EARLY EDUCATION IN
ALICE SPRINGS

&

'THE BUNGALOW':
1800s TO 1930s

by

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INTRODUCTION

This account attempts to correlate a story that up until now has been related in fragments and by various authors. This fragmentation has made it difficult to know in what chronological order events occurred, where they happened, and who was involved. The account is mainly concerned with determining these things, with as much accuracy as possible, without being concerned about the philosophy behind them.

The two topics, early education and 'The Bungalow', are inextricably linked, up until the time of the departure from Alice Springs of Ida Standley, by people common to both and by circumstances of the time. Ida Standley's story has been well documented and so is not repeated here, except as necessary. Also well documented is the Commonwealth Government's Policy of the period relating to young Aborigines of mixed descent in the Northern Territory.

'The Bungalow', in its several guises, has had a varied reputation — from the unsavoury to a place where good works were done. The very first was described as "an extraordinary blot on the history of Alice Springs" and its inmates as living "a sort of Black Hole of Calcutta existence".

Then there is the question of whether or not the name — 'The Bungalow' — should be applied to anything other than what was the original building in the Alice Springs township.

The use of terms such as 'half-castes', 'coloureds', 'blacks', and 'whites', etc. are seen now as being derogatory. Nevertheless, they are a part of history and are used here as proper nouns, in deference to people's sensibilities, except where they appear in direct quotes.

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Et al.


THE STORY

From the beginning of settlement in central Australia families living at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, or later at the town of Stuart (known as Alice Springs from 1933), had little or no means of providing formal education for their children. The task of education was usually undertaken by parents, or governesses where they could be afforded. An example of the latter was the Bradshaw family who departed Adelaide in 1899 to come to Alice Springs where Thomas Bradshaw became Officer-in-Charge of the Telegraph Station until 1907.5

One of the daughters, Doris Blackwood, later wrote of her experiences:

Of the four governesses who came to us in nine years only one, Mrs Cornock, was a trained teacher; yet my entire education after the two or three years in Adelaide was supervised by them. In case it is thought that we were neglected children I should point out that teaching us was the governess's only duty. The other six children then living in Alice Springs did not go to school at all.6

However, as she went on to write, some formal education was possible:

...Mort [her brother] and I began to learn drawing by correspondence from the Adelaide School of Design. We were its most distant pupils. Our papers were often in the mails for six weeks before we got replies.7

It may well have been Thomas Bradshaw who first raised the question of commencing a school at Stuart. As well as his duties at the telegraph station, he was also the Sub-Protector of Aborigines. In a letter dated 6 January 1906 he reported, among other things, on the situation at Hermannsburg where there was a school of about 60 children.8 He wrote that:

...perhaps a similar school could be opened in Stuart for the 20-30 half caste and native children of school age.

Later, on 27 September, he advised that there were "12-15 Half-Caste, three White and 12-15 Black children" and that clothing and food should be provided to keep them at school.

This circumstance prevailed until after the Commonwealth Government gained control of the Northern Territory from South Australia in 1911. The Territory then came under the jurisdiction of the Department of External Affairs.

A major figure working for the setting up of a government school in Stuart was the redoubt able Robert Stott. In July 1913 when he was a Senior Constable at Alice Springs, he wrote a lengthy letter to Atlee

6Ibid, p.65.
7Ibid, p.66
8SA PRO: GRS I 1906/196.
Hunt the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. It was mostly concerned with the possible advent of a railway line to Alice Springs and its likely effects on the cattle industry in particular.

But at the end of the letter he raised the question of the need for a public school at Alice Springs. He saw the lack of a school as a: 
...great obstacle against permanent settlement of desirable married settlers with families.  
He went on to detail how local families had had to either leave the area to take their families south to Adelaide for the education of their children or had to live apart for the same reason. The Minister appended a note on the bottom of Stott's letter: 
It would be well to ascertain the probable cost and attendance of a school at Alice Springs.

Pressure on the government also came from other quarters. For example, the Rev. Robert Steel, Secretary to the Australian Inland Mission Board, wrote to the government on 29 August 1913 on the need for a school.

On 5 January 1914 the Administrator, J.A. Gilruth, wrote to the Minister about the proposal after he had paid a visit to the town. He believed that there was no doubt that the government should provide a school while noting that there would be eleven school age white children, four quadroons and some half caste children. Of the latter there were up to 14 whom Gilruth believed should receive some sort of education.

Gilruth went on to propose the erection of a teacher's residence with classroom attached. He suggested the employment of a male teacher who would also take charge of the Aboriginal and half caste children. The teacher's time would be split between morning classes for the white children and afternoon lessons for the Aboriginal children. The teacher's wife could teach the female children sewing "and such useful work".

