

# GRANVILLE STAPYLTON'S 1836 JOURNAL VOLUME 1

{1} Woolymaee<sup>1</sup>

Granville Chetwynd Stapylton  
April 1836

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Nº 1

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{2} ——— Journal of proceedings after leaving Sydney for the purpose of overtaking the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gls. expedition of Discovery.<sup>2</sup>

On the **7<sup>th</sup> of April**<sup>3</sup> I reached Kedowa<sup>4</sup> (the most inclement weather accompanying my ride over the [Blue] Mountains) a station on the Lachlan, belonging to Collitt late Inn keeper on the Bathurst Road,<sup>5</sup> on this River the most distant station, and about 280 miles<sup>6</sup> W.S.W from Sydney—

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1. *Woolymaee*: this is the Aboriginal name for a particular river, spelt Woollamàee by Mitchell in his Journal entry for 7th July 1836. See T. L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, 2nd edn, T. & W. Boone, London, 1839, Volume II, p. 166.
  2. The discrepancies in dates between Pages {2} to {5} on the one hand, and Stapylton's letter to Deputy Surveyor General Perry and Mitchell's *Three Expeditions* on the other, suggest that Pages {1} to {5} were written in retrospect by Stapylton on 13th April when left in charge of the camp, situated about 8 or 9 miles WNW of Lake Cargelligo. See Prologue; and Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 15-16, 30-3.
  3. **7<sup>th</sup> of April**: probably 4th April. See Prologue.
  4. Kedowa: *c.f.* Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 30: 'Cordòwe, a station above Mount Cunningham'. The property is now known as *Cadow*, and is situated on the left bank of the Lachlan River 9 km south-east of Mulguthrie Mountain, about 30 km east-south-east of present-day Condobolin. The property is within the Parish of Cadow. References: Condobolin 8331-N 1:50 000 map, 1980; Jemalong 8431-S 1:50 000 map, 1981.
  5. Collitt late Inn keeper on the Bathurst Road: see Note I. Mitchell met 'Mr. James Collits of Mount York' on 28th March—see Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 16.
  6. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {3}: '300 miles'.

On the **8<sup>th</sup> [April]**<sup>7</sup> I abandoned my light cart & proceeded on the track of Major Mitchells drays, on horseback accompanied by /"Sykes"/ one of the two men attached to my party on leaving Sydney— The country thro which we passed appeared to be of the most desolate &

{3} barren description, an interminable morass without vegetation— Halted for the night unable to meet with grass or water—

**9<sup>th</sup> [April]**.<sup>8</sup> Pursued the Track for 20 miles, but the Horses failing under us I determined on returning to Kedowa, which we reached late at night of the same day— The Horses dead beat at 8 in the evening[,] one down apparently to rise no more, when we fortunately discovered a Water Hole distant

{4} from Kedowa about ten miles—

**10<sup>th</sup> [April]**<sup>9</sup> Rested at Collits station[,] contemplated an immediate return to Sydney— Much annoyed that no chance had been offered to me of overtaking the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. in consequence of the rapidity of his movements and long journeys averaging from 12 to 18 /miles/ per diem—<sup>10</sup> Ducks in abundance at this station, a good shot might bag any number— Shot only two brace—

{5} **11<sup>th</sup> [April]**.<sup>11</sup> Succeeded in prevailing upon "Coffee" a Stockman to mount me on a fresh horse, & accompanied by him & his friend "Watkin" made another effort to overtake the Sur<sup>r</sup> General— Started at 7 am this morning & came up with his party on the **13<sup>th</sup> [April]**—<sup>12</sup> Therm<sup>r</sup> at night 76[F, = 24°C].<sup>13</sup>

**13 [April]**<sup>14</sup> Encamped on the Lachlan  
The Sur<sup>r</sup> General very kindly dispatched two Horses & three men to Kedowa to bring up my light Cart & baggage—

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7. On the **8<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably still 4th April.

8. **9<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably 6th April.

9. **10<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably 7th April.

10. A folio (of two pages) in Volume 3 covering the (alleged dates of) 9th and 10th April is missing, suggesting that Stapylton had second thoughts about criticizing Mitchell in writing.

11. **11<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably 8th April.

12. **13<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably 11th April; see Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 30. Volume 3, Page {6} adds: 'having rode at the rate of 45 miles per diem'.

13. Therm<sup>r</sup> at night 76[F, = 24°C]: this was the overnight temperature recorded by Mitchell for the evening of 12th April; see Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 33.

14. **13 [April]**: probably 12th April; see Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 33.

- {6} [13th April] The Lake Cudjällagong<sup>15</sup> bearing East South East about 8 miles distant— The Sur<sup>r</sup> General & 7 men on Horseback proceeded to reconnoitre the Lake with a view of ascertaining the pulse<sup>16</sup> of the Natives, who were reported to have assembled in great numbers on its banks— The Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. wishing that the exact size & shape<sup>17</sup> of this lake should be accurately obtained by measurement, but previously
- {7} to doing so anxious to decide whether the survey should {be} /be forced or/ carried on<sup>18</sup> peaceably, while the natives observed our motions— Directed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> General to remain in charge of the encampment with the necessary directions as to my proceedings in the event of an attack during his absence— The Rain falling in Torrents during the whole of this day— The Deep bed of the River dry for miles together, with the exception
- {8} of large stagnant Water holes in a few places— Three very beautiful specimens of the Lily<sup>19</sup> species in abundance on these barren marshes— Oxley's Narrative<sup>20</sup> pictures most truly the desolateness of the region we are now traversing, although in point of travelling, we have much the advantage of him both as regards our most excellent present equipment & the prevailing drought of this & the previous year— Specimens
- {9} of the Lily, yellow coloured, Orange & Pink— hitherto unknown— Plains covered with "Rhagodia"<sup>21</sup> & "Na"<sup>22</sup> of Oxley—<sup>22</sup> Studded patches of poor grass on the banks of the River at this point— The slight elevations on the plains, composed of a deep red sand & covered with Cypresses,<sup>23</sup> stunted Eucalypti & occasionally the *Acacia pendula*<sup>24</sup> so frequently mentioned by Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt— Twenty four hours rain would in my opinion render
- {10} these marshes utterly impassable— This opinion opposed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> General who states from experience that a few hours baking by the Sun, would create a superficial crust sufficiently tenacious to bear the weight of

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<sup>15</sup>. Lake Cudjällagong: Lake Cargelligo.

<sup>16</sup>. ascertaining the pulse: *i.e.*, sounding the intentions.

<sup>17</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {7}: 'form & size'.

<sup>18</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {7}: 'conducted'.

<sup>19</sup>. the Lily: *Calostemma* sp.

<sup>20</sup>. Oxley's Narrative: John Oxley, *Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales*, John Murray, London, 1820. A copy of Oxley's book would have been carried on Mitchell's 1836 expedition.

<sup>21</sup>. "Rhagodia": Saltbush.

<sup>22</sup>. "Na" of Oxley: see Note II.

<sup>23</sup>. Cypress Pines (*Callitris* spp.)

<sup>24</sup>. *Acacia pendula*: Boree or Weeping Myall.

the Drays— Je m'en doute— About 4 p.m. the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. returned to the Camp, bringing with him from the Lake<sup>25</sup> five wild Devils, one of Gigantic stature 6 ft. 6. in height by

{11} measurement—<sup>26</sup> a Hercules but remarkable for bad proportions— They were stated to have been about 100 in number, and to have retreated rapidly on the approach of our horsemen— “Piper[”] a native of the Bathurst Tribe,<sup>27</sup> who is bound by treaty to accompany us throughout the journey, a lazy rascal, useful only as an interpreter, overtook them at the Gallop, succeeded in inspiring them with confidence; and induced them to venture over to the

{12} Camp where they now are, opening their wide eyes with astonishment— An illlooking set but awed into apparent harmlessness— The Lake reported to be nearly dry, covered with wild Fowl— a new species of pigeon shot there (at least new to me) by the Overseer Alexander Burnett, a most excellent man and whose equal as an Overseer I have never yet seen, even tempered & quiet but shrewd and from

{13} what I should judge, firm as a rock & game to the back bone— Therm<sup>r</sup> 54[°F, = 12°C]—

**14<sup>th</sup> [April].** Drizzling rain during the night— Morning fine— directed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> General to proceed to survey the Lake and Creek which supplies it— accompanied by Piper and six men well armed— surveyed 12 miles & ½ and bivouacked the night on its margin—<sup>28</sup> A native Encampment about ¼ of a mile distant.

{14} Piper the black surprised us in the evening by bringing a wife over to our Guneahs<sup>29</sup> which it appears he obtained by force— These people are a curious race; in one short space Piper talks to them in a conciliatory mood, & in the next robs them of a daughter— Manning a {J}/G/in as it is called— It passes off however without comment—

**15<sup>th</sup> [April].** Continued the survey of the Lake which proved

{15} to be 8 m & ¼ in circumference— Returned to the Encampment accompanied by numerous wild Blacks— In the course of our trace<sup>30</sup> of the

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<sup>25</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Pages {9}-{10}: ‘from the Lake bringing with him’.

<sup>26</sup>. *c.f.* Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 36: ‘one who measured six feet four inches’.

<sup>27</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {10}: ‘a Bathurst black’.

<sup>28</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {11}: ‘on its banks’.

<sup>29</sup>. Guneahs (gunyahs): Aboriginal or bush huts.

<sup>30</sup>. our trace: *i.e.*, our survey (traverse).

Creek which supplies the Lake[,] we passed[,] near its junction with the River, an old Encampment of Mr. Oxley's. Timber sawn down & apparently given such a direction as to serve for a bridge— circumstance not mentioned in his Narrative—

- 16<sup>th</sup> [April].** Fine weather— Barometer rising— Mr Evans's<sup>31</sup> landscape  
 {16} of the Lake<sup>32</sup> much more picturesque than the reality— Halted—
- 17<sup>th</sup> [April].**<sup>33</sup> Cart & baggage arrived at 5 p.m.[;] robbed of my Segars but fortunate in other respects—<sup>34</sup>
- 18 & 19 [April]**—<sup>35</sup> Proceeded— The Sur<sup>r</sup> General taking the bearings
- 20<sup>th</sup> [April].**<sup>36</sup> Deputed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> General to take the bearings & keep the Feild Book— entered upon it with alacrity, preferring occupation to idleness— Pursued a similar  
 {17} course along the banks of the River— Commencement of angry feeling on the part of the — — — Led by the Black Guide into a bight,<sup>37</sup> [even though I was] directed at starting [of the survey] to follow implicitly the Savages demonstrations— finally blamed for so doing—<sup>38</sup>
- 21 [April].**<sup>39</sup> Halted at night on a dry Creek, having pursued a North Westerly course for 12 miles, leaving the River in our rear— Cattle & Horses without water all night & kept yoked together to prevent  
 {18} their straying away in search of it— The Blacks succeeded in obtaining a small quantity for our use from some muddy holes—  
 [Rest of Page {18} is missing]<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>. Mr Evans: see Note III and Plate II.

<sup>32</sup>. the Lake: Lake Cargelligo.

<sup>33</sup>. **17<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably still 16th April. Volume 3, Page {13} adds: 'Halted—'.

<sup>34</sup>. Mitchell recorded the arrival of the men 'with Mr. Stapylton's light cart, although his own horse, having strayed at Cordowe, did not accompany it.' See Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 39. See also Volume 2, Pages {32}-{33}.

<sup>35</sup>. **18 & 19 [April]**: probably 17th and 18th April.

<sup>36</sup>. **20<sup>th</sup> [April]**: probably 19th April.

<sup>37</sup>. bight: bend in the river.

<sup>38</sup>. A folio (of two pages) in Volume 3 covering the 20th April is missing, once again suggesting that Stapylton had second thoughts about criticizing Mitchell in writing.

<sup>39</sup>. **21 [April]**: probably 20th April.

<sup>40</sup>. Volume 3, Page {16} has, for this day:

{19} [First part of Page {19} is missing]

**22 [April].** Sur<sup>r</sup> General & five Men on horseback proceeded to reconnoitre the country to the Westward & North of West— taking five days

{20} provisions— The Sur<sup>r</sup> General displays hardihood— Intention to bivouack nightly á la militaire— Left in Charge of the camp.—

**23<sup>d</sup> [April].** Encamped— Shot a beautiful specimen of the Cockatoo pigeon— To be stuffed for the museum— being little injured by the Shot— Our Camp arrangement<sup>41</sup> reflects much credit on the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. in a military point of view, according to my notion of it— Our Drays & the long Boat

{21} are so placed that they would serve as a secure rampart from which to repel an attack, while the Tents six in number are also so disposed that volley after volley might be fired all round our position without injuring one of them— The regularity with which each Bullock Driver takes up his Station, is admirable— The leading covered Cart<sup>42</sup> serving as the pivot upon which all the Teams one after the other fall into their proper

{22} places.— In the centre of our Camp are placed the Sheep, now not quite 100 in number, yet such is the voracity of the Native dog, that more than once in defiance of<sup>43</sup> the {two} Watchm{e}/a/n who {are} /is/ patrolling all night and with Fires burning in many places, has he made an incursion & mangled several— Poor Oxley complained of his ration of Salt Pork and

{23} his modicum of bread;— We for bushing it<sup>44</sup> are positively in clover— The sheep will probably serve for the period of the expedition, but we also have a reserve of a few<sup>45</sup> fat Bullocks— Emus are also plentiful & strange to say, I have only just discovered their merit on the table— The flesh is very similar to mutton, more tender, & far superior to Kangaroo. A new species of Rosella

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‘**21st [April]**— a Southerly course to recover the banks of the River, our only hope of Water being in its few deep stagnant {Ponds}—

Encamped upon it about 1 p.m— after travelling nine miles—’.

<sup>41</sup>. Our Camp arrangement: see Note IV and Figure 21.

<sup>42</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {18}: ‘The leading Light Cart’.

<sup>43</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {18}: ‘in the teeth of’.

<sup>44</sup>. bushing it: roughing it.

<sup>45</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {19}: ‘a reserve of {fifteen} /Five/’.

{24} parrot<sup>46</sup> shot to day by the Bird stuffer— of a large size & blue about the head & wings, where red prevails in the known species— Shot this evening another of the beautiful Cockatoo pigeon tribe— excellent eating, much superior to the Bronze Wing— Tracks of wild cattle seen yesterday, The Overseer & two men off at day light yesterday to try their skill in bringing one down with a bullet—

{25} expected home tonight, but not arrived now at 8.p.m. The aspect of the country to the Westward, is most unpromising being one uninterrupted flat, destitute of Timber as far as the eye can sweep the horizon— The same appearance to the Northward & Westward— All hopes therefore of making the Darling by crossing such a barren desert must I fear be speedily relinquished— the return of the Sur<sup>r</sup> General will elucidate much on

{26} this head—

**24<sup>th</sup> [April]** At 4 p.m.— Burnett returned from the Bullock Hunt without success, reports that he met with a herd of Bullocks, 2 milch Cows, & 2 Calves & 1 young bull— wounded a bullock with the Crown brand on it— the pace however of these wild runaways much too severe for their horses— Still encamped awaiting the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gls. return— To day our companions the wild Blacks all left us for the

{27} Lake Cudjällagong.

**25 [April].** Weather most propitious Nights very cold— Yesterday the Collector of Plants [John] “Richardson” brought home from<sup>47</sup> the Macquarie range<sup>48</sup> several bulbs of a rare species— Also the lily abovementioned in full bloom— Colour as the Ladies term it French white, of an exquisite perfume the essence of which I make no doubt will ere long find a place at their Toilette—

**26 [April].** Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. & party returned at 10.a.m.— suffered much

{28} from want of water— Horses 2 days & 2 nights without it—<sup>49</sup> Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. decided in his opinion that Mr Oxley was not upon the River when he quitted it but upon a branch of it— The course of the former more to the

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<sup>46</sup>. Probably the Red-bellied Blue Bonnet (*Northiella haematogaster haematogaster*), which was first described scientifically by Gould in 1837 as *Platycercus haematogaster* from a specimen collected by Mitchell from the Darling in 1835—see Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. 238.

<sup>47</sup>. Volume 3, Page {22} adds: ‘the summit of’.

<sup>48</sup>. Now known as the Lachlan Range.

<sup>49</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {23}: ‘3 days and /2/ nights destitute of it’.

northward— Still of opinion that the junction of the Darling with the Murray may be<sup>50</sup> the point of confluence of the Lachlan & Murrumbidgee.

Plains to the Southward described by the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. as better in appearance than we have yet witnessed

- {29} more extensive than Moneroo<sup>51</sup> and well clothed with young grass— Weri-calle<sup>52</sup>—anglice No Water— Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. decided upon leaving the banks of the Lachlan, & taking a direct course for the point<sup>53</sup> where he quitted the Darling on the last expedition—<sup>54</sup> Immediate orders given for the construction of Troughs to be composed of sawn planks of [Native] Pine about 2 feet wide & 15 feet long, Tarpaulined & caulked, for the conveyance of Water for the subsistence of men, cattle, Horses & Sheep. Distance of the Darling
- {30} from our present situation about 180 miles— Taking it for granted that the intermediate ground shall be found wholly destitute of Water, a quantity not less than 15 Tons weight will be required, supposing the journey to be of fourteen days duration— We muster 75 Bullocks, 90 Sheep, 15 Horses,<sup>55</sup> 25 men & 4 Black boys,<sup>56</sup> who (the latter) have accompanied us thus far, and are now afraid to return— at 6.p.m. the Sur<sup>r</sup> General upon further consideration
- {31} altered his project of carrying water so great a distance, and resolved upon pursuing the course of this River<sup>57</sup> to its confluence with the Murrumbidgee at Sturt's Lachlan junction, or Darling, as it may hereafter prove—

**27<sup>th</sup> [April].** The Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. accompanied by two men proceeded to continue the trigonometrical survey from the summit of a high Mountain b[earin]g

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<sup>50</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {23}: 'that the /junction of the/ Darling /with the Murray/ of Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt must be'.

<sup>51</sup>. Moneroo: Monaro district.

<sup>52</sup>. *Weri-calle*: (Aboriginal—Lachlan River and Upper Darling River), *wēri* (or *weeri*) meaning no; *callè* (or *câlle*, *kally*, *gally* or *gallo*) meaning fresh water. See Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. 213; *id.*, Volume II, pp. 45, 379 and 382.

<sup>53</sup>. Near present-day Menindee, N.S.W.

<sup>54</sup>. on the last expedition: in 1835.

<sup>55</sup>. Of the eleven horses that returned with the exploring expedition, only one, "Diamond", was a mare. Reference: Report of Board of Survey, attached to Letter 37/27, Perry to Col. Sec., 13 Jan. 1837. SRNSW, 4/2383. Of the four horses lost on the expedition, three were lost during the month of May: two were kicked severely by the mare and had to be destroyed, while 'our best Cart Horse' ("Farmer", a Clydesdale) drowned.

<sup>56</sup>. 4 Black boys: Piper, Tommy Came-first, Tommy Came-last, and Barney. Barney was with the party from 7<sup>th</sup> April until 7<sup>th</sup> May, when Mitchell sent him back to his own tribe, fearing that the local tribes would be insulted by Barney's covetous behaviour towards their gins.

<sup>57</sup>. Volume 3, Page {25} adds 'either'.

about South from the Camp & distant eighteen or twenty Miles— Native name <Boürdägändērēe><sup>58</sup> Left in charge— Encamped—

{32} Barometer falling— slight rain at 3.p.m.

**28<sup>th</sup> [April]** Surf Gl. returned to the Camp this morning about 10 oclock— Weather having been most unfavourable for taking bearings— Water very scarce— Bivouacked under the mountain— Heavy fall of rain at night—

**29<sup>th</sup> [April]** Broke up our Enc[ampmen]t— and continued the trace of the Lachlan— proceeded 9 miles & encamped on its banks— The day previous to our departure we made the pleasant discovery

{33} that the body of a dead Black had lain some days in the Pond from whence we had drawn our water during our six days stay!!!!!!  
“Piper” in spearing for fish had secured as he thought at first a caboune fish,<sup>59</sup> when lo & behold it proved to be the leg of a man in a state of putrification— It appears that of two Natives who were journeying in company together one died and the other being unable alone to pay the necessary honours after the usual

{34} mode of burial amongst these people; hit upon the shorter method of pitching him into the Water— Water being so scarce & so essential to their existence, any one would have supposed<sup>60</sup> that a Savage even would have felt a repugnance to such an action— but they are the Devils people without a doubt as I once heard the Major express himself.

**30 [April]** Continued the survey of the River 12 m. 40 chs. passed thro the same unvarying

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<sup>58</sup>. <Boürdägändērēe>: *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {26}: ‘<Boürd?gändärēe>’. Spelt by Mitchell ‘Burradorgàng’. Now called Mount Bootheragandra. At an elevation of 445 metres, it is about 250 metres above, and 20 km from, the Lachlan River.

<sup>59</sup>. The Aboriginal word ‘*cabonne*’ means big. This word is perpetuated in, for instance, the name of the property *Boree Cabonne* (so named because of a big clump of Boree or Weeping Myalls, *Acacia pendula*, originally growing on the banks of a creek running through the property), near Boree, about 18 km south of Molong, N.S.W., and the starting point for Mitchell’s second, third and fourth expeditions of discovery. In his description of the plan of encampment on his 1835 expedition, Mitchell referred to their camp as a “‘car borne” citadel’ (perhaps with the pun intended). Reference: Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. 338. *The Australian National Dictionary* states that the word *cabon* or *cawbawn*, *cobborn*, etc., is an example of Australian pidgin (the language of contact between European settler and Aboriginal, and now largely obsolete). It is an adaptation of the Dharuk [Dharug] word *gaban*. The Dharug tribe inhabited the Hawkesbury River region; see *Aboriginal New South Wales: a pictorial study guide*, CMA, 1987. See also footnote for Page {152}.

<sup>60</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {28}: ‘I would have supposed’.

{35} level country— Encamped at a small water hole in the River— at this point the bed of the river is most capacious with banks about twenty feet deep— This must prove the long continuance of a drought, for with the exception of the small pond we have here, not a drop of water has there been in its channel to day—

**1<sup>st</sup> May**— Traced 8<sup>m</sup> ½ along the River Banks— channel cont[inu]ing very deep wide & dry.

{36} **2<sup>d</sup> May.** 11<sup>m</sup> 50<sup>ch</sup>

On arriving at Water we much alarmed & put to flight a small family of Aborigines—<sup>61</sup> a remarkable instance of courage and true affection was displayed on this occasion by a little girl— who, while the others fled, hesitated not to remain behind by the side of her sister, who was perfectly blind—<sup>62</sup> A most unfortunate and rare circumstance occurred this evening—

{37} A vicious mare with a single kick fractured in two places the thigh of a horse standing near her— accordingly shot him—

**3<sup>d</sup> May**— Pursued a S.WY Course.

River =l[evel] about two miles South— The Lachlan[,] it appears[,] after spreading into many large channels over these immense plains, again unites, and we are now encamped on the main stream within a few yards of the same pond where Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt crossed the Creek mentioned in his

{38} narrative—<sup>63</sup>

The wild Blacks who accompany us recollect the circumstance perfectly well & their details interpreted by “Piper” prove the fact— This therefore sets at rest the identity of the “River” we are upon & Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt's junction of the same with the Murrumbidgee— chained to day 18 miles— The Overseer

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<sup>61</sup>. c.f. Volume 3, Page {30}: ‘a family of wild Blacks’.

