The Yarli Project

A selection of published references to Aboriginal people from Milparinka and the surrounding area

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Contents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this material may contain terms that reflect authors' views, or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded, but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in an historical context.

Foreword:

In 2020 the Milparinka Heritage and Tourism Association began to expand the local Aboriginal cultural and heritage displays in the Milparinka Heritage Precinct by consulting with local Aboriginal people as well as researching the documents and articles that contained references to Aboriginal people.

It soon became apparent that these references were not readily available unless a good deal of an individual's time was spent on research. Consequently, funding was sought to enable as many of these references as possible to be collated into a single document that would be available to the public for research and information purposes.

The information gathered was to be used to identify local cultural practices, diets, map where people lived, and the interaction they had with Europeans. The information had to be collated into print and digital format and be available to the many visitors to Milparinka annually as well as a wider online audience.

The material would complement the work already undertaken by the Association in developing an exclusive Aboriginal interpretive space within the Precinct. Further to that, the Association established a native bush tucker and medicinal plant garden within the Precinct footprint.

Although there is considerable overlap with other language groups in the area the focus of the project is on the Maliangapa people, those whose traditional lives centred around the locality we now call Milparinka.

During the research component of the project it has become apparent is that there are many documents which contain references to Aboriginal people in our general area, some from the journals of explorers, others are newspaper accounts, articles, and books. It is unlikely that within the scope of the project all of these references will be captured, which creates an opportunity for this to become an on-going living project where new references can be added as they become available in both printed and digital formats.

The main repository for the material will be the Archive Room at the Milparinka Heritage Precinct where it will be available in print as well as being computer based. The secondary repository will be online as a separate searchable section within the website www.visitcornercountry.com.au.

The Milparinka Heritage and Tourism Association acknowledges the support of the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment (Heritage NSW) for the project.

Aboriginal People in Western New South Wales.

Aborigines have lived in the area known as NSW for at least 45,000 years and traditionally there are more than 38 Aboriginal language groups. The Aboriginal heritage of each bioregion is described in bioregional overviews, except for those bioregions in the Western Division of NSW where the overlap of language groups required a broad description as provided in the following account by way of background information.

Aboriginal occupation of the Western Division

The Barkindji people were predominant around the lower Darling, which they called the Barka, Barkindji literally meaning "Darling folk". The homelands of the Barkindji extended from what is now Wentworth in the Riverina Bioregion, northward through the Murray Darling Depression Bioregion and into the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion beyond Wilcannia (HO and DUAP 1996). Barkindji homelands were known to extend into Queensland via the Paroo due to the friendly relations they had with the Parundji people of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion (HO and DUAP 1996). The home of the Parundji was the banks of the Paroo River, although unlike the Murray and Darling River groups, they did not use the rivers for transport in bark canoes.

The Karenggapa people traditionally occupied the far north-west corner of NSW in the Channel Country Bioregion at the Queensland border (HO and DUAP 1996). The Maliangapa people occupied the area around the seasonal lakes south of Tibooburra and, like the Karenggapa, were more likely to travel north or west rather than join the people of the Murray-Darling on the rivers (HO and DUAP 1996).

However, further south in the Broken Hill Complex Bioregion the Wiljakali people traditionally occupied the lands around Broken Hill (HO and DUAP 1996) and visited the Barkindji people on the Menindee Lakes in the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion each year.

Just as the majority of Aboriginal groups populated the areas close to water, early European settlement in the west began with the rivers, and so it was the Aboriginal people of the far west and mallee regions who survived the longest with little European disturbance.

Aboriginal men of the west were also employed as shearers and cattlemen on many of the stations during the 1860s and 1870s, while Aboriginal women were employed as domestic helpers in homesteads, sometimes bearing settlers' children (HO and DUAP 1996).

By this time – the 1870s – only the Aboriginal people of the most arid areas retained, for the most part, their traditional lifestyles. However, traditional lifestyles required mobility over large areas of the landscape to use the products which the Aborigines needed to subsist. The European presence did not allow this mobility and the range of the Aborigines was restricted to such an extent that there was no choice for them but to relinquish their traditional ways and turn to missions and stations simply in order to exist (HO and DUAP 1996).

The struggles of station owners from the 1890s due to droughts and harsh conditions on the land also adversely affected the Aboriginal tribal groups of the west and as a result their populations rapidly declined. As they left the stations, Aboriginal reservations were created to provide them with accommodation, mainly in tents. These reservations came under the jurisdiction of the Aborigines' Protection Act, 1909 at such places as Pooncarie (near Menindee), Milparinka, Tibooburra and White Cliffs.

The influenza epidemic in 1919 all but destroyed the remainder of the Aboriginal population of the west and those who survived were placed on a new reserve near Menindee in the 1930s. The remaining community of 70 Maliangapa people still living in their traditional corner country in 1936 was trucked east to Brewarrina against its will.

Source NPWS

Charles Sturt's Expedition

Excerpts from the "Narrative of an Expedition into Central

Charles Sturt's exploration of the area north of the Darling River to the area now known as Sturt's Stony desert began in August 1884 and continued throughout 1845 with expedition members arriving back in Adelaide early in 1846. Sturt's Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia contains many references to interaction with local Aboriginal people during this period which have been selected and published below but it is recommended that researchers also read the Narrative for the full story.

The accounts begin in September 1844 when the party was well advanced along Murray River, and concluded after journeying into the area now known as Sturt's Stony Desert.

Page numbers refer to the page number on which the reference is recorded in the PDF copy of the Narrative. Please refer to the map of Sturt's Expedition in the folder titled "maps".

September 1844. Lake Victoria area

Around September 11th 1844 the expedition reached the Anabranch of the Darling River. Browne, Flood and a guide explored the area which would cut off some distance to the intersection with the Darling River. The camp was moved to Lake Victoria.

PDF Page 96. September 1844.
The floods in the Rufus had obliged us to make a complete circuit of the lake, so that we had now approached that little stream to within six miles from the eastward. Our friend Nadbuck, therefore, thinking that we were about to leave the neighbourhood, rejoined the party. With him about eighty natives came to see us, and encamped close to our tents; forty-five men, sixteen women, and twenty-six children. I sent some of the former out to hunt, but they were not successful.

Amongst the natives there were two strangers from Laidley's Ponds, the place to which we were bound. The one was on his way to Moorundi, the other on his return home. Pulcanta had given us a glowing account of Laidley's Ponds, and had assured us that we should not only find water, but plenty of grass beyond the hills to the N.W. of that place.

This account the strangers confirmed; and the one who was on his way home expressing a wish to join us, I permitted him to do so; in the hope that, what with him and old Nadbuck, we should be the less likely to have any rupture with the Darling natives, who were looked upon by us with some suspicion. I was, in truth, very glad to take a native of Williorara up with me, because I entertained great doubts as to the reception we should meet with from the tribe, on our arrival there, in consequence of the unhappy occurrence that took place between them and Sir Thomas Mitchell, during a former expedition; and I hoped also to glean from this native some information as to the distant interior. Both the Darling natives were fine specimens of their race. One in particular, Toonda, was a good-

looking fellow, with sinews as tough as a rope. It also appeared to me that they had a darker shade of colour than the natives of the Murray.

Nadbuck turned out to be a merry old man, and a perfect politician in his way, very fond of women and jimbuck (sheep), and exceedingly good humoured with all. He here brought Davenport a large quantity of the fruit of the Fusanus, of which he made an excellent jam, too good indeed to keep; but if we could have anticipated the disease by which we were afterwards attacked, its preservation would have been above all price. The natives do not eat this fruit in any quantity, nor do I think that in its raw state it is wholesome. They appeared to me to live chiefly on vegetables during the season of the year that we passed up the Murray, herbs and roots
certainly constituted their principal food.

I had hoped that the weather would have cleared during the night, but in this I was disappointed. On the 17th (September) we had again continued rain until sunset, when the sky cleared to windward and the glass rose. We were however unable to stir, and so lost another day. About noon Nadbuck came to inform me that the young native from Laidley's Ponds, who was on his way to Moorundi, had just told him that only a few days before he commenced his journey, the Darling natives had attacked an overland party coming down the river, and had killed them all, in number fifteen. I therefore sent for the lad, and with Mr. Browne's assistance examined him. He was perfectly consistent in his story; mentioned the number of drays, and said that the white fellows were all asleep when the natives attacked them amongst the lagoons, and that only one native, a woman, was killed; the blacks, he added, had plenty of shirts and jackets. Doubtful as I was of this story, and equally puzzled to guess what party could have been coming down the Darling, it was impossible not to give some little credit to the tale of this young cub; for he neither varied in his account or hesitated in his reply to any question. I certainly feared that some sad scene of butchery had taken place, and became the more anxious to push my way up to the supposed spot, where it was stated to have occurred, to save any one who might have escaped. I felt it my duty also before leaving Lake Victoria to report what I had heard to the Governor.

PDF page 116 Chapter IV.

October 1844. *The expedition reached Laidleys Ponds and established a camp at the junction of Willioriara Creek and the Darling River. Poole and Stuart and Topar searched ahead for more suitable spot but found nothing. Sturt questioned the local Aborigines about what lay beyond the lakes.*

Scouting parties were sent out toward Scopes Range and further west toward the Barrier Ranges.

TOONDA left us on our arrival at this place, to go to his tribe at Cawndilla, but returned the day Mr. Poole left us, with the lubras and children belonging to it, and the natives now mustered round us to the number of sixty-six. Nadbuck, who the reader will have observed was a perfect lady's man, made fires for the women, and they were all treated as our first visitors had been with a cup of tea and a lump of sugar. These people could not have shewn a greater mark of confidence in us than by this visit; but the circumstances under which we arrived amongst them, the protection we had given to some of their tribe, and the kind treatment we had adopted towards the natives generally, in some measure accounted for this, nevertheless there was a certain restlessness amongst the men that satisfied me they would not have hesitated in the gratification of revenge if they could have mustered sufficiently strong, or could have caught us unprepared.

It was clear that the natives still remembered the first visit the Europeans had made to them, and its consequences, and that they were very well disposed to retaliate. It was in this matter that Nadbuck's conduct and representations were of essential service, for he did not hesitate to tell them what they might expect if they appeared in arms.

Late in the afternoon the lubras (wives) of the natives, at our camp, made their appearance on the opposite side of the river, and Nadbuck, who was a perfect gallant, wanted to invite them over; but I told him that I would cut off the head of the first who came over with my long knife—my sword. The old gentleman went off to Mr. Browne, to whom he made a long complaint, asking him if he really thought I should execute my threat. Mr. Browne assured him that he was quite certain I should not only cut off the lubra's head, but his too. On this Nadbuck expressed his indignation; but however much he might have ventured to risk the lubra's necks, he had no idea of risking his own.

One of the natives who visited us at this place was very old, with hair as white as snow. To this man I gave a blanket, feeling assured it would be well bestowed; although a circumstance occurred that had well night prevented my behaving with my usual liberality to the natives who were here with us. The butcher had been killing a sheep, and carelessly left the steel, an implement we could ill spare, under the tree in which he had slung the animal: and it was instantly taken by the natives. On hearing this, I sent for Nadbuck and Toonda, and told them that I should not stir until the steel was brought back, or make any more presents on the river. On this there was a grand consultation between the two. Toonda at length went to the natives, who had retired to some little distance, and, after some earnest remonstrances, he walked to the tree near which the sheep had been killed, and, after looking at the ground for a moment, began to root up the ground with his toes, when he soon discovered the stolen article, and brought it to me. The thief was subsequently brought forward, and we made him thoroughly ashamed of himself; although I have no doubt the whole tribe would have applauded his dexterity if he had succeeded.

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...we had not however gone more than two and a half miles when he (Topar) again caught sight of smoke due west of us, and was as earnest in his desire to return to the creek as he had been to leave it. Being myself anxious to communicate with the natives I now the more readily yielded to his entreaties. Where we came upon it there was a quantity of grass in its bed, but although we saw the fire at which they had been, the natives again escaped us. Mr. Browne and Topar ran their track up the creek, and soon reached a hut opposite to which there was a well. On ascending a little from its bed they discovered a small pool of water in the centre of a watercourse joining the main branch hereabouts from the hills. Round this little pool there was an unusual verdure. From this point we continued to trace the creek upwards, keeping it in sight; but the ground was so stony and rough, and the brush approached so close to the banks that I descended into its bed, and halted at sunset after a fatiguing day's journey without water, about which we did not much care; the horses having had a good drink not long before and their feed being good, the want of water was not much felt by them. Topar wished to go on to some other water at which he expected to find the natives.

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Topar had shewn much indignation at our going on, and constantly remonstrated with us as we were riding along; however, we saw two young native dogs about a third grown, after which he bounded with incredible swiftness, but when they saw him they started off also. It was soon evident, that both were doomed to destruction, his speed being greater that that of the young
brutes, for he rapidly gained upon them. The moment he got within reach of the hindmost he threw a stick which he had seized while running, with unerring precision, and striking it full in the ribs stretched it on the ground. As he passed the animal he gave it a blow on the head with another stick, and bounding on after the other was soon out of our sight. All we knew
further of the chase, was, that before we reached the spot where his first prize lay, he was returning to us with its companion. As soon as he had secured his prey he sat down to take out their entrails, a point in which the natives are very particular. He was careful in securing the little fat they had about the kidneys, with which he rubbed his body all over, and having finished this operation he filled their insides with grass and secured them with skewers. This done he put them on the cart, and we proceeded up the pass, at the head of which we arrived sooner than I expected. We then found ourselves at the commencement of a large plain. The hills we had
ascended the day before trended to the north, and

Our camp at Cawndilla now bore S.S.E. from us, distant 70 odd miles, and having determined on moving the party, I resolved to make the best of my way back to it. On the following morning, therefore, we again entered the pass, but as it trended too much to the eastward, I crossed a small range and descended at once upon the plains leading to the camp. At about 17miles from the hills, Topar led us to a broad sheet of water that must have been left by the recent rains. It was still tolerably full, and water may perhaps be found here when there is none in more likely places in the hills. This spot Topar called

Wancookaroo; it was unfortunately in a hollow from whence we could take no bearings to fix its precise position.

At early dawn Mr. Browne started with Flood, Cowley, and Kirby, in the light cart, to enlarge the wells at Curnapaga, to enable the cattle to drink out of them. Naturally humane and partial to the natives, he had been particularly kind to Toonda, who in his way was I believe really attached to
Mr. Browne. This singular man had made up his mind to remain with his tribe, but when he saw the cart, and Mr. Browne's horse brought up, his feelings evidently overpowered him, and he stood with the most dejected aspect close to the animal, nor could he repress his emotion when Mr.Browne issued from the tents; if our route had been up the Darling, I have no doubt Toonda would still have accompanied us, but all the natives dreaded the country into which we were going, and fully expected that we should perish.

At this water-hole, “Parnari,” we surprised three natives who were strangers. They did not betray any fear, but slept at the tents and left us the following day, as they said to bring more natives to visit us, but we never saw anything more of them. They were hill natives, and shorter in stature
than the river tribes.

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The little pond of which I have spoken at the head of the pass, had near it a beautiful clump of acacias of a species entirely new to us. It was a pretty graceful tree, and threw a deep shade on the ground; but with the exception of these and a few gum-trees the vicinity was clear and open. Our position in the creek on the contrary was close and confined. Heavy gusts of wind were constantly sweeping the valley, and filling the air with sand, and the flies were so numerous and troublesome that they were a preventative to all work. I determined, therefore, before Mr. Browne and I should start for the interior, to remove the camp to the upper part of the glen. On the 4th we struck our tents and again pitched them close to the acacias. Early on the morning of the 5th, I sent Flood with Lewis and Sullivan, having the cart full of water, to preserve a certain course until I should overtake them, being myself detained in camp with Mr. Browne, in consequence of the arrival of several natives from whom we hoped to glean some information; but in this we were disappointed. Toonda had continued with us as far as “Parnari;” but on our moving up higher into the hills, his heart failed him, and he returned to Cawndilla.

Late October, early November 1884.

Left Cawndilla for the Barrier Ranges. It was very hot and they had little water, animals struggling, a sheep died. They made a camp before getting to Curnapaga but left early following morning, as the animals were perishing. There was plenty of water at Curnapaga and the animals recovered. The next few days were spent searching for water and meeting with hills aborigines.

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Mr. Browne will I am sure bear the Rocky Glen in his most grateful remembrance. Relieved from further anxiety with regard to our animals, he hastened with me to ascend one of the hills that towered above us to the height of 600 feet, before the sun should set, but this was no

trifling task, as the ascent was exceedingly steep. The view from the summit of this hill presented the same broken country to our scrutiny which I have before described, at every point excepting to the westward, in which direction the ranges appeared to cease at about six miles, and the
distant horizon from S.W. to N.W. presented an unbroken level. The dark and deep ravine through which the creek ran was visible below us, and apparently broke through the ranges at about four miles to the W.N.W. but we could not see any water in its bed. It was sufficiently cheering to us however to know that we were near the termination of the ranges to the westward, and that the country we should next traverse was of open appearance.

I had hoped from what we saw of it from the top of the hill above us, on the previous afternoon, that we should have had but little difficulty in following down the creek, but in this we were disappointed.

We started at eight to pursue our journey, and kept for some time in its bed. The rock formation near and at our camp was trap, but at about a mile below it changed to a coarse grey granite, huge blocks of which, traversed by quartz, were scattered about. The defile had opened out a little below where we had slept, but it soon again narrowed, and the hills closed in upon it nearer than before. The bed of the creek at the same time became rocky, and blocked up with immense fragments of granite.

We passed two or three pools of water, one of which was of tolerable size, and near it there were the remains of a large encampment of natives. Near to it also there was a well, a sure sign that however deep the water-holes in the glen might now be, there are times when they are destitute of any. There can be no doubt, indeed, but that we owed our present supply of water both at this place and at the Coonbaralba pass, to the rains that fell in the hills during the week we remained at Williorara.

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This creek he said was about 40 miles in advance, but there was no water between us and it. He also confirmed an impression I had had on my mind from our first crossing the Barrier

Range, that it would not continue to any great distance northwards; Flood said that from what he could observe the hills appeared to be gradually declining, as if they would soon terminate. He saw three native women at the creek, but did not approach them, thinking it better not to excite their alarm. These were the first natives we had seen on the western side of the hills.

Late November and December 1884,

The expedition reached the western side Barrier and set up a new base camp. Flood was sent out to find more water and came across a creek with an adequate supply to which the expedition moved on December 11th. Sturt named the creek after Flood

Flood had not at all exaggerated his account of this creek, which, as an encouragement, I named after him. It was certainly a most desirable spot to us at that time; with plenty of water, it had an abundance of feed along its banks; but our tents were pitched on the rough stony ground flanking it, under cover of some small rocky hills. To the north-west there was a very pretty detached range, and westward large flooded flats, through which the creek runs, and where there was also an abundance of feed for the stock.

Although, as I have observed, the heat was now very great, the cereal grasses had not yet ripened their seed, and several kinds had not even developed the flower. Everything in the neighbourhood of the creek looked fresh, vigorous, and green, and on its banks (not, I would observe, on the plains, because on them there was a grass peculiar to such localities) the animals were up to their knees in luxuriant vegetation. We there found a native wheat, a beautiful oat, and a rye, as well as a variety of grasses; and in hollows on the plains a blue or purple vetch not unusual on the sand ridges, of which the cattle were very fond.

In crossing the stony plains to this creek we picked up a number of round balls, of all sizes, from that of a marble to that of a cannon ball; they were perfect spheres, and hollow like shells, being formed of clay and sand cemented by oxide of iron. Some of these singular balls were in clusters like grape-shot, others had rings round them like Saturn's ring; and as I have observed, the plains were covered with them in places. There can be no doubt, I think, but that they were formed by the action of water, and that constant rolling, when they were ina softer state, gave them their present form.

The reader will observe, that although slowly, we were gradually, and, I think, steadily working our way into the interior. At that time I hoped with God's blessing we should have raised the veil that had so long hung over it, more effectually than we did. Up to that period we had been exceedingly fortunate; nothing had occurred to disturb the tranquillity of our proceedings; no natives to interrupt our movements; no want either of water or grass for our cattle, however scarce the parties scouring the country might have found it; no neglect on the part of the men, and a consequent efficient state of the whole party. But time brings round events to produce a change in all things; the book of fate being closed to our inspection.

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I WAS much surprised that the country was not better inhabited than it appeared to be; for however unfit for civilized man, it seemed a most desirable one for the savage, for there was no want of game of the larger kind, as emus and kangaroos, whilst in every tree and bush there was a nest of some kind or other, and a variety of vegetable productions of which these rude people are fond. Yet we saw not more than six or seven natives during our stay in the neighbourhood of Flood's Creek.

One morning some of the men had been to the eastward after the cattle, and on their return informed me that they had seen four natives at a distance. On hearing this I ordered my horse to be saddled, with the intention of going after them; but just at that moment Tampawang called out that there were three blacks crossing from the flats, to the eastward, I therefore told him to follow me, and started after them on foot. The ground was very stony, so that the poor creatures, though dreadfully alarmed, could not get over it, and we rapidly gained upon them. At last, seeing
there was no escape, one of them stopped, who proved to be an old woman with two younger companions. I explained to her when she got calm, for at first she was greatly frightened, that my camp was on the creek, and I wanted the blackfellows to come and see me; and taking Tampawang's knife, which hung by a string round his neck, I shewed the old lady the use of it, and putting the string over her head, patted her on the back and allowed her to depart. To my surprise, in about an hour and a half after, seven natives were seen approaching the camp, with the slowness of a funeral procession.

They kept their eyes on the ground, and appeared as if marching to execution. However, I made them sit under a tree; a group of seven of the most miserable human beings I ever saw. Poor emaciated creatures all of them, who no doubt thought the mandate they had received to visit the camp was from a superior being, and had obeyed it in fear and trembling. I made them sit down, gave them a good breakfast and some presents, but could obtain no information from them; when at length they slunk off and we never saw anything more of them. The men were circumcised, but not disfigured by the loss of the front teeth, perfectly naked, rather low in stature, and anything but good looking.

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As I have already observed, there were a great variety of the cereal grasses about Flood's Creek, but they merely occupied a small belt on either side of it. All the grasses were exceedingly green, and there was a surprising appearance of verdure along the creek. Beyond it, on both sides,
were barren stony plains, on which salsolaceous plants alone grew. About 13 miles to the westward the pine ridges commenced, and between us and these were large flats of grassy land, over which the waters of the creek spread in times of flood.

The heat now became so great that it was almost unbearable, the thermometer every day rose to 112° or 116° in the shade, whilst in the direct rays of the sun from 140° to

150°. I really felt much anxiety on account of Mr. Poole and Mr. Browne, who did not return to the camp until the 25th.

So great was the heat, that the bullocks never quitted the shade of the trees during the day, and the horses perspired from their exertions to get rid of the mosquitos. On the 22nd the natives fired the hills to the north of us, and thus added to the heat of the atmosphere, and filled the air with smoke.

Flood returned on the 25th, at 2 P.M., having found water in several places, but none of a permanent kind like that in the creek. He had fallen on a small and shallow lagoon, and had seen a tribe of natives, who ran away at his approach, although he tried to invite them to remain.

January 1845. The party struggled to the north east across sanddunes and creeks with little water, heading toward the range of hills Sturt named Mount Arrowsmith.

On the 13th, the party pushed on at an early hour for the gum-trees, but found no water. Observed numerous flights of pigeons going to the N.W. Traced the creek down for two miles, when they arrived at a place where the natives had been digging for water; here Mr. Poole left Mr. Browne and went further down the creek, when he succeeded in his search; but finding, on his return, that Mr. Browne and Mack had cleared out the well and got a small supply of water, with which they had relieved the horses and prepared breakfast, he did not return to the water he had discovered, but proceeded to the next line of gum-trees where there was another creek, but without water in it; coming on a small quantity in its bed at two miles, however, they encamped.

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On the following morning he continued his journey to the north, being anxious to report to me the character of the ranges. At 12 miles over open plains he intersected a creek trending to the eastward, in which there was an abundant supply of water; but this creek differed from the others in having muddy water, and but little vegetation in its neighbourhood. Passed some native huts, and saw twenty wild turkeys.

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As we passed through the acacia scrub, we observed that the natives had lately been engaged collecting the seed. The boughs of the trees were all broken down, and there were numerous places where they had thrashed out the seed, and heaped up the pods. These poor people must indeed be driven to extremity if forced to subsist on such food, as its taste is so disagreeable that one would hardly think their palates could ever be reconciled to it. Natives had evidently been in our neighbourhood very lately, but we saw none.

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On the 8th we started at 5 A.M., and reached our destination (a place to which Mr. Poole had already been) at 11. We crossed barren stony plains, having some undulating ground to our left, and the magnetic hill as well as another to the south of it shewed as thunder clouds above the horizon. On our arrival at the creek we found about 30 fires of natives still burning, whom we must have frightened away. We did not see any of them, nor did I attempt to follow on their tracks which led up the creek. To the S.W. a column of smoke was rising in the midst of the scrub, otherwise that desolate region appeared to be uninhabited. On descending from the peak, we turned to the N.W. along the line of a watercourse at the bottom of the valley, tracing itfor about four miles with every hope of finding the element we were in search of in its green bed, but we gained the point where the valley opened out upon the plains, and halted under disappointment, yet with good grass for the horses. Our little bivouac was in lat. 29°2' 14" S.

On the other side of the creek from that on which we remained, there was a new but unfinished hut. Round about it were the fresh impressions of feet of all sizes, so that it was clear a family of natives must have been engaged in erecting this simple edifice when we were approaching, and that we must have frightened them away. We found a pool under, or rather shaded by the trees, of tolerable size, and much better than the water nearer to the hills. Close to it also, on a sloping bank, there was another more than half finished hut from which the natives could only just have retreated, for they had left all their worldly goods behind them; thus it appeared we had scared these poor people a second time from their work. I was really sorry for the trouble we had unintentionally given them, and in order to make up for it, I fastened my own knife with a glittering blade, to the top of a spear that stood upright in front of the hut; not without hopes that the owner of the weapon seeing we intended them no harm.

The first thing we did on arriving, was to visit the hut of the natives to see if they had been there during our absence, but as my knife still dangled on the spear, we were led to conclude they had not. On examining the edifice, however, we missed several things that had been left untouched by us, and from the fresh footsteps of natives over our own of the day before, it was clear they had been back. The knife which was intended as a peace offering, seems to have scared them away in almost as much haste as if we had been at their heels. There can be no doubt but that they took it for an evil spirit, at which they were, perhaps, more alarmed than at our uncouth appearance. Be that as it may, we departed from the creek without seeing anything of these poor people.

