, with Pastor Nicholls standing immediately to the left, followed by Julia Thorpe (Edwards). Percy's daughter Dora is standing directly in front of him, partly obscured by Nancy Green. The photograph was taken by Rita Watkins.

Courtesy of Watkins family

Percy Pepper asked for help from George Prendergast, the Leader of the Opposition (Labor), after receiving a notice of eviction from his farm, 19 March 1924⁸

TO MR PRENDEGAST

Dear Sir

I am wrighting to see if you could get in touch with the Clossas Settlement Board and Reapatation some time ago they gave me 14 days to leave my Block I went and saw you sir and you got them to extend the time for me to sell it their is not much money about and it is hard to sell well I let my Place go back after thay gave me notice when my time was up to sell and I owe them money I am willing to go on with the Place for another season or till I make it look like a farm I did not do any more to it when my time was up as I may have been put off any time should they let me stay on until I can sell so I can settle with them I will get cattle in the back paddock and Cultervate my family is scattered At Present and I want to get them together again since my wife Died it has been a trying time for me and I think in the future I can pull up as I had 4 years of sickness I remain hear yet in the house waiting for the Board if I was to Clear out and leave it like the rest or some of Men then well what would become of me I have a family to study and if the Board would let me know what to do well I would act at once trusty you will see into the matter for me.

Trusty to know before the end of the month as I am anxious to get to work also to have my family together.

I remain your
Obident P. PEPPER

W McIver, Director of Land Settlement, wrote to George Prendergast, 22 March 1924⁹

Sir,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, forwarding a communication from Mr P. Pepper of Koo-wee-rup, in which he suggests that he be allowed to continue in occupation of the area granted to him under the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts, and to state that Mr Pepper

has not proved a successful Settler, although he receives a substantial pension in addition to the assistance given to him by the Board.

I understand that his family is not scattered but the younger members of the family are under the care of the management of the Aborigines Station. I believe there are some members of the family over 20 years of age, and are looking after themselves.

It is believed that if the block were sold, it would realise sufficient to pay Mr Pepper's liabilities to the Board, and in view of all the circumstances, I think this would be the best course to follow in the interest of Mr Pepper as well as the Board.

Yours faithfully,
DIRECTOR OF LAND SETTLEMENT.

The HON. G. M. PRENDEGAST, M.L.A.,
STATE PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
MELBOURNE

Percy Pepper appealed to W McIver, 28 March 1924¹⁰

MR MCIVER

Dear Sir

Will you not consider and give me another chance to wright the Place and make it look like a farm at Present it is like a Bush with the Reeds and Fat Hen I started to clean it up thinking that the Board would let me carry on untill I made the Place look ship shape and as thing are at present my Family are separated by your letter Sir Saying My Children were at Lake Tyers they are not as my Oldest girl is looking after the 2 youngest 1 is working out I have 2 boys with me 1 goes to school the other works away around the Neighbour I have had a Run of 4 years hard fighting agains floods and sickness also Seasons you know what it is Sir with a Delicate Wife and I was up and down after her also I had to send her away up the Lakes and sometimes to the Melbourne Hospital all this was done with a car as she could not travel in a train 3 or 4 times I had her down on a stretcher to Melbourne and once to Warragual another time I hired a boat and brought her from Lake Tyers to Now Nowa than Train to Koo Wee Rup I than had to get car for her to Melbourne when she came Back

after Being at Sanatoren she Died my hands was tied and I also had a boy sickly and with worry and trouble all these 4 years I suffered it was 4 years of fighting and now all for nothing give me another chance I can and will battle with cows also Mixed Vegetables as I can work them with help from my Boy he worked away when his mother was Alive to find and keep her in nourishing food should you know how we struggled sir would make you think I was to Proud to let my Neighbour know kindly consider and the Board Can Handle all of Produce as long as I get my children together and I will get on all Right I reman.

Your obident P. PEPPER

I have started to clean up the land But soon as I got you letter Broke me up and will wait for further orders kindly let me know.

