

Shared history forgotten: the neglected stories of Aboriginal miners, prospectors and ancillary workers in the north Queensland mining industry

By GALIINA (KAL) ELLWOOD and JANICE WEGNER
James Cook University

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While they were most notable in Cape York Peninsula and Chillagoe, Aboriginal miners and prospectors could be found in other mining regions of north Queensland, including Herberton, Charters Towers and the rainforest goldfields of Mulgrave, Russell River and Jordan Creek. In some cases, their stories have been published, and in the case of Jupiter Mosman at Charters Towers, are well known. In this study, their stories are supplemented with additional information. These stories are yet more evidence that in every mining field, Aborigines were involved in mining. Others were engaged in ancillary roles and activities of the kind that have occasionally been acknowledged by historians: surface work at mines, charcoal burning, firewood collecting, Native Mounted Police and police trackers on the fields, and as wives of European miners. These ancillary workers sometimes also engaged in mining.

This study reinforces the opinion expressed in an earlier publication¹ that Aboriginal participation in the mining industry was most likely to occur in mining fields thinly settled by Whites because they were remote and isolated, or arid, or mountainous, or heavily forested. This was particularly true of those areas with good alluvial or eluvial tin, gold and wolfram resources. Participation in the industry was most common in the nineteenth century. Unless Aborigines could gain exemption from Queensland's notorious Aboriginal Protection Acts or somehow avoid them, their employment in the twentieth century was constrained mainly to those occupations considered suitable by officialdom, which rarely included mining or casual ancillary work on the mining fields. This study also notes that contrary to the usual historiography of frontier race relations, on mining fields where mining predated other types of White settlement or closely followed them, Aborigines survived in larger numbers than on those fields which had been settled earlier by pastoralists. Rather than Noel Loos's idea that the mining frontier was more violent, in fact the pastoral frontier was more murderous in the long term.² Loos believes that the miners did not require Aboriginal labour to the same extent as in pastoral districts, and used this idea and the vulnerability of European miners, prospectors and teamsters to explain why race relations on mining fields seemed so fierce. In fact, after a short period of conflict, Aborigines became quickly integrated into the economies of mining fields and were valued as such.

Charters Towers was the premier hard rock mining field in Queensland up to World War I, covering a large area which included both alluvial and hard rock mines. It is well known that the discoverer was Jupiter Mosman, the Aboriginal horse boy who accompanied a group of prospectors; even so, many historical accounts miss him out of

the discovery story, including that by George Clarke, a member of the prospecting party.³ One version that circulated in Charters Towers said he could not have been involved as he was only an ‘infant’ at the time, indignantly refuted by a writer who had known him as a boy.⁴ However, in his later life he is usually described as a stockman in the Charters Towers district. In fact, he also continued to prospect, being described as ‘a fine prospector’,⁵ and for some time worked with J. Roberts on a tin mine on Stockyard Creek. Roberts had heard there was tin somewhere near his copper mine in the same district and sent Jupiter to prospect for it; Jupiter found it and sparked a tin rush and ended with a 1.2 percent share in the mine.⁶

There were other Aboriginal miners around Charters Towers, including a few who worked underground, some of whom went to WWI as sappers. Few Aboriginal miners can be identified by name, and while Dick Edwards was noted as working on the Rishton Day Dawn Reef in 1887, he is not identified as Aboriginal in this source, but is mentioned as such in other sources.⁷ Nearby Kangaroo Hills, a small tin and silver field inland from Ingham, was prospected by Charters Towers miners like Jupiter Mosman, who found wolfram there.⁸ In 1903 an un-named Aborigine found gold specimens in the same area and gave them to a young White man named Molloy, which led to a new gold reef being discovered. It is worth noting that the *Warungu* people of Kangaroo Hills are closely associated with the *Gudjula* people of Charters Towers. Given that much Aboriginal mining history can only be found through family history, Aboriginal family history research may reveal more miners on the Charters Towers field.

Near Kangaroo Hills field, near Greenvale to the southwest, is Blue Range, a remote and unimportant field. It appears that Aborigines regularly worked alluvial tin in this area; Marnie Kennedy records doing this on weekends with her husband and another couple during World War II:

... the men would get the banjo [sluice-box] ready for washing the tin, and carry the dirt near the water... we had our own dishes [pans] while the men would wash their dirt in a banjo. Later, Maisie and I would dry the tin in a tub over the fire. When dry, we would bag it. These bags were not very large but they were mighty heavy. I think they held one hundred pounds, and no wonder our legs would buckle under us. The going price was ten to twelve pounds a bag.⁹

The huge Herberton mineral field was well worked by Europeans, but was mostly in rough country, and hosted a large number of Aboriginal miners. Many worked at other occupations but went mining occasionally when the mineral prices were up, or other conditions were favourable. Larry Manning of Mareeba was a road worker, but spent spare time tin-scratching.¹⁰ The Gosam and Congo families, of mixed Chinese and *Bar-Barrum* heritage, worked over three generations as wolfram and tin scratchers, until the tin prices collapsed in 1984.¹¹ Glenda Morris’s family, the Gosams, left timber work for wolfram mining with her Grandfather Con Goo, a tin miner: ‘Granddad... knew all there was to know about mining’.¹² The tin prices were low at that point so they went after wolfram, taking eluvial material from around a reef on Dingo Mountain in the Kirrama area west of Cardwell. In the 1950s this mineral had very high prices – around £1 for a pound of wolfram, though the price collapsed soon after. The techniques used

by the family for the wolfram mine are interesting, combining those used for hard rock mining with alluvial mining:

During the day, Grandfather and Dad would be off to the wolfram claim while Mum did some prospecting of her own. We followed her as it was a bit dangerous to be around the men when they were blasting the ore body to loosen it... After setting the charge in place, Granddad would yell "FIRE!" and we'd hit the ground and wait till the rocks and stone ceased to fall... After the soil was loosened it was carted to the creek to be put through a sluice race. At times this was merely a channel in the natural stream itself, at others it was a timber structure built like a long trough. The technique was in controlling both the water and the dirt at the same time, and separating the metal from the soil without loss of values... Later, the clean black ore would be taken back to the camp, spread on a flat piece of iron over an open fire, and allowed to dry. Once dry it had to be tossed in tin dishes to further separate any fine sand. However, I have seen Granddad clean tin or wolfram in the sluice race until there wasn't a grain of sand to toss out of it.¹³

This passage demonstrates the level of skill required for good alluvial mining.

