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Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.03.02/04

TATATYILLA and 'TORTACHILLA'

(last edited: 15.12.2016)

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This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.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



TATATYILLA and 'TORTACHILLA'

(last edited: 15.12.2016)

Abstract

Tatatyilla is the Kurna name for a site centred around a “well” or waterhole in Willunga Creek at Aldinga town, north of the Aldinga Arts Eco Village. It was recorded as “Tar-ta-chil-la” and “Tartachilla” by survey labourer Louis Piesse during the first surveys of the area in 1839, and he must have obtained it from some of the Aboriginal men who were employed in the Aldinga surveys that year. He located it at “Section 399, District C” (now Hundred of Willunga).

No meaning is known for the name except its Locative suffix *illa* ‘at, place of’.

There was a “Well” on the creek here when the surveyors first sketched the Section in 1839, and a line of trees still signals the presence of reliable water. The vicinity was apparently a campsite, probably used by Aboriginal travellers as a water stop on their way between the *Ngangkiparingga* crossing (Onkaparinga ford) to the north,¹ *Wilangga* (Willunga) to the east,² the coastal water sources *Tirranangku* and *Ruwuru* 2 km downstream at Port Willunga,³ and southward to the high pass near *Kurtandilla* (Sellicks Hill).⁴

Almost as soon as the name was passed on to the surveyors, they shifted it four km northwest to use it for their trig station ‘Tartachilla’ on Section 378, at the prominent cliff now called Blanche Point.⁵ At some stage later in the 19th century one of the Survey Department’s draftsmen misspelled and mapped the trig name as ‘Tortachilla’. This version passed into local use as the name of the whole area of sandstone cliffs and hills between Maslin Beach and Port Willunga.

The version ‘Tartachilla’, re-spelled as ‘Tatachilla’, was used for the road leading to the trig area, and then as the name of JG Kelly’s farm on that road; the farm became Tatachilla Vineyard and Winery. The current suburb is named after it.

There is no linguistic or historical credibility in the claims (originating with Tindale and his Ngarrindjeri-speaking informant Albert Karlowan) that ‘Tortachilla’ means ‘red earth’ and ‘red earth

¹ See PNS 4.02/04 Ngangkiparingga.

² See PNS 4.04.02/02 Wilangga.

³ See PNS 4.02/02 Tirranangku and /03 Ruwuru; 4.04.01/03 Wakondilla.

⁴ See PNS 4.04/03/03 Kurtandilla.

⁵ The precise location of the trig station has been moved several times since then.

ending',⁶ or 'red sandstone bluff'.⁷ These are descriptions of the site, based on accepting 'Tortachilla' as a valid Aboriginal place-name, which it is not.

Coordinates	Latitude -35.263728°, Longitude 138.479104° [nominal centre of line of big trees in creek]
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Language Information

Meaning	Unknown
Etymology	<i>tatatyV</i> [meaning unknown] + <i>illa</i> 'at'
Notes	A place-name need not have a dictionary meaning.
Language Family	Thura-Yura: 'Kaurna'
KWP Former Spelling	Tatatyilla
KWP New Spelling 2010	Tatatyilla
Phonemic Spelling	/thaTatyila/
Syllabification	"Tata-tyilla":
Pronunciation tips	Stress the first syllable. Secondary stress on 2 nd syllable. Every 'a' as in Maori 'haka' (not as in 'cat').

Main source evidence

Date	Sep 1839
Original source text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Well brakish" [marked on Section 399, Hundred of Willunga, District C (= western part of today's Aldinga town)] - "Valley / water brakish" [marked along creek on Sections 391-2 to 399] - "present track" [over-written by] "proposed road to Adelaide" [marked on Sections 394-5 & 399-400, on two versions of a north-south road (= today's Main South Rd & Old Main South Rd)] - "proposed road to Willunga" [marked on eastward road through Sections 440, 401, 229 (= today's Flour Mill Rd)] - [two east-west tracks marked faintly, one on each side of the creek, joining in the east at Section 399 (Old Coach Rd), and extending west to 396]
Reference	Richard Counsel 1839, Field Book 102, Hundred of Willunga: 37.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

⁶ Tindale annotated map AA 338/24/97; Tindale Kaurna place-name card [630] in AA 338/7/1/12; GH Manning 2006, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia: From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill*, Modbury: Gould Books: 57, 424.

⁷ A Pridmore 1949, *The Rich Valley: An Account of the Early Life of McLaren Vale*, McLaren Vale Institute Committee: 28.



