



The writing of this essay was funded as part of The Kurna Project 2015-7 (coordinator Rob Amery) by the Commonwealth of Australia Ministry for the Arts through its Indigenous Languages and Arts (Languages) program.

I am grateful to Gavin Malone for enthusiastically sharing with me his library research and on-the-ground investigations around McLaren Vale; and for his encouragement.

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Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.03.03/04

'WALDEILA' / WALTILA

(last edited: 3.8.2017)

SEE ALSO: PNS 4.03.03/03 Kanyanyapilla

NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:

This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.

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

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

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

I hope upcoming generations will continue this work and improve it. My interpretations should be amplified, re-considered and if necessary modified by KWP or other linguists, and by others engaged in cultural mapping: Aboriginal people, archaeologists, geographers, ecologists and historians.

Chester Schultz, 21 July 2017.



Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.03.03/04

‘WALDEILA’ / WALTILA

(last edited: 3/8/2017)

Abstract

Waldilla (*Waltila* in KWP’s New Spelling 2010) was probably a post-contact Ngarrindjeri version of a name for all or part of the place originally called *Kanyanyapilla*. This was an area of campsites, burial sites and a waterhole, on a well-travelled route from the crucial ford at Old Noarlunga, going south via *Tarniyandingga* on Pedler Creek to *Piltangga* in Willunga South.¹

In the 1930s the Ngarrindjeri elder Milerum (Clarence Long) applied the name “*Waldeila*” to a campsite which he and Albert Karlowan had both used. They both mentioned it to Tindale and he, without knowing exactly where it was, mapped it as “*Waldeila (Walteila)*” a few kilometres southwest of McLaren Vale (on Sections 185 and 194-5, but these details were probably in error).

Archaeological work to follow up these hints did not begin until 1955, more than a decade after Milerum and Karlowan died. Since then it has revealed two campsites in this vicinity, one on Section 182 and another overlapping Sections 194/195/184, with a spring on 192. Both of them are located on an ancient coastal dune ridge, fitting the original site card’s description of a “*Sandy hill top overlooking flats to the south*”. Following Tindale’s opinion that one of them was “*perhaps*” Milerum’s *Waldeila*, they have been registered under the Aboriginal Heritage Act as ‘*Waldeila Campsite No. 1*’ and ‘*Waldeila Campsite No. 2*’ respectively.

As it stands, the name ‘*Waldilla*’ does not conform to the Kurna language rule about Locative suffixes on root words of two and three syllables (see Discussion), and so cannot be a standard Kurna place-name. It could be ‘just a name’ in either Kurna or Ngarrindjeri, with no dictionary meaning. But the combination of elements – incorrect structure plus the Kurna-style ending *-illa* – strongly suggests it could be a Ngarrindjeri adaptation from an original Kurna word which probably *did* have a meaning.

If there was a Kurna original we cannot reconstruct it with any certainty. The gloss given by Tindale – “*wallaby place*” – is not linguistically credible as it stands, nor is the reference to wallabies certain (see Discussion). In addition to the structural error (it would have to be *Waldingga*, not *Waldilla*), it is clearly based on an etymology which hybridizes the Ngarrindjeri noun *waldi* (‘wallaby’) with the Kurna Locative *-illa* (‘at, place of’).

We may make some intelligent guesses at what an unrecorded Kurna original might have been. Two doubtful suggestions of mine are *Wadlalilla* (‘place of bulrushes’) and *Wadlharlilla* (‘place of

¹ See PNS 4.03.03/03 *Kanyanyapilla*; 4.03.03/01 *Tarniyandingga*; and 4.04.02/01 *Piltangga*.

two wallabies’): see below. These two names might relate to aspects of the site, e.g. the presence of valuable bulrushes for technology and food, or perhaps an unrecorded Wallaby Dreaming.

These remain guesses, not facts; and they are the more doubtful because part of the area, perhaps even the whole, was certainly known by the quite different Kurna name *Kanyanyapilla* in times of first contact. Yet the possibility remains that Kurna people may have used a name something like *Waldilla* for part of this greater area. If so, they might perhaps have abridged my guesses to *Wad’illa* and *Wadh’illa* respectively, to simplify the flow. I know no other example of such abridgement of a place-name ending with *-illa*; but if it happened, it would be unsurprising that Ngarrindjeri visitors then reversed the consonants to match their own *wald* instead of *wadl*.

Coordinates	Latitude -35.244305°, Longitude 138.525131° [on Section 193, as a nominal centre of the Kanyanyapilla-Waldilla ‘locality’]
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Language Information

Meaning	Unknown
Etymology	Unknown
Notes	<p>The etymology given by Tindale – ‘wallaby place’ – depended on combining a Ngarrindjeri root <i>waldi</i> (‘wallaby’) with the Kurna Locative suffix <i>-illa</i>. But on linguistic grounds this could not be a Kurna word (see Discussion).</p> <p><i>Waldilla</i> could conceivably be a Ngarrindjeri adaptation of Kurna <i>Wadlalilla</i>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>wadlala</i> ‘bulrush’ + <i>illa</i> ‘at’ > <i>wadlalilla</i> ‘place of bulrushes’ > late-19th-century Ngarrindjeri adaptations <i>waldalilla</i> > <i>wald’illa</i>.</p> <p>OR of Kurna <i>Wadhlarlilla</i>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>wadlha</i> ‘wallaby’ + <i>rla</i> ‘two’ + <i>illa</i> ‘at, place of’ > <i>Wadhlarlilla</i> ‘place of two wallabies’ > late-19th-century Ngarrindjeri adaptations <i>waldarlilla</i> > <i>wald’illa</i>.</p> <p>But these are unlikely, because the immediate vicinity has a quite different Kurna name <i>Kanyanyapilla</i> recorded at first contact. SEE ALSO: separate entry <i>Kanyanyapilla</i>.</p> <p>The name might possibly signify that Ngarrindjeri people believed the place had connections with wallabies (e.g. a Wallaby Dreaming); or it might be ‘just a name’, with no dictionary meaning.</p>
Language Family	Uncertain: probably Yaraldic: ‘Ngarrindjeri’, perhaps derived partly or wholly from Thura-Yura: ‘Kurna’.
KWP Former Spelling	Waldilla
KWP New Spelling	Waltila
Phonemic Spelling	/waLTiLa/
Syllabification	“Wal-dilla”:
Pronunciation tips	Stress the 1 st syllable. Pronounce every ‘a’ as in Maori ‘haka’.