<sup>62</sup>. Mitchell says in his Journal that the blind child was a boy, about seven or eight years old.

<sup>63</sup>. Sturt and two of his men, one being George McLeay, son of Alexander McLeay, the Colonial Secretary (1825-1837), had proceeded on horseback a short distance northwards from the Murrumbidgee on Christmas Day 1829, to reconnoitre the land and to locate the Lachlan, the Aboriginal name for which was *Colare* (Sturt) or *Kalàre* (Mitchell). Eventually they crossed a ‘creek’, which Sturt surmised to be a drain from the Marshes of the Lachlan, conducting its superfluous waters into the Murrumbidgee in times of flood. In reality, the ‘creek’ was the Lachlan River itself. References: Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 63; and Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*, Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1833, Volume II, pp. 9, 63-5. A copy of Sturt's book would have been carried on Mitchell's 1836 expedition.

wounded a splendid specimen of the Cockatoo<sup>64</sup> this evening— We are in great hopes it will live— It has a magnificent crest

{39} and its beauty would make it a present worthy of an Angel— Mr. M'Cleay shot one similar to it when on the Murrumbidgee—<sup>65</sup>

**4<sup>th</sup> [May]** Halted—

**5 [May]** Pursued the course of

**6 [May]** the Lachlan thro the

**7 [May]** same description of<sup>66</sup>

**8 [May]** baren country— Large

**9 [May]** Flats covered with reeds

**10 [May]** appearing—

**11 [May]** Made the Murrumbidgee

**12 [May]** a few miles<sup>67</sup> below the  
junction of the Lachlan.

**13 [May]** Surveyor Gl. proceeded with five men up the Murrumbidgee to determine

{40} the junction of the Lachlan with the Murrumbidgee—

**14 [May].** Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl's continued absence creates alarm for his safety— Numerous Murrumbidgee and Cudjällagong Blacks surround the Encampment— outwardly amicably disposed, but report thro Piper that a Savage tribe frequents the junction of the Lachlan and Murrum<sup>ee</sup>[,] a Tribe from the Lake <<“Wolgees”>,<sup>68</sup> and even profess to testify alarm for the consequences of a rencôtre with them— & saying that the party ought to have been more numerous— Having anxiously

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<sup>64</sup>. a splendid specimen of the Cockatoo: Stapylton refers to this bird as ‘The Cockatoo with the splendid Crest’ on Page {60}. It is almost unquestionably the Major Mitchell[’s] or Pink Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*). See Plate III.

<sup>65</sup>. Sturt’s description suggests that the bird shot by George McLeay hereabouts was a Long-billed Corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*). Reference: Sturt, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>66</sup>. Volume 3, Page {32} adds ‘level’.

<sup>67</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {32}: ‘about 26 miles’.

<sup>68</sup>. Wolgees: spelt ‘*Waljeers*’ by Mitchell and so spelt today.

{41} waited until 2.p.m. for their return I directed the Overseer with five men to proceed immediately on horseback— well armed: in order to render assistance, if it should be unfortunately required— I am of opinion however, & encourage the idea, that the delay in their return has been occasioned by the distance to the junction being much greater than the Major anticipated[,] & the intermediate ground covered as it is with reeds most difficult for the chainmen— 12 men remain to guard our position—

[*One folio (two pages) torn out, including Stapylton's entry for 15th May.*]<sup>69</sup>

{44} Not another shall do so without an understanding whether my orders are to be respected & obeyed & my complaints attended to— Others I am informed have submitted to the insolence of these ticket of leave vagabonds— as an Officer of the Department & a gentleman I will not tamely resign myself to be bearded<sup>70</sup> by a convict— Halted from Enc[ampmen]t of the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**16<sup>th</sup> [May].** Proceeded down the Murrumbidgee— Country covered with reeds on both sides—

**17<sup>th</sup> [May].** New feature appearing on the banks of the River— red sand Banks

{45} covered with Pine & Flats thickly timbered near the River— River becoming smaller in volume— Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. resumed the survey by bearings &c— {The real cause of its being taken out of my hands being perfectly intelligible to me—} /wrong/<sup>71</sup> This evening we had the misfortune to lose our best Cart Horse—<sup>72</sup> drowned in plunging down a steep bank<sup>73</sup> into the River—

**18<sup>th</sup> [May]** River bearing much more to the Southward than described<sup>74</sup> by Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt— Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. states that gentleman altho tolerably correct in his latitude, much out in his longitude—<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>. The corresponding folio in Volume 3 is missing, also, suggesting that the suppressed passage covered the first challenge to Stapylton's authority during an absence by Mitchell. The respect by certain of the men for Stapylton had probably been diminished by Mitchell's expostulation with Stapylton after the problems he had encountered on the 20th and 21st April.

<sup>70</sup>. bearded: opposed openly and resolutely, thwarted, affronted.

<sup>71</sup>. These two sentences do not appear in Volume 3.

<sup>72</sup>. our best Cart Horse: "Farmer", a Clydesdale. (Actually, Mitchell recorded his death on the 16th May, and the rescue of another horse on the 17th May.) See also footnote for Page {30}.

<sup>73</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {36}: 'a deep Bank'.

<sup>74</sup>. Volume 3, Page {37} adds 'on the Map'.

{46} **19<sup>th</sup> [May]** Course as usual—

**20<sup>th</sup> [May]** Directed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> to proceed with two men on horseback, and survey after the Military mode with pocket Compass & pacing my horse, a large Creek<sup>76</sup> upon which we are now encamped, apparently coming from the Northward— Traced it & ascertained it to be a large overflowing of the River which it eventually rejoins— a Branch which Col Jackson of St. Petersburg M.R.G.S. [*sic*]<sup>77</sup> would term anastomosing—<sup>78</sup> Rode thirty five miles & halted a short time on<sup>79</sup> a large

{47} Lake<sup>80</sup> fed by this stream— returned to the Camp by an East course distant 7 miles—

**21<sup>st</sup> [May].** Encamped on the Lake. Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. decided upon making this spot the Depôt during his absence on a survey of the Darling, leaving me Governor of the Fort as he terms it with eight men for its protection—<sup>81</sup> Ample means with the Barricade of Drays & Boat we possess to defend it against any number of Natives—  
Somewhat disappointed at this turn of affairs, being anxious to witness the

{48} improvement in size of this River at the junction of the Darling, as well as to have participated in opposing any warlike demonstrations of the Tribes on

<sup>75</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {37}: 'Surv<sup>r</sup> General surprised at the great errors in Latitude & Longitude of that gentleman'.

<sup>76</sup>. Manie Creek.

<sup>77</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {38}: 'some Military officer who has recently published a work on Rivers'.

<sup>78</sup>. Colonel [J. R.] Jackson, F.R.G.S., 'Hints on the Subject of Geographical Arrangement and Nomenclature', *JRGS* 4, 1834, pp. 72-88 plus fold-out. Anastomosis, meaning the intercommunication between two vessels channels or branches by a connecting cross branch, was originally a medical term for the cross connections between the arteries and veins, etc. It is now used for the cross connections of any branching system, including rivers. J. W. Gregory, Professor of Geology, was later to observe that the English term 'anabranche', an abbreviation of 'anastomosing branch', had been widely adopted in Australia, but not elsewhere. Reference: J. W. Gregory, *The Geography of Victoria: Historical, Physical, and Political*, 2nd edn, Whitcombe & Tombs, Melbourne, 1912, p. 161.

<sup>79</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {38}: '/one hour/ at'.

<sup>80</sup>. Subsequently named Lake Stapylton by Mitchell, but now known as Chalmers Lagoon.

<sup>81</sup>. The people left with Stapylton at this depot were Lane, Webb, Blanchard, Gayton, Douglas, Jones, McKean and Field, together with Turandurey and Ballandella and one of the two Tommys. See Volume 2, Pages {176}-{171}, {164}, {139}.

that River— Great accounts from Sur<sup>r</sup> General of Natives<sup>82</sup> hideous to view & ferocious in the extreme in those parts—<sup>83</sup>

**22<sup>d</sup> [May] Sunday—**

Preparations making for departure of the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. and fifteen men with the Native “piper”<sup>84</sup> for the solution of the problem respecting the Darling—<sup>85</sup>

Position of the Depôt for defence excellent—<sup>86</sup>

On high ground /high compared with the country around us—<sup>87</sup>  
commanding

- {49} an open plain to the South, & South East & a steep bank descent all round in other directions upon this ana-branch—  
and the Lake to the North—  
Stockyard being constructed for the Bullocks at night thus affording one more man for the Camp Watch—  
Sur<sup>r</sup> General in his written instructions to me<sup>88</sup> for my guidance during his absence dates from “Lake Stapylton”—<sup>89</sup>

**23 [May]. Monday**

I omitted to mention a most unfortunate accident which befel the little Piccaninny who with its mother has continued

- {50} to accompany us since our Encampment of the 2<sup>d</sup>. of this month— By some sudden fright the child it would appear in turning round became entangled with a bullock Team & was thrown down, the Dray wheel passing over & fracturing the poor little creatures thigh in two places— The Doctor<sup>90</sup> immediately rendered assistance, and the child is doing well & [is] quiet—

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<sup>82</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Pages {39} and {42}: ‘of Firebrands, and Natives’.

<sup>83</sup>. Volume 3, Page {42} adds ‘At ½ past 7 this evening, a change in the orders— Party to proceed as usual tomorrow morning down the River to the junction of the Murray— Bullock Drivers having reported a non-sufficiency of Feed for the Bullocks— all my eye—

**22<sup>nd</sup> [May] Sunday—**

Better report of Feed for the Bullocks—’.

<sup>84</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {43}: ‘and sixteen men’.

<sup>85</sup>. Volume 3, Page {43} adds ‘{eight of the <worst> characters picked out to remain at the Depôt under my command—}’.

<sup>86</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {43}: ‘good’.

<sup>87</sup>. *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {43}: ‘On an eminence’.

<sup>88</sup>. his written instructions to me: see Note V.

<sup>89</sup>. Queries raised by Stapylton with Mitchell before the latter departed from the depot, and Mitchell’s replies, appear in Volume 5, Page {17}.

<sup>90</sup>. The Doctor: *i.e.*, John Drysdale.

The Mother shews true concern & her language of endearment & soothing is peculiarly soft & musical— This circumstance may

{51} (notwithstanding it is to be lamented) perhaps prove somewhat providential, and tend in a great degree to prevent collusion between the mother & some wild tribes, of which there {was} /were/ evident signs of a commencement— With what view it would be difficult to say except to our disadvantage— The Mother is at all events a fixture now,<sup>91</sup> & it shall be my province to keep off the black gentry— This morning<sup>92</sup> the Sur<sup>r</sup> General & party<sup>93</sup> departed for the Darling making this Camp a Depôt of reserve— The Devil of a Mare has

{52} destroyed another horse, the Major's own property by a kick in a precisely similar situation on the thigh— Compelled to have him shot—<sup>94</sup> I am now left in charge of this Depôt, with the prospect of one months dreary solitude— Not agreeable but hope to alleviate ennui<sup>95</sup> by the perusal of several books which the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. has considerably lent me for my amusement—<sup>96</sup> The Stockyard is in progress & will be completed this evening— The Sur<sup>r</sup> General starts with a party of [fifteen men, including] five able fellows [and Piper's gin, Kitty], all in high spirits, and some as far as I can

{53} judge possessed of considerable nerve & cool courage— one in particular named "Robert Muirhead" famed for great intrepidity & cool courage<sup>97</sup> on the Darling during the former expedition. Eight men compose our defence— quite sufficient for all purposes—

**24<sup>th</sup> May**— Stockyard completed at 1 p.m.[;] an excellent job very strong & well calculated for the safe keeping of working bullocks.<sup>98</sup> My puppy "Smut" shews great game—<sup>99</sup> With the assistance of a brindle cur killed one

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<sup>91</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {46}: 'now a fixture'.

<sup>92</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {46}: '/at 10. am/'.

<sup>93</sup> . Volume 3, Pages {46}-{47} adds 'consisting of 16 Men with "Piper" in new Boots white Socks & Red Shirt accompanied by "Madame Kitty"'.  
<sup>94</sup> .

Volume 3, Page {47} adds '/rather a bore /also/ for me as my best Gov<sup>t</sup> Horse must now go the journey [to the Darling]—/'.

<sup>95</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {47}: 'annoyance'. The French word 'ennui' means boredom or passive discomfort, whilst 'annoyance' means active discomfort. Both words are derived from the Latin '*in odio*' meaning hateful.

<sup>96</sup> . See also comments in Volume 4 on Page {121}.

<sup>97</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {48}: 'coolness'.

<sup>98</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {49}: '/65/ working oxen'.

<sup>99</sup> . great game: pluck.

{54} this morning & two large Native dogs this afternoon— Shot two Teal on the Lake to day— The ducks on this piece of Water are remarkably fine— fat & tender to a degree, which is some comfort under existing circumstances—<sup>100</sup> Men orderly & well behaved— Bullock Drivers as usual giving some cheek about watching— soon silenced. My Orders Law now—

**25<sup>th</sup> May**— Shot a brace of Teal this morning on the Ana-branch— [I feel] Very dull & somewhat low spirited—

{55} Took a book & laid down on the margin of the Lake— began to reflect upon past times— found the subject disagreeable & banished it,<sup>101</sup> but made some good resolutions, more particularly with reference to the rosy God.<sup>102</sup> Apropôs de cela the Chêf has left with me a large Lime juice bottle of Col. Snodgrass's Whiskey—<sup>103</sup> Civil enough as I have contributed nothing to the Spirit store—<sup>104</sup> Not a Native has made his appearance since our arrival here, which is rather extraordinary, such situations as these being their usual haunts—<sup>105</sup> I suspect

{56} they have cleaned out all the fish from this water— which might account for it— Poor Piccaninny's leg doing well— These children would set a splendid example of patience & endurance of pain to some I am acquainted with— Three remarkable {burying places} /graves/ close to this camp— Piles of

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<sup>100</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {49}: 'present circumstances'.

<sup>101</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {50}: 'found it disagreeable, and banished the subject'.

<sup>102</sup> . the rosy God: Bacchus.

<sup>103</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {51}: 'old Snodgrass's Whiskey'. Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass, M.C., C.P., was Major of Brigade to the Governor of New South Wales. From 31st October 1836 to 5th January 1837 he was Administrator of Van Diemen's Land. On 14th June 1837 Governor Bourke recommended him as Superintendent of the District of Port Phillip, but the British Government did not accept his recommendation. From 6th December 1837 to 23rd February 1838 Snodgrass was Administrator of New South Wales. He was noted for his high reputation, sound judgment, and unalterable firmness 'accompanied by a mildness of manner not usually met with in military men'. Snodgrass was an old friend of Mitchell's, who liked to tell the tale concerning Snodgrass Valley (near the present-day locality of Mangrove Creek, on the edge of Dharug National Park) which had acquired *Vox populi, vox Dei* a local appellation not wholly unsuited to its character: 'No-grass Valley'. References: Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, pp. 5, 9; William C. Foster, *Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell and his World 1792-1855*, Inst. of Surveyors N.S.W. Inc., Sydney, 1985, pp. 230, 408; J. W. Gregory, *The Geography of Victoria: Historical, Physical, and Political*, 2nd edn, Whitcombe & Tombs, Melbourne, 1912, p. 25; and *The Sydney Herald*, 6 Oct. 1836.

<sup>104</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {51}: 'Civil enough but quite proper'. Stapylton made the whiskey last until 5th June—refer to Page {77}.

<sup>105</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {51}: 'their favourite haunts'.

wood over these, encircled<sup>106</sup> by a large furrow in the shape of a Canoe or rather jolly boat of a Man of War—<sup>107</sup> It is a little odd that the same circumstance occurred at the former Depôt of the

{57} Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. at Fort Bourke— perhaps the fact of its being a place of burial may /also/ account for the absence of all Natives— By the way the Blacks here have a most extraordinary mode of testifying their attachment to & respect for the deceased. - - It is their custom to form a large guneah over the body, and for the brother or nearest relation to sleep every night with the dead body until it becomes a perfect Skeleton— one cannot conceive a more trying situation in which to be placed or one requiring more fortitude to bear up with— Picture

{58} such a trial on this gloomy waste[,] night after night— alongside a putrid carcase—  
at 8 p.m. rain— at 10 continuing. Night dark & gloomy—<sup>108</sup> It is to be hoped a Flood will not come down the Murrumbidgee as in that case we shall be cut off from our Stockyard and in other respects it would prove extremely embarrassing—

**May 26<sup>th</sup>.** Man<sup>109</sup> lost last night but eventually made the Tents by aid of Musket firing &c.

Good Teal & pigeon shooting contin[u]e to get rid of time

{59} by such means, & condensing in Manuscript<sup>110</sup> both extracts & critiques contained in the last numbers published by {The} the Royal Geographical Society— Thanks to the Major for this—<sup>111</sup> without books this Depôt business would be the devil— No appearance of Natives— Piccaninny's leg doing well & keeping its right position—<sup>112</sup>

<sup>106</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {52}: 'Three remarkable burying places, close to this Camp— piles of wood over the {ground} /Graves/, and encircled'.

<sup>107</sup> . jolly-boat: a clinker-built ship's boat, smaller than a cutter, used chiefly as a hack boat for small work; *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {52}: 'long boat'. A long boat is the largest boat belonging to a sailing vessel.

<sup>108</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {54}: 'Night dark & cloudy'.

<sup>109</sup> . Archibald McKean—see Volume 2, Pages {169} to {167}.

<sup>110</sup> . See Volume 4, comments on Page {121}, and Pages {118}-{119}, {121}-{186}.

<sup>111</sup> . See Page {52}.

<sup>112</sup> . In Volume 3, the following is the entry for 26th May. It commences on Page {54}, proceeds down Page {55}, and finishes on the top of Page {60}, the intervening Pages {56}-{59} having been removed before the words commencing '/day find /out/ the fellow...' were inserted by Stapylton.

**'May 26<sup>th</sup>**

[Joseph] "Jones" the Shepherd[,] a hero well known /as a Messenger/ to some of my brother Officers who have been compelled to attend Office in Sydney— A Scoundrel

**May 27<sup>th</sup>**. Rode out to see how the bullocks fared for pasture— well off & Herdsmen staunch to their duty night & day— Fine weather—

**May 28<sup>th</sup>**— Last night heard

{60} voices near the Camp, but no signs of Natives {near the Camp} in the morning nor even their tracks— Smut very active and a valuable watch dog— Our only live curiosity now is a Cockatoo Pigeon, a beautiful bird & becoming tame— It would be a delightful breed to introduce and would soon become domesticated It has a dove like look about it, which with its graceful tuft,<sup>113</sup> makes it particularly beautiful— The Cockatoo with the splendid Crest<sup>114</sup> died after four days abstinence but it had received one grain of Shot in its head—

{61} otherwise I had hopes that it would have reached Sydney—

**May 29<sup>th</sup>**— Sunday— Long day— tout à fait ennuyée avec ces sujets ici— Shot a brace of black ducks, at 9 o'clock this evening— bright moonlight—

**May 30<sup>th</sup>**—

Out with my gun & made a discovery as I at first weakly imagined of the head of a species of Alligator— Black boy declared it to be the back bone of an Emu— Intend to take it to Sydney, its peculiar formation will puzzle some of the knowing ones—

{62} Bullock drivers trying to gammon me<sup>115</sup> about relieving the morning watch— [I] Let them know I did not intend to be a Cypher<sup>116</sup> or one vested

of the first Water—\* a rascally Tale bearer, a Liar, a mischief maker amongst all hands and an impudent varlet to boot— very forward and officious— took him down a Peg this evening, for thinking it fitting & proper to give an opinion— A decided favourite with the Chêf, & recommended to me as one of the good Men— I can plainly see this such humbug, and only wish he may some /day find /out/ the fellow to be what he is but he knows it already and cares not for my feelings on this subject./

\* In the seventeenth century the word 'water' was used for the transparency and lustre characteristic of a diamond or pearl, the phrase 'of the first water' signifying the highest grade of quality. The phrase later became used in the figurative sense to denote the highest excellence of purity of a substance, but by the nineteenth century it had come to mean 'out-and-out', 'thorough'.

<sup>113</sup>. a Cockatoo Pigeon ... dove like look ... with its graceful tuft: probably the Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), whose range has expanded greatly since European settlement. See also Pages {20}, {64} and {75}.

<sup>114</sup>. The Cockatoo with the splendid Crest: See Page {38} and Plate III.

<sup>115</sup>. gammon me: stuff me with nonsense. During the early days of European settlement, the Aborigines adopted some words like *piccaninny* from maritime pidgin English. Some English words even gained an extra lease of life among the Aborigines. The most famous

with authority & afraid to exercise it— Up occasionally before daylight & challenging them at their posts thro the Camp watch— no good to be done without it— Scoundrels, I wish I had done with them— all mighty subservient and attentive now, so far so good— Rainy—

**31<sup>st</sup> [May].** Fine clear weather— Fine pasture hereabouts apparently[,]

- {63} but the horses do not thrive upon it— The d<sup>st</sup> set of Screws<sup>117</sup> bought at high prices I ever beheld<sup>118</sup> by Mess<sup>rs</sup>. Hunter & Perry<sup>119</sup> only four good horses in the lot<sup>120</sup> The Major's own, (dead),<sup>121</sup> two purchased in Darling's time<sup>122</sup> by Col. Dumaresq<sup>123</sup> & a brokenkneed Black by the present overseer,<sup>124</sup> The two, fine shape & make[,] but old<sup>125</sup> I would wager a trifle<sup>126</sup> that not one of them could equal the performance of my black (& he too touched in the wind)— of carrying me from Sydney to Boree in five
- {64} days— Boree eighty miles beyond Bathurst— Have great sport in<sup>127</sup> Cockatoo {and} pigeon shooting— Had a splendid shot at a Pelican on the water yesterday with ball— missed him— another to day at three together —

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example is *gammon*, an eighteenth century Cockney word meaning 'a lie'. *Gammon* was rapidly adopted by the Aborigines who developed it into a verb. The word then gradually dropped out of everyday 'White' Australian talk but continued to flourish among the black community. Now, according to anthropologists working in the Northern Territory, *gammon* is coming back into the English of the region, re-borrowed from the Aborigines. Reference: Robert McCrum, William Cran & Robert MacNeil, *The Story of English*, Faber & Faber, London, 1986, p. 285.

<sup>116</sup> . Cypher: non-entity.

<sup>117</sup> . Screws: worn-out horses.

<sup>118</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {61}: 'I ever set eyes upon'.

<sup>119</sup> . Hunter & Perry: Captain William Hunter, Assistant Military Secretary to the Governor; Captain S. A. Perry, Deputy Surveyor General (1830-1853). These two gentlemen, together with Captain Williams of the Mounted Police, subsequently formed the Board of Survey established by the Governor to report on the eleven horses returned with the exploring expedition. Captain Hunter accompanied Governor Bourke on his trip to Port Phillip on the sloop of war HMS *Rattlesnake* in February 1837. References: Letter 36/1074, Col. Sec. to Mitchell, 27 Dec. 1836, SRNSW, 2/1471; Letter 37/27, Perry to Col. Sec., 13 Jan. 1837, SRNSW, 4/2383; *Historical Records of Victoria* 5, p. 74.

