#### Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Revue de la Société historique du Canada



# Connecting Australian First Nations' Histories with Settler Colonial Winegrape Cultivation

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Volume 33, numéro 2, 2023

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1108196ar DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1108196ar

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Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (imprimé) 1712-6274 (numérique)

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#### Citer cet article

McIntyre, J. (2023). Connecting Australian First Nations' Histories with Settler Colonial Winegrape Cultivation. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 33(2), 11–35. https://doi.org/10.7202/1108196ar

#### Résumé de l'article

La diffusion mondiale du raisin de cuve (Vitis vinifera) de l'Europe occidentale vers les colonies européennes depuis le XVe siècle est souvent présentée comme un avantage accordé à ces lieux coloniaux plutôt que comme une invasion d'écosystèmes où les peuples autochtones souverains géraient leurs terres en toute connaissance de cause. Les colons britanniques en Australie ont associé symboliquement la production et la consommation de vin au pouvoir impérial et colonial, envisageant l'avantage matériel des profits domestiques et d'exportation et l'apaisement social au sein de l'ordre colonial émergent. La viticulture coloniale est donc un site privilégié pour l'observation des relations entre les colons et les populations autochtones. Cet article s'appuie sur mes collaborations antérieures avec des chercheur.e.s non autochtones sur le thème des relations entre les colons et les Autochtones dans le domaine de la viticulture et de la consommation pour mettre en lumière les expériences des Premières nations en matière de colonisation.

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# Connecting Australian First Nations' Histories with Settler Colonial Winegrape Cultivation

#### JULIE MCINTYRE\*

#### Abstract

The global diffusion of winegrapes (Vitis vinifera) from western Europe to European colonies since the fifteenth century is often historicized as a benefit bestowed upon those colonial places rather than an invasion of ecologies where sovereign Indigenous peoples knowingly managed their land. British colonists in Australia associated wine production and consumption symbolically with imperial and colonial power, envisaging the material advantage of domestic and export profits and social appeasement within the emergent colonial order. Settler colonial winegrowing is thus a salient site for observing settler-Indigenous relations. This article expands upon my earlier collaborations with non-Indigenous scholars on the topic of settler-Indigenous relations in winegrowing and consumption to highlight First Nations' experiences of colonization.

#### Résumé

La diffusion mondiale du raisin de cuve (Vitis vinifera) de l'Europe occidentale vers les colonies européennes depuis le XVe siècle est souvent présentée comme un avantage accordé à ces lieux coloniaux plutôt que comme une invasion d'écosystèmes où les peuples autochtones souverains géraient leurs terres en toute connaissance de cause. Les colons britanniques en Australie ont associé symboliquement la production et la consommation de vin au pouvoir impérial et colonial, envisageant l'avantage matériel des profits domestiques et d'exportation et l'apaisement social au sein de l'ordre colonial émergent. La viticulture coloniale est donc un site privilégié pour l'observation des relations entre les colons et les populations autochtones. Cet article s'appuie sur mes collaborations

<sup>\*</sup> Thank you to Benjamin Bryce, Donna Senese, Adrian Shubert, and Marcel Martel for invitations, discussions, and debates that prompted and refined this research. Michele Seah provided research assistance. I thank Michele and Ruth McLean at Yarra Ranges Council for contributions to the section on Kulin peoples, Claire McLisky for advice relating to the case study on the Gringai's short stay at Maloga Aboriginal Mission, and Peter Hocking, the archivist for the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. I acknowledge wine writer Max Allen for his archival searches on Barak and Yeringberg.

antérieures avec des chercheur.e.s non autochtones sur le thème des relations entre les colons et les Autochtones dans le domaine de la viticulture et de la consommation pour mettre en lumière les expériences des Premières nations en matière de colonisation.

In Australia the widespread replacement of Indigenous peoples' ecological management with settler colonial commodification of land and biota has entailed the introduction of many marketable species of animals and plants, such as winegrapes (Vitis vinifera). Winegrape cultivation has played a very modest role in Australia's economic and spatial history compared with the export-scale grazing of sheep for wool and meat as well as cattle for meat, tallow, and dairy; wheat cropping; and the extraction of minerals such as gold, copper, iron ore, and coal. Yet wine production, trade, and consumption are potent Western icons of established, well-ordered, and wealthy societies. Grape wine held a vaunted, ritualized place in classical, biblical and early modern Europe as a "symbol and tool of knowledge and initiation."<sup>2</sup> England traded in European wines from the eleventh century. These cultural associations proved influential among British elites sanctioning and driving imperialism.3 Wine exemplifies a "good life." Who participates in this "good life" in settler colonial societies is a marker of where the lines of economic, social, and cultural citizenship are drawn, and redrawn, in those societies.

From the outset of British colonization in eastern Australia in the late eighteenth century, some British (and later other European colonists) believed that winegrape cultivation enhanced land values and made for civilized landscapes and communities while promising profits. Elsewhere, my colleagues and I have pointed to the role of wine in early settler-Indigenous relations in the colony of New South Wales as well as of Aboriginal labour in settler colonial winegrowing enterprises in various parts of Australia. This article further nuances this relational history with an expanded Australian case study, a new Australian case study, and some remarks on the contemporary history of First Nations wine businesses in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Canada.

