

# **The expunction of the Reverend Richard Taylor from Australian Missionary Linguistics**

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**Society for the History of Linguistics in the Pacific  
Conference**

University of Adelaide

13 December 2018



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THE DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# Abstract

A few years ago I came across a manuscript by the Reverend Richard Taylor in the Alexander Turnbull Library within the National Library of New Zealand. Within this MS are Notes on New Holland which run to about 50 pages. These notes include material from the Wiradjuri language of central NSW as well as cultural material. This provides some background on Taylor:

In 1835 Richard Taylor took his MA. After he was appointed a missionary in New Zealand for the Church Missionary Society, the family sailed on the *Prince Regent*, disembarking at Sydney on 13 June 1836, in company with a fellow missionary, the Reverend William Yate. Because of a shortage of clergy and because Richard Taylor was required to give evidence concerning Yate's alleged homosexual behaviour on board ship, the family remained in New South Wales for three years.

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t22/taylor-richard>

It seems that Taylor collected some of this material while at Wellington within Wiradjuri territory. This would have been some time within 1836-1839. The Church Missionary Society had a significant presence at Wellington from 1832 to 1842 including the Reverend James Günther and the Reverend William Watson (both of whom made efforts in documenting the Wiradjuri language) as outlined by Carey (2009). Neither Carey nor other sources on Wiradjuri language documentation make mention of Taylor. At the time the entire population of Australia at around 125,000 was a little over the current population of Ballarat. We can assume that the population of Wellington in the 1830s must have been tiny so how is it that Taylor's linguistic efforts seem to have been expunged from the history of Australian Missionary Linguistics?

## Reference

Carey, Hilary 2009 Death, God and linguistics: conversations with missionaries on the Australian frontier, 1824-1845. *Australian Historical Studies* 40 (2): 161-177.

## Richard Taylor in NSW

Three weeks after thanking God for relief from the cares of office, Marsden was visited by the Rev. Richard Taylor, of the Church/Missionary Society, who became an intimate associate of the family during his two-year sojourn while awaiting orders to proceed to New Zealand. Although annoyed by the rats in his bedroom at the parsonage, he was ‘very much pleased’ by the company of the principal chaplain. On 10 July 1836 he took the communion service at St John’s and heard Marsden preach extempore ‘a very good sermon’.

A. T. Yarwood 1977 *Marsden: The Great Survivor*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 271-272.

## Shipboard hanky-panky

On 30 June Taylor confided to Marsden that all was not well with his colleague, the Rev. William Yate, who had travelled with him to Sydney on the *Prince Regent* after receiving the applause of Evangelicals in London and Cambridge as a brilliant writer and lecturer on the New Zealand mission. Yate had drawn the opprobrium of Taylor and other passengers by his unguarded intimacy with the third mate, Edwin Denison, by sleeping in the same bed in Denison's locked cabin and ashore in his apartment in Park Street. Taylor had listened to the complaints of two scandalized ladies and was told by a second young man, Dick Deck, of a 'spree' when all three had been in bed together, 'but there had been so much tickling that [Dick] was obliged to get out of bed and sleep on a sofa in the next room in order to obtain any rest'.

A. T. Yarwood 1977 *Marsden: The Great Survivor*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 272.



## Shipboard hanky-panky

Marsden was hideously embarrassed by Taylor's allegations and refrained from taking definite action until the middle of August, when the rumours came to the bishop's attention. Dissatisfied with Yate's account of himself before two accusers, [Bishop] Broughton interdicted him from the exercise of his ministry as a relieving preacher at St James's Church and passed on to Marsden as chairman of the Church Missionary Society committee the problem of dealing with the society's backsliding servant. He added that if Yate continued to reside in his diocese, it would be his duty to proceed against him in a consistorial court for a breach of the seventy-fifth canon and for conduct tending to bring scandal on the ministerial office.

