REPLENISHED

Sources of meaning, sources of history
in the Pine Creek area,
Northern Territory,
Australia.

Jane Bathgate
Batchelor of Arts (Hons), University of Melbourne
Master of Arts, University of Melbourne

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Faculty of Law, Business and Arts
Charles Darwin University.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by research of the Northern Territory University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 25th February 2004
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis

To my teacher Jetsunma Ahkön Norbu Lhamo who taught me that the ground, path and result are inseparable.

To Lily Ah Toy Wong Wu Len, Lulu Martin Dalpbalingal and Helen Liddy Emorrotjba who inspired me with their words and their deeds.

To my Grandmothers – Marguerite Cora Lavers and Rachel Helen Dunnett for their feistiness, humour and determination - it has served me well.

*May this thesis be of benefit.*
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Abstract

This thesis describes a journey towards replenishing my historical praxis through identifying the causes and conditions that produce meaningful historical discourse within the context of Indigenous, European and Chinese histories of the Pine Creek area in the Northern Territory of Australia. The sources of meaningful historical discourse lie within a multi-faceted approach to history that engages ethical frameworks, historiography, oral history methodologies, community, site visitation and reviewing written sources of history.

Through this journey I identify the richness of local history as a discipline and as a vehicle for exploring theoretical discourses and deepening historical understanding. As part of this journey I explore local and regional historical discourses, environmental history, place studies, politics, heritage and public history, community and memory, mobility and settlement, remembering and forgetting.

My praxis has been 'Replenished' through identifying sources of meaningful discourse that form the core components of what I call Engaged history. Engaged history broadly describes the application of ethics in both the research process and in the writing of history. It encompasses both applied history in a community context, clarification of the subjects of, and motivation for, historical research and integration of my historical praxis with my general work experience and Buddhist philosophy. Engaged history identifies meaning at a practical and theoretical level and encompasses an holistic approach to writing and researching history.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank everyone who welcomed me to their 'place'. This thesis is a written expression of visiting and sojourning in the Pine Creek area and as such I acknowledge the Indigenous people of Pine Creek, including the Jawoyn and Wagiman people, who have relationships of traditional ownership, custodianship and long term residence in the area.

Some of these people who have assisted with this thesis and who are named or depicted in this thesis may have passed away. I apologise for any distress this may cause to readers.

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LANGUAGE USAGE

In this thesis I use the terms Indigenous, Chinese and European in reference to the primary cultural background of the people resident in the Pine Creek area and also deploy them in reference to research areas, such as Indigenous, Chinese and European histories. These terms further refer to Indigenous Australians, Chinese Australians and European Australians. The usage of these terms obviates the usage of terms based on colour rather than culture. For instance the terms 'white' and 'black' have often been used to describe European settlers and Indigenous peoples respectively. These terms cannot accommodate Chinese people.

However I do note that the categories Indigenous, Chinese and European are extremely broad and do not do justice to the intra-cultural differences within these groupings including differences based on languages, dialects and diverse cultural backgrounds. In this case I have sacrificed specificity for generality in order to distinguish between these three broad groups in historical terms. However, where possible I mention the Indigenous language group a person belongs to rather than using the generic term 'Indigenous'. Where I refer to more recent political debates, as in Chapter three, I have referred to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples rather than the above three cultural groupings because these terms more aptly reflect the political situation.

I also note that while the use of the word 'Indigenous' is becoming increasingly used by Aboriginal Australians many Indigenous people still prefer the term Aboriginal. Moreover, most Indigenous people I spoke with would prefer that they were referred to in terms of their specific language group. ¹

The naming of people in respect of their cultural grouping has, in Australian history, been closely associated with the history of colonisation and racism. As Bernie Brian has pointed out in his PhD thesis on Northern Territory history: "When writing Territory history, it is difficult to avoid using racialised categories such as 'white', 'coloured', 'half-caste', part-Aboriginal' and 'full-blood Aboriginal' which are 'socially constructed' and which 'have arbitrary meanings which change over time."²

¹ Peter Read, verbal communication, May 25, 2003; Christine Franks, verbal communication, June 16, 2003.
Many of these terms became embedded in the vernacular for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As Gillian Cowlishaw has pointed out:

Many words that have been part of normal language for years and remain part of the local vernacular, have been outlawed in the public domain because they were used to express contempt or to entrench racial inequality. *Coloured* or *part coloured, half-caste* and *yellafella* were commonly used terms in the past which are seldom used now except in remote places such as Bulman. *Boy* referred to 'full blood' Aboriginal men who worked for white men. *Boy* was used to differentiate them from both the white workers and the myalls or 'wild bush blackfellas' who lived apart from whites. *Gin* and *lubra* used to be the Territory vernacular for an Aboriginal woman and Tex uses them in this original sense.

The terms that Brian and Cowlishaw described appear throughout the written records of Northern Territory history and, during the course of my interviews, were used occasionally by Indigenous and non-Indigenous informants. Where possible I have avoided using these terms except where I am quoting directly or referring to the racial distinctions of the period. When quoting Indigenous speakers I write as they speak in the vernacular in what linguists describe as 'Aboriginal English'.

In this thesis I have used the word Chinatown to describe the Chinese settlement next to Pine Creek. I acknowledge that this was a label ascribed initially by Europeans although later taken up by Chinese Australians in reference to this area.

The term 'Pine Creek' refers to an area, the town and the creek of the same name. The three are normally distinguished by context. However, where there is some ambiguity I qualify my statements with the terms 'area', 'township' or 'creek'.

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3 Grace Koch and Harold Koch (eds), *Kaytetye country. An Aboriginal history of the Barrow Creek area*, Institute of Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs, 1993, x-xxii. The editors note that Aboriginal English derived from Pidgin English and was '...widely spoken in the frontier in the early post-contact period, which further north developed into a separate Aboriginal language now known as Kriol.', x.

4 Lily Ah Toy interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1997; NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 401, Transcript of addresses of Chinese stories by Mr Ah Toy, Mr Charlie See Kee and Mr Ernest Fong, kindly donated
I refer to the Northern Territory University in this thesis rather than Charles Darwin University. They are one and the same. The name 'Northern Territory University' was the term given to the institution for the period of history I was examining and for the period of my enrolment. The official replacement of the name 'Northern Territory University' with 'Charles Darwin University' occurred in 2004.
ACRONYMS

AAPA - Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
AGPS - Australian Government Publishing Service
ALC - Aboriginal Land Commissioner
ANU - Australian National University
AIATSIS - Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AUSLIG - Australian Surveying and Land Information Group
AWM - Australian War Memorial
DIPE - Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
GRS - Government Resident Series
KT - Katherine Times
MS - Manuscript
NAA - National Australian Archives
NARU - North Australian Research Unit
NLC - Northern Land Council
NT - Northern Territory
NTG - Northern Territory Government
NTANT - National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory)
NTAS - Northern Territory Archives Service
NTN - Northern Territory News
NTTG - Northern Territory Times and Gazette
NTDB - Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography
NTU - Northern Territory University
OTL - Overland Telegraph Line
PCAAA - Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association
PCN - Pine Creek News
PMG - Postmaster General
SAPP - South Australian Parliamentary Papers
TS - Transcript
UDLC - Upper Daly land claim
UQP - University of Queensland Press
PROLOGUE

ARRIVING

When I first drove into the town of Pine Creek I bumped into a wall, a low lying stone structure in front of the Hotel that disappeared from view the closer I drove towards it. A number of people drinking on the verandah broke into guffaws. I gathered from wry comments made in my direction that I was one of many to have driven into that wall.

My encounter with the wall marked the beginning of many encounters with the town of Pine Creek and the surrounding area. Travelling to Pine Creek, residing in Pine Creek, thinking about and researching the history of Pine Creek was, for the next few years, to be a source of inspiration and much perspiration. There were, it turned out, many walls which I was not aware of when I began to write this history. As I became conscious of the underpinnings of history – the inner structures that define and confine history – I was able to clarify these structures. The walls have not gone but now, perhaps, I am more familiar with their composition, and their location!
INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

REPLENISHING SOURCES

This thesis describes a journey towards replenishing my historical praxis through researching a local area (Pine Creek) in the Northern Territory of Australia. I liken this journey to being replenished by a spring. My praxis has been 'Replenished' through the writing of this thesis, through identifying sources of meaningful discourse that embrace both the past and the present and that include memory, history and historiography.¹

In the Pine Creek area numerous springs well up from the ground. These springs are a gentle and subtle reminder of the transformative and replenishing nature of water in what is essentially a dry country. In the tropical north the seasonal drought - The Dry - is broken by the Monsoon - The Wet. Rain plunges down onto the land soaking and replenishing the earth - creeks become rivers and rivers overflow. A dry brown land is transformed into a green moist land.

I found I needed to replenish my historical practice which had figuratively become dry - somehow detached from its source. For many years I had been replenished by my continuing interest in all things historical but having an interest was not enough: it was neither theoretically sustainable nor replenishing in the long term.

Springs are local sources of water. They well up from deep under the ground. Research into one place can provide enormous depth and richness. Local history is potentially deep history because of this rich detail and the potential interconnections unearthed by looking at one place. Place Studies provide a theoretical base for exploring place and locality from many vantage points including history and geography.

But springs are only apparently local - they are often part of an interconnected network of other springs which mutually draw their waters from under the ground. By looking at one area I am able to canvass larger discourses on regional history in this thesis and a diversity of
subject areas including the history of Indigenous Australian, Chinese and European cultures in the area, environmental history and sense of place, public history, oral history, the history of travel and settlement, memory, forgetting and loss.

The journey towards identifying the conceptual elements that replenish history has been as much a journey about historiography as it has been about the richness of local history. For instance the significance of Pine Creek historically informs this thesis but it is not the primary subject. The path of writing a history of Pine Creek would have set me on a different path than the one I am following here. Some chapters in this thesis are more overtly historical (Chapter one and Chapter five) and others are oriented towards discourses on history including methodological considerations (Chapter three and Chapter four).

Place
The Pine Creek area does not exist in any formal sense. I have named the area after the town of Pine Creek and nearby creek of the same name. Broadly, the area lies between the Adelaide River and Edith Rivers, extending into what is now the southern part of Kakadu National Park, and as far south-west as the Daly River. This area falls within the catchment of the Daly, Douglas, Edith and Mary Rivers. The Pine Creek area is located in the Northern Territory (NT) in what is colloquially known as the ‘Top End’ of Australia. The Top End literally refers to the ‘Top End’ of the Northern Territory and roughly includes the land mass above the 20th parallel which incorporates the area between Katherine and Darwin. The town of Pine Creek lies two hundred and sixty

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1 I garnered the idea from Toni Morrison’s ‘Beloved’. I use ‘replenished’ in the informal sense of an adjective or noun, as in I am replenished and my praxis has been replenished. Toni Morrison, Beloved. Chatto & Windus, 1987.
kilometres south-east of Darwin, the capital of the Northern Territory, and eighty kilometres north-west of the town of Katherine (see Figure 1).

Climate
The Pine Creek area lies within a monsoonal zone, in a region of Tropical Savannah, approximately fourteen degrees south of the equator. The area immediately around Pine Creek is quite rocky with stunted eucalypts, low shrubs and coarse grass (see Figures 2 and 3).\(^5\)

Living communities
Most of the population in the Pine Creek area is concentrated in and around the township. If one includes the local Indigenous community at Kybrook Farm and the miners and contractors working at nearby Union Reefs gold mine, the area is home to 475 residents. Of this number approximately 300 are long term residents and 112 are Indigenous residents at Kybrook Farm. Most of the Indigenous residents are of Jawoyn-Mayali or Wagiman descent and live either at Kybrook or at a sister settlement in town.\(^6\) Long term residents comprise mostly Indigenous families and a few core European and Chinese Australian families who have had long term businesses in the area.\(^7\)

The town's proximity to two major roads - the Stuart Highway and the Kakadu Highway - means that it often provides a stop-over (generally not a sleep over) for travellers, mostly tourists, who stop off to have a rest and re-fuel while heading to Darwin or into Kakadu National Park, an extensive natural heritage park to the north of the town. A portion of travellers stop long enough in the town to visit various local heritage sites such as the old railway station (see Figure 4).

History
The history I draw upon concerns the post-contact period, a span of approximately one hundred and thirty years, following settlement of the Pine Creek area. Europeans associated

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\(^6\) The overall population has dropped from 650 to 475 in the last five years with the downsizing and, more recently, the impending closure of the Union Reefs Gold mine. Elaine Gano, verbal communication, 11 June, 2003. The official name of Kybrook Farm is the Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association. For a history of Indigenous people in Pine Creek and Indigenous population estimates in the 1980s see J.S. Wolfe, *Pine Creek Aborigines and town camps*, Monograph, ANU, NARU, Darwin, 1987.
with the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line bestowed the name Pine Creek on a local creek and its immediate environs which had stands of native cypress pine. The area was at the confluence of a number of Indigenous land-language affiliations. The building of the overland telegraph line in the early 1870s, which led to the discovery of gold, instigated a gold rush which marked the onset of intensive settlement and disturbance of the land by European and Chinese miners. Pine Creek was one of a number of gold rush camps, however unlike other camps it eventually evolved into a town, mainly because it was the southern railhead for the North Australia Railway.

Pine Creek township remained the railhead for the North Australia Railway up until the 1920s and during that period it established itself as a service centre for local mining and pastoral interests. Like many settlements in gold-mining areas of Australia the township had been a significant site of cultural contact for Indigenous, European and Chinese people. Indigenous people used Pine Creek as a base camp during The Wet when their seasonal work abated. Indigenous and non-Indigenous pastoral station workers, buffalo and crocodile hunters, miners and timber cutters from the surrounding area have all relied at some point on the town as a base.

The impact of early mining in the area is clearly visible in the abandoned mine shafts and mullock heaps that dot the area. More recently a whole hillside behind the town has been sheared away by the Pine Creek Goldfields Open Cut Mine and roads have been re-routed. The main access road into the township has been altered four times in the last fifty years. A land once mined has been re-mined again and again.

The town of Pine Creek was a cultural meeting place historically and a figurative and literal meeting place for my ideas and engagement with the past in the present. How did I begin the process of unpacking this history and engaging with an alternative understanding of my praxis?

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7 Such as the Huddleston, Liddy, Smith, Young, Ah Toy and Lee families.
8 Dr Mark Harvey to Bathgate, e-mail, section of Chapter 1 in thesis, 1 July 2003.
Figure 1: Location of the township of Pine Creek with topographic detail of the local area.
Figure 2: A view of the Pine Creek area from the north.

Figure 3: Pine Creek flowing during the Wet Season.
Figure 4: Tourist map showing the layout of the township of Pine Creek.
Source: Pine Creek Community Government Council, n.d.
ENTRY POINTS

I began my inquiry by maintaining a posture of conceptual reflexivity that enabled me to be receptive to a range of possibilities. This included an open ended inquiry into what constituted the history of Pine Creek and what causes and conditions produced meaningful historical discourse. This was a process of immersion through engaging with the history, physical environment and community of the area in a distillation process that required the ingredients of time, patience and trust. Specifically I reviewed various written archival sources, travelled to the Pine Creek area, undertook field work including oral history interviews and established a community-based arts/history project.

Significantly, this approach also entailed linking my work experience in social research and Buddhist philosophy with the historical undertaking. The proposed outcome of this process would, I anticipated, be identification of a more meaningful praxis through understanding the components of that praxis.

There were many periods of uncertainty as I battled with my own myths and ideas about my role as an historian and questioned my approach. I see now that this uncertainty was a goad that kept me looking for ways of researching and writing history.

Geography, observation and inquiry

Undertaking a history of Pine Creek allowed me the first substantial opportunity I had as an historian to physically be in the place of my inquiry. I travelled regularly to the area. Why was this important? Being in Pine Creek provided me with a geographic link between the present and the past. At a theoretical level it enabled me to clarify historical questions I had about grounding history in experience which included the opportunity to engage with living communities and more general reflections about my praxis.

In particular visiting the place of my inquiry enabled me to clarify the relationship between what I saw and what I knew regarding its history and my experience of place. For instance I visited Pine Creek with my own store of historical knowledge derived from my research that I could compare with the interpretations of history I was reading at heritage sites around the

\[^{10}\text{In alchemy there is a period in which time and waiting are essential for the process to proceed. Titus Burckhardt, }\textit{Alchemy,}\text{ William Stoddart (Trans.),}\text{ Element Books, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1996, pp.182ff.}\]
town, the physical history I could see around me such as abandoned mining adits and the railway line and community life that I observed.

In this process I was both an observer and a participant. I critiqued my own ideas about history by engaging in an ethnographic approach. I was less concerned with pure observation than situating my experiences and encounters with a place within an observational framework. I have not undertaken field work as extensively as a cultural anthropologist would have but I have engaged in what being in the field can offer in critiquing my own practice.12

One of the first things I observed in the town was the apparent separateness of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. I could see, for instance, that the paths and destinations Indigenous people walked differed from those of non-Indigenous people and, for the most part these cultures lived in different areas of town.

There was, however, a dissonance between what I was seeing, the apparently separate way people moved and gathered around the town, and for instance the social history of inter-relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the area. While people and communities do live separately from one another for social and economic reasons communities have co-existed and historically depended on one another. These relationships however are not acknowledged publicly nor immediately apparent.

Similarly there was a dissonance between what the historic interpretation offered and the historical social reality. For instance, much of the static historical interpretation around the town of Pine Creek focussed on the history of mining with references to social history including occasional references to Indigenous histories and perhaps slightly more on the history of the Chinese in the area. This public history occluded the multiplicity of histories in the area, notably indigenous and itinerant histories and non-developmental aspects of the history of the area.

11 I drove from Darwin or Batchelor (two and a half and one and a half hours drive, respectively, from Pine Creek). The longest period of living in Pine Creek were three two-week blocks in 1997.
This dissonance frames a number of inter-related historical questions I ask in this thesis. How does one historically acknowledge the simultaneity of Indigenous, European and Chinese cultures who lived in the Pine Creek area; how does one trace their history of separateness, co-existence and interconnection? One strategy I have employed is to maintain focus on all three cultures and their history of association with the Pine Creek area. In Chapter five I have attempted to trace some of these connections more specifically through tracks and settlement.

**Travelling discourses**

It was my initial engagement with the town of Pine Creek and its Indigenous, European and Chinese heritage that sparked my interest in the history of the area. While I have retained my interest in the town I also recognise the advantage of looking at a loosely defined area to examine the history of communities.

As a traveller in a geographic space I began to focus on the pathways of movement, roads and tracks, and where people walked around the town. I speculated about how people moved about. I began to look at and use maps to assist me in identifying pathways of movement and locations of dwellings and meeting places (see Chapter four and Chapter five). Individual and population movements, by their nature, transgress boundaries and so while I focus on the Pine Creek area I am not prescriptive. At times I range outside these areas as far north-west as Darwin and as far south-east as Katherine and north into Arnhem Land.\(^{13}\)

At a theoretical level my own travel and observations of others travelling have resulted in a kind of boundlessness and de-centering of focus on Pine Creek township as the primary place of focus and concomitantly a de-centering of European histories. In addition my focus on travel has also provided an avenue for answering my question about how to incorporate the history of diverse cultures into my writing. The advantage of looking at a space of movement is that all peoples, no matter what their background, move through an area and stop for a time. Everyone travels from A to B and everyone needs respite. In this sense geography has provided a potentially egalitarian space for tracking histories that have been on the margins of historical writings.

\(^{13}\) This 'range' reflects people's movements which are not contained by a specifically defined local area, for instance the movements of people from Arnhem Land into Pine Creek.
Change and impermanence

My own experience of travelling in the Pine Creek area also focussed my attention on demographic and climatic change and the impermanence of material phenomena. My observations of people moving through the Pine Creek area influenced my perception of Pine Creek as a place of shifting population reflecting a significant historical theme of nomadic and itinerant peoples moving in and out of the area.

My sensory experience and observations of being in a tropical climate focussed me on climatic change. In a tropical climate the seasons swing between extreme dryness and extreme wetness. The climate has profoundly shaped responses of people to the land, as I discuss in Chapter two.

One of the primary processes in the tropics is that of decomposition: moisture in the air hastens decomposition of all material phenomena into constituent parts or elements. Another of the primary processes in the 'Top End' is fire which annually clears away overgrowth but in the process destroys vegetation and animals (see Chapter two). Both decomposition and fire are part of the natural cycles of regeneration. However, these processes also reflect the impermanence of all phenomena. At a literal and figurative level this impermanence directly impacts upon what we understand to be the sources of history because both these processes destroy physical signs of the past, such as sites of human habitation. As I travelled around Pine Creek I could see the physical remains of the past: abandoned mines, mining adits and old tracks. But I could also see their deterioration: rust on metal, rotting timber or blackened and charred paddocks, and tracks that were gradually disappearing back into the land.

The psychological counterpart of the impermanent nature of physical phenomena is embodied by memory. Memory is by nature variable, non-linear, mutable and, at times unreliable.  

The constantly dissolving nature of physical and psychological signs of the past is part of what I call the vestigial aspect of history. The term 'vestige', from which vestigial derives, conveys a sense of tracing and outlining the past through observation but also of the dissolving impermanent signs of that past. Throughout this thesis I touch on traces or

15 The word 'vestige' derives from the Latin vestigium which refers to a footprint '...hence a trace in general: from vestigare, to follow the footprints of; to track, hence to go in search of...to see for
vestiges of history that remain as signs of the past, signalling a history which is inevitably in the process of disappearing; a history which is ultimately irretrievable.

Memory can be read in this setting as a re-membering or re-composing of the past. Vestigial history encompasses the remains of a history that has disappeared in between the gaps of memory as people leave their places of habitation and consequently their historical association with the area. It also occurs where people purposefully hide their past and/or wish to preserve their anonymity. I discuss this aspect of history most clearly in Chapter six. The physical and psychological remains of the past are doorways through which to reflect on history.16

Imagination and sense of place

By travelling to and staying in the Pine Creek area I began to develop my own ‘sense of place’ and yet I was acutely aware of a ‘sense of displacement’, both as an outsider and as an observer of the way in which people and land had been overturned and excavated; literally by mining and figuratively through public history.17

The best local history I believe is infused with a strong sense of place because it conveys through words the tangible experience of a location which deepens the engagement of the researcher and any readers. There is something very powerful about standing in the place of the history one is writing about. It enables one to evoke the past in the present - a kind of narrative ‘calling forth’.18

16 David Lowenthal refers to the vestigial qualities of the past through his rhetorical questioning about how we relate to the past. '...to what end its vestiges, like our memories are salvaged or contrived, and how these alterations affect our heritage, and ourselves...', David Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, xix.


Sense of place is linked to evocation as part of the experiential qualities of encountering space - of touch, sight, smell and sound. Mary Hutchinson pointed out that evocative texts '... touch us, offering a sense of people and place that stays with us in the same way that other impressions of the senses may: smooth, sharp, bright, sudden, enclosed, silent, cool. They stretch and move us.'

In the following section I describe the next step in my process - an articulation of meaning within my praxis through what I term Engaged history.

**ENGAGED HISTORY**

In this thesis Engaged history specifically describes applied history in a community context but more broadly describes the application of ethics in both the research process and in the writing of history. It was one of the central outcomes of the reflexive research process I embarked upon at the outset of this thesis and is incorporated through the examination of the research process, exploration of methodology and in the historical subject matter. It is also an expression of holism - in which my historical praxis has been integrated into my philosophy of ethics and work experience. Engaged history replenished my praxis because it applied meaning at a practical and theoretical level through the incorporation of a conscious social obligation in the research and writing of history. In its pared-back form Engaged History describes ethical activism.

*Buddhist philosophy*

Engaged History draws on the philosophy of (socially) engaged Buddhism. The roots of Engaged Buddhism emerged in the 1960s particularly in relationship to the Vietnam War. In its simplest form it describes '...active involvement by Buddhists in society and its problems' through compassionate activity in the world. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, has exemplified this philosophy that challenged warring parties during the Vietnam war to engage in compassionate activity. This movement has fruitfully resonated with western movements of community and ecological activism. Arnold Kotler, Editor's Introduction and Thich Nhat Hanh, 'Love in Action' in Arnold Kotler (ed), *The engaged Buddhist reader*, Parallax Press, Berkeley, California, 1996, pp.64-69. As Kenneth Kraft writes: 'The touchstone for engaged Buddhists is a view of interdependence in which the universe is experienced

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Buddhism has its origins in a central premise of Mahayana or northern Buddhism - the Bodhisattva vow - which encompasses the ethics of working for the welfare (or benefit) of others. In other words all activity is undertaken on behalf of others.  

Integration

This application of Buddhist philosophy is also part of my holistic and reflective approach that is designed to incorporate the disparate parts of my life into the writing of history, notably my work experience and spiritual philosophy, which in turn, has been part of the replenishment of my historical praxis. For instance my experience in community based research projects assisted me in the development of community feedback mechanisms (see Chapter four). Buddhist philosophy has assisted me in the development of an ethical framework (as discussed above) and reflection on Buddhist philosophical concepts notably 'equanimity' and 'impermanence' has provided a source of contemplation for aspects of Pine Creek's history. I hasten to add that I am in no way a Buddhist Scholar or trying to write a Buddhist text. I speak only as a fledgling practitioner of Buddhism and the way that it has assisted me in my research and writing process and the importance I place upon incorporating an important part of my life into my research and writing. In this latter respect Buddhist philosophy provided a touchstone for clarifying philosophical questions I had about integrating academic work with daily life. In this respect the process of writing this thesis became a source of contemplation and mindfulness about motivation, purpose and the meaning of history.


22 For identifying and clarifying the Bodhisattva vow in respect of my historical practice I am grateful to Geshe Thupten Tenzin and Ani Lucia Latimer. For discussion of the Bodhisattva vow see Harvey, An introduction to Buddhist ethics, p.123, p.126, p.128, pp.130-131. Mahayana Buddhism emerged around the first or second century B.C. in reaction to a growing perception among Buddhists that the practice of Buddhism was becoming too narrow and exclusively focussed on the ordained. As Thich Nhat Hanh writes ‘The ideal put forth by the Mahayanists was that of the bodhisatta, who practiced and taught for the benefit of everyone.’ Thich Nhat Hanh, The heart of the Buddha’s teaching. Transforming suffering into Peace, joy and liberation, Rider, Sydney, 1998.

23 The thematic (historical) connection with Buddhism in this thesis is through the Chinese immigrants who brought their form of Buddhist practice to the Top End. Popular Chinese (Mahayana) Buddhism was infused strongly with elements from other Chinese religions including Taoism, Confucianism and folk-religious elements. In many instances popular Buddhist faith could be more aptly described as a Buddhist-Taoist religion. Arthur F. Wright. Buddhism in Chinese history, Stanford University Press, California, 1971, (revised printing, first published 1959), pp.98-111.
The exploration of Buddhist philosophical concepts and their application to the subject of history would be a thesis in itself. For the purposes of this thesis they slide gently beneath the surface providing a kind of theoretical understanding for certain aspects of Pine Creek's history. For instance the Buddhist concept of 'equanimity' is based upon a deliberate experience of all beings as fundamentally equal and provides a philosophical basis for my attempts to give equal attention to Indigenous, Chinese and European cultures where a Eurocentric view has dominated the written history (see Chapter one and Chapter three). I have touched briefly on my perceptions of change and impermanence through my experience of travelling through the Pine Creek area and observing people and the landscape. The Buddhist concept of impermanence reflects the instability and continually changing nature of all phenomena. Contemplations upon impermanence are reflected in my focus on changes wrought by the climate and the passage of time (see Chapter two and Chapter three), movement and travel in the Pine Creek area (see Chapter five) and forgetting and loss (see Chapter six).²⁴

The writing of history and moral purpose

In this thesis the core element of Buddhist philosophy that I am mindful of is the concept of beneficial outcomes. Ethics, or the study of morals, as a philosophical discipline is not however only the province of Buddhist philosophy but also has its antecedents in Greek philosophy. It is the concept of beneficence or, more particularly, benefit which I want to explore in this section as it is the area more practicably difficult to define in respect of history where the concept of benefit has tended to be generalised and non-specific. Historians, because of the way they take refuge in writing about the past, have not traditionally had to address how information gathering can be turned to a beneficial process external to their personal benefit whatever that may be. It is what one does with history that actualises its potential.

Giving Back: Identifying benefit and clarifying accountability

Because I had come to the conclusion that I could not write a history for the sake of writing history it was important to identify how the history I chose to write might be of benefit to others. The concept of benefit is clearly specified with respect to the ethics of research. In the Australian Indigenous context benefit is raised in respect of '...the ethics of utility, or

benefit, to Indigenous communities' of research.\textsuperscript{25} The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999) identifies ‘three basic ethical principles’:\textsuperscript{26}:

- Respect for persons
- Beneficence
- Justice

Social or moral purpose is often embedded in historical writing, for instance through theoretical movements which seek, in their terms, to balance the historical record such as feminism, post-colonialism and socialism. While one cannot generalise about historical writing, for the writing of history covers as many subjects as there are human experiences, there is the capacity in writing about the past to draw conclusions about the nature of the human condition. For instance, history can potentially provide the opportunity to document inhumanity and suffering in order to remind the reader of the causes and conditions that led to this situation. In this sense benefit can be identified through political and humanistic viewpoint whereby revealing the ‘truth’ of past events is deemed to be a worthy act. At a mundane level historians may choose to work for particular institutions which they believe undertake beneficial activity.\textsuperscript{27}

Because there is no inherent social obligation embedded in writing history I am reminded of my purpose.\textsuperscript{28} Paul Thompson writes that "History should not merely comfort; it should provide a challenge, an understanding which helps towards change."\textsuperscript{29} Thompson’s perception of the benefit of history is couched as ‘social purpose’. ‘All history’, he writes ‘depends ultimately on its social purpose’.\textsuperscript{30} Graeme Davison writes that an awareness of ‘...history deepens our conversation about the causes and direction of social change’ and

\textsuperscript{26} National Health and Medical Research Council, \textit{National statement on ethical conduct in research involving humans}, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra 1999, p.4.
\textsuperscript{27} For example historians working for Indigenous organisations seeking the repatriation of lands and/or the reuniting of families - or an historian working in the area of community history.
\textsuperscript{28} Traditionally one could say that the value of history is that we learn from the past. It is important to recognise the necessity of the ‘moral’ element in the writing of history because any historian, myself included, could write a history that has no moral imperative or ethical consideration. In academic history misrepresentation can be camouflaged within discourse as interpretation or viewpoint or even be embedded within description. In the public history arena pressure can be brought to bear on historians about what should go in a corporate or civic history.
\textsuperscript{29} Thompson, ‘The voice of the past’ in Perks and Thomson (eds), \textit{The oral history reader}, p.27. As Thompson points out: ‘Oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used.’, p.22.
adds that 'in standing against the self-interested uses of the past by others, historians may
demonstrate their greatest usefulness.'

While history may, as the adage states, 'repeat itself' the potential social incentive in writing
history is to ensure not simply that the past is not forgotten but that it is also understood or as
Inga Clendinnen writes that there is a '...commitment to seek to understand human action in
the past by the critical evaluation of sources and the disciplined procedures of the analyst...'
By placing historical writings in the public area it is implied that certain events should never
be repeated. Thus, history can promote consciousness of the causes and conditions that lead
to suffering or harm. This endeavour is undertaken on a large and small scale, for instance
the writings on the Holocaust and World War Two. In Australia the writing of the history of
settlement has initiated a wide ranging debate about the nation's responsibility in respect of
Indigenous people because of the manner in which the country was 'settled' or 'invaded'.

The links between the Holocaust, notably the concept and definition of genocide, have
recently been explored with respect to the colonisation of Australia. To the extent that this
debate is about coming to terms with understanding the 'terrible inexplicable past' it shares
common ground with Holocaust studies like Inga Clendinnen's. Ann Curthoys and John
Docker explored the question of genocide and its application to Australia's colonisation in
collection of essays they edited in an issue of Indigenous History. This issue of Indigenous
History promoted significant debate about deeply moral questions in respect of Australian
history. As one of the writers, - Larissa Behrendt - wrote, the word genocide adequately
describes Indigenous experiences as colonised peoples. Other non-Indigenous writers were
not so sure. However, nearly all writers concurred that there was a kind of forgetting or

30 Thompson, 'The voice of the past', p.21.
denial about this part of Australian history among many non-Indigenous Australians. They asked why?^{35}

My engagement with the question of social obligation expresses itself most clearly in respect of my research process and community feedback mechanisms (Chapter four) but I am also aware that the way I handle various themes in this thesis reflects an ethical consideration in respect of attempting to present a balanced cultural history of the area and acknowledging the impact of colonisation upon Indigenous people of the Pine Creek area.

**Applied history, Engaged history**

An integral part of Engaged History is its socially engaged aspect, which I liken to an applied form of history. While there is no absolute separation between pure and applied approaches in mathematics the pure approach is one based on the abstract or theoretical outcomes; the applied approach is one, in the first instance, where the science is put to practical use – where concrete phenomena are the result. In this latter respect the applied approach anchors theoretical activity in the world. The ‘concrete phenomena’ so to speak pursued in this thesis are the contemporary application of history to living communities which includes ethical frameworks for undertaking history in these communities.

For instance when I ask the question 'how may I be of benefit to others in writing history?' then I also need to apply this question to my research process and look at ways that both the research process and the outcome can be of benefit to others. This moral obligation can manifest in practical ways through socially engaged historical research such as a community development project dovetailing with the research enterprise and in theoretical ways with respect to the subject matter, for instance as part of a broader aim to address social justice issues.

This applied approach to history was honed by work experience in social research, which assisted me in clarifying the benefit potentially embedded within the historical research process. In this setting I, as an historian, engaged with an existing place and living

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^{35} Curthoys and Docker, 'Genocide: definitions, questions, settler-colonies', pp.1-15; See also the following articles in *Indigenous History*, vol. 25, 2001; Larissa Behrendt, 'Genocide: the distance between law and life', p.132; Colin Tatz, 'Confronting Australian genocide', p.29, p.33; Anna Haebich, 2001, "Between knowing and not knowing": public knowledge of the Stolen Generations', p.70.
communities in order to clarify strategies that would be of benefit to the Pine Creek community.

**Distilling purpose and meaning**

A socially engaged research process involves giving something back to the community, which is essentially a moral obligation to return benefit to the community as part of the research process. Such research has an application to historical research where moral obligation is founded upon a recognition of the interrelationship between historical research and living communities.

By engaging with a place that was both a site of history and a living community I had the opportunity to link the research and writing of history (in this case a PhD thesis) with a variety of strategies in which the community and a number of individuals identified benefit. This included community identification of ways in which history could be used in a community context, close collaboration between the historian and community and ascertaining appropriate feedback mechanisms. This was a primary opportunity for linking history with living communities and engendered a mindfulness about the mechanisms by which history (and academic writing for that matter) can dovetail with community needs (see Chapter four).

I asked how could I, as a researcher, return the research I was undertaking to the community?

**Returning research to communities**

Indigenous communities have been the subject and object of intensive research for many years and Indigenous people are acutely aware of how information is taken away. The return of information to Indigenous communities is vital not only as an act of restitution, following colonisation, but as part of an ongoing dialogue and communication between the researcher and researched.

I was made acutely aware of this exchange when I undertook a project to document sites of cultural contact on the Tiwi Islands. I recognised that I fitted into ‘...a common pattern of outsiders coming in and defining the grounds of research – in this case defining an historic
site from an outsider’s point of view. In the case of the Tiwi project my task was to try to de-colonise my point of view and to work within an ethical collaborative framework with Tiwi people.

Many kinds of research, historical or otherwise, can be interpreted as stealing. The charge of stealing has been most noticeable with respect to the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology because of their focus on material phenomena including human remains. While historians, in respect of Indigenous communities, have not necessarily taken body parts or totemic and cultural items there is a colonising legacy for, in a generic sense, the writing of history cannot be separated from the anthropological and archaeological endeavour insofar as physical items have provided a basis for historical documentation.

Historians' traditional reliance on the written record has not always stood them in good stead in their dealings with people as sources of information. Unfortunately historical information collected from individuals has often been considered a right, not a privilege of the researcher. I encountered inquiries time and again about what I was going to do with my research from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It is important to incorporate feedback mechanisms into any historical inquiry which involves the living.

**Integrating practice**

One of the anomalies that I noted in my life was that I had split the practice of writing history from my interest in living communities. I treated my interest in history almost as a separate passion in contrast to much of my working life which comprised various forms of social research mostly in the Northern Territory in inter-cultural contexts and often in partnership with other researchers. In obvious contrast, I had never been to the places I had

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36 Jane Bathgate and Darrell Lewis, *Nginaki nigirramini ngini Tiwi amintiya mamurruntawi. This is a story about Tiwi and non-Tiwi. Culture contact sites in the Tiwi Islands*, National Trust (NT) and the Tiwi Land Council, Darwin, 1999, p.55. In New Zealand the recognition of this has extended to Maori scholars who have questioned the right of Pakeha (non-Indigenous) historians to enter into the field of Maori history because of their divergence with 'important values, beliefs and attitudes of ....[Maori] Institutions', Angela Ballara, "I riro I te hoko’ Problems in cross-cultural historical scholarship", *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, p.20, p.27ff.

37 For a history of Australian traditions of collecting as part of the 'antiquarian imagination' including the convergence of racism and sympathy in European motives for collecting, see Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and collectors: the antiquarian imagination in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996.

38 The establishment of Ethics Committees within Australian universities such as NTU and elsewhere has assisted with the implementation of ethical research procedures including research that is cognizant of the interviewees' rights. The generation of oral history collections through public institutions such as the NT Archives, Oral History Unit, has also clarified these procedures.
researched and written about in my academic studies. In my work I was constantly reminded of the need to engage with living communities while looking for ways to acknowledge competing and diverse claims of ownership within history.

Socially engaged history or applied history has obvious connections with community based approaches to history particularly those underpinned by a community development model.

Community research approaches

The concept of community development identifies benefit through strengthening community ties and networks. The concept of community development is inherently local and often engages participatory research methods where there is close collaboration between the researcher(s) and participants.

The potential success of community based research lies in the fact that it is community driven and feedback mechanisms are built into the research process.

As Cornwall and Jewkes point out, participatory research contrasts with conventional research which '...tends to generate “knowledge for understanding” while most participatory research focuses on “knowledge for action”'. As these authors sum up: The key difference

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39 My prior research at undergraduate and post-graduate level has included histories of Polynesia with an ethnographic component: Moemoea: The Polynesian dream: An ethnographic account of dreams in culture, MA, University of Melbourne, 1987; The powerful ritual of human sacrifice in Tahiti 1797-1815, B.A. (Hons), University of Melbourne, 1984.

40 This included work in the fields of law and order, arts, heritage management and work for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority on sacred sites. For some examples of this work see S. O’Neill and J. Bathgate, Policing strategies in Aboriginal and non-English speaking background communities in the Northern Territory: A community relations project, Northern Territory Police, Executive Summary and Final Report, 1993; Bathgate, J. ‘Aboriginal art and craft organisations in the Northern Territory. An overview of the industry and its training needs’. Arts Training Australia and Arts Training NT, 1994; Parsons, G, Bathgate, J and Hodge, D, You don’t get degrees in Weetbix boxes. True stories of Aboriginal people in tertiary education and beyond, NT Department of Education, 1994; Bathgate and Lewis, Culture contact; Malin, M and Bathgate J., 'Getting a good education: Indigenous families talk about how it is going for their children at Kormilda College'. Commissioned research report submitted to Kormilda College, Darwin, April 2002; S. Dugdale in association with J. Bathgate. Interpretive Masterplan, Alice Springs Telegraph Station for Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works on behalf of the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission, Alice Springs, November 2001.

41 For general references to social research models see G. Turrell, B. Oldenburg, I. McGuffog, R. Dent Socioeconomic determinants of health: towards a national research program and a policy and intervention agenda, Queensland University of Technology, School of Public Health, Ausinfo, Canberra, 1999, p.70.

42 The authors define participatory research as emphasising ‘...a ‘bottom-up’ approach with a focus on locally defined priorities and local perspectives.’ Andrea Cornwall and Rachel Jewkes, 'What is participatory research?', Soc. Sci. Med. vol. 41, no. 12, 1995, p.1667.
between participatory and other research methodologies lies in the location of power in the various stages of the research process. The practice of participatory research raises personal, political and professional challenges that go beyond the bounds of the production of information.  

43 Cornwall and Jewkes, 'What is participatory research?', pp.1667-1668. As the authors point out, participatory research relies on local knowledge. 'It is about developing a realization that local people are knowledgeable and that they, together with researchers, can work towards analyses and solutions. It involves recognising the rights of those whom research concerns, enabling people to set their own agendas for research and development and so giving them ownership over the process.' pp.1674.


45 For discussion of oral history and community development model see Jane Bathgate and Joanna Barrkman, 'Mapping memories and talking banners in Pine Creek: a community cultural development project incorporating oral history and banner making', Oral History Association of Australia Journal, no. 20, 1998, p.44. Community writing and community theatre have drawn on oral history, at times, for their creative content. See Annie Bolitho and Mary Hutchison, Out of the ordinary: innovative ways of bringing communities, their stories and audiences to light, Canberra Stories Group, Canberra, 1998; Peter Read, Returning to nothing: the meaning of lost places, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp.98-99.


Local sources and oral history

What participatory research and community cultural development models identify is the link between the locally based research and its capacity for community empowerment. The concept of 'local' offers a counterpoint to a focus on the 'big picture'. Local history by dint of its scale is a potential ally in community development and community empowerment.

Oral history has had a role in the community development research process. It is one method of linking community members directly into the research process and outcomes. During the life of this thesis oral history was incorporated into a community cultural development project in Pine Creek (See Chapter four).

As Paul Thompson has pointed out, oral history has done much to encourage self-inquiry: 'The co-operative nature of the oral history approach has led to a radical questioning of the fundamental relationship between history and the community. Historical information need not be taken away from the community for interpretation and presentation by the professional historian. Through oral history the community can, and should, be given the confidence to write its own history'.

43 Cornwall and Jewkes, 'What is participatory research?', pp.1667-1668. As the authors point out, participatory research relies on local knowledge. 'It is about developing a realization that local people are knowledgeable and that they, together with researchers, can work towards analyses and solutions. It involves recognising the rights of those whom research concerns, enabling people to set their own agendas for research and development and so giving them ownership over the process.' pp.1674.
Oral history in combination with place studies has also produced strong community based studies. For instance, Margaret Somerville's history of an Indigenous mission with four Indigenous women who had lived there was also entwined with ‘...an interactive process rather than a separation’ where she was both a listener and recorder of their stories and in negotiation with the women about how the information should be presented.47

Oral history interviews enabled me to address gaps in my historical knowledge and the flexibility to balance particular categories such as culture, gender and age through interviewing men and women, adults and children and people of Indigenous, Chinese and European descent. The flexibility of interviews contrasted with the way in which the sedentary archival record displayed these categories. This approach gave me flexibility in exploring the way oral history could fruitfully dovetail with other methodologies such as community art, site visitation and mapping and allowed me to explore during interviews various subjects' histories of movement in the area and the public history of Pine Creek. Finally I used oral history as part of a community development process to return history to that community. I explore the above uses of oral history in Chapter four.

**Public history and community**

Socially engaged history also has links to public history insofar as it engages with historical representation in the public (community) domain.48 Tom Griffiths points out that:

> History can take many forms. It can be constructed at the dinner table, over the back fence, in parliament, in the streets, and not just in the tutorial room, or at the scholar's desk. It can be represented through museums, historical societies, universities, books, films, recordings, monuments, re-enactments, commemorations, conversations, collections, and historic sites and places. History is

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48 For elaboration on public history as a discipline and the way in which public history is linked to 'focussed local studies' see Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton, Editorial, 'Going public', *Public History Review*, vol. 8, 2000, pp.5-6; See also Ann Curthoys and Paula Hamilton, 'What makes history public' in *Public history review*, vol 1, 1992, p.8.
the fruit of both popular and learned understandings, both amateur
and professional socialisation. 49

This includes the involvement of communities in identifying and maintaining heritage sites. The significance of local identification and input into the management of heritage places, including sacred and historic sites, has been a critical part of promoting heritage and history in the community and in promoting the care of both sacred and secular sites by the community. 50

I discuss heritage in more detail in Chapter three. In the following section I expand on the various discourses which, in addition to Buddhist philosophy, inform this thesis. These discourses include theoretical traditions within and outside the discipline of history including geography and post-modernism, local history, place studies and oral history. Aspects of feminism are also embedded in this discussion.

DISCOURSE AND TRADITION

Geography, local history and place

Definitions

'Place', 'space' and 'locality' are geographical terms that assist in writing about the local, whether it be local places or local history. It is helpful to unpack their meaning as the subject of much of this thesis concerns the history of a local area.

Studies of place or locality cannot be undertaken without reference to space. In a specific geographic sense 'place' is situated within space. The term 'place' is etymologically linked to the term 'local'. 51 Lucy Lippard writes 'Space defines landscape, where space combined with memory defines place.' 52 For geographers the study of space has been grounded in the ideological construction of landscape. 53 Alan Baker, marrying postmodernism with the

51 The shorter Oxford English dictionary on historical principles, p.1229.
52 Lippard, The lure of the local, p.612; Hayden, The power of place, p.47.
53 Kay Anderson writes that '...landscapes are linked in circular relation to ideological formations, systems of power, and sets of social relations.' Kay J. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown. Racial discourse in Canada, 1875-1980, McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston, 1991, p.28. See also Brian S. Osborne, 'Constructing landscapes of power: the George Etienne Cartier monument,
concerns of cultural geography, defines landscape as "...a social construction, both intentionally and unintentionally."\(^{54}\)

In this thesis I use the term 'country' generally to describe people's relationship with the land and the term 'landscape' to describe people's description of the land. The term 'landscape' in its literal usage describes what appears on the 'scape' or surface of the land. The term 'country' is often used by Indigenous people in reference to their homelands and their relationship to that land.\(^{55}\) As Kathleen Devereaux, a Mak Mak Marranunggu woman described: 'Our life is our land' in relation to '... country from the heart.'\(^{56}\) When I asked Lulu Martin, a Wagiman woman, what she thought of when I mentioned the word history – she replied 'country' and used the term 'country' to greet her land, to mourn her previous absence from her land and to say goodbye when she left it.\(^{57}\)

**Mapping motifs**

One way of representing country and landscape is through maps. Hugh Brody's book *Maps and Dreams* documents Native Canadian representations of hunting areas in their locality via mapping. These maps turn out to be 'map biographies' which show land use over individual lives. Brody found that Native Canadians used (western) maps for their own cultural purpose.\(^{58}\)

Maps are symbolic forms of representation.\(^{59}\) As Lucy Lippard writes: 'A map is a composite of places, and like a place, it hides as much as it reveals.'\(^{60}\) Denis Woods has

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\(^{56}\) Kathleen Devereaux, 'Looking at country from the heart' in Rose and Clarke (eds), *Tracking knowledge*, p.71, see also p.68, p.69.

\(^{57}\) See Chapter Four.


pointed out that 'The maps made by members of less alienated societies are different from ours.'...Often the process is more important than the product.\textsuperscript{61}

The history of cartography has been associated with colonisation because of the way maps symbolically represent appropriation of country including re-naming Indigenous places. Derek Gregory argues that '...it is possible...' to use maps as a way of knowing in which '...conventional cartographic discourse...' can '...be turned against itself...' where the mapping metaphor can be used '...ironically or parodically...'.\textsuperscript{62} As he points out '...geography (like cartography) has always been a thoroughly practical and deeply politicised discourse, and it continues to be marked by its origins.\textsuperscript{63}

Mapping embraces not only formal printed maps such as street maps or cartographic maps but also 'cognitive mapping' which has displayed some of the features that Gregory describes. Cognitive mapping had its origins in the 1970s and in later decades it has been harnessed in social/conservation movements. \textit{Common Ground} established in 1983 in England combined the preservation of landscape with the 'mapping' of the significant social values associated with place and the natural environment thus incorporating the relationship of people to place.\textsuperscript{64}

Dolores Hayden explored this form of mapping in an urban setting in her work as an architect and historian as part of a process to '... find out what residents of a city think about the meaning of urban history in their lives and in the places they go'.\textsuperscript{65}

Mapping has become associated with compiling inventories of associations with place through a process of so-called 'cultural mapping'. In the context of the heritage movement Damien Stevens defines this as '...a process to identify and record the cultural resources of a community or region'.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{60} Lippard, \textit{The lure of the local}, p.82.
\textsuperscript{61} Woods with Fels, \textit{The power of maps}, pp.40-41.
\textsuperscript{62} Derek Gregory, \textit{Geographical imaginations}, Blackwell, Cambridge USA, 1994, p.7. He writes: 'Maps should be critically studied and judged in the same way as literary verbal sources and documents by historians and other scholars. While literary documents use words and phrases in order to promote ideas, or to influence beliefs, maps are designed to do just the same, but using graphic figures instead of words.'
\textsuperscript{63} Gregory, \textit{Geographical imaginations}, p.8.
\textsuperscript{64} Hayden, \textit{The power of place}, p.63, p.229.
\textsuperscript{65} Hayden, \textit{The power of place}, p.229.
While the origins of cognitive and cartographic maps differ, both forms of mapping literally and figuratively allow one to look at history and memory in another way. In Chapter four I examine these various mapping methodologies as a way of 'mapping' other kinds of histories such as the history of travel and the remembrance of places. Maps have a natural link to oral history as a prompt for memory or as creations of memory, such as mud maps.67

Defining Place, Place Studies

The fluid definitions of the term 'place', its layered meanings and qualitative associations expand its definition beyond its traditional geographic meaning and thereby expands the possibilities of local history to encompass a variety of ways of looking at locality. As discussed above one of the aspects of place I explored was the affective associations of place as in 'sense of place'. Dolores Hayden observes that the term 'Place carries the resonance of homestead, location, and open space in the city as well as a position in a social hierarchy.'68 Stephen Mueke, Kim Benterrak and Paddy Roe note that '...the study of specific, local places puts things more on the scale of everyday living.'69 The focus of these writers on place fits within the genre of Place Studies.

Place Studies have emerged as part of a cross-disciplinary inquiry embracing cultural geography and landscape, architecture and post-modernism and anthropology, history, ecology and heritage. The study of place has consequently become an interdisciplinary field.70 Historian Peter Read specifically defines the studies of place as studies of belonging. As he points out: 'Studies of belonging are beginning to replace the sociological obsession of the century's middle decades about the nature of Australian identity.'71

67 Mud maps are hand drawn maps from memory usually of a local area.
68 Hayden, The power of place, p.16.
69 Benterrak (et al), Reading the country, p.13.
71 Peter Read, 'Leaving home', p.36.
In earlier work Read and anthropologist Deborah Rose looked jointly at what they call '...life sites: the places - real and imagined, present or absent, living or destroyed - in which and through which we encounter ourselves and each other, and make manifest the meaning of our lives.' 72 Read argues we need to ask '...why and how [do] we form attachments to certain areas of country...,'73

More recently Read has looked at contested places of ownership at sites where new Australians have evolved attachments to Indigenous lands.74 He finds that non-Indigenous Australians have, for the most part, a keen sense of personal belonging. However he signals that a true sense of belonging for non-Indigenous Australians rests upon their acknowledging surviving Indigenous custodianship. This is, as he points out, a journey that has not yet concluded.75

The values associated with different sites or places in the landscape in the Northern Territory also reflect contested values between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.76 Author and artist Kim Mahood reflects on the conundrum of 'white' attachments to Central Australia: 'Many of the whites who live here struggle to articulate an attachment over which they have no control. They leave and return, resentfully, full of anger and indigestible griefs.'77 Some of these contested values are explored in Chapter two through perceptions of country and landscape and in Chapter three through public history.

**Place and locality**

The study of landscape and place is entwined with the local.78 In a geographical sense local history can be conceived of as a component of regional history. Regions tend to cover large-

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73 Peter Read, 'The look of the rocks and the grass and the hills. A rural life site on the south coast of New South Wales' in *Voices*, vol. 2, no. 2, Winter 1992, p.38, see also p. 47.


scale areas while local areas are smaller in scale. Traditionally regional histories have pertained to histories of states or Territories or large geological boundaries. Local histories have pertained to shires, districts, towns and/or smaller geographic areas. In both cases artificial or natural boundaries - pastoral, local government, rivers, ranges and so forth - represent the geographic limits of the area thus containing the historical inquiry. But as the geographer David Meinig observes, the problem with looking at a local scale is '...that there is no end of detail to analyse.' During the course of this thesis I was at pains sorting through the meaning of miniscule details. Depending on the scale of their inquiry all historians have to deal with this issue of 'particularism'. Within the limits of inquiry oral history proved a particularly helpful ally in discerning particular aspects of local history as well as being a flexible research tool.

Oral history

Because of the centrality of oral history in this thesis it is worth canvassing the advantages of oral history as a tool as well as its limitations. I would argue, like Paula Hamilton, for the fundamental 'interdependence between memory and history'.

Paula Hamilton writes: 'For many years too, oral history claimed to be inherently radical - recovering the voice of those previously 'hidden from history'. Passerini calls this naive.

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79 Reginald Berry and James Acheson (eds), *Regionalism and national identity*, Association for Canadian studies in Australia and New Zealand, Christchurch, 1985, ix.
80 Two examples are Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1970 and Bill Gammage, *Narrandera Shire*, Narrandera Shire Council, NSW, 1986; Berry and Acheson, *Regionalism and national identity*, p.142. The difference between local and regional histories can sometimes be hard to determine. For instance, the Victoria River District was an administrative region that encompassed the Victoria River catchment area. When does a district become a region?
81 Meinig, 'An appreciation', p.204.
82 As Adrian Jones has pointed out 'History's resort to new rhetorical ways has created a paradox. The new ways have resurrected old scourges of history: overspecialization and/or gullibility. Historians often read too much about too little (particularism in sources mined or themes traversed) or read too much into too little (untested presumptions of coherence and of power in sources read or the history written).' Adrian Jones, 'Word and deed: why a post-poststructural history is needed, and how might it look' in *The Historical Journal*, vol 43, 2 June 2000, pp.520-521; Paul Bourke, 'Revisiting Australian intellectual history: from quest for authority in Eastern Australia to 1996' in *Australian Cultural History*, 1997/98, p.6.
claim 'almost derisory' in the light of recent events in Europe which highlight the greater political significance of 'distorted' memories.\textsuperscript{84}

One of the critical hallmarks of oral history is its foundation in the interview process. As Michael Frisch asks 'Who, really, is the author of an oral history...?'\textsuperscript{85} Frisch like other historians insists on the application of rigor in the use of oral history which, he says: '

...functions as a source of historical information and insights, to be used, in traditional ways, in the formulation of historical generalisations and narratives.'\textsuperscript{86} It is clear that rigor and 'cross-examination' are necessary to counteract the pitfalls of memory but oral history also needs to be interrogated on its own terms based on the unique qualities of memory.

Passerini and Allesandro Portelli have articulated the unique nature of oral history, which is less about factual statements than an expression of culture, memory, ideology and 'subconscious desires'. Passerini argues that the 'irrelevancies and discrepancies' of memory reflect a particular cultural and psychological reality.\textsuperscript{87} As Portelli points out - factually wrong statements can be psychologically true. As he sums up: 'The first thing that makes oral history different, therefore, is that it tells us less about events than about their meaning.'\textsuperscript{88} As Michael Frisch sums up:

...oral history emerges a powerful tool for discovering, exploring and evaluating the nature of the process of historical memory - how people make sense of the past, how they connect individual experience and its social context, how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and world around them.\textsuperscript{89}


\textsuperscript{85} Michael Frisch, \textit{A shared authority. Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history}, State University of New York, Albany, 1990, xx - see also xxxi , p.60.

\textsuperscript{86} Frisch, \textit{A shared authority}, p.9. Ronald Grele, Luisa Passerini and Alessandro Portelli have argued for rigor also in terms of close theoretical scrutiny, and ideology. See also the following articles in Perks and Thomson (eds): Ronald J. Grele, 'Movement without aim: methodological and theoretical problems in oral history', pp.40-41, pp48-49; Luisa Passerini, 'Work ideology and consensus under Italian fascism', pp.53-62; Alessandro Portelli, 'What makes oral history different', pp.63-74.

\textsuperscript{87} Passerini, 'Work ideology', p.54, p.60.

\textsuperscript{88} Portelli, 'What makes oral history different', p.67, p.68.
Histories of Difference

The application of oral history and socialist, feminist and other cultural ideologies has redressed the traditional focus of history on the rich and powerful. It has also shown how history has privileged certain groups over others. In the process new fields of interdisciplinary studies have been created. Tom Griffiths notes that in Australia, social history together with indigenous history over the last forty years has challenged 'dominating imperial narratives'.

The literature on place and space, while once the sole province of geographers, has burgeoned in recent years as part of a general shift within a variety of disciplines including literature, anthropology and history in analytic perspective which can be traced to a self-critique within disciplines of their core assumptions. Post-modernism has been critical in this process in challenging fundamental assumptions about 'authoritative and essentialist truths' in academic discourse including the veracity of historicism in which history is presented as a coherent seamless interpretation of the past and of deconstructing categories in order to articulate 'difference' that acknowledges multiplicity. Foucault's postmodern history asks questions not about stasis or stability but, rather, about 'discontinuity-threshold, rupture, break, mutation, transformation.'

De-construction has also been accompanied by a 'general multilayering of discourse' which as Paul Bourke writes 'is related to a scaling down of the unit of study.' Post-modernism has, through the study of space or critical geography, proffered a model which in

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89 Frisch, A shared authority, p.189.
90 Tom Griffiths, 'Social history and deep time', p.15.
91 Rose and Clarke (eds), Tracking knowledge, viii.
93 Foucault, The archaeology of knowledge, p.5.
94 He refers in particular to historians of gender and their studies of women in the public sphere which includes referencing geographical and cultural space. Bourke, 'Revisiting Australian Intellectual History', p.3.
some aspects seeks ways around the fixedness of historicism and causality by looking at
space and geography and at the same time finds the concept of 'local' useful. 95

Les Rowntree has pointed out that the notion of cultural landscape as integral to 'new'
cultural geography '...expresses and captures the tensions of socially constructed space, it is
a useful tool for articulating issues of structure and agency...' including 'contemporary
social issues of gender ethnicity, and class.' 96 There is a codicil however on how effectively
geography deals with bias. As Derek Gregory points out, if geography '...dispenses with the
privileges traditionally accorded to "History," it nonetheless requires a scrupulous attention
to the junctures and fissures between many different histories: a multileveled dialogue
between past and present conducted as a history (or an historical geography) of the present. 97

While historians have tended to respond ambivalently to the more abstract aspects of post-
modernism, at the very least these discourses have led to a closer critique and scrutiny
among historians of the theoretical underpinnings of their discipline. Post-modernism and
other disciplines that share the task of interrogating their own categories and assumptions of
inquiry including post-colonialism, feminism and socialism have transformed the academic
landscape because they ask 'who is looking' in order to answer questions about bias and
privilege. 98 It is this critique of one's discipline that informs my own work and reframes the
questions that I ask.

In this scenario the history of Pine Creek is about de-centering dominant discourses. It is no
longer simply the history of the apparently dominant culture, in this case mining and

95 Edward Soja, Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory, 1989,
p.15; Doreen Massey. Space, place and gender, Polity press, Cambridge, 1994; Hayden, The power of
place, xi, xii; Paul Carter, The road to Botany Bay, Faber and Faber, London, 1987, p.349.
96 Rowntree, 'The landscape', p.5.
97 Gregory, Geographical imaginations, p.416, see also p.4, p.99; See also Anne Godlewska and Neil
Smith (eds), Geography and empire, The Institute of British Geographers Special Publication Series
98 In Creating a nation the authors state that they '...acknowledge the complexity of discussing the
category 'women'... We resist, however, the more radical post-structuralist conclusions that there are
no real women or that their reality cannot be known or is of little interest.' Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn
Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quarty, Creating a nation. Ringwood, McPhee Gribble, Victoria, 1994,
pp.3-4; Adrian Jones, 'Word and Deed', pp.520-521, p.536; Angelika Bammer, Displacements.
Cultural identities in question, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994, xii,
xiii; Patricia Nelson Limerick, 'Place, past, perspective' in History News, Winter 1996, p.9, p.13. See
also Bourke, 'Revisiting Australian intellectual history', pp.3-4; Anna Banks and Stephen P. Banks
(eds), Fiction and social research: by ice or fire, Altamura press, California, 1998, p.14; Bain Atwood,
Introduction in Bain Attwood, and John Arnold (eds), 'Power, Knowledge and Aborigines' in Special
European settlement, but about historiography and critiquing these very categories. It is about looking at multiple social histories in the area. My focus on the three primary cultures associated with the history of Pine Creek (Indigenous, Chinese and European) is about acknowledging the history of cultural pluralism but it is also a discursive antidote to cultural exclusivity where geographic space is a delineator and container of cultural diversity.