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At a little distance from the creek to the N.W., upon a rising piece of ground, and certainly above the reach of floods, there were seven or eight huts, very different in shape and substance from any we had seen. They were made of strong boughs fixed in a circle in the ground, so as to meet in a common centre; on these there was, as in some other

huts I have had occasion to describe, a thick seam of grass and leaves, and over this again a compact coating of clay. They were from eight to ten feet in diameter, and about four and a half feet high, the opening into them not being larger than to allow a man to creep in. These huts also faced the north-west, and each had a smaller one attached to it as shewn in the sketch. Like those before seen they had been left in the neatest order by their occupants, and were evidently used during the rainy season, as they were at some little distance from the creek, and near one of those bare patches in which water must lodge at such times. At whatever season of the year the natives occupy these huts they must be a great comfort to them, for in winter they must be particularly warm, and in summer cooler than the outer air; but the greatest benefit they can confer on these poor people must be that of keeping them from ants, flies, and mosquitos: it is impossible to describe to the reader the annoyance we experienced from the flies during the day, and the ants at night. The latter in truth swarmed in myriads, worked under our covering, and creeping all over us, prevented our sleeping. The flies on the other hand began their attacks at early dawn, and whether we were in dense brush, on the open plain, or the herbless mountain top, they were equally numerous and equally troublesome. On the present occasion Mr. Browne and I regretted we had not taken possession of the deserted huts, as, if we had, we should have got rid of our tormentors, for there were not any to be seen near them. From the fact of these huts facing the north-west I conclude that their more inclement weather is from the opposite point of the compass. It was also evident from the circumstance of their being unoccupied at that time (January), that they were winter habitations, at which season the natives, no doubt, suffer greatly from cold and damp, the country being there much under water, at least from appearances. I had remarked that as we proceeded northwards the huts were more compactly built, and the opening or entrance into them smaller, as if the inhabitants of the more northern interior felt the winter's cold in proportion to the summer heat.

I was exceedingly glad to find that the natives had not shewn any unfriendly disposition towards Mr. Poole and his men; but I subsequently learnt from him a circumstance that will in some measure account for their friendly demonstrations. It would appear that Sullivan and Turpin when out one day, during my absence, after the cattle, saw a native and his lubra crossing the plains to the eastward, with some stones for grinding their grass seed, it being their harvest time. Sullivan went after them; but they were exceedingly alarmed, and as he approached the woman set fire to the grass; but on seeing him bound over the flaming tussocks, they threw themselves on the ground, and as the lad saw their terror he left them and returned to his companion. No sooner, however, had these poor creatures escaped one dreaded object than they encountered another, in the shape of Mack, who was on horseback. As soon as they saw him they took to their heels; but putting his horse into a canter, he was up with them before they were aware of it; on this they threw down their stones, bags, net, and firestick, and scrambled up into a tree. The fire-stick set the grass on fire, and all their valuables would have been consumed, if Mack had not very properly dismounted and extinguished the flames, and put the net and bags in a place of safety. He could not, however, persuade either of the natives to descend, and therefore rode away. Mack happened to be with Mr. Poole at the time he met the tribe, and was recognised by the man and woman, who offered both him and Mr. Poole some of their cakes. Had the behaviour of my men been different, they would most likely have suffered for it; but I was exceedingly pleased at

their strict compliance with my orders in this respect, and did not fail to express my satisfaction, and to point out the beneficial consequences of such conduct.

Mr Poole having thus communicated with the natives, I was anxious to profit by it, and if possible to establish a friendly intercourse; the day after my arrival at the camp, therefore, I went down the creek with Mack in the hope of seeing them. I took a horse loaded with sugar and presents, and had every anticipation of success; but we were disappointed, since the whole tribe had crossed the plains, on the hard surface of which we lost their tracks. On this ride I found a beautiful little kidney bean growing as a runner amongst the grass, on small patches of land subject to flood. It had a yellow blossom, and the seed was very small and difficult to collect, as it appeared to be immediately attacked by insects.

The fact of the natives having crossed the plain confirmed my impression that the creek picked up beyond it, and I determined on the first favourable opportunity to ascertain that fact. It now, however, only remained for me to place the camp in a more convenient position. To do this we moved on the 27th, and whilst Mr. Browne led the party across the plains, I rode on ahead with Mr. Poole to select the ground on which to pitch our tents. At the distance of seven miles we arrived at the entrance of the little rocky glen through which the creek passes, and at once found ourselves on the brink of a fine pond of water, shaded by trees and cliffs. The scenery was so different from any we had hitherto seen, that I was quite delighted, but the ground being sandy was unfit for us, we therefore turned down the creek towards the long sheet of water Mr. Poole had mentioned, and waited there until the drays arrived, when we pitched our tents close to it, little imagining that we were destined to remain at that lonely spot for six weary months. We were not then aware that our advance and our retreat were alike cut off.

We had not ridden four miles on the following morning, when we observed several natives on the plain at a little distance to the south, to whom we called out, and who immediately came to us. We stopped with these people for more than two hours, in the hope that we should gain some information from them, either as to when we might expect rain, or of the character of the distant interior, but they spoke a language totally different from the river tribes, although they had some few words in common, so that I could not rely on my interpretation of what they said. They were all of them circumcised, and all but one wanted the right front tooth of the
upper jaw. When we left these people I gave them a note for Mr. Poole, in the faint hope that they would deliver it, and I explained to them that he would give them a tomahawk and blankets, but, as I afterwards learnt, they never went to the camp.

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There was a native's hut on the bank, from which the owner must have fled at our approach; it was quite new, and afforded me shelter during our short halt. The fugitive had left some few valuables behind him, and amongst them a piece of red ochre. From this point the creek trended more to the north, spreading over numerous flats in times of

flood, dividing its channels into many smaller ones, but always uniting into one at the extremity of the flats. At 21 miles the creek changed its course to 20° to the west of north, and the country became more open and level. There were numerous traces of natives along its banks, and the remains of small fires on either side of it as far as we could see. It was, therefore, evident that at certain seasons of the year they resorted to it in some numbers, and I was then led to hope for a favourable change in the aspect of the country

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The gum-trees as we proceeded down the creek increased in size, and their foliage was of a vivid green. The bed of the creek was of pure sand, as well as the plains through which it ran, although there was alluvial soil partially mixed with the sand, and they had an abundance of grass upon

them, the seed having been collected by the natives for food. At about 14 miles from the place where we stopped, the creek lost its sandy bed, and got one of tenacious clay. We soon afterwards pulled up for the night, at two pools of water that were still of considerable size, and on which there were several new ducks. They must, indeed, have been large deep ponds not many weeks before, but had now sunk several feet from their highest level, and, however valuable to a passing traveller, were useless in other respects, as our cattle would have drained them in three or four days. From this place also the natives appeared to have suddenly retreated, since there was a quantity of the Grass* spread out on the sloping bank of the creek to dry, or ripen in the sun. We could not, however, make out to what point they had gone. The heat during the day had been terrific, in so much that we were unable to keep our feet in the stirrups, and the horses perspired greatly, although never put out of a walk.

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After crossing a portion of the plain we saw some box-trees in a hollow, towards which we rode, and then came upon a deep dry pond, in whose bottom the natives had dug several wells, and had evidently lingered near it as long as a drop of water remained. It was now clear that our further search for water would be useless. I therefore turned on a course of 12° to the north of east for the muddy water we had passed two days before, and halted there about an hour after sunset, having journeyed 42 miles. We fell into our tracks going out about four miles before we halted, and were surprised to observe that a solitary native had been running them down. On riding a little further however, we noticed several tracks of different sizes, as if a family of natives had been crossing the country to the north-west. It is more than probable that their water having failed in the hills, they were on their way to some other place where they had a well.

January 1845. Camped in the area of Evelyn Creek initially and later moved to Depot Glen where the expedition remained until July 1845.

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On the 11th about 3 P.M. I was roused by the dogs simultaneously springing up and rushing across the creek, but supposing they had seen a native dog, I did not rise; however, I soon knew by their continued barking that they had something at bay, and Mr. Piesse not long after came to inform me a solitary native was on the top of some rising ground in front of the camp. I sent him therefore with some of the men to call off the dogs, and to bring him down to the tents. The poor fellow had fought manfully with the dogs, and escaped injury, but had broken his waddy over one of them. He was an emaciated and elderly man, rather low in stature, and half dead with hunger and thirst; he drank copiously of the water that was offered to him, and then ate as much as would have served me for four and twenty dinners. The men made him up a screen of boughs close to the cart near the servants, and I gave him a blanket in which he rolled himself up and soon fell fast asleep. Whence this solitary stranger could have come from we could not divine. No other natives approached to look after him, nor did he shew anxiety for any absent companion. His composure and apparent self-possession were very remarkable, for he neither exhibited astonishment or curiosity at the novelties by which he was surrounded. His whole demeanour was that of a calm and courageous man, who finding himself placed in unusual jeopardy, had determined not to be betrayed into the slightest display of fear or timidity

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12th, I determined to make a second excursion to the eastward, to see if there were any more natives in the neighbourhood of the grassy plains than when I was last there. Wishing to get some samples of wood I took the light cart and Tampawang also, in the hope that he would be of use.

Although the water in the creek had sunk fearfully there was still a month's supply remaining, but if it had been used by our stock it would then have been dry. Close to the spot where we had before stopped, there were two huts that had been recently erected. Before these two fires were burning, and some troughs of grass seed were close to them, but no native could we see, neither did any answer to our call. Mr. Browne, however, observing some recent tracks, ran them down, and discovered a native and his lubra who had concealed themselves in the hollow of a tree, from which they crept as soon as they saw they were discovered. The man, we had seen before, and the other proved to be the frail one who exhibited such indignation at our rejecting her addresses on a former occasion; being a talkative damsel, we were glad to renew our acquaintance with her. We learnt from them that the second hut belonged to an absent native who was out hunting, the father of a pretty little girl who now obeyed their signal
and came forth. They said the water on the plain had dried up, and that the only water-holes remaining were to the west, viz. at our camp, and to the south, where they said there were two water-holes. As they had informed us, the absent native made his appearance at sunset, but his bag was very light, so we once more gave them all our mutton; he proved to be the man Mr. Browne chased on the sand hills, the strongest native we had seen; he wanted the front tooth, but was not circumcised.

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The old man who had come to the camp the day before we left it, was still there, and had apparently taken up his quarters between the cart and my tent. During our absence the men had shewn him all the wonders of the camp, and he in his turn had strongly excited their anticipations, by what he had told them. He appeared to be quite aware of the use of the boat, intimating that it was turned upside down, and pointed to the N.W. as the quarter in which we should use her. He mistook the sheep net for a fishing net, and gave them to understand that there were fish in those waters so large that they would not get through the meshes. Being anxious to hear what he had to say I sent for him to my tent, and with Mr. Browne cross-questioned him.

It appeared quite clear to us that he was aware of the existence of large water somewhere or other to the northward and westward. He pointed from W.N.W. round to the eastward of north, and explained that large waves higher than his head broke on the shore. On my shewing him the fish figured in Sir Thomas Mitchell's work he knew only the cod. Of the fish figured in Cuvier's works he gave specific names to those he recognised, as the hippocampus, the turtle, and several sea fish, as the chetodon, but all the others he included under one generic name, that of “guia,” fish. He put his hands very cautiously on the snakes, and withdrew them suddenly as if he expected they would bite him, and evinced great astonishment when he felt nothing but the soft paper. On being asked, he expressed his readiness to accompany us when there should be water, but said we should not have rain yet. I must confess this old native raised my hopes, and made me again anxious for the moment when we should resume our labours, but when that time was to come God only knew.

The old man left us on the 17th with the promise of returning, and from the careful manner in which he concealed the different things that had been given to him I thought he would have done so, but we never saw him more, and I cannot but think that he perished from the want of water in
endeavouring to return to his kindred.

Lake Pinaroo area

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Mr. Browne remarked that the females he had seen were, contrary to general custom as regards that sex, deficient in the two front teeth of the upper jaw, but that the teeth of the man were entire, and that he was not otherwise disfigured. I was anxious to have seen these natives, and, as their hut was not very far from us, we walked to it in the cool of the afternoon, but they had left, and apparently gone to the N.E.; we found some mussel shells amongst the embers of some old fire near it. Our latitude at this point was 28° 3' S., at a distance of 86 miles from the Park.

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The trees on this creek were larger than usual and beautifully umbrageous. It appeared as if coming from the N.E., and falling to the N.W. There were many huts both above and below our bivouac, and well-trodden paths from one angle of the creek to the other. All around us, indeed, there were traces of natives, nor can there be any doubt, but that atone season of the year or other, it is frequented by them in great numbers

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Both on this creek and some others we had passed, we observed that the graves of the natives were made longitudinally from north to south, and not as they usually are from east to west.

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The character of the country we had previously travelled over being so very bad, the change to the park-like scene now before us was very remarkable. Like the plains at the Depôt, they had gum-trees all round them, and a line of the same trees running through their centre.

Entering upon them on a north-west course, we proceeded over the open ground, and saw three dark figures in the distance, who proved to be women gathering seeds. They did not perceive us until we were so near to them that they could not escape, but stood for some time transfixed with
amazement. On riding up we dismounted, and asked them by signs where there was any water, to which question they signified most energetically that there was none in the direction we were going, that it was to the west. One of these women had a jet black skin, and long curling glossy ringlets. She seemed indeed almost of a different race, and was, without doubt, a secondary object of consideration with her companions; who, to secure themselves I fancy, intimated to us that we might take her away; this, however, we declined doing. One of the women went on with her occupation of cleaning the grass seeds she had collected, all the time were mained, humming a melancholy dirge. On leaving them, and turning to the point where they said no water was to be found, they exhibited great alarm, and followed us at a distance. Soon after we passed close to some gum-trees and found a small dry channel under a sand hill on the other side, running this down we came suddenly on two bough huts, before which two or three little urchins were playing, who, the moment they saw us, popped into the huts like rabbits. Directly opposite there was a shallow puddle rather than a pool of water, and as Joseph had just met with an accident I was obliged to stop at it. I was really sorry to do so, however, for I knew our horses would exhaust it all during the night, and I was reluctant to rob these poor creatures of so valuable a store, I therefore sent Flood to try if he could find any lower down; but, as he failed, we unsaddled our horses and sat down.

The women who had kept us in sight were then at the huts, to which Mr. Browne and I walked. In addition to the women and children, there was an old man with hair as white as snow. As I have observed, there was a sandhill at the back of the huts, and as we were trying to make ourselves understood by the women a native made his appearance over it; he was painted in all the colours of the rainbow, and armed to the teeth with spear and shield. Great was the surprise and indignation of this warrior on seeing that we had taken possession of his camp and water. He came fearlessly down the hill, and by signs ordered us to depart, threatening to go for his tribe to kill us all, but seeing that his anger only made us smile, he sat down and sulked. I really respected the native's bravery, and question much if I should have shewn equal spirit in a similar situation. Mr. Browne's feelings I am sure corresponded with my own, so we got up and left him, with an intention on my part to return when I thought he had cooled down to make him some presents, but when we did so he had departed with all his family, and returned not to the neighbourhood again. We had preserved two or three of the fish, and in the hope of making the women understand us better, produced them, on which they eagerly tried to snatch them from us, but did not succeed. They were evidently anxious to get them to eat, and I mention the fact, though perhaps telling against my generosity on the occasion, to prove how rare such a feast must be to them.

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As the line of the sand ridges was nearly parallel to that of our course, we descended to a polygonum flat, and keeping the ridge upon our left, proceeded on a bearing of 342°, or on a N.N.W. course, up a kind of valley. Whilst thus riding leisurely along, Flood, whose eyes were always about him, noticed something dark moving in the bushes, to which he called our attention. It was a dark object, and was then perfectly stationary ; as Flood however insisted that he saw it move, Mr. Browne went forward to ascertain what it could be, when a native woman jumped up and ran away. She had squatted down and put a large trough before her, the more effectually to conceal her person, and must have been astonished at the quickness of our sight in discovering her. We were much amused at the figure she cut, but as she exhibited great alarm Mr. Browne refrained from following her; after getting to some distance she turned round to look at us, and then walked off at a more leisurely pace. At the distance of about four miles, the sandy ridge made a short turn, and we were obliged to cross over to the opposite side to preserve our course.

On gaining the top of the ridge,we saw an open box-tree forest, and a small column of smoke rising up from amongst the trees, towards which we silently bent our steps. Our approach had however been noticed by the natives, who no doubt were at the place not a minute before, but had now fled.

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About an hour before sunset we arrived on the banks of a large creek, with a bed of couch grass, but no water. The appearance of this creek, however, was so promising that we momentarily expected to see a pond glittering before us, but rode on until sunset ere

we arrived at a place which had attracted our attention as we approached it. Somewhat to the right, but in the bed of the creek, there were two magnificent trees, the forest still extending back on either side. Beneath these trees there was a large mound of earth, that appeared to have been thrown up. On reaching the spot we discovered a well of very unusual dimensions, and as there was water in it, we halted for the night. On a closer examination of the locality, this well appeared to be of great value to the inhabitants. It was 22 feet deep and 8 feet broad at the top. There was a landing place, but no steps down to it, and a recess had been made to hold the water, which was slightly brackish, the rim of the basin being also incrusted with salt. Paths led from this spot to almost every point of the compass, and in walking along one to the left, I came on a village consisting of nineteen huts, but there were not any signs of recent occupation. Troughs and stones for grinding seed were lying about, with broken spears but there were not any signs of recent occupation.

Troughs and stones for grinding seed were lying about, with broken spears and shields, but it was evident that the inhabitants were now dispersed in other places, and only assembled here to collect the box-tree seeds, for small boughs of that tree were lying in heaps on the ground, and the trees themselves bore the marks of having been stripped. There weret wo or three huts in the village of large size, to each of which two smaller ones were attached, opening into its main apartment, but none of them had been left in such order as those I have already described.

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Every here and there, as we travelled along, we passed some holes scooped out by the natives to catch rain, and in some of these there was still a muddy residuum; we moreover observed that the inhabitants of this desert made these holes in places the best adapted to their purpose, where if the slightest shower occurred, the water falling on hard clay would necessarily
run into them.

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On coming up, they informed us that they had fallen in with a tribe of natives, twelve in number, shortly after starting, and had remained some time with them. They were at a dirty puddle, such as we had left, and were at no great distance from our little bivouac. Joseph good-naturedly gave one of them his knife, but he could not understand a word they said

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We passed the salt lagoon about 10 A.M. of the 9th, and stopped at a shallow but fresh water pond, a little below it, no less thankful than our exhausted animals that we were relieved from want, and the anxiety attendant on the last few days. On passing the lagoon we saw two natives

digging for roots, but did not disturb them. In the afternoon, however,J oseph and Lewis saw twenty, who exhibited some unfriendly symptoms ,and would not allow them to approach. They were not armed, but carried red bags. The food of the natives here, as in other parts of the interior, appeared to be seeds of various kinds. They had even been amongst the spinifex gathering the seed of the mesembryanthemum, of which they must obtain an abundant harvest.

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There were only two or three solitary trees to be seen to the north, at which point the plain was bounded by sand hills. To the S.E. there was a short line of trees, from the midst of which the natives were throwing up a signal smoke, but as it would have taken me out of my way to have gone to them, I held on a N.N.W. course, and at the termination of the plain ascended a
sand hill, though of no great height. From it we descended a small valley, the sides of which were covered with samphire bushes.

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We re-entered the plain in which the creek rises at 3 P.M., and made for the trees, from whence the signal smoke was rising, and there came on a tolerable sized pond of water, at which we stopped fora short time, and while resting, ascertained that some natives were encamped at a little distance above us; but although we went to them, and endeavoured by signs and other means to obtain information, we could not succeed, they either did not or would not understand us; neither, although our manner must have allayed any fear of personal injury to themselves, did they evince the slightest curiosity, or move, or even look up when we left them. I cannot, however, think that such apparent indifference arises from a want of feeling, for that, on some points, they possess in a strong degree; but so it was, that the natives of the interior never approached our camps, however much we might encourage them. On leaving these people, of whom, if I recollect, there were seven, we tried to avoid the distressing plains we had crossed in the morning, and it was consequently late before we got to the creek and dismounted from our horses, after a journey of about 42 miles.

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On the 16th we turned from the creek to the south, and passed down the long flat up which we had previously come. On the following day we passed several of the hollows scraped by the natives, and in one of them found a little water, that must have accumulated in it from the drizzly showers that fell on the night of the 8th, and which might have been heavier here than with us.

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From the Box-tree Forest we pushed on down the polygonum flat, where we had seen the native woman who had secreted herself in the bush. A whole family was now in the same place, but an old man only approached us. We were, indeed, passing, when he called to us, expressly for the purpose of telling us that the horse (Flood's) had gone away to the eastward. This native came out of his way, and evidently under considerable alarm, to tell us this, and to point out the direction in which he had gone, Our stock of presents being pretty nearly exhausted, Mr.Browne, with his characteristic good nature, gave him a striped handkerchief, with which he was much pleased.

At six miles we crossed the salt lagoon, and late in the afternoon descended to the box tree forest before mentioned, having the grassy plains now upon the left hand side. The sandy ridges overlooked these plains, so that in riding along we noticed some natives, seven in number, collecting grass seeds upon them, on which alone, it appears to me, they subsist at this season of the year. However, as soon as they saw us, they all ran away in more than usual alarm, perhaps from the recollection of our misunderstanding with Mr. Popinjay. Their presence, however, assured us that there must be water somewhere about, and as on entering the plain, more to the west than before, we struck on a track, I directed Mr. Browne to run it down, who, at about half-a-mile, came to a large well similar to that in the creek on the other side of the Stony Desert, but not of the same dimensions.

We had lost sight of him for some little time, when suddenly his horse made his appearance without a rider, and caused me great anxiety for the moment ,for my mind immediately reverted to our sulky friend, and my fears were at once raised that my young companion had been speared; riding on, therefore, I came at length to the well, down which, to my inexpressible
relief, I saw Mr. Browne, who was examining it, and who came out on my calling to him. There was not sufficient water to render it worth our while to stop; but the well being nine feet deep, shewed the succession of strata as follows: four feet of good alluvial soil; three feet of white clay; and two feet of sea sand. about half-a-mile, came to a large well similar to that in the creek on the other side of the Stony Desert, but not of the same dimensions.

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On the 27th, as we were crossing the country between the creeks, some natives came in from the north and called out to us, in consequence of which Mr. Browne and I rode up to them. They were in a sad state of suffering from the want of water; their lips cracked, and their tongues swelled. They had evidently lingered at some place or other, until all the water, intermediate between them and the creeks had dried up. The little water we had was not sufficient to allay their thirst, so they left us, and at a sharp trot disappeared over the sand hill.

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Mr. Stuart informed me that a few natives only had visited the camp; but that on one occasion some of them appeared armed, being as they said on their way to a grand fight, four of their tribe having been killed in a recent encounter. Only the day before, however, a party had visited the camp, one of whom had stolen Davenport's blanket. He was pretty sure of the thief, however, so
we did not despair of getting it back again.

On the 3rd the natives who had visited the camp before our return, again came, together with the young boy who Davenport suspected had stolen his blanket. He charged him with the theft, therefore, and told him not to return to the tents again without it, explaining at the same time what he had said, to the other natives. The boy went away before the rest, but all of
them returned the next day, and he gave up the blanket. On hearing this, I went out and praised him, and as he appeared to be sorry for his offence, I gave him a knife, in which I believe I erred, for we afterwards learnt, that the surrender of the blanket was not a voluntary act, but that he had been punished, and forced to restore it by his tribe. I cannot help thinking, however, that if the theft had not been discovered, the young rogue would have been applauded for his dexterity.

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The day before we commenced our journey to the north it was exceedingly hot, the thermometer rose to 106° in the shade, and thus early in the season were we forewarned of what we might expect when the sun should become more vertical. In the afternoon the old man who had visited us just before we commenced our late journey, arrived in the camp with his two wives, and a nice little girl about eleven, with flowing curly hair, the cleanliness and polish of which would have done credit to the prettiest head that ever was adorned with such. They came in from the S.W., and were eagerly passing our tents, without saying a word, and making for the water, when we called to them and supplied all their wants. The poor things were almost perishing from thirst, and seized the pannikins with astonishing avidity, when they saw that they contained water, and had them replenished several times. It happened also fortunately for them, that the lamb of the only ewe we had with us, and which had been dropped a few weeks before, got a coup de soleil, in consequence of which I ordered it to be killed, and given to the old man and his family for supper. This they all of them appeared to enjoy uncommonly, and very little of it was left after their first meal. The old man seemed to be perfectly aware that we had been out, but shook his head when I made him understand that I was going out again in the morning.

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We descended from it northwards, but had not gone half a mile, when we were again stopped by another creek, still broader and finer than the first. The breadth of its channel was more than 200 yards, its banks were from fifteen to eighteen feet high, and it had splendid sheets of water both above and below us. The natives, whose broad and well

beaten paths leading from angle to angle of the creek we had crossed on our approach to it, had fired the grass, and it was now springing up in the bed of the most beautiful green. I determined, therefore, to stay where I was until the following day, to give my animals the food and rest they so much required, and myself time for reflection. We accordingly dismounted, and turned the horses out, and it was really a pleasure to see them in clover.

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This ridge was not altogether a mile and a half in length, and behind it there were other ridges of the same colour bounding the horizon with edges as sharp as icebergs. I did not yet know whether the waters of the lake were salt or fresh, although I feared they were salt. Looking on it, however, I saw clearly that it was very shallow; a line of poles ran across it, such as are used by the natives for catching wild fowl, of which there were an abundance, as well as of hematops on the water. As soon as we descended from the sand ridge we got on a narrow native path, that led us down to a hut, about 100 that led us down to a hut, about 100 yards from the shore of the lake.

As we approached the water, the effluvia from it was exceedingly offensive, and the ground became a soft, black muddy sand. On tasting it we found that the water was neither one thing or the other, neither salt or fresh, but wholly unfit for use. Close to its margin there was a broad path leading to the eastward, or rather round the lake; and under the sand ridge to the west, were twenty-seven huts, but they had long been deserted, and were falling to decay. Nevertheless they proved that the waters of the lake were sometimes drinkable, or that the natives had some other supply of fresh water at no great distance, from whence they could easily come to take wild fowl, nor could I doubt such place would be the creek.

