

NEWSLETTER
March 2023

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

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OPEN: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM

MARKET DAYS (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 9 AM-1 PM

The Coleman Axemen of Emigrant Creek

Under the heading 'Jarrett Story Update' at [106.-Newsletter-May-2021.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#) we acknowledged **Joan Ransom's** generous donation of the book '*The Jarrett Family; Pioneers of the Richmond*', compiled by Pam Jarrett in co-operation with Joan Ransom and Doreen Jarrett..., which added supplementary detail to our earlier Jarrett story at [Newsletter-May-2020.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#). The Jarretts and all the other interconnected members of the Emigrant Creek timber camp (Tintenbar) played a big part in opening up the Brunswick and laying the foundation for today's road network. Amongst that cohort was the pioneering Coleman family, the subject of another book recently donated by Joan - '*From Brighton to Ballina; No Fair Play!; The Story of John Coleman*', by Dianne Wiggins and Joan Ransom. Our Jarrett summary briefly mentioned one of those Colemans - **Charles Jordan Coleman** – who also features at [Early-Settlement-of-Tyagarah-and-Ewingsdale.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#). He spent considerable time around the Brunswick, mainly camping at Tyagarah Grass and Boyd's Mountain (Coorabell) while drawing cedar for **Charles Jarrett**.

From Brighton to Ballina No Fair Play!

The Story of John Coleman



By
Dianne Wiggins and Joan Ransom
Self-published Jun2022

Charles Coleman was born 1842 Mangrove Creek, near Brisbane Water on the Hawkesbury, the son of American sailor **James Jordan** and Irishwoman **Catherine Moran**. The mariner swiftly sailed into the sunset leaving Catherine in dire straights until English convict **John Coleman** came along to present her with a further four children prior to committing to the relationship via an Anglican service 5Jul1852 Sydney and three days later a Catholic ceremony conducted by **Fr Mellitus Corish** who *often lamented the immorality of his Godless flock....* (That short paragraph summarises many interesting pages in Dianne and Joan's book.)

John Coleman (1819 Brighton, Sussex – Jun1871 East Ballina) landed in 1835 to serve a 7yr sentence for stealing a dead rabbit. In Nov1839 he received his Ticket-of-Leave at Bathurst and shortly afterwards moved to Brisbane Water to pursue his sawyering career. By at least early 1845 he was living with **Catherine Moran** (1823 Dublin – 1901 Ballina), who was likely working as a domestic at Mangrove Creek. She too was a teenager upon landing in Feb1841, at the start of the 1840s Depression that saw ~600 homeless women on the streets of Sydney. It's likely she was placed in a domestic servant position at Mangrove by the great humanitarian **Caroline Chisholm**.

John received his Certificate-of-Freedom in Jul1843 and almost immediately took his axe for a short sojourn on the Richmond before

returning to Sydney by mid1844, thence back to Brisbane Water by early 1845. As a couple, he and Catherine had further adventures around Erina, Sydney and Wollongong prior to permanent settlement in the Ballina district in ~1863. Along the way **Charles Jordan** adopted the name Coleman and gained many half siblings:

1. **Charles Jordan Coleman** (29Oct1842 Mangrove Creek – 5Oct1901 Ballina). Married **Susan Robinson Ainsworth** (10Dec1847 Sydney – 14Aug1915 Ballina) 15May1864 Emigrant Creek (in a dual ceremony with Susan's sister **Jane Ainsworth** and **James Ross**), and begat
 - (a) **James** (1865 Emigrant Creek – 1914 Ballina), married **Catherine Finn** 1896 Ballina. 9 children.
 - (b) **Charles John** (1870 North Creek – 1949 Cairns), married **Estella Callaghan**.

