

# Naming Charlie: British Indian Identities in White Australia, 1901-1940

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UNSW, Sydney

Workshop on Indian Migration to the Pacific and Indian Ocean States  
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand  
15 April 2015

# The politics of naming

- Aliens
- Asiatics
- Hindoos
- Indians
- Natives of British India

We hold Ourselves bound to the Natives of Our Indian Territories by the same obligations of Duty which bind Us to all Our other Subjects ; and those Obligations, by the Blessing of Almighty God, We shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of Religion, We disclaim alike the Right and the Desire to impose our Convictions on any of Our Subjects. We declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure that none be in any wise favored, none molested or disquieted by reason of their Religious Faith or Observances ; but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the Law : and We do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under Us, that they abstain from all interference with the Religious Belief or Worship of any of Our Subjects, on pain of Our highest Displeasure.

And it is Our further Will that, so far as may be, Our Subjects, of whatever Race or Creed, be freely and impartially admitted to Offices in Our Service, the Duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

# Indian Reactions to White Australia policy in India

- ‘Are not natives British Subjects, and has the British Government forgotten the late Queen Empress’ Proclamation promising equal treatment and rights to both her black and white subjects?’
- *Qasur*, July 1, 1903. Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab, 1903. IOR, L/R/5/187, p. 165.

Sir JOHN FORREST.—How would the honorable member deal with our Indian-British subjects?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN.—I said in my opening remarks—and nobody can be more seized of the difficulties and dangers of the position than I am—that we are a component part of the British Empire, which is made up of all sorts of races and classes of men. But the fact that these difficulties arise, and that we are a part of the British Empire renders it all the more necessary at this initial stage of our Commonwealth life that we should meet these difficulties straight out, face to face, and that we should tell the Imperial Government that although we desire to cling to the British connexion for all time we must not be hampered by these conditions which arise out of our union with the Empire. Furthermore, I deny that we

## ADJOURNMENT.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT—CALCIUM  
CARBIDE—INTER-STATE CUSTOMS CERTI-  
FICATES.

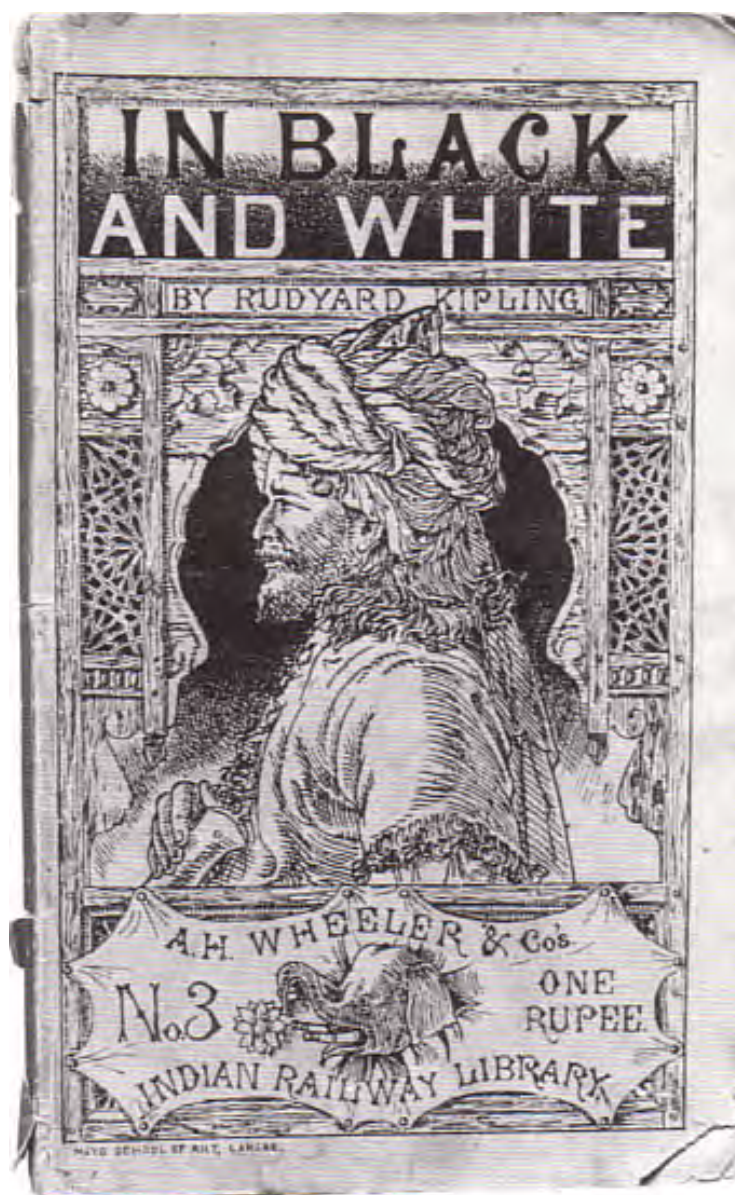
Motion (by Mr. BARTON) proposed—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. WATSON (Bland).—I should like to direct the attention of the Prime Minister to a statement to the effect that a number of Hindoos have recently been admitted into Western Australia upon passing a test in the English language. If I recollect aright, the Government undertook, when the Immigration Restriction Bill was before the House, that the test which they proposed would prove in administration as effective in keeping out people who were held to be objectionable as that supported by a number of honorable members who wished for a more direct method. If, however, the statement to which I refer is true, the Act is not proving so effective as it was said it would be.

