

Incidents between Aboriginal people in NSW and the British colonisers 1792–1809

Stage 2: British Colonisation of Australia

Incidents between British and Aboriginal people 1792–1809

This is a chronology of significant events in cross-cultural relations between Indigenous and colonial settler societies. The aim is to provide teachers with evidence from primary source documents and contemporary images which could be a basis for more detailed research.

It is a continuation of the BOSNSW timeline of cross-cultural relations for the period 1770–92.

Image: [*Gnung-a gnung-a, mour-re-mour-ga*](#) (*dit Collins*)

[Gnung-a Gnung-a Murremurgan, called 'Collins']

Engraving by Barthelemy Roger (1767–1841) after Nicolas-Martin Petit (1777–1804). Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Linked with permission.

OVERVIEW

Between 1792 and 1809 European settlement west of Sydney focused on Parramatta, which had a governor's house, military garrison, government farm and cornfields, convict village and gardens. Satellite settlements of ex-convicts on 25-acre land grants were located at the Northern Boundary (near the present Kings School), at Toongabbie (Seven Hills) just west of Parramatta, and at Prospect to the south-west.

Small mixed farms proliferated rapidly into the territory of the Darug which stretched from Parramatta to the foot of the Blue Mountains. From 1794 the frontier shifted to the fertile banks of the Hawkesbury River, north-west of Sydney. Language groups (then referred to as 'tribes') encountered during this time included the Gundungurra in the Blue Mountains and Burraborang Valley, the Darkinjung west and north of the Macdonald River at Wiseman's Ferry and the Dharawal south of Botany Bay.

A violent and brutal war prevailed throughout this period. Aboriginal resistance was at first provoked by the clearing of Aboriginal hunting grounds. To feed themselves and their farm animals, the settlers grew crops of Indian corn (maize), which attracted the Aboriginal people, who were accustomed to collecting edible food plants from the bush. Clashes were inevitable.

Aboriginal people raided settlers' huts and robbed travellers of their clothing and provisions. Soldiers and settlers counter-attacked with blasts from their muskets. In retaliation, the Aboriginal people adopted the 'hit-and-run' tactics of guerrilla warfare, fading into the bush with ease when challenged.

The Bidjigal warrior Pemulwuy led resistance around the Georges River from Botany Bay to Salt Pan Creek and ranged further afield to attack Parramatta and Toongabbie. In the words of Governor John Hunter, Pemulwuy was 'a most active leader of the resistance against the settlers who constantly made inroads into his country, plundering their property, and endangering their personal safety'.

1792

21 March: After ‘coming in’ in 1790, the coastal Eora continue to frequent the English convict settlement (the ‘camp’) at Sydney Cove. ‘A Number of the Natives, both Men women, and especially Children are every day now in the Camp —Two native Girls I have under my roof,’ writes Chaplain Richard Johnson in a letter.

Source: Richard Johnson to Reverend William Morice, 21 March 1792, in John Cobley, *Sydney Cove, 1791–1792*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1965:233.

18 May: Aboriginal people from ‘the tribe inhabiting the woods’ ransack a settler’s hut at Prospect, and run off, wearing stolen clothes, when the settler fires small shot at them. They leave behind blankets, some spears and nets filled with corn. One Aborigine is wounded.

27 May: A convict is killed while digging wells at Prospect Hill on the road from Parramatta. He has thirty spear wounds in his body, his head is cut open and most of his teeth are knocked out.

Source: David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales ...* London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies in The Strand, [1798] 1975:178. Reprint: A. H. & A. W. Reed, Sydney 1975. Hereafter ‘Collins [1798] 1975’.

‘It is an invariable rule with them [the people of this country] to Kill the first White man they can in revenge,’ the newly arrived Judge Advocate William Atkins comments in his journal.

Source: William Atkins, *Journal of a Voyage to Botany Bay*, 27 May 1792, typescript, Macquarie University, Sydney.

10 December: Bennelong and his young Wangal kinsman Yemmerrawanne board the storeship HMS *Atlantic* with Governor Arthur Phillip to sail out of the Eora world to England.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:211.

Administration of Lieutenant-Governor Francis Grose, 11 December 1792 – 12 December 1794

1793

June

Aboriginal people are reported to be ‘lurking between the different settlements, and forcibly taking provisions and clothing ... One or two convicts having been wounded by them, some small parties were sent out to drive them away, and to throw a few shot among them, but with positive orders to be careful not to take a life’.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:249.

1 July: Gnung-a Gnung-a Murremurgan, husband of Bennelong’s sister Warreeweer, sails on the storeship HMS *Daedalus* for Norfolk Island, Nootka Sound (now Vancouver, Canada) on the Pacific coast of North America and Hawaii.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:250-1.

December

A large group of Aboriginal people attack settlers returning from Toongabbie to Parramatta, steal their provisions and run into the bush. ‘They were of the Hunter’s or Woodman’s tribe, people who seldom came among us ...’

The Sydney clans choose a clear space between the town and the Brickfields, (the site of Central Railway) to publicly stage their 'rites and ceremonies'. In one ritual punishment, Carradah (Black Cockatoo), called 'Mr. Bool', having exchanged names with Henry Ball of HMS *Supply*, faces spears for two days before he is wounded in the arm.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:275-6.