While the notion of having a complete record has been shown to be a myth, within the limits of historical inquiry there is scope to balance the record. In the absence of words from 'hidden' or marginalised groups within the public record other markers of history can be pursued and the gaps and the silences articulated.

The notion of mining as central to the history of Pine Creek is potentially upended in light of other non-developmental axes of power, for instance the impact of inter-cultural relationships on society and the significant role of barter in the local economy. If we ask about 'sense of place' in Pine Creek we must equally ask about a sense of displacement and so forth.\(^9\) Returning to my earlier concept of Engaged History the challenge is also how theory and discourses are applied in practice.

**Chapter summaries**

Each chapter in this thesis is self-contained and yet reflects various aspects of a journey of inquiry that is multifaceted. Each chapter has within it a whole story about one particular aspect of history. Although each chapter is different from the preceding one, what they share is an in-depth inquiry into a particular aspect of history. Within each chapter I want to convey a perspective that is not lost by looking at the part or losing the detail by looking at the whole. In other words each chapter is a complete story yet it is part of a whole story outlined in the thesis that is about plumbing the depths of my praxis through the instrument of local history.

The recurring theme that I explore in each chapter is essentially about perception and who is looking whether it be in regard to written histories (Chapter one), the physical environment (Chapter two), politics and heritage (Chapter three), community and memory (Chapter four),

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mobility and settlement (Chapter five) or forgetting (Chapter six). Embedded in this exploration of perception is a focus on Indigenous, European and Chinese histories and associations with the area.

I begin each chapter with a picture of an applique banner created during the 'Talking Banners' project. This project was part of a process of returning history to the community during the course of thesis research. Each banner depicts a central theme of the respective chapter it introduces. I begin the text with a Buddhist quote which is a touchstone for the Buddhist philosophy that flows beneath this thesis.

Each chapter contains an exploration of aspects of history that interest and expand my perspective whether it is about understanding the historiography of local and regional history (Chapter one), the environmental history and sense of place (Chapter two), public history (Chapter three), community history (Chapter four), maps and movement (Chapter five) and the gaps in my knowledge about the history of the area (Chapter six). All these chapters express different but interconnected themes which are ultimately about uncovering the nature and meaning of history.
CHAPTER ONE

HISTORIES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY
Figure 5: Pine Creek local industries banner.
CHAPTER ONE
HISTORIES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

As much as our intention is limited, the result will be limited.
If we have a vast intention, no one can prevent its fulfillment
because of the unpreventable strength of natural mind.

Thinley Norbu

In this chapter I was faced with the gap between my intention, to review what had been
written about the history of the Pine Creek area - within the framework of 'equanimity', that
is, to not privilege any particular source - and the pragmatic limitations that confine any
historical research. The body of evidence, historical or otherwise, is continually being added
to and conceptual inquiry is by its nature unceasing. In this sense historical inquiry is
potentially limitless.

As part of my focus on local history I inundated myself with the historical minutiae of daily
life in Pine Creek, from perusing a public record on algae in the town water tank to visiting a
cave above the town, in the company of a local resident, where European and Indigenous
people had camped. There was, potentially, a vastness to my inquiry embedded in the detail
and plethora of sources I trawled through: in oral histories, narrative accounts, academic and
non-academic histories, land claim hearings, public records, maps and newspaper accounts.
These sources covered a period ranging from the 1860s when exploration first began in the
Pine Creek area to the 1990s the decade in which I undertook most of my research.

This chapter is about productively defining the boundaries of this inquiry through describing
and discussing the sources that inform Pine Creek's history. It is also an introduction and
orientation to aspects of the general history of Pine Creek, through an examination of

1 Thinley Norbu, White sail. Crossing the waves of ocean mind to the serene continent of triple gems, Boston, Shambhala, 1992, p. 119.
2 I have taken the date 1860 because it is the decade in which the first general exploration of the Pine Creek area takes place. In 1861 the Scotsman John McDouall Stuart and his party passed to the north of Pine Creek. J. Macdonald Holmes, Australia's open north. A study of Northern Australia bearing on the urgency of the times, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1966. I have chosen to focus on public records rather than newspaper accounts. This was based largely on the constraints of time. I selected
Indigenous, European and Chinese histories. This general history informs my overall discussion on historiography as well as providing background information for the discussion of other aspects of history elsewhere in this thesis.

For reasons of time and space I have chosen mainly to focus on the early period of settlement, including the early gold mining period, as part of my review of the general history of the area. This period marks the beginning of culture contact between Indigenous, European and Chinese peoples in the area. Gold mining was the initial trigger to colonisation and settlement of the area and led to the first major influx of outsiders into the region. I focus briefly on the World War Two period because, like the early gold rushes, it signals a period of marked demographic change. Much of the secondary source material I refer to derives from the 1980s, the period in which most of the local and regional history pertaining to the Pine Creek area was written.

Scale

By looking at a relatively small area like Pine Creek I have consciously focussed on a micro-rather than a macro - history or a local rather than regional history. There is, however, an obvious interrelationship between the micro and macro scales. As Susan Lawrence has written '...there is a growing awareness that large and small scales of history are interconnected and that major changes in society are grounded in smaller changes made in daily life'.

The larger trends and influences that impinge upon the history of Pine Creek include the broader social, political and economic context of Australian history and global history. These include the history of colonisation, migration, mining, communication, cultural ideologies and defence. In this sense the history of Pine Creek is of one country within myriad countries in Australia with its own distinct history as well as a history shared with other localities in Australia and other 'new world' countries such as the Americas and Canada.


4 There is a general debate about how much Northern Territory history is distinctive or shared compared with other parts of Australia. See Bill Wilson, *A force apart? A history of the Northern Territory Police Force 1870-1926*, PhD thesis, NTU, Darwin, 2000, p.346.
Scope

*A confluence of many histories*

The history of the Pine Creek area is a confluence of many histories. It is a history of colonisation and settlement, an economic history, a social history, a gendered history; a history of mining and an environmental history; it is a cultural history and an inter-cultural history. It is a history of impact, movement and change – an unceasing, fluctuating discourse comprised of many lives and many deaths.

While I cannot do justice to the complexity of these various and interconnected histories in this chapter I am aware of the pitfalls of generalisation and that every thematic choice I have made in this chapter, what I have included or excluded, is about selectivity and subjectivity. My response is that generalisation can potentially encompass and display the richness inherent in diverse and multiple histories. Rather than narrowing the focus, an overview of historical processes invites multiple thematic inquiries and various footnotes highlight particular history and highlight the scope for further historical inquiry.

Cultural themes and cultural headings

History has traditionally been written from the viewpoint of the dominant culture, in this case by Europeans who perceive the world through their eyes whether it was of other Europeans or other cultures. There is an obvious disjunction between the exclusive European historic record and the culturally plural past. Historically, Indigenous, European and Chinese people have comprised the three main cultural groups who have lived in and/or travelled through the Pine Creek area. As part of a theoretical offering in 'equanimity' I want to engage in a pluralism that articulates the diversity of social and, in this case, cultural histories of the area.

This diversity includes acknowledging how cultures maintain their cultural cohesion and separateness from other cultures and yet engage in inter-relationship with all cultures in varying degrees. This cultural pluralism is part of the history of the Top End. As Julia Martinez has noted, the ideology of White Australia masked an opposing ideology of a Plural Australia which was reflected in the multi-ethnic city of Darwin: 'Australia's past can be constructed as ethnically diverse, and it is possible to formulate that narrative to highlight a more inclusive and less exclusive national past.'5 Darrell Lewis noted that in the historic photographic record of the Victoria River District, 'In virtually every aspect of local life,

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Aborigines and non-Aborigines (whites, Chinese and others) are shown together. This coexistence does not of course necessarily mean equality but it does reflect how proximity necessitated the establishment of relationships between cultures.

**Presenting diverse histories**

In order to write about themes in Indigenous, European and Chinese histories and Northern Territory regional history in general I have not only moved between historiography and history but very different aspects and scales of history, for instance from maps to macroeconomics and questions of identity. This diversity of themes reflects the subjects I canvass. For instance the subjects I examine pertaining to Indigenous, European and Chinese history in this chapter are unique to the extent that they reflect very different issues of historiography within these specific cultural histories.

I have also been selective in my choice of themes in order to fill in the gaps in my historical knowledge based on what has been written. For instance I spend more time discussing Indigenous languages and Chinese dialects than I do European languages. Far more is known about European settlers than Chinese settlers or Indigenous inhabitants in the broader context of Australian history. I am well aware that the study of either Indigenous, European or Chinese histories in the Pine Creek area could be a thesis in itself. My exploration of specific themes also allows me to confine my discussion to one chapter.

I begin the main part of this chapter with an examination of Northern Territory historiography as it pertains to the Pine Creek area followed by an exploration of specific themes within the rubric of Indigenous, European and Chinese histories and concluding with a brief examination of the World War Two period. The use of the terms Indigenous, European and Chinese histories as main headings in this chapter are helpful ordering categories for the information I present and in this respect are a jumping off point for examining cultural histories and issues coincident with, but not always exclusive to, culture.

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HISTORIOGRAPHY AND NORTHERN TERRITORY HISTORY

What is Northern Territory history?

Gregarious histories

The histories that have been written about Pine Creek reflect the general terrain of Northern Territory writings which comprises a diverse and disparate collection of sources generated by individuals working independently or through institutions. To paraphrase Thinley Norbu the intentions of all these categories of historical writings have often been vastly different and to this extent there have been limitations on coherently defining the subject of regional history in the Northern Territory.  

Local historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, linguists, journalists, public servants along with academic historians have been active in writing the history of the region. The diverse backgrounds of these writers reflect the gregarious origins of history writing in general and the political landscape in the Northern Territory. The varying quality of these writings partly reflects individual differences and experience in writing, the distinction between amateur and academic writing and differences in academic orientation such as anthropologists and archaeologists working outside their areas of traditional expertise, for instance researching archival history.

In respect of the political landscape institutions such as the Northern Land Council and the National Trust (Northern Territory) have generated the collection of histories along cultural lines in which history has tended to be written on behalf of Indigenous or settler interests respectively. The establishment of Kakadu National Park has established a regional research base in western Arnhem Land which has focussed on the Indigenous history of this area with occasional references to nearby Pine Creek, as I have discussed in Chapter three. In contrast the establishment of the National Trust (NT) has generated a focus on the settlement history of the Northern Territory including mining areas and towns.  

The different strands of historical writing have enriched Northern Territory history but as a body of work has not necessarily created a base for generating critical discourses about history. While one cannot generalise, history has tended to be employed as a tool of personal

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7 See opening quote in this chapter - footnote 1.
8 Robert Levitus, Everybody bin all day work, A report to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife service on the social history of the Alligator Rivers Region of the Northern Territory, 1869-1973, Australian Institute of Indigenous Studies, Canberra, 1982; Pearce, vol. 1.
and political interest and this has led to an oversimplification at times of what constitutes history. For instance there has been a heavy and uncritical reliance on archival sources and a tendency to ascribe value to recording the past without being cognisant of the limitations and selectivity not only of the sources but ones own viewpoint.9

The significance of Indigenous history in the Northern Territory has underscored the importance of oral history sources for writing Indigenous histories and yet oral sources like archival sources have inherent biases.10 While the archival record is often revealing on matters of policy and European perceptions this record also has a tendency to omit the detail of daily life and with respect to Indigenous people may even omit their presence.11

As Richard Baker has pointed out 'Since European accounts of the past are predominantly written and Aboriginal ones are mostly oral, the differences between these two sources has obvious ramifications for research on contact between Aboriginal people and Europeans.' 12

Francesca Merlan’s detailed study of Indigenous connections to places in and around the town of Katherine and Indigenous peoples' relationships with non-Indigenous peoples in the town revealed that the gap in information about Indigenous presence in the town was not only archivally based – there were also gaps in European memory. She noted that Europeans were more present in Indigenous accounts of place than Indigenous people were in European accounts of place.13 Merlan argued that to gain an understanding of Indigenous social experience ‘... we must find the ways in which the two accounts are a joint product, as well

9 Examples of this tendency are evident when people write history on the subject of their particular interest but rely uncritically on archival and oral sources to produce unexplicated accounts of history eg Winsome Maff’s, Katherine’s no lady, n.d and Ellen Kettle’s, Health services in the Northern Territory, 1991 accounts of local history and nursing respectively. Some heritage assessments in the 1980s and 1990s also contain elements of this didactic approach to history. For instance, Scott Mitchell’s work on historic Chinese mining sites in the Pine Creek District, A management plan for historic Chinese mining sites in the Pine Creek District, 1995 draws heavily on the work of Timothy Jones, The Chinese in the Northern Territory, 1990. Timothy Jones’ account of mining and Chinese history in turn suffers from a lack of historiography particularly in respect of his uncritical, reliance on archival accounts.

10 For example of anthropologists’ use of archival sources see Levitus, Everybody and Francesca Merlan, Caging the rainbow: place, politics, and Aborigines in a North Australian town, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 1998.

11 As Dan Gillespie observed at Imarlkba, a former gold mining area to the north of Pine Creek that was opened up during the 1920s, the substantial documentary material ‘...makes almost no mention of Indigenous people during the site’s life except for one or two oblique references. This flies in the face of European and Indigenous oral evidence that Indigenous people were present throughout’. Dan Gillespie, Imarlkba. Historical archaeology and a fossicking economy site in the Top End of the Northern Territory, Masters of Letters, University of New England, 1985, p.27—see also p.33.

12 Richard Baker, Land is life: from bush to town. The story of the Yanyuwa people, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1999, p.27.

13 Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.56.
as the ways in which, at the same time, they are unequal in the manner and extent to which whites and blacks fit into each other's accounts.¹⁴

Notwithstanding the limited or absent historiography in many texts, and their varying quality, they all add to the body of knowledge that constitutes the subject of Northern Territory history. For instance, Timothy Jones' history on the Chinese in the Northern Territory bridges a gap in the history of Chinese Australians in the Top End. Barbara James' work on women in Northern Territory history has been critical in offering a more in-depth reading of women's place in Northern Territory history. Histories written by Indigenous people, such as Barbara Cummings, have been vital for filling in the gaps in public knowledge about the oppression of Indigenous people and have been an opportunity for reparations in the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships through acknowledgement of what happened in the past.¹⁵

Genres
These texts also reflect different genres in historical writing by dint of the various backgrounds of the writers. For instance Timothy Jones was a public servant in the Northern Territory government who had a personal interest in mining history. Barbara James was a journalist with a strong interest in women's history. Barbara Cummings had grown up in government homes as her mother had before her as a result of the welfare policies of the day. In some respects each of these works must be evaluated on their own terms as well as being situated within the general category of Northern Territory history and evaluated in respect of historiography.¹⁶ I explore other categories of narrative further on in this chapter.

Regional histories
Geographically, Pine Creek is a small area within the larger Top End region. The regional histories which provide background history most relevant to the area are those concerning the regions that abut or incorporate Pine Creek including western Arnhem Land - notably the Alligator Rivers/Kakadu region - and the Douglas/Daly River region. Less substantive

¹⁴ Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.56.
¹⁶ For further discussion see on in this Chapter and Chapter Three. Graeme Davison has looked at the different values, origins and categories of local history writing including pioneer, patriarchal, professional, preservationist and community history. Davison, The use and abuse of history, p.199.
historical work has been undertaken to-date on the latter region. What this has meant in terms of my thesis is a skewing of secondary sources towards Arnhem Land.17

The most substantial social history to-date has concerned the Alligator Rivers/Kakadu region. In 1982 anthropologist Robert Levitus on behalf of the then Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, undertook a social history of the region (1869-1973) which was completed a few years after the inception of Kakadu National Park. His report was significant for its focus on Indigenous histories, oral history and his concept of the local non-Indigenous economic activity in terms of a 'fossicking economy'.18 As he pointed out:

These people, who would have been marginal to economic life in other areas, were in the Alligator Rivers region principal economic actors for much of the time, and the activities they pursued amounted to what might aptly be labelled a "fossicking economy". This fragmented and shifting scene offered many opportunities for the participation of Aborigines.19

Levitus also raised interesting questions about the aim of and scope of social history in the region. He pointed out the complex nature of colonisation and the need "...to develop a broader and more integrated view of frontier society as it developed between the north-south line and western Arnhem Land. The focus of social history needs to be broad enough to deal with the intricacies of social and cultural relations, and to explain the social processes, that emerged."20

In the same year that Levitus's report was completed another significant collection of reports was finalised by historian Howard Pearce on behalf of the National Trust (NT). As part of its brief to document and preserve the material heritage of the Northern Territory the National

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17 Studies on the Daly River to date are marked by a focus on descriptive history with little or no reference to historiography, a reliance on archival texts and a focus on settler history. See Bob Alford, The Douglas/Daly Region. A History Overview from 1900... Part II. A Report to the National Trust (NT), Darwin, 1989; Peter Forrest, The spirit of the Daly. Daly River Community Development Association, Northern Territory, Australia, 1994. The exception to the above pattern is Michaela Richards', "An Australian frontier..." Aborigines and settlers at the Daly River 1912-1940" in Jane Gleeson and Michaela Richards, Mataranka and the Daly. Two studies in the history of settlement in the Northern Territory, ANU, NARU, Monograph, Darwin, 1985, pp.35-65. I have tried to balance the Arnhem Land focus in regional sources through utilising oral history sources from Wagiman people of the Upper Daly River region to the west of Pine Creek. Consequently I undertook more oral history interviews of Wagiman people than Jawoyn people (who are associated with the area north and east of Pine Creek).

18 Levitus, Everybody, p.7.

19 Levitus, Everybody, pp.7-8.

20 Levitus, Everybody, p.98.
Trust (NT) has, in the past, focussed specifically on the Pine Creek area. The town of Pine Creek has a number of historic buildings and the surrounding area contains numerous abandoned mining sites. In 1982 Howard Pearce produced a three volume work, entitled 'Pine Creek Heritage Scheme Report'. Pearce's *General History* (volume 1) is a conventional, albeit well researched history based largely on archival sources. It documents the general settlement (European and Chinese) and mining history of the district while documenting the general impact of the frontier on Indigenous culture.  

For the purposes of this thesis both Levitus's and Pearce's reports have been helpful in piecing together the general history of the Pine Creek area. I should add that no detailed post-contact Indigenous history or Chinese settlement history of the Pine Creek area has been undertaken to-date although general histories of the Northern Territory (NT) and of Chinese people in the NT have been written.  

**Establishing a discourse**

The academic discipline which underpins Northern Territory history is quite young - not more than 30 years old and has been inspired largely by the establishment of the tertiary studies sector in the Northern Territory although this sector comprises a relatively small number of academics (centred mostly in Darwin). This small research base in turn reflects the relatively small population of the NT compared with its size - although I note that there has also been significant interest from academics outside the Northern Territory in Northern Territory history.

The establishment of a Department of History and Department of Education through the Northern Territory University has provided a forum for historians, students and academics to discuss, write and publish history. Northern Territory journals including *Northern*  

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21 Pearce's *General history* (volume 1) and *Site report* (volume 3) provide the most useful historical information for the purposes of this review. Pearce, *vol. 1*; Howard Pearce, *Pine Creek Heritage Scheme Report*, archival photographs, Site plans, *vol. 2* and Site reports, site strategy, *vol. 3*. Pearce's *General History* (vol. 1), which runs to 150 pages, draws on substantive historical records including parliamentary papers, police journals, mineral leases, newspapers, maps and early accounts of the area, as well as more recent secondary sources. The site documentation, aside from archival sources, also draws on personal communication from locals, a number of whom are now deceased.

22 Powell, *Far country*; *Jones, The Chinese in the Northern Territory*.

23 See Chapter Three for further discussion of the role of various societies and institutions in this development.

"Perspective and the Journal of Northern Territory History have been important forums for these writings."

In order to establish the discipline of Northern Territory history there has been a concerted effort to establish a body of historical writings pertaining to the Northern Territory through the above publications and other sources. For instance the contributions in the *Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography* (NTDB) which historian David Carment and other editors have overseen has established a foundation or base of factual information on aspects of Northern Territory history through the narration of individual lives.

This focus on the factual aspects of history has not necessarily been congruent with theoretical engagements in what constitutes Northern Territory history. For instance the NTDB while attempting to bring together a body of historical information that fruitfully informs Northern Territory history has tended to focus mainly but not exclusively on European male lives.

One recent example of the conundrum facing historians in dealing with gaps in knowledge about Northern Territory history has been articulated by Bernie Brian. He believed that his PhD, a chronological history of the North Australian Workers' Union, was a necessary precursor to writing a more theoretical history on class formation and masculinity in the frontier because before he could make any theoretical conclusions on this subject he had to know what the working class and its organisations had done. In this thesis I have also had to undertake primary research in order to engage in discussions about historical discourses. For instance I have had to conjoin disparate sources, both primary and secondary, on Pine Creek's history in order to identify key historic themes. This has at times presented structural challenges in writing.

The exception to the factual trend in Northern Territory history writing has been the theoretical work of anthropologists and the work of some historians who have looked at

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25 *Journal of Northern Territory History* (Established 1990), *Northern Perspective*. (Established 1970). Note that the tertiary sector was established in the Top End with the founding of Darwin Community College and subsequently the Northern Territory University.


27 European men's lives dominate in the *NTDB* although there is a broader cross-section of cultural backgrounds with more recent volumes. See *NTDB*, vol. 1, 1990; *NTDB*, vol. 3, 1992 and *NTDB* vol. 3, 1996.

28 Brian, One big union, pp.9-10.
post-contact history and race-relations. Some of the most comprehensive post-contact histories of the region have been written by anthropologists as part of their broad interest in Indigenous culture. 29

**Anthropologists, regional and oral histories**

It is not surprising that anthropologically driven history has been so pre-eminent in the Northern Territory. Anthropologists, generally non-Indigenous, have been drawn to work in areas where there is significant Indigenous populations such as the NT. Research undertaken by linguists and archaeologists have also proved critical in providing local histories of Indigenous peoples in the region as researchers have sought to describe the history of the language and/or the culture they are studying. 30

**Land claims and oral histories**

The anthropologists' involvement in writing regional post-contact histories has been buttressed by the Indigenous land claim process which has required extensive documentation of the history of Indigenous connections to their country. This process formally began with the introduction of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*. The Northern Land Council has been the main institutional repository of these histories. The major land claims of particular relevance to the Pine Creek area are the Upper Daly River, Finniss River, Alligator Rivers Stage Two, Katherine and the Jawoyn (Gimbat Area) land claims. Anthropologists, notably Maddock, Chase, Meehan and Merlan have generated culture contact histories through their work on these land claims. The Finniss River land claim north-west of Pine Creek was notable for the involvement of two historians - Ann McGrath and Leonore Coltheart. Generally speaking historians have had comparatively little

29 For the work of anthropologists see Levitus, Everybody; Merlan, *Caging the rainbow*; Morphy, 'Colonialism', p. 226. With the possible exception of Tim Rowse, historians of the Northern Territory have been less theoretically oriented although some have looked closely at race relations and how these have been historically formed. See L.A. Riddett, *Kine, kin and country: the Victorian River District of the Northern Territory 1911-1966*, ANU, NARU, Monograph, 1990; Tim Rowse, *White flour, white power. From rations to citizenship in Central Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1998; Sue Harlow, *Tin gods. A social history of the men and women of Maranboy 1913-1962*, Historical Society of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 1997; Tony Austin and Suzanne Parry (eds), *Connection and disconnection: encounters between settlers and Indigenous people in the Northern Territory*, Northern Territory University Press, Darwin, 1998; Ann McGrath, *Born in the cattle*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987. This list is not comprehensive.

30 There have also been significant anthropological studies undertaken in respect of Indigenous people living in or near urban settlements such as Darwin and Katherine. Those studies encompassing the area immediately north of Pine Creek, including the contact history of the Alligator Rivers Region, have been undertaken by Keen, Alligator Rivers stage II land claim, 1980; Merlan, Jawoyn (Gimbat area) land claim, 1992 and Levitus Everybody, 1982. Kenneth Maddock, Report on field work in the Northern Territory and Merlan and Rumsey, The Jawoyn (Katherine area) land claim, 1982 have written about the Katherine area. For other local/regional studies see Basil Samson, *The camp at Wallaby Cross*, Deborah Rose, *Dingo makes us human*, 1992 and Dan Gillespie, Imarkba, 1985.
input into the land claim process until the advent of Native Title in the 1990s which saw Land Councils and government bodies recognising the need to employ historians as an essential part of Native Title research.\(^{31}\)

Indigenous oral history recordings generated through the land claim process can be read as expressions of empowerment because Indigenous people are in their own country articulating their connections to the land. In these recordings Indigenous people also identify the impact and legacy of colonisation at a local and regional level.\(^ {32}\)

In the 1980s and 1990s oral histories have formed the backbone of a number of significant North Australian studies which have sought to balance the historical record by providing indigenous perspectives of history. These include Peter Read and Jay Read's Indigenous accounts of Northern Territory history (1991), Ann McGrath's work on Indigenous people in the cattle industry (1987), Lyn Riddett's account of the Victoria River District history (1990) and Deborah Bird Rose's account of Yarralin peoples from the Victoria River District (1991). The Oral History Unit in the Northern Territory Archives Service has also begun to build a substantial collection of Indigenous oral histories. Indigenous writers/historians like Barbara Cummings (1990) and Sue Stanton (1993) are significant for their articulation of Indigenous history from an Indigenous perspective.\(^ {33}\)

**Social research**

In addition to the histories generated through academic journals and anthropologically generated histories connected with land claims there has been another body of work which has contributed to local and regional history - the social research generated through the North Australian Research Unit (NARU). NARU, which has recently ceased to exist, was based in Darwin (and attached to the Australian National University). It generated an

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32 As Ann McGrath has written 'Indigenous stories of colonisation '... form black models of colonialism.' Ann McGrath, 'We grew up the stations'. Europeans, Aborigines and Cattle in the Northern Territory, PhD Thesis, La Trobe University, 1983, p.35.

important body of work on North Australia at a local level. A major theme in the focus of this research was the articulation of Indigenous autonomy and self-determination defined originally by the founder of NARU, H.C. (Nugget) Coombs a former Commonwealth government bureaucrat, economist and advocate for the rights of Indigenous people.34

In the 1980s NARU published a number of research studies, written mostly by geographers, on the impact of local government and economic, political, environmental and social factors operating in respect of small towns and communities in the Northern Territory. Pine Creek, Katherine and Tennant Creek have all been subjects of these studies. The research on small towns and communities in North Australia in the 1980s was part of a wider research agenda in Australia that focussed on rural and remote communities including, as one writer put it, the 'Indigenous component in the Australian economy' and related studies on the impact of mining on Indigenous people. In the Kakadu area this has included social impact of uranium mining on the local Indigenous population.35

The NARU studies were revealing and assiduous in describing and analysing the local political climate and race relations as well as documenting Indigenous and settler history. While some of this history is derivative these studies were important for establishing parameters for basic over-view histories of small settlements in the Top End within the context of self-determination for Indigenous people.36

In 1986 a Canadian geographer Jackie Wolfe undertook a study of Pine Creek Aborigines and Town Camps to provide the Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association with information that would assist with future planning and improvements of living conditions in the two camps - Kybrook Farm and the Town Camp. Wolfe charted the history of Indigenous people's residence in the town, their employment status, living conditions and

their tribal affiliations by interviewing Indigenous residents. From an historical point of view she provided a history of Indigenous association with the town of Pine Creek.37

While historical overviews have been embedded in most of these studies two specifically historical studies were undertaken in 1985 by Gleeson and Richards respectively as a product of their undergraduate work. These studies were notable for their attempts to view Indigenous/non-Indigenous interactions and the impact of colonisation at a local level, in the Upper Roper River and Daly River districts respectively. Gleeson situated her history within the framework of the competition for land and resources between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and noted the complexity and variety of interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures in the area. Richards outlines the ‘Eurocentric descriptions’ of early historical accounts of the Daly River area which obscured the story of the original inhabitants. She also reflected that the accounts of settlement at the time did not aptly reflect the 'diversity of human experience' of those who lived in the area.38

The work of Gleeson and Richards and other historians like Riddett who have looked at the regional history in the north were noticeable for their engagement with the history of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships reflecting the capacity of history as a discipline to be applied to the complexities of these engagements, a capacity which has still to be more fully explored in the Top End. Gleeson and Richards relied on archives to write their histories. What is missing from their stories are Indigenous and non-Indigenous first hand accounts of their experiences. In the following section I look at Indigenous histories in more depth and the associated historiography.

37 Wolfe, Pine Creek Aborigines and town camps.
38 Michaela Richards, 'An Australian frontier…', p.63; Jane Gleeson, 'Blocks, runs and claims: interaction in three settlements in the Upper Roper River District, 1911-1942' in Richards and Gleeson, Mataranka and the Daly. NARU has played a strong role in publishing history as part of its general research into North Australia including Lyn Riddett's history on the Victoria River District, Kine, kin and country, 1990; David Carment's work on heritage - see History and the landscape in Central Australia, 1991; Mickey Dewar's, The black war in Arnhem Land, 1992; Sam Wells work on the history of the Arnhem Land Progress Association, Taking stock, 1993 and Ellen Kettle's, Health services in the Northern Territory, 1991.
INDIGENOUS HISTORIES: COLONISING STORIES

Names and boundaries

Family ties

The majority of Indigenous people with whom I spoke in the town of Pine Creek and at the nearby community of Kybrook Farm identified themselves as Wagiman or Jawoyn people. The Jawoyn people I spoke with occasionally identified themselves as Jawoyn-Mayali people. Mayali is a language group with numerous dialects including Gundjeihmi and Kunwinjku and is spoken in the Western Arnhem Land area to the north of Pine Creek. Mayali people have historically travelled into Pine Creek and have had close associations with Jawoyn people. 39

By marriage and birth a number of Wagiman people I spoke with had connections with Mudburra (Murrurri), Djamindjung (Timber Creek) and Port Keats people. There was also a Dagoman man with a long standing family connection to the area. There have also been more recent arrivals such as the former President of Kybrook Farm - George Ah Won - from Borroloola. As a local resident, Bessie Coleman said of Kybrook Farm: ‘You got Wagiman tribe, you got Jawoyn tribe and you got Borroloola together. That’s three tribes here.’ 40 Other groups from the Daly River and Arnhem Land areas have also had long associations with the area and have been connected to Jawoyn and Wagiman people through family ties. They include Dagoman, Yangman, Nanggumerri, Warray and Mayali people. 41

Naming, custodianship and politics

The process of naming of boundaries of Indigenous territories has become highly politicised as part of the land claim process. As Peter Sutton, a linguist, has noted, the definitions of boundaries and frontiers of Indigenous territories since the introduction of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 has been embedded in ‘the ongoing politics of competition and

40 Kybrook Women (Bessie Coleman) interviewed by Bathgate and Joanna Barrkman, Kybrook Farm, 1997.
41 See footnote 38.
conflict over land, its resources and its symbolisms, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests.‘

Sutton has pointed out that the origins of Indigenous names are complex and continuously evolving with antecedents in both Indigenous and European naming processes. As he has outlined 'old group or territory names may change meaning and applicability over time' and as such are part of 'historical events and processes'. The challenge, he writes, lies in drawing conclusions based on the limitations of written records regarding Indigenous groups such as '...variably defined terms for territorial groups in a particular area'. Moreover as Jane Jacobs has pointed out (referencing Francesca Merlan's work in the area) '...what is known about the 'traditional' territory 'has been learned' precisely in relation to intrusions...in the context of specific historic relations of White-Black interaction'

European historical records and naming

The challenges are apparent in sifting through the early European historical records which name Indigenous groups associated with the Pine Creek area and refer to territorial boundaries. Late nineteenth century accounts from European anthropologists and other observers have ascribed the names Agigwolla, Awinmull, Awarai, Agrikondi, Wuwulum, Gwoolingahs and Woolwonga people in relation to the Indigenous people from the Pine Creek area.

The naming of Indigenous groups in European historical records has been intrinsically related to spatiality and locality in which names have been ascribed by Europeans to

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42 Peter Sutton devoted a substantive monograph to the subject of Indigenous group and territory boundaries as part of a critique of a mapping project undertaken by two geographers (Stephen Davis and Victor Prescott) without, in his and others estimations, due regard for the complexity of this undertaking. Sutton, Country. See also Peter Sutton, 'Indigenous country groups and “the community of native title holders”', National Native Title Tribunal occasional papers series no.1/2001; Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.149.


46 Of these terms Awarai [Warray], Awinmull [Uwinymil], Wuwulum [Wulwulam] are linguistically recognisable with respect to current names denoting particular Indigenous groups. See Sutton, Country. Mark Harvey to Bathgate, e-mail, section of chapter 1 in thesis, 1 July 2003. See also E. Eylmann, Die Eingeborenen der Kolonie Südaustralien, Johnson Reprint Corporation, New York, 1966 (First published 1908). (The translation of the relevant section was undertaken by Jan Hintze); William J. Sowden, The Northern Territory as it is. A Narrative of the South Australian
Indigenous groups deemed to live in or have ties with particular geographical areas in Australia.

At the turn of the nineteenth century Eylmann, a German anthropologist, noted that the 'Agigwolla' and 'Awinmull' inhabited the Pine Creek area. Eylmann located Awinmull country to the north-east of Pine creek around Burrundie. He was more vague on the location of Agigwolla country but stated that their land lay to the south. As he summed up: 'The natives at Pine Creek are partly members of this tribe [Agigwolla], partly Awinmull'. In Eylmann's assessment the Agigwolla and Awinmull people were part of the Woolwonga tribe which, he wrote, also comprised the Awarai and the Agrikondi people.

Howard Pearce has identified that the earliest descriptions of language groups in the Pine Creek District were 'attempted' in 1876 by W.B. Wildey based on information '...from local European prospectors and officials.' Wildey did not identify the 'Aguagwillahs' (Eylmann's Agigwolla) as part of the Woolwonga group but listed them separately. He also identified another group - the Gwoolingahs east of Union Reef.

In other early European accounts the Wuwulum were described as being part of the Woolwonga 'tribe'. William Sowden, in his travels with a Parliamentary committee to the Pine Creek area in 1882 identified Woolwonga people at the Port Darwin mining camp north of Pine Creek and the Agrigoolha [Eylmann's Agigwolla] at Copperfield Creek south of Pine Creek.

Jensen, the Northern Territory Government Geologist, who arrived in the Top End 20 years after Eylmann named the Agricondi geological province after the 'tribe' of the same name inhabiting the Pine Creek, Umbrawarra and the upper Mary River valley area while he

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47 Eylmann, Kolonie Sudaustralien, p.160.
48 Eylmann described Woolwonga country as extending along both sides of the Overland Telegraph line between 13 and 14 degrees of latitude stretching between the Finniss River, Rum Jungle, Brocks Creek, the upper reaches of the Mary River, Burrundie, Wandi Golfields and Pine Creek. Eylmann, Kolonie Sudaustralien, p.160.
49 Wildey described the 'Aguagwillahs' as being east south-east of Southport, the 'Woolwongahs' next extending to Yam Creek and then the 'Gwoolingahs' east of Union Reef. Pearce, Pine Creek: General History, p.10. Phonetically the name Gwoolingah appears linked to the Woolwonga.
50 The Agrigoolha described by Sowden approximate Eylmann's Agigwolla, Sowden, The Northern Territory as it is, p.41.
named the Waggaman Geological province after the Waggaman ‘tribe’ in the Brocks Creek and Burrundie areas.\(^{51}\)

Indigenous names, with no specific reference to territoriality, were also marked by surveyors on maps of the Pine Creek area.\(^{52}\) Names such as Wandi Wandi and Woolndie (Woolgnie) goldfields, Umbrawarra tin field, Burrundie town, Galingie spring, Woolwonga Reserve and Goodparla Station were scattered among the plethora of European names and the occasional Chinese name on these maps.\(^{53}\) It is hard, if not impossible, to discern from most of these European renderings of Indigenous words their relationship to particular Indigenous groups. European maps presented names amputated from their relationship to Indigenous people.

**Oral history, linguistic and anthropological research**

There were always potential pitfalls in the attempts by early anthropologists and others to name Indigenous territories in the Pine Creek area. A common misconception was linking language identity with residence and therefore territory: language identity and residence were not necessarily the same. As Mark Harvey, a linguist with extensive knowledge of language groups in the Pine Creek area, has pointed out in regard to Eylmann's categories: 'Eylmann is confusing the residence of individuals of owning particular languages, with the territorial associations of those languages.'\(^{54}\) Harvey gave one example of this in Eylmann's research. Eylmann suggested that 'Awinmull' (Uwinymil) country included Burrundie. Harvey pointed out that 'Unwinymil country does not seem to include Burrundie' but rather '...the lower McKinley and mid-Mary [Rivers]' north of Pine Creek.\(^{55}\)

Peter Sutton has shown that social identity can be cast in many different ways, language identity being only one of a large number of different criteria which Indigenous people may use to assign names to groups. Attempts to distinguish Indigenous territories based on

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\(^{51}\) H.I. Jensen, Reminiscences of a Geologist, n.d. MS, p.113, p.115. For another mention of Agricandi see, NTAS: NTRS 829, GRS 1 A10784 'N.T. Government Resident Inwards Correspondence, 9 March 1888. This is a reference to Agricandi Lease.

\(^{52}\) As I discuss further in this Chapter and subsequently in Chapter Two and Chapter Five naming was also part of personalising and familiarising Europeans with the country as well as a representation of colonisation.

\(^{53}\) For mention see the following maps in the National Library: *Plan shewing pastoral lease. Grazing licences and pastoral permits. Northern Territory of Australia*, Department of Home and Territories, Melbourne, 1920; *General map of the Northern Territory of Australia*, Department of Home and Territories, Melbourne, 1922; *Plan showing principle pastoral areas held under lease, licence and permit in the Northern Territory of Australia*, Department of External Affairs, Melbourne, 1915.

Charles Kelsey, a telegraph operator, reported that the original Indigenous name for Burrundie was 'Burrungie'. D.E. Kelsey (Ira Nesdale ed), *The Shackle*, Lynton Publications, Blackwood SA, 1975, p.95.

\(^{54}\) Mark Harvey to Bathgate, e-mail, section of chapter 1 in thesis, 1 July 2003.
historically recorded names of Indigenous groups is greatly complicated by the fact that Indigenous informants may have used group names deriving from a range of identifiers including language variety, names of localities, regional names based on typical ecological or geographical attributes, ceremonial groupings and nick names. 56

While early European observers based their information on Indigenous and non-Indigenous informants it is also likely they had insufficient knowledge about the social and religious context of the names they were given. More recent oral research undertaken by Dr. Mark Harvey suggests that Pine Creek was at the '...confluence of four land-language affiliations. Dagoman on the Copperfield, Cullen and Stray Creek drainage, Wagiman on the Douglas drainage, Jawoyn on Harriet and Frances Creeks and 'Ngorrkgowo', a very unclear identity on the upper McKinley and Margaret [Rivers]. 57

Land claims and defining boundaries
In the latter part of the twentieth century new issues of naming Indigenous territories have arisen. Claim areas and the groups of Indigenous claimants applying for the return of their land are required to be precisely delineated under the terms of the Land Rights Act and subsequently disputes have arisen through the delineation and fixing of boundaries and in relation to who has traditional ownership of a particular area. 58

There are many reasons why it has been difficult to fix boundaries for Indigenous territories. As Nancy Williams has written in respect of the Yolgnu people of north-east Arnhem land - '...I have explained why I do not draw lines as in boundaries on maps. This is because of a concern that it would contribute to a fossilizing, or at least freezing at a particular moment in time, what is for Yolgnu a continuous process of negotiating interests in land.' 59 European historical records by their nature contain frozen and static descriptions of Indigenous groups, kinship structures and boundaries. Discrete naming of places or people is similarly static reflecting a moment in time but not the nature of change over time.

55 Mark Harvey to Bathgate, e-mail, 1 July 2003.
56 Sutton, 'Indigenous country groups', p.11.
57 Mark Harvey to Bathgate, e-mail, 1 July 2003.
58 As Sutton has pointed out Western-industrial society has encouraged 'precision and consistency in the description of land tenure units'. Sutton, 'Indigenous country groups', p.10. See for example Justice Kearney, Upper Daly land claim volumes 1,2 and 3, report no. 36. Report by the Indigenous Land Commissioner, Justice Kearney to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and to the Administrator of the Northern Territory, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, pp.4-7, p.88.
59 Nancy Williams, Appendix 2: Comments on the map by regional specialists in Peter Sutton, Country, p.125.
The nature of impacts

If the loss of Indigenous land to Europeans was one of the defining hallmarks of colonisation, what was also evident was that Indigenous peoples suffered the impacts of colonisation in myriad ways - through population loss arising from contact with new diseases, from massacres, from introduced substances, from erosion of cultural values occurring as a result of settlement and from displacement. While the outcomes of these impacts were similar for Indigenous people throughout Australia, at the local level the degree and nature of this impact varied. I explore some of these impacts in this section and how these impacts have been interpreted by Indigenous people and research historians. I begin with an exploration of the concept of the frontier as it pertained to Northern Territory history.

Impacts on the frontier

The frontier is a recurring motif in Northern Territory historians' work in which it is described as a real and yet figurative meeting place. As Mickey Dewar has written: 'the frontier is, in one sense, a notional line where two opposing world views come together, those of the colonists and the colonised.' In the Northern Territory the telegraph line and its associated stations including one at Pine Creek became a primary place of encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In this sense it was where the initial frontier was established.

Ann McGrath wrote that the frontier not only represented a boundary of white settlement, it was '...a meeting place of two very different worlds, and often a coming together. This could be cooperative or tragic.' She went on to point out that 'the white frontier of 'settlement' was perceived by many Indigenous people as a frontier of mayhem and destruction. It was a place of fear and desire, of struggle and survival where indigenous people and colonisers came into contact, interacted and clashed.' But what of Indigenous memories about the impact of colonisation? Oral traditions provide the most salient accounts. As Tony Austin and Suzanne Parry observed ‘... the nineteenth and early twentieth century encounters that

61 Ann McGrath, Born in the Cattle, p.133.
62 Ann McGrath, ‘Sex, violence and theft: 1830-1910’ in Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath, Quartly (eds), Creating a Nation, p.131, p.133.
are among the best-remembered in Indigenous oral tradition were violent ones – ‘dispersals’ by parties of police, trackers and settlers, and violence in the workplace.  

**Remembering**

These oral traditions are evident in Indigenous people's stories from the Pine Creek area and describe both the killing times and the impact of government policy. For instance Lulu Martin Dalpbalngali remembered her mother telling her about Indigenous people from the Pine Creek/Katherine area being pursued and killed by local pastoralists in the Douglas/Daly area in the early part of the twentieth century at a site near Dry Creek. Helen Liddy Emorrojba talked about Indigenous people being killed at Collah Waterhole.

Helen Liddy, Lulu Martin, Mai Katona and Freddie Muggleton experienced the personal impact of the policy of removal of children of Indigenous descent which was part of government policy for much of the twentieth century. Lulu Martin and Helen's mother fled with their children Rankin and Helen Liddy to escape the Brock Creek policeman who had come to take their children from them. A large part of Helen Liddy's oral history was about how her mother kept her away from the police by concealing her in the hills and caves above the town of Pine Creek after World War Two. Mai was taken away from her family in Pine Creek and eventually sent to the Retta Dixon home in Darwin. Mai described how traumatic this event was 'to even just think about it... forty-five years later'. Freddie Muggleton remembered being removed from his mother when he was quite young and tied up outside the Pine Creek police station to a post. He spent time with other boys in the Pine Creek 'half-caste' home in the 1930s before being moved to Bathurst Island. The Pine Creek home for Indigenous boys was one of a number of such homes in the NT. It also functioned as a staging post for the transfer of children to other homes and settlements.

**Policies of control**

Archival research has been important for describing the breadth and impact of government policy on Indigenous lives. It also provides a political context to the personal experience.  

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63 Austin and Parry, *Connection and disconnection*, p.11.
64 Lulu Martin and Helen Liddy gave accounts of massacres along the McKinley River and at Collah waterhole respectively. Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Old Douglas Station, 1997 and Old Ooloo Station, 1997. For detailed oral account of this massacre see Wagiman Texts, Lulu Martin interviewed by Mark Harvey circa 1992, pp.41-50. Helen Liddy interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1996.
66 Freddie Muggleton interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1996; Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Burrell Creek Compound and Mt Shoebridge, 1997.
described by oral history. The scrupulous work of historians such as Julie Wells and Tony Austin, in particular, have identified the range of government policies and their impacts on Indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory. Another important source has been the autobiographies of Indigenous people who spent time in these homes and who have also documented their history, such as Barbara Cummings. These studies have been important for tracking the depth and scale of government policy, bureaucracy and intervention in Indigenous peoples' lives designed to control the Indigenous population both physically and socially. 68

Reserves were part of this policy of control and were created to remove Indigenous people from settled areas. 69 In the early twentieth century Baldwin Spencer advised that in respect of Indigenous people in the Pine Creek area '...there is no difficulty in gathering them together into a village or compound, as is now being done in Darwin, at a convenient distance from the town.' 70 As Tony Austin has pointed out reserves '...were inappropriately located in areas that were of no interest to pastoralists but did not encompass the distinct 'country' of Indigenous groups'. 71

The first reserve in the general region was established in about 1890 at Daly River following the establishment of the Daly River Mission. The reserves located close to Pine Creek region (but still some distance away) were the Woolwonga Reserve (presumably named in part to reflect who the government intended should live there) on the upper Mary River and the Monassie Reserve on the West Alligator River. The Woolwonga Reserve was moved to the South Alligator River in 1936 and now forms part of Kakadu National Park where it is under


69 As Levitus has pointed out '...where Aborigines were relatively uncontacted, reserves were intended to keep them that way, and where Aborigines were subject to regular contact, reserves were intended to minimise the most socially undesirable aspects of that contact.' Levitus, Everybody, p.87; Powell, Far country, p.126, p.187; Austin, 'Survival of the fittest', p.81. Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.185; Gillespie, Imarlkba; G. Barker, Alligator Rivers Region: historical sketch to World War 2, 1978, p.13, p.14.

70 Baldwin Spencer was the Chief Protector of 'Aborigines' at the time - a government appointed position to allegedly look after Indigenous peoples welfare. In reality it was a position which entailed close surveillance and control of Indigenous peoples lives. Professor W. Baldwin Spencer, 'Preliminary report on the Indigenous of the Northern Territory' in Bulletin, no. 7, 1913, p.23. See also Pearce, vol. 1, p.109.
the control of Indigenous owners in association with Parks Australia. In the absence of a reserve near Pine Creek, Beswick reserve, south of Katherine was used as a welfare destination for Indigenous people in Pine Creek in the post-war period. 72

The nature of specific impacts

The nature and level of the impact of settlement on Indigenous lives has been a focus of a number of writers who have studied the history of the Pine Creek area. A number of factors have been identified by researchers in Indigenous population loss in the region and debate has circled around which factors had greater or lesser impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples - loss of land and/or the impact of mining, pastoralism, missionaries, massacres and/or disease. 73

Population loss

Population collapse

Mark Harvey has concluded from anecdotal evidence based on oral history work he has undertaken with Indigenous people from the southern Daly River, Pine Creek and Kakadu areas, that there was a population collapse in the Pine Creek area. This observation is borne out by other evidence of population collapse among the Aborigines of the Alligator Rivers region from the late nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century. Ian Keen estimated that the population of the area between the Adelaide River and the East Alligator Rivers was '...reduced to, at most, 4 percent of the population at the time of contact' with an estimate of in excess of 2,000 Indigenous people at the time of contact.74 As Robert Levitus has also pointed out there has been a 'marked variation in population loss between different groups' suggesting the localised nature of impacts on particular groups of Indigenous people. 75

Factors in population loss

71 Austin and Parry, *Connection and disconnection*, p.13, see also p.10 and Austin, 'Survival of the fittest', p.74.
72 It is not clear that the reserve system operated as it was intended at Woolwonga and other locations insofar as there seems to have been little attempt to contain people at this site. NLC: Ian Keen, *Alligator Rivers Stage II land claim*, 1980, p.46, p.50; Kearney, *Upper Daly land claim*, p.63; Allan Stewart, *The green eyes are buffaloes*, Landsdowne press, Melbourne, 1969, p.19; Barker, *Alligator Rivers Region*, p.19; NAA, NT: F1, 1954/160 - Proposed Depot for Aged 'Natives'.
At the turn of the nineteenth century Baldwin Spencer noted that the King of the ‘Wai­willum tribe’ in Pine Creek was the King of a nearly extinct tribe.\textsuperscript{76} Howard Pearce wrote that it was difficult to describe the ‘...traditional lifestyle of Aborigines within the Pine Creek District...' because the ‘lifestyle’ had been profoundly altered ‘...by the pressures of contact before it could be carefully observed’.\textsuperscript{77}

Leonore Coltheart emphasised that the loss of land through construction of the overland telegraph line and mining was as ‘profound’ a loss ‘...and perhaps a more significant factor in the deterioration of Kungarak-Warrai-Parlamanyin society [who lived to the north-west of Pine Creek] than the specifically economic impact, or even the savagery of conflict, of European and Chinese occupation.’\textsuperscript{78} Others have been more sanguine about the impact of mining. Alan Powell has argued that the arrival of permanent settlers (cattlemen as opposed to miners) in the Northern Territory, interfered far more greatly in the lives of Indigenous people ‘...than did the temporary presence of surveyors and builders of the telegraph and railway lines or the restricted permanent settlement of miners and telegraph operators.’\textsuperscript{79} Robert Levitus has proffered that the impact of missionaries was far greater than ‘townspeople, buffalo shooters, or miners' in the Alligator Rivers region because unlike these groups, missionaries ‘...sought to allocate Indigenous time.’\textsuperscript{80}

The absence of missions, government settlements and reserves in the Pine Creek area obviously differentiated it from other settlements. Pine Creek, as Francesca Merlan has identified, occupied a unique place in the region because it was a secular place far removed from any missionary influence. This potentially created less interference in Indigenous lifestyles than on missions such as Daly River and Oenpelli where there was a clear imperative, through the introduction of Christian beliefs and values, to change Indigenous culture.\textsuperscript{81} Conversely it is also possible that it created a climate in which trade in sex and alcohol flourished.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{75} Levitus, Everybody, p.76.
\textsuperscript{77} Pearce, vol. 1, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{78} Leonore Coltheart, 'Kurrindju: changing the cause of history' in \textit{Australian Studies}, vol. 12. no. 1, Summer 1997, pp.36-53, p.50.
\textsuperscript{79} Powell, \textit{Far country}, pp.129-130.
\textsuperscript{80} Levitus, Everybody, p.31.
\textsuperscript{81} Francesca Merlan to Bathgate, email, Subject: re: Pine Creek etc., 27 October 1997; See also Levitus, Everybody, p.30, p.31; C.F. Adams’ description of Aboriginal people in the Pine Creek/Grove Hill/Brock’s Creek area supports the impression that Aboriginal people had relative freedom in the area at least in terms of how and with whom they chose to work. C.F. Adams – personal correspondence cited in Timothy G. Jones, \textit{Pegging the Northern Territory. A history of
Both Levitus and Bauer have made the point that land in the Alligator Rivers Region and mining areas generally were not attractive for agriculture or pastoralism and therefore the impact of settlement was reduced. A general factor Levitus identified in ameliorating conflict in the area was the prominence of buffalo hunting as opposed to pastoralism in the Alligator Rivers area. He pointed out that the nature of the buffalo industry created less material opportunities for conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the area than pastoralism because:

... Buffalo, unlike sheep and cattle, were not private property, but feral animals. The buffalo shooter owned only the right to shoot buffalo found on his block of country. Buffalo killed by Aborigines were therefore not a direct cost to the enterprise. Further, there was no husbanding of the stock, and it was pointless to claim monopoly control of water-holes and pasture. Buffalo colonised the country independently of whites, found food and water in most years and perished in drought years. The industry harvested animals according to their natural availability.

Coming in

Settlement also led to shifts in migration patterns. As Richard Baker has pointed out Indigenous people had many different reasons for gravitating towards settlements including curiosity, longing for stimulants, desire for staple foods, protection from particular people (mainly Europeans) and economic necessity due to environmental damage.

There appears to have been a number of population migrations over time in the Pine Creek area from central and southern Arnhem land and from the Daly River region closer to settlements, including Pine Creek and surrounding cattle stations. Wagiman people were drawn east from the Daly River area while Jawoyn people were drawn west and Mayali

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82 A 1959 report described that '...there appears little doubt that liquor supplying and prostitution is carried on quite extensively in (sic) Pine Creek area, where from time to time there are large groups of transient wards and single European miners resident in the vicinity.' NAA: NT: F1, 1959/7, Report on alleged disorder amongst natives in Pine Creek - Hercules Mine area, 24 April, 1959.


84 Robert Levitus, 'Cultural compromise and the Indigenous engagement with whites in the North Australian buffalo country'. Seminar paper delivered at the Department of Anthropology, Macquarie University, Sydney, 11 October, 1990, p.15.

85 Other reasons included disease and the fact that other Indigenous people had already 'come in'. Richard Baker, Land is life, p.127; Kenneth Maddock. Report on Fieldwork in the Northern Territory
people moved south. Kenneth Maddock identified a significant depletion of particular language groups from the southern Arnhem Land area notably Dagoman around Katherine and the Wagiman and Djauan [Jawoyn] around Pine Creek as a result of their moving in to live and work near mines, farms and stations. 86

Anthropologists have also noted the seasonal nature of migration patterns with Indigenous people migrating into town with the first rains and leaving at the beginning of the dry season. 87 These seasonal patterns partly reflected the stand down time during the Wet for all workers on pastoral stations.

Historian Anne McGrath has pointed out that cattle work dovetailed neatly with Indigenous movements of seasonality and travel. The same could also be said of other 'itinerant' and seasonal industries in the Top End such as buffalo and crocodile hunting. Indigenous people chose to work in places on or near their traditional lands and this enabled them to also 'keep country' and conduct ceremonies. In the Pine Creek area Wagiman people gravitated towards Claravale, Jindare, Dorisvale, Douglas and old and new Ooloo stations for work while Jawoyn/Mayali people gravitated towards Esmeralda, Gimbat, Goodparla and Bonrook Stations. 88

Violence
Notwithstanding the population loss in the immediate Pine Creek area there has been general discussion about the degree of impact of frontier violence on Indigenous populations in Arnhem Land and the Northern Territory generally. 89

Alan Powell has written that frontier violence was diminished in the Northern Territory, compared with other parts of Australia, because of a number of factors including the vastness

88 Kearney, Upper Daly land claim, p.4; McGrath, Born in the cattle, p.24, p.173; Austin, Survival of the fittest, p.44; Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.39, pp.137-138.
89 Austin and Parry, Connection and disconnection, p.12.
of the Northern Territory, the small number of Europeans in the Northern Territory, the
dependence of these Europeans on Indigenous labour and because some settlers had more
humane approaches in their dealings with Indigenous people.\(^{90}\)

Robert Levitus has written that inter-racial violence does not appear to have been the main
cause of population loss in the Alligator Rivers region although he pointed out that there was
some evidence to suggest an increase in internecine conflict between Indigenous people in
the region as a result of stresses caused by settlement.\(^{91}\)

Much more detailed work remains to be undertaken on population loss including the impact
of violence before any definitive conclusions can be drawn about the NT or Top End being a
less violent place than elsewhere in Australia. Moreover the argument that inter-racial
violence was less common should not be used to downplay the violence that did occur.\(^{92}\)

Indigenous people in the Top End responded in numerous ways to the colonists' attempts at
settlement and expansion. They attacked European and Chinese settlers usually singling out
individuals or small groups of people, and harassed the new arrivals by a number of means -
lighting fires, spearing livestock and appropriating European and Chinese goods. This
situation is best described as a continuing war of attrition. The nature of this war contrasted
with more formal understandings of colonial wars such as those apparent in the Maori wars
in New Zealand.\(^{93}\)

The European responses to Indigenous defence of their territory were extremely punitive.
The Pine Creek area had its share of 'dispersals', a euphemism for settler killings of
Indigenous people. Howard Pearce documented particular incidents involving the killings of
Indigenous people in the Pine Creek and surrounding areas in 1875, 1878 and 1885.
Mounted troopers working out of the Pine Creek telegraph station participated in these
killings which were partly in response to the killing of Europeans and which resulted in
large-scale retaliatory killings of Indigenous people.\(^{94}\) As he pointed out: 'The uprooting and

\(^{90}\) Powell, *Far country*, p.110.
\(^{91}\) Levitus, *Everybody*, p.76. As Levitus has pointed out it remains an open question about how much
intra-Indigenous violence contributed to population decline within particular Indigenous groups.
\(^{92}\) See parallel discussion about the level of conflict between Chinese and European miners on the
goldfields in section on 'Chinese histories and identity' later in this Chapter.
\(^{93}\) Jones writes that the Chinese were particularly vulnerable to attack from Aborigines in their journey
to the goldfields. Jones, *Pegging the Territory*, p.53; Ballara, "I riro I te hoko", pp.20-33; Austin and
Parry, *Connection and disconnection*, p.10.
\(^{94}\) Pearce, vol. 1, pp.43-47, p.72; NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 126, Jessie Tamblyn interviewed by Ronda
destruction of Aboriginal populations throughout the Pine Creek District following the killings at Daly River copper mine and Argument Flat, exceeded in intensity all previous retaliations.  

By 1928 the days of large scale European reprisals and massacres of Indigenous people had largely passed but killings still occurred. In Pine Creek two Indigenous people were shot at point blank range by white stockmen at Bonrook Station. While opportunistic killings had abated by the 1930s the ensuing period was marked by a range of European responses to Indigenous people that ranged from acts of kindness to acts of cruelty and all that lay in between.

**Gender related violence**

As a number of writers have pointed out issues relating to male settler encounters with Indigenous women appear to have been behind numerous inter-racial conflicts. There was evidence that the killing of European miners at the Daly River Copper mine in 1883 were sparked by a dispute over sexual contact between a miner and an Indigenous woman. Conversely Indigenous women were killed by Indigenous men for apparently breaking traditional law in respect of some of their relationships with European men. There are a number of accounts of tribal retribution, with Indigenous husbands killing wives who chose to stay with European men.

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95 Pearce, vol. I, p.67, p.68. In 1883 three European miners were killed by Aboriginal people at the Daly River Copper mine. Michael Christie described the resulting European retaliation as 'The last of the great nineteenth century dispersals'. Michael F Christie, 'Discourse and disclosure: the Daly River outrage 1884-1885' in Austin and Parry, *Connection and disconnection*, p.138.

96 For Bonrook killings see NTTG, 6 July, 1906; However one of the most infamous massacres of Indigenous people occurred in 1928 in Central Australia at Coniston. Wenten Rubuntja with Jenny Green with contributions from Tim Rowse, *The town grew up dancing. The life and art of Wenten Rubuntja*, IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2002, p.29 ff. For other accounts of violence/massacres in the Top End see Merlan, *Caging the rainbow*, p.35 and Merlan, 'Making people quiet', p.102.

97 I refer particularly here to the experience of Indigenous people on pastoral stations. Riddett, *Kine, kin and country*, p.7; Paddy Huddleston, interview, 1997. European Pastoralists were not the only perpetrators of cruelty. There is evidence of brutality committed by miners, buffalo hunters and missionaries against Indigenous people. Francesca Merlan, 'Making people quiet', p.71ff; Powell, *Far country*, p.110.