- (c) **John** (1872 North Creek – 1884 Lismore)
 - (d) **Ellen Laverty** (1874 North Creek – 1956 Brisbane), married **Thomas Flanagan**.
 - (e) **Cornelius** (Neil, 1877 North Creek – 1948 Sydney), married **Lucy Carlill**.
 - (f) **Lydia** (1880 North Creek – died pre Oct1891)
 - (g) **Thomas** (1882 North Creek – 17Jun1950 Brisbane), married **Millie Thompson**.
 - (h) **Benjamin** (Benson, 1883 North Creek – 1964 Brisbane), married **Kath Clifford**.
 - (i) **Christina** (1887 North Creek – 1973 Sydney), married **Matthias Reed**.
2. **Harriett** (1845 Lane Cove, Nth Sydney – 1897 Ballina). Married **Frederick Leslie Lee** (1841 Hobart – 1909 Eltham) 7Jun1864 Emigrant Creek. 11 children.
 3. **John** (1849 Brisbane Water – 1938 Millers Point, Sydney). Married **Mary Ann Matilda Gray** (1852 Sydney – 1936 Sydney) 23Oct1871 Ballina. 13 children.
 4. **Elizabeth Mary** (24Nov1851 Sydney – Unknown).
 5. **Louisa** (24Nov1851 Sydney – 16Sep1853 Erina, Gosford).
 6. **William Henry** (21Jul1854 Fairy Meadow, Wollongong – 1935 North Creek, Ballina). Married widow **Elizabeth King**, nee **Gray** (1846 Sydney – 1920 North Creek) 7Jun1881 Ballina. 4 children (+ 7 step-children).
 7. **Henry William** (21Jul1854 Fairy Meadow – 22Nov1854 Bulli).
 8. **Louisa** (3Oct1856 Erina, Gosford – 24Apr1857 Brickfield Hill, Sydney).
 9. **Mary Ann** (3Oct1856 Erina – 22Apr1857 Brickfield Hill).
 10. **Ellen** (1860 Matcham, Erina – 1937 Ballina). Married **John Patrick Jarrett** (1851 Brickfield Hill – 1931 Ballina), nephew of cedar merchant **Charles Jarrett**, 6Sep1877 Ballina. 15 children.
 11. **Joseph** (1864 Emigrant Creek – 1935 Ballina). Married **Ellen Sutton** (1882 Yangan, near Warwick – 1957 Inglewood) 23Apr1900 Warwick. 6 children.

The Colemans settled at Emigrant Creek under the 'right of pre-emption' that accompanied the granting of a cedar license. **John snr.**, **Charles** and **John Jnr** immediately gained employment with timber merchant **Charles Jarrett**, a 20yr old when he pitched his tent at the Emigrant Creek camp in 1849. By the early 1860s Jarrett was employing up to 100 men harvesting cedar around the traps and making great inroads into the 'Big Scrub'. Into the 1870s the industry was growing exponentially, with the export of millions of feet of rainforest timbers. By 1877 45 steamers and 224 schooners were plying the timber trade on the Richmond....

The Colemans score many references in the *Diaries and Account Books of Richard Donovan Glascott; A timber-getter on the Richmond River in the 1860s and 1870s*, edited by **Marlene Lester**, self-published 2001, copy available BVHS (and see [66.-Newsletter-September-2017.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#).) They also feature in the 'reminiscing articles' of 80yr old **James Ainsworth**, retired cedar-getter and teamster of Ballina (and the brother-in-law of **Charles Coleman**), serialised in the *Casino and Kyogle Courier* 2Sep-11Nov1922, and now collated under the umbrella of [REMINISCENCES | Ballinahistorical \(ballinahistoricalociety.org.au\)](#).

Running contrary to the general character of the timber-getters, **John Coleman** became 'Worshipful Patriarch' within the *Ballina Star of the East Division of the Sons of Temperance*, of which **Charles Jarrett** was a prime mover. **Charles**, **John jnr** and **William Coleman** also signed up, along with their brothers-in-law **John Patrick Jarrett** and **Peter Gray**.

John Coleman Snr died of pneumonia 26Jun1871, his fellow Temperance brothers providing his elaborate headstone in the old East Ballina Cemetery that now features on the 'Pioneer Memorial Wall'. On 4Aug1879 Catherine re-married widower **William Day**, a farmer of Emigrant Creek, but with a day job as a butcher in Charles Jarrett Jnr's Ballina butcher shop.

Matriarch **Catherine** died 4May1901 Ballina, the *Clarence River Advocate* noting that she and first husband **John Coleman**, were old pioneers of the Richmond River in the very early days when cedar was the staple product of the district. In fact, they came to the Richmond before there were any houses in Ballina, and lived most of the time on the rafts. **Mr Charles Coleman**, who



'Modern' Rafting on the Richmond
(Courtesy Richmond River Historical Society)

is the eldest son of this pioneer couple, says that one of his earliest recollections was an event that took place when there was a flood in the river. The family were living on a tent on a cedar raft, and when the flood set in they were swept down the river and his father had barely time to remove his wife and children off the raft at Mobbs' Bay when it was carried over the bar and out to sea with the tent, the domestic animals, and all the belongings. The sturdy cedar worker died 30 years ago, his grave being one of the oldest in the Pilot Point cemetery....

