

Banyjima man Percy Tucker is mentioned in anthropology reports
Mulvaney (1984:27) writes:

Tindale (1974) has placed the boundary along the edge of the Hamersley plateau west of Marillana. However, through the advent of pastoralism in the region and assimilation of tribal groups little is left of the Bailgu as an identifiable group, and the Pandjima have taken responsibility for these areas (Brown 1983a, Clarke 1982).

Mulvaney (1984:31) concludes:

Probably than it was likely that the Fortescue Valley was utilised by small groups of people extending their range when produce was obtainable and alleviating resource pressure on the more permanently occupied areas within the Hamersley Plateau and Chichester Ranges. This mobility pattern may account for the ambiguities of traditional tribal ownership of this valley section and for the shared tribal areas of the groups which traditionally occupied this proportion of the Pilbara.

Tindale (1974):

Upper plateau of the Hamersley Range south of the Fortescue River; east to Weediwolli [sic] Creek near Marillana; south to Rocklea, on the upper branches of Turee Creek east to the Kunderong Range. In the later years under pressure from the Kurama, they moved eastward to Yandicoogina and the Ophthalmia Range forcing the Niabali eastward. They also shifted south to Turee and Prairie Downs driving out the Mandara tribe, now virtually extinct [‘Punduwana], a native place not yet located, was their main refuge water in very dry times; other refuges were in Dales Gorge and at [‘Mandjima] (Mungina Creek on maps). (Tindale 1974:255)

Two named dialects of Panyjima were originally spoken on the Hamersley Range... Pantikura dialect was spoken on the higher plateaus of the Hamersley Range, while the Mijaranypa dialect was spoken in lower areas. (Dench 1991:126)

Percy Tucker had died 18 months before Brown conducted his survey for the Great Northern Highway realignment (Brown 1983:6). Brown (1983:8) notes that according to Matt Herbert, the leasee of Juna Downs, the last Aboriginal person living or working in the survey area (on Juna Downs and Munjina Station) left the area in about 1960.

Brown consulted Herbert Parker who knew the general area around the Lake Gundawuna and Munjina claypan and gorge. He knew of Aboriginal sites in the gorge and wanted these recorded. Herbert did not know the meaning of *munjina*, which Brown (1983:9) suggests might mean ‘lots of death adders’. Brown (1983:10) states:

The migration patterns and breakdown of traditional culture following European contact makes it very difficult to establish the basis of authority for any ceremonial ‘caretakers; in the area under investigation. Berndt (1979:5) sums the situation up in the following terms:

Roughly south of the Fortescue, the traditional culture of people who are the remaining members of local language groups or ‘tribes’ is no longer a living reality. From there, south to the Murchison, only isolated aspects have survived.

In the present situation, there seems to be no descendants of specific ‘owners’ of, or of local descent groups from, this area of land. Percy Tucker seemed to have the strongest claim in this regard.

Palmer also interviewed Percy Tucker who he described as a Banyjima man whose mother was a Banyjima woman with spiritual associations with a rockhole some distance east from Packsaddle (Brown 1983:6). Brown quotes Palmer (1980:21) who said that Percy was born on Marillana station and grew up on Mulga Downs. He worked as a Government dogger over a wide area of the Hamersley Ranges. His father was Banyjima with spiritual association with a hill north of Packsaddle called Wiriwirbi. Both his father's mother and father's father were Banyjima from the Dales Gorge area. Palmer (1980:21) continues:

Percy's [mother] was Bandjima, born on Juna Downs while his [mother's father] was Inawunga and his [mother's mother] a Bandjima probably from upper Turee. His [father] was a Bandjima who came from the Packsaddle area, and both his [father's mother] and [father's father] were Bandjima from the Dales Gorge area.

Percy Tucker described two sites to Palmer:

Djiniri. An old yard, east from the lake Gundawuna approximately 24 kilometres, where there is an old mine for ochre (*wilgi*). The creek that flows close by is called Bibaninya, and north of this creek is a rock-hole and spring called Gumanunya... A short distance from the lake, north-east, where there is a large cave which faces north. This is a *dalu* or increase site for wild honey (Palmer 1980:22).

Palmer also spoke to Herbert Parker and Paddy Long, who he described as a Palyku man who was born close to Mulga Downs and worked at Juna Downs, Roy Hill and Punda but mainly at Marillana (Palmer 1980:28). Chris Clarke conducted an ethnographic survey for the Yandicoogina and Weeli Wolli Creek area and noted that the Banyjima and Nyiyaparli interests were in the boundary region of the Weeli Wolli. He conducted a number of Banyjima people in Onslow and noted (Clarke 1980:9): 'Herbert Parker and his brothers were regarded as the appropriate informants. The survey area (Yandicoogina and Weeli Wolli Creek area) was Herbert's grandfather's country, and Herbert had been taken there as a child.' David Stock also told Brown in 1983 (page 8) that Herbert knew more about the highway survey area. A rockshelter known as Billirribinna in Munjina Gorge was used as a camping place and an Aboriginal woman had been born there (Brown and Mulvaney 1983b:8).

Bindon and Lofgren (1982:124) suggest that the concentration of walled rockshelters around the 'Area C' mining area near Packsaddle Ridge suggests 'that at some stage in the prehistory of this area, large numbers of people gathered to participate in ceremonies.' Brown and Mulvaney (1983b:6) describe the Packsaddle area as 'a "divide" (watershed) with water courses draining north and east to the Fortescue River and south and west to the Ashburton River.'