After wolfram prices dropped again, the family went tin mining on the Dry River and Mowbray Creek. They carted mullock heaps (mine dumps) to the Irvinebank Battery during the dry season, then went alluvial mining during the wet seasons:

We went tin scratching in the wet, as that is when water brings down the free tin, the pretty rub-amber, the grey, the brown and the black. Whenever we got a quantity we put it with Mum's cache to be sold in one lot, reaping the rewards in the final dividends. The process of tin dressing is the same as for wolfram. We cleaned and dressed our tin – with a little help from the oldies.¹⁴

'Tin scratching' refers to small scale alluvial and eluvial mining. Interestingly, the division of labour was along traditional lines:

The company usually divided up, with the men going about their work while Mum operated in another direction. We followed Mum when she prospected for tin dirt... sometimes we would do ten to twelve kilometres a day without noticing it.¹⁵

The children had their own 'banjos', short sluices often made out of corrugated iron, to wash tin-bearing dirt. Kevin Gosam built a tin jig at One-mile, near Mowbray, behind Mossman. Jigs use pulses of water to push the lighter dirt up and over the lip of the jig, while the heavier tin sinks.¹⁶

When tin prices were high, fossicking paid well; a report from 1936 noted that

Even the real Australians have the "tin-fever." Along the Dry River and elsewhere, aboriginals and their womenfolk can be seen "fossicking," and it is one of the weekly sights in Herberton to see "Tara," whose home is at Kalunga, along Flaggy Creek, come to town with his tin, which is bought for export south, some later finding its way oversea.¹⁷

Other miners in the Herberton mining field included George Barley (see Fig. 1), Turpin, Tommy Miller, Walker, Bertie Johnson, Barney Callaghan, Hughie Wood, Charlie Woods and his wife Jemima Ross, Logan, Cross and Haines, from the Herberton area, and Archer, Bennett, and Burns, from Petford (see Fig. 2).¹⁸ There was also a small Aboriginal community at Mt Molloy, north-east of the Herberton field; at least one of them, Harry Kludo, is said to have mined gold.¹⁹

Figure 1.1: George Barley of Woollooman Creek, Herberton, prospecting in a river, 1971.

Figure 1.2: George Barley outside his bush timber hut, 1971.



Source: 1.1 – National Archives of Australia,

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/PhotoDetail.aspx?Barcode=116675148>

Source: 1.2 - National Archives of Australia,

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/PhotoDetail.aspx?Barcode=11667550>

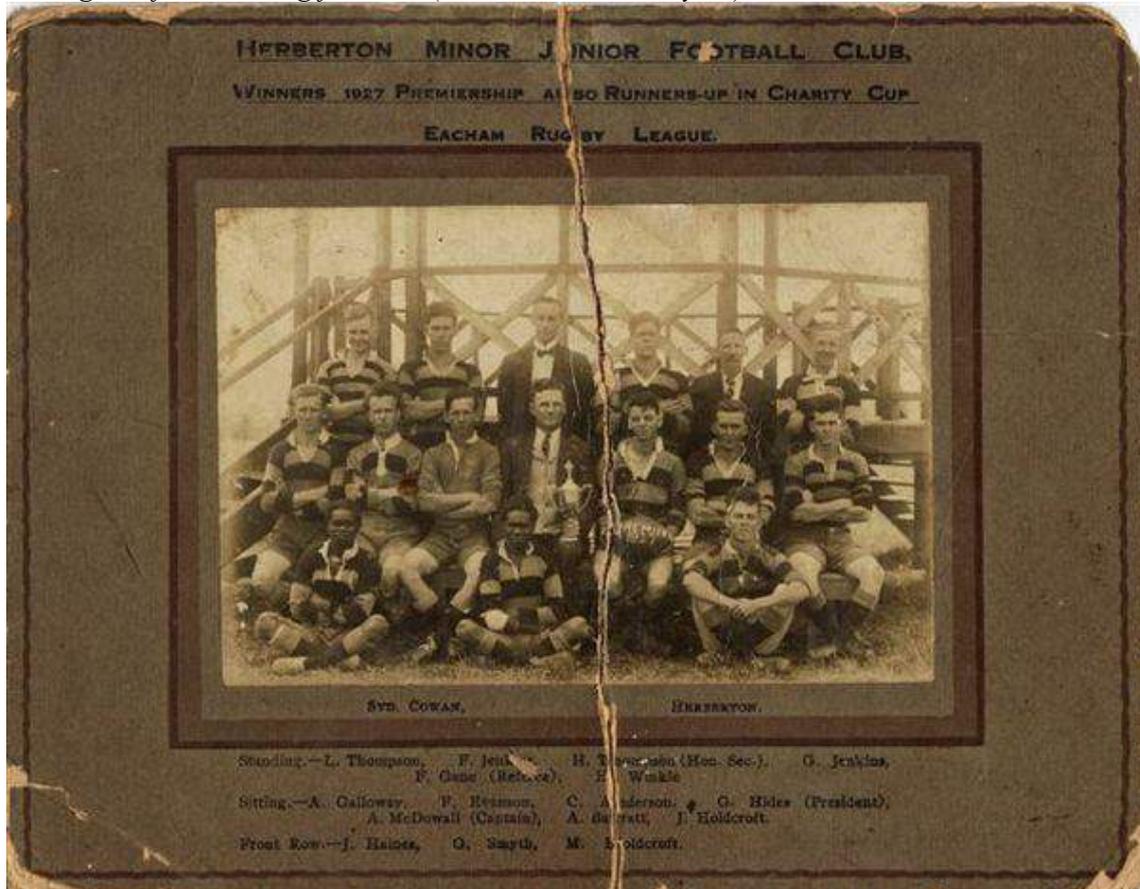
The rainforest goldfields south of Cairns, the Mulgrave (Goldsborough), Russell River and Jordan Creek, were all on the steep coastal ranges and had considerable Aboriginal involvement even before frontier warfare died down. Mulgrave goldfield began in 1880 with a European rush but soon came to rely on Aboriginal people, the *Dulabed* and *Malanbarra* people of the *Yidinji*. The Mulgrave mining warden wrote in 1891 that local Aborigines were ‘Very useful to the miners, who have so many difficulties to contend against, in a country so much broken and covered with so dense a jungle’.²⁰ The *Malanbarra* were among those who washed alluvial gold along the Mulgrave River,²¹ but when they were rounded up in 1913 and removed to Yarrabah Mission, the field collapsed.²² Kal Ellwood’s Aunty Eileen Royee remembers her family mining and assisting European miners until she was caught up in the round-up in 1913 at the big camp at Kearney Flat, and taken to Yarrabah.²³ The Mulgrave has since been a useful standby for small-scale alluvial mining; other members of the family have worked alluvial gold there up to recent times.

Christy Palmerston is credited with the 1886 discovery of the Russell River field to the south, though Michael O’Leary said it was actually Palmerston’s Aboriginal mates who found the gold.²⁴ On the Russell field, and the Boonjie field which was an extension of it towards Malanda, the *Nudjon-jii* and *Yidinji* peoples were involved from

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the beginning: a newspaper article noted that in the 1880s, ‘some miners paid 10 shillings a head for Aborigines to assist them in the search for the precious metal’,²⁵ and another said that Aborigines were ‘very friendly’ and helpful to the European miners, though not to the Chinese.²⁶

2: *Herberton football team indicating the level of acceptance in the White community of Aborigines from mining families (the Haines and Smyths).*



Source: Cairns Historical Society.

