

# RECALLING THE ELLISTON INCIDENT



In 1992 the artist Siv Grava supervised members of the Elliston community in a search for images to represent the district's life and culture on the walls of both the Community Agricultural Hall and the public conveniences on the foreshore, producing one of South Australia's biggest and most distinctive murals. The community found historical, agricultural, fishing and sporting images to celebrate this west coast country town's sense of what matters. On the north-western side of the building, around the back, is a representation of an Indigenous family standing on a cliff top staring out at the sun setting on Waterloo Bay. At their feet are shells, suggesting the dozens of middens and campsites that still can be found along the coast. The image hints at a number of narratives. Only a small percentage of the wall space of the building is given over to representations of Indigenous experience. The family stands on a cliff edge at sunset, the prosaic nineteenth-century trope encouraging the viewer to accept the idea that the Aborigines have had their day. By 1992, the image suggests, the traces in this country of the Nauo, the Wirangu and the Kukutha are as fragile and transitory as the middens they have left behind. They belong to a *pre*-history, they survive only as fragile archaeological evidence in the shifting sands.

The image of Aboriginal people on a cliff edge hints at popular memories of a series of events in the history of the Elliston district. There still circulates on the west coast (and beyond) shadowy, incomplete fragments of a local legend about Indigenous people driven to their deaths over a cliff near Elliston as payback for the murders of two or three settlers.

Typical of the *written* versions of the Elliston incident is 'The Massacre that Mangultie Did Not Forget' by Betty Mac, published in



Mural on Community Agricultural Hall at Elliston  
(photograph by Rick Hosking)



Detail of the mural on the Community Agricultural Hall at  
Elliston (photograph by Rick Hosking)

the *Mail* of 30 April 1932 and containing many of the details that have circulated since the late nineteenth century. A hut at Lake Newland is the scene, a shepherd and his two sons described. The shepherd is murdered by an Indigenous man named Mangultie. When the sons return to the hut 'ready and hungry for their "tea" . . . Mangultie, an exultant gleam in his eye, pointed towards the camp oven. "Tea in there!" he said.'<sup>1</sup> The sons find their father's head roasting in the camp oven, his body later discovered some distance away from the hut. The police arrive and an unnamed 'trooper' takes charge, a man 'who folk to this day say could strike terror into the heart of any erring blackfellow by his appearance and demeanour'. Horsemen assemble with their dogs and round up the Indigenous people of the district and drive them over the cliffs.<sup>2</sup>

Another substantial representation of the story is local author Neil Thompson's 1969 novel *The Elliston Incident*,<sup>3</sup> which details a dark and violent story of the rising of the Wirangi [*sic*] and Kukutha people, led by their 'Chief' Jaggal, against the white settlers of the west coast some time last century. The discovery of the body of a decapitated shepherd named John Hamp, his head found roasting in a camp oven, provokes the whites to retaliate against the Aborigines for the murder. A band of vigilante horsemen is organised, a huge policeman named Gehirty [*sic*] taking a leading role; the Wirangi are rounded up and driven over the cliffs (here named 'the Bluffs') to the south of Elliston. The novel describes 20 deaths.

As a journalist observed in 1935, no 'episode in connection with the aborigines in South Australia has raised more controversy than the "massacre" of Waterloo Bay, somewhere about 1848'.<sup>4</sup> Since at l e a s e t the 1850s there has been community debate about whether the massacre actually took place, a debate that reveals a great deal about uneasy memories of our pioneer past and of violence on the frontier. Every decade or so another version of the Elliston 'incident' is published, the details disputed, letters written to the editor, the only certainty that of contestation and disagreement.

Is there *any* historical basis for this gothic tale? Most versions of the story begin with the murder of the hutkeeper John Hamp.<sup>5</sup> He was killed near Weepra Spring on 23 June 1848, on William Pinkerton's<sup>6</sup> Stony Point station near Lake Newland. His body was found some distance from his hut, and it appears that when attacked he had been

walking towards the scrub with a cross-cut saw to cut timber for fuel. He had left his firearms behind in the hut. A number of spear wounds and a deep laceration to the left side of his head were described as having caused his death. Hamp is buried near the site of the hut at Weepa Spring, the site marked today by a plain granite memorial.

Hamp's death was followed in August 1848 by an 'affray', the shooting of at least one Aborigine by William Pinkerton's overseer, George Stewart, at Lake Newland after the theft of a shirt from the hut of a shepherd, John Wood.<sup>7</sup> The victim is not named in any official account. Lance-Corporal James Geharty's report<sup>8</sup> records that the victim was shot through the stomach: when Geharty went to the site a month after the shooting, the body had been mostly eaten by dingoes. No action was taken against Stewart and Wood.

In May 1849 the deaths of five 'natives' were reported: Karakundere<sup>9</sup> and Yurdlarir (boys of ten or thirteen), Puyultu and Ngamania (husband and wife), and Pirrapa (an infant), all of whom had eaten arsenic-poisoned flour stolen by an Aboriginal youth called Illeri from a hut on William R. Mortlock's station near Yeelanna. The person responsible was the hut-keeper, Patrick Dwyer, who was later arrested by Inspector Alexander Tolmer, charged with murder but then released by Charles J. Driver, the Government Resident in Port Lincoln.<sup>10</sup> Dwyer left South Australia shortly after for the United States. This episode may be the source of a number of local legends about similar poisonings elsewhere in the colony<sup>11</sup> and may have precipitated the payback murder of Captain James Rigby Beevor on 3 May 1849 and that of Anne Easton on 7 May 1849.

Captain Beevor<sup>12</sup> was in partnership with E.B. Lodwick on Tornto (also spelled Taunto and Tonto), about 80 kilometres north-west of Port Lincoln, between Mount Hope and Warrow. On the morning of 3 May, Lodwick had gone off to look after the sheep, leaving Beevor with three Indigenous men, one woman and a child, Beevor's servant, the latter having been sent out that morning to recover a tether rope and a horse. That evening Lodwick returned to find Beevor lying outside the hut with two spears through his heart, the hut ransacked and £70 value of goods taken. Beevor had been making a chair outside his hut when attacked by what seemed to have been a number of Indigenous people, including his young servant.<sup>13</sup> Beevor is buried in the Happy Valley cemetery near Port Lincoln.<sup>14</sup>

Anne (or Annie) Easton<sup>15</sup> was the first white woman to take up

residence in the Lake Hamilton district which had only been settled for about a year. Her husband James was employed on Edward Bowyer Vaux's Lake Hamilton Run, the neighbouring lease to Beevor's.<sup>16</sup> After her murder, James Easton gave evidence that he had left his wife, who was still in bed, with the instruction that she should employ 'a native and his wife' to cut grass 'for the purpose of putting into a bed-tick'.<sup>17</sup> When he returned, he found the grass cut outside the hut door and, inside, his wife's body speared in several places 'on the bed-place' on the floor. Some commentators suggested that she was raped,<sup>18</sup> but Geharty's evidence asserted she died from the effects of a number of wounds: three to her breast, another through both cheeks, one in the back of her neck and a heavy bruise on her thigh.<sup>19</sup> The hut had been rifled, and one of the items stolen, the ramrod of a gun, would later be found in the possession of suspects.<sup>20</sup> Her infant six-week-old son Alfred (whom she was apparently dressing when she was attacked) was unharmed. When discovered, the naked child was exhausted from crying all day beside his dead mother.<sup>21</sup> Easton is buried in what is now the Lake Hamilton cemetery. The two men convicted and hanged for her murder are buried in the grounds of the old Port Lincoln police station.

The next 'affray' occurred three weeks after Easton's death, on



Annie Easton's grave (photograph by Rick Hosking)

27 May 1849, on Thomas Cooper Horn's<sup>22</sup> Kappawanta Run, which centred on Bramfield and extended as far west as Waterloo Bay.<sup>23</sup> Stores were taken from a hut and hutkeeper David Allen and shepherd James Brown threatened. Horn and some of his station hands gave chase, and when they came up on the fleeing party, spears were thrown and shots fired. The suspects then split into two, Horn and his men following one group to the Waterloo Bay cliffs, which the suspects climbed down attempting to escape. Horn and his men fired on them: two were killed on the spot and one died of wounds later. Five other Aboriginal people were apprehended in possession of stolen goods.

Government Resident Charles J. Driver and Tolmer both have recorded detailed accounts of the 'affray'. Driver notes that Horn and some of his employees pursued the Aborigines to the cliffs, and after a brief conflict two were killed and eight captured.<sup>24</sup> Tolmer reports the same episode and similarly does not mention large numbers of casualties,<sup>25</sup> describing his arrival at Horn's station and the subsequent pursuit which resulted in several arrests.<sup>26</sup>

The colonial criminal justice system took its full course with those arrested and charged over the various offences, the authorities taking considerable care to demonstrate that British justice would prevail. In September 1849 Neulatta (or Neentulta or Needgalta), Keelgulta (or Kulyulta, Kulgulta or Culgalta), Pulluruninga and Yabmanna were escorted back to Adelaide. Needgalta and Kulgulta (an old man) were tried and convicted of Beevor's murder and sentenced to death.<sup>27</sup> They were returned from Adelaide to Taunto, and hanged from a red gum on a spring cart scaffold outside Beevor's hut.<sup>28</sup> Father and son Ngálda (Ilgalti) and Bakkilti (or Pakilte, and sometimes spelled Bakilta) and Pularpintye (or Purtapintye) were charged with the murder of Easton, but both were acquitted for lack of evidence.<sup>29</sup> Korlo was also charged with being an accessory before the fact of the murder of Easton. Yaingulta, Wirao, Winulla and Yaluma were arrested and charged with various offences for the attack on Horn's station.

Mingulta and Malgalta were arrested a little later in Port Lincoln by Trooper Geharty and charged with the murder over a year before of John Hamp.<sup>30</sup> They were found guilty and sentenced to death but later released when doubts were raised about the value of 'native testimony' collected by Geharty – such testimony in other cases against white men had been ruled insufficient to warrant a conviction.<sup>31</sup> Before their release they were taken back to Taunto to witness the hangings of

Neentulta and Keelgulta.<sup>32</sup>

There were more arrests in the months to come. One of the most poignant of the stories that has survived is that of Maltalta, who was arrested by Geharty in February 1850, and charged as an accomplice in Hamp's murder. Maltalta (or Multulti) was sent to Adelaide but only remained in Adelaide Gaol a few days, released in Adelaide for lack of evidence.<sup>33</sup> He tried to walk home to his country but was intercepted by a group of Narrunga men from Yorke Peninsula and executed as a trespasser. During the murder trial Kanyana, a boy of 12 years of age, gave evidence that when Maltalta first arrived in their camp he had said his name was Maltalta and that 'he was going around to his country', that is, walking home. The four men charged with his murder were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged on 9 June 1851. The court was well aware that two legal systems had come into violent and intractable conflict but was determined that British criminal justice would prevail.<sup>34</sup>

*Was* there a massacre? There seems to be no *direct* evidence of any 'crusade against the natives' in the official documents from the period 1848–1850. The outletter book kept by Charles Driver still exists, but there is no description of a massacre to be found in any of the many letters Driver sent to the colonial secretary's office in the period in question.<sup>35</sup> There is only one letter that might be read as suggesting that there was a group of vigilantes out searching for the alleged murderers.

