

Edit from a NSW National Parks Publication "There were always people here: a history of Yuraygir National Park" 2009

~~Minnie Water each winter for grazing from Ulmarra, does not think there were any cattle people out there. The farmers had to be regularly accountable for every animal, and in those days there were no fences on that part of the coastal land. Bill remembers his father being among the large group of farmers who were very angry about the tick eradication program.¹⁶⁷~~

3.3.3 Living off the land: pastoralism

Since early settlement, coastal forests have been linked with cattle grazing. The long-term presence of grazing in the north-east state forests is well documented in the Grafton district.¹⁶⁸ There were cattle throughout the Newfoundland and Candole forest area from the mid-nineteenth century. Thomas Bawden notes two nineteenth-century runs on the east side of the range extending to the coast in the southern part of what is now Yuraygir National Park: Bookram and Barunguary stations.¹⁶⁹ In turn, all the timber on Crown lease land on which twentieth-century families grazed their cattle was subject to the control of the state forestry authorities. Many families worked in both the timber and cattle industries.



Rosemary Waugh-Allcock, 2006. Photo: J. Kijas.

From the last part of the nineteenth century, WN Reeve Waugh, and then his youngest son Alexander Stanley Johnstone Waugh (Stan), of Taloumbi Station ran cattle on the eastern side of the Coast Range from Yamba to the Sandon River. When Reeve and his brother John (known as Jack) bought Taloumbi Station from the Smalls in 1888, it had seemed such green and promising country compared to the drought-ridden country they had left in the west, and the cattle looked so fat.

However, according to Waugh history, the previous owners had imported the stock in from other districts and much of the station was 'unsound country'. 'It took years of hard work and worry to clear the scrub and drain the swamps, but these two brothers did have their reward in turning Taloumbi into a fine property'.¹⁷⁰ John Waugh later bought another property, selling his share of Taloumbi Station to his brother Reeve.

Stan's daughter, Rosemary Waugh-Allcock, grew up on Taloumbi Station when the station was run by her father. She remembers his stories and documentation of the 1902 drought when 15,000 sheep were shepherded to the area from around Moree. Of these, 5000 stayed on Taloumbi, 5000 went north to the valley area on the eastern side of Lake Wooloweyah and 5000 went down to the Bookram/Fantail Flat/Candole area. The two latter areas are now in Yuraygir National Park. Fred Casson, who worked for the Waughs, told Rosemary that until the 1940s one could still see the remains of the huge wooden wool presses at Hanna's Camp where the sheep had been shorn.¹⁷¹

The Waughs were the only large landholders in the study area, with all the accompanying aspects of social class related to the pastoralist. Following the early 1900s, large landowners in NSW such as the Waughs were officially excluded from purchasing vast areas to benefit small landholders. In response, large landholders carried out the process of 'dummying'. A relative or stockworker would be the supposed purchaser or dummy, with the deposit

¹⁶⁷ Moy M 1994, Bill Niland interview, 25 May 2006

¹⁶⁸ Blackmore & Associates 1993

¹⁶⁹ Bawden T 1997

¹⁷⁰ Honeyman C 1996, p. 65

¹⁷¹ Rosemary Waugh Allcock interview, 24 May 2006

being provided by the real purchaser. Once the land was in the name of the dummy, the mortgage was also paid by the real purchaser.¹⁷² All the coastal leases in the far north of the park, which became Angourie National Park in the mid 1970s, were dummied for WN Reeve Waugh. In the central section of the park from Sandon River to south of Minnie Water, Stan's oldest brother, William Napier Schrader Waugh (known as Napier), purchased the land through dummies.

From the early twentieth century, the central and southern parts of the park were taken up by small farming families from the neighbouring hinterland. They ran their cattle on Crown land leases and freehold land. In the central section were Len Bailey and his daughter's family the Jeffries, and the Nilands, Johnsons and Taylors. In the south were the Franklins, Fallons, Taylors, Kratzs and Buchanans, and the Lawrence Downs Pastoral Company. Throughout this period of grazing in what is now the park, very little forest was cleared although fears of clear-felling were raised from the late 1960s as park proposals were under discussion. The clearing that did occur was on heath and swamp land in the southern parts of the park, discussed below. Otherwise, previous land managers' burning practices, which encouraged native grasses, had the most impact on the landscape.