1794

January

Lieutenant-Governor Grose sends the first group of settlers to take up farms in Darug territory on the banks of the Hawkesbury River near Green Hills (Windsor), 24 miles from Parramatta.

Source: Grose to Dundas, 29 April 1794, *Historical Records of New South Wales* (HRNSW) Vol.11:210; *Historical Records of Australia* (HRA), Vol. 1:133.

February

Aboriginal people attack, rob and beat settlers' wives, stripping one woman of her clothes.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:292.

April

Frequent Darug raids harass the new Hawkesbury settlers, making it 'a necessity for firing upon them, by which, it was said, one man was killed'. Armed watchmen posted at Toongabbie to guard the ripening Indian corn (maize) shoot three Aboriginal men. They bring in one man's head to prove their story.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:304.

3 April: After a cross-Pacific voyage to North America, Gnung-a Gnung-a returns to Port Jackson in the storeship *Daedalus*. While in Hawaii, King Kamehameha unsuccessfully offers to buy him.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:302-3.

15 April: Judge Advocate Richard Atkins refers to the beheading at Toongabbie. 'The head of one is brought in and the Lt. Govr [Major Francis Grose] has preserved it, as a present for Dr. Hunter.' In London, Surgeon John Hunter has died, so the head is sent to Sir Joseph Banks, who later provides the skulls of two 'New Hollanders' to the German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in Gottingen.

Source: Richard Atkins, *Journal*, 15 April 1794.

18 May: In England, Yemmerrawanne dies at the age of 19 from a lung ailment and is buried at Eltham (now South London). The inscription on his gravestone reads:

In
Memory of
YEMMERRAWANYEA
a Native of
NEW SOUTH WALES
who died the 18th of May 1794
In the 19th Year of his
AGE.

25 August: In his State of the Settlement report, Grose writes: ‘Natives victualled from the store, five’.

Source: HRNSW Vol. 11:2512.

September

At the Hawkesbury, two settlers are attacked by Aboriginal people and badly wounded. A few days later, settlers pursue Aboriginal people who have stolen clothing and provisions, killing ‘seven or eight of the plunderers on the spot’. David Collins believes that ‘many natives had been wantonly fired upon’.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:326–7.

October

The Hawkesbury settlers take revenge by seizing an Aboriginal boy they claim is a ‘spy’. They tie him up, drag him through a fire and throw him into the river, before he is shot and killed.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:329–30.

Administration of Lieutenant-Governor William Paterson, 12 December 1794 – 11 September 1795

1795

January

Aboriginal people at the Hawkesbury kill another settler. There is enmity between the Aboriginal clans. Two Aboriginal women are murdered at night near Sydney and a woman from Pemulwuy’s clan is dragged into the bush and raped.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:339.

25 January: Cameragal (North Shore) elders officiate at the *Erah-ba-diang* initiation ceremony in Cadigal territory at Woccanmagully (Farm Cove), in which a dozen boys are ‘made men’. According to David Collins, ‘Pemulwuy, a wood native, and many strangers, came in.’ No attempt is made to detain Pemulwuy.

Image: [*Yoo-long Erah-ba-diang*](#)

[‘Striking out the tooth’]

Engraving by James Neagle (1760–1822)

From David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, London, 1798
Held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. Linked with permission.

March

26 March: Yeranibe Goruey, a Burrumattagal (from Parramatta), clubs Bennelong’s ally Bing-y-wan-ne to death at the Brickfields when he finds him with his companion Mawberry (Flying Fish).

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:345.

28 March: ‘Woods natives’ are blamed when Thomas Webb is wounded and his hut is plundered at the Hawkesbury. A spear is thrown at soldiers in a boat on the river.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:346.

May

Collins refers to the hostilities at the Hawkesbury as ‘an open war’ between the settlers and the Darug, who carry off the ripe corn in blankets and nets. William Rowe and his son are killed at Richmond Hill. ‘Within a few weeks five people have been killed and several wounded,’ Colonel Paterson advises London.

Paterson, who had led expeditions against the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, despatches 60 New South Wales Corps troops from Parramatta to the Hawkesbury River. They are ordered ‘to destroy as many as they could meet of the wood tribe (Be-dia-gal); and in the hope of striking terror, to erect gibbets in different places, whereon the bodies of all they might kill were to be hung’.

In Sydney, ‘Pemulwuy, or some of his party’ wounds a convict near the Brickfield Village huts.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:346-9; William Paterson to Henry Dundas, 15 June 1795, HRNSW Vol. 11:307.

11 June: Collins reveals his private opinion about the inter-racial conflict to Surgeon Edward Laing: ‘The natives at the Hawkesbury are murdering the settlers – Abbott & MacKellar with Co [New South Wales Corps] soldiers are in turn, murdering the natives (but it cannot be avoided).’

Source: Collins to Edward Laing, 11 June 1795, King Papers (b) Mitchell Library (ML), State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, pp. 131–4, quoted in John Currey, *David Collins A Colonial Life*, Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2000:111; 126.

15 June: Captain William Paterson tells the Home Office in London that there are now 400 settlers, with their families, on land extending 30 miles along both banks of the Hawkesbury River.