Similarly there is no *direct* evidence in the memoirs written by individuals who were directly involved in the events of 1848–1849. None of the policemen involved (Geharty, Tolmer and Henry Holroyd) has anything to say about a massacre on the scale described in the legend. Nathaniel Hailes, Charles Driver's clerk, does not report any such event in his memoirs. Nor has Sub-Protector (and later Court Translator) Pastor Clamor Schürmann anything to say.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems that an aggregation of details drawn from a number of these episodes from 1848 and 1849 is responsible for the more dramatic late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century versions of the 'Elliston incident'. The pillaging of Horn's hut, the subsequent pursuit by Horn and his men, some shooting and deaths on the cliffs overlooking Waterloo Bay: these details can be seen as the origins of many of the details that will later become integral to the legend.

Whatever did (or did not) happen in and around Elliston in the late 1840s has been argued about for a long time, at least since the first

version of the story was published. 'H.J.C.'s 'A Reminiscence of Port Lincoln' appeared on Saturday 14 August 1880 in the *Adelaide Observer*. This piece, which has been taken as 'history' by some commentators, was in fact published in 'The Miscellany' section of the *Observer*, subtitled 'Literature'.<sup>37</sup> H.J.C. are the initials of Henry John Congreve (1829–1918), the brother of the writer 'Maud Jean Franc'. Congreve arrived in South Australia in 1849 on the *Trafalgar*, and worked variously as a doctor, bullock driver and newspaper editor. He lived for 18 months in Port Lincoln on various pastoral runs, later moving to Burra, then Gawler. He left South Australia for the Victorian diggings in 1851 and did not return to South Australia until 1880.<sup>38</sup> Congreve published many short stories in newspapers and magazines in South Australia and other colonies. He was interested in writing *creatively* about the sensational, gothic aspects of frontier and bush experience: murders, massacres, lost children, lonely graves and so on. Such popular and ephemeral pieces filled the literary pages of most Australian newspapers of the period.<sup>39</sup>

Congreve's version of the Elliston incident contains many of the controversial details that later appear in the more colourful versions (published or otherwise) of what *might* have happened. It is a fanciful and sometimes wildly inaccurate fictionalising of the events of the late 1840s. In lurid fashion, the piece describes four murders by an Aborigine called Multulti (the name of one of the suspects in the Hamp murder arrested by Geharty in 1849). Multulti, it is claimed, 'was motivated by a desire to expel the whites from the country'. The first murder is that of Captain B – while the latter was engaged in carpentry. The second, of Mary, the 'young and pretty wife' of a shepherd and the object of Multulti's 'fierce wishes', and the third, of Mary's baby son. The fourth, of an *unnamed* hutkeeper, who was surprised while cutting wood and killed when his head was cut in half with his crosscut saw 'while yet alive'. The piece includes some of what will become the characteristic features of the legend: the murders themselves, one committed with a cross-cut saw; a retaliatory 'drive' organised by Harry, the victim Mary's husband; the shooting of many Aboriginal people, the survivors driven over a cliff; the capture of Mary's killers and their later execution outside Captain B – 's hut. Multulti survived, was captured much later and died in Adelaide. Interestingly, Congreve does *not* refer to a head in a camp oven, nor does he call the hutkeeper Hamp.

Congreve's representation of Multulti includes the suggestion that



'from an accident in childhood he had been crippled in one foot'<sup>40</sup> so that, once the pursuit started, the settlers were able to track him and his party to their camp. Sergeant Geharty's evidence at the trial of Mingulta and Malgulta (the two accused of Hamp's murder) reveals that at least part of the prosecution's case against Mingalta was based on his having an injured great toe, which enabled his footprints to be tracked by Police-Constable John Dann for 20 miles.<sup>41</sup>

Who might have been 'Mr S—,' the 'captain' of the vigilante posse? When the nineteenth-century novelist employs the convention of using only the initial letter of a surname, it can be taken to mean that that character is based on a real individual and the writer is preserving his true identity. Congreve may have had in mind George Stewart, William Pinkerton's overseer and a man implicated in a number of 'unhappy collisions'. Congreve worked on a number of different runs in the Port Lincoln district between 1849 and 1851 and, given the relatively small number of settlers on the coast at that time, it is likely that he knew Stewart and thus may have heard of his involvement in collisions with Aboriginal people.<sup>42</sup>

Within a fortnight of its publication, Congreve's short story attracted comment. G.K., a west coast resident, wrote to the *Observer* to point out 'errors' in Congreve's piece, insisting: that the child survived (and still lives, says 'G.K.');

that Congreve's account of the fight was 'highly coloured'; that only one Aboriginal man was shot dead and none of the settlers was injured; that 'the man Hemp [*sic*] who had his head sawn open, was murdered some time previously'; and that 'Harry' the husband of the murdered women was 'as sane of mind as H.J.C. himself, and perhaps possessing a better memory'.<sup>43</sup> The *Observer* asked Congreve to respond to these accusations. In an 'explanation' printed beneath G.K.'s letter, Congreve makes several points: he had written from memory; he had lived at the very hut where the executions had occurred (at Taunto); he had been a member of a party sent out to capture Multulti, a 'Lachlan blackfellow'; and he was pleased to discover the child had lived. Congreve added this rider:

I never intended my sketch to have the weight of an historical document. It was merely written as illustrative of the trials and dangers of the early settlers . . . It would not be wise (if able) to more fully particularize localities or individuals concerned in black

encounters, as it might lead to unpleasant interference from those who are concerned with the protection of the aborigines.<sup>44</sup>

Congreve insists his 'sketch' is not history but fiction designed to 'illustrate'. But as G.K. demonstrates and Congreve admits, the sketch exaggerates and distorts what (probably) happened. Congreve's piece contributes to the developing national myth of the violent, blood-thirsty, vengeful 'black' and the dark unholy fight on the frontier that, like drought, floods and fire, had to be fought and won by the pioneer before the 'new heaven and new earth' might be achieved.<sup>45</sup> Congreve also admits that covert and unreported violence did occur in 'black encounters'.

The second published reference to the 'Waterloo Bay Massacre' is an oblique reference in a short story called 'Doctor' by Ellen Liston, published in the *Observer* of 17 June 1882. Rick Hosking has argued elsewhere<sup>46</sup> that Liston must have read Congreve's 'A Reminiscence of Port Lincoln', in that in the same issue (14 August 1880) in which Congreve's piece appeared, Liston published a poem 'The Fire King: A Reminiscence of 1851'.<sup>47</sup> She probably heard the story of Annie Easton's death when she worked as a governess on Nilkerloo Station between 1869 and 1872 – her employer just happened to be John Chipp Hamp, the son of the John Hamp who was murdered at Weepira Spring in 1848.

The incident at the centre of Liston's short story 'Doctor' seems to be based loosely on the historical murder of the shepherd's wife Anne Easton at Lake Hamilton. In the Liston story, Kit, the pregnant wife of a shepherd, is attacked by an Aboriginal man called Coomultie, but she does not die; her life is saved by a dog called Doctor who kills Coomultie. As a consequence of the attack, Kit loses her baby, provoking what Liston calls 'a crusade against the natives' organised by the 'hands' – that is, employees from the surrounding stations, not leaseholders nor police.<sup>48</sup>

Did Liston hear whispers about a massacre while she worked on Nilkerloo? Perhaps John Chipp Hamp told her the story – he seems to have told just about everyone else. If a massacre did occur, were the 'hands' responsible? There is some evidence that while official parties led by Tolmer and Geharty were out and about in the field in search of those responsible for the killings, there were also unofficial parties in the field. Historian Greg Charter notes that on 16 May 1849, John

Stewart Brown, Charles Driver's clerk in Port Lincoln, reported to the colonial secretary's office that 'there were three separate parties of volunteers out at that time'. Charter suggests that this information is consistent with

the major component of the later stories, i.e. a party of armed horsemen in pursuit of a large body of Aborigines in the vicinity of Elliston near the end of the decade and indicates that if the massacre took place it occurred following the Beevor and Easton murders.<sup>49</sup>

Another interesting detail about the publication history of Liston's short story 'Doctor' emerges from the fact that it was reprinted twice in 1936 – the centenary of European settlement in South Australia. A revised version of 'Doctor' (with significant editorial changes) appeared in a volume celebrating women's roles in European settlement, the anthology *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*.<sup>50</sup> It was then reprinted (in its original 1882 *Observer* version) in *Pioneers: Stories by Ellen Liston*. The editors of the revised version removed three paragraphs from the original. The first contains a reference to 'troublesome' blacks. The second has Liston's description of a 'vast and terrible stillness' that pressed so heavily upon her character that she was 'tempted to flee away shrieking as from some unholy presence'. The third paragraph mentions the 'muster of hands from several stations . . . who had gone in for a crusade against the natives'. The removal of these paragraphs may have had something to do with the kinds of memories of pioneering the editors wished to valorise in 1936, South Australia's Centennial Year. Better erase from the record any suggestion of settlers' violence against Aborigines, any unease about colonial history. Liston's character Kit's sensing of an 'unholy presence' in this frontier landscape can be read these days as the discovery of the reality of Indigenous presence, even if that presence is demonised, represented in crudely Manichean terms. Liston's phrase reveals what cultural historian J.J. Healy has described as 'the great rich . . . unease' evident in much nineteenth-century Australian writing,<sup>51</sup> the melancholy strain which reveals the dark side of the Australian Dream.<sup>52</sup>

By the turn of the century a well-developed local legend was circulating about the 'Elliston incident', a story that became part of the folklore of South Australia: one of the 1926 correspondents to the *Register* who claimed he first heard the story in 1869 or 1870.<sup>53</sup> However, the

earliest reference to the *legend* of the Elliston massacre – that is, to the fact of a oral account circulating on the west coast, and a mocking description of the circumstances under which it might be retold – first appeared in the *Register* and was then later reprinted in a 1906 travel book called *The Real West Coast: A New Picture of a Rumour-Damaged Country* by E.W. Parish. Parish claimed that while travelling around the coast with a friend he had heard ‘the tragic legend’ told a dozen or more times, the details of which ‘varied according to the degree of elasticity of the narrator’s veracity’. Parish records, in what he calls a ‘literary tabloid’, most of the familiar details: the son discovering his murdered father’s head in a camp oven; the rounding up of the supposed Aboriginal murderers by a posse of horsemen; the ‘herding’ over the Elliston cliffs and significant numbers of casualties.<sup>54</sup> Parish’s scornful response to the storytellers who pressed themselves on him may seem callous and insensitive, but nevertheless his understanding of the social functions of local legends is apparent. Parish also records how he and his companion were told the story so often that they were forced to develop a strategy to deflect yet more retellings. The west coast seems to have been peopled with yarnspinnners keen to claim their right as locals to tell the story.

