

## **Aboriginal prospectors and miners of tropical Queensland, from pre-contact times to ca.1950**

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On entering the mining township of Coen, Cape York Peninsula in 1895/6, E.C. Earl wrote:

We pass a large camp of blacks who have fixed their abode promiscuously along the creek. Here are a party of whites, new to the district, in vigorous prosperity, unearthing the gold that commands respectful attention in all parts of the world. Here again are a party of blacks, old to the district, whose ancestors for centuries back probably inherited the same stretch of land, loathsome in their poverty-stricken condition, diseased, lazy, treacherous, with the brand of Cain damning them irretrievably. These blacks have seen striking evidence of the power of gold. Others, especially those adjacent to the Palmer goldfield, have handled nuggets, yet no black fellow has ever brought to light gold, and all seem, useless except in the form of coins, utterly ignorant or oblivious of its many advantages.<sup>1</sup>

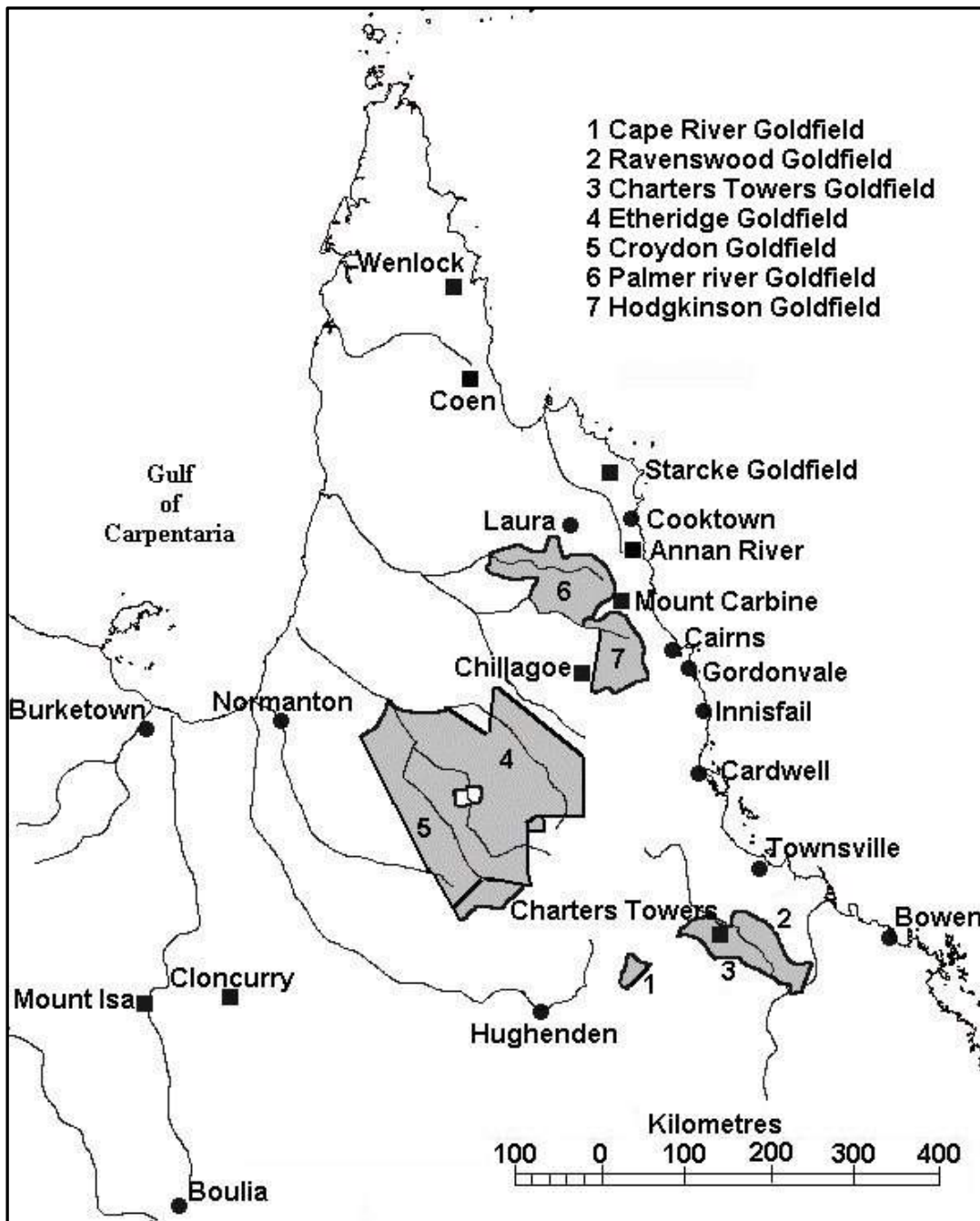
Little did Earl know that a member of his party, Pluto, was a well-known North Queensland Aboriginal prospector-miner who certainly knew the 'power of gold'. Pluto and his wife Kitty Pluto were to become household names as discoverers of gold throughout Queensland in the early twentieth century.

The Plutos were only two of approximately 22 named individuals, 17 named families and an unknown number of the nameless who were Aboriginal miners and prospectors mentioned in the historical records (Appx. 1; Map 1) For those whose stories are known, certain themes recur. The most intriguing is the way many of these people escaped European control, and used European social structures in Aboriginal ways. Often they begin with white mentors who might be 'bosses' in the traditional Aboriginal sense<sup>2</sup> before they become independent, or use fictitious Europeans (for example, 'Anderson' for Pluto) as a cover for their activities. They can move between mining, pastoralism and even the Native Police. Despite sometimes finding themselves in trouble with white authority, they manage to escape the law and the effects of restrictive legislation because they are too valuable to white society. In too many cases they have been written out of history.

This paper aims to correct the general portrayal of Aborigines living under the Act<sup>3</sup> in tropical Queensland, as powerless victims. It will show that Aboriginal prospectors and miners had more agency than has been credited to them in the past and that some individuals did achieve economic success and social recognition within European society without having to compromise their own culture. Many of the identified miners in this study actively selected and engaged non-Aboriginal prospectors or miners in the early portions of their careers and then worked alone.<sup>4</sup> This is characterised by different types and degrees of interpersonal engagement to an extent not adequately noted in the current literature on Aborigines in Queensland. Not only

that, but they were partly responsible for the economic development of post-contact Queensland through their discoveries of mining fields. Because so many have been effectively written out of history, this study will resurrect their stories, point out their importance to the Northern mining industry, and consider possible reasons for their relative freedom from the controls of the Act after 1897. While Aborigines were present in the mining industry in many capacities, the paper concentrates on miners and prospectors with particular attention given to those making mineral finds and taking out mining tenements.

**Map 1:** Locations of major gold and mineral fields in Tropical North Queensland.



Source: Adapted and redrawn from G. C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1970, p. 42.

### **Pre-contact Aboriginal mining**

**A**t the time of contact Aboriginal people were no strangers to mining and resource quarrying for tool making, trade and ceremony; they also understood the qualities and value of their extracted materials. While this has been recognised in the archaeological literature, the idea that Aborigines might have adapted readily to post-contact mining because of their long tradition of mining activities has not.

Archaeological investigations have shown how long this mining tradition is: Wright dated the Koonalda Cave quarry, the oldest dated stone quarry known to be in operation, to between 24,000 and 14,000 years ago;<sup>5</sup> Smith, Frankhauser and Jercher found that the oldest dated ochre mine, *Karrku*, was worked from around 32,000 to 13,000 years ago.<sup>6</sup> It is well known that pre-contact Aboriginal societies were stone based economies; they required good quality fine grained stone, such as chert, quartzite, silcrete, eclogite (greenstone), sandstones and other silicates, for tool making and trade.<sup>7</sup> Other good quality minerals were mined to make pigments for rock art and for religious practices such as mortuary preparations and body-painting for ceremony.<sup>8</sup> These included minerals of interest to Europeans such as malachite, azurite, iron oxides and clays.<sup>9</sup> Davidson's work has shown that Aboriginal mining practices were also quite complex; as well as quarrying, underground excavations using stope and pillar techniques and the use of pole scaffolding with wooden platforms to allow the extraction of ochre from different heights in the rock face were used at *Wilgie Mia* (Western Australia) more than 1,000 years before similar methods were employed in European mining.<sup>10</sup> A number of studies have found post-extraction refining, for example, 'heat treating' which annealed quarried stone and made it easier to flake.<sup>11</sup> Ochres also went through a series of refining processes, the most complicated of these being found at *Wilgie Mia* and *Toolumbunner*.<sup>12</sup>

A number of major ochre mines and stone quarries are also recorded in the archaeological literature for tropical Queensland. Many of these are in the principal historical mining provinces. They include: greenstone quarries, for making stone axes, and sandstone quarries for making grinding stones, as for example in the Cloncurry-Mt Isa Districts;<sup>13</sup> in the Herberton-Chillagoe field, large greenstone quarries at Koorboora<sup>14</sup> and Petford;<sup>15</sup> obsidian from Nolans Creek;<sup>16</sup> a number of pigments found in Chillagoe rock art using malachite and azurite;<sup>17</sup> and alum at Boonmoo Pinnacle.<sup>18</sup> For good quality ochre (iron oxide), there are mines on the Palmer River goldfield at Maytown<sup>19</sup> and another on Jordan Creek Goldfield near Innisfail.<sup>20</sup>

### **Aboriginal Mining from 1866 to ca. 1950**

In modern historical accounts of Australian mining, Aboriginal participation is often ignored or obscured, or Indigenous people are only mentioned in terms of the (very real) negative impacts mining had upon culture and lands, and the consequent conflict.<sup>21</sup> The mining industry certainly opened up numerous new opportunities for Aboriginal people to take part in the colonial economy, and it is clear that Aboriginal people have been involved in North Queensland mining industry from its beginning in the 1860s.

