

GILLIES MACPHERSON

PREFACE

I am not related to Gillies Macpherson but I encountered his name several times while I was researching my own family history. I found no consolidated record of the man, so I decided that such an interesting character deserved to be more accessible. However, this paper is intended only to bring together all references to Gillies Macpherson that I found. I have not extracted all details from each source document. Anyone who wants a fuller picture of the events Macpherson lived through should consult the references at Appendix F, or the actual referenced documents. But beware of other documents that I list in Appendices C and D. Some will have elements of truth, but many newspaper items from the twentieth century are old prospectors' yarns which should not be accepted unless you can find some corroborating evidence.

I would be very pleased to hear of any further references to Gillies Macpherson, because I would like to see them all together in one paper. My address is on the title page.

I spell Gillies Macpherson's surname the way I do because this was his choice on his wedding certificate and on the grave of his wife and son. The rest of the world called him McPherson, which is the spelling used by his father and grandfather on baptismal records. (It must have been a matter of fashion in the mid-nineteenth century, when my great-grandfather made a similar change of spelling.) Gillies Macpherson's Christian name was sometimes spelt Gilles or Gillis, even on his wedding certificate¹, but this would be because I understand that the name Gillies is pronounced by the Scots to rhyme with Phyllis².

My main sources of information have been:

- Peter Bridge of Hesperian Press, who kindly let me read a stack of photocopies of newspaper items on Gillies Macpherson, and has allowed me to collate the information they contain. In my References in Appendix F, all those which are to Peter Bridge's material are preceded by a "B".
- Alan G Macpherson, Ph D, Professor Emeritus, The Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. He is an indefatigable researcher of the Macpherson clan history and genealogy, and he has shared with me his information on Gillies Macpherson³.
- Dr Robin McLachlan of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst NSW, who has an interest in Australians in the Yukon.

When I was researching Western Australian place-names containing the name Macpherson, I discovered McPherson's Pillar (sic). The Geographic Names database of the Department of Land Administration provided me with more background. The Pillar is in the Gibson Desert, about eighty kilometres north of the Gunbarrel Highway. If it were beside a mountain range I am told that it would probably be an insignificant rock but, on the flat expanse of the desert it is a true landmark. I had assumed that it had been rarely seen since David Carnegie named it in 1896⁴ but, when I advertised for a photograph of it, I was surprised to hear from a half-dozen who had seen it. These people say that there are also many others who explore the Western Australian deserts for adventure in four-wheel-drive vehicles. I am told that, in the centenary

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year of Carnegie's trip, many people retraced his route. I have listed in Appendix B the modern-day explorers who contacted me. I accepted the offers of photographs from Jim Polinelli and Michael Cusack, though I greatly appreciate the interest shown by all of them.

Thanks to the author Tom Austen for his constructive advice on the form and structure of these notes.

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GILLIES MACPHERSON was a prospector, explorer and miner in the Western Australian gold rushes of the nineteenth century. He is a truly legendary figure, since most of the stories about him have been passed on only by word-of-mouth, and then recorded as reminiscences in newspapers as late as fifty years after the events.

Any mentions of his origins say that he was Scottish. The only Gillies Macpherson known to have been born in Scotland in his generation was christened 9 April 1844 in the parish of Kingussie and Inch in the Shire of Inverness. His parents were Graham McPherson and Isabell McPherson⁵. Alan G Macpherson has found that Gillies Macpherson was born 1 February 1844, the son of Graham and Isabell, at the Dalwhinnie Inn where his unmarried parents were employed⁶. The inn is near the head of the pass between the shires of Perth and Inverness, and is a bleak and dangerous spot in mid-winter⁷. This might explain why his christening was delayed until the spring. The father, Graham Macpherson, had been born on 1 February 1820 on the small farm of Drumgalvie above the Braes of Ruthven and the town of Kingussie, to Donald and Janet Macpherson. Gillies appears to have been brought up by these grand-parents in the Spey River valley - at the age of six he was living with them on 14 acres at Lynmore, in a valley above Newtonmore, and ten years later he was still with them, this time at Nuide across the river from the town. According to Gillies Macpherson's Marriage Certificate, his father Graham became a postmaster⁸. But, at the age of twenty-six, Gillies was an agricultural labourer and shepherd at Lionel de Rothschild's Halton Estate on the edge of the Chiltern Hills near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire

Alan G Macpherson's research also shows that Gillies Macpherson, aged 29 and single, arrived in Brisbane on board the ship *Winefred* on 14th January 1873, in the early days of the Queensland goldrushes⁹.

Some of the more reliable records of Macpherson's life should be contemporary newspaper reports from 1888 to 1895. Even some of these maybe dubious, for he was reported to be secretive about his prospecting activities. One of the most reliable records may be a statement by J C Peterkin recorded by C M Harris, a mining engineer and amateur historian of Macpherson's period and later¹⁰.

Peterkin told Harris that his uncle Jack Peterkin and Macpherson first met on the North Queensland goldfields. Both went to the Kimberley goldrush of about 1884, then the subsequent Egina (sic) and Pilbara goldfields. In a 1909 letter to the press, J C Peterkin wrote that Macpherson and Jack Peterkin met again on the South West tin-fields at Greenbushes near Bunbury. A newspaper report of Macpherson's wedding in 1892 states that he had been a resident of the Bunbury district for over 12 years¹¹ - that

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is, from 1880 if not earlier - but this may be a minor inaccuracy among some others in that press report.

Among unsubstantiated stories published mainly in the twentieth century, one recurs in various forms. It says that he struck gold while prospecting east of Southern Cross with an aboriginal guide and several horses, but ran out of water and got into severe trouble. The party stumbled into the camp of Arthur Bayley and recuperated for several days before continuing back to the Cross. Several old timers claim to have sat around Bayley's campfire yarning with Macpherson, but none mentions any of the others being there at the time¹². They all claimed that Macpherson told Bayley where he had found the gold, and that Bayley waited for a favourable season before setting out and finding the spot in 1892 - starting the great rush to Coolgardie. Inspector A D Edwards said that the event occurred in 1887¹³, while the leader of the South Australian Elder expedition said in 1892 that it was "last year" (i.e. 1891)¹⁴. In each version, Macpherson and his guide arrived back at the Cross in poor shape, with a varying number of horses. According to C M Harris in Malcolm Uren's *Glint of Gold*, Macpherson had to shoot all but one of his horses and, when he became delirious from thirst, his aboriginal guide Toobey tied him to the remaining horse and brought him to Bayley's camp¹⁵.