Former policeman Thomas Clode probably knew some of the same informants who had earbashed Parish. Clode joined the South Australian police force in 1865, served for many years on the west coast and for some time was stationed at Venus Bay. In 1915 his recollections were published in the *Register*, including what should now be seen as many of the conventional details: Hamp’s murder, his son discovering the head in the camp oven, a posse of constables under Sergeant Geraghty [*sic*] who rounded up the blacks and drove them over the cliffs. Clode’s version contains two new details: he insists that John Chipp Hamp ran away after finding his father’s head in the oven, but ‘the blacks traced him, and kept him for three months before the police found him’.<sup>55</sup> This is the only version of the ‘Elliston Incident’ which gestures towards the ‘captivity narrative’ tradition.

In 1926 an innocent letter from John Dow to the editor of the *Register*, inquiring how Waterloo Bay got its name, made the question of the ‘massacre’ a matter of public debate.<sup>56</sup> West coaster Archie Beviss responded three weeks later, provoking a ding-dong battle between *Register* journalist A.T. Saunders and Beviss in the pages of the paper. At issue was the authenticity of the Elliston legend, Beviss

relying on hearsay evidence recounted in yarns, Saunders on what he could establish on the official record. The battle was joined by correspondents from both sides of the debate, from all around South Australia and from Elliston residents in particular.

Beviss's name is now associated forever with the most bloodthirsty of the versions of the legend. He claims to have heard about the massacre from, among others, 'the late Mr John Chip [*sic*] Hamp and Sgt. Garretty [*sic*]', both of whom he names as 'principals'. He records the main features of the story as follows. Hamp (then 16 years old and a shepherd) finds his father's head in a camp oven, the head cut off with a crosscut saw. While the sergeant is investigating, a second murder of a woman occurs, prompting 'Garretty' to approach the government demanding drastic action. The government, Beviss insists, 'granted the request, and the sergeant organised a force 160 strong, and planned the drive', which resulted in about 260 Aboriginal people being driven over the Elliston cliffs. The account ends as follows:

The effect of the drive was tranquillity among the blacks from Port Lincoln to Fowler's Bay. To use Sgt. Garratty's [*sic*] words, as he told me over 40 years ago, 'Show them a gun or crack a whip, and it is quite sufficient.' His last words were, 'I had a good lot of men with me then. I would not like to try it now.' The sergeant named the place Waterloo Bay after what he saw happened.<sup>57</sup>

Many of Beviss's assertions can be challenged. Geharty did not name Waterloo Bay.<sup>58</sup> The husband of the murdered woman Ann Easton could not have been 'well in the van of the drive'; James Easton went to Adelaide after his wife's murder and it seems he never returned to the west coast. Their son Alfred was raised by the pastoralist Andrew Tennant.<sup>59</sup> There is no evidence that the government sanctioned any 'drive'. Finally, if the vigilante party contained 160 men, given what happened after the Rufus incident near Lake Victoria when a number of participants recorded their recollections, it is likely that at least one or two manuscript accounts of the massacre would have survived. No such diary or journal accounts exist.

In spite of many inaccuracies, the influence of the Beviss version of the story was strong enough to shape many later descriptions of the district and its lurid history. A typical note is struck in P. Hosking's 1936 assertion that Elliston is located on Waterloo Bay, the latter 'appropriately named on account of the sad stories, so numerous in this

part of the State, of the outrages by aboriginals and reprisals by white settlers'.<sup>60</sup>

Similarly J.F. O'Dea's 1960s pamphlet held in the Mortlock Library notes that 'it is generally agreed that the story is basically [*sic*] correct although generally not accepted by Historians due to lack of documented evidence'.<sup>61</sup> O'Dea notes that 'one elderly man who was spoken to some years ago and whose father was said to be in the 'drive' told me that the infamous Trooper Geharty told those who took part that "it was a terrible thing that they had done and there would be no record made of the incident"'.<sup>62</sup>

Many versions of the story in print claim to rely on hearsay evidence from individuals either living in the Elliston district at the time of the alleged massacre, or from the relatives of witnesses. When the claim to authority is based on 'sources' living in or around the Elliston district, such versions reveal one of the typical characteristics of local legends: that local identities play a key role in fixing one version of the truth. John Chipp Hamp (John Hamp's son) and Sergeant James Geharty are often mentioned as telling the story of the incident, for many years after the event. Numbers of commentators quote one or the other or even both. But it is unlikely that John Chipp Hamp should have been (as Beviss insists) one of the principals in any massacre: his obituary in the *Observer* notes that he was 12 when his father was murdered.<sup>63</sup>

Yet it does seem that John Chipp Hamp was partly responsible for spreading the legend of his father's death. D.R. Myers lived on Oaklands, the neighbouring property to Chickerloo which John Chipp Hamp took over in 1865. As an old man of 85, Myers reports in a reminiscence in the *Port Lincoln Times* in 1931 that:

Many a time I have heard my old friend and neighbour [John Hamp] . . . tell of that tragedy, and I have seen his father's grave. . . . Such a grim and dreadful happening caused great wrath and indignation among the white folk in this isolated part of the State. Police and settlers scoured the country on horseback, collected many of the natives and drove them towards Waterloo Bay, frightening them thoroughly. Nowadays, this drive is known as the Waterloo Bay massacre, and the results have been exaggerated, the early settlers being loath to speak of it.<sup>64</sup>

While travelling with John Chipp Hamp, N.A. Richardson also heard him tell the story. Writing in the *Register* in 1931, he describes how:

Mr Hamp told us the story of his discovering his father murdered by the natives; the head had been cut off the body, and was in the camp oven in the fireplace. He told me of the rally made by the few settlers then in the district, and of how they rounded up the natives, and how they made for the coast, where many of them were driven over the rocks, and perished in the sea. He said that was how the place became known as Waterloo Bay. The real murderer was afterwards arrested and hanged close to where Mr Hamp sen., was killed. Was it likely that those few settlers were going to report their escapade to the police – the nearest of whom were then stationed at Port Lincoln, some 120 miles away?<sup>65</sup>

And as late as 1970, writing in the *Advertiser*, the writer Max Fatchen quotes Arthur Betteridge-MacBeth who met the 70-year-old Hamp northwest of Port Augusta around the turn of the century:

he told me . . . about a massacre of aborigines after the death of his father. . . he told me how he and his elder brother as boys had returned from herding sheep and had found their father's head in a camp oven. Hamp had said that a chain of men had been formed and they ranged across the countryside driving the aborigines to the coast and over the cliff into the sea. He never named the cliff.<sup>66</sup>

Within the Hamp family opinion is divided about their ancestor's powers of recall. To begin with, Fatchen quotes Rupert Giles, a great-grandson of John Hamp:

The story handed down by Mr Giles's father and his cousins was that John Hamp's head was found in the oven by his son. The cousins' version was that the settlers were so incensed that they rallied together, mustered all the aborigines in the vicinity and drove them into the sea.<sup>67</sup>

But at least one member of the Hamp family did not believe his grandfather's yarn. Dr Edward J[ohn?] C[hipp?] Hamp wrote to the *Advertiser* in 1937 with the view that:

Mr J.D. Somerville['s] exceptionally careful research work . . . shows conclusively that the alleged massacre never occurred, and that the head in the camp oven story is a myth. . . [T]he early settlers did not take the law into their own hands, as is commonly depicted'.<sup>68</sup>

Many years later, in a letter to P.J. Baillie, Dr Hamp continued to pour scorn on the Bevis version of the story:

[t]here would never have been this interest in the Hamp family, had it not been for the murder and the story of the head in the oven, which was invented by the late drover, Archie Bevis [*sic*], who was a self-confessed liar. The press publish references and the stories become resurrected. Descendants of the old pioneers believe the Bevis story, and because of this, the only proof positive (in spite of the findings at the Coroner's Inquest and the trial of the natives Mingalta and Malgalta), is to view the skeleton, because there are still plenty of people who believe that the Police of those days deliberately suppressed the truth, and dreadfully untrue indictment, linked up with the alleged massacre of natives at Waterloo Bay, where they were said to have been driven over the cliffs to certain death. This too is a lie.<sup>69</sup>

No doubt Hamp's grandson is right: an autopsy *might* settle the matter.

There are problems with all these versions. Hamp's son John Chipp Hamp is *not* mentioned as being present as a shepherd on Pinkerton's Stoney Point Run in any *Register* account of the later trial, nor in any of the letters to the colonial secretary's office from Charles Driver,<sup>70</sup> nor by Police Commissioner George Dashwood in his quarterly returns which mention the murder.<sup>71</sup> The only named companion for whom Hamp worked as hutkeeper was Henry Hammond, the man who found the body and reported the murder to the overseer, George Stewart.<sup>72</sup> The son John Chipp Hamp seems not even to have been present. Surely the poignancy of the detail of a son discovering his father's murdered body would have attracted at least one of those individuals close to the events to have recorded the fact of his presence. So why did John Chipp Hamp tell the story that he had discovered his father's body, not once but many times? Did *he* invent the detail about the head in the camp oven? Or did he accept at face value a yarn circulated by others such as Bevis?