Ironically, on 12 March 1914, Gilruth again wrote to the Minister to inform him that Stott had applied for leave to take his wife and family south for the children's education in Sydney. He again raised the proposal of a school and also made the suggestion of appointing a female teacher if it was decided not to erect a school and appoint a married teacher. He closed by adding that temporary accommodation for a school was available without indicating what that was.

Five days later Stott telegraphed Gilruth advising that he, Stott, could provide accommodation for a teacher and that a building where

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9AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
11AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
12AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
13AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
he kept rations for the Aborigines could be converted temporarily into a class room. On the same day Gilruth advised that arrangements were being made with the South Australian Director of Education to procure a teacher.

Mrs Ida Standley was the teacher recruited for the task. She had been teaching in schools in South Australia since 1897. Leaving her family behind, she departed for Alice Springs on 6 May 1914. A deal was struck where those whose children were to attend the school would contribute to Mrs Standley’s costs. Her salary was set at £150 per annum. The school was opened in June with an attendance of twenty-five pupils (Fig. 1).

Harry Griffiths, in his book *An Australian Adventure*, gives the very exact date of 4 August 1914, the day World War 1 was declared, as the assembly date of the first class. However the June starting date is confirmed by P.McD. Smith in his book, *The Strenuous Saint*, an account of the travels of William Wilkinson. Wilkinson arrived in Alice Springs in mid-July 1914 and he wrote:

> A school has recently been started for the children. Mrs. Standley, appointed by the Government, has been in charge for about six weeks. The white children are taken in the forenoon, about 12, and in the afternoon about the same number of half-castes.

Griffiths concurred that there were twenty-five pupils, fifteen part-Aboriginal and ten European.

For a couple of months classes were taught in a room at the Stuart Town gaol. The prisoners occupied the cells at night and the children had their schooling there in the day time. From the beginning the European children were taught from 9.00 a.m to 12.30 p.m. six days a week and the coloured children 3.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday. The school soon moved to the Warder’s quarters (Fig. 2) behind the police station and gaol. Perhaps this occurred in August and is the date, 4 August 1914, that Griffiths gives as the starting date for the first class. The Warder’s quarters was a small, part stone-walled, and part galvanised iron-walled, galvanised iron...

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15AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
19In fact there were eleven European children.
21The times for tuition given here are from a telegram from the Administrator, Gilruth, in 1914. From a S.A. Teacher’s Journal cutting in Mrs Standley’s Visitor’s Book, the times of 8.30 to 1 p.m. and 3 to 4.30 p.m. are given. These latter hours were also given by Mrs Standley in her report for 1927.
FIG. 1: Ida Standley and her first class c1914.

Back row, left to right: - Dempsey Hong, Gordon Stott, Malcolm Stott, Tessa Betts, Katie Williams, Don Stewart, Mort Conway, Tom Williams, Ida Standley.
Middle row, left to right: - Dick Gillen, Maude Smith, Sonny Crooks, Doreen Crooks, Claude Nicker, Cameron Stott, Jack Cooper, Ada Hong, Essie Simpson, Amy Colley, Eileen Cooper.
Front row, left to right: - Willie Smith, Ben Nicker, Margaret Nicker, Agnes Stott, Kathleen Crooks, Emily Smith.

FIG. 2: The first school or Warder’s Quarters c1960.
roofed building. It was erected by a Mr Sigimund. Mrs Standley originally boarded at the police station but later lived in what became known as Myrtle Villa, on Wills Terrace.

By early 1915 Mrs Standley was being asked to also supervise the coloured children outside the hours of tuition. For this she was to receive an extra £50 per annum. Officially this commenced from 1 March 1915. The children were already being looked after by Topsy Smith, whose story is told later. She in turn was to be assisted by Dodo Cooper (Fig. 4).

The 'Bungalow' came into being in late 1914 as a direct result of the arrival in town of the newly widowed Topsy with her brood of ten children. Stott, with the concurrence of the Administrator, arranged for the erection of an iron shed on two government allotments (numbers 62 and 63) behind the Stuart Arms Hotel (Fig. 3). It was the one alluded to in a letter of Stott's of 3 December 1914 in which he wrote:

Have had building erected for accommodation of coloured children.

There has been some confusion about the location of this first Bungalow with some authors placing it in the police compound. Stott originally provided accommodation for Topsy Smith in the police compound on Lots 48~d and 49 and this may be where the confusion has arisen.

It was not long before the system whereby parents contributed towards Mrs Standley's expenses began to break down. Some were simply unable to pay and others left the district. It was agreed to increase her salary to £170 per annum from 15 September 1915.

There was also an element of racism involved. Twelve months prior to this the government had received a telegram from a European resident objecting to having white children taught with Coloured children. In September 1915 Mrs Standley had to also report that there was ill feeling in the town about Europeans contributing to her upkeep when a majority of students were Coloured.

