

Friday 12th August 1916

Dear Diary,

Today was by far the best day in all of my life. I made a discovery so amazing, so unbelievable, it had to be seen to be believed. It all began early this morning while I was doing my morning chores. I had finished milking the cow and went off to clean out the chook's pen. Yuck! What an awful job. I took my rake and started cleaning out all the chicken poo. After not too long I noticed something sticking up from the ground and although I could only just see it, I knew exactly what it was.

I remembered a story I had been told by my friend Jimmy Brown, a local Aboriginal man from the Boorooberongal clan. Jimmy was famous in the local community for his great stories and knowledge of the local environment. On special occasions, we were allowed to visit Jimmy's Kitchen, well that's what he called it. Jimmy's Kitchen was a camp fire near the school where Jimmy used to tell his stories. We would stay up late drinking billy tea and eating damper while Jimmy told epic tales of times gone by.

One such story was about an Aboriginal man who, while hunting one day, saw in the sand a large footprint. It was like nothing he had ever seen before. He tracked the footprint for days and days, over hills, through gullies and across the plains. Finally, on the fifth day he found a creature feeding by the river, right here in the valley

below my school. It was the mightiest creature he had ever seen, large and powerful, yet seemingly calm and gentle. The man watched the creature as it moved across the floodplain, walking from tree to tree, turning its head in slow sweeping stares, as if looking for something it had lost. The man wondered if the creature was lonely. Night fell in the valley and the man lay down to rest. As he drifted off to sleep he wished for morning to hurry up and arrive so he could once again follow this magnificent creature.

The man awoke to the sound of a deep bellowing noise that echoed throughout the hills and gullies. Although it was still dark he knew it was the creature. He stumbled to his feet and gathered up his possessions before taking off in the direction of the sound. He searched and searched, using all of his tracking skills, but could find no trace of the creature. He was most disappointed but vowed to keep up the search as long as his legs could carry him. For years and years the man returned to the valley in hope of seeing the creature again but it was never to be. As mysteriously as the creature had entered the man's life, it disappeared without a trace, until now.

I got down on my knees and carefully scratched the ground around my newly found treasures, making sure I didn't damage anything in the process. I held them up to the light of the morning sun. They were scratched and dusty like an ancient Egyptian tomb that had been

buried in the sand for thousands of years. I had surely found evidence of the creature that the man had searched for all those years ago.

Mum was yelling out from the back veranda, telling me to get a move on or I would be late for school. I quickly wrapped my findings up in a hessian bag and raced up to the house to get ready for school. I was desperate to show them to my best friend, Harry. He would love them because he too knew the story of the creature in the valley.

Harry is a year and a half younger than me. Harry and I shared the same love of adventure and especially fishing for and eating yabbies from the river. We always checked our nets frequently so we didn't accidentally catch a platypus. Harry would help me find a safe place to keep this discovery away from the horrible school bully, Ben.

Ben was eleven, small for his age and mean to everybody. He even tried to be mean to our teacher once, but Mr Munro gave him 6 cuts for insolence. I have to give it to him though, he was a master at marbles in the playground.

As I sat in class trying to look interested in what my teacher had to say, all I could think of was the parcel at my feet. I nudged Harry in the side when the teacher turned around to write on the board and whispered, "Look at what I found". I opened the bag and revealed my

find, Harry let out a "WOW" that was way too loud for class! Our teacher, Mr Munro spun around and demanded to know what all the fuss was about. I tried to convince the teacher that we were just really interested in what he was writing on the board but he didn't believe me. When I refused to open my parcel and show what I had brought to class, things got really bad. Both Harry and I had to stand in front of the class and we each received three strokes of the cane. My hand throbbed to the beat of my heart but it was a secret worth keeping.

Harry and I were excused from class and allowed to go to the well to get a drink of water, freshen up and learn some manners. As we pumped the water up from the well, we made a pact that we would split up and hide our finds and keep them a secret from everyone. Harry said that he knew just the place to hide part of our discovery, where no one would ever find it.

As soon as the school bell rang for the end of the day, Harry and I raced down the hill towards Harry's farm. Harry's family were cattle farmers and they owned all of the land at the bottom of the hill near the river. We ran all the way to a big gate that led into the back paddock. It was here that Harry said we should hide this part of our find. The back paddock had a big pile of rocks stacked up at the far end, a perfect place to hide our parcel. Better still, between the rocks and the gate leading into the paddock, stood the biggest, meanest, crankiest

bull in the whole of the valley. Brutus was a prize winning bull with a prize winning temper. No one would dare enter this paddock.

My only concern was how I was going to enter the paddock and reach the rock pile without Brutus tenderising us with his gigantic horns! Harry assured me there was nothing to worry about, he said he knew the one thing that Brutus was scared of... Thunder. That was all very well and good, but it was clear and sunny day with no sign of thunder anywhere! 'Never mind', said Harry, 'I'll show you a trick that fools Brutus every time'. So off we went into the paddock and true to his word, Harry made Brutus turn into nothing more than a little scared kitten. We got the first piece hidden and ran away before Brutus caught on.

It was then I noticed something strange, I turned to Harry and said 'I think we are being followed, we better race off to Jimmy's'.

Recently more sections of Lawrence's diary have been discovered which mention that there are other bones yet to be discovered.

We need your help to solve the history mystery!!!!