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# Register Report for Ababa

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## Generation 1

1. **Ababa-1.** She was born 1900. She died on 29 Jun 1986. Burial in Kulaluk cemetery.

Notes for Ababa:

General Notes:

Bowditch, Jim 1986 'Granny was part of living history in the Territory', Northern Territory News, July 5, p.4. "At her home in Kulaluk, Ms Topsy Secretary, sister to the late Bobby Secretary of the Larrakia tribe said she and Bobby were two of Granny Hubba-Ba's children. With tears trickling down her face Topsy said: 'I loved my mother, everyone did, people will come from far away because she was Queen of Darwin.'"

Also known as Harriet, Ruby or Ariyat (Gray 2000, p.38)

A/District Adviser, Welfare Branch, Jack Doolan reported in 1971 - "Harriet Ababa - M. Larrakia, F. Larrakia"

List of Wards, Govt Gazette, 1957 lists "Ruby, Ab name Ariyat, Adiba, tribe Larakia, F, born 1900

As a young woman Ruby Ariyat Ababa...was born around 1900 in Darwin. Her grand-daughter, Pauline Baban, was told by older Aboriginal people that her grandmother was promised in marriage to the Larrakia man, Tommy Lyons. However it was a broken promise and Ababa first married Jack Reid and had a child, Ruby, with him in May 1921. Ruby Reid was married to Ray Tiger and had two children, Lesley and Trevor Reid... As a young woman, Ruby Ababa worked at Government House. It was here that she met her second husband, Billy Shepherd. in 1924 Ababa gave birth to a girl, Molly Danganinba, on the beach below Government House. Molly's father, Billy Shepherd, and some other Larrakia women were present at the birth... (Wells 2001:79-80).

### Jack Reid.

Jack Reid and Ababa. They had 1 child.

2. i. **Ruby Reid.** She was born May 1921. She died Mar 1945 in Adelaide.

**Billy Shepherd** is the son of Nellie. He was born Abt. 1880. He died 1944.

Notes for Billy Shepherd:

General Notes:

"Good-night, All-About" by Hilda Abbot (NAC Q 305.89915 ABB) describes Billy as "a Malay-Aboriginal"

List of half-Castes in the Northern Territory" (Palmerston) lists "Willie, Male, 13 to 14 years; Mother Nellie; mother's tribe Larakia; reputed father's name Shepherd or Dr Morris; Remarks, Half cast Willie is employed by Mr Herbert, he appears to be well fed and clothed." (NTRS F790 A10441/1899) - See Wells 2001:99, endnote 1

In 1899 the Larrakia man, Billy Shepherd, was employed by Charles Herbert who was then a lawyer in town. In 1905 Justice Charles Herbert became the Government resident of the NT, a position he was to hold until 1910. When Justice Herbert took up residency at Government House, Billy Shepherd moved in with him and was employed there on general duties. After Herbert's stint as Govt Res he turned his attention to his pastoral station, Koolpinyah, located around the Adelaide River, Herbert went to PNG and his sons, Oscar and Lloyd, worked and managed Koolpinyah Station for most of their lives ... Billy Shepherd remained working at Govt House for the new Administrator, Dr J A Gilrith, who took up his duties in 1912 (Wells 2001:75-76).

in 1912, Billy Shepherd accompanied the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Baldwin Spencer and Administrator Gilruth on the first overland tour of the Northern Territory by motor car. (Wells 2001:77) Note WBD: See 1912 NT Times letter below.

Billy Shepherd had three wives, his first wife was a Larrakia woman named Ruby. They had two children, Ruby and Robert, but it was while giving birth to Robert that, his mother, Ruby passed

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away. Robert Shepherd married Maggie Gurrumundum, a Marathiel woman from Daly River and they had four children - Nellie, Bobby, Patsy and Pauline. Robert Shepherd had another daughter, Alice. Ruby had a daughter, Corine, who passed away at the tender age of eighteen. Bill was also married to the Larrakia woman Ruby Ariyat Ababa and she had one child Molly. Billy Shepherd's third wife was the Malak Malak woman Lucy Jarrngnin/Bredch who was also a worker at Government House. Robert passed away just before the war and his younger children moved in with their grandpa Billy and Granny Lucy at Government House (Wells 2001:77-78)

Letter to Northern Territory Times 5 April 1912

Mr Barry's Mission

Dear Sir,

The closing of Mr Barry's mission to half-caste and aboriginal children, and the probable departure of that gentleman from the Territory, call for more than passing notice, for the whole circumstances form a climax to the record of stupidity and ineffectiveness put up by that astonishing collection of "southern officials" known to fame as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs... Mr Barry's case is briefly this - There were in the mission seventeen children, of whom nine or ten were half-castes. They were being well fed, clothed, and taught, without any expense to the Government. Professor Spencer - usually at the most awkward of time of day, paid several visits of inspection, and finally announced that he was "not satisfied" ... [Mr Barry] has, inspired by love of the children, done what Professor Spencer and his staff, inspired by high salaries, can not do - he has won the confidence and affection of every child in his care... But it is the treatment of Billy Shepherd and his children that the genius of this Department finds its fullest expression. Here surely, is reached the "ultimate limit". Billy Shepherd is a half-caste, lawfully married (by the Registrar) to a half-caste. His three legitimate children were in Mr Barry's hands; they were being well-cared for, and Billy paid a small sum towards their keep. Billy protested, but protested in vain, against their removal, and afterwards presented himself at Professor Spencer's office. That gentleman, according to Billy's account, almost on the spot told him to "Clear out, you have nothing to do with them, we look after them." This defies comment. That neglected children may be taken from their parents is just, but that a lawful father who is willing to pay for the care of his children shall be denied all right to them - this passes the limit. One can only ask what insane authority vested in this gentleman a power more despotic than any exercised by the King of England. And what limit, if any, is there to his arbitrary exercise of the power?