In April 1916 Mrs Standley was again requesting an increase in salary to help cover her board costs which were £1 per week. Reports concerning the work of Mrs Standley, particularly with the coloured children, were proving to be very complimentary and so an increase in salary was favourably looked upon.

In early 1917 the Chief Protector of Aborigines, H. Carey, wrote a memo to the Administrator and forwarded with it examples of the work being done by the children along with the 'Bungalow'

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FIG. 3: The Bungalow c1915.

FIG. 4: The Bungalow children c1917.

Standing at extreme left is Dodo Cooper and next to her is Topsy Smith. Standing at extreme right is Vivian Browne, Ida Standley’s daughter, who is standing next to her mother.
Visitors Book. This may be the first use of the term 'Bungalow' in the official record. By this time it consisted of at least two galvanised iron sheds.

While the work being done at the Bungalow was receiving complements, this was not so about the building, or the one being used for the school. An entry in Mrs Standley's visitor's book, dated 14 July 1921, by Senator J. Newland from South Australia reads:

I have visited the school at Alice Springs, also the 'Bungalow' provided for the accommodation of half caste children.
The Teacher - Mrs. Stanley (sic) set her pupils several tasks which they carried out with satisfaction, some of the children showing great brightness.
The school is a most unsuitable building - badly lighted and only partially ceiled, and is situated in a most unsuitable position - opposite the prison door. I can only express shame and regret for the building provided for accommodation of half caste children - a disgrace to our civilization! Under all those adverse conditions Mrs. Stanley is bravely doing her best to teach the white and uplift the coloured children under her care, a truly christian task. 24

By 1922 the conditions at the Bungalow were beginning to concern the authorities. A telegram from the Administrator, F.C. Urquhart, on 24 July 1922 read:

61 Inmates Bungalow here conditions not good establishment discreditable but remedy not obvious except at considerable expense no building or materials procurable here glad if you approach Lutheran Authorities Adelaide ask if they would entertain offer to purchase Hermannsburg stock and buildings for establishment training institution.

The Administrator later wrote a more detailed report after having visited the Mission and deciding to abandon his idea of using it as a site for a training institute for coloured children. Instead he proposed using the Police Reserve 2 miles (3.2 km) from the town where there was a stone building in fair order. He proposed that this be upgraded to house a superintendent and that the old bungalow be removed there and other new buildings erected. 25

The Secretary to the Department of Home and Territories 26 advised the Minister that Professor Sir Baldwin Spencer would be prepared to investigate the matter. This was arranged and Spencer was in the Territory from April to July 1923.

24 Entry from Mrs Standley's 'Visitor's Book', page 39, held by National Trust of Australia (N.T.), Alice Springs.
25 AA: A1/1, Item: 30/1542.
26 Jurisdiction for controlling the Northern Territory changed from the Department of External Affairs in November 1916.
Spencer forwarded his final report to the government on 17 September. It gives a very detailed description of the circumstances of the Bungalow at the time:

(1). **History of the Bungalow.**

In 1914, after the death of a miner with whom she had been living at Arltunga, a native woman named Topsy Smith came to Stuart bringing with her seven (7) half caste children. A tent was put up for her by Sergeant Stott, who informed the Administrator in Darwin that there was no accommodation for her children, and suggested that two township allotments near the Police Station should be reserved for half castes. The Administrator agreed to this, and authorised the building of an iron shed. This was done, and Topsy Smith was placed in charge of it under the supervision of Sergeant Stott. Rations were supplied from the general Aboriginals grant. In 1915 the Administrator, after visiting the Bungalow, authorised the extension of the building to accommodate half castes from outside districts, Topsy Smith still remaining in charge. In the same year, Mrs. Stanley (sic), the schoolteacher in Stuart was asked and agreed to accept the position of matron with an extra remuneration of £50 per annum. Separate rations, as requisitioned by the Matron, were provided for the Bungalow, goats were purchased and a garden formed.

(2). **Present staff of Bungalow and remuneration.**

(1). **Matron.** Total salary £285 per annum. (made up as follows:- salary as school teacher of white children £160; Maintenance £75; Matron of Bungalow £50).

(2) Two goat shepherds and a gardener and his lubra, who receive clothes and rations but no pay.

(3) Assistants. Three half caste women, who receive clothes and rations but no pay.

(3). **Structure of Bungalow.**

The Bungalow consists of three corrugated iron sheds. The largest of these measures 50 feet (15.25 m) in length by 12 (3.7 m) in width, and is divided into three as shown on the accompanying plan. (Plan 1). One of these is used as a store room, the other two for the distribution of food, washing up, etc., during the day, and as dormitories at night. A second shed, 29 feet (8.8 m) by 12 feet (3.7 m), is used as a dormitory. These two sheds are practically bare save for benches and a few wooden bunks. The children at night lie huddled together on the ground.

