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A forgotten brouhaha: the controversy surrounding the Aboriginal name of Mt Toolebewong in the Healesville district, of Victoria, Australia, in 1943-1944 – lessons in authenticity and authority

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1. Introduction

In July 1943, noted Victorian author and travel writer Eileen Finlay (1878-1950) returned to the tourist resort town of Healesville to enjoy ‘a respite from her literary labours’ (*Healesville Guardian* 24/7/1943). Staying at Golf House, her respite did not prevent her from appearing at the Healesville Library to promote her publications and meet her fans. Eileen Finlay was born Mary Ellen Moroney in Maffra, Gippsland, in 1878, and lived for a time in Colac where her father was appointed shire engineer in 1882 (Barraclough 1995: 56). In 1889, two years after the death of her father, her family moved to Lilydale where her connection with Healesville commenced. In 1899 she married architect, Alexander Kennedy Smith Finlay, and settled in Melbourne. On 29th December 1921 her husband was one of three passengers who drowned when a launch capsized *en route* to Lake Tyers Aboriginal station. Many of the survivors, including Eileen Finlay and her son, owed their survival to two Aboriginal women from the Aboriginal settlement who

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rescued them in a rowing boat – once on shore, men and women from the settlement assisted them by lighting a fire to dry their clothes (*The Argus* 31/12/1921). Finlay's pen names included Eileen Finlay, Mary Eileen Finlay, Mollie Eileen Moroney, Mary Eileen Fortescue, and Mrs. E.F. Boswarrick. At least 14 major works are attributed to her.¹ Other than her most well-known novels, *The Caravan Passes: a Family Saga* (1941), *Full Turn: a Family Saga* (1942), *Undeclared* (1943), and *The Hills of Home* (1943), Finlay was known for the many articles she wrote for *The Radiator*, the official magazine of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, and for newspapers such as the *Lilydale Express*, *The Argus*, and the *Healesville Guardian* (Thompson 2005). Her first travel article was published in *The Radiator* in May 1937. Her death notice (*The Advertiser* 13/6/1950) reported that she had only begun to write her first book some eight years earlier in her early 60s.

1.1 'My Heart was Stirred in Healesville'

As a result of her stay in Healesville, Finlay wrote three articles for the *Healesville Guardian*. The first was entitled 'My Heart Was Stirred in Healesville' (*Healesville Guardian* 24/7/1943). The second and third articles were on two guest houses 'Gracedale' and 'Nyora'. In her first article, Finlay mentioned meeting Miss Ethel Shaw (1874-1956), daughter of Joseph Shaw (1839-1909), the superintendent of Coranderrk Aboriginal station from 1886 until his retirement in 1908. Many years earlier Finlay had played tennis against Ethel Shaw and she recalled her steady, reliable play. She described Healesville as 'the neighbour of my old home town and the hated rival of my young days in tennis and football' (*Healesville Guardian* 14/8/1943). Finlay also visited the animal sanctuary at Healesville and could not resist drawing parallels between the sanctuary and the former Aboriginal station: 'I have seen Coranderrk natives being stared at and questioned in much the same manner, and thought there was a similarity in the two true natives of Australia'. Finlay noted that Coranderrk was no more: 'I saw no native about, as in the old days when tribes of spindle-legged children, with wide, black, limpid eyes, came to the football matches and shows, and lanky boys and old grey men gave boomerang exhibitions' (*Healesville Guardian* 24/7/1943).

Coranderrk was closed by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in 1924 and all but seven of its residents were resettled at Lake Tyers. Seven elderly Aboriginal people were permitted to remain at Coranderrk on 20 hectares that were retained for their use. The last of these seven 'permitted' residents, Mrs Jemima Dunolly, died in Healesville in early 1944, though there were hundreds of other descendants of the families who had built Coranderrk, living in the Healesville district and elsewhere in Victoria and New South Wales. In the early

¹ <http://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A43335?mainTabTemplate=agentWorksBy> [accessed 2016-04-19]

+1960s, when Luise Hercus began her survey of Victorian Aboriginal languages, she spent some time at Healesville studying the Woiwurrung language. Hercus (1986: 160) notes that she received:

much help from the Wandin family, the very elderly grand-nieces and grand-nephew of the famous King Berak. Unfortunately the remnants of the Woiwuru that could be recorded from them are so slight that only tentative remarks can be made about the phonemics and phonetics in the hope that this will help in the interpretation of the material written down last century.

