



AIATSIS
Australian Institute of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Finding aid

BARKER_J17

**Sound recordings collected by
Jimmie Barker, 1971**

Prepared June, 2022 by BS
Last updated 16 September 2022

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ACCESS

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Date: 1971

Extent: 4 audio tape reels (3 hrs. 59 min.) : analogue, mono ; 5 in. + field tape report sheets

Production history

These recordings were made by Jimmie Barker in September and November of 1971. They feature Mr Barker discussing his life story, as well as information on Muruwari language and cultural heritage.

The recording project was initiated by Janet Mathews, who obtained funding from the AIAS to provide recording equipment and consumables.

RELATED MATERIAL

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Transcripts of these field tapes are held in the AIATSIS Library, see PMS 205 and MS 89. For a complete listing of related material held by AIATSIS, consult our [online catalogue](#), Mura®. To conduct a search of available audio finding aids, please [click here](#).

ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

This finding aid was compiled from information provided by Jimmie Barker, Roy Barker, Janet Mathews and audition sheets prepared by AIATSIS staff. Timing points may be slightly out depending on the technologies and procedures in place at the time the recordings were auditioned.

ITEM LIST

Archive number	Field recording number	Description
002302A	Field tape 77B	Oral history and discussion with Jimmie Barker
002302B	Field tape 78B	Oral history and discussion with Jimmie Barker
002303A	Field tape 79B	Language elicitation of Muruwari words and phrases and discussion with Jimmie Barker
002303B	Field tape 80B	Oral history and discussion with Jimmie Barker

ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

002302A/Field tape 77B Sides 1 and 2

Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker
Personal subject(s):	Maggie Barker (née Ellis), Clara Ellis, Jimmy Ellis, Jack Ellis, Robin Campbell, Billy Barker, Albert Barker, Harry (Breaker) Morant, Henry Lawson
Subject keywords:	Social organisation – Clans, History - Genealogy and family history, Language - Change – Loss, Gender relations – Intermarriage, Employment - Conditions - Slavery and indentured labour, Environment - Climate and weather – Floods, Defence - World War I, Social identity - Mixed descent, Language - Oral communication, Law enforcement - Police trackers, Occupations - Pastoral industry workers - Drovers / Stockmen, Sport – Boxing, Mining industry – Opal, Religions - Christianity – Missions, Employment - Labour market, Education – Primary, Religions - Christianity - Religious education, Occupations - Pastoral industry workers – Shearers, Environment - Land management – Clearing, Water supply – Tanks, Death - Mortuary / funeral ceremonies – Burial, Transport – Railways, Race relations – Racism, Child welfare - Children's homes, Reproduction - Childbirth – Midwifery
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI, D25: Kurnu, D26: Barranbinya, D33: Guwamu
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06), Murdi Paaki / Bourke (N NSW SH55-10), Yantabulla map area (NW NSW SH55-05), Enngonia (N NSW SH55-06), Dry Lake (SW NSW SI55-09), Hungerford (SW Qld SH55-01), Paroo River (SW Qld SF54, SG55, NW NSW SH55), Weilmoringle (N NSW SH55-06), Culgoa River (N NSW SH55-06, SH55-07, SW Qld SH55-03), Birrie River (N NSW SH55-07), Longreach (Qld Far West SF55-13), Cunnamulla (SW Qld SH55-02), Goodooga (N NSW SH55-07), Darling River (NSW SH55, SI54), Gallipoli, Byrock (N NSW SH55-10), Warrego River (SW Qld SG55, N NSW SH55), Cobar (N NSW SH55-14), Nyngan (N NSW SH55-15), Warren (N NSW SH55-15), Lightning Ridge (N NSW SH55-07), Duck Creek (SW NSW SI55-11), Cato Creek (12476), Walgett (N NSW SH55-11), Coonamble (N NSW SH55-11), Dubbo (N NSW SI55-04), Wellington (N NSW SI55-04), Barwon River (N NSW SH55), Kinchela (NSW N Coast SH56-10), Cootamundra (SW NSW SI55-11)
Recording quality:	Fair
Notes	* There is a discrepancy here in that Jimmie (born 1900) describes Albert as much older. Given the Gallipoli landing took place in 1915 that would suggest Albert was only around 2 years older than Jimmie. *Here Jimmie likely refers to Cato Creek – a tributary of the Warrego River, north of Brewarrina.

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J17-A002302A	00:00:00	Jimmie Barker discusses his mother Maggie's family history. Includes detailed discussion of Maggie's brother Jack Ellis.	1971	Brewarrina, NSW

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
	00:25:13	Jimmie Barker chronicles his life at Brewarrina Mission Station.		
	01:05:02	End of field tape 77B and end of BARKER_J17-002302A.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Jimmie Barker speaks about his mother Maggie Ellis' family history and then continues an account of his life on Brewarrina Mission Station.</u>
00:00:07	Archive announcement.
00:00:12	Jimmie Barker records a tape ID identifying himself, the location – Brewarrina , and the date of recording – November 18th, 1971 .
00:01:00	Jimmie Barker speaks about the ancestral groups to which his mother Maggie was connected. Jimmie identifies three groups by their tribal names and speaks about Maggie's people and their connection to country around North Bourke, Ford's Bridge, Yantabulla, Barrington, Enngonia, and Dry Lake.
00:01:53	Jimmie Barker speaks about a Muruwari tribal group – the “western group” and their country bounded by Hungerford (at the eastern side of the Paroo River) stretching down south east toward Bourke.
00:02:33	Jimmie Barker speaks about a Muruwari tribal group that occupied the northwest region of Muruwari country.
00:02:42	Jimmie Barker speaks about a Muruwari tribal group that occupied the Weilmoringle, Denewan area.
00:02:46	Jimmie Barker speaks about an “Eastern” Muruwari tribal group that occupied the lands between Weilmoringle and Bourke, along the Colgoa river.
00:03:04	Jimmie Barker speaks about how in the old days the territory of this “Eastern” Muruwari tribal group would have included the Birrie River and extended all the way south to Brewarrina.
00:03:25	Jimmie Barker identifies his uncle Jack Ellis as a source of information about his mother Maggie's clan.
00:03:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about his maternal line - his mother Maggie (the eldest) and her siblings – Clara, Jimmy and Jack Ellis (in order of birth). Mention of Jimmy Ellis' burial place in Bourke.
00:04:37	Jimmie Barker speaks about the movement of his mother's relatives through Muruwari country and distinguishes them as “slow” Muruwari speakers in contrast to the “fast” speakers of the north.
00:05:25	Jimmie Barker speaks about the vocabulary shared between “outer” Muruwari tribal groups and neighbouring language groups such as Kulali, Kurnu, Barranbinya, Guwamu.
00:05:58	Jimmie Barker reflects on the dynamic between neighbouring Aboriginal language groups in this region surrounding Muruwari Country and how it gave rise to exchange in vocabulary and what Jimmie describes as the development of “universal” words. Mention of Ngemba words in common use amongst some Muruwari peoples.
00:06:36	Jimmie Barker muses on the extent to which tribal boundaries may have shifted over time and suggests that numbers must have “dwindled” in the 19 th century to the point where, by the beginning of the 20 th century there were “very few [Muruwari] people left.” Mention of Robin Campbell as the last of the ‘Culgoa’ Muruwari.

