

CHAPTER THREE

Locating the fringe.

3.1 Introduction

In the first chapter I discussed differences between ‘cultural’ and ‘political’ approaches to Aboriginal studies. One approach emphasises a social domain which functions parallel to the wider socio-economic world, while the other emphasises the dialectic engendered when an indigenous society is encapsulated within the dominant Australian socio-economic system. While Tonkinson (1999:134) suggests that the two theoretical frameworks are ‘closely intertwined’, the differences are typified in the contrasting analyses of Aboriginal society in an urban environment by Basil Sansom (1980a) and Gillian Cowlishaw (1988).

In this chapter I include the role of the anthropologist, the selection of a study topic and the ‘finding’ of a field site as evidence of interconnections between fringe dwellers and the wider community. I suggest that the anthropologist is required to be a ‘committed witness’, rather than an ‘invisible observer’, whose ‘writing up’ of fieldwork cannot be separated from the struggle of fringe dwellers for space. Drawing upon my past experience in the Darwin fringe dwellers’ struggle, I trace the connections between my primary fieldwork site at Fish Camp and the continuing struggle for space by homeless Aboriginal campers. I examine how media representations ended any illusion of a bounded field and confirmed the preparedness of fringe dwellers to resist against public and political opposition. Finally I give the example of a fringe camp where a process of ‘legitimation’ as an Aboriginal community has led to public support in the face of NT Government threats to ‘relocate’ the town camp.

3.2 Fieldwork and the ‘itinerant problem’

Aboriginal urban bush camps and the related issues associated with Aboriginal drinking in public places are recommended as topics requiring research in numerous reports and the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

(Johnston 1991:45). A parliamentary inquiry found ‘insufficient information about the numbers and needs of [itinerant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders]’ (HRSCATSIA 1992:169). In an earlier inquiry, Brandl (1981:102) submitted: ‘Very little research on the town camp exists... Before government and other agencies can plan effectively for the needs of town camps, more studies are undoubtedly needed’. An *NT News* editorial (March 11, 1996) stated: ‘Pulling down of makeshift camps and moving people on certainly doesn’t work. The itinerants just shift to another spot in town. Disliking them and their lifestyle won’t make them go away. Positive ideas are needed’.¹

These comments, combined with my previous experience of conditions for homeless Aboriginal people in Darwin, confirmed the relevance of my research topic. During my brief pre-fieldwork visit to Darwin in February 1996, a newspaper interview situated me in an earlier role as defender of Aboriginal rights under the heading ‘Bill is back to tell of battle’ (*NT News* March 7, 1996):

A rebellious school teacher left Perth in 1969 to become a hippy in Darwin. But on arrival Bill Day became immersed in the lives of Aborigines and a champion for land rights...

Mr Day, 56, who lived on Lameroo Beach for six months in 1969, returned to Darwin this week after more than 10 years in Perth to meet old friends and reminisce about a grand struggle.²

By the time of my return, the renewed campaign by the Northern Territory Government and Darwin City Council (DCC) against ‘the itinerants’ had driven the Aboriginal camps from the beaches and parks into hidden sites in bushland around the town which often received early morning visits from police or council inspectors. A petition of over 4000 signatures (Schulz 1996) had called for firmer action against unsociable behaviour in public places. ‘Aboriginal people are quite free to come into white communities, white people are not allowed into black communities, that’s a very distinct form of racism’, proclaimed the mayor, in one of his many contributions to the lively media debate (see Ween 1997:32).

On my return to The University of Western Australia I mailed a standard letter to all interest groups in Darwin. My letter ended:

Perhaps your interaction with the itinerants will provide a valuable information resource. Therefore I would like to work with your staff who have the most knowledge of the problems, sharing any statistics you have gathered, respecting your experience and taking heed of any difficulties you may anticipate.

Over twenty-two replies were received, including a helpful discussion on the telephone with the manager of a Darwin taxi company. The NT Tourist Commission expressed interest 'in supporting any possible solution to a problem which can have a negative image to visitors to the Northern Territory'. An alcohol awareness organisation wrote of 'an abundance of opinion but little factual data in this specific area'. The Darwin City Council replied in detail:

Together with the public places program Council operates in co-operation with a similar NT Police program, Council supports the recent initiative to establish a Social Issues Reference Group comprising representatives from Aboriginal organisations and NT and Local Governments. The initial meetings of those keen to establish such a group saw issues underlying much of the anti-social behaviour apparent in public places as a high priority for discussion aimed at generating long term solutions. The organisation of this reference group is auspiced by the NT Office of Aboriginal Development.³

One organisation admitted to a failing of many other social welfare agencies in Darwin. The NT Region of the Salvation Army (22 April, 1996) stated: 'We do have a work with itinerants, however we have very little to do with the indigenous population'. I decided that I would not feel comfortable being accepted into a fringe camp while working closely with institutions or organisations seeking a solution to 'the itinerant problem'. I share the doubts of Gupta and Ferguson (1996:9) about an anthropology where: 'the importance of particular topics as research priorities have

mostly been thinly disguised (if that) projections of the state's strategic and geopolitical priorities'. In the Northern Territory, research on 'the itinerant problem' could come under that category, as my replies indicated. Because of the heightened conflict between fringe camps and authorities from early in 1996 and my own contacts which developed as my fieldwork progressed, I did not pursue the possibilities suggested in the replies to my letters and in discussions during my pre-fieldwork visit to Darwin in March.

As the campaign of harassment intensified during 1996, I anticipated that getting to know people who are being constantly moved could be difficult. A police blitz was announced (*NT News* February 20, 1996) and DCC by-law 103 making it an offence to sleep in a public place between sunset and sunrise was enforced (*NT News* April 4, 1996). In the month of August 1996, when I began fieldwork, the media later reported that 398 people were warned for sleeping in a public place and 156 infringements for the same offence were issued (*Suburban* October 9, 1996). As a sole researcher using a bicycle as transport, I suspected that finding the shifting camps and retaining contact long enough to build a relationship of trust in a sprawling city like Darwin would be impossible.

Urban anthropologists recognise that the size and complexity of urban groups and localities often limits what can be accomplished by one fieldworker (Foster and Van Kemper 1988:96). In my preparation for participant observation, I had internalised much of what Gupta and Ferguson (1996:25) call 'the hegemonic "Malinowskian" practice of "the field"'. In this tradition, I sought a manageable field site where I could work with a particular group of, as yet unknown, fringe dwellers. However, as I argue in this thesis, not only is the methodological convenience of a bounded field destabilised by the tactical refusal of Aboriginal fringe dwellers to remain within defined borders, but the artificial drawing of boundaries to make fieldwork manageable potentially renders invisible many influences on fringe dwellers' lives.