Archibald Meston noted that even while frontier warfare was still going on, with killings on both sides, ‘large numbers of blacks have been acting as prospectors for the diggers’.²⁷ Others worked as bearers, taking supplies into the rough country, and as guides. Robert Logan Jack noted that they had not long been in contact with Europeans and praised Christy Palmerston’s management of his human packers:

Blacks employed for carrying must, as a matter of course, be permanently attached to the camp, kept out of mischief with light “odd jobs”, and fed. It is an expensive and troublesome method no doubt, but it will have to be endured where no other means of supply is procurable. I observed with some interest Mr. Palmerston's method of "working" his boys.²⁸

Using pack horses would in fact have been much more expensive, as there was practically no grass for grazing. The *Yidinji* were even recruited to ‘defend’ the goldfield against the incursion of Chinese, taking part in an anti-Chinese riot to prevent the Asian miners moving further into the goldfield.²⁹

The condescending tone used by Logan Jack above is ironic given that later, Aborigines worked the hydraulic sluicing plants on this field, and were involved in these claims from their beginning.³⁰ They were hired on Edward Bovill Chandler's hydraulic sluicing operation on the Russell River in the 1890s, while Fred 'Boonjie' Brown and Clarke also employed 'dozens' of Aboriginal men and women on their Russell River sluicing operations (Fig. 4):

At Clarke's one could not help noticing four or five stalwart aboriginals mining away like white men, and from the happy and contented look about them it is a pity more are not taken in hand and trained to this work.³¹

One historian writes that they were digging races,³² but the images from the time (see Fig. 5), and stories from the elders, seem to indicate they were also looking after the races once in operation, ensuring that they worked properly so that the fast-moving water would remove the dirt and leave the heavier gold behind. Aunty Emma Johnstone told Sandra Pannell that 'My mum [Molly Raymond] told me her and Arnold's granny, Lydia, used to go through Boonjie to Kiandra [Creek] when they were kids. They worked on the gold sluices washing the gold'.³³ Brown provided food and clothing in return for their labour.³⁴ He certainly found their work profitable; he is said to have extracted 100,000 ounces of gold from the alluvial claims.³⁵ After 1911 returns declined and so did the field; the *Ngadjon-Jii* worked on the Tableland farms instead.

Figure 3 Statue of Pompey (also known as Pompo) and Christy Palmerston at Millaa Millaa.



Source: Courtesy Annette Taylor.

Alluvial gold had originally been found behind Innisfail by Christy Palmerston and his Aboriginal mate Pompey in 1897 (see Fig. 3),³⁶ but a rush was started when local Aborigines led European prospectors to good alluvial in 1898, thus founding the Jordan goldfield.³⁷ The settlement that grew there supported a postal receiving office until 1906. Palmerston by that time had a group of eight Aboriginal packers and guards who were reported by Robert Logan Jack as 'each carrying about 40 lbs. of rations and swags, ourselves and some of the boys armed like pirates with weapons which happily proved unnecessary.'³⁸ There is little to say that Palmerston's Aboriginal 'packers' and guides were also mining, but Palmerston refers to 'we' while prospecting by panning, so it is clear that the Aborigines were also doing so.³⁹

The headwaters of the Tully River hosted another rainforest goldfield, Koombooloomba. Willie Joss, who had been

involved in the other rainforest fields, had *Jirrbal* people working for him, including Jimmy Clarke. Soon the *Jirrbal* were mining gold specimens themselves and selling them to the White prospectors for food and tobacco.⁴⁰

Some Aboriginal miners have been noted for Croydon, though fewer because of the nature of that field, with very little alluvial.⁴¹ An unusual Croydon *Takalaga* miner was Mrs Ethel Marshall, who as a young woman mined with her husband, while her baby played in a safe place underground.⁴² On the nearby Etheridge field, the Dry Hash staff who had been trained to a 'high standard of efficiency' included 'a young man of Aboriginal blood' considered 'outstanding among them'.⁴³ As for the Charters Towers field, *Ewamin* and *Tagalaka* family history research may reveal more Aboriginal miners for these fields, but it is notable that both fields were settled by White pastoralists well in advance of mining which may account for their absence in the records. The southern section of the Etheridge has some of the rough country that seemed to encourage Aboriginal mining, but Croydon's landscape is relatively flat and open.

Figure 4 *Aboriginal workers on Clarke's hydro-sluicing claim, Russell River goldfield, one on the monitor. On other sluicing areas like the Annan, it was a favoured job.*



Source: *Queensland Government Mining Journal* 1902, p. 549.

The story of Henry's collaboration with the *Kalkadoon* people to find the copper deposits of the Great Australian, Argylla and Mt Oxide mines, that began the Cloncurry field, is well known.⁴⁴ Less often mentioned is Aboriginal participation in mining and prospecting on the Cloncurry field before and after these discoveries. Blainey notes that even before Argylla was found, Henry's partner Sheaffe began mining with a 'blackboy' and an Aboriginal woman, and

White prospectors William McPhail and Robert Johnson found one of the biggest copper lodes on the field, the Hampden, with two unnamed 'blackboys'. Mining warden Uhr inspected the find and on the way back, his Aboriginal horse wrangler Brisbane was following behind with the horses; he called them back to an outcrop of copper ore. In 1897 Jack Kennedy, son of pastoralist Alexander Kennedy, and a 'blackboy' found the Duchess, perhaps the richest mine on the field. There is a story, which Blainey doubts, that a *Kalkadoon* man pointed to the lead outcrop that would later become Mt Isa and said: 'sometime white man make lot money alonga that'. Certainly the *Kalkadoons* would be well aware of the relative value of minerals to Europeans by then, and would also know where on their lands the ore deposits occurred.⁴⁵ In 1919, a miner working near the later site of Mt Isa was shown samples of silver-lead ore by Aborigines but 'he had not realised its value'.⁴⁶ Had this been followed up, Mt Isa might have been discovered much earlier. There was gold on the Cloncurry field as well; Blainey notes that in 1920, 'near May Downs Station, the old Golden Sunset mine was

in the hands of a few Aboriginal prospectors and their gins'.⁴⁷ In 1931 another anonymous Aborigine started a gold rush 'in the environs of Mt Isa'.⁴⁸

Lawn Hill was a small and isolated silver-lead field on Frank Hann's Lawn Hill cattle station in the Gulf Country, near Burketown. There is one reference to an Aboriginal miner there, the son of an Aboriginal woman and a White prospector and station worker named Harry Flick; both father and son were recorded as prospecting on the station. The young man – Joe Flick – became one of the most notorious bushrangers in Queensland when soon after, he got into trouble with the police.⁴⁹

Figure 5: *Native Trooper with a prospecting pan on his back, Barron Gorge.*



Source: Cairns Historical Society photograph.