A. T. Yarwood 1977 *Marsden: The Great Survivor*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 272-273.

# Richard Taylor 1805-1873

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In September 1839, after a preliminary visit in March, when he had accompanied the Reverend William Williams on a missionary tour of the East Coast, Taylor and his family arrived at the Bay of Islands. He took over the mission school at Waimate North from the Reverend Octavius Hadfield. It was not a task he enjoyed.

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t22/taylor-richard>

# Richard Taylor 1805-1873

<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22607779>

A portrait of Reverend Richard Taylor, ca 1860-1873. Taken by unidentified photographer.



# Taylor in 1839

Rev. Richard Taylor

Extract from *Diary of a Residence in New South Wales(1)*

13th - 20th January 1839

13th I had a very large congregation for Campbelltown. Afterwards I rode to Appin but being overtaken by a thunder shower I took refuge at a little villa by the wayside.

I reached Appin to a late dinner at Mr Sparling's; afterwards I walked with them to call on Mrs Carne where I saw an interesting lady who was both deaf and dumb, but still being able to read could pronounce several words which appeared very remarkable.

20th. I went to Campbelltown in time to open a secondary school. Afterwards I preached and dined at Mr Redall 's whence I reached home late; the same evening I had a Roman Catholic who heard me both in the morning and evening. I trust he was led to hear from the desire of knowing the truth. At Woolongong I heard an instance of **the underhand way the papists [Catholics] are working**. [my emphasis] The Revd. Mr Wilkinson, Mr Mears' pre-decessor, was the only clergyman who assented to the Irish school system(12). His people were chiefly of the same mind and when the protestant school master left, leaving the place for some time without one, the liberal inhabitants sent their children to the popish school where the master said he would teach them the same as they were accustomed. But one evening a Gentn. named Osborne expressed a wish to hear his child say his prayers when to his surprise he heard him commencing "Hail Mary Mother of God". The father was very angry and bid him say his own prayers. The child said he had forgotten them. It is unnecessary to say the eyes of these foolish protestants were then open to see their folly.

# Population of Sydney

European settlement in Sydney began in 1788, and in 1800 Sydney had around 3,000 non-indigenous inhabitants. It took time for the city's population to grow—in 1851 its population was only 39,000, compared with 77,000 in [Melbourne](#).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Sydney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Sydney)

1840                      35,000

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney>

# Population of New South Wales

<b>AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS</b>			
cat. no. 3105.0.65.001 Australian Historical Population Statistics			
TABLE 20. Population, age and sex, NSW, 1833 - 1846			
		1833	1836
<b>Males</b>			
	Above 12 years of age	17542	23121
	Under 12 years of age	5256	7464
	Convict	21845	25251
	Total	44643	55836
<b>Females</b>			
	Above 12 years of age	8522	11973
	Under 12 years of age	4931	7007
	Convict	2698	2577
	Total	16151	21557
<b>Persons</b>			
	Above 12 years of age	26064	35094
	Under 12 years of age	10187	14471
	Convict	24543	27828
	Total	60794	77393
<b>Sources:</b>	NSW censuses of 1833 and 1836		

# Population of Australia

1828	36,600
1830	70,000
1834	127,200
1840	170,400
1851	648,500

<http://www.populstat.info/Oceania/australc.htm>

# Taylor's world 1836-1839

very small population

however population rapidly expanding –  
Australian population rising from c. 127,000 in  
1834 to c. 170,000 in 1840

we might assume that there was a sectarian  
divide between Catholics and Protestants

and another divide between those educated  
professionals and the wider population – more  
than  $\frac{1}{2}$  population are convicts or under 12



## **Missionary activity in the Wellington Valley**

Beginning in 1832, the Church Missionary Society posted three missionaries and their wives, William and Anne Watson, Johann Christian Sebastian and Mary Handt, James and Lydia Günther and the unmarried agriculturalist William Porter to the mission station at Wellington Valley, NSW. All were provided with the now traditional instruction to make what efforts they could to learn the language but only one, Watson, appears to have functioned effectively in the new language. (Carey 2009:169)

