

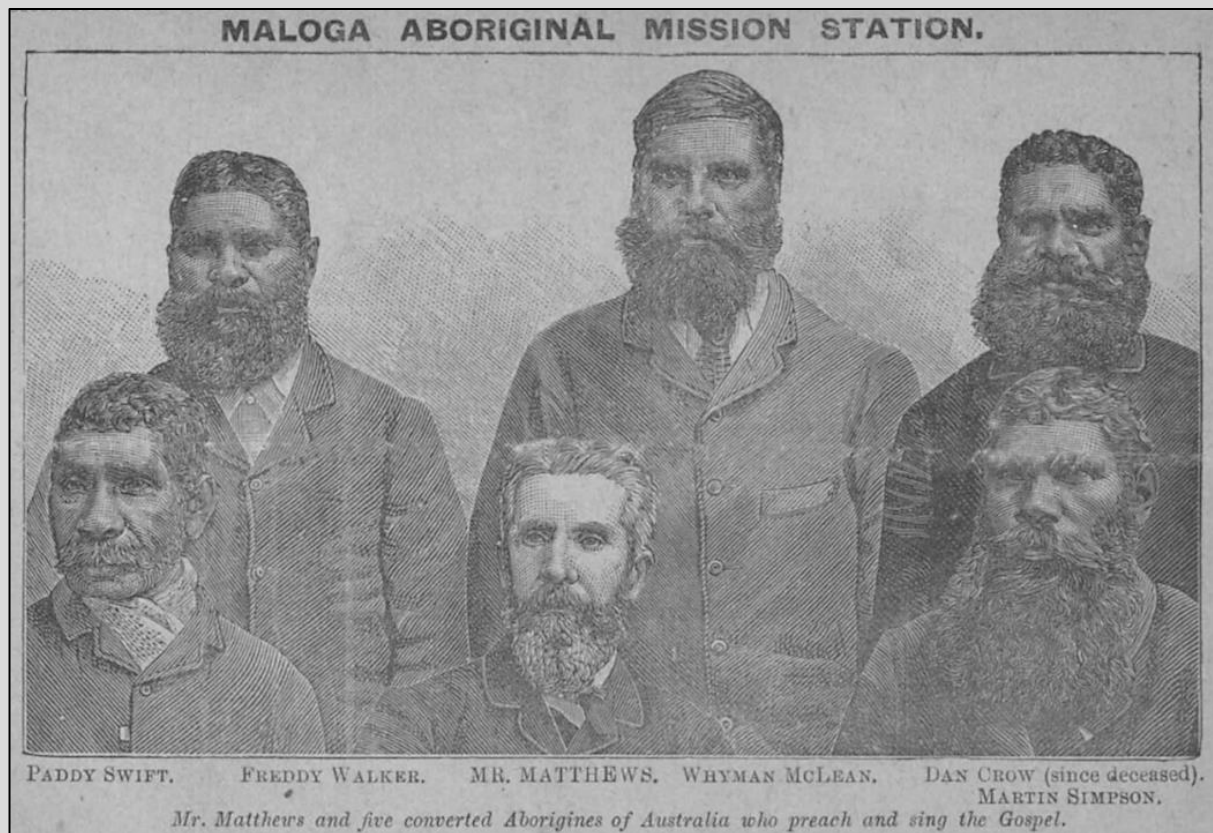
LEGENDARY ABORIGINAL TRACKER OF WAGGA WAGGA

WARNING - This article contains the names, images, and descriptions of Aboriginal people who are now deceased.

LEGENDARY TRACKER

WHYMAN

McLEAN



Front Cover Graphic: Extract from, "Daniel Matthews. *Eighteenth Report of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission.*"

Geoff Burch © January 2024

Introduction

One of the benefits of researching local history is discovering stories that were previously unknown to the researcher. For me, Whyman McLean's story is one such incident. When I first read about some of his special abilities, I made a note to learn more about this man, and I've finally got around to doing just that, in my own small way.

Whyman McLean, was a good man, who led a good life. He was a valuable asset to the communities in which he lived and worked. His story is important.

Acknowledgements

In searching for information on Whyman, I was pleased to see that others had already discovered the significance of this unique man. I was especially motivated by the work done by Ron Frew in "*Police Trackers Tumberumba:1864-1927. An Initial Survey. 2016.*" Ron and Catherine do such a great job of promoting history, in and around Tumberumba, and I thank Ron sincerely for sharing his records on early police trackers.

My thanks to the National Library and the NSW State Library for their support and development of the Australian Newspaper Digitisation Project. Trove continues to be the most fantastic resource.

Thank you to Ancestry.com, which is now, for me, a standard research tool.

Belatedly, I became aware of Michael Bennett's 2020 publication "*Pathfinders: A History of Aboriginal Trackers in NSW.*" I thank Stephen Gapps for making me aware of its existence. The associated website [<https://pathfindersnsw.org.au/>] makes the information all the more accessible to the general public and I highly recommend the book and the website to anyone who is interested in the subject matter.

Notes

The retention of original wording, in numerous sources, is done so in order to maintain historical accuracy, and to demonstrate the overt and institutionalised racism that Aboriginal people experienced at the time.

This is a white person's interpretation of events. Indigenous Australians may well have a different perspective, and a greater understanding of the inherent nuances.