Source: Paterson to Henry Dundas, 15 June 1795, HRA 1:499; HRNSW Vol.2:307.

August

John Wilson (Bun-bo-è) and William Knight, a runaway convict, join ‘the natives at the river’ [Hawkesbury]. They are prevented from dragging away Aboriginal girls ‘whose age could not have been beyond nine or ten years’. Knight and Wilson are locked in cells, but escape.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:355-6.

7 September: Bennelong returns to Sydney with Governor John Hunter aboard HMS *Reliance*. It is five years to the day since the payback spearing of Governor Phillip at Manly Cove.

Source: HRNSW Vol. 111; Collins [1798] 1975:358.

Image: [Portrait of Bennelong](#)

Pen and ink wash by W. W. [William Waterhouse].

Dixson Galleries, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

Image: [Ben-nil-long](#)

Engraving by James Neagle (1760–1822).

This image is from a copy of David Collins’s journal, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, 1798*, held in the Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales.

October

Navy lieutenant John Shortland claims the Hawkesbury River settlements have stabilised. ‘The Natives at the Hawkesbury on first settling were very much angered with the people,’ Shortland tells Lord Sydney. The detachment of soldiers sent

there ‘answer’d the purpose ... for few of them [Aboriginal people] were ever seen after, & are now very quiet: in short the natives are perfectly reconciled to the inhabitants’.

Source: Lieutenant John Shortland to Thomas Townshend, October 1795, Townshend Papers, MSQ 522: 67, Dixson Library (DL), State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

24 October: At first, Bennelong stays at Governor Hunter’s house in Sydney, but soon begins to take off his English clothes to meet his friends in the bush. In a letter to Arthur Phillip, Captain Henry Waterhouse writes that Bennelong ‘already goes away with the Nativs [sic] for two days together, has got his old Wife ... Bennelong desires me to send his best wishes to yourself & Mrs. Phillip.’

Source: Henry Waterhouse to Arthur Phillip, 24 October 1795, Series 37.28:178, Public Record Office (PRO), London.

November

Bennelong’s brick hut at Bennelong Point is demolished. ‘The little hut built formerly for Bennillong, being altogether forsaken by the natives, and tumbling down, the bricks of it were removed to the South Head,’ writes David Collins.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975: 362.

Despite his gifts of a rose-coloured petticoat, a jacket and a gypsy bonnet, Bennelong is estranged from his young wife Kurabarabulu (Two Firesticks), who in his absence has taken up with Caruey, a young Cadigal. She chooses to stay with Caruey, even when Bennelong severely beats him in a fight with bare fists in the English style.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:367–8.

Administration of Governor John Hunter, 11 September 1795 – 27 September 1800

December

A large group of Aboriginal people at the Hawkesbury attack settlers. ‘An armed party was directly sent out, who, coming up with them, killed four men and one woman, badly wounded a child, and took four men prisoners.’

In a ritual revenge battle in Sydney, Pemulwuy spears Gnung-a Gnung-a (‘Collins’) and the barbed head of the spear remains in his back. The English surgeons cannot extract it and believe he will die. Gnung-a Gnung-a recovers when his wife Warreeweer pulls the head of the spear out with her teeth. He is afterwards lame.

A report that Pemulwuy has been killed turns out to be false. It had been incorrectly reported that John Caesar, a giant escaped convict of unknown African heritage, had killed him.

Source: Collins [1798] 1975:371–2.

1796

February

The Darug severely wound a man travelling by boat on the Hawkesbury River.

John Wimbow, who is living with an Aboriginal woman at the Hawkesbury River, shoots and kills John Caesar for a reward of five gallons of rum.
Source: Collins [1798] 1975:381.

22 February: Hawkesbury settlers agree they will assemble for mutual protection when Aboriginal people are seen near their farms. 'It has been intimated to the governor, that two white men had been frequently seen with the natives ... and were supposed to direct and assist in those acts of hostility by which the settlers had lately suffered,' writes Collins.

The two renegades, Wilson and Knight have shown the Darug that English muskets, once discharged, are useless until reloaded. This, says Collins, 'effectually removed that terror of our fire-arms with which it had been our constant endeavour to inspire them'.

Source: David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales ...* Volume 2, London, 1802. Reprint, A. H. & A. W. Reed, Sydney, 1975, (hereafter referred to as 'Collins II [1798] 1975'):382-3; HRNSW Vol. 111:25-6.

3 June: The 'Scottish martyr', Reverend Thomas Fyshe Palmer, makes a strong statement about the constant hostilities:

'The Natives of the Hawkesbury ... lived on the wild yams on the banks. Cultivation has rooted out these, and poverty compelled them to steal Indian corn ... They [soldiers and settlers] came upon them [natives] unarmed, and unexpected, killed and wounded many more. The dead they hang on gibbets, in terrorem. The war may be universal on the part of the blacks, whose improvement and civilisation will be a long time deferred. The people killed were unfortunately the most friendly of the blacks, and one of them more than once saved the life of a white man.'

Source: Rev Thomas Fyshe Palmer to Doctor John Disney, Sydney, 3 June 1796, MSS 948:18, ML.

