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## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 8/17

### MULLA-YAKKI (Murla-yaki) and MULLAYAKKI-PARRI (Murlayaki-pari)

(last edited: 13.8.20)

**with an account of Mullayakkiburka (Tam O'Shanter) and the Mullayakki tribe;**

**and an Appendix about the politics of these 1839 events.**

**and PART 4 (CONCLUSION) of the 1839 Police expedition and its aftermath:**

**SEE ALSO:** PNS 8/14 Muna (**Part 1**); 8/18 Kadlitiya (**Part 2**); 9/04 Karrawadlungga (**Part 3**); and 8/39 Mitiwarti; 8/20 'Para'.

#### PREFACE:

My analysis of this and other names north of Adelaide is incomplete, and may be clarified or modified by others later from better knowledge of this part of the land, and from sources not yet consulted. In particular, I did not cover these areas when I searched the records left by the first surveyors (i.e. Field Books and maps held in the SA Geographical Names Unit). The Southern Kurna Place Names Project was originally confined to the region from Adelaide southward.

Many thanks to Adrian Shackley for his generous help in taking me to some of the places mentioned here, and in sharing local knowledge.

#### *NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:*

*This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.*

*The spellings and interpretations contained in it (linguistic, historical and geographical) are my own, and do not necessarily represent the views of KWP/KWK or its members or any other group.*

*I have studied history at tertiary level. Though not a linguist, for 30 years I have learned much about the Kurna, Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri and Narungga languages while working with KWP, Rob Amery, and other local culture-reclamation groups; and from primary documents I have learned much about the Aboriginal history of the Adelaide-Fleurieu region.*

*My explorations of 'language on the land' through the Southern Kurna Place Names Project are part of an ongoing effort to correct the record about Aboriginal place-names in this region (which has abounded in confusions and errors), and to add reliable new material into the public domain.*

*I hope upcoming generations will continue this work and improve it. My interpretations should be amplified, re-considered and if necessary modified by KWP or other linguists, and by others engaged in cultural mapping: i.e. Aboriginal researchers who are linking their oral traditions with other up-to-date and best available knowledge, and associated archaeologists, geographers, ecologists, anthropologists and historians.*

*Chester Schultz, 10/7/20.*

## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 8/17

### MULLA-YAKKI (Murla-yaki) and MULLAYAKKI-PARRI (Murlayaki-pari)

(last edited: 1/8/17)

**with PART 4 (CONCLUSION) of the 1839 Police expedition and its aftermath;  
an account of MullaYakkiburka (Tam O'Shanter) and the MullaYakki tribe;  
and an Appendix about the politics of these 1839 events.**

#### Abstract

*MullaYakki* (or, in our New Spelling, *Murlayaki*) is the most probable interpretation of the Kurna place-name recorded as "Mulleakki" by the German missionaries in 1839-40. It named the territory of a Kurna-speaking group located near Port Gawler: from the mouth of the Gawler River upstream, including the rich well-watered alluvial flats of Buckland Park and Virginia, probably up to somewhere around Penfield Gardens, together with adjacent strips of the surrounding plain.

In this interpretation the name probably means 'dry low [thing]', i.e. 'dry lowland', referring to the lack of surface water on the nearby plains if they also formed part of the *pangkara* ('inherited tract of land').

It is also possible that the name has no dictionary derivation or meaning, but is simply *Muliaki* or *Mudliaki*, the name of that place. However, the meanings above fit the place and are more probable.

The group was named after their territory, and at the time of these records the owner of this *pangkara* was *MullaYakki-burka* (*Murlayaki-purka*), known to the colonists as 'Tam O'Shanter'. Most of what we know about him and the name was recorded in connection with his involvement in the murder of shepherd Thompson on the Gawler River in April 1839. The eastern border of his country was somewhere in or around Penfield Gardens.

*MullaYakki-parri* (or *Murlayaki-pari*), 'river of the dry lowland', was recorded by Protector Wyatt at this time. It names this section of the Gawler River.

Tindale interpreted the name as 'dry valley'; but 'valley' is unlikely, as the lower reaches of the river are not in a valley or gully and are not dry even in summer.

<b>Coordinates</b>	Latitude -34.636033°, Longitude 138.547812 (nominal centre of locality: at intersection of Gawler River and Old Port Wakefield Road = southwest corner of Section 67, Hd of Port Gawler)
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## Language Information

Meaning	1. 'dry low [thing]', i.e. 'dry lowland' 2. 'river of the dry lowland'
Etymology	1. <i>murla</i> 'dry' + <i>yaki</i> 'depth, valley, low, deep, underneath' 2. <i>Murlayaki</i> + <i>pari</i> 'river'
Notes	In the sequence <i>a-ya</i> , the final vowel <i>a</i> in <i>murla</i> is changed and obscured by the following <i>y</i> , and sounded like <i>i</i> to the early listeners, who did not recognize the words in the compound.
Language Family	Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'
KWP Former Spelling	1. Mullayakki 2. Mullayakki-parri
KWP New Spelling 2010	1. Murlayaki 2. Murlayaki-pari
Phonemic Spelling	1. /murlayaki/ 2. /murlayakipari/
Syllables	1. "Mu-rla-yaki": 2. "Mu-rla-yaki pari":
Pronunciation tips	Stress the first and fifth syllables. Secondary stress on third syllable. 'u' as in 'put'. Every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'. 'rl' is an 'l' with the tongue curled back (retroflex).

## Main source evidence: (1) THE PLACE-NAME:

Date	[May 1839] / 1879
Original source text	"Weera districts north of Adelaide: Boora wongoarto Mikka wummungga Pootpa, pootpóbbëre Pootpou weera and weerungga Punggára... <b>Moole yerke perre – The Gawler river.</b> Kaleeya, kaleteeya – Gawler town... ? In the Weera districts: Weereecha Weertootpe... MEN'S NAMES: ... Nawálte – Tom of Weerawulla. Wongoocha – Charley of Weerungga."
Reference	W Wyatt [1837-9] / 1879, 'Vocabulary of the Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes', in JD Woods 1879, <i>Native Tribes of SA</i> : 179-180.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Probably one or more of the prisoners from Milner Estate: Paitya Kudnuitya (= Muliakkiburka = 'Tam O'Shanter'), Parutiya Wangutya ('Tommy Roundhead'), and Tipa Warritya ('Bob').



Date	Jan 1840
Original source text	<p>“Our numbers at present, as correctly as ascertained, are 540. This number includes the five tribes with which Europeans are in contact, viz.–</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Inhabiting Muliakki (Milner Estate)</b>, and containing only 20.</li> <li>2. <b>The Wirra tribe</b>, or those inhabiting the borders of the Para River, containing 120.</li> <li>3. <b>The Adelaide</b>, or those inhabiting a district of 10 miles north of Adelaide to the foot of Mount Terrible – 80.</li> <li>4. The Patpunga, or those inhabiting the southern coast from Mt Terrible to Rapid Bay, containing 90.</li> </ol> <p>These 4 tribes speak nearly the same language...”</p>
Reference	M Moorhouse Protector’s Report 14/1/1840, ‘Papers Relative to SA... 1843’, <i>BPP Australia</i> 7: 354.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	3 Feb 1840
Original source text	<p>“The other one [<i>i.e. the “station” on Special Survey, i.e. Milner, at Port Gawler</i>] is to be established on <b>the large Parra (Muleakki)</b> not far from there where German people will be settling on land which Angas and Flaxman recently purchased [<i>i.e. Barossa</i>]. We will perhaps have to extend our field of labour and be able to accompany the Aborigines on their walkabouts, but this depends on having means to do so. So those stations are not superfluous but necessary. On the Murray on account of the numbers of Aborigines and at <b>Muleakki</b> on account of the European settlement there, the Aborigines are more likely to stay.”</p>
Reference	Teichelmann letter to Dresden Missionary Society 3 Feb 1840, in Teichelmann Correspondence, translated by Noller & Kersten: 102 [Archival Ref: TB 136 – 137], Lutheran Archives of SA.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1840
Original source text	<p>– “<b>Burka</b>, <i>adj.</i> and <i>s.</i> old, of age, an adult, man... If affixed to a district of country, it implies that the individual is the proprietor and inhabitant; as <i>mullawirraburka</i>, dry-forest-man (King John’s native name). If affixed to the name of a child, it means the father of the child; as <i>ngultiburka</i>, <i>kudmoburka</i>.”</p>



	- “ <b>Pangkarra</b> , s. a district or tract of country belonging to an individual, which he inherits from his father... As each <i>pangkarra</i> has its peculiar name, many of the owners take that as their proper name, with the addition of the term <i>burka</i> ; for instance, <b>Mulleakiburka (Tam o’Shanter)</b> , <i>Mullawirraburka</i> (King John), <i>Kalyoburka</i> , <i>Karkulyaburka</i> , <i>Tindoburka</i> , &c...” - “ <b>Mulleakki: the Para River</b> ”.
Reference	Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840, <i>Outlines of a Grammar...</i> 2:4, 36, 75.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kadlitpinna, Mullawirraburka, Ityamaitpinna, etc 1838-40

Date	1857
Original source text	“ <b>Mudleakki N. prop. of the great Para.</b> ” [ <i>N. prop</i> = ‘proper noun’, i.e. a name].
Reference	Teichelmann, CG 1857, <i>Dictionary of the Adelaide Dialect</i> (unpublished MS No.59 from Bleek’s catalogue of the library of Sir George Grey [South African Public Library]).
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kadlitpinna, Mullawirraburka, Ityamaitpinna, etc 1838-44

**Main source evidence: (2) THE PLACE and PEOPLE:**

Date	16 Feb 1839
Original source text	“Early on Saturday morning last [16 Feb 1839], Mr T.B. Strangways, J.P., Mr Nation, myself [George Milner Stephen] and attendant [Strange], left Adelaide... We travelled along the Gawler, which has a very broad channel and banks from thirty to sixty feet high, running through the SW through the great plain before spoken of, for three miles, throughout which we found no water... we accordingly pursued its course through the same monotonous plain for about fifteen miles [Angle Vale, Lewiston etc], when we again came upon water in a continual chain of extensive ponds. Here commenced beautiful alluvial banks on either tide running out from 100 yards to three quarters of a mile, adorned with the most magnificent red gum and other trees that I have met with in the three colonies. The same rich alluvial soil, to the depth of thirty to fifty feet, as we saw by the opposite banks, with a succession of ponds, continued for about seven miles [around Virginia], when the Gawler ended in an extensive flat of many hundreds of acres, studded with immense trees [Buckland Park area], and in which also we have been informed there is water; and to which, indeed, we saw a path made by the aborigines. About one quarter to half a mile from this spot, we came upon a salt-water creek flowing into the gulf, and which His Excellency has permitted me to name Strange’s Creek, after my attendant, who led us to it, and had discovered it about two years ago in a boat, when a fisherman... Upon my return to town I took a special survey in this spot, from the mouth



	of the inlet up the banks of the Gawler, a far as the water extends [ <i>Milner Special Survey</i> ]... As soon as the spot has been well surveyed by sea and land, it is my intention to lay out a town for sale.” [comments in square brackets by Adrian Shackley]
Reference	George Milner Stephen 21 Feb 1839, ‘Discovery of a Splendid Tract at the Mouth of the Gawler River’, <i>South Australian Gazette &amp; Colonial Register</i> 28/2/1839: 8a-c.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	27 Feb 1839
Original source text	“At daylight this morning (Thursday, Feb 27) we entered a beautiful inlet [ <i>Strange’s Creek</i> ] ... We proceeded up the right branch for about two miles, when we landed with our party and walked across to the Gawler, where we breakfasted. The water is in abundance and of excellent quality. Within less than half a mile from the spot where we landed, we struck the left branch of the inlet... This branch leads to within three hundred yards of the finely timbered land which skirts the Gawler, and is close to a spot where we found a native well. There is also a native burying-place at this spot—a circular mound of earth surrounded by fine tall gum trees, notched in various places. The land in every direction is of the richest description... My opinion at present is, that this neighbourhood would form an excellent site for the town, as there are water carriage and fresh water both at command...”
Reference	AF Lindsay (surveyor), in ‘Extract from Captain Sturt’s Report of Strange’s Creek’, <i>South Australian Gazette &amp; Colonial Register</i> 28/2/1839: 8c.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	March 1839
Original source text	“MILNER ESTATE. PORT GAWLER. MR. NEALES BENTHAM has great pleasure in announcing to the public that the surveyors have laid out the Town... The Town is situated within a stone’s throw of <b>the river Gawler (called by the aborigines the “Great River”)</b> , and on the banks of two broad salt water creeks; (in which fish and wild fowl abound), navigable for the largest boats at low water to the anchorage in Port Gawler. It is also watered by a chain of ponds now containing an abundant supply...”
Reference	<i>South Australian Gazette &amp; Colonial Register</i> 16/3/1839: 3b.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	