Aboriginal people played an important role in daily life on the gold and mineral fields of tropical Queensland. Aboriginal guides and assistants were as crucial to frontier prospectors as they were to explorers and pastoralists; their traditional knowledge of country and its resources was used to find economic minerals as well as tracks and water. Aboriginal people were present on the mining fields in many capacities, as Native Police, as guides, as wives and sexual partners.

On the small remote fields of the north, their labour was particularly important. 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’.<sup>22</sup> On the Rocky goldfield and at Port Stewart, near Coen, local Aborigines carried in all supplies because the country was too hard for packhorses. 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, or even blacksmithing. George Hensey on the Chillagoe mineral field appears to have conducted the area’s first limestone cave tours in 1888.<sup>23</sup> Some of these types of participation have been recognised in the literature of mining for tropical Queensland, but not all, and the recognition is limited. In particular the contribution of Aboriginal prospectors and miners to the development of the Queensland mining industry has been largely lost, or even deliberately written out of history.

Aborigines prospected and mined, either alone, or as partners or assistants with non-indigenous miners. Unfortunately, they are seriously under-documented and we know only a few of them by name, though they began with the earliest European settlement of North Queensland. In 1860 North Kennedy District was opened to pastoralists, including William and Joseph Hann of ‘Bluff Downs’ and ‘Maryvale’ stations. One of their stockmen was a *Girramay* man, *Kullajerry* (Jerry)<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 1, family portrait). Jerry was born ca. 1852 and died at Rockhampton in 1942 at the age of 90 years. His death certificate states that he was born at Mt Carbine.<sup>25</sup> The descendants of Jerry and Topsy Hann<sup>26</sup> state that he came from ‘Kirrima Station’ (*budjubulla*) in *Girramay* country near Cardwell. He began working as a stockman and shepherd for William Hann of ‘Bluff Downs’ when he was about 14 years old. How or why Jerry ended up on the Upper Burdekin, in *Gudjala* country, approximately 180km south of his traditional homeland is, as yet, unknown, though it is speculated that he may have been on a trading trip which met with some misfortune. Brayshaw points out that:

over much of the Burdekin intertribal movement was wide ranging, there was close linguistic ties ... groups had contact with the coast and tribes to the east, while to the west their boundary was rarely traversed.<sup>27</sup>

In 1865 with Richard Daintree, Jerry found the North’s first goldfield at nearby Cape River and was rewarded a pound of tobacco by William Hann.<sup>28</sup> Hann and Jerry accompanied Government geologist and erstwhile pastoralist Richard Daintree on many of his explorations. Daintree and Hann had the first copper mine in the north in 1864.

In 1871 Jerry was with Wm. Hann on a year-long droving trip from the upper Burdekin to Swan Hill in Victoria, some 2,200 km. It was on this trip when Jerry first

told Hann about the *boongarry* or the tree kangaroo (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*)<sup>29</sup> which is found in the rainforests of his country. Hann's disbelief in Jerry's 'bunyip' (a mythological creature) meant he was the brunt of many a joke from Hann and others until the *boongarry* was sighted in the Bloomfield rainforests during Hann's Northern Expedition in 1872.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 1:** *Family portrait of Kullajerry and family c. 1866 possibly taken at 'Maryvale' Station.*



Source: Courtesy of Ms Nicole Huxley and the descendants of *Kullajerry* and Topsy Hann.

Jerry accompanied William Hann in his Government-sponsored Northern Expedition into Cape York in 1872, and it is on this expedition we see *Kullajerry* the traditional Aborigine, rather than the stockman, for the first time.<sup>31</sup> Wm Hann may have been the official leader of the expedition but it was Jerry's Aboriginal knowledge which took the party to the Stewart River and back via the Bloomfield rainforest safely. Jerry, even though he was about 14 when he joined Hann, was already a polyglot, knowing at least three of the major Aboriginal language families and their speakers of southeast Cape York Peninsula, including his mother tongue *Jittabal/ Girramay*; *Gudjula/ Gugu Badham*; and the *Wakaman/Yalanji* language groups. Hann records that Jerry could converse fluently with the *Kuku Nyungkul* (in an *Yalandjic* language) of the Bloomfield

and Daintree rainforests whereas previously he had difficulties conversing with the people closer to Princess Charlotte Bay and with the *Gugu Yimihdirr* near Battlecamp.<sup>32</sup> Jerry also led the expedition for the most part along the pre-contact Aboriginal trade and exchange routes that enter the southern parts of Cape York Peninsula and continue to Princess Charlotte Bay.<sup>33</sup>

This expedition found gold on the Palmer River, later converted into the North's biggest alluvial rush by James Venture Mulligan.<sup>34</sup> In late 1873 Jerry was attached to Government Surveyor McMillan, who had been commissioned to open the road from Cooktown to the newly established Palmer goldfield.<sup>35</sup> The party unloaded their horses and plant from the steamer and as soon as Jerry recognised some landmarks he led the survey party unerringly to their destination.<sup>36</sup> It was during this trip that the first major conflict with Aborigines occurred at a place that was to become named as 'Battlecamp'. A nearby lake was named 'King Jerry's Waterhole' in Jerry's honour.<sup>37</sup>

The following year William Hann took 222 fat bullocks to Edwardstown (Maytown) on the Palmer River and sold them to a butcher<sup>38</sup> for £10 per head. He sent his two men back to 'Mary Vale' with the droving horses while he joined Inspector Clohesy's gold escort about to leave for Cooktown, but found that Jerry, instead of returning with the horses to 'Mary Vale', had also attached himself to the escort.<sup>39</sup> It was near Battlecamp when Jerry drew the Inspector's attention to a large number of foot tracks and warned him of the danger of an attack. A careful watch was kept and when the attack came at daylight the Aborigines were frightened away before any serious damage was done. After their return to Maryvale, as a reward for his services, William Hann presented Jerry with a crescent shaped brass breastplate (kingplate) on which was engraved the words: 'King Jerry of Kobubla'.<sup>40</sup>

Often a common thread in written histories is the way that Aboriginal companion(s) are relegated to minor roles whereas the non-Aboriginal is elevated to a 'hero' status. Like his white 'Boss', Hann, *Kullajerry* played a major role in the development not only of North Queensland's pastoral industry but also in developing two of the most important northern goldfields, the North's first goldfield at the Cape River; and the Palmer River, which began the mineral exploitation of the Peninsula. Sadly Jerry's role in this important shared history of tropical Queensland has been neglected and nearly forgotten.

Similarly to Jerry's association with Hann and his role in establishing important goldfields, the Aboriginal man Dick helped Ernest Henry with his early copper prospecting and mining activities in the Cloncurry/Burketown region. After disposing of his pastoral interests on the Burdekin and at Hughenden, Henry went further west and for a period of nearly 50 years, between 1864 and 1913, prospected the Cloncurry Mineral District and the Gulf country lying between Cloncurry and the ports of Normanton and Burketown.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1867, Henry with the ever present Dick<sup>41</sup> and Sheaffe<sup>42</sup> found a copper lode between two barren hills, and on the 20<sup>th</sup>, they found a large outcrop of copper ore, which subsequently became 'The Great Australian Copper Mine.'<sup>43</sup> Henry and his partners continued to work the Great Australian Mine until 1879, when it was sold. Subsequently in 1880 a Kalkadoon man whom Henry refers to

as ‘*Tubby Terrier*’, led Henry to a place where ‘big fella copper sat down’ some 80 km west of the town of Cloncurry, situated in exceedingly broken and confused country. Henry named the lode ‘*Argylla*’ which is an anglicised corruption of the *Kalkadoon* name *Yamamilla*.<sup>44</sup> Henry employed about 30 Aboriginals and two white station hands to mine the copper at *Argylla* and paid the Aboriginal miners with flour and corned beef.

