

# **Transcript of the Diary of Goyder's Survey Party 1869**

**Extract from:**

**Northern Territory Archives Service, Surveyor-General's Department,  
NTRS 3733, Transcript of the Diary of Goyder Survey Party, 1869**

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DIARY OF SURVEYOR-GENERAL GOYDER

1869

NTAS, NTRS 3733, Transcript of the Diary of Goyder Survey Party

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DIARY OF SURVEYOR GENERAL GOYDER, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1869.

Ship "Moonta" arrived at Ft. Darwin on afternoon of 5th Feby 1869 and came to anchor at 3.15p.m. opposite Fort Pt. Two boats were at once lowered and put off for land; the first containing the Surveyor General, Doctor, Capt. Barneson, Messrs. Mitchell, Woods, McMinn, McLachlan, Berry, Hardy, Schultze, and the following men:- Collett, Edwards, and a seaman of the "Moonta". The second boat contained R. Burton Tuckwell, Wm. Rowe Senr., Wm. Rowe junr., D. McAulay A. Kennedy, J. Lowther, C.J. Palmer & T. Loveday. Upon the return of the party to ship arrangements were made to facilitate the landing on the ensuing day. It was arranged that D. McAulay, M. Moyses and F.J. Bennett should early next morning proceed on shore with tube-wells and other tools to search for water on a spot selected by the Surveyor-General today. It was also arranged that the following parties should proceed on shore next morning.

Road party

Mr. A.J. Mitchell  
Cadet Greene        Beate  
Walters             Francis  
Collard             Ryan  
Cornish             Edwards

Trig: piling -

Mr. G.G. MacLachlan  
E. Ryan  
P. Healey  
J. Loudon  
D. Hare

Landing party:-

Mr. G.R. McMinn

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Mr. E.M. Smith  
Dalwood  
Lowther  
Krüss  
McPherson  
Robinson  
Wilson  
Farrant

Landing party:-

Mr. R.R. Knuckey  
Guy  
P. Kelly  
R.A. Horn

Timber Cutting party for store & Jetty

Mr. J.M. Thomas  
J. Ryan  
D. Johnson  
Houston  
Stanborough  
G. Bayfield  
M. Keely

Timber party --

Mr. S. King  
W. Collett  
Barrow  
Bosworth  
Kersley

Fraser  
G. Deane

Timber Party --  
Mr. Daly  
Armstrong  
Irwin  
Gerald  
Stevenson

Timber party --  
Mr. Brooking  
R. Loveday  
T. Loveday  
J. Lowther  
G. Richards  
G. Hughes  
C. Lines

Ship party  
Mr. W. Harvey  
Cadets McKay  
Giles  
Packard  
Bee  
Beetson  
Aldridge  
Roberts  
Burden  
Sprigg  
Wells  
W.W. Mills

Newfoundland dog "Carlo" died from distemper.

Saturday 6th Surveyor-Genl. & Captn. left vessel at 5 a.m. to sound along coast for best landing place & to look for water - found surface water at several places along coast oozing out of rocks also fresh water swamp abt. 2½ m distant east of Pt. Emery & surface water in a gully between Fort Pt. and Pt. Emery found also that the best landing place was close to Fort Pt. Landed parties to work as arranged on the previous evening. Captn. removed from anchorage to as near landing place as possible abt. ½ mile from shore. Landed well to be sunk in gully between Fort Pt. & Pt. Emery and track cleared from well to beach and commenced landing stock. Bullocks landed successfully but one very weak - half the horses landed. Black mare badly handled by men in dingy and nearly drowned by ships carpenter. Went in life boat to assist & took mare safely ashore. Orders given by myself & Captn. that the dingy should be used no more in landing stock. Proceeded with well party to sink a second well on a flat ¼ of a mile East of Fort Pt. - men sunk 4 feet through nodulous earth to conglomerate, when the ground became softer, examined locality & returned to ship - found contrary to my express orders & that of Captn. that the ship's carpenter had again attempted to land stock with dingy, the result was "Young Bobby" one of our best horses was drowned. as I consider this loss solely attributable to one of the ships officers, I hold the ship responsible for it. My English terrier dog "Tiger" carelessly left on shore by Homeyer found dead on beach - Track cleared through from landing place to well. Teamsters sent on shore in charge of Wm. Rowe to take charge of & water stock. Squall from S.E. at 2 p.m. - thunder lightning & a little rain. Self still suffering from bilious attack. No other illness of importance on board - Most of country thickly timbered grass long and of but

little service for stock - Breeze N.W. Bar: 29.9 Ther: From 92 to 96 in shade. Visited by two native boys.