<i>Date</i>	[27 April] / 11 May 1839
<i>Original source text</i>	[27 April 1839] “We immediately returned to Mr. Jacobs' tent [ <i>at Dead Man's Pass Reserve</i> ], took the horse out of the cart, and mounted two natives on horseback. We lost no time in proceeding to Milner estate. On our way there we came to the hut of Mr. Hallet, where we found two strange natives. I enquired where they came from and what they were doing there; they told me they had just come from the We-re tribe, and were waiting for a native named Rodney, who, they stated, had gone to the white men's house. I then asked them if they had seen any natives, and they told me that they had seen <b>Tam o'Shanter</b> and three others down the river; I then told our two natives to keep a sharp look-out for Tam o'Shanter's werlie, and in a few minutes came to it. We immediately proceeded across the river to the werlie, where we saw Tam o'Shanter and his two wives; on hearing my voice, three others made their appearance, all of whom I knew. I enquired from Tam o'Shanter if they had seen any natives, to which he answered ‘No.’ I then told him the men I wanted and what they had done. Tam o'Shanter said they were afraid to come on his ground. I then shook hands with them all, and left for Milner estate.”
<i>Reference</i>	William Williams, ‘Apprehension of the Native Murderers’, <i>South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register</i> 11/5/1839: 2c.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

<i>Date</i>	4 May 1839
<i>Original source text</i>	“... a shepherd of Mr. Hallett's [ <i>Thompson</i> ] had been murdered by the natives near that gentleman's station <b>at the Para River</b> ... The party of police, headed by Mr Inman, the Superintendent, and accompanied by Mr. Williams of the Storekeeper-general's department, and several of the most intelligent natives of our friendly tribes of the immediate neighbourhoods of Adelaide [ <i>Captain Jack</i> , ‘ <i>Bob</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Williamy</i> ’] ... succeeded in apprehending and bringing into town three natives directly implicated in these affairs. They belong to the small tribe who frequent <b>the Lower Para district</b> , and among them are the natives known as <b>Tam o'Shanter, Tommy, and Bob</b> — perhaps of all others, the most purely savage and the very worst that have occasionally visited the town. Tam o'Shanter is a notorious sheep and pig spearer.”
<i>Reference</i>	‘The Natives’, <i>SA Gazette &amp; Colonial Register</i> Saturday 4 May 1839: 1.
<i>Informants credited</i>	Police Deputy Inspector Henry Inman
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

<i>Date</i>	23 May 1839
<i>Original source text</i>	“I first saw the prisoner at the Para River... I know Mr. Hallet's station – I saw the prisoners about two miles from there. I spoke to them all – the first I saw was <b>Tam O'shanter</b> – I made enquiries of all of them about the murder of Mr. Gilles's shepherd [ <i>Duffield</i> ] – I asked them if they knew any thing of the men, whom I described to them—they told me they had not seen them, and that they never approached that ground in consequence of their belonging to another tribe”.
<i>Reference</i>	W Williams evidence, <i>Southern Australian</i> 29/5/1839: 2a, <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/6244805">http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/6244805</a>
<i>Informants credited</i>	Muliakkiburka and others
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

## SUBDUING THE PEOPLE OF THE ‘DRY LOWLAND’: Discussion:

### THE NAME (1): SOURCES:

There can be little doubt that this place-name, the place to which it refers, the man who was its custodian, and the ‘tribe’ of which he was a member, all came to public attention and appeared in the records as a result of the murder of shepherds Duffield and Thompson in April 1839. These events caused a crisis in the young colony, a police expedition to find the murderers, the first official executions of two Aboriginal men, and the recording of five out of the six reliably attested place-names which survive in the Para region.<sup>1</sup>

Interim Protector of Aborigines William Wyatt produced a list of place-names which included “Moole yerke perre: The Gawler River”. Elsewhere I argue that when he obtained his Para place-names, and the associated “Weera” personal and place names, he was almost certainly in Adelaide investigating the six Aboriginal suspects who had been arrested for these murders.<sup>2</sup>

This deduction is confirmed when we consult the German missionary linguists Teichelmann and Schürmann who were already active in the Adelaide Native Location Piltawodli during 1839. They recorded the name “Mulleakki: the Para River”, and also the name and status of one of the prisoners: “Mulleakiburka (Tam o'Shanter)”. He was one in their list of men who were *burka* (‘adult man, senior man’) – “owners” of a *pangkarra* or “tract of country belonging to an individual, which

<sup>1</sup> See also PNS 8/14 Muna, 8/18 Kadlitia / Kadliti-pari, 9/04 Karrawadlangga.

<sup>2</sup> See PNS 8/18 Kadlitia.



he inherits from his father” – and who each took his name from his *pangkarra*.<sup>3</sup> ‘Mulleaki’ was therefore Tam O’Shanter’s heart country, his property and responsibility.

Teichelmann recorded the place-name twice as “the large Parra (Muleakki)”<sup>4</sup> and “Mudleakki... the Great Para”.<sup>5</sup>

## THE PLACE (1): UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCES:

‘The Para River’ was and is a very ambiguous expression. ‘The Great Para’ is not much better, since it could apply not only to what we call the Gawler River but also to either the North or South Paras.<sup>6</sup> But Teichelmann’s letter specified that ‘Muleakki’ applied to a new station or Survey on the “Great Parra”, and a month earlier the new Protector Matthew Moorhouse had listed “Muliakki” as the name of a small ‘tribe’ of 20 people who inhabited the “Milner Estate”.<sup>7</sup> At this size the Muliakki tribe was essentially Tam O’Shanter’s immediate extended family.

The Milner Estate was Governor Gawler’s Special Survey No.1, a large area marked out in February 1839 on both sides of the Gawler River, including the mouth at Port Gawler and upstream for at least 18 km.<sup>8</sup> This referent coincides roughly with Wyatt’s gloss for ‘Moole-yerke-perre’, i.e. “Gawler River” – if this is taken to mean what it officially means now, i.e. *only* the watercourse on the plains below the junction of the North and South Para rivers at Gawler. The Milner Estate covered much of this stretch.

It is most unlikely that this area coincided exactly with the Kurna referents ‘Moole-yerke-perre’ and ‘Mulleakki’. But it is a good indicator, more specific than many other locations recorded for place-names. And it is possible that we can become a little clearer on the boundaries of the place and its ‘tribe’ if we look more closely at the name itself, and the adventures of its traditional proprietor.

<sup>3</sup> Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: 4, 36, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Teichelmann letter 3 Feb 1840, in Teichelmann Correspondence, tr Noller & Kersten: 102 [Archival Ref: TB 136 – 137], copy in Lutheran Archives of SA.

<sup>5</sup> Teichelmann MS Dictionary 1857.

<sup>6</sup> See PNS 8/20 ‘Para’. Once in 1839 there was a suggestion – in one of the advertisements for the Milner Estate – that Aborigines called the Gawler River “*the ‘Great River’*”, with the implication that this was the origin of the English name sometimes used in the 1840s, ‘Great Para’ (*SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 16/3/1839: 3b). However, there is no substantial evidence to back this idea as far as the *name* is concerned.

<sup>7</sup> Moorhouse Protector’s Report 14 Jan 1840, ‘Papers Relative to SA’: 354.

<sup>8</sup> i.e. upstream to somewhere near today’s Heaslip Rd in the suburbs of Angle Vale and Gawler River. The Milner Survey was mapped (very inaccurately, according to Adrian Shackley) on Arrowsmith 1841, ‘Map shewing the Special Surveys in South Australia’, London. Here its location is described on the left as “*Banks of the Gawler or N. Parra R*” (in which an over-careful draftsman, working at a time when the places were little known and the names in confusion, contradicts the map by referring to the North Para).

## THE NAME (2): MORPHEMES AND MEANINGS:

The morphemes are all easily identifiable as Kurna language. It will be convenient to deal with them in reverse order.

Wyatt alone adds “perre”, which is clearly *parri*, ‘river’.

We therefore have here a pair of names, one with ‘river’ attached and another without.<sup>9</sup> Such pairs could perhaps refer to the same place, one version simply reinforcing its position as a water source on a river. Or they could have two referents, the other being nearby but away from the river, or including a larger area through which the river runs. In this case the total evidence gives us reason to suspect the last alternative: a river site located within and named after a larger tribal *pangkarra*.

For once it is Wyatt (usually unreliable in linguistic matters) who alerts us to a possibility which the German linguists may have missed. His version of the second morpheme – “yerke” – suggests that their *-akki* was actually a word beginning with a consonantal *y*.<sup>10</sup> They recorded the separate word *yakki*; it can be a noun or an adjective, meaning ‘depth, valley’ or ‘deep, low’.<sup>11</sup>

The first morpheme appears to be *muli*, or (in Teichelmann’s late manuscript version) *mudli*.<sup>12</sup> While there is no known *muli*, *mudli* means ‘tool, furniture, a possession’. But it is hard to see how this word could be part of a place-name,<sup>13</sup> and we may probably discount it because there is something more likely.

Although all the records agree in ending the first morpheme with *-i*, this could be a mistake. It could be *a*. It is very easy to hear the sequence *-a-ya-* as *-ia-* or *-iya-*: especially when there is an unstressed *a* at the end of one morpheme, and the *ya-* is stressed at the beginning of the next; and more so if the listener does not recognize the first morpheme.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore possible that the

<sup>9</sup> There are several other Kurna place-names which form pairs in this way: cp. *Karrawirra* / *Karrawirra-parri* (PNS 2/05); *Pamgka* / *Pamgka-parri* (PNS 7/03/10); *Kadliti* / *Kadliti-parri* (PNS 8/18).

<sup>10</sup> The sound progression *i-a* is essentially the same phonetically as *iya*, and the transitional *y* can have more or less emphasis in pronunciation. If less, the foreign listener may miss the fact that the *y* begins a new word.

<sup>11</sup> There is no doubt that the collectors thought the first morpheme’s final vowel was *i*; it is so in every source. Tindale carelessly ignored this in one of his speculations, that Wyatt’s ‘yerke’ could be derived from Kurna *yarko* (‘shin, leg’): no doubt because Teichelmann & Schürmann had spelled it as *yerko*.

<sup>12</sup> “*Mudleakki N. prop. of the great Para*” (Teichelmann 1857, MS dictionary).

