The Wiradjuri nation is defined by three rivers the Lachlan (galari), Macquarie (wambool) and Murrumbidgee (murrumbidjeri), making it the largest Indigenous nation in New South Wales. Prior to settlement the Wiradjuri people lived a hunter gather lifestyle moving from prosperous hunting grounds to river side camps that made best use of natural resources. Wiradjuri people would travel in small groups 20-40 people and come together in larger groups to feast, for ceremonies and to resolve disputes. The Wiradjuri language is no longer fluently spoken, but many words and phrases are known. Aboriginal culture, spirituality and practices are linked to the land, which provided tools, shelter, food and connections to ancestors.

Spiritual beliefs were organised around sacred sites connected to heroes known as jin. There are at least 18 Wiradjuri jin known, however it is likely that there were many more. Each is connected to an animal or plant and each person inherits their jin from their mother and is then responsible for caring for the scared sites associated with the jin. People learnt the stories, songs and dances of their jin. Social practises including marriage were regulated by jin and people could not eat or damage their jin. Jin no longer regulates the marriage system, but the basic principle of preventing close marriage still applies. Also, many people still know their totems (jin animals) and avoid eating or damaging them.

Wiradjuri people worshiped many other mythical heroes in addition to their jin, these included Biami and his emu wife Goobperangalnaba and a giant serpent Kurrea who travelled and created the landscape.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s poem ‘Biami’ outlines his role as a creator god (http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/noonuccal-oodgeroo/biami-0719060). Biami can also be spelt Baiame, he is a sky god who created the rivers, mountains, and forests, and gave people laws of life, traditions, songs, and culture.

While there are no specific dates for Aboriginal sites within the Orange region, the oldest approximant site date can be taken from two rock shelters 60km south-east of Wellington, this site is dated to 7150BC. Occupation of the Australian continent began over 40,000 years ago, it is likely that Aboriginal people have been living in the Orange district for most of that time.
CARVED TREES
Notable features of the Wiradjuri landscape are carved trees, used to mark burial grounds. Yuranigh’s grave site, a Wiradjuri man and guide to Sir Thomas Mitchell, included a circle of carved trees according to traditional tribal customs. Carved trees were once common in central NSW and feature traditional geometric designs.

Approximately 7,500 modified or carved tree sites have been recorded in NSW, unfortunately fewer than 100 remain standing in their original locations. At Yuranigh’s grave four carved trees are still preserved. One is preserved under a shelter, one is clearly visible, one is partly obscured and the third is completely grown over.

View the State Library NSW online exhibition on Carved trees: Aboriginal cultures of western NSW for images and locations of other carved trees in NSW [http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/events/exhibitions/2011/carved_trees/].

“Wiradjuri people of central NSW carved complex designs into trees to mark the burial site of a celebrated man whose passing had a devastating effect on the community. It has been suggested that the carvings were associated with the cultural heroes admired by the man in life and were thought to provide a pathway for his spirit to return to the skyworld”

Carved Trees: Aboriginal Cultures of Western NSW, exhibition resource, State Library NSW

“Usually only one trees was carved at each burial site but as many as five have been recorded. The design always faces the grave, serving as a warning to passers-by of the spiritual significance of the area. The trees were usually located near riverbanks and flats where the excavation of soil was easier. Shallow graves were dug and a high mound of earth and foliage was built up over the body creating a bare, rounded strip of soil around the grave”

Carved Trees: Aboriginal Cultures of Western NSW, exhibition resource, State Library NSW

MT CANOBOLAS
Male initiation ceremonies (burbung) were once held on Mt Canobolas and stone tools sites are found on the mountain. Canobolas comes from the Wiradjuri words meaning two shoulders, coona, shoulder; booloo, two – Ghannabulla referring to the two main peaks. Mt Canobolas also served as a rich source of food and medicines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source material</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>In the Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The grave of a native Australian</td>
<td>Ask students to look closely at the image of this traditional grave site and compare it to a picture of a European grave site. What is the same? What is different? The idea of this activity is to get students to think about Indigenous attachment to land. The traditional grave site forms a part of the landscape, while it is manipulating the landscape it is made from and will eventually be reclaimed by the landscape. A European grave site is made of stone or concrete its manipulation of the landscape is permanent, imposing and restrictive. Grave sites are key indicators of belief and lifestyle and can be used to examine cultural practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Milne standing next to Aboriginal Arborglyphs [carved tree], Gamboola, 1912</td>
<td>Ask students the following questions: What is Edmund about to do? What would be the European equivalent? What would be your reaction to a person knocking down the tomb stone of one of your family members? Here the aim is to encourage students to place themselves in the past and understand what motivates peoples actions and thoughts in the present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aborigines hunting water birds in the rushes, Joseph Lycett, 1813</td>
<td>Using the object cards in the resources section ask students to examine the image and identify what tools are being used by the hunting party and what animals are being hunted. Students can match the tools and animals on the cards to the items in the images. Other images that can be used for this activity can be found via the links below • Aboriginal Australian man hunting kangaroo, 1822, Brinton H([<a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/182625171%5C">http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/182625171\</a>]) • Aboriginal Australian weapons and hunting implements, 1870s [<a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/12780908">http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/12780908</a>] • Aboriginal Hunting, 1850, Balcombe T [<a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/13298518">http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/13298518</a>] Additional images can be found using a Trove pictures, photos and objects search. <em>These items may show Aboriginal people who have died, which may cause sadness and distress to their relatives. Care and discretion should be used when viewing the item.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copies of all source material are contained in the resources section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>In the Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Image of Coolamon] Coolamon, date unknown Loan courtesy Orange &amp; District Historical Society</td>
<td>Coolamons were used by Aboriginal women to carry fresh water, fruits and nuts, as well as to cradle babies. Coolamons are made from the outer bark of a tree trunk by cutting an outline of the shape with an axe. The bark was moulded over a fire to give it its distinct curved sides. It was let dry for a numbers of days and were rubbed with animal fat to keep the wood in good condition.</td>
<td>Example of Coolamon from Australian Museum collection (<a href="https://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-wooden-container-from-new-south-wales">https://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-wooden-container-from-new-south-wales</a>). Using the object investigation sheet found in the resources section ask students to try and figure out what this object might have been used for. Do not tell the student what the object is until the investigation has been completed. Large images of the objects can be found in the resources section. Can also use objects listed below for this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Image of Nardoo dish and grinding stone] Nardoo dish and grinding stone, date Unknown Orange Regional Museum Collection ORM2016/110/1-2</td>
<td>Grinding stones were used by Aboriginal people to grind seeds for cooking purposes. The flour produced was mixed with water and eaten as a paste, or cooked in the coals of a camp fire to make a type of bread. Large grinding stones such as this one were left at camp sites for use the by the clan groups as they travelled from temporary sites. Smaller mill stones were carried between sites.</td>
<td>More information on grinding stones from the Australian Museum (<a href="https://australianmuseum.net.au/grindstones">https://australianmuseum.net.au/grindstones</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Image of Stone tools] Stone tools found at Palings Yards, south of Orange, date unknown Loan courtesy Orange and District Historical Society</td>
<td>Stone axes were used to make tools, to chop and create objects from wood, to prepare animal skins, and to collect and prepare food. Large flakes of stone were sharpened by grinding them on sandstone to make a sharp edge. Water was used as an aid to grind the edge of the stone. Fibre from plants or animal sinew was used to attach a wooden handle to the axe head. Axes were also used as weapons, ceremonial objects and items of trade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