Main source evidence

Date	[1839] / 1844
Original source text	<p>- [Travelling northward from Aldinga Scrub] "... Keeping along the plain four miles brings us to the grassy gully called Tartarchilla... The next gully is Cunyunyapella, in which the large tea tree (<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>) and reeds at once show that the water is permanent. There is some very good land in this gully... Proceeding onwards we arrive at the next gully called Turneeyundingga..."</p> <p>- "Surface water is not scarce to the South. I think I could go from Adelaide to the Slate Quarry at Piltongga and obtain surface water on an average of four miles. Distances measured from Government-house, Adelaide...</p> <p>5. Onkaparinga (Noarlunga) 22 6. Turungga, McLaren Vale 25½ 7. Willunga 30 8. Piltongga 31</p> <p>Or, surface water may be had instead of the three last by Turneeyundingga and Cunyanyapella, to Piltongga, which also saves a mile in distance."</p>
Reference	'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], 'Descriptive Tours through Part of District C', <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 8a, 8a-b.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kaurna survey guides 1839.

Date	1935-41
Original source text	<p>[written northeast of McLaren Vale, but arrow to Section 195 on eastern side of Pethick Rd:]</p> <p>"Waldeila wallaby place (Walteila)"</p>
Reference	Tindale annotated map Hundred of Willunga, SA Museum AA 338/24/97.
Informants credited	General map credit "Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941".
Informants uncredited	Milerum

Date	1955
Original source text	<p>- "[Sect.] 185 – [Hundr.] Willunga...</p> <p>- [Description of site] "Sandy hill top overlooking flats to the south; the historical native campsite known as Waldeila used by Milerum and Karloan"</p> <p>- "[No.] A53533 [Date] 5 Jan. 1955 [Collector] NBTindale asst H. Burrows"</p> <p>- [Notes] "Never previously collected over Found as followup of native report by Milerum to NBT and field rept. by Dr C Stephens"</p>
Reference	original Site Card 'Waldeila', Archaeology Dept, SA Museum.
Informants credited	Informant for the name not clear; Milerum and Karlowan for the campsite.
Informants uncredited	



Date	[1955-6] / 1984
Original source text	<p>"In 1955 Norman Tindale noted:– ... 'a late site of Aboriginal occupation on the top of a sandy hill where iron stone had been used as hearth stones... Perhaps this is the site known to old Milerum (Clarence Long)... as Waldeila, 'Wallaby place'. The following year Tindale was able to confirm that Waldeila was a spring at this location about 6 km inland in undulating country on the Willunga plains".</p>
Reference	Betty Ross 1984, <i>Aboriginal and Historic Places Around Metropolitan Adelaide</i> , Adelaide, Anthropological Society of SA Inc: 21a; quoting Tindale unpublished MS 1955, 'Campsite at Section 185, H. of Willunga at Native Place called Waldeila 'Wallaby Place'.'
Informants credited	Milerum for the name; seemingly Milerum for the derivation.
Informants uncredited	

Date	1955 or later
Original source text	" campsite N.B.T. 5 Jan 1955 " [arrow to two ink crosses on NW part of Section 185]
Reference	Tindale annotated map Hundred of Willunga, SA Museum AA 338/24/97.
Informants credited	Tindale
Informants uncredited	Dr C Stephens

Date	n.d. [1956 or after]
Original source text	<p>"Waldeila → Walteila Kurna Tr / Adelaide / S.Aust. Archaeological site at Section 185, Hundred of Willunga, first noted as such by Dr Stephens of the Waite Research Institute. Lit. Wallaby place. Deriv: This is a late camp with pebble and chopping tools, rough flakes and an absence of microlith implement flakes hence is classified as a Murundian culture site. There is a spring of water at sections 194 and 195. Tindale ms: campsites & implements Journ. 1-3:241, 597. visit [?of] by anthropology excursion p.597 & flexed burial."</p>
Reference	Tindale Kurna place-name card [632] 'Waldeila-Walteila', AA 338/7/1/12.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Adele Pridmore for spring.

Date	n.d. [?1980s]
Original source text	" Waldeila " [arrow to red dot (i.e. archaeological site) at western edge of Sec 192]
Reference	Tindale annotated map County Adelaide, AA 338/24/107.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	n.d. [1991 or after]
Original source text	<p>“Waldeila Kurna Tr / S.Aust. Waldeila campsite. Studied by Rodney Weathersbee assisted by local residents of Wirra Wirra, Alec and Ruth Baxendale. Sand now mined and site largely destroyed. Tindale ms. T.Gara letter 5:1991.”</p>
Reference	Tindale Kurna place-name card [660] ‘Waldeila’, AA 338/7/1/12.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

‘WALDEILA’: CAMPSITES ANCIENT AND MODERN: Discussion:

FIRST RECORDS:

Tindale’s most prolific informants about Aboriginal culture south of Adelaide were the Ngarrindjeri elders Milerum (Clarence Long) who died in 1941, and Albert Karlowan who died in 1943. Sometime between 1931 and 1941, Milerum told NB Tindale about a campsite which he knew and had used, and which he called “*Waldeila*”.² At some stage between 1935 and 1943 Karlowan, told Tindale that he too had used it.³

Tindale mapped it as “*Waldeila (Walteila)*” a few kilometres southwest of McLaren Vale, with a misleading source credit, and without knowing exactly where it was.⁴

² Tindale 1955, quoted in B Ross 1984, *Aboriginal and Historic Places Around Metropolitan Adelaide*, Adelaide, Anthropological Society of SA Inc: 21a; Site card ‘Waldeila’, SA Museum 1955. For the dates when Milerum first met Tindale and when he died, see Tindale 1986, ‘Milerum (1869-1941)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/milerum-7572> (12/8/14). Tindale’s 1955 paper is ‘Campsite at Section 185, H. of Willunga at Native Place called Waldeila ‘Wallaby Place’’, unpublished field notes, SA Museum, but we have not been able to look at it yet.