99 Alec Gorey, a Russian settler, who spent most of his life in the Pine Creek area, lost his partner Topsy in this manner. McGrath, *Born in the cattle*, p.172. See also Paddy Huddleston, interview, 1997; Freddie Muggleton interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1996.
Disease
While disease has been identified as a major factor in Indigenous population loss no specific work has been conducted on these impacts in the Pine Creek area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the most common early diseases among Indigenous people in the Pine Creek area were tuberculosis, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases particularly syphilis and gonorrhea. At various stages there were epidemics of measles and other highly contagious diseases which killed large numbers of Indigenous people such as flu epidemics in the Pine Creek area in 1920 and 1930.¹⁰⁰

Keen, in his reading of the decline in population, has identified the main cause of mortality in the Alligator Rivers region as due to the spread of diseases such as smallpox, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, malaria, flu and measles. Obviously contact was increased in places where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people lived and worked together such as townships like Pine Creek, railway sidings and outlying mining and buffalo camps and pastoral stations.¹⁰¹

Gender and culture
The prominence of sexually transmitted diseases in the health history of Indigenous peoples in the Pine Creek area reflected the gender imbalance in European and Chinese populations during the early mining era and later during World War Two which led to increased pressure being placed on Indigenous women to engage in sex with non-Indigenous men. Some work has been undertaken by historians and anthropologists about this impact in the Northern Territory.¹⁰²


Sexual exchange for goods and services instigated superficially simple yet complex trading relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people – simple because goods were traded for sexual favours - and complex because in the context of Indigenous society exchange had a cultural context and a set of mutual social obligations.\(^{103}\)

Ann McGrath has written extensively on the nature of these contacts as part of her history of Indigenous and European people in the cattle industry in the Northern Territory.\(^{104}\) She, like Merlan, noted cultural precedents within Indigenous culture for sexual trade. She noted the gaps in knowledge about the '...extent to which Indigenous women lacked control over their bodies when it came to bartering or sale for sexual purposes...' or not.\(^{105}\)

Indigenous people had economic reasons for pursuing relationships with European and Chinese men and a cultural basis for this activity that placed sexual trade in a more complex category than prostitution or casual sex, as the activity was often described in contemporary European accounts.\(^{106}\)

Ann McGrath noted that when Indigenous women she interviewed looked back on their encounters with European men, they tended to prefer to reminisce about those liaisons which were enjoyable, rather than dwelling upon any cruelties and abuses they may have suffered, whereas Indigenous men tended to emphasise the 'theft' of women by force or coercion.\(^{107}\)

It is relevant to reflect on the complexities of memory and how the passage of time can blur the intensity of past experiences painful or otherwise and how the interviewee's response to the interviewer will also shape recall. A more complete account of these relationships from Indigenous women's perspective remains to be written.

Judy Atkinson has pointed out that Indigenous culture and Indigenous women in particular are still dealing with the legacy of cultural and spiritual violence from the frontier period

\(^{103}\) Merlan, 'Gender in Indigenous social life', p.43; Bathgate and Lewis, *Culture contact*, pp.10-12.

\(^{104}\) See McGrath, 'We grew up the stations', pp.161ff.

\(^{105}\) McGrath, 'We Grew up the stations', p.167, p.178.


\(^{107}\) McGrath, 'We grew up the stations', pp.190-191. Note also the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. See Riddett, *Kine, kin and country*, pp.115-116; Lyn Anne Riddett. "Finish, I can't talk now": Australian Indigenous and settler women construct each other’, *Occasional Papers no. 3*, Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, 1996; McGrath, 'We grew up the stations', p.165.
including sexual violence. She holds that myths about the nature of Indigenous women's sexuality have been carried over from 'non-Indigenous male viewpoints and values' into 'popular social opinion' and 'myths' about Indigenous women today still include the attitude that 'Indigenous women's sexuality is something to be exploited and abused.'

**Change and adaptation**

While many researchers have documented the negative impacts of settlement on Indigenous peoples lives there has also been a recognition, particularly among anthropologists, that the changes brought about by settlement also produced dynamic and innovative responses from Indigenous peoples. Merlan and Rumsey have pointed out that: '...it should not be inferred that all change with settlement is about destruction for indigenous people. For instance during the same period of destruction brought by European settlement ‘...some “traditional” Indigenous institutions spread to new areas, displacing other institutions...The social transformations which have resulted in differing institutions of land tenure across the “Top End” were no doubt occurring long before European contact.'

In Merlan and Rumsey's definition of change it is perhaps too simplistic to say that settlement destroyed Indigenous people and their ways of life. There was scarification of and appropriation of land, there was death and destruction but there was also resilience, adaption and maintaining of cultural traditions. There was both a *displacement* and a *transforming* of seasonal Indigenous travelling patterns as a result of settlement.

For Lulu Martin there were too many fences in her country. Helen Liddy spoke of damage to burial sites from mining and the general destruction of the environment (see Chapter two). Survival of Indigenous people in the Pine Creek area has been at a cost and the legacy of colonisation can never be forgotten. However these two women maintained connection with their country - through living in their country. A number of Indigenous families have chosen to retain Pine Creek as their base and travel to their country in the Kakadu or Douglas/Daly area from Kybrook or the town.

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110 Kearney, *Upper Daly land claim*, p.3.  
111 Merlan, *Caging the rainbow*, p.145.
Returning country, returning to country

The introduction of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976* marked a period of profound change for Indigenous people's relationships with country they had lost. It re-orientated the land ownership equation, facilitating the return of land to Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. Jawoyn, Mayali and other Indigenous groups maintain traditional ownership of land in what is now Kakadu National Park. The Wagiman people secured title over Umbrawarra Gorge to the south east of Pine Creek, the Upper Daly Hot Springs to the north and 'Sawmill' lease area on the Claravale Road to the south-west. On the 7th of December 2002 a further 110,000 hectares located near Pine Creek were returned to the Wagiman people.\(^{112}\)

Currently native title claims made under the *Native Title Act 1993* are underway in the Pine Creek township providing another, alternative, point of relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the negotiation of land - land that was settled and divided up by Europeans 130 years ago. These 'hand backs' and the ongoing negotiation of land in the area mark a significant watershed in Indigenous land rights with the return of country to Indigenous people. I now turn to European history, history sources and discussion of related issues of historiography.

**EUROPEAN HISTORIES, OWNERSHIP AND ECONOMICS**

The sources of European history for the Pine Creek area are critical not only for what they tell us about European settlement but also, for the purposes of this thesis, for their historic descriptions of Indigenous and Chinese people and culture. In many cases European sources provide the only information on the immediate post-contact period and therein lies the rub: a hegemonic culture is the main source of written information on non-European cultures. It behoves any writer handling historic sources to be constantly mindful of ethnocentrism and bias in this situation. In this chapter I uncover some of the perceptual frameworks of the viewer partly as a way of articulating self-defined aspects of European culture. I look particularly at the recurring theme of economic imperatives which triggered colonisation and settlement of the north and how this theme is common to both primary and secondary sources.

\(^{112}\) 'Ruddock returns 110,000 hectares', *NTN*, 8 December, 2002.
Local and regional narratives

Yarns and legends

For as long as Europeans have lived in the Northern Territory they have kept records and accounts of their experiences. In the Pine Creek area these autobiographies have more of the flavour of adventurer rather than pioneer-settler reflecting the occupations of the writers who travelled from one location to the other, for instance buffalo hunters, miners, patrol officers and tourist operators. The qualities of the 'yarn' are also present in the narratives. In contemporary Pine Creek the oral tradition of the bush yarn continues to flourish. The yarn with its focus on entertainment and engaging the listener is not necessarily congruent with fact and historical information on social and domestic life, and social mores often have to be gleansed within the context of story telling.

However experience, and therefore 'truth', is also promoted in these narratives. As Alfred Searcy (customs officer) wrote in 1909 'Even poor writers with experience at their backs are more convincing than fine writers who lack that invaluable stock in trade.' Searcy and others like Lionel Gee (miner) often interspersed their accounts with re-created conversations and heavy use of the vernacular. There were of course others who gave less florid accounts of their experiences such as John Lewis. All these autobiographical accounts were imbued with the social and cultural values of the period where Indigenous people were often depicted in servitude to their European masters or noticeable by their absence - and where Chinese people were viewed in equally prejudicial terms.

More complex pictures of race relations emerge later in the twentieth century where writers documented Indigenous lifestyles as part of their own engagement with Indigenous people. Bill Harney was a patrol officer for Native Affairs in the 1950s. The title of his book North

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113 For a comprehensive review of 'popular' Northern Territory writing by European Australians see Mickey Dewar, In search of the 'Never-Never'. Looking for Australia in Northern Territory writing, NTU Press, Darwin, 1997, ix.
114 Tex Moar, interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997a, 1997b; Earl Gano interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
116 Lewis, Fought and won; Searcy, In Australian tropics, pp.331; Gee, Bush tracks and goldfields, pp.22-33.
of 23 degrees: *Ramblings in Northern Australia* references 'ramblings' which signified story
telling and travelling.¹¹⁷

The accounts of Bill Harney, Tom Cole (buffalo hunter) and Alan Stewart (tourist operator)
emphasised adventure and mis-adventure in the western Arnhem land area which included a
mock heroic element, humour and more sobering accounts of life in the bush. These writings
are part of a wider genre of writings in the Northern Territory that articulate concepts of
European masculine identity.¹¹⁸

Jensen, a Government Geologist in the NT in the early twentieth century, wrote that the
quintessential North Australian [read European man] had '... the hospitality of the Arab and
Bedouin, the generosity of Persian aristocrats and broadmindedness of a race of
philosophers. The elements of greed and selfishness are reduced to a minimum.'¹¹⁹ Jensen's
extravagant description, while alluding to valued qualities, raises the issue of the gap
between the written myth and the reality of European masculine identity in the North. These
written narratives display a certain bravado that often omitted key aspects of daily life such
as familial relationships with Indigenous women and Indigenous people generally,
dependency on alcohol and/or living in poverty.¹²⁰

There was a disjuncture and an ambivalence about how much European men could say
truthfully about what happened partly because many activities at the time were by definition

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1961.

¹¹⁸ Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1990, (first published 1938); See also
and crooked*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1989; Stewart, *The green eyes*, 1969; Carl Warburton,
*Buffaloes. Adventure and discovery in Arnhem Land*, Angus & Robertson, 1934; Mickey Dewar, *In
search of the 'Never-Never*', p.45; Brian, One Big Union, p.5; David Headon (ed), Preface. *North of
the ten commandments. A collection of Northern Territory literature*. Hodder and Stoughton,
Rydalmere, NSW, 1991, xiii; Dino Hodge, *Did you meet any malagas? A homosexual history of

¹¹⁹ Jensen, Reminiscences, p.120; Mayse Young with Gabrielle Dalton, *No place for a woman. The

¹²⁰ Brian, One big union, pp. 21-22. Note also Brian's observation of workers who did not drink. See
also H.I. Jensen, Reminiscences, p.120, p.121; Minister controlling Northern Territory, *Northern
Territory of South Australia North-Western District, reports (geological and general) resulting from
the explorations made by the government geologist and staff during 1905*, Adelaide, 1906, p.52;
Sydney Wellington Herbert, *Early Experiences in the Northern Territory, 1870-1873*, Reminiscences
of S.W. Herbert, n.d., MS, p.171, p.176. Alcohol was not only the province of European men - it was
part of the general culture of both men and women, European and non-European. For instance a poster
from around the 1970s/early 1980s advertising the Pine Creek Pub was entitled. 'Boozing ... anytime.
An example of a typical Territory pub'.
illegal including cohabitation with Indigenous women.\textsuperscript{121} As Paul Watson has pointed out there was also a 'white-black masculinity' \textsuperscript{122} ...based around the shared drinking of alcohol, despite the drastic legal consequences [at that time].

While European men have cast themselves in the larrikin hero role European women have tended to give more modest accounts that are less in the mould of an adventure and more about living daily life such as Judy Opitz's account of living at Cooinda (in what is now Kakadu National Park) and Mayse Young's account of family life at the Pine Creek Hotel.\textsuperscript{123}

Often these books provide an historical magnifying glass on aspects of social history while being highly personalised accounts. Mayse Young's history, for instance, provides a 'birdseye' account of the life of her family and others that rotated around the Pine Creek pub. Major life events, birth, death, marriage, war and so forth are described as were the social customs and relations of a particular class of people. She also gave second hand accounts of the history of the area.\textsuperscript{124} Writing in an earlier period, Mrs. Dominic Daly, the wife of the Government Resident was able to give a first hand account of the diverse class and ages of miners travelling to the goldfields in the 1870s ranging in her words from the 'respectful' to the reckless.\textsuperscript{125}

**Travellers**

Mrs. Dominic Daly was both a resident of the Northern Territory and a traveller within the region. She is also part of another category of writing by both men and women - travel writing which has been undertaken by long time residents or visitors - anthropologists, journalists, tourists and others who have sort to capture their experiences for the general Australian market as well as overseas. No one person is a hero but the land somehow becomes part of an heroic epic - a wild, untamed country that is part of the 'exotic' or 'primitive'. Travel writer Elsie Masson described the Northern Territory as *An untamed territory*. The anthropologist Knut Dahl entitled his book of the north *Savage Australia*.


\textsuperscript{122} Paul J Watson, The real North? Jedda and the centering of the Australian male in *Northern Perspective*, vol 19, no 2, 1996, p.22.


\textsuperscript{124} Young with Dalton, *No place for a woman*, 1992, p.56, p.60.

\textsuperscript{125} Mrs. Dominic Daly was the pen name of Harriet Daly, nee Douglas. Her husband was Dominic Daly. Daly was on board one of the first ships to bring the miners to the goldfields. Mrs. Dominic Daly, *Digging, squatting and pioneering life in the Northern Territory of South Australia*, Facsimile edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, Western Australia, 1984 (first published 1887), p.141.
Baldwin Spencer named the area for the purposes of writing about his observations as *Wanderings in wild Australia*.\(^{126}\)

Ernestine Hill was one of the best known authors of Northern Territory history or the 'Tropic North' as she described it in her book entitled *The Territory: The classic saga of Australia's far north* which was first published in 1951 and is still in print as are other Northern Territory 'sagas' including Tom Coles autobiographies.\(^{127}\) Her writing is a combination of both history, observation and journalistic license bordering on the bush yarn.

There is another category of writer - the local historian - generally a long time resident of the area who decides to document the history of the town they live in. Winsome Maff's *Katherine's No Lady* provides a short settlement history of Katherine interspersed with some oral history. In their promotion of the history of the area both Maff's book on Katherine and Hilda Tuxworth's book on Tennant Creek are also aimed at the tourist market.\(^{128}\) In the Pine Creek area local residents (Chinese and European Australian) have formed a large part of the core enthusiasts for documenting local history. In Pine Creek a small number of booklets were put out by the local branch of the National Trust (See Chapter three).

**Ordering categories**

The terms Northern Territory, and North Australia generally, have been deemed useful terms for ordering historic information by writers and researchers. Historian Mickey Dewar has noted that the 'Territory is perceived '...as both a geographic and political entity distinct from the rest of Australia and as a place with its own cultural and mythic values.'\(^{129}\) This observation is reflected in the title of books concerning the history of the Northern Territory such as Jeannie Gunn's land of the 'Never-Never', Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*, Ernestine Hill's *Far North* and Alan Powell's *Far Country* '...the land beyond the real Australia...'.\(^{130}\)

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\(^{127}\) Hill, *The Territory*; Cole, *Hell west and crooked*.

\(^{128}\) Maff's book was a joint publication of the Municipality of Katherine and the National Trust of Australia (NT). Winsome Maff, *Katherine's No Lady*, Corporation of the Municipality of Katherine and the National Trust (NT), n.d. Hilda Tuxworth's book *Tennant Creek: yesterday and today* was self-published in the Northern Territory in 1966.


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Another helpful ordering category for Northern Territory history is to divide it up geographically rather than defining it within the boundaries of the Northern Territory per se. Like its neighbouring states Western Australia and Queensland the Territory is so vast that writing a history defined by surveyed boundaries is not necessarily helpful because the areas that lie within it are so geographically different. Geographers and economists have, in the past, looked at the North in these terms.\footnote{See references to Davidson '1965' and Kelly '1966', Bauer '1964' further in this Chapter.} By location Pine Creek is part of far North Australia and while I have for the purposes of this thesis located my study of Pine Creek within the context of Northern Territory history I am also aware that I could have also given it context within North Australian history and related studies in North Queensland and North Western Australia.

**Academic histories**

A fourth category of narrative has been academic histories of the region notably Alan Powell's condensed history of the Northern Territory and Peter Donovan's political history of the South Australian and Commonwealth governance periods in the Northern Territory. These histories are linked by a strong narrative and thematic focus. The themes of success and failure are prominent in both accounts. Powell and Donovan's histories provide an overview account which is useful in documenting the key events that have impacted on Pine Creek's history. However, it is clear that these histories, because of their scale, can tell only a fleeting part of the story of small areas such as Pine Creek. Both accounts privilege the European settler history of the Northern Territory although significant references are made to elements of Indigenous and Chinese history, particularly in Powell's text.\footnote{Powell, *Far country*, P.F. Donovan, *A land full of possibilities. A history of South Australia's Northern Territory*. UQP, St Lucia, Queensland, 1981; P.F. Donovan, *At the other end of Australia. The Commonwealth and the Northern Territory 1911-1978*, UQP, St Lucia, Queensland, 1984.}

These generalist settlement accounts contrast with more overtly social history such as that collected by Peter Read - *'A Social History of the Northern Territory.'* which was designed for secondary school students but was notable for its exploration of social aspects of life in the Northern Territory through historical examples of mining on the gold fields. Sue Harlow has contributed more recently to the field of social history with her valuable account of life on the Maranboy tin fields richly describing these miners as '...battlers; tin gods of their small world of hard work and poverty.'\footnote{Harlow, *Tin gods*, p.1. For similar perception vis a vis conditions for gold-miners at Arltunga in Central Australia see Kate Holmes, Arltunga, Northern Territory: The use of artefacts to augment the documented history results of a survey covering occupation from the 1890s to the 1950s', PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1987, p.4; The same could be said of tin miners who came to Umbrawarra Gorge south-west of Pine Creek in the early twentieth century. See Brian, One bg union, p.30; Peter}
Lyn Riddett's history of the Victorian River District (1911-1966) was significant for the scope of her inquiry and conceptualisation of regional history in the Northern Territory in terms of both European and Indigenous connections to the land and the role of gender including both non-Indigenous and Indigenous women's history of association with the region. She focussed on people's responses to the country '...and how residents, both traditional owners and settlers, have used it.134

Economic attractions

Hope springs eternal

There is an extensive body of literature - economic, geographic and historic - that has been written examining and dissecting the economic promise of Northern Australia as though, from a European point of view, it was a land perpetually waiting to fulfill its economic potential where, as Donovan has described, there was a persisting belief '...that the region was one of vast, untapped, and readily exploited resources.135 In a way the miners were the individual expression of this dream for the search for wealth and yet the daily slog of mining life also expressed the difficulties Europeans had in wresting this dream from the land. The historic literature on pastoralism, agriculture and in particular mining in the Pine Creek area are located within this larger discourse on the economy of the Northern Territory.136

Initially, the economic expectations for the Northern Territory were not focussed on mining but on pastoralism and agriculture. Speculation, a hallmark of the early sale of land in the Northern Territory and the gold rushes, propped these expectations.137 For years government sponsored geologists traversed the country looking for signs of wealth. They saw possibility and promise everywhere. Equally, there were many a geologist's report that listed abandoned

Read (ed), A social history of the Northern Territory, 1 gold mining 1870-1932, spoken, written and photographed by those who took part, published for the Department of Education, Northern Territory by the Commonwealth of Australia, 1977.
134 Riddett, Kine, kin and country, xii.
mine after abandoned mine. The pendulum always swung between exhortation and despair. In 1913 one government man acerbically reported that ‘...the country was believed to possess great mineral wealth; but for various reasons this part of Australia had come to be known to mining investors as a land of blasted hopes.’\textsuperscript{138} Even today the margins of profit in the open cut goldfields around Pine Creek are very slim.\textsuperscript{139} As the above comment illustrates the counter-weight of expectation (and speculation) was collapse and disappointment when the dreams failed to be realised.\textsuperscript{140}

Many commentators concerned themselves with examining the reasons for the failures of mining and other industries. Henry Hall succinctly listed the impediments to mining in the Top End goldfields in his wonderfully titled book \textit{Our Back Yard: How to make Northern Australia an asset instead of a liability} published in 1938. He listed numerous obstacles to successful mining in the Top End noting the harshness of the tropical climate including rising water during the sinking of wells and shafts, dry season fires, lack of capital and shallow reefs.\textsuperscript{141}

Definitions of success came down to individuals and to particular periods when mineral and metal prices were high due to demand. There appears to have been rewards for those few who had sufficient capital either individually or through association with consortiums, who knew a good lease when they saw one, had business acumen combined with good fortune and who were prepared to stay.\textsuperscript{142}

As Steve Boyes, a mining engineer living in Pine Creek prosaically summed up: ‘...the economics bit is the important thing. If you can make money at it then it is an ore body; if you can't make money out of it then it's not an ore body.’\textsuperscript{143} In every decade between 1870

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} Report on operations since the transfer to the Commonwealth in the Bulletin series, Minister for External Affairs, Melbourne, 1913, p.9; \textit{Reports (geological and general)}, p.35, p.36; Jensen, Reminiscences, p.84, p.101; State Records of SA: SAPP, G. MacLachlan, Senior Surveyor, 1871, II, Paper no. 126.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Steve Boyes interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Powell, \textit{Far country}, p.104.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Henry Hall, \textit{Our back yard: how to make northern Australia an asset instead of a liability}, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1938, p.124. p.125-127, pp.127-128, p.129; p.130, pp. 132-133. For general discussion of these impediments see Pearce, vol. 1, p.31.
\item \textsuperscript{142} One of the most successful long term miners in the early years of Pine Creek was Olaf Jensen who took many thousands of ounces from the Eleanor mine until, in a timely manner in 1892, he sold his claim. C. Price Conigrave, \textit{North Australia}, Johnathon Cape, London, 1936, pp.188-189.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
\end{itemize}
and 1910 there was a downturn in either metal and mineral prices and a downturn in the volume of metals and minerals that were mined on the Top End mining fields.  

Success, failure - or something in between

Economic foci

Peter Donovan, who has looked closely at government and economic enterprise in the Northern Territory is blunt in his assessment of European economic enterprise in both the South Australia period of government [1863-1910] and Commonwealth period of government [1911-1978] of the Northern Territory describing 'The history of European enterprise in the Northern Territory of South Australia [as] singular for the fact that it was almost a total failure.'

Alan Powell is sanguine about the economic promise of the Northern Territory noting a history of piecemeal settlement, failed enterprise and spasmodic success in the form of mining and, to some extent the pastoral industry. However, he also celebrates the survival of mining and pastoralism in the Northern Territory and the human and resource outcomes including the arrival of the first Chinese immigrants and the building of the North Australia Railway. He locates the development of the North 1870-1890 with a boom period Australia-wide and he points out that in relative terms'...mining and particularly the mining of gold, was by far the most stable and profitable enterprise in the Northern Territory during the nineteenth century and it brought development where none had existed before. It brought the Pine Creek-Darwin railway. It also brought the first Chinese immigrants.'

David Carment and Sue Harlow have concluded that in general terms the mining industry in the Northern Territory succeeded in terms of revenue when compared with other industries. Carment argued that mining in the Northern Territory needed to be located not only within a regional historical context but as part of the rise of global industrialisation where new forms of mining technology were successfully imported into remote fields.

144 NAA, NT: A3, 1918/2764, report, E. Copley Playford, Chief Mining Warden of the Northern Territory, Northern Territory Mines District A. Comparative statement of revenue received for the year ending 30th June 1916. See Appendix 1 in this thesis - Population and mineral profit estimates 1872-1916.


146 Powell, Far country, p.95.

147 David Carment and Sue Harlow, A History of mining in the Northern Territory. Report to Donovan and Associates, history and historic preservation consultants, for 'History of mining in Australia' project, November 1994, p.15; David Carment, 'Writing the mining history of Australia's Northern Territory: past themes, current research and future prospects', Paper presented to the Australian
The tendency of historians of NT history to focus on economic interests reflects partly on the economic motives in settlement but also reflects a trend towards 'developmentalism' whereby '...the affairs of the local community are chiefly a result of profiteering interests, the desire for economic gain.' This trend was particularly pronounced in mining and civic histories into the 1980s. In a way the uncritical focus on development as a theme in local and regional history has been another form of colonising discourse and overshadows non-economic/non-commercial understandings of history. For instance, the concept of economic success within the mining industry does not take into account the impact of mining on the lives of people notably Indigenous people, on whose lands the mining occurred.

Howard Pearce defined the significance of the town of Pine Creek in terms of its function as a communication/transport and mining centre. Peter Donovan described the historic significance of Pine Creek as being the centre of '...the Territory's premier goldfield, and the southern terminus of the North Australia Railway', a premier status that had waned by 1911. As J.Y. Harvey noted, the significance of Pine Creek as a rail terminus [1896-1911] was not only that it '...served a mining area but that it '...was also the railhead for developing pastoral properties further inland. Similarly, historians' assessment of the Chinese contribution to Northern Australian history identifies their contribution largely in economic terms, for instance their success in the

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Historical Association Regional Conference, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville, July 1995, p.12.

148 For instance the town of Pine Creek would not have survived without the support of local industries and the railway. See Pearce, vol. 1, pp.124-125.


150 Examples of this genre or elements therein are found in the following examples: Janice Wegner, The Etheridge, James Cook University, Townsville, 1990; Peter Donovan, Alice Springs. Its history & the people who made it, Alice Springs Town Council, Alice Springs, 1988; Geoffrey Blainey, The rush that never ended: A history of Australian mining, Melbourne University Press Melbourne, 1981 (first published 1963); Jones, The Chinese in the Northern Territory. The histories of the National Trust have also reflected more general trends in local and regional history in the 1980s in which description and historical chronology tended to be heavily emphasised. See Peter Bell, Pine Creek: A Report to the NTANT on an archaeological assessment of sites of historic significance in the Pine Creek District, James Cook University, Queensland, 1983, p.2.xxx.

151 Haitch, Biography of a Small Town, p.260; Richard Howitt, 'Developmentalism', p.6.

152 Pearce, vol. 1, p.150. For instance Pearce writes that by 1886 Pine Creek, as a mining center, '...had ceased to be of any importance' but by 1892 the town was said to be enjoying another boom as a result of the railway line established between Port Darwin and Pine Creek. Pearce concluded that in the 1970s Pine Creek '...lost its renewed significance as a mining centre, and it lost its significance as a transport and communications centre'. Pearce, vol. 1, p.150.

domain of mining, market gardening and merchandising.\textsuperscript{154} Howard Pearce described the arrival of the Chinese miners on the Pine Creek goldfields '...as an event of seminal importance in the development of the Pine Creek District'.\textsuperscript{155} Alan Powell was emphatic about the contribution of Chinese people to regional development and to the local economy. 'The Chinese largely built the Pine Creek railway, they dominated the goldfields, their industrious market-gardening gave the first reliable supplies of fresh vegetables to Darwin and they were well established in business.'\textsuperscript{156}

As well as bypassing the exploration of non-commercial aspects of regional history the focus on the themes of development, economic success and failure is perhaps too broad and rough a brush with which to examine the local economy. For instance the pattern of mining at a local level was highly volatile making it difficult to conceive of in terms of success \textit{per se}. At the very least the success was highly contingent and modified by adverse conditions such as the distance of the goldfields from Port Darwin and southern supply ports, the costs of transport, labour and food, lack of capital and climatic exigencies.\textsuperscript{157} From a labour history point of view mining has not necessarily been successful in terms of work safety nor economic certainty. As Bernie Brian has written 'Mining was, and still is, a very insecure industry for Territory workers' and the mining conditions were 'often very primitive and dangerous, with little regulation from the government.'\textsuperscript{158}

The definition of economic interests needs to be broadened in historical analysis in local and regional history to embrace the more localised aspects of economic exchange.\textsuperscript{159} Micro-economic realities in the Pine Creek area included small scale, often mobile, industries which relied heavily on labour partnerships and bartering in order to survive. European and Chinese employers relied heavily on Indigenous labour/partnerships particularly in the cattle, buffalo and crocodile industry while Europeans have also historically relied on partnerships with Chinese investors and miners.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{154} For instance Cathie May looked at the Chinese in Cairns in terms of '...their contribution to the early development of North Queensland', Cathie May, \textit{Topsawyers: the Chinese in Cairns 1870 to 1920}, James Cook University, Townsville,1984.
\textsuperscript{155} Pearce, vol. 1, p.53.
\textsuperscript{156} Powell, \textit{Far country}, p.97.
\textsuperscript{158} Brian, One big union, p.147; See also Carment and Harlow, A history of mining, p.3, p.15; Carment, Writing the mining history, p.2.
\textsuperscript{159} In the Daly River area Richards described a forgetfulness among observers during the period 1912-1940 about how local industries survived. Richards, 'An Australian frontier...', p.64.
\textsuperscript{160} The antecedents of the fossicking economy go back to the early days of mining when miners had to diversify economically to survive. For instance the Chinese miners moved seasonally between work...
Diversification: 'A fossicking economy'

There has been some debate between historians and archaeologists about whether Pine Creek's primary historical economy is one of mining or pastoralism, based on the economic contributions of these industries to the area. As one resident queried — was Pine Creek a mining or a station town? One might also ask, given the history of the area, was Pine Creek a buffalo town also? The answer to this question lies in the question itself. Residents of the Pine Creek area have relied on diversification in their work in order to survive including mining, cattle, buffalo and crocodile hunting, timber getting, market gardening, peanut growing and tourism.

Levitus has contrasted this 'small-scale' economic activity in the Alligator Rivers region with '...official attempts to attract large amounts of permanent, productive capital' which he described as being '...repeatedly frustrated, with large investments being lost in cattle stations, mines and agricultural projects.' Levitus's observations are a counter-discourse to the traditional emphasis in NT regional history on macro-economic themes. Levitus's

on the goldfields and work on the Railway. State Records SA: GRS 22, report, Chief Warden to Government Resident. Progress Reports on Goldfields, 8 October 1887. In this system barter and credit were essential features of the local economy. From 1936 onwards Ah Toy’s store operated with substantial issuing of credit as part of their normal business practice. In the Pine Creek area numerous locals, Indigenous non-Indigenous, were fossicking for minerals in exchange for supplies. As one Pine Creek resident summed up: 'We did anything.' NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 34, Sony Cox interviewed by Mary Stephenson, 1982, p.10.

Robert Liddy interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997. Pine Creek was surrounded by both pastoral and grazing leases. As Pearce points out pastoral leases along with grazing leases were also used for buffalo shooting. Pearce, vol. 1, p.5. Goodparla Station was used in this manner. See Tom Cole, Riding the Wildman Plains. The letters and diaries of Tom Cole 1923-1943. Pan MacMillan, Sydney, 1994, pp.176-179; The small pastoralist that emerged in the 1890s proved to be a long term stayer in the area and in 1922 the pastoral industry was declared the chief industry. See NAA, ACT: A1/1, 1927/7835, 'Hookworm campaign - Northern Territory'. Leasehold maps of the area reflect the mixture of both cattle and buffalo with both pastoral leases and grazing leases evident. See for instance National Library: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Northern Territory of Australia. Pastoral leases & grazing licences, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra, 1952.

Levitus, Everybody, p.7, Young with Dalton, No place for a woman, pp.65-66. Levitus does not explicitly discuss tourism but it is another industry I have included on this list. Tourist/safari enterprises have been operating in the region periodically throughout the twentieth century. During the late 1980s and early 1990s Elaine and Earl Gano, in conjunction with Leoni Ruig, operated sight seeing 'tented safari' on behalf of Abercrombie and Kent. For other references to tourism in the area see Stewart, The green eyes.

Levitus, Everybody, p.7

Levitus, Everybody, p.7
observations are also supported by the detailed work of geographers on the region particularly H.H. Bauer and McDonald Homes.\(^\text{165}\)

The importance of Levitus's work is that he aptly names and describes aspects of the local economy which reflect the daily reality of survival and which incorporates the contribution of Indigenous labour. So the question becomes not so much whether mining or pastoralism or other industries were prominent but how the majority of people resident in the area survived. Thus the fossicking economy is an inclusive economic model that reflects the diverse cultural make up of labour while emphasising micro-economic realities in the region.

What is less obvious in Levitus's history is a recognition of the role of Chinese people in this economy and their relationships with Indigenous people. Levitus's history also highlights how, in the Northern Territory, the emphasis on Indigenous-European relationships has tended to mean less attention and emphasis on Indigenous-Chinese relationships and the impact of Chinese settlement in the area.

**Other kinds of histories**

As discussed earlier the general focus in the literature on whether or not an industry succeeded or failed does not take into account non-commercial indicators of success and failure. Overtly economic themes are in some ways integral to the concept of settlement but also need to be recognised in context as one of a number of themes that can be potentially pursued in writing local and regional history.

**Non-economic foci**

In the early twenty-first century non-commercial motives are most clearly defined in histories which look at the history of place, culture, community and environment. These histories offer stories about the complexity of motivation for being in a place and the nature

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\(^{165}\) McDonald Holmes, writing in the 1930s, described the Pine Creek area as a '..."plus cattle" economy with individual station owners practising widely different part-time activities. Some were peanut growers and buffalo shooters, one was a miner at the Pine Creek goldfield, one was a railway fettler and another "mine host" at the Brock’s Creek Hotel.' J. Macdonald Holmes, *Australia’s open north: A study of Northern Australia bearing on the urgency of the times*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1966, p.279. Bauer, an historical geographer writing in the 1960s, pointed out that those stations which ‘hung on’ in the Top End could not survive by pastoralism alone. Rather, they developed a ‘...a new-subsistence existence compounded of cattle, a little mining and ... buffalo shooting.’ Bauer, *Historical geography*, p.156. Note that World War Two provided a local market for some of these stations. Pearce also records that the small pastoral holdings that typified the area were held by European residents of various occupational backgrounds who survived by prospecting and relying heavily on Indigenous labour for cattle and buffalo work. Pearce described Pine Creek as ‘a small man’s country’, Pearce, vol. 1, p.105, see also p.126.
of impacts of development on the land and its inhabitants, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous and have their antecedents also in the 1980s. The 1980s were a particularly rich period for local and regional history writing. It signalled the zenith of National Trust funded histories in the Top End including Pine Creek. It was a decade in which many local and regional histories were initiated through Bi-centennial funding which celebrated European settlement. It was also a period marked by an exploration of alternative perspectives which coincided with the rise of the Indigenous land rights movement, the environmental movement and the feminist movement. It was a period when historians began to explore different vantage points and different perspectives and where other disciplines began to draw heavily on history in order to understand the past.

For instance in the late 1980s the first substantive history of forestry in the Northern Territory was written. More recently environmental history has been strengthened through collaborative research enterprises involving scientists, social scientists and land owners/leasees although with limited involvement by historians. On the ground the juncture between environmentalists and mining developers resulted in the production of Environmental Impact assessments (EIS). These written assessments produced by the mining company comprised descriptions of regional geology, hydrology, flora and fauna and for the purpose of this thesis have provided a resource for describing elements of local environmental history in the Pine Creek area.

**Reassessing mining history**

The 1980s was also a period of historical reassessment in respect of the gold rushes where the rushes ceased to be conceived of solely as events and where the gaps in previous mining histories were interrogated. As David Goodman observed:

...immigrants and their ethnicity; failure at the diggings; the way in which the trials and tribulations of diggers were not recorded by goldfield artists; women and children on the goldfields; and the physical devastation of the landscape. The new environmental

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166 See Chapter Five. For environmental research bearing on forestry in the Top End see David L. Wigston, Forest Murmurs. Forestry in the Northern Territory 1954-1978 in *Northern Perspective*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1990, p.4 and Nicola L. Hanssen and David L. Wigston. 'Approaches to a forest history of the Northern Territory in Australia’s ever changing forests' in Kevin J. Frawley and Noel M. Semple (eds), *Proceedings of the first national conference on Australian forest history*, special publication no. 1, Department of Geography and Oceanography, Australian Defence Force Academy, Campbell, ACT, 1988, pp.345-357.

histories gave space to the gold rushes as instances of the general environmental destruction associated with mining history. The old heroic gold rush had gone, but so had any sense of the gold rushes posing historically specific moral problems.\textsuperscript{168}

Susan Lawrence, an archaeologist, who looked at the historical archaeology of an 1890s gold mining area in Victoria examined 'ordinary men and women doing ordinary things' rather than on the '...literary elites...' of the period '...who created the records'.\textsuperscript{169} She added that the traditional emphasis of mining on 'men and machines' obscured 'the subtleties and complexities of the gold rush' and fed into stereotypes about mythologies associated with the bush and male/Australian identity.\textsuperscript{170}

Sue Harlow's work on the history of the Northern Territory tin mining fields at Maranboy south of Pine Creek particularly noted the absence of women in the written history and the '...celebration of the courage and masculinity of the men' which failed '...to recognise the significance of women, black and white, married and single, who made their way to the tin mining community of Maranboy.'\textsuperscript{171}

In Pine Creek a number of European mine owners in the early twentieth century were women and there are a number of cases of European women in partnership with Chinese men. European and Chinese women, while small in number, played key roles in the local economy individually and as part of family businesses.\textsuperscript{172} Similarly there is evidence indicating that many Indigenous people were involved in the discovery of minerals, worked alongside European miners and undertook fossicking on their own account in exchange for goods.\textsuperscript{173}

The work of Harlow and other writers like Francesca Merlan highlights not only the significance of women and Indigenous people in the mining industry but the significance of tin in the region. Gold was the early breadwinner in the Pine Creek district and its high price

\textsuperscript{168} David Goodman, \textit{Gold Seeking Victoria and California in the 1850s}, Allen & Unwin, St Leonard's NSW, 1994, x.
\textsuperscript{169} Lawrence, \textit{Dolly's Creek}, p.7.
\textsuperscript{170} Lawrence, \textit{Dolly's Creek}, p.16.
\textsuperscript{171} Harlow, \textit{Tin gods}, p.36. Francesca Merlan has added to this picture in respect of the role of Indigenous labour generally and Indigenous contacts with Europeans at the Maranboy mines. Merlan, \textit{Caging the rainbow}, p.88.
\textsuperscript{172} Both Mayse Young and Lily Ah Toy were strongly situated within a family unit. For more biographies of NT womens' lives see James, \textit{No man's land}.
\textsuperscript{173} Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Brocks Creek and Burnside Station, 1997; Larry Ah Lin, discussion notes, 1997; Gillespie, \textit{Imarlkba}.
meant that it never really fell out of favour. It was tin however that rivalled gold as the principal mineral in the immediate Pine Creek area and buttressed the mining economy for a number of years particularly in the early nineteenth of century. Copper also proved to be reasonably profitable and wolfram came into its own during both world wars while iron ore and uranium became significant in the post-war era.

The situation on the Top End goldfields had parallels and differences with what occurred elsewhere in Australia. More work remains to be done on the relationship between population expansion and contraction on the mining fields, the cycles of mineral prices, the opening up of other mining fields elsewhere in Australia and the impact of government policy on the viability of the mineral fields.

Archaeological records

Archaeological records have been a particularly important source of mining history because, as Susan Lawrence has noted, ‘...the physical remains of mining are so widespread and ubiquitous on the Australian landscape.’

Susan Lawrence noted that the archaeological research on towns and villages has been far less common than industrial archaeological research on the gold fields. The exception to this has been the work of archaeologists on Chinese settlements including Pine Creek.

I review these archaeological studies in more depth in the next section as part of my review on what has been written on Chinese Australian history and some of the issues these writings raise.

174 Hall outlines: ‘In some way tin mining has been the most satisfactory for the Northern Territory, in that its production has been the most regular of all the metals and minerals for many years’. Hall, Our back yard, p.123; See Appendix 1: Population and mineral profit estimates (1872-1916); Reports (geological and general), p.39; Gamble, ‘A history of mining’; Pearce, vol. 1, p.120.

175 The diversity of minerals and metals in the Pine Creek area may have assisted the local mining industry. When the Northern Hercules gold mine near Pine Creek went out of business in the 1950s the uranium mining boom in the South Alligator area filled the gap. The uranium boom, which began in 1954, crashed in 1956. At the end of the 1950s, Frances Creek iron ore mine started life and closed in 1976. In the 1980s and 1990s new technologies facilitated the opening of two large scale open cut gold mines in the Pine Creek area, one of which closed in the 1990s and another which is about to close in 2003. See Gamble, ‘A history of mining’, p.29, p.37, p.39; Pearce, vol. 1, p.105, p.126, pp.132-144, p.150; Harvey, The Never-Never line, p.72; Powell, Far country, p.169.

176 See Appendix 1: Population and mineral profit estimates (1872-1916).

177 Lawrence, Dolly's Creek, p.6.

178 As Lawrence has also noted it has been much more unusual for archaeologists to study non-Chinese settlement in Australia. One of the notable exceptions to this was Kate Holmes archaeological work at Arltunga in Central Australia, Northern Territory. Holmes, Arltunga.
CHINESE HISTORIES AND IDENTITY

The issue of racism raises an interesting conundrum in understanding Chinese Australian history: Chinese people, like Indigenous people, suffered experiences of racism but like European people were settlers and colonisers albeit with a different orientation towards settlement. The sources reflect this division.

Australian historians who have looked at Chinese-European relations during the gold rushes have tended to focus on European anti-Chinese sentiment, government policy and the population implications of the enactment of immigration restriction Acts. This focus has been reflected in the body of archival evidence in the Goldfields period which was generated by Europeans often with an anti-Asian/racist focus. This research has been mainly focussed on the southern and Queensland goldfields. The historical archival record on Pine Creek provides numerous examples of this focus in the descriptions by Europeans of the Chinese miners, their culture and their mining methods. 179

In recent years the Chinese Australian community has been instrumental in generating its own history in contrast to Euro-centric accounts. Writers of Indigenous histories have situated Chinese migration within their broader exploration of the impact of colonisation.

Ann McGrath in her work on the history of Indigenous people in the cattle industry summed up that virtually '...all the evidence available concerning the relationships between Chinese and Aborigines records oppression and cruelty' 180 This statement while true in part glosses over a more complex reality. 181


180 McGrath, Born in the cattle, p.84, Eric Rolls, Sojourners. flowers and the wide sea, UQP, St Lucia, 1992, p.291. For incidents involving Chinese and Indigenous conflicts in the Pine Creek area see Pearce, vol. 1, p.45, p.96.

181 While acts of oppression and cruelty certainly did occur much of the evidence was tainted by European racism. For instance, as Powell observes, in Baldwin Spencer's accounts of the Chinese in the Northern Territory it would be hard to separate out his personal 'abhorrence' about Chinese people from what he saw as the debasement of Indigenous culture by the Chinese immigrants on the goldfields. Powell, Far country, p.161. The police at Pine Creek were constantly policing Chinatown. See for example - NTAS: F294, Pine Creek police journal 14 June 1894 and 16 June 1894. Conversely the law sought to protect Chinese people from 'crimes' committed by Indigenous people.
Both written and oral history sources reveal that Chinese settlers, like Europeans, were colonisers of Indigenous people's land and their mining activities directly impacted on Indigenous people and their culture. The traffic of opium, the impact of intensive mining and contact with Indigenous women mostly for sexual purposes have parallels with European impacts on Indigenous people's lives.  

Indigenous people defended their territory and their rights by attacking both European and Chinese men and European law sought to defend and protect both European and Chinese people from such attacks although there were disparities.

There were however distinctions in the initial nature of European and Chinese settlement. Because most Chinese were sojourners they did not extensively engage in long-term land acquisition such as pastoral ownership and therefore they did not need to continually assert their rights to the land like the Europeans. In a general sense all Chinese people who initially came to Australia, whatever their background, were sojourners to the extent that home remained China. Chinese people working in Australia were expected to send their earnings back home to their families and eventually return themselves with their new found wealth.

Like European relationships with Indigenous people the continuum of human responses - both cruel and empathetic - were displayed. Many Chinese and European men did not claim paternity of children out of relationships with Indigenous women, however there were exceptions. There are clear parallels between European and Chinese men's relationships with Indigenous women. Many children with Chinese or European fathers and Indigenous mothers experienced the same oppression. Furthermore many of these children did not know who their fathers were.

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182 C.E. Cook in H.C. Giese, 'Indigenous education in the Northern Territory', p.3; Lane (et al), Kakadu Conservation Zone Inquiry, p.10; Rolls, Sojourners, p.291.
185 At the very least they did not want to die or remain buried in Australia as evidenced by the practice of returning the bones of Chinese sojourners, who died in Australia to China. Bon-Wai Chou, 'The sojourning attitude', p.60, p.63.
186 Freddie Muggleton's father was a Chinese man. Freddie had no recollections of him - instead he had strong memories of his Indigenous step-father. Larry Ah Lin on the other hand remembered his
In this section I explore the historiography in relation to the writing of European and Chinese Australian community accounts of history. I begin with a brief history of Chinese immigration to the Northern Territory, Anti-Chinese legislation and Chinese settlement in the Pine Creek area as a precursor to exploring the sources and issues that emerge in the written histories in more detail.

Gold rushes and Chinese migration

Chinese workers first arrived in the Top End in 1874 as indentured labour working for mining companies, on public works such as the overland telegraph line and later for the North Australia Railway. The majority of these workers were initially employed under a credit-ticket system which essentially meant working off a debt in exchange for labour. A smaller but economically significant group of Chinese people were merchants and mine owners.

Most of the Chinese miners in the Northern Territory, as elsewhere in Australia, came from Kwantung Province in the Pearl River Delta in mainland Southern China. Chinese workers also came from other southern provinces including Pok-Lo, Gujian, Shongshan provinces and from Hong Kong. Workers also came from Singapore.

The Chinese merchant class was instrumental in advocating for the rights of Chinese workers in the face of anti-Chinese discrimination. While many of these merchants such as Ping Que and Quong Wing Chong had capital when they arrived others made their fortunes upon arrival. In this sense mining and other investment avenues in the Top End offered Chinese

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188 Justin McCarthy, 'Tales from the Empire City: Chinese miners in the Pine Creek region, Northern Territory, 1872-1915' in Paul MacGregor (ed), Histories of the Chinese, p.193; Curthoys, 'Men of All nations', pp.103-104. Jones, Pegging the Territory, p. 47. Note that Indian/Singhalese workers also came from Singapore. See for instance Shui Kwong Lo and Pine Que in NTDB, vol 3, p.198 and NTDB, vol 1, p.238. For further references see following footnote.
people the opportunity for upward mobility and an escape from the rigid hierarchies and obligations of the Chinese class system.\textsuperscript{189}

\textit{Anti-Chinese legislation}

From the 1870s to the 1890s Chinese people made up the majority of miners in the Pine Creek area and a significant number of the mine owners. The ascendancy of the Chinese people on the goldfields led to the European population lobbying the government for restrictions on Chinese access to the gold fields. The South Australian government initially attempted to curtail Chinese immigration in the Northern Territory through poll taxes and quarantine restrictions (1888) and legislation to exclude Chinese miners from holding leases on all newly opened fields (1895). The government also periodically repatriated miners to China including older Chinese miners who had worked the mining fields for many years.\textsuperscript{190}

The culmination of racist anti-Chinese sentiment by Europeans that manifested in a number of pitched battles on Australian mining fields culminated in the passing of the \textit{Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act} of 1902.\textsuperscript{191}

Racism constantly shadowed relationships between European and Chinese people, during the gold rushes. As Ann Curthoys has pointed out when '... the numbers of Chinese rose, as they did in New South Wales from 1877, and more dramatically on the Palmer River and other goldfields in northern Queensland, conflict and racism re-appeared with renewed virulence.'\textsuperscript{192} In the Pine Creek area the Wandi gold fields became a site of conflict.\textsuperscript{193}

Many Chinese miners left the Top End Goldfields for Queensland between 1890 and 1898 as the returns slowed. Some of these miners established themselves permanently in Queensland. Although the departure of these miners may have been hastened by anti-Chinese immigration legislation the primary cause for their leaving appears to have been economic

\textsuperscript{189} Yet Loong; Ping Que and Que Noy were among the first contingent of Chinese merchants/mining entrepreneurs who arrived in the early establishment years of Pine Creek. There were also a few Chinese business women who operated independently as business women such as Granny Lum Loy. A review of the \textit{NTDB} is revealing in terms of Chinese 'business' people who lived in or near Pine Creek and who stayed. Most were from Canton or the surrounding Province of Kwantung and spoke the Sze Yup dialect. See Chin Shue Hong, Lee Toy Kim (Mrs Lum Loy), Jimmy Ah Toy, Lee Hang Gong, Sue Wah Chin, Chin Toy, Myrtle Houn On Yee, Yuen Yet Hing (Yet Loong) and Kwong Sue Duk (Sun Mow Loong) - see \textit{NTDB}, vol. 1, pp.54-55, p.179, p.238; \textit{NTDB}, vol. 2, p.5, pp.80-81; \textit{NTDB}, vol 3, pp.50-54, p.165, pp.185-188, p.366.
\textsuperscript{191} For commentary on 'tributing' imposed on Chinese leaseholders which required joint ownership with Europeans see Jensen, Reminiscences, pp.86-87.
\textsuperscript{192} Curthoys, 'Men of All Nations', pp.108.
\textsuperscript{193} The Wandi goldfields north of Pine Creek were the first new field to which the \textit{Chinese Exclusion Act} of 1885 had been applied. In the lead up to this exclusion a print battle in the Northern Territory
although restrictions on Chinese immigration prevented the Chinese population from expanding in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia.\textsuperscript{194} There were also other factors at work impinging on population numbers including high mortality due to disease and exacerbated by poverty, and family obligations that encouraged Chinese people to return home.\textsuperscript{195}

Chinatown

From the 1890s onwards Pine Creek was the base of the Chinese mining community and continued to maintain a significant Chinese community into the early twentieth century. Evidence points to a thriving Chinese community in Pine Creek well into the 1920s that was largely concentrated in Chinatown immediately south of the gazetted town of Pine Creek.\textsuperscript{196} The Depression of the 1920s and the evacuation of the civilian population in World War Two effectively ended Chinatown’s existence and consequently the concentration of Chinese Australians living in the Pine Creek area.\textsuperscript{197}

Eurocentric interpretations of Chinese Australian history

Comparatively speaking very little historic academic research has been undertaken on the Top End gold rushes and their place within the larger history of gold rushes in Australia.\textsuperscript{198} Notwithstanding this gap much has been written on the history of Chinese participation in the early gold rush period of Australian history. However, there is a codicil on this history, which Ann Curthoy’s articulates. As she points out, the treatment of the Chinese miners on the gold fields by Europeans ‘…remains a matter of uneasiness’ in the Australian [European] Times was waged by Europeans against Chinese miners on this field. Jones, \textit{Pegging the Territory}, p.57, p. 63; \textit{NTTG}, 1 February, 1988, 18 March 1898, 25 March 1898.

\textsuperscript{194} As Timothy Jones points out a number of Chinese miners left the Northern Territory in 1910 to work on the Kowloon to Canton Railway. Jones, \textit{Pegging the Territory}, pp.45-46, see also p.94; Powell, \textit{Far country}, p.97. As My-Van Tran wrote in his biography of the merchant Chin Shue Hong, born in Pine Creek in 1900, economics and family ties played a role in whether or not Chinese miners chose to stay in the Pine Creek area. \textit{NTDB}, vol. 1, p.55. See also M. Christie ‘End of Darwin’s Chinatown’, \textit{Northern Perspective}, vol. 18, no. 2, 1995, p.50.

\textsuperscript{195} Powell, \textit{Far country}, p.117.

\textsuperscript{196} Chinatown comprised two temples, various stores, gambling spaces and a butcher’s. (See Chapter Five for further discussion of Chinatown). The majority of Chinese residents appear to have been miners but numerous residents also turned their hand to other kinds of work including teamster work, timber getting, market gardening, cooking, tailoring and herbalism. There were a number of Chinese retailers in Chinatown and Pine Creek. Some Chinese merchants engaged in opium dealing. (See Chapter Two for discussion of market gardening). Albert Que Noy interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1996, 1997; Lily Ah Toy interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1997; NTAS: TS 126, Jessie Tamblyn, 1981.

\textsuperscript{197} Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997; Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1997; M. Christie ‘End of Darwin’s Chinatown’, p.50; Jones, \textit{The Chinese}, p.106; \textit{NTDB}, vo.1, pp.54-55.

\textsuperscript{198} A case-in-point is the recent collection of gold rush histories (2001) in the collection edited by McCalman, Cook and Reeves, \textit{Gold}, which is noticeable for the lack of any mention of the Top End gold rushes although articles are included on Central Australia and the Pilbara in Western Australia.
psyche and this uneasiness continues in so far as Australians still grapple with their relationship with Asia. 199

Historians have also promoted this uneasiness. Geoffrey Blainey’s reading of the Chinese presence on the Australian goldfields could well have been written in the gold rush era itself – it seems unmediated by time or distance. “From Ballarat to the Palmer was halfway to the Equator, and a Chinese dragon stalked the European diggers all that way and nearly swallowed them in the steaming valleys of the Palmer.” 200

Historians and others writing about the history of the area have frequently commented on how European miners were outnumbered by Chinese miners. As I discuss in Chapter three, in relation to heritage interpretation, this emphasis is racially based to the extent that it implies that the normative reality was that Europeans were or should be in the majority on the Gold fields. Moreover, no mention is made of how many Indigenous people participated in mining or how they were outnumbered by the ‘immigrant’ mining population. 201

The most comprehensive account on the history of the Chinese people in the Northern Territory has been undertaken by Timothy Jones. Based largely on archival accounts, Jones argues that ‘...racial animosity was minimal and not a significant issue’ on the goldfields because the Chinese were in the majority. 202 However, this view tends to minimise the nature of racist incidents that did occur and the power differential between the two cultures.

The best that can be said perhaps was that racist episodes between European and Chinese miners were less widespread than elsewhere in Australia. 203 In contrast to racist episodes there were many mutually beneficial relationships between Chinese and European miners and investors that developed on the gold fields, in spite of government restrictions. 204

199 Curthoys ‘Men of All Nations’, pp.103-104.
200 Geoffrey Blainey, The rush that never ended, 1981, p. 95. See also p.87.
203 Sue Walden has pointed out that on the Tasmanian tin fields there was minimal strife between Chinese and non-Chinese miners partly because of the precarious nature of tin mining, a less cosmopolitan population (few Irish or American miners) and a responsible press which did not generate or inflame debate on the Chinese presence on the tin fields. Sue Walden, The tin fields of North-East Tasmania - a regional variation’ in Paul MacGregor (ed), Histories of the Chinese, p.62, p.177. Restrictions against the Chinese on new fields, notably Wandi, were eased in 1899 when Europeans realised that without the Chinese miners on the fields very few leases were being worked. Jones, Pegging the Territory, p. 63; Jones, The Chinese, p.82, p.83.
204 In the Pine Creek area the mining investor Mee Wah maintained a number of profitable business relationships with Europeans over many years including May Brown. NTDB, vol 1, p.43; See also Jones, Pegging the Territory, p.168, p.180, p. 63.
The Wandi goldfields were a site of conflict between European and Chinese miners but also were a site of conflict between Chinese miners themselves which reflects the more complex dimensions underpinning conflict whereby historical internecine conflict between particular Chinese dialect groups was imported onto the Australian mining fields. As Jane Lyndon has pointed out in her research on the Chinese community in Sydney: ‘Identity was more complex than the crude axis of race allowed.’

Archival records
Notwithstanding their cultural biases archival records provide important information on the Chinese mining population in the Pine Creek area. For instance in the gold rush period government Records on Mining District A, which included Pine Creek, provides an overview of the level and the degree to which Chinese miners were engaged in mining in the local area. The records include population statistics and the number of mining licences and leases being issued.

As Janis Wilton has pointed out, traditional archival sources reveal Australian European attitudes towards the Chinese community but not the cultural, social, political or economic practices of Chinese people in Australia at that time or the reasons Chinese people stayed after the mining booms had passed.

Wilton’s observations were part of a shift in the writing of Chinese Australian histories in the late twentieth century which as J.W. Cushman outlined needed ‘...to relocate the Chinese experience within the Chinese community itself.’

European Australian writers
This shift involved European Australian historians such as Janis Wilton, Jan Ryan and Timothy Jones focussing on the history of Chinese communities in specific regions in Australia. The work of historical geographers has also been important. Kay Anderson, in

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205 Lyndon, Many inventions, p.174 see also p.222. See also Jones, The Chinese, p.62, p.90; Hill, The Territory, p.217; NTTG, ‘letters to the editor’, March 18, 1898. Internecine conflict was also situated, at times, in Chinatown - see Pearce vol. 1, p.109.
her study of Vancouver's Chinatown has pointed out that: 'An important distinction needs to be made... between self definitions of identity and those classifications that are ascribed from without.'\textsuperscript{210} Anderson looked at the concept of 'Chinatown' as a case-in-point of a '...cultural abstraction that belongs to the beliefs and institutional practices of white European society'.\textsuperscript{211} In this respect, she wrote, the concept of 'Chinatown' belonged to the society '... with the power to define and shape it'.\textsuperscript{212} Similarly historical descriptions of Pine Creek Chinatown are replete with European categories of understanding.\textsuperscript{213}

In Pine Creek Baldwin Spencer and Hudson Fysh were examples of European outsiders looking into a Chinese cultural environment. In 1921 Fysh wrote that as he passed by the Joss House in Chinatown '...the pungent odour of burnt incense floats out through the open doorway and we are glad to be away from the town with its baffling mixture of unpleasant smells.'\textsuperscript{214} The Eurocentric gaze was evident in other historical descriptions of the area in which the town of Pine Creek was the focus of descriptions rather than Chinatown. In 1915 Elsie Masson could see 'the brushwood rooms and drooping flagstaffs' of Chinatown from the township but that was the extent of her engagement.\textsuperscript{215}

Local historians like Timothy Jones and more recently Diana Giese have promoted Top End Chinese history through their work. Giese describes this as part of '...the continuing process of collecting and highlighting the often hidden history of Chinese Australians.'\textsuperscript{216}

Oral history has been a vital source of information in the generation of histories from within the Chinese community and in conjunction with archival sources provides a more holistic record. An early Chinese Australian resident in Pine Creek I spoke with, Albert Que Noy, identified three main dialects in the area – Sze Yap, Chungshan and Hakka - and interviews with other former residents confirmed this.\textsuperscript{217} The work of historians in other parts of Australia confirms that the majority of Chinese people who came to Australia in the

\textsuperscript{210} Anderson, \textit{Vancouver's Chinatown}, p.17.
\textsuperscript{211} Anderson, \textit{Vancouver's Chinatown}, p.8, p.9.
\textsuperscript{212} Anderson, \textit{Vancouver's Chinatown}, p.10.
\textsuperscript{213} Hudson Fysh, 'The Northern Territory of Australia: A trip from Darwin to the Katherine River' in \textit{Sea, Land and Air}, vol. IV, no. 40, July 1, 1921, p.253; Spencer, \textit{Wanderings in Wild Australia}, p.630.
\textsuperscript{214} Fysh, 'The Northern Territory of Australia', p.253.
\textsuperscript{217} NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 634, Ernest Fong interviewed by Agnes Hannon, transcript, Darwin, 1985, pp.8-9.
nineteenth century spoke these dialects. The Sze Yap and Chungshan dialects were from the Sam Yapp district in Kwantung Province. The Hakka speaking people were resident workers in Kwantung and Kwangsi province but were originally from Shantung province in northeast China but due to political persecution they had gradually migrated south.\(^{218}\)

There is far more biographical information about those Chinese people who stayed in Australia like the Fong, Que Noy and Ah Toy families from Pine Creek and the Chinese merchant class generally who had a high public profile.\(^{219}\) In other words more is known about the Chinese people who stayed on in the Territory than the classic sojourners - those who left or those who died in Australia without dependents. It is this latter class, transient, in debt and poor, who we know least about as individuals. Many Chinese miners died on the Top End fields of diseases such as tuberculosis - their deaths hastened by poor diet and poverty.\(^{220}\) This gap has begun to be addressed particularly through the work of archaeologists who have reconstructed aspects of daily life on the mining fields.