Tubby, son of one of the local Aboriginal leaders, later joined his people at what has been referred to as the last great battle between Aboriginal tribesmen and Queensland Native Mounted Police and graziers, at Battle Mountain, in September 1884.<sup>45</sup> Tubby was knocked unconscious by a bullet and he appears to have been the only tribesman to escape alive from the Battle Mountain conflict. He later worked for the Macdonalds of ‘Glenroy Station’ on the Leichhardt River and died in 1935 (aged ca.72 years) in Cloncurry, respected by all. He was given a brass breastplate (kingplate) inscribed ‘*Tubby the Terrible, King of the Kalkadoons*’ for his work with Ernest Henry in the early days of Cloncurry.<sup>46</sup>

In February 1882, Henry was led to the Mount Oxide ‘copper sit down longa his country’ by a *Waggaboonga* man named Toby.<sup>47</sup> Situated in the rugged ranges 130km north-west of Cloncurry, Mount Oxide has been one of the most lauded mines in Australia. Henry generally maintained good relations with the *Kalkadoons* and he believed in letting them into his camp and generally fraternized with them to a far greater extent than did other settlers, a line of action that resulted in complete friendship. Henry maintained that the ‘Australian Native’, ‘though undoubtedly a primitive man, possessed a happy and childlike disposition that was responsive to good treatment, kindness and trust’<sup>48</sup> Ernest Henry, who generally worked only with his Aboriginal companions Dick, Tubby and Toby and their people, was allowed more or less uninterrupted access to the countries west of Cloncurry. Together they shared the trials and tribulations of opening up new mining frontiers and eventually set the foundations of what is still considered to be one of the most important mining provinces of Australia.

Jupiter Mosman is one of the better-known prospectors because he is credited with the discovery of the Charters Towers field in 1871, the most productive in Queensland. Jupiter, whose tribal name is unknown, was born ca. 1861 on ‘Kynuna Station,’ north-western Queensland and here he was ‘acquired’ by Hugh Mosman. Soon afterwards the Mosman brothers and John Frazer sold their own station ‘Tarbrax’ and set off for the Cape River diggings. They visited Ravenswood where they became friendly with the prospector George Clarke and decided to look for gold around the Seventy Mile Pinnacle (Mount Leyshon).<sup>49</sup> The party rode through the gap on the western side of what is now called Towers Hill and camped on a creek where, in December 1871, Jupiter discovered the gold-bearing quartz of the North Australian reef which sparked the Charters Towers goldfield, the field that ensured the survival of north Queensland as a European settlement.

Mosman sent Jupiter to school at Newtown and later at Lyndhurst College, Sydney, where he was baptised as a Roman Catholic and given the names John Joseph. During vacations he re-joined Mosman in Charters Towers, playing football and cricket

in local teams. He accompanied Mosman on his visits to Sydney but, when the latter accepted nomination to the Queensland Legislative Council in June 1891, they finally parted.

Jupiter then became a drover for one of Mosman's nephews.<sup>50</sup> He later worked on a number of northern cattle stations, including Lolworth, Dotswood, Wombiana and Mirtna. He continued to prospect for gold and for some time worked with Soilleux and Roberts on Stockyard Creek. He is said to have prospected, sometimes successfully, over all of the Cape York Peninsula fields. Jupiter eventually retired and was allocated a house at the Eventide Home for the Aged in Charters Towers where he died on 5 December 1945. He was buried in the Roman Catholic portion of the Charters Towers cemetery and a park in Charters Towers has been dedicated to his memory.

### **Working for the big companies and State owned mines**

For some of the Aboriginal miner-prospectors we have names but little else. In 1886 George Hensey,<sup>51</sup> an Aboriginal employee of O. Charles Garbutt<sup>52</sup> of 'Woodleigh Station', found the first copper while exploring the Chillagoe area for pastoral land.<sup>53</sup> They also found copper - lead - silver deposits at Muldiva. After the party reported their discovery to base metal mining magnate John Moffat, Moffat arranged for Anthony Linedale's return to the region with Delaney and Hensey. Hensey also found tin at Koorboora, 30km to the southeast of Chillagoe. Hensey's skill at prospecting was legendary; it was written that while chasing strayed horses Hensey:

picked up a stone to throw at one of them ... his trained hand felt that the weight was greater than any ordinary stone could possibly be, and it needed no lengthy examination to determine that it was 50% tin ore that was lying in boulders all around the place.<sup>54</sup>

If this story is true then Hensey was not far wrong in his assessment, as Koorboora tin assayed in at a little over 50 percent. He would have been a valuable asset to the prospecting parties employed by John Moffat. Hensey's name is honoured in one of the best producing copper lodes in the Calcifer area, the Hensey group, in which productive mines, also called Hensey #1 and #2, were named by Moffat in George's honour. Hensey and Linedale also found copper at Zillmanton and copper-lead at Girofla (near Mungana), both north-west of Chillagoe, in 1888.

We know the cause of Hensey's death, as he was thrown from his horse somewhere near Chillagoe. The date and place of death has not been recorded though it is speculated, based on dating of artefacts at the remains of his miner's hut near Chillagoe, that the hut was abandoned about 1892. A lone grave, roughly aligned east/west, is to be found in the south west portion of his hut;<sup>55</sup> it is not known if this is Hensey's grave. In 1898 a Special Commissioner eulogised George Hensey:

His memory still lives and those who knew him best assert that as a bushman or prospector not one white man could give him a point and that he possessed ability of a remarkable kind, considering his race and his opportunities.<sup>56</sup>



Hensey's role in establishing yet another rich mining province, one of the largest in the world at the turn of the twentieth century, has completely disappeared from modern histories.

Hensey was not the only Aboriginal miner-pro prospector of note in the Chillagoe field. In 1899 a group of Broken Hill mining speculators, while inspecting the Chillagoe prospects, visited an Aboriginal camp near Calcifer. They noted an interesting skill adaptation:

“King Cooper”, who has been invested with a shield [kingplate] presented by Mr Moffatt, has a reputation as a geologist. He has learned the class of stone the white man values, and his intimate knowledge of the district adds to his value in reporting upon mines and directing prospectors.<sup>57</sup>

Other than this single sentence found in the *Barrier Miner* there is very little written about King Cooper, though we may speculate that he was probably *Gugu Djungan*. Archaeological evidence around his camp near Calcifer appears to indicate that he and his people were adapting traditional heat treatment methods of annealing stone to pre-treatment of copper ore, to be sold to Europeans. Current archaeological fieldwork in the Chillagoe-Mungana area is revealing evidence for pre-contact use of cassiterite (tin) for making stone tools, along with shaping and sharpening native copper to make spear points. They were also using copper carbonate as pigments for art. So was King Cooper ‘taught the class of stone’ when his people were already using copper and tin to make tools and art? Similarly the Aboriginals of the Cloncurry area were not taught by Ernest Henry how to ‘identify copper’<sup>58</sup> as they already knew of its existence; copper was also used for drawing art in traditional times. To confirm these hypotheses, more work needs to be done

Another local Aboriginal from the Chillagoe area was King Spider, who also received a King plate for his valuable contribution to the Chillagoe Smelters, where there were a number of Aboriginal workers. Other Aboriginal prospectors in the Chillagoe area included Stewart and Archer, with Robert (Bobbie) Chong, a half cast Chinese-European man, who in June 1923 found the silver-lead deposits on the Big Watson River, which became the Nightflower Block.<sup>59</sup> The Nightflower along with the state, held leases, and the Chillagoe Smelter figured prominently in the Mungana Inquiry into state corruption, of the late 1920s.<sup>60</sup>

### **The small miner**

Though some Aboriginal people worked for the big mining companies such as Moffat's Irvinebank Company or the state run mining ventures, many others were among the small miners who populated new mining fields and remained on the fields long after the bigger players left. Gold was very valuable and relatively easy to mine, and was ideal for Aboriginal miners with little to no capital behind them. In 1888 the Government medical officer based at Thornborough, on the Hodgkinson goldfield, records an old Aboriginal gold miner:

Soon after come on a bark humpy on the right and on river bank owned by James Green a darky who owns a mine, Mt. Trial, not far off. This man has been under me [treated by me] since I came and had 10 days in hospital, his heart is bad and he is half starved, lives on bush reptiles etc. and is so ungrateful that people who used to help him have thrown him over now.<sup>61</sup>

In 1909, King, a Mount Emu Plains stockman, discovered the gold of Mount Emu on the Flinders River.<sup>62</sup> Another Aboriginal, Asmus, was with the Webb brothers in 1891 when they found the antimony deposits of Coco Creek on the already established Starcke goldfield. Miners worked this field into the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>63</sup>