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We crossed some low sand hills to a swamp in which there was a good deal of surface water, but none of a permanent kind. We then crossed the N.W. extremity of an extensive grassy plain, similar to those I have already described, but infinitely larger. It continued, indeed, for many miles to the south, passing between all the sandy points jutting into it; and so closely was the Desert allied to fertility at this point, and I may say in these regions, that I stood more than once with one foot on salsolaceous plants growing in pure sand, with the other on luxuriant grass, springing up from rich alluvial soil. At two miles and a quarter from the swamp, striking a native path we followed it up to the S.W., and, at three-quarters of a mile, we reached two huts that had been built on a small rise of ground, with a few low trees near them. Our situation was too precarious to allow of my passing these huts without a strict search round about, for I was sure that water was not far off; and at length we found a small, narrow, and deep channel of but a few yards in length, hid in long grass, at a short distance from them. The water was about three feet deep, and was so sheltered that I made no doubt it would last for ten days or a fortnight. Grateful for the success that had attended our search, I allowed the horses to

rest and feed on the grass for a time; but it was of the kind from which the natives collect so much seed, and though beautiful to the eye, was not relished by our animals. The plains extended for miles to the south and south-east, with an aspect of great luxuriance and beauty; nor could I doubt they owed their existence to the final overflow of the large creek we had all along marked trending down to this point.

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After surveying this gloomy expanse of stone clad desert we looked for some object on the N.W. horizon upon which to move across it, but none presented itself, excepting a very distant sand hill bearing 308°, towards which I determined to proceed. We accordingly descended to the plain, and soon found ourselves on its uneven surface. There was a narrow space destitute of stones at the base of the sand hill, stamped all over with the impressions of natives' feet. From eighty to one hundred men, women, and children must have passed along there; and it appeared to me that this had been a migration of some tribe or other during the wet weather, but it was very clear those poor people never ventured on the plain itself.

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In the afternoon two natives made their appearance on the opposite sid eof the water, and I walked over to them, as I could not by any signs induce them to come to us. They were not bad looking men, and had lost their two front teeth of the upper jaw. To one I gave a tomahawk, and a hook to the other, but when I rose to depart, they gave them both back to me, and were
astonished to find that I had intended them as presents. Seeing, I suppose, that we intended them no injury, these men in the morning went on with their ordinary occupations, and swimming into the middle of the water began to dive for mussels. They looked like two seals in the water with their black heads, and seemed to be very expert: at all events they were not long in procuring a breakfast.

Notwithstanding the misgivings I had as to the creek, the paths of the natives became wider and wider as we advanced. They were now as broad as a footpath in England, by a road side, and were well trodden; numerous huts of boughs also lined the creek, so that it was evident we were
advancing into a well peopled country, and this circumstance raised my hopes that it would improve. As, however, our horses had no longer a gallop in them, we found it necessary to keep a sharp look out; although the natives with whom we had communicated, did not appear anxious to
leave the place as they generally are to tell the news of our being on the creek to others above us.

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While here we saw a native at some water a little lower down, mending a net, but did not call to him. On resuming our journey we kept in the upper channel, and had not ridden very far when we saw a native about 150 yards ahead of us, pulling boughs. On getting nearer we called out to him, but to no purpose. At the distance of about 70 yards, we called out again, but still he
did not hear, perhaps because of the rustling of the boughs he was breaking down. At length he bundled them up, and throwing them over his shoulder, turned from us to cross to the lower part of the creek, when suddenly he came bolt up against us. I cannot describe his horror and amazement,—down went his branches,—out went his hands,—and trembling from head to foot, he began to shout as loud as he could bawl. On this we pulled up, and I desired Mr. Stuart to dismount and sit down. This for a time increased the poor fellow's alarm, for he doubtless mistook man and horse for one animal, and he stretched himself out in absolute astonishment when he saw them separate. When Mr. Stuart sat down, however, he stood mor eerect, and he gradually got somewhat composed. His shouting had brought another black, who had stood afar off, watching the state of affairs, but who now approached. From these men I tried to gather some information, and my hopes were greatly raised from what passed between us, in so much that one of the men could not help expressing his hope that we were now near the long sought for inland sea.

On my seeking to know, by signs, to what point the creek would lead us, the old man stretched out his hand considerably to the southward of east, and spreading out his fingers, suddenly dropped his hand, as if he desired us to understand that it commenced, as he shewed, by numerous little channels uniting into one not very far off. On asking if the natives use dcanoes, he threw himself into the attitude of a native propelling one, which is a peculiar stoop, in which he must have been practised. After going through the motions, he pointed due north, and turning the palm of his hand forward, made it sweep the horizon round to east, and then again put himself into the attitude of a native propelling a canoe.

On my asking if the creek went into a large water, he intimated not, by again spreading out his hand as before and dropping it, neither did he seem to know anything of any hills. The direction he pointed to us, where there were large waters, was that over which the cold E.S.E. wind I have noticed, must have passed. This poor fellow was exceedingly communicative, but he did not cease to tremble all the while we were with him.

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On the morning of the 2nd of November the horses strayed for the first time, and delayed us for more than two hours, and we were after all indebted to three natives for their recovery, who had seen them and pointed out the direction in which they were. It really was a distressing spectacle to see them brought up, but their troubles and sufferings

were not yet over. The Roan was hardly able to move along, and in pity I left him behind to wander at large along the sunny banks of the finest water-course we had discovered.

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The first was, that, the meshes of the nets used by the natives, of which we examined several hanging in the trees, were very small, and that among the fish bones at the natives' fires, we never saw any of a larger size than those we had ourselves captured, and it was evident that at this particular time, it was not the fishing season. I was led to think, that the water in which we noticed so many swimming about, was sacred, and that it is only when the creek overflows, that the fish are generally distributed along its whole line, that the natives take them. Certainly, to judge from the smooth and delicate appearance of the weeds round that sheet of water the fish were not disturbed.

We had hardly arranged our bivouac, when we heard a most melancholy howling over an earthen bank directly opposite to us, and saw seven blackheads slowly advancing towards us. I therefore sent Mr. Stuart to meet the party and bring them up. The group consisted of a very old blind man, led by a younger one, and five women. They all wept most bitterly, and the women uttered low melancholy sounds, but we made them sit down and managed to allay their fears. It is impossible to say how old the man was ,but his hair was white as snow, and he had one foot in the grave.

These poor creatures must have observed us coming, and being helpless, had I suppose thought it better to come forward, for they had their huts immediately on the other side of the bank over which they ventured. We gave the old man a great coat, as the most useful present, and he seemed delighted with it. I saw that it was hopeless to expect any information from this timid party, so I made no objection to their leaving us after staying for about half an hour. Our latitude here, by an altitude of Jupiter, was 27° 47' S.; our longitude by account 141° 51' E.

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The morning of the 3rd of November was as cloudy as the night of the2nd had been, during which it blew violently from the N.W., and a few heat-drops fell, but without effect on the temperature. One of the horses got bogged in attempting to drink, and Mack's illness made it nine before we mounted and resumed our journey up the creek, on a N.N.E. course, but it gradually came round to north. At six miles we crossed the small and sandy bed of a creek coming from the stony plains to the south, and beneath a tree, near two huts, observed a large oval stone. It was embedded in the ground, and was evidently used by the natives for pounding seeds

In returning to the creek, we observed a body of natives to our left. They were walking in double file, and approaching us slowly. I therefore pulled up, and sent Mr. Stuart forward on foot, following myself with his horse. As he neared them the natives sat down, and he walked up and sat down in front of them. The party consisted of two chiefs and fourteen young men and boys. The former sat in front and the latter were ranged in two rows behind. The two chiefs wept as usual, and in truth shed tears, keeping their eyes on the

ground; but Mr. Stuart, after the interview, informed me that the party behind were laughing at them and sticking their tongues in their cheeks. One of the chiefs was an exceedingly tall man, since he could not have measured less than six feet three inches, and was about 24 years of age. He was painted with red ochre, and his body shone as if he had been polished with Warren's best blacking. His companion was older and of shorter stature. We soon got on good terms with them, and I made a present of a knife to each. They told us, as intelligibly as it was possible for them to do, that we were going away from water; that there was no more water to the eastward, and, excepting in the creek, none anywhere but to the N.E. I had observed, indeed, that the native paths had altogether ceased on the side of the creek on which we then were (the south or left bank), and the chief pointed that fact out to me, explaining that we should have to cross the creek at the head of the water, under the trees, and get on a path that would lead us to the N.E. On this I rose up and mounting my horse, riding quietly towards it, descended into the bed of the creek, in which the natives had their huts, but their women and children were not there. The two chiefs and the other natives had followed, but, the former only crossed the creek and accompanied us. We almost immediately struck on the native path which, as my tall friend had informed me, led direct to the N.E. I was not at first aware, what object our new friends had in following or rather accompanying us; but, at about a mile and a half, we came to a native hut at which there was an old man and his two lubras. The tall young man introduced him to us as his father, in consequence of which I dismounted, and shook hands with the old gentleman, and, as I had no hatchet or knife to give him, I parted my blanket and gave him half of it.

We then proceeded on our journey, attended as before, and at a mile, came on two huts, at which there were from twelve to fifteen natives. Here again we were introduced by our long-legged friend, who kept pace with our animals with ease, and after a short parley once more moved on, but were again obliged to stop with another tribe, rather more numerous than the last, who were encamped on a dirty little puddle of water that was hardly drinkable; however, they very kindly asked us to stay and sleep, an honour I begged to decline. Thus, in the space of less than five miles, we were introduced to four different tribes, whose collective numbers amounted to seventy-one. The huts of these natives were constructed of boughs, and were of the usual form, excepting those of the last tribe, which were open behind, forming elliptic arches of boughs, and the effect was very pretty.

These good folks also asked us to stop, and I thought I saw an expression of impatience on the countenance of my guide when I declined, and turned my horse to move on. We had been riding on a sandy kind of bank, higher than the flooded ground around us.

The plains extended on either side to the north and east, nor could we distinctly trace the creek beyond the trees at the point we had crossed it, but there were a few gum-trees separated by long intervals, that still slightly marked its course. When we left the last tribe, we rode towards a sand hill about half a mile in front, and had scarcely gone from the huts when our ambassadors, for in such a light I suppose I must consider them, set off at a trot and getting a-head of us
disappeared over the sand hill. I was too well aware of the customs of these people, not to anticipate that there was something behind the scene, and I told Mr. Stuart that I felt

satisfied we had not yet seen the whole of the population of this creek; but I was at a loss to conjecture why they should have squatted down at such muddy puddles, when there were such magnificent sheets of water for them to encamp upon, at no great distance; however, we reached the hill soon after the natives had gone over it, and on gaining the summit were hailed with a deafening shout by 3 or 400 natives, who were assembled in the flat below.

I do not know, that my desire to see the savage in his wild state, was ever more gratified than on this occasion, for I had never before come so suddenly upon so large a party. The scene was onof the most animated description, and was rendered still more striking from the circumstance of the native huts, at which there were a number of women and children, occupying the whole crest of a long piece of rising ground at the opposite side of the flat.

I checked my horse for a short time on the top of the sand hill, and gazed on the assemblage of agitated figures below me, covering so small a space that I could have enclosed the whole under a casting net, and then quietly rode down into the flat, followed by Mr. Stuart and my men, to one of whom I gave my horse when I dismounted, and then walked to the natives, by whom Mr. Stuart and myself were immediately surrounded.
Had these people been of an unfriendly temper, we could not by any possibility have escaped them, for our horses could not have broken into a canter to save our lives or their own. We were therefore wholly in their power, although happily for us perhaps, they were not aware of it; but, so far from exhibiting any unkind feeling, they treated us with genuine hospitality, and we might certainly have commanded whatever they had.

Several of them brought us large troughs of water, and when we had taken a little, held them up for our horses to drink; an instance of nerve that is very remarkable, for I am quite sure that no white man, (having never seen or heard of a horse before, and with the natural apprehension the first sight of such an animal would create,) would deliberately have walked up to what must have appeared to them most formidable brutes, and placing the troughs they carried against their breast, have allowed the horses to drink, with their noses almost touching them. They likewise offered us some roasted ducks, and some cake. When we walked over to their camp, they what must have appeared to them most formidable brutes, and placing the troughs they carried against their breast, have allowed the horses to drink, with their noses almost touching them. They likewise offered us some roasted ducks, and some cake.

Of sixty-nine who I counted round me at one time, I do not think there was one under my own height, 5 feet 103/4 inches, but there were several upwards of 6 feet. The children were also very fine, and I thought healthier and better grown than most I had seen, but I observed here, as
elsewhere amongst smaller tribes, that the female children were more numerous than the males, why such should be the case, it is difficult to say. Whilst, however, I am thus praising the personal appearance of the men, I am sorry to say I observed but little improvement in the fairer sex. They

were the same half-starved unhappy looking creatures whose condition In have so often pitied elsewhere.

These were a merry people and seemed highly delighted at our visit, and if one or two of them were a little forward, I laid it to the account of curiosity and a feeling of confidence in their own numbers. But a little thing checked them, nor did they venture to touch our persons, much less
to put their hands into our pockets, as the natives appear to have done, in the case of another explorer. It is a liberty I never allowed any native to take, not only because I did not like it, but because I am sure it must have the effect of lowering the white man in the estimation of the savage, and diminishing those feelings of awe and inferiority, which are the European's
best security against ill treatment. The natives told us, that there was no water to the eastward, and that if we went there we should all die. They explained that the creek commenced on the plains, by spreading out their fingers as the old man had done, to shew that many small channels made a large one, pointing to the creek, and they said the water was all gone to the place we had come from; meaning, to the lower part of it.

On asking them by signs, if the creek continued beyond the plains, they shook their heads, and again put their extended hand on the ground, pointing to the plain. They could give us no account of the ranges to which I proposed going, any more than others we had asked. On inquiring, if there was any water to the north-west a long discussion took place, and it was ultimately decided that there was not. I could understand, that several of them mentioned the names of places where they supposed there might be water, but it was evidently the general opinion that there was none. Neither did they appear to know of any large waters, on which the natives had canoes, in confirmation of the old man's actions. On this interesting and important
point they were wholly ignorant.

The smallness of the water-hole, on which these people depended, was quite a matter of surprise to me, and I hardly liked to let the horses drink at it, in consequence. At sunset all the natives left us (as is their wont at that hour), and went to their own encampment; nor did one approach us
afterwards, but they sat up to a late hour at their own camp, the women being employed beating the seed for cakes, between two stones, and the noise they made was exactly like the working of a loom factory. The whole encampment, with the long line of fires, looked exceedingly pretty, and the dusky figures of the natives standing by them, or moving from one hut to the other, had the effect of a fine scene in a play. At 11 all was still, and you would not have known that you were in such close contiguity to so large an assemblage of people.

When I laid down, I revolved in my own mind what course I should pursue in the morning. If the account of the natives was correct, it was clear that my further progress eastward, was at an end. My horses, indeed, were now reduced to such a state, that I foresaw my labours were drawing to a close.

Accordingly, in the morning, we saddled and loaded our horses, but none of the natives came to us until we had mounted; when they approached to take leave, and to persuade us not to go in the direction we proposed, but to no purpose. The pool from which they drew their supply of water, was in the centre of a broad shallow grassy channel, that passed the point of the sand hill we had ascended, and ran up to the northward and westward; we were, therefore, obliged to cross this channel, and soon afterwards got on the plains. They were evidently subject to flood, and were exceedingly soft and blistered; the grass upon them grew in tufts, not close, so that in the distance, the plains appeared better grassed than they really were.

It looked exactly as I have described it—an immense concavity, with numerous small channels running down from every part, and making for the creek as a centre of union; nor, could we anywhere see a termination to it. Had the plain been of less extent, I might have doubted
the information of the natives; but, looking at the boundless hollow around me, I did not feel any surprise that such a creek even as the one up which we had journeyed, should rise in it, and could easily picture to myself the rush of water there must be to the centre of the plain, when the ground has been saturated with moisture.

As we descended from the flats to cross over to our old berth, we found it occupied by a party of natives, who were disposed to be rather troublesome, especially one old fellow, whose conduct annoyed me exceedingly. However, I very soon got rid of them; and after strolling for a short time within sight of us, they all went up the creek; but I could not help thinking, from the impertinent pertinacity of these fellows, that they had discovered my magazine, and taken all the things, more especially as they had been digging where our fire had been, so that, if I had buried the stores there as intended, they would have been taken.

As soon as the natives were out of sight, Mr. Stuart and I went to the rhagodia bush for our things. As we approached, the branches appeared just as we had left them; but on getting near, we saw a bag lying outside, and I therefore concluded that the natives had carried off everything. Still, when we came up to the bush, nothing but the bag appeared to have been touched, all the other things were just as we left them, and, on examining the bag, nothing was missing.

Concluding, therefore, that the natives had really discovered my store, but had been too honest to rob us, I returned to the creek in better humour with them; but, a sudden thought occurring to
Mr. Stuart, that as there was an oil lamp in the bag, a native dog might have smelt and dragged it out of its place, we returned to the bush, to see if there were any impressions of naked feet round about it, but with the exception of our own, there were no tracks save those of a native dog. I was consequently obliged to give Mr. Stuart credit for his surmise, and felt somewhat mortified that the favourable impression I had received as to the honesty of the natives had thus been destroyed. They had gone up the creek on seeing that I was displeased, and we saw nothing more of them during the afternoon; but on the following morning they came to see us, and as they behaved well, I gave them a powder canister, a little box, and some other trifles; for after all there was only one old

fellow who had been unruly, and he now shewed as much impatience with his companions as he had done with us, and I therefore set his manner down to the score of petulance.

Return to Depot Glen

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Mr. Browne informed me that the natives had frequently visited the camp during my absence. He had given them to understand that we were going over the hills again, on which they told him that if he did not make haste all the water would be gone.

The Retreat from Depot Glen

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Mr. Browne had found a large party of natives at the water, who had been very kind to him, and many of them still remained when we came up. He had observed some of them eating a small acid berry, and had procured a quantity for me in the hope that they would do me good, and while we remained at this place he good-naturedly went into the hills and gathered me a large tureen full, and to the benefit I derived from these berries I attribute my more speedy recovery from the malady under which I was suffering. We were now 116 miles from the Darling, and although there was no longer any doubt of our eventually reaching it, the condition in which we should do so, depended on our finding water in the Coonbaralba pass, from which we were distant 49 miles. In the evening I sent Flood on ahead to look for water, with orders to return if he succeeded in his search. In consequence of the kindness of the natives to Mr. Browne I made them some presents and gave them a sheep, which they appeared to relish greatly. They were good-looking blacks and in good condition, speaking the language of the Darling natives.

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One of the women we found here, came and slept at our fire, and managed to roll herself up in Mr. Browne's blanket, who, waking from cold, found that his fair companion had uncovered him, and appropriated the blanket to her own use. The natives suffer exceedingly from cold, and
are perfectly paralysed by it, for they are not provided with any covering, neither are their huts of a solidity or construction such as to protect them from its effects. About noon a large tribe joined us from the S.W. and we had a fine opportunity to form a judgment of them, when contrasted with the natives of the Desert from which we had come. Robust, active, and full of life, these hill natives were every way superior to the miserable half-starved beings we had left behind, if I except the natives of Cooper's Creek.

During the day they kept falling in upon us, and in the afternoon mustered more than one hundred strong, in men, women, and children. As they were very quiet and unobtrusive I gave them a couple of sheep, with which they were highly delighted, and in return, they overwhelmed our camp at night with their wom

To the Desert with Sturt: Daniel Brock

This is a copy of Daniel Brock's accounts of interaction with Aboriginal people during the Central Australian Expedition, 1844-1846. The entire record can be found in the book "To the Desert with Sturt", first published in 1975. It is recommended that the book be read in full. The expedition left Adelaide on August 14th 1844.

Along the Murray River to Moorundie

16th August 1844
We moved away-two natives accompanying us-these fellows belong to a tribe further up the river who in times past were very troublesome to the overland parties from Sydney. These men go as guides and protectors. They are two fine muscular fellows, one called "Nite-book" the other "Ca-ree-na

26th August 1844
Having received instructions to commence my work in securing birds, I passed away from the drays having the Captain's double gun, but I found a remarkable scarcity of the feathered tribe-what birds there are, are of a common kind, not worth powder and shot.

The native, whom we naturally expected to be brought in contact with, is nowhere to be seen. Have the tribes been blotted out of existence which not many years ago so numerously lined the banks of this truly noble river? A river abounding in fish, and the adjacent scrub abounding in game.

The white man has been here cruel, more cruel, than any savage. As I passed on, anxious at every chirrip I heard, hoping to get a shot I descended into one of the flats, which not many years since was the scene of strife and blood, between the natives and an overland cattle party.

7th September 1844
Natives are becoming more numerous, and remarkably friendly. Mr. Eyre's influence is strongly felt. I am sorry to see disease exist among them as it does, and this too through intercourse with Europeans an Englishman is a curse to the Aborigines of any country. One poor fellow especially came under my notice—his thighs were dwindled away to a mere shadow.

In accordance with Mr. Eyre's wish, when the night came on, the natives amused us with dancing—men had striped themselves with white in various parts of their bodies, and had made themselves appear as formidably hideous as anybody could have wished-the women sitting behind some small fires, which ever and anon, would throw a fitful glare upon the scene, revealing the dancers who were capering away, flourishing their waddies over their heads at a most ferocious rate. The music which accompanied their gestures was produced by the women beating an extended skin with a stone, at the same time chaunting with their voices.

During the latter part they were enacting the death of the Kangaroo-three men, personating the Kangaroo, being surrounded by the others with spears and green boughs, sometimes as in the act of killing, then retreating, waving the boughs and shouting-a most ludicrous effect was produced on them, in consequence of our throwing up a rocket; it sadly frightened them.

Rufus River

10th. September 1844
After a short journey we were encamped upon the Rufus at its junction with the river. This locality has been the scene of one of the most determined and bloody encounters with the natives which lie impaged in South Australian history-party after party, coming overland with sheep, were attacked by the natives, and if it had not been for the timely arrival of some of our police the last party would have been all destroyed, as the fight had been continued so long that all the ammunition was nearly expended.

It had been generally the case in all such previous attacks, that after a few rounds being fired, and the consequences following of the poor natives falling dead orwounded, the body generally broke up, and after securing as many of their fallen friends as they could, they retreated, but at this time such was not the case; as one fell another took his place. Having been formed in half circle, before actual war commences, they crouch one behind another holding one another by the hips—the yelling is most fearful.

With the addition of the police force, they were shot in all directions, their bodies lying in heaps. Several of the whites were wounded in all of the attacks. In the last Robinson, the leader of the overland party, was very badly so, it seems he fearfully revenged himself-when mercy, it is not found in the vocabulary of parties coming overland from Sydney with stock.

Since these occurrences, we are the first party to have visited these tribes, save and except a journey Mr. Eyre took on horseback. Our two native guides, "Nite-book" especially, were deeply engaged in the affrays; but they are now become quiet, good-natured fellows, and most useful auxiliaries to our party.

The natives which have visited us, however, are a morose savage-looking set, and perhaps if they thought they had any chance would endeavour to be revenged—they are all afraid of Eyre, whose influence over all the tribes we have passed is most astonishing—he is known amongst them as the "Uu-cu-matta", or great chief.

16th September 1844
On returning to the camp we passed the "wurleys" of some natives. I counted 10 females, and 11 children. They were all coiled in 2 small "wurleys" or huts save an old hag who was seated outside by an oven busy in brewing roots and beating them between two stones til the beaten root became formed into a consistency not unlike an oatmeal cake. I tasted some of it, really it was not bad.

The preparation is simply this, the root is poured over with some hot ashes for a short time, which then finally separates from its pith. The pith is thrown away and what remains is only used. The oven is a hole dug into which are placed stones; a fire is then made and when the stones are become sufficiently hot, whatever fibrous things they eat, or animal, is put into this oven and covered over and a fire made over it, where it soon gets cooked. Our guide "Nite-b ook" claims this locality as his territory, he has here several wives, and not a few children.

28th September 1844
During the early part of our journey, a considerable body of natives were observed on the opposite bank with bundles of spears. The sheep attract more attention than aught beside; they were, however, brought more in a body, the fire arms were all prepared and ready for immediate use. Our friend "Tuando" approached opposite, and began jabbering away-it was a dropped and one after another came across the river, to the number of 50. Old Mr Nitebook and Tuando, on their getting up on the bank joined them. The first movement was deep and earnest whispering, then the arms were thrown over the shoulder, when a perfect understanding arose, and all suspicion gave way to curiosity. We of course had kept traveling; the strangers were soon with us, very few had ever before seen a European.-

They were principally growing young men with a few more staid and elderly. After we had encamped, they came, and were exceedingly friendly. We had been expecting blood-shedding from these fine looking men; it all seems to breathe of peace and kind feeling.

Mitchell, in his account of the Darling native, speaks of them as the most daring, bloodthirsty fellows possible; this tribe at all events appear altogether different.

4th October 1844
Among the natives who came to us today I observed some "Lubras" or females who were in deep Mourning—this was neither widows' caps nor yards of crape-their hair had been burnt close to the head with a fire stick, and thick plasters of white clay was stuck on their blocks—they looked very interesting—very.

6th October 1844
Sunday. Last night there being about a dozen of strange natives at the camp, Nitebook earnestly begged that they might be frightened with a sky rocket—after much palaver and entreaty, his wish was complied with, and if a scene of fright was ever complete it was in this instance—it was laughable, to observe the affected indifference which Nitebook displayed, for the mere purpose of impressing them with the idea that he was a very wonderful fellow.

For the first time we are not called upon to travel on this day, in the afternoon prayers were read. We have been visited today by some very fierce-looking natives—these having tomahawks did not surprise us, as we cannot be far from the spot where Major Mitchell formed his last camp, previous to his return.

These hatchets were worn to the very eye one of them had a piece of iron six inches long fastened into a stick, just as a smith's tool is fastened into a withy - it was part of a dray wheel's tire, it must have cost an immense deal of labor to have fashioned such an implement—its edge was better than the tomahawk's. To show the jealousy which is existing (or perhaps the hate) one towards another, of some tribes-we have had two young men accompanying us from Lake Victoria, and they were anxious to still go with us-but No—they are suffered to go no further. The tribe into whose district we are about passing through will not suffer them-poor fellows are sadly annoyed, butthere is no help—Tuando and Nitebook must send them back.

