

# progenitor



***Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory Inc.***

*The Family History Place*



***DECEMBER 2023***

# GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY INC

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**FRONT COVER:** Christmas is always a time to remember. Christmas 1974 will long be remembered in Australia's Northern Territory.

Early in the morning of December 25 the Territory's capital city, Darwin, was destroyed by Cyclone Tracy.

## **FELINES SURVIVE CYCLONE TRACY**

Julian Schuller, owner of the Blaumeise Cattery in 1974-5 Darwin gave me permission to reprint her story of Cyclone Tracy, which first appeared in a Cat Association NT Newsletter.

"Christmas Eve 1974 started off much as usual – lunch at a hotel with fellow workers, a dash to the nursery to pick up the two children, some last minute shopping and picking up husband from the celebrations at the hospital where he works.

The news that a cyclone in the area was now heading for Darwin was a bit of a surprise – "Well, I don't mind," says I, "It will make it cooler for eating Christmas Dinner." There is nothing quite as frustrating as being faced with a huge Christmas dinner on a hot, humid, Territory Christmas Day.

As my father was returning to England in a few days, I was making Christmas something special and had asked some friends over for the meal. The evening was busily spent in preparations for the feast, punctuated by wrapping presents and half an ear being given to the cyclone warnings. At midnight, thoroughly exhausted, we went to bed.

At about 1 o'clock, husband Helmut checked the presents on the living room floor and, as rain was coming in through the windows, he moved them further over. A little later, a virtual flood was pouring in, so, with towel and buckets we mopped the floor and piled the Christmas presents onto the table.

A check on the children showed 3 ½ year old son Wolf's bed saturated, so he was moved into our double bed.

Then the noise of the wind became really frightening, so I got baby Rikki from her cot and Helmut got Wolf from the bedroom in case he became frightened. In the meantime, I had moved the box, containing mother and four 2 week-old Burmese kittens from our bedroom into the kitchen. Neutered male was in the bathroom and two females and one neuter were in the living room.

Suddenly, "Crash," a large piece of timber was forced through the windows by the wind, skittling the beautifully decorated Christmas tree – we retreated to the bathroom, 3 adults, 2 children and one cat. Luckily, this room provided one seat, on which I sat with the kiddies on my knee – we also had a gaslight standing in the washbasin. Soon, the pressure forced the trapdoor in the ceiling to fall down.

After a long while, the lull came, and Helmut went to check on the windows, but was back soon and the wind started from the bathroom side of the house with greater fury.

"You'd better get in the bath," said Helmut. I had just managed to climb in with Wolf when "Crash" – a piece of wood flew through the bathroom window and crashed into the towel rail, bending the rail to the wall. The fact that I had just moved from the spot gave me a queer feeling.

Four of us crouched in the bath, now covered in glass and two inches of water, with a shower curtain over our heads. Tammy, the cat, was under the washbasin and father squeezed between the washbasin and the wall.

We stayed like this until 6am, freezing cold, the baby having lost her pyjamas was blue, myself in tropical nightie wasn't much better – unable to get rid of the water out of the bath as I was sitting over the plug-hole and glimpsing lightning flashing through the trapdoor. The full significance of this did not strike us until we went to view the damage – the whole roof had gone and the ceilings had fallen in everywhere except for a small ceiling in the kitchen. Snug as bugs under were the kittens and mum in their box on a small table. Peta, in his basket was a bit wet and neuter and female were under the linen cupboard in a sewing basket, quite safe. The second female was in a cupboard in the baby's cot, which had fallen over. She must have been hurt or in shock, as she died at a cattery within the week.

The aftermath of the cyclone was amazing and bewildering – my huge stud cage was sitting in the next-door garden, the clothes hoist was flat on the ground, the Kombi van was festooned with power lines, roofing iron littered the road and gardens. The houses either side had lost walls, or were crumbling wrecks.

Helmut had to go to the hospital and report for work and I, with father and children lived in our Kombi van parked at the local school down the road. I went to the house each day and gave the cats meat and water. – I didn't mention them when the talk turned to shooting all the animals.

Then I was evacuated to Sydney – not even my husband knew and I had to leave the cats to fend for themselves. Luckily, Helmut came home a day or two later, found me gone and took the cats to a cattery about twenty miles out of Darwin. The kittens went to a friend whose house was undamaged. The nine-year-old neutered male was missing. On one of his trips to the house, about a fortnight later, Helmut found Bixie, the old cat, sitting on the bed, looking quite well, so he was safe as well.

