



# THE FLYING FOAM MASSACRE

## ABSTRACT

Historian Tom Gara has published notes on the Flying Foam Massacre of 1868, including the names of some individuals involved. This summary combines three documents by Gara surrounding the events, and related archival documents and accounts.

## **ADVICE**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document contains the names of people who have died.

Readers are informed that the following information is confronting, and contains disturbing accounts of the Flying Foam Massacre and treatment of Aboriginal peoples. At some points, racial slurs are quoted.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Office of Robin Chapple MLC respects and acknowledges the Wadjuk Noongar people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we live and work.

The Aboriginal countries of the North-West regions of Roebourne and Cossack are the Ngarluma and Yaburara peoples. We acknowledge the past, present and emerging custodians of the lands and waters of this region, and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

Tom Gara makes the following acknowledgements in his 1993 article “Orphan Country”:

During the course of my fieldwork, I spoke to many Aboriginal people. My principal informants were James Solomon, Roger Solomon, David Daniel, David Connors, Gordon Lockyer, Algie Patterson and Yilbie Warrie. I also spoke to many others including Sheila and Robert Boona, Mibbin Lowe, Milton Churnside, George Togo, Tim Kerr, Clare Cooper, Georgina Connors, Kenny Jerrold, Karie Monadie, Calvin Saunders, Esther Solomon, Tootsie Daniel, Colin, Susan and Janis Cosmos, Trevor Solomon, Dora Solomon, Nita Fishhook, Doreen Jane, George Sheckler, Ross and Judith Walker, David and Gladys Walker, Frank Smith and Ernie Smith. Information was also obtained from various non-Aboriginal people including Ben Sharpe, Bob Hart, Carl von Brandenstein, Jan Turner, Nic Green, Pat Vinnicombe and Jenny Gibson.

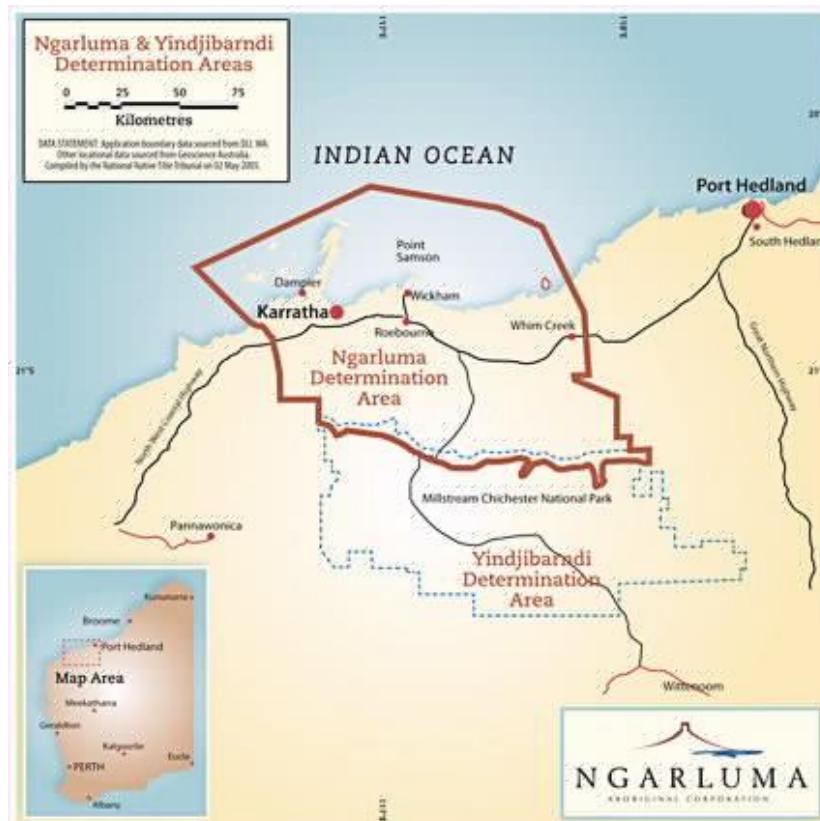
This report was written and edited by Robin Chapple.

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# YABURARA HISTORY AND COUNTRY



**Figure 1.** Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Determination Areas. Reprinted from *Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation*, N.D. Retrieved from <http://www.ngarluma.com.au/>

Aboriginal people have lived in the Pilbara for tens of thousands of years. The Yaburara<sup>1</sup> are the traditional owners of Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula and the islands of the Dampier Archipelago), though they are assumed to have been wiped out in the genocidal Flying Foam Massacre.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as Yapurarra in Gara's 1993 article.

Gara comments that “it is now difficult to ascertain whether the Yapurarra [sic.] were a small tribe [sic.] in their own right or a subgroup of the Ngarluma tribe, who occupied the coastal plains between Maitland and Sherlock Rivers”.<sup>2</sup> The Ngarluma people are identified as the traditional owners of the mainland of the North-western Pilbara, and as of May 2005 were granted Native Title over a significant portion of the Pilbara.

Gara had a conversation recorded<sup>3</sup> between Aboriginal elders at King Bay on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July – year unspecified – regarding the boundaries of Yaburara country:

<b>Tom Gara:</b>	That whale <i>thalu</i> <sup>4</sup> was in Yapurarra country?
<b>Gordon Lockyer:</b>	Proper Yapurarra, right in the middle of it.
<b>James Solomon:</b>	Yeah.
<b>TG:</b>	And the hills near Karratha?
<b>GL:</b>	Yeah, and Mount Leopold.
<b>David Connors:</b>	Mount Leopold, Aboriginal name they call it <i>Ngarrari</i> .

Yaburara country extended almost as far east as the Nickol River, and included Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula) and the northern islands of the Dampier Archipelago. Some of the western islands may have been shared between Yaburara and Martuthunira peoples. Whether the Yantare or Maitland River was the boundary to Yaburara country was undecided, but it

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<sup>2</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.5)

<sup>3</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.7)

<sup>4</sup> *Thalu* refers to *Kadarrabuga Thalu* (Whale Thalu) – a “totemic site” for ceremonies and rituals: “associated with a different species of animal or plant or with some natural phenomenon such as rain or cooler weather. The members of the local group “owned” the ceremonies and songs associated with the *thalu* sites, and by performing those ceremonies they could ensure that the particular animal or plant species associated with that site continued to increase in numbers or that rain or cooler weather would come” (Gara, 1993, p.13).

was generally agreed that Yaburara country includes the hills around Karratha and the adjoining coastline of Nickol Bay<sup>5</sup>.

Gara has also mentioned rocky hills in the coastal plain south-west of the Maitland River mouth;

The three hills are in Martuthunira country but their relative positions represent or "stand for" the three tribes; the western-most hill is the Martuthunira, the central hill stood for the Yapurarra while the eastern-most hill stood for the Ngarluma.<sup>6</sup>

Different Aboriginal groups had different ideas of who the Yaburara country were;

During my conversations with Aboriginal elders I got the impression that whereas Ngarluma and Martuthunira people define the Yapurarra as those people living on the peninsula and islands, some Indjibarndi and other inland people use the term Yapurarra as a more general term for all the "sea-side" Ngarluma, the local groups who lived along the coast between the Maitland and Sherlock Rivers.<sup>7</sup>

The Yaburara people were resourceful, being noted for their mobility and "close association with the sea":

The Yapurarra visited the outer islands of the archipelago on simple swimming logs, probably made from the light buoyant wood of the kurrajong tree (Gregory 1884: 56), or on a more complex type of watercraft composed of several mangrove logs lashed together (King 1827, Vol. I: 43-4). [...] Fishing nets up to nine metres in length, woven from spinifex fibre, were used on the beaches or in tidal creeks. The men fished with nets and spears from the shore or paddled out on their watercraft to spear

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<sup>5</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.7)

<sup>6</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.7)

<sup>7</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.8)

dugongs and turtles. The women gathered shellfish and crustaceans from the beaches and mangroves.<sup>8</sup>

The Yaburara language has all but disappeared, aside from “70 or so words that were collected by Walcott at Hearson Cove in 1861”<sup>9</sup>. Unfortunately, Yaburara language is no longer spoken. A man named Charlie Aleck is suspected to have been the last speaker of the Yaburara language; his Aboriginal name was *Thugari*.<sup>10</sup> Roger Solomon, said:

Those Yapurarra people were no different to us. Only the language; the dialect was different - Martuthunira and Ngarluma mixed. They were West Ngarluma people but they were called the Yapurarra because they lived in that direction: sea-side.<sup>11</sup>

Estimates for the Yaburara population are around 500 and 600 people at the time of European contact.

