

kuranda.org

CURRENT CONTENT

OUR VIBRANT INDIGENOUS CULTURE

"Dja-bu-guy" is the name of the tribe of Aboriginal people who live in the Kuranda region. The present Kuranda Village was "Ngunbay", or place of platypus. An important camping area with good fishing and hunting for locals. This all changed with the opening up of the hinterland for gold and tin mining. The access was along tracks of the "Bama" (rainforest) people, and through their country. "Gadja" (ghost spirit), or white man, had an immediate impact on the Djabugay people.

THE PAST - WHEN TWO CULTURES MEET

In May 1886 construction of the Cairns to Herberton railway began over one such walking track, which crossed the ranges and went down to the coast. This was not popular with the Djabugay, who stood up to the white invasion by spearing bullocks and the occasional white man. They took workers food, as their traditional gathering and hunting grounds were now either taken over by new settlers, or over hunted by the 1500 men living and working on the railway line.

An infamous massacre, known as the Speewah massacre, occurred in the mid-1890s. Early settler, John Atherton, sent native troopers to revenge the death of a bullock. Other unconfirmed reports of similar atrocities occurred locally.

THE PRESENT - A VIBRANT THRIVING CULTURE

Before white man, the population of the Bama people in the Cairns area was estimated at between 4000 and 5000, but by the turn of the century their numbers had rapidly declined, overtaken by the Gadja settlers.

Coffee, the regions first cash crop, began in 1896. The Bama people were soon utilized as farm labourers on the rapidly expanding plantations around Kuranda, until well into the twentieth century. Many Bama became fringe dwellers on the edge of white settlements, unable to hunt and fish, or move around as they had for thousands of years.

The land around Kuranda has been home to the Djabugay Aboriginal people for more than 10,000 years and this vibrant indigenous culture continues to thrive today. For more information, please visit the [Djabugay Aboriginal Corporations](#) website.

PROPOSED CONTENT

OUR VIBRANT INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Djabugay and Buluwai are the names of the tribes of Aboriginal people who live in the Kuranda region. The present Kuranda Village was "Ngunbay", or place of platypus. An important camping area with good fishing and hunting for locals. This all changed with the opening up of the hinterland for gold and tin mining. The access was along tracks of the "Bama" (rainforest) people, and through their country. "Gadja" (ghost spirit), or white man, had an immediate impact on the Bama people.

THE PAST - WHEN TWO CULTURES MEET

In May 1886 construction of the Cairns to Herberton railway began over one such walking track, which crossed the ranges and went down to the coast. This was not popular with the Bama, who stood up to the white invasion by spearing bullocks and the occasional white man. They took workers food, as their traditional gathering and hunting grounds were now either taken over by new settlers, or over hunted by the 1500 men living and working on the railway line.

An infamous massacre, known as the Speewah massacre, occurred in the mid-1890s. Early settler, John Atherton, sent native troopers to revenge the death of a bullock. Other unconfirmed reports of similar atrocities occurred locally.

THE PRESENT - A VIBRANT THRIVING CULTURE

Before white man, the population of the Bama people in the Cairns area was estimated at between 4000 and 5000, but by the turn of the century their numbers had rapidly declined, overtaken by the Gadja settlers.

Coffee, the regions first cash crop, began in 1896. The Bama people were soon utilized as farm labourers on the rapidly expanding plantations around Kuranda, until well into the twentieth century. Many Bama became fringe dwellers on the edge of white settlements, unable to hunt and fish, or move around as they had for thousands of years.

The land around Kuranda has been home to the Bama Aboriginal Rainforest people for more than 65,000 years and this vibrant indigenous culture continues to thrive today. For more information, please visit [Djabugay Aboriginal Corporations](#) or [Buluwai Indigenous Corporation](#) websites.