Date	Oct 1839
Original source text	" Tar-ta-chil-la – section 399, district C".
Reference	Louis Piesse, letter 18 Oct 1839, in <i>SA Colonist</i> Vol. 1 No.19, 1840: 296.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kaurana survey guides employed on 'Aldinga survey' 1839

Date	n.d. [?1839-40]
Original source text	[on bottom diagram] - "Sea" - " Tartachilla " [trig station triangle, at extreme NW corner of part of Section 378 (= tip of today's Blanche Point); a bearing marked from here toward 'McLeods Hill']
Reference	Ide n.d., Field Book 28 Hundreds of Encounter Bay, Myponga, Willunga & Yankalilla, GNU: no pagination [p.3b].
Informants credited	Corporal Henry Ide of survey team from Royal Sappers & Miners
Informants uncredited	

Date	[1839] / 1840
Original source text	- "Swampy valley" [along Willunga Creek across Section 391 & into 392, i.e. to a short way east of Bowering Hill Rd] - "W ^r Brackich" [sic] [on Section 399] - "Well" [marked near east end of Section 399 = about 250m west of Old Coach Rd]
Reference	John Arrowsmith map 1/9/1840 'Country South of Adelaide...', London, Arrowsmith.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1843
Original source text	" Tartachilla " [first 'a' is badly formed; could be misread as " Tortachilla "]
Reference	Plan 1/31, [Hindmarsh County (Yankalilla) Forrest Origl 1843], GNU.
Informants credited	Sgt. William Forrest of survey team from Royal Sappers & Miners
Informants uncredited	

Date	Nov 1843
Original source text	" Tarta^chilla " [trig station name hand-written on map]
Reference	Plan 1/7, 'Diagram No. 2 South District November 1843' [Cape Jervis to Murray Mouth – Forrest Origl 1843].
Informants credited	"Wm Forrest Serjeant Royal Sappers & Miners / 1 st November 1843"
Informants uncredited	



<i>Date</i>	1844
<i>Original source text</i>	<p>"I must now strongly advise the tourist to take a walk up Mount Terrible for the commanding prospect that can be obtained from its summit... To the right-hand the south side of the Mount Lofty Range, and the whole country between spread as a carpet, dotted here and there with a farm or homestead; the coast can be discerned all along—the boat harbour of Tartarchilla, the mouth of the Onkaparinga, Holdfast Bay, and the Port... Returning <i>[from Mt Terrible]</i> and keeping more towards the coast, we cross the plain called Aldinga (properly Ngaltingga)... Keeping along the plain four miles brings us to the grassy gully called Tartarchilla. There is no surface water in this gully in the summer, but there is a considerable underground drainage which may be demonstrated by the fact that on a well being sunk it overflowed, and kept full to overflowing even during the drought of last year. The country in this neighbourhood is generally lightly timbered with She Oak (<i>Casuarinae</i>), the Honeysuckle (<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>), prevailing in any little hollows or gullies.</p> <p>The next gully is Cunyanyapella, 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, and it is superior to the last-mentioned gully of Tartarchilla."</p>
<i>Reference</i>	'L.P.' [Louis Piesse] 1844, 'Descriptive Tour Through Part of District C', <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 8a.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	Kaurna survey guides employed on 'Aldinga survey' 1839

<i>Date</i>	1873
<i>Original source text</i>	" Tortachilla " <i>[trig triangle southeast of today's Blanche Point on Sec 381]</i>
<i>Reference</i>	map 'Hundred of Willunga' 1:63,360, July 1873, State Library of SA H830bje.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

<i>Date</i>	1909
<i>Original source text</i>	" Tortachilla " <i>[place-name printed on base map immediately below 'Blanche Point'; no trig station]</i>
<i>Reference</i>	Tindale annotated map 'Hundred of Willunga', Surveyor General's Office 1909, SA Museum AA338/24/97.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

Discussion: A MISPLACED PLACE:

In an Aboriginal sense, *Tatatyilla* is actually at 'Aldinga' town, and the original Aldinga, *Ngaltingga*, is mostly in the suburbs now called Aldinga Beach, Sellicks Beach and Sellicks Hill. Here is the story.

THE ABORIGINAL PLACE *TATATYILLA* AT FIRST CONTACT:

By mid-1839 the first surveys were underway around the Willunga Basin and Aldinga plain. In August an Adelaide newspaper, briefly mentioning some examples of the "progress made in bringing the natives to a state of civilization", noted that "several of them are also employed in the Survey Department at Yankalilla and Aldingha (Aldinga), who receive rations and pay the same as white laborers".⁸

One European in the team during these months in the bush of 'District C' south of Adelaide was Louis Piesse. On October 18th at their "camp, *Coortandillah, near Aldinga*".⁹ he sent to the editor of the *Adelaide Guardian* a Kurna vocabulary and list of place-names, undoubtedly gleaned from his Aboriginal guides. One of the place-names was "Tar-ta-chil-la", which he defined as "section 399, district C".¹⁰

Section 399 is a 592-metre square which now contains the old town of Aldinga. The survey team's draftsman was one Richard Counsel, who left many detailed field sketch maps including one of this area along the lower reach of what is now called Willunga Creek.¹¹ Near the coast he marked "Valley; water brakish" [sic], from near the mouth to a short distance past today's Bowering Hill Road. On Section 399 half a km upstream he marked a "Well; Brakish".¹² The first maps based on his work refined these details respectively to "Swampy valley" and "Well; W^f Brackich" [sic].¹³ Today a line of trees along this part of the creek on Section 399 still signals the presence of reliable water.

