
CITY OF SOUTH PERTH LOCAL HERITAGE INVENTORY

Management
Category

B

PLACE RECORD FORM

Prepared by *Heritage Today*, January 2003
Most recent update by City of South Perth, November 2015

**Place No: SPT 4 Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge
(Former)**



(Heritage Today, 2002)

LOCATION

Name of Place	<i>Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)</i>
Other / former names	Gentilli Way Foreshore
Address	
Suburb/Town	Salter Point
Local Government Authority	City of South Perth
Scope of listing	This heritage listing applies to the portion of the Salter Point foreshore between the Canning Bridge and the Mount Henry feature.

LISTINGS BY OTHER BODIES

Name of Body	Reference No.	Grade of Listing	Date
Heritage Council of Western Australia	4831	Not listed – Data base only	-

LAND DESCRIPTION

Reserve No.	Lot	Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio
A21288	-	Canning 974	219097	-

PERIOD	Depression 1929-1930s
Design Style	-
Construction Date	1930
Source / Details	Shirley Burns in <i>South Perth-The Vanishing Village</i> . Edited by Phillip Pental and Kerry Davey. Published by the City of South Perth Historical Society, WA, 2002.

USE(S) OF PLACE

Original	Campsite for Unemployed or Homeless during the 1930s Depression
Present	Natural bush land and walkways
Other / Former	

HISTORICAL NOTES

The *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* was first established in 1930 when the effects of severe unemployment began to be felt throughout Australia. Without a social security system, unemployed people struggled to pay their bills and rent, leaving them destitute and often homeless. This was the case of the Angwin family whose plight was described by Shirley Burns who as a five and a half year old child moved to the camps with her family of seven.¹

Shirley's father, Arthur Angwin, a sign writer and painter, became unemployed early in the depression which started with the Wall Street Crash in the United States. Australia's situation mirrored the declining World economy when unemployment rose to thirty percent of the population. In December 1930, the Angwin family were forced out of their Victoria Park home and in desperation camped on the banks of the South Perth foreshore. A Road Board employee encouraged them to move to the campsite near the Canning Bridge where other families were already living.

Mrs Burns recalls particularly her mother's efforts to provide a comfortable place to live under trying circumstances. Insects, snakes, extreme heat and cold, flooding, and lack of shelter, food and clothing were a number of hardships that had to be overcome. Simple aspects of life accepted as the norm today, such as medical treatment and schooling, were trials for each of the 26 families (110 people) who lived from time to time in the camps from 1930 – c 1933.

The local primary school was Applecross Primary which the children of the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* attended by taking a long walk from the campsite to the school across Canning Bridge.

¹ The Depression Camp at Canning Bridge *South Perth-The Vanishing Village* Edited by Phillip Pental and Kerry Davey Published by the City of South Perth Historical Society WA 2002.

HISTORICAL NOTES (cont'd)

Medical treatment was sought by walking to the doctor or, if in dire need, a tram ride and ferry, then bus to the hospital. Authorities began to scrutinize the Camps more carefully when a suspected case of typhoid was reported. This led to the South Perth Road Board installing toilets and a running water tap, which alleviated the need to use the untreated well water.

Mrs Lydia Angwin worked hard to provide the basic necessities for her family but also lobbied other groups to foster help for those in need. By contacting a local politician she arranged some old flattened metal drums for building materials for shacks and she also organized for donations of warm underwear for the men of the camps. Charitable organizations contributed food and clothing but people still struggled daily to make ends meet. Sustenance work was sometimes available for the men but was not regular enough to fully support their families.

Shirley Burns remembers vividly the life that her family experienced in the camps and has expressed the hardship and humiliation her family suffered in an article in *South Perth – The Vanishing Village*, edited by Phillip Pandal and Kerry Davey and published by the City of South Perth Historical Society in 2002. Further to this, a good description of the struggle between the South Perth and Canning Roads Boards for the supply of services to this small community is well documented in Florey, C. *Peninsular City : A Social History of South Perth*, pages 178-182. Until 1955, the southern portion of what is now within the City of South Perth, was then governed by the Canning Road Board. In addition, the South Perth community assisted in various ways – the local police supplied a tent, the Burnett Bakery provided day-old bread, the Ugly Men’s Association built several family huts, and the Como Baptist Church, Salvation Army and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society donated food and clothes.