Percy Pepper further explained his situation to George Prendergast, 29 April 1924¹¹

MR PRENDERGAST

Dear Sir

Your letter to hand thanking you for what you have dones Mr McIver by what I understand think my children are at Lak Tyers Mission We Don't come under that Act I only have 1 girl over 20 years and she has 4 girls with her looking after them 1 other girl 16 is working I have the 2 Boys one has or is digging Potatoes about hear the other Boy goes to school he is with me living at the farm the place is not fit to sell as it has over grown with Rubbish I have started to clean it up and should the Board let me do so untill it is fit to sell stay hear I am sure that I can make a head Way should I have to go right out well I go out with nothing and no where to go I am willing to carry on until the Place is fit to be inspected the reason I let it go was I got 14 days to leave it than they gave me permission to sell than I could not sell I go another Notice that my time was up all the furniture is packed and we are batching in the house Should I have to go well it throwes me back a lot I am not the only failure besides I had a hard 4 years of it with Sickness of my late Wife also 1 little Boy and my self I had a rough time as for my Pension well it all went to keep my family as the Prospects of the Crops were not

up to what it should have been the Board if you was to speak I am sure will consider again I will stop work on the Place until I hear from you Mr Prendergas I am sure that I can make it up now we are free from floods as I had 3 years of flood and Bad Seasons also a Delicate Wife trusty you can get them to Consider

I remain
Your P. PEPPER

Percy Pepper wrote again to George Prendergast, newly elected Premier of Victoria, 18 July 1924¹²

To the PREMIER

Mr Prendergast

I am pleased to see by to day Paper that you are Premier wishing you and Party every success I now am wrighting to you again as Weight tells with us struggling Soldier Settlers and shall give you Sir the full details of my Experance at Koo Wee Rup also the struggle I have had for the last 6 years I took over this Block October 1918 and was rather lat as the Land had to be fallowed no hous was on it I was staying with my family at another Return Soldiers Place this Soldiers has left his Block on account of Floods 3 of us Came on to the one Estate and 2 Have gone. I was left struggling along as I had a family of 7 Children also a wife who suffered from then to the 29 of November 1923 when she died my oldest when I came hear was a girl Age 15 = my Oldest boy was 12 years who was not much help to me as the Oldest girl done the House Work and Helped the Mother she then went to school until they were of age to leave than they went to work about the neighbours casual pea picking for a time also Helped me when the Peas were worth Sending to Market My Boy Helped me on the farm and done a lot of work for nothing at times as I had lost a Crop through all the Floods and another year I had the Grub and Catapolar as well as Bad Markets now Since I saw you last on this Season I did not have a Crop in as before my Wife died I wrote to the Closer Settlement Board for Soldiers for a Permit to transfere my Block on account of the Wife Health as the Doctor Ordered her to Leave the Swamp also one little Girl and 1 Boy are Delicate I did not get the Permit until she was in hospital or dead I really forget any way it was to

FOOTPRINTS

late to do anything about a week after she died I got notice that lease cancelled and I went and saw you sir you sent me with a letter to Mr Allan and Mr Allan gave me 2 months to find a buyer the weather was bad and I had a chance of transferring to a party but the water was in the front paddock so he did not take the Place I than had another offer of exchange also the other Party was willing to take my Place at £46 per acre 56 I have and he had 36 Acres also a 5 Roomed house the Board would not allow that now they are going to sell it themselves I have transferred my Waggon 2 Horses Harrows Harness and Fertilizer as I had no choice I could not go on working the Place without Permersion I am still living in the House as I am responsible for the Place and as I am up against it I am glad of the Shelter as I go out working piece work my 2 Boys are with me one is a school the other Works Potato Digging my Girls 2 go to school the oldest 21 looks after the 2 that goes to School they are up at Lake Entrance with their Aunt I would sooner all my Family under the one Roof and would like to be on the Land if the Board will Allow me to Carry on untill I can Exchange an transfer the Place my Self as I would like to have a smaller Place in another Locality this Land was my great Grand fathers and the White People took it why not as I am the only Half Cast Australian Aboriginal that has tried on the Land I always worked for my living and could do much harder work than I can do now before I went to the War I will admit the Place is two big for me and this ground hear takes a lot of working also very Expencive as manure has to be used and I would like another smaller Place I cannot Buy one but I may Exchange to the good and I would make the Place I exchange over to the Board if I did not get enough to Cover or to Pay them Should I have to Leave well I will have a Hard Struggle as some days I get down and others I am all right on the land or a smaller Place me and my Boy could Work it between us and 2 Girls out a Work. I have struggled and reared my family up to now and just when they will be usefull the Home or We are Seperated the sale of this Place is shortly if you can see in matter Sir trusting you will be Successfull.