# **Missionary activity in the Wellington Valley**

Settled in Wellington at last, Watson worked hard to improve his understanding of the language on the Moravian model - that is 'not to speak on the subject of religion before they could address the natives in the vernacular tongue' - but this seemed impossible. Three years later, in 1835, he was/reporting a breakthrough at last: 'Now our way seems opening as we advance in the knowledge of the language we shall have reason to hope for brighter scenes'. By this stage Watson claimed that he had begun preaching in Wiradhurri, sometimes travelling long distances to find native people assembled in a camp for this purpose. With the appearance of Threlkeld's Australian Grammar in 1834, Watson was pleased to have a model which might serve to create a grammar of Wiradhurri. On 28 January 1835 he wrote in his journal that he had finished copying out nearly ten thousand English words from Johnson's Pocket Dictionary and was proceeding to record Aboriginal equivalents as they came to hand. In March 1835 he reported that he had been revising his translation of parts of the Church Service and, although he recognised its imperfections, was delighted that 'some who had attended Divine Service more than the rest immediately understood it'.

(Carey 2009:170-171)

# Wellington Valley Mission 1832-1842/3

Günther      Arrived c. August 1837

“Completes” a grammar in early 1840

lots of squabbles among Günther, Handt and  
Watson

## Notes on New Holland

Language. The tribes of New Holland aborigines are not only very numerous, but also totally different in language and this appears the more remarkable when we find how few persons compose a tribe, and what a small district pertains to each. the only way I can account for this difference of language is, by supposing that it arises from the continued state of hostility in which they support live towards each other, having no intercourse amongst themselves they know no more of each other than if they were placed at the furthest extremity of the island from one another abodes, or else we must conclude that such is their degraded and debased state that they only make use of terms to make known their pressing wants which as it were every family invents for itself, or that they are descendants from different stocks which from the general resemblance existing amongst them does not appear probable, unless this resemblance can be accounted for by the custom of their stealing wives from their enemies, which whilst it renders them in person similar becomes also a means of continuing the same customs &c. whilst it does not affect the language. —

It is the blacks of the lower

# Richard Taylor extract

# Notes on New Holland

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# Wiradjuri language

## “the sound of the language is harsh and guttural”

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150  
the sound of the language is harsh and guttural. the following are a few words of their language

gungch - a House	The moon	Tarra - the legs, shin
gileuk -	The sun	Tara - thigh
gkan -		Tammora hands or fingers
Guarranini. The native name for Liverpool.		Tannah foot
Dorobin - George River		Tana foot
Morgan - water affected by the tide		Gouyou flap
Bardo - fresh water		Balgah a big hill
Kuonsa - throat		Narrang Balgah a little hill
mebora - the eye		Bwirago a valley a deep place
puolo - forehead		Bonnah to rain
ngoin - the nose		nungamay go to sleep
Karaga - the mouth		I go nungay I go to sleep
krib - a finger		guorah wind
kura - ear		Morninghal thunder
Yarrung - the beard		manpa. manpa lightning
erak - the teeth		kundoo a kill
dolung - tongue		Tabora ground
maraga - belly		Karagum salt water the sea
murung - arms		Penderwin a big river
warlo chin		Narrangroon little
Colay - a man a boy		mara - bir 1. warpal
Korrek - knee		2. bulla
woggo - sorrow - as a girl		3. borra
gin - a woman a wife		4. bullaham
monn - milk		Gerang - leaves 5. karul.
guern - fire		
Bura, or Bura sky		
Barlut to via he is dead now		Kadarbin ants
Albyringa to kill		e an barley he will be
will go, where are you		dead
goring		giving kn and my big man
mind my gara he will be alive yet.		gob