<sup>120</sup> . Volume 3, Page {61} mentions 'only three good horses in the lot', and disregards the Major's own (dead).

<sup>121</sup> . See Pages {51}-{52}.

<sup>122</sup> . in Darling's time: *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {61}: 'formerly'.

<sup>123</sup> . Col. Dumaresq: see Note VI.

<sup>124</sup> . the present overseer: Alexander Burnett.

<sup>125</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {61}: 'the two former fine shape & make but old & nearly done up'.

<sup>126</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {61}: 'I would lay a wager'.

<sup>127</sup> . Volume 3, Page {62} adds: 'Duck, and'.

missed them all— Double[-barrelled fire-arms] dont carry a ball with any precision— Loud singing & bloody this & that at the Men's Tent— Sent [Walter] Blanchard to stop it immediately. More quiet but all ripe for mischief, if they can but contrive to get a hold /as they term it/. Any one a short

{65} time in<sup>128</sup> New South Wales, & who has had to deal with such blackguards will perfectly understand me—

The Bullock Herds report that when out to day they encountered a tribe of Blacks. It is singular that this wild race of people should adopt as they invariably do when their intentions are peaceable, the symbol of peace of old— viz. the extending the olive branch in one or both hands in the shape of a green bough— It is useful to know that they attach importance to this

{66} circumstance— altho on the Marshes of the Lachlan, it would puzzle a traveller to find a branch of a tree or even {it} a substitute— A sitting posture is another friendly intention and dumb silence with downcast eyes for a few moments—<sup>129</sup> The Masks of which such ridiculous mention was made in Sydney by some great wise-acres in the Office, I am decidedly of opinion {would} if properly accompanied by a winding sheet & the firing off a pistol or rocket {would} would set a whole Tribe

{67} scampering as if the Devil was at their heels—<sup>130</sup> The Bullocks even which have small bells attached to their necks appear to cause great terror— not so the Sheep (except in a few instances) which the Murrumbidgee Blacks called Kangaroo dogs— Cold Frosty night. Jupiter & Venus most brilliant now— Also "Oliver"<sup>131</sup> which is fortunate. Scorpio also with Antares—<sup>132</sup> Dont

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<sup>128</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {63}: 'Any one long in'.

<sup>129</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {64}: 'a few minutes'.

<sup>130</sup> . Later, on the evening of 7th October while camping beside Déegay (Major) Creek, Mitchell's advance party became perturbed at the number of local Aborigines lingering near their tents. Mitchell resolved to scare them away. 'Accordingly, at a given signal, Burnett suddenly sallied forth, wearing a gilt mask, and holding in his hand a blue light with which he fired a rocket. The use of these masks, which I on several occasions displayed with success, was first suggested to me by Sir John Jamison.' (Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 290). Sir John Jamison (1776-1844), physician and constitutional reformer, was a member of the colony's squatter autocracy ('exclusives'), and owned a property *Regent's Ville* overlooking the Nepean River just south of Penrith (N.S.W.). Sturt stayed overnight there at the commencement of his first expedition of discovery, on 13th November 1828. Sydney's Jamison Street was named after him, as was the County of Jamison in northern N.S.W.

<sup>131</sup> . "Oliver": the moon! Cant (*i.e.*, language or 'secret speech' of the underworld) 1780-1900, but nearly obsolete by 1860. Reference: Eric Partridge (abridged by Jacqueline Simpson), *The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1973.

<sup>132</sup> . Comparable text from here to near the bottom of Page {71} is missing from Volume 3, due to the removal of two folios (four pages) from that volume.

make much [head] way in this sort of study not having a great relish for it—  
but anything pour passer le temps—

**June 1<sup>st</sup>**. Shot a species of parrot<sup>133</sup> I have not seen before— uncertain

{68} whether [there is a specimen] in the Museum or not until the return of the  
birdstuffer. Green with yellow ring round the neck Dark blue on the back  
with dark blue feathers in the wing— yellow on the breast— black feathers  
underneath the wings— size of the green <Teal>— Unfortunately no  
preparation for curing the skin—

**June 2<sup>nd</sup>**— Piccaninny very uneasy— having shifted the splints from its  
thigh & leg— compelled to perform the part of Surgeon— readjusted them  
but foot apparently sadly out of its proper position  
Poor little devil it could not have fallen into kinder

{69} hands altho with a broken leg—  
Rain— Every prospect of a flood— Such an event would be most disastrous  
for the party on the Darling, as well as for ourselves— we are comparatively  
in safety having two magnificent boats close under our lee— whereas the  
consequences might be most serious indeed, & perhaps fatal to the party  
away, should a flood overtake them without a Hill to fly to, & now only one  
fortnights provisions on hand— It is to be sincerely hoped no such  
Catastrophe may happen—

{70} “Smut” first at the killing of a Native dog this evening— Night wet &  
cloudy— Pulled up Mr. Jones<sup>134</sup> for the second time last night for making a  
noise & waking me with an oath that he wished all the dogs in the Camp  
were in Hell during his watch— His damned Sheep jump over the Canvass  
Fold often during the night without any apparent cause— but the vagabond  
rascal would wish it to appear that the dogs alarm them, whereas they (the  
Dogs) are his best protection and were it not for the

{71} heroism & gallantry of “Smut”, the sneaking son of a bitch would have been  
long since minus a good many— thro attacks from the Native dog— I am of  
opinion however that he begins to understand I will not be trifled with or  
gammoned by such a presumptuous blackguard as he is— The Chêf calls him  
a good man— Heaven defend me from such specimens in my own party—  
My Tentkeeper “Geiton”,<sup>135</sup> a baker by trade & yet no Cook, is a good  
servant but a flash queer tempered Cove—

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<sup>133</sup> . Probably the Mallee ringneck (*Barnardius barnardi*).

<sup>134</sup> . Mr. Jones: *i.e.*, Joseph Jones, the shepherd.

<sup>135</sup> . “Geiton”: *i.e.*, John Gayton.

{72} Before . . . . Departure heard<sup>136</sup> some appalling anecdotes related of . . . . . during the last expedition—<sup>137</sup> always considered him an insignificant little fellow, but could not have believed him so devoid of all gentlemanly feeling & character, or such a rank coward as the representations prove him to have shewn himself— The Overseer's stories also are to the same effect but of a darker hue even— I can scarcely believe them.<sup>138</sup>

{73} Poor [Richard] Cunningham's history is a most melancholy one—<sup>139</sup> His sufferings must have been most dreadful— The Major describes this event in a very forcible manner and his sensations during the period of doubt respecting the fate of Cunningham were evidently of the most painful nature—<sup>140</sup>  
Like all botanists he would persist in wandering away, and he from the Track in pursuit of his favourite occupation— altho repeatedly forewarned by the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl.

{74} of what would happen to him— and it is clear to me that the loss of life must be wholly attributable to his own folly & loss of senses, from despair & terror on discovering that he was astray—<sup>141</sup> We have a fellow in this party who I expect will share a similar fate from the same cause— It is most absurd that these sort of men should expect to find more curiosities right or left than along the route the party may be going thro a new region—

**June 3<sup>d</sup>** Fine weather Shot a black duck, a Teal,

{75} and three Cockatoo pigeons. These latter appear to carry away a great deal of shot in them—<sup>142</sup> by watching their flight after [gun-] fire & being hit hard repeatedly see them fall dead at a distance—

**June 4<sup>th</sup>** Bullock Herd<sup>143</sup> reporting three bullocks down a short time after leaving the Stockyard this morning— Circumstance caused by their being

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<sup>136</sup> . Volume 3, Page {70} adds: 'him relate'.

<sup>137</sup> . during the last expedition: in 1835.

<sup>138</sup> . Volume 3, Page {71} adds: 'at all events I think he is cock sure of getting the sack, the very first stumble he makes in any point of Duty—'.

<sup>139</sup> . The brother of Government Botanist and explorer, Allan Cunningham, Richard Cunningham was attached to Mitchell's second expedition (in 1835) as botanist. He was killed by local Aborigines on the Bogan River, the first white man killed while exploring the inland.

<sup>140</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {71}: 'The Major describes his sensations as most painful during the period they remained in doubt about his fate—'.

<sup>141</sup> . Volume 3, Page {72} merely says: 'to his own folly, or blunders—'.

<sup>142</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {73}: 'to stand a great deal of Shot about them—'.

<sup>143</sup> . Charles Webb—see Volume 2, Page {150}.

cramped by cold in the Stockyard at night, which has become very wet since the rain— Ordered a Coil of rope to be taken out of one of the

{76} drays, and set two men<sup>144</sup> to make a temporary inclosure on dry ground for the Cattle.

Fine day but cloudy—

At 11.a.m. Creek rising in a<sup>145</sup> remarkable manner— Directed Horses Cattle & Sheep to be brought over to the Camp side of the Creek

**June 5<sup>th</sup>**— Compelled to construct a new Stockyard— Water rising like the Devil— unsettled appearance of weather— every prospect of a Flood— Lake a brimmer— Our Camp however full 18 feet above the surface—<sup>146</sup>

{77} Miserabile dictu.<sup>147</sup> floored<sup>148</sup> the Whiskey bottle to day at dinner— pretty moderate however for a fourteen days touch—<sup>149</sup>

**June 6<sup>th</sup>**— Rise of water in the Creek three feet since yesterday—

At 1.a.m. stormy with thunder & /terrific/ lightning— Terrific inasmuch as I have a dray close to my Tent containing two barrels of Gunpowder not to mention sundry Ball Cartridges<sup>150</sup> & rockets— The quantity of Iron work about us and the bullock chains

{78} placed over the Tarpaulins of the drays, offering a most inviting attraction to the electric fluid— another Native dog killed this afternoon by Smut & the brindle— Smut is clearly an out & outer—<sup>151</sup> Never receives a bite,<sup>152</sup> and once fast,<sup>153</sup> never lets go his hold—<sup>154</sup> Rain & stormy weather—<sup>155</sup> Creek continues to rise slowly— about 1 foot in the 24 hours— This need not cause

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<sup>144</sup> . Richard Lane and James Field—see Volume 2, Page {149}.

<sup>145</sup> . Volume 3, Page {74} adds: 'most'.

<sup>146</sup> . *c.f.* Volume 3, Page {75}: 'not more than ten feet above its present surface'.

<sup>147</sup> . *Miserabile dictu*: sad to say. Jocular parody on *mirabile dictu*: (Latin) wonderful to relate.

<sup>148</sup> . floored: knocked off, finished.

<sup>149</sup> . pretty moderate however for a fourteen [*sic*] days touch: Stapylton had resolved on the 25th May (see Page {55}) to make the whiskey last as long as possible.

<sup>150</sup> . Ball Cartridges: gun-cartridges containing small shot.

<sup>151</sup> . out & outer: (colloquial) a perfect or supreme type of his kind.

<sup>152</sup> . Volume 3, Page {76} adds: 'The first in always,'.

<sup>153</sup> . fast: firmly fixed.

<sup>154</sup> . Much later, Stapylton added to Volume 3, Page {76}: '/Sept 1<sup>st</sup> on referring to this journal I little thought when I wrote it of the fate that awaited poor Smut—'.

<sup>155</sup> . Volume 3, Page {77} adds: 'continuing'.

much apprehension,<sup>156</sup> but the devil of it, is our ignorance of what may be taking place

{79} in the mountains to the Eastward {—} for I have myself witnessed the most extraordinary rise<sup>157</sup> in the Murrumbidgee frequently near the upper parts—  
Here we are very little above the level of the Sea, and have besides the contribution of the Lachlan, and all those infernal Creeks, and marshes {in} North & South of it—  
at 8.p.m. Fine starlight night— no rain— wind subsided—

**June 7<sup>th</sup>**— at 8.a.m. rain with stormy weather— Creek rose six inches last night—

{80} We are now literally surrounded by water, & at a distance of about<sup>158</sup> two or three miles— We have a Lake North & South of us, & the River South of that, and this ana branch<sup>159</sup> encompassing us all round— For elevation however it is decidedly the best spot the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. could have hit upon—<sup>160</sup>  
I still retain the Stockyard on the opposite side for two reasons 1. Because we can if necessary at any time swim the Cattle over, there being little or

{81} no current & the banks firm & sloping— 2. Because being surrounded by water, the run is materially curtailed on this side, added to which the pasture is much better<sup>161</sup> on the other, & if needs must the Cattle may there be left to go to the devil their own way but with the advantage of having the open Interior to fly to, where sand Hills abound covered with grass—<sup>162</sup> Creek now about 30 yards across—<sup>163</sup> Crossed over this morning in a Canoe— An easy

{82} & practicable mode of crossing water, but not very safe for one who cannot swim— Caused two Trees to be sawn down, and thrown over the Creek to serve as a bridge to the Stockyard— the Shoemaker<sup>164</sup> one of the Bullock watches [being] no swimmer—

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<sup>156</sup> . Volume 3, Page {77} adds: 'for our safety for some days'.

<sup>157</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {77}: 'and I myself have witnessed the most extraordinary & rapid rise'.

<sup>158</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {78}: '/of/ not more than'.

<sup>159</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {79}: 'and the Creek /the anabranch/'.

<sup>160</sup> . Volume 3, Page {79} adds: '(—My discovery though be it said.)—'.

<sup>161</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {80}: 'is much superior'.

<sup>162</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {80}: 'covered with grass abound'.

<sup>163</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {80}: '30 yards in width'.

<sup>164</sup> . the Shoemaker: *i.e.*, James Field.

Men much more orderly in the Camp since the lecture<sup>165</sup> I indulged them with a few days since— I have one amongst them a most particular rascal<sup>166</sup> a man of D'arcys,<sup>167</sup> [John] Douglas by name a sour Highlander

{83} and a sailor— another good man— pointed out to me particularly— Still I might find them very different characters had I the supreme command— for they are universally bad unless ruled with a rod of Iron—<sup>168</sup> The Bullock Herds duties<sup>169</sup> I must admit are severe both night & day—

**June 8**— Continued as per Journal at the Depot for Sur<sup>r</sup> Gls inspection.<sup>170</sup>

**June 10<sup>th</sup>**— at 11 am. heard with great joy {— — —} Tally ho the groom sounding his

{84} horn at a distance as is the custom in order to prepare /for/ pitching the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gls Tent—  
The Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. shortly afterwards arrived at the Creek side— Crossed over in a Canoe and met me in a most friendly manner.

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<sup>165</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {81}: 'orderly & attentive since a lecture'.

<sup>166</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Pages {81}-{82}: 'one most particular rascal here'.

<sup>167</sup> . D'arcy: Frederick Robert D'Arcy who, as a younger man, was appointed a Draftsman in April 1829. From 1831 to 1833 he was engaged in tracing the almost impenetrable valleys and heights of the Colo River, a main tributary of the Hawkesbury. On 10th September 1836 Governor Bourke directed that D'Arcy and another draftsman, William Wedge Darke (see Appendix V), be employed at Port Phillip as Assistant Surveyors. Robert Russell, who had an architectural background, was subsequently appointed senior Assistant Surveyor in charge. They arrived on 3rd November (and landed on 5th November). D'Arcy and Darke then assisted Russell in preparing the first-ever plan of the existing settlement of Melbourne. (On this feature plan Robert Hoddle was later to superimpose the layout of Melbourne's streets, as indicated by the Governor, in April 1837.) D'Arcy then surveyed the western shoreline of Port Phillip Bay from the mouth of the Werribee River southwards for about 90 miles, and later traced the Barwon, Moorabool and Yarrowee Rivers. Russell, D'Arcy and Darke were three of the first ten public servants appointed in Melbourne. (Police Magistrate William Lonsdale and District Interpreter William Buckley were another two.) It was Russell who designed St. James' Old Cathedral, Victoria's oldest surviving church and Melbourne's oldest surviving building, in 1838-39. The church was built in Little Collins Street, near William Street, between 1839 and 1847. References: J. M. Freeland, *Melbourne Churches 1836-1851*; *An Architectural Record*, MUP, 1963; David Saunders (ed.), *Historic Buildings of Victoria*, Jacaranda, 1966; *HRV* 1, 3, 5.

<sup>168</sup> . c.f. Volume 3, Page {82}: 'a sour Highlander— Another good man for the Chêf— particularly pointed out to me as a meritorious character— Heaven deliver me from having such specimens in my own party—'.

<sup>169</sup> . Volume 3, Page {82} adds: 'however'.

<sup>170</sup> . Refer to Volume 2, Pages {177}-{131}. Volume 3, Page {82} says:

'**June 8<sup>th</sup>** Ascertaining this m[ornin]g. that the cattle still shewed &c &c as per Journal kept for Surv<sup>r</sup> Gls inspection during his absence—'.

From his statement it appears that the Savage Tribes whom he mauled so severely last year on the Darling were not content & had actually come a distance of 150 or 160 miles to fight him— To his great surprise he encountered them at

- {85} a large Lake “Benninee”<sup>171</sup> distant not more than 15 or 20 miles from the Depôt— These devils it would seem (& there can be no doubt of the fact) had the audacity to suppose that they could overpower the Major & Party by main /muscular/ strength & by Strategem— viz having concealed their spears at a short distance off, to approach in a friendly unconcerned manner while certain parties of them six or eight in number were allotted for the respective duties of rushing upon & securing
- {86} the Major first then the Overseer &c &c—  
The Native “Piper” overheard this scheme being planned & apprised the Major {&} /, who directed/ a party of men on proceeding as usual in the morning {were directed} to choose an opportunity for a retrograde movement ambuscade in a scrub, & deal out destruction upon these Cannibals right & left— the manoeuvre succeeded— the Blacks immediately took to the Water— The Chief and numbers
- {87} were shot— Tranquillity ensued— the party proceeded unmolested—  
Having pursued the Darling upwards for many miles thro a desert, the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. whose anxiety for the fate of his Depôt was extreme, and being /fully/ convinced on all /the/ points he wished to ascertain /regarding that River/— brought back his party with all haste to our Encampment—  
Much astonished that the Blacks had not attempted to take revenge upon the Depôt, & well pleased to find Horses, Cattle, & Sheep much improved in condition, & Camp in statu quo— Slight “κῶδος” for me for exercising strict
- {88} authority over the rascals— which was very satisfactory to my feelings—  
I would command the devil himself only let me be supported by my Superior Officer—

**June 11<sup>th</sup>** Halted

**June 12**— Directed by the Sur<sup>r</sup> Gl. to proceed with a strong party to our encamp[men]t of the 21<sup>st</sup> May, trace /thence/ the Murrumbidgee down, to its junction with the Murray, & the Murray down to a certain point where he would also proceed with the baggage— The River at this point altho wide

- {89} offering an eligible place for the transit of Cattle &c.

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<sup>171</sup> . Lake Benanee (about 10 km north-east of present-day Robinvale, Vic.).

**June 13<sup>th</sup>** Occupied in passing over the /sheep &/ baggage in the two Whale Boats & swimming Cattle & Horses—

Tents pitched on the left bank of the Murray at 30<sup>m</sup>[inutes] p[ast]. 6.p.m— and all over safe with the exception of one bullock drowned thro the d—d Stupidity of one “Stuttering Charley”,<sup>172</sup> who slacked the rope too much, in lieu of keeping the animals head close up to the Stern of the Boat— a few were thus lugged across the River

{90} who would not face the Stream— All the horses swam well with the exception of my Govt. Prad,<sup>173</sup> who after <plunging> violently, took the sulks, & laid on his side without making an effort to swim— a good man one “Charley King” a devil of a fellow amongst the black gentry<sup>174</sup> keeping the Nags head well up out of the water—

**June 14<sup>th</sup>** Halted to allow Bullocks & Horses to recover from the effects of their bath yesterday— current of the River at this point 4 feet per second—

{91} the water now piercingly cold— The Banks of the Murray most picturesque {at this point}— a fine wide River with a stream<sup>175</sup> about four miles an hour— I made it 8 chains in width at the junction of the Murrumbidgee but here it is rather narrower— Numerous small parties of Natives surround our encampment but they are remarkably on their good behaviour— not allowed to approach to sit down, within some distance, & given to understand they need

{92} not expect Tomahawks, no such article being in our possession— An infinity of mischief has originated in this system of former travellers {by} giving /them/ Tomahawks— These devils have not the principle of good in them. They feel no gratitude for your presents, & their intentions are only fraught with evil and how to compass your destruction— If they are not very civil the leaden pill<sup>176</sup> will be amongst them I feel assured from what I can perceive of

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<sup>172</sup> . “Stuttering Charley”: *i.e.*, Charles Webb. See another reference to him in Volume 4, Page {40}.

<sup>173</sup> . Prad: (slang) horse. The word prad comes by metathesis (transposition of letters) from the Dutch *paard*, horse.

<sup>174</sup> . It was Charles King who, with William Woods and John Johnston, had saved the lives of several of the party during Mitchell’s second expedition in an affray with natives on the Darling River (near present-day Menindee) on 11th July 1835, and who, on the present expedition, fired the first shot in the incident with the same tribe at ‘Mount Dispersion’, about 38 km west of Lake Benanee, on 27th May.

<sup>175</sup> . stream: current.

<sup>176</sup> . leaden pill: *i.e.*, bullet.

{93} our Commander's feelings on the subject— Stormy— Rain— The "Millewa"<sup>177</sup> rising fast, a considerable flood in it at present—

**June 15<sup>th</sup>** Halted— some repairs necessary for Boat Carriage—<sup>178</sup> Blacksmiths portable Forge extremely useful. Natives keep at a respectful distance, altho it would appear they are not yet acquainted with the "Benninee" affair— Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. gone with five men in the Boat up the Murray to see the junction of the Murrumbidgee— Left in charge— Men noisy—

{94} dont like my treatment of their pals lately at the Depôt. Hate me like the devil I plainly perceive, of which I am heartily glad— always get on better when that is the case— River remains stationary in height— cold weather & barometer falling fast— /Lat<sup>e</sup> & Long<sup>e</sup> of the Murray where it was crossed in Boats—

34°. 42'. 00" S. lat<sup>e</sup>—  
143°. 20. 20. E. long<sup>e</sup>—<sup>179</sup>

**June 16<sup>th</sup>**

Proceeded— Sur<sup>r</sup> General taking the bearings & keeping the Feild Book— Traced 14 miles & encamped on the River banks— Country improving— Salsolo<sup>180</sup> Flats, but

{95} composed of a better soil— strong red clay— Thickly timbered in places— Large Lagoons or ana branches, & Capital pasture for some distance on the firm ground parallel with the River— Cattle & Horses must thrive in our present line of country—

**June 17<sup>th</sup>**— Proceeded as usual— Splendid weather, cold but delightful for exercise— No climate can possibly {equal} /surpass/ that which

{96} we at present enjoy & if we are fortunate enough to discover an eligible pasture country, & finely watered, as it is reasonable to suppose we may, with such a feeder as the Snow mountains, this must eventually be the Nook in this great Island where all its riches shall concentrate— A new animal caught to day by one of the dogs— Head like a guinea pig— Kangaroo Rat species.<sup>181</sup> Fossill remains of the same discovered some time since

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<sup>177</sup> . "Millewa": Aboriginal name for the Murray River.

