

Quirky fact:

Despite being considered the unofficial national anthem of Australia, **Waltzing Matilda** was overlooked by the public as its choice for a national anthem in both 1974 and 1977.

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Year	Learning and Assessment (Time, Continuity and Change/Culture and Identity)
6	Music creates Legends
7	Defining Australia - Musical Uniqueness

DESCRIPTION

The song 'Waltzing Matilda' embodies the Australian spirit and has played a significant part in defining the Australian character. Written by A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson in January 1895, the words were inspired when he was staying with the Macpherson family on Dagworth Station, north-west of Winton. Christina Macpherson is thought to have written the tune, adapting the Scottish march, 'Thou Bonnie Wood of Craigielea', to accompany the words.

The phrase Waltzing Matilda is believed to have originated from German immigrants. Waltzing (auf der waltz) meant 'to go on the tramp'. In those days, apprentices would travel throughout Germany and to other European countries to gain experience in their trade, finding work with master craftsman and sleeping wherever they could. The word Matilda is from Teutonic origin meaning Mighty Battle Maiden - the name given to the women that followed the soldiers in the thirty year European war. The Matildas were like de-facto wives that kept their soldiers warm at night. The soldiers soon came to nickname their grey army coats Matildas and then, much later in Australia, Matilda was adopted as the name for a swag or blanket that was usually carried over the shoulder. Hence, Waltzing Matilda means to go walkabout looking for a job with your tools of trade and the things that keep you warm at night.

Historians believe the song was first performed publicly at the North Gregory Hotel in Winton, on 6 April 1895, apparently at a banquet for the then Premier of Queensland.

There are various interpretations of the meaning behind the song, ranging from those that say it is based around the conflict of the Great Shearers' Strike (1891 - 1894), to those that believe it was a simple ditty written by Banjo Paterson to win the admiration and eye of a woman.



Waltzing Matilda Centre, Winton

HISTORY - Winton

First residents: Koa, Malintji and Maiawali peoples

European exploration: Ludwig Leichhardt, 1848

European settlement: 1866

Town gazetted: 1879

History highlights:

- Opals discovered at Opalton in 1888 - the oldest opal mining venture in Australia
- Site of Lark Quarry, the world's only evidence of a dinosaur stampede
- Home of the 20-30 tonne sauropod Elliot, Australia's largest dinosaur skeleton discovered in 1999

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Listen to a selection of traditional Australian songs and make a list of any locations that are mentioned in the lyrics. Try to pinpoint these locations on a map of Australia
- You are an observer: You witness the singing of the song 'Waltzing Matilda' for the first time at the North Gregory Hotel in Winton. Give a critique of the song including how it was received by the locals
- Write an alternative set of lyrics for the last verse of 'Waltzing Matilda'

BEST EXPERIENCE

The Waltzing Matilda Centre, Winton

50 Elderslie Street, Winton QLD 4735

Cost: Entry fee applies

Hours: Open daily from 9.00am to 5.00pm

Phone: 1300 665 115

Email: waltzing@matildacentre.com.au

Website: www.matildacentre.com.au

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

- The Australian Age of Dinosaurs Foundation and Museum, Winton
- Royal Open Air Theatre and Museum, Winton
- Lark Quarry, Winton

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Waltzing Matilda

Music and words - various renditions
www.hamilton.net.au/matilda.html

REFERENCES

Forrest, P. & S., 2008, *Banjo & Christina : the true story of Waltzing Matilda, Shady Tree: Darwin, N.T.*

Mango Grove Lyrics

www.newmango.com/mangos/lyrics/lyrics_waltzing.html

National Library of Australia

www.nla.gov.au/epubs/waltzingmatilda/1-Orig-Christina.html

Roger Clarke's Waltzing Matilda Home Page

www.anu.edu.au/people/Roger.Clarke/WM/#Words

The Australian National Anthem

www.acn.net.au/articles/nationalanthem/

FURTHER INFORMATION

Waltzing Matilda Centre

PO Box 286, Winton QLD 4735
Phone: 1300 665 115
www.experiencewinton.com.au