Whyman Mclean - Indigenous Tracker

Regional History

In September 1869, Sgt Ussher, aided by a “*black tracker*,” travelled to Temora to assist in the search for a missing woman and her child.¹ This was possibly one of the earliest regional deployments of an Aboriginal tracker from either the Wagga Wagga or Narandera police stations.

In October 1879, two “*black trackers*,” Tommy Mongo and Sandy Simon, assisted Senior Constable King, of Narrandera Police, in arresting three men who had assaulted Robert Egan at a spot near Narrandera.²

An early tracker at Wagga Wagga was Joseph Bellilla, in the period June to December 1885.³ From April to August 1886 Joseph was stationed at Albury and remained there, on and off, till 1887. It appears Wagga Wagga was without a tracker between January 1886 and June 1902, at which latter time Whyman McLean was transferred from Tumbarumba.

In April 1890, Senior Constable William Anderson who was stationed at Junee, was investigating the death of John Young Taylor. He was assisted by “*black tracker Weston*.”⁴ Dick Weston was attached to the Narrandera Police station for the period June 1885 through to the end of 1894.⁵ All up he worked with various police forces for some twenty five years. Dick Weston’s death took place in May 1895, ending a memorable career, and elicited the following comments,⁶

“It may be added that the deceased who was 54 years of age had rendered conspicuous service on several occasions in different parts of the Riverina. Notably when he was despatched from Narandera to Albury to take part in a search for a missing child which had been lost for several days. He succeeded on that occasion in effecting a rescue in two hours after taking to the road. In flood times ‘Dick’ rendered signal assistance in swimming the Murrumbidgee at Narandera when other means of communication had failed. He was very popular with the members of the force on the Narandera Station. The deceased was buried in the Church of England portion of the Narandera Cemetery on Thursday.”

Weston’s death was tragic. He was found lying on the side of the road, at the approach to the bridge, vomiting and near collapse. By the time the police arrived Weston had passed away. The police suspected Weston may have fallen and struck his head, but the autopsy found “*the skull and brain in perfect order*.” His internal organs were “*much diseased*,” Most notably the stomach and his heart. The latter exhibited clear signs of “*fibroid degeneration*.” Weston’s bowels were said to be “*surcharged with alcohol*.”⁷

In May 1890, it was reported that Senior Constable Dixon and a party of police, consisting of fellow officers and a number of “*black trackers*,” departed Wagga Wagga in search of two men – Schmidt and Rick. A body had recently been found in the lagoon, but had not yet been identified, and the

¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 25th September 1869, p1.

² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4th October 1879, p2. / Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 11th January 1879, p4.

³ NSW State Records. Police Salary Registers - Trackers [NRS-10946]

⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 1st May 1890, p3.

⁵ NSW State Records. Police Salary Registers - Trackers [NRS-10946]

⁶ Narandera Argus. 28th May 1895, p2.

⁷ Narandera Argus. 28th May 1895, p2.

incidences were proving to be “*mysterious*” and difficult to solve.⁸ It is suspected these trackers had been brought in from outside Wagga Wagga. The local police were clearly dependent on the skills of these indigenous men to solve difficult crimes.

In December 1893, the Progress Association at Tumbarumba resolved to write to the Inspector General of Police requesting the appointment of a “*black tracker*” to the police station at Tumbarumba.⁹ An appointment had been made by June 1894, when the Progress Association wrote to the Inspector General to complain about the small allowance made to their new tracker.¹⁰ The Inspector General’s reply advised that the tracker would be supplied with clothing, and if he proved useful to the police and was of good behaviour his “*salary*” would be increased.¹¹ The new appointee would have been Whyman McLean.

In August 1897, three children were lost in the bush near Crainbob Creek, not too far from Wagga Wagga. Police and volunteers from all around joined in a search for the children. Inspector Smith at Tumbarumba dispatched a constable and a “*black tracker*” who, presumably, was Whyman McLean,¹² as he appears to have been the only tracker stationed at Tumbarumba in 1897.¹³ The three children were not found in time, and they all perished. A local editorial bemoaned the fact that Wagga Wagga did not have a “*black tracker*” noting that the closest, aside from Tumbarumba, was some one hundred and fifty miles away.

Whyman McLean served at Tumbarumba up until April 1902, at which time he transferred to Wagga Wagga [in June 1902]. McLean served continuously at Wagga Wagga up until September 1910. McLean was back at work in Wagga Wagga from July 1912, along with J Patten [probably John James, aka “Jack” Patten], who filled in during McLean’s absence. McLean was still employed at Wagga Wagga at the end of 1915.¹⁴

⁸ Australian Star. 16th May 1890, p5.

⁹ Albury Banner. 1st December 1893, p17.

¹⁰ Albury Banner. 1st June 1894, p17.

¹¹ Albury Banner. 22nd June 1894, p24.

¹² Wagga Wagga Express. 31st August 1897, p2.