In winter time the heat is provided by means of fires in old kerosene tins with holes round their base. Each child receives one blanket each year, and clothes as required, these being made by the assistants and elder girls under the supervision of the Matron, a supply of necessary materials forming part of the "rations" of the station.

A third, smaller shed 12 feet (3.7 m) by 8 (2.4 m), serves for cooking and bread baking. The whole place is kept scrupulously clean. To one side, only a few yards away, there
Store Room for rations
Shelving
Distribution Room
Washing Up
Sleeping Room
& Day Room

Bunks
Original shed for all halfcastes now a day & sleeping room

SPENCER'S
General Ground
Plan of the
Bungalow

PLAN 1
are two closets and a primitive bathroom, all totally inadequate, but the children are bathed daily and the conveniences and bathroom disinfected. It is not possible to do more than is done under conditions as they exist at present.

The water supply is kept in a small tank, which is daily filled by the children, who carry it across from Sergeant Stott's well at the police station about two hundred yards away.

(4). Situation of Bungalow.
The Bungalow is placed on two unenclosed allotments in the centre of the township of Stuart; (62 and 63 in Plan of Stuart, Dec. 15, 1888). The total area is one acre (0.4 ha). The police station (blocks 48 and 49) is about two hundred yards (183 m) away. About 150 yards (137 m) to the north is a store and the house in which the Matron, Mrs. Stanley, lives. Only 65 feet (20 m) to the east of it is the back fence of the block on which stands the Stuart Hotel. A gate opens through this fence directly on to the Bungalow ground, and, at the side of this gate, are the sanitary conveniences of the Hotel.

It will be evident that its close proximity to the Hotel is a very serious matter from the point of view both of the Bungalow and Hotel which, in hot weather suffers from the lack of adequate sanitary premises in the former, and it is also fortunate that the Police Station, under the charge of Sergeant Stott, protector of Aboriginals, is close by.

Apart from the total inadequacy of the buildings both in regard to size and equipment, the position is eminently unsuitable.

(5). Number of Half Castes.
There are, at present, some 60 children in the Bungalow, their ages varying from a few months to 15 or 16 years. A few of them are in the employ of residents in Stuart during the day time, but return to the Bungalow at night.

(6). Supervision.
When first appointed, Mrs. Stanley pointed out that, owing to the position of the Bungalow and the fact that it was unfenced, and further, that there was no accommodation for herself, she could not be responsible for the moral welfare of the children except during such time in the day when they were under her personal supervision. At night time Topsy Smith takes charge, but each evening the Matron comes and sees that all the children are in. There have been occasions on which request[s] have been made at night to take them away, when she had to seek the assistance of the Matron and Sergeant Stott. Prosecutions and convictions, details of which are available in the police records, have followed under the Aboriginals Act, which prohibits anyone entering a native reserve without the consent of a protector. Under present conditions adequate supervision is impossible.

The children are not allowed to go into the native camps, but their mothers can and do visit them.

(7). Life in and management of the Bungalow Children.
In the evening the Matron superintends the preparation made by one or two elder girls for the making of bread necessary for the next day. In the morning she is present while the distribution of the supply for breakfast takes place. The children have three meals daily. They line up outside and pass through the distributing room, each one receiving his or her own share. I was much struck with the perfect orderliness of the simple proceeding. The children, one after the other, passed in at one door and out at another, each one carrying its cup of tea, bread and jam or meat. As there are no seats provided, the elder ones sit on the ground outside, the younger ones on the floor of the room. They all seemed to be as happy and contented as possible, and, immediately the distribution was over, the room and everything used was thoroughly cleaned by the women in charge and some of the elder girls.

Three meals are provided daily as follows:

**Breakfast** - Porridge, bread and jam. Tea with milk and sugar.

**Dinner** - Meat (goat) and vegetables - cabbage, silver beet, tomatoes, etc., grown in the Bungalow garden; also, when fresh vegetables are not available, split and green peas, dried potatoes, sago, rice, (?),maizina, etc.

**Tea** - Bread and jam or treacle. Tea with milk and sugar.

So far as the quantity and quality of the food supplied is concerned, it is excellent. No supply of ration is accepted until it has been inspected and approved of by the Protector of Aboriginals (Sergeant Stott).

During the morning, Mrs. Stanley is engaged teaching the white children in a room at the Police Station. The younger half castes, after they have had breakfast, and filled up the water tank, play about the Bungalow grounds until dinner time, the older ones sewing and mending clothes, etc., under the supervision of Topsy Smith.

In the afternoon they attend school for two hours. This is held in the same room as that in which the white children are taught. A plan of this is attached (Plan 2). I was present on several occasions, and it was evident that the room was far too small to accommodate even the 36 children (14 boys and 22 girls) present. It could hold no more, and the remainder were obliged to be excluded.