Sunday 7th - Service on board at 9.30 a.m. Men and officers allowed to land. Blacks took two of the men to show them water and after a long round-about took them to where we had already sunk a well. McIntyre brought on board suffering from suppression of urine and in great pain, obtained relief on remedies being applied by Dr. First alligator seen this morning - men who slept on shore report that they rested well and were undisturbed by mosquitoes - Self still ill. One of boats reported finding water at 8 & 11 miles, the first in the sand on a point at the W. Entrance of the Eastern Arm, the second abt. a mile & a half to north east of mouth of arm at foot of a nodulous rise skirting low swampy land, beyond the mangroves fringing the reach. Exaggerated the distances however the first being  $5\frac{1}{4}$  miles & second  $7\frac{1}{2}$  from Fort Pt.

Monday 8th - Landed with well party at 6.30 a.m. erected tube well apparatus at well on flat east of Fort Pt. Only able to penetrate 8 inches. Mem: This apparatus is only suitable for alluvial soil - Left well sinkers at work to sink by the ordinary means, proceeded abt.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles E.N.E. examining country with Burton & Moyses in search of a more favourable site. found a suitable place for sinking, with every appearance of water at a few feet - Whilst examining the locality more particularly Burton came on a small creek with abt.  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile running fresh water, the water very good - water course dying out at edge of mangroves - returned to well party & left Moyses to continue operations - examining for road at Fort Pt. On arrival found that the weak bullock had died and that Bennett the teamster had been taken suddenly ill. Remainder of stock safely landed. Timber cutting going on satisfactorily also clearing of rocks from landing place preparatory to construction of small jetty. Fixed working hours for party from 7 to 11 a.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m. Sent remainder to teamsters & stockmen on shore - horses & bullocks to be removed to Burton's Ck tomorrow, where there is better feed & abundance of water. The stock to be tailed by Holland, Hemming & Hood under Alick Kennedy. House fittings being taken down & rafted on shore clear of high water mark. Cases being got up preparatory to landing such as are required - Progress of the whole of parties on shore satisfactory with exception of well party. Invalids improving. Thunder lighting & rain at 10.30 p.m. Bar: 29.85 Ther: 92 Squall from S.E.

Tuesday 9th Breakfasted & party proceeded to work by 7 a.m. Men on vessel getting up tools &c. Invalids improving. Wind N.W. Surveyors completed traverse of site to include township - draftsman plotting work. Sent stock to Burton's Ck. Bullocks drawing timber for jetty till 11 a.m. Landed after dinner & examined progress of various parties timber cutting clearing and landing party progress satisfactory. Naturalist out collecting. Brooks taking photos. Well party done no work save to erect shade and rough wurlie since yesterday at noon. Cautioned them and sent Mr. Woods to inspect & measure work done & Mr. E.L. Smith to see that they continue their work. Arranged for shoeing horses for Mr. Mitchell's party - returned to vessel. Mr. Surveyor Mills to be reduced to cadetship. Mr. Brooking to be promoted - Mr. Mitchell's Party to consist of himself, Cadet Green, (3d) S.P. Brooking (2d), R. Home (4), & Steven King (1st).

Mr. Mitchell to start on Wednesday morning with five saddle 1 led and three pack horses and to make his way to the rocky bar about 13

miles south of the entrance of Eastern Arm Pt. Darwin to note natural features of country as he goes - to endeavour to keep upon the high ground so as to obtain a practicable route for a line of road from Fort Pt. to latter places & where the country is intersected by Creeks impracticable for drays to note places where fords or bridges may be most easily constructed. Mr. Mitchell to take with him a weeks provisions for 5 men and three feeds of barley for each horse to be given at night. Should I fail to meet Mr. Mitchell on evening of 11th or at latest by noon of 12th Mr. Mitchell is then to proceed to Fred's Pass examining country for route as before. At this place he will sketch in natural features of country & return thence to Fort Pt. noting most available routes for dray traffic & the impediments that exist thereto. Mr. Mitchell will take sextant & artificial horizon with him to enable him to fix latitude of camp each night taking such bearings of his course as will also enable him to give the approximate longitude.