Julian Schuller

## MORE CYCLONE TRACY CAT TALES

The Cyclard cattery owners were away when Cyclone Tracy struck. Their friend was caretaking the house and animals. The husband's workmates were calling at the house post cyclone, looking for the animals. The dog had been killed by flying debris but they found the Seal Point queen. Three months later the owners returned, advertised in the newspaper and had their Siamese returned by a family.

The Donrenor Cattery cats were used to eating meat and turned up their noses at the tinned cat food offered. Eventually they compromised with baby food. They evacuated to Townsville by train.

There were 15 pets in residence at the Sirikit Cattery. They heard that all pets were to be destroyed. As the VW vehicle was unharmed, they made it into a travelling ARK. The hardest part was choosing which animals to take. The heat was so intense they thought they'd lose most of the cats. At Tennant Creek Police Station, the police made a cell available for the cats to exercise and be fed, on water and diluted Carnation Milk. At Elliott, the little baby with pneumonia was left at the police station. Bibi Brown Burmese lost her litter but mothered all the rest, regardless of age.

Thanks to Julian Schuller for this information.

## CHRISTMAS PAST IN THE NT

The celebration of Christmas in the Northern Territory over the years was similar in many ways to the present day. Social gatherings, awful weather, Christmas dinner, the exodus of people going south for their holidays, and Carols by Candlelight are still part of the celebrations.

A correspondent from Yam Creek (a mining area south of Darwin) wrote in 1879 that:

*'The mail has gone, and so has Christmas! It was, perhaps, a providential thing that the down post should close on Christmas Day, because those who had friends and relations to write to were occupied with their correspondence and were thereby led to forget that the 25th of December was the day of the year for good eating, good drinking, good fellowship, and wonderfully good resolutions for the next twelve months. I was busily writing up to the last moment, and was inwardly thankful to be thus engaged, for I found the balance of the day to be most insufferably dull and dreary... My "Bill of Fare" embraced: Tinned Soup! Tinned Meat!! Tinned Peas!!! Tinned Potatoes!!!! a sad Chinese composition called plum pudding, and—the Lord be praised— bottled beer. The latter washed down the other unattractive stuff, and made a meal, but not a dinner.'*

In 1915, Christmas at Powell Creek (near Elliot) was a better affair with the use of home grown vegetables and game. It was described by a correspondent to the *Northern Territory Times & Gazette* as follows:

*'...Pea soup, roast ducks, roast kid; (roasted whole to make it look like the good old bye-gone days), boiled bacon (or ham being procurable) ... , baked pumped, green peas, plum pudding and custard, apricot spice, mince pies, jam tarts, etc., ginger beer, tea, watermelon. I've just been through it and must take a nap, so goodbye.'*

Over the years comments were made about the atrocious weather experienced during the Christmas Season. In 1905 it was reported that:

*'As a rule, the climatic conditions at this time of year are not conducive to a spirit of gaiety, and this year the continuous heat has been even a trifle more oppressive than ordinary, whilst the*

*cooling rainstorms and welcome pall of clouds generally in evidence towards the closing days of the old year have been conspicuous by their absence.'*

In 1915 the correspondent already mentioned from Powell Creek wrote that: '

*We are thinking it very hot down here. Thermometer registered 106 deg. F, day after day ... Rain, of course, cools us down, but the sun on top of it is far from pleasant, and generally sultry conditions prevail both by day and night. Nights are worse here than they were on the coast, causing great loss of sleep and sweat. We are very much bothered with flies which cause a certain amount of sickness as well as unpleasantness.'*

Social gatherings included '*The Children's Christmas Fete at the Palmerston Town Hall on Christmas Eve [which was] was one of the best-attended social functions that we have ever witnessed here ... over 100 children ... Christmas tree well laden with gifts ... Father Christmas ... Brass Band rendering the Christmas anthem "Adeste Fideles." ... pianoforte selections were contributed by Adelaide Tuckwell and Gertrude Cromer.*

In 1925 '*On Christmas Eve the Choir of Christchurch, Darwin, visited the Hospital and rendered a programme of sacred music. A large number of visitors were present among whom was His Lordship The Bishop of Carpentaria. ... Hymns and carols were sung ... The Matron of the Hospital entertained the choir to a very nice supper at the conclusion of the entertainment.'*

By 1939, with the Darwin population swollen by military personnel, Christmas celebrations were more elaborate. '*A Christmas dinner was given by the Department of Native Affairs to 500 aborigines and 150 half-castes at the native compound ... While Santa Claus handed out his presents, an aboriginal mouth organ band played jaunty airs. There was a Christmas tree hung with balloons and beautiful toys. The adult natives received gifts of coloured frock material, hair oil, soap, pipes, tobacco, and red and blue bandanas.*