It will be helpful for Canadian readers to know that archaeological research evidences continuous Indigenous presence in some Australian geographies of upwards of 65,000 years.<sup>6</sup> As a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars has recently argued, this deep history constitutes a First Nations "everywhen." In a brief moment

within that deep history, British colonization of Australia began in 1788 near present-day Sydney. The theft of the land of more than 250 First Nations proceeded through violence and other means, without formal declaration of war or signing of treaties, asserting settler colonial governance in place of Indigenous sovereignty. This article centres Indigenous Australian presence on their ancestral land (or Country) that settler colonists turned over to winegrowing. It expands research into settler-Wonnarua relations (north of present-day Warrane/Sydney, New South Wales) and settler-Kulin relations (northeast of present-day Naarm/Melbourne, Victoria). I also introduce a synchronous case study on the New Norcia Benedictine Mission in Yuit Country (north-northeast of present-day Nyoongar Country/Perth, Western Australia).

In Australian geopolitical history, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia are former British colonies that became states within the Commonwealth of Australia with an act of British Parliament creating the federated nation of states in 1901. Australian settler colonial winegrowing occurred in colonies and states that are increasingly historicized as co-constituted by Indigenous and settler peoples. Settler colonial agriculture in places premised on the dispossession of First Nations are "shared histories," a term Victoria Haskins deployed when challenging the underrepresentation of Aboriginal histories in museum collections and interpretation in 2002.9 Nēpia Mahuika also asserts the coexistence of Māori and Pākehā history in Aotearoa New Zealand, stating:

All New Zealand history is relevant to Māori and ... Māori are relevant in all New Zealand histories ... it all has a bearing on the long-standing history of tangata whenua [the country's people]. Topics that seem comfortable safe harbours outside the currents of Māori history should be more closely charted to determine how they align with, or disturb, the conventional assumption that New Zealand narratives and Māori narratives are separable. These are the really dangerous waters, the supposed safe harbours away from the rip tides of Māori history; below their calm surfaces lurks a powerful colonial undertow.<sup>10</sup>

Māori-Pākehā entanglements in Aotearoa New Zealand winegrowing is a field of inquiry that awaits its scholarly historian. My research is informed, however, by Mahuika's caution against perpetuating the

"colonial undertow" of overlooking Indigenous participation in the histories of settler colonial nations. Similarly, in recasting histories of the emergence of settler colonial governance in Australia as relational, Ann Curthoys and Jessica Mitchell argue that political history can no longer be written without attention to First Nations. The same may be said of histories of the wine industry.

Out of respect for the First Nations people whose histories are discussed in this article, I acknowledge that I am a sixth-generation non-Indigenous Australian historian born on unceded Wiradjuri Country and writing this article on unceded Awabakal land. Settler colonial theory frames the elimination of Indigenous dominion over land through colonial violence and the replacement of Indigenous sovereignty with settler sovereignty and possession of land. I am a settler colonial as theorized by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, benefiting from multiple generations of settler colonial landownership and reconfiguration of that land into modes of capital extraction. 12 Therefore my analytical framework is relational rather than postcolonial. This standpoint recognizes Linda Tuhiwai Smith's concern that postcolonial identification of representations of Others in literary culture in settler colonial nations does not sweep aside the present danger to First Peoples of surviving colonization in their ancestral lands. According to Smith, in her foundational definition of decolonizing methodologies, the unsatisfactory nature of postcolonial scholarship in Oceania was "best articulated by [Australian] Aborigine activist Bobbi Sykes, who asked at an academic conference: 'What? Post-colonialism? Have they left?"13 As I am not leaving Australia to return to the homeland of either my British or European ancestors, I am "they" as referred to by Sykes. As I cannot be "postcolonial" in Smith's typology, I situate my study as relational.

Why not seek to decolonize the role of First Nations in settler colonial winegrowing? As historian Anna Clark observes, the imperative to apply decolonizing methodologies is clear, what is less clear is how non-Indigenous historians may do so:

While the ethical imperative to include Indigenous voices and perspectives has become increasingly accepted by historians and the wider public, the disciplinary implications of that inclusion are far from reconciled. Attempts by scholars to "excavate and denaturalize" what [Antoinette] Burton ... describes as "the archive logic" that dwells at the heart of what is generally accepted as professional historical

practice have gone some way to shifting those perspectives and occlusions. They do so by interrogating silences in embodied histories, in environmental archives, in material culture and oral histories.... They read along the archival grain, as Ann Laura Stoler ... advocates, as well as across and between the lines of their sources, following the urging of ethnographic historians like Greg Dening ... and Rhys Isaac.... And they have become increasingly aware, especially since the cultural turn, of their own disciplinary "blind eyes," as [Catherine] Hall ... describes them.<sup>14</sup>

Following this increased awareness and with the intention to be an ally for First Nations — as there are no Indigenous Australian historians researching the role of Australian First Nations in winegrowing to collaborate with — I am holding space with a relational approach for Indigenous researchers who may seek in future to enter the field.

Briefly, the origins of experimental winegrowing in eastern Australia occurred as an (albeit very small) part of the initial invasion of Gadigal land of the Eora First Nation in 1788 to establish the first British colony of Australia: New South Wales. British colonial occupation of early Sydney, the initial township of the colony, comprised a military garrison guarding transported convicts. Colonial officials onboard the flotilla of eleven ships that constituted the invading force in 1788 purchased V. vinifera from settler colonial Dutch winegrowers during a layover at the Cape colony in late 1787. It is well documented that colonists trialled the cultivation of these winegrape plants that had been acclimatized at the Cape by planting them near to present-day Circular Quay in Warrane/Sydney Cove. As far as it is possible to tell from the historical record, experienced gardeners overseeing convict transport labourers planted cuttings from the original plants at another site in Dharug Country at a site briefly renamed Rose Hill by colonists and thereafter called Parramatta (a Dharug word). 15 First Nations resisted colonization but as many as two thirds of the Eora Nation died from colonial violence and disease in the early years of colonization in the Sydney region.<sup>16</sup>