Bar: at 4.30 p.m. 29.67 falling. Ther: 88° under windsail - sent boats off at once for men but storm came on before a heavy squall from S - going round to S.E. with thunder lightning & rain - The bar. fell 2 tenths - the squall lasted 1½ hours - part of men got off safely before squall - remainder afterwards - during heavy rain drizzle afterwards with lightning.

Monday. Dr. reports six cases including those above attended to & Samson who was bruised by the horses rushing past & knocking him down.

Tuesday (cont'd) Dr. Reports invalids going on well - including all nine cases - Mr. Beard fell down fore hatch after dark & broke one of his ribs on left side which the Doctor at once set - The accident the result of carelessness more than any thing else - in the evening gave written instruction and plan of Cy to Mr. Mitchell - who as previously agreed upon is to start tomorrow morning - Samson Lowther McIntyre & Beard off duty.

Bar: rose 2/10ths on breaking of squall.

Wednesday 10th Went on shore at 7 a.m. Saw all right as to progress. Started off Mr. Mitchell & party equipped as per agreement. Mr. King declining to go from alleged fear of return of fever. Mr. Packard was substituted and Mr. King censured for undertaking a duty for which he had not moral courage to carry out. Mr. King excused himself on plea that he expected only to have survey work to do & not to have to camp out any where at night. Returned to vessel Dr. reports invalids doing well. Started with Captn. Dr. & boats crew to Talc Head locality shown with general accuracy in marine survey. A dyke of quartz with plates of mica thickly embedded running from East side a little to S. of point to S.W. in direction of the Shoal bay to W. of Talc Head. Stratified rocks, mica schist & micaceous sandstone visible in places on the shore the beds dipping at high angles and running from S.S.E. to N.N.W. the cliffs - principally beds of indurated alloys with anhydrous peroxide of iron & ferruginous sandstone. Vegetation similar to Pt. Darwin. Not slightest appearance of country being auriferous - Fresh water was obtained by sinking a few feet in the margin of a swampy hollow inside the Coast cliffs abt. 300yds inland from the point. The rocks covered at high tide are covered with small rock oyster - The glare from sand rendered heat almost intolerable the shingle onbeach mostly consisted of talc sand & coarse fragments of quartz. Admirably suited for ballast and can be readily obtained at any state of tide by boats. Proceeded thence up Western Arm & found good landing place available for shipping & discharging stores &

country so far as could be seen well adapted for construction of roads to the higher lands South & West of the Adelaide. A squall thunder lightning & heavy rain set in at 4 p.m. and continued till near sundown returned to vessel at 9.30 p.m. found progress made by land party satisfactory & invalids doing well - Self though thoroughly saturated for hours feeling considerably better.

Thursday 11th Parties proceeded to shore as usual at 7 a.m. Designed plan of township and set draftsmen to work preparing 6 copies for use of Surveyor. Invalids better. Proceeded to shore. Gave necessary instructions for work to be carried on and started with Captn., Dr., Mr. A.H. Smith & boats crew to examine Eastern Arm with a view to select a landing place & site for township at head of navigation. Dr. reports that patients are progressing satisfactorily & that he will be able to accompany me for a few days without any fear. Mr. Horn in meantime attending to patients - It was arranged previous to starting that in the event of the Doctor or Captn. being required on board, that two rockets would be fired for the former and one for the latter, punctually at 9.00 by Cabin clock & the Doctor's watch being set to same time - Went up Eastern Arm as far as navigable until intercepted by overhanging branches - the water perfectly fresh above bar. Found the rocky obstructions more numerous than anticipated & that the arm above had apparently only been sketched. Anticipated from what had been told me that the mangroves would entirely disappear. Descended about a couple of miles down stream and landed through fringe of mangroves to ridge of land coming down to within abt. 40 yds of high water mark. Went inland abt. a mile blazing trees. Country undulating with small watercourses, soil b brown sandy loam with nodules of ironstone. Boulders of ironstone, quartz, quartz rock, micaceous sandstone, frequently cropping out from surface, the timber consisting of fan & corkscrew palms, various kinds of eucalypti, a few pines cotton tree, a tree something resembling the Casuarina, and long threadlike leaves, but free from knotty articulation milkwood &c &c - The hearvs & grasses of usual description hibiscus indigo & other shrubs. Returned to boat descended stream & again landed at a narrow opening through mangroves on North bank which led to a native grave in small opening above high water mark where the high land came to within 60 yds of high water mark, being still dissatisfied with this spot the high tide concealing all rocky obstructions returned to boat & descended stream abt. 3 miles exg. banks narrowly but mangroves extended farther & farther inland, so anchored for night. At 8 p.m. fired rocket as agreed upon between Mr. Mitchell & myself. Dr. reports 14 cases.