C M Harris reported from the records of Greaves and Risely¹⁶ that, in some unstated year, Macpherson had been the first prospector to the Hampton Plains beyond present-day Kalgoorlie. He had taken "Hunt's Track" to Slate Well (by present-day Kambalda), south to the west bank of Lake Lefroy, then towards Frazer Range before being forced back by lack of water. He was said to have gone again in 1887 with six brumby ponies (bush horses) and the native Toobey, from Slate Well north around Mt Burges and then found gold. This would seem to be the trip that ended in the dramatic entrance to Bayley's camp

No-one unfamiliar with the interior of Western Australia can appreciate the amount of effort, endurance and planning that Macpherson and his associates must have put into their prospecting and exploration. The lack of water, extremes of temperature, and general harshness of the landscape demanded teamwork and self-discipline. A reasonably detailed map will give some idea of what a prospector had to tolerate. Where there is little sign of civilization today, the conditions are sure to be harsh. A lake on the map will certainly be a vast expanse of salt, holding water only on the rare occasions that rain penetrates far enough inland. A great many men died from exposure or disease in the gold-rushes. Macpherson was unusual in that he not only survived, but that he also appeared to prosper as a prospector.

In April 1888, Gillies Macpherson gave his address as the South West port of Bunbury, not far from Greenbushes, and was reported to have found good prospects of gold at

Golden Hill¹⁷, which appears to have been on the Yilgarn goldfields around Southern Cross¹⁸. By September that year he and Ridley had found gold on the Hampton Plains, about 100km east of present-day Kalgoorlie, having followed an experienced mining engineer named George T Simpson¹⁹. This was 300km east of the Yilgarn, which was the furthest outpost of civilization in the 1880s, and very few prospectors would have penetrated that far before then. Ridley claimed to represent the Grosvenor syndicate in Perth, and he reported good rains and abundant feed in the area²⁰. The two were undoubtedly spurred on by a legend that three convicts attached to one of Hunt's expeditions in the 1860s had found gold somewhere on the Hampton Plains but had never disclosed its whereabouts²¹.

Another story published in various versions is that Macpherson successfully mined McPherson Gully, near the subsequent White Hope Mine on the Hampton Plains²², some time before gold was found at Kalgoorlie²³. This was presumably the discovery reported in September 1888²⁴. One claim is that this was the first gold found east of Southern Cross²⁵.

In July 1889, Macpherson was still associated with George T Simpson. He was in York and leaving with Simpson for the Yilgarn²⁶.

There is no further mention of Macpherson's success at prospecting for the next eighteen months. If the leader of the South Australian Elder expedition was correct²⁷, it could have been in that period, rather than in 1887, that Macpherson explored beyond Fraser Range and nearly perished before stumbling into Bayley's camp. Or it may have been in this period that he prospected for tin at Greenbushes, if J C Peterkin was correct when he wrote of the meeting at Greenbushes before the move to the Murchison²⁸.

J C Peterkin, in his reminiscences with C M Harris, said that Macpherson and Jack Peterkin met again in Perth in 1890 and, both being fairly financial, set up an outfit of seven horses which they shipped to Geraldton in October²⁹ and took on the track to Annean Station just west of present-day Nannine. The area was in severe drought, but they told the station people that they were looking for good sheep-country which, surprisingly, was believed. They found gold at Nannine - according to J C Peterkin, their aboriginal guide was the first of them to find gold³⁰. They later admitted to finding 300oz of specimens within four months but kept the find a secret at the time. They returned to Perth for provisions and arrived back in Geraldton in May 1891³¹. A handful of others joined them, but they all kept the secret. One was Arthur Bayley, who later found gold at Coolgardie. John Connolly, a later arrival, let the cat out of the bag and was able to claim the £500 Government reward for reporting the gold find³². Macpherson then reported to a visiting mines inspector that they had won a further 500oz of specimens from their mine to the north of Lake Anneart. Although there were sixty diggers in the area, Macpherson and Peterkin were the only ones to have sunk shafts³³. At the time, gold was worth £3/17/6 (\$7.50) an ounce, and the Commissioner of Crown lands

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reported that the couple had won £3 000 (\$6 000) worth before the secret was revealed.

In September, a Harry Pass announced to the press that what he called Macpherson's reef was perhaps the richest ever seen in Australia³⁴. This was certainly an exaggeration. Soon after this, George T Simpson had reappeared and was bringing some of Macpherson's gold to Perth, while the rest of it followed shortly after³⁵.

Abundant water was uncovered by boring³⁶ and, by October 1891, 500 men were on the Murchison goldfield³⁷. Within a month claim-jumpers were invading claims and demanding access to those not actually being worked, but there appears to have been no violence. Macpherson and Peterkin, who had four claims, were among those on whom the newcomers served notice. When Government officials eventually arrived at the end of October, peace returned³⁸.

Much of this is confirmed by J C Peterkin, who implies that Macpherson and Jack Peterkin sold their claim to a Perth syndicate for a good figure while there was still strong interest in the Murchison goldfield³⁹.

For many years, letters to the newspapers argued about who had actually first discovered gold on the Murchison, confusion possibly caused by Macpherson and Peterkin having kept their find a secret⁴⁰.

Macpherson must have been back in Perth in June 1892 because he advertised the loss of a packet containing "1 small ring set with bright stones, 3 shirt studs with Freemason's emblems, 1 gold nugget brooch 'Birthday' marked on back & 1 gold necklace . . ." and offered £5 reward⁴¹. Was he a Freemason?

By September 1892, Jack Peterkin had died in Perth and Macpherson appeared to be based in Southern Cross again. He and J C Peterkin, with an aboriginal guide, were rumoured to have been exploring the head of the Phillips River, possibly near Lake King which is 200km south of the Cross. They were reported to have been moving around erratically and avoiding people, apparently to put other prospectors off their scent⁴².