Native Mounted Police are generally considered in an ancillary role on the mining fields, fighting the war for the White frontier and breaking the resistance of the traditional owners. Initially they were brought in for the pastoral industry but were soon adapted to patrolling roads to the mining fields and in mining areas. After the Queensland Native Mounted Police force was disbanded by 1900, most of the troopers became trackers attached to bush police stations. However, there are reports that some went mining after they left the force or had escaped it earlier (see Fig. 5). Ex-trooper Bobby was with prospectors near Thornborough in 1878,⁵⁰ while deserting trooper Bismarck was also with prospectors at Laura in 1880,⁵¹ while one ex-trooper, Dugald, found gold near Cloncurry in 1886.⁵²

Others mixed ancillary work with mining. Geologist H.I. Jensen noted that 'black gins are the best prospectors' and suggested using 'white or black assistants' to hunt horses to relieve miners of that often time-consuming job.⁵³ In the 1930s they were used for shallow mining: 'White miners get about 19/- a day so some of the gougers occasionally make use of the help of native boys in dewatering and cleaning out shallow holes'.⁵⁴

Pastoral workers elsewhere were occasional prospectors. On the Normanby goldfield near Bowen, a ‘blackboy’ named Jack was prospecting for specimens on reefs in the area in 1901 while out horse hunting.⁵⁵ In 1909, King, a Mount Emu Plains stockman, discovered the gold of Mount Emu on the Flinders River at what became the Diecan mine.⁵⁶ It started a small gold rush, and the orebodies were also found to contain silver-lead.⁵⁷ Clearly, Aboriginal stockmen and horse wranglers prospected in gold-bearing country when they could.

Ancillary workers

The role of Aborigines as ancillary workers on the fields is better known by historians, particularly those Aborigines working in the towns, and a remarkable range of occupations has been reported by historians, both academic and popular. Henry Reynolds reported the *Northern Miner* calling them ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’, partly for domestic use but also for mining (see for example Fig. 6). Timber was supplied to the miners and ore millers, for fuel and mine props.⁵⁸

Figure 6: *Aboriginal water carter, Cloncurry, carting water for prospectors*



Source: *Queensland Government Mining Journal*, May 1906, p. 237.

This is reinforced in reminiscences; Diane Menghetti’s Charters Towers informant talked of the men chopping wood for food or a shilling or making timber props for clotheslines. They also delivered messages and parcels. King Billy of Millchester innocently delivered a parcel which turned out to contain opium and spent a few days in jail for it.⁵⁹ At Croydon and Golden Gate, old residents recalled men chopping wood, cleaning up yards, and fetching water from old shafts and wells for householders, with payment in food or if money, ‘a pittance’. Harry Walsh worked at one of the hotels; one of his jobs was to pull the punkah, the predecessor

of the ceiling fan.⁶⁰ Jan Wegner noted that in the 1880s they were teamsters’ ‘spare boys’, labourers, and charcoal burners on the Etheridge goldfield.⁶¹ In Coen, new arrivals were housed by Aborigines who stripped messmate bark for roofs and walls and gathered ant-bed (termite mounds) for making ovens.⁶² Carlo Thompson was described as a ‘Southern Aboriginal’ domestic and yardman in Coen in 1896, and another ‘yard boy’ named Jim was working for a White miner there.⁶³ Mt Croll Station near Coen was owned by the Armbrusts and Taylors, who also owned the butcher shop and hotel; the station’s Aboriginal workers also worked in the hotel, gardening, chopping firewood, washing, ironing, cleaning and milking. Jessie Togan was one, who also was nanny for

Irene Taylor's child while they were mining at Scrubby Creek near Iron Range.⁶⁴ On the Batavia field they were 'very useful, especially in the gardens and for cutting timber'.⁶⁵ Glenville Pike noted a number of 'roustabouts' working in Herberton: Tommy Newell, Joker Todd, Tommy Smyth, and Ivor Bligh McKenzie.⁶⁶ There are frequent references to Aboriginal horse-minders. Aboriginal chainmen were employed by surveyors, no doubt for their bush skills (see Figs 7 and 8).⁶⁷ Chris Anderson notes that the *Nyungkul* of the Annan tinfields engaged in ancillary work as well as mining:

packing, gardening, yard-boy, horse-boy, farm labourer, stockman, drover, stationhand, house-boy, message-boy, cutting weeds, scrub-faller and 'general-useful'.⁶⁸

They also hunted game and sold it to the White miners.⁶⁹ In 1888 the Government Medical Officer did a survey of every household at Thornborough on the Hodgkinson goldfield, and noted Aborigines working for the butcher and the mail contractor, a female house servant, and several Native Mounted Police troopers and their wives.⁷⁰

Figure 7: Survey party in the Cairns area, 1886.



Source: Bill Kitson and Judith McKay, *Surveying Queensland 1839-1945*, Brisbane: Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water and Queensland Museum, 2006, p. 6.

Ruth Kerr notes that John Moffat of Irvinebank and his suppliers employed the *M'barbarum* and *Jittabal* 'cutting wood and fetching water and looking after horses etc.'⁷¹ Others also remember them cutting wood, and as stockmen looking after the butcher's cattle.⁷² On Moffat's selection at Port Douglas, his bailiff Robert Mclean employed *Gugu Yalanji* to grow maize for the Irvinebank Mining Company's horse teams, paying them with keep and tobacco.⁷³

Women's labour was also valued. In the 1930s Aboriginal women would 'cook, bake and wash' for European miners on the Coen field; one reporter said that the

women had to be treated well or they would disappear into the bush. This employment stopped when police visits became more frequent, as it was against the Act.⁷⁴ Removals of women were justified on the grounds that they were in ‘immoral association’ with White miners and being ‘openly kept’ by the miners, which probably means in fact that they were de-facto wives.⁷⁵ Miners, both European and Chinese, in the more remote mining camps, took Aboriginal wives; in 1917 it was reported that

The Russell goldfield is now almost deserted, only a few battlers remaining on the ground. Some of these have apparently settled down for good, and appear quite contented with their dusky aboriginal wives. About four or five have secured the blessing of the church on their alliances...⁷⁶

Figure 8: *Survey party on Chillagoe mineral field, with two Aboriginal chainmen, looking towards the Featherbed Ranges. Inset shows the Mining Surveyor sitting on the veranda of his residence, Chillagoe, 1900.*



Source: National Library pic-vn3307930-v, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/167828821>. The inset is proof that this survey gang is photographed on the Chillagoe field, as the original is titled as being taken there.

Effectively, taking Aboriginal wives stopped the usual nomadism of the small miners and prevented fields from being deserted; with a whole field to choose from, they probably did better than continually following the rushes. The wives could earn money by fossicking, such as the unlucky Annie who was associating with Ah Tong at Butcher’s Creek on the Mulgrave River field and was murdered while fossicking for gold in the creek.⁷⁷ Many sources talk of women doing housework and washing in mining towns, either as casual workers or as stolen servants, for households and hotels, and as child minders.⁷⁸ Aboriginal women in the town camps also engaged in casual sex work, which brought down the disapproval of officials and the ‘respectable’ residents of towns and contributed to calls for their removal to missions.