For the most part, after the earliest trials with winegrowing, (mainly) British settlers with some capital attempted to create a wine industry in New South Wales and in subsequent British Australian colonies. Some colonists in the nineteenth century — speaking Portuguese, German, Italian, Swiss German, and other European languages

— owned land or laboured for settler capitalist landowners. There were very few Spanish winegrowers as land ownership in the colonies was mainly limited to British migrants and naturalized subjects of non-British countries, and not all European wine countries became sources of British Australian immigration.<sup>17</sup>

In the classical and biblical cultures that are foundational to histories of the so-called rise of Western civilizations and consequent European imperial hegemony, V. vinifera was a sacred, elite, healing, and popular product that symbolized success and luxury. Some of this symbolism derived from the mysteries of wine fermentation, the psychotropic effects of wine, and the intensive labour and intellect required to produce it. 18 It takes many years to successfully raise grape vines and make drinkable and marketable wine in a specific location. Grapevines are perennial domesticated crops where fruiting does not begin until three years after planting. Winegrapes are different *V. vinifera* cultivars than grapes for eating fresh or dried, and they begin only to show distinctive fruit characters and produce profitable yields for winemaking after about seven years of growth. Even pre-industrial scale winegrape cultivation required considerable investment in embedded human settlement. This is distinct from comestible crops such as grasses that produce grain and leafy or root vegetables with annual growth cycles that may be managed under conditions of less "settled" occupation of land than winegrapes.

Furthermore, distinctive wine taste, style, and quality depend upon *V. vinifera*'s suitability to the planting environment. New vines are traditionally grown from cuttings obtained from existing vineyards after the annual grape harvest to clone vines of proven quality. (Planting seeds means chancing natural selection and unruly characteristics in the fruit of the vine.) Winemaking is more complex than simply fermenting winegrapes, and the creation of a reputation for wine quality is more multifaceted than other less storied crop-based manufacture. Narratives deployed to sell wine add value to what can be a reasonably simple product consumed close to its place of production or, in combination with technological innovations, a luxury product transported far from its vineyards of production.

From the twelfth century, English and later British elites imported wine from Europe, and as Britain became a richer country from the late eighteenth century, British political elites increasingly consumed wine. Certain wine styles symbolized British manly strength in leadership, a culture connected with shifting allegiances

in British wine trade with Portugal and France and the politics of European powers. <sup>19</sup> British elites existing on the cusp of modernity, in part funded by colonization in the Americas, embraced symbols of grapes in material culture as denoting imperial wealth and luxurious civility. <sup>20</sup> These British imperialists perceived the potential to profit from winegrowing in temperate climate colonies. Aspirations to introduce and acclimatize *V. vinifera* to colonized territories formed part of the cultural baggage of imperial reach into the Atlantic and Pacific oceanic regions. <sup>21</sup>

British colonists in New South Wales considered winegrape cultivation and wine consumption as potential pacifying forces, not of First Peoples but of the convict and working-class labour force required to build a new economic and cultural order in the colony.<sup>22</sup> Vine stock and a panoply of economic, social, cultural, and environmental ideas about winegrowing subsequently circulated to other colonies. As Erica Hannickel has shown, "[settler colonial North] Americans and Australians sought to prove themselves and their landscapes as solidly located within the accepted Western narrative of world history which claimed that all powerful nations since antiquity, had successful grape cultures."23 Most settler capitalists imbued with these ideas who grew winegrapes in Australia did so with non-Aboriginal labour. 24 It is worth noting here that Australia's First Nations are referred to as Aboriginal people on the mainland and Tasmania and as Torres Strait Islanders in that region. Winegrape cultivation occurs only in latitudes where Aboriginal peoples live, not in the Torres Strait Islands.

#### New Evidence of Gringai/Guringay/Gweagal and Kulin Connections

The Hunter Valley, New South Wales, is an early colonized winegrowing region north of the Sydney Basin that is the ancestral land of the First Nations of Awabakal, Worimi, Wonnarua (including Gringai/Guringay/Gweagal — henceforth Gringai), and Kamileroi. Due to the location, climate, and soils of the Hunter region, colonial officials began experimenting in the 1810s with transforming the territory of the "Maitland tribe," as colonists referred to Wonnarua peoples, into very small-scale farms (measured in tens of acres) supplying goods to Sydney. Then colonial authorities began to seed larger scale agricultural production. This new objective received a fillip in the early 1820s with the survey and sale of 2,000 acre parcels of "Crown" land

to encourage British settler capitalist immigration and investment. Despite the concomitant escalation of settler-Indigenous violence in the region from the 1820s, members of the Gringai clan continued, until the 1840s, to coexist with settlers on at least three of the colonial estates where aspirational winegrowing took place alongside more profitable pursuits such as other crops or grazing cattle. There is little evidence that Aboriginal people laboured to produce marketable goods at these properties. Settler capitalists relied on labourers assigned from the system of convict transportation to the colony, which continued to 1840, or freed convicts. From the late 1840s, landowning settlers sponsored the immigration of German-speaking workers and their families, some of whom recorded accounts of Aboriginal people in the region. During this time, British landowner Charles Boydell of Camyr Allyn near Maitland developed close ties with Gringai, recording their language and rituals. As late as 1882, by which time Boydell's son James had inherited the property, a group of Gringai still camped at Camyr Allyn.<sup>25</sup>

By 1882, Boydell cared for Gringai at "a hospital of my own ... of sick blacks" and lamented that promises of government assistance for these people had not materialized. "Blind Sally" died as the "Manager of the [Maloga] Mission took away 15 men, women and children, which is a great relief to me; I sincerely trust that some good may be done for the poor creatures." <sup>26</sup>