This hook they make out of a piece of a twig, forming it with a muscle shell, and then just pushing it beneath hot ashes to harden it-this is then fastened on to a piece of "Polignum," which grows to a great length and as big as a pen holder. Down the beforenamed hole is the hook passed, and with little trouble, the gobbish morsel is hooked. Up it comes, and if the native is hungry he does not wait to broil it but down it goes all alive and writhing.

When-ever we saw a native, he had his waddie and spade in one hand, and his hook and gear, thrown over his shoulder, held by the other-with one native I observed a piece of thick hoop iron, which was fastened into a piece of wood, and had been brought to a cutting edge. This must have been obtained through Major Mitchell's party.

Among the natives which visited us today, I noticed three characters. One was an exceedingly aged man, his white hair as the driven snow, and was remarkably active. Another man was tall and well- proportioned excepting his arms, which from the shoulder downwards had no appearance of muscle and no bigger than a gun barrel. The third man was a native whose locality is supposed to be on the River Lachlan or Morumbidgee; this supposition arises from the fact of his having a tooth extracted from one side of his mouth.

8th October 1844
The supply which the native must have in these regions of game must be very scanty, as nothing scarcely ever larger than the bandicoot is seen. The sweet although monotonous note of the dove is heard in almost every tree, it is a beautiful delicate bird of a fawn color. I have all the father in me yet, which I discovered about ten minutes since; in walking some distance from the camp by the lagoon's bank, I observed on the opposite side three or four families of natives, watching and wondering at what they saw. What stirred me was—there were two or three children, about the size of my boy William, perched upon the shoulders of their fathers, their tiny arms encircling the head— what would I give to see my lad and his beloved mother—many long months yet before such a thing takes place.

9th October 1844
Early in our journey this morning many natives joined us, expressing the most lively astonishment, and we presume pleasure, at everything they saw; it puzzled them sadly about the wheels turning round. Mitchell's account of these tribes was that they were regular "fire eaters", the fact is he used them badly, and he had cause to dread them—so

much so that had he proceeded further down the river, instead of turning back when he did, he would have never returned. We pursue a course of kindness towards them, and we find them altogether as friendly. The savage is as susceptible of kindness, and perhaps more so,
than many Europeans.

11th October1844
This morning our officer Poole was instructed to examine the country to and beyond the hills. A black fellow who belongs to the Wangarra tribe (or “Hill tribe”) with the draughtsman (Stuart) accompanies him. It seems Mr. Eyre came up as far as this but through ill health was obliged to return, and Major Mitchell traced the Darling down as far as this, and this latter gent speaks of ponds near, and gives them the name of "Laidley's" Ponds
Laidley’s Ponds

What these ponds are like Mr. Poole will have to ascertain. It is on the assumption that a water course flows from the NW into these ponds that from this point the struggle to get into the interior is to be made. The natives however give a most miserable account of the country in the direction we want to go.
During the morning word was brought that a number of natives were making for the camp-orders were immediately issued to make all things ready and snug and stand to our guns.

Our alarm was soon suppressed-true a numerous body of natives soon made their appearance, but they consisted of females and children; such a mark of confidence in us was altogether unlooked for. There were two or three men accompanied them.
Our guns were laid in their places and we were soon busy in sharpening for their spades, and making them grubbing hooks.

A certain quantity of blankets were given, and these interesting ladies were regaled with tea, the "younger branches" with sugar. The ladies were not black but yellow, and any mortal thing but handsome.

We were visited with a short but very heavy storm of rain, thunder and lightning—but little as it lasted, it has caused us an annoyance, for we cannot move anywhere, but the bottoms of
our shoes are at once clogged with the saturated soil. Even under the paws of our dogs it forms into a crust which is difficult to remove. In the wet season, our route must have been impassable

14th October 1844
About 4 p.m. the camp was put all astir through hearing at some distance a native most terrificly shouting—as the fellow drew nearer, we could distinguish the words “Jacky, Jacky" mixed up with the words, “Tomahawk Flour". Our surprise was not lessened when the native, who was accompanied by two other fellows, ran into the camp holding up in

his hand a packet-but nothing could be got out of him but “Jacky-flour and tomahawk". It was a dispatch from the Governor to Sturt, in answer to the dispatch sent from us, relative to the supposed murder

18th October 1844
The flag that had been stolen was returned, through the prepossessing; a few locks of white hair at the sides of his head and otherwise quite bald; a high fine forehead; his manners are quiet, unobtrusive and dignified. He appeared this morning wearing a very fanciful head the "Pinkoe", netted so as to form a strip of black and a strip of white.

A plume of feathers was fastened on the top, and pendent from behind were a kind of tails, as are the tails from a councillor's wig. Another man accompanied him wearing one somewhat similar but destitute of any appendages—this latter one I obtained in exchange for a cotton nightcap. The old man gave his to Sturt, receiving a knife in exchange. The natives brought us two Pinkoes—I skinned them. Its color was blue fur on the back and white behind; ran like a rabbit; the buck was as large as a hare, the doe somewhat smaller; it had a snout similar to the pig; its feet marsupial; the young are protected in a pouch.

Yanco Glen area

30th October 1844
Having during the night got into a sweat, I felt this morning better, but still very sick-and dreadfully depressed in spirits; here the lot of the sick man will be deplorable. The article of death has no terrors; although I am an unfaithful, sinful creature, the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin yet the mind recoils in contemplating the passage to the tomb under the present circumstances-the association, the indifference “if you live, you live; if you die, it will be a feed for the wild dogs—but I will not give way to this. God is all sufficient—Oh may I be able to abide in his Love.

About 8 a.m. we again started; the bullocks all right, and having occasionally some good ground to travel over, we got on pretty well. About 12, having kept near the creek the most of the day, we again fell in with water; we here brought up and rested the cattle, and got some refreshment ourselves. Black fellows had not long left, as there was appearance of a fire, not long extinguished, under the tree where we for the time sat. I picked up a stone tomahawk, without its handle—it was a stone about 6inches long, 2 wide and 2 thick, in shape similar to an American axe; it is fastened into a stick with gum.

About 2 p.m. we again moved away, and about 5 came to a water hole in the creek. It has been a toilsome dusty journey. We at this place fell in with three natives, at first full of fear but after a little they became quite at home. They were fine looking fellows—one of them was the chief of the tribe.

31st October 1844
The botanist would find much here to please him; several flowers of the most lovely hue, but without smell, we found near our camp; the potato in abundance. The range which

we have been hugging the bases of runs in NE and SW direction; our present camp is about three miles distant. Our late journey has been about 60 miles—we shall remain some little time on this water till more is found ahead-the creek is wide and no doubt at seasons a great body of water flows down it. It is a sandy bottom generally, but here, where our water is, it is rocky-but it will not retain water very long.

Ist November 1844
Mr. Poole and Mr. Stuart are away this morning to discover water, and make general observations in reference to the country ahead of us. We observe here tracks of the kangaroo; the wild dog, which hitherto has been almost a stranger, is frequently seen. Tuando and the other native who has been with us from Lake Victoria are again manifesting symptoms of discontent, and are wanting to return.

2nd November 1844
We now feel the want of vessels which would hold 40 or 50 gallons of water. The Captain is trying to get a machine (out of a tinned bacon case) made—he wants the seams soldered—so as he could take it in the cart, and be as a supply for his horses. I spoke of it as being necessary a soldering iron, with rosin and solder, should be obtained before we left Adelaide "It would be no use," was the reply. The seams of the case were plastered with white lead and putty. It often causes me to smile at the little jealousies which shew themselves among
some of the party.

Some of our party on looking after the bullocks fell in with some native females, they are described as being very good looking. One of them had an infant, and it was really a beautiful child for a native; one of our men, wishing to have it to fondle it, caused the mother to be alarmed, supposing that we wanted to deprive her of it.

16th November 1844
During the day we were visited by five natives two of them had visited us at the last camp—but we could scarcely recognize them, their having had their beards plucked off. The three others were miserable looking creatures—I observed the scarifications on their bodies, different from any I have seen before.

The scarification which passed in lines across his belly and stomach were no bigger than a large size thread. One was an old man who was very anxious to see my flesh, to draw a comparison between it and his own. After getting some food they passed down the creek to where their females were.

6th December 1844
By calculations we are supposed to be about 10 miles to the boundary of South Australia—we see no natives, all round us seems a deserted waste. Mr. Flood and Moses who accompanied him have returned; they have fallen in with a good supply of water; in their journey they saw some native females and some children-water fowl in abundance.

Near Flood's Creek

12th December 1844
The black boy who has accompanied us, Tam-pi-wam-or Bob, is an inoffensive good lad, and has now to look after the sheep when in camp; he, on coming home this morning, informed us of having seen natives. Soon after we observed two females on a spur of the range at the back of our camp. The Captain with Bob went after them to get them to the camp-but it was no go-after many manoeuvres on the part of Sturt he desisted from following them and left it to Bob, who very soon managed to come up with them, and to engage their notice he gave them his knife. Soon after other natives joining them they ventured to come to the camp-we passed out and met them—their party consisted of three women and an infant, also four men. They were emaciated, pitiable-looking objects, half-starved in appearance; they were small in stature.

One of the women was the principal speaker, she was the best condition of any of them, there was some small quantity of flesh about her – she appeared to tell us which of the women was her daughter, which she did by placing her hand to her breast and lifting it, at the same time placing her other hand on the shoulder of the deathly looking female who had an infant at her back. This poor young mother shook and trembled while her child kept up a constant cry.

The two elder ladies displayed signs of age, in their decayed teeth. As for the men, they never opened their mouths as they walked to the camp – I could not compare them to anything more appropriate than to men fettered, and going to the gallows – they had hold of each other's hands and their heads were resting on their breasts. There was no movement with them but what was absolutely necessary to get themselves along with; their eyes rolled about in every direction, in coming in to the camp.

We conducted them to a near gum tree under which they sat. Piesse brought them some mutton—they began to eat it raw as it was—we made them a fire, and signed to them to cook it. It is true the meat went on the fire, but it soon came off again.

One of the women, having on her piece of meat a bit of fat, held it to the mouth of a young man who sat next to her—he tore away at it with his teeth like a first rate tiger. Their shyness after a while in some measure wore off, but they appeared to be surprised at nothing; they were past curiosity—I observed round the waist of one of the men a belt, the thickness of a good sized rope; it was composed of human hair and fur mixed-beautifully interwoven; he presented it to me, but I refused it. The only weapons—I saw with them— was a stone tomahawk-and poor made boomerang.

They were sadly diseased, one could well suppose they were the last of the race. Poor creatures, what is Man in his fallen state, where is the image of their Maker? These people are less enviable than the Brute as to their natural condition.

They left us, signing they would return, busy in repairing the dray wheels; the tires having got loose, we endeavoured to contract them by first heating them and then cooling them with water, but we did not make a very good job of them. No tools.

A grass bearing a grain not unlike the wheat is found here-the appearance is just similar to smutty wheat—it has 4 or 5 grains enclosed in a husk when ripe, and probably farinaceous.

17th December 1844
Sullivan and myself received instructions to again move off in search of birds. We took provisions for three days and were to run down the creek as far as we could find water. It being very hot we did not leave the camp till near sundown. Following down the creek about 5 miles, it lost itself on the plain, and again formed about 3 miles to the westward.

Finding water we encamped for the night. Some little distance we observed the fires of the natives, we had no reason to fear them; coiling ourselves under a peppermint tree, we soon fell asleep.

22nd December 1844
Sunday. The natives have not returned, as they us to understand; I can imagine their pleasure, when they found themselves free from us. I have no doubt on my mind, but they take us to be supernatural beings, similar to the idea entertained by the southern tribes, that the European is a returned from the grave, and in consequence of the change has become white.

On December 28th 1844 the expedition left Flood's Creek camp moving north easterly. The men had to cross numerous sandhills and timbered areas in the Packsaddle Creek area before reaching the east side of Mount Arrowsmith

The country adjacent to this creek is subject to great inundations; in crossing the plains in coming here I observed the foot print of the native inches deep. The country is a barren waste. Some miles to the W of us is a range of hills, trending away to the N. The flow in the creek is from the West to the East. Native fires are seen, but no natives.

Near us are a group of huts extremely well-constructed, being made so as no rain can penetrate them. Sticks being bent in the form of an arch interwoven with twigs, on which is plastered mud and sand, which from the heat becomes hard and durable. The entrance of the biggest hut was 4 feet in height, in the centre it rose about 15 inches, then to the back it gradually declined, the distance from the opposite bases about 9 ft.—altogether it is a snug affair; there were several smaller ones for the children.

7th January 1845
Late in the afternoon we were again on the move, keeping a northerly direction, a range of hills to the trending a parallel course which we were moving on. Some 4 miles travelling brought us on a creek in which we found a good supply of water; the country

everywhere as sandy and miserable as the mind can conceive. Sometime after night closed in we encamped on a creek where we obtained a very scanty supply of water.

Evelyn Creek

8th January 1845
At daylight we were on the road—the sandy nature of the ground makes it heavy work for the drays. About 11 in the forenoon we brought up on a creek, where we encamped, with a full supply of water, the flow being from the westward. Terrific torrents must fall in these latitudes, as we perceive in almost all the creeks we pass, left in the branches of the gum trees, some 10 and 15 yards from the surface of the banks, drift timber which has been washed down by the occasional
floods.

Native fires were burning near this water, but not a native could be seen. One of their dogs was perceived cooling itself in the water; its masters were not far off, as it frequently stole down to drink to the imminent peril of its life. Master Serjy was lazy, to which it probably owed its safety.

Trapped at The Depot

19th January 1845
Sunday. My sight no better, but having turned out very early, I was less bothered with the flies and got all my birds secured – they certainly look well, it is a great pity I have no paper to place them in; all I can do is to sew a piece of paper round the body to fasten the wings. During the
attendance of the black boy on the sheep while they were feeding, five natives came up to him, and were quite friendly, they examined the boy's clothing, and manifested a deal of wonder.

We went where he had left them, but they were gone—however Lewis who had been away getting the bullocks together, on his return home, some six miles from the camp, observed six men and one woman; they tried to avoid him, first laying down their spears and some large flat stones, which they were carrying perhaps to their camp to beat the seeds which they eat into a powder. They were well proportioned and muscular, though short in stature.

20thJanuary 1845
The weather has been very much cooler this last day or two which renders it much more pleasant. We find abundance of feed on the numerous creeks for our tea having been reduced, one of the few comforts we can enjoy, we avail ourselves of a wild mint which is found in the creeks, which does middling. The comet has become invisible. Tracks of emu being plentiful, two of our men started off this morning to endeavour to waylay them, as the birds would be coming to drink. Lying in ambush in the creek some time, they got tired of watching, and on getting up from the creek they surprised two middle-aged natives, a man and woman.

Our chaps came so suddenly upon them that for a moment they could not move for fright—after a little they uttered the most dreadful shrieks, the woman ran to hide herself behind her companion, when he lifted his hands as in the act of pushing back-as much as to say do not come nearer; on our fellows approaching nearer he smote his head and temples with his clenched fist, and as a last resort the woman ran round the man with her fire stick and setting fire to the grass, which burned in a small circle round them, ceasing not an instant in crying and that too most dolefully.

The men still coming nearer they became almost lost, their fright assuming the most fearful aspect, and the woman managing to make another circle of larger dimensions, they hoped they should be more secure.

Out of pity our men left them. The most unquestionable evidence is here given that we are looked upon as beings of another world by these children of the wastes. The conduct of the natives with whom Lewis came in contact yesterday – their fearless approach—evinces
much natural courage. We know by the records of the late European Age, what terror our old fashioned fore-fathers experienced when they supposed themselves in presence with a brocaded old Lady Ghost—compare an European with these wild creatures, the one possessed of principles, in a less or greater degree, which would in some measure regulate his passions—the other altogether the creature of impulse and passion. This shews or gives us some idea, in the recited cases, of absolute fear, and marked natural courage.

21st January 1845
Poole in this journey fell in with a considerable body of natives, men, women and children, about thirty. Moses, who was with Poole, being a little in advance first observed them on the opposite bank of a creek which Poole was running down.

Getting off his horse (of which they were extremely frightened) he made signs to them to come over to him, which after some considerable hesitancy they complied with, the men sending over two women. As soon as they came to Moses he squatted down-the females immediately did the same—but the signs which they made, Moses could not understand one of them.

After some pantomimic confab he rose up and taking them by the hand led them across to their party. Moses then got some sugar and damper, and first ate some himself and then offered it them. They came one by one, extending their capacious jaws to get a supply—these mouths of theirs are no small bread baskets then came the ladies, then the children.

Poole on joining Moses expressed terrible fear, he is a rank coward, but perceiving no offensive weapons, he plucked up his courage. Moses wanting a fire stick, four women were sent with it, not one of the men daring to cross over. One of the females was particularly attentive and courteous to Mr. Poole.

When first seen by Moses, these natives were busy in preparing food from a seed which grows on a low grass and is found somewhere in great abundance. They have a large flat stone, on which they pour the seed from their hand, and with a round stone smash it as it falls—it forms an oily kind of food not very unlike linseed would be if it was so bruised.

These natives were in good condition; the men, though small, were well proportioned, as were the women; the children were healthy and robust.

24th January 1845

The Captain returned after a hot struggling journey – he pushed as far N as he could, an immense pine and acacia scrub with no water stopped him-his hopes of an inland sea in this direction are become very low. It is a fearful desert, they experienced the heat to be dreadful—the glass standing 155, in the sun-rather hot. A few natives were disturbed in a scrub; they scampered off leaving everything behind them, kangaroo and wallaby rugs, and baskets; the spears were found stuck in the ground.

In leaving the camp, the Captain hung a knife on one of the spears, and in returning some two days after he again passed the spot—the natives had returned, and had taken their things away which were not very near the spear on which the knife was hung, but everything was left around this fearful object, for there still swung the knife.

25th January 1845

Passing upwards gathering seed, and during the afternoon got to the Depot. We found the Captain and his party had returned; they, it seems, could get but a very little further N than before. The heat was exceedingly great, the glass being occasionally as high as 150.18 According to the arrangement Flood and Stuart had remained at the last water hole, while the Captain with his favorite Joseph, taking the water cart—for so it was but nothing was effected the Captain returned, leaving Joseph at the water hole while he with Flood and Stuart pushed westward, the country everywhere being desolate sandhills.

They, however, fell upon one little spot which from the surrounding country must have been as an oasis, it was a plain surrounded by sandhills five or six miles in length and one or two in breadth, dotted with stunted gum trees. In this plain terminated a water course, in which they found a small supply.

The unextinguished fires of apparently numerous body of natives were found here.

Numerous bodies of waterfowl were sailing about—some were asleep. Seeing so much game and so unexpectedly, the Doctor eagerly got his gun, and all eager, he let fly amongst a lot. The report not only frightened the ducks, but also two native women, which were encamped in a bend of the creek, unaware of our approach. One of the women began to scream and bellow, the other crawled under a skin dragging a child with her. Being afraid to run, they made a virtue of necessity.

The Doctor was of course rather surprised at the scream, but having made himself familar, and sitting down at their fire, the women became less afraid, and began to talk.

No one can tell the pleasure I felt in again looking upon a strange human face, it being so long since any but our own party having come under my notice.

These women were far from prepossessing even for a native low forehead, sunken (remarkably so) eye, and the hair on their head like a brush. We encamped, and Flood having shot a bird, I speedily secured it, saving the fat for the natives, with which they grease themselves. As the day was closing in, two men with more women and children joined us, and we all together were quite at home. The ducks, and other birds which we had, we gave them; this with the roots they had brought would be a first rate meal for them.

Sitting down as we were all together, the various parts of our dress came under notice. Among other parts, our boots were very wonderful, the mysterious lace—one chap was turning over my foot when I drew up my trowsers and shewed him my leg, and the effect of my thus exposing the color of my unexposed limb, which was tolerably fair, upon one of the females was really laughable–every lineament of her facewas marked with horror.

Shewing them how the lace was unfastened, the fellow who was dandling my foot as if it was a little baby, at once began and drew the lace from every hole. I then made signs to him how it could be pulled off, which with my assistance he did; then came another poser—the sock—did it belong to my veritable body?

On pulling it off, my foot being almost white, this set the woman (who had been eagerly watching every transition, from boot to sock, from sock to foot) to a most fearful scratching of her head, and at the same time crying a lament over me, for it is possible the color which takes place in any of their dead, is not dissimilar to the color which was now presented. The man too for a moment in deep wonder, and as he looked he too scratched his poll, and gave two very decent grunts, he then began to pull the sock on again, but could not manage it.

It getting dark, and being no doubt anxious to get their evening meal, for they were pointing to their birds and at the same time patting their bellies, they were presented with a blanket and knife of which they were highly pleased; not but what they had first rate skins, some of the best I have ever seen, so large and so well prepared. We retired from their fire, and soon were coiled in our blankets, where we had not been long before four of the ladies came and sat themselves down at the Doctor's and Captain's feet. Their visit was obvious, and on being sent away they were solely displeased.

Exploration to the east of The Depot

14th February 1845

The Captain being anxious to determine the course of the creek broke away early, and kept its banks. We found it trending to the south. We found the country very sandy, ridge after ridge intercepting us. We pushed on some seven or eight miles, sometimes almost losing the creek, when it opened out into a very extensive lake, I should imagine eight miles or more in circumference. One is led to conjecture, this is one (of which for what we

know there may be others) of the reservoirs of all the water which flows down so many creeks, yet it now contained not the least water, and was bounded by sand ridges.

In the creek, which retains its character a very considerable distance towards the centre of the lake, we found a species of the melon, growing on a most luxuriant beautiful vine, not in ones and twos but in thousands. Its size was no bigger than the first joint of one's thumb, its taste a most pungent bitter, the facsimile of the water melon in shape. As the course of the creek was lost, the Captain instructed Joe and I to remain while he and Doctor and Flood examined the other parts of the lake.

On again joining us we moved back again to our last water hole, where we found more natives had arrived, they were four men, nine women and six children. One of the men belonged not to this tribe, for he was not circumcised, and had his front tooth extracted. Our horses were a source of great dread to them.

Again we shot them birds, and gave the uncircumcised native a tomahawk, hoping if he belongs to any tribe with whom we may yet be brought in contact this gift might cause a favorable impression on their minds.

The Doctor, having studied the construction of the language of the native generally, detected many words similar to the Darling tribes, which may possibly be of the same meaning. It is supposed we are about 180 miles from the river. We were turned in for the night, and all was quiet, save now and again was heard the talking of the natives, who had removed to the other side of the creek to be away from the horses, when all at once we heard the squalling of the children.

This we thought but little of till we saw a lot of fire sticks approaching us across the creek. What could the natives be up to was the question; it boded no harm was evident by their bringing fire sticks. It was six ladies, who were coming on a visit to us; on their arrival, they quietly placed each their fire stick on our fire, one remaining at it, the other five sitting down one at the foot of each of our blankets. At seeing their motive, they were told to be off to their squalling children.

When they knew we would not let them stop, they abused us as roundly as so many Billingsgate Fish Fags. This act of theirs evidently was through fear, their visit to propitiate, for though so free they were in great awe of us.

11th May 1845

Sunday. A new parrot having visited us this morning six were brought me, with a white hawk. While engaged in skinning under my dray, I heard a strange “cooie”—the dogs were alive in a moment, bounding furiously away towards the place where the sound came from. I hastened across the creek, where I found a poor native defending himself from their fury. As soon as I came to him he threw his arm round my waist for protection, and thus linked to me, I brought him to the marquee.

He is all wonder, and terror; of rather a forbidding countenance. However, after a while he became more composed and assumed rather a homelike look, as if he intended to do justice to our mutton, off which he has most enormously regaled himself.

Towards night, he being afraid of moving far away from his fire on account of the dogs, we supplied him with firewood for the night, as well as some sheep skins.

12th May 1845

Sturt, Doctor and Bob the native belonging to us have gone this morning to the eastern water hole. The strange native is becoming quite at home and comfortable. He gives us to understand his name is Pappas—we hope to be able to make something out of him as to the country ahead.

The Captain returned; he had understood from signs which the natives he fell in with made that no rain would fall for some time. After the Captain had refreshed himself, he exhibited to Pappas an illustrated work of the Natural History of New Holland. The black fellow seemed very pleased at the pictures, and with some

of the illustrations he seemed to be quite familiar, indicative of his knowledge of the originals, especially some sorts of fish.

This has given a fresh impetus to the Captain's opinion of a large body of water before him. The boat to him, from his gestures and signs, seemed for the purpose of traversing the water, which might be in a large body further ahead. He pointed to the WNW, but what almost counteracted the opinion which was thus formed, that when the fellow was directed to the quarter where we knew no large body was, he indicated just the same as towards the point of which we as yet know nothing.

Building the cairn

15th May 1845

Pappas has become fat; he gets crows, hawks and mutton. Although poor Poole is so very ill, he plans out work for us-today we have commenced to build a pyramid on a hill distant about four miles to the NE of the camp. It is to be of stone, twelve feet high and ten feet round the base. Our boots suffer fearfully through the stones which are as so many knives.

16th

Busy rearing the stone work of the pyramid. 11 " oz. of bread per day gives us but little strength to lift stones in their place of 4 and 5 cwt, which has to be done.

17th

Pappas left us this morning; I never saw in so short a time such an improvement in the species (Homo) as is observable in this fellow-his cheeks from being sunk and hollow are

become well filled the paunch of him as protuberant as that of a moderate sized alderman.

We have finished the pyramid; on its SE side we have deposited a bottle, containing our names, the time we have been detained here, the constant absence of danger and alarm, our future destination, when able again to travel

22nd May 1845

Poole gets worse. I should like to be one of the party who will be appointed to return with him, for it is not the inconvenience or danger of our position, but the sad and sickening association which makes me long again for my much loved home and the dear beings who constitute its charm. Contemplating my further absence, the Husband and the Father are rife within me, how dearly shall I value my privileges when I shall be restored to their enjoyment. My companions are most of them shut out from the holy associations of women, and vent their hate to those who are thus blessed by traducing them, thinking they are swayed only by passion and lust—they little know the depth of woman's purity.

The black boy as usual had this morning taken out the sheep. Hour after hour passed on over the usual time of his return, but Tampiwam did not come home.

Parties were sent after him, and when he was found he was up the creek, the sheep coiling around him, and the poor lad was amusing himself with making womeras.