<sup>13</sup> We might wonder whether ‘implement’ could be about a workshop site; but we would still have to explain how such implements could be ‘deep’, ‘low’ or in a ‘valley’, and why a workshop site would be the defining identity of this area.

<sup>14</sup> The spoken context of a place-name rarely gives any clue how its morphemes relate to ordinary vocabulary. Another example of *aya* heard as *iya*: it is very likely that the place-name “Cowiealunga” at Myponga Beach is *kauwa-yarlungga* ‘cliff and sea place’ rather than *kauwi-yarlungga* ‘water and sea place’, the listener having mistaken *kauwa* for the much more familiar *kauwi* (see PNS 5.01/02).

original first morpheme was actually *mula*, *murla* or even *mudla*.<sup>15</sup> This possibility becomes a high probability when we consider the available vocabulary and meanings.

*Mudla* or *mudlha* is ‘nose’.<sup>16</sup> But ‘nose’ is often used by Aboriginal people for capes and peninsulas,<sup>17</sup> making it an unlikely candidate for the Gawler River or the coastline of Port Gawler.

*Mulla* or *murla* is a common word meaning ‘dry’, and ‘mull-’ is closer to most of the recorded versions. Another possible variant *murdlā*, though unrecorded in Kurna, could easily have existed; it could explain Teichelmann’s ‘Mudleakki’.<sup>18</sup> ‘Dry’ is a word which could certainly belong in a place-name,<sup>19</sup> and unlike ‘nose’ it could apply readily in this area.

So the most likely interpretation is *Mulla-yakki* (*Murla-yaki*).

So do we have here a ‘dry valley’, or a ‘dry deep or low’ place?

### THE PLACE (3): A DRY GULLY?

Was this *yakki* the gully of the Gawler River? Could this gully be identified routinely by its *dryness* in this area?

The channel of the Gawler gradually becomes shallower to the west, from about 12 metres at Gawler West to about 9 at Angle Vale and 3 at Virginia,<sup>20</sup> while west of the Port Wakefield Road it is only a shallow groove in the landscape. While we might (at a stretch!) describe it as a *yakki* at Angle Vale, the word could not apply at Port Gawler.

<sup>15</sup> In Kurna the alveolar *l* (as in English) is sometimes interchangeable with the pre-stopped *dl* and/or the retroflex *rl*. Teichelmann and Schürmann noted that “a few letters... are frequently changed or omitted, even amongst one and the same tribe... *R* is changed with *l* or *d*; as... *garla*, *gadla*; *murla*, *mulla*” – thus revealing that *mulla* (‘dry’) is likely to include a retroflex *rl* (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840 1:3). They might perhaps have included *mudla* here, except that they recorded this spelling separately as ‘nose’ (which strictly is *mudlha*, with a pre-stop and an interdental *lh*). See the new spellings in *Draft Kurna Dictionary 2014*.

<sup>16</sup> Wyatt recorded no pre-stop in “*Moola*, *nose*”.

<sup>17</sup> e.g. *Mudlangga* for Lefevre Peninsula (see PNS 8/06).

<sup>18</sup> Linguist Rob Amery says that “*murdlā* is a likely variant pronunciation of *murla* ‘dry’. In fact it is recorded as *murtla* in *Nukunu*. It’s just like the *warli* ~ *wardli* (*worli* ~ *wodli*) variation” (p.c. email 14/9/2010). The *Nukunu* were neighbours of the Kurna speakers of the Mid-North, and the languages are closely related.

<sup>19</sup> Cp. *Mullawirra* (‘dry forest’) near Sellick’s Hill (PNS 4.04.03/04).

<sup>20</sup> Adrian Shackley p.c. email 30/1/2016. Stephen reported its banks as “*from thirty to sixty feet high*” in its upper reach (*Register* 28/2/1839: 8b): clearly an overestimate.

Neither was the whole river *murla* as a generalization. This could only be said upstream from Virginia, and then only in summer.<sup>21</sup>

Like all the rivers of the plains from the Torrens northward, the tributaries of the Gawler River could produce “a great rush of water” in winter, making the South Para and junction at Gawler very dangerous.<sup>22</sup> And like the others the Gawler was intermittent, shrinking in summer to a series of pools. These features were not at all unique to this river.<sup>23</sup> The settlers gave the name ‘the Dry Creek’ not to the Gawler but to the small watercourse just north of what is now Grand Junction Road (and even this could produce “a wide sheet of flowing water” in winter at Parafield and Greenfields near the mouth.<sup>24</sup>

And downstream in those times the Gawler was not ‘dry’ at all, even at its driest. When the Colonial Secretary George Milner Stephen explored the Gawler River in February 1839 – late in summer – he found it dry from the junction downstream for many miles, but further down he reported as follows.<sup>25</sup>

*We accordingly pursued its course through the same monotonous plain<sup>26</sup> for about fifteen miles, when we again came upon water in a continual chain of extensive ponds. Here commenced beautiful alluvial banks on either side running out from 100 yards to three quarters of a mile, adorned with the most magnificent red gum and other trees that I have met with in the three colonies. The same rich alluvial soil, to the depth of thirty to fifty feet, as we saw by the opposite banks, with a succession of ponds, continued for about seven miles,<sup>27</sup> when the Gawler ended in an extensive flat of many hundreds of acres, studded with immense trees,<sup>28</sup> and in which also we have been informed there is water; and to which, indeed, we saw a path made by the aborigines. About one quarter to half a mile from this spot, we came upon a salt-water creek flowing into the gulf.<sup>29</sup>*

<sup>21</sup> “Basically dry from Gawler to Bakers Road in summer – there is 1 waterhole at the end of McGee Rd which has water over summer but that’s about it till a Bakers Rd where the water table used to be a about ground level” (Adrian Shackley p.c. email 30/1/2016).

<sup>22</sup> DG Brock 1843 (ed. K Peake-Jones 1981), *Recollections of D.G.B. 1843*, Adelaide, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, SA Branch: 32.

<sup>23</sup> Brock in *SA Register* 11/10/1843: 2; Brock *Recollections*: 21; ‘Old Colonist’ 1851 in EM Yelland (ed) 1970, *Colonists, Copper and Corn in the colony of South Australia 1850-51*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press: 111 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1983). Brock’s three newspaper articles have more detail than his published *Recollections*.

<sup>24</sup> C Westell & V Wood 2014, ‘An Introduction to Earthen Mound Sites in SA’, *Journal of the Anthropological Society of SA* 38: 35 (thanks to Sue Coldbeck for this reference). This ‘sheet of flowing water’ gave the area its Kurna name *Yartalla*, ‘water flowing beside a river’ (see PNS 1/04 Yartalla).

<sup>25</sup> George Milner Stephen, ‘Discovery of a Splendid Tract at the Mouth of the Gawler River’, *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 28/2/1839: 8b-c, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750425>. Thanks to Adrian Shackley for directing me to this reference and the Lindsay one below, and for providing his comments on them.

<sup>26</sup> Adrian Shackley comments: “more confirmation that the floodplain through Angle Vale, Lewiston etc was mostly grassland” (p.c. email 12/6/2011).

<sup>27</sup> “covering the main alluvial horticultural land around Virginia” (Shackley).

<sup>28</sup> “Buckland Park area” (Shackley).

<sup>29</sup> Stephen named this “Strange’s Creek”.

The seven miles of ponds, measured eastward from the 'extensive flat' of Buckland Park, probably began around Angle Vale or Penfield Gardens.<sup>30</sup>

If so, the 'wet' stretch was a very substantial part of the river, well over half of its length. Today this might surprise us; but the normal volume of water in the river has of course been drastically reduced by dams and reservoirs upstream in the very large catchment area.<sup>31</sup>

Nine days after Stephen, the surveyor Arthur Lindsay confirmed the earlier information when he found in the same area "water... in abundance and of excellent quality", a "native well" and "a circular mound of earth" which he took to be a "native burying-place".<sup>32</sup>

#### THE PLACE (4): THE DRY LOWLAND:

The neighbouring landscape was a different matter. Early colonists were impressed and daunted by the 'boundless plains' of Australia. They described the "immense plain" surrounding the Gawler River as "monotonous country",<sup>33</sup> by which we must understand 'open grassland'.

In particular, it was and is *dry* both southward and northward, especially in summer and autumn.<sup>34</sup> In 1843 Brock described the land between Dry Creek and the Gawler River as "a plain on which there is but little water or timber: at this season [*October*] the pasture is tolerable, but it soon passes away".<sup>35</sup> On these flats of kangaroo grass with occasional belts of mallee and native pine scrub,<sup>36</sup> there was no surface water southward until the Little Para River 15 km away, or northward

<sup>30</sup> This estimate (in consultation with Adrian Shackley 6/2/16) allows for the fact that Stephen's distances are all over-estimated, and is consonant with the likely location of waterholes east of Baker Rd, Virginia (about four km east of Port Wakefield Rd; see also the discussion of Tam's wurley and Hallett's hut, below). Adrian Shackley says, "*the total distance from Gawler to coast as the crow flies is about twenty miles. Stephen's descriptions add to about 30 miles which is not surprising if following somewhat the twists in river... These pools could start around Baker's Road ford where the water table is still close to the surface*" (p.c. email 12/6/2011).

<sup>31</sup> According to the official studies, "56% of the natural flow [has been] diverted for consumptive purposes" (Dept for Environment & Heritage 2007, *Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Region: Estuaries Information Package*: 10; google 'mp-gen-estuariesinfopack-amlr').

<sup>32</sup> *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 28/2/1839: 8c, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750441>.

<sup>33</sup> These expressions were used more than once: see Brock *Recollections*: 19. "The North-road from this spot [Grand Junction Inn at Gepps Cross] to Gawler Town presents no attractions. It lies along an immense expanse of plain, interrupted only by the strips of vegetation of the Dry Creek and the Little Para" (Yelland 1970: 104). North of the River Gawler the plain was equally 'immense and monotonous', though here it featured the 'immense' Gawler Scrub (Brock *Recollections*: 22; Yelland: 113).

<sup>34</sup> Shackley p.c. email 30/1/2016.

<sup>35</sup> 'DGB' [Daniel Brock] 'The Country Districts' [No.1], *SA Register* 11/10/1843: 2, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/27445718>.

<sup>36</sup> "The Gawler Plains were covered with kangaroo grass, and in lighting a fire on our way up, the growth caught alight, and there was an immense blaze. River red gums bordered the Light, Gawler and Little Para River" (Ross Reid interview)

until the River Light (12 km) – which Colonel Light disparaged as a “salt water creek”,<sup>37</sup> and of which Brock (in late spring) reported that “the running of the stream was scarcely visible”.<sup>38</sup>

As part of the lamented ‘monotony’, these plains are also very flat and *low*. Along the Gawler River the land rises from the sea eastward very slowly, only 10 metres of height for each 5 or 6 km of distance. The eastern end of the Milner Survey, about 18 km inland, was only 30 metres above sea level.<sup>39</sup> North and south of the Gawler, the east-west slope is not much different.

Thus the *Murla-yaki* itself – a ‘dry *lowland*’ – certainly applies to the vicinity of the Gawler; but in this vicinity alone it could also theoretically apply anywhere between Gawler Scrub and the Little Para.

#### THE RIVER IN THE DRY LOWLAND:

In Aboriginal perception it seems there was a *yakki* here and also a *parri*, and they were not the same thing. The *Murlayaki-pari* clearly applied to the alternately dry and raging gully of the Gawler River, with its precious ponds downstream.