00:07:14	Jimmie Barker speaks about Enngonia and the Culgoa region and identifies Robin Campbell as the last remaining member of the Muruwari tribe in this area.
00:07:42	Jimmie Barker speaks about the Maranoas of Cunnamulla as Muruwari people but explains that the descendants of this group may well be now speaking Gunggari and other dialects of tribal groups to the north – north west of Muruwari country.
00:08:09	Jimmie Barker points out that both his mother Maggie and his Aunt Clara married “white” men. Jimmie explains that his uncle Jimmy Ellis lived at Longreach and died there before he was born. Of his Aunt Clara Jimmie recalls meeting her twice, once in 1906 and then again in 1909 – the year of her death.
00:09:05	Jimmie Barker explains that Clara and Jimmy ended up living further north, well beyond Muruwari country in central western Queensland. Mention of the town of Winton.
00:09:18	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack and his move from Cunnamulla down to live with Jimmie in the 1940s. Jimmie explains that Jack moved to Goodooga for a time and then returned to Brewarrina / Lightning Ridge where he died in 1950.
00:09:44	Jimmie Barker speaks about his Uncle Jack’s knowledge of Muruwari language – more in understanding than as a speaker himself. Jimmie notes that as the youngest sibling Jack didn’t learn the dialect.
00:10:15	Jimmie Barker explains that although his Uncle Jack was a rich source of cultural knowledge, he didn’t take advantage of this as he was not so focussed on recording Muruwari language and cultural heritage at this time. Mention of Enngonia and Barringun as places where Jack Ellis was culturally connected.
00:11:42	Jimmie Barker recalls being told by Maggie and his uncle Jack that his uncle Jimmy Ellis ran a pub in Brewarrina before going to Enngonia where he worked as a contractor and married a local Aboriginal woman. Jimmie explains this in the context of the broader practice of white male settlers “taking unto themselves” Aboriginal women as wives.
00:12:45	Jimmie Barker speaks about the birth of Jimmy Ellis’ four children and the death of “Granny Ellis” (Jimmy Ellis’ wife and Maggie’s mother). Jimmie mentions that his mother Maggie had taken up the role of carer in Granny Ellis’ later years, and “learnt quite a lot from her,” during this period.
00:13:13	Jimmie Barker speaks about his mother Maggie’s working life following the death of Granny Ellis, and her marriage in 1888/89. Mention of Enngonia and Yantabulla as places where Maggie worked.
00:13:47	Jimmie Barker speaks about the birth of his sister Marcia just before the great flood of 1890 that effected the Darling River and its tributaries. Jimmie is uncertain of Marcia’s place of birth.
00:14:23	Jimmie Barker speaks about the birth of his other siblings noting that he and Billy were born in the 20 th century.
00:14:42	Jimmie Barker speaks about his older siblings, their schooling in Bourke and Cunnamulla. Jimmie mentions that some (possibly all) of his older siblings were in the care of his aunt [Clara].
00:15:03	Jimmie Barker explains that he was estranged from his older siblings. Jimmie does mention his older brother Albert’s death (aged 16 or 17) at Gallipoli. *
00:15:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about the diaspora of his older brothers. One emigrated to America, another returned from WWI and was a part owner of a pastoral station near Byrock. Jimmie wonders whether his sister is still alive estimating that she’d be in her 80s at the time of recording.
00:16:33	Jimmie Barker speaks about his mother Maggie’s skin colour in comparison to her siblings Jack and Clara. Jimmie likens Maggie’s skin colour to his own.

00:17:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about his mother's character and her preference for tidiness and "nice things."
00:17:23	Jimmie Barker uses the word "superstitious" to describe the way his mother was steeped in traditional Aboriginal beliefs. Jimmie claims to share many of these beliefs himself and explains that knowledge of the Muruwari dialect opens up a different mode of perception.
00:17:52	Jimmie Barker speaks about how his mother mixed "modern ideas" with traditional Aboriginal ways.
00:18:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about how much he learned from his Mother Maggie, although he notes she did not speak Muruwari often. Jimmie reiterates that he learned Muruwari language from other sources.
00:18:42	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis, the fact that whilst he could not speak Muruwari he could understand it.
00:19:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis, his wit, his deafness in later life, his abilities as a storyteller, a step (tap) dancer, a mouth organist and a singer with great knowledge of "all the old songs."
00:20:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis as a principal source of Muruwari cultural knowledge.
00:20:25	Jimmie Barker speaks about his Uncle Jack Ellis' working life including tracking for the Police force, fencing work, horse breaking.
00:20:51	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis' friendship with Harry (Breaker) Morant. Jimmie reflects on Harry's reputation as "a very daring man" and stories uncle Jack told him about their mateship, breaking in horses together and swimming the Warrego River when in flood, whilst drunk.
00:21:39	Jimmie Barker speaks about Harry Morant's military experiences in the Boer War, his rank (lieutenant), court-martial and execution by firing squad for having murdered civilians whilst on active duty.
00:22:16	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis' failed attempts to enlist in the military.
00:22:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about his uncle Jack Ellis' droving days in Queensland and in NSW including at Cobar, Nyngan and Warren.
00:22:57	Jimmie Barker describes his uncle Jack as a very smart man, highly regarded in the "white" community and one of the "pugs" good boxers of western New South Wales.
00:23:30	Jimmie Barker speaks about how even though his uncle Jack was never involved in opal mining he had knowledge deposits in the area before mining took off at Lightning Ridge. Jimmie recalls visiting sights at Duck Creek that Jack had spoken about and seeing "potch" in the surface of the earth.
00:24:13	Jimmie Barker relates a story his Uncle Jack told him about meeting Henry Lawson for whom Jack had the highest regard.
00:24:46	Jimmie Barker by way of concluding this part of the recording (the discussion of "Maggie's people") addresses Janet Mathews directly and expresses a hope that it may be useful to her. The context, though unstated is clearly Janet's work on what would later be published as <i>The Two Worlds of Jimmie Barker</i> .
00:25:13	Jimmie Barker introduces the next section of the recording – a continuation of the chronicle of his life at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie provides the location of the station, 9 miles outside the town of Brewarrina and explains the Mission was home to him and many others up until 7 years ago (at the time of recording) when residents were moved to "Dodge City."

00:25:42	Jimmie Barker explains why the name “Dodge City” came to be synonymous with the settlement into which former residents of Brewarrina Mission Station were moved.
00:26:15	Jimmie Barker describes the circumstances of his first visit to Brewarrina in 1910 – the 40-mile buggy trip from Milroy station and the extreme January heat. Jimmie speaks about a visit to the Mission station and his impressions of the children he encountered there.
00:27:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about the employment / labour arrangements for Aboriginal people on large sheep stations in Northwest NSW around the turn of the century. Jimmie explains that Aboriginal children often grew up on these stations without schooling and only a new Aborigines Protection Board act requiring school attendance brought about a change an influx of people from these properties to Brewarrina Mission Station
00:28:41	Jimmie Barker speaks about what might have been a turning point in his own education. He recalls that it might have been possible for he and his brother Billy to be schooled at Milroy station as there was a governess employed there by the station manager. Jimmie believes his mother was advised (pressured?) not to take up this option and she moved with Jimmie and Billy to Brewarrina Mission Station on January 1 st , 1912.
00:29:35	Jimmie Barker speaks about the schooling regime at the mission wherein older boys (including Jimmie) were “part time” as they were expected work whereas younger children (including Billy) were “full time.”
00:30:13	Jimmie Barker speaks about the “outside jobs” that were a requirement of his schooling at the Mission - wood cutting, sheep work, fence repair, water carting and general cleaning
00:30:56	Jimmie Barker speaks about how he read voraciously once he’d acquired basic reading skills.
00:31:19	Jimmie Barker speaks positively about 1913 when two teachers from the education department were resident at Brewarrina Mission Station. Even so, under the control of the Mission Manager, indentured labour was emphasised ahead of educational development. Boys were required to work all day Saturday and attend Sunday school on Sunday morning.
00:32:01	Jimmie Barker recalls feeling relieved when the manager of the Mission was transferred elsewhere.
00:32:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the child labour abuses that Mission children were subjected to, given their status as State wards.
00:32:23	Archive announcement.
00:32:29	Jimmie Barker continues to speak about child labour abuses under the Mission system. Jimmie explains that the manager of the Mission had the power to apprentice children out “to anyone” for a period of up to 4 years at 2 shillings per week.
00:32:56	Jimmie Barker explains that in 1914 his schooling was disrupted by “outside jobs”
00:33:23	Jimmie Barker speaks briefly about his ‘apprenticeship’ to work for a pastoralist at Tottenham that began the following year (1915). Jimmie refers to an earlier detailed discussion of this period, furnished as a part of his autobiography Days Night and Day.
00:34:05	Jimmie Barker speaks about his return (by train) to Brewarrina Mission Station in August 1919. He explains the factors involved - the end of the 4-year term of his placement at Tottenham and the extent to which he had come to miss his mother, Maggie.

