

Do you get the National Geographic Magazine? I have a copy (May '31) showing the curvature of the earth – supposed to be discovered or revealed in a Plane camera over the Andes. Will send you the magazine if you have not already got one.

Native Camp
Ooldea
E-W Line
2.6.31

Dear Dr Cleland,

I am sending tomorrow (Thursday 3rd) some further vocabularies of these C.A. (Central Australian) Mobs. I have only written down the local variations as certain main words run through the whole Central area and across the border. The Wirongu Wongga group had a 'run' from Mobba (N.W. of Tarcoola?) Tarkula (Turcoola) and E (a little) NE and SE through Yooldilbina, Yuria and Fowlers Bay - the E and S edge of Bight – also Ooldea – and along the NW and N edge of Bight - 'relations (by capture after cannibalism etc.) being in all the camps they visited. I obtained the Wirongu Wongga from Binilya, the last, blind, old woman of the Wirongu group. I nursed her for 8 months before her death in 1918. She spoke very little English and I had to learn her words and meanings through the days.

The Bulu Wongga will be understood near Kalgoorlie and Laverton. Also the Wongg'ai Wongga – A few of the old Bulu Wongga group – also the Wongg'ai are among the derelict mobs all round the plains edge and along the line to Kalgoorlie. I can 'place' only four Wongg'ai and two Bulu – and these are not keen to be known as Wongg'ai or Bulu because their old group was specially cannibalistic. Just as many of the Alice Springs and other mobs are pretending to belong to Spencers Arrunda – so these derelicts whom I've handled since 1914 pretend to belong to groups with less sinister reputations. Not to me, as they know I am aware of their own group names. Here and there in their dialects I see vestiges of W.A. words – most interesting. For instance, Waru Kuling (or Guling) (female kangaroo with young in pouch) runs right over to the SW Coast – Perth – Fremantle – Biyarup etc- 2 is Warr Kuling and so – gabbi (water) gurara (prickly acacia) Kuli (sheoak) and a lot more – are all in my SW and Geraldton and other dialects! Same words, same meanings.

But the Wirongu Mob could 'speak' with the Wongg'ai Mob near Boundary Dam and with the Bight Mob and Ooldea Mob. I know because I had some of these together at my Wirilya camp in 1918. (note on page margin)

I'm sending a few group names of groups now hopelessly mixed or extinct. There may be one or two of these among the derelicts roving about the plain and plain's edges and the fringes of civilization. The 1920 Mob that came to me from NW has a few Munjinga, Manggundha and other men and so too the 1929-30 Mob – all mixed through cannibalism and the resultant annexation of the victims women and children who were doubtless re'captured' again and again as their men were killed and eaten.

You will see what a mixture there is when you scan the few group names I am appending. I have more somewhere but I can't find them in the place where I had put these group dialects. I am sending too the complete group waters of old Munbinya of Kolona as I think you know that area and will be interested. Munbinya and his family group owned these waters and the area about them. His 'brothers' and other relatives had adjoining areas but that didn't prevent 'killing and eating' when droughts came. They could go about 20 miles on the plain to hunt but the magic ganba snake did not allow them to sleep on his plain and so though the centre of the plain held swarms of kangaroo and emu, these were left for a white man, Mr Beadon, to shoot

for their skins. The blacks first crossed the plain from Ilgamba (Bight Head) to Murgaru Water under Mr Beadon's protection.

Banyarda's father (I mention Banyarda in accompanying MS) was with a small group at Mungara Water where Mr Beadon and the few blacks came alive out of the snake's territory! The travellers were welcomed as tho' they had risen from the dead. Mr Beadon told me of their 'fearful joy' at meeting the adventurers.

You should have the Coast dialects too but I cannot get at those yet as my MS Boxes containing them are in Adelaide in friendly storage there.

Howitt and Fison(?) wrote up the Dieri and (I think) the Eabbuna, Guyani and other groups near the Dieri. The Wirongu were 'in touch' with these and had their names Karaara and Madhuri for their own fair (karaara) and dark (madhuri) men and women but corruption had long set in though the Wirongu knew the proper marriage law of fair and dark and Karaara men took Karaara sisters and Madhuri men likewise and after a killing and cannibal feast the women were again divided and mixed. I don't know if any Dieri and other (Guyani etc) words are given in Howitt's book but I know the Wirongu and other groups mingled with the Dieri so that the dialects of these C.A. groups cover the area between the Dieri and Kalgoorlie! The Arrunda area also was penetrated by the C.A. groups – McDonnell Ranges seem to have been a definite boundary, also Tanami (Where is Tanami?). Munjinya who accompanied Maurice to Wyndham told me that Tanami was the extreme boundary of all the C.A. groups and when he entered that country he was among ngadhari (strangers) and his life was in daily peril. Maurice knew this and guarded Munjinya day and night. Good man Maurice must have been.

Have you or has your University the records of that journey? I would like to have met Maurice. I think he had a similar kind of interest in the aborigines.

