

THE HISTORY OF YERONGA PART 5 PUBLISHED INFORMATION ON GATHERINGS OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

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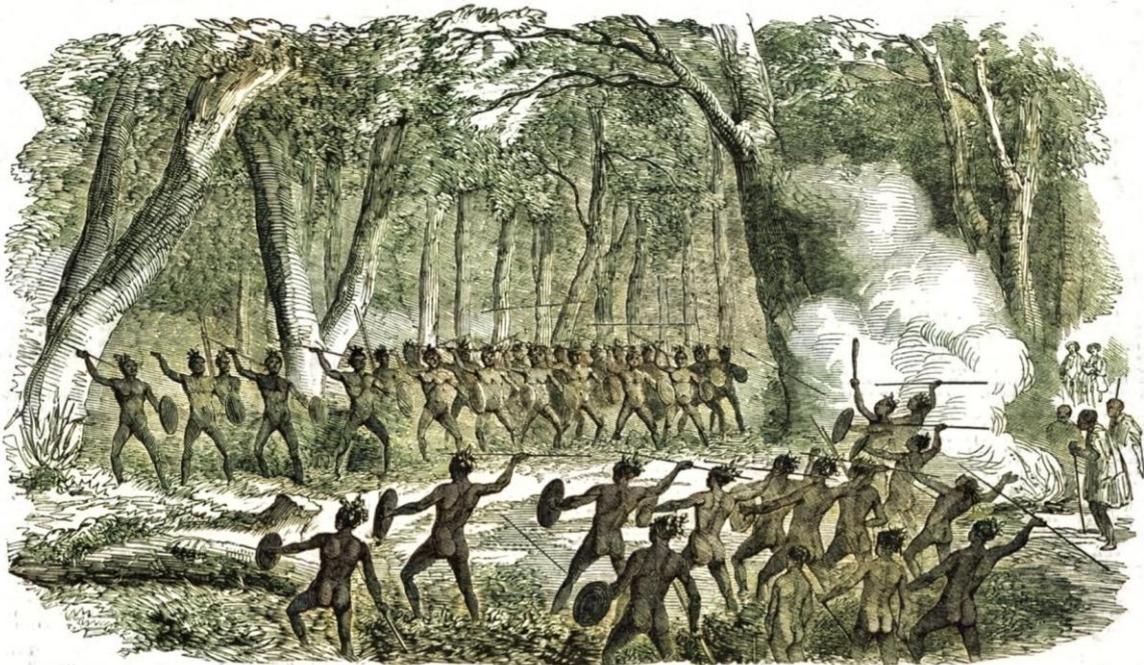
It is interesting to see that the Yeronga area was making international news as early as the 1850s. An account in *The Illustrated London News* of 17th June 1854 describes a “war or fight” between the “Amity Point, Logan, Bribie Island, and Ningy-Ningy tribes” about a mile beyond Burnett’s Swamp (now Stones Corner) to settle a dispute over the kidnapping of a woman.¹ The exact site of this *pullen pullen* is disputed but recent work by local historians suggests that the “fine green flat” referred to in the article seems to have been the area from near the Yeronga Memorial Park stretching as far as Yeerongpilly.² The article finishes with the following revealing comments that give us some insight into the mindset of that time:

“...it is the imperative duty of the Government to step in...to put a stop to a murderous practice, one of the remnants of that barbarism which sixty-six years of active occupation of the country by Europeans has not been able to efface...it must be recollected that the European having seized to himself the lands of the aborigines, the least return he can make is to bestow on them the benefits of that civilization which is the white man’s proudest boast, and which has been the means of enabling him to render subservient to his power and will his sable brethren whenever he has found them.”

JUNE 17, 1854.]

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

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AFFRAY OF ABORIGINAL TRIBES, THREE MILES FROM BRISBANE, NEW SOUTH WALES.

It is probable that the Yeronga area was chosen for this *pullen pullen* because of the local Yerongpan's standing among the various surrounding groups. This has clearly been a well settled area even prior to colonization and would have been acknowledged as such by other groups. For example, Tom Petrie talks about a number of separate camps of about two hundred each spread across a wide area.³ Much larger figures than these were mentioned in

newspaper reports as far back as 1847 with talk of up to two thousand people per camp/village.

Clearly this was only possible in areas where food was in abundance such as was the case in the Yeronga/Yeerongpilly area.⁴ It would seem that it was a good place for a get-together even of this belligerent kind since significant numbers lived in this area in substantial dwellings with no issue about supplying an additional one to two hundred for a visit. This description from 1848 well illustrates the situation:

*...they have fixed habitations, dwelling in little villages of six or seven huts in a cluster. Some of them are of great length, extending upwards of eighty feet, and covering a considerable space of ground ... One of them was in the form of a passage, with two apartments at the end. The arches were beautifully turned, and executed with a degree of skill which would not have disgraced an European architect.*⁵

Nice to think that when the Egyptians were putting up their pyramids, the locals in Yeronga were building some rather nice homes for themselves and welcoming visitors even then.

1 John Oxley Library, Brisbane Suburbs and Localities. The Illustrated London News, Saturday 17 June, 1854, pp575-576.

2 James Devaney, 'Records of Brisbane Blacks,' BC, 21 May 1932 p. 19 & James Devaney, *ibid.* Ray Kerkhove "Indigenous Aboriginal Sites of Southside Brisbane. Accessed online 16 August 2019 at <https://mappingbrisbanehistory.com.au/brisbane-history-essays/brisbane-southside-history/first-australians-and-original-landscape/indigenous-sites/>

3 Petrie, Tom, 1901, 'Ethnology The Old Brisbane Blacks. Letter to the Editor' The Brisbane Courier, 28 September 1901, p 624

4 Ray Kerkhove. "Aboriginal Camps: Foundation of our towns, suburbs and parks? Evidence from South-eastern Queensland." Paper delivered for the AHA Conference: 'Foundational History' University of Sydney 8 July 2015

5 Moreton Bay Courier, 17 June 1848, page 3.