00:34:22	Jimmie Barker speaks about how after 2 or 3 days with Maggie at the Mission he took a job (for 2 and half weeks at 10 shillings per week) mustering for the shearing season.
00:35:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about another job that took him north into Queensland working as a drovers cook for 6 weeks. Jimmie speaks about his distaste for this job and the other men that were part of this droving party.
00:35:56	Jimmie Barker speaks about the next job he took, at 2 pounds 8 shillings a week, working as a horseman. This job took Jimmie through until Christmas, at which time he returned to the Mission for a few days before taking on another job early in 1920 pumping water for stock. Jimmie notes that this was a time of drought, and the rate of pay was again 2 pounds 8 shillings a week. Jimmie explains how he tired of this work which involved a lot of well digging in the Cato River * and finished up in March 1920.
00:37:39	Jimmie Barker speaks of his long-held desire to go to sea and work as Sailor but Maggie's poor health at this time stopped him from pursuing this.
00:38:01	Jimmie Barker speaks about a job "scrub cutting" near Byrock. Jimmie explains that due to the laziness of the other crew members he was shown favour by the boss and given extra money (2 pound 15 shillings a week) and a room at the station. Jimmie worked this job through until June 1920.
00:38:57	Jimmie Barker speaks about the heavy rains and floods of July 1920 that bogged livestock and forced the relocation of Brewarrina Mission Station residents to Red Hill, not from the railway line. Jimmie speaks about his work on the recovery effort, including 3 months spent repairing flood affected fencing.
00:41:24	Jimmie Barker speaks about being based in the Brewarrina township at this time, doing odd jobs, visiting his mother for whom he provided financial support. Jimmie comments on Maggie's frugality with the money he gave her.
00:41:55	Jimmie Barker speaks about Christmas 1920 and the month of December where he chose not to work. Jimmie explains how he'd developed an attraction for a life "on the track," having met a number of swagmen. Jimmie resolved to sample this way of life himself and in the first week of January 1920 he set off and was away until April of that year, carrying his swag from Walgett to Coonamble, Dubbo, Wellington, Warren and then back to Brewarrina. Jimmie mentions some the of men that he met and periods of near starvation.
00:44:12	Jimmie Barker speaks about the circumstances that led up to him to taking the position of handyman at Brewarrina Mission Station. Mention of his predecessor and the Station manager at that time who Jimmie describes as "a very broad Scotchman."
00:45:47	Jimmie Barker explains that he would not have taken up the job of handyman at Brewarrina Mission had his mother Maggie not been resident there and in poor health. Jimmie notes he started immediately and speaks about some of the work involved.
00:46:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about his immediate start as handyman at Brewarrina Mission Station and some of the work involved.
00:46:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about the provision of water at Brewarrina Mission Station which involved carrying water directly from the river. Jimmie describes rigging up a manual pump to what was an old 400 gallon "ship's tank," so that water could be dispensed into buckets and carted around the Mission on a tip dray.
00:48:04	Jimmie Barker refers to the year (1921) and speaks about the horses at Brewarrina Mission – two draught horses that were used for carting water and wood and light horses that were used with a sulky for trips into Brewarrina township.

00:48:30	Jimmie Barker speaks about how he used the dray to collect the dead from Brewarrina, collecting the bodies and transporting them for burial. Jimmie also speaks about thrice weekly trips to collect mail and provisions. In some instances, the dray was used for the bulk transport of rations – flour, sugar etc. Jimmie gives some background as to how contractors were used for the transport of provisions from government stores.
00:49:36	Jimmie Barker speaks about the mortuary work associated with his role at Brewarrina Mission Station - building coffins and transporting the deceased from Brewarrina hospital back to the Mission, where the caskets would be stored in the school prior to funeral rites and burial.
00:50:07	Jimmie Barker tells the story of one trip to Brewarrina to pick up a body from Brewarrina Hospital. Jimmie explains how others from the Mission refused to travel in the dray with the body and came in independently on horseback. Jimmie speaks about how when into town he would often buy saveloys to reward the boys who helped him on the Mission. Mention of the evening train arrival time, the bridge over the Barwon River and how he passed the time on these trips smoking cigarettes.
00:52:52	Jimmie Barker speaks about another occasion in 1921 when he brought the body of a young man from the hospital out to the Mission wrapped in blankets. Jimmie notes he was 21 years old at that time.
00:54:11	Jimmie Barker speaks about how in the wake of his mother Maggie's death on February 2nd, 1922, he considered leaving Brewarrina Mission to pursue a career at sea or on the railways. Jimmie discusses the factors that influenced his decision to stay on – job security, a desire to be with his “own people,” discrimination in the wider community, his good relations with the manager of the Mission and his relationship with Evelyn (his future wife) who he had met the year before.
00:56:06	Jimmie Barker discusses his work at Brewarrina Mission Station in 1922 – care of sheep and cattle, the creation of gardens made possible following the installation of a windmill.
00:57:22	Jimmie Barker explains that as the Mission handyman he was essentially his “own boss,” an arrangement he greatly preferred to the “rough life” of shearing, droving or farm labour. A life that had brought him into contact with people for whom he had little regard.
00:58:14	Jimmie Barker moves on to 1923 and speaks about how in wet weather he would lead a horse into town and load it up with mail and provisions rather than take the sulky.
00:58:51	Jimmie Barker speaks about 1924 as a busy time on the Mission with the post cutting and fence work involved in expansion of gardens across the Mission. Jimmie describes this as a happy time for residents although there was a slow exodus of families that almost led to the Mission Station being closed down. Jimmie explains that by the end of 1924 this trend was reversed, and numbers began to swell.
00:59:54	Jimmie Barker speaks about the “Aboriginal inspector” of the time withholding supply of engines, tools and machinery to the Mission because of his personal prejudices with regard to the ability of Aboriginal people to operate and maintain equipment.
01:00:25	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the gift of an engine and pump from a Brewarrina resident further enhanced irrigation on the Mission and the purchase of a small Ford utility motorcar greatly increased the frequency of travel into town.
01:02:08	Jimmie Barker speaks about the introduction of a dormitory for girls at Brewarrina Mission Station in 1924. Jimmie describes the influx of girls from the Cootamundra domestic training home. Mention of the Kinchela home for boys.

01:02:45	Jimmie Barker speaks about his role in transporting the children from training homes (domestic and farming) to pastoral and station properties in the area. Jimmie records the official rate for these Aboriginal child workers was 2 shillings a week and notes that “the good people [employers],” paid 10 shillings or more above this rate.
01:03:32	Jimmie Barker speaks further about his role at Brewarrina Mission Station transporting Mission residents to Brewarrina hospital. Jimmie recounts one late afternoon trip to the hospital in the utility, with a maternity case in wet boggy conditions.
01:04:41	Archive end announcement.
01:04:50	Tape rolls on – no content.
01:05:02	End of 002302A

[RETURN TO ITEM LIST](#)

002302B/Field tape 78B Sides 1 and 2

Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker
Personal subject(s):	Evelyn Wighton, Sidney Williams, James Danvers, Burt Groves, Jack Patten, William Ferguson, Evonne Goolagong, Clara Wighton, Jack Barker, Billy Barker, Gordon Barker, Roy Barker (Snr), Bert Barker, Margaret Barker, Mary Barker
Subject keywords:	Religions - Christianity – Missions, Reproduction - Childbirth – Midwifery, Gender relations – Marriage, Economic sectors - Building and construction, Health services, Health status – Hygiene, Animals - Mammals – Sheep, Economic sectors - Agriculture and horticulture – Dairying, Death - Mortuary / funeral ceremonies – Burial, Weapons - Clubs and fighting sticks – Fighting, Social welfare – Rationing, Communications - Postal services, Economic sectors – Engineering, Health status - Nutritional value of foods, Health – Treatments, Forestry – Sawmills, Politics and Government - Political action – Activism, Social organisation, Social welfare, Sound recording, Media - Broadcast media – Radio, Defence - World War II, Sport – Tennis, History - Genealogy and family history, Education – Teaching, Transport – Railways, Defence - Armed forces, Occupations - Pastoral industry workers – Shearers, Economic sectors – Hospitality, Aged - Retirement income - Pensions
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI ,
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06), Angledool (N NSW SH55-07), Walgett (N NSW SH55-11), Murdi Paaki / Bourke (N NSW SH55-10), Weilmoringle (N NSW SH55-06), Goodooga (N NSW SH55-07), Melbourne (Vic SJ55-05), Brisbane (SE Qld SG56-15), Pilliga (N NSW SH55-12), Peak Hill (N NSW SI55-03), Dubbo (N NSW SI55-04), Wellington (N NSW SI55-04), Tennant Creek (Central NT SE53-14), South Africa (Durban), Newcastle (NSW N Coast SI56-02), England, Germany, Norway, United States (USA), Burwood (S NSW SI55-12)
Recording quality:	Fair

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J17-	00:00:12	Continuation of Jimmie Barker	1971	Brewarrina,

- 00:11:33 Jimmie Barker speaks about the period from 1930 to 1933 when James Danvers was the manager of Brewarrina Mission Station.
- 00:17:07 Jimmie Barker speaks about the decline in conditions for residents of Brewarrina Mission Station in the years after James Danvers' departure.
- 00:22:34 Jimmie Barker speaks about his role, behind the scenes, in the formation of the Aborigines Progressive Association
- 00:26:26 Jimmie Barker speaks about the activism of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the fight for first nations rights.
- 00:33:30 Jimmie Barker speaks about sound recording and building radio transmitters in the first decades of the 20th century.
- 00:37:48 Jimmie Barker returns to the chronicle of his life at Brewarrina Mission Station including his efforts to join the military in 1940 and the death of his wife Evelyn in 1941.
- 00:46:00 Jimmie Barker speaks about his wife Evelyn's family.
- 00:49:47 Jimmie Barker speaks about his children and their working lives.
- 00:58:49 Jimmie Barker speaks about resigning his employment at Brewarrina Mission Station and the latter part of his working life at the Brewarrina Hotel and Brewarrina Hospital.
- 01:05:41 End of field tape 78B and end of BARKER_J17-A002302B.