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

⁹ He meant 'Aldinga Plains', not the later site of the town: see PNS 4.4.1/1 Ngaltingga.

¹⁰ The letter has survived as a reprint in the SA *Colonist* Vol. 1 No.19. 1840: 296.

¹¹ Willunga Creek has often been called 'Aldinga Creek'. The two names reflect two different ways of seeing it: one recognizing its sources to the east, the other and older, its significance for southward-bound travellers (long before Aldinga town was founded: see PNS 4.04.01/01 Ngaltingga).

¹² Counsel 1839, Field Book 102, GNU: 37.

¹³ FH Burslem [1839], 'Plan of the country south of Adelaide...', Adelaide, Survey Office, C236, State Library of SA; J McLaren 1840, 'Country South of Adelaide...', London, Arrowsmith (and later versions).



Counsel's sketch shows a dotted track running north and south through Section 394 and 400 just east of 399. A little way north on Section 199 this is marked as "present track", meaning 'the track which settlers have already been using'; but we know from his other maps that still further north, around the ford at Old Noarlunga, he and his team identified several parts of the same route as a "native track".¹⁴

In the southeastern corner of 394, this through-route crosses two other dotted tracks running along both sides of the creek line from the east.¹⁵ The one following the northern bank crosses the creek approximately at the site of the current little bridge on Lot 2, and joins the second track on the southern bank around the creek at [Township Lane] just east of [Old Coach Rd and about 400 metres from the 'Well' on 399. The implication is that the east-west route then continued along the southern bank through 392 to 391. The details are faint and obscured by stipples representing the swamp, but there seems to be a track which runs west down the creek before turning south in 396 (just west of Bowering Hill Rd), towards the place of the undersea spring *Tirranangku* and the beach spring *Ruwuru*.¹⁶

Thus the well on 399, though 'brackish', was probably a water stop for Aboriginal travellers approaching *Tirranangku* and *Ruwuru* from the east; and also for those journeying between the Onkaparinga ford and the pass over the range at *Kurtandilla* on Sellicks Hill.¹⁷ Albert Karlowan must have mentioned a campsite there, presumably one that he himself had used in the decades around the turn of the 20th century; for Ronald Berndt's map of the area shows an "Aldinga camp" on an east-west track from Willunga (presumably down White's Gully [Willunga Creek] as in Counsel), one of a number of "Traditional Aboriginal tracks" shown on the map.¹⁸ But the book contains no detail about this.

In 1844 Piesse wrote a brief description of this locality which gives us an insight into its ecology before it was developed. As travellers return northward from Mt Terrible (Sellicks Hill),

keeping more towards the coast... four miles brings us to the grassy gully called Tartarchilla. There is no surface water in this gully in the summer, but there is a considerable underground drainage which may be demonstrated by the fact that on a well being sunk it overflowed, and kept full to overflowing even during the drought of last year. The country in this neighbourhood

¹⁴ See McLaren 1840.

¹⁵ These two tracks run near the southern boundary of 394 and 395, which is today's Little Rd and Township Lane.

¹⁶ See PNS 4.03.02/02 and /03.

¹⁷ See PNS 4.04.03/03.

¹⁸ Berndt & Berndt 1993, *A World That Was*: 330. Though the scale is too small to show anything more than approximations, we see two north-south tracks, one running along the coast through Port Willunga, another from Mt Compass through Willunga to McLaren vale; and an east-west track from Willunga to Port Willunga. On the latter is a dot labelled "Aldinga camp", at the site of the town. Cp. p.20 (though here the geography is still not detailed, and names like 'Aldinga' seem to be used very loosely).



is generally lightly timbered with She Oak (*Casuarinae*), the Honeysuckle (*Banksia integrifolia*), prevailing in any little hollows or gullies.

Integrifolia is no longer counted as native to South Australia,¹⁹ but if Piesse's observation is accurate, he provides evidence that once it did grow here.

The Aboriginal functions probably centred around the 'Well'.

In Counsel and the first maps its location is not marked precisely; it could be anywhere along the creek between about 130 and 400 metres west of the Section boundary (which is now called Old Coach Road).

Piesse was speaking of a well which had been 'sunk' by colonists in the three years between the survey and his essay; and he did not specify that it was the same as the one on Section 399 which he had already found there, perhaps even in a form improved by Aborigines. However, since his hypothetical traveller in 1844 was 'keeping more towards the coast', there can be little doubt that the two wells were in much the same place, and that both were using the same geological formation which ensured 'a considerable underground drainage' even during a drought. A thorough study of the hydrology of the underground water systems of the Willunga Basin would no doubt be able to pinpoint the exact location of the pre-colonial well.²⁰ It may be that in better years than 1839 it was not 'brackish' even at the surface.