On the Palmer goldfield from after World War I until well into the 1940s, several Aboriginal families after receiving exemptions from the Act and release from the missions, returned to their *Kuku Yalanji*, *Wakoora* and *Kuku Mini* homelands of the Mitchell and Palmer Rivers.<sup>64</sup> Others who continually returned to the Palmer to fossick for gold included some of the *Wakoora* and *Kuku Yalanji* stockmen and their families. Among these was the Mitchell family.<sup>65</sup> The contact histories for the western *Kuku Yalanji* and *Kuku Mini* of the 'River of Gold' (Palmer River Goldfields) follow much of the invasion and resistance scenarios outlined by Loos and Reynolds among others.<sup>66</sup> However, the Aboriginal story in the post rush period has been ignored by modern local histories. In 1991, Jillian Comber, with Janice Wegner, while undertaking a heritage study for the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage, reported four camps in the Maytown area which according to the Parsons family are said to have been occupied by Aboriginal families who were making a living from gold.<sup>67</sup>

Some base metals were also suited to the small miner. Further south in the Herberton - Silver Valley areas, other Aboriginal families, including the Gosam and Congoo families, worked as tin scratchers. In recent times a growing area of popular history, which includes Aboriginal mining, is seen in biographies and autobiographies of Aboriginal people's lives, such as those published by Kathleen Denigan and by Glenda Morris.<sup>68</sup> These works demonstrate that mining was often a family occupation, suggesting that Aboriginal mining was no temporary aberration, but a continuing tradition.<sup>69</sup>

In the early 1880s, Romeo, a local *Kuku Nyungkul* man discovered the tin field of Mount Romeo south of Cooktown on the Annan River, and teamed up with a white partner, the well-known prospector William (Bill) Thompson Baird.<sup>70</sup> A small town christened Romeo grew up, with a store, hotel and a post office that only closed in 1930.<sup>71</sup> In the late 1880s and early 1890s Bill Baird had a butcher's shop in Cooktown,<sup>72</sup> where Romeo helped him. In 1888 Baird sold up and decided to go gold prospecting again to look for his elusive 'Eldorado'; he and Romeo eventually found it in the Batavia River country of Cape York Peninsula, near Coen.<sup>73</sup>

The brothers Jim and Paddy Keating, who discovered and worked scheelite at Keating's Claim (Mining Claim 8357)<sup>74</sup> in the Burton Range (Mt Carbine) from 1904 to 1906, were also Aboriginal. Several open cuts, an adit and a shaft sunk by the Keatings exposed a vein 9 to 12 inches in thickness that yielded between 3-4 tons of wolfram. Jim Keating died at Cairns in 1910 and Paddy at Mareeba in 1923,<sup>75</sup> their claim was

later owned by Simpson and renamed the True Blue Lease. In 1952 Aboriginal families of Mount Carbine would make good money by collecting and selling the wolfram floaters from unclaimed ground. At the time wolfram prices were fluctuating from £1,600 to £1,800 per ton.<sup>76</sup>

Many miner/prospectors remain nameless. Aboriginal diggers discovered the Jordan gold reef behind Innisfail in 1898,<sup>77</sup> and the settlement that grew there supported a postal receiving office until 1906. Aboriginal miners worked on Edward Bovill Chandler's hydraulic sluicing operation on the Russell River in the 1890s, while Fred 'Boonjie' Brown also employed many Aboriginal men and women in his Russell River sluicing operations. He provided food and clothing in return for their labour.<sup>78</sup>

Anderson sheds light on the extent and importance of the *Kuku Nyungkul* people's role in prospecting and mining on the Annan River Tin fields, near Cooktown. He notes that both the coastal *Kuku Yalanji* and *Kuku Nyungkul* peoples:

consciously and aggressively chose to assimilate the economies and trappings of the tin fields quickly and began to exploit not only the new commodities bought by the industry but also the labour arrangements.<sup>79</sup>

The *Kuku Nyungkul* were able to instigate a number of initiatives: not only were they working for personally selected white bosses but in several cases the Aboriginal people were prospecting and mining tin for themselves. Further, the Aboriginal miners had a number of strategies in place so that they would not get caught up in 'protection' policies such as being removed to reserves. For example they would stay clear of towns or camps where there were police, or they would get the 'Boss' to purchase their supplies when they went to the larger centres such as Cooktown. Anderson points out that this not only increased the *Nyungkul*'s economic stability, but the arrangements allowed the five main clan groups to remain in their clan estates and maintain their traditional camps.<sup>80</sup> It was really only when tin mining more or less ceased on the Annan around the time of the Second World War that the camps disappeared and the Aboriginal people moved to *Wujul Wujul* (Bloomfield Aboriginal Mission).

During World War II the women of Moa Island in the Torres Strait worked the small wolfram shows when the men enlisted. Aboriginal women worked gold at Goldsborough diggings, on the upper Mulgrave River near Cairns,<sup>81</sup> and there is some evidence that an Aboriginal woman found the first reef gold on the Hodgkinson goldfield.<sup>82</sup>

### **On Cape York Peninsula**

Aboriginal prospector/miners played a particularly important role in the remote Cape York Peninsula. The Batavia goldfield was first discovered in October 1892 on Retreat Creek, a tributary of the Wenlock River. The lucky prospector was Romeo, in partnership with non-indigenous prospectors William Baird and Jack Duval, and soon about 150 men rushed to a camp called Bairdsville. Romeo was described as an 'intelligent Aboriginal, who can pan off a dish like an expert, and also knows how to use his fists to some advantage'.<sup>83</sup> As it was a small field of some 40 acres the surface gold quickly petered out and most miners left the field, though Baird and Romeo

remained, only for Baird to be killed by local Aborigines in 1894.<sup>84</sup> Descriptions of what happened after the death of Baird are confusing but one story emerged which mentioned in passing that Romeo immediately asked to join the Native Police<sup>85</sup> to hunt his mate's murderer. He remained as an Aboriginal tracker based at Maytown until 29 January 1915 when he died in the Cooktown Hospital.<sup>86</sup>

The Batavia field lay idle until about 1905 when it was revived by another Aboriginal prospector/miner, Pluto, later described as the 'The Black Gold Tracker'.<sup>87</sup> The first mention of Pluto in the far north was in 1895 when he travelled from Laura to Coen with E.C. (Basalt) Earl, mentioned previously. He was later to find and work the Iguana Mountain Goldfield in 1905.

For the next five years Pluto prospected the area from Iguana Mountain to Bairdsville. In October 1910 this resulted in discoveries of gold at Plutoville on the Batavia (Wenlock) River. Between, 1910 to 1916 he made more discoveries, including Pluto's Lead #2 in 1911; Pluto's Gully in 1912; in The Tunnel 1914; and a number of locations along Sefton Creek, as well as a new find on Retreat Creek on the old Bairdsville diggings. The superintendent of the Mein telegraph station helped him legalise his claims. Pluto had the PC (Prospecting claim) for the field, a type of claim containing more land than usual and given to the discoverer of a new lode. There was a small rush to the ground, which gave good returns of very pure gold including 213 ounces in nuggets found by Pluto and his presumed non-indigenous partner, Anderson.<sup>88</sup> There are conflicting reports in the records as to whether Pluto made his claims alone or with Anderson. He may have used a 'dummy' European to ensure he had no trouble with officials, given that this was in the time of the notorious Protection Act which deprived Aborigines of civil rights.

In 1912 the Protector of Aborigines (POA) while interviewing Pluto at the Diggings noted in his report that Pluto, who not long since discovered a new gold mine at the head of the Batavia River, was out prospecting, and had a personal bank account with £196 to his credit.<sup>89</sup> Again, in 1914, Pluto was not at Plutoville when the POA arrived to interview him and he stated:

The Aboriginal Pluto, who claimed to have been the discoverer of the Batavia River goldfield, let his own claim on tribute, but apparently all the gold in the claim had been taken out and now the ground has been abandoned. After this Pluto went away on a prospecting expedition. He had his banking account so that he was prepared to expend some time on his research.<sup>90</sup>

The mining Warden at the time also noted Pluto let the claim on tribute to a group of new chums from the UK, when it had already been 'played out'. This type of cheating of the unwary was common on goldfields, and Pluto certainly had a touch of larrikin.<sup>91</sup>

Pluto's origins are obscure. The normally reliable geologist Robert Logan Jack<sup>92</sup> recorded that Pluto and Kitty were from Rockhampton. Kitty's traditional name, Altengen,<sup>93</sup> indicates she was in fact born to the Batavia River people ca.1878, and a good case is put forward by 'Carbine' (aka Effe Pike) who suggests that Pluto was not from Rockhampton but actually from the 'Lochinvar', 'Woodhouse' and 'Woodstock' Stations district on the lower Burdekin. Mrs Pike bases this on a claim that she had once

met Pluto, and some Burdekin graziers who knew him as a stockman and roustabout there. She also claims that Pluto possessed detailed knowledge of the people, places and workings of the stations of the lower Burdekin River.<sup>94</sup>

