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ABORIGINAL HISTORY

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Cover: Quinkan figures from Pig Gallery, Laura Caves. Designed by R.E. Barwick, from photograph by Margaret Valadian. This site is described by P.J. Trezise in Rock art of south-east Cape York. Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1971.
Photograph by Jeremy Beckett.
I first met George Dutton in the winter of 1957. I had come to the little town of Wilcannia, on the Darling River, in the course of a study of part-Aborigines in the far west of New South Wales. My assignment was to investigate their place in 'outback' Australian society. I had not intended to search for remnants of the indigenous culture; indeed, my advisers had led me to believe there would be none. But I found that there were a dozen old men and a few women who had been initiated, and I was soon devoting a part of my time to working with those who were ready and articulate enough to tell me something about the 'dark people's rules'. It was frustrating, time-consuming work, and I might not have attempted it had it not given me an occasion for being amongst Aborigines who were suspicious and more or less uncomprehending of my interest in their present-day affairs. I found, moreover, that it provided the basis for a closer relationship than I could achieve with any of the younger generation.

I had already heard of George Dutton when I was working on the Lachlan. When I came to Wilcannia everyone agreed that he was the man to see: 'He knew forty lingos!' They directed me to the outskirts of town where a score or so of scrap iron humpies stood scattered in the salt bush and mallee scrub. Some youths in cowboy hats and high-heeled boots led me past the wrecked cars, over the broken glass and rusty tins, to a rough single-room shanty, just big enough for the two beds in which he, his small son and two daughters slept. Dutton was sitting outside playing cards, a tall emaciated half caste of about seventy, his long, sallow face sunken with the loss of his teeth, under his broad brimmed stockman’s hat. I stated my business, but he was unresponsive, saying he might come and see me tomorrow.

*This is a much revised and expanded version of an earlier piece (Beckett 1958). I carried out the initial research as a Goldsmiths Company Travelling Scholar. Later visits were funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. I would like to acknowledge a particular debt to Professor Russell Ward who, at the beginning of the project, showed me the manuscript of his Australian Legend (1962). Without it I should have had little understanding of outback history, or the Aborigines' marginal situation in the rural working class. I must also thank Dr Luise Hercus for comments on this piece and for allowing me to use some of her material. Last but not least, I must thank Myles Lalor, whose letters kept me in touch with George Dutton while I was overseas, and who spent many evenings talking over our old friend’s career.
I felt I had been fobbed off, but he came. He explained that he wasn't going to talk in front of the young people because they only made fun of the old ways. He dictated a few myths and then drifted away to a poker school. Rather to my surprise, he didn't ask me for any money or even seem to expect payment. But I had to pursue him to get more. It took some time to convince him that I wanted more than the few folk tales that had proved enough to satisfy the tourists he had met before. Perhaps also it took time for him to marshal the knowledge that had lain so long untapped. I kept off ritual, having found other old men very reticent on the subject. At last one day, when we were drinking in the hotel, I asked him whether he had been 'through the rules', which was the way Aborigines in these parts described initiation. He answered non-committally, as I feared he would. But when we stopped by the lavatory on the way out he showed me that he had been circumcised. He then gave me a detailed account of the young men's initiation, though it was some time before he would discuss the higher rites.

As time went on, the character of our work changed. I was still eager to learn what I could about tribes that had gone undescribed, but I was becoming interested in the man himself and ready to let him take his own course. The culture was dead, but its exponent was alive and accessible. Much of his talk was about the country which he knew both in its mythological associations and as a drover. I had to send for large-scale maps to follow the tracks that the dream-time heroes — the muras — and he had followed. In the arid back country, both Aboriginal and stockman must be able to recognize landmarks which to others seem nondescript, and they travel slowly enough for each feature to make its impression on them. I have heard drovers in bars rehearsing each step of a route, remembering what had happened here and there along the way, as though they were Aborigines 'singing the country'. The country provided the link between George Dutton's life as a stockman in white society and his life as an initiated man in black society. For him at least it seems to have mediated the conflict between the two worlds.

George's country was not Wilcannia but the 'Corner', the arid country to the north-west where the three States meet. He had not been there for some years and we were soon seized with the idea that he should 'show me the country'. He also had the notion that we should find opals at the end of some mura track, since the old people used to say that opal was mura's blood. Unfortunately I had no car. We managed to get a lift as far as Tibooburra the following January, but that was as far as we could go. Even so, the trip was worthwhile. We saw a few of the places that had been no more than names till then. And though many old timers were dead, while others had left in the general drift from the region, there were still a few of George's generation with whom I could hear him reminisce and talk myself. It was not until several years later that the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies provided me with a
land-rover to go up to Cooper's Creek. George was in his eighties by then and frail. I was half-joking when I asked him if he was coming. 'By Jesus Christ, I'm coming!' And he persuaded his youngest son to join us. Despite his enthusiasm, he found the heat and the journey grueling. With his failing sight he could barely recognize the drought-ravaged country he had not seen for forty years. At Innamincka Station there was not one Aboriginal where once there had been hundreds.

After 1958 I was caught up in other work and able to make only brief and infrequent visits to the far west, in 1961, 1964, 1965 and finally, in 1967. One by one the old people died, and each time I left him wondering whether I would see him again; but each time I came back he was there, thinner, coughing more and seeing less, but mentally alert as ever. His friend, Myles Lalor, who had droved through the same country and who took down many of his letters, predicted in 1964 that we wouldn't have the old man with us much longer; later he said, 'He's nearly died a dozen times but he won't give up'. George never lost his zest for the old stories, especially when he was recording them on tape. He was by now a seasoned informant, working with N.W.G. Macintosh, Stephen Wurm and Luise Hercus.1 In 1968 I sent Harry Allen, a prehistorian, to see him, but this time it was too late. He was too ill, though he dictated a short letter: 'Me and Harry can't do much here now. I can't get around to help him along, but I'll send him a word when I get strong...'. He died in November of the same year, the last initiated man in the far west.

I found the same restlessness and love of travel among other Aborigines of George's generation, though none had travelled so widely as he. This does not, of course, support the notorious 'walkabout' myth. They had not grown up as hunter-gatherers, and I doubt whether they were much more peripatetic than white pastoral workers, whom Anthony Trollope had earlier called the 'nomad tribe'.2 Though the white settlers exploited the country in ways unlike their Aboriginal predecessors, they nevertheless reproduced the conditions for nomadism, at least among the proletariat. The prevalence of seasonal and contract work, the need to drive stock across vast distances, the monotony of life on remote stations and the shortage of women, were all conducive to moving on. And the way of life acquired for some at least a certain glamour. There are Australian folk songs that are little more than lists of places where shearers have shorn or drovers have travelled.3 These conditions survive today only in the remotest areas, but they were still active when Dutton was a young man. Aborigines, in addition, had to cope with periodic official harassment, forcing them to move on or take flight.

More than others, Dutton responded to the combined pressures of white and Aboriginal society in his zest for travel. And in his old age it

mattered more to him than it did to others. Once when he was arguing with another man who had misremembered my name, he clinched the matter by saying, 'Dammit, I've travelled with the bloke!'.

When George Dutton was born the traditional order still held; but it was breaking up by the time he reached maturity, and the memory of it died with him. Yet he was not a tribal Aboriginal. His parents' generation had already made the adaptation to pastoral settlement, grafting the institutions that they valued onto station life. They had, in Elkin's words, '... woven station activity and certain European goods into their social and economic organization and into their psychology without upsetting the fundamentals of their social behaviour or belief'.

This adaptation appears differently according to whether it is viewed from the settlers' perspective or that of the Aborigines. Elkin sees the Aborigines as pursuing a strategy of 'Intelligent Parasitism'. The term has unfortunate overtones — doubtless unintended — and the notion credits them with more freedom of choice than they necessarily had. They were indeed able to use European resources to underwrite Aboriginal activities, but only because the arrangement suited the settlers.

In terms of the wider system we have what may be called internal colonialism, a regime that preserves traditional institutions in order to maintain a supply of cheap labour. The pastoral industry, in New South Wales as elsewhere, could not have survived recurrent droughts, recessions and labour shortages without Aboriginal help. Many stations supported permanent communities so as to be assured of a supply of cheap but skilled labour that could be taken on and laid off at will. Aboriginal women, for their part, provided domestic labour and sexual release for the solitary males who made up the white work force. Thus the pastoralists had nothing to gain and something to lose by disrupting their peons' ties to community and country, or teaching them the virtues of monogamy and thrift. Cultural difference obscured and legitimized exploitation; but at the same time it assured Aborigines of an area of autonomy.

When the *modus vivendi* broke down Dutton's people moved into the phase which Elkin has called 'Pauperism'. This refers to an indigence that is as much cultural as economic, a net loss of material and mental things, and a life that is wholly mundane. Also lost are the occasions for self-determination. Until they can reconstruct their identity Aborigines

4 Elkin 1954:324.
5 Elkin 1951.
6 I have applied Wolpe's model of internal colonialism to the northern Australian pearling industry and suggested its applicability to the cattle industry (Beckett 1977). In work as yet unpublished Heather Goodall, a graduate student in history at Sydney University, has shown its value in explaining the situation of New South Wales Aborigines into the 1930s.
7 Elkin 1951.
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are distinguished from other Australians by external factors: the colour bar and the uninvited attentions of welfare and protection agencies.

The transition is poorly documented and little understood. Ultimately the determining factors are to be found in the white sector, and there are many instances of direct suppression of custom, even of language. But sometimes the agents of destruction have been the Aborigines themselves, responding to diffuse and indirect pressures from within the community, as well as from without.8 Often, as in the far west, the decimation and dispersal of Aboriginal population have been crucial.9 But the dispersal must be understood in terms of changes in the rural economy of the far west, which were themselves reproduced in other parts of Australia. I refer to the subdivision of the large pastoral properties and the decline in the proportion of wage labourers to self-employed small-holders. In those parts of northern Australia where population has been neither decimated nor dispersed, and indigenous institutions have not been suppressed, the transition may not take place.

Although many anthropologists have worked among Aborigines at the first stage of integration, few have described them in these terms. Ronald and Catherine Berndt have given some impression of it in the early pages of their South Australian study10 and Mervyn Meggitt has stressed the settlement environment of his Desert People.11 However, W.E.H. Stanner has given it the most direct and vivid treatment in his biography of a Port Keats Aboriginal, Durmugam.12 In the far west of New South Wales the phase had ended at or before 1920 and there was no question of my observing it, but it was the setting for the early years of Dutton and his generation. By the time they were born Europeans had already settled the land, which may explain why none of them could give me a coherent account of local organization. Theirs was a world of sheep stations, wayside hotels and rare, dusty townships, but also of regulated marriage, bush camps and secret rituals.

During these times Aborigines had the freedom and occasion to travel further afield than their forebears. This increased mobility brought into contact tribes that had hitherto been separate. There were more cups from which to drink even if the contents were somewhat adulterated. The white sector likewise offered new experiences and opportunities, as well as restrictions. Some Aborigines made more of their opportunities than others. The half caste was perhaps better able to penetrate the white sector and, in this part of Australia at least, suffered no disabilities in the Aboriginal community.

8 See, for example, Berndt 1962; Stanner 1960.
9 Elkin 1951:170.
10 Berndt and Berndt 1951.
11 Meggitt 1962.
12 Stanner 1960.
Map 1

Distribution of language groups, western New South Wales.
The names and location of the tribes of the far west are a matter of some confusion. Dutton’s own account (Map 1) does not coincide exactly with that obtained by Tindale from field and documentary sources, and there seems to be no way of resolving the differences at this date. However, the general picture is clear enough. The tribes to the east of the Darling were linguistically and culturally homogeneous and may be classified together under the heading of Wiradjeri. They do not concern us here except to note that they differed from the people of the Darling and the country to the north and west, who may be classified as Bagundju. According to Dutton, Bandjigali, Danggali, Bulali, Wiljali, Wiljagali, Wainjubalgu, Barundji and Bagundji proper all spoke variants of the one language. They also employed the same kinship terminology which Elkin recorded under the name Wiljakali.

The people of the ‘Corner’ — Maliangaba, Wadigali, Gungadidji and Wonggumara, differed again. They are mentioned only in passing by earlier writers and Maliangaba is the only group about which I could obtain much information. Though their languages were not like Bagundji, their kinship terminology and social organization were similar. But like the peoples of south-western Queensland and north-eastern South Australia, they practised circumcision and a form of the wiljaru rite. Elkin has classified them with these northern and western neighbours as part of the Lakes Group, but since some of the northern members of the Bagundji group also practised a variant of the wiljaru without cicatrizations (jama — i.e. ‘clean’ — wiljaru) one should be wary of setting up boundaries. Mythical mura tracks run from the Paroo to Lake Frome in South Australia, and from White Cliffs to Bulloo Downs in Queensland. Aborigines around Tibooburra travelled over into South Australia as far as Parachilna for red ochre and exchanged grinding stones with people on the Cooper. Dutton and other informants made little mention of contacts with the Darling River people, but this may have been due to the disrupting and decimating effects of white contact upon the latter, already advanced by the time they were born.

Hardy has documented the settlement of the far west in detail. Europeans began to establish pastoral runs along the Darling early in the 1860s. By the end of the decade the banks of the river had been taken up and newcomers were pressing into the arid areas to the north and west. By 1880 almost all the country to the State borders had been carved up into vast pastoral properties. Wilcannia was a flourishing town of substantial stone buildings, its prosperity based on its situation as a port for the river traffic which linked the region with the coastal cities.

13 Capell 1956:42.
14 Elkin 1939:43.
15 Beckett 1968.
16 Elkin 1931:53.
17 Hardy 1969.
But the backcountry stations were so far from such centres that they were obliged to be self-supporting for long periods. Stations that had become established and prosperous employed scores of workers, maintaining their own workshops, smithies and store. C.E.W. Bean, who explored the region before the first World War, described such stations as more like villages.18

During the 1880s, discoveries of gold in the Tibooburra area and of opals at White Cliffs created a brief mining boom bringing hundreds of prospectors, Chinese as well as European, into the area. The boom was short lived and towns such as Tibooburra, Milparinka and White Cliffs soon dwindled into tiny centres, serving the vast pastoral hinterland. Only Broken Hill proved to have the deposits to support a large scale permanent mining industry. With its more or less static population of around thirty thousand it has been the region’s only city, though one which has offered few openings to Aborigines.

Here as elsewhere, settlement resulted in some violent clashes between white and black. Dutton had heard of several (see below p. 25) and Hardy has found documentation for many more.19 The settlers did not go out of their way to publicize such things, but Bean’s account of events along the Darling is indicative: ‘It did not matter who was shot. Every blackfellow that was killed was considered a pest. He would get you as soon as he possibly could ... The law at this time could hang a man for killing a blackfellow. But there was nobody to enforce the law if the squatters did not take it into their own hands’.20

In the long run white settlement was incompatible with the Aborigines’ hunting and gathering economy. Intensive grazing, interference with water supplies, and the shooting of game undermined the old mode of existence. But the Aborigines had become dependent upon European goods before they lost their access to wild foods. Their eagerness for such things as flour, tea, tobacco and sugar was as intense here as elsewhere, and as potent a source of friction as the conflict over land. In other parts of Australia the economy had no place for Aborigines, but the pastoral industry of the far west could make use of them. By December 1882 the newly-appointed Protector of the Aborigines could report that ‘The males are employed by the squatters in the district, bringing in the horses and general knockabout work for which they receive food, clothes and tobacco’.21 Aborigines camped near the homesteads, providing a pool of cheap labour which could be tapped as the need arose, and expert knowledge of the country. Aboriginal women worked in the homestead kitchens and became the concubines and casual sexual partners of white men. An old white stockman told me

18 Bean 1945:73-76.
20 Bean 1911:259-261.
21 Protector of the Aborigines 1883.
that 'All the jackaroos had two or three gins in those days, and if you looked cross-eyed at them you were sacked on the spot'. One can scarcely assess the extent of miscegenation at this date. Half castes were a sizeable minority in the Aboriginal population by 1915 (see Appendix 1). Persons with some European ancestry outnumber 'fullbloods' by approximately ten to one in the present population, but often both parents are of mixed descent, and miscegenation seems to have occurred less frequently over the last twenty-five years.

It seems unlikely that the 'station blacks' would have commanded much status or respect in the eyes of white people, but from their ranks there emerged a new generation — mainly half caste — who were not tied to the one station, but formed part of the region's itinerant proletariat. They had been reared by their black mothers and ignored by their white fathers; in most cases they had been initiated, but they had acquired the manners and style of the white stockman. This is not to suggest that they became indistinguishable from their white workmates or that they were accepted on terms of equality. It seems unlikely that they could escape the pervasive Australian prejudice against 'mongrelization', but it may be that with enough 'cheek' they could achieve acceptance in the egalitarian setting of the roadside hotel and the stockman's camp. In Tom Collins' *Such is Life*, a novel set in the western New South Wales of the 1880s, the half caste is a sturdy fellow, as capable as any of treating his employer with cool insolence. Neither employers nor workers confined Aborigines to any particular class of occupation. In 1911, Bean wrote:

... the Australian worker of his own accord regularly recognizes his obligation to the blacks, drawing a firm distinction between him and other dark-skinned people. Shearers who will not work beside a Hindoo or American negro, will work readily with an Australian black or a New Zealand Maori.

The New South Wales *Rural Workers Accommodation Act* of 1926, section 16 (I)(g), required separate accommodation for Asiatics and Pacific Islanders, but not for Aborigines. The old practice of serving Aborigines their meals 'on the woodheap' instead of in the men's huts had gone by the time Dutton began working, though it persisted up in Queensland.

By the 1880s, white population had increased and black population had declined to the point where Aborigines were no longer a numerical threat. There is no way of estimating the Aboriginal population before

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24 Collins 1944:10.
25 Bean 1911:264; also Ward 1962:122.
26 Myles Lalor tells me that at least one station persisted with the 'woodheap' practice into the 1950s.
contact, but the first police enumeration for the Protector in 1882 reported a mere 561, including twenty-eight half castes, from the Darling to the Queensland and South Australian borders (see Appendix 1). Even allowing for some omissions, notably in the Paroo area, the figure could scarcely have exceeded seven hundred, which was less than the population of Wilcannia alone. It seems safe to conclude that bullets and disease had already accounted for many, and the decline continued as Appendix 1 shows. But for the moment the survivors were still able to hold ceremonies and marry according to the old rules. It was into this world that George Dutton was born.

Dutton was born on Yancannia Station some time during the 1880s. Yancannia, situated about fifty miles north of White Cliffs, was one of the first stations to be established in this part of the country. Aborigines had attacked it a number of times in earlier years but now all was quiet. His father, after whom he was named, was a white stockman, his mother Aboriginal.

I don’t know much about my father. I just seen him. They reckoned he was a good feller. He left me money, but I never got it. People wanted me to fight for it, but I never bothered. He was run over by a dray up in Queensland. My stepfather was living with my mother all the time. He reared me. Him and my father used to work together, they were great mates. Of course, a lot used to sell their women. My mother died when I was about seven. My old step-father and I, we travelled up into Queensland, two or three times to Cobham Lake, down this way [i.e. Wilcannia], through Wonominta. We travelled for the pleasure of it. The Gaiters [a white family] wanted me to go to school in Tibooburra. I was about ten then. My old father would have left me behind, but I didn’t like it and cleared off after a week. This was all the education Dutton ever had. Looking back, he considered this action decisive: ‘I might have been doing all right for myself now, but I’d never have known about the dark people’s stories’.

This was his education during the next few years as he travelled about the country with his step-father who taught him all he knew. The old man was a Maliangaba. George’s mother had been a Wonggumara, but he himself was Bandjigali, because he was born in Bandjigali country. Tribal boundaries did not restrict their travels ‘for pleasure’, but Tibooburra, Milparinka and Yancannia were the main centres. The station was his father’s place of work and the two townships were in his father’s tribal country. It was here, when he was about sixteen, that he went through the milia circumcision ceremony.

They were chasing me for a year before they got me. I was keeping away from them, working down at Connulpie. Someone came and said:

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27 Hardy 1969:141.
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"Your father wants to see you. He's in Milparinka". When I came there they were holding a big meeting in a barn. I ran outside. "Don't try those bloody capers on me", I said. They told me not to worry. My father said, "Let's go down to Mt Brown". We set off, but there was a big mob following behind us. "What's happening?", I said. "They're going to put me through". "No", he said, "Don't worry, it isn't for you. You'll be dalara, you'll have to go back to Yancannia for that".28 We camped and the other mob came up and joined us. The next morning they started a game of gudjara [played with throwing sticks] and every now and then someone would make a grab at me, but I was too bloody quick. "Don't try these capers on me", I said. There was another young feller, about sixteen, they were going to put through with me. I said to him, "Let's get away". We sneaked off early the next morning, but they followed us. "Where are you going?", they said. "Rabbiting", we said — of course we weren't. "You better come back, your father's sick", they said. We came back. My father was lying down and the doctor, the old clever man, was sucking things out of him. It was only a trick, he wasn't sick really. "I'd like you to go through while I'm alive", he said. Then my malandji [a male cross cousin who serves as the guardian during the ceremony] said, "You ought to go through the rules. I've been through". So I agreed. But they kept us there two months till a mob came down from Queensland.

I have published Dutton's account of the milia elsewhere29 and I shall not repeat it here. As he described it, it was a solemn affair but revealed no mysteries. There was no attempt to terrorize the neophytes and the operation was painless.

When the two boys were released from their seclusion and had gone through the final rites, they set off for Queensland with some Wonggu-marra and Gungadidji friends. Years later the old man showed me the spot where they had been surprised by a station owner, eating one of his sheep.

I travelled from Cobham Lake right up through Milparinka, Tiboolburra, Nerialco. We stopped off at the stations on the way. We were going up to Conbar where they were going to put a Bundamara boy through. It was like showing you how to circumcise so you can get your own back. They compel you to go. When we got up there they had him caught and everything. That night they had the singsong. They speeded things up. We sang the milia all night and put the feller through. We came home then, stopping round Nockatunga for a few

28 Dutton's stepfather meant that he would be put through the Bandjigali initiation which, like that of the Darling River Aborigines, involved tooth avulsion and hair depilation. Dutton subsequently participated in these rites as an initiated man and recorded the songs for me.

29 Beckett 1968.
weeks.\textsuperscript{30} They had a big corroboree there. Then my mate got a job there. They asked me to take two hundred head of goats from Nockatunga to Windorah... .

In these last few sentences we have foreshadowed the pattern of George Dutton’s career for the next twenty-five years. He went through the milia around the turn of the century and from then until the 1920s he roamed far and wide, droving and participating in the ceremonies of the various tribes he encountered. Early in our acquaintance he insisted on my taking down a list of the places he had gone, the names of his employers and the work he had done. He dictated without a pause and had evidently worked it all out at some time. His account is interesting to follow with the assistance of Map 2.

I was working on Cobham Lake one time. I started from Cobham Lake in 1902 and went right off to Windorah. I got a job off Mr Hackett to go to Balkarara Station.\textsuperscript{31} We picked up a thousand head of bullock there and took ‘em off to the Bluff [near Birdsville]. Then I left Mr Hackett. I took a job at Haddon with Mr Frew but he sold the place so I had to shift over to Arrabury Station and worked there with Mr Lindsay for twelve months, breaking in horses. I went to Farina with a mob of horses, with McLean the drover. I left him and went with Jim Sidi the Afghan, carting copper from Nunamudner\textsuperscript{31} mine with twenty-five head of camels. After I was finished there I came back to Nockadoo\textsuperscript{31} Station. I worked there twelve months. Then I left there and went over to Durham Downs Station, to put the horse paddock up. After I’d finished there I went to Orient Station to work for Mr Eastern. I left there and I came back to a place they call Neralco Station to work with Mr A.C. McDonald as a stockman. After I was finished there I took a team of bullock on, working for the same station. Then I went down with fifty head of horses to Meningie in South Australia, other side of Adelaide. I left A.C. McDonald down there. I worked for the Council there for about three months. Then Mr McDonald wanted me to come back to Grasmere Station [N.S.W.]. I caught the boat at Meningie and came across to Adelaide. I caught the train there to go up to Broken Hill and took the mail to Carungoo Tank where the boss met me. I handled fifty head of horses for the sale and twenty head of riding hacks. I went to Neralco Station and took five hundred head of cattle from there to Maree with a feller called Billy Hillston. I stayed at Finniss Springs for about eleven months. Then I got a job with eight hundred bullocks from Crown Point [N.T.]. We brought them to Yandama Station [N.S.W.]. Then we picked up a mob there to take to Cockburn and we came

\textsuperscript{30} Nockatunga Station seems to have had the largest concentration of Aborigines in southwestern Queensland at that time.

\textsuperscript{31} I have been unable to locate these places on the map and it is possible that my spelling is incorrect.
Map 2

George Dutton's country.
back to Yandama Station. I done five mile of fencing with another dark chap. I went from there to Mount Pool Station. I done six mile of fencing there with another dark bloke, friend of mine. Then I went to Eurithinna scrub cutting. Then I went up to Bransbury Station. I got a job off the owner, Mr Charlie Austin. We had two bullock teams, me and a feller named Ted Baldwin, and we came across to Yandama Station. We picked up eleven ton of wool there and took it to Broken Hill. When we were finished we went across to Langawira Station in New South Wales and picked up eleven ton of wool there and took it to Broken Hill. Mr Austin sold the teams in Broken Hill and took me across to Olary Down in South Australia, to pick up sixty head of poor cattle. I took them out for Mr Austin to Mootwingie Station — Mr McFadden owned it. From there I went to Polamacca Station. I stopped there two days, then carried my swag up to Tibooburra. I got a job on Yancannia Station. Then I went from there with a fellow named Tom Larkin to Lake Elder [S.A.] with two thousand sheep. I left there and I went back to Tibooburra and stayed there prospecting for gold. It was 1914 and I enlisted there to go to the war — me and a dark fellow named Albert Hebsworth. We couldn’t pass so we went back to Nerialco and got a job there again with Mr McDonald. We both stopped there for twelve months. Then we parted and I went down to Finniss Springs. I did some dogging down there for about twelve months...

For some reason, related perhaps to his marriage, he did not leave New South Wales after 1925, working still as a drover but mostly within a 150 mile radius of Wilcannia, which presently became his home. Apart from his one visit to the coast at Adelaide, George Dutton’s country could be roughly bounded by the Flinders Range in the west, the Channel Country in the north, and the Paroo in the east, with the southern boundary running through Wilcannia and Broken Hill. This is all more or less desert country in which the oases are rare stations and even rarer towns, like Birdsville, Farina, Maree and Windorah. Broken Hill is the metropolis, but for stockmen a place of transit. Many of the stations named were Kidman property at some time, though Dutton never encountered him. For much of the time he was working the droving routes, sometimes called the ‘Y’, which linked the relatively lush but isolated Channel Country with the rail heads at Maree and Broken Hill.

It would seem that Dutton had no lack of employers, and his white contemporaries remembered him as a ‘smart man’, which is to say,

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32 It seems that the Australian Army rejected Aboriginal volunteers during the early years of the first World War, though they accepted at least a few part-Aborigines later on. There is a story among older Aborigines that the army adopted this policy after the Kaiser had sneered at them for using black troops.

skilled in his handling of horses and stock. He was 'flash' too, with his clothes made to measure for him in Broken Hill and long necked spurs. He worked with Aborigines, Afghans and whites. A.C. McDonald gave him a state school boy to 'train up' for a while. He claimed to have had a short spell as a head stockman somewhere, and when a white worker refused to take orders from him the boss backed him up. He addressed the station owners as 'Mister', but this seems to have been the general practice at that time\textsuperscript{34} and it didn't stop him from answering them back:

A.C. McDonald was a good old fellow, but I had a barney with him once. I'd just unyoked the bullocks for the night when he came and asked me why I was camping there. "I'm the bullock driver", I said. "Don't give me any of that talk", he said. I told him to go and get fucked and left him the next day, but we made it up later. He left Albert Hebsworth and me two blood horses, but we missed out, someone burned the letter.

It does not seem that Dutton made any lasting friendships among his white work mates. But during the years that I knew him, I never saw him more at ease than when he was among his old droving associates. Late in the evening when he had become a little drunk, he prefaced a contradictory remark with, 'Well, I'm only a poor old blackfeller, but...', to be reassured with, 'You're white enough for us, George'. But there were whites who would 'call your colour' in the hope of starting a fight. George recalled several such incidents, though he said he had never been directly involved. He said that on some Queensland stations they tried to give him his meals 'on the woodheap' with the local blacks: 'I told them if I wasn't good enough to eat inside I wasn't good enough to work on the place'. Initially he told me that he had gained his point, but years later implied that he had walked out.

Dutton's travels, though usually prompted and directed by his participation in the pastoral industry, had a dual character. The routes he followed as a drover were often those travelled by the \textit{murra}s, who had created the waterholes at which he watered his stock. The stations where he worked often had Aboriginal camps where he heard new languages and saw new ceremonies. 'I saw corroborees at Innamincka, Durham Downs, Cobham Lake. I started learning then. Only after I came back I started to learn our own stories'. In 1965 Luise Hercus met a Point McLeay man who remembered George Dutton, and said that he was a 'special mate' of Albert Karloa. Ronald and Catherine Berndt later used Albert Karloan as their principal informant, writing down the same myth\textsuperscript{34} that Dutton had heard years before and remembered ever after.\textsuperscript{35} But it was his time in the northern Flinders Ranges that seems to have been the high point of his career:

\textsuperscript{34} Berndt and Berndt 1964:203.
\textsuperscript{35} Hercus 1970.
When I went down to New Well [on Stuart's Creek Station, near Finnis Springs] among the Arabanna mob, they asked me if I was a *wiljaru*. "No", I said. "Have you been through the first rule?" "Yes". I told them my father and all my people were *wiljarus* and I had to go through then. They offered me a wife, wanted me to marry bad, but I didn't want to. I didn't want to marry from a strange country. Too far away. Too far for me to take her back to her own country to see her relations.

Although he used to say, 'Where I put my hat down, that's home', Dutton, like most of the Aborigines I know, could not consider living away from his own people permanently. Perhaps, also, he felt uneasy among strange tribes. He told me grim tales of *kadaitcha* men in these parts and claimed to have seen a man killed for revealing *wiljaru* secrets. He was amazed and disgusted to see Arabanna eating fat cut from the chest of a corpse, as part of a funerary rite. And when I asked him about subincision he just laughed and said, 'Bugger that game!' But he stayed long enough to master the language and to learn several of the song cycles, which he could remember more than half a century later.

When he was back amongst his own people he found he was a senior man. 'Two or three of my mob saw me lying down with the marks on my back. "He's a *wiljaru*!" They were pleased then and asked me to come out with them. Then they started singing the song in our way and I started singing the way I was taught'. This was about 1905, when ceremonial activity was drawing to an end in New South Wales with the decline and dispersal of population. The survivors, whether they had been through the *milia* or *dalara*, whether they were *wiljarus* or *jama wiljarus*, joined together. Which form they followed depended on who was running it. Whether as an innovation or by tradition, if a boy from one tribe was put through the rule of another tribe, the latter must reciprocate at a later date. Dutton thought that the last *dalara* ceremony had occurred about 1902 and the last *milia* in New South Wales around 1914. But there were still new ceremonies to see up in Queensland and over in South Australia, and he pursued them long after his other countrymen had given up. Speaking of one he remarked:

Yes, well, poor old bugger, he didn't know anything. He was my countryman too, you know, but he knew bloody nothing, though he was a *jama*. Now look, I'm the only man in New South Wales — and old Hebsworth that died up there in Bourke — we're two bloody half castes, but we been through more bloody *muras* than any other man. We went through the *milia*, through the *waradjeri* with the Jandruwanda mob; then he went through the *maragandi* — that was up on Bulloo Downs — and I went through the *wiljaru*. He beat me by one, and I beat him by one. It's like that song, "I've been everywhere..."."
Dutton saw his last ceremony, the dulbiri mura\(^{36}\) at Yandama Station in 1925. By 1930 he was the only surviving ritual leader in New South Wales. About this time the Queensland Government removed the Nockatunga Aborigines to a settlement further east, thus depriving the region of one of its main centres. Everywhere the numbers were declining. He knew that somewhere to the west the life was still going, but too far from home where he now had a wife and children. He was married twice:

The first one I was just living with her. I met her at Nerialco. She was a fullblood, had three kids. I went with her about ten years. Reared the three boys — there’s one living now up in Queensland. I came down to Gnalta to see my auntie [his mother’s sister] : I always had to look after her and give her money. When I got back she had a kid. I said, “Fuck it, the father can have her”. The grandmother was mad after me so I said all right. The man came back, but he said it was all right, he’d had enough. I went up to Nockatunga with this woman. Then I started taking cattle down to Maree. When I came back me and her had an argument — she was a terrible jealous woman, didn’t even want me to talk to other men. So I left her and went off to Maree. She took another bloke then. My second wife was a half caste girl, born on Yandama Station. I’d just come back from South Australia in 1925 to see her father — I knew him, he’d come from Yancannia. Her father and uncle wanted me to marry her. She was booked up for me. I didn’t want to, but the old feller said, “You better stop with us and help us out”.

He stayed with this wife, having three sons and three daughters.

When George Dutton married for the second time the country was different from what it had been in his youth. Both the Aboriginal life and the pastoral economy had changed. The most dramatic change was the disappearance of the Aboriginal population. The decline between the first New South Wales police enumeration of 1882 and the last of 1915 (Appendix 1) is dramatic and, if anything, understates its extent. Dutton knew it well enough: ‘At Polamacca in 1901 there was a big mob of blackfellers, two hundred men without the women and kids. When I went back in 1910 there were only two boys left and graves all round’. The ‘Spanish Flu’ epidemic of 1919 accounted for more lives. When we looked about the old Tibooburra camping ground, now occupied by one old couple, he recalled the two hundred who had lived there in his youth. When old Frank Miller, a Wonggumara, sang a mura, George wept to hear the names of so many who were dead.\(^{37}\) But the final dispersal was effected not by natural causes, but by white people.

\(^{36}\) Beckett 1968:458.

\(^{37}\) Personal names were taken from those of sites along a mura track. A name thus brought to mind a place, a mythical event and a human being, living or remembered.
The sub-division of pastoral properties, already begun before the Great War, intensified after it in the soldier settlement programme. The small, family-sized blocks needed few if any permanent workers, and with the hazards of drought and fluctuating prices had neither the need nor the means to support an Aboriginal camp. Yandama Station supported a small community into the 1930s, but in the west, as elsewhere, the ‘station blacks’ were becoming fringe dwellers or clients of the Aborigines Protection Board. Hitherto the Board had left the Aborigines of the far west to the care of the station owners and the police, but it now began to extend the policy of bringing them onto settlements. As the depression set in, Aborigines who had supported themselves all their lives had to go onto the settlements because the agencies distributing unemployment relief considered them the Board’s responsibility.

Economic hardships also brought about a deterioration in relations between white and black. In Tibooburra, where the two were about equal in number, tension became apparent in late 1934. A Mr Allan Angell wrote to the local M.L.A. asking whether it was compulsory to admit Aborigines to a registered hall, and to admit Aboriginal children to public school where they would be ‘intermixed in classes of white children’. The enquiry was referred to the Department of Education and the Aborigines Protection Board. The Department replied that Aboriginal children were required to attend school, but added that ‘Their attendance at public school with white children is allowed by the department unless objection to their presence is lodged by the parents of the white children’.

Early in 1935 Mrs J. Angell submitted a petition, with seventeen other signatures, requesting the removal of Aboriginal children on the ground that they were physically unfit to sit with white children in a small classroom, being subject to many diseases that whites did not have. In May the minister approved the removal of all children of Aboriginal descent. But evidently Mr Angell had not intended that Aboriginal children of white appearance, from decent and respectable homes, should be excluded. Several part-Aborigines who had been among the signatories were dismayed to find their children shut out along with the rest. A meeting of parents then requested the minister

38 Hausfeld 1963.
40 The correspondence is to be found in the Tibooburra Public School File in the archives of the N.S.W. Department of Education. I am indebted to Mr Jim Fletcher for bringing these to my attention. Mr Angell’s letter was dated 19/12/1934. For a less informed account of the affair see Hardy 1976:219-221.
41 Tibooburra File, item dated 6/2/1935.
42 Ibid. 16/3/35.
43 Ibid. 3/5/1935.
44 Ibid. 28/5/1935.
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to readmit all children until the Protection Board could provide alternative facilities.\textsuperscript{45}

The Protection Board took no action until 1937, when Mrs Angell submitted a second petition, with nine other signatories, requesting either separate facilities for Aborigines or their removal to the Menindie settlement.\textsuperscript{46} In April 1938 the Board responded to this clamour by sending a truck and forcibly removing the Tibooburra Aborigines three hundred miles east to the Brewarrina government settlement.\textsuperscript{47} Dutton and his family were among those deported. His account of the place tallies closely with that of its longterm resident, Jimmy Barker.\textsuperscript{48} The labour market was already saturated and employers preferred the workers they knew to strangers, who consequently had to live on the meagre Board rations. To a man like Dutton the situation was intolerable: ‘I told the manager, “This is no good to me”. “You can’t go”, he said. “I’m going to”, I said, and we loaded up the turn-out straight away’. When he saw Tibooburra again George sought out the man who had led the agitation to have the Aborigines removed. ‘I called him out of the pub. “You’re the bloody bastard that had all the people turned out of their homes”, I said. But he said he didn’t have nothing to do with it’.

The Duttons were not the only ones to leave the settlements. Once economic conditions improved, many of those who had earlier lived independently moved off, if only because so great a concentration of Aborigines in one place ensured a high level of unemployment. However, Wilcannia now became the focus, both for the Darling River people who had been on the Menindie settlement, and for the people from the Paroo and the ‘Corner’ who had been on the Brewarrina settlement. Few returned to Tibooburra or the other townships of the ‘Corner’, which were all sadly reduced in population.

Wilcannia itself had fallen below one third of its three thousand peak. With the laying of the Sydney — Broken Hill railway through Menindie and the termination of the river traffic, it dwindled into a small service centre for the surrounding stations. Its own Aborigines had vanished long before, but it now, within a few years, found itself with an immigrant population of some two hundred, no longer on the decline but increasing rapidly. The government, having failed to draw the Aborigines to its new model settlement near Lake Cargellico, built a number of cottages, but sited them across the river at the insistence of the white population. The Aborigines soon tired of the black soil that turned to mud as soon as it rained and the periodic floods which cut them off from

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. 31/5/1935.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., item undated.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. 29/4/1938. The Tibooburra deportation was not an isolated case. The Pooncaira Aborigines were deported to the Menindie settlement about the same time and under similar circumstances (Pooncaira Public School File, Department of Education).
\textsuperscript{48} Mathews 1976:154-160,212-216.
supplies. Many preferred to squat on the drier ground of the town's outskirts, even if it meant living in scrap iron humpies and doing without a water supply or sanitary service. It was here that I found Dutton in 1957.

Wilcannia at that time still depended on the pastoral industry, and most of the inhabitants were directly engaged in it. No one was obviously wealthy; the majority were working class. The main division in town followed racial lines. The Aborigines were pastoral workers too, mostly unskilled and in such casual contract work as fencing and mustering. A few were drovers, but motor transportation had deprived the drovers of much of their work in this part of the country. Although young Aborigines affected the dress of the mounted stockman, few had much to do with horses. The land rover had replaced the horse, and there was no scope for 'smart' horsemen. I found it hard to assess work opportunities. What was clear was that many Aborigines, particularly adolescents, were not working for a considerable amount of the time. During the late 1960s, when the far west was gripped by drought and the adolescent population had increased, there was no doubt about the lack of work. Subsequently unemployment has exceeded 70 per cent.

Black and white bought their food at the same stores. Their children attended the same schools. The Greek cafe was open to everyone. But Aborigines always sat down the front in the cinema. There was a separate lavatory for Aboriginal children in the State school and there was segregation in the hospital. A few young Aborigines played in the football team, but they could not join the team for a beer after the match because the law then forbade the supply of liquor to Aborigines. It was effective to the extent that it kept them out of the bars, but it did not prevent the back-door supply of cheap wine in large quantities. The police were never able to catch the suppliers, but they kept busy rounding up Aborigines for being drunk or in possession of liquor. I have described elsewhere the endless running battle between Aborigines who were determined to drink and the law whose reprisals set off renewed defiance. It was a part of a general pattern of police harassment. The police in addition to their normal duties had to act on behalf of the Aborigines Welfare Board, issuing rations to the indigent, reporting on cases of child neglect, enforcing school attendance, dunning defaulting husbands and fathers for maintenance, pursuing vagrants and so on. I could not see the police records, but there was no question that the Aborigines were their most regular customers. As often happens, constant interaction had produced a sardonic familiarity between the two, but it was the kind of familiarity which allowed the police to enter Aboriginal homes unceremoniously or sit with their truck headlights shining on a group talking, for as long as they cared.

49 Beckett 1964.
From 1943 it was possible for Aborigines to obtain a Certificate of Exemption from the disabilities normally imposed on them by the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Act. The Certificate was commonly known as a ‘dog licence’, but a number of men and women had obtained one. Most of them, like Dutton, were old people who could not otherwise become eligible for a Commonwealth age pension. Since it was winter, we spent quite a lot of our time yarning round the fire in the hotel bar. The townspeople were not particularly friendly, but there was a motley collection of transients who would sometimes join the circle.

Later the government repealed the liquor prohibition in the Act, but the situation did not change much. As George said in one of his letters, ‘It’s open slather in the bar for the dark people and they are no better off as there seems to be more in gaol now than before’. After several riotous months the hotels established their own colour bar and George wrote: ‘The pubs are closed on us again but we can buy as much wine and beer by the gallon and dozen at the store. It makes one think doesn’t it’. In the end only one hotel served Aborigines and the publican issued and revoked his own exemption certificates. For the few who had once been assured of their rights the situation had deteriorated. George, thinner, bearded and ragged, may have seemed less presentable than in earlier years. He told me with bitterness how the owner of one of the other hotels had refused even to allow him to warm himself at the fire.

Had life continued as it was when he was young, Dutton would have been a man of some standing. Among his own people he would have been a senior man and a ritual leader. Among whites he would have been an ‘old timer’, or what is known in Australian country towns as ‘an old identity’. In the event he was neither. He had tried to set himself up as ‘King of the Darling’, but such honorifics — hollow at the best of times — meant nothing to the younger generation, white or black. The Aborigines knew he could speak a lot of languages, but even if they could understand some of the languages themselves they were more embarrassed than pleased to hear them spoken in public. His stories of strange tribes and customs had no appeal. He tried to teach his sons, and one young man he had taken droving complained that George had kept him awake

At that time Aborigines (as defined by the Aborigines Protection Act 1909-1943) could not legally purchase or possess alcohol, and under a 1936 amendment the Board had acquired power to remove campers to a reserve or managed station. The Aborigines’ Welfare Board’s 1952 Annual Report noted that Aborigines living off reserves were now eligible for Commonwealth unemployment and sickness benefits and age, invalid and widow’s pensions, but these rights were not extended to reserve and station residents for some years. Exemption from the provisions of the Act, a policy change stemming from the adoption of an assimilation goal in 1940, was granted on an individual basis, ostensibly as a recognition of attainment of a suitable manner of life, but certificates could be withdrawn by the Board. In the far west exemptions were often granted to avoid the inconvenience of supplying Board rations to individuals dispersed in towns.
all night with his stories, but he could make no impression on them. Children fell into uncontrollable giggles when he sang the old songs. I would have expected him to take consolation among the few survivors of his own generation, but he did not. He dismissed them, sometimes unjustly, as know-nothings. He resented any time I spent with them and would ask, sardonically, whether I had picked up anything good. Often, too, he would dismiss them as myalls — timorous, unsophisticated black-fellers, unable to stand up to white people. Possibly, having at last found white people who would actively seek him out and provide an appreciative audience, he feared rivals. He relished the status of expert, frequently rounding off a recording with a remark like, ‘Now if there’s anyone who knows more stories than me, he’s a good man’.

Many Aborigines have the notion that anthropologists exploit their old people, extracting their lore for a few packets of tobacco and selling it to the newspapers for large sums. The notion is exaggerated, if it is not quite false. I gave George something when I could, more by way of a gift than as payment. He never asked for money except once when he was in trouble, and somehow a gift seemed a more appropriate expression of appreciation for his ‘helping’ me. Yet there were times when I wondered whether I was exploiting our friendship. I was reassured when, fairly late in our acquaintance, he told me how a white man, seeing us in the bar together, had suggested he was taking me for a few quid by spinning tall stories. ‘You know’, he said, ‘they don’t understand what we’re doing’. He had a mission to get his knowledge recorded. When he was dictating something he considered important, the sense of urgency and authority was unmistakable.

What Dutton considered important were certain rituals and myths. They were always connected in some way with the country. He had no interest in yarns about rainbow serpents and hairy men which the other old people told. There was no strain of speculation or mysticism. His delivery was matter-of-fact and his approach dogmatic. (An example of Dutton’s narrative style appears in Appendix 2). All the same, he did not lack feeling for sacred places. He adamantly refused to camp overnight at Mootwingie and prevented his son and me from finding the rock engravings there. Discussing his nominal conversion to Catholicism, Dutton said he ‘squared it’ with certain myths, but he attempted no syncretism. He was unimpressed by the attempts of his cousin, Walter Newton, to integrate the whole corpus of myths and restate them in terms of a battle between good and evil.51 Of Catholic beliefs he remarked: ‘Of course, a man can’t be sure; it’s only what you hear’. In one letter he wrote to tell me of the rumour that the people of another settlement had ‘turned

51 See Beckett 1958. Newton’s was one of the few attempts I have seen at syncretism. However, it does not get very far before encountering the problem of the geographical particularism of Aboriginal myth, and its absence in Christian myth.
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Christians':

There is one bloke got bit by a snake down there. Well the first thing he done was pull out his Bible and started to read. At that the snake started to cough and the bite did not affect the man. Then there was an old lady looking after a child and didn’t have any milk to give the child so she looked around and there upon the table stood a tin of milk... . Well old pal, if they don’t hit the Lunatic Asylum shortly I don’t know nothing. I don’t think the God done anything for me.

He seemed to have no such scepticism about ‘the dark people’s stories’.

Whatever the old ways meant to him, Dutton clearly had an acute sense of cultural deprivation in the modern setting. Around 1927, when the old order was dying, he had been baptised into the Roman Catholic church, perhaps as a substitute. ‘I like their way. Hymns were like the mura and the guluwiru was like God. I squared it up with the story of Crow and Eaglehawk...’.52 Despite his scepticism, he liked attending Mass. But he never went near the church in Wilcannia. He objected to the way the priest ‘wanted to boss the dark people around’. Referring to the priest’s attempt to check drunkenness, he tartly remarked that the man drank himself. In search of cultural variety he turned to the ‘Ghans’ and Chinese and, as they disappeared, the Greeks. He had found his way to the Greek Club in Broken Hill and loved to hear strange languages and customs discussed. But in Wilcannia he found life empty and featureless. His own people lived without order or meaning. Discussing the old ways, one night, he said:

The dark people take no interest in it, don’t want to learn. And a lot of the dark people round this part of the country, Jerry, between you and I, they don’t know what they are. They don’t know whether they’re gilbara or magwara [the moieties], you understand what I mean? That’s how they come to marry into one another, but they don’t know. All they know is how to read a comic. [At this point his son interjected, “Can you read a comic?”, but the old man brushed aside this jibe.] And furthermore, they don’t know anything about it, they can’t tell you. They go down to the picture show and have a look at the picture. Tomorrow you ask them what did they see? They couldn’t tell you the story, what it was or anything, nothing.

One of his contemporaries had put it even more succinctly: ‘They know nothing and they don’t talk about anything’.

The reader may find a certain irony in an Aboriginal turning to white people to preserve the culture which his own people were rejecting. He knew well enough what the early settlers had done and the effects of white contact. Discussing a massacre near Wilcannia, he said: ‘... those poor fellers didn’t know anything. They fired into ‘em. They tried to get away but they couldn’t. Just for nothing. Raped the bloody women,
one thing and another, rode 'em and shot 'em as well. All for nothing'. He had heard of similar shootings round Tibooburra and Cobham Lake. I asked him if the settlers had used poisoned flour. 'Oh yes, round Coongee Lake, there's bloody thousands died there. Paddy-paddy water hole... . There might have been a bit of bloody spearing, and they had to defend their bloody selves, but no need for 'em to go on that far. They only had to shoot one or two and scare 'em. But they shot the whole bloody camp'.

In these last few sentences is evidence of the accommodation which had already set in when Dutton was born, not a sullen accommodation to superior force, but a recognition that the settlers 'had to defend themselves...'. At another time he remarked:

'It's not so bad that the whitefeller came, but it spoiled the people. It made 'em ashamed to talk their own lingo, and marry wrong. They don't learn from the old people; can't talk their own lingo. Some of them can't even ask for a bit of bread or meat. They were better off in the old days, camped on their own, working on stations. They always had a bit of money. They knew who their aunties and cousins were. Now they got educated they think they're better than other people. They're always telling lies.

Even in this, he laid part of the blame on his own people: 'There was too much boning and poisoning'. And explaining the disappearance of clever men, he said 'The grog settled it'. Dutton, then, was not harking back to some golden age of tribalism which he never experienced, but to the time of the big pastoral holdings, a period of accommodation to white settlement in which his people still retained their own social order and cultural resources. Now the Aborigines had abandoned their identity only to find themselves in the position of delinquents and outcasts in Australian society. In 1914, when he volunteered for the army, there seemed to be a place for men like himself. In 1957 he said: 'These darkies have got no right to go fighting for the whites that stole their country. Now they won't let 'em into the hotel. They've got to gulp down plonk in the piss house'.

His view of life may have been soured by the sickness and family troubles that increasingly beset him. His wife had gone insane. His eldest son died suddenly, following an encounter with the police, and the old man spent all his savings bringing the body back to Wilcannia. It was the only time he asked me for money. Cataract was destroying his sight and he suffered from chronic bronchitis that several times turned to pneumonia. In the last years infirmity confined him to the settlement, where the only visitors were the police, no friends of the Dutton family.

Strangely, in the last year of his life he was able to re-establish contact with some of his old friends in South Australia. Luise Hercus, while working in Marree and Port Augusta, recorded a number of messages for
him, recording his reply when she visited Wilcannia. She played him a
Southern Aranda man singing the Urumbula (native cat) cycle, which
George had learned at New Well. Between verses, the singer said, ‘Tom
Bagot singing now. The Urumbula. You remember, George?’ George
replied, ‘Well Tom, it’s a long time since I left New Well, and the time
we had the Wandji-wandji corroboree, you remember that? You was a
smart man and I was a smart man... . I hear a lot of them went out to it,
a lot of the people. That’s one of my songs now, Tom, but I am getting
very short-winded now’.

He also heard the voice of Andrew Davis, the Banggala-Gugada man
who had been his sponsor in the wiljaru. Davis, with Tom Bagot, sang
part of the Wandji-wandji cycle. ‘That’s the Wandji-wandji. George
Dutton knows it. I put him through it. He knows. You get a big hiding
in that corroboree, you have a rough time in that corroboree... ’. George
replied: ‘Well Tom, I’m really glad you and Andrew Davis singing that
Wandji-wandji corroboree and I am very glad to hear yous. I can’t sing
a song for you just now, but I’m very sorry to hear that Tom Marsh
[a southern Aranda] went off. Well, some day we might meet again –
course I’m crippled now, old fellows. Well, I’ll say goodbye to you once
more, Tom, Andrew’.

The European settlement of the far west brought about the cultural
as well as material dispossession of the Aborigines. Dutton, however,
grew up in a period of temporary respite, with his people continuing to
regulate marriage, initiate young men and perform rituals, under con­
ditions of cultural dualism. The settlers were now secure in their possess­
ion of the land, but still dependent on a reserve of cheap black labour.
The stations of the ‘Corner’ region were big enough to support small
Aboriginal communities, which served as the knots of the social and
ceremonial network. The missionaries and school teachers who were
suppressing traditional activities elsewhere had not yet reached the far
west, and the pastoralists did not care. If anything they stood to gain,
for the cultural difference facilitated the economic exploitation of black
men and the sexual exploitation of black women. However, cultural
difference did not mean an insurmountable social barrier. Some Abori­
gines, particularly half castes, were able to enter the ranks of the drovers
and shearers and become ‘smart men’. Nor did this require a drastic
change in their identity, for in the fluid conditions of the frontier, work
was the primary mode of identification, and the society made few other
demands.