The location avoids the 'swampy valley downstream, provides for sheltered campsites on the southern side of the creek, and has a nearby hill for a lookout.

But the original reality of the place *Tatatyilla* has been buried under multiple layers of colonial re-invention.

THE TRIG STATION 'TORTACHILLA':

Those who consult the work of surveyors, for example on the website of the SA government's Land Services Group,²¹ may have heard of the trig station called 'Tortachilla' on the cliffs near the southern end of Maslin Beach, or of the surrounding locality of the same name. The name 'Tortachilla' originated as a mistaken transcription of some draftsman's hand-written 'Tartachilla'.

¹⁹ See maps at http://www.florabank.org.au/lucid/key/species%20navigator/media/html/Banksia_integrifolia.htm and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banksia_integrifolia [5/12/16].

²⁰ My own preliminary observations so far have been mainly on GoogleEarth, from which a likely site might be the tiny watercourse which can be seen still emerging on the south side of the creek, almost due north of Kennedia Walk. See also the 'Port Willunga Formation aquifer' in Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board, 2007, *Water Allocation Plan for the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area*, online via home page <http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtlofyranges/water/water-allocation-plans/mclaren-vale> [3/6/15].

²¹ <http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/>

In late 1839 a second wave of surveyors – from a regiment of Royal Sappers and Miners – arrived to replace McLaren’s team, and they made the earliest available maps of trig stations.²² A field sketch by Corporal Henry Ide shows the “Tartachilla” trig station on Section 378 at the extreme tip of what is now Blanche Point, and it occurs again in 1843 on maps derived from the work of Sgt William Forrest.²³ There are two sketches of it and its surroundings as they were in November 1850.²⁴

Significantly, on one of these early hand-written internal maps the name ‘Tartachilla’ could easily be misread as ‘Tortachilla’.²⁵ Later in the century the name ‘Tortachilla’ began to appear on maps published by the Survey Department. Somebody had mis-copied the name; the error went unnoticed and became the official name of the trig station.²⁶ Eventually it went into general usage and became a place-name for the area around the station,²⁷ and briefly the name of an electorate.²⁸

It seems that around 1908 some of the Lands Department people still knew it was ‘Tartachilla’ and regarded ‘Tortachilla’ as incorrect;²⁹ and that for a brief period around 1910-20 the Survey Department restored the original spelling.³⁰ But somehow this knowledge did not become part of the 1937 military aerial survey, and all subsequent maps have ‘Tortachilla’. Meanwhile, the station itself was shifted around according to the current needs of the Department.³¹

This locality has attracted international attention from photographers and geologists for its majestic multi-coloured sandstone cliffs, coastal panoramas and bare grasslands. We should not assume that the baldness here is the result of denudation by farming. Piesse described the gully of

²² Trig (trigonometrical) stations are essential structures erected on high landmarks to enable surveyors to take accurate bearings from far away. The Royal Sappers and Miners under new Surveyor-General Frome arrived in SA in September 1839 (James Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in South Australia*, Adelaide, Wigg & Son 1899, 1:53a).

²³ H. Ide n.d. [1839?], Field Book 28 [no pagination: p.3b], GNU (exact location deduced from measurements); W Forrest 1843, ‘Trig Points South of Adelaide’, Plan 1/32, GNU (which marks the trig station without naming it).

²⁴ Edward Snell (ed. Tom Griffiths) 1988, *The Life and Adventures of Edward Snell*, North Ryde, NSW, Angus & Robertson: 159, 166-7.

²⁵ Forrest 1843, Plan 1/31, GNU.

²⁶ The earliest example I have found is a map of the Hundred of Willunga in the State Library’s collection: H830bje, scale 1 inch to 1 mile, dated July 1873.

²⁷ On the 1909 map used by Tindale, ‘Tortachilla’ was a place-name but no trig was marked (AA 338/24/97).

²⁸ A Pridmore 1949, *The Rich Valley*: 65-6.

²⁹ A newspaper’s ‘Answers to Correspondents’ in 1908 reads: “*Tartachilla, not Tortachilla, is the name of a hill and a trigonometrical station, but the meaning is not on record*” (*Evening Journal* 22/7/1908: 2h, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/208636891/22433312>).

³⁰ Tindale base maps ‘Southern Portion of South Australia, 1912’, AA 338/15/2; and [central SA] n.d. [before 1920?], AA 338/16/2.

³¹ First it was shifted a few yards south into Section 381 (Hundred of Willunga, July 1873, SLSA). For a while two separate stations ‘Tortachilla’ and ‘Blanche Point’ were mapped (Hd of Willunga 1884, Plan 79/39, GNU). In the mid-20th century it went north to the cliff above Maslin Beach (‘Mount Barker, 4 miles to 1 inch, 2nd Edition’, 1942, SLSA), and remains there now (see <http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/>).