Pluto died in January 1916 at an unknown age just after his Aboriginal wife, Kitty Pluto (Fig. 2), discovered the field's richest leads at Lower Camp, about 2 km down river from Plutoville. The town of Wenlock was established in the wake of Kitty's discovery, though it was not formally so named until 1938. In 1922 Kitty made another rich find (a 92oz nugget) at Kitty Gully, and this find was the beginnings of a period of intensive mining of the Batavia (later renamed Wenlock) and arrival of the mining companies. Kitty was later rewarded with a full government pension for being the only Aboriginal woman in Queensland to find a goldfield.<sup>95</sup> Joe Fisher, co-owner of 'Black Cat Amalgamated' also named a gold mining lease on the Wenlock field in Kitty's honour.<sup>96</sup>

**Figure 2:** *Kitty Pluto aged ca 55 years, standing roughly where she found the first gold in 1914 at Lower Camp Batavia (Wenlock) River.*



Source: 'On the Batavia River Diggings,' *The Queenslander*, 28 January 1932

The Wenlock mines were worked until the Second World War, producing nearly 35,000 ounces of gold. The maximum population was 160 in 1932, when there were two ore crushing mills on the field. As late as 1940, Peter Larsen tabled a £310,000 Batavia gold exhibit at the Cairns Show,<sup>97</sup> while the last resident of Wenlock died on the field in 1957. A European, his name and history are known, but much less is known about Kitty Pluto. Kitty's name is often mentioned in passing in modern histories as the finder of the first gold at Lower Camp for the Batavia (Wenlock) field, though her later

history is confused. For example, she is said to come from Rockhampton, despite considerable evidence that she was a local woman. A Central Queensland Aborigine would not come under the control of the Northern Protector of Aborigines and would escape the constricting Aborigines Protection Act. She is recorded as having been removed to Yarrabah in 1921 and 1922,<sup>98</sup> which normally meant for life, yet was on the Batavia in 1932; appears on an Aboriginal removals register again in 1933<sup>99</sup> but died at Lockhart River, the nearest mission to the Batavia (Wenlock) goldfield, in 1946.<sup>100</sup> These conflicting official reports suggest that for Aborigines considered of value to the European community, or held in high esteem, records were falsified.

Another intriguing aspect to the story of the Plutos is that they did not work alone. There are many stories of other Aborigines working with and for the couple, and later just for Kitty. One of these, possibly a business partner, may have been Friday Wilson, another well known, but now forgotten Aboriginal miner/pro prospector. He was born about 1880, near Coen, and was taken in as 10-month old infant by a non-Aboriginal family named Wilson, who were among the first people to be on the Coen Field in the late 1870s. He was christened Frederick Wilson but many in the Peninsula knew him better as 'Friday'. Like his family he was a miner/pro prospector and with his adopted brother, the carrier Johnny Wilson, co-owned drays and two of the largest bullock teams on the Peninsula, in addition to a couple of horse teams. They carted goods from Port Stewart to Coen and the smaller mining fields:

Both these men took pride of their bullock teams and shifted many hundreds of tons of loading with them, much of it valuable stuff too, but they carted faultlessly and fearlessly until Johnny Wilson succumbed to an injury received in handling heavy loading with his wagons and lies buried in the old defunct gold town of Ebagoolah.<sup>101</sup>

At one time Pluto worked the horse teams for Friday and Johnny Wilson.

In 1910 after the deaths of his adopted parents and brother, Friday sold up and went to the Batavia goldfield, mining at Plutoville where he won many ounces of gold. He was closely associated with both Pluto and Kitty, and like Kitty he was caught up in bureaucratic record keeping. In 1922 he was said to have been removed to Yarrabah with Kitty and others<sup>102</sup> but was still on the fields throughout the 1920s - 1940s.

By the mid, 1930s Friday began to expand his mining interests and associated industries. In 1936 the Mining Warden's report commented about Aborigines being keen prospectors and that:

one aboriginal Friday Wilson, has a miner's right and a properly pegged claim in the Blue Mountains and is lode mining. During the last six months his crushings have yielded about 80 ounces of gold. He works on his own, and in a most methodical fashion. He is at present constructing a blacksmith shop near the mine.<sup>103</sup>

It would appear that Aborigines were able to possess miner's rights and claims but in order to be granted mining leases they needed to go into partnerships with non-Aboriginal people. In late 1936, Friday along with non-Aboriginal partners applied for, and were granted a 10 acre lease on the Blue Mountain Field about 40km north of Coen.

This lease covered Friday's previous claim 'Blue Metal' which they changed to the 'Shakespeare'.<sup>104</sup> In mid-1939 the Mining Warden at Cooktown declared GML No. 189 'Shakespeare' forfeited for non-payment of annual rental. Again in 1942 'Friday' applied for another gold reef claim four miles north of the Blue Mountains, being the abandoned claim 'Jubilee'.<sup>105</sup> In 1947 Friday was granted the old age pension, which sustained him until his death in Cooktown in 1950, aged 69.<sup>106</sup>

The Batavia was never a big field, but its location in the centre of the remote Cape York Peninsula meant it was important for European settlement and especially for small miners, as its richness has contributed to constant reworking and fossicking. The role of Aborigines (Pluto, Kitty Pluto, 'Friday' Wilson and an unknown number of unnamed Aboriginal miners) in discovering and working new finds, is significant.

### **Conclusion**

Tropical Queensland's history is a shared history that encompasses the experiences, trials and tribulations of the settler Australians and the Aboriginal peoples. In modern historical accounts of Queensland mining, Aboriginal participation is often ignored or obscured, or Indigenous people are only mentioned in terms of the (very real) negative impacts mining had upon culture and lands and the consequent conflict. The exclusion of Aboriginal voices from the story of the tropical Queensland mining industry is not due to a dearth of available information. As this short biographical study demonstrates, Aboriginal involvement in the mining industry has been present from pre-colonial times through the formation of colonial Queensland of the 1860s and continues to flow through to the present.

It shows that Aboriginal-European relations have been stereotyped as one of invasion by the white and resistance from the black, followed by a period of dispossession, economic exploitation (mostly as servants, labourers and stock workers) and deprivation of rights. Very little has been acknowledged of the work of Aboriginal miner-prospectors in the mining industry, an industry which was crucial for the white settlement and economic development of the north. In fact, Aboriginal participation in this very important industry has been mostly ignored or whitewashed out of history. Moreover, this story highlights five common misconceptions surrounding Aboriginal people on the gold and mineral fields of tropical Queensland. These misconceptions are:

- that most Aboriginal people were attached to pastoral stations and missions, rather than mining fields;
- that those few Aboriginal people living near mining settlements were on the periphery;
- that those on the periphery were bewildered spectators or casual unskilled labour;
- that Aboriginal experiences on the gold and mineral fields were primarily negative;
- that after 1897 Aboriginal independence was severely constrained by the Aboriginal Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act.

Of great significance in this study is the realisation that Aboriginal people were prospectors and miners, and that a few outstanding individuals, such as *Kullajerry*,

George Hensey, 'Friday' Wilson, Pluto and Kitty Pluto to name a few, and many as yet un-named Aboriginal individuals and families, made significant contributions to the development and history of the state of Queensland and its mining industry. Moreover, in the twentieth century individuals valued as miner-prospectors by the white community were able to escape the repressive provisions of the Protection Act.

History has not done justice to their endeavours nor has it treated them fairly, or given full acknowledgment to their skill and successes. Finally, the standard paradigm for post-contact Aboriginal history in tropical Queensland needs to be modified to show that the history of Aboriginal miners indicates that they had agency, independence and respect from the white community; it also needs to reinstate them in community memory - a memory which has sadly disappeared in recent decades.