**Archaeological studies and Chinese mining sites**

The work of archaeologists on mining sites in and around Pine Creek, notably Justin McCarthy, Peter Bell and Scott Mitchell has revealed key aspects of Chinese mining lifestyle which has, in conjunction with historic photographs and oral history, fleshed out the spare outlines of what has been known about the lives of Chinese miners. McCarthy highlighted the layout of Chinatown, components of Chinese diet, mining and religious practices. More recent work by Mitchell has focussed on trading networks and dietary differences between European and Chinese dwellers while Peter Bell has investigated Chinese ovens.\(^{221}\)

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\(^{219}\) See also Curthoys, 'Men of all nations', pp.103-104; Jones, *Pegging the Territory*, p. 47.

\(^{220}\) For overview of this picture see Len Cossons, (Compiler), Index of deaths mentioned in NT Police Day books – Pine Creek 1 January 1882 to 12 October 1948. Extracted by Len Cossons for the Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory December, 1991. For specific examples see NTAS: F294, Pine Creek Police Station Journals


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As McCarthy has pointed out the archaeological significance of Top End, Northern Queensland and Northern Tasmania mining sites is that they have been relatively undisturbed compared to southern mainland mining sites. 222

McCarthy and Associates' study on Pine Creek has been the most comprehensive to-date on the area. The analysis of ceramic tableware and vessels revealed that the Chinese miners re-created the dining and eating environment to which they were accustomed in China, for instance the use of rice and soup bowls, the imbibing of tea and the adherence to traditional cooking practices and recipes including the use of dried/cured meat and fish. As McCarthy discovered Chinese miners also consumed alcohol and smoked tobacco, yet unlike most of their European counterparts smoked opium. One of the most significant discoveries during the McCarthy and Associates survey was the discovery of a Chinese cemetery - eighty-five depressions or mounds were identified in some cases signified by corrugated iron grave markers. 223

Scott Mitchell's subsequent survey in 1995 added and clarified aspects of McCarthy's findings. In particular his excavation at Yam Creek Chinatown revealed extensive faunal remains confirming that fresh meat including crustaceans, dog, pig and beef, were an important part of the Chinese diet. Based on 'modern oral evidence' including Lily Ah Toy's, Peter Bell concluded that the cylindrical stone Chinese ovens in Pine Creek and elsewhere in Australia were used for roasting pigs for ceremonial occasions. 224

Community focus and public history

The direct involvement of the Chinese community in telling their own story has enriched what we know about Chinese Australian history particularly in terms of immigration and family history.

In the Northern Territory the Chinese Australian community has been instrumental in promoting Chinese-Australian history to a larger audience and engaging Chinese-Australian

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222 There are a number of photographs from the early twentieth century that depict Pine Creek Chinatown which McCarthy matched with archaeological evidence on the buildings in the Chinatown area. McCarthy, "Tales from the Empire City", p.198, p.201.


224 Like McCarthy, Mitchell found an absence of tinned meat cans and concluded that Chinese miners had an aversion to this type of meat. Mitchell, A Management Plan, p.13; Bell, 'Chinese ovens', p.220.
viewpoints about their own history through a permanent Chinese-Australian Chung-Wah Society museum exhibition in Darwin. The Darwin Chinese community, comprising families with links to Pine Creek, were instrumental in supporting and informing a Northern Territory Museum exhibition in 1996 entitled *Sweet and Sour: Experiences of Chinese families in the Northern Territory.*

These public histories are important for what they contribute to the body of knowledge about the past and because they empower the community. In their public display they celebrate the contribution of Chinese Australians as an antidote to previous histories which have been written by outsiders.

Individuals like William Yang, a photographer and performance artist, have also been instrumental in this reclamation of Chinese history in Australia - and in North Australia. Yang's maternal grandfather lived and worked in Yam Creek not far from Pine Creek. Yang travelled to 'ancestral' locations in the Top End of Australia in order to research his family history and visit the places of this history.

The strengths of community based histories also reveal their constraints. David Carment described the 'Sweet and Sour' exhibition at the Northern Territory Museum as both 'positive and misleading'. It was positive 'visually and aesthetically' but 'misleading' in giving scant attention to historical events and processes such as anti-Chinese racism and the relationships between Chinese men and Indigenous women. He noted that the curator of the exhibition had purposefully avoided stories of pain and suffering because of the Chinese committee's wishes to present a 'positive' exhibition which was linked to and reflected in the Chinese communities ownership of the exhibition.

In their celebratory aspects community histories tend to leave out the harsher stories of survival and, in the case of Chinese Australian history, aspects of colonisation. In Giese's work with the Chinese community in Darwin there was a strong 'celebratory' theme that emerged in the published result which necessarily concealed other stories of pain and

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226 See for instance NTAS: TS 401, transcript of addresses of Chinese stories by Mr Ah Toy, Mr Charlie See Kee and Mr Ernest Fong, n.d.
suffering. As one interviewee told Diana Giese, 'That's all in the past. Why talk about it.' There are personal reasons why people do not wish to re-visit this terrain and consequently one has to situate these public histories within the historical experience of the Darwin Chinese Australian community. Celebratory histories also provide an antidote to the traditional focus of historians on Anti-Chinese European responses.

The biography of Henry Quong illustrates what might be absent in public exhibitions. Henry Quong (Chin Shue Hong) told his son Eddie, 'Never be ashamed of your race' which as My Van Tran his biographer wrote ‘... had its roots in the harsh treatment Chin She Hong and other Chinese had experienced at the hands of Europeans in the early days of Northern Territory settlement...In fact, according to his children, Henry Quong had very few nice things to say about whites. On the other hand, he spoke of the native Aborigines as his 'good mates.'

**Conundrums: colonisation and cohorts**

Henry Quong's observation that Aborigines were his 'good mates' reflects the close ties that many Chinese people established with Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. Helen Liddy remembered the kindness of the Fongs in supplying their family with vegetables while they were hiding from authorities on the escarpment and Mai Katona will never forget Lily Ah Toy taking her into her own family when Mai's father was imprisoned. But other Indigenous people had other stories.

Individuals from second and third generation Chinese Australian people born in Pine Creek recognised an affinity with Indigenous people because of what they perceived as a 'shared oppression' while recognising that the Indigenous people were more oppressed than the Chinese people. Similarly David Hugo found that Italian mica miners in Central Australia had empathies with Indigenous people they employed based on their experience as


231 Personal communication, in confidence, 1997.

232 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 634 Ernest Fong, transcript, 1985, p.6, 'It's the poor Indigenous had a bad time.'; NTDB, vo.1, p.55.
immigrants in Australia. He wrote that the basis for the mica miner's relationship with Indigenous workers from Hart's Range was one of mutual respect.\footnote{David Frederick Hugo, Mica mining at Hart's Range, Central Australia, 1880s-1960: A study of ethnicity and the impact of isolation, PhD thesis, Northern Territory University, 1995, pp.25-26.}

The second generation of Chinese settlers in Pine Creek not only recognised an affinity with Indigenous people but also identified their roles as settlers. Ellen Crammond, Lily Ah Toy's sister-in-law, recalled a conversation with 'One eyed Tommy' in Pine Creek:

I'll never forget One Eyed Tommy, and it's a funny thing that gets in you, and I said to him something about – oh, I forget what it was – he said: "What are you talking about", he said; "this black fella country", he says. "Me here long time before you", he says. He gave it to me and I thought to myself that's right One Eyed Tommy. (Laughs). Oh yes, One Eyed Tommy – its things like that that register in your mind – really told me off – wasn't cheeky but he just letting me know. It was his country long before mine.\footnote{NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 483, Ellen Crammond interviewed by Margaret Gillespie, Darwin, transcript, 1986, p.6}

In the next section I look briefly at some of the sources that inform the World War Two period in Pine Creek. World War Two along with the nineteenth century gold rushes marked the second major demographic movement of non-Indigenous (military) males into the area when the civilian population of Pine Creek was evacuated south and the armed forces were stationed in the Top End including Pine Creek.\footnote{Powell, Far country. As Lily Ah Toy remarked, 'The war just shifted everybody.' Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1997, Darwin.}

**WORLD WAR TWO: SOURCES OF HISTORY**

**Background history**

During World War Two the town of Pine Creek, like Katherine and Darwin, was largely emptied of its civilian population and became one of a number of military outposts along the north-south route. The town of Pine Creek was a small stepping stone in the Northern Australian defence plan to keep the supply route open. Australians, European and African Americans, Dutch and Javanese military personnel were stationed for varying lengths of time in the Pine Creek district. Between 1942 and 1945 fifty-six army units were stationed in the town and vicinity. The busiest wartime time period in Pine Creek appears to have
been in 1943 when, for a brief period, the 18th Squadron was stationed at McDonald Airstrip. 236

A small core of civilian personnel, mostly men, stayed behind to supply the army with essential goods, such as market garden produce and maintaining the railway line. Sarah Feeney, a European woman managed to stay behind by threat (she was going to run into the bush) and cajoling (she offered to mend the soldiers uniforms) and she, along with a handful of nurses, formed the core contingent of European women in Pine Creek during the war years. So called ‘traditional’ or ‘full blood’ Indigenous people were moved by the army and Government agencies into compounds near the major settlements including Pine Creek. One of the largest compounds was at Adelaide River. A small compound was established south of Pine Creek near the Cullen River. Buildings in Pine Creek - including the Hotel and Ah Toys General Store - were commandeered for army use. 237

The compounds became a point of labour supply for the army - men and women went to work labouring on infrastructure projects including road works and in market gardens and other areas. Indigenous men worked in a fettlers gang on the railway line near Pine Creek and with an airforce crash crew. 238

Military historians and military personnel
The most comprehensive overview of the military in World War Two in the Top End of the Northern Territory has been undertaken by Alan Powell who thoroughly exploited the rich archival record for this period, much of which is held in the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the National Australian Archives. War diaries and photographs held by the

236 For instance two US army squadron’s were stationed at Pine Creek, possibly at McDonald Airstrip. Graham R. McKenzie Smith, Australian Army Units in Pine Creek Area, NT, 1998 (printed list); Graham R McKenzie Smith, Australia’s forgotten army, vol. 2. Defending the Northern gateways. Northern Territory & Torres Strait – 1938 to 1945, Grimwade Publications, Chapman ACT, 1995. It is difficult to estimate how many military personnel were in the area although the size of these units is likely to have been quite small as Pine Creek was not a major strategic centre. The average stay of these units was about 9 months. For a list of units see Appendix 2. See also Robert Hall, ‘Aborigines, the army and the Second World War in northern Australia’ in Aboriginal History, vol. 4, June 1980, p.87.


AWM are also helpful for this period. One has to read carefully to find any references to such a militarily insignificant area as Pine Creek - or go to the primary sources oneself. Far more readily available information is available on Adelaide River which housed a large army base and was the headquarters for the region.

Powell's history is a general history of the defence forces in the NT during World War Two with less emphasis on the civilians that remained behind. In this sense the main gap in his account lies with the experiences and perspectives of non-military personnel during this period. More is known about the legacy of military occupation for returning civilians in Pine Creek from their oral history accounts and autobiographies. The Ah Toy and the Young families recalled the significant physical damage and neglect of the buildings that housed their business and their homes and feelings of personal devastation at having to start over again.

The most comprehensive information on military units stationed in Pine Creek comes from military enthusiast Graham McKenzie who took the time to document the units stationed in the Top End including Pine Creek which was a sub-area of the 14 Line of Communication District. Other historians have also assisted with this enterprise.

Personal memories and oral histories have provided another important avenue of information. During the course of this PhD I interviewed Gordon Wallace who was part of the 18th Squadron at McDonald Airstrip outside of Pine Creek. He had written about his personal experiences in his self-published memoirs.

**Other accounts**

Anthropologists have been a significant source of information on the history of Indigenous people who were placed in compounds during the war. Of particular note is the account by Ronald and Catherine Berndt who undertook a survey of military camps during World War

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240 I undertook general searches at the Australian War Memorial and the National Australian Archives in Victoria as well as examining some of Alan Powell's archive material housed at the Northern Territory University.
241 Young with Dalton, *No place for a woman*, p.121; Eddie Cheong Ah Toy interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek 1997a.
Two including Cullen Compound. Their survey remains the most comprehensive examination of these compounds in respect of Indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{244} Robert Hall's general work on Indigenous involvement in the military has also made an important contribution to this subject area including North Australia.\textsuperscript{245}

Oral history in general is another valuable source of historical information for this period. During the course of this PhD I visited both Cullen and Adelaide River (Burrell Creek) compounds with two Wagiman women, Helen Liddy and Lulu Martin respectively, and as I discuss in Chapter four visiting the sites of memory was a prompt for recollection. Lulu Martin gave a particularly detailed account of Burrell Creek compound which was aided by the amount of debris left over from the war such as bully beef tins, a bed, oven and so forth. As Lulu Martin recalled of the Adelaide River compound, living conditions were unhealthy and could even be life threatening.\textsuperscript{246}

As with other aspects of Northern Territory history more work remains to be done about this period. Tex Moar recalled that it was common knowledge that military personnel in the Pine Creek area were liaising with Indigenous women illicitly and that large amounts of cash were flooding into the local economy through this trade.\textsuperscript{247}

With the end of World War Two and the return of the civilian population to the Northern Territory the local demography of Pine Creek had changed forever. Many of the old people, notably the old Chinese men from Chinatown, never returned and many families moved to Darwin using Pine Creek as a staging post after the war. For a period in the 1950s a number of well known Indigenous families took up residence in Pine Creek before moving back to Darwin.\textsuperscript{248}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{243} Gordon Wallace, \textit{Those airforce days}, Gordon Wallace, Surrey Hills, Victoria, 1986. Veterans in general have been a strong source of information such as former member for Jingili, Ted Warren, \textit{Recognition for wartime railway workers} in Ted Warren's Jingili Journal,
\item \textsuperscript{244} Berndt, and Berndt, \textit{End of an era}.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Hall, 'Aborigines', pp.73-95.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Lulu Martin's sister died in childbirth at the compound. Lulu talked about the the loss of her sister and the poor living conditions. The latter included flies and stagnant water. There was a fuel dump nearby. Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Burrell Creek Compound and Mt Shoebridge, tape 4, 1997. Pearce, vol. 1, pp.143-144.
\item \textsuperscript{247} Tex Moar, interview, 1997b, Lulu Martin interview, tape 4, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{248} William (Bill) Baird interviewed by Jane Bathgate, Batchelor, 1997; Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997a.
\end{itemize}
CONCLUSIONS

In reading the histories of the Pine Creek area, whether they are archival sources, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, local or regional histories, and whether they are written by public servants, journalists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, Justices or local residents I am reminded constantly of how written history is fed by many streams of historiography each with something to offer in understanding Indigenous, European and Chinese Australian histories of the area - and each with its limitations. In this chapter I have alluded to some of these streams but by doing so I am also acutely aware of how difficult it is to draw together a history based not only on sources with very different orientations but where much primary research remains to be undertaken. The diversity of sources which make up the history of the area requires close scrutiny and sifting through in order to understand their respective biases. In other words historiography is integral to understanding the history of the area. What is also apparent is that both oral and archival sources, community based and external histories are all critical sources in understanding the history of cultures in Pine Creek.

The writing of local or regional history relies on frames of reference that accommodate difference and allow different voices to speak. One way to address this divergence in sources is to look at them as expressions of perception, be it a European Australian public servant's perception or a Chinese Australian merchant's or an Indigenous person's as recounted in oral history, or the perceptions of a European Australian historian like myself. Throughout this thesis I pursue the theme of perception in various ways. In the next chapter I explore perceptions of country, my own and others, and how people have survived in relationship to the natural environment.
CHAPTER TWO

LOOKING AT THE LAND, LIVING IN COUNTRY
Figure 6: Kybrook Farm banner and Pine Creek environment banner.  
CHAPTER TWO
LOOKING AT LAND, LIVING IN COUNTRY

It rains everywhere equally
Descends on all sides,
Streaming and pouring unstinted,
Permeating the land.

The Lotus [Sutra] of the Wonderful Law

The above sutra alludes to the presence of the Buddha 'everywhere equally'. It is an allegory
drawn from the Asian landscape and could easily be applied to the tropical north of Australia
where monsoon rains also 'stream and pour'.

One of the abiding memories I have during my travels to Pine Creek was during the wet
season. As I drove south into Pine Creek billowing banks of clouds moved off the Kakadu
escarpment to the east. I could see flashes of lightning and hear the rumble of thunder. I
noticed the contrast in colour between the grey heavens and the long green grass covering
the ground.

This chapter is partly a respite from the density of the previous chapter's exploration of
history and reflects a change in focus. The focus in this chapter is about the natural
environment and its elements. Integral to this theme are peoples' responses to the
environment, their relationship to place and the continuing process of environmental change,
both natural and introduced, that influences their responses.

The natural environment impacts on all who live in the area. The banners that introduce this
chapter reflect an abiding concern, interest and relationship with the natural environment in
the Pine Creek community. These banners depict images of bush food (lily roots, pythons
and turtles) and rare and endangered species (the ghost bat, Gouldian finch and hooded
parrot) and other wildlife local to the area (kites, brolgas and dragonflies).  

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1 The lotus of the wonderful law of the lotus gospel, W.E. Soothill (trans), Oxford University Press,
2 Steve Boyes, interview, 1997; See also Sarah Nabulwad Roberts and Jill Roberts, discussion notes,
Kakadu, 1997; Notebook 1, 27 February 1998.
For Indigenous people 'country' is where they are from – it is their place. Their connection to country is tempered by an experience of loss and environmental damage that is the legacy of settlement. For non-Indigenous people the land is where they seek to belong – or seek to escape. There is both aversion and attraction - appreciation and despair at what they find or do not find in the land.  

I begin by briefly describing the local natural environment, its uniqueness, and its seasonal cycles of change before moving on to a broad discussion of the relationship of people to place and their diverse perceptions including the impact of environmental change.

**ELEMENTS**

**Climate**

In the physical environment and climate there is a continual interrelationship of the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. All human activity is set against a background of climate change, which oscillates between months of drought and fire to months of copious rain, from extreme humidity to cooler dry season temperatures.

*Water, air, fire and earth*

The rains, a harbinger of seasonal change, flood the waterways. In the wet season (between mid-January and mid-February) Pine Creek is full and flowing but with the seasonal drought, which extends from four to eight months of the year, water sources diminish and dry up. Pine Creek becomes a trickle rather than a stream. The air is often tinged with the smell and colour of smoke from seasonal bush fires. The green grass of The Wet has been replaced by the yellow, brown and fire-blackened earth.

Indigenous calendars illustrate the subtleties of seasonal change not apparent in the simple distinction of seasons into The Wet and Dry. They include at least six seasons identifying

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3 Note the extensive work the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas has undertaken in recent years in documenting the diverse values associated with the savanna landscape. See Tropical Savannas CRC, Cooperative Research Centre for the Sustainable Development of Tropical Savannas. *Annual report 2000-2001*, CRC Australia, Darwin, 2002.

both rain and drought in combination with the changing winds, humidity and the availability of particular bush foods. The calendar also includes the time for burning off.  

Fire has been extensively harnessed by Indigenous people for food and keeping country. As Violet Lawson, a traditional custodian and ranger in Kakadu summed up, 'You got to burn to go hunting.' Traditionally 'fire stick farming' occurred towards the end of the wet season or early in the dry season.

Settlement has resulted in later hot dry season fires which have proved detrimental to flora and fauna. For Marie Heidtmann who had grown up at Esmerelda Station the annual dry season fires brought both growth and destruction. ‘Everything grows in the wet season, so when the bushfires go through there’s not much left, and young growth is always killed off, young trees, young fruit trees—plums and things. Yes. You have to have the bush fires, but there’s a lot of destruction, so much destruction.’

Marie’s views reflect another aspect of the climate in the Top End - its extremities. Fire can burn relentlessly, scorching and destroying vegetation; changes in air pressure produce annual bouts of cyclonic winds and flooding. In the 1957 floods the Daly River broke its banks and flooded settled areas. Helen Liddy remembers the waters coming up to her chest at Claravale Station. In town cyclonic winds damaged buildings and the roofing iron was reported to have been blown three miles away.

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5 Chapell, 'The geographic context', pp. 15-16.
8 Marie Heidtmann interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997. See also Chapell's observations about fire at the wrong time or in the wrong place and damage to the food cycle. Chapell, 'The geographic context', p. 43.
9 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996; For further discussion of 1957 and earlier floods see Nancy Polishuk and Douglas Lockwood, *Life on the Daly River*, Rigby Limited, Adelaide, 1961, p.75; NAA, SA B300/1, 341 Pt 2, letter, Resident Engineer and Superintendent, NT Railway to Secretary, External Affairs, 16 April, 1914. p.6; For description of local cyclones see NAA, SA B300/2, 8656 Manager, Commonwealth Railways to Secretary, 29 January, 1957; Olive O'Keefe remarked on a milder Cyclone in 1937, NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 299, Olive O'Keefe interviewed by Hilda Tuxworth, Katherine, transcript, 1980, p.3; Pat Smith, interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
In the build up to the Monsoons ninety percent humidity can be reached and conditions become difficult to bear. One ex-soldier based in the Top End during World War Two described the heat as harder to bear than enemy air attacks.\(^{10}\) Heat-induced mental stress was described by soldiers as 'going troppo'.\(^{11}\)

Fortunately there were also ways to relieve the effects of heat stress such as swimming and resting.\(^{12}\) Inevitably with the change of seasons climatic exigencies softened. The air temperatures cooled reinforced by the benefit of Pine Creek's higher elevation than either Darwin or Katherine. Darkie Dempsey, a local, described Pine Creek's climate as '... the most beautiful climate I've ever struck in Australia or anywhere else'.\(^{13}\)

**Water**

Perennial sources of water are important in places of extended drought. Natural springs dot the landscape in and around Pine Creek. Springs emanating from the local escarpment are part of a larger network of springs in the general area. Well-springs form the heads of creeks which flow into rivers. Pine and Copperfield Creeks originate from springs in the local escarpment and flow into the Cullen River. On the north-west side of the escarpment, spring fed creeks flow into the Douglas River.\(^{14}\)

Springs feed animals and humans, provide shade and water and are a source of bush food – in particular yams. Lenny Liddy Gapbuya, a Wagiman man noted how the Wagiman travelled from spring to spring for food and water. He could follow the network of springs from the Table-land country around Pine Creek through to Hayes Creek and Butterfly Gorge. Lenny recalled how the springs attracted red and black kangaroo, and in the dry pigs and

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\(^{10}\) 'Recognition for wartime railway workers' in *Ted Warren's Jingili Journal*.

\(^{11}\) Long grass, heavy rains, cockroaches, white ants and mosquitoes compounded the living situation. Wallace, "Those airforce days", p.60., p.65, p.67. Graham McKenzie Smith has described the Northern Australian army as 'Australia's forgotten army' noting this isolation contributed to hardship. McKenzie Smith, *Australia's forgotten army*, p.103.

\(^{12}\) Pine Creek school children (Wattle Johnson) interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997a, Pine Creek school children (Phillip Wills and Jack Johnson) interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997b; Wallace, "Those Airforce Days", p.65.

\(^{13}\) Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997. For comments on positive benefits of local elevation. Jack Holden interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997; Paul Williamson interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997 and Gaye Lawrence, interview,1997; Mayse Young, interview, 1996.

buffalo would come. As he summed up: 'You travel to spring for food. Springs are good places for food. Travel water to water. Rainforest country'.

Springs were also vital for gardeners because they provided a constant source of water. The major Chinese market gardens and rice paddies in the Pine Creek area were invariably located close to springs. During World War 2 the airforce squadron at McDonald airstrip relied heavily on spring water from the Pine Creek escarpment.

Earth

Most of the Pine Creek area is undulating rocky, broken and deeply-weathered hill country. The town is located in a kind of a basin which rises up into a small rocky ridged escarpment that runs roughly north-south on the western side of town. Clusters and ridges of grey and reddish-brown rocks protrude from long grass amidst the open stands of scraggly eucalypts and termite mounds. Pockets of rainforest flourish at the foot of the escarpment, around the springs, along the creeks, in gorges and in areas shielded from the seasonal fires.

On the side of the Kakadu Highway, north of Pine Creek and south of the Mary River Roadhouse, there is a cutting in the road which displays the earth's interior. It is an undulating wave - a story line in myriad shades of brown, red and grey, of anticline and syncline, folding and unfolding. This is a land that the early geologists described as contorted, riven, crushed, fractured and intruded, moulded, folded and metamorphised (see Figure 7).

The folded earth is also a signifier of the intrusion of settlement into the earth that happens to display the beauty of the earth's interior. It is also a marker of the Pine Creek Geosyncline.

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15 Lenny is Helen Liddy's half brother. Lenny Liddy, discussion notes, 1997. For similar observation see Francesca Merlan's discussion of the springs which form the head of the South Alligator River which are described by Indigenous people as good camping and foraging areas. NLC: Merlan, Jawoyn (Gimbat Area) land claim, anthropologists' report on behalf of claimants, Darwin, 1992, p.3


17 The vegetation is loosely described by scientists as Tropical Savanna and covers an area spanning northern Australia, from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Kimberley. It comprises open eucalyptus forests or woodlands with a tropical grass understorey of spear grass (sorghum) which can grow to over 2.5 metres in the Wet. Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, 3-3, 5-2; Chapell, 'The geographic context', p.33, p. 38 pp. 40-41.
the geological name for a highly mineralised formation that includes the broken, rocky spine that cuts across the Pine Creek area.\(^\text{19}\)

**Flora and fauna**

Around Pine Creek rough barked trees such as Woolly Butt, Stringybark, Ironwood and Bloodwood predominate. The small salmon gums with burnished, smooth, copper-coloured bark provide flashes of colour on the rocky terrain. Stands of Northern cypress pine are found in more secluded areas in the local escarpment. Wattle and some pockets of grevillea and long grass (sorghum) form a middle story while a variety of shrubs, vines and smaller plants lie closer to the ground. The vegetation has adapted to low nutrient laterite soils, drought conditions and to seasonal fire.\(^\text{20}\)

The Table-land immediately to the west of Pine Creek has created niche environments for particular plants. Jack Lewis, who currently lives at the foot of the local escarpment has noted the extraordinary diversity of flora on the escarpment including rare eucalypts, cypress pine and pockets of rainforest.\(^\text{21}\) He remarked: 'Everything that grows in the Top End, yeah, its probably there somewhere around that escarpment there, yeah. There's lots of springs'.\(^\text{22}\)

Where there is diversity in flora there is also diversity in fauna. The Pine Creek area has unique environmental qualities as a result of the topography, climate and vegetation that have allowed endangered, rare and uncommon species to survive. These include the ghost bat, Gouldian finch, the Orange horseshoe bat, the Darling Downs dunnart, the Carpentarian dunnart, Forrests mouse, the Grey goshawk, the Wood sandpiper and the Partridge pigeon.\(^\text{23}\)


\(^{19}\) Chappell, 'The geographical context', p.34. Geographers have described this general mineralised area, which includes the margins of the Arnhem land plateau, as 'the backbone country'. See Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS; P.G. Stuart-Smith (et al), *Map commentary*, p.3, p.28. Powell, *Far country*, p. 3; Basedow, *Proceedings*, p.159


\(^{22}\) Jack Lewis, interview, 1997.

\(^{23}\) The EIS fauna survey for the mine in the 1980s identified the colony's importance as well as the hooded parrot. A maternity colony of 520 adult ghost bats which relied on Maitlands Dam as its primary food source was located in Kohinhoor adit (800 metres from the proposed mine development). Kinhill Stearns, 'Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, ii
Figure 7: Cutting near Mary River on the Kakadu Highway.
WHO IS LOOKING AT THE LAND?

Inhabitants and travellers in the Pine Creek area respond to the land in various and divergent ways which encompass a range of descriptions of the country as bountiful, parlous, fragile, harsh, damaged and resilient. These perceptions are both individuated and cultural responses to a changing and changed land.

There are myriad non-Indigenous observer accounts detailing the economic potential of the Pine Creek area, which they often found wanting, contrasting with the stories of those people who have been nurtured and sustained by the country and who noticed, experienced and at times despaired at the level and nature of damage to the local environment as a result of settlement. What one sees and notices in the land is about knowledge and familiarity with country.

**In the eye of the beholder**

Over the last one hundred years many non-indigenous people (myself included) have viewed Pine Creek, and the Top End generally as a place of too little water in The Dry and too much water in The Wet.²⁴ Comparisons often occur on sighting a new place: the known is compared with the unknown. I viewed Pine Creek as dry when I initially visited, comparing the dry hilly rocky country around Pine Creek with what I saw as the richer environment to the north, where life flourished around the larger river systems such as the Mary and Daly Rivers, and even further north where the rivers irrigated the capacious wetlands.

Compared with these locations Pine Creek is dry and rocky. The closest major river, the Cullen River, is a days walk away. As Albert Que Noy, born in Pine Creek in 1911 prosaically summed up: 'Not much water about because very dry country.' However, Johnnie Hart who grew up in Pine Creek during the 1920s and 1930s recalled that for him there was ‘water all the time’ in the Pine Creek area: ‘Oh, miles of water about’. He talked about spring water, creek water and dam water.²⁵

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²⁴ NAA, NT: A3, 1914/2482, Report, Impressions of country travelled over by the Royal Commission for Northern Territory Railways and Ports – as recorded by Frank Clarke, Chairman, p.7.
²⁵ Emu and Jessie Corrigan, discussion notes, Kybrook Farm, 1997; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997b; Johnnie Hart, interviewed by Bathgate and Jo Hart, Pine Creek, 1997.
There is a place for comparison but at the point of sustenance it is about what is available where and when. I needed to step beyond comparisons in order to recognise the inherent values of the Pine Creek area itself. It is not which place is richer or better but what environmental elements identify a place. The Pine Creek waterways are home to small sized fish. Miall/Jawoyn and Wagiman women pointed out that if one wanted bigger fish and flying fox, one should go to Burrundie. Particular places in the Pine Creek area, like Golden Gully, were identified as having plentiful bush food.

The rocky terrain around Pine Creek and the escarpment provides a habitat for echidna, rock python and a variety of bush plums. Johnny Hart recalls that in earlier years by ‘foot Falcon’ you could walk just out from Pine Creek and collect ‘miles’ of bush tucker. Helen Liddy pointed out a granite bouldered area on Claravale road as having a lot of echidna around there and other locations for tucker. ‘You know some places we used to always get yams, or some of the places, some of the hills had a lot of porcupines [echidna]. Some of the areas had a lot of kangaroos, you know, goannas and all that sort of stuff – sugar bag.’

These perceptions of the bounty of the land contrasted with the observations of Europeans travelling through who were not looking for bush food but for economic returns in the form of pastoralism, mining and agriculture.

**A culture of economic promise**

Early European visitors and observers of the Pine Creek area were not interested in the existing land but were trying to determine what economic promise the land held for agriculture, pastoralism and minerals. They were making fleeting observations invariably on fleeting visits. They struggled at times to recognise the country – they wanted to equate it with something familiar – something known.

In early European descriptions of the country around Pine Creek the land is described in terms full of promise and potential. For instance, an early geological report describes the ranges between Adelaide River and Pine Creek as ‘well defined’, the plains as ‘numerous’.

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26 Golden Gully (or Salt Trough) runs into the Copperfield Creek. It was known for its plentiful supply of bush food – echidna and fish. Helen Liddy, interview, 1997. Golden Gully, in spite of its namesake, was also a tin mining area. It was also a good picnic and fishing location. Emu and Jessie Corrigan, discussion notes, 1997; Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
28 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996; See also Sarah and Jill Roberts, discussion notes, 1997; Notebook 7, 4 December, 1996.
'extensive' and well watered. The conclusion was inevitably reached that this was 'good country' with 'good cultivable soil.' Stuart, the first explorer in the area anticipated this vision in his description of the Top End in terms of pastoral promise, 'Crossed granite and quartz rises, with broad valleys between — both splendidly grassed.'

**A land of comparisons**

The reality was that all beholders of the land in the Top End grappled with describing a place with which they were unfamiliar. They could only compare the land with what they knew of where they had previously travelled or lived.

In this context the appearance of pockets of tropical rainforest tempered and softened European views and perhaps gave observers hope of a more lush promising land - or at the very least a respite from a land they found dry and hot. This was a botanical landscape and imaginary hot house. As one geologist wrote: '...at the base of the Pine Creek tableland a beautiful bit of jungle grows along the creek-ferns, palms, jungle, trees, and climbers, with the gurgling stream beneath.'

Early in the twentieth century Herbert Basedow compared the mineralised country around Pine Creek with the 'South African kopje-landscape'. In the same period Gilbert White compared the view from Union 'Mountain' with the country between the Hawkesbury River and Sydney.' Fifty years later Frank Flynn compared the '... picturesque, fascinating country around El Sharana' with Cox's and Jamieson Valleys in the Blue Mountains, N.S.W., where we used to go hiking...'

European observers at the turn of the nineteenth century quite literally wished that the Top End had agricultural and pastoral potential but as time passed even wishful thinkers had to confess that the land was not suited to pastoral and agricultural enterprises on the scale they envisaged. Frank Clarke, who had gone looking for the elusive Pine trees around Pine

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30 Reports (geological and general), p.32. See also p.7 and p.35.
32 NAA, ACT: A211, 1917/421, Minutes, Algeman Coombes, Parliamentary standing committee on public works... in regard to the proposed extension of the Pine Creek — Katherine River Railway southwards so far as Bitter (Mataranka) Springs, 10 November 1915, p.36; NAA, ACT: A1640/1, 1895/412, letter, W.W. Andrews to Pendleton, 10 February, 1896.
Creek, provided a tempered description of the view outside his North Australian Railway carriage window in 1914.

It's an easy thing to receive impressions of a country from a railway carriage window. Impressions more or less erroneous. More often than not the route of railway following for purposes of economic construction the line of least resistance traverses the very worst country from a productive standpoint. This, I hope, applies to the railway line between Darwin and Pine Creek. For the country is certainly poor from either a pastoral or agricultural standpoint.33

The value of the country obviously depended on what one was looking for. As William Sowden commented in 1882: 'When the bogs cease the country becomes rugged and stony; less useful for pasturage or tillage, and more valuable mineralogically.'34

Geological earth

The geologists were the first group of non-indigenous Australians in the Top End to thoroughly explore and describe the Pine Creek area. They were sub and surface explorers - inspectors of the earth.35

Geologists also functioned as government assessors of economic potential and frequently made comments on the agricultural and or pastoral potential of the land. Jensen described the land around Pine Creek in terms of its agricultural and pastoral potential as of 'inferior and sour character' including its deficiency in lime based on the 'calciphobe timber' in the area.36

33 NAA, NT: A3 1914/2482, report, Impressions of country— as recorded by Frank Clarke, p.1.
34 Sowden, The Northern Territory as it is, p.34.
The early geologists' wide ranging interest in natural features of the land such as topography, vegetation, soil types and water sources reflected their search for any indicators for the presence of minerals. As Jensen wrote of the Pine Creek area: 'As is usual the timbers serve as a fair guide to the nature of the geological formations underlying the sandy soils of the interior'.

Early geological descriptions of the Pine Creek area are full of conjunctions between geology, vegetation and water. As the geologist Jensen observed 'The headwaters of the principal streams rise in granite country...Granite divides are generally studded with pandanus springs, in which many strong creeks take their rise'. These early geologists focussed particularly on these granite intrusions because, as Woolnough described in 1912, they contained '...the most important mineral deposits'.

Rubbish country?
The harshest descriptions of the land around Pine Creek arose in respect of its unsuitability for cattle. Green grass was deceptive in the Pine Creek area - it lacked essential nutrients for cattle. Tex Moar, a former pastoralist and cattleman echoed Jensen's comments eighty years earlier describing the Pine Creek area as:

Rubbish country. This highly mineralised country is never any good for cattle; it's sour country. It's good for about four months of [the] year, and after the wet finishes all the nutrient goes out of what feed there is, and there's nothing in it. You've only got to look at the stock at the end of the year, they've got to walk around in pairs to lean on each other otherwise they'll fall over they're that bloody weak.

38 For instance, Mt. Diamond Creek, Mt. Davis Creek, Nellie Creek, the Mary River and the Cullen River. Jensen, Geology of the Agicondi Province of the Northern Territory, p.6.
40 Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, 7-2; Jack Lewis interview, 1997.
41 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
Another local, Bert Batty, was even more blunt in his assessment of the cattle potential of the country, describing Pine Creek as ‘... the most useless place in Australia.’\textsuperscript{42} As early as 1896 a public servant summed up:

... Pine Creek has many disadvantages. There is no water for stock anywhere near it in the dry season. The roads between the Katherine and Pine Creek are so stoney that no stock are driven through Pine Creek if it can possibly be helped. The natural stock route for all cattle coming in from beyond Katherine, whether from east or west is along the headwaters of the Daly River, passing 15 to 20 miles to the west of Pine Creek and separated from it by stony ranges.\textsuperscript{43}

Russell Young, who had grown up in Pine Creek in the mid-twentieth century, was blunt in his assessment of Pine Creek’s cattle potential. It had ‘... never been cattle country’ because there was ‘No grass. No nothing, its all that granite sand type country.’\textsuperscript{44} When his family ran Bonrook Station near Pine Creek he described their struggles at establishing cattle. ‘We tried everything. We had all new pastures, we cleared, we grew our own Townsville lucerne. Dad got in a couple of stud bulls. Goodness knows what else. It’s just not cattle country, or we couldn’t do anything with it, and neither could anyone else around’.\textsuperscript{45}

Russell Young pointed out that Dorisvale, Claravale and Jindare cattle stations were able to operate more successfully than their northern counterparts because they were close to the Daly River. Cattle outfits also survived because they had a specific market, for instance supplying the local mine - or soldiers during World War Two with beef. Railway sidings in the area like Cullen River also assisted with the local industry.\textsuperscript{46}

Tex Moar noted that the best country for cattle started further west and south across the Daly River and below the Katherine River. Tex Moar and Jack Lewis pointed out that the Victoria River District and the Barkly were much better for cattle. Jack Lewis observed, ‘...you’ve

\textsuperscript{42} Merv Lee, Bert Batty and David Rowlands, discussion notes, Burrundie, 1997.
\textsuperscript{43} NAA, ACT: A1640/1, 1895/412, letter, Superintendent – Palmerston, South Australian Railways to Railways Commissioner, Adelaide, February 10 1896.
\textsuperscript{44} Russell Young, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{45} Russell Young, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{46} Russell Young, interview, 1996; The railway facilitated the establishment of stock routes closer to Pine Creek. During World War Two. Temporary routes were established between Claravale,
got to get into the Mitchell grass country before it's any good.' As Tex Moar noted, Golden Gully closer to Lewin Springs and near the Daly River was where the country started to change, '...its getting a bit better. You get more kangaroos there and you've only got to go into that country and you see – it's pretty noticeable.'

This changing landscape, Tex noted, was marked by the end of granite country 25 miles south-west of Pine Creek and the beginning of 'red soil country'. The best country, he identified was 'black soil country' in the 'basalt country' of the Fitzmaurice, Angalarri and Victoria River areas.

In contrast to cattle, buffalo were deemed to be far more suited to the Pine Creek area. Mick Alderson, a senior Indigenous man from Kakadu, and cattlemen like Jack Lewis, Tex Moar, Mick Page and Russell Young (most of whom had also been buffalo hunters) all pointed out that the country around Pine Creek and further north was 'okay' for buffalo. Tex noted that Gimbat and Goodparla Stations north of Pine Creek were located in more typically buffalo country.

Identifying Pine Creek as 'rubbish country' for cattle but 'okay' for buffalo shows the way the country was defined in terms of pre-determined expectations. If cattle could not be raised successfully then by definition the land was worthless. But the reality was more complex. The longer non-Indigenous people stayed in the Pine Creek area the more they could see it and understand it. They could begin to value it on its own terms.

*Rites of passage*

Even though Tex Moar damns the Pine Creek area in terms of its cattle potential he celebrates those who have stayed on almost as if they have undergone a rite of passage with the country which may or may not be about being economically successful in western terms.

...you can get good men come out of Queensland or wherever down south, and they're damn good men – I'm talking about cattlemen – and they come up here and it take them years to learn, to find out. They find out – if they're good enough men, they

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Dorisvale and Douglas Stations and local railway sidings such as the Cullen and Ban Ban Yards. Tex Moar, interview, 1997a, 1997b; Lulu Martin, interviewed by Bathgate, tape 12, Pine Creek, 1997.


48 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.

49 Mick Alderson, discussion notes, Kakadu, 1997; Russell Young, interview, 1996; Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Mick Page, discussion notes, 1997.
finally do and they’ve got the guts and where-with-all to stick it out. But yeah, its completely different.50

Tex’s observations imply that with time comes understanding: integral to staying is how the country teaches people. In this sense traditional European agricultural and pastoral knowledge is insufficient of itself without having the knowledge of the ‘country’. Earl Gano, a local tourist operator and former park ranger, who has lived in the town for 20 years delivered a similar sentiment.

I reckon this country is the greatest leveller, it really flattens all those type of blokes. If you want to live in this country you have to live with the country – you can’t go like a bull at a gate here, you have to live with the country, it’s a great leveller.51

For Earl the lessons from the land only came with time and experience. Top End cattle producers have frequently had to diversify to survive, particularly in the Pine Creek area. And so the wheel turns - or does it reinvent itself? As one cattleman recently noted, ‘If you can get some alternative form of income you can weather the peaks and troughs. You’re much more secure.’52

**Market gardening country**

The counterpoint to the designation of the Pine Creek area as ‘rubbish country’ for cattle was the viability of small scale market gardening. Granite country might not have been good for cattle but it was good for gardening.53 Chinese market gardens were the mainstay of local fruit and vegetable supplies in Pine Creek from the Goldrushes up until World War Two. The Chinese market gardeners managed to successfully adapt their knowledge of small-scale agriculture into the Top End and, almost immediately upon arrival in the Top End, started planting. The establishment of market gardens was also facilitated through the release of small plots of land by government specifically for small scale agriculture on mining fields.54

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50 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
51 Earl Gano interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
53 Joan Frazer interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
54 ‘Within a recognised Mining Warden District such as Pine Creek, many Chinese availed themselves of “Garden Areas” under the mining ordinance...”Garden Areas & Business Areas” in the Mining Warden areas [were] a way of supporting, by produce, those workers in a mining area...’, Vern O’Brien, letter, 29 July 2003; State Records of SA: GRS 16, Northern Territory mineral licences.
Market gardens were an invaluable source of food for the local community and were sorely missed when they ceased to operate. In 1900 the local Pine Creek policeman reported on the loss of one such garden and gardener.

Sir, I have the honor to inform you that the garden one mile from here held by Yee Cheong Fong has been abandoned since the owner was [shot]. All the vegetables [...] have been dug up and the fowls and pigs removed by the friends of the deceased and the fence broken down. This is a great loss to the Residents of the district as it was a good garden.55

The signs of the Pine Creek Gorge market garden still mark the land - in the form of earthen lines indicating irrigation and terracing on the Lawrence's property at Green Valley (formerly the Fong market garden or Pine Creek Gorge garden) and the Lee's family property at Esmerelda Station. Vestiges of these gardens also remain in local memory. Local residents recalled evidence of rice paddies at Esmerelda Station, near Cullen River, Burrundie, the foot of the Pine Creek escarpment (Pine Creek Gorge), McKinlay River and Mt Wells - all areas that were spring fed or close by to a creek. Joan Frazer remembers another garden out towards Mt Wells 'called Hang Gong Gardens'...that was marked for many years by a lemon tree and the presence of good black soil.56

As Joan Frazer summed up '...the Chinaman can grow vegetables where no-one else can.'57 She observed that the Chinese knew that the best areas for growing rice and vegetables were located around springs at the foot of the local escarpment. The Chinese, as in mining, were prepared to work intensively. The wet season leached the soil annually of nutrients and

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55 The words in brackets were barely legible. I have surmised the meaning of the first word - shot. State Records of SA: GRS 10, Letters Received by Government Resident, A9960 'Police Station Pine Creek, 12 October 1900 to Inspector of Police, P. Foelsche.
56 A local refers to the fact that you could generally see where the gardens used to be - their stone pitching, trenching and terracing. Notebook 2, 20 March 1997; Helen Liddy, interview, 1996; Joan Frazer, interview, 1997; Darkie Dempsey 25 March 1997; Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997.
constant fertilisation was required - the hours required for gardening were long and arduous.\(^{58}\)

In the late nineteenth century William Sowden commented on the 'oases' of Chinese gardens in the Pine Creek area:

...the party caught their first sight of the striking headland known as McMinn’s bluff, with its surrounding peculiar high broken table-land, flat topped, and with an immense natural wall bordering its crest all round. Still patches of slate and plentiful ironstone nodules, relieved by veritable oases - as gardens all abloom with vegetation, fostered by Celestial care - in plain English, cabbage and sweet potato gardens.\(^{59}\)

Joe “Bogger” Young recalled that when he first came to Pine Creek in 1933 ‘...there was Quongs out here, he used to grow a lot of stuff and Ma Hoi up near Burrundie, they’d bring it to town and sell it, water melons, rock melons, everything. You’d buy pineapples – beauties.’ Ellen Crammond remembered two other pre-war market gardeners - ‘King Gee and Billy Wah Too’.\(^{60}\)

The Fongs’ Garden

Natural springs were an important factor in the longest running market garden in Pine Creek located at the foot of the escarpment and at the head of Pine Creek (‘Pine Creek Gorge’).\(^{61}\)

Tommy Fong and his father, also named Tommy, bought this garden from a Chinese market gardener in the 1930s and continued gardening with the help of his wife and family until the War intervened.\(^{62}\) Sarah Feeney recalls that ‘old’ Tommy Fong ‘... used to come into town

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\(^{59}\) Sowden, *The Northern Territory as it is*, p.46; In the early twentieth century Brown commented on the garden in Copperfield Gorge, *Reports (geological and general)*, p.32, p.7, p.35.


\(^{62}\) There is a history of Chinese gardeners passing on/selling their leases to other members of the Chinese community. Gilbert Williams described the Fong’s garden ownership in terms of
with two baskets on his shoulders, carrying them in baskets, and he used to walk about four miles with those baskets. When he came to town you could get a great big bunch of bananas for [one shilling] a dozen. Then when he died, Tommy his son took over and he got a dray and horses, then after the dray and horses, he got a motorcar.\footnote{NTAS: TS 202/2, Sarah Feeney interviewed by Helen Wilson, transcript, 1980, p.15.}

*Other gardens*

The historical prominence of market gardens in the Pine Creek area needs to be seen in a general gardening context where most households endeavoured to be as self-sufficient as possible. Albert Que Noy recalls the small gardens of the residents, many of them miners, in Chinatown. Nearly every hut had its own garden fenced to protect the vegetables from grazing animals including kangaroos. Lily Ah Toy’s mother-in-law was friendly with the ‘old pensioners’ from Chinatown and gave them vegetables from her garden ‘... like Chinese cabbage and a bitter melon, and stuff like that.’\footnote{Albert Que Noy, interview; 1997; Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.}

All cattle stations had their own gardens and at mining camps people would also set up their own gardens.\footnote{Albert Que Noy, interview; 1997; Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.} Europeans and ‘exempted’ Indigenous people like Andy Knight, Mai Katona’s father, had their own established gardens. He grew grapefruit to sell and tobacco which he sold until the police stopped him for not having a licence.\footnote{NTAS: TS 588, Eileen Fitzer, 1990, p.10. Mai Katona, interview, 1997.} Frank Atkinson, who settled in the Pine Creek area in the 1930s, had a series of garden leases and in the early 1980s was still going strong. He reported growing about ten watermelons, ten rockmelons and sixty-one pumpkins!\footnote{NTAS: NTRS 226, TS20, Annie Brown (nee Frith), interviewed by Liz Monaghan, Melbourne, 1982, pp.7-8; Marie Heidmann interview, 1997.}

Chinese knowledge threaded its way through non-Chinese gardens either through direct assistance, advice for preparation and growing of plants, or through other means such as seed swaps.\footnote{NTAS: TS 126, Jessie Tamblyn, 1981, p.35, p.21.}
The Lee's garden
Doreen Lee was, in many ways, the inheritor of this Chinese knowledge and the Chinese market gardens in the Pine Creek area with her garden at Esmerelda Station during the 1950s and 1960s. Her daughters, Marie Heidtmann and Joan Frazer continue to live in the Pine Creek area.

Bobbie Lee, Marie and Joan's father, was a descendent of a Top End Mandarin speaking Chinese merchant Willie Lee Han Gong. He had married a European Australian woman Sarah Beaumann. His grandson was Bobbie (Robert) Lee. Bobbie subsequently married Phoebe Doreen Butterick. Joan described their family background and her mother's gardening: 'Well Dad was part-Chinese, my grandfather was a quarter Chinese – and Mum just sort of that way, she learnt how to pick up things real quick, and grew them.' Her sister, Marie, summed up her mother as: '... a darned good gardener.' Bobbie Lee, Doreen's husband began extensive gardening in the Pine Creek area during World War Two supplying the army. Marie and Joan, through their parents, developed an extensive knowledge of Chinese plants.

Doreen Lee was an avid and enthusiastic gardener. Like the Fongs before her she would get up before dawn and garden at night under the moonlight. Much of Doreen's knowledge of Chinese plants appears to have come not only from her husband but her husband's connections with the Chinese Australian's in the Top End including from Mrs. Chin Quan.

Marie recollected how her mother and Jimmy Ah Toy, the local store owner in Pine Creek from the 1930s to the 1980s, swapped seeds and flowers. The Fong's also used to swap and trade vegetables, seeds, plants, and presumably gardening hints with Mrs Lee.

The list of Chinese vegetables that the sisters recalled their mother growing included 'proper' Chinese shallots, Chinese cabbages, snow peas, snake beans, mustard cabbage, bitter melon, winter melon, Loo Fah, lemongrass, and varieties of spinach, water spinach,
Bok Choy, Wong Wok and Shanghai Bok Choy, Hin Choy (red amaranth) and Foo Gar. There were also more typical European vegetables - cauliflowers, cabbages and strawberries, asparagus, tomatoes, lettuces, beans, radishes, shallots, cucumber, pumpkin and root vegetables.  

A bountiful land

The Fongs' and Lees' gardens sustained people. Indigenous people were sustained in a holistic sense by their relationship to country including sustenance from the land. When I asked Miali/Jawoyn and Wagiman women about their memories of Pine Creek the first thing they talked about was bush tucker - 'cheeky' round and yellow yam, 'sugar bag', red kangaroo, 'porcupine' (echidna), rock python and goanna - and the seasonal variety of native plums and apples.

In contrast to those Europeans who passed through Pine Creek and made fleeting observations of the local area, the story of the Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people who have stayed includes how they have been sustained by bush food and the produce of local gardens and in a broader sense how they are sustained by their continuing relationship with the land.

Tucker is an Australian word for food. For Indigenous people 'bush tucker' was a generic category for any indigenous food sources that were edible. The Kybrook women explained the significance of 'bush tucker' in five main ways.

- the seasonal availability of the food
- where the food was likely to be found
- how to catch or harvest the food
- how to prepare the food for eating
- how the food tasted

What the Wagiman and Miali-Jawoyn women were describing was bush tucker as an expression of their kinship ties and familiarity with 'country'. In this sense 'country' sustains

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74 Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997; Joan Frazer interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997; Notebook 1, 19 February 1997.
75 Kybrook Women, (Maureen Smith) interviewed by Bathgate, Kybrook Farm, 1997; See also Sarah Moore and Jill Moore, discussion notes, 1997.
and nourishes one's self and one's community - in this case through appropriately harvesting and hunting bush food.

I asked Sherie Ann Lee, a young Jawoyn girl, to describe what was on the Pine Creek school banner, one of a series of cloth banners produced by the community (see Chapter four). The names of living creatures tumbled out of her mouth extending beyond the images on the banner into what she was familiar with in the surrounding environment: snakes, turtles, birds, flowers, water, billabong, fish, tree, sun, school, barra, catfish, bream, crocodile.76

Sherie Ann's list was bountiful and related directly to where she lived and who she was. Merv Lee, a European Australian miner who had lived in the area many years observed that when you live in a place you become part of a place. Everything has its time. In his words the world outside his doorstep was a 'magic carpet of creation.'77 Merv Lee’s observations of country were bound up with ecological diversity. Jack Lewis, a former stockman and miner, also recognised this ‘bounty’ in the escarpment behind Pine Creek which for him was ‘...a keeping place of 'everything that grows in the Top End.' 78

Taste sensations

Peoples' access to locally sourced food describes a sustaining relationship to country, land and to place.79 I have already discussed some of the Indigenous descriptions of bush tucker in the Pine Creek area and some market garden produce but I venture further here with more detail including the experiential and visceral enjoyment and appreciation of local sources of food by both children and adults.

Children

Graeme Alangale, a Jawoyn boy, described the pictures of bush tucker on the school banner as some of his favourite images because ‘It tastes sweet.’80 The appreciation of food is also about communality, sharing and family which are emphasised in the following story from Aaron, Graeme's brother, about eating Barramundi.

76 Pine Creek school Children (Sherie Ann Lee) interviewed by Bathgate, 1997a.
77 Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997
79 Lenny Liddy, discussion notes, Pine Creek, 1997; Robert Liddy, interview, 1997; Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
80 Pine Creek school children (Aaron Alangale) interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997a.
Aaron: We went to bush, you know at Claravale...we went there and Rebecca got big Barramundi.

Jane: Woah!

Aaron: And we fried with saucepan and we had coke and chip and we all eat it together.81

Aaron was a boy when he described this event. Many adults I spoke with had childhood memories of bush food. For children growing up in Pine Creek from the 1920s to the 1970s the local creek was a rich and fertile hunting ground. With small fishing lines they could catch small silver bream and silver spotted rifle fish. There were fresh water mussels and Billy Goat plums.82 Russell Young recalled the pleasures, as a boy, of food down at the creek with his friends.

Jane: What else did you do ...?

Russell: Oh, we'd do a bit of fishing down the creek...Yeah, and mussels; a lot of mussels...If you left home with just a pocketful of salt and a box of matches we used to go down and light little fires and open them up alongside the fire. You had plenty to eat, no worries for tucker.83

Sue Neall recalls childrens' tea parties of wild bush foods and mango. Robert Liddy, Helen Liddy's son, recalled the plentiful berries in the area as a child and other sources of food including bush potato (yam) and birds. As he pointed out: ‘Well, us kids never would starve.’84

Food of all sorts was constantly tempting particularly to children with hungry appetites, and while bush foods were seasonally available to everyone vegetable gardens provided a tempting proposition. There is a hundred year history in Pine Creek of children raiding Chinese vegetable gardens!85

81 Aaron Alangale, interview, 1997a.
83 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
84 Robert Liddy, interview, 1997; Sue Neall, discussion notes, 2000.
85 There were heists of fruit, sugar cane and vegetables from Granny Lum Loy’s and Tommy Fong’s gardens between the 1930s and 1950s. Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997. See also stories from Mai Katona and Freddie Muggleton. Sonny Cox recalled raiding the ‘Chinaman’s garden’ in childhood, NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 34, Collin (Sonny) Cox interviewed by Mary Stephenson, transcript, 1982, p.6; NTAS, NTRS 226, TS 478: Jack Roney interviewed by Francis Good, transcript, 1987, p.32.
When Freddie Muggleton was a child in the 'half-caste' home in Pine Creek in the 1930s, he and the other boys used to raid Tommy Fong’s garden. ‘We used to go and steal anything there, like cabbage or oranges, grapefruit, anything like that. The old Chinaman couldn’t chase us, poor bugger, he was a bit old.’

However Chinese gardeners were also generous with their food. Helen Liddy recalls the Fong’s supplying ‘us littlies' with food from their garden including sweet potato, bananas, mandarin, grapefruit and lemons, sugarcane and tomatoes. Lenny Liddy, Helen's half-brother, had a similar story.

Jessie Tamblyn, as a child, remembered an Indigenous girl called Alice, somewhat older than her, who looked after her and her brother. She remembered Alice teaching her brother to eat ‘...beardies. She could dig those up; little round whitish worms and he said they were lovely. He liked them.’

Jessie's account highlights the knowledge that Indigenous people passed on to European and Chinese Australians. Eventually knowledge of bush foods became essential for all those who lived on the land. Jessie recalled a Mrs Jones and her love of bush food including the 'lemony' tasting Iron bark gum. 'She used to eat it and I mean she was a Territorian of many years and I used to suck it and eat it too. Mother didn’t quite approve of this. She said. 'I believe the bushmen use that as a remedy for diarrhoea.’

Adults

Enjoyment of food was obviously not the sole province of children. Bush tucker was gathered in a wide circumference around Pine Creek including parts of the northern wetlands and the Daly and Mary Rivers. After the War Sarah Nabulwad Roberts used to come into Pine Creek during the wet season lay off period after working on Gimbat and Mary River

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86 Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
90 Sarah Feeney, who lived in Pine Creek in the early twentieth century, tried a lot of different kinds of bush tucker as a child. NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 202/2 Sarah Feeney, transcript, 1980, p.47.
Stations. She recalled hunting for yams, sugar bag and kangaroo. In the hilly areas they went hunting on top of the hills for porcupine, rock python, goanna and red kangaroo.  

Helen Liddy, Lily Ah Toy, Sarah Roberts and Bessie Coleman described the various bush fruits of the local area including 'wild cocky' plum, the 'billy-goat' plum, milky plum, green plum, black 'currants' and 'cherries' and white 'apples'. The Billy Goat plum was aptly named – as Sarah Feeney recalled: 'The goats would go mad after it, the plums, they’d get the plums and chew them and spit all the seeds out, you know. They’d eat the leaves and all. We used to chop the plum trees down for them so they could eat them.'  

As discussed earlier seasonality was inherently woven into Indigenous accounts of bush foods. As Sarah Roberts articulated in her discussion notes:

In the time just before the wet season there were green plums; also black plums or black cherries. There were black currants with a flower. The black plums and black cherry came with the first storms of November/December. There was also the Billy Goat plums which were half yellow or Nanny Goat plums after The Wet. There was also red apple around Pine Creek and big mobs of white apple.

Seasonality applied to all fruits and vegetables including introduced species. As Nellie Fong summed up:

It all depends on the season. Like the wet season we grow melon, cucumber, pumpkin and you get snake beans all the time – and Chinese melon and all that. And during the winter months, between

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95 Kybrook women (Bessie Coleman), interview, 1997a; Notebook 1, 20 February 1997.
April and May, Chinese cabbage and all those. And then, towards the winter months there’d be cabbages, lettuces, beans, peas.97

Eating

The Kybrook women in their descriptions of bush tucker often discussed preparation of the food and its taste. As Maureen Smith described: ‘...get the goose and pluck all the feather and put it in the fire, make it nice and brown and roast that thing and cook it and eat it.’98 Monica described goanna ‘Especially when it’s fat, it’s got a lovely taste.’99 For Paddy Huddleston Benbo there were good places to hunt kangaroo – above Tommy Fong’s garden on the escarpment and around McDonald Airstrip. ‘Yeah, good hunting ground went there all the way. We used to get a lot of kangaroos. Roast ’em – bush oven you know. Have a feed.’100 Bessie described eating emu: ‘It’s beautiful eating, it tastes like a big roast turkey eh, like that and its got white meat like chicken.’101

There was also the taste of plants. Fred Muggleton described how the gum from the ironwood mixed with bush honey was: ‘...like real golden colour, that’s alright, you can make like toffee. You can chuck it in the water and stir it up and put bit of sugar; if you get sugar but you get honey, you can put the honey in. Wild bush honey, you put it in and stir it, and it make a good, like chocolate or something.’102

Helen Liddy and Lily Ah Toy talked about local fish in the area - black bream, catfish, perch, eels and especially mud cod and Lily offered her own recipe.

Lily: In the wet season in the old days, the Aborigines used to bring us cod.
Helen: Mud cod we called them, I don’t know what the English call them.
Lily: ...I just call them cod and they’re quite nice to eat.
Helen: We used to get them at that – Chilloes billabong, that long and that thick. Lily: You’d get them that long...It’s a wonder the crocodile didn’t eat them or anything.
Helen: Oh God, they used to be big there. And they all flesh and round inside of them, there’s no bones.