29 August: 'I have not my wife: another black man took her away,' Bennelong confesses in a letter he dictates and asks to be sent to Mr Phillips, Lord Sydney's steward. 'We have had murray [big] doings: he speared me in the back ... but I am better now: his name is now Carroway [Caruey]'.

Source: Bennelong to Mr Phillips, 29 August 1796, Ms 4005 NK4048, NLA Canberra.

November

In Sydney, Governor John Hunter sends troops to protect Bennelong, when he is threatened by an Aboriginal revenge party at the Brickfields. Bennelong denies he has killed a man near Botany Bay. He tells his antagonists that the soldiers have been sent 'to convince them that the governor would not suffer him, his old friend and fellow voyager ... to be ill treated by them on any false pretence; and that he was determined to drive away every native from Sydney who might attempt it'. The warriors disperse and Bennelong avoids punishment.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:5.

1797

March

Pemulwuy, at the head of 'a large body of savages', said to number 100, attacks the government farm at Toongabbie. At dawn the next day, troops and armed settlers pursue the attackers to the outskirts of Parramatta. When Pemulwuy, 'in a rage', throws a spear at a soldier, he is shot and captured. The first volley kills five of his men. Pemulwuy has seven buckshot wounds in his head.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:20.

A nineteenth-century historian, John Henniker Heaton, estimates that half Pemulwuy's total war party (50 men) was killed in what Al Grassby (Minister for Immigration from 1972 to 1974), would call the 'Battle of Parramatta'.

Sources: J Henniker Heaton, *Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time*, Sydney, 1873; Al Grassby and Marji Hill, *Six Australian Battlefields*, North Ryde: Angus & Robertson, 1988:99.

May

Pemulwuy escapes from hospital at Parramatta and is later seen at the Georges River near Botany Bay with the iron shackle still on his leg.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:24.

Aboriginal people attack the Kissing Point (Ryde) settlement in Wallumedegal territory on the Parramatta River, wounding John Wood (who later dies) and his wife Mary and burning their home.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1802] 1975:25; Copley 1986:145.

2 June: William Garland, a convict at Parramatta, is 'speared by natives'.

Source: Copley 1986:153.

December

Bennelong officiates at the last recorded initiation ceremony in Port Jackson 'in the middle harbour' (possibly George's Head). 'The various exhibitions which took place were not observed to differ from those in the preceding years,' remarked John Hunter.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:49-50.

1798

January

After severely wounding Colebee and leaving him apparently dead in a duel with clubs, Moorooboora is speared in the hip by an unnamed assailant and dies in an hour. Moorooboora's sister Daringa is Colebee's wife.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:58.

February

As the maize again ripens, a settler is killed and three others wounded at Toongabbie. Two more are killed a few days later. Hunter writes: 'It became absolutely necessary... to send out numerous well-armed parties, and attack them [natives] wherever they should be met with; for leniency had only been followed by repeated acts of cruelty.'

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:66.

March

'A strange idea was found to prevail among the natives respecting the savage Pemulwuy, which was very likely to prove fatal to him in the end,' writes John Hunter. Aboriginal people believe firearms cannot kill Pemulwuy, who is blamed for every attack on the maize grounds.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:70.

June

A mob of Aboriginal people attack settlers at the Northern Farms near Parramatta (near King's School) and burn their houses.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975:83.

August

Aboriginal people murder Warreweer Wogul-Mi (One Eye), a Burrumattagal (Parramatta Clan) woman, described as 'a good tempered girl. A man from the south of Botany Bay drives a spear into Nanbarry. When Colebee kills the assailant, Bennelong is speared in retribution. He is treated by surgeons aboard HMS *Reliance*.

September

A group from the Tagary clan, from the southern side of the Georges River near Mill Creek, come to Sydney to revenge the death of the young man killed by Colebee. In the battle, three men are killed and several wounded, including Bennelong,

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975: 89–90.

1799

May

Aboriginal people spear and kill an ex-marine settler at the Georges River. Hunter writes: 'The natives belonged to the tribe of which Pe-mul-wy was the leader.'

Source: Hunter in Collins [1798] 1975:149.

8 July: Bongaree (Bungaree), 'a native of the northside of Broken Bay, who had been noted for his good disposition, and open and manly conduct' joins Matthew Flinders aboard the sloop *Norfolk* for a six-week voyage of exploration to Moreton Bay (now Queensland). Flinders soon comes to rely on Bungaree's skill as a go-between with coastal Aboriginal people.

Source: Hunter in Collins II [1798] 1975: 161–2.

September–October

Settlers at Edward Powell's farm at Green Hills (Windsor) torture and murder two Aboriginal boys, Little Jemmy and Little George, when they bring in the musket of Thomas Hodgkinson, who has been murdered in the bush. They shoot one boy and hack one to death with cutlasses. A third boy, Charley, escapes by jumping into the river. Governor Hunter brings the murderers to trial. They are found guilty, but released.

Sources: Hunter to Duke of Portland, 2 January 1800, HRNSW Vol. 1V:2–3; HRA 1, Vol 11:401–3; *Minutes of Proceedings*, X905, pp 323, 329–362, SRNSW; [Rex v Powell and others, Court of Criminal Judicature, 15–16 October 1799](#), Decisions of the Superior Courts of New South Wales, 1788–1899, website of the Division of Law, Macquarie University, Sydney. Linked with permission.

