

Aunty Matilda House remembers...

Yiradhu marang - Yinaagalangbu, gibir-bangbu, wugalbu, migaybu.

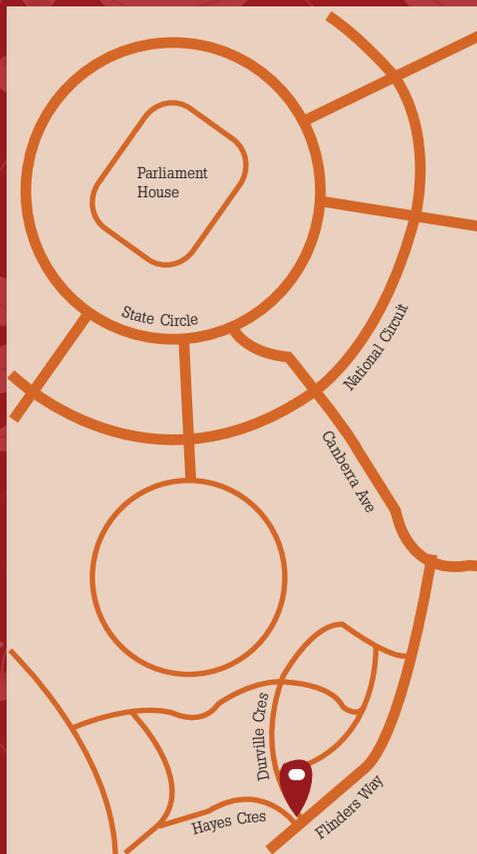
That means, hello - ladies and gentlemen, young men and women.

Well in my time, as a little girl, I came here with my grandparents who were doing domestic work for people around here, for the elite. We'd come with the horse and sulky from Yass. We'd camp here 'cause there's a creek running down there from the Grammar School. We'd take our horse Poppy down to the creek and she would have a drink and wander around.

That's what people wanted in them days, somewhere where you could always have a drink of water. And of course the Molonglo River (now Lake Burley Griffin) wasn't far from here. In them days, there was an abundance of food on the Molonglo, shellfish, lots of fish, cod, crabs and ducks.



Matilda House (bottom) around 1950 (House-Williams Family Collection).



Visit Red Hill Camp at the intersection of Flinders Way, Durville Crescent and Hayes Crescent, Griffith.

www.redhillcamp.weebly.com

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Visitors' guide to **RED HILL CAMP**



A special place of

Aboriginal heritage

in inner Canberra.

Welcome to

RED HILL CAMP

Red Hill Camp is colloquially known as the 'last campsite of the Ngunnawal'. The site is listed in the ACT Heritage Register for its association with the life of Ngunnawal-Ngambri Elder Aunty Matilda House.

Today, Red Hill Camp is a small, non-descript park in the inner-city suburb of Griffith, within a couple of kilometres of Parliament House. In the 1940s, Matilda camped in this park with her brother Arnold and her grandparents Cissy and Lightning Williams. They worked at the old Narrabundah Homestead (now Endeavour Street).

The park and surrounding suburb was built in the 1920s after Canberra was announced as Australia's capital. However, it is likely that Aboriginal people were camping along the nearby creekline a long time before European colonisation of the Limestone Plains.

Red Hill Camp must be seen in the context of the wider cultural landscape of Ngunnawal Country. This one small camp is representative of the broader network of campsites and pathways that local Aboriginal families used to live and work on their Country up until the present day. Rivers and creeks were important food sources across Australia and were often used as pathways by Indigenous people.



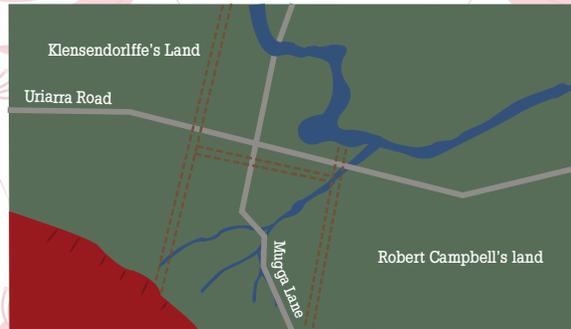
Molonglo River, 1920s, Mildenhall Collection

A changing landscape, but always a good camping spot!



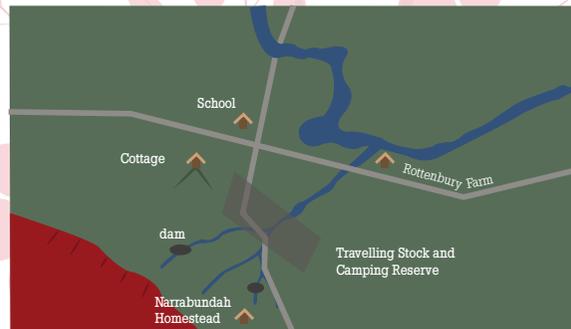
Pre 1820s

- Open temperate grasslands
- Perennial water source in the area means a likely camping place
- Molonglo River to north was a main pathway and food source for local Indigenous people



1820s - 1880s

- European invasion of the Limestone Plains, establishment of homesteads
- First roads laid out
- Site remains unfenced Crown Land surrounded by properties, meaning people could continue to camp here



1880s - 1920s

- More intense settlement around the Molonglo, damming of creeks
- Travelling Stock and Camping Reserve opens along creek in 1880s - Aboriginal people involved in moving stock
- Cottage on Bass Gardens also used for camping in 1890s



1920s - 1950s

- Development of Canberra starts 1913
- Griffith's 'Blandfordia' subdivision built in 1926
- Camping reserve closes, community paddock opens opposite new park
- Williams family camps in 'Red Hill Camp' park in late 1940s
- Other itinerant campers use local parks