<sup>178</sup> . Boat Carriage: see Note VII.

<sup>179</sup> . The modern geographical co-ordinates are latitude 34°43' 0" S, longitude 143°11' 48" E; Stapylton's calculated position is thus 2.1 km too far to the north and 13.0 km too far to the east.

<sup>180</sup> . Salsolo: Common or Prickly Saltwort, Roly-poly (*Salsola kali*).

<sup>181</sup> . A new animal caught to day by one of the dogs— Head like a guinea pig— Kangaroo Rat species: Pig-footed Bandicoot (*Chaeropus ecaudatus*); see Note VIII and Figure 7.

{97} by the Surf Gl. in the caves at Wellington Valley—<sup>182</sup> thus proving the great antiquity of some of the animals now extant in New South Wales—

**June 18<sup>th</sup>**

Our course to day parallel with a large Ana-branch of the River— After tracing 13 miles encamped on the Banks of the Millewa, having passed the mouth of the former— country improving— undulating heathy ground

{98} right & left of the River  
red sand— Cypress Pine abounding. Lofty Gums near the River at the end of our journey  
reeds & Lagoons on the left bank— causing some embarassment— A red Sand Bank uniformly runs parallel to the course of these Rivers—  
the proper term<sup>183</sup> for it the “River Berg”— This affords an excellent guide as it invariably will abut in some parts close upon the River,

{99} Thus proving an excellent clue to the general {— — —} course of the River— and weathering<sup>184</sup> all the ana branches, Lagoons, Swampy ground &c—  
The River up to this point coming very much from the southward, making a beautiful curve to that point from its junction with the Murrumbidgee—

**June 19<sup>th</sup>** Bullocks astray in the morning— Started at 1 p.m. and made eight miles— Reedy

{100} country on both sides of the River—

**June 20<sup>th</sup>** Emerged shortly after starting upon undulating grassy country— extensive Southward & /to the/ Westward—

On being directed /late in the afternoon/ to ride ahead & see if I could find a place practicable as to banks for Cattle [to negotiate], I /suddenly/ came upon the junction of another River<sup>185</sup> flowing through a {— — —} /Mass/ of reeds I supposed to be the Goulburn— The country on the left bank of this River where we

{101} are now encamped is of the most promising description— Extensive hollows between the undulating parts of the plain composed of the richest alluvial soil— The plain covered with thick tufts of grass similar to Bathurst [district]

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<sup>182</sup> . the caves at Wellington Valley: see Note IX.

<sup>183</sup> . the proper term: *i.e.*, according to Col. Jackson—see Page {46} above.

<sup>184</sup> . weathering: passing through and surviving.

<sup>185</sup> . Little Murray River (which collects the waters of the present-day Loddon and Avoca Rivers).

and the view unbounded to the South— Excellent pasture inhabits also these reeds— once burnt off[,] & in dry seasons the land watered by irrigation A vast scope of endless splendid Wheat land is here opened to the Settler.

{102} I entertain the most promising expectations of the fertility and available resources of the region we are now traversing— A noble River flows majestically thro the whole /of it/ for we know that the Hume<sup>186</sup> was eighty yards wide where the travellers crossed it—<sup>187</sup>

Opposite my Tent at this point it may be about 200 yards wide— Steam shall eventually be employed to navigate it and what matters it whether or not its mouth

{103} be blocked up by a bar of Sand— some port will indubitably be found on the Coast, from which cartage may be employed—

Nights very cold— Innumerable wild fowl<sup>188</sup> on the Swamps in the reeds— Not comattable<sup>189</sup> being on the wrong side for us—

Three Kangaroo killed to day by five dogs in about 3 minutes—

### June 21<sup>st</sup>

The Reeds encompassing both the Millewa<sup>190</sup> and Goulburn<sup>191</sup> upon our left

{104} as we proceed, may extend for 5 miles /Easterly/— beyond we see a lofty line of trees which must belong to the Millewa, the stream of that river far more rapid than the Goulburn—

This line stretches away to the Eastward, while Reeds as far as the eye can reach, show the course of the Goulburn<sup>192</sup> {to} /from/ the Southward—

Fine Frosty weather—

Surv<sup>r</sup> General appears well pleased with the prospect of discovery as it now opens before us— Awfully cold last night— a piercing wind from our snowy

{105} Acquaintances<sup>193</sup> to the Southwad— /& Eastward./ Not a little frigid I guess as we approach that quarter—<sup>194</sup> Thanks to a good monkey Jacket<sup>195</sup> &

<sup>186</sup> . Hume: *i.e.*, Murray River.

<sup>187</sup> . Hume and Hovell crossed the Murray River near Bonegilla, upstream from Wodonga.

<sup>188</sup> . Innumerable wild fowl: including swans, whose noise during the night disturbed the campers on the nearby rise so greatly that Mitchell named the spot Swan Hill. See Pages {111}-{112}.

<sup>189</sup> . comattable: come-at-able, *i.e.*, accessible.

<sup>190</sup> . the Millewa: the Murray River.

<sup>191</sup> . Goulburn: Little Murray River.

<sup>192</sup> . the Goulburn: present-day Loddon River.

<sup>193</sup> . snowy Acquaintances: *i.e.*, Snowy Mountains.

<sup>194</sup> . quarter: region in that compass direction.

Trowsers from friend [William] Pendray,<sup>196</sup> and I bid defiance to all [weathers?] we may encounter in that respect— My government Prads both get fresher every day, and as I have now little else to do than ride about & amuse myself in the best way I can, I manage, with sundry Halts for a right good smoke of the Pipe to pass the day pretty pleasantly—

{106} Everything appears to go on smoothly— I give the Chêf no opportunity to be crusty, and upon the whole I may say that he treats me with attention & kindness— I look back upon our toilsome & disheartening passage down the Lachlan as one is wont to do upon a dream or an event long past of an unpleasant nature— Those infernal Marshes cause nothing else but dissatisfaction and mortification to the feelings of every traveller whose ill luck

{107} it has been to encounter them—  
Traced 15 miles and encamped on extensive Flats destitute of Timber— soil of the richest description— Passed two very fine Lakes—<sup>197</sup> The feature on the right bank is very different to this on the left— We see lofty Timber & a finely wooded country intervening between this River<sup>198</sup> & the Murray— The River here is rising— two feet more would inundate the whole plain— To our right to the

{108} Southward & Westward we have the Pine sand Hills, & [Eucalyptus] dumosa Scrub to fly to— The Stream here is slow & the river about half the width of the Murray— which may be said to average about 200 yards in {width} /breadth/—  
At dark “Piper” came up full of importance & stated that he had killed his Man— It appears that he had sought out in the Reeds some blacks (whom I had a few minutes previously myself put to

{109} flight in the greatest consternation upon seeing me suddenly ride in amongst them on horseback I being considerably a head of the Party) and having enquired of them the name of the Sheet of Water a villainous old man as is invariably the case, in an authoritative tone desired two other blacks to spear Piper forthwith— Two spears were accordingly immediately hurled at him both of which he warded off with the barrel of

{110} his carbine, then came our black friends turn who straightway fired and shot one of the three, ran up and hammered out the fellows brains with the Butt

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<sup>195</sup> . monkey Jacket: a short close-fitting jacket, such as was worn by sailors.

<sup>196</sup> . See another reference to Pendray in Volume 5, Page {56}. William Pendray was a tailor and draper of Jamison Street, Sydney. Reference: Alan E. J. Andrews, *Stapylton: with Major Mitchell's Australia Felix Expedition, 1836*, pp. 107, 266.

<sup>197</sup> . two very fine Lakes: Lake Baker and Lake Boga.

<sup>198</sup> . Little Murray River.

end of his piece— Thus these devils will not allow us to pass along peaceably— A civil question is asked & the answer is a shower of spears— We spared their Guneahs to day because they were a new race & had done us no harm— but let them beware, henceforward

{111} for the Chêf will shew them no quarter— Forbearance they take for timidity, and then presume to take liberties with our lives. They are an infernal people in the true sense of the word— Our Two black boys corroborate Piper's story, and yet it is somewhat odd that Piper did not man their spears— This hostile disposition of these Tribes will prove a great obstacle to obtaining the Native names of places—  
Our Encampment of last night is named "Swan Hill" by the Chêf on account of the numbers of those birds whose

{112} beautiful notes were incessantly heard during the night and also from the circumstance of its being close to the junction of the Millewa & Goulburn<sup>199</sup> Rivers & therefore important to assign it a name on the Map— The Name appears as rational as that of Emu Plains—<sup>200</sup> Bitter cold frosty night— Fogs in the Flats very inimical to Surveying in the morning—

**June 22<sup>d</sup>**—

Extensive grassy plain South & West of our course—  
Near our Encampment at

{113}-{114} [Blank pages]

{115} night three small Lakes—<sup>201</sup> Water as salt as the Sea— Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl of opinion that from their appearance their level must be below that of the River— Unfortunately it was not determined upon to ascertain this point, until we had left them far in our rear—

Should this opinion be borne out by fact, it would give rise to a curious geological question, namely that they might be antediluvium and formed before the waters of the Deluge subsided & the fluviatile formation had taken place— I am disposed

{116} to differ on this point with the Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl— for although the Crater in which the water of them lies, is surrounded by a very deep bank descent still our course over this vast plain in some parts during the last two days has been over slightly rising ground—

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<sup>199</sup> . Goulburn: Little Murray.

<sup>200</sup> . Stapylton is being ironic about the conceit of both names: Swan Hill is virtually flat, while Emu Plains (formerly known as Emu) is a locality on rising land (at the foot of the Blue Mountains, opposite Penrith).

<sup>201</sup> . three small Lakes: probably Lake Kelly and its two small neighbours.

At this point Stapylton probably should have inserted the date **23<sup>rd</sup> June**. See Note X.

23 [June]<sup>202</sup> Debarred from access  
 24 [June] to the [Murray] River by a  
 25 [June] large ana branch—<sup>203</sup>  
  
 26 [June]<sup>204</sup> quite at a loss to know  
 where the river is—  
 This ana-branch  
 continues precisely in the

{117} direction the River should take— Country not so good— Large Forests of low Box Trees— (Cobbra)—<sup>205</sup> and occasionally Flats covered with fine grass, but on a white tenacious clay— A curious discovery made to day of a Kangaroo Mouse— In all respects similar to the rat species, but most diminutive /& with a brushy Tail./<sup>206</sup>  
 A peice of Scoria, or Lava, found near one of the Salt Lakes—<sup>207</sup>  
 Surv<sup>r</sup> General states that we are now about 120 miles only from the Sea Coast— Govt. Prad dead

{118} lame this morning— in consequence of being swamped in an endeavour of mine to cross the ana branch, while accompanied yesterday by the Chêf on a ride— Meant swimming it wishing to shew off, but was completely flummaxed by the mud—  
 Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. having left a large Tract of country unexplored to the Southward proceeds with 7 men on Monday<sup>208</sup> all mounted carrying 10 days' provisions in order to make a flying survey of it—  
 Mountains

{119} seen to day about 20 miles South—  
 Heard the Birdstuffer a most impudent scoundrel strike my dog last night while on watch, which sent poor "Smut" yelping into my Tent—  
 Notwithstanding the hour I damned his eyes well & in the morning blew him up sky high & very loud, which had the desired effect of making him look very foolish— Surv<sup>r</sup> General did not interfere which was quite right— If the men annoy me it is quite correct that I should have the power of blowing them up &

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<sup>202</sup> . 23 [June]: this date probably should be deleted.

<sup>203</sup> . large ana branch: Gunbower Creek.

<sup>204</sup> . 26 [June]: this date probably should be deleted.

<sup>205</sup> . Cobbra: Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*).

<sup>206</sup> . A curious discovery made to day of a Kangaroo Mouse: See Note XI and Figure 9.

<sup>207</sup> . A piece of Scoria, or Lava, found near one of the Salt Lakes: See Note XII and Figure ??

<sup>208</sup> . Monday: *i.e.*, 27th June.

{120} threatening them with consequences hereafter—  
 [Three lines of writing heavily scribbled over]  
 This damned bird Skinner has been spoilt in Sydney by old M<sup>c</sup>Cleay,<sup>209</sup> and  
 is just the sort of free and easy vagabond with a flash Shooting jacket on, that  
 I feel especial pleasure in taking down a peg—

**27 [June]**<sup>210</sup> Directed by the Surv<sup>r</sup> General to start tomorrow with 1 Bullock  
 & five men & a black boy on a voyage of discovery to the Eastward—  
 Directed to

{121} take fourteen days provisions, cross the Goulburn<sup>211</sup> in the best manner we  
 can (which will be no joke without a boat & being about 100 yards wide) and  
 proceed East in search of the Murray— on finding it, to trace it down /as far  
 as time will permit/ recross the country, & trace up the Goulburn to the Point  
 where we cross it in the first instance—

Heavy rain—

At night Surv<sup>r</sup> General gave up his intention of proceeding Southward, as  
 well as my course Eastward— disinclined to separate the party & resolved  
 upon proceeding to explore the country towards Cape Northumberland with  
 all hands.

{122} **28<sup>th</sup> [June]**<sup>212</sup> Directed to proceed with five men & survey until I intersect  
 the Goulburn—<sup>213</sup> Traced 16 miles & a half S.E. & no river—  
 Bivouacked— Heavy rain & snow all night— Wet & miserable—

**29<sup>th</sup> [June]**—<sup>214</sup> Went /North/ East & intersected the River in six miles—<sup>215</sup>  
 Hoofed it to let prads get fresh— Damned tired on arriving at the Tents by  
 moonlight at 8.p.m— Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. much pleased that I at last hit the River &  
 with my [survey] plan—

**30<sup>th</sup> [June]**—<sup>216</sup> Proceeded South over a vast & beautiful grassy level tract  
 of country, intersected in all directions by picturesque clumps of Trees—  
 Totally destitute of water in summer & our wants & [those of] the Cattle now  
 supplied

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<sup>209</sup> . old M<sup>c</sup>Cleay: Alexander McLeay, Colonial Secretary (1825-1837). See Plate VI.

<sup>210</sup> . **27 [June]**: probably 26th June.

<sup>211</sup> . the Goulburn: Gunbower Creek.

<sup>212</sup> . **28<sup>th</sup> [June]**: probably 27th June.

<sup>213</sup> . What is probably meant is that Stapylton was to trace the ana-branch (Gunbower Creek)  
 upstream to its diffluence from (*i.e.*, the point where it leaves) the Murray River.

<sup>214</sup> . **29<sup>th</sup> [June]**: probably 28th June.

<sup>215</sup> . intersected the River in six miles: at the present-day Torrumbarry Lock, or thereabouts.

<sup>216</sup> . **30<sup>th</sup> [June]**: probably 29th June.

- {123} by the many muddy pools we encounter in our course. Made to day the first Hills we have seen since leaving the upper parts of the Marshes of the Lachlan— High granite Hills<sup>217</sup> jutting out on a vast grassy plain— A granite Cone of great height<sup>218</sup> close to our Encampment, which the Chêf has named “Pyramid” Hill in consequence of its exact similarity in shape to the Pyramids of Egypt— Yesterday Smut killed with the assistance of one Kangaroo Dog, who was cut to peices, the largest old man Kangaroo we
- {124} have met with— weighed 160 weight<sup>219</sup> Smut got a hold by the throat & although almost beat[en] to death by the beast against the ground, while hopping away with him in his fore paws, vigorously maintained his gripe & so effectually floored the gentleman that we were enabled to overtake & despatch the Kangaroo with Sticks— Smut was literally bright red all over with gore— Brought home the hind quarters & the Kangaroo Dog in a dying state on our Pack bullock. There is no gammon in Smut, he has all the pluck of the bitch his mother of Sailors return notoriety<sup>220</sup>  
Fine clear frosty weather  
Government Prad quite sound & fresh again—
- {125} **July 1<sup>st</sup>**<sup>221</sup>  
Appearance of a dividing range extending South East from the Granite Hills— it now becomes a question whether the Lindesay of Sturt, & the Goulburn of Hume are not one & the same River<sup>222</sup>, if so, my intended course East would have been brought up by the Murrumbidgee<sup>223</sup> a pretty conditon to have accomplished— 100 miles & upwards distant from the Encampment, and all to no purpose— The River, which I intersected /in Lat<sup>e</sup> 35°.55'.35" South & 144.36.20" E. long<sup>e</sup>/ on the 29<sup>th</sup><sup>224</sup> was 100 yards

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<sup>217</sup> . High granite Hills: Mitchell named the first hill reached, rising 100 metres above the surrounding country, Mount Hope.

<sup>218</sup> . of great height: Pyramid Hill is a monadnock only 90 metres above the surrounding country, but together with Mount Hope was enough to provide relief from the monotony of the terrain encountered since the end of April.

<sup>219</sup> . 160 weight: 1.6 hundredweight, = 80 kg; if Stapylton's measurement is correct, this must have been a large male Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*).

<sup>220</sup> . Sailors return notoriety: this sounds like a pun on 'sale or return', perhaps recalling some incident in the past. Alternatively, Sailors Return could have been the name of a hotel or a home for sailors. 'Sailor' was also the name of a dog, belonging to Sturt's expedition of 1829-1830, whose loss on 18th March 1830 was the only misfortune that befell them during the expedition.

<sup>221</sup> . **July 1<sup>st</sup>**: probably 30th June.

<sup>222</sup> . the Lindesay of Sturt: see Note XIII.

<sup>223</sup> . my intended course East would have been brought up by the Murrumbidgee: see Note XIV.

<sup>224</sup> . on the 29<sup>th</sup>: probably 28th June.

wide, a noble river flowing at the rate of 2 knots an hour [!], with lofty gum trees on both sides

{126} with banks 7 feet perpendicular depth, & in my humble opinion clearly the Murray itself & no other— at no point except below the confluence of the Murrumbidgee was it different in character[,] & now we are comparatively near to its sources in the Snow Mountains— To day or tomorrow will decide the question, as we shall by that time have reached some river which must flow under the high range of Mountains we see to the Southward & Westward not far distant—

{127} This vast grassy plain can never be available to a small population— To intersect it with Canals which might with facility be constructed on such a space of level country & filled by means of damming up the numerous ana-branches, is an event, which may some day take place, & indeed Nature seems to have suggested the performance of it, by the pranks which she has manifested in so many places by cutting off all intercourse with the main River, thro the

{128} meanderings of her said ana-branches— By the way the ana-branch last mentioned,<sup>225</sup> I traced up the Stream until it became dry /the channel continuing equally wide but no water in it—/ How in the name of goodness did it have a current near our last camp but one, unless supplied by the River? The only solution which I can offer is that the circumstance of their being many curious hollows, or subsidences of the earth near that camp, makes it probable that a limestone formation exists under ground & that thus the

{129} the River water filters its way along into the bed of the ana-branches— This is the more probable because the one is Flood water & muddy & the other transparent & clear— I examined narrowly but in no place could I see Water bubbling up as the consequence of such a means of communication— /and yet this might take place in the deep Holes./ The Chêf seems to approve of my theory, but wants more facts to elucidate the curious appearance of a large stream with a current and yet, to us, no known source of supply—  
29 miles<sup>226</sup>

{130} **[1st July]**  
Traced 4 miles & crossed <first> chain of ponds— Xanthonia<sup>227</sup> appearing— country vastly improving, grassy plains of immense extent— at 6 miles

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<sup>225</sup> . Gunbower Creek.

<sup>226</sup> . 29 miles: this would be the distance travelled so far in a south-westerly direction from the camp near Gunbower Creek.

<sup>227</sup> . Xanthonia: *Danthonia* grasses (Wallaby grasses) were named after É. Danthoine, a 19th-century French botanist, not from the Greek word ξανθός (Xanthos) meaning yellow. The

brought up by a deep small river<sup>228</sup> (12 feet depth of water, & 30 feet from the level of the Banks to the surface of the Water), coming from the South East— course North West, rapid current & /probably/ a tributary of the Lindsay, thus watering the most splendid tract of level grazing country that can be imagined— /current 1 foot & a half per second.—/ A Dense line of Trees seen to the South West distant about 5 miles {marks the course of the Lindsay without doubt.} /X wrong/ Sturt's great Tributary<sup>229</sup> must now sink into insignificance as compared with the Lindsay.

{131} Men employed in constructing a bridge of Gum Trees—<sup>230</sup> all hands at work & as the Timber is large & lofty with a convenient inclination over the Stream from both banks, no difficulty ought to arise in the execution, but there are two [too] many wise men in the business—

The country promises well

Distant Hills to the Southward & Westward, probably the Coast range & fine rising Forest land up to the base of them—

If the country beyond towards the Sea proves equally good, of which there is reasonable expectation it may, inasmuch as there should exist many fine inlets from the Ocean, which in

{132} all probability have been totally overlooked in the very inaccurate Surveys that have been made of the Southern Coast— (Inaccurate because the prevalence of the Cape Winds<sup>231</sup> up Bass's Straits & a lee shore<sup>232</sup> have always proved an insuperable obstacle to the near approach of all Surveying vessels.) Then we shall have discovered a paradise unequalled in New

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grass called 'Xanthonia' by Stapylton was probably actually the Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*).

<sup>228</sup> . a deep small river: eventually named by Mitchell the Yarrayne, now known as the Loddon.

<sup>229</sup> . Sturt's great Tributary: it is probable that Stapylton is referring to the Darling River. There appears to be only one occasion when Sturt actually described one of the major rivers (Murrumbidgee, Murray or the supposed Darling) as a tributary of another; this occurred in his concluding remarks when he discussed 'the junction of the principal tributary [*i.e.*, the Darling] with the Murray.' Sturt however later reported that 'The angle formed by the Darling with the new river [*i.e.*, the Murray] is so acute, that neither can be said to be tributary to the other.' Reference: Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 225, 262.

<sup>230</sup> . a bridge of Gum Trees: Mitchell acknowledged the useful suggestions contained in the book on temporary bridges by Sir Howard Douglas (1776-1861). References: Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 160-1; (General Sir) Howard Douglas, Bart, *An Essay on the Principles and Construction of Military Bridges and the Passage of Rivers in Military Operations*, 2nd edn, 1832 [3rd edn, John Murray, London, 1853]; S. W. Fullom, *The Life of General Sir Howard Douglas, Bart.*, John Murray, London, 1863.

<sup>231</sup> . Cape Winds: head winds. From *caput*: (Latin) head.

<sup>232</sup> . lee shore: shore to leeward (sheltered or downwind side) of a ship. The sailor's great dread was to be unable to sail against the wind in order to escape being driven on to the shore.

