

14 - 10 - 1941

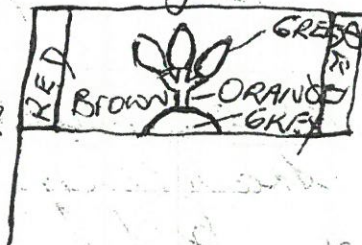
Dear Mother,

The News Reporter have just left, he came here to interview Bill about the Larrakias, Bill is at work so the news Reporter left with a disappointed look on his face. He may be back tonight.

Yes Bill have about 300 Bunji's typed out (I wish I could type, I could ~~type~~ type them for him.)

I have finished sewing the Larrakia flag which is red, Brown, Green, orange and grey. Very simple design, like this.

YOU SEE A BETTER PHOTO OF THE FLAG ON THE BUNJI PAPER



I found it quite hard to sew ~~because~~ but tried my best. The flag each colour means something. Red for blood Brown for their brownish Black skin the others are just a tree on the little hill which they believe a bird has once used for her nest. Bill have been painting signs for the Larrakias so they could collect donations.

At the wharf Bill found a very rusty tangled up wire and it looks like a sculpture of some kind. I think it would look nice once its ~~been~~ painted



News and  
Current Affairs

Australian  
Broadcasting  
Corporation

16 Bennett Street  
Darwin N.T. 0800

GPO Box 9994  
Darwin N.T. 0801

Tel: (089) 43 3172  
Fax: (089) 43 3175  
Telex: 85143

21 August 1991

Mr Bill Day  
PO Box 892  
NEDLANDS WA 6009

Dear Bill

Thank you for your note on our 20th anniversary. I too remember the first bulletin and looking back over the years, it comes as no great surprise I suppose that the issues are largely the same...only the players have changed.

We have only just completed the task of transferring the old news stories on film to video tape so they can be used for archive purposes.

On August 13, we compiled a 9 minute nostalgic look at the News of the early 70's. By coincidence there was a shot of yourself taking part in a demonstration at the Fannie Bay gaol. I think it was in protest about the gaoling of an aborigine, but I don't remember the exact detail. Was it something to do with the Larrakia? I wish you luck with your book. A copy for review purposes would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Fletcher".

Bill Fletcher  
Head of News &  
Current Affairs NT



NORTHERN TERRITORY STATE OFFICE  
GPO BOX 3064 DARWIN NT 0801  
TELEPHONE (089) 82 4511  
VOCADEx (089) 81 5182

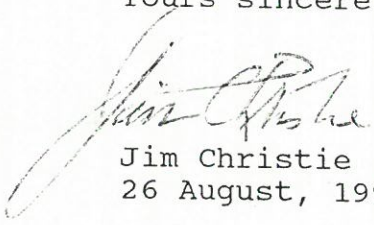
Dear Mr Day,

In relation to your request regarding personal details of the late Mr Bobby Secretary I can inform you that he was born in 1929.

You may wish to confirm this with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages at GPO Box 3021 Darwin N T 0801.

The Registrar now holds the records to which you refer. I hope this is of assistance to your researches.

Yours sincerely



Jim Christie  
26 August, 1992

048 422057

PO Box 86  
Braidwood  
NSW 2622

1 October 1991

Dear Bill,

Here is the foreword, and I am happy with almost all of your work on it.

But I do have a few points to put to you, the first very strongly. Please replace my last sentence. I believe it is really important to acknowledge the fact that Aborigines like Bobby just don't have the ability to directly write down their contemporary history. God knows, speaking the foreign language of English must be hard enough. But writing the bloody thing! I believe this sentence would help Aboriginal people to accept the value of what you have done in writing Bunji.

The passage on page 2 referring to your identification with the 'Larrakia' has been changed to 'Aborigines.' I expect this is because you included in Gwalwa Daraniki the remnants of the other tribes at Railway Dam and Knuckey's. So I have suggested instead of Aborigines the words 'the remnants of Darwin's Aborigines' - indicating that these very dispossessed people were not acceptable to other Aborigines in Darwin who were integrated and not struggling. I just felt that you were not acceptable to most of these Aborigines. *True? Maybe not true?*

Also, I think Jack Phillips needs identifying (page 4) and I would like the inclusion (page 7) of my travelling companion. The fact that these points were not in my original notes doesn't matter.

However, I would really only ask you to accept the replacement of my last sentence. It is a small but, I believe, crucial part of the whole foreword.