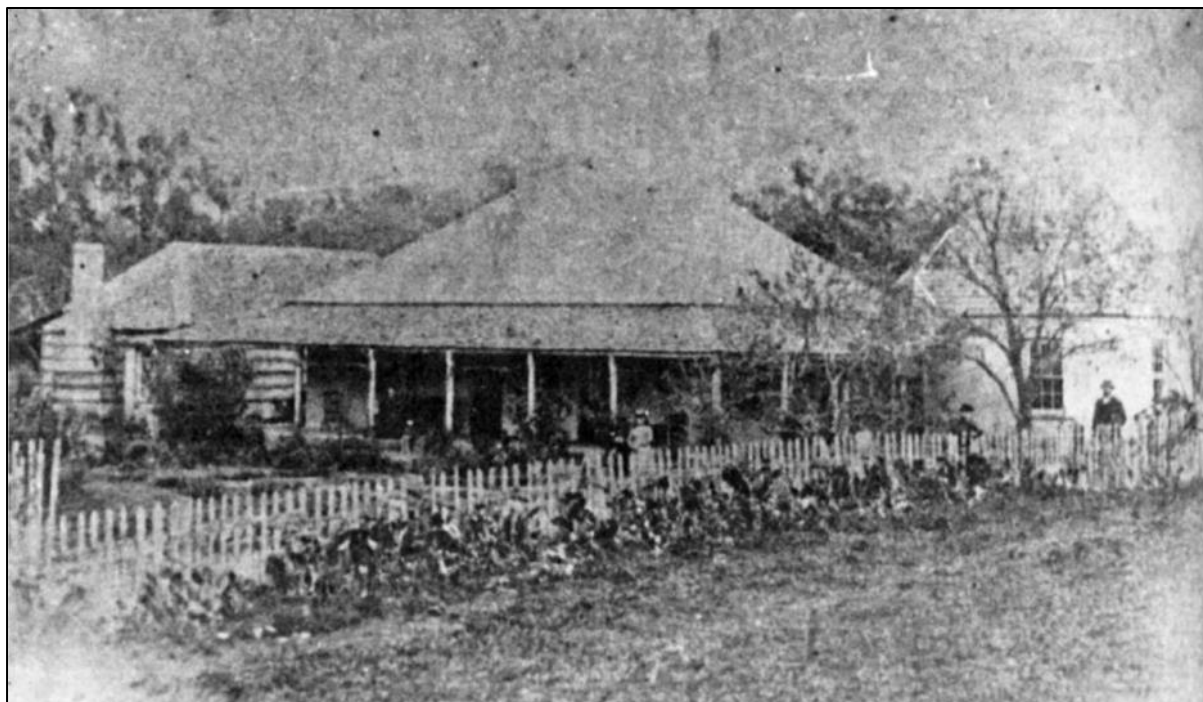
¹³ NSW State Records. Police Salary Registers - Trackers [NRS-10946]

¹⁴ NSW State Records. Police Salary Registers - Trackers [NRS-10946]

Tracker Whyman McLean

Whyman McLean was born about 1857, at Morago near Denilquin.¹⁵ His father was a Scottish immigrant, Archibald McLean, and his mother was an Aboriginal woman,¹⁶ Doreda Louisa Wareham.

Morago Station, to the north of the Edward River was, in the 1850's, owned by the Paterson brothers, one of whom, Andrew Paterson, was the father of Banjo Paterson.



Above: An early photo of the homestead at Old Morago. Courtesy the Denilquin & District Historical Society.

Archibald McLean passed away in 1888 at Hay,¹⁷ aged fifty five. Doreda Louisa Wareham died in 1919, at Wentworth, aged fifty nine.¹⁸ [These ages appear to be incorrect, but they are entered here as they appear on the death registrations].

In 1882, Whyman McLean married Eliza Foster, in Victoria.¹⁹ Their first child, Gideon McLean, was born about 1886, probably at Molago.

In 1888, Whyman was strongly influenced by the preachings of Daniel Matthews, superintendent of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission [on the Murray River, NSW, near Echuca]. Whyman, and a friend, Fred Walker, had left the Cumeroogunga Mission in order to live on Matthews' reserve. McLean and Walker were so influenced by Matthews that they had both agreed to accompany him into Queensland on a Mission tour. George Bellenger, of the Cumeroogunga Mission, wrote to Whyman

¹⁵ Daily Express. 28th December 1921, p2.

¹⁶ NSW BDM's. Death registration {Whyman McLean} # 24347.

¹⁷ NSW BDM's. Death registration # 6801.

¹⁸ NSW BDM's. Death registration # 24347.

¹⁹ VIC BDM's. Marriage registration # 2862.

