Mr. and Mrs. Clark

Mr. Clark was employed by Anne Drysdale as her first overseer / manager on Boronggoop. He was responsible for overseeing the construction of her hut, supervised the workers and took charge of the flock of sheep that she obtained from Dr. Alexander Thomson. Most of the information about this period came from Anne Drysdale's first diary. Fortunately, she wrote descriptive passages in that volume so it gave some flavour to their characters. Anne always referred to them as Mr. and Mrs. Clark in the diaries. They have been identified as Thomas Clark and Jessie Janet Cameron who married on the 12 July 1839 in Edinburgh.[1] They were both born near Inverness, and thus 'from the Highlands' as cited in the Diary.[2]

Anne Drysdale and Mrs. Clark became friends on the *Indus* on route to Australia and Jessie regularly came to Anne's cabin where they did needlework, read and by December 1839 were giving lessons to the children in steerage.[3] Mr. Clark's behaviour was less exemplary with several incidents where he had 'drunk more than usual', and became aggressive. On arrival, Mr. Clark assisted her by packing up her cabin and riding out to inspect properties for her from Port Phillip.[4] After she obtained Boronggoop, Anne engaged Mr. Clark 'he is to take charge of all my concerns'.[5]

His first task was to oversee the building of a hut and engaged men for this task, 'four rooms ... without chimneys, a parlour and bedroom for myself, a kitchen and bedroom for Mr. & Mrs. Clark, a storeroom will also have to be added'.[6] However Mr. Clark became very drunk on several occasions.[7] After one particularly aggressive incident in December 1840 when he attacked another worker, she decided to discharge him.[8] The Clark's first child, born on 29 April 1840, had just died which might have explained his behaviour at this time. Employment conditions were set by the Colonial Master's and Servants' Acts 1828 and were designed to support pastoralists' objectives to restrict wage levels and reduce worker mobility. Amendments in 1840 gave employees some capacity to recover unpaid wages whereby two judges arbitrated such cases.[9] Guided by Dr. Thomson who possibly wanted to test the new

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[1] FHL 1066765, married 12 July 1839, South Cuthberts, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland.

[2] Geneanet Community Trees Index, Thomas Clark, male, 1804, birth place Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire, Scotland; Geneanet Community Trees Index, Jessie Janet Cameron, female, birth date 1 November 1809, birth place Urquhart, Inverness, Scotland.

[3] Roberts, Miss D & Miss N, 8 December 1839, p. 47.

[4] Roberts, *Miss D & Miss N*, 30 March 1840, pp. 65-66.

[5] *Ibid.*, 6 May 1840, p. 72.

[6] Ibid., 26 June 1840, p. 76.

[7] *Ibid.*, 9 December 1840, p. 78.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Miles Goodwin and Glenda Maconachie, 'Minimum labour standards enforcement in Australia: Caught in the crossfire?', *The Economic and Labour Review*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 57-58.

laws, Anne took the question of Clark's payment for his six months work to the arbiters. They gave him nothing. Not surprisingly, he was enraged and refused to leave until threatened with jail.

Thomas and Jessie Clark returned to Melbourne. They were later to move to the western districts and had several more children, Hopefully, he overcame his drinking problem. Thomas Clark died on 17 August 1867 at Purnim near Warrnambool aged sixty three where he was a farmer.[10] Jessie Janet Cameron died on 25 May 1869 at Bellangelch, Colac aged sixty two.[11] Anne hired John and Vair Armstrong to replace them.



Fig 4 Sketch of Boronggoop Hut

Anne's treatment of Thomas Clark is a sharp contrast to that given to John Hyland who was employed in 1843 as a general 'jobbing' labourer around the home property. He was a long term employee responsible for grinding wheat and shifting flour at their mill, constructing the wash house and goose house, repairing their hut and delivering wool bales to the port. However, he clearly had a drinking problem with early instances described as 'illness' in the diaries. These escalated in late 1844. They included a passionate dispute with Caroline, whereby he threated to leave but returned to work three days later.[12] In July 1845, *'Hyland came home in the night-time quite drunk & knocked us all up, as old Mammy [his wife] was sleeping here. He is to be discharged'*.[13] Despite being discharged, he was back at work four days later. Another major drinking incident occurred in April 1846. Again he was not

[10] Deaths, *Age (Melbourne),* 27 August 1867, p. 7.

[11] Deaths, *Herald (Melbourne),* 31 May 1869, p.2.

[12] Anne Drysdale Diary, diary entries, 4 October 1844, 7 October 1844.

[13] Anne Drysdale Diary, diary entry, 20 August 1845.

discharged, rather John and Mammy were sent to Coriyule.[14] He was not mentioned again. Given Anne and Caroline's strong religious affiliations and Clark's summary dismissal for similar offences, their tolerance of Hyland's drinking was surprising. Perhaps it reflected a growing tolerance for colonial conditions where drunkenness was a common feature. Moreover, in addition to the numerous reprieves, they also attempted to help him, taking him to church with them and encouraging him to attend a teetotal meeting.[15] It suggested that Anne and Caroline, as well as being employers, held at least some of their workers in a familial relationship which was to greatly assist those people in establishing successful positions in the colonial society as discussed elsewhere.

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[14] Anne Drysdale Diary, diary entry, 12 May 1846.

[15] Anne Drysdale Diary, diary entry, 17 April 1844.