



JOURNAL

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NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 3rd General Meeting of the Society for 1987 will be held in :-

THE CONSERVATION CENTRE, 120 WAKEFIELD STREET, ADELAIDE

ON

MONDAY 25th May 1987 AT 8.00 PM.

AGENDA

1. Apologies :
2. Minutes of the previous General Meeting :
Minutes of the previous General Meeting, held in the Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield Street, Adelaide on 27th April 1987, having been circulated in this journal, to be confirmed.
3. Papers and Journals :
Papers and journals received from other societies and organisations, since the last general meeting, will be tabled at this meeting.
4. Speaker :

Mr Chris Anderson, Curator at the SA Museum will address the Society, and the subject of his address will be :-

" Contemporary Western Desert Paintings :
Where did all the secrets go ? "

5. Supper will be served at the close of the meeting.

R. Allison
Hon. Secretary
120 Wakefield Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

REMINISCENCES :

The editor is very pleased with the response to the notice in the April Journal, and wishes to thank Mr A.C. Parsons of Minlaton for his contribution. Copies of his letter and notes follows.

The Editor,

At your request I am enclosing some Reminiscences of natives on Yorke Peninsula.

Most of what I am enclosing is mentioned in my book recently published,

"Yorke Peninsula, a Residents View."

The second edition is now out, priced at \$6.95, plus postage.

At this stage the R.A.A. is the only shop in Adelaide with stocks of the second edition.

Yours faithfully
A.C. Parsons.

" Reminiscences of Natives on Yorke Peninsula, after closer settlement."

There are still a few native wells on Central and Southern Yorke Peninsula in the same condition, that is shape and depth as when they were used solely by the Aboriginal population.

There are others still in use but have been enlarged for livestock use. One well on Gum Flat, just east of Minlaton is still spoken of as the native well and its name was Minlacowie, from which the town of Minlaton derived its name, also one of the Hundreds of the District Council of Minlaton.

Incidentally the well at Gum Flat has recently been cleaned out and enclosed by a fence by the Council. The local Branch of the National Trust has erected a sign to identify it.

When I became deeply interested in Aboriginal history in 1960, after finding stone artifacts, several elderly men volunteered information. One old Stansbury identify, pointed out a steep gully or cutting in the cliffs between Stansbury and Port Vincent, which local natives were scared of. The only explanation I have heard is perhaps, if the wind was from a certain direction, an eerie sound was created.

Another gentleman from Warooka, who had lived there all his life, explained to me how his mother used to go hunting with the natives. They would form a line and beat through the scrub. His mother had related how she saw a lubra drop a kangaroo by throwing her killing stick at it.

During the first half of the 1930's, an old native drove his horse and buggy periodically from Port Pearce, south to Port Minlacowie, a distance of at least 30 miles. He occasionally procured work laying dunnage (brush-wood, or mats stowed under or among cargo to prevent wetting or chafing, Ed.) and helping at grain stacks at both Port Rickaby and Port Minlacowie. Otherwise he was seen camping in deserted huts, living on rabbits or fish. I have seen him at Bluff beach dressed only in a shirt, with a spear in his hand, wading about in shallow water. He did not walk far, but often stood motionless with his spear poised, waiting for a butterfish, flounder or flathead to swim past. Charlie sometimes called in at our farm and asked for some rations. My Mother would cut him some sandwiches and make a bottle of tea.

At another beach a little south of the Bluff, Parson's beach, sixty years ago I saw a Model T Ford parked off the road. Up on the sand-dunes one native stood watching for fish, the other men spread out along the beach in shallow water, evidently each had a code number. when the observer spotted a fish, he whistled the number of times to suit the code of the man nearest the fish. This happened again many years later.

Between Parson's beach and the Bluff, my Father showed me a high dune, where boot leather and broken glass lay about, which my Father knew was a native campsite.

On rising ground a mile south of the now extinct Port Minlacowie, a man still living can remember when natives camped there among the trees.

"Notes on a Local Native family, as told to A.C. Parsons by Mrs.A.E. Cleland (nee Edwards) Minlaton 1977."