# Taylor notebook metadata

REV. RICHARD TAYLOR

PAPERS

Volume 8

NOTEBOOK 1835

Copied March 1967 from originals lent by  
Mr Cranleigh Barton  
Christchurch

# Wiradjuri language

## p. 195

a few words of the language,  
spoken at Wellington Valley called in the native tongue  
Wiradjuri

Ballang head	Bardang bitter
Baggur. hind part of the arm.	Bandarra to tie
Babbir. Father	Bandarra. the band round the loins, girdle
Babin. a nettle	Bangrong autumn
Bamer. long tale	his face of the winter
Baddang a cloak	Ba col. upolung (washed)
Barrang. white	Bam.
Baigun. Earing ornament in the ear	Barru. Rabbit rat
Baigarra. to emit sparks	Balli a new born baby
Baddana to bite	Bana. step
Ballun dead, Ballupingama <sup>in his death</sup>	Babi mud ang
Ballunna to die <sup>Ballunna ballunna</sup>	Babi. father mud ang
Ballunmerra to kill <sup>the dead one, the ancient</sup>	deficient woodwork
Balunmildam a murderer	Baiamai, a native god
Balubatal Poison	Baraiyaling a to rise again applied to the resurrection
Baitadai cold	Barrai means quick
Batteidaria to be cold	Ballaya. no fire put gone out
Banganalbara to burn	Barrimarra to make fire in the native way, i.e. with 2 pieces of shells
Bulladrong a cap	Biring bread
Balla head wronga to enter	Borka back
Ba. fresh cold winter	Billa River
Barrain. a little apron	Borra tree
Bairgair Leeches	Birbarra to take
Bingai. shells, spoon	Birbal dain a baker
Badyan little finger	Bayer the thief
Barramma to take hold of	Burri a child
Barrarnai. Thumb	Bugurin grape
Bambuya. To own	Prabbai little
Bandar Kangaroo	
Bombal. The place where the natives meet first in morning place of assembly	



# Wiradjuri language

## p. 196

196  
 Bulla Two  
 Bullangun bai Three three  
 - list of their numerals  
 Biead many 4 or 50  
 Maltarni hair 2 wigs  
 Buddang dark black  
 Burremil Fly  
 Bulbin Whirlwind  
 Bumbarra to smoke  
 Burbin belly  
 Bumbang knee  
 Buringang wangan a knee  
 To stand on the knee  
 Budy a butterfly  
 a moth.  
 Talain Tongue  
 Taffal cheeks  
 Tarning thigh  
 Tagin ground soil land  
 Taginbil a dirty fellow  
 Tabal a bone  
 Tavar Rib  
 Taya dung dirt  
 Tarra To eat  
 Taimmal wrist  
 Tanyang heel  
 Tandalla Hail stone  
 Tarnin a small species of  
 snake  
 Dalin a kind of yema  
 Tarana to net  
 Tabburang pipe clay  
 Tanni gum  
 Tarrabin a little bird  
 Talara snow

Dawarang a native dog  
 Merri the same  
 Dawin a hat  
 Burpin an iron  
 Tandain a frog  
 Tanyang food bread  
 Teri grey hair  
 Tiriwang old man  
 Teran a mountain  
 Dai a flesh  
 Tabburi a bird  
 Donda a swan  
 Tervon a snake  
 Tervon a fly  
 Tullubang the soul  
 Tarkang bag for a  
 female also the pouch  
 of marsupial animals  
 Dre sun, zua woman  
 fewang moon  
 Turalang stars  
 narrabong a pouch or bag

# Some questions

Did Taylor get to the Wellington Valley?

Did Taylor “borrow” material from Günther or someone else?

How did Taylor’s connection with early Australian missionary linguistics apparently become expunged from the record?

## Some questions      **bonus slide?!**

Did Taylor get to the Wellington Valley?

Did Taylor “borrow” material from Günther or someone else?

To what extent was Taylor shanghaied by Marsden?!

How did Taylor’s connection with early Australian missionary linguistics apparently become expunged from the record?