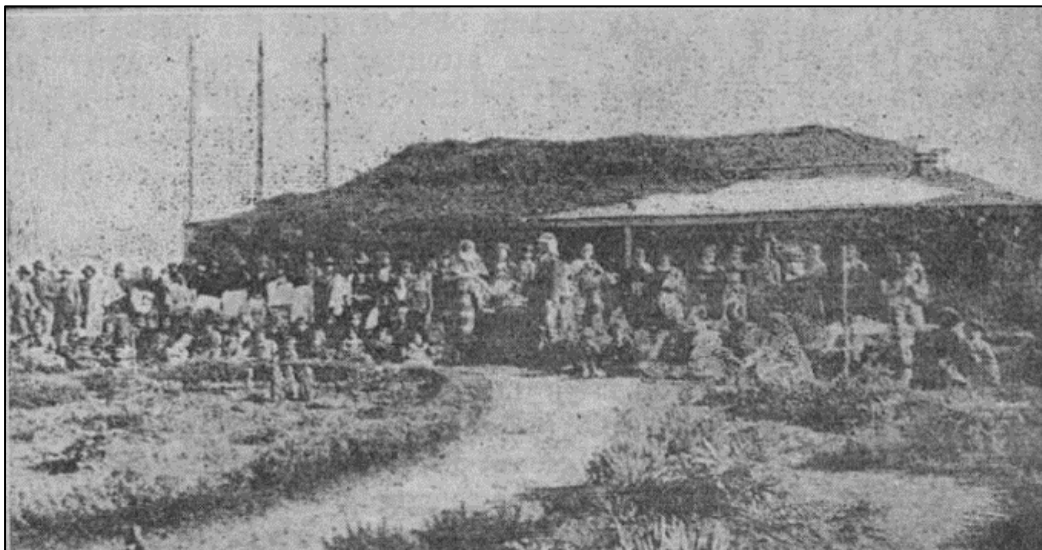
and Walker, pleading for them to return to the Mission. Bellenger expressed a concern that Matthews had offered each of the pair a fifty pounds per annum inducement to accompany him to Queensland. Bellenger referred to the offer as a bribe. It appears that the two men had been expelled from Cumeroogunga. Cumeroogunga Mission Station (aka Cumeroogunga) was an Aboriginal reserve situated in Yorta Yorta country on a bend in the Murray River in New South Wales, near the Victorian town of Barmah. Bellenger stated that he was now prepared to allow the two men back onto his Mission, conceding that the loss of their houses was sufficient punishment.²⁰



Left: Daniel Matthews.²¹

In July 1888, McLean and Walker accompanied Matthews on a tour extending from Melbourne to Sydney. Matthews preached at Albury, Wagga Wagga, Junee, Cootamundra, and numerous other towns as the travelled towards Sydney. Matthews recorded how, at the Framlingham Aboriginal Station, Whyman and Walker “*spent many hours in fellowship and prayer in the natives’ huts until past midnight.*” By the 28th July [1888] the troupe were in South Brisbane, where McLean and Walker impressed the local congregation with their delivery of the gospel using speech and song. The men were all back at Malogo on the 23rd August 1888.²²

Eliza McLean [nee Foster] died at Maloga on the 15th February 1889.²³ Eliza had been brought to Maloga, with a group of other Aboriginal people, from Sydney, by Matthews, several years earlier. According to Matthews, she became “*a genuine Christian, and a happy wife and mother.*”²⁴



Left: The mission house at Maloga in 1884.

²⁰ Daniel Matthews. *Fourteenth Report of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission.*

²¹ Daniel Matthews. *Seventeenth Report of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission.*

²² Daniel Matthews. *Fourteenth Report of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission.*

²³ Beverley (Gulumbali) Elphick and Don Elphick. *The Camp of Mercy.* 2003. p60.

²⁴ Daniel Matthews. *Fourteenth Report of the Maloga Aboriginal Mission.*



Above: Original camp at the Maloga Mission Station, in 1874. [King Billy's camp]. Courtesy VIC State Library.²⁵



Above: The Maloga Mission Station viewed from Victorian side of the river, in 1888.

²⁵ VIC State Library. Photographer, NJ Claire [1837-1918] [<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/54524>]



Above: An early house on Maloga Mission Station, c.1883. Courtesy State Library of Victoria.²⁶



Above: Aboriginal women and children at Maloga Mission Station, early 1900's. Courtesy VIC State Library.²⁷

²⁶ VIC State Library. Photographer, NJ Claire [1837-1918] [<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/295652>]

²⁷ VIC. State Library. [<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/149895>]

In August 1893, Whyman married Maggie Manns, at Narrandera²⁸ – on Warengesda Mission Station.²⁹ Whyman and Maggie had two children: Jessie, born 1895 at Deniliquin;³⁰ and Florence, born 1897, at Hay.³¹

In December 1896, Whyman McLean was residing at Warengesda, and was still there in January 1897.³² On the 9th March 1897, Whyman left Warengesda, having accepted a position as a tracker with the police department.³³

In March 1897, Whyman made a request to the Aborigines' Board for permission to travel to Wagga Wagga. His request was denied. The following account of the situation highlights the inhumanity of his treatment,

“McLean, the black tracker at Tumbarumba Station, wishes in some respects to imitate the fashion of the best circles, and desires, in view of the near approach of winter, that his family should take flight to a more genial clime than Tumbarumba. Some weeks ago he caused an application to be forwarded to the Aborigines' Board asking that permission might be granted to him to absent himself from the station for five days, from the 23rd to the 27th instant, for the purpose of driving his wife and children to Wagga Wagga, and that a free pass might be issued for them from the latter place to Darlington Point, as he intended sending them to Warengesda Mission Station for the winter. The board communicated with the superintendent of police at Albury on the matter and wished to know why the tracker desired to send his wife and family to Warengesda, and if they were aboriginals, adding that, as McLean was receiving good wages, they were indisposed to grant passes, or admit his family to Warengesda. The reply to above stated that McLean's wife had been very ill, and could not stand the cold winter of Tumbarumba, and that he wished to send her to her mother at Warengesda. The board yesterday considered it undesirable to send the tracker's wife and children to Warengesda and thought that if they could not stand the climate of Tumbarumba, it would be better to transfer him to another station.”