The courses of the major creeks were marked then as now by conspicuous lines of gumtrees standing up from the surrounding grasslands to announce ‘here is water’.<sup>40</sup> A *parri* was of great importance to travellers in a *murla* country. The Gawler was a much bigger and better-watered gully than the Little Para or the Light. Certainly its Milner reaches must have been a basic focus of Aboriginal life and travel on the plains.<sup>41</sup> Hence it would not be surprising if this relatively large habitable stretch was specially identified as ‘the river of the dry lowland’, *Murlayaki-pari*.

Probably this connection also served to narrow the focus of the name *Murlayaki* to the area surrounding the Gawler, rather than around other lesser rivers. Obviously this was not the only ‘dry lowland’ in Kurna territory – just as *Murla-wirra* (the scrub patch featuring Dryland Teatree which

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1909, describing the area as it was when the Reid family first arrived in Gawler in February 1839: (SMEC Urban 2013, *Gawler Urban Rivers Master Plan*: 31, <http://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=641&c=38510> [30/11/15]).

<sup>37</sup> According to William Jacob, the Gawler Special Survey “*should have been called Light, as he afterwards said ‘they called a salt water creek after me, but as kissing goes by favour he was not Governor’*” (W Jacob letter to James Martin, ‘Gawler: Past, Present, and Future’, *The Bunyip* 26/8/1892: 3a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/97236904>). However, this was partly (and very understandably) ‘sour grapes’. Light himself had not seen the River Light, and in fact it “*has lots of permanent waterholes but only flows significantly after a wet winter. It gets more salty late summer, autumn*” (Shackley p.c. email 30/1/2016).

<sup>38</sup> *SA Register* 11/10/1843: 2.

<sup>39</sup> Captain Allen of Buckland Park overestimated its flatness, contemplating the possibility of a canal from the coast to Gawler, and forgetting that the supply of water to fill it was intermittent (Brock *Recollections*: 21).

<sup>40</sup> See Eliza Mahony (nee Reid) 1898 (ed. AA Lendon 1927), ‘The First Settlers At Gawler’, *Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, SA Branch*, Proceedings 28: 66; Brock *SA Register* 11/10/1843: 2; Yelland: 104.

<sup>41</sup> The area has burial sites, wells and mound sites arising from generations of pit-ovens: see C Westell & V Wood 2014: 30-65 (thanks to Sue Coldbeck for this reference).

once existed in the foothills opposite Aldinga Scrub) was not the only 'dry forest' in the area.<sup>42</sup> We may guess that Murlayaki gained its title because it included a notable area of well-watered land and a large rich estuary nearby for fish and shellfish, and supported a resident 'tribe' who had made a visible path to the coast. All of this supports a location further downstream for this *pangkarra*, rather than nearer to Gawler Town.

Most other *pangkarras* never had their names recorded simply because nothing forced the invaders to pay attention to them. It is time to tell the sad story of how Murlayaki came to be recorded.

### ON THE TRAIL OF 'TAM O'SHANTER: MURLAYAKI-BURKA, 'SENIOR MAN OF THE DRY LOWLAND':

The names were not only ecological markers but also cultural. 'Muliakki' was also a tribe, and one of its leaders owned the land here. Accordingly we shall follow what little is known of these people their tribal boundaries, and the owner of the local *pangkarra*.

Quite a lot was recorded about the man whose name we may now spell *Murlayaki-burka*, 'senior man of the dry lowland', known to settlers as 'Tam O'Shanter'.

Outside the Fleurieu Peninsula he was one of the first Aboriginal leaders to meet Europeans. At the beginning of February 1837 he was visiting a large gathering at Port Noarlunga. A small party of colonists led by CW Stuart and Kangaroo Islander Nat Thomas walked south from Adelaide looking for a missing horse, and unexpectedly came upon the Aboriginal camp. "A tall fellow, afterwards known as Tam o'Shanter", led the usual cautious challenges to the newcomers, the physical examinations, and the attempted questions in language – which is puzzling, since here 30 km south of Adelaide he was himself a guest on other people's land. Though none of these Aborigines knew English, they welcomed, watered and fed the newcomers, and some from both groups went hunting together. Two days later Tam and others accompanied Stuart's party back to Glenelg, where Governor Hindmarsh had them dressed and presented to the curiosity of the colonists and sailors.<sup>43</sup>

Tam cut a memorable figure. Stuart remembered him as "a wild, dangerous fellow, very tall, and powerful",<sup>44</sup> another colonist as "powerful and ferocious".<sup>45</sup> Although he was already frequenting

<sup>42</sup> See PNS 4.04.03/04 Mullawirra.

<sup>43</sup> 'Noarlunga' [CW Stuart] 1875, 'An Adventure With the Natives', *South Australian Advertiser* 28/12/1875: 5-6. This story is re-told by JW Bull in his well-known book (Bull 1878 / 1884, *Early Experiences Of Colonial Life In South Australia*, Adelaide: Advertiser & Chronicle Offices: 32-7). For more on this incident see PNS 4.02/01 Birrangga.

<sup>44</sup> *Advertiser* 28/12/1875: 6b.

the Adelaide region at the effectively pre-colonial moment in 1837, for another two or three years his *tribe* would be unknown as such to the settlers, emerging into the light only for a brief and tragic moment in 1839, soon to be forgotten. But Adelaide apparently became familiar with the sight of Tam's imposing presence and voice in the big local corroborees.<sup>46</sup>

### STORY (1): MURLAYAKI, MURLAYAKIBURKA, AND THE CRISIS OF 1839:

In 1839 Murlayakiburka was a lead player in a tale which I tell here because it reveals how the name of his territory was obtained, and some hints about its extent.

On 21<sup>st</sup> April 1839 a shepherd Duffield was killed near Athelstone by three Aboriginal men, who immediately fled north "to join their tribe". Police Inspector Henry Inman quickly organized an expedition to track and capture them.<sup>47</sup> Along with interpreter William Williams he brought a number of Williams's Adelaide Aboriginal contacts as trackers, including Kadlitpinna ('Captain Jack'), 'Bob' and 'Williamy'. These men (and others of the Adelaide tribe) had identified the killers as visiting members of the northeastern 'We-re' or 'Wirra' tribe.<sup>48</sup> Now, armed also with Duffield's descriptions of the three foreigners and their two dogs, they were pursuing them enthusiastically, "determined to find the murderers and take them back to Adelaide for the white men to hang them".

The story of the earlier parts of this expedition – from Adelaide, northeast across the Little Para, to Lyndoch, and back to the site which was then being surveyed for Gawler Town – is given in other essays.<sup>49</sup> Here I continue it into its final stages, including a number of details which hint obscurely at a complex tribal politics:

Having lost the trail of the three men with their two dogs, somewhere in the northeast, at the direction of Kadlitpinna and his colleagues they arrived at Jacob's Gawler survey camp on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Here and at John Reid's neighbouring homestead 'Clonlea' they were told that "two native

<sup>45</sup> Advertiser 21/12/1878: 5e.

<sup>46</sup> "In the infancy of Adelaide there was a black who had obtained from the new-comers the name of Tam o'Shanter, whose grandest vocal efforts became familiar to the colonists as they sat outside, or reclined in their tents and reed huts" (JP Stow 1883, *South Australia: Its History, Production, and Natural Resources*, Adelaide: 135-6). p. "There were some remarkably fine men among the blacks who in the old days camped on the Park Lands. Among them, [was] the powerful and ferocious Tam O'Shanter, whose fearful yell at the corroboree was never forgotten by those who heard it" (Anon., 'Review: The Native Tribes of SA', Advertiser 21/12/1878: 5e).

<sup>47</sup> There are two main accounts of this expedition: Williams's, 'Apprehension of the Native Murderers', *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 11/5/1839: 2b, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750582>; and the diary of Arthur Hardy (a survey labourer who joined the expedition), 21-29 April 1839, PRG 101/1/1, SLSA, [http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/prg/PRG101\\_1\\_1\\_Hardy\\_diary\\_1838-40\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/prg/PRG101_1_1_Hardy_diary_1838-40_transcript.pdf). Extra details emerged in the court evidence: *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d-5a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750623>; *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 29/5/1839: 1e, 2a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/71685317>.

<sup>48</sup> For more analysis of who the 'Wirra' people were, see PNS 8/14 Muna, 8/18 Kadlitiya and 9/04 Karrawadlungga.

<sup>49</sup> See PNS 8/14 Muna and 8/18 Kadlitiya.



men and two dogs” who “answer[ed] the description we gave” had passed through the day before and headed further west along the Gawler River. The party “made no doubt but that they were gone to Milner estate” 18 miles away. They “immediately returned to Mr. Jacobs' tent, took the horse out of the cart, and mounted two natives on horseback”, probably Kadlitpinna and either Bob or Williamy.<sup>50</sup> A smaller party including these two with Inman and Williams “lost no time in proceeding to Milner estate” to capture their quarry.

It is rather unlikely that the *two* men they were now tracking actually belonged to the *three* whom they had pursued to the northeast. The Adelaide trackers were probably personally acquainted with the Wirra men, and certainly knew their names.<sup>51</sup> But they had received a severe scare at Lyndoch Valley, when “we saw 3 natives at a distance walking up & down in the moonlight”.<sup>52</sup> The Adelaide men were terrified, obviously taking these figures to be either dreaded night spirits or sorcerers threatening payback.<sup>53</sup> Next morning “the natives then stated that the men we wanted... had proceeded to the Para River”,<sup>54</sup> but no reason was recorded for this guess. Was it Kadlitpinna’s prudent decision to save face while surreptitiously abandoning the chase? Did he and his colleagues feel safer at Gawler?

Inman’s flying squad moved west along the Gawler River and came to “the hut of Mr. Hallet”: presumably his shepherd’s hut, probably around Angle Vale or Penfield Gardens.<sup>55</sup> Here he found no shepherd, but “two strange natives” – presumably men who did not answer the descriptions Inman had, but who nevertheless were probably the ones they had been following from Gawler. They told Williams they “had just come from the We-re tribe”. This fact, though of great interest to us now, seems not have aroused any suspicions among Inman’s party, as nothing transpired except a friendly exchange of information. These two Wirra men “were waiting for a native named Rodney, who, they stated, had gone to the white men’s house”, i.e. the tent or hut of Stephen’s men at Milner.<sup>56</sup> (Was this the well-known ‘Rodney’ of the Adelaide tribe, Ityamaitpinna, another of the leading informants at the Native Location?) When Williams asked if they had seen any other natives, they directed him to “Tam o’Shanter and three others down the river”.

<sup>50</sup> “Our brave-hearted Captain Jack, Bob, and Williamy” were particularly enthusiastic and trusted, having volunteered to be part of a special small advance force earlier in the expedition (Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2c).

<sup>51</sup> Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2b.

<sup>52</sup> Diary of Arthur Hardy (a survey labourer who joined the expedition) 26 April 1839, PRG 101/1/1, SLSA.

<sup>53</sup> Among the Adelaide people Wirra men were noted for sorcery (Schürmann diary 6 March 1840), and Lyndoch Valley was probably in their territory.

<sup>54</sup> Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2c.

<sup>55</sup> This station belonged to Alfred Hallett, not his more famous brother John who acquired a station ‘Arno Vale’ at Cockatoo Valley. I have found no record of where precisely Alfred’s station on the Gawler River was located, but see below for an estimate.

<sup>56</sup> At that moment in the progress of the Surveys, Stephen’s men such as Kerville were probably the only other resident Europeans in the western stretch of the river. The surveyors had already laid out Milner Town by early March (SA *Gazette & Colonial Register* 16/3/1839: 3b).