Early in his fieldwork, Sansom (1980a:9) found that: 'given inter-mob competition, it was not possible to run with a variety of mobs'. I also found that without ties of kinship the fieldworker must show a degree of commitment to a particular group

before being accepted as part of a fringe mob, although the rivalry does not necessarily prevent some Aboriginal campers moving between groups. In a response similar to that noted by Benn (1994:7) in Arnhem Land communities, fringe campers appeared to take a possessive and jealous view of 'their balanda' (White person) as useful resource.

3.3 The role of the anthropologist

In this section, I defend my personal involvement in fringe dweller resistance during my fieldwork between 1996 and 1998 and suggest that my research and my thesis cannot be viewed as separate from the embattled position of fringe dwellers in Darwin. I was aware that research in an embattled environment might involve personal commitment to their cause, possible conflict with authorities and difficulties in satisfying the requirements for objectivity in research. Indeed, as I describe in this and later chapters I soon became an active participant in the fringe dwellers' struggle for space in Darwin. However, the point of my thesis is not whether fringe dwellers will openly resist without outside help, which I have already suggested is unlikely. My point is, that fringe dwellers in the Northern Territory over a period of almost thirty years have consistently shown a political awareness and preparedness to openly protest which suggests that their oppositional role has not been adequately examined in other studies. Towards this end, I maintain that my methodology satisfies the definition of scientific and objective methodology cited by D'Andrade (1995b:433) and Harris (1995:423) as, 'public, replicable, and testable'.

Research proposals which use 'the vocabulary of justification' to academically select a field solely to test 'theoretical problems' are criticised by Gupta and Ferguson (1996:18). In their critique of fieldwork practices, they claim that neutrality privileges a study directed by 'intellectual interest' under the guise of 'universal, meritocratic norms [which support] a particular structural and ideological location' (p.18). According to Gupta and Ferguson (p.18), the authority of 'academic interest' continues to privilege the White middle-class male over others who may have alternative reasons for working with the subaltern group. Gupta and Ferguson (p.18) continue: 'leaving their commitments and responsibilities for the sake of untethered

"research interests" is for many anthropologists a Faustian bargain, a betrayal of those people whose lives are inextricably linked to their own'.

On the other hand, Bourgois (1996:256), who worked amongst cocaine dealers in East Harlem, suggests that the majority of anthropologists avoid venturing into unpleasant neighborhoods 'where they must face the underside of their class privilege'. In defence of his own subjective approach, Bourgois (1995:13) notes that ethnographers using methods of participant observation, 'establish long-term, organic relationships with the people they write about. In other words, in order to collect "accurate data", ethnographers violate the canons of positivist research' (p.13). Bourgois (p.18) cites Scheper-Hughes (1992:25) and Wolf (1990) in his conviction that 'anthropological writing can be a site of resistance' (see also Scheper-Hughes 1995:420), and that social scientists should 'face power'.⁴

The inequalities I witnessed in the field in 1996 caused me to agree with Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995:410) that the anthropologist who witnesses injustice should be critical of the position of an 'objective' and 'neutral' observer. However, I maintain that international treaties recognised in Australia can be accepted as objective facts.⁵ As I will explain, the conditions in the camps breach those treaties. Therefore I suggest that my study of homeless Aborigines in Darwin is not only ethically committed, but also constitutes an objective view supported by internationally accepted standards which are increasingly being applied in criticisms of Australia's treatment of indigenous people.

In a criticism of Scheper-Hughes (1995), Ong (1995:429) sides with D'Andrade (1995a) in warning against ethnocentrism in applying 'Western notions of morality', so that cultural others become 'bit players in yet another Western debate' (Ong 1995:429). Ong (p.430) defends 'a mobile sensitivity to cultural difference', in contrast to Scheper-Hughes's argument centred on 'human universalism', but agrees that an ethical anthropology should defend 'minimal modern human rights (freedom from hunger and torture and the right to survive as people)' (p.230). In the Australian context, I agree with Rose (1986:28), who argues: 'If we who are frequently identified as experts on Aboriginal society and culture have little to say about the

power relationships in which they are embedded, we contribute to the process of masking these relationships'. According to Scheper-Hughes (1995:417), in the so-called 'objective' approach to anthropology, 'the suffering is aestheticized, (turned into theatre, viewed as "performance") and thereby minimized and denied'.

In his defence of 'an advocacy approach' to anthropological research, Harries-Jones (1996:166) notes: 'If researchers form part of the situation which they have to interpret, this conflict between participant activism and objectivity is supposed to endanger the value of their conclusions'. In response to this argument, he cites opinions that 'all science is a process of engagement between scientists and that which they study' (p.166). Harries-Jones adds that, in this view, it is a doubtful proposition that the researcher is independent of the world and that the world is external to the observer.

Scheper-Hughes (1995:419) claims that 'noninvolvement was, in itself, an "ethical" and moral decision'. She advocates instead the position of a committed 'witness' who, unlike the passive spectator, is 'accountable for what they see and what they fail to see'. Consistent with my critique of *The camp at Wallaby Cross* in Chapter Four, I take the position Scheper-Hughes (p.419) describes as a witness 'accountable to history', rather than the spectator 'accountable to "science"'. Scheper-Hughes (p.411) asks: 'What makes anthropology and anthropologists exempt from the human responsibility to take an ethical (and even political) stand on the working out of historical events as we are privileged to witness them?'⁶ Accepting this view, I suggest that my presence in the field and my thesis become inseparable from the object of my study.

Contrary to Marcus's prediction that multi-sited fieldwork could lead to 'cross-cutting and contradictory personal commitments' (Marcus 1995:113), a collection of short papers on multi-sited research in a special edition of *Canberra Anthropology* shows 'the researcher will usually have a primary emotional and political affiliation to one particular group within the wider field' (Bolton 2000:4). In his Afterword to a collection of essays on multi-sited ethnography, Weiner (2000:75) states:

Certainly it was Foucault who reminded us that power is effective to the degree that it disguises itself, and part of how it accomplishes this is by denying the systematicity to regimes from which power emanates. And although Marcus admits that mobile positioning attenuates the subaltern as a locus of resistance, when through our ethnographic work, we bring this locus into relationship with other nodes and points of agency, I think the opposite reading is also possible: in shedding light on power's systematicity, one has to necessarily bring oneself into opposition to it and hence assume an advocacy position with respect to those who are affected by these regimes. Bill Day's project I think rests on this reading of the siting of power in the contemporary indigenous world.⁷

Arguments for objectivity in the field (D'Andrade 1995a, 1995b), often fail to critique the role of the anthropologist in the 'writing up' process, on return from the field. For example, D'Andrade (1995b:433) states: 'What makes an observation objective is that it describes a phenomenon that exists independent of the observer's feelings or thoughts about it'. However, Marcus (1995:112) observes that in the writing up stage of a multi-sited study, 'the privilege and authority of the anthropologist [is] unambiguously reassumed'. At this point, according to Appadurai (1988:37) the mobile and all-seeing ethnographer may create what he or she calls the 'spatially incarcerated native' who is restricted in what they 'know, feel, and believe'.