In May 1983 a trip was made to the Hamersley Range with three Aboriginal people from Onslow. They are Herbert Parker (Pilbara Representative, National Aboriginal Conference), his brother Wobby Parker and Brian Tucker. Herbert Parker is 73 years of age and Wobby Parker is 66 years of age. Wobby Parker was born near the old Munjina homestead. Both men are of Pandjima descent. Both worked on Mulga Downs, Juna Downs and Mount Bruce Stations prior to the Second World War. During that time they worked at the Yampire Gorge asbestos mine and following this moved to work on station in the west Pilbara (Ashburton Downs, Rocklea, Nanutarra). Brian Tucker is 20 years of age and of Pandjima descent. His father (now deceased) had extensive knowledge of the Hamersley ranges and his immediate ancestors belonged to the central Hamersley Plateau (Palmer 1979:21-22, cited in Brown and Mulvaney 1983b:11)

My father's father was *Wirrilimarra* (Bob Tucker). My father was *Pilyangkanpangu* (Jacob Tucker). [Ngatharntu mayali *Wirrilimarra*. Ngatharnta mama *Pilyangkanpangu*]
My uncle was *Kutiya-layi* [*Kutiya-layi* ngatharntu yumini]
My name, with these two fella, is *Karlayurangu* [Ngatha-rlayi yini, niyakutharla pantiku *Karlayurangu*]
These ones, they are the gang, the boss for the Hamersley Range. [Niyajirri-mpa marntiyarrangara nhanguyu niyangkaku marntakaku Karijinilaku, maatha].
All of these Marntiyarrangara of this name – my grandfather, Herbert Parker's grandfather, the father belong to them, my father, my uncle [Jurlu-layi, jurlu-rla marntiyarrangara nyiya yini, *Wirrilimarra*, *Pirtupiri*, *Marntunha*, *Pilyangkanpangu*, *Pirtanganpangu*],
In this hill, on the top of the Hamersley Range, they were the boss of what's left behind, us little fellas [Niyangka marntaka pirturula Karijinila pantiku maatha ngajupantharriku kupijarriku].
Now we are the boss. We took over from the oldfellas. [Ngajupantharri-rru Kupijarri-nguru maatha pantiku pirturku niyayau marntayu Karijiniku Kuwarrila maatha] (Dench 1980).¹

'I was born and reared up on Mulga downs. Mulga Downs is my cousin Alec Tuckers country. It is my son Greg's country too. It has been handed to them through Aboriginal law. They know all about that country through the old people. I have some country at Mulga Downs through my grandfather but it is not really my place to talk about it. Alec has more right to talk about it. It is my spirit country. My mother and father and sons my children are buried at Mulga Downs. I stayed there for years and years. I worked there for old George Hancock. He was a good boss. He understood when we needed to go away for meetings and ceremonies. He was Lang Hancock's father. We all knew Lang Hancock as a boy ... We had a law ground at Mulga Downs. We made a new law ground at Wittenoom. Why can't we go back to Mulga Downs? I would like to go there. No one tells me why. And that country belongs to Alec and Greg. That belongs to them law way. I feel satisfied about that. We had to leave Wittenoom too. I can't go back there. Why? I would like to go back there' (ALS 1984).²

15 October, 1958, Lindsay Tucker found employment at Mulga Downs Station where his mother is working (Commissioner)

21 October 1949 Mr Barrett-Lennard said the station would pay for Tommy's plane fare to and from Perth and meet all expenses during his stay to visit his son Lindsay at the Deaf and Dumb School in Mosman Park. He would be able to stay at the Police stables. 'At present Tommy is engaged in the droving of cattle from Boolalee to Onslow and Mr Barrett-Lennard thought he would be ready to leave Onslow after the 8th November, 1949.

Wittenoom Cemetery records: Egypt Tucker aged 57 died in District Hospital, Tom Price on 19 March 1972, buried on 23 March.

Clerk of Courts to Department of Native Welfare - Geoffrey Long received Certificate of Citizenship at Wittenoom on 26 September 1966. 'The children Gregory Long and Archy Long were included on the certificate.'

On May 5, 1967 application for Social Services by Blanche Long born 1-7-1923 at Tablelands? of 1 Zero Avenue Wittenoom with sons Archie 3-4-54 and Gregory 1-7-52.

I am a station native born at Mulga Downs Station via Roebourne. I belong to the Punjamah tribe, and I am the leader of my people. My woman is named 'Blanche' she is only a young girl; I have had her since 1937; couple of years before the war broke out. When I was only young Mr William Pead of Cossack and Roebourne brought me up. My woman Blanche has run away from me and went with other men on two occasions. She first went with a boy from Roy Hill for one night in 1946. I went after her and brought her back. Towards the end of 1946 she run away with a boy

¹ Transcript of interview with Percy Tucker recorded by Alan Dench at Onslow Nhuwala Centre, 19 June 1980.

² Statement given to Sandy Toussaint by Blanche Tucker in Roebourne, 1984.

name They were living together at Mount Florance Station. At a Meeting in March of this year at Mulga Downs station, I had a bit of a fight with and 'Blanche had to come back to me. We stayed at Mulga Downs for some weeks because my little girl was sick; when she died about the middle of April 1947, I started to go back to Juno Downs Station with Blanche. Blanche did not want to go home. When we reached the windmill about six miles from Mulga Downs station, Blanche, who was riding a horse tried to run away. I chased her and caught her and brought her back to the windmill. It was then about sundown and we had a bit of a fight, I had a piece of mulga stick and was hitting Blanche across the legs. I was not hitting her very hard. I do not know how the hole came in her knee, it must have been caused by small point on the stick. We both rode our horses...

References:

Brown, S H and K Mulvaney 1983a *A Survey For Aboriginal Archaeological Sites Relating To A Part Of, And Some Associated Works On, The Perth – Darwin National Highway*. Prepared for the Main Roads Department

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