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<sup>8</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.9).

<sup>9</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.10)

<sup>10</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.10)

<sup>11</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.11)



## CONTACT AND COLONISATION

The Dampier Archipelago is named after William Dampier, who sighted the islands in August 1699 from the *Roebuck*.<sup>12</sup> Philip King, commanding the *Mermaid*, charted the islands of the archipelago and the nearby coast of Nickol Bay in February of 1818, and he named Intercourse Island after the “friendly intercourse” that was had between Aboriginal people and himself.<sup>13</sup> American whaling vessels hunting humpback whales visited the Archipelago in the 1840s and 1850s.

Cossack and Roebourne were colonised in 1863 and 1865, respectively. Reports from R. J. Sholl from May 16, 1866, stated:

[...] the natives continue quiet and peacable [sic.]. In no part of this settlement [...] have the early settlers been so secure from plunder or attack.<sup>14</sup>

The first colony, in Cossack, was located near the mouth of the Harding River.

A drought from 1864 to 1866 caused significant adversity for Aboriginal people and colonisers. In 1866 a smallpox epidemic caused many deaths in Aboriginal communities, though the total death toll is unknown.

Rich beds of pearl shell were discovered in Nickol Bay in 1865, which lead to the ending of peaceful relations between Aboriginal people and colonisers. Sholl wrote on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1868 that “32 tons of shells have been secured”, and estimated that they would fetch £80 per ton—adjusted for inflation, this would be £8,786 (AU\$15,474) per ton in 2018, around AU\$17,057 per metric tonne.<sup>15</sup> He continues, “At present, the profits are great and the

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<sup>12</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.14)

<sup>13</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.14)

<sup>14</sup> (The Inquirer, 1866, p5, cited in Gara, 1983, p.3)

<sup>15</sup> Other estimates place the value of the pearl shell at £100 per ton, with a ton of shells being exported every 27 days (Nicol Bay, 1868)

expenses small, but with competition the same happy state of affairs cannot be expected to continue”.<sup>16</sup> Aboriginal people were “employed” as divers in exchange for tobacco, flour, and other goods:

The pearlers, most likely, had little regard for the local Aborigines when they dispossessed them of the vital water supplies there. The Yapurarra apparently responded to these intrusions by stealing food and other goods from the pearlers' camps and from the boats offshore.<sup>17</sup>

Aboriginal people often also resorted to stealing sheep, and Police Constable Griffis was to arrest some Aboriginal people accused of such a theft in January of 1868. The Government Resident of Roebourne R. J. Sholl wrote:

It cannot be expected that the best of natives would resist such temptation, the more especially when, from the dryness of the season, their relations are suffering for want of food. However injudicious this may be, it is essential that the natives be taught not to steal sheep.<sup>18</sup>

Gara also notes that the “employment” was actually abduction and enslavement:

Aboriginal men were abducted to work as divers on the boats; Aboriginal women were also abducted to work as divers and as sexual partners for the white pearlers. [...] In many cases, if inducements failed, the Aborigines were simply kidnapped, chained together and marched to the boats on the coast. From there they may have been transported to pearling grounds hundreds of kilometres from their homes and

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<sup>16</sup> (Sholl, 1868d)

<sup>17</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.15)

<sup>18</sup> (Sholl, 1868d)

abandoned there at the end of the season [...] Aboard the boats, the murder, mistreatment and rape of Aborigines was commonplace.<sup>19</sup>

This exploitation of Aboriginal people took place first in Broome and Cossack, and, when reported in the West Australian Times, was termed “‘beach combing work’ – for it is little more”.<sup>20</sup> The practice of kidnapping or forcefully removing Aboriginal people from country and enslaving them was known as “‘native hunting’, ‘n\*gger-driving’ or ‘blackbirding’”.<sup>21</sup> Many of the Aboriginal people were removed from non-coastal areas and could not swim; this “‘appeared immaterial to the blackbirders’”.<sup>22</sup>

Some Aboriginal women were abducted and kept as slaves on islands off the archipelago, and “‘sold off to the masters of the pearling boats’”.<sup>23</sup> The number of Aboriginal people put to work in this industry climbed to 549 people in 1884.<sup>24</sup> There is evidence that some of these pearl divers, referred to as “‘little boys’”, were as young as 10 years old.<sup>25</sup>

A few years after the colonisation of Roebourne, the Flying Foam Massacre occurred. Conflicting reports about the true number of Aboriginal people killed has been a topic of contention, particularly in Gara’s work. Gara notes that the Yaburara “‘were effectively destroyed as a social unit in frontier conflict in the late 1860s’”:

The few survivors were scattered along distant coasts by the pearling boats, or sought refuge on the pastoral stations inland. Early ethnographic sources [...] record a great deal of useful information on the material culture, subsistence techniques, customs

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<sup>19</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.21)

<sup>20</sup> (Nicol Bay, 1868)

<sup>21</sup> (Owen, 2016, pp 130-1), censorship not present in original.

<sup>22</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.131)

<sup>23</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.21)

<sup>24</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.130)

<sup>25</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.130)

and beliefs of the Ngarluma tribe. However, little is known specifically of the Yapurarra [sic.]. There may be people of Yapurarra [sic.] descent scattered throughout the north-west of the state who know little if anything of their heritage.<sup>26</sup>

The Government Resident and Chief Magistrate of Roebourne, Robert John Sholl (1819-1886)<sup>27</sup>, and his sons Richard Adolphus Sholl (1847-1919)<sup>28</sup>, Robert Frederick Sholl (1848-1909)<sup>29</sup>, and Horatio William (Horace) Sholl (1852-1927)<sup>30</sup> were “directly involved in the lucrative pearling industry”.<sup>31</sup> A police report written by Sub Inspector Piesse in 1873 stated “the natives fear Mr Sholl will put them in prison if they refuse to serve his sons who are pearlery... native men and women are kidnapped...and practically taken into slavery”.<sup>32</sup> The Governor at the time wrote that Sholl’s abuse of his authority was “a disgrace to the British name”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.5)

<sup>27</sup> (Birman, 1976)

<sup>28</sup> (Bolton, 1988a)

<sup>29</sup> (Bolton, 1988b)

<sup>30</sup> (Bolton, 1988c)