In my experience, the researcher's commitment to their interlocutors is tested by his or her academic commitments. The conversion of the fieldwork experience into ethnography is described by Pratt (1986:32) as requiring 'a tremendously difficult shift' from the subjective experience to 'the scientific position' of an observer 'looking in and/or down upon what is other'. Similarly, Gupta and Ferguson (1996:42) believe: 'One "writes up" in a space that is superior', where the roughly made notes are given order. However, I seek to respond to these criticisms by suggesting that my thesis is not separate from, but is integral to, the struggle by the fringe dwellers for space in Darwin. I further suggest that the anthropologist in the

field is another connection between fringe dwellers and the wider world which should be critically examined in a multi-sited study.

Bourgois (1995:11) discusses the problems of ‘the politics of representation’. He questions whether his ethnography will confirm negative stereotypes and worries about ‘the political implications of exposing minute details of the poor and powerless’ (p.18). He refers to advice from Nader (1972) not to study the poor and powerless ‘because everything you say will be used against them’. Despite these arguments, Bourgois reasons that his graphic descriptions of the lives and conversations of crack dealers emphasises ‘the interface between structural opposition and individual action’ (p.12). To avoid providing material that may compromise the campers in the hostile environment that existed in Darwin in the 1990s, and due to other factors discussed in Chapter Five, I have kept my accounts of life in the camps to a minimum.

3.4 ‘Finding’ a field site

Marcus (1986:172) asks: ‘Why precisely are you in this locale rather than another?’

Marcus (p.172) comments:

One is obliged to be self-consciously justifying (or strategic) in the placement of ethnography precisely because of sensitivity to the broader system representation that is at stake, foreshortened by the practical advantage of ethnography fixed in a single locale.

The ‘rhetorical self-consciousness about the selection and bounding of the ethnographic subject’ discussed by Marcus (p.172) was emphasised for me by the harassment of fringe dwellers which was occurring as I moved about Darwin looking for a fieldwork site.

Gupta and Ferguson (1996:13) claim descriptions of arrival into the field as ‘another world’ often minimise, if not make invisible, ‘the multiple ways in which colonialism, imperialism, missionization, multinational capital, global cultural flows, and travel bind these spaces together’. In the arrival narrative, the distinction between

‘home’ and ‘away’ is often dramatically illustrated. The narrative of discovery emphasises the field as a place apart, distant from home, while the ‘arrival tropes’ used in ethnography ‘mediate this contradiction between the engagement called for in fieldwork and the self-effacement called for in formal ethnographic description’ (Pratt 1986:33). I will presently apply these observations to my own arrival into the field.

Trigger (1992:3) introduces Doomadgee with the tropes of a detective novel, with the lone outsider arriving by road to discover if descriptions given by outsiders of a closed and divided community were correct. Burbank (1994:7) is accepted by her Aboriginal interlocutors as ‘a different kind of Westerner ... not there to judge or change but to accept and learn’ (see also Trigger 1992:86). In my activist text (Day 1994), the arrival scene authorises the liberator of the exploited victim. Coming from ‘the free world’ into the land of the oppressed, and returning to the freedom of writing in isolation, is a version of the entry and exit trope perhaps most applicable to my thesis.

The entry and exit narrative emphasises the connections between the site and the wider world, through the person of the anthropologist. For this reason, I suggest that critically examining the entry of the anthropologist to the field becomes an aspect of a multi-sited ethnography. For example, the ‘discovery’ of the site for my fieldwork in 1996 introduces issues of media representation, power relations and the history of the Aboriginal struggle for recognition and land in Darwin, including my earlier involvement. These are some of the connections I now examine.

3.5 The establishment of Fish Camp

An Aboriginal fringe camp was established on vacant Crown land at Fish Camp by an Aboriginal activist from Queensland, Fred Fogarty, and his Malak Malak wife, Violet Adams in 1973 (see Maps 2 and 3; Plates 17 and 18).⁸ The area is amongst burnt-out monsoon forest beside the tidal and mangrove-fringed Ludmilla Creek, under the flight path of the Darwin International Airport, in Darwin’s northern suburbs.⁹ It is situated between the lease held by the incorporated Bagot Community, and the sea to the east. Fish Camp is near the banks of the tidal Ludmilla Creek

which now serves as the southern border of the 301 hectare Kulaluk Aboriginal lease (Map3).

Prior to 1965, the extensive eucalyptus and monsoon forest, grassland and swamp surrounding the site had been a sizeable part of the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve (see Woodward 1974:55-63; Wells 1995b:221-232, 2000:73). More land was required for subdivisions as Darwin spread and the Aboriginal reserve was a prime site. In 1959 the mayor stated: 'The way Darwin is growing, leaving Bagot where it is would be like putting it in Smith Street. What a furore that would cause. It is high time Bagot was moved' (quoted in *Bunji* October 1972). The politician and activist lawyer, Dick Ward, stated in the NT Legislative Council: 'The town of Darwin is extending and we do require places within easy access where people can live. (Hansard of NT Legislative Council, January 13, 1959). An August 28, 1964 memorandum suggests the 'scrubland and swamps [on the reserve] provide the seclusion ideal for drinking and gambling orgies and other forms of anti-social behaviour. The very nature of the land prevents adequate supervision by authority' (quoted in Wells 1995b:225). Perhaps referring to the initiation area, *Gunabibi* site and burial grounds, which were pointed out to me by various of my Aboriginal interlocutors during my fieldwork, Wells (1995b:226) notes: 'The activities which the Branch describes as "anti-social" and for which Aborigines used the bushlands would have been portrayed quite differently by the Aboriginal protagonists'.¹⁰

Woodward (1974:55) believed 'it is worth setting out the history [of Bagot] in some detail, since it illustrates the way in which Aboriginal interests can be lost sight of when other requirements become pressing. It also shows that the general Darwin community owes some land to Aborigines on the basis of past understandings'. Woodward (1974:62) noted that the alienation of the Bagot land 'highlights the strength of the Aboriginal case for more land in the township of Darwin'.

Without any legal process to claim the land in within the pre-1964 Bagot Reserve boundaries, myself, Fogarty and others in the Gwalwa Daraniki coalition of fringe dwellers had nailed signs to trees along Bagot Road and Coconut Grove Drive stating: 'Aboriginal land claim. Under negotiation with the Aboriginal Land Rights

Commission'.¹¹ Meanwhile, the Bagot Aboriginal Council had failed to lodge an interest in the Ludmilla land. According to Woodward (1973:25), the only concern of 'the regular residents of Bagot Reserve' was to 'obtain title to the Reserve so that they can develop it as an attractive and useful community area'. Despite the lack of interest by the Bagot Council, the Aboriginal residents continue to use the nearby creek, mangroves and vacant land for food gathering and recreation, as they had done when the area was part of the reserve.¹²

In July 1973, three of the Aboriginal residents of the Kulaluk camp were charged after a truck was firebombed in a confrontation with surveyors. Fred Fogarty, who was charged with malicious damage, then moved from the Kulaluk camp, with his wife, to the site that they named Fish Camp.¹³ While his court case was pending, he began constructing houses with building material from the Darwin City Council dump, which was located at the end of Fitzer Drive where Minmarama Village is today (see Map 3). As the DCC filled low-lying land on the fringes of the Ludmilla Creek mangrove system, Fogarty was able to salvage useful building materials, tools and utensils for his house.