As for photos, The Canberra Times is selling me one which doesn't show Fred (none available), but shows a placard about the Larrakia outside the Embassy in '74. By a strange coincidence the woman in charge of the photo library at the Institute, Ronda Wie, was quick to tell me that she is a Larrakia! She is looking out photos for me and her reaction to news of your book was real delight - she didn't know it was with the Institute, because at the time I didn't know this. (Actually she is another to have written a thesis on the Larrakia).

I'll send you the photos as soon as I get them.

All the best,

*P.S. Also  
enclose a letter  
from The Canberra Times.*

*Howard*



P.S. I'd like to keep Dr Henderson's ms 16  
show Neil & Hattair, in confidence. Will  
return it later. Of course I will give them  
'Bunji'. S.

048 422057

P.P.S. Just received  
the new, clean  
'Bunji'. S.

PO Box 86  
Braidwood  
2622

Sept 13 1991

Dear Bill,

Here it is at last. The traditional kind of foreword really goes from the beginning to the end of the second paragraph on page 4, plus the final three paragraphs on page 30. Taken together, they make one whole traditional foreword.

The rest of it could make an 'afterword' - I've seen this done before. Or you might like to leave it as it is.

On pages 10 and 11 I have, on reflection, cut out the reference to an old man's bladder, because it seemed lousy to make fun of this. Also, I may have mixed up Tommy Lippo and Tommy ~~Line~~ Lyons - their names, I mean, and perhaps spelling. And if one of them is in fact Tommy Nimabul, then it would be better to use that name, I think. Perhaps you would decide about this.

I decided to quote from my notes at the time for several reasons: 1. Because they might confirm in my own words, written with a sense of immediacy and some amazement, the sort of daily chaos with which you had to deal over many years. That might help the reader to understand, without being able to share the experience.

2. Because I can't see myself having the time to write anything for publication about this period and your book might give me the chance to get these few pages into print.

3. Because the aura surrounding my role as a senior research fellow at ANU and a foreign correspondent of The Times might help you to get your book published. But I hasten to say that it should be published for its own quality and importance.

However I do want to make sure that it is up to you, first, and then the publisher to decide whether my notes are in fact used. I just offer them to you, but I really don't mind if you or the publisher decide that they should not be used.

Again, it is up to you to decide if certain parts of my notes should be cut out. I don't want to hurt anyone, above all. Also, feel free to draw attention to any factual errors - the notes were written hastily and without checking. They could be corrected, perhaps, within brackets.

Finally, if the Q'land Uni Press don't want to publish, I feel sure that the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra would welcome your manuscript. As you know, they publish a great deal and their circulation seems reasonable.

Sorry the photos were all so poor. I will see if the Canberra Times has any of Fred at the second Embassy. I found it pretty hard sorting out the chronology in my rough notes, but the whole thing brought back great memories. I felt for you and Polly and the kids, as I remembered. It seems that you have all sorted yourselves out and are happy again. Good.

All the love,

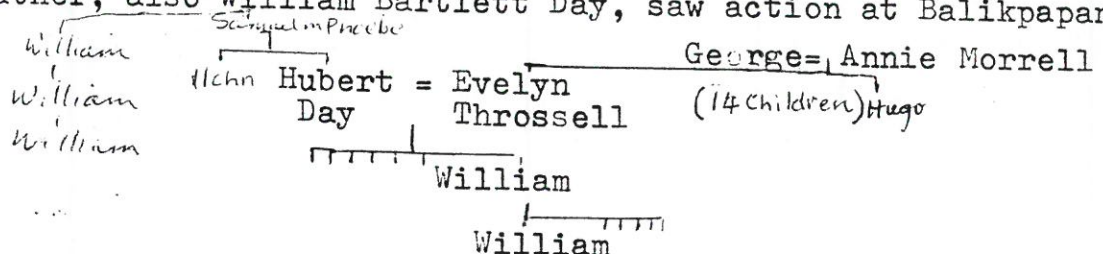
*[Signature]*



# Family History - Bill Day, author of Bunji

Hubert Bartlett Day emigrated from Maidstone, Kent, where his uncle, William Day, was the first in a succession of three generations of William Days to serve as mayor of the city. Hubert settled in Northam and York, where he married the third daughter of George and Annie Throssell in 1895. Hubert and Evelyn had seven children, all of whom settled in Perth while Hubert continued his pharmaceutical and dentistry practice in Boulder until his death in 1932. (Hubert was Bill Day's grandfather) George Throssell had arrived on the 'Scindian' in 1850 as the ten year old son of a pensioner guard bringing the first convicts to Western Australia. Orphaned at fifteen, Throssell became a successful Northam entrepreneur and politician, succeeding John Forrest as the second Western Australian Premier. Throssell had married Annie Morrell, the first and native-born child of Richard and Susannah who arrived in Fremantle in the first years of settlement (1832 and 1830).