In early April 1901, Whyman McLean, a “*black tracker at Tumbarumba*” petitioned for a divorce from Maggie McLean [nee Manns], on the grounds of adultery. The correspondents were William Griffiths and a second, unnamed party [Charles Wright, or Upright].³⁴ McLean testified that he had not seen his wife for sixteen months. On the 6th July 1899, he entered the Wagga Wagga Hospital, as a patient and remained there for two months. When he returned home, his wife, with his permission, went to visit her mother at Grong Grong, with the two children. She never returned to his home. McLean's case was supported by Rose Freeman who testified that she had seen Maggie and Griffiths in bed together while McLean was in hospital. A decree nisi was granted, with Whyman to have custody of the children. Griffiths was ordered to pay costs.³⁵

²⁸ NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 5160.

²⁹ Wagga Wagga Express. 4th April 1901, p2.

³⁰ NSW BDM's. Birth registration # 2992. [Mother listed as Margaret M A McLean]

³¹ NSW BDM's. Birth registration # 3734. [Mother listed as Mary McLean]

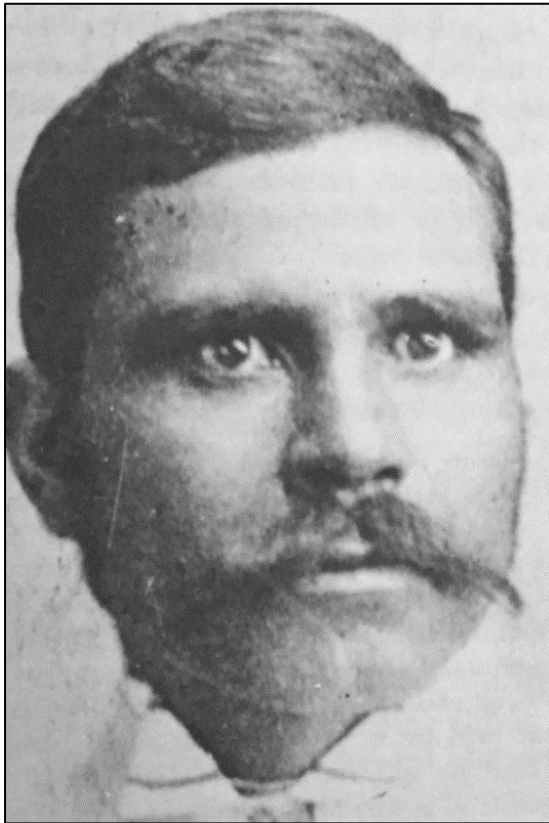
³² Beverley (Gulumbali) Elphick and Don Elphick. *The Camp of Mercy*. 2003. p23.

³³ Beverley (Gulumbali) Elphick and Don Elphick. *The Camp of Mercy*. 2003. p60.

³⁴ NSW State Archives. Divorce Records. [INX-16-7440] [NRS-13495-29 (13/12551) 3806]

³⁵ Wagga Wagga Express. 4th April 1901, p2.

In March 1902, Tracker McLean was transferred from Tumbarumba to the Wagga Wagga Police Station.³⁶ By 1903, Whyman had secured a residence in Best Street, Wagga Wagga.



On the 23rd February 1903, Arthur Kenny appeared in court charged with assaulting a young lady named May Brady. Tracker Whyman McLean was an important prosecution witness whose testimony regarding the various footprints at the scene was vigorously cross examined by George Coleman, one of two defence solicitors, and a very capable one at that.³⁷

The Wagga Wagga newspapers in the 1910's regularly featured reports highlighting the feats of Tracker Whyman McLean – recovering drowned bodies, inspecting crime scenes, and carrying out other duties. In 1916 Whyman married for a third time, to Elizabeth Webster, at Wagga Wagga.³⁸

Left: Whyman McLean. Courtesy Marie Albertine Augustine Renaud [Ancestry]

In January 1921, Tracker McLean's duties included capturing stray dogs. "Mac", as he was sometimes referred to, had developed his own strategy for capturing strays. He would sit on a bench and pat a friendly dog, in order to attract the stray dogs. When they drew close, his hand would flash out and the stray would find itself secured with a noose around its neck. He was, apparently, quite successful with this method.³⁹

In the first half of 1921 Whyman suffered two accidents with horses. In the first instance he was thrown from his horse, which shied when he lit his pipe. On the second occasion he was riding into the police station yard when his horse reared, threw him to the ground and then fell on top of him. On this occasion he was taken to the hospital, in an unconscious state, but had awoken by the time they reached the hospital.⁴⁰

Tracker McLean - Expert Witness

In September 1902 an attempt was made to burn down the Wantabadgery woolshed and shearers' hut. An inquest was held in the same month at which the managing partner, Claude Augustus MacDonald, gave details of his dispute with some two hundred shearers who had refused to sign the agreement. The men had set up camp nearby and picketed the site. MacDonald had threatened to

³⁶ Wagga Wagga Express. 29th March 1902, p2.

³⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 24th February 1903, p2.

³⁸ NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 5988.

³⁹ Daily Express. 19th January 1921, p2.