Charismatic Christians Daniel and Janet Matthews founded Maloga Aboriginal Mission on the New South Wales bank of the Murray River, which borders New South Wales and Victoria, in 1870 to house, provision, and minister to Aboriginal people. Over the next few years, Daniel Matthews travelled throughout the colony seeking settler donations to bolster the finances of the mission, which also received funding from the Aborigines Protection Association of New South Wales and the Office of the Colonial Secretary. Matthews's colonial connections included the Anglican community at Maitland. According to Maitland newspaper reports, Matthews "induced" the Gringai to travel from Camyr Allyn to Maloga, implying that this removal of First Nations from their ancestral land constituted a clever, kind, and noncoercive act.<sup>27</sup> The perceived "good" Matthews provided for the Gringai from Camyr Allyn may also be described as welfare bestowed under conditions of Christian doctrinal control and exclusion from land ownership under settler colonial law at a distance from urban labour markets.

A month later, Maitland supporters of Maloga raised thirty-six pounds as an "instalment" in donations to the mission. On receiving the funds. Matthews wrote in reply:

The blacks from Camyrallyn [sic] are getting on grandly, they are a happy people, and are quite at home with the others. One of the women — Rosey — was helping me to prepare the food for the school-house children yesterday, she seemed so thankful for being at a real home, and her little girl going to school. She said to me, "I would like the people in Maitland to see us now, Mr Matthews." My dear wife and I long to see more of these poor and neglected people cared for in the same way, it is a grand work. And we long to see it prosper and extend.<sup>28</sup>

There is no document record in the voice of Rosey and her kin at Maloga, but their recorded actions dispute Matthews's story.

Maloga Mission Station formed a part of colonial policies designed to keep Aboriginal people away from settler townships.<sup>29</sup> Maloga is significant in Australia's settler-Indigenous histories of Christianity, as well as histories of land dispossession and the colonial establishment of mission stations and reserve lands, ostensibly providing colonial protection for Aboriginal people during a perceived racialized decline. The Matthews claimed in the summer of late 1883 through to early 1884 to have overcome the resistance of ninety-eight of the mission's Aboriginal residents and achieved a mass conversion of historic proportions. Claire McLisky interprets this landmark event as owing "as much to Aboriginal people's past connections to and future aspirations for their traditional lands as they did to the institution known as Maloga."30 The Gringai did not, however, participate in the conversion event. Early in 1883, Daniel Matthews advised that "your people from Maitland are longing for their home again" and hoped a mission station might be formed in two potential locations in the Maitland district.<sup>31</sup>

Despite Matthews testimony that Rosey was satisfied at Maloga, she was likely among the thirteen people who in early 1883 suddenly left the mission to travel home, to Matthews's "regret and disappointment, as we had shown them great kindness, and had been the means in God's hands of preserving them from the misery and vice of their former experience, for the time being." It is not clear why two fewer Gringai returned home from Maloga than the fifteen Boydell recorded as going there. A report in the *Maitland Mercury* stated, with far less

fanfare than the announcement of the Gringai's departure from Maitland, that Matthews in fact found "the Maitland blacks" to be "dissatisfied from the first." Rosey and her kin refused to be banished far from their Country, although Boydell and other settlers insisted they had no place in and around Maitland unless they developed independence from settler care. Yet the settler colonial order offered the Gringai no right to freehold landownership or labour opportunities they were prepared to accept, an impasse it appears colonists, including Boydell, were not prepared to resolve.

Due to the lack of Aboriginal land rights in Australia until the late twentieth century, settler colonial employer-Indigenous labour relations — and particularly settler colonial employer-Indigenous labour relations mediated around Indigenous residents at mission stations — is the main junction through which Indigenous histories are connected with settler colonial winegrowing. Maggie Brady, Jillian Barnes, and I explored two notable connections. In one key instance, a large group of Aboriginal people from Sackville Reserve in the Hawkesbury River district between Sydney and the Hunter Valley performed seasonal labour at Italian medical doctor Thomas Fiaschi's Tizzana property in the early twentieth century. Sackville residents developed meaningful attachments to this working relationship and drew colonial admiration for their sobriety and industry. The other instance is relations between people of the Kulin nation and the De Pury family of Swiss settler capitalists, also at the turn of the twentieth century.

In Victoria in the late nineteenth century, Kulin Nation leader William Barak — a sober Christian — lived at Coranderrk Mission, a Westernized Aboriginal village and successful farming and grazing community that the colonial government permitted to be established on 5,000 acres in 1863. However, in the 1880s, colonial government policies began to move more decisively toward preventing Aboriginal freehold land ownership. Despite articulate entreaties by Barak and his community, the successes achieved through Aboriginal-settler administrative collaboration at Coranderrk (a Kulin word) were undermined by new but hostile settler colonial management, leading to the economic and social fracturing of the Kulin at Coranderrk. Meanwhile, the settler colonial Swiss property that became Yeringberg (Yering is a Kulin word), one of the main winegrape enterprises of the Yarra Valley, lay adjacent to Coranderrk from the 1860s.<sup>35</sup>

As well as owning Yeringberg and being a trusted friend of Barak, Guillaume De Pury served as a leading member of the Swiss Angli-

can community of the Yarra Valley, contributed to the establishment of the (white) rural shire of Lilydale, participated in the Commission of Inquiry into the future of Aboriginal cooperative management of Coranderrk in 1881, and served as a commissioner of Melbourne's 1888 International Exhibition.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1880s, De Pury employed six to eight European immigrants (possibly full time) in grape and wine production.<sup>37</sup> Some colonial wine businesses thrived by the late nineteenth century, yet winegrowing experience proved inconsistent with the unbounded optimism of boosterist literature. Marian Aveling (Quartly) noted that for De Pury,

Wine sales hardly covered running costs. Guillaume De Pury's account books show that at "Yeringberg" the day to day expenses were largely financed by other activities of the estate.... And all the while there was interest to pay on mortgages — eight or nine percent, devouring [profits] like an animalculae in fermenting must.<sup>38</sup>

De Pury likely clung to his struggling winegrowing enterprise for the same reasons Hunter Valley growers did in lean years: habitual attachment to this type of production, the considerable investment represented by an established vineyard, the challenge to find a replacement land use, and the desire to hand on the property to descendants.

