## CHAPTER 9

# 'Aboriginal names of places in southern South Australia'

# Placenames in the Norman B. Tindale collection of papers

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#### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In 1927, Norman B. Tindale (1900-1993), as Honorary Secretary of the recently formed Anthropological Society of South Australia, received a letter informing him that:

I shall be very pleased to prepare a paper for your Society on native place names in South Australia; there is much to be said on the subject ... Please get it out of your mind that I am a walking encyclopedia on the subject of the aboriginal dialects. My long suit is geographical nomenclature, & I have never posed as an authority on the native language. There is no such authority in South Australia, because the blacks have largely disappeared, & the written records of their language are, as you know, miserable in the extreme, so that study offers no reward ... I shall endeavour to interest your members in my own way. I want to prove to them, among other things, how utterly unreliable is the distribution of native names on our map as denoting or marking or fixing the territorial bounds of the different tribes. (Rodney Cockburn letter to N. Tindale 14 October 1927)

Tindale's correspondent on this occasion was Rodney Cockburn, noted for his 1908 publication *Nomenclature of South Australia*, in which he listed the derivations of 1200 placenames in the state. Not surprisingly, given the sentiments expressed in the letter to Tindale, most of the placenames included in *Nomenclature* reflect colonial rather than Indigenous naming practices (Stewart Cockburn 1999<sup>2</sup>).

Tindale was not one to blink at a challenge. By this time, he had already begun what was to be his major work: the mapping of Aboriginal tribal boundaries in Australia. Edgar Waite, the Director of the South Australian Museum (hereafter SAM), provided the impetus for Tindale's mapping project when he challenged "the validity of limits or boundaries" recorded by Tindale during his first field trip to Groote Eylandt and the Roper River in the Northern Territory (NT) in 1921-1922 (see Tindale 1924-1936: iii; 1974: 3). Tindale's initial response to Waite's challenge had its first public airing when, at a 1927 meeting of the Anthropological Society, Tindale presented a map showing the distribution of the "Native Tribes of South Australia" (The Register, 5 July 1927: 10). This map can be seen as an early prototype or section of his later tribal map of Aboriginal Australia. The tribal map of Aboriginal Australia, with its accompanying catalogue of tribes, was first published in 1940 and was revised to accompany Tindale's Aboriginal Tribes of Australia (1974). For his tribal mapping project, contra Waite, Tindale has often been credited with debunking the myth of the "free wandering Aborigine".3

It is not difficult to imagine that, for Tindale, the sentiments expressed by Cockburn in his letter presented a challenge of a similar order to that posed by Waite. At the time of writing, it has not been possible to track down further reference to Cockburn's intended presentation to the Anthropological Society. Despite this, by considering the body of work produced by Tindale during the many years of his association with the SAM (1918-1965 and beyond into retirement<sup>4</sup>), it is clear that he amassed a significant weight of counter-evidence against Cockburn's views. As will be shown in this paper, Tindale not only recorded placenames directly from the lips of knowledgeable Aboriginal people or 'survivors' in the parlance of the day – according to Tindale's figures over 2000 for the south-east of South Australia alone - he recorded at times a wealth of associated cultural detail, conducted archival research, and at times employed placenames and related knowledge as clues in his delineation of tribal territories and boundaries for the tribal mapping project. One of Tindale's final projects, incomplete at the time of his death, was a proposed gazetteer of Aboriginal names of places in southern South Australia: it was intended to preserve a substantial part of this rich cultural heritage and to present it to the interested public.

This paper offers ways to approach this important part of Tindale's legacy. Specifically, it surveys the manuscript materials relating to the proposed gazetteer that were bequeathed to the SAM, it examines Tindale's methods, highlighting major strengths and potential weaknesses and, finally, it also considers the usefulness of this material for contemporary researchers and others with an interest in Aboriginal heritage.

### Overview of the project

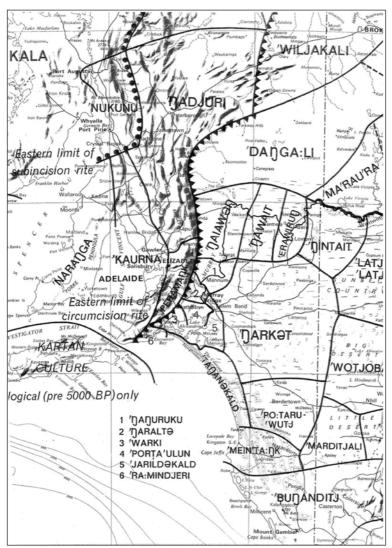
The 'Aboriginal names of places in Southern South Australia' project, to use Tindale's working title (here after 'the project'), was conducted by Tindale in retirement with the support and encouragement of the Geographical Names Board of South Australia. It was intended that Tindale would produce from his voluminous research materials:

- 1. lists of Aboriginal placenames organised under tribal headings to be entered into the official gazetteer of the state (including details such as location, type of physical feature, derivation, and meaning); and
- a 'special gazetteer' to be published separately as a book and providing useful supplementary information (such as the methods of recording, the linguistic and geographical characteristics of the names, and their functions in traditional society).