In 1992, the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* was recognized by the installment of a City of South Perth Heritage Trail plaque.

The area where the camps once stood later returned to being a peaceful, natural piece of bushland used mostly for walkers and cyclists. The paperbark trees and foreshore vegetation has also been the source of scientific study and care by local schools studying the river environment.

DESCRIPTION

The *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* in Salter Point is often described as the ‘Canning Bridge Camps’. However, it must be noted the campsite is quite a distance from the bridge. The Campsite is part of what was later named the Canning / Cloister Foreshore. The foreshore can be accessed by a fly-over across the Kwinana Freeway, to a public boat ramp and car park. The Canning / Cloister Foreshore is a mixture of paperbark natural bush land and introduced grasses which are controlled by the City of South Perth. The *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* can also be accessed by bike and foot via the pathways along the foreshore.

ASSOCIATIONS**ASSOCIATION TYPE**

Shirley Burns	One of the former residents of the Camps

HISTORIC THEME / Sub-theme**CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Outside Influences/ <i>The Depression</i>	Aesthetic
Demographic Influences/ <i>Depression and Boom</i>	Historic
	Social

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)*, has aesthetic, historic and social cultural heritage significance. The Canning / Cloister Foreshore is a place of natural beauty that attracts many walkers and cyclists. It is of aesthetic and social significance to the community as a destination for outings and passive recreation. The *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* is of particular significance in the context of the evolution of South Perth's history as it reflects the human occupation of an area not normally set aside for this function during a period of severe economic decline known as the Great Depression. The place has the interpretive capacity to demonstrate a way of life in the region of South Perth that is no longer practiced.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**Management Category B : Considerable significance**

Conservation essential. Reflects the highest level of local cultural heritage significance. Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity and authenticity. Demolition or significant alteration to a place in Management Category B of the Heritage List is not permitted. Any alterations or additions are to be guided by a Conservation Plan, if any, and reinforce the heritage values of the place.

The former Depression Campsite is a site only and has no remaining evidence of its existence. However the site has been marked with interpretive material describing its historical and natural contribution to the development of the foreshore.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION / BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Burns, S. Depression Camp at Canning Bridge in *South Perth – The Vanishing Village*. Edited by Phillip Pandal and Kerry Davey. Published by the City of South Perth Historical Society, WA, 2002.
- Florey, C. *Peninsular City A Social History of South Perth* City of South Perth WA 1995.
- Burns, S. *The Camps at Canning Bridge* notes held at the City of South Perth Local Studies Collection Perth WA 199?
- Review of Municipal Heritage Inventory by *Heritage Today* in 2006.

HISTORY OF HERITAGE LISTING BY CITY OF SOUTH PERTH

	Date Adopted by Council
Update of MHI	March 2003
Review of MHI by <i>Heritage Today</i>	February 2006
Interim Heritage List – Policy P313 ‘Local Heritage Listing’	April 2013
Updated in renamed LHI	November 2015



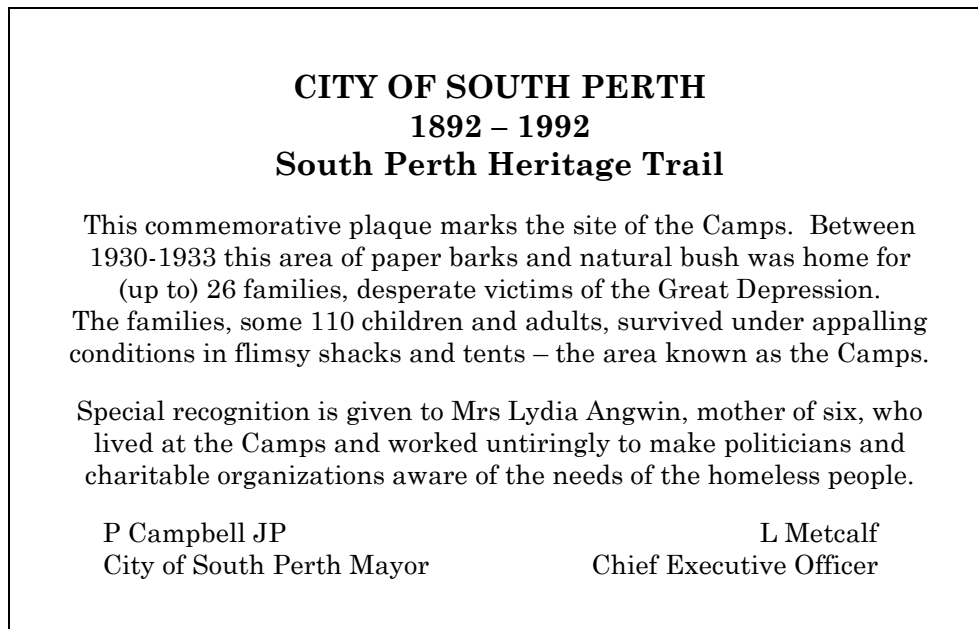
Despite the name of the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)*, they were not in close proximity to the Canning Bridge. This photograph gives an indication of the distance from the Bridge.
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