Dutton travelled both as a drover and as an Aboriginal. The country
provided the unifying ground for this dual life, but the two perceptions
of it were distinct and unassimilable. For the Aboriginal the land was an
artefact that had taken final form through the deeds of mythical heroes:
songs and ceremonies celebrated their deeds and gave renewed particular-
ity to places. The European’s purpose was to change the country, which he saw as virgin: it was an economic resource, to be measured and bounded, but as yet outside the sphere of human action and meaning. His equipment for giving particularity to place was of the most rudimentary kind; often he took a native name that meant little or nothing to him.

This dissociation of the two worlds gave Aborigines a defence in their accommodation to conquest. While accepting as they must the white man’s law, they could also plead their continuing need for black-fellow law. Maddock has explained such two-law thinking among Northern Territory Aborigines as assertion of ‘human equality and cultural value and of the need to remain in touch with one’s past if one is to remain truly human’.

By the time Dutton reached maturity, the dual order was disintegrating. As Aboriginal life failed he tried to extend his foothold in the European sector, only to find that this too was changing. The depressed townships of the ‘Corner’, that had now become the centres of Aboriginal life, placed demands that many – the Duttons among them – could not meet. Officialdom moved in, and they began their descent into economic and social marginality, their only defence a self-destructive defiance.

Under these conditions, cultural dualism meant nothing. But with the arrival of anthropologists Dutton once again could proclaim its validity. He was not primarily interested in serving as informant: strings of seemingly unconnected questions exasperated him. He had his own message and his own way of communicating it. In showing us the country he was telling us who he was, and what his rightful place was in it.

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53 Stanner noted the same dissociation in Durmugam (1960:96).
54 Maddock 1977:27.
### APPENDIX 1

*Location of Aboriginal population in far western New South Wales, 1882 and 1915 (number of half castes shown in brackets).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>1882</th>
<th>1915</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milparinka</td>
<td>152 (2)</td>
<td>33 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Gipps Station [near Broken Hill]</td>
<td>61 (3)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibooburra</td>
<td>187 (21)</td>
<td>17 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooncaira</td>
<td>52 (2)</td>
<td>26 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menindie</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>21 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>109 (—)</td>
<td>5 (—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrowangie Station</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal Lal</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanaaring</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>32 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Cliffs</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>13 (—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>561 (28)</td>
<td>179 (59)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Police enumeration, by police sub-districts and stations, in the second report of the Protector of the Aborigines, to 31 December 1882, and in the Aborigines' Protection Board's *Annual Report* for 1915. No enumeration was reported for the Paroo region in 1882, although it seems likely that there were Aborigines living there. If this assumption is correct, the population decline is greater than the totals indicate.

### APPENDIX 2

*The bronze-wing pigeon, told by George Dutton*

One time when the old pigeon came down — the *madi* they call him, but he was a man then — he came down all the way from the Bulloo right away down to Mt Brown. He camped there and he come over to Mt Pool. There was a big mob of people camped there, all mixed. Then a kid said: “Who is that skinny looking man?” (He was talking Wonggu-
mara.) He turned round and he said: “I’m only just travelling”. An old feller said to him, “Come closer, make your camp”. Anyway, he had a feed — they give him the tucker. “Good!” he said. (He was talking Gungadidji now.) He turned in that night. He took the water bag down. Then he said to the water: “Come this way, water”. So all the water came in from three water holes into the bag and the bunyip too. He started off that night. When he got to Good Friday: “I think I will camp here”. Then he went on to Tibooburra: “I think I’ll camp here”. Then he went on from there to Ngurnu. When the Mt Pool fellers got up next morning — no water. “Hey, get up! No water here. Come on, we’ll follow that bloke”. So they set to work and followed him. “Oh, bugger him!” Anyway, away he went. He went from Ngurnu to Jalbangu. He went from Jalbangu to Woodburn. Then he went from there to Tickalara. Then he went from there to Little Dingara. Then he went from there to Draja [Bransbury Station]. Then he went from there to Warali. Then he went from there to Graham’s Creek. Then to Paddy-paddy, then just this side of the Wipa hole. He camped in the creek and made his camp there. He hung his water bag up. The snake started to move: he bust the bag. Then the old Bronze Wing away he goes and banks the water up so the water won’t get away. Then the water washed the bank away. He tried to bank it up with a boom. “Ah, bugger it, let it go”. It all ran into Paddy-paddy. He called it the gugu then. Then he went on to Madawara (gidgee) Creek. He went on from there to what they call Wipa hole. He left all his feathers at Widhu [Hook Creek]. Then he went up from Hook Creek to Walbinja and this is where he died. He’s standing up as a stone, but the gold is away to one side.

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Dick Japanangka Riley,
at Ngurrantji, September 1977.
FOR OUR FAMILIES: THE KURUNDI WALK-OFF AND THE NGURRANTJI VENTURE*

Diane Bell

On 11 January 1977, Aboriginal stockmen and their families who had lived and worked at Kurundi for most of their lives walked off this cattle station in northern Alyawarra country. Unless they were protected by 'proper' work contracts they vowed, they said, never to work for Kurundi again. They claimed they had not been paid proper wages for years and that they were unhappy about the method of payment of their Social Security benefits. The largest of the family groups said they would 'go it alone', at a place called Ngurrantji some sixty kilometres north of Kurundi. Subsequently, they initiated a claim under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 for this area, a portion of unalienated Crown land that includes important dreaming sites. Ngurrantji is, in their view, a suitable area in which to establish a 'horse plant', where they will run and break the horses they have collected during their working life on the station, as well as working gardens and tending their goats.

The priorities of the cattle industry and the programmes of government have until recently restricted the free choice of residence by

*I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, and of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, which made possible my fieldwork amongst the Alyawarra and Warramunga from September 1976 to February 1978, and a further brief visit in July 1978. Without Neil Westbury's thorough knowledge of Welfare and D.A.A. involvement on Kurundi, his willingness to answer my questions about the conditions of Aboriginal workers in the area and his permission to draw freely on such material, the background section of this paper could not have been written. In preparing this paper for publication, I am indebted to Diane Barwick and Nancy Williams for their exacting comments on various drafts. I also appreciate the assistance of David Nash, James Urry, Jack Waterford, Graziella Würmli and Arie Wielinga. C.L.C., C.A.A.L.A.S. and Social Security, at the request of the men and women of Kurundi, permitted me to attend meetings held in Tennant Creek and at Warrabri. In July 1978, Hugh and Anita Kennedy of Melbourne kindly gave me information and allowed me to copy their collection of family papers and photographs of the early days of Elkedra. To the people of Ngurrantji I owe the greatest debt for welcoming me and my children, allowing us to live with them and teaching us. My relationship with the people of Ngurrantji and my role in the events which are the subject of this paper are described more fully below (37ff).

Unless otherwise stated, I have used the standard Warlpiri (Walbiri) orthography used in the Yuendumu Bilingual Programme and, with minor variations, at the Hooker Creek school. Although this does not entirely meet the requirements of some of my material, I have chosen this orthography as it is the one which literate Warlpiri of the future will use, and as yet Warlpiri is the only language of this area being taught in the schools.

1 Kurundi is a cattle station located some thirty miles east of Bonney Well on the Stuart Highway and fifty miles south of Tennant Creek.
Northern Territory Aborigines. Large tribally mixed populations were collected at government settlements where medical, educational and administrative facilities could be conveniently centralised. Smaller numbers of Aborigines remained as employees, with their dependents, on pastoral properties, more or less subject to protective legislation governing their wages or rations, their housing and general welfare. The decentralisation movement of the 1970s has decreased the population of many settlements as former residents dispersed to ‘outstations’ or ‘homeland centres’ on areas to which they had traditional claims and ties. Similar Aboriginal efforts at self-determination have led to ‘walk-offs’ from cattle stations in various parts of Australia since the second world war.2

The establishment of the new camp at Ngurrantiji required not only initiative and commitment, but also the endurance of frustration and hardship by the participants. Officers of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (D.A.A.), the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (C.A.A.L.A.S.) and the Central Land Council (C.L.C.) offered advice and support, but the idea of Ngurrantiji originated with one of the several families who camped at Kurundi. Its organisation has been in the hands of Dick Riley (about 66 years old), his brothers Murphy (about 56) and Nelson (51) and their sister Myrtle (about 58), who with their children form the core of the Ngurrantiji mob. Members of the other families who, together with the Ngurrantiji mob, comprise the Kurundi mob, have established a less permanent camp on the McLaren Creek. Still others have drifted onto nearby stations, to Warrabri or to Tennant Creek. All are free to visit at Ngurrantiji.

This account was written because they wanted their story told. I have drawn upon oral accounts by participants, discussions with Europeans who have longstanding relationships with the Kurundi people, contemporary records made while a participant in many of the events during my anthropological fieldwork in this area, and the published ethnographic material on Alyawarra and Warramunga speakers and the general literature on Aborigines in the cattle industry. The experience of the Kurundi workers and the Ngurrantiji mob is not unique. The literature on Aborigines in the cattle industry, spanning some forty years, clearly shows that certain interests have always prevented or delayed the extension to Aborigines of rights and privileges accorded to other Northern Territory workers.3

The published literature includes few references to the cattle stations south of Tennant Creek and east of the Stuart Highway (‘the Bitumen’), such as Elkedra, Epenarra, Murray Downs and Kurundi, which are inaccessible for many months of the year. Unlike McDonald Downs,

2 Rowley (1971:292-293) gives a brief outline of previous strikes and actions by Aborigines at Berrimah, Bagot and Port Hedland.
Elsey Station or the Durack holdings, these stations have been ignored by both novelist and historian. Nor do detailed studies of their Aboriginal employees’ working conditions exist, such as the 1965 wage case reportage of Victoria River Downs or the economist’s, journalist’s and anthropologist’s studies of Rosewood, Wave Hill, and Angas Downs. Kurundi is small (some seven thousand cattle graze on 2,600 square miles), and it was apparently easy to overlook the twenty to sixty Aborigines who made their home there. After 1960 Welfare Branch officers began to lodge inspection reports, but as they usually interviewed only the manager and accepted his assessment of conditions, the reports provide few clues about Aborigines’ perceptions.

Kurundi Station is located in the extreme north of Alyawarra country, which extends from the Sandover River north to the Davenport Ranges. Warramunga also have an interest in this area. As one travels further north to Ngurrantiji, the country is jointly used by Warramunga and Alyawarra speakers who have worked and lived together in this area since the mid-1920s. Today, the Aboriginal population is small and relatively scattered. Aboriginal reminiscences and my own hunting and foraging experience with them confirm that game and vegetable food continue to be plentiful in this country. According to Hale, the Alyawarra speakers are a northern branch of the Aranda linguistic group. To the north they merge with the Warramunga. Indeed, the families at Kurundi and the family at Ngurrantiji are equally at home in either language. ‘We are Alyawarra and Warramunga mixed’, they state. Today, the Alyawarra are highly mobile, maintaining close contact with relatives on other cattle stations, at Warrabri (a government settlement housing some eight hundred persons in 1977), and with their Warramunga relatives in Tennant Creek. The alteration of their economy from semi-nomadic foraging to employment on cattle stations has meant some disruption of ritual life and an alteration of subsistence strategies, but hunting and gathering are not merely weekend picnic activities: they are important teaching experiences for children who thus acquire their parents’ know-

4 Groom 1955; Gunn 1906; Durack 1961.
5 Kelly 1966-67; Hardy 1968; Rose 1965.
6 The mixing of these two groups is partly a result of their contact histories and partly a reflection of traditional ownership patterns in the area.
7 Yallop (1969:186-188) offers a tentative summary of boundaries for Alyawarra speakers and notes that the largest population concentrations are outside their traditional country. This is basically a result of employment possibilities and the location of government settlements. The best country of the Alyawarra was quickly alienated by pastoralists. Although the Ngurrantiji mob includes both Warramunga and Alyawarra speakers, I have referred to Alyawarra ethnography, as it is more appropriate to emphasize this aspect of the mob’s heritage when speaking of their foraging and ritual activities, since they have not suffered such severe disruption as their northern Warramunga relatives.
The Alyawarra are still closely connected with their traditional 'country' and organize their major rituals to coincide with the pastoral 'stand down' over the Christmas vacation, which is also the holiday period for some two hundred Alyawarra at Warrabri. Other religious duties, such as attendance at mourning ceremonies, have been difficult for station employees, and the Ngurrantiji mob specifically say that now they are their 'own bosses', they are free to attend these important rites.

Changed pastoral technology has ended the droving days, but nostalgia for the adventure and independence of that period is apparent in much of Dick Riley's reminiscence, and that of other Alyawarra and Warramunga men who recall with great pride their competence in stock camps and droving on the roads, away from the eyes of white supervisors. Indeed, Barker has suggested that in southeastern Australia cattle station employment has sometimes provided the best option for Aborigines whose traditional hunting grounds have been despoiled by cattle. Unlike the life of chronic unemployment on many large modern settlements, pastoral employees engage in work which they find enjoyable and where they can exercise initiative and considerable autonomy in the organisation of their daily routine. It is not yet possible to make precise comparisons of 'contact histories', but I believe that interference with the social and ritual life of the Alyawarra, and this particular group of Alyawarra-Warramunga, has not been as destructive as it has in other groups in areas with different histories. It appears that conditions on stations in Alyawarra country have favoured the persistence of Alyawarra culture during a relatively short period of contact. A spirit of independence and a desire for autonomy of action have also survived. This is not to say that the move onto the stations has not been disruptive and involved injustice and hardship, but it may help explain why some groups of Aborigines are seeking alternatives to their present life style, which involves a crippling dependence on white institutions, and others are not.

In describing and interpreting events that are the subject of this paper,

9 Denham (1977) and O'Connell (1977) have both worked with Southern Alyawarra whose country centres around the Sandover River. Like the Northern people they also enjoy a rich ceremonial life and food-getting strategies are still an integral part of their daily lives. Indeed, O'Connell (1977:48) estimates that hunting provided 60 per cent of the meat in the diet of the McDonald Downs residents.

10 Barker 1960:140. Although Barker's judgement is based on a rather romantic notion of the life of a drover, the observation is sound.

11 The Warramunga have suffered enormous disruption of ritual and social life. This is especially true of the people around Tennant Creek.

12 In the 1880s, the Willowie Pastoral Company took up the lease at Elkedra. The station was abandoned after an incident with the local Aborigines which convinced the manager that he was not welcome within their country (Groom 1955:59). Although there were other individual whites in the area from time to time, it was not until the 1920s that contact became regular and sustained.
FOR OUR FAMILIES

I have relied not only on the sources already mentioned, but also on my observations at many of the relevant meetings between C.A.A.L.A.S., C.L.C. and officers of the Department of Social Security with the Kurundi mob, while I was participating in the everyday activities of these people. The background of my role in the events of January 1977 and onward, therefore, requires some comment. It begins some four months earlier. My first real contact with Kurundi Station and with Myrtle Kennedy, who became one of my closest friends during my stay in the Northern Territory, occurred in October 1976. At the request of several Warrabri women, I travelled to Kurundi to provide transport for Myrtle, whose presence was necessary at Warrabri for a women's ceremony. I camped that night with the women of Kurundi, and I was struck by the gentle but firm manner in which Myrtle supervised children, saw to the performance of chores, and maintained orderliness in the camp. As we sat around a small fire, Myrtle began to sing of her country at Kurundi. After about half an hour, she turned to me to explain her obvious pride and contentment: 'Here we are together. All our families we'. This emphasis on family became a dominant theme at Ngurrantiji. It was Myrtle who taught me, laughed with me and worried for me. Her brothers talked with me and were particularly fond of my two children, especially my son, who was 'claimed' during the 1976-77 initiation ceremonies as an Alyawarra boy who would always return to the country. Many of the reminiscences which I present here were told to me during 1977 in the camp at Ngurrantiji when, typically, one of the adults was sitting in the shade of a brush shelter while dogs and children played nearby. Dick was the acknowledged 'boss' of the country, and the most prolific story teller. Nelson, the articulate political spokesman for the group, always referred me to Dick if I wanted information about traditional matters concerning land and dreamings. Nelson knew the answers, but it was Dick who had the right to tell me. Murphy would always join in once Dick had started. Murphy would speak with dry humour and throw-away lines; Dick with twinkling eyes and a laugh; Nelson with a more cynical edge; and Myrtle with her own gentle humanity. All were masters of understatement, and this is reflected in their stories. The concern for detail in these stories was brought home to me when I was talking with Nelson and Murphy in April 1977 about droving in the Northern Territory before the second world war:

Nelson said: "We would drove from here to Queensland and from here to Alice Springs. It could take months if the rains came. I remember droving Elkedra cattle once. They belonged to Johnny Driver".

"How many cattle?", I asked.

"Oh, somewhere between five hundred and seven hundred", Nelson replied.

"705", interrupted Murphy, "I counted them; Nelson only tailed them".

37
I did not use a tape recorder in these sessions, for there was no power at Ngurrantiji and batteries were unreliable. I took notes and wrote the complete accounts as soon as possible afterwards — on occasion, not until evening, when all the chores were done. I was later able to check details of these accounts with the storytellers. When I read their stories to them they responded with immediate pleasure and an exclamation such as: ‘That is my story. I told it to you here’.

During most of November and December 1976, various members of the Kurundi mob were at Warrabri in order to participate in ceremonies or simply to visit relatives. On the day of the walk-off in January, Myrtle had asked me to drive her to Kurundi so that she could ‘talk straight’ with the manager about her Social Security payments. In another vehicle, Neil Westbury, D.A.A. Community Advisor at Tennant Creek, accompanied the men, who planned to discuss their wage problems with the manager. I attended meetings on 18 January at Tennant Creek and on 2 February at Warrabri between the stockmen who had walked off Kurundi and representatives of C.A.A.L.A.S., C.L.C. and the Department of Social Security. I accompanied the extended family who first moved to Ngurrantiji. Whenever any of them was in Warrabri or Tennant Creek during periods when I was working at those places, they visited me and we discussed their progress and their problems. Throughout 1977, I was never out of contact with at least one member of the group for more than two weeks.

Although the Kurundi workers have been ‘covered’ by various awards and regulations, the results for them have been much the same: rations but little cash in hand. Since 1911, when the Commonwealth government assumed control of the Northern Territory, the Aboriginal Ordinances have, in principle, regulated conditions of employment and the fixing of wages. But as Rowley demonstrates, the first Northern Territory Aboriginals’ Ordinance 1911, the revised Northern Territory Aboriginals’ Ordinance 1918 and the Wards’ Employment Ordinance 1953 all assumed that Aborigines are people to be managed. Throughout his discussion of wages and conditions, Rowley is at pains to stress that although protectors may have had the power to set wages with the work permits they issued, enforcement was another thing in the frontier conditions of the Northern Territory. Indeed, it was even in their interest not to enforce regulations as the likely result, mass stand-downs by employers, would have overtaxed government resources.

Documentation for earlier decades is scanty, but the report of Bleakley, the Queensland Protector of Aborigines who toured the Northern Territory in 1928 (about the time that Dick Riley as a man of seventeen would have been entitled to wages), reported that the town employees

were best off as they were entitled to five shillings a week. The Kurundi workers today speak with dry humour of the ‘five shillings a week days’. Many employers maintained workers and their dependents in lieu of cash wages. Whether or not Aboriginal workers received provisions depended on the particular manager, his relationship with his workers and the accessibility of the station to inspection by government bodies. Writing of conditions in the 1930s, Stanner comments that ‘In the deep bush, on the smaller, more isolated properties, almost anything went and did’. In 1935, he had protested in *The Aborigines’ Protector* that rations were a right, not a privilege, for those whose country and food resources had been destroyed by cattle. Other contributors to *The Aborigines’ Protector* – Duguid, Elkin, Morley and the Berndts – wrote detailed submissions deploring the inhuman conditions under which Aborigines were forced to live on pastoral properties. The Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Association for the Protection of Native Races in the October 1936 issue of *The Aborigines’ Protector* declared there was ‘no cause for celebration’ because ‘The status and conditions under which the Australian natives have to live remain substantially what they were a hundred years ago’. In 1974, Stevens could still write of stations on which rations were substantially below standard. Rowley speaks of the gazettal in June 1949 of the draft regulations of 1947 stating that an adult male Aboriginal pastoral worker with three years experience was to receive £1/0/0 per week. By 1957, this had been increased to £2/8/3 plus a clothing allowance of 15/0 a week. Kelly notes that this amounted to one fifth of the wage of a white stockman. In 1948, the attempt of the North Australian Workers’ Union (N.A.W.U.) to bring Aborigines under the Cattle Station Industry Award was rejected by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission on the ground that the Wards Employment Ordinance was considered sufficient protection.

The provisions of the ordinances were complex, and where bookkeeping was minimal, as it was on many stations, it was difficult to bring

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16 Stanner (1967:41) and Berndt and Berndt (1946:11) also speak of the five shillings a week wage. This was set by the *Northern Territory Aboriginals’ Ordinance* of 1933 and stayed in force until the 1949 increases. See also Anonymous 1936:9-11; Elkin 1937:6-8.
17 Berndt and Berndt 1946:10-11.
18 Berndt and Berndt 1946:11.
19 Stanner 1967:42.
20 Stanner 1935:16.
21 Morley 1936:1; see also Duguid 1936:14, Elkin 1937:6-8.
charges against employers suspected of not observing the ordinances.\textsuperscript{25} The patrol officer who first inspected Kurundi in 1960 refused to certify a return because he was not satisfied that the book-keeping was accurate, but no action followed.\textsuperscript{26} Even in the late 1970s, Aboriginal workers on cattle stations in the Centre told me that if they were too insistent on correct pay and conditions, they might be taken to 'the Bitumen' and left to walk into town. Accurate figures relating to wages and rations received by the Kurundi workers in the past are difficult to determine from available sources. The Kurundi employees do, however, appear to have enjoyed reasonably good work relationships with most of the managers. Presumably, when the men first began working at Kurundi, they were covered by the \textit{Northern Territory Aboriginals' Ordinance 1918-1953}, then by the \textit{Wards' Employment Ordinance 1953}. In the report of the first Welfare Branch inspection of Kurundi, the quality of worker-management relationships was the subject of favourable comment. In subsequent reports of 1962 and 1966, similar comments were made. It was not until 1972 that wages were reported as becoming an issue.\textsuperscript{27}

Kurundi workers remember that 'in the 1950s' the manager would eat with them when not accompanied by other Europeans. The present manager was by all accounts reasonably well liked. Managers have always been able to blame a distant owner if promises could not be fulfilled, and it was possible for an owner to exploit the manager's good relationship with the men to keep them on Kurundi. As a manager necessarily had a financial interest in the success of the station, his popularity would also protect his own interests. About 1966, there began a contract system which operated for the mutual benefit of worker and management: a fifty-fifty sharing of the profits from the cleanskins branded and the ownership of horses broken. This scheme allowed the enterprising worker to earn more than the fixed wage of £2 established by the \textit{Wards' Employment Regulation} of 1959. The management of Kurundi, operating in terms of the local contract system, considered themselves exempt from the conditions of the Regulation; they declared that equal wages (to come into force in 1968) need not be paid at Kurundi because the men were already receiving wages exceeding the Regulation rate. It was claimed that during the period 11-26 April 1966, eight men had each earned $54.00 (on the basis of $1.20 per head of cattle branded and trucked to Tennant Creek).\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} As Rowley (1971:285ff) amply demonstrated, it was the station managers and owners who controlled conditions, and as the employees were illiterate and subject to restrictive legislation, protest was unlikely. Further, 'the government was in a weak position to enforce minimum conditions which it does not itself observe' (Rowley 1971:307).

\textsuperscript{26} Westbury 1977 (pers. comm.).

\textsuperscript{27} ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} ibid.
Meanwhile, the N.A.W.U., on the initiative of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council, had in 1965 made application to the A.C.T.U. to press for equal wages for Aborigines employed in the cattle industry. Opposition from the Vesteys-dominated Northern Territory Cattle Producers Council was not sufficient to prevent the inclusion of Aborigines within the award.\(^{29}\) It did, however, delay application of the award for three years.

Presumably some version of a 'contract system' operated between 1966 and 1972, but no official inspections were made, and it is difficult to determine its effects from oral accounts. In 1972, when Aboriginal opinion was first actively sought by the Welfare Branch, workers voiced dissatisfaction. In 1973, following several extended visits, the patrol officer found that the men were claiming that there were substantial arrears in cash payments.\(^{30}\) Why there were arrears, if there were, is uncertain. They could have resulted from a temporary shortage of funds, a directive from the owner, or an initiative of the manager. As the men are now insisting that they will not work without written and clearly set-out work contracts, it seems likely that a contract system had operated to everyone's satisfaction for a period and then lapsed. The men said they were always given money when they went into Tennant Creek and were never short of rations, but were always given some reason for not being paid in full. The only records, if any, of payments made were kept by the management.

During the 1970s, officers of the Welfare Branch felt frustrated by the manager or owner in attempting to establish direct communication with the people at Kurundi, to understand the local political structure, and to provide support for the initiatives of the people. Determining Aboriginal opinion on such matters as the contract scheme, as well as health, education or housing needs, was not made easier by the brevity of officers' visits, by the insistence of the manager or his wife on accompanying the visitor into the camp, by the absence of many men in stock camps, and the problems of a male officer approaching Aboriginal women. Many of these issues became clear after the move to Ngurrantji, when people felt free to discuss their 'felt needs'.\(^{31}\) Both health and education officials had experienced difficulties in consulting directly with Aborigines at Kurundi. In the 1960s, the manager declared that Aborigines had no interest in setting up a school at Kurundi. In 1973, Department of Health nursing sisters were asked to leave the camp. Aboriginal women today recall this visit: after the sisters had tried unsuccessfully to rouse

\(^{29}\) Kelly 1969:62.
\(^{30}\) Westbury 1977 (pers. comm.).
\(^{31}\) Gray (1977:117) states that the D.A.A. in its liaison with and support for decentralized communities focusses on (a) commitment, (b) felt needs, and (c) response. However, as Hardy's (1966) account of the Kurintji walk-off and my experience of the Kurundi walk-off indicate, (b) may not be apparent or be articulated clearly in terms appreciated by European advisors until after the move has occurred.
somebody in the station house, they accepted the Aborigines' invitation to the camp and began examining the children. According to the Aboriginal women, there was a 'big row' when the manager's wife appeared, saying: 'You shouldn't be here. This is the camp', but the sisters continued their work. Kurundi women told me in 1976 that 'We want a sister to come and look at us once a month', expressing dissatisfaction with medical treatment then available. Nelson or Murphy drove any seriously ill patient to the hospital at Warrabri. Tody, the people are well disposed to visits from Rural Health personnel, and one of the first requests Myrtle made after the move to Ngurrantiji was for a proper first aid kit, so that she could care for the simpler problems herself.

Education, including basic literacy for children, is now actively sought by the people at Ngurrantiji. But until they contacted parents of the potential students directly, officials of the Welfare Branch and the Department of Education were persuaded that children would run away if a school was established at Kurundi, that the children were scattered in inaccessible bush camps, and that parents actively discouraged their children from attending the 'nearby' school at Warrabri. In 1967, when the school-age population resident at Kurundi was estimated at fourteen, parents expressed a preference for a local school. In 1976, the school-age population at Ngurrantiji was more than twenty and during the first week Myrtle began speculating about the best location for a school. At the same time, the men began worrying about access roads for teachers' caravans and the necessary water supply. Since February 1977, the Education Department has been in close contact with the Ngurrantiji people, but until the problem of a sufficient water supply for caravans is overcome, Ngurrantiji cannot have an Education Department school.

Kurundi, as with many other cattle stations in the Northern Territory, never reached the standards set in accommodation provisions of the Wards' Employment Ordinance of 1953. Each inspection report echoed the same promises of improvement to the criticism that accommodation was inadequate, showing awareness that something better must be provided for the valued workers of Kurundi. But each also offered a managerial excuse for not taking action: they were waiting until after the muster, or there had been a death in the camp with subsequent problems in finding another suitable location. It was true that following a death in 1963, the people moved to Mosquito Creek, but they returned

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32 Rowley (1971:305) comments on the widespread reluctance by pastoralists to establish schools.
33 Westbury (pers. comm.). No school was established.
34 Rowley (1971:309) quotes from a Sydney Morning Herald report that the administration had 'no intention of prosecuting pastoralists who did not comply with the housing regulations; that “policy” was to “encourage” the lessees to comply, but not to compel'. See also Lockwood 1965.
to Kurundi within the year. After fifteen years of criticism by Welfare Branch and D.A.A. officials, and proposals by the Aborigines about the location and type of shelter required, little had been achieved. The make-shift dwellings in the small fenced camp at Kurundi were constructed of wood frames and corrugated iron sheeting; the camp itself was distinguished only by its high standard of cleanliness and efficient organisation. This also characterises the camp at Ngurrantiji, where the shelters are now mainly constructed of bush materials which provide warmth in winter and the possibility of ventilation in summer. The camp occupies a larger area than the one at Kurundi, thus enhancing privacy and requiring one to ‘visit’ to talk with a relative in a nearby shelter.

It was not the problems related to accommodation, health or education which set in action the chain of events leading to the establishment of Ngurrantiji, although these problems certainly produced discontent. I believe that land was the central issue. In 1972-73, Kurundi was offered for sale. At this time, the Aboriginal stockmen began to seek assistance in implementing alternatives to living at Kurundi. All the plans involved access to a portion of land which they could control. Their first firm suggestion was to establish a horse plant at Fat Bullock Bore. They discussed the possibility of an excision from the Kurundi lease with officers of the D.A.A. However, the owner of the Kurundi lease stated that the Fat Bullock Bore was indispensable to his pastoral operation, and offered instead a square mile at the Ten-Mile Bore. There is some evidence to suggest that Nelson was persuaded by the owner and/or the manager to change his mind in favour of the Ten-Mile Bore site, a change he diplomatically expressed as a willingness to look elsewhere. Discussion between the D.A.A. and the Kurundi people lapsed during 1974. Mainly because of the slowness of the administrative process, it was not until April 1975 that further discussions began: Albert Murphy, Kurundi Bill and Murphy Japanangka approached the D.A.A. Community Advisor resident at Warrabri to discuss the possibility of making a claim for a portion of Crown land north of Kurundi. They hoped to extend the horse mustering activities already carried out by Nelson, Sandy Nabba and Johnny Jungarrayi on Kurundi.

Although the establishment of a horse breaking plant independent of the station had been mooted before, its location had always presented a

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35 A popular justification for not providing permanent housing for Aborigines is that dwellings must be abandoned if an occupant dies. Although this practice is still observed, desert Aborigines are finding ways in which to overcome the problem. Houses may be vacated for a limited period, exorcised and then reoccupied by a different family. More flexible designs developed in conjunction with Aborigines will also minimize this problem. The death of Blind Annie in February 1978 did not lead to the abandonment of Ngurrantiji—the camp was merely shifted to the other side of the creek.

36 Westbury 1977 (pers. comm.); D.A.A. involvement began in early 1973, after the new Labor government established the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
problem. In discussions initiated in 1975, the manager of Kurundi indicated that the owner might agree to sell the station to the government, and he offered to see the station through the change-over. The D.A.A. officer contacted the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission (A.L.F.C.) in September 1975. Tentative negotiations were begun by the A.L.F.C. and the owner's response was to name a price of one million dollars 'walk in, walk off'. As the property was underdeveloped and in a rundown condition, this response was seen as a refusal to sell. Previous to this negotiation, the owner had displayed little apparent interest in the station and had visited it infrequently. In 1976 there were changes. The owner's son arrived to assist with the muster. The manager informed D.A.A. officials that the owner intended to pay the Aboriginal stockmen wages from the proceeds of the 1,400 cattle he expected to muster. But in mid-December 1976, the stockmen claimed that they had received only $45.00 cash each for four months' work plus the rations they had consumed. They said they had received no holiday pay, although they knew they could receive rations if they remained on Kurundi during the stand-down period. What I have referred to as a walk-off strictly speaking began as a stand-down with the usual stand-down distribution of rations. But the Ngurrantiji mob did not return to work, asserting that they had not been paid correctly in the past and had been given no assurance they would be paid correctly now. They are willing to do contract mustering on Kurundi or any other station in the area. Their skills are prized as they know the countryside and are talented stockmen, but, they assert, they will not work for nothing.

Sandy Nabba, the head stockman, and Johnny Jungarrayi announced that they would never again work on Kurundi, and in December 1976 moved to a bush camp on vacant Crown land nearby. At the same time, Dick Riley and Murphy put through a road further north to the site of the present camp at Ngurrantiji, created temporary yards for their horses, and moved some of their tools and equipment there. There was no really suitable bore in the Ngurrantiji area, and the possibility of one being sunk quickly was remote, but there was water in the Ngurrantiji

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37 The Aboriginal Land Fund Commission is an independent body whose function is to purchase land for dispossessed Aborigines throughout Australia. Government land rights policy to 1977 has been described by the Commission chairman (Rowley 1978).

38 From December to March pastoral workers in Central Australia are often stood down because the excessive rainfall of that period makes work impossible. At Kurundi, workers and their families were always provisioned during the wet, but the station did not apply for 'Pasdown', a government payment equal to the rate of unemployment benefit for employees during the wet season. Stanley (1976: 163) noted the underutilization of this scheme. In many cases, it would result in workers receiving more than they earned in wages!

39 See above (page 34). While the Ngurrantiji mob went north of the McLaren Creek, Sandy and Johnny established a camp on the McLaren. Both sites had been in use, on and off, before the walk-off.
water hole, which had been a favourite camping site in the past and a watering place for cattle travelling overland to Elkedra or Murray Downs. Ngurrantiji was also close to important sacred sites which the Japanangka and Japaljarri/Japangardi men own and maintain. Even if Ngurrantiji did not prove to be the best site in the long run for a permanent settlement, it was on their land and a place they were responsible for looking after. It would be a base, if not a permanent camp.\(^{40}\)

During January 1977, many of the Kurundi mob were obliged to spend time at Warrabri for a period of intense ritual and could not, therefore, attend to the organization of new camps. They were, however, able to hold many discussions with officers of the D.A.A. The stockmen and their families were concerned about their Social Security entitlements; this and their desire to ‘talk straight’ with the manager about wages led to the visit to the station on 11 January. The manager’s wife told the D.A.A. officer who accompanied the stockmen that Social Security was not the business of the D.A.A.; following that, leading stockmen told the manager they would not work for Kurundi. The stockmen left laden with rations and some cash which could have been construed as part payment of arrears in wages. The stockmen returned to Warrabri, and a series of meetings between officers of C.A.A.L.A.S., C.L.C., Department of Social Security and the Kurundi mob were arranged. The entire Kurundi mob travelled to Tennant Creek on 18 January to meet with Jim Moore of Social Security, who explained what pension each person was receiving, the amounts involved, and to whom it was payable. The manager had previously handled all payments and, as it is possible to bank an unendorsed cheque, it was not remarkable to find that people did not know the nature of their benefit. Most of the older recipients of Social Security are illiterate; although some may be able to sign their names, some of those present did not even know to whom the entitlement was payable.

The men who had been stood down without holiday pay, and had subsequently walked off, lodged claims for unemployment benefits on 18 January 1977. Although the usual waiting period is six weeks, members of the Kurundi mob did not receive any payments until early April. Legal officers of the C.A.A.L.A.S. advised the Kurundi people not to accept any more ‘handouts’ from Kurundi as that could jeopardise any back wage claims which might be lodged. Since they had no resources to fall back on, and since the only other income was child endowment and old age pensions, the financial situation was grim. Furthermore, since most of the relatives they normally relied upon for support in lean times were among those who had walked off, little help was to be expected from the kinship network. D.A.A. assisted by providing Emer-

\(^{40}\) One of the ‘communication problems’ between D.A.A. and Aborigines on outstations is whether the decentralized communities should be mini-settlements or not. The people of Ngurrantiji do not see themselves duplicating existing structures.
gency Purchase Orders (E.P.O.) for food at Warrabri and Tennant Creek, but the E.P.O.s were subject to cash repayment when the Social Security cheques arrived. This method of survival required individuals to approach D.A.A. each time they needed an order for food; it also meant there was no extra cash for tobacco, petrol, clothes or minimal luxuries. The activities of the Kurundi folk were severely limited. For example, Nelson had decided, in consultation with the others, that their first objective was to get the horses off Kurundi; but without money for petrol for their Toyota 4x4 or for extra saddles and equipment this was difficult.41

On 18 January, the day of the meeting with officers of the Department of Social Security, Phillip Toyne (of C.A.A.L.A.S.) discussed their options and future with the men at Tennant Creek. Old Albert Japaljarri, Young Johnny, Old Ned, Dick Riley, Sandy Jampijinpa, Murphy, Jerry, Henry Barnes, Robert Jungarrayi and Old Friday McLaren and Leslie Foster were there from Kurundi. D.A.A. representatives and I also participated. The men reiterated that they ‘didn’t know what they were working for’. Conditions and wages were too vague. They asked for legal work contracts to be drawn up by C.A.A.L.A.S. They discussed who was to blame at Kurundi: none really blamed the manager — he was ‘straight’, they said; it was the owner who was to blame, since he was in control. Phillip Toyne discussed the possibility of a back wage claim, the Water Resource Branch report indicating that Ngurrantiji was not an ideal bore site, and the problem of ‘scab’ labour. The Kurundi stockmen asserted again that they would not work at Kurundi without contracts, but they were concerned that perhaps other stockmen could be drawn from nearby stations or the Warrabri settlement to work at Kurundi.

A further meeting with representatives of C.A.A.L.A.S. was held at Warrabri on 2 February 1977. Discussion at this meeting centred on back wage claims, but the men requested that nothing be done until they got their horses off the station: they feared that someone might ‘get nasty’ and they would lose their horses and belongings still on Kurundi. Fifteen men expressed a desire to lodge a claim for wages against Kurundi. Of these, seven were married (six of whom have large families), six were single and two are now old age pensioners. Their claims for duration of work on Kurundi varied from sixteen years to several months. The C.A.A.L.A.S. stated its intention, if these claims were not satisfactorily met by the station, to issue a summons on behalf of the Aboriginal workers.42 The day after the Warrabri meeting, the men got into their Toyota, and the women and children into mine, and we drove to Alice

41 This Toyota was bought with an Aboriginal Benefit Trust Fund (A.B.T.F.) grant received in September 1976.
42 If the issue is resolved by judicial decision it is likely to form an important precedent. Other Aboriginal stockmen in the Northern Territory may choose to initiate legal action on similar grounds.
Top: Frederick Michael Kennedy.
Bottom: Philip Muldoon, Mrs Muldoon, Harry Batham, Fred Harris, Frederick Kennedy, George Hayes, George Birchmore (first manager of Kurundi).

— Courtesy of Hugh and Anita Kennedy
Top left: Myrtle Napanangka Kennedy    Top right: Nelson Japanangka
Bottom: Murphy Japanangka and the Ngurrantji Toyota

- Photographs by Diane Bell
Springs to attend C.L.C. meetings on 3 and 4 February. These were general meetings attended by traditional land owners from a large area of Central Australia. The Kurundi men discussed their problems with members of other groups, exchanges which they valued highly. They also heard the Aboriginal Lands Bill explained in language they could comprehend and arranged a further meeting with C.L.C. at Ngurrantiji in order to discuss details of their land claim.

In this brief summary of conditions in the cattle industry and my account of the efforts of the Kurundi workers to obtain their due, it is obvious that before the 1970s Aborigines were rarely consulted on matters affecting their lives. The brutality and injustice which Central Australian Aborigines such as Dick, Murphy, Nelson and Myrtle recount in a matter-of-fact way during casual conversation about ‘the old days’ were confirmed by Hugh Kennedy (the son of Frederick Kennedy, who founded Elkedra in the 1930s), who lived as a child at Elkedra. The homestead had a dirt floor, a high gable roof with no ceiling and flywire all round the house, but in spite of these conditions white table cloths and silver were used daily while his mother, Monica Theresa Kennedy, was there. In describing the freedom he enjoyed as a child (when his playmate was Donald, Old Fanny’s brother), Hugh Kennedy recalled the horror he had felt at the harsh treatment of Aboriginal workers, some of whom were only a few years older than he. Beatings such as those described by Nelson (below) are still fresh in his memory. Like many of their generation, Dick, Murphy, Nelson, and Myrtle have seen cattle stations grow from nothing, and feel their contribution to the development of the cattle industry in the Northern Territory has not been recognised. They see their future in the establishment of independent communities like Ngurrantiji. Here they speak of the past and the future.

Dick Japanangka Riley:

When I was a boy I worked at Elkedra. I grew up there. We were taught the hard way. My father put me in the saddle and I just kept going until I was used to it. Bosses were different in those days; they wanted it their way and we worked from sunrise to sunset. There was no room for mistakes. Bill Riley, who gave me my name of Riley, and old man Kennedy were partners out at Powell Creek, before we moved to Elkedra.43 I remember shifting all the gear along the road from the Telegraph Station, north of Tennant Creek. We then found good water at Elkedra. We walked the bullocks and had a buggy.

43 According to Frederick Kennedy’s son Hugh (who left Elkedra in 1939 when he was eight years old and now lives in Melbourne), Riley was a maintenance man for the Overland Telegraph Company and Kennedy, his father, was a technician who, amongst other things, maintained the radio at Hatches Creek.
When Kennedy was ill, Riley took him to Alice in an old V8. He died later in Adelaide. My sister Myrtle married the son of old man Kennedy by a part-Aboriginal woman at Elkedra. They didn’t have any children, but my mother had a son by one white man, Jim Donahue. They took the boy away to The Bungalow when he was little, before the war.\footnote{44} My mother [Blind Annie] missed him. She is blind and he used to ride on her shoulders to show her the way. That's the way things were then – families were broken up. People finished up in the wrong country. We want all our family here together now in their own country.

Riley was a fair boss but hard. You always knew where you stood with him. It was the same with Birchmore at Kurundi. When we were doing stockwork we'd get 5/0 a week. Once we drove about 500 bullocks from Kurundi to Alice Springs. There was me, Peter Dixon boss man, old man Alphonso (he was young then), Johnny Kurundi, Murphy (my brother) and Derby (he’s at Yuendumu now). I remember old Birchmore saying: “You fellas drove cattle from here, you'll get £1.5.0. I'll pay extra”. That trip took three to four weeks, so we were given an extra week’s pay. We always knew what we were working for. It's not like that now. They always keep us in the dark. We won't go back to Kurundi. We were missing out on wages, we didn’t get many. I once got $100.00. That was the highest. Poor buggers, you just got your saddle and bridle and go away. It might be two or three months before you get something. Now I'm waiting for a pension. I've worked all my life but have not been able to save up any money because we were never paid proper wages, just $20.00 when we went into town. I reckon I'm old enough\footnote{45} to get a pension because other blokes who were boys in the bush with me are getting pensions. But they say I'll be sixty-five on July 1st, 1977, so I'll have to wait until then.

I'd like my big sons to join me and my wife, Alice, here. One of my sons and my eldest daughter and her children are already living here. My family are happy to sit down here for a while and get on with our own business. We are away from the fights and drunks at Tennant Creek; we can grow our own vegetables and live by ourselves.

\footnote{44} The operation of official policy which sanctioned the forceful removal of part-Aboriginal children from their families has left many Aboriginal adults of today with no knowledge of the identity of their actual parents and siblings. Many children were taken to The Bungalow (the Telegraph Station near Alice Springs), others to Tennant Creek and Darwin.

\footnote{45} Dick's birthday may be July 1st, 1912, but it may not. Once a birthdate is entered on Welfare cards, it is extremely difficult to change it. He may well be eligible for a pension now, but in order to challenge the records, he would need a doctor's certificate and Statutory Declarations from age mates whose ages can be verified. This is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, procedure for an Aboriginal resident of a cattle station.
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Myrtle Napanangka Kennedy:

During the war, I was married in church in Tennant Creek to Dan Kennedy, but he left me after the war. We didn’t have any children, but I’ve ‘grown-up’ the children and grandchildren of my brothers. All my life, I have worked in someone else’s house, washing, ironing and cleaning. Sometimes I got $30.00 for a month. I always got rations. In 1976, I began getting a ‘pension’ of some sort, but I didn’t really know what it was for, or how much it was. The manager’s wife looked after all our cheques and gave us maybe $20.00 cash a fortnight. My old blind mother [Blind Annie] needed me to help her get around and I was tired of always doing other people’s work. I wanted to sit down quietly for a while. I wanted to be able to dance for my Dreamings. But my pension stopped. The manager’s wife said I was running around too much. She said I would have to work for my mother’s pension to make it ‘a little bit easy’. I was not able to go to school because I was always working. The children here still have no school. If I had learnt to read and write, I could ask the Social Security mob about my cheques. It is too late for me to learn now, unless we had a special teacher for grown-ups. I can speak a couple of Aboriginal languages and ‘hear’ [i.e. understand] a few others, but I can’t write letters or read papers.

Murphy Japanangka:

When I was a child I worked at Elkedra. We worked like men. There was lots of tucker but no money. We worked all day and had to do jobs properly. I remember running away several times. Once the policeman caught me and gave me a hiding with a piece of rope. I had run away from the stock camp. I learnt if I wanted to really get away I should take a horse. That way I could move faster. We used to drive from here to Alice Springs. Once when we got to Alice Springs with the cattle, the train was held up so we had to wait about five weeks for the train. We kept the horses on the flat near Jay Creek. Other cattle came in from the Top End. It was a long trip. We’d drove in the cold weather time. I still see some of the old blokes from that time around now. My father used to drove all the way to Oodnadatta. He used to tell Dick and me about how they started from Elkedra with Kennedy and Riley’s cattle and went all the way South.

46 Myrtle has taken much of the responsibility for rearing these children. In this sense, she has grown them up. Such fostering is common in large families in Aboriginal communities throughout Australia.
47 Myrtle is ritually a very important lady and certain yawalyu (women’s ceremonies) cannot be staged without her. The pension payments ceased because certain forms were not returned to Social Security, and Myrtle did not discover the actual nature of the benefit until January 1977.
I remember the old managers at Kurundi — Birchmore, Cronin, George Crombie, Jim Matthew, Tom Barker and Richter. It was during their time I went to work at the coal mine for Kurinelli. Jack Foul was the boss then. I can remember the Army chucking away bread and apples at Barrow Creek and Muldoon, the policeman who gave Nelson and me our names.

All my life, I've worked for other people and now I want this piece of land to live on and break horses for ourselves. I'm not working for Kurundi again without a contract. We should be paid holiday money, but we got nothing. We need to look around to find a really good place to make a permanent camp where we can build proper houses. Ngurrantiji is good for now, but I don't know whether we will always camp here. We will always look after it. Until we have our horses and things off Kurundi and at Ngurrantiji, we really can't think about what to do next. We need to find out if the government will help us. We will never work for Kurundi until we have work contracts and know where we stand. We are not working for nothing.

Nelson Japanangka:

I grew up around Hatches Creek and worked for Riley as a house-boy, cutting wood and gardening when I was small. When I got older, there was plenty of work mustering, droving and breaking. I used to tail the horses and was quick as a flash. One horse fell on me and I broke my collar bone. It just healed and now I have a bump there. If I sit in one place, like driving a car, I get very stiff and sore.

Old Kennedy was 'proper cheeky'. He'd tie us to a tree with a chain or rope. One night I tried to run away from the station. I went with Mickey's brother, Two Bob, Johnny Nothing, Walter and Tommy. Henry Lalfret, the policeman from Hatches Creek, came after us. They sent two blokes on horseback to catch us. We were tied overnight to a tree. Talk about mosquitoes! Riley came up in the morning with bullock rope used to catch bullocks with. Only Walter and me got a hiding. He really laid into me. I tried to defend myself by grabbing at him, but I was too small. I reckon I was about eight. I was too busy crying to know how many times I was hit. Another time, Riley came on horseback to chase us. He had a stock-whip. He really used to get into Walter for fighting all the time. Riley was a big man. He worked at Elkedra nearly all his life.

I've worked for Kurundi with no proper wages for sixteen years. I reckon I've helped grow this place up, but we don't know where we stand with wages. We hear that there is no money from cattle, but then the owner's son comes here and uses a helicopter to muster. We want to know from the start what we are getting. He doesn't even make us sign for it. It is not the manager's fault. The owner is the
toughest bloke. He doesn't tell you what he is going to give you. We know this country. I walked through here as a boy. It belongs to us through our fathers and grandfathers. We are not asking for handouts of rations. We want to get a horse plant going with some help like maybe a bank loan. The horses are good and we know how to work them. Our children will really have something to be proud of.

Establishment of the Ngurrantji camp

Once they had decided to move, the family had to sort out priorities. These were discussed by men and women separately and together. They needed an economic base, as horse-breaking would not be sufficient. Some mining of local minerals could supplement their incomes. Social Security payments would be the mainstay for some time, but these had not yet arrived. The camp at Ngurrantji could be serviced out of Tennant Creek — so close that its lights could be seen at night from the camp. It was 55 km., at least two hours' travel, to 'the Bitumen', then a further 80 km. to Tennant Creek, but a road could possibly be cut through to the north. Water was also a problem: the creek at Ngurrantji was good, but could easily be polluted by dogs and children. They would have to look around for a permanent camp site but, for the time being, Ngurrantji was a sensible base. A survey of water resources had indicated likely sites for bores, but the men felt they knew the country better and wanted a further survey. Schooling for their children would be a problem at Ngurrantji: to get a teacher they needed to have an adequate water supply, but that would take at least a year. They wanted to establish gardens, but without money for seed or water, it was difficult. They wanted adequate shelter, but without money, they could not buy materials and could not afford the petrol to transport their existing shelters from Kurundi. Schooling, water, access, shelter, as well as economic base — how to allocate priorities? Where to start? Finally, they decided the only way to achieve independence was to move to the Ngurrantji site and work out priorities from there.

On 9 February 1977, Nelson and Dorrie and their seven children, Margaret and Murphy and their seven children, Dick and Alice and their four children, with Myrtle, Johnny Kurundi, and Sandy received $230.00 worth of E.P.O.s from D.A.A. at Warrabri, purchased food, packed and prepared to leave Warrabri. I was with them as they set out for Ngurrantji. After dark that evening, we made camp at the half-way camp on McLaren Creek, drank tea, and then slept. The next morning, Murphy returned to Warrabri to collect more people and goods. The women cooked and washed, while Nelson and I inspected the road north and talked about the country and the future.

Murphy returned late in the afternoon, and we set off again along the new road north from McLaren to Ngurrantji. There was rain about but not enough to affect the condition of the road. We camped that evening...
at Ngurrantiji. Two shades were already erected there: one belonged to Dick and one to Murphy. Nelson slept near his vehicle. The women had a wind-break and shelter constructed the previous December, since improved and extended. Ngurrantiji is a beautiful site: a good creek, a rocky rise with caves, plenty of firewood, a high flat place to camp. That night we slept on the ground. In the morning, Myrtle woke and stretched. 'How do you feel?' I asked. 'Beautiful', she replied. That day, we explored the surrounding country, gathered some bush tucker and organised the women's camp. The men went out hunting and shot an emu. Some people remained in the camp; they discussed the problem of access roads and their financial situation. The mood of the camp was hopeful and enthusiastic.