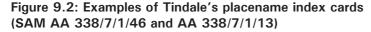
For Tindale, the project offered the chance to bring together materials gathered by him over a 60 year period. More specifically, the project was to include materials relating to the area south of a line drawn from Port Augusta to the New South Wales (NSW) border (see Figure 9.1). This area includes the following tribal groups as determined by Tindale:<sup>5</sup>

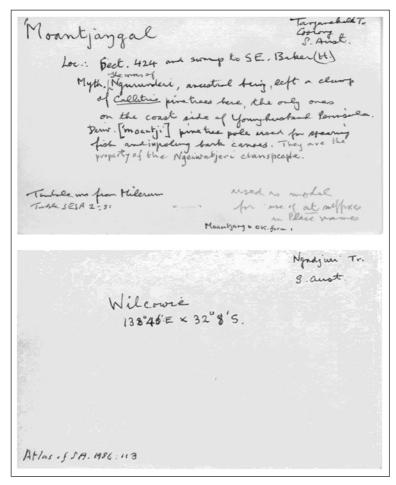
Danggali	Meintangk	Ngarkat	Potaruwutj
Erawirung	Narangga	Ngawait	Ramindjeri
Jarildekald	Ngadjuri	Ngintait	Tanganekald
Kaurna	Ngaiawang	Nukunu	Warki
Maraura	Nganguruku	Peramangk	Wiljakali

Figure 9.1: Section of the map of tribal distribution accompanying Tindale (1974)



Tindale compiled the placename data onto index cards, filed under the above tribal headings. In the process, he drew on his own manuscript materials, published literature and maps, and archival materials. An individual card may carry a placename; a tribal designation; a Tindale manuscript, map, literature or archive reference; a derivation; a meaning; geographical details and cultural information. In some cases, however, details are sparse (see Figure 9.2).





According to Tindale's estimate, 95 percent of his placenames were recorded from the lips of Aboriginal people. For many areas he was limited by availability of living informants, and where he relied mainly on published and archival sources the cards tend to be fewer and the entries less detailed. An overview of the index cards as a work in progress is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Tindale's placenames	indale′s pla	cenames				
Tindale Tribe	Main sources	No. of cards	Main Tindale informants	Main source details	Comments	SAM reference
Bunganditj	Published, Tindale & archive	5cm	Clarence Long	Smith (1880) D. Stewart (1901) R. Noble (1901) Tindale journals	Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/5
Danggali	<i>Atlas</i> & Tindale	0.4cm		Atlas of South Australia (1986)	No language records. Most cards drawn from the <i>Atlas</i> .	AA 338/7/1/43
Erawirung	Published & Tindale	1.8cm		Tindale journals and a range of literature sources, including Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Many of the cards are drawn from the Atlas.	AA 338/7/1/6
Jarildekald	Published & Tindale	9cm	Albert Karloan Clarence Long	Taplin (1879) Tindale journals	Most cards from Tindale ms materials; cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/6
Kaurna	Published & Tindale	7.5cm	Clarence Long Albert Karloan Ivaritji	Teichelmann & Schürmann (1840); Wyatt (1879) and a range of minor published sources.  Atlas of South Australia (1986) Tindale journals	Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes. Tindale revised some spellings and recorded names from informants.	AA 338/7/1/12
Maraura	Tindale	3 cards		Tindale journals	No placenames included	AA 338/7/1/19
Marditjali	map	1 card		County Macdonell map, Lands Dept.	Taken from a map	AA 338/7/1/43
Meintangk	Tindale	2cm	Alf Watson Clarence Long	Tindale journals	Chiefly Tindale ms materials, cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/19
Narangga	Published, Tindale & corresp.	3cm	Louisa Eglinton Gladys Hughes	J.H. Johnson (1930-31) Hill and Hill (1975) D. Mack (1988, correspondence) Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Tindale re-recorded data with Eglinton, Johnson's informant; D. Mack was a research associate. Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/13

Tindale Tribe	Main sources	No. of cards	Main Tindale informants	Main source details	Comments	SAM reference
Ngadjuri	Published & Tindale	2.5cm	Barney Warrior (Waria) Grannie Giles	Berndt & Vogelsang (1941) P.T. Noble in Taplin (1879) Atlas of South Australia (1986) Tindale journals	Placenames mostly drawn from <i>Atlas</i> . Warrior's contribution was minor.	AA 338/7/1/13
Ngaiawang	Published & Tindale	1.8cm	Robert Mason	Tindale journals Moorhouse (1846) <i>Atlas of South Australia</i> (1986)	Drawn from a variety of published sources and Tindale ms materials, cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/43
Nganguruku	Tindale	2cm	Robert Mason	Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Chiefly Tindale ms materials, cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/43
Ngaralta	Tindale	1.3cm	Albert Karloan Pinkie Mack Clarence Long	Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Some entries relate to the name of a clan, the general location of their territory or boundary points.	AA 338/7/1/19 AA 338/7/1/43
Ngarkat	Published & Tindale	2.5cm	Alf Watson Albert karloan Robert Mason Clarence Long Grannie Unaipon	Day (1915) Tindale journals <i>Atlas of South Australia</i> (1986)	Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes. Records a named boundary point.	AA 338/7/1/19 AA 338/7/1/43
Ngawait	Published & Tindale	1cm		Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Mostly drawn from Tindale ms materials.	AA 338/7/1/43
Ngintait	Cards not located					
Nukunu	Published & Tindale	1cm		Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)		AA 338/7/1/43
Peramangk	Published & Tindale	1.1 cm	Clarence Long Albert Karloan Grannie Giles Robert[?] Mason	Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Tindale remarks that most placenames were gained from members of other tribes.	AA 338/7/1/19 AA 338/7/1/43