1800

19 January: John Washington Price, recently arrived on the ship *Minerva*, observes that ‘Pummil-woy (who frequents Sidney & Paramatta)’ is known to say that ‘no gun or pistol can kill him ... He has now lodged in him, in shot, slugs [sic] and bullets about eight or ten ounces of lead, it is supposed he has killed over 30 of our people, but it is doubtful on which side the provocation was given.’

Source: J. W. Price, *Journal on Minerva*, Add MS 13880, British Library, London.

2 February: Yellowgowey [Yaragowhy], a Hawkesbury Aboriginal leader, says an Aboriginal man named Major White killed Hodgkinson and John Wimbow.

Source: Hunter to Portland, 2 February 1800, HRA Ser 1, Vol. 11:411-12.

August

John Wilson, who has lived in the bush with the ‘woods tribes’ as a ‘jumped-up’ or reincarnated Aborigine and who speaks their language, is speared and killed by relatives of the Aboriginal woman with whom he lives.

Source: David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales ...* Volume 2, London, 1802. Reprint, A. H. & A. W. Reed, Sydney, 1975:214-5. Hereafter referred to as ‘Hunter in Collins II’.

Administration of Governor Philip Gidley King, 27 September 1800 – 12 August 1806

30 September: Six Aboriginal people are receiving government rations at Sydney.

Source: Hunter to Portland, 30 September 1800, HRA 1, Vol.11:679–80.

1801

19 June: Governor King sends a party in HMS *Lady Nelson*, commanded by Lieutenant James Grant, to establish a convict settlement at the mouth of the Hunter River, 160 kilometres north of Sydney (now Newcastle). ‘With us likewise,’ Grant notes, ‘went one of the Natives, named Bangaree [Bungaree].’

Source: James Grant, *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery, Performed in His Majesty’s Vessel The Lady Nelson ...* London: T. Edgerton Military Library, Whitehall, 1803:149.

1 May: King issues an order that ‘a large body of natives resident about Parramatta, George’s River, and Prospect Hill ... are to be driven back from the settlers’ habitations by firing at them’. These mixed clans are accused of murdering stock-keeper Daniel Conroy and a settler, killing sheep and threatening anyone they meet. The Eora at Port Jackson and along the Parramatta Road are excluded from the order.

Source: Philip Gidley King, *Government and General Order*, 1 May 1801, HRNSW Vol.V:362.

25 August: Referring to Aboriginal attacks around Parramatta, George Caley tells his employer, Sir Joseph Banks, ‘I have every reason to believe that the whites have been the greatest aggressors upon the whole.’

Source: Caley to Banks, 25 August 1801, HRNSW Vol. 1V:513–4.

22 November: Governor King offers spirits and other rewards for the capture, dead

or alive, of ‘the native, Pemulwoy’, who with two escaped convicts, William Knight and Thomas Thrush, has promoted ‘outrageous acts that have been lately committed by the natives, whereby two men have been killed, several dangerously wounded, and numbers robbed’.

Source: HRNSW Vol. 1V, 1896:628-9; HRA 1, 11:466–7.

1802

10 May: Matthew Flinders enlists Bungaree, ‘the worthy and brave fellow who had sailed with me on the Norfolk’ and Nanbarry, ‘a good-natured lad’ (nephew of the Cadigal leader Colebee), to accompany him on the sloop HMS *Investigator*.

Source: Matthew Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, London: W. Nichol, 1814:235.

2 June: Pemulwoy is shot dead, either by bounty hunters or by Henry Hacking, mate of the brig *Lady Nelson*. Pemulwoy’s body is decapitated and Governor King sends his head, preserved in spirits, to Sir Joseph Banks in London on the whaling ship *Speedy*. Its present location is unknown.

Source: [Keith Vincent Smith, ‘Solved, Australia’s oldest murder mystery’](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 2003. Linked with permission.

July

20 July: Samuel Smith, a seaman on HMS *Investigator*, writes in his journal: ‘Bumblway [Pemulwoy], a Severe Enemy to White People ... was shot by the master of the Nelson Brig ... his head being brought Tranquillity was again restored.’

22 July: HMS *Investigator* and *Lady Nelson* steer north from Port Jackson to explore the Australian coastline. Henry Hacking sails as First Mate on *Lady Nelson*.

18 October: The *Lady Nelson* turns back. ‘Nanbarre, one of the two natives, having expressed a wish to go back to Port Jackson, was sent to the *Lady Nelson* in the morning,’ writes Matthew Flinders. The *Investigator* continues and as the others on board are British, Bungaree becomes the first Australian to circumnavigate the continent.

Source: Matthew Flinders, *Terra Australis*, 1814:97.

1803

5 March: George Howe uses a wooden printing press to produce Australia’s first newspaper, the official *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*. From this day, the *Sydney Gazette* is the major source of information about events in New South Wales.

Source: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 5 March 1803: Hereafter SG.

9 May: Governor King reports that Aboriginal people about the Hawkesbury are ‘much attached’ to the settlers and ‘very active and useful in securing some fugitives’.

Source: King to Earl Camden, 9 May 1801, HRNSW Vol. V.