During the week following their arrival at Ngurrantiji, Myrtle, with Nelson and Dorrie and their seven children and her mother, Old Fanny, plus Dick and Alice and her mother Minnie and her brothers Adam, Jackal, Syd and William and his wife Margaret, together with Murphy and Margaret and their six children and Old Friday McLaren camped at Ngurrantiji. They planned to have others join them. By the end of the week, a fine misty rain was soaking the camp, and more elaborate shelters were built. The men were still discussing their plans. They wanted to muster their horses, but petrol was low and they had no money to purchase more, so I suggested that we drive into Tennant Creek and request an E.P.O. for petrol. Nelson in his vehicle led the way across country which he knew on horseback but not by car, and I followed in my Toyota. This was the track they hoped to develop as an access road. It entailed crossing two wide sandy creeks and much winding between ant hills, and it came onto a network of roads on the Seismic Station controlled by the Australian National University, a restricted area. Clearly this was not an ideal access road. Permission could be granted for use on certain occasions, but it was not a road for regular use. In January 1978, the people at Ngurrantiji were still using the road which follows McLaren Creek and then heads north to Ngurrantiji.

D.A.A. did provide an order for petrol, Nelson undertaking to repay it when his Social Security benefit arrived. He returned to Ngurrantiji, while Myrtle and I went to Warrabri to collect more bedding and belongings and to discuss education needs with the head teacher there. On 14 February, we met D.A.A. personnel who had arranged with C.L.C. to join us at Warrabri and then travel to Ngurrantiji. In my vehicle, Myrtle and I took large quantities of food and the medicines we had obtained for the Community Health Centre in Tennant Creek three days earlier. As soon as we arrived at Ngurrantiji, Myrtle began treating the 'bung eyes', cutting and shampooing the children's hair and treating them for head lice, and drying and cleaning out their ears. We sat down and discussed the contents of the roughly improvised medical kit. I drew pictures on the labels to indicate dosage and purpose. Myrtle continued her
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eye, ear and hair programme with the children after I left; it was so successful that when we next met in Tennant Creek in early March, all the children were free of lice as well as eye and ear infections.48

Next day heavy rain threatened. The men showed Freddie Pepperel and John Chudleigh from D.A.A., and an old friend of the Kurundi mob, Peter Dixon, around the camp and discussed the problems of Ngurrantiji. As the storm clouds mounted, the D.A.A. party decided to leave, although the C.L.C. party had not yet arrived. Regretfully, I packed and left with the D.A.A. party. I had hoped to return next day, when my vehicle was repaired, but was isolated at Warrabri during a fortnight of rain. The Ngurrantiji mob were cut off in their camp and the D.A.A. officers could not leave Tennant Creek. We found the C.L.C. officers waiting when we returned to Warrabri, but the Ngurrantiji road would be impassable for some time. We were all stranded.

On Friday, 18 February, the Ngurrantiji mob ran out of food and began to walk into Tennant Creek. They slept five nights and walked five days in wet uncomfortable conditions. Jeffrey, aged sixteen months, was the only person carried. All the others walked, even Old Fanny, aged over seventy. Before deciding to walk into Tennant Creek, the people at Ngurrantiji assessed their situation. Myrtle told me later that she would have stayed, but they worried about the children starving. Their camp was still new and not adequately provisioned to withstand weeks of isolation from the provisions of Tennant Creek and McLaren Creek station, and it was impossible to support so large a group by hunting in such wet conditions in country long ravaged by cattle. Now they realise it would have been feasible to send a messenger for help, but in February 1977, they felt too insecure to rely on an unknown response. If they had had radio contact with Tennant Creek, this trek might not have been necessary.49 Dick Riley gave me this detailed account of their march:

We were low on tucker. The rain was really hard on Tuesday and just kept going all week. We couldn’t do much hunting. We were cold and wet and knew we’d be hungry in a couple of days. On Saturday, old Mickey decided to set out for Tennant Creek. We needed food. He was going for help. There were thirty-one of us left in the camp. Nelson, Dorrie and their seven kids; me, Alice and Bruce; Murphy, Margaret and their six kids; Minnie (Alice’s mother), Alice’s brothers Syd, Jackal, Adam and William and his wife; Old Friday, Mollie (Alice’s sister), Amos (Fanny’s nephew), Myrtle and Fanny (Dorrie’s mother).

[Sunday (20 February):] We loaded the Toyota and moved half mile down creek to higher ground. We bogged the Toyota two times. We had it loaded with our remaining food — some flour, tea, sugar, milk

48 Health at Ngurrantiji has remained good. Myrtle excludes any visitors with scabies until their blankets have been boiled and treatment begun.

49 The rainfall of February 1977 isolated many other communities in Central Australia, but they were able to receive food drops.
and Weetbix. We wrapped our matches and ammunition in our swags. Nelson brought his rifle, but the ammunition got wet in the end. We also had a tomahawk. We slept on a ridge, but it was cold and wet. Nelson built a bit of a humpy with a ground sheet. I had a calico, Myrtle and Fanny had a rubber sheet, Murphy had a calico.

**Monday 21 February:** It rained really hard and we only got about one and a half miles. We left the Toyota and decided to foot walk. We had tea, sugar and flour, but it was a little hard to make a good fire. We just put hot water onto the flour and ate it that way. We ran into another storm. Alice and I went a different way to dodge the water. Myrtle said: "Let them go, we'll walk this way". She was walking with old Fanny all the way. When we camped, Nelson came across to find us before dark. We were on the other side of the water. We followed the Yilariji Creek to where it joins another creek. From there on we only had to cross a big creek to get to Tennant. That part took us two days.

**Tuesday 22 February:** It didn't rain so much on Tuesday and we were able to camp on the flat. We managed to travel about seven or eight miles. We were following the creek and looking for a good place to cross. We still had a little bit of tea, flour and sugar. We began crossing the flooded creek. It was four feet deep in places and fifty yards across. One of Nelson's dogs was swept downstream and he chased it for 150 yards. Murphy and Nelson worked with a stick to get everyone across the water. It was running fast. It was up to my waist. We tied everyone up to pull them across. The children went first. Bruce carried little Jeffrey, Dorrie and Nelson's baby. The water was strong and some of us were weak ones. Especially Old Fanny. We crossed Morgan Creek too, but it wasn't so wide, but we still had to help the little ones across. Nelson lost one boot that day and Alice lost the other one for him later. Jonah had lost his hat on Tuesday. We ate some Weetbix and milk, when we got across. I was chewing tobacco all the way and Old Fanny reckons she got drunk on it. Nelson says he ran out.

**Wednesday 23 February:** We made it to Murtalki Bore this day. Some of us left our swags there. Nelson came back for his but I think mine is still there. Murphy kept his till the next day. They were all wet and not much use. We were getting tired. We started getting bush berry and sugar bag [honey from tree trunk], once we crossed the creek. It was okay for us. We would keep going but we worried for the children. We saved some flour and milk for them. Minnie's boys, my brothers-in-law, decided to push on ahead of us. They didn't know this country but they had seen the lights of Tennant Creek from Ngurrantiji and headed for that. They took a short-cut through the bush. They camped at Nobles Nob on Thursday and got into Tennant on Friday. Some people at Nobles Nob helped them out with food.
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[Thursday 24 February:] We camped the night in Warramunga country. We got up really early in the morning and Nelson and Old Friday went on the two miles to the house at the Seismic Station. They hoped to get some tobacco or food. No one was there. We felt we have to keep walking. Bruce was sick that day. Myrtle had brought some of the medicine she and Diane got in Tennant Creek so we rested and gave him some medicine. He had been vomiting but got better. We ate sugar bag and felt better. We were not sick, just weak. Myrtle said the men travelled harder than the women because they are usually on horseback. Nelson had a limp for a while.

[Friday 25 February:] In the morning about nine o’clock, we met Old Mickey. He had tucker with him. We just sat on the side of the road and ate it. We kept going and got past Nobles Nob almost to Pekko Mine. D.A.A. arrived with mobs of tucker — fish, meat, bread, tea and sugar. They went back to get another car and took two trips for us all to get into Tennant Creek. Me, Murphy and Nelson waited until last. We just sat down in Tennant Creek for a while after that. First at the Village and then we moved camp to the east side.

Of the consequences of the trek and their stay in Tennant Creek Dick Riley said:

We were without our vehicle for some time and still had to get E.P.O.s for food. Freddy Pepperell from D.A.A. tried to help us get the car out [the car became bogged the day after the group left Ngurrantiji for Tennant Creek], but the road was too boggy. Warrabri was also cut off all this time. We tried lots of times to get that car. We wanted to get back. D.A.A. helped us. In March, we finally managed to get the Toyota out of the bog at Ngurrantiji. We brought back some of our gear to Tennant Creek. We were still waiting for our money. We want to live again at Ngurrantiji, but the D.A.A. say maybe it is not such a good place.

The heavy rain of February 1977 and the delay in receiving unemployment benefits were disruptive. The people stuck, nevertheless, to their plan to get their horses to Ngurrantiji. I visited the Ngurrantiji mob on 11 March 1977 in Tennant Creek and suggested to Myrtle that she act as Health Worker for the trachoma programme to begin the next week. Myrtle and I spent several days in Alice Springs at a training course and Myrtle earned $100.00 a week for the three-week programme. This was the first cash that a member of the group had received. While in Alice Springs, we discussed the problems facing the Ngurrantiji mob with

During 1976 and 1977 teams led by Professor Fred Hollows, an ophthalmologist of the University of New South Wales Medical School, treated large numbers of Aboriginal and white people in the Northern Territory. Their three-week trachoma treatment scheme in this area offered employment and training for local Aboriginal people as Health Workers.
officers of the C.L.C., C.A.A.L.A.S. and certain other people sympathetic to the problems of the Ngurrantiji people. Several members of the Quaker Race Relations Committee were taking part in the trachoma programme, and they suggested that we ask for financial assistance from their organisation. I wrote a brief history of the walk-off and sent it to their office, and two weeks later, a cheque for $100.00 with promises of further support came from Sydney. The Quaker response delighted the people of Ngurrantiji. Officers of the C.L.C. visited the Ngurrantiji mob on 28 March 1977 in Tennant Creek; they discussed with them plans for the future, and arranged to visit Ngurrantiji after the people returned to their camp. In late March 1977, the Ngurrantiji people returned to the task of establishing their settlement.

When I went to Canberra in January 1978, they were still at Ngurrantiji. Officers of the C.L.C. had visited and begun the work of documenting their claim to the land there. Individual vegetable plots were well established; their shelters had been improved; the camp had been cleared and was swept regularly. The camp arrangement had become more complex: special areas were set aside for vehicle repairs (undertaken by Nelson, a skilful mechanic), gardens, meat storage, and goat and horse paddocks. Myrtle had walked goats across from McLaren Station. Goats, like gardens, required constant attention, and in August 1977 Dick and Murphy had brilliantly improvised a drip irrigation system using a 44-gallon drum, which allowed the gardeners some relief from watering their plots. Watermelons have been grown with great success, and tomatoes, sweet corn, pumpkins and beans were grown by individual families for their own consumption. There was no surplus. Some supplies are purchased in Tennant Creek, and meat is obtained from McLaren Station when kills are made, and from hunting: the proportion varies according to season, other commitments and availability of vehicles. Gardens, goats, hunting and gathering wild foods are all important components of the evolving life style at Ngurrantiji. Ngurrantiji has now become a permanent camp, but there is still the possibility of establishing other centres close by. At present, there is a 'halfway camp' on the McLaren River which is comparable to Ngurrantiji in its essential features and resources, but is closer to Kurundi and 'the Bitumen'. The people at Ngurrantiji hoped that other members of their families now living at Warrabri, Tennant Creek and nearby stations would join them. The men especially wanted Albert Murphy, Old Long Jack, Murphy's son Ronnie, Nelson's son Teddy, Albert's son Alfie, Old Ned, Leslie Foster, Young Johnny and Edward. The men have removed all their horses from Kurundi, placing them in well constructed yards at Ngurrantiji, but they had only one saddle of their own and one they had borrowed from Mr. Cluff at Epenarra.

51 This Sydney-based committee of the annual meeting of the Society of Friends represents the Society in race relations issues.
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When I was able to make a brief return visit in July 1978, I found much progress had been made. Current plans for development reflect their improved economic situation, since the Ngurrantiji mob had received a $27,000 Relocation Grant which is managed through the Tennant Creek D.A.A. office. Nelson and John Chudleigh had made a trip to Alice Springs in March 1978 to price and inspect the kinds of equipment the community might purchase, and after a full discussion, the people had bought two fifteen cubic foot freezers, a tractor and trailer, two chain saws, two lighting plants, a three-point rotary hoe, a water tank, pump and motor, and various gardening tools. In addition to their Toyota, they now have a five-ton Dodge truck, financed by an A.B.T.F. grant.

The character of the camp had undergone a subtle change. Following the death of Blind Annie on 6 February 1978, the camp was moved to the west side of the waterhole, where new shelters were constructed. In deciding the uses of their grant, the Ngurrantiji mob used their own priorities, not those of white advisors. When I asked about the purposes of three concrete-block sheds being built to the Warramunga Housing Association design, the people told me they had always been able to provide shelter for themselves, but tractors, saddles and freezers needed the white man’s kind of shelter: thus, one shed was for the tractor, one for equipment, and the third for food storage. With their new equipment, they have been able to cut and grade a new and shorter access road which meets the Stuart Highway a few miles north of Kelly’s Well. Improvements to the water supply are under way: a tank is to be erected on the ridge above the creek (which still contained good drinking water when I visited). New gardens are planned, but instead of the individual plots of 1977, they intend to plough a larger area on the site of their old horse yards. They expect to expand their horse-breaking work and contract mustering.

The homeland movement in the Northern Territory is indeed the beginning of a new era of economic relationships between black and white Australians. In the 1930s and 1940s there were fears that a falling Aboriginal birth rate would mean a shortage of labour in the cattle industry. But the Aboriginal population is now young and rapidly increasing, and the problem today is that of massive unemployment, largely due to technological changes in the cattle industry. Distribution of rations has been replaced by payment of Social Security benefits directly to individuals. But groups such as the Ngurrantiji mob, and others as far apart as Papunya and Yirrkala, are expressing more than a desire to find economic security on outstations or homeland centres. In many cases, the cash income per head is lower on outstations than on

52 See Stanner 1935: 17; Berndt and Berndt 1948: 16.
settlements, where some paid work is available. Trends now emerging indicate that Aboriginal priorities, preferences, and approaches to planning their future may differ substantially from those articulated by white administrators. Both Doolan's\(^5\) account of events on pastoral properties in the Victoria River District in 1972-73 and Gray's\(^4\) analysis of trends in the decentralisation movement in Arnhem Land reveal similar motives in the establishment of independent communities: all of these groups desired opportunities to live on their own land and make their own decisions. Obviously, this movement requires some financial assistance just because few Aborigines have been able to accumulate cash savings during their working lives. A flexible approach to Social Security payments is also necessary. Rowley\(^6\) has argued that contact with the cash economy has in fact limited economic choices for Aborigines. But the homeland movement, if given the kind of support advocated by Doolan and Gray, will expand their opportunities. The Kurundi walk-off and the establishment of Ngurrantiji obviously has much in common with the 1966 walk-off by the Kurintji (Gurindji) and the subsequent establishment of Dagaragu (Wattie Creek). In both it is evident that the Aboriginal participants established their own priorities and stated these clearly.

During the years of pastoral boom the false notion of the ‘slow worker’ was current, and it was claimed the Aborigines should not be paid a full wage because it took three to do the work of one European.\(^6\) However, as the Berndts and Kelly\(^7\) document, Aborigines have always been essential to the Northern Territory cattle industry. Their superior knowledge of the terrain and their ability to handle animals were prized work skills. What was often exploited was their attachment to a particular portion of land. It was generally assumed that if an Aboriginal stockman remained on a station, he was content. But Aborigines employed under conditions they find far from ideal will remain if they are in their own ‘country’. To take work in another ‘country’, even if it is the only work available, is rarely viewed as a real option. Working on Kurundi meant that men and women were able to move about their country and look after if properly. This is the centre of dog dreaming country; a little to the north of the station is the pile of stones that shows where the dog had its pups; a red cliff nearby is the place where the dog’s brains were splattered. Such sites are sign and symbol of the central truths of their religion; such knowledge is their heritage and its maintenance is their major obligation. Aboriginal workers’ reluctance to leave a station or to agitate for improvement in conditions must be

\(^5\) Doolan 1977:106ff.
\(^6\) Rowley 1971:217.
\(^7\) Berndt and Berndt 1946:9; Kelly 1966-67:9.
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understood in terms of their religious beliefs and duties.

The economic downturn in the pastoral industry during the 1970s has encouraged employers to assert that economic viability depended on cheap labour. Negotiation for equal wages has been tedious and non-productive for most Aborigines, and years of unfulfilled promises have left most workers somewhat cynical about government, union and other interventions. They expect to be exploited by pastoralists, whether the industry can support equal wages or not. In forming homeland centres, Aborigines are expressing their frustration with the leisurely pace of legal action, and asserting their ties to their land and their desire for privacy, family unity and control of their own affairs. They have shown that they can and will utilise their own resources and initiative to form their own camps, where they can develop a new life style that embodies features of the cash economy but is governed by their own value system. The move from Kurundi expressed many of these considerations. It was in part an industrial action against one station, but it expressed the shared wish of the families there to establish themselves in an independent camp with some autonomy, a move which had been thwarted before. A number of camp sites on station land could have been chosen, but in view of their past failure to negotiate successfully with the management, they decided to move onto vacant Crown land a reasonable distance from Kurundi. The D.A.A. now considers Ngurrantiji a successful venture; the people themselves are proud of their new beginning.

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How much did Aborigines normally know about Europeans before the arrival of the first permanent settlers? The amount and nature of that information was probably a vital influence on Aboriginal behaviour and, as a corollary, coloured European perception of indigenous society at the 'instant of contact'. But as with any question about the far side of the frontier this is difficult to answer conclusively. Existing evidence is scattered and inadequate and while oral history may uncover new sources of information much of it will relate to the twentieth century and the more remote parts of the continent. This paper considers material about nineteenth century Queensland found in the accounts of castaway or runaway Europeans, explorers, pioneer settlers and the early ethnographers.

We know that Aboriginal groups were using European commodities long before the arrival of pioneer settlers, a fact confirmed by many accounts of explorers and frontier squatters. Thus on his expedition into Central Queensland in 1846 Mitchell noted the dissemination of steel axes. 'Even here', he wrote on the Belyando, 'in the heart of the interior on a river utterly unheard of by white men, an iron tomahawk glittered on high in the hands of a chief'. Lumholtz, who lived with the Aborigines in the Herbert River hinterland in the 1880s, observed how sought after steel axes were. He also remarked that tobacco was bartered over long distances, wrapped in leaves, and was therefore 'known among remote tribes who have never themselves come into contact with Europeans'. While on his expedition into Cape York Robert Jack noted how 'the natives fashion, with infinite pains, such unconsidered trifles of old iron as shovels, broken pick heads, scraps of iron hoops, ship's bolts, telegraph wires, nails, cartwheel tires, and the like into weapons and implements'. A North Queensland pioneer referred to spears and many other steel tools which the blacks kept in 'a wonderful state of sharpness, and have fitted to handles in a very neat and artistic manner'. Other writers mentioned such 'transitional' artifacts as shear blades sharpened at both edges with handle affixed, spears edged with bottle glass chips let into grooves, axes made from old

1 Birdsell 1970:130.
2 Mitchell 1848:325.
3 Lumholtz 1889.
4 Jack 1881:239.
5 Palmer, Queenslander, 31 January 1873.
horse shoes, three pronged fishing spears barbed with sail needles, wooden clubs studded with iron nails. But clearly material objects were not the only things which were passed back beyond the frontier of European settlement.

In traditional society words, ceremonies and information were exchanged over wide areas of the continent. Ethnographers like Howitt and Threlkeld described the role of the tribal messengers, ‘their living newsmongers’, who quickly conveyed information from tribe to tribe. Writing of north-western Queensland Roth explained how ideas are interchanged, superstitions and traditions handed on from district to district, and more or less modified and altered in transit... new words and terms are picked up, and... corroborees are learnt and exchanged just like any other commodities.

But is there any direct evidence of the passage of information about Europeans?

In the earliest period of contact Europeans were often thought to be spirits returned from the dead. This was especially true when whites arrived from the sea. But as settlers pushed back the land frontier this belief was rapidly dispelled: pastoralists and their servants were only too corporeal. Bracewell, the convict escapee, reported that in 1842 there was a large meeting of Aborigines from a wide area of south-east Queensland, many with no direct experience of Europeans. Aborigines from the south made mention of a great number of Blacks belonging to different Tribes... perhaps 30 men, women and children, having died in consequence of food given them by white men at a station in the mountains where there were many sheep, horses and a tent: They described the following symptoms with minuteness: swelling of the head, foaming at the mouth, violent retching... trembling of the limbs and sudden prostration.

James Morrill, who lived for seventeen years with the Aborigines of the Townsville-Bowen region, described the way in which news of the Europeans passed back and forth among North Queensland Aborigines before settlement overflowed across the Kennedy district in the early 1860s. As soon as Morrill and his fellow castaways began to pick up the local language they were told that news of their unexpected arrival had already been disseminated widely and that when the dry season came ‘a great many other tribes’ were coming to see them. During the 1850s information about several European expeditions reached Morrill,

6 Gunson 1974:1, 48; see also Howitt 1904.
7 Roth 1897:136.
9 Return of Mr Petrie from excursion to the North (N.S.W. Col. Sec. 42/4284).
10 Morrill 1863:12.
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for he found that 'news soon spreads from tribe to tribe'. From 1850 to 1860, he wrote,

before the whites commenced destroying the blacks indiscriminately, the northern tribes were very well disposed towards the whites. In 1855 it was reported among the tribe I was with, that a party of whites were to the north... About six months after this I heard of another party of whites; they were said to be to the North-West of Mount Elliot, half way between that and the Gulf, and were described as having a large number of horses and cattle.¹¹

About three years before he was 'discovered' by two frontier shepherds, Morrill heard from a distant tribe information about a white man who had been seen with two horses. The interloper fired in amongst a mortuary party, killing one young man, but was subsequently lured from his horse and killed in turn by the avenging Aborigines. Another report followed, concerning further killings by a group of both white and black men on horseback. When the news arrived Morrill was told about the saddles for the men to sit in, the stirrups and bridles, about guns, and the noise and smoke they made when fired. Information reached Morrill with increasing frequency as the wave of settlement washed closer. He remarked that from this time forward he received almost daily reports of the whites:

I shortly after heard of the cattle being on the river in great numbers, and of a man being on horseback with a stock-whip which he cracked, and they thought it was a gun. They saw him get off the horse and drink some water with his hands, but the water being hot, he scraped the sand aside and got some cool water; a little black dog was with him lying on the sands.¹²

Barbara Thompson, a castaway contemporary of Morrill, reported a similar rapid dissemination of information about Europeans in the Cape York-Torres Strait area, where 'news went at once throughout the islands'.¹³ John Jardine, writing from the Somerset settlement, confirmed her testimony. 'The communication', he wrote,

between the islanders and the natives of the mainland is frequent, and the rapid manner in which news is carried from tribe to tribe to great distances is astonishing. I was informed of the approach of "HMS Salamander" on her last visit two days before her arrival here. Intelligence is conveyed by means of fires made to throw smoke up in different forms, or by messengers who perform long and rapid journeys.¹⁴

Howitt made similar observations in the opposite corner of the colony. While camped on the Barcoo in 1861 he found that messengers from up

¹¹ Morrill, Rockhampton Bulletin, 1 July 1865.
¹² Morrill 1863:15.
¹⁴ Byerley 1867:85.
to 150 miles away had on several occasions arrived to inform the local Aborigines about the progress of McKinlay’s contemporaneous expedition:

The first reported that he was surrounded by flood waters, and, after some time, that the waters had fallen and that he had “thrown away” his cart, and was gone northwards they knew not where. These messengers came from the tribe living where Birdsville is situated. The account given on McKinlay’s movements was correct.... This shows how news is carried from one tribe to another, in this case for a distance of about a hundred and fifty miles at least.15

Roth found that the blacks from Glen Ormiston in the north-west knew all about the central telegraph line three hundred or so miles away to the west.16 Archibald Meston, an enthusiastic collector of Aboriginal oral history, met an old man near Townsville in 1881 who related how news of an expedition (Meston assumed Kennedy’s) had come down the coast from Cardwell many years before. His informant was able to relate precise details about the party, including the number of men, horses, sheep, drays and dogs.17

Other relevant scraps of evidence can be adduced. Explorers and pioneers often found that previously uncontacted Aborigines knew about and were terrified of guns, a fact corroborated by oral testimony collected by Dick Roughsey on Mornington Island. His father heard of guns well before he had seen any Europeans. Mainland Aborigines related how ‘these white people could kill a man with thunder that sent down invisible spears to tear a hole in his body and spill his blood in the sand’.18 Recent linguistic studies suggest an early spread of information about guns. The word markin or makini, derived from musket, was used over a wide area of Queensland, by the Gugu Badhun in the Upper Burdekin, the Dyirbal in the northern rainforest, the Kalkatungu of the Mount Isa region and the Budjara of the Charleville area.19

Thomas Mitchell and the pioneer pastoralist Alan Macpherson both reported from southern Queensland that Aborigines with no previous direct contact used the words ‘white-fellow’ when talking among themselves, along with such pidgin terms as ‘wheelbarrow’ for dray and ‘yarraman’ for horse.20 Leichhardt found that Aborigines on the Comet uttered a cry, on seeing the explorers, resembling the word ‘whitefellow, whitefellow’.21

15 Howitt 1904:685.
16 Roth 1897:136.
17 Meston 1893.
19 Personal communication with Peter Sutton.
21 Leichhardt 1847:90.
Many Aboriginal groups would have had experience of European animals which strayed out beyond the frontiers of white settlement. Morrill described how four stray cows were seen in his district but his kinsmen obviously examined the arrivals with the keen observation of the hunter-gatherer. They showed him the tracks and described the teats, big ears and horns. Morrill questioned them about them; they said three had teats and one had none... I told them they were what we ate, and they chaffed me about the great size, long tails, big ears and horns.22

Previously uncontacted Aborigines were often terrified of horses but in some places they appear to have had prior knowledge of them, either from direct experience with stray animals or by means of information passed on from groups in contact with Europeans. Mitchell noted this when on the Belyando in 1846. 'It was', he wrote, 'remarkable that on seeing the horses they exclaimed “Yarraman”, the colonial natives name for a horse, and that of these animals they were not at all afraid'.23 The Dyirbal people of North Queensland tell a story relating to their ancestors' discovery of a stray horse. Though awed by the animal's size they eventually killed it, closely examined it, and then experimentally cooked and ate some of the flesh.24

Aborigines were often made rapidly aware of the ecological impact of the exotic animals. Morrill's tribesmen described to him how a herd of cattle had drunk all the water in a favourite water-hole and that they had been too frightened to dash forward and pick up the stranded fish.25 Mitchell made similar observations. With an Aboriginal guide he was looking for small secluded waterholes only to find that they had been trampled into hard clay by a herd of cattle. 'Thus it is', he mused, 'that the aborigines first became sensible of the approach of the white man'.26

With settlers establishing themselves the Aborigines appear to have often adopted a policy of cautious surveillance. A Crown Lands Commissioner noted on a journey along the Dawson Valley that his camp was 'occasionally visited and watched by natives prowling about secretly in the middle of the night'.27 It seems that old women or children were often sent to spy on the Europeans on the assumption that they would arouse less suspicion. Morrill related that with the arrival of the first party of settlers old women were despatched to watch the newcomers. They returned with a detailed report:

22 Morrill 1863:14.
23 Mitchell 1848:270.
24 Tape 12a, Murray Upper, Oral History Collection, History Department, James Cook University.
25 Morrill 1863:15.
26 Mitchell 1848:69.
27 W.H. Wiseman to Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands, 5 January 1865 (QSA, CCL, 7/61).
They brought word back that there was a large hut, and that they had seen red and white blankets hanging on the stockyard fences and heard a dog bark, and an old sheep bleating tied to a tree, they also heard the report of a gun twice, but could not see where it came from.\textsuperscript{28} Accounts of explorers and pioneers contain many reports of sudden and unexpected meetings with small groups of blacks. Perhaps the Aborigines concerned were less surprised by such encounters than the whites imagined.

White-Aboriginal relations did not begin anew in every district despite the pioneers' widespread perception about entering an untouched wilderness. European commodities had preceded the bullock dray along with information about the settlers' weapons and behaviour. Aborigines responded to the newcomers armed with knowledge and expectations about them. Any interpretation of the contact situation must keep this fact constantly in mind. Serious doubt must also be cast on the value of projects which aim to collate reports of explorers and pioneers in order to reconstruct a picture of traditional society as it was at the instant of contact. Aborigines were almost certainly aware of the approach of overlanding parties and reacted in advance to the intrusion with clans scattering to avoid contact or coalescing from fear, or curiosity, or a desire for European goods. It seems most unlikely that accounts of explorers and frontiersmen will provide, as Birdsell has argued, 'valid materials about group size under specified circumstances of place and season'.\textsuperscript{29} We must seriously ask if encroaching Europeans were ever able to examine Aboriginal society in its pristine condition, to observe things as they would have been if they themselves had not been there.

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\textsuperscript{28} Morrill 1863:16.
\textsuperscript{29} As projected by Birdsell and Stanner (Birdsell 1970:130, 136).
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Top left: Janbuyin (Hicky Hood)
Centre left: Munguj (Maudie)
Bottom: Roper River Overland Telegraph Camp, 1871-72.

— Courtesy of State Library of South Australia.
Elsey Station has been a familiar name to most Australians since the 1908 publication of Jeannie Gunn’s popular *We of the never-never*. She came to the Elsey in 1902 as the wife of the newly-appointed station manager Aeneas Gunn, and much of her narrative describes her rather uncommon situation as a woman in the man’s world of the pastoral north. Her attitude toward the Aborigines who lived and worked at Elsey Station was plainly one of sympathy, and admiration for what she saw to be their good qualities, but *We of the never-never* and her 1905 story, *The little black princess*, show no profound concern for, or understanding of, the shattering impact of pastoral development on the Aborigines of this area.

A second book about Elsey Station was written by the pastoralist Harold E. Thonemann, who with E.H. Thonemann bought the Elsey leases together with the nearby Hodgson Downs property in 1914. His 1949 *Tell the white man*, based on the life history of an Aboriginal woman, conveys much more of the Aboriginal view of the pastoral occupation of their traditional lands, the disruption of their culture, and their own enforced dependence on the station.

‘Making people quiet’ is the vivid phrase that some present-day Elsey Aborigines use to describe the treatment of their ancestors in the early days of pastoral settlement, when Northern Territory Aborigines were generally regarded as a ‘problem’, a menace to stock and stockmen alike. The need to develop the north was generally accepted by Australians, and the ‘Aboriginal question’ was then phrased in terms of controlling Aborigines, keeping them from the cattle and, if possible, converting them into an economic asset.

The history of ‘pacification’ of the pastoral north is still fairly fragmentary, and researchers have only recently begun to make any extensive

*The linguistic research on which this paper is based has been supported by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Several months were spend gathering Maŋarayi material in 1977 and work with the Jembere community at Elsey Station is continuing. Others who have worked at Elsey Station include anthropologists A.P. Elkin, John Bern and Jan Larbalestier, and linguist Margaret Sharpe. I am grateful to John Dymock for suggestions about the use of archival materials; to Dr F.H. Bauer, Field Director of the Australian National University’s North Australia Research Unit for his kind permission to cite some of his field notes on pastoral history; to the staff at the Archives, State Library of South Australia, and to Dr James Urry of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies for assistance and advice.
Distribution of language groups and locations in the Elsey area.
use of Aboriginal recollections for historical documentation. The part that Aborigines themselves were forced and encouraged to play in subduing their countrymen and foreign tribesmen has been virtually unrecorded. This paper attempts to reconstruct some of the history of pre-pastoral contact and pastoral settlement, using documentary materials and Aboriginal oral accounts recorded by Elsey residents, descendants of Aborigines who settled at the station in the early years of pastoral occupation. The stories have been selected for their focus on the recruitment of Aborigines to assist in the process of pacification.

The traditional lands of two tribes, the Maŋarayi and Yaŋman, lie partly within the Elsey property. The traditional lands of the Maŋarayi extend from the western headwaters of the Roper River around the present Mataranka, east along the river and other waterways including tributaries, billabongs and lagoons, to approximately Roper Valley and Hodgson Downs Stations (see Map 1). Maŋarayi country includes areas within the present Elsey, Goondooloo, Moroak, Roper Valley and Hodgson Downs leases.

Yaŋman country extends south along Elsey and Birdum Creeks and into the Dry River plateau. Intermarriage between the Maŋarayi and Yaŋman has been extensive, but inquiry into the relation between patrilineal descent groups and ownership of land areas reveals a basic territorial distinctness between the two tribes. Maŋarayi belongs to a language group which includes Alawa, Mara and Wandararan (now very close to linguistic extinction); Yaŋman to a group which includes Wadaman (whose traditional lands lie within Willeroo, Delamere and Inniesvale Stations), Dagoman and on the basis of the small amount of information available, seemingly also Wagiman. The Maŋarayi and Yaŋman languages are not mutually intelligible, but by virtue of close association between the two groups in the Elsey Station area, most speakers of Maŋarayi are able to speak or at least understand Yaŋman, and the small number of fluent and semi-fluent Yaŋman speakers all have good proficiency in Maŋarayi.

1 Among recent works based on Aboriginal accounts are A view of the past: Aboriginal accounts of Northern Territory history compiled by Jay and Peter Read for publication by the Curriculum and Research Branch, Northern Territory Division of the Department of Education; My people's life by Jack Mirritji (Milingimbi Literacy Centre 1976); and other books and literacy materials written by Aborigines at Yuendumu, Lajamanu and other settlements.

2 'Tribe' is here used to mean linguistic group and definable but not strictly bounded social group. This approximation of tribal territories rests on traditional principles of land ownership which cannot be outlined here.

3 A few people remain at Roper Valley Station and other Roper communities who have some knowledge of Wandararan.
The Elsey Station homestead has been shifted several times. In the Gunns’ time it was located at Galyag or Warloch Ponds, later it was moved to Narminingan or Red Lily Lagoon and a few Aborigines remember having helped as children to carry the iron and other materials on their backs to the new site. Today it is situated on the Roper River at McMinn’s Bar (Guyaŋgan). An Aboriginal camp has been associated with the station since the middle of the 1890s. Aboriginal labour was the mainstay of pastoral operations here as elsewhere, but after the granting of equal wages most stations were reluctant to continue supporting large numbers of workers and dependents. Following the 1971 Gibb Committee recommendation for excision of land areas from pastoral properties to establish Aboriginal communities independent of station control, the Elsey camp moved in 1974 to Jembere, a few kilometres upriver from the homestead. By agreement with the station this land is to be excised from the Elsey lease, but excision is currently delayed because a survey had shown that Jembere Community is located on a stock-route, where freehold title cannot legally be granted.

The population of Jembere ranges from forty to about sixty-five depending on the season, availability of stock-work at Elsey and neighbouring stations and people’s need and desire to travel or to visit other communities, mainly in the Roper area. The Maŋarayi constitute the core group at Jembere and Maŋarayi is the community’s primary Aboriginal language.

Throughout their history of station residence Maŋarayi people have continuously occupied some part of their traditional lands and kept in contact with other portions of it through seasonal ‘walkabouts’, shorter bush trips, and also through stockwork. Their feeling of association with their country is very much alive, and the older people especially have vast knowledge of the mythology governing traditional ownership and management of land areas. This continuous occupation contrasts with the fate of many groups removed to missions and settlements far from their home territories, but the traditional life-style of the Aboriginal population in the Elsey area has been altered by pastoral settlement, initiating a dependence on Europeans and European institutions which has both material and psychic aspects. The Jembere people engage in subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering only to a limited extent as availability of natural resources, transportation and other factors permit. For the most part they depend on European commodities. Their cash economy in 1978 relies on welfare benefits, since employment at any of the stations is now sporadic, involving only a few hands or domestic workers for limited periods of time. As these Aborigines have become...

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4 The Gibb Committee was appointed to investigate the situation of Aborigines on pastoral properties in the Northern Territory. Granting of award wages to Aborigines was recommended in 1966 by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.
increasingly sedentary, visits to certain parts of their country have become less frequent and religious observances, maintenance measures and utilisation of resources in many places have been discontinued or are only sporadic. During a visit to Ĺuđuďmińi (Crescent Lagoon, Elsey Station), an important ‘sickness place’ and also a rainmaking site, the Maĝarayi were describing the now-lapsed practices of the jayway, the ‘rainmakers’ of the descent group which owns the area. One of the present owners of Ĺuđuďmińi remarked, ‘I don’t know how we get rain today. Must be we’re just bludging the white man’s rain’.

Early white exploration in the Elsey area resulted in minimal contact with the Aborigines. In 1856 the exploring party commanded by the surveyor A.C. Gregory passed through part of the area which was later to become Elsey Station. Gregory travelled up the Dry River and crossed to a waterway which he named Elsey Creek on 14 July 1856, in honour of Joseph Ravenscroft Elsey, the young surgeon, naturalist and meteorologist of the party. Gregory followed Elsey Creek to its junction with the Roper (already known from the Leichhardt expedition of 1844-45), and travelled along the river for a few miles before turning south towards the present Hodgson Downs. The sole encounter with Aborigines in this area is recorded in Gregory’s journal of 19 July 1856, when several Aborigines who had approached the party unarmed during the day returned at night with spears. Gregory ordered a charge of shot to be fired at them which ‘had the desired effect of compelling them to retreat’.

In 1862 John McDouall Stuart’s fifth exploring expedition crossed Gregory’s track near the Roper. Stuart’s report of the Roper region, praising its abundant water, rich soil and luxuriant native grasses, was one of the factors which encouraged the colonial government of South Australia, looking for ways to satisfy growing demands for new pastoral country, to annex the Northern Territory in 1863. The construction of the Overland Telegraph made the first significant impact on the tribes of the Roper region before pastoral occupation began in the early 1880s. Construction parties were preceded by a surveying expedition led by John Ross, appointed in 1870 by Charles Todd, Postmaster General and Superintendent of Telegraphs in Adelaide. He was accompanied by surveyor William Harvey, Alfred Giles and others. In 1870 the Government Resident in Palmerston (Darwin), Bloomfield Douglas, sent another party to assess the suitability of the Roper River as a secondary port for the landing of supplies by steamship; this resulted in the establishment of a supply depot and encampment at the Roper Landing.

Gregory 1884:159.
Gregory 1884:161.
Of the expeditions’ various diarists, probably the most informative concerning Aborigines is Alfred Giles. His entries of 22, 23 and 24 July 1871 tell of an attempted attack on the surveying party by some Aborigines who had camped nearby, on the western Roper River. Giles made entries in his journal at intervals of several hours during those tense days:

---4 oclock—three natives have just come up bringing five other young men with them whom we have not before seen they gave us to understand that they had been a long way to find them to have a look at us. This however only strengthens my belief that they fully intend attempting attack upon us, and the fresh arrivals are portions of a reinforcement and the lubras [being?] sent away is a pretty sure sign that mischief is brewing. The circle of smoke is getting denser and denser as the night draws on I notice also that several large and hollow trees have been set fire to at about even distances on the east side of the camp to act as beacon lights I shall keep a sharp lookout tonight for the rascals everything is silent but the blazing trees night close a sultry... 7

The Aborigines were forced back by rockets and rifle-fire, and Giles later recovered bundles of spears abandoned as they fled.

The more permanent encampments of the Overland Telegraph, like the Roper Landing depot, attracted Aborigines in large numbers. The journal of R.C. Patterson, the officer-in-charge of the government construction party based at the Roper Landing, 8 records several incidents which illustrate the Aborigines’ and Europeans’ mutual lack of understanding of behaviour and motives. In his 1871-72 entries he tells of chaining two Aboriginal hostages during an attempt to ‘smoke out’ those who had stolen some clothes from the Europeans. Evidently the two men seized (one of whom came into the European camp voluntarily) were not the guilty parties, and Patterson remarks it was ‘by no means clear that the natives understood the cause of their captivity’. 9 The Aborigines attempted to appease their captors:

It transpired that our second captive was the son of the old chief—the native Prince of Wales in fact—they could not make themselves intelligible to us nor we to them. The young fellow kept bawling out to the lubras on the other side and at last the lubras jumped into the water to swim across—It then became evident that our captives

7 Giles, Book 2.
8 The contract for the northern section of the overland cable (Darwin to Tennant Creek) had originally been let to the private Adelaide firm of Darwent and Dalwood. In 1871 this contract was cancelled due to unsatisfactory progress of the work, and a government construction party headed by R.C. Patterson was sent in July 1871 to continue work on the northern section.
9 Patterson 1871-72.
MAKING PEOPLE QUIET

wanted to propitiate the camp by sending for their women, but before they could land on this side we drove them back... 10

Finally Patterson ordered the release of the hostages, since the clothes were clearly not going to be returned, and they were sent back to their camp after having been given a meal and some biscuits for their families. Patterson and other diarists record as a commonplace the use of rifle fire and rocketry to scatter Aborigines from the boats and European camp at the Landing.

The Aborigines quickly appreciated the usefulness of iron, leather, bouilli tins and other items of European material culture, salvaging what they could from abandoned camps and occasionally also stealing into occupied camps while the telegraph workers were absent. R.C. Patterson came upon two Aborigines extracting ironwork from a pair of shafts that a work party had left behind. 11 Tools left on the line overnight were promptly stolen. 12 Bullock drays bogged and abandoned at Red Lily Lagoon were cut up and carried away. 13 Aborigines cut the buckles out of harness left by H. Packard close to Bitter Springs (near the present Mataranka) and cut up the leather. 14

In some areas at least Aboriginal tribesmen attempted to institutionalize trading and protective relationships with telegraph workers after the native fashion. S.W. Herbert wrote of the Larakiya tribe south of Darwin:

... to speak of our experience in connection with the telegraph construction work, I should mention that the Larakeah will exchange names with a white man to whom he takes a special fancy, an act which implies protection, assistance in obtaining food, and warning against danger. 15

Herbert also recorded a native assult on Number Two Depot ninety-seven miles south of Darwin. 16 The Aborigines had at first been given bully-beef and damper by line-workers, but were refused rations as supplies ran low; they immediately attacked the depot but did not succeed in storming the workers' hut. As a result of this incident two mounted troopers were despatched to protect telegraph workers on the northern section of the line. One, trooper Messon, was stationed at Number Two Depot; the second, Sutton, was sent to Elsey Creek where R.C. Burton, one of the government overseers, was camped. This seems to have been the first police presence in the Elsey area.

A few native attacks which resulted in loss of European lives quickly became known at every camp along the line, and are mentioned in almost

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10 Patterson 1871-72.
11 Patterson 1871-72.
12 Herbert, 1870-72:145.
15 Herbert 1870-72:27.
16 Herbert 1870-72:111.
every journal. One of the most frequently recorded incidents was the clubbing to death of John Millner at Attack Creek in the Centre in August 1871. He and his brother Ralph had left Port Augusta in 1870 in an attempt to overland stock (sheep, horses, goats and working bullocks) to Palmerston. After the death Ralph continued north, suffering heavy stock losses due to poisonous plants and other causes.\(^{17}\) Millner arrived at Red Lily Lagoon (Elsey Station) in late 1872, where the surviving stock, in poor condition, was purchased by Patterson to replenish the telegraph parties' supplies.

The death of his brother did not dispose Ralph Millner to leniency towards Aborigines. The vivid recollections of Arthur C. Ashwin, a member of Millner's party, are more candid than many of the journals which hint at violence towards Aborigines but omit details. Ashwin wrote of an incident on the western Roper River:

> Whilst having dinner a big mob of niggers showed up about a quarter of a mile south on a range of hills. Three of the hard cases went away north and were taking a circuitous route endeavouring to work round behind the natives to give them a lesson. Before starting they asked Mr Packard not to allow a man to fire on them until they first heard a shot from the stalking party, but one of the silly fools fired without orders and away went the natives. The hard cases never fired a shot but returned and told Packard they would like to see the blacks raid the camp that night. It was at this spot the natives came to Packard and he gave them handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, combs and knives and a tomahawk, and the next night they attacked him on the Strangways.\(^{18}\)

Be kind to the wild native if you want trouble.
He mistakes kindness for fear all over Australia.\(^{19}\)

Commenting on a later incident in which he and a companion shot some Aborigines farther east toward the Roper Bar Ashwin added:

> This was the same tribe which stuck Packard up and other parties since at the same camping place. They attacked Joe Pettit, W. Banks and Tommy McBride at the camping place and waterhole. Joe Walker one of the party was too many for them and gave them a lesson. He rode a one-eyed horse and galloped at them and then after them revolver in hand. Tommy McBride told me all about that trip over from Cloncurry in 1872...\(^{20}\)

The guerilla warfare begun by the Aborigines on the Roper during the construction of the telegraph line was to become more intense and

\(^{17}\) Bauer 1964:105.
\(^{18}\) H. Packard's party was sent from Bitter Springs (near the present Mataranka) to the Roper Landing for rations. After the native assault his party retreated to Katherine.
\(^{19}\) Ashwin 1870-71:20-21.
\(^{20}\) Ashwin 1870-71:30.
unequal as the country was taken up for pastoral settlement.

Application for part of the area which later became Elsey Station was first made by Abraham Wallace in 1877.\textsuperscript{21} The original ‘situation’ of the station is given in the Register of Northern Territory Pastoral Leases as the ‘All Saints’ Well’ which was sunk by R.C. Burton’s telegraph party on Elsey Creek. The date of commencement of the original leases was January 1878, but it was not until 1880 that Wallace and a small party began their stocking drive from Sturt’s Meadows Station in New South Wales,\textsuperscript{22} and 1882 before the property was declared stocked.\textsuperscript{23} Wallace’s droving party consisted of six men, and included his nephew J.H. Palmer, who became the first manager of Elsey upon arrival at their destination. Having reached the Roper Bar, the Wallace party passed by Mount McMinn, then went on to Duck Ponds, Mole Hill, the Strangways River and finally encamped at Crescent Lagoon (see the map) while a small advance party went on to Elsey Creek. There some friendly Aborigines gave them enough fish to make a meal, their own supplies having run out. The cattle were later brought to Elsey Creek via Red Lily Lagoon, and released.\textsuperscript{24} Nearby Hodgson Downs was established in 1884 by Cyrew Mason and stocked with cattle driven from Queensland. The Elsey property changed hands a number of times: after the death of Abraham Wallace in 1888 the station was bought by W.S. Osmand; in 1901 the executor of the Osmand estate offered the position of manager to Aeneas Gunn, who arrived at Elsey early in 1902 and acquired a one-quarter share when Elsey was purchased by a partnership of Bennett, Gunn and Samuel Copley in November 1902. Following Gunn’s death in 1903 the station was purchased by a large cattle syndicate, Eastern and African Cold Storage Co. Ltd.

The taking up of pastoral properties inevitably resulted in intensification of trouble with Aborigines. A telegram from Government Resident Edward Price to the Minister for Education in Adelaide reported the killing in mid-1882 of Duncan Campbell, Elsey Station’s first head stockman:

Croker who has arrived at Elsey camp from Bush reports that a native informed him that Duncan Campbell who with two Queensland blacks has been five weeks away mustering cattle was murdered sixty (60) miles east of Elsey by native who is known at Elsey Camp that the two blacks were still alive but were to be murdered at Corroboree these natives are now supposed to be congregated at Moles Hill I have directed armed party with Corporal Montague and constable to start at once in pursuit. Most earnestly and respectfully recommend act to

\textsuperscript{21} N.T. Archives, Register of Pastoral Leases.
\textsuperscript{22} Wallace to the Minister for Education (SAA 790/1880/94).
\textsuperscript{23} N.T. Archives, Register of Pastoral Leases.
\textsuperscript{24} Palmer n.d.
be passed giving power to try natives for murder here and if guilty to execute them at scene of murder outrages by natives increasing they seem to think they can only be imprisoned.\textsuperscript{25}

A second telegram from Price in September 1882 reported the capture of a Queensland native, Paddy, who had been found with Campbell's gun and blanket. Paddy was said to have confessed to the murder, and to have been assisted by a Northern Territory Aboriginal, Charley, who was still being sought.\textsuperscript{26}

The people at Jembege tell of the spearing of a 'Chinaman' (for his swag and food) on the Strangways near Crescent Lagoon by Mululurun, a 'rainmaker' who was one of the owners of the Lagoon. According to their recollection, Mululurun was hanged at Crescent Lagoon and the remains of the tree may still be seen there today. Their forebears were brought to witness the hanging, were told not to grieve and were given gifts of tobacco, blankets and some food. The hanging of Mululurun occurred on 10 January 1895 according to the \textit{Northern Territory Times} of 25 January 1895. On 9 April 1897 the \textit{Times} reported another spearing at Elsey: 'whilst the manager and stockman were out on the run three blacks attacked the Chinaman cook (Ah Poy) and put two spears in his back and one through the lower part of his leg... . Constable Burt has started for the Elsey to inquire into the matter'. Other incidents reported in the \textit{Times} indicate that Elsey-area natives were involved in killings on the Hodgson and Roper rivers, and as far away as Willeroo Station.\textsuperscript{27} In 1908 Mrs Gunn wrote of how to deal with the problem of cattle-spearing:

On stations in the Never-Never the blacks are supposed to camp either in the homesteads, where no man need go hungry or right outside the boundaries on waters beyond the cattle, travelling in or out as desired, on condition that they keep to the main traveller's tracks — blacks among the cattle have a scattering effect on the herd, apart from the fact that 'niggers in' generally means cattle-killing.

Of course no man ever hopes to keep his blacks absolutely obedient to this rule; but the judicious giving of an odd bullock at not too rare intervals, and always at corroboree times, the more judicious winking at cattle killing on the boundaries, where cattle scaring is not all disadvantage, and the even more judicious giving of a hint, when a hint is necessary, will do much to keep them fairly well in hand,
anyway from openly harrying and defiantly killing, which in humanity is surely all any man should ask.\textsuperscript{28}

According to George Conway,\textsuperscript{29} an all-round cattleman, drover, and sometime station owner-manager who was for many years a resident of the Mataranka area, in the early years of this century chain gangs of from twenty to thirty Aborigines, sentenced to terms of three to six months for cattle-spearing, were walked to Pine Creek, then railed to Darwin and imprisoned in Fanny Bay Gaol. At first prisoners were released in Darwin upon completion of their sentences, but when this was found to result in trouble with local tribesmen they were taken back at least as far as Pine Creek and left to walk from there.

Aborigines were not the only cause of trouble to the developing pastoral industry: the overland stock route from Queensland ran through Elsey Station, making it difficult to control cattle diseases and stock loss, and bringing undesirable whites into the area. Darwin Police Inspector Paul Foelsche,\textsuperscript{30} reporting to the Government Resident, had stressed the need for police protection as early as 1883:

...during the last twelve months the overland traffic from Queensland to Port Darwin has greatly increased especially in connection with the importation of cattle to stock runs in the Northern Territory and a good many of the criminal class from the back country of Queensland have found their way here, among them some who have served various terms of imprisonment in that colony for horse and cattle stealing, highway and mail robbery ... it is necessary that police protection should be extended beyond the goldfields and I would therefore respectfully recommend that a Police Camp be formed at the Elsey at or near Mr Wallaces Cattle Station about 135 miles south of the present farthest south police station at Pine Creek: and that two Mounted Constables be stationed there.

At this place the police would command both the Queensland and Adelaide Routs [sic] and will be a check on horse and cattle stealers, which I fear will be carried on before very long and for which the overland road to Queensland offers great facilities.

A police station at the Elsey would in my opinion also greatly lessen the troubles experienced every now and then with the natives in the Roper River country. In the recent murder case\textsuperscript{31} in that

\textsuperscript{28}Gunn 1908:200; for another opinion on controlling the ‘wild blacks’ see editorial in the Northern Territory Times, 27 October 1905.

\textsuperscript{29}George Conway, now deceased, was interviewed by Dr F.H. Bauer near Mataranka on 18 November 1957; all references to Conway’s life below are from these notes. Conway came to the Territory in 1901 and at different times took up Urapunga (1907), Maryfield (1910), and Roper Valley Stations (1914).

