

A.C. GREGORY'S FIRST VISIT 1845

Assistant Surveyor A. C. Gregory in a letter written from the Williams River and dated May 30th, 1845, and addressed to the Surveyor General, the Hon. J. S. Roe, says –

“During the early part of this month, May, I made a short trip to the Blackwood River with a view to tracing its course towards the sea, and examining some surrounding country.

From the Junction of the Arthur and the Beaufort Rivers I followed the river for about 107 miles. For the first forty miles, the country through which I travelled was mostly grassy, but did not offer many attractions, although the river formed nearly one continuous succession of reaches from fifty to one hundred and fifty yards in width, the general course being nearly due south, but from its many tortuous windings I was only able to judge of my distance by latitudes, the most southerly of which placed us in latitude 33 deg. 58 min. 30 sec. south. From this the river takes nearly a westerly direction, becoming much narrower, and many of the hills showing a very superior character of soil and grass, and towards the latter end of the route watered by numerous springs and running streams; the examination terminating on the western face of a range of hills from which I took bearings to the south extremity of some highland, distance about 25 miles, probably a part of Cape Leeuwin, although I could not distinctly see any other peak, I would have forwarded you a sketch of this route, but my tracing paper being expended I am unable to do so.”

A.C. GREGORY'S SECOND VISIT 1852

During a journey through Bunbury, across the Lockwood and Gordon Rivers, steering south from the Preston he crossed the Blackwood, before travelling on to the head of the Donnelly River to proceed to Broke Inlet. He started northwards to the Warren, then northwest to the Blackwood again, north to the Preston, then to Mandurah to return to Perth.

Information extracted from
History of the Upper Blackwood
by A.A.Schorer, 1968. pp 4-6
And the W.W.W.



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HISTORY

The Gregory Tree

BOYUP BROOK



*You're
absolutely
welcome*

THE GREGORY TREE

The initial exploration of the Boyup Brook area (then known as the 'Upper Blackwood') was marked by a surveyor's benchmark cut on this tree by Assistant Surveyor A. C. Gregory (1819-1905) during his first journey through the Blackwood district.

Much discussion and debate has claimed the attention of local historians and organisations interested in the actual date that Gregory traveled through the area and marked the tree.

This benchmark was found by H. S. Ranford during surveys 32 years later in May 1877. Despite the tree being a Jarrah, the blaze had already begun to deteriorate, leading Ranford to record it as "AG over 1843", though he queried the '3'.

In the many years following the finding by H.S. Ranford the tree has died and suffered much deterioration, including fire damage resulting in the last two numerals being indecipherable.



From details gathered, during the course of investigations, we can now assume with reasonable confidence that the date on the blaze can only have been '1845'.

Information received from the Surveyor General and various other official sources confirm that there can be little doubt that this tree was blazed by A. C. Gregory in May 1845, during one of his surveying trips to the South West.



A.C. GREGORY

Sir Augustus Charles Gregory (1819-1905), explorer and surveyor-general was born at Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire, England.

Although accounts of Gregory's exploration trips to the Blackwood are mostly vague, it is quite evident that during his first journey he did do exploration work in the Upper Blackwood. Evidence of his visit still exists in what is termed the "Gregory Tree". This tree stands near the Blackwood River on the side of Gibbs Road midway between the township of Boyup Brook and locality of Dinninup. On this tree Gregory cut his name and the year 1845. In searching through records of Gregory's travels no reference to this tree could be found, but it is quite evident that he crossed the Blackwood River at this point.



In 1983, the Boyup Brook Tourism Committee gained permission to remove the top of the tree and protect the stump under a roof. A bronze plaque was attached with the following information:

THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES
THE FIRST SURVEYOR AND EXPLORER
TO VISIT THE UPPER BLACKWOOD DISTRICT.
A. C. GREGORY, GOVERNMENT SURVEYOR,
BLAZED THIS TREE
WITH HIS INITIALS A. G. IN 1845
WHILE CAMPING HERE SURVEYING
THE SOURCE OF THE BLACKWOOD RIVER
BOYUP BROOK TOURIST COMMITTEE, 1983

