

## MIDDLE BROTHER THE ABORIGINAL CONNECTION

By Jennie Kerr.

I wonder how many of us, so fortunate to be living in the Camden Haven with its rich and diverse natural beauty, know of the Aboriginal heritage and history of the area. For countless generations and long before the more recent contact with people from distant shores, this has always been Biripi country.

Biripi country stretched from Nambucca Heads in the north to the Great Divide in the west and south as far as Karuah. The Biripi traded and intermarried with other tribal groups, coming together for timeless ceremonies recognizing the spiritual importance of ancient sites passed down in the Law of the Dreamtime, preserved intact until the devastating and often brutal contact with the Europeans. This clash of culture began in our area following the establishment of a penal settlement at Port Macquarie in the 1820s.

To the Biripi, the three great mountains which stand as silent sentinels to the past, have always been known as the three Birrooguns - or Three Wise Brothers. This Dreamtime story of the Three Brothers has been passed down, in story, dance and song, to present generations and in recent times a local newspaper published a version recounted in 1981 by the late, initiated Gumbangirra elder, Harry Buchanan of Kempsey. In the Dreamtime story of courage and sacrifice, the three brothers were changed from human to mountain form and hold deep spiritual significance to generations of Aboriginal people.

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Captain Cook, in 1770, gazed at the three majestic forms so close to the coast and noting their resemblance, called them - The Three Brothers alluding, unwittingly to the Biripi Dreamtime legend.

Aboriginal ties to the land of their forebears is strong and children of Biripi descent are keen to learn of their heritage and have access to places of cultural and spiritual significance. The Purfleet-Taree Aboriginal Lands Council is looking to protect, for present and future generations, such an area, on the summit of Middle Brother Mountain.

Today, many displaced descendants of the Biripi live in the Camden Haven area. Many Kooris - a contemporary term for Aboriginal people - were raised on missions such as Purfleet, Taree and in the Wauchope and Kempsey areas. Many are retracing their steps having been part of the "stolen generations" - taken from their families under callous government legislation, unable to vote or to be considered a citizen in this, their homeland, until 1967. Today Aboriginal people have formed their own organizations and have more control over their own affairs but community attitudes take longer to change and many people feel threatened by the Aboriginal quest for self-determination, justice and equality. Especially when it comes to the land we share.

Sonny Paulson, Chairperson of the Purfleet-Taree Aboriginal Lands Council responds: "This area has significance to Koori people. It is most important to protect it as a place of Aboriginal culture for the future. We have no plans to change the environment here but to protect it as a place our kids and others can visit, as part of our culture."

Those who would like further information can contact Sonny Paulson on 065 - 524 106.



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by JENNIE KERR

This article states that the BIRPAI NATION country extended from Nambucca Heads in the North and west to the Divide, and South as far as Karuah.

All this information is not correct because all Aboriginal Nations lived within their own separate areas.

For instance "BIRPAI NATION" area was between two major rivers they were — Hastings River in the north and Manning River in the south.

"DAINGHUTKI NATION" area was between the HASTING RIVER northern bank to the southern bank of that river at Macksville.

"GUMBANGRI NATION" area north of Macksville and linking up with Awar Bay in the north, so Nambucca Heads was part of their area.

South of "BIRPAI NATION" from the Manning River to the northern bank of the Hunter River and west to Potters and Williams Rivers was "WORIMI NATION" land.

Those few NGAMBA people who early settlers found in the Hastings Valley, were originally people who were cast out of "GUMBANGRI NATION" due to a problem within that Nation, these NGAMBA folk lived between Plumbers and North shore, they stole young women from BIRPAI Camps.

The THREE BROTHERS MOUNTAINS are part of BIRPAI NATION.

Correction by  
Les Ridgeway J.P.



N. S. W.

CUMBANGARI AREA  
BETWEEN CLARENCE RIVER  
AND NAMBUCCA HEADS.

BIRPAI AREA  
BETWEEN HASTINGS RIVER  
AND MANNING RIVER.

WORMIE AREA  
BETWEEN MANNING RIVER  
AND HUNTER RIVER

WADAKAL AREA  
BETWEEN HUNTER RIVER AND  
LAKE  
LAQUARIE

DARKING AREA  
BETWEEN LAKE MACQUARIE  
AND HAWKS BURY RIVER

DARK AREA  
KINGSBURY R.  
MONEY

**BUNJALONG NATION.**

**GUMBANG RAKI NATION.**

THOMAS DUDDEN NATIONAL

ALABAMA CLASS

EL PAI NATION.

WIDRINI NATION

**ANURAKAL NEDUN.**

DARLINGTON NATIONAL

**DARUK NATION**

## MAIN WATER WAYS

NATIONS OR MAJOR  
ABORIGINAL CLANS.

Vic