**APPENDIX 1: Aboriginal miners and prospectors identified for tropical Queensland.**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Field</b>            | <b>Discoverer</b>  | <b>Mineral</b>  | <b>Associated Town</b>                               |
|-------------|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1865        | Cape River GF           | <b>Jerry</b> (stockman)  | Au  | Cape River   |
| 1867        | Cloncurry/ Mt Isa       | <b>Dick</b> (stockman, prospector, miner) with Ernest Henry  | Fe/ Cu  | The Great Australian Copper Mine, <i>Cloncurry</i>   |
| 1871        | Charters Towers GF      | <b>Jupiter Mosman</b> (stockman, miner)  | Au  | Charters Towers                                      |
| 1872        | Palmer River GF         | <b>Jerry</b> with Wm. Hann's expedition  | Au  | Palmerville  |
| 1870s       | Hodgkinson GF           | unknown Aboriginal woman   | Au  | Thornborough   |
| 1880-1882   | Cloncurry/ Mt Isa       | <b>Tubby Terrier</b> shows Ernest Henry where 'big fella copper lay down'<br><br><b>Toby</b> shows E. Henry, "copper plenty sit down longa my country" | Cu/Au/Ag  | <i>Yamamillah</i> changed to Argylla<br><br>Mt Oxide |
| 1886        | Annan River TF          | Wm. Baird and <b>Romeo</b> (prospector, miner)   | Sn  | Mt Romeo   |
| 1887-1892?  | Herberton/Chillagoe MF  | <b>George Hensey</b> (prospector, miner) Also ran what is probably the first cave tour venture in the Chillagoe Karst area                             | Cu/Sn/Ag/Pb   | Chillagoe, Koorboora, Muldiva, Mungana?              |
| 1888        | Hodgkinson GF           | John Green (miner)   | Au  | Mt Trial   |
| 1889        | Jordan's Creek GF       | unidentified, Aboriginal diggers   | Au  | Geraldton (Innisfail)                                |
| 1891        | Starcke GF              | <b>Asmus</b> w. Webb Brothers  | Au/Sb   | Cocoa Creek  |
| 1892        | Batavia Diggings        | Wm Baird and <b>Romeo</b> (prospector, miner)  | Au  | Bairdsville (Retreat Creek)                          |
| Ca. 1899    | Chillagoe- Mungana      | <b>King Cooper</b> invested with a King plate by Mr Moffatt, for his reputation as a geologist.  | Cu/Ag/Pb  | Calcifer   |
| 1905        | Mt Emu GF               | King (stockman)  | Au  | Mt Emu   |
| 1905        | Iguana Mountain         | Pluto (prospector, miner)  | Au  | Chock-a-block  |
| ca. 1906    | Mt Carbine MF           | Keating (miner)  | CaWo <sub>4</sub> /Wo   | Mt. Carbine  |
| 1910-1915   | Batavia Diggings        | Pluto (prospector, miner) Appears Pluto also packed during the off season. He paid white prospectors to find more deposits in the region               | Au (Pluto Lead #1-1910), Au (Pluto Lead #2-1911), Au (the Tunnel-1912), Au (Pluto's Gully-1913) | Plutoville<br>Chock-a-block                          |
| 1915-1922   | Batavia Diggings        | Kitty Pluto (prospector/miner)   | Au  | Lower Camp   |
| 1923        | Herberton /Chillagoe MF | Robert Chong and <b>Mick McTavish</b> (official reports record Aboriginals <b>Stewart</b> and <b>Archer</b> )  | Ag/Pb/Au  | Nightflower  |
| 1932?       | Coen GF                 | 'uncivilised' Black befriended by Mr Armburst. Was this actually 'Friday' Wilson?  | Au  | near Blue Mountain                                   |
| 1943        | Little River Coal       | Jerry Croydon (packer, miner)  | Coal  | Laura  |

Note: Names in bold is the Aboriginal in the party

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 'The Coen Goldfield,' *The Queenslander*, Saturday 21 November 1896, p. 984; was a serial of 16 parts outlining E.C. Earl's tour of Cape York Peninsula during the wet season of 1895. There are many jibes at Pluto's expense in the account, making him a figure of fun, a common type of racism once the danger of Aboriginal attack was over.

<sup>2</sup> cf. C. Anderson, 'All Bosses Are Not Created Equal', in W.H. Edwards (ed.), *Traditional Aboriginal Society*, Macmillan Education Australia Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, 1998; C. Anderson, *The Political and Economic Basis of Kuku-Yalanji Social History*, PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> *The Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* and its successors.

<sup>4</sup> Using the traditional system of 'Bosses', similar to the 'Boss' concept described by Chris Anderson for the *Kuku Nyungkul* of the Annan River Tinfield; Anderson, 'All Bosses Are Not Created Equal'; C. Anderson, *The Political and Economic Basis of Kuku-Yalanji Social History*, PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> R.V.S. Wright, 'The Cave', in R.V.S. Wright (ed.), *Archaeology of the Gallus Site Koonalda Cave*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1971.

<sup>6</sup> M.A. Smith, B. Frankhauser, and M. Jercher, 'The Changing Provenance of Red Ochre at Puritjarra Rock Shelter, Central Australia: Late Pleistocene to Present', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 64, 1998, pp. 275-292.

<sup>7</sup> J. Mulvaney and J. Kamminga, *Prehistory of Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 1999; P. Hiscock and S. Mitchell, *Stone Artefact Quarries and Reduction Sites in Australia: Towards a Type Profile*, Australian Heritage Commission, Technical Publication Series No. 4, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993; T. Corkill, 'Red, Yellow and Black: Colour and Heat in Archaeological Stone', *Australian Archaeology* vol. 45, 1997, pp. 54-55; J. Flenniken, J. Jeffrey, and J. Peter White, 'Australian Flaked Stone Tools: A Technological Perspective', *Records of the Australian Museum* vol. 36, no. 3, 1985, pp. 131-51; I. McBryde, 'Kulin Greenstone Quarries: The Social Contexts of Production and Distribution for Mt William Site', *World Archaeology*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1984, pp. 267-85.

<sup>8</sup> M.J. Morwood, *Visions from the Past: The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002; Mulvaney and Kamminga, *Prehistory of Australia*.

<sup>9</sup> Azurite and malachite are copper carbonates.

<sup>10</sup> D.S. Davidson, 'Notes on the Pictographs and Petroglyphs of Western Australia and a Discussion on Their Affinities with Appearances Elsewhere on the Continent', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96, 1952 pp. 114-150; W.H. Kretschmar, ' "Wilgie Mia": An Aboriginal Red Ochre Mine', *Walkabout* 2, no. 12, 1936; Morwood, *Visions from the Past*; Mulvaney and Kamminga, *Prehistory of Australia*.

<sup>11</sup> L. Lamb, 'Investigating Changing Stone Technologies, Site Use and Occupational Intensities at Fern Cave, North Queensland', *Australian Archaeology* 43, 1996, pp. 1-7 ; K. Akerman, 'Heat and Lithic Technology in the Kimberleys, WA', *Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania* 14, no. 2, 1979, pp. 144-151; Corkill, 'Red, Yellow and Black'; Mercieca, A. and P. Hiscock, 'Experimental Insights into Alternative Strategies of Lithic Heat Treatment', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35, 2008, pp. 2634-39.

<sup>12</sup> A.G. Sagona (ed.), *Bruising the Red Earth: Ochre Mining and Ritual in Aboriginal Tasmania*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994; Davidson, 'Notes on the Pictographs and Petroglyphs of Western Australia'.

<sup>13</sup> K. Tibbett, 'Community Specialisation, Standardisation and Exchange in a Hunter-Gatherer Society: A Case Study from Kalkadoon Country Northwest Queensland Australia', James Cook University, 2005; Anon., 'The Ancient Miners of Mount Isa', 2002; Hiscock and Mitchell, *Stone Artefact Quarries and Reduction Sites in Australia*.

<sup>14</sup> B. David, 'The 1984 Chillagoe Surveys', *Queensland Archaeological Research* 10, 1996, pp. 33-53.

<sup>15</sup> B. David, *Landscapes, Rock-Art and the Dreaming: An Archaeology of Preunderstanding*, Leicester University Press, London, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> B. David, et al., 'Glassy Obsidian Artefacts from North Queensland: The Nolan's Creek Source and Some Archaeological Occurrences', *The Artefact* 15, 1992 pp. 25-30.

<sup>17</sup> B. David, 'A Space-Time Odyssey: Rock Art and Regionalisation in North Queensland Prehistory', University of Queensland, 1994; 'The 1984 Chillagoe Surveys'; B. David, *Landscapes, Rock-Art and the Dreaming: An Archaeology of Preunderstanding*; M. Mardaga-Campbell, *Under the Boardwalk: 'Living-Floor' Research in Aboriginal Rockshelters of North Queensland (Australia)*, PhD Thesis, James Cook University, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> E.C. Saint-Smith, 'On the Occurrence of Natural Alum, &C., at Boonmoo Pinanacle, North Queensland', *Queensland Government Mining Journal* 19, no. 213, 1918, pp. 367-371.

<sup>19</sup> David, *Landscapes, Rock-Art and the Dreaming*: B. David and N. Cole, 'Rock Art and Inter-Regional Interaction in Northeastern Australian Prehistory', *Antiquity* 64, 1990, pp. 788-806; B. David et al., 'The Maytown Ochre Source', *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 38, no. 2, 1995, pp. 441-445.

<sup>20</sup> N. Horsfall, 'Living in Rainforest: The Prehistoric Occupation of North Queensland's Humid Tropics', PhD Thesis, James Cook University, 1987.