Timing point	Description
	Continuation of a discussion in which Jimmie Barker recounts his life at Brewarrina Mission Station.
00:00:05	Archive announcement.
00:00:13	Continuation of a discussion in which Jimmie Barker recounts the roadside birth of a baby on the road from Brewarrina Mission Station to Brewarrina hospital. Jimmie notes with amusement that when his offsidiers heard the baby cry, they “took off” to a safe distance leaving him to deliver the baby as best he could.
00:02:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about his marriage to Evelyn in December 1924, his love for her and his great happiness at this time. Mention of his work attire which was for the most part “free issue” through the Mission.
00:03:31	Jimmie Barker speaks about 1925, a year when people were returning to the Mission, there was much work done to improve the Mission Station which Jimmie describes as “better than it ever was.” Jimmie records having built 5 small Sidney Williams steel houses and explains that he repurposed the steel from one of these houses for his current home (at time of recording).
00:04:37	Jimmie Barker speaks about health issues at Brewarrina Mission Station - no real medical care available onsite, prevalence of tuberculosis and possibly cancer. Jimmie reflects on the mortality rate in 1925 stating “most of the old Aboriginals passed away,” along with a significant number of younger people.
00:05:23	In the context of this discussion about health Jimmie Barker speaks about efforts to maintain hygiene standards at the Mission and notes that poisons such DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) were not used at that time. Mention of the practice of sheep dipping.
00:05:58	Jimmie Barker again speaks about the nature of his work at Brewarrina Mission Station including transporting people to and from work placements. Jimmie notes that in 1925 the Mission was divested of sheep and most of the cattle - only a couple of dairy cows remained, and it was Jimmie’s job to milk them. Jimmie also notes that another handyman was employed at the Mission that year and worked under his supervision.
00:07:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the small 3 room house in which he and Evelyn lived. Jimmie explains this was one of the old houses with a bathroom addition he’d added himself.
00:07:42	Jimmie Barker speaks about the constancy of his work through into 1926. Again, much time was devoted to the transportation of indentured workers and over a broader area including Angledool, Walgett and Bourke. Jimmie mentions that it wasn’t until 1930 that the Mission purchased a new truck.
00:08:25	Jimmie Barker speaks about his ongoing mortuary work, as undertaker and on one occasion administering burial rites as the manager of the Mission was in hospital.
00:08:41	Jimmie Barker speaks about enjoying the responsibility of “looking after people” at Brewarrina Mission Station including breaking up fights between residents. Jimmie remarks “it’s a wonder I never got my head knocked off with a <i>Bundi</i> .” Jimmie explains that these situations were better resolved without the involvement of the manager as people always listened to him. Mention of the fact that he was known on the Mission as “Joe.” *
00:10:05	Jimmie Barker explains that for the younger men at Brewarrina Mission Station they were required to work 3 days a week to earn their rations. Distributing rations was also Jimmie’s responsibility and this included meat, collected 3 times a week from

	town. Jimmie explains that whilst he was always working well beyond his job description he was never paid accordingly.
00:11:00	Jimmie Barker reflects that his working life remained essentially the same up until 1930 when a new manager arrived at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie recalls that he was sad to see the former manager leave as they had always enjoyed good relations.
00:11:33	Jimmie Barker describes the incoming manager (Danvers in 1930), as “one of the best we ever had.” Jimmie speaks about his diligence and lists some of the consequent improvements in living conditions at Brewarrina Mission Station – much greater provision of milk for children, vegetables - off the back of a new community garden and a new lorry.
00:12:13	Jimmie Barker jumps back in time momentarily to speak about mail sub-contracting work he’d undertaken in the past for the son of the previous (pre - 1930) manager of the Mission. The mail run took in Brewarrina, Weilmoringle, Goodooga and “round about,” and was 2-day trip. Mention also of a car hire business that Jimmie helped to run.
00:13:13	Jimmie Barker returns to 1930, the change in manager and improvement in circumstances at Brewarrina Mission Station which included a new water pump. Jimmie also notes that a new “Inspector of Aborigines” was appointed and “was a very nice man,” so in this sense the improvement in the administration of the Mission was twofold.
00:13:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about the engineering background of the Inspector and how this opened the way for the installation of a diesel engine and a centrifugal pump at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie laid the piping and constructed 5 and 10 thousand-gallon tanks to provide water directly to all the houses on the Mission.
00:14:34	Jimmie Barker speaks about the installation of an electrical plant with 64-volt generator at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie installed the wiring and circuitry for the lighting and machinery on the Mission. Jimmie speaks about the dietary improvements for children at the Mission and remarks “oh that got really shiny legs after that.” Jimmie explains that prior to this halcyon period under the new manager, people had existed on a “starvation diet” and this had been the principal cause of mortality for both young and old.
00:16:01	Jimmie Barker speaks about the arrival of a “sister” at Brewarrina Mission Station who provided medical care, including daily treatments for Trachoma.
00:16:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about the transfer of Danvers in 1933 and the arrival of a new manager at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie describes this new manager as an alcoholic and “not much good.” He managed the Mission for 18 months.
00:17:07	Jimmie Barker describes his work during this period for the forestry department measuring and transporting timber. Jimmie explains that, due to the incompetence and alcoholism of the manager, most of the high quality timber that he brought to the Mission was either not used or burnt as fire wood.
00:18:18	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the manager’s (post 1933) ill treatment and disregard of Brewarrina Mission residents, inspired him to try and draw public attention to the conditions under which Aboriginal people lived in the Mission system. Jimmie lists some of the injustices people were subjected to including expulsion under false pretences.
00:19:38	Jimmie Barker speaks about the arrival of a new manager to Brewarrina Mission Station in 1935. Jimmie describes him as a “rat bag” and recalls “nobody liked him,” in the short time that he was there (less than a year).

00:20:32	Jimmie Barker speaks about the next manager appointed to Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie recalls that whilst he was treated very well by this manager other residents of the Mission very treated very poorly. Jimmie used the phrase “boot and batten” to describe the manager’s treatment of younger men.
00:21:32	Jimmie Barker speaks about how in the winter of 1936, Angledool Mission was dissolved, and the residents were moved to Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie speaks about his involvement in transporting residents and demolishing the buildings and infrastructure (including “a mile of piping”) at Angledool, to salvage building materials for use at Brewarrina.
00:22:34	Jimmie Barker returns to the theme of injustice pointing out that he’d “seen it all” from his early days at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie speaks about how he and Burt Groves (former handyman at Angledool Mission) formed what was in effect a chapter of the Aborigines Progressive Association. Jimmie discusses Jack Patten’s direct involvement in this.
00:23:53	Jimmie Barker speaks about the difficulty of effecting change from within Brewarrina Mission Station or “compound” as it was known. Jimmie describes how the association was in a constant state of tension with the manager and assistant manager in their efforts to try and “uplift” the people. Jimmie explains the subversive tactics they were forced to employ.
00:25:00	Jimmie Barker explains how the APA activities at Brewarrina Mission ceased later in 1936, due in large part to mission residents informing against them to management. Jimmie speaks about the departure of Bert Groves to Coonamble (he’d wanted Jimmie to go with him to continue the APA work). Jimmie explains his strong belief at the time that change could not be affected from within the Mission system and the APA needed to exert pressure from outside. Discussion of John Patten’s intellect, his capacity as a public speaker and his publication of the <i>Abo Call</i> – the first periodical produced by the APA.
00:26:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about William Ferguson and his advocacy for Aboriginal rights. Jimmie explains that Ferguson was “blackballed” from all Mission Stations as he was seen as an agitator and disturber of the peace.
00:27:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the groundswell of support and agitation across the country in the fight for rights and the “undercover” effort to dismantle the existing Mission system as it was administered at the time by the Aborigines Protection Board. Jimmie Barker reflects on how this came to be some years later and the system that replaced it, whilst flawed, has resulted in greater self-determination for Aboriginal people. Short discussion of the Child welfare department’s role in the “upbringing” of Aboriginal children.
00:29:39	Jimmie Barker reflects on the improved outlook for Aboriginal people (at time of recording) and traces this back directly to the movement he was a key part of in 1936, that gave rise to the Aborigines Progressive Association and the wave of activism that followed.
00:30:04	Jimmie Barker notes that a proportion of Aboriginal people are disengaged with the fight for rights. He explains that his motivation has always been to try and help elevate Aboriginal people that want to participate in the Australian mainstream.
00:30:58	Jimmie Barker speaks about a recent community meeting where he was frustrated by views expressed by people and the lack of personal responsibility. Jimmie reflects on how traditional Aboriginal social structures built on the automatic distribution and sharing of material goods have contributed to welfare dependency.
00:32:17	Archive end announcement (Side 1).
00:32:21	Tape rolls on – no content.