*On Christmas Day, in accordance with Darwin tradition, parties made tours of friends' houses and there enjoyed cold beer in unlimited quantities. The lateness of heavy rains this wet season enabled many camping, shooting and picnic parties to motor to bush resorts and beaches.*

*The Star Theatre showed a special Christmas programme, and each person who attended received a gift. There were tobacco pouches for men and small bottles of perfume for women. Several parties were held on Christmas Eve, and carol singers from the Defence Forces went round the town in a truck. Members of the Defence Forces were given regular Christmas dinners, and all three services received special issues of "Christmas Cheer."*

*A Christmas party was held at the R.A.A.F. station last Friday afternoon for the wives and friends of the Air Force men. There Air Force planes thrilled the spectators with their stunting. When they returned to the field, they were accompanied by a fourth machine which had appeared mysteriously from the sky. The children were awed to see Santa Claus step from the plane, and their shrieks of delight were almost deafening.*

*A feature of the treat was the Christmas tree. The Darwin branch of the R.S.S.L L.A. held a Christmas tree on Saturday afternoon for all school children.*

*The festivities were so complete that the holiday passed swiftly and almost before one realised it Wednesday had dawned and more than half the populace were back at work.*

The 1940 Christmas celebrations were very subdued as the presence of cerebro- meningitis in the town meant that hotel bars were closed, there was no late-night shopping, the picture theatre closed, no public dances were allowed, and people were asked not to hold large parties in private houses. All cases were placed in isolation. Churches were asked to limit their services and if

possible, hold them in the open air. Ships in port were asked to stop unnecessary shore leave. [But] football matches were held as the danger is less in the open air.

*The Centralian Advocate* (Alice Springs) reported on the Carols by Candlelight to be conducted in 1953. 'While people of Alice Springs gather on the lawns in front of the F.D.S. Base and Hospital for a 'Carols by Candlelight' ceremony, they will be linked by two-way wireless with people in every bush station home, and with three missions.

*This distinctive celebration is being sponsored by the 'C.W.A. of the Air.' Already candles have been posted by C.W.A. Air President, Mrs. Sneddon, to all members. People in Alice will hear, over a public address system loaned by the Racing Club, the singing by choirs from Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa and Ernabella Missions. Ernabella Mission, 300 miles south, will have a 100-voice mixed choir. The items from each mission will be broadcast direct over the FDS network in the open air gathering. The choir at Hermannsburg will sing in their native tongue. A special children's choir will broadcast from Santa Teresa. The missions and bush people, in turn, will hear the whole proceedings over their pedal radios. [The] Alice Flying Doctor Base Chief is supervising all technical details. Rev. Fred McKay, of the Aust. Inland Mission, is acting as compere of this festival of carols. Mr. McKay said yesterday that the 'Carols by Candlelight' would illustrate in a practical way the real spirit of an inland Christmas.*

This writer cannot comment on Christmas beyond the 1950s but there are sure to be many readers of this article who could fill in the empty pages and comment on the similarities and differences between then and now. Christmas 1974 awaits an article of its own.

Ruth Sheridan

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*Northern Standard*, Friday 29 December 1939, page 6  
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## MAILMAN MICK

The job of an outback mailman demanded a variety of skills, many of which were learnt on the job. This was certainly the case for Mick Sheridan when he took on the Gascoyne Mail Route for contractor Bruce Jolly of Carnarvon, Western Australia in February 1961, after the big flood.

He had learnt to drive trucks during his stint in the army for National Service in 1958. He had his own car and maintained it. He was keen for the adventure. Little did he know what was in store for him.

The usual mail route north of Gascoyne Junction and across the Lyons River could not be used owing to flood damage. The previous driver had abandoned the vehicle at Williambury Station. The generator didn't work so the battery was always flat and it needed to be cranked by hand to start. This was too much for the driver who found a ride back to Carnarvon and quit.



Jolly had bought an ex-army 4WD Blitz wagon to service the mail route up the Lyons River side of the run to Williambury Station and then back down to Mt Sandiman and Lyons River stations. It was this vehicle that was sitting waiting at Williambury.

Jolly and Mick went there by car where the usual mail truck and the Blitz wagon were located. They fitted a new generator to the Blitz but not a new battery. This meant it still needed to be cranked to start. They transferred a load of station supplies from the normal truck onto the Blitz and it was after dark by the time they had finished.

