

A Compendium of the Place Names of South Australia

From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill

With 54 Complementary Appendices

Researched and written by

Geoffrey H. Manning

*The natives wisely named their lands
The meanings now I write to save
Them from entire oblivion,
And honour those not great, yet brave.
(Register, 11 October 1893)*

The German [place] names which we have so indiscriminately destroyed were, as Pastor Brauer has said, 'statues of liberty proclaiming and perpetuating the glory of Britain, because they proclaimed to future generations and ages that these pioneers had been accorded in a British province the liberty denied them in the country of their birth.' We made a mistake when we decreed the ruthless destruction of such memorials...

(Advertiser, 10 February 1928, page 12)

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Other Books by the Same Author:

- Hope Farm - Cradle of the McLaren Vale Wine Industry* (1980)
Whisky Makes You Well - The Biography of Frank Maiden (1983)
Hope Farm Chronicle - Pioneering Tales of South Australia (1984)
The Romance of Place Names of South Australia (1984)
Memoirs of Thomas Frost (ed.) (1985)
The Tragic Shore - The Wreck of the Star of Greece and a history of the Jetties of Port Willunga. (1988)
Worth Fighting For - Work and Industrial Relations in the Banking Industry in South Australia (1989)
(In association with Haydon R. Manning)
Manning's Place Names of South Australia (1990)
50 Years of Singing - A History of the Adelaide Harmony Choir (1996)
The Grange Golf Club (1997)
A Colonial Experience - 1838-1910 - A Woman's Story of Life in Adelaide, the District of Kensington and Norwood together with reminiscences of Colonial Life (three volumes) (2001)
Manning's Place Names of South Australia, From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill, Gould Books. (2006)
The Place Names of Our Land, A South Australian Anthology, Gould Books (2010)

Unpublished Works

- A Social History of Thebarton*
Toponymical Tales of South Australia
The Russians are Coming - The Defence of Colonial South Australia
A Social History of Glenelg - 1836-1936
A Social History of the Lower South-East in the 19th Century
The Town on Woolfirtina Creek - Naracoorte and District - The First Sixty Years
Occasional Essays on South Australian History
A Tourist's Guide to the Place Names of South Australia

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Foreword

My father, born in 1926, created a successful career in banking, but it was an interest, pursued from the late 1970s, that moulded him into a most satisfied octogenarian. The content of his website (*see below*) is testimony to his perseverance, over five decades, into research into the origin of place names germane to South Australia, together with other aspects of our local history, culminating in an autobiography.

He had little formal education yet, today, his many and varied historical studies are, in my view, worthy of a doctorate, the highest qualification bestowed by our universities.

His father, an itinerant carpenter, and survivor of World War I, died in 1936, aged 40, and consequential hardship followed for the family and I recall my father's frequent lament emanating from the school yard, during his three years of secondary education at Mount Gambier High School in the late 1930s, where taunts from more affluent students alluded to the fact that he was "On the Free List" – by way of explanation - his Mother had to resort to support from the Government for the provision of necessary text books to enhance his education further.

I believe that this experience forged a sense of social justice compelling him to engage, for more than a quarter of a century, as an honorary official within the Australian Bank Officials' Association where, for his services, he was, in the 1960s, accorded a 'Life Membership' which, today, with pride, is held aloft, alongside his extensive work on South Australian history.

He enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, aged 17 years, served in the Pacific region on the corvette HMAS *Pirie* as a Visual Signaller, engaged in the assault upon Okinawa, and was present at the surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay in September 1945: later, he returned to his employer, The Savings Bank of South Australia, where, given his acumen, he rose steadily through the ranks.

In the late 1970s, having served as a Branch Manager across suburban Adelaide, he found himself amidst 'senior management', with an expectation of retiring at the then prescribed age of 65 years. However, on an autumn afternoon, the arrival of two long-lost cousins into his domain in King William Street changed his life. They plied him with information about the Manning clan of McLaren Vale; a topic never pondered by my father.

At this time, banking was being transformed by the promise of financial deregulation and rapid technological innovation, little of which appealed to bankers of his generation. Thus, beginning to dabble in his family and local history, the lure of devoting full attention to research was strong and, in September 1982, he chose to retire.

My father's journey into historical research was motivated by the discovery that his great-great-grandfather, George Pitches Manning, was among the first to plant grape vines in McLaren Vale and the efforts of his ancestor in digging the first cellar in the district are honoured today by a display at Seaview Winery.

This pioneering story sparked an interest into other aspects of our State's early history when he found himself engaged with a small community of scholars of a similar mind and, notably, in his case, the trials and tribulations of our indigenous people, that are traversed at length in Appendix 46 of this publication and elsewhere.

Soon, retirement from the paid workforce was a boon to my father as he found a new and most enjoyable vocation as an historian. - chasing facts became his passion! This evolution began, as related above, with the story surrounding the Manning family's pioneering spirit, but it soon evolved into the realm of toponomy, that is, a resolve to solve many puzzles associated with the history of place names. This work represents the joy, the intelligence and obsession of a man anxious to get to the truth of matters surrounding our nomenclature.

Stewart Cockburn, in the preface to his father's pioneering contribution to the study of South Australian place names, *What's in a Name*, recited that: 'It is a tribute to the quality of the author's research that so few mistakes have been discovered in it.'

During the throes of research into *Hope Farm Chronicle: Pioneering Tales of South Australia*, my father began to find errors in that work and this inspired a certain curiosity to correct the record and, as overwhelmingly evident here, add to it substantially. The corrections made by my father to this historical record were not always an easy matter for Stewart Cockburn to digest and certain difficulties are discussed, at length, in my father's autobiography, *A Depression Kid's Story*. (See www.geoffmanning.net.au.)