After the Kulaluk incident, the legal adviser to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gareth Evans, spent four days in Darwin researching a report to the minister (Henderson 1984:20-21). Evans recognised that Fish Camp and the fringe dwellers' claim to the original Bagot area was becoming 'another Kulaluk situation'. Evans believed that Aborigines had a strong claim to the Ludmilla Creek area around Fish Camp because it was a traditional fishing ground, had been part of the reserve and 'there are a large number of grave sites (perhaps as many as two hundred) in the area' (p.22). In contrast, Evans cited cynics who suggest the Kulaluk camp claim was established 'less because it was of traditional significance than because it was a convenient staging post for both the Seabreeze Hotel in Nightcliff and the Dolphin [Hotel] in Bagot Road' (p.21).

During the ten years Fogarty lived at Fish Camp, many people were invited to share the area and use the buildings he had made, including myself for a short time in 1978. Fred attached 800 metres of piping to a water main at his own expense. The

piping extended from the end of Fitzer Drive to his house (see Map 3). The shower, flushing toilets, sinks and taps which he installed provided water and facilities for Aboriginal people going fishing and for others camping nearby. Deep hand-dug wells provided extra water for the Fish Camp gardens and reforestation project (*Bunji* March 1978).

Fred died suddenly at his camp in 1985 (see *NT News* April 1, 1985). Before his burial in Queensland a work gang from the Kulaluk community demolished his house and the wreckage was left in a twisted pile (see Day 1994:132). As no move had ever been made to evict Fogarty, the motivation behind this act appeared to be to prevent other Aboriginal people using the area.¹⁴ By the destruction of Fogarty's house his contribution to the struggle by fringe dwellers for space in Darwin was figuratively erased and piped water supply was effectively confined to the community on the northern end of the lease. Since then, apart from my own version of events, the failure to acknowledge his contribution is a notable silence in the history of the struggle for alternative accommodation for Aboriginal people in Darwin.¹⁵

During a quick visit in 1990 (Day 1994:135) I photographed the scattered timber and iron of Fred's buildings that had been burnt by the annual uncontrolled grassfires. The ruins otherwise lay as they had been left in 1985. Fogarty's neatly painted sign, 'Fish Camp. Legally owned by Aborigines' was still standing at the site in 1996. Several open wells and rows of trees also remained. Although Burarra people from the Maningrida area in Arnhem Land had shared the area with Fred in the 1980s, I saw no recent evidence of any campers in the area.¹⁶

Coulehan (1995a:81) mentions the Kulaluk lease as 'a significant referent for Yolngu in Darwin'. She adds that 'during the years of my fieldwork Yolngu sometimes called the place "fish camp"'. This observation suggests a continuing connection by Arnhem Land Aborigines to the Ludmilla Creek area. The situation had changed since Hayward-Ryan (1980:5) reported: 'For spiritual and a variety of other reasons Eastern Central Arnhem Land people will not, and cannot, camp overnight in that area triangulated by East Point, North Kulaluk and Ludmilla [i.e. Fish Camp and environs]'.¹⁷

In 1989 an Aboriginal village of ten one-bedroom houses with communal ablution blocks and ten two-bedroom houses with showers and toilets was built on the old city council dump site across the mangroves from the ruins of Fogarty's camp (Map 3). The development was named Minmarama after a Gwalwa Daraniki Association president who died in 1986.¹⁸ Minmarama was an attempted resolution to an ongoing controversy over the government policy to move 'transients' from the parks and beaches onto the Kulaluk lease (*NT News* October 13, 14, 1981; *Bunji* April 1982; Day 1994:111; Wells 1995a:75; Jackson 1996:100). In 1983, the Aboriginal manager of the Kulaluk lease joined the media debate on the housing of 'transients':

'A transient area with adequate facilities is an absolute must for many reasons,' Mr Baugh [the Kulaluk manager] told *The Advertiser*. The lack of such a facility was largely responsible for complaints from the general public of small temporary, some not all that temporary, camps springing up in areas around the outskirts of Darwin. Some temporary camps are actually set up not a great distance from the city centre. 'These people must have somewhere to go that is properly organised,' said Mr Baugh (*Advertiser* April 7, 1983; see also *NT News* March 19, 1983, p.1).

The project was funded by the Aboriginal Development Corporation and the Town Camp Housing and Infrastructure Program (Wells 1995a:75). The residents pay rent to the Kulaluk management. According to Wells (1995a:76) 'although the houses were specifically designed as transient accommodation they quickly became used as permanent accommodation'.

3.6 Fish Camp and Lee Point 1996

I arrived in Darwin on August 2, 1996, looking for a base to begin fieldwork with the homeless people. While following the 'itinerant debate' in back issues of the newspapers, I found an article describing the eviction of Aboriginal fringe dwellers from central Arnhem Land who had been camping in bushland on vacant Crown land at Lee Point to the east of Lee Point Road, to the north of Darwin's northern suburbs (see Map 2).

Darwin residents and tourists use the parkland overlooking the beach at Lee Point infrequently during weekdays until 5pm, when people arrive to walk their dogs or enjoy the sunset. However, there had been complaints about the behaviour of Aborigines from the camps that were hidden in the bush opposite the park's facilities. The *NT News* published an account of the eviction on July 8, 1996 under the heading 'Govt moves to clear Point Camps'. Photographs showed the bags of aluminium cans at the camps, one of the tin huts, and a disabled man being carried from the area. The man was Bob Bunduwabi, whose history is told in Chapter Six of this thesis.

One of 'the itinerant residents' told the newspaper they had cared for the area and kept it clean. 'We were told we had to go,' he said (*NT News* July 8, 1996). A Department spokesman said there had been complaints about the rubbish from the campers. 'The decision was made to ask them to leave,' he said. The newspaper article ended, 'The camps are near the popular Casuarina Coastal Reserve which includes Lee Point'. The incident was reported only because the Keep Australia Beautiful representative had been in the vicinity with a photographer from the *NT News* at the time of the forced move (personal communication).