About two miles further on<sup>57</sup> they found a wurley on the opposite side of the river, with Murlayakiburka in residence, his two wives, and three other men: “Tippa Warricha” (Warritya) or ‘Bob’, Wangutya or ‘Tommy Roundhead’, and ‘Charley’. All four men were already known to Williams. “They appeared frightened”. Murlayakiburka denied seeing any other natives, and when Williams described Duffield’s killers, his reply signified that those men could not be in this vicinity: “they were afraid to come on his ground” because they belonged to “another tribe”. Nothing seemed amiss; the squad “shook hands” and went on to Milner.

But there they found the resident Kerville and Hallett’s hut-keeper Cox with the news that blacks had clubbed Hallett’s shepherd Thompson to death and scattered the sheep, only the day before while Inman’s party were around Lyndoch. Rodney was not seen now but he had been there; for “a native boy came up to us who informed [Williams] that Rodney had told him that Tam o’Shanter and some other natives had killed the white man”.

They had a second case on their hands, perhaps conveniently for Kadlitpinna; the original case now disappears from view in Williams’s account. Inman, Williams, Edwards, Strange<sup>58</sup> and the two Aboriginal volunteers (presumably still mounted) hurried back the eight miles to Murlayakiburka’s wurley. It was now 10.30 at night; the same four men were still there. “To each of our two natives we had given a pistol and sword, telling them to assist us in taking the other natives, to which they answered — ‘Yes, we will, and if they won’t come, we will shoot them’”. Pretending to be lost, Williams gained access to the wurley for the three white men, who then seized three of the Aborigines and put pistols to their heads. “Mr. Inman took hold of Tam o’Shanter, who made an attempt to run, but was stopped by Mr. Inman hitting him over the head with the butt end of his gun”. After capturing three prisoners, the squad searched the wurley and found Thompson’s gun, one of his missing dogs, and a bloodied spear. The prisoners – Murlayakiburka, ‘Bob’ and ‘Tommy’ – made no more resistance and allowed themselves to be taken back to Milner.

Three prisoners, not four. Did Charley escape? Did they not want him? Was his disappearance too embarrassing to mention? Did they shoot him and then enforce a cover-up?

Next morning Wangutya-Tommy admitted they knew where Thompson’s body was and took the party to it – but not until Inman had threatened to shoot them.<sup>59</sup> Kerville and Cox accompanied the squad and their prisoners “about ten miles in a direct line” to the bank of the river not far from Hallett’s hut, and identified the partly-hidden body. From there Inman returned to their base camp at Jacob’s tent. Tam denied being present at the murder (though this may have been a lie), but admitted to stealing some sheep afterwards and also accused Wangutya of killing Thompson; and

<sup>57</sup> This distance was given by Williams in court (*SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d).

<sup>58</sup> Edwards was one of Inman’s party; Strange was Stephen’s ‘attendant’ who had been with him on his exploration to Port Gawler in February.

<sup>59</sup> Hardy diary 28 April 1839. This detail was of course omitted from the published account and the court evidence.

“all the three said it was Charley—that Tommy only struck him a little, but that Charley hit him plenty”.<sup>60</sup> Inman had failed to bring in the main offender.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> they returned to Adelaide – as the *Register* put it, “without having obtained any trace of the three men suspected [of Duffield’s murder] or of the tribe which they belonged”, but “bringing into town three natives directly implicated in these affairs”, who “belong to the small tribe who frequent the Lower Para district”.<sup>61</sup>

This sentence illustrates the very limited grasp of Aboriginal realities which prevailed among the settlers. As we have seen, the killers of Duffield came from a different tribe, and were said to be afraid to set foot on Tam O’Shanter’s Lower Para. But the city merged ‘these affairs’ into one, along with the tribes involved. This confusion was unresolved even by the trials three weeks later. In today’s Aboriginal renaissance, it is important to tease out from it whatever facts we can.

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## THE PLACE (5): THE EXTENT OF TAM O’SHANTER’S TERRITORY:

At this point we interrupt the story in order to use it in drawing some conclusions about the eastern limit of Murlayaki territory.

We can be sure that Tam’s land did not extend all the way to Gawler town, as the name *Miti-warti* was given a couple of km west of the town,<sup>62</sup> and beyond that was *Kadli-tia*.<sup>63</sup> But the tale of Inman’s expedition gives us an approximate eastern border.

### (5.1) The border was probably located somewhere between Hallett’s hut and Tam’s wurlie.

Murlayakiburka boasted that Inman’s three Wirra fugitives “never approached that ground in consequence of their belonging to another tribe”, and “were afraid to come on his ground”.<sup>64</sup> So it is likely that Hallett’s hut, where the two Wirra men were waiting for Rodney, was just outside Murlayaki’s eastern border. It is even possible that it was the presence of these others, following border protocols only one or two km away, which may have elicited Tam’s boast. It is a fair guess that when Tam camped at his wurley with visitors he was on his own land.

<sup>60</sup> Williams evidence, *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 5a.

<sup>61</sup> *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 4/5/1839: 1d.

<sup>62</sup> See PNS 8/39 Mitiwari.

<sup>63</sup> See PNS 8/18 Kadlitia.

<sup>64</sup> *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a; Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2c.

We know that the wurley was only “about two miles from Mr Hallett’s station”, and it took “a few minutes” to travel from the hut to the wurley.<sup>65</sup>

It is a safe bet that both Hallett’s hut and Tam’s campsite were next to a waterhole on the river. This was April, when the river is at its driest for the year; so Tam’s and Hallett’s waterholes would both have to be a permanent ones. Even today there are a number of places on the river between Baker Road, Virginia, and Chivell Road, Angle Vale, which still show signs of having once been reliable waterholes.<sup>66</sup>

Any two of these which are ‘about two miles’ apart could be the sites we want. Somewhere in the intervening stretch of the river was probably the border.

**(5.2)** To deduce the actual position of these sites we need to know **the position of Kerville’s camp at Milner**, since our crucial data are measured from there.

Kerville almost certainly erected his tent or hut at the site of the proposed *Milner Town*, so that he could examine its assets on behalf of Stephen and show them off to any visitors.

According to John Reid, Milner Estate was “about eighteen miles” from his property ‘Clonlea’ at Gawler.<sup>67</sup> We may assume that he meant Kerville’s hut or tent, that as a neighbour he would be likely to know a fairly accurate distance, and that this was not as the crow flies, but a travelling distance. The track would first go south from Clonlea to the river, and then west along what would become the ‘Parra Road’ (roughly today’s Angle Vale Road). This would put Kerville fairly close to the coast – which is likely also from the importance Stephen attached to the possibility of a new port there.

By my calculations, the town as marked on the ‘Map shewing the Special Surveys’ lies eastward from what we know as Brooks Road, Buckland Park (i.e. around Legoe Road, between Thompson Creek and the Gawler River).<sup>68</sup>

Brock said the town was to be at “the entrance out into the gulf” and “about 2 miles” from Captain Allen’s homestead,<sup>69</sup> which would be known as ‘Buckland Park’. The site of this is known, and it is

<sup>65</sup> Williams evidence, *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a; Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2c. In this context we can read Hallett’s ‘station’ as equivalent to his ‘hut’. At this early stage he would have had nothing on the station except sheep feeding on native grasses, and the shepherd’s hut inhabited by Thompson and Cox.

<sup>66</sup> In 1839, with the water table almost at the surface everywhere along the river up to about Chivell Rd, Angle Vale, there would have been waterholes in late April at a number of places along this stretch (Shackley p.c. 6/2/16). Even today, when the water table is many metres below the surface and waterholes are fed by river flow alone (Shackley p.c. 6/2/16), the GoogleEarth image at <http://www.findlatitudeandlongitude.com> (8/2/16) shows quite large strips of water at the end of Johns Rd, Winifred Rd, Hayman Rd and Chivell Rd. A quick field trip on 6 Feb 2016 showed small green remnant pools and a tiny cracked claypan at Johns Rd; another green pool at Winifred Rd; but no water visible at either Bakers Rd or Chivell Rd. These areas might be worth investigation by future cultural historians.

<sup>67</sup> Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2c.

<sup>68</sup> The boundaries of the Surveys are very inaccurate compared with the original survey maps (Adrian Shackley p.c. 2016; and cp. original maps of the Murray Pass Survey, GNU Plans 5/5 and 5/6); but it is only the western end of the Milner Survey which concerns us here.

<sup>69</sup> DG Brock *Recollections*: 20-21.

about two miles from the western part of the town as marked on the map, i.e. the area around Legoe Rd.

**(5.3) Tam's wurley was on the "opposite" (northern) bank of the river "about eight miles" from Kerville's.<sup>70</sup>**

It would certainly have been in the upper part of Stephens's seven miles of ponds, and further upstream than the Baker Rd ford. In this area the water table is now many metres below the surface in April, but in 1839 it was probably at the surface and in many places able to feed a waterhole even in April. According to Shackley, the waterhole at today's Johns Road was the most likely permanent water between Bakers Rd and Gawler; but there could have been others: e.g. at Winifred Rd, Hayman Rd and Chivell Rd.

**(5.4) The body of Thompson was found on the banks of the river "about ten miles in a direct line" from Kerville's.<sup>71</sup>**

It is unlikely that Thompson had taken his sheep very far from water, and the best water would have been close to the hut. We may therefore take the location of the body to be (for our purposes) roughly the same as that of the hut, near a good waterhole.

On this route Inman's party and prisoners must have crossed Thompson Creek to save time. This would put the body and hut somewhere close to today's Angle Vale Bridge on Heaslip Road. But this is 1.5 km upstream from the nearest likely site for a permanent waterhole, Chivell Road. This is 1-2 km west of the bridge and about 9 miles in a straight line from Kerville's. Williams might have over-estimated the distance, we can probably locate the body and hut in this vicinity.

If so, then the border of Murlayaki may have been right here, arising from the ecological and social importance of the waterholes: 'in summer and autumn you will find no water east of here until Kadlitia'.

**(5.5) Tam's wurley was 'about 2 miles' from the hut.**

If the hut was near Chivell Road, then the wurley was probably near either Hayman Rd or Winifred Rd (respectively about 2 and 3 km west).

<sup>70</sup> Williams 'Apprehension': 2d. We don't know whether this too was 'in a direct line', or whether they detoured north around Thompson Creek. Their haste would suggest the former; but it was night-time and mounted, which might suggest the latter.

<sup>71</sup> Williams evidence, *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d.

But the calculations are approximate, and we cannot rule out the possibility that both wurley and hut were further west, allowing better water for Hallett at (say) Hayman Road, and for Tam at Johns Road.

In the absence of other more precise geographical<sup>72</sup> and cultural information, these items are all we have to go on for the eastern border of Murlayaki: it was *possibly* somewhere between Johns Road, Virginia, and Chivell Road, Angle Vale. Murlayaki itself was most likely the surrounding dry low plains; and Murlayaki-parri was certainly the river-bed in this lowland, through which water intermittently flowed and overflowed, to feed the water table and thence the summer waterholes, and the ponds at the rich seaward end.

Now back to the story.

.....

## STORY (2): AFTER THE ARRESTS:

Adelaide was abuzz with the murders and arrests. Fear was the driver. Were the natives planning a general 'uprising'? Would there be a repeat of the horrors of the recent Black War in Tasmania? Many colonists still clung to the hope that their 'friendship' with the locals would continue and become normal, with the current crisis as a temporary glitch; but few were in a mood to learn about fine new distinctions between northern tribes.