I have often thought of the black fellow Pappas who last visited us. He with his tribe must have water somewhere. When the Captain was returning home from his last trip, the tracks of black fellows were Pappas might have been one; never having seen a horse the observed running the tracks of the horses. impression of its hoof would surprise him; it is possible his curiosity led him to follow it up to ascertain what sort of beast it could be; in doing so, before he was aware, he was on our encampment, and was prevented from stealing away unobserved, by getting surrounded by our dogs. If when he did leave us he could have been tracked, we might have fallen in with water and perhaps we might have pushed ahead – as it

Departure from The Depot,

26th July 1845

Where is the creek is the question; strange in so short a distance they should be thus hobbled. Flood and Stuart were sent off to scour the country in search of it-we remained in camp. As evening drew we heard the “cooie” of the native but he kept away. It must now be their hunting season; we observe continually their tracks. Having water everywhere, they are not confined to the locality of a single water hole. Flood and Stuart returned but have not found the creek.

27th

Yesterday we again entered the Province of South Australia so they say. We are to remain stationary, until the creek is found; the Captain and Flood started early in search of it. Did I not know that the eye of the Lord is over me, I should feel very uncomfortable, for these discrepancies in Sturt's calculations induce distrust.

At last the creek is found—but where? Just 30 miles to the westward of the point which was determined for us to make— a longitudinal error of 30 miles, in a latitudinal distance of 60 miles.

1st August 1845

Friday. We have chained 46 miles from last Monday. No perfect picture can be conveyed to the mind of the desolateness all around us, sand ridges and hollows. With the heavy chain we have often to wade up to our knees in a liquefied mud sufficiently consistent to make it like pulling up a50 lb. weight at each foot. Very little timber, it being either a stunted acacia or the prickly spinifex. A break in the scene was the sight of an unknown but most beautiful flower, strange to me. Although in full bloom it was a beautiful green color.

Also we disturbed some natives. There were three; two succeeded in getting away, but the third did not. They were dreadfully frightened, however, the one who remained with us soon became familiar, and on our bringing up for the night he encamped very near us. After some time the other two runaways joined him, they really are apparently very civil nice sort of folks—rather well made men.

They were curious and full of surprise. I had my belt and pouch round my waist; they wanted sadly to examine it; on my unbuckling the belt and opening the pouch, the book which it contained at once drew forth an exclamation. My little Bible was handled by them with the greatest care, the turning over the leaves took their fancy most wonderfully, as did a little bit of green leather. When one had satisfied himself, the other overhauled it.

Whenever will these benighted tribes be brought out of their awful mental darkness, and be able to appreciate the blessings of the Gospel? I dare not say never—for God's word forbids it-but their condition staggers one-that ever such a consummation can be. These men are on a hunting expedition, their bags filled with jeboas and bandicoots. One man actually

ate 70 Jeboas before he left off, just flinging them on the fire, and burning off the fur, and giving them a squeeze, they were deposited in the mouth, and as soon as it was disposed of another was ready.

2nd August 1845

Today eight more natives joined us. At first they would not come near us; the Captain rode towards them-that made matters worse, but on his dismounting and seating himself they at once came up and sat down too. The horse was however removed some distance-

they dread our horses more by far than they do us. A knife was offered them, which after some considerable degree of hesitancy they accepted.

Return to the previous general camp (Fort Grey)

15th August 1845

This creek flows in from the eastward, rising in a range running north. Although the soil is sand, and most probably would grow no one vegetable, it is as much an oasis as can be found in any desert in Africa. Two natives came to the camp, they were very good looking friendly fellows. One of them had an English tomahawk, worn nearly to the eye they must have obtained this through either Mr. Eyre or Captain Frome, who presented it to some tribe they fell in with in making Mt.Hopeless. Very few birds are seen. My occupation is gone and I get kicked.

21st August 1845

Engaged in cutting logs for the stockade and minding the sheep. A native visited us with his wife and two children, the youngest being no more than six weeks old. The mother was far from being bad looking. The man has been before at the camp; the poor fellow seemed very proud of his youngest child, it was a boy. We gave him some mutton fat, and he soon was very busy in reducing it in the frying pan and regaling himself and his wife with the hot fat. We observed with this family a small supply of seed, on which they must so much subsist. It has an acrid taste. They prepare it by dropping three or four seeds at a time from their hand upon a small stone, and smashing it with another stone into a semi flour, it is surprising how quickly they effect this with so small an apparatus. It may be occasionally mixed with water and cooked on the fire. Among the game he had caught during the day was a beautiful animal, in some respects like the "Jeboa" but several times larger, and having a long snout. Mitchell secured one, and represents it in his work with a stumped tail, whereas it has a very long tail, finished at its tip with fine bristles, as feathers grow on the quill. Sturt has been very anxious to get hold of this animal. I nicely secured it.

24th August 1845

Sunday. A few hours of rain – we hoped it would have been of longer continuance, so that Sturt might receive the benefit of it. If the same country continues over which he will have to pass, I question much if he will have a full supply of water, or even sufficient for his purpose. We observe all round us, where we found water on our first coming here, a very rapid disappearance.

Natives in ones and twos visit us but we have but little to give them to eat. Today two young fellows came in to the camp, the best made men I have ever seen since I have left the Darling; they were small but so full of action, eyes remarkably bright and restless

This evening as usual the Church service was read. What a system is Church of Englandism, that such offshoots of solemn mockery are by it recognized—Papistry is before this!

15th September 1845

During the day several natives visited us but did not remain long. Killed an emu, the bird was very fat, which fat we tried down and got a quantity of oil. It is only at certain seasons of the year any fat is found on them at all. When it begins to get secreted, the bird soon becomes so fat that when rendered down it amounts to two or three gallons of oil. It is very valuable. Mr. Stuart very unamiable.

16th September 1845

Again visited by natives. On their—leaving us we observed a bulkiness in the covering of one of them, which induced us to suspect they had stolen some of our clothing. It was indeed one of our jackets. The fellow gave it up without imagining perhaps he had done wrong.

30th September 1845

Today several natives visited us, some of them we have seen here before. They are remarkably keen and active, so much so they managed to secure a blanket on leaving us, they must have done it very adroitly as we ever keep a look out when thus visited that we lose nothing. A very little rain fell.

5th October 1845

Sunday. The Church Service read, during which three natives visited the camp—one of them we suspected to have been the thief who stole the blanket. He was given to understand, if he did not bring back the blanket the next time he was seen, he would be shot. He was very mute and quiet.

The Captain is very much cut up that he did not succeed in reaching the desired point-so much so, that he determines to go again. The Doctor has been trying to dissuade him, but to no purpose. There is no one who feels more devoted to Sturt than the Doctor, and was there any chance of success he would be the last man to throw any obstacles in the way.

6th October 1845

Today the blacks returned bringing with them the lost blanket, giving us to understand the thief had been punished for his roguery, they saying he was knocked down twice with a waddie, but they are so able to detect things that are pleasing or otherwise to us, that I believe this is a positive lie. The Captain ordered the thief a knife for bringing it back, no sooner receiving which all his dullness vanished, and he resumed all that liveliness which before the theft he had been so remarkable for possessing.

9th October 1845

Three natives came to the camp, one man with two females, the man we knew having been frequently at the camp before. The women were strangers. The one was an

extremely old lady, quite grey headed and I must say one of the most ugly old women I ever saw. The other was her daughter; though you could trace in many points a likeness, yet she was as positively good looking.

She was the handsomest woman I have ever seen in any one of the districts I have ever visited since I landed on the shores of New Holland. They did not stay long, but ere they went the Doctor ordered the male sheep to be killed, part of which was given to them, and the promise of the whole if they liked to come again and fetch it, but the natives appear just now, all of those who visit the camp, to be in good condition which no doubt they will be as long as the waters last, for they now can traverse these wastes anywhere, and jeboas, wallaby, dipus and other game are found in abundance. They no doubt this part of the year live principally on flesh. When, from the want of water, they are tied to one or more localities, seed must constitute their principal food. With the natives here with whom we have been brought in contact a very pleasing difference is observed, from those we fall in with to the east of the late Depot—these natives manifest much care and attention to their wives and children.

There is even a spirit of jealousy lest other intercourse than what should be, should exist between ourselves and their families. In the character of their food they are very particular. If such should be in the least tainted or fly blown, they throw it away, and on receiving anything from us, they

13th November 1845

Today a female native and two children were observed hanging about the camp, wanting to come to the water, but afraid. On coming up to her, she made the usual sign for water, which is the throwing an open hand to the mouth. This poor thing was dreadfully exhausted, as were the children. We brought them down and supplied the poor thing with what food

we could spare, and having filled two skins with water for her husband, who would he too lazy or too frightened to come near us, she pushed off, lugging one of the children at her back, for the poor little thing through walking had become footsore.

The main group return to Depot Glen and wait for Sturt to return from the interior.

Soon after he struggles back to The Depot the expedition retreat begins.

17th November 1845

Our surprise was great, our pleasure greater-the Captain today returned—but it was with extreme difficulty. The scurvy has laid hold of him, most fearfully. This journey of his has, I suppose, been a desperate affair. He has discovered a large creek – he followed it up more than a 100 miles, when it became indistinct. Large, immensely large plains opened out,

over which, through the rottenness of the ground, he could not travel. The waters of this creek, when running, pass over those immense flats which Sturt crossed on his previous journey. A very numerous body of natives dwell on this water. They were extremely kind. This creek is the only thing of note to be observed on this journey. Coopers Creek.

Floods Creek area on the return journey

13th December 1845

Very little water is where we have camped, but there is more further up – but we cannot take the drays nigher to it. We just rested about an hour or so, we then took the cattle and sheep to where the water was more plentiful, distant about three miles. In passing up the creek a numerous body of natives were on the heights above us, they kept up a long shout, but appeared friendly. When I got to the water, I availed myself of it and got some of the accumulated dirt from my body, for travelling in this country as we are travelling is no joke. My duties calling me to the camp I returned home from the water. As I was pushing down the creek I observed the natives drawn up before me. If they were so minded, they could have sorely bothered me, for I was perfectly in their power. I however walked up to them; they received me very kindly, and by signs begged to know if I would permit them to attend me to the camp, which I most graciously permitted. They were a stiff made lot of

fellows. My dog Serjy happened to put his nose to a rat hole, he began at once to dig away at his usual ferocious rate. This caused the poor fellows high delight. One of them had a dog on his shoulder, Master Serjy no sooner perceived this gentleman placed on the ground than he pinned him by the throat.

He took it to be what it appeared, a wild dog. It was with great difficulty I could cause him to loose his hold. I almost feared the consequences; the native who owned the dog might revenge the attack on myself, but it turned out contrariwise, they saw what command I had over the ferocious Serjy, and it filled them with wonder.

Barrier Ranges

15th December

It being desirous to ascertain the nature of this creek, this morning the Doctor with myself, instead of accompanying the drays, started, instead of going over the range, to follow the bed of the creek, through the range. It was terrific work, the Doctor having two horses, and I had the sheep. It was a continuous mass of broken rock in the creek, and the sides stood up as walls on either hand.

It was wild scenery, wild as the wildest ever depicted by a writer of romance. What gave an interest to the scene, was the presence of that rare and beautiful animal known as the "Rock Wallaby." One jumped from before me, it appeared to have an iron grey back, black breast and a long sweeping tail. So rare are these animals, but few have ever yet been secured either dead or alive. We saw three who had become disturbed by us spring to the face of a precipice overlaying us, and how they could find a footing to spring as they did up its smooth face we could not account, but up they were, in less than no time, it was most astonishing. We at last broke through the range, and soon joined the drays, who were encamped on the creek which we had been running up.

In this creek we found a native fruit, a small berry. I gathered a great quantity. They proved highly acceptable to Sturt, who is becoming hourly worse. In the creek we passed a good deal of water, but most of it was salt. However, within a mile of the camp we found enough for our use, and within three miles sufficient for our cattle. Flood had been instructed to push ahead, to ascertain about the water.

17th December 1845

This morning Flood returned, he had found below our old camp, "Piesse's Nob," as we had called it, a little water. We started, it was a long and tedious journey, and it was not till daybreak on the 18th we reached the supply. It was brackish.

We disturbed a tribe of natives but they were very friendly; their friendship went beyond all legitimate bounds. We killed them a sheep.

Darling River

25th December Christmas day

We fell in with the natives whose faces we so well remember – especially the old man with so fine a head and countenance, who gave Sturt the head dress when we were encamped here the last time.

Murray River

6th January 1846

We made the Murray. We expected to fall in with old Nitebook, but a native told us he would fetch him. This native was the man who had speared Robinson, in the encounter on the "Rufus," a scene which I have before referred to, though at the time I did not mention that the man who wounded Robinson was eventually secured, desperately wounded, having no less than five ball wounds.

The poor fellow was heavily ironed and fastened on a dray and taken into town. During this journey he was inhumanly treated, and a deed of daring done by this poor black is worthy of record, which was this: as the dray on which he had been fastened (for the lashings were at the time insecure) was passing upon the verge of the cliff overhanging the river, he quietly threw himself off, irons and all from the dray, and plunged into the river below, and would have escaped, but a native female betrayed him as he was secreted in a thick belt, of rushes, growing at some distance on the banks.

This morning he was telling us all about it and shewed us the ball wounds in the different parts of his body, and emphatically referred to Mr. Eyre as the man who had caused him to love the white fellow. During the day "Tuando" and Nitebook joined us.

28th January 1846

Arrived home

Dr John Harris Browne's Journal of the Sturt Expedition.

The following references to Aboriginal people were made by John Browne and relate to those observed in the area north of Flood's Creek through to the Cooper Creek area. Browne mentions how many people may have been in the various groups, the huts and villages that they constructed, and their diets, including the grains harvested and small mammals hunted for food.

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Since we left the hills called the "Bluff" or the distant range Mr. Poole had seen during his first trip, we had not any Natives about us, altho' a few have been seen from time [to time] by detached parties or the men when out looking for cattle. I have not seen any myself during the last trip with Captn. S[turt]. Having encamped late one night in a Gully without water, the next morning we left at daybreak, and about 8 o'clock were led to a water-hole by watching the flights of Pigeons all going in one direction. On the opposite side of this water was a Natives' camp from which they had run away as they saw us coming towards them, leaving their fire and some of their weapons. The following day about 10 miles lower down this creek we started them again. The country being scrubby we got very near them before they saw us, but we did not see them as the place was surrounded by thick scrub. This time they left everything behind them, Weapons, cloaks, Stone Tomahawks, nets &c. We examined all these and then Captn. S[turt] gave me a Knife which I tied to a Spear and stuck up in the ground thinking that this would show them we did not wish to hurt them. Three days after we were forced to return to this place for water as we could not find any further on. Immediately after our arrival I stole quietly over to the camp expecting to find the natives. I found the Spear and Knife untouched, and so frightened were they that they had left a Rug, a Tomahawk and several Boomerangs which happened to be at the door of the hut where I had left the Knife. All the other things were taken away. At this season of the year these Natives live principally on seeds both of the Acacias and Grasses. We saw some of these parched and prepared at this hut and in several different places spots where they had been thrashing and winnowing Grass and Acacia seed. They also eat the seeds of a small bean like the French "Haricot" which grows abundantly on the banks of the Creek. In going down the "Red hill creek" Mr. Poole [and] his party met with a tribe about 60 in number engaged in collecting Grass seeds. They behaved very civily to him, but he could not induce them to come to the camp. He described them as being small, well made and good looking. They had no clothing or arms, but were all living on the seeds of a kind of Rice which grew abundantly on the flooded lands near the creeks. A short time after this three of the men met about 12 Natives a few miles from the camp and shot an Emu for them but could not induce them to accompany them to the Camp.

They build their huts here in a much superior style-they are really very comfortable. They are circular, about 8 or 10 ft in diameter, 4 ft high in the centre. They are made of poles as thick as a man's wrist, all put one end in the ground, the others meeting in a line at

the top. These sticks are put about 4 inches apart and covered thickly with grass and over this a thick layer [of] earth is thrown and plastered down. A small hole is left for the door, to enter which it is necessary to kneel down and crawl in. The floor inside is kept very clean, the fire being made at the door. Round the hut and fire place they dig a trench to lead off the water. Each hut will hold about 6 persons. At one camp I counted 23 of these, all in good preservation. Close by each large hut there is a small one constructed apparently with more care. It is perhaps intended to hold their nets &c. It is generally about four feet long and a foot or 1 _ ft high.

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March 12th. [sic] Captn. Sturt being anxious to examine the country to the East of our camp, he and I accompanied by three men left the camp. We took the spring cart and the water kegs. We went the first day down the creek 33 miles and found a large pond of water at which were an immense number of Cockatoos of a new kind. Of these I killed five at a shot and got them stuffed. The next day we followed the creek about 2 miles lower down and found that it lost itself on the plains. The plains here were extensive [sic], tolerably good soil and better grassed than the country generally. All these plains are covered with water during winter and intersected with channels which are backwaters from the main creeks and in this way we found all the creeks terminate. They are but little above the level of the sea, if not on a level with it. We continued our journey and found another creek about 8 miles South of the last in which there was a good pond of water. Here, whilst going up the creek to shoot some ducks for supper, I found a native woman and child. She screamed lustily and was terribly frightened at first, but I gave her some Cockatoos I had shot and roasted one for her at her fire, when she became reassured and went away to some scrub near[by] and presently returned with five more women and a lot of children. I took them down to Captn. Sturt who was encamped below. We gave them some Ducks and Sugar. In the evening their two, husbands came to them, to whom Captn. S[turt] gave a Blanket and a Knife. Each of these poor devils had three wives, nearly as big as himself, for they were small people and very thin. They live almost entirely on the seeds of the Acacias and Grasses, also a kind of Mysembryanthemum, and the seeds of the dwarf box tree. They made their fires and slept about 200 yards from us. They speak the same language as the Darling natives, use the Bommerang [sic] and wooden shield, but I did not see a throwing stick with them. Men and women went entirely naked although two of the ladies to whom I gave a piece of red tape immediately bound it round their snowy brows. They had also stone hatchets with them, but their implements, weapons, nets and clothing were the worst I have ever seen. The women had collected a quantity of roots-a kind of Vetch17 . These they cooked in this way. They dug a hole in the ground and made a good fire in it. In about an hour they covered up the fire with earth out of the hole. On this they laid a quantity of grass and over this the roots, the quantity belonging to each individual being separated by a thin layer of grass. They put grass over the roots and then poured about 3 gallons of water over the whole and covered all up with sand. The roots were thus cooked by steam and in about an hour were well done. I tasted them and found them very good and full of Starch. They must be very nutritious.

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The Natives of the Murray and Darling cook Cress, the roots of the Indigo and several vegetables in this way, which is both clean and expeditious compared with their other methods of cooking. These natives behaved very well and told us there was no water to the Eastward. The next day, however, we tried to get on in that direction and found the Lake that Mr. Poole and I had seen before at a great distance. It was now quite dry. In its bed I found a small Melon covered with fruit about the size of a nut, as bitter as Colocynth. At night we were obliged to make back to the last water. We found two more men and five women had joined the Natives we had left there. One of these was a talkative old fellow. He told us again there was no water to the East and that himself had come from that direction because it was all dried up. We gave him a Tomahawk. We remained all night at this place and the next day went across to a creek about 8 miles from where we had found water two days before. From this point Captn. S[turt] proposed trying to get to the Eastward some 50 miles from this position. I felt satisfied from what the Natives had said that there was no water, as I understood sufficient of their language for that. We had two natives of the Darling with us for some months and I learnt a good many words from them. We started next morning, taking with us 40 Gallons of water in the cart. This was to be carried one day's journey, about 20 miles for the Saddle horses, and then return to the creek and come back to the same spot with another load for us on our return. We travelled till two p.m., when we came to the dry bed of a large lake about 5 miles wide and 15 miles long. Here we stopped for the night. Today in crossing the Scrub, I saw a Native on a Sandhill and went towards him and shouted. He ran off directly he saw me and although I galloped after him he managed to hide in the scrub and I could not find him.

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The Natives never stop with us. Four men came to the camp some days ago but went off the same day, although they were well fed with mutton. The Sheep are doing well and do not decrease in weight. The wool on them is about equal to 4 months' growth on sheep about Adelaide. It [is] now 10 months since they were shorn. I am sure they have not 2 Ibs of wool each. It would appear from this that the great heat of summer checked its growth, or perhaps that although these barren pastures they have had made them fat it would not tend to produce wool as much as rich and good herbage. The sheep have been very fat since November and have rather improved than diminished up to this time. The Nomad life seems to agree particularly with them and I think the best plan of fattening a flock [of] Wethers would be to send some men with them and a covered cart about such parts of the plains as could not be occupied in any other way, and let them remain a few weeks in any one place and then remove to another. In this manner 2000 sheep would fatten in one flock and that, too, in a very short time, and without injuring runs that might be made serviceable at least a part of the summer.

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We saw a good many Natives, both on going out and returning. They had come from some place to hunt for small animals in this desert-no desert to them for it abounds in Jerboas, Talporoos and Wallaby. The Jerboa is [a] beautiful little animal about as big [as] a large mouse but formed like a Kangaroo with a very long tail with a brush at the end. They are very numerous. I counted those one man had in his bag after he had been eating of them for at least half an hour, he had still 170 left. They throw them into the hot ashes and eat fur and indeed every part of them except the brush of the tail and the lower jaw. We have four alive. These form their principal food at this time as all the Natives had some with them or the sticks they use for poking them out of their holes in which they [live] in large families. They make a large nest in the ground and into this they have several holes leading. The blackfellow throws a long elastic stick down one of these into the nest which he soon pokes to pieces. The poor little Jerboas come out at the other holes and he knocks them down with a long stick or his Waddy.

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We got back to the Camp on the 12th August. This had been established at the mouth of a Creek Captn. Sturt had found in February. It is in reality the dry bed of a Fresh water Lake as all around its banks and on the trees themselves which grow on it are marks of water several feet up their trunks. It is a pretty place enough and like the flooded Vallies of the Darling and Murray is at present covered with Grass and with a Clover which also grows on the Darling. Of this Clover the Natives eat an immense deal. Captn. Sturt and I stopped at the Camp two days and on August 14th we started for the Northwest, accompanied with 3 men. We took 10 Horses and 15 weeks provisions on the Spring Cart, and leaving Mr. Stuart in charge of the Camp, we struck off on a North West course from the Camp. We had to rely for our supply of water on the late rains which had now fallen a month ago. Most of the broad but shallow puddles such as had served us for our Lake Torrens trip were dried up or had become so thick from being constantly agitated by the wind as to be unfit for use. The first day we travelled over the usual Sandhills and flats and by night having travelled about 23 miles had cleared the scrub. We stopped for the night not finding water.

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We saw Natives every day or two, but not in any great number. They were always very much frightened and would not let us within 3 or 4 yards of them. Both the men and Women had the two front teeth of the upper Jaw knocked out which disfigured them a great deal. They were tolerably fine people. They live principally on Seeds of the different Grasses and of the Aquatic plant which are so numerous on the flooded plains. I saw one family with at least two Bushels of these collected. They crush them between two stones and eat them. They are not very nice. They have Boomerangs, wooden shields, and Stone Tomahawks, but most of their tools and weapons are very rough.

Settlement

NSW - European occupation

European land settlement commenced in NSW in 1788 when Governor Phillip claimed possession of the land for a penal colony on behalf of the British Government. The historic accounts of the bioregional areas are diverse and detailed in the bioregional overviews. Further information on the European occupation of the Western Division bioregions is provided below.

Non-Aboriginal occupation of the Western Division

(This section is largely based on HO and DUAP 1996: Chapter 16 of Regional Histories of New South Wales.)

Charles Sturt approached western NSW from South Australia in 1829, returning in the 1840s, while Thomas Mitchell approached from the north-east in 1835 (HO and DUAP 1996). The intensification of the squatting era in the 1840s occurred after squatters followed in the path of the explorers of the previous decade. Squatting continued until nearly 1900 (Denny 1994).

The route often taken by overlanders, from the Namoi south to the Murray via the Barwon and Darling, required regular supplies and this prompted the birth of several small towns along the way (HO and DUAP 1996). By the mid-1840s, river frontages on the western section of the Murray and the lower Darling supported several pastoral stations. Aiding the development of these towns, the Commissioner of Crown Lands held offices first at Balranald in the late 1840s and later at Euston after 1853 (HO and DUAP 1996).

East of Bourke along the Upper Darling, settlement spread in the 1840s from the pastoral regions already established in the east, towards the west and north-west along the Bogan, Castlereagh, Namoi and Gwydir Rivers of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion (HO and DUAP 1996).

The best grazing land was occupied along the Barwon and Mooni Rivers by 1850 and by 1859 on the east bank of the Warrego River and along the rivers up to and beyond the Queensland border. The arid area between the Culgoa and Warrego Rivers became occupied during the "land boom" of the early 1860s (HO and DUAP 1996).

Cattle remained the most significant element of the pastoral industry up to 1860. Sheep were present but were consistently outnumbered by cattle and since it appeared they could subsist on smaller land areas per head, were allocated much less land than cattle. While cattle comprised the dominant industry of the time, wool production was of significance in the 1850s, with local Aborigines an important part of this industry, using canoes to ferry wool across the Murray.

Steamboats began operating on the Murray in 1853 and their range was extended to the Darling in 1859. Although the Darling had been relatively ephemeral in the past, it was unusually full from this time and allowed riverboats to travel as far upstream as

Brewarrina and beyond. Riverboats were known even to reach Queensland from the Darling via the Paroo River during times of flood.

Wool was transported to the Victorian town of Echuca, where the riverboat route linked with the Victorian railway, and also by riverboat to Goolwa in South Australia. When the railway from Sydney reached the upper Darling in 1885, riverboats turned instead to Bourke and thus this town became an important destination for trade, continuing as the destination for wool trade until 1931 (HO and DUAP 1996).

The riverboat trade – and the movement of cattle overland before this – led to the development of several towns along the major rivers of the Western Division during the 1850s and 1860s. The Murrumbidgee saw the settlement of Balranald (gazetted in 1851), Hay (1859) and Maude (1861) in the Riverina Bioregion; Wentworth (1859) in the Riverina Bioregion and Menindee (1863) sprang up on the lower Darling in the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion along with Wilcannia (1866) on the central Darling.

The settlement of the towns of Walgett, Bourke, Brewarrina and Collarenebri occurred on the upper Darling and Barwon in the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion from the late 1850s to mid 1860s. All of these towns remained fairly small even with the booming riverboat trade.