Her son **Charles Jordan Coleman** (1842-1901) worked mostly as a sawyer, but also drove cattle for **Charles Fawcett** of Kyogle Station and **Edmund Ross** of Ballina. By the birth of son James in 1865 he was working for **Charles Jarrett**, continuing to do so after selecting 38ac on North Creek on 18Apr1867 and further selections at Gundurimba (1873) and Newrybar (1876). During his timber-getting days he was frequently away, often spending extensive periods living in his huts at Tyagarah Grass and Boyd's Mountain (Coorabell). Son **James** also spent time at Tyagarah, in the vicinity of which he selected 100ac in 1882, and is the likely 18yr old 'James Coleman of Brunswick' who participated in the Ballina Athletic Club's '£30 handicap' of Christmas 1884. In the late 1880s Charles semi-retired to Crane Street in Ballina from where he operated a carting business, *capitalising on his knowledge of the Brunswick by transporting supplies there for the early selectors....* He also became a foundation member of Ballina's Salvation Army unit, while continuing his Temperance activities. He succumbed to pneumonia 5Oct1901.

[Charles' sister-in-law **Jane Ainsworth** (1845 Jervis Bay – 1916 Ballina) married **James Ross** (1830 Stockholm, Sweden – 1906 North Creek, Ballina) on 15May1864 Emigrant Creek and begat **Johanna Ross** (1866 Tintenbar – 1955 Brisbane) who married **Charles Andrew Skennar** (1861 Tintenbar – 1906 Ballina), the son of **Captain Johan Frederick Skennar** (1817 Stockholm – 1895 Tintenbar), who started working for Charles Jarrett in 1850 and is now immortalised with *Skennar's Creek, Skennar's Head* and *Skinner Street*, Ballina.

Charles Skennar's mother-in-law, 42yr old **Ellen Ainsworth** (nee **Laverty**), widow of shipwright and mariner **Thomas Ainsworth**, after whom *Lake Ainsworth* is named, remarried **Charles Brown** (1832 Stockholm – 1891 Ballina), 7Aug1865 Sydney. Shipwright and mariner Charles Brown was a witness at the burial of his brother **Captain Andrew Brown**, master of the schooner 'Star of the Sea', at Brunswick Heads 23Apr1877.

(And another local Swedish connection occurred in 1890 when **Jessie Ann Skennar** (1868 Tintenbar – 1951 Burwood), 10th born of Captain Skennar's 13 children, married **David Mann Law** of Mullumbimby.)

(Ref Ainsworth story at [65.-Newsletter-August-2017.pdf](https://www.ballinahistoricalociety.org.au/copy-of-early-european-settlement) (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au), and Skennar story at <https://www.ballinahistoricalociety.org.au/copy-of-early-european-settlement>)

Perhaps connected to the Swedish Browns was **Captain Alexander Brown** (1801 – 1874 Balmain), whose daughter **Margaret Ann** (1847 Sydney – 1884 Ballina) became the second wife of **Edmund Ross** (1825 London – 1908 Ballina), cedar-merchant, postmaster, coroner and storekeeper of Ballina. Ross's first wife was **Ellen Easton** (1825 - 1877 Ballina), sister of Ballina pilot **Captain George Easton**. Their daughter **Harriet Ann Ross** (1870 Ballina – 1923 Ballina) married **Charles Ainsworth** (1869 North Creek, Ballina – 1945 Ballina), son of **James Ainsworth** and **Christine Williams**.]

Charles' half-sister **Harriett Coleman** (1845-1897) married **Fred Lee**, born 1841 in the Cascades Female Factory, Hobart, who came to the Richmond with his step-father and mother, **William** and **Agnes Roberts**, in the early 1860s. Fred and Harriett remained at the Emigrant Creek timber camp for 14yrs, Fred working for Charles Jarrett, thence 3yrs in Ballina before taking up farming on his selections at Newrybar. Unfortunately the bank foreclosed and they were forced to transfer the farm to trustees **Charles Jarrett** and **Peter Gray**. In 1887 they returned to Emigrant Creek, where Harriett died 10yrs later. Daughter **Harriett Lavina Lee**, born 1882 Newrybar, married **William Selwood** who became Mayor of Mullum and President of the Byron Shire.

John Coleman Jnr (1849-1938) married **Mary Ann Gray**, the daughter of Irish immigrants **Peter** and **Mary Ann** (nee **Inglesby**) who arrived on the Richmond ~1861, both drowning at Pimlico, Peter in 1863 and Mary Ann in 1864. The Gray offspring were prominent personalities in the Emigrant Creek timber camp, often bullock driving and cedar-getting around Tyagarah, Coorabel and Brunswick Heads. 'Gray's Hut' on Coorabell Creek, along with 'Coleman's Hut' on 'Boyd's Mountain' and other eponymous labels, became well-known navigation aids, their connecting tracks giving rise to the current array of roads. John and Mary Ann Coleman lived at Emigrant Creek for 5yrs until selecting at North Creek, near Mary Ann's sister **Elizabeth** and her husband **Robert King**, son of Stephen, credited as the first cedar-getter on the Richmond, and near John's half-brother Charles, and later brother William. John and Mary Ann were beaten by the Depression of the early 1890s and moved to Ballina, thence retirement to Sydney around 1920.