Billy Shepherd and Ababa. They had 1 child.

3. i. **Molly Shepherd**. She was born 1942. Aboriginal name in Dangalinba (Wells 2001:79).

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## Generation 2

2. **Ruby Reid-2** (Ababa-1). She was born May 1921. She died Mar 1945 in Adelaide.

### **Ray Tiger**.

Notes for Ray Tiger:

General Notes:

See Samantha Wells 2001:79

Ray Tiger and Ruby Reid. They had 2 children.

4. i. **Trevor Reid**. He was born on 17 Apr 1942 in Alice Springs.
- ii. **Leslie Reid**. He was born on 03 Jan 1940 in Alice Springs. Occupation in Stockman.

# Register Report for Ababa

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## Generation 2

Notes for Leslie Reid:

General Notes:

Leslie fell off the back of a truck on the way back to the station from Katherine and died. His wife had died not long after they were married in the Retta Dixon Home in Bagot Road (Wells 2001:109-112)

Name of Child        Leslie Reid  
Mother                Ruby Reid H/C, deceased  
Father                European  
Date of Child's Birth 3. 1.1940 Katherine

3. **Molly Shepherd-2** (Ababa-1). She was born 1942. Aboriginal name in Danganinba (Wells 2001:79).

Notes for Molly Shepherd:

General Notes:

Molly was removed from her mother and father at a young age. The girls were kept separate from Aboriginal people of full descent and were not allowed to talk to anyone outside the Home, but ex-residents remember that Ababa used to wait near Charlie Talbot's house, near the playground, to see mMly. Molly's sister, Ruby, moved out of the Home to train as a nurse at the hospital but she also continued to visit Molly at the Home." (Wells 2001:90-91)

When she was only a small girl, an unknown man removed Molly from her mother while she was playing and placed her in the Darwin Half-Caste Home, next to the Kahlin Compound.. Molly's half sister, Ruby Reid, suffered the same fate. Ababa was able to maintain contact with both her daughters after their removal because she lived in a little humpy on the beach below the Kahlin Compound and was able to visit them at the Home and give them food and boiled lollies (Wells 2001:80).

**Bernie Baban** is the son of Donald Thomas Baban and Carolina Davey.

Bernie Baban and Molly Shepherd. They had 3 children.

7.    i.        **Pauline Baban.**
- ii.        **Donald Baban.**
- iii.       **Ronald Baban.**

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## Generation 3

4. **Trevor Reid-3** (Ruby Reid-2, Ababa-1). He was born on 17 Apr 1942 in Alice Springs.

Notes for Trevor Reid:

General Notes:

Sam Wells writes (2001:101): "Trevor's mother was Ruby Reid, the daughter of Ruby Ariyat Ababa and sister of Molly Dungalimba Baban. Ruby passed away in Adelaide in march 1945 when Trevor and his older brother, Leslie, were only small boys. Before she was evacuated to South Australia during the war, Ruby was educated at teh kahlin School and then went to train as a nurse at the old Darwin Hospital."

Trevor (Wells 2001:101): I was supposed to be born in alice Springs at the Bungalow - the Half-Caste Institute - that's what they called it on my birth certificate. I was born in 1942 and I had a brother [Leslie] who, my birth certificate said, was one-year-old. He could have been born in 1940 or 1941...Mum was born in 1921 and was at Kahlin Compound, i was only about three years

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### Generation 3

old when she died [in Adelaide]. My mother used to be called Ababa too, same as our grandmother. Ruby Ababa, my mother got her name and I gave my daughter that name, Ruby. just so you know where you come from. In 1945 me and my brother were some of the first to come back to that place called Retta Dixon, Aboriginal Inland Mission... I asked Granny Vicky Dashwood how I got the name Reid and she told me that old man Reid used to be her boyfriend but he made Granny pregnant so she told him that he could have her now! Jack Reid, I found out later he was a mounted policeman.

Name of Child Trevor Reid  
Mother Ruby Reid H/C, deceased  
Father European  
Date of Child's Birth 17. 4.1942 Alice Springs

5. **Carol Collins-3** (Molly Shepherd-2, Ababa-1).
6. **Irene Musk-3** (Molly Shepherd-2, Ababa-1).
7. **Pauline Baban-3** (Molly Shepherd-2, Ababa-1).

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### Generation 4

8. **Neil Reid-4** (Trevor Reid-3, Ruby Reid-2, Ababa-1).
9. **Ruby Reid-4** (Trevor Reid-3, Ruby Reid-2, Ababa-1).
10. **Peter Reid-4** (Trevor Reid-3, Ruby Reid-2, Ababa-1).
11. **Kenny Reid-4** (Trevor Reid-3, Ruby Reid-2, Ababa-1).
12. **John Collins-4** (Carol Collins-3, Molly Shepherd-2, Ababa-1).
13. **Noel Collins-4** (Carol Collins-3, Molly Shepherd-2, Ababa-1).