

The Campsite

There is some dispute as to the exact location of the Nyungar camp on the morning of the 28th of October. In a report on the significance of the Murray Districts Hospital Site to the Aboriginal people (Consulting Headquarters, 1997), the campsite was identified as having been on the north-west bank of the river, just east of where Oakley Brook meets the Murray river. This estimation was apparently based on a map apparently drawn in 1865 by Mr Cowcher and Mr Hammond. The location is indicated on Map 3.

Note that it was in this approximate location, at the end of Camp Road, where Lieutenant Bunbury established the first barracks in Pinjarra in 1836 (Harries, 1998). The road leading down to the water's edge nearest to this area is called 'Camp Road'. While there has been some speculation that the road was named as such because of its proximity to the Nyungar campsite, Harries asserted that its name derived from being located near Bunbury's barracks – the first European 'camp' in the area.

On the other hand, Harries (pers. comm. 1998) suggested that the campsite may have been just south of the meeting place of Oakley Brook and the river. The area is indicated on Map 3. A campsite at either this, or the previous location referred to, would fit with the location of the ambush indicated on Map 3 ('Scenario 1').

Finally, Nyungar Elders suggest that the campsite may in fact have been somewhere in the vicinity of the present day Pinjarra Massacre Memorial Area. This would be consistent with their estimations of the party's first crossing, and the location of the ambush ('Scenario 2'). The location is depicted in Map 4.

In conclusion, upon considering the views of the various authorities on the subject, it appears that there are two most likely locations as to the route taken by Stirling's party in search of the Nyungar camp, and the place of the ambush. These are indicated in Maps 3 and 4. The implication is that the graves would be somewhere in the vicinity of one of these two sites. We turn now to a consideration of the evidence relating to the Massacre that has emerged over the years.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES AND ORAL HISTORIES

Over the years, evidence of different forms has emerged which confirms that the Pinjarra Massacre took place within the boundary indicated in the Aboriginal Sites Department's Significant Sites File S1025, and that victims of the Massacre were buried somewhere within this area. There is evidence of at least one grave located in close vicinity to the junction where Oakley Brook meets the Murray River. Other information has pointed to the location of graves in areas at some distance from this point. All evidence is consistent with either one or both of the 'scenarios' detailed respectively in Maps 3 and 4. However none of the evidence thus far has eliminated one or other of the scenarios.

Evidence includes physical remnants from the Massacre, such as human skeletons, musket balls, and possibly fighting axes. Nyungar and Wadjella oral histories, and powerful spiritual experiences by Nyungars also point to particular areas. Map 5 illustrates the location of the evidence detailed below. While evidence was actively sought early on in the research phase, new information has continued to emerge as the research has progressed. Some of the