(Tyagarah had become a major cedar depot by the mid1860s, **Edmund Ross** building a store there in 1867 for the provisioning of his camping axemen. Brunswick Heads doesn't seem to have gained a store until the early1870s, provisioned by **Charlie Jarrett** and likely operated by pilot **George Simpson**. **Henry French** selected 640ac 'Nubhoygum' (*place of dense lawyer scrub*) at Tyagarah in 1881 and developed the Ross store, visited by a couple of 'Commercial

Travellers' in 1884 who recorded that *Our business at the shed completed, we left for Byron Bay and after passing the native camps...*, also suggested a sizable resident aboriginal population available for cedar getting.)

William Coleman (1854-1935) also worked for **Charles Jarrett**, with whom he became connected through marriage. Charles (aged 23) married **Stephen King's** 15yr old daughter **Elizabeth** in 1852, while 27yr old William married 35yr old widow **Elizabeth King**, nee **Gray**, 1881. It had been a big occasion at Emigrant Creek on 7Jun1864 when the latter Elizabeth married **Robert Stephen King**, on the same day as **Harriett Coleman** wedded **Fred Lee**. Upon the death of Robert King in 1876 Elizabeth inherited considerable assets, including a North Creek farm, enabling William to dabble with farming while continuing to stick with his timber-getting day job for a fair period. Both died on the (sub-divided) farm, Elizabeth 1920 and William 1935.

Ellen Coleman (1860-1937) married Charles Jarrett's nephew **John Patrick Jarrett** (1859 Brickfield Hill – 1931 Ballina), the brother of prominent Mullum identities **James Thomas Jarrett** (1854 Wingham – 1912 Cudgera) and **Bernard Abraham Jarrett** (1858 Maitland - 1947 Brunswick Heads). Except for a 3yr sojourn at the Timbarra Goldfields near Tenterfield, JP and Ellen continued to live in a slab hut at the Emigrant Creek camp until selecting at Cumbalum in 1883, thence North Creek by 1887 and finally putting down roots in Ballina by ~1896.

Joseph Coleman (1864-1935) was a wayward soul and fell foul of **Henry French** at Brunswick Heads in 1892 while on a visit from Queensland. He spent the greater part of his life farming and labouring around South East Queensland until returning to Ballina ~1927, spending most of his time living with sister Ellen prior to his death. His wife Ellen remained a loyal Queenslander and died 1957 Inglewood.



Pioneers Reunion, Ballina, 15May1902

Rear: Thomas Duff, Wardell; M'Clure, Ballina; Unknown; Jimmy Exton, with the axe; Thomas Russell jnr; **Charles Jarrett**, Ballina; R.C. Smith, Ballina; **Henry French**, Mullumbimby; T.G. Hewitt, proprietor *Northern Star*, Lismore.

Middle: Joseph M'Guire, Tintenbar; **Robert Marshall**, Brunswick; **Lemnel Snow**, Bangalow; Vincent Norris, Lismore; Boyd M'Curdy, Ballina; **Fisher**, Woodburn. (**Lemuel Grigg Snow**, born 1822 Connecticut, USA, was appointed as teacher-in-charge Tintenbar Public School 15Apr1887).

Front: **W.J. Reilly**, Mullumbimby; D.W. Munro, Ballina; Thomas Russell Snr., Ballina; George M'Lean, Coraki; C. Bowers, Ballina; Thomas Borton, Lismore.

(Scotsman **Duncan Weir Munro**, with the dog, became the first Byron Shire Engineer, serving for 3½yrs and after resignation in 1910 partnered up with **James Coleman** to win the Myocum Swamp Drainage Contract.)