Debating the Immigration Restriction Act, 7 February 1902, Hansard, Reps p. 9870.

definite action being taken. It is said by some of those who object to legislation of this sort that, while we may be justified in keeping out Chinamen, Japanese, Manillamen, Malays, or Assyrians, we have no justification for attempting to keep out of Australia the coloured British subjects of His Majesty the King. I would direct the attention of people who think in that way to the fact that the British Government to-day admit the power of this Commonwealth and of the people of Australia to differentiate between Indian British subjects and white British subjects, because they themselves differentiate between them. The British Government do not think of putting the Hindoo or any other native of India upon the same plane as the people of the United Kingdom. The ground I take is that the natives of India are British subjects and subjects only, whilst the people of the United Kingdom are citizens as well, and British subjects in Australia are citizens also. That









# THE HINDOO BLEND PURE TEA



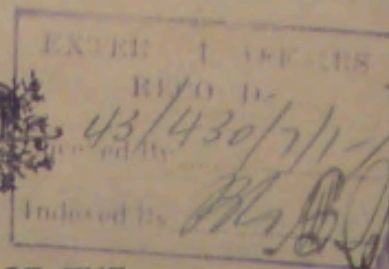
IN  
1 lb. & 1/2 lb  
PACKETS.

ALSO TINS & 1/2 CHESTS.



IF YOU WANT A REFRESHING CUP OF TEA *buy only*  
**THE HINDOO BLEND** Guaranteed Absolutely Pure

TRADE MARK



TELEPHONE: CALCUTTA 3431

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:  
AUSTRADE

GOVERNMENT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

~~2, FARMERS PLACE~~

CALCUTTA

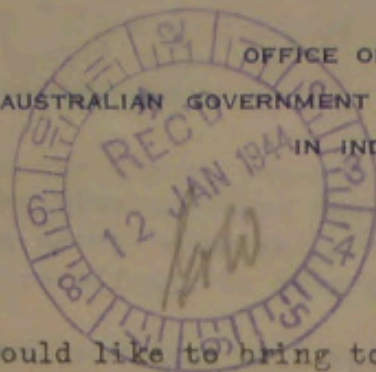
OFFICE OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TRADE COMMISSIONER  
IN INDIA

Gorton Castle,  
Simla.

4th December 1943.

PLY PLEASE QUOTE

50	4	20
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I would like to bring to notice the fact that the word "native" gives offence in India, and to suggest that this fact be made known to Ministers and officials in Australia with a view to avoiding its use when referring to people of Eastern countries.



Book No. 175

15 95

Form No. 21.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No. 33

Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.

## CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, OSWALD SEPTIMUS MADDOCKS. the Collector of Customs  
for the State of QUEENSLAND. in the said Commonwealth,  
hereby certify that Charlie Phillips (Worce)  
hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted  
from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Com-  
monwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 12th February 1915.

Collector of Customs.

### DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Hindoo Birthplace India  
Age 55 years Complexion \_\_\_\_\_  
Height \_\_\_\_\_ Hair \_\_\_\_\_  
Build \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes \_\_\_\_\_  
Particular marks \_\_\_\_\_

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

### PHOTOGRAPHS.

Full Face:—



Profile:—



*Clarence and Richmond Examiner,*  
May 4, 1909, p. 8

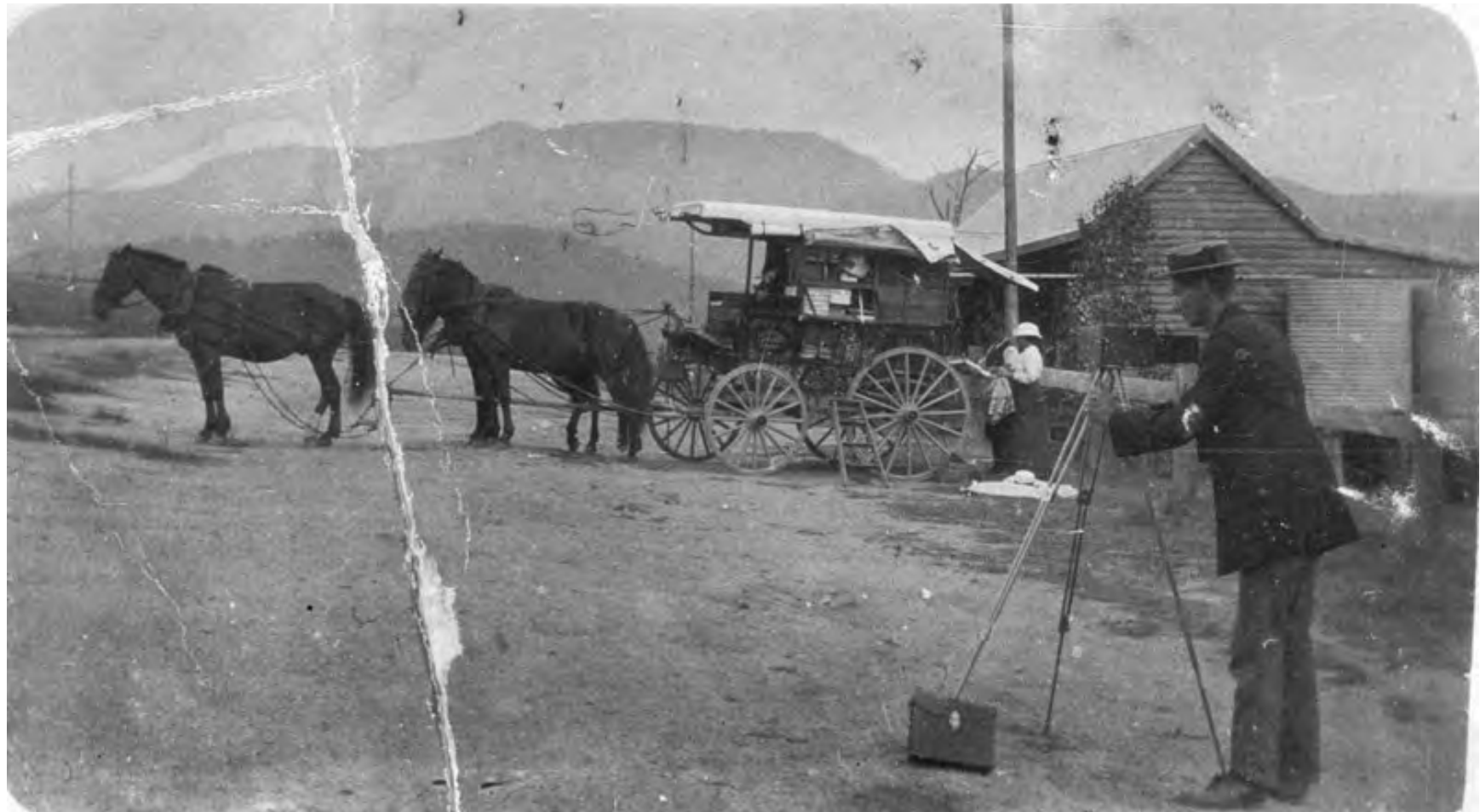
A coloured man, well known as "Charlie," was found dead on the public wharf on Saturday. It transpires that he had been in poor health for some time, and left home on that morning with the intention of going to the hospital for medical treatment. His remains were interred in the local cemetery yesterday.