De Pury's death in 1890 led to his elder son George assuming management of Yeringberg. The Yarra Valley had by this time avoided the spread of the American aphid phylloxera that weakened and destroyed *V. vinifera* in vineyards around the world. Even so, George's inheritance occurred as the Australian colonies experienced the first serious economic depression in fifty years, reducing domestic demand for De Pury's wines. Over the next decade, George De Pury pulled out every second row of his vines, exchanging the original system of close planting for high per-acre yields with space for a horse-drawn plow. This lowered human labour costs for De Pury but may have also removed labour opportunities for the Kulin.<sup>39</sup>

This is the context for farm daybook entries by George De Pury in mid-April 1901 when Kulin, whom De Pury referred to as 'blacks,' still occasionally gained employment at Yeringberg. The April 10 entry states, "went to Black Station got 16 blacks to pick grapes R.H. [red hermitage grapes]." On April 11, the grape harvest commenced with "RH nice and ripe 13 baumé. Fritz over[seeing] Blacks in vine-

yard." On April 13, De Pury "paid off the blacks." <sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, De Pury did not name the Aboriginal employees. Fritz was a non-Indigenous labourer who often worked in the winery. (Baumé is the proportion of grape sugar, an indicator of the sugar-acid balance likely to be achieved when crushed grapes are fermented into wine.) Nevertheless, De Pury's payment of the 'black' workers from Coranderrk is important as it indicates a more mutual arrangement than bartering for labour or non-payment which beset many Aboriginal-colonial labour arrangements.

On July 15, 1902, George De Pury "put on black boy tying leaders [pruned canes in vineyard]." This entry is underlined. The employment of the "black boy" may have been a favour to Barak or another Kulin man, Johnny Terrick. Or, compared with other underlined entries, which are not common in the day book, the underlining may indicate the need to make a payment to the 'black' worker. This boy appears to have worked only for one day. Other boys employed are not referred to by colour, indicating racialization in these industrial relations.

On July 21, "Fritz and Blacky began racking [transferring wine from one barrel to another] new white wines." On July 22, "Fritz and Blacky racking new whites finished began old whites." Entries for July 23 and 24 both read, "Fritz and Blacky racking white wines." On July 25, the pair finished racking white wines and commenced racking red wines. They continued to do so on Saturday July 26, rested the following day, and completed the task on Monday July 28. A few days later, the pair cleaned up the winery and then moved to building or repairing the "kitchen drains." By September, there is another mention of Fritz without Blacky, suggesting Blacky had been employed seasonally to assist Fritz.<sup>43</sup>

These are the final entries hinting at Aboriginal labour at Yeringberg. It may be that with Barak's death in 1903 the De Pury relationship with the "black station" as a source of labour drew to a close. Until this time, De Pury trusted and could afford the Coranderrk residents he employed. Conversely, Coranderrk residents appear to have increasingly limited opportunities for paid work as the wider white community of the region expressed similar hostilities toward them as had Maitland residents of the Gringai. Irrespective of evidence of De Pury's benevolence towards the Kulin, this settler colonist's growing participation in colonial matters during this period coincided with the decline in opportunities and self-determination for Barak and

the Kulin Nation. Shared histories of colonial betterment corresponding with Indigenous dispossession is a common thread of colonization in Australia.

#### Connections with the Yuit Nation

Missionary-Yuit relations at New Norcia Aboriginal Mission Station in Western Australia offer a different viewpoint again of relational histories in settler colonial winegrowing. New Norcia was established in the mid-nineteenth century about eighty-five miles inland from Perth, by Spanish Catholic missionary Rosendo Salvado. Dom Salvado's journey to the southwestern corner of the Australian continent resulted from petitions by Catholics in the region for congregational leadership as well as Salvado's calling (at that time with a fellow monk) to work "for the conversion of native peoples in whatever part of the globe we should happen to be sent."

Salvado wrote tenderly and informatively of his initial dependence upon Yuit peoples for sustenance and navigation. He learned Yuit names and their language. He and other monks later stationed at New Norcia understood that land obtained from the British Crown belonged first to the Yuit. Salvado strenuously fostered the stability and continuity of Yuit presence in this region, and harboured other First Nations people, as long as the Aboriginal people met expectations of Christianity and settler colonial economy and society. Salvado expressed pride when Bishop John Brady, visiting New Norcia for the first time in 1847, was "surprised" by "so much civilized development in the midst of the thick and endless bush" and especially "pleased" by the "moral and civil improvement that had taken place in the lives of our natives."