Holland, & for as much as I know superior in point of extent & fertility to any in the world— Pyramid Hill will perpetuate the discovery— It is a land mark on a vast plain that can never be mistaken

{133} and must always convey an association of ideas which will imprint on the memory, the circumstance of this expedition & the name of its leader— His man “Friday”<sup>233</sup> will not share the same good luck I suspect— “Peut-être el n’importe beaucoup”—

/July 2<sup>d</sup> \_\_\_/ During the night our two Black Gins & the Piccaninny all bolted— So much the better— The Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. however seems vexed about it, why, I am at a loss to conceive— They were utterly useless to us, and moreover a severe Tax upon the Flour bag—

Surv. General hints that “Ilyssus” shall be the name of this beautiful little river—<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> . His man “Friday”: Mitchell’s servile follower, factotum, manservant (*i.e.*, Stapylton himself). From Man Friday in the first great English novel, (*The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe (c.1660-1731), published in 1719. The story was based loosely on the experiences of Alexander Selkirk (1680-1721), master of a ship (the 130-ton galley *Cinque Ports*) under the command of William Dampier (1652-1715), whose crew put him ashore on the island of Más a Tierra in the Juan Fernández archipelago in the South Pacific in 1704, and was rescued by Dampier himself in 1709. Reference: Diana Souhami, *Selkirk’s Island*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2001.

<sup>234</sup> . Named after one of the two main watercourses of Athens, the Ilisós (Ilissus) River; which is almost always dry nowadays, and is filled for a few hours only after heavy rain. One of the suburbs of Athens through which the bed of the river runs is ΗΛΙΣΣΙΑ (Ilissia).

The Ilissus featured in the religious life of the Ancient Greeks: in the Lesser Mysteries, held near Athens in the springtime, candidates for initiation underwent a preliminary purification by self-immersion in its waters.

Turning to literature, Plato (*c.* 429-347 B.C.), in some of his finest dialogues, lays the scene of the conversation with Socrates on its banks; for instance, part of the dialogue of Plato’s *Phædrus* takes place on the banks of the Ilissus, with Socrates and his pupil (*i.e.*, Plato himself) cooling their feet in the stream.

Because of its geographical importance, religious significance and Platonic connection, the Ilissus has been mentioned in a number of later poetic works.

Two examples are Thomas Gray (1716-1771), *The Progress of Poesy: A Pindaric Ode*, stanza vi:

‘Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,’

and James Beattie (1735-1796), *On the Report of a Monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey to the Memory of a late author [viz., Charles Churchill (1731-1764)]*, 1765, lines 41-2:

‘Like the rapt sage [*i.e.*, Plato], in genius as in theme,

Whose hallowed strain renowned Ilyssus’ stream:’

Mitchell later re-named his Ilyssus the Yarraine or Yarrayne River, but it is now called the Loddon.

Very appropriate when taken in reference to Queen Dido's

{134} plan of forming her new Colony,<sup>235</sup> as related by Virgil,<sup>236</sup> & prospectively as relates to the probability of this region being also shortly colonized<sup>237</sup> at 7.p.m. Bridge practicable— an inferior job and I much question whether it will not give way under the weight of the loaded Drays— Piper after being absent all day has just brought back one of the Jins & the Piccaninny, having tracked them to our last Encampment— The Major well pleased at the circumstance[,] apprehending that they might have made the wild Blacks acquainted with our Camp arrangement<sup>238</sup> & that at night an attack

{135} might at some time be made productive of the most serious consequences to us— I do not participate in this notion, because amongst other information the Jins would surely have mentioned to their friends the circumstance of a Watchman patrolling /our Camp/ all night— These Jins took their measures very cunningly, having left in the middle of the night during a very severe Frost aware {[*Half a line heavily scribbled over*]} that from this latter circumstance it would prove almost impossible to track them— They are shockingly frostbitten however in the feet & the Mother could not come up tonight—

{136} There she is alone & without fire in the bush, and her feet described as being in a most dreadful state— I think she will die poor devil— What then shall we do with the Piccaninny?— It would have been much wiser to have let them go when they desired it— /&/ damn [the possibility of] their collusion with the tribes—

**[3<sup>rd</sup> July]** The other Jin returned this morning with her feet in a most deplorable state— Thus we are all saddled with two useless devils who must be carried on the Drays for the next fortnight— On inspecting the bridge at daylight found that the River had risen in

{137} a most remarkable manner during the night & that our said bridge was two feet under water— Sent over a Team yoked up together to try its capabilities— all went to the Devil with the weight of four animals some of which were nearly drowned— This misfortune however principally arose

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References: Sir William Smith (ed.), *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, London, 1854; Will Durant, *The Life of Greece*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1939, pp. 188, 514; *The Poetical Works of Campbell, Goldsmith and Beattie*, T. Nelson & Sons, London, 1865, p. 354.

<sup>235</sup> . her new Colony: Carthage.

<sup>236</sup> . as related by Virgil: in the 'Æneid'. This great national epic of Rome was written by the Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 B.C.).

<sup>237</sup> . The connection being that Queen Dido's other name was Elissa.

<sup>238</sup> . our Camp arrangement: see Note IV and Figure 21.

from the Cattle not seeing the bridge & consequently swerving & loosening the planks— The whole day occupied in swimming Cattle & Horses, taking Dry stores across in the Boats & rushing the empty Drays thro the water by long chains attached to the Axle Trees,<sup>239</sup> and drawn by a Team of nine Bullocks /from the opposite side/ across Water 20 feet deep— at 7 p.m

{138} all over— Drays reloaded— Boats in their carriage & Tents pitched on the left Bank of this River—

I feel confident that we have yet the Lindesay to cross altho the Surv<sup>r</sup> General does not— Tomorrow will decide it— I would bet a trifle that this is a Tributary of the Lindesay & that the Goulburn & Lindesay are one & the same River—

This small river by the melting of the snow has risen five feet in height since last night & continues to rise—

Tomorrow will be an interesting journey— These Hills to the Southward & Westward must open out something to our expectations—

/Lat<sup>e</sup> 36° .14'.56" South

Long<sup>e</sup> 144. \_\_\_'.10 East

{139} according to observations for our present position/

**July 4<sup>th</sup>**— River rose a foot during the night— Fine Frosty night, very cold clear weather— but hazy on the Hills & consequently bad for Surveying—

Surv<sup>r</sup> General took the decided step of leaving the Jin & the child behind, having first made them a present of Shirts, flour and Meat— Madame “Kitty” Piper’s wife at the /earnest/ intercession of “Piper” is permitted to accompany us,

Our course to day thro a fine Forest country covered with “Xanthonia”— & well watered, by gravelly bottomed streams from the Mountains— Tributary

{140} to the Lindesay—

Encamped under the high hills seen yesterday to the Southward & Westward—

**June 5<sup>th</sup>**—<sup>240</sup> Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. with a small mounted party off to reconnoitre the Mountains & determine a pass for the Drays— Left in charge— Piper’s Jin a thorough bitch— It now appears that she instigated the other to bolt, but with the prudent intention of returning herself in order to sack the others ration of Flour & Meat— By interpretation we have ascertained that the Mother sorely reproached her yest[erda]y morning with her treacherous conduct

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<sup>239</sup> . Axle Trees: the fixed bar on the rounded ends of which the opposite wheels of a carriage revolve; the axles themselves properly being the slender ends of the axle-tree.

<sup>240</sup> . **June 5<sup>th</sup>**: *i.e.*, July 5th.

- {141} while suffering under the agony of frost bitten feet— A Tomahawk was fortunately given her, just before our departure— With this she informed us she would cut a little Canoe for her Piccaninny, and by swimming herself, gently push before her across the Murray, her infant charge /and then make her tribe in four days—/  
 A good subject this for the pencil— We are now steering straight for Cape Northumberland, and /by our course of 215 [Magnetic] by Kater[’s compass]/<sup>241</sup> we may be about three degrees & a half<sup>242</sup> from the Sea Coast— If the Surv<sup>r</sup> General pushes his way much further South, I am at a loss to know how eleven
- {142} weeks provisions will suffice, or how the Devil he means to deal with the Mountains to the Eastward encumbered /as he is/ with Drays & Boats— It will be a miracle to me when I behold Drays and a heavy Boat carriage surmount difficulties which brought me to a stand still with Pack Bullocks, when surveying the Tomat River<sup>243</sup> about two years ago—  
 Having now reached the base of one of the lateral ranges from the Coast range,<sup>244</sup> it would seem that the “Ilyssus” shall be the Lindesay
- {143} of Sturt & in my opinion also the Goulburn of Hume or that we have yet to head<sup>245</sup> or cross the upper part of the Lindesay— The same having its sources in the Coast range far westward of the Snow Mountains— Capt<sup>n</sup> Sturt was of this opinion in which as well as his conjectures respecting the Darling, I presume he will not a little exult— /should it/ also /be verified by us—/  
 At 2 p.m. Surv<sup>r</sup> General & party returned to the Camp— Rainy weather— no good done with the Theodolite— Serious embarassments are sure to arise when anything of importance is to be attempted— So it was with our Bridge from the Flood during a single night— not caused by rain but by the melting of the
- {144} Snow by the warmth of two previous days— I have hitherto put in force all my philosophy in checking <my, any> yearnings after a return to Sydney, & to one “petite affaire de Galanterie”,<sup>246</sup> but this measure of proceeding South, defies all my exertions to that effect— Every day prolongs our distance from Home, and finally I should not be surprised to behold on the Map, a course

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<sup>241</sup> . Kater: see Note XV and Figure 23.

<sup>242</sup> . In reality a little over 4° (of longitude) to the west, but only about 2 ½° (of latitude) to the south.

<sup>243</sup> . the Tomat River: the Tumut River.

<sup>244</sup> . the Coast range: *i.e.*, Great Dividing Range. Stapylton seems to have used this term consistently for what we now call the Great Dividing Range, separating the waters flowing towards the coast from those flowing inland.

<sup>245</sup> . to head: to go round the head of.

<sup>246</sup> . This is Stapylton’s first mention of his love life. See Appendix V and Appendix VII for further information on Mary Ann Collins.

back, geographically straight, of at least six hundred miles, and with impassable mountains in prospect— This Trip will be a long one with a vengeance—

{145} **July 6<sup>th</sup>**— Course /from Pyramid Hill/ by Kater's compass<sup>247</sup> 215 [Magnetic]— Rainy weather continuing— Bullocks astray— Bad watching— Bullock Herds gammon to watch the Cattle at night, but in reality sleep as well by the fire they make in the Bush, as they would at their Camp Fire— Jobation & Threats about no Tickets of Leave, by way of in Terrorem— My Tentkeeper "Geiton" is also cursedly inattentive, believe I shall start<sup>248</sup> him & get another, but perhaps a worse, for it is well known that to find as the term goes "one of these sort of Men good for anything" would be a rarity indeed—

These rascals are spoilt, and it is enough to spoil

{146} them, when I see the vagabonds mounted & cutting capers with the Govt. Horses, à la mounted Policeman— /& still it is an evil that cannot be helped—/ 215[ Magnetic] the course proposed for the exploration of the country Southward of the Coast range, which will be direct for Lady Julia Percys Isles, about a degree Eastward of Cape Northumberland—

Weather clearing up about 11 am.

Surv<sup>f</sup> Gl. & mounted party off to take angles—

Mountain scenery described by him as very romantic to the Southward— no want of a high Coast range— thus shewing how utterly useless & absurd are the declarations of Mariners respecting the Interior of a country—

{147} /Intend to/ Dismiss my Tentkeeper Geiton & /wish to/ take Douglas— a sulky fellow but obedient, and less of the Baker's Flash about him than the other— changed my mind this evening, and resolved to keep my Tentkeeper "Geiton", who promises better behaviour for the future— Surv<sup>f</sup> General on his return this afternoon reports well of the Mountain ground— describes it as void of rocks {&} /being/ Forest land to the summits of the Hills— good news as regards our progress over them— /Reports that he/ Saw numerous Fires & several natives who

{148} [*Sketch-map of land, bounded on the south by the coast from Fleurieu Peninsula to approximately Bateman's Bay, and bounded on the north by the Murrumbidgee-Murray, showing supposed configuration of main ranges. See Map 2. Known features named include:*

*Murrumbidge R<sup>f</sup>.*

*Murray R<sup>f</sup>.*

*Lindesay R<sup>f</sup> (faint)*

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<sup>247</sup> Kater's compass: See Note XV and Figure 24.

<sup>248</sup> start: dislodge.

*Level country*<sup>249</sup>  
*Pyramid Hill*  
*Level country*<sup>250</sup>  
*Mt. Disappointment*  
*Snow Mountains*  
*L. Alexandrina*  
*C. Northumberland*  
*Lady Julia Percy's*  
*Port Philip*  
*C. Howe.]*

{149} adopted a system quite different from /that of/ any of the former Tribes we have encountered— Upon perceiving the party, they shrunk down almost to the ground, & /silently &/ stealthily stole away without uttering a clamour of voices as is usual with them— It is puzzling how to account for this mode of bearing— Did it arise from extreme terror, at seeing a new race of Beings or have they frequently massacred the unfortunate white people on the Coast who by shipwreck or otherwise may have fallen into their hands,

{150} and on the present occasion are anticipating another successful attack by a series of wariness & cunning—

Tomorrow I'll be on the Hills & judge for myself— at all events I perceive that the Chêf is bent on making for Lady Julia Percy's Isles—

There is something in a name, for it is pleasant to have such a goal to our hopes & with so pretty a name— where everything else is damnable—

How in the Devils name are we to get back from thence to the Settlement, under three or four months— [*One line of writing heavily scribbled over*] At 9.p.m. Jin & the Child again joined us— She's a fixture now I suppose— She must have crawled about 15 miles on her hands & knees!!!!

{151} **July 7th**

Passed thro a fine Forest country, well watered, and prospect very encouraging. Saw to day the blue Hills of the Coast range about 40 miles distant & apparently very level on the summits— Xanthonia everywhere prevailing, and Mountain Streams in abundance— Birds of all sorts in this part of the country, similar to those seen in the vicinity of Sydney— Pulled up by a Creek at 10 miles & a half & encamped—

**July 8th**— Proceeded— country splendid for grazing Establishments, but soil not sufficiently good for wheat land— Timber— Flooded Gum<sup>251</sup> & Box— Surv<sup>r</sup> General makes

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<sup>249</sup> . N.W. of Pyramid Hill.

<sup>250</sup> . E. of Pyramid Hill.

<sup>251</sup> . Flooded Gum: possibly River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

- {152} capital way across the country, keeps his line wonderfully well, and shews a complete knowledge of his subject— I have already got a few hints, altho I must confess I at first thought I had with my experience little or nothing to learn—  
 Encountered a small family of Blacks— Obtained great news of a Caboune River<sup>252</sup> not far distant, as well as a description of some Sea water with great waves, but not the Sea, consequently a harbour we suppose on the South Coast— at 5 miles ascended a high hill<sup>253</sup> & had a view to the South & West of a splendid tract of undulating
- {153} Forest ground— The high Coast range quite visible— no rocks, but Forest ground to the summit— encamped on a deep Creek<sup>254</sup> at 10 miles flowing to the Northward— Shall have some difficulty in crossing it tomorrow morning— This will be the country for a grant— Forest Hills of Granite & Grey sand stone, high & dry covered with Xanthonia, & the Flats rich beyond measure.  
 Timber most picturesque Flooded Gum,<sup>255</sup> Blue Gum,<sup>256</sup> & Bastard Box,<sup>257</sup> & Forest Oak<sup>258</sup> on the high ground— 10 miles & 5 chains— /Water of the Creek ferruginous & very unpleasant to the taste./ At ½ past 3. Rain— Barometer falling— country terribly deep for the Drays—
- {154} [9<sup>th</sup> July] Chained 9. [miles] 27 chains  
 Inclined to believe that I was wrong about the Ilyssus being the Goulburn & Lindsay joined together— Now think that they are seperate rivers, that the Ilyssus is one large branch of the Lindsay & that its sources must be West of the Snow mountains & in the Deep Cavity I perceive to the Southward & Westward formed by the great curve of the Coast range in the large jutting out of the land about Cape Northumberland—  
 Soil here a black mould<sup>259</sup> of the first quality 2 feet & a half in depth—  
 This region must be inhabited

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<sup>252</sup> . The Aboriginal word 'cabonne' means big. See also footnote for Page {33}. On 29th September the *Sydney Gazette* recorded that word had reached Bathurst, via the blacks, that Major Mitchell and his party had discovered a carbaun water, on which they had been for some time embarked. See also Volume 2, Page {29}.

<sup>253</sup> . Just south of Weelbang.

<sup>254</sup> . Named by Mitchell the Loddon River; now known as the Avoca River.

<sup>255</sup> . Flooded Gum: possibly River Red Gum (*E. camaldulensis*).

<sup>256</sup> . Blue Gum: possibly Yellow Gum (*E. leucoxydon*).

<sup>257</sup> . Bastard Box: possibly Long-leaf Box (*E. goniocalyx*).

<sup>258</sup> . Forest Oak: possibly Buloke (*Casuarina luehmannii*).

<sup>259</sup> . black mould: friable earth; soil rich in organic matter and suitable for the cultivation of plants.

{155} at no distant period {but} not by the outpourings of our {Goals}/Gaols/, but by a set of honest hardworking Farmers. It is much too good for the present Colony which is even now too large— It must not be possessed by the griping, greedy, money making scoundrels of Sydney— /Killed 3 Kangaroroos/

**July 10<sup>th</sup>**— Crossed an equally fine tract of country to day— at 6 miles a high scrubby range— Iron Bark<sup>260</sup> & Stringy Bark<sup>261</sup> in abundance upon it— Everything available and

{156} at hand for the future Inhabitants of this portion of New Holland— an empire shall arise here which shall have its Court and its Ambassadors— What hopes may not be indulged & expectations realized from so fine a portion of Nature's Gifts—  
chained 10 m 50 chains— and encamped on a beautiful Stream of Water—<sup>262</sup>  
Fine Forest, undulating land— & Honeysuckle<sup>263</sup> scrub—  
Course of Stream North West.  
Killed to day three Kangaroo & two Emus— one by Smut single handed  
The Bird being nearly

{157} beat by a previous course—<sup>264</sup> got a gallon of Oil from the Fat & Skin—<sup>265</sup>

**July 11<sup>th</sup>**

Cloudy weather— Barometer slightly rising— Chained nine miles & a half over a very deep country— still of unexceptionable quality— at 7 miles crossed a high lateral range,<sup>266</sup> and descended upon a fertile valley—  
From the high ground the first extensive view of the Coast Mountains,<sup>267</sup> splendidly high & broken, no Snow visible /as/ yet—

{158} to the South East— Coast range dist. about 30 miles, a wide Valley of some extent seperating us from it—  
Two discoveries made to day /one/ of a new species of Opossum dark brawn /colour[,]<sup>268</sup> another of a grey rabbit rat—<sup>269</sup> The Scoundrel Birdstuffer takes

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<sup>260</sup> . Red Ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*).

<sup>261</sup> . Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*).

<sup>262</sup> . Named by Mitchell the Avoca River; now known as Sandy Creek.

<sup>263</sup> . Honeysuckle: probably Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*).

<sup>264</sup> . beat by a previous course: exhausted by an earlier chase.

<sup>265</sup> . It can be surmised that the oil was used for cooking purposes (when fresh), providing fuel for the signal lanthorn, and for greasing the saws, chains, axles, weapons, harness, etc.

<sup>266</sup> . Linking Mount Bolangum and Navarre Hill.

<sup>267</sup> . Coast Mountains: later named by Mitchell the Gulielmean Mountains, and later, finally, the Grampians (of the South).

<sup>268</sup> . Possibly a form of the Common Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*).

the greatest pains to conceal every thing new from my sight—/ The Collection for the Museum is already very extensive.

From some high point on the Coast range I anticipate some knowledge of our vicinity to the Sea—

It is very curious that the high broken range to the South should

{159} drop down into a level Forest country to the Eastward— Thus as we have an open country to the Westward, these pastures may fairly be termed illimitable East and West—

The straight direction of the Track will puzzle future travellers for while the chainmen keep the bearing of 215[ Magnetic],<sup>270</sup> the Surveyor General chooses his passes, and in fact forms a road upon the proper principles of Road making. The bearing has now lasted us for 70 miles & upwards—<sup>271</sup>

**July 12<sup>th</sup>** Sharp Frost at Night— Morning lovely the climate here is literally English in every sense of the word— W[e] are now in the same latitude as

{160} Montpellier in the Northern Hemisphere,<sup>272</sup> but of course in a somewhat colder temperature—

Mem[orandum]— good situation this for a grant— That of July 10<sup>th</sup> better— Ground dreadfully deep for Cattle— In two instances compelled to have teams of seventeen & nineteen [bullocks] to draw the Drays & Boat Carriage along.

Encamped at 8 miles on a deep Creek—<sup>273</sup> Ordered in the Afternoon to ride ahead on a West course for six or seven miles & report nature of the country— Went by compass about West and in returning was benighted but made the Creek /(& Camp soon after sunset)/ about 1 mile below the Camp Some difficulty in finding it[,] not knowing

{161} whether it was situated up or down the Stream.

Reported the country very wet & deep but some plains at six miles being in sight[,] recommended a slight deviation to the Northward as harder ground & clayey.

<sup>269</sup> . a grey rabbit rat: see Note XVI.

<sup>270</sup> . As anticipated on Page {146}.

<sup>271</sup> . Stapylton is here discussing two separate issues: the route of the survey and the route of the convoy of carts, etc. To all intents and purposes, a constant bearing of 215° (Magnetic) had indeed been kept for the survey traverse for at least 70 miles. (A new bearing was adopted on crossing the range south of present-day St Arnaud on the 10th July.) On the other hand, the boat-carriage and carts were usually sent on a more-or-less constant gradient around obstacles such as steep hills; although their route was not as straight as that of the chainmen, it formed the basis for a road for future travellers.

<sup>272</sup> . *sic*; the Latitude of Montpellier in the south of France is about 43° 36', not 36° 48'.

<sup>273</sup> . Richardson River.

[13<sup>th</sup> July]

Surv<sup>F</sup> General determined on going /with the Drays/ a little North of his course, in order to avail himself of this circumstance, but started this morning accompanied by six men & the Black Piper all mounted for the {Pics} /Peaks/ on the Coast range in order to take angles— I expect abundance of information on his return for of all men I believe the Surv<sup>F</sup> General has the most correct idea of geographically laying down & ascertaining to a /mathematical/ nicety all points of Importance in a country however extensive, provided you give him Mountains of elevation from whence

{162} to draw his conclusions—

Left in charge with directions to form a

[*Rest of page torn off*]

{163} practicable pass for the Drays over this deep Creek—

— Surv<sup>F</sup> Gl. expected home tomorrow /evening—/

{164} **July 13<sup>th</sup>**— Native name of the Ilyssus Wāllānīyē—<sup>274</sup>

I wish to God we were upon or across the Coast range, or that I knew its latitude & longitude, I might then form some idea of the prolongation of this business— The Surv<sup>F</sup> Gls return however will bring volumes of News— Shortly after his departure this morning two Native Blacks fine looking fellows came boldly up to the Camp & seated themselves by the Fire— Thro the black boy Tommy we were informed, that they had been at two Stations, seen White fellows & Bullocks, and pointed in the direction of Port Louis—<sup>275</sup> They appear

{165} quite at home & I wish to detain them if possible until the Surv<sup>F</sup> Generals return for by them we may obtain a great deal of knowledge of the intervening country between us & the Ocean— relative to what rivers Lakes &c may exist Southerly— Men hard at work at my bridge— and if I don't

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<sup>274</sup> . *c.f.* spelling on Page {1}.

