

A Glimpse at Buluwai History (1867–1969)



Buluwanydji camp at Mona Mona, Annie and Toby Brim centre right

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Chapter 1 – Father’s inheritance – Custom, Traditional Knowledge and Law



Photo above: Toby Brim third from left

Local tribe’s, our areas of responsibility, customs, traditional knowledge and law, all pre-ordained by ancestors millenniums ago. Bama (Aboriginal people), our Creation story speak of Buda Dji, the Rainbow Serpent, creating the Barron River boundary, Bulurru Law. Damarri and Guyula represent the two halves of the one, ‘Wet (water)’ and ‘Dry (land)’ Moieties.

Moieties regulate ‘Marriage Law’, its bloodline purity, we cannot marry the same moiety. Every Buluwai male, their inter-tribal marriage produces multi-lingual descendants. Seasonal Runs through neighbouring lands, attending kinsfolk Ceremonies, speaking their language is paying homage to each ancestral Mother’s Clan, her Tribe.

Layer upon layer, Buluwai petroglyphs, our ‘rock art’, include ‘Kunindooran’ whose globally symbolic ‘squatter man’ pose, has this extraordinary solar event, the Sun, included. This occurred around 42,000 years ago. Short-films, ‘Buluwai Story – Damarri & Guyula’ and ‘Great Flood’ can be viewed on buluwai.org.

Tribes comprise of unrelated clans who descend from an apical male ancestor, we share inner-moiety bloodline and language. Bama had one name, their unique ‘skin’ name. Buluwai known ‘Apical Male Ancestors’ are: Jolputai (Clohesy, Koah, Oak Forest), Goolingan (Redlynch), Merukan (Tinaroo), Tja:muru (Dina:ru, Stoney Creek), Hobbler (Redlynch), Tjinaru:l (Myola, Redlynch), Windga (Dina:ru, Stoney Creek), Tj:Auwin (Speewah, Kuranda), Oipee (Redlynch), Oiyoo (Kuranda), Binnanuwan (Speewah, Mantaka).

Australia's Frontier Wars started with 1788 First fleet and supposedly ended during the 1930's. The Far North of Queensland wasn't immune, it was brutal for both black and white. It's with respect that another man's story isn't mine to tell, so for this reason, I example my Buluwai Katjiraka (Taipan) Clan, to simply enlighten.

My great, great-grandfather Merukan, died at Mt Bartle Frere. His sons, Tjaimuru 'dead at Dina:ru' near Stoney Creek (Yarrabah Clan), Tjinaru:l jailed for murdering George Hobson, Myola. Tj: Auwin c1867(Toby Brim) born 'S of Mareeba. S extremity of tribe range', Oipee 'Jimmy Lowe' (father of Peter Banning, Redlynch) and Tommy Durston (Redlynch, Palm Island).

Generationally, my four ancestral 'Mother's' hail from Ngatjan, Idindji, Tjapukai, Koko-Yalindji (grandmother). My fifth 'Mother', is my Awabakal (NSW) ancestral Mother's story. The 'shade' difference between brothers Darkie and Toby Brim below, is our Idindji ancestral Mother's story.



Photo above: Toby Brim
Photo right: Tjinaru:l (Darkie)

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No. 57 Name Darkie (abn)

Date when Portrait was taken, 17 April 1891

Native place Queensland Where and when tried Cairns 2 April 91

Year of birth about 1868 Offence Murder

Arrived in } Ship
Colony } Year

Trade or occupation }
previous to conviction }

Religion none Sentence Death commuted to life P.S.

Education, degree of none Remarks

Height 5 feet 5 1/2 inches

Weight } On committal 10/3
in lbs } On discharge

Colour of hair Blk

Colour of eyes Brn

Marks or special features two toes
left foot joined.

(No. of previous Portrait _____)

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS:--

Chapter 2 – Frontier Wars – John Atherton Raids on Kuranda Area

The British Empire through its Australian Westminster Government, has no Treaty with its First Nations people.

There was no Waitangi Day style celebration envisioned, “Aborigines” were deemed a dying race. Settlers spoke of “smoothing the pillow of a dying race” – Internet.