Tindale Tribe	Main sources	No. of cards	Main Tindale informants	Main source details	Comments	SAM reference
Portaulun	Tindale	0.9cm	Albert Karloan Pinkie Mack	Tindale journals	Mostly drawn from Tindale ms materials. Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes. A few cards report named boundary points.	AA 338/7/1/44
Potaruwutj	Tindale & survey maps	4.5cm	Clarence Long Alf Watson	Tindale journals Variety of survey maps listed	Cards rich in detail, often containing etymological, ethnological or geographical notes. Often contain references to Hundred maps. Some names refer to regions rather than to 'discrete' places. A number of cards relate to boundaries.	AA 338/7/1/47
Ramindjeri	Published & Tindale	4.5cm	Reuben Walker Albert Karloan Clarence Long	Meyer (1843) Tindale journals Atlas of South Australia (1986)	Cards often contain etymological, ethnological or geographical notes.	AA 338/7/1/17
Tanganekald	Tindale	14.5cm	Clarence Long Albert Karloan	Tindale journals	Mostly from Clarence Long. Cards often describe the social function of a place, associated story, type of geographical feature, Hundred location and etymology often provided.	AA 338/7/1/46
Warki	Cards not located					
Wiljakali	Atlas	3 cards		Atlas of South Australia (1986)	All cards taken from <i>Atlas</i> , contain little information.	AA 338/7/1/43

From Table 9.1, one gains an indication of the relative quantities of placenames collected. Leaving to one side the empty categories Ngintait, Warki and Maraura (whose three cards contain only general vocabulary), the categories range from one card (Marditjali) to 14.5 centimetres of cards (Tanganekald). Apart from Tanganekald, the other main categories include Jarildekald (9cm), Kaurna (7.5cm), Bunganditj (5cm), Potauwutj (4.5cm) and Ramindjeri (4.5cm). Significantly, it would appear that Tindale's principal informants, Clarence Long (or Milerum, a Tangane man) and Albert Karloan (a Jarilde man), between them provided Tindale with the bulk of the placenames. How this was done and what it means will be considered in the following section.

Before moving on, it is worth noting that the 'special gazetteer' component of the project is also incomplete. Tindale's papers include 180 pages of gathered notes entitled "Draft for text", much of which is handwritten with pages often containing no more than a paragraph or two. It does, however, include copies of finished cards provided to the Geographical Names Board (Tindale 1991a). 'Draft for text' is an important frame through which to view the index cards, and it informs the discussion below. Draft sections include: water and camps, Aboriginal name of Adelaide, tribal boundaries, notes for Potaruwutj placenames, mode of gathering and recording placenames, stability of names, places of special importance, and post-contact Aboriginal placenames, to list only a few (see the SAM web catalogue for further details).

### Methods

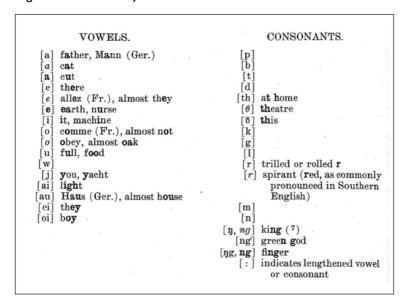
On turning to consider Tindale's methods more fully, one faces the basic questions of how the original data was collected and how Tindale filled out and organised the cards. The latter question has already been partly addressed above, so in this section the discussion will focus on the former.

As a general observation, Tindale was a fastidious record keeper. According to the historian Tom Gara, Tindale kept a journal "every day of his life, whether he was in the field, working at the Museum or at home on the weekend" (Gara 1995: 135). Accordingly, Gara suggests, "all the information that Tindale recorded during his fieldwork is, or should be, documented somewhere in his journals" (Gara 1995: 138). Certainly the field journals relating to the 1930s, a period in which Tindale conducted 'salvage' work in the south-east of South Australia, are a rich and detailed source of information. Most relevant to this analysis are the fieldnotes, vocabularies, song texts, and stories from which Tindale extracted placename data. Importantly, Tindale also took maps into the field and those relating to the south-east of South Australia held at the SAM are often heavily annotated (see South Australian Museum AA 338/16 and 338/24).

