

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.1.2/07

'KORRO' (Huntfield Heights) (last edited: 28/3/2013)

Abstract

As the name of a railway stopping place on the former Willunga line, 'Korra' was approved by the Nomenclature Committee on 10th January 1946; but in the process thereafter it was mis-transcribed as 'Korro' by either the Railways Department or the office of the Director of Lands.

'Korra' was almost certainly taken from Curr's *Australian Race* (1886), in which Provis gave a wordlist in the language of the Aboriginal people of Streaky Bay on the West Coast of SA.

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| <i>Coordinates</i> | -35.1619773 Latitude, 138.5157885 Longitude. |
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Language Information

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| <i>Meaning</i> | 'Korra' (but not 'korro') was said by Provis to mean 'grass'. |
| <i>Etymology</i> | |
| <i>Notes</i> | |
| <i>Language Family</i> | Aboriginal language of Streaky Bay in 1880s. |
| <i>KWP Former Spelling</i> | |
| <i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i> | |
| <i>Phonemic Spelling</i> | |
| <i>Pronunciation</i> | |
| <i>Pronunciation tips</i> | |

Main source evidence

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| <i>Date</i> | 1886 |
| <i>Original source text</i> | "No. 40.-STREAKY BAY. By [Charles] PROVIS, ESQ.... Grass - korra. " |
| <i>Reference</i> | Edward M Curr 1886, <i>The Australian Race</i> Vol.2: 4, 6-7. |
| <i>Informants credited</i> | Charles Provis |
| <i>Informants uncredited</i> | |

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| Date | Jan 1946 |
| Original source text | "Rw St DL 5890/40: The following names are suggested for stopping places on the Willunga line:... KORRA m^g 'grass' ." |
| Reference | Minutes of 10/1/1946, in Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book, GNU: 106. |
| Informants credited | |
| Informants uncredited | |

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| Date | March 1946 |
| Original source text | "SAR 6968/45. Stopping places on the Willunga line:... No.6, KORRA meaning 'grass' ". [signed for committee by "AD Smith & RO Segerlind 5/3/46"]. |
| Reference | Nomenclature Committee Minutes as sent to Director of Lands, in Docket DL 5890/40, State Records. |
| Informants credited | |
| Informants uncredited | |

Discussion: 'KORRO' RAILWAY STATION:

Aboriginal words have been all the rage for naming purposes since the 1890s. On the 4th of February 1946 PF Cherry, Secretary of the Office of the Railways Commissioner, sent a letter to the SA Surveyor-General:

*We have a number of un-named level crossing stops on the Willunga line which are at present identified by numbers... 2, 4, 6, 9 and 11.... It is deemed desirable that names should be substituted for numbers and the Railways Commissioner would be glad if the Nomenclature Committee would suggest a suitable name for each of the above stopping places. It is suggested that short aboriginal place names be selected containing few syllables.*¹

The Committee responded with a typewritten Minute to the Director of Lands dated 5th March:

*Consideration has been given to the requests of the Railways Commissioner, and the Committee submits the following native names for use in connection therewith:—
... SAR 6968/45. Stopping places on the Willunga line:—
No.2, PATPA meaning 'south wind'.
No.4, YETTO meaning 'good'.
No.6, KORRA meaning 'grass'.
No.9, TUNI meaning 'sand'.
No.11, PIKKARA meaning 'south'.²*

¹ SAR 6968/45, in docket DL 5890/40, State Records of SA.

² Enclosure in Docket DL 5890/40, State Records. The information in the typescript is identical with that which appears in the Committee's Minutes Book, with the same internal date but for some reason still under the head of 'Meeting 10.1.46'.

Spellings in this note are identical to those hand-written in the Committee's Minutes Book.³

The committee, a little more familiar than the Commissioner with Aboriginal language sources, had wisely not complied with his request to use existing place-names. At that time they were using plenty of Aboriginal words but rarely making any distinction between different languages or lands. For sources they used most of the readily-available Aboriginal wordlists from all over Australia.

They did not say where they obtained 'Korra', but it occurs with the meaning 'grass' only in Curr's *The Australian Race* (1886). Thus it seems to be a word from the language of the Aboriginal people of Streaky Bay as recorded by Charles Provis in the 1880s.⁴

Unfortunately, somewhere in the production line somebody mistranscribed the word as 'Korro'. This was the spelling gazetted for use, and which appeared on maps of the area while the Willunga line was operating.

The Committee was made up of busy men who all had other main jobs. During this one interchange three out of five names were mistranscribed. 'Yetto' was actually 'yatto' (also from Curr), and it was the Committee who mistranscribed it.⁵ And for once they chose an almost-local Ngarrindjeri word, *Rikkara*; but the secretary also managed to mistranscribe it as 'Pikkara', and this was also duly gazetted.⁶ We don't know whether the Committee noticed at the time of publication or regarded the matter as having any importance.

The old line was closed in 1969.⁷ It is now followed by the Coast To Vines Rail Trail, where this and other stations are now commemorated by onsite plaques.

In the Kurna language of this area the word for 'grass' is *tutta*.

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End of Summary

³ Nomenclature Committee Minutes Book: 106.

⁴ EM Curr 1886, *The Australian Race*, Vol.2: 6-7.

⁵ See PNS 4.1.2/06 'Yetto'.

⁶ See PNS 4.3.1/06 'Pikkara'.

⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willunga_railway_line,_Adelaide (16/3/09).