<sup>275</sup> . This is a curious statement. The most likely explanation is that Stapylton meant Portland Bay (Mitchell stumbled upon the Hentys' settlement there, with its 'white fellows and bullocks', at the end of August). Port Louis itself is the capital of Mauritius, one of the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean. After a Dutch occupation from 1598 to 1710, Mauritius was taken by France in 1715 and renamed the Ile-de-France. The French established an important strategic and supply base at Port Louis as its main 'half-way house' to India and the East Indies, the island being conveniently situated in relation to the trade winds, etc. Port Louis soon became the base for French activity in the Antarctic, and later for their Australian explorations: Marion Dufresne (Tasmania 1772); Saint Allouarn (W.A. 1772); Nicolas Baudin, Jacques Hamelin, Louis de Freycinet 1802/1803; Louis de Freycinet (W.A. 1818, N.S.W. 1819). Baudin died at Port Louis on his return voyage to Europe in 1803, while Matthew Flinders was detained there for 6 ½ years (December 1803-June 1810) as a prisoner-of-war. The British captured the island in December 1810, and it was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Paris in 1814, after which its name reverted to its previous Dutch name, Mauritius. The military commander of Mauritius, before he became Governor of New South Wales in 1825, was Lieutenant General Ralph Darling.

make a good one I am much mistaken— I cannot conceive anything easier than to effect these sort of trifling matters, when you have a multitude of hands which only want guiding— To allow such men to imagine the idea all

{166} their own, & when once at work, to keep them at it, thus wonders may be accomplished—

The Strange Blacks report that the Creek we are encamped upon falls into a very large River called the “Walla Walla”,<sup>276</sup> this must therefore be the Lindsay & the Ilyssus [must be] another tributary— The Walla Walla must consequently lie under the Coast range which we see to the Southward, and I fully expect that it will effectually stop the progress of the Major & his /mounted/ party on their way today /or tomorrow[;] if so/ as Captain Sturt so often says in his book—

“My conjecture was right.”<sup>277</sup>

**July 14<sup>th</sup>** At 10 am Bridge finished & a capital job

{167} **July 14<sup>th</sup>.**

Notwithstanding the strickest watch being kept night & day upon the two Black fellows who left us this morning, it was discovered soon after their departure that the knaves had stolen the Black Boys Tomahawk.<sup>278</sup>

This Camp 100 feet below the level of that of July 11<sup>th</sup> At sunset Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. not returned—

Man[,] one “Tantragee”<sup>279</sup> lately a notorious Bushranger[,] reported missing. Fired three shots—

**July 15<sup>th</sup>.** In the morning two men volunteering [I] desired them & the two Black boys to track him & ascertain his fate— Black Kangaroo Dog returned this morning at 10 oclock— This looks bad— Fear he has been watched away from the Camp & murdered by these infernal Natives— It appears that he left the Camp about 4 oclock yesterday afternoon, with one dog, & men suppose

{168} that he went in search of a Whip Stick—<sup>280</sup> at 12 oclock Man found by the Black boys & brought back to the Camp— These matters may appear very trifling, but I can assure any one, who may hereafter /condescend to/ read this

<sup>276</sup> . See also Volume 2, Page {76}.

<sup>277</sup> . As it transpired, the direction taken by Mitchell to Mount William avoided all the main rivers draining the Grampians, so Stapylton was wrong!

<sup>278</sup> . The actual wording of the text is: ‘... discovered <sup>^</sup> that<sup>5</sup> the<sup>6</sup> knaves<sup>7</sup> had<sup>8&c</sup> stolen the Black Boys Tomahawk soon<sup>1</sup> after<sup>2</sup> their<sup>3</sup> departure<sup>4</sup>’, Stapylton indicating by superscripts the correct sequence of words. A similar rearrangement of words occurred in Volume 4, Page {23}.

<sup>279</sup> . “Tantragee”: James McLellan. See Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 111.

<sup>280</sup> . Whip Stick: stick suitable for a handle of a whip.

stupid journal, that under /the/ present circumstances /of my situation/ in this Camp, as the responsible person to the Surv<sup>r</sup> General for all that occurs during his absence, they prove most infernally annoying & vexatious—  
I've another Crow to pick with my friend the Birdstuffer & it will be odd if I dont square accounts with him eventually—

- {169} Surveyor General still absent—  
no joke these cold nights with only a military Cloak for a covering— They must <also> be hard up for grub, this being the third night & with provisions for one day only at starting—  
at sunset Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. still absent—

### July 16<sup>th</sup>

At 10 a.m. Surv<sup>r</sup> Gl. & party returned, being the fourth morning— great privations & suffering from cold on the Mountains— The Highest Pic ascended upwards of 7000 feet above the level of the Sea— 16 hours on the hill almost without fire, the height being above the line of vegetation & the only small twigs which had perhaps grown during some very favourable <season> covered with Icicles— Hill enveloped in mist in the

- {170} morning— all below a chaos— fortunately two distant Hills previously fixed in the survey were seen[,] upon which angles were taken for position of Mountain—  
but in all other respects a barren & fruitless attempt— after the greatest toil suffering & some danger from the slippery state of the rocks, had been encountered— This Range to be termed the Gulielmean Mountains<sup>281</sup> & the Mountain itself Mount Blue in contradistinction to Mont Blanc,<sup>282</sup> & for other good reasons which I could explain<sup>283</sup>  
Country superb up to the base & the finest Timber— Iron Bark<sup>284</sup> Stringy Bark<sup>285</sup> & Black Butt in the lower parts of the ascent—

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<sup>281</sup> . After the current monarch, William IV, whose coins were inscribed GULIELMUS IIII. The range was subsequently re-named the Grampians (see Volume 3, Page {121}), after the well-known mountains in Scotland.

<sup>282</sup> . Mont Blanc: (French) White Mountain; the highest peak in France (and Western Europe) at 4807 m altitude.

<sup>283</sup> . Mount Blue: In Mitchell's survey fieldnotes the peak is named Mount True Blue. Later Mitchell re-named it Mount Royal (see Volume 2, Page {52}), and finally Mount William (see Volume 3, Page {129}). The first names have obvious connotations of blue mountains, blue skin due to the cold, and uncompromisingly loyal British feelings (taking a 'side-swipe' at the French, as inferred by Stapylton). Included in the treasures of the National Herbarium of Victoria are plant specimens collected from Mount William by John Richardson, Mitchell's collector of plants. These specimens bear the whimsical tag "Mt. Blew" in Richardson's handwriting, inducing J. H. Willis, Assistant Government Botanist (1961-1972) to attribute this name to the fact that the wind 'blew keenly' on that exposed summit. Reference: J. H. Willis, 'Plant-life in the Grampians', *Walk* 22, 1971, pp. 13-18.

<sup>284</sup> . Red Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*).

Sea distant about 75 miles but not visible—

{171} Level country East West and South of this broken isolated mass of Mountains— Surv<sup>r</sup> Gls intention to make a circuit of it by the North West extremity and take the level country home South of the range— consequently on a line parallel with the Ocean— Surv<sup>r</sup> Gls constitution must be as hard as iron, to stand three days of it without food wet thro the whole time, a bitter wind from the Southward /on the summit/ chilling the frame violently heated with perspiration from the fatigue of the ascent, & the Thermometer during sixteen hours which they remained on the mountain (stopping the night with the hopes of a clear morning) standing at 30[° F = -1° C] — 2° [Fahrenheit] degrees below the Freezing Point—

{172} But he appears not at all the worse for it at present but positively in better health.

**July 17<sup>th</sup>** Bullock Teams & Drays all crossed my bridge without starting<sup>286</sup> a plank— Chained 13 miles— fine grassy plains close on our right to the Westward— At 6 miles crossed a small rivulet—<sup>287</sup> at encampment Waters falling apparently to the South— cannot understand the course of these streams— can we have passed the Coast range & that these waters fall into the Sea— at 6 miles had a glimpse of the

{173} Major's Gulielmean Mountains. The high Pic Mount Blue not seen being at the South Eastern extremity—  
Very deep for the Drays— Country covered with Xanthonia but wet— unexceptionable probably in summer for the broken nature of the ground covered as it now is with small pools of water must always retain considerable Moisture—  
Jin capsized from the top of the Dray— not hurt but she is truly a most unfortunately bitch—  
Piccaninny held on well—

{174}-{175} [Blank pages]

[Pages {176} to {191} are written upside down and in reverse order and contain Survey field notes]

{192} [Blank page]

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<sup>285</sup> . Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*), Brown Stringybark (*E. baxteri*) and possibly Messmate (*E. obliqua*).

<sup>286</sup> . starting: loosening, dislodging.

<sup>287</sup> . a small rivulet: Richardson Creek, named by Mitchell after his collector of plants, who parted company with his horse while crossing the stream on the 13th July *en route* to Mount William.

## NOTE I

### Page {2}: Collitt late Inn keeper on the Bathurst Road

Collitts' Inn, the first inn established west of the Blue Mountains, is situated at Hartley Vale at the foot of Mount York. Now a famous tourist attraction, it served as a half-way house for travellers to the Bathurst area, where the western plains promised a golden future. Called initially the 'Golden Fleece', it sheltered noted personalities, including Governors, during its early years.

The history of the inn is tied in closely with the history of the various efforts to construct a road down the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains. These road builders toiled in harsh conditions, experimenting with and improving upon the road in order to make the descent safer and more bearable.

The first expedition to succeed in crossing the rugged Blue Mountains had been that of Gregory Blaxland, William Charles Wentworth and William Lawson. In May 1813 they reached Mount York and descended into the valley below. This valley is watered by a small stream called the River Lett (from *rivulet!*).

Construction of a road to the west was given top priority by Governor Lachlan Macquarie, and Deputy Surveyor General George W. Evans was instructed to survey a suitable route for a road from Emu Ford (Penrith) to the country to the west of the Blue Mountains. The survey commenced in November 1813.

On completion of the survey, William Cox was commissioned to construct the road; this he accomplished with 30 men in only 6 months. Work on the section down the escarpment through Cox's Pass from Mount York was carried out in November-December 1814.

Governor Macquarie subsequently travelled via this new road to Bathurst, proclaiming it a Town on 7th May 1815.

In 1822-1823 an alternative route was constructed into the Hartley Valley from the Mount York plateau and was known as 'Lawson's Long Alley' after the explorer who at this time was Commandant over the whole area west of Mount York.

During 1823 Pierce Collitts (formerly of the Penrith area) opened Collitts' Inn to service traffic on Lawson's Long Alley. This road, after passing the inn, turned south to re-join Cox's Road, which remained in use, to Bathurst.

In 1823 Archibald Bell discovered a route (using existing Aboriginal tracks) from Richmond to Collitts' Inn, via Mount Tomah. This road became known as 'Bell's Line of Road'.

These three roads all brought travellers, bond and free, soldiers, teamsters and drovers, past the doors and lamp of Collitts' Inn.

Then in April 1828 Major Edmund Lockyer commenced construction of a new road up to the escarpment between the routes of Cox's Road and Lawson's Long Alley; evidence of this road may still be sighted as far as Collitts' Inn. Construction of Lockyer's Road ceased in late 1829 when Major Mitchell transferred the convict road gangs from this project to his own road through Victoria Pass (which Mitchell named after the youthful Princess).

With the opening of the pass at Mount Victoria by Governor Richard Bourke in 1832, Collitts' Inn, then named the 'Royal Garter', was by-passed, and Pierce Collitts moved on.

Victoria Pass is still in use today as part of the Great Western Highway, a tribute to Mitchell's skill in road designing and construction.

#### References:

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, pp. 155, 158;

S. Pilarck & MacLeod Morgan, *Collitts' Inn, Mount York Farm*, Gearside Printing, 1961;

Department of Lands, *History of the Blue Mountains Crossings*, Government Printing Office, Sydney, 1979;

Greg Powell, *Ghost Roads of the Blue Mountains*, Blue Mountains Tourist Association, n.d.

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## NOTE II

### Page {9}: "Na" of Oxley

One's initial response is to assume that "Na" was an Aboriginal word. If Oxley obtained the name from the vicinity of Lake Cargelligo, it would have been from either the Wiradjuri or Ngiyampaa language. But both of these languages have few monosyllabic words, so one must further assume that the word spoken was polysyllabic and that the ending was not heard.

The following plants are possible contenders:

Nardoo: Common Nardoo or Clover Fern (*Marsilea drummondii*), or Narrow-leaf Nardoo (*Marsilea* sp., non *angustifolia* R.Br.1810);

Ngarga: Nealie or Needle Wattle or Needlebush (*Acacia rigens*); or

Ngarkarri: Leopard Wood (*Flindersia maculosa*).

Reference: Geraldine Triffitt, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra (pers. comm.), 1987.

If in fact Oxley was using an Aboriginal word, the most likely contender for his "Na" would seem to be the Common Nardoo. 'Aborigines in many desert areas used the capsules [sporocarps] as an item of diet. The lubras swept them up from the floors of the clay-pans, ground them into a paste with a little water and made a kind of cake. This however was not found nourishing by members of the Burke and Wills expedition at Coopers Creek in 1861, for though they consumed several pounds of nardoo daily, both the leaders eventually died of starvation.'

References:

N. A. Wakefield, *Ferns of Victoria and Tasmania*, 2nd edn, rev. J. H. Willis, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, 1975;

Betty D. Duncan & Golda Isaac, *Ferns and Allied Plants of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia*, MUP, 1986.

The problem with the above line of reasoning is that there is no mention of a plant called "Na" in the printed Journal of John Oxley's 1817 expedition. However, on 30th June 1817, about 20 km SW of present-day Hillston, N.S.W., Oxley recorded that 'the plains were with nothing but knaphalium'; and on 22nd July 1817, while proceeding up the Lachlan River in the vicinity of the present-day town of Lake Cargelligo, he recorded that 'The flats were uniformly swampy, and covered with bushes (rhagodia); the hills instead of grass were covered with knaphalium.' The list of errata at the front of Oxley's printed Journal indicates that the correct spelling of knaphalium/knapthaliium is gnaphalium.

In the printed Journal of Allan Cunningham, the senior botanist who accompanied Oxley in 1817, is recorded, on 26th July 1817, during a visit to Prince Regent's Lake (Lake Cargelligo), the following passage: 'On the bare open rising grounds above the lake, I observed ... some common *Gnaphalia*.'

Thus it appears that Stapylton's "'Na" of Oxley' is a species of *Gnaphalium* (with a silent 'G'), a genus erected by Carl von Linné in 1753. This genus, commonly called Cudweed, has a world-wide distribution. There are five species recorded for western New South Wales, of which the Creeping or Common Cudweed (*G. sphaericum* Willd., now known as *G. involucreatum* G. Forster s. lat.), and the Jersey Cudweed (*G. luteo-album* L., now known as *Pseudognaphalium luteo-album* (L.) Hilliard & Burt), are the most common. The latter species sometimes extends over considerable areas,

particularly on floodplain country and on lake-beds. Aborigines used a drink made from this species for treating general sickness.

Some cudweeds are no longer in the genus *Gnaphalium*; they are now regarded as members of the genus *Gamochoaeta*.

Closely related to *Gnaphalium* is the genus *Stuartina*, erected by O. W. Sonder (1812-1881) in 1853, for which the vernacular name is Cudweed, also: e.g., Spoon Cudweed (*S. muelleri* Sond.) and Hooked Cudweed (*S. hamata* W. R. Philipson), both of which occur in western New South Wales.

Yet another cudweed is the Flannel Cudweed (*Actinobole uliginosum* (A. Gray) Hj. Eichler), more familiar under the illegitimate generic name *Gnaphalodes*. A prostrate annual, it is abundant on open sandy or loamy flats in inland mainland Australia.

Whatever the true identity of the "Na" of Oxley, it seems most likely to have been one of the cudweeds.

References:

John Oxley, Journal of an Expedition into Australia, Part I, in *Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales*, John Murray, London, 1820;

Ida Lee [Mrs C. B. Marriott], *Early Explorers in Australia*, Methuen, London, 1925 (includes extracts from the diary of Allan Cunningham, botanist);

G. M. Cunningham and others, *Plants of Western New South Wales*, Government Printing Office, Sydney, 1981;

J. H. Willis, *A Handbook to Plants in Victoria*, Volume II, MUP, 1972;

Cochrane, Fuhrer, Rotherham & Willis, *Flowers and Plants of Victoria*, Reed, Sydney, 1968;

Elizabeth Conabere & J. Ros. Garnet, *Wildflowers of South-Eastern Australia*, 2nd edn, Greenhouse, 1987.

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### NOTE III

#### Page {15}: Mr Evans

George William Evans (1780-1852) arrived in Sydney in October 1802. In August 1803 he was appointed acting Surveyor General of New South Wales and in 1809 Assistant Surveyor at Port Dalrymple (the name given by Bass and Flinders in 1798 to the Tamar Estuary), Van Diemen's Land.

On the strength of his surveying work in N.S.W. he was appointed Deputy Surveyor of Lands in Van Diemen's Land in November 1812.

After the success of Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson in hacking their way across the ridgetops of the Blue Mountains in mid 1813, Governor Lachlan Macquarie recalled Evans and instructed him to cross the Blue Mountains and discover what description of country lay to the west of them; this he did in late 1813, discovering the Macquarie River and becoming the first European to cross the Great Divide. He reached the site of the future City of Bathurst on 9th December, 1813. For his discoveries he was rewarded with £100 and a 1000-acre grant of land near Richmond, Van Diemen's Land, and a 370-acre grant at the junction of the Jordan and Derwent Rivers. (He also acquired 140 acres at Bankstown, N.S.W.) Eighteen months later, after the founding of the Town of Bathurst, Macquarie instructed Evans to proceed south-west from Bathurst 'until he shall fall in with the western ocean'(!). On this, his second expedition, Evans discovered the Lachlan River, proceeding down it to its junction with Mandagery Creek, about 30 km upstream from the future site of Forbes.

To find out where the Macquarie and Lachlan Rivers flowed, Evans was keen to lead another expedition out, and Macquarie was keen to send him, but Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, objected because of Evans' limited scientific observation and literary skills. As a result, in 1817 Macquarie instructed John Oxley (Mitchell's predecessor as Surveyor General), to lead such a party in order to solve the mystery of the western rivers, George Evans being appointed second-in-command.

Evans subsequently returned to England with his second wife (whom he married in 1826) and supplemented his pension by teaching. In 1832 they returned to New South Wales where Evans set up as a bookseller and stationer and became drawing master at The King's School, Parramatta. He returned to Hobart in 1844 and lived at *Warwick Lodge*, New Town (a suburb of Hobart), and then moved to 58 Macquarie Street, Hobart, where he died in October 1852.

A three-quarter standing portrait in oils of George William Evans circa 1825, attributed to Augustus Earle, was sold by Sotheby's at auction in Melbourne on 24th July 1988 for \$187,000; see Plate II. A portrait of a lady, historically accepted as the companion to the preceding portrait, was sold at the same auction for \$110,000.

References:

*Discovery*, Gregory's Guides and Maps Pty Ltd, n.d.;

A. K. Weatherburn, *George William Evans, Explorer*, Angus & Robertson, 1966;

Bill Peach, *The Explorers*, ABC Enterprises, Sydney, 1984;

Hendrik & Julianna Kolenberg, *Tasmanian Vision. The art of nineteenth century Tasmania*, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart, 1987, pp. 64-5, 98;

Sotheby's, *Fine Australian Paintings ...*, Melbourne, 24th Jul. 1988, Lots 310, 311.

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#### NOTE IV

##### Pages {20}-{22}, {134}: **Our Camp arrangement**

Figure 21 shows the plan of encampment adopted by Mitchell on his 1835 expedition, when he had two professional men and 21 convicts with him. The professional men were Assistant Surveyor James Larmer and botanist Richard Cunningham.

According to Mitchell's printed Journal, the plan of encampment was the same for the 1836 expedition, except that a greater number of carts stood in the line parallel to the boat-carriage. Later, the number of light carts increased to three, on the arrival of Stapylton's own light cart on the 17th April.

The layout was designed for two purposes: defence, and general convenience.

The camp was always able to be defended—nothing could approach by night unseen by the people at their fires. The heavy carts were drawn up in one line, with the wheels close to each other; and parallel to it stood the boat-carriage, room being left between them for a line of men. Thus at all times they had a secure defence against spears and boomerangs, in case of any general attack. The light carts and tents were so placed as to cover the flanks of this 'citadel': the light carts covered one flank, the men's tents the other.

As far as general convenience was concerned, Mitchell could choose an open area, indicate where his tent was to be pitched and in which direction it was to face, and then leave it to the men to set up

camp while he attended to other matters. Familiarity with the layout also meant that the camp could be set up in the dark, if circumstances required.

The layout enabled Mitchell to observe to the stars without hindrance from the light or smoke of the cook's and men's fires. The placing of the carts was also well planned: the light carts were placed near the cook's fire, the "shifting cart" near the men's tent, and the heavy cart containing the gunpowder furthest away from the fires or a surprise attack. The sheep fold was so situated as to be well illuminated at night, in an attempt to prevent incursions by marauding dingoes.

References:

Pages {5}, {16};

Volume 2, Pages {37}, {62}, {68};

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, pp. 338-40; id., Volume II, pp. 4, 29.

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## NOTE V

Page {49}: **his written instructions to me**

Mitchell's written instructions of 22nd May 1836, addressed to Stapylton, accompanied the Memorandum of the Surveyor-General, dated 17th December 1836, laid by Mitchell before the Executive Council in connection with the Enquiry regarding the conduct of the party towards the Aboriginal inhabitants at Lake Benanee.

These appeared as Appendix I in the Extract from Minute 31 of the proceedings of the Executive Council, dated 24th December 1836, and read as follows:

*'Lake Stapylton, May 22, 1836.*

SIR—To-morrow morning I am to proceed with a light party for the purpose of completing my former survey of the river Darling, according to the Governor's instructions.

The principal part of the stores, with the drays, boats, sixty-five bullocks, and six horses, and seventy-three sheep, will remain here in depôt of reserve, under your charge, with eight men of the party, as specified in the list I handed to you this morning.

It is scarcely necessary for me to call your attention to the peculiar circumstances of your position in this camp—with so many armed men you have nothing to fear from the natives, but, nevertheless, considerable caution is indispensable in your conduct towards any who may approach your camp. If they make any hostile demonstrations, calmness, vigilance, and forbearance, must be exercised, until self-defence might require a different bearing towards them, a necessity which, however easily you might repel them, my party might have occasion to regret.

The orderly conduct of the men under your charge, as it is to be regulated by a division of watches, for the care of the cattle, and security of the stores, is a subject to which I beg your particular attention.

I have noted in the list of the men, the names of four for each kind of duty. The horses to be spancellor during the day, and placed under the charge of the men with the bullocks, and both bullocks and horses are to be brought up to the camp each night and counted—the cattle lodged in a stock-yard (to be immediately put up,) and the horses tethered where the grass may remain near the camp.