James Geharty's role in the alleged affair is equally problematic. He is an individual about whom numbers of yarns have circulated. He seems to have led the kind of life on the west coast for which William Willshire (a colleague in the South Australian Police Force) would later become notorious in the Northern Territory. Geharty's superior



officer, Henry Holroyd, describes him as possessing a ‘grand dash of military style which was very effective among wild natives and rough bushmen’ and also notes that there ‘was an extraordinary facet in the native character which was invaluable to us [policemen]. . . . They had a great fear of the police and on the occasions of lawbreaking they gave us every assistance in finding the culprits.’<sup>73</sup> One suspects that Geharty may have had something to do with polishing that facet of the native character. He was once quoted as saying that ‘the blacks’ were easily managed – ‘show them a gun or crack a whip and it is quite sufficient’.<sup>74</sup> In 1969 writer and local historian Neil Thompson repeated<sup>75</sup> the oft-told story that Geharty often refused to gaol Aboriginal suspects and instead tied them to the wheels of his wagon to punish them. In *The Streaky Bay: A History of the Streaky Bay District* Thompson quotes Mr Roche, the husband of Geharty’s grand-daughter: ‘he was a big man and ran things his way. He’d go into a camp – “wagon-wheel” them – to make his point. He was hard, all right’.<sup>76</sup>

Hardly surprisingly, in 1849 there was some unease<sup>77</sup> expressed in the executive council about Geharty’s methods in extracting confessions from the Hamp murder suspects. Their validity was questioned after the Bishop of Adelaide (among others) had presented a memorial to the council presenting reasons why the sentences of death should not be carried out.<sup>78</sup>

Numbers of commentators refer to Geharty’s role as yarnspinner, usually citing him as an authority, an eyewitness, a participant, someone who *knew*. Robert Hull, of Elliston, wrote to the *Observer* in 1926 asserting that when he

came to Colton in 1877, Sgt. Geharty [*sic*] stayed with me often, and he told me a few things about the murders of blacks. He said they drove a mob over the cliffs near Waterloo Bay, but he did not say how many. I think the story is something like the snowball – the older it gets the bigger it grows. There is no doubt there was a drive. The place was along the cliffs south of the bay. The point or cape your correspondents speak about is called Cape Finniss.<sup>79</sup>

Another version of the same story was told in the *Advertiser* in 1932 by M.S.W. Kenny, also a native of Colton:

There was nothing in this yarn . . . I lived 50 years behind the bar [of the Colton Hotel] and heard most things. I have the true story

first hand from Sergeant O'Garaghty [*sic*], a very fine type of wild Irishman who had left the police force. . . . He said that the blacks had been bad . . . and that about 200 bushmen on horseback drove the blacks north. One lubra may have fallen over the cliffs, but the wholesale massacre is all moonshine.<sup>80</sup>

These last two versions seem to capture some of the details about what happened at Horn's Bramfield Run in May 1849, although the numbers involved seem to have grown somewhat with the various retellings of the story. As Neil Thompson notes, if as many as 200 bushmen were involved, 'no secret of that dimension could possibly have been kept'.<sup>81</sup> Some of these versions of the story (perhaps collected from Geharty) will typically dismiss reports of a 'massacre' as either a 'legend', a 'yarn', a 'snowball' or 'moonshine'. They include details of a settlers' muster or drive of an indeterminate number of Aboriginal people and a cliff-top setting, but usually it is insisted that there were either no casualties or perhaps only one or two.

The most macabre detail of the Elliston legend is that of the head in the camp oven. What does the historical record have to say? There is *no* evidence of Hamp's decapitation in any of the accounts by Charles Driver, nor in any police evidence given at the inquest, nor in the later trial of Mingulta and Malgalta for Hamp's murder. Driver reported to the colonial secretary that 'the deceased had apparently been waddied to death, and his skull sawn nearly half round with a hand-saw'.<sup>82</sup> Police Commissioner Dashwood, quoting reports from Geharty, notes that 'the murder has been attended with peculiar barbarity, the skull having been divided with a handsaw'.<sup>83</sup> Dashwood's quarterly report ending 30 June 1848 does, however, give a slightly different version. The murder is described as being

of a most barbarous character, the perpetrators of this horrid deed having sawed their victim's head into two pieces with a hand saw which was found in the hut, with blood and hair adhering to it.<sup>84</sup>

The *Register* account of the trial does not mention Hamp's decapitation. The details of his fatal injuries can be found in evidence given by Pinkerton's overseer, George Stewart, a witness in the murder trial in the Supreme Court in Adelaide in September 1849. Stewart and two police constables had found Hamp's body on 23 June 1848. Stewart insisted that Hamp's:

head was cut all over as if he had been beaten with sticks. There was one very deep wound near the left ear. It appeared to have been done by a saw. There was a hole in his trowsers as if occasioned by a spear. His hands were also wounded.<sup>85</sup>

Stewart also found a bloodstained spear between the hut and where Hamp's body had been found, and footprints which he recognised as belonging to one of the suspects, Mingulta, whose 'great toe' was deformed. Stewart identified a saw as the property of Mr Pinkerton. 'It was found inside the hut with blood and grey hair upon it. Hamp's hair was grey, and his brains were visible through the wound made with the saw in his head'.<sup>86</sup>

Extensive notes were taken by Judge Charles Cooper from the evidence presented by the police during the trial of Hamp's alleged murderers. That evidence was later used to bring doubt on the guilt of Mingulta and Malgalta and eventually to save them from the gallows.<sup>87</sup> Cooper records the statement given by the 'native aboriginal witness' Ninnulta as follows:

This witness stated that he knew Tommy; – that the Prisoners – Mingulta and Malgalta and others speared him; – that he died by spears; – that Malgalta threw the first spear; – Mingulta threw the next; – that Monalta and others speared him; – that he was speared on the side; – that Korti Warri is the name of the place; – that there is water near it; permanent water; – that he knew a saw produced [as evidence in court]; – that a man sawed the head with it; – that he [Ninnulta] was there; – that the Prisoners were there; – that the saw was put outside a hut; – that the prisoners went to the sands where the scrub was; – that there is water in the sands; – that they went to Willi Narri; – that Korti Warri<sup>88</sup> is a lake place; – that the Prisoners cut the lake; went over it; – that witness knew Tommy<sup>89</sup> a long time ago, and so did the Prisoner Mingulta; – that Tommy was his only name; – that when the men went away Tommy was lying in the plain in the grass; – that all the men who were there speared him; – there was one (wound) on his breast and another there also; Normulta threw the spear; – that the Prisoners were there and they speared also.<sup>90</sup>

Aside from its intrinsic interest, the evidence of Ninnulta clearly establishes that it was the *spearing* of Hamp that most interested the prosecu-

tion, not the wounds to his head. It appears that the prosecution also pursued this same line of argument with later witnesses. George Stewart and Police Constable Dann both mention Hamp's head wound. Both saw the body and later gave evidence in the Supreme Court. First, Stewart's evidence, which clearly indicates that Hamp's head was still on his shoulders:

on the 24rd of that month [June 1848] his [Hamp's] dead body was found, lying with the face partly down; – that the head was cut all over, as if struck with sticks; – and there was a deep wound over the left ear, which appeared to have been done with a sharp instrument; – that there was a mark like a spear mark, and a hole in his trowsers; – that the body was not examined; it was much mutilated, and all covered over with blood; – the head and the hands were much mutilated . . .

The witness was then shown the saw which was presented as evidence.

It belongs to Mr Pinkerton. I saw it in Hamp's hut; – it was found inside the hut; – there were marks of blood and hair on it; – grey hair: Hamp had grey hair.<sup>91</sup>

Police Constable John Dann then gave his evidence:

that he was in company with Stewart when the body was found; that there was blood on the head and the hands; – on the head there was a deep cut through the skull; – the brain was partly out; – the head and face and hands were battered about. Under the waistcoat there was a hole; – Witness did not see how deep it went.<sup>92</sup>

In spite of the crown's insistence during the trial in September 1849 that spear wounds killed Hamp, it seems that as early as July 1848 the story of his decapitation was beginning to circulate on the west coast. One early suggestion is in the *South Australian's* account of the murder written by a local correspondent, which states that Hamp 'had no spear wound, but his head had been sawn down. The hand saw, which had evidently been the instrument of death, was lying near him'.<sup>93</sup> It may be that 'sawn down' means 'sawn off'. By 1882 the popular view seems to have been held that Hamp had been decapitated: a unequivocal reference to Hamp's head being 'cut off with a saw' is in Alexander Tolmer's *Reminiscences* published in that year.<sup>94</sup>

Whatever the truth, as early as 1851 the detail of Hamp's head wound had become synonymous with the barbarity of Aboriginal people. In a letter by Charles Driver detailing the killing of the shepherd Crocker by Kumbilti, the following remarks were made about the nature of the violence committed by Aboriginal people against Europeans:

their murders have always been committed in strong parties attended by wanton destruction of property, and with the barbarous mangling of the dead, such as sawing the head, or beating it to a pulp, or burying an axe in it . . . the late atrocities committed by the Natives in this district, are merely the natural working of an unformed system.<sup>95</sup>

While there may be no evidence that Hamp was decapitated, the head in the camp oven story has helped shape the memory of frontier violence in South Australia. It is illuminating, however, to compare the circumstances of Hamp's death with that of an Aboriginal man in the same district six years earlier. After the killings by Aborigines of a number of settlers in the Port Lincoln district in 1842, the government sent a detachment of soldiers into the field to track down the perpetrators. In early May there was a collision at Pillaworta station at the southern end of Arno Bay and an unknown number of Aboriginal people were killed. When the missionary Clamor Schürmann was called to identify the victims, he discovered that the soldiers had decapitated one of the bodies:

The soldiers and the policemen stuck the head on a pole and put it on an old pig sty, forcing a short clay pipe between the teeth. I remonstrated with the Lieutenant [Hugonin] against the impropriety of such conduct but could not prevail upon him to put a stop to it.<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps the head in the camp oven detail evolved from the conflation of local memories of both the 1842 decapitation and the nature of Hamp's head wounds. Whatever the truth, the shocking nature of those wounds and the detail of the saw found in the hut was sufficiently colourful to precipitate a rumour that within fifty years was fully formed, and known by a whole community. In the absence of any scrutiny of the official record and of any detailed published memoirs from the period, the story quickly gathered momentum until thousands believed it.

Over time, the head in the camp oven story developed a life of its own, sometimes being told independently of any story associated with the Elliston district. Historian Jim Faull found one version when preparing his 1988 book *On the Edge*. In some cardboard boxes in the Ceduna Area School library are a number of memoirs of local people, some handwritten. One (by Murray Collins?) is titled 'The Pioneers' and contains this version of the 'head in the camp oven' story:

Mr Hosking, another prominent pioneer – he later owned St Peters Island – built his homestead near Waranda Well. Years later, while alone in his hut, he was attacked and killed by blacks, who cut off his head and placed it in his camp oven.<sup>97</sup>

And what of that camp oven? There are *no* references to camp ovens in the prosecution evidence presented at the trial of Hamp's alleged murderers. There was, however, debate about a rather more prosaic 'pint pot . . . with WP [William Pinkerton engraved] on the bottom, and John Russell on the side' which was found in the possession of the accused Malgalta who was arrested by Police Corporal Geharty in Port Lincoln when he had arrived for the distribution of rations on the full moon. Under cross-examination Geharty admitted that Malgalta may have received the pot from another native. Mingulta was also arrested at that time on the evidence of his footprints.<sup>98</sup>

One intriguing detail about the head in the camp oven story is a letter from D.C. Amey, the District Clerk of the District Council of Streaky Bay, to P.J. Baillie, dated 1 April 1971 (note the date), in which it is asserted that 'Elliston couldn't claim the privilege of the historical site of the head in the camp oven incident – that the boy who made history in this connection was Baird [*sic*]'.<sup>99</sup> This remark refers to a notorious murder at Mount Hall in the Calca district in 1896 when Walter Richards was murdered by Joshua Beard (not Baird) who buried the body and then built a campfire over the grave on which he had cooked his food.<sup>100</sup> Amey suggests that storytellers describing the 'Elliston Massacre' yarn took the camp oven detail from stories about the murderer Beard circulating around the turn of the century. Amey may have been right, in that there are no references to the head in the camp oven published before the turn of the century.