The second of Finlay's three articles was entitled 'Echoes of Gracedale House' (*Healesville Guardian* 14/8/1943), in which she recalled the stately guest house and the many dignitaries who had stayed there, including Queen Mary, Victorian state governors, and Dame Nellie Melba. She recalled how as a young child she 'longed to get married, just to have my honeymoon up there like everyone else did'.

2. Toole-be-wong or Tonne-be-wong – the debate begins

It was Finlay's third article 'Life and Death of Nyora' (*Healesville Guardian* 17/9/1943) that unleashed the brouhaha about the authenticity and orthography of Aboriginal placenames and the authority of official placenames as documented by naming authorities. The seemingly innocent line in the article that sparked the debate was the following: 'Life up there on Toole-be-wong Mount ('Burning of the Crows') made me forget the bad road'.² A week after Finlay's piece on Nyora, Ethel Shaw published an article on William Barak in which she noted that he 'was fond of hunting and joined in expeditions up Mt. Riddell and Mt. Donnabewong (now erroneously called Toole-be-wong)' (*Healesville Guardian* 25/9/1943). Shaw did not mention Finlay's article, other than to allude to the confusion regarding Toole-be-wong. In a later series of articles on early Healesville, Ethel Shaw consistently noted: 'land was thrown open for selection up Mt Donnabewong, as we called it in those early days ...' (*Healesville Guardian* 22/4/1955). The next to enter the fray was John T. Cornish, the son of John Cornish, a boot maker who settled in Healesville in 1876 (Symonds 1982: 43). John T. Cornish was a cab proprietor in 1923 and a shire ranger in 1946; he died in March 1947, and his death notice in *The Argus* (29/3/1947) noted that he and his father 'were identified with local public movements, especially those for the opening up of new beauty spots and the preservation of native trees and wild life'. Cornish wrote (*Healesville Guardian* 16/10/1943):

² The article is reproduced in Thompson (2005: 63-64).

'Early Healesville': To the Editor. Sir, Re the interesting article on Nyora in the 'Guardian', I would like to point out that the writer is making a common error in describing Nyora as situated on Mt. Toolebe-wong. The three mountains south of Healesville all had native names. The one nearest Coranderrk, on which Mr. Robarts built Nyora, is Mt. Tonne-be-wong. After crossing the Badger Creek you come to Mt. Toole-be-wong, now known as Ben Cairn, and continuing on over the next saddle you come to Mt. Donne-bu-ang. Mr. Green, the founder of Coranderrk, selected land running from the Badger Creek up the side of Mt. Tonne-be-wong, and we always called it Tonne-be-wong paddock. ...Yours, etc., J.T. CORNISH Healesville, 13/10/43.

Cornish had made this point in an article in the *Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian* (27/11/1937) some six years earlier, when he contributed some reminiscences to the Shire of Healesville's jubilee celebrations. Referring to John Green, he noted that Green had a hop garden at his 'Tonne-be-wong' miscalled Toolebewong' selection extending from the Badger nearly to Malleson's lookout. As proof of this name, he noted that they always referred to Green's hop paddock as 'Tonne-be-wong paddock'. There does seem to be some independent support for Shaw's and Cornish's view: the *Brighton Southern Cross* (1/2/1902) in an article on health resorts near Healesville noted that 'A little further on and the ascent of Mt. Tonnebuang, on which 'Nyora' is situated, is begun in earnest'. Cornish's argument is that the three mountains formally known as Mt Toolebewong (Figure 1), Ben Cairn (Figure. 2), and Mt Donna Buang (Figure 3) should be named Mt. Tonne-be-wang, Mt Toole-be-wong, and Mt Donne-bu-ang respectively. Cornish is not disputing that Toolebewong is an Aboriginal placename; he is arguing that it has been ascribed to the wrong mountain. He points out that the traditional name of Ben Cairn was Toolebewong, and that what is now called Mt Toolebewong was traditionally called Tonne-be-wang.