#### Orthographics

Tindale's desire to create useful and lasting records, as indicated by his fastidious approach to journal keeping, is also evident in his linguistic records. Over the years he used a variety of orthographic systems to record data. During early fieldwork in the 1920s he followed the system recommended by Notes and Queries on Anthropology (Freire-Marreco and Myers 1912), a system originally developed by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) for recording foreign placenames for British maps. In the early 1930s he began to use an orthographic system developed specifically for ethnological and linguistic work in Australia (see Tindale 1935a: 261-265; 1963: 372-373). This system, the 'Adelaide University Phonetic System' (AUPS), was adapted from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) by a committee consisting of Professor J. A. FitzHerbert, Charles Chewings and Tindale in 1930-1931.7 Although the AUPS became Tindale's preferred system, he at times used Geographic II, a later version of the original RGS system, the main benefit of which was that it contained only symbols found on a typewriter (Sutton 1979). Indeed, Tindale was less than completely satisfied with Geographic II; he found that it afforded "only a moderate degree of accuracy" (Tindale 1947). Most of the placename index cards were written in the AUPS system, often referred to by Tindale as "International Phonetic". The following Figure 9.3 displays an early version of the AUPS.

Figure 9.3: An early version of the AUPS



When approaching Tindale's linguistic records it is important to appreciate that he tried to record what he heard phonetically and did not attempt to phonemicise his spellings. That is, to pick a common example, Tindale recorded both voiced and unvoiced consonants from the series [p, t, k] and [b, d, g] as he heard them. From Louisa Eglinton,8 the principal informant for the Narangga section of the project, for example, Tindale recorded both <Pandalawi> and <Bantalawi> for the gazetted placename 'Pondalowie'. Modern spelling systems for Aboriginal languages in South Australia, as developed by linguists, aim for the representational ideal of one graph per distinctive sound; in this case, a single graph can be used to cover the variation between [p] and [b] or [d] and [t] as recorded by Tindale. The main point for people wanting to use Tindale's placenames is that many require phonemicising if they are to be used consistently, either <Pantalawi> or <Bandalawi> in this case, and, moreover, choices should be consistent with the spelling systems current in language maintenance and revival projects where they exist. As a final comment on this point, it should be noted that in his placename card files Tindale often filed word-initial voiced consonants under the word-initial unvoiced consonant headers (i.e. <b> filed under  $\langle p \rangle$ ;  $\langle d \rangle$  under  $\langle t \rangle$ ; and  $\langle g \rangle$  under  $\langle k \rangle$ ). He did this, presumably, to make data handling easier, but he may have found that word-initial unvoiced consonants were the more frequent variants.

Apart from recording the speech of informants, Tindale also used the AUPS to transcribe words found in published and archival sources. A word of warning is required in relation to this practice. While this was done, no doubt, to remove variation (most of the early recorders of placenames and general vocabularies were influenced by English spelling practices), it may give the misleading impression that Tindale's re-transcriptions were guided by the speech of an Aboriginal informant. It is certainly important to note that Tindale did re-record published and archival materials with informants (as discussed below), but this should not be assumed for all the placenames in the card files.

Finally, it is worth making a brief and general comment about the reliability of Tindale's field recordings. At the time Tindale made his recordings there were few full speakers of the various languages of the south-east of South Australia available. During a recording session with Albert Karloan in 1940, for example, Tindale observed:

Karloan's Jarildekald is rusty from disuse & he stumbled over his phrases several times; once breaking into English. There are some obvious lapses in his text but on hearing it played over he expressed pleasure at it, saying it was fine to hear the language spoken again. Few of his people now use it. (Tindale 1938-1956: 31)

Tindale received some assistance with his transcriptions from Professor FitzHerbert at the University of Adelaide, although the latter's contribution is not well documented (for one of the few references in Tindale's journals, see Tindale 1934-1938: x). While it is no longer possible to check Tindale's transcriptions with full speakers of the languages in question, there is a small number of wax cylinder and acetate disc recordings relating to the south-east of South Australia, with Tindale's transcriptions, held at the SAM that would no doubt repay close study. Until this is done, it is worth noting that I have checked Tindale's vocabulary recorded at Ooldea (SA) in 1934 with current Gugada (also written 'Kokatha') speakers, and have found that the recordings are good given the limitations of the AUPS and Tindale's aims.

#### Sources

As indicated in Table 9.1 above, for the placenames card files Tindale drew on a variety of sources: fieldwork, published literature and maps, and archival documents. While many of the card sections contain elements drawn from all of these sources, some sections were compiled predominantly from fieldwork and others were complied predominantly from maps. As a general rule, one would expect data arising from the former to be richer and more reliable than data arising from the latter. This is often the case, but there are complicating factors, as will be discussed below in 'Filling in the gaps'. Certainly Tindale's preference was for fieldwork with knowledgeable people, as he wanted to record as many of the placenames as possible from the lips of Aboriginal people.

Fortunately, many of the materials drawn upon by Tindale for the project are held at the SAM and are catalogued on the website. They include:

- field journals (series AA 338/1);
- research papers supplementary to the journals (series AA 338/2);
- collected vocabularies and placenames data (series AA 338/7 AA 338/10);
- songs and texts (recorded in journals, series 338/1, and in published papers);
   and
- maps (over 200 listed in series AA 338/16 & 338/24).<sup>9</sup>

Tindale's use of the various sources can be illustrated by considering three sections of the project: Tanganekald, Narangga and Ngadjuri.