The head in the camp oven story has since travelled far. It appears in a 1977 travel book about the Nullarbor, Basil Fuller's *Nullarbor Lifelines*. Travellers, it seems, are suckers for local legends – the locals

have a field day when rubbernecks show up. Fuller was told that somewhere on Roe Plain:

is the grave of a young woman, Annie McGill, who died in childbirth after the shock of seeing her husband lying dead, his head in the oven. The unfortunate pioneer had been murdered by Aborigines. Some say that the tribesmen had provocation for this and other atrocities they committed, that there were occasions – after periods of constant stock spearing – when Aborigines were rounded up by armed horsemen and driven over the ninety metre high cliffs of the escarpment. However, when . . . I called in Melbourne on Mr James Lawrence, senior Eucla telegraphist before and after the turn of the century, though I listened to many tales of the Roe Plain and the Hampton Tableland, there had been no mention of happenings such as these. James Lawrence was not a man to perpetuate such memories and perhaps he deliberately suppressed them. The evidence of Anne's grave is inescapable. However, it seems likely that the tales of the killings have been exaggerated in the telling, and that exact recollection has faded with the generations.<sup>101</sup>

Fuller's 'grim tale' preserves most of the salient features of the original and offers some of the usual ways of interpreting the Elliston incident. It demonstrates once more the uneasy equation of the pioneer's hardships with internecine skirmishing with Aborigines, the extermination of whom is a necessary step in ensuring the pioneer's success. The yarn notes that the Aborigines were provoked to violence. But as Fuller remarks after James Lawrence failed to verify the yarn he had collected, tales of the killings *might* have been exaggerated in the telling.

After 1926, most versions of the Elliston incident usually quote the archival and newspaper record and notice that there is *no* evidence of a massacre on the scale described by Congreve, Beviss or John Chipp Hamp. The most rigorous attempts to examine the evidence for the Elliston massacre are those of J.D. Somerville, A.T. Saunders, P.J. Baillie and Greg Charter, all amateur or professional historians. After examining the official records held in the South Australian Archives, Somerville's view is that there is no *formal* evidence of a massacre, and the 'affray' at Horn's station was the precipitating incident that helped create the 'myth'.<sup>102</sup> P.J. Baillie worked with Somerville, and as his unpublished research notes held in the Mortlock

and his published comments in the *Chronicle* make clear, he agreed with Somerville and Saunders that 'this alleged massacre is based on the robbery of Thomas Horne's hut (Horne's look-out) which was the subject of investigation by the Adelaide Supreme Court' and goes on to add that from this incident 'ambitious raconteurs have superimposed the massacre story, elevating modest fact to unbridled fancy'.<sup>103</sup> In his Flinders University honours thesis Greg Charter also examines the archival evidence, but notes in conclusion that it 'appears likely the rumours relating to the Elliston Massacre have a foundation in fact, and that some form of punitive action did take place on the cliffs at Waterloo Bay, upon which an exaggerated myth had developed'.<sup>104</sup>

What can we make of the fact that so many versions of the Elliston Incident exist? In everyday life, members of local communities – 'locals' – often distinguish themselves from outsiders by their access to stories of their district's past, stories that often feature local landmarks. In many rural communities in South Australia, and especially those either beyond the settled areas or on the margins between the settled and the unsettled, outsiders are known politely as 'tourists' or 'from town', less politely as 'rubbernecks' or 'terrorists'. Locals stress their sense of belonging to those communities by acknowledging their family connections with early settlement and through their possession of local legends (or by acknowledging their provenance). Typically locals will identify outsiders by their lack of access to the communal memory that is preserved in such local legends. It obviously helps if the legend is also associated with some dramatic local landform, like the cliffs to the south of Elliston. As A.T. Saunders notes in passing in the 1926 *Register* controversy, he had 'no doubt that that bold headland . . . at Waterloo Bay started the yarns'. The cliffs 'looked the right place for such a tragedy. It was a pity to waste such places, hence the yarns'.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, one of the authors of this book recalls a student describing her visit to the alleged site on the clifftops, and stressing the eerie and malevolent atmosphere of the place. Such feelings about some parts of the district were also recorded over a hundred years ago: Ellen Liston's character in her short story 'Doctor' describes 'a vast and terrible stillness [which] seemed to lie over everything; frequently it would press so heavily upon me that I was tempted to flee away shrieking as from some unholy presence'.<sup>106</sup>

Many rural communities still preserve local memories through their telling of local legends associated with local landforms. But as historian



Pat Sumerling notes, with the passing of time and in the absence of written accounts (or their inaccessibility) by the 1920s the direct link with the foundation years of European settlement in South Australia was passing. In 1920 there would have been very few pioneers from 1836 still alive, let alone individuals who could clearly remember what happened in 1848 or 1849. Anyone in possession of a version of what happened at Elliston must have either known an adult participant or had access to local legends already in circulation, and obviously problems of hearsay evidence arise. As Sumerling says:

Reminiscing in the 1920s, especially as South Australia headed for its first 100 years of European settlement, became a matter of urgency as early pioneers began to die. This prompted members of the rising generation to ask their elders what the pioneering days were like. Responses were often colourful, larger-than-life stories of frontier life. It was with much authority that some remembered 'something' about the massacre, with all its gory details as told to them by someone 'who was there'. . . . [T]he 1920s were ripe for the myth to grow and take root in a community at a time when age and memory were at their most precarious.<sup>107</sup>

The burgeoning numbers of local and family histories published since the 1960s has meant that increasingly such 'myths' are subjected to research, and if then written down often presented with the qualification that archival evidence may not exist that corroborates their details. The increasing scrutiny of the regional historical record has led to the challenging of the veracity of some local legends, a development often hotly contested by those who 'own' such stories and see their authority as storytellers undermined. A typical response to 'history' denying some versions of a well-polished yarn can be found in M.T. Bendall's Letter to the *Adelaide News* during the 1970 controversy over the Elliston massacre. He continues to insist (rather plaintively) in the face of the evidence that his father, F.W. Farrant, *was* present in 1848, that dad *was* speared and carried the wounds to his grave, that there *were* 'bad' Aborigines in the district and that anyway his father *was* a friend of Archie Beviss, who knew the truth.<sup>108</sup>

In South Australia local legends that feature contact or conflict with Indigenous Australians are increasingly subject to investigation. Many have been reconsidered in the light of changing (or contested) communal attitudes to Indigenous political issues. Furthermore,

contemporary sensitivities about the darker side of the pioneer legend may now mean that what was a common phenomenon until the 1960s – a swaggering amplification of a district's record of prejudice and violence – may now be qualified by those who would reject of such simple-minded vainglorious point-scoring. Our country was more violent than yours, is what those who told the Elliston massacre story really meant. Around here was the *real* Bush. *We* knew how to handle the 'Aboriginal Problem'.

One of the reasons why local legends are still told is because there have been relatively few attempts to write local histories until the last generation or so. Most of the hundreds of local and family histories have been published in the last 30 years, many of them appearing either in 1986 or in 1988, the years of the South Australian Sesquicentenary and the Australian Bicentenary celebrations. Of course some memoirs were written before the 1960s, but not many were known beyond the confines of those families (or districts) whose members might have written them. Often a typical rural district like the west coast was not so much country without history but country without historians. In such a district there is still a need for history, if only to separate the insiders from the outsiders, and local legends performed something of that social function. With the passing of time and the deaths of participants and eyewitnesses, details are blurred – or, paradoxically, details are sharpened, distorted, enlarged for narrative effect. Everyone likes a good yarn.

In many Indigenous communities a story is told of a group of Aboriginal people driven to their deaths over the cliffs just south of Elliston. A plan to erect a cairn on the cliffs south of Elliston was initiated in 1970 by the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the Aborigines Progress Association. According to the *Advertiser*, the memorial would 'commemorate a massacre of 250 aborigines by white settlers in 1846 [*sic*]' and was to have been 'part of a national mourning campaign by aborigines, coinciding with the Capt Cook centenary celebrations' planned for April 1970.<sup>109</sup> John Moriarty, assistant president of the South Australian Aborigines' Progress Association, was quoted as saying that the Elliston massacre was 'part of the history of the West Coast Aboriginal population despite strenuous efforts by the relatives of the whites involved to discredit what is a well-known fact'.<sup>110</sup> The chairman of the Elliston District Council, Mr J.B. Cameron, told the

reporter that 'the council would agree to the cairn if it could be proved that the massacre took place'<sup>111</sup> and that a memorial to 'those Aborigines who lost their lives in the early development of the area' might be erected, presumably without any direct reference to the Waterloo Bay massacre. The *News* article has Cameron adding that 'we are unsure what happened back in 1848, and are hoping that someone can give us direction on the matter'.<sup>112</sup>

The news items in the Adelaide papers in 1970 provoked a predictable flurry of letters to the editor. Some correspondents like Norman Ford even claimed to have known Archie Beviss, who 'invented the Waterloo Bay massacre story, which was so completely exposed by the late Mr Somerville and Mr A.T. Saunders'.<sup>113</sup> Ford's letter provoked a quick response from Laurie Bryan, member of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders:

The racist tone of Norman Ford is greatly to be deplored.

His claim about the Waterloo Bay massacre's [*sic*] being a myth is a personal opinion which is directly contrary to the opinions of the aboriginal people of the West Coast, who are basing their attitude on personal relationships with the aboriginal people involved in the incident.

Having read most of Mr Summerville's [*sic*] research it is noteworthy that while he refers to atrocities by whites against blacks before 1839 (the date when Port Lincoln was first settled) he makes no mention of atrocities towards aboriginals after that date.

He does make mention of atrocities against whites by aborigines.

The last time Waterloo Bay was discussed was in 1929 when statements appeared such as: 'It is no good asking the niggers, because they have all gone where good niggers go.'

If Europeans then and today were only prepared to ask aborigines their views it would clearly show that the situation is not as Mr Ford states.

Some correspondents in 1929 were convinced the massacre occurred. Some were not.

Australians voted ten to one in favour of aboriginal equality at the Aboriginal Rights Referendum. Our proposal is that those who voted for equality be invited to share in bringing it about.<sup>114</sup>

Bryan claims that ‘the aboriginal people of the West Coast . . . [base] their attitude on personal relationships with the aboriginal people involved in the incident’, clearly asserting an Indigenous oral history that links the 1840s with the 1970s, and insists that a massacre did occur at Elliston. Bryan’s quoting of some of the details (and statements) from the 1920s newspaper controversies also suggests that at least some of the details in the Indigenous oral history may well have been drawn from a reading of those letters.