I remain
Your
P. PEPPER

W McIver, wrote to Percy Pepper about his letter to the Premier, 21 August 1924¹³

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 18th ultimo addressed to the Honorable the Premier, relative to the block previously held by you in the Parish of Koo-wee-rup, I have, by direction, to advise you that the Closer Settlement board has given careful consideration to your case, but cannot see its way to vary its previous decision, therefore, the sale of same by public auction will be held at Koo-wee-rup on the 27th instant.

Yours faithfully,
DIRECTOR OF LAND SETTLEMENT

ETA Wilson reported to the Secretary, Closer Settlement Board, 28 August 1924¹⁴

The Secretary,
Closer Settlement Board.
Pepper's forfeited holding, Allot. 26. Sec. J,
Parish of Koo-wee-rup, 56 acres.

I visited Koo-wee-rup yesterday for the purpose of submitting this property for sale as directed by the Board.

An attempt to inspect the property prior to the sale was frustrated by the phenomenal floods, which covered practically the whole district. By the evening, practically the only dry part of the township was the railway grounds.

In common with all the surrounding properties, Pepper's land was covered (it was said) to a depth of two feet. I was only able to get within a quarter of a mile of it.

About twenty people attended the sale. Bidding started at £20 per acre, and quickly rose to £35 per acre, when only two bidders were participating. These ultimately carried the price to £40 per acre.

I interviewed the highest bidder (Thomas Henry Wadsley of Koo-wee-rup) with a view to getting him to increase his price to the Board's upset (£46 per acre) but he stated that £40 was

his limit and I could not persuade him to go beyond.

The phenomenal flooding may have militated against a higher figure being offered.

To enable a purchaser to secure a return from the land this season, it will be necessary for him to start preparations for cropping immediately the present floods subside. It would therefore appear advisable to re-offer the property at an early date.

The sale was capably handled by Mr Witham, who did his best, both before and during the sale, to bring the property and the terms under the notice of buyers.

E.T.A. WILSON

1927

Percy Pepper wrote to George Prendergast, now Victorian Chief Secretary, 4 July 1927¹⁵

170 Station Street Carlton

Dear Sir

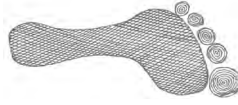
I am wrighting to you as I see Adv. For Settlers to wright to the Soldiers Settler Board for any Complaints it is no use me wrighting to them for when I was on my Block at Koo Wee Rup I had to Battle with them now that We have a Labour Government I may get a hearing I am willing to go before their inspector Mr Chipendall and answer any questions as long as he answers mine I don't think they gave me a go up there as I stuck longer to my Place than most of the Boys. I had a Delicate Wife, and Seven Children going to School when I was their I did Battle hard my Wife had Consumption and with the 5 years of flood & Sickness also Bad Seasons I had a lot of Worry, in the End my Wife died as the Children was about able to help me about a Week after she died I had notice from the Board to leave 14 days to shift my family went up Country the 2 Boys Stayed with me I came down and Mr Prendergast gave me a letter to Mr Allan to see what could be done any way. I got 6 months to find some one to Buy the Place but was of no use as floods was on it I had a man to take it if I took his Place but the Board would not allow that So I had another notice to go as the Place was Adv. For Sale

LIFE GOES ON FOR THE PEPPER FAMILY

while I was in it then it was sold under Water I had no Chance while I was their with hard ships no one of my 2 Boys is willing to come and help me I am applying for a look in or a hearing I gave the Board my War Bond and my family Went short at time I am only applying for a hearing face to face I have Photoes of my Place under water to Show what We went through and not only that Sir if you care to see me Personally I will show you Papers that I am sure you will see into as I keep these papers just to prove things as things have not all been good since I lost my wife and my family separated all I want is to get a home to gether I have good References with me to show you that I am a worker when I am able to work as at times I am not fit to work should I get a place will I have help with my Boys

Trusty you will
Do you Best I remain
Your P. PEPPER

Afterword



Where are we now?

By Rita Watkins, grand-daughter of Lucy and Percy Pepper

I HOPE THAT THIS BOOK will help other Aboriginal people understand how to find and access information about their families, and to see how resilient our ancestors were.