Bill Day's great uncle, Hugo Throssell, won a Victoria Cross at Gallipoli and married the author Katharine Susannah Prichard in 1919. In 1964 Bill Day made his own pilgrimage to the battlefields of Gallipoli during a ten month overland journey to Britain. Day was a child of the second World War and his father, also William Bartlett Day, saw action at Balikpapan.

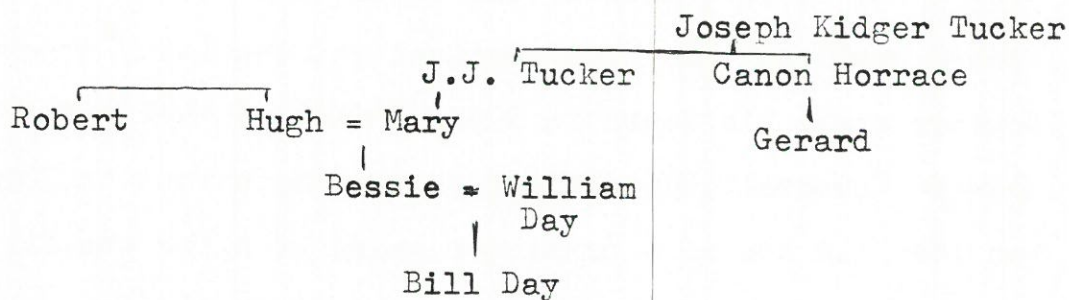


Bill Day's father married Bessie Moore whose 'Uncle Bertie', R.H. Moore, served as the Dean of Perth from 1929 to 1947.

Robert and his brother Hugh had emigrated from Ireland after the Coolgardie goldrush of 1892.



On the goldfields, Hugh Moore met and married Mary Tucker, the daughter of Coolgardie's first town clerk, J.J. Tucker. He was the son of Joseph Kidger Tucker of Wangaratta, Victoria, who arrived from Kent in 1861 as a representative of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. J.J. Tucker's nephew, Gerard Tucker, founded the Brotherhood of St Laurence.



" I am a product of all these branches of the family tree," says Bill Day. " Without their sacrifices I would not be here. However we will remain intruders until there is reconciliation with the original people. I see the book as a contribution to that process, and as a book that will take this nation into the next century."

Bill Bartlett Day      December 1993.



P.O. Box 1144  
Palmerston

19th Aug.

Dear Bill

I must say it was a surprise to hear from you via the news. Actually at the time you wrote the letter I went down to the "Swamp" on a nostalgic walk and was horrified by the devastation happening there. There are bulldozer tracks crisscrossing the whole area soil and sand from some areas being used to fill the Swamp. Where your dwelling was is totally destroyed - with large amounts of soil being taken to fill the Swamp - to what purpose this is to be used is a mystery.

We moved out of Cocant Grove when this area was changed to light industry - the rates rose a hundred fold so we moved right out. However I really like the Swamp area as we spent twenty six happy years there.

Yes it would be interesting to exchange books. Mine sells here for \$9.50 but I can't post one for \$10.00. My eye sight is not the best so my writing suffers. What course are you doing at UNA?

It was interesting to hear from you and possibly you may care to write again

Sincerely  
(Mrs) Sheila Clarke



PROGRESS DRIVE  
NIGHTCLIFF  
SEP 28

DEAR MR. DAY

I WANT YOU TO KNOW THEY ARE  
GOING TO SELL THAT LAND WHERE THE TOTEM  
POLES ALWAYS WERE AND THE GRAVES DOWN  
TOTEM ROAD. THIS IS NOT WHITE MAN LAND  
BUT BELONG TO US. MY BROTHER IS BURIED  
THERE AND IF THE MAN WHAT SAYS HE  
IS GOING TO BUY IT GETS IT HE WILL KNOCK  
DOWN ALL THE TREES AND BUILD ON THE  
GRAVES AND TOTEM POLES. I HEAR THIS AT  
BAPT. MY GIRL SHE RIGHT THIS FOR ME.  
PLEASE TELL THEM IT CANT BE SOLD TO BUILD ON  
GRAVES.