Tatatyilla as “grassy”, not scrubby. Counsel’s 1839 field books and the maps arising from them regularly show the forestation in meticulous detail, but on these sections relatively few trees are marked, and none at all along a 3-400-metre coastal strip from Maslin Creek to Willunga Creek.

In 1850 Edward Snell bought Section 378 and wrote in his diary that it

*appeared to be pretty good ground, bare of trees... I made the following sketches which will give a tolerable idea of the scenery of the section and neighbourhood. The cluster of posts shewn in the 1st and 3rd views is on the section and is a station put up for the government trigonometrical survey.*³²

In his two sketches of the trig pole, it stands surrounded by a low circle of posts, in lonely splendour amid a bare cliff-top landscape containing only two stunted trees.³³ Its name was not yet a common enough usage that he mentioned it, even onsite, though the station was on his property, had been well established for about ten years, and he himself had been a surveyor on Yorke Peninsula a few months earlier.

THE WANDERINGS OF ‘TATACHILLA’: THE ROAD, THE WINERY, AND FURTHER:

Independently of ‘Tortachilla’, spellings which used ‘a’ for the first vowel wandered in a different direction.

Piesse had publicized twice the name ‘Tar-ta-chil-la’ and its true location at Section 399 in the “grassy gully”. Even he by 1844 may perhaps have already been generalizing the location to the whole gully, and he certainly applied it also to the “boat harbour” two km downstream at the mouth of Willunga Creek.³⁴

Until the 1850s the only name in use by the colony to identify any place between ‘McLaren’s vale’ and the Aldinga plains and west of Willunga town (1840) was the ‘Tartachilla’ trig station. We would therefore predict that the road west from the Vale would soon be ‘the road to Tartachilla’, then abbreviated to ‘the Tartachilla road’, then simply ‘Tartachilla Road’. This seems to have happened, and historians of survey and road development may be able to find out when.

³² Snell diary 15 Nov 1850, Snell (ed. Griffiths) 1988: 166. Snell had noted of his Section that “*I am told it is just about where the new pier for Port Willunga is to be built*” (p.159). No doubt he was riding the wave of the new town development.

³³ Snell 1988: 166-7, sketches: ‘*My 80 acre Section / View looking down the Gulf*’ and ‘*View from the bight of the Bay*’ (i.e. from the cliffs at Maslin Beach, looking south).

³⁴ Piesse 1844b: 8a.

The familiar spelling ‘Tatachilla’ encourages us all to pronounce it incorrectly to rhyme with the modern English slang ‘tatt’.³⁵ This appears to be a late arrival, and we are not quite sure where it was first applied.

The earliest records of it that I know are references in local newspapers. In 1889 there were “repairs to be done near Tatachilla”, somewhere unspecified in the District Council of Willunga.³⁶ This was obviously a locality name already in use, perhaps for decades; but we do not know exactly where it was, whether it referred to the coastal cliff area or to the “celebrated Tatachilla vineyard” which first appeared in a newspaper three years later.³⁷

In 1887 John George Kelly bought a property around the site of the current Tatachilla Lutheran School, west of McLaren Vale. This farm became the Tatachilla Vineyard and Winery. Family and wine historians may be able to trace the spelling earlier in its story. The currently write-ups available online do not seriously investigate when Kelly first used the *name*, but it must have been in 1887 or very soon after.³⁸ In the perspective of first contact and the recording of original place-names, this is a very late date. Most likely he, like ‘Wirra Wirra’ in his own time and many owners after them, wanted an evocative Aboriginal name and appropriated the nearest one he could find.³⁹ If the track past his frontage was already known informally as ‘Tatachilla Road’, he probably named the farm after it.

Here was yet another new spelling of the name. This time it caught on, ousted the ‘Tortachilla’ electoral name, and eventually became official.

Other newspaper records give the spelling “*Tattachilla*” for the name of the vineyard⁴⁰ and of a racehorse,⁴¹ but these, if not typographical errors, are simply eccentric spellings of the same word.

³⁵ ‘Tatt’ is the current urban slang for ‘tattoo’.

³⁶ *SA Chronicle* 18/5/1889: 13g.

³⁷ *SA Chronicle* 20/2/1892: 24f, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/91545614/8440570>.

³⁸ According to Hankel, JG Kelly bought the property and planted his first vines in the same year, 1887; so the vineyard name must have acquired the name very soon after 1887 in order to become ‘celebrated’ under that title by 1892 (Valmai Hankel, ‘What’s in a name?’, *Adelaide Review*, June 1999: 44; cp.

http://www.onkapingacity.com/libraries/localstudies/view_subject.asp?subject=Wineries&offset=180 [30/11/16]). Part of the property was later sold to the Lutheran Church.