³ For his use of the campsite see the site card ‘Waldeila’. For the dates when Karlowan first met Tindale and when he died, see Tindale ‘First meeting with Karlowan, 29/4/1935’, AA 338/1/33/1: 189; and Berndt & Berndt 1993, *A World That Was*: 7.

⁴ Tindale annotated map, Hundred of Willunga, AA 338/24/97. This map has no credit for ‘Waldeila’, none to Milerum, but a general credit “*Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941*”. It therefore appears to credit Karlowan rather than Milerum for the name. But Tindale specifically attributed the name to Milerum in his 1995 account of his archaeological field trip: “*Perhaps this is the site known to old Milerum... as Waldeila, ‘Wallaby place’*” (Tindale unpublished MS 1955, ‘Campsite at Section 185, H. of Willunga at Native Place called Waldeila ‘Wallaby Place’.’ as quoted in B Ross 1984, *Aboriginal and Historic Places Around Metropolitan Adelaide*, Adelaide, Anthropological Society of SA Inc: 21a).

We know that Karlowan spent time, especially in December 1935, giving many place-names along the Gulf coast for Tindale to add to his maps (Tindale MS, ‘Murray River notes’ AA 338/1/31/1, SA Museum: 197). However, Tindale’s maps often give no date or source for a given individual item, and often include items whose source is known or easily deducible but not listed in the general credits. On this map some uncredited hand-written place-names are merely Tindale’s own adapted spelling of a name already gazetted and mapped, e.g. “*Wil:anga*” for Willunga and “*Munapil:a*” for Monopilla.

More than a decade passed after the deaths of Milerum and Karlowan before anyone followed up these hints with an archaeological field search.

The first report came from Dr C Stephens of the CSIRO Division of Soils,⁵ and Tindale quickly followed it up on 5th January 1955. He found “a late site of Aboriginal occupation on the top of a sandy hill where iron stone had been used as hearth stones”.⁶

Here, he thought, might be the place. Ignoring Karlowan’s involvement in favour of the man with whom he had spent most time, he acknowledged his uncertainty and wrote, “*Perhaps this is the site known to old Milerum... as Waldeila, ‘Wallaby place’*”.⁷ Here he specifically credits Milerum with knowing the name as well as the site. He also seems to imply that Milerum gave its meaning as ‘wallaby place’; but we shall see reason to doubt this.

The SA Museum began a site card ‘Waldeila’ which listed its location as Section 185, and Tindale also mapped the camp in the northwest corner of the same Section: north of Branson Rd and east of the closed continuation of Pethick Rd.⁸

In 1956 somebody (possibly the local chronicler Adele Pridmore) told Tindale of a spring, which (according to Ross) confirmed that “*Waldeila was a spring at this location*”. One of Tindale’s place-name cards says the spring was “*at Sections 194 and 195*”.⁹ This probably explains why he added an arrow from the ‘Waldeila’ map text to the northwest corner of Section 195, at the junction of a small tributary with today’s Maslin Creek, about 700m south of where he had mapped the campsite on Section 185.¹⁰

We don’t know what Milerum or Karlowan said to Tindale about the *location* of this campsite. Tindale seems to have been unsure. Apart from his “*perhaps*” in 1955 (see below), the text of his map annotation is written across an area 4.5 km *northeast* of McLaren Vale, and circled; and a long curved arrow then locates it at Section 195, 4.5 km *southwest* of the town, in a part of the map which has much less competing data than the part where he wrote the words. This looks to me like uncertainty. Probably the arrow was a response to Pridmore’s information about a spring on Section 195.

⁵ Tindale’s card is inaccurate about Stephens’ affiliation; he was based at ‘Waite Research Institute but did not work for it (Malone p.c. email 3/7/2016).

⁶ Tindale 1955, in Ross 1984: 21a.

⁷ My emphasis.

⁸ The map text reads “*campsite N.B.T. 5 Jan 1955*”.

⁹ Ross 1984: 21a; Tindale (n.d.), Kurna place-name card [632] ‘Waldeila>Walteila’. As with the map entry, this heading probably means ‘original Waldeila, modified to Walteila’; i.e. Tindale probably believed (from Meyer’s ‘walde’) that the ‘d’ was the old original, while Milerum’s actual pronunciation was more like ‘t’. Malone believes that Pridmore was the source of the information about the spring (Malone unpublished research notes 2016). Tindale’s location on Sections 194-195 *might have been* an error based on being told merely that the spring was ‘on the creek south of the campsite’, then deducing from 185 that it must be on 194-5. But in fact potential springs have recently been identified on Sections 194 and 195, the one on 194 being on the site of a current small dam (Malone p.c. 16/8/2016). Thus it seems that on this card Tindale was quoting *Pridmore’s* information accurately.

¹⁰ Tindale map AA 338/24/97.



More field trips to examine the site and some of its surroundings went out in the 1960s with Tindale and others, especially Rodney Weathersbee, who eventually produced a major study of what is now known as the Waldeila No.1 site: *“He concluded that Waldeila was a camping and ceremonial site with a possible occupation period of several thousand years. He proposed that it was an extensive site, artefacts being noted up to 750 metres away”*.¹¹ Throughout these episodes, the paperwork – the maps and reports – continued to say that it was located at Section 185, and the spring at 194-5.