\textsuperscript{30}Foelsche, appointed Sub-Inspector of Police in the Northern Territory in 1869, took up his duties in 1870. See SAA Research Note No. 456 for information on Foelsche and the genesis of the Northern Territory police force.

\textsuperscript{31}Reference is probably to the murder of Duncan Campbell.
locality some of the Yam and Pine Creek police were away from their stations for two months, a very undesirable thing in a country where the natives are plentiful and at times very troublesome, and where the criminal class of Europeans are steadily increasing.\textsuperscript{32}

He recommended that a much-needed Chinese detective and interpreter be hired at Darwin; this would also free a constable who could be posted at Elsey Station. Subsequently Foelsche determined to create a native police force.

Foelsche's idea was to create a combined force of European constables and natives at the Elsey police camp, but there was obviously official hesitation about the nature of the proposed native force. Government Resident J.L. Parsons generally referred to the force in his correspondence as 'black trackers', while Foelsche himself frequently used the phrase 'Native Police'. Parsons wired the Minister for Justice and Education on 11 September 1884 regarding the need for police protection in the outlying districts, concluding:

Have conferred with Inspector [Foelsche], recommend that black trackers be connected with present police force. Black force on Queensland basis open to grave objections. Inspector strongly opposed to it.\textsuperscript{33}

In a letter of 14 October 1884 Parsons again strongly opposed the idea of a 'Native Police' and gave his opinion regarding the suitability of local Aborigines:

NT natives are unsuitable either for police or trackers because many of the tribes intermingle... They will not discover their friends in addition they are poor trackers. Game is very plentiful and they are not made keen by hunger. My opinion is usual here we want trackers from Central Australia or Queensland. We do not want a black police for the Queensland black force goes out and disperses shoots natives. Mr McDonald who has been 16 yrs superintendent of the penal establishment at Moreton's Bay informs me the biggest scoundrels and the cause of most troubles with the blacks are the ex black troopers. For the Elsey I wanted two European constables and would place there two black trackers.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} Foelsche to the Government Resident (SAA 790/1883/124). The problem of undesirables was a continuous one, especially with the periodic slumps in the pastoral industry. A leader in the Northern Territory Times (3 March 1905) later commented: 'What between the later drover Dunbar's men, men who were engaged in the droving of cattle from Wollogorang to Arafura, and a number of others who have trailed out into these fresh fields on their own, the country just at present is well supplied with--unemployed'. Gordon Kinross Dunbar, a Queensland drover, had been employed by the Eastern and African Cold Storage Co. Ltd. (see below) to transfer cattle from Hodgson Downs to the Blue Mud Bay area. He died of malaria in 1903 while working for the company.

\textsuperscript{33} Parsons to the Minister for Justice and Education (SAA 790/1884/842).

\textsuperscript{34} Parsons to the Minister for Justice and Education (SAA 790/1884/926).
Pursuing the matter, Parsons' November 1884 telegram asserted that 'low rents for pastoral country will not enable us to give police all over Territory but station at Elsey appears urgent'.

The use of non-local Aborigines in police and tracking capacities was not unique to the Territory, indeed seems to have been preferred in many parts of Australia. The correspondence of E.L. Hamilton, Protector of Aborigines, indicates that three trackers were brought to the Territory from South Australia in 1881, but does not specify where they were stationed.

In a letter of October 1884 Foelsche reported the organizing of the native force, to be brought north from Alice Springs by Mounted Constable Willshire (notorious for his ferocity in exterminating Aborigines in the Centre):

I have communicated with the police at Alice Springs with the view of organizing a party of natives to be sent to the Northern Territory to act as a police patrol. As there may be some difficulty in getting a suitable white man to take charge of them until their arrival at their destination, I propose lending the Minister for Justice and Education the services of MC Willshire stationed at Alice Springs who is eminently qualified for the duty—to return to his station on the completion of his tasks.

Foelsche does not mention the provenience of the natives, but his correspondence of 1884 refers to the building of adequate quarters at Elsey for the natives and for the two European mounted constables who were to take command, Curtis and Power.

A letter from Foelsche to the Commissioner of Police in Adelaide announced the arrival of Willshire in Palmerston in January 1885, and the subsequent arrival of Curtis and the natives at Southport in early February. Foelsche added:

On the 9th Feb MC Willshire handed all the government property over to MC Power, who together with Curtis and the 6 trackers left for Pine Creek on the 16th ultimo, where the party will be stationed till the end of the wet season when I intend to remove them to the Elsey to patrol the Roper River country as a commencement of their regular routine...

A telegram from J.L. Parsons indicates that the native force left for Elsey in April 1885 after having been employed in the Pine Creek area assisting in the collection of fees for mining rights. Upon reaching Elsey some of the natives, commanded by MC Power, were sent to assist
in the apprehension of the native 'Charlie' who, it had been decided, was the real murderer of Duncan Campbell.40

In January 1885 Foelsche had issued regulations for the guidance of the officer-in-charge of the 'Native Police' (as he called them in titling his communiqué):

He is to make himself acquainted with the favorite [sic] camping places of the natives in the neighborhood where the force for the time being is stationed and visit them occasionally especially when a large number of natives are assembled and give them to understand that if they commit depredations they will be brought to justice: and that for the purpose the force is travelling about the country: thus the natives may be deterred from murder and felony.41

Foelsche ordered that all native 'outrages' be reported to him at once, as well as any action taken by the police. Although he did not specify whether firearms were to be issued to the native police, he said that firearms could be used to secure the arrest of Aboriginal offenders, and in self defence, but 'it is to be borne in mind that the system termed “dispersing the natives” which simply means shooting them is not to be practiced and for this the officer in charge will be held strictly responsible.'41 Evidently Foelsche viewed this force as a special unit, for he instructed that they were to lend assistance to local police wherever required.

It is unfortunate that there seems to be little record of the activities of the native police while they were at Elsey. The force was disbanded after only a few months: on 20 May, 1886 Parsons advised the Minister for Education that Foelsche was in agreement with this dissolution. Parsons recommended the re-stationing of the ‘trackers’ at Borroloola, Katherine, ‘or if telegraph opened at Elsey there as occasion requires’43.

In 1887 Foelsche informed Parsons of the desire of the remaining native trackers at Katherine and elsewhere to return to their own countries, adding: 'I may state they are all good and obedient men but very inferior trackers... . I recommend that three really good trackers be procured from Queensland or the interior... .'44 Very likely some never overcame their fear of local tribesmen and unknown country and thus were unable to work effectively.

Apparantly this was not the last attempt to use imported Aborigines in a ‘police’ function. The Jembere community includes a brother and sister whose elder brother Janbuyin is now living at Bamyili; Janbuyin, 40 Parsons to the Minister for Justice and Education (SAA 790/1885/626). Queensland Paddy, originally apprehended as the murderer of Campbell, was committed for trial at Katherine in 1882 according to SAA 790/1882/571. I have not yet been able to find documents relating to the resolution of this case.
41 Foelsche to the Officer-in-Charge of Native Police (SAA 790/1885/174).
42 Ibid.
43 Parsons to the Minister for Education (SAA 790/1886/438).
44 Foelsche to the Government Resident (SAA 790/1887/13).
now in his early seventies, had an elder sister, now deceased, by the same father, which probably means that it was in the late 1890s that their father was brought to the Elsey area. Their knowledge of his place of origin is vague; it is sometimes said to be the Kimberleys and sometimes the Victoria River area, but at any rate far to the west of Elsey. They were told that he was brought by a policeman, but it may have been someone who carried out what was thought to be a police function, that of ‘making people quiet’. Janbuyin remembers his father saying that he travelled north to the Elsey area from Alice Springs, where he was engaged in black-shooting. The father, Gudir (Luganid), eventually married at Hodgson Downs and was thoroughly incorporated into local Aboriginal society: despite the fact that Gudir is known to have come from a foreign tribe, he is said to have been brought to the Elsey area by a ‘wild wind’, (locally the totemic property of the semi-moiety to which he belonged). It must be understood that the travels of mythological figures like ‘wild wind’ are timeless. Gudir’s descendants speak both Manjarayi and Alawa (as well as Yanman to some extent), but given their long residence at Elsey, identify themselves primarily as Manjarayi. Janbuyin says of his father:45

1. Ḥanjugu na-baga-ŋanju na-Luganid gugurgurun-gana
   my M-father-mine M-Luganid whiteman-ABL
   malam-gana-bayi Gudir na-baga ninaŋ
   Aboriginal-ABL-foe Gudir M-father come-PP
   Kajeran Sini-gana, miriwun-gana, guŋali-wana,
   Katherine Bridge-ABL Miriwin-ABL Nunali-ABL
   janan-gana ninaŋi.
   west-ABL come-PC

2. Na-gugurgurug na-gayingan janan-gana niri
   M-whiteman M-policeman west-ABL bring PC
   gayi jilwa na-ga-n pi-nawu-bayi.
   Neg remember ISg-AUX-pres name-his-foe

3. Gana na-baga go? ma-ji-we gayara, malam
   well M-father shoot AUX-PC-ps west Aborigine
   bu-ni-wa, malga malga ńuŋiŋ? Alice Springs-gana
   kill-PC-ps then then around Alice Springs-ABL
   jina-bamgan jibma ju-yi-ni.
   dir-towards speaker descend AUX-Med-PC

   fear-Med-PC shooting-DAT DAT-whiteman so
   man+bu-b, yum+bu-b na-gayang-gan na-bagam-gan.
   run-PP leave-PP LOC-other LOC-place/camp

45 All texts and photographs are by permission of the story-tellers, and immediate kin where possible.
5. Malga Meñeri-Jama ya-j yawal
then Hodgson Downs-ALL go-PP bludging
na-gagugu-wu, Alawa naja-nañi, na-gungu,
PURP-woman Alawa F-mother M-uncle (MB)

6. Naja-napi naja-Jiryirmin, ja-ma
F-mother F-wren (name) 3PresPass-say
warwiyan-gajama warwiyan-nayawu Ḩan-ma-qi
dreaming-ALL dreaming-hers 15g/25g-tell-PC
bajalaga, gana ni-nayawu naja-Nurubadu,
today but name-hers F-Nurubadu

Janbuyin is actually uncertain how his father got away from the white
man, nor does he remember any details of the 'shootings in the west'.

In 1903 Elsey, Hodgson Downs and Wollogorang Stations were pur-
chased by the newly-incorporated Eastern and African Cold Storage
Co. Ltd. The precursor of this company had in 1899 leased nearly
twenty thousand square miles with coastal frontage in the Blue Mud
Bay region of Arnhem Land. The Company's intention was to stock this
holding by transferring cattle from the Elsey-Hodgson area to what was
thought to be rich pasturage along the northern coastal rivers, despite

46 It is unclear what English name this may be.
47 Jiryirmin means 'wren'. Reference is to the frightening of a wren by a goanna
dreaming at Hodgson Downs. Note indefinite 'they call her' or 'one calls her' is
expressed by a third person singular verb form.
the fact that some holdings on the Goyder River had proven failures in the late 1880s and had been abandoned. This venture soon proved a failure also, because, as F.H. Bauer summarises: 'The cattle found the coarse native grasses entirely unpalatable and, worried by ticks and mosquitoes, speared by blacks, and eaten by crocodiles, it is small wonder that the remainder went wild'. In 1908 the stock that could be mustered was returned to Hodgson Downs by contract musters such as George Conway, and in 1909 a Notice of Special Resolution was issued which wound up the company. In the six years of its operation the 'Eastern and African' engaged in what was apparently the most systematic extermination of Aborigines ever carried out on the Roper and in the company's Arnhem Land holdings:

It is commonly said that the blacks "hunted the cattle out". This was probably one of the few authenticated instances in which the Aborigines were systematically hunted. For a time the company employed 2 gangs of 10 to 14 blacks headed by a white man or half caste to hunt and shoot the wild blacks on sight.

When interviewed in 1957 George Conway mentioned that he had been hired to lead a hunting expedition into Arnhem Land in 1905 or 1906, and that his party had killed dozens of Aborigines. There are numerous references in the Northern Territory Times to the company's cattle-droving to the Arafura country, and of the 'outrages' perpetrated by the Aborigines whose lands were being occupied. It is likely that killings were carried out on the largest scale on the north Roper and in Arnhem Land, but much violence also occurred in the Elsey-Hodgson Downs area. Sorties were made in the Elsey area to exterminate the 'wild blacks' camped at the headwaters of the Roper (near the present Mataranka) and north-east along the river. The oldest Aborigines living at Jembere today were small children during the Eastern and African period but some claim to have heard contemporary or nearly-contemporary stories of the shootings.

Aboriginal stockmen who worked at Elsey were used to help shoot out the 'wild blacks'. Many of these men lived on to old age and are fondly remembered, for despite the fact that Aborigines are said to have been the instigators of shooting sorties in a few instances, it is ultimately claimed that they were made to do what they did. The white man said to have been the principal organizer of the shootings around Elsey is remembered by the Aborigines as 'Miglinin'. He had been, they say, one of Mr Gunn's stockmen and was well-known in the area. Presumably he was the 'Sanguine Scot', John MacLennon, of We of the never-never.
Ira Nesdale summarises what is known of MacLennon: he was born of Scottish parents in Mawollock, Victoria, and had been the acting manager of Elsey Station for six years before Aeneas Gunn arrived. From 1902 he was briefly engaged in a contract loading project which proved unsuccessful, then went back to droving, working for a time for the Eastern and African company, and later tried his hand at peanut farming in the Elsey area. He died of malaria in 1932 and his body was eventually moved to the Elsey Cemetery near Warloch Ponds, where Aeneas Gunn is also buried. Despite the character references that Mrs Gunn gives most of her ‘bush-folk’, including MacLennon, it is hard to believe that he could have worked for so many years on the pastoral frontier without having participated in some of its violence. Mrs Nesdale quotes MacLennon’s own summation of where he had been and his vocations, included in his obituary in the *Adelaide Chronicle* of 19 May 1932:

> Well, hell, west, and crooked, as the cove says: droving mining, butchering, cooking in the stock camps, keeping stores and pubs here and there as far as Borroloola on the gulf. I’ve taken 6,000 cattle in one mob overland to Sydney, and shifted stock out to the Arafura country, No Man’s Land, and down on the Marrambay [sic] tinfield I could have died of blackwater fever if I had liked.

Interestingly, some of the shooting expeditions around Elsey are now said to have been instigated by settled Aborigines because of some quarrel among themselves or with nomadic tribesmen, but the Aborigines (today, at least) have little idea of the part Elsey Station was intended to play in the larger scheme of the Eastern and African company, and the motives supplied in their stories frequently stem from their own affairs. It is possible that whites may have seized upon disputes to do away with troublemakers. The following is the story of an Aboriginal stockman Dujgari (nicknamed ‘Damba’ because of his predilection for damper) who had worked for the Gunns and continued to work intermittently at the station after Mrs Gunn left the area. Dujgari was enraged by the attempt of his brother Warayanbuwa, also known at the station, to steal one of his wives. This story was told by Wawul (Kitty) with some comments added by Dingayg (Amy).

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1. **Na-Dujgari-?mingan**
   - **pindi-wa**
   - **garan**
   - **bu-ni-wa**

2. **M-Dujgari-mob**
   - **3SgOj-art**
   - **Local**
   - **kill-PC-ps**

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52 Nesdale 1977:146-147.
53 Nesdale 1977:147.
54 -(?)-mingan is suffixed to names to indicate one singled out for attention as the focal member of a group. In Pidgin English of the area the suffix has a convenient gloss derived from pastoral terminology, ‘mob’ as in ‘Dujgari-mob’. Dujgari is mentioned by H.E. Thonemann (1949:171) as ‘Dut’kari-Grand old man of the Yungman tribe. Great hunter and tracker. 6’2” in height’. Dujgari is remembered also as ‘Old Kimberley’ or ‘Kimberley Jake’, evidently because he worked for a time in the Kimberleys.
MAKING PEOPLE QUIET

wuja-bu-ni-wa Yiwoinma-?mingan-bayi.
3Sg-kill-PC-ps Yiwoinma-mob-foc

2. Na-?amba, na-Dujgari ni-nawu malan-gana,
M-?amba M-Dujgari name-his Aboriginal-ABL
na-muigungu-niga na-ga?ila guwa hangi, wug
M-PP-yours Sg M-ga?ila like you Sg work
ma-ri-wa na-jalbon-gan.
AUX-PC-ps LOC-station

(Eng.) send 3Sg/3PL-AUX PP M-boss-theirs 3PL

4. Gi-nara-bayi na-?amba nagalawa wuyan-nidba-ri,
Ana-that-foc M-?amba three 3Sg/3PL-have-PC
na-Bagurniya, na-Wadballa, na-?amana.
FObj-Bagurniya FObj-Wadballa FObj-?amana

5. Wa-naja-yag, wu?a-ma-?, wa-naja-ba?+ma, mawuj
Irr-1INPl-go 3PL-say-PP Irr-1INPl-bogey tucker
naja-wa-n. 1INPl-visit-Pres

Yes 1INPl-visit-Pres tucker 1INPl-bogey Red

7. Jad wu?a-jaygi-ni-wa jina-baman,
return 3PL-AUX-PC-ps dir-towards speaker
wu?a-mi-?i-wa, na-?ayanayag mujb pi?a-?
3PL-get-PC-ps N-some bunch come-PP
piwa-baman, na-?ayanayag mawuj gawa-ri,
here-towards N-some tucker bury-PC
wu?a-ba?+ma-ri. 3PL-bogey-PC

prohib M-one N-old person Red 3PL-bury-PC
mawuj wu?a-ba? ma-ri yarayg maiga
tucker 3PL-bogey-PC Aponogoton right up to
Najig.
Mataranka Homestead

M-Warayanbuwa sneak up AUX-PC sneak up Red
pi?a-ni-wa, jiwi-m-gu nana-gagugu-nawu
come-PC-ps take away-PNeg-Int FObj-woman-his
na-Bagurniya.
FObj-Bagurniya

10. Na-?amba gangaw? wa-bu-b, gi-nara-bayi bugbug
M-?amba dive in Irr-AUX-PP Ana-that-foc old man
guy?+ma-ri na-Warayanbuwa-bayi, yagay ma-ri.
strike-PC M-Warayanbuwa-foc ou! say-PC

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11. Na-Warayanguwa guy+ma-ri-bayi, Damba gangaw?
   M-Warayanguwa strike-PC-foc Damba dive in
   bu-b pawanwa, yu?yu+ma-ri-wa jina-banggan,
   AUX-PP this side swim-PC-ps dir-towards speaker
   maiga man+bu-b.
   then run-PP

    that-foc Irr-strike-PC PURP-mother PURP-Bagurinya

13. Nara-bayi ne-Damba jag je-j Gaiyen-galama,
    that-foc M-Damba return AUX-PP Warloch Ponds-ALL
    galij+ma-n boj-nawu.
    report-PP boss-his

14. Na-ji wula-gar?min+ma-ri gamayi-bayi,
    INST-grease 3Pl-make good-PC rifle-foc
    garag-wa na-malam.
    many-art M-Aboriginal

15. Baraŋala-nawu-bayi na-Wugmi, wagij na-Gondo,
    father-in-law-his-foc M-Wugmi also M-Gondo
    na-Yibelgun baŋa-pawu-bayi na-gag-nenga-ŋu,
    M-Yibelgun father-his-foc GEN-MMB-ours 2Sg
    na-Yiwolŋa, na-Wongaraŋ, na-Bulminmin
    M-Yiwolŋa M-Wongaraŋ M-Bulminmin
    na-jabjieb-nawu naya-gangji-nenga, stockboy-pawu
    MF-press GEN-MMBD-ours 2Sg (Eng.)-his
    na-Miglinin-gu garag, niŋiŋa na-wumbawa,
    GEN-Miglinin many prohib M-one

    INST-grease 3PI-make good-PC shoot 3PI-AUX-PP
    Najin-gana.
    Mataranka Homestead-ABL

17. Nel? wuyan-wa-ni na-Miglinin, jibma
    sneak up 3Sg/3Pl-AUX-PC M-Miglinin go down
    ju-yag, moier warya na-jarbiŋ.
    AUX-Medi PP cry out AUX PC-ps M-young man

    sneak up 3Pl-come-PC-ps ah! those-art-Ana

19. Do? wula-ma-ri-wa Najin-gana
    shoot 3Pl-AUX-PC-ps Mataranka Homestead-ABL
    maiga Gunja, Na-muriŋa-yan
    right up to Gunja LOC-Eucalyptus microtheca
    wagij.
    also
20. Waq+gagij bug+bugbug yiram-ji-ni-wa
children Red old person Red cross over-Med-PC-ps
liwu? yi-ñi-wa, bab gag-ji-ni-wa
jump in AUX-PC-ps come out AUX-Med-PC-ps
wuyirab, man+bu-ni-wa.
other side mui-PC-ps

21. Na-ga'agugu-wu gan-Bagurniya Damba
PURP-woman FOBJ-Bagurniya Damba
jiwi-j-bayi para na-Warayanbuwa.
take away-PP-foc that M-Warayanbuwa

22. WuJa-man+bu-ni-wa waq+gagij wula-yirab+ma-ri-wa,
3Pl-run-PC-ps children Red 3Pl-make swim-PC-ps
qawur+qawur wuyanba-ga-ni-wa, qa'nayayag
drown Red 3PI/SPL-AUX-PC-ps some
man+bu-ni-wa, yu+yu+ma-ri-wa, wayi-ni-wa,
run-PC-ps swim-PC-ps fall Med-PC-ps
jaq+jaq? ma-ri-wa qa'nayayag-bayi,
die Red AUX-PC-ps some-foc
bolgej wuyanba-bu-ni-wa ga+jalugu.
to strike on target 3PI/SPL-AUX-PC-ps poor things Red

23. Naqa'ayayag gal?ma ni-wa nugu-wana,
some climb up AUX-ps water-ABL
wula-man+bu-ni-wa bulula-jama.
3Pl-run-PC-ps jungle-ALL

3PI-take-PC Red-ps boss-theirs 3Pl Miglinin

25. Give it time la allabout, ma-ñ, letim allabout musterim
(Pidgin English) say-PP
meself nother place, from that way too.

26. Jag wula-jaygi-ni-wa Gajyan-gajama,
gum return 3PI-AUX-PC-ps Warloch Ponds-ALL rest
wula-mi-yi-ni-wa.
3PI-AUX-refl-PC-ps

M-cheeky that-foc M-whiteman M-Miglinin

28. Stockboy-nawu wuyan-nidba-ri-wa, gamayi
(Eng.)-his 3SG/SPL-have-PC-ps rifle
wuyan-wu-ni-wa.
3SG/SPL-give-PC-ps

Note that indefinite, semantically plural subjects are very often cross-referenced in the Manarayi verbal pronominal prefixes as third person singulars, hence the (unwritten) zero third person prefix of this verb. Note also many such instances with subject qa'nayayag 'some' in the texts.
29. jigiga nila-ni, bajajaga gayi miniwa.
   little-Pl IEPPl-AUX PC today Neg already

TRANSLATION

1. Du'gjari and his mob killed countrymen, Yi'wolnya and his mob killed them.
2. Damba, Du'gjari was his name from the Aboriginal, your father's father, gayila subsection like you, was working at the station.
3. Their boss sent them on holiday.
4. That same Damba had three (wives), Bagurniya, Waqbal and Yamana.
5. Let's go, they said, let's bogy, we'll visit tucker (places).
6. Yes, let's visit tucker (places), we'll bogy-bogy.
7. They came back this way, they got it (tucker), some came in a bunch towards here, some buried (i.e. roasted) tucker, they bogyed.
8. Not just one old person roasted tucker (i.e. they were many), they bogyed for Apongeton right up to Mataranka Homestead (its present name).
9. Warayanbuwa smuck up on him, he came on sneaking sneaking, he wanted to take away 'his wife Bagurniya.
10. Damba is said to have57 dived in, Warayanbuwa struck that same old man, he cried Ow!
11. Warayanbuwa struck him, Damba dived in on this side, he swam this way, then he ran away.
12. That one is said to have struck him on account of my mother (classificatory mother) Bagurniya.
13. That Damba returned to Warloch Ponds, he reported to his boss.
14. They prepared rifles (greased them), a lot of Aborigines.
15. His (i.e. Damba's) father-in-law Wugmi, also Gongo, Yibelgan the father of your MMB, Yi'wolnya, Wonga, Bulminmin the MF of your 'cousin', Miglinin's stockboys were many, not just one.
16. They greased up (rifles), they shot from Mataranka Homestead.
17. Miglinin smuck up on them, he went down, the young men were crying out.58

56 Story-tellers frequently explain the (fictive or actual) genealogical relationship of the person being talked about to the hearer(s), in this case the writer. References to persons in terms of the hearer's relationship to those persons are very common in ordinary speech also.
57 Note the value of Irrealis prefixation is often to give a reportative sense 'it is said that', i.e. the speaker cannot personally vouch for what is being said.
58 It was later explained that they were grieving on account of previous shootings.
MAKING PEOPLE QUIET

18. They came sneaking up, Ah! there they are.
19. They shot from Mataranka Homestead right up to Gunja (place), also at Namariñjayan.
20. Children, old people crossed over, they jumped in, they came out on the other side, they ran.
21. (It was) on account of woman trouble, that Warayanbuwa took Bagurniya away from Damba.
22. The children ran, they made them swim, they drowned them, some ran, swam, fell, some died, they struck them right on target, poor things.
23. Some climbed out of the water, they ran to the 'jungle'.
24. They (always) took along their boss Miglinin.
25. Give them time, he said, let them muster up at another place, from that way too.
26. They turned to Warloch Ponds, they had a spell.
27. Cheeky, that whitefella Miglinin.
28. He had his stockboys, he gave them rifles.
29. We were little, today there is nothing (like that).

On another occasion Miglinin and his stockboys came upon an Aboriginal cutting sugarbag up in a tree. The Aboriginal Monkey (spelled Mongi in the text below) is mentioned in Mrs Gunn's *The little black princess* as a troublemaker and cheeky fellow from Willeroo Station. Monkey defied his pursuers and managed to escape. The version of this story given here was told by a man Budu (Nugget), with comments from a few other people present.

1. Do? wuj-bu-b wagi jong-bayi. shoot 3PL-AUX-PP also Monkey-foe
2. Nara-bayi na-Mongi na-jan-gana, na-ganila, that-foe M-Monkey M-west-ABL M-ganila
   mun yawaj niqa-ni ga-gagugu-wu, marambu
   only bludging come-PC PURP-woman wife stealer
   niqa-ni Wagaman-gana, yan-Warajwaraj niiba-ri.
   come-PC Wadaman-ABL EObj-Warajwaraj have-PC
3. Mod mi-ri wab, ga-jandi-yan cut AUX-PC sugarbag LOC-tree

59 'Jungle' is the Pidgin English gloss for bulula; reference is to dense bulrush thickets at Red Lily Lagoon and elsewhere.
gala+wu-yi-ni.
to be hanging-Med-PC

4. Nara-bayi bugbug war+ma-n bogogobogobogob. 
that-foe old man hear-PP (sound of horses)

5. Gay? wula-bu-b wara, bega 
chase 3Fl-AUX-PP reckon tobacco

wula-wu-yam-gu.
3Fl/3Sg-give-PNeg-Int

6. Gegege:
gudgud+ma, daway-nanga, 
(cry Monkey uttered) Imp fuck tail-yours 2Sg

nyulyur+wu, barigod-ji gabgab willig 
Imp be greedy tin-having guzzle (vulgar) swallow
war.
Imp AUX

7. Do? wula-bu-b, dangaw? bu-b Dendan, 
shoot 3Fl-AUX-PP dive in AUX-PP (place)
yiram-jag wuyirab 
cross over-Med PP other side

na-galayar-an.
LOC-Eucalyptus microtheca

8. Gana ngingi-nara bugbug go? wula-bu-b 
Well 3SgObj-that old man shoot 3Fl-AUX-PP

na-Miglinin-?mingan, maiga bij 
M-Miglinin-mob then like a shot

wuyan-wu-na muña-pawu, gar+gar 
3Sg/3Fl-give-PP excrete-his excrete violently Red

bu-ni galuju, go? wula-bu-b, gar 
AUX-FC poor thing shoot 3Fl-AUX-PP excrete violently

bu-b, maiga wulu? wurg ya-j na-nanan-gan. 
AUX-PP then woops! hide AUX-PP LOC-rock

emerge AUX PP nighttime

10. Nanba-bu-b, ma-n, maiga man+bu-b bulula-jama 
3Fl/1Sg-hit-PP say-PP then run-PP jungle-ALL

gari-jaga, maiga gudula. 
there-Ana then forever

11. Nanawa gargoma warag na-Miglinin, man+bu-ni 
from here emerge AUX-PP M-Miglinin run-PC

na-malam bulula. 
M-Aboriginal jungle
MAKING PEOPLE QUIET

TRANSLATION

1. They shot (at) Monkey too.
2. That Monkey was from the west, gorilla subsection, he only came bludging for women, he came wife-stealing from the Wajaman (tribe at Willeroo Stn.), he had Warajwaraj (woman's name).
3. He was cutting sugarbag, he was hanging up in a tree.
4. That old man heard horses galloping.
5. He reckoned they were chasing him, they wanted to give him tobacco (evidently a ploy of some kind, or so Monkey thought).
6. Gegege: (Monkey cried), fuck it, your ass, be greedy, guzzle it up tin and all (supposedly what Monkey said to Miglinin about the tobacco tin offered him).
7. They shot (at) him, he dived in at Qendan (a place), he crossed over to the other side into a eucalypt.
8. Well, Miglinin's mob shot (at) that old man, then he shot his excrement at them, he fired it, poor thing, they shot (at) him, he fired, then woops! he hid in a rock. (Monkey evidently turned around and shat at them in a gesture of defiance.)
9. He came out at night.
10. They shot (at) me, he said, then he ran to the 'jungle' there again, forever. 60
11. Miglinin came out from here, the Aborigines ran into the 'jungle'.

Miglinin is also said to have shot two Aboriginal men, Melnarwuyi and Malamba, near Warloch Ponds, though it is not clear whether he did this while working for the station or later for the Eastern and African company. These two men had worked at the station and so their names are remembered (and borne by two of their descendants) today, although the names of nomadic Aborigines who were killed around this time have been forgotten.

Violence did not cease with the termination of the Eastern and African venture. Another woman, Maudie, tells the story of how she was left in a coolamon while her mother, mother's sister and other Aborigines fled from white pursuers, said to have been Miglinin and a man named Shadforth; it is not clear whether they were accompanied by

60 Dugul, Pidgin English 'forever' or 'for good', is often used to mean only 'for a long time'.
61 Harry Shadforth was manager of Elsey Station from 1916 to 1920 (Thonemann 1949:177); it is likely this incident occurred within that time period. It is not clear from Maudie's story whether any shooting occurred on this occasion. It is also doubtful that Miglinin was at the station around this time.
any station Aborigines. The families were camped in the vicinity of Red Lily Lagoon and were probably considered a menace to the cattle. They ran further into the 'jungle' country east of Red Lily.

1. Na-magu-yan-ja  nan-bab+namdag,  naja-pañi
   Loc-cooliman-emph  3Sg/1Sg-put PP  F-mother
gwud  nan-namdag,  nan-ga-ñiñ
carry in cooliman  3Sg/1Sg-AUX PP  3Sg/1Sg-take-PP
Waj?mingan.
   (place)

2. Waj?mingan ma-ri  gana  Beyiri yir wa-bu-b
   (place)  do-PC  but  (place)
   qanba-bat+namdag.
   3pl/1Sg-put PP

   that way-foc  3pl-run-PC  3pl-cross over-Med-PC
   Biraran-galama,  naja-pañi  yiram-ji-ni
   (place)-ALL  F-mother  cross over-Med-PC
   qan-yum+bu-b.
   3sg/1sg-leave-PP

4. Wula-yi-yi-ji-ni  ga-gamayi-wu,  gajari-we do?
   3pl-fear-Med-PC  DAT-rifle  they-art  shoot
   wa-ma-ri-wa,62  niyanyungun  go?  ma-ri-wa
   Irr-AUX-PC-ps  ancestors  shoot  AUX-PC-ps
   ne-Miglinin  ni-yaran-bai  ne-Shadforth.
   M-Miglinin  there-Du-foc  M-Shadforth
   qan-yum+bu-b.

   Marakai-ABL  come-PC  maybe  there-somewhere-Ama.

   that-art-emph  M-cheeky

7. Niñjag  ne-wumbawa  wula-ni-we  pa-bug+bugbug
   prohib  M-one  3pl-sit-ps  M-old person Red
   niyanyungun  nanawa  Mañjungen-gana  maiga
   ancestors  from here (place)-ABL  right up to
   bulula,  maiga  Gugguna  yun  jina-biya,
   jungle  right up to (place)  island  dir-downriver
   Ñararambaran.
   (place)

8. Na-ñayanyag  man+bu-ni  Ñararambaran,  na-ñayanyag
   M-some  run-PC  (place)  M-some

62 Gajariwa 'they' somewhat unusually is cross-referenced by third singular zero pronominal prefix in the verb.
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9. Nara-bayi Jirgijaji biya ñala-yi-hi, gana that-foc (place) downriver 1InPl-go-PC well
gawar Gaman.
upriver (place)

10. JiIwa ñanba-ga-qïï, ñala-bugbug-ñiga-bayi remember 3PL/1SG-AUX-PP F-old woman-ours InDu-foc
jiIwa ñan-ga-qïï, ni-yari remember 3SG/1SG-AUX-PP there-somewhere
ga-ña-baday?+ma ña-magu-yan, maIga-3PresPos-1SG-squirm LOC-cooliman then
(imitative of swimming)

11. Wula-war+ma-ñ miniwa ja-man+bu-n 3PL-hear-PP already 3PresPos-run-Pres
bogogobogobogot, ñanba-wa-b, warguj (sound of horses) 3PL/1SG-visit/some to-PP pick up
ñanba-may, ñala-bugbug-ñiga-wur-bayi, maIga 3PL/1SG-AUX PP F-old woman-ours InDu-Du-foc then
jina-biya nila-man+bu-ni maIga Gunguna.
dir-downriver 1ExPl-run-PC right up to (place)

TRANSLATION

1. She put me in a cooliman, my mother carried me in a cooliman, she took me to Walmingan.

2. She was making for Wa1iminyan but they put me (down) at Bayiri yir wa-bub.

3. They were running that way, they crossed over to Biraran, my mother crossed over and left me.

4. They were afraid of rifles, they were shooting it is said, those two Miglinin and Shadforth shot old people (forebears).

5. Maybe he came from Marakai (Station), somewhere there again (reference is to Shadforth).

6. That one was a cheeky one.

7. Not just one old person, ancestor (i.e. there were many) was sitting down (living), from here, Marjungun, right up to the jungle, right up to Gunguna, an island downriver, Mararambaran.

63 Reference is to the speaker's mother. Speakers frequently use a InDu possessive, suffixed to a kin term (or human noun such as 'old man'), which refers from speaker's (not hearer's) point of view, e.g. 'our InDu auntie' when reference is to the speaker's auntie. This sort of usage contrasts with that mentioned in fn. 58; it has the effect of suggesting a close link between speaker and hearer.
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8. Some ran to Jararanbaran, some ran to Gaman.

9. That Jirgijaji lowdown where we went, well Gaman is up­river.

10. They remembered me, our old woman (i.e. the speaker’s mother) remembered me, there I am somewhere squirming in a coolman in the bush, then away she swam (the speaker’s mother).

11. They already heard horses galloping, they came to me, they picked me up, our two old women (i.e. the speaker’s mother and mother’s sister), then we ran lowdown right up to Gimgurya.

Luganid’s son Janbuyin recounted another incident in which Aborigines acted against their fellows, but this occurred closer to Hodgson Downs. By this time Luganid had been in the area for a while and was returning to Hodgson Downs from St Vidgeon Station further east. According to Janbuyin’s account Luganid was going to Hodgson to ‘bludge’ tobacco and was travelling with his brother-in-law Jaranajin, (now an old man living at Roper Valley Station). The two were given tobacco at Hodgson Downs but were followed toward LD Creek on the station by several Alawa men and one unidentified white man whose role in the pursuit party, whether as instigator or merely member, is not clear. He was speared by Luganid in the fight which ensued.

Jaranajin’s remembrance of this occasion, though he indicates he was probably less than ten years old at the time, sheds some light on the Alawa men’s part in it. It seems Luganid went to seek out a woman, possibly the sister of his first wife; the tobacco was perhaps only incidental. Jaranajin remembers the names of four of the Alawa men who gave chase and says there were about three others. He does not know the name of the white man speared by Luganid, though he confirms that detail. He recalls that a Queensland Aboriginal named Dick Nipper was at Hodgson around that time, and that the white ‘boss’ was probably George Stevens. If so, the incident must have occurred sometime after 1910; around 1914 George Conway, Tommy Sayles, and Jimmy Gibbs were partners with George Stevens in the management of Roper Valley and St Vidgeon Stations, and in 1914 Hodgson Downs was turned over to the Thonemanns by George Conway.

1. Bega-lama wur-yi-ŋi ŋabarana 3Du-go-PC two

   gaŋbam-yi ŋa-gungu ŋanjugu
   spouse-having (dyadic kin term) K-uncle (MB) mine
   ŋa-baga.
   K-father

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6. The Magarayi suffix -wuji-buyi is added to the place-name of an individual's (actual or close) father's father's death as one kind of naming procedure. Such a name means 'place where X's father's father died'. This sort of grandparental necronym is not the most intimate or personal kind of name each individual has. Such necronyms are sometimes shortened by dropping the suffix. The equivalent Yaqman suffix is -buwa, as in the name Warayanbuwa given in an earlier story.
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   now Alawa SPL-run-PP return SPL-AUX-PP
   duguja na-Waliburu, gal bu-b biwin-gana.
   forever K-Alawa hook up AUX-PP behind-ABL

    tobacco-foc Neg forget 3Du-AUX-PNeg

23. Mayawa nugu+nugu-yi wur-ga-ni bega,
    now water Red-having 3Du-take-PC tobacco
    berig ga-qi-war yungun, wur-ma-n.
    hang up -3PresPos-1Indu-AUX ahead 3Du-say-PP

24. Mob namdag gi-nara-bayi wilmur, yur?
    break AUX PP Ana-that-foc wire spear extract
    may maneya yungun.
    AUX PP maybe ahead

TRANSLATION

1. Two brothers-in-law, my uncle and my father, were going to (i.e. for) tobacco.

2. From there (another place referred to in a previous episode) they supposedly went to Hodgson Downs for tobacco.

3. That Amargamawara, in English they call it Shovel Hill to the east of it, well west at Amargamawara they (i.e. Alawa) were hanging up (i.e. clinging to some rocks, or on the side of a hill).

4. They were afraid of being shot by whitemen.

5. My uncle Jaranajih and my father went bludging for tobacco to Hodgson Downs.

6. They went, they gave it to them, a whiteman of Queens-land origin gave it them.

7. He gave them tobacco, plug tobacco, now you two go, he said, and they went.

8. Then as soon as they supposedly wanted to go back, well they were preparing rifles (i.e. the Alawa and whiteman).

9. Let's follow, let's kill them on the way (supposedly what the Alawa and whiteman said).

10. The whiteman followed them, blacks too, they came on together, they were chasing them to kill them, to shoot them.

11. They heard the sound of horses, they looked, they looked back, he (the whiteman) had propped it (his rifle on his knee).

12. They dived in this side of Gulurga, (on) the river.

13. He chased them, they're swimming.

14. Dive in, they were crossing over on horseback (the pursuit party), they climbed up, they got out of the water.
15. Well my father went around, he submerged his wire spear in the water, my father did.

16. He went, over there he came out, he put it in its hole, (that is) he hooked up (his spear), he speared the whiteman's arm, o/w, the blacks ran.

17. He also speared another one wanting to come up, he should have run away (probably means the Alawa man should have run).

18. It stuck in his body (i.e. the spear in the whiteman's body), in his lower arm, it stuck.

19. He grabbed it, tried, tried, nothing (the spear wouldn't come out).

20. Red (i.e. blood) came out.

21. Now the Alawa ran, the Alawa went back for good, he (Lugand) hooked up his spear from behind (as the Alawa fled).

22. They didn't forget the tobacco.

23. Now they were carrying it drenched with water, you and I will hang it up further on, they said.

24. He (the whiteman) broke that wire spear, maybe he pulled it out further on.

There seems to have been no large-scale use of Aborigines as black-hunters or trackers after the Eastern and African period, but sporadic violence continued for some time. An episode remembered at Jembere is the shooting of two Aborigines in 1915 or 1916 near the Strangways River. J.K. Little (then manager of Elsey), accompanied by the Alawa man Galimbiri, is said to have followed, shot, and burned the bodies of the two men because they had refused to work for him. Little did not know that two other men heard the shots, later went to examine the charred bodies, and walked back to Red Lily to tell of the shootings. Little left Elsey in 1916 and the Aborigines believe he fled to escape police action. Galimbiri is not thought to have played an active part in the killings, but he suffered the consequences of having been present: he is said to have been tomahawked when he eventually returned to Hodgson Downs. Galimbiri was under a cloud already for having married a classificatory sister (belonging to the same subsection, Burala, as himself) but the Aborigines say he was killed for having accompanied Little, not for his improper marriage.

Detailed documentation of cattle station history would very likely reveal that Aborigines in many places were compelled by circumstances to participate in acts of violence towards their countrymen, as were Miglinin's stockboys at Elsey Station.
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APPENDIX 1: Maŋarayi Phonemes

Consonants:

- **Stops**
  - Labials: b d d j g
  - Alveolars: m n n ŋ ŋ
  - Palatal: ĭ ĭ
  - Velar: w ɨ
  - Glottal: 

- **Nasals**: m n ŋ ŋ

- **Laterals**: l ɨ

- **Rhotics**: r ɨ

- **Glides**: w

- **Vowels**: i e u o a

**Notes:**
Glottal stop is predictable at certain morpheme boundaries. There is no contrast between apico-alveolar and retroflex consonants word-initially: the norm is retroflex. In addition, only a handful of morphemes have underlying initial apico-alveolars, all the rest are retroflex.

Following non-retroflex consonants, especially across word-internal as opposed to across-word boundaries, morpheme-initial retroflexion is completely, or almost completely, neutralized in favour of an apico-alveolar phonetic norm. So for example, the morpheme -nawu 'his, its' is written with initial apico-alveolar in a form like bab-nawu 'his head'. Occasionally at such boundaries a slight amount of retroflexion can be detected. Within morphemes there is never any contrast such as bn vs. bŋ, gn vs. gŋ or the like.

The orthography used in the texts prefers single symbols to digraphs, so that retroflex consonants are underlined instead of represented as rC, ĭ is preferred to dj, ŋ to ng, and so on.

APPENDIX 2: ABBREVIATIONS

- **ABL** ablative case
- **ALL** allative case
- **Ana** anaphoric. Two affixes are so labelled. The prefix gi- refers to some person or object made clear in previous speech, ‘that same one’. The suffix -jaga, also labelled Ana, is affixed principally to demonstrative adverbs and pronouns, and indicates a person or place known and clear in context but not necessarily mentioned in immediately preceding speech, e.g. ni-jaga, Pidgin English ‘there again’ (i.e. there, in that known place). Jaga is also used with verbs to mean ‘like that’, ‘in that (known or demonstrated) way’, e.g. Imperative la-ma jaga ‘you Pl. do it like that!’
- **art** article suffix
- **AUX** auxiliary. The most common type of Maŋarayi verb phrase is composed of an uninflected particle and a separable AUX which carries pronominal prefixes and affixation for the various verbal categories. There are also many compound verbs with inseparable AUX, e.g. -man+bu- ‘to run’.
- **DAT** dative case
directional prefix jina-, used with certain adverbs which cannot be
inflected with the usual local case affixes, usually in an Allative sense,
e.g. biya ‘downriver’ LOC, jina-biya ‘in the direction of/towards down-
river’.

dual number

emphatic suffix -ja, gives sense of ‘indeed’.

exclusive pronominal category

feminine noun class

father’s father

focus, suffix -bayi (sometimes shortened to -ba), which usually expresses
the relative salience of a noun, but may also be suffixed to other parts
of speech

genitive case

imperative verb form

inclusive pronominal category

instrumental case

intentional verb suffix

irrealis mood; see fn. 59.

locative case

masculine noun class

mother’s brother, uncle

mediopassive verb

mother’s mother’s brother

mother’s mother’s brother’s daughter

negative particle, dayi

(transitive) object

originative, suffixed to place-names to indicate origin of persons

past continuous

plural number

past negative

past punctual

present tense suffix. In some verbs the present suffix is zero and is not
written.

present positive ‘conjugation marker’, which precedes any pronominal
prefixes. For third person intransitive subjects this marker is ja-, for
non-third persons ga-, e.g. ja-yag ‘he goes’, ga-na-yag ‘I go’.

prohibitive particle ginjag. With verbs this particle gives the meaning
‘cannot’, e.g. ginjag yag ‘he cannot go’ as opposed to dayi yag ‘he is not
going’. Ginjag is also used to deny qualities or attributions, e.g. ginjag
na-wumbawa ‘not one’, that is, ‘many’.

past suffix -wa, very commonly used in narration, somewhat less
frequently in ordinary speech, following past continuous verb forms.
It seems to be a stylistic device and cannot be glossed.

purposive case

reduplication (partial or complete), marked with +

reflexive (also reciprocal)

singular number

Note on case-marking:
Manarayi case-marking is achieved by combinations of prefixes and suffixes, the
required combinations varying with case-function and noun class. In given case forms
either the prefix, the suffix, or both, may be zero. The two animate noun classes
Masculine and Feminine, conform to an ‘accusative’ type case-marking system, i.e. for
each noun class, transitive subject (TS) and intransitive subject (IS) are identically
case-marked, while transitive object (TO) is distinguished. Thus Feminine singular
TS/IS is marked by prefix ɲala- and ɬ suffix, ɲala-gadugu ‘the woman’, while TO
is marked with prefix ɲan- and ɬ suffix, ɲan-gadugu. Masculine TS/IS prefix is ɲa-
with -0 suffix; Masculine TO is sometimes characterized by zero prefix and suffix, or alternatively (usually with kin terms) nan- and -0 suffix. Inanimate singular nouns conform to an ‘ergative’ case-marking system, i.e. IS and TO forms are identically marked (zero prefix and suffix), while Ergative/Instrumental is marked with prefix ga- and -0 suffix, e.g. ga-wulu Erg/INST ‘floodwater, rapidly flowing water’. In the texts zero affixes have not been written. For Masculine and Feminine nouns in TS/IS function the prefixes are simply labelled M and F respectively, and MObj or FObj for nouns in TO function. Where a case-form is marked by overt prefix and suffix, a label is given only once, under the prefix. For example, Masculine and Inanimate Locatives are marked with prefix na- and suffix -yan-gan, e.g. na-landi-yan ‘in the tree’.

It is to be understood that the case-function is marked by the prefix-suffix combination.

The above remarks hold for singular nouns. There are no distinctive nonsingular case or noun class affixes, but overt case-marking is facultative in some nonsingular case-forms. Nonsingular inanimate objects are sometimes marked in the same way as nonsingular animate objects, i.e. the ‘ergative’ patterning of the inanimate class is not strict in non-singular forms, but there is no need here to discuss the complexities of number-and-case marking. Mixed-gender nonsingulars in TS/IS function may be marked with prefix ga-; such instances are labelled M(asculine).

Note on labelling:
Reduplication is indicated by + as are some derivational boundaries, e.g. do+wajin, nominalization ‘shooting’. Also inseparable AUXs are marked with +. Not all possible boundaries within words are indicated. For example, niyanyungun ‘ancestors’ may actually be analyzed as composed of ni-, as a free form adverb ‘there’, collective element -yan, and -yungun, as a free form adverb ‘before, ahead, further on’.

In some instances a boundary has not been indicated between verb root and tense-marker. For example, -pama-, which may function as separable or inseparable AUX, has PC form -namdi, PP -namdag. These forms are labelled, e.g. AUX PC or AUX PP.

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SOURCES FOR ABORIGINAL HISTORY

This section, which appeared in Volume One as Archives and Publications, is intended as an aid to those writing Aboriginal history although the documents — previously unpublished manuscripts, vernacular texts, and recorded oral traditions — should be of intrinsic interest to all students of the subject. The section will also feature articles commissioned from national, state and overseas archives relating to Aborigines.

The section editor, Niel Gunson, will also consider descriptive listings of other Aboriginal source material, including photographic and film holdings, in public and private collections; and specialised bibliographies. Previously unpublished material such as letters, diary extracts, brief regional and family histories, and reminiscences should be presented in an edited form with some account of provenance and explanatory footnotes where necessary. The section editor would also like to hear from those who have material or know where it may be obtained but who have not the time or expertise to prepare it for publication. Authors should acknowledge permission to publish material held by institutions or private persons other than themselves.

RECORDS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF ABORIGINES IN VICTORIA, c.1860-1968*

Myrna Deverall

A large and historic collection of records of the Victorian government’s administration of Aboriginal people is held by the Australian Archives at its Victorian Branch. These records were transferred to Commonwealth control at the time of the transfer of the functions of the Victorian Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to the Commonwealth in 1975. They cover over a century of government administration, from 1860 to 1968, and consequently provide a continuous history of the life of Victorian Aborigines over that period.

The records were created by authorities set up by the colonial and State governments. The first, the Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of the Aborigines, was appointed by the Governor in 1860, with Robert Brough Smyth as Secretary. Its functions were to oversee the welfare of the Aborigines of the colony, including recommending the allocation of land for reserves, appointing local agents, supplying the essential needs of the Aboriginal people and generally advising the government. This Board was reconstituted under the long-delayed Aborigines Protection Act (No. 349 of 1869) as the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines, with the Chief Secretary, the responsible minister, as ex officio chairman. The Board’s considerably increased powers included authority to prescribe the place of residence of Aborigines, to control the care, custody and education of their children, to lay down conditions for employment contracts and to apportion the earnings from their labour on the Aboriginal stations. The Board worked through a system of reserves managed by missionaries or superintendents, and ration depots maintained by Local Guardians in areas much frequented by Aborigines. The Act was amended in 1886 to implement an ‘absorption’ policy for ‘half castes’, who were excluded from Board care and control until the Act was again amended (Aborigines Act, No. 2255 of 1910) to give the Board discretionary power to license needy individuals to reside at the stations and receive aid. The limited definition of eligible Aborigines was altered to include ‘any person of Aboriginal descent’ in the Aborigines Act (No. 6068 of 1957)

*This article is the author’s private submission.

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which dissolved the old Board and established an Aborigines Welfare Board, as a result of the recommendations of a Board of Inquiry (the McLean Inquiry) set up in 1955. This Board was in turn dissolved by the *Aboriginal Affairs Act* (No. 7574 of 1967) which established a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the responsible authority from 1968 to 1975.

Apart from the three consecutive Boards responsible for the continuing process of administration from 1860 to 1968, three other agencies have contributed to the records now held by Australian Archives in Victoria. One was the Royal Commission on the Aborigines, appointed in January 1877 to inquire into the present condition of the Aborigines and the best means of caring for them in the future. The report was presented to both Houses of Parliament late in 1877 and published in the Parliamentary Papers. Another was the Board of Inquiry appointed to investigate the condition and management of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station in August 1881. In 1882 its report was also presented to both Houses of Parliament and published. Thirdly there was the McLean Inquiry. McLean's report was presented in January 1957.

There is great variety in the records created by the above agencies, everything from scribbled working papers to old leatherbound volumes. They include minute books, press copy books, maps, routine working papers, inward correspondence papers, plans and specifications, accounts, petitions, reports, ledgers, tenders and so on. Their physical condition varies. Two items, unfortunately, are currently unavailable for public access until restoration work is undertaken, but most of the records are still in a very usable condition.