³⁹ The mythology of vineyards includes their idea of ‘terroir’ (the complete natural environment and farming practice which produce a wine flavour or brand), and often tries to relate this to Aboriginal and quasi-Aboriginal ideologies of land ownership and land-care. (For an analysis using McLaren Vale examples, see William Skinner 2015, ‘Fermenting Place: Wine production and terroir in McLaren Vale, South Australia’, PhD thesis, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide; download from web by Googling ‘skinner mclaren wine ferment’).

⁴⁰ *SA Register* 17/2/1896: 4.

⁴¹ *Advertiser* 10/4/1914: 14 and onward.

As with some other Aboriginal names attached to vineyards,⁴² 'Tatachilla' has followed the vines and the cellars: to a modern suburb based around Tatachilla Road;⁴³ to a 'Tatachilla Winery' in McLaren Vale town at the eastern end of Tatachilla Road, and a developer's 'Tatachilla Estate' around it;⁴⁴ and to a 'Tatachilla Vineyards' near the Onkaparinga National Park.⁴⁵

We saw that during the 1937 military surveys the name of the trig station reverted to 'Tortachilla', which as a result remained for some decades as the local name for the cliffs and the hills south of Maslins (as I can remember from the 1950s and 60s). Then in my lifetime it has faded out of even local awareness,⁴⁶ leaving only 'Tatachilla' to wander around, cut off from its Kurna origin.

THE KAURNA WORD:

Some authors have assumed that this familiar public form 'Tatachilla' is a 'corruption' of the older and less familiar 'Tortachilla'.⁴⁷ But as we have seen, the truth is almost the reverse: 'Tortachilla' originated as a mis-transcription of 'Tartachilla'.

This first record can be spelled as *Tatatyilla* in our modern phonetic representations. It is obviously in Kurna language, with the Locative suffix *illa* ('at, place of'), used correctly after a three-syllable root word *tatatyV*, whose last vowel we do not know. The *a*-sound in the first syllable could be either a long *aa* as in 'tart' (as suggested by Piesse's spelling), or short *a* like the sound of the 'u' in 'tut-tut'.

It is tempting to think that this word has something to do with known words from Kurna vocabulary: *tartu* 'low swampy country' (though the second vowel would be wrong, and we note that Section 399 itself is a 'grassy gully', *not* swampy like the mouth at Port Willunga), or various words beginning *tarta-* which are associated with 'covering' or 'shutting'. But such interpretations do not give us any known way to account for the third syllable *tyV*; nor does Kurna grammar. Thus we cannot say that we know the 'meaning' of the name. Of course a place-name need not have a dictionary meaning (think of 'Rome' or 'London').

⁴² e.g. 'Taranga' and 'Taringa'; see PNS 4.03.01/02 and /03.

⁴³ At its nearest point the suburb of Tatachilla is 3 km away from 'Tortachilla' and 2 km from the original *Tatatyilla*.

⁴⁴ This winery is currently (2016) called 'Southern Vales Winery'.

⁴⁵ See 'Tatachilla Vineyards' report on <http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/>.

⁴⁶ I can also remember the local name "*Portachilla*" occasionally being used for Ochre Cove. No doubt this usage was modelled on nearby 'Tortachilla', in combination with Kurna and/or Ngarrindjeri originals beginning with *P*. But this name has almost entirely disappeared from record except on one of Tindale's map annotations from about 1935. See PNS 4.03.02/01 Purditilla/Puretilla/Putatang.

⁴⁷ Pridmore 1949: 65.

THE NAME AND PLACE IN TINDALE:

I am not aware that Tindale ever noted any information or made any theories about the name 'Tatachilla' or 'Tartachilla'. However, he did follow up the fictitious 'Tortachilla'.

In December 1935 he spent some sessions with Albert Karlowan in Adelaide, mapping place-names along the coast of the Gulf up to Adelaide.⁴⁸ One of the large-scale maps they were using as a base for annotations was a 1909 inch-to-the-mile Hundred of Willunga published by the Survey-General's Office.⁴⁹ Tatachilla does not occur anywhere on this map, but the place-name 'Tortachilla' is printed just south of 'Blanche Point'. To this location Tindale has added the following hand-written note:

`Turto`tjalanga
earth ending
red earth

We may safely agree that it was Karlowan who gave the name itself, which I represent here as "Turtotjalangga".⁵⁰ This word is in Kurna form, using the standard Locative suffix *ngga* correctly after a two-syllable root *tyala*. There is a known Kurna word *turto* meaning 'clod of earth'; and we might allow that its second vowel *u/o*, being unstressed, could easily have been mistaken for *a* by an English listener. Karlowan had some knowledge of Kurna language, but it was very limited. Did he know a genuine Kurna place-name here at Tortachilla, away from his home country of the Lakes and Lower Murray?⁵¹

Doubts arise when we consider the gloss beneath, and Tindale's later interpretation of it. It is very problematic. On the map the word 'ending' is placed exactly below 'langa' (not under 'tja'), and might refer to the suffix or 'linguistic ending' of the Aboriginal word, rather than being a translation of anything.