⁴⁰ Daily Express. 4th April 1921, p2.

have the striking men locked up. Whyman McLean was called as a witness. He explained that the “*hard nature of the ground*” meant that he could not identify any tracks. The jury found that the fire had been deliberately lit, but by whom they could not say.⁴¹

Another inquest was held at the same time, on fires at Claris Park, where an attempt had been made to burn down the woolshed and shearers’ quarters, at that place. Whyman was also called to give evidence at this hearing. His testimony read as follows,⁴²

“I am a tracker in the employ of the New South Wales Government. I remember Tuesday, the 9th instant. I came to the woolshed at Claris Park. Got there at 10.30 p.m. Sergeant Duprez and Constable Hyam were with me. We camped at the hut all night, and at daylight on the morning of the 10th I looked for tracks. I previously saw where a fire had been lighted. Saw the window shutter had been broken. I made careful search but could find no tracks owing to the hard nature of the ground. Went to the woolshed but could not find any tracks there.”

In September 1904, Andrew Fogarty was charged with stealing copper plates from the *Kimo* battery of James Robinson, in the previous months. Fogarty was committed to stand trial. Whyman McLean’s testimony was pivotal in the case. Whyman, described as “*a black tracker attached to the Wagga Police Station,*” gave the following evidence,⁴³

“Remember August 21st. I was at Kimo battery on Saturday. I found tracks in the battery. Examined them and covered them up. On 22nd I searched about for tracks and found some magnettings 1¾ miles from the battery. Later on the same day I was with Mr. Givney, still searching, when I found the plate produced. About ten yards away I noticed where a fire had been. A few feet away was a scorched mark, as though something had been put down. Found several tracks about there. Also found a rag on a stick, appearing as though it had been used on the plate. At the battery on Sunday last I saw Sergeant Dixon. The tracks were covered up as I had left them. Sergeant Dixon handed me the boots produced, and I compared both boots with the tracks in the battery, and they fitted exactly. Then went to Reardon's paddock and tried the boots on the tracks where the plate was found. They corresponded. Went then to a gully over a quarter of a mile away, and tried the left boot on a track there, and they corresponded. Then went to Reno, and examined some tracks shown me by Sergeant Dixon. They also corresponded with the boots. I found several other marks corresponding with the boots produced.

To Mr. Weekes: Noticed the tracks myself. They were peculiar. The boots were worn over on both sides especially on the heels. The soil is clay in the battery, with sand over it. The soil is soft. It is also clay soil near the old fire. Every peculiarity in the boots was observable in the tracks.

To the P.M.: The tracks were made in damp weather. The magnettings were found near some water, as though they had been washed. There had been a big fire near where the plate was found.

To the police: I found tracks corresponding with the boots at the creek where the magnettings were found.”

⁴¹ Cootamundra Herald. 20th September 1902, p2.

⁴² Cootamundra Herald. 20th September 1902, p2.

⁴³ Gundagai Times. 6th September 1904, p2.

Another incident in which the identification of boots was critical occurred in September 1906, when obstructions were placed across the railway line, some two miles west of Narrandera, at a viaduct. The material extended for a distance of some thirty feet along the rails. Evidence was that the obstructions, so placed, could have caused a train to derail. The police case rested heavily on the identification of boot prints belonging to three accused men. Whyman McLean, a police tracker of Wagga Wagga, was called as a trial witness, and he testified to having inspected the tracks left by the alleged perpetrators and to having compared those with the boots submitted as evidence. Whyman explained that he had eleven years' experience as a tracker, and he had no doubt that the boots matched the tracks.⁴⁴

In January 1913, Tracker McLean and Senior Constable Field apprehended a wanted man, on the Tarcutta Road. A description of a man who had committed a robbery at Colinroobie, near Narrandera, had been distributed and McLean had suspicions of a stranger who shortly afterwards appeared in Wagga Wagga. McLean kept track of the man until the next morning when he reported his suspicions to Senior Constable Field. The two men pursued the alleged criminal out along the Tarcutta Road, on their bicycles, and took him into custody.⁴⁵

Tracker McLean – River Tracker

McLean was also described as a very successful "*river tracker*" - someone able to find and recover drowned bodies.

In November 1897, a "*black tracker*" from Tumbarumba recovered the body of twenty four year old Richard Bannatyne, from the Murrumbidgee River. Richard was the son of Alexander Bannatyne, the licensee of the Belmore hotel at Borambola. Deceased went missing at 2pm on a Friday and his body was recovered on the Sunday morning following.⁴⁶ The tracker would have been Whyman McLean.

In 1921, Whyman was attributed with recovering twenty two bodies. The tracker provided an account of his methodology to a reporter,⁴⁷

"His procedure in searching for bodies of drowned persons is effective and simple. Immediately he strikes the bottom of a river he crawls on hands and knees until he finds the track he is seeking. After covering a circuit of seven feet he comes to the surface again to get sufficient fresh air to enable him to continue his operations. He then resumes his search at the part of the 'track' he had just left, and it invariably happens that the method adopted by him proves successful."

Whyman was very humble when questioned about his feats, declaring, "*We all do our little bits at times. I simply do my duty.*"

Questioned by the reporter, Whyman gave details of three specific bodies he had recovered. His first ever was at Echuca, before he had joined the police force. The victim was a man new to the town, and one who developed a reputation as a strong swimmer and a high diver. When executing the latter, he dived from a high tree and failed to surface. Two of Whyman's friends dived in to search

⁴⁴ Cootamundra Herald. 6th April 1907, p2.

⁴⁵ Wagga Wagga Express. 11th January 1913, p2.