Paperbark grove which was part of the site of the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)*.
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



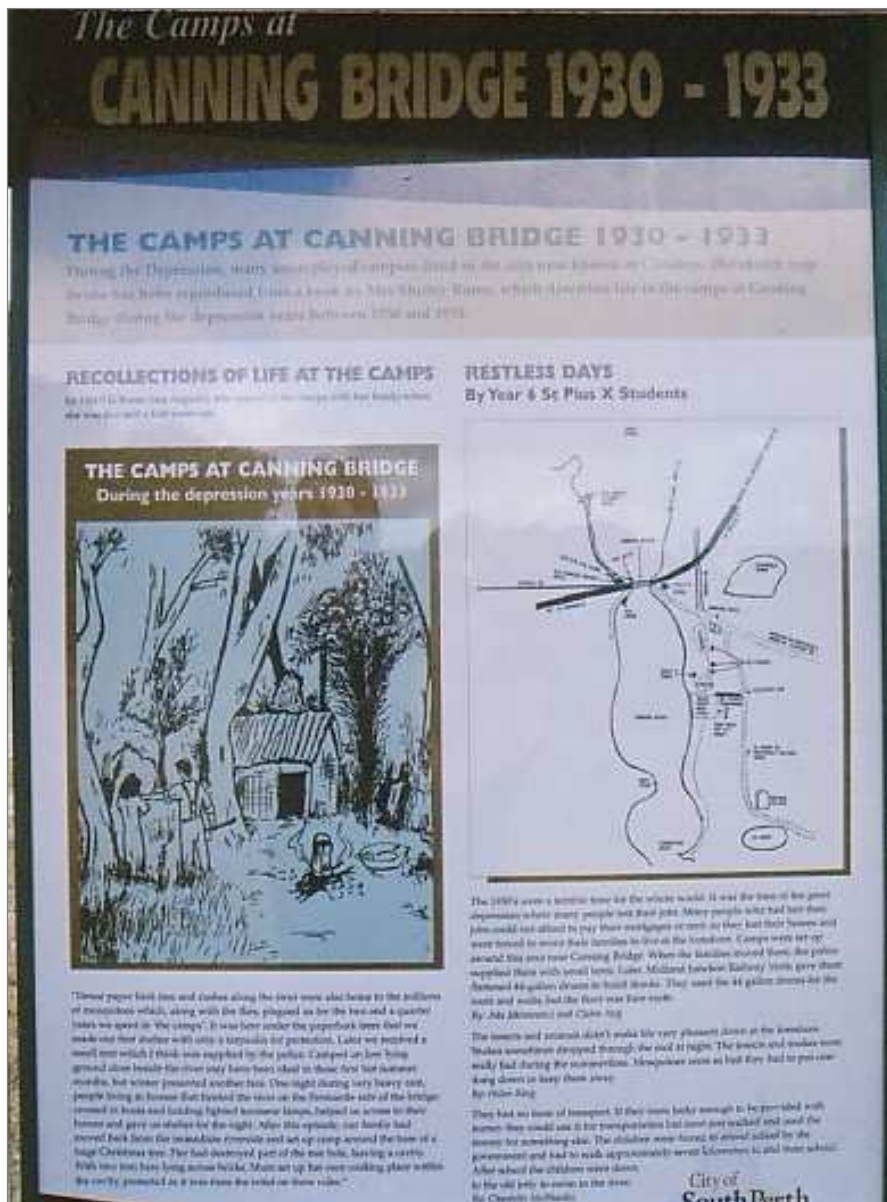
The Commemorative Plaque at the site of *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)*.
The plaque reads as follows:



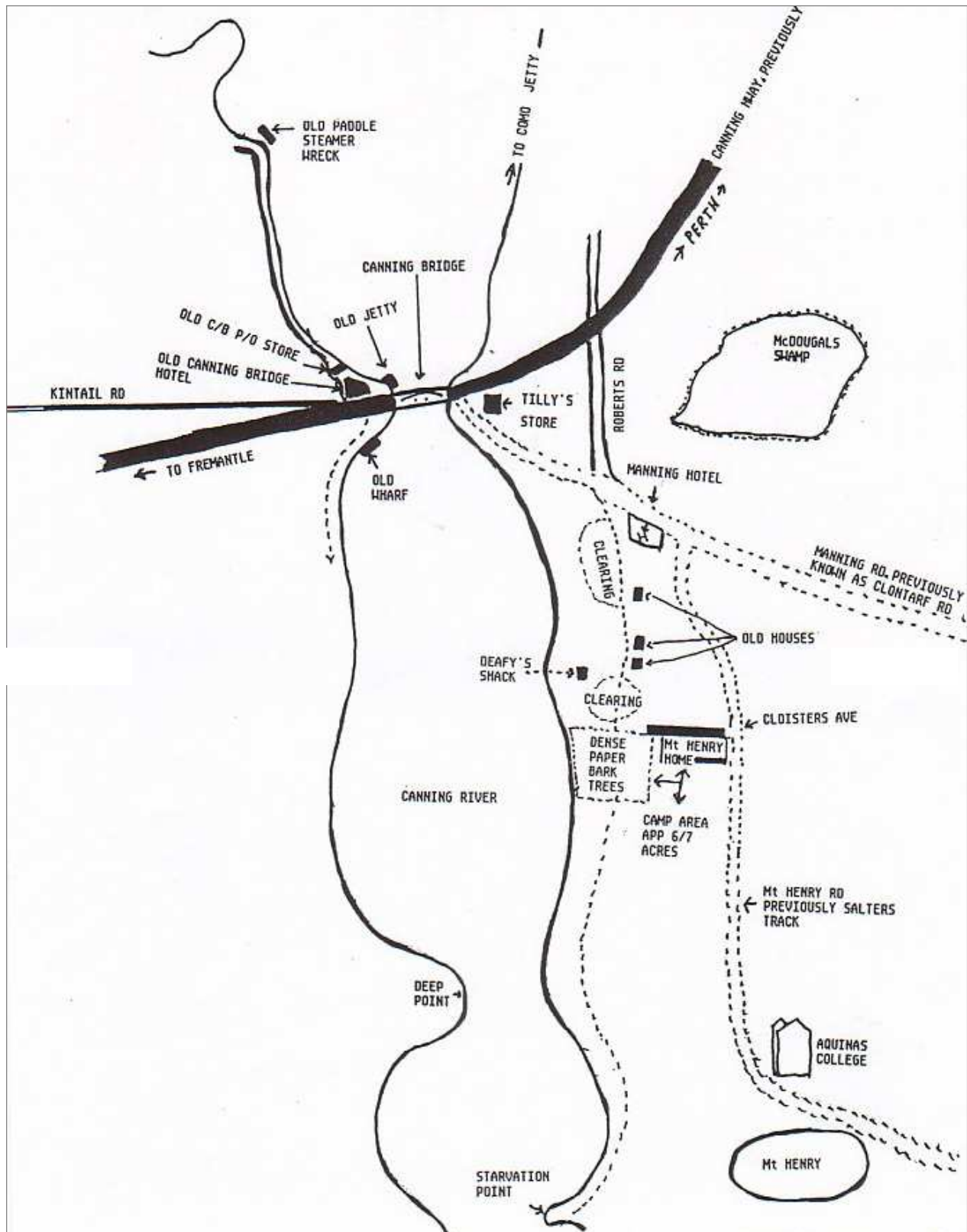
(Heritage Today, 2002)



The information board at the site of Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former), also showing the nearby dual-use pedestrian and cycle path. (Heritage Today, 2002)