98 Kybrook Women (Maureen Smith), interview, 1997a.
100 Paddy Huddleston, interview, 1996.
101 Kybrook women (Bessie Coleman), interview, 1997a.
102 Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
Lily: Their bodies are round.
Helen: Their bodies are about this big, some of them.
Lily: Cooked with black bean and garlic and ginger.
Helen: [Laughs]\textsuperscript{103}

Jack Lewis described the plentiful bush food he lived off when he was prospecting with others including a Jawoyn family he went tin mining with.

\ldots we got lots of fish, turtles – a lot of turtles – goannas. Just about anything. Some's better than others, the long-necked turtle they get are, he's better than the short-necked turtle. There's a lot. Pythons, some crocodile. You don't eat much crocodile, you get very sick of it, it's very rich. Some of the yams are good eating, and some are bloody, what they call cheeky. They burn you. They've got some acid in them... \textsuperscript{104}

Of the all the plant food people talked about – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – yams were frequently singled out - even if they were 'cheeky'. As Bill Harney remarked while on a prospecting mission in the 1950s yams turned out to be 'Better than gold!' when their expedition ran short of food.\textsuperscript{105} Yams were so diverse in their range and kind that often people went into detailed descriptions about their differences, at what stage they were best to eat and how to prepare them to eat.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS}

A land can be bountiful if it is cared for but in Pine Creek settlement impacted upon this bounty in various ways. Environmental impacts are measured differently by different groups. Locals have perceived these environmental impacts in both positive and negative terms reflecting the magnitude of some of these impacts and also peoples respective cultures and backgrounds.

\textsuperscript{103} Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{104} This was Violet Smith and her family. Jack Lewis, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{105} Harney, \textit{Grief, gaiety and Aborigines}, p. 178.
Indigenous people, like Helen Liddy, grieve for the changes that have occurred in the landscape including the loss and damage to 'country' as a result of mining. As Helen Liddy remarked about the ridge behind the town. 'There was a big hill, a nice big hill there, they pushed it down. They reckoned they put it back to what it was, but you don’t put anything back to what it was, no matter how you do it.' In contrast, the search for profit has often been deemed by those in the mining industry (mostly non-Indigenous) as due compensation for the environmental cost.

**Moving the earth**

Just underneath the eucalyptus canopy around the town of Pine Creek lies a network of adits, tracks and reformed hills. What was once a landscape stripped of much vegetation and pock marked with holes has been stripped again recently with the inroads of open cut gold mining behind the town in the 1980s and more recently north-east of the town at Union Reefs. This is a land where the earth has obviously been moved - where many landmarks in recent memory have been excavated in the service of mining.

When Pine Creek Goldfields excavated the ridge behind the town it also destroyed specific landmarks which included Chinese digging sites (see Chapter three). One of the key landmarks that disappeared was Gandy's Hill, the highest point on the ridge, and the original trig point. Jolly's Dam was another site that was lost. Jolly's Dam was originally built to supply Jolly's battery with water. Helen Liddy described the dam as ‘...an old [handmade] Chinese dam.’ When the battery fell into disuse in the 1930s the dam became a valued water supply as well as a place of recreation and bush food ‘... little fish, turtles and lillies.’

Helen described how sad she was when in a matter of three days in the 1980s Goldfields demolished Jolly's 'beautiful big' Dam. Lily Ah Toy pointed out that Jolly's Dam and the hill behind the town created good Feng Shui and gave good support to the town. Albert Que Noy likened the ridge behind the town to a crouching tiger or a 'lion sitting on top'.

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107 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
109 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996; Steve Boyes interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997; 'Report of the Preliminary Scientific Expedition, p.13.; NAA, NT: F1, 1945/96, letter, Administrator from Mines Branch to Administrator, 22 June 1938; NAA, SA: D2827/0, Pine Creek to Katherine Permanent Survey, Survey Book 170m-180m, 1913, no. 35, no. 3; Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
110 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
111 Notebook 8, 15 August, 1996.
Helen Liddy pointed out '...lots of places have changed. They've just either just dug it up and left it, knocked the trees down.'\textsuperscript{112} (See Figure 8).

For others who had spent less time in the town loss of landmarks was not necessarily associated with any personal loss. For Steve Boyes, the mining engineer, who had been in the town twelve years the disappearance of the hill was associated with a kind of forgetting rather than a loss.

You forget that there was a hill there, unless you actually stand up on the lookout and talk to people, and you say: 'Well, there was a hill here.' There was actually two hills and the saddle in between was where the shaft was, and the head frame.\textsuperscript{113}

For non-Indigenous people who lived in the Pine Creek area during earlier mining times the holes and heaps became part of the view. As Jessie Tamblyn recalls about the large adits and Chinese workings early in the twentieth century: 'I suppose they were unsightly. They were so much part of the landscape to me that I just accepted them.'\textsuperscript{114}

To paraphrase Helen's earlier words, what, in Pine Creek, did not get put back to the way it was? The main identifiable impacts in the Pine Creek area are the direct impact of mining and the more sustained long-term impact of introduced species, such as cattle and buffalo, on the earth.\textsuperscript{115} In the next section I look at three areas of environmental impact - forests, in particular northern cypress pine, fauna, in particular ghosts bats and finches, and waterways, in particular Pine Creek. In each of these areas the magnitude of environmental impacts are entwined with peoples' assessments and values of the environment; ranging from perceptions

\textsuperscript{112} Helen Liddy, interview, 1997; Albert Que Noy, discussion notes, 1996, Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996; Notebook 8, 15 August, 1996. The sign at the Pine Creek Goldfields mine lookout (now a pit filling with water) notes that Pine Creek goldfields was built on the site of the old Enterprise mine and that the Pine Creek (waterway) was re-routed to fill the open cut. See Notebook 1, 14 February, 1997.
\textsuperscript{113} Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{115} In the Pine Creek area two Environmental Impact Assessments reports, for Pine Creek Goldfields and Union Reefs respectively, inform the general environmental history of the area. See R. Baker, Pine Creek Gold Mine Environmental Studies Archaeology, Prepared by Kinhill Stearns, October 1983 and Kinhill Stearns Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS. See also Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd, Union Reefs gold project: Historical and prehistoric archaeological heritage, Unpublished report to the Shell Company of Australia, 1992; Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd Union Reefs gold project, Regional survey and review of historical heritage, Unpublished report to the Shell Company of Australia, 1993.
of irretrievable loss to a sense of the environment being endangered through to notions of environmental adaptation and regeneration.

Forests
A story of widespread clearing
By the 1890s much of the land around the mining areas was cleared of trees. As Tex Moar summed up prosaically, '...it was really flogged out. They gave it a hell of a hiding.'\textsuperscript{116} A government report described this impact in respect of the gold rich 'range' behind the town of Pine Creek in 1891 which '...has been denuded to a considerable extent, and the detritus from such denudation deposited on the low-lying ground east and west of its base.'\textsuperscript{117} Brown, government geologist, described the area around Pine Creek in the early twentieth century as '...pitted, gashed, and honeycombed with shafts, open cuts, and workings.'\textsuperscript{118} (See Figure 9).

Northern cypress pines
The northern cypress pine (\textit{Intratropica callitris}), indigenous to the Pine Creek area, is the namesake of the town of Pine Creek. The story passed down in local memory is that cypress pine once grew along the banks of the Pine Creek where the town is now located. As Bill Harney remarked in the early 1960s: 'The creek is still there all right, but the pine trees have gone ....'\textsuperscript{119} Some current residents are unsure if there had ever been significant stands of cypress pine along the creek. As Earl Gano summed up, 'They call it Pine Creek but perhaps there might have been a Pine – maybe one – who knows, maybe there might have been two or three along the creek here. I've seen a few along Umbrawarra Creek.'\textsuperscript{120}

The area along the Pine Creek and up into the escarpment/table land area is well suited to cypress pine which favours rocky catchments and non-laterite sandy soil. As one local described: 'The pine trees are the only thing that really grows here.'\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{116} Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Joan Frazer, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{118} Reports (geological and general), p.7.
\textsuperscript{120} Earl Gano, interview, 1997; Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
Figure 8: Aerial photo of Pine Creek, 1994.
Source: Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, Northern Territory Government.
Figure 9: Gold mine, Pine Creek, ‘Emptying pits and wheeling cyanide vats’, circa early 1900s.
Source: Kirkbride Album, La Trobe picture collection, State Library of Victoria.
The northern cypress pine has, along with other timbers, directly bore the brunt of settlement. Generally speaking all timber around mining camps at the turn of the nineteenth century was used for either mining infrastructure or fuel. A single battery required a constant source of fuel and local timber was the most easily accessible source, moreover the railway required extensive sources of sleepers mostly sourced from Ironwood stands. However the need for timber extended beyond the life of the mines and timber milling, particularly of cypress which was widespread in the Pine Creek area.

Indigenous people used cypress pine as a source of implements and for the medicinal properties of the bark. Cypress was highly valued by settlers because of its termite resistant qualities. It was initially used to replace the original overland telegraph poles which had quickly succumbed to termites.

As Henry Scott, a long-time resident of the Katherine area observed cypress was '... a beautiful timber for flooring and panelling.' Many of the early twentieth century homes in Pine Creek incorporated cypress pine. It was also used in the pastoral industry for fence posts which can still be found scattered around abandoned homesteads in the Pine Creek area (see Figure 10).

Behind Pine Creek there was a rich stand of Cypress on the escarpment known as 'Table Top' which had been logged by the Que Noy family in the early twentieth century. Chinese timber cutters had made early inroads into the South Alligator region. Ellen Crammond, Jimmy Ah Toy's older sister, recalled the huge wagons that the Que Noys used to haul the timber with:

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122 Hanssen and Wigston 'Approaches to a forest history of the Northern Territory', p.339; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997.
123 Cypress timber milling occurred at many sites in the Pine Creek area including Table Top, Aston Springs, Dorisvale, Claravale and further afield at Noarlungie, Depot Creek, Mt Diamond, Wolfram Camp, Driffield and Maranboy. Gilbert Williams interviewed by Bathgate, Lake Finniss Farm, 1996; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997; Henry Scott interviewed by Francesca Merlan, transcript of tape 7, 2 December 1991, p.3, p.6; NAA, NT: A3, 1918/2764, Returns showing machinery [...] mines, during the year ended 30 June 1916.
124 Kybrook Women (Daphne Huddleston and Bessie Coleman) interviewed by Joanna Barrkman and Bathgate, Kybrook Farm, 1997a; Hanssen and Wigston, 'Approaches to a forest history', pp.345-357. For extent of issue of timber milling licences in the 1950s and 1960s see DIPE, archives, miscellaneous leases eg no. 1375 purpose timber at Munmalary Stn in South Alligator area 1 October 1963 - 31 March 1964; no. 1346 purpose timber at Mary River 1963.
125 Henry Scott interviewed by Francesca Merlan, transcript of tape 7, 2 December 1991, p.73; See also Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
126 The beams in Jessie Tamblyn's home near Pine Creek were cypress pine and similarly Marie and Joan's (nee Lee) family's home at Esmerelda Station was partly built of cypress. Both houses were
...there'd be about twelve horses pulling this big wagon. Huge wheels – not just like four wheels – they must have had six or eight wheels on this thing. It was like a big semi-trailer. With logs real long. They'd bring in great big massive logs and they'd load them on the train...

Gilbert William's father operated a timber milling operation in the Pine Creek area prior to World War Two and returned to 'Table Top' after the Que Noys for what Gilbert described as 'second growth'. The last main timber milling site near Pine Creek was run by Russ Jones at Wardegan on Dorisvale Station in the early to mid-1960s. The introduction of the Northern Territory Forestry Program in 1959, which brought controls and fees on logging, appears to have contributed to the end of widespread timber milling in the area.

The legacy of timber felling is still felt in Pine Creek today. Jack Lewis summed up that in the 1950s when he first came to Pine Creek 'No, there was nothing there, you'd be flat out getting a shady tree to sit under.' He might also have added 'you'd be flat out finding a Northern Cypress pine' in Pine Creek as well.

If cypress was extensive along Pine Creek it was swiftly removed. By 1914 no trees appear to be in the immediate vicinity of the Pine Creek or the town. As Frank Clarke reported in 1914 after visiting the head of Pine Creek,

Questioned as to where Pine Creek is, and why it was so called, the oldest inhabitant suggested a drive out of about four miles. "There you will see beautiful water tumbling over the cliffs at the head of Pine Creek; plenty of pine and rich black soil." We chartered a buggy and pair next day; drove out to see this oasis in the wilderness. The head of Pine Creek certainly carries what appears to be...
Figure 10: Cypress fence post – Lewin Springs Station, 1996.
Source: Jane Bathgate.
to be permanent water, but only in small volume. There was a small plot of garden tilled by a Chinaman. The Pine trees we saw not, but there were evidences (sic) of pine logs having been cut. Somewhat disappointed we at any rate satisfied ourselves that Pine Creek had some title to its name.\textsuperscript{132}

Tex Moar identified significant stands of cypress in the region still in existence. 'It's still there', he said.\textsuperscript{133} The cypress pine is still valued among locals for its durability. Cypress pine continues to be logged occasionally by some people albeit illegally. Other locals took a dim view of this continuing depletion and regretted the lost pine.\textsuperscript{134} Pine Creek Council has planted cypress pines in recent years along the creek perhaps in order to do justice to its name and in recognition of its significance to the local area.

\textbf{Bats and birds}

\textit{Gouldian finches}

The absence of Cypress pine in the area reflects a broader loss of species, both flora and fauna, in Pine Creek and Australia generally as a result of settlement. Pine Creek is unique for being home to a number of endangered species such as the hooded parrot and the Gouldian finch. Jessie Tamblyn recalled hundreds of Gouldian finches arriving annually in her front garden in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{135}

Prior to World War Two there were many descriptions detailing the widespread nature of local wildlife but as one local, Johnnie Hart, conceded: 'Naturally when the population come here well naturally it faded out too.'\textsuperscript{136}

Gouldian finches were a prized collector's item early on in the twentieth century. They were either trapped alive and shipped down south, or their eggs were collected.\textsuperscript{137} Jessie Tamblyn

\begin{footnotes}
\item[132] NAA, NT: A3 1914/2482, Impressions of country-- as recorded by Frank Clarke, p.2.
\item[133] Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
\item[137] There was a trade in fauna in Pine Creek whereby locals sold hooded parrot eggs to the local store, Notebook 3, 14 May 1997.
\end{footnotes}
vividly remembers her mother’s description of Gouldian finches being trapped and transported for the Sydney markets many of them dying on the way.\textsuperscript{138}

\textit{Ghost bats}

Another endangered species indigenous to the Pine Creek area, is the largest carnivorous bat in Australia, the ghost bat \textit{(Macrophaga gigas)} and is an example of the complex factors at work in the survival of individual species.

The largest known single colony of ghost bats in Australia inhabits the abandoned Kohinor adit in Pine Creek.\textsuperscript{139} The story of the ghost bats survival is a paradoxical story about displacement and adaptation. Unlike the Cypress pine the ghost bats have adapted in this specific case to a suitable ‘man made’ roosting site.\textsuperscript{140}

\textit{Changing values}

Changing conservation values among non-Indigenous peoples has been one element in the recognition of the need for protected habitat for native species.\textsuperscript{141} The story of the ghost bat and other endangered species in the Pine Creek area reflects the changing conservation values within the Pine Creek community. Many locals were aware of the endangered status and significance of a number of species including the ghost bat, Gouldian finch and hooded parrot. As Earl Gano summed up: ‘Everybody knows that we’ve got the largest colony of ghost bats in Australia, yet recorded, that is here in Pine Creek in the [Kohinoor] adit there.’

The Kohinor adit is now a registered Heritage Site aiding in the protection of the ghost bat colony and reflecting broader community support of the site.\textsuperscript{142}

For many long-term non-Indigenous residents there has always been an awareness of the values of the natural environment. Lily Ah Toy recalled the beautiful dance of the brolgas:

\textsuperscript{141} Keith Willey, \textit{Ghosts of the big country}, p.113.
\textsuperscript{142} Earl Gano, interview, 1997; Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, ii.
We used to sit in our truck and don’t make a noise and they’d go across the billabong and dancing away... Oh beautiful.143

No species, however, is safe from change. Introduced cane toads, a major threat to native fauna that has devastated indigenous species in Queensland, arrived in the Pine Creek area during the last wet season: how the ghost bats, brolgas and other species will be impacted by the cane toad remains to be seen. One local has already reported seeing dead quolls since the arrival of the cane toad.144

**Buffalo**

There are myriad markers of environmental change that have come with settlement. Clearing of habitat and changed fire regimes are clearly significant in the reduction in populations of particular native species such as ghost bats. Feral animals have impacted on Indigenous species, competing for food, destroying habitat. Predators such as cats and dogs have killed native animals. Buffalo, horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, cats, cattle and dogs have all inhabited the Pine Creek area since settlement and all populations have at some point gone feral.145 In this section I look briefly at the impact of buffalo, the heaviest hard hooved animal introduced in the Top End.

**Habitat and hard hooves**

Buffalo were introduced into the Top End in the nineteenth century. In a country where even fence lines, roads and airstrips produced erosion during the rainy season the buffaloes’ hard hooves combined with their heavy weight were potentially an environmental disaster.146

In the 1980s the last of the wild buffalo and cattle were eradicated from the Top End as part of a program to eradicate the disease brucelosis. As Emu Corrigan summed up: ‘Used to be

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143 Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
144 Carol Palmer, verbal communication, 4 September 2002; Gaye Lawrence, verbal communication, 11 June 2003.
biggest mob of buffalo one time. All been shot dead.\textsuperscript{147} The deaths of such large numbers of animals was a matter of emotional and financial hardship for those who had come to rely on the industry and who accepted them as part of the country. However, their demise was welcomed by others because of the damage they identified. For these people the passing of the buffalo marked the rehabilitation of parts of the land.\textsuperscript{148}

As Tex noted buffaloes took over the northern pastoral stations, ‘And of course, you couldn’t do anything until you got rid of the buffalo because they’d knock the fences down, as fast as you put ‘em up. So we started shooting buffalo. They were still worth a fiver a hide then, which is good money.’Tex described the impact on the earth.

... some of that black soil plains which after The Wet it’d be beautiful, huge mats of grass for miles, good para grass and that sort of thing, by June-July, there’d be just absolutely nothing. It’s absolute - just bare, churned up, black soil bog marks [of] what were beautiful big billabongs, with waterholes there was - full of lillies and reeds, and that [sort of] thing. Not a thing, just yellow, soupy mud-holes - all the banks broken down. Oh, they did a lot of damage alright, there’s no doubt about that. It’s just too many - out of hand. Just overstocked, overstocked too much.\textsuperscript{149}

Jack Lewis described the buffalo as a ‘bad animal’, ‘...the harm that those things were doing, you know, must have been unbelievable. You sort of couldn’t believe it.’\textsuperscript{150} He went on to describe their impact on wildlife in the billabongs.

...well I see turtles with their shells broken in the water where he [the buffalo] drank – drank the river dry and they get into the holes that are left, and they trample – everything lives in that, see. The crocodiles. The crocodiles were out on the bank under the roots of

\textsuperscript{147} Emu and Jessie Corrigan, discussion notes, Kybrook Farm, 12 May 1997. 
\textsuperscript{148} Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997. 
\textsuperscript{149} Tex Moar, interview,1997b. 
\textsuperscript{150} Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Dorothy and Noel Hall attributed the demise of the ‘pygmy’ geese on their station [Bonrook] to the buffalo. NTAS: TS230, Dorothy and Noel Hall, 1978, p.33; Jack Lewis, interview,1997.
the trees, because they're not going to – that great weight would get them too, you see. 151

Dams and creeks

The passing of the buffalo has seen the rehabilitation and regeneration of the areas they once roamed but other animals like pig, donkeys, horses and wild cattle continue to impact heavily on the environment. There are other places around Pine Creek still recovering from heavy environmental impacts and in these cases the land can only partially be restored. One of the most obvious impacts in and around the town of Pine Creek is that of mining. I began this section with the example of the range behind the town being knocked down including Jolly's Dam. Now a larger open cut edifice filled with water is located where the range once stood.

The pit behind the town has filled rapidly with water. People have adapted, like the ghost bat, to a changed landscape. Some locals now see the value of a large water resource now in the form of a lake filling up the mining pit (albeit currently undrinkable) in the area. A local mango grower has been successful in drawing water for his trees from another disused mining pit and so a local fledgling mango industry has started. Other signs of mining excavation around the town are partially concealed by the planting of native species to 'rehabilitate' the area. At the end of the Pine Creek Gold mine's life the tailings dam was converted into a recreational dam, 'Copperfield Recreational Dam'.

Changing the flow

Mining not only disturbs the earth but affects water resources. When the Pine Creek Goldfields mine finally closed there was another more long term impact on the flow of Pine Creek. At ‘...the end of the life of the mine Pine Creek was diverted to fill the pit with water’ in order to reduce the amount of time required to fill the mining pit. This diversion initially prevented Pine Creek from flowing downstream from the pit. The stream now operates as an overflow channel when the water reaches a certain level.152

There were other impacts on Pine Creek when the mine closed. In order to prevent acid water and the associated dissolved heavy metals from polluting water-ways like Pine Creek, the material was 'capped' or sealed with ‘...non sulphide bearing waste...’. However, with

152 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Gaye Lawrence, interview, 1997; Steve Boyes, interview, 1997; Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
the monsoon rains leaching inevitably occurred and, in recent years, during some wet seasons, an overflow in water from the pit into the Pine Creek has led to a dangerous increase in heavy metals, making it unsafe for swimming in the section of the creek below the pit.\footnote{Steve Boyes, interview, 1997; Notebook 1, 12 February 1997. See Order of Town Clerk, Pine Creek Community Government Council, 28 February 1997.}

Helen Liddy and Russell Young identified other changes in the creek – noticeably the absence of the small fish that were once common. As Helen pointed out the Pine Creek, ‘... used to come down past old Fred Kirk, all the way down there. That’s the same creek that used to come down here. But since they’ve dammed it up there’s no fish go anywhere. The fish used to come up the Cullen.’\footnote{Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.} Russell Young had not seen the small fish in the creek near his camp for many years: ‘... I don’t know what’s happening to them.’\footnote{Russell Young, interview, 1996.}

For Helen Liddy there was a clear experience of loss. Her signposts and her history of association with the land had been quite literally excavated–resulting in the loss of Indigenous sacred sites in the mining areas.\footnote{Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS.} The diversion of Pine Creek and the absence of the small fish was another loss - hopefully more temporary.

Helen Liddy’s experience of loss contrasts with others like Tex Moar who focussed on the capacity of land to regenerate. As Tex summed up, ‘Yeah, its marvellous how quick it [the land] rejuvenates, yeah. Well just for an instance, you look around this Pine Creek, I mean, there were thousands of people here once. And the whole country was - see everything was steam driven and the whole country was cut out and there wasn’t a tree. You wouldn’t know to look at the place now. There’s scrub everywhere and it’s certainly comes back quick because of our rainfalls every year, I s’pose.’\footnote{Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; See also Earl Gano, interview, 1997.}

**A CHANGED LAND**

**Growing wild**

One hundred years of environmental impact in the Pine Creek area has clearly left a legacy. But the country still provides sustenance for those who wish to live off the land - and the
procession of the seasons still continues, ripening particular bush foods. Indigenous people in the area are constantly on the look-out for ripened bush food. For example, when Helen Liddy and I travelled back from Esmerelda Station she clearly had her eyes on the trees - she was looking for ripe green plums. Knowledge and memory combine continually.

The legacy of the gardens and the fruit trees still lies in the Pine Creek landscape - although some plants would now be classified as weeds. Old mango trees still survive in the Chinatown area as they do elsewhere in Pine Creek. Tamarind trees were also widely planted and continue to survive. Sisters Joan Frazer and Marie Heidtmann (nee Lee) pointed out a tamarind tree down by Sally Feeney's old place near the Pine Creek.¹⁵⁸

Custard apples grew wild, recalls Fred Muggleton, who used to eat them as a child. Other non-fruit bearing trees were also planted. Boab trees, local to the Victoria River District, were grown in the Top End. Helen Liddy planted a Boab at Claravale station after the 1957 flood and a boab marks the site of the Cullen Compound (see Chapter four). Helen’s sister also planted wattle from ‘VRD’ way. Bright pink bougainvillea still grows luxuriantly around the old Claravale Station homestead and bamboo that Helen Liddy transplanted from Mary River still survives.¹⁵⁹

While Helen and her sister consciously planted indigenous and non-indigenous flora other non-indigenous flora went ‘wild’ such as the blue hyacinths growing around Jolly’s Dam and the ‘Chinese grass’ Lulu Martin described as, ‘Too hard to burn’.¹⁶⁰

The Lee sisters, Marie and Joan, have maintained a Chinese seed collection inherited through their mother and can readily identify any Chinese plants growing in the local landscape such as ‘candlebush’ and watercress, amaranth (‘fat hen’) and pig weed.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ ‘VRD’ is the acronym for Victoria River Downs station. Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996, Notebook 2 14 March 1997; Notebook 7, 4 December 1996; NTAS: TS 210/2, Mrs. Shu Ack Fong, 1981, p.14, p.19. Jasmine was also planted early on in the area along with other introduced plants, Reports (geological and general), p.32.
¹⁶⁰ Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, 3-4; Lulu Martin, interview, Brocks Creek and Burnside Station, tape 10, 1997.
¹⁶¹ Marie describes what she calls ‘Candlebush’ – a medicinal plant used on infected wounds which continues to grow wild around Esmerelda Station. Watercress also still survives untended around the dams on the farm. Marie Heidtman, interview, 1997; Joan Frazer, interview, 1997; Lily Ah Toy also
Marie's rumination about the 'candlebush' plant provides an insight into these sister's knowledge and the continuing presence of these plants (and their seeds) in the landscape.

One of my friends found a clay jar with seeds in it, and they were grey with age. They used the leaves and/or the flowers pulped up to put on wounds, boils, infected injuries, grazes, cuts - which there were plenty of in the mining days. And they thought it precious enough to carry a clay pot of seeds with them, from somewhere. It grows around the dams at home. It's a large scratchy bush of about two metres, I suppose, but the white ants and borers love it, but it keeps growing happily.  

Like 'candlebush' other fruit and vegetables went to seed and spread - growing in the 'wild.' Nellie Fong noted that tomatoes grew wild. Les Finniss noted that three or four years after the Pine Creek to Katherine railway extension was completed watermelons grew along the line. He thought the engine drivers and fettlers must have dropped them. 'They used to pull up and pick a few watermelons and bring them down on the train for themselves, or you know, some of their friends.'

Results
One could say that the Pine Creek environment has survived the exigencies of settlement for over 100 years but with complex and paradoxical results. The physical legacy of settlement is mixed - heavy and light in parts. There is both loss, adaption and reclamation - the latter signified by the establishment of Kakadu National Park, and more locally, the rehabilitation of the Pine Creek mining area. Pine Creek has yet to be diverted back to its original flow. When and if the creek stops being diverted then it can return to some kind of equilibrium, and then perhaps the heavy metals will cease to be washed down annually and perhaps, just perhaps – the small fish might return.

Jack Lewis, a long time prospector in the Pine Creek region, was thankful that the Goldfields mine in the 1980s did not manage to get a bore up on the Pine Creek escarpment. As he stated '...if they had found a good bore they would have bled the whole escarpment, you commented on young 'pig weed', 'wild spinach' and collecting bamboo shoots in the area, Lily Ah Toy interview, 1997.

Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997.
know, taken away the spring water and that. That would have mucked it up, so it was a good job that they didn’t find anything – didn’t find enough anyway.\textsuperscript{164}

Gold mining continues in the Pine Creek area in so far as technology and the margin of profits allow but it also remains a place of cultural and natural diversity, of both indigenous and introduced species, of Indigenous, Chinese and European Australians, of tamarind trees and Cypress pine, of buffalo and kangaroo. The landscape continues to display a mixed heritage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous species. Feral cats, if they could talk, could wax lyrical under the mango tree!

For those who stay in the Pine Creek area the natural environment is a constant and abiding theme in their lives. Their memories become the record of place and change. Like many other ‘countries' in Australia the Pine Creek area displays both the scars of settlement and the signs of the continuation of life. It is perhaps a place of mixed blessings washed seasonally by the ‘shower of blessings' - the Monsoon rains that transform The Dry into The Wet.

In the next chapter I examine another aspect of Pine Creek's history - the history embedded in the heritage and historic tourism associated with the town.

\textsuperscript{164} Jack Lewis, interview, 1997.
CHAPTER THREE

HERITAGE, TOURISM AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY
Figure 11: Pine Creek mining banner.
CHAPTER THREE

HERITAGE, TOURISM AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

In caves, beneath the trees, in houses left abandoned
May we linger long as we might wish.

_Shantideva_  

PROSPECTED HISTORY

Shantideva's words refer to contemplative spaces. In such places there is no attachment to possessions because they have been 'abandoned'. Heritage, the main subject of this chapter, in some ways represents the obverse. It is about our attachments to abandoned buildings and those physical remnants from the past with which we identify. These material signs are, as the historical geographer David Lowenthal points out, vestiges of the past that we imbue with our selective values that reflect back to us our own values and responses. 2

How the past alike enriches and impoverishes us, and the reasons we embrace or shun it ... How our recollections and our surroundings make us aware of the past, and how we respond to such knowledge...Why and how we change what has come down to us, to what end its vestiges, like our memories, are salvaged or contrived, and how these alterations affect our heritage, and ourselves...3

In this chapter I examine the history promoted at heritage sites and through historic tourism in the town of Pine Creek. In other words I am examining the realm of public history. Public history extends beyond the domain of heritage to encompass a variety of ways in which

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3. "How the past alike enriches and impoverishes us, and the reasons we embrace or shun it..." (Lowenthal, 1985)
history is brought into the public domain. As the historian Graeme Davison writes: 'Heritage is, above all, a political concept. It asserts a public or national interest in things traditionally regarded as private'. Heritage is also defined by personal encounter. Lowenthal describes heritage as something '...with which we continually interact...which fuses past with present. David Carment has pointed out that a 'key feature' in respect of Australian discussions of heritage in the 1990s has been 'the concept of social value' where 'meanings known to individuals and shared by communities were attached to places'. Historic tourism occupies the borders between heritage and history: it capitalises on heritage by generating its own interpretive forms about the past.

Investigating the public history in Pine Creek entails exploring the interpretive history of the area in order to unearth its components. As part of this inquiry I examine local viewpoints about what comprises the history of Pine Creek and local people's engagement with heritage. I also explore the contrast between historical interpretation in Pine Creek and in nearby Kakadu National Park. I widen the inquiry beyond local heritage and history to canvass the ways in which history is harnessed to politics. In this respect the history promoted in Pine Creek is part of a wider construction of history in the Northern Territory is infused with notions of the 'ownership' of history.

One of the reasons for choosing the Pine Creek area as the starting point for this thesis was that the town and its immediate surrounds have been the subject of significant historical inquiry. This has enabled me to scrutinise definitions of heritage and see how history has been publicly defined. In terms of Northern Territory settlement and mining history Pine Creek is probably one of the best documented or, to choose an appropriate metaphor for Pine Creek, it has been prospected. The context for much of this 'prospecting' has taken place within the heritage domain under the auspices of the National Trust (Northern Territory)

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3 Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country*, xix
4 Public history includes museum exhibitions, documentaries, community based projects as well as heritage displays. Hayden, 1995, p.48. Within the heritage movement in Australia 'heritage' is defined as 'Those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia, or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations, as well as for the present community.' NTANT, Register of significant places information kit, nd.
which seeks to preserve and promote sites of historic value.\(^8\) An examination of the history of the National Trust (NT) and research undertaken by this organisation is threaded through this chapter. In many ways this chapter documents a period of history in the late 1970s and 1980s when a number of heritage initiatives for the town came to fruition and when the Indigenous land claims in areas surrounding Pine Creek were initiated.

**An historic tourist town**

On the Stuart Highway, at the turnoff to the town of Pine Creek, there is a brown sign that reads ‘Historic Town’. What is an ‘historic town’? In an immediate sense the sign is an invitation for tourists to visit. More specifically the term might imply restoration and re-created history.

Since the 1980s the town has relied heavily on its history and heritage buildings to promote tourism. A tourist brochure entitled: *Everything you wanted to know about Pine Creek (but were afraid to ask)* describes the main industries in the town in the following order –

- Tourism
- Mining
- Associated industries.

The brochure notes that the ‘things to see in Pine Creek’ include the: National Trust Museum, railway station and train, Miners Park, old Chinese diggings, mine lookout, Water Gardens, flora and fauna display, Gun Alley gold mining, Bonrook Lodge & Station, Copperfield Dam’. Over half of these sites are heritage related.\(^9\)

Interspersed with these ‘historic’ sites are the more recent besser brick buildings such as the town council offices, post office, cafe and the 1950s pub of brick and mortar. There are also aluminium and polythene clad demountables suggesting a more transient population.

The preservation of historic sites in and around the town was initiated by the local townspeople who formed a branch of the National Trust in the 1970s. Wider recognition of

\(^8\) Pearson and Sullivan describe the role of the National Trust as having the '...common aims of encouraging and assisting in the preservation of areas of natural or historical interest or beauty, for public, scientific and educational purposes'. M. Pearson and S. Sullivan, *Looking after heritage places*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p.76.
Pine Creek's built heritage has been acknowledged through registration of select 'historic' buildings and sites on the National Trust Register (NT), the Register of the National Estate and the declaration of buildings and sites as heritage places as declared under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act* and the *Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act (1981).* In 1991 the Northern Territory introduced its own heritage legislation and register including historic sites in Pine Creek.\(^9\)

Places on the National Trust (NT) register in Pine Creek include the museum (formerly the Mining Warden's office and residence), the Chinese bakery, the butchery, the Bonrook homestead, the railway precinct, including the railway station and the stationmaster's house, the Kohinoor mining adit (home to the protected colony of ghost bats) and remnants of Chinatown, including an old pig roasting oven. Most of the sites on the register date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The establishment of a heritage trail in the late 1980s and a revised trail in the 1990s has variously promoted this listing.\(^10\)

As early as 1912 the buildings of Pine Creek were being promoted as part of the town's character although in 1912 their depiction on a postcard was meant to imply a thriving contemporary town: the appellation 'Historic Town' would have to wait another eighty years (see Figure 12).

Along with the identification of Pine Creek as an historic town have come measures to 'beautify' the dusty treeless landscape in and around the town. The most noticeable attempt at beautification was the establishment of the water garden in 1995. The water garden clearly suffers in the heat and while some visitors have not been impressed with the vista it is still a

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\(^9\) The flora and fauna display has now closed. A mango winery operated until recently. Many business have closed or are for sale as a result of the closure of Union Reefs Mine. Elaine Gano, personal communication, 11 June 2003.

\(^10\) The *Australian Heritage Commission Act* provides for the inclusion of significant places or natural areas to the Register of the National Estate '... in recognition of their value, locally, at State/Territory, or to the nation as a whole.' Sites in Pine Creek on the register of the National Estate include Chinatown, the Playford Club Hotel, the Chinese bakery, the railway precinct, butchery, Kohinoor mining adit, nearby overland telegraph poles and the repeater station (now the museum). Information supplied by Bob Alford, Director, NTANT, Darwin 'registered site list 1997'. The NT register is currently being reviewed and updated (2003). The Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act 1991 legally protects '...declared heritage places and objects...' Under this Act the above sites have been declared heritage sites. NTANT: Attachment 2. Heritage Advisory Council File D93/595. See also NTANT, *Properties you can visit in the Northern Territory,* n.d; David Carment, 'Cultural heritage management in the Northern Territory 1983-1998' in *Journal of Northern Territory History,* no. 11, 2000, pp.15-24.
cherished patch of green for the locals who have seen a number of improvements in local landscaping.12

Whose heritage?
Heritage is in the eyes of the beholder. The heritage listing of buildings in the town of Pine Creek has come about as a result of lobbying from local European and Chinese Australian people partly reflecting the non-Indigenous cultural antecedents of the concept of heritage.13 That is not to say that local Indigenous people do not have significant connections with these sites - they do.14 These sites are sources of memories for all people who have passed through and live in or near the town. In other words living and frequenting a place is important in having connections to that place (see Chapter four and Chapter five).

The focus on what has been written for tourists provides an opportunity to examine who and what is missing from the interpretation. In this case acknowledgement of Indigenous histories - and other histories that are less easily traced are noticeable by their absence.

There are also cultural differences in the scope of historical association with the area. When I mention to Top End non-Indigenous residents that I am doing a history of Pine Creek I receive unsolicited feedback from them about the town’s historical significance and importance that is quite site specific – for instance they mention the museum and railway as old buildings and the fact that these buildings have survived. When I mention to local Indigenous people that I am undertaking a history of Pine Creek they talk about places that are located in the general area and their activities associated with that place such as hunting and pastoral work. In other words, for many Indigenous people, the term Pine Creek describes an area circumscribed by the history of their daily life and work rather than the town which they, historically, have had only periodic contact with. As Emu Corrigan and Jessie Corrigan recounted when they were working on cattle stations in the area there was no

reason to go to Pine Creek. Emu and his wife could travel easily between Claravale station (south of Pine Creek) and Ooloo Station (north of Pine Creek) following the Daly River.  

Still standing?

On one level it is remarkable that modest buildings of tin and timber have survived in Pine Creek. The tropical climate, the nature of the materials used and the transitory nature of many settlements leave few discrete material remains behind. Moisture and white ants hasten the decomposition process and fire has periodically swept through buildings. In addition building materials are constantly recycled for use elsewhere.

The ‘survival’ of original buildings in Pine Creek is constantly touted in the historic tourism literature in terms of a few remaining buildings of a particular style from a particular period! As the interpretation outside the museum and hotel sums up respectively: 'The building is on the Register of the National Estate and is the oldest surviving prefabricated structure in the Northern Territory.' This building is the earliest example of a top end galvanised iron public house to survive, structurally intact, in its basic form.

The National Trust is not the only organisation which has a covenant on describing uniqueness. The front of Ah Toy’s store states that it is the longest family owned store in the Northern Territory.

Corrugated iron, termite resistant cypress pine and serendipity have been the critical components in the survival of buildings in Pine Creek. The arrival of the National Trust and its commitment to regular maintenance and repair of Trust properties has prolonged the life of these buildings.

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15 Emu and Jessie Corrigan, discussion notes, 1997. Emu was a Jambijimba man from Timber Creek who married Jessie, a Wagiman woman. Jessie was Clara McMahan’s sister. Clara accompanied Lulu Martin on her travels to her country (see below for further discussion). See also Wilson, *Wakgala*, pp.73-75.


17 In a phrase coined in Pine Creek tourism fliers and heritage pamphlets: ‘Pine Creek is the only original mining town remaining from the gold rush of the 1870s’, Pine Creek Branch of the NTANT, *Welcome to historic Pine Creek*, n.d. See also Pine Creek Tourist Association, *Pine Creek Gateway to Kakadu, Northern Territory Australia*, n.d.; Katherine Region Tourist Association, *Katherine Region Australia’s Northern Territory*, n.d., p.34.

18 *Properties you can visit in the Northern Territory*, n.d.

19 NTANT, Interpretation. Old Playford Club Hotel, Pine Creek, c1984.
Figure 12: Postcard. ‘Pine Creek Township. Northern Territory. With Greetings’.
Source: National Trust (NT), c1980s, reprint of postcard by J.P. Campbell, Malvern, Victoria, 1912.
For those buildings that have long gone memories still remain. A fire demolished the town hall in the late 1960s: Lily recalled the beauty of its interior including the cypress woodwork in the ceiling. The local Progress Association refurbished the building and, as Lily pointed out, it ‘... lasted for years and years.’

More recently observers on behalf of the National Trust investigated the remnants of the Overland Telegraph in the Top End which once spanned the continent from Port Augusta to Port Darwin. Some of what little remains lies just out of Pine Creek.

There is not a great deal left of the Overland Telegraph Line, although there was a small section just out of Pine Creek where three of the original ironwood poles were still standing... They look very fragile, and it seems a miracle that they have not previously been destroyed by bushfires or human impact. They are also not signposted in any way, although they are apparently part of a regular stop by a private tourist group...

**Historic tourism and heritage research on Pine Creek**

As discussed in Chapter one the most substantive historical work on the Pine Creek area to-date was undertaken by Howard Pearce on behalf of the National Trust (NT) in 1982. It provided three volumes of documentation on the settlement and mining heritage in and around Pine Creek as well as providing the first overview history of the area. Pearce’s survey was a fillip for the local branch of the National Trust because it provided substantive historic material that could be harnessed for the promotion of the ‘historic’ town of Pine Creek.

Howard Pearce’s work remains the definitive settlement history of Pine Creek and has provided a benchmark for subsequent heritage/historic archaeological studies including the

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20 Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996. This hall was originally the hospital before the Progress Association took it over. See Chapter five.
22 Pearce, vol. 1-3.
23 As the first Pine Creek National Trust pamphlet noted. ‘The National Trust has completed a survey of the principal heritage resources under the Pine Creek District Heritage Scheme. About 140 sites of possible historical significance in the area have been identified.’ Welcome to historic Pine Creek.
work of Bell (1983) McCarthy (1986) and Mitchell (1994 and 1995). Much of the interpretive and tourism/heritage literature has also drawn on his work, as have more general studies which reference Pine Creek’s history. Moreover, Pearce’s study has come to be defined by local history enthusiasts in the town, including members of the National Trust, as ‘the’ history. When I was canvassing local community opinion to see how they felt about my undertaking a history of Pine Creek one person asked ‘Hadn’t the history of Pine Creek already been done?’ – referring to Pearce’s study.

**Historic tourism and the settlement verse**

National Trust research on Pine Creek coincided with a corresponding generation of historic tourism literature as well as interpretation at the main identified sites of heritage in the town and a ‘Discovery Trail’ which linked these sites. The focus of this literature was designed to promote and engage visitor/tourist interest. Some of this information has been generated by the National Trust, at a Pine Creek branch and Northern Territory level, or generated by local interest groups/tourist associations. It includes fixed interpretation at heritage sites, pamphlets and brochures. I variously refer to this writing as historic tourism literature and/or heritage interpretation.

The prospecting of Pine Creek’s history is associated largely with its gold mining history. Gold mining has always been bound up with a mythological attraction. (I can not imagine a lead mining town having the same attraction). As Elaine Gano remarked about visitors to her

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24 Bell, Pine Creek; McCarthy, Heritage zone; Mitchell, An archaeological and historical survey; Mitchell, A management plan.

25 Bell found Pearce’s report ‘...to be an accurate and comprehensive guide to the district, and greatly assisted the process of identifying and assessing sites’. Bell, Pine Creek, p.4. Bell drew directly on Pearce’s background history for his own archaeological report, see p.2; Mitchell’s 1995 report confirmed the importance of Pearce’s study as ‘The first, and still the most comprehensive of these studies...’, Mitchell, A management plan, p.7; NTANT, *Pine Creek Heritage Trail* n.d. The map in this pamphlet is directly lifted from Howard Pearce’s heritage report. Pearce, vol. 1; Jackie Wolfe drew heavily on Pearce for the early history of Pine Creek in her monograph. *Pine Creek Aborigines and town camps*, p.12. It is interesting to note how a number of these studies have referred to and incorporate Pearce’s concluding summary statement on the historical significance of Pine Creek as a mining, transport and communication centre. Pearce, vol. 1, p.150. See Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, ii, 2, section 4.4.


family's gold panning tourist enterprise: 'You can have people who are dripping with diamonds, but they find a little speck of gold in their pan and they are absolutely thrilled.'

The emphasis on Pine Creek's gold mining history is part of a constant refrain of a settlement 'verse' reiterated in Pine Creek's heritage/tourism literature.

To sum up the main points:

• Pine Creek is defined historically as a gold mining town
• The significant Chinese presence on the goldfields is emphasised
• Communication links are deemed to have played a critical role - in particular the overland telegraph, the railway and the Stuart Highway - in Pine Creek's development.

Other commonly recited points are that:

- Pine Creek is the only original gold mining town from last century.
- Europeans were outnumbered by Chinese on the goldfields.
- Little is known of 'Aboriginal' lifestyles in the area prior to settlement.
- Following settlement 'Aboriginal' lifestyle was altered irrevocably.
- Mining is a boom/bust economy.
- Mining has made a comeback in Pine Creek.

The most original description of Pine Creek I came across that did not draw specifically on this settlement 'verse' was in a Lonely Planet Guide which described Pine Creek as having 'great atmosphere' and that is certainly stretching the concept of original!

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29 This includes the gamut of texts ranging from National Trust reports on sites, interpretative texts through to pamphlets, local newspaper reports and tourist ephemera. Pamphlets and tourist ephemera are of particular interest including those relating to the Pine Creek District Heritage Scheme established in the 1980s which included the 'Pine Creek Discovery Trail'. The sources I draw mostly appear in the 1980s. They include the following. Welcome to historic Pine Creek; Joyce Frazer, Corrugated iron architecture of Pine Creek Northern Territory, n.d. NTANT publications and interpretation: Early days in Pine Creek, n.d, Pine Creek Heritage Trail, n.d; Properties you can visit in the Northern Territory, n.d, Pine Creek people, n.d; Pine Creek Railway Station, interpretation c1984. Other related tourist/heritage publications. Katherine region: Australia's Northern Territory, n.d.; Pine Creek Gateway to Kakadu, Northern Territory Australia, n.d; Pine Creek Community Government Council, Everything you wanted to know about Pine Creek (but were afraid to ask), n.d; NTG, Northern Goldfields Loop, 1997; Pearce, vol. 1, p.150; Carment, A past displayed, pp.109-110.

30 Last century refers to the nineteenth century. Arltunga, a Central Australian gold mining town, was not acknowledged in such a definition perhaps because it did not survive - however Tennant Creek, also a gold mining town, has survived but part of a later period of gold mining.
It should be noted that this 'verse' is not specific to heritage/tourism literature on Pine Creek but includes more general histories on the area and has been located in broader tourism strategies in the Northern Territory during the 1980s and 1990s. As Mike Reed, the Minister for Tourism, in the early 1990s, summed up regarding a new series of trails including the Pine Creek Goldfields Loop '...the trails would give Territorians and tourists an overview of the history of exploration, settlement and development of the Territory.'

Nor is this settlement verse confined to text. A number of the townspeople also conceived of the history of Pine Creek in these terms. When interviewing local people about their connections with Pine Creek I also took the opportunity of asking them about what they thought was the main history of Pine Creek. Most respondents, including school children, were quite clear and definite in their response. As one child summed up 'Our town was established in 1877. The main industry gold mining.' Another adult stated that Pine Creek was here because of the railway and the mining. Another proffered that: 'The whole history of our town is based around mining... Oriental feel.'

There were exceptions. For instance an older person who was a long term resident identified Pine Creek in more complex terms as a place of gold, buffalo and for stocking up supplies. It was a big centre. Others also saw Pine Creek in non-mining terms. One person commented on Pine Creek's cosmopolitan and transient nature.

While the general outline of this history in people's minds, and in written form, are factually 'true' - for instance Pine Creek was originally a gold mining town, communication links were vital in the survival of the town, Europeans were outnumbered by Chinese on the

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31 'This small town (population 450), 245km from Darwin, is one of only a handful of towns in the Territory that have great atmosphere – it was the scene of a gold rush in the 1870s and some of the old timber and corrugated-iron buildings survive.' Hugh Finlay in *Northern Territory: a lonely planet Australia guide*, Lonely Planet publications, Hawthorn Vic., 1996, p.183.

32 The Northern Goldfields Loop was one of seven routes devised by the Northern Territory Government '... designed to protect and promote...' aspects of the Northern Territory's natural and cultural heritage including history, Indigenous culture and the natural environment. NTG, *NT Heritage Trail*, 1996; Note that the NTG commissioned the National Trust to develop a system of Territory heritage trails between Alice Springs and Darwin - *NTT*, 22 October 1992 in NTANT: 8/135 Heritage Trail.

33 Pine Creek school boys to Gordon Wallace, letter, 22 June 1995. The Pine Creek school curriculum has occasionally included a local history module emphasising these points.

34 Another person said that 'The only thing I knew about Pine Creek... was the gold.' Another emphatically stated: 'You wouldn't be able to go past mining.' Notebook 7, 2 December, 1996.
Goldfields and Indigenous lifestyle was altered irrevocably with settlement - it is these emphases and generalisations that conceal a more complex variegated history. To take two examples – the focus on Pine Creek as a gold mining town overshadows the long history of tin mining in the area, the focus on profound change of Indigenous culture belies the way culture continues on.

It is interesting to speculate whether or not the written interpretation placed in and around the town has impacted on peoples' perceptions of the history of the area, reinforcing the narrative of mining and settlement. It is hard to prove or disprove this point but certainly the historic interpretation both simplifies the history of the area and mirrors the general view of the European Australian people I spoke with, adult and children alike.

Robert Liddy disputed the focus on mining history in the area.

I don’t think I’d class it as a mining town. I don’t know what you would class it as at the moment, see, originally you could class it as a station town because most of your station owners came in here. I mean, you’ve got a few miners around, but what’s the work for a miner these days? I mean most people come here with detectors.36

Material views

Material culture focuses history in a particular direction. The focus on the town buildings and mining equipment inevitably focusses written interpretation on these physical representations of mining and settlement. Preserved structures like the museum and railway Station tend to be reminders of the ruling status quo - those in government or in positions of authority in contrast to those who camped in the open and did not live under a roof (see Chapter five). Moreover it is noticeable that a majority of National Trust (NT) reports on Pine Creek have been undertaken by historical archaeologists, reinforcing an emphasis on material culture and its associated history.37 Heritage consultants for the Pine Creek area have argued about the significance of Pine Creek’s history through their respective reading of material culture.

35 One person noted a floating population in Pine Creek hence his description of the town as a ‘Gateway to Kakadu’, Notebook 7, 2 December 1996.
37 In the past consultants from a variety of discipline backgrounds, noticeably architects, archaeologists and historians have been employed to carry out heritage assessments. As Davison
Howard Pearce argued that Pine Creek’s history extended beyond material culture. He wrote:

The majority of historic sites within the Pine Creek District are of mining origin, raising the assumption that this is the principal offering in terms of historic product. To combat this impression it needs to be demonstrated that the District contains a range of sites illustrating the processes of natural history and evidencing a variety of forms of human occupation.38

Peter Bell who surveyed a number of mining sites in the area, argued that the history of Pine Creek was largely the history of mining. He wrote:

First, whereas Pearce believed that the significance of mining in the district’s history had been overstated, and sought to counterbalance that impression by stressing other aspects of Pine Creek’s heritage, this report accepts that the district is, and has always been since European settlement, predominantly a mining region.39

Other verses
This general mining/settlement verse contrasts with the kind of history presented in the cultural centres in Kakadu National Park to the north of Pine Creek. In many ways Pine Creek and Kakadu are sites of differing representations of history – Kakadu giving prominence to Indigenous participation in the mining industry and the impact of mining on the environment while the interpretation in Pine Creek gives prominence to the European and Chinese mining history of the area/region with a focus on ‘development’.

These differences in representation are reflected in the history of historical research and collection in the Northern Territory which has tended to be divided on the basis of Indigenous/non-Indigenous histories. For instance the National Trust (NT) has traditionally been the repository of ‘settler’ history while organisations representing Indigenous peoples including the Land Councils and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority have traditionally been repositories for Indigenous histories. While this divide is not true of all

points out an architect or architectural historian will have a different set of criteria for determining the value of a building than an historian. Davison, ‘The meanings of ‘heritage’”, p.66.

38 Pearce, vol. 3, p.6

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organisations or facilities (libraries at the Northern Territory Museum, Northern Territory University and Northern Territory reference library being an exception) none the less it is a division that has profoundly shaped the research landscape in the Northern Territory. The combination of different agendas for collecting history and representing history in the Northern Territory whether they are academic, amateur or institutionally based have resulted in a diversity of histories which emanate from very different ideological and historical positions.

HISTORY COLLECTION AND GENERATION

The politicisation of history collection and generation has its antecedents in the history of settlement in the Northern Territory; the population 'make-up' and contested land ownership.

The Northern Territory is unique in Australia for having the largest proportion of Indigenous peoples per head of population and the largest proportion of land under Indigenous ownership compared with other states and Territories. Indigenous people made up twenty-seven percent of the population of the Northern Territory at the last census with forty-four percent of the land in the Northern Territory currently under 'Aboriginal' freehold title.40

In 1976 the advent of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 enabled, for the first time, a formal process for the return of land to Indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory. The Northern and Central Land Councils were established at this time to act on behalf of prospective traditional owners for the return of land. The Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act (1978) was enacted as complementary legislation in accordance with the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority oversees this Act and is charged with protecting Indigenous sacred sites on all lands in the Northern Territory.41

More recently the Native Title Act 1993 has further enabled Indigenous claims to land outside the ambit of the Land Rights Act, including towns and cities, to be assessed. The

39 Bell, Pine Creek, p. 4
41 Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, Annual report 1999-00, eleventh annual report for the period ended 30 June 2000, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, p.31.
main population centres of Darwin and Alice Springs and towns like Pine Creek are in the process of addressing these Native Title Claims.  

Against this Land Rights background was the advent of self-government in the Northern Territory in 1978. Until 2001, a conservative government (Country Liberal Party) was in power. This government established itself for the most part as an adversary to Indigenous claims to land ownership in the Northern Territory. The Indigenous/non-Indigenous divide has thus been fuelled politically by the competition between a conservative government focussed on development, maintenance and strengthening of European claims to the land 'versus' recognition of Indigenous peoples' a priori claims to traditional lands. The political make up of the Territory has had implications for the handling of heritage sites although the adversarial divide between the Government and Indigenous institutions is changing with a less-conservative Labor Government. However the situation in recent history has been 'complicated'. As David Carment pointed out:

There were continuing public arguments between the Territory's non-Labor government and Aboriginal organisations over land rights and 'sacred sites'. Among Aborigines there was some disagreement over whether they alone should determine how their cultural sites were looked after or whether these sites needed to be identified under white administrative systems. The Chief Officer of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, David Ritchie, observed in December 1993 that all too frequently in identifying and managing the Territory's Indigenous heritage the vital need to establish rights for Indigenous people was being sidestepped, often in a desire to build national identity for non-Aboriginal Australians. Rather than ensuring Indigenous control of land, he believed that there was a non-Aboriginal obsession with the spiritual value of places.

What emerges out of this combination of legislation, redeemed and contested land ownership and cultural heritage is a parallel history of divided historical research where even researchers became identified with Indigenous rights versus Government 'policy'.

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43 Geoff Eames, 'The Central Land Council: the politics of change' and John Coldrey 'Anatomy of a campaign' in Alexis Wright (ed), Take power like this old man here, pp.135-143, pp.144-159.
The most significant body of information pertaining to post-contact Indigenous history rests with the Land Councils and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA). In the case of Pine Creek, the Northern Land Council (NLC) has until recently been the repository of most of the oral Indigenous history of the area. The history documented under the auspices of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* have been critical in affording an opportunity for a large number of Indigenous people to record their oral history. These Acts have also generated a number of anthropological, linguistic and historic accounts.\(^4\)

In contrast to the statutory limitations on information held by the NLC and AAPA the National Trust has traditionally been a volunteer organisation with a strong lobbying component engaged to preserve heritage on behalf of the public.\(^5\) There has also been a strong tendency, borne out of the National Trust's European middle- and upper-class origins to focus on European settler heritage. The Northern Territory has been part of this trend.\(^6\) Most of the site documentation held by the National Trust (NT) concerns documentation of non-Indigenous attachment to heritage sites.

In the 1990s volunteer organisations concerned with community heritage and history were burgeoning.\(^7\) They included not only the National Trust (NT) but the Historical Society of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Genealogical Society.\(^8\) These organisations have been instrumental in generating historical research, published works and establishing research collections. Volunteer organisations are egalitarian to an extent—women and men, academic and non-academic historians rub shoulders with one another and draw on each other for information. Such organisations are a form of the 'people's history'

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\(^4\) Carment, 'Cultural heritage management in the Northern Territory', p.17.

\(^5\) See Chapter one. These land claims embrace a large area around Pine Creek extending from Adelaide River in the West, Katherine to the East, Dorisvale and Jindare Stations to the South and Oenpelli and Kakadu to the north.

\(^6\) The Northern Territory National Trust, in contrast to more populous states, such as Victoria, which are largely self-funded, relies heavily on financial support from the government. The National Trust (NT) was incorporated under an Act of Parliament in 1976. NTANT, *What is heritage?* 1996. See also National Trust (Victoria), *Enjoy the National Trust experience*, Melbourne nd, p.4.

\(^7\) The Northern Territory boasts few so-called 'grand buildings'—which has been the traditional focus of the National Trust—hence the Trust in the Territory has focussed on more humble abodes of settlement. See Davison, 'The meanings of "heritage"', p.8, 11.

yet in the Northern Territory they reflect the cultural make up of these citizens which by and large are made up of non-Indigenous writers and collectors although histories of Indigenous peoples have been generated through these forums.  

Government Departments have also played a key role in the collection of history. The Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (DIPE), for instance, have developed their own in-depth collections of historical information and archival collections about their respective areas over many years. Vern O’Brien, a retired Government surveyor, has been extensively involved with the DIPE collection through the Place Names Committee and Genealogical Society of the NT. This involvement forms part of his personal recognition of the historical importance of these 'functional areas' in recording details on Territory identities, adding names into the local street nomenclature and ascertaining details of land tenure. Others have undertaken extensive indexing work such as Lawrie Debnam (a former Police Prosecutor) with the Debnam Index of the NT Times and Len Cossons, a former policeman, who indexed the NT police journals (including Pine Creek's) and the probate records in the NT (1911-1995).  

The written form has been the province mostly of European Australians and as discussed in Chapter one the Pine Creek region has produced its own writers and collectors of such history including Mayse Young and Tom Cole.  

In Pine Creek, as in other towns, there are also a number of individuals who have maintained a passion for various elements of local history which has been facilitated through friendships between 'old timers' and younger residents. These younger people in turn have become repositories for local oral history. (For more discussion of this connection see Chapter four) Earl Gano, who runs a gold panning tourist venture, has garnered a knowledge of Northern Territory mining history over many years, and is familiar with the mining history of Pine Creek. Another resident, Paul Williamson, has a passion for World War Two history of the

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50 For instance the work of Darrell Lewis on the Murranji stock route.  
51 Vern O’Brien, letter, 25 July 2003. DIPE has gone through a number of 'incarnations'. Formerly it was the Department of Lands and Housing in which the Place Names Committee resided and where an archive collection is still housed.  
52 Earl Gano referred me to a range of mining histories noticeably Timothy Jones 'Pegging the Territory'. He had read Peter Bell’s archaeology report on Pine Creek (1983) but pointed out that most of the relevant material was in Howard Pearce’s report(s).
area. Tex Moar who volunteers his time at the museum and runs his own gem/rock store often regales people with many tales based on his own experience as a pastoralist and miner as well as the knowledge he has garnered from reading local history.

In the 1980s Jimmy Ah Toy and Ernest Fong in conjunction with Charles See Kee gave an address on behalf of the Chung Wah Society which included a history of Pine Creek and Chinese settlement based largely on their knowledge and experience of living in Pine Creek. This kind of knowledge is obviously not confined to Pine Creek residents but to all those who have lived and travelled in the area. When Francesca Merlan asked Henry Scott, a long-time Katherine man, why the railway by passed Yam Creek Scott replied succinctly, ‘Well it was by-passed because it was very mountainous country, and there were very deep gorges and it would have been the cost of building the railway line there would have been out of the question.’

**Divided information?**

The Land Rights and Sacred Sites Acts which guide the operations of the Land Councils and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority respectively, determine the course of their information collection which is held in confidentiality by these organisations on behalf of Indigenous claimants and/or custodians.