But recent research by Vivienne Wood and Gavin Malone has shown ‘185’ to be a mis-recording or transcription error for 182. The topography of Section 185 does not match the old descriptions and Weatherbee’s map, but does match Section 182, 1½ km to the west. They also found a spring a few hundred metres south of this, on Section 192 (not 194-5).¹² The searches around 185 turned up significant results in an area centred on 194 and extending into parts of 184 and 195. Accordingly the two sites were registered in 1990 as ‘Waldeila Campsite No. 1’ and ‘Waldeila Campsite No. 2’ respectively.¹³ Both are the subject of cultural research by Gavin Malone, collaborating with senior custodians Karl Winda Telfer and Georgina Yambo Williams.

THE PLACE:

The archaeologists have examined only two disconnected parts of the area which I now describe.¹⁴

Located on an ancient dune ridge, and less than a kilometre apart, both of the registered sites fit the site card’s description of a *“sandy hill top overlooking flats to the south”*.

Both are on Branson Rd: No.1 west of California Rd, Tatachilla, No.2 around Pethick Rd, McLaren Vale. Both are on low sandy hilltops overlooking the Maslin Creek swamp.

Both sites are described as ancient, but with Waldeila-2 also showing signs of use in historical times. Waldeila-1 has been partly destroyed by sand mining and road making, and Waldeila-2 denuded by farming.

¹¹ Malone unpublished research notes 2016; RDJ Weathersbee 1980, ‘The Waldeila Camp Site’, unpublished paper, SA Museum AA 255/19/18/003: 2.

¹² I have calculated the location of the spring from its position in relation to contour lines on Weathersbee’s map (‘Location of Campsite’, in Weathersbee 1980). It seems that Tindale also came to this conclusion eventually (probably in the 1980s), presumably because he had remembered that the site was really on Section 182; for when he was preparing his late summary maps for the proposed gazetteer, he marked *“Waldeila”* at the western edge of Section 192, i.e. at Weathersbee’s location, not on 194-5 (Tindale annotated map n.d. [1980s?], County Adelaide, AA 338/24/107). However, as noted before, there may *also* have been springs on 194 and 195.

¹³ For convenience I will refer to them from here on as ‘Waldeila-1’ and ‘Waldeila-2’.

¹⁴ I owe many of the details in this account to personal communications by Gavin Malone, from his dedicated local knowledge and unpublished notes.

'Flats to the south' is not an adequate description of their surroundings. This area is a series of rolling 'downs' rather than flats; and what the sites 'overlook' immediately south is Maslin Creek, with lower ground on its southern side. On these Sections 192-193-194 the Creek is part of a greater reed swamp which even now extends 3 or 4 km from Bayliss Rd in the west to beyond Pethick Rd in the east.¹⁵ On the west side of California Rd at 192 is a small remnant patch of Woolly Teatree, known locally as the 'California Road Wetland'. In this area "*stands of woolly ti-tree (Leptospermum lanigerum)... are still common today with surrounding bulrush (Typha domingensis) and common reed (Phragmites australis). This shrubland assemblage was characteristic of wetlands on the Willunga Plains [in 1840], with the California Road Wetland being one of the few places where it has survived today*".¹⁶ As we saw above, the archaeologists found a spring here a few yards west of the remnant teatree scrub.¹⁷

Despite the nearby burial sites, Kurna guides brought white men here during some of their journeys. In the winter of 1839 during the first 'Aldinga' survey, it was most likely the unnamed Aboriginal employees who first brought Louis Piesse, Richard Counsel and others here to camp. They camped twice in June, on Section 203, and 400 metres away on Section 193; and again in August on 193.¹⁸ On 203 Piesse recorded the name "*Cun-yu-ya-pel-la*". These camps were on the lower and flatter southern side of the reed swamp, with a low rise protective against the winter south westerlies. The surveyors feared no enemies and had no need of lookouts with a commanding view (like the ancient hilltop sites on the northern side of the swamp), because they had Kurna people in their company and on their payroll.¹⁹ It was winter; they could avail themselves of the north-facing slope to seek shelter from the south-westerlies and sleep closer to the spring. Counsel did not mark any waterhole nearby, but as we have seen above, there was a spring a little over half a km downstream.

¹⁵ – and probably further still in both directions before settlement, especially southeast along the tributary which arises in the hills behind Willunga and has recently been dubbed 'Wirra Creek' (see map in Tim Denham *et al.*, 'Multi-disciplinary investigation of 19th century European settlement of the Willunga Plains, South Australia', in S Haberle & B David (ed.) 2012, *Peopled Landscapes: Archaeological and Biogeographic Approaches to Landscapes*, Canberra, ANU Press: 396, <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=165471>).

¹⁶ Denham *et al* 2012: 398. On reeds and bulrushes here, cp. Ellen R Stuart 2005, 'A problem of settlement: the continuing evolution of a cultural landscape: Cultural landscape change on the Willunga Plains from 1840', Honours thesis in Archaeology, Flinders University: 43, https://www.flinders.edu.au/eh/fms/archaeology_files/dig_library/theses2/Stuart%20Hons%202005%20small.pdf. The "*Melaleuca linariifolia*" mentioned by Piesse is an eastern states species, and the local species referred to here is *Leptospermum lanigerum* *Woolly Tea-tree*. *M. linariifolia*'s common name is 'snow in summer' because of its profuse white to cream flowers in spring and summer (Malone p.c. 23/8/2016). Of water in the California Road Wetland a 2007 report says: "*Underground water discharges to the surface throughout the year... This site includes a permanent pool, which potentially supports drought intolerant fauna such as native fish*" (Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board 2007, 'Water Allocation Plan for the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area': 10, <http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtloftyranges/water/water-allocation-plans/mclaren-vale> [3/6/15]).

