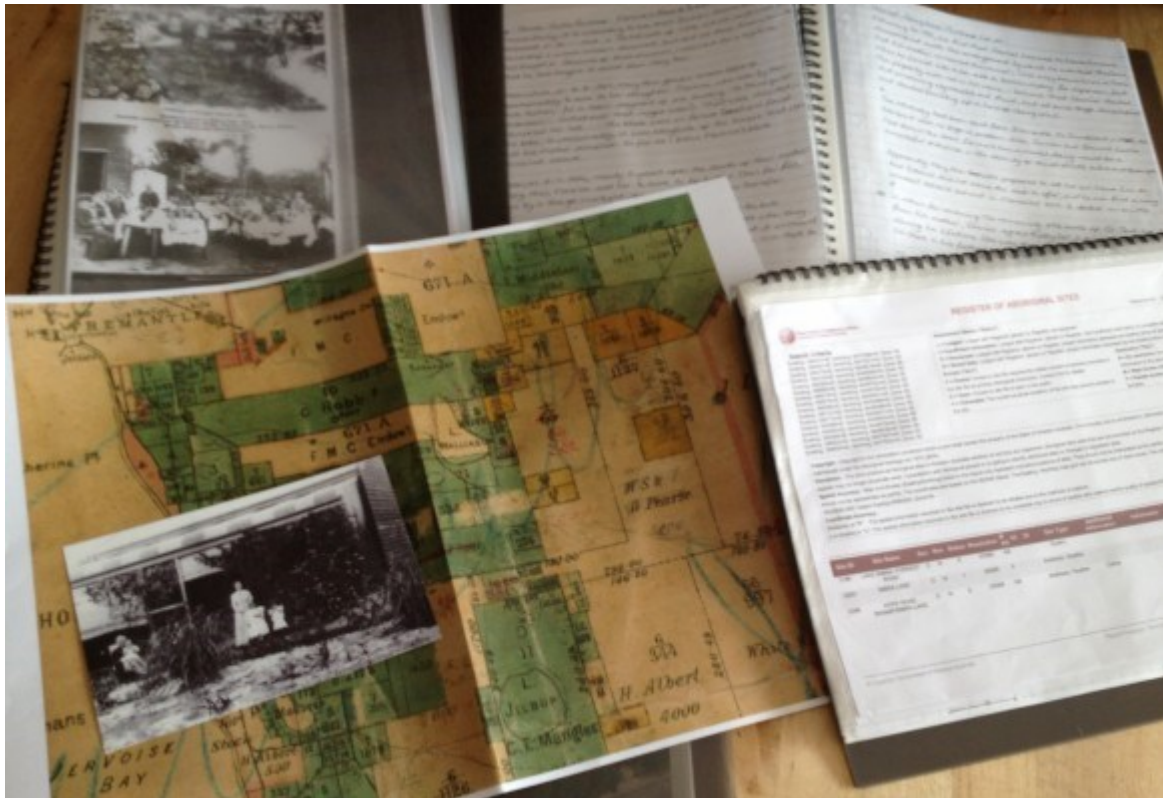


TAPPERS HOMESTEAD, BIBRA LAKE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

June 29, 2012 Sue Carter Day of Archaeology 2012, Historical Archaeology
Aboriginal, Archaeology, Artefacts, Australia, Azelia Ley, Azelia Ley Museum, Battye
Library, Bibra, Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Cockburn council, Daniel Tapper, database, Florence
Korten, Government Department, Homestead, Korten, Mary-Ann Tapper, museum, Perth, Research,
Schmalkalden-Meiningen, State library, State Library of Western Australia, Tapper, Western Australia

Today I am working on some of the history of the site. Research can take many forms and for this project I am utilizing historic records that are known for the area. These include registered maps, known local Aboriginal sites, notes taken from books relating to Bibra Lake and its Pioneering families as well as personal photographs from descendants.

The research of any site is integral to understanding its location and position within the landscape and its importance as a locus within the neighborhood or community. The Tapper family homestead was a focal point of the Bibra Lake community during its later years. Documentation and information is sourced from local libraries, the State Library of Western Australia, the City of Cockburn council, the Azelia Ley Museum, interviews with descendants which includes viewing family photographs, Landgate (Government Department dealing with land titles and records for Western Australia), and personal communication from the period that is stored at the Battye Library in Perth.



Research for Tappers Homestead

Tying the history and the archaeology together can be challenging at times, yet when it all falls into place, and you hit that “Eureka!” moment, nothing can compare! Archaeology can also show discrepancies that may exist in the historical record too. After being informed there was ever only one structure on the site, I was a bit perplexed as to why I had two distinctive artefact scatter areas. The research has since shown that there were actually three structures, which was confirmed by early aerial photography, and now know that the three structures belonged to Mary-Ann Tapper, her son Daniel Tapper, and daughter Florence Korten. This information has answered one of my research questions relating to the artefact scatters.

I was only permitted to collect artefacts that were visible on the ground. With over 400 artefacts collected from an area of 60m x 70m, after it had been churned up by trench digging for reticulation pipes, I should gain some insight into the daily lives of the three households. With the last property being demolished in the 1960’s the date range of the artefacts (1895-1960’s) is challenging but rewarding – another aspect to the research of the site is obtaining dates or date ranges for each individual artefact, once they have all been placed in a database. There has been major disturbance to the area and so I will not be able to ascertain which artefacts came from which household, yet should gain an overall picture as to the standard of living of the Tapper family.

There are still many hours of work to do to unravel the history of the site – at least another couple of months before a report can be written for the local council. Archaeology work is not just digging – there is so much more to do. I field walked for one and a half days only, and will spend approximately 3-4 months researching and formulating a report, but this is what I love about the discipline – variety, investigation and knowledge – I wouldn't have it any other way!