Of the approximately 17.60 metres of records that were transferred I have listed the major items cleared for public access. The 'housekeeping' type of records (such as accounts, time books, cash payment books) have not been included, although these could prove to be useful for some purposes, especially where other records are not extant. Records created in the post-1948 period have been omitted also, as these are still closed to public access under the government's thirty-year access policy. The list does include the minutes of the various boards, volumes of outward correspondence, and several series of inward correspondence. Two are very large. One covers matters concerning the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station, after 1924 the only station managed by the Board. The other covers matters affecting the other Aboriginal reserves and correspondence from Local Guardians. These inward correspondence series are largely composed of letters from the missionaries or managers to the Board secretary, but also include some correspondence from Aborigines, members of the public, church mission society authorities, police and other government departments and from authorities in other colonies or States concerned with Aboriginal welfare. Also listed is a series of case files compiled on individual Aborigines.

Official policy on access to Commonwealth government records provides that records more than thirty years old are available for public access but that some categories of records are withheld for longer periods. In the series listed in the appendix the only papers closed are those which might cause distress or embarrassment to living persons. Most papers restricted under this category fall between the years 1920 to 1948. Very rarely was any nineteenth century paper closed and only occasionally any before 1920. Special access to papers in the open period which have been restricted can be requested and is approved, in certain circumstances and conditions, on application to Australian Archives.

There are some gaps in the material transferred to archival custody. For example, Australian Archives do not hold any Annual Reports for the years between 1906 and 1921, there are no copy books of the outward correspondence of the Board between 1897 and 1909, and inward correspondence is entirely missing for some years and some stations. On the other hand the extant records are, at times, very comprehensive indeed. For example, the correspondence from the Coranderrk Station for the years 1882, 1883 and 1884 is so extensive that a separate file was necessary for each month's correspondence. Also large is that from the Ramahyuck (Lake Wellington) Station for the years 1874 and 1875, and from the Lake Condah Station for the years from 1876 to 1885. When such complete collections of inward correspondence can be combined with the Minutes of the Board's meetings, and the outward letters from the Secretary of the Board, the record of the period is very good indeed. At other times, gaps in one of the series may be compensated for by
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covering records in another series. In this respect, the Minutes of the meetings of the three consecutive Boards are the most basic and reliable source, for they are complete from the first meeting of the Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of the Aborigines in June 1860, to the last meeting of the Aborigines Welfare Board in 1967 (though those post-1948 are, of course, still within the closed access period).

As well as gaps in some series, there were apparently virtually no agency control records transferred to archival custody. It is not known if the original registers of correspondence are still extant. Only one register of inward correspondence (for the years 1876-1877) was transferred to Australian Archives. Some of the related inwards and outwards correspondence was pinned together, but much of the correspondence was transferred to Archives as individual, loose items. Sometime just before transfer of the records to Archives, the papers had been arranged roughly by subject or by locality (for example, Lake Tyers) to aid retrieval. As it was not possible to establish the original system of control, Archives staff proceeded to streamline this arrangement and to extend it to establish some uniform control over the correspondence. As a part of this process, new finding aids were created, in the form of series descriptions and lists of file titles, to facilitate use of the records for research purposes.

What can the surviving records be expected to reveal? Firstly, of course, the policy of the Victorian government towards the Aboriginal people, and the changes in policy that occurred over time. Some of the changes were quite drastic in their results. Among the main ones would be that of 1869, when the first Board decided it needed greater powers to 'manage' the Aborigines, the decision of 1886 that, with few exceptions, only full blood Aborigines, were to have any call on government help, the 1910 amendment to the Act that conceded the impossibility of such a strict definition, that of the 1920s 'amalgamation policy', when eligible residents of the remaining stations were transferred to Lake Tyers, and finally the change in 1957 when all persons of Aboriginal descent were once more eligible for aid. The pressures that led to these and other less major changes in policy can be traced in the records, as can the structure and membership of the policy-making body itself, which also underwent changes over time. The performance of different Boards varied — some were enthusiastic and conscientious, some not interested, some even negligent. The Minutes of Board meetings record their performance, how they interpreted government policy and the differences of opinion between individual members of the Board. They also reveal the important role the Secretary could and did play in Board policy and decision making especially when, as in the latter part of the nineteenth century, he was himself an experienced ex-missionary.

Secondly, and obviously, the material records the implementation of government policy, the vigour or laxity with which it was carried out and the perhaps inevitable gap between the intention and reality in such a new and difficult area of government administration. Again the Secretary's role is revealed as vital — interpreting Board policy and enforcing compliance upon missionaries, managers, Local Guardians, Aborigines and the public. The outward correspondence books show his central role, especially at those times when the Board itself was neglectful. But the great mass of detail on the day to day administration of the Aboriginal stations was recorded by the managers on the spot. The Board's agents sought advice and approval from the Secretary for all the details of their work in administering what were, in effect, rural estates. Their correspondence is as much concerned with crops, weather and returns as it is with people and supplies. They reveal the daily life of the stations and all the problems associated with their pioneering attempts to establish the reserves as viable economic units using Aboriginal labour. Some missionaries had sole responsibility for the administration of a station and the care and management of the people on it for a generation or more, and their influence on the land and the people alike must have been immense. Their correspondence unwittingly reveals the life of the missionaries as well, and their differing approaches to the work they undertook. There are contrasts to be found between the nineteenth and twentieth century administrations, as the missionaries were replaced by secular managers, the squatter Local Guardians were replaced by local police officers and the missionary-secretary by the career public servant. The new administrators reveal different attitudes and ambitions to those of the previous generations, and, of course, they had different problems to face. The twentieth-century records deal with a period of con-
traction and amalgamation of reserves, and, one suspects, of disillusionment with the old aim of assimilation, as the problems of the people living outside the Board's authority became more and more insistent upon the Board's attention.

And what of the central people in these records, the Aboriginal people themselves? Surprisingly perhaps, there is virtually no anthropological information recorded, at least that the layman can recognize. It is known that some of the early missionaries were very interested in tribal customs and beliefs, but references to such matters are rare and incidental in what are largely bureaucratic records. However, there may be some useful material for demographic studies. The earliest population statistics, compiled in 1863, in many cases give tribal as well as English names — a rare treat in these records. Estimates of the number of people of full or part-Aboriginal descent were thereafter taken periodically by the Board and give an indication of their relative numbers and the demographic changes that occurred over time. The records may also be useful for genealogical studies of Aboriginal families, though with some limitations. One would be that of the Board's long held policy to exclude part-Aboriginal people from its area of responsibility. These people's names would thus occur only spasmodically when the Board for one reason or another was forced to consider them. At times such people may feature large in the record, but it is not likely to be as consistent a record as that of people who were officially under the Board's authority and care.

Secondly, the lack of original registers (or name indexes) makes the location of genealogical material a much harder task. From the Secretary's correspondence it is clear that registers of all Aborigines in the State once existed, but these do not appear to be extant. Thirdly, the twentieth century case files and the post-1920 records generally would have limited use for genealogical studies due to the access restrictions that have been applied. However, as mentioned above, special access to material that is normally closed or expunged can be requested for a particular purpose, and possibly a case could be made for special access to pursue genealogical studies on one's own family. Of course, the problem would not exist for the older records, as restrictions are so few.

But for a study of the life and conditions of the Aboriginal people as a whole over this long period, the most informative source material is to be found in the correspondence of the administrators, be they missionaries, police, managers, civil servants or squatters. The health, habits and living conditions of the Aboriginal people, whether on or off the reserves, are recorded extensively, largely through the eyes of the white authorities, who, at the same time, reveal their own attitudes towards their charges — attitudes that changed fundamentally over the century. Of the Aborigines' own opinions on their condition there is, of course, far less on record. But their letters and petitions are not infrequent, and are always revealing of their situation.

As well as the information that can be gleaned on government policy and administration, and on the Aboriginal people themselves, there are various other potential areas of interest in the material. Among them would be the early period of land settlement in various areas of the State, and the customary and legal relationships between settlers, church mission authorities and the government. The pioneering farming activities of the missionaries indicate something of the topography of different regions of the State and changing patterns of land use. The relative benefits of different forms of transport use are recorded as the Board's authorities and the Board's supplies were transported to all areas of the State by road, coastal steamers, railways or river boats. Early medical services — medicines, treatment, fees, availability of doctors — also feature large in the missions' records. To a lesser extent there is information on schooling and on dealings with the Education Department regarding buildings, classification of schools and the supply of teachers. Information is available on the workings of local government in the early days of settlement, and on the important role of the police, both as Local Guardians and in maintaining the authority of the Board. The effects of the economic depressions of the 1890s and 1930s on the functioning of a government agency and on the lives of the people concerned can also be traced in these records.

Overall they are a rich and varied source: this is only an indication of their range. Further information on the material, or on access to it, may be obtained from Australian Archives, Victorian Branch, Outer Crescent, Middle Brighton, where these records are held.
The main series are listed below, with date ranges, content ranges in brackets where necessary, the approximate quantity of each series and a few notes on content and access.

**Records of CA 2012, Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of the Aborigines, 1860-1869**

**Commonwealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record Series</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date Ranges</th>
<th>Content Ranges</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>B 314</td>
<td>Minutes of Board Meetings, chronological series.</td>
<td>1860-1869</td>
<td>2 volumes: 1860-1861; 1861-1872. The second volume also includes the Minutes of the first meetings of its successor, the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines.</td>
<td>Open access.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B 332</td>
<td>Annual Reports, chronological series.</td>
<td>1861-1869</td>
<td>containing reports for the years 1861-1867, which are bound together with B333, the Annual Reports for the years 1871-1906. There are no Reports for 1868 and 1869.</td>
<td>Open access. (Published in Papers Presented to Both Houses of Parliament).</td>
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<td>B 312</td>
<td>Correspondence files.</td>
<td>1859-1869</td>
<td>Quantity: 0.20 metres.</td>
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<td>B 313</td>
<td>Correspondence files.</td>
<td>1869-1957</td>
<td>Quantity: 2.52 metres.</td>
<td>Open access.</td>
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<td>B 333</td>
<td>Annual Reports, chronological series.</td>
<td>1871-1957 (1871-1924)</td>
<td>0.05 metres. The Reports for 1871-1906 are bound together in one volume, with the reports of the earlier Board. There are no reports for the years 1907-1920 in archival custody, and the 1921-1924 reports are typed copies only. (The Reports from 1860 to 1912 and from 1921 to 1924 were published in Papers Presented to Both Houses of Parliament).</td>
<td>Open access.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B 315</td>
<td>Minutes of Board Meetings, chronological series.</td>
<td>1869-1957</td>
<td>6 volumes: 1872-1885; 1885-1896; 1896-1906; 1907-1921; 1921-1945; 1946-1957. The first Minutes of this series are contained in the last volume of the previous Board's Minutes (B 314) and the last volume of this series contains the first Minutes of the Board's successor. Most volumes contain handwritten Minutes. This is a complete series, the only gaps in the record being the occasional periods when the Board apparently held no meetings, e.g. the war years 1914-1916. The Minutes cover all items that the Secretary considered important enough to bring before the Board, and include much</td>
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personal information on individual Aborigines. Access is open to December 1947, with occasional restrictions in the earlier volumes, and extensive expunging in the last two volumes.

B 329 Letter book comprising: (1) outward correspondence, chronological series; (2) nominal index to outward correspondence, chronological series. 1871-1922

9 volumes: 1871-1872; 1874-1875; 1880-1883; 1885-1889; 1889-1892; 1892-1894; 1894-1897; 1909-1911; 1920-1922. There are many gaps in the series. The volumes are press copy books, and contain copies of handwritten correspondence of the Secretary of the Board. The last volume contains copies of typed correspondence. All outward correspondence was recorded in these volumes until 1922. The letter books record, day by day, the whole range of official activities of the Secretary. They are a most detailed record of the administration for the periods covered, and also include much personal information on individual Aborigines. Access is open, with some restrictions.


B 337 Aborigines case files, lexicographical series. 1895-1968

Quantity: 2.52 metres. Case files were not kept on all Aborigines but only, it appears, as the need arose. Access is available to case files over 75 years old, with a few restrictions.


B 356 Lake Tyers correspondence files. Quantity: 2.16 metres. 1865-1968

The Lake Tyers papers were apparently kept separately once it became the only station. Arrangement of most of these papers is chronological and by subject. The correspondence covers the take-over from church authorities, appointment of staff, medical care, education, discipline, supplies, wages, recreation, etc. The series contains reports from managers, reports of inspections by Board members, and investigations of complaints. It is a large and important collection, including much information on individuals. Access is open to December 1947, but with some restrictions.

B 355 Agenda items for Board meetings. Quantity: 0.18 metres. 1860-1968

Contains lists of topics for discussions, rough drafts of minutes, and correspondence relating to Board meetings. Access is open to December 1947, with some restrictions.

Record of CA, Board for Coranderrk Aboriginal Station Inquiry

B 352 Report of the Board of Inquiry. 1881-1882

1 volume, containing the report plus minutes of evidence and recommendations. Access open. (Published in Papers Presented to Both Houses of Parliament).

Record of CA, Royal Commission on the Aborigines

B 353 Royal Commission on the Aborigines, Report of the Commissioners. 1877

1 volume, containing the report and recommendations, minutes of evidence, a census of Aborigines and reports of school inspectors. Access open. (Published in Papers Presented to Both Houses of Parliament).
Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century were not notable for fine insights into the cultural systems of indigenous peoples. German missionaries from various societies were amongst the most active workers in Christianization or 'civilization' schemes in Australia, but their success in establishing stations did not necessarily reflect a more enlightened approach. Rather the reverse. Such missionaries believed in an uncompromising religious order and they imposed fairly severe standards of discipline upon those who came to their stations for rations. The world of Aboriginal religion remained a closed door for them, just as their own insistence on a justifying faith and a sacrificial god remained incomprehensible to the religious understanding of the Aborigines. The reality of one system did not admit the reality of the other and there was no bridge between them.

The journals of such missionaries may not tell us a great deal about the beliefs of the Aboriginal tribes to whom they ministered but they frequently record tribal movements and occupational pursuits and material of use to ethnohistorians, demographers and other investigators. The following journal is one of a number of manuscript diaries and reports kept by the German missionaries recruited in 1837 by the Reverend Dr John Dunmore Lang to work among the Aborigines of the Moreton Bay District under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales.1

The mission was established two miles from Eagle Farm at Zion Hill, now the Brisbane suburb of Nundah.2 Most of the missionaries were members of Gossner's Society (Gossnerische Missionsgesellschaft), an Evangelical missionary society founded in 1836 by the Reverend J.E. Gossner, a former Roman Catholic priest dissatisfied with the missionary policy of the societies connected with the State Church of Prussia.3 Gossner had been influenced by the missionary ideals of the Moravians, who favoured the creation of Christian industrial settlements under the leadership of an ordained pastor.

The Reverend Karl Wilhelm Edward Schmidt was the clerical leader of Gossner's men at Zion Hill, though he shared leadership of the settlement with the Reverend Christopher Eipper, trained by the Basle Missionary Society.

The mission received government support and related to the Presbyterian Church through the New South Wales Society in Aid of the German Mission to the Aborigines, an independent body consisting of Evangelical Reformed churchmen of several denominations: Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists. In 1842, both because of the general economic slump and Governor Gipps' pessimistic view of the state of Aboriginal missions in the colony, there was every prospect of government support being withdrawn. In fact, after visiting the mission in March, Gipps made support conditional on the mission locating a new site well away from Brisbane.

In 1842-43 several expeditions were made by members of the mission party to neighbouring areas. In March 1842 Peter Nique and Franz August Rode itinerated in the Humpy Bong (Redcliffe) region; in April-May 1842 Eipper went to Durundur and J.G. Haussman and A.T.W. Hartenstein went to Humpy Bong and Toorbul (in the vicinity of Bribie Island); in June 1842 Schmidt visited the 'Bunya Bunya Tree

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1 See Lang Papers, Box 20. Schmidt's journal is at ff 121-42 and is reproduced through the courtesy of the trustees of the Mitchell Library.
2 For the history of the mission see Gunson 1960-1961, Sparks 1938.
3 For Gossner's career see Holsten 1949, Craig 1887.
A MISSIONARY EXPEDITION

Country' (the country around the Bunya Mountains) in the Wide Bay district; in November 1842 Eipper and Hartenstein camped with the Aborigines at Pine River; in December 1842-January 1843 Schmidt and Rode went to Toorbul (the subject of this journal); and in March-April 1843 Eipper accompanied the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dr Stephen Simpson, to the 'larger Bunya Country along the Wide Bay River', Simpson having been directed by Gipps to report on the region with a view to settling the missionaries there.4

In Sydney a new body to administer the mission had been inaugurated at the request of Schmidt on 15 March 1842 as an arrangement with the Synod of Australia in the previous October had proved abortive.5 The committee was representative of the same Evangelical Reformed clerics and laity who had formed the society established in 1839; the joint secretaries were Lang and the Reverend Dr Robert Ross, minister of Pitt Street Congregational Church, and members included the Baptist minister Saunders and the Congregational merchant David Jones.6 A former London Missionary Society missionary, the Reverend L.E. Threlkeld, was appointed to the committee in June 1842. The committee's objects were as follows:

1. To correspond with the Government on all matters connected with the Mission.
2. To collect funds for the support of the Mission and to diffuse information respecting its operations, by holding public meetings and publishing such intelligence from the Mission as may interest the public in its favour.
3. To correspond with the Missionaries, to procure and to forward supplies for the Mission and to undertake the general superintendence of their interests and affairs.

The journals of the missionaries were submitted to this committee and some of the material was published by Lang.7

Schmidt, the author of this journal, was a controversial figure in the mission's history. Born at Stargard in the then Prussian province of Pomerania, he graduated from the Universities of Halle and Berlin and was the first theological student to attend Gossner's missionary seminary in Berlin. The first incident which brought unfavourable publicity to the mission took place on 21 March 1840 when some of the missionaries fired on the Aborigines. The incident was reported on 23 March to the Commandant, Lieutenant Gorman, who called on Schmidt and requested an explanation. Schmidt submitted a written reply in which he stated that the mission gardens were so frequently raided at night that the missionaries decided to fire their guns 'in order to frighten [the Aborigines] and drive them away before they came close up to the watchmen to hurt them with their spears and clubs'. Schmidt stated that no injury took place for, he said, 'we learnt a few days after, that two blacks were wounded, but so slightly, that scarcely anything can be seen, and when asked how they came to their wounds, they assigned another cause'.8

Schmidt next earned criticism for appearing to conceal abuses against the Aborigines by the squatters. On his first trip to the Wide Bay district the Aboriginal guides refused to go beyond Durundur, then the limit of settlement. An extract from his published diary alleged that one of the reasons why the guides refused to go further was that about fifty or sixty Aborigines had been 'poisoned at one of the squatters' stations'.9 Official enquiries were made immediately and Schmidt asserted that as

4 The journals of these survey trips, except those for April-May 1842 and Schmidt's for June 1842, are located in Lang Papers, Box 20.
5 Minute Book for the Committee for the German Mission, in Lang Papers, Box 20.
6 The Reverend John Saunders (1806-1859), minister of Bathurst Street (Baptist) Chapel was also agent for the London Missionary Society in 1838-1840.
7 In The Colonial Observer (e.g. 23 and 27 July 1842, 3 and 7 December 1842). Earlier reports had been published in The Colonist.
9 Quoted in Sparks 1938:37.
early as March 1842, after returning from Sydney, he had heard from Eipper that such a rumour was spreading. He stated that he believed the authorities were already aware of the matter from other sources. ‘When writing down, therefore, my journal’, he told Commissioner Simpson on 14 January 1843, ‘I considered it unnecessary to make a full statement of all that had come to my knowledge since the month of March, concerning that most horrid event, or even to relate it as something new, as it was not only known several months since to the respective authorities, but also as almost every one at Moreton Bay supposed, that an investigation would take place without delay’.10 Simpson was not convinced, commenting on the report that from the conversation of Schmidt and his colleagues it was ‘very evident that their disinclination to follow up the investigation, has been caused by the fear of offending the squatters generally, a circumstance that struck me even during my previous conversations with them upon this subject’.11

In July 1843 Schmidt and Eipper supported a joint report to the Sydney committee as a result of their visits to the Wide Bay district in search of a new site. The future of the mission was uncertain and Schmidt’s writings, such as the following journal, reveal that he was disillusioned with the Aborigines and that his attitude to the mission was coloured by this pessimism. His wife was ill, and he had received a call to a Lutheran congregation in the United States. Schmidt did not leave the mission until the end of 1845, then he sailed to England where he ministered to a Lutheran congregation in Paddington. Afterwards, on the recommendation of Dr Ross of the Sydney committee, who was also agent for the London Missionary Society, he served as a missionary of that society in Samoa from 1847. He was forced to resign in 1857 because, as a widower, he was seen to take too much interest in a Samoan woman in his congregation. He married the woman and they conducted a ‘free school’ for the children of foreign residents in Apia until his death in 1864.

Before Schmidt left Zion Hill a second party of Gossner’s men arrived in 1844 and the lay missionaries decided to continue the mission while working at their own trades. Although they remained at Zion Hill they opened a branch station at Burpengary near Caboolture as a result of their northern itinerations.

Schmidt’s journal reveals a degree of religious misanthropy arising from his Eurocentric pessimism, depression and general discomfort. His movements appear important while the necessary pursuits of Aboriginal life are made to appear trivial and subordinate to the missionary’s progress. He makes no attempt to come to terms with the different social outlook of the Aborigines, preferring to see them as vagabonds and rascals. Yet despite his conviction of their innate depravity and boorishness it is possible to discern more human qualities in the Aboriginal response: a desire to please on the part of the Aboriginal youths wanting to be taught a prayer, an openness about the alleged theft of flour and biscuit, a spirit of integrity and independence in the face of missionary bribes, a feeling of sympathetic understanding on the part of the third guide returning to relieve the missionary of an unaccustomed burden, and the willingness of the guides to return to the mission station although already on their way to the bunya feast in the mountains.

10 Schmidt to Simpson, 14 January 1843, quoted in Sparks 1938:57.
11 Idem.
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Journal of W. Schmidt during a journey to Toorbal made with A. Rode from the 28th of December 1842 to the 6th of January 1843.

December Wedn. 28. Brother Rode and myself left this morning our Station (accompanied by 3 black men, 1 woman and 1 child, who carried our provisions,) in order to proceed to Toorbal. Having crossed both the North and South-Pine-Rivers, which have, when Ebb-tide, about 3 feet water at the crossing, places of the Natives, we encamped near the first fresh water holes, about 1 mile beyond the North-Pine-River. The Natives had very little pleasure, to make us a hut, but wished us to be content with a fire until at last, observing our dissatisfaction, they put 3 sticks together and covered them with branches.

Th. 29 After having marched about 5 miles, we met with a few women and children of the Umpie boang Tribe, who were encamping at a spot called 'Burrujavoiuin'. Our guides, having intended to proceed to day as far as Toorbal, lost now their pleasure, to move one step farther and wished us to encamp along with those few women and children. We however declared them, that we could not consent with their plan, having no delight in staying with half a dozen of old women and children, but desired to go to Toorbal, in the expectation, to meet there with a large number of Natives.

They then promised us, that they would break up to morrow early along with the here encamping Natives, — a few men and lads besides having gone afishing, who were expected to return before night. Acceding to their proposal I wrote the English Alphabet with charcoal on a piece of Tea tree-bark, fastened to a tree and instructed 6 children. Bro. Rode kept school in the afternoon. It was grievous to us, to observe, that the children, notwithstanding their being old scholars, upon whom we have already bestowed much time and labour, had forgotten almost every thing and that neither the children nor the adults have as yet the right idea about the reason of our following and instructing them. The children still think, they must be paid for their attending our instructions and we dare not venture to travel amongst them, without having rice or bread along with us, to be able, to give them at least a little as encouragement, although they have generally plenty of food themselves, and the adults suppose, we make journeys for mere pleasure's sake, or to survey the land and to feast with them upon fish and oysters etc. Poor Creatures! Our hearts break, our Souls faint on account of the great misery, in which they languish, "their God being their belly."

As for feeding the children, I shall endeavour, to act also in the bush upon the same plan, which I have followed up hitherto at our Station, to make them do, one or another little job after school, before they get their meal, that they may consider it payment, fpr the job, they have done and not for the instruction, they have received. This, I am convinced, is the only way, to make them active and useful.

There is also another reason for our dissatisfaction with them, observing namely, that none of the children have a blanket, although they did receive some not many months since, with the sharp warning, neither to part with them, nor to destroy them. There are now already divided amongst old and young for services rendered to us and for attending the school about 70 blankets since the month of May. But how few are seen amongst them.

A few men and lads returned in the evening from fishing. We endeavoured to speak

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12 i.e. Toorbul. Eipper had visited Toorbul in August 1841. August Rode (1811-1903), who accompanied Schmidt, was more usually known as Franz. He continued to live in the district after the cessation of the mission and gave evidence before the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the Native Police Force in 1861.

13 More usually Humpy Bong in contemporary references, now Redcliffe.

14 On 5 July 1841 Schmidt wrote that he had commenced schoolkeeping and that on some days he had over twenty children round him.
to them about spiritual things, but they could not conceive them, and as soon as I read to them some passages from the Sacred Scriptures, which I had translated with Bracefield, they fell asleep. Only one listened attentively a few minutes and told us, rubbing his belly, that it did good to his bowels and desired me to read more. He had however scarcely uttered his wish, when he like the rest, answered with snoring upon our questions. — We closed the day with the fervent prayer, that God Almighty may soon send help out of Zion, to these “fugitives and vagabonds in the earth.” —

Fr. 30 It was very painful to us, that we could not prevail with them, to be silent during our morning prayer. They smoked, laughed, shewed us their teeth and tongues and did just what they liked, so that we had to commence also this day with sorrow and patience, of hope being greatly troubled in our minds, when asking us, what will become of this nation. — One even lifted up his tomahawk, against me, when I told him, to be quiet, whilst we were speaking with God.

We continued our journey accompanied by some more Natives, so that we had a dozen of adults and 5 children about us. One left with his children for Brisbane Town. When stopping a little while at a spot, called “Dipperenba”, I kept school. In the afternoon we crossed a small river and soon after the wide Deception River. Although there was just Ebb-tide, we had likewise to strip, as yesterday, when crossing the two Pine-rivers. It is very unpleasant to wade especially through the deep mud up to the knees along the banks of the river and to be touched and burnt by the innumerable Medusa’s heads. It took us at least 15 Minutes to cross the Deception River.

After the Natives had fished, we proceeded to a place termed “Gibunba.” Also this evening we had to forbear their brutality. One of them, “Jemmy Willboang”, particularly put our patience upon a trial; he simply opposed, when he along with the other bearers of our provisions should repeat a grace before their meal. Being told, that he should not get any rice, he replied in great anger, that he had no desire to eat any rice and that he would not speak with God, God being, not in the bush. He told us likewise, that he would no more speak with us, nor carry tomorrow our provisions. After a short time however he asked us for a little bread; we told him, that he should get some, if he were going, to repeat a short prayer. That he consented. This fellow is the most shocking character we have amongst the black Natives and we should never have thought of engaging him as one of our guides, if we had not preferred, rather to be annoyed by him, than that he should be troublesome to our Station and rob our gardens and houses as he has done in former days. — Before the Natives fell asleep they tuned a short mourning song over a brother of one of our guides, who died more than 9 months since. — Being very much fatigued from the great heat during the day and a long walk, we longed for a refreshing sleep, were however greatly troubled by a very small species of Flies, which made my skin blister and itch all over.

Sat. 31 We arrived this afternoon at Toorbal after a rain had wettened us. We felt very tired, the Blacks having led us a round about way over large flatts covered with
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deep sand. We were deceived in our expectation, to meet here with a large number of Natives; there was only a couple present. After a little rest I instructed four children, the fifth having not yet arrived, and Br. Rode endeavoured to instruct 3 Lads, was however unsuccessful by reason of their continual laughing. The huts at Toorbal are a little better than those they erect usually; undoubtedly because some of this Tribe are generally staying here. — "Jemmy" and some others moved off, soon after they were fed, so a few Natives, who were told to encamp on the other side of a river "Kaerwagum", which is running in about half a mile's distance from the place, where the huts are. There remained therefore with us but 5 men, 3 lads, 1 old woman and 5 children. — After "Jemmy" had left "Dabianco" told me, that Jemmy had stolen some of my Flour, when he had stopped behind us during the rain. I opened my bag and found to my great astonishment, that he had left of all my flour scarcely a few cups full. The other Natives dissembled to be astonished and displeased but these rascals knew all about it.
The Flies are dreadful, my whole body is itching and sore from scratching. It rained again in the evening. This being the last day of the year, we surveyed once more in general all the mercies of God received at his hand during the past 365 days and also our innumerable shortcomings and transgressions and praised the Lord our God and Saviour for these and supplicated the forgiveness of these. And looking upon the work in which we are engaged and observing no coming of the Kingdom of God even in the smallest degree we must sigh with trembling hearts and tears in our eyes, shall we spend here our strength in vain and for nought, will the Lord not have compassion on these poor Creatures. Much indeed they are degraded, having neither Idols, nor even the essential marks of human beings, given by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans I, 19, 20. My soul faints, when I dwell on this view. — With the prayer of the sorrowful father in the Gospel we pass therefore over from the old to the new year, having our eye of faith fixed upon the author and finisher of our faith: "Lord we believe; help our unbelief!" Mr. 9, 20.

1843.

January Sab. 1. We assembled the children for morning and evening prayer and gave them twice religious instruction. In the interval we edified ourselves on our most holy faith from the inspired Volumes, making our New Year's requests known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. The women went twice for oysters and once for Bongwall, which took them the greater part of the day and on returning they could not lose time to fill their bellies. The men went early in the morning afishing and promised, to fetch the other Blacks from the other side of the river. — We cannot prevent them from going their own ways even on the Sabbath day, having very little authority over them in the bush and being at the same time not able to feed them. They have especially at Toorbal abundance of food, so that it would be very easy, to procure one day's provisions on the previous day. But first of all, they never think of caring for the next day and secondly if they have got sometimes even so much food as might do for the next whole day, they have no rest until every bit is consumed, being quite as voracious as pigs. — The men returned not before evening, without having however any fishes. There was also but one boy along with them, by whom we learnt, that there were only a few Natives on the other side of the river and 3 children, who would not come over to us, also the other Ningé Ningé Blacks having gone some time since to the Bunya

18 Correctly Mark 9, 24. Watchnight observance was common to most Evangelical missions.
19 Bangwall was the local name of a root known to the Toorbul Aborigines as dansum. See The Colonial Observer, 14 October 1841:10.
Bunya Mountains, who were expected to return very soon. We resolved therefore, to remain here a few days and to engage us in instructing the children and in making some language exercises.

After the children had said their evening prayer two lads addressed me, to make them also repeat a prayer, that the devil might not approach them, whose example all the others followed. They did it of course merely by reason of imitating and perhaps even of mocking.

It was raining the former part of this day, which makes it very unpleasant, to be in the bush, as one is obliged to remain altogether in his hut. Besides this we are excessively troubled by musquitoes and flies, so that we sometimes scarcely know, what to do for uncomfortableness.

Mond. 2. Men and women went again early in the morning for food. The 5 children were instructed. The boy, who came last night from the other camp, moved off, as soon as he saw that I assembled the children for instruction. Musquitoes and flies continue to be very troublesome. — It was only this morning, when I discovered, that "Jemmy" had stolen not only almost all my flour, but also the most of my biscuit, which I had in another bag, having left me scarcely 3 days provisions. When speaking to the other Natives about and showing them the remnant, they told me, that he and two other young men had stolen both flour and biscuit on Saturday, when we had sheltered in the scrub during the rain and that they had baked on the other side of the river three large cakes. This shows how little these Natives may be trusted in. They knew, that those three had stolen and had neither prevented it, nor informed me about sooner than the thieves had gone and I discovered it myself. The men returned very late from fishing. We had again a thunder storm with a little rain during the night.

Tuesd. 3. Having been taken seriously ill during the night from a severe attack of a spasm in the stomach and great headach with feverish heat I could scarcely leave to day my couch, notwithstanding I felt somewhat easier. Br. Rode had therefore to instruct the children both in the forenoon and in the afternoon. Blessed be the Lord my God, that He has redeemed my life from destruction and is healing my disease. It is exceedingly painful and distressing, to be visited by sudden and serious disease in the midst of the bush, being not only deprived of remedies, but also being beyond the reach of medical attendance.

Half a dozen of men and women and 3 children arrived this morning from the other side of the river. Along with these were also the thieves. "Jemmy" the principal thief was even bold enough, to come close up to our hut and when remonstrated by Br. Rode, that he had stolen, replied in a rash manner, he had taken but very little. Rode thought advisable, not to speak any more to him, knowing him as a very troublesome and mischievous rascal, but nevertheless he annoyed R. so much, who was about to keep school, that the latter threatened him, whereupon he even challenged Br. Rode, shewing him his cudgel. I also had to suffer greatly in my hut from him, although I neither spoke with him, nor even looked at him. It was particularly

**According to Eipper (1841:4-5) the Aborigines of the district were subdivided into small tribes 'each of which has a certain territory allotted to it, from which they generally derive their names. Each of these tribes may number from 50 to 60 souls. On the right bank of the river are the Amity Point, Maturbine, and Moppé's tribe, who number, together, about 200; on the left are the Duke of York's tribe, the Pine River natives, the Ningé Ningé, Umpie Boang, and Yun Monday tribes, which including the mountain tribes in their neighbourhood, amount to about 400 souls. The tribes are distinguished from each other by the direction of the incisions which they make on their breasts and arms; but the fishing tribes have, from their peculiar occupation, a fleshy protuberance on the wrist, to which they are often found referring to prevent their being confounded with other natives'.**

Tindale includes Ninghi in his alternate names for the Jagara (Turubul speakers), located 'Brisbane River from the Cleveland district inland to the Dividing Range about Gatton; north to near Esk; at Ipswich' (Tindale 1974:169).
A MISSIONARY EXPEDITION

grievous to us, to observe that none of the other Natives did interfere, but that some rather followed his example in mocking at us, some others at least engaged his tricks. The Lord gave us grace, that we could bear all patiently without taking any notice of him. — The Natives went again afishing and did not return before Wedn. 4 forenoon, having caught a great many fishes. I felt a little better, although the pain had not left me altogether. I instructed the children again in the forenoon. — A messenger from the Bunya district arrived in the evening, to invite the rest of the Ningé Ningé and Umpie boang Natives to the feasting upon the Bunya fruit. The Natives resolved therefore this evening, to proceed thither the following morning. — Having intended to return this morning, we were prevented from doing so on account of the Natives having not returned from fishing on the previous evening. — I appeased a woman, who was very angry upon others, by a piece of bread. — We had some more rain to-day.

Th. 5. I felt again unwell last night, and although I was very weak, we broke up early in the morning, to return to our Station and to leave all the Blacks to proceed to the Bunya Bunya Mountains. — 

We had great difficulty to procure the necessary bearers of our things. Several having promised, to go along with us and our two principal guides, changed their minds on the point of starting, so that we had to take some bundles ourselves and to march off, until at last a third followed us, who took the bundles on his head. — 

We crossed this afternoon the Deception River and the other small River and reached before night the hut at “Burrujavoiun”, wherein we slept the second night, the Blacks having chosen shorter paths, as they are in a great haste, to bring us home, in order to follow the others to the Bunya Country. I was very much knocked up from walking so far and fast, feeling besides very unwell, so that I longed greatly for rest.

Fr. 6. After a refreshing sleep we continued our journey, crossed early in the morning both Pine Rivers and proceeded under a burning sun to a place, where we found the first fresh water about 7 miles from our Station, having walked from half past five o’clock till 12 o’clock.

There we intended to rest a few hours, and to finish our journey in the cool of the evening. We had scarcely sat down, when also Br. Rode got very ill, so that he was afraid, we might have to remain the night here. He had great head-ach and felt sick. After having vomited however and slept a few hours, he felt a little better, so that we could move on, and finish our course praising our ever blessed Redeemer with our Wives, Brethren and Sisters for all, what He had done unto us, His servants. Unto Him be commended the establishing of the work of our hands, for His is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Feasting on the large roasted seeds of the bunya bunya (Araucaria bidwillii) took place every third year when the seed crop was plentiful. See Young 1939.

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Sandy McDonald

Photograph by Bruce Shaw, 1978.
Northern Australia today retains many of the anachronistic features of the colonial system, a system which is revealed in numberless ways on the cattle stations, on missions and government settlements (particularly in north Queensland), and in small country towns both old and new by the attitudes and assumptions of the people living in these differing social environments. In the East Kimberley, one of the latest of Australia's frontiers, these attitudes — of exploitation and racial dominance — date back to the early 1880s. There are people born around the turn of the century who remember vividly the mistreatment received by neighbours and kinfolk, and by themselves, at the hands of the colonizing whites. The experiences of brutality, deviousness, insensitivity and fear are very much part of northern Aboriginal oral traditions, many still lively and dynamic. The resentments generated are passed on not unnaturally from the old to the young and are strengthened, if not exacerbated, by the present social system. Gjessing notes that: 'What is "forgotten" does not disappear, but sinks down to the unconscious level. The events of yesterday and today are already on their way into our tradition', and concerning violence in colonialism he adds, citing Lévi-Strauss, 'a situation of this kind cannot be forgotten, much less erased'. Tradition, for the people that I know in the East Kimberley, remains still at the conscious level.

In the last decade many elderly Aborigines have been displaced from East Kimberley cattle stations as a result of the introduction of higher wages for Aboriginal stock workers. The dependants now considered redundant by management have tended to settle on camping reserves adjacent to various Western Australian towns. The new township of Kununurra was founded officially in 1961, on the site of a construction camp opened in 1959. From 1959 to 1963 a diversion dam was under construction at Bandicoord (Bandicoot Bar) on the Ord River a few miles from the townsite. The main irrigation channel and its subsidiaries were also built in these years to service cotton farms established on the black 'cununurra' soil of the Ivanhoe Plain to the north of the town boundary. In 1963 a camping reserve was gazetted by the then Native Welfare Department just within the line of this northern boundary in response to the drift of old people and children — unwanted by the stations — to Kununurra's fringes. Now, some fifteen years later, Kununurra itself has a population somewhat in excess of a thousand persons, including four hundred to six hundred Aborigines of the district. Able-bodied members of the community ply their seasonal occupation as cattle station workers.

In 1973 and 1974 I collected individual histories from about thirty people of Aboriginal descent. These ranged from transcripts of case history size to a handful of life histories. Among the former were the reminiscences of Sandy McDonald, which appear below. They were the result of five interviews, the first in 1970, three in 1973, and one in 1974. Editing, transforming the narrative from the spoken to the written word, was relatively extensive, but I strove to remain faithful to the original spirit and idiom of the account. The dialectic which predominates in Sandy's anecdotes is woven around his individual conflicts with white authoritarian agencies, specifically the State Aboriginal welfare department and Roman Catholic Christian

1 See Stevens 1974.
2 Gjessing 1968:400-401.
3 See Shaw 1974.
missions, and some of the social issues critical to Aboriginal advancement (education, alcohol dependency, self-help movements). I do not agree with all of Sandy's views. Some of the explanatory notes may modify or illustrate them further from the vantage-point of the present for, since 1974, a number of highly significant changes have taken place, I believe for the better.

Expositions on friendship in the field are among the clichés of anthropological literature, a fashion which is highly suspect to the minds of some writers. The anthropologist finds his 'key informants' often in the same way that one selects friends and acquaintances, on criteria of affective compatibility. At the same time, one cannot be a friend to all because of differences in motives, temperament and a host of other variables. It is not expected that every person approached by the anthropologist will fall over backwards to talk with him. Some Aboriginal communities, with good reason no doubt, now refuse to permit anthropologists into their midst. As for those who accept the usually sincere approaches of a social scientist to study their way of life (and we cannot rule out the element of fraud in individual cases), there is often created reciprocally a debt of friendship and caring which goes well beyond the mere production of a monograph. This was my experience when collaborating with a Gadgerong man, Grant Ngabidj, now sadly passed away, and Jack Sullivan with whom I am at present working, producing relatively large-scale life histories. The same bonds of friendship can apply however during briefer encounters when collecting case histories. Early in June 1978 I asked Sandy McDonald for his opinion. I pointed out that he had strong dislikes for welfare officers and missionaries and yet in my case as a 'neutral' person he had welcomed me to his camp and discussed his ideas. His response was that he saw no difference between such discussion and friendship. Anthropological field work for these reasons is not to be taken lightly, for friends in the best sense of the word are not found easily.

Reminiscences by Sandy McDonald

I was born in 1908 on Inverway station in the Northern Territory. My father was a European and he had a ranch, a station called Kirkimby in the Northern Territory. This was on Farqueharson Brothers country and he had permission to live there. He came in the 1880s as a station manager from Alice Springs. My mother was a full-blood Aboriginal woman, you might as well say Djaru and Nyining, sort of mixed. They spoke the same language and were almost one tribe across. Her father was also Nyining and Djaru mixed and I suppose her mother was the same because every Aboriginal was born to speak two languages. From Hall's Creek to Wave Hill you could speak the same language, and Kirkimby station was in that area.

Every Aboriginal language had a boundary, a territory of their own like the border of the Northern Territory and Western Australia, but only a small area. Both sides understood both languages; it was bred into them. They never married across, only at odd times when they shared women with the other side. They do not believe it now; they just marry anyhow, even their blood relations. We found everything going well in those days. My father had no trouble with the Aboriginal people working for him. All of them in the camp followed the Aboriginal rules and customs and went on well, no fighting, no row. All through the World War Two, they were good. They never stole anything. You could leave a truck down the creek, or pack horses, packs and camp rigs and things like that, and grog. They never used to drink grog until after World War Two. Of course, gradually they were getting grog from somebody, and the certificate of citizenship right was granted to them, even to half castes. They were not recognized as an Australian citizen until they bought this ticket for two dollars. This ticket was the so-called Certificate of Citizenship, which was wrongly named.

4 Willis 1969:141.
THEY DID IT THEMSELVES

That book should have been named a beer ticket. Aboriginal people were always Australian citizens under the Commonwealth Nationalized and Citizenship Act (sic), but the State government had their own law. They had to buy this book to become an Australian citizen.5

In those days the fullblood Aboriginal never got wages, just a shirt, trousers, boots and hat, and a stick of tobacco. That was their payment. And tucker. And any bad boys, say a boy with a bit of intelligence who stuck up for his rights, they would flog him. See, that was going on a long time. The Aborigines got that way that they could not open their mouths out. The station I was on was fairly good. Some of the small stations that started off like it were really good. They relied on the Aborigines to do the work. A lot of those stations now today were built up by Aboriginal people.

One squatter taking up a block of land, a pastoral lease, had no labourers except the fullbloods and he had to rely on them, trusting them to muster the cattle and brand them for him. He would go out with them but a lot of times he did not, when he had to go to Hall's Creek or Wyndham or the nearest town in the Territory to get rations or tucker. Everything was trusted to the Aborigines and now today they are condemning them all and saying they are no good. They never give them a go. Way back before the World War Two they gave them a go. There was one station by the name of Ruby Plain, about I suppose approximate distance round by the road sixty miles the other side of Hall's Creek, that was run by one white man and a group of Aborigines, until he sold the station in 1959. He had no trouble with the Aborigines all their life. And all the other stations started off that way.

There were three half caste and two black people in my family. A boy had my mother before my father got hold of her when he was a boundary rider on Ord River station. I had one half-brother and one half-sister, that was all. How that came about of course was the old feller had a lot of natives in his camp and through their custom they gave my mother to him. That was why in those days a lot of the whites did not have any trouble with the fullblood Aborigines. The elders gave them wives, promised them just like in their custom. That was how I was born. My father married my mother and had a bit of a ranch, brought all his cattle onto the block of country then. There was myself and a brother named Duncan who was the youngest. I was the second youngest. Duncan is a broken-down old feller looking older than me according to what people reckon. We went out on the station there for twelve years, then in 1922 the old feller had to sell out and we had to go because we were getting blamed for a lot of things. My father sold the cattle to Vestey's northern agency and bought a mob of horses and we went to Hall's Creek. We had three hundred of them for breeding purposes and to sell down in the Fitzroy area, but the drought came and killed them all. When we came to Western Australia I was about fourteen. I have never been to school but I can read. The old man started to teach me once but he died too soon, in August 1926 at Hall's Creek. He started me off and of course I had to back up myself and things like that. I was about eighteen when that happened.

5 The practice of granting citizenship in this manner was discontinued in 1971. Prior to that year, people of Aboriginal descent living in the Pilbara and the Kimberley divisions were unable to become Australian citizens without first applying to the then Native Welfare Department for that right. The Certificate of Citizenship forms still in use in 1970 bore the date 1961. They required the applicant's full name, date of birth, 'caste' (whether 'half', 'quarter' etc.) parentage, father's and mother's names, 'caste' of both parents, date and place of marriage, 'caste' of spouse, and the names and birth dates of children. In this system with its emphasis upon 'caste' there was a marked tendency to exclude fullblood Aborigines. Successful applicants, designated as 'poor white' by the welfare officer who filled in the form, were issued with a small cardboard booklet, stamped, signed, not unlike a passport. This was referred to colloquially as a 'dog licence' or 'beer ticket'. Aside from the impertinence of assessing at all whether an applicant was 'reasonably capable of managing his or her own affairs' (one of the questions to be answered by the public official), the procedure was iniquitous because of the total discretionary power it placed in the hands of the local Native Welfare officer to give or withhold.
and I had to go and work to keep the tucker bag full, learning to read and write at the same time. I used to do saddling, mostly for drovers, and work as a stockman. In those days we had slate and chalk instead of a lot of books like today. There was no school but everybody used to send away for slates, and we could get little books to write A, B, C and all those things, ‘cat’ and ‘dog’.

I can read papers — I am a bit interested in papers — and sometimes in good books. There was one book called Gone Bush written by a medical officer in the Northern Territory, Sister Kettle. She was employed by the Health Department there and the first job she got was in 1952 when she was sent out to Yuendumu mission settlement north-west of Alice Springs. After a while when she had been working in the hospital out there one of the native women came along and said to her: ‘Sister Kettle, my mother is your mother, your mother is my mother. You look after my mother while I’m workin for you’. ‘Righto Ruby’, she said. And Sister Kettle then turned around and wrote in this book: ‘The first job that I got from the Health Department I was sent out to Yuendumu settlement. And the Aboriginal people at Yuendumu settlement accepted me in their midst. They gave me a niche, and accepted me in the tribal custom, in the four marriage structure, and I became a Namaldjeri, the same skin as that woman’.6 It is the same here, you work off the four. It went on a lot then, and everywhere she went in the Northern Territory she was recognized by the Aboriginal people in certain stations, with her skin name. She had uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and brothers and sisters no matter where she went. That custom was broken, see, by the early settlers. They forced them to marry women and boys against their religion, against their custom, and through that four marriage structure they kept their tribe in order, for they had no police force, no army, no jail. When they did all that they could not go wrong. In that custom they could not marry their first cousin; it had to be a cousin from another tribe. Through that custom they could not kill anybody, and they stuck to that for nobody knows how long, we can only surmise. Well, if the Aborigines took that custom back you would find they are better off.

Some of these customs should have been accepted in the church. Christianity is doing the Aboriginal no good. The government is trying to introduce changes; they want the Aborigines to take their culture and their customs back. That is the only way. But there are too many missionaries preaching all the time. They say yes, but in their heart they do not say it, you see. I have read it in the paper many a time that that is why the government wants the Aboriginal people to learn their language, so they will understand each other. A white man or woman who is born on the station would tell you the difference. I do not believe Christianity; I will not have it. There is no God in my religion. In Aboriginal custom there was no hell or heaven, there was no such thing as a God. It was nearly the same everywhere; all the tribes had that, among these people and in my own country, although it is a different language here that I do not understand.

After I had been living around Hall’s Creek with the horses, I went with an old prospector across to Alice Springs, three years in the desert. We had no trouble with the Aborigines out there. They showed us water and helped us in every way. Of

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6 Sandy’s paraphrasing is relatively accurate; Kettle (1967:1) says:

“The Walbiri folk of the “Centre”, having accepted me as their friend, found a niche for me in their tribal social structure. I became Nabaldjari, and belonged to one of the eight skin-groupings. This privilege, which had disadvantages as well as advantages, provided me with many tribal mothers, fathers and siblings, not to mention uncles, aunts and cousins. News of my acceptance was brought by one of the hospital staff, Ruby Nabaldjari, who explained that I had become her sister, and from then on I was referred to by all as Nabaldjari. The disadvantages of a newly-acquired family were borne home when I remonstrated with my staff over their reluctance to care for a certain elderly woman patient; they blithely pointed out that, since the woman was my mother, it was my duty to care for her.”
course I learnt nothing, never saw a paper. In those days you could not get newspapers like you do today. We would go into some of the nearest stations round that area, say every three or four months, till we rounded up and went back to Hall's Creek. There was no civilisation whatsoever. This old feller I was with, a white man, could not read or write and I had to read all the miner's rights and a lot of other things to him. He had a diary and I read all that. And the longer I stayed out there I got tired of him and so I never learnt any more after that. You know how a man gets that way that he gets full of some of those old settlers, like the old prospector I was working for, you start arguing the point over something. I had nothing to read then, not even a diary, and I forgot a lot of it.

I never went through the Aboriginal Law. They would not interfere with half caste kids. They would say: 'No, we can't touchim. E's gone to the white man. We leavim out'. In those days too the white men on the stations did not treat half castes too well, although they treated me a little differently from fullbloods. At the same time, when you had a row with them they ran for the rifle. I nearly got shot one time by the man I was working for, but of course when he picked up his rifle I picked up mine. Mostly half caste people were carrying guns, not the fullblood Aborigines. I said to him: 'What are you going to do with that? You better put it down', and when he saw me with one he put his away. I said: 'Never you do that'. See, I always had something in my swag like that and from that time I never worked on a station without a pistol in my shirt. I learnt that lesson. A few of us carried pistols. I had a gun all my life, and a pistol too.

I was about twenty or twenty-one when I came back to Hall's Creek. I went out again working on the stations; got a job there with an old teamster on a donkey team. I used to take any kind of contracting job and liked the work. I did not like stock work because it was a risky job for little money, £2.0.3 per week. Some stations would pay a little more but not much. In the Territory you received £2.8.0. There was one European on the donkey team and we had about four fullblood Aborigines. I was put on as cook. After I finished there I got a job at Mount Amhurst station about sixty miles from Hall's Creek. I went down there to break in some young colts and when I had finished they kept me on until Christmas time. So I came back, and the second year they wanted me there and I returned and worked for them again, leaving once more somewhere around October or November and coming back to Hall's Creek. I looked for gold but could not find any, and spent all my money on tucker. The gold rushes were earlier in 1884-86. So I had to camp there; I could not go anywhere. There was an old bloke who used to be working round there for the local road board years ago, and he took a block of land out from Hall's Creek. He said to me: 'You come with me, I'll give you a job'. So I went with him and helped him brand up what he could get around his country. Then he said: 'I'll sell you bullock, an you start butcherin in Hall's Creek'. 'Right', I said, and I bought all the bullocks that he had. He was another European starting a ranch you see. This was in 1931.

And I went on butchering and was doing all right. Meat that time was sixpence a pound, not a lot even in those days. I went on killing and we got on together well until the year after in 1932 when I was still butchering. The Native Protector managing Moola Bulla station did not like me butchering. He thought I was killing his bullocks. He came in and never said anything except to give me a sour look. But he asked the old bloke I was working for: 'Who's the butcher here?' 'Sandy McDonald'. He came round to me and said; 'Where you getting your bullocks from?' I said: 'You mind your own business. I don't ask you any questions'.

Then I left and in 1940 I got a job for a drover and went as far as Newcastle Waters in the Northern Territory, near the highway a few miles from a town called Elliot. I came back from there to Wave Hill and me and another feller started back to Hall's Creek where we did a bit of work for the local road board, but mostly I was
working for contractors. This was just before the World War, in 1942 or '41. I did a bit of saddling in one particular station out from Hall's Creek and I was a caretaker as well when the manager Jack Skeehan was away droving. He happened to be half caste too, the father of the Skeehans who live here. He died in Derby from heart trouble, so I got a job for fourteen months on Lissadell station, pumping. The windmill man there had to go because he could not get on with the manager, so the manager came and fixed me up to take the windmill job on. All through that there was a bit of a drought and I had to pump all the time, sometimes staying out there by myself and fixing up the engine.