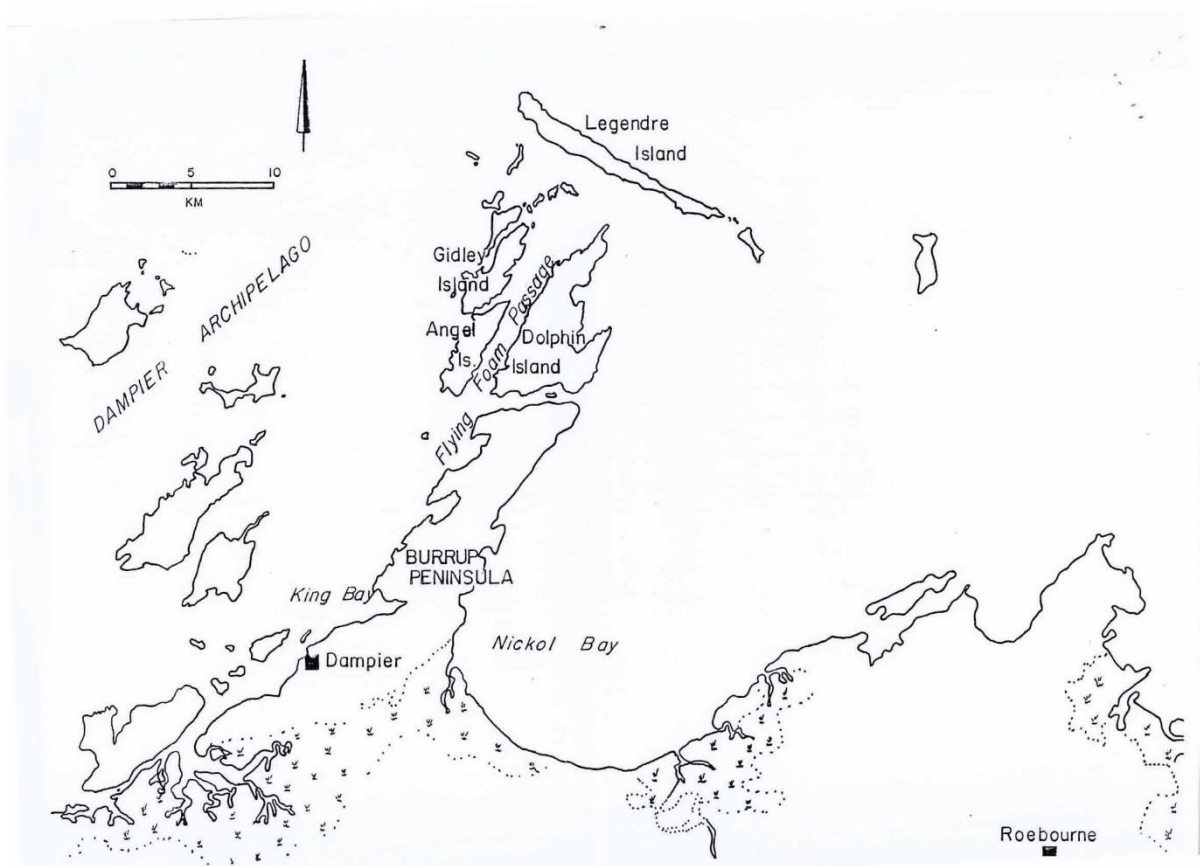
<sup>31</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.131)

<sup>32</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.131)

<sup>33</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.131)

## MAPS

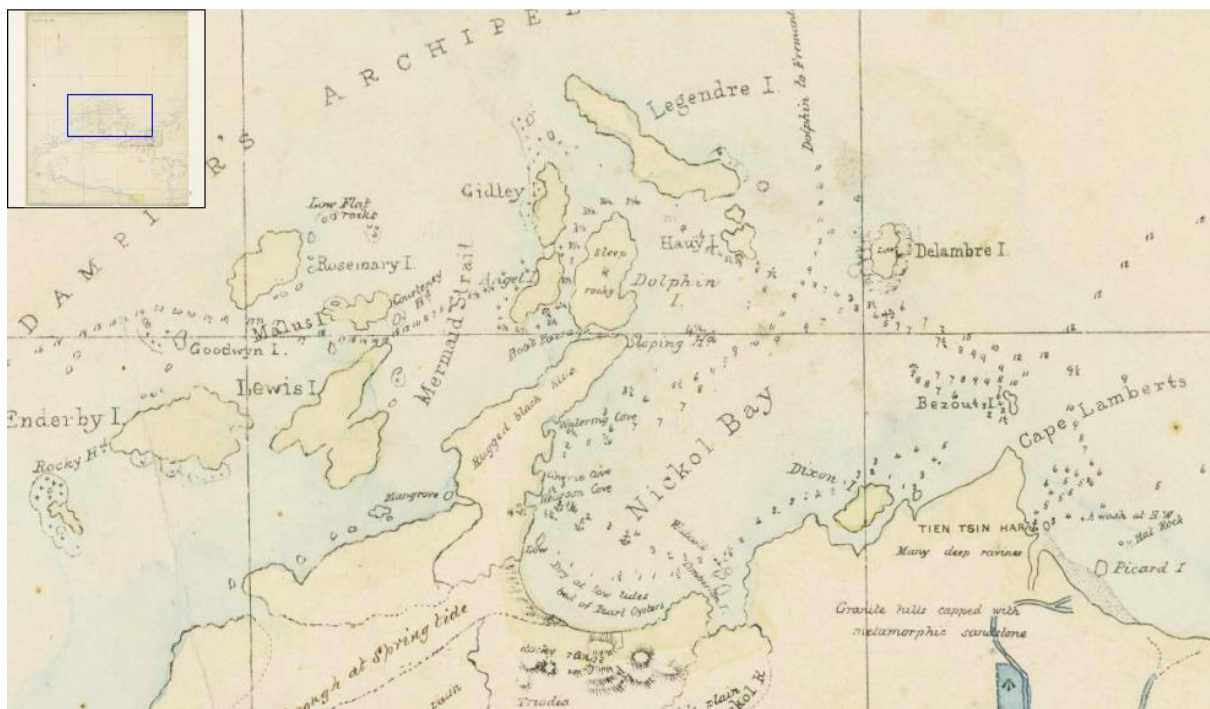
The Flying Foam Massacre occurred in the north-west coastal region of the Pilbara, around Nickol Bay, the Flying Foam Passage, and Roebourne depicted below.



**Figure 2.** Map of the upper coastal Pilbara region of North-West Western Australia, where the Flying Foam Massacre occurred. (Gara, 1983, p.2)



**Figure 3.** Roebourne District Map (Cropped) presumably published in 1867: “Map of portion of Western Australia between Dampier's Archipelago and Fortescue River showing properties of W.A. Taylor, J. Wellard and J. Withnell”. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/27949190?q=roebourne+&c>



**Figure 4.** Closer view of Nickol Bay, Tien Tsin, and the East side of the Dampier Archipelago.

## THE FLYING FOAM MASSACRE

The Flying Foam Massacre occurred in February of 1868, and was not a singular event, but a sequence of murders carried out by colonisers against the Yaburara people. It occurred around King Bay and the Flying Foam Passage over the course of three or four days.

It is worth noting that colonists would not officially report the full extent of atrocities committed during the Flying Foam Massacre.<sup>34</sup>

### OFFICIAL RECORDS

In February 1868, Aboriginal local Peter and Police Constable William Griffis<sup>35</sup>—of whom Peter was a “native assistant”—left Roebourne to arrest a group of fourteen Aboriginal men accused of stealing flour from a vessel called the Pearl, a small vessel engaged in pearl shell fishing. They were armed with a revolver, a carbine, a good supply of ammunition and warrants for the arrest of the fourteen Aborigines.<sup>36</sup> They caught one known as Coolyerberri, who was one of those accused of stealing flour “and other stores”<sup>37</sup> from the Pearl at Nickol Bay. Coolyerberri, according to Gara’s 1993 report, was not the only Aboriginal person to steal flour from the pearling boat. Coolyerberri was arrested by Peter and Griffis on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, and chained by the neck to a tree.<sup>38</sup>

Other Aboriginal locals attacked after a council<sup>39</sup> on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> and speared<sup>40</sup> to death Griffis, Peter, and a pearling sailor named Breem, the latter of whom happened to be

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<sup>34</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.144)

<sup>35</sup> Police Constable Griffis has been spelled differently in separate Gara articles. Griffis is referred to as “Griffs” in Gara’s 1983 article, and as “Griffis” in Gara’s 2017 article.