Probably up to 50 years later, when he was preparing material for his proposed Gazetteer of place-names, Tindale wrote an index card which is clearly an interpretation of his map note.⁵²

⁴⁸ Tindale 'Dec. 19th to 27th 1935', 'Murray River Notes', AA 338/1/31/1: 197.

⁴⁹ Tindale annotated map AA 338/24/97. The map as a whole bears a general credit: "*Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941*".

⁵⁰ *Tj* = *Ty* = approximately the sounds which in English are spelled 'ch' as in 'church' and 'j' as in 'judge'. Tindale uses 'j' routinely to represent the sound of the consonant *y*; and *ŋ* is the phonetic symbol for the sound *ng* as in 'singing'.

⁵¹ Karlowan had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the place-names of his Yaraldi homeland from about Raukkan to Murray Bridge; but (like other Yaraldi informants) very limited knowledge of those on Fleurieu Peninsula (see Berndt & Berndt 1993: 23).

⁵² Tindale Kurna place-name card [630], in AA 338/7/1/12.



`Turto`tjalanga

Tortachilla or Blanche Point, NW of Section 381, Hd of Willunga.

Lit. 'Red earth ending'.

Deriv: [ˈturto] red earth + [ˈtjala] end + [ŋga] at.

Tindale ms from Karlowan.

Tartachilla Adelaide Observer 13 April 1844.

Tortachilla of Hd of Willunga map.

Note that “ms from Karlowan” simply means Tindale’s old map note; that Tindale ignores the evidence of ‘L.P.’ from the *Observer* 1844 even while quoting it;⁵³ and that he credits ‘Tortachilla’ to the map itself, not to Karlowan. In particular, note that only now does he tell us that ‘ending’ is a translation of “tjala” (= *tyala*). But no such word, or anything like it, is known, either in Kurna language (which never begins a word with *ty*) or in Ngarrindjeri.⁵⁴ Tindale has simply invented it by mis-reading his own note.⁵⁵

What can we say of Karlowan’s ‘Turtotjalangga’? At best it could only be a Ngarrindjeri corruption of a Kurna original bearing some resemblance to it. We already know one original: *Tatatyilla*; was there also a *Turtotyilla*? Whether this was so or not, Karlowan shows that he does not know the Kurna Locative *illa*, but commits the linguistic absurdity of adding to it a second Locative, the more common *ngga* which he did know. Or perhaps it was his Yaraldi clan who passed this on to him as a tradition (probably recent, dating only from the years since Kurna-speaking relatives and visitors ceased to be an identifiable group on the land to challenge the form).

But far the most likely explanation of the Tindale data is that Tindale showed Karlowan the name ‘Tortachilla’ printed on his base map, and *asked* him to give his own Yaraldi version of it.⁵⁶ Karlowan obliged by combining *illa* with *ty* to intuit the fictitious word ‘tyala’, to which he correctly added *ngga*; but he naturally did not give a derivation for it. In this case probably Tindale then also asked him for a derivation for that version, and again Karlowan obliged with a description of the

⁵³ Tindale apparently did not know Piesse’s name or his 1839 letter.

⁵⁴ There are known Kurna and Ngarrindjeri words for ‘end’ or ‘extremity’, but they bear no resemblance to ‘tjala’.

⁵⁵ Tindale’s ruminations here can be seen on three other cards, one for the real Kurna word *tarto* and others for the hypothetical ‘tjala’ and ‘tarta’. On the latter his derivation theory for “*torta as Tortachilla*” cites *tarto* but goes as follows: “*tarta* > *torto* > *torta*”, all supposedly meaning “*swamp*”. This is simply confused (Tindale Kurna vocabulary cards in AA 338/7/1/12).

⁵⁶ This may be implied by one of Tindale’s credits on his card: “*Tortachilla of Hd of Willunga map*”. In any case, Tindale often used published map names to elicit supposedly ‘authentic’ versions from his informants in areas away from their home country. E.g. Of Peramangk names Tindale wrote, “*Most of the remembered place names have come through Nganguruku sources & through the knowledge of Milerum on pronunciation of place names already on our maps*” (Tindale ‘Place Names: Drafts For Text’, AA 338/10/2: 114). In the case of Milerum’s “*Wiljauar*”, the printed name ‘Willyaroo’ (near Strathalbyn) was local in any historical sense, for when re-naming the village of New Hamburg here in 1916, the government’s new Nomenclature Committee had found a name for it in a published wordlist of the Diyari, 700 km away (see PNS 7.03/07 ‘Willyaroo’). Moreover, the linguistic derivations which accompany the informants’ place-names in Tindale’s primary or secondary records are *usually* his own, not theirs: cp. “*presumably Milerum did not dissect the name*” (Tindale Ramindjeri vocabulary card ‘wita’, in AA338/7/1/17).

site ('earth, red earth' for *turto*, a Kurna word which he may have known), and perhaps a comment on the fact that the last two syllables he had given were a Locative suffix or 'ending'.⁵⁷ Decades later, Tindale seems to have misunderstood some of his own annotation.