¹⁷ This spring was probably at the site of the small dam which we see there today. Weathersbee's map shows the teatree patch much smaller than it is today.

¹⁸ See Counsel 1839, Field Book 94, p.50, 56 for June dates, p.52 for two camps: one on Section 193 (right at what is now "Evergreen Flats") and the other about 400m further south and up-slope in the middle of Section 203; also Counsel 1839, Field Book 102, p.23 for August date, p.25 for a camp on the same place in Section 193.

¹⁹ *Register* 10/8/1839: 6a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27440703/2049497>.



In 1839 several of John McLaren's survey team here noted the abundance of large game in the area, especially emus. His Second Officer Richard Counsel, on one of his meticulous field maps, pencilled "*emu plain*" across Section 195.²⁰ Assistant Surveyor James Hawker wrote: "*Emus were just as plentiful as kangaroos about the Maclaren plains... On many occasions when riding without my dogs in pretty open ground, I came across a large flock of emus*".²¹ According to Piesse, "*The fine large trees and close sward give this locality the appearance of a park. When I first knew it, it was without an inhabitant and abounded in game, kangaroos and emus being very numerous*".²²

In July of the same year a young Kurna man named Wauwitpinna guided the German missionary linguist Schürmann on foot to Encounter Bay, aiming to camp on the second night at a place called "*Kanjanjapilla*" (Kanyanyapilla) seven miles south of the Onkaparinga. On the way they met senior surveyor John McLaren; he was also familiar with the place, took them there and offered one of his men's tents. Schürmann's colleague Teichelmann also visited Kanyanyapilla in October.²³

Despite the surveyors' experience of an apparently uninhabited plain, it is clear that this place had been well-used for a long time. It was strategically placed for travel between the crucial ford at Old Noarlunga and southern destinations such as Willunga and Aldinga. Piesse later wrote a travelogue of the area ('District C'), in which he showed he was well aware of the "*native pads*" and had a high respect for their logic and value. During his surveying stint in 1839 he was noting how the earlier colonists had already using them as the basis of their own tracks, and how, by implication, his survey colleagues were benefitting now from their logic wherever they kept to 'the old road'.²⁴ Survey draftsman Counsel (Second Officer in Piesse's team) drew meticulous field sketches which mapped explicitly a "*native track*" from the crucial ford at Old Noarlunga, southward and joining with the surveyors' "*Proposed Road to Encounter Bay*".²⁵ His field books show more detail: one such 'native track' proceeding from the ford to *Tarniyandingga* at Section 123 on Pedler Creek; and also what was probably one of its continuations, the "*present track*" or "*old road*" following close to the line of the 'proposed road' all the way to Sellicks Hill.²⁶

²⁰ Richard Counsel 1839, Field Book 94: 54, Geographical Names Unit.

²¹ James Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in South Australia*, Adelaide, Wigg & Son 1:49a.

²² 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse] in *Observer* 13/4/1844: 7b.

²³ For all these incidents see PNS 4.03.03/03 Kanyanyapilla. Schürmann's 'j' is the German spelling of a consonantal y sound.

²⁴ "*The old road [the settlers' first track to Encounter Bay] went as near as possible by the 'native pad' from Encounter Bay to the Onkaparinga. I think the predilection of the natives for their route may be accounted for by the fact that water can be more frequently obtained, and that they had not to pass so large a tract of scrub, and consequently could sooner fall on good country abounding in game, an object by no means unimportant to those who had both to travel and find food on the journey*" ('L.P.' [Piesse], '*Descriptive Tours In South Australia*', *Observer* 16/3/1844: 7a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/158918330/18834055>).

²⁵ Ma, J McLaren 1840, 'Country South of Adelaide', London, Arrowsmith.

²⁶ Counsel 1839, Field Book 94: 58; Counsel 1839, Field Book 102: 37, 41, 42, 43. These two field books and the McLaren map also contain 'native tracks' going north from the Onkaparinga ford.

Piesse knew a route which passed through Kanyanyapilla-Waldilla. In his 1844 travelogue he outlined how to find water every few miles from Adelaide to *Piltangga* (Beltunga Gully at Willunga South). South from the ford at today's Old Noarlunga, you could travel via "*Turungga*" and Willunga to "*Piltongga*"; "*Or, surface water may be had instead of the three last by Turneeyundingga and Cunyanyapella, to Piltongga, which also saves a mile in distance*".²⁷

But for some reason no 'native track' was recorded near Waldilla, and all the 'proposed roads' bypassed it.

This essay can only touch on the richness of how a place like this might have been known in traditional Aboriginal culture. Fortunately it has friends who will do much more delving into its ecological, cultural and colonial records, and develop a better understanding of its Aboriginal significance and history. This will be the work of Gavin Malone and colleagues based around ongoing efforts at ecological and cultural regeneration on Lot 50-Kanyanyapilla (on Section 194, part of the registered site). Aboriginal cultural regeneration is being led by senior custodians Karl Winda Telfer and Georgina Yambo Williams and looks to the future of a living culture, building on knowledge of the past. Archaeological research is ongoing which will also assist understanding. Some of the early stages are on public view at Malone's Lot 50-Kanyanyapilla project website, as an inspiring illustration of what might be done with cultural mapping from work such as the Southern Kurna Place Names Project and a collaborative, bi-cultural approach to place.²⁸

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THE STATUS OF THE PLACE-NAME:

Nothing like the name 'Waldeila' was recorded from Ngarrindjeri or Kurna language sources in times of first contact, i.e. before 1850. Like a number of other names along this coast, it is a very late record, obtained from a man who in old age was remembering the social situation of the 1860s-80s. By 1860 most of the Kurna-speaking people from Adelaide to the Fleurieu had died or been dispersed, and the remnant submerged in the families of Ngarrindjeri speakers from south-east of the range, many of them no doubt relatives. This process had already begun by the early 1840s, especially when families and warriors from Encounter Bay (and eventually from the Lower Murray Lakes too) came north repeatedly as allies of the 'Adelaide tribe', to defend Adelaide territory against invasion by the people of the 'Moorundie' (Blanchetown) area in alliance with the 'Mount Barker tribe'.²⁹

²⁷ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], 'Descriptive Tours through Part of District C', *Observer* 13/4/1844: 8a-b. See also PNS 4.03.03/03 Kanyanyapilla; 4.03.03/01 Tarniyandingga; and 4.04.02/01 Piltangga.