They set off for Mt Sandiman. The Blitz only had one instrument that worked, the oil pressure gauge. The lights were that bright you needed a candle to see if they were going. Because all roads were washed out, they had to follow two tyre tracks in the dark and this was OK until they reached a large claypan. Because of dull lights they couldn't find the tyre tracks leading off so after doing a couple of laps they decided to have a sleep. They rolled out their swags then by daylight, found the tracks and moved on.

At Mt Sandiman, the manager Geoff Smith, told them he'd been to Minnie Creek station the day before and it had only taken him one and a half hours to do the 40 miles, so the Blitz shouldn't have any trouble getting there. After lunch, Jolly arranged to return to Carnarvon and Mick drove the Blitz, leaving about 1pm.

As he didn't have a watch and the Blitz had no speedometer, he had no idea how far he'd travelled. The vehicle stopped every few miles and he'd have to crank it up again. He had no idea what the road was like and where he was going. Darkness fell and he found himself on the banks of a large river which he presumed was the Lyons. When he went to cross the river, the vehicle stopped again after a few yards. He couldn't get it started so he grabbed his swag, carried it back to the bank and went to sleep.

In the morning after he started the vehicle and crossed the river, he found that Minnie Creek homestead was only half a mile away. Fred Nelson, manager, had been wondering what was happening as Smith at Sandiman had radioed ahead to alert him when Mick had left on a 2-hour journey. They unloaded Minnie Creek's stores then drove another 20 miles to Mangaroon station.

At Mangaroon, Alan McDonald had a look at the Blitz but couldn't figure out what was wrong. So, Mick returned to Minnie Creek homestead then departed for Cobra station.

By the time he reached Cobra Woolshed, he couldn't get the Blitz to start again and found out that the distributor cap had cracks in it. So, he decided to walk to Cobra homestead, still not knowing how far it was or what the time was. He remembered coming to a gate that said 'Cobra ½ a mile.' After walking about one mile or so, he came to the homestead. By that time, it was too late to do anything, so Ben Wilson, the owner, contacted Phil Oakley at Mt Phillip station. He said he had a new distributor cap, all I had to do was go and get it.

Mick slept in the workers' quarters then the next day Ben's brother Frank drove him the 20 mile or so to Mt Phillip station. The journey was not a fast one because Frank had to stop every 10-15 minutes to have a leak. They duly collected the new distributor cap, took it back to the woolshed and fitted it then drove to Cobra to unload the last of the supplies. Mick then drove back to Carnarvon via Mt Phillip, Yinnetharra, Dairy Creek and Gascoyne Junction.

That was Mick's first trip as the Gascoyne mail truck driver. He had many more adventures to follow.

Ruth Sheridan



## TIP TREASURES from Ruth Sheridan

Recently found at the local tip in Darwin were four framed letters (not the originals), related to the gift of a handmade silk banner as a token of esteem from the Chinese Community of Darwin in 1913 to William George Stretton Sub-Collector of Customs. They expressed their gratitude to a government official who they felt had treated them well, or at least not unfairly. The banner reads 'protect the country and the people'.

The letter was signed by Ah Chong, President of the Ah Wong Society. Some of the other Chinese names were Wing Wah Loong, Chin Kim Kee, Sun Hing Kee, Cheong Wo, Lee Tong, Man Fong Lau, Chin Yam Yan, Fung Cheong Loong, Yot Sing, Lee Duck, Wing Cheong Sing, Wing Cheong Tong, Yet Loong and Pang Kwee.

One of the letters was from Stretton's grandson dated 1980, gifting the banner to the Commonwealth Archives Darwin. The letters are all now available online through National Archives of Australia (NAA Series No. E1352. ID: 138317).



William George Stretton was born on 1 February 1847. He served in the South Australian Mounted Police from 1865 to 1869. After apparently acting as Chief Storekeeper during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line during 1871 and 1872, he returned to the Mounted Police in 1872.

On 6 March 1879, Stretton joined the South Australian State Public Service. By 1 August 1888, he was serving as the Customs Officer, Harbourmaster and Postmaster at Borroloola in the Northern Territory. On 13 November 1894, he exchanged positions with Charles William Nash and became Chief Warden of the Northern Territory Gold Fields. From 1 June 1896, he was Health Officer at Port Darwin and the Darwin Harbourmaster and Superintendent of Mercantile Marine.