00:33:26	Archive announcement (Side 2).
00:33:30	Jimmie Barker speaks about a change in the employment structure at Brewarrina Mission in 1937. Two men were employed in the handyman role that Jimmie had occupied previously, and they worked under what Jimmie describes as a gardener overseer. Jimmie describes his own workload as much heavier and he compares this to the period from 1921 to 1925 when he had much more time to himself, particularly in the evenings. Jimmie describes aspects of his home that were given over to educating children at the Mission – “a bit of a picture show,” a blackboard and a large school clock.
00:35:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the phonograph he had in his home which had the capacity to record onto wax cylinders. Jimmie describes recording Aboriginal people singing traditional songs (and some words), but explains he was limited in his recording efforts by the expense involved.
00:35:35	Jimmie Barker speaks about a room in his home at Brewarrina Mission Station which was in effect an electrical and mechanical workshop. Jimmie describes how in the 1920s cigarette companies distributed wireless radio parts. He ordered “blueprints” from a hobby shop in Sydney and with a close Aboriginal friend at the Mission built a wireless radio. Mention of the national radio transmission available at that time – 2LO Melbourne, 4QG Brisbane and 2BL Sydney which was established in 1925.
00:37:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the response of Brewarrina Mission Station residents to his wireless transmissions – their disbelief and view that this was some form of madness. Jimmie recalls seeing one of these people 40 years later, listening to a radio in Bourke and reminding him of how he’d reacted back on the Mission.
00:37:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about his ongoing work at Brewarrina Mission Station in 1938, at a time when the number of residents had increased. Jimmie was transporting people and maintaining the machinery at the Mission. Jimmie describes the lorry driving trips as arduous (“terrible turnouts”). Mention of destinations Pilliga, Bourke and Peak Hill.
00:39:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about the continuation of this work through 1939 until the outbreak of World War II when “things tightened up a bit” in terms of the administration of Brewarrina Mission Station.
00:39:39	Jimmie Barker speaks about his acceptance into the Transport Command of the Australian Military in 1940 but being “manpowered” by the board of Brewarrina Mission Station and forced to remain. Jimmie explains that for some time it had been his intention to leave the Mission in order to improve the circumstances of his family.
00:40:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about the legislation of the time that excluded Aboriginal people from compulsory subscription. Jimmie wonders whether this law is still in place (at the time of recording) and concludes that it’s unlikely due to the citizenship rights that had been granted to Aboriginal people in 1948.
00:41:47	Jimmie Barker speaks about New Year’s Day in 1941, being in Pilliga and heavy rains (15 inches) prevented him from returning to Brewarrina Mission Station until the 3rd of February. Jimmie recalls that his wife Evelyn who was expecting their youngest child was in Brewarrina hospital when he returned. Jimmie speaks about how Evelyn was transferred to the hospital in Bourke and experienced medical complications after a surgical procedure and gradually declined until she passed away in hospital on April 13th. Mention of Evelyn’s burial at Brewarrina Mission Station.
00:46:00	Jimmie Barker speaks about Evelyn’s family, the Wightons and the fact that Evelyn was one of thirteen children. Jimmie explains that at the time of recording, of Evelyn’s siblings, only one brother and two sisters are still alive. Jimmie speaks about

	Evelyn's heritage. It was Jimmie's belief that Evelyn's mother was a Māori and her father was "White." Jimmie expresses some uncertainty about this.
00:46:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about Evelyn's father's work making bricks. Mention of houses (still standing) in Dubbo and Wellington that feature these bricks.
00:47:11	Jimmie Barker speaks about Evelyn's younger sister, her recent death and her family connection (grandmother) to Australian tennis champion Evonne Goolagong. Jimmie reflects more generally on the athleticism of the Whitton family.
00:47:46	Jimmie Barker speaks about the military service of one of Evelyn's brothers and her eldest sister Clara (still living) and her vitality despite being well into her 80s. Mention of another of Evelyn's older sisters still living in Brewarrina.
00:48:35	Jimmie Barker speaks about the personal upheaval that followed Evelyn's death and reflects on his love and devotion for her and the children.
00:49:47	Jimmie Barker speaks about his children listing them in birthplace and chronology: Jack (Brewarrina township) 1925 Billy (Brewarrina Mission Station) 1926 Gordon (unspecified) 1927 died one month old Roy (Brewarrina Mission Station) 1928 Bert (Brewarrina township) 1930 Margaret (unspecified) 1937 Mary (unspecified) 1941
00:51:35	Jimmie Barker speaks about the challenge of caring for Margaret and Mary in particular, who was still a baby at the time of Evelyn's death. Jimmie mentions the help he received from Evelyn's Brewarrina based sister (name undisclosed).
00:52:11	Jimmie Barker speaks about the movements of his older children in the years following Evelyn's death. Jack and Billy went to Bourke to take up work at the aerodrome. Roy left school and took a job.
00:52:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about how his son Bert's education was affected by the decline in teaching standards at Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie explains that Bert's literacy was well below that of his other children.
00:53:12	Jimmie Barker speaks about the work history of his sons Jack and Billy who both finished up at the aerodrome in Bourke. Jack worked for a time at Tennant (?) Creek (earning as much as 180 pounds a week) before enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force. Jimmie explains his service was cut short due to asthma after which "he joined the yanks" (Texaco/Caltex?) and worked on oil tankers. Reference to trips between Durban (South Africa) and Australia and a shipwreck on the Coral Sea and a torpedoed boat of the coast of Newcastle.
00:54:55	Jimmie Barker speaks about his sons Jack's travels to England, Germany, Norway, San Francisco and Galveston, Texas (where he worked on the railway).
00:55:15	Jimmie Barker speaks about his son falling ill in Durban (South Africa) and being sent home to Australia.
00:55:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about the financial support he provided to his son Jack during his time overseas. Mention of the currency exchange rate between Australia and the United Kingdom at that time.
00:55:47	Jimmie Barker expresses some regret that his son Jack was never able to save money. Jimmie speaks with pride about Jack achieving the rank of Able Seaman.
00:56:03	Jimmie Barker speaks about the death of his son Billy (whom he describes as "a fine chap") 13 years prior to the time of recording.