YOURS TRULY  
ROSIE BISHEP  
ROSIE

## FOURTH SCHEDULE

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act

## EXTRACT OF ENTRY IN THE REGISTER OF DEATHS

Number of Entry **N.T. 262/67****31852**

I, **Gail Shirley Fleay**, the Deputy Registrar  
of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the Northern Territory of Australia (~~of the District Registrar of Births,  
Deaths and Marriages for the District of Central Australia~~), hereby certify that an entry in the Register  
of Deaths kept in my office in pursuance of the Registration of  
Births, Deaths and Marriages Act gives the following particulars concerning the\* death of

**NAME** : Kathleen Minmarama SECRETARY**DATE OF DEATH** : 1 February 1986**PLACE OF DEATH**: Bagot Road Nightcliff N.T.Dated this **Thirtieth** day of **July** 19**91**

\*Set out particulars





2-5-91  
G. Borthistle  
11 Acacia Ave,  
Dalby,  
4405  
076-621314

Dear Bill,

Hope this letter finds you in good health,  
I received your letter a couple of weeks ago,  
sorry I haven't replied earlier, but things  
are always hectic with me since I got sober  
when I was drinking I had all the time in the  
world, today I wish there was an extra day  
in the week.

I pass your letter on to a  
nephew of Fred Fogarty, his sister son Melroy  
Morrison who lives in Dalby, I did speak  
to Melroy, his father in law works at  
the Hospital with me, he gave it to him, and  
sent the message back to say that he  
knew Fred well and would be happy  
to help you with the information you  
would be seeking. Melroy told Pat his  
father in law that he was the one who  
identified Fred when he died, he said if  
you would like to write to him care  
of

Melroy Morrison  
CT 11 Cantts street  
Dalby

4405



stating in detail what information you  
who like, Pat told me that Melroy was  
very pleased to hear that you were writing  
a book & including Fred in the book.

Bill if you could come to  
Dalby one day you would find out plenty  
about Fred, he was well known & liked.  
I have mentioned to a few people who  
knew him & they all have a story to  
tell, you would be most welcome to  
stay at my place if you were able to  
visit Dalby.

well I must sign off now  
& get ready for work, all the best in your  
inquiries & I wish you God Bless<sup>ings</sup> in your  
walk with God in the Fellowship of Alcoholic  
Anonymous which was given us the beautiful  
gift of Sobriety

Gerard.

P.S. please excuse the torn writing paper. if I can  
be of any further help just let me know.



Mr W.B. Day  
Post Office Box 4751  
DARWIN N.T. 5794



STATE LIBRARY  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

MITCHELL LIBRARY  
MACQUARIE STREET  
SYDNEY, NSW 2000  
TELEPHONE (02) 230 1414  
TELEX 12 1150  
FAX 232 4816

ML433/72  
JR:JSF

17th August, 1990.

Dear Mr. Day,

Enclosed are copies of the lists of contents of the George Gibbs Memorial Collection (MSS.2662) which includes records of the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights.

Thank you for the list of your records in the Northern Territory Archives and for the copies of the newscuttings.

Yours sincerely,

Janice Robertson  
Mitchell Library Reading Room

Encl.

GIBBS, GEORGE

MLMSS 2662

George Gibbs Memorial Collection re Aboriginal rights

Continuing additions

Since 1974 the Darwin Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation has provided an annuity to perpetuate the memory of George Gibbs and to be used to acquire material to help and preserve the history of the Aboriginal people.

CONTENTS

(George Gibbs Memorial Fund)

MLMSS 2662	received February 1974
MLMSS 2662	received October 1975
MLMSS 2662 Add on 820	received October 1975
MLMSS 2662 Add on 986	received July 1976
MLMSS 2662 Add on 1536	received October 1982
MLMSS 2662 Add on 1537	received October 1982
MLMSS 2662 Add on 1641	received May 1984
MLMSS 2662 Add on 1832	February 1987
MLMSS 2662 Add on 1834	March 1987

DETAILED CONTENTS LIST(S) AVAILABLE



GEORGE GIBBS MEMORIAL COLLECTION  
re Aboriginal rights in the Northern Territory  
1951, 1961-1965, 1978

<u>Date</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Box</u>
1951, 1978	Photographic prints (24) of papers re 1951 Strike of Aboriginal workers in Darwin, copied from film of Professor Frederick Rose, with transcripts and annotations by Mrs. Moira Gibbs, 1978.	1 (1)
1961-1962	Records of the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights.	
c.1962-1965	Records of the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights.	
1964	Transcripts of evidence and written submissions presented to the Select Committee of Enquiry of the Northern Territory Legislative Council into the Social Welfare Ordinance, 1964.	