²⁸ See e.g. <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com>; <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com/ecological-history-outline/>; <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com/cultural-history/>; <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com/cultural-regeneration/>; <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com/architectural-expressions/>; <https://lot50kanyanyapilla.com/some-photos/>.

²⁹ For more about the Moorundie invasion 1841-4 see Tom Gara 1998, 'The Life and Times of Mullawirraburka', in Simpson & Hercus (ed) 1998, *History In Portraits*, Canberra, Aboriginal History Monograph 6: 116-121; and my history *Feet On the Fleurieu, Language On the Land* (in progress), especially the appendix 'Captain Peter's alleged battle at the River Torrens'.

‘Waldeila’ is therefore a Ngarrindjeri slant on a locality which already had a Kurna name in those bygone times. We know what it was: *Kanyanyapilla*,³⁰ recorded as “Cun-yun-ya-pel-la” in 1839 by survey worker Louis Piesse, who located it precisely on Section 203.

This Section lies between the two ‘Waldeila’ archaeological sites, 650 metres southeast of Waldeila-1 and contiguous with the southwest boundary of Waldeila-2.

Granted that only certain limited parts of the area have been examined archaeologically, and that one of the possible meanings of *Kanyanyapilla* is ‘many earth ovens’, there is a high likelihood that in pre-contact times the whole area was used for camping and feasting, with suitable ground available for dancing, and that it was all referred to under the one name *Kanyanyapilla*.

But it is also possible that in post-contact times the Ngarrindjeri travellers used ‘Waldeila’ to refer to a more limited part of the area, when other parts of it had been taken over for farming. But if so, it is not clear which parts were Waldilla, since nobody investigated this during the lifetime of Milerum, Karlowan or any others who may have used them.

THE NAME ‘WALDEILA’:

‘Waldeila’ as a name is located only approximately, and its Aboriginal authority is only from a Ngarrindjeri tradition three generations after first contact. Was this name a purely Ngarrindjeri creation? Or does it preserve a Kurna original, perhaps in an adapted form?

We have only the one source and two recorded spellings: Tindale and “*Waldeila (Walteila)*”. He marks a stress on the first syllable, and recognizes that the *d* might equally well be a *t*.³¹ His diphthong “*ei*” certainly represents a variant pronunciation of either *e* or *i*; in Kurna this could only be *i*.³²

‘ILLA’:

³⁰ See PNS 4.03.03/03 *Kanyanyapilla*.

³¹ To mark the beginning of a stressed syllable Tindale used an accent sign which I transcribe here as ` . In Aboriginal languages there is no semantic distinction between the sound *d* and *t*; they are variant pronunciations of the same thing.

³² The vowels *e* and *i* exist in Ngarrindjeri as separate phonemes, but in Kurna they are ‘the same’, in the same way as *t* and *d*. Pronunciation of vowels could also vary, especially in songs. Cp. Tindale’s spelling of Karlowan’s “*Ka`reildun*”, which (in the light of Berndt’s records of the same man) represents *K`rildun* (see PNS 3/10 *Krildhung*); also Tindale’s spellings of common Ngarrindjeri words in the texts of Milerum’s songs, where he sometimes spells *enggul* as “*einggol*”, and *inggi* as “*einggi*” (Tindale 1937, ‘Native Songs of the SE of SA, Part 1’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of SA* 61: 112; Tindale 1941 *ibid.* Part 2, 65(2): 242-3).

At first sight one might suppose that this *Waldilla* or *Waltilla* is in Kurna language, using the less common Kurna Locative suffix *-illa* ('at, place of') as in 'Yankalilla' (*Yarnkalya* + *illa* > *Yarnkalyilla*). This would replace the root word's final vowel with *i*, and the name would then signify 'place of *Wald_*' (whose final vowel is unknown and could be *a*, *i* or *u/o*).

Before embarking on a rather complex discussion of other possible derivations, we note that etymology is not always relevant to a place-name. 'Waldilla' could be 'just a name' in Ngarrindjeri (or in Kurna), with no dictionary meaning (cp. 'Rome', 'London').

But *-illa* makes the probability high that it is a reminiscence of a Kurna word with a glossable root, part of an adaptation in which they preserved some Kurna language unwittingly.³³ As a word-ending *-illa* is almost completely unknown in records of the Ngarrindjeri language.³⁴ How did Milerum or Karlowan (and presumably their predecessors in the 1880s) come to use it in this name? Had they heard it and were reproducing or imitating it, probably without understanding it? There are no other known examples of Milerum giving a place-name which ends in *-illa*.³⁵ Karlowan seems not to have recognized its meaning in Kurna place-names when he heard them.³⁶

The Ngarrindjeri travellers who taught Milerum had remembered that campsites here had a Kurna name ending with *-illa*. This suggests that they were remembering a real Kurna name – perhaps even trying to reconstruct it – without understanding its grammar or retaining all its details, among them the meaning of its root. Perhaps it was the quite different name *Kanyanyapilla* and they added their own first morpheme; or perhaps they were adapting a real Kurna root word.

'WALD_ / WALT_' IN NGARRINDJERI:

The root of 'Waldilla' is *wald_* or *walt_*, with an unknown last vowel. What can we deduce about it?