These events would have taken place between 1900 and 1920. This native family, included the grandmother, Tilly, Milly and her son Charlie, Milly's youngest child.

There were twenty one dogs, each dog's name linked with light, Starlight, Moonlight, Sunlight, Sunrise etc.

This family would walk from possibly Point Pearce, or somewhere north of Port Rickaby to Corny Point and back, following the same route each way.

The late Mrs H. Collins knew this family when she lived at Corny Point.

They had a wurlie in Edwards' scrub, west of Minlaton and not far from the homestead and this stood for many years. The natives would come to the house and the only things they would ask for were tea, sugar, flour and baccy.

They would stay indefinitely while the ti-tree was in flower as this was a sign that the Tommy Ruffs were about.

When asked where they obtained drinking water they would say that they had small wells which they kept covered so that they were hidden, it also helped to keep the water cool and prevented small animals from falling in fouling the water.

The natives would search old rubbish dumps for old boots. They would remove the upper which they used for the base of small baskets. These baskets were made from porcupine seed stalks which had to be in the right state of maturity for weaving. The baskets were sold for 1/6 each.

Another camping ground was at Hardwicke Bay in the white sand dunes.

One day Charlie arrived at the Edwards' homestead and when asked where Tilly was, he said that they had left her at Hardwicke Bay sick. Mrs Edwards sent two of the workmen down in the horse and cart with blankets and a billy of gruel. They found her buried up to her knees in sand, weak and undernourished, evidently left to die. The men removed her from the sand wrapped her in the blanket and fed her the gruel. They then took her back to the homestead where she recovered and later was able to accompany the family on their walkabouts.

Mrs Edwards and other kept the family in clothes. Their dogs were never known to attack sheep or let their fires get out of control.

After the rest of the family died Charlie lived on at the Edwards Scrub wurlie for many years. He would come to the house for dinner and Mrs Edwards sent food back with him for his tea. He wanted to be back in his wurlie before dark, he appeared to be afraid of the dark. Later on when he was older, he would stay at the homestead for tea also, and one of the family would accompany him back to the wurlie.

Charlie would walk direct to the beach which would be the southern end of Parsons beach with his spear and stand on a rock, perfectly still, until a large enough fish to spear come along, whether it would be a butterfish, Mullet or flat head, and then spear it. He kept the Edwards family in fish.

After the Edwards shifted to Minlaton, Charlie and other natives would bring their fish into the town and hawk them, and Mrs Edwards would buy what they had not sold. Charlie later lived at Point Pearce Mission station.

This native family were peaceful and much respected by the local white people.

A.C. Parsons.

Additional notes.

While speaking at a meeting of the Edithburgh Museum Committee meeting, several weeks ago (20/4/87) I was told by one of the people present that there are several natives buried in the local cemetery.

At a road junction about halfway between Minlaton and Yorketown, known as Roger's corner (Yonglacowie) the road running off in a south westerly direction was a native track before closer settlement.

A road running east from the Minlaton road, up near Mount Rat, is known as Bob's road, it is the road the natives used between Point Pearce and Black Point.

A.C. Parsons.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Art and Land, formerly housed on the Ground Floor of the Museum's North Wing, has been removed. This exhibition featured the Museum's unique collection of Aboriginal sculptures or Toas, from the Lake Eyre Basin South Australia. In its place will be an exhibition dealing with aspects of the Museum's research programme.

Aboriginal Culture in South Australia has been opened on the Second Floor of the Museum's North Wing (Next to the Egyptian Gallery). This exhibition has been revamped since its last showing to the public, when it was situated on the Ground Floor, prior to the renovations carried out on the North Wing. The basic structure of the exhibition remains intact, with the division of the State into three main Culture Regions : South East, Central Lakes and Western Desert. However, the graphics have been upgraded, new Aboriginal groups and artefacts are featured in some sections and a small amount of contemporary information has been added to each Culture Region.

New objects include : a skin cloak from the Flinders Ranges, basketry items from the lower South East and clubs from the Tatiara area.

S. Hemming Anthropology Division, S.A. Museum.