Wherever there were no roads, or the going was too rough for packhorses, or rainforest meant no grass for horse teams, Aborigines were employed as packers. As

noted earlier, they were essential for the Russell Goldfield; on the Rocky goldfield and at Port Stewart, near Coen, local Aborigines carried in all supplies because the country was too hard for packhorses.⁷⁹ When Jack Gordon found gold at what became the Claudie goldfield, 'at times during the wet season natives carried light rails and needed equipment to Iron Range, and were well paid for it'.⁸⁰ In the difficult country of the coastal ranges they used their own tracks and trails, which along with their cleared campsites were essential for European penetration of the thick rainforest and steep terrain of the Cairns goldfields. Their knowledge of those tracks was useful when the tracks became roads. When the Johnstone Divisional Board tried to make roads to the Russell River goldfield, Paddy Billy guided a track marker, and later Aboriginal workers forged ahead of the track-making team, brushing the 'scrub' with knives in preparation for the axe men following.⁸¹

The role of Aboriginal guides for European explorers is now acknowledged as being vital to the success of these expeditions,⁸² but the role of Aboriginal 'black boys' in prospecting trips should receive similar acknowledgement. Particularly in remote areas or difficult terrain, they were essential. Their tracking skills and ability to memorise the country they went through made them indispensable for finding strayed horses and lost members of the party, or for backtracking. Their knowledge of bush foods meant scarce rations could be replaced or supplemented, as in the work of Jack who 'kept the larder... replenished' for his prospector mate.⁸³ As Dawn May notes, 'As the use of Aboriginal labour became more common in the 1870s, Europeans developed the habit of taking a black companion on almost any overland journey'.⁸⁴ They were rarely mentioned by name, R.L. Jack's Willie and Brusher being an exception for his 1879 expedition.⁸⁵ J.V. Mulligan had 'Charlie' on his expeditions, but the name is not mentioned in his reminiscences published in the *Queenslander*; it is R.L. Jack who actually identifies him.⁸⁶ Pompey is well known, but not Willie, the *Mamu* man who accompanied Palmerston while prospecting in 1885,⁸⁷ or Sam, the 'Flinders River aborigine' who accompanied the prospector George Clark.⁸⁸ Even after the north became better known to Europeans, any expedition into remote areas was incomplete without Aboriginal workers. 'M.W.S' took Billy to guide him on a prospecting trip to the Carron Range on Cape York in 1897.⁸⁹ James Dick and Sheffield picked up two 'friendly' Aborigines on a prospecting trip on Cape York in 1910 and they were 'made useful' for the time they stayed with the prospectors.⁹⁰ In 1938, three accompanied two cyanide plant owners looking for old mill tailings to treat in a 600 mile trip through Cape York, starting at Portland Roads.⁹¹

Aboriginal tracking skills were also used to search for lost White prospectors and miners, and local groups helped those they came upon in the bush, there being a number of cases on the remote fields of Cape York.⁹² In one case, a group of Aborigines came across a lost prospector in bad health and in a journey that included wading flooded crocodile-infested rivers, they carried him over 75 km to Port Stewart for help.⁹³

Aboriginal people were also entrepreneurs and, as local residents going about their everyday lives, developed other opportunities, such as staging corroborees for pay or donations; owning and operating bullock drays and packing stores; and

blacksmithing.⁹⁴ Tommy Miller owned a pack-horse team, using mules, on the Herberton field,⁹⁵ while on the remote Woolgar field, Diamond and Kitty kept a mail change in a bark hut.⁹⁶ This entrepreneurship included innovative fraud; on Cape York, Pluto's fleecing of new-chums by putting a played-out mine on tribute is one example.⁹⁷ Another successful incident was widely reported:

A blackfellow (whom you can now put down as a thorough mining expert - result of civilisation) came in and told some men of a big mountain with plenty of gold. Those who got the news kept the nigger quiet, gave him everything he wanted, and fed him up like a fighting cock. Then they started out. The first day they sailed along in one direction. The next day the blackfellow changed his course. He was treated right royally all the time. The second night out the noble nigger cleared, and left the unfortunate fellows clean - bushed, and if it had not been that they were discovered by another nigger who was horse-hunting, they would have about perished. So if ever you come up this way, look out for aboriginal mining experts.⁹⁸

Mining field railways also employed Aborigines, both as construction workers and later on maintenance gangs. Aboriginal women accompanied the construction gangs, cooking and washing for them.⁹⁹

There is no doubt that much ancillary work was exploitative, usually paid in food, tobacco, alcohol, opium or clothing, and occasionally a small coin. Robert Logan Jack praised Christy Palmerston's treatment of his packers on the Russell field, but noted that 'The half civilized blacks being employed to carry rations and other necessaries to camps inaccessible to beasts of burden are in some cases overloaded, over-driven, and unfairly treated as to their remuneration'.¹⁰⁰ Sandra Pannell also calls these packers 'beasts of burden' and notes that 'Aboriginal men worked as human packhorses and girls and women as domestic servants for nothing more than rations and cast-off clothes.'¹⁰¹ She points to the imperial expectation that Black people, after a brutal invasion that broke their resistance, should then labour for practically nothing to establish a home suitable for White people without any expectation of sharing in the prosperity their labour helped to create.¹⁰² This is true, yet the *Ngadjon-Jii* people themselves stated that they thought well of Fred 'Boonjie' Brown, despite his and Christie Palmerston's earlier massacres of their people, and as noted earlier, many of the women married White miners. After equal wages were imposed in the 1960s, and the farmers whose land they had helped to clear refused to employ them anymore, many went mining alluvial gold for themselves; their past experience with mining and knowledge of country meant they could navigate the rainforests of the Russell goldfield and live off the land, until the 1980s:

We did gold chasing around Carr's Hill [near Butchers Creek], and down on Kiandra, Combo and Coolamon Creek. Once I tried camping at The Astronomer [a former gold claim] but packed up in the middle of the night because the spirits were too strong. We used to go to Gulgagulga country for gold. I would go fossicking with Auntie Jessie, my mum [Emma Johnston], and Auntie Elsie Battle. We'd get water from creeks, like Coolamon Creek. We'd be out in the

scrub for months. School holidays all the kids would come down and join us. We'd all live off bush tucker.

We went panning for gold. We would dig dirt from corners of the creek and wash it out with sluice. My granny Molly used to go digging for gold.¹⁰³

In other words, experience of the mining frontier, though it led to massacres, dispossession and exploitation, could lead to small independent mining later, as it had in other areas of north Queensland.