Pat Sumerling notes that in 1993 Aboriginal people were still telling the story:

I asked a couple of local Aborigines . . . about their views of what happened near Elliston. They related that they were both told of a massacre that had taken place in the Elliston region where Aborigines had been chained together and thrown over the cliffs. As the Aboriginal oral tradition is of crucial importance to their culture, with stories handed down from generation to generation, one cannot dismiss their disturbing claims.<sup>115</sup>

On several occasions the authors of this book have discussed memories of the Elliston incident with Indigenous people in Ceduna and elsewhere on the coast. People have described how they will not visit Elliston, and one mentioned that he found stopping for petrol difficult. Although we have not heard Sumerling’s detail about the victims being chained,<sup>116</sup> the broad particulars coincide: the site near Elliston; the numbers, about 250 rounded up and driven over the cliffs. We have heard one further detail: that not all the people died, the majority hiding at the base of the cliffs until the vigilantes left.

Poet and linguist Lee Cataldi notes that a version of the story has been collected in the Kimberleys in Western Australia by Charlie McAdam.<sup>117</sup> The fact that the story has travelled so far reveals the well-established political and social contacts between Indigenous communities that have developed since the 1970s. A flourishing oral history network now exists which has brought Indigenous Australians into contact with the local histories of their compatriots. Communities are sharing histories.

No memorial has ever been erected at Elliston. However, in December 1971 a plaque in memory of John Hamp marking the site of his death was unveiled by Mr P. Penna, deputy chairman of the Elliston District Council. It was nearly two years after the Adelaide newspaper

controversy raged about the historical authenticity of the Elliston Massacre, two years after the Aboriginal community had not been allowed to erect a cairn at Elliston because there was no evidence of a massacre. The small granite memorial to Hamp can be read as an assertion of the truthfulness of the non-Indigenous version(s) of the legend, reinforcing the perception that the settlers only responded in the face of inexplicable, brutal and violent aggression by the Aborigines.<sup>118</sup> In the early 1970s P.J. Baillie made sure that most of the other sites pertaining to the Elliston incident were visited and either memorials erected or painted plates left to indicate their significance. At the sites of the Beevor and Easton huts, at the hanging tree at Taunto and at Easton's grave at Lake Hamilton (and, for good measure, at the grave of James Baird) either substantial granite cairns were built or (now fading) tin plates left describing what happened there, holding whitefella fragments of complex stories. Monuments such as these commemorate the European fallen of the Australian frontier. The Aboriginal dead remain uncommemorated.

Local legends such as the cluster that have been told about a putitive massacre near Elliston register the long and uneasy memories of violence in the unsettled areas of South Australia. Even if no massacre



P.J. Baillie's memorial to Annie Easton  
(photograph by Rick Hosking)

actually happened on a scale suggested by the detail of some versions, the obvious fact that people want to tell such a story reveals a deep unease about the communal memory of frontier history. Some people may tell the story as a way of demonstrating sympathy for and solidarity with the Indigenous victims of colonialism, while others may tell it as a way of boasting about how bold, resolute and resourceful were the early settlers who took the law into their own hands. As time has passed, however, the telling of such stories for whatever motive uncovers that 'dark unholy presence' revealed in the stories that are inscribed on the sunny walls of the Elliston Community Agricultural Hall. Whether we Australians like it or not, the Indigenous presence is at the centre of our communal memory. The doubts, fears and hopes that we experience as a nation are often to do with the presence and the futures of Indigenous Australians. Such stories as those told about the cliffs of Waterloo Bay have become 'narrative battlegrounds in which conscience . . . [fights] itself into a kind of consciousness'.<sup>119</sup>

## RECALLING THE ELLISTON INCIDENT

- 1 Betty Mac, 'The Massacre That Mangultie Did Not Forget', *Mail*, 30 April 1932, p. 16e. I am grateful to Mr Geoffrey Manning for information about this version of the story. His Geoffrey H. Manning, *Manning's Places Names of South Australia* (G.H. Manning, Adelaide, 1990) is an invaluable reference.
- 2 In the Betty Mac version of the story Mangultie survives and then later takes his revenge by murdering a shepherd near Mount Joy (now Mount Parapet?), his victim a tailor who was attacked while making a wedding garment. This is a fascinating accretion to the traditional details of the 'legend'. She seems to refer to 1930s memories of the murder of William Walker, whom D.R. Myers insists was murdered while making his uncle a wedding suit. In his 'Reminiscences of a Pioneer, born 1846', the typescript held in the Baillie papers in the Mortlock Library (PRG 458/77) Myers notes that 'near Lake Hamilton, stands, beside the main road, a lone chimney. At this hut many years ago, a woman was murdered by the natives, and still further west, at Mount Joy, William Walker, too, fell a victim to a native spear (14).' Possibly the woman he has in mind is Anne Easton, who features in other versions of the Elliston incident. A 'John' Walker is buried in the Lake Hamilton cemetery with Ann Easton. See Maureen and Bill Nosworthy *Tjeiringa: The Story of the Sberinga District* (The Sberinga History Committee, Adelaide, 1988), p. 30. I can find no reference to the murder of a William Walker in the *Guide to Records Relating to Aboriginal People*, 5 vols, (State Records, Adelaide, 1988). The former west coast policeman Samuel Dixon records the same story in 1926. Samuel Dixon, 'The Waterloo Bay Massacre', *Register*, 29 March 1926, p. 13f. In 1861 a Mrs Impett was murdered at Mount Joy by two Aboriginal men, Karabidine and Mangeltie, who were both convicted and hanged at Chiriroo on 14 September 1861. *Register*, 19 September 1861, p. 2g. See Robert Hull, 'Waterloo Bay', *Register*, 9 April 1926, p. 13d who also mentions the murder of Mrs Impett. Thus in the absence of communal agreement and knowledge about the past does a story continue to accrete.
- 3 Neil Thompson, *The Elliston Incident* (Robert Hale, London, 1969). Thompson was born in Ceduna, is descended from an old Streaky Bay family and is the co-author with his wife, Val, of the Centenary History of the Streaky Bay District Council. The dust cover of the novel featured in an Adelaide *News* article about the controversy over the 'incident'. See Jeff Turner, 'What Did Happen at Waterloo Bay?', 2 April 1970, pp. 12–13.
- 4 'H-' 'Mystery "Massacre" of Aborigines', *Chronicle*, 18 July 1935, p. 14.
- 5 John Hamp and his family (including his one-year-old son John Chipp Hamp) arrived in South Australia in 1838 in the *Duke of Roxburgh*. Father and son went to the Port Lincoln district in 1844 (*Observer*, 9 December 1905, p. 28). Hamp's Hill, near Elliston, is named after the father, as is the lake south of Waterloo Bay where one version of the Elliston massacre is said to have begun, where the party of Europeans disturbed a party of Aborigines (*Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay: Elliston 1878–1978*, 1978, p. 10). For clarity's sake, the father is named John Hamp, the son John Chipp Hamp, although it seems they both shared the same name.
- 6 William Pinkerton was licensed by Charles Driver to 'occupy grazing land at Franklin Harbour on 29 September 1846, at Wedge Hill on 20 May 1847 and at Lake Newland on 30 September 1847'. Jack Casanova, *Fading Footprints: Pioneers, Runs & Settlement of the Lower Eyre Peninsula* (The Author, Port Lincoln, 1992) p. 30. No doubt he did not take up all three leases. Casanova suggests that he was active in establishing a run at Lake Newland 'by 1845 or early 1846. ... Pinkerton's station centred on Talia and his wool was shipped each year from the beach inside Venus Bay' (Casanova, 1992, p. 30).
- 7 Charles Driver's account of the affray appears in a letter dated 23 August 1848, GRG 24/90/424. See also GRG 24/6/1848/1415. State Records, Adelaide.
- 8 James Geharty's Police Report (dated 28 August 1848) can be found in GRG 24/6/1848/1415. State Records, Adelaide. George Stewart seems to have been involved in more than one 'collision' with Aboriginal people and if there was indeed a covert massacre in 1849 he might well have

been implicated. James Geharty was born in Ireland in 1816 and arrived in South Australia on the *Pestonjee Bomanjee* in 1838. He arrived in the Port Lincoln district in 1839 as an assistant to B. Pratt Winter, the first surveyor to work on Eyre Peninsula (Casanova, 1992, p. 18). He became a policeman and after serving at Port Lincoln, he later moved to the Cherritoo Police Station near Venus Bay. In 1856 he accompanied Thomas Horne and Alfred King on an exploration trip of the Streaky Bay district for Price Maurice. About 1856 he retired from the force and took up a pastoral lease on 9 October 1856 for ten square miles on the shores of Venus Bay (lease 625). Later he had a lease at Lake Newland (lease no. 507). He died at Marryatville on 30 December 1897. Mount Geharty north of Cowell is named after him (Manning, 1990, p. 124, 320). The spelling of Geharty's name has given many writers real problems over the years.

- 9 It is very difficult now to be consistent with the spelling of the names of the various individuals cited as perpetrators or witnesses in these several cases. Written reports from Charles Driver, the Government Resident, Matthew Moorhouse, the Protector of Aborigines, Corporal Geharty, Police Superintendent George Dashwood, Nathaniel Hailes, Inspector Tolmer and Sub-Protector Clamor Schürmann (to name just some of the commentators) often use different phonetic spellings when naming the various participants.
- 10 Charles Driver was originally a pastoralist at Nairne in the 1830s, then moved to the Port Lincoln district c. 1839. He gave up his station in March 1842 when he was appointed Government Resident and Stipendiary Magistrate. Nathaniel Hailes was his clerk. Driver died on 7 January 1854. Rodney Cockburn, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia* (Publishers Limited, Adelaide, 1925/7), Vol. 2, p. 249. Driver was the target of a very pointed letter from the Colonial Secretary dated 19 April 1884, in which he was reprimanded for his reports upon the subject of the natives which had 'neither been copious nor frequent'. He was reminded that 'one of the most important duties of the Resident . . . is to exercise a constant and active supervision over the welfare and conduct of the natives . . . [I]f the settlers do not find in the activity and energy of the Government Authorities sufficient protection from outrages on the part of the Aborigines, they will undoubtedly, from a desire of self-defence, take the law into their own hands' (GRG 24/6/1844/634, State Records, Adelaide). After 1844 his reports are much more detailed—in fact there is no other subject described in such detail and at such length as his letters on 'the welfare and conduct of the natives'.
- 11 A book about South Australian colonial experience published in London in 1846 records a detailed account of an arsenic poisoning on a 'sheep station at Port Lincoln', the alleged perpetrator the subject of an investigation by the government resident. It seems Dwyer was not the first to attempt to murder Indigenous people through labelling poisoned flour. See E. Lloyd, *A Visit to the Antipodes with some reminiscences of a sojourn in Australia, by A Squatter* (Smith Elder & Co., London, 1846), pp. 124–126.
- 12 Captain James Rigby Beevor was a veteran of the Peninsula War, serving in a regiment of Lancers under Sir de Lacy Evans and General Bacon. He arrived in South Australia with his brothers (one of whom was a pensioner of the East India Company) in the late 1830s. Beevor took up land around Mount Barker (Mount Beevor is named after him) where he was involved in an incident in which one of his men shot an Aboriginal man (Cockburn, 1927, Vol. II, p. 180–81). He also had property on the Hindmarsh River (Cockburn 1927, Vol. II, 180–81; Cockburn, 1984, p. 22). Dr Neil Draper suggests that there is some anecdotal evidence that Beevor was also involved in 'collisions' on Hindmarsh Island (Pers. Comm. 1996). In 1841 Beevor, because of his military background, was placed in charge of a party of 37 volunteers who joined with a further 27 policemen under Major O'Halloran in a punitive expedition against Aborigines in the 'disturbed districts' around Lake Bonney, where overlanding stock parties had been 'grievously attacked by hordes of niggers', as Cockburn tastefully puts it (Cockburn, 1926, Vol II, p. 181). They rescued the overlanding survivors of the stock parties and their cattle, and a number of Aborigines were killed.



