



CHRIS JACKAMARRA

I was born in 1947 at Carrolup Mission down near Katanning. My mother is Cella Doris and she was born in 1932 under a mulga tree out at Mulga Downs station north of Mt Tom Price in the Pilbara. My father's name was Joseph Robert Jackamarra, everyone used to call him Joe-bob and a few other blokes called him Two-bob, but the date of his birthday, I wouldn't have a clue. He was born in the Toodyay area. I was the only child between Joe and Cella, but Mum had ten others besides myself and Dad had another two as well.

Any child in them years that had white blood were all put in missions or institutions. That was the law in them days. Mum got shipped down to Perth after the police came to the station looking for any half caste kids, that's what they called them in those days. They'd do the rounds of each station looking for half caste kids and round them up to put them in institutions or missions. Mum was trucked to Roebourne in a cattle truck. She was held in the cattle yards near the wharf there with her cousin Minette Doris. Then she was put in Moore River Native Settlement. She was about nine years old at the time and couldn't speak a word of English.

My father experienced institutionalised life too. The same thing happened to him, the police come around looking for halfcaste kids and picked them up all through Toodyay and put them in Moore River. Mum and Dad grew up together there and they more or less fell for each other. They run away together a few times but the police kept taking them back. My father was fair like I am, but my mother was a little bit darker and the Protector of Aborigines at that time was A.O. Neville and he said they weren't compatible. I assume it was because of their different skin colour. Mum and Dad defied him, they rebelled like any teenager does.



Chris' mother, Cella Doris at about seven years old, just before she was taken away and put into Moore River Native Settlement. Cella's mother Gertie and her aunty at Mulga Downs Station. c.1939

Photograph courtesy:
Chris Jackamarra



A young Cella Doris (Chris' mother) as a young girl at Mogumber Mission - the Moore River Native Settlement. c.1943/44

Photograph courtesy:
Chris Jackamarra



Chris at about 12 months old with his mother, Cella Doris in the grounds of Queens Gardens, Perth. 1948

Photograph courtesy:
Nadine Robinson