Whilst in the Top End imagining sugarcane and cattle acreage, 1873, George A Dalrymple, an Explorer, named the Macalister Range. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum, Dalrymple – ‘large muscular men’ who were ‘ferocious, cunning’ and ‘formidable enough to threaten the survival of the new settlement’. He used similar words to describe a group near the Macalister Range (Tindale’s Buluwai or possibly Irukandji tribe).

Cairns officially founded 1876, a year later John Atherton establishes his Emerald End homestead. 1878, Bama speared travellers and packers at Middle Crossing. By 1880, Archibald Meston, Protector of Aborigines, is living at Kamerunga and American, Andrew Banning further in Redlynch.

‘Scores of Atherton’s cattle were speared, and seeking them far and wide over the Barron and Clohesy valleys, he carried his life in his hands. A tomahawk thrown from ambush, once almost put finish to Atherton’s career, he carried the terrible scar to the day of his death.’ ‘One and a half years after Atherton’s letter to the colonial Secretary Sub-Inspector Carr reported to the Commissioner of Police that on 13th August, 1881, he and his troopers had ‘dispersed blacks (Buluwandji) at the head of the Clohesy River for stealing cattle’, which suggests that this was part of the area over which he ran his herds’.

‘A hill northwest of Tolga called Bones Knob, is a grim reminder of the revenge the early pioneers took on the dusky owners of the land ...’ Sub-Inspector Douglas and his troopers frequently sallied forth to ‘disperse’ the Stone Age tribes who were fighting a losing battle against the white invasion; and, ‘in the early days of Mareeba, old John Atherton, red-shirted and bearded, was a familiar figure, riding up the street on a small jack donkey’.

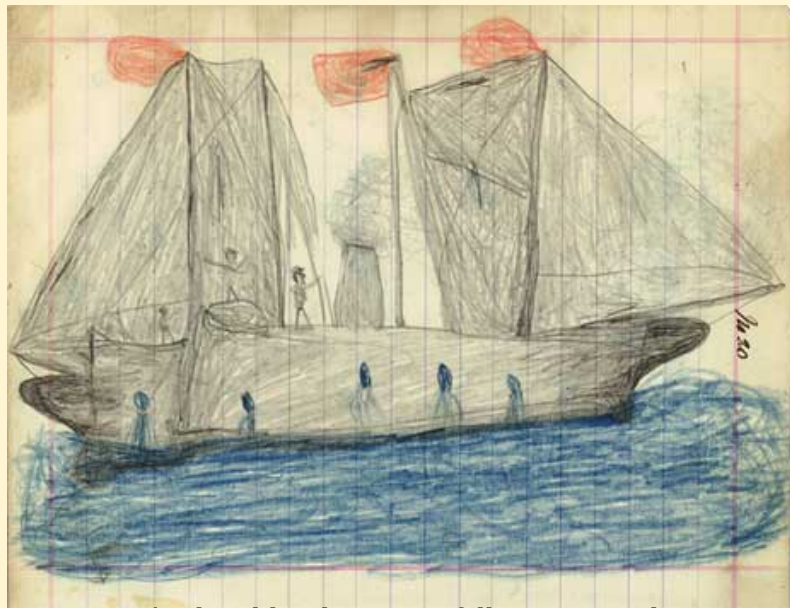


Oscar’s Sketchbook, 1. Sub Inspector and Troopers shooting

At some time, Toby Brim has no choice but to tell his two eldest sons to run for their lives; they head north. From the time John Atherton moved in, his ‘sick’ demeanour, would forever be burnt into Katjiraka memory and generationally retold as ‘oral history’. Toby’s surviving children are Dan (Cape Flattery), Oscar (Croydon), Middie (Lalfie Thompson mother) and Binnanuwan (Cecil) in Buluwai Country.

It was 1883 when Walter Hill Veivers homestead was located at Speewah. Neighbours for 33 years, the humaneness of Mr Veivers and his clan, is Katjiraka first-hand knowledge and 'oral history'.

At Cooktown 1887, the police got Oscar and took him on board the steamer for Augustus Glisson, a Station Manager near Camooweal.



Oscar's Sketchbook, 20. Big feller Steamer longa Cooktown, childhoods reme[mbrance]

Who's the man in the red shirt? Is there a red smudge at the back of his head? Is this a defining event? Oscar's 'burnt' circumstance, is our Tjapukai ancestral Mother's story.