Arthur Bayley found gold at Coolgardie soon after and, by 23 September, Southern Cross was virtually deserted. Fraser's Mine and the battery came to a standstill and the tradespeople left. The arrival of Macpherson and his mate just then went almost unnoticed. They were returning from eight weeks away; they said that they had travelled over 600km but had found no worthwhile gold⁴³. Also overshadowed by the Coolgardie rush was news from Esperance, on the south coast. Two men arrived on 25 September from the Dundas Hills, near present-day Norseman, with optimistic news of a gold find there. Macpherson and "a nephew of

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Peterkin" were reported to doing well there⁴⁴. But obviously not too well, since they must have left at about the same time as the informants had, in order to be back in Southern Cross at the start of the Coolgardie rush.

Even newspaper reports at the time are unreliable. Some stated that Macpherson then accompanied Bayley back to Coolgardie⁴⁵. Others said that he "left by mail today"⁴⁶, presumably for Perth. One even said that he was suffering from ophthalmia and was leaving for Melbourne⁴⁷, but Macpherson was known for covering his tracks. Presumably he left for Perth, since eight weeks later he married in the Bunbury Wesleyan Church, on 17 November⁴⁸. His bride was Elizabeth, daughter of Charles Wisbey the Mayor of Bunbury⁴⁹. The press report said the groom was "one of the most successful gold prospectors in the colony and had acquired considerable wealth from the mines". The best man was the bride's brother-in-law. Apparently, at the age of 48, Macpherson still had no-one he could call on to be his best-man. It was also reported that the couple would travel to England and to the Chicago Exhibition before settling in Bunbury⁵⁰. The details of the press report were not completely accurate. The marriage certificate gave Macpherson's address as Perth.

Thirteen months later, in December 1893, Elizabeth Macpherson died leaving a two-week-old son⁵¹. And one month later the boy died⁵². The boy's names, Donald Graham, were the names of Gillies' paternal grandfather and father⁵³. Their grave is one of the larger sites in the cemetery and has been more elegantly furnished than most. It would have been prominent then because it fronts what was Horatio Street before that street was closed and incorporated in the cemetery. At the time of Elizabeth's funeral the family home was said to be in Cemetery Road, now the present-day Forrest Avenue, running diagonally from the corner of Hay and Bennett Streets to the cemetery entrance at the corner of Horatio and Bronte Streets⁵⁴. But, according to the rate books of the City of Perth, the couple settled in Trafalgar Road by the corner of Constitution Street in East Perth⁵⁵. The house would have been the first in a new subdivision above the river and would also have had views to the now big country town of Perth and its new suburbs developing to the east⁵⁶.

G M Macpherson was reported to have arrived by ship in Geraldton on 2 November 1893⁵⁷. If this was Gillies Macpherson and he left Perth so close to the baby's birth, he may not have been present when Elizabeth died. By 1896, the Trafalgar Road house was owned by timber-milling entrepreneur and gold-mining investor E G Lacey⁵⁸.

The next report of Gillies Macpherson was about May 1894 in the Coolgardie area, to which he and his party returned around New Year 1895, all in good shape⁵⁹. Then, on 27 March 1895, he and his partners J C Peterkin and W Johnston left Nannine to go prospecting eastwards with camels and six month's supplies⁶⁰. After about three

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months, near the Northern Territory border, they were delayed when their camels ate poison shrubs and, being short of supplies, the party continued on to Alice Springs rather than risk the return to Nannine⁶¹. From there, they travelled by trap to Oodnadatta, then by rail to Adelaide and steamer back to Geraldton. It is not completely clear that Macpherson made the return; the first report of the trip⁶² mentions only W Johnston returning to Cue on 27 September, but the second, more detailed report⁶³ implies that the entire party returned to Nannine. J C Peterkin was apparently still in Nannine in 1897, described as a Store Assistant⁶⁴.

Appendix A outlines the route of the 1895 expedition, extracted from the second report.

I have not seen any more contemporary reports of Gillies Macpherson in newspapers until April 1898, when it was probably he who was among recent departures "from the East" for the Klondyke goldrush in the Yukon Territory of Canada. This implies that word from the east coast of Australia had just reached "the West", so the departures might have been much earlier. The two named were "veteran Nannine prospector" J Macpherson and Alexander Livingstone, proprietor of newspapers in Cue and Mt Magnet⁶⁵. Gillies is the only veteran Nannine prospector I know of named Macpherson. Rob McLachlan found, in Royal Canadian Mounted Police archives, records of the checkpoint at Tagish on the Yukon River showing that G McPherson and J Morgan from Perth, Western Australia passed through in boat 14110 on 4 July 1898. He believes that Macpherson made at least one mining claim in the area.⁶⁶

J C Peterkin, in his reminiscences with C M Harris, said that Macpherson and three companions were caught in a blizzard on the Yukon beyond Dawson City. Macpherson and one other were said to have perished but the other two escaped and sent word back to relatives in Western Australia. If this had been true, then Gillies Macpherson would appear to have been born in a blizzard and died in a blizzard. In a 1909 newspaper report, J C Peterkin stated that Macpherson's whereabouts then were unknown⁶⁷.

Rob McLachlan and Alan G Macpherson have found that the facts are much more mundane. Rob discovered from Canadian census records that, in 1911, Gillies was a seventy-year-old salmon cannery-man lodging with the plant manager in Richmond, Vancouver. Alan G Macpherson found that Gillies died at the age of 84 on 8 December 1928 in the Provincial Home for Incurables in Vancouver, from chronic bronchitis and myocarditis, and was buried on 12 December in the New Masonic Cemetery. It seems he would have been a Freemason. The administration of Freemasons in British Columbia and Yukon have no record of Gillies after 1907. The Western Australian administration has not replied to my enquiries.

Gillies Macpherson had lived in Canada for thirty years. The details of his death

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certificate confirm that he was our Gillies Macpherson. A sad end to a courageous and rather heroic life⁶⁸.