This work represents, only, a modest proportion of my father's contribution to South Australian history, for he has researched and written many local histories ranging from a Choral Society to a Golf Club while, in 2004, the State Library purchased his meticulous cataloging of 100 years of South Australian newspapers – available on-line on its Website.

Whatever pleasure readers derive from these pages, and I am sure there will be plenty, I hope this work inspires them to ponder their local history and engage in researching our past.

My father's latest contribution to the nomenclature of South Australia is not one that he claims to be flawless; indeed, his work is ongoing because many people contact him frequently – It is apparent that the puzzle of place names, alongside a keen interest in national and American politics, keeps him well and truly alive.

His many essays on local history, together with references to his books and samples of his analysis of place names, are presented within his website www.geoffmanning.net.au.

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Preface

I think it may be fairly said that the community in general has a very real desire to see Aboriginal names preserved for all time. Scarcely a week has gone by in the past twenty years but that I have been asked by the newspapers, or by individuals, to supply Aboriginal words suitable for the naming of houses, streets, subdivisions, racehorses, greyhounds, ships, yachts, row boats, nursing homes and other subjects, including a new brand of pickles, a girl's social club and a new Church of England diocese.

One of my delights on a Sunday afternoon is to paddle slowly around the suburbs in a motor car noting the display of hundreds of house names for the adoption of which I have been responsible. The only trouble is to avoid duplication, the desire for exclusive house tags being almost as keen as a woman's anxiety to be seen in a distinctive frock.

(Rodney Cockburn – 1930)

In the 1970s, having been separated from paternal family links for all but 40 years, I was enticed into writing a family history of my immediate 'Manning' ancestors and, following research within and without the State Library, I was finally rewarded with what I believe is the authentic nomenclature of McLaren Vale where my great-great-grandfather, George Pitches Manning, was the pioneer vigneron - this fact is supported by substantive evidence that, today, is on public view at Seaview Winery on Chaffey Road but, unfortunately, not identified within the town's environs where Thomas Hardy is regaled as the pre-eminent pioneer of this viticultural district that is recognised throughout the world.

I repeat a word or two made in an address given to the Port Elliot Branch of the National Trust on 14 September 2006:

At that time, recorded nomenclature by both H.C. Talbot and Rodney Cockburn said that it was named by David McLaren when on a trip to Happy Valley and Hurtle Vale in 1837, but no source for the opinion was given by either gentlemen. This was disputed by Mr J.D. Somerville, who quoted from J.C. Hawker's *Reminiscences*: '... The Valley of McLaren, named from Mr [John] McLaren, Land Office, who surveyed it.'

In support of this statement the *South Australian* of 7 October 1845 said: '... named from Mr McLaren, of the Survey Office, who surveyed it'. Indeed, it is most unlikely that the party travelling to Hurtle Vale in 1837 would have been far enough south to traverse the McLaren Vale.

In an effort to resolve the matter I corresponded with Mr David Elder, the author of *William Light's Brief Journal and Australian Diaries*, and he said:

As I understand it McLaren arrived at Kangaroo Island on 21 April 1837... and the *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* for 8 July 1837 included a paragraph or two welcoming McLaren to Adelaide... This makes me wonder if Talbot was right in thinking that McLaren led an expedition to this area so soon after his arrival in Adelaide...

Thus, the weight of the evidence suggests that it was named after the surveyor, John McLaren.

From this excursion into family affairs evolved an innate desire to delve into the broad spectrum of what I was to describe in my first venture into the subject as the *Romance of the Place Names of South Australia* and, over the past quarter of a century, two further volumes have flowed from ongoing research and, at the risk of being adjudged pedantic, I rescind my statement in my last edition when I declared that 'unlike Nellie Melba, with her interminable "last appearances", this is my final epistle on nomenclature'!

This change of heart followed a plea from my son, Haydon, to write an autobiography of my life that commenced on 25 June 1926 at Waikerie where my father was employed as an itinerant carpenter on the construction of Lock 2 on the River Murray – I have been informed that this 'epic', together with other idle ramblings on various facets of South Australian history, now appear on the World Wide Web.

For those who share with me an appreciation of Aboriginal names, I suggest they turn to this site, and within this work, where they will find correspondence emanating from me to local councils where I pleaded for the use of mellifluous native names in lieu of importunate European appendages – for example 'The City of Wongayerio' appeals much more to my ear than the 'City of Charles Sturt'! *Wongayerio* is the Aboriginal name for Saint Vincent Gulf and means – 'overwhelming water where the sun sinks'.

I thank many people who have contributed to my published findings on the place names of South Australia many of whom are mentioned in the text – in particular, Max Medwell, Mick Sincock, William Watt, Peter Whittington, Wayne Slape and Neil Cocking of the Department of Lands; historians Rob Linn, Hans Mincham, Reg Butler, Neville Collins and Peter Rymill, with whom I spent many worthwhile hours in exchanging thoughts on the history of the Lower South-East.

In conclusion, I applaud past and present staff of the State Library, including Barbara Mayfield, Marie Maddocks, Ann Burrows, Roger Andre and Anthony Laube and, of course, must not forget my dear friend, George Daws, who spent countless hours researching the idiosyncrasies of Governor William Fox Drummond Jervis in respect of the plethora of ignominious nomenclature that gentleman inflicted upon 'The Place Names of Our Land'.

Geoffrey H. Manning

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