



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Achieve International Excellence

Archaeology
Seminar Series
2016

The Archaeology of the Native Mounted Police in Queensland

Lynley Wallis (The University of Notre Dame Australia), **Heather Burke** (Flinders University), **Bryce Barker**, **Kelsey Lowe** (both University of Southern Queensland), **Iain Davidson** (University of New England), **Noelene Cole** (James Cook University) and **Liz Hatte** (Northern Archaeology Consultancies)



Image: Lower Herbert
River camp 1872 -
Waterview Station

The 'History Wars' sparked a flurry of research into the nature and extent of Aboriginal-settler frontier violence. While vital, this research has been limited to written records largely excluding Indigenous voices. We argue that in order to attain a more holistic and sophisticated insight into the complexities of the frontier we should approach the debate through an entirely new lens: the material evidence for the Queensland Native Mounted Police (NMP) and their activities—both violent and mundane. Our recently commenced ARC project is undertaking the first broad-scale and systematic archaeological investigation of the NMP, including their activities, living and working conditions, the domestic and hierarchical arrangements in camps, and the oral histories of troopers, officers and conflict held by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. By investigating the material evidence for the range of responses to the presence and activities of the NMP, it explores the nexus between the force and local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across three key areas (Cape York, Central Qld, NW Qld) in order to examine the evolution of the NMP system, and the unfolding of the frontiers it created across space and time. By comparing and contrasting material culture and memory we can better understand frontier conflict, the process of colonialism and its effects, settler society's relationships with Aboriginal peoples both then and now, and how such complexities provide opportunities for '*reflection upon the options we have ourselves*' (Lydon 1996:161).

4-5pm Thursday 31st March
Social Sciences, Lecture Room 1 (G28)

Enquiries: sven.ouzman@uwa.edu.au