As owner of the property where the real 'Lower Para' natives were based, Milner Stephen claimed to know that they had "been two months absent from Adelaide" at the time of the murders,<sup>73</sup> and this may have been true for most of the Murlayaki. By contrast, some of the Wirra people had been camped there for a month.<sup>74</sup>

Other citizens brought in three suspects on the grounds that their appearance and dogs matched the newspaper descriptions of Duffield's murderers. On the evening of Inman's return two local men ('Monichi' or 'Peter', and 'Parlooboka' or 'Williamy') were arrested at North Adelaide not far

<sup>72</sup> We are also told that the hut was "about two miles" from where Cox found Thompson's sheep which several hours before had been "hunted about" (Cox evidence, *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a) This does not help us, because we have no way of knowing how far the sheep had run from the place where the body was found on the river bank; nor which direction they were from the hut.

<sup>73</sup> *Southern Australian* 10/5/1839: 4a.

<sup>74</sup> *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 27/4/1839: 2a.

from the Native Location.<sup>75</sup> Next morning another man ('Yarricha' or 'George')<sup>76</sup> was arrested by survey labourer William Baker "at Mr. Jacob's tent on the Para river", and brought back to Adelaide by a Captain Walker.<sup>77</sup>

For three weeks the six prisoners languished in jail, 'examined' from time to time by the official interpreters. Evidence was collected. Apart from language difficulties, theoretically under British law the court could not accept evidence directly from the accused 'natives' themselves because they were unable to swear an oath on the Bible. So it was the interpreters who told the court later what the natives had said. Only Cronk and Williams were called to the stand; but it is virtually certain that Protector Wyatt had been present at some of these interrogations, taking a special (though abortive) interest in the Wirra people, and defending the Murlayaki people in their trial.<sup>78</sup> No doubt it was at this time that he referred to Tam O'Shanter's country on the Gawler River and recorded the name "Moole yerke perre". However, Tam's name was given throughout the trials as "Picha-Cud-Nacha" (*Paitya Kudnuitya*: 'deadly thing, vermin' + 'third-born son'). Only the German linguists discovered that he was the "Mulleakki-burka", probably during Schürmann's visit(s) to the jail.

On the river Tam had already accused Tommy Roundhead (Wangutya) of Thompson's murder. Now he repeated it and "turned Queen's evidence, implicating his companions".<sup>79</sup> There is no record that any of them repeated their earlier unanimous claim that Charley was the main culprit. Williams mentioned this during his court evidence in the trial, but the point seems to have been ignored. On May 23<sup>rd</sup> 'native evidence' (i.e. their own confessions) was quietly and illegally used to find two of the six guilty of murder and sentence them to death: Wangutya-Tommy for Thompson, and Yarraitya-George for Duffield.<sup>80</sup> On the 27<sup>th</sup> Tam, though charged with stealing sheep, was "immediately set at liberty" for lack of evidence.

The next day was Queen Victoria's birthday, and near Parliament House Governor Gawler held the first of his annual Queen's Birthday banquets for the natives. On this occasion the Aboriginal crowd included not only locals but members of the mysterious "Weree tribe". As his last public act in the role of Protector, Wyatt interpreted the Governor's speech which "assured the aborigines of the friendly disposition of the white men towards them, exhorting them to adopt the habits of civilized life, to work, to build huts, to wear clothes, to live like the white men, and be their brothers". The

<sup>75</sup> It is quite unlikely that these two had anything to do with the murder at all, and even less likely that they were 'Wirra' men. They were acquitted in the end. See my document 'BACKGROUND5murders1839expedition.doc'.

<sup>76</sup> 'Yarricha' is *Yarraitya*, a birth-order name for general use meaning 'second-born male': a less commonly recorded alternative to *Waritya* which means the same.

<sup>77</sup> For all three arrests see the evidence of William Baker and Captain Walker, *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 1d; cp. *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4b.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Clyne 1987, *Colonial Blue: a history of the SA Police Force 1836-1916*, Adelaide, Wakefield Press: 46. Other evidence for Wyatt's involvement in the investigations is outlined in a footnote in PNS 8/18 Kadlitiya.

<sup>79</sup> *Southern Australian* 1/5/1839: 3c.

<sup>80</sup> See Clyne 1987: 46.

*Register's* reporter noted rather smugly: "After the unpleasant excitement with reference to the blacks created by recent events, this spectacle was calculated to restore those former peaceable relations which we hope will long subsist between us and our friendly native tribes".<sup>81</sup> The 'beef and pudding', blankets and clothing were followed on the same evening by bitter arguments between some Adelaide and "other" men about the murders and related matters.<sup>82</sup>

On the 31<sup>st</sup> Bakkabarti Yarraitya and Parutiya Wangutya were brought out near the Iron Stores to be executed in front of "a very large assemblage of white people", as was our custom in those days. The prisoners, with Cronk beside them, were guarded by "a numerous and armed body of police, both mounted and on foot"; the scaffold was "surrounded by a barrier of immense strength". It was a show designed with a message: 'we are many and strong'. "Many" Aboriginal people also "approached the spot... with timidity if not reluctance. Among them scarcely an eye was tearless, and some were bloodshot, as if from long weeping"; they included members of the condemned men's tribe as well as the Adelaide.<sup>83</sup> They watched as the two, especially Yarraitya, "betrayed every symptom of terror" and Wangutya "made violent protestations in his own language", before being hanged. One who was present believed that most of the natives there "seemed to agree in the justness of the sentence, and he had "no doubt but the example thus shown them will act as a terror to [the other natives]". That night "the aborigines, chiefly the relatives and clansmen of the two unfortunates, were deeply affected and wailed exceedingly".<sup>84</sup>

The crisis had been brought to a kind of conclusion which satisfied most white people more or less. The government had acted quickly to defuse a very real threat of vigilante action by the settlers.<sup>85</sup> The blacks had been 'taught a lesson' officially and legally, and henceforth this would be a familiar mantra in SA as in the eastern colonies.

Now the authorities also belatedly recognized their own overdue responsibility to do something about 'the native question'. They found the money to pay a fulltime Protector to do what was deemed necessary, and in July appointed another doctor, Matthew Moorhouse. But by now most of the colonists wanted him to protect *them* rather than the Aborigines. Fear remained; the market in pistols flourished; settlers now carried arms when they went to the bush.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 3b.

<sup>82</sup> See below, in the section 'Tribal Politics'.

<sup>83</sup> J Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in South Australia*, Adelaide, Wigg & Son 1:40a.

<sup>84</sup> *Southern Australian* 12/6/1839: 3d, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/71685340>; Schürmann diary 31 May 1839; *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 1/6/1839: 5a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750634>.

<sup>85</sup> See Pope 1989: 58, 63. Some young bloods had already showed their hand. In early May there was a rumour that another of Gilles' shepherds along the Torrens had been killed; whereat "a mounted and armed party of young men proceeded to the spot, and finding the report to be unfounded, amused themselves by charging and putting to flight such families of the natives as they found assembled round their fires" (*Southern Australian* 15/5/1839: 3c).

<sup>86</sup> See Pope 1989: 63.



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MURLAYAKIBURKA AND THE TRIBES AFTER MAY 1839:

The Wirra, Murlayaki and ‘North’ people continued to visit Adelaide quite often in the following months, but Schürmann in his diary was almost the only source to mention them.<sup>87</sup> The first visits in June were still part of part of the tribal crisis (see below), and hostility often continued to surface when prompted by women or deaths. A reputation for sorcery distinguished the Wirra people and periodically ramped up the fears.<sup>88</sup> But there was also the exhilaration of combined public ceremonies, no doubt many of them featuring Tam O’Shanter.

He was in Adelaide again in the following summer, seemingly still an angry man. On 30<sup>th</sup> December Schürmann, careless of the defeated warrior’s pride, “playfully touched Muleakiburka with my spear on the nape of his neck and he was quite angry”. In January Tam admitted that he had speared a man who had mistreated his wife. On the 30<sup>th</sup> he beat and speared his wife, though not fatally: “No one knew the reason for it”.<sup>89</sup> It seems he did not live much longer. According to Stuart’s memory in later years, Tam “was killed in some fray a few years after the incidents here mentioned” (in 1837, as outlined above).<sup>90</sup> Perhaps this was the fray between the Para and Port Gawler tribes which Eliza Mahony remembered (see below).

These groups seem to have adapted very rapidly into colonial life as itinerant fringe-dwellers. Protector Moorhouse listed ‘Muliakki’ and ‘Wirra’ among his five tribes in January 1840. The letters of Klose – the new German missionary who arrived at the Location in 1840 – mentioned in passing that unspecified “northern tribes” were among those who quickly adopted the habit of visiting Adelaide every May for the Queen’s Birthday rations; some of their children went to the native school at times, and the locals still sometimes went north to Gawler for ceremonies.<sup>91</sup> In 1844 he could still identify the “*Kawanda Meyunna* = the North-men” and “*Wirra Meyunna* = the wood people, from a particular region in the north which is thickly overgrown with trees”.<sup>92</sup> After that they all disappear from the record as distinct named groups.

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<sup>87</sup> See Schürmann diary 7 June 1839, 8 Aug, 8 Oct, 20-21 & 25 Dec; 3, 8, 12, 21, 24, 30 Jan 1840, 6 Mar.

<sup>88</sup> Schürmann diary 8 Aug 1839; 3 Jan 1840, 7 Feb, 6 & 23 & 30 Mar. For some details of the threat of sorcery in June 1839 see PNS 8/17 Kadlitiya.

<sup>89</sup> Schürmann diary 30 Dec 1839; 29 & 30 Jan 1840.

<sup>90</sup> Stuart 1875: 6b.

<sup>91</sup> Samuel Klose letters 1842-5, in Klose 2002 (tr. E Meier, M Krieg, & L Zweck), *Missionary to the Kurna: the Klose letters*, Occasional Publication No. 2, Adelaide: Friends of Lutheran Archives: 22, 32, 34, 42.

<sup>92</sup> Klose: 35. Evidence for the country of the Wirra tribe accumulates in these four PNS essays about the 1839 police expedition: PNS 8/14 Muna, 8/18 Kadlitiya, 9/04 Karrawadlungga and 8/17 Murlayaki, to be read in that order. It appears fairly certain that *one part* of the country of the ‘Wirra people’ was east and northeast of Gawler, around Lyndoch Valley and north of it. More work is needed to clarify this matter, and its relationship to today’s recognized Ngadjuri and Peramangk territory.

## APPENDIX: INTER-RACIAL AND INTER-TRIBAL POLITICS AS REVEALED BY THESE EVENTS IN 1839:

The events of April and May 1839 were a turning point in South Australian race relations. The colony's first *de facto* Mounted Police excursion paved the way for O'Halloran's violent response on the Coorong in 1840, Inman's on the mid-Murray in 1841, and SA's own Black War around Port Lincoln in the following years. The general outline of these earlier small-scale events has been written up before; but they are sufficiently interesting, significant and lacking in detailed analysis that I am appending some more of it to this essay which began from a place-name.<sup>93</sup>

Some of the underlying political realities, both before and after the crisis, both inter-racial and inter-tribal, are largely hidden from our sight. Yet fragments of them were recorded, enough for us to glimpse close-up a few of the driving forces among the tribes involved.