<sup>36</sup> (Henderson, 1988, p.85)

<sup>37</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>38</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.3)

<sup>39</sup> (Nicol Bay, 1868)

<sup>40</sup> (Henderson, 1988, p.85)

camping nearby guarding a stranded vessel, the *Nautilus*—that had been driven ashore some seven weeks earlier into the area of Nickol Bay located to the east of the current township of Karratha after a hurricane<sup>41</sup>—and freed Coolyerberri<sup>42</sup>. Breem’s partner Jermyn was also presumed killed<sup>43</sup>, but his body was never found. The likely explanation is that “Jermyn had left Nickol Bay sometime before the murders *en route* to Tien Tsin<sup>44</sup>, and perished somewhere along the way”.<sup>45</sup> A deposition from Henry Quartus Davis (master of the *Lone Star*) also confirms this: “Jermyn then [...] said he was going on to Tien Tsin. Three natives went along with Jermyn”.<sup>46</sup> The Government Resident for Roebourne at the time, R. J. Sholl, estimated that around fifty or sixty Aboriginal people had been present or “consenting parties” for the murders, also remarking that those parties “certainly robbed the tent after the massacre”.<sup>47</sup> In a report made on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, Sholl comments:

Tracks of natives were seen in all directions; there must have been at least a hundred of them. They have trampled the ground like a flock of sheep.<sup>48</sup>

It is also noted in *Unfinished Voyages 1851-1880* that a large number of tracks were followed by McRae west to the Mermaid Straits.<sup>49</sup>

Sholl was fond of Griffis, writing the following:

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<sup>41</sup> (Nicol Bay, 1868)

<sup>42</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.3)

<sup>43</sup> In Gara’s 1993 report, he states that the men “speared to death Griffis, Peter, and two white pearlery camped nearby”, implying that Jermyn (a pearler mentioned in Gara’s 1983 report) was also murdered.

<sup>44</sup> Tien Tsin was the previous name for the region now known as Cossack, and is visible in Figure 4.

<sup>45</sup> (Gara, 2017, p.1)

<sup>46</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>47</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>48</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>49</sup> (Henderson, 1988, p.85)



P. C. Griffis's loss will be much felt in this district. He was bold and fearless in the discharge of his duty, and was much dreaded by native offenders. He died while executing the law upon those who would, if not apprehended and punished, most probably have been more severely dealt with by those whom they had robbed any possibly in that case the innocent would have suffered with the guilty.<sup>50</sup>

Some<sup>51</sup> of the Aboriginal locals who were unnamed in Gara's 1983 report attempted to prevent the others from attacking the police camp. They told Sholl what had occurred, and the names of principal murderers<sup>52</sup>:

“Poodegin alias Charley, Woolgolgarry<sup>53</sup> [sic.] alias Ned, Mullagaugh<sup>54</sup>, an island native, Minulgajebba<sup>55</sup>, an island native, Parrakarrapoogoo, an island native, Cooracoora [...] and Chilwell.” Three other Aborigines were later named as being involved in the murders: “Pulthalgerri<sup>56</sup> alias Big Monkey, Euculgurria<sup>57</sup> alias Jimmy, a lad who took spears with him, Warrara, an island native.”

They informed Sholl that the suspects had fled to the islands around Flying Foam Passage.

Sholl writes in a report that “those who threw the first spears” were:

Coolyerberri, alias Entire, who killed Peter, Poodigie, alias Charley, who killed George Breem, and Woolgolgarri, alias Ned, who killed Griffis.

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<sup>50</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>51</sup> In Gara's 1983 report, only one informant was implied, and remained unnamed.

<sup>52</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

<sup>53</sup> In Gara's 2017 report, Woolgolgarry was spelled Woolgulgarry.

<sup>54</sup> In Gara's 2017 report, Mullagaugh is spelled Mulligough

<sup>55</sup> In Gara's 2017 report, Minulgajebba is spelled Minnulgajebba

<sup>56</sup> In Gara's 2017 report, Pulthalgerri is spelled Pulthergerri. Multiple spellings of this name exist.

<sup>57</sup> In Gara's 2017 report, Euculgurria is spelled Euculgurri

On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Moongoogemarra (Johnny) and another Aboriginal “boy” (unnamed) meet Henry Quartus Davis on his pearling vessel the *Lone Star*, and tell him what has occurred.<sup>58</sup>

An Aboriginal child named Euralgarri (alias Jacky)—Henry Quartus Davis states that “Jacky was a native boy of about 14 years of age”<sup>59</sup>— made a deposition “given through the sworn interpretation of Horace William Sholl”:

Entire came when we were asleep with a revolver in his hand, and a chain on his neck, and told us that the whitefellows were dead, and that he and the others had speared them. The other natives came with him. Ned said that he had speared Griffis first, in the chest, and then they all hit him with the back of a tomahawk. They did not use the firearms. Charley speared Peter in the belly just as he was rising up—he tumbled over and never spoke—Griffis never spoke. Entire said that he speared Breem, who ran away frightened but the others chased him, and he was speared. When he was running away he told them not to be savage with him.

Later, Euralgarri (Jacky) gave information to Davis when questioned, after swimming to their boat the previous night but remaining silent out of fear. Davis also confirms his statement:

He [Euralgarri/Jacky] said that Ned had killed Griffis, Entire had killed Peter; and that Charley had killed Breem. He said that Entire had a chain round his neck.<sup>60</sup>

Davis details in his deposition what he found at the scene; he investigated the bodies with the help of Moongoogemarra (Johnny), and another Aboriginal boy whose name he doesn't know:

We saw Griffis lying outside the tent near a fire. We saw Griffis lying outside with his left arm lying on his left leg. He seemed as if he was asleep and had not stirred. We did not move him but examined him as he lay. On his left eye above the eyebrow we observed a wound, whether inflicted by a spear or a bullet, I cannot say. The orifice of

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<sup>58</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>59</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>60</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

the wound was black with clotted blood. His jaw seemed to be broken with some blunt instrument. We saw a good many bruises on his left arm and leg. His clothing was torn off except a portion of his shirt, and the clothing carried away. We covered him with a sail and went into the tent. We there saw the native Peter lying just outside the tent at the back, lying on his back with his arms stretched out. He was dead. We did not move him, but examined him as he lay. We found that his face, right across the bridge of his nose, was smashed in with some blunt instrument. We saw a good many spear wounds on his left side, two in the region of the heart. He seemed to have been dragged out of the tent, and the native Johnny, who accompanied us, said, from the marks on the ground that such was the case. He had no clothes on him. I went on with the native Johnny, to try and find the white man George Breem. On proceeding about 50 yards from the tent, Johnny saw him lying under the mangroves, I went up to him and saw Breem lying on his face with his arms clasped. He was dead. He had all his clothes on. On examining him as he lay, we found part of a spear in his body right under his left arm, and on looking closer towards his face we found that it was very much swollen, and that he had several wounds in the face apparently from spears; also wounds apparently from spears, in his left arm. It appeared to us that he was running from the tent when he was killed. We covered Peter with sacks and Breem with sacks.<sup>61</sup>

Euralgarri also provided information on those involved in another deposition:

Poodegin, alias Charley, Woolgulgarry, alias Ned, Mulligough, an island native, Minulgajebba, an island native, Parrakarrapoogoo, an island native, Cooracoora, a native who came to the Government Resident to complain of a whiteman named Woodhouse having flogged himself and his brother, Chilwell, who went with Mr. Broadhurst pearl shell fishing, and three others.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>62</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