I had known Bob Bunduwabi in 1982 when he was living on the narrow beach between the mangroves and the remnants of a dense coastal monsoon forest on the Kulaluk lease. An expatient of the East Arm Leprosarium who had lost his fingers and feet to leprosy, as I will later recount, Bob had set up his camp beside a sewerage pumping station, where there was a tap and private access road (Map 3). I regularly passed that way and provided his camp with fresh fish from the fish trap, which I had built in 1981, by constructing two-metre high fences extending in a twenty-five-metre vee shape on the nearby mud flats that were exposed at low tide. A brief description of the Bob's beach camp appears in my book:

'Old Bob', as I knew him, lived in pitiful conditions under shades of plastic and cardboard. His artificial legs were seldom used, while his stumps of fingerless hands served him well enough. Fortunately he was never short of helpers.

Old Bob had no intention of returning to his birthplace near Maningrida. Instead he made Central Arnhem Landers welcome with the conveniences of a tap, seafood, firewood and seclusion. At night, he shared a blanket with his dog, Fifty Cents, while his visiting countrymen hurled their [fishing] spears into the mangroves. They preferred searching for weapons in the morning to risking an impulsive drunken murder (Day 1994:106).¹⁹

The *NT News* (July 8, 1996) reported that the evicted Lee Point campers had moved to the Kulaluk community. Surprisingly, there had been no public indignation at the photograph of a man with no feet or fingers being carried from his makeshift home to an unknown future. However, the photograph and article gave me hope that Bob could be a personal contact that might be helpful in my search for a field site.

Few people had survived in the conditions of the Darwin camps for as long as Bob Bunduwabi. After fourteen years, I was amazed to read he was still alive and looking so well.²⁰ After moving camp at least six times over the years, he was forcibly on the move again. A telephone call to the Kulaluk management informed me that the Lee Point group were now at Fish Camp, although there is no water there.

Having a fringe camp on Aboriginal land presented several issues that complicated the position for them and for me. Firstly, to visit the camp I needed the permission of the Kulaluk leaseholders, the Gwalwa Daraniki Association (GDA). Secondly, the government claimed no further responsibility for the conditions in the camp because it was on Aboriginal-owned land. Thirdly, the landlords refused the fringe dwellers permission to build any permanent structures or to lay water pipes, which could have easily been done, as Fred Fogarty had shown at the old Fish Camp twenty years earlier. The threat of eviction also remained ever present for the campers.

Gaining authority to visit Fish Camp could have been a problem for me because from 1982 to 1984 I had successfully contested an eviction order against me by the GDA (Day 1994) and my relationship with the management remained tense. Fortunately I

received verbal permission to work on the lease from a surviving Larrakia elder who lived at Kulaluk and knew me from the 1970s.²¹

Gupta and Ferguson (1996:3) describe the ‘lack of fit’ between a research method of participant observation that has been developed to study small-scale societies and the realities of ‘a mobile changing world’. However, the little community at Fish Camp hidden from the busy city gave the appearance of a bounded and manageable field site suited to the ‘dominant Malinowskian orthodoxy’ (Gupta and Ferguson 1996:23). Despite appearances, the media report, which had led me to Fish Camp, was evidence that a bounded field would not adequately explain the fringe camp’s location and purpose. Later newspaper and television reports also ended any hopes of ‘the practical advantages of ethnography fixed in a single locale’ (see Marcus 1986:172).

Appadurai (1991:191, cited in Gupta and Ferguson 1996:3) asks, ‘What is the nature of locality, as a lived experience in a globalized, deterritorialized world?’ In this thesis I have already recounted some of the events that set the scene for Fish Camp as my research location and as a refuge for a displaced group. They are: the establishment of a town on Larrakia land; the revoking of a large part of Bagot Reserve, which alienated the area set aside for Aboriginal use; the activism of fringe dwellers and Larrakia people which reclaimed the area; the work of Fred Fogarty and his partner who established a recognised camp site; the 1996 campaign to drive ‘itinerants’ out of the city which forced the Lee Point people to relocate; my past involvement and the contacts I had made; media representations which led me to the site; the complexities of living as fringe dwellers on Aboriginal land; the determination of one severely disabled man; contested land in a developing city and the lack of alternative housing for Aboriginal groups.

3.7 Making contact

The single track into Fish Camp in the dry season of 1996 wound through pandanus and paperbark from the junction of Dick Ward Drive and Totem Road in the suburb of Coconut Grove (see Map 3). The rough gravel track turned sharply left before the Aboriginal burial ground which had given Totem Road its name. Totem Road also

marked the northern boundary of the old Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. Running parallel with Dick Ward Drive, the track now ran in a straight line for 800 metres across a raised bund of earth on the edge of a freshwater swamp known as the old rice field (Map3). After heavy rain this section of the track was covered by a sheet of knee-deep water. In the dry season many taxi drivers refused to negotiate the corrugations. The track crossed a culvert that was excavated to drain the freshwater wetlands and now allows high tides to inundate the reeds with seawater. The track then rose onto higher ground, winding through the remnants of coastal monsoon forest choked by tall dry grasses. Wheels spun in the dry sandy soil or sunk to the axles if the driver slowed.

Gupta and Ferguson (1996:13) criticise anthropologists who suggest by their descriptions that their entry into the field is a journey back in time, amongst cultures apart from the world the anthropologist has left behind. In my case, the conditions in the camp and the access track were more reminiscent of a past frontier era than a modern city. In my eyes, this view derived from material conditions, rather than cultural difference. The noise of glinting international airliners descending to land on the nearby runway, or screaming jets circling in war games, contrasted with the privations of the residents of the camp. Rather than exemplifying cultural distance and establishing the anthropologist as outsider (see Bolton 2000:3), entry to the field accented for me the relationship between the dominant social and economic system and the marginalisation of the fringe dwellers.

The track had been opened to provide access to fishing spots on Ludmilla Creek that marked the southern boundary of the Kulaluk lease. Two hundred metres before the track terminates at the creek bank it passes a shady tamarind tree that forms a canopy with a weeping fig and several black wattles amongst rain trees struggling to rise above the annual grass fires. Gusts of wind whipped up the fine brown dust around sawn bush saplings resting on upright forked poles supporting four tarpaulin shades. A muddy path through the mangroves led across to Minmarama Village. In the distance, visible above the mangroves, were the golden arches of the McDonalds restaurant which had been given an 'anchor lease' on the Kulaluk land by the Aboriginal leaseholders in 1993 (GDA 1995).²²

Bob welcomed me to his camp as an old friend while his middle-aged niece, Dulcie, prepared food for him, her two invalid pensioner brothers and her partner. Her daughter lived in another low tent with her young White husband, who did most of the heavy carrying. In a later interview Dulcie described the camp:

That's my uncle over there. He can't do anything. Also my brother. He's blind. We've got to go and get the water and carry it back. I can't do anything because I'm stuck with the old people - mainly old Bob and old Tommy. My son-in-law has a car. He shifted all the things here. It's very hard. We need water. We need some place to wash. We rang up city council. We asked them to come and collect the dogs. They didn't come. We've got too many here - nine or ten. It floods when it rains here. Big mob water runs under the tarp but we got our beds up higher. It worries me all the time - old people. Bob, he's all right. He goes to Danila Dilba [Aboriginal Medical Service]. He has a shower there but the rest of us, nothing. Our Darwin government, they welcome tourist people from overseas but they don't welcome us because we full-blood Aboriginals. We all belong to this land, our country, and we are full citizens.²³

The campers' dogs usually lay resting in the red dust. Their barking was a warning that someone was approaching. Always close to Bob was his pet black hen that intimidated the dogs or picked parasites from their skin as they rested. I was soon feeling at home sitting in the shade of the tamarind which I remembered planting in 1978, (although several Aboriginal people I later met, claimed to have done so).