<sup>21</sup> cf. S. Babidge, *Written True Not Gammon: A History of Aboriginal Charters Towers*, Black Ink Press, Thuringowa, 2007; N. Kirkman, *The Palmer Goldfields*, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1988; N.A. Loos, *Invasion and Resistance: Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861-1897*, Australian University Press, Canberra, 1982; J. Richards, *The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Report of Mining Warden, Mulgrave Field, *Queensland Votes & Proceedings* [hereafter *QV&P*], Queensland Government Printer, Brisbane, vol. IV, 1891, p. 269.

<sup>23</sup> The Cave below Lizard Head Rock is known and referred to by Chillagoe residents as 'Hennessy's cave'. There is a panel of historical names, the earliest date inscribed being that of E. Atherton 1888. There are many other names inscribed on the wall, including Henesy's.

<sup>24</sup> Sometimes spelled as *Kullijerry*. See Babidge, *Written True Not Gammon*; S.M. Babidge, *Family Affairs: An Historical Anthropology of State Practice and Aboriginal Agency in a Rural Town, North Queensland*, PhD Thesis, James Cook University, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Queensland death certificate, 1942/C2859. If Jerry was originally from Mt Carbine area he would have been about 460km south of his country as a 14 year old. The town of Mt Carbine was established in the late 1890s.

<sup>26</sup> Frank Hann of Lolworth Station took in Topsy as a 7-year old of the *Gudjala* people of the Charters Towers area. She was about 16 when she married Jerry.

<sup>27</sup> H. Brayshaw, *Well Beaten Paths: Aborigines of the Herbert Burdekin District, North Queensland. An Ethnographic and Archaological Study*, Studies in North Queensland History, Department of History, James Cook University, Townsville, 1990:33, pp. 35-38.

<sup>28</sup> It was common at the time for newspapers to get Aboriginal names wrong. It was reported that a Hann stockman by the name of 'Jackey' found the gold. After consulting the Hann family Diaries it was found that no Aboriginal person by that name was employed by the Hanns, though there are many recordings of Jerry. cf. Anon., 'Aborigine's Gold: Some Queensland Finds', *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 1 June 1934; G. Hansen, 'A Mining History of the Cape River Gold Field (1867-1870)', n.d. unpublished manuscript; B. Toll, Typescript, 25 May 1922, 1; *ibid.*, Typescript, 19 June 1922, 3, held at James Cook University Archives.

<sup>29</sup> cf. T. Tate, Typescript, 'Diary', 26 June - 10 November, 1872, of Thomas Tate, *Botanist with the Government Expedition under the Leadership of William Hann Which Explored the North Queensland Hinterland in 1872*, Mitchell Library, Sydney, n.d..

<sup>30</sup> See entry dated 17<sup>th</sup> September in W. Hann, 'Copy of the Diary of the Northern Expedition under the Leadership of Mr. William Hann', in *QV&P*, 1873.

<sup>31</sup> See, W.G. Ellwood, J.B. Campbell, and N. Huxley, 'Kullajerry: Traditional Knowledge and Trade Routes, the Hann Northern Expedition 1872', (in prep).

<sup>32</sup> H. Clarke, 'William Hann Diary 1872. Expedition of Exploration to the Endeavour River, Cape York Peninsula, 1872: Reconstruction from His Diary and Two Notebooks', in *Hann Family Papers*, James Cook University Library, 1982.

<sup>33</sup> See, Ellwood, Campbell, and Huxley, 'Kullajerry: Traditional Knowledge and Trade Routes, the Hann Northern Expedition 1872'.

<sup>34</sup> J.V. Mulligan, *Guide to the Palmer River and Normanby Gold Fields North Queensland*, George Slater & Co., Brisbane, 1875.

<sup>35</sup> This was the first rush to the field from a coastal port. Mulligan had already led a much larger overland rush from Georgetown on the Etheridge Gold Field.

<sup>36</sup> R.L. Jack, *Northmost Australia*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., London, 1921; Kirkman, 'The Palmer Goldfields'; G.C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1970.

<sup>37</sup> A.J. Dick, *Peninsula Pioneer: James Dick (1849-1916) Visionary of Far North Queensland a Biography*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003; Hann, 'Copy of the Diary of the Northern Expedition under the Leadership of Mr. William Hann'.

<sup>38</sup> Butchers, Edwards and Nation who previously worked at Hann owned properties of Mary Vale, Bluff Downs and Lolworth. Nation was also on the Northern Expedition in 1872. Edwardstown is named after Edwards.

- <sup>39</sup> W. Hann, 'Trip to Palmer River with Fat Cattle, 1874', in *Hann Family Diaries*, James Cook University Archives, 1874.
- <sup>40</sup> H.H. Clarke, 'Hann Family Diaries', in Hann Family Papers, James Cook University Library, 1982.
- <sup>41</sup> Dick was an Aboriginal stockman and shepherd employed by Ernest Henry from the late 1850s when on the Upper Dawson. See, R. Gray, *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland 1857-1912*, Constable and Company, London, 1913. Grey was a cousin of Ernest Henry and eventually took over Henry's Mt McConnell then Hughenden Stations.
- <sup>42</sup> Sheaffe was a white grazier who partnered with E. Henry. He later took up Fort Constantine on the Cloncurry River.
- <sup>43</sup> E. Henry, typescript, 'Account of Exploration by Ernest Henry: Including the First Discovery of Copper at Cloncurry', James Cook University Library, n.d..
- <sup>44</sup> 'Diary and Field Notes of Some Exploratory Journeys in the Cloncurry District by the Late Ernest Henry: Notably from Argylla to Mount Oxide, 14th-20th February, 1882 and Return Journey to Cloncurry, 2nd - 26th March', James Cook University Library, n.d..
- <sup>45</sup> Operations against the Kalkadoons were given into the charge of Sub-Inspector F.C. Urquhart, who had succeeded Marcus Beresford as O.C. Native Police in that district. Urquhart was afterwards appointed as Commissioner of Police in Queensland, and later Administrator of the Northern Territory. See, R.E.M. Armstrong, *The Kalkadoons: A Study of an Aboriginal Tribe on the Queensland Frontier*, William Brooks and Co., Brisbane, 1981.
- <sup>46</sup> S.E. Pearson, 'In the Kalkadoon Country: The Habitat and Habits of a Queensland Aboriginal Tribe', *Journal of the Royal Historic Society of Queensland* 4, no. 2, 1949.
- <sup>47</sup> The name of this group has changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. E. Henry, Typescript, *The True Story of the Finding and Opening Mount Oxide Copper Mine*, James Cook University Library, n.d.; *Diary and Field Notes of Some Exploratory Journeys in the Cloncurry District by the Late Ernest Henry: Notably from Argylla to Mount Oxide*.
- <sup>48</sup> H. Fysh, *Taming the North*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1970, p. 114.
- <sup>49</sup> D. Menghetti, *Charters Towers*, PhD, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1984; *Northern Miner*, 1897; *Northern Miner*, 6 and 7 December 1945 and 24 December 1971.
- <sup>50</sup> Jupiter's first cattle drive was from Beaudesert Station, near Kynuna to Wodonga in Victoria.
- <sup>51</sup> *The North Queensland Register*, 13 July 1898, p. 6.
- <sup>52</sup> He was exploring and later prospecting for John Moffat of Irvinebank.
- <sup>53</sup> They found that William Atherton had already established Chillagoe Station, later the Athertons also joined the search. The first copper mine on the Chillagoe Field was the Atherton Mine at the base of Cathedral rock.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Mining Notes', *The Northern Miner*, 16 July 1898.
- <sup>55</sup> We do know that Hensey's bark slab hut was here as it is located on the Linedale map of the Chillagoe-Mungana mineral field. Linedale family records, held by members of the Linedale family at Atherton and Georgetown.
- <sup>56</sup> Mining Notes, *The Northern Miner*, 16 July 1898.
- <sup>57</sup> 'Halfway around the Continent', *The Barrier Miner*, 17 November 1899.
- <sup>58</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *Mines in the Spinifex*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1960.
- <sup>59</sup> E.C. Saint-Smith, 'Nightflower Silver-Lead Lodes, Chillagoe District', *Queensland Government Mining Journal* 24, October 1923, p. 367.
- <sup>60</sup> Also known as the Mungana affair. See, K.H. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1978.
- <sup>61</sup> Reports and Diary of the Government Medical and Health Officer, Thornborough Police District 1888-1889, Queensland State Archives (hereafter QSA).
- <sup>62</sup> E.O. Mark (ed.), 'Gold on Mount Emu Plains Station. Huehenden District', in *Geological Survey of Queensland. Publication No. 235*, Queensland Department of Mines, Brisbane, 1924.
- <sup>63</sup> Anon., 'Aborigine's Gold: Some Queensland Finds'.
- <sup>64</sup> Including the Pelen and Burton Families; Willy Ah Bue (aka Willy Tung Sing), Paddy Ah Bue and Rupert. cf. J.Comber, *Palmer Goldfield: Heritage Sites Study (Stage 2)*, 1991.
- <sup>65</sup> Anderson, *The Political and Economic Basis of Kuku-Yalanji Social History*; C. Anderson and N. Mitchell, 'Kubara: A Kuku-Yalanji View of the Chinese in North Queensland', *Aboriginal History* 5, vol. 1, 1981, pp. 21-37.
- <sup>66</sup> Loos, *Invasion and Resistance*; H. Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: An Interpretation of the Aboriginal Response to the Invasion and Settlement of Australia*, James Cook University, Townsville, 1981.
- <sup>67</sup> Comber, *Palmer Goldfield: Heritage Sites Study (Stage 2)*.