When Sholl returned to Roebourne, he assembled two parties of “special constables” to find the alleged murderers<sup>63</sup>, allowing the constables to choose their own parties and procedures; “knowing that you [the constables] will bear in mind the necessity of protecting your own party from injury”.<sup>64</sup>

Alex McRae, one of the special constables, was in charge of a party which travelled via land, consisting of “Messrs. F. McRae, W. S. Hall, S. H. Meares, R. Bax, A. E. Anderson, and R. F. Sholl; also Woobat, a Swan River native, and Johnny, the native boy who swam off to the *Lone Star*”.<sup>65</sup> McRae also reported “assistant Tommy, and a native of the district” as extra party members.<sup>66</sup> John Withnell, the other special constable, was in charge of a party in the cutter *Albert* which sailed from Tien Tsin consisting of “G. B. Fautleroy, R. Rowland, G. Seubert, and J Field—J. Glover, and the Swan River native Monkey were also attached to this party”. There were other members of Withnell’s party of whose names Sholl was unaware<sup>67</sup>; Withnell names these men in his report: “G. Seubert, G. B. Fautleroy, G. Howlett, J. Field, R. Rowland, J. McKenzie, J. Glover, Fitzgerald, and native Monkey”.<sup>68</sup>

Sholl wrote in his instructions to McRae:

I earnestly trust that the effect of your operations will be to teach these misguided persons to abstain from violence, and to protect the lives and property of the few white people who are scattered over a large extent of country, and who are peculiarly liable to attack.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

<sup>64</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>65</sup> (Sholl, 1868c).

<sup>66</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>67</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>68</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>69</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

In Sholl's instructions to Withnell, he writes:

I sincerely trust that you will be enabled to take such measures as will tend to deter the natives from the commission of crimes so heinous as those which have lately occurred, and thus renew that feeling of security which has hitherto prevailed.<sup>70</sup>

Alex McRae was in charge of a party of ten who headed west to the peninsula (arriving at Hearson Cove on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February). John Withnell was in charge of the other party (also of ten), and sailed around the Flying Foam Passage.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, McRae surrounded the suspects.

McRae claimed that he found items taken from the dead policeman in the camp. The boat party, led by J. Withnell, arrived at the scene at about the same time and, on the following day, transported McRae's men to Dolphin Island.

Over the next few days, the two groups of special constables apparently roamed around the islands of Flying Foam Passage, firing upon any Aborigines they saw... McRae's men shot and killed one man they caught crossing the passage on a log and fired at some others they saw on one of the islands. On that occasion, "several were shot or wounded", according to McRae.<sup>71</sup>

McRae writes an official report on the events of his party's investigation and pursuit on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. He describes what happens on the 17<sup>th</sup>:

[...] they were camped on a clear sandy beach a few yards from the mangroves but before we could get within reach of them they saw us and made for the mangroves and the hills at the back of the camp [...] they would not stop to be arrested so we had no alternative but to fire upon them, [w]hen one of the murderers, 'Chilwell' was shot dead and several others wounded. I regretted much to have to take this step with these

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<sup>70</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>71</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

misguided creatures [...] but their escape without a lesson would only lead to further outrages.<sup>72</sup>

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, some Aboriginal people were seen crossing the Flying Foam passage on logs. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, “Withnell had what he described only as a ‘sharp skirmish’ with Aborigines on either Angel or Girley Island but he provided no account of the casualties in his official report”.<sup>73</sup>

McRae and Withnell returned to Roebourne on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February.

Sholl writes to the Colonial Secretary on the events that he did not know how many Aboriginal locals were killed in the massacre, and that “the natives attacked were in possession of the property of the murdered men, and [...] they were all either concerned actively in the murder or consenting parties thereto”, which speaks to a non-existent desire to discern between different Aboriginal people. The fact that possessions were found after the massacre is also evidence for this. Sholl continues:

I have tendered to Messrs. Withnell and McRae and the gentlemen associated with them my thanks for the services they have rendered and I have no hesitation in saying that by their action, loss of life amongst the isolated whites has been prevented, the well-disposed natives confirmed in their amity towards us, the wavering made steadfast, the guilty terrified and the old feeling of security revived amongst the whole white population.<sup>74</sup>

McRae and Withnell’s reports indicate “only a small number of Aborigines, perhaps five or ten, had been killed”.<sup>75</sup> Two individuals captured on Dolphin Island were able to escape, as Withnell did not have handcuffs or chains. It is certain from official records that some

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<sup>72</sup> (McRae, 1868, p.3)

<sup>73</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

<sup>74</sup> (Sholl, 1868a)

<sup>75</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

Aboriginal people died on the islands around the Flying Foam Passage. In July, Coolyerberri was shot by Billy, the native assistant of Police Constable Francisco.<sup>76</sup>

Historian Peter Gifford writes that the special constables and their parties “harried the Yaburara mercilessly, killing indiscriminately for weeks on end until the Resident Magistrate who had licensed this retribution, Robert John Sholl, now sickened by it, put an end to it”.<sup>77</sup>

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 1868, the *West Australian Times* reported the following:

It is well that punishment followed so quickly upon the crime, as it is stated that emboldened by their success, the natives had actually planned the murder of all the whites, and the burning of the township Roebourne.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> (Gara, 2017, p.1)

<sup>77</sup> (Durlacher, 1900, p.xii)

<sup>78</sup> (Nicol Bay, 1868)

## TIMELINE OF OFFICIAL RECORDS

This one probable timeline, as different reports and accounts record different dates for the same event. The sources of these dates is included in citations.

### 6 FEBRUARY 1868

Police Constable Griffis arrests Coolyerberri. Coolyerberri is chained to a tree.

### 8 FEBRUARY 1868

Police Constable Griffis, Peter, and Breem are speared to death. Jermyn is presumed dead.<sup>79</sup>

### 11 FEBRUARY 1868

Government Resident Sholl meets McRae in person and secures his services as a leader of the land party which searches for “the native murderers”.<sup>80</sup>

### 14 FEBRUARY 1868

McRae’s party departs and camps along the Nickol River.<sup>81</sup>

### 15 FEBRUARY 1868

McRae and his party find Breem’s remains, and search for Jermyn’s. McRae camps at the bottom of Nickol Bay.<sup>82</sup> Withnell sails the cutter *Albert* with his party from Tien Tsin.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>80</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>81</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>82</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>83</sup> (Withnell, 1868)



## **16 FEBRUARY 1868**

McRae's party arrived at Hearson Cove, and does not report seeing any Aboriginal people.<sup>84</sup>

McRae's party camps for the night at the south shore of the Mermaid Straits.<sup>85</sup>

## **17 FEBRUARY 1868**

Alex McRae surrounds an Aboriginal camp, (assumed to be the south shore of King Bay).

Withnell's boat party arrives "shortly after" this incident.<sup>86</sup>

McRae writes of the day:

[...] started on foot before daylight, to try and surround the native camp seen last night, as, by the large number of tracks, it was supposed to be a large one, and likely to contain most of the men we wanted [...] before we could get within reach of them, they saw us, and made for the mangroves and the hills at the back of their camp. We cut some of them off, but they would not stop to be arrested; so we had no alternative but to fire upon them, when one of the murderers, Chilwell, was shot dead, and several others wounded. I regretted much to have to take this step with those misguided creatures, but we had no alternative for it, for if they cannot be arrested, their escape without a lesson would only lead to further outrages.<sup>87</sup>

McRae reports finding many possessions of Griffis, Peter and Breem. McRae also writes that "Withnell [...] succeeded in taking a lad, about ten years of age, on the way over, and learned from him that several of the murderers were in the camp we tried to surround".<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>85</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>86</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

<sup>87</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>88</sup> (McRae, 1868)

Withnell landed on the south site of the Boat Passage and met the land party, who reported of a “skirmish [...] with a number of natives”.<sup>89</sup> Withnell writes:

A boy was taken whilst crossing the island, from whom we learned that several of the murderers were in the camp surprised in the morning, and more had gone to the north. In the afternoon crossed the Boat Passage in search of water, when two natives came to us, mistaking us for pearl fishers, finding out their mistake only when it was too late to run away. They asked if the white-fellows were angry at the death of Griffis, the murder of whom they confessed to be implicated in; one of them was Mulligang<sup>90</sup>, for whose arrest a warrant is out. We took them on board the cutter and kept a watch over them all night, but having no chains or handcuffs, could not fasten them securely.