#### Tanganekald

For the most detailed section of the project, Tanganekald, Tindale worked primarily with Clarence Long (Milerum) throughout the 1930s. The following extract from a report of fieldwork conducted by Tindale during January to June

1934 is worth considering for a number of reasons: it provides insights into Tindale's methods, it includes a brief history of his work in the Lakes-Coorong region, and it illustrates the range and depth of the collected materials.

Detailed study of surviving natives of southern South Australia was commenced in June 1931, during a week spent at Point McLeay. Milerum (Clarence Long) the last full blooded adult survivor of the Tangane Tribe, was encountered.

Work was continued in 1932 when a visit was made to the South East and over a period of several weeks Milerum was questioned at the South Australian Museum when several legends, vocabularies and twenty songs were transcribed.

Several other natives were met on the Murray River and at Lake Alexandrina in 1933, and Taratap (where I spent three weeks, Christmas 1933) also produced useful information and specimens of aboriginal handiwork.

On February 10<sup>th</sup> of this year [1934], a grant from the Australian National Research Council made it possible for Dr Fry and me to travel through the South East of the State under the guidance of Milerum.

With the aid of detailed maps (inch to the mile Hundred maps) it was possible to record 1,100 native placenames, crossing places on the Coorong, clan and tribal boundaries, camping places and many localities appearing in the legends previously collected at Adelaide. The coast was followed southeastward from Port Victor, where Milerum's geographical knowledge commenced, to his own country near McGraths Flat (where specially detailed notes were secured) and thence to Guichen Bay, the southern-most outpost of the country he knows. Journeys inland to Blackford, Taratap, Tilley Swamp and others at Salt Creek, Wood's Well and between Meningie and Cold and Wet, completed a survey of his country and its borderlands.

The accuracy of this Tangane man's geographical knowledge has been checked, as far as an overlapping portion at the north-western end of the area is concerned, by the independent data supplied by a Yaralde tribe native.

At the conclusion of the South Eastern trip, Milerum's services were retained at Adelaide, from March 6<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> while further data was transcribed. (Tindale 1934-1938: 179-180)

The report goes on to mention work with a Ramindjeri man, Rueben Walker, at Goolwa (21-22 April) and, significantly, a Jarilde man, Frank Blackmore, who

visited Tindale in Adelaide (12-25 May) and "supplied useful confirmatory data with regard to Milerum's knowledge of placenames and legends", as well as further details on Jarildekald culture.

To borrow a surveying metaphor, it is clear that for this section of the project Tindale attempted to triangulate his field data, and this certainly adds to its strength. For a detailed account of this work see Tindale's field journal (Tindale 1934-1938); a more accessible summary appears in the newspaper article 'Vanished Tribal Life' (Tindale 1934).

The following map of the Hundred of Glyde (see Figure 9.4) is one of those used by Tindale during this work. Note that a simplified version appears in Tindale (1974: 67).

Tindale enjoyed a productive working relationship and friendship with Milerum over a 10-year period. Each year, after the shearing season, Milerum would travel to Adelaide and spend time with Tindale at the SAM.<sup>10</sup> Such was the richness of these interactions that in his final years Tindale was also working on a monograph entitled 'The World of Milerum'.

Figure 9.4: Section of the Hundred of Glyde (SA) with Tindale's annotations (SAM AA 338/24/32)

#### Narangga

For the Narangga section of the project, Tindale operated in a slightly different mode by re-recording published materials with the help of the original Aboriginal informant. In 1935 Tindale travelled to Marion Bay on the Yorke Peninsula to interview Louisa Eglinton, who had provided vocabulary and placenames to J. Howard Johnson, a local pastoralist, between 1898 and 1900. These materials, an approximately 350-word general vocabulary and approximately 50 placenames, later appeared in *The Pioneer* newspaper (Johnson 1930-1931).

During sessions with Louisa, Tindale used the AUPS in seeking to record more phonetically accurate versions of the published materials, as well as adding to their number. With regard to placenames, Tindale's concern for accuracy is clearly apparent in the following journal entry:

there were many placenames in her country but she has forgotten some. I went over a map & jotted down all the ones she could remember & then checked over Johnson's list with her; the dual check was most useful & added several new ones as well as localizing practically all the old ones. The principal point in dispute was the site of Ilarawi ('ilara = dwarf beings). This is marked on the map Section 11B Warrenton as (Hillderowie) and on Section 2 at Stenhouse Bay as 'Emu Waterhole'. Her statement that it was between Rhino Head & Badara suggests that the former is the correct place'. (Tindale 1935b: 11-13)

Tindale's published results of the field trip appeared in the following year (Tindale 1936) and include the map given in Figure 9.5.

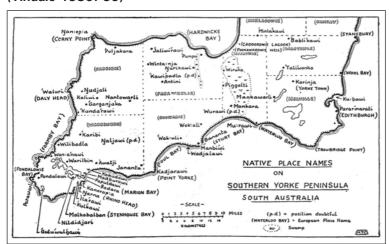


Figure 9.5: Map of native placenames on Southern Yorke Peninsula (Tindale 1936: 56)<sup>11</sup>

Finally, while the data gathered at Marion Bay in 1935 form the core of the Narangga section of the project, Tindale added placenames from literature sources in the 1980s (see the index card file SAM AA 338/7/1/13 for details).