I feel the heartache my grandparents, parents, aunties and uncles went through, especially Granny Lucy whose children and husband were sent off Lake Tyers station when she was close to death. My mum Gwen told me that Granny Lucy came back to Koo-Wee-Rup, where she asked Mum to play a hymn on the piano while Granny Lucy went to sleep and died. Auntie Alice and Uncle Jack Connolly did so much for the family when my Granny Lucy passed away.

Grandfather Percy had the help of Auntie Julia Thorpe (Edwards) and Granny Connolly (Percy's mum) who helped keep the children and family together. The government would not allow Granny Lucy to be buried at Lake Tyers next to her father's grave because, as AE Parker, the Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, wrote:

In all probability if the body were exhumed and buried at Tyers it would result in the Pepper family desiring to transfer to that station to be near the mother's grave.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?



Percy Pepper and his grand-daughter Rita Watkins, circa 1942, in the Fitzroy Gardens. The family lived in the nearby suburb of Fitzroy.

Courtesy of Watkins family

How true this would have been: our family still meets at the Pakenham cemetery on Mother's Day to visit the graves of Granny Lucy, my mum Gwen, brother Reg and my husband, Tom Watkins. It has been a family ritual since Granny Lucy died. To have all their bodies taken to Lake Tyers is a dream.

I believe the government policies that affected our family's lives did not deter us as Aboriginal people. My mother went back to Lake Tyers so that I could be born with the help of Auntie Julia Thorpe. Uncle Phillip Pepper, my mother's brother, was the author of two books *You Are What You Make Yourself To Be* and *The Kurnai of Gippsland*. As kids growing up in Gippsland, we moved between Lakes Entrance and Stratford, and later to Fitzroy, following the picking season. We all know the land at Koo-Wee-Rup that Grandfather Percy was given for his war service as 'the swamp'.

This book includes a letter Grandfather Percy wrote to the Premier of Victoria, George Prendergast, asking for assistance to stop the sale of his land: 'I would sooner all my Family under the one Roof and would like to be on the Land if the Board will Allow me'. He went on to say: 'I would like to have a smaller Place in another Locality this Land was my great Grand fathers and the White People took it...'

Grandfather Percy never got back to Koo-Wee-Rup. After leaving the farm, he moved to Carlton and later, when my mum Gwen moved the family to Gertrude Street in Fitzroy, he moved to a house nearby. His final days were with Auntie Dora in Oriel Street, Preston. He died on 8 March 1956.

I am sure that both grandparents would be happy and proud that most of their family is still involved in Aboriginal affairs issues and aspirations – not as 'half-castes', but as GunaiKurnai Aboriginal people from Gippsland. Together with other GunaiKurnai families, we have formed The GunaiKurnai Land & Waters Corporation. We are now Elders passing on family stories documented by our ancestors to and for our children and grandchildren, so our GunaiKurnai history will never be forgotten.

Endnotes

UNDERSTANDING CITATIONS

Records that have been transcribed and included in this book have a corresponding endnote that indicates whether they are held by the National Archives of Australia or Public Record Office Victoria.

Records in the National Archives are described using the Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System, which is based upon three elements: agencies, series and items. *Agencies* (eg, government departments) create *series* (groups of related records), which are made up of *items* (individual records, such as files or maps).

In *Footprints*, records from the National Archives' collection are identified using series and item numbers, as in the following example:

National Archives of Australia (NAA): B2455, Pepper Percy

In this case, the file is from the series B2455 (First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers) and the item number is 'Pepper Percy'.

The collection of Public Record Office Victoria is described using a similar system, with agencies, series and items. In this book, records are identified using series, consignment, unit and item numbers, as in the following example:

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3

This indicates that the file is from the Victorian Public Record Series (VPRS) number 1694 (Correspondence Files of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines), the consignment number is 0, and it is in unit number 5 (in this case, a box containing numerous items). The item number is 'Bundle 3'.

The endnotes include the page number where the document (such as a letter or report) can be found on the original file. Some documents included here have additional notes added by public servants and other individuals. Where these annotations appear on the same page of a document, they do not have separate endnotes. Readers should refer to the previous endnote for details.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: A History since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2005, pp. 130–1.
- 2 See Public Record Office Victoria (hereafter PROV), VPRS 14558/P1 Acts of Parliament, Unit 17, Act No. 349, *Aborigines (Protection) Act 1869*, especially section 2. The actual regulations produced under the powers of the Act can be found in *Victoria Government Gazette*, no. 15, 24 February 1871, p. 338.
- 3 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 130–1.