The men in charge of the cattle, must on no account be without their arms; three muskets are left for this purpose; and you will be so good as to take care that it is with these they go out, and not their pistols only; they should always have both. All the men must continually have their arms ready in case of need, and none are to be allowed to waste the ammunition shooting ducks; neither to stray far from the camp, where I hope you will also remain, leaving it as little as possible, until my return, which I think will be in three weeks, although you need feel no alarm if it should be some time longer, as, in exploring an unknown region, such calculations must be uncertain.

The watches at the camp must be punctual and vigilant; no fires should be permitted near the drays, or smoking near that containing the powder.

In case a flood should come down the anastomosing branch of the river on which this camp is situated, care must be taken that the bullock-herds do not drive the cattle into deep places, lest they might be drowned or cut off from the camp, there being abundance of grass northward of the lake on this side [of] the ana-branch above-mentioned.

It is most desirable that the cattle should be accustomed to run in that one direction, not only because in a few days they would get accustomed to it and be more easily gathered together at night, but also, because they would then be less likely to stray towards the main stream, which, if grazing on any other side, they might probably do.

It will be desirable that you keep a journal of occurrences at the camp, that you may report to me more exactly, on my return, the conduct of all the men, and the particulars of whatever may occur.

I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

T. L. MITCHELL.

Surveyor-General.'

Reference:

Supplement to the *N.S.W. Gov. Gaz.*, no. 259, 21 January 1837, pp. 70-1.

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## NOTE VI

Page {63}: Col. Dumaresq

This is probably a reference to Captain William Dumaresq, one of three brothers of Eliza Darling, wife of Lieutenant-general Ralph Darling, Governor of New South Wales (1825-1831).

Within five months of Darling's assuming the office of Governor in December 1825, his three brothers-in-law were occupying positions of responsibility: in Van Diemen's Land Lieutenant-Governor Arthur had appointed Edward Dumaresq as Surveyor General, while in New South Wales Darling had appointed Henry Dumaresq Clerk to the Executive and Legislative Councils (in other words, his Private Secretary), and William Dumaresq Superintendent of Roads and Bridges.

Darling subsequently recommended to the Secretary for State that William Dumaresq be appointed Deputy Surveyor General (to Oxley), but this was rejected by Bathurst in London, who advised Darling that another officer (*i.e.*, Mitchell) had been previously selected.

Mitchell's antagonism towards Darling's choice of Captain Charles Sturt to explore the Australian hinterland was based not only on Sturt's lack of surveying credentials, but also on the fact that this was yet another instance of Darling's nepotism: Sturt, Darling's Military Secretary, was related to the wife of Henry Dumaresq.

Later, in 1830, William Dumaresq married Christiana, daughter of Alexander McLeay, Colonial Secretary (1825-1837), thus strengthening even further the influence wielded by the Dumaresqs over the administration of the Colony.

Mitchell found himself unable to confide in his deputy, Captain S. A. Perry, because Perry was an old associate of William Dumaresq, and any word of criticism of Darling by Mitchell could have had the most serious consequences for Mitchell, such as his dismissal and replacement as Surveyor General by either Perry or Dumaresq.

The name Dumaresq is perpetuated in Australian nomenclature by a town near Armidale, N.S.W., and a river which forms part of the N.S.W./Queensland border. 'Fort Dumaresq' was the name given by Captain Wetherall of H.M.S. *Fly* to the settlement established at Rhyll, Phillip Island by Captain Samuel Wright on 3rd December 1826 to forestall the French. This settlement was established a week after Captain J. Dumont D'Urville's six-day visit to Western Port *en route* to New Zealand in the corvette *Astrolabe*. See also Volume 2, Page {51}.

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## NOTE VII

Page {93}: **Boat Carriage**

### **Fig. 22. Boat-carriage** (based on a sketch by Mitchell)

The boat-carriage used on Mitchell's second (1835) and third (1836) expeditions of exploration was constructed according to a model made by his friend James Dunlop (1795-1848), King's Astronomer and Director of the Observatory at Parramatta.

One boat was made to fit within the other, the thwarts of the larger, or outer one, being removed. The double boat, thus formed, was suspended on belts of canvas, which supported it buoyant and clear of the frame work. Those parts of the canvas of the carriage, most liable to friction, were guarded with sheepskin and greased hide. The smaller boat was suspended within the larger, also on canvas, so as to swing clear of the outer boat's sides; and a tarpaulin, thrown over a ridge pole, covered the whole.

References:

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. 149;

William C. Foster, *Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell and his World 1792-1855*, p. 252.

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## NOTE VIII

Page {96}: **A new animal caught to day by one of the dogs— Head like a guinea pig— Kangaroo Rat species.**

Mitchell described this remarkable animal (now known as the Pig-footed Bandicoot) and the circumstances of its capture, as follows:

‘This animal was of the size of a young, wild rabbit, and of nearly the same colour, but had a broad head, terminating in a long very slender snout, like the narrow neck of a wide [wine?] bottle; and it had no tail. The fore-feet were singularly formed, resembling those of a hog; and the marsupial opening [pouch] was downwards, and not upwards, as in the kangaroo and others of that class of animals. This quadruped was discovered on the ground by our native guides, but when pursued it took refuge in a hollow tree, from which they extracted it alive, all of them declaring that they had never before seen an animal of that kind.’

Mitchell later prepared a catalogue of the objects of natural history collected during the journey. In his printed Journal he wrote: ‘Amongst the most remarkable of these was the pig-footed animal, found on June 16. It measured about ten inches in length, had no tail, and the fore feet resembled those of a pig.’ Elsewhere, he described the find as ‘From forest near the Murray’. More precisely, and in modern terms, the location was on the Victorian side of the Murray River, between Narrung and Kenley.

At the conclusion of the expedition, the specimen was deposited in the Australian Museum in Sydney.

Subsequently, Mitchell’s notes and drawing of the animal (see Figure 7) were shown to the British zoologist William Ogilby, who realised that the animal belonged to a new genus of bandicoots, and was not a rat-kangaroo as perhaps first surmised by Mitchell.

The name Bandicoot was apparently first applied to an Australian marsupial by George Bass in his diary for 1799. The word is actually a corruption from the Telugu *pandikokku*, pig-rat, Telugu being the principal language of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Bandicoots are among the most interesting of the marsupials, having anatomical features that link them with both the carnivorous and herbivorous groups. All bandicoots except the Pig-footed Bandicoot have a bounding gait.

Ogilby reported Mitchell’s discovery in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* for 1838, Part VI, p. 26, describing the animal as ‘belonging to a new genus closely allied to *Perameles*, but differing in the form of the fore-feet, which have only two middle toes resembling those of a hog, and in the total absence of a tail’. Ogilby gave the animal the generic name of *Chæropus* (from the Greek *χοιρος*, young pig; *πούς*, foot) and the specific appellation *ecaudatus* (from the Latin *ē-*, without; *cauda*, tail), not realising that bandicoots are prone to such an undignified casualty.

William Ogilby (?-1873) was Secretary of the Zoological Society of London from 1840 to 1847; his son, John D. Ogilby (1853-1925), was vertebrate zoologist in the Australian Museum from 1885 to 1890.

The zoologist Gerhard Krefft (1830-1881) accompanied W.Blandowski’s expedition to the Murray-Darling junction in 1857. Krefft was subsequently Curator of the Australian Museum from 1861 to 1874. While on the expedition he searched for further specimens of the Pig-footed Bandicoot, offering the local Aborigines high rewards for what he thought was an accurately described tail-less animal, showing them Mitchell’s drawing.

The Murray River men rose to the occasion. ‘The cunning natives’ wrote Krefft, ‘not succeeding in finding the animal required, were in the habit of bringing any number of the common Bandicoot with the tail screwed out.’

Eventually, a score or so specimens of the Pig-footed Bandicoot were collected from a dozen localities scattered over a vast area across the scrubby, semi-arid and arid parts of southern Australia. All specimens were furnished with well-developed tails, confirming that the type specimen must have lost its tail through injury.

As a result, another British zoologist, John E. Gray (1800-1875), noting the deep chestnut colouring of the ears of most of the specimens - those collected from Western Australia - changed the specific name to *castanotis* (from the Latin *castanea*, chestnut; and the Greek *ωτος*, ear). But due to the law of priority, this name is invalid (unless it can be shown that the Western Australian specimens indeed belonged to a separate species).

The Pig-footed Bandicoot, regarded as the most graceful and delicate of all the bandicoots, was coloured orange-brown above and fawn below, with slender legs rather like those of a miniature deer, and a tail ending in a low crest of short black hairs. Unique among the bandicoots, it had a sort of running gait, described by Krefft as 'like a broken-down hack in a canter'.

W.D.L.Ride noted that there is little information on the natural history of the animal and much is conflicting, although some of the apparent conflict (like the account in Sturt's exploration of Central Australia) is probably due to misidentification.

Recent studies by West Australian ecologists Andrew Burbidge and Phillip Fuller and Northern Territorians Ken Johnson and Richard Southgate, who spent years probing the memories of elderly Aborigines from desert tribes, indicate that a number of native animals were more widespread than hitherto accepted by zoologists; in particular, the researchers managed to extend the known range of the Pig-footed Bandicoot, from a broad band across the dune and sandplain country of the southern part of the continent, into regions of central and north-eastern Western Australia and the western fringe of the Northern Territory.

From their work, two truths have emerged: the mammals of the Australian deserts were more numerous and diverse than previously believed; and in the last few decades they have suffered huge and sudden losses.

The Pig-footed Bandicoot, rare even before Europeans first started to colonise Australia, nevertheless apparently survived in relict colonies until about thirty years ago, in remote pockets of the inland. No sightings have been made since then, and the inescapable conclusion is that this inoffensive, unusual and scientifically interesting little marsupial has become extinct.

References:

- Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. xvii; id., Volume II, pp. 131-2, 263, 264 (footnote);  
John Gould, *The Mammals of Australia*, Macmillan, 1983, p. 18;  
A.J.Marshall (ed.), *The Great Extermination*, Heinemann, 1966, p. 45;  
Gordon Lyne, *Marsupials and Monotremes of Australia*, Angus & Robertson, 1967, p. 26;  
W.D.L.Ride, *A Guide to the Native Mammals of Australia*, OUP, 1970, pp. 100-2, 200;  
Ellis Troughton, *Furred Animals of Australia*, 9th edn, Angus & Robertson, 1973, pp. 65-7;  
Derrick Ovington, *Australian Endangered Species*, Cassell, 1978, pp. 64-5;  
Ronald Strahan, *A Dictionary of Australian Mammal Names*, Angus & Robertson, 1981, pp. 21-3, 144, 149-50;  
——(ed.), *Complete Book of Australian Mammals*, Angus & Robertson, 1983, pp. 91-3, 104-5;  
*The Weekend Australian*, 8 Jul. 1989, p. 3.

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NOTE IX

Page {97}: the caves at Wellington Valley

Mitchell commented in his printed Journal: 'The most remarkable incident of this day's journey, was the discovery of an animal, of which I had seen only the head among the remains found in the caves at Wellington Valley.'

Although the exact date of discovery of the Wellington Caves, about 8 km south of Wellington, N.S.W., is unknown, the first documented visit to the largest of the accessible caves there (the Cathedral Cave) was made by Hamilton Hume in early December 1828, while waiting to set off as Sturt's second-in-command on Sturt's first expedition.

Eighteen months later, the 'respectable colonist and Magistrate', George Ranken of *Kelloshiel*, Bathurst, made the first major discovery of fossil bones of extinct animals in Australia, when he discovered some fossil bones in the Breccia Cave at Wellington.

In June 1830 Major Mitchell, with the help of Ranken, made a detailed survey of these two caves and sent large collections of the bones from the Breccia Cave (now known as Mitchell's Cave) to Professor Richard Owen at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, for examination. The collection was hailed with delight and interest by palaeontologists around the world. Here at last was the first evidence of the past geographic distribution of mammals in what had so recently been Terra Australis Incognita.

Exponents of Biblical and evolutionary theories alike seized upon the bones sent to England, as proof of whatever theory they happened to espouse. Colonist the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang hailed the discovery as proof of the literal truth of the Scriptures, and of the foresight of the Creator in providing a Universal Deluge to eliminate the worst of the prehistoric predators, for the betterment of Man.

The treasure-trove of fossils yielded by Mitchell's Cave included bones of giant marsupials such as the hippopotamus-like *Diprotodon*, the 'marsupial lion' *Thylacoleo*, and giant kangaroos, in addition to vast quantities of bones of much smaller animals, including (if we are to believe Mitchell) the Pig-footed Bandicoot.

This particular animal was not one of the species described by Owen, but was described scientifically in 1838 by the British zoologist William Ogilby. See Note VIII.

In recognition of his friendship with George Ranken, Mitchell gave the name Rankin's Ridge in 1835 to a low range near the Darling River, between present-day Louth and Tilpa, whilst on his second expedition. In 1875 the County of Rankin was erected as the cadastral unit for the same area.

References:

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 131;

J. F. Atchison, 'The Counties of New South Wales', *The Australian Surveyor* 30, 1980, p. 41;

Joan Starr & Doug McMillan, *The Wellington Caves*, Macquarie Publications, Dubbo, 1985.

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**NOTE X**

Page {115}: [re sequence and dating of events in late July]

Stapylton records on Pages {115}-{120} a series of events and observations ostensibly covering the period from 22nd June to 26th June, corresponding to the entries recorded in Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 141-52 for the period 21st-25th June. But it is not just the dates that differ: the *sequence* of events and observations in the two journals differs markedly.

It is also of interest that Mitchell's survey fieldnotes for the 23rd-24th June cannot be completely reconciled with features depicted on modern topographical maps, nor with the entries in his own printed Journal. However, consistency between modern topographical maps and Mitchell's survey fieldnotes (and his printed Journal) was restored on the 25th June.

Stapylton's Journal entries on Pages {120}-{129} for the alleged period 27th June to 1st July correspond with Mitchell's Journal entries (and survey fieldnotes) for the period 26th June to 30th June and it seems likely that, at least for this section, it is Stapylton and not Mitchell whose dates are in error by one day.

Reverting to Stapylton's Pages {115}-{120}, and noting the bunching of dates on Page {116} and the inexplicable absence of entries on Pages {113}-{114}, it would appear likely that Stapylton omitted to make entries for a few days and subsequently had to recollect and record a number of events that had taken place in the intervening period, with no regard for their correct sequence and at the same time adding in an extra day by mistake.

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## NOTE XI

### Page {117}: A curious discovery made to day of a Kangaroo Mouse— In all respects similar to the rat species, but most diminutive /& with a brushy Tail./

Mitchell recorded the finding of this little animal, now known as Mitchell's Hopping-mouse (*Notomys mitchelli*), in his Journal on the 21st June. He wrote:

'A very curious and rare little quadruped, was this day found by the two Tommies, who had never before seen such an animal. Its fore and hind legs resembled in proportion those of the kangaroo; and it used the latter by leaping on its hind quarters in the same manner as that animal. It was not much larger than a common field-mouse, but the tail was longer in proportion to the rest of the body, even than that of a kangaroo, and terminated in a hairy brush about two inches long.\*

\*This appears to be a species of Jerboa, thus, for the first time, seen by us in Australia. My friend, Mr. Ogilby, has described this animal in the Linnæan Transactions from my drawing [see Figure 9] and descriptions; the specimen itself having been deposited in the Australian Museum at Sydney. *Dipus Mitchellii*, D. plantis subpentadactylis; corpore supra cinereo-fusco, subtus albido; auriculis magnis, cauda longissima, floccosa.—*Linn. Trans.* vol.[XVIII] p.129.'

Mitchell later referred in his printed Journal to 'The unique specimen from the reedy country on the Murray of a very singular animal much resembling the jerboa or desert rat of Persia'. Elsewhere he noted that the specimen was obtained 'From reedy plains, near the Murray', while on his general map of his exploratory routes he indicated 'The Jerboa found here 21 June' over a small defined area about 10 or 12 km south-east of the edge of Lake Boga. In modern terms, the location was on the Victorian side of the Murray, between Tresco and Mystic Park, some 10 km south of the actual survey traverse for that date.

In view of the animal's hopping gait and long, tufted tail, in which it closely resembles the jerboas, it was understandable that Ogilby considered the specimen to belong to the genus *Dipus*, but

further study soon showed the two groups to be quite distinct, and the resemblance between them is now recognised to be one of the classic examples of convergent evolution.

In 1842, the French naturalist René Primevère Lesson (1794-1849) established the genus *Notomys* (from the Greek νότος, the south wind, hence southern; μύς, mouse) for the Australian hopping-mice; unfortunately, the zoological name does not draw attention to the long hindlegs and hopping gait of these rodents.

Mitchell's Hopping-mouse, marginally the largest of the extant hopping-mice, has the distinction of being the first one to be described scientifically.

As it is less able than other inland species of hopping-mice to exist without free water, its distribution is restricted mainly to mallee scrub on the fringe of the desert. Although it is seldom seen, it is probably fairly common throughout the sclerophyll woodlands, heathlands and grassland communities of southern Australia, from the Western Australian coast to the so-called Big Desert in Victoria. Previously, its distribution extended further eastwards along the scrubs of the Murray River, so Mitchell's type specimen must have been collected near the easternmost extremity of its range.

References:

- Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, p. xvii, map at back; id., Volume II, pp. 144, 263, 264 (footnote);
- W.D.L.Ride, *A Guide to the Native Mammals of Australia*, OUP, 1970, pp. 144, 146-7;
- Michael Morcombe, *Australian Marsupials and Other Native Mammals*, Lansdowne Press, 1972, p. 95;
- Ellis Troughton, *Furred Animals of Australia*, 9th edn, Angus & Robertson, 1973, pp. 248-9;
- J.A.Mahoney, 'Identities of the Rodents (Muridae) listed in T. L. Mitchell's "Three Expeditions ..." (1st ed., 1838; 2nd ed., 1839)'. *Aust. Mammal.* 5, 1982, pp. 15-36;
- Ronald Strahan, *A Dictionary of Australian Mammal Names*, Angus & Robertson, 1981, pp. 68-9, 148-50;
- (ed.), *Complete Book of Australian Mammals*, Angus & Robertson, 1983, pp. 426-7;
- Philip Whitfield (ed.), *Longman Illustrated Animal Encyclopedia*, Longman, 1984, pp. 178-81.

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## NOTE XII

Page {117}: **A peice of Scoria, or Lava, found near one of the Salt Lakes**

### Introduction

What Mitchell picked up near Lake Boga was in fact an australite, a type of tektite. Tektites may be described simply as small, glassy, pebble-like, naturally occurring objects. In 1900 the geologist F.E.Suess proposed for them the name *tektite*, from the Greek τηκτός, meaning molten. They have been found in only four major areas in the world: South-East Asia and Australia; the Ivory Coast in Africa; Czechoslovakia; and North America. Tektites found in Australia are now known as *australites*. Tektites are particularly intriguing because they are one of the commonest naturally occurring objects whose formation has never been satisfactorily explained.

While Major Mitchell is given credit for being the first person to find an australite and to submit it for scientific scrutiny, the circumstances surrounding its discovery have been glossed over in the scientific literature and the few attempts that have been made to pin-point the place and/or date of the discovery appear to be based on incorrect assumptions.

A case is now made for Mitchell's discovery to have been made, not in far western N.S.W. in 1835 as is commonly assumed, but in northern Victoria in the middle of 1836 during his '*Australia Felix*' expedition.

Mitchell's find in '*Australia Felix*'

While Mitchell was alone making a survey to the southward of Lake Boga on 21st June 1836, in order to ascertain its shape, he found, near the margin of the lake - to quote from the printed journal -

'a small fragment of highly vesicular lava'.

The unexpected discovery was also noted briefly by Mitchell's second-in-command, Granville Stapylton, who recorded independently in his journal:

'A peice [*sic*] of Scoria, or Lava, found near one of the Salt Lakes——'.

The discovery was noteworthy because the men realized that they were a significant distance from any volcanic region; it is now known that the area of extrusive rocks nearest to Lake Boga is the Newer Basalt to be found just south of Bridgewater, some 130 km to the SSE. It is possible that Mitchell believed that such pieces of 'lava' were traded between Aboriginal tribes. Whatever his views on how it came to be found at Lake Boga, he was sufficiently curious to discuss the discovery with other members of the party and to record the details of the find in his journal.

At the end of this expedition Mitchell went to London on leave. He submitted the many specimens of plants, birds, mammals, shells, saline solutions and other material collected on his three expeditions to various scientific authorities, mainly in London, for identification and description; the results were conveyed to Mitchell in time for them to be included in the book that he was preparing for publication. The book, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, in two volumes, was published in about August 1838, with a second edition, 'carefully revised', following six months later. The only specimen collected that appears *not* to have been described scientifically by an expert in time for publication in Mitchell's book was his 'small fragment of highly vesicular lava'.

A 'curious stone' lent by Mitchell to Charles Darwin

During Mitchell's period of leave in London, he corresponded with Charles Darwin, now also back in London, on the geology of the Blue Mountains. Subsequently, in mid-1839, while Mitchell was still in London, Darwin wrote to him a short letter, in which the following appeared:

'I enclose the curious stone, which I take much shame to myself for not having returned earlier.— but I had stored it away so carefully, that it had utterly past [*sic*] from my mind. I hope before very long, however, to publish a short account of it, & the woodcut, which you permitted to be taken from it.—'

Darwin did indeed include 'a short account of it, & the woodcut', on pages 38-9 of his second geological book, *Geological Observations on the Volcanic Islands*, which was published in 1844. Darwin wrote:

'Sir Thomas Mitchell has given me what at first appears to be the half of a much flattened oval ball of obsidian; it has a singular artificial-like appearance, which is well represented (of the natural size) in the accompanying woodcut. It was found in its present state, on a great sandy plain between the rivers Darling and Murray, in Australia, and at the distance of several hundred miles from any known volcanic region. It seems to have been embedded in some reddish tufaceous matter; and may have been transported either by the aborigines or by natural means. The external saucer consists of compact obsidian, of a bottle-green colour, and is filled with *finely-cellular black lava*, much less transparent and glassy than the obsidian. The external surface is marked with four or five not quite perfect ridges, which are represented rather too distinctly in the woodcut... The lip of the saucer is slightly concave, exactly like the margin of a soup- plate, and its inner edge overlaps a little the *central cellular lava*. This structure is so symmetrical round the entire circumference, that one is forced to suppose that the bomb burst during its rotatory course, before being quite solidified, and that the lip and edges were thus slightly modified and turned inwards. It may be remarked that the superficial ridges are in planes, at right angles to an axis, transverse to the longer axis of the flattened oval: to explain this circumstance, we may suppose that when the bomb burst, the axis of rotation changed.'

A clear enlarged reproduction of the woodcut illustrated in Darwin's book is given by O'Keefe (1976). No contemporaneous evidence has been found to support Darwin's assertion that the object was discovered 'on a great sandy plain *between* the rivers Darling and Murray', and the following discussion will show that it is unlikely to have been found there.

#### Baker's examination of the specimen lent to Darwin

In 1968 George Baker examined the original specimen lent to Darwin; now known as an oval flanged australite button, it is lodged with specimens of obsidian in the petrological collection of the Geological Survey Museum, South Kensington, London, with six other australites. Baker remarked that it had been significantly corroded by soil etchants, its lustre had been much dulled by some degree of mechanical abrasion (evidently attrition by wind-blown sands), and a number of small facets around the outer edge had been caused by small-scale chipping.