In 1942-43 I was a butcher again, for two years, doing it for another man while he was out droving. In those days there was a Native Protector. They have changed it now to welfare; it was similar to welfare. In those days they called them Native Protector, but they should have called them native enemy, not protector. They were local men. One had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. He had the job, then he died or retired and another local man took over and he was worse. 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this boy against his will'. 'I’ll fix you too', he said. 'An that’ll be the day you fix me', I said. 'I’ll put you on a chain an I’ll give you a lashing up', he said. 'You know what’ll happen to you', I said, 'Long enough for me to put a cartridge in the breech of this rifle ere. An that’s ow long you gonna last. You flog me an see how far you’ll go'. 'No, no', he said, 'We don’t want to have any row'. 'Well shut up an say nothin about it', I said. The postmaster put his head through the window and listened. 'What did he say to you Sandy?' he asked. 'Oh e tryin to stand over me. You heard w hat e said to me. E called me a bastard an things like that. Wanted to flog me'. 'Mm', he said, 'That’s bad, I eard im, eard what e said. He had no right to say that to you. I’m glad you stood on your dignity'. That was not the second time I had a row with him; it was the third. After showing him my thirty-two rifle he went away and never said any more.

The next time I saw him I had stopped for a smoko with a new boy about four years old. That was Allen, the big feller here who was only a little boy then, a poddy with no mother, like they call a poddy calf. I reared him on to milk after my first wife died in 1941. Allen wanted a feed so I pulled up and boiled a billy to have a cup of tea while he was eating his breakfast. It was about nine o’clock, and that feller pulled up and said: ‘Ow are you? You broken down?’ ‘No’, I said. ‘Any help?’ he said, ‘You want any help? I’ll give you all the help you want’. ‘No thanks Mr George. I’m quite all right’, I said, ‘I’m not broken down.’ ‘Oh’, he said, ‘Well don’t be fright­ened to pull me up any time I come in if you’re broken down’. ‘Righto’, I said, ‘Thanks for your offer’. And the second time I went out near the same place but half a mile apart I pulled up again. And the third time when he came in and saw me doing the same thing: ‘You always pull up and make a fire like that?’ he asked. ‘Yeah, when the kid want a feed. When I eat in the mornin I givim what e want, an I have my cup a tea too’. ‘Mm?’, he said, ‘That boy here, where’s the mother?’ I said, ‘Mother died long time’. I met my first wife at Hall’s Creek. I think she was a part-Aboriginal but not by a European, by a half-Maori I think. We had only that one child.

That feller Mr George did not have the grudge against me all the time, only sometimes when he got wild and on the spur of the moment. If you did not pull him up well he would go a bit further with it. He was the only man who said that to me because he was a Protector and he was trying to bounce me around. But I said: ‘Don’t try to stand over me Mr George. I’n not like those Aborigines you’ve got over there. I always have something in my swag. I was not dragged up; I was brought up’. After that he was pretty good, could not do enough for me. However, soon after that, he started bringing in meat to the hospital and the town, giving it to them so I could not sell mine. I reported him to the Minister of the North who came up, and he said to me: ‘Moola Bulla station, that’s what they grow meat there for, to sell meat. But he cannot sell meat by the pound. He can sell meat by the quarter or a bullock or half a bullock. We can’t stopim on that. But we stoppinim on sellin the meat by pound. He cannot do that’. I was selling it by the pound, which was the normal way.

When I was working for the Main Roads Department from ’43 to ’45, driving a truck, we were camped about twelve miles from Sturt Creek. I would go out and get a killer at the station, and I came back once with the calves on the back of the truck. We put them on the table and I helped the cook cut them up, salt them, and put them in the freezer. And one of the blokes who had not been long up in the Kimberleys, had come up from Perth with a truck, asked me: ‘Where’s you go today Sandy?’ I said: ‘I went to Mistake Creek’. ‘What’s Mistake Creek, what is it?’. ‘A station’, I said. ‘How’s it come to get the name Mistake Creek?’. I said: ‘I couldn’t tell you’. That went on for a few years and I found out after. How I found out was I came back to my camp and started thinking about it. There were two Mistake Creeks, one in the Territory and one in Western Australia not far from Turkey Creek. And there were two shootings, you see, both white men shooting blackfellers. It
happened to be a police party this time, somewhere around 1890 just when the telegraph line was completed. Some white man did not like this shooting and he reported it down south through the telegraph, sent a wire down. There were white policemen and police boys, they generally had two or three, and sixty people were shot. They were on a chain but not taken into Wyndham jail. You see, they were making money out of the Aboriginal people, getting two shillings and sixpence a head at that time to feed the prisoners. And when they got a telegram to let the Aborigines go and to get the right man who killed a bullock — you see, every Aboriginal could not be all cattle killers — instead of letting them go that is what happened. They took them off to this particular creek and I think that is how it got its name Mistake Creek, through that. Well of course when they received a telegram to let the Aborigines go they had made a mistake arresting them and putting them on a chain, and instead of letting them go they shot them and burnt them. You will not see that in the newspaper, not like with the story of the Wyndham massacre.

In 1950 I finished up there and went into Wyndham. Next I got a job out here at Argyle repairing the yard and then I went over to Newry station in the Northern Territory. In those days no priest was up here. They all came after World War Two. They were not here much in 1950 but they poured in in 1960. There were all station people, no missions, and only one welfare station at Moola Bulla thirteen miles out of Hall's Creek. It used to be pretty bad, Moola Bulla, in those days, the time I had a row with the superintendent. It was somewhere around 1956 when they sold the place and let the Aborigines go. It is owned by a company now.

I came back in '52 and got a job with the Main Roads Department at Wyndham. I worked with them from 1952 to 1956 and in that year I got a job with the Public Works Department laying water pipes for the Wyndham water supply, in from the pumping station. I was put on as a leading hand and a fitter and turner but I did not stay there for too long. I left in 1957 because I was not given a fair go. One reason I pulled out was I was not getting enough money. I had to put the sockets in the asbestos pipes and test them myself. The engineer came up from Derby and I showed him a lot of faults in them and he gave me the job to test them. I was doing two other men's work. After leaving them I went to Hall's Creek and worked for the Main Roads from '58 to '59, and in mid-1959 I went to Alice Springs and lived over there. I had a job there with a contractor putting down curbs and guttering in the streets, forming the road up and things like that, both me and my boy. We worked there, and in '61 we came back here to Kununurra and have been living here ever since. I never lived in the bush, only out on the stations. They had just started building the diversion dam in that year, had never even poured the cement. I was there when they poured the first cement in, and I think they finished it in 1963. I came up to Kununurra on the strength of that job, working on the dam. We camped down at Lily Creek then shifted to another camp in 1967. Then while I was in the hospital in Darwin the welfare put my second wife and two grandchildren on the reserve and gave them a house there. Of course, she flew up to see me and I said: 'Well I'll be out, as soon as we get out. You stay in the house until I come there'. There were not too many natives there then. So when I came back we packed up the same day — I had a van — and we shifted to a camp. I left the reserve because they had no right to send my wife there. Before I went to hospital the welfare came out to see whether I wanted a house and when I told them I needed one I distinctly said that I would not live on the reserve under any consideration because the name reserve itself is discrimination. 'You're a fool', I was told, but I said: 'I'm not a fool. I'm a fool to stay there. I don't want you to push me around and stand over me'. It was a principle. 'I never was brought up in the native camp', I said, 'an you want to push me back in the native camp'. That was why I left the reserve.

Moola Bulla government station was founded in 1910, followed by Violet Valley adjoining it a year later (Biskup 1973:100).
Before I got my pension I was working all the time here and there. During the wet
we used to camp out, like we do now, when everybody knocked off station work in
September. In those days they did not require any more labourers in September, not
like today. Now I am retired on an invalid pension. I do nothing here, only fixing
cars for different blokes who come in. Sometimes they pay me, sometimes they do
not. I am making no money from repairing motor cars and helping people because
they are broke too. My son in the town comes and goes. I chose to live here because
my granddaughter was going to school here and my boy had a good job in Wyndham
as a waterside worker. I planned once to start a garage, but I never finished it because
I could not do it on my own. That is the only thing I regret, not being able to start
a store, a bit of an agency. If I had money I would go to no-one. I am independent.

It is pretty good here. The only trouble is the pub and the arguments there when
something is said about coloured people. I never stayed in one place when I was
working. I did not like Wyndham. Kununurra was a better place to live although
some people here are biased against the native people, including half castes. I am
classed as a white man and those years ago I had my Citizenship rights. There was
nowhere else to go. Hall's Creek was too far and Wyndham did not suit me. What I
did not like was not having a house. My shanty would be blown down during the rain.

Today I do not think they have any objection when an Aboriginal girl marries a
white man. You know, they are not like some of the Europeans who say: 'Look,
what a black bastard doin with that white woman there?'. That is what they would
say, but the Aborigines would not say that. It is only one way. It can happen the
other way in Darwin, and there you see white women adopting black kids, you see
a lot of that. I think it is so different because the Northern Territory is run by the
Commonwealth government. The State government has its own laws and governs
its own State. I think that has a lot to do with it. One time out in the back country
you only wanted to say something out of place and look out, they would kill that
dark man. That was the local law in these little towns in the outback. Oh that feeling
is still hanging on here. There is a lot of colour bar still, a lot of class discrimination.
It is different in a big town like Darwin. There is no colour-bar over there; different
altogether. I do not know why. In the early days in the Territory they treated the
Aborigines the same as here, but after the World War Two they went up pretty
quickly, and sort of changed the law then. That did not happen here after the war,
only lately. I know way back in the 'fifties there were a couple of white men in
Wyndham who did not like their kids to go to the State school there with the Abori­
ginal people. Did you know that?

Native Welfare has been changed to Community Welfare, but that is no different.
They are still Native Welfare. They are not the same, never ever changed, and should
not be combined. You go to the court, say. A lot of the time the Aborigines do not
get justice because the community welfare believe the policeman. Sometimes the
policeman can be wrong. In a lot of cases when they make the charge the welfare do
not look into it deeply and do not quite understand. They should have some Abori­
ginal people there to see that they do get justice. And it is not only fullbloods, they
do that to the poor white man too. He gets no justice here, never. The local J.P.'s
are no good. Kununurra is full of them. They work with the crowd. There is a
clique here you see — the farmers and the squatters and the missionaries, they are
all one. Well, they are not so mixing with the missionaries, but say the businessmen.
It is better if the people are tried by a magistrate as is done with most of the court
cases in Darwin. Here there is a travelling magistrate. However, I do not think you
would find Aborigines here clever enough to go in and help the others. You want a
bit of education to do that, and you want to understand what you are talking about.

8 This is one of the folk myths of the north. It is extremely unlikely that Darwin is subjectively
very different from other European northern settlements where race relations are concerned.
And with the kids going to school, well one of the missionaries, the Catholic, is involved in that. Why do they have to do that? Why do they have to interfere with the Aboriginal people? You see, they should not interfere with somebody else's kids. One time here all the welfare were Catholic and when they were tried in the court they took the kids off them and sent them away to a Catholic school. Why is that? That should not be. The parents should have the say: 'No, my kid not goin there. I wantim to go to such-an-such a place'. A lot of the parents do not get the freedom to say that. The freedom is taken away when the child is taken to court and it becomes a court case. Well, parents should be able to object and say: 'My kid is not goin to your religion'. It still happens now. I think a lot of people, some of them, are frightened to say these things. I do not think it is an accident. There is a lot of that going on here in Kununurra. They keep them down by changing them. Their religion is no good. If parents object they should not do that. If the welfare decided to send a child to a Catholic school that should not happen. The government should take over and send them to their school, or to a school where the parents want them to go. I have no religion, but as I said before I believe the native custom and I follow that. I will not accept Christianity. Christianity is the ruination of the Aboriginal people. They do not educate the kids. They are not kept longer at school. The church and school have done nothing for the natives.

And the welfare were on their back all the time and did nothing for the natives. They wanted to be master all the time. They did not go and ask the native what he wanted but told him what he wanted. This was in the past but it is still not good. The Aborigines cannot vote and that is the point. The welfare do not do anything about it, that is their policy. They have never explained what voting means to the native. A lot of these Acts which are about bother me. I would like to see the Declaration of Human Rights. I read in the paper one time that Section 18 of the Liquor Act says that a publican has no right whatsoever to ask people questions; he is there to serve refreshment to anybody, it does not matter who, and the penalty for not doing so is fifty dollars. A lot of them do not serve Aborigines. Now, my brother went up with Tom Wilson the squatter and he got a station in the Hall's Creek area. He knew him for twenty-five years and what happened? The publican went over and told Wilson: 'E's not allowed in the pub. E got to drink out, e cant' be brought ere, e got to get out'. Well that is his colour bar, his discrimination, and that is bad. My brother was not being noisy or anything: he just went in there. I have been here since 1961 and there has been a lot of discrimination in the pub by the publican, the owner. That is going to cause trouble here. You go to Wyndham now, there is no discrimination in those pubs. They can drink and do what they like. If they are too drunk the police have to tell them to go home. Well here they used to ring up and get the police and of course when they start slingig dirt that is where the discrimination comes in. Naturally, when the publican gets knocked over that is his own fault. Not long ago he was knocked over and I believe that the bloke who knocked him got eighteen months. That was bad, you see.

That native boy came here from Darwin. He was a Wyndham boy but he had been away in Sydney for a long time. He came down here for help but we would not give it to him. He said to me: 'You come up to the pub?'. 'What for?', I said. He replied: 'To stand by. We got to get into the publican'. He was sticking up for another man, was going to go there and cause trouble over one person. 'Not on your life', I said, 'I'm not going up there'. He then said to my boy: 'What about you? Are you comin

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9 This appears to be in fact Section 118 'Penalty for refusing entertainment' which reads, in subsection (1) 'Any holder of a publican's general license, a limited hotel license, or a wayside-house license, or an Australian wine, beer and spirits license, who, without reasonable cause, refuses to receive any person as a guest in his house, or to supply any person with food, liquor, refreshment or lodging, commits an offence against this Act'. The penalty was $100. (Western Australia Licensing Act 1911-1965).
THEY DID IT THEMSELVES

up ere?’. ‘Look Norman’, Alan said, ‘I went to school with some of these white people up ere in Wyndham. I lived ere in Kununurra an I’m well-known ere. I don’t want to cause no trouble in the pub. So leave me out of it’. And I said to this Aboriginal: ‘You see, you’ll find yourself in jail tomorrow. You cannot do that’. That young feller from Sydney was trying to have the Black Power movement here you see. It started this year a month or two ago I think. That was the time they knocked the publican down. That feller was trying to cause trouble in Darwin but the Aboriginal people there would not take any notice of him, they just ignored him. He was trying to cross up, and he was trying to cause it here. I would not know what happened to him. He was no good, see, with that in his head. And there was this half caste boy who came over with that fullblood Aboriginal. He disappeared. He was on a drunken driving charge over the same incident they had here with the publican. He was no good. There was a story that a big mob were going to come from Wyndham, but nobody came. When they asked him he said there was a big mob at Fork Creek. Well all I know is there are all pensioners at Fork Creek. They would not come out here and do anything like that. A lot of them are friends and relatives of people here. I told him: ‘You don’t know what you’re talking about. You gotta go home and go back to Wyndham. Otherwise you’ll find yourself inside’. That rumour made everybody frightened, but I stayed here. I never went bush like a lot of the others. Well if they were going to kill people they would have followed us out there and killed us just the same. I believe the white people, every one, had the shits properly. They were buying rifles and taking off to the police station to get them registered, in Wyndham and here. I know there was one couple who took a rifle up there. Any other time you go to buy a rifle here the police will not give you a license, but this particular day they gave them rifles and a license to carry firearms. Those kinds of things are wrong; they are looking for trouble.

Work here now is better only for some people. Some are victimised from getting a job up here — fullblood, half castes and some of the whites — any job. They cannot get jobs now. I do not know what is going to happen in a couple of years time when all the young Aborigines come back from school and cannot get jobs. Since World War Two everything was going well and smooth and they started paying the Aborigines wages. Some of the stations still treat them badly by not giving the full basic wage. There was some talk of Rosewood, that a stockman from a kid up got $26 instead of $42-45 a week. But now we have more welfare than Aborigines. Most of the young people today you see here were all bred up after World War Two. It has become worse and worse. They will not do the work. You see, they go over there for a feed, get everything out of the pensioners. The pensioners should be separated from the younger people who go and get the money off them, drink it up, and come back for a feed and eat them out. They have no tucker. It is getting worse because young people now are telling each other: ‘Why do you want to work? Why don’t you be like me, going around? I don’t have to work. I go over there and get a feed’. I know a lot of people who have been here for years and they will not go to work when they are supposed to. You see them in a group. You see them go to a camp and squat down there and then eat everything in the camp. But they are not lazy. The only reason why they behave like that is through the grog. One time you never saw this, anything like it. The Aborigines in those earlier days behaved better. Getting too much grog now is the main trouble with them. They never used to go round and

10 In Oct. 1973 there was a Black Power scare in the town which lasted a couple of days. Sandy’s version is substantially close to that of many other rumours which were flying at the time among both Aborigines and whites. Perhaps more than anything else in my fieldwork, it underlined the truly abysmal gap of understanding between the two cultures. There were over-reactions on both sides, the strongest element being one of fear. I heard stories of ‘neurotic’ European housewives locking themselves in their homes with rifles and shotguns. I witnessed at first hand the panic among Aborigines on the reserve.
The only thing I can see is that people born in the country did not want to leave, but some could not get jobs, both Aborigines, some whites and part-Aborigines. Newcomers arrive and they put them on, and when it gets hot they go away down south. Some come to make money and just to travel around Australia, not live here. That is why a lot of Aborigines are out of work. And they cannot save money. They put money in the bank today in the morning and in the evening some of them go back and draw it out. I never had enough to save and I am on a pension now. When it was in the good old time the wages were very low, only two pound threepence a week. We used to camp eight months in the year waiting for a job. Only working six months in a year, how could we support ourselves on that? Six months, the dry season, was the working season and eight months was the wet. It was a long time, and sometimes we used to start late. Sometimes the wet was for six months, shorter. Most stations generally knocked off in August, not like today when they are still working. One time they did not do that. They had good men, experienced on the stations who used to go round the run twice in a year. Now this time they have a job to go round once, to brand the calves. They work on the stations for longer now, and they started late too owing to the big wet this year. Any other year a lot of people used to work right up to September. When I worked on Rosewood — Kilfoyle owned the station that time, used to manage his own station — we worked from March till August, finishing at the end of August, and there were no more jobs.

In the old citizen right days when they used to sell this beer ticket to Aboriginal people for two dollars, they used to get the man with the beer ticket to buy the grog on the quiet and take it down to the creek where nobody could see, and they would all get together. Around the pub the native people were not popular without a beer ticket, the rights book. It was a disgrace for the Australian citizen to carry that. The Citizenship right was discrimination. In the Northern Territory it was different. Everybody was the same, all classed as Australian citizens. They could walk into any pub and were not asked for a beer ticket. In the past, fullbloods were not allowed to drink with white people. That is why we have a lot of drunken natives in the country. I think that was bad for the Aborigines. They have kept on doing that. And they were forcing young boys, even school kids for a few bob, to buy grog. They drank quickly for being glutons and did not want to try to keep sober. You hear them talking: ‘I got drunk last night. I had so many bottles of beer. I had a bottle or flagon’, and all that. That is not right. And even the kids are going around drinking. The parents teach them. Why does the publican keep on serving them with liquor when he knows they are drunk? That is where the welfare should step in and do something, and the police should be given stricter law. These sorts of things in the long run cause trouble.

Sometimes I have a beer. The doctor told me I must have one now and again, but I do not drink heavily, no. I do not know why people drink heavily. It may be the way they were brought up, to just go in there and do what they like. You get a lot of blokes in the pub will not leave it. That is how it happens, they drink too young. There are a lot of young people here drinking and some are not eighteen. What is wrong with the law? They just need to go round and ask their ages. Some of those drunk people are born around here; others come from Port Keats. There are Malngin and Ngarinman people here, and some Gidja ones who drink. There are a few at Lily Creek. A lot of the young coloured boys there do not want to go to work. Welfare should send people like that away and see that they get work or something, that somebody teaches them something. They could put in someone, a man to go around and educate them. I think they drink just for being ignorant; they do not know any better. You see, when an Aboriginal person goes to the pub he goes not to just have a drink but to get drunk, to get a big quantity of grog. He does not want to drink like
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a European — go in and have a few glasses of beer and take a bottle with him and walk out — he wants to keep on drinking. See, they keep on drinking and drinking. You see how many native women go in and out of hospital here with cracks on the head and broken arms. The old men on the reserve are frightened.

With the workers the Aboriginal people are all together, one, and some of the foremen, but not with the local government body (Shire Council members) regarding native rights. Workers and natives get on well but local government people have kept the native people down all the time, stations and missions, you can't get away from that. To them, the natives are third class citizens. In the past just going back two years the poor man did not get justice. If a rich man gave a drink to an Aboriginal he was let off with a warning and some patrolmen did nothing about it. That was in the past. They have a good policeman this year. There is a bit of class distinction I suppose between some of the new Australians, and between natives and part-natives. Some part-Aborigines look down on the fullbloods, but not all. In my opinion Kununurra is a moneyed man's town. What all the fullblood Aborigines and part-natives do not like is using two laws on human beings, one for the poor and one for the rich. At Timber Creek over the border one policeman controlled everything and there was no trouble. There was a difference between Kununurra and the Territory. There was no trouble in the Territory since the Aborigines were given drinking rights, no-one in jail. Before that, whites could go to jail for supplying and the native for receiving. To some people drinking is terrible, not to all but to mostly fullblood women. A lot were out of work and would not take a job because they were on the grog. And some whites gave women grog to make them drunk, just to get the use of them. There should be someone here to look after these drunken people.

I think the government has misunderstood badly about Aborigines. Take living in groups. You know that in the old native custom every Aboriginal hunted for himself, camped for himself and lived by himself. They had little wurlies, not bunched up in a heap like they do up here. There was none of that in the old native custom days. You would see one with a little mia-mia over there and another one over there, and another one over there; not all in a group. They had plenty of space between them. It is the welfare idea to build one house and put all the natives in there. They started that by building a big bungalow and putting everybody in. You could have about twenty-four people living in one house. A lot of the natives did not like to go in there but they were forced to and they accepted it. They were told to get in and they went because they were frightened of the big-feller boss. Living in groups started with the stations. The Aborigines camped in the bush had to hunt for their tucker every day. They did it themselves. They would go out and get a kangaroo and when they brought it back they shared it out — you never saw a man starving, that was one thing. But the way the government works it now with the group of Aborigines starting a garden, I do not think it will ever happen, not here, if you want a group to go in with you. It is the same with me. I said to a bloke from Canberra: 'You gonna have trouble with the group of Aborigines here'. If it was individual it would work better. The man would grow the garden and he would know when he sold the produce he would get money. The way it is, he is growing a garden for somebody else and not getting paid. To prove that they could do it here they should have said to one man: 'You start your garden here, you start your garden there. I'll show you how to grow everything'. The time to teach them would be after the wet because you put the seeds in somewhere around January: 'You grow your own vegetables there. Anything you sell out of that is yours, not that feller's'. I think that would work.

You want to go to Wave Hill for a weekend and have a look around. They get on well there as far as I know. They built a town area for the Aboriginal people, a native welfare settlement and a police station. And then there were the native people
at Wattie Creek. They refused to go there, choosing to stop in their tribal land. They had houses put up and an overhead tank with water laid on. Everyone's tent or bit of a hut had a garden. Why have they never had it here? And white people went there voluntarily to help those people, and some of them are still there. They did not say: 'We don't want a white man to tell us what to do'. Now if I had to start farming I would go to the agriculture mob to get information to show me how to grow things. Some of the farmers here get advice from them. That is what they wanted here. On Wave Hill they still believe in the native custom, but it is breaking down here. That is terrible. The old people are not trying. And say with the garden, a man over there said that the old fellows were over their heads and bossing people around, telling them what to do. The first thing he said was: 'I'm not going t' grow vegetable for em. Bugger em, sitting down over there givin orders'. It will not work with the Aborigines as a group. If they had their own property, individually, and were paid wages they would work. They will not work voluntarily.

You have to have somebody to put you on your feet. Say, if you put an uneducated man on to books he would not know where to start or what to do. It is the same thing. You have to teach people, to show them. Europeans should have started the garden for them and showed them how to grow those things. That is one thing about Wave Hill, the Aboriginal people there never said 'we do not want a white man to show us what to do'. They knew in their own hearts that they wanted somebody to help them, and they got help. One of the fullblood boys around here said to me: 'We don't want a white man to teach us what to do'. 'Well what can you do', I said, 'You can't do nothing'.

Way back I tried to organize things and said to one or two half castes (not full-bloods), that we should all get together and start a business. 'Who's gonna handle the business?', they said. 'One man have to handle the business', I replied. 'Oh', they said, 'that won't work with us'. 'Why?'. 'You'll run away with the money'. 'You can't run away with the money', I said, 'When you get these things you registered, and agreement drawn up by a Justice of the Peace or police or welfare. How can you get away with it? You raise it as a company, you cannot get away with it'. So one reason they do not work together as a group is that they distrust each other. They point out a leader, the Aborigines today, and say that he owns the place because he is a leader of the gang. They do not understand the company affair, not like Europeans who form a company and put a manager there to run it. They do not quite understand that. A lot of part-natives do not understand too. It all depends where he went to school and how he was taught. Working in a group can work if they understand. But it is better to do it yourself. What the government should have done when they started out was to start the Aborigines on a little farm, a garden block here and there, and see how they go instead of spending a few thousand dollars trying to get the group to do the work there. If you work on your own, well, you know you have a place that is yours. If you worked for them you had to pay them. Living and working on your own as I said last time is the old way in the Law. The Aboriginal used to camp on his own and go out and hunt on his own. When they brought a kangaroo or emu or anything to the camp they always shared the food amongst one another because they could not eat it all themselves before it went rotten. But even the idea of sharing does not work properly in a group like this. They are just too busy I think.

Some of the pensioners over there should not be leaders because they are out of date. There should be somebody with a bit of intelligence and education to be a leader there, but most of them with a bit of education cannot leave the pub. Some of the leaders we have here were not good enough either, two here and a couple of boys from Wyndham. They did not have the education for a start — I think that is the main trouble — and they do not think about what they are doing. They did not think before they talked; they were not quite awake. For a start, they said they were
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going to knock down all the ground here and told us: 'You gotta shift from ere. We gonna build the houses here right down there, an put down streets an roads an things like that'. They had that in their minds you see. I said: 'What about the government, the Shire Council, did they give you o.k. to do this?'. They said: 'Oh, we get it from Canberra'. I said: 'Canberra can only grant you money. This is State of Western Australia. They govern their own State'.

Stock work is something a group does better. That would be different. But I do not know about letting the council have Argyle and a chance to prove themselves that way. These fellers here have been too long in the pub. They would be running in and out from Argyle chasing grog. I cannot see how they would make a go of it without a European or a part-European there to see and run the place. It is very hard to get a part-European here to go out there. If you are a manager on a place well you have to look after it, you should not neglect it. Durack had good men for years. There were only a few boys at Rosewood with Kilfoyle and no younger boys are living now; they are all old, sort of dead. They would have understood better, those who went out to muster cattle for the meat works. When I worked on Newry a bloke by the name of Hector Fuller was managing the station, but he never left the verandah. He used to send the boys to go out and muster and brand up the calves and get the bullocks, saying to one boy: 'You go out an get five hundred bullocks. Get more if you can'. Well they went out and brought them in. Those boys had that experience you see. Tiger was one. He worked for Fuller a long time and used to be a smart man that feller. Well nobody is there now. Bulla was a good man. He worked on Argyle a lot and was brought up under good men. He might go ahead.

11 This was the Kununurra Aboriginal Progress Association, established around July, 1974 by a relatively 'militant' group within the part-Aboriginal community as a response to, and in competition with, the fullblood Mirima Council, itself formed a little more than two years earlier in September 1971. The members of the Association identified more closely with the European community, shared many of its values, paradoxically harboured strong (and justifiable) resentments against whites ('The Aboriginal people have been kept down'). Some of its members revealed scarcely-concealed contempt for the alleged naivety of the fullbloods. The Association's chief goal was the improvement of living conditions for its members by building a village on land in the north-west corner of the town's boundary, where several camps had stood for some years. In their endeavour to lever the government authorities into allowing this, they began building a shed on part of the land. This was the project mentioned by Sandy. They used money siphoned off from the Mirima Council's funds, according to members of that Council, on the principle that it came under the aegis of the Association, which purportedly spoke for all Aborigines in the town. The money ran out and the frame of the building stands unfinished to this day. The Association was refused the land on the ground that aerial spraying of pesticides on an adjacent stretch of farmland was a health hazard. White authorities appear to have been unconcerned over the health hazard earlier. The Hooker company which was using the land moved out of the district in the following year. Finally, the leadership of the Association succeeded in alienating itself not only from Europeans and the Mirima Council but also from its own members. One man was virtually its driving force. He and another, backed by a European adviser/convenor, froze out a keen core of members from committee activities when it appeared that his name was not on any of the sub-committees they were forming. This was the tragedy of the Association. It may have come to something, but its leadership was out of touch with its members. When that one man opted out from a combination of frustrations and personal troubles it produced the collapse of the whole structure.

Bulla Bilingiin was a member of the Mirima Council who made a request for land of outstation size in the Dingo Range area in 1975, and early in 1977 this became a reality. He has the land, vested in the West Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust, on a leasehold for eighteen years, and a small cluster of families live there much of the time, commuting frequently to the town to visit relatives. This change makes Sandy's suggestion a reality for a time, although the issue that this and other land should be freehold granted in perpetuity to groups such as Bulla's, is the chief concern of those advocating Aboriginal rights through compensation. At present it appears too easy for retroactive legislation to remove tomorrow what was given today. There are various examples in the history of race relations in Western Australia. Biskup
others. They have no idea. They cannot control the reserve. They do understand their own Law and its rights and wrongs, but the things they do now they would not do if they stuck to their own Law.

What I think myself, if the government put up a non-Christian settlement out of town with the elders there and someone who understands the Aboriginal language to run the place, I think you would find out a lot by doing that. You would find out the difference, the old way and customs, how they used to carry on years ago. I heard news from Canberra that the government was going to preserve the Aboriginal identity, their language and culture, and their way of life and their beliefs. Well they cannot do it here. It is dying out here. I think that is the only way to find out whether the Aboriginal is going to pull himself together, separate the elders from these no-hopers here and bring them in from way back. The elders they have here I do not think know anything either about the white feller or about Aboriginal culture. They are not too old and they were all the time working on the stations. Some remark passed by one, somebody told me yesterday, showed that he did not understand, did not believe Aboriginal culture, and he is an Aboriginal himself. What he said was that he did not believe it. Maybe he wants to go over to the white man's ways. He knows what he is talking about and I do not think he believes Aboriginal custom, otherwise they would have better control over there.

The change I would like to see is the white people to put the Aborigines on their feet. You see, white men can help to show them how to work these things, how to grow anything or run a cattle station, show them right from wrong and get them on their feet. Fullbloods do not quite understand here because they have never been taught. Teach them that you cannot go in and drink in the pub every day right up to half past eleven and go home, burning petrol and chucking your money away giving it to the publican. That is wrong. Between natives and the people living in the town you should have a better understanding. It is the people who run the town are doing the discriminatory things, like in the pub. It would be good if they had something here like a technical school, but it would have to be run by a native to see that the work is done. That would be handy. The welfare department has nothing to prove, not in the Kimberleys.

I am just an ordinary man, born to do work. At present the most important thing in my life is to have a bit of a place of my own where I can grow vegetables and live decently. I cannot do hard work now: I am buggered up, I get short-winded. One time I used to go out and cut somewhere round sixty posts before dinner. I cannot now. If I had a garden and was receiving a pension that would be good, I used to save a bit, even on a pension, twenty dollars a fortnight. We have that sometimes and sometimes we do not. I did not chuck my money away foolishly. I intended to start a market garden about four or five years ago and I still plan to do something. This law they have about granting money to a group of Aborigines is why a lot of people do not go into it. If they granted more money to individuals — long term loans — there would be a lot of that and they might make it a success, because they will be working for themselves. They might change you see. As I told you in the background, a lot of the Aboriginal people do not have it in them, to wake up.

DARWIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AND KUNUNURRA, W.A.

(1973:144) notes that the 1907 Electoral Act disenfranchised all Aborigines in the State, and it was not until 1971 that voting rights were again extended to Aborigines in the Pilbara and the Kimberleys. A Kimberley Land Council letter dated 4 August 1976 notes that 'The Western Australian government is proceeding to amend the regulations governing the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act to deprive Aboriginal communities of the right to say who may enter onto their reserves... . This is being done in the wake of a sudden upsurge of interest in Aboriginal reserve lands among mining companies'.
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AUSTRALIA 1788-1988: A BICENTENNIAL HISTORY

A number of historians and other social scientists have embarked on a co-operative project intended to mark the bicentenary of European settlement in Australia. F.K. Crowley, Professor of History at the University of New South Wales, is to be general editor of four reference volumes: a volume of historical statistics; a historical geography; a guide to sources; and a handbook, encyclopedia or manual of Australian history. K.S. Inglis, Professor of History in the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, is to be general editor of a series of volumes on Australia to 1788, Australia in 1838, Australia in 1888, Australia in 1938, and Australia 1939-88. Enquiries and offers will be welcomed by the general editors and the volume convenors:

*Australia to 1788*: Professor G.N. Blainey, Department of History, University of Melbourne; Professor D.J. Mulvaney, Department of Prehistory and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University.

*Australia in 1838*: Dr A.T. Atkinson, Department of History, University of Western Australia.

*Australia in 1888*: Professor J.W. McCarty, Department of Economic History, Monash University; Dr G. Davison, Department of History, University of Melbourne; Dr J.M. Powell, Department of Geography, Monash University.

*Australia in 1938*: Dr W.L. Gammage, Department of History, University of Adelaide; Dr P. Spearritt, School of History, Philosophy and Politics, Macquarie University.

*Australia 1939-88*: Dr A.W. Martin, Department of History, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.
Top: Engineer Jack Japaljarri.
Bottom: Sketch map of the Wave Hill area.
THE PRICE OF TOBACCO: THE JOURNEY OF THE WARLMALA TO WAVE HILL, 1928*

Peter Read and Engineer Jack Japaljarri

Engineer Jack Japaljarri is a Warlmala Warlpiri (Walbiri) whose country lies between Winnecke Creek and Hooker Creek in the Northern Territory. In about 1910 he was born in the desert. For some eighteen years he lived the life of his Warlpiri ancestors, interrupted by occasional meetings with itinerant white men. His hunter-gatherer existence, and that of the group of about fifty Warlmala with whom he lived, was brought abruptly to an end in 1928. Towards May of that year, since the supply of tobacco and other provisions formerly provided by Europeans was no longer readily available, the Warlmala decided to travel to Wave Hill Station, where a supply was known to exist. By June the group had arrived at the station; by Christmas, according to Engineer Jack, most of them were working. He himself began work in a road gang. Later he became a steam and diesel mechanic, and continued working at Wave Hill until the war. In 1940 he joined the Army, and spent much of the next four years at the camp at Banka Banka. Demobilised in 1945, he was sent to help build the new Baptist settlement at Phillip Creek. In 1953 the site was abandoned, and the inhabitants moved to Warrabri, where Engineer Jack still lives.

The part of Engineer Jack’s narration transcribed here concerns the period 1927-28, from the time shortly before the decision to visit Wave Hill was taken, to the outbreak of the Coniston killings in August 1928. In 1926-28 the Warlmala had met several wandering European bushmen. First mentioned was Joe Brown, a small-scale pastoralist famous for his bushcraft. Second was a miner whom Engineer Jack identifies as ‘Mr Hamilton’. Hamilton wanted guides to take him into the Tanami and Granites goldfields, first discovered by the geologist Davidson in 1900. It was through the economic relations with these two Europeans that the Warlmala desire for European commodities was implanted. When Engineer Jack’s father and uncle returned from the Granites, the Warlmala were faced with the problem of how to acquire European tobacco. It was a problem which must have confronted many Aboriginal groups in areas where there was little permanent pastoral settlement. The Warlmala difficulty in visiting Wave Hill was that their route lay through Kurintji country. How much they knew of the country to the north is not clear. Trade amongst Warlpiri clans was not extensive. McCarthy suggests that such trade as did exist with the northern tribes was carried out by the eastern Warlpiri clans, and by the Warramunga. If the Warlmalas traded infrequently with the Kurintji and Mutpara, they nevertheless must have had information about what was likely to be available at Wave Hill. In former times, Engineer Jack stresses, the Kurintji and Warlmalas ‘used to make a war’. The necessity now was to ‘get friendly’.

* For linguistic advice I would like to thank Ian Green and Diane Bell, and for their comments on the manuscript as a whole I am indebted to Jay Read and Jim Urry. This interview was recorded 3 April 1977 at Warrabri Settlement, during the collection of material for a forthcoming secondary school text, *An Aboriginal oral history of the Northern Territory*. The speakers were Engineer Jack Japaljarri and Blind Alec Jupurrula, interviewed by Peter Read. This tape and others referred to in the paper are held by the archives of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.

1 Biographical information was collected in the same interview. Standard Warlpiri orthography is used in the bilingual programme of the Yuendumu school, and with minor variations at the Lajamanu (Hooker Creek) school, is used throughout the paper.

2 Meggitt 1962:56.

3 McCarthy 1939:429, map 8.
Engineer Jack describes two separate 'peace' ceremonies held before the Kurintji were satisfied. One was at a hill north of Hooker Creek, identified as Nyirriwiyat, and one was at the station itself. Both occasions were preceded by 'marching, Aboriginal way', and seem to have involved large-scale formal ceremonies. Presumably they were of the type witnessed by Spencer and Gillen in 1901. At the conclusion of the first meeting the Kurintji (some of whom were bound for Inverway in search of tobacco) travelled northwards on the eastern side of the Victoria River. At Wave Hill the Warlimala arrival caused a mild commotion which is still remembered in the Territory. Tobacco was given to the visitors, who appear then to have retired for several miles. After a few days, the supply exhausted, they desired more tobacco. A decision was made to return to the station. The manager, McCugan, now demanded work in return for rations. The Warlimala were divided into four or five groups. Most of them began to 'cleanem road'. The Kurintji and Warlpiri, traditional enemies, worked side by side in a white man's road gang.

Some weeks later news arrived from the south that the prospector Brooks had been murdered, and that the pastoralist Morton had been attacked. A police expedition was in pursuit of the culprits. Probably the newsbearers were Aboriginal refugees from the upper Lander, where the attack upon Morton was even then being avenged by the police. At this point in Engineer Jack's narrative, Blind Alec Jupurrula, who had remained silent, interrupted with the information that his aunt had been one of the newsbearers. His father, he said, had been shot by the police party on the Lander; his mother had escaped south-westwards to Mount Doreen Station, and his aunt had carried him in the opposite direction to Wave Hill. Engineer Jack later mentioned that the white overseer of the road gang had warned the Warlimala not to return to their own country while the police party remained in the region.

Account of the journey of the Warlimala to Wave Hill by Engineer Jack Japaljarri

Q. Where were you before Wave Hill?
In the desert.
Q. Why did you come out of the desert, to that Wave Hill Station?
Oh, we just bin living there, and plenty, oh, kang...wallaby, you know. Wallaby. Plenty good to live in the desert, plenty water too you know. The spring water, some spring water, some the soaks water. Live together... this way. This is grandfather bin live too. My grandfather, desert, still be 'live still. He, 'fore you people lived there, in the desert. Before the Wave Hill, you know.

Young feller...my father, he's [met] one white feller from Alice Springs. He should be come, he might be north of one Joe Brown. Well, Joe Brown got mob of horse. He go straight along Lander Creek, used to live there. He givit it tobacco...All right, we bin walk down before the — Old man, all bin there young feller, you know. Cookembat the whatsaname, you know wallaby. Big mob of wallaby that time, one bandicoot, anything, you know. Wild sugarbag. Bin live 'gether. All right, I bin losen my grandfather, in the desert. Well, it still-feller living together, my father. Big mob, you know, big mob of people. They bin cut out now. Some go this way live, and some go this way, north. 'We live this way, and people bin live there'. All right, it's my father bin move away, leave quick that way, you know. 'Well, what do we got to

4 Spencer 1928:325.
5 For example, in June 1977 the manager of the Vestey station Nutwood Downs was able to recount to P. Read most of the details of the Warlimala arrival.
6 Buchanan (1939:148) notes: 'Joe Brown, the greatest bushman of this century in the North, led what was almost a hermit's life — that is, if one whose home is bounded by the extreme outposts of civilisation north, south, east and west in Northern Australia, can be called a hermit. He wandered between the upper Sturt and the Lander, and he discovered what is known as the J.B. Track from Tanami to Coniston'.
THE PRICE OF TOBACCO

do now? We'll have to look about for tobacco now'. Well we sit down first, and this
he bin leavem, my father, desert.

Well one white feller bin come, big mob of cattle, you know...Mr Hamilton. And
he got two old men, two boy, one Alyawarra, that one Warlpiri that, you know,
Kaiditj that. He's got one woman, one woman there for Alyawarra. He takem that
one. 'Oh, we'll go this way, and I'll show him where the Tanami, in the desert this
way, big mob of camel'. And they all go live 'gether, in the middle you know, old
man bin live, mob. He got three, ol' gooman, he got this four woman, this my father,
but...big mob, my brothers, brother and sister, you know. All finish now. I'm by my-
self.

Well, we bin live 'gether, sit down there, good while, and my father bin go hunting,
chasing with a one wild dog, wild dog and wild pussycat. That's him, he couldn't
kill him, and sometimes that white feller bin killem behind. Mr Hamilton, he shootem
there. All right, 'nother mob, big mob camel, two...horse and camel, changem round.
Oh, we bin cut out now, all bin cut out runaway now, we bin run away too. Well,
morning time all bin muster up again. We all frighten, you know. We run away for
that white feller: 'Oh, what's the matter you-feller run away?'

The old man, Mr Hamilton, and 'Oh, don't run away. We'll give you bullock'. That
meanem, he killem camel, see. Him killem camel, him not bullock. While him ridem
him killem camel. That bullock that one, killem one open, cuttern now. This morning
time. We living on that camel, everybody bin eatem. Good tucker now. They bin
leavem, cuttem bat now. Givit flour, flour and tobacco and tummyache everyone,
just leavem. 'Right. I'll take a message, old man. You got to show me country'.
'Where country?' 'Show me this way'. All right, him bin Granite, Tanami. See how he
got the map. 'I want to findem Tanami, and Granite'. This old man, 'All right'. It's
my father bin say, 'You fellers sit down. I'll showem you country belonga this white
feller'. All right. We bin sit down. Him killem camel. He'll shootembat that camel
now. It's like, it's like a bullock too, you know. This old man bin there — that's his
country too. That's belonga country me-feller, like. 'I'll showem you Tanami, and
I'll leavem in the mid', — all his family, you know. Two feller bin go, old men, two
old men from this country, belong to Peter father, you know, his two brothers. We
callcm 'father' too, tribal law, you know.

They bin go now, right up longa Granite. There, all right, they givit. They givit
tucker, everything. 'And two feller go back from here, but I gottem road now, findem.
That's all right, you-feller bin showem me this Tanami, Granite and I gotta
get tucker from the Hooker's Creek...you know' [said Hamilton]. That old man,
two old man bin come back, right back. This one man bin come this way, 'nother
old man bin come, 'All right', him bin say, old man bin there. 'Oh, we gotta go for
tobacco now. Where you-feller got to go?'

'Oh, we go this way now, big mob. Big mob bin coming of them people, you
know, Walmunpa and Warlpiri mix, you know, altogether. We bin going Winnecke
Creek river, you know, the Winnecke Creek river, you know, it's that one from
Hooker Creek'. We going big mob of soldiers, you know,...soldiers, Aboriginal way.
Going to Kurintji we got to meet up the Kurintji people. Used to be, used to fight,
Warlpiri and the Kurintji. All right, now going to Kurintji country. All right, we got
to make a friend now, Kurintji. It's my father bin make a law: 'You can't fight', and
my uncle, 'you can't fight'. We gotta, this time we makem friendly, we want to
gettem longa tobacco, go longa tobacco, get it tobacco.

All right, right we bin go longa hill now. Climb up. Well, 'nother Kurintji bin sleep
there, behind the hill, you know, big mob again. They bin make big camp. All right,
they bin burnem bush fire, oh, they bin run away now. They bin findem. All right,
one bloke we bin meetem, married man. Oh, white people no all about here, all
there, people bin there. White soldier him there too ['there' — in the direction of
Alice Springs]. All right, we got to makem meeting, talk about the meeting, you
know, got to makem friendly. Right, all bin come, the Kurintji, Warlpiri and Kurintji mixem. All right, we bin come out now, marching, you know, Aboriginal way marching. We talkem Aboriginal marching first. All right, stand up one another, you know, showem one another. No, nothing, no woomera, nothing. All right, no trouble, nothing. Showem down. No white feller fighting — just Aboriginal way meet up. All right, one old man bin make a law: we gotta get on friendly now, none matter they bin fight before. All right, this time we'll be friendly.

All right, what you fellers got to, we bin camp here that days, in the bush, you know, right alonga Winnecke Creek, you know that big hill. You know, just that side from Hooker Creek. All right, they callem Jirpirli you know. Aboriginal callem Jirpirli. We bin live there, all come out now. 'All right, we'll camp there'. 'Fore light, man, woman, bin camp there, men, young feller bin camp there, you know, altogether. Singem all the way. Singem, you know, country. Singem country business you know. Right, first thing in the morning, first thing in the morning, they bin showem down: 'Right, where you got to go?', Kurintji bin there. 'I'm going to Wave Hill. I want to get to Wave Hill'. All right, Warlpiri bin there: 'Where you fellers going to go?' 'Go longa Inverway Station. They callem Ngangkuri, you know. And we get tobacco there'. 'Righto, we're going to shoot through, long whatsaname, Wave Hill. Go longa Catfish [Waterhole, on the Victoria,], longa Nyirriwiyat, you know'. Where you bin go there, big mob. Wave Hill the first one, you know, people with the work. Go on, finish. Come out longa whatsaname from chasing bullock too, you know, lot of bullock. And we can't havem there now. And all bin travelling there. And Catfish. Oh, that camp bin leave there, from Wave Hill, and Inverway. And Kurintji bin travelling that side, you know, 'nother side. Warlpiri bin travelling this side.

Q. That's towards Wave Hill?
Yeah. They callem Wave Hill now. We bin go longa Wave Hill now. And that mob bin go longa Inverway, you know. All right, Hamilton, that the whitefeller bin camping there, big mob, used to be Aborigine too. Right, we bin travelling Inverway, longa whatsaname, Nyirriwiyat. Camp there, morning time. All right, this morning we go travelling, got to go longa Number Six there, Number Six Bore. Come out longa Wave Hill. New station Wave Hill, not that police station, but new station, this side one. All right, there's the big mob of Kurintji, Mutpara and Walmunpa mix. All bin live 'gether. 'Oh, the Warlpiri travelling!' and that, big mob, Warlpiri travelling. The first one we bin meet up Wave Hill now. All right, they bin come out, Warlpiri, now. He's my father bin come out. All right, uncle, my uncle bin come out. Oh, big mob, everywhere. They bin stand up now, he got trouble before — you know what they bin kill one another. They bin stand up one another, showem that....No fight, no trouble, all right, no trouble. Stand up one another there, you know, big mob, you know. You know we can't makem fight now, finish. All right, they bin givit tobacco now.

Q. Who gave you tobacco? The whitefellow at Wave Hill?
Whitefeller tobacco.

Q. What was his name?
McCugen...You know, used to be Tingal, Mr Coonachie, Mr Maurier. That's the manager, you know. Oh, old men, you now. That's the first one.

Q. So he gave you tobacco?
Yeah. He givit tobacco. All the Warlpiri coming up, come up. All right...Sometimes we givit job now, for work you know. All right, all right, all bin sit down three days, sit down three days. 'Oh, we'll have to go back first. We'll go back first. Get tobacco. We'll come back bye and bye'.

Big mob bin go back now, right back to long Wave Hill, Wave Hill new station. Come out long whatsaname, you know, camp yard, to long Nyirriwiyat. And I bin losem father mine....We bin go back now. I bin losem my father, friendly. And all bin go back, right back another people, you know, crying everything. We bin sorry, you
know. 'Now what are we going to do? We can't go back. Soon as you go back, we'll come back again'. 'All right, we'll go back into Wave Hill again. You know, we'll sit down 'bout there. We've got to givit job now, you-feller wantem Warlpiri got to cleanem road, you know.

Q. Oh, the road gang?

Road, you know. You know, used to pickem all the way rock, you know. All right, they bin puttem three lot: 'nother mob that way, 'nother mob that way. 'Nother mob that way they bin puttem. 'Nother mob round station, you know. We bin working now working together now, Kurintji and Warlpiri. All right, working now, right up the Christmas. Right, before Christmas we bin hearem trouble. Trouble going on longa Lander. They bin startem the war. Aborigine and whitefeller bin startem war. This way I bin longa Wave Hill now.

Q. You heard about it at Wave Hill?

Yeah. That's the first one, ain't it? We bin longa that way now. We bin hearem that way. And they bin kill one another, old man bin killem one another, longa that old Boomerang Hole. They bin make a war. Hanson Creek. We bin first one from desert. We bin first one from desert. We bin first one go from desert. We bin come along Wave Hill first.

Engineer Jack's story is particularly interesting as an account of what appears to have been a voluntary decision to visit a cattle station to procure supplies. Of the many aspects of the narrative which invite analysis, two deserve comment: Engineer Jack's cited reason for the decision to visit Wave Hill; and the contrast between the historian's and the Aboriginal evaluation of the critical period between life in the desert, the hunter-gatherer existence, and permanent station life.

Engineer Jack makes no mention of the severe drought, documented in European sources, which affected the pastoral industry in the whole of Central Australia from 1924 to 1929; in fact he later denied that shortage of food or water was a factor in the Warlimala decision. It has been assumed by some European commentators that the drought must have been of critical importance to the desert tribes. J.W. Bleakley, discussing the conflict between station and bush Aborigines in time of drought, noted:

That the position as regards water has in some places become acute may be seen from the fact that a large party of Warramulla blacks, a wild desert tribe, were seen at Wave Hill station, where they had come, bringing their women and children, which in itself was significant, because the waterholes had dried up.

Meggitt takes the same view, slightly exaggerating Bleakley's remarks:

Some walked because of the drought to Birrindudu and Gordon Downs Stations, others crossed Hooker Creek into Wave Hill, where Bleakley (1928) remarked on the arrival of one party of Walmalla who were almost starving.

It is possible that an eighteen year old lad may have been confused as to the real motives of the Wave Hill visit, but it is unlikely that a drought severe enough to cause a large number of bush people to visit a station in search of supplies has been so completely forgotten or suppressed. Other men interviewed on the Coniston massacre itself have stated that there was no real shortage of water for the Warlpiri in the years before the shooting. That there was what the Europeans considered a serious

The orientation of most of the northern Warlpiri in speaking of the Coniston massacre is directed at the attack on Nugget Morton on the upper Lander River, 28 August 1928. However, the incident which triggered the sequence of events which led to the murder of probably over one hundred Aborigines was the spearing of Fred Brooks, at Brooks Soak, on 7 August, some 150 km. farther south of the place where Morton was attacked.

Bleakley 1928:31.