The teaching includes singing, reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing - the elder girls making their own clothes. Under the very difficult conditions the results attained seemed to me to be excellent and to hold forth great promise as to what could be done with the half castes under more favourable conditions of tuition.

The children were evidently greatly interested in their work, and could write and read very well, while the singing was quite pleasant to listen to.

One morning on the playground, I took the opportunity, by means of a South Australian School Reader, of testing
SPENCER’S
Section and ground plan of school house at the Police Station, Stuart.

PLAN 2
independently their reading powers, and found, not only that they were quite good, but that they were keenly emulous as to who could read it best.

Of the Bungalow Spencer concluded:
(1). The Bungalow has been managed as well as it could have been under existing circumstances, and every possible care of the half castes has been taken by the Matron and her assistants. As it was decided to establish the Bungalow in the township of Stuart, it was fortunately located in close proximity to the police station. The help and constant interest of Sergeant Protector Stott have been of the greatest value.
(2). It is quite evident that the present situation is absolutely unsuited for a reserve for half castes.

Spencer's major recommendation was that:
A half caste station be formed on land to be resumed or reserved for this purpose by the federal government. It should be situated at some distance from the central overland route or any projected railway or stock route.

The bureaucrats within the department were not happy with this recommendation of Spencer's and in turn recommended to the Minister that a representative of the Salvation Army be sent to Alice Springs to report and make proposals to the government. This the minister approved on 9 January 1923. Nothing had come of this suggestion by the end of the year when the file was closed.

While the bureaucrats and politicians were considering what to do about the Bungalow, Mrs Standley left Alice Springs on 18 August 1922 for six months leave. Stott's wife Agnes relieved as Matron and her daughter, also Agnes, relieved as school teacher. Sergeant Stott advised that there were five white children receiving morning tuition and that there were four white children at the Telegraph Station who were not attending the school. Thirty-six half caste children were receiving afternoon tuition.

The four children at the Telegraph Station were those of Fred and Isobel Price. He was the stationmaster from 1916 to 1924. It would appear that most if not all children living at the Telegraph Station did not use the education facilities within the town.

The new site for the Bungalow could have been selected as early as 1925, if not sooner. An entry in Mrs Standley's visitor's book by the Secretary of the Aborigines Friends Association, John H. Sexton, dated 12 June 1925 reads:
The environment of the Bungalow for half caste children is not conducive to their best interests and I rejoice in the prospect of a more suitable home at Jays (sic) Creek.

27 AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
The conditions surrounding the work of training these children only heighten the admiration one has in the care and attention given the children by their dedicated teacher Mrs Standley.

Those who are disposed to be critical over the Bungalow should in fairness contrast the condition of the children there with those in the wurleys and camps and they will realise that the work of the Bungalow represents a transition. The Bungalow is the first rung in the ladder to raising the children to a higher level and therefore great credit is due to all concerned in carrying on the good work.28

An area of 25 square miles (64.75 sq km) at Jay Creek was surrendered from Pastoral Lease No.2387 (Undoolya Station, later Owen Springs) on 21 July 1925.29 The search for an adequate water supply at the site was to no avail and progress came to a halt in mid 1927.30 Buildings had been erected but timber used to erect the frame was green and would have had to be replaced had the project continued.

One who was 'disposed to be critical' of the Bungalow was geologist C.T. Madigan. He was in Alice Springs from October to November 1927, with Sir Douglas Mawson, primarily to investigate a deposit of nitrate near Glen Helen. In his book, Central Australia, he wrote:

Next day we discovered this extraordinary blot on the history of Alice Springs. The government took charge of the half-castes, fed, cared for, and taught them, and kept them nominally in a tin shed behind the hotel. In practice they slept out under the trees. Here they grew up till they could get employment on the stations; and here the girls returned when it was time to add to the population of the 'Bung', as this 'bungalow' was called. This irregular state of things had evolved in that isolated community till it was accepted. There was no attempt to disguise the facts. Men came round openly and spoke to children, and gave them sweets, children bearing well-known names in the district, for old Sergeant Stott, the Protector of Aborigines, enforced the rule that half-castes should be given their father's name, and for this he was dependent upon the mother's story. It may be added that the new-comer's first shock became modified by further experience and sympathy.

Another character of the old Alice was Mrs. Standly (sic), the schoolmistress, appointed by the South Australian Education Department. Mrs Standly lived at the hotel, and had the care of the children of the Bung, as well as the school; she taught them, and issued them their rations and clothing. She showed us round one day, through the cookhouse, where the

28 Entry from Mrs Standley's 'Visitor's Book', page 53, held by National Trust of Australia (N.T.), Alice Springs.
29 AA: A659, Item: 45/1/1570.
older girls did all the cooking, and the sleeping-quarters, where no one slept unless it was raining. These little half wild things lived under the trees, and spent some of their time getting bush tucker in the form of grubs and insects. Mrs. Standly was a good and kindly soul, with no thoughts of any reform; she considered everything quite satisfactory. She was fond of the children, and they of her, and she was proud of the results of her teaching, which went beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, and included sewing and cooking at the Bung. She showed us a letter from one of the girls who had left, quite well written, and including the question whether Maggie had a baby yet. That was what they all looked forward to, the strongest instinct in them; marriage had no meaning for them. They were just natural little animals.