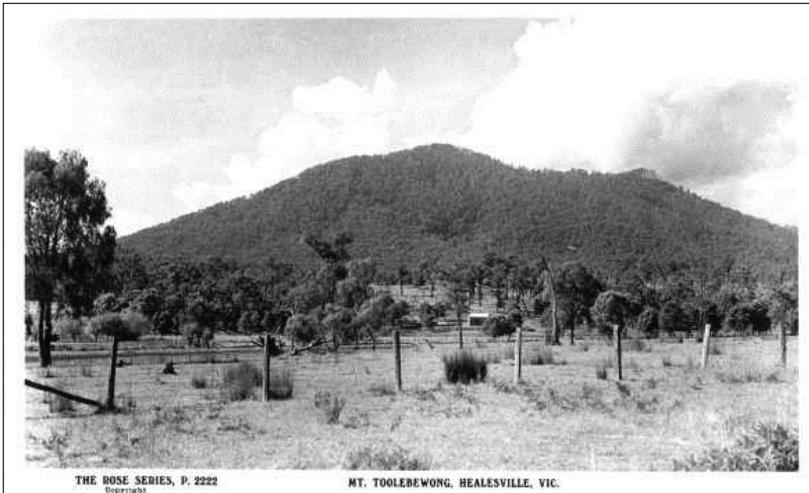


Figure 1: Mt. Toolebewong, Healesville, Vic. Postcard, Rose Stereograph Co. State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, Accession No. H96.200/1035.

Finlay responded to Cornish's letter, and then the hoo-ha really got underway.

'Early Healesville': To the Editor. Sir, I read with interest Mr. J.T. Cornish's corrections to my article on Nyora (17/9/43), and as I am always most particular about my facts, I have, since then, gone to much trouble to find out if I were right or wrong; and, with due respect to Mr. Cornish, I find I am right.

Here are the facts, gathered from the Robarts family and another source. When Mr. Robarts took over the original selection from a Mr. Jackson, about 1887 - even then the mountain on which they lived was known as Toole-be-wong, and has remained so ever since. The naming of Ben Cairn came about in this way: Some 30 to 40 years ago, before Donna Buang or Ben Cairn were opened up to tourists, a Jim and Peter Clancy lived with their family up the Dee river (or creek) and were visited by a party of city surveyors, as well as Cyrus and Ernest Robarts. These latter men were accustomed to taking people over a huge mountain which lay between the Don and the Dee rivers - on an unmade track - and during this particular visit the Clancys (who were even then very old residents) asked Mr. Reid, Surveyor General of Victoria, to name that same mountain. Mr. Reid [sic] produced an atlas and the map of Scotland, where he found a mountain between the rivers Don and Dee, and its name was Ben Cairn. He then and there named the mount Ben Cairn, and it has been of that name ever since. I can find no trace whatever of the name Toone-be-wong, and my informants assure me they have never heard of it in any part of that district.

If Mr. Cornish can prove I am wrong I will offer him my apologies. My information has only been gathered from lifelong residents and experienced bushmen, for I assure him I was not there at the time. Yours, etc., EILEEN FINLAY. Armadale, 20/10/43 (*Healesville Guardian* 23/10/1943).

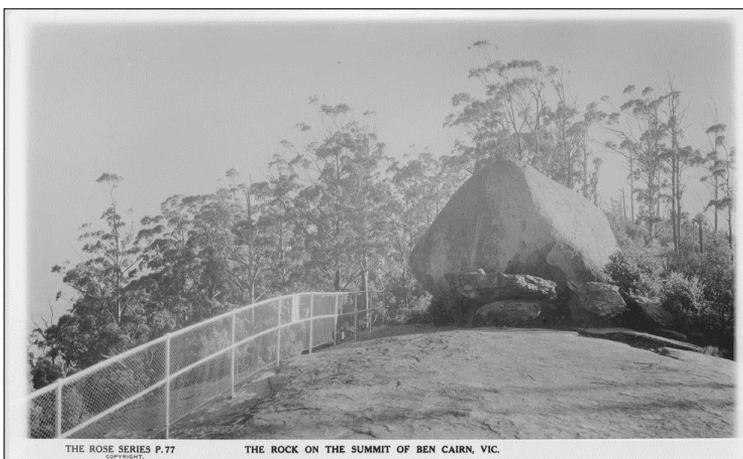


Figure 2: *The Rock on the Summit of Ben Cairn, Vic.* Glass negative, Rose Stereograph Co., State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, Accession No. H32492/119.