Bob Bunduwabi, who was about sixty-five years old, told me he came from the Gamal clan to the east of Blyth River (Map 1), which has close ties to the Yolgnu people from northeastern Arnhem Land and the Burarra people to the west (see Bagshaw 1994, cited in Sutton 1995c:122-4; Carew and Handelsmann 1996c). He claimed to be a sorcerer, and was an exceptionally determined man. His younger brother, who also lived in Darwin, later became involved in the struggle of the campers, but I did not meet him until the following year.

Prior to the eviction, Lee Point camp had been a well-established and comfortable one, as I was to later see in a music video filmed there by a band in which Dulcie's son is the lead singer (NLC 1996b). Without representation and unaware of any legal rights, the campers had hired minibus taxis to shift their tarpaulins, bedding and utensils. They had left behind many items they could not carry from Lee Point and all their self-made structures supported by sawn saplings had been destroyed. The other Lee Point residents had scattered to other sites around Darwin. Before they had time to establish their camp on the beach beside the Kulaluk village, the GDA had asked them to move to the old Fish Camp site and the group shifted their tarpaulins for the second time in weeks. They were left with few options.

Thirst compelled me to cut short my first visit. After that, I carried water for the pensioners and myself from my accommodation at the North Australian Research Unit guest house in Casuarina known as 'the Manor'. After a day at the camp, with clothing and skin stained by the fine red soil and soaked with perspiration after cycling the five kilometres home each evening, I relished soaking myself in the clear water of the swimming pool. The daily transition of my access to abundant water, to the desperate need for a single tap at Fish Camp produced a daily 'culture shock', while the persistent complaints of the Aboriginal campers assured me that my reaction was more than an ethnocentric view of the contrasting conditions.

Watching Bob crawl about in the dust with nowhere to wash the clinging red dust from his clothes and body gave a surreal effect to an already scarcely believable scene. The pair of artificial legs he had used in the past were seldom used and remained jammed in a tree fork beside his tent. He had no wheelchair. Despite these deprivations, Bob and his relatives at the camp made me feel very welcome.

Bob had told the *NT News* (July 8, 1996), 'he believed he had been living at his camp [at Lee Point] through wet and dry seasons for seven years'. Another spokesman had said: 'We would like to be left here. We have been here a long time and we are a bit worried'. When I met him two months later, Bob still had a strong wish to return to the campsite at Lee Point where there was water, bitumen access and a historical

connection. The anger expressed at Fish Camp over their eviction was reminiscent of the mood in similar camps on vacant Darwin bushland in the 1970s.

3.8 Fish Camp and the media, 1996

With permission from the people at Fish Camp, in September 1996 I contacted the Darwin media to publicise the needs of homeless people. I noted my fears that filming the camp could be seen as voyeurism, especially if the story highlighted Bob's disabilities. I wondered how publicity would affect the group and my fieldwork. And I suspected that the Kulaluk landowners would resent the negative publicity. However, I was concerned that authorities were using Aboriginal land as a 'dumping ground' for unwanted homeless Aboriginal people. Once away from public view it appeared to be a case of 'out of sight out of mind'. At Lee Point, where there are taps and showers, the camps had caused concern to the government, but once they were hidden in the Kulaluk lease, they were of no further interest, as later statements by politicians indicated.

A very sympathetic journalist visited the camp and interviewed the people. She quoted two men by name in her report, although I was given as the major spokesperson under a heading, 'People dumped in Darwin, says Bill' (*NT News*, September 10, 1996). I was placed in the centre foreground of a photograph illustrating the article. Situating a tent and anonymous Aboriginal people behind me appeared to signify the mediating role of the anthropologist. Presumably, the involvement of an anthropologist gave the story an added authority. Rebecca Whitfield wrote:

Anthropologist Bill Day said the [city] council was creating South African homeland-like areas in the city - set up for blacks only to live.

One member of the group is blind and another cannot walk after losing his arms and legs through leprosy.²⁴

Mr Day said: 'The conditions at the camp are shocking - there is no running water and cooking and washing is difficult. They have their own tents but the area is a dust bowl and the fine dust is already causing eye problems. The

Kulaluk lease was never meant to be used as a dumping ground for homeless people’.

And George Banbuma, about 50, said: ‘We are thankful to the Kaluluk [sic] people for letting us live here, but want our own land where we can speak our own language’.

He said the group did not want to move to one of Darwin’s three established Aboriginal communities. ‘There are too many fights there,’ he said. Mr Banbuma pleaded with ATSIC and Northern Land Council to help’.

The subsequent local radio interview and debate between myself and the Community Services Manager for the Darwin City Council on ABC ‘Drivetime’ (September 10, 1996) and a local television news item on Bob’s complaint of discrimination, described by Alison Morrow of Channel 8 ‘as a case which will test the rights of itinerant people’ (October 18, 1996), produced no noticeable remedial action. Later, when early storms turned the dust to mud and wet the mattresses, I commented in a letter to the editor, ‘I cannot believe there has been no response - no donations of beds or tents, no offers of emergency water supply’ (*NT News*, October 26, 1996).

On November 13, 1996 the *NT News* published my open letter to Pauline Hanson,²⁵ which was later published in the *West Australian* (November 16, 1996), the *Koori Mail* (November 20, 1996) and *Green Left Weekly* (November 20, 1996). The letter gave an alternative description of an Australian icon know as ‘the battler’, which was championed by Hanson:²⁶

If you had to cart your daily water supply in a jerry can through mud and mangroves, would you call that disadvantaged? If you had no sewerage, electricity, mail delivery, telephone or garbage collection, would that be disadvantaged? If your local government harassed you instead of representing you, labelling you ‘itinerants’ by the colour of your skin although you had lived in the city for more than 15 years, would that be fair?

Now imagine you have no feet, or are blind, yet have never claimed taxi subsidy vouchers, meals on wheels, Medicare or most of the entitlements due to a disabled pensioner. Instead you sleep in dust or mud huddled under a leaking tarpaulin. Nearby an ailing middle-aged niece toils as a full-time carer, cooking on an open fire, worried that her unemployment benefit demands she be 'looking for work'. Please explain to her the meaning of 'respite leave'. Try negotiating the bureaucratic maze in a language that is foreign to you, because this family speaks a tongue that has grown with the continent, and that is a lot longer than 200 years. Wouldn't you agree, Pauline, that this family group, friends of mine in the city of Darwin, are the real Aussie battlers?

