

Sikh and Indian Australians

TEACHER RESOURCE 5 - GEORGIANA MOLLOY

In 1830 the *Warrior* brought Georgiana and John Molloy and their eight servants to the colony. Georgiana was a 24 year old English woman who had recently married the 48 year old retired army lieutenant. John Molloy's ambition was to establish a prosperous farm in the colony. He was convinced by Governor Stirling to take a land grant 320 kilometres south of Perth on the Blackwood River. This area had not been settled by the colonists, although American whalers had told the Governor of the protected port at Flinders Bay. The town of Augusta was established beside the Blackwood River.

Labourers employed by John and Georgiana Molloy cleared tough jarrah and marri forests and fenced land to graze cattle. Georgiana's first home was a tent where she gave birth to her first child who died nine days later. After much effort a house was constructed for the Molloy family and a small community of settlers emerged in the Augusta region. Georgiana gave birth to four children while at Augusta. Two of them died, one shortly after birth and another drowned. Her husband John Molloy travelled and often spent weeks in Perth. Georgiana fought heartbreak, loneliness and the harsh environment to care for her children and run the farm. She found the Aboriginal people frightening and all the physical work exhausting. Her daily

tasks included child rearing; washing, boiling, starching, wringing, ironing, sewing and patching clothes; collecting, preparing, cooking and preserving food; gardening; supervising cleaning and ordering household items.

Amid these tasks she collected seeds and pressed local wildflowers to be sent to Captain James Mangles, a botanist in England. Georgiana carefully documented the wide variety of generally unknown orchids and native flowers for nearly seven years. Georgiana's letters to her family and Captain Mangles are detailed primary sources reflecting the changes to her way of life.

The Molloy family moved from Augusta to establish a new farm on the Vasse River near Busselton in 1839. Here they started the exhausting process of building a new farm that they called Fair Lawn. Georgiana had two more daughters during the four years she lived at Fair Lawn. Her life was cut short, like many colonial women, following the birth of her seventh child in 1843.

The Bussell and Molloy diaries can be found online at the State Library of WA site provided below. However the handwritten letters and diary entries may be challenging for your students.



Several historical fiction novels provide the struggle facing European colonists like Georgiana Molloy.:

http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4398597

(John and Georgiana Molloy Diaries)

http://slwa.wa.gov.au/find/eresources/bussell_diaries

(Bussell and Molloy diaries with an introduction)

Hathon, Libby 2008 *Georgiana: Woman of Flowers*, Hachette Publishing Sydney.

Berry, Bernice 2016 *Georgiana Molloy: The Mind That Shines* Picador Australia

Adapted from *West One Services, A New Start*, 2011 by M. Southee