This situation should be contrasted with the Queensland government's response to perceptions of exploitation in the late nineteenth century. Under the 1897 Protection Act and its successors, Aborigines had to be employed under a permit; the kind of employment considered suitable for permits was usually pastoral station work or servant and labouring work for middle class homes and businesses, and the Aborigines could not choose their employer, nor leave that employer voluntarily. Permits were available for casual work but added a layer of bureaucracy, along with increased wages, that would have deterred many former employers. Sally Babidge noted that in Charters Towers, the Protector disapproved of and discouraged casual ancillary work by Aborigines because it did not fit the permit system set out in the Act.¹⁰⁴ The legislation was self-serving as the class of employer favoured by the Act was that largely represented in the Queensland Parliament. The wages set under the Act were mostly far more than what Aborigines received earlier, but they saw very little of the money – the notorious 'stolen wages' – and had no control over it, not even being able to bequeath it to their children. Those who were 'removed' to Government stations and missions were not only taken from their own land but – ironically – were paid even less for the work they did there. The only real benefit was that the spread of venereal diseases, which were devastating communities and fertility levels, was halted, and they were safe from White violence, though not from attempts to destroy culture, a violence of a different kind. Given the choice between this system's type of exploitation and the exploitation earlier around the mines and mining towns, where at least they had some freedom of contract, could go mining for themselves, and could stay on country, one might suspect they would have preferred the latter. Some White people sympathised: 'for all right thinking people consider the blacks have a perfect right to live their own free life in their own country, working when they wish or walking about at intervals'.¹⁰⁵

Geologist Jensen made another important point when he complained about the operation of the Act in Cape York. The Queensland authorities had a very limited view of what was a suitable occupation for Aborigines; they were to be employed, usually in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, preferably in the fishing and pastoral industries. This did not include mining for themselves or working for miners on their own land. Jensen lamented that:

In addition to all the other hardships and disadvantages which the prospector has to face a new one has been thrown upon him. All the blacks, who formerly roamed about and were available as horse-boys and domestic help, have been rounded up and have been taken to the missions, where they are hired out on 12 months' or two years' contracts as indented labour on trochus fishing luggers, which are mostly commanded by Japanese or Filipino captains. They are taken

away from their natural food and hired out on labor [sic] which often means crippling for life or death by shark, or the bursting of a blood vessel in deep diving... Malaria is introduced by the fishing luggers and mortality in the native concentration camps must increase. The system is a cruel one to the natives who are made serfs and robbed of their freedom, and a blow to the development of Northern Australia.¹⁰⁶

In fact, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in 1907 had proposed setting up a Government station at Lockhart River after complaints from lugger captains that they had trouble recruiting Aboriginal crews, because so many were inland – where many were engaged in the mining industry.¹⁰⁷

There were other objections to removals to missions and reserves under the Act, such as the infamous and brutal round-up of Cape York Aborigines by Constable Theis on Christmas Eve in 1932, which included well-known prospector Kitty Pluto and provoked an outcry from the White miners.¹⁰⁸ The permit system also met with resistance from Whites. In 1915 a Cape York resident pointed out that since the Protector had begun to insist on employment agreements, employment of Aborigines had almost disappeared and they no longer had an opportunity to earn tobacco and food, and in consequence were becoming ‘threatening’, and violence between White and Black was re-emerging.¹⁰⁹ This type of protest against the implementation of the Act was not confined to the remote districts of Cape York, where the labour and skills possessed by Aborigines were at a premium. In 1898 a deputation to the government from other mining fields in north Queensland protested against removals of Aborigines from their districts, as expressed in a telegram to the Premier:

Very strong opinions expressed by deputation of graziers, farmers and miners against stringent enforcement of aboriginal protection act in Cairns, Russell River, Atherton, Thornborough and Herberton districts have promise that Govt. will not enforce act so as to interfere with legitimate employment of aborigines engaged & also that Govt will not compel the removal of aborigines from their own country to reserves.¹¹⁰

Some of the protests above were just as self-serving for the miners and townspeople as the implementation of the Act was for the bigger employers. Looking at the situation from a contemporary Aboriginal point of view, though, they would be more likely to side with those protesting against the Act.

Conclusion

There are many histories which detail Aboriginal participation in the life of mining fields, such as Fred Cahir’s *Black Gold*¹¹¹ and Mike Harding’s study of Aboriginal opal mining in South Australia.¹¹² This article shows that the participation of Aborigines in the north Queensland mining fields, both as miners and as ancillary workers, was more important than historians of the region have realised. While there were Aboriginal miners and prospectors on every mining field, it is clear that more could be found in the more remote and isolated districts, and in rougher terrain not closely settled by Europeans such as ranges and rainforest. In the open savannah mining fields, especially

the larger and more accessible fields such as Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Croydon and the Etheridge, they were less likely to figure as miners. This is understandable for 'reefing' fields like Croydon and Ravenswood, which required capital and knowledge of deep hard rock mining techniques to work the lodes. However, large fields like Charters Towers and the Etheridge, with their many isolated sub-fields, including some with alluvial gold, should have been worked by at least some Aborigines in the same way as goldfields on the Cape. These fields, however, were situated in areas already settled some years before mining began, by pastoralists, who with the Native Mounted Police had reduced the Aboriginal population considerably. Research for this paper has found that Aboriginal ancillary labour was more valuable in the more isolated mining fields, or those with rough terrain. Aboriginal skills in such locations were more appreciated and consequently miners were employing Aborigines even while frontier conflict was still occurring, and hence murderous conflict declined more quickly in these areas than on the pastoral frontier.

In the less accessible fields, Aboriginal miners and prospectors were more numerous and they mined from frontier times to the present. Whole families and clans went mining, over generations, so it is surprising that their mining activities have been forgotten so thoroughly. Standard histories of these districts usually neglect them, and while this could be explained by Aborigines taking European names, in many cases they are actually identified as Aboriginal in the primary sources. Reminiscences certainly mention the ancillary work that Aborigines did on the mining fields, particularly the less skilled tasks such as chopping firewood, fetching water, general labouring, and domestic work such as cleaning and laundering. These fitted the image of Aborigines as capable of only simple tasks. The more skilled jobs and the mining they participated in are much less likely to appear.

Just as for mining, much ancillary work on the mining fields disappeared under the Protection Acts in the twentieth century, as it was mostly casual. Permits under the Acts were required to employ an Aborigine, and these employers were rarely miners; they were more likely to be business owners in the towns, or graziers. The idea was to prevent exploitation of the Aboriginal workers, and it was true that exploitation had occurred. However, the cure proved worse than the disease, with the Act robbing the people it 'protected' from freedom to choose their own employer, one who fitted their concept of a good 'boss'. The scale of wages under the Act was generous compared to other States, yet the workers saw little of the money they earned, and they lived under the threat of being removed from their own country, or of having their families removed. White observers on the mining fields protested on both economic and humanitarian grounds but were ignored by officialdom. The opinions of the Aborigines themselves are missing from the records.

Endnotes

¹ Galiina Ellwood, 'The Aboriginal miners and prospectors of Cape York Peninsula 1870 to ca.1950s', *Journal of Australasian Mining History* vol. 16, October 2018, pp. 75-92.

² Noel Loos, *Invasion and Resistance*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1982, Chapter 3 *passim*.