Meanwhile, the Aboriginal flag I had tied to a tree in the centre of the camp had become a landmark for taxi drivers who distinguished Fish Camp from similar locations as 'the camp with the flag' (Plate 3). For northeastern Arnhem Land people, reflecting their contact with Macassan traders, flags flying on a mast have localised ceremonial and spiritual significance that has been integrated into the pan-Aboriginal resistance symbolised by the Aboriginal flag. When the flag became worn, another in a succession of Aboriginal flags was raised over the camp in emotional ceremonies organised by the residents (see Plate 14; Simmering 1998).

In November 1996, the issue of town camps and homelessness returned to the media. A front-page story on Fish Camp appeared in the *Suburban* (November 13), a free newspaper delivered to every home in Darwin. 'Family's home an "atrocious squalor"' was the headline above a sympathetic article:

And a Darwin anthropologist has blamed Darwin City Council's public place patrols for the crisis, saying homeless people were being forced to move to unhygienic camps to avoid fines... Seven people have been living at the site, behind Minmarama Village housing estate off Dick Ward Drive for four months, without any water supply or sewerage.

Mr Day said: 'They're having to go back and forth with jerry cans to get water, and you can't do much with a jerry can of water in terms of keeping clean... It's discriminatory to say they have to move to Kulaluk, because Kulaluk belongs to the Larrakia people - just because they're Aboriginal, they shouldn't have to live in one designated area. These are people from the Maningrida region, who have lived in Darwin for more than 15 years. To them this is an urgent state, a life and death issue, not something that can just wait'.

A reader wrote to the *NT News* (November 18):

Some of these people [from Lee Point] have leprosy and as such are entitled to a disability pension and disabled housing... If on the other hand they have rejected these benefits, I can only say they have made their own bed so let them lie in it.

If the attitude of the letter writer was representative of a wide section of the Darwin public, it was evidence that 'the politics of embarrassment' (see Dyck 1985:15; Kapferer 1995:78) was no longer an effective tactic in Darwin. Local and Territory Government wanted to appear tough on Aboriginal 'itinerants' and the Federal Government appeared to have little influence on local issues. Another letter, condemning the 'poor bugger me' syndrome, drew attention to the 'four storey ATSIC palace built ... on the dearest real estate in Darwin. Just look through the sealed windows at all the sleek and well-paid ATSIC staff'. The writer continued:

But Bill, in this day and age why are your friends living like this? Do they not get pensions, or social security, or CDEP like everyone else? Do they not have relatives other than the one niece mentioned who have money and who could help care for them? In all the vastness of the Northern Territory surely there are camping places more convenient? (*NT News* November 21, 1996)

Another letter on the same page suggested ‘Aussie battlers’ have access to services because they work and pay taxes. ‘Many people in Aboriginal communities don’t work, don’t pay taxes and therefore don’t have and should not expect those services’.

Jim Saint has been a Top End resident for 30 years. He attacked ‘do-gooders’ like myself who: ‘appear to live in a dream world where because you may be an anthropologist, what you write people may believe. Wake up mate, the bludgers have lived without you for the past 11 years, they will live without you for the next 100’ (*NT News* November 27, 1996). In my reply, I wondered if there would be a place for old ‘bushies’ like Jim when Darwin became a little Singapore, as politicians had recently proposed (*NT News* December 3, 1996). Jim fired back (*NT News* December 6, 1996):

Is it not great Bill that Darwin is soon to become a ‘little Singapore’? Your friends will have to pay for their camping and their littering ... their places of abode are still their own choice, they can walk out, catch a plane, go to their own country, speak with their own people in their own language tomorrow.

As I will describe, it became evident that the negative media attention angered the Kulaluk leaseholders. Comments by members of the public and some Aborigines emphasised the gap between fringe dwellers and recognised Aboriginal organisations. The campers themselves were pleased by the publicity, without any apparent sense of it being an intrusion into a private Aboriginal domain. Indeed, they appeared to be encouraged by the media interest and the positive public response they received in face-to-face contacts. Neither did the sometimes aggressively negative remarks in letters to the editor deter them. In Chapter Eight, I discuss the building of allegiances between fringe campers and sympathetic non-Aboriginal groups that began during the media attention in 1996.

3.9 Legitimation: the case of the Railway Dam camp

The lack of sympathy for homeless Aborigines in letters to the NT media and on talkback radio reflected the general view that fringe camps are little more than hideouts for alcoholics. In the following paragraphs I contrast such views with the

public support for the Aboriginal community at Railway Dam (see Map 2) in the face of threats by the NT Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment to ‘relocate’ the town camp (*NT News* November 15, 16, 1996; ABC 7.30 Report, September 28, 1997). The case is an example of the process of ‘legitimation’ of fringe camps, which Brandl (1981:98) rather hopefully saw beginning with the Woodward Commission reports (1973, 1974). That is, ‘the process of educating outsiders to sharing [the campers] views of themselves as autonomous, legitimate communities’.

Brandl (1981:98) claims ‘legitimation’ is the necessary first step towards ‘reasonable and acceptable living facilities for their lifestyle’, adding that: ‘Long and difficult as the process has been, most fringe-dwelling communities are still engaged upon it’. By 1996, Railway Dam has gained a degree of public acceptance as one of the first camps ‘legitimised’ by being granted a lease almost twenty years earlier.

Like Fish Camp, Railway Dam struggled to achieve the initial stage of ‘legitimation’. In 1972 the *NT News* (July 13) reported:

Aboriginals camped behind Dinah Beach ... are wondering why the community has waited so long to establish showers and facilities in the area ... No one has ever expressed concerns whether they have facilities or not. The camp has no shelter, no toilet facilities and no water supply.²⁷

When the 3.12-hectare lease was finally granted to the Aboriginal Development Foundation on behalf of the community, the Minister for Lands and Housing stated:

It will provide a permanent place for Aboriginal people to stay when they come to Darwin. It is best for all concerned if land is allocated and used to meet the needs of Aborigines who wish to live as a community in the urban environs. The people can now move to make improvements to their surroundings confident they have secure title to the area (*NT News* March 26, 1979; ADF 1997).

Railway Dam is now home to thirty people and more who are visitors to Darwin (ADF 1997). After the threat to transform the lease into a public park, one of several support letters stated: ‘The people of Railway Dam belong there. They "fit in"’ (*NT News* December 3, 1996). Radio talkback was strongly in favour of keeping the town camp (*NT News* November 16, 1996). The daily newspaper was also supportive:

The Railway Dam camp site houses up to 12 Aboriginal families and also hosts remote community visitors. It will be removed as part of plans to relocate the Frances Bay [oil] tank farm. The picturesque and well-hidden campsite is located off Dinah Beach Road, between Tiger Brennan Drive and Duke Street, less than a kilometre from the city centre.