In 1901, following Federation, Stretton became Sub-Collector of Customs, Darwin (CA 820) and Inspector of Distilleries at Port Darwin, responsible to the Commonwealth Department of Trade and Customs. At the same time, Stretton was apparently employed by the South Australian government as Health Officer at Port Darwin, retaining his positions as Harbourmaster, Superintendent of Mercantile Marine and Registrar of Shipping. In February 1902, he was gazetted as the Authorising Officer and Receiver of Public Moneys in the Northern Territory for the Department of Trade and Customs. Stretton married Alice Anna Arthur by 1890 and had two sons and five daughters. Their son, Alfred Victor Stretton, was Superintendent of Police in the Northern Territory.

Neville Jones, of the Chinese Museum Darwin, says that the banner is now stored at the NT Archives for temperature control purposes. He is hoping to restore the Stretton panels in the museum for the Family Murmurings art exhibit.

## **CWA COOKBOOK**

Your cover once green  
Now a dog-eared grey  
Batter spatter, grease spots  
Serve to mark your age.  
I know you are Tasmanian,  
By the adverts I find there  
Remember Yolla Butter  
Dewcrisp and Hy-Peak veggies  
Cascades Cordials  
And Merry Widow junkets?  
I know you are Tasmanian,  
By your mutton bird section  
Plump petrels plucked from burrows,  
Salted, baked, or curried.  
Scallop chowder, oyster rolls  
Rabbit stew, sheep's tongues too  
Crayfish patties were commonplace,  
As was your kangaroo stew.  
I know my Nana used you,  
By recipes highlighted  
For melon and ginger jam  
Cream sponge and yo-yo biscuits.  
Now I consult your pages too,  
Bent on a nostalgic trip,  
Back to her 'fifties kitchen  
And many afternoon teas.

Ruth Sheridan

## LONE AND ISOLATED GRAVES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### **Northern Territory Times. PALMERSTON: SATURDAY, FEB. 3, 1877.**

A monument has recently been erected in the West Terrace Cemetery to Messrs. Stapleton, Frank Johnston, and Daer, who were speared by the blacks in the Northern Territory.

It consists of a fluted column of Caen stone, having the top broken off, and a wreath of flowers, cut in the same kind of stone encircling it, and its height is nearly 12 feet, of which the column measures about six feet. It rests on a square base, supported on two broader bases, all of Caen stone. On each side of the upper base a slab of beautifully veined Italian marble is let in.

That facing the north is plain, that on the east side bears the inscription, "James Lorenzo Stapleton, Stationmaster, Barrow's Creek, speared February 22, 1874; died February 23, 1874, aged 40. John Frank, speared at Barrow Creek, February 22, 1874; died the same day."

On the south side, facing the main walk, the following is cut in the marble slab, like the other inscriptions, with gilt letters:—"This monument is erected by the officers and men on the Overland Telegraph Line, in memory of their comrades who were treacherously murdered by the blacks while in the discharge of their duties."

On the west tablet is cut:—"Chas. Henry Johnston, Stationmaster, Daly Waters, speared at the Roper River, June 29, 1875; died June 30, 1875, aged 28. Abram Daer, speared at the Roper River on June 29, 1875; died August 7, 1875, aged 40."

A low railing of ornamental ironwork surrounds the whole. Mr. E. H. Herring, of Waymouth Street, constructed the monument, which is of excellent workmanship. The site was selected by Mr. Brooks, the curator of the cemetery, and could not have been better chosen, as the memorial is the first object of the kind seen from the entrance gate, and is placed as near as it conveniently could be to the main walk. We are informed that Mr. Stapleton's name was correctly given to Mr. Herring, and that he has had orders to correct it to James Oliver Lawrence Stapleton.

## CHARLES HENRY JOHNSON

**Charles Henry Johnson** was born on 13 February 1848 in Exeter, Devon, England to parents John Saunders Johnston and Ann Palmer. He arrived in Australia (Fremantle) with his parents and siblings on 27 July 1857.

In 1868 he was working at McGrath Flat Post Office and in 1871 as a Telegraph Clerk at Semaphore. He came to the Northern Territory in 1872 working as a Telegraph Operator at Roper River. He was Station Master at Daly Waters Telegraph Station in 1875.

Johnston was murdered by aboriginals at Roper Bar NT dying on 30 June 1875. His companions Rickards and Daer who were also injured reported that 'Poor Johnston was speared on the left side of the stomach and lived till about 9.30 on the next day and died very easily.'

He is buried at Roper Bar and a gravestone was erected outside the Roper Bar Police Station which reads, C H Johnston, speared by blacks June 29. 1875.

There is also a monument at West Terrace Cemetery Adelaide.

