

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF HUNTER'S RIVER

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MR. SURVEYOR GRIMES ON HUNTER'S RIVER

Sydney, 11th December, 1801

Hunter's River, from the Bason to Paterson's River

Near the bank is low and swampy, the tide at high water flowing over in many places ; where it does not the ground at the back is lower than the bank, and covered with weeds ; there are some few spots of a white sandy soil running between the swamps, covered with good grass, but not fit for cultivation.

Hunter's River above Paterson's River

There is very little carradjang [kurrajong] up this part of the river, and no ground fit for cultivation. There are a few hills N.E. of the joining of the rivers, extending at the back of the swamp, of a light sandy soil, and covered with good grass for about a quarter of a mile back ; then the most barren sandy soil, with a low brush of a thorny shrub, and between every little hill a swamp ; the principal timber is the Banksea, oak, and a few blue-gum trees.

Between M't Harris and M't Grant I think the country overflowed from the river, and no part not overflowed until the foot of the mountains ; the ground from the mountains to the rivers is almost a continued reedy swamp ; there are some spots of fine ground, but the least rise of the river must lay them under water. The high lands are covered with rocks, but good grass between them to the tops. The timber on the low land is principally apple tree and blue-gum trees; on the high lands blue-gum and iron-barked trees.

Edgerton and Hobby's Hills, and the space between them.

The hills are very rocky, but good grass between them. The soil is very light, mostly sand ; the space between the hills is nearly a continued swamp covered with reeds. The land is much lower at the back than close to the river, tho' the banks are very low, except in a few places where the points of the high hills come down to the rivers, which are uniformly of a light sandy soil and very stony, but good grass. The low banks are covered with vines, the timber at the back blue-gum and apple trees ; on the high lands blue-gum and iron-barked trees.

In a N. line from Hobby's Hills and a body of mountains to the fall, and from the high land above the fall you are surrounded with high rocky mountains in every direction, but good grass growing to the top ; the timber blue and red gum, apple tree and iron-barked trees.

Beyond the fall, on the west side of the river, are the finest stringy-bark and black-buttred blue-gum trees I every saw, but the flood rises to a considerable height.

Schanck's Forest Plains, above the New River.

The water rises on the banks a great height, as appears from the rubbish left on the trees, and the country for about half a mile back is full of lagoons, or swamps covered with reeds, which are bounded by moderate high hills. The ground is good between the river and the hills ; but much lower than the bank in most places, so that the country is under water before the banks of the river are generally overflowed, and there are marks of the flood a considerable distance up the hills at the back, which are of a light sandy soil and covered with small ironstone. The grass is very fine, except at the top of the hills, which are in general covered with an ironbark scrub. The vallies are wet, and marks of heavy torrents running down them. The timber on the low ground is principally blue-gum and apple-tree. Near the banks of the river a great quantity of large cedar, vines of different kinds, and plenty of curradjong ; but the cedar and curradjong are more plentiful up the new river than any other part. On the high land blue-gum and ironbark trees are almost the only timber growing.

C. GRIMES.

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