### **18 FEBRUARY 1868**

Sholl writes a report (1868c) on the murder of Griffis, Peter and Breem, and the claims of Aboriginal people who named individuals involved in those murders.

Mulligough and the other unnamed Aboriginal person escaped Withnell by swimming to mangroves; Withnell reports he gave orders to fire on them.<sup>91</sup>

### **19 FEBRUARY 1868**

Some Aboriginal people were seen by McRae’s party crossing the Flying Foam Passage on canoes.<sup>92</sup> They shot one person, and wounded or shot several others standing on shore waiting for those in the canoes. The mangroves made it impossible to pursue them, writes McRae.

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<sup>89</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>90</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>91</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>92</sup> (McRae, 1868)

Withnell transported the land party to Dolphin Island, and their party landed on an island north of the Flying Foam Harbour. No Aboriginal people were seen by Withnell's party, but signal fires were spotted.<sup>93</sup>

#### **20 FEBRUARY 1868**

Withnell had a "sharp skirmish"<sup>94</sup> with Aboriginal people on the islands where he spotted signal fires the previous day, "on either Angel or Gidley Island".<sup>95</sup> Withnell writes, "None of them were taken, but several articles belonging to the murdered party were found in their possession in the camp".<sup>96</sup>

McRae travels to the Maitland River, and Mr Hill, Bax, and Johnny returned to Roebourne.<sup>97</sup>

#### **22 FEBRUARY 1868**

Withnell arrives back at Tien Tsin Harbour after passage on the 21<sup>st</sup> past Hearson Cove.<sup>98</sup> McRae begins the journey home.<sup>99</sup>

#### **25 FEBRUARY 1868**

Withnell and McRae's parties return to Roebourne.

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<sup>93</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>94</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>95</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

<sup>96</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>97</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>98</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>99</sup> (McRae, 1868)

## **MARCH 1868**

Parrakarrapoogoo, Woolgulgarry<sup>100</sup>, and an innocent Aboriginal man are shot dead while trying to escape by Police Constable Francisco or one of his “native assistants”.<sup>101</sup> In Gara’s 1983 article, it is suspected that the location of their death was the Maitland River, but in the 2017 article, Hampton Harbour is listed.

## **MAY 1868**

At least eight<sup>102</sup> more Aboriginal men, Poodegin, Pulthergerri<sup>103</sup>, Mulligough, Cooracoora, Eurunbiddy, Warrara, Nemeru, and Bowera were arrested on Legendre Island. Mulligough, Cooracoora, and Eurunbiddy were sentenced to death after being tried in the Perth Supreme Court. This charge was later wound back to “penal servitude” of 12 years’ imprisonment on Rottnest Island.<sup>104</sup>

It was reported that Poodegin was shot dead on Legendre Island in May, but he was only wounded in the thigh.<sup>105</sup>

Warrara, Nemeru, and Bowera were tried in the Roebourne Court. Warrara was sentenced to three years’ gaol on Rottnest Island. Nemeru was acquitted. Bowera was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment with hard labour in Rottnest Prison.

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<sup>100</sup> In Gara’s 1983 article, Woolgulgarry was spelled ‘Woolgolgarry’. In the 2017 article, it was spelled as above.

<sup>101</sup> (Gara, 1983; 2017)

<sup>102</sup> In Gara’s 1983 article, it states that four men were arrested on Legendre Island in May. Only Poodegin and Pulthergerri were named, two other men remain unnamed. This information has been updated to “eight men”, as in Gara’s 2017 article, Mulligough, Cooracoora, Eurunbiddy, Warrara, Nemeru, and Bowera are named. It is unclear as to whether the unnamed two of the original “four” are named in the 2017 article. It is possible that a total of 10 men were arrested.

<sup>103</sup> Pulthergerri/Pooldalgarry (Gara, 2017, p.3) is likely the same person named Pulthalgarry (Gara, 1983, p.4).

<sup>104</sup> (Western Australia, 1868)

<sup>105</sup> (Gara, 2017, p.1)

## **JULY 1868**

Coolyerberri was shot dead by Police Constable Francisco's "native assistant" Billy near the mouth of the Maitland River.

## **FEBRUARY 1869**

Poodegin and Pulthergerri return to Roebourne. "Sholl was to take no action against these two men".<sup>106</sup> Sholl wrote on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February:

"As the trial of these men would involve much expense, for the witnesses employed in the previous trial would have to be forwarded to Perth, as well as an interpreter (if one can be obtained), I have not arrested these men. As they do not anticipate evil I can take them at any time should His Excellency the Governor authorize their arrest. Personally I am in favour of amnesty, for the natives have received a severe lesson and much blood has been spilt".<sup>107</sup>

## **13 AUGUST 1870**

Bowera dies in prison.

## **27 JANUARY 1874**

Cooracoora dies in prison.

## **30 AUGUST 1877**

Mulligough and Eurunbiddy are released from prison on Rottnest Island.

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<sup>106</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.5)

<sup>107</sup> (Sholl, 1869, cited in Gara, 2017, p.3), also (Birman, 1976)

## ACCOUNTS FROM ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

In Roebourne, a Ngarluma man named Coppin Dale was interviewed by Nic Green from the Western Australian Museum:

“Lot of Yaburara people there, long time ago. This policeman took a young girl into the bush, with a rifle. The old fella [the girl’s husband] he got a spear in his hand, he put the spear right through the policeman’s chest. The other police all got their guns, went out there, got all the Yaburara people up, got them all together, shot them down. Must be 30, 40 people killed.”<sup>108</sup>

This is evidence that the death toll was highly understated in official reports. Other, more recent information has also been provided:

Coppin Dale has since told Jan Turner (1990: 43) a detailed account of the shootings that appears to correspond closely with what is known of the movements of the special constables. He did not wish this information to be made public, however. Jan Turner also heard stories about the massacre from other Roebourne elders, since deceased, in the early 1980s.<sup>109</sup>

David Connors, an Aboriginal man from Warambie station commented on the Massacre:

They all got shot. King Mullagong [footnote reads: “Mullagong was a Ngarluma man, described by the early colonisers at Cossack and Roebourne as the “chief” of the local Aboriginal people (Gara, 1984: 8-9).”], that fella that showed the Withnell brothers Roebourne, he didn't like those people down there, he had something against them. He got the coppers there to go and shoot them. One of the coppers got speared too! [...] they wiped the whole lot out, women and children too. Only one young fella left, he fell beside the old fellas and the blood all covered him and after they shot them all,

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<sup>108</sup> (N. Green, personal communication, cited in Gara, 1983, p.6)

<sup>109</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.18)

they kicked the young fella in the ribs [...] The young fella he was alive for quite a while – he killed a lot of policemen, police boys and all. He used to wait for them and he got hold of one of their rifles and learned about it. He ended up shooting them before they got there because they had to come across in a dinghy – they reckon he was really bloody deadly.<sup>110</sup>