FOOTPRINTS

- 4 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 188–9.
- 5 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 191–2.
- 6 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 130–2.
- 7 See Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 141–2.
- 8 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, p. 218.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 *Digger–Pioneer Index. Victoria 1836–1888: Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Victoria*, electronic database produced by Macbeth Genealogical Services Pty Ltd, Hampton, Victoria, 1998.
- 2 Cunninghame and Lakes Entrance are often referred to interchangeably in this book. The township of Cunninghame was surveyed in 1886 and gazetted the same year. It is now known as Lake Bunga and is located to the east of Lakes Entrance. Lakes Entrance township was gazetted in 1887. Prior to this, when the Tambo Shire was formed in 1882, the whole area – Lakes Entrance, Cunninghame and East Cunninghame – was included in the Cunninghame riding of the new shire which led to people referring to the whole area as Cunninghame. Local people continued to call the area Cunninghame. The name for the whole area (including post offices and schools) was officially changed to Lakes Entrance in approximately January 1915.
- 3 *Digger–Edwardian Index. Victoria 1902–1913. Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Victoria*, electronic database produced by Macbeth Genealogical Services Pty Ltd, Hampton, Victoria, 1997.
- 4 Phillip Pepper, *You Are What You Make Yourself To Be: The Story of a Victorian Aboriginal Family, 1842–1980*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 32–6.
- 5 *Digger–Edwardian Index. Victoria 1902–1913*.
- 6 Phillip Pepper & Tess De Araugo, *What Did Happen to the Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. 1, *The Kurnai of Gippsland*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1985, p. 125; Merle Jackomos, ‘The History of Lake Tyers’, *Identity*, vol. 1, no. 2, October 1971, p. 5.
- 7 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, p. 132.
- 8 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 135–6.
- 9 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 133 & 163.
- 10 See the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) website, *Mission Voices*, for a brief history of the Lake Tyers mission, accessed 13 June 2007 at www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/lake_tyers/mission_history/default.htm.
- 11 Pepper & De Araugo, *What Did Happen to the Aborigines of Victoria*, p. 243.
- 12 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, p. 217.
- 13 ABC website, *Mission Voices*, accessed 13 June 2007 at www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/lake_tyers/mission_history/default.htm.
- 14 Board for the Protection of Aborigines, *Annual Report*, no. 49, 1921.

CHAPTER 2

- 1 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 1.
- 2 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 232.
- 3 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 233.
- 4 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 234.
- 5 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 235.
- 6 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 237.
- 7 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 238.
- 8 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 240.
- 9 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 239.
- 10 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 241.
- 11 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 242.
- 12 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 242a.
- 13 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 242a.
- 14 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 251.
- 15 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 244.

ENDNOTES

- 16 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 245.
- 17 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 246.

CHAPTER 3

- 1 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 247.
- 2 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 248.
- 3 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 248a.
- 4 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 249.
- 5 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 249a.
- 6 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 250.
- 7 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 254.
- 8 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 258.
- 9 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 257.
- 10 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 261.
- 11 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 262.
- 12 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 263.
- 13 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 260.
- 14 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 270.
- 15 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 270a.
- 16 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 268.
- 17 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 269.
- 18 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 272.
- 19 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 272a.
- 20 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 274.
- 21 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 277.
- 22 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 278.
- 23 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 275.
- 24 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 282.
- 25 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 283.
- 26 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 255.
- 27 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 273a.

CHAPTER 4

- 1 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 286.
- 2 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 285.
- 3 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 284.
- 4 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 287.
- 5 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 288.
- 6 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 291.
- 7 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 290a.
- 8 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 309.
- 9 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 310.
- 10 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 311a.
- 11 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 312.
- 12 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 313a.
- 13 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 314.
- 14 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 315.
- 15 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 317a.
- 16 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 318.
- 17 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 319.
- 18 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 322.
- 19 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 321.
- 20 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, pp. 323–4.
- 21 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 325.
- 22 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 326.
- 23 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 327.
- 24 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 328.

