Yugambeh Nation

Name: _____

Date: _____

AGES 14 AND UP · TRUTH-TELLING

Kilcoy, 1842

Content note. This sheet describes the mass poisoning of Aboriginal people. Kilcoy is in neighbouring Country, north of Brisbane.

Today, we mark a somber and painful anniversary. On February 1st, 1842, the soil of Kilcoy, north of Brisbane was stained by an act of unimaginable evil.

The air in the summer of 1842 was thick—not just with the heat of the Brisbane Valley, but with the whispers of a coming change.

In the corridors of the Moreton Bay penal colony, the talk was of "Free Settlement." The maps were being redrawn, and the exclusion zones were about to vanish. But on the ground, at the edge of the frontier, the squatters didn't want to wait for the stroke of a pen. They wanted the land cleared. They wanted the Law of the Country gone.

Over 50 of our neighbouring kin —men, women, and children—were murdered through the cowardly poisoning of gifted flour. Families sat together, breaking bread, unaware that the white flour was laced with strychnine. Within hours, the laughter around the fires turned to agony and death.

Just nine days later, on February 10th, the exclusion zone was officially repealed, opening the floodgates for further dispossession and violence. The land was "opened" for settlement only after the soil had been stained with the blood of its protectors. This was the brutal reality of the frontier—a calculated clearing of the path so that "free" settlement could begin over the fresh graves of our People

In the journey of Nation Building, looking back at Kilcoy is an essential act of truth-telling:

- Truth as a Foundation: We cannot build a future on hidden graves. Acknowledging the massacres is the first step in restoring the moral balance of this Country.
- The Resilience of Kinship: Despite the attempts to poison our bloodlines, our skin systems and family ties remain unbroken. We stand today as the living proof of their failure to remove us.
- Sovereignty of the Mind: By telling this story from our perspective, we reclaim the narrative from the colonial archives. We honour the victims not as "casualties of progress," but as martyrs for their land.

As we reflect on those lost at Kilcoy, we also look toward the future. We honour their memory by teaching our children our Language, by walking our shared tracks, and by asserting that our Law was never ceded.

The "Free Settlement" may have brought more death, but it never broke our spirit. We are still here. We are still the caretakers of this Country.

Always was, always will be.

KILCOY, 1842

Questions

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1. When and where did the poisoning happen, and how were people killed?

2. What happened nine days later, on 10 February 1842?

3. Why does the Reading put “Free Settlement” in quotation marks?

4. List the three reasons the Reading gives for why looking back at Kilcoy is essential truth-telling.

5. How does the Reading say the Nation honours the memory of those who were lost?

6. What does “We are still here” mean in this Reading?