

believed that the area where it was discovered was near where the soldiers had camped at the time of the Massacre. The badge had been in the possession of Mr White for about 30 years before it was handed over to the W.A. Archives by his wife.

#### Axes:

When walking along the Murray River one day in 1968/9, Bruce and Naomi Michael spotted an old axe embedded in the eastern bank of the river, about one and a half metres down (see 'Axe 1' on Map 5). The river bank was several metres in height. The axe was exposed because the side of the bank had been washed away with the river. They commented that it was shaped like a fighting axe, and was like nothing they'd ever seen before. Mr Michael sketched a drawing of the axe, emphasizing the many sharp points to the head. The wooden handle was almost rotted away, but the steel head was still intact. Judging by the style and age of the axe, they felt that it was almost certainly a remnant of the Pinjarra Massacre.

Around 1970, when Theo Kearing was in his teens, he also found an axe embedded in the bank of the river on the west side, south of where the Michaels had found their axe (see 'Axe 2', Map 5). Mr Kearing had not been aware of the axe found by the Michaels, but from his description of the axe he found, it could well have been the same style. He described it as very old and unusual. He showed it to an older wadjella fella who was extremely interested by it, and immediately bought it from him. In later years, he felt strongly that the axe had been from the Pinjarra Massacre.

However, military historians such as Geoff Blackburn (1998) have suggested that it is highly unlikely that Stirling's men carried such axes on the expedition to Pinjarra. It may therefore be that the axes were used in subsequent years to clear the land for farming.

#### **Oral histories & spiritual experiences**

In addition to the physical evidence that has been uncovered over the years, Indigenous oral history points to particular locations. This oral history is based on stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, as well as strong spiritual experiences in certain areas along the river.

#### The Blythewood Burial Mound and surrounds

Peel Region Elder Joe Walley communicated with Theo Kearing and the consultant that his grandparents had told him about a burial mound just south of the Massacre Memorial Area (see 'Blythewood Burial Mound', Map 5).

... You know where the sandy hill is on McLarty's – the banksia trees and things?  
... Just in this slope here, on the side of the hill, is where my old Grandfather and Grandmother always said – old Dave Nannup and Grandmother Emily – they said that it was a burial ground and some of the bodies was buried in there... Because that's when we used to come and go down here fishing, they used to always talk about that place... This is one of the reasons why the old McLartys didn't want to take that bush. That's why they promised they would leave that as a thicket. Old Donald (McLarty)...

On this basis of this information, Joe Walley commented: "All through the side of the hill is where I'd like to get tested (for burials)."

Mr Walley's comments were corroborated by Mr Vic Beacham and several other informants.