Like Aboriginal people before them, the new settlers were reluctant to inhabit vast areas of the Western Division away from the major rivers, due to unreliable access to water. Dams were attempted but were not often an option as the western plains lacked the rock formations offered by the land to farmers in the east (HO and DUAP 1996).

In the north of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion, attempts were made around 1873 to dam the Narran River, but the river rebelled, refused orders to desist and within a few years had found an alternative route, defiantly bypassing the dammed section.

Other elements of the landscape were not so assertive, or had no escape from the control imposed by the settlers. For example, the red soils characteristic of the west quickly succumbed to trampling and compaction by grazing animals (HO and DUAP 1996). Graziers in the Bokhara River channel country near the Queensland border saw this change to the land favourably as it meant rainfall runoff reached the channels more readily. However, the improved flow in the channels wasted a lot of water and, ironically, compaction inhibited the growth of feed for the very stock that had trampled it in the first place.

Groundwater was available to some stations such as Kinchega station around Menindee Lakes in the lower Darling, which had access to the overflow lakes and flood channels near the Darling. The availability of water allowed the station to support around 143,000 sheep on 400,000 hectares in the 1880s and the station employed many of the Barkindji people as shepherds (HO and DUAP 1996). Control of the water resources of the area allowed transportation of wool bales by water to the Darling.

The late 19th century brought innovations which helped to solve the water problem of the west. Wells were sunk in the 1860s along the stock route between the Darling and the Lachlan by the Public Works Department, which also made gradual improvements to water facilities in the far west. Graziers also sunk wells but salinity always caused

problems: five out of six wells sunk on the western plains in the 1880s reached salt water at less than a depth of 30 m (HO and DUAP 1996).

The discovery of an extensive underground catchment – the Great Artesian Basin – near Bourke around 1878, led to changes in the access to and use of water. From then on this vast water resource deep underground could be used for watering stock and, along the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee where the water was less saline, for irrigation (HO and DUAP 1996).

The artesian bores were particularly important resources from the 1880s to the graziers and overlanders in the west. The government sank bores from Bourke west through the Mulga Lands Bioregion to Wanaaring on the Paroo (HO and DUAP 1996). Across the west graziers sank private bores throughout the 1880s although, as happened with ordinary wells, these did not always yield bore-water. By 1895, this widespread bore sinking led the Pastoral Review to publish a regular column titled "Boring Notes".

This reliable and seemingly unlimited water source changed the settlement of the west, giving landholders and industry the confidence to expand. In fact, this access to water in the far west enabled the significant mineral discoveries of the corner country at Tibooburra, Milparinka and of course, Broken Hill (HO and DUAP 1996).

By 1910 there were 364 artesian bores in NSW, which every day harnessed about 500 million litres of water from the Basin. Since then, the number of bores has increased although the total amount of water flowing has progressively decreased, falling by 35 per cent between 1915 and 1958 (HO and DUAP 1996). In the north, where the water is least saline, the Basin still provides the water supplies for the towns of Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

The discovery and exploitation of the Great Artesian Basin, although an immense advantage for the graziers of the west, spelt trouble for the landscape. Access to so much water encouraged overstocking, and just prior to the devastating drought of the 1890s, the western plains supported about 15 million sheep. Sandstorms intensified by erosion due to overstocking caused silt to block tanks and channels.

This increased the expenses of installation and maintenance of the bores and drained the economic resources of local graziers (HO and DUAP 1996). Rabbits, encouraged by the plentiful water supply, ran rampant in the west, competing with the stock for food. By 1902 sheep numbers on the western plains had dropped to five million, one-third of their former magnitude.

The Western Division, as well as its Central and Eastern counterparts, was a creation of the Crown Lands Act, 1884. Economic and social collapse during the drought and recession of the 1890s (Cambell 1994) prompted a Royal Commission into the Western Division which repealed the Crown Lands Act and conceived the Western Lands Act, 1901.

The aim of the Western Lands Act was to manage and control the western land resource, and included the creation of a lease system to enable rural and urban development in the Western Division of NSW. This established a system of leasing and administering land that was more relevant to the western landscape than land management undertaken previously in the Western Division.

Most of the land in the Division is held under perpetual leasehold as Western Lands Leases from the Crown for the purpose of grazing, with some small areas held under Special Leases for agriculture, freehold or in reserves (Cambell 1994, Hyder Consulting 1999). The Act does not apply to freehold land in the Western Division.

Since its inception, the Act has undergone several reviews designed to re-evaluate its direction and implement improvements to its functionality, the most recent being in 1999 (Hyder Consulting 1999).

The Western Division of NSW covers around 32,500,000 hectares or 42 per cent of the State (Hyder Consulting 1999). The boundary of the Division traverses the Darling Riverine Plains, Cobar Peneplain, Riverina and Murray Darling Depression Bioregions. The Western Division boundary has mainly leasehold lands to the west and freehold lands to the east and this results in fairly significant differences in the management and subsequent condition of land on either side of the boundary.

The Central Division lands to the east have been extensively cleared and intensely cultivated compared to the Western Division lands (Masters and Foster 2000). Dryland and irrigated agriculture has become more common in recent years, particularly along the rivers of the Western Division (Hyder Consulting 1999).

The landscapes of the Western Division are diverse, having adapted to the semi-arid climate of high summer temperatures coupled with low and irregular rainfall. Inappropriate land management of the Western Division in the past has led to degraded habitats and loss of species (Hyder Consulting 1999).

In 1996 the population of the Western Division was 52,830, a figure which had declined by more that 5,000 in the preceding 15 years, a loss attributed mainly to the decline of mining in the Broken Hill area. However during this time, the Aboriginal population had increased by about 65 per cent to around 5,000 (Hyder Consulting 1999).

The most recent Western Lands Review was established to "identify issues impacting on long term sustainable management and recommend actions to enhance such management" as well as to "resolve land administration problems and to develop greater flexibility in rural land use" in the Western Division (Hyder Consulting 1999).

Robert Hamilton Mathews was born in 1841 at Narellan, New South Wales. After Qualifying as a licensed surveyor in 1870, he spent twenty years surveying northern New South Wales and was based initially in the New England region and, later, in Singleton. In 1889 he moved to Parramatta where he acted as deputy coroner and wrote Handbook to magisterial inquiries and coroners' inquests, which was issued in several editions. During the time he spent surveying in northern New South Wales he developed an interest in traditional Aboriginal life and customs, an interest which he pursued with vigour after his retirement from surveying in the early 1890s. For the next twenty years he researched and wrote on the social life, customs and languages of various Aboriginal tribes from all Australia. During this time he travelled widely, interviewing informants and conducting field research, and he corresponded extensively with a large number of amateur anthropologists. Between 1890 and 1910 he published over 150 articles on the Australian Aborigines in Australian and overseas anthropological and scientific journals. He had planned to produce a single large scale work on the Australian Aborigines, but this was not completed when he died at Parramatta in 1918. R.H Mathews as the father of the ornithologist Gregory Mathews.

In the late 1890s and the early years of the new century, Mathews despatched numerous letters to local police and pastoralists seeking information about Aboriginal matters particularly relating to class and moiety divisions, ceremonial types and in relation to artefacts including stones which served some ritual purpose, probably relating to grave sites.

On 4.11.1898, Mathew's correspondent from Bourke, James Miller, relayed information from a man named Possum, who provided that 'the Muckwarra and Kilpara classes commenced somewhere about Dunlop Station near Louth – 10 miles up the river from Louth - and extends down the river below Menindee. Possum says right down to Wentworth or even further. From the river Darling west or north west the Kilpara and Muckwarra extend to Tibooburra whence they merge into whatever class adjoins them'. Miller himself comments that he could not confirm that the boundary lay at Dunlop because there appeared to be Muckwarra and Kilpara on this side of Dunlop and Ippai and Kumbo and Murri and Kabbi on the other side, 'The Muckwarra and Kilpara extend east from the Darling out towards Cobar and Byrock, there being Muckwarra and Kilparra at both Cobar and Byrock.

A. Lewis Louth November 1898

From Windbar Station to Gundabooka they speak Koornoo – Windbar is 15 miles below Louth Gundabooka 35 miles above. From Windbar down to Wilcannia they speak Unelgo this tribe crosses over the river and joins the lower Paroo tribe. Unelgo man making ceremony Warrapunyah.

In 1884 1885 Mathews was in Silverton. He attended to magisterial duties in the local court and surveying work in surrounding areas, as well, it seems, as researching and putting his name to a number of blocks, possibly of interest in relation to the potential for bearing silver.

Chas Vain advised Mathews in a 11.10.98 letter that the people about Tarrowangee where he was stationed, were divided into Muckwarra and Kilpara classes. He said None of the Blacks here known anything about the Blacks at Lake Boolka.

On 25.3.98 Chas Vain wrote that there was only one tribe in his district and that it was known as the Poolamacca tribe. He also noted that the people did not 'go in for any penis splitting or any of that sort of thing. Mostly all the blacks have died out . There are only a few scattered about working on Stations and their ways are more like white people.

Another of Mathews correspondents was D. Maclean of Yantara. He wrote to Mathews on 20.12.1901. When at Tilcha Station I took some interest in black's language and customs but never enquired into such minute particulars as you ask for. About here there is a considerable difference from the dialect used in Tilcha though less than 100 miles apart.

Maclean 2.3.1902

One of the changes that have taken place in the blacks is that they stick as much to water places as whites. When I first had much to do with them they would travel long distances in drought time and get all the water they required from needle-bush roots – now they never attempt that around here. They are steadily decreasing in numbers and few children among them – the older men getting more and more disinterested for work and civilized into loafing about townships for tucker and grog.

About two years ago a big mob here had a series of corroborees which required months of preparation, some of the series were old tribal rites which the younger generation of blacks had not seen before and an elderly blackfellow (belonging to Yantara country) told me he had only seen twice before in his life. They will probably never be repeated about here and I rather regret not having taken full notes and descriptions of the proceedings.

16.10.1902 Maclean

No blacks trouble to come this way – several of those who used to patronise Yantara are at Yancannia and Salisbury – There was a fair camp of them at Cobham, but Cobham Lake is dry and they have scattered.

Some of the old blacks about here used to profess 'rain-making', but they seem to have retired from the profession now.

23.4.1910

A blackfellow working here gives the local name of the widow's caps poornquoo and says they are made of emu sinews, possum hair and copi.

Constable Nolan White Cliffs 10.4.98

Only 4 or 5 Aborigines in the whole of this station patrol district, which extends over a large area of country at present these aborigines are somewhere on Yancannia Station.

There are a number (about 25) aborigines generally about Poolamacca Station (J.W. Brougham Esq Manager and part owner) Tarrowangee (Postlown??) and also at Mundi Mundi Station.

There are also about 30 aborigines in the Milparinka Police Patrol District (Senior Constable Wood)

Constable B.Hynes Police station Tibooburra 28.5.98

There are 2 classes of blacks in this district viz Kilpara and Muckwarra. The Blacks about Yancannia, Momba and Morden are called Wanyabulka. Tibooburra and Bulloo Downs are called Coongatoocha. Depot Glen, Cobham Lake, Milparinka and Yantara are called Mullyuppa. The Innamincka Blacks are called Yanderawanda. The Tilcha Blacks are called Berluppa and the Thargomindah QL are called Cullilly.

The Blacks in these parts circumcise their young but very few splits the penis. There is one at Tilcha. They split the penis more west toward Blackwater in South Australia. And it appears they split the penis in the very dry parts such as Northern Territory SA.

B. Hynes Tibooburra 18.9.1898

Kilpara and Muckwarra extends as far as Tilcha and ends there. Muthurrie and Karraru commences at Tilcha. Muckwarra and Kilparra ends at Bulloo Downs. The Black from Tilcha has now left the district and it is almost impossible to obtain any information from the Blacks as they are very stupid. Most of the more intelligent Blacks have left this part. Tilcha is now only a back station of Yandama and I believe there are no blacks there at present.

Constable W. Woods 27.9.1898 Milparinka

Lake Boolka and Tilcha are remote from here in S.A. territory.

Yandama Station is situated 37 miles from here westerly and 25 miles from Tilcha Border Gate. 40 miles from Tilcha Station Homestead and in NSW.

Mr H. O. Thompson of Mt Stuart Tibooburra who takes more than the ordinary interest in the Aborigines and I understand speaks several tribal languages.

W. Woods 6.12.1898

The blacks around this part are called Muckwarra and Kilparra subtribes of the tribe Mullyanappa. The names Muckwarra and Kilpara are used at Cobham, Milparinka and north no further than Yalpunga and Wompa – and west at Yandama, Fort Grey, Tilcha and Lake Boolka. There are other places east and south but I am unable to say what boundary – The names Mattarru and Karrarra are first used west on the South Australian side of the NSW border at Parella or Parellan Station [Paralana?] I am also unable to give any other names defining the eastern limit of this set of names.

Re the marriage customs I understand from the old men that if a Muckwarra want to reside at Lake Blanche (which is in the Mutturri and Karrarra division) he is called a Matturu. A Kilparra under the same conditions is called a Karrarra. If a Muckwarra man marries at Lake Blanche or here the woman must be Karrarra. A Kilparra, a Matturri woman. The offspring in all these cases takes the class name of the mother.

Four sections QLD as far as Mt Margaret, Stoney Point, Kyapara, Ardook, Morley, Denoop downs and Commonigan

I am unable to say or hear what set of names are used at Tinga Tingana or Innaminka [sic]

The Endawarra tribe don't take in Lake Boolka but it is used at Beltana, Terowie and Blinman South Australia. The Matturri and Karrarra names are not in vogue at Tilcha. This place is within the community of the Muckwarra and Kilparra Blacks.

Woods 27.7.1899

... I have interviewed the only blackfellows (2) about Milparinka at present and have ascertained from them that the classes that you mention Coolpirry and Tinnawa are quite familiar to them and that they are known as far south as Tilcha and Boulka South Australia, Fort Grey, Boulka (NSW) Cobham Yantarra and Connulpie Downs NSW.

Nocundra QLD and others in QLD don't know

Now for re equalities: The Tinniwa is the equal of the Muckwarra and Colpirry is equal to the Keelparra wherever they are known. The Muckwarra marries a Tinniwa and vice versa so with the Keeplarra and Coolpirry – I am quite confident of this owing to their familiarity with the subject altho' I am of the opinion the Muckwarra and the Keelparra is the stronger numerical tribe around this district

Hercus and Austin comments on Mathews.

In their 2004 article, Hercus and Austin address a statement from Mathews who in 1898 observed, 'At Lake Boolka and Tilcha are the Endawarra and Berluppa people respectively.' The authors suggest that Mathews information relates only to post-settlement developments, writing,

There has been some confusion regarding the location of the Wadikali people from Tilcha to Lake Frome. This was caused by a statement in the work of R.H. Mathews (1898:242) ... Mathews was basing himself on information from correspondents, including letters from the police sergeant B. Hynes from Tibooburra in 1897-98. Hynes wrote 28.5.1898: "the Tilcha Blacks are called Berluppa'. In a later communication 18.8.1898, too late to be used by Mathews in his article, he wrote: 'Tilcha is now only a back station of Yandama and I believe there are no blacks there at present.' Hynes was passing information he had been given by R. B. Dawes, the manager of Tilcha: he was talking about the state of affairs at that particular time, not about the ancestral homeland of particular groups of people. The homeland of particular groups is precisely what George Dutton was speaking about.

'Berluppa' or 'Biraliba' are variant spellings for the Pirlatapa, who were not linguistically associated with the Yarli group but were closely akin to Diyari (Austin 1990b). There may well have been a group of them visiting Tilcha ... They were strongly associated with the Blanchwater area.' (Hercus and Austin 2004:230).

More important in Hynes' second communication than his reference to Tilcha being a back station of Yandama and there being no blacks there at present - which indicates only that there was no one to speak to there at the time – is the fact that Hynes specifically indicates that Tilcha serves as the boundary or cross-over point between two major moiety systems. He writes 'Kilpara and Muckwarra extends as far as Tilcha and ends there. Mathurrie and Karraru [ie. the nomenclature employed by groups including the Dieri and Parnkalla] commences at Tilcha.' He also indicates that 'The Black from Tilcha has now left the district and it is almost impossible to obtain any information from the Blacks as the [sic] are very stupid...' I take this to mean that there had been a man from Tilcha at Milparinka, was or might have been knowledgeable and who was distinguished from the locals or at least others resident there. In his first letter, Hynes also notes that there was a man at Tilcha, unlike others in the district, who had a split penis ie. who had been subject to sub-incision.

The greater challenge to Hynes comes from Constable Woods of Milparinka. Woods says that 'The blacks around this part are called Muckwarra and Kilparra subtribes of the tribe Mullyanappa. The class names Muckwarra and Kilparra are used at Cobham, Milparinka and north no further than Yalpinga and Wompa [near the QLD border] – and west at Yandama, Fort Grey, Tilcha and Lake Boolko. To this point he is in agreement with Hynes. However, he additionally states that 'the names Matturru and Karrarra are first used west on the South Australian side of the NSW border at Parella or Parellan Station, which is presumed to be a rendition of Paralana. In contradiction, to Mathews article published earlier in 1898, whether responding to the article or an earlier question, Woods states that 'The Endawarra tribe don't take in Lake Boolka but it is used at

Beltana, Terowie and Blinman South Australia. The Matturri and Karrarra names are not in vogue at Tilcha. This place is within the community of the Muckwarra and Kilparra Blacks. (6.12.1898).

It is perhaps also pertinent to note that Mathews' correspondent Constable C. Vain stationed at Tarrowangee noted that the local Silverton blacks knew nothing about the blacks at Lake Boolka (11.10.98). Confirming that Elkin was confused when he suggested that Wilyakali extended to Tibooburra.

Notably in his 1900 publication, Mathews amends his configuration in the light of the additional information he has received. Now referring to the group as Pilladappa he places them to the east of the group associated with the area from Mount Freeling to Lake Frome and Lake Blanche 'including country adjacent to Lake Callabonna, and thence toward the New South Wales boundary' (Mathews 1900:81). advice of his informants

Chas Vain advised Mathews in a 11.10.98 letter that the people about Tarrowangee where he was stationed, were divided into Muckwarra and Kilpara classes. He said that the Silverton Blacks. None of the Blacks here known anything about the Blacks at Lake Boolka.

In the latter communication Hynes indicates that Tilcha serves as a cross-over point between two systems of moiety

Newspaper Reports.

The following reports which contain references to Aboriginal people in the far west of New South Wales were published in various newspapers from 1876 to 1935

Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney, NSW : 1870 - 1919), Saturday 7 October 1876, page 26

Another Blackfellow Shot near Wilcannia.

AT the Wilcannia Police Court, on the 13th September, an inquiry was held touching the death of one Sandy, an aboriginal. The first witness examined, according to the Times, was William Champ, who deposed : I am a squatter, residing at Depot Glen. The information I now give I give voluntarily. I am aware it may be used against me in the future. I believe it was on the 27th July last, John Bates reported to me, that as he was coming up the creek, he came upon several blacks on that day, taking a sheep from one of our flocks. They had the sheep's legs tied, and ap-parently were going to slaughter it. Immediately on seeing him they ran away, and he came at once to our camp and reported the matter. We, that is Mr. Singer (my partner) and myself, decided, as we had lost so many sheep by the blacks, to go to the camp and order them all away. On the following morning we went to the camp, and found it was deserted. We then proceeded up the creek to where the blackfellow that was shepherding was camped. His name was Samuel, and he was shepherding a flock of sheep for us. He was not there. I sat down at his camp. Mr. Singer and Mr. Mair walked up the creek.

I all at once saw a blackfellow jump up and appear with his nulla nulla in his hand. I immediately ran up towards Mr. Mair and Mr. Singer. As I approached Mr. Mair the blackfellow rushed up to me, and made at me with his nulla nulla, which blow I partially avoided. Mair then caught hold of the blackfellow, but he got away from him immediately, and seized his spear, which he aimed directly at me, I believe with the intention of throwing it at me. Mr. Mair called out to me, "Shoot him, or he'll spear you." I raised the gun to my shoulder and fired at him, and he fell. To Mr. Morrisset: I believe he would have done me grievous bodily harm had I not shot him. I suppose I ran about 100 yards to Mr. Singer when the blackfellow jumped up at me. I only saw a nulla nulla at first. When I saw him jump he was in the creek, close beside Mr. Singer. This was daylight on the morning of the 28th July. It was about a mile or a mile and a half from our camp. I believe there was a fire where the blackfellow was. Our reason for going so early was because we were busy shearing at the time. We did not see any other blacks except his lubra and a little boy, who were with him. The boy's name is Joe. We were not all armed. I had a gun loaded with shot cartridge, and Mr. Singer had a revolver. Mr. Singer did not fire his revolver ; I was the only one who fired a shot. I am not sure if Mr. Singer had his revolver. I looked at the black-fellow after he was shot. He was killed immediately. He fell down dead. I had no doubt he was dead. I don't know if the others examined him at all. The shot struck him in the neck. It did not go through his head at all. I did not see any other shot wound upon him but was told afterwards there was another. Mr. Singer and Mr. Mair could have fired at him without my hearing it. I don't think the blackfellow was wounded before I fired at him. I do not know what made the blackfellow attempt to hit me, unless it was that he was afraid he was going to be beaten for stealing the sheep. I

was running up to Mr. Mair at the time. Mr. Mair and I buried the body. I did not then see more than one shot wound, which was in the neck. It was a small wound. It was not four inches across. It did not appear much torn. I was about six yards from him, or perhaps not quite so far when I fired at him. It was a common muzzle-loading gun. I used an Ely cartridge. I think it was large shot. I am quite certain the black-fellow was beyond all hope after the shot, and nothing could be done for him. He was quite dead. I reported the matter to the police as soon as I possibly could. My place is about two hundred miles from Wilcannia. There is great difficulty in getting out there now, for the want of water. There is one distance of sixty-five miles without water, another forty-five miles, and another thirty-seven miles. We have left our camp with our sheep for the present on account of the scarcity of water. I believe it was Mr. Mair who told me there was another wound on the body of the blackfellow. It was impossible for either Mr. Mair or Mr. Singer to wound the blackfellow without my seeing them. I con-sider the blackfellow was of a quarrelsome disposition. I think it was last October he came into our employ, and remained with us up to the time he was shot. I knew him to steal my sheep, but I believe he and the other blacks together used to slaughter the sheep for their own use, without our permission.

William Duncan Singer and William Mair were examined. The latter said :—I am a gentleman living on my means. I was present when Mr. Champ shot a black-fellow, on the 28th July. I went with Messrs. Singer and Champ to the blacks' camp at Depot Glen, and not finding the blacks there, we proceeded up the creek. I think it was about two miles from Singer's and Champ's camp. We went down for the purpose of sending the blacks away off the place, Mr. Bates having told them the day before that the blacks had been stealing the sheep. When we went up the creek, we found Sandy, his lubra, and a boy named Joe. I was in advance of Mr. Champ, and when I saw the blacks in the camp I walked up to them, and said, "Well, Sandy, what is this you have been doing ?" He then turned round and got his nulla nulla. At this time Mr. Champ came up, and the blackfellow at once made an attack upon him with the nulla nulla. Seeing what he was going to do, I caught hold of him, but he immediately got away from me and got hold of his spear, and was in the act of spearing Mr. Champ, and I called out to Mr. Champ, "Shoot him, or he will spear you;" and Champ fired at him from his hip. The charge entered the blackfellow in the neck, just above the collar-bone, on the left side. He fell at once, and was dead a minute afterwards.

To Mr. Morrisset: I believe had Mr. Champ notfired the blackfellow would have speared him. I think Mr. Champ's life was in danger. Mr. Singer had a revolver. I had no weapon. I don't know if Mr. Singer had his revolver in his hand. There was no threat made to the blackfellow in any way. There was only one shot fired. I only saw one wound. If more than one shot had been fired I must have heard it. The blacks said there were no wounds on the body. It took place early on the morning, about sunrise. I saw no more blacks before Sandy was shot. I saw some afterwards that were camped a short distance higher up the creek. I saw no signs of my sheep having been killed by the blacks. I believe the blacks had been in the habit of stealing hundreds of Singer and Champ's sheep. I have seen sheepskins lying about the bush. I have been staying out at Singer and Champ's since last April. I have not been in their employ. I heard of a blackfellow having been shot at Yancannia, years ago, which is the only other case of a blackfellow being shot I ever heard of. I am of opinion that if Mr Champ had not shot the black-fellow he would have

speared him. The spear was sharp, and about ten or twelve feet long. The blackfellow struck Mr. Champ on the hip with the nulla nulla. The spear did not leave the blackfellow's hand. I be-lieve the gun was loaded with an Ely wire cartridge. The blackfellow was about four or five paces off when Mr. Champ shot him. The wound was a good large one. Not more than a moment elapsed after the shot was fired before Sandy died. I don't know if Mr. Champ had the gun cocked when he came up, or if he cocked it afterwards. Mr. Champ and I buried the body the same afternoon. The Bench stated the depositions would be sent to the Attorney-General, but did not consider it necessary to bind over any of the witnesses.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Wednesday 10 April 1889, page 2

The Western Country.

A POLITICAL TOUR.

[BY Our SPECIAL REPORTER.]

Cobham Lake and Milparinka

When Cobham Lake was reached that night the starlight, upon the water the large fire of the bullock-drivers and wandering swagmen.on the high ground, land the small patches of color given out by those of the blackfellows camped at the water’s edge, made the scene weird in the extreme.

Boniface Smith is in charge of the "pub.' here. The fare may not be so good as at some places along the road, but the welcome it undoubted.

Another early start next day and the evening gives comfort to man and horse at Mr. George Blore’s Hotel in Milparinka. What a change there has been in the country this part of the journey! Of course, there were some miles of the same kind of sand as upon the approach to Cobham at the first part of the journey but, upon reaching One 'Tree; - green grass, in many places knee-high, was in view for miles along the track.

The Evelyn Creek was forded near ' Coalli,' and the - grass country continued up to Milring, a few miles this side of Milparinka, where a “ tribe of blacks were camped." There were about fifty in this original mob, and some of them were not very particular as to the number of garments they wore as they crowded, around the trap, begging for bread, tobacco, and whiskey. I think some of the whites in the district do not treat them very well, for many of they were very as though they; had been seriously frightened.

Evening News (Sydney, NSW : 1869 - 1931), Tuesday 28 May 1901, page 7

THE DISAPPEARING ABORIGINES

LIVING ON REPTILES.