Grazing on the eastern side of the Coast Range spread across the entire area, from the forests to heathlands to the coastal dunes. However, it was sporadic and often very thinly spread, and never a year-round activity. As local historian Roy Bowling, born and bred at Tucabia just west of the Coast Range, explained:

You mostly only ran the cattle through the winter. If they stayed into the summer too long, there was deficiency in the grass that was there and that affected their bones, and they would get what was commonly known as 'coast disease'. If they got real bad, they'd get that they couldn't walk. And they'd be all humped up and bent over, and their hair would sort of turn back the opposite way, and they looked real crook. If you could get them before they got too bad, and got them home and got them onto the good grass here – well, it'd still take them a long time to get over it.¹⁷³

The coastal section of Taloumbi Station, which is now part of the national park, was called 'the run'. It was used to graze a few hundred of the Waugh's own cattle during the winter or when the cows were dry. In 1900, the 'family tutor' wrote a poem 'The Waughs of Wild Taloumbi' which provides a romantic idea of a coastal cattle station:

... I think of misty mornings, when, anear the ocean shore,
Out riding in wet saddles mustering kine,
Ere sunrise tinged the surges, we hear the brooding roar
Portending stormy weather o'er the brine.
When nearer yet the seabord in the hazy light we stirred
The startled coast-bred cattle that had lain
Amid the stunted heather, 'mid haunts of bee and bird;
And in mine ear the stockwhips ring again
As when thro' the oak-boughs crackling, the wild-eyed
cattle rushed,
And madly thro' the scrub line to the west,
Talboumbi's ga'lant stockmen, with wild excitement
flushed,
Each steed and every rider at his best...¹⁷⁴

172 Moy M 1994

173 Roy Bowling interview, 7 March 2006

174 McAlister G (family tutor) in Maloney N 1996

Taloumbi Station also agisted cattle from outside the region. Prior to World War I, before there was pasture improvement on the New England Tablelands, cattle were walked down to the run for winter feeding or drought relief. Rosemary Waugh-Allcock remembers one example of a family from Glen Innes who brought their working bullocks down each winter for a 'holiday' to fatten them up before returning them to work through the summer.¹⁷⁵

Once improved pasture was introduced on the Tablelands, the agisted cattle on the run came predominantly from the Waugh's inland properties and other properties around Nymboida. In times of drought, Marie Preston remembers starving cattle moving through the stock route near Tucabia headed for the coastal run, entering it through Taloumbi Station to the north, or along the Wooli Road and through Len Bailey's and other coastal leases.¹⁷⁶ Through to the late 1940s, during the occasional high times of agistment such as drought, it is thought that up to 2000 cattle might be scattered along what is now the national park from Angourie south to the lakes. They would wander into Brooms Head and the Sandon area, around the freshwater springs and up into the base of the coastal range.¹⁷⁷

Stan Waugh and the Cassons were known for their fire management practices. Rosemary recalled that in times of drought, her father and Fred Casson would go looking for places that had not been burnt for a long time. Such places included the 'melon hole' or swamp country, the black soil Christmas Bells country, and gullies. They would burn the land, then wait for the coastal showers to bring up new grass. She said that such small pockets of land could keep 20 cows alive.

Rosemary worked beside her father, following on her horse as they rode out for a day's muster. She says he would always drop a match, any time of year, and it would burn to the next section which might have been burnt six months before. This practice was specific to the coastal areas and occurred on both the heath and grasslands and through the forests. These were the 'ordinary fires – little and often'. The fishermen out to sea would see the smoke and say, 'that's Freddy Casson or Mr Waugh'. The smoke would obscure their navigation landmarks.¹⁷⁸

This patchwork burning, where some areas might not be burnt for up to three years and others burnt much more regularly, produced the grassy pasture which sustained the cattle.¹⁷⁹ The Waughs always called the area to the west of the Sandon Road along Toumbaal Creek, Toumbaal Plain. They pronounced it 'Tumbal' where most other locals say 'Toombal'. Rosemary recalled it as 'beautiful grass country, wallaby and kangaroo grass. It was special cattle country; they loved it'.¹⁸⁰

In 1945, WN Reeve Waugh died. Taloumbi Station had to be sold to pay for the probate. The grazing country with the homestead on the western side of the Coast Range, known as 'the station', was bought by Reeve's son Stan. The coastal leases north of Shelley Beach to the shores of Lake Wooloweyah were bought by Percy Dwyer. The other coastal leases to around Sandon were bought by Dey Waugh, Rosemary's uncle. He owned the inland river property, Nymboida Station, and bought the coastal run mainly for drought feeding for his Hereford breeding cattle. He called the property East Taloumbi. Dey died in 1953 and his land passed to his son, Reeve, who sold most of it to Max Carson in the late 1950s. Carson ran cattle and later started cane farming before selling part of the land in 1976 to the NPWS for Angourie National Park, and the rest of the land was resumed by the NPWS in the 1980s.