⁴⁶ Wagga Wagga Express. 16th November 1897, p2.

⁴⁷ Daily Express. 28th December 1921, p2.

for the body but without any results. Whyman dived in himself and searched for the 'trail,' which he soon discovered, which led him to the body. The victim had dived into a bed of weeds, which had wrapped around one leg. The body was floating upright with two arms outstretched and as Whyman approached the body appeared to be moving. Alarmed, Whyman surfaced for water, then dived down again and brought the body up.

The second incident he spoke of was about recovering the body of an Indian, also in the Murray River at Echuca. The drowning was attributed to a cramp. Whyman remembered this incident because the body was also upright, looking as if the man was preparing to spring at him.

The 3rd account was of a drowning at Illabo. A swimmer drowned when he got caught up in the wire netting that surrounded a creek. Whyman had to be careful that he did not fall victim to the same cause. His strategy was to place a long pole in the centre of the creek and to work out from that. It took quite a number of forays before he was able to recover the body.

1919 Heroics

1919 was the year that the Spanish Flu spread throughout Australia, like a runaway bush fire. More than 450 people in Wagga Wagga were infected and thirty two of these died. In May 1919, the mayor of Wagga Wagga, Alderman EE Collins, paid tribute to three specific individuals for their dedication and contributions during the epidemic. The first was the council Health Inspector, JB Tinsley. The second was the Government Medical Officer, Dr Morgan. The third individual was Whyman McLean, who had been on permanent call to convey patients, in the ambulance, whenever required. The mayor recommended an ex gratia payment of seven pounds and seven shillings for McLean, in recognition of the work carried out, in spite of personal risk to his [McLean's] own health.⁴⁸ According to Tinsley, Tracker Mclean had been "*indispensable*" during the epidemic.⁴⁹

When Whyman McLean retired, in January 1925, he was credited with having recovered thirty four bodies from the Murrumbidgee River. This figure did not include bodies recovered in collaboration with fellow officers. He was also credited with tracking down one hundred and twenty fugitives from justice, some of whom threatened to throw him in the river.⁵⁰

A report in the Sydney papers proclaimed,⁵¹

"Whyman McLean, of Wagga, even if his hide is dusky, has a white man's heart. Black-tracker for the N.S.W. police for 30 years, he holds Australia's record for faithful service. In his time he tracked and assisted to capture 120 fugitives, some of his feats being little short of miraculous. Several notorious stock-stealing gangs were broken up as a result of his sleuthing, and even though his life has been often threatened and once actually attempted, he stuck to the force."

⁴⁸ Geoff Burch. *Diary of a Pathogen. Pneumonic Influenza: 1919 Pandemic. Wagga Wagga.* / Daily Advertiser. 14th May 1919, p4; 7th April 1919, p2; 23rd May 1919, p2.

⁴⁹ Daily Advertiser. 25th February 1919, p2.

⁵⁰ Gundagai Independent. 5th February 1925, p2.

⁵¹ Smith's Weekly. 1st August 1925, p15.



Left: Tracker Whyman McLean. Courtesy Shain Frederick Miller [Ancestry]

Whyman McLean died at Callan Park hospital in Sydney on the 23rd December 1926, supposedly aged sixty nine years old.⁵² His body was buried at the Rookwood Cemetery. [Zone C, section 10, grave # 347]

Whyman's second wife, Mary, or Maggie, McLean [nee Manns] died at Wagga Wagga in 1907.⁵³

⁵² NSW BDM's. Death registration # 21673.

⁵³ Beverley (Gulumbali) Elphick and Don Elphick. *The Camp of Mercy*. 2003. p60.

Gideon McLean

Gideon McLean was born at Maloga in 1886.⁵⁵ The son of Whyman McLean and Eliza McLean [nee Foster]. In 1912 he married Daisy Atkinson at Moama.⁵⁶

A child, Ridley McLean, was born at Wagga Wagga in 1903.⁵⁷ The birth registration lists the parents as Whyman McLean and Rosie McLean. This conflicts with Ridley's death registration, which lists his parents as Gideon and Daisy McLean.⁵⁸ Gideon would have been seventeen years old when Ridley was born. One explanation is that the child was Gideon's but because of his age and possibly the age of the mother, the baby was registered under the name of Whyman and Rose? I'm inclined to believe the death registration details are correct.

Gideon appears to have had a troubled life.

On the 24th November 1909, an alleged assault took place at the Cumeragunja mission station. William Jackson and Gideon McLean were subsequently charged with assaulting William Onus. Jackson pleaded guilty and was fined one pound plus six shillings costs, or fourteen days hard labour in the Deniliquin goal. McLean pleaded not guilty but was found guilty and fined two pounds plus two pounds and ten shillings costs, or two months hard labour in the same goal.