In light of Cornish's article, Finlay endeavoured to check her facts and her sources and found that 'she was right'. Her sources were the Robarts family and another unnamed source. She concluded that she could find no trace of the name 'Toone-be-wong', and she challenged Cornish to prove her wrong. Cornish took up the gauntlet thrown down by Finlay, and turned to some of Healesville's oldest residents with the longest association with Coranderrk and with Aboriginal people, to support his case: Rhoda Parkinson (nee Green) (1878-1967), the youngest daughter of John Green, superintendent at Coranderrk from 1863 until 1874; Ethel Shaw, the daughter of superintendent Joseph Shaw; and three 'old residents': W. Lalor, the 'oldest native-born resident', whose father had pioneered a farm at the junction of the Yarra and the Watts (Symonds 1982: 111), resident for 71 years in 1937 (*Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian* 27/11/1937); George Burns – a government ranger in the district for over 33 years; and O.H. Potts Jun. whose father was a carrier at Badger Creek and former councillor (*Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian* 12/8/1905).

'Early Healesville': To the Editor. Sir, In reference to your correspondent's challenge for me to prove that the mountain on which Nyora was built was ever known as Mt. Tonne-be-wong, I submit the following statements by old residents:

"Our father selected land on this mountain about 65 years ago. It was then known as Mt. Tone-be-wong, and the name has never been changed." Mrs. Parkinson (nee Rhoda Green).

"We, and the aborigines at Coranderrk, always referred to this mountain as Tonne-be-wong, and it is mentioned under that name in a book on the Aborigines of Australia by Mr. Brough Smythe [sic], which can be inspected in the Public Library, Melbourne." Miss Ethel Shaw.

"These three mountains, south of Healesville, were called by the blacks Tonne-be-wong, Toole-be-wong, and Donne-bu-ang. Toole-be-wong, the central mount, was re-named Ben Cairn (Big Rock) by a party of surveyors." W. Lalor (oldest native resident).

"I can remember back about 55 years, and have always known this mount as Tonne-be-wong, and your statement is correct in, every detail." George Burns (Government ranger around these mountains for 33 years).

"I went to school with the blacks in the Badger Creek school, at the foot of this mountain, and never heard it called anything but Tonne-be-wong, except by the Robarts." O.H. Potts, Jun.

Thanking you. Yours, etc., J. CORNISH. Healesville, 10/11/43 (*Healesville Guardian* 13/11/1943).

Eileen Finlay responded to Cornish's letter (*Healesville Guardian* 27/11/1943), expressing her surprise that her 'humble little article' on Nyora had caused such heart burn, and withdrew from further discussion. In concluding she drew attention to the authority of the maps of the Lands Department and official nomenclature.

‘Early Healesville’: To the Editor. Sir, I had no idea my humble little article on Nyora would cause such heart burnings, and wish to state that I have handed over all correspondence to the Robarts family and have retired gracefully from the field of battle. Not because I have lost, but simply because there is no arguing against the Lands department, which made the maps, and from whence I got my original facts. People may call a place any name from careless long habit, and this may also reach a volume in the Public Library; but only the Lands department can be taken as absolutely authentic. Yours, etc., EILEEN FINLAY. Armadale, 19/11/43.



Figure 3: *Mt Donna Buang Warburton*. Postcard, Osboldstone & Co., State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, Accession No. H96.200/2006.

Cyrus Robarts, the brother of Charles Robarts, the last superintendent at Coranderrk from 1909 until 1924, published a long communication on the matter in the same issue of the *Healesville Guardian*. Robarts noted that he had never heard of Mt Toole-be-wong being queried before (though on this he was wrong, as Cornish and Ethel Shaw had questioned it earlier – see above). He referred to the authority of Lands Department maps, and privileged them over other placename publications. He acknowledged that there may be other variant names but considered them incorrect. The tone of his letter is disrespectful; he queries whether Cornish is related to Rip Van Winkle, and hopes Cornish has ‘not over worked his monkey muscles travelling around getting the information required’. Curiously, the three placenames in 1943 were not in fact official placenames registered with the Surveyor General – Ben Cairn and Mt Donna Buang were officially added to the Register of Geographic Names on 2nd May 1966 and Mt Toolebewong was added on 24th June 1999.³

³ VICNAMES – The Register of Geographic Names – see <http://maps.land.vic.gov.au/lassi/VicnamesUI.jsp>. [accessed 2015-09-14]

To the Editor. Sir, Referring to letters in your columns recently, under the headings of 'Life and Death of Nyora' and 'Early Healesville', there seem to be some folk not prepared to accept the names on Government maps, which, by the way, all reasonable people are willing to abide by. The name in question at the moment is of the mountain on which Nyora was built. The property was taken over by my father about 1888, and was even then named Mt. Toole-be-wong. I lived on that mountain for over 40 years, and during the whole period from the year mentioned I never heard the name 'Toole-be-wong' queried. This only came about in the last two months.