### **Sources**

*Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, Saturday 17 July 1875, page 2





## CHARLES MC CONACHIE

**Charles McConachie** was born circa 1863 at Bendigo, Victoria.

There is a reference to a Charles Mc Conachie losing cattle to poisonous vegetation while moving 1200 head of cattle from Vena Park, along the Isisford - Ilfracombe Road in 1903.

He was a stockman at Austral Downs Station when he died of asthma aged 45 on 5 June 1908. At the time of death, he is described as 5ft. 4 in. high dark, complexion, and brown hair. Camoo-weal Cemetery records indicate that he was buried there.

In 1908 the *Townsville Bulletin* published 'orders to administer the following intestate estates ... granted: ... Charles Mc Conachie, late of Camoo-weal, laborer'

### Sources

BDM NT; BDM SA

*North Queensland Register* (Townsville, Qld.: 1892 - 1905), Monday 2 November 1903, page 44

*South Australian Government Gazette* P422-26.8.1909

*Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Qld.: 1907 - 1954), 4 August, p. 4.

## CHARLES PALMER

**Charles Palmer** arrived in the Northern Territory circa 1870 as a teamster/ Overland Telegraph Line employee. He died circa 1 August 1871 at The Wigley near Alice Springs. He is buried at Central Mount Stuart. There is a memorial 42 miles from Barrow Creek & 227 miles from Central Mt Stuart.

In the Family Notices of the *South Australian Register* 9 September 1871 is this notice:

PALMER. On the 4th July, on Telegraph Construction Line, near Central Mount Stuart, Charles James Palmer, aged 35 years. He leaves a wife and one child to mourn their loss.

Cause of death was 'palpitation of the heart' according to a 2016 article attributed to Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife.

Palmer is remembered in Palmer St at Ti Tree NT. Place Names Register note: Named after Charles Palmer a teamster who left Adelaide on August 29th 1870 as a member of A T Woods Construction party on the Overland Telegraph Line. Palmer died in August 1871 in the vicinity of Central Mount Stuart.

### Sources

*South Australian Register* (Adelaide, SA: 1839 - 1900), Saturday 9 September 1871, page 8

[www.facebook.com/ParksandWildlifeNT/posts/heritage-at-the-alice-springs-telegraph-stationthe-supposed-grave-of-charles-pal/1044637352263194/](https://www.facebook.com/ParksandWildlifeNT/posts/heritage-at-the-alice-springs-telegraph-stationthe-supposed-grave-of-charles-pal/1044637352263194/)

## CHIN LOY aka CHING LOY

Ethnic Chinese, **Chin Loy** aka **Ching Loy**, was a miner at the Howley Diggings who was murdered by natives circa 12 November 1912 at Howley near Brock's Creek. He was 70 years of age. He had a wife and a son and two daughters. He is possibly buried in the Howley Area.

### Sources

BDM NT

NT Archives Vol. 3 Series F1054

## EDWARD WILLIAMS

**Edward John Williams** was born circa 1873 at Ballarat, Victoria. His father was William Williams. On 3 December 1901 Williams married Isabell Martin (1882-1940) at Eulo, Queensland. They had one child, Edward Martin, born 28 February 1902. Sadly, he died in 1903.

Williams was a stockman for 25 years. In 1906 he was at Rosewood Downs. He died of consumption at Brunette Downs Station on 29 May 1907 aged 36 and is buried at the cemetery there.

At the time of his death his wife was believed to be at Cunnamulla, Queensland and his mother at Bendigo, Victoria. Williams had been suffering for five weeks before he died. *The South Australian Government Gazette* describes him as: '5ft. 7" high, fair complexion, hair, and beard... A native of Victoria [and] a jockey'

### Sources

Ancestry

## ERNEST E. TUCKER

**Ernest E. Tucker** was born circa 1857. He was a bushman who came to the Northern Territory from Burra, South Australia.

He committed suicide by shooting himself, at Cooey Creek, 22 miles from Mount McMinn. He was believed to have been indulging in a heavy drinking bout and was suffering from its effects. Tucker died aged 28 on 26 August 1885. His address on death was Roper River.

### Sources

*Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, Saturday 3 October 1885, page 2

BDM/SA and BDM/NT

## FRANCIS MC DONALD

**Francis McDonald** was born on 9 August 1857 in Belfast, Ireland. Prior to his arrival in the Northern Territory, he had been a well-known seaman at Port Adelaide. In the Territory he was engaged in tin mining at West Arm. At a different time, he was the mate on board a contract coastal steamer, *Waihoi*.