1804

3 May: Soldiers from the 102nd Regiment open fire on a large group of Aboriginal people at Risdon Cove, north of Hobart in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). At least three Aboriginal people are killed, but estimates range from 30 to 40 or more.

Source: HRA Series 111, Vol. 1:238-43; 607.

20 December: In a meeting with Governor King, Hawkesbury Aboriginal people complain that they have been 'driven from the few places that were left on the banks of the river where they alone could procure food ... if they went across white man's ground the settlers fired on them and were very angry ...'

They ask King to retain some places on the lower parts of the river. King says their request is 'just and equitable' and promised no more settlements will be made lower down the river. He does not keep this promise.

Source: King to Hobart, 20 December 1804, HRNSW Vol. V:513.

24 May: Bungaree escorts six Aboriginal people who have been visiting Sydney back to the Hunter River in the ship *Resource*.

Source: Governor King to Charles Menzies, 24 May 1804, HRA Vol. V: 413-4.

3 June: Aboriginal people at Portland Head, near Sackville Reach, spear settler Matthew Everingham, his wife, servant and neighbour John Howe.

Source: SG 3 June 1804.

17 June: Some 300 Aboriginal people threw spears at armed Hawkesbury River settlers, who open fire and return to Richmond Hill with stolen goods they have retrieved. A military detachment at Windsor shoots two Aboriginal people.

Source: SG 17 June 1804.

1 July: Lieutenant Charles Menzies, commander at the Hunters River, praises Bungaree's skill as an intermediary. 'I have directed the Storekeeper to victual Boungee. He is the most intelligent of that race I have as yet Seen,' he tells King, 'and Should a misunderstanding unfortunately take place he will be Sure to reconcile them'.

Source: Lieutenant Menzies to Governor King, Kings Town (Newcastle), 1 July 1804, HRA Vol. V:415-6.

1 July: Two Aboriginal people, Nabbin and Major White, are reported killed at Richmond Hill. They are believed to have murdered Thomas Hodgkinson and John Wimbow late in 1799.

Magistrates Samuel Marsden and Thomas Arndell give food and clothing to two Richmond Hill chiefs, Yaragowhy and Yaramandy [Yarramundi], and ask them to help put an end to the 'mischiefs'.

Source: SG 1 July 1804.

19 August: Aboriginal attacks are widespread. At Georges River they assault a settler's wife and take away 'everything that was portable'.

Source: SG 19 August 1804.

September: A reported 200 warriors plunder the farm of James Wiltshire at Lane Cove and tie up the servants before they are 'dispersed' by gunfire.

Source: SG 2 September 1805.

September-October

Botanist George Caley takes Daniel Moowattin with him on a collecting expedition to Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), where they climb Mount Wellington near Hobart.

Sources: HMS *Buffalo*, *Ship's Muster Book* 1805, ADM 36, Reel 7018 36/17313: 91, PRO London; *Ship News*, SG 6 October 1805 1c.

5 October: Three runaway convicts kill Bungaree's father 'in the most brutal manner' while he is trying to persuade them to return to Newcastle. The convicts are not brought to trial.

Source: Menzies to King, 5 October 1804, HRA Vol.V:420; 423.

December

Back in Sydney, Bungaree takes part in a battle at Farm Cove in which white spectators are 'astonished at the dexterity and incredible force with which a bent, edged waddy resembling slightly a Turkish scyemetar [scimitar] was thrown by Bungary ... The weapon ... twirled round in the air with astonishing velocity.' This is the first report of a returning boomerang in the coastal Sydney area.

Source: SG 23 December 1804.

1805

January

The Burramattagal (Parramatta Clan) 'go bush' when several men are wounded in a battle against Sydney clans.

Source: SG 20 January 1805.

17 February: Thomas Brown, a free settler, is sent to the Parramatta gaol for striking an Aborigine.

Source: SG 17 February 1805.

14 March: Bennelong and Nanbarry each spear the Cow Pastures (Camden) leader Cogy in a revenge battle on the road between Prospect and Parramatta. For three weeks, Cogy walks about with a spear shaft sticking out of his body.

Source: SG 17 March 1805; 31 March 1805.

7 April: The spear is extracted. Despite his wound, Cogy is now well enough to take part in a punishment trial at the Hawkesbury River.

Source: SG 7 April 1805.

21 April: Aboriginal people 'from the interior of the mountains' use tomahawks to kill two stockmen at John Macarthur's farm at Camden. Armed settlers chase a group estimated at more than 300 Aboriginal people.

Source: SG 28 April 1805.

21 April: John Llewellyn, a former soldier, is sharing his food with Branch Jack at the Hawkesbury, when the Aborigine seizes his musket and calls in twenty warriors. Llewellyn dies of spear wounds.

Source: SG 21 April 1805.

29 April: Yaragowhy, Charley and 'four or five' other Aboriginal people are killed. A later report says 'seven or eight' Aboriginal people have fallen. On the same day, a settler is wounded at Prospect.

Source: SG 5 May 1805; 12 May 1805.

5 May: Aboriginal clans ‘composed of families well known about Prospect and Parramatta, with some strangers from the Cowpastures’ are permitted to ‘sit down’ (camp) between Prospect and the Georges River. Orders are given that they should not be molested.

