

## **Life Along the Tully River - Kennedy's Explorations**

After landing at Rockingham Bay on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1848, Kennedy set up his first camp. Following some preliminary reconnoitring, he moved south trying to find a way to move inland through the coastal mangroves and swamps. He crossed the Hull River but found no way inland between the Tully and the Hull.

To cross the mouth of the Tully River, he unloaded the carts and the dray, made a punt out of one of the carts using empty water kegs for buoyancy and ferried his supplies across. The operation took two days. The swamps were still impassable to the west, so the expedition continued south. He was not able to turn west and north until he had crossed the mouths of the Murray River, Dallachy Creek and Wreck Creek.

The expedition was at last able to move inland and found themselves in grassy country with boulders and hillocks, crossed by creeks bordered with vine scrub, through which they had to hack a path to cross each creek. After a few days of bogging and a broken axle tree, they had to unload their stores and abandon the carts.

They continued to cut through the seemingly endless scrub, working their way northwest up beneath the range, its tops often obscured by cloud. They entered the Tully valley but the ranges between which they were travelling relentlessly converged as they travelled up the Tully Gorge. The mountains to their left were 2500 feet high, heavily ravined, steep and densely clad with jungle.



*The Tully Gorge lies below the Tully Falls. A beautiful but steep, rainforested landscape, it provided great difficulties to Kennedy and his expedition.*



They camped just below the junction of the Tully with Cochable Creek and began, on August 3) to hack a way up the gorge and out of the valley. It took them another five days to cut a track for the animals. It was only about a mile from the camp to the top but it took more than a day to climb the steep valley side. They were wearied by leech-bites, cutting scrub so that horses and sheep could make the climb, and suffering in the rain, but they made it up out of the Tully Gorge.

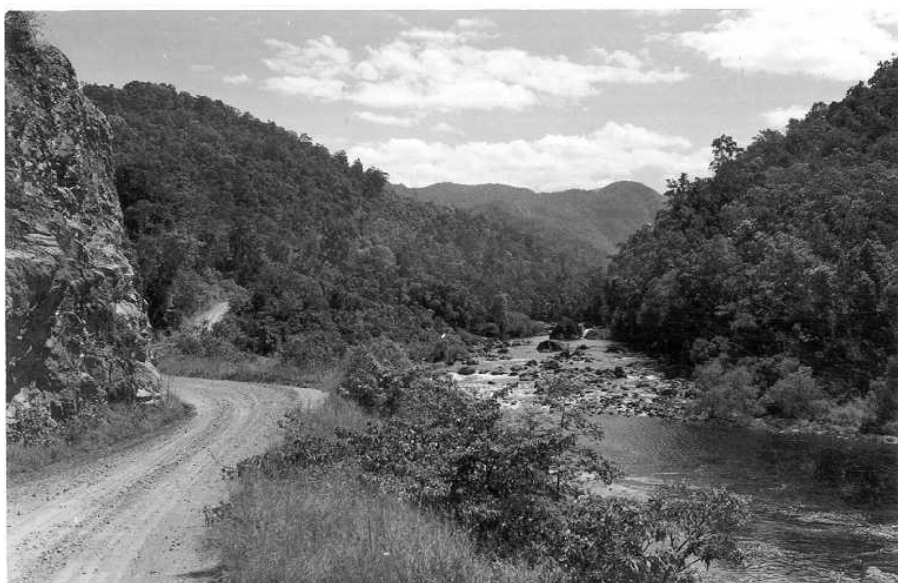


*This photograph shows the Tully Falls in 1938 (before the completion of the Kareeya Power Station and Koombooloomba Dam).*

*Here, after flowing north from its source, the river swings in a huge bend and turns southwards. Kennedy had climbed out of the southward flowing Tully and reached the northward flowing section. He camped about four miles upstream from the Falls.*

*The tablelands which Kennedy reached were like those at the top of the Falls on this photograph.*

They were then only about 40 miles from the coast after 9 weeks of arduous travelling. They were on the upper Tully, which they forded and made camp on the west bank before heading east on August 12, across the tablelands away from the Tully River and the eastern ranges, rivers and coastal swamps at last.



*The Tully Gorge c.1960, with the Cardstone Road on the left. This road now leads to the Kareeya Power Station.*

With many difficulties, Kennedy's expedition journeyed to Weymouth Bay, attacked by Aborigines, suffering from lack of food and sickness. Only Jackey Jackey, Carron

and Goddard survived. An official investigation was held, and Kennedy's qualities as a leader were acknowledged despite the tragic end to the enterprise.