Salvado began New Norcia with twenty acres of Yuit Country and throughout forty years expanded the mission property through lease and purchase from the British Crown of a further 950,000 acres of Aboriginal land. This included 'marginal' sheep grazing territory (unsuitable for agriculture). Within the mission territory an Aboriginal village lay near a monastery. As many as eighty non-Indigenous brothers housed in the monastery trained Aboriginal people in farming and other manual work and educated Aboriginal children in reading, writing, and music. Tiffany Shellam has traced Salvado's assigning of farming acreage and cattle to Yuit men Bilagoro, Dwergan, N-yalbinga, and Takencut in 1848. Twenty years later these men petitioned the colonial government to own the land under colonial law. Although

their campaign to regain this land did not succeed, Shellam points to the Yuit efforts as being as significant as the more widely known Coranderrk agitation to own and farm their ancestral land, as discussed briefly above.<sup>47</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century New Norcia also contained eighty acres of winegrape vineyards. It is not clear when Salvado and his clerical brethren established these vines, but by the 1880s the monks cared for them in all seasons — with no evidence of Aboriginal workers assisting at any time — and pressed the harvested grapes by foot for fermentation. Several settler colonial travellers delighted in visiting New Norcia, where their welcome included good food and wine. In 1896, one of Australia's few female journalists of this era, N. V. Philpott, described being welcomed to New Norcia by a Spanish monk with halting English. This monk introduced Philpott to Eliza, who Philpott described as "black, plump, and beaming like a picture from 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" despite presumably having no African American ancestry. Eliza showed Philpott to her room to freshen up before lunch. Later, after the monastery's siesta, Salvado led Philpott on a tour of the grounds.

First we visited the cellar, which extends under the "guests' house" and right away under the quad where we entered a distance of about 200ft. This cool retreat is a rare sight, with its double row of hogheads and tuns, all filled with wine made from the small black grape of New Norcia, and which is said by many to be equal to the finest Madeira. Bishop Salvado has a royal disdain for cheap honors. He could not be persuaded to exhibit this wine at any local contest. "Who are the judges?" he exclaimed scornfully. "Someone, perhaps, who has never tasted genuine wine in his life! You see them — of, I have seen them!["]— and his fine old eyes lit up with merry scorn—"They take it this way"—holding it up and looking at it sideways. "They taste it this way, chewing it all the time, and if it bites the throat they say it is good. All humbug! They know nothing about it. Only adulterated wine will grip the throat; genuine wine will do nothing of the kind. Humbug every bit of it! What do these judges in the colonies know?"48

This passage reveals Salvado's view of New Norcia wine as a continuation of his Spanish heritage in a way that other newspaper reports do

not. Salvado perceived New Norcia's wine as vastly superior to wines made by British colonists.

Colonial Australian winemaking — shaped by British wine trade traditions and influenced predominantly by market intentions — relied upon the building of product reputation through country show competitions (fairs) and colonial and international exhibitions. Salvado, however, valued wine that emulated his well-versed preference for imbibing wine with food as well as, probably, for sacramental purposes. Catholic clergy in colonial Australia did not need to produce sacramental wine as wines from many parts of the world were imported from 1788 onward due to the strength of British wine trade networks. Only middle class British colonists practised dining with wine as did Salvado, and this middle class constituted a very small proportion of the colonial Australian population.

Given New Norcia's creation as a place of perceived economic, social and spiritual uplift of Aboriginal people it is significant that there is no evidence of Aboriginal people employed in the vineyard at New Norcia. The apparent absence of Aboriginal people from New Norcia's vineyards during Salvado's tenure, until his death during a visit to Rome in 1900, may simply have been because sufficient labourers existed among the large number of monks. The absence of any evidence of Aboriginal people associated with the vineyards also infers the separation between wine as part of the missionaries' "good life." Either way, the separation of Aboriginal people from New Norcia's vineyards and winery highlights the parallel lives led by settler colonists and First Nations in their shared history at this mission.

It is less surprising to find Aboriginal people excluded from the winery. Salvado would have been breaking the settler colonial law if he shared wine with Indigenous residents of New Norcia. Settler colonists could not sell wine to Aboriginal people in Western Australia, or indeed anywhere in Australia, at this time. <sup>49</sup> This state of affairs marks a line between Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences of colonization. And Salvado's successor as abbot, Fulgentius Torres, made changes that extended this line of demarcation into a chasm. Torres marginalised New Norcia's Aboriginal residents through changes to the mission's operations and infrastructure, ushering in an era of their very poor treatment. Torres also made New Norcia's winemaking business-oriented compared with the rustic novelty favoured by Salvado. The point to be made here is the widening gap between Aboriginal people and settler colonists in rights not only to land but

to a "good life." It has been said that in the 1940s, a generation after Torres relocated and commodified the mission's winegrape enterprise New Norcia monks enjoyed and ritualized vineyard labour.<sup>50</sup> This experience of an imported form of arcadian delight for the monks of New Norcia coincided with the transition in settler colonial government policies to the harshest yet suppression of Indigenous culture. Although frontier massacres of Aboriginal people by settler colonists ceased in 1930 Indigenous Australian experienced a worsening of structural and cultural racism until the late 1960s.

#### Contemporary First Nations in the Wine Industry

My research into shared histories of winegrape production aims to understand continuing divisions between cultural and economic citizenship for Indigenous Australians compared with non-Indigenous Australians. The opening of new global wine markets from the 1990s in response to, first, settler colonial Australian wine marketing, followed by settler colonial New Zealand product innovations, coincided with a new era in self-determined Indigenous rights in knowledge making. Smith, for example, encouraged Indigenous academics to denaturalize Western ways of knowing by freeing themselves from being primitive objects of Western scholarship, countering the dominance of settler colonial voices in research and becoming instead modern knowledge producers whose inquiries and narratives bridged Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.<sup>51</sup> Yet, until recently, few historians have sought to connect Indigenous histories with settler colonial winegrowing.<sup>52</sup>