Reeve also returned a 435-acre block near the Sandon River to his cousin Rosemary. Half this land, the ocean frontage block, was resumed by NPWS in 1996, while 200 acres is still owned by Rosemary's son, Alec, who has built a house on the land (see section 4.2.3).¹⁸¹

175 Rosemary Waugh-Allcock interview, 24 April 2006

176 Marie Preston interview, 10 April 2006, Roy Bowling interview, 7 March 2006

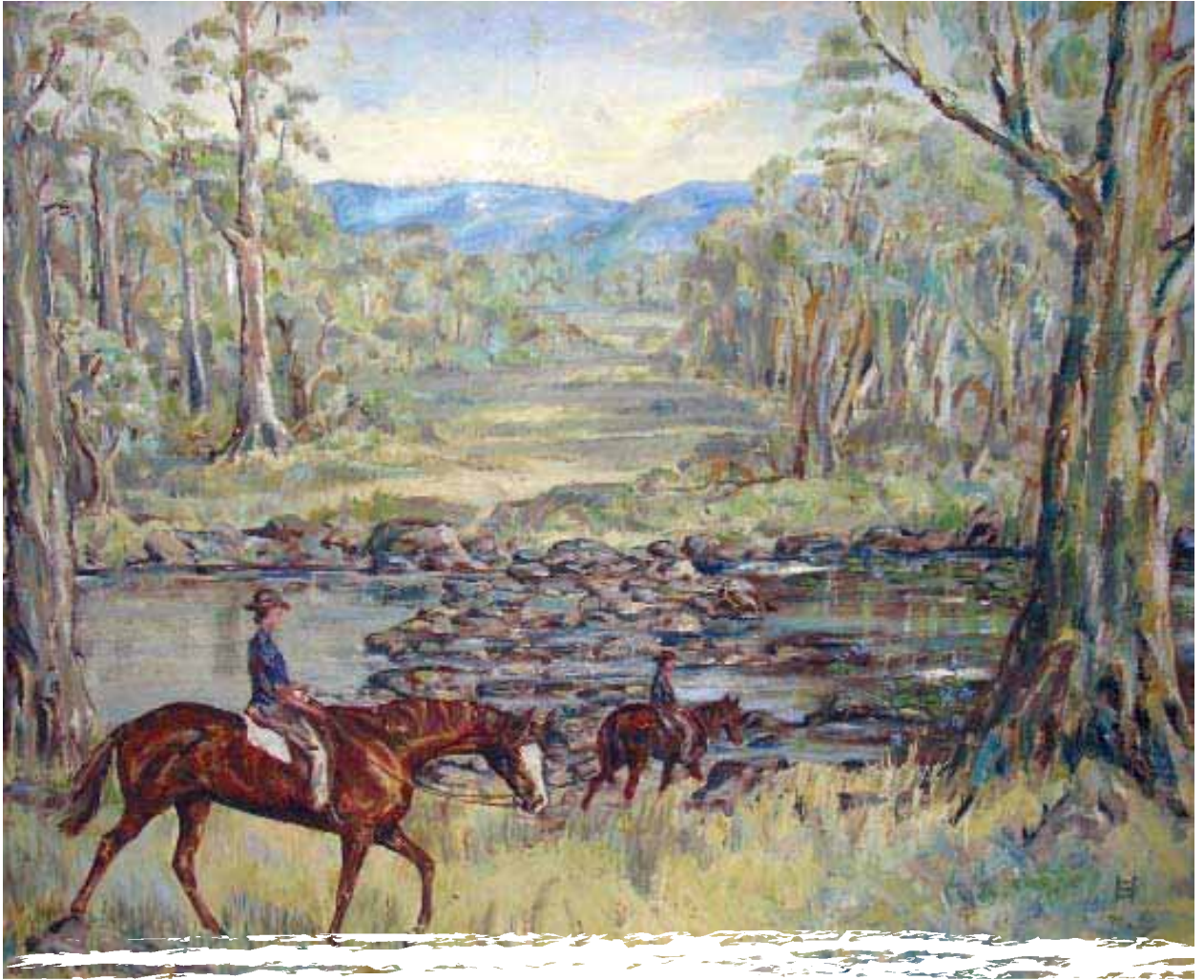
177 Rosemary Waugh-Allcock interview, 24 April 2006, Marie Preston interview, 10 April 2006

178 Allen Johnson interview with Rosemary Waugh-Allcock, 6 May 2006

179 Rosemary Waugh-Allcock interview, 24 April 2006

180 *ibid*

181 Honeyman C 1996, Rosemary Waugh-Allcock interview, 24 April 2006



The crossing on Candole Creek near the Sandon River, as remembered by Rosemary Waugh-Allcock in her recent 'memory painting' of herself and her father Stan. Courtesy Rosemary Waugh-Allcock, April 2006.