00:56:15	Jimmie Barker speaks about his son Roy's deployment to Japan at the end of World War II and his service in the occupation forces in the years that followed. Jimmie discusses Roy's return to Australia and work in the shearing industry.
00:56:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about his son Billy's unsuccessful attempt to enlist in the military and subsequent career in the shearing industry.
00:56:59	Jimmie Barker speaks about his son Bert's diverse working life, his strong work ethic and his large family of seventeen children.
00:57:18	Jimmie Barker speaks of his other son's families – Jack had many children (unspecified), Billy had five children.
00:57:35	Jimmie Barker speaks about his brother Billy, their arrival at Brewarrina Mission Station in 1912 and Billy's family of eight children. Jimmie notes that five are still alive (at the time of recording). Of Billy's offspring Jimmie says, "the girls did very well," but "the boys didn't do much."
00:58:07	Jimmie Barker returns to the period after Evelyn's death when his son's had left Brewarrina Mission Station, as previously discussed. Jimmie recounts that he stayed on at the Mission for twelve months but was primed to leave with bags packed throughout that time. Jimmie states "I was trying to do something for the girls all the time and I was trying to get them in."
00:58:49	Jimmie Barker speaks about the appointment of a new assistant manager at Brewarrina Mission Station in April 1942 and the disagreement that led to Jimmie resigning despite the protestations of the manager. Jimmie describes arranging transport into Brewarrina township where he stayed for a few days with his sister in law who was caring for his daughters Margaret and Mary.
01:00:15	Jimmie Barker speaks about a 16-week job at a station, 36 miles out of Brewarrina, working on vehicles and servicing the water pumps.
01:00:30	Jimmie Barker speaks about his next job at Brewarrina hotel which lasted 3 years. Jimmie reflects with some amusement on the incongruity of this given his distaste for alcohol and any form of drunkenness.
01:01:57	Jimmie Barker speaks about his work at Brewarrina Hospital which he describes as "routine." Jimmie remembers that his offsidiers where often work shy and he to a large extent "carry them." Jimmie recalls that the work was heavy. In one year, he chopped 90 tonnes of firewood in a ten-week period.
01:02:41	Jimmie Barker speaks about periods of illness in the seventeen years that he worked at Brewarrina hospital and periods in which he was hospitalised. Jimmie attributes this to the heaviness of his workload, in particular heavy lifting – he was often required to lift male patients.
01:03:19	Jimmie Barker states that in 1949 he "sent the girls down to Burwood when there was a vacancy ... and they did very well down there."
01:03:39	Jimmie Barker explains how during a period of hospitalisation he reluctantly accepted a doctor's recommendation for medical retirement two years before he was eligible for the senior's pension. Jimmie speaks about the pension he still receives - \$17.25 a week (at the time of recording), and muses that given his working life he'd probably earned it.
01:05:14	Tape rolls on – no content.
01:05:29	Archive end announcement
01:05:36	Tape rolls on – no content.
01:05:41	End of 002302B

[RETURN TO ITEM LIST](#)

002303A/Field tape 79B Side 1 and 2

Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker
Personal subject(s):	May Gibbs, Jimmy Kerrigan
Subject keywords:	Language – Linguistics, Language - Linguistics - Language elicitation, Language - Classification and evolution, Indigenous knowledge - World view – Numeracy, Hunting – Poisons, Animals - Mammals – Rabbits, Plants – Trees, Law enforcement - Customary – Kadaitcha, Magic and sorcery, Health - Treatments – Traditional, Indigenous knowledge - Health and medicine
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI, D22: NGIYAMPAA / NGEMPA
Places:	Lightning Ridge (N NSW SH55-07), Sydney (NSW SI56-05), Murdi Paaki / Bourke (N NSW SH55-10), Walgett (N NSW SH55-11), New South Wales (NSW)
Recording quality:	Good

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J17-A002303A	00:00:13	Jimmie Barker elicits (with discussion) Muruwari and Ngemba words and phrases including some place names.	1971	Lightning Ridge, NSW
	00:13:29	Jimmie Barker discusses the difficulties involved in translating ideas and concepts between English and Muruwari.		
	00:18:06	Jimmie Barker elicits (with discussion) Muruwari words and phrases including gender assignations (for livestock) and Indigenous numeracy.		
	00:30:27	Jimmie Barker discusses (with elicitation) Muruwari words for poison (both traditional and settler introduced). Discussion extends to hunting, rabbit plagues, baiting methods and warning labels.		
	00:43:23	Jimmie Barker discusses (with elicitation) a Muruwari word used variously for hat, cap, lid, the mound of an ant's nest or bottle top.		
	00:51:36	Jimmie Barker speaks about the <i>Kurdaitcha</i> and the relationship between this 'mythical' being and the Cleverman tradition.		

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
	01:01:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about bush medicines.		
	01:04:49	Jimmie Barker elicits Muruwari words and phrases relating to “swear.”		
	01:05:20	End of field tape 79B and end of BARKER_J17-A002303A.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Jimmie Barker elicits Muruwari words and phrases with discussion in relation to cultural practice, social history and language structure and conventions.</u>
00:00:04	Archive announcement.
00:00:13	Jimmie Barker records a tape ID stating the title of the recording <i>Muruwari by Jimmie Barker</i> , the location Lightning Ridge, the date September 27, 1971 and the recording number 24 in the series of 1971.
00:00:48	Jimmie Barker returns to a discussion of the Muruwari word <i>gar</i> . Jimmie explains that it is a terminating common to both Muruwari and Ngemba and means “in.”
00:01:30	Jimmie Barker explains that in many contexts <i>gar</i> is “silent of any meaning.” Elsewhere Jimmie describes this category of words as “dead words” or “rhymers.” Jimmie provides examples including in connection to names and pronouns. Elicitation of the Ngemba word for “dog.”
00:02:56	Jimmie Barker speaks about the Muruwari word for “my” and explains that it’s common to Ngemba. Elicitation of “my money” and “my hat.” Jimmie provides further explanation of how this word might be used in context in answer to a question such as “Is this yours?”
00:04:15	Jimmie Barker discusses (with elicitation) the phrase “my dog” to illustrate the subtle differences between how the common word for “my” might be applied in Ngemba and Muruwari dialects. Elicitation also of “my people” in Ngemba.
00:05:40	Jimmie Barker reflects on the integration of <i>gar</i> into these Muruwari and Ngemba sentences.
00:05:57	Jimmie Barker speaks about applications of the word <i>gar</i> to denote “in.” Elicitation of the Muruwari for “in Sydney” by way of example. Jimmie explains how a variety of connective sounds or words are used between the place name and <i>gar</i> in order to say “in Sydney” or “in Bourke.”
00:08:20	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the connecting word used between “Bourke” and “in” is also the Muruwari word for “soon.” Jimmie also explains that the tail of the English place name is also “dragged a little bit on the native side,” to render it in the dialect. Elicitation of “in Walgett” and “in Brewarrina” by way of example.
00:09:58	Jimmie Barker speaks about other connective words and elicits the phrase “it was in Bourke” to illustrate. Jimmie explains that the addition of the suffix <i>bu</i> is optional.
00:11:43	Jimmie Barker elicits the Muruwari phrase for “he was in Bourke” and provides an alternative with the same meaning.
00:12:14	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for “whereabouts is he?”
00:12:38	Jimmie Barker expresses a view about his limited ability to explain linguistic and grammatical concepts.

00:13:29	Jimmie Barker speaks about the difficulties Aboriginal people face when subjected to language elicitation and how in many instances there's no answer to the questions put to them.
00:15:30	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the ancient vocabulary of Aboriginal languages was static compared to a language like English that has constantly expanded through external inputs.
00:17:16	Jimmie Barker explains that despite limited vocabularies and a frame of reference drawn from limited geography it's possible to "explain quite a lot" in Aboriginal languages.
00:17:40	Jimmie Barker again reflects upon how this disparity often makes translation into English difficult. Jimmie qualifies this by saying "this only happens now and then."
00:18:06	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for "we all didn't go hunting," and provides variations in Muruwari.
00:18:38	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for "fat."
00:18:55	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "I killed a fat kangaroo."
00:19:17	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "he killed a fat kangaroo."
00:19:32	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "I killed a fat sheep."
00:19:56	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "I killed a fat bullock." Jimmie explains the word for "bullock" also means "cow" or "oxen."
00:20:34	Jimmie Barker discusses Muruwari sex (or gender) assignments as applied to animals and explains how to distinguish between a bullock and a cow in relation to the sentence above.
00:22:17	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "he killed a fat kangaroo."
00:22:27	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "he killed two (or several) fat kangaroos." Jimmie explains how in this context the Muruwari word for the "numeral" two is not generally used.
00:24:08	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for "he killed three kangaroos."
00:24:34	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for "he killed four kangaroos." Jimmie explains that all the Muruwari numerical words (up to ten) can be used in this way with this phrase. However beyond three or four the Muruwari word for "several," is more commonly used.
00:25:25	Jimmie Barker explains that the Muruwari word for "several" also means "them," and for this reason the Muruwari word for "a lot" is often used in the above context. Jimmie elicits the phrase "a lot of Kangaroos."
00:26:18	Jimmie Barker discusses the Muruwari word for "five," and elicits the phrase "five fingers."
00:24:40	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "they killed a lot (or several) of kangaroos."
00:27:05	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "I killed one kangaroo."
00:27:19	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "we killed one kangaroo." In this instance the "we" is "dual," i.e. the speaker and one other.
00:27:49	Jimmie Barker provides a variation on the Muruwari for "we killed one kangaroo," wherein the "we" is "inclusive," i.e. the speaker and two or three others.
00:28:14	Tape cuts out – no content.
00:28:28	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for "he killed one kangaroo," and elicits an alternative with <i>bu</i> terminating, which can also mean "it killed one kangaroo."
00:30:27	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for "poison."
00:30:40	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for "bitter," and "bitter water" as an example of contextual usage.
00:31:00	Jimmie Barker speaks about the poisons derived from plants and wild fruit that were