In your last note you ask me to name a sum that would be acceptable as honorarium. My dear friend, I need £50 – I mean I want that sum because all my articles – over 12 representing about £30 or more – have come back to me since the iniquitous paper (tax?). My old newspapers, relied upon for so many years – The W-Mail, West Australian, SM [Sydney Morning] Herald etc etc are turning down all their casual contributors and a batch of four articles accepted in WA were sent back with an apology due to financial stress. My capital (from the proceeds of my leasehold and freehold properties in WA) has gone and I have been absolutely dependent on the newspapers for some time. The 'homing' of my articles is like pigeon homing. And so, as I say, I want £50 to carry me through this stress, but, unless you and your University can see the worthwhileness of obtaining the MS and can show them to a University man able to purchase and present them – there is no possibility of receiving what you say would be adequate remuneration. If the late Under Treasurer Mr Tom Gill were alive he would have purchased the West Coast and other dialects for the R.G. S. [Royal Geographical Society]. He spoke to me about my MS [manuscript] when I stayed a few days with his daughter (Mrs Abbott) at Glen Osmond and indeed was keen that I should remain with them and collate my West Coast notes up 1919, but I was keen to come to Ooldea as I knew it was the 'focus' for all the C.A. [Central Australian] mobs.

Dear Dr Cleland – do your best. I shall accept whatever you can obtain for the MSS including the packet sent with this letter comprising: Bulu wongga 3 pages, Wirongu wongga 7 pages, Wonggaii wonga 5 pages, Miscellaneous 6 pages.

I have such a strong feeling against the facts of my present financial condition becoming known, that I am placing them before you because I have such reliance upon your personal honour. Do your utmost to retain the MSS for your University (and don't let it get into Dr Basedow's hands. He took all Lyell Brown's MS, photos and all and published them as his own!)

What I should like best of all would be to present every scrap of C.A. and S.A. MSS to your University through you. I think the University should have the MSS and I really feel that if it

were shown to Murray or Bonython or some other man – Barr-Smith (not Sowden) and they purchased it, the University would be glad of it in the years to come. I know that some such appt. [appointment] as I have advocated will materialize when the present systems will be proven futile. Only such a man – free from all bias – an absolute gentleman - seeing these natives as I have seen them – a low race – level with the dingo, and as impossible of ‘companionship’ of any kind as dingoes. There has been no such man – or woman (except myself) having these ideals, and so institution, mission, settlement are from the natives’ standpoint just brothels. They look at the whites thro’ their native laws regarding their women etc – and there isn’t a look, a gesture, a sign of any kind that they don’t interpret from their own low standpoint. That is why – when I had seen the missions etc as the natives saw them, I came in amongst them to show them that there are “two kinds of whites”. And for thirty years I’ve been under the ‘high light’ of their observation, and so I have left an example to future idealists. I talked the matter over with Lords Foster and Stonehaven and Novar (Sir Ronald Ferguson) as 30 years ago I talked to Lord Northcote and to our W.A. Governors Newdigate and Campion and Sir Henry Galway – always I wanted a High Commissioner for them all – to take the reins of every activity and to be accountable to the Gov. Gen. So you see the way is prepared but there isn’t a Labour Man who wouldn’t put a yardman over the lot – if he were told by ‘his masters’ to put such a one as Head. Englishmen have always had a ‘flair’ for native Management and one quality of such Englishmen I possess – apartness from my charges and my own quiet decent life amongst them.

The day will come when the natives will have such a man and when that day comes – these poor derelicts all over Australia will die as happily as they die with me – and you could not wish them better fate. They will die out because they have completely destroyed the laws that kept them in cohesion. The smell of low white and half caste is repugnant to them and all my old Bibbulmun told me that the smell of the Jang-ga (white men, spirits of returned dead) was the cause of their decline and death.

I am frankly afraid of Adelaide. There is something in its dealing with the aborigine question that makes me wish I were 30 years younger so that I could clear the air in some way. It is an intangible something that I cannot explain. The few sickly sentimental notes appearing in the Adelaide press now and then show me the need for a great and good man to take them out of Adelaide’s hands.

Do your best, dear friend, with the MSS already sent and that going today (included with it). I have more dialects and I see 3 bulging notebooks marked Ooldea 1919-20 and so on. I will give all that will be useful to the University in the day when perhaps she may have an Anthropological Chair: I have no pigeonholes to put my MS in and so I can’t keep the C.A. and S.A. MS by itself.

Beyond my deedboxes and one table in my tent (I have two big tables within an 8x10 tent!) and an upended tank which I rolled over two miles when my book tent collapsed and which holds books and MS. I have no place to sort out my notes. Did you read my “Aboriginal Trade Route” in The Australasian”? I’ll lend you my cutting if you haven’t read it and would care to read it. I keep all, or nearly all, my articles.

Yours sincerely, Daisy M Bates (signature)