The information divide also reflects different ways of handling knowledge between cultures as well as formal protocols for handling information such as land claim material. This difference is highlighted in the contrast between oral-Indigenous and written-European traditions. The prominence of Indigenous oral tradition contrasts with Europeans' propensity to write down history. There are no prohibitions on access to such material. In contrast oral tradition is a comparatively private enterprise. It resides in the vernacular – in the familial connections between people of all cultures but most noticeably, for Northern Territory history, in respect of Indigenous culture. So for instance when I and another researcher accompanied a Wagiman woman, Lulu Martin Dalpbalingali and her family through her

54 Tex referred me to the work of the Reverend Tenison Woods, the Government Geologist who toured the area in the late nineteenth century. Tex Moar, interview, 1997b. Tex was involved in organising some of the early uranium explorations of the area. For instance he organised supplies and horses and guided Sleis and Beck in search of Uranium in the 1950s.
55 NTAS: TS401, Mr Ah Toy, Mr Charlie See Kee and Mr Ernest Fong, n.d. In this short transcript Jim Ah Toy gave a history of Pine Creek and of Chinese settlement in the area including Chinatown.
56 Yam Creek was another early gold mining area/town not far from Pine Creek.
country in the Douglas/Daly area north of Pine Creek, the central purpose of her story telling and reminiscence were for her family to hear. She was passing on stories to the next generation and we were there recording them for that primary purpose.

**History and tradition**

In the Indigenous world view, where history and the sacred are clearly linked, it is problematic to separate history from tradition, or the sacred from the secular – both history and tradition are profoundly entwined – both signify Indigenous connections with the land. The Land Councils and AAPA act as custodians of sacred ceremonial information as well as what non-Indigenous people would regard as secular or profane historical information. These histories describe Indigenous peoples' attachment to the land in a formal sense, for instance through sacred connections with the land and in a secular sense, for instance in their history of work and survival in the area of their custodianship. Indigenous people may tell both stories in the same breath and they are inter-linked to the extent that they described connections with country.  

In this context what meaning and value do Indigenous people ascribe to European concepts of history and heritage and where is the common ground? In the 1990s I worked with Darrell Lewis on a National Trust (NT) project carried out jointly with an Indigenous Land Council, the Tiwi Land Council, in documenting historic sites on the Bathurst and Melville islands. The project highlighted differences in perception of heritage that resided at the most basic level of language and understanding. At the outset there was a misunderstanding when we met with the Tiwi Land Council about what we were to do. Initially they thought we were documenting sacred sites as previous anthropological consultants had done. The onus was on us to explain what an historic site was. We explained that we were looking at cross-cultural contact points or 'meeting places' between Tiwi and non-Tiwi people on the Islands. The process of definition not only underscored the need to build into any heritage assessment the recognition of different values attached to historic sites but how the Tiwi defined for themselves what an historic site constituted.

One Tiwi Land Councillor pointed out the importance of documenting the old timber milling sites before they were completely destroyed. A group of Tiwi women pointed out a lone

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57 Henry Scott interviewed by Francesca Merlan, transcript of tape 6, 29 November, 1991, p.4
58 For general examples see the Aboriginal Land Commissioner land claim hearings. For specific example see Lulu Martin, interview, Douglas Crossing, tape 5, 1997.
tree on the beach at Nguiu along the Apsley Straits. This tree had old axe marks cut into it and rusty nails deeply embedded in the trunk for hanging billycans on. For the women it was a special place marking not only the time of Bishop Gsell's arrival but also the passing of the old ways. They remembered an old man and his many Tiwi wives who camped in the shade of what was then a row of trees. One Tiwi elder remarked that this tree, a *Malikiringa* or nut tree, was ‘the oldest tree along the beach’.  

**Historical agendas**

The Tiwi Land Council's initial perception of Darrell and I as anthropologists reflects the very orientations Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations have towards collecting history. The sequestering of Indigenous and non-Indigenous history at an organisational level, and the different approaches to documentation, are clearly illustrated by Howard Pearce’s work on Pine Creek in the 1980s. During that time, he undertook two consultancies in relation to sites of significance – one study on behalf of the National Trust (NT) and subsequently one on behalf of the AAPA. The differences between the reports highlights the perils of collecting information on historic sites based only on non-Indigenous attachment to sites.

Certain kinds of information were deemed appropriate for each report – the National Trust report largely precluded Indigenous oral histories and relied heavily on archival evidence. This archival evidence informed the subsequent AAPA report to the extent that Pearce could specifically detail the ‘displacement’ factors that impacted on the Indigenous population in the area and early accounts of Indigenous territories. He went on to note in his report for the National Trust an ‘...absence of identified sites of importance to Aborigines.’

In contrast the AAPA report documented important sites (sacred sites as well as general living areas) significant to local Indigenous people based on interviews with them. Pearce found a conflict of interest between the tourist-heritage schemes the National Trust proposed and Indigenous custodianship of the area. Thus Pearce found himself in the unusual situation of identifying ‘conflicts of usage’ based on his previous report for the National

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59 Bathgate and Lewis, *Culture contact*, p.4.
60 Pearce, vol 1-3; Pearce, Aboriginal sites.
61 Pearce, Aboriginal sites, pp.5-7.
62 Pearce, vol. 2, pp.6-11.
Trust. He identified the need for Indigenous groups to be consulted in ‘...the formulation of a conservation management programme for the Pine Creek railway reserve and for certain rock art sites to be off limit to the public.' In another example Pearce reversed the original proposal which recommended the inclusion of a mining camp and battery site north of Pine Creek in the Heritage Scheme due ‘...to considerable pressure during the tourist season.’ After consulting with local Indigenous people he wrote:

However from discussions it is apparent that members of the Jauan group can provide evidence of traditional ownership of this country and continued use of at least several sites. Therefore, following consultation with Jauan representatives, it is recommended that site presentation strategies be revised so that tourist activity is isolated from nominated sacred and ceremonial areas. It is anticipated that this would result in a very large reduction in areas open to non-Aboriginal use, upstream from [this area].

This passage not only reveals the pitfalls of basing heritage assessments on European sources of information in a country where Indigenous people have traditional ongoing connections but how commonplace and prevalent it was for non-Indigenous people to be ignorant of Indigenous claims to ownership and custodianship of sacred sites and associated tracts of country in settled or previously inhabited (European) areas. The 1980s was a particularly critical period in the awakening of non-Indigenous Australians to Indigenous rights to the land and Pearce’s two studies occur in a decade of great change in this area. On one level the AAPA report reveals Pearce awakening to Indigenous custodianship of the area and the specifics of that custodianship.

It is problematic for Europeans to write their history of places without an awareness of a priori Indigenous associations. As Deborah Rose and Darrell Lewis have pointed out,

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63 Pearce, Aboriginal sites, p.26.
64 'Conflicts of usage may occur in regard to the following sites as a result of the implementation of heritage site management strategies outlined in the Pine Creek Heritage Scheme Report', Pearce, Aboriginal sites, p.25, see also p.2.
65 Pearce, Aboriginal sites, p.25.
67 As Howard Morphy pointed out ‘...it is the ideology of timeless continuity that has proved conceptually difficult for anthropologists to grasp and has proved so frustrating for European objections to Aboriginal land claims.' Howard Morphy, 'Colonialism', p.240. p. 240. Morphy also points out that Indigenous culture has mechanisms for renewing links with recently abandoned or irregularly visited places.
based on their extensive fieldwork in the Northern Territory, 'Too often white history is constructed around sites which are deemed to be European without recognising that Aboriginal people’s history is also located in these sites.'\textsuperscript{68} They went on to write:

Significance of place is not so much dichotomised by race, as it is multi-dimensional, with different people sharing in some of the many dimensions and with all the dimensions resonating among the many people whose personal, family, community and regional histories intersect with this particular place.\textsuperscript{69}

That is not to say that cultures should not focus on their own history of association with places but rather that recognition of each other’s history is due. In the context of colonisation all Australians are inheritors of the past. Where Europeans deny or ignore that past there will always be a conflict in respect of shared sites of history.

Howard Morphy's observations about Roper Bar are a case-in-point. Morphy, an anthropologist, has described profoundly different concepts of place at Roper Bar in the Northern Territory. He points out that 'European and Indigenous people have co-existed and interacted in the region over a long period of time, yet in some respects it can almost seem as if they occupied different conceptual space/time' in which sites such as Roper Bar become sites of competing rather than shared significance.\textsuperscript{70}

The Roper Bar Police Reserve, located in Arnhem Land, was the subject of a land claim in the 1980s which the NT Historical Society, among other groups, opposed.\textsuperscript{71} As he notes ‘...it was an area of land of sufficient significance in white Australian history to be at one stage proposed for inclusion on the register of the National Estate. It was also of considerable significance to the Ngalakan, since it was the only area of their traditional lands that remained unalienated crown land and therefore available for them to claim.’\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{69} D. Rose and D. Lewis, ‘A bridge and a pinch’, p.32.
\textsuperscript{70} Howard Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, pp.206-207, see also pp.233-237.
\textsuperscript{71} Morphy ‘Colonialism’, p. 226.
\textsuperscript{72} Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, p. 209. Note that that there were a cluster of sites around Roper Bar for a major Dreaming. Roper Bar was also one of the first places on European maps of the Northern Territory. It was ‘discovered’ on Leichhardt’s expedition in 1847 and became the site of a large European settlement peaking in 1872. It also lay on the main cattle route in the Top End from Queensland to the Kimberley, Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, p.232, pp.210-223.
Howard Morphy’s article is detailed in his elaboration of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous connections to this particular Reserve. His article is important for identifying how Indigenous linkages became so entwined with specific European settlement sites in this region and why the managing of shared history sites cannot be easily addressed. He sums up: ‘Given the shift of focus to the cattle stations and to settlements such as Roper Bar, then, aspects of Indigenous religious and political processes would have reinforced linkages to land in those localities.’

The geographical and environmental logic that made them sites and routes for European colonists meant that they were already centres for the Aborigines of the region... Dreaming tracks tended to follow watercourses and the greatest mythological activity appears to have taken place close to major camping sites... By a great irony of the colonial process Aborigines and Europeans developed their strongest emotional attachments to precisely the same places, though the attachments are constructed on a quite different basis.

Separate and shared histories?
The issue of ‘recognition and management of the Territory’s ‘shared heritage’ is an ongoing one. A 1993 ICOMOS conference held in Darwin raised a number of issues specifically relevant to the NT situation including questions about differential valuing of material sites between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture in the Top End. David Carment recounted elements of this conference debate.

... an historical archaeologist referred to the lack of conservation and interpretation of non-Aboriginal historic places within Kakadu National Park and warned against an ‘unpalatable form of cultural censorship’. An Australian Nature Conservation Agency archaeologist involved in the park’s management, however,

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73 ‘...the colonial process ended up structuring the Aboriginal population to fit into the landscape as it had been transformed by European settlement and gave the people no option but to articulate with the life of the cattle stations. One of the consequences of this was that the sacred landscape became focussed on the cattle stations and their immediate environs. Roper Bar seems to represent an extreme case of this.’ Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, p.237.
74 Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, p. 238.
75 Morphy, ‘Colonialism’, pp. 238-239.
76 Carment, ‘Cultural heritage management’, p.18.
questioned the importance of such places in comparison with places associated with Aboriginal culture and gave examples of non-Aboriginal places that ought not be conserved because Aboriginal traditional owners did not wish this. John Ah Kit, the prominent Aboriginal leader, referred to the 'myth' of shared heritage in the Territory, to the prevailing tendency there to commemorate British and European heritage whilst hiding the unpleasant history of colonialism, dislocation and subjugation of Aboriginal people.\footnote{Carment, 'Cultural heritage management', pp.18-19. This conference was an Australia ICOMOS (International Conference on Monuments and Sites) Conference held in Darwin in December 1993. Fort Dundas on the Tiwi Islands has been a case-in-point. From a European/heritage point of view the site, which marked the first European settlement on the Island, was neglected. It was over grown with tree roots and decaying. It is/was a site of contested cultural memory as represented in its physical aspect. \textit{Culture contact}, p.3.}

Indigenous people in Darwin, including the historian Sue Stanton, a Kungarakan woman, have taken their own initiatives in addressing the absence of identified Indigenous heritage sites in the Darwin area incorporating places special to the Larrakia and to the Stolen Generations who grew up in Kahlin and Retta Dixon compound.\footnote{Other sites include the Star Picture Theatre and Fannie Bay Gaol. This project was based at the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management, NTU. Since this time Stanton has identified other Indigenous histories relating to events/sites in war-time Darwin and social clubs, dances and football celebrations around Parap camp in post-war Darwin. Sue Stanton, letter, 3 June 2003. See also John Ah Kit, 'Aspirations for heritage conservation' in \textit{Northern Perspective}, vol. 17, no. 1, 1994, pp.17-18.}

Institutions keep each other's cultural histories to greater and lesser degree.\footnote{‘In 1979 Dallwitz conducted a field survey of the Pine Creek District on behalf of the NTANT and submitted an inventory of heritage sites of significance which included a number of Indigenous cultural sites'. See Pearce, Aboriginal sites, p.15. Note that Dallwitz obtained much of his information from a local Pine Creek European resident, Earl Gano.} In this sense the National Trust is the body that simply holds European history in the same manner that Land Councils and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority hold Indigenous history. However the historical separation and compartmentalising of Indigenous/non-Indigenous histories embodied in the separation of knowledge between indigenous and non-indigenous organisations belies the reality of a complex web of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians historically as well as the knowledge each camp holds about the other's history.
But how useful is it to talk about a shared history when history has been appropriated or denied as part of the colonisation process? Indigenous historian Sue Stanton writes that it is appropriate to speak of 'shared history' because denial, appropriation and disputation about history reflects that shared histories do exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.80 There is an important place for culturally specific histories particularly where there has been historical omissions; thus Indigenous history provides a necessary avenue for re-casting and critiquing existing history.

Opening doors
The National Trust, while having its origins in European history, is not an exclusively settler organisation: it does seek Indigenous participation. Although some Indigenous people are members of the National Trust, involvement of Indigenous people at the executive committee level has to-date been unsuccessful.

David Carment makes the observation that Indigenous people choose not to pursue their specific heritage interests through volunteer organisations. Rather ‘...they worked effectively through a variety of other institutions to do so ...’.81 It is unclear what the specific reasons for a lack of Indigenous involvement in the National Trust (NT) are but it may be that Indigenous people face more urgent priorities in terms of their commitments to their communities and their families. There has also been, historically, a lack of trust by Indigenous people in European institutions in general and the National Trust like any institution needs to seek ways to engender trust and build relationships with Indigenous people at a local level.82

The absence of Indigenous involvement in the National Trust remains an issue. Apart from participation at the committee level there are other ways to address Indigenous participation. In recent years, there has been an increasing flow of Indigenous organisations approaching the National Trust for advice on their ventures into tourism and ecotourism for the advantage they see in preserving sites of European heritage for tourism purposes.83 In this respect

80 Sue Stanton, letter, 3 June 2003.
81 Carment, 'Cultural heritage management', p.16
82 This includes the association of institutions with the welfare system which controlled Indigenous peoples lives and separated families and, in a research context, where research environments such as libraries, archives etc. have been traditionally associated with European knowledge and power. Sue Stanton, letter, 3 June 2003.
83 See also discussions between NTANT and Northern Land Council about possible joint projects. See for instance Jawoyn Association to Director, Bob Alford, National Trust (NT), letter, 3 October 1995; Ken Lum, letter to Bob Alford 28 April 1994 ref:94/189:170-LTRA/A03(D11):kl in Attachment 2,
Indigenous motivations are the same as towns like Pine Creek who see economic potential in tourism through marketing of European heritage sites.

The broader issue of acknowledging 'shared history' and seeking ways of addressing the different values ascribed to heritage sites, is a question of process. As Isabel McBryde has pointed out: 'If we consider shared heritage as a matter of sharing the process of understanding differing values and working to accommodate them, then perhaps at last we may resolve these contradictions.'84 Riddett and Vemuri argue that in order to resolve the tensions that arise between the different cultural paradigms there should be an emphasis on decision-making procedures.85 The evolution of this process is necessarily on-going and it remains to be seen how inter-cultural dialogue between volunteer organisations charged with collecting history, like the National Trust and Indigenous-focussed organisations like AAPA, will occur.

In the following section I provide a background to the establishment of historic tourism and local heritage initiatives in the area followed by a more detailed analysis of the content of heritage interpretation at a number of key sites around the town.

TOURISM AND HERITAGE IN THE TOWN OF PINE CREEK

The antecedents of historic tourism and local heritage initiatives in Pine Creek

The 1970s marked a decade in which heritage management began to have significance for Pine Creek townspeople. Mining had hit a low point in the Pine Creek area. Heritage was an industry that, allied with tourism, could bring potential economic benefit to the town and there was also interest in preserving the heritage from an historical point of view. However the combination of economics and heritage in Pine Creek went hand in hand. The local Progress Association was the original umbrella for many of the early tourism initiatives in

Minutes, Agenda for the Meeting of the Cultural Heritage Committee, 16 May 1994. Consideration is now being given by the Tiwi to Fort Dundas as a potential tourist site. In addition, the establishment of a museum and keeping place at nearby Pirlangimpi [has been] part of an increasing local and public awareness about culture contact history on the Islands'. Bathgate and Lewis, Culture Contact, p.3.


85 Lyn Riddett and Siva Ram Vemuri, 'Here and now, there and then: significance of cultural perceptions in resource development in the Northern Territory of Australia', 1994, p.33, p.8.
the town and people involved in the Progress Association, such Jimmy Ah Toy and Dorothy Hall, were early promoters of the history of the town.\textsuperscript{86}

In the 1970s a local branch of the National Trust was formed in response to the proposed demolition of the Repeater Station (now the museum and library).\textsuperscript{87}

A committee was quickly formed, and made representations to the government and Telecom, with the result that the building was classified as an Historic site, and handed over to the National Trust for management.\textsuperscript{88}

Townspeople debated the value of heritage.

It has not always been an easy, or a popular task, as there were many who felt that the old buildings were expendable, and shouldn't be allowed to stand in the way of “progress”. It is only now that we are beginning to see what a tourist attraction Pine Creek has become simply because of the large number of intact buildings that the town has retained!\textsuperscript{89}

In 1979 to great fanfare in the local Northern Territory Newspaper a Pine Creek ‘Heritage Park’ was proposed to increase tourism and spur the local economy. The Park was to encompass Chinese diggings, Chinatown, European mining huts and World War Two relics. The railway was to be revived for transporting visitors.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{86} The Pine Creek Progress Association were constantly agitating for improvements to the town. NAA, NT: F1, 1955/1065, letter, H.H Schlutes (Hon. Sec.) to Acting Government Secretary, Northern Territory Administration, 1 October 1955; Eddie Ah Toy, Jimmy's son has followed in his footsteps through his involvement in town committees.

\textsuperscript{87} A general meeting for the purpose of establishing the Pine Creek branch of the National Trust was held on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of September 1977. Present at the meeting were D. Riley, G. Lawrence, L. Lawrence, A. Martin, E. Ah Toy, S. Marsh, L.A. Lawrence, L. Ellwood and C. Jensen. The Pine Creek Progress Association was particularly active in the post-war period although its history goes back to at least 1911. There was also a Progress Association for the Mining District in the late nineteenth century. NAA, NT: F1, 1945/8, letter, Murray H. Schlutes, Hon. Sec, Pine Creek Progress Association to the Administrator, 1 September 1952; NAA, ACT: A1/1, 1911/12138, letter, R.R. Gillard, Secretary (Pine Creek and District Progress Association) to Minister for External Affairs 7 March 1911.

\textsuperscript{88} "The National Trust in Pine Creek", PCN, November 1996, p.3.

\textsuperscript{89} "The National Trust in Pine Creek", PCN, 1996, p.3.

\textsuperscript{90} "Heritage plan backed. Pine Creek move" \textit{NTN}, 24 August 1979 p.2, see also \textit{NTN}, 29 August 1979, p.2.
It was not until 1982 that a formal heritage plan was implemented based on Pearce’s Survey for the National Trust. The Pine Creek District Heritage Scheme was designed:
‘...to promote the heritage attractions of the area so that people will be encouraged to visit the region, and ‘...to foster an economic revival in the area through tourist interest.’ The Heritage Scheme was never fully implemented. However with the refurbishment of the railway station, museum and the establishment of the Miner’s Park a modest heritage scheme was established.

The built heritage was a focus of the early National Trust promotional material. Mayse Young, formerly the publican of the Pine Creek Hotel and erstwhile writer and painter, drew the pictures for the first National Trust pamphlet on Pine Creek entitled Welcome to Historic Pine Creek. In the 1980s another resident, Joyce Frazer illustrated a booklet Corrugated Iron Architecture of Pine Creek Northern Territory which included a summarised interpretation of various buildings around Pine Creek and accompanying illustrations.

In the mid 1980s gold mining returned to the town with Pine Creek Goldfields. But with the closure of the mine set for the early 1990s tourism was again canvassed. As one resident commented: 'People now realise that tourism is going to be Pine Creek’s lifeblood when the mining runs out.'

Sites of heritage interpretation in Pine Creek
There are three main sites of historic interpretation in the town; the museum, the Miners Park and the railway precinct which I will briefly describe below. In addition there is interpretation in front of designated heritage buildings such as Playford Club Hotel, Bonrook.

91 Pearce, vol. 2, p.4. The scheme also included natural and archaeological listings '-to research and describe the natural and human history of the area; to locate and identify those places and things within the area which have special heritage value – both natural and made by Aboriginal, European or Asian man; to protect and manage objects and sites which should be preserved; to develop facilities which allow the local community and visitors to understand and enjoy their heritage and allow proper management of that heritage; to encourage the provision of support facilities such as roads and tourist amenities.'
92 As a young woman Mayse Young sent articles off to newspapers and later in life wrote her autobiography in conjunction with Gabrielle Dalton. Young with Dalton, No place for a woman; Pine Creek Branch of the Welcome to historic Pine Creek, drawings by Mayse Young, Darwin; Corrugated iron architecture of Pine Creek Northern Territory. One of Mayse’s daughter’s Leonie Ruig, has continued her mother’s tradition by producing a series of cards depicting buildings around Pine Creek, Leonie Ruig, ‘Old Pine Creek shop’, card, 1991.
Homestead and Ah Toy's bakery. Later in this Chapter I will analyse the content of this interpretation more closely.

The main interpretation at the railway, museum and Miners Park has not been up-dated since the mid-1980s, the period in which most of Pine Creek's heritage was being assessed. However, the fact that it continues to be read by the general public continues to make it appropriate for analysis as well as representing a particular era in heritage interpretation. My reading of the interpretation functions as a spring board for reflection and contemplation about local and regional history and how public history is constructed. Written interpretation at heritage sites is a condensed form of history writing and perhaps by its nature is particularly revealing of political and philosophical viewpoints underpinning history.

Museum

The museum, originally the Mining Warden's residence from Burrundie, is made of rough hewn timber with the ubiquitous corrugated iron roof. It has a covered verandah comprising vertical slats and sits singularly on the east side of the North Australia Railway line next to the current police station. The museum was opened in early 1983 (see Figure 13).

Interpretation in the museum is devoted to the social, communications and architectural history of National Trust buildings. It has focussed mainly on the former function of the museum as a repeater station. In this vein the interpretation provides a history of communications in the area, including the overland telegraph. It also incorporates general elements of social history including photos of school children from early this century to the 1950s and descriptions of past and present 'historic' buildings in the town. Apart from the communications history there are references to Pine Creek during World War Two and also the history of policing and buffalo hunting in the area. As David Carment has pointed out there is a focus on relics and recreations:

Among the collection were relics of the local Chinese community that included bowls, bottles and a roof ornament from the local joss house, a display of photographs and artefacts relating to the

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94 I was asked in 1999 by Bob Alford, the previous director of the NTANT to up-date the interpretation in the railway station. I recommended to the NTANT the need for all three main sites of interpretation to be upgraded. This up-date has not been implemented and after writing this chapter I think I would now write it differently! Bathgate, Interpretation: Pine Creek railway station, for the National Trust (NT) 1999.
Figure 13: Pine Creek Museum.

Figure 14: Interpretation, Miners Park.
Northern Territory Police, the recreated interior of a gold miner's hut, an original Overland Telegraph pole, an old water cart, a recreated blacksmith's shop and a display of mining equipment.96

**Miners park**

The Miners Park is an open air museum of mining relics. It was established in the mid 1980s when locals and a former mine manager at El Sharana uranium mine collaborated.97 It is immediately visible to those travelling from the north turnoff into town. It is situated on a rise between the creek and the railway station master's residence. A poppet head clearly marks the site (see Figures 14 and 15). There are two standing interpretative displays at the Park. As one visitor observed when the Park was being established:

> The idea is to make use of machinery that would otherwise be rusting away or disposed of, and to create a historic mining site complete with shafts and head frames. But of course it is a lot more attractive than a real mining site. Trees have been planted and there will be a covered rest area, with photographs and explanations. It will be a great tourist attraction.98

The interpretation at the Miner's Park aligns Pine Creek's history with ‘A History of Mining in the South Alligator River Valley 1920-1984’. The interpretation focuses particularly on Uranium mining from the 1930s to the 1950s and gold mining in Pine Creek from last century. Essentially the interpretation celebrates the mining history of the area with a particular focus on the history of mining in the South Alligator Rivers region. Much of the South Alligator mining area, including El Sharana, now lie within the boundaries of Kakadu National Park.

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97 Eddie Ah Toy was the Chair of the local Bicentennial Committee in the 1980s. The Committee wanted something to commemorate the occasion and Jo Fisher (representing the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy) who had also been a manager at the El Sharana uranium mine had collected a range of mining equipment from the area which he offered for display. The Railway Museum followed the establishment of the Miners Park, Notebook II, 30 July 1995.
Railway station

The Pine Creek railway station is part of a complex of buildings gathered around remnants of the North Australia Railway line. There is the Station Master’s Residence which has periodically operated in recent years as a youth hostel and craft shop. Opposite, across the track, is the railway station. As the interpretation in front of the railway station building describes the building is of a ubiquitous style used throughout the South Australian Railway last century. Like the Mining Warden’s building (aka the museum) it was designed to be easily transportable (see Figure 16).99

Next to the railway station is a semi-restored steam engine housed underneath a curved tin roof which has a fading albeit futuristic depiction of, at that time, the proposed Alice Springs to Darwin railway line. The interpretation depicts a monorail with two people dressed in futuristic white body suits – very 1980s!100 Opposite the railway station is a loading platform with a refurbished shed and small crane.

Inside the railway station there are eight panels largely detailing aspects of the mining and railway history of the area which also provide an over view history of the local area. Interpretive panels with accompanying photos and illustrations introduce the reader to the history of the Pine Creek ‘District’ which encompasses Indigenous pre- and post-contact history, European exploration, Chinese immigration, mining, the construction of the North Australia Railway, and the Pine Creek District Heritage Scheme. The titles of the panels illustrate the content.

1. The Pine Creek District: an Introduction
2. Pine Creek – The Great 1872-74 Goldrush
3. The Chinese
4. A new century: revival in the 60s, 70s & 80s
5. Aboriginal people of the Pine Creek
6. The Pine Creek District Heritage Scheme
7. The line that led to nowhere
8. The Pine Creek Railway station

99 As the current interpretation outside the building describes, ‘Although the buildings for the line were designed in South Australia, the Stations well proportioned simple lines and the use of easily transportable corrugated iron are ideally suited to conditions in the Top End’. Interpretation outside Pine Creek Railway Station, c1984.
100 Notebook 1, 12 February 1997.
Figure 15: Miners Park to the left of Main Street.

Figure 16: Pine Creek Railway Station with Alistair Quest.
This is a kind of conglomerate history – it tries to do it all – by giving a history of the railway line, regional mining history, and immigration with reference to the Chinese miners and railway workers, and the Indigenous association with the area. Significantly there is no separate panel for ‘The Europeans’.

In a way the interpretation at each of the three sites mentioned, the museum, miners park and railway, echoes each other’s history and in some cases simply repeats the interpretation. All canvass the mining/settlement/communications history of the area while variously emphasising each of these themes. The railway interpretation is probably the most interesting of the three main sites of interpretation in the town because it attempts to place Pine Creek’s history within broader historical themes, for instance, about the nature of Northern Territory identity and the national significance of Chinese migration to the district.

I analyse the absences and emphases of this historic tourism interpretation as well as local perceptions of history in the following section.

**Missing histories**

Little is known of the specific history of these [Indigenous] people before European settlement but what is known is that their lifestyle, which had endured almost unchanged for thousands of years, was altered irrevocably with the penetration of white people into the area.

This passage which has been cited in the interpretation at the railway and elsewhere in tourist/heritage literature on Pine Creek is drawn from Howard Pearce’s report. It is a quintessential summary of loss and change. But it is also about the foreshortening of Indigenous history in the area which is invariably summed up in a few lines. Pine Creek’s

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101 As a Northern Territory Museum’s pamphlet describes: ‘Displays depict North Australian Railway, mining, Chinese and Aboriginal culture and local history,’ Museums and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory, ‘Museums of the Northern Territory’, Darwin, c1982.

102 Railway Interpretation.

103 Many of the references to gold mining appear to have been drawn directly from the interpretation in the railway station. See for instance ‘The Beginnings’ panel which describes the Goldrush and the ‘Rebirth of the mining industry’ panel in the Miners Park. The latter panel lifts passages from the railway interpretation panel ‘A new century: revival in the 60s, 70s & 80s’. Note the passage, ‘Pine Creek is still a rich goldfield. New mining companies have arrived to exploit it with new machinery and mining techniques and the mining tradition of Pine Creek lives on.’ NTANT, Railway Station interpretation, c1984.
heritage literature refers to the fact that 'Aboriginal people were the first to come to Pine Creek' that they had a ‘40 000 year history engaging in a hunter-gatherer nomadic lifestyle': and then the story abruptly ends. All that is left are 'hints’ ‘clues’ and 'relics' although the railway interpretation states 'you can still piece together some of their past.' In summary there is a short obligatory passage on the 'first occupants' before the text moves on to more detailed history of the early settlement period.105

There is a dissonance, a missing piece between the prehistory and post-contact history, in such interpretation. The language of description of the pre-historic past fails to connect to the present. Thus the Wagiman appear suddenly in this story almost 'out of the blue' in the present. It is the Wagiman who ‘...have a tremendous storehouse of knowledge concerning the early history of the Pine Creek region...’. However no connection is made between the prehistory of the area and the ongoing relationship Indigenous people have to Pine Creek. And what of the Jawoyn who are simply left out of this particular interpretive story altogether? Partly this story is a result of loss of knowledge but more specifically it is a gap in European knowledge of Indigenous associations with the area. There are also definite politics in ascribing ownership to country around Pine Creek where ownership is still being recognised through the land claim and Native Title process.106

This gap in knowledge is evident in non-Indigenous townspeople's recollections of Indigenous presence. Clem Hill states that in his time (post-war Pine Creek) ‘There were no Aboriginal people there’ nor could he ‘... find out if Aboriginal people were here.’ He concludes ‘I don’t think it was an Aboriginal area.’107 He goes on to clarify that he never saw any Indigenous people at the South Alligator – it was 'sickness country', a statement

104 Railway Station interpretation, ‘Aboriginal people of the Pine Creek’.
105 ‘...these people were pursuing a nomadic lifestyle following the seasonal availability of bush foods within the boundaries of their land.’ Railway Station Interpretation: ‘Aboriginal people of the Pine Creek’; Early days in Pine Creek, p.1. As the text in the 1990s heritage trail pamphlet acknowledges: ‘The story begins with the land itself...’. Continuing on there is a short passage on the ‘first occupants’ followed by the more substantive tale of the advent of the overland telegraph, the ‘rush’, the arrival of the Chinese and the advent of the railway. Northern Goldfields Loop. Another pamphlet notes ‘Aboriginal people were the first to come to Pine Creek. For up to 40 000 years they lived by hunting and gathering their food.’ And ‘If you look at the hints and clues in the relics and remains around the district today, you can still piece together some of their past.' Pine Creek people.
106 Rose, Dingo makes us human, p.87.
which inadvertently recognises Indigenous connections with country.\textsuperscript{108} One long time European Australian resident wondered who the ‘original inhabitants were.’\textsuperscript{109}

Another missing part of Indigenous post-contact history at the museum and railway station concerns the assimilation period. The interpretative history at the museum canvasses communications history but not the specifics of occupancy: the museum operated as a half-caste home for boys in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{110} This omission is part of a general absence of acknowledgement of the specific impact of colonisation upon Indigenous people. Perhaps it is much easier to write a general history bereft of the finer details of suffering. The boys who lived at this home had painful memories of separation from their mothers as part of the policy of assimilation. How does one deal with such pain in heritage interpretation? How would the former residents of the home articulate this publicly, or would they at all?

The original police gaol is a stark reminder of the colonial past. It is not on the tourist map of recommended sites to visit. As Russell Young recalls ‘...there is just that old shed with a concrete floor, with a big steel ring in the middle. I think there’s a bottle tree there, or used to be there, that they used to chain people up to as well.’\textsuperscript{111} In the latter half of the twentieth century this site was used by Indigenous people as a camp and home (see Chapter five).

What place does it occupy in the public memory of the town? One local pointed out that the station has been left to disintegrate over the years.\textsuperscript{112} Lily Ah Toy commented that ‘...it’s a pity they didn’t reserve that for the Historical Society.’ But in both Russell and Lily’s references they do not mention who was chained to the ring. Lily refers to ‘prisoners’ and Russell to ‘people’.\textsuperscript{113} Generalities occlude the specifics of suffering. The Indigenous people who camped there in more recent times did not necessarily identify it as a European place - it was their home.

\textsuperscript{108} In contrast, the interpretation within Kakadu, identified the mining of uranium, with sickness country. Interpretation, Bowali Centre, ‘Miners in this Country’, 1997.
\textsuperscript{109} Notebook 7, 2 December 1996.
\textsuperscript{110} Wagnon, Your guide to Darwin and the Top End. In Wagnon’s description of Repeater Station, now the Pine Creek Museum there is no mention of a ‘half caste home’ Instead the mining history is celebrated e.g. pp.89-90.
\textsuperscript{111} Russell Young, interview,1996, Darwin.
\textsuperscript{112} Robert Liddy, interview, 1997 - ‘The old police station was pretty well intact then, it’s just disintegrated over the years.’
\textsuperscript{113} Lily Ah Toy, interview,1996.
Generalised histories

Generalisation conceals the specific details of local history. Another feature of the historic tourism writing vis a vis the settlement ‘verse’ is that Pine Creek’s history tends to become symbolic of Northern Territory regional mining history particularly of the early goldrush period. As the interpretation in the Pine Creek Museum states: ‘Pine Creek was, until the turn of the century, the centre of the Northern Territory’s mining industry. The history of Pine Creek is therefore the story of this industry...’ 114 The history of Pine Creek is described as the quintessential story of the mining industry in the Northern Territory ‘... a story of hope, hardship, fortunes and fraud...’ 115

Pine Creek as THE mining centre

The difficulty in locating Pine Creek at the centre of the history of the goldfields is that local history becomes overly regionalised. As a result local historical detail tends to be obscured. Distinct settlements such as Pine Creek Chinatown become absorbed into the history of the town, and other mining centres such as Brocks Creek, Burrundie and Yam Creek take on less prominence than they historically occupied. 116

Pine Creek’s historic tourism text constantly reiterates how gold was discovered in the region, and one could be forgiven for thinking that this initial discovery occurred at Pine Creek rather than Yam Creek. 117 Fact gently strays into fiction when a pamphlet states: ‘It was at Pine Creek that a significant discovery was made when [post] hole diggers found gold.’ 118

Civic pride has a role to play in the blurring of historical fact when, in the service of tourism, history must drum up public interest. As one local said: ‘We are proud of our town, which is

114 NTANT, Interpretation, Museum, Pine Creek. The move away from singling Pine Creek out as the symbol of gold mining history has partly occurred with the establishment of a Goldfields Loop, as part of the Northern Territory Heritage Trail in which Pine Creek is one point on the loop, albeit a central point, and described as one of a number of goldfields last century. NTG, *NT Heritage Trail*, 1996.
116 In the current historical interpretation of the town there is the additional confusion of what constitutes the mining district of Pine Creek. There is no description of the district per se but there are a number of maps listing former gold mining towns and camps between Adelaide River and Pine Creek, see Railway Station Interpretation.
117 As one pamphlet notes gold was first discovered at Yam Creek but ‘The discovery of gold in Pine Creek follows soon after’. See also Pearce, vol. 1, p.150.
118 Early days in Pine Creek, *Welcome to Historic Pine Creek and Pine Creek people*. 

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the only original mining town from the gold rush days of the 1870s and presently has the largest open cut gold mining operation in the Territory.  

Ambiguous histories

While the Indigenous history is treated sparingly in the historic tourism literature Chinese history is not. The success and dominance of the Chinese on the goldfields is constantly referenced in historic interpretation. And yet equal space is given to Anti-Chinese legislation which underscores a more complex status for the Chinese than that of a 'free' settler. Chinese people are described in terms of their difference. They are 'Orientals' as distinct from Occidentals. And while the Chinese are deemed to have ‘... maintained an important and visible presence in the Northern Territory’ their 'significant contribution' is described in terms of 'their adopted homeland'. The term 'adopted' conceals a more tenuous claim to being 'home' or being 'settled'. It underscores the ambiguous status of the Chinese miners, a number of whom came as indentured labour and who retained life long ties to their ancestral home, yet it also reflects a sojourning quality that is not similarly ascribed to European miners. The concept of an adopted homeland unwittingly acknowledges that the land was home to others before the Chinese arrived. However, the concept of Indigenous homelands is never canvassed in the interpretation, thus the concept of 'home' is in reality a coloniser's home.

The underlying unease about the Chinese presence on the goldfields is reinforced in other ways through the reiteration in historic tourism literature on how the Chinese in the

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119 Katherine Region. Australia's Northern Territory, p.34. For similar see Early days in Pine Creek 'With a colourful past and an interesting future Pine Creek residents are justifiably proud of their small town and its community.'

120 As one pamphlet sums up: 'It was during this time that the mining industry took on its most characteristic feature – the dominance of the industry by Chinese.' Welcome to historic Pine Creek. As the Railway Station interpretation describes: 'They became highly successful alluvial and reef miners developing new labour intensive mining techniques unique to the Territory and thereby succeeded when the initial gold boom had faltered.' They are further described as having '... maintained an important and visible presence in the Northern Territory and have made a significant contribution to their adopted homeland.' Railway Station Interpretation, 'The Chinese'. See also Pine Creek people. The literature associated with the more recent Heritage Trail sums up the contribution of the Chinese to the Goldfields in occupational terms as 'Coolies, Capitalists and Cultivators', Northern Goldfields Loop.

121 For instance in the railway interpretation the Chinese economic contribution to mining is singled out along with the immigration policies that restricted 'open entry to the Northern Territory to the Chinese.' Railway Station Interpretation, ‘The Chinese’, Pine Creek Railway Station.

122 Railway Station Interpretation, ‘A new century: revival in the 60s, 70s & 80s’.

123 Railway Station Interpretation, ‘The Chinese’.
goldfields far outnumbered the local European population.\textsuperscript{124} The concept of outnumbering has a lot of history attached to it in the Australian consciousness — of a European population’s fear of being overrun by ‘Asian hordes’. While factually correct - Chinese people did outnumber European people on the goldfields — the repeated emphasis on ‘outnumbering’ in Pine Creek’s heritage literature is exclamatory as if being outnumbered was cause for concern. Of course the concept of being outnumbered does not apply in this instance to Indigenous people but rather to Europeans.

The ambivalent status of the Chinese in Pine Creek’s gold mining history, and at times the absence of Indigenous people’s history from the story of the Northern Goldfields in heritage/tourism texts, contrasts with the way in which the ‘cultural heritage’ of Pine Creek and the Northern Territory is celebrated in these texts. As a railway panel sums up: ‘There are few places in Australia where so many threads of cultural heritage are as entwined as at Pine Creek’.\textsuperscript{125} Elsewhere in the historic tourism literature the ‘cosmopolitan’ nature of the population is celebrated \textit{in terms} of Chinese Australians. As part of the railway station interpretation declares: ‘A high percentage of this population are Chinese, many of whom can trace their families back to the gold mining area of Pine Creek.’\textsuperscript{126} The pamphlet for the Gold loop trail describes life on the goldfields as ‘...a movable and cultural feast — still reflected in the Territory’s rich cosmopolitan population.’\textsuperscript{127}

But whose cultural history is being described? In this literature cultural diversity appears to be focussed firmly on the Chinese. Are we to assume that the other cultures implied in these descriptions are Indigenous and European? Certainly descriptions of Chinese miners and immigration take up more physical space in heritage literature than descriptions of Indigenous people while European culture is often undifferentiated.

\textsuperscript{124} ‘At various times during Pine Creek’s history the Chinese population substantially outnumbered the Europeans.’ \textit{Pine Creek Heritage Trail}. And similarly: ‘A third and most important aspect to the heritage of the district is the influence of Chinese, who for many years substantially outnumbered the European population.’ NTANT, \textit{Fountain Head heritage information leaflet}, nd. ‘By the late 1870’s there were 1500 Chinese compared to only 100 Europeans at Pine Creek. In some ways the district was like a small province of China, \textit{Pine Creek people} nd. See also NTANT, Heritage Trail, Pilot Study.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Pine Creek people}. Similarly another pamphlet notes that ‘Pine Creek has been the meeting place of many races of people with many different lifestyles’. Background information on the proposed 1990s heritage trail notes that ‘The Northern Territory has always been distinguished for its diversity of ethnic and racial groups.’ Heritage Trail. Pilot Study, p.1.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Welcome to historic Pine Creek}. A railway panel notes: ‘One of the unique and distinctive features of the Northern Territory is its cosmopolitan population’. Railway Interpretation: ‘The Chinese’, Pine Creek.

\textsuperscript{127} NT Government, \textit{Northern Goldfields Loop}.
Questions of identity

The fliers for the 1997 Pine Creek Goldrush Weekend show a bearded European miner kneeling in front of a well with pick and shovel. In cultural contrast are the large signs that depict a silhouetted Chinese miner along the Stuart Highway and on the back loop road as part of the Goldfield’s loop heritage trail.

Both illustrations are images of two different mining cultures historically associated with the area. Indigenous people are completely absent from this story even though they participated in the mining industry. There is a mismatch - a dissonance - between the written interpretation and the history. One local journalist wrote that ‘Pine Creek yawns at those who wish it was different. It has seen thousands come and go, and is nonchalant about its identity.’

Pine Creek was, among other things, a 'frontier' town - a European and Chinese settlement in an Indigenous place. As an interpretative panel sums up: 'Pine Creek’s mining and railway heritage now symbolizes the ambitious early opening of Australia’s northern frontier...’ In this condensed story the focus on settlement extinguishes the story of loss experienced by Indigenous people.

A point of comparison: Kakadu National Park

Both Pine Creek and Kakadu are significant sites of historic interpretation and both places highlight differences in that interpretation, and how regional history is constructed. Both sites, by proximity, share a common regional history. Pine Creek's written interpretation predates Kakadu's by about ten years and so the differences in interpretation also reflect changes in political and land owning contexts. When Pine Creek's written interpretation was completed in the mid-1980s Kakadu National Park had only recently been formed (in 1979)

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128 Pioneer Gold Rush Weekend Pine Creek, 4-5 May 1996. ‘Celebrating the Pioneering Heritage of Pine Creek’. This pamphlet depicts a well known scene of a parliamentary committee visiting Pine Creek early this century. The National Trust (NT) has also been supportive of the ‘pioneer’ tag for Pine Creek although it wants to avoid the development of ‘plastic heritage’. See NTANT File note, Bob Alford, Region G, 21/9/1995 Daly River/Pine Creek Trip 18-19 September 1995.
129 KT, 13 November, 1996, p.27.
130 ‘The town of Pine Creek ... began as a small frontier town in response to the discovery of gold in the early 1870's.’ Pine Creek Heritage Trail, n.d.
131 ‘... - it is a story of some of the men and women who were to shape the character of the Territory.’ See also the following panels. ‘Pine Creek – The Great 1872-74 Goldrush.
132 Bathgate, interpretation: Pine Creek Railway Station.
and the major sites of historical interpretation, Bowali Visitor Centre and the Warradjan Cultural Centre, were another decade away from being established.

Kakadu National Park was created after 'Aboriginal' freehold title was granted over Arnhem land and the Woolwonga Reserve. The Park is now jointly managed by Indigenous traditional owners and Parks Australia.¹³³

The Park area incorporates the Alligator Rivers region and includes the upper catchment of the South Alligator and Mary Rivers north of Pine Creek. This area is intimately bound up with the history of the township of Pine Creek. Traditionally the Alligator Rivers Region encompasses the history of association of Indigenous people with the Pine Creek area.¹³⁴

As mentioned briefly in Chapter one the return of land to Indigenous owners and the establishment of Kakadu National Park has resulted in the re-casting of regional historical discourse because Kakadu has become a site of research focussed on Indigenous philosophies and histories.¹³⁵

Historian David Carment has described, in some detail, the dimensions of cultural heritage management, interpretation and display in the Northern Territory including Pine Creek and Kakadu. He praised the Pine Creek museum for presenting an '...interesting and reasonably comprehensive introduction to the history of Pine Creek and its surrounding area with an appropriate emphasis on the very important role of mining.'¹³⁶ Carment's views on the Pine Creek museum are situated within the broader debate about what constitutes the history of the Pine Creek area and his focus on mining reflects the orientation of historical

¹³³ Levitus, Everybody, p.1; Barker, Alligator Rivers Region, p.16-17; Levitus, 'Social history since colonisation', p.91.
¹³⁴ A researcher writing in the year before Kakadu's establishment named the area as the Alligator Rivers Region which encompassed the mining settlements of Pine Creek, Yam Creek and Burrundie. See Barker, Alligator Rivers Region, p.10. Note that Robert Levitus in his chapter on the post-contact social history of the Kakadu area refers to the Alligator Rivers region and then, subsequently, refers to the Kakadu area. Of the two main access routes in the Alligator Rivers Region one was the track connecting Pine Creek to Oenpelli. Levitus, 'Social history since colonisation', p.64, p.83, p.87, p.79; Troppo Architects and Peter Forrest, Kakadu homesteads survey. Final report on a survey of historic homesteads in Kakadu National Park, Darwin, 1991, p.27.
¹³⁵ Since 1979 two more (stages) have been added to the Park. The establishment of Kakadu as a National Park and World Heritage area has delineated the boundaries of the collection of history within the park. With this status came funding for research and cultural and history collection. For example: Press (et al), Kakadu.
¹³⁶ Carment, A past displayed, p.73, see also p.72.
archaeologists like Peter Bell (see Chapter one) and Carment's own long-standing interest in material heritage, cultural landscapes, European settlement and mining history.  

Carment's praise for the Pine Creek museum was perhaps tempered by his general assessment of regional museums in the NT in which 'the overall picture presented...avoided historical conflicts and tensions' and where 'the view of the past presented frequently failed to incorporate the values of all sections of Territory society'.  

In respect of Kakadu National Park Carment noted that while many places within Kakadu '-...reflected important aspects of non-Aboriginal history, such as mining and pastoralism,...most were not interpreted for visitors.' As he went on to point out 'the traditional owners' preference was that visitors come to the Park to appreciate its significance to Aboriginal people.' Carment's observations highlight the clear distinctions between interpretation displays at Pine Creek and at Kakadu National Park and the different values ascribed to different aspects of Australian history - differences not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians but within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities who differ in their views of the past.  

**History interpretation in Kakadu**

The public interpretation in Kakadu promotes a particular view of local history which is indigenous-centred history with a focus on natural or environmental values rather than the settler/developmental centred history of Pine Creek. It focusses on Indigenous participation and viewpoints on local industries, noticeably mining and buffalo hunting, with reference to some Europeans, like Paddy Cahill, who established Oenpelli.

Where Indigenous participation in mining is absent in Pine Creek it is clearly outlined in the interpretation at the Bowali Visitor Centre in the Park and the Warradjan Cultural Centre. There is an overtly political and cultural statement being made by the traditional owners in this interpretation about not mining in so-called 'sickness country' where uranium deposits

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137 See the following articles by David Carment: *History and the landscape in Central Australia: A study of the material evidence of European culture and settlement*, 1991; 'Archaeology and history in central Australia', 1993; *Looking at Darwin's past: material evidence of European settlement in tropical Australia*, 1996; 'Cultural heritage management in the Northern Territory 1983-1998', 2000. David Carment, in addition to his academic work at NTU, has been a long standing member of the National Trust (NT) and the NT Historical Society.


139 Carment, *A past displayed*, p. 35.
occur although dissenting Indigenous opinion on this is also acknowledged.\textsuperscript{141} The discovery of uranium within the Park is described as a time when ‘Strangers came into the country…’ with ‘…little regard for the opinions and well-being of Bininj.’\textsuperscript{142} As the Interpretation states: ‘Bininj have had to voice their opinions in the strongest terms in order to be heard. In the late 1980s when further mining was proposed at Guratba (Coronation Hill) in Buladjang (sickness country), the voice of the Jawoyn people was finally heard.’\textsuperscript{143} In Pine Creek there is no mention of mining as a problematic industry nor is mining interpreted in terms of oppression of Indigenous people. It is documented as part of the development of the region and in this respect mining is celebrated as an enterprise in the South Alligator Region.

The contrast in the two sites of interpretive history (Kakadu and Pine Creek) was highlighted by historian Peter Forrest’s observations in the early 1990s that: ‘It is not widely known that there also was considerable mining activity within what is now Kakadu National Park, over many years prior to the Park’s gazettal’.\textsuperscript{144} His comment reflects what he perceives as a lack of acknowledgement of the mining history of the area and a lack of maintenance and preservation of European settlement sites in the Park.\textsuperscript{145} A later survey of historic sites prepared by Godden Mackay (1993) noted that Kakadu’s historic sites are secondary to the Park’s natural and Indigenous resources albeit ‘…an integral part of the processes that have shaped the complex cultural landscape that is Kakadu today.’\textsuperscript{146}

Forrest’s views are situated within the ongoing discourse among some European historians and historical archaeologists about how European history is acknowledged (or not) on Indigenous land reflecting a larger cultural and political divide in heritage management. In the written interpretation in Kakadu mining history is only meaningful in the context of Indigenous viewpoints about its merit or otherwise and perhaps one could say that in Pine Creek the opposite is true - European viewpoints about mining are pre-eminent.

\textsuperscript{140} Carment, \textit{A past displayed}, p.35.
\textsuperscript{141} The ‘sickness country’ area also covers the areas where there are significant deposits of uranium. Other materials identified include arsenic, mercury and lead. Interpretation, ‘Miners in this Country’, Bowali Visitors Centre, Kakadu, 1997; Carment, \textit{A past displayed}, p.35.
\textsuperscript{142} Interpretation, Warradjan Cultural Centre, 1997.
\textsuperscript{143} Interpretation, Warradjan Cultural Centre, 1997.
\textsuperscript{144} Troppo and Forrest, Kakadu homesteads survey, p.25.
\textsuperscript{145} See Kakadu homesteads survey.
\textsuperscript{146} Godden Mackay, vol. 1, p.1.
Regional research base

The joint management between Parks Australia and the Indigenous owners has resulted in a well-funded research environment.147 To-date there has been extensive research generated on Indigenous histories and sites and to some extent non-Indigenous histories and sites as a result of the establishment of the Park. As Peter Hiscock has pointed out 'The surge of political interest in the Alligator Rivers area around the issues of mining, conservation and tourism led to a considerable body of research being done on the physical features of the area.'148 Equally it has resulted in the extensive use of Indigenous oral histories to document sites, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in the Park.149

New regional histories: where is Pine Creek?

The creation of the Park has re-cast regional boundaries, including research boundaries, which define yet elide aspects of regional history. Regions are pragmatic containers of information yet by definition they omit information by focussing on histories within certain geographic boundaries. Within Kakadu Goodparla and Gimbat Stations fall within park boundaries and it is their history that is discussed in the interpretation on display in the Park rather than Pine Creek, which lies outside those boundaries.150

The existence of Kakadu today overlays previous regionalisation of the area defined broadly as Arnhem Land and more specifically the Alligator Rivers region. The placement of the South Alligator mining historical interpretation at the Pine Creek Miner's Park reflects a period of transition when Kakadu was being established yet the region it describes including the El Sharana uranium mine now lies within Kakadu. The township of Pine Creek has become a de facto site of European interpretation for mining history in the South Alligator Region including Kakadu National Park. Pine Creek township was the main supply/settlement for that region and the area west of Pine Creek towards the Douglas/Daly River. The mining interpretation is focussed to the north not to the west of the town. Pine Creek is a place at the interface between Daly River (west) and Mary River (north).

147 Mining on freehold land has also produced environmental impact assessments. Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS.
148 Peter Hiscock (ed), Preliminary report, p.115. The advent of mining on Indigenous lands has also produced a number of social impact statements. Necessarily these studies canvass Indigenous and culture contact history in the region. For example, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Aborigines and uranium. Consolidated report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the social impact of uranium mining on the Aborigines of the Northern Territory, AGPS, Canberra, 1984, p.49; Godden Mackay, vol. 1, p.23.
149 Godden MacKay, Inventory, vol. 2. Note also the oral history collection held by Parks North, Kakadu on behalf of traditional owners.
Indigenous peoples. Perhaps if there had been a Daly River National Park the history would have been *regionalised* in a different way, aligned more to the west.

In this re-casting of boundaries the township of Pine Creek, which is so much bound up with the history of southern Arnhem Land, is reduced in importance, not unlike the way the interpretation in Pine Creek is reductive in respect of Indigenous histories in the area. The contrast between the content and ideologies in historic interpretation at Pine Creek and in Kakadu could not be more marked.

There is a Commonwealth map of Kakadu National Park, 1:250 000, that is frequently purchased by tourists at the Bowali Visitor Centre. The township of Pine Creek is marked on the map but in an unusual way. The left hand border of the map is pushed out, exactly at the point where the township is located, and just enough to accommodate it on the map. Pine Creek is on the map of Kakadu, but only just. As a place of European and Chinese and seasonal Indigenous settlement outside the boundaries of the Park the township occupies an ambiguous place in the history of the Kakadu area.¹⁵¹

In the following section I return to my focus on Pine Creek. I examine historical tourism. Pine Creek relies heavily on tourists as does the Territory as a whole and historical tourism is a significant form of tourism in the town.¹⁵²

**Historical tourism: the trappings of history**

David Goodman has observed that historical tourism has become a significant local industry in old mining towns that ‘...brings with it an inevitable fixation upon the outward trappings of the gold era—the equipment, the ‘look’ of the buildings and the clothing of the miners.’¹⁵³ Pine Creek has not escaped this ‘look’ which is embodied in the annual Pine Creek Goldrush weekend. The Pine Creek Goldrush weekend is one of a long line of endeavours to generate income and business and increase the profile of the town. In this respect Pine Creek is not dissimilar to other NT towns, like Katherine and Mataranka, which promote themselves through annual festivals. The short-term nature of mining ventures in the area has

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¹⁵² The first local National Trust pamphlet on Pine Creek stated that 'Tourism is another of Pine Creek's hopes for the future'. *Welcome to historic Pine Creek*. There was room for optimism at this time: Howard Pearce had just completed his report.
encouraged local initiatives in longer term tourism ventures. With the increasing recognition of the value of material heritage in and around the town there has also been a tension between mining development and historic tourism.

A Gateway to where?

The economic dilemma for townspeople of Pine Creek is how to temporarily waylay the traveller by enticing them into a small town that has, since the railway moved on to Katherine in the 1920s, always been on the way to somewhere else.\textsuperscript{154} In the 1960s Colin Simpson described Pine Creek as the ‘Gateway to Arnhem land’.\textsuperscript{155} The term ‘Gateway’ suggests Pine Creek is on the edge of somewhere far more important! Recently Pine Creek has started promoting itself as the Gateway to Kakadu.\textsuperscript{156} This appellation has been strengthened with the sealing of the nearby Mary River-Kakadu Road.

Yet there’s a juggling of tourist identities in the town. There is the local ‘Kakadu Gateway Caravan Park’ and there is also the ‘Pine Creek Diggers Rest Motel’. The most recent tourist drive initiated along the Stuart Highway, named perhaps predictably ‘Explorer Highway’, describes Pine Creek both in terms of its gold mining history and as a Gateway to Kakadu.\textsuperscript{157}

The Pine Creek Goldrush weekend

In order to garner more tourist trade and create a community event, Pine Creek has since 1996, hosted the annual ‘Pioneer Gold Rush Weekend’. The idea for a major civic event in Pine Creek occurred in the same year Mataranka hosted its own inaugural ‘Back to the Never Never Festival’ although both towns are careful not to host their events on the same weekend!\textsuperscript{158} The weekend was held on the 4-5 May, 1996. One long time resident recollected that something like this weekend had not really happened since the mid-1970s.

\textsuperscript{154} NTANT, Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural Heritage Committee, Darwin 25 October 1993.
\textsuperscript{156} Pine Creek. Gateway to Kakadu. Northern Territory Australia, n.d. There is also a Pine Creek Caravan Park called ‘Kakadu Gateway’ Caravan Park.
\textsuperscript{157} The other featured routes include ‘Nature’s Way’ tourist drive and Pioneer’s path. For Pine Creek the pamphlet sums up: ‘Pine Creek is a fascinating historic gold mining town, where you can still pan for ‘colour’ and experience the excitement of the find. It is also the southern gateway to Kakadu National park via Nature’s Way Tourist Drive.’ Northern Territory Tourist Commission and South Australian Tourist Commission, The Explorer Highway Tourist Drive from Adelaide to Darwin through the heart of Australia. n.d.
\textsuperscript{158} Goldrush weekend Apr 28- May 1’, ‘Pine Creek Tourist Association has handed over the running of the Goldrush to the Council.’ ‘Hundreds turn up to Pine Creek Festival’ KT, 8 May, 1996, p.8;
The Goldrush Weekend clearly capitalises on Pine Creek's history as a gold mining town. The weekend hosts events such as Gold Panning Championships, a 'Diggers and Dames' evening at the pub, the Gold Rush Ball, a 'stake your claim' game at the miners park and tours of Union Reefs mine. Other general events included damper making, a didgeridoo jam session, home brew competitions, a bag race, wheelbarrow races, horse and buggy tours and food and craft stalls.\textsuperscript{159} There was also a focus on story telling and oral history with long time residents taking people on tour of the various places of local significance.\textsuperscript{160}

The Weekend was declared by the Pine Creek News as 'a roaring success'.

The pub rocked till the early hours to the sounds of Jackie Lee at the 'Diggers and Dames' evening. The bar and kitchen staff were all dressed in costume for the occasion, which added to the atmosphere of the night. Commencing at 10am on Saturday morning were the horse and buggy tours of the town with Dale Sharf's beautiful wagon pulled by two Clydesdale horses. Lily Ah Toy was the guide for the first tour, and entertained visitors with stories of her early days in Pine Creek...Everyone moved to Bogga Young park in the afternoon...The Darwin Chung Wah Society entertained everyone with their lion dance, followed by the primary school line dancers who had been practising for weeks in preparation for the occasion....Food stalls, photographic displays, period costume, games and races all contributed to the success of the afternoon, which ended with the Goldrush, won by Nola Lamb from Katherine.\textsuperscript{161}

Clearly people were out to have a good time! The Goldrush weekend is a creation with variable ties to history. It is a blend of fact, fiction and imagination. It is a limited

\textsuperscript{159} 'Gold Rush Festival 3rd - 4th May, "Up the Creek", PCN, March 1998, p.3.

\textsuperscript{160} The headline in the Katherine Times was 'Pine Creek festival to revive memories'. As the paper summed up: 'Hundreds of people from across the Territory are expected to converge on Pine Creek this weekend for the pioneer gold rush festival – celebrating the rich heritage of the community.' KT, 1 May, 1996, p.6. See also flier - Pine Creek Tourist Association 'Pioneer Gold Rush weekend 3-4 May' 1996.

\textsuperscript{161} 'The Pioneer gold rush was a roaring success once again, after months of planning, publicity, and glitches both large and small', PCN, March 1997; 'The Rush is Over!' PCN, April 1997, p.1.
community event to the extent that Indigenous participation is variable. To-date it remains a town based event which includes Indigenous families who live in the town. At the time I was visiting one Indigenous family had a food stall and were selling home-made corned beef sandwiches.