Friday 12th - Returned up stream at daylight having decided that bar shown in Stoke's Chart must be at opening to native grave which afterwards proved to be the case. Landed with Dr., Mr. A.H. Smith, Roberts & Burton, made rough sketch of country abt a mile on each side of landing place including upper land of previous day, blazing trees as indications to Mr. Mitchell's party of our presence. Returned to boat at abt. 2 p.m. & heard a shot fired. Answered, & sent Burton & Roberts out, who returned with Mr. Mitchell at 3.30 p.m. Mr. Mitchell had succeeded perfectly in his object, without mishap and reached the Creek within 100 yds of landing place but his party instead of following had run down the trees blazed by us on previous day. & reaching creek at opening cut by us & not finding Mr. Mitchell there had fired shot which we heard, having every confidence from result of Mr. Mitchell's journey that he would satisfactorily complete journey to Fred's Pass, I gave him instructions to that effect, with all stores in boat we could spare, & feed taken

up for the horses and he returned to his camp on a fine fresh water creek abt. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles E.S.E. from our camp, his horses had done well upon the journey and though wet nearly all the time the men had suffered but little inconvenience from this cause or mosquitoes. Started at 6 p.m. for ship which we reached a little after midnight. Schooner not arrived no signal light on ship though we fired off a rocket and discharged a gun several times, the only notice taken was by Wm. Rowe, who suspended a lighted lantern from the summit of Fort Pt. - Found all asleep on board & no watch kept. Messrs. Woods & Hardy afterward reported that everything had gone on well, that salt water had been got in well sunk near the saddle and that the men had got down 10ft at well East of Fort Pt.

Saturday 13 Men went to work as usual at 7 a.m. Draftsman has nearly completed plan of township - Gave instruction to Mr. Smith to plot the up river survey & landed - Well party down 11 ft took 10 gallons water out - percolation from bottom. Withdrew Smith. Shore progress satisfactory. Observations taken from Fort Point by Mr. McL. Pole & pile raised - MaHair (sic) again ill from heat. Plotting work with Mr. Woods in afn.

In afn. memorial presented relative to increased grog allowance - See correspondence. Visited well party & returned to ship. Dr. reports but 6 cases & today - ten cases - none serious - one man Mahir (sic) ill from heat

Monday 15th Men went to work as agreed - Camp equipage being got out for shore parties stable being completed. Store commenced. Landing place in progress - Rations being got out. Day hot Bar: 29.85 Ther: 90, slight breeze W. Invalids improving but many of the men have swellings from boils and slight abrasing got whilst at work - Dr. landed to see blacks - camp arranged. Pile completed - Equipage for McLachlan & McMinn's double party kept on board. Donley sent in request to be allowed to forfeit wages if allowed a passage back by the vessel - He stated that he had been badly used & constantly grumbled at & had too many masters - deferred decision - Went on shore & saw work going on as arranged. Well party had got down about 14 feet. The water previously obtained proved to be a drainage from N. side and appeared to be less than on Saturday - returned to vessel at 7 p.m. - Dr. reports 8 cases - none serious - Wind N.N.W. Day hot. Bar: & Ther: as before - Mr. McL. reported in very favourable terms of Cadet Wells - decided that he & Cadet Bee shd. be transposed as to grade from 1st inst. Wells to be senior & Bee junior.

Tuesday 16th Feby - 11 a.m.  
Survey of road & Township commenced - Landing nearly complete - Dr. saw all invalids - Dfts. engaged on board - Strong wind from W. Bar: 29.83 Ther: 90° in shade - Fine weather. All on residing on shore except self, doctor, McL. & McL's double parties, Drafts. & store keeper

Saty 20th -  
Commenced landing stores - Men cutting timber - Landing stores - Erecting store and surveying & road making. Draftsmen plotting and writing - Stopped work at 5 p.m.