The Ngarrindjeri language has "*walde*, hot" in Taplin, and what looks like the same word in Meyer: "*wälde*, small species of kangaroo called wallaby". Right from the start sometime before 1941,

³³ Ramindjeri man Ephraim Tripp unwittingly preserved in his language a known Kurna name. To him it was "*Witawatang*" at Seacliff Par; but it was derived from Kurna *Wita-wartingga*, although Tripp did not know that form or its meaning: see PNS 2/21 Witawattingga (Seacliff Park).

³⁴ In Ngarrindjeri one can express plurals by the suffix *-ar*; so *ilar* could occur as the plural of words like *kondili* / *kondilar* 'whale(s)' and a few others, none of which resemble *wald*. Otherwise the only known word ending in *ila[r]* is *minmilar* 'stump of a tree'.

³⁵ For Milerum 'Yankalilla' was *Yangkalyawangk* (Tindale 1941 *op. cit. ibid.*: 242), as it had been for the Ramindjeri when Meyer was recording their language in 1840-3 (HAE Meyer 1843, *Vocabulary of the Language Spoken by the Aborigines...*, Adelaide, James Allen: 50).

³⁶ In processing a folk etymology of 'Tortachilla' (a recorded variant of *Tartatyilla*) which already has the Locative *-illa*, Karlowan added the other and more common Locative which he knew, giving the extremely unlikely word "*Turtotjalangga*" – allegedly 'dung earth place' (Tindale annotated map, Hundred of Willunga, AA 338/24/97). On the same map there is another case involving *-illa*: he gave the name "*Kunanjapilba*", almost certainly as a response to Tindale quoting Piesse's 1844 'Cunyunayapella' (*Kanyanyapilla*); and he located it in a quite different place which we know is incorrect for the Kurna original (see PNS 4.03.03/03 *Kanyanyapilla*).

Tindale's records assert as fact that 'Waldeila' means "*wallaby place*". To most of us who are not linguists the case has appeared watertight. But was it Milerum or Karlowan who said this, or was it Tindale – for he knew Meyer's vocabulary and had consulted it?³⁷ And whoever said it, is the gloss credible?

DISSECTING NAMES:

Although one gets the opposite impression from Tindale's index cards, maps and publications, my own impression is that his Aboriginal informants rarely added analytical 'derivations' to the place-names they gave. In the case of *Witawatang* Tindale acknowledged that Milerum did not "*dissect*" the name, but Tindale himself certainly did;³⁸ and this was probably true in general.³⁹ Karlowan did 'dissect' a name at least once, strictly in his own language;⁴⁰ but in most cases where he gave Tindale a Ngarrindjeri version of a Kaurna place-name, the folk *etymology* or 'derivation' is probably Tindale's.⁴¹

Forms which combine a Ngarrindjeri root with a Kaurna suffix are hybrids which would not be used by speakers of either tongue in the times when both languages were in regular use and many people on the borders knew both languages. Although Tindale seems to have been chronically unaware of this issue,⁴² we cannot treat *-illa* as a Kaurna suffix without eliminating *waldi*-wallaby from our list of possible derivations for the root. This kind of hybrid is impossible except as a post-contact reconstruction, most likely created by Tindale himself from his limited knowledge of the language literature.

Perhaps the Ngarrindjeri people had their own reasons to think that the place had something to do with wallabies, and used their own word to express this. But we have no evidence for this.

³⁷ On the same Willunga map Tindale cites Meyer for the name "*Tainbarang*".

³⁸ See Tindale's *Ramindjeri* vocabulary card 'wīta' (though it is a *Kaurna* word, as the card also says): "... *gum tree, peppermint... Compare name 'Wīta`wātaŋ. Milerum learned names during walks to Adelaide to receive blankets – Presumably Milerum did not dissect the name*" (n.d., in AA338/7/1/17). Cp. PNS 2/21 *Witawattangga* (Seacliff Park), 2/22 *Wituwatangk* (Brighton), and 5.04.01/08 *Witawattangga* (Rapid Head).

³⁹ According to philologist JRR Tolkien (who had "*specialty studied*" nomenclature), this is true of all languages: "*Even where a place-name is fully analysable by speakers of the language (usually not the case) this is not as a rule done*" (*The Letters of JRR Tolkien* (ed. H Carpenter, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co 1981: 250-1). Not many of us think about the etymology of 'Erindale' or even 'Longwood', let alone 'Craigburn' (suburbs of Adelaide).

⁴⁰ See Berndt on the *Ramindjeri* meaning of *Yangkalyawangk*, gleaned from Karlowan (Berndt & Berndt 1993: 311); and my comments on it (PNS 5.02.01/02 *Yarnkalyilla*).

⁴¹ Cp. Tindale's *Ngarrindjeri* 'Tarangk' as an equivalent for *Kaurna* 'Tarangga', both allegedly meaning 'middle place' (see PNS 4.03.01/02 *Tarangga*).

⁴² In the case of 'Waldeila' the gloss itself is circumstantial evidence supporting the case that it was he who gave the 'meaning' and not his informants. Cp. the place-name 'Brukunga', which Tindale almost certainly invented himself from *Ngarrindjeri* *bruki* and *Kaurna* *ngga*, associating it with the pyrites mine there and the story of Tjilbruki's fire-making. If it was a genuinely 'Kaurna-fied' word it would be *Brukingga* (see PNS 6/23 *Brukunga*).

'WALD_ / WALT_' IN KAURNA:

We cannot reconstruct the Kurna original (if there was one) with any certainty.

In Kurna we have *wolta* (*waltha*), 'wild turkey'; *worlta* (*warlta*), 'warm, hot'; and *wāltu* (*warltu*), a word with diverse meanings such as 'nape of the neck', 'space between two things (e.g. a valley)', and 'line, stripe, row'. Do we have here a 'turkey place', a 'hot place', or a 'valley place'? From a cultural or geographical viewpoint any of these could be credible.