- Letter, detailing Aboriginal carved trees at Burburgate Station, near Gunnedah, NSW, including pen and ink sketches of six trees and a diagrammatic map of the site, 5 February 1894, Dr Alan Carroll, http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/events/exhibitions/2011/carved_trees/03_euro_discovery/image04.html

Resources

This section contains all source material and activity resources.

All photos, images and maps can only be used for educational purposes. Please contact Orange Regional Museum if you have any questions.

E: museum@orange.nsw.gov.au  P: 02 6393 8444
BIAMI, BY OODGEROO NOONUCCAL
TEXT FROM AUSTRALIAN POETRY LIBRARY

‘Mother, what is that one sea,
Sometimes blue or green or yellow?’
‘That Biami’s waterhole.
He big fellow.’
‘Mother, what make sunset fire,
Every night the big red glare?’
‘Biami’s gunya out that way,
That his camp fire over there’
‘How come great wide river here,
Where we swim and fish with spear?’
‘Biami dug him.
You see big hills all about?
They the stuff that he chuck out.’

SOURCE MATERIAL

The grave of a native Australian
Image courtesy National Library of Australia, nla.obj-135903737

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM
Aborigines hunting water birds in the rushes, Joseph Lycett, 1813
Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an2962715-s21

Edmund Milne standing next to Aboriginal Arborglyphs (carved tree), Gamboola, 1912
Image courtesy of the State Library of New South Wales, SPF / 1149

Aborigines hunting water birds in the rushes, Joseph Lycett, 1813
Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an2962715-s21

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM
OBJECT IMAGES

Coolamon, date unknown
Loan courtesy Orange & District Historical Society

Nardoo dish and grinding stone, date Unknown
Orange Regional Museum Collection  ORM2016/110/1-2

Axe heads located at Palings Yards, south of Orange, date unknown
Loan courtesy Orange and District Historical Society
HUNTING AND ANIMAL MATCHING CARDS

Fishing Spear, Australian Museum collection, E031764
Photographer © Australian Museum Reproduced for educational use only

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

Late 19th century boomerang featuring scalloped design particular to north-west New South Wales. National Museum of Australia collection, Photo: Dragi Markovic. Reproduced for educational use only

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

A woven fishing net, National Museum of Australia collection 2007.0053.0854 Reproduced for educational use only

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

Contemporary woven basket, 2009 Object on loan from Brian Turnbull

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM
**Club, National Museum of Australia collection, 2007.0053.0234**
Reproduced for educational use only

**Kangaroo, William Strutt, 1850?, National Library of Australia**
Reproduced for educational use only

**Figures in possum skin cloaks, 1898, William Barak, National Gallery Victoria collection 1215A-5**
Reproduced for educational use only

**Lithography Murray Cod, by Arthur Bartholomew**
Murray Cod are native Australia fish found in the Murray-Darling River system in Australia. Museum Victoria collection
Reproduced for educational use only
OBJECT INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET

Worksheet can be copied and used for any object investigation

1. Draw a picture of your object.

2. What is it made from?
   Tick the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOOD</th>
<th>BARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COTTON</td>
<td>WOOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEATHER</td>
<td>STONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASS</td>
<td>PAPER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLASTIC</td>
<td>CLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METAL</td>
<td>FIRBE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Draw any markings, patterns or words that you see on the object in the box below.
4. Is the object complete?
Yes/No

5. If the object is incomplete, draw what you think the missing parts are.

6. What do you think the object was used for?


7. Do we use the same object today?
Yes/No
8. If we do not use it, what object do we use instead?


9. What are the differences between the modern object and this object?


10. What do you think this object could be?