Kuranda, like Puckerum and Helmholtzia, are common names for *Helmholtzia acrifolia*. A 400–1500m altitude understory plant in mountain rain forest, usually along creeks and other permanently moist sites. From countless specimens, Baron von Mueller has his name attached to this botanical specimen.

Thankfully in 1888, Kuranda was our official founding name, and not the other two. The Clohesy lands are open for selection. 1890, settler George Hobson was murdered near Myola, for this crime Darkie (Tjinaru:l) 'was sentenced to death but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment' at St Helena Prison Island.

Chapter 3 – Government Missions, ~~Stolen~~ Kidnapped Generation, Stolen Wages

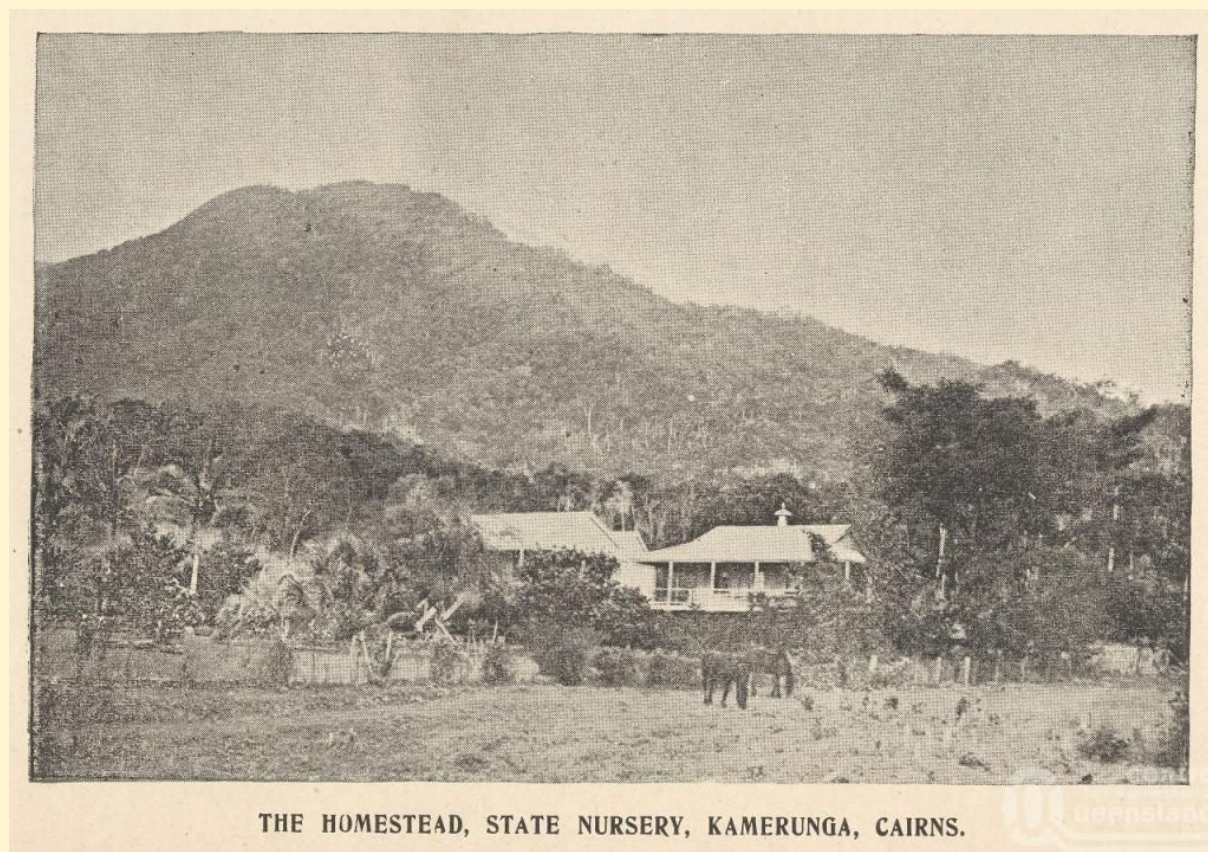


Photo above: Archibald Meston, Protector of Aborigines, homestead at Kamerunga

Government Missions housed survivors of war and kidnapped children, who were followed by their families. It's decades long 'assimilation' programming was to teach Bama basic English, Mathematics and only prepare them for menial jobs. Cilento Report, DISCIPLINE *'Of what use is it to instil moral and social conventions into aboriginals, to teach them to read and by other forms of education, if they are without a future in the country of their origin'*.