But they fall down linguistically. *Waldilla*, as it stands, does not fit Kurna rules of construction and so cannot be a normal Kurna word. For *-illa* can only be used with root words of three syllables. *Waldi* (in whatever language) has only two; with a Locative it would have to be *Waldingga*.⁴³

The Dual case-ending *-rla* ('two'), which could legitimize the number of syllables, was another piece of Kurna grammar which Milerum's tradition would not have known about. But it is ruled out here because there is no matching vocabulary. Since the Dual does preserve the final vowel of the root, a hypothetical *Walti-rla* ('two *walti*') would require a Kurna *walti* to give us the *i*, and no such word is known.

GRAMMATICAL POSSIBILITIES:

There might still be a known original Kurna word for *walt_* if we allow for some more advanced grammar, and some extra linguistic adaptation on the way.

For example: if the original word contained repeated consonants, the Kurna people themselves might abridge it by dropping an unstressed syllable to simplify the flow;⁴⁴ thus leaving the way open for Ngarrindjeri visitors to adapt a *three*-syllable name rather than the full four-syllable version. In this way *Warltatilla* ('place of the hot season *warltati*'), might be abridged to *Warlt'illa*. But this meaning seems unlikely in a place-name.

If we allow a second adaptation – the reversal of consonants in an unfamiliar cluster or pre-stop such as *dl* – then *Wadlalilla*, 'place of the bulrush *wadlalla*' (*Juncus* or *Typha*), might be transformed into *Wald'illa*.⁴⁵ As we saw above, this meaning is confirmed to some extent by the presence of bulrushes in the reed swamp here, an important source of food and technologies; but I

⁴³ Root words of two syllables must retain their final vowel and use the Locative *nnga*: e.g. *parri* > *parringga*; *patpa* > *Patpangga*; *witu* > *Witungga*

⁴⁴ This is a known process, with many examples known in Kurna: e.g. in eliding a syllable in a common suffix (*pudna-wappendi* > *pudna-'pendi*); or the possible Reduplicative glosses of *Kanyanyapilla*, in which *kanya-kanya* becomes *kanya'nya* (PNS 4.03.03/03).

⁴⁵ Reversal of consonants in a cluster (metathesis): e.g. some people pronounce *Nuriootpa* as 'Nurioopta'; and the Kurna place-name *Mudlangga* (near Port Adelaide) was remembered by some Ngarrindjeri people in the 20th century as *Muldang* (see PNS 8/06 *Mudlangga*). *Wadlalilla* (like *Wadlharlilla* below) depends on the principle that speakers of Ngarrindjeri would be likely to reverse the Kurna *dl* to *ld* because their language does not use the pre-stop *dl*.



am told that the opinion of local Natural resource Manager is that there is no record of a large stand of bulrush in the locality; the Common Reed (*Phragmites*) is the dominant species.⁴⁶

There might even be a dim possibility of returning Tindale's marsupial, since one of the Kurna words for 'wallaby' is *wadla* (*wadlha*). Ngarrindjeri travellers might have heard *Wadlha-rla* ('two wallabies'), mistaken the unstressed second vowel for an *i*, and also reversed the cluster, to form *Wald'ila*. Or they might have heard *Wadlharl'-illa* ('place of two wallabies'), reversed the cluster (> *Waldarlilla*) and then abridged it (> *Wald'illa*, like *Wart'illa* above).⁴⁷ Although it is not likely that a place would be named after wallabies simply because they were found there, even in large numbers, a place might be part of an unrecorded Wallaby Dreaming.⁴⁸ As we noted above, the nearby McLaren Plains were noted for emus rather than wallabies.

If we pursue these grammatical ideas a bit further, the unabbreviated Kurna original might also have been *waltha-rl'illa*, 'place of two turkeys' (possibly implying a Turkey Dreaming); or *wartu-rl'illa*, 'place of two spaces or valleys' (but there is only one valley here); or even *wardli-rl'illa*, 'place of two huts' (if two huts occurred in a Dreaming story).

There is plenty of choice here. But I know no other Kurna example of such abridgement of a place-name ending with *illa*. These speculations are stretching the data a long way. They remain guesses, not facts, and they are the more doubtful because the whole area was almost certainly known by the quite different Kurna name *Kanyanyapilla* in times of first contact.

So the *name* 'Waldeila' remains an enigmatic Ngarrindjeri word from post-contact times. Its cultural significance and its meaning (if any) are unknown – unless we find more information, better interpretation, or some very persuasive connections between Kurna knowledge, the locality, and one of the derivations.

End of Summary

⁴⁶ Gavin Malone p.c. 3/7/2016. "In 1844 Piesse referred to reeds only rather than bulrushes in the locality. *Phragmites* is more tolerant to dry periods and water flows have changed dramatically in the region since settlement. If wetter in the past there may have been more *Typha*" (Malone p.c. 23/8/2016).

⁴⁷ Amery even considers it possible that the Ngarrindjeri "*walde, wallaby*" recorded by Meyer in 1843 could already have been "*wadlha borrowed from Kurna and assimilated into Ngarrindjeri*" (Rob Amery p.c. email 29/6/2016). There would have been a number of words in both languages for different species and genders of wallaby. Those on record include *pargi, tulatji* and *maikari* in Ngarrindjeri; and in Kurna *kunadna* ('female wallaby'), *kurnta* ('brush kangaroo'), and *wadlha* ('wallaby').

⁴⁸ They could have been Tammar Wallabies: "*The SA mainland form of the tammar wallaby once occurred on Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, the Mid North and Adelaide Plains, and the Fleurieu Peninsula east to the Murray River. By the 1930s, they had become extinct from mainland SA*" (Department for Environment and Heritage 2004, *Translocation Proposal: Re-introduction of Mainland SA Tammar Wallaby to Innes National Park*, Adelaide. Thanks to Gavin Malone for this item). We cannot be sure which species were meant by each of the three Kurna words for 'wallaby'.