## CHARLIE THE INDIAN

7 Last Tuesday afternoon saw the  
last act in connection with the estate  
of Galeb Cashmere—or Charlie the  
Indian, as he was familiarly called.  
Charlie was well and very favorably  
known in Kilmore and for many  
miles around. He had travelled the  
district for over thirty years as an  
itinerant salesman of drapery and  
the usual adjuncts thereto. His in-  
tegrity was never doubted, and dur-  
ing his long connection with the dis-  
trict he enjoyed what might be term-  
ed its freedom. His familiar turn-  
out of big waggon, drawn by the  
grey and bay horses—in too fat con-  
dition actually for strenuously rapid  
work—sauntered quietly from one  
place to another at fairly regular in-  
tervals, camping in appointed spots,  
where Charlie cooked his johnny  
cakes and poultry, he being very par-  
tial to the latter. These two items,  
with full supplies of milk and butter,  
made up the greater part of his mo-  
dest bill of fare. He was, however,  
a master hand in the construction  
of curry, as is the wont of his  
nationality. He was devoted to his  
horses, and they reciprocated in no  
uncertain way, following him about  
in similar manner to pet dogs. After  
his long years of travel Charlie's  
health commenced to fail and during  
the last few weeks of his career he  
did little more than get about. He  
was of an independent disposition,  
and respectfully declined assistance  
offered him by friends. It was not  
until he collapsed at Kilmore East a  
few weeks ago that he gave in. He  
was brought to Kilmore hospital for  
treatment, and, at the request of his  
people, he was removed to Mel-  
bourne, where he passed away on  
the day after he left Kilmore.

Kilmore Free Press, November 14, 1935, p. 2.

## Charlie Ammondeen's Cart, c.1914. Comara, NSW





Book No. 364

Form No. 21. **COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.** No. 062  
**DUPLICATE.** *Immigration Act 1901-1922 and Regulations.*

**CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.**

I, John Musgrave <sup>Actg</sup> the Collector of Customs  
for the State of Queensland in the said Commonwealth,  
hereby certify that Charlie Statto, born  
hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted  
from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Com-  
monwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1923 Musgrave  
*Actg* Collector of Customs.


**DESCRIPTION.**

Nationality <u>Indian</u>	Birthplace <u>India</u>
Age <u>50 years</u>	Complexion <u>Dark</u>
Height <u>5 ft 5 in</u>	Hair <u>Grey</u>
Build <u>Medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>
Particular marks <u>Large scar on left leg</u>	

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

**PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Full Face:— Profile:—




Date of departure 30. 10. 23 Port of Embarkation TOWNSVILLE.  
Ship Willea Destination India


Date of return \_\_\_\_\_ Ship \_\_\_\_\_  
Port \_\_\_\_\_


4.374/8.17.—C.2008. Customs Officers.

**IMPRESSION OF LEFT HAND.**



Left Right





NAA, 9587296



**THUMB PRINTS.**

**LEFT.**

**RIGHT.**

THUMB PRINTS DISPENSED WITH  
SEE PREVIOUS CERTIFICATE No. 86/360

FEE PAID TO REVENUE, WARRANT NO. 193201 20/1/19

Book No. 265

Form No. 21.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.  
Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.

No. 013

### CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, HENRY MACNAMARA ROBINSON, <sup>Actg</sup> Collector of Customs  
for the State of QUEENSLAND, in the said Commonwealth,  
hereby certify that Charli Dulap Singh (Bairno)  
hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted  
from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Com-  
monwealth within a period of two years from this date.

Date 20 Jan 1919

H. Robinson  
Actg Collector of Customs.

#### DESCRIPTION

Nationality	<u>Hindoo</u>	Birthplace	<u>Dulapen India</u>
Age	<u>53 1/2</u>	Complexion	<u>Dark</u>
Height	<u>5 ft 4 1/2</u>	Hair	<u>Black</u>
Build	<u>Medium</u>	Eyes	<u>Brown</u>
Particular marks	<u>Scar on underside of back of neck</u> (For impression of hand, see back of this document.)		