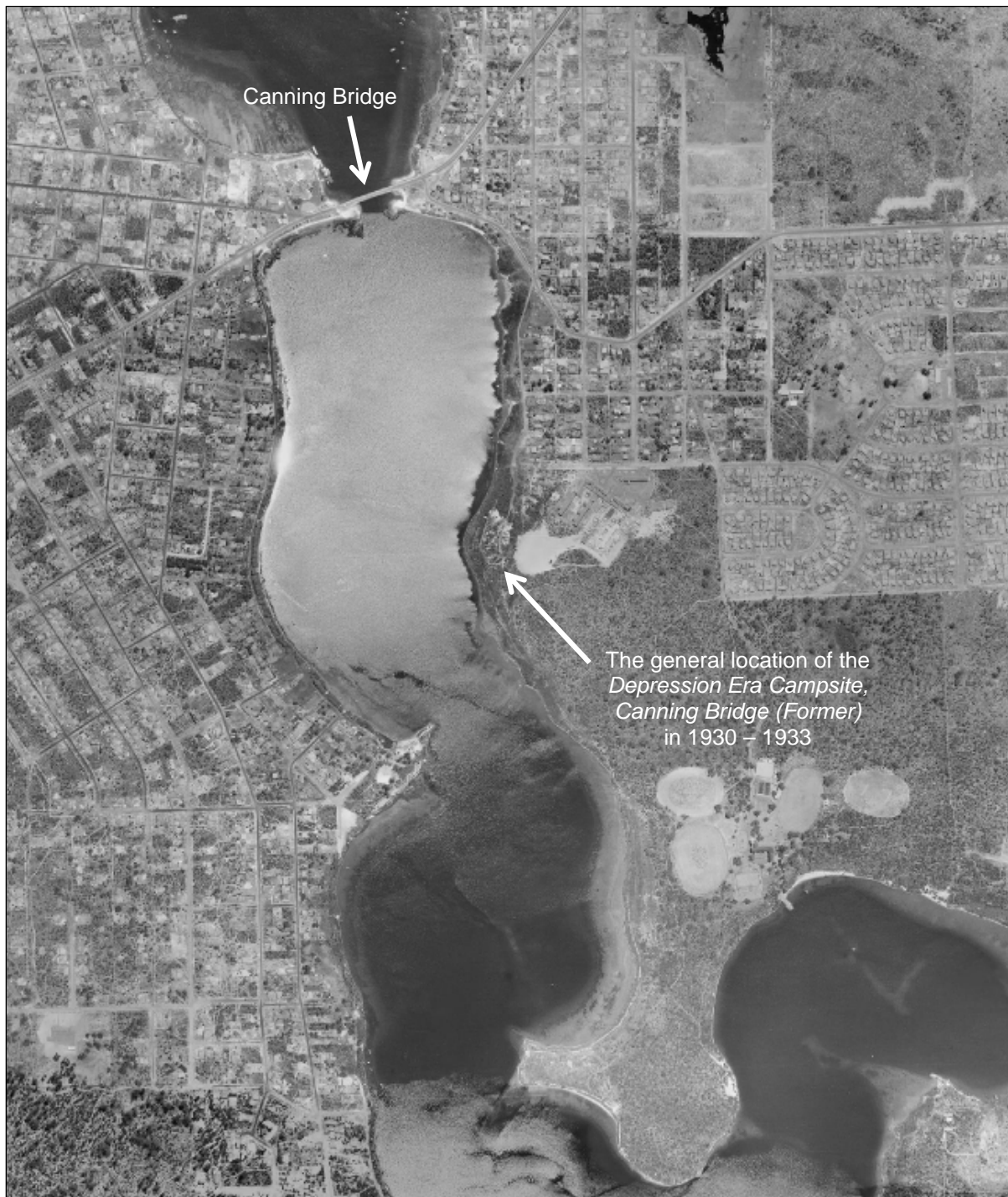


Some of the interpretive material at the site of Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former). (Heritage Today, 2002)



