

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 5.4.1/11

‘OUIWACHILLY’

(last edited: 25/2/2013)

Abstract

‘R. Ouiwachilly’ was recorded with this spelling by surveyor G Bryant in 1839 during the first surveys of Fleurieu Peninsula. It is an Aboriginal name for the main course of Nowhere Else Creek around 2½ km above its junction with Yattagolinga Creek near Rapid Bay, below the reach which he marked ‘Ichicouinga’ (see PNS 5.4.1/12 ?ltyi-kauwingga).

It is not known whether ‘Ouiwachilly’ was originally a place-name, nor which language it is in (probably either Kurna or Ngarrindjeri).

Its meaning is unknown.

<i>Coordinates</i>	-35.548429° Latitude, 138.19067° Longitude.
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	Unknown
<i>Etymology</i>	Unknown
<i>Notes</i>	
<i>Language Family</i>	unknown: probably either Thura-Yura: ‘Kurna’, or Yaraldic: ‘Ngarrindjeri’.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	Uncertain
<i>Pronunciation</i>	Uncertain
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	

Main source evidence

<i>Date</i>	1839
<i>Original source text</i>	“ R. Ouiwachilly ” [marked along Nowhere Else Creek on an unmarked section = Section 1456 in later maps].
<i>Reference</i>	‘Plan of 15 sections in the country adjoining Rapid Bay... Mr Bryant’s survey’, plan 6/15a, Geographical Names Unit.
<i>Informants credited</i>	G Bryant (surveyor).
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	Aboriginal survey guides 1839.

Discussion: 'OUIWACHILLY':

The first surveyors of this southern area, James Poole and G Bryant, recorded a number of names around Rapid Bay, including those that still appear on the maps and signs but also several others which never found their way into public use. Among them was 'Ouiwachilly', marked in 1839 by Bryant specifically along the eastern and main course of Nowhere Else Creek, where it runs below Rapid Bay Road around 2 km from the Main South Road. The same creek upstream to the south-east near the main road was marked 'Ichicouinga'.¹ Perhaps there is some significance in the fact that Bryant locates 'R. Ouiwachilly' immediately below a very steep narrow gully, and 'Ichicouinga' immediately above it.

Rapid Bay was probably regarded as part of 'the Yankalilla Survey' which, like 'the Aldinga Survey', employed Aboriginal men on equal pay in 1839.² So these names collected by Bryant are first-hand information.

THE WORD:

'Couinga' at the end of the name upstream is clearly *kauwingga* 'at the water' in Kurna language; and being by the same hand and from the same origin, it alerts us that 'Oui' in this one might also be interpreted as *awi* or *auwe*.

However, the Kurna language does not begin words with *a*.

Is it an abbreviation of *kauwe* 'water', as found at the *end* of many place-names throughout most of the lands where Thura-Yura languages were spoken? – 'Coobowie', 'Pondalowie', etc. There are a very few Kurna names ending with *kauwe*.³ There are also a few which, following the usual practice for descriptive phrases in Aboriginal languages, begin with *kauwe* 'water' and follow with a descriptive adjective or noun.⁴ But none of them drop the *k*. *Awi* is very rarely used at the beginning of a place-name anywhere where it means 'water', and if this were the case here it would be unique among Kurna records.⁵

This all very uncertain and unlikely as an explanation of this name. More likely is that the surveyors missed *ng* at the beginning of the word. In English this sound is familiar in the middle and end of words like 'singing' but is never found at the beginning. Settlers often ignored it in their spellings, as with *Ngaltingga* ('Aldinga'), and *Ngangki-parringga* ('Onkaparinga'): presumably having mistaken it for a stammer or noise. If so, the first morpheme here would probably be *ngawi*. But this is not among the known Kurna vocabulary.

We could speculate that ‘-illy’ is a mis-hearing of the Kurna locative *-illa*, so that the name would be *Ngawi-watyilla*. But this has a four-syllable root *ngawi-watyV*,⁶ and in the Kurna system all four-syllable roots use the locative *-ngga*, never *-illa*. Nor is there any known Kurna word *waty* which might have had a Dual *watyilla*.

Was ‘Ouiwachilly’ given in the neighbouring Yaraldic language (Ngarrindjeri/Ramindjeri)? In surveys this far south, it is quite possible that Bryant’s Aboriginal guides included not only Kurna men hired in Adelaide but Ngarrindjeri-speaking men hired at Encounter Bay, which was considerably closer. Mann and Wyatt had established contacts for interpretation with Encounter Bay locals in September 1837 during the Driscoll death inquiry. By this time around mid-1839 Finniss, Hall and others had already been surveying there, and the whale fisheries had been active (on and off) for two years. Ngarrindjeri-speaking guides would of course give their own Ngarrindjeri versions of any place-names.

The Management File of this name has some more speculation about its possible etymologies. But both *Ngawi-watyilla* and ‘Ouiwachilly’ seem to be an impasse. With no other evidence to guide us, we don’t know which language it is, nor what it means (if anything).

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End of Summary

¹ Bryant 1840, ‘Plan of 15 sections in the country adjoining Rapid Bay’, 6/15a, GNU.

² Register 10/8/1839: 6a.

³ PNS 5.3/8 ‘Tyutyugawi’, 5.4.1/12 ‘Itchecowey’, 9/32 ‘Mercowie’.

⁴ PNS 4.1.1/3 ‘Cowie-manilla’; 4.3.2/1 ‘Cowie-orlunga’.

⁵ For discussion of these matters see Hercus and Potezny1999, ‘Finch vs Finch-water’, *Rec. SA Mus.* 31(2): 165-180.

⁶ The capital V signifies an unknown Vowel.