Gara finds that estimates of a death toll of the Massacre around 150 people to be “clearly exaggerated”.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.18)

<sup>111</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.19)

## UNOFFICIAL ACCOUNTS

After the events of the massacre, some allegations were made (by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people) that Griffis was killed for abducting Aboriginal women:

It was also alleged that on the night he was killed, he had carried a young Aboriginal girl into the bush and had been speared through her chest by her husband.<sup>112</sup>

There was some speculation as to the motives of the Aboriginal people, and suspicion that the population would attempt to remove the colonisers from their lands completely. One individual named A. R. Richardson wrote in a letter to the Editor of *Western Mail*, calling the Aboriginal locals an “inferior race”, saying “there was nothing in the nature of a ‘massacre’”, and writing the following:

The blacks, elated with victory, and like blood-hounds madly excited with a first taste of the white man’s blood, sent in a message to the little settlement that they now intended to serve all the rest of the white fellows in the same way, and drive them right out of the country.<sup>113</sup>

Richardson continues, “nor [...] was there any desire, wish, or intention to deal anything but stern justice to savages, who were incapable of understanding any lessons but those of ‘might is right’”. They add that the massacre was beneficial for the Aboriginal locals, as subsequently enjoyed “good food and other luxuries”.

Though official records claim that around 10 or so Aboriginal locals were murdered, speculation that the massacre involved the deaths of a possible 60 people rose outside of police reporting.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> (Memorial lauds policeman, 1989)

<sup>113</sup> (Richardson, 1892)

<sup>114</sup> (Henderson, 1988, p.85)



As one of his sons was a member of McRae's party, it can be presumed that Sholl was aware that Withnell and McRae understated the number of Aborigines killed and that he gave his overt or covert support to the actions of the special constables.<sup>115</sup>

The special constables were not publicly alleged to have massacred the local Aboriginal people until 1885.<sup>116</sup> David Carly (one of the colonisers in Roebourne) wrote to Reverend J. B. Gribble about the massacre:

“[...] it is very well-known by all old hands around Nickol Bay and the Flying Foam Passage that in one day there were quite sixty natives, men, women and children shot dead. The natives have shown me the skulls of 15 who were shot dead. Three of the skulls were those of children, and two of these small skulls had bullet holes in them”.<sup>117</sup>

Another account from Richard Allen, “a Kimberly pioneer”,<sup>118</sup> states:

Hundreds of men, women and even children were shot down in this period. Where once natives roamed in hundreds only 40 odd years ago, hardly any survive, and you can ride in these ranges for days and never see a sign of natives let alone tracks.<sup>119</sup>

This conflicts with Sholl’s order to Withnell to be “careful that the women and children shall, as far as possible, be saved from harm”.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.6)

<sup>116</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.5)

<sup>117</sup> (Gribble, 1987, pp 47-48)

<sup>118</sup> (Owen, 2016, p.144)

<sup>119</sup> (Allen, N.D., p.15)

<sup>120</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

In 1869, William Taylor (a coloniser at Roebourne) wrote a letter to the Colonial Secretary, and the abusive treatment of Aboriginal people in the region at the hands of the police was revealed. Taylor wrote:

“the former policeman Griffiths [sic.] met his death about a year ago in consequence of the excesses which he committed on the blacks – I believe that the immediate cause was the carrying off of 2 [sic.] women to Roebourne [...] Mr Sholl then mustered what whites he could and murdered blacks, some members of this party committing the most cowardly and diabolical acts both on innocent women and children”.<sup>121</sup>

John Watson, a pearler, did not participate in the events of 1868, but was involved in the arrests of Aboriginal people on Legendre Island a few months after. His account was written more than 60 years after the events:

“At daylight next morning the land party [came] upon a number of natives in camp [...] They were shot down while others took to the water only to be finished off by the boat party. I leave it to the imagination of my readers to picture the public indignation that would be aroused today by such slaughter, perpetrated as it was with the colourable approval of the responsible Government official of the district”.<sup>122</sup>

If Watson’s account is accurate, the site of the slaughter would be the Aboriginal Camp at King Bay, attacked by McRae on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February.

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<sup>121</sup> (Taylor, 1869, cited in Gara, 1983, p.5)

<sup>122</sup> (Watson, 1933, cited in Gara, 1983, p.6)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Taylor's belief that Griffis was killed in relation to the abduction of Aboriginal women is supported. Gara offers the following comments:<sup>123</sup>

“It seems unlikely that Peter, Jermyn and Breem were merely innocent bystanders. Whether Sholl was aware of the true circumstances of Griffis' death at the time is a matter of conjecture. Taylor's letter suggests that the circumstances of Griffis' death were common knowledge in Roebourne at least by January 1869.”

Gara also speculates that Withnell did not intend to take any suspects prisoner due to his lack of handcuffs and chains. “Although the alleged murderers were supposed to have gone to the islands around Flying Foam Passage, McRae's party, and possibly Withnell's too, attacked an Aboriginal camp at King Bay”.<sup>124</sup>

One observation, from Henry Reynolds' book *The Other Side of the Frontier* which Gara has cited states that:

Pioneer communities appeared to be unable to cope with the psychological tensions produced by even small amounts of inter-racial violence. The punitive expedition - official and unofficial - was the almost universal riposte. The objective was simple: the use of overwhelming force to crush resistance once and for all and drown in blood the Aboriginal determination to take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.<sup>125</sup>

Richardson, who wrote to the *Western Mail* in 1892, expressed somewhat hypocritically that some pearlers killed by the local Aboriginal people were not mourned by the settler community:

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<sup>123</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.6)

<sup>124</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.6)

<sup>125</sup> (Reynolds, 1981, p.63, cited in Gara, 1993, p.20)

[...] let me tell the public once and for all, that these last were neither pitied nor sympathised with by the settlers for the fate they deserved, nor was there any private feeling against the natives for the crime, because it was felt that those who were unfeeling enough to treat natives badly had no right to expect mercy from the blacks when they had it in their power to avenge themselves.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> (Richardson, 1892)

## NAMED PERSONS INVOLVED

*In Alphabetical Order by First Name (if available)*

### **BOWERA**

**(AKA "DICKY")**

Bowera was convicted in the Roebourne Court in May 1868 for having stolen flour from the tent of H. Jermyn, and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment with hard labour in Rottnest Prison. He died in prison on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1870.

### **CHILWELL**

Euralgarri's deposition claims that Chilwell "went with Mr. Broadhurst pearl shell fishing".<sup>127</sup> Suspect in the murders of Peter, Griffis and Breem. Chilwell was shot dead by members of McRae's party at King Bay on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February.<sup>128</sup>

### **COORACOORA**

**(AKA "WEENJOW")**

Euralgarri's deposition claims that Cooracoora was "a native who came to the Government Resident to complain of a whiteman named Woodhouse having flogged himself and his brother".<sup>129</sup> Arrested on Legendre Island in May 1868 along with Mulligough and Eurunbidy, and committed for trial to the Supreme Court in Perth for murder. He was found

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<sup>127</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>128</sup> (McRae, 1868)

<sup>129</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

guilty and originally sentenced to death, but then later commuted to Rottnest Island 12 years imprisonment. He died in prison on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1874.

**COOLYERBERRI (OR COOLYERBERRI OR COOLYERBERIN)**

**(AKA "ENTIRE", OR "MACINTYRE")**

Arrested on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1868 for stealing flour. Suspect in the murders of Peter, Griffis, and Breem. Sholl writes that Coolyerberri was the one to kill Peter.<sup>130</sup> Coolyerberri allegedly cooperated with Poodegin and Woolgulgarry. Shot dead in July 1868, by Police Constable Francisco's 'native assistant' Billy near the mouth of the Maitland River.