Other local initiatives
The Goldrush weekend is a recent initiative. A number of people have been involved in local tourist enterprises over the years. One of them has been Earl Gano who now runs a gold panning/mining park. The centrepiece of the Park is an operational and restored steam engine, jaw crusher and stamp battery, and a race which provides gold panning opportunities for tourists.

At the Pine Creek Railway station a local resident (and sometime miner), Alistair Quest, has created his own volunteer job of hosting tourists through the railway station. He has become an avid railway historian, even dressing up in overalls labelled ‘Station Master’ and a cap. He went so far as to publish his own postcard depicting the Pine Creek Railway Station. He also sells old railway spikes which he’s managed to turn into ‘Rail spike whistle bottle openers’. He has translated information about his railway spikes into a variety of languages, compliments of the international tourists he gets to do the translations! At last count he had ten different translations, ranging from Chinese to Latvian. As the local Pine Creek News noted of Pine Creek’s new railway historian:

The railway station and train are attracting a good deal of attention these days, with a constant stream of visitors coming through in the tourist season. An average of 20 vehicles a day is calling in, from caravans to tourist buses. Alastair Quest keeps the tourists entertained with stories of Pine Creek’s great train disaster (ask Questy about that one) and the like...

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162 At the inaugural Pine Creek Goldrush Weekend the organisers invited participation from Kybrook Farm but there has to-date been no consistent involvement of Kybrook Farm in the Goldrush Weekend. Elaine Gano, verbal communication, 11 June 2003.

163 Alistair Quest, ‘Pine Creek Railway Station NT 1889-1976’, 1996. The postcard mainly depicts the train and describes in detail the make and model of the engine.

164 On his flier about the railway spikes he has written his own version of ‘spike’ history. Railway spikes, he writes: ‘...used to hold railway line to sleepers. Fettlers (workers) used it as a warning for when the ganger (boss) was coming; to open their beer bottles; whistle to local friendly Ladies at night for an evening talk.’ Alistair Quest, ‘Rail Spike Whistle bottle opener.’ c1996.

Mining development, historic tourism and fossicking

Because development tends to destroy historic landmarks it is essential that we act to protect what is of interest and value to our heritage.\textsuperscript{166}

In the Northern Territory there has been a traditional conflict between development interests and heritage interests that manifested in ongoing tension between the National Trust and the pro-development CLP Government over heritage preservation.\textsuperscript{167} While this tension has eased in the last decade with the introduction of heritage legislation, and more recently with the change of government, the legacy of past times is still evident. A number of significant buildings have been demolished in the last twenty years in spite of protests from the National Trust (NT).\textsuperscript{168} Mining has always taken precedence over historic preservation in the Northern Territory. As Mitchell sums up,

Direct conflict between mining and the conservation of historic sites has emerged on a number of cases in the Pine Creek region.

No mining operation in the Northern Territory has ever been stopped owing to the presence of historic mining relics, and as a result several historic sites have been destroyed.\textsuperscript{169}

Three years after Pearce released his report on the heritage of Pine Creek another gold boom in the area imperiled the heritage that Pearce's report had sought to identify and protect.\textsuperscript{170} To compound matters it was precisely the abandoned 'historic' mines which modern mining operations, such as Pine Creek Goldfields, targetted as earlier miners had worked in the richest gold bearing areas.


\textsuperscript{167} As Mitchell has pointed out: 'A prime target of modern mining operations are ... the mines which have been abandoned in the past'. Mitchell, A management plan, p.177

\textsuperscript{168} This was initially due to the introduction of the NT heritage legislation (1991). For discussion see Carmint, 'Cultural heritage management', pp.15-24.

\textsuperscript{169} Mitchell, A management plan, p.177.

\textsuperscript{170} 'Boom around the corner for Territory Town', \textit{NTN}, 26 January, 1985, p.5; 'Pine Creek gold boom', \textit{NTN}, 14 January 1985, p.1; 'Chinatown bulldozing probe on', \textit{NTN}, 14 May 1985, p.2. As one journalist summed up in respect of the new Goldfields mine '...Pine Creek does not dwell on the past...it looks to the future, too.' Tizianna Zeroni 'Time to explore Top End's backyard. Steeped in the glory of the goldrush days Pine Creek is living history', \textit{Sunday Territorian}, 17 August, 1986, p.9.
In the process of excavating the Pine Creek Goldfields mining pit Steve Boyes and other mining staff had the opportunity to see what was quite literally a slice of the past before it was obliterated including the narrow tunnels with timber supports that followed the ore beds. As he summed up: 'You could see the pit marks in the wall, and beautifully preserved and really it was a shame to destroy it...' He also described how the Goldfields conveyor belt, that carried the ore revealed '… various old bits of equipment: picks, shovels, chisels, things like this – mainly when they came out on the magnets on the conveyor belts when they went through the plant. Yeah, it's a shame to destroy it, but we had to.'

In 1986 archaeologist Justin McCarthy noted the incursions made by the Pine Creek Joint [Mining] Venturers into the Pine Creek Chinatown area. As Jack Lewis, a local resident, noted: ‘Once they get in there with the bulldozer it’s all gone.' Historic relics were either destroyed or, in rare cases, re-used. One old steam engine ended up being used temporarily as a loading ramp. Archaeologists were also concerned about the inroads of fossickers or so-called 'relic hunters' in the Chinatown area.

The establishment of an open-cut mine on the edge of town led to a diversion of the Stuart Highway, away from town. This was of great concern to the townspeople because of its likely impact on the local economy. As Steve Boyes, the mining planning engineer for Goldfields identified: 'As a whole we were trying to encourage the tourists to come in. And the mine didn’t want this either.' The road deviation went through an Indigenous quarry

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171 Steve Boyes, interview, 1997. Steve made the assessment that these were Chinese rather than European workings.
172 McCarthy, Heritage zone archaeological survey, p.57.
174 NTANT: Minutes, 6 September, 1982, Minutes, 12 June, 1985 stated that 'Mr Dick Wimby, Renison Mine Manager, attended the meeting to discuss the recent bulldozing in Chinatown. Mr Wemby apologised for the lack of consultation with the Trust before the work began.'; 'Our branch members were dismayed ... at the recent bull-dozing in the Chinatown heritage area.' Minutes Book, President’s Report for 1984/85.
175 A member of the 1990s Heritage Trail committee commented: 'We did not come across any sites pertaining to Aboriginal heritage. There are, doubtless, sites within this region which would be quarries from which certain mineral types would have been extracted and traded for use in the region and elsewhere. Consultation with archaeologists suggest a very negative view to identifying such sites on a tourism map for fear of visitors 'souveniring' articles from the site.' Dewar (et al), 'Heritage Trail 'People of(sic) the move. Pine Creek Goldfields/Mining Loop preliminary report', p.12. Archaeologists such as Bell and Mitchell have documented the inroads of mining exploration and relic hunters. Bell, Pine Creek, p.1, 16-17; Mitchell, A management plan, pp.177-178, p. 189.
176 Steve Boyes, interview, 1997, Pine Creek. road deviation/tourist flow has been a perennial issue in Pine Creek's history. For more recent history see Mr. K.A. McGregor, letter to the editor, P.E. McGuin, letter to the editor, NTV, 18 July, 1989, 1 August, 1989, p.9.
site which was surveyed by archaeologists before being effectively destroyed by the road deviation.\(^{177}\)

The same massive excavation destroyed at least one Indigenous burial site which, unlike the Indigenous quarry site, was not in the system of checks and balances vis-à-vis site preservation. Indigenous people continue to mourn the loss of these sites. As Paddy Huddleston, a Wagiman elder put it: ‘But I get a lot of stories about what bin – what old Wagiman people bin get crushed up their bones there, from that mine there.’\(^{178}\)

**Fossickers and historical ruminations**

There is an irony in the loss of mining heritage by more mining and yet when early miners arrived in Pine Creek with their picks and shovels they too impacted on the environment and destroyed parts of the natural heritage, albeit on a smaller scale than more recent mining technology allows.

Steve Boyes' observations about the Chinese diggings he saw highlights the way proximity to material heritage inspires historical curiosity. The Pine Creek area is replete with material heritage and historical artefacts from mining. Anyone who lives in the area often becomes a natural fossicker simply by proximity. Signs of history are all around and the possibility of direct engagement with material history, is very real as Tex Moar pointed out:

> It’s marvellous you know, no matter where you go in this country, you can be in some of the most remote places, which I’ve been up in – the head of the Katherine, and up in Arnhem Land – and thinking that you’re - you know, well there’s never been anybody here, and then you’ll find an old tin or something. Or an axe mark on a tree, or an old horse shoe, or some bloody thing – somebody’s been there [laughs]. No matter where you go.\(^{179}\)

There was also Indigenous heritage. Jack Lewis recalled coming across caves in his travels as a tin miner. ‘Oh, there’s a lot of caves that you could live in if you were stuck in the wet:

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\(^{177}\) Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
\(^{178}\) Paddy Huddleston, interview, 1996.
\(^{179}\) Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
shelter. Well you can see where the natives have been there, you know, there's odd paintings — a lot of the paintings have faded a bit — spear heads, and ashes from the old fires.\textsuperscript{180}

As Jimmy Ah Toy knew from personal experience ‘...if you go through the area today you'd find old [Chinese] workings right through those miles.’\textsuperscript{181}

Fossicking has been a common past time for many in the Pine Creek area. Ann McGrath went to inspect some of Fred Frith’s finds in 1978. She ‘...went to look at various things that Freddie had found while fossicking about the camps...All sorts of things, Chinese coins, gold weights, and things to melt gold, and things from China. Gold digger's boots.’\textsuperscript{182}

Clem Hill undertook a one-off experiment in which he tried to crawl into a Chinese mining tunnel: he realised there was not anywhere to turn around. It was so small and narrow he nearly got stuck and had to back all the way out.\textsuperscript{183}

A Jawoyn mother and daughter, Violet and Bessie Smith recalled finding bits of gold, Chinese pots, money, glass, an opium pipe and bottles around Pine Creek. They also found a big clay pot and copper buckles.\textsuperscript{184}

The penchant for local history among townspeople continues on in a number of ways. The local National Trust branch continues to collect historic photographs of the town and its occupants.\textsuperscript{185} The physical heritage of a key number of buildings continues to be maintained by the National Trust (NT). Recently the town acquired a steam train from the NT Museum. Local people would like to see the train up and running in order to generate tourism.\textsuperscript{186}

In 1999 Pine Creek celebrated the hundred year anniversary of the school with the publication of a booklet, the printing of a medal and a tea towel. A reunion of students was also held.\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{180}Jack Lewis, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{181}NTAS: NTRS 226, TS401, transcript of addresses of Chinese stories, p.5.
\textsuperscript{182}NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 214, Fred Frith interviewed by Anne McGrath, Pine Creek, 1978, comment by interviewer.
\textsuperscript{183}Clem Hill, discussion notes, 1998.
\textsuperscript{184}Violet Smith and Bessie Coleman, discussion notes, 1997, Kybrook Farm.
\textsuperscript{185}‘Do you have any old photos?’ - Up the Creek, PCN, February 2000, p.5.
\textsuperscript{186}Notebook 9, 21 March 1995
\textsuperscript{187}Pine Creek primary school centenary 1899-1999. The tea towel was headlined ‘The Northern Territory’s oldest operating school.’ The booklet was entitled Pine Creek primary school, Pine Creek Northern Territory. Celebrating 100 years of education 1899-1999, 1999, Pine Creek primary school.
While the material heritage has proved a bonus for Pine Creek's local economy the town's fate is by no means secure. Long-time dwellers were sanguine about the future of Pine Creek given its mining history. As one resident summed up: 'It'll probably kick things along for a bit and then it will become a ghost town again.' Another pointed out that '...a gold mine comes to Pine Creek, just gets a little larger, and it dies and everything disappears again, they take their ball and go home, or whatever. Then another gold mine starts and Pine Creek comes up again. So its been for as long as I can remember, you know.' Tex Moar placed this in an historical context '... and then of course, it kicked over again when the mines opened up again in the twenties, and it had another burst here for a while. And then the Army during the War started up, and that brought'em in again, too.'

**Many material histories**

The public history associated with Pine Creek is, as Lowenthal's quotation implied at the outset of this chapter, selective and revealing and one might add politicised. Local interpretations of history are diverse and broad ranging. Many people from Pine Creek are steeped in the history of the town and the area. However, the longer their association the more personalised and complex this history becomes. The continuing presence of historical materials in the landscape means that the past constantly (and literally) impinges on the present; inserting itself into people's perceptions and engagements with the country they live in. These perceptions and engagements - and associated values - extend outwards into other domains. In the next Chapter I look at these perceptions and engagements in respect of community and oral history and how historical research can be linked to living communities.

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189 Russell Young, interview, 'Pine Creek's a town that it dies and comes back. It's mainly on the gold, but I mean, the same families have been there for that many years it's not funny.'
190 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
Figure 17: Pine Creek school banner with Gaye Lawrence.
CHAPTER FOUR
MEMORY, PLACE, COMMUNITY:
ENGAGING ORAL HISTORY

The teachings of the whispered lineage is the Dakini's breath

*Milarepa*

This passage by Milarepa is about oral transmission. The Sanskrit word *Dakini* refers to the feminine principle associated with the display of wisdom in Tibetan Buddhism. It literally translates as 'moving through space'. Oral history is an ordinary expression of communication 'moving through space', through the 'breath'. The 'lineage' of oral history is ultimately oral tradition which is integral to the life of all Indigenous cultures and which has its own kind of wisdom. Oral tradition is linked to the concept of community and identity. As a branch of the discipline of history, oral history has opened up the discourse of history to include many previously unheard voices, including women's, which have not traditionally been represented in the historic record.

This chapter is about processes and methodologies in respect of oral history and the different applications of oral history. It is broad ranging, ruminative and exploratory in scope and is part of a wider exploration about how history can be of benefit to communities.

Oral history interviews were a touchstone for engaging with people and place in the Pine Creek area. They enabled me to explore

- the link between memory, sense of place and history.
- the concept of community.
- how historic research can be beneficial in an individual and community context.

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how oral history could be usefully combined with other modalities, in particular mapping, site visitation and community art, in order to facilitate the process of recollection.

Banners
I touched on the banner-pictures that introduce each chapter in the Introduction and which were made and designed by the Pine Creek and Kybrook Farm communities. During the course of this chapter I refer frequently to these banners. Banner making involves the method of applique onto a cloth backdrop. These banners form part of a community cultural development project which textile artist, Joanna Barrkman, and I facilitated at Pine Creek and Kybrook Farm.

Joanna and I initially presented our ideas for a combined oral history and banner making project to members of the Town Council, Kybrook Farm and the local primary school. Our ideas received initial support from all three groups. With the support of the Town Council we applied for funding through a number of sources and were successful. This project was a vehicle for translating my research into beneficial community outcomes which in turn benefitted my own process of understanding local history and sense of place. We named the project the ‘Talking Banners’ project because it combined discussions about sense of place and oral history in association with the art form of banner making.

I begin this chapter with a brief examination of the nature of memory followed by an exploration of community in Pine Creek. I then describe the application of oral history in conjunction with different research modalities, including banner making.

The nature of memory
It has become almost an adage to say that memory is history but history is not necessarily memory. All oral history interviews are mediated by the nature of memory which is experientially based, selective and often events based. Memory is by nature imperfect.

3 See Appendix 5.
Memory mediates our relationship between the present and the past. As Kim Mahood recollects in her journey back to the country of her childhood in Central Australia,

It seemed to me as I travelled through the country that memory trapped me in an image of the past that compromised the present and made it almost inaccessible. Memory worked like a map, making visible relationships which existed only for me. A map conceals the reality of country, brings it under control, gives it a structure which allows it to be grasped without the risk of being overtaken by the unknown. ⁵

People have different fields of knowledge and experience—and memories. Even in a place as small as Pine Creek people inhabit it and perceive it in very different ways.

The pictures of banners that begin each chapter, including the Children’s Banner that introduces this particular chapter, are pictorial displays of sense of place that combines both memory and imagination, history and geography. As one school child summed up: ‘The Banner tells the life of Pine Creek, what’s in it, how we feel about Pine Creek, it tells a sort of story…’ ⁶ This child expresses among other things a sense of place. ‘Sense of place’ is a redolent phrase that like memory combines the illusive with the tangible. In its simplest form it describes the impact of place on the senses and yet it also describes levels and kinds of attachment to one’s environment. Sense of place includes a sense of the past in a place. For instance the Children’s Banner is a visual description of a sense of place that includes historical references.

The memory of childhood is interesting to compare with adult memories. Life as a child is taken up with different endeavours and different foci to that of an adult. For instance play and recreation, adventures and explorations of the landscape are more at the forefront of experience than in adult life. The sometimes harsh realities of adult life, including experiences of racism, may be softened. ⁷ The passage of time may also distort memory in particular ways. Adults who lived in Pine Creek only as children have their child’s view preserved in memory and this may result in less detailed memories. Albert Que Noy

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⁶ Pine Creek School children (Riccardo Martinelli) interviewed by Bathgate, 1997a.

⁷ Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
remembered visiting and watching the residents at play (gambling) and at work (gardening) but on certain details of Chinatown - like the distinctions between the two joss houses - he was less clear than he would have been if he had been an adult and knowledgeable about such things.  

There are other differences. Child interviewees may be more candid than adult interviewees who to greater and lesser degree will censor what they say. In this vein it was adult interviewees during my research who were wary of disclosing information about the living and information from the past that was too painful to disclose. On a number of occasions people asked me to keep certain information about the past confidential. In one case I erased a section of a tape in order to comply with confidentiality.

The pitfalls of selective memory can be counteracted by archival research and extensive oral history interviews but the pitfalls of memory must also be embraced. Memory is a complex entity and the use of it in history is also necessarily complex. For instance, engaging archival sources to buttress oral history or vice versa is a fraught enterprise partly because the sources are so profoundly different from one another. It is like comparing apples with pears. The only remotely comparable archival source with oral history interviews are other interviews, for instance police interviews of witnesses.

Oral history interviews

If oral history interviews are understood as memories about the past then they can be 'read' essentially as perceptions about the past. There are also other factors pertinent to oral history interviews which shape the outcome. Oral history interviews are, among other things, an expression of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. This distinguishes oral history interviews from archival research insofar as oral history interviews are undertaken in relationship to others. Interviews are necessarily mediated by the nature of this relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee which includes what the speaker is prepared to disclose and what the interviewer seeks to uncover. In this latter sense oral

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9 One has to read between the lines in order to ascertain the nature of race relations. For instance no older Chinese interviewees I spoke with specifically commented on racism although I found mention of it in transcripts and archival sources. See for instance Albert Que Noy, discussion notes, 1998; NTAS: TS 202/2, Sarah Feeney, 1980, p.13.
10 In citing interviews I have referred initially to the interviewee in recognition of this dialogue/conversation aspect of oral history interviews.
history interviews are a dialogue and even when the interviewer says very little in the interview the mere act of listening engages the speaker.

So, oral history interviews have a particular morphology that needs to be taken into account when using them as a source, however their richness and form far outweighs their limitations. Oral history provides a perspective or view of the past and to this extent they are another form of history.

**What is community?**

In its simplest definition the term community defines a population which interacts with one another within a defined geographical area.\(^{11}\)

The term community can sometimes give a false sense of cohesion or singularity. There is pluralism in any community and all communities co-exist in varying degrees of relationship to one another. In Pine Creek there are many communities - the indigenous-non-indigenous community, the adult and child community, the Jawoyn and Wagiman community, the long term residents (locals) and the new comers, the miners and the non-miners, the tourists and the residents and so on. One hundred years ago the multiplicity of communities was equally complex.\(^{12}\)

When I visited Pine Creek I observed how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people gathered in different parts of the town.\(^{13}\) At the local hotel cultural divisions were clearly evident. In the evening some Indigenous drinkers from Kybrook Farm gathered around the pool tables or bought their take away cans of beer from the back bar. In the air conditioned section of the bar were mainly European drinkers. One local described the air-conditioned section of the bar as being the province mainly of non-local miners although this description was stretched by the obvious presence of locals escaping the heat. In the public (non-air conditioned) bar and spilling out on to the verandah was a mixed crowd of locals, tourists and young people.

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\(^{11}\) As Susan Lawrence has summed up: 'Community is a set of interactions that is centred on a physical place' Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, p.13. While I focus on communities linked by geography I also recognise that communities may be geographically isolated from one another but retain a sense of shared community through identity based on culture, religion and so forth.

\(^{12}\) See Chapter One.

\(^{13}\) Jane Bathgate, 'Looking for history: place, heritage and memory in Pine Creek'. Paper presented to the Australian Historical Association Biennial Conference, University of Melbourne, 15 July 1996.
The people who gathered at the Pine Creek hotel represented one part of the community of Pine Creek and yet the drinkers comprised many different communities. In the following section I explore perceptions of community life, past and present, in Pine Creek.

**Perceptions of social change**

In the late 1990s one local summed up that the town was divided into two different populations – the miners and the originals – the originals being distinguished from miners by either being born in the area or being long term residents.14

The most recent miners to arrive in town (Union Reefs’ miners) had their own social club and living quarters next to the town oval. One local had heard on the grapevine that the miners were told to ‘keep away from the town.’ Whether or not this was true there was a local perception of separation between the two groups which locals avowed had been less obvious with previous mining personnel from Goldfields, Moline and Frances Creek mine, who were seen to have been active in town life. The sense of social dislocation, which was commented on by a number of local residents, was fueled by the perception that miners were a short-term, transient population who in some respects were strangers in the town.15 Eddie Ah Toy, the storekeeper, remembered earlier days when everybody knew everybody ‘...but nowadays...you don’t know everyone that’s in town. But in the early days I s’pose you used to know everyone in town.’16

Clem Hill, a former miner, noted a big shift when the uranium boom occurred in the area in the 1950s. He summed up that ‘This place was dormant for fifty years until the uranium boom started.’ These days, he said, there were ‘Too many floating people...don’t know who they are now.’17 Another miner of a similar age, Merv Lee, who had lived at nearby Burrundie since 1958 said: ‘Pine Creek is not like it used to be – some unsatisfactory place I got away from!’ In a prosaic sense this meant he preferred living away from the town. He summed up his perception of the ‘real’ Pine Creek as a culture of hard work, sacrifice and drunkeness.18

14 Notebook 1, 19 Feburary, 1997.
15 However there was some participation from Union Reefs personnel/families in the Banner Making project including Judith Stevenson and Jesusa Dodgson. Steve Boyes, an oral history interviewee and banner participant, was a mining engineer at Mt Todd.
16 Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997c.
17 Clem Hill, discussion notes, Pine Creek, 1998.
Larry Ah Lin, of Jawoyn-Chinese descent, and born in the area, said that for him the town had not changed much at all. His primary observation was that people minded their own business, that it was not a place that discriminated against people.\textsuperscript{19}

Mai Katona, a Murrumburr woman, who grew up with her father in town, remembers very little racism. She did not remember ‘...any restrictions on having Aboriginal people, your own relatives, in your own house.’\textsuperscript{20}

She went on to point out that her view of the town was informed by her childhood experience – she was not there as an adult. ‘Perhaps racism did exist, perhaps paternalism did exist – but as a child you don’t look for those sorts of things’. It was the place she recalls that marked ‘...the beginning of learning to live with white society’ and it was the place in which her father was taken away from her and thrown into jail; an event which effectively ended her family life at that point. She eventually ended up in a Home for ‘half-caste’ children.\textsuperscript{21}

Bill Baird, an Indigenous man who grew up in Pine Creek during the post-war period, like Mai, generally remembered the town in positive terms.

\begin{quote}
The best early years of my life growing up there, I found today, I still speak with positive feelings about the place, you know. And every time I go through there, even have my own children now, I say: ‘Well, you know, I grew up here.’ And my kids say: ‘Oh Dad, not another history lesson.’\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

For Bill his experience of racism did not begin until later on in life as an adult when he entered the work force.

\begin{quote}
But the other thing that comes to mind, is that racism doesn’t – in my eyes, never existed for me in this town. And certainly didn’t
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} See Larry Ah Lin, discussion notes, Pine Creek, 1997. See also Notebook 1, 13 March 1997. ALC (Jawoyn-Katherine): transcript, 23 March 1983. In this transcript a Jawoyn woman described the attraction of Pine Creek: ‘Yes, I like Pine Creek. It’s a quiet town and there are a few old Jawoyn people there. I would rather be with them than here in Katherine’.
\textsuperscript{20} Mai Katona, interview, 1997. For similar see Bill Baird, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{21} Mai Katona, interview, 1997, Mai’s father, Andy Knight, was one of the few Indigenous men who had quasi-status as a ‘white’ man.
\textsuperscript{22} Bill Baird, interview, 1997.
exist in Darwin until I got into the work force, later on in life. But then there’s all kinds of racism, too. There’s also the racism between traditional and half-caste, and between whites and other races. It’s a shame that life, has come to this sort of situation. 23

Robert Liddy, Helen Liddy’s son, remembered his childhood in terms of the children mixing together where everyone knew each other.

We just sort of all mixed together, and as I said, this is where we had – we all lived in harmony I suppose that’s the way you put it. But as the town grew a bit bigger and the mine came, and stuff like that, it started to disjoint itself in some ways, which I think it is still now. 24

However, clearly social relationships reflected perceptions of the era. In the post-war period there appears to have been a softening of social divisions and more social associations between the Indigenous, European and Chinese family groups and less obvious conflict and racism. 25 In this respect World War Two was a watershed of social divisions for both Indigenous and Chinese people – people came back with new social and work experiences that changed their views, although prejudice was never totally banished. 26

Accounts of pre-war years paint a different story. Sarah Feeney, who lived in Pine Creek up until she was twelve years old (1916), emphatically stated that when she was a child there was no mixing between Chinese and European families. 27 When Chinese children were eventually admitted to school there was bullying. Ellen Crammond, Eddie Ah Toy’s Aunt, remembered these times.

23 Bill Baird, interview, 1997. One has to read between the lines of archival sources to interpret the social reality. See for instance NLC: Resource Assessment Commission, Kakadu Conservation Zone Inquiry. Extract from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs file 77/152(1) re conditions of Aboriginal people in Pine Creek/Adelaide River area, Exhibit 11, John Morris, Senior Clerk, letter, 10 January 1972.
26 In earlier time racial divisions were much more apparent, for instance in the battle between European families and the Education Department about the admission of ‘half-caste’ children to the Pine Creek School in the 1930s. Conversely families from the same cultural background also supported one another such as the Ah Toy’s and the Fongs who socialised regularly with one another. NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 1, Lily Ah Toy interviewed by Sandra Saunders, Darwin, transcript, 1981, p.23, p.39, p.49, p.53, p.57.
...cause the teachers weren’t game to control the white children because you couldn’t because she was white. So to keep peace she’d let the boys out - our boys out earlier – to get away hoping we didn’t get a - cop a hiding from them.²⁸

In contrast to particular European residents whom she saw as anti-Chinese she also noticed Europeans who were not racist such as Constable Bob Woods, a local policeman.²⁹ Other European Australians strove to incorporate her in their own community which meant for them classifying her as an Australian rather than a Chinese Australian. ‘...they used to say to me: “Ellen, you’re not a Chinaman, you remember that; you’re a dinky-di Australian. Don’t you let them think that you’re a Chinaman. You are one of us...’’³⁰

Reasons for staying

Merv Lee and his friend Bert Batty who’d lived in the Pine Creek area for many years described the ‘greatest’ reason for staying in the area was ‘freedom’. For Merv the cities held no attraction. ‘You’ve got a mob of sheep waiting for the green light to open the gate!’³¹

One European ex-miner, Clem Hill, who came to Pine Creek in 1938 described his reason for staying in terms of friendship. ‘I stop in Pine Creek for friends’.³² Bill Cain alluded to the same thing. ‘I know everyone here, and – that’s the main thing.’³³ However for some who’d lived there all their life they were more circumspect. Eddie Ah Toy acknowledged the possible attraction of a carefree lifestyle for some residents but that was not his situation. He was the first born son in a Chinese family - his duty was to run the family business - in this case the general store. He was proud of his family’s long association with the town and he had fond memories of growing up in the town but life was also hard work.

²⁹ NTAS: TS 483/1, Ellen Crammond, pp.22-23.
³⁰ NTAS: TS 483/2, Ellen Crammond, p.4.
³¹ Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997.
³² Clem Hill, discussion notes, Pine Creek, 1998.
...I haven’t chosen to be here. Yeah, that’s the thing you know. Maybe it sums it up ... you know, it’s a pretty lonely life really, by yourself. So you know, I’ve put up with it at the moment, but I don’t know what the future holds.³⁴

Johnnie Hart, a man of Dagoman/Irish/Sri Lankan descent, pointed out that if you’ve lived in a place all your life you do not think in terms of whether you like a place or not: ‘Oh well, I was born here, I s’pose naturally, it comes natural to a man.’³⁵

However, life experiences profoundly shape perceptions of place. Like Mai Katona, Fred Muggleton was separated from his family by government policies. When he was taken away from his mother at Jindare Station in the 1930s he was initially taken to Pine Creek and chained to the verandah of the police station. He subsequently spent time in Kahlin Compound and the boys’ home in Pine Creek. Pine Creek came to represent a difficult time in his life but it was also close to the area where he grew up with his mother. For Fred it was a place of mixed experiences.³⁶

**A family town?**

While Mai and Fred were separated from their families, others grew up in more intact family units. In spite of the social upheavals brought about by mining there was a continuing sense of community among current residents.³⁷ Mayse Young continued to identify Pine Creek as a ‘family town’.

It’s still a family town; everybody’s always there for each other. The women might have a little gossip around the place, but if anyone needed help, or someone to look after their children if they were sick, or something, they’re always there for each other. I think it’s a great little town for that. And it’s always been a bit like that.³⁸

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³⁴ Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997b.
³⁶ Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
³⁸ Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
Johnnie Hart also commented on how people helped each other out. ‘When you come good with your gold, well you share it with them’. In this statement there is a sense of continuity over time. Paul Williamson enunciated the willingness of people to support one another in the town when it was really needed.

Bill Baird spoke of the Pine Creek connection that continued on long after he’d left the town. In the post-war period his family and a number of other Indigenous families had returned to the Northern Territory after being evacuated ‘down south’. Most of these families settled in Darwin but for a number of years they shared their life together in Pine Creek.

Of course, the Talbot family, there was a heap of them. I can’t think of some of the names. Kevin, Manni, Ben, Barnie - - yeah, quite a few of the boys. And their extended families now, you know, with their kids they’re having kids – and then their kids having kids and they’re growing up with my kids. So, we’ve still got this connection here, even here in Darwin. And I s’pose it goes with the Lew Fatts and the Bonsons, and the Markhams and the McGuinnesses too, they’re another group. So we all, still connecting today.

Similarly, a lot of Chinese and European families resident in Darwin also trace their family history back to Pine Creek and the connection with the town is still strong.

Looking out for each other

Another feature of the ‘community’ of Pine Creek was the way younger residents had established relationships with older residents – often single male pensioners who were former miners, hunters and pastoralists and ‘jacks of all trades’. In more recent years a number of these ‘old timers’ have included war veterans. For many years Lily and Jimmy Ah

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41 Bill Baird, interview, 1997.
Toy kept a watch over the old Chinese ‘pensioners’ who remained in Chinatown. They also became a second family for Alec Gorrrie, a Russian Cossack.\footnote{The Pine Creek Cossack', Northern Territory Newsletter, May 1976, p.15; Paul Williamson, interview, 1997; Mai Katona, interview, 1997. Some elderly Aboriginal people continued camping in Pine Creek in relative peace in spite of the Welfare Act and with local support. In 1959 a Welfare Branch patrol officer reported on an infirm and partially blind 71 year old Aboriginal man Wingie Nundall. He wrote to his supervising officer. ‘As Wingie has been living in the Pine Creek area for some years, and has been receiving handouts from the people of the town, Constable Dean requested that food and clothing be made available to him.’ NAA,NT: F1, 1959/7, letter, M. Ivory, Patrol Office-in Training to District Welfare Officer, Darwin 27 May 1959.}

Robert Liddy recalled a lot of the ‘old’ people who lived in Pine Creek.

Well most of them came from the Pine Creek area, some were old miners, some were ex-station owners, cattlemen. Most of them were around, I mean like Uncle Tex [Moar], he sort of moved – he was in and out of the town all the time...

We had an old racing identity here by the name of Bill Cain. Matter of fact his house is still there. There was old Auntie Sally Feeney, I still get on really well with her kids. ... There was old Uncle Fred Frith, but he’s passed on since – he moved over to Queensland and he passed on. There was an old fella, old Tim Boland.\footnote{Robert Liddy, interview, 1997.}

Mayse Young commented on these inter-generational relationships.

People care about each other, and that’s very important. We said the other day that the girls in the town all seem to look after the old folk in the town, they sort of accept responsibility for one person and look after him. Then when anything happens and he passes on, well then they adopt somebody else. [Laughs] There’s always someone coming. It’s great.\footnote{Mayse Young, interview, 1996.}

Russell Young, Mayse Young’s son, who lived in Pine Creek in the pre-war and post-war period, could, like Robert Liddy, easily reel off names of old residents who’d lived in the town. ‘Oh, there’s so many come and go. Old Jamus Peterson. Well, old Martha Hart
again. Russell also commented on how comfortable ‘pensioners’ found it living in the area. ‘You know they can build their own camp on a waterhole, or whatever they want to do. They just become part of the town and, you know, they don’t get hassled.’

In the 1950s when Bill Cain settled in Pine Creek after working for many years variously as a drover, buffalo hunter and station owner in the area he observed that ‘...there was more old pensioners in Pine Creek than any place in the World in comparison to the population.’

Sharing stories

Pat Smith, who had come to Pine Creek in the early 1970s summed up why she made an effort with a number of ‘old timers’ in the town.

...what I think it is, you know the empathy that I had with the old people...the three main ones I had a lot to do with is Bill Cain, Norm Jensen and Frank Atkinson, ... this empathy is because I know the loneliness...and I think it was knowing that they were lonely and I didn’t want to be like that when I’m old you know. I hope someone takes the time with me...

Living in the country of the stories was an integral part of deepening one’s understanding about local history. Tex Moar had known ‘a very old man’ named Jim O’Connor who had been a teamster and carted stores from Pine Creek to Bradshaw Station on a three month round trip.

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46 Russell Young, interview, 1996; Leonie Ruig, Russell Young’s sister, recalled other old timers ‘Les Turley, Jerry Martin, Jack Knight and Mario Amelio “Mafia” as he was nicknamed. Leonie Ruig, discussion notes, Pine Creek 1997. Leonie noted the oldest (European) families in town were the Coxes and the Murphy’s. Later came Bill Cain and Jack Sullivan. There was also Frank Atkinson. See also Chapter Six for other residents.

47 Russell Young, interview, 1996.

48 In 1981 Bill Cain was still remarking on the large number of old-age pensioners in the town. NTAS: TS 190, Bill Cain, 1981, p. 32. See also Chapter Five for discussions on aged population. Gaye Lawrence estimated that out of approximately 150 residents in Pine Creek in the late 1970s 40 percent were, in her words ‘old men’. Gaye Lawrence, interview, 1997. Between 1938-1940 Ah Toy’s Store had seven pensioners on their credit books compared with twenty-six non-pensioners. Lily Ah Toy, Hand written notes. n.d.

49 Pat Smith, interview, 1997.
Yeah. I used to listen to him, listen to his stories. He’d talk about those days when they used to go through there with wagons. And later on, when I owned Dorisvale Station, well that was - a road went right through there – that old wagon road. And I got to know that country pretty well.50

What is an outsider?
One of the aspects of being part of a community is being ‘known’. I was conscious of being an outsider in Pine Creek, not part of any particular community. Does an outsider ever become an insider? It almost goes without saying that this history would have been very different if I had been born in Pine Creek and grown up there or lived in the area for a length of time but I chose to live in Darwin (260 kilometres away) or Batchelor (160 kilometres away) and visited Pine Creek periodically.

I consciously chose to be an outsider initially for what it offered me in terms of view: partly this was born of a clarity that comes from standing back from the subject of inquiry, but it was also an opportunity to be part of a transient population in a place in which, historically, people had always travelled through and draw on other benefits of physically being there. This oriented me towards the geography of the place. As I discussed in the Introduction travelling to Pine Creek and traversing the local area was a starting point for asking questions about geography and history. How long, for instance, had Indigenous people been gathering in front of Ah Toy’s store - who travelled and continued to travel down the old Moline mine road? Where had the road originally taken them?

As an outsider I had to establish new relationships with people. Through this process I became more known to locals and this tempered my status as an outsider. There were also the constraints on speaking to any one in a small community. In any small town there is a constant tension between confidentiality and public knowledge or – in more prosaic terms, secrets and gossip.51

I was tested at times socially: there was a wariness towards me from some people that abated over time but in other instances never quite went away. I am not naturally gregarious. It was uncomfortable for me to walk into a place where I did not know anyone - I too recognised that I needed time getting to know people.

50 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
As a woman it seemed easier for me to establish relationships with women rather than men. It was contact with three particular women Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Lulu Martin that provided me, over time, with an ongoing personal connection with the history of Pine Creek through their sharing of aspects of their past associations with the area.\(^{52}\)

Like any community there were people who were particularly supportive and helpful in introducing me to the wider community and pointing me in the right direction. It is through Helen Liddy that I was introduced to Lenny Liddy, her brother. Robert Liddy introduced me to Paddy Huddleston; through Gaye Lawrence I met Jack Lewis and through Leonie Ruig I met Clem Hill. Others did not need intermediaries. There was Tex – an affable retired stockman and miner always available for a yarn and a beer.

As part of the Talking Banner project (see below) I redefined my role of outsider as a participant/observer and actively participated in a community project as an historian. This was enormously beneficial in developing relationships with members of the community.

Patience was perhaps the primary gift I developed as an outsider. As I wrote in my diary ‘It’s about a delicate combination of putting myself forward and waiting...’ \(^{53}\) At Kybrook I was introduced to Emu Corrigan. After he had seen me numerous times at Kybrook he was ready to talk ‘about history’.\(^{54}\)

**What is a researcher?**

*Returning information*

By defining myself as an outsider I was also conscious of how research, historical or otherwise, is often undertaken by ‘outsiders’. Outside research is a problem when it is disconnected from the *subject* of research. Most historical research has traditionally derived its sources from the dead. I wanted to apply research of the past to the present and make it relevant to the living. How could my research be of benefit to others?

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\(^{51}\) See Paul Williamson, interview, 1997.

\(^{52}\) One man was more interested in talking to me when he had had a cataract removed and could see me better! He was not interested in disclosing details of his past. Another person was never ‘home’ when I came to visit. However most people were willing to talk. See Chapter Six for related discussion.

\(^{53}\) Notebook 1, 10 March 1997.

\(^{54}\) Notebook 1, 14 February 1997.
The question of benefit was particularly relevant to Pine Creek in two ways. Firstly, I was studying the history of a place that had a living/continuing community. Secondly, the members of that community were assisting me with my research through providing support for my project, mainly through oral history. How could a dissertation be translated into a community process that engaged the past with the present or, in this case, local and regional history with the existing lives of people?

One young Jawoyn woman at Kybrook Farm asked if I was going to write a book and ‘get famous’ - the implication being that I was about to embark on self-centred enterprise. I felt uncomfortable when she asked me this question but it was a fair question and who was to say that I was different, from other researchers.55

When Joanna Barrkman and I were beginning the Talking Banners project there was a wariness among some residents about what we were intending to achieve. One resident said she had heard that we were just coming to get ideas and take them away.56 On another occasion I visited a European person in an outlying area to introduce myself and was greeted with a rainstorm of speech about how people ‘like you’ just come in and take information. ‘Who do you think you are?’ This person went on to tell me about a man who had ‘borrowed’ some papers and was never seen again. I was able to allay this person’s fears, however their concerns were real.

Collectors of information, whatever their discipline or orientation, can potentially behave like fossickers. Like the mining sites in and around Pine Creek which have been gone over by collectors, mostly for artifacts, local history too can be pilfered. This is quite literally the ‘finders keepers’ approach to information collection. Many stories abound in the Northern Territory of disappearing diaries, photo albums, maps and other historical artifacts. People shake their heads, almost in disbelief, when they tell these stories – and part of their disbelief stems from the fact that the people who take/steal materials are sometimes well known to the speaker.

At the outset of the research project I tried to clarify with local people what they thought about my interest in undertaking a history of Pine Creek, but I could not identify that anyone really had an opinion either way. No one expressed specific ownership of local history. The

56 Notebook 1, 19 February 1997.
most identifiable response was curiosity about why I was undertaking such a history and suggestions for people I should talk with.\footnote{I initially approached the Town Council and Kybrook Farm about undertaking a history of the area in 1995. See also letter, Bathgate to the President, Mr George Ah Won, Kybrook Farm, 8 November 1995.}

A lack of interest in my research did not mean a lack of responsibility on my part. Reading between these lines - there was a need for me to establish a relationship of trust with community members, in order to identify community needs in respect of any outcomes of the historical research I was undertaking. I also understood that ownership of research could only occur through participation with the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous community. My initial solution was to keep showing my face in the town, and at Kybrook Farm, periodically in order to become more ‘known’.

While I received no definitive answers or directions it was clear that I needed to devise a method of return of information and/or a community link with the research I was undertaking. Otherwise I felt I would fall into the perennial research trap I was hoping to avoid - undertaking history not connected to the living.\footnote{See Introduction for discussion of Engaged history. In this Chapter I am focussed more specifically on relating external research, in this case historical research, to community needs.}

I had no immediate answers about how I might link my research to the community but I kept my eyes and ears open for possibilities. In the first instance I recognised that the return of information to the community was an appropriate place to start. This meant returning copies and transcripts of oral history interviews to interviewees and lodging the collection of oral history interviews I had undertaken in the community and, later, the PhD in the local library.\footnote{The oral interviews have been housed in the Pine Creek Library and individual copies given to participants. Copies of the Kybrook interviews were given to Kybrook Farm for storage in the Council offices. See Appendix 3 and 5.}

The Talking Banner project
The main vehicle for returning information to the community was the 'Talking Banners project' which resulted in the generation of a significant number of oral history interviews, sense of place interviews and the creation of a series of community banners that combined historic themes with sense of place.
The project arose out of a friendship between myself and a friend Joanna Barrkman who had worked for many years in community arts projects in the Northern Territory. Joanna wanted to work with a small community in a banner making project and I wanted to establish a project that would link history to the community in ways that had tangible results.

Through the ‘Talking Banners’ project Joanna and I facilitated a community process in which townspeople, Kybrook Farm people and school children came together in their various groups to participate in banner making and interviews concluding with a launch and exhibition in the Pine Creek museum. The ‘Talking Banners’ project incorporated a community cultural development approach in which art and history were vehicles for bringing communities together.60

I describe the 'Talking Banners' project further in this chapter as part of my discussion about the process and results of combining oral history with three key modalities - mapping, site visitation and community art (banner making). While I discuss these modalities separately they were in fact entwined with each other as are history and sense of place. Mapping was a necessary part of site visitation to places of memory, and enriched banner designs. Site visitation assisted with understanding sense of place and banners provided another avenue of expression for sense of place.

ORAL HISTORY MODALITIES

Getting a sense of orientation

When I started talking with people about Pine Creek’s history people would often 'map' the history for me by making reference to sites that were no longer there or had either changed location or function. As Helen Liddy said to me when I asked if there were any buildings that had survived in the post-war period:

60 A general definition of cultural development is ‘...a process whereby the cultural identities of groups within a local area are acknowledged and nurtured through a range of arts and cultural activities’ Local Government and Arts Task Force, Local government’s role in arts and cultural development, January 1991, p.9. See also Anthony Kelly and Sandra Sewell, With head, heart and hand: dimensions of community building, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988 and Mary Anne Reid, Not a puppet. Stories from the frontier of community cultural development, Australia Council, Sydney, 1997, p. 5, p.58. It is extremely difficult to define Community Arts. This arises partly out of the differing and evolving perceptions of what constitutes ‘Community’. Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.48.
Well, there’s still old post office standing, that’s the museum; Ah Toy’s; old bake house. The police station is new ... that used to be the old police station before, but they just pulled it down and rebuilt a new one in the old spot.\textsuperscript{61}

There had been so much change that it was difficult for me to orientate myself in relation to these ‘memory maps’ because I did not have the memory of these sites. As Eddie remarked in respect of one road: ‘Well there used to be that road used to go out to Moline. I remember that one, that used to go out past Paul Williamson’s place. There was that one, then they changed that.’\textsuperscript{62}

People’s recollections were often based on locating themselves in the physical landscape. Lily Ah Toy and Helen Liddy’s reminiscences were one example of this.

\textbf{Lily}: Remember old what’s-his-name used to live where he used to live. Old yella fella that used to live for years... Jamus Peters.

\textbf{Helen}: Yeah, where he live.

\textbf{Lily}: That’s up on the hill.

\textbf{Helen}: Well that’s up on the Roberts Road.\textsuperscript{63}

I had names and places but no reference point. In particular I could not work out where all the roads went — many of which had been amputated by mining activity. One resident speculated that in the last 50 years the main access road has moved four times.\textsuperscript{64}

The whole town appeared to have moved from one side of the road to the other (rather than the reality where the Stuart Highway has moved from one side of the town to the other). Local residents and former residents found this disconcerting.\textsuperscript{65}

Maps can be a particularly helpful tool in orientation. I needed a map perhaps — but which kind of map? There are extant cartographic maps and the maps we carry around inside our

\textsuperscript{61} Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{62} Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997a.
\textsuperscript{63} Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{64} Russell Young, Opening Ceremony speech. After this description he momentarily lost his place in the speech he was reading.
\textsuperscript{65} Russell Young, Opening Ceremony speech; Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
heads. One geographer has distinguished these maps in terms of “real” maps and “virtual” maps. 66

Mapping modalities

What is the map, where is the map?

All maps have their biases. Maps too can lie. 67 As Monmonier puts it:

A good map tells a multitude of little white lies; it suppresses truth to help the user see what needs to be seen. Reality is three-dimensional, rich in detail, and far too factual to allow a complete yet uncluttered two-dimensional graphic scale model. Indeed, a map that did not generalise would be useless. But the value of a map depends on how well its generalised geometry and generalised content reflect a chosen aspect of reality. 68

Most of the cartographic maps of the Pine Creek area I came across over the last one hundred years were cadastral, geological and pastoral maps. They were clearly focussed on demarcation of territory and described the land in terms of different kinds of categories that were essentially about ownership and economics. (I explore some of these maps in Chapter five).

The definition of mapping has, in the late twentieth century, been expanded beyond cartographic maps to include cognitive and ‘cultural’ forms of mapping. In the 1970s behavioural geographers looked at the idea of ‘mental maps’; the way in which people reconstructed a physical place in their minds eye. 69 In the 1980s the environmental movement harnessed ‘mental maps’ combining documentation of environmental resources with discussions of place. In the 1990s the term ‘cultural mapping has been used to define ‘...a process to identify and record the cultural resources of a community or region.” 70 In this

67 Gregory, Geographical imaginations, pp.7-8. As Woods and Fels point out maps are inherently selective. Wood with Fels, The power of maps.
70 Stevens, ‘Cultural Mapping’, p. 12; Sommerville (et al), The Sun dancin’, i, iii.
context cultural mapping is seen as a tool for social and economic development. Mental or cognitive maps have in more recent times been linked to explorations of sense of place.\textsuperscript{71}

Mapping has also been used extensively in enunciating Indigenous territories and their connections to country.\textsuperscript{72} Anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose describes using cartographic maps as a way of recording Indigenous locations for food/plant gathering in a particular area. Rose called these 'biographical-ecological maps'. Her main focus was asking about food but people offered a broader range of responses. Talks with people, as she describes, '...brought back a wealth of memories-of people, events, emotions, relationships, and so on.'\textsuperscript{73}

So people come to maps in different ways and for different reasons. In this thesis not only did they prove a useful tool in linking memory to history and sense of place but they proved a vital orientation tool.

**Maps and memory**

I began my 'mapping' of the area by walking around the town but also by talking to people. This orientation was partly about my need to have my own sense of place and get my bearings but more importantly it was background information I needed in order to talk with people about their 'maps'. I needed, for the purpose of interviews, to develop a local inner map of the Pine Creek area. If a person was referring to a particular location I wanted to know where they were talking about.\textsuperscript{74}

I started this exploration with Eddie Ah Toy, the local store keeper. I armed myself with sheets of blank paper and sat down with Eddie and asked him if he could clarify my confusion about where all the old roads went (including the various versions of the Stuart Highway). Could he, I asked him, draw the roads and tracks he remembered. Three textas later we had three kinds of roads. The very old roads (not necessarily in existence any more), the old roads and the new roads.

Through this mapping I began to orientate myself geographically and historically in respect of Eddie's history of association with the area (see Figure 18). Eddie's road map did not stop at the road. Eddie started marking and mentioning sites next to the road - and reminisced

\textsuperscript{71} For discussion of the history of environment/sense of place maps and mental/cognitive maps see Hayden, *The power of place*, pp. 63-64, p.229.  
\textsuperscript{72} Brody, *Maps and dreams*, p.6.  
\textsuperscript{73} Rose, 'Biographical-ecological maps', pp.65-66.
about where the roads had taken him: roads were thoroughfares of movement and prompts for memory. Roads take people in and out of town. Eddie’s memories took him to the north. The borders of Eddie’s maps were shaped by his regional movements. Eddie had his own encounter with place and his own hinterland for that place.75

I took Eddie’s map to show his mother, Lily Ah Toy. I asked her if she would like to draw a map as Eddie had. She declined. I showed her a map of the town but the lettering was too small for her to read easily. We discussed that I would bring back a larger map of the town and she would draw on that.

Out of these two encounters and others, I began to recognise the need for a history of place that was accommodating and flexible of different perceptions of place - that allowed an Indigenous person to define Pine Creek as a place in relation to the nearest river or pastoral station and - that made room for a European person, such as the publican Mayse Young, to define her territory as the pub rather than the town or a Chinese storekeeper like Eddie Ah Toy to define the service area of the store. In other words a variety of maps were needed to accommodate a variety of personal hinterlands.

The need for flexibility in mapping was reinforced by reading existing life history transcripts of people who had lived in and around Pine Creek. These transcripts yielded ad hoc treasures, like any general historic source, but I wanted to be able to be more specific in interviews in order to uncover the issues I was interested in, including ‘place history’, community life and demographic movement.76 Memory of past or current residents of Pine Creek potentially provided details that rarely figured in memoir or autobiography or for that matter life histories arising out of oral history interviews.

Experimental mapping

I embarked on an experiment in mapping in combination with memory. Initially I had an idea that I could produce a series of maps of different scales that would accommodate people’s different hinterlands. These maps would form a template – a base landscape upon which to mark the site of people’s movements and memories. As I collected people’s oral

74 Notebook 1, 13 February 1997.
75 Eddie’s memories had a commercial element. For instance the purpose of his journeying was often in relation to Ah Toy’s store business. In this respect he was describing part of the service area for the store.
76 These general interviews were NTAS oral history transcripts.
Figure 18: Eddie Ah Toy's mud map.
Source: Eddie Ah Toy, 1996.
histories I anticipated marking these memory sites on the map. Thus I imagined there would be a conjunction between the physical map and the oral history interview.

Sharon Taylor, a drafts person, compiled three maps of three different scales. We based the maps on earlier maps that provided additional historical information. They included Howard Pearce’s and Scott Mitchell’s maps of the township and Chinatown area (1982, 1995), a Department of Land and Housing pastoral map (1964) and a Royal Australia Army Map (1942). Each of these maps potentially created a link with living memory insofar as they contained historic information. I thought that perhaps there would be a coincidence with some of these sites and with people’s memories of where they had lived, worked and travelled.

Three ‘hinterland’ maps were created. The 1:5000 map included the township of Pine Creek and its immediate environs. The 1:10000 map included Pine Creek and Chinatown, mining areas, creeks and billabongs in the vicinity of the township. The 1:50000 included outlying pastoral stations as well as various rivers, tracks and communication routes including the North Australian Railway line and the Telegraph Line.77

I overlaid these maps with perspex to enable others or myself to draw on them. I clipped the maps to some hard board and carried them with me to interviews. I undertook eight interviews, including Lily Ah Toy, using these maps.78

Using physical maps in conjunction with oral history was a bit like the odd couple: sometimes they worked extremely well together and sometimes not all. Sometimes the maps hampered the interview process. The maps were cumbersome and intrusive compared with a relatively uncluttered taped interview. In a way the ubiquitous hand drawn or ‘mud map’ that Eddie had drawn proved to be the more harmonious form of mapping in respect of oral

history interviews. However the relationship between the two modalities was interesting and revealing, often in an unanticipated ways.

‘You’re going to put Pine Creek on the map’ (Lily Ah Toy)

I returned to interview Lily with pre-drawn maps and with a tape recorder. I was excited about the possibility and initially I jumped straight in to the interview with the maps: showing her a map of the town but there were too many silences in our conversation. I wondered if the map of the town felt too close-up - too immediate? We moved on to the largest scale map (Map 3) and I began asking her about the service area for Ah Toy’s general store. The station names on the map elicited a swift response in terms of the service delivery area for Ah Toy's store to outlying pastoral stations: 'Yes - we went as far as Tipperary'. Her discussion of pastoral stations led on to a discussion of other industries like buffalo and crocodile hunting and where the hunters came from to trade and get supplies. She outlined the area where the buffalo hunters and crocodile shooters were located. The red encircled area marked this latter area (see Figure 19).

[Jane] I mean is it possible to draw a rough circle around where the buffalo hunters and the crocodile shooters were?
[Lily] Well, you see it would be all on this side. We can start from Mount Munmarlary. Cannon Hill – yes, Cannon Hill. Goodparla. '

[Jane] Lily’s drawing a black line on the north of Map three around the general area for the buffalo shooters and the crocodile hunters – where they were located.
[Lily] Jim Jim Creek. No, this is all mining there.

I was particularly interested in Lily’s reminiscences about Chinatown but the scale on Map two did not allow for sufficient detail. However Map One which showed the town of Pine Creek did have sufficient detail (see Figure 20). Notwithstanding the limitations of the map Lily was able to provide information on the walking track and cycling route from Chinatown into Pine Creek used in the pre-war period.

79 Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997a.
80 Lily Ah Toy, discussion notes, Darwin, 1996.
81 Lily Ah Toy interviewed by Bathgate, Darwin, 1996.
82 See Appendix 4 for Map 2.
Figure 19: Lily Ah Toy's overlay, Pine Creek hinterland (Map 3).

Source: Lily Ah Toy (drawing overlay), Jane Bathgate (writing) and Sharon Taylor (Map 3), 1996
Figure 20: Lily Ah Toy's overlay, Town of Pine Creek (Map 1).  
Source: Lily Ah Toy (drawing overlay), Jane Bathgate (writing) and Sharon Taylor (Map 1), 1996.
The former Jolly's Dam site turned out to be very significant for Lily because it was near a number of grave sites. The discussion of burial sites led to her talking about Indigenous and Chinese burial customs.

For Lily and my discussion of Map 3 and the service area for Ah Toy's store provided an introductory space. In the second half of our hour long conversation it seemed appropriate to turn to the town map. By this stage Lily was more than happy to talk about key places - in particular stores, houses, the bakery and the local butchery - she remembered. She also noted Indigenous camp sites and pointed out where buildings including Chinese huts did not exist on the map but remained in her memory. She also remembered sites that were abandoned by the time she arrived such as Schunke's residence, which was marked on Map 1.

Albert Que Noy, born in Pine Creek in 1911 and resident there until he was a young man, was able to provide a much more detailed picture of Chinatown than Lily. He described it as a bustling community comprising shacks, vegetable gardens, one or two temples, gambling houses, street vendors and more up-market housing. Albert did not particularly relate to the large maps I brought. He preferred to draw a map of the significant houses he remembered in Chinatown, describing the precarious thin track that wended its way past mining shafts over the hill into town and the Indigenous campsites close by town (see Figure 21).

**Falling off the map: the limits of inquiry**

[Jane] So coming back the other way, on Map two, this is where Que Noy Battery is – was your house around here do you think?  
[Jane] ...Just here? If I mark that is that the right place?  
[Albert] Oh, where the open cut is now. Yeah, somewhere here. I wonder what this store is?  
[Jane] Not all of this map may be correct. I think.83

The use of the physical maps in conjunction with oral history had variable results largely because the physical maps I had could not do justice to the complexity of people's memories. In this respect a travelling computer map may have been more helpful because flexibility was required in naming the landscape in terms that people were familiar with and flexibility in drawing the hinterlands of movement of individuals so that the map expanded and contracted where necessary. In other words I needed a 'virtual' map for a 'virtual' memory.

83 Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996.
In a way the mining history also contributed to the limitations of my mapping enterprise because so much change had occurred in the landscape it was difficult to convey this easily in a two dimensional format without making a rather messy map.

I had also assumed that people interacted uniformly with maps – they did not! Some people found the maps a hindrance and others an aid. I found people used the maps in different ways - some people honed in on the map for extended periods, while others touched on the map only briefly finding it of little use because they could not ‘recognise’ the map’s relationship to what they remembered. Sometimes the maps just sat between myself and the person I was interviewing simply reminding us of the space we were talking about. I might steer the questions towards the map but equally people might steer me away from it. I had an agenda to find out about the history of place and they had their life stories of association with place.

I also found that memory often outstripped the synchronous task of mapping. For instance I wanted to mark the sites of peoples memories on the physical maps as they talked but this was difficult. As one interviewee succinctly put it when I asked him how he found the maps and talking he said ‘Talking too fast for maps’.  

Mapping in combination with oral history was a painstaking process. As I summed up near the end of an interview with Lily Ah Toy. ‘We’re nearing the end of the tape, and I think we’re only just starting to really nut out the town.’ The maps I presented to people were a tool for unlocking memory and documenting sites of history.

The maps were perhaps less helpful from an historical-mapping viewpoint than they were in clarifying what it was I was actually looking for in interview and orienting me in the general landscape of historical geography. Perhaps I had more use for them as an orientation device than the interviewee? Along with my review of the place of maps in interview I also reviewed my underlying questions making them much more open ended thus allowing for the ‘mapping’ process to unfold at a pace and in a way that the interviewee was comfortable with rather than imposing my pre-determined borders and asking too many questions. The more I talked with people the more specific I became in asking about place names and people. I became a repository of sorts of other’s disclosed maps.

Fred Muggleton, interview, 1996.
Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
Figure 21: Albert Que Noy's mud map.
Source: Albert Que Noy (drawing) and Jane Bathgate (writing), 1996.
Other kinds of maps

Time and again I encountered people's frustration with 'falling off the map' \(^{86}\) I experimented with the use of aerial and topographic maps to see if these were 'better' maps in this situation. The clear depiction of routes on the aerial map and topography on the topographic map was more useful for those who had worked in the bush. However the limitations of all maps including these was a constant thorn in the side of discussions because they couldn't accommodate the range of peoples' movements or the level of detail of peoples' memories.

But on other occasions the maps were revealing because they contrasted with peoples memories. The maps I carried with me contained information that pre-dated peoples memories but helped me to see what lay outside memory and enabled some dating of sites. For instance the collection of Chinese huts to the north west of the town on Map 1 did not appear to be within living memory of the people I interviewed, but Martha Hart's camp was.\(^{87}\)

Two places not on the maps I had, but which came up time and again in peoples' memories, were the Fong's vegetable garden and Police Paddock. Police Paddock was a name that pre-dated the interviewees. It was where the police used to put their horses at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Fong family were gardening in the early twentieth century up until World War Two. They were continuing a tradition of market gardening in the area that was extremely important to the locals.\(^{88}\)

'Where are we? Crikey! ' (Gilbert Williams).\(^{89}\)

The dissonance between the physical maps I carried around was immediately apparent in one of my first interviews. Gilbert Williams, a European ex-timber miller and railway worker, immediately identified the absence of certain names on the map and the addition of others.\(^{90}\)

Not only did Gilbert get annoyed when he couldn't find a particular mine or creek on Map 3 (the general area map), he could not find the place where he and his father milled timber:

\(^{86}\) One man said the Pine Creek 1:50,000 map did not extend far enough east for him. Notebook 2, 26 February 1997.
\(^{87}\) For further reference to Martha Hart see Chapter Six.
\(^{88}\) Russell Young, interview, 1996. Similarly Gilbert Williams noticed the absence of some Chinese sites marked on the maps and others, such as the Chinese temple, which he did not recollect. Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
\(^{89}\) Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
\(^{90}\) Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
'Where's Depot Creek?' he asked 'I can't see it.' Other details were missing and in some cases he considered them to be wrongly marked. Gilbert helped me correct the map and I could see from his point of view that the Maps were in part inaccurate because, again, they did not do justice to the complexity of his internal map. The formal names for places were at times unrecognizable. As Lily mentioned in respect of one location: 'Mt Callanan — for goodness sake. I didn't know there was a place called Mt Callanan.'