- 13 Alexander Tolmer, *Reminiscences of an Adventurous and Chequered Career at Home and at the Antipodes* (2 vols, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882) Vol. II, p. 106. Tolmer quotes Dashwood's police report published in the *Government Gazette*, 16 August 1849.
- 14 Mr Swaffer, *Register*, 7 May 1926, quoted in the *Observer*, 28 December 1929: 45b.
- 15 The surname is spelled 'Eastone' in some accounts.
- 16 Nosworthy & Nosworthy, 1988, p. 16. In one of the best and most interesting of the west coast local histories, Nosworthy and Nosworthy have determined that James Easton married Annie Wilson in New South Wales, and the couple travelled from Sydney to Adelaide on the *Emperor of China*, arriving on 20 September 1848. It seems James Easton settled in the Two Wells district and married again. Just before his death he made enquiries about his first-born son (the letter still exists), but died before a reunion was possible (Pers. Comm., Bill Nosworthy, February 1999).
- 17 Matthew Moorhouse's Quarterly Report dated 26 July 1849, quoted Tolmer 1882: 2: 108. John Stewart Browne's report notes that the man's name was Meentalta, 'for whom a warrant had already been issued for felony' (GRG 24/6/1849/947, State Records, Adelaide).
- 18 John B. Hobbs, of Lake Hamilton, in a letter to the *South Australian*, 8 June 1849: 2f claims that Easton's 'wife laid dead on the bed, covered with wounds, and in such a posture as to lead one to suppose that the most barbarous brutality had been committed'. It also suggests elsewhere that 'Mrs. Easterne [sic] was murdered by a lustful native'. Neville and Margaret Wanklyn, *The early history of the city of Port Lincoln, 1802–1971*, 2nd ed. (Corporation of Port Lincoln, Port Lincoln, 1971), p. 12.
- 19 Tolmer, 1882, Vol. II, p. 107.
- 20 GRG 24/6/1849/1404, State Records, Adelaide, p. 8.
- 21 James Easton left Lake Hamilton after the death of his wife, who is buried in the small cemetery at the northern end of Lake Hamilton. Their son Alfred Easton remained on the west coast all his life, where he worked as a farm labourer. He died in 1910, and is buried in the Poonindie cemetery. His entry in the *Biographical Index of South Australians* reads: 'Alfred Easton. *par?* and Annie. *b.* 1849 Lake Hamilton SA. *d.* 8–11–1910 North Shields SA. *bd* Poonindie SA. *oc.* Labourer. *res:* North Shields. *rel:* C/E. *m. c.* 1875 nee HALL *cb:* John Herbert (1876–1964), Annie POWER. Jill Statton, ed. *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836–1885*. 5 vols. (South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Marden, SA, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 450.
- 22 Thomas Cooper Horn's name is sometimes given as Horne – apparently he chose to add an 'e' to his name to avoid confusion with W.A. Horn who eventually settled near Streaky Bay. T.C. Horn 'was born in about 1807 at Bramfield, Hertfordshire and arrived in South Australia by 1840' (Nosworthy & Nosworthy, 1988, p. 17). He set up the Kappawanta Run centered around Bramfield of about ninety-one square miles, capable of grazing about 9000 sheep (Nosworthy & Nosworthy, 1988, p. 17). It seems that Horn was not successful with Bramfield and eventually sold out to Price Maurice, for whom Horn later managed the Lake Hamilton Run.
- 23 The Bramfield Run is not listed in the *Government Gazettes* which list occupational licences issued between 22 December 1842 and 10 February 1848. Nosworthy and Nosworthy speculate that therefore Horn must have taken up the run sometime in 1848, perhaps occupying the land before the licence to stock was actually issued (Nosworthy & Nosworthy, 1988, p. 14). Modern maps show Horn's Lookout in the Hundred of Kappawanta and Lake Horn near Elliston. Waterloo Bay was known as Horn Bay in the 1840s and 1850s.
- 24 Driver's report is dated 1 July 1849. GRG 24/80/424, State Records, Adelaide.
- 25 Tolmer mentions the name 'Waterloo Bay' in his memoir (Tolmer, 1882, Vol. II, p. 99) but it is unlikely that he was remembering what the place was actually called in 1849. The name 'Waterloo Bay' carries powerful meanings, in that either way it celebrates a famous moment that helped establish British paramouncy in the nineteenth century. There seems little doubt that the name 'Waterloo Bay' was given to commemorate the rather more famous battle in 1815, not because of a cliff-top skirmish that left three or four people dead. Geoffrey Manning has this to say about the name: 'Prior to June 1865 it [Waterloo Bay] was not shown on maps but during

- that month the Surveyor-General, G.W. Goyder, and Captain Bloomfield Douglas were in the vicinity in the Government vessel *Flinders*. Therefore, it is probable that it, together with Wellington and Wellesley Points, were so named to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the British victory over Napoleon at Waterloo' (Manning, 1990, p. 329).
- 26 Tolmer, 1882, Vol. II, p. 99–102. Tolmer records the following revealing detail about how the *male* suspects were restrained: 'Then quickly, at a given signal we simultaneously rushed into the wurleys, each trooper seizing and firmly holding a black-fellow, which is no easy matter in his state of nudity, when he is as slippery as an eel, and is all the while yelling, struggling, and biting as a savage only can. If the captor is experienced, however, by adroitly adopting a peculiar but indescribable knack, the difficulty is much diminished (Tolmer 1882, Vol. II, p. 101). John Wrathall Bull was obviously familiar with this method of restraining Aboriginal suspects, for he alludes discreetly to the practice seemingly pioneered by Major O'Halloran: 'I have the advantage of the use of the diary of Major O'Halloran during the time he was out in the Port Lincoln district to endeavour to *catch and hold* [Bull's emphasis] natives, naked and greasy' (Bull, 1884, p. 298).
- 27 *Register*, 29 September 1849: 3a. *South Australian*, 2 November 1849, 2f.
- 28 *South Australian*, 16 November 1849, 2e, *Register*, 17 November 1849, 3b. The so-called hanging tree still stands, near the 80-kilometre road distance marker from Port Lincoln on the eastern side of the Elliston road. Harold Normandale, *To and About Eyre Peninsula* (H. Normandale, Adelaide, 1986), p. 69. The tree still carries what's left of a notice which used to read: 'The Hanging Tree/Convicted Natives/hung here 1849./Spring cart scaffold/Bodies buried at Port Lincoln'.
- 29 *South Australian Register*, 26 September 1849: 4c.
- 30 *South Australian*, 11 September 1849, 2f.
- 31 Matthew Moorhouse argued that if the prisoners had been Europeans they would never have been convicted, in that the prosecution case rested on the testimony of natives. Such evidence had been dismissed in other cases against white men only days previously (and in many other cases) GRG 24/6/1849/1850, State Records, Adelaide.
- 32 *South Australian Register*, 29 September 1849. See also GRG 24/6/1849/1847, State Records, Adelaide.
- 33 Charles Driver, letter to Colonial Secretary 11 February 1850, GRG 24/90/424, State Records, Adelaide. See also GRG 24/6/1851/1564, State Records, Adelaide.
- 34 *Register*, 16 May 1851, *Observer*, 24 May 1851, p. 7, GRG 24/6 1851/1564, State Records, Adelaide. Moorhouse told the court that most natives knew that it was unlawful to kill, but tribal law demanded that strangers might be killed. Moorhouse claimed in court that Malta had been charged with Beevor's murder, but Driver mentions that Geharty had arrested him as an accessory in Hamp's murder.
- 35 GRG/24/90/424, State Records, Adelaide. John Stewart Browne's letter was written c. 12 May 1849.
- 36 Alexander Tolmer, *Reminiscences of an Adventurous and Chequered Career at Home and at the Antipodes* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882, 2 vols); 'The Autobiography of Henry Holroyd' D 4108 (L); *I'd rather dig potatoes: Clamor Schürmann and the Aborigines of South Australia*, edited by Edwin A. Schürmann (Lutheran Press, Adelaide 1987); *Recollections: Nathaniel Hailes' adventurous life in South Australia*, edited by Allan L. Peters (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1998). Corporal Geharty wrote to Alexander Tolmer, 31 December 1848, about the state of the district, asserting that '[n]othing has ocured dureing the passed Quarter between the Natives and they Settlers with the exception of the speering of Mr Mortlock's overseer and the late accident at Trial Bay. All the Northwest Settlers Messers Pinkerton Nation Mortlock Vaux Lodwick and Peter has not Been in the Least anoyed During the Quarter they North Settlers has been entielly free from ay atack by they Natives Dureing the Quarter. I think the Native Nirlgulta that was comited for trial from hear was about the Greatest anoyance the Northwest