J C Peterkin, in his reminiscences with C M Harris, said that Gillies Macpherson was called Cluny by his intimate friends. Cluny, or Cluanigh in the Gaelic, means "a green place" and is the name of the castle and estate of the chief of the Clan Macpherson, in the Spey Valley homeland of the Macphersons⁶⁹. The chief would be known formally by the name of his estate, so Australians with a Highland background might well give a Macpherson friend the nick-name of Cluny, as they might do with anyone with the same surname as someone notable. Australia has many nick-names that are passed along year after year, such as "Nobby" Clark.

The name Gillies Macpherson is not well known outside of historians of gold-prospecting. The Shire of Coolgardie has acknowledged his contribution to the region's history by naming after him a children's playground in Kambalda West⁷⁰.

Early in September 1896, the young Scots prospector and explorer David Carnegie was travelling through the same deserts that Macpherson and his party had traversed the previous year. He saw, from 24 miles to the north, what he described as "a huge square block of red rock planted on top of a conical mound, perhaps fifty feet high, whose slopes are covered with broken slabs and boulders". He named it McPherson's Pillar, "after Mr McPherson, a well-known and respected prospector who, though leaving no record of his journey, crossed the colony from west to east, visiting the hills and waters on Forrest's route as far east as Parker Range and thence striking Giles's route at the Albert and Mary, and so via the Rawlinson into Alice Springs on the Overland Telegraph. Though little of his journey was through new country, yet it had the valuable results of proving the non-existence of auriferous country in the belt traversed"⁷¹.

A P P E N D I X A

ROUTE OF THE 1895 EXPEDITION

Newspaper reports, principally one in the Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette of 2 October 1895, give details of the expedition's route which appears to have been:

- March 11 or 18: Left Nannine (Austin Advertiser of 18/3/1895), or
March 27: Left Nannine (Murchison Times & Day Dawn Gazette of
2/10/1895)
April 5: Passed north of Quinns (Geraldton Express 12/4/1895)
Star of the East
Mount Bartle
Lake Way
Lake Nabberoo
Carnarvon Range
John Forrest's track of 1874
Lake Weld, and the remains of Forrest' s old humpy
Alfred and Mary Range
Lake Christopher
Giles' track of 1876
June 15 Rawlinson Range
Mt Destruction
Lake MacDonald, on Tietkin's track of 1889, where all camels
Were poisoned and two bulls died. After a good spell here:
August 20 Alice Springs, where they met Carr Boyd who had also
travelled across country.
Oodnadatta by trap
Adelaide by rail
Geraldton by ship (the *Bulimba*)

APPENDIX B

THE MODERN-DAY EXPLORERS

The modern-day explorers who contacted me are:

- Michael Cusack RSM Box 549 Kojonup 6395
- Stan Gratte 292 Seventh Street Wonthella 6530
- Jim McCallum 125 Hamilton Street Stirling 6021
- Bill Peasley 22 Hovea Crescent City Beach 6015
- Jim Polinelli 16 Stonecreek Close Thornlie 6108

Dr Peasley is the author of *In the Hands of Providence*, a work on the life of David Carnegie, and he mentioned to me:

- Trevor Herbert 16 Cambridge Crescent East Bunbury 6230

Stan Gratte went to the Pillar as early as 1976.

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APPENDIX C

UNUSED SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Either unreliable, duplicated or not relevant

1. Geraldton Morning Telegraph 4/8/1893: Richard Robson's reminiscences of the Murchison. First on the field was Bonnor, who failed, followed by Connolly in 7/1890, then Macpherson & Peterkin. Others came and went, then Bayley's party. Robson knew nothing of this at the time, which is an odd sort of reminiscence.
2. Southern Cross Herald 18/1/1895: Historical reference to Hope's Hill mine, 1½miles from town. Macpherson and party were prospectors of the property and in 1891 a company started operations.
3. Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette 8/4/1896: Mentions Macpherson as a pioneer.
4. Unnamed cutting 1/5/1897: Rehash of history - Who discovered the Murchison? Douglas got the reward but Macpherson and Peterkin should have.
5. Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900: Quote from Southern Cross Times of history; seems garbled. First Eastern Goldfields find after Southern Cross was by Macpherson and mate in a gully 10chain S of present White Hope Mine. On their return, they told Bayley, who found Coolgardie about 30mile from Macpherson's find. Seems to be confusion between the Hampton Plains find and the 1887 encounter at Bayley's camp. Macpherson said to have lost horses at Strawberry Rocks, otherwise would have been first to Parker Range, then found Kookerdine (7mile from the Cross) but was beaten by Monger Groves and others. Maybe.
6. Southern Cross Times 1/8/1903: Confirms Macpherson at Hope's Hill in winter of 1888.
7. Sunday Times 13/12/1908: Historical reference to Gerald Macpherson pioneering Hope's Hill.
8. Western Mail 21/8/1909: Connolly claims to have discovered the Murchison, and had the certificate and £500 reward to prove it
9. The Sun, Kalgoorlie 22/8/1909: Gossipy report of Western Mail 21/8/1909 and Western Mail 28/8/1909.
10. The Sun, Kalgoorlie 5/9/1909: Macpherson & camels met Crossland & party. Macpherson & camels at Hunts Well (Kookerdine) before Riseley found gold at Southern Cross. Letters arguing about who found Southern Cross.
11. 15/1/1910: Garbled version of Southern Cross Times 5/3/1904 by unnamed writer - in this case, Macpherson is old and has 3 or 4 horses. Other data wrong.
12. The Sun, Kalgoorlie 4/12/1910: Rambling reminiscences by ADE. Says Macpherson named his find just NE of Southern Cross Mt Macpherson, but later named it Hope's Hill.
13. Southern Cross Times 3/4/1915: Rambling reminiscences with oblique reference.

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14. Southern Cross Times 31/1/1920: Repeat of Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900.