Across the inlet **1892, Yarrabah Mission** opens. Government census report tribal population 575, represented by Barbarum, **Buluwai**, Djankun, Djirubal, Idindji, Iitu, **Irukandji**, Kabikabi, Kalkadunga, Kandju, Karbunga, Keramai, Kokobididji, Kokobujundji, Kokoimudji, Kokoimudji, Kokokulunggur, Kokolamalama, Kokowara, Kokojava, Kokojelandji, Konanin, Konkandji, Kukatji, Kulngai, Kunggari, Maikulung, Mamu, Muluritji, Mutumui, Ngatjan, Tagalag (Dagalang), **Tjapukai**, Wakaman, Walmbaria, Wargamai.

Cairns Post 13th February, 06th & 13th August, 1896 Meston *'By August, once more on the travelling show circuit, with tales of expert blacks spearing grasshoppers at 60 yards. When interest in the lecture flagged, one was easily distracted by identifying the local farm hands, Toby or Sandy, Sambo or Tommy or Jimmy in unfamiliar guise as a myall in war paint'*. Are these entertainers Toby Brim with brothers Tommy Durston and Jimmy Lowe with Sandy, Sambo?

'When Australia became a nation in 1901, one of the founding fathers Alfred Deakin forecast that within a hundred years: "Australia will be a white continent with not a black or even dark skin amongst its inhabitants.'

St Helena prison, 'do not release at present – too cunning, refuses to go to the Native Police'. From St Helena to 'Fraser Island from where he escaped in a canoe, reached the mainland and walked to Ingham'. 'By April 1902 he (Darkie) was back in Cairns, arriving impudently by ship. All the police were alerted and he was eventually recaptured at Kuranda'.

'A Clever Arrest', Morning Post 11th April 1902 Constable Barson arrested Darkie who's charged as an 'incurable aboriginal'. Archibald Meston, Protector of Aboriginals, complains 'that if he had been informed of Darkie's escape from Fraser Island he could have got trackers to intercept him before he got to Bundaberg'.

Oscar Brimm, Stockman at Einsleigh is mentioned in the 1909 Brisbane *Truth* coverage of Carpentaria Downs murder 'Who killed Nelly Duffy'. Four years later, John Atherton dies at Emerald End and **Mona Mona Station in Djabugay Country opens**.

Government invest in Religions to do their isolated 'assimilation' experiment. Missions rely on its free labour force who had no birth certificates, identification or bank accounts to physically construct and financially support the concentration camp. Free labour and potential profit has to come from somewhere, so a plan to remove the last tribes from Kuranda was formed.

Under the guise of saving the natives from their wretched lives, a letter is sent from Mona Mona Mission Superintendent to Chief protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 'It will be convenient for me to take the Kuranda Tribe on the Mission by July 1915. If you think it advisable for one to do so, at the time, would it not be best for you to instruct Constable Donahue to sign them on for six months only? I think the sooner we can have them on the Mission the better it will be for them'.

Then in 1916 Mona Mona Mission Superintendent to Chief protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 'Re: Kuranda Aboriginals. We are now in a much better position to take them ...', 'You may feel free to have them sent along any time when it is convenient to your department'. ...



Photo top right: Toby Brim at Mona Mona Mission
Photo above: Toby Brim in "Jail" at Mona Mona Mission

Hunter's BARRON FALLS HOTEL to Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 'Dear Sir, I have just heard that the Kuranda Blacks are very shortly to be removed to the Mission Station. I must ask how to enquire into this as they are a very interesting to tourists in their natural homes, they are a pure and only increasing tribe known in the north. They are of great service to the inhabitants and of no trouble to the Police. No doubt they will be of great commercial value to the Mission Station who are working in open competition to the whites of the district. ... I do hope now will be good enough to see this matter stayed'. ...