GIBBS, GEORGE

ML MSS. 2662

ACC-ON 986

George Gibbs Memorial Collection re Northern  
Territory aborigines rights, c.1939+

18 cartons, 52 boxes

Continuing additions

The Darwin Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation  
established an annuity to perpetuate the memory of  
George Gibbs, which will be used to acquire material  
relating to the aboriginal struggle for equality

CONTENTS

1. Include records of the Northern Territory Council for  
Aboriginal Rights, c.1962-1965 and a transcript of  
evidence of the Select Committee of Enquiry of the  
Northern Territory Legislative Council into the Social  
Welfare Ordinance 1964
2. Further papers collected by Prof. Frank Stevens, being  
subject files, A-Z, c.1962-1974, and index cards, and  
further named subject files, c.1939-1975.

Report of Aboriginal Land Rights Commission, 1973 is RESTRICTED

DETAILED LIST AVAILABLE

Presented by Mrs. Gibbs and Frank Stevens

Gibbs, George

Australian Aborigines- Northern Territory c.1962-197-



MLMSS 2662  
Add - on 820

ML 1337/73

GIBBS, GEORGE

George Gibbs Memorial Collection -

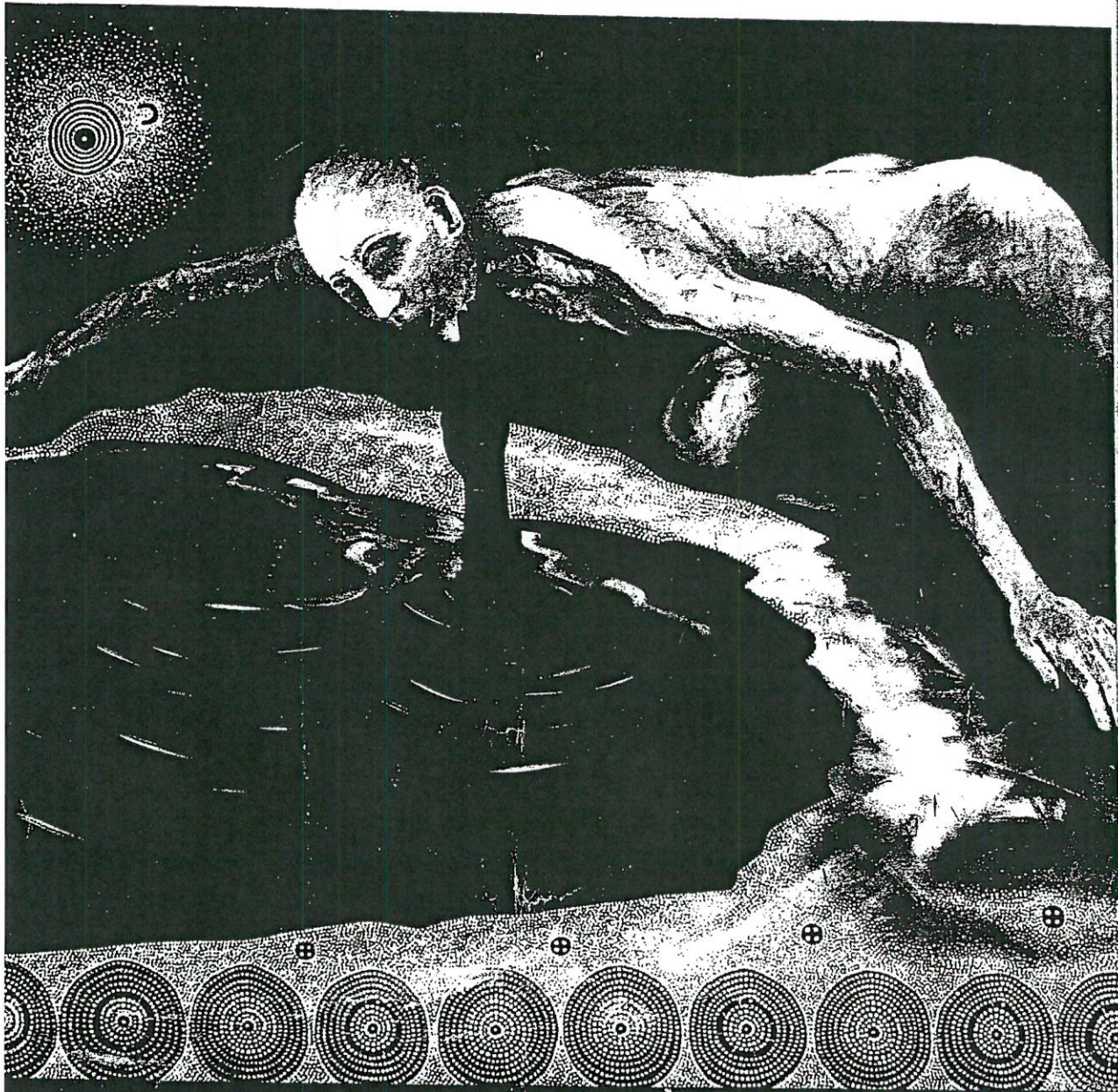
Further papers, being typed letter signed from Moira Gibbs to  
Faith Bandler, 10 Mar. 1970.



