

A booklet has been prepared by Blacktown Council celebrating the centenary of the opening of the first train service to the town.

A section tracing the origin of Blacktown's name should interest readers. Here it is.

"The name Blacktown holds a deep historical significance, although many (finding that the town derived its name from the unsuccessful first, and only, attempt at colonising Aboriginal children) have sought to change it to one synonymous with current development.

"The experiment, carried out by Lachlan Macquarie, one of the greatest governors in the new colony, promised a 'new deal' for Aborigines, planning to induce them to settle on the land, training them in domestic and agricultural pursuits.

"A school for Aboriginal children with the object of 'conveying Education and Habits in Industry' was first set up in Parramatta in December, 1814, under the guidance of an ex South Sea Island missionary named William Shelley, who was appointed to the charge of the twelve males and twelve females, who were the first pupils.

"Plans included the appropriation and clearing of an area, and the feeding of the natives at the expense of the Government while they remained at the settlement.

"On March 15, 1821, Michael Yurringgy, native constable of Richmond, and his son Robert, married two girls of the school—Polly and Betty Fulton—and were granted suitable lands a short distance from the present site of Blacktown.

"The school was also moved from Parramatta and established in a house built on the road to Richmond, one mile and a half from the present town of Blacktown.

"However, the freedom of the bush apparently held a greater lure, and the experiments failed. Those who had

BLACKTOWN'S NAME DERIVED FROM EARLY EXPERIMENT WITH ABORIGINES

been placed on the land deserted their farms, and the native institute was closed down in 1825.

"Rev. Wm. Walker who first visited the locality in 1821, refers to 'the blacktown, Boongarumbee'—Bungarribee, as it was written later, the native name for the

locality, meaning the 'burial place of kings'.

"By 1824 the name was given the dignity of capitals and written as 'Black Town'.

"References to the 'deserted hamlet' of Blacktown, following the failure of the experiment, are made by a poet of the period, 1826, and the New South Wales Road Calendar in 1834.

"Thompson introduced his 'Wild Notes From the Lyre of a Native Minstrel' with:

"Written in the verandah of the Chapel at the deserted hamlet of Blacktown, an establishment formed by the Government some years since, for the purpose of civilising the Aboriginal natives of Australia, and teaching them the art of agriculture, etc., on the New Richmond Road, about 28 miles distance from the Metropolis."

"The New South Wales Calendar, 1834, states: 'The Road Itinerary. New Richmond Road, 26½ miles. On the left Black Town; so named because Government endeavoured some years ago to establish a village and induce the natives to follow a more settled life. Black Town is now deserted and no vestige of the inhabitants of the sable settlers remains (1½ miles off the road).'"

"The main portion of Blacktown itself today stands on two land grants, one of 1,200 acres to Frederick Garling in 1819, and another of 2,000 acres to Robert Lethbridge in 1823. Two other settlers in the district were Robert Crawford, who was granted 1,000 acres named 'Hillend'—now subdivided and developed as part of the pleasant village of Doonside—and John Campbell, who was granted 2,000 acres in 1823, which he named 'Bungarribee.'"

NATIONAL ABORIGINES DAY

Full details, with pictures, of the observance of National Aborigines Day, July 10, will be published in the next issue of "Dawn"

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