Some of the Bung girls used to be taken away to service in the south, even as far as Adelaide, but they got into worse trouble there than they would have done in their own environment, and amongst worse vice. At first opportunity they would escape and return to the only home they knew. It was pathetic, but natural.

At this time there were only about forty white people in Alice Springs. About a dozen children attended school in the morning, and the half-castes went for an hour and a half in the afternoon. The afternoon squad had to scrub the desks every day before leaving, and I have never seen whiter school furniture.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1926 the Northern Territory was divided into two sections and Central Australia, south of the 20th parallel was administered by a Government Resident. Stuart became the capital on 1 February 1927 and John Charles Cawood was the first to be appointed to the new position.\textsuperscript{32} In the first report for the new territory Ida Standley reported:

The general welfare of this institution leaves much to be desired, and until the children are removed from the precincts of the Hotel, to a suitable building a mile [1.6 km] or so out of the town things will remain as they are at present. The children are well behaved and the healthiest and happiest family I have ever worked amongst. The Matron should reside at the home, as these people require constant supervision. Numbers are growing; at present there are 57 inmates-28 males and 29 females. In addition, there are eight girls employed outside, six of whom return to the home at night. The Bungalow has its own flock of goats and vegetable garden for supplies. The approximate cost of food per capita is 4s. per week.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{33}The Territory of Central Australia: Report of the Government Resident for the period 1 March 1927 to 30 June 1927, p.10.
In 1928 Cawood was letting it be known that he thought the building being used for the school should no longer be used as such.\textsuperscript{34} There were now eight White children and 40 Half-castes at the school. The Department of Works and Railways drew up plans for a school (PLAN 3) costing £2,050 and also stated that the money was available. The plan, by architect C.E. Davies and dated 30 November 1928, was of a simple two roomed school with a verandah along one side. A folding partition separated the two rooms. The hipped galvanised iron roof had a ventilation ridge. Walls were to be concrete blocks and the floors to be concrete throughout. A fireplace was located in one corner. Rainwater tanks were located at both ends.\textsuperscript{35} The Department of Home Affairs\textsuperscript{36} continued to dither.

These plans foreshadowed the final separation of the 14 year link between the Bungalow and the school. In the same month that Davies drew up his plans, Mrs. Standley moved to Jay Creek with the Bungalow children. A Miss Pearl Burton was soon to take up duty at the school in town.

THE SCHOOL

The Department of Home Affairs started looking for alternatives and in February 1929 asked Cawood if the new council hall could be used. This was actually what is now known as the Old Court House. Cawood replied that the 'hall' was being used as a court and the noise generated from a school would continually interrupt proceedings.

A Department of Home Affairs minute of the same date summarised the position:

\begin{quote}
The Government Resident...advises that the quarters provided for the Warder...have been used for some time past as a temporary school room, but the building...is now required for warders, and he recommends that steps be taken to erect a suitable schoolroom. He states that there is no other building, Government or otherwise, which could be utilised as a schoolroom.

In a recent telegram the Government Resident stated that there were twenty (20) children of school age in Alice Springs but it is possible that the number will be greatly increased when the railway line reaches Alice Springs, as the headquarters of the railway staff will be transferred from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs.

A petition has been received in the Department signed by residents of Alice Springs urgently requesting “that a suitable school building be erected by the Government forthwith. We also ask for a good State School Teacher to be sent immediately”. The latter request has already been attended to,
C.E. DAVIES’

PROPOSED SCHOOL AT

STUART CENTRAL

AUSTRALIA

PLAN 3
Miss Pearl Burton on loan from South Australia Education Department having taken up duty at Alice Springs.

Miss Burton's secondment was approved in March 1929 and she commenced duty in Alice Springs on 2 May. The school was reopened in the town on 13 May in a 'galvanised cottage' on the corner of Todd Street and Parsons Street, which was then allotment number 92, adjacent to the Stuart Arms Hotel. Rent of 15/- per week was paid to the owner C. Meynard from 13 May 1929.

A pupil of the time, Kurt Johannsen, described the school as: ...a tin shed one-roomed building for the fifteen to twenty children of all grades from first to about seventh grade who attended.

He continued:
Our teacher was Miss Burton, a small bird-like spinster. It was extremely hot in the tin shed but we weren't really used to anything else, and I didn't mind it very much.