	widely used in traditional Aboriginal societies.
00:31:28	Jimmie Barker elicits a “part English” word for “poison” that came to be used to describe the poisons such as phosphorus and Strychnine that were introduced to combat the rabbit plagues in North West New South Wales.
00:32:17	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari for “I killed a lot of kangaroos with poison.”
00:32:51	Jimmie Barker speaks about how differences in language structure between English and Muruwari present difficulties in elicitation. “I poisoned a lot of kangaroos” for example cannot be directly translated into Muruwari.
00:33:12	Continuation of the previous discussion. Jimmie explains that “I poisoned a lot of kangaroos” when translated into Muruwari becomes “I killed a lot of kangaroos with poison,” or “with poison I killed a lot of kangaroos.”
00:33:44	Jimmie Barker provides two alternate Muruwari words for “small” and explains the second of these words can also mean “that only.”
00:35:30	Jimmie Barker again elicits two Muruwari words for “poison.” The 1 st referring to traditional forms and applications and the 2 nd to western chemicals more recently introduced. Jimmie elicits “poison there,” and explains that this was issued as a warning to children in relation to the phosphorus that was dispensed from the poison carts. Reference again to Strychnine as a poison used to suppress rabbit populations.
00:37:50	Jimmie Barker provides more detailed discussion about the method of poisoning rabbits in North West New South Wales in the first half of the 20 th century and the care the “old people” took to protect children from exposure to it. Phosphorus was mixed with pollen and Strychnine was mixed with quince jam to entice rabbits. Jimmie describes the methods of baiting and how when he collected rabbit scalps by following these bait trails he would step in Strychnine jam from time to time either in bare feet or wearing boots.
00:40:23	Jimmie Barker remembers being less concerned when wearing boots but reflects this may have in fact been more dangerous, as residue was more likely to have ended up on his hands.
00:40:55	Jimmie Barker reflects on how careful he was as a young boy in relation to poisons. Before he could read he relied on the skull and crossbones symbol that appeared on labels at that time.
00:41:39	Jimmie Barker reflects on how careful he was with regard to traditional plant based poisons and how he developed this awareness first.
00:42:09	Jimmie Barker reflects upon the rabbit plagues and the methods used to suppress populations including the myxomatosis virus, which was highly effective. Jimmie notes that rabbit populations are increasing again (at time of recording) having developed immunity to myxomatosis but not to the extent of establishing warrens.
00:43:23	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for “hat,” and notes that it was “universal” at least to the Aboriginal language groups of west and north western New South Wales. Jimmie Barker speaks about the misapprehension amongst some Aboriginal people that this word was a post settlement word. This rested on the belief that headwear didn’t exist in traditional Aboriginal culture. Jimmie corrects this, explaining that animal skins and emu feathers were used by men to protect their heads against the harsh midsummer sun.
00:46:28	Jimmie Barker explains that the above word really means “cap” or “lid” and derives from the top of the burrows in which moth larvae live or the hatches of the trapdoor spider. The word also describes the easily displaced “caps” on berries and gumnuts.
00:49:17	Jimmie Barker corrects an error in the previous description of gumnut “caps.” Jimmie explains that the caps form after (not before) blossoming. When they detach, seeds are released. Reference to May Gibbs’ Bib and Bub illustrations as an example of these

	“caps.”
00:50:31	Jimmie Barker provides a context in which the above word might be used and elicits the Muruwari for “Where is the lid of this can?”
00:51:03	Jimmie Barker goes further in explaining the breadth of application of this word and the way it was used to describe a white ant mound or even a bottle top.
00:51:36	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for “boot,” explaining that this also was a very old word used to describe the footwear word when burrs were bad and also the emu feathered footwear of the <i>Kurdaitcha</i>
00:52:23	Jimmie Barker speaks about the <i>Kurdaitcha</i> , the featherfoot sorcerer assassin well known and much feared in central Australia. Jimmie provides several alternate Aboriginal words for the <i>Kurdaitcha</i> .
00:53:55	Jimmie Barker provides the word for <i>Kurdaitcha</i> used by both the Muruwari and Ngemba people. Jimmie speculates about the commonly held belief that the <i>Kurdaitcha</i> was in fact a supernatural being that killed by night wearing the emu feather moccasins so as to leave no tracks. Jimmie suggests that Clevermen performed these assassinations behind the myth of the <i>Kurdaitcha</i> .
00:58:34	Jimmie Barker explains that there was an awareness of the above practice amongst Muruwari community and Clevermen themselves were at times killed in retribution.
00:59:00	Jimmie Barker expresses his belief in the spiritual power of Clevermen, certainly their ability to heal by “arresting bad spirits.”
00:59:51	Jimmie Barker recounts that Jimmy Kerrigan claimed never to have killed anyone but he was recognised as having the power to heal. Jimmie was sceptical of the self proclaimed Clevermen he encountered years later at Brewarrina Mission Station and reflects that the power of sorcery dissipated with the erosion of traditional Muruwari belief systems.
01:01:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about bush medicine, some of the herbs and barks (Quinine and Wilga) that were used for ailments and to prevent pregnancy.
01:03:02	Jimmie Barker speaks about a plant (undisclosed) used to treat stomach aches and diarrhoea. Jimmie explains that he has successfully treated many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people using this plant but never disclosed the identity of the plant itself. Mention also of plants used in making poultices.
01:04:49	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for “swear.”
01:04:52	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for “to swear.”
01:04:56	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari word for “swore.”
01:05:05	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for “they swore.”
01:05:14	Jimmie Barker provides the Muruwari phrase for “swear at him.”
01:05:20	End of 002303A

[RETURN TO ITEM LIST](#)

002303B/Field tape 80B Sides 1 and 2

Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker
Personal subject(s):	Janet Mathews, Judy Trefry, Frederick McCarthy, Bunny Orwell, Jimmy Kerrigan, Evelyn Wighton
Subject keywords:	Religions - Christianity – Missions, Health services, Politics and Government - Political action – Activism, Government policy – Integration, Indigenous peoples - Pacific – Maori, Language - Change – Loss, Education, Government policy - Self determination, Health status - Child health – Infants, Government policy - Initial period and protectionism - 1901-1925, Race relations – Racism, Race relations - Racism – Apartheid, Language - Linguistics - Vocabulary and grammar, Art - Rock art, Communications - Sand drawing, Sites - Scarred trees
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI, D22: NGIYAMPAA / NGEMPA
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06), Japan, China, Queensland (Qld), New South Wales (NSW), Sydney (NSW SI56-05), Lightning Ridge (N NSW SH55-07), Culgoa River (N NSW SH55-06, SH55-07, SW Qld SH55-03), Birrie River (N NSW SH55-07), Gunderbooka (N NSW SH55-10), Enngonia (N NSW SH55-06), Weilmoringle (N NSW SH55-06), Collarenebri (N NSW SH55-08), Peak Hill (N NSW SI55-03)
Recording quality:	Good

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J17-A002303B	00:00:10	Jimmie Barker reflects on broadly on his life at Brewarrina Mission Station, his love for wife Evelyn.	1971	Lightning Ridge, NSW
	00:08:39	Jimmie Barker discusses the improvement in living conditions for Aboriginal people in the course of his lifetime and looks forward to further improvement in the decades ahead.		
	00:16:31	Jimmie Barker speaks about the impact of assimilation policy, self determination and infant mortality in Aboriginal communities.		
	00:26:06	Jimmie Barker speaks about the corruption of the Mission System under the Aborigines Protection Board and how the dismantling of this system has led to positive outcomes for Aboriginal people.		
	00:36:02	Jimmie Barker corrects language materials sent to him by Judy Trefry and reflects on how he first learnt		