Following Memn. Addressed to officers & men

Dr. reports 12 cases - Dalwood 7th rib fractured by fall last night - all going on favorably - Gave notice to close mail on Saturday morning at 7 a.m. time to be extended to Monday - should ship not have sailed

Grey mare ill

Sunday 21st Grey mare since dead. I attribute her death in a great measure to the physicing she has received. Have since placed the horses under the care of Robinson who will attend to all that require veterinary treatment

21st Sunday

Heavy rain from 3 to 6 a.m. Boating party getting water at 6 a.m. D Service on shore at 10a.m. Dr. reports but 4 cases. All going on well - Strong wind from N.N.W. Placed a kedge anchor to secure floating jetty. Memm. M make extra landing as E. side of Fort Point. On board in afternoon.

Monday 22nd

Bar: 29.63 Ther: 90° in shade. This is the lowest reading of the Bar. since we embarked.

Discharging Cargo - Men at surveys road. Cutting timber & Landing Stage. Well sinkers completed. Slabbing bad ground. Draftn. at journals & correspondence. Recd. Mr. Mitchell's plan and report & two reports from Dr. relative to Bi Sulphide of Lime & preserved meat - Completed design of Port Township.

Squall at 2p.m. from S with heavy rain & thunder & lightning. Dr. reports 12 cases none serious.

Tuesday 23rd Feb

Men at work as usual. Self & Captain sounding Francis Bay from 7 to 9.30 a.m.

Returned to ship - completed design of Township - Dft. preparing working drawings - Recd. note from Mr. Woods reive to familiarity of men with natives - Took necessary steps to prevent this in future - Bar: at noon 29.67 Ther. 90° - Light Breeze from W.N.W.

Wrote memm. to Dr. Peel 1/69 with reference to men unable to stand work of party & 2/69 to officers & men as to treatment of party - Dalwood still ill - ordered on board.

Plans being completed for surveyors. Heavy squall of thunder lightning and a little wind & heavy rain from S. & E. as from 4.30 to 6 p.m. - Draftsmen engaged till 10 p.m. Dr. Reports but 6 cases none serious.

Wedy 24th Feby -

Went on shore at 6 a.m. & gave plan & instructions for survey of Township at Port to Messrs Woods Smith Harvey Mitchell & their asstns. Mr. King set to plot survey of Francis Bay - Dftn at remainder of Township plans - Acctt. preparing for mail by ship to Adelaide - Dr. Peel arranged to take a rough record of rainfall until vessel sailed - regular record to be kept from 1st prox-

Thursday 25th

Started with Capt Dr. Peel, Mr. McL., Packard & two seamen for West Arm - found good land & water on east side - Lat: two minutes out as shown on Stokes Chart. Heavy rain with thunder & lightning from 4 to 6 p.m. Camped on shore - Mosquitoes & sandflies.

Friday 26th. Had abt six mile walk - Vegetation as before with addition of Honeysuckles & Kangaroo grass - Water had fallen 20 feet. Dingy had to be carried to West side - landed & had a seven mile walk - Sketch of cy as shew on Stoke's chart erroneous - The arms are further appt. Cy same as on East side but more

honeysuckle on s de near West arm - Had to sit down & rest felling for a time knocked up by wet trousers - leather legging & quantity of long grass to carry or step over each time - Took off leggings & started again all right - reached boat & arrived at ship at 9.30 p.m. - Steward drunk - He had opened cases in my own & Drs Cabin - Missing 1 bottle light wine, 2 brandy, & 2½ bottles port.

Saty: 27th Feby

Cleared out of ship - Dr. remaining. Saw parties at work on store road etc - & started with party inland - camped at forked inlet Mosquitoes & sandflies. Obsd. Lat.

Sunday 28th

Examining of N.E. & N. Sec Mitchell's sketch - Returned to camp - Service at 8 p.m.

Monday 1st March - Heavy Rain with thunder & lightning at 4 a.m. Store at E. end too open - Many of my better things spoiled or saturated. Gave Holiday to men. Sent Burton out for samples of timber. Preparing for mail. Wrote out orders in duplicate for Capt. Barneson for balance of sum named in Charter party - viz: £1500 - Disrated steward - Mr. McL. asked to have him as cook for his party - Consented - Mr. Schulze complained of Homeyer. Drs. report recd & read - specimen of Echina brought in by black -