Telegram from M Fitzpatrick, Kuranda to Hon McCormack, Brisbane, 'Kuranda Blacks all taken by force special contingent police two in handcuffs no notice given to employer under agreement and agreements not cancelled matter demands immediate enquiry. Taken to Mona Mona Mission. Kindly attend on behalf of Kuranda people'.

'In the early days of the mission two brothers came here Toby Brim and Dick. Toby with his wife and only son Cecil remained on the mission while Dick wended his way back to Redlynch, at which place he resided all the years except for a few visits to his brother here.' Superintendent, Mona Mona Mission for Aborigines

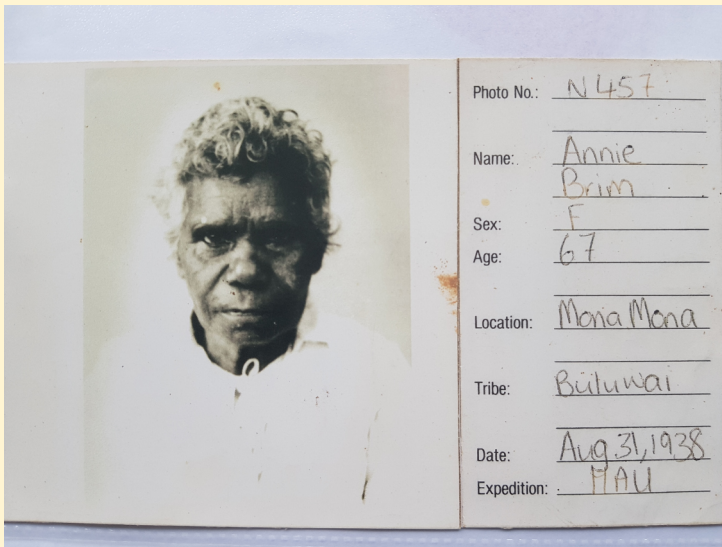


Photo above: Annie Brim

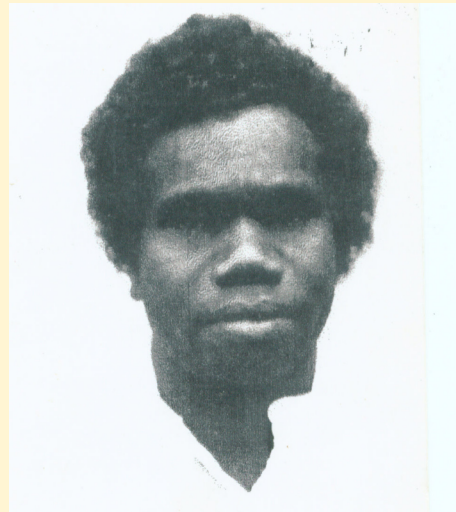


Photo above: Cecil Brim

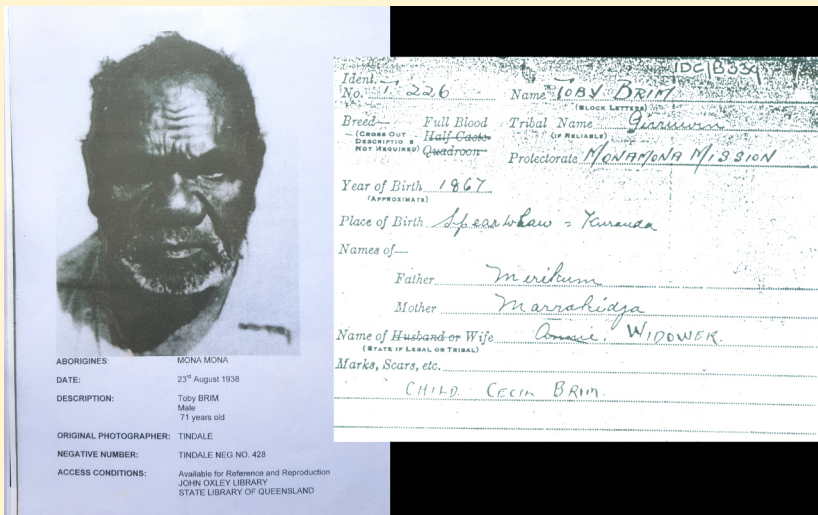
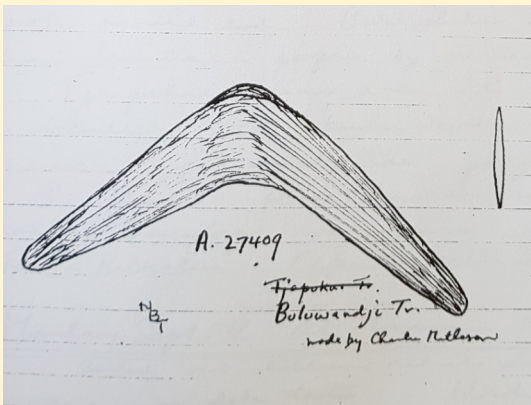


