

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

JAMES PETTET

Diary, 1882

Reel M972

**Mr N. West
13 The Moorlands
Devizes Wiltshire**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1976

JAMES PETTET

Reel M972

Diary kept by James Pettet while sailing from Melbourne to Western Australia and while working as a shearer and labourer in the Kimberley region, June – December 1882.

Written in a Lett's diary, the diary commences with brief entries recording Pettet's voyage on the SS *Maudon* from Melbourne to Adelaide and Western Australia (the port is not named), 17-25 June 1882. It resumes on 30 July with more detailed entries describing his voyage on the *Jessie*, a chartered schooner, along the north-west coast of Western Australia from Cossack, near Roebourne, to the Fitzroy River. He refers to his companions on the voyage, Daly Buller, Harry Cuzens and Anthony Cornish, who were all heading to a shearing camp at Yeda Station, a Kimberley Pastoral Company property on the Fitzroy River. They began shearing on 2 September in very hot weather, with the temperature reaching 104° on 5 September. Subsequent entries refer to continued high temperatures and Pettet's daily activities such as shooting birds, ducks, an emu and a crocodile, fishing, moving sheep and searching for water, laying poison for dingoes, sighting a comet, and encounters with Australian Aborigines. There are no entries from 12 October to 9 December, when Harry Cornish, McDermott and Pettet set out in search of Aborigines. Cornish was killed by an Aborigine on 14 December. The last entry is dated 18 December, with a storm raging.

At the beginning of the diary are some financial accounts, followed by an account of a journey eastwards from Yeda, 10-16 October 1882, and a few pages of Aboriginal vocabulary. At the end of the diary is some verse, followed by a detailed account of the same journey, starting on 10 October, from Yeda, heading in a north-easterly direction.