As previously noted, in the central section of what is now the park, hinterland farmers held the coastal leases for winter grazing and flood relief. Among them, the Nilands had owned the lease to a block on the western side of Minnie Water since 1928. They always transported their cattle on foot from their main property behind Ulmarra down the Wooli Road until it became too busy with traffic, and then they transported the cattle by truck. The last time they walked with the cattle was in 1977. Bill Niland thinks that: 'at one time or another, there were cattle here, there and everywhere'.¹⁸²

Rosemary's uncle, Napier Waugh, ran cattle from the Sandon River all the way down the coast to south of Minnie Water. Pat Skinner ran 20 or 30 cows on Napier's property around Minnie Water, and Bill Niland remembers Jim Towns of Nymboida running cattle on the coastal land between Sandon and Minnie Water in the 1957 drought. Bill's guess at the winter number of cattle between the Sandon River and Wooli stands at around 100 to 200. During drought, when the Upper Clarence and Tablelands pastoralists brought their cattle in, he remembers a claim that they were 'dying like flies' at 'Everinghams' on the west side of Lake Hiawatha one year. But on the whole, Bill believes that most of the cattle that made it to the coast survived.¹⁸³

In the southern part of the national park, the Lawrence Downs Pastoral Company bought a 4792-acre lease of predominantly grassy wet heath on the eastern side of Barcoongere Pine Plantation, stretching from the Red Rock River in the south and north nearly to Wooli (portions 21, 17 and 19). Buying in 1969 and 1970 on land that the Sim Committee had already recommended should be designated as national park, the pastoral company

¹⁸² Bill Niland interview, 25 May 2006

¹⁸³ *ibid*

became embroiled in a drawn-out battle with the NPWS throughout the first three years of the 1970s (see section 4.2.2).

Almost immediately, they began legally clearing the heath country in portions 21 and 17 to plant pasture for cattle. Some of the land in portion 21 was in one of the Sim Committee's 'scientific areas', protected from mining but not from other activities.¹⁸⁴ Field Officer Dave McFarlane, who began working at Yuraygir National Park in 1981, remembers the NPWS harvesting semi-trailer loads of the pasture during the 1980s for drought-stricken cattle in the hinterland.



Setaria grass at Station Creek. Remnant landscape from the Lawrence Downs Pastoral Company's planting. May 2006. Photo: J. Kijas

In 1972, the Lands Board in Grafton conducted a final valuation of the three portions before selling them to the NPWS for the proposed Red Rock National Park which was gazetted in 1975. The type and extent of the pasture is recorded in the following valuation:

Improved Pasture: 420 acres of established pasture (north west) of siratro, setaria, green panic, red and white clovers – good stands @ \$20 per acre: value \$8,400. 300 acres of partly established pastures (south) comprising some paspalum in conjunction with red and white clover – these stands are of a very sparse nature but should respond in the ensuing years upon successive applications of fertiliser – @ \$12. = \$36,00.00. 250 acres of well established pastures (east) comprising red and white clovers mainly in conjunction with a little siratro, setaria and green panic... @ \$15 = \$3,750. Also a landing strip, properly built - \$800. Total value of all improvements \$5,3996.¹⁸⁵

3.3.4 Other agricultural pursuits: bananas, dairy farming, bees and sugar

On a high wooded hill, above the swamp areas ploughed for pasture in portion 21, was an established banana plantation of 45 acres. Clarence (Clarrie) Moller had procured this sublease from the grazier Barry Richards in 1962, well before any suggestion of a national park in the region was discussed.¹⁸⁶ A Woolgoolga man, Moller had successfully re-established this plantation on the steep slopes overlooking Station Creek where he lived part-time in a small shack and had his packing and poultry sheds. According to Clarrie Winkler, Moller had already been forced to move his plantation from state forest land to the south-west, after a change of policy in the Forestry Commission which had previously encouraged such activity.¹⁸⁷ Clarrie remembers there was much disgust with the NPWS in Woolgoolga when Moller was yet again forced to abandon the plantation after park gazettal.¹⁸⁸

On the northern banks of Red Rock River, land had been reserved for public recreation in 1942 (R57037) and later leased for grazing to the Fallons. The Cheals subleased land in 1970 on the western edge of R57037 from the Lawrence Downs Pastoral Company and built a cottage, piggery and fowl yards on it. The cottage, which was rapidly erected, was dismantled again by the mid-1970s with the gazettal of the park.

¹⁸⁴ NPWS Director Michael DF 1971, 'Information to the Minister: Proposed Red Rock State Park' in National Parks and Wildlife Service undated a

¹⁸⁵ Report of Lands Board Grafton 1972 in National Parks and Wildlife Service undated a

¹⁸⁶ The sublease was transferred to Lawrence Downs Pastoral Company when they bought the land from Richards in 1969

¹⁸⁷ Blackman & Associates 1993

¹⁸⁸ National Parks and Wildlife Service undated a