(Courtesy Ballina and District Historical Society)

(Visit TROVE for more photos and names in the *Sydney Mail* of 7Jun1902 and a comprehensive narrative in the *Northern Star* of 21May1902, + [BALLINA PIONEER REUNION | Ballinahistorical \(ballinahistoricalsociety.org.au\)](#))

BRUNSWICK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP FOR 2003 IS NOW DUE

Membership Fees		Payment Options	
Adults \$15	Concession \$10	Cheque/postal Order payable to Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc	Direct Deposit
Students \$5			BSB: 032583 Account No: 201192
Printed mailed copy of Newsletter add \$5			Reference: Your name

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Ngarakbal-Githabul Visitors to the Museum

It's now generally acknowledged that the Colemans, Jarretts, Glascotts, et al, wouldn't have made such great inroads into the Big Scrub without assistance from its Indigenous custodians, records of whom are scant, particularly so in identifying the 'First People of the Brunswick'. But we were recently fortunate in enjoying a visit from Aunty **Elizabeth Ida Davis Boyd** and her brother **Sturt**, members of the Ngarakbal-Githabul cohort, who have helped clarify some of the local Indigenous history.



Elizabeth and Sturt have an impressive lineage. Their mother, **Marlene Daphne Shanka Boyd (Eelemarni)**, born 1945 Middle Pocket, was a highly regarded keeper of Aboriginal Lore. Marlene's mother, **Millie Clara Boyd**, born 1906 Stoney Gully, was a much respected Elder and teacher of ancestral culture and custom.

Millie, in conjunction with her niece-in-law, **Lorraine Mafi-Williams** of Suffolk Park, produced the film '*Eelemarni; The Story of Leo and Leva*', starring none other than grandchildren Elizabeth and Sturt. (And no, Hollywood never rang).

[Incidentally, the 'Tyagarah Spiral Stone Circles', featured in [First-People-of-the-Brunswick-Part-1.pdf](https://mullumbimbymuseum.org.au/First-People-of-the-Brunswick-Part-1.pdf) (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au), represent the spirits of Leo and Leva, whose marriage is a metaphor for the union of Ngarakwal and Githabul.]

Millie's mother was the esteemed **Charlotte Williams**, nee **Brown**, born 1885 Taylor's Lake, Suffolk Park, a traditional birthing place for Indigenous women over thousands of years, now preserved as a sacred site under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

Charlotte also became a well-known custodian of tribal lore, relating the story of *The Fairy Emus* songline to Roland Robinson, posthumously published in his '*The Nearest the White Man Gets*', 1989. The songline originates at the creation site of Julian Rocks, formed by *Nguthungulli, the Father of the whole world*, who came ashore at Belongil and proceeded inland through Mount Warning/Wollumbin and Woodenbong (Nguthumbung) and *out into the desert, towards the sunset...*

Charlotte was the daughter of **Boobinday** (aka **Ngarakbul Mary** and **Mary Michulty**), born in the Byron-Brunswick district in the 1850s. Thereafter the lineage gets murky as it stretches back into an Arcadian past sans whitefellas and smallpox.

Elizabeth is on the way to becoming as well-known as her illustrious female forebears. She has inherited her mother's Elder mantle and tribal name 'Eelemarni' and taken up the cudgels to continue Marlene's fight for the re-opening of Mount Warning.

Marlene, designated '*Keeper of the Seven Sisters Creation Site*', has a memorial at the base of Mt Warning on the Lyrebird Track, now out of bounds to her family.

They intend to continue with family history research and pass on any unearthed clues that may help flesh out the story of *The First People of The Brunswick*.

MUSEUM MAKEOVER

Last year the Historical Society applied for a Creative Capital Funding Grant from the NSW Government, and delighted to gain approval, which has allowed us to update our lighting in the display, work and entrance areas by replacing the old fluors that kept blinking and dying with new LEDs. The main aim was the upgrading and repair of the windows and sills on the eastern wall which were in a sad state, slowly rotting away. Thirdly, we added some shelving in the back room to lift things off the floor.

Proudly funded by



Supported by



The new
lights



New shelving



Removing, cleaning and fixing the weights. First working window returned.
New windows and sills are in production and will be fully functional when completed. Thanks to Dr Mark Edwards for applying for the grant - great job! Thanks also to the terrific local tradesmen who have looked after us and member Robert Garland for building the shelving. So good!



Don't forget to come to the March market and try out for the Thong-Throwing Competition. Should be fun!

A new exhibition, Community Organisations Past & Present, is almost ready. A couple of organisations will feature in Stewart's Menswear window.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and for
the members of the BVHS Inc

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**All members are invited
to contribute to this
newsletter**

Please email contributions for the
newsletter to

admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au

*Deadline for newsletter items
LAST FRIDAY of the month

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 14th March

@10.30am

**MUSEUM HOURS – Tuesdays
and Fridays 10.00-12.00
Market Saturdays 9.00 - 1.00**

**MULLUMBIMBY COMMUNITY
MARKET**

Next Market- Saturday Mar 18

mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au