At Thursday's meeting of the Aborigines' Protection Board a report was received from the police at Milparinka in reference to between 90 and 100 aborigines at that place, to whom the police had recommended that rations should be supplied. The list accompanying the report included 37 male, 31 female, and 12 children fullbloods, and 7 male and 3 female half-castes.

The report stated that as a consequence of the long and severe drought still prevailing, the aborigines referred to were reduced to want, and some special relief should, if possible, be granted them while the drought lasts. The station managers, the report went on to state, say they cannot allow the meat and other food they used to give them previously, as they could no longer afford it.

All kinds of game had disappeared from this part of the State, even to the rabbits and kangaroos, and they {'the aborigines) were forced to catch reptiles for a means of existence. The senior constable who wrote the report added that if flour, tea, and sugar were (temporarily supplied, it would save many of these people from hunger, as he bad personal observation of 70 of them, who had assembled t» corroboree, and had to break up their camp before 'they intended on account of the want of food, and scatter in all directions, where their wants will not for much, better met. All the aborigines referred to follow their native manners and customs. The board decided to issue instructions to have the aborigines supplied with rations pro tem., and requested that a further report be submitted to them later on.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Saturday 18 May 1901, page 5

THE CENSUS TAKER IN THE

BACK COUNTRY.

A Picture of Desolation.

The Census Man Strikes a Blacks' Camp.

The aboriginal occupies his place in the census taking, and is generally a difficult subject to deal with. They are very wary, and their aim is to get more information out of the census man than he gets out of them. At Blackfellows' Waterhole and Noogee Lake Mr. Nulty found camped some remnants of the old Barrier tribes. He tried to obtain some information, after having impressed on the natives that he was a "Government man." Now, to the blackfellow's mind, a "Government man" represents unlimited rations and blankets, and is the only elixir for the cure of blackfellows' grievances.

"What name you got?" asked the census taker insinuatingly, as he cornered the apparently "oldest inhabitant" and produced his official-looking paper.

"Yarramba Jimmy," was the laconic reply. "We wantem plenty rations this time, boss," added Jimmy quickly.

"You tell me how old," said the official, coaxingly, pointing an interrogating fore-finger at the ancient Jimmy.

"You gib' blanket, boss; too cold soon; want big fellow blanket," said Jimmy evasivly.

"I not givem blanket, Jimmy; 'nother fellow come soon; he givem blanket. I take name," &c., &c. And the census taker enters into a long explanation in pidgin English, which is frequently interrupted by dozens of interested inquiries prompted by the blacks' curiosity. In the end no very clear idea is obtained as to how the blacks really stand in relation to the various headings so carefully set out in the census paper. They had all been there long before the white man came. Each one said he "belonged all round here; all this my country"—or words to that effect. The old fellows reckoned theywere all the same age; the young men had very little idea of their ages. One old fellow on being asked his age gave the definite reply, "Oh, tumble down soon." There was pathos in that. Still more pathetic was the answer of another colored antiquity. "Old fellow; can't go get kangaroos now; too old." That was as near as he could get to it. But their chief trouble seemed to be about owning the country. Nulty said he met a lot of white men about there who were equally anxious on that score. Only they wanted to give it away

Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 2 February 1933, page 61

Cobham Lake

In Grandfather's Day My grandfather built the first hotel at Cobham Lake in 1879. The blacks were very numerous about Cobham, but they were always friendly. I think that there is an old Battleground, in the sandhills, south of the lake, but these clashes between tribes took place before my grandfather's time.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Saturday 11 December 1937, page 18

DESERTED VILLAGES OF WEST By E. B. Dow

Bancannia.

At 92 miles the fire-twisted ruins of the once famous Bancannia Hotel were found, another favorite stopping place, on the shores of the lake, a huge shallow depression that collects drainage from many miles of surrounding country. The hotel was burnt down in August of last year, and now the whole place is deserted, the speed of modern transport having marred the strategic importance of the site. Amidst the depressing loneliness there was one pleasing feature, for leaning against a wall, awaiting the mail coach, was a Winchester rifle and a bag of cartridges, addressed to Tibooburra. The owner was evidently quite confident that this most cherished outback possession would reach its desired destination, and one's thoughts turned to the gaol at Silverton and the "bad old days." Now we are in evidently quite confident that this most cherished outback possession would reach its desired destination, and one's thoughts turned to the gaol at Silverton and the "bad old days." Now we are in the present good days when men are honest and mails and goods can be left at lonely mail boxes without risk of

molestation. Such things are a wonderful tribute to the integrity of the bush people who must, of necessity, trust to the honesty of other travellers, and whose trust is seldom misplaced.

The northern end of the lake, where every wind moves the sand capping from the gently rolling ridges, is a happy hunting ground for the archaeologist. Here, indeed, is a truly deserted village, once occupied by thousands of blacks, but now, but now given over to solitude. Their wurlies have long since gone, but their camp fires and stone implements remain to tell us of the busy hunting and fishing days of these people.

Mount Arrowsmith.

Looming to the west is a rugged line of low hills, the Mt. Arrowsmith Range, but on approaching the homestead we found a disappointing contrast to the place we had just left. Once it boasted a stone house and garden, but the property got into other hands whose motto was "profit and more profit," and no attention was given to beauty and comfort.

A line of wood and iron rooms on a sandy waste, provides the accommodation for a bachelor manager who is expected to wring profits out of the soil, surrounded with as much discomfort and ugliness as it is possible to imagine.

The place is typical of others in the "Corner" which have passed into the hands of large companies, soul-less monopolies, "whose god is their belly," and these deserted villages bear silent, but eloquent testimony to the character of the owners.

Very many years ago the Mt. Arrowsmith country must have been much different to what it is today. Soil erosion has silted up the creek as in many other parts of the west. Just about here the dead waters of Wonominta Creek have been cut off by sand drift and now flows in the opposite direction to what they did some years ago within the memory of the settlers, and there is further definite evidence.

Along one of the tributaries of Mt. Arrowsmith Creek can be found abundant traces of a deserted native village. The old camp fires occur in hundreds, while stone flakes and chippings are in countless thousands, and in this particular area they occur more thickly than in any other place that I know. Many spear heads can be found and the flakes are more highly finished, and the numbers point to a very long occupation of the site, which must have provided more water than is now available. The creek has a flat and shallow sandy bed, but in past ages must have contained large sheltered holes to supply the number of natives who have resided here permanently or gathered for periodical ceremonials.

[Native] Stone Designs.

In addition to the ordinary signs of native occupation, there occur several interesting designs laid out in small stones on the clay pans. Some of these have been destroyed by stock and weather, and the complete design cannot be followed, but others are almost intact, and the photograph [shown with the newspaper article] illustrates two adjacent patterns or "yards" as they are locally called. These are, without doubt, ceremonial grounds, but one can only make a wild guess as to their use and symbolism. Inquiries are being made from some of the older natives along the North Coast, and they may be able

to elucidate much of this stone cultural mystery unless, of course, that the two districts were entirely separate in their beliefs.

This site is truly a deserted village, and although all signs of habitations have long since decayed, the stone implements, camp fires, and playgrounds remain to remind us of this ancient civilisation. Whether they lived at this spot or only visited it on special occasions one will never know, but it certainly was an important centre in the life and ceremonial of the aboriginal race.

The pioneer white man really spelt the doom of the black man, and while we honor him for forcing his way into inhospitable country, we oft forget the black brother who lived and worked out his own salvation in probably the most harsh environment of any country of the world.

We turned away with regret from the ruins of the native village. Burnt hotels and rusting pumps can be renewed, but here was an example of native culture which, once destroyed, can never be replaced. If the area were fenced, it would be protected from wandering stock and for all ages it would stand as an example of native art.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Wednesday 11 July 1934, page 1

RESERVE WANTED FOR ABORIGINES

Request From Tibooburra

The need of an aboriginal reserve at Tibooburra for the use and pro-tection of aboriginals has been the subject of a request by Constable M'Avoy, of Tibooburra, for 100 acres of ground near Tibooburra to be made available for a reserve.

An application for this land has been sent in by him to Superintendent Winter who will forward it to the Aborigines Protection Board.

Constable M'Avoy states in his ap-plication that there is a common at Tibooburra consisting of 19,578 acres and it is requested that 100 acres of this common about 1½ miles south-east of Tibooburra be set aside for an aboriginal reserve.

At present there are approximately 90 aborigines in the Tibooburra police patrol. These include 25 adults in camp and 19 children, 14 of whom are attending school, while the balance of the populace are working on sta-tions within the patrol.

At present, Constable M'Avoy states, the aborigines have no fixed place to camp and the camp would serve to keep thom together and water is available near by.

If a reserve is made at Tibooburra it will also be of assistance to the police in keeping undesirable white men from visiting aboriginal camps.

In the last six months two convic-tions have been recorded at Tiboo-burra against white men, one for having aboriginal clothes in his pos-session and the other for supplying aboriginal women with liquor.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Thursday 30 May 1935, page 1

COLOR LINE DRAWN

School Trouble At Tibooburra

SYDNEY, Thursday.

The petition forwarded by Tiboo-burra residents asking that the abo-riginal reserve camp children be excluded from the local school on the ground that these children are dirty, verminous, and carriers of disease, is likely to cause considerable bad feeling in this locality.

The residents have no objections to any child whose parents reside in a house from attending school, irres-pective of his nationality or color, but it appears that exception has been taken by the local teacher, and also the Protector of Aborigines, to the wording of the petition, and the teacher is alleged to have stated that in the event of the black camp children being excluded he will refuse to teach the quarter caste and others less colored.

CONTRACTED DISEASE

A meeting has been called to discuss the position, and a stormy even-ing is expected. The trouble appears to have originated from the system which compels all the children attend-ing school to wash their faces und hands, and it is alleged that one white child was compelled to wash in a dish in which a black child with eye trouble had just washed, and the white child acquired a serious eye disease.

It is rumored that a number of half castes will now he placed on the dole instead of the aboriginal ration in a protest by the black sympathisers against these children being ex-: eluded. It seems the question of black and white will be settled only when all citizens having dark blood in their veins will be put in a reserve away from the whites, and the rule en-forced that any white found inside the enclosure, or any black caught outside, will be severely dealt with.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Friday 31 May 1935, page 1

Tibooburra School Trouble

MOVE TO HOLD PETITION TIBOOBURRA. Friday.

A public meeting was held at the Albert Hall, Tibooburra, at 8 o'clock last night to discuss the position regarding the exclusion of aboriginal children from the school. Mr.McDougal occupied the chair, and the Protector of Aborigines was watching the proceedings on behalf of the blacks.

The chairman explained that owing to a petition having been presented to the Education Department the teacher in charge has been instructed to exclude all children with any dark blood in their veins, and this was likely to cause very bitter feelings amongst a certain section of the residents. He pointed out that the petition should have been worded so that the children of the blacks camp alone would have been debarred. As it was, however, all children carrying any trace, however light, of black blood must be expelled from the school, unless the meeting decides to withdraw the petition or to wait advice from the Aboriginal Protec-tion Board concerning the building of another school.

A number of those who had signed the petition were present, and an atmosphere of indecision was apparent.

The meeting dragged along, occasionally enlivened by a few, witticisms, and finally Mr. Clarke moved "that the meeting ask the signatories to the petition to request that the black children be allowed to attend the school until the Aboriginal Protection Board had completed arrangements for their education in a school of their own."

After a deal of discussion, it was agreed upon, and the motion was carried.

Excerpts from “Twelve Years in Australia”

Matilda and Abraham Wallace settled on a property to the east of the Barrier Ranges which they called Sturt’s Meadows. These extracts are from Matilda’s personal account of her life in that area.

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After three days’ travelling we t to the foot of the ranges, where there was a nice water hole, and sixteen or seventeen natives. While my husband and his man were gathering the sheep into camp, 1 thought 1 would give these old blacks a pannikin of flour each. One old man was the king of the tribe, and when I gave him his share he wanted to keep the pannikin too, and shook his “nella nella” (or wadie) in my face, but when he saw a revolver he made off, and his lubra came for the flour. We had great difficulty to make them understand that we meant them no harm; one of them was able to interpret our language, so they camped there. Next morning, after watering the sheep, the man and one black fellow, started with them across the ranges. Ourselves, horses, cow, and black fellow (a most intelligent youth) started to find our way as best we could through creeks, hills and rocks, till within three quarters of a mile to the tops of the range, when the black fellow said, “Bel more pull away allabout yarra man tumble down,” meaning the country was so rough we could go no further. However, with a little difficulty we did get to the top and camped there for the night. After a day and night’s travelling we came to water; we intended making our home here, the blacks telling us the water was permanent although in the sand. We arrived at 5 am. Meeting the sheep here, the next thing was how to water them. My husband and his man set to work and sunk seven feet of a well, made a trough out of a tarpaulin, watered the sheep and twenty-five horses, all before 11 a.m. We got the blacks to shepherd the sheep, whilst my husband and man set about building a house on a very pretty spot, where we intended making our home. This done, there was little else to do but water the sheep every other day, and my husband started to explore the country around. At the end of six weeks ye found there was not sufficient water for the sheep, as the spring began to fail, so my husband told me he would have to save me here and take the sheep to the river, which would take him three weeks, unless he found water nearer. So he and a black fellow started with the sheep, having started our an to Mr. N’s station for the mail, which I was to send after him, but when he did return he was in no humour to follow his master, there being no road. I thought it best to go with him—a journey of twenty-five miles through scrub and timber, without a track of any sort, except here and there sheep’s footmarks.

At sunrise we started on horseback, I taking on my saddle a bucket, a leg of mutton, loaf of bread, a pair of boots (for the black boy), an American shovel, and an axe, the man refusing to carry any of these articles, declaring his horse would not stand it, hence the reason of my having such a load. At 12 a.m. I arrived at “Nartaubulla,” where my husband was waiting. No doubt it is very pleasant to have a groom in attendance, but mine proved anything but a help, and would not stir unless I took the lead in these unknown parts. The day was very hot, and we had nothing to drink on the road, but on arriving at the depot the black boy gave me a pannikin of tea, a perfect “nectar.” I even now remember with what a relish I drank it.

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My husband returned, having left the team and sheep on the road. We packed up and started back to within fifteen miles of our first camp, which was a very beautiful spot, with lakes and pastures green and wild fowl in hundreds. Here we built a house, and made our home, and as soon as settled my husband started north to explore some country he had taken up in South Australia, leaving me for three weeks, and knowing there were twenty-five or so natives on the lake a few miles off. I did not relish my loneliness, with only Tom as my companion, though he was a great comfort to me. My husband seeing my tears seemed quite hurt, saying it was poor comfort to him while away to think of his wife being so sentimental. About a quarter of an hour after he had departed, seven blacks, after watching him go, made for the house. Imagine my fear at being accosted by these men, all armed with war implements, and clothed in nature. Seeing them coming I went outside and sat by a fire, trying to put on an air of indifference, which, believe me, I did not feel. They all stuck their spears round the fire; one of the men was chosen by the others as spokesman, he being the only one who could understand my language. He having been with us for a short time quite under stood what our possessions were, and he asked for sheep, clothes and tobacco, all of which I refused. He told me I had plenty in the house. I said, “Well, if black fellow think so, go and see.” That made him think I. had a revolver or sword; therefore he was afraid to go in. I told them my husband would be home that night, and if they did not go away he would come down and shoot them. Then they came to an arrangement that if they would go away altogether white man would not be cross to them. So I promised them it should be so if they left, which they did, and I never saw them again for two years. Next day I and a lubra walked twenty miles to be sure they had gone, for I felt too uncomfortably till I knew they had left the district and gone amongst the ranges. My husband returned and stayed at home ix weeks, when he left ti take some eight hundred fat sheep to Adelaide, where he got 25s per head for them, leaving me with me little nephew, a Dutchman, and one thousand eight hundred sheep to lamb. A few days after he had gone the man began to shirk his work, and expected little Tom to shepherd while be idled in his tent all day, only going out to meet him in the evening, and if there were any young lambs he would not bring them home, but left them for the wild dogs to eat, telling the child he was master now and would do as he liked. I thought it best to dismiss him at once, and if the dogs did eat the sheep, it was no use paying him to let them do so.

With the help of Tom and an old lubra I looked after them, sending him with them the first thing in the morning, and I went out afterwards to gather up the lambs, for if any were left out the dogs would eat them. Many a time have I sat on the sand hills and had a good cry, and then thought how very wrong it was of me, as all went on so well—the sheep giving me little or no trouble, for wherever I put them there they could be found, and everything I did seemed to prosper, and my health was good, for which I used to thank God as I drove my flock home.

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Started next morning, and got to Cobam about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. There we found plenty of water, and an empty house of two rooms, which I took possession of. The owners had given me permission to occupy the house, they having left some time previously. Feeling very tired, I partly undressed and lay down to rest with my baby. I had

not been laying down very long when I heard footsteps in the apartment outside, and on looking up, to my astonishment, in the doorway a policeman in uniform, revolver in hand, pointed at me. I do not know which was the most astonished—the policeman or myself. He did not know the hut was occupied, and seeing smoke issuing from the chimney, he came to the conclusion he had found what he was looking for, namely, a bushranger of the name of "Burns." After we got over the first misunderstanding and he had explained how matters were to me, I found that the man he was looking for was camped about four miles from us, on the creek, at a blacks' camp, the blacks having given me the information. Letting the policeman have one of my black boys to go with him and his two men, they went and arrested "Burns,'' and brought him back in custody that very night. Next morning they started for Wilcannia. So now, here I am a fixture until rain comes, with about one hundred blacks camped within a quarter of a mile of me. Not pleasant no although they were extremely kind to me; they brought me wild fowl, fire wood, and looked after the horses. I spent here six weeks very miserably. The weather was close, hot and thundery, threatening rain every day. The water at Cobam Lake, although twenty feet deep, was so very bad in the middle of the lake that it was difficult to use it, were one ever so thirsty. What with sand flies by day and mosquitoes by night, the poor horses were almost beside themselves. I have seen the horses for hours in the middle of the day standing in the lake with the water rolling over their backs, and when once the sun went down they would gallop about for hours together. The horses were quite fat when I went to Cobam, and at the end of six weeks they were dog poor. When I was there six weeks we had two days' beautiful rain. I made up my mind to turn my face towards home, and I only got half-way, as far as the Packsaddle, when I found the rain had fallen no farther. However, at the Packsaddle I found the creek running full of beautiful water.

Two days after I had arrived at the Packsaddle, my husband came up to me, 'he having come back with the sheep he went to the Burra for. We decided to remain at the Packsaddle until the rain came farther down, or until we found water in the well which was now being sunk.

Here we stayed for three months, when one of the men came up with the joyful tidings that they had struck water in the well. My husband once more left me, this time with one white man, and we had eighteen thousand sheep to look after. My other help was natives; he took all the other white men with him to start putting up a house. At the end of one month he came back after putting up a house. Need I say with what pleasure I started on the journey that brought me to what was to be my permanent home at last. I must not forget to mention the little adventure between the blacks. The Murray blacks went up to Cobam to steal wives. They took a few from each camp as they went by, intending to wind up with a few from the Packsaddle. The blacks in the back country were too much afraid of the more civilized ones to defend their lubras. But the Cobam blacks sent one of their number ahead asking us to protect their wives when they reached us. We were prepared for the Murray blacks when they arrived, and not thinking we would interfere with them, they allowed the lubras to come up and ask for provisions. As they came we detained them until we had them all but two. Those two the blacks refused to let come up to camp. So we had to go over to the blacks' camp and take them. After taking the lubras, the thing was how to protect them. There were twenty-five black fellows camped within a short distance of us, and only my husband and I there. But as we were debating how best to manage, a gentleman rode up, and he stayed all night

and assisted us. The first thing we did was to erect a tent for the lubras to stay in during the night, and my husband and our visitor kept watch all night, armed with a gun and sword.

These Murray blacks went away next morning, and when they wished us good morning they assure us they would come some other time and take them. Some time during the day the husbands belonging to the rescued lubras arrived, when we were well repaid for our trouble. The thanks the poor fellows could not express they showed by dancing around us and the Corrobborees they got up for our entertainment for some days after were very numerous and amusing.

Excerpts from the memoirs of Keith Brougham

D 4701 My experiences and memoirs: reminiscences of life on famous stations 'west of the Darling' by Keith Brougham ca 1940

IN EARLY YEARS: THE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

"When pioneers started to fence and water the country, both sides of the River Darling where they had the river for permanent water, their first object was to find the boundaries of the holding they were interested in. This was a colossal job at the start - very perilous - taking risks with thirst and being lost with only a packhorse to carry supplies. This was, indeed, life and death during their survey wanderings.

When the boundaries were discovered the job of subdivision had to be faced. This was generally done by mileage and a compass and five pegs at the corners. To get mileage a rag was tied around the spoke of the buggy or cart wheel, giving the length and circumference. The number of revolutions of the wheel was given by counting the time the rag went around. This gave the distance required. The compass was used to go north, east, south or west as required. When you came to the distance you wanted or thereabouts, you had to use your pegs for another line going at right angles to start your other line of division. Next, you had to pick sites for water by excavation or well sinking, avoiding silty nature and trying for a clean watercourse. Then there were the roads to different spots you had determined on for sinking. This was done, first by a cart or a buggy dragging a large tree branch following a pilot, followed by a team of bullocks dragging a couple of trees cutting its way on with axe men ahead. Keeping in mind the water distance and sinking small catch tanks excavated for the watering when filled to water the team of bullocks close to their work.

Wild aborigines were a help by following their tracks as they knew of existing water away from the river. Further out was evidence of swamps, lakes and lagoons from water marks and tree foliage. Probably these had water at that time and assisted the inspection for any requirements regarding improvements

One old aborigine, who claimed to be from one of the wild tribes, told me the walkabout was a good sign to watch for at that time. A mob were looking for a new hunting ground and had camped at midday. While there, a pregnant woman had a baby. Next day, they were off again, mother and child, and went straight to a waterhole, which the white people found by following their tracks.

Evidence of swamps and water marks show out on each side of the river from big floods before the whites came, so they might have found it when they started dividing the country. These flood marks occurred by the River Darling, the Cooper and many others in the channel country".

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One day returning from hunting for the horses we came to the swamps where the black boy and I saw the other black boys and shepherds bathing. We got down on our knees and howled like dingoes. They skittled like wild hares to the camp.

Another time when we went to Billeroo, now owned by Mr. Alec Wilson and sons, we had a lot of horses and let them go over the sand hills from Billeroo dam. We turned out a couple of days afterwards and went to the dam and found Mr. Philips there from Frome Downs who went off the deep end for letting the horses go as this country did not belong to us. Wykalpa, Dad's place, was ours. He threatened pounding them all if not immediately shifted.

Being young we took notice. It would have been too far from anywhere to pound the horses. We set to work mustering all of them, having the gray Arab stallion and no rations of any description, relying on getting them from Wykalpa our main camp. Five days later we started with our horses, duly mustered, for Wykalpa by night The gray stallion, which we were leading, broke away from us and scattered the horses and packhorse with dishes, pints, plates, etc. flying everywhere through the scrub. Finally we caught him, before we could proceed.

We had to live on possum while we were at Billeroo. We had to catch these in the moonlight and knock them with sticks. Pluck them, clean them and cook them in the ashes and live on them for five days.

When we arrived at Wykalpa, we stayed the night and had a feed of damper. It was very soddy; we could not wait long enough for it to cook. Next morning a black boy and I were sent to look for some horses that we had missed, including the other stallion Abealla, an Arab, while Harry Brougham got a beast out of the cattle we had there to kill.

The black boy and I followed the tracks of these horses for a day and a half. They buckled around and led us to where we found the tracks the day before. We followed these and finally came back to the swamp. In the meantime we had a spell. The black boy climbed a box tree and found a possum, so it was a toss up to stay and get the horses or return to camp. We tossed with the end of a cardboard matchbox - tails and heads, the latter go home the other remain. Every time we tossed it came down tails, so we changed it so it became heads. We gave the tossing away and returned to camp.

We were so hungry we imagined we could smell the steak cooking 20 miles away. When we arrived back we were greeted with “Where are the horses” my reply was “It's all right for you to talk with your stomach full”, “We know where the horses are, but we want a feed first”.

STATION WORKERS

When we got there17 we were amazed by the number of aborigines that were there. As days and time went on, I had a boy mate staying with me and about two hundred blacks were camped in a sort of an inlet in Silverton Hill, as it was called, west of the homestead. This boy and I decided to give them a fright. We scooped out a water-melon, put eyes, nose, mouth and a candle in it. As the Aborigines were practically in their wild state and did not speak our language, they got a fright in the night when they saw two figures approaching with sheets over their heads. There was a terrific stampede like a mob of wild bullocks, crying "Debil, Debil," We had to keep away from them for a long time as we were not popular with them or my father who grilled us over the coals for our prank. We gradually gained their confidence slowly.

17 Poolamacca D 4701 Brougham reminiscences transcript Page 17 of 65

We also had a half-caste woman at Poolamacca, remarkable for her cleanliness and her starched clothes. We thought she was there for good but she returned to the camp eventually, the call being too strong. Any who have aboriginal blood in them usually return to their natural way of living instead of in a nice home.

One old blackfellow camped at the station in his own humpy was expert at carving anything you liked to give him; he held his pocket-knife upside down. He carved for me on an LC &Co pipe a horse bucking with a man on him on the one side and being thrown on the other side. He did carving on emu eggs, made boomerangs and other native weapons. Before he left the station a few of his mates joined him and sang many songs, among them [was the same] verse from the old Bullock Dray .

Note: Mungaree means “plenty tucka”

Murragar means “good fellow you in your old bullock dray”.

I could speak their language in those days and converse with them.

My father was especially thought of by the black-fellows; one old man who used to call him Jacky Brougham was told to use a handle to his name and his reply was, “All right, Mr. Broom Handle”.

A roundhouse was made for the aboriginals by my father with a fireplace in the middle and a cone-shaped hole in the roof for escaping smoke. There were cubicles around to hold about 20 blacks. They were only there for three weeks when one died, and that was the finish. They checked out and the house became a lumber room.

The black-fellows making rain had their particular stone, something like a large block of sal ammoniac with streaks on it like falling rain. Veins of arms were cut out and stamping feet and the stone always was kept in a secret place and only the king knew where it was. Also the bone, which consisted of a bone out of the human arm wrapped up in rag, usually soaked in fat from a dead body. Only one man was allowed to use it, and the man in charge of it kept it secretly away. All were frightened of this man, and, if by chance,

saw him handling it, ran for their lives and if he pointed it at any one particular person that person would not eat but pine away and eventually die.