Not only the school building was primitive:
The girls' and boys' toilets were just five posts with some hessian tacked up around them.

The old school, the Warder's Quarters, remained in place until at least mid-1960. On 16 June the Assistant Administrator, R. Marsh, advised the National Trust in Alice Springs that it had "been decided to remove the old building in the Police Station yard at Alice Springs known as the old school".

Approval was finally given on 12 July 1929 for the erection of a new school and single quarters for the teacher. Miss Burton had agreed to pay 10% of her salary as rent. The contract for the construction of the buildings, along with the Resident Engineer's Residence, was let on 3 March 1930 for £2852. The design of the school was for two rooms divided by a movable partition. The teacher's house consisted of a bedroom, living-room, kitchenette, bathroom/laundry and front verandah.

The new school and the teacher's residence were occupied on 22 September 1930 and the school officially opened on 26 September. The ceremony was carried out by the new Government Resident Mr. Victor Carrington who had replaced Cawood in 1929. There were 31 children enrolled at the time and they were given a half holiday for

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37 AA: CRS A1, Item: 1933/278.
39 Letter dated 16 June 1960, to The Secretary, Northern Territory National Trust, Alice Springs, from R. Marsh, Assistant Administrator, Darwin, Ref. No.60/627/16.
40 AA: A518/1 Item: F241/6/1.
the occasion. The continuing history of this school can be found in the Trust's booklet *Hartley Street School*. 42

THE BUNGALOW

Despite the earlier problems with the site Mrs Standley moved to Jay Creek with the half caste children in November 1928. 43 She had been ill for quite some time and was due for retirement in January 1929. 44 In the absence of a suitable replacement she was prevailed upon by Cawood to move with the children to Jay Creek. The move was rushed because of the imminent arrival of the railway which, it was anticipated, would have undesirable influences, especially for the older girls. At Jay Creek the children lived in a tin shed constructed from the materials of the old dismantled Bungalow and the previously erected bush timber frame. Mrs Standley lived in a tent covered with a bough-shelter. 45 Her health deteriorated and she officially retired in April 1929.

As a temporary measure Mr and Mrs Thorne were appointed as Superintendent and Matron respectively. 46 As at 30 June 1929 there were 49 inmates at Jay Creek.

The Thomes were soon relieved, as intimated in the Territory of Central Australia's Annual Report:

In May, 1930, the term of Mr. and Mrs. Thorne expired and Mr. and Mrs. Freeman were appointed as superintendent and matron of the Half-caste Institution, which is temporarily established at Jay Creek.

The rains which fell in January considerably increased the water available and provided ample food for stock. A number of goats was obtained and, for the remainder of the year, a supply of fresh milk was available for the children. A few of the goats were killed to supplement the meat supply.

With the exception of an outbreak of measles, the health of the children was good.

With a view to locating the Institution nearer Alice Springs efforts were made to obtain a satisfactory water supply at Temple Bar about seven miles (11.3 km) from Alice Springs. These efforts have not been successful and negotiations have been entered into with the postal authorities with a view to

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43 Northern Standard, 28 October 1930, p.2.


46 Report on the Administration of Central Australia for the year ended the 30th June 1929, CPP No.12 of 1929, p.6.
FIG. 5: Removal of the Jay Creek children to Alice Springs 1932.

FIG. 6: The Telegraph Station as the Half-Caste Institute c1933.
utilizing the Alice Springs Postal Buildings for the purposes of a home.\textsuperscript{47}

Later in the same report it was noted that:

The building has been enlarged, increasing the former space by about half, and allowing the separation of male and female children.\textsuperscript{48}

There were 25 males and 23 females.

There are two points of interest from this report. First is the dropping from use of the name 'Bungalow', at least officially. Second is the projected removal of the Institution to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station.

A suggestion to use the Telegraph Station first came in 1927 but was ruled out on cost grounds.\textsuperscript{49} Advancing technology and the growth of the town meant that the telegraph station was becoming redundant. A new post office was opened in the town in January 1932.

Before the telegraph station site was settled upon, negotiations had resumed with the Undoolya lessees with a view to resuming land at Temple Bar.\textsuperscript{50} Land was resumed and a contract signed for work to commence on buildings. But once again lack of water ended proceedings. After protracted negotiations with the Post Master general, lasting more than two years, the shift from Jay Creek took place in late 1932.