For example, Tim Japangardi, interviewed by P. Read, Yuendumu, 9 August 1977, tape 49:1.
The drought in the middle 1920s cannot be doubted. The Government Resident specifically mentioned the shortage of water or feed in the Annual Reports of 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1928. It was possible that in a time of severe drought the desert tribes might seek relief outside their own country. Tindale noted that in a bad year the Nara in the Western Desert had been 'driven out of their usual territory by lack of rain...and because it was in another tribe’s territory, only older persons had ever seen it. In this case the reception was friendly'. Engineer Jack was quite definite, though, and in the absence of hard evidence to the contrary, his account of the Warlpiri motive must be accepted. It seems that Bleakley's conclusion that a search for water or food was the sole reason for the Warlpiri arrival was almost certainly wrong. The claim that tobacco was the primary factor in the visit has support elsewhere. Many Aborigines have cited the desire for tobacco as the reason why they, or their parents, visited cattle stations. This was the pattern, for instance, at Bathurst Island Mission, where the Government Resident reported in 1923: 'after a few months at the station they feel the call of the bush and must go away for a time... Their supply of tobacco soon runs short, and they return to the station for another period. They are continually on the go thus to and from the bush'. It seems to have been a fairly common practice in the settled areas of the Northern Territory for bush people to wander in and out of stations, visiting relatives, collecting supplies, for years, or even decades. Warlpiri men told Meggitt that they were content to maintain this pattern of sporadic contact with Europeans indefinitely, so long as no pressure was put upon them by pastoralists, missionaries or welfare authorities to abandon nomadic life. It is probable that the fifty Warlpiri who visited Wave Hill in search of tobacco would have maintained their independence by returning to the station only occasionally, to deal with relatives rather than with the station management. But the Coniston massacre intervened, the Warlpiri could not return to their country, and the more usual pattern of a gradual lessening of independence over ten or fifteen years was telescoped into a few months. Whatever their original intentions, two months after leaving the desert, many of the Warlpiri were enduring conditions in a road gang little short of slavery. It may be that the Warlpiri expected no better treatment at Wave Hill. The station enjoyed a reputation for

11 Northern Territory, Reports: 1924:3; 1925:3; 1936:5; 1928:5.
13 For example, Warraki No. 1, translator Bilu, interviewed by P. Read, Elcho Island, 10 May 1977, tape 28:1; Ninawunda Jerakba, translator Ivan Mamarika, interviewed by P. Read, Groote Eylandt, 5 May 1977, tape 20:1.
14 Northern Territory, Report 1924:25.
15 Meggitt 1962:23-24. That this pattern of sporadic contact lasted into the 1930s and 1940s was confirmed by Johnny Nelson Jupurrula (interviewed by P. Read, Warrabri, 18 April 1977, tape 8:2); and Jimmy Hooker Creek Jungarrayi (interviewed by P. Read, Willowra, 15 August 1977, tape 59:2). Jimmy Jungarrayi stated that following the Coniston massacre, his father remained on the fringes of Anningie and Willowra Stations for the rest of his life, while Jimmy Jungarrayi himself began station work at Gordon Downs.
16 It is probable that the Warlpiri would in any case have begun work for the station, but that they would have left their employment within two or three weeks is also probable. That conditions of near slavery prevailed at Wave Hill can be inferred from the comments of Matthew Thomas, in charge of a road gang between Wave Hill and Inverway, who reported to the Northern Standard, 20 August 1937:

For ten weeks I was in charge of a gang of natives repairing the road for over 100 miles between Wave Hill and Inverway Station. My gang consisted of three boys and seven lubras...The native wages were: beef, damper, tea, sugar, with three sticks of dried up nicky tobacco for the boys, and two sticks for each lubra per week. Trousers, shirts and boots were sent out for the boys, but nothing for the lubras, who had to make dresses from flour bags to cover their naked bodies. They worked harder and longer hours than the bucks. Then the natives were working in slave conditions cannot be disputed, also they worked under appalling conditions with the sanction and approval of the Minister of Territory Affairs and Chief Protector of Aboriginals.
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hospitality among European travellers, but there seems to have been no reason for the Warlmala to have expected anything but a cool reception. A white informant stated that Paddy Cahill, the manager of Oenpelli Station, had been called over in about 1924 to deal with cattle killers. He shot over thirty bush people.

There is a temptation for the historian to assume in these events an inherent significance upon which whites and blacks must agree. In his narration, though, Engineer Jack seemed to regard the events of 1928 as more a good story, less a fundamental discontinuity in his life. An Aboriginal interpretation of the significance of the Wave Hill visit may be at considerable variance with the European estimation. There are at least two reasons for these divergent interpretations, both of which are relevant to the study of Aboriginal history. The first is that if too much attention is paid to the consequences of an event, rather than to the processes by which an event takes place, a conscious causality may be inferred which was not in fact present. Thus a short view of the Warlmala arrival may suggest that at some point a conscious decision must have been taken, not only to visit, but also to remain at the station, to set aside to some degree their former way of life, and to fall in with the rules of life dictated by the management.

Engineer Jack's story shows clearly that no decision to remain at the station was made. The series of steps by which the Warlmala came to accept the European sway were small, and for the most part unplanned. By the end of the Coniston shooting there may have been as yet little sense among the old people that any part of the old pattern of life had been compromised, replaced or lost. Frequently they must have speculated whether it was safe to return to the desert. At the end of the first five years of station life, those who had been toddlers in 1928 would have lacked knowledge of a desert life. Until the War it is likely that within the Warlmala station community two different concepts of the meaning of station life existed side by side. To the old people, station life may still have seemed temporary — soon a permanent return would be made to the homeland; but those less than fifteen years old knew no other permanent life than the station and stock camps of Wave Hill.

Research into Aboriginal history in the Northern Territory suggests that a good deal of what can appear to have been a conscious choice to abandon desert homelands would be better described as accidental. Thus the Daly River tribes which Stanner describes as having been drawn towards European settlements in the 1920s and 1930s in pursuit of European goods originally may have come solely to visit. Perhaps the Kamor and Yunggor always intended to return but for various reasons their intention was postponed, year after year, until a return became a practical impossibility. Elsewhere, too, research may show that many of the permanent station communities came to stay accidentally. Bobbie Hardy, for instance, says of the Barkindji, 'the seductive allure of European goods was a potent factor behind their submission'. It may be that the young men had no conscious intention of attaching themselves, still less submitting, to the squatters. But life was lived from day to day: novelty bred a habit, and habit bred a dependence into which the next generation, which knew no other relationship, was born.

1 For example, the pleasant week spent at Wave Hill by Michael Terry (1926:108-113).
2 Personal communication, Dr Stephen Harris, Darwin, 12 March 1978.
3 Stanner 1960:75.
4 Hardy 1976:79.
5 I offer here a suggestion as to why some station communities came to be permanent. To the larger question of how and why the Northern Territory station communities grew and stabilised there is no simple answer. Quite a different explanation was offered by Mr Alec Wilson (interviewed by P. Read, Mount Doreen, 7 August 1977), who suggested that the station communities which he knew had been begun by young men who, after seizing another's promised bride, had run to the nearby station for protection; their children formed the basis of the station community.
The second reason for Engineer Jack's variant interpretation is that he may consider that his fundamental life-spring was not upset to any great extent by station life. Ritual life at Warrabri is probably at least as vigorous as it is in any of the other large settlements, and Engineer Jack is a most important Warlpiri figure. Following the interview, it appeared in further discussions over several days that he considered Warlpiri culture to have lost nothing since 1928. He could scarcely believe that some Aborigines elsewhere in Australia can no longer speak their native language. His surprise may point to the difficulties of interpreting cross-cultural history. The historical analysis of an event by the conquerors may not necessarily be that of the conquered. To the European historian, Engineer Jack describes a process whereby a nomadic people, within two or three months, came under the yoke of a sedentary and separate culture. Engineer Jack seems to regard the process as an important phase of his life, not a sudden transformation. The ritual life of the Warlpiri, in his opinion, has transcended the abandonment of nomadic life. The inner life has survived: the continuance of Warlpiri culture has been assured.

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AND WARRABRI SETTLEMENT, N.T.

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How long have the Aborigines been in Australia? Where did they come from? How did they come? To whom are they related? How and why are they different from other races of man? These questions have been posed by Europeans since they first came to Australia, and thanks to recent research some answers are beginning to appear.

In 1898 A.W. Howitt reviewed the arguments which had been put forward to that time for the origin of the Aborigines of Australia and Tasmania. With his usual acumen Howitt dismissed a number of theories before focusing attention on the evidence which he thought important to the problem. On one point Howitt was adamant: the questions relating to the origin of man in Australia were far too complex to be the prerogative of a single discipline. Time has proved Howitt right: the advances of recent years in our knowledge of the origin and antiquity of man in Australia have been the result of multidisciplinary ventures.

It is the aim of this paper to review some recent contributions to the questions concerning the origin and antiquity of man in Australia. In particular it will examine two recent volumes, one concerned primarily with physical anthropology and the other with prehistory, which contain papers directly or indirectly related to these questions. The account is not intended to be yet another summary of recent archaeological research, but a critical re-examination of ideas related to a specific theme. The issues involved are complex; the work of scholars of different disciplines is involved, the language they write in is often technical and their works are not easily accessible to the layman. It is hoped that this paper will not only provide a synopsis of recent thought but also provide some new insights to the current debate.

How long has man been in Australia?

In 1898 Howitt boldly asserted that man had been in Australia for a very long period:

In considering all the facts before me bearing upon the question of the origin of the Tasmanians and the Australians, I have been much impressed by the immense periods of time which seem to be essential as one of the elements of any solution of the problem.

I would like to thank Diane Barwick, David Horton, Isabel McBryde and Michael Walsh for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

John Rastell, The interlude of the four elements (c.1520), quoted in Huddleston 1967:8.

Howitt 1898 reprinted with alterations in Howitt 1904.

Although the history of theories relating to the origin and antiquity of man in Australia are of great interest to historians, they will not be dealt with in this paper; for a provisional statement see Mulvaney 1966.

Kirk and Thorne 1976; the first four papers in this volume deal with the Pleistocene background to man in Australia and adjacent regions, the remaining contributions with aspects of physical anthropology.

Allen, Golson and Jones 1977; the papers deal not only with Australian but also with aspects of Melanesian and Southeast Asian prehistory.

Jones 1973; Lampert 1975; for an excellent account of Australian prehistory see Mulvaney 1975.

Howitt 1898:745:746.
Howitt based his opinions mainly upon geological evidence, particularly upon archaeological finds whose stratigraphy indicated some antiquity (even though many of the finds have since proved false) and upon the fact that the Tasmanians, lacking adequate water transport, must have crossed the Bass Strait when it was still connected to the Australian mainland during a period of lower sea level. Howitt lacked the means to date precisely the archaeological sites or to calculate exactly when the sea levels were lower than at present, but he reasoned that a very long period of time was involved.

Today scientists have discovered not only ways to date archaeological deposits but they have also established a chronology for past changes in sea level. Howitt's assertions of great antiquity have been confirmed, but only in recent years. Until 1961 the oldest reliable date for an archaeological deposit in Australia was that from Cape Martin in South Australia (dated at 8700 BP) but since then much older dates have been obtained. Many of these dates are older than 20,000 years and a number, all at present from south-eastern Australia (although claims have been made for such old sites in Western Australia), are over 30,000 years old. It has become commonplace in Australian prehistory to say that man has been in Australia for at least thirty to forty thousand years.

We now know that the last period of really low sea level occurred in the Australian region at about 20,000 years BP. If the archaeological dates had clustered about this period hypotheses concerning a connection between the last period of low sea level and the migration of man into Australia would have been confirmed. Instead the archaeological dates have established that man was in Australia much earlier, so we must examine the evidence for periods of very low sea level before 20,000 years BP. Chappell and Thom have calculated the changes in sea level for the last 240,000 years (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Changes in sea level for the last 240,000 years.](image)

Between the present day and 240,000 years ago the sea level has changed many times to varying degrees, but at only three periods, at 160,000, 50,000 and 20,000 years BP, has the sea fallen to extremely low levels. At these three periods of time extensive areas of land emerged from the sea. In particular two large areas of land emerged, the Sunda shelf connected to mainland Asia and the Sahul shelf to the north of continental Australia which linked Australia to New Guinea (see map). However, even at these periods of really low sea level, Australia and Asia were never connected by a continuous land bridge; between Sunda and Sahul lay many islands, separated in places by deep water channels, some up to sixty miles across.

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8 See discussion in Jones 1977b:355-356. These dates are Carbon 14 dates; BP stands for Before Present which for C14 dates is calculated as before 1950.
9 Chappell 1976; Chappell and Thom 1977; as these papers indicate the question of sea level changes is immensely complex and involves a number of factors. The dates given in this paper for sea level changes are only approximate especially in regard to tectonic changes (alterations in the earth's crust due to earthquakes and volcanic activity) which are still not known exactly for the regions discussed.
10 After Chappell and Thom 1977:277, with alterations.
11 See Birdsell 1977 for calculations of some of the distances involved.
Australia, mainland and island Southeast Asia showing the Sunda and Sahul shelves and Wallacea (solid black line).
There is no real reason to assume, however, that all our calculations either of time or distance must be based upon the period when the sea fell to its lowest level. Man could have crossed from Asia through the islands and into Australia when the sea levels were as high as they are today. The lowering of sea levels merely increases the possibility of man’s crossing; in fact the possibility of crossing increases proportionately to the enlargement of land and the decrease in the distances separating coasts. But this process was not the same in all areas because topographical factors must be taken into account. Where areas of land were separated by deep sea channels, large falls in sea level hardly altered the distances involved, whereas in shallow areas the decrease in distances was sometimes quite considerable. In such situations it is not just a question of how much the distances were decreased but also the rates at which the distances changed. Shallow areas may have emerged quite quickly and remained open for long periods of time. In terms of calculating a chronology for the possibility of man’s entry into Australia we need to construct a figure on either side of the midpoint of lowest sea level fall. At a certain point in time during the fall in sea level the possibility of crossing was considerably increased and again during the rise in sea level there was a cut-off point when possibility suddenly decreased. In these terms, of the three periods of really low sea level which have occurred in the last 240,000 years, that at 160,000 years BP appears to have been the most suitable for the crossing of man into Australia. At this date the rise and fall of sea level was gradual, the period of time when the topographical conditions were most favourable for crossings was quite long (e.g. say ± 6,000 years = 12,000 years) and climatic conditions were stable over a long period. In contrast the rise and fall in sea level at 50,000 years BP was quite rapid (say ± 2,000 years), considerably more rapid than at 20,000 years BP (say ± 4,000 years).

At present there is no evidence that man has been in Australia for 160,000 years but given the size of the continent, our limited knowledge of archaeological sites from many parts of the country and the pace of recent discoveries, there is no reason to deny such an antiquity. On the other hand if man could have crossed into Australia by whatever means and for whatever reasons at 160,000 years BP, it is highly possible that groups could also have come at later periods, particularly if technology was more developed. Birdsell has hinted at this possibility: '... there is ample evidence that the last great drop in sea level of about 20,000 years ago was not responsible for the initial populating of Greater Australia'. This in turn raises other difficult and controversial problems. Was there more than one 'colonization' of Australia? If so, was more than one group involved? What is the evidence for such a hypothesis, and what are its consequences?

One group or many?

During the nineteenth century, as Europeans became aware of the extent of Aboriginal occupation across Australia, a number of scholars were struck by the similarity in physical appearance and custom of widely separated groups. At the same time a number of distinctive characteristics were also noted and various hypotheses were developed, some supporting a homogeneous view of the Aborigines, others concentrating on heterogeneous features. By the early twentieth century a number of theories were current which accounted for the differences between Aboriginal groups by reference to ancestral links with populations existing outside Australia, in India, island Southeast Asia and neighbouring Melanesia. The ancestors were sometimes named Dravidian, Malayan negritoid and Papuan, etc.  

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12 Birdsell 1977:110 (my emphasis); as this paper was being written it was claimed that stone tools have been discovered in a river terrace in Western Australia which is at least 100,000 years old.
13 For example Mathew 1910.
During the 1930s the American physical anthropologist J.B. Birdsell began his extensive investigations (with N.B. Tindale) of Aboriginal groups in many areas of Australia. Birdsell developed a trihybrid theory to account for the variations he discovered by anthropometric measurements of physical build. These variations, Birdsell argued, were the result of migration by three different groups, the remnants of which had preserved their distinctive features into recent times. The oldest group, and thus the first migrants, Birdsell termed Barrineans or Oceanic Negritos whose descendants until recently inhabited Tasmania and the rainforests around Cairns in northern Queensland. These people were small in stature, dark-skinned and had curly hair. Sometime in the past the Negritos had been succeeded by the Murrayians whose descendants inhabited the Murray River basin and could also be found elsewhere in Australia. The Murrayians were of sturdy build, dark-skinned and often had extensive body hair. The third group and the most recent migrants Birdsell termed the Carpentarians. These people he traced to India, suggesting they may have been linked to modern Veddas, hunter-gatherers of southern India and Sri Lanka. The Carpentarians inhabited large areas of Australia, were tall and were particularly well adapted to the hotter climates of northern and central Australia. Though Birdsell formulated his hypothesis many years ago and much new information on the physical anthropology of the Aborigines has since emerged, he has maintained his position. Birdsell has certainly been aware of these new developments but it would seem that new discoveries can only help refine and support his trihybrid theory and he believes they provide no real challenge to his argument.

The major opposition to Birdsell's trihybrid theory has come from another physical anthropologist with considerable experience of Australian Aborigines and who also mainly based his ideas upon anthropometric analysis of build. In a number of studies A.A. Abbie argued that over large areas of Australia the Aborigines exhibited a remarkable homogeneity in physical features. The variations which were encountered were small and could be explained as the result of adaptation (genetic and/or somatic) to diverse environments by a people derived from a single source (or gene pool). None of the variations which were apparent in existing populations were such that they need to be explained by positing separate populations derived from distinct genetic pools or separate migrations.

Physical anthropologists using other methods to examine Aboriginal groups have neither proved nor disproved Birdsell's or Abbie's hypotheses, but they have brought Birdsell's theory into question. Genetical studies, particularly of blood groups, have revealed that at one level Aboriginal populations are extremely heterogeneous yet at another level Aborigines may be said to share common features which separate them from populations outside Australia. In other words, although Aboriginal groups vary within Australia there are features which set them apart as distinct from neighbouring peoples in New Guinea, Asia and Oceania. While the variations within the Australian population can be accounted for by normal variations expected to occur among groups over long periods of time and groups inhabiting different ecological conditions, the variations may also reflect inherited differences derived from separate populations. Given the antiquity of man in Australia, genetical studies cannot tell us much about how changes have occurred over very long periods: geneticists can only make significant statements about micro-evolutionary changes. Over very short periods of time differences within specific populations can be accounted for, but relationships between distant groups, either within Australia or with populations outside, cannot be properly explained.

14 Birdsell 1949.
17 Balakrishnan, Sanghvi and Kirk 1975.
18 Parsons and White 1976.
A similar pattern has been established in other fields of study. Though Australian crania examined by detailed metrical analysis reveal variations, all the material can be grouped together to differentiate the Australian material from populations outside the region. One result of the analysis of the crania, however, has been to show that variations which do occur within the Australian material do not correspond to the variations outlined in Birdsell's trihybrid theory. This is particularly so of the people Birdsell described as Negritoid who inhabited the Cairns rainforest area. An examination of surviving crania from these groups show that they fall within the expected range of Australian skulls. Tindale and Birdsell had suggested that the languages spoken by the 'Negritoid' peoples of north Queensland were different from other Aboriginal languages and this added substance to the trihybrid theory. Dixon has shown that although some of the languages have distinctive features they are generally similar to known Aboriginal languages and their peculiarities can easily be accounted for. Indeed linguistic analysis has taken somewhat the same position as the geneticists: local, short term variations can be accounted for but larger, long term relationships, particularly with language groups outside of Australia, are difficult to reconstruct. While Australian languages vary quite considerably they all share distinctive features which mark them as 'Australian' and therefore as different from languages outside the continent.

Archaeological evidence of cultural remains is difficult to interpret in terms of racial differences in population, but the analyses of stone tools from many different sites point to a fairly similar technology existing for a long period of time in Australia. There are certainly no differences which could be interpreted as three separate technologies developed over long periods by separate populations outside Australia and brought to the region with a new group of immigrants such as would support Birdsell's hypothesis.

To summarise the latest thinking, it appears that in spite of the concerted efforts of many scholars we are no nearer understanding whether the Aborigines are a homogeneous or a heterogeneous group in origin. But many scholars prefer the idea of a single population, whether or not as the result of one migration. In fact the greater antiquity for man in Australia established by prehistorians during the 1960s and 1970s seemed to support such a view. If man had existed on the continent for such a long period there was plenty of time for groups to have become heterogeneous from a single population through natural selection and/or environmental adaptation. As such the remains of men from these early periods should have been homogeneous, variation having occurred later. But new discoveries of early man in Australia have suggested a different pattern.

A number of remains of early man have been found in Australia. The first finds were often the centre of bitter controversies as some scholars denied their antiquity or alleged they were the remains of recent Aborigines suffering from various mutations. The Talgai cranium was found in Queensland in 1886; the Cohuna and Keilor crania were found at Victorian sites in 1925 and 1940. Finally in 1960 a skeleton was found at Mossgiel in western New South Wales. All the crania were large in size and robust in features. Near the Victorian site of the Cohuna cranium, at Kow Swamp, a number of interesting skeletons of similar robust individuals have been found.
SURVEY ARTICLE

excavated. A number of apparently much older remains have also been discovered at Lake Mungo in western New South Wales, at the sites associated with the oldest dates obtained from archaeological deposits in Australia. The robust remains from Kow Swamp have been dated to about 10,000 BP, and this age appears to correspond to that of the other remains found in the locality. The age obtained for the Lake Mungo remains is much older than those from the Victorian sites, at 25-35,000 BP. These remains, however, are gracile, the crania being thin and the features delicate. The surprising thing about both sets of remains, in terms of the crania at least, is that neither have the characteristics of modern or relatively recent Aboriginal skulls. What is more the Kow Swamp and the Lake Mungo crania are opposed in form: in terms of metrical analysis the Lake Mungo remains are at one end of the spectrum, the Kow Swamp population at the other. Recent Australian crania fall between these two extremes. To complicate things further there has been much discussion of the fact that the Kow Swamp and related material resembles ancient fossil skulls from Java which are classified as Homo erectus. The age of the Javanese material is still open to question but is certainly considerably older than the Kow Swamp remains.

Thorne, who has carried out the most research into these recent finds of fossil man in Australia, has recognised the dilemma they pose for any consideration of the origin of the Australian. He has set up three models to account for the variations in the crania:

1) That two separate groups entered Australia at different times, each group radically different from the other, and later these groups merged to form the existing Aboriginal population.
2) That two separate groups, each different, entered Australia at roughly the same period and later merged into the existing population.
3) That one group entered Australia, later producing a greater range of forms, but subsequently this variation was reduced to that of the existing population.

Thorne has not attempted to link his models with any exact chronology or to changes in sea level. He does state, however, that the 'existing skeletal evidence is quite consistent with occupation of the continent 60,000, 80,000 or even 120,000 years ago'.

In fact if we adopt the approach taken by Thorne and relate it to our earlier discussion of changing sea levels his models can be adjusted and added to. It would be tantalising to imagine that the Kow Swamp population are the remnants of a group which entered Australia in great antiquity and who were descended from the Homo erectus communities in Southeast Asia. The low sea level existing at 160,000 BP and the long time the sea was low would fit such a theory. The Mungo-type group could have entered at this time or at the later low sea level period at 50,000 BP. Finally a third group, related to the existing Aboriginal population, could have entered at the last period of low sea level, at 20,000 BP. Thorne's models all assume that modern Aboriginal groups are descended from the earlier forms represented in the fossil record. This may be so, but there is no evidence to confirm or deny it. It may well be that the present day Aborigines are late immigrants (as indicated in my model) and the forms known from the fossil record may have become extinct without mixing with other populations. Indeed, if we rely on the theory that there is a connection

26 The latest discovery is reported in Bowler and Thorne 1976.
28 Macintosh, who once supported such a connection, later rejected it, stating that the Kow Swamp material fell within the range of known modern Aboriginal skulls (Macintosh and Lar-nach 1976:117).
29 The age of the Homo erectus may be as old as two million years and the youngest material about 250,000 years old; see Jacob 1976.
30 Thorne 1977.
between low sea levels and the migration of groups into Australia, a whole range of models can be drawn up following Thorne’s lead. One can start with three groups or even more; one can reduce the number of groups; one can miss out a period of low sea level as a possible time for migration and in each model allow the groups to interbreed, to become more or less morphologically diverse or make certain lines die out. Given the period of time involved and the various changes in sea level the number of alternative models that can be constructed is surprisingly large.

But the problems of these early fossils and the homogeneity and diversity among existing Aboriginal groups still remains. Why must we assume that the Kow Swamp population is an archaic group reflecting the survival of ‘primitive’ Homo erectus traits? If the Kow Swamp groups had been in Australia for 150,000 years there was ample time for changes to have occurred within the population. Wright has challenged the view that the Kow Swamp population was primitive, arguing instead that the robust morphological features could be the result of adaptation in the Australian environment to particular ecological conditions. Perhaps in Wright’s approach we can see a possibility for both adaptation and the retention of particular features from earlier times. When the sea level fell in Southeast Asia not only was the area of land increased but the climate and vegetation also changed. In terms of climate the tropical climatic zones shifted and with these larger changes (as well as local microclimatic alterations associated with the increase in land masses, changes in ocean currents, sea temperatures etc.) the vegetation cover also altered. Of particular interest is the alteration in areas of tropical rain forest in both Australasia and Southeast Asia and the increase in areas of grassland. The robust features associated with the Kow Swamp material may well reflect an adaptation to such an environment and a dependence on grass seeds for nutrition, the large molars being used to crush the grains. With later changes in sea level and climate, groups adapted to such conditions would have been restricted in range, but Australia would have provided an excellent and fairly large habitat for them. One could extend the argument to include the Lake Mungo group and suggest they are descendants of groups adapted to different conditions, say a tropical rainforest existence.

One problem in such discussions is that the morphological variations detected in the remains of early Australian man are based almost entirely upon analysis of cranial features. Though extensive postcranial materials (i.e. rest of the skeleton other than the skull) were recovered from Kow Swamp and Lake Mungo there has been little published on these remains. This is unfortunate as much research has been carried out on the postcranial remains of fossil man elsewhere with interesting results, particularly concerning locomotion, arm and hand movements, etc. Another problem which has not been faced is the evolutionary significance of the remains. The origin of the Australians, because of the time period involved and the variations in fossil forms, is no longer a question of history or prehistory but also of human evolution. Morphological analysis of the fossils translated into temporal sequences is not enough; methods of classification combined with a knowledge of how evolutionary changes occur need to be developed which relate the Australian material to remains from elsewhere in the world. The answers to the problem of whether one group or many

33 Wright 1976; see also Brown 1976 regarding recent changes in Aboriginal crania.
34 Rognon and Williams 1977; Macfarlane 1976 argues that physiologically Aborigines appear to have come from a tropical region.
35 Verstappen 1975.
36 The literature on such studies is extensive; Stewart 1975 summarises his studies of Neanderthal postcranial material; see also Trinkaus 1977.
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came to Australia and what exactly earlier groups may have contributed to the present Aboriginal population have to be sought outside Australia.37

Where did he come from and why did he come?

The problem in asking the question 'where did he come from' is that it seems to assume that there is a place to be located somewhere in a particular time. Such a search may indeed prove elusive. Earlier scholars tended to seek answers in terms of links with apparently similar surviving hunter-gatherer groups living contemporaneously outside Australia, hoping to establish by such connections not only a biological link but also a locality for dispersion. The chief candidates — Veddas, the Ainu, the Malaysian 'Negritos', the Andamanese and the Papuans — were somehow assumed to have stayed where they were or at least failed to make it to Australia. Subsequently great effort has been expended to find more scientific bases for such connections, using all the methods available to modern anthropologists. The results have proved disappointing. The hunter-gatherer groups show more affinity with the other inhabitants of their region (i.e. the Negritos of Malaysia with ordinary Malaysians and the Ainu with the Japanese) than with distant populations such as the Aborigines.38

Asking the question 'where?' implicitly suggests migration from a source into Australia. Many discussions of the origins of the Australians contain maps showing arrows starting from some ill-defined source on the Asian mainland sweeping broadly across island Southeast Asia and into Australia. An endless stream of humanity, it would seem, sought out the Australian continent as if it were some promised land, Australia and Tasmania being the ultimate reward for intrepid nomads. All this reflects what can only be called Greater Australian Chauvinism. But what evidence have we for such movements, much less a migration? The answer is none, beyond the fact that man must have come from outside the continent. And what was supposed to have motivated this movement? No adequate answer has been provided.

Another point much discussed in the literature is whether Australia was 'discovered' by accident or by design.39 The problem is false — because we can never know. If the first contact was accidental the chances of archaeologists discovering the evidence to prove such a theory are very slim; we cannot rediscover an 'event' in prehistory. To assume that the contact was purposeful not only presumes that the people concerned had a prior knowledge of what lay ahead but also that prehistorians can recapture the intentions of those in antiquity, which of course they cannot.

In many ways the question of the origin and the migration of man into Australia has suffered from analogies with theories concerning the populating of America, the other great uninhabited continent settled by man during the Pleistocene. Undoubtedly the American situation was very different from the Australian,40 for man entered America from Asia at a northerly latitude where climate and landscape were not favourable either for large scale settlement or, during really cold periods, for the movement of groups. Mainland and island Southeast Asia contained excellent environments for human settlement, whereas the harshness of much of Australia provided poorer opportunities than the interior of the Americas.

This brings us to another point much discussed in the literature on the origin of the Australians. At no time was the continent of Australia linked to Asia by a continuous land bridge. Man must have crossed regions of sea. This topographical barrier,

37 Some early writers believed that man developed into Homo sapiens after reaching Australia (see opening discussion in Kirk and Thorne 1976). One modern writer has expressed the opinion that man developed independently within Australia and later moved out into Asia (Gallows 1969).
40 One Australian prehistorian (Hallam 1977) has suggested that the Australian material can provide examples for American migration; this too is highly dubious.
which has existed between Australasia and Asia for thousands of years, has quite
important biogeographical implications for it acted as a barrier to restrict the inter-
change of plants and animals between the regions. Prehistorians have placed great
emphasis, perhaps too much emphasis, upon this barrier. The zoogeographic barrier
has been recognised as lying along a line drawn during the last century by Alfred
Wallace and named after him. Wallace's line is discussed in most of the accounts of
prehistorians with various degrees of precision: sometimes the barrier approximates
to that intended by Wallace, sometimes to that line taken from Wallace and adjusted
by Thomas Huxley and sometimes to a figment of the prehistorians' imagination.
'Wallacea' is boldly written across a vast area of island Southeast Asia. Jones has
summed up the position of many prehistorians: 'Wallacea, with its numerous water
barriers, was the decisive geographical influence on the prehistory of man on the
Australian continent'. But was the barrier decisive? Was it even important?

It is questionable whether a clear line can be drawn to separate the Australasian
region from Asia. Many scholars have attempted to construct a firm line to represent
the zoogeographic barrier but as Simpson has recently noted there are 'too many
lines'. The flora and fauna do not suddenly change at any one point and there
are grounds for considering most of island Southeast Asia as a transitional zone
between Asia and Australasia. At the same time, whatever line is accepted, it is a
line drawn by specialists after a detailed examination of a number of factors. It is
highly unlikely that the changes between regions were consciously recognised by man
in antiquity. Indeed, most groups were probably unaware that they had crossed from
one region to another even if we assume that a clear line exists and movement was
always one way (i.e. towards Australia). It might be argued that even if we attempt
to dispose of the concept of a single biogeographic barrier we are still left with a
topographical barrier imposed by broad sea channels separating the Asian islands
from Australasia. Recently, however, Verstappen has noted that climatological
barriers in the region, especially those associated with changed climatic conditions
during periods of changing sea levels, may have imposed more important limitations
to the movement of man and animals than topographical barriers. Simpson has noted
that between the edge of the Sahul shelf and the edge of the Sunda shelf lies a region
which might be considered a separate zoogeographic zone. This region consisted
mainly of islands even when the sea level was at its lowest in the Pleistocene. Dunn
and Dunn have independently recognised a division of the region into Mainland,
Sundaic and Insular Southeast Asia during the Pleistocene. In the past there has
perhaps been too much emphasis upon mainland continental areas and too little
recognition of the importance of the insular region which has long existed between
Asia and Australia. The low sea levels were thought to be important only in that
they brought the mainland areas into closer proximity and presumably encouraged
migration from Asia southwards. As we have seen the idea of a single source for
the origin of the Australians in mainland Southeast Asia has not been proved and the
idea of migration is based upon assumptions which have no basis in the existing
evidence. Instead of concentrating on mainland Asia and on the Sunda shelf itself,
closer attention should be paid to the island world lying in between.

At the same time we need to stop thinking in terms of static models (periods of
high sea level and periods of low sea level) and instead develop dynamic models

41 Jones 1973:278 (my emphasis).
42 Simpson 1976; see also Calaby 1972.
43 There has long been evidence that man crossed these 'barriers' in the Pleistocene as his stone
tools have been found on the Australian side of Wallace's line; see Mulvaney 1970.
45 Dunn and Dunn 1977.
46 The title *Sunda and Sahul* (Allen, Golson and Jones 1977) reflects this attitude — as if noth-
ing of importance lay between the two shelves.
concerning the rise and fall of sea levels over specific periods of time. Such models would have to take into account not just changes in the topography of the region but also alterations in the climate and changes in the flora and the fauna which accompanied the rise and fall of the sea levels. Tindale has suggested that alterations in sea level should be seen as promoting the movement of people rather than just providing easier access between regions, but few prehistorians appear to have noted the importance of this suggestion.

At periods of high sea level Australia and Asia were separated, as they are today, by a region of thousands of islands. As the sea level fell these islands grew larger, some became joined while elsewhere new islands emerged, some of which remained islands during the lowest period of sea level and others eventually became parts of continental shelves. However, even at the period of lowest sea level a mass of islands remained. Therefore the fall in sea level did not just produce continental shelves but at various times a host of new islands which were colonized by plants and animals. This colonization was influenced by changes in climate, wind and tide patterns which accompanied changes in sea level. It is highly possible that coastal Southeast Asia and many of the adjacent islands were inhabited by man long ago in antiquity, perhaps by groups of people living off the rich inter-tidal and marine life of the region. As the sea level fell these groups would have moved out onto neighbouring islands after plants and animals had colonized the newly emerging land. In the short term the area of coast and inter-tidal zone open to exploitation would have expanded but in the long term, especially after the formation of continental shelves which united islands and altered the coastline, the area of coast would have been reduced. Bowdler has recently argued that in the case of Tasmania the rise in sea level would have increased the area of coastline open to exploitation by man. Dunn and Dunn have calculated that the area of coastline in Southeast Asia was reduced by 54 per cent when the Sunda shelf was at its maximum 20,000 years ago. If this were so, people living on mainland Southeast Asia would have been forced coastalward and out onto neighbouring islands. Climatic changes would merely have compounded the pressure to move. As the sea level rose once again, drowning land masses and low lying islands, people would again be forced to move. The process would not be an exact duplication of the rise of sea level because areas already colonized by plants and animals would be drowned. While along mainland margins and in other regions a greater area of coastline would be available for exploitation, a number of important island areas would be lost. In some areas man would therefore benefit from the changes, in others new pressures would have forced new movement.

The movement of man between Asia and Australia should be examined against this background of the rise and fall in sea level. Changes in sea level are now viewed as a cause of movement, rather than just the means of movement, through the emergence of new areas of land. In these movements man could have crossed from Asia into Australia and back again just as some animals did. Large placental mammals (such as now extinct forms of elephant) crossed into islands just to the north of Australia and certain marsupial species (such as the cuscus) moved northwards. Calaby has noted that large animals having greater buoyancy and smaller creatures with the ability to cling to driftwood were excellent candidates for movement across the water barriers. Man, as part of the fauna, could have moved in the same directions even if he had lacked the assistance of watercraft.

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47 Tindale 1967.
48 But see Mulvaney 1971:377-378.
51 Hooijer 1975.
In many discussions of the origin of man in Australia, insular Southeast Asia appears as a void through which groups moved southwards. However it has been known at least since the end of the last century that an earlier form of man lived on Java a very long time ago. If man had existed just to the north of Australia for thousands, if not millions of years, it was just a matter of time before groups, spurred on by changing conditions, found their way to Australia.

My earlier discussion of possible dates for the first entry of man into Australia was based on the assumption that periods of really low sea levels were the crucial factor in the movement of man. These periods are obviously important but by adopting a dynamic model of sea level change what becomes equally important is the rate of rise and fall in sea level. In terms of cause and effect a rapid change in level, particularly a rapid rise in sea level, would have precipitated greater movement than a slow change. Not only would groups have become trapped by a rapid rise in sea level but climatic changes would also have occurred at a faster rate. One particular period during the Pleistocene stands out in this respect: the change at c.50,000 BP when the sea level rose and fell rapidly (see Figure 1). Such a date (say between 50-40,000 BP) would fit closely with archaeological evidence for the first settlement of Australia, though older dates cannot be entirely dismissed. The use of a dynamic model of sea level change to explain movements of man in insular Southeast Asia is attractive in other ways. Examining the changes in sea level which have occurred in the region during the last 240,000 years it is clear that while there have been only three periods of really low sea level there have been numerous occasions when the sea level changed to lesser degrees (see Figure 1.) At such times areas of land would have been gained and lost in particular areas, causing local movements of people. Groups isolated by sudden and short movements in sea level could have found themselves trapped within restricted environments and under pressure for survival.

Such varied responses to changing sea level in insular environments are of great importance in any understanding of the populations of not only Southeast Asia but also Australasia. It is very likely that even if the population of Australia was derived from mainland Asia this population was already varied (the term used by evolutionists is polytypic) and that groups existing in the Southeast Asian archipelago were even more polytypic due to their periodic isolation on islands. The patterns of evolution in the islands would have been different since the isolation of some groups would have been brief (when quite small changes of sea level reunited groups separated for short periods), while other groups could have been isolated for long periods of time and these communities, probably adapted to specialized ecological niches and formed a closed world; in such conditions certain distinctive morphological features could have persisted. When large changes in sea level occurred these groups could have been released to mix with other population groups who had experienced greater changes, or, which is more likely the case, such contact could have doomed the isolated communities. It is possible that the Kow Swamp population may have been descended from a group isolated outside Australia for a long period in restricted habitats but who, after 20,000 BP, were able to enter Australia because of lower sea levels. Here they persisted, perhaps because they continued to exploit a restricted habitat or because they avoided other groups. Eventually the men might have been killed and the women absorbed by other groups, or there could have been free interbreeding between themselves and a larger more ‘modern’ population.

The significance of the island world for an understanding of the origin, affinities and evolution of man in Australia is considerable. Australian prehistorians have discussed the importance of island life near Australia, but have not as yet extended

53 See Mayr 1963.
their studies to the islands of Indonesia. It may be that the Australians are descended from heterogeneous groups in island Southeast Asia who, within continental Australia, evolved into a more homogeneous population. In island Southeast Asia groups remained isolated as the sea level rose but eventually improved watercraft allowed contacts to be renewed and new groups to enter the region from mainland Asia. However, in present-day eastern Indonesia and particularly in New Guinea the diversity of groups and languages which exists may be evidence of earlier heterogeneous island communities.

How did he come? Why did he become isolated?

To cross the sea barriers separating areas of land to the north of Australia man must have used some kind of water transport. This may just have been on flotsam but the prehistorians' common assumption is that the form of transport, however unsophisticated, had been fashioned by man for the purpose of movement. The use of water transportation is therefore considerably older than previously imagined.\(^57\)

It is often assumed that man, moving from mainland Asia 'to Australia', had to acquire the skill of using water transport and thus the use of boats is a sign of cultural achievement. Such ideas become less important if the concept of migration is restricted to short movements and also if we assume that island Southeast Asia had been inhabited by man for some considerable time. Inhabitants of the archipelago would have grown accustomed to maritime life, travelling between islands and visiting reefs and banks which were within sight and local knowledge. Swimming may have been well developed and, with the assistance of log floats, used singly or tied together to form a raft, could have extended the range of man's activities. Such forms of water transport are well known from ethnographic reports throughout Australia, but attempts to use these and other ethnographic references to Aboriginal watercraft to reconstruct possible forms of transport in prehistory may prove incorrect.\(^58\) The most one can say is that whatever forms existed were unlikely to have been more sophisticated than the simplest forms known from recent ethnographic reports.

Some kind of navigation must also have been involved. It has been shown that many of the water barriers between islands in Southeast Asia and between Asia and Australia, even at the lowest periods of sea level, were such that no areas of land were visible over the horizon to encourage men to sail onwards. However, a people with experience of living in a world of islands may easily have moved out into the unknown with faith that islands existed somewhere in the distance, as Polynesians, thousands of years later, ventured into the Pacific. The flight of birds and the presence of flotsam may also have indicated that land lay ahead.

There is no reason to suppose that given the technology for movement across water barriers and perhaps navigational skills, however limited, man could not have maintained an extended contact between Australia and islands in Southeast Asia. The concept of migration conditions thought in terms of one way movement. But the period of time when such movement was possible was restricted. Whenever the sea level rose, water distances increased and the patterns of tide, wind and current made formerly easy crossings too dangerous. A similar situation has been recorded in the modern ethnographic literature: the Bentinck Islanders in the Gulf of Carpentaria carefully calculated the costs in human life of movement between islands.\(^59\) As the sea levels rose technology did not develop fast enough to keep pace with the widening of distances so groups on islands and on continental margins became isolated from each other. In this manner the Aborigines became isolated from island Southeast Asia and this isolation is critical in Australian prehistory.

\(^{57}\) Macintosh 1974; Hallam 1977.

\(^{58}\) See the discussions of transport in Birdsell 1977; Tindale 1977.


\(^{60}\) Tindale 1977.
The isolation of continental Australia began with the drowning of the Sahul shelf, the separation of the islands of Indonesia and the breaking of the land link with New Guinea. But the separation of people may have begun well before the separation of the land. The coastal region of the Sahul shelf may have been quite sparsely populated for a long period as the supporting vegetation and marine life would have been poor if erosion was rapid and ecological conditions unstable.\(^6\) The low lying area of the shelf behind the coastal dunes may have consisted of swamp, covered by saline water for much of the year with few supplies of fresh drinking water. Neither the coast nor the hinterland would have provided a good environment for human occupation. Even if man had lived here the isolation from New Guinea may not have occurred gradually as the sea level rose. Firstly quite small rises of sea level could have drowned vast areas of shelf quite suddenly. Secondly, the coast could have been protected by sand dunes while the hinterland was below sea level. Sudden storms could have breached these defences and drowned vast areas. The increase in the area of ocean to the north of Australia brought changes to the climate of the region and cyclonic activity would have increased.\(^6\) The opening of the Torres Strait sometime between 6500 and 8000 BP may have added to these changes as well as altering the pattern of sea currents.\(^6\)

There are, however, two things involved in the isolation of man in Australia from the wider world: firstly the Aborigines never developed the skill or the desire to unite themselves with neighbouring New Guinea or Asia and secondly though such technology and skills were available for a long period in both Asia and New Guinea contacts with Australia appear only to have occurred in quite recent times.

Not only were the mainland Aborigines isolated from New Guinea and Asia but in Tasmania another group became isolated at about 10,000 BP when the Bass Strait was flooded. Jones\(^6\) has recently argued that the isolation of the Tasmanians for thousands of years had a drastic effect on their culture. Not only was their gene pool severely restricted but there are indications in the archaeological record that important technological skills and subsistence techniques were lost or abandoned. The implications of such an argument are disturbing and appear to run counter to all our accepted beliefs concerning human culture. Jones’ argument concerning the Tasmanians might be extended to the culture of the Aborigines.

For a very long period the size of the Aboriginal population in Australia may have remained fairly stable though the density of population varied according to local ecological conditions.\(^6\) Over vast areas sustained contact between neighbouring groups was minimal because of enmity, harsh ecological conditions and other factors; thus as a whole the Aborigines were isolated from outside influences and ideas and relationships between groups within the continent were often restricted. The development of human culture which we can trace in other parts of the world may have been dependent not solely upon internal innovation or upon the diffusion of ideas from outside, but upon a subtle combination of the two. It is probably increasing communication between expanding populations which promotes innovation and change; in Australia both of these were lacking. This is not to suggest that Aboriginal culture never changed or that it is regressed from some earlier ‘higher’ state. It does suggest, however, that the pattern of life was very different from the recent history of most other parts of the world and perhaps more akin to that experienced by man.

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\(^6\) Chappell and Thom 1977.
\(^6\) Jones 1977c.
\(^6\) Birdsell (1957) suggested that Australia was populated rapidly and most areas were occupied shortly after the first settlement. His hypothesis has recently been challenged, but this is not the place to discuss the interesting arguments about how Australia was settled, how quickly and whether or not all regions were colonized at an early period.
at earlier periods when he existed as a hunter-gatherer for thousands if not millions of years. Change and innovation were very gradual and cultural traditions and ideologies were developed which stressed the continuity and maintenance of culture rather than discontinuities and alteration. The consequences of such a tradition can be seen in what we can reconstruct of Aboriginal life as it existed before the coming of the Europeans and there are indications from the archaeological record which confirm the persistence of cultural traits. In spite of local differences and linguistic variation Aboriginal culture was remarkably homogeneous. Differences which Europeans encountered at first contact, for example in circumcision practices and ritual observances, were not fixed, and there is much evidence of diffusion across wide areas in recent times. Continuity and homogeneity at a general level was being re-established. Given variations due to the availability of resources and differences in subsistence patterns, the technology of the Aborigines also shows a homogeneity over large areas and, for stone technology, over long periods of time.

Outside Australia, particularly in island and mainland Southeast Asia, the pattern of life since the end of the Pleistocene has been very different. Populations expanded tremendously, patterns of subsistence altered, particularly with the introduction of agriculture, and the diffusion of ideas and practices increased greatly. One of the most important innovations was the development of maritime skills. Communities learnt to overcome the limitations imposed upon movement by the rise of sea levels and even colonized new areas previously inaccessible to man. The islands of Southeast Asia were settled by Austronesian-speaking peoples and with their skill of building sailing boats they reached Madagascar across the Indian Ocean and in the other direction settled the islands of Micronesia, Polynesia and eventually parts of Melanesia. Solheim has recently suggested that the origin of the Austronesian-speaking peoples should be sought not in mainland Southeast Asia, as was previously thought, but in the islands of eastern Indonesia. The Austronesian-speaking peoples were thus the inheritors of that island existence from which the Aborigines may have originated: isolated on their islands, they developed the technology to conquer the sea and spread beyond island Southeast Asia without the assistance of lower sea levels.

Though the early Austronesians, the Indonesians and later the Papuans of coastal New Guinea possessed the technology and the skills to reach Australia there are no signs that they did so, at least until very recent times. The reasons for this are unclear though it may well have something to do with the prevailing wind systems to the north of Australia which tend to force sailing ships westwards. Only in very recent times did the Macassans begin to visit northern Australia from Sulawesi (the Celebes), and then not to colonize Australia but merely to exploit the rich resources of trepang for oriental markets. It was people from a very distant place, Europeans, who were to conquer and to colonize Australia. Only then did the isolation of the Aborigines suddenly and violently end.

Queries about the origin and the antiquity of man in Australia are still as relevant today as when they were first asked, but modern scholars have inherited many of the prejudices and assumption of earlier periods. Recent research as yet provides few clues.

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66 Dr Horton has pointed out that all I may be saying here is that they were all hunter-gatherers. This may be true but there is more to this homogeneity than just the patterns of subsistence which anyway varied considerably according to ecological conditions.

67 Although there do appear to have been quite sudden alterations in stone tool technology; the cause of these alterations is still unknown. On stone tool traditions in Australia see Mulvaney 1975 and the papers in Wright 1977.

68 Solheim 1975.

69 See also Bellwood 1975:25.

70 Keats (1970) has established genetical links between the Aborigines of Arnhem Land and the people of southern Papua-New Guinea. The explanation of these links still needs elucidation from other sources.

71 Macknight 1976.
clear answers but scholars have been forced to re-examine the basis of the original questions. At the same time recent discoveries have complicated many of the issues involved. Not all new methods have fulfilled expectations; in particular genetical analysis has failed to establish clear connections between distant population groups which can be interpreted in terms of direct relationship over long periods of time. The really significant advances have occurred in archaeology with the establishment of a more exact and extended chronology and the discovery of fossil remains of great importance. These advances have all occurred in quite recent years. Co-ordinated archaeological programmes have been a recent innovation. The number of properly investigated sites is still minute, particularly when we consider the size of the continent and the depth of time involved in man's prehistory in Australia. These sites are nearly all concentrated in southern Australia; the north and centre have hardly been investigated.

Studies of the antiquity of man in Australia cannot afford to be parochial: solutions to many of the problems relating to Pleistocene man in Australia must be sought elsewhere, in particular in island Southeast Asia. Archaeological investigation in much of the archipelago is still in its infancy, and the quality of some work is open to question.7

Island Southeast Asia is an important area for the consideration of both cultural changes and patterns of evolution in human populations. If man has inhabited the region for thousands, if not millions of years, then changes in sea level must have produced startling differences between populations isolated periodically. If the Aborigines' immediate past lies in island Southeast Asia, rather than in mainland Asia, then their ancestors were affected by these variations. Scholars have a unique opportunity not only to place Australian prehistory in its proper perspective, but also to make fundamental contributions to our understanding of man in prehistory.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

THEORETIC HISTORY BY OSMOSIS: THE LANGUAGE OF COMMON SENSE AND THE COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF 'RACE RELATIONS' IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Mervyn Hartwig

If further proof is needed that history uninformed by adequate theory is bad history, or that structural-functionalist social science is tarted-up common sense, K.R. Howe's *Race relations Australia and New Zealand* unwittingly provides it. In a recent article which contended that race and ethnicity can best be understood from the point of view of Weberian stratification theory, R.A. Wild omitted a critique of the structural-functionalist model which informs most of the Australasian literature on race and ethnic relations on the grounds that the model had been criticized to death in a debate which began in the 1940s. Those who are familiar with the debate will appreciate the truth of this assertion. Howe is not only unfamiliar with the debate, he has not even read in the relevant structural-functionalist literature or begun to think at all critically about his basic assumptions. And yet the theoretical model he implicitly employs is profoundly structural-functionalist — without any of its few redeeming features.

Structural-functionalist theory defines the problem of racial and ethnic inequality in Western industrial societies as one of lower-class status and perceives the solution of the problem in terms of the 'inclusion' ('integration', 'assimilation') of the whole of the lower class, including racial and ethnic groups, in the mainstream of a consensually based social structure. Oblivious of this, but his mind steeped in the phraseology of the theory by an education in New Zealand, Howe took a tour of Australia in 1970 and decided that 'race relations' in New Zealand were 'better' than in Australia. The chief grounds for this decision were that the living conditions of Aborigines were worse than those of Maoris and that Aborigines were the victims of more intensely racist attitudes and treatment, public and private; Maoris, in short, had been far more 'included' in the 'mainstream'. He thereupon set out to ascertain the reasons for this difference and arrived at the unstartling conclusion, given basic similarities in the processes of European colonization in the two countries, that the cause is probably to be sought chiefly in differences in the nature of Maori and Aboriginal societies in pre-European times. These differences brought differing reactions to European settlement, and both sets of differences resulted in European attitudes towards, and treatment of, Aborigines being far more brutal and racist than they have been in respect of Maoris. Differing attitudes and treatment, and a continuing less 'effective' response on the part of Aborigines, produced inclusionist government policies for Maoris and, until recently, exclusionist ones for Aborigines.

It would all sound plausible enough to anyone who failed to question its underlying assumptions. Indicative of Howe's uncritical attitude to these is the fact


1 See also, for example, Stedman Jones 1972 and 1976.
2 See also, for example, Hartwig 1978: 124-126 and references supplied.
4 See, for example, Lockwood.
that he does not even pause to consider the much-debated question concerning what constitutes a system of ‘race relations’. He simply makes the narrow assumption that the concept of ‘race relations’ is exhausted by Aboriginal-white relations in respect of Australia, and by Maori-white relations in respect of New Zealand, and writes as if the interaction of two peoples who look different and have different cultures in itself constitutes a ‘race relations’ situation. He employs the concept, in short, in its loose, popular sense. This is in keeping with his unapologetic, and apparently unthinking, use of the terms ‘half-caste’, ‘mixed-blood’ and ‘full-blood’.