APPENDIX C (continued)

UNUSED SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Either unreliable, duplicated or not relevant

15. Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette 27/2/1920: Repeat of Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900.
16. Mirror 18/3/1921: Repeat of Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900 with rambles.
17. Kalgoorlie Miner 31/12/1921: Ramble by ADE
18. 13/12/1925: Repeats Leonora Miner 5/12/1925, and adds that Macpherson was the unluckiest of prospectors because of the 1887 incident.
19. Sunday Times 5/8/1928: Garbled ramble with distortions.
20. West Australian 5/2/1931: Requotes news of 19/9/1892 and 20/9/1892.
21. Kalgoorlie Miner 12/1/1933: Garbled rehash.
22. Western Mail 17/12/1936: Letter from Meiklejohn retelling old news.
23. Western Mail 30/9/1937: Letter from JET of Nedlands retelling old stories.
24. Western Mail 21/10/1937: Letter from Menang of Mullewa retelling old stories.
25. Western Mail 21/10/1937: Letter from Meiklejohn restating Western Mail 17/12/1936.
26. Western Mail 28/10/1937: Second hand references.
27. Western Mail 2/12/1937: Garbled version of Hampton Plains
28. Western Mail 9/12/1937: Nothing new.
29. Western Mail 10/2/1938: Nothing new.
30. Western Mail 10/2/1938: Garbled.
31. Western Mail 3/3/1938: Says Peterkin reported gold in Perth June 1891. Must be wrong. It was supposed to be still all secret then.
32. Western Mail 31/3/1938: Vague rehashes.
33. Western Mail 14/4/1938: Vague rehashes.
34. Western Mail 2/6/1938: Vague rehashes.
35. Western Mail 3/3/1939: Vague rehashes.
36. Western Mail 16/3/1939: Vague rehashes.
37. Western Mail 26/9/1940: Vague rehashes.
38. Kalgoorlie Miner 28/4/1947: Vague rehashes.
39. Geographic Names approval 2nd Quarter, 1997: Gillies McPherson Park in Pittosporum Street, Kambalda.
40. Unidentified cutting: Inspection by Mr Scadden - location of McPherson's Gully.
41. Victorian Express undated: Ramble.
42. Kalgoorlie Miner 23/11/?: Oblique references

The above press cuttings are all in the collection of Peter Bridge.

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APPENDIX D

UNSUPPORTED REFERENCES TO GILLIES MACPHERSON BY C M HARRIS ("DIORITE") IN MALCOLM UREN *GLINT OF GOLD*

p29 Shortly after arriving in WA, Bayley was camped on the outskirts of Southern Cross. Macpherson walked into Bayley's camp suffering from a "perish" he had done coming in from S of Lake Lefroy. Bayley fed and tended him, and he told Bayley of his trip. (Same event as p81/82)

p31 Bayley and mates followed Macpherson to Nannine, and then on to Lake Annean.

p37 When Bayley reported Coolgardie find, Barlow Morris (friend of Bayley) told him Macpherson was "out in the blue" several hundred miles north of Southern Cross.

p47 In 1891, Dick de Courcy said Macpherson tried to find the Convicts' Gold but was driven back by want of water.

p53 Gnarlbine rockhole succoured Macpherson in 1889.

pp57/58 Anstey's party left Perth 5/7/1887 and explored Eenuin waterhole, Yilgarn Range and Golden Valley. Is this where Anstey's claim and Bibra's Golden Hill were - see ref 3.

p80 "McPherson was regarded by prospectors and diggers as one of the giants of the gold trails of Western Australia". When Macpherson arrived in WA (direct from Scotland - no mention of Queensland) he tried his luck on the new tin field at Greenbushes. When gold was found on the Yilgarn he went to Southern Cross, then to Parker Range. No luck there, so he set out for Lake Lefroy and nearly perished (see p81/2).

p81/82 Probably at Annean, Macpherson told de Courcy and others of his (1887?) "perish". He started from Hunt's Slate Well and followed Hunt's track NW towards Mt Burges, where he still had found no water. Headed as directly for Hunt's track as possible. Had started with 6 horses, eventually had shot 5. When he fell unconscious, his aboriginal guide, Toobey, tied him to the 6th till they found Gnarlbine rockhole. Toobey nursed him back to consciousness and the continued on Hunt's track until they reached Bayley's camp (see pp79 & 80).

pp92/93 Macpherson and Jack Peterkin had known each other on Queensland goldfields and met again in Perth. When they found gold on Annean, Macpherson sent word to Bayley at Southern Cross

Hannan's find was early-to-mid 1893.

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APPENDIX E - PHOTOGRAPHS



Gillies Macpherson - c 1893

Picture attributed to C M Harris

From State Photographic Collection - 5001B/110a

GILLIES MACPHERSON



Gillies Macpherson probably on the right



Gillies Macpherson's expedition leaving Nannine in 1893

Both from The State Photographic Collection in Battye Library of WA History

Online Images 255035PD and 255036PD

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McPherson's Pillar - photographs by Michael Cusack of Kojonup WA

APPENDIX F

REFERENCES

References preceded by a "B:" are historical newspaper extracts collected by Peter Bridge of Hesperian Press.

¹ WA Marriage Registration – Bunbury 346/1892

² E-mail to me 7/5/2001 from Alan G Macpherson

³ Alan G Macpherson's academic field of research and teaching has been Historical Geography, and he is the author of *A Day's March to Ruin: a documentary narrative of the Badenoch Men in the 'Forty-Five Rising and biography of Col. Ewan Macpherson of Cluny (1996)* and principal author of *The Posterity of the Three Brethren, a short history of the Clan Macpherson*.

⁴ Hon David W Carnegie: *Spinifex and Sand - a narrative of five years of pioneering and exploration in Western Australia* p221

⁵ International Genealogical Index of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Also, Gillies Macpherson stated on his marriage registration (346/1892 - Bunbury) that his father was named Graham and was a postmaster

⁶ -mails to me 7/5/2001 and 13/3/2012 from Alan G Macpherson state Gillies Macpherson's genealogy and census details for 1851, 1861 and 1871

⁷ Thomas Sinton: *By Loch and Stream* in Core Stack at State Library of WA

⁸ WA Marriage Registration Bunbury 346/1892

⁹ E-mail to me 7/5/2001 from Alan G Macpherson

¹⁰ Early Days (Journal of the Royal WA Historical Society) December 1946 pp26/29

¹¹ Bunbury Herald 23/11/1892

¹² B: Southern Cross Times 5/3/1904, Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900, unidentified cutting 15/1/1910, and several other vague restatements

¹³ B: Southern Cross Times 5/3/1904 - Reminiscence by Inspector A D Edwards - While prospecting for Dr Hope late in 1887, just before Parker range rush, Macpherson with aborigine and 5 or 6 horses reached Southern Cross from the E. Most picturesque - matted hair, long beard, torn clothes, jaded horses. He had first struck Bayley's camp and stayed a day or two. Edwards often joined them and heard Macpherson tell Bayley of great prospects from which he got good gold 120 mile to E. He wasn't apparently at death's door, as stated by Malcolm Uren. Note that Edwards describes Macpherson when he reached the Cross, not when he reached Bayley's camp.