Photo above: Toby Brim

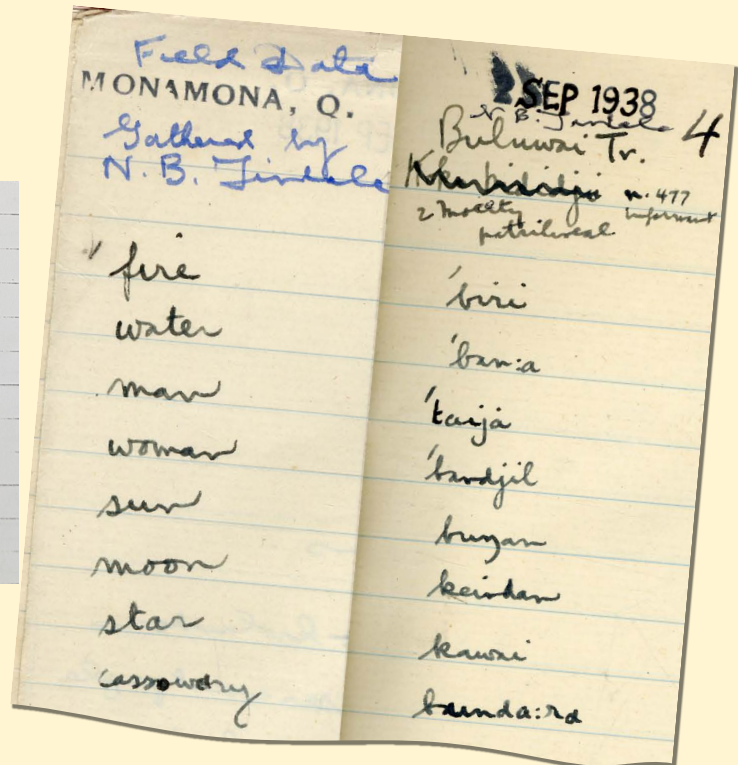
Identity No: T226
 Name: Toby Brim
 Breed: Full Blood
 Tribal Name: Tjiwin
 Protectorate: Mona Mona Mission
 Year of Birth: 1867
 Place of Birth: Spearwhaw - Yairanda
 Names of
 Father: Merikun
 Mother: Marrakidja
 Name of Wife: Annie Widower
 Marks, Scars, etc. Child Cecil Brim

These items were collected during the Harvard-Adelaide Universities' Anthropological Expedition of 1938-39 and are now stored at SA Museum.

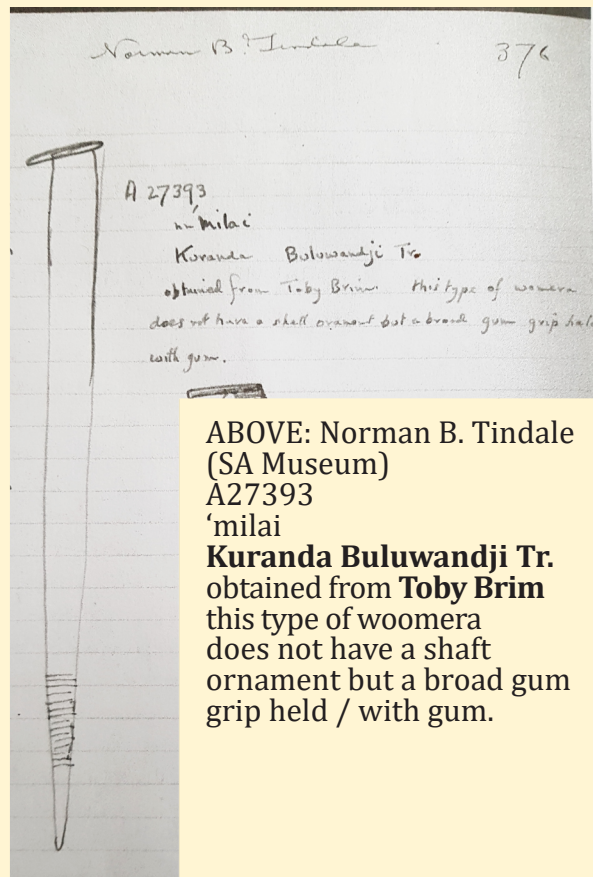
BELOW: Norman B. Tindale (SA Museum) A.27409
Buluwandji Tr. |made by Charlie Matheson