#### Ngadjuri

The Ngadjuri section of the project differs most notably from those described above in that it is based almost exclusively upon published materials. A few cards are sourced to Tindale's informants Barney Warrior (Waria<sup>12</sup>) and Granny Giles, but most appear to have been drawn directly from the *Atlas of South Australia*, a volume published to accompany the 150<sup>th</sup> year of European settlement in the state (Griffin and McCaskill 1986). Many cards consist merely of a placename with map coordinates and a tribal group identifier (see Table 9.1). There are a number of points to be made in relation to this practice. Firstly, the data are not as rich as those noted above. Secondly, there are doubts as to their reliability, and this is particularly apparent with supplied derivations and meanings.

Although for the Ngadjuri section Tindale drew upon other writers, such as Cockburn (1908) and Day (1915), for derivations and meanings, it would appear that often Tindale provided them himself. As with other sections of the project, the Ngadjuri cards are filed along with a separate section of general vocabulary, in this case a Ngadjuri vocabulary compiled mostly from Berndt and Vogelsang (1941). Apparently Tindale proceeded by searching through the general vocabulary for etymological clues and thus arrived at a derivation or meaning for a particular placename. To put it in the most charitable of terms, there is an obvious element of speculation involved in this practice. Admittedly, placenames are often at least partially transparent when they contain the common morphological element <-owie> 'water', indicating a rockhole, for example (see Hercus and Potezny 1999). Indeed, Tindale created lists of geographical features to help him to determine meanings for names; such lists may include Aboriginal terms for 'hill', 'forest', and so on. There is, however, much room for error in this approach. In the extreme, one may read transparency into names or, to put it in Tindale's terms, derive 'rational meanings' (Tindale 1974: 40-41) where otherwise there is obscurity, effectively inventing a meaning to satisfy one's preoccupations.<sup>13</sup> It should not be denied, however, that a careful approach (such as that discussed by Amery 2002: 178-179) can be productive for current language revival or maintenance projects. Again, one needs to exercise caution when dealing with these types of materials.

Given the lack of fieldwork conducted by Tindale with Ngadjuri people, this section of the project appears relatively shallow. Certainly there are many unknowns, most notably: who provided the placenames to surveyors, when were they recorded, and who recorded them? For other sections of the project there

is evidence that Tindale attempted to ascertain such details. He endeavoured to find out from the relevant authorities, for example, whether or not Karloan provided placenames during a survey in the Lakes region in 1902, as claimed by the latter.

Finally, it is worth noting a problem of circularity in Tindale's methods. That is, for Ngadjuri (and for some other sections of the project), Tindale drew placenames directly from a published map and then assigned them to a tribal category on the basis of the boundaries represented on his 1974 tribal distribution map. In effect, Tindale is assuming the identity of the placenames in advance. The main point here is that the identity of placenames for a given area may benefit from an approach that is based on linguistic rather than ethnocartographic considerations. At the very least, each card should be treated on an individual basis and with caution.

#### Filling in the gaps

In the discussion of the Ngadjuri section, a number of limitations with Tindale's use of published source materials have been outlined. A number of problems associated with Tindale's use of informants also deserve mention. For some sections of the project, circumstances forced Tindale to use informants who had some knowledge of an area but were nevertheless 'outsiders'. With regard to the Ngaiawang area, for example, Tindale noted

the placenames of this tribe were not gathered in the early days, except along the Murray River itself, and there is little in the way of links between the vocabulary as published by Moorhouse (1846) and such placenames ... What we have learned about the Ngaiawang comes indirectly, chiefly from the few Nganguruku survivors who managed to survive ... [and who] kept their aboriginal status as fisherman and food gatherers well into the twentieth century. (Tindale 1991a: 30)

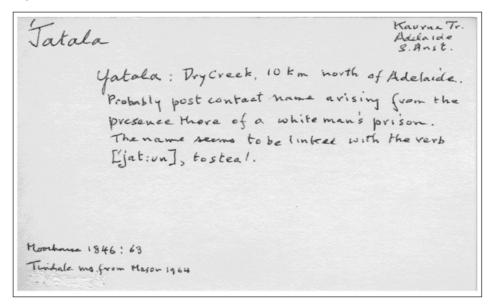
Similarly, for the Peramangk area, "most of the remembered placenames have come through Nganguruku sources and through the knowledge of Milerum on pronunciations of placenames already on our maps" (Tindale 1991a: 114).

Milerum provided placenames for a number of sections of the project, including: Bunganditj, Jarildekald, Kaurna, Ngaralta, Ngarkat, Peramangk, Potaruwutj, Ramindjeri and, of course, Tanganekald (see Table 9.1). For a number of these sections, such as Bunganditj, Potaruwutj and Tanganekald, he was the principal informant and the information provided by him reflects his particular life experiences: he was a senior Tanganekald man, his mother was Potaruwutj, and he learned of Bunganditj language and culture in his youth (see Tindale 1986). For other sections of the project Milerum's links to country

are less clear: while Tindale recorded placenames from him for a wide range of areas, it would appear that often Tindale had him pronounce words from maps (as indicated in the above quoted passage). From Tindale's records it is often unclear whether Milerum is providing 'new' data or merely offering a pronunciation for re-transcribing purposes. So, there is a degree of ambiguity in the materials that needs to be taken into account.

