TEACHER RESOURCES – THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES

Colonial Western Australian History –
Study of the Swan River Colony 1827 to 1890s

TEACHER RESOURCE 6
IMPACT ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLE: WHAT HAPPENED AT PINJARRA?

A clash occurred on 28th October 1834 between Murray River Aborigines [Bindjareb Noongar] and Stirling’s party of 25 soldiers and police.

The way people write about these events clearly shows many different points of view exist. Until recently the Aboriginal version of history has not been documented. Aboriginal history is recognised as being of oral, not written tradition. Now the history of Australia is being transformed as the stories are being heard through Aboriginal voices.

An excellent site on the events at Pinjarra, that includes both Aboriginal and European points of view, can be found at:
http://www.pinjarramassacresite.com/content/story/

The site includes:
- A map to show the progress of the British military party from Perth to Pinjarra
- An excellent virtual tour of the location of the conflict
- Eye witness accounts that provide perspectives on the Massacre/ Battle
- The belief there was a massacre.

Suggested STUDENT ACTIVITY: What Happened at Pinjarra - A Massacre or a Battle?

Students piece together the events of the conflict – detective work can take place.

- Hand out extracts of eyewitness accounts at TEACHER RESOURCE 6: Eyewitnesses at Pinjarra and/or taken from websites to students.
- Students compare and contrast the versions.
- Students consider how we know what happened to the Aboriginal people at the time. Why is there limited information? How was their history recorded and does this give a proper perspective?
- Download a map of the region and consider how the landscape may have contributed to the outcome.
- In groups, students create their own version of the conflict using the evidence (ensure both perspectives are considered) and write a script to be performed as Readers Theatre*
- Students present their performance.

*Readers Theatre is a dramatic presentation of a written script. Readers read from their ‘script’ and reading parts are divided among the readers. No memorization, costumes, blocking, or special lighting is needed. Scripts are held by the readers. Lines are not memorized. The focus is on reading the text with expressive voices and gestures.