RIGHT: Norman B. Tindale (SA Museum) **Buluwai Parallel Vocabulary**



ABOVE: Norman B. Tindale (SA Museum)
 Shield of fig tree wood
 'kulmari of Ba:baram
 'kundjuri of Muluritji
 'matjai of Tja:pukai
 'dakul of Buluwai
 A.27410 Dindj R. W of
 Herberton.



ABOVE: Norman B. Tindale (SA Museum)
 A27393
 'milai
Kuranda Buluwandji Tr.
 obtained from **Toby Brim**
 this type of woomera
 does not have a shaft
 ornament but a broad gum
 grip held / with gum.

Photo above: Toby Brim

Chapter 4 – Assimilation into White Society



Photo above: Brim/Richardson/Grogan Family

Within decades, Government parcel off and lease 'vacant' land. On their Missions, Government expected our cultural knowledge and language to die with our 'proper' old people. At age five, children were segregated from their parents, placed into dormitories, so they wouldn't be taught culture.

Norman Tindale **1938** Government census, **Mona Mona Tribal population 260**, represented by **Tjapukai**, Muluritji, Idindji, **Buluwandji**, and Koko-jelandji. Also Djirubal, Barbarum, Ngatjan, Djankun (koko-gutu), Koko-njunkula (Tjunbundji), Koko-bididji, Koko-bujundji, Koko-imidji, Koko-mini, Koko-wara, Koko-patun, Wakaman, Jangga, Kutjal, Dagalang, Arap (Walangan).

By 1955, young 'Exempted' families needed to move where the Railway, Forestry, Logging and Farm work was and Kuranda had it all. From the Oak Forest community near the Chirio family on the hill, a mud-map and listing of 13 Hut Owners were made by the District Land Office Cairns. Cecil Brim and his eldest son Warren, worked for Forestry, Black Mountain. Ivan at Machans Beach, Milton (timberworker) employed by Ben Herbohn, Kuranda.

N.B.—The Director may at any time, revoke any Exemption and thereupon the provisions of this Act shall apply to such aboriginal as if no Exemption had ever been granted.

" THE ABORIGINALS PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION ACTS, 1939 TO 1946."

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION No. 109/61

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that IVAN BRIM
of MONA MONA MISSION
is hereby exempt from the Provisions of "The Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts, 1939 to 1946" and the Regulations thereunder, subject to the conditions specified hereunder:—

(Date) 3rd November, 1961.

Geoff
Director of Native Affairs

A condition of the granting of this Certificate of Exemption is that such Certificate of Exemption shall, upon revocation, be delivered up to the Director.

CERTIFICATE OF
EXEMPTION No. 109/61
IVAN BRIM
MONA MONA MISSION
3rd November, 1961

District Land Office Cairns, 16th October 1962. Res. 2940 Camping & Water Reserve R.158, Parish of Mona Mona MEMO: *The new arrivals on the area is the result of the recent publicity over the air regarding the resettlement of the mission people on the Cairns-Mareeba Railway Line, and they hope to be able to secure for themselves some assistance re housing.* **Mona Mona officially closed 1963**, a year after I was born.

Along the Barron and in Kuranda, Bama menfolk worked, their Mona Mona houses were bought and brought. Some families continued to attend the SDA Church, a lot didn't for various reasons.

The 1967 Referendum, Australians voted for Constitutional change to allow Indigenous Australians the right to vote and thus, enable the Commonwealth to make laws for us. Opposing, were those who thought their vote would allow us, full citizenship rights.