However, the Institution was still at Jay Creek in July 1932 when Pastor Paul Albrecht passed through on his way to Hermannsburg:

It took most of the morning to drive the thirty-five miles (56.3 km) to Jay Creek where Harry Freeman came out to invite them for lunch. He was the superintendent of the small building and group of tents called the Half-Caste Institution. For years it had been the Bungalow, a part-Aboriginal children's hostel at the back of the Stuart Arms hotel in town. But in 1928, the government moved it out to Jay Creek to get the children away from contact with railway construction gangs. Jay Creek was a dusty spot with no permanent springs. Water was obtained from a few wells which in dry times almost failed. Boys of ten and twelve were lowered into it night and morning with jam tins to scoop water from the sinkhole in the bottom into the windlass bucket. In 1932 it

\textsuperscript{47}Annual Report by the Government Resident of the Administration of the Northern Territory of Central Australia, for the year 1 July 1929 to 30 June 1930, CPP No.151 1929-1930, p.5.

\textsuperscript{48}Annual Report by the Government Resident of the Administration of the Northern Territory of Central Australia, for the year 1 July 1929 to 30 June 1930, CPP No.151 1929-1930, p.11.

\textsuperscript{49}Austin, Tony, (1993), I Can Picture the Old Home So Clearly, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, p.163.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.
was the sole government institution catering for Aborigines, part or fullblood, in Central Australia.\(^{51}\)

Once again there is the idea that the name Bungalow was out of favour.

The removal of the Jay Creek children to the Telegraph Station appears to have been imminent in October 1932. Journalist F.E. Baume was in Alice Springs in mid-October to report on the Granites goldrush and he wrote:

> Four miles [6.4 km] out is the old Telegraph station which very soon will house...the half-castes who...are kept from moral and physical harm by Mr. and Mrs. G. K. Freeman...\(^{52}\)

The children were transported by car in November (Fig. 5).

The area of the telegraph station was proclaimed an Aboriginal Reserve on 8 December 1932 with an area of 273 hectares.\(^{53}\) The Freemans were the first Superintendent and Matron at the new location.\(^{54}\) Whatever the case with its name, the Telegraph Station became the last location for the Institution (Fig. 6).

### BUNGALOW OR TELEGRAPH STATION?

In his book, *An Australian Adventure*, Rev. Harry Griffiths argued the question of the naming of the 'Bungalow':

> In the last three years [?1972-75] I have read, in more than one publication on Central Australia, the statement that the original Alice Springs is situated at the bungalow two miles (3.2 km) north of the present town, near a water-hole named Alice Springs. This is completely erroneous. The historic repeater station is not and never was the bungalow. Such a title is anything but complimentary to the repeater station, which is one of Australia's heritages. I speak on behalf of all old-timers: please do not attach the name "bungalow" to the first building to be erected in Central Australia.\(^{55}\)

And later:

> ...Mrs Standley...move(d) out to Jay Creek settlement, with the "bung kids", as the children from the bungalow were known. Unfortunately, wherever they went this title went with them. When we visited the settlement at the beginning of 1931, Mrs Standley had left and Mr and Mrs Freeman were...

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\(^{52}\)Baume, F.E., (1933), *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*, Frank C. Johnson, Sydney, p.36.


\(^{54}\)Alice Springs telegraph Station Historical Reserve Plan of Management, (1989), Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, Alice Springs, p.82.

in charge, and in the Alice at that time I heard someone refer to the Jay Creek settlement as "the bungalow". On our return from Katherine two years later, Mr and Mrs Freeman with their charges had moved into the old repeater station, now obsolete because all postal business was then being carried on in the new post office on Railway Terrace. Again, unfortunately, the old title, "bung kids", had moved with them, and remained until the three churches...were asked to take over the work which began in the unsavoury building in Parsons Street.56

Nevertheless the name 'Bungalow' has stuck with the Telegraph Station through the decades up to the present day. Gorey applied the name in her 1952 book The Alice;57 it was applied by the assistant Administrator in 1960 in his letter to the National Trust, previously quoted; Donovan, in his 1988 book on the history of Alice Springs, applies the name to the Telegraph Station;58 and as recently as 1992 it was applied by Henson.59

On the other hand, one author who did not use the name was Frank O'Grady. In his book, Francis of Central Australia, he refers to the Telegraph Station as the 'Half-caste Home'.60 Similarly, Charles Perkins, who claims to have been born at the telegraph station in about 1936-37, does not use the term 'Bungalow' in his autobiography.61 However, he did use it in an interview published in the local newspaper, the Centralian Advocate, in 1987.62

Since 1993 (see Afterword below) the term 'Bungalow' has appeared in several articles in the Centralian Advocate — Friday, 15 April 1994, p.9; Friday, 11 October 1996, p.10; Tuesday, 8 September 1998, p.28; and Tuesday 7 December 1999, p.28.

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56Ibid, p.136-137.
AFTERWORD

This work was substantially finished by the end of 1993. Except that I was unsure about how to finish it off... I had largely set down what I had set out to do but in the end, literally, had started to drift off into an area that I felt that I did not want to pursue. And so, there things remained until I pulled it out again, almost a decade later. It was either a case of burying it forever or at least put it on one or two library's bookshelves - so, for better or worse, here it is.