


Lake Monger Story

Tricia Marshall's presentation at the MHCC Aboriginal Sunday Service, 22 Jan 2023


Slide 1:



Galup


Home of Fires

For tens of thousands of years, a special place
on the boodja (land) of Yellagonga people
of the Noongar nation




Comment: Galup (G/Kaarlup) is the traditional Noongar name for what we call Lake Monger.

Slide 2:


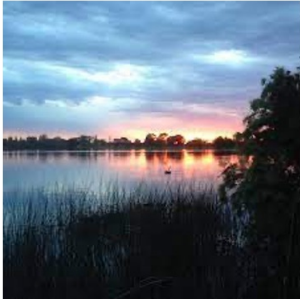


Galup



A traditional camping and meeting area

- A site for ceremonies and dance
- A place for trade
- Fresh water
- Plentiful food:
 - kangaroo
 - emu
 - snakes
 - tortoise
 - mudfish
 - gilgies
 - waterbirds and their eggs



Comment:

Galup was a special camping and meeting place, a place for ceremonies, dancing and trading. It had a good supply of fresh water and plenty of food

Slide 3:

West Australian Act 18 June 1829 (UK) gave effect to the

*“settlement of certain **wild and unoccupied lands** on the western coast of New Holland and the islands adjacent which are known by the name of Western Australia”.*

Comment:

In 1829 the West Australian Act referred to the west coast as “wild and unoccupied lands”.

Slide 4:

The Foundation of Perth 1829:

“I do hereby give Notice that if any Person or Persons shall be convicted of behaving in a fraudulent, cruel or felonious Manner towards the Aborigines of the Country, such Person or Persons will be liable to be prosecuted and tried for the Offence, as if the same had been committed against any other of His Majesty’s Subjects.”

Comment:

In that same year, when Perth was founded, Governor Stirling declared that mistreatment of Aborigines was a criminal offence and that they were to be treated with the respect of entitled to any other British subjects.

The reality proved otherwise.

Slide 5

Massacre, 3-5 May 1830

- Led by the British Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Irwin, leader of the colony's soldiers.
- Started over theft
- Several soldiers were wounded with spears
- A lot of Noongars killed or wounded
- The Noongars ran to hide in the reeds of the lake
- The militia chased them and waited to "finish the job in the morning"
- In the morning they had escaped



Comment:

A year later, on May 3 1830, a massacre was led by the British Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Irwin, leader of the colony's soldiers.

There is a number of reports.

It started in Kings Park when a Noongar man was shot for "grabbing a blanket from a farmhouse or something".

"He dropped the blanket and ran, and then a farmer shot him. He was the first victim, that was around 3:00pm," Mr Wilkes said.

"... The Noongars were starting to get aggressive back and then they ran, eventually, down to Lake Monger to hide in the reeds and use the lake as a way to hide from the colonisers and settlers [who were] shooting and firing at them.

"Eventually night came and militia were called, and Irwin came and there were two parties that surrounded the lake, knowing that all the Noongars were in there somewhere.

"They waited it out and created a bit of a siege and said 'We'll go and finish the job in the morning'.

According to Indigenous elders, Noongar men were chased to Lake Monger and killed by British militia. "A lot of Noongar elders, when we talked to them said the same thing — 'I've heard a lot of Noongars died there',"

"In the state records office there are letters that Captain Irwin, who led the attack, wrote to [Governor] James Stirling, but interestingly the details of how many people were killed has been edited or changed or varies quite a lot."

There was a lot of war among Nyungar people who were stealing the flour, tea and sugar [and] some of the early settlers were shooting some of them, so they (Nyungar) retaliated. A lot of the Nyungar were shot by the Red Coats and were rounded up...

The Bennell family was cornered up at Lake Monger. The Red Coats were going to shoot them in the morning at daylight, but in the night-time, the Nyungar went down through the middle Swan... [and escaped]. (Collard, 2004, p 36).

"They all ran into the bush to hide. The young men, women and teenagers ran into the thick bush of Lake Monger. The Red Coats chased them and gunned some of them down. There were sounds of gunfire, bang-bang-bang, screams, cries, and shouts. Some got away, some were shot. It started to get dark, and the troopers got reinforcements surrounding the lake, and setting up camp in the hope of shooting all my grandmother's people on daybreak. But next morning, when the Red Coats raided the lake, no one was there. They had crept out in the early hours of the morning unseen by the troopers."

Slide 6

Irwin's report to Stirling, 18 May 1830

After the attack Frederick Irwin sent a report to his superiors. In it he stated that he had a 'duty' to make the local Whadjuk Noongars subservient to British authority.

"This daring and hostile conduct of the natives induced me to seize the opportunity to make them sensible of our superiority by shewing how severely we could retaliate their aggression."

Comment:

Irwin sent a report to Governor Stirling. This is an excerpt:

An affair took place between the Natives and some of the Inhabitants which led to the Military being called out. The Natives were decidedly the aggressors; they had been very troublesome in the forenoon; in one place throwing spears at poultry, at another stealing pieces of board from workshops; and at last they broke into and plundered the house of a man named Paton This daring and hostile conduct of the Natives induced me to seize the opportunity to make them sensible of our Superiority, by showing how severely we could retaliate their aggression; but that we had no wish to injure them; I now divided the party, taking half with me round the lagoon and directing Mr Dale with the remainder to do the other way, to get the Natives between us, should they be in the Lagoon.

Slide 7:

Land grants to settlers

- John Henry Monger (c.1802-1867) and his wife Mary arrived in WA in 1829. In the early 1830s John took up a grant comprising 200 acres (81ha) on the southern side of the lake, and by 1833 the wetland had become known as Monger's Lake.
- William Henry Leeder (c.1797-1845) and his wife Hannah (c.1797-1889) arrived in WA in 1830 and obtained grants for 288 acres (117ha) of land on the eastern side of Monger's Lake.
- Henry Burgess, snr (c.1801-1859) had arrived in Western Australia in 1830, travelling with his wife, Mary, and their children. He had been granted part of the site extending from the south-west corner of Monger's Lake.

Comment:

Shortly afterwards, John Monger was granted land on the southern side of the lake, which was renamed Lake Monger.

William Leeder was granted land on the eastern side of the lake

Henry Burgess was granted land in the south-west corner of the lake.

Slide 8

In Stirling's address to Legislative Council, June 23, 1837 as reported in the Perth Gazette:

The 'settlement' proceeded with the expropriation of land which Governor James Stirling later referred to as 'invasion'.

*"In the first public act of the Government, the protection of the law was extended to the Native Tribes, and they were at once recognised as British subjects. It was long before any intercourse took place between them and the settlers, but when they became emboldened by degrees, to frequent the farms and habitations of the whites, it was obvious enough, from their propensity to theft and their frequent necessities, that quarrels and hostilities would happen between the two races....the [colonists] knew that their own welfare depended on avoiding hostilities; and it is due to them to state that their conduct, as a body, has been marked throughout by an anxious desire to avoid, **on their invasion of this territory**, every necessary injury to its earlier inhabitants ...and establish and regulate, upon general principles of mutual benefit, the future intercourse between **the invaders and the invaded.**"*

Comment:

Although not related to this incident, it is interesting to see that in 1837, Governor Stirling described the colonisation as "invasion" and the settlers and the Aboriginal inhabitants as "the invaders and the invaded" respectively.