Here in the north, Bama ancestors didn't have Birth Certificates. For Cecil Brim Pension, 1969 STAT. DEC. says,

'I, Walter Thron VEIVERS of Kuranda, in the State of Queensland, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am 70 years of age, I was born at Kuranda on 7th August, 1899. I have known Cecil BRIM since I was seven years of age and I consider him to be two years younger than myself.'

"Oaths Act of 1867-1960"
Statutory Declaration.

QUEENSLAND } Kuranda.
TO WIT }

I, Walter Thron VEIVERS
of Kuranda, in the State of Queensland,
do solemnly and sincerely declare
that I am 70 years of age, I was born at Kuranda on
7th August, 1899. I have known Cecil BRIM since I
was seven years of age and I consider him to be two
years younger than myself.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing
the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the
"Oaths Act of 1867-1960."

Taken and Declared before me, at Kuranda
this twelfth day of September, 1969 } *W. J. Veivers*
A Justice of the Peace.

G.P. St. Ref. F26. Dist. Printer, Brisbane (N.S.)

Chapter 5 - 'Treaty' Tribal Recognition and its Native Title Precursor

Tourism in 1913, Kuranda was advertised as, 'The Riviera of the Commonwealth'. It was our ecological beauty, our rare and unique animal and plant species, our lifestyle within this paradise that brought visitors. Bama employees added cultural spice that made the visit more memorable.



Photo above: In 1975, NAIDOC became a nation wide week-long event, and in 1983 Kuranda hosted its inaugural year, led by Elders Maggie Donahue and Cecil Brim (pictured)

From our ancestors to Native Title, Section 223(1)(a) says: 'The Native Title Act does not create new rights and interests in land called 'native title.' Instead, ... rights and interests finding their origin in pre-sovereignty law and custom, not rights or interests which are a creature of that Act.' Pre-sovereign is before 1876 when Cairns founded.

For Treaty purposes, it appears both Yarrabah and Mona Mona Missions were a nose-count of war refugees in those refugee camps, the survivors from the Frontier Wars. Moving towards compensating the right people, Native Title requires your pre-sovereign apical male ancestor connection to your claim (inheritance) and evidence of continuing practice of traditional customs, lore and law.

For all tribes forced onto Mona Mona Mission, we all celebrated the Skyrail inspired Djabugay Barron Gorge National Park Determination; ancestor Toby Brim was included. The National Park is limited in area and doesn't include Kuranda. For the rest of Buluwai Tribal Estate, our 2004 lodgement of Buluwai Native Title Claim was misled by NQLC.

Today in Kuranda there is promotion of: *'The Djabugay people (Bama) are the Traditional Owners of Kuranda'* (Kuranda Historical Society), and *'Mandingalbay Yidinji Country | Cairns and Kuranda region'* (WTMA Sustainable Tourism Plan). The AIATSIS Map fineprint says, *'not suitable for native title or other land claims'*. Buluwai Country is the prize certain tribes want, but cannot culturally or historically have.

Because of recent history, Buluwai cultural diversity sees our 'inclusive' practice as not stripping a man of his tribal identity. Commercial branding aside, the tribal heritage of the first Tjapukai Dance Theatre entertainers, is testament to this fact. There was a 'brotherhood' among men from many different tribes - not just Djabugay!

'If you don't know history, it's as if you were born yesterday. If you were born yesterday then any leader can tell you anything.' – George Santayana, American philosopher

The Kuranda Paper 'Going looking for words' says *'.. and Gulunydji have lived here for millennia.'* Gulunydji or Guluy? Linguist Quinn's 1995 map, Guluy is within an unknown mountain range passing Mt Molloy. His 2012 map, the whole mountain range has completely disappeared and Guluy, is now within Buluwai traditional land.

To enhance Kuranda's historical information, and to recognise Buluwai's past and being historically fair, I openly request Linguist Quinn and his team, to publish in the Kuranda Paper as I have exemplified, Gulunydji/Guluy tribal history from 1876 pre-sovereign to now.

For me, newly presented source material will either confirm or give a different view. Since tribal branding is trendy, I welcome any historical information, showing Buluwai giving our Father's inheritance to any neighbour. As for 'Empire Dreaming', ***'Don't gain the world and lose your soul, wisdom is better than silver or gold'*** - Bob Marley.