In our study of Aboriginal participation in the settler colonial Australian wine industry, Brady, Barnes, and I made brief mention of Khoesan labour in the South African Cape of Good Hope wine industry and gestured to Māori involvement in the Aotearoa New Zealand industry. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Pākehā (white) anthropologist of the wine industry Peter Howland acknowledges Māori dispossession and the colonial after-effects of settler colonialism. Howland recognizes too that colonial claims of bringing settled cultivation to Māori lands overlooks systematic cultivation by Māori of kumara, or sweet potato, transplanted from elsewhere in the Pacific at least a millennium earlier. He also states that Aotearoa New Zealand wine history has not yet been drawn into conversation with evidence of "the decimation of Māori culture, language, sovereignty and lands wrought by

vineyards amid the rampant deforestation and wholesale pollution of lakes, rivers, and streams caused by ... protectionist agriculture."55

Although Algeria is geographically beyond the purview of this article I am interested in how and where Owen White incorporated an Algerian perspective into his history of the "economic life" of the Euro-Algerian (mainly French colonial) wine industry. White's *The Blood of the Colony* is an orthodox economic and social history that contains, for example, vivid accounts of violence by Euro-Algerian wine industry employees against Algerian labourers. In the absence of historical Algerian voices on winegrowing White presents a fond contemporary Algerian account, in an epilogue. This attachment is portrayed as rare amid national revulsion for the wine industry's perceived devastation of landscape, society, and economy during colonization from the 1830s to the 1950s and the destruction of livelihoods through rapid decolonization in the 1960s. 57

The Algerian informant, anonymised by White as "my guide," is a university educated Algerian employed by a private wine company who accompanied White to the village of Oued Berkèche near Aïn Témouchent. The outlier is presented as exemplifying men of his generation for whom remnant winegrape vineyards and memories of winegrowing evoke a nostalgia for youth. The guide's family and friends disapprove of his employment in the wine industry. The guide, for his part, is saddened that "now children were taught in school that the vine was la culture de Satan—'the devil's crop.' He speculates that in twenty years there would not be a single vineyard left in Algeria." This illuminates the complexity of finding First Peoples' voices and of the colonial after-effects of winegrowing in Algeria as a former French colony.

By contrast, winegrowing is not divisive in settler colonial nations where colonizers have not "left" as they did through Algerian decolonization. In British Columbia the Osoyoos Indian Band has since 1968 leased its tribal land to wine companies and from the 1980s operated its own winegrape vineyards, winery, and tourism facilities. Indeed, Clarence Louie, Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band is proud that the band of 540 members employs more than 1,000 people in enterprises including Nk'Mip (formerly Inkameep) vineyards and a wine brand operated in partnership with Anterra Wines. Although Osoyoos employment opportunities since the 1960s have included apple-picking and packing, and forestry, Chief Louie singles out the winegrape vineyards on Osoyoos land as significant to his people's fortitude and self-determination: "For most youth in the 1970s, working

in a vineyard was our first summer job." From twelve or thirteen years of age, during the fruiting season, Chief Louie and others harvested grapes from five o'clock in the morning and laboured for eight hours, earning two dollars per hour, before the height of the day's heat over the desert landscape; because of this "tough job training ground ... most of our people are very hard working." Nk'Mip — which brands itself as the world's first Indigenous owned winery — has employed an Osoyoos vineyard manager since the 1980s and an Osoyoos winemaker since 2009. 60

In 2022, Howland pointed to a recent surge in Māori wine enterprises. 61 By contrast, when Brady, Barnes, and I asked in 2019 whether Indigenous Australians had at any time been winegrowers, we found only one Aboriginal-owned winegrape vineyard. From 1998 to 2010, the Murrin Bridge Aboriginal Land Council supported the suggestion by an Italian Australian winery owner from their region to plant, cultivate, and harvest winegrapes on the central New South Wales land the Murrin Bridge community owned and managed collectively since 1983. The grape growing enterprise was one of many trialled by this community to provide economic uplift during an Australian wine boom in export and tourism. Nevertheless, we found no evidence of a special relationship between the Murrin Bridge community and their vineyard. 62 The Osoyoos Indian Band's successful engagement in winegrowing, winemaking, and wine tourism, and the contemporary flourishing of Indigenous wine brands in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand is a counterpoint to this paucity in Aboriginal winegrowing. Quite likely, the difference is related to Australia's lack of land treaties with Indigenous Australians and the systematic racialized exclusion of First Nations people from settler colonial education and economic participation until as recently as the 1980s.

*V. vinifera* is an introduced species in Oceania (as well as in the British Isles). In critical ecological terms, *V. vinifera* is considered invasive because it is exotic. Its planting in Australia is, however, almost exclusively through human intervention in monocultures. *V. vinifera* does not "run wild," as do introduced species defined by Australian government authorities as invasive. <sup>63</sup> Up to the turn of the twenty-first century, historical perspectives on winegrowing in places colonized since the early modern era, including within the British empire, tended to foreground what wine production "brought to" new lands in the way of civilization, profit, and pleasure. <sup>64</sup> In Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand today there is settler colonial pride

and enthusiasm for winegrowing. Now First Peoples too have become attached to *V. vinifera* as a plant, as well as the "good life" connected with its products. Combined with widening settler colonial support for Indigenous rights and self-determination, the presence of Indigenous vineyard ownership and wine business proprietors — while extremely small in number — is seen as a positive trend by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Future research must consider the comparative business histories of First Nations wine enterprises in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, along with two Aboriginal Australian wine brands that have commenced trading since 2021: Mt Yengo Wines and Munda Wines. These new businesses represent First Nations' entrepreneurship and survival in a sector with cultural as well as economic significance in shared histories of ongoing colonization. *Munda* means *land* in the language of the Wirangu and Kokatha First Peoples. The Munda philosophy is that Country speaks through the sensory quality of wines in the same manner as "terroir"-based marketing positions certain wines as expressive of the locale where their grapes are grown. Munda's claim signals a new Australian chapter in Indigenous-*V. vinifera* relations at variance with the Indigenous-*V. vinifera*-settler past.