‘Aborigines’, ‘Maoris’ and ‘Europeans’ are accordingly treated as undifferentiated, homogeneous ‘races’. The whole question of class and other divisions and relations within and across these groups is virtually ignored; there is no attempt to locate race and ethnic relations within a broad theory of social stratification alongside other dimensions of social inequality. The central question — why are Maoris more ‘included’ in the ‘mainstream’ — is thus wrongly posed from the outset. We are not even told what ‘inclusion’ in the ‘mainstream’ of a stratified society would look like. In terms of the functionalist model, it would mean simply that Aborigines and Maoris were evenly distributed throughout the social structure. But since the model accepts the inevitability and functionality of stratification, and since capitalist economies indeed generate structural inequality, what this would entail is that, for every Aboriginal or Maori who went up, some other person (who would certainly belong to a ‘race’ on Howe’s loose usage) would go down. Equality of opportunity would thus in reality become equality of opportunity to become unequal for individuals of differing racial descent. But Howe is innocent of such considerations. In writing of the possibility of Aborigines and in particular of Maoris achieving equality with Europeans (his last two chapters but one are entitled, respectively, ‘Towards equality: Aboriginal society, 1950s-1970s’ and ‘Towards equality: Maori society, 1950s-1970s’), he presupposes that Europeans themselves are undifferentiated according to class or race. This is an insult to the working class, to the unemployed, and to recent immigrants, among others; it is no doubt highly gratifying to the Australian and New Zealand ruling classes.

But above all, of course, it is an insult to Aborigines and Maoris themselves. For as Howe knows well, on every meaningful socio-economic index both Aborigines and Maoris are at the bottom of the pile, or near it; and while their living conditions have improved during this century, their relative position in the socio-economic structures has not. In respect of Aborigines, he explains this for the most part in terms of the central thesis set out above (the generation of attitudes and policies which excluded Aborigines from the ‘mainstream’), but when he comes to the period after World War II, during which policy has been directed towards ‘inclusion’ and there has been an ideological commitment to formal equality, he finds it necessary to introduce a social pathology model so dear to the hearts of structural-functionalists — the famous ‘vicious circle of poverty’: ‘Present Aboriginal living conditions throughout the country help ensure that the “Aboriginal syndrome” is a self-perpetuating one. Poverty and poor health contribute to poor educational achievement, unemployment, and hence poverty’ (p. 64). Such ‘blaming the victim’ might appear inconsistent with his central thesis, but was always implicit in his emphasis on the ‘inadequacy’ of the Aboriginal response, an emphasis which now stands revealed in its true light: Aborigines have not been the victims of an inherently unjust socio-economic order but of their own lifestyles.

In respect of Maoris, Howe is not even sure what he has to explain: writing of the period ‘1950s-1970s’, he asserts that ‘the welfare state... had not [by 1960] closed the ever widening gap between Maori and European standards of living’ (p. 79), only to claim a few pages later that ‘Maoris have equal civil rights which they are increasingly able to turn to equal opportunities’ and to predict that ‘the bulk of the Maori population will continue to be included socially, economically and
physically into white society'. Since he is sure, however, that Maori living conditions are superior relative to those of Aborigines, he introduces, not a 'vicious circle', but J.K. Hunn's 'magic circle' ('now universally recognized'): "Better education promotes better employment, which promotes better housing, which promotes better health and social standing, which promotes better education and thus closes the circle" (p. 79).

Had he paused to reflect that the social function of education in Australia and New Zealand (and other capitalist societies) has always been to reproduce and legitimate class inequality, he might have avoided positing such embarrassingly contradictory 'circles'. Of course, the 'magic circle' could significantly alter the relative position of Maoris (and of Aborigines) if there were massive positive discrimination in their favour for a lengthy period. But there never will be such discrimination, only sops here and there, so long as the present power structure remains intact, for that would involve the class with power signing away its privileges. But Howe is quite incapable of seeing this because he systematically begs the question of the structural generation of inequality and has no adequate theory of power or of the state. The model he implicitly employs is a simplistic, pluralist one which locates power 'within the parliamentary system' (p. 42) (where it is wielded by politicians responding to public attitudes) and which fails to incorporate any notion of ideology. Middle class values are simply assumed to constitute the consensual value system — 'the predominant mores of the white community' (p. 83) — on which the social order rests and into which Maoris and Aborigines are being willy-nilly 'included'. There is no examination of this value system in relation to the power of the hegemonic class and its ability to mobilize bias and manufacture consensus. Everybody's 'attitude', provided it is white, is presumed, in effect, to be as influential as that of everybody else — a shepherd's as influential as a squatter's, and so on.

There is nevertheless no gainsaying the fact that, given basic similarities in the structural generation of inequality in Australia and New Zealand, the answer to the question why most Maoris are relatively better off than most Aborigines in terms of living standards and of status in the wider society must be sought chiefly in 'the relative strength and resilience of Maori society' (p. 1). At least two further comments are in order, however. First, Howe is unable from his perspective to pose the question concerning the reasons for such relative strength at all adequately. In Chapter 1 he ranks Maori above Aboriginal society in terms of 'cultural evolution' and suggests that Maori society had more in common with European than Aboriginal; in Chapter 2 he condemns nineteenth century social evolutionists for holding similar views. No doubt he does so because nineteenth century social evolutionists were often also racists and rarely pointed out, as Howe himself is careful to do in Chapter 1, that a concept of social evolution does not necessarily entail a notion of the inherent inferiority or superiority of the bearers of cultures. But this is no argument that their views on social evolution were wrong, especially since they are essentially Howe's own. As if to compound confusion, he dubs 'their' view 'cultural relativity', meaning that Aboriginal and Maori cultures were deemed less advanced relative to European culture, and Aboriginal culture relative to them both, which is precisely the reverse of the accepted sense of the concept, that no value judgments can properly be made between cultures. The wondrous upshot of such confusion is that, like many of the nineteenth century evolutionists he

5 P. 83. Figures are cited on p. 59 to demonstrate that 'the gap had been considerably narrowed' between ca.1935-1950. Crucial indicators like ownership of wealth are ignored however.

6 See especially Bowles and Gintis, Gramsci, Sharp.
condemns, he takes social evolution for granted and asks, in effect, not why Maori society had, but why Aboriginal society had not, developed from 'parasitical'\footnote{sic} hunter-gathering etc. To anyone who appreciates the enormous power of ideology in classless society in the absence of any major social contradiction, and the full significance of the fact that the greater part of human history has been dominated by a primitive communist mode of production, the former question, adequately phrased, is by far the more significant: how and why were Maoris and their eastern Polynesian forebears in process of developing from primitive communism to what some contemporary European observers well understood was a society in transition to class society?\footnote{8} Instead of confronting this question, Howe concentrates on the other and trots out a fantastic cliché concerning the harshness and aridity of the Australian environment (is North Queensland so different from Papua New Guinea or Australia Felix from New Zealand?), together with various tautological explanations concerning the relative antiquity of Aboriginal and Maori settlement, the greater number of Aboriginal languages, and so on.\footnote{9} I do not know whether sufficient empirical data exists to explain adequately why Maori society was in transition, but theory and comparative data suggest an answer in terms of the production of a regular surplus product and the development of the social division of labour;\footnote{10} and answers will never be correct, no matter what the abundance of empirical data, if questions are not.

Secondly, what strikes an observer with a more adequate theoretical perspective, and Maoris and Aborigines themselves who compare their lot, is not the differences in the histories of 'race relations' in Australia and New Zealand, but their similarity. Howe is aware of similarities, but refers to them as 'apparent' and as 'at best true only in the most general sense, at worst... misleading' in view of 'major differences' (p. 73). But why are similarities in the most general sense not the most important ones, why are they not more important than differences, and why would an emphasis on them necessarily obscure differences? Aborigines and Maoris who intelligently compare their histories since the advent of Europeans, are likely to be fully cognizant of the fact, if Howe is not, that capitalism is an expansionist system which invaded and largely destroyed their societies and deprived them of most of their land; that both societies resisted this process as best they could; that apart from the period of resistance both have always desired 'a decent union of their lives with ours but on terms that let them preserve their own identity';\footnote{11} that both produced incipient peasannies only to see them ruthlessly underdeveloped;\footnote{12} that, whatever the differences between 'amalgamationist' and 'protectionist' strategies, the

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\item[7] P. 3. The rider 'in a non-pejorative sense' is added. But what is that sense, since a parasite damages its host? What Howe means to imply, of course, is that Aborigines merely 'took from' nature and in no way improved its productivity. This, however, is false. See especially Hallam 1975.
\item[8] See p. 17. Anyone still intimidated by the assault on the idea of social development in the bourgeois social sciences once that idea came to be associated with Marxism should consult, for example, Makarius 1974, 1977; Gellner, Cohen.
\item[9] He does glimpse the power of Aboriginal ideology (pp. 7-8) — though the concept is foreign to him — but not sufficiently to avoid these absurdities.
\item[10] On primitive communism and the transition to class society see Marx, Marx and Engels, Pershits, Andreyev, Bloch, Godcler, Meillasoux, Sahlins, Terrey, Thompson, Hindess and Hirst, Gellner (especially comments by Pershits).
\item[12] Regarding Maoris, see Hargreaves 1959, 1960, Sorrenson, Ward; regarding Aborigines, see Markus 1977:277-8 (and the works by Barwick, Massola, Mulvaney, Horner there cited), Jenkin.
\end{footnotes}
ultimate aim of the state for long periods in both countries was the disappearance of Aboriginal and Maori societies as distinguishable entities; that both societies have been the victims of an overwhelmingly similar racist ideology; and that both have little chance of bridging the ‘gap’ short of a thorough-going transformation of the whole structure of social inequality. They are entitled to be told why.

Howe at least does not repeat the sillier conclusions of other writers in the same tradition concerning the overriding importance of the humanitarian influence in New Zealand or of the brutality of convicts in Australia. But his book is subliminally tarted up bourgeois ideology for all that. It does a particular disservice to Maoris, other ethnic groups, and the working class in New Zealand in that it does nothing to challenge the ruling ideology on the issue of ‘harmonious race relations’, and much to reinforce it. Aborigines for their part are likely to find it a handy compendium of misconceptions concerning their society and history. ‘Any conclusions should...be taken as suggestions for further study’, Howe warns in a preface. They should rather be regarded as the fag-ends of an intellectually bankrupt tradition in history and the social sciences.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

13 For example Geddes, Sinclair.

14 Compare how the issue of class inequality is mystified for, e.g., the Brazilian working class, peasantry and lumpen proletariat by continual indoctrination to the effect that they enjoy ‘harmonious race relations’ which present no barriers to social mobility. See, for example, Degler, Ianni.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The moving frontier: aspects of Aboriginal-European interaction in Australia.

The concept behind this book was a wise one. There is a need for authoritative popular accounts of the diversity of Aboriginal culture and its interface with European expansion. Thirteen authors have presented individual essays on aspects including prehistory, environment, traditional economic and social life, cultural factors such as art, music and language, historical and contemporary race relations and the European perception of Aboriginal Australians through the medium of art and literature. The book is clearly printed and attractively assembled on good quality paper. There are contributions from established authorities such as Dr A. Capell and Dr Alice Moyle, but several authors are relatively new to the field. The editor is to be commended for encouraging so many 'nonestablishment' scholars. He also enlisted support from 'outside' disciplines, and Leonie Kramer's short survey of 'the Aboriginal in literature' opens up a neglected area. The volume is innovative in one most positive direction. Terry Widders was asked to contribute thoughts on the predicament of his own people. His insights merit attention and it is to be hoped that he will proceed to a more extended treatment.

The credit balance of this book is unfortunately offset by so many negative features, that it is necessary to emphasise them at some length. The editor must be held responsible for many of them. Uneven and repetitive chapters are included, several of them bearing the hallmarks of hurried preparation. In some chapters factual content is sparse, while other sections are overloaded with personal names or disjointed and bald factual details. There is some blurring between fact and inference. The expectation of audience level evidently varied from elementary school to undergraduate. The editor fails to explain why he exerted such lax editorial control or why he excluded any documentation of illustrations or bibliographic advice. The principles that guided his choice of authors, chapters, themes or illustrations also remain unstated. The dustjacket blurb implies some
virtue in a policy of avoiding 'the style of the academic study', but any gains are questionable. They are offset by the fact that a book intended to inform a lay audience becomes dogmatic if all the scholarly apparatus is ignored. 'There is no deliberate propaganda in these pages', the editor claims, 'but merely the facts, sympathy and understanding of the authors'. This bland 'objectivity' is matched by several recent works on race relations, including source books. There is a danger, however, that tolerant editors, such as the one of the book under review, by seeking 'to avoid extremism' (p.5), project just that image disguised with appeals to reason and emotion. These critical and generalised observations may seem both untimely and uncharitable, for the sympathetic humanitarianism of the contributors is evident, and Australian society surely needs education on the subject of these essays. It is commendable that contemporary academics should feel remorse for racial genocide, but the story told is easily distorted.

There is a tendency in some of these chapters to emphasise the perfect harmony between man and nature in pre-European times and to contrast it with the pathetic sequel. The consequential message is of the fall of a race from ecological and spiritual grace to a physical state ruined by shot, disease and alcohol. There is a danger that total acceptance of this 'before and after' syndrome may act to the educational disadvantage of contemporary Aboriginal people. They are presented with a stereotype of what their people now are, a stereotype already accepted by most Europeans; they are left unaware of other dignified but less obvious features of their history since European domination. While it may salve the conscience of the whites, it can do little to assist the recovery of self-esteem and sense of achievement amongst the depressed people to emphasise the paradise lost. This book overlooks many aspects of Aboriginal-European interaction which establish that disintegration was not the only theme meriting investigation and reflection. For example, what of the dignified bearing of tribal elders at the time of initial contact, and the close friendships which they established with men such as William Thomas in Victoria? There is scope for detailed historical evaluation of the role of these men. The fact that there was significant Aboriginal resistance in Queensland is under close investigation by Townsville historians; it is a theme unrepresented here, and so is any reflection on the 'rebellion' at Coranderrk. Aboriginal stockmen adapted to the horse as readily as American Indians; Tasmanians adopted the dog so rapidly that it transformed their social life even as it was under brutal European assault. Aboriginal sportsmen have achieved celebrity in many fields of European endeavour, not least as cricketers in England over a century ago. Many explorers praised the initiative and endurance of Aborigines in the patronising prose of the period; but such guides cannot be dismissed as mere variants of Uncle Tom. Neither can the Gippsland informants of A.W. Howitt or his proud friend Barak, elder at Coranderrk. Those great folk heroes, Burke and Wills, perished in a land of Aboriginal plentitude. Forty years later two Aboriginal men from Charlotte Waters accompanied Spencer and Gillen across the continent and returned alone, safely and without fuss. Such subjects are as much a part of culture contact as are the very real and depressing effects. Any Aboriginal (or European schoolchild) who read The moving frontier would scarcely learn that reality.

Neither does the selection of illustrations assist. In such a 'factual' survey, where are the maps which tie names in the text to localities? Given the vaunted objectivity of approach, why were so many illustrations culled from the nineteenth century popular press? Why bother to use an illustration, if it is necessary to add (p.23) that 'early nineteenth century Europeans often used more imagination that observation'? Surely scholarship has advanced beyond acceptance of a George Grey Wandjina as typifying 'a Dreamtime superman' (p.21)? The distinguished linguist S.A. Wurm may feel startled to read that he is an archaeologist (p.84); likewise, it is Watkin, not Watkins Tench (p.66). However, misprints are rare in the text, although the single
or two sentence paragraphs which abound render pages staccato and unattractive. Few chapters could be described as distinguished literature. The index is exceptionally bad, for confusion abounds. Presumably the insertion of full page pictures explains why the index is a nonsense around pp. 117-120. Indexing is selective in regard to persons included and, to take examples from 'B', Bellbrook is listed in chapter 7, but not in chapter 13; Bull Cave is something of a feature, being mentioned in three chapters (pp. 114, 119 and 128), but appearing in the index at p.128 only; whether it is illustrated at all is unclear, but perhaps p.119 carries an example of its art. This reviewer cannot accept the editor's inferences (p.10) that this book succeeds in recording past events so that the future may be followed 'with understanding', or that it will assist the process of comprehending Aboriginal identity.

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This book is one of at least four document collections on the history of relations between Aborigines and white Australians published between 1972 and 1975. Their publication illustrated the upsurge of interest in race in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Australian community, and publishers' desire to cater for the burgeoning market. These anthologies served a useful purpose. They provided the student and the general reader with much historical material that had been locked away in often obscure sources and temporarily filled a serious gap in the historiography of Australian race relations. It was possible to prepare such books quickly and they were often the by-products of other related and ongoing research projects. Several of these documentary collections bore obvious signs of hasty preparation and inadequate editing, while commentary and interpretation was often skimpy. The focus was typically European, the emphasis (as in this book) on white attitudes and policies. To a considerable degree these collections already show their age. They will probably be superseded by a new wave of more serious books which will come out over the next few years.

Sharman Stone's book covers a wide scope — nominally from 1697 to 1973. But Section One, entitled 'The Sailing Explorers', consists of only one page — half from Dampier, half from Cook — scarcely a serious attempt to illustrate eighteenth century opinion. The following 114 extracts in 200-odd pages cover the First Penal Settlement, The Expansion of Free Settlement Beyond the Limits of Location, The Aborigines in the Work Force, The Twentieth Century and a New Deal for Aborigines, Becoming an Australian Citizen. Nearly half the book deals with the twentieth century. The sources are fairly obvious and well known to anyone familiar with the field. For the early period Stone draws on the Historical Records of Australia, Historical Records of New South Wales and the British Parliamentary Papers. Nine extracts in a row come from an 1839 House of Commons Paper, five in a row are taken from the Report of the 1861 Select Committee on the Queensland Native Police. The editor seems a little uncertain about the basis for selection. In a foreword she states that 'the only pre-requisite for selection was that at the time of statement, the views were made readily available to the reading public'. It seems doubtful if this was true of Governor's Despatches or even of many other official publications.

Each of the seven sections is prefaced by an introductory note from the editor.
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They are short and succinct but provide little of historiographical interest. There are indeed a number of minor slips and inaccuracies. G.A. Robinson was not a Presbyterian missionary, William Lanney's name is spelled wrongly, it did not take eight months to sail to England in the 1830s, the Protectorate was not initiated in 1836, Western Australia did receive convict labour. The standard of editing is below what should be expected from an established publisher. There is inconsistency in the use of capital 'A' for Aborigines, in the use of Aborigines or Aboriginals. There is some confusion about the 1861 Select Committee on the Queensland Native Police. It is variously referred to as a Select Committee or a Royal Commission, either in 1861 or 1864. However the index is comprehensive and much better than those in comparable publications.

The book also contains more pictures — 27 plates — than any of the other documentary anthologies. While they are often interesting they seem to be culled from a limited number of collections and are often not directly related to the text. For instance a picture of Coranderrk residents of the 1870s faces a page containing Governor Hunter's despatches of 1797 and 1800. A survey of the pictures raises another question. The text is thoroughly Eurocentric in depicting white attitudes and policies. Yet the pictures are all of Aborigines: they are used as decorations, almost as exotica, rather than as illustrations of the text. Stone has put together a useful, if not distinguished, collection of documents, although I suspect that it is an example of a genre that is already a little dated.

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In recent years documentation on the life, death, religion, past history and other unique aspects relating to the Australian Aborigines has been prolific. This in turn has created a demand for bibliographic coverage. However, one immediate reaction to the publication of a bibliography of theses relating to the Aborigines is one of caution, as the approximately 700 theses included here could arguably be better covered from an information retrieval viewpoint as part of a wider listing.

It is now about ten years since the appearance of B.F. Craig's bibliographies (Arnhem Land peninsular region, 1966; Central Australia and Western Desert regions . . ., 1969; North-West-Central Queensland . . ., 1970). J. Greenway's Bibliography of the Australian Aborigines . . . covers the period to 1959. These works, however, do not include theses. Despite the Morris Miller Library list (Union list of higher degree theses in Australian University Libraries, 1965, supplements to 1974), total bibliographic coverage of theses in Australia in any field is not complete, and bibliographic research success is at times reliant on the grapevine of colleagues. Theses produced by Pass and Honours Bachelors' degree and Master's Qualifying candidates, are not included in the Morris Miller list, nor are many theses submitted to institutions outside of Australia. The value in this present catalogue of including all thesis-type material is great, as frequently such theses may represent the only work which has been done in certain fields. Other bibliographies and catalogues published in Australia also cannot be relied upon to cover theses. My own Bibliography of the Northern Territory aims to include relevant theses as fully as possible, but part 3, the one most directly concerned with the Aborigines, will not appear until 1979 or 1980.

Quite obviously the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is aware of this bibliographic gap, as they funded Dr. Coppell in the work of preparing the present
catalogue for publication. The coverage of this bibliography would appear to be the result of some depth of work, as it includes theses prepared for all levels of tertiary award. One particular feature is that known related published works of any given author are also listed, which can be of value to users without convenient access to or need of a copy of the original theses. Coverage of theses and similar works originating within Australia appears to be excellent. As regards 'world' coverage of theses it is extremely difficult both for the compiler to be certain of universality and for the reviewer to judge gaps in coverage. But, in the circumstances, the mere fact that citations for such a large group of theses have been gathered together in one volume is of itself a contribution of considerable value to the researcher. The text of the catalogue is in alphabetical author order, and is supplemented by a useful subject index, which includes names (with alternative spellings) of tribes and languages, and geographic regions. The text itself is clear and easy to read. Each entry gives details of author, title, thesis level, and when and to which institution it was presented. No advice as to any projected means of updating the catalogue is offered, and as the cutoff point is July 1976, the work is already beginning to date. For the present the A.I.A.S. Newsletter will serve as a de facto supplement, but over a longer period this has obvious disadvantages. The volume of writing on the Aborigines has now reached a stage where the ideal overall definitive bibliographic coverage of the field could be usefully divided on a subject basis. In view of the accessibility of theses to the experienced researcher, theses would be treated in such a listing as one form of documentation in such a wider listing, but in the meantime, as such a prospect is unlikely, this catalogue is extremely valuable to any reader or researcher in fields relating to the Aborigines. Hopefully a revised edition will appear in due course. This catalogue will also have its uses to the writers of these theses, as increased exposure of their work in an appropriate source could encourage the publication of some works of wider appeal or potential usage.

CAROL M. MILLS CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION


This essay is a narrative of the relations between Europeans and Aborigines from Cook's visit to the end of an attempt to conduct a mission for the Aborigines. The authors divide the subject into four sections: casual contacts (to 1842); war (1842-1859); economic and social relationships and mission work (1859-1897); and the Fraser Island Reserve (1897-1905). The essay has been carefully researched and is thoroughly documented. The authors seem to have been exhaustive in their quest and use of sources. This comprehensiveness is perhaps possible only with local studies and it therefore raises the question of what role local history should have in Aboriginal studies. It is not clear from this essay that its authors intended to contribute anything to the wider study of Aboriginal history, or to understanding the general problems of race relations and culture contact in Australia. The effort seems to have been directed more at recording the passing local scene than, say, looking at local variations of general processes. The absence of comparative comment or analysis is a disappointment in what is otherwise a well executed piece of research. For example the narrative of depredation and reprisal is interrupted in an unduly discreet way to suggest that 'European retaliation against Aborigines throughout south eastern Queensland, extending over many months, was massive,
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indiscriminate and unrelenting and nowhere does it seem that the response was so viciously unrestrained as in the regions of the Burnett, Wide Bay, and their hinterlands...’ (p. 57).

There should be no need to justify local history, but it is less likely to interest anyone but locals unless statements like these are made; but they must, in addition, be examined and supported. Every local historian thinks his area is ‘special’, but if the statement quoted above is true, then it must have more than local significance. Generations of white Australians have thought that the Aborigines do not have a history; that view has been superseded, whatever its numerical following. It now needs to be established whether the Aboriginal experience of Europeans was homogeneous, or whether there were important regional or social variations. If some areas were more violent than others, can the difference be explained?

A second historiographical problem is contained in the second half of the essay. The authors betray some ambivalence about the extent to which the Aborigines were adaptive or passive in their response during the post-violence period. The short answer would be that they were both, and the authors present evidence for both; but they are apt to see the situation in perhaps overly sympathetic terms as a combination of exploitation and rejection. The problem here is that since Evans and Walker claim that the Wide Bay region was more than usually violent, and that the violence stopped fairly suddenly in 1858, then how should one explain the very considerable amount of work done by Aboriginal employees for the settlers before 1858? (p.61). The Aboriginal response, and therefore the question of adaptation, appears to be more complex than the interpretation offered here allows.

A third historiographical problem implicit in this essay is the possibility of countering the inevitable Eurocentric bias of written sources, to attempt to write history from ‘the inside’. In the first half of the essay the authors make plausible attempts at such reconstruction, but the attempt is not sustained throughout. This problem is inherent in the sources, and not the fault of the authors, who are obviously aware of it. Perhaps European written sources contain biases which cannot be overcome in writing ‘inside’ history. These remarks are made not to denigrate local history, or this essay in particular. The answer to these problems is to be sought in more local history, not less. The time has come, however, for such studies to be done in a comparative, problem oriented framework.

The virtues of this essay, as well as its limitations, are those of local history: detailed information, close documentation and careful exposition. Aboriginal perceptions of Europeans, the nature and success of Aboriginal resistance to invasion, the arrogance and hostility of white townsfolk, the gross exploitation of Aboriginal labour, the contradictions of missions, the brutality of ill-conceived philanthropy, the futility of paternalism, official indifference once white lives and property were safe, are all there. One thing that is missing, however, is a location map: the only map is of Fraser Island and the details are not particularly relevant to the essay. To avoid the appearance of disjointed narrative and contrived argument the inclusion of a map of the Wide Bay region, with all relevant detail, is essential.

For readers wanting a relatively brief but authoritative account of a case study from first contact to indigenous pauperization or extinction, this essay meets a need. It is unfortunate that published in a series of Occasional Papers in Anthropology it might find a smaller audience than it deserves.

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'Taming the wilderness': the first decade of pastoral settlement in the Kennedy district. By Anne Allingham. Studies in North Queensland History No. 1, History Department, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville, 1977. Pp. xiv + 238. $3.50 plus postage.
We thoroughly enjoyed those days of wild romantic life, with our horses and our gun, swimming flooded rivers and the danger of being dragged under by undertows or swept under driftwood, and always the danger of being speared by some blackfellow ambushed under cover, so we had to be ready to protect ourselves and keep our powder dry. (Memoirs of Marmaduke Curr quoted p.179.)

Passages such as this carry the myth of the pioneering pastoral frontier in Australia from generation to generation. Examining the myth's reality, and the establishment of the pastoral industries vital to Australia's early development are challenges often ignored by Australian historians. As with the history of exploration the romantic aura itself acts as a barrier. It is, as Allingham puts it, a 'traditionally misrepresented, and latterly disregarded field, which is so fundamental to Australian history' (p.xiv). So it is a pleasure to see this book, a study of the pastoral frontier in the Kennedy District of North Queensland in the 1860s. The book is produced by the James Cook University as the first of their series Studies in North Queensland History, and is based on the writer's BA Honours thesis for the History Department of that University. It suggests a developing school of regional historians there; let us hope the series continues.

The Kennedy frontier of the 1860s was a 'hard frontier', pushing the bounds of sheep production far into the tropic north where climate, terrain and vigorous Aboriginal opposition to settlement all combined against the grazier, especially one who hoped to produce fine wool. The lesson that cattle were better suited to tropical climate, steep terrain and spear-grass country was imprinted by bitter experience. The depression of the late 1860s with the collapse of the wool industry reinforced the message, while the mining rush of the following decade added new dimensions to the Kennedy frontier and its problems. Allingham gives balanced coverage to the history of pastoral settlement in the Kennedy district ('this upside down, outlandish place') during its first decade, with the emphasis on social history. The writer is convinced that such studies are important, and as relevant to the mainstream Australian history as its politics, racial and class tensions:

... one suspects that squatting is considered by comparison to be irrelevant, predictable and somewhat unstimulating. Moreover the celebrated squatter of the earlier historical era is now seen as frontier tyrant, in the light of Aboriginal and frontier conflict studies. But in the interests of balanced history it is desirable to research anew the squatter; stereotype images require questioning, and the pastoral pioneer must be appreciated amidst the guiding and motivating forces of his era and also in all his complexity. ... I would urge as a further progression of current race relation studies, the integration of both Aboriginal and European research, with the ultimate aim of comprehensive frontier history (p.xi).

The study carries this aim of balanced coverage into effect. It also achieves even weighting of the minutiae of regional and local history and the wider issues to which they related. Throughout, the latter are kept in the reader's awareness, but they do not dominate. Critical judgment is displayed in discussion of the grand synthesising models, Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis and Russel Ward's mateship theories.

Allingham sees women and Aborigines as the 'silent parties' in the history of pastoral expansion. She does not explore the role of pioneer women in detail, but, drawing on the work of Brayshaw, Loos and Reynolds, she presents a clear summary of relations between pastoralists and Aborigines during the 1860s and early 1870s.
This chapter is of major interest for contact studies, as the Aborigines offered 'effective and intelligent resistance' to settlement in a guerilla campaign of unexpected violence. This campaign had decisive impact on the labour situation in, and development of, the area. Loos and Reynolds estimate that on the European side losses in the north Queensland conflict amounted to some 400 to 450 dead. If, as one observer commented, for every white man killed six 'blackfellows bite the dust' (p.158), Aboriginal losses must have been considerable. The situation was recognised as one of crisis but projected reform policies were rejected by a distant government and a solution was left to local expedient. Some pastoralists, such as Christison, Chatfield and Bode, successfully countered the situation with negotiation and experiments in co-operation. The majority, however, responded 'with lead' or by calling in the Native Police. The grim reality of the 'very jolly kind of life' (p.157) led by this body of troopers is neatly exposed by Allingham. In a perceptive and balanced account of a complex situation she indicates areas where the current models of culture-contact history need modification in the light of regional variation. Allingham also tries to assess 'both sides of the frontier', but her section on Aboriginal society is less satisfying than that on the settlers. References to 'stone age technology' (p.141) and to 'totally unknown' agriculture seem simplistic. Would those who are actively engaged in culture contact studies welcome the title 'revisionist historians' (p.139) reacting to 'tacit silence'?

In concluding, Allingham writes:

. . . In the long term perspective the influence of initial racial conflict has been suggested to have been tragic and pervasive; one wonders what the impact of the frontier has been, socially, politically and economically in the continuing affairs of Northern Queensland (p.221).

Allingham points to areas of regional research which might suggest answers to this question — studies of the bush worker, of pioneering women, of the North Queensland separation movement, of racial attitudes in the coastal towns of the north, and the history of the Flinders district and the Gulf country. Regional histories of this kind, well researched, clearly written and fully documented, investigating local history in its wider context, are important contributions to Australian history. They offer basic building blocks for significant synthesis. It is hoped that further studies follow in this series which has begun so well.

ISABEL MCBRYDE
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


For over thirty years, an Aboriginal community in the Pilbara region of Western Australia has shown considerable ingenuity and organizational innovation in its efforts to survive economically and yet retain a degree of group independence, to maintain significant components of Aboriginal culture, and develop new strategies to cope with the changing situation. The changes have been dramatic, and the Aborigines have been part of the drama, as the Pilbara altered from an isolated pastoral area, with many residual characteristics from its frontier and colonial background, to become a major focus for mining by the multinational companies, and an area dotted with new towns catering for suburban life-styles.

A strike of Aboriginal pastoral workers in 1946 under the guidance of Donald William McLeod, a local European contractor and mineral prospector, and the leadership of Aborigines Dooley Bin Bin, Kitchener, and Clancy McKenna not only challenged the then current low wage levels and meagre amenities for Aborigines on the stations, but also the authority and activities of the Native
Affairs Department which officially claimed to represent the interests of Aborigines. Another outcome was the emergence of the new Aboriginal community which aimed to obtain a pastoral station, not only for subsistence, but as a place for the formal education of the children and the retirement of the old people. Today, after a complicated series of events, the properties of Strelley and Yandeyarra are concrete evidence of these efforts.

The main economic activity of the group has been mining, although a diversity of other ventures such as the collection of pearl shell and buffel seed, as well as the hunting of kangaroos and goats for hides and meat have been some of their other work projects. In mining, the Aborigines used a modification of the traditional wooden dish, the yandy, to separate minerals of different specific gravity. This innovation not only enabled successful competition with European miners on alluvial fields, but was a technology ideally suited to the situation. A yandy could be cheaply constructed from sheet iron, was easily transported, fitted existing Aboriginal skills, and was labour intensive. Further, women were most expert in its use, and so became again an integral part of the Aboriginal workforce. As a postscript, however, it is worth noting that in the late 1970s these Aborigines have been virtually forced out of mining by the large claims and competition from the international mining companies.

In the documentary novel, The black Eureka, Max Brown gives a detailed portrayal of the organization of the strike in the 1940s, through to the group's mining successes and the acquisition of Yandeyarra pastoral station in the 1950s. In addition we get two other glimpses of the movement, first in 1953 when Max Brown joined the group at Yandeyarra. This gives some indication of the Aborigines forging a workable organization at a time when there was a rapid influx of new members, including a small gathering of idealistic Europeans. The novel touches on the ambivalence and tensions as well as the appreciative cooperation engendered in the situation. A hint of the coming financial difficulties for the group and the ensuing hardship is also evident. The second brief view is from 1960, when the group went through a leadership crisis which led to a split in the movement, a schism which remains to this day, and is evident in the separate settlements of Strelley and Yandeyarra. The division of the book into three parts reflects Max Brown's two visits to the group, along with his collection of information on the earlier strike period. The central and more lengthy section covers Max Brown's two visits to the group, along with his collection of information on the earlier strike period. The central and more lengthy section covers Max Brown's two visits to the group, along with his collection of information on the earlier strike period. The central and more lengthy section covers Max Brown's two visits to the group, along with his collection of information on the earlier strike period.

The style of writing in this part is more formal and less personal than in the other sections, as the author stands once removed from his subject, more in the manner of the historian. In the other sections, the detailed reporting of events and description of cultural items is maintained but is not as fully placed in a broad social context. We see more of Brown, the participant observer with his attitudes and foibles, in social relationship with other participants. This is a type of reporting rarely used by social scientists. Bland academic reporting can be more protective of authors, but often less useful for readers in assessing the perspectives, assumptions, and interpretive models used by the writers. In this novel we are left in no doubt about the author's sympathy with the strikers, or his interpretation of wider political events in terms of class conflict. Even so, readers may find the glimpses of the Aboriginal groups' micro-politics in the early and final sections of the book more difficult to appreciate.

The book is certainly an important contribution to the history of race relations in Australia, yet a few of the generalisations are misleading. The claim that it was the first organised initiative by Aborigines in Australian history, or even the inference that it was the first Aboriginal strike, cannot be substantiated. Admittedly, the magnitude of the strike organisation in the Pilbara, and its ramification beyond
the district to influence State politics and legislation, as well as the publicity gained both nationally and internationally, makes it a spectacular occurrence. However, we need to remain aware of the long series of conflicts which preceded the strike, some of which are actually mentioned in *The black Eureka*. Also mentioned is an earlier strike over food supplied to the Aborigines of De Grey station. Comparable disputes over wages have been reported from Anna Plains farther up the coast, as well as from other States.

How *The black Eureka* will fare judged in terms of current literary aesthetics is difficult to estimate, in that documentary novels tread the tightrope between adequate historical reporting and literary creativity. I suspect that the general reader without any special interest in social movements, social conflict, or Aboriginal history may at times find the detail somewhat overwhelming: others will commend such detail as an indication of committed scholarship. For myself, I found the strike history impressive, and the descriptions contained in the other two parts certainly complementary to other sources dealing with the social movement of the Pilbara Aborigines.

JOHN WILSON

PERTH, W.A.


*Wacvie* is the semi-fictionalised biography of the author's father. *Wacvie* Mussingkon was, she tells us, kidnapped from the New Hebridean island of Ambrym in 1883 and brought to slave on Queensland sugar plantations. The story tells of fear and discomfort on the voyage to the colony, and then of hard labour, bad food, harsh punishment and tight social restrictions on the plantations. *Wacvie* escaped in 1897 and settled in the Tweed district of northern N.S.W. He was one of the approximately sixteen hundred Melanesians who were allowed for humanitarian reasons to remain in Australia when the bulk of their countrymen were repatriated as part of the White Australia Policy from 1907. It is a larger-than-life, morally simplistic tale indicting white Australia for its participation in the system of indentured Pacific Island labour.

Such a picture is at variance with the current scholarly interpretation of the labour trade as a two-way enterprise, if not in its early years then from the 1880s, in which Melanesians participated with a knowledge of the rewards and the dangers of such involvement. This depiction of an active and intelligent role is not welcomed by many Australian-born descendants of the migrants and some critics of our racist past: the 'blackbirding' epithets are a handy stick with which to beat a blunt Australian conscience. Yet whether or not the recruits came willingly does not alter the fact that in colonial society they were an exploitable servile labour force. Both supporters and opponents of the indenture system accepted their (relative) cheapness and inferior position; the debate centred on whether Queensland's tropical development could or should regardless dispense with their services. The 'kanakas' were expendable field workers, not permanent settlers.

*Wacvie* records the cruelties and indignities to which Islanders were subjected: the occurrence of whippings, beatings, sexual exploitation, the staggeringly high mortality in comparison to the white population. But Ms Bandler, in her crusade, overstates the case. For example, her father tells us that the recruits were forbidden outlets such as fishing, singing, dancing, holding feasts, cultivating small gardens of their own. This is contradicted in the numerous accounts by contemporary observers of such leisure activities; nor would it be sensible policy in terms of a stable and efficient labour force.

Since *Wacvie* is a novel, it cannot be overly criticised for its historical inaccuracies.
As part of an emerging black literature, and as the first work by an Australian-born descendant of the Melanesian recruits, its place is assured. To this reviewer, however, it is something of a disappointment. In describing the life of a black man in Australia, the emphasis is heavily on the injustices done to him and there are only occasional glimpses of the ‘other side’, of how he reacted to such treatment and managed to carve a niche for himself and his family in a new country. Wacvie Mussingkon was an independent, proud Melanesian, a church and community leader respected alike by Islanders and Europeans in the district. ‘The call of village life had faded; home was now here’ (p.113). If we had been given more insights into this process of adaptation, Wacvie might have made a unique contribution. White Australia is only slowly being drawn into an awareness of the vibrant and functioning sub-cultures in its midst.

PATRICIA MERCER  AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


I am eleven years old and now live in Canberra, but for eighteen months in 1976-77 I lived in the Northern Territory with my mother and brother who is two years younger. Most of the time we were at Warrabri which is an Aboriginal Settlement 375 km. north of Alice Springs. We travelled around a lot because my mother was doing research with Aboriginal women. I visited lots of places and went to school with Aboriginal children at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Warrabri. At Warrabri people speak Warlipiri, Warramunga, Kaiditj and Alyawarra. My teacher, Alice Naparula Nelson, taught us Warlpiri. She showed me how to write Warlpiri sentences. I think it is important for Aboriginal children to be able to write their own stories for themselves in their own language. It is also important that children can write stories for whites to read in English because that way they will learn something of the Aboriginal ways.

Both these books tell about how Aborigines feel about themselves. They make whites think about the beauty of the Aboriginal world and some of the changes which have taken place in the last two hundred years. It is very hard to understand about the Dreamtime which was a long time ago but is still in people now. Some whites think it is just dreams, like make-up things. In some books you can buy about Aborigines, the stories make fun of their way of life. People think it is funny or dirty to eat snakes and lizards. They make the differences sound very big between us. Really there is very little difference because Aboriginal children love to hear stories too. The best ones are the stories about themselves. The Aboriginal children’s history of Australia is a book which Aboriginal children like because they wrote it and did the illustrations. Some of my favourite authors are in both these books. Geraldine Kerinaia, Irene Lama Lama, Dianna Merrkiyawuy, Ancilla Munkara, Dorothy Nurra and Sarah Wolmbay have stories and paintings in both.

The story of Kwork Kwork tells the way Aboriginal people think of the way the world was made. We sometimes learn about God at school but we all have different ideas and it is good to know what Aboriginal children learn from their parents. ‘Blue tongue lizard and the taipan’ is about when men and women were animals. This is a bit hard for whites to understand but Aboriginal children know what it is about and the drawings in the book help us to see it too. ‘The boy who became the white cockatoo’ tells Aboriginal children that they should obey their
elders and the law. It also helps warn whites that they should be careful about laws and not laugh at them. 'The river which was made from tears', illustrated by Dianna Merriyawuy, is also in *The Aboriginal children's history of Australia* but the story is told in a slightly different way. It is an important story. All these stories in *Kw ork Kw ork* come from the Top End (North section of N.T.) and Queensland and, like stories from the Centre, are told over and over again. *Kw ork Kw ork* is easy to read because I can find out who wrote the stories and did the illustrations, in the table of contents. The print is big and clear and that is important for children who are reading English but speaking another language at home.

I like *The Aboriginal children's history of Australia* best of all the books which deal with Aboriginal stories because you can really tell it has been written by Aboriginal children. They use skin names (sub-sections) and it has the rhythm of English as Aboriginal children speak it at school and at home. Other Aboriginal children will know when they read these stories that they were written by other Aborigines. One problem with this book is working out who wrote the stories. There is no real table of contents, only a list of contributors and the artist's name beside the paintings. This collection of stories has more to do with real problems and the life on settlements, missions, and cattle stations now. Some of these things children see clearer than grown-ups. They tell about grog fights and people who have lost their country. The stories of mining tell how we have ruined the countryside. Maybe people will have second thoughts about destroying the country when they read these stories. My favourite story is about Elkedra Station as told by Doreen Spratt (p.147) because I have also enjoyed that part of the country and understand a little bit about how she feels:

This is our land. It goes back, a long way back, into the Dreamtime, into the land of our Dreaming. We made our camp here, and now all that is left of our presence are the ashes and the bones of the dead animals the young men had killed. Soon even our footprints will be carried away by the wind.

The stories in this history are told by proud people. These two books can be read by children now and in the future perhaps we will have more stories by Aboriginal people.

**GENEVIEVE BELL**

**TURNER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**BOOKS RECEIVED**

*Aboriginal and Islander Identity*, January, April, July 1977. Aboriginal Publications Foundation Inc., 971 Wellington St., West Perth, W.A. 6005. Published quarterly, annual subscription including postage $6, $8 overseas.


*Aboriginals of Australia: a record of their fast-vanishing traditional way of life, featuring over 90 full-colour photographs.* By Douglass Baglin and Barbara Mullins.
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1978 2:2


The hairy man of South Eastern Australia. By Graham C. Joyner. Available from the author, P.O. Box 253, Kingston, A.C.T. 2604. Pp. iv + 27. $5.40 including postage. [A collection of 29 documents from the Monaro and South Coast region relating to alleged sightings of 'the hairy man', variously described as a strange animal, gorilla, ape or huge monkey.]

CURRENT RESEARCH

This listing summarises replies to a letter requesting details of current research on Aboriginal history sent to Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education and interested individuals. It is hoped that publication of this incomplete initial listing will encourage others to provide details of their research. A comprehensive listing of current research would prevent duplication of projects and enable scholars to see at a glance where work is being done and where further research should be directed. Corrections, additions and deletions should be sent to: Jim Urry, Aboriginal History, c/- Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, The Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.

AUSTRALIA (general)

Browne, Richard. Aboriginal boxers from 1930 to the present; Aborigines in sport generally. (History Dept., La Trobe University).

Burke, Catherine. Aborigines as depicted by whites in films and photographs; Ph.D. research. (Dept. of General Studies, University of New South Wales).

Donaldson, Tamsin. Forms of oral literature (N.S.W. and elsewhere). (Dept. of Linguistics, Australian National University).


CURRENT RESEARCH

Markus, Andrew. Aborigines and the labour movement, 1890-1970; Judge Wells and the rule of law; Jimmy Governor: fact and fiction; evolution of Aboriginal protest movement. (School of Business and Liberal Studies, Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.).

Reynolds, Henry. Race relations between whites and Aborigines. (Dept. of History, James Cook University).

Walsh, Graham. 'King' plates awarded to Aborigines; their history, distribution, use etc.; private research. (P.O Box 132, Injune, Qld.).

White, Isabel. Daisy Bates and the Western Australian Aborigines; field research and study of National Library collections. (20 Blackbutt Street, O'Connor, A.C.T.).

NEW SOUTH WALES


Hagan, J. Social history of Aborigines on the far south coast of N.S.W. (History Dept., University of Wollongong).

Hercus, Luise. Languages of the far north-west of N.S.W. (South Asian and Buddhist Studies, Australian National University).

McCarthy, F.D. History of the Aborigines in the Sydney/Hawkesbury area from first contact. (10 Tycannah Road, Northbridge, N.S.W.).

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Bell, Diane. Oral histories and anthropological research; the ritual life of Warlpiri, Kaiditj and Alyawarra women of Warrabri settlement, nearby cattle stations and homeland centres. (Prehistory & Anthropology, S.G.S., Australian National University).


Cole, Keith. History of Aborigines in Arnhem Land with particular reference to interaction with missionaries; private research. (Diocesan Registry, Bendigo, Vic.).

Jones, Rhys. History of groups in northern Arnhem Land, in association with ethno-archaeological research; outstation movements. (Dept. of Prehistory, R.S.Pac.S., Australian National University).

Larbalestier, Jan. Aborigines and the pastoral industry in the N.T. with particular reference to the role of women and Elsey Station and surrounding area. (School of Behavioural Sciences, Macquarie University, North Ryde, N.S.W.).

McGrath, Ann. Aboriginal employment on cattle stations 1911-39 with special reference to Aboriginal adaptation, relations with whites and changes in cultural
norms; M.A. research (La Trobe University and N.A.R.U., P.O. Box 39448, Winnellie, N.T.).

Merlan, Francesca. Aborigines and Europeans with particular reference to Elsey Station, Beswick Reserve and surrounding areas; linguistic research. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Acton House, A.C.T.).

Read, Jay and Peter. Collecting oral history from Aborigines and whites in English; research in connection with school project books for N.T. Education Department. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Acton House, A.C.T.).

Walsh, Michael. Early recorded language material with particular reference to Port Keats area languages and Larakiya and other Darwin area languages. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Acton House, A.C.T.).


Zorc, David. Yolngu language groups, their history and relationships. (School of Australian Linguistics, Darwin Community College, Batchelor, N.T.).

QUEENSLAND

Alpher, Barry. Cape York Aborigines, particularly Yir-Yoront; oral history and life histories through the collection of linguistic texts. (6818 Wilson Lane, Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.A., 20034).


Chase, Athol. Cape York Aborigines; social anthropological research with special emphasis on Lockhart area; oral history and literature sources. (School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University, Nathan, Qld.).

Griffin, Helga. Early Townsville with reference to Aborigines; for BA Hons. (Dept. of History, James Cook University).

Haviland, John. Gugu-Yimidirr and missionary activity at Hope Vale Mission; social anthropology and linguistic research. (Dept. of Anthropology, R.S.Pac.S Australian National University).

Kirkman, Noreen. European/Chinese/Aboriginal relations on the Palmer River Gold fields; for BA Hons. (Dept. of History, James Cook University).

Moore, Clive. Pacific Islanders in the Mackay district with reference to their relations with Aborigines; for Ph.D. (Dept. of History, James Cook University).

Wegner, Janice. History of Etheridge Shire with reference to Aborigines and race relations; for BA Hons. (Dept. of History, James Cook University).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Austin, Peter. Diyari and Dirari near Lake Eyre; linguistic research involving use of
CURRENT RESEARCH

Lutheran archives. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).

Hercus, Luise. Languages and mythology of the Lake Eyre region. (Buddhist and South Asian Studies, Australian National University).

Pretty, Graeme L. Ethnohistory in association with Roonka Flat, Lower Murray Valley excavations. (South Australian Museum).

Satterthwait, L.D. Traditional Aboriginal methods of food procurement involving search of literature of early contact period. (South Australian Museum).

Summers, John. Missions and government settlements in S.A.; the Rocket Range and bomb testing in central Australia and their effects on Aborigines. (School of Social Sciences, Flinders University).

TASMANIA

Jones, Rhys. Ethnohistory; early accounts of Tasmanians with particular reference to French explorers; archaeological and prehistory research. (Dept. of Prehistory, R.S.Pac.S., Australian National University).

Plomley, N.J.B. History of Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement; observations on the Tasmanian Aborigines made by D'Entrecasteaux and Baudin expeditions; private research. (P.O. Box 1276, Launceston).

Ryan, Lyndall. Part Aborigines in the Bass Strait. (School of Humanities, Griffith University, Nathan, Qld.).

Stockton, Jim. Ethnohistorical research in relation to archaeological investigations. (Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, Hobart).

VICTORIA


Barwick, Diane. Victorian Aborigines from contact to the present day; government policy; life histories. (45 Waite St., Farrer, A.C.T. 2607).


Critchett, Jan. History of the Framlingham and Lake Condah Mission Stations, 1860-1940; research for MA, Melbourne University. (Teacher Education Faculty, Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education, Vic.).

Gardner, Peter D. Aboriginal/white relations in Gippsland with special reference to violent conflict. Private research. (C/- P.O. Ensay, Vic.).

Victoria Archaeological Survey. Ethnohistorical research into many topics associated with archaeological investigations in the State. (Dr Peter Coutts, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic.).
AWENLING, Marian. Editing a social history of Western Australia which will include items on white/Aboriginal relations. (Dept. of History, University of Western Australia).

Christensen, W. Social organisation of Aborigines in Kalgooerie and the Eastern Goldfields since the 1930s; research for MA. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).

Gray, D. Social change in the Pilbara in association with research into 'traditional' Aboriginal medicine; research for MA. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).

Green, Neville. History of Forrest River mission; the 1926 Kimberley massacre. (Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley, W.A.).

Hallam, Sylvia J. Ethnoarchaeology of the southwest of W.A. particularly in the Perth metropolitan area. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).


Palmer, Kingsley. Oral tradition and social change in the Pilbara region; research for Ph.D. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).

Shaw, Bruce. Culture contact in the East Kimberley area with special reference to life histories collected through oral history research. (Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, Darwin Community College, Batchelor, N.T.).

Stannage, C.T. Editing a general history of Western Australia with contributions concerning Aborigines; researching history of Perth with Aboriginal concerns. (Dept. of History, R.S.S.S., Australian National University).

Stanton, J.E. Aborigines in the Northeastern Goldfields; Mt. Margaret Mission 1893 onwards; research for Ph.D. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).


Woenne, S.T. Royal Commissions set up to investigate Aboriginal Affairs in W.A. (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Western Australia).
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Manuscripts must be typewritten, double-spaced and with ample margins to allow for editorial marking. Submit ribbon copy but keep a carbon. Footnotes should be as brief as possible, typed on a separate sheet and numbered consecutively throughout the paper. A short form of citation should be used for references to literature (for examples see current issue). The bibliography, on a separate page, should show the author's name and full publication details as given on the title page of the work, listed alphabetically by author and chronologically for each author. Tables and maps should be submitted in final form (except for size), on separate sheets, numbered consecutively and given headings. Photographs for illustrations should be 6 x 4 glossy prints, numbered on the back, and accompanied by a list of captions and photographic credits.

Authors should follow the usage of Style manual for authors and printers of Australian government publications except for numbers: use numerals for all requiring more than two words (e.g. 105, five thousand). Express percentages as: 45 per cent.

Footnote style:

1 Rowley 1971:107; see also Elkin 1965.

2 Colonial Secretary to Denison, 7 January 1850 (TSA CSO 24/93/3033).

Bibliography entries: author's first name or initials must appear as on title page; do not abbreviate to initials.


Tasmanian State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office. (TSA CSO 8/157/1166; TSA CSO 24/93/3033).


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