

Our Way

This book is the culmination of more than seven decades spent gathering the stories of our Ancestors. This section explains how my daughter Robynne and I have gone about finding all the information for this story and how the book is laid out. I began looking for information about Grampa and our Aboriginal Ancestors when I was seven years old. Over the past seven years my daughter Robynne has completed the research for this book in both Australia and internationally—then managed to combine this with all that I had previously found, to write this wonderful story.

The types of information that make up this story come from:

- Listening to the stories and day-to-day yarns I heard from my Ancestors, now past, especially my parents, Aunties and Uncles, Nanny Pris and Pop Mackray.
- My incomplete thesis at Adelaide University, which involved research and interviews with my Elders during the 1990s.
- Yarning with various family today about what they know of Grampa's life and my own.
- The inclusion of valuable information from other valuable written works by people such as my father-in-law Ronald Morgan, Nancy Cato and Professor Heather Goodall to name a few.
- The collection of photos, documents and letters which my wife Brenda and I gathered over the past few decades; my more formal research which has taken place over the past seven years, with my daughter Robynne, including travelling across the Indian Ocean to Mauritius to meet our family there and undertake ongoing research within Mauritian archival systems; all of which Robynne has now collated and catalogued as the GBRNelson Collection or GBRN Collection.
- Input and/or advice from our academic friends here in Australia, Mauritius, and India who have supported our search and the writing of this book.

What you will find as you read this book is that it does not flow in chronological order. It does, however, parallel my life and the order in which I have lived or learnt what I know. This means that you the reader will, in a sense, take a journey with me, from the time of my earliest memory, through to today; and in the case of the last two years, you will actually be learning the bits and pieces of information precisely as we learn it. This book is structured in the following way:

Part 1: The Early Years – starting with my earliest memory and sharing a little about the people around me at the time.

Part 2: Our Life – the life my wife Brenda and I built for ourselves.

Part 3: Grampa's Story – including all that I have come to learn about Grampa's life post Mauritius, from living around him as a child, asking the family and researching him both in Australia and overseas.

Part 4: Roots – takes you on our journey across the Indian Ocean in search of Grampa's story, pre Australia and our Ancestry in Mauritius.

Part 5: The Legacy – looks at the impact Grampa's teaching had on our people and the amazing legacy that he left Aboriginal Australia.

Part 6: Appendices.

As you turn the pages you will read the stories told in my voice – Robynne's pen. You will also see comments made by my daughter Robynne throughout the book, written in italics. She shares her insight into what she has discovered, learnt, or come to understand, as she travelled to Mauritius with me in 2006, then again in 2010 and 2012 alone, and in her research here in Australia and putting our findings together in this story. I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we have enjoyed gathering the stories.