- Settlers had' (Geharty's spelling, GRG 5, Series 2, #226 of 1848, State Records, Adelaide. Unfortunately no police correspondence survives from 1849).
- 37 Dr Barbara Wall makes this point very strongly in 'Another look at the Elliston Massacre', *History SA*, no. 122 (January 1994), p. 4.
- 38 I am grateful to Dr Barbara Wall for biographical information about Congreve and bibliographies of his works.
- 39 See Stephen Knight, *Continent of Mystery: a Thematic History of Australian Crime Fiction* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1997) for a general discussion of the taste for sensational and crime fiction in Australia late last century.
- 40 H.J. Congreve, 'A Reminiscence of Port Lincoln', *Observer*, 14 August 1880, p. 281c.
- 41 *Register*, 29 September 1849: 2c. See also GRG 24/6/2118, State Records, Adelaide, p. 9.
- 42 Certainly Stewart's reputation seems to have been well established back in Adelaide. See Charles Sturt's views of Stewart expressed in GRG 24/4/1850/647–48, State Records, Adelaide, which clearly suggests Stewart was suspected of being implicated in 'unhappy collisions' with Indigenous people.
- 43 *Observer*, 11 September 1880: 428d. The misspelling of Hamp's name is noteworthy, in that Congreve does not name Hamp in his 'A Reminiscence of Port Lincoln'. In other words, Hamp's name is unequivocally linked with the Elliston incident by 1880.
- 44 *Observer*, 11 September 1880: 428d.
- 45 The phrase is Henry Kingsley's, from the novel *The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn*, taken from Revelations 21:1.
- 46 Rick Hosking, 'Ellen Liston's "Doctor" and the Elliston Incident', *Southwords: Essays on South Australian Writing*. Edited by Philip Butters, (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1995), pp. 62–84.
- 47 *Adelaide Observer*, 14 August 1880, p. 283.
- 48 Ellen Liston, 'Doctor', *Observer*, 17 June 1882, p. 45d.
- 49 Charter, 1989, p. 61–62. See Henry Price to the Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1851/1559, State Records, Adelaide, for a strongly expressed view that the *servants* had more to fear from attacks than their masters.
- 50 *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*, Louise Brown, Beatrix Ch de Crespigny, Mary P. Harris, Kathleen Kyffin Thomas, & Phebe N. Watson, eds., (Rigby, Adelaide, 1936).
- 51 J.J. Healy, *Literature and the Aborigines in Australia* (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978), p. xv.
- 52 Bob Hodge & Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1991).
- 53 'Interested' claims he first heard the story on either Tallata or Yalluna stations and that '[t]he details were as described by Mr Beviss'. *Observer*, 20 March 1926, p. 16c.
- 54 E.W. Parish, *The Real West Coast: A New Picture of a Rumour-Damaged Country* (W.K. Thomas, Adelaide, 1906), p. 8.
- 55 'A Fine Record: Inspector Clode's Retirement', *Register*, 20 July 1915, p. 11b. Clode argued that the Elliston locality should be called the Hundred of Hamp.
- 56 John Dow, 'Waterloo Bay', *Register*, 24 February 1926, p. 8c.
- 57 *Observer*, 13 March 1926, p. 14c.
- 58 See Manning, 1990, p. 106.
- 59 Pers. Comm. Bill Nosworthy, 1998. See Nosworthy & Nosworthy, 1988, p. 16.
- 60 P. Hosking, *The Official Civic Record of South Australia: Centenary Year 1936* (Universal Publicity Company, Adelaide, 1936), p. 558.
- 61 J.F. O'Dea, *Elliston: A brief outline of the history of this area of Eyre Peninsula* (Elliston?: the Author, n.d.), p. 1.
- 62 O'Dea, n.d., p. 2.
- 63 *Observer*, 9 December 1905, p. 28.

- 64 D.R. Myer, 'Reminiscences of a Pioneer, born 1846', typescript, PRG 458/7/7. This typescript has a note 'Appeared in weekly instalments in the *Port Lincoln Times*, 22 May–3 July 1931'.
- 65 N.A. Richardson, 'Waterloo Bay Massacre', *Register* 24 October 1929, p. 6. If this was the story that Hamp often told, then at least one detail is inaccurate. The suspects for his father's murder were never hanged: however, two men were convicted on Captain Beevor's murder and hanged at Taunto, 80 kilometres from Port Lincoln.
- 66 Max Fatchen, 'Massacre of the Aborigines', *Advertiser*, 11 April 1970, p. 17.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 'Waterloo Bay Massacre', *Advertiser*, 15 October 1937, p. 3a.
- 69 PRG 458/6, State Records, Adelaide.
- 70 GRG 24/6/1848/1127, State Records, Adelaide, dated 17 July 1848.
- 71 GRG 24/6/1848/1152, State Records, Adelaide, dated 26 July 1848; GRG 24/6/1848/1156, State Records, Adelaide.
- 72 GRG 24/6/1848/1127, State Records, Adelaide, dated 17 July 1848.
- 73 Henry Holroyd, 'South Australian Pioneer. His Autobiography'. Written in 1902 and held in the Mortlock Library: D.4108/7(L), p. 27.
- 74 Quoted in *News*, 2 April 1970, p. 13.
- 75 Thompson 1969, p. 176–8.
- 76 Interview by Neil Thompson with Mr and Mrs Roche at their home at 10 Park St, Glandore, 17 September 1965, quoted in Thompson & Thompson 1988, p. 23.
- 77 GRG 24/6/1849/2118, State Records, Adelaide, p. 6. Judge Cooper notes that the 'confessions given by prisoners to Geharty cannot be relied on'.
- 78 GRG 24/6/1849/1847, State Records, Adelaide.
- 79 *Observer*, 24 April 1926, p. 60.
- 80 *Advertiser*, 4 August 1932, p. 10i. Reminiscences of M.S.W. Kenny.
- 81 Thompson & Thompson, 1988, p. 23.
- 82 GRG 24/6/1848/1127, State Records, Adelaide, p. 3.
- 83 GRG 24/6/1848/1152, State Records, Adelaide, p. 3.
- 84 GRG 24/6/1848/1156, State Records, Adelaide, p. 4.
- 85 *Register*, 29 September 1849, p. 2e.
- 86 Ibid., p. 3a.
- 87 See also the *Register*, 29 September 1849, pp. 2e–3a for a detailed account of the trial.
- 88 This evidence later helped to save the suspects from the gallows: at no stage did the prosecution establish that Korti Warri was in fact Weepra Spring where Hamp lived.
- 89 Similarly the prosecution could not establish that Tommy and John Hamp were one and the same.
- 90 GRG 24/6/1849/2118, State Records, Adelaide, pp. 6–7, dated 20 November 1849. This is remarkable evidence. Judge Cooper argued that it could not be used to clearly identify 'Tommy' as John Hamp, an argument which saved Mingulta and Mangalta from hanging. The evidence also gives Korti Warri (or Warrie) as the Wirangu (?) name for Weepra Spring on Stoney Point, Lake Newland although as Cooper notes we can not be sure that the witness was describing what the Europeans knew as Weepra Spring or Stoney Point.
- 91 GRG 24/6/1849/2118, State Records, Adelaide, p. 8.
- 92 GRG 24/6/1849/2118, State Records, Adelaide, p. 9.
- 93 *South Australian*, 21 July 1848, p. 2a.
- 94 Tolmer 1882, Vol. II, p. 105.
- 95 GRG 24/6/1851/1744, State Records, Adelaide.
- 96 Clamor Schürmann, *I'd Rather Dig Potatoes*, p. 154. (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1987).

- 97 The writer probably means William Hosken, of Waranda Well (Faull 1988, p. 39) and not some long-forgotten relative of one of the authors. His properties included Chillundie, Chilperundie and Muddamuckla: he also had a lease on St Peter's Island off Ceduna.
- 98 *Register*, 29 September 1849, p. 2e.
- 99 The letters of P.J. Baillie. PRG 458/6.
- 100 Lisa Baker, *Calca 1885–1991: History of Calca* (Calca Book Committee, Calca, 1991), p. 19. See also Neil Thompson & Val Thompson, *The Streaky Bay: A History of the Streaky Bay District* (The Streaky Bay District Council, Streaky Bay, 1988), p. 78.
- 101 Basil Fuller, *Nullarbor Lifelines* (Rigby, Adelaide, 1977), p. 185.
- 102 J.D. Somerville, *The Port Lincoln Times Centenary History of the early Days of Eyre Peninsula*. Held in the Mortlock Library (Z.994.2/b). See the entries beginning on 18 September 1936, running through to 27 November 1936. His views, like those of Rodney Cockburn's, are occasionally defensively belligerent on the subject: '[t]he white men, now and again, in self defence and in attempting to arrest raiders, may have shot down a few raiders', quoted in *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay: Elliston 1878–1978*, p. 5.
- 103 P.J. Baillie, 'The Waterloo Bay Story', *Chronicle*, 3 December 1971, p. 43.
- 104 Charter, 1989, p. 65.
- 105 A.T. Saunders, 'Waterloo Bay', *Register*, 29 March 1926, p. 13e.
- 106 Ellen Liston, 'Doctor', in *Pioneers: Stories by Ellen Liston*. Compiled by E.A. Harwood (The Hassell Press, Adelaide, 1936), p. 58.
- 107 Pat Sumerling, 'The myth of the Elliston Massacre', *History SA*, No. 120, 1995, pp. 4–5.
- 108 *News*, 7 April 1979, p. 20.
- 109 Max Fatchen, *Advertiser*, Wednesday 25 March 1970, p. 17.
- 110 *News*, 18 February 1970, p. 2.
- 111 'Plan to recall "massacre",' *Advertiser*, 24 March 1970, p. 11.
- 112 Jeff Turner, 'What did Happen at Waterloo Bay?' *News*, 2 April 1970, pp. 12–13.
- 113 Norman Ford, 'Massacre legend', *Advertiser*, 30 March 1970, p. 2.
- 114 Laurie Bryan, 'Massacre incident', *Advertiser*, 3 April 1970, p. 2. The noun in the headline is worth a comment: Ford's letter describes a 'legend', Bryan's an 'incident'. The contentious nature of the subject is clearly manifested. The printing of the letter with a number of spelling errors included is also a not-so-subtle indication of the attitudes of the *Advertiser* staff.
- 115 Pat Sumerling, 'The myth of the Elliston massacre: The value of memory', *History SA: Newsletter of the Historical Society of SA* No. 120 (1995), p. 4.
- 116 Perhaps the detail of the chains has been taken from stories still told about James Brown by Ngarrindjeri people from the Coorong and the South East. The same story has been collected from two members of the Ngarrindjeri community about Brown chaining his victims to the rock wall of a cave and leaving them to die when the tide came in (Pers. Comm. at the opening of the David Unaipon Centre at the University of South Australia, 1996).
- 117 Pers. Comm., 1994.
- 118 The plaque on Hamp's grave reads: 'JOHN HAMP/KILLED BY THE NATIVES NEAR THIS SPOT/MAY 3RD 1848/ERECTED IN 1971 BY/THE PT LINCOLN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY/P.J. BAILLIE CHIEF'.
- 119 J.J. Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia*, 2nd ed. (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989), p. xv.

## THE LEGEND OF JAMES BROWN

- 1 Rodney Cockburn, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, Vol. I (Lynton Publications, Adelaide, 1974, facsimile of the original by Publishers Limited, Adelaide, 1925–27), p. 140. What the