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
		Muruwari in the early nineteen hundreds.		
	00:39:17	Jimmie Barker speaks about rock art, sand drawing and marking trees.		
	00:43:50	End of field tape 80B and end of BARKER_J17-A002303B.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Jimmie Barker discusses family, Brewarrina Mission Station, assimilation and racial discrimination. (Side 2 - 00:35:51) Jimmie Barker records a 'letter tape' to Janet Mathews. This Collection item has been edited.</u>
00:00:00	Archive announcement.
00:00:10	Jimmie Barker reflects on the value of life and his twenty-one year association with Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie muses that his life may have been better spent elsewhere, but that he always felt safe at the Mission and devoted himself to his wife Evelyn and their family. Jimmie notes with sadness the fact that "Evelyn never saw her family grow up."
00:03:07	Jimmie Barker explains that he often contemplates how his life might have been different had he left Brewarrina Mission Station. Jimmie poignantly describes his dreams of Evelyn "I often dream about Evelyn. I have some beautiful dreams. I think she's with me and I awake and she's not there. I guess I'll go on dreaming always."
00:04:04	Jimmie Barker tries to explain why he never remarried – his devotion to his children, the independence of his sons and his daughters now happily married.
00:05:43	Jimmie Barker reflects warmly on his Brewarrina Mission days and the people he knew from that time all departed and with their passing so to the Ngemba dialect.
00:06:42	Jimmie Barker describes the site of the Brewarrina Mission Station (at the time of recording) where only "part of the manager's house" remains. Jimmie describes some of the infrastructure such as the school and the medical treatment room that was built "during the war years."
00:07:51	Jimmie Barker speaks about his efforts to help the residents of Brewarrina Mission Station during his time there and reflects upon the old people and the "third generation" descendants now residing in the township of Brewarrina.
00:08:39	Jimmie Barker speculates about the evolution in thinking of Aboriginal people and what form this will take by the end of the twentieth century.
00:09:12	Jimmie Barker speaks about the present day (at the time of recording) Aboriginal advocacy for rights and better conditions and the inertia that continues to impede progress.
00:09:49	Jimmie Barker speaks about the technological developments that have emerged in his lifetime and describes himself as "a dreamer of these things." Jimmie goes on to describe himself as "an arm chair adventurer" with an ever-restless mind.
00:10:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about his satisfaction with "the smaller things in life," and disregard for material wealth or largesse.
00:11:33	Jimmie Barker looks ahead to the "coming (21 st) century," and anticipates better living conditions for Aboriginal people and better integration into the Australian mainstream.

	Jimmie laments the loss of traditional Aboriginal languages and traditional cultural practices. He understands the need to function within the settler society but suggests traditional language and culture can exist in parallel. Mention of contemporary Maori culture by way of example.
00:15:07	Jimmie Barker speaks about education as the key to the advancement of Aboriginal people and the means by which they can escape what he describes as “the in between groove” – a place somewhere between the traditional way of life and the mainstream.
00:16:31	Jimmie Barker speaks about assimilation and predicts that it will take seventy-five years for this to occur. Jimmie rejects the notion of assimilation and asserts that Aboriginal people should be able to participate in Australian society and still maintain their identity. To illustrate his point, Jimmie suggests how outrageous it would be for Japanese and Chinese communities in Australia to be subjected to an assimilation policy.
00:18:16	Jimmie Barker considers whether Aboriginal people will retain identity and withstand the pressure to assimilate. Jimmie draws a distinction here between “full-blooded” Aboriginal people and those of mixed heritage like himself.
00:19:53	Jimmie Barker articulates the process of assimilation – gradual generational erosion of bloodlines through intermarriage.
00:20:41	Jimmie Barker speaks about the pressures of assimilation in northern Australia and suggests that sovereign borders or separate jurisdictions would be a means of preserving a traditional way of life. Jimmie qualifies this, stating sovereign communities should be free to integrate “modern ideas as well.”
00:21:26	Jimmie Barker speaks about his observations over many years of the high infant mortality rates amongst “full blooded” Aboriginal communities and contrasts this with the hybrid vigour of Aboriginal people of mixed descent.
00:23:01	Jimmie Barker speaks about the few remaining “full blooded” Aboriginal people in the Brewarrina area but explains that “they’re from other parts” including Queensland.
00:24:16	Jimmie Barker refers to public discussion about “the Aboriginal problem in New South Wales” and wryly observes “there’s not many Aboriginals in New South Wales.” Jimmie is here again drawing a distinction between “full blooded” and “part Aboriginal” people.
00:25:08	Jimmie Barker speaks about how at the time of recording Aboriginal people have the same social entitlements as other Australian citizens.
00:26:06	Jimmie Barker returns to a discussion of Brewarrina Mission Station and the complete lack of transparency or accountability that the manager enjoyed. Letters of complaint from residents might be sent to Sydney. The letters would be sent back to the manager and then the complainant would most likely be “blackballed” – cast out into a no man’s land without support or prospect of employment.
00:27:05	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the establishment of Mission Stations by the Aborigines Protection Board, perhaps inadvertently helped to preserve Aboriginal culture. Jimmie reflects on how “full blood” and “half caste” populations were impacted by this system. Jimmie expresses repugnance at the expression “half caste” and looks forward to the time when it will be no longer be used. Jimmie notes with irony the expression “the half caste problem” and asks the question “Who’s fault was it?”
00:28:25	Jimmie Barker reflects positively on the dismantling of the mission system and suggests this pave the way for Aboriginal people to establish themselves within the mainstream of Australian society. Jimmie envisages that by the mid 21 st century racism against Aboriginal people will be a thing of the past. This process of de normalising racism has already begun. Jimmie reflects that in years past whenever Aboriginal people from the mission would visit the township of Brewarrina they would be routinely harassed by

	police and sent back.
00:30:11	Jimmie Barker recalls how “in the early days” shopkeepers in the Brewarrina township were reluctant to serve Aboriginal patrons.
00:31:07	Jimmie Barker speaks about the current day (at the time of recording) situation where “white” people are forthcoming in defending Aboriginal people against acts of discrimination.
00:31:40	Jimmie Barker speaks again about the “in between groove” and the key role of education in helping Aboriginal people to “look ahead,” and create opportunities for themselves.
00:33:30	Archive end announcement.
00:33:33	Tape rolls on – no content.
00:35:51	Archive announcement – “... it contains extracts from a letter recorded by Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews.”
00:36:02	Jimmie Barker speaks about some language material sent to him by Judy Trefry. Jimmie corrects the references to Brewarrina and Lightning Ridge as places where Muruwari was spoken. Jimmie explains that whilst he was recording from Lightning Ridge this was well beyond the boundary of traditional Muruwari country which extended only as far as the “western part of the Culgoa.” Jimmie states that the Birrie river was “as far as it ever got.”
00:37:56	Jimmie Barker speaks about the difficulty he has in describing the linguistic and grammatical aspects of Muruwari when making his language recordings.
00:38:37	Jimmie Barker speaks about the way he learnt the Muruwari from the old people in the early nineteen hundreds. Anything he didn’t understand was explained to him – he compares this to the schooling method of words or sentences below with an illustration above.
00:39:17	Jimmie Barker speaks about a letter he received from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Principal Frederick McCarthy asking about cave drawings. Jimmie lists Gundabooka, Enngonia and Weilmoringle as locations where rock art sites can be found in northwest New South Wales. Jimmie explains that some of these rock art sites were talked about when he “was quite young.”
00:40:11	Jimmie Barker speaks about “wells in solid rock” found near Weilmoringle which were sacred Muruwari sites. Mention of Bunny Orwell.
00:40:46	Jimmie Barker explains that he was unable to provide much information in response to Frederick McCarthy’s questions about the Gundabooka rock art sites. Jimmie mentions that he did provide some drawings of “the Muruwari god” to McCarthy and explains that he learnt about these images from Jimmy Kerrigan who “used to draw them on the ground.”
00:41:47	Jimmie Barker remembers sand drawn figures that the old people produced such as lightning bolts and water waves. Jimmie regrets that he was “too young to grasp it all.”
00:42:22	Jimmie Barker recalls marked trees where bark was removed and a tomahawk was used to make “horizontal zig zags of waves.” Jimmie notes Collarenebri, Peak Hill and the Culgoa as known locations for these marked trees but wonders if some have been cleared in recent years.
00:43:34	Archive end announcement – “And that ends the extracts of a letter recorded by Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews.”
00:43:39	Tape rolls on – no content.
00:43:44	Archive end announcement – “No further recordings recorded on this tape.”
00:43:50	End of 002303B