FOOTPRINTS

CHAPTER 5

- 1 'Lest We Forget', *Message Stick*, television program, ABC, 23 April 2007.
- 2 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, pp. 199–201.
- 3 Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians*, p. 201.
- 4 See historical accounts given on 'Lest We Forget', *Message Stick*.
- 5 Marilyn Lake, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria 1915–38*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987, pp. 44 & 67–9.
- 6 Paper no. 32, Report of the Royal Commission on Soldier Settlement, *Papers Presented to Parliament*, 1925, vol. II, pp. 1061 ff.
- 7 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 279.
- 8 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 280.
- 9 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 281.
- 10 National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): B2455, Pepper Percy.
- 11 NAA: B2455, Pepper Percy, p. 15.
- 12 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 19.
- 13 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 17.
- 14 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 18.
- 15 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 20.
- 16 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 24.
- 17 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 75.
- 18 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, pp. 162–3.
- 19 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 163a.
- 20 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 161.
- 21 PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, Unit 5, Bundle 3, p. 163a. This is an annotation on the correspondence referred to in note 19 above, but it has been reproduced separately to aid reader understanding.
- 22 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 97.
- 23 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 110.
- 24 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 111.
- 25 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 147.
- 26 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 163a.
- 27 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 164.
- 28 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 170b.
- 29 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 177a.
- 30 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 183.
- 31 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 184a.
- 32 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 189a.
- 33 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 192a.
- 34 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 197a.
- 35 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, pp. 207a–207b.
- 36 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 242a.
- 37 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 255.
- 38 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 257.

CHAPTER 6

- 1 NAA: B337, 609, pp. 1–2.
- 2 NAA: B337, 609, p. 2a.
- 3 NAA: B337, 609, p. 3.
- 4 NAA: B337, 609, p. 5.
- 5 NAA: B337, 609, p. 6.
- 6 NAA: B337, 609, p. 6a.
- 7 NAA: B337, 609, p. 7.
- 8 NAA: B337, 609, p. 8.
- 9 NAA: B337, 609, pp. 9 & 9a.
- 10 NAA: B337, 609, p. 10.
- 11 NAA: B337, 609, p. 11.

ENDNOTES

- 12 NAA: B337, 609, p. 13.
- 13 NAA: B337, 609, p. 13a.
- 14 NAA: B337, 609, p. 12.
- 15 NAA: B337, 609, p. 14.
- 16 NAA: B337, 609, p. 15.
- 17 NAA: B337, 609, p. 16.

CHAPTER 7

- 1 NAA: B337, 609, p. 19.
- 2 NAA: B337, 609, pp. 17–18.
- 3 NAA: B337, 609, p. 20.
- 4 NAA: B337, 609, p. 22.
- 5 NAA: B337, 609, p. 21.

CHAPTER 8

- 1 NAA: B337, 609, p. 26.
- 2 NAA: B337, 609, p. 26.
- 3 NAA: B337, 609, p. 23.
- 4 NAA: B337, 609, p. 24.
- 5 NAA: B337, 609, p. 25.
- 6 NAA: B337, 609, p. 30a.
- 7 NAA: B337, 609, p. 29.
- 8 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 337a.
- 9 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, p. 339.
- 10 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, pp. 340a & 340b.
- 11 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, pp. 341–2.
- 12 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, pp. 67–71.
- 13 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 74.
- 14 PROV, VPRS 5714/P0, Unit 2508, Item Allot 26 Sec. J, p. 76.
- 15 PROV, VPRS 10381/P0, Unit 13, Item 278 P Pepper, pp. 392a–392d.

Appendix A

Key people in the records

Stanley Seymour Argyle, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Toorak (1920–1940) and Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1923–1924, 1924–1927 and 1928–1929).

Anne Bon was appointed to the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in 1904, a position she held until her death at the age of 98 in 1933. She had developed a connection with some of the Aboriginal people who lived and worked at the Coranderrk station near Healesville. Some of these people had once lived on her Mansfield pastoral property, and returned for the shearing season. They reported the poor conditions at Coranderrk station. Bon was critical of the management of the station and believed that ‘half-castes’ should receive support at the government-financed stations.

Reverend John Bulmer came to Victoria in 1849 and worked on the goldfields without much success. In May 1855, he became an assistant at the Church of England Yelta Aboriginal Mission on the Murray River under Thomas Hill Goodwin. He established Lake Tyers Aboriginal Mission in Gippsland, settling on the location of Lake Tyers after consulting the local Aboriginal people. He managed the station from 1861 to 1907, and continued to play a role as a ‘spiritual guide’ until his death in 1913.