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Breeding horses was very interesting. You watched the youngsters grow until they were broken and all the horses were broken in by Harry Brougham and myself. We put through a large number at times and saw a terrific lot of spills.

One spill I remember vividly was a black fellow called Dick Willow The filly bucked over with him and landed with him lying beneath her with only his head showing out from the withers of the horse. While we were tying up our colts to go to his assistance he called out "Don't hurry, I'm alright" and we finally lifted the mare from him.

He was a very hard blackfella on account of another time this same chap had a fight and had a wonderful slogging exhibition. It was started over a maturing gin. Glennie, his opponent, was very smart with his fists and for about five rounds he pasted Dick until he was unable to see out of both eyes, Dick would not give in. Finally he wore Glennie down and gave him a hammering and eventually won the fight and the gin. This happened frequently after this but the stayer always came out on top after a flogging. They say always hit a blackfella in the stomach, don't hit his head, if you do you won't get anywhere.

Usually we did all our cattle on camp but we found the yards were much easier on the horses keeping them together. They consisted of a big holding yard, a crush pen for drafting, a stronger calf and bush yard, to the side was a long race which held about 50 bullocks and a horse pen attached to it. This we used for inoculation. At the end we had a bale which we held the cows for spaying, with a gate opening out when required for this operation.

We did many calves in this yard; in fact, they ran into many hundreds and it was very tiring work to put in a full day. Some of the blackboys would get very tired and as they were slackening off I said to a man named Mitselburg "You know anything that will help to liven these chaps up?" "Yes," he said, "I'll fix them for you", he said. He got the boys together and started to recite. "Away at the back of Gnalta is where you see the pick of the blackboys ride," and so on. The result was marvelous. They went into the work again as if they had only started.

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Euriowie

We had a lot of aborigines working in the creeks surrounding this country picking slugs of pure tin and bagging it in 1 cwt. lots; they got a fair quantity of it. They combed the creeks until it became too scarce to continue.

My uncle, sister and I went to our relations the Kennedys during 1897 to a race meeting; it was a great turn out. We had a mare from Poolamacca called Meg; there also came another called Valentine. He was a dark horse which won many races, but they couldn't procure the weight allotted him. They made it up by putting chains around its neck. He still won.

The Kennedy family had a half-caste boy who did the housework and waiting at the table, called Yarrowie, also a blackboy who was chasing horses and had a fall due to a rabbit burrow. He got caught in the stirrup and dragged some distance with his head bumping on the ground. After Mrs. Kennedy treated him he rode in the races the following day. He was eventually a police tracker in Broker Hill.

This great property in N.S.W. had a half-caste house boy brought from the blacks' camp his name was Yarrie. Another, by a full blooded aborigine named Duncan, also worked in the house. The latter was the boy who fell and was dragged by a horse. Yarrie was splendid in the house and to the Kennedys he was as good as any woman. Duncan also did house work and was a great help, but as time went on the usual want for the camp returned to them and they returned. The Kennedys were very fond of these boys who being so far distant outback were hard to replace.

Family Stories

Gilbert Williams (c. 1884 or 1892 – 1937)

Gilbert Williams was also known as Thintyu (Martin Notes, Thompson 1997), as was his mother's brother (Hercus Tape 1963). His DC indicates he was born around 1884 at Bulla Downs station and was a drover, but his 1917 World War I enlistment indicates he was born around 1892 at Gonelie station (a mistake, made clearer on his WWI medical history as Connulpie station). Bulla Downs and Connulpie stations are close together on either side of the Queensland border. Gilbert enlisted in the Light Horse Regiment at BrokenHill on 3 April 1917, listing his next of kin as Mrs Quailof Yancanyer [Yancannia] station, and a son, Allan. He was described as physically fit and a "bushman" and went on to Adelaide, but was discharged there in

September 1917 on the grounds of being "Aboriginal, deficient physique" (NAA item 1807866).

By this time, Gilbert was a widower, as shown on his army discharge. His first marriage was at Broken Hill in 1916. His wife Leata (or Leta) McCulloch (or

McCullough) was born at Poolamacca station in about 1895 (DC and MC). Their son, Allan Williams was born 15 March 1912 at Tarrawingee, a small village on

Poolamacca station. Leata passed away in Broken Hill from tuberculosis in 1917.

Allan went on to enlist in the Australian military in 1940 and died in action during World War II. His enlistment noted his next of kin as his "auntie" Mrs M. Bates (Minnie Bates nee Williams). Allan may have been brought up by Minnie after his mother died and his father enlisted. Allan fought in the Middle East and then New Guinea, where he was promoted to corporalin January 1943. Two weeks later he was killed in action (NAA Series B883 item number SX10789) and is listed on Panel 3 of the Port Moresby Memorial (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) and on the Menindee war memorial, where some of his survivingsoldier "mates" honoured him.

Gilbert's second marriage was at Mildura to Daisy Robinson. They had four sons, James F. (Jimmy), Johnny, Georgy and Stanley T., a daughter who had already passed away when Gilbert died (Gilbert's DC), and another baby daughter, Christina, who was born at Menindee Mission and died at Broken Hill hospital in 1938 aged 7 months (Christina's DC).

Gilbert died at Broken Hill hospital in 1937, one of the many people living at Menindee Mission who were victims of the epidemic of tuberculosis among the people there (Martin 2001). Daisy also died from tuberculosis in 1938 (DC with little detail) just a few days after her baby daughter Christina had died of pneumonia and

malnutrition (almost definitely a result of the mother's illness). Three of the boys, Jimmy, Johnny and Georgy were sent to Kinchela Boys home. It is not known whether Stanley was also sent there. Willy Riley remembers they came back to Wilcannia in the 1940s and were widely known as boxers. Georgy died in 1999 and was buried in Wilcannia with his people. Johnny Williams was living in White Cliffs in 1973

(Barrier Miner 15/9/1973).

Jack and Hannah Quayle - Family Stories Room - Milparinka

'Big Jack' John Quayle was born on Momba Station around 1873. His father had emigrated from the Isle of Man and through a union with an Aboriginal woman known as Judy had three sons; John, William and James. Judy returned to her people and the three boys grew up with their father. They earned a living sinking bores throughout the far west until their father died and the plant was relinquished to a local station owner.

Hannah 'Malyarya' Hamilton was born on Morden Station around 1880 (TBC). Hannah's father, W.F Hamilton, left Morden following a severe drought and Hannah grew up with her mother, Buugali, who returned to live among her Malyangapa people and had two sons, Gilbert 'Thinju' and George Williams. Hannah and her family had learned the domestic ways of the white settlers and they continued to work the surrounding properties.

Hannah and her brothers retained as much of their custom and language as they were able, though they weren't allowed to practice in their new world. Jack Quayle and Hannah married in Milparinka in 1895. They had fourteen children, though only seven survived past childhood.

The children were raised with a combination of 'white man's' ways and traditional skills learned from both parents. Certainly Hannah passed as much traditional language and culture onto her children as she was able, but their world was changed.

They led an itinerant lifestyle, traveling by horse and buggy to wherever work was found on stations, building fences and breaking in horses. They had their own traveling stock of horses, camels and goats, living independent of the welfare system and largely outside the government dictations which forbad Aboriginal customs and language.

They realised they had to adapt to survive and although their children had no formal education they were taught to read and write in English and basic mathematics.

John and Hannah eventually moved to White Cliffs, carting wood and doing odd jobs. John passed away from pneumonia in 1934, at the age of 61. Hannah 'Granny' Quayle moved on to Wilcannia, to be near her brother and other relations who had been relocated many years before. She died in 1964. Despite being restricted by government policy in language and custom, Jack and Hannah passed on important beliefs and values through the generations.

Gail Hunt

John Alexander Quayle Junior (1904 – 1967)

John (known as Jack or Sonny) was born on 11February 1904 at Salisbury Downs “near Milparinka” (MC, DC and Defence Records NAA). Jack enlisted in the AIF in September 1942 and was discharged in December 1945 at the end of World War II.

He served as a mechanic in Australia and New Guinea and received four medals: the 1939/45 Star, the mPacific Star, a War Medal and an ASM. When he enlisted he was described as an Aboriginal labourer and stated his relevant skills as being able to drive a car and lorry, ride a motor cycle, make running repairs, cook and butcher animals.

He married Amy Johnson (or Clark) in 1946 at Wilcannia (MC). Their nine children were Elizabeth, John, Gloria, Mary, Clement, Gerald, Greg, Mark and Timothy. Amy lived in Wilcannia until her death in 2006.

Sarah Martin

May Hunt.

‘Big Jack’ (John) Quayle was born on Momba Station around 1873. His father was from the Isle of Man and his mother an Aboriginal woman known as Judy. They had three sons; John, William and James. Judy returned to her people and the three boys grew up with their father.

Hannah ‘Malyarya’ Hamilton was born on Morden Station around 1880. Her father, W.F Hamilton, left Morden following a severe drought and Hannah grew up with her mother, Buugali, who returned to live among her Malyangapa people.

John Quayle and Hannah Hamilton married in Milparinka in 1895. They had fourteen children, though only seven survived past childhood. May Hunt was their first surviving daughter, born in Milparinka on May 1st 1900.

The family led an itinerant lifestyle, traveling by horse and buggy to wherever work was found on stations, building fences and breaking in horses. They had their own traveling stock of horses, camels and goats, living independent of the welfare system and largely outside the government dictations which forbid Aboriginal customs and language.

Some-time after May’s nineteenth birthday, a young Australian born Irishman by the name of Bill Hunt found his way into the Quayle camp. Soon romance blossomed and May and Bill were married in White Cliffs in 1921. They had eight children, two of whom died as infants.

Bill and May’s first real home was a tent pitched under a stand of leafy ghost gums near a dam on Willangie Station where Bill found work as a handyman, maintenance worker and camel driver. Gums on the eastern side (of the dam) provided early morning shade, as did the trees on the western rim in the late afternoon. Water was carried in buckets hooked to a wooden yoke carried across the shoulders

From Willangie May and Bill's life took them many places in the far west; White Cliffs, Bourke, Mount Browne and Tibooburra.

May couldn't get a house in town as she was Aboriginal and we weren't allowed to camp with the other Aboriginal people on the reserve because Bill was white. The government was removing mixed-race kids from their families and placing them into 'care'. May and Bill were not going to be a part of that. [Harold Hunt}

Instead, Bill acquired the lease of a public watering place called Coally Bore sixty kilometres south of Tibooburra. The Coally lease consisted of 640 acres, pastured mainly with stubble and saltbush. Coally Bore could be seen as an isolated, lonely place but the nearest neighbours were friendly and offered support whenever they were in need.

Life threw up many challenges for May during 'The Great Depression' years which she met with strength, resourcefulness and dignity. Bill suffered from trachoma and was often in Sydney undergoing treatment. Eventually their marriage suffered due to his long absences and the couple separated. May took her surviving children and her orphaned niece with her, first to White Cliffs and then to Wanaaring where this young single mother had secured a lease of land. The family built a home on the banks of the western side of the Paroo from salvaged bits and pieces.

The aim was to build a pitched roofed hut, about twenty feet long by ten feet wide, to serve as a kitchen and storeroom.

Some of the bedrooms had opened wheat bags on the floor that had been pegged down with wire staples, but the kitchen had too much traffic so the bags would not last long.

The family lived a very full life at Wanaaring. The children attended school, May's niece who had come to live with them, found work at the hotel, and May turned her hand to doing what-ever was needed to provide for her family. They had a thriving vegetable garden and a small herd of sheep, goats and horses.

But the time came for them to move on. The family had grown up and found work, and May made the decision to relocate to Bourke where she ran a boarding house that served as a home for her family and a haven for travelers.

Life took May to many other places in New South Wales, but for the rest of her life she cared for her immediate and extended family with kindness and compassion.

"She was a person who could express anger or happiness according to the situation at hand. She was incapable of hatred, and discouraged it in all who came her way.

But, after almost seventy-four years of hardship, trauma and sadness, mixed with large doses of joy and happiness, Mother departed this life peacefully to rest among the spirits who guided her.

May Hunt, her abiding love and wisdom, like the sun, the wind, the earth and the open spaces she loved, are not gone but are woven into the fabric of this age-old land of her ancestors. [Harold Hunt]

The Barlow family

Jimmy Barlow (c. 1855 – 1928)

Jimmy Barlow was born around 1855 and married Jennie at Yancannia station around 1880. Jennie was born at Connulpie to the north of Yancannia station towards the Queensland border.

Jennie, who was Wangkumara, belonged to the Makwara moiety and was brolga meat. According to Jimmy's DC and Jennie's DC they had only one son, Alf, and one daughter who had passed away by 1920.

Warlpa Thompson believes that there were more children who ended up at Cherbourg Mission and then moved down into NSW to the Moree area and further south (pers. comm.), but further research for this report was not possible.

Jenny died at Yandama in 1920 aged about 70, and was buried in the Yandama cemetery (DC). Jimmy died at Tibooburra in 1928. He lived at Yandama before he became ill and was taken to the Tibooburra Hospital (DC). He was described as a "labourer", a general term which was often used.

Sarah Martin

Newton, Walter (1889–1963)

by Jeremy Beckett

This article was published: in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 15*, 2000, online in 2006.

Walter Newton (c.1889-1963), soldier and stationhand, was born about 1889 at Yancannia, a large pastoral station near Tibooburra, New South Wales, son of Walter Newton, a White stockman, and an Aboriginal woman later known as Maggie Tyler. She was a Wanjiwalgu, a people linguistically related to the Barkindji of the Lower Darling River, but whose country was situated around White Cliffs in the north-west corner of the State. Deserted by his father, young Walter was raised by his mother among the Aborigines working on the station.

When he was about 10 his mother moved away, leaving him in the care of the manager, Edward Peter Tapp, who employed him in various tasks around Tarrawingee station. Newton maintained a lifelong friendship with Tapp and eventually worked for him as overseer. They both enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 5 February 1917 and were allocated to the 9th Light Horse Regiment. On 20 April that year at St Peter's Anglican Church, Broken Hill, Newton married Emily Pantony, a 31-year-old domestic servant from Tarrawingee; the marriage was to be brief and childless. He and Tapp embarked for the Middle East in June. Only some four hundred Aboriginal men, most of them of mixed descent, were accepted by the A.I.F. Newton's experience with horses may have recommended him. His duties mainly involved looking after remounts, although he

later stated that he had often been under fire. Discharged from the army on 10 September 1919, he took a job in the Broken Hill mines before returning to stock work.

Newton had not been initiated as a boy, but he had heard many of the old people's stories, particularly the myths describing the forming of the 'Corner' country in the 'Dreamtime'. He had attended Church of England services while in the army, and was deeply impressed by seeing the Holy Land. Some time after his return, he began to try to reconcile Christianity and Aboriginal lore. Myths that he had heard as a child he retold in the idiom of the Bible, pointing out parallels between them, such as the feeding of the multitudes and the flood. His wartime experiences also seem to have imbued Aboriginal stories of cataclysms with a new force. He dictated his 'history' to an anthropologist in 1957. Its conclusion consisted of the Aboriginal creator, 'the Guluwiru', announcing the coming of White people, and naming the place (after the British Crown) from which he would ascend into the sky. Newton's history of the Corner country put Aboriginal knowledge and people on the same footing and in the same moral dimension as European knowledge and people.

The last years of his working life were spent in solitary occupations like boundary-riding. After World War II he obtained employment with the Broken Hill Municipal Council. Through Tapp's good offices, Newton received a pension. For some years he was the only Aborigine living in the town. He died about 23 July 1963 at his Broken Hill home; the expenses of his burial in the nearby cemetery were covered by the local branch of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, of which he had been a member.

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Various personal accounts

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this material contains references which may contains terms that reflect authors' views, or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in an historical context.

SMITH George Thomas ('Banjo Bill') 1915 – 1982
A HUNDRED YEARS OF CORNER LIFE Typescript written C 1980

Page 20 Court hearings at Milparinka

Not all the law transgressors were like Robert Graham who achieved notoriety in 1865 (? date..ed) by being involved in a silver swindle at Packsaddle. Anyway, Robert took off but he was pursued by the police and died in a shoot out.

Another character got away with some gold stolen from the White Cliffs mail as the horses jogged slowly along the road.

Most people coming before the court were there for debt, swearing, clearing out from work, not giving notice for stock movements, being drunk, offending the cops.

The court reports also bring out clearly the newspapers' bias against coloured people such as blacks, Chinese and Afghans.

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Dancing was a common activity. The music was provided by accordion, the M.C. called the dances and directed the square dances. The squatters and those identified as aspiring to be one of 'them' sat in one section of the hall, the others sat in another section, each danced with one another, the blacks looked through the window, or back from the street. The performers needed stamina.

The Evelyn Creek now known as the Milparinka Creek, the Yancannia Creek, Flood Creek and some lesser creeks in the district had some massive waterholes, long since silted up. The Yancannia Waterhole, Depot Glen, Coally, Tickilara and other waterholes lasted for months after rain. These waterholes and the lakes at Cobham, Yantara, Boulia, Bancannia and the floodwaters of the Bulloo River provided the basis for the district aborigines and the early settlers. So much so that places like Cobham became desolate sand traps from about the 1902 droughts until the 1940s.

Ern Kelly's reminiscences (written in 2003).

Quite often the aborigines would swim across the river in the evening at Nappa Merrie and have a corroboree. They would go down to the river, take their clothes off and put them on a lignum bush. The women wouldn't dive in, they would put their legs forward and slide on their bottoms until the water was deep enough to swim. Jack Conrick (the manager of Nappa Merrie) set some rabbit traps under the water to catch water rats. Polly, one of the women who worked in the station house at Nappa Merrie slid over one and it caught her by a cheek. She ran up to the station yelling "Jacky, Jacky. Take him off!". Poor Polly was not amused. They got a school teacher who opened a school at Innamincka so I went and stayed at the Innamincka Station. My grandmother was the cook there and I had to walk about 3 miles and cross the river (to get to school). To cross the river was no trouble when it was shallow at the crossing, but when it was knee deep it scared me. It wasn't the depth, it was the current. It was very fast and very strong. It washed my feet from under me. So then I went to what they called the "big camp", half way between the Station and the Town. It was where all the old aborigines lived. They were a very kind-hearted mob and would do anything for me. They would squat down and I'd get on their back and they piggy-backed me across the river. When I came back from school I would sing out and if the men were away on a hunt a woman would come across for me. They were pickaninnies when Burke and Wills were there. They looked after King.

They used to take me fishing. I caught a turtle on my line. I was going to throw him back but Nellie, one of the women who worked at the Station gave me two fish for him. She said he was better tucker than the fish.

It was dangerous to camp in a dry creek. There could be a downpour up the river and it would come down in a wall of water. One day there were three of us slowly walking along our creek, keeping level with the water flowing uphill (it was backing up from the river). I saw them shifting camp. The king of the tribe was walking ahead, carrying his waddy and spear and his dog was behind him. A couple of hundred feet back were the women leaning over with big bundles on their backs.

They were the pack horses. We said "You shift camp Jackey?". They said "Big fella flood come". They were always right. I was told there were two ways they could tell: one was a reflection on the moon on a moonlit night and the other one was some little birds that lived in the lignum bushes near the water would all fly out from the river.They were all given clothes. Men had trousers and shirts and the women had dresses which they would put on when white people came around.

The men would go up to the Station and ask for an old bag. They would sit down, whith their backs against a post or tree and put a corner of the bag between their big toe and the next and use their two hands to unwind it till it was a big heap of string. Then they would twist it and make a belly band and have a few tassels hanging down the front.

There were hundreds of brumbies on Nappa Merrie and the stallions used to come in and take the station mares away. The owners had to go and find the brumbies and cut their horses out of the mob and take them home. Dad lost 3 or 4 mares to the brumbies.LIFE OF A STATION HAND SIXTY FIVE YEARS AGO

A TALK GIVEN BY THE LATE Mr W.F. RIDDIFORD, O.B.E., ON 14TH JULY. 1975 T0 THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

At the very large stations in this district there were usually a number of aborigines camped on the property. There was a permanent group at Yancannia station, as it was one of the very few places in the western district of New South Wales where the aborigines of bygone days could survive, because there was a constant water supply. There were only about four pl aces with permanent water in the whole area west of the River Darling, except along the Paroo River. One waterhole was at Depot Glen, Mount Poole, which the aborigines called Currawilpa. They could survive for quite a number of months in very dry times, where the carvings are at Mootwingee. The reason for the carvings and hand stencils is quite obvious. The aborigines did not have to go hunting, as they would wait for the animals to come in for water, then would spear them. While waiting all day for kangaroos to come to the rockholes the aborigines would occupy their time with paintings and rock carvings.

We had the sheep on blocks up there on Momba Station called Break O'Day and Wild Duck. We left them there for a considerable time until rain fell at Yalcowinna. While there we had a half caste fellow who was always making up verse to send to the Bulletin which went something like this:

I must ring up my horses and

I am mustering up my horses and gathering up my gear,

I am going back to Queensland

I am far too smart a man to waste my time down here.

Evelyn Creek 2020

by Harold J Hunt JP 124283

Harold Hunt is the author of several biographical books, including 'Memoirs of the Corner Country', the story of his mother May, the last Aboriginal woman born in Milparinka

A descendant of the Malyangapa People

DOB 27.12.1925

Totem. Gnaamba. (Boney bream fish)

The largely waterless lands of the Corner Country were traditionally occupied by several Aboriginal groups. In the Milparinka area lived members of the Maliangaapa people, around Tibooburra, were Wadigalis and Wangkumaras.

A fundamental understanding of the land and environment helped Aboriginal tribes to survive, especially their ability to find and conserve water. Soaks and wells were dug in dry creek beds, holes gouged into the lower ends of claypans, and campsites established alongside creeks and waterholes. They carried water in bags of kangaroo skins, or in coolamons. Many Europeans, both explorers and early settlers, could not have survived without the help of the Aboriginal people.

Trade routes and tracks were established across the desert to the west, to the north and east to the rivers. Sturt recorded following one track for six hours, coming, in the end to a well full of water. Stone artefacts found in the Corner Country had their origins in quarries hundreds of kilometres away.

The settlement brought changes to life in the Corner Country. Pastoralists spread their flocks of sheep and cattle across the region and competed with local Aborigines for water, and for grazing land. Often there were serious and tragic consequences. In time, however, many Aboriginal people were employed on the newly formed stations and were able to co-exist with pastoralists on their traditional lands. Others moved to local centres such as Tibooburra where they lived on the fringes of the township.

In 1909 the Aboriginal Protection Act was implemented, and in 1936 the Aboriginal Protection Board acquired the powers to remove Aborigines from "undesirable living areas". From Tibooburra, around 70 people were forcibly loaded onto trucks and taken to Brewarrina. Some found their way home to their tribal areas, but life for many was irreversibly damaged.

Across the Corner Country are many locations with traditional Aboriginal names, Milparinka and Tibooburra are just two

Evelyn Creek

Evelyn Creek runs through Milparinka. It was named by Charles Sturt in 1844 after his brother, Evelyn, a landholder in Victoria. Preservation Creek on which Depot Glen lies is a tributary of Evelyn Creek. The name "Milparinka" is an Aboriginal word, believed to mean elopement. The story goes that a young couple, each from a different tribe, fell in love and were forced to live away from their families. They camped alongside the waterhole at Milparinka. In the 1880s the same waterhole sustained a community of miners and their families in a desperately dry and difficult landscape.

Evelyn Creek would not be known to many people away from the Corner Country of New South Wales. But it is the lifeblood of that area. A gum tree lined the creek. Its source is a number of smaller creeks and gullies beginning south-west of Tibooburra, this state's most western town, and it wends its way down to the Cobham Lake. The overall length is only about one hundred kilometres, however, the significance of this creek is crucial to the opening up and prosperity of that part of the country from sheep and cattle grazing.

Prior white settlement it was the main meeting place for the Malyangaapa people and other tribal groups of the lakes between the Paroo River and those from the lakes east of the Flinders Ranges.

There are features of the Evelyn Creek that are not found in many other parts of the country. As well as the heavily grown gum tree lined banks it contained a wide variety of flora providing sustenance for wildlife therefore also providing food for the people.

The other major feature is that the creek had deep waterholes at various distances apart which became camping and ceremonial areas for the different tribal groups. Those waterholes provided substance over lengthy dry periods. That particular feature enabled graziers to select the most appropriate places to build their homesteads as can be seen by the property homesteads of Peak Hill, Milring, Coally, One Tree and others further down.

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  Geoffrey V. Svenson

- On some customs of the aborigines of the River Darling, New South Wales by Frederick Bonney
- Those who went before: A History of People of the Corner Country and Narriearra Caryapundy Swamp National Park.
- Developing Interactive Knowledgebases for Australian Aboriginal Languages — Malyangapa Peter K. Austin

Living Stories

- Great-great Grandfather George Dutton
- Twelve Years' life in Australia Matilda Wallace
- May Quayle Pioneer Women's Room, Milparinka
- Fowlers Gap to Milparinka Johnson

Rock art

- Images of rock art from the Byjerkerno and Sturt's Meadows localities
- Aboriginal rock engravings of the Panaramitee Hills David Mott
- Rock art footprints
- Rock art localities
- Sturt's Meadows Rock Art
- Monash University signs

Tools on display at Milparinka

- Some notes on grinding implements at Milparinka, NSW Colin Pardoe

Tools on display at the National Library of Australia

- Photographs of tools collected on Mount Poole Station and donated to the NLA.

Reference books

Available from the Archive Room, Milparinka Heritage Precinct. For access please ask the volunteer on duty.

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE FROM THE MILPARINKA HERITAGE PRECINCT.

Sturt's Narrative

The Dig Tree by Sarah Murgatroyd (Burke and Wills)

Tibooburra Corner Country by John Gerritsen

Aboriginal History by Malcolm Prentis

West of the Darling by Bobbie Hardy

Lament of the Barkinji by Bobbie Hardy

Voices from the Land (various authors)

Memoirs of the Corner Country by Harold Hunt

Dark emu by Bruce Pascoe (also in children's version)

Kidman the Forgotten King by Jill Bowen

The People of the Paroo. Frederick Bonney's photographs. By Jeannette Hope and Robert Lindsay

Gunyah, Goondi and Wurlie. The Aboriginal architecture of Australia

Additional references. List supplied by Natalie Kwok

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