¹⁴ B: Inquirer 10/2/1892: Passing reference in a reprint of a report by the leader of the South Australian Elder expedition. He was currently camped near Southern Cross and Golden Valley (distances show that Golden Valley was at Bullfinch) and was referring to a telegram he had sent to headquarters from Esperance. He said that Macpherson (discoverer of the Murchison field) was the one who had perished his horses last year and just managed to reach Fraser Range. (See later reminiscences - this may not have been "last year" but perhaps 1887).

¹⁵ Malcolm Uren *Glint of Gold* p29

¹⁶ Early Days (Journal of the Royal WA Historical Society - December 1943, pp46-53

¹⁷ B: Inquirer 11/4/1888 - From Golden Hill - An excellent sample of gold by Macpherson from a leader running through Anstey's claim to Bibra's Golden Hill; and

B: Inquirer 25/4/1888 - Letter from Macpherson, Bunbury, 23/4/1888 - different reef west of Golden Hill

¹⁸ Malcolm Uren: *Glint of Gold* - pp57/8 Anstey's party left Perth July 1887 for the Southern Cross area

¹⁹ B: Inquirer 21/9/1888 - Geo Simpson, apparently an experienced mine manager and recently returned from Hampton Plains, says Macpherson and Ridley followed him there and found reasonable prospects of gold.

²⁰ B: Eastern District Chronicle 3/11/1888 - Ridley said on Wednesday 1/11/1888 that he had been on trip with Macpherson over 500 miles east. No particulars but mentions Hampton Plains. Good rains and abundant feed. He represented the Grosvenor Syndicate in Perth

²¹ Malcolm Uren *Glint of Gold* - the "convict's gold"

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²² B: Coolgardie Miner 5/4/1895: Item by JD. Includes a description of how to get to McPherson's Gully - several landmarks not on current map, ending in Lake Lefroy, which is a few kilometres west of Hampton Plains

²³ B: The Sun, Kalgoorlie 28/9/1919 (Whereabouts of McPherson's Gully), B: Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900, and B: unidentified cutting of inspection by Mr Scadden. The Laverton Mercury also confuses this site with the event when Bayley saved Macpherson's life

²⁴ B: Inquirer 21/9/1888 - Geo Simpson, apparently an experienced mine manager and recently returned from Hampton Plains, says Macpherson and Ridley followed him there and found reasonable prospects of gold

²⁵ B: Laverton Mercury 5/2/1900

²⁶ B: Inquirer 10/7/1889 - Geo T Simpson left Perth for Yilgam. on Saturday 7/7/1889. Will leave York today with Macpherson

²⁷ B: Inquirer 10/2/1892 - Passing reference in a reprint of a report by the leader of the South Australian Elder expedition. He was currently camped near Southern Cross and Golden Valley (distances show that Golden Valley was at Bullfinch) and was referring to a telegram he had sent to headquarters from Esperance. He said that Macpherson (discoverer of the Murchison field) was the one who had perished his horses last year and just managed to reach Fraser Range. (See later reminiscences - this may not have been "last year" but perhaps 1887)

²⁸ B: Western Mail 28/8/1909: Letter from J C Peterkin says that Macpherson and Peterkin, both old Queensland prospectors, met at Greenbushes and decided to try the Murchison

²⁹ B: Inquirer 26/8/189 L Macpherson & Peterkin's report to Inspector Troy. Left Geraldton 6/10/1890, arrived Nannine after a month

³⁰ B: Western Mail 28/8/1909 Letter from J C Peterkin. The first gold was found by Macpherson's "nigger"

³¹ B: Victorian Express 9/5/1891 - Shipping Notes - 6 May *Australind* from Fremantle - Passengers for Geraldton include J Peterkin & G Macpherson.

and B: Inquirer 26/8/1891 - Quote from report to Inspector Troy. To Perth 12/3/1891 for provisions, keeping their find of 300oz secret. Returned 10/6/1891 and found William Douglas in one of their shafts

³² B: Western Mail 28/8/1909 Letter from J C Peterkin

and B: Western Mail 21/8/1909: Connolly claims to have discovered the Murchison, and had the certificate and £500 reward to prove it

³³ B: Inquirer 26/8/1891 - Quote from report to Inspector Troy by Macpherson and Peterkin. Found 500oz of specimens since return from Perth. Only other find they knew of was Bayley, 2¹/₂ mile south.. On 4/8/1891 Macpherson registered a protection area and on 5/8/1891 he officially reported payable gold.

and B: Inquirer 21/8/1891: Murchison Goldfields - Inspector Troy reports 15/8/1891 - workings of Arthur Bayley and James Taylor on island in Annean Lake, discovered by Bayley 30/6. 15 men there now. Gillies Macpherson has rich specimens on Home Rule reef in ironstone range on north side of lake, with shafts about 3metres down. Macpherson and Peterkin had done the only sinking in the area. 60 men on the field, and 142 on route. Station owner Cruikshank opened small store and butchery. Main camp 2¹/₄mile west of Nannine Well. Macpherson and Peterkin gained 800oz of 1709oz total reported since 11/1890

³⁴ B: Inquirer 25/9/1891 - 23/9/1891, Harry Pass reported general opinion that Macpherson's reef was the richest ever seen in Australia

³⁵ B: Inquirer 7/10/1891: 3/10/1891 G T Simpson expected in Perth soon with some of Macpherson's gold. The balance expected in Geraldton soon

³⁶ B: Inquirer 7/10/1891 : Abundant flow of water found at the field

³⁷ B: Inquirer 16/10/1891: On 15/10/1891 500 men in the field, extending over 25mile north of lake