*The Register* newspaper records the circumstances of his death on February 24, 1909, at Horseshoe Creek NT thus:

'McDonald was lying in his hut suffering from an attack of rheumatism which had deprived him of the use of his limbs on one side. On reaching McDonald's hut, M.C. White found him lying on the floor, to which he had fallen from his bunk, -paralysed and helpless. A backboard was secured, and in this the poor fellow was conveyed into Horseshoe Creek, where he was given all assistance possible in the circumstances by Messrs. J. Oeland, Nelson, Irvin, and others. But McDonald never rallied, and died on February 24, and, on the necessary order being secured from Mr. Buttle, the body was interred near the grave of another European named Hiern, who died at Horseshoe Creek some time ago.

The deceased went to Granite Creek about six months ago, with the intention to work alluvial tin, but was never able to do much owing to attacks of rheumatism. He is believed to have been having a hard time. The only provision found in his hut was a few pounds of flour which had been given him by another white man a short time previously.

McDonald came to the Territory a few years ago from Port Adelaide, was working as a miner for some time at West Arm, and during another period was engaged as mate on board the late 'Coastal contract steamer Waihoi. He was between 40 and 50 years of age and was supposed to be a native of Ayrshire or of Belfast. About two years' ago he underwent treatment for some months in the local hospital.'

The *South Australian Government Gazette* describes McDonald as '54 years of age, 5ft. 9 in. high, sandy moustache, dark hair, stout build.'

### Sources

*Register* (Adelaide, SA: 1901 - 1929), Thursday 1 April 1909, page 4

*South Australian Government Gazette* P422 – 26.8.1909

Cemetery Book 1, p.20

BDM/NT and BDM/SA

## **FREDERICK OSCAR GODLEE**

**Frederick Oscar Godlee** was born to parents John Godlee and Mary Amelia Guy on 30 December 1848 at Hindmarsh Adelaide SA. He was an overland telegraph linesman who lived in Alice Springs.

Godlee died at Powell Creek, Northern Territory on 2 December 1893. His death certificate was issued on 2 December by the coroner Paul Foelsche, JP. Cause of death is unknown. Age on death was 45. Godlee is buried at Powell Creek Cemetery.

### **Sources**

BDM NT, BDM SA

1893 'NOTICE.', *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* 29 December, p. 4

## **GEORGE MASTERS**

**George Masters** was born at Sturt, Adelaide, on 1 October 1864 to parents William Masters and Sarah Elizabeth Bennett.

He is believed to have been living at Yongala in 1882 when his brother John was killed by accidentally discharging a gun. John died in George's arms.

Newspaper records show that he is a miner in the Hatches Creek area from 1916 when he applies for gold mining leases. He was mentioned in the court case in August 1929 when one of his workers, Willaberta Jack was accused of murdering Harry Henty. Jack was acquitted.

Masters had only arrived at Banka Banka Station a few weeks prior to his death on 14 October 1929. His description at the time of his death was '60 years of age, height 5 feet 8 inches, stout build, fair complexion.'

### **Sources**

BDM SA

Ancestry

*Northern Standard* 17 January 1930 p. 7

NT Probate Index 1911-1994



# **The Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory Inc.**

## **Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2023**

After the upheaval of the move from the premises at 84 Smith Street, Darwin city, to a location in the northern suburbs at "Harry's Place", Willeroo Street Tiwi, activities slowly resumed as members found their way around a new office and library layout. Although the move was accomplished with much hard work, meticulous organisation and attention to detail from the volunteers, some of the Society's items (desk, microwave etc.) remain missing or damaged. We also had damage to storage cabinets and a book shelf that went to the dump. Our efforts to remedy this situation have met with a disappointing response from those in a position to help us.

Thanks to the dedicated work of Patsy Hickey and Keven Young, the updated burial list for the Palmerston Pioneer Cemetery in Goyder Road has been passed on to the City of Darwin Council for forwarding to the Heritage Unit who are employing a Consultant to look at the signage issue for the Goyder Road Cemetery.

Unfortunately we are in dispute with our IT Service Provider. From the installation of our server at Tiwi, we have had issues. Although they were supposedly fixed, nothing seemed to last. Repairs lasted a few hours or a few days, and has become an ongoing issue. Despite our calls, the IT Company started not logging our jobs, and not answering queries. We tried to contact the owner of the business, but our calls were never returned. Requests for an appointment to talk about our issues were ignored. Four invoices had issues that we would have liked to discuss. Approximately six weeks ago we were advised that the IT service would hand over our information to another provider. As yet, we have not sourced one.