APPENDIX A

Robert Bulmer, timber merchant and contractor at Cunninghame (Lakes Entrance) who commissioned Percy Pepper to cut timber poles for him in 1915.

JS Calhoun, a local district officer in the Occupation Branch of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey with whom Percy Pepper corresponded about his soldier settlement block at Koo-Wee-Rup.

Alice and Jack Connolly, Lucy's sister and brother-in-law, who lived at Lakes Entrance.

William James Ditchburn, Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines until 1916.

Bruce Ferguson, manager of Lake Tyers Aboriginal station, 1917–25.

WL Galbraith, Superintendent of Lake Condah Aboriginal station from 1915 and Local Guardian of Aborigines at Lake Condah from 1919.

CL Greene, acting manager of Lake Tyers Aboriginal station, 1915–17.

Ellen Good, an Aboriginal woman who took Lucy Pepper into her home while she was at Framlingham for a number of months in 1915–16.

John Gray, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Swan Hill (1904–17) and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1916–17).

Captain RW Howe, manager of Lake Tyers Aboriginal station, 1908–15.

William W Johnstone, Local Guardian of Aborigines at Bushfield (near Framlingham), 1913–19.

HP Keogh, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Gippsland North (1901–08) and Vice-Chairman of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1901–08).

Sir AE Lind, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Gippsland East (1920–61) and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines from 1922.

Donald McLeod, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Daylesford (1900–23), Chief Secretary of the Victorian Government (1915–17); and member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1915–17).

Edward Mullett, a relative of the Peppers and a permanent resident at Lake Tyers.

John Murray, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Warrnambool (1884–1916), and Chief Secretary (1902–04, 1909–12, 1912–13 and 1913–15), during which time he was also Chairman of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Unlike his predecessors, Murray actively intervened in the Board's operations. In 1910, he oversaw the introduction of legislation that ensured aid was extended to 'half-castes'. Between 1913 and 1914 he attended all meetings of the Board, and then decided not to convene the Board but to administer directly.

AE Parker, Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines from 1917.

George Prendergast, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Footscray, a seat he held from 1927 to 1937, having previously held the seat of North Melbourne from 1894 to 1897 and 1900 to 1926. He was the leader of the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party on two occasions (1904–13 and 1918–26) and was Premier and Treasurer from 18 July 1924 to 18 November 1924.

Constable WH Rogers, Local Guardian of Aborigines at Stratford (1908–09).

William and Sarah Thorpe, Lucy's parents, who lived at the Lake Tyers Aboriginal station.

Appendix B

About the government records used in this book

THE RECORDS used in this book are held by the National Archives of Australia and Public Record Office Victoria. Most of these records were originally created and collected by people working for the Victorian Government who were responsible for administering Aboriginal affairs. In 1975, the Victorian Government transferred many of its records relating to Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth Government (Australian Government). This is why some of the records relating to Aboriginal people in Victoria are held by the National Archives and some by Public Record Office Victoria.

Some of the records found in this book were created by other areas of government. For example, the records relating to Percy Pepper's soldier settlement block were created as part of the Victorian Government's administration of lands. His service record, on the other hand, was created by people working for the Australian Government who were responsible for recording details of soldiers serving in Australia's armed forces.

The records in this book come from a number of different government agencies and groups of records. In other words, they

are not all located in a single file. To find information about people in the records of the National Archives and Public Record Office Victoria, researchers will often have to look at a number of different files.

Finding records at the National Archives

RecordSearch

Most family history begins with a search for information about particular people or places. The National Archives has an online database, called RecordSearch, which holds information about the entire collection. RecordSearch is available on the National Archives' website (www.naa.gov.au), and allows researchers to search for records about people or places.

Bringing Them Home Name Index

In response to recommendations in the *Bringing Them Home* report, the Australian Government provided funds for the National Archives to create an index of the names of Indigenous people and institutions found in key records in its collection.

If researchers wish to arrange a search of the Bringing Them Home (BTH) Name Index, they should contact the Koorie Reference Officer in Melbourne or the National Archives' Reference Service (see below for contact details) providing as much of the following information as possible:

- the name of the person (including names, Indigenous names, different spellings)
- date of birth, death or age at which something important happened
- family connections (names of sisters, brothers, or other relatives)
- places where the person was born, lived, worked or was sent, and the approximate dates they were there.