³⁸ B: Inquirer 16/10/1891: Trouble brewing many men wanting to invade claims to fossick for alluvial gold, and B: Western Mail 21/11/1891: Claim jumpers had invaded claims and were getting some gold, but there was no violence. When the Warden and Inspector arrived on the 30th (October?), peace returned. Macpherson and Connolly had been served notice by claim jumpers to hand over some claims, presumably those not currently being worked. and B: Western Mail 21/11/1891: Wednesday 19/11/1891 - Peterkin said he & Macpherson had left Perth October 1890 and discovered Murchison Goldfield 4/11/1890. After returning to Perth and back, discovered Nannine reef 23/7/1891 and pegged it. Connolly was the next to peg. Peterkin described their working methods

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³⁹ B: Western Mail 28/8/1909 Letter from J C Peterkin suggesting that records of the Bank of New South Wales, Perth, would show how much gold had been lodged. They worked the Nannine reef until it was sold for a good figure to a Perth syndicate

⁴⁰ B: Western Mail 21/11/1891 - Wednesday 19/11/1891 - Peterkin said he & Macpherson had left Perth October 1890 and discovered Murchison Goldfield 4/11/1890. After returning to Perth and back, discovered Nannine reef 23/7/1891 and pegged it. Connolly was the next to peg. Peterkin described their working methods, and B: Inquirer 10/2/1892: Second-hand opinions. W Tucker Allen got the impression that Douglas was the only one entitled to claim a reward. The find would still be unknown if he hadn't fallen out with his friends, including Macpherson who wanted there to be no gold rush and who had been getting gold for 8 or 9 months before making it known. Men were now leaving the Murchison

⁴¹ WA Police gazette 29/6/1892 – p104 – Property Lost -apparently somewhere on the road from Fremantle to Perth on 19 June.

⁴² WA Death Registration: Perth No 465/1892 - John Peterkin,

and B: Victorian Express 2/9/1892: - Mining News - Chatty column says that some few months ago, Macpherson was moving around erratically. It was thought that he was searching for new finds and was avoiding people. His mate Peterkin joined him last June, but had now suddenly died in Perth. Apparently Macpherson and a nephew of Peterkin and an aboriginal were scouring the head of the Phillippe (sic) River. (The head of the Phillips River is about Lake King, but might be further north of salt lakes that drain into it.) It was rumoured that they had found something alluvial, but he is closely watched. It was rumoured that someone well known in Perth was "standing in" with Macpherson.

⁴³ B: Inquirer 21/9/1892: New discovery ENE of Southern Cross, found by Bayley 50mile south of Uraling 6 weeks ago. Estimate of 1 000oz to the ton - he got 250oz in 3days, plus 150oz alluvial and expects it to exceed the Murchison. Everyone was leaving the Cross for Uraling - Hopes Hill battery shut down and Fraser's mine at a standstill. Yesterday Macpherson and mate arrived at the Cross after 8 weeks away. Travelled 400mile and discovered only small prospects - nothing payable. Abundant water and grass - 8 horses were fat.

Macpherson and mate left this morning with Bayley for the new find,

and B: Western Mail 24/9/1892: Same report as Geraldton Morning Telegraph 23/9/1892 for 19/9. Macpherson, Hampson and Gerald left by mail today. On 20/9, Macpherson and Bayley left this morning for the new field.

and B: Geraldton Morning Telegraph 23/9/1892: - Mining Notes - At Southern Cross on 19/9, the new rush is 100mile E and 20mile NE. Macpherson arrived today for fresh rations. He had been further east than Bayley and was suffering from ophthalmia and leaving for Melbourne. On 23/9, Southern Cross was deserted - butchers, bakers, barber and bootmaker left for the rush.

⁴⁴ B: Geraldton Morning Telegraph 27/9/1892: Telegram to Police Commissioner from Esperance Bay Police on 26/9. Two men had arrived 25/9 from the Dundas fields with quartz but no alluvial. Prospects of a large and rich-reefing field are good. Provisions were scarce. Among those there were R Macpherson (sic) and a nephew of Peterkin, and B: Victorian Express 30/9/1892: Same telegram as Geraldton Morning Telegraph 27/9/1892.

and B: Inquirer 28/9/1892: Same telegram as Geraldton Morning Telegraph 27/9/1892, but no initial R for Macpherson.

⁴⁵ B: Inquirer 21/9/1892: Macpherson and mate left this morning with Bayley for the new find

⁴⁶ Western Mail 24/9/1892: 19/9. Macpherson, Hampson and Gerald left by mail today

⁴⁷ B: Geraldton Morning Telegraph 23/9/1892: Mining Notes, and B: Western Mail 24/9/1892

⁴⁸ WA Marriage Registration Bunbury 346/1892

⁴⁹ Bunbury Herald 23/11/1892 and The West Australian 16/12/1893: Funeral Notice

⁵⁰ Bunbury Herald 23/11/1892: - Report of marriage ceremony and reception. The couple sailed to Perth on 18/11 and intended to proceed to England and the Chicago Expedition. They might settle in Bunbury

⁵¹ The West Australian 16/12/1893: Funeral Notice, and Bunbury Herald 23/11/1892: - wife, daughter of the Mayor of Bunbury, died this afternoon, leaving a baby only a few days old

⁵² Gravestone in East Perth Cemetery states that Elizabeth Macpherson died 15/12/1893, and son Donald Graham died aged 6 weeks on 15/1/1894 (National Trust 9 9221 4022)

⁵³ E-mail to me 7/5/2001 from Alan G Macpherson: details of all Gillies Macpherson's genealogy known to him

⁵⁴ The West Australian 16/12/1893: Funeral Notice - the remains of the wife were leaving from her late residence, Cemetery Road, and column of Bunbury News 15/12

⁵⁵ Post Office Directory 1894 and City of Perth ratebooks of the period - see "Post Office Directories" at end

⁵⁶ Perth City Library: Rate Books 1892 to 1899, and City of Perth plan dated 1/12/1893

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⁵⁷ B: Victorian Express 10/11/1893: Shipping report - Port of Geraldton - arrival of *Flinders* on 2/1 L passengers included G M McPherson. In view of the deaths, could this be wrong? The baby was born about five weeks after this. Would he leave then, or were men men then, and women required to be women?

