

# Coranderrk Aboriginal Station

## Significant Historical Events

- 1835** John Batman arrives in Victoria and a treaty is signed by leaders of the Kulin Nation to 'purchase' land around Port Phillip Bay. Melbourne is founded.
- 1838** A protectorate is established to defend the interests of the Aboriginal population.
- 1840** Lieutenant Governor La Trobe issues orders banning Aboriginal people from Melbourne.
- 1842** Victoria is occupied by over 12,000 settlers as well as 100,000 cattle and 1.5 million sheep.
- 1843** Ngurungaeta Billibellary requests land to be reserved for the Woiwurrung clans. His request is not granted.
- 1846** Billibellary dies and is succeeded as Ngurungaeta by his son Wonga.
- 1849** The protectorate is disbanded. William Thomas was employed as 'Guardian of the Aborigines'.
- 1851** Victoria becomes a separate colony from New South Wales. The population of settlers explodes due to the discovery of gold.
- 1850s** William Thomas and Simon Wonga strive to obtain a parcel of land for the remnant Kulin population, at Acheron Station.
- 1855** Victoria now has its own Parliament.
- 1857** John and Mary Green arrive in Victoria from Scotland.
- 1858** Anne and Jon Bon arrive in Victoria and settle at Wappan Station, on Taungerong country.
- 1859** A recommendation to establish several reserves to house and 'civilise' the surviving Aboriginal population. A deputation of Taungerong men, together with Wonga, request land at Acheron, on Taungerong country. They are successful.
- 1860** The Central Board to Watch Over the Interests of the Aborigines is formed. The Taungerong clans are forcibly removed from Acheron. They are relocated to Mohican Station.
- 1861** John Green is appointed Inspector for the Central Board.
- 1863** 40 Kulin people, together with John and Mary Green, abandon Mohican Station and settle at a site which they name Coranderrk, in the Yarra Valley outside present-day Healesville. It is gazetted as an Aboriginal reserve (2300 acres) on 30th June. Green assumes management of the station without pay.
- 1864** The township of Healesville is established in the proximity of Coranderrk.
- 1866** Coranderrk's population grows to approximately 100. A further 2550 acres of land extends the site to a total of 4850 acres.

- 1869** The Aboriginal Protection Act 1869 (Vic) is passed and the Central Board is renamed the 'Board for the Protection of Aborigines' (The Board).
- 1872** The Board recommends that Coranderrk should focus on the cultivation of hops and takes control of agricultural development of the station.
- 1874** Board members visit Coranderrk to inspect the station. John Green is harassed into offering his resignation.
- 1875** Wonga dies and Barak becomes Ngurungaeta, leader of the Coranderrk people, who now number close to 150. Barak leads a deputation of seven men to attend a Board meeting in Melbourne. Their complaints about station management are ignored. A group from the Board again inspect Coranderrk. They report that the station should be abandoned due to the cold climate and residents should be relocated to a warmer location on the Murray River. Christian Ogilvie is appointed temporary manager of Coranderrk.
- 1876** Barak leads a second protest deputation into Melbourne, this time going directly to the Chief Secretary to protest Ogilvie's management and ask for Green's reinstatement. Ogilvie resigns as manager of Coranderrk. Hugh Halliday takes his place.
- 1877** In response to the Coranderrk debacle, a Royal Commission to investigate the condition of the Victorian Aboriginal reserves. It recommends they should be maintained, under missionary supervision. A general election is held in Victoria, giving a massive majority to the radical party led by Graham Berry.
- 1878** Barak leads another deputation into Melbourne to meet with Chief Secretary Berry to complain of Halliday's management and Green's removal. Reverend Strickland replaces Halliday as manager of Coranderrk.
- 1880** Coranderrk is in a state of 'revolt'. The residents strike and write letters in protest against Strickland's management.
- 1881** Coranderrk wins award for high quality hops. Barak leads a deputation of 22 men into Melbourne. They spend the night at Anne Bon's house in Kew. The following day they urge Chief Secretary Berry to abolish the Board and allow them to manage Coranderrk together with John Green. Barak travels into Melbourne with his son, David who has tuberculosis, to hospital. David dies soon after. Graham Berry loses office. The Government Gazette announces that a Parliamentary Board of Inquiry has been appointed to enquire into the management of Coranderrk. The local MLA Ewan Cameron is appointed Chairman; and Anne Bon is named as one of the Commissioners. The Enquiry begins: the first two hearings are held at Coranderrk. Anne Bon holds her 'unauthorised' hearing at Coranderrk. Cameron refuses to include the evidence in the official minutes. The 3rd, 4th and 5th hearings take place in Melbourne. The Enquiry returns to Coranderrk. The 7th hearing is held in Healesville. In total 10 hearings are held.
- 1882** The Commissioners submit their final report to the Chief Secretary. Following Strickland's removal, William Goodall is appointed manager of Coranderrk.
- 1883** Graham Berry wins the election and returns to office. Barak travels to Melbourne to submit a petition asking Berry to implement the recommendations of the Inquiry.

