

JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY TO PORT PHILLIP, NEW SOUTH WALES

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IN 1824 and 1825

Journal excerpt

Wednesday, November 24The river comes from the eastern chain of mountains, and very probably joins the Hume, though perhaps at a considerable distance to the westward. They name this river the "Ovens," after the deceased Major Ovens, the late Governor, Sir Thomas Brisbane's Private Secretary.

Thursday, November 25. Little difficulty was experienced in crossing the "Ovens," the water being so low, that it was found fordable in several places. The ford at which they passed was only three feet deep, and the bottom pebbly, so that although there was a considerable current, they were enabled to cross with the cattle laden. The banks of this river, are somewhat higher than those of the last two, and they appear less liable to floods.

The wild flax, (which is very similar to that of commerce,) grows here in profusion, generally about six feet high, also the native honeysuckle, and the grass-tree, both of which, (a circumstance by no means usual,) seem here to denote a good soil. At the hills near the "Murrumbidgee" as well as in the "Limestone-valley" the same circumstance was observable. Four miles and a half from the "Ovens" they reach the summits of a range, whence they obtain a view of that river, coming from East by North, and evidently deriving its waters, from part of the "Alpine Chain." One of these snowcapped mountains, is now in sight, bearing South East, distant about twenty miles, there is also a singularly formed mountain, in the same direction, but much nearer, which from its shape, they name "Mount Buffalo;" a fine level country is observable to the Westward, commencing at the distance of about five miles, and in some directions particularly to the N W. extending in unbroken tenor, to the utmost boundary of the horizon; to the southward of west, at a considerable distance, there is a range which extends in the directions, South East, and North West, at the distance of about eight or ten miles, **some plains also are observed, situate most probably on the banks of the "Ovens" these they designate "Oxley's Plains" after the late Mr. Oxley, Surveyor General of the Territory.** All the country in their line of route to-day, had been burned, and a little to the Westward of this line, the grass was still blazing to a considerable height. At noon having travelled seven miles, they rest near some water holes, on a small plot of good grass, which had most fortunately escaped the ravages of the flames. At four they renew their route, and soon afterwards arrive on the banks of a fine creek running to the northward, having in their way been obliged to cross the western terminations of several ranges of hills.* Some of these hills are covered with a kind of scrub, and some consist of large masses of rock piled fantastically, as if by art, on each other. The crossing of these ranges was dreadfully distressing to the cattle. A little before sunset they pitched their tent near some water holes. The grass good. The natives evidently numerous.