⁵⁸ Perth City Library: Rate Books 1896 to 1899

⁵⁹ B: Geraldton Express 11/1/1895: Report from Quinn's. (Where was Quiff's? Was it Mt Quinn?) - Macpherson and party passed through here a short time ago, having been away from Coolgardie 8 or 9 months. All in good shape. (The party would have left Coolgardie about 1/5/1894.)

⁶⁰ B: Austin Advertiser 18/3/1895 - Nannine Sunday (today? Or last week?) W Macpherson, well known explorer with partner Johnston, leaving for the east, prospecting. Well equipped. Also in B: Western Mail 23/3/1895, and B: Geraldton Express 12/4/1895, and B: Inquirer 19/4/1895: Report from Quinn's - Macpherson, Peterkin and Johnston and camels and 6 months' provisions passed north of here Thursday 5/4 bound east prospecting. 70 or 80 miles of dry stages ahead.

⁶¹ B: Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette 2/10/1895. Contains the full itinerary, as in Appendix. A. A fairly detailed description of the trip. To the SA border, it refers to "the party" and "they". From then, places are "reached". No indication that Macpherson and Peterkin accompanied Johnstone back, but Peterkin was in Nannine 1897 (see end -Post Office Directories), and B: Geraldton Morning Telegraph 2/10/1895: Report from Cue They had reached Alice Springs on 20/8. Reads as though Quinn's may be near Nannine.

⁶² B: Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette 28/9/1895: W Johnston of the pioneering and prosperous firm of McPherson Peterkin and Co returned to Cue by last Thursday 27/9. Left Nannine 6 months ago. Travelled through Alice Springs, Oodnadatta, another 400mile by trap, then 700mile by rail to Adelaide, then by the Bulimba to Fremantle. (The Fremantle shipping arrivals in The Inquirer showed none of the names, but there were about 100 in steerage unnamed.)

⁶³ B: Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette 2/10/1895: Fairly detailed description of the trip. To the SA border, it refers to "the party" and "they". From then, places are "reached". No indication that Macpherson and Peterkin accompanied Johnstone back, but Peterkin was in Nannine 1897 (see end - Post Office Directories)

⁶⁴ Post Office directories to 1898: 1894, G Macpherson of Trafalgar Rd Perth. 1895/96, a W McPherson, explorer of Nannine.

1897. J Peterkin, Store Assistant, Nannine.

⁶⁵ B: Geraldton Express 29/4/1898: Recent departures from the East for the Klondyke were veteran Nannine prospector J Macpherson and Alexander Livingstone, proprietor of the newspapers at Cue and Mt Magnet

⁶⁶ Public Archives of Canada – RCMP Yukon Records (RG18, D4, Volume8) – Registration of Boats through Tagish in 1898 by number from 12377 – 14404. Rob McLachlan found that, in that period, the North West Mounted Police kept registers of all boats descending the Yukon River to Dawson City.

⁶⁷ B: Western Mail 28/8/1909

⁶⁸ Sources of data on Gillies Macpherson's years in Canada

Rob McLachlan's e-mail of 25/9/2011:

I have though a rather sad postscript. I think Gillies fell on hard times after the Klondike. A search on the 1911 Census for British Columbia brings up a Gillis McPherson working as a canneryman in Richmond, New Westminster. Note Gillis not Gillies, and he is aged 70; his date of birth is given as February 1841, not 1844, but he was born in Scotland, and marital status is given as a widower. He is living as the sole lodger in the home of the cannery manager. The discrepancy in age and birth year might be that he was trying to hide a few years to keep his job, or it could be a clerical/transcription error as the writing is not clear, I think though he is quite likely our man.

Working as a canneryman in a salmon cannery in 1911 suggests a hard existence. He is at least twice the age of most of his fellow workers and by this period most of the process workers are Japanese and Chinese workers, a contemporary reflection on the social standing of his employment.

Alan G Macpherson in an e-mail of 25/9/2011 found this exchange between Shyama Peebles and Paula on DPS-CHAT-L Archives, dated 3rd and 4th Feb. 2001:

"Hi Shyama:

I got this from a researcher in Vancouver today, do you think this might be your Gillis McPherson [Paula]: I was at the Archives today, and had time to look up Gillis McPherson's death certificate. The informant for the details on the certificate was a friend of Gillis named Robert H. Sharpe. Gillis was confined at the Provincial Home for Incurables at the time of his death, suffering from chronic Bronchitis and myocorditis. The death certificate stated that Gillis was born in Scotland, but parents' names were left blank. His birth date was 1 Feb. 1844; he

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had been living in Canada for 30 years, and was buried 12 Dec. 1928 at the New Masonic Cemetery in Vancouver".

Alan adds: This seems to clinch the matter. Evidently Gillies never left Canada after the Klondyke, and at some point settled in Point Grey. His designation as a Widower might indicate a possible second wife in Canada.

Here is the Cemetery record. No memorial tablet. His residence was Pitt Meadows, B.C. which lies upstream on the Fraser east of New Westminster - a different location from Point Grey in the death certificate,. It bears some thought as to what it signifies.

In an e-mail of 27/9/2011, Alan G Macpherson forwarded this message from the Masonic Cemetery Association of British Columbia in Vancouver:

>Our records indicate the following:

>McPherson, Gillis

>Age: 84 years

>Date of Death: Dec. 08/28

>Place of Death: Marpole Hospital (no longer in existence).

>Place of Birth: Scotland

>Residence: Pitt Meadows, B.C.

>Interment Site: Plot 263, Grave 04 in Section D.

>There is no memorial tablet on the site

Rob McLachlan has obtained a copy of the death certificate, and Alan G Macpherson and I have copies.

⁶⁹ Advice from Alan G Macpherson

⁷⁰ Website of the Shire of Coolgardie: www.coolgardie.wa.gov.au

⁷¹ Hon David W Carnegie: *Spinifex and Sand - a narrative of five years of pioneering and exploration in Western Australia* p221