- ³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 26 August 1903, p. 28.
- ⁴ *Northern Miner*, 10 June 1922, p. 5; *ibid.*, 14 March 1945, p. 7.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 August 1913, p. 4.
- ⁶ *North Queensland Register*, 29 May 1905, p. 3.
- ⁷ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 17 February 1887, p. 2; 'a list of Aboriginal donors to WWI funds in Charters Towers', *Evening Telegraph*, 3 April 1916, p. 2.
- ⁸ *North Queensland Register*, 3 October 1904, p. 8.
- ⁹ Marnie Kennedy, *Born a Half-caste*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1985, p. 33.
- ¹⁰ *Northern Herald*, 20 May 1939, p. 19.
- ¹¹ Glenda Morris, *Looking Back the Way We Came*, Pinevale, Mareeba, 1991, p. 17.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- ¹⁷ *Johnstone River Advocate*, 11 February 1936, p. 5.
- ¹⁸ See police reports in the Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) <http://www.cifhs.com/qldrecords/qldherberton.html>
- ¹⁹ Christopher Anderson and Norman Mitchell, 'Kubara: a Kuku-Yalanji view of the Chinese in North Queensland', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 5, no.1, 1981, p. 28.
- ²⁰ Report of Mining Warden, Mulgrave Field, *Votes and Proceedings of the Queensland Parliament* [hereafter *QV&P*], Vol. IV, 1891, p. 269.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Uncle George Davis, Uncle Lenny Royee and Uncle Connie Stewart, pers comm., 2001. George Davis was a child at the time he and his clan were rounded up. The mother of Lenny Royee was also a member of the group rounded up.
- ²³ Aunty Eileen Royee, pers. Comm. to Kal Ellwood, 2008. Aunty Eileen was three at the time.
- ²⁴ *Cairns Post*, 9 January 1941, p. 8. He states that one was Pompey, who actually died in 1882.
- ²⁵ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 9 February 1933, p. 4.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5 July 1877, p. 2.
- ²⁷ Quoted in Sandra Pannell and the Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owners, *Yamani Country: A Spatial History of the Atherton Tableland*, Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management, Rainforest CRC, Cairns, 2005, p. 36.
- ²⁸ Robert Logan Jack, *Geology of the Russell River Goldfield*, Geological Survey of Queensland Publication 45, January 1888.
- ²⁹ J. May, 'Mountain tracks and the Russell Goldfield', 1959, Cairns Historical Society Document G07261.
- ³⁰ Robert Ashley, 'The life and times of Edward Bovill Chandler: in search of El Dorado', *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, vol. 12, October 2014, pp. 17-18. Ashley notes that as he aged, Chandler depended on gold found by his Aboriginal companions.
- ³¹ *Cairns Post*, 12 November 1892, p. 3; May, 'Mountain Tracks'.
- ³² W.T. (Bill) Johnston, *Yungaburra: Place of Haunted Spirits*, Eacham Historical Society, Malanda, 1983, p. 10.
- ³³ Pannell and Ngadjon-Jii, *Yamani Country*, p. 45.
- ³⁴ May, 'Mountain Tracks', p. 1; D. Ray and P. Callaghan, 'Frederick Grace (Boonjie) Brown: Farmer and Mining Entrepreneur', *Eacham Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 377, 2012.
- ³⁵ May, 'Mountain tracks', p. 1.
- ³⁶ 'Coyyan' (Michael O'Leary), who prospected with Palmerston for some time and was a friend, states that Pompey was taken by Palmerston from the Bloomfield area, which indicates he was probably *Kuku Nyungkal* or *Gugu Yalandji*. *Cairns Post*, 9 January 1941, p. 8.
- ³⁷ D.W. De Havelland, *Gold and Ghosts Volume 4*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, W.A., 1989, p. 240. The statue to Pompey (Pompo) in Millaa Millaa is one of the few examples of Aboriginal prospectors being commemorated with a monument.
- ³⁸ Jack, *Geology of the Russell River*, p. 1. In fact, the guns were unnecessary, as the packers were local men.
- ³⁹ *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 9 July 1952, p. 5. In 1880, J.V. Mulligan prospected Cape York, between the King and Coleman Rivers, with Palmerston and Pompey, and records himself and Pompey finding gold. See *Queenslander*, 5 November 1904, p. 8.

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- ⁴⁰ Edwina Toohey, *Tumbling Waters: Toumoulin on the Evelyn Tableland in days gone by*, the author, Toumoulin, 1991, p. 19.
- ⁴¹ Dave Flett, Notes based on oral histories with Chillagoe Aboriginal families c. 1975 – 1990s.
- ⁴² Interview with Mrs Marshall by Jan Wegner, Croydon, 20 June 1986.
- ⁴³ *Northern Miner*, 7 September 1937, p. 3.
- ⁴⁴ See Galiina Ellwood, 'Aboriginal prospectors and miners of tropical Queensland, from pre-contact times to ca.1950', *Journal of Australasian Mining History* vol. 12, October 2014, pp. 64-5.
- ⁴⁵ Geoffrey Blainey, *Mines in the Spinifex*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1970, pp. 15, 20, 21, 31, 60.
- ⁴⁶ H.A. Bruce in *Bowen Independent*, 5 July 1933, p. 1.
- ⁴⁷ Blainey, *Mines in the Spinifex*, p. 61.
- ⁴⁸ *Northern Miner*, 22 June 1931, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ *Northern Standard*, 22 September 1931, p. 4; Jan Wegner and Galiina Ellwood, 'Joe Flick the bushranger', *Cairns Historical Society Bulletin*, in press. After a number of incidents, including his wounding Frank Hann and killing Senior Constable Alfred Wavell and Hann's Aboriginal stockman Nym, he was killed by Trooper Jack Noble.
- ⁵⁰ Queensland State Archives [hereafter QSA], POL12M/G1, 1878/148, courtesy of Jonathan Richards.
- ⁵¹ QSA, A/40147, 1880/2409, courtesy Jonathan Richards.
- ⁵² QSA, COL/A454, 1886/211 & COL/A462, 1886/2960, courtesy of Jonathan Richards.
- ⁵³ *Cairns Post*, 18 December 1936, p. 14; Ray Langford, *Two White Swans: reminiscences of Irvinebank and Stannary Hills*, Langford, Atherton, 2002, p. 3.
- ⁵⁴ *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 23 April 1936, p. 3.
- ⁵⁵ *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette*, 22 January 1901, p. 4.
- ⁵⁶ E.O. Marks (ed.), 'Gold on Mount Emu Plains Station. Hughenden District', in *Geological Survey of Queensland Publication* No. 235, Records No. 3, Queensland Department of Mines, Brisbane, 1924.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28
- ⁵⁸ Henry Reynolds, 'Townspeople and fringe-dwellers', in Henry Reynolds (ed.), *Race Relations in North Queensland*, History Department, James Cook University, Townsville, 1978, p. 173; 'Chief Protector of Aborigines', *Queenslander*, 26 January 1907, p. 32.
- ⁵⁹ Diane Menghetti, *I Remember: memories of Charters Towers*, History Department, James Cook University, Townsville, 1989, pp. 66, 68.
- ⁶⁰ Jones, *Memories of Golden Gate* (no publishing details or page numbers); V.T. Corbin (ed.), *Back to Croydon Week: souvenir booklet of Croydon*, Croydon, 1958, no pagination.
- ⁶¹ J. Wegner, 'The Aborigines of the Etheridge Shire, 1860 – 1980: a descriptive study', in Reynolds (ed.), *Race Relations in North Queensland*, pp. 157, 162.
- ⁶² Stanley H. Boyd, *Louisa of the Peninsula* (ed.) Glenville Pike, Keystar Publications, Ravenshoe, n.d., p. 18.
- ⁶³ List of Coen residents for 1896 supplied by Stan Boyd, 22 March 1963, Cairns Historical Society document GO1884; M. Copland, 'Calculating Lives: the numbers and narratives of forced removals in Queensland 1859-1972', PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2005, p. 227.
- ⁶⁴ Mal Brown, *Irene's Story*, M. Brown, Malanda, no date, pp. 10, 36.
- ⁶⁵ *Central Queensland Herald*, 9 October 1930, p. 55.
- ⁶⁶ Glenville Pike, *Herberton: town of the pioneers*, Glenville Pike, Mareeba, 2009.
- ⁶⁷ Bill Kitson and Judith McKay, *Surveying Queensland 1839-45: a pictorial history*, Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water and Queensland Museum, Brisbane, 2006, pp. 4, 6.
- ⁶⁸ Chris Anderson, 'Aborigines and tin-mining in North Queensland: A Case Study in the Anthropology of Contact History,' *Mankind*, vol. 13, no. 6 (1983), p. 485.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ Reports and Diary of the Government Medical and Health Officer, Thornborough Police District 1888-1889, in possession Dr Jan Wegner, JCU, Cairns Campus.
- ⁷¹ Ruth Kerr, 'John Moffat of Irvinebank: a biography of a regional entrepreneur,' PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1986, p. 99.
- ⁷² Langford, *Two White Swans*, pp. 3, 61-2.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-4.
- ⁷⁴ *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 23 April 1936, p. 3.
- ⁷⁵ Copland, *Calculating Lives*, pp. 232, 239.
- ⁷⁶ *Northern Herald*, 7 December 1917, p. 57.
- ⁷⁷ *Brisbane Truth*, 2 June 1907, p. 3.
- ⁷⁸ Jones, *Memories of Golden Gate* (no page no.); Corbin, *Back to Croydon Week*; Pike, *Herberton*, p. 32; Anderson, 'Aborigines and tin-mining', p. 485.

