

White Settler History

Hume and Hovell travelled through the Holbrook area in 1824. John and Elisabeth Mitten were the first settlers on the present site of Holbrook. They squatted on the North Bank of the Ten Mile Creek, in the late 1830s.

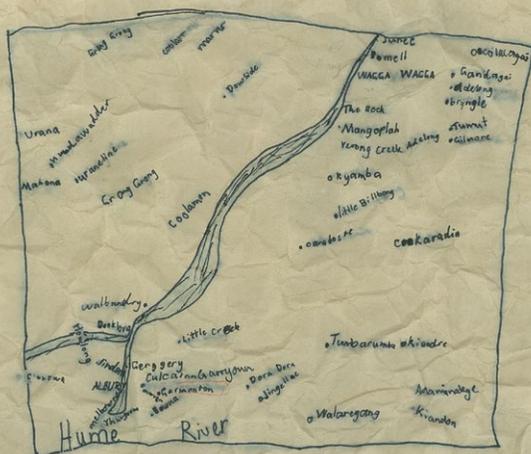
In 1837, Rev. JJ Therry was granted the first land licence in the Holbrook district. John Purtell and Daniel Carmody were successfully granted the "Billy Bong" lease in 1837, which covered an area of 6,400 acres. It is said that John Purtell named Ten Mile Creek as his land was ten miles from the Therry's Stock Yards.



Squatters started the original travelling stock reserves (TSR) to move their stock from their properties to sales. Many tracks that were used were formed by Aboriginal people, animals, explorers or bullock tracks.

The Holbrook TSR was formed in 1886 on the Ross brothers land to the north of Germanton. By 1857, the area was named Germanton, which was later changed to Holbrook, in 1915. The town was renamed after Lieutenant Commander Holbrook, who fought for the British Navy aboard the B11 Submarine during World War I.

The railways arrived in Holbrook in 1903, as a branch line from Culcairn, and ran until 1977.



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Holbrook

THE TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVE

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AN IMPORTANT PLACE WITH A LONG HISTORY

Aboriginal Culture in Holbrook

The travelling stock reserve in Holbrook is in Wiradjuri Country.

Located within the travelling stock reserve, there is thought to be one boundary tree (pictured below) and two ring trees. In Wiradjuri culture, a boundary tree signifies the boundary of Aboriginal tribal land. Visiting tribes must seek permission from the tribal elders before entering into another tribe's land.

Aboriginal people would move according to the seasons. In warmer climates, they would travel to cooler areas, while during the cooler climates, Aboriginal people would travel to warmer tribal lands.

Aboriginal men would find tools and weapons from surrounding trees. Aboriginal women would forage for berries, grubs and honey ants, while the men would go hunting for meat. Like most Aboriginal tribes, the men and the women would have their own sacred meeting places.

Plants and Animals in the Holbrook TSR

The Holbrook Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) is home to many birds, mammals and plants. Holbrook TSR is crown land, reserved under legislation for travelling stock. Local Land Services manage over 500,000 hectares of TSR land in New South Wales.

The Holbrook TSR covers approximately eighteen hectares, and is made up primarily of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland. This woodland is made up of yellow box, white box and red gum trees, as well as many native grasses.



There are approximately thirty species of birds that call the TSR home, including Australia's smallest bird the Weebill. The TSR is also home to Brown treecreepers and Barking owls. There have been sightings of the Regent honeyeater, which is critically endangered.

◀ Nesting boxes have been installed in the trees of the Holbrook TSR. They have been used by the threatened Squirrel gilders, as well as Brushtail and Ringtail possums.

Importance of the Holbrook TSR

TSRs provide reserves for travelling and grazing stock. These traveling stock reserves are great for times of drought, bushfire and flood. They are also a good meeting place.

Originally, the reserve in Holbrook was home to the Wiradjuri people. There was no ownership of the land, as Aboriginal people saw themselves as the caretakers of the land. It was protected, and respected, by tradition. By protecting the environment they ensured there was food, water and other resources.

Each area was protected and guarded by a caretaker named Gunjung. They would protect the land from exploitation. The caretaker would watch over the land and rivers.

In the years following white settlement, people used these reserves to walk stock from their farm to sales. The Holbrook TSR was used as a reserve and then as a pony club. The Holbrook TSR, and many others, have value for conservation because they are some of the only areas of Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands that haven't been continuously grazed. Therefore, they still retain good trees and native grasses that most farmland doesn't have.

In order to use the TSR in Holbrook today, you need to purchase a permit from Local Land Services. Unless you acquire a permit for a longer time limit, stock has to travel for at least 10km each day. In addition to paying for a slow travel permit you also have to pay for a stock walking permit. The restrictions on travelling stock on the Hume Freeway, and the fact that people use trucks to get their stock to market these days, means that the Holbrook TSR is not often used for travelling stock anymore.