- 1884** Berry orders that Coranderrk be permanently reserved 'as a site for the use of the Aborigines'.
- 1886** Berry retires from Parliament and prepares to return to England. Barak leads a deputation of 15 men to farewell and thank him for his support over the years. The Aboriginal Protection Law Amendment Act, otherwise known as the Half Caste Act passes both Houses of Parliament. No longer considered as 'Aboriginal people', all 'half-castes' between the age of 15 and 35 are ordered to leave the reserves.
- 1893** Taungrong clan head Thomas Bamfield dies. Only 17 men and 14 women remain at Coranderrk. Government cancels the reservation of 2400 acres of Coranderrk to create the Badger Creek settlement.
- 1901** Federation of the Australian colonies. Australia becomes a nation.
- 1903** William Barak dies at Coranderrk.
- 1908** Robert Wandon and John Green die.
- 1920** Sir Colin MacKenzie, a leading medical researcher, leases 78 acres from the Aboriginal Protection Board to begin his work in comparative anatomy with Australian fauna. This was the catalyst for the creation of the Healesville Sanctuary.
- 1924** Coranderrk is officially closed as an Aboriginal reserve.
- 1930s** Elderly residents are permitted to stay.
- 1934** Anne Bon re-dedicates her husband's headstone in honour of Barak's memory; an unveiling ceremony takes place in Healesville.
- 1936** Anne Bon dies in Melbourne.
- 1948** The Coranderrk Lands Bill is passed revoking the reservation of Coranderrk's remaining land and setting it aside for solidier resettlement. No Aboriginal sliders are eligible for the land.
- 1955** Barak's headstone is relocated to the Coranderrk cemetery, where it still stands.
- 1991** Coranderrk Cemetery handed back to the Wurundjeri people (Wurundjeri Council).
- 1992** Wurundjeri acquire 38 hectare former Army School of Health (on former Coranderrk land) (Wurundjeri Council).
- 1999** The 200 acre parcel of Coranderrk was handed back to Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation – WEAC.
- 2013** Walk to Coranderrk and Coranderrk Festival, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Coranderrk.
- 2014** Walk to Coranderrk and Coranderrk Festival.
- 2015** Walk to Coranderrk.

- 2016** Performance at Coranderrk of the play: *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country*. The Coranderrk Property Management Plan is developed and work starts on regeneration of the farmland.
- 2018** The *Plants of Coranderrk* project is commenced.
- 2019** The *Coranderrk River Restoration Project* is commenced. Art installation *untitled (seven monuments)* is launched at Coranderrk.
- 2020** The *Coranderrk Bush Food Garden and Orchard* project is commenced. The *Plants of Coranderrk* project is completed with the publication of the *Plants of Coranderrk* brochure.