**EUCULGURRI (OR EUCULGURRIA<sup>131</sup> OR POSSIBLY EUCALGERRI)**

**(AKA "JIMMY", EUCALGERRI AKA "DAN")**

Accompanied Sholl and his son R. F. Sholl in their travel to Nickol Bay to visit the scene of Griffis, Peter and Breem's murder.<sup>132</sup>

**EURALGARRI**

**(AKA "JACKY")**

Sholl claims he took down a statement from Jacky.<sup>133</sup> Euralgarri provided the names of those who were not involved in the murders:

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<sup>130</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>131</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

<sup>132</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>133</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

The following natives attempted to dissuade them from attacking the white men, namely: Joe Murray—I do not know his native name; he is an Eastern native, Nguyewoorunga, alias Little Monkey, Woolgolgerri, alias Charcoal, Eucalgerri, alias Dan, [...] Whalebone, Johnny, and myself. Maypole was not there. He ran away when Griffis came.

It also seems that, from a statement quoted by Henry Quartus Davis, Euralgarri was present for the murders (as he was able to identify which individual killed either Breem, Griffis or Peter).<sup>134</sup>

## **EURUNBIDDY**

**(AKA “CASTOR OIL”)**

Arrested on Legendre Island in May 1868 along with Mulligough and Cooracoora, and committed for trial to the Supreme Court in Perth for murder. He was found guilty and originally sentenced to death, but then later commuted to Rottnest Island for life imprisonment. He was released on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1877.

## **GEORGE BREEM (OR BREAM)**

Murdered on the 8th February, 1868. One of the sailors of the boat *Nautilus*.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>135</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

## **H. JERMYN**

Suspected to have been murdered on the 8th February, 1868. Knowledge of his death is denied by Aboriginal locals. It appears that Jermyn died along the way from Nickol Bay to Cossack (previously known as Tien Tsin) before the murders occurred.<sup>136</sup> Master of the wrecked boat *Nautilus*, which was found wrecked in mangroves near the Breem, Griffis and Peter's campsite.<sup>137</sup> Sholl supposes in one report that the *Nautilus* was lost in a storm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February.<sup>138</sup>

## **MEMERRI**

**(AN ISLAND NATIVE)**

Euralgarri in a deposition states: "They said when the whitefellows came to shoot them they would spear them. Memerri, an island native, said so."<sup>139</sup>

## **MINNULGAJEBBA (OR MINULGAJEBBA<sup>140</sup>)**

**(AN ISLAND NATIVE)**

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<sup>136</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>137</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>138</sup> (Sholl, 1869)

<sup>139</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>140</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)



## **“MONKEY”**

### **ABORIGINAL NAME UNKNOWN**

Called “a Swan River Native”, Monkey was one of the members of Withnell’s party.<sup>141</sup>

## **MOONGOOGEMARRA**

### **(AKA “JOHNNY”)**

Johnny accompanied Henry Quartus Davis in his investigation of the scene. Sholl claims he took down a statement from Johnny.<sup>142</sup> One of the first witnesses of the crime scene, Moongoogemarra was one of the Aboriginal locals who accompanied Jermyn, along with “Charcoal, Joe Murray, Little Monkey, Whalebone, and Dan”.<sup>143</sup>

## **MULLIGOUGH (OR MULLAGAUGH<sup>144</sup> OR MULLAGOUGH<sup>145</sup> OR MULLIGANG<sup>146</sup>)**

### **(AN ISLAND NATIVE)**

Mulligough was “granted [...] a free passage to Fremantle” in 1866 by R. J. Sholl.<sup>147</sup> Arrested by Withnell’s party on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 1868, along with another man (unnamed) ‘implicated’ in the murders. The two men escaped.

Mulligough was arrested again on Legendre Island in May 1868, along with Eurunbiddy and Cooracoora, and committed for trial to the Supreme Court in Perth for murder. He was found guilty and originally sentenced to death, but then later commuted to Rottnest Island for life imprisonment. He was released on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1877.

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<sup>141</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>142</sup> (Sholl, 1868c)

<sup>143</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>144</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

<sup>145</sup> (Birman, 1976)

<sup>146</sup> (Withnell, 1868)

<sup>147</sup> (Birman, 1976)

## **NEMERI**

*(AN ISLAND NATIVE)*

Arrested on Legendre Island in May 1868. He was acquitted in the Roebourne Court after being charged with robbing Jermyn's tent.

## **NGUYEWOORUNGA**

*(AKA "LITTLE MONKEY")*

Tried to dissuade individuals from murdering Peter, Breem and Griffis.<sup>148</sup>

## **PARRAKARRAPOOGOO**

*(AN ISLAND NATIVE)*

Shot and killed while attempting to escape by either Police Constable Francisco, or one of his 'native assistants', "Monkey" or "Woobat", near Hampton Harbour in March 1868. It is implied in Gara's 1983 article that Parrakarrapoogoo was a suspect, and not innocent.

## **PETER**

Native assistant to Police Constable Griffis. Murdered on the 8th of February, 1868.

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<sup>148</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

**POODEGIN (OR POODIGIE<sup>149</sup>)**

**(AKA “CHARLIE” OR “CHARLEY”)**

Sholl writes that Poodegin was the one to kill George Breem. Suspect in the murders of Peter, Griffis, and Breem. Wounded in the thigh by Police Constable Francisco in May 1868. Returned to Roebourne in 1869 and did not face prosecution.

**PULTHERGERRI (OR POOLDALGARRY<sup>150</sup>, OR PULTHALGARRY<sup>151</sup>, OR PULTHALGERRI<sup>152</sup>)**

**(AKA “BIG MONKEY”)**

In February 1869 Sholl reported that Poodegin and Pulthergerri had returned to Roebourne. Pulthergerri did not face prosecution, though Sholl writes that Pulthergerri was “the instigator of the assault”.<sup>153</sup> Euralgarri claims in a deposition that Pulthergerri said (on the night of Griffis, Breem and Peter’s murders): “We’ll all be savage, and when they go to sleep we’ll spear them” to which others present responded “We out not to be frightened—we ought to go and spear them”.<sup>154</sup> This deposition was “given through the sworn interpretation of Horace William Sholl”.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>150</sup> (Gara, 2017, p.3) and (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>151</sup> (Gara, 1983, p.4)

<sup>152</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

<sup>153</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>154</sup> (Deposition of the Natives, 1868)

<sup>155</sup> (Deposition of the Natives, 1868)

## **WARRARA**

### **(AN ISLAND NATIVE)**

Arrested on Legendre Island in May 1868. He was sentenced in Roebourne Court to three years' gaol on Rottneest for robbing Jermyn's tent.

## **POLICE CONSTABLE WILLIAM GRIFFIS**

Murdered on the 8th February, 1868.

## **WOOLGULGARRY (OR WOOLGOLGARRY<sup>156</sup> OR WOOLGOLGARRI<sup>157</sup>)**

### **(AKA "NED" OR "CHARCOAL")**

Sholl writes that Woolgulgarry was the one to kill Griffis.<sup>158</sup> Shot and killed while attempting to escape by Police Constable Francisco's 'native assistant' "Monkey"<sup>159</sup>, possibly near Hampton Harbour, in 1868. Euralgarri claims in a deposition: "Ned said that he had speared Griffis first, in the chest, and then they all hit him with the back of a tomahawk".<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> (Gara, 1993, p.16)

<sup>157</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>158</sup> (Sholl, 1868b)

<sup>159</sup> Gara did not make it clear whether "Monkey" is "Big Monkey", Pulthergerri, but this is unlikely, as Pulthergerri was arrested.

<sup>160</sup> (Depositions of the Natives, 1868)

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