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#### **Endnotes**

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- On archaeological progress in documenting this deep history, see Billy Griffiths, *Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2018).

- 7 See the collection of essays in Ann McGrath, Laura Rademaker, Jakelin Troy, eds., *Everywhen: Australia and the Language of Deep History* (Sydney: New South, 2023).
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- 10 Nēpia Mahuika, "New Zealand History Is Māori History: Tikanga as the Ethical Foundation of Historical Scholarship in Aotearoa New Zealand," New Zealand Journal of History 49, no. 1 (2015): 5–30.
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- 12 See Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409; and Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," Settler Colonial Studies 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–12.
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- 17 See Mikael Pierre, "France of the Southern Hemisphere': Transferring a European Wine Model to Colonial Australia" (PhD diss., University of Newcastle (Australia) and Universitè Bordeaux-Montaigne [France], 2020).
- 18 Unwin, Wine and the Vine, 216–18. See also McIntyre, First Vintage.
- 19 Ludington, *Politics of Wine*.
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- 21 David Dunstan and Julie McIntyre, Wine, Olives, Silk and Fruits: The Mediterranean Plant Complex and Agrarian Visions for a 'Practical Economic Future' in Colonial Australia," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 16 (2014): 29–50. See also Julie McIntyre, "Adam Smith and Faith in the Transformative Qualities of Wine in Colonial New South Wales, *Australian Historical Studies* 42 (2011): 194–211.
- 22 Julie McIntyre, John Germov, and Mikael Pierre, "To Wash Away a British Stain: Class, Trans-Imperialism and the Australian Wine Imaginary," in Wine, Terroir and Utopia: Making New Worlds, ed. Jacqueline Dutton and Peter Howland (London: Routledge, 2019), 42–57.
- 23 Erica Hannickel, "Cultivation and Control: Grape Growing as Expansion in Nineteenth-century United States and Australia," Comparative American Studies 8, no. 4 (2010): 284. See also Erica Hannickel, Empire of Vines: Wine Culture in America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Julie McIntyre, "Camden to London and Paris: The Role of the Macarthur Family in the Early New South Wales Wine Industry," History Compass 5, no. 2 (2007): 427–28; Dunstan and McIntyre, "Wine, Olives, Silk and Fruits."
- There has been no sustained study of Australian wine industry labour. In *Hunter Wine*, McIntyre and Germov discuss how labour in Australia's oldest continually producing wine region varied over time. From the 1820s to 1840, assigned convict workers performed most vineyard labour. From the late 1840s, Hunter winegrowers sponsored immigrant families from preunification Germany. At the turn of the twentieth century, seasonal labour was supplied mainly by family, neighbours, or schoolchildren. In the 1950s, European immigrants joined the labour market. By the 1980s, mechanization replaced most seasonal labour,

and specialist roles required training at vocational or university levels of education. Compare with McIntyre, Brady, and Barnes, "They Are among the Best Workers."

- 25 See McIntyre and Germov, Hunter Wine, 26, 100, 162.
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- 27 Maitland Mercury, July 29, 1882, 6.
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- 31 Maitland Mercury, January 9, 1883, 6.
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- 45 Tiffany Shellam, "On My Ground': Indigenous Farmers at New Norcia 1860s–1900s," in *Indigenous Communities and Settler Colonialism: Land*

Holding, Loss and Survival in an Interconnected World. ed. Zoe Laidlaw and Alan Lester (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 62.

- 46 Salvado, Memoirs, 62. My emphasis.
- 47 Shellam, "'On My Ground."
- 48 Australian Town and Country Journal, May 23, 1896, 29.
- 49 In 1843, legislation prohibited the settler supply of alcohol to people with Aboriginal ancestry. From 1911, responsibility for Aboriginal avoidance of alcohol shifted from settler colonists to Aboriginal people. See Kayla Calladine, "Liquor Restrictions in Western Australia," *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 7, no. 11 (2009): 23–26.
- 50 Peter Hocking (New Norcia historian and archivist) to Julie McIntyre, email correspondence, November 11, 2022.
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- 52 Except for Julie McIntyre, "'Bannelong Sat Down to Dinner with Governor Phillip and Drank His Wine and Coffee as Usual': Aborigines and Wine in Early New South Wales," *History Australia* 5, no. 2 (2008): 39.1–39.14.
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- 54 Peter Howland, "Drinking the Divine: Fine Wine, Religion, and the Socio-Political in Aotearoa New Zealand," *Journal of Wine Research* 30, no. 4 (2019): 275–93. See also Peter Howland, "New World of Wine and the Evolution of Universal, Vernacular Metro-Rural and Indigenous Idylls," in *The Routledge Handbook of Wine and Culture*, ed. Steve Charters et al. (London: Routledge, 2022), 265–66.
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- 63 See Julie McIntyre, "Wine Worlds are Animal Worlds Too: Native Australian Animal Vine Feeders and Interspecies Relations in the Ecologies that Host Vineyards," in *Animals Count: How Population Size Matters in Animal-Human Relations* ed. Nancy Cushing and Jodi Frawley (London: Routledge, 2018), 126–38.

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- 65 Munda Wines (website), accessed September 27, 2023, <a href="https://mundawines.com.au/">https://mundawines.com.au/</a>.