ASP

Topsy Secretary

# Australian IDENTITIES



*Edited by*  
D a v i d   D a y



## References

Attwood, B., Aborigines and academic historians: some recent encounters (review article) in *Australian historical studies*, Vol. 24, No. 94, April 1990, University of Melbourne, pp. 123-135

Barwick, D.E., Writing Aboriginal History, Comments on a book and its reviewers in *Canberra anthropology*, 4, 2, 1981, pp. 74-86

Darian-Smith K. & Hamilton P. (Eds.), 1994, Introduction in *Memory and history in twentieth century Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp 1-6

Morris, B., Making histories/living history in *Social analysis* no. 27, 1990, pp. 83-92

Muecke, S., *Textual spaces: Aboriginality and cultural studies*, New South Wales University Press Ltd., NSW, 1992

Neumann, K., A postcolonial writing of Aboriginal history in *Meanjin*, v. 51, no. 2, 1992, pp. 277-298

Rose, D.B., 1989, Remembrance in *Aboriginal history*, vol. 13, no. 12, pp 135-47

Secretary, T., and Heffernan, S., *Gweyelgwa ngayuboenoe, gwoyalwa darrinigi*, 'I burnt my feet for this country, this is my country', The life story of Topsy Secretary (*Juwaning*) as told to Sean Heffernan, unpublished, 1996



### Cyclone Tracy commemoration

In 1994 the Northern Territory Government commemorated 20 years since cyclone Tracy visited Darwin and caused wholesale destruction and the movement of people away from the town. This commemoration took place during the wet season of 1994/1995. Traditionally, Topsy states, *Larrikiya* people do not like to talk about cyclones during the wet season because that can 'call' a cyclone to come. It is a dangerous thing to do.

During this wet season a very high rainfall was recorded for the Darwin area. Also, in this season there were a small number reported cases of Nightcliff Gardener's Disease or Meliodosis for Darwin. Firstly, Topsy believes that the high rainfall occurred because of the Tracy commemoration and, secondly, the Meliodosis cases were caused by this high rainfall putting 'poison' into the ground. This disease comes from the soil and infects the bloodstream through open sores or cuts. 'Too much rain' put the 'poison' in the ground. These were the consequences brought on by the commemoration of cyclone Tracy.

### Reading the country, talking to country

As the above story demonstrates Topsy Secretary has an intimate knowledge and relationship to country. On a regular basis she 'reads' the country, attributing changes in country, sometimes, to specific causes and at other times alluding to possible reasons for these changes. On other occasions she may talk to country for protection and food supply among other reasons.

### 'Sites of struggle'/areas of sensitivity between *Larrikiya* and *Barragut*

There are a number of sites around Darwin that Topsy and her family are concerned over. They are usually sites that have involved some form of urban development and so risk damage to that particular area of country. Some of these sites include:

- Sunset Cove development in Nightcliff,
- Derriba Nungalinya* (Old Man Rock), Casuarina Beach,
- Cullen Bay development, Cullen Beach and
- Mindil* beach *Larrikiya* and *Tiwi* burial grounds.

### Sunset Cove development

This housing development lies directly alongside the *Kulaluk* community where Topsy and her family live. *Kulaluk* is the name of the serpent that lives in the waterhole, a sacred site, on *Kulaluk*. Underneath the land where the development is taking place there is plenty of *karawa* or freshwater. This

*Topsy is Helen Secretary's grandmother.*

also forms part of the feeding ground for the watersnake, a feeding ground which has been drastically altered by the development.

Throughout the course of this development there have been a number of trucks and tractors bogged owing to the freshwater rising on occasion. Also, a worker on the site was accidentally killed when he fell off his steam roller and it came back on top of him.

