



Boongaree, Bundle and Migeo: Reading Indigenous lives through exploration texts

Biography Workshop

National Centre of Biography
11am - 12:30 pm, Thursday 16
September 2021

Zoom Only Event

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Royal Navy archives have been a site of rich reward for historians keen to trace the life of an expedition, or to write a biography of a captain or senior officer. They have not often been considered as a storehouse where the experiences of Indigenous crew who travelled on Royal Navy expeditions can be read. This paper reflects on my searching, sifting and reading of Royal Navy texts to locate the ship-and-shore moments of three Indigenous men who travelled on board maritime expeditions to the north west coast of Australia in the early nineteenth century: Boongaree, a Kuringgai man who travelled with Royal Navy hydrographer Phillip Parker King in 1818; Bundle, a Dharawal man who replaced Boongaree for King's fourth voyage in 1821; and Migeo, a Whadjuk Nyungar man, who voyaged with the crew of HMS Beagle in 1839. Within the vast archives of these expeditions, at times well hidden, are narratives, traces, fragments and images of Boongaree and Bundle, as well as the song-making of Migeo. This talk reveals the ways in which the texts that the crew generated, can add to the biographical narratives of these three Indigenous men.



Associate Professor Tiffany Shellam lectures in History at Deakin University. She works collaboratively with Noongar people, and historians, museum curators, librarians and archivists to critique the archives, unearthing hidden and alternative histories generated by encounters between Indigenous people and explorers and settlers in the 19th century. Her book *Shaking Hands on the Fringe: Negotiating the Aboriginal world at King George's Sound* was published by UWA Publishing in 2009, and her second book, *Meeting the Waylo: Aboriginal Encounters in the Archipelago* (UWA Publishing 2019) won the Prime Minister's Literary Award in Australian History in 2020.