Mr Karadara, 44, who has lived at the camp since the 1960s, said the move would uproot a community that had never contemplated having to leave. He said: ‘We’ve never had any trouble here and no one bothered us. This is our land. We don’t have anywhere else to go... Why can’t they make a park somewhere else? This is our home’ (*NT News* November 15, 1996).²⁸

Another letter reflected a growing class-based opposition to the development of the land for the benefit of elites:

We want to live in a society where commercial development is the top priority ... don’t we? The preposterous proposal to move the camp at One Mile Dam is in the interests of only a minority of people. To let the camp remain would benefit the families who live there, and serve as a valuable lesson in tolerance (*NT News* November 23, 1996).

In this chapter, my introduction to the field illustrates the inadequacies of a single-sited study of a fringe camp. Instead, I have justified the need for a morally engaged, multi-sited study. My ‘finding’ of my primary field site, the history of Fish Camp and my examples of public reaction to fringe camps demonstrate that Darwin fringe camps exist in a politically charged environment. The reaction of the fringe dwellers confirms their political consciousness, preparedness to resist and suggests that

theories of a closed Aboriginal domain to not apply. In the next chapter, I give evidence to support my politically engaged, multi-sited approach in a revisiting of *The camp at Wallaby Cross*. My extensive critique of the work of Basil Sansom that follows is additional evidence suggesting that a bounded study does not adequately represent Darwin fringe dwellers.

Endnotes:

¹An illustrated feature article in *Aussie Post* (March 31, 2001, pp.10-11), headed 'Riverbed refugees', reports that an 'NT exodus' has resulted in 'destitute and homeless' Aborigines setting up camps in Mount Isa, the closest town to the NT border.

² See also Sydney Morning Herald, 'The man who wants martyrs', February 11, 1974; *Sunday Times*, 'Flower-power teacher leads Darwin's protest causes', October 21, 1984; *Sunday Territorian*, 'A trek into paradise', October 7, 1984; *The Australian* (NT Special Report), 'An old beatnik mixes politics and palm trees', July 15, 1985, p.11.

³ Letter from Community Services Manager, DCC to Bill Day, 24 April 1996.

⁴ Bourgois (1995:11) also notes his concerned with the 'politics of representation' whereby his graphic portrayals of the lives of drug dealers will be 'misread as negative stereotypes'.

⁵ See for example, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 25:1 (United Nations 1948).

⁶Tonkinson (1974), Stanton (1985) and Trigger (1992) are other examples of witnesses' accounts of Aboriginal resistance - in their cases, to fundamentalist missionary indoctrination.

⁷ Weiner is referring to my article, 'Forgive us our trespasses: finding space for Aboriginal fringe dwellers in Darwin' (Day 2000:62-69).

⁸ Violet is listed in the Malak Malak Aboriginal land claim book as 'Violet Fogarty' (Sutton and Palmer 1980:51).

⁹ See 'A walk through Kulaluk' in *Bunji* (March 1978), for a detailed description of the area.

¹⁰ On March 26, 1982 the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority wrote:

a Gunabibi ground is located on Kulaluk Community land, south of Fitzer drive and just east of Dick Ward Drive. Guwaykuway, a North East Arnhem Lander from Naymil/Datiway clan group, now living at Bagot, says that the site was used during the 1950s and although no longer active is still out of bounds to all women and children (AS.81/147, reproduced in Cooper 1985).

¹¹ Fogarty had built himself a hut at the Kulaluk camp by early 1973, and became the founding public officer of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association Inc in June the same year (see Buchanan 1974; Cooper 1985).

¹² 'It is hard for non-Aborigines to see the mangroves and tidal flats as useful areas', wrote Maria Brandl, of ANU (*Bunji* October 1981). She continued: 'More than this, Aborigines find

a lot of food in these areas. This is still true today. Often the only fresh food available to them is what they can hunt or gather'.

¹³ See *NT News* July 7, 1973; *Nation Review* July 19, 1973; *Bulletin* July 21, 1973; *Bunji* July 1973; Buchanan 1974:17; Henderson 1984:17; Wells 1995a:71).

¹⁴ A notice in the *NT News* warned that 'all permits to enter the reserve [Kulaluk lease] have been revoked' (Day 1994:128).

¹⁵ See *Koori Mail*, 'Academic remembers "Fighter" Fogarty', April 5, 1995, p.6.

¹⁶ After Violet's death, Fred lived with a Burarra woman. Another Burarra woman and her white partner lived in one of Fred's old houses. Both these women visited Fish Camp during my fieldwork.

¹⁷ The restriction was probably because of deaths in the area.

¹⁸ See 'Last of the Larrakias', *Midweek Territorian*, March 16, 1986.

¹⁹ The spears are popular amongst Arnhem Land campers to catch stingrays, but they can be dangerous weapons if a dispute occurs when people are drinking together.

²⁰ One of Bob's kin suggested to me that his survival was due to regular visits by health services and his more sedentary, and safer, lifestyle.

²¹ Heffernan (1996) refers to an unpublished text he has co-authored with the senior elder, Topsy Secretary, called (in English) 'I burnt my feet for this country, this is my country' (Secretary and Heffernan 1996). I was told that the title describes walking on hot bitumen in bare feet in the protest actions of the 1970s.

²² Section 4.2 of this report, prepared by the Kulaluk leaseholders, states: 'a successful lease agreement with the McDonalds restaurant on Bagot Road in the eastern part of the lease (part lot 5182) ... forms the anchor tenancy for future planned developments'. I was informed by an Aboriginal woman, who was involved in making the report, that an anchor lease is given on generous terms to a prestigious developer to attract other developments to the area.

²³From ' Bill Day and Sally Mitchell, *Green Left Weekly* November 20, 1996, p.7. <www.greenleft.org.au/backissu.htm>

²⁴ *NT News* reports often incorrectly stated that Bob had lost his 'arms and legs' to leprosy (January 24, 1997; February 11, 1997). This rather grotesque image appeared to gain no extra sympathy from the public.

²⁵ Pauline Hanson, the founder of the One Nation Party, had complained that Aborigines received special privileges.

²⁶ Just as I argue in Chapter Nine that Aboriginal drinking owes much to an earlier frontier lifestyle, my observations suggest that the lives of the fringe dwellers retain many aspects of a frontier life now unknown to many residents of settled Darwin.

²⁷ See also *NT News* (February 28, July 4, 1973); Woodward (1974:54-55); *Bunji* (April 1978, March 1982); Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority 5368/1994: Railway Dam land claim.

²⁸ The minister told the *NT News* (November 16, 1996): 'the camp did not fit plans for the relocation of the Frances Bay tank farm and the development of an inner-city residential area'. In the same article I was quoted: 'For me it's total deja vu'.