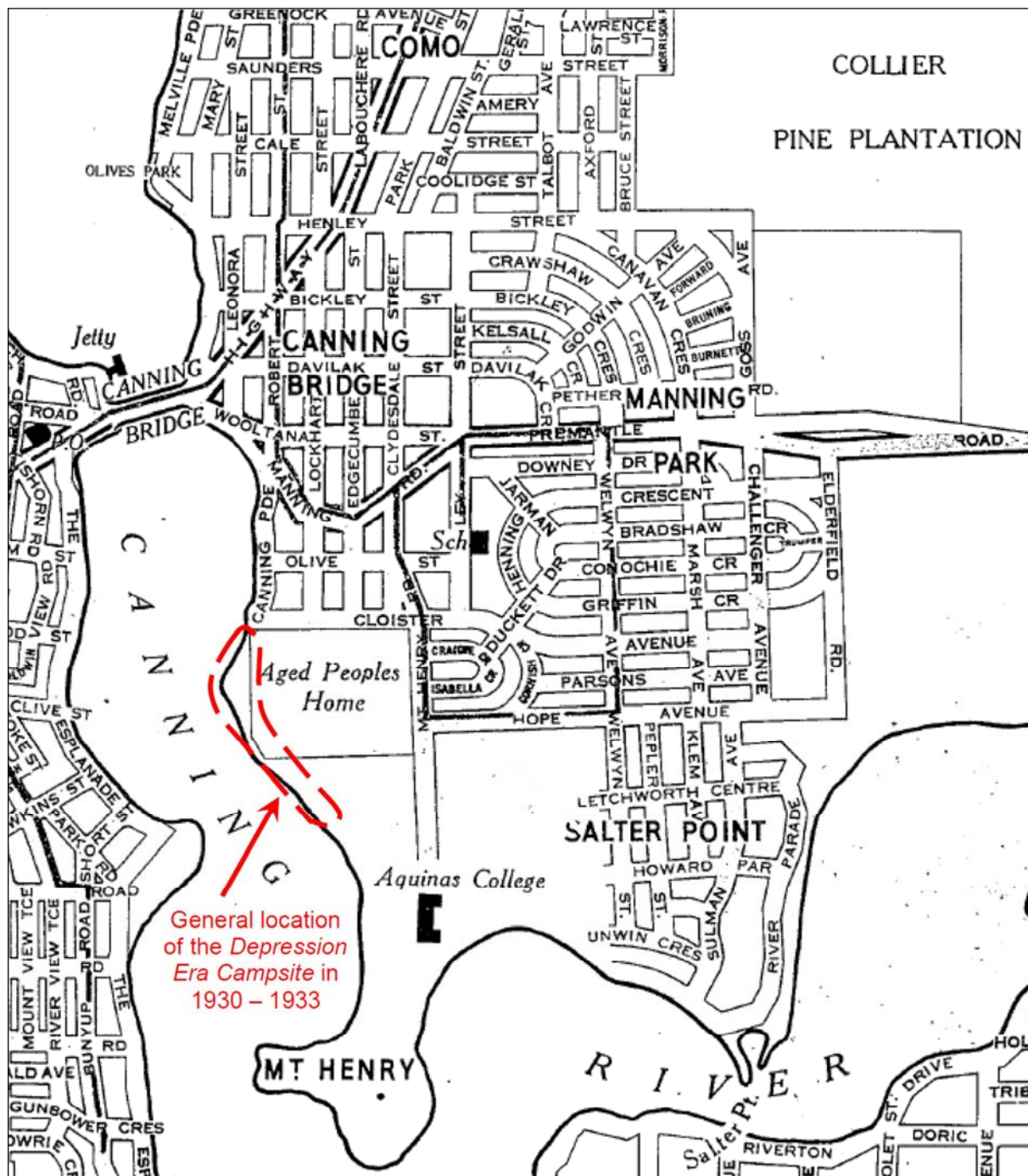
An historic map of the area where *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* was situated during 1930-1933.

(Courtesy of Ms Shirley Burns)



This 1953 aerial photograph shows where the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)* had been located twenty years earlier, in relation to the Canning Bridge. The area now known as Salter Point was sparsely developed, and prior to the Kwinana Freeway, there was a considerable amount of virgin bushland with dense paperbark coverage. Until 1955, this area fell within the jurisdiction of the Canning Road Board.
(City records)

LOCATION MAP



The general location of the *Depression Era Campsite, Canning Bridge (Former)*, superimposed on a 1952 street map of the area, prior to the Kwinana Freeway being constructed through the area.