Source: Government and General Order, 5 May 1805, HRNSW, Vol. V:616.

5 May: Bennelong, says Congregational minister, Reverend W. Pascoe Crook, ‘visits the settlements [Sydney and Parramatta] now and then, is very polite, begs a loaf and departs’.

Source: W. P. Crook to J. Hardcastle, Parramatta, 5 May, 1805, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 49:141, ML.

July

6 July: Musquito is surrendered to the authorities. Bulldog, a lad about sixteen years old, is also arrested. As magistrate, Samuel Marsden had released seven Aboriginal people who promised to ‘use their utmost endeavours to apprehend the native Musquito’. The *Sydney Gazette* notes: ‘We are happy to add, that they fulfilled their promise, and the above Culprit, was last night lodged in Parramatta Gaol.’

Source: SG 7 July 1805.

7 July: A 13-year-old Aboriginal girl is caught trying to set fire to the Hawkesbury River farm of Thomas Chaseland. It is discovered that the girl also burned down the house of Henry Lamb, whose family had brought her up.

Source: SG 7 July 1805.

8 July: Judge Advocate Richard Atkins discloses the death by shooting of ‘Tallon’, said to have murdered Macarthur’s stockmen. He says a party led by Obediah Ikins has killed ‘many of them’. Atkins gives his opinion that Aboriginal people cannot be brought before a criminal court.

Source: Richard Atkins to Governor King, 8 July 1805, HRNSW, Vol.V:654.

20 July: Tedbury is released from gaol at the entreaty of the ‘friendly natives’ who helped to capture Musquito.

Source: SG 4 August 1805.

August

5 August: Musquito and Bulldog threaten to set Parramatta Gaol on fire and ‘destroy every white man within it’. Their attempt to escape is thwarted when a white prisoner informs a gaoler.

Source: SG 11 August 1805.

10 August: Governor King informs John Piper, commandant at Norfolk Island: ‘The Two Natives, Bull Dog and Musquito having been given up by the other Natives as principals in the late outrages are sent to Norfolk Isld [Island] where they are to be kept, and if they can be brought to Labour will earn their Food—but as they must not be let to starve for want of Substance—they are to be victualled from the Stores.’

Source: King to Piper, Sydney, New South Wales, 10 August 1805, Letter Book, 1797-1806, A2015: 495 ML; SG 11 August 1805.

11 August: At the Hawkesbury, the Reverend Samuel Marsden baptises a three-year-old Aboriginal child, saved by Thomas Rickerby while clinging to the breast of his dying mother, who had been ‘mangled’ with a tomahawk (see 20 July 1806).
Source: SG 11 August 1805.

22 August: Musquito and Bulldog are sent as prisoners to Norfolk Island aboard the storeship HMS *Buffalo*.
Source: HMS *Buffalo*, *Ship’s Muster Book* 1805, ADM 36, Reel 7018 36/17313:91, PRO London

15 September: ‘Woglomigh’ (One-Eye) is shot dead and Branch Jack is shot and wounded while making his escape after an attack on a boat at the Hawkesbury River.
Source: SG 15 September 1805.

22 December: Caruey (White Cockatoo), a Cadigal, dies from a spear wound in the thigh and is buried, wrapped in paperbark, at the Brickfields. Thomas Watling’s pencil sketch of Gur-roo-ee (Caruey or Carraway) shows the gap where his incisor tooth was knocked out in his initiation in 1795.
Source: SG 22 December 1805.

Image: [Gur-roo-ee](#), [Caruey or Carraway], c. 1795
Drawing by Thomas Watling.
Held at the First Fleet Collection, Natural History Museum, London. Linked with permission.

1806

January

In late January, Nanbarry throws a spear that kills Colinjong, a Botany Bay man, and then runs off with his uncle Colebee. This report is the last known reference to Colebee, who might have died from his wounds. Nanbarry is the sole remaining Cadigal.

23 January: George Caley and Daniel Moowattin return to Sydney from Van Diemen’s Land.
Source: SG 2 February 1806.

March

Sealers at Twofold Bay, south of Sydney, open fire on attacking Aboriginal people ‘by which nine of their assailants were lain prostrate’. Their bodies, hung in trees, were taken away during the night.
Source: SG 6 April 1806.

April

A ‘youth by the name of Potter’ and another ‘Sydney native’ (probably his ally Pigeon) assist starving survivors from the 28-ton colonial vessel *George*, shipwrecked at Twofold Bay, who left their boat near Jervis Bay to walk to Sydney.
Source: SG 18 May 1806.

July 20: John Pilot Rickerby, a five-year-old Aboriginal boy adopted by Constable Thomas Rickerby, is buried at the Green Hills (Windsor). Fifty European children, clothed in white, follow the funeral procession.
Source: SG 27 July 1806.

Administration of Governor William Bligh, 13 August 1806 – 26 January 1808

23 October: Governor William Bligh meets ‘a few obliging natives’ who build him a bark canoe to cross the swollen Nepean River after his visit to landowner Walter Davidson at Menangle, near Camden.

Source: SG 26 October 1806.

