

Crinigan's Stone Hut

GINNINDERRA



Archaeological investigation by Canberra Archaeological Society.

Who were the Crinigans?

John and Maria (Mansfield) Crinigan lived here from about 1842 until 1863 when Maria died. John soon married the widow Margaret Logue and moved into her Molonglo cottage *Camberry* (now the National Library site).

John was a native of Westmeath in Ireland and at 19 years of age was sentenced to transportation for life for 'assaulting habitation'. He arrived in the colony in 1836 and was assigned to *Palmerville* (now the Heritage Park in Giralang). Free settler Maria arrived in 1832 and they married in 1842, settling here in the stone cottage. In 1849 John was pardoned. He died in 1899.

The Crinigan family sadly experienced the era's high level of infant mortality. Only one of their 10 babies survived! This child, Eliza Jane born in 1850, married Duncan McInnes in 1867. They

lived here with their first four children until the mid 1870s.

What does this site signify?

The cottage fell into ruin after the McInnes family left and the land was farmed by the Cavanagh family until the suburb of Amaroo was developed in the 1990s. The site was then excavated by the Canberra Archaeological Society and Crinigan family descendants.

The three-roomed stone cottage is typical of mid 19th Century dwellings, of which there were 40 along Ginninderra Creek. Although life was hard and austere, artifacts found "beneath the floor boards" create a fuller picture where there was time for playing mouth organs, women wore jewellery, the family ate not only from tin plates and they indulged in the odd alcoholic beverage. At times this was more than just horehound beer,

as evidenced by the brawl here in 1858 between Thomas Wells and Samuel Marley. Marley died from horrendous head wounds some 10 days after the bumpy ride on a dray to the small Queanbeyan hospital.

The resourcefulness of the settlers is evident through archaeological finds revealing possum and other native animal bones, and the remnants of Crinigans' orchard to the west. The three pear trees would have been planted in the mid 19th Century, together with the Robinias and Hawthorns closer to the house. Blue irises still bloom each spring on the site.

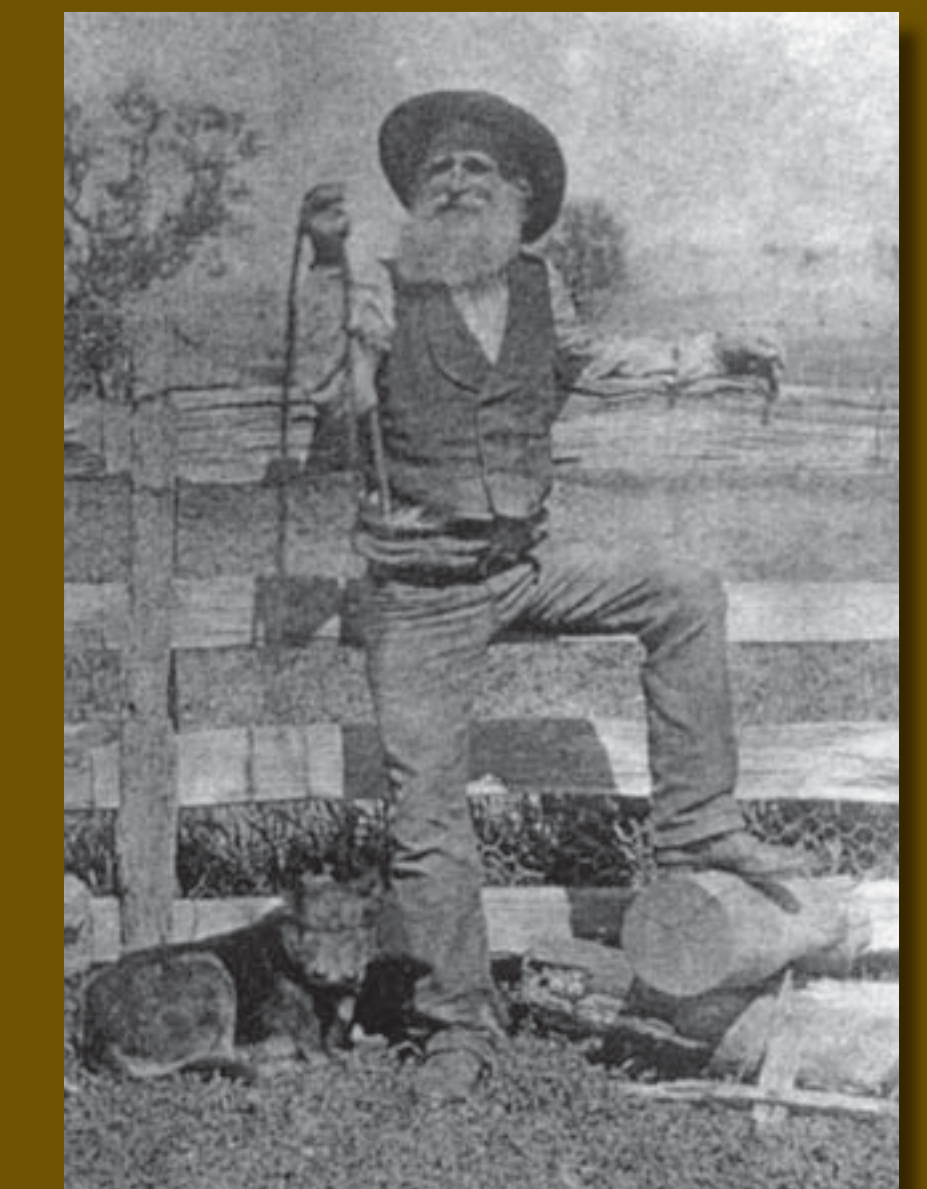
The original inhabitants of this area, the Ngunnawal, have left signs of their early occupation of this area in the stone artifacts found nearby and stone resources quarried not far from here at Girrawah Park.

This site is listed on the ACT Heritage Places Register.

ALL IMAGES: MARILYN FOLGER FAMILY COLLECTION



Eliza Jane McInnes nee Crinigan.



Duncan McInnes.



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This project was assisted through funding made available by the ACT Government under the ACT Heritage Grants Program.



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