In addition, in the area of this development, there is a love magic site called *jirriyigi* or 'sweetheart stone' which is very important to Topsy and the *Larrikiya*. This site was disturbed by the trucks and had some influence in the subsequent disturbance of relationships between men and women at *Kulaluk*. Not long after the damage was caused to *jirriyigi* a tragic death occurred to a member of Topsy's family.

Topsy believes that these occurrences, the boggings and the deaths are related in some way to the unhappiness of the water serpent who has had her feeding ground disturbed and, of course, to the disturbance of *jirriyigi*.

#### *Derriba Nungalinya* (Old Man Rock)

As discussed previously in this paper Old Man Rock is a very important sacred site to the *Larrikiya* and so they are very clear and strong in arguing for the necessity of respect to be shown towards it. As pointed out earlier the *Barragut* haven't always been able to share this feeling towards the site and so there have been corresponding problems; both with research that has been carried out there and on the Old Man Rock Race day.

#### Cullen Bay development

Over the past two or three years work has been carried out on the Cullen Beach area in order to build a substantial residential, commercial and mooring site. This development has meant a radical change to this area with an extension of the beach area through the addition of tonnes and tonnes of sand and gravel. Initially, when this project was proposed it met with quite a deal of local opposition.

In the text of her life story Topsy argues that Cullen Beach has been destroyed by whitefella development. She argues that the damage to this section of country could be so great as to one day bring a tidal wave. She compares this area of land as it is today to the time when she was a young child and herself and friends would play there. She states that there used to be a mermaid that use to swim and play in the ocean close by to Cullen Beach



but that it is no longer able to do this due to the changes to country there. Topsy comments upon the Cullen Beach housing development and about the earlier presence of a mermaid in response to my questions.

Look, that beach is mile away near that channel where they ship come in. They ruin Cullen Beach...

*Did they ask Larrikiya people about this ?*

They didn't ask me, that's why I'm a bit nasty.

---

*If they would have asked you what would you have said to them?*

I'd say:

"No".

After when they build it, they ask me, it too late to say something! Cause she [mermaid] gone to the sea now, probably in 'nother place. If [she] found a nice beach, might be staying there, you know. Once she wanted to come out from the sea, well, she stop there [Cullen Beach]. [But not now] I don't think it'll be back because the house is still going on and on and on, noise. See, those day wasn't a noise (Secretary & Heffernan 1996 unpubl).

### **Mindil Beach burial ground**

The *Mindil* Beach burial ground is located in a close proximity to the centre of the town of Darwin itself. It also lies underneath the *Mindil* Beach or Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Casino and under the very successful *Mindil* Beach Markets. On a couple of occasions over the past ten years the bones lying in these grounds have been excavated by Northern Territory Government and Darwin City Council workers without prior consultation of *Larrakiya* traditional owners. Topsy and other *Larrikiya* were grossly offended by this lack of negotiation with themselves.

When referring to one of these incidents Topsy states:

That's where they dug all the people who were buried there. They dig her [my sister Anna] out too. That's why I growl and I made them to put it back the bones.

"We are not animal! They're having peaceful rest."

My family buried at *Mindil* beach. I went mad, *Mindil* beach, I said:

"If my father was alive [he] wouldn't lift your grave. Now having a good rest. Why you come and dig my grave? We not animal. We are human like you."

(Secretary & Heffernan 1996 unpubl)

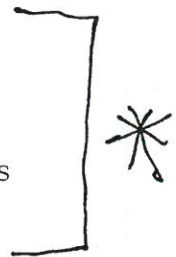
It is a matter of tragic irony that two symbols of whitefella success in Darwin, the Casino and the Tourist Markets, are built upon the bones, the graves of the traditional owners, the *Larrikiya*.

#### 4. FINAL DISCUSSION

In talking at this conference about notions of Australian identity it would appear that writings such as Topsy Secretary's life story closet to other knowledges, other histories and, therefore, other identities. In so doing, it could be argued that there is no such thing as a single national identity and what is regarded as such is a construct designed to serve various political ends.

In amongst these 'other identities' and 'other histories' of Australia as revealed by post-colonial historiography is a whole plethora of different regional, cultural and ethnic voices with a wide range of varying experiences. Topsy Secretary (*Juwaning*) is one of these voices and a very crucial one in terms of understanding the country of Darwin or of forging some sort of sense of place for those people living here. If there were to be a meaningful regional identity or relationship to place in terms of the population or populations of Darwin then this would have to grow out of a relationship to the traditional owners of that country, the *Larrikiya*. Topsy's identity and sense of place is rooted in a deep knowledge of her land, her culture, her language and the history of her family. Our (whitefellas) relationship to *Larrikiya* has actually impeded our closer identification to country and it is, perhaps, through such texts as Topsy's life story that non-Aboriginal people can become or feel more connected to country and so identify more closely to place.