12 November: At Cabramatta Creek, friendly Aboriginal people help John Macarthur’s stockmen to capture two Irish bushrangers, Patrick Cox and either James or Stephen Halfpenny (both brothers were later hanged).

Source: SG 16 November 1806.

1807

June–July

Several Aboriginal people escape with their lives when a boat overturns on 9 June, near the heads at Botany Bay, drowning George Legg. A hand is found in a shark close by on Sunday 7 June. Aboriginal people soon after spot his body under the water and Legg’s remains are recovered on 24 July.

Sources: SG 14, 21 June; 19, 26 July 1807.

The first Russian ship in Australian waters, the trading sloop *Neva*, 370 tons, arrives in Sydney on 16 June and sails on 1 July. While anchored in Neutral Bay, Lieutenant Leonid Hagemester collects Aboriginal weapons, which are sent to St. Petersburg.

Sources: SG 21, 28 June; 5 July 1807.

30 August: Governor Bligh suspends publication of the *Sydney Gazette* because of a shortage of paper. The next issue is 15 May 1808.

Administration of Major George Johnston 26 January 1808 – 28 July 1808

1808

January

26 January: On the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the colony of New South Wales, Governor William Bligh is unlawfully deposed by officers of the New South Wales Corps and placed under arrest at Government House, now the site of the Museum of Sydney.

27 January: Tedbury or Tjedboro, son of the famous Pemulwuy, arrives in Sydney, ‘armed with a bundle of spears’. He has been friendly with John Macarthur, who lives at Parramatta. Finding Macarthur safe at his town cottage, Tedbury exclaims, ‘Master they told me you were in gaol’.

‘Well Tjedboro, what has brought you here with your spears?’ asks Macarthur, who was gaoled for a few hours the previous day. He replies, with eyes flashing, ‘To spear the Governor.’

Source: William Macarthur, *A Few Memoranda Respecting the Aboriginal Natives* (no date – c.1834), MS A4360:63, ML.

15 May: The *Sydney Gazette* resumes publication, with General Orders issued by John Macarthur, Secretary to the Colony.

Source: SG 15 May 1808.

Administration of Joseph Foveaux, 29 July 1808 – 8 January 1809

29 July: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Foveaux assumes control of the colony of New South Wales from Major George Johnston.

4 September: Artist John Lewin paints an Aboriginal man, armed with a spear, gazing across Sydney Cove towards the governor’s house. Two others are fishing in a bark canoe.

Image: [Sydney Cove, 1808](#)

Watercolour by John William Lewin (1770–1819).

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Linked with permission.

24 October: Aboriginal people destroy William Singleton’s hop field at Mulgrave Place (between Windsor and Pitt Town) and cripple his servant with a tomahawk. Singleton’s sons pursue and fire on the attackers, killing one man.

Source: SG 30 October 1808.

Administration of William Paterson, 9 January 1809 – 31 December 1809

1809

15 January: Bennelong’s brother-in-law, Gnung-a Gnung-a Murremurgan, is found dead behind the Dry Store (present Sirius Park, off Bridge Street). His children and his brother Old Phillip face a spear ordeal.

Source: SG 15 January 1809.

17 March: Aboriginal people save a boy from the surf near Pittwater after the sloop *Hazard* is wrecked and the master drowns at Box Head, Broken Bay.

Source: SG 26 March 1809.

3 September: Bundle and Tedbury menace a man named Tunks near Parramatta. Tedbury has been involved in several similar attacks.

Source: SG 3 September 1809.

10 September: A woman is attacked and stripped of her clothing by Aboriginal people at John Blaxland’s Brush Farm (present Dundas-Eastwood).

Source: SG 10 September 1809.

14 September: A group of ‘native banditti, 15 in number’ attack the house of Joseph Marcus on the Parramatta Road. They wound his wife with a spear and steal muskets and clothing.

Source: SG 24 September 1809.

26 September: Tedbury (Tjedboro) is one of ‘a number of natives’ who attack the farm of ex-convict William Bond. Bond had built his farm in the heartland of the Bidjigal, between two arms of Salt Pan Creek, near the Georges River (present Punchbowl). The farm is temporarily abandoned.

Source: SG 1 October 1809.

This incident is commemorated by a plaque at the corner of Cullens Road and Mitcham Streets, Punchbowl, titled ‘Site of Aboriginal Resistance to Settlers 1809’. You can see a picture of it by going to the City of [Canterbury website](#)

October

Aboriginal people continue to attack and rob travellers on the Parramatta Road. They drive off a herd of sheep from the property of Edward Powell at Canterbury. Pursuers surprise them roasting two sheep at their camp near the Cooks River, but they escape.

Source: SG 15 October 1809.

29 December: Lieutenant Colonel Lachlan Macquarie (1761–1824), a Scottish career soldier, arrives in Port Jackson on HMS *Dromedary* with his 73rd (Highland) Regiment. An Aboriginal man, the first he has seen, greets Macquarie on the pilot boat that meets the ship inside Sydney Heads.

From the ship that night, Ensign Alexander Huey sees a group of Aboriginal people gathered around a fire, singing and beating a rhythm on their shields.

31 December: On Sunday, the last day of 1809, Aboriginal people ‘from the Hawkesbury and many miles around’ fight ‘a regular battle in honour of the new governor’.