At the end of January 2023 we hosted a visit from the Hon Lauren Moss MLA, Minister for Equality and Inclusion under whose portfolio the Society comes. The visit was most successful with Minister Moss saying that she was very impressed by the breadth and depth of our research facilities. She said that she would promote the Society whenever it was appropriate to do so.

In February, the Society was approached for help by The Italian Club of the NT, a respected community organisation fostering Italian culture and traditions. The Italian Club are anxious to compile a list of 'The Forgotten Northern Territory Italians 1845 – 1945'. Ruth Sheridan, our Librarian/Lead Researcher has been working on the Italian project, whilst June Tomlinson manages the Library and has an administrative role in the Italian project.

We continue to receive interstate requests for help from people who believe their distant relatives may have lived or worked in the Northern Territory. Thanks to the efforts of Ruth, June, Gail and Julie Andrew, we are able to accommodate such requests.

May saw the annual 'Seniors' Expo', organised and conducted by COTA (Council of the Ageing) NT at Marrara. Although our volunteers received many queries, none resulted in new members. Thanks to June Tomlinson, Julie Schuller, Gail Macgregor, Ione and Theresa Jolly who manned the GSNT stall.

Where would we be without our volunteers? GSNT has no paid staff and relies heavily on our volunteers, who do our research, staff our Library all day Monday and Tuesday, Wednesdays evenings for three hours and Saturdays from 1.00 to 5.30pm. We are deeply indebted to Julie Andrews, Ruth Sheridan, Julie Schuller, David Boys, Pat King, Gail Macgregor, Joan Angeles, Leticia Charrington, Marcia Charrington, Peter Jolly, Theresa Jolly and Lone Jolly.

Dianne Tessmann is the Editor of *Progenitor* and Jeanice Levez is our Web Master. Both Dianne and Jeanice now live in Queensland, so we are very lucky to have these two dedicated and talented members. Jeanice has been challenged many times with our website. She has learnt three different web programs until we got WordPress. Then we had a massive problem when journals from exchange societies throughout Australia started appearing in Google from our website. Jeanice solved the problem; however it was very labour intensive for her. Dianne fills *Progenitor* with a wide range of interesting articles. She enjoys retirement travelling in her caravan and we are fortunate that she continues to be the Editor of our Journal. Meanwhile Burniece Cross, despite health issues continues to provide us with a steady stream of craft articles that are readily snapped up by both members and visitors.

Where would we be without Eddie Webber and Janet Leather who do a thorough clean and dust of our premises every fortnight, unseen and unheralded?; their efforts are very much appreciated and we are deeply indebted to them. Thanks also go to Ruth Sheridan our Minute Secretary; Lone Jolly who refreshed our Information Brochure and Membership Application form and Elaine Barry who continues to 'beaver' away at Births, Deaths and Marriages in the NT.

Our Pioneer Register continues to grow thanks to the persistent and dedicated work of Julie Schuller, Ruth Sheridan, Gail Macgregor and June Tomlinson. Coordinating all aspects of our work, as well as managing our volunteers and dealing with complex inquiries is June Tomlinson our long serving secretary. June has been at the helm of the Society for more than 40 years, guiding it through good times and bad. We would be lost without her expertise and guidance.

We are indebted to Neville Jones immediate past President, who has handled difficult and delicate negotiations with our IT Service Provider; the Director of Library and Archives NT re our move from Smith Street to Tiwi and our Insurance Agent. Neville also acted as President for an extended period, whilst our President was hospitalised.

Our Family History Library is appreciative of the accommodation grant and continued support received from the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities.

Without this grant and support we would not be able to reconnect past and present Northern Territory families.

We are also indebted to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade through the Community Benefit Fund (CBF) for the provision of funds that enabled the installation of a Fire Wall for our IT system and the Signage at our new location. The CBF receives funds from a levy on electronic gaming machines in licenced hotels. Major community grants provide funding to provide services, leisure activities and opportunities for Territorians...

We thank our Patron, the Hon Austin Asche AC, KC, who despite health issues, continues to maintain a keen interest in our operations.

In summary, the 2022-2023 year has been one of successful genealogical study and family history research, despite some initial difficulties associated with our move.

Judy Boland

President

04 August 2023

## **FAMILY HISTORY WRITING PROMPT**

Family History writing prompts can be a helpful way to kickstart your writing. Some prompts are silly some prompts are serious, but all will get you thinking about your genealogy in new ways.

A Prompt

Write a thankyou note to an ancestor. Who are you thanking? What did they contribute that you are thankful for?