- ⁷⁹ *Royal Commission into the Mining Industry*, 1897, p. XLIV. One problem sometimes encountered was that the packers would not cross into another tribe's territory. See for example, *Cairns Post*, 27 March 1940, p. 10.
- ⁸⁰ Hugh Borland, 'Stars of Gold', *Cairns Post*, 31 August 1951, p. 7.
- ⁸¹ Dorothy Jones, *Hurricane Lamps and Blue Umbrellas*, G.K. Bolton, Cairns, 1973, pp. 239, 240.
- ⁸² See for example Henry Reynolds, *With the White People: The Crucial Role of Aborigines in the Exploration and Development of Australia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1990, Ch. 1, *passim*, and Greg Blyton, 'Harry Brown (c. 1819-1854): Contribution of an Aboriginal guide in Australian exploration', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 39, 2015, pp. 63-82.
- ⁸³ *Cairns Post*, 12 February 1921, p. 8.
- ⁸⁴ Dawn May, *From Bush to Station: Aboriginal labour in the North Queensland pastoral industry, 1861-1897*, History Department, James Cook University, Townsville, 1983, p. 51.
- ⁸⁵ Jack, *Northmost Australia*, Vol. 2, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd, London, 1921, pp. 470, 476.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 440.
- ⁸⁷ *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 27 November 1953, p. 7. Willie supplemented the party's rations with bush foods on a number of occasions.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1946, p. 4, based on Palmerston's account of his journeys in the Royal Geographic Society of Australasia (NSW) journal in 1885.
- ⁸⁹ *Queenslander*, 28 August 1897, pp. 402-3.
- ⁹⁰ De Havelland, *Gold and Ghosts*, p. 526.
- ⁹¹ *Northern Herald*, 9 April 1938, p. 2.
- ⁹² 'Ebagoolah notes', *Northern Miner*, 1 November 1902, p. 4; *Northern Miner*, 21 April 1936, p. 4; *Brisbane Telegraph*, 12 July 1921, p. 4; *Gympie Times*, 20 May 1902, p. 3; *Brisbane Courier*, 28 December 1918, p. 6.
- ⁹³ *Uralla Times*, 22 February 1934, p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ For example, *North Queensland Register*, 17 April 1905, p. 16.
- ⁹⁵ Pike, *Herberton*, p. 11. Pike says Miller was born in the late 1890s in the Aboriginal camp on the Wild River at Herberton.
- ⁹⁶ Julie-Ann Authurs, *From Wyangarie to Richmond*, Richmond Shire Council, 1995, pp. 201-2. A mail change is where the coach carrying the mails changed horses.
- ⁹⁷ Ellwood, 'Aboriginal miners and prospectors of Cape York', p. 84.
- ⁹⁸ *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, 1 November 1904, p. 5.
- ⁹⁹ Colin Hooper, *Angor to Zillmanton: Stories of North Queensland's Deserted Towns*, Author, Townsville, 2006, p. 269; George Skeene O.A.M., *Two Cultures: children from the Aboriginal camps and reserves in Cairns City: an autobiography*, Rams Skull Press, Kuranda, 2008, pp. 81-97.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰¹ Pannell and Ngadjon-Jii, *Yamani Country*, pp. 33, 48.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 36, 40, 45-49.
- ¹⁰³ Trevor Johnstone quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ¹⁰⁴ Sally Babidge, 'Family Affairs: a historical anthropology of state practice and aboriginal agency in a rural town, North Queensland', PhD thesis, James Cook University, 2004, pp. 73-4.
- ¹⁰⁵ *North Queensland Register*, 20 November 1905, p. 22.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Cairns Post*, 18 December 1936, p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁷ 'Chief Protector of Aborigines', *Queenslander*, 26 January 1907, p. 32.
- ¹⁰⁸ Copland, 'Calculating Lives', p. 243.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Cairns Post*, 5 November 1915, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁰ Premier T.J. Byrnes to Home Secretary, 5 May 1898, QSA Pol/J15, quoted in Copland, 'Calculating Lives', p. 125.
- ¹¹¹ David 'Fred' Cahir, *Black Gold: A History of the Role of Aboriginal People on the Goldfields of Victoria, 1850-70*, University of Ballarat, 2006; Cahir, 'The Attraction of Gold Mining in Victoria for Aboriginal People,' *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, vol. 6, 2008, pp. 46-69; Cahir, "'Are You Off to the Diggings?": Aboriginal Guiding to and on the Goldfields', *The La Trobe Journal*, vol. 85, 2010.
- ¹¹² Mike Harding, 'Plenty of opal back then': Opal Pulkah': a history of Aboriginal engagement in the northern South Australian opal industry, c. 1940-1980', PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 2016.