Both men were also found guilty of using indecent language on the same day at the same location [Cumeragunja]. Jackson was fined two pounds plus eight shillings costs, with the option of serving a month imprisonment in the Deniliquin goal. McLean was fined three pounds plus one pound, ten shillings and sixpence in costs, or the option of two months penal servitude in the Deniliquin goal.⁵⁹

In April 1911, the Moama Bench issued a warrant for the arrest of Gideon McLean, who was charged with child desertion. Twenty seven year old McLean, was described as being a labourer, five feet eight and a half inches tall, about eleven stone in weight, black hair, clean shaven [but possibly with a small dark moustache], brown eyes, flat nose, and large mouth. He was said to be wearing workmen's clothes. The final attribute was recorded as "*half-caste Aboriginal*."⁶⁰

Another warrant was issued in August 1911. This time Gideon was charged with failing to pay child support – he was in arrears to the amount of nine pounds, one shilling, and six pence.⁶¹ The charge was subsequently heard, ex parte, by the Moama Bench, and McLean was ordered to pay five shillings per week until the child reached the age of sixteen. Failure to pay incurred a penalty of twelve months imprisonment.⁶²

In the same month [August], Gideon McLean was arrested by Constable Dyce of the Yerong Creek Police. He was remanded to Daysdale and discharged. He was arrested again by Sergeant Smith and Constable Millane, of the Moana Police, and charged with two offences. Gideon was found guilty on both accounts, with the second offence incurring a penalty of twelve months imprisonment, with this sentence to be suspended upon payment of the outstanding monies.⁶³

⁵⁵ Beverley (Gulumbali) Elphick and Don Elphick. *The Camp of Mercy*. 2003. p60.

⁵⁶ NSW BDM's. Marriage registration # 10436.

⁵⁷ NSW BDM's. Birth reg # 16803

⁵⁸ NSW BDM's. Death registration # 9305.

⁵⁹ Riverine Herald. 5th January 1910, p3.

⁶⁰ NSW Police Gazette. 29th April 1911, p159.

⁶¹ NSW Police Gazette. 23rd August 1911, p315.

⁶² NSW Police Gazette. 23rd August 1911, p318.

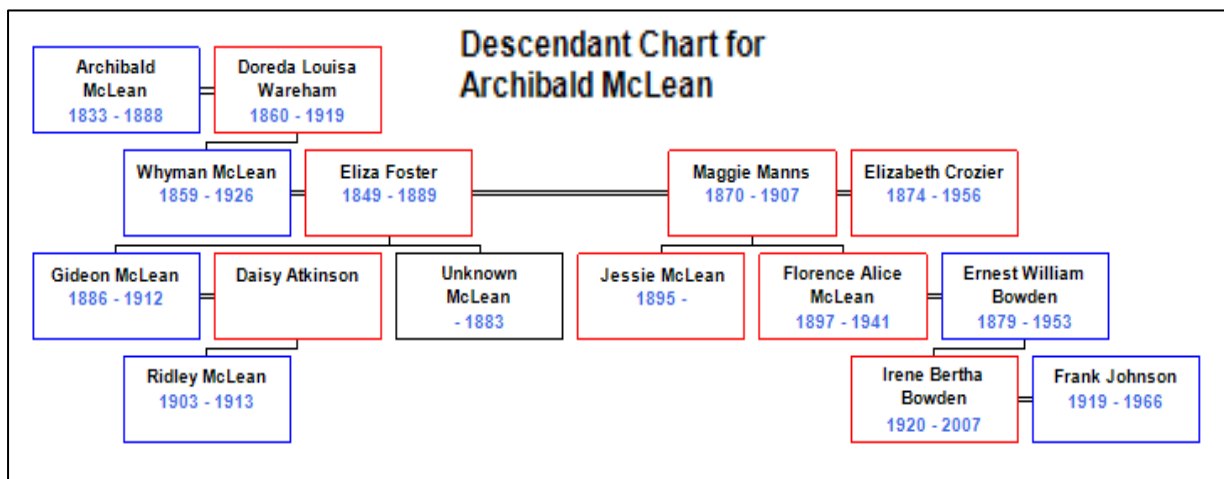
⁶³ NSW Police Gazette. 6th September 1911, p333.

On Sunday the 22nd September 1912, Gideon was out shooting rabbits, on Madowla Park station, with a “*pea rifle*,” when an accident occurred.⁶⁴

An account of the incident read as follows,⁶⁵

“A half-caste aboriginal named Gideon McLean, went shooting rabbits in a flooded part of the country. He was accompanied by his wife and a little girl named Nora Nicholls. McLean carried a stick in one hand and a pea rifle in the other, and in turning suddenly the weapon struck against a sapling, which caused it to explode and at the same time to point toward his body, with the result that the bullet entered his abdomen, causing a dangerous wound. Mrs. McLean went for assistance, and some of the employees carried him to his hut. Mr. Cain, the owner of the station, telephoned to Dr. Moss, who, with Sergeant Corby, went out in a motor car. The doctor found that the bullet had entered the right side of the man's abdomen and lodged in his body. Having treated the patient as far as possible, he ordered his removal to the Echuca Hospital, to which institution he was brought last evening. Drs. Moss and Stoney, assisted by Dr Hutchinson, who administered the chloroform, performed an operation, and ascertained that the intestines had been badly perforated. Whether the injury will prove fatal, they cannot say as yet.”

The wound proved fatal, and Gideon McLean passed away on the 24th September at the Echuca Hospital. An inquest was held where evidence was given by Gideon’s wife, Daisy McLean, and by his niece, amongst others.⁶⁶



Above: Family tree showing descendants of Archibald McLean and Doreda Louisa Wareham.

⁶⁴ Argus. 23rd September 1912, p3.

⁶⁵ Bendigo Independent. 24th September 1912, p3.

⁶⁶ Bendigo Independent. 27th September 1912, p5.

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