Problems associated with Tindale's use of 'outsiders' have already been noted in the literature. Amery and Williams (2002) note that many of Tindale's Kaurna placenames are coloured by the linguistic practices of his non-Kaurna informants; some display Ngarrindjeri suffixes while others appear to contradict expected phonotactic patterns (e.g. words in Kaurna do not begin with <r> or <l>). In the index card files, the former category is by far the larger of the two. Amery and Williams rightly point out the need for caution with such placenames. From my reading of materials relating to the project, it appears likely that Tindale was aware of at least the first of these problems: on index cards and related notes he shows some understanding of the various locational suffixes used in a number of language in the south-east of South Australia. As indicated above, Tindale sought to record what he heard as accurately as possible, and in fairness to him it is important to appreciate that the materials found in the index card files were left in a working rather than a finished state and that contemporary conclusions about the data need to be tempered by this fact. That close attention needs to be paid to Tindale's sources is further reinforced when derivations are considered. Amery (2002: 172-173) discusses Tindale's derivation of <Jatala> (Yatala), the site of a prison to the north of the City of Adelaide. The 'Jatala' placename is identified as Kaurna, and on the card Tindale notes that "the name seems to be linked with the verb ['jat:un], to steal" (see Figure 9.6). But, as pointed out by Amery, ['jat:un] is "clearly a Ngarrindjeri word". To extend Amery's analysis, it is worth noting that Tindale gives two sources: "Moorhouse 1846: 63" and "Tindale ms from Mason 1964". Moorhouse (1846: 63) lists 'yattun' with the English gloss 'to steal' and on the inside cover of Tindale's copy of this work one finds the note: "additional notes in this copy are from discussions with J. Mason, aboriginal of the Nganguruku tribe in the 1950s and 1960s". In this case it is clear that both sources relate to the River Murray region, and it appears likely from the text on the card that Tindale arrived at the derivation by his own means. As a general observation, Tindale's signposting of his sources makes contemporary re-analysis and appraisal easier for many of the cards.

Figure 9.6: Jatala placename card (SAM AA 338/7/1/12)



The <Jatala> card also leads to the point that Tindale generally tried to avoid post-contact placenames. While there is clearly a link here between the project and Tindale's larger tribal mapping project, which aimed to represent the distribution of Australian tribes at the time of first contact, this appears also to have been influenced by the Geographical Names Board. In a letter of official confirmation of the project, the Board's Secretary informed Tindale that he should focus on "names of proven South Australian origin given to localities by the early inhabitants" (Medwell 1986). This limit on data collecting is worth bearing in mind for its own sake, but is also leads to the contentious issue of the relationship between the placenames and tribal boundaries. As this is a complex matter worthy of a separate paper, I will restrict the discussion to a few general observations that may be of use to people wanting to consult the materials.

I began this paper by quoting Rodney Cockburn, who expressed to Tindale his opinion on "how utterly unreliable is the distribution of native names on our map as denoting or marking or fixing the territorial bounds of the different tribes". Problems associated with the term 'tribe' and determining the precise nature of tribal boundaries now comprise a sizable literature. In his work Tindale often attempted to use placenames to delineate tribes, both to locate boundary points and to indicate past, often pre-contact, tribal movements, and this aim was not always easily or successfully achieved (for problems encountered in the Western Desert region, see Monaghan 2003). In many cases, Tindale had to rely upon ecological data to determine the location of tribal boundaries (see Tindale 1974). As has been pointed out above, for the south-

east of South Australia, Tindale faced a number of significant difficulties in his research owing to its salvage nature and to a lack of available informants for particular areas. Certainly his aim to record pre-contact placenames, and particularly those that functioned as cultural boundary markers for areas that had experienced the general pattern of social and cultural disruption associated with colonisation, was both ambitious and problematic.

In the current era of Native Title, tribal boundaries serve new political functions and I do not want to comment directly on Tindale's use and placement of them — typically they serve the interests of some groups and not others. Rather, it is sufficient for present purposes to consider, if only in passing, the basic question of whether or not Tindale signposted links he made between placenames and tribal boundaries. The answer is that many of the cards do carry notations indicating that they mark cultural boundaries, either at a clan or tribal level (especially those found in the Tanganekald section). It is apparent that some of this information contributed to the tribal boundaries as they appear on the map in Figure 9.1. Thus, it should be possible in some cases to reappraise the information used by Tindale to delineate his tribal boundaries.

#### Conclusion

The main point to be drawn from this discussion is that Tindale's placename card files are not entirely useful on their own and need to be considered against his field journals, papers relating to placename research, maps and relevant literature and archival sources. A number of strengths of the material have been outlined as have a number of potential weaknesses. On the plus side, Tindale worked closely with a number of informants to amass over 2000 placenames in the south-east of South Australia. Many of the names are accompanied by a rich store of associated ethnological and geographical data. There is no doubt that these texts, including annotated maps, constitute important heritage materials. It should also be appreciated that as well as accuracy in his field recording Tindale was thorough in his literature and archival searches. The major limitation of the work arises from its incomplete state and its salvage nature. In a number of areas caution is required: in particular Tindale's use of sources and derivations based upon conjecture.