Is your correspondent in any way related to Rip Van Winkle and only just awakened after many years of slumbering? I trust he has not over worked his monkey muscles travelling around getting the information required. The informants mentioned in your issue of November 13 are people I know and respect, but that does not alter the fact that names on any maps compiled by the Lands department or other Government bodies are authentic: not names in the Public Library, which is hardly a reliable source for information of this character.

It is evident that the present owner of the property was quite satisfied with the correct name of the mountain, and has named his fine modern home, built on the site on which Nyora stood, 'Toole-be-wong Lodge'.

Different places may be called or known by certain names, which may not be correct, such as Coranderrk, which was often called 'Corranderrick'. Even one of the recent correspondents has been frequently heard by me speaking names other than the correct ones.

With reference to Ben Cairn, which is of Scotch origin and named after the mountains in Scotland situated, as this one is, between the Don and the Dee, it is a pity the public should be misinformed by the meaning being given as 'Big Rock', instead of Mountain or Mount Rock.

As far as I am concerned, the correspondence on this matter here ends. Should any person wish to seek further information, contact the local encyclopaedia. Thanking you. Yours, etc., CYRUS ROBARTS. Ringwood, 22/11/43 (*Healesville Guardian*, 27/11/1943).

Symonds (1982: 102) confirms that Ben Cairn was named, by Surveyor General Joseph Martin Reed, after a big mountain in Scotland between the Don and the Dee. Reed served as Surveyor General from 1899 until 1914. Blake (1977: 38) interprets Ben Cairn as 'ben means mountain, and cairn a stack of rough stones'. According to Sinnott (2003: 19), it is Gaelic from *beinn* 'peak' and *carn* 'heap of stones'. It is more likely that the name signifies a mountain with a cairn-like rock formation on its summit (Figure 2).

Ethel Shaw, writing in support of Cornish, commented that she believed surveyors were responsible for the cartographic errors.

‘Early Healesville’: To the Editor. Sir, With reference to the name of the mountain under discussion in your columns, it may be of interest to know how Mt. Tonnabewong came by its name. The names was given to the mountain, by the aborigines of the Yarra tribe long years before white men set foot in this country. Barak, last of the Yarra tribe, said, ‘Old people called it Tonnabewong’. Mr. Green, who founded Coranderrk station in the late ’50’s; was careful to get the right names of places round about.

Originally, the reserve reached about halfway up Mt. Tonnabewong, and was a favourite hunting ground of the old aborigines. When my father came to Coranderrk in 1883 the mountain was still called Tonnabewong; in fact, I have never heard it called by any other name until later years.

Surveyors are often responsible for errors on maps. I think the name Toole-be-wong is a corruption of Tonnabewong, adopted by people who have misunderstood the aboriginal word. The correct pronunciation of Coranderrk is Corander-rk, the ‘e’ as in etcetera and the ‘r’ rather long drawn out. I have not hear[d] it pronounced Coranderrick by those who know.

Unfortunately, mistakes will occur, even in the authentic Lands department; but it is a pity about Tonnabewong, as it is much more euphonious than the present name. It is the aboriginal name, while the other is not. Yours, etc., ETHEL SHAW. Healesville, 2/12/43 (*Healesville Guardian* 4/12/1943).

Cornish followed Shaw’s article confirming that the error was with the Government map, but he did think Finlay owed an apology to his sources for the implication in her last letter that ‘their word was of no value’.

Early Healesville. To the Editor. Sir, Eileen Finlay promised she would make me an apology if I could prove that the mount in question was ever known as Mt. Tonne-be-wong. I leave it to your readers to say whether I proved my assertion. However, I want no apology. The mistake was fully explained through the error on the Government map; but I do think an apology is now due to those persons – Miss Shaw, Miss Rhoda Green, Mr. George Burns, Mr. W. Lalor and Mr. O. Potts – for the implication in her last letter that their word was of no value. Again, thanking you, Mr. Editor. J.T. CORNISH. Healesville, 8/12/43 (*Healesville Guardian*, 11/12/1943).