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Full Face:—

Profile:—

Extension of Book 190/31  
3.12.18 to 3.2-12-19  
Records 18/9469

Date of departure	<u>7.2.16</u>	Port of Embarkation	<u>Bairno</u>
Ship	<u>Maharaja</u>	Destination	<u>India</u>
Date of return	<u>10.7.21</u>	Ship	<u>Muttra</u>
Port	<u>Sydney</u>		<u>432</u>

#51/117—C.965.

Customs Officers.

1916

NAA 9104977

FILE PAID AT CAIRNS.  
 102 No. 21 of 4/10/16  
 Book No. 190

QLD. No. 15 693

Form No. 1 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 031  
 Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.

### CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, HENRY MACNAMARA ROBINSON, <sup>Sub</sup>Collector of Customs for the State of QUEENSLAND, in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Charlie Dulach Singh (Cairns) hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 2nd December 1915 <sup>Sub</sup>Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.	
Nationality <u>Native of India</u>	Birthplace <u>Budapin (India)</u>
Age <u>40 years</u>	Complexion <u>Dark</u>
Height <u>5' 10 1/2"</u>	Hair <u>Black</u>
Build <u>Medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>
Particular marks <u>Scar 2 or (2) inches long back of neck.</u>	

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Full Face:—



Date of departure 7.2.1916 Port of Embarkation CAIRNS  
 Ship S. S. Mataram Destination India  
 Date of return 15.7.21 Ship Shivappa  
 Port Sydney Indiastella  
S. Watt  
 Customs Officers.

A. 2145-14—C. 1002

NAA 9110933

1916



Fee paid - w 400 29/11/34

Book No. 365

Form No. 21  
**DUPLICATE.**

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.  
*Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.*

No. 086

### CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.


I, John M. Musgrave <sup>Actg.</sup> the Collector of Customs  
for the State of Victoria in the said Commonwealth,  
hereby certify that Charlie Dulup Singh (Bairns)  
hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted  
from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Com-  
monwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 27th February 1934 <sup>Actg. Collector of Customs.</sup>

DESCRIPTION	
Nationality <u>Indian</u>	Birthplace <u>India (Barapind)</u>
Age <u>58 years</u>	Complexion <u>Dark</u>
Height <u>6-0</u>	Hair <u>Black</u>
Build <u>Medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>

Particular marks \_\_\_\_\_  
(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Full Face:—  Profile:—

Date of departure 29th Nov 1934 Port of Embarkation Cairo  
Ship Tanjar Destination India  
Date of return 11/10/37 Ship Shriala  
Port Sydney N. Andrews  
H. Sankar  
Customs Officers.

086

1924

Book No. 538  
 Form No. 21.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 38  
 Immigration Act 1901-1932 and Regulations.

**CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.**

I, RUPERT BRISBANE GORD the Collector of Customs  
 for the State of QUEENSLAND. in the said Commonwealth,  
 hereby certify that Charlie Dulceep Singh of Cairns  
 hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted  
 from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Com-  
 monwealth within a period of three years from the date of departure  
 shown below.

Date 7. 1. 37 *R.B. Gord*  
 Collector of Customs.


**DESCRIPTION.**

Nationality <u>Indian</u>	Birthplace <u>India (Benarsh)</u>
Age <u>70 years</u>	Complexion <u>Copper</u>
Height <u>6 ft.</u>	Hair <u>Grey</u>
Build <u>medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>
Particular marks _____	

(For thumb prints, see back of this document.)


**PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Full Face:—



*Charlie Dulceep Singh*

Profile:—



*experience 7/1/37*

Date of Departure 17. 1. 37 Port of Embarkation Townsville  
 Ship Marulla Destination India  
 Date of Return 26. 12. 39 Ship Narkunda  
 Port Brisbane *R. Gulick*  
*W. H. O'Connell*  
 Customs Officers.

B. J. 229.—294.

NAA 30089518

1937



1916, aged 50



1924, aged 58



1937, aged 70





Tweed Heads - Point Danger. 9/8/28



Clarence River. Chatham Island. 11/8/28



Moree  
11/8/28

North  
Coast  
Visit.



"Indian Charlie" out on trip.  
Northwood Island Point. 12/8/28



Murrumbidgee. 12/8/28



Mount Warrig  
12/8/28

Album of L. G. Watt, New South Wales Board of Fire Commissioners, 1928

# 'Indian Charlie and his Pipe', 1928



State Records NSW

Harwood Island, NSW