A reference officer will search the index and produce a list of index entries that might be relevant, which will then be sent to researchers, who can then request access to the records.

From early 2008, the BTH Name Index will also be available to Link-Up caseworkers of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.

Indigenous World War I servicemen

The National Archives has prepared a list of Indigenous World War I servicemen for whom personnel files are held. This will be printed and made available on the National Archives' website in late 2008.

Access to records

Under the *Archives Act 1983*, most material is available for public access when it reaches 30 years of age. However, before items are released to the public, the National Archives examines them to identify sensitive material that should be withheld. For example, material is withheld to protect the privacy of individuals.

The National Archives has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency to assist Victorian Aboriginal people to access open period Commonwealth records (that is, records over 30 years old) for the purposes of re-establishing family and community links. People granted access under the MOU can:

- access sensitive information normally withheld, and
- get free photocopies.

For more information, see the National Archives' website (www.naa.gov.au) or contact the National Archives.

Contact details

Melbourne
Koorie Reference Officer
National Archives of Australia
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne Vic 3051

GPO Box 8005
Burwood Heights Vic 3151

Telephone: (03) 9348 5600
Fax: (03) 9348 5628

FOOTPRINTS

National Reference Service
National Archives of Australia
Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600

PO Box 7425
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Telephone: 1300 886 881
Fax: 1300 886 882
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Website www.naa.gov.au

Finding records at Public Record Office Victoria

Access the Collection

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) has an online database called Access the Collection, which holds information about its collection. Access the Collection is available on the website (www.prov.vic.gov.au), providing a wide range of services to enable researchers to access the public records of Victoria.

Koorie Records Unit

The Koorie Records Unit (KRU) promotes Aboriginal records within PROV's collection and improves the accessibility of these records. The KRU builds links between PROV and a range of Aboriginal community organisations through outreach, education and training activities.

The KRU can provide advice and assistance for researchers wishing to access records about Aboriginal people in PROV's collection. Researchers may want to start by consulting the Koorie People and Places research pathway through the Access the Collection database. This resource provides researchers with background information about PROV and other recordkeeping agencies that hold Victorian Aboriginal records.

See the KRU website at www.prov.vic.gov.au/about/kru.

Koorie Index of Names (KIN)

In response to the recommendations of the *wilam naling* report in 2006, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria provided funds for PROV to create the Koorie Index of Names (KIN) project.

APPENDIX B

The first phase is to index records created by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. The KIN database will be launched in late 2008 and will be available online in the Reading Room at the Victorian Archives Centre.

Reference officers will help researchers access the KIN database. KIN enables researchers to search for and identify individuals, and provides information needed to order and view original records. Researchers can then purchase copies or apply to take a digital image of the original record.

The KIN database is only an index, and does not contain personal information. Researchers need to view the original records to find further information on individuals named in the KIN database.

Contact details

Koorie Records Unit
Public Record Office Victoria
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne Vic 3051

PO Box 2100
North Melbourne Vic 3051

Telephone: (03) 9348 5600
Fax: (03) 9348 5656
Email: ask.prov@prov.vic.gov.au
Website: www.prov.vic.gov.au

Further reading

More detailed information about researching records on Aboriginal people held by Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia is available in *My Heart Is Breaking* and *Finding Your Story*.

My Heart Is Breaking is a comprehensive guide listing official records about Victoria's Koorie people from 1836 to 1975, held by the National Archives in Melbourne and Public Record Office Victoria. It provides information about how to undertake research, as well as including examples of records covering issues such as administration and policy, health and welfare.

FOOTPRINTS

My Heart Is Breaking can be purchased from the Victorian Archives Centre or online at <https://shop.naa.gov.au> or www.prov.vic.gov.au/publications.

Finding Your Story is a resource manual developed by the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria as a reference tool for Indigenous Victorians seeking information on their separation from families and communities. It provides a comprehensive guide to government and non-government archival collections in Victoria, and was developed in consultation with Koorie people and organisations. *Finding Your Story* has the potential to change the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Finding Your Story was released in 2005 and can be purchased from the Koorie Heritage Trust and Public Record Office Victoria. It is also available online at www.prov.vic.gov.au/findingyourstory.

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