I suspect that in a very general sense non-Aboriginal Darwinians have a stronger identification to the climate, to the lifestyle and to the economic opportunities that the development mentality of the Northern Territory Government provide. This exploitative *Barragut* view of the land clashes with the *Larrikiya's* perception of the value of land.



It is a problematic question where you have Aboriginal sacred sites within a town or urban setting and one whereby traditional Aboriginal values have not been respected, given the drive to build cities. We are lucky in Darwin that much traditional Aboriginal knowledge is still available to us and, to some extent, some sites have not been totally desecrated through development.



However, the problem for the *Larrikiya* remains: that of a lack of effective control over their sites within the city of Darwin even though many are protected by Northern Territory Government legislation. Development alongside sites inevitably can mean damage to some degree to the site itself.

The text of *Gweyelgwa ngayuboenoe gwoyalwa nganigi*: 'I burnt my feet for this country, this is my country' helps to work against the idea sometimes held by non-Aboriginal people that urban Aborigines have no culture or that *Larrikiya* culture is dead. It may seem that way simply because, as stated, they lack effective control over sites and because of their numbers being far outweighed by the non-Aboriginal population.

Colin Bourke from the University of South Australia said regarding Australian identity in a session he was chairing at the *Australian identities* conference held in Dublin, Ireland in July 1996:

To be Australian you must know Australia.

(Bourke, J., Comment in Session 7C, *Australian identities: history, culture and environment*, University College Dublin, Ireland, July, 1996)

At the time, in general discussion, he was referring to Australia in terms of the country itself and went on to say that this applies to Aboriginal knowledge regarding country. I would extend this argument to Darwin and say that if non-Aboriginal people wish to identify with 'place', with the country of Darwin then it would be fundamentally important to learn something about the traditional owners and about the significance of certain sites to the *Larrikiya*. I would even go so far as to suggest there is a moral imperative to do so given the extent of change or damage the European culture brought to their country and because of the continued lack of recognition of *Larrikiya* culture and of their unique relationship to the land. This shift in recognition of *Larrikiya* culture is vitally important in improving relationship between the *Larrikiya* and the *Barragut* and absolutely essential before any discussion of 'shared identity' can be entertained.

Sean Heffernan is based at the Faculty of Education, Northern Territory University, Darwin, Northern Territory

*Barragut = whitefella  
(page 1)*

*Bordaen = Darwin*



## Cullen Bay

Over the past few years, work has been carried out on the Cullen Beach area to build a substantial residential and commercial development and mooring site. This development has meant a radical change to this area with an extension of the beach area through the addition of many tonnes of sand and gravel. Initially, when this project was proposed, it met with quite a deal of local opposition. In the text of her life story, Topsy argues that Cullen Beach has been destroyed by white-fella development. She argues that the damage to this section of country could be so great as to one day bring a tidal wave. She compares this area of land as it is today to the time when she was a young child and would play there with friends. She says that there used to be a mermaid that used to swim and play in the ocean close by to Cullen Beach but that it is no longer able to do this due to the changes to country there:

Look, that beach is mile away near that channel where they ship come in. They ruin Cullen Beach ...

Did they ask Larrikiya people about this?

They didn't ask me, that's why I'm a bit nasty.

If they would have asked you, what would you have said to them?

I'd say: 'No'.

After when they build it, they ask me, it too late to say something! Cause she [mermaid] gone to the sea now, probably in 'nother place. If [she] found a nice beach, might be staying there, you know. Once she wanted to come out from the sea, well, she stop there [Cullen Beach]. [But not now] I don't think it'll be back because the house is still going on and on and on, noise. See, those day wasn't a noise.<sup>19</sup>

The Mindil Beach burial ground is located in close proximity to the centre of Darwin. It also lies underneath the Mindil Beach or Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Casino and the very successful Mindil Beach Markets. On a couple of occasions over the past ten years, the bones lying in these grounds have been excavated by Northern Territory Government and Darwin City Council workers without prior consultation of Larrikiya traditional owners. Topsy and other Larrikiya were grossly

Topsy  
Secretary  
grandmother  
of Helen