- <sup>68</sup> K. Denigan, *Norman Baird: A Spark Within*, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, Cairns, 2006; G. Morris, *Looking Back the Way I Came*, Pinevale, Mareeba, 1991; G. Morris, *The Con Goo Line*, Townsville: Glenda Morris, 1997.
- <sup>69</sup> Other Aboriginal families who also worked gold and tin included; Turpin, Miller, Walker, Logan, Cross and Haines, from the Herberton area, Rodgers from Mt Carbine, Archer, Bennett, and Burns, from Petford. Caesar Lee-Chue and Alec Llyle were Palmer miners.
- <sup>70</sup> Bill Baird's surname can be also found spelled as Beard. cf. Clarke, 'Hann Family Diaries'; Ian Elliot, *Frank Hann's Lolworth Diaries 1865-1875*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 2013. Baird worked on the Hann properties from ca. 1866 to 1869 when he went to the Etheridge in 1871. He was with T. Leslie, S.G. Hackett, John Edwards, H. Edwards, John Duff and Charlie Ross on their failed expedition for Richard Daintree. cf. S.G. Hackett, 'Part of a Diary of a Prospecting Party Consisting of S.G. Hackett (and Others) Started from Glen Dhu Station, Valley of Lagoons, in Search of Kirchner Ranges', 1871, in *Hann Family Papers*, James Cook University Library, 1871; J.V. Mulligan, 'Sketcher. Exploring Expeditions and Prospecting Experiences 1850-1903. Part 4', *The Queenslander*, 17 September 1904.
- <sup>71</sup> C. Anderson, 'Aborigines and Tin Mining in North Queensland: A Case Study in the Anthropology of Contact History', *Mankind* vol. 13, No. 6, 1983, pp. 473- 498.
- <sup>72</sup> *Queensland Government Gazette*, November 1888, p. 985. He was also one of the original partners in the butcher's shop with John Edwards, J. Duff and T. Leslie at Edwardstown (Maytown) on the Palmer in 1874.
- <sup>73</sup> Jack, *Northmost Australia*, 703-04; J. Dick, 'The Cape York Peninsula', *Cairns Post*, Wednesday 30 August, 1911.
- <sup>74</sup> L.C. Ball, *Wolfram mines of Mount Carbine, North Queensland*, Geological Survey of Queensland, Publication #251, 1915, pp.76-94. True Blue vein was later worked by Simpson who sank a second adit.
- <sup>75</sup> At their time of death both men were listed as 'full blood'. Chief Protector of Aborigines, Register of Aboriginal Deaths 1910 – 1928, A/58973, QSA.
- <sup>76</sup> R. Annabel, 'Even Toddlers Earn Money from Wolfram to Buy Toys', *The Australian Woman's Weekly*, 8 October 1952.
- <sup>77</sup> H.A. Borland, 'Goldfields of the Nineties: Jordan', *Cairns Post*, 27 July 1951.
- <sup>78</sup> J. May, 'Mountain Tracks and the Russell Goldfield: An Extract from a Brief History of Eacham Shire', 1959; D. Ray and P. Callaghan, 'Frederick Grace (Boonjie) Brown: Farmer and Mining Entrepreneur', *Eacham Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 377, 2012.
- <sup>79</sup> Anderson, 'Aborigines and Tin Mining in North Queensland'.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>81</sup> D.W. de Havelland, *Gold and Ghosts Volume 4*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, WA, 1989.
- <sup>82</sup> C. Hooper, *Angor to Zillmanton: Stories of North Queensland's Deserted Towns*, Bolton Print, Townsville, 2006.
- <sup>83</sup> Anon., 'Batavia River Rush', *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 3 December 1892.
- <sup>84</sup> Later histories claim the death was 1896 but the first reference in the Newspapers was 1894 and the Queensland death certificate confirms this earlier date, see Queensland Death Certificate 1894/C3585 William Thompson Baird.
- <sup>85</sup> N. Francis, 'Told on the Bloonfield. About Bill Baird, No.6', *Cairns Post*, 2 February 1940.
- <sup>86</sup> Chief Protector of Aborigines Register of Aboriginal Deaths 1910 – 1928, A/58973, QSA.
- <sup>87</sup> 'Mining Notes', *Worker*, 13 February 1913.
- <sup>88</sup> Official Wardens' Reports always mention Anderson.
- <sup>89</sup> 'Protectors report 1912', "Als", *Cairns Post*, 1 September 1913.
- <sup>90</sup> 'Protector of Aborigines', *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, 26 September 1914.
- <sup>91</sup> Pluto was doing what all the miners, big and small, were doing at the time, find a dupe and swindle him then do a runner until things cool down (there is evidence which suggests that Pluto was marking out and putting claims on the Hodgkinson field near Thornborough in 1914)? Pluto's larrikin nature is bought out in the writings of Basalt Earl in his series of weekly articles titled 'Along Cape York Peninsula' published by Basalt Earl in the *Queenslander* between September 1896 and January 1897.
- <sup>92</sup> Jack, *Northmost Australia*, p. 734.
- <sup>93</sup> Sir R. Cilento, Section 1: Survey of Aborigines in North Queensland 1932 – 1937, National Archives of Australia, Series A1928, Item 4/5.
- <sup>94</sup> Bill Bowyang, 'On the Track', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 25 March 1938.
- <sup>95</sup> Kitty Pluto was the only Aboriginal woman to be acknowledged for finding a gold field, though research has uncovered that a unidentified woman may have also found a number of Auriferous reefs on the northern sections of the Hodgkinson in the 1870s.

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<sup>96</sup> QSA/GML 47/476/740 Kitty Pluto; cf. J. Fisher, *Battlers in the Bush: The Batavia Goldfield of Cape York*, S.R. Frankland p/1, Melbourne, 1998.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> 'Removals 1921', HOM/B58, QSA, notes 10 Aborigines at Batavia & Tin Cks to Y [Yarrabah], viz., Mary Ann, Rose Ann, Kitty Pluto, Lizzy, H/C child, Nancy, Mick (female), Annie, Little Annie, Maggie Williamson, Sambo H/C, Paddy (female), Emily, Sullivan, Jackie Fat, Charlie, Dick, Bob Whelan, Friday Wilson; Protector of Aborigines, Cooktown Aboriginal Occurrence Book 10, 5.1915 - 22. 5.1942, POA 13/1, Extracts 29, 6.1922, QSA, notes, 'Arrived en route to Yarrabah Peter Constant, Jacky Flat, Sullivan, Kitty and Pluto or Kitty Pluto, Lizzie, Sambo (H/C child). Left for Yarrabah'.

<sup>99</sup> Kitty to Palm Island, Removals register, A/64785:227, QSA.

<sup>100</sup> Queensland, death certificate 1946/C4858.

<sup>101</sup> 'Aboriginal with a History', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 October 1950.

<sup>102</sup> see endnotes 75 and 76.

<sup>103</sup> *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 23 April 1936. For a more official report see, G. Beck, 'Cape York Peninsula Fields: Report of Recent Mining Activities', *Queensland Government Mining Journal* 36, November 1935, p. 378; 'Report on Inspection of Peninsula Division', *Queensland Government Mining Journal* 37, September, 1936, p. 324 stated that 'Friday Wilson is gouging stone out of a mullocky leader 3 to 4 in. on his prospecting area, Blue Metal. It strikes 250 degrees and underlies 50 degrees east. A parcel of 2 tons 18cwt treated at Coen returned him 3oz 17dwt of gold in 1936 Friday's returns were 36oz for 12 tons crushed'. These were common returns for a small miner.

<sup>104</sup> QSA/GML No. 189; 'Public Notices', *Cairns Post*, 3 December 1936. His partners were Herbert James Thompson, Charles Morley and John Louis Bassani.

<sup>105</sup> *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 28 January, 1942, p. 8

<sup>106</sup> Queensland death certificate 1950/4490.