Baker noted that the material attached to the specimen, said by Darwin to be tufaceous, was still present: it was jammed into and partially cemented in the gap region at the boundary of the flange and core. In Baker's opinion, this material was more consistent with a silty to clayey soil: it varied in colour from greyish to grey-brown and red-brown, and was comparable with the materials constituting the soils of the river plain whence the specimen was recovered, like (said Baker) the red loam, 16 km NNW of Hattah Railway Station, on which another australite had been found in more recent times.

Could it be that Mitchell's 'small fragment of highly vesicular lava' found near the southern edge of Lake Boga in mid-1836, and Mitchell's 'curious stone' lent to Darwin, and still containing grains of soil similar to that found near Hattah, were one and the same thing?

Knowing that Darwin obtained the 'curious stone' from the Surveyor General of New South Wales and knowing that the '*Beagle*' (upon which Darwin was travelling) was in Sydney in early 1836, it is tempting to connect these two facts and to deduce that Mitchell lent the specimen to Darwin at that time. In 1985 Ken McNamara of the Western Australian Museum reproduced Darwin's woodcut of

'... the first known tektite, which was presented to Charles Darwin and was figured in his '*Voyage of HMS Beagle*' in 1844.'

It is easy to overlook the fact that the title of Darwin's book includes, after the words '*Voyage of HMS Beagle*', the expression '*together with some brief Notices of the Geology of Australia and ...*'. However, it is clear from the text, and from Darwin's correspondence, that some of the material in Darwin's book was prepared *subsequent* to the return of the '*Beagle*' to England, after he had conducted discussions with a number of other people, such as Mitchell.

McNamara then went on to state:

'In Australia, although tektites had been known to the Aboriginals for a long time, the earliest record was of one found in the Darling River area and later presented to Charles Darwin, in 1836, when he visited Sydney on board the *Beagle*.'

Previously, Baker had stated:

'Darwin evidently received the specimen from Mitchell towards the end of 1835 or early 1836.'

While the '*Beagle*' was indeed in Sydney in early 1836 - from 12th to 30th January, to be exact - no evidence has been found to support the view that the tektite which Mitchell gave to Darwin was in fact presented to him during the visit of the '*Beagle*'. F.W. and J.M.Nicholas, authors of *Charles Darwin in Australia* (1989), state:

'It is not known whether Darwin and Mitchell met during Darwin's visit, but... they certainly met and corresponded after Darwin had returned to England.'

'... Darwin later corresponded with Mitchell on questions concerning the geology of the Blue Mountains, and other related topics.'

William Foster (1985) noted that during January 1836 Mitchell was under direct orders from the Governor to prepare for another expedition to the Darling, and that he must lead it; Mitchell indicated on 21st January that he desired the party to set out on 1st February, and that he hoped to join it one month later. During this period, a busy one for both Mitchell (based in Sydney, preparing for his third

expedition) and Darwin (on an excursion across the Blue Mountains from 16th to 27th January), there seems to have been little opportunity for the two to have met.

Baker appears to have been the only writer to have attempted to pin-point the actual location of Mitchell's find. In 1973 he plotted it, rather fancifully, as Latitude 34°12'S, Longitude 143°03'E - that is, a few kilometres east of Prungle Lakes, N.S.W. This position is obviously incorrect, because in 1835 the nearest point reached by Mitchell on his second expedition was Menindee, some 210 km to the NNW, while in 1836 the nearest point reached was Lake Benanee, some 40 km to the SSW.

In Mitchell's published book, there is only *one* reference to an unusual geological specimen collected in the whole of the Murray-Darling region, and that is the one found near the southern edge of Lake Boga, a few kilometres *south* of the Murray River, in Victoria, on his *third* expedition. Both Mitchell's and Stapylton's descriptions suggest that this specimen was considered to be of (terrestrial) volcanic origin, and a similar view of the origin of tektites was shared by no less than Darwin and most of his contemporaries.

There are sound reasons for rejecting claims that Mitchell lent the specimen to Darwin during the visit of the '*Beagle*' in January 1836, and there is no evidence to support the assertion that Mitchell found the specimen between the Darling and Murray Rivers. Rather, one must lean towards the view that it was found on the 21st June, 1836, on the southern margin of Lake Boga, Victoria.

#### The Nature and Origin of Tektites

Tektites (of which australites are the form found in Australia) are very rich in silica and superficially resemble obsidian. But tektite glass is quite different from volcanic glass, being created only by the superheat and shock associated with melt rock created by a meteorite impact.

An early idea was that tektites were splashed off the moon by meteorite impacts or ejected from lunar volcanoes, but any such celestial origin has now been firmly rejected by planetologists. It is now fairly well established, from a study of their composition, that tektites have resulted from meteorite impacts on the earth.

Of the four major tektite-strewn fields on earth, the youngest and most extensive is the Australasian field, extending from the Philippines to Australia. The tektites in this field have been dated at about 610 000 years old, using the potassium-argon dating technique, but many of them have been found in sediments only 5000 to 24 000 years old; the discrepancy in radiometric and stratigraphic ages has not been resolved.

More than 45 000 australites have now been collected in southern Australia, with two notable concentrations in Victoria: one around Horsham, and one particularly heavy concentration around Port Campbell. By contrast, only about 20 specimens have been brought to scientific notice from the extensive Murray-Darling confluence region. Dunn gave a list of localities where australites had been found up to 1912, while Baker wrote a number of significant articles on australites in the 1950s - 1970s.

A possible source of the Australasian field is a newly-identified meteorite impact crater, with the tongue-twisting name of Elgygytgyn, in a remote corner of north-eastern Siberia, north of the Arctic Circle. Elgygytgyn is truly a giant crater, being 18 kilometres across and 1200 metres deep, so it is of sufficient size to have generated a tektite-strewn field. Furthermore, the wind-deposited soils of this region ideally match the chemistry of tektites, the Mesozoic rocks at Elgygytgyn provide parent material of the proper age, and the bisector of the Australasian strewn field, which is shaped like an isosceles triangle, points towards the crater. Other crateriform candidates for the Australasian strewn field are Zhamanshin in Kazakhstan, and an unnamed one in Cambodia.

The tektites found in the Philippines and South-East Asia are either irregular or aerodynamically-shaped, whereas the australites found in great numbers in southern Australia are rounded, often button-shaped and flanged, signifying a higher velocity of trajectory from the parent crater. Australites have, in fact, been subject to a double melt!

Although there is much to be discovered about tektites (in particular the australites), there is no doubt that the first European to collect one of these fascinating objects and pass it on for detailed scientific investigation was Major Mitchell.

References:

- T.L.Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, 1st edn, vol. II, p. 141; 2nd edn; vol. II, pp. 142;  
Mitchell Papers, volume VI, A295-1, misc. pp. 1-3, CY Reel A295/1, ML. [The transcript reproduced in F.W. & J.M.Nicholas, *Charles Darwin in Australia*, CUP, Sydney, 1989, p. 119, is taken from F.Burkhardt & S.Smith (eds), *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin, Volume 2, 1837-1843*, CUP, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 195-6.];
- Charles Darwin, *Geological Observations on the Volcanic Islands visited during the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle, together with some brief Notices of the Geology of Australia and the Cape of Good Hope. Being the second part of the Geology of the Voyage of the Beagle, under the command of Captain FitzRoy, R.N., during the years 1832 to 1836*, Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1844, pp. 38-9. [Part of the passage was quoted in R.H.Walcott, 'The Occurrence of So-called Obsidian Bombs in Australia', *Proc. R. Soc. Vict.* 11 (new series), 1, 1898, pp. 23-4.];
- E.J.Dunn, 'Australites', *Bull. Geol. Surv. Vic.* 27, 1912, pp. 10-19;
- George Baker, 'Tektites', *Mem. Nat. Mus. Vic.* 23, 1959, pp. 1-259;
- , 'Largest Australite from Victoria, Australia', *Mem. Nat. Mus. Vic.* 33, 1972, pp. 125-30;
- , 'Australites from the Murray-Darling Confluence Region, Australia', *Mem. Nat. Mus. Vic.* 34, 1973, fig. 1, pp. 199, 201;
- John A.O'Keefe, *Tektites and their Origin* (Developments in Petrology, vol. 4), Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co, New York, 1976, p. 4;
- Robert S.Dietz, 'IFOs (Identified Flying Objects)', *Sea Frontiers* 24, 1978, International Oceanographic Foundation, Miami, p. 342;
- Ken McNamara, *Tektites*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 1985, pp. 2-3, 25;
- William C.Foster, *Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell and his World 1792-1855*, Inst. of Surveyors N.S.W. Inc, Sydney, 1985, pp. 172-3;
- F.W. & J.M.Nicholas, *Charles Darwin in Australia*, CUP, Sydney, 1989, pp. 22, 41.
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### NOTE XIII

#### Page {125}: the Lindesay of Sturt

When mapping the topographical features of a newly-discovered region, it is as essential to establish the general drainage pattern as it is to establish the general pattern of ridges and spurs, etc. The location, direction, volume and other characteristics of each stream need to be determined, and the geographical co-ordinates of their junctions calculated, as a basis upon which other features can be established in their true positions.

Mitchell's criticisms of Sturt's explorations were in part caused by the gross inaccuracies of Sturt's determinations for longitude, and the consequent unreliability of his maps. For instance, Sturt's calculation of the position of the junction of the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers on his expedition of 1829-1830 placed it about 140 km too far to the *east*, while his calculation of the position of the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers placed it about 70 km too far to the *west*. These were huge errors when compared with what Mitchell was able to achieve.

Unknown to Mitchell and others, Sturt also made an error of omission, which had ramifications for some years to come and almost caused the death of the overlander (later explorer) Edward John Eyre in 1838.

While travelling down the Murray River by boat on 27th January 1830, Sturt wrote the following passage in his journal:

‘We passed two very considerable junctions, the one coming from the S.E., the other from the north. Both had currents in them, but the former was running much stronger than the latter. It falls into the Murray, almost opposite to the elevations I have been describing, and, if a judgment can be hazarded from its appearance at its embouchure, it must, in its higher branches, be a stream of considerable magnitude. Under this impression, I have called it the Lindesay, as a tribute of respect to my commanding officer, Colonel Patrick Lindesay of the 39th regt. I place it in east long. 140° 29', and in lat. 33° 58' south. Mr. Hume is of opinion that this is the most southerly of the rivers crossed by him and Mr. Hovel in 1823; but, as I have already remarked, I apprehend that all the rivers those gentlemen crossed, had united in one main stream above the junction of the Murrumbidgee, and I think it much more probable that this is a new river, and that it rises to the westward of Port Phillips, rather than in the S.E. angle of the coast.’

Subsequently, in his official report to the Colonial Government written on the banks of the Murrumbidgee on 20th April 1830, Sturt wrote:

‘It is remarkable that the Murray has few tributaries below the Darling. It receives one, however, of considerable importance from the S.E., to which I have given the name of the “Lindesay,” as a mark of respect to my commanding-officer, and in remembrance of the many acts of kindness I have received at his hands.’

(Colonel Patrick Lindesay was Administrator of New South Wales from 22nd October to 2nd December 1831, the period between Darling's departure and Bourke's arrival. It was Sir Patrick Lindesay who authorized Mitchell's first expedition of discovery into the interior, in November 1831.)

Unfortunately, Sturt noticed only the confluence and not the diffluence of the Lindesay with the Murray on both his downstream and upstream passages of the Murray, the Lindesay being, in fact, an insignificant anabranch of the Murray. As a consequence, Mitchell (and Stapylton) believed that one of the main streams flowing northwards, which they crossed during July, or Hume's Goulburn, would be found to be the Lindesay of Sturt.

Joseph Hawdon, who with Charles Bonney in 1838 was the first man to overland cattle from Sydney to Adelaide, believed

‘that the Yarane [our present-day Loddon] should prove to be a branch of the Lindsey of Captain Sturt, which he observed entering the River Murray.’

Eyre, the second man to overland cattle from Sydney to Adelaide, and the first man to overland sheep, followed the Wimmera River northwards a little later in 1838, believing it to be the head of the Lindesay. When he found the Wimmera petering out at Lake Hindmarsh, Eyre made two unsuccessful sallies into the thick mallee scrub before retracing his steps to the present-day Loddon River and proceeding along Hawdon's tracks to Adelaide.

Eventually it was realised that Sturt's ‘Lindesay’ was merely an anabranch of the Murray.

References:

Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 130-1, 268;

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume I, pp. 2-3;

Joseph Hawdon, *The Journal of a Journey from New South Wales to Adelaide*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1952, p. 21.

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#### NOTE XIV

Page {125}: **my intended course East would have been brought up by the Murrumbidgee**

In the Governor's instructions to Mitchell, reference was made to [John] Arrowsmith's Map published in 1832. See Map 3. This was the map that was incorporated in Sturt's printed journals, which were published in 1833. Another copy of Arrowsmith's map was published in 1834 after Arrowsmith had shifted from 33 East Street, Red Lion Square to 35 Essex Street, Strand. It is unquestioned that Mitchell carried with him in 1836 a copy of one of these Arrowsmith maps, together with "Hume's Sketch"—see Volume 4: footnote to 23rd October, and Note I. See Plate V.

Before considering Stapylton's comments, it would be constructive to compare the widths of the streams where crossed by Hume and Hovell in 1824 as quoted in "Hume's Sketch", with those given on the two Arrowsmith maps.

"Hume's Sketch"	Arrowsmith (1832 and 1834) maps	Modern name of stream
—————	Oxley 30 yards	Kiewa River
Hume 100 yards	Hume 80 yards	Murray River (near Albury)
Ovens 40 yards	Ovens 100 feet	Ovens River
Twisden 60 yards	Goulburn 70 yards	Goulburn River
—————	Murray 67 yards January 1830 [i.e., as measured by Sturt]	Murray River (above junction with Murrumbidgee River)

The reason for the discrepancies in the values of the widths of the various streams is not clear. Certainly, Arrowsmith's maps suggest that the Hume was hardly larger than the Goulburn, and if one were to misread the width of the Hume on the Arrowsmith map as 30 yards (easily done) then Stapylton's comment about proceeding easterly until brought to a halt by the Murrumbidgee is less of a geographical puzzle. (It is of course the upper stretch of the Murrumbidgee, well south of present-day Canberra, to which Stapylton is referring.)

Stapylton seems to be arguing, almost by *reductio ad absurdum*, that if the Goulburn and (presumably) its tributaries the Ovens and the Hume joined to become the Lindesay (this river system being to his south), and if Sturt's Murray were a minor tributary of the Murrumbidgee (and flowing parallel with it), then on proceeding eastwards the first river he would meet would be the (Upper) Murrumbidgee, a river with which he was only too familiar.

Stapylton of course recognised that the Murray was a most significant and noble river and unlikely to be an anabranch of the Murrumbidgee. Nevertheless, he was keen to determine the location and identity of the rivers forming the headwaters of the Lindesay, and every possibility had to be taken into account. As Stapylton realised, the appearance of a dividing range extending south east from Mount Hope seemed to rule out the possibility of any of the streams crossed by Hume and Hovell joining to become the Lindesay.

References:

Supplement to *NSW Government Gazette*, 5 Nov. 1836;

John Arrowsmith, *Map of the Discoveries in Australia*, 1832, in Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*, Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1833, Volume I;

H. Hume's Sketch, Dixson Library, Cb 82/24;

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, pp. 83, 87, 89, 245.

**NOTE XV**

Page {141}: **Kater**

Page {145}: **Kater's compass**

Henry Kater (1777-1835), English physicist, was born in Bristol, and died in Hastings, Sussex. See Figure 23.

As a Lieutenant in the 12th Regiment stationed at Madras, Kater assisted in the great Trigonometrical Survey of India, from 1800 to 1807. During this period he worked out the principle for his first invention, Kater's Compass: a compass with a card attached to the magnetic needle, and a vertical horsehair for accurate sighting to distant objects. See Figure 24. This was the instrument, which John Oxley was to describe in his journal as:

‘a most valuable instrument, combining all the advantages of the circumferentor, without being so liable to be damaged and put out of order by carriage.’

In 1808 Kater was promoted to the rank of Captain, and attended Sandhurst. After Napoleon's abdication the British Army was drastically reduced and thousands of officers were retired on half-pay; thus Kater ended his service career, in 1814.

He then began to take an active part in the work of the Royal Society of London, that distinguished scientific body founded in 1645. In 1815 he was elected a Fellow of the Society, in recognition of his surveying work in India and his more recent work in England on instruments designed to enable accurate measurements of distance and of time to be made.

Included in this work was a series of tests with reflecting telescopes, but, most important of all, he had devised an improved method of dividing astronomical circles on the principle of the beam-compass, and had succeeded in measuring one ten-thousandth part of an inch (about 1/400 mm).

Two years later, in 1817, the Royal Society presented Kater with the Copley Medal for the pioneering work he had done in the determination of standard measures. By 1820 he was acknowledged as Britain's leading authority in the field of metrology.

In 1818 Kater led a research team to ascertain the length of the seconds pendulum at different stations of the European trigonometrical survey; this involved the use of the brig *Nimrod* on an expedition of scientific exploration to the Shetlands and Outer Hebrides, and the waters of the Arctic Ocean, north of the North Cape of Norway.

The Admiralty, the War Office, the makers of scientific equipment, manufacturers and mathematical scholars, all consulted Kater about their problems. When naval vessels were being prepared for Arctic explorations in the 1820s, he was called upon to frame instructions for the use, care and maintenance of instruments in Arctic conditions.

In recognition of his scientific work for exploration, a cape situated on the east coast of Baffin Island, in latitude 69° 05' N, longitude 66° 45' W, was named Cape Henry Kater in his honour. Later, at the other end of the New World, he was honoured by his friend Charles Darwin, who, while exploring near Cape Horn, off Tierra del Fuego, on Christmas Day 1832, wrote in his journal:

‘Close by the cove, a pointed hill called Kater's Peak, rises to the height of 1700 feet.’

By now Kater's achievements—his floating collimator, the determination of precise standards of mass and length, and his famous pendulum (providing the most accurate way known of determining gravity)—were widely known. Indeed, it was on the basis of the researches of Kater and his colleagues that the great scientific achievements of the later 19th century were erected.

By 1830 Kater was a Vice-President and Treasurer of the Royal Society, and in 1831 he was awarded the coveted medal of the Royal Astronomical Society.

The year 1831 saw the publication in London of Kater's best-known work, *An Account of the Construction and Verification of a Copy of the Imperial Standard Yard, made for the Royal Society*. This slender pamphlet, reprinted from the *Philosophical Transactions*, described the intricate series of calculations and tests by which the standard yard had been measured. His earlier works had included *An Account of the Comparison of Various British Standards of Linear Measure* (London, 1821), *The Description of a Floating Collimator* (London, 1825), and *The Error in Standards of Linear Measure* (London, 1830).

Kater caused two models of his standard yard to be made. One was destroyed in the great fire, which ravaged the old Houses of Parliament at Westminster in 1834. The other was brought to Australia by his son, and subsequently presented to the University of Sydney by his grandson.

Kater died in 1835, at the age of 58, having become one of the ornaments of British science. Five years after his death another important work by him was published in London; this was concerned with improvements in astronomical clocks.

Kater's original invention, Kater's Compass, played an important role in the early surveys of Australia. Being lightweight, readily portable, easy to operate and relatively cheap and procurable compared with the theodolite, it was used extensively in the early cadastral surveys of this country, in an endeavour to satisfy the demands of the first European settlers to 'unlock the land'.

References:

Charles Darwin, *Journal of researches into the Natural History and Geology of the countries visited during the voyage of HMS Beagle round the world* [familiarily known as *The Voyage of the 'Beagle'*], 1839;

Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 314;

Benjamin F. Howell, Jr, *Introduction to Geophysics*, McGraw-Hill, 1959;

David S. Macmillan, *The Kater Family 1750-1965*, Halstead Press, Sydney, 1966, ch. 2;

*HRV* 5, p. 59.

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## NOTE XVI

Page {158}: **a grey rabbit rat**

In the early days this animal was called 'the Rabbit Rat of the Colonists', in reference to the animal's soft greyish colouration and rather large ears. Mitchell does not mention seeing or collecting the animal on the 11th July, but later, on the 18th September, whilst taking stock of the objects of natural history collected during this his third expedition, he referred to a number of animals which had not hitherto been mentioned in his journal. He wrote: 'There was also the rat, which climbs trees like the opossum;' (Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Volume II, p. 263). This animal is now known as the White-footed Tree-rat or Rabbit-rat (*Conilurus albipes*, formerly *Hapalotis albipes*), and is presumed extinct.

Earlier, Mitchell had referred to a quite different animal, one that he collected on his second expedition in mid-1835 'from the scrubs near the Darling', as 'The rabbit-rat of the colonists' (*ibid.*, Volume I, p. xvii). Mitchell described the nest-building habits and rabbit-like appearance (except for the tail) of this latter animal in his Journal (*ibid.*, p. 308). One of the animals collected on his third expedition in 1836 and not hitherto mentioned until the 18th September of that year was: 'the flat-

tailed rat from the scrubs of the Darling, where it builds an enormous nest of branches and boughs' (ibid., Volume II, p. 263).

Unfortunately, these remarks were juxtaposed by Mitchell with his remarks on the tree-climbing rat mentioned above, separating the two with a semi-colon without the conjunction 'and'. Subsequent writers have criticized Mitchell for suggesting that the tree-climbing rat built stick-nests, but Stapylton's disclosure that a grey rabbit-rat was caught on the 11th July 1836 (*i.e.*, between Rostron and Kanya) vindicates Mitchell's assertion on the 18th September that they had indeed collected a rat which climbs trees like the 'opossum', namely *Conilurus albipes*.

Mitchell's brief descriptions of the other animal – the one from the scrubs of the Darling – indicate that it was one of the Stick-nest Rats (*Leporillus sp.*). The animals of this genus 'were originally known as the "Native Rabbit" or "Rabbit-Rat" to early colonists of the south-eastern inland, because of their relatively long ears, blunt nose, and rounded fluffy appearance when sitting hunched-up, making them appear like small rabbits with rat-like tails, a superficial resemblance to which the generic name [*Leporillus*] refers'. Reference: Ellis Troughton, *Furred Animals of Australia*, 9th edn, Angus & Robertson, 1973, p. 244.

The now-rare Greater Stick-nest Rat (*L. conditor*, Sturt, 1848, formerly *Hapalotis conditor*) is described as resting in a hunched posture reminiscent of a rabbit (Ronald Strahan (ed.), *Complete Book of Australian Mammals*, Angus & Robertson, 1983, p. 424). The Lesser Stick-nest Rat (*L. apicalis*, Gould, 1853, formerly *Hapalotis apicalis*), now almost certainly extinct, is described as having been similar in appearance but smaller and more lightly built, and distinguished from the former by a pencil of white hairs on the last quarter of the tail (ibid., p. 425), thus suggesting that it was this latter animal that Mitchell collected along the Darling in either 1835 or 1836, or both years, and which W. Ogilby scientifically described and named *Conilurus constructor* in 1838.

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