The next respondent presented the view that the Lands Department was the final authority, the ‘beginning and the end of it’ and that the official

placename found on government-produced maps silenced unofficial names, although he acknowledged there is no reason not to let people have their own names if it keeps them happy.

Early Healesville. To the Editor. Sir, I am a mere onlooker who has a word to say in favor of Mrs. Finlay's assertion that Tonne-be-wong is correctly Toole-be-wong. I read that she has 'retired from the battle' after writing simple and kindly little articles and not expecting to cause strife. I do not consider she owes any apology whatever. The Lands department map and name a place, and that is the beginning and end of it, and though people (or Miss Shaw's dear blacks) may have their own names for places the fact remains, and there can be no other authority. But does it really matter if the mountain is Tonne or Toole? The main thing is to let people call it what they like as long as it keeps them happy. We hope to get more of Mrs. Finlay's friendly little articles, without people flying at her throat. Let them have a go at the Lands department, and see how these several knowledgeable people get on. Yours, etc., PETER KENNEDY. Heidelberg, 14/12/43 (*Healesville Guardian* 18/12/1943).

The last voice to join the hullabaloo pointed out inconsistent spellings in Ethel Shaw's contributions and believed these inconsistencies diminished their value: Mt Donnabewong (25/9/1943); Tonne-be-wong (13/11/1943); and Tonnabewong (4/12/1943). However, given that Australian Aboriginal languages do not normally distinguish between voiced and unvoiced consonants, Shaw's variant spellings are not problematic, and R.A. Gillam need not be concerned with these differences.

Early Healesville. To the Editor. Sir, Referring to a letter under the heading of 'Early Healesville' in your issue of December 4, 1943, relating to the mountain recently under discussion and written by Ethel Shaw, this correspondent does not mind suggesting that errors on maps are often made by the surveyor, and even the Lands department. This does not in any way help your correspondent, as I can show by the following: An article on 'Barak, Last of the Yarra Tribe', etc., was published in your issue of September 25, 1943, in which the writer mentioned this mountain as 'Mt. Donnabewong' (now erroneously called Mt. Toole-be-wong). Then, on November 13, in a letter by another correspondent, Miss Shaw, among others, is mentioned as giving it the name of Mt. Tonne-be-wong. In her letter of December 4, the name has been given as Mt. Tonnabewong. Why not call it Mt. Toole-be-wong (a native name) – and be correct – and so save herself the trouble of finding a fresh name each time of writing? Thanking you. Yours; etc., R.A. GILLAM. Belgrave, 27/12/43 (*Healesville Guardian* 8/1/1944).

In a family manuscript in the Robarts papers, it is possible to find the ‘Toole-be-Wong’ spelling (Clark 2014b: 26):

In 1890 Charles Thomas and brothers Cyrus and Ernest, bought virgin forest land on the top of Mt. Toole-be-Wong (near Healesville) and a little later the family left Seville going to Mt. Little Joe’s lower slopes.⁴ They also bought a property ‘Due Vue’ two miles from Launching Place near the western end of Mt. Toole-be-Wong. Adam Reid (Charles Thomas’ Scottish brother-in-law), and later Cyrus built ‘Nyora’ on top of Mt. Toole-be-Wong in 1890. Nyora became a famous guest house. Charles and Ernest left there in 1925. Cyrus carried on until the 1939 ‘Black Friday’ bush fires destroyed the whole mountain.

2.1 Toole-be-wong in the primary sources

In terms of the primary sources, there is some confusion between the Indigenous names for Mt Riddell and Mt Toole-be-wong. The earliest reference is from surveyor T.H. Nutt from 1839 in which he records Tongbeun as the name of Riddells (Wesson 2001: 22). This attribution is not supported by Kaborer, a Boonwurrung speaker, who provided William Thomas with a sketch map of the Yarra mountains in c. 1841 (see Clark 2014a): his map suggests Mt Riddell was known as Burmbul and the peak known today as Mt Toole-be-wong was ‘Tourneybuan’. Smyth (1878 vol. 2: 188) adds to the confusion by providing two names for Mt. Riddell: Koranderrk and Turnim-be-wang. Ethel Shaw, in a self-published history of Coranderrk has discussed the placename Coranderrk:

The site chosen for the home of the Aborigines was ideal; it was on high ground which sloped gently down to the Badger Creek, a lovely, quick-flowing stream, purling merrily along on its way to join the Yarra River, about a mile distant. Its banks were lined with wattles, ferns, and shrubs, festooned with starry white clematis and purple sarsaparilla. The Christmas shrub (*Prostanthera Lasianthos*) grew luxuriantly everywhere, the beautiful sprays of delicate mauve and creamy bell-shaped flowers delighted the eye. The Yarra tribe knew it by the name of Coranderrk, and so the Mission was named after it. The reserve contained 4000 acres of well-timbered, undulating country, ranging from Mt. Riddell and Mt. Donnabewong to the River Yarra, with its rich, fertile flats (Shaw 1949: 13).