One is revealed by an incident on Hallett's station a few hours after the murder of Thompson. Hut-keeper Daniel Cox went out to search for Thompson, and came upon some of the missing sheep with three natives including Bob and possibly others who were in Tam's company when he was arrested:<sup>94</sup>

*One of them said 'White man no good – no flour, no pizger,<sup>95</sup> no sugar.' Bob then threw a spear at me, which passed me on my right side, and he threw another which passed over my head – I then discharged my piece, but the natives did not seem frightened...*

– “Bob laughed and threw another spear at him”<sup>96</sup> –

*“... I then reloaded again as fast as possible and fired, when they ran away”.*

The overt issue of rations had arisen immediately when news of Duffield's death reached Adelaide. Stephen was Acting Governor in the temporary absence of Gawler, and cancelled rations of food and clothing to all Aborigines “until you bring the three wicked black men into Adelaide”.<sup>97</sup> This

<sup>93</sup> e.g. Kathleen Hassell 1921, 'The Relations Between the Settles and Aborigines in SA 1836-1860', Tinline thesis, University of Adelaide: 35-41; Clyne 1987: 43-7; chapter 'Pivot Point' in Alan Pope 1989, *Resistance and Retaliation: Aboriginal-European Relations in Early Colonial SA*, Bridgewater, Heritage Action; Tom Gara 1998, 'The Life and Times of Mulla Wirraburka', in Simpson & Hercus (ed) 1998, *History In Portraits*, Aboriginal History Monograph 6: 105-7. Hassell, Clyne and Pope cover well the white institutional aspects of the events such as government and law, but nobody has examined carefully the Aboriginal details and their significance. Some of Pope's details of the attacks seem to be inconsistent with the evidence.

<sup>94</sup> Cox evidence, *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a.

<sup>95</sup> Biscuit.

<sup>96</sup> – according to the Advocate-General, *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d. These men knew that spears could work faster than slow muzzle-loading single-shot guns. For this spear-throwing “with intent to kill”, Bob was sentenced to twelve months' prison with hard labour (*Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a).

<sup>97</sup> *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 27/4/1839: 2a.

caused an instant reaction from the local tribe, published in “almost the very words” used by their spokesmen, who were probably familiar figures such as Kadlitpinna or Mullawirraburka: “You white men have taken our land and you have driven away our kangaroos and emus. We have no food now but what you please to give us. We are few and weak; you are many and strong”.<sup>98</sup>

By 1839, without support the Adelaide people would face starvation (as a few of the colonists recognized).

However, this was not so for the Para peoples. The Country Surveys, which would enable settlers to move onto the land with their stock, had only begun about two months earlier. By April Alfred Hallett had 561 sheep,<sup>99</sup> but these were the only stock on the Gawler River at that date as far as we know. Similar figures may have been true of a few places around the Para rivers, such as Reid at Gawler and Anstey on Tenafeate Creek.<sup>100</sup> The tribes of the Paras were not yet in danger of starving,<sup>101</sup> but they were visiting Adelaide and could see the writing on the wall, especially since February when settlers began to move into their country, some with stock.

The same issue of rations was also the subject of the quarrel between the Adelaide and Wirra people on the Queen’s birthday, the day after the jury verdicts had been given. In the evening after Gawler’s feast, Adelaide locals took back the food and clothing from the northern visitors and told them to go home and catch fish (a sign that the visitors may have been from Murlayaki): “You are the ones who kill Europeans”.<sup>102</sup> Adelaide people would keep their privileges exclusive: goods would be handed out in Adelaide but not in Murlayaki; to the Adelaide tribe but not to the Murlayaki tribe. Shortly after the executions an old man of the same tribe elaborated: “You get your houses built and we have to live in wurlies. That is why you kill no Europeans and still more and more are coming”.<sup>103</sup> Teichelmann learned now that the dispute had been simmering for some months since he began to hand out rations to other tribes camped near the Native Location. It was not merely over rations as such but over *entitlement* to them as compensation for the loss of livelihood. And as the frontier invaded each *pangkarra* one by one, each group of traditional owners felt the same exclusive local right to goods from the invaders.<sup>104</sup> Recent events had inflamed this. No doubt on

<sup>98</sup> SA Gazette and Colonial Register 4/5/1839: 2a.

<sup>99</sup> Cox evidence, *Southern Australian* 29/5/1839: 2a.

<sup>100</sup> For Anstey see footnote ‘The Expedition’s visit to Fisher & Handcock’s station’ in PNS 8/14 Muna.

<sup>101</sup> – contrary to Pope’s assumption that they were “desperate” (Pope 1989: 57), which unjustifiably equates their situation with that of the Adelaide tribe.

<sup>102</sup> Teichelmann report to Dresden n.d. [mid-1839], in Teichelmann Correspondence: 80 (Archival Ref: TB 104-106). We are not told where these visitors came from; but Schürmann’s diary records many days when either the “Wirramejunna” or the “north men” were present over the next months. It is not clear whether he was making a clear distinction between them; and as we saw in PNS 8/17 (Kadlitia), the tribal distinctions were probably breaking down very quickly under the impact of colonization.

<sup>103</sup> Teichelmann report to Dresden, *ibid*.

<sup>104</sup> Teichelmann later summed up the principle, no doubt remembering the 1839 instance: “No tribe is allowed to live on the district of another one, except as occasional visitors, and they think themselves more entitled to the support of Europeans, living, or having settled upon their district, than any other native of a distant tribe. Whenever this rule is trespassed, a fight is the consequence; thence partly so many fights take place about the town, as soon as different

the side there were also hot arguments over the warmongering involvement of Kadlitpinna and other locals in the tracking and capturing of Murlayakiburka and his companions, and over the forthcoming executions of two northern men.

But most colonists were not interested in black-on-black violence, and gave little attention to the conflicts which resulted over the next months. Most of our small knowledge of the tribal aftermath comes from the diary of Clamor Schürmann, who was living on the native Location in Adelaide, and from the unpublished reports of him and his colleague Teichelmann.<sup>105</sup>

No doubt Bob in 1839 had seen what happened in Adelaide, and on that Friday on the Gawler River with Cox was determined that it would not happen there. But by the end of Saturday he and the owner of the *pangkarra* began to learn that the new regime could invade Para land with the same impunity as Adelaide, capture leading men on their own land and execute some. The collaborators in the Adelaide tribe proved that they could ride this wave and be rewarded for it. The deed was enacted with pistols, with physical force and direct threats of shooting, with armed Aboriginal constables mounted on very large and intimidating foreign animals with iron-shod feet. We should not underestimate how frightening this experience was for the little Murlayaki tribe and their Wirra neighbours who had also watched the expedition trail their men further east. It was a small foretaste of the even bigger terror next year, aroused on both sides and enacted under martial law by O'Halloran on the Coorong in the wake of the *Maria* massacre.

The outcome had thoroughly intimidated the Para peoples, who now lived in “fear and dread of the white population”.<sup>106</sup> Yet they were not entirely cowed. A fortnight after the hangings, payback time arrived and “the much feared relatives and fellow tribal members of the two executed men really did arrive in Piltawodlinga”, intending to poison the Torrens River by sorcery and so destroy the colony. Kadlitpinna – though terrified himself, and probably with his life at stake – was the only man able to negotiate a way out (as Schürmann recognized), while also warning the missionary not to make things worse by interfering or asking questions.<sup>107</sup> Probably it was only his kin connections as a ‘northern’ man that made this feat of diplomacy possible.

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*tribes are assembled*” (Teichelmann 1841, *Aborigines of South Australia*, Adelaide, SA Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society: 7).

<sup>105</sup> In April 1839 the Dresden missionaries were busy but not yet in public, still in the early stages of learning the language. Schürmann had kept no diary since shortly after their arrival, and resumed it only in May 1839. He apparently visited the two condemned men in jail and wrote “*impressions of them*” in a report to his superiors in Dresden (Schürmann diary 21 June 1839), but this has not been found. His diary for the following 11 months records a number of hostile incidents between the “*north men*”, the “*Wirramejunna*” (Wirra people) and the locals. Teichelmann was visiting the site frequently, and occasionally recording what he observed in letters and reports to Dresden.

<sup>106</sup> “*When I came into office [in July]... the Para tribe, which a little before had been spearing the Europeans, was labouring under a degree of fear and dread of the white population, on account of the two executions which had recently taken place; and that fear, though in a milder degree, still exists, and probably deters them from committing further outrages*” (Moorhouse Protector’s Report 9 Oct 1839, ‘Papers Relative to SA... 1843’, *BPP Australia* 7: 350).

<sup>107</sup> Schürmann diary 16 and 18 June 1839; cp. Gara 1998: 106. We are not told which of the northern tribes this deputation represented; but later diary entries identify the Wirra-meyunna as notable sorcerers making new threats (3 Jan, 6 March 1840).

There was conflict not only between the north and Adelaide but between the northern tribes themselves. Gawler pioneer Eliza Mahony (daughter of Clonlea's John Reid) in her old age remembered that the large group she called "the Para tribe"<sup>108</sup> had "a great fight with the Port Gawler tribe. Some were speared".<sup>109</sup> We don't know the date of this battle; but the Reids arrived in February 1839, and it could well have been part of the aftermath of that April. Before his alliance with Adelaide, Kadlitpinna had once belonged to a "Koubanda (northern)" tribe which was probably distinct from both the Wirra and the Murlayaki.<sup>110</sup> There were probably local repercussions between his kinsfolk and the other locals who had stayed aloof from the Adelaide 'collaborators'.

#### MORE INTRIGUES?

Around these known or deducible facts, the records leave obscure hints of a politics even more complex.

We can probably eliminate the issue of women. On the frontier lone shepherds were vulnerable and often targeted for payback when they embarked on relationships with Aboriginal women but failed to satisfy reciprocal expectations. However, in the cases of Duffield and Thompson there is no evidence that this was so,<sup>111</sup> and the timing of the second murder, coupled with other strange details almost 'outside the frame' of the records, might suggest more than coincidence. Since these details have never been investigated, I include some of them here, in the hope that in future someone may be able to clarify them.

In Williams's account of the episodes on the Gawler River, there are three puzzling features:

First, Rodney. If he was the Adelaide leader Ityamaitpinna (and this is likely), then he was an ambiguous man. He helped the Germans with their teaching and cultural investigations at Piltawodli, but he was also on occasion much more aggressive with the colonists than other informants such as Kadlitpinna. He was remembered 40 years later as "the cunning and wicked old savage"<sup>112</sup> – language which was often a coded description for blacks who were suspected of armed resistance. Why was he visiting the white men (Kerville and Strange) at their 'house' at Milner?<sup>113</sup>

<sup>108</sup> There were, she said, "about 250" of them.

<sup>109</sup> Eliza Mahony (nee Reid) 1898 (ed. AA Lendon 1927), 'The First Settlers At Gawler', *Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, SA Branch*, Proceedings 28: 70.

<sup>110</sup> See PNS 8/17 Kadlitia.

<sup>111</sup> There seems to have been no *personal* motive imputed for the killing of Duffield, who was known to be on good terms with Aborigines and sympathized with them for the loss of their land (Bull 1878: 71). He was old and partly disabled, and if he or Thompson had dealings with Aboriginal women – a common cause of conflict with shepherds if they did not meet reciprocal expectations – then it was never mentioned. Thompson too was "a man of mild and quiet disposition and very fond of the natives" (SA *Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d).

<sup>112</sup> *Advertiser* 21/12/1878: 5e.