Inevitably but unfortunately, his line has been taken as a final authority and publicized in the widely-used works of the place-name scholar Geoffrey Manning.⁵⁸

THE REAL *TATATYILLA* RE-NAMED:

Meanwhile the real *Tatatyilla* had been re-named 'Aldinga'.

Between 1839 and 1850 the colonists had been busy building roads to serve the expanding settlements which followed immediately in the wake of the surveys. Very often these roads and towns were built over the ancient tracks inscribed on the landscape and shown to the newcomers by the Aboriginal owners of the land. As Counsel's field sketches showed right at the start, the roads around Section 399 followed the 'native tracks' quite closely. The 'present track' which he marked had no doubt been shown to colonial pedestrians by Aboriginal guides during the three years preceding the first Country Surveys.⁵⁹ Our present Main South Road is almost the same route; but because of our increasing obsession with speed, many of the crucial links with the land are now bypassed and few would know they exist.

At the same time the genuine Kurna names which had mapped the true nature of the land were appropriated and shifted to other places, sometimes several miles away, where the colonists wanted a name for something of their own creation which was useful in their eyes.

In the year 1850 plans were afoot for a 'Port of Willunga' to serve the farmers of the Willunga Basin; Snell acquired Section 378; and Thomas Martin subdivided part of Section 386 as the township of Port Willunga. In the same year one of the locals had plans to establish a hotel which would serve travellers between Adelaide and the new southern settlements over the range, as they crossed the Aldinga plains which were (to them) waterless in summer. Essential to the inn was a waterhole or well, and the obvious choice was the pre-colonial well marked by Counsel on Section 399. As we have seen, this was probably at or very near the site of the settler well described by Piesse in 1844. Both were fed by underground drainage and were abundant all round the year even in a drought.

⁵⁷ Ngarrindjeri language also uses its own Locative suffixes, of which *-angk* bears some resemblance to Kurna *-ngga*.

⁵⁸ GH Manning 2006, *Manning's Place Names of SA*, Modbury, Gould Books: 57, 424; Manning 2011, *Place Names of Our Land*, Modbury, Gould Books: 105, 853. Manning expands on Tindale's theme: "probably inspired by its geological structure exposed along the cliffs of the section".

⁵⁹ For accounts some of these early journeys south from Adelaide, see my history (in progress) *Feet On the Fleurieu, Language On the Land*.



On 10th December 1850 the Magistrate's Bench approved a publican's license for Carty Downing to use at a house which (they noted) was located "on the junction of the Willunga, Port Willunga, Yankalilla, Aldinga, and Miponga roads".⁶⁰ By now these roads had been built (to some extent), roughly on the same two axis routes, southward and eastward, which Counsel had sketched as 'native tracks' and 'proposed roads'. For travellers from the vicinity of Willunga, the eastern route near the creek traversed what they called 'White's Gully'. For those coming from Adelaide, the route south was at this point 'the road to Aldinga Plains'. Stretching a point (in view of its proximity to the low hills north of the creek), Downing's new watering place was said to be at 'Aldinga Plains', and (naturally) would be called 'Aldinga Hotel'. The road junction puts his house on Section 399 where an Aldinga Hotel still stands, no more than a few hundred metres from the Aboriginal well; and from here he dispensed fluids much more 'brackish'.

Within about seven years a small 'Village of Aldinga' was being laid out around the hotel.⁶¹

Thus – by a process similar to that which would eventually transfer 'Tatachilla' northeastward away from *Tatatyilla* – the name *Wilangga* (as 'Willunga') came west to the coast near *Tirranangku*, and *Ngaltingga* (as 'Aldinga') came north to *Tatatyilla*. The new European reality used Aboriginal reality, but at the same time suppressed it.⁶²

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End of Summary

⁶⁰ SA Register 11/12/1850: 3d, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/38446988/3931666>. Another report noted that Downing's house would be the only licensed inn "between Willunga and Yankalilla" (South Australian 12/12/1850: 4d, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/71627806>).

⁶¹ Manning 2011, 'Aldinga' in *Place Names of Our Land*: 25, 1329.

⁶² This process would happen at many other places such as Yankalilla town (6 km from the original *Yarnkalyilla*: see PNS 5.02.01/02) and Myponga Beach (8 km from the original *Maitpangga*: see PNS 5.01/02 *Kauwayarlungga* and 5.01/05 *Maitpangga*); and of course it had already happened at *Tartachilla Trig*.