The Rev. John Mathew visited Coranderrk in January 1909 conducting research into Aboriginal moieties. In his papers there is one field booklet that has been captioned ‘John Mathew: notes on Aborigines received from Mr

⁴ Another reminiscence written by Maurice Robarts, Charles Robarts’ youngest son (see Clark 2014b: 207) gave the date of acquisition of the selection on Mt. Toole-Be-Wong as 1888.

Table 1: Suggested Aboriginal placenames

Official placename	Kaborer 1841? in Smyth Papers	Mathew 1909 in Papers	Cornish, <i>Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian</i> 27/11/1937	Shaw, <i>Healesville Guardian</i> 4/12/1943	Cornish, <i>Healesville Guardian,</i> 13/10/1943	O. Robarts, <i>Cairns Post</i> 28/12/1943
Mt. Toolebewong	Tourneybuan	Tongbiwang	Tonne-be-wong	Donnabewong	Tonne-be-wong; Tone-be-wong (Parkinson)	Toole-be-wong; Turm-be-waang
Mt. Ben Cairn					Toole-be-wong	
Mt. Donna Buang					Donne-bu-ang	

Table 2: Suggested meanings of Aboriginal placenames

Aboriginal placename	Mathew 1909 in Papers	Maurice Robarts n.d. in Clark 2014b: 209; Eileen Finlay in <i>Healesville Guardian</i> 18/9/1943	Oswald Robarts, <i>The Argus</i> 6/6/1931	Massola 1968: 43	Blake 1978: 191	Clark & Heydon 2002
Tonnebewong	'lie down crow'					waang = crow
Toolebewong	'burning of the crows'	'the hill the crow sat on'	'where the crow sat on a tree'		'crow perched on tree there'	waang = crow
Donna Buang			'the body of the mountain'			yawang = mountain

John Green, Healesville. Barak of Coranderrk mentioned (some in breviscript)'. Breviscript is a form of syllabic shorthand without vowels. This booklet contains a list of European placenames and their Indigenous equivalents and meanings. It contains a sketch of three peaks: Mt Juliatt, Mt Riddell, and a third Tongbiwang 'lie down crow' (Mathew papers Ms 950). Mathew's sketch map gives support to Shaw's and Cornish's arguments. Table 1 (previous page) lists the three official placenames and their suggested Aboriginal placenames as given in the sources.

Table 2 (previous page) lists the suggested meanings of the three Aboriginal placenames as given by Cornish and Shaw and others. It shows that both Tonnebewong and Toolebewong are likely to end with *waang* 'crow'. Mathew's gloss for Tonnebewong is 'lie down crow'; and Oswald Robarts' gloss for Toolebewong is 'the hill the crow sat on'. It is possible that the similar ending confused early recorders and they mistakenly believed they were referring to the same placename.

3. Conclusion

Tourists often show an interest in toponymy (Light 2014), and this forgotten 1943 controversy about the Aboriginal names of mountain peaks near Coranderrk is an example of how an innocent reflection from a tourist in a local newspaper pitted long term residents against one another and sparked a debate about authenticity and authority. In one camp the participants were willing to accept as final authority the official placenames as recorded by surveyors and published by the naming authority – the Lands Department. There was no questioning of the official nomenclature as found on government-produced maps. In the other camp were residents, many with long associations with the Coranderrk Aboriginal station, who were convinced that the mapping authorities had got it wrong and were promulgating toponymic errors. These are issues that have been central to the work of Luise Hercus, and given her association with Coranderrk and Healesville, this paper is a tribute to her research into Aboriginal toponyms. In a recent paper (Hercus 2002: 63), Luise noted that the study of Australian placenames was challenging as they are unpredictable: 'we can never guess what a place was called. We can also never be sure we are right about a placename unless there is clear evidence stemming from people who have traditional information on the topic. In the absence of such evidence we have to admit we are only guessing'.

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