<sup>113</sup> See Gara 1998: 104, 108. One source names Rodney as the actual murderer of Duffield. JW Bull, who owned the block next to Duffield's and had spoken with the victim while he was dying after the attack, wrote in a late reminiscence that "Duffield gave the name of the principal murderer as Rodney, a villainous fellow, who had not long before this killed



Secondly, the two unnamed Wirra men at Hallet's hut. Why were they waiting there – prudently just outside Murlayakiburka's territory which Wirra men were afraid to enter (if we may believe Tam) – and coincidentally at the very moment when Wirra men were being tracked along this river for Duffield's murder, and when Thompson had just been killed by the locals?<sup>114</sup>

Thirdly, the stranger 'Charley' who was staying at Tam's wurley all through the day that his companions were arrested. Since Williams knew (by the time he wrote his account) that this Charley was said to be the major culprit, why did he not say what happened to him on that night? There were six men in Inman's squad at that point. What happened to Charley? If he escaped, how did this come about?<sup>115</sup>

In Wyatt's list of 'Men's Names' are some other clues to these matters:

First there is a "Charley of Weerunga". Quite probably this was the Charley whom Williams met at Tam's wurley on the Gawler River;<sup>116</sup> for the three prisoners arrested by Inman agreed that he was the one who had actually killed Thompson, and would almost certainly have talked about him in Wyatt's presence.

Secondly, Wyatt has a 'Tom' and two others called "Wongoocha". The public reports gave Tommy Roundhead's Aboriginal name only as "Wang Nucha" (*Wangutya*, 'seventh-born son'). In Wyatt there is a "Tom of Weerawulla" whose Aboriginal name was "Nawálte"; a "Yerre wurre Wongoocha" (with no English name); and – most interestingly – "Wongoocha: Charley of Weerunga".

Several questions immediately arise.

Was Wangutya-Tommy the same man as this 'Nawálte-Tom'? or alternatively, the same as 'Yerre-wurre'? Were Charley's place "Weerunga" and Tom's place "Weerawulla" parts of Wyatt's 'Weera

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*his lubra*" (Bull 1877, 'Early Experiences of Colonial Life. No.XI, [By an Arrival of 1838]', *South Australian Chronicle & Weekly Mail* 14/7/1877: 18c-d = Bull 1878, *Early Experiences Of Colonial Life In South Australia*, [1<sup>st</sup> edition] Adelaide: Advertiser & Chronicle Offices: 72). However, Bull wrote this article 38 years after the events, and this is probably one of several false memories or confusions of identity. Duffield's dying evidence was produced in court; Rodney was well-known to settlers; but he was never mentioned in 1839 in this connection.

<sup>114</sup> It is unlikely that these two were the Wirra fugitives; we would expect these to be recognized by Inman's party from the descriptions they had been given.

<sup>115</sup> It would have been easy for the party to shoot Charley if they could not seize him, and bury him next day. But it is less likely that this could have been completely covered up when Charley was mentioned during interviews with the three captive witnesses in jail later in the presence of Wyatt; but not impossible if Inman and Williams had made a hard deal with Edwards and Strange, and had sufficiently intimidated the prisoners.

<sup>116</sup> Apart from these two, the only other Aboriginal 'Charley' I have come across in this period is 'One-arm Charley', the whaler of Encounter Bay. No doubt the name was bestowed on more men than these; but again the coincidence suggests a connection.

Districts North of Adelaide’?<sup>117</sup> Were Charley and Tom therefore both members of the Wirra tribe? If so, they clearly had permission to be there as Tam’s guest on his land and were not ‘afraid’.

Moreover, if *both* of Thompson’s waddy-wielding attackers (Tommy and Charley) had the same birth-order name *Wangutya* for use by outsiders,<sup>118</sup> then what would Williams and Wyatt make of statements like ‘Wangutya did it’? How reliable were the struggling interpreters’ accounts of Tam’s evidence? And if Tommy belonged to ‘Weerawulla’ did Tam, under pressure to save his own skin, turn against him in the end because he belonged to a different tribe?

In the wider picture, were the city alarmists almost right when they feared a ‘general uprising’ of the natives? Duffield’s account of the attack on him might suggest that the three Wirra men were not merely seizing an unexpected chance to obtain some sheep but enacting a premeditated plan, possibly a declaration of war.<sup>119</sup> Guerrilla tactics proceed by seizing opportunities and then disappearing. Had the Duffield murder been (or become) the first move in such a movement? A few days later Rodney and other Wirra men (possibly five or more of them, if my speculations from Wyatt are justified) came to Murlayaki. Did they carry news of the attack on Duffield, intending to negotiate with men like Tam and Bob for a combined resistance to the colonists – but found they were too late? Did the Murlayaki men act independently and prematurely in killing Thompson, so that the unexpectedly quick response of Inman’s expedition nipped a rebellion in the bud? Or had the Wirra visitors sent Rodney ahead (also too late) to call a halt before it led to frightening consequences?

Alternatively, was Rodney visiting Milner to consolidate his Adelaide people’s privilege by supporting the Wirra *against* the Murlayaki, and by blowing the whistle to the white men on Murlayakiburka’s involvement in the murder of Thompson?<sup>120</sup>

And what was Kadlitpinna’s relationship to all this? He had tracked two groups of tribesmen, and taken part in the arrest of one group, leading to executions. These were serious acts of war; the offended groups would identify him and his Adelaide tribe as traitors and ‘collaborators’. Nevertheless in June he negotiated with some of the same people to avoid trouble in Adelaide. Perhaps, from his closer knowledge of the colonial regime, he was able to defuse the vendetta

<sup>117</sup> We can’t be sure because these two places are not listed under the ‘Weera Distiricts’ heading, but only attached to the men’s names.

<sup>118</sup> Schürmann knew (doubtless from the pastoral visit which he mentioned) that another of Tommy’s names was “Parudiya” (Schürmann diary 31 May 1839): probably *Paru-tia*, ‘meat/game’ + ‘tooth’ = ‘tooth of the animal’ (New Spelling *Pardutiya* (thanks to Jack Kanya Buckskin for clarification). But this was not public knowledge.

<sup>119</sup> It seemed to many settlers “*an unprovoked and most deliberate attempt at murder*”. Duffield’s attackers did not club or spear him to death but expertly ‘boned’ him, leaving him to die slowly and painfully over the next six days with the wound scarcely visible: a traditional method of instilling fear (including the fear of sorcery) and so of declaring war on the victim’s whole group. See *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* 27/4/139: 1d-2a; 25/5/39: 4a; *Southern Australian* 29/5/39: 1d.

<sup>120</sup> His whistle-blowing may have been unintentional. The news was conveyed to Williams third-hand by “*a native boy*” who had spoken with Rodney, while Rodney himself seems to have disappeared. But the context suggests that he made himself scarce as soon as Inman arrived; also perhaps that he may have been acting against the locals rather than with them. Tam denied that he had been present at the murder.

against the settlers by persuading the northerners in words that he or his compatriots had used six weeks earlier: ‘we can never win this kind of fight; we are few and weak; they are many and strong’.

We don’t know the answers to any of these questions separately. I leave it to others to discover more and assess whether any conclusions are probable in combination.<sup>121</sup>

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### POSTSCRIPT: THE NAME (3) ACCORDING TO TINDALE:

Because Norman Tindale has been regarded as an authority on Aboriginal place-names, and because many of his speculations-in-progress have been published by the leading author on South Australian place-names, Geoffrey Manning, it is necessary to add another appendix.

His unpublished Kurna index cards – compiled in the 1980s for his project for a gazetteer of ‘Aboriginal names of places in Southern South Australia’, which was never finished<sup>122</sup> – include two direct interpretations of Wyatt’s ‘Moole yerke perre’, one of Teichelmann and Schürmann’s ‘Mulleakki’, and three related vocabulary cards.

In these his various changing interpretations include one also endorsed in this essay: that the first morpheme is *mulla*, ‘dry’, in which the final vowel is affected or obscured by the following consonant *y* so that it sounds like *i*. But his other linguistic and geographical speculations on this name go far beyond the data and can be ignored.<sup>123</sup>

His attention to sound wanders when he considers Wyatt’s ‘yerke’. He introduces the one thing that is newly derived from his Aboriginal informants, citing his Ngarrindjeri informant Milerum as the source of the idea that “shin or leg” can be “seemingly applied to the dry reach of a river”.<sup>124</sup> He then applies this to Wyatt’s ‘yerke’ because in Kurna *yerko* was the old published spelling for ‘leg’; and goes on to use the idea of a ‘dry river bed’ in vocabulary cards for both “mulə” and “jerkə”.

<sup>121</sup> Further study of these pivotal events could examine the verbatim sentences spoken by Kurna people at this time and published in Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840, and in Teichelmann 1857; also the other unpublished writings of Teichelmann, and Schürmann; other published material such as contemporary newspapers; and other unpublished material such as court reports (especially Wyatt’s defense at the second trial), police records, letters and diaries.

<sup>122</sup> See P Monaghan 2009, Chapter 9 in Koch & Hercus 2009, *Aboriginal Placenames*, Australian National University Press.

<sup>123</sup> He seems unaware of Moorhouse’s record locating the name at a specific place called ‘Milner Estate’.

<sup>124</sup> Tindale Kurna vocabulary cards “mulə”, “mul:a” and “jerkə” in AA 338/7/1/12, SA Museum; cp. Kurna place-name cards 566/1 “Mulajerka`pari” (sic) and 566/2 “Mul:ajerka`perenga”. The suffix *-ngga* does not occur in any known source of this name (though it would have been used); Tindale appears to have added it himself.



He also mixes the data up with his own theories about tribal borders. He gives coordinates for Teichelmann and Schürmann's "Mul:eak:i"<sup>125</sup> which place it on the South Para River near Para Wirra. Perhaps he was interpreting their gloss "the Para River" in terms of his own published claim, that an area around rivers of this name – vaguely defined by him as "Gawler to Angaston" – was a boundary for the Kurna, Peramangk and Ngadjuri.<sup>126</sup>

It was not the last of his thoughts on the name. In 1990 *Manning's Place Names of SA* published the following: "Mudlayakki – The Aboriginal name for the River Para district - 'dry valley'"; and "The River Para... The Aborigines called the surrounding district *mulleakki* - 'dry valley' (corrupted to *mudlayakki*)".<sup>127</sup> This of course confuses *mulla* 'dry' with *mudla* 'nose'. The idea and spelling could only have come from Tindale.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps it was Manning who introduced the idea of 'word corruption' here.

Tindale submitted this spelling to the Nomenclature Committee in 1947 as one of several suggestions for the names of new railway stations, along with "Nurlutta", "Womma", and "Kudla" north of Adelaide, and "Taringa" near Willunga;<sup>129</sup> but 'Mudlayakki' must have been insufficiently short and sweet for the committee, who substituted 'Para'.<sup>130</sup>

While we must be forever grateful to Tindale for preserving so much from so many informants, we have to be very alert when he presents his own interpretations as facts. Each item should be pushed back to its authoritative Aboriginal source (if it has one).

## References to background documents

See also my document  
'BACKGROUND5police1839.doc',  
accessible to researchers through Management of this website (contact KWP).

*End of Summary*

<sup>125</sup> Tindale Kurna place-name card 568. "Mul:eak:i" is Tindale's re-spelling of "Mulleakki": he has simply indicated the double consonants with a colon.

<sup>126</sup> Cp. Tindale 1974: 213 'Kurna', 214 'Ngadjuri', 217 'Peramangk'. In the last two he says this border is at Angaston 30 km northeast of the coordinates on his card.

<sup>127</sup> GH Manning 1990, *Manning's Place Names of SA*: 214, 239 = Manning 2010, *Place Names of Our Land*: 567, 631.

<sup>128</sup> Tindale must have come to 'mudla' independently, as he did not have access to Teichelmann's 1857 MS which gives the name as "Mudleakki". As with several explicitly 'Tindale' items in Manning, I have not found his Tindale source. Some items may have been personal communications.

<sup>129</sup> See PNS 4/03/01/10 Taringa Railway Station.

<sup>130</sup> Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book (SA Geographical Names Unit): 111 (19/9/47).