At a number of points in this paper I have gestured to the incomplete state of the project. So, how far towards completion did Tindale get? According to his own estimates, on 29 January 1991, a time close to the end of his working life, Tindale considered that he was at the halfway point of the project (Tindale 1989-1991: 287). Indeed, Tindale did extract all of the placenames in his manuscript materials and many of the placename cards appear only partially filled out.

Such is the richness and value of Tindale's legacy that the materials discussed in this paper are not sitting in the archive gathering dust. In 1988 Tindale provided two draft sections of the project, Narangga and Jarildekald, to the Geographical Names Board. According to Bill Watt of the Land Services Group, a division of the South Australian Government, consultations are currently underway with both the Narangga and Ngarrindjeri communities to negotiate the inclusion of these placenames, where appropriate, onto the official gazetteer of the state (pers. comm. 12 September 2005). It is hoped that further work by linguists on the materials will contribute to this process. As for the remaining placenames, the Land Services Group has developed a Tindale database containing approximately 2000 entries; these represent the sum of Tindale's placename card file entries. Watt plans to locate each of the places as effectively as possible and no doubt Tindale would have been pleased to know that this work is continuing.

Perhaps the final word should be left for Tindale, who, towards the very end of his last journal took a moment to reflect upon his spellings and "phonetic name writings". They are "relatively good – perhaps as good as can be passed on to the future" (Tindale 1991b: 129-131).

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#### **Endnotes**

- 1. This paper has come about through research conducted at the South Australian Museum Anthropology Archive during 2004-2005. As one of a number of research consultants employed to provide content for the museum's website, my particular task has been to document and describe linguistic materials held in the Norman B. Tindale collection. The principal aim of the website is to provide a useful on-line catalogue for researchers and to facilitate access to the museum's collections. As such, the descriptions are necessarily limited and it is intended that this paper, by providing an overview of Tindale's placename work and an analysis of it, will serve as a useful supplementary guide. The Tindale section of the web catalogue can be found at: www.samuseum. sa.gov.au/tindale. My thanks extend to Philip Clarke, Tom Gara and Mandy Paul for helpful comments during the preparation of this paper.
- 2. Stewart Cockburn presents a revised and substantially expanded version of his father's work.
- 3. For a critical account of the development of Tindale's tribal mapping project, see Monaghan (2003).
- 4. For a brief biographical summary follow the 'Archives' link on the SAM website (http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au). Further biographical details can be found in Jones (1995) and Walter (1988).
- 5. The spelling of tribes in this paper follows that of Tindale (1974).
- 6. Note that the figures in Table 9.1 are only approximate. Tindale's placename cards and general vocabulary cards tend to overlap in places. Moreover, the tribal categories are often not discrete: within a particular section words from neighbouring groups may appear, apparently for comparative or etymological purposes. These features reinforce that fact that the project is a work in progress. Note also that the listings of 'main Tindale informants' and 'main source details' have been taken from information appearing on the cards. An examination of the cards will reveal informants not mentioned in Table 9.1, and a number of 'minor' literature sources, particularly for Kaurna, have not been listed.
- 7. FitzHerbert was Professor of Classics at the University of Adelaide; he was trained in philology and active in research on Australian languages (see Monaghan 2008). Chewings, a geologist and pastoralist in the Northern Territory, was at the time compiling an Arrernte vocabulary.
- 8. This person also appears in the literature as 'Louisa Egginton'.
- 9. Note that there is further unaccessioned, and at this stage only partially examined, material in the SAM that may prove relevant to the project. Note also that many of the published sources relied on by Tindale, too numerous to list here, are found in his catalogue of tribes (Tindale 1974), listed under the various tribal headings.
- 10. For Milerum's biographical details see the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry penned by Tindale (1986).
- 11. The original map with Tindale's annotations is found at SAM AA 338/16/11.
- 12. Warrior was a senior Ngadjuri man who also worked with Ronald Berndt (see Berndt 1987).
- 13. Tindale's etymological practices could at times go wildly astray. Consider the following example of his drawing conclusions based upon spurious etymological premises, albeit with regard to the tribal name 'Djerag' in Western Australia. In the following passage he attempts to show that the

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term 'Djerag' is a post-contact construction and not a valid tribal name: "one of the classic cases of nomenclatorial confusion is the effort of the learned student of kinship systems who possibly misread his own field notes, so that the geographical term Durack Range, named after the Durack family of white pioneer settlers in northwestern Australia, became Durack Ra., Durackra, Durakra and, finally, the Djerag tribe, as an arbitrary phonetic system, using only voiced consonants, took the 'tribal name' into its grip" (Tindale 1974: 38). However, as McConvell (2002: 272) points out: "jarrak is the term for 'talk, speech' in a number of languages in the area, and this is the origin of the term".

14. Problems associated with the notion of tribe and the precise nature and placement of tribal boundaries are discussed in Peterson (1976) and Sutton (1995), for example.