On Map 1 (the town of Pine Creek) Gilbert found it hard initially to get his bearings. He asked 'where's the railway station' I had to find it and point it out to him. In respect of Map 1 he oriented himself by finding where families he knew had lived. These families were not named on the map but he recognised their location. He also recognised specific landmarks like the Government Battery and Ah Toy's store.

Similarly Mayse Young, the former Pine Creek Hotel publican, who had lived in Pine Creek most of her life, found it difficult to relate to the maps. She summed up in respect of Map 1: 'Well, I really don't know what these roads are for, unless they're down to rubbish dumps or something.' Her son Russell could not get his bearings in the beginning. '...your racecourse would be in here somewhere — no, the racecourse is back there you nii! [Laughs] Oh, where am I?'

I realised the gazettal markings for the town on Map 1 caused initial confusion in people because the lines didn't exist in reality. Moreover, most people remembered places by walking or driving through them — not aerially as the map displayed. People had to transfer their conceptual memories into an aerial format which was easier for some and harder for others. Conversely, when there was recognition of location in respect of the maps, for instance a recognisable name, people became much more engaged. Albert and Russell.

91 Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
92 This was Gilbert Williamson's general assessment. He subsequently pointed out that a particular billabong was on the wrong side of the road.
93 Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
94 Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996. Note Lily's similar observations leading her to conclude that Pearce's maps were not to scale.
95 Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
96 Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
97 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
98 However, even though the aerial view is not directly experienced by people, it is a recognisable and/or translatable form based in some cases upon personal experience with maps. See David Turnbull with a contribution by Helen Watson with the Yolgnu community at Yirrkala, Maps are Territories. Science is an atlas. Deakin University Press, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, 1989.
brought out their own maps during our interview. Russell preferred to speak to his map rather than the one I presented because he was very familiar with it.

The maps I had were like skeletons of memory in comparison with the flesh of memory, thus the oral history interviews were a necessary counterpart to the mapping exercise.99 When memory inevitably outstripped my plotting the interview recorded what sites were significant to people. For instance, on Lily Ah Toy's 'map' of the town, there were a multiplicity of memory sites: the rubbish dump, the cemetery, the railway tank, Gun Alley, Police Paddock, the settlers' houses, the Wandi Road, Moline Rd, Chinatown, the Coxes' and Williams', Mrs Hall's residence and Schunke's store. Lily also pointed out the railway building where somebody had been murdered.100 Mayse Young's 'map' contained the morgue (no longer there), the location of the old mines and the 'gins' camp at Gun Alley.101

Memory and mobility
Race, gender and class provide variables which impacted on the scope and range of personal hinterlands. Helen Liddy had a detailed knowledge of the caves above the town in which she spent time with her mother Nellie Kinbirrinyan, escaping Welfare.102 Some people had more detailed knowledge of roads and tracks into town and less of the town itself. Gilbert and Paddy spent their working lives out of the town. They were more focussed on topography - the creeks, rivers and tracks.

On the topographic map I showed Paddy Huddleston he traced his fingers over the Fergusson and Edith Rivers. He talked about the railway line as a dividing line between Jawoyn and Wagiman country but it was also a line of memory and he talked about his memories of travelling on the train. I asked him what side of town he lived on. 'This side, yeah. This side, you know where - what that little - little Pine Creek ... come up, eh? Right up to the...Black Cat. Follow that creek right up, eh, to the spring...'103

99 For instance one woman pointed out that there was an old road to Kybrook off the Umbrawarra Road - the latter led eventually to Setay Valley - or police paddock - a site that was no longer marked on the map. She noted that the Oenpelli Road had changed direction as of course had the Stuart Highway. Notebook 1, 24 February 1997.
100 Notebook 8, 15 August 1996.
101 Notebook 8, 15 August 1996.
102 Tommy Fong supplied Lenny Liddy's family, including his mother, Grandfather and his half-sister Helen Liddy with 'tucker, tea leaves, sugar, jam and flour', Wilson, Wakgala, p. 78.
103 Notebook 8, 9 August 1996. See also Paddy Huddleston, interview, 1996.
I spoke with Mick Alderson in Kakadu about his family's connection with Pine Creek. He spoke of his travels with his family on horseback and on foot from Spring Peak or Noarlangie Camp to Pine Creek. I asked him if he would show me this travelling route on the Kakadu Park map. This topographic map proved to be ideal for this task. It was of the appropriate scale (big enough to cover the area of his memory) with sufficiently recognisable landmarks, noticeably rivers and creeks. Like the Wagiman and Jawoyn women I talked with at Kybrook Farm (see Chapter two) he interspersed his stories with comments on specific sites of bush tucker. My discussion notes with Mick read as follows:

When Mick and his family used to travel from Spring Peak to Pine Creek they went by Barramundi Creek where they caught pig nose turtle and then onto the eastern most part of Mundogie Hills. The valley here was a good spot for yams. They joined up at the South Alligator Crossing. They then camped at Gerowie Creek near the junction before moving on to what is now the Kakadu Highway jump up. Then they took the old road west and came out at Big Nellie (or this side of Big Nellie) – went past Mary River Station past Harris Creek.

Memory maps
At the conclusion of my ‘mapping’ interviews I realised that the map I was looking for was a personal conceptual map formed in written and spoken word embedded in the text or drawn. As Paddy Huddleston put it. ‘My map I carry around in my head.’ The oral history interview was self-reflexive and yet it became increasingly open ended as I sought to understand people’s concept of place.

Helen Liddy initially refused to look at the maps at all. She preferred to show me the places she talked about. I drew maps of these places freehand as we drove around. However, she did eventually return to mapping in the ‘Talking Banner’ project (see below). Perhaps like Lily Ah Toy she felt comfortable about talking with me in relationship to the map after we had spent sufficient time together. Mapping, like oral history interviews, was, after all, about a relationship. But a relationship was also required between the map and the viewer.

In order to relate to the map a certain amount of freedom and flexibility was required. This manifested in a number of ways. It might be the freedom to draw a mud map rather than on a pre-existing map or getting me to draw on the map following the interviewer’s instructions. In other words people needed the freedom to draw to their own scale which included their own reference points – rather than a pre-planned map which circumscribed their memory and which was invariably overloaded with detail.

In the case of Helen Liddy pre-existing maps were not helpful for her memory. She suggested that I get butcher’s paper and picked up a pen to draw. ‘Get me some rubbish paper and I’ll draw on it, that’s the best way.’ So, near the end of my mapping journey in Pine Creek Helen returned me to where I had started with Eddie Ah Toy’s map and on a blank piece of butcher’s paper.

The orientation point that Helen started with initially was Ah Toy’s store. She described Indigenous walking tracks – what she called kangaroo pads - that lead to and from Ah Toy’s general store. As she talked, I wrote the names she mentioned alongside the walking track lines. We had a record of the purpose and direction of the tracks. But we also had an expression of a relationship, a dialogue, that had begun when we physically travelled to the places of her memories.

SITE VISITATION

Travelling memories and ‘Being there’

From the first time I met Helen Liddy she was keen to visit the places we talked about. She wanted to go back up into the hills behind Pine Creek where she had hidden with her Mum, and others on the escarpment. For health reasons Helen could not walk very far and we could not reach the escarpment by road so travelled to more accessible destinations.

Travelling to the sites of memories, like mapping, is another way of collecting oral history. Moreover, travelling, mapping and talking are often woven together. I had consciously
brought maps in to oral history interviews but I found that visiting the sites of memory seemed to unfold far more naturally and easily. Talking about the past and being in the physical place where the events occurred was a crucible for memory.

Site visitation in combination with oral history is not new. Indigenous oral histories have been collected since people had tape recorders and vehicles. However, the focus on life history and being at the conjunction of memory and physical place gave me an understanding of the nature of the intersection between memory and place. I explored this intersection mainly through the journeys of Helen Liddy and another Wagiman woman, Lulu Martin.

**Being there**

I cannot know a place until I go there. As an historian I have often visited the past through archives, artifacts, or through people who have memories of the past, but rarely through visiting the physical sites of the history. Local historians are often writing about the places they live in. I wanted to balance this experience and bring the physical environment into the domain of my inquiry. In the tropical north the physical environment is constantly impinging on the senses whether it’s the humidity of the ‘build up’, the heavy rains of the monsoon, or the cool night air of the dry season. I did not want the history I was undertaking to be out of physical reach. I wanted to be able to touch and feel it in the place - to imagine what might have been and to hear from others what had occurred at particular locations.

As part of the 'Talking Banners' project Joanna Barrkman and I travelled to the places that people spoke of during interviews and which were proposed for the various banners. We swam in the Pine Creek and crossed Copperfield Creek on numerous visits to Kybrook, we visited the Cemetery, travelled the back roads to view the escarpment, saw the open cut mining pit behind the town, went to the airstrip and observed the grevillea in full bloom. All these images were displayed on various banners. This strengthened our role as facilitators in the 'Talking Banners' project because it enabled us to more fully relate to people's stories with whom we worked, including any geographic references they made to the area. In doing so we developed our own sense of place during the time we stayed in Pine Creek.

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111 Read and Read, *Long time olden time.*
112 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p. 44.
Expanding the view

Journeys with Helen and Lulu to the sites of their memory were a separate enterprise to the Talking Banners project. However like the discussions with the townspeople of Pine Creek about what constituted Pine Creek's history and consequently what should go on the banners, site visitations with Helen and Lulu also defined aspects of local history - but with a focus on the more personal biographical elements of life history.

Helen and Lulu’s life histories are emblematic of Indigenous life histories and Indigenous women’s life histories in the Top End in the pre and immediate post-war period. Lulu was born sometime in the 1920s and Helen was born in the 1930s. Lulu was a contemporary and friend of Helen’s mother, Nellie Kinbirrinyan. Both spent a significant portion of their lives working on pastoral stations. Helen worked at Claravale Station and eventually married Mick Liddy the owner and raised a family. Lulu worked mainly on Oolloo and Douglas Stations. Lulu had also worked in a number of domestic positions including working for the army in World War Two in the Batchelor laundry.  

Journeys with Helen

The first place Helen took me was to the site of Cullen Compound, off the Claravale Road, where she and her mother – and other Wagiman people including a young Paddy Huddleston – were interned during World War Two. An open clearing off the Claravale road marks the site where dormitories and huts once stood. The main physical element that marked the site for Helen was a mature boab tree that had been planted during World War Two. This was a tree that marked a particular period in her life. Another marker was the spring on the western edge of the Compound. Helen recalled water being used by the compound’s internees, and she recalled others telling her that there had been terraced Chinese rice paddies nearby.

Trees proved to be significant markers for a later period of her life at Claravale Station. There was a tall stringybark that she pointed out, past the Cullen Compound, along the Claravale Road. The tree had a fading inscription carved in its bark ‘21 M’. The inscription signalled that we were 21 miles from Pine Creek and marked the beginning of a now disused overgrown track into Pine Creek from Claravale Station. There was one more tree that Helen

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113 The township of Batchelor lies west of Adelaide River. For historical context and background to Helen Liddy and Lulu Martin see Wilson, Wakgala.
singly out at the old Claravale Station homestead. As a young married woman Helen had
planted a boab tree. This tree marked her memories of marriage, child birth and family life at
the Station and the 1957 Daly River Flood when the river burst its banks and people and
livestock drowned.\footnote{Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.}

These trees, the site of Cullen Compound and the original Claravale Station buildings
marked an extensive period of Helen's life. Her mother had fled the Cullen Compound just
before the end of the war and made her way into the escarpment area above Pine Creek
where she and Helen lived until her Uncle brought her down to work at Claravale Station.
There Helen worked as a drover and stock woman until she married Mick Liddy.\footnote{After a
d number of years on the Station Mick's health started to fail. Helen moved into Pine Creek
with her children. She remembered that it was the year that the first man walked on the Moon. As she
summed up: Within a short time of moving into town. 'My old husband died on me.' Helen never
returned to the Station to live. Instead she remained in town looking after her children. She became a
trained health worker at the local clinic. Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes interviewed by
Bathgate, 1997; Helen Liddy, interview, 1996, 1997; Wilson, Wakgala, p.7. See also p.9.}

Helen's return to the sites of her memory were marked by material remains of the past such
as the original Claravale homestead and more natural signposts such as trees. Being in the
place of her memory brought up her past connection with that place. In this respect Helen's
preference to visit the sites of her memory rather than deal with a static map was in many
ways a more complete method of engaging with oral history.

**Journeys with Lulu**

Working with Lulu allowed me to explore the relationship between site visitation and
memory in more detail. The working title for this project was 'Lulu Martin's Memory Trail.'
\footnote{For reasons of confidentiality I do not discuss any material related to sacred sites in this thesis.
AAPA to Bathgate, letter, 6 February 2002.}

Four trips were organised around locations between Batchelor and Pine Creek that Lulu
wanted to visit. This included twenty specific sites, ranging from camping areas to pastoral
stations, birth and burial sites to World War two sites, as well as rivers and springs. These
field trips included Lulu Martin, Christine Martin (Lulu's great great niece and adopted
daughter), Clara McMahon (Lulu's great niece and Christine's mother), myself and Stephen
Wilson, a linguist. Occasionally other family members would also join the group.\footnote{I first met Lulu through Dr. Mark Harvey, a linguist who has studied Top End languages for many
years including Wagiman and who has worked extensively with Wagiman people including Lulu. The

\begin{footnotes}
\item[115] It was a 'memory' tree perhaps like the *Malikiringa* tree for the Tiwi women on Bathurst island
(See Chapter Three).
\item[116] Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
\item[117] AAPA to Bathgate, letter, 6 February 2002.
\item[118] I first met Lulu through Dr. Mark Harvey, a linguist who has studied Top End languages for many
years including Wagiman and who has worked extensively with Wagiman people including Lulu. The

Pine Creek was the southern-most reach of Lulu’s memory which she described as a place to ‘sit down’. She was familiar with the camping sites on the western side of the Pine Creek railway including where she had camped with Queenie, a Jawoyn woman with whom she was close friends.  

It was clear that being in the physical place, like Helen, sparked Lulu’s memories and stories. The trip provided Lulu with an opportunity for her to be in her country and/or the places of her life story of association with particular places. In this latter respect the project provided Lulu with an opportunity not only to connect with her country, re-visit and recount her past, but to pass on her knowledge and memories to her granddaughter and adopted daughter Christine. Clara also participated in this remembering. Being younger, Clara’s experiences were of another generation; she added information or expanded on Lulu’s stories.

For Lulu being in the place of memory evoked strong reminiscences, reinforced ties to ‘country’ and afforded Lulu the opportunity to pass on her stories to family. Christine spoke of how important it was to know this country:

It’s very important for me to know. Say if my Grandmother leave, you know pass away or anything happen to her, so I’ll carry on – me and my family. My sisters for country then. Young ones, we take over then. That’s why it’s very important for us to know now while we’ve got this chance to go out and I’m the only eldest daughter belong to Clara and follow my Grandmother – she let me know what’s happening now and I pass it on to my sisters and her children and maybe my children.

original idea for this trip came from Mark who nominated an honours student, Stephen Wilson, to undertake the language component of the project. Mark and I made a joint submission to AIATSIS for funding which included an oral history and language component and which enabled Lulu to visit country with her family on what was essentially a memory trail – a return to the sites of Lulu’s memories. Both Christine (Lulu’s great-niece and adopted daughter) and Clara (Lulu’s niece and Christine’s mother) were instrumental in providing personal support for Lulu on the four main field trips. Other family members included Clara’s son and grandson and Christine’s husband. Some of Lulu’s stories collected on the memory trail are included in Wilson, *Wakgala*. See Figure 24.

119 Lulu Martin, interviews, Pine Creek, Burrundie and Grove Hill, 1997.
120 Wilson, *Wakgala*, p.51.
121 Christine Martin in Lulu Martin, Burrell Creek Compound and Mt Shoebridge, 1997.
Lulu’s journey to the sites of her memory were as much an emotional response to being in country as an opportunity for her to describe the stories associated with those places. A visit to the sites of her past evoked a complex web of memories which included past experiences but also the memory of speaking language and re-connecting with the country of her birth. As discussed in Chapter three work history and custodianship were entwined. Being in the sites of her memory and travelling through country was replenishing for these connections. The places Lulu remembered included hunting, dreaming, ceremonial, work and living places.

*Poor fellow my country*

As Lulu said on a number of occasions when we visited sites of her memory ‘Poor fellow my country’. This powerful expression of country says so much with a spare use of words. It is a familial greeting and yet it is accompanied by a sadness and nostalgia- perhaps an acknowledgement of being apart or absent from one’s country for a time and/or from the place of one’s lived experiences. Lulu often said this phrase on leaving the place we had been talking about. It is also a commentary on places falling into disrepair. As Lulu described Old Oolloo station, ‘Poor thing, him look ugly eh?’

*Method and memory*

Lulu has a rich memory and she has outlived most of her contemporaries. As she blithely pointed out: ‘Them all dead but me still going yet (Laughter).’ For this project, as Lulu described, ‘We went ‘talkabout’ our country’. When we arrived at a place that Lulu had wanted to visit we would walk about the site with Lulu as she talked about her memories and associations of that place. I would first ask her about the significance of the place and she would tell her story of association with that place and subsequently tell the story in language (Wagiman) which Stephen recorded. As we walked around she would frequently point out the signs of the past in the land – where an old piggery had been, where a tree marked a

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122 Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Batchelor, Batchelor and Adelaide River and Old Douglas Station, 1997.
123 Xavier Herbert used this phrase for the title of his novel on race relations in the Northern Territory. Xavier Herbert, *Poor fellow my country*.
124 Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Oolloo Station, 1997.
125 Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Burrell Creek Compound and Mt Shoebridge, 1997.
126 Lulu Martin, notes, 3 August 1997; Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Old Ooloo Station, 1997.
127 I would collect the intial story in Aboriginal English and then Lulu would provide Stephen with a version of the story in Wagiman.
bury site or where an old kitchen had been. As she said: 'It come back to me and all that thinking about...'

Recording Lulu’s stories in both 'Aboriginal English' and Wagiman deepened the storytelling. Not only were there two versions of the same story but speaking in language and being in country were also powerfully connected. For most visits other family members listened to the story Lulu was telling although Clara sometimes added more information.

One of the first issues that came up whenever we visited a settlement site was trying to establish where exactly everything had been located. This was partly a question of detail and a matter of physical orientation – locating oneself in a landscape altered by the passage of time, for instance changes in vegetation, and psychological orientation – locating oneself in respect of which memories were most significant and, in Lulu’s case, worthy of recounting. Lulu started out by walking around and talking however the main recounting occurred when we sat down in full view of a particular site she wanted to talk about. I provide one example of this as an illustration.

**Old Douglas Station**

Poor fella my country. Stay my heart.

We bin sitting down this country, makem fence, put paddock, make yard. This is my country poor thing, long time back.

Old Douglas Station was, along with Old Oooloo Station, the two sites that elicited very strong responses for Lulu for their connection to her work history but also to her early life with her family. Lulu was born at old Oooloo Station and it was important for her to find her birth place. 'Hey, here I think, right here my country because yard’s here – yard there – I was born there.'

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128 Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, New Douglas Station and Old Oooloo Station, 1997.
129 It would be interesting at some point to analyse the differences and/or similarities in the stories between the English and Wagiman versions.
130 Lulu Martin, notes, 3 August 1997.
131 Lulu Martin, interview, Old Douglas Station, 1997.
132 Lulu Martin, interview, Old Oooloo Station, 1997.
Lulu’s recounting of the burial site of Mick Fleming, the owner/pastoralist at Old Douglas Station, was heavily imbued with sadness for the passing of this man – and yet at the same time she could recount stories about how he and his brother and another pastoralist had allegedly chased some ‘wild blacks’ and killed them for stealing flour. Lulu pointed out a large old banyan tree which marked his burial site. Lulu walked around the tree and I followed with the tape recorder. Lulu reported Mick’s wish to be buried under this tree ‘Take me and bury me longa that banyan tree’. She spoke of wanting to put a headstone on his grave and indicated that she would like to be buried here too: ‘Poor thing [that grave] make me think about it.’

She commented on other trees she remembered at the station ‘This is the mango I was thinking about…still alive’ ‘This tree old one…’ She located the old garden and well and where they had camped. She constantly interspersed her observations with ‘poor thing’ referring to a particular marker from the past but which had also aged since her youth. For instance the yard was a ‘poor thing’ and upon departure she said: ‘Poor thing my country.’

It was at Douglas station that she eloquently described the link between her memory, her language and her country.

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133 For discussion of her birth place see Lulu Martin, interview, Old Ooloo Station and Old Douglas Station, 1997. Lulu pointed out that these massacres were before her time- in her mother’s time. ‘We bin nothing yet – when the massacres – shooting happened- Mummy bin telling us.’ This suggests that these killings occurred in the establishment phase of these stations. For further discussion of these sites see also Mark Harvey interviewing Lulu Martin – transcribed Wagiman texts, ‘Story about massacre at Mamamuyan-laying (Barramundie Hill), c1992, p.41.

134 Trees are markers for Lulu at various sites – there were two white gums at Ooloo Station which she measured her age by ( the trees grew with her) - see Lulu Martin, interview, Old Ooloo Station, 1997 and the trees marking her father’s grave. Lulu Martin, interview, New Douglas Station and Old Douglas Station, 1997. For more discussion of Mick Fleming see Alford The Douglas/Daly Region, p.80. See also NTANT: Amendments – Douglas/Daly Region Heritage Sites Survey Part II.
Good language eh. I said goodbye that land now I leave for me, I might go back next time. If I want to feel like go back I'll go back and see her – see Douglas, Old Douglas ... I bin do that all the time. (Laughter) I forget all this language, you know. We walk around that country my time, poor thing. I was talk about down longa Old Douglas. Really that's my place I was working there long time ago when I was a little kid, a young girl, I was workin there hard. Finish. I was done whole lot, finish.\textsuperscript{135}

**Concluding**

My experiences with Lulu and her family left me with the impression of the inextricable links between memory and place. In the next section I conclude with a discussion of the third modality I worked with, banner making in combination with oral history - which drew on my experiences with Lulu, my work with maps and provided me with an opportunity to undertake a community based project in which I linked my historical research to the living community of Pine Creek.

**BANNERS**

**Talking Banners: another way of 'mapping' history**

This section returns me to discussions about community with which I began this chapter. The 'Talking Banners' project was both a vehicle for community participation and a way of anchoring my history work in a community context. Altogether about ninety people were involved in the project. Over a period of six weeks Joanna and I worked with the school children, the townspeople and Indigenous residents of Kybrook Farm.\textsuperscript{136}

**Combining oral history and banner making**

The general overarching theme in the project was 'sense of place'. Sense of place could potentially incorporate the past and the present and therefore provide a link between history and the community. Sense of place allowed for the incorporation of history into the project...

\textsuperscript{135} Lulu Martin interview, Old Douglas Station, 1997.
\textsuperscript{136} For discussion of this approach see Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', pp.44-51; Joanna Barrkman, 'Talking Banners in Pine Creek: A community sewing and oral history project in a 'tenacious outback community is described by Joanna Barrkman'. *Textile Fibre Forum,* no. 50, 1997, pp.8-9, p.27; Bathgate, Mapping Place – A Local Spatial History, 1996, pp.1-15. For participants see acknowledgements.
in a responsive way, for instance in general group discussion on themes for the banners, a school history project and through oral history interviews related to the banner themes.

Origins

Banner making harks back to another era when sewing was an occupation for both men and women as tailors and an essential part of domestic life.\textsuperscript{137} Traditionally banners have been associated with labour identity.\textsuperscript{138} In Joanna Barrkman's work this has included working with trade unions, Indigenous communities, people who speak languages other than English, survivors of sexual assault and young people.\textsuperscript{139}

The process of making community banners involves people coming together and spending time sewing and talking. Joanna had realised that there was a wealth of oral history and information exchange including storytelling, reminiscence and gossip that took place during the banner-making process.\textsuperscript{140} In this respect banner making appeared to be particularly suited to oral history collection because of the way in which banner making inspired recollection of the past.

The historical and political origins of community arts bear a lot of similarity to oral history insofar as each discipline potentially provides a medium for the 'common' voice to be heard.\textsuperscript{141} While oral historians are now more critical about the relationship between history and memory, oral history retains its potential community orientation because it operates at a local level and allows for face to face encounters with people. This is the 'grass roots' aspect of oral history which, like community arts, can be utilised at the local level and in collaboration with other disciplines including theatre.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{137} Notebook 1, 18 February 1997; Albert Que Noy interview, 1996.

\textsuperscript{138} Banner making has a history that can be traced back to the Guild and Trade Union Movement (see footnote 139).

\textsuperscript{139} Chips Mackinolty has described flags and banners as representing '...a particularly human expression of triumph in identity: the identity of the family, the clan or the tribe; the community, association or trade union; the church, political party, corporation or nation state.' 'Ultimately, they serve the interests and ideas of those for whom they are created.' Chips Mackinolty, 'Living histories' in \textit{Against the wind: An exhibition facilitated by Joanna Barrkman with communities in the Northern Territory}, calendar, written by Joanna Barrkman and Jane Bathgate and designed by Therese Ritchie and Joanna Barrkman, 1998.

\textsuperscript{140} Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.44. Helen Buchanan has written that 'Banners are simultaneously intimate and public works: they are what all post modern art would like to be and rarely is-they are truly inclusive and democratic.' Helen Buchanan, 'Living banners' in \textit{Against the wind}, May 1998.

\textsuperscript{141} Rachel Fensham, 'Why do Angels fly clockwise?', \textit{Artlink} Special Issue: Community Art, vol. 10, Spring 1990, no. 3. p.10; Annie Bolitho and Mary Hutchison, \textit{Out of the ordinary}. 

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While the banner making process was ‘open ended’ to the extent that community participants determined the content of their banner both Joanna and I intervened at times to shape the process. In this sense Joanna and I were participants as much as facilitators in directly coordinating designs for the banners and engaging with local people about history, sense of place and hence the themes proposed for the banners. It was very refreshing to be involved with the community when I was grappling with these issues in my research work. The images created for the banners, the stories people told, and the questions they asked about the past, created a dynamic interactive process that raised broader questions about local history and ‘sense of place’.

Joanna and I developed flexibility in our roles as historian and artist respectively. There were times when there was a less clearly defined border between my role as an oral historian and Joanna’s role as banner maker. At times Joanna interviewed people and this was particularly important in the Kybrook interviews where Joanna’s ongoing close association with the women in making and designing the banner assisted in the interview process. I took to sewing where necessary but I think it is fair to say that Joanna was a better interviewer than I was a sewer!

**Banner making communities**
The three main communities that came together to make banners - the school children, the townspeople and residents of Kybrook Farm - were all groups that had responded positively to Joanna and I when we were seeking community support for the project.

**Starting the ball rolling**
Joanna and I approached the school, the town council and residents of Kybrook farm to see if they were interested in participating in the project. Joanna showed people examples of the banners she had previously worked on and this helped in connecting people with the project. The school was interested from an historical vantage point as it dovetailed with a school history project they were undertaking at the time. The Pine Creek Community Government Council agreed to become the auspicing body for the project; funding and in-kind support were received from a number of sources. Some people wondered initially if the project

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142 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.48; Read, *Returning to nothing*, p.98.
143 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.49.
144 The relationship between Joanna and the women had been established with a screen printing of tea towels at Kybrook. The tea towels bore the women's designs. This small project was a significant stepping stone to the larger banner making project.
would sustain people's interest. Indigenous managers at Kybrook Farm said that it was hard to know what would or would not work for people and, consequently, what activities would engage people's interest and participation. As the project progressed enthusiasm was generated and Lily Ah Toy came down from Darwin especially to assist with the banner project.\footnote{145}

The townspeople involved in banner making comprised mostly long time local residents but included two women from the Union Reef's mining community. Lily Ah Toy and Helen Liddy also participated. The town banner also attracted residents with a long-standing interest in local history including Leonie Ruig, Elaine Gano and Gaye Lawrence. The Kybrook participants comprised mainly Wagiman and Jawoyn women from two main families, the Huddlestons and the Smiths. The school children comprised the intersection of many communities in Pine Creek, Indigenous-non-Indigenous, Kybrook - town, mining-non-mining, local - newcomer and so on.

The content of the banners and the kinds of stories that were collected reflected the distinctiveness of each group. Essentially the three banner groups - school children, townspeople and Indigenous people - worked on their banners autonomously but everyone was privy to what each group was doing. There were also opportunities for exchanging skills and designs. For instance the Kybrook participants sewed designs on the town banner, and the townspeople helped on the Kybrook banner. One woman said that she did not realise that certain people could sew!\footnote{146}

Content
The banners emerged as a form of memory map where the land was depicted in myriad ways. On the children's banners sense of place included a contemporary and historical landscape of the local area; on the Kybrook banner the depiction and discussion of bush tucker exemplified how the Kybrook residents perceived their connection to country and the bounty of the land - in the town banners local history, environment, meeting places and maps

\footnote{145}{Funding sources included the Australian Council and the Oral History Unit, NTAS. The funding enabled myself and Joanna to be employed for a period of six weeks and covered related materials and expenses. For outline of funding bodies, in-kind support, local publicity on the project and Project outline submitted to the Australia Council, see Appendix 5 and Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.45.}
\footnote{146}{The school banner was undertaken in the Town Council Day Care Room. The Kybrook Banner was brought in regularly from Kybrook Farm for people to see. Moreover there was a regular netball night next to this room and often people came in at this time to see what was going on.}
reflected the many levels at which the 'local' was understood and the many 'senses of place' people had with respect to Pine Creek.

The common image depicted on all the banners was the natural environment. The most extensive list generated amongst all three groups of participants was in relation to flora and fauna. The Kybrook residents identified plants and animals as food and as expressions of their relationship to their country. The school children identified their favourite places—where they liked to play and swim, including the Pine and Copperfield Creeks—and the fish and mammals that inhabited these waterways. The townspeople also singled out the environment for the main subject of one of their banners which included endangered species.

*Balancing gender and talking history*

Most of the banner makers were women although there were two noticeable exceptions to this rule. Generally men were not interested in banner making presumably because it was identified as 'women's work'. Joanna and I met two miners from Union Reefs mine who, like many miners in Pine Creek, were living in demountables. When we told them about the 'Talking Banners' project and explained what it was about one miner showed us photos of the Moline mine which he worked at in the 1980s—and gave us a tour of his new fishing boat! The second miner disclosed that his mother had been an overlocker—and he had done some overlocking himself but he baulked at the prospect of sewing in any form. He was, he said first and foremost, a driller.

Oral history interviews offered a strategy for bringing more men into the project and for expanding the historical component of the banners. Off-site I undertook to interview a number of men on the historic themes and images represented in the town banners. For instance one of the town banners had a World War Two theme and depicted the airstrip/race track (see Figure 34). I interviewed a World War Two veteran, Jack Holden, about being

147 Flora included wild gooseberries, plums, wild banana, yams, wild potatoes, white gum, woolly butt, stringy butt, bloodwood and bamboo. Fauna included geese, crocodile, duck, jabiru, brolgas, scrub turkey (bustard), kites, finches, the blue tongue and frill necked lizard, the 'ta ta' lizard, the pheasant coucal, file snake and yabbies.

148 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.51.

149 One was a Wagiman artist Joe Huddleston from Kybrook and the other, Steve Boyes, a mining engineer with an interest in tapestry. As a mining engineer, Steve Boyes, was skilled at planning the excavation of pits. He depicted an open cut mine using tapestry.

150 Temporary accommodation, that is, aluminium clad self-contained units on concrete blocks.

151 Notebook 1, 21 February 1997.
based in the Top End and, John Bellinger, about his friendship with a local horse racing identity, Bill Cain, and his own knowledge of horses and local racing industry.\footnote{Men interviewed included Larry Ah Lin, John Bellinger, Steve Boyes, Emu Corrigan, Darkie Dempsey, Jack Lewis, Jack Holden, Lenny Liddy, Tex Moar, Mick Page and Paul Williamson.}

One of the town banners was focussed on the Chinese presence in Pine Creek (see Figure 11). I interviewed an old European miner, Darkie Dempsey who had memories of Chinese men riding buffalo, prior to World War Two, with halter and steering the animals with their knees. He remembered a temple where the mango trees now grow wild in old Chinatown.\footnote{Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997; Mick Page, discussion notes, 1997.}

Another town banner depicted historic local industries including the buffalo hide industry (see Figure 5). Mick Page recalled the buffalo hunts of the 1950s and the history of one leasehold in the buffalo hunting area to the north which was won and lost in a card game.\footnote{Notebook 1, 14 February 1997, 19 February 1997.}

**Banner-making interviews**

Most people who were working on the banners did not want to be interviewed at the place they were making the banners but wanted to be interviewed elsewhere, often at a quieter more private location. I also interviewed a number of women who, for various reasons, were unable to directly participate in banner making or the attendant discussions but who could speak to images depicted on the banners.\footnote{Jessie Corrigan, Toni Eperjesy, Marie Heidtmann, Joan Frazer,}

**Linkages**

The ideas and the stories that emerged from the discussion for the banner designs provided a springboard for ideas about what kinds of stories should be collected and 'how' they should be collected. There was an interweaving between oral history and banner making with the banners providing the warp for the weft of oral history. In other words the banners provided foundation stories upon which to build an oral history collection. At times there was a close collaboration between banner making and oral history collection and at other times these activities were carried out separately but remained linked by the subject matter.\footnote{228}
understanding of how open cuts and adits were constructed, various children could speak personally on Pine and Copperfield Creeks and two sisters were expert on flora and fauna; both men and women had memories of buffalo hunting in their own time or in their parent’s time (see Figure 22).

The oral history interviews operated as a ‘linking activity’ for engaging individuals not involved in the banner-making process and ‘...offered a counterpoint to the group process by creating opportunities for one-to-one encounters...’

There was also another form the interview took in providing the opportunity for linking people. While seeking to interview one man, Johnnie Hart, his step daughter expressed an interest in hearing his story and she agreed to be involved in the interview and Johnnie wanted to tell her his story. During the interview she asked questions that she was interested in and the interview benefitted as a result of her input.

I did not want to confine my interviews solely to history and in respect of the school children and Kybrook residents it was more appropriate to interview them about their contributions to the banners which included reflections on sense of place and occasionally history.

**Team interviews**

The exception to the above situation was the key role played by two of the town elders, Helen Liddy and Lily Ah Toy, who were comfortable with talking directly to the stories being depicted in the banners in the resource centre where most of the banners were being made. As Helen and Lily had known each other for years, and had a good rapport with one another, this proved the vital ingredient for recording a session on their reminiscences in association with the banner making.

I initially described the idea behind each of the town banners and Helen and Lily gave their thoughts and stories about the ideas behind the banner. Steve Boyes also participated in the joint interview. So for instance when I mentioned the Chinese mining banner other stories flowed from the memories associated with particular places.

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156 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories'.
157 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.50.
158 Notebook 6, 21August 1998.
[Jane] ...I’m just going to talk about each banner. ... Down here we have the image of a Chinese miner; up here’s a market garden and that –

[Lily] Tommy Fong Garden

[Jane] Tommy Fong Garden, and that mesa that’s near Gay’s place.

[Lily] Yeah, that hill.

[Jane] That special hill.

[Lily] Flat top hill.

[Helen] I used to live in that place.¹⁵⁹

Helen and Lily’s reminiscences formed the basis for the images on the banner depicting the airstrip. Lily recalled a particular kind of mushroom that she picked around the airstrip and moonlight walks with a group of women where they had billy tea and biscuits. Helen recalled hunting for bush tucker around the airstrip after she had moved into town. Both recalled seeing Indigenous men armed with spears hunting kangaroo and wallaby on the airstrip. Thus the banner for the airstrip depicted it as an inhabited place – the women with their billy tea, the Indigenous men hunting and signs of cricket matches and horse races.¹⁶⁰

After the joint interview I undertook two individual interviews with each of them. The individual interview with Helen concerned the map banner. Helen Liddy described where the Indigenous tracks went in and around the town effectively bringing an Indigenous content to the banner. Lily’s interview furnished more details about her memories associated with the airstrip.¹⁶¹

In the following section I outline the different processes at work amongst the three different communities we worked with.

*Townspeople*

Of all the three community groups the town banners involved the most direct discussions about the history of Pine Creek. We started with a brainstorming session with those gathered (which comprised a core of about ten people) about what constituted Pine Creek's history.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.
¹⁶⁰ Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997. See also Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1997 for further discussion of airstrip.
¹⁶² I have talked about some of these views in Chapter Three. See also Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997.
Figure 22: L-R: Helen Liddy, Lily Ah Toy, Jane Bathgate, Steve Boyes.
Source: Joanna Barrkman and Jane Bathgate, 1997.
Discussions brought to the surface a variety of historical themes noticeably mining, but also buffalo and crocodile hunting, timber cutting and the pastoral industry. World War Two was recognised as a particularly important time. Throughout the discussion the participation of Indigenous, Chinese and European communities in the ongoing life of the town was identified. The living environment was singled out as a particularly important theme in the context of the flora and fauna of the region. One town participant wanted the banners kept simple while another person's concept was expansive. One person was concerned that the banners were only about history. 'It isn’t going to be all history is it?'

These discussions brought a plethora of images that were rich, dense and overflowing. Ant beds, speargrass, poppets, droving and Indigenous trackers, the striking ‘mesa’ to the southwest of Pine Creek, mining pits, Chinese miners, the railway and droving images, indigenous and settler images were all reeled off. Certain images were associated with a sense of loss—one person, for instance, identified the natural stands of cypress pine as typifying the local environment but noted that most of the cypress stands had gone. Others noted the endangered species of the area – the Gouldian finch, hooded parrot, and the ghost bat haven protected in the Kohinoor Mining Adit.

Other images included the flying doctor Clyde Fenton, buffalo hunters who came through Pine Creek, Chinese ovens, wallabies on the airstrip, feral donkeys, mullock heaps, the old saw mill at Tabletop, the overland telegraph line, long gone buildings such as Sergeant's and Jolly's store where Eddie Ah Toy's home was now located, market gardens, police paddock with its remnants of rice terraces, the train running right through town cutting it in half so you couldn’t go from one side of town to the other without walking all the way around, the old golf course near the airstrip, the changing location of the airstrip, timber coming through Pine Creek from Arnhem land, the weeds in the area – goatweed and pigweed - and Len Tuit's bus, the first coach service. There was a description of crocodile skin. As Lily pointed out the standard crocodile skin had no head – it was just the neck down – they skinned the crocodile along the back to leave the belly, the most valuable part of the skin intact. There were discussions of kangaroo pads and Indigenous men in nargas. These images were a combination of certain people’s localised memories and general historic images that people knew about - but not necessarily first hand.

164 Notebook 1, 18 February 1997; Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997. There were also more localised memories that were incorporated on the banners for instance, Lily Ah Toy’s memories of moonlight meetings on the airstrip with other women in the town and Helen
Not all of these images could be reflected in one banner. Instead a series of banners emerged. In the end five banners were proposed which combined historical images with sense of place—mining, environment, historic industries, recreation areas, communication routes, and the airstrip. Lily Ah Toy had the final say on the number of banners. She reminded us that we shouldn’t have an unlucky number of banners so the number five was chosen.

Discussions also extended to what images could suitably represent Pine Creek’s history. This included found objects from the area such as old coins, snake skin, medals and glass objects such as a Chinese medicine bottle which also made their way onto the banners. Participants brought their photographs, maps, books and memorabilia into the hall where the banners were being made. These objects and articles also provided a stimulus for designs. A mining engineer brought in his pair of scales for weighing gold and other minerals. The local branch of the National Trust provided on-site access to their photographic collection.

During preliminary discussions Lily recalled a Chinese altar that her parents-in-law had given her and her husband. She searched the back storage area of their store (Ah Toy’s) and uncovered the cherry-wood altar. It was dusty with a broken glass panel but otherwise intact. There were Chinese characters on the altar, which Lily’s brother, Bill Wong, translated for us. It read ‘Peace and tranquility like a mountain’. An image of this altar was sewn on to the town mining banner, including the Chinese inscription and the offerings before the altar.

Kybrook Farm

When Joanna and I visited Kybrook Farm, Bessie Coleman, a Jawoyn woman, quickly established her vision for the banner. She wanted something that would symbolise all the different groups living at Kybrook—she spoke of the different kinds of bush plum as images which could go on the banner. Subsequent ideas for the Kybrook banner began with a

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Liddy’s memories of Aboriginal walking tracks around the town. The Aboriginal walking tracks that Helen described became part of the town ‘map’ banner which depicted the overland telegraph line, the railway, the Stuart Highway and Copperfield and Pine Creek.

Bill Wong, Lily Ah Toy’s brother and a long time member and custodian of the Darwin temple translated the text and also provided a description of the offering bowls, chopsticks and incense placed before the altar. Unfortunately the chopsticks ended up being back to front on the banner! He kindly showed Joanna and I around the Darwin Chinese Temple and explained the altars’ significance. Both Bill and Lily were long time members of the Chung Wah Society.

Notebook 1, 19 February 1997.
screen printing project. Joanna had noticed the women working in the kitchen, and having a keen eye for material, noticed the potential demand for tea towels.167

What emerged were many images of bush tucker: plums, yams, geese and flying fox, water lilies and so forth. The drawings for the tea towels formed the basis of the Kybrook banner design. Members of the group also suggested that the 'Aboriginal' flag and the Kybrook logo be incorporated in the design.168

It was not clear to me in the early stages of working with the women from Kybrook Farm how oral history would fit in with the banner making. Like the people involved in the town banner, the women indicated to me that it was not appropriate to record stories while they were making banners although they were happy to assist me with interviewing older people about their history.169

During the banner making process the women explained their drawings in some detail and there was general discussion about bush foods, their whereabouts and their seasonality, the preparation of particular bush tucker for eating and the name of the bush tucker in language170 (see Chapter two).

The women were ready to be interviewed when the banner was nearly complete.171 At the conclusion of their banner making the women recapped on the images they had designed. The Jawoyn women spoke first about the banner and subsequently talked with the Wagiman women about their contributions to the banner.

School children
Joanna and I introduced ourselves to children in years 5 and 6 at Pine Creek primary school by exploring sense of place. Mapping proved a useful aid in this exploration. We asked children about their favourite place in the local area, what place they didn't like, what was a

167 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.46.
168 The Kybrook logo - includes a fishing spear and a hunting spear and the Aboriginal flag. See Kybrook Farm Banner depicted at the front of Chapter Two.
169 The women were, however, happy to help me in talking with the old people. I was unable to fully follow up on their offer due to time constraints. However I did conduct three non-taped interviews and one taped interview with four older people from Kybrook: including Lenny Liddy, Paddy Huddleston, Emu Corrigan, Jessie Corrigan and Violet Smith (with her daughter Bessie Coleman).
170 Notebook 1, 19 February 1997.
171 I felt my role was less clearly defined as I was not directly participating in the banner making. I helped where necessary. I realised that everything has its time. I had to wait until it was right to talk – at the conclusion of the project. Notebook 2, 19 March 1997.
new place and what was an old place. We then asked the children to draw a series of maps of
the town including their favourite and (non-favourite) areas and the way they walked to
school (see Figure 23).\textsuperscript{172}

Parallel with our own project the children were undertaking a school project on local history
and contemporary industries in Pine Creek. Subsequently many of the subjects the children
chose to investigate for their school project ended up on the school banner. The projects
included the history about the town and its buildings, the history of the police station,
Chinatown, Bonrook Station, the railway, the currently operating Union Reefs mine and
recreation areas (where the children played) in and around the town. The projects involved
children undertaking oral history interviews with adults who could speak on their project
subject. One child was interviewing her father about how he produced ice for the town,
another the storekeeper, another the policeman and another a retired stockman.\textsuperscript{173}

Joanna and I ran a workshop at the school with the children about oral history collecting and
'sense of place'. As some of the children were interviewing long time residents for their
school history project talking about oral history and how to get a good recording proved
timely.\textsuperscript{174}

We invited Lily Ah Toy to come in to the children's initial banner making workshop to talk
about her memories of the Pine Creek of her past. She talked about the old school,
Chinatown and the Bakery her in-laws ran. The children asked her questions about her
memories while the teacher passed around photos of Chinatown.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{172} Initial visits took place in December 1996. Marg Henderson, the principal of the school at the time,
was the main teacher who instigated the school's involvement in the project. There were twelve
children in the class. The questions were based around the following question/topics: where they
lived, their favourite place, a place they did not like, an old place, a new place. About twenty-five
children were involved in banner making.

\textsuperscript{173} Many of the subjects chosen by the children to investigate for their school project were
subsequently included on their banner. These included historic buildings, gold mining, recreation
sites and the Chinese presence in market gardening. 'Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories',
p.45.

\textsuperscript{174} As with all banner making participants we sought permission for using and arranging the images
for the banners. With the children's permission Joanna selected at least one element of each child's
work from their school project book and/or their map, placing the images in relationship to one
another in order to create a design. This design was then shown to the children for their comments and
feedback. At that time Joanna was informed that the train was going in the wrong direction:
adjustments were made! The children's banner could be essentially described as a sense of place
'map' with Pine Creek and Copperfield Creek as the central motifs.
\end{footnotes}
Figure 23: Pine Creek school children's map, 1996.
Source: Cara Malone, Natasha Wills, Wattle Johnson and Liam McIlwain.
Over the course of this two-week period I obtained permission from the children to interview them about their contribution to the banner. I interviewed the children on the patio outside the hall while the banner making was occurring.

Children were interviewed individually but friends would always accompany them and listen in while they waited their turn. These interviews allowed each child to tell their story about the banner and what they had contributed. These talks often led to the children telling stories of bush tucker hunting, swimming in their favourite swimming hole or other escapades. For those who had been doing the history project it provided an opportunity for them to talk about what they had learnt. This was a kind of oral history interview of the banners but it was also an opportunity for the children to hear their stories played back to them through headphones.

**Methodological outcomes**

**Banner making and oral history: an interesting couple?**

Like maps – banners can work well in conjunction with oral history and at other times their differences created barriers - banner making like mapping proceeded at a different pace to oral history. Moreover, banner making was clearly a collective enterprise – oral history was more suited to a one to one situation.

The process of collecting oral history in conjunction with banner making proved more subtle and complex than originally anticipated. The act of banner making created an intimate space between the participants – a space conducive to conversation that ranged from recollections of the past through to personal disclosure and the more prosaic conversations related to actually making the banners rather than creating a space suitable for oral history recordings. This was the case particularly in the beginning when the ideas were gestating and people were just getting to know one another. With the town banners there was an understanding between Joanna and I that recording would have ‘killed the conversation’. With the Kybrook

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175 Notebook 1, 20 February 1997. The questions were simple and built on earlier work with the children (see footnote 172). Questions included: Which pictures did you draw for the banner? Why did you choose those pictures? Which is your favourite part of the banner? Why? Do you know why you’re doing the banner? These questions were amended at times. For instance I asked some children more specifically about their school project and their favourite and least favourite places in Pine Creek.

176 Bathgate and Barrkman, 'Mapping memories', p.46; Notebook 1, 25 February 1997

177 Notebook 1, 19 February 1997.
banner the women did not feel they had a story to tell until they had finished the banner – or put another way, finished making the story.  

...Participating in history

The combination of interviews about sense of place and oral history interviews during the ‘Talking Banners’ project freed up my perceptions of what I considered valuable history. In this respect history resided in the interstices of people’s sense of place as a filament or a recurring thread. It also allowed me to participate in the debate about what Pine Creek’s history comprised. This was an engaged form of historical inquiry whereby I discussed with the interviewee what they understood to be Pine Creek’s past and joined in the brainstorming sessions for the town banners. The process of collating history and making banners also provided the opportunity to collect oral histories and flesh out the history of Pine Creek in ways that might not have happened if I had followed a narrower research path.

Beneficial Outcomes?

The Launch

While it is difficult to measure how beneficial the project was in community terms the launch attested to the strength of participation. Nearly every participant in the project attended the launch to watch the unveiling of his or her banner. At this time the oral history interviews I had collected were placed in the library. A soundscape was compiled of the many and varied ‘voices’ that had contributed their stories. Their words formed an audio backdrop to the visual display of the banners. The launch occurred during the Gold Mining Weekend Celebrations. As the Pine Creek News reported:

The weekend’s events started off on Friday night with the unveiling of the banners and a local art exhibition featuring the work of twelve artists and craftspeople. The museum was bursting at the seams as close to 70 people crowded in for the opening which was presided over by Lily Ah Toy. The banners were

178 Bathgate and Barrkman, ‘Mapping memories’, p.49. This awareness was highlighted because one person did not like having their voice recorded under any circumstances. There were also practical limitations to the collection of oral history during the banner making process as it was often very noisy.

179 ‘The launch of the banners and the oral history collection in the local museum reflected the breadth of community participation in the project. Bathgate and Barrkman, ‘Mapping memories’, p.50.
unveiled by those who had participated in their making, and each banner was greeted with appreciation by the audience.\(^{180}\)

**Continuing communities**

The diversity of viewpoints reflected in the banners, oral history interviews and encounters and discussions with people attested to a continuing and strong 'sense of place' which is remarkable in a community with an historically large transient population but not surprising given the significant participation of long-term residents. The project expanded my vision about how the past and the present are entwined where history, the environment and sense of place are not separate and yet not the same. Individual oral history interviews served to confirm people's long standing relationship with the land around them, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

There were many unique circumstances which enabled this project to engage people's interest including the small size of the population, people's general enthusiasm, the interest of key people, my previous contact with the community, knowledge of local history and the previous experience both Joanna and I had respectively in working with communities.

The images created for the banners, the stories people told and the questions they asked about the past created a dynamic, interactive and creative process that engaged broader questions about local history and 'sense of place'. In many respects the banners and the tapes are the visual and auditory legacy of this inquiry stemming from a community which is deeply curious about its history and deeply connected to place and country.

Transience continues on as a theme in the life of the community. One boy summed up that the school banner '...tells a sort of story that's going to be with us for the rest of our life.' Not long after he participated in the banner making he left town with his family, moving to another mining community. Will he take his sense of place with him?

**Re-orientation: Oral history, sense of place and interlinking modalities**

In this chapter I have explored various outcomes and aspects of oral history, including perceptions of community and the ways in which oral history can be combined with other modalities to highlight aspects of memory. I have also explored the ways oral history can be linked to community processes.

\(^{180}\) 'The Rush is Over!' PCN, April 1997, p.1. See Appendix 5 for related publicity to this event.
While I had a few challenges in combining oral history with other mediums the strength of oral history lies in its flexibility and adaptability. It is accommodating of other mediums as well as in its own right. It was also an important medium for establishing relationships with people. I was reminded again and again of the relational aspect of oral history during the course of each interview. At the end of the day it is the people who are the critical components and contributors in this process; who engaged with me about place and history (see Figure 24).  

In the next chapter I extend the theme of mapping to include a discussion of cartographic maps, and what they reveal, as part of a broader exploration of movement of people in and out of the Pine Creek area and places they stopped.

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181 See Appendix 3 for short biographies of some of the interviewees.
Top row: (Left) Steve Boyes and Susan Boyes. (Right) Helen Liddy.
2nd row: (Left) Darkie Dempsey. (Right) Marie Heidtman and Joan Frazer.
3rd row: (Left) Lily AhToy and Joanna Barrkman. (Right) Violet Smith and Beryl Smith.
4th row: (Left) Eddie AhToy. (Right) Tex Moar and Jack Lewis.

Figure 24: Oral history interviewees and participants in the Talking Banner project.
Source: Jane Bathgate and Joanna Barrkman.
Top row: Stephen Wilson, Clara McMah, David McMah, Christine McMah, Lulu Martin and Jane Bathgate.
2nd row: (Left) Earl Gano. (Right) unknown, unknown, Daphne Huddleston and Mercia Huddleston.
3rd row: Pine Creek School children making banner.
CHAPTER FIVE

TRAVELLING, STOPPING AND MEETING PLACES
Figure 25: Pine Creek map banner.
CHAPTER 5

TRAVELLING, STOPPING AND MEETING PLACES

Take it or leave it or don't
everyone has his own path
Stonehouse¹

TRACKS AND PLACES

Stonehouse, a Chinese Zen hermit, refers figuratively to the way everyone must find their own 'path' - and yet his words are paradoxical. 'Take it or leave it or don't', he writes. In this chapter I pursue the paradox of pathways which are both conduits of movement and places of respite. To travel on a pathway is also to reach a destination. The town of Pine Creek and Chinatown were destinations and yet also places of transience - people were both travellers and stayers - transient and settling.

Travelling lines and travelling destinations offer a way of reading place that is based on lines of communication. Roads, tracks, resting and gathering places are highlighted in this story which describes the movements and dwelling places of all people who have lived in or passed through the area. This exploration is not intended as an exhaustive literal analysis of the history of roads or tracks or dwellings, it provides an outline of movement and settlement through an examination of the physical pathways of that movement such as tracks and roads, and sites of habitation.

This outline is part of a broader aim in this thesis to describe the flux of human movement in the Pine Creek area and ways of conveying that - in this case via pathways. Settlement, in the context of this movement, is a relative concept as settlers also move, sometimes within limited physical geographic spaces and sometimes further afield.

In this chapter I incorporate the concept of a town within the looser category of settlement as the latter term better describes and accommodates the long history of unofficial dwellings in the area, particularly where people have settled or camped in the area in response to the presence of the town of Pine Creek and Chinatown. The term settlement thus incorporates both camping areas and built areas, both gazetted and non-gazetted living areas.

Sources

One of my main avenues for exploring this travelling and settlement history has been through maps. Other sources include oral history interviews and narratives of peoples travels in the area. The focus on maps is a continuation of a mapping theme in this thesis. In this chapter I also explore physical maps of surveyors for what they reveal about travelling routes and settlement.

The Banner 'map' at the front of this chapter depicts some of the more established local routes including the Overland Telegraph Line (OTL), the North Australian Railway (NAR) and the Stuart Highway. The Banner map also depicts Indigenous walking tracks or 'foot pads' into and out of Pine Creek as described by Helen Liddy. These 'foot pads' signified Indigenous connections with the town of Pine Creek and reflected a larger network of Indigenous walking tracks.²

Pine Creek residents' sense of place was infused with lines of travel and memories about where they took people. Children and adults described these local walking tracks which included both short cuts and longer roads. People generated maps of their town that described their hinterlands of movement. Children described their movement from home to school or to visit a friend or swim in the creek. Adults included both local walking tracks and more regional travelling routes as part of their work and their custom.

TRAVELLING LINES

Signs of the path

Travel lines made by human feet, animal paws, hooves and wheels, left marks on the earth. These engravings signalled both environmental impacts and the passage of humans from one place to another. These tracks are still apparent.³

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The inroads of mining and development has attenuated many local tracks such as the old Moline Road which has been bisected by the new Stuart Highway - which has itself been moved numerous times. These bi-sected and attenuated roads and tracks in and around the town are part of the spatial history of Pine Creek.

Between Pine Creek township and Chinatown, Albert Que Noy recalled, an abandoned road around Davis' hill was still visible. Outside the town other abandoned tracks were also visible. Brian May, a prospector, recalled sighting the eight year old Collah Tinfields 'road' to the west of Pine Creek where McCarthy's teamsters once hauled tin to the railway; where sheets of iron were cast to the side of the track where they were used as an aid to prevent the teamsters bogging down.

Helen Liddy and Tex Moar pointed out that the Willeroo crossing over the Fergusson River south-west of Pine Creek was 'still there'. As Tex described '...there is still patches of that [Willeroo Road], the parts of that where you can see it the old ruts and that sort of things.' Tex continued

...there's roads around roads around roads...Yeah.[Laughs] I can still show you on the other side of Bonrook some of them old tracks. You won't see them now, you'll see them when the country's burnt, you know. Now they're old washaways, yeah, but they was the original road tracks.

Maps and signs

4 Russell Young, opening ceremony speech; Leonie Ruig, discussion notes, 1995; Steve Boyes, interview, 1997; Lily Ah Toy, Steve Boyes and Helen Liddy, interview, 1997.
5 Northern Territory Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government, Town of Pine Creek, cadastral map, 19 August, 1995.
6 Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996.
7 Joan Frazer, interview, 1997.
10 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
11 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b. In the 1950s a Patrol Officer described the ‘...traditional route from Arnhem Land through Mainoru, Beswick, Yeuralba, Katherine and Pine Creek to the buffalo shooting
Indigenous people carried maps of their country in their head and heart. This internalised map was not something that could be easily translated onto paper. As non-Indigenous people became more familiar with the country they also became oriented physically in the landscape. They carried terrain maps around in their head which they could expand on verbally and spatially through the use of mud maps and through reference to printed maps.

**Mud and Calico**

Bill Harney observed: 'In olden days the mud-maps of the bushmen told the new-comer where to go, and what to find on the way'. William Sowden reported in the late nineteenth century - 'A Northern Territory map is quite in keeping with the place and many of the people - it is rough, superlatively rough... Perhaps he was referring to the maps drawn on the ground such as Yorky Mick's map of Deaf Adder Creek, drawn for the army during World War Two. Yorky Mick traced the shapes of the creeks on the earthen floor of his home with his staff and then '...expectorated juice of some sort from his mouth and hit a spot on the north side... of the creek in question and said "You'll find permanent water there".'

Long term stayers such as miners and cattlemen kept maps in their possession as a standard part of their equipment. Ruby Roney, who moved to Pine Creek in 1928, described the calico backed maps that managers of cattle stations carried '...of their holdings and all of the country.'

**Signs on European maps**

In the European world-view however maps were a form of representation about knowing the land with reference to topography and/or ownership that reflected European traversal of the land. As Mrs. Dominic Daly wrote in respect of the NT in the 1880s the land could no longer be described as 'Terra Incognita' 'The country has been traversed in all directions by explorers, by prospectors, and by agriculturalists.'

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13 Harney, *Content to lie in the sun*, p.155.
14 Sowden, *The Northern Territory as it is*, pp.37-38.
Maps on paper were generated more frequently at particular periods of history. The survey and settlement of the Northern Territory generated a series of leasehold and allotment maps. The discovery of gold in the Top End triggered the production of a series of geological and topographical maps which included commentary on vegetation, soil types and geological formations. The building of the North Australia Railway line to Pine Creek in 1889 and then to Katherine in 1914 generated a series of local survey maps. The 1930s produced the next significant wave of map making with the aerial geological and geophysical survey of North Australia and this work was further expanded during World War Two.\textsuperscript{18}

Maps were only as good as the terrain was known. Up until the early twentieth century the European pastoral maps of the region consistently displayed a caveat ‘approximate’ stating that ‘those outside lines shaded thus [diagonal striping] are liable to considerable alteration when the accurate positions of rivers and starting points are known.’\textsuperscript{19}

As a body of evidence European maps contained myriad details of both movement and settlement through the display of tracks and places of habitation reflecting the historical period in which they were constructed. They also conveyed cultural and class distinctions which diluted the apparent homogeneity of colonial naming.

**Naming**

As discussed in Chapter one, maps revealed the Indigenous presence in the area through the presence of Indigenous names. The names of Chinese miners and merchants were also evident. On a map from 1915 the name Que Noy Battery and the Philip Ah Chin lease near Pine Creek were printed. The name San Kee Chan was printed next to the name Fergusson (Wandi Wandi) gold field.\textsuperscript{20}

Map names of the Pine Creek area revealed more subtle divisions within European culture with regards class and gender. While names of European men of official importance dominated the early maps the diversity of names at a local level reflected a more complex

\textsuperscript{17} Daly, *Digging, Squatting and pioneering life*, p.351.
\textsuperscript{19} National Library: *Plan shewing pastoral leases in the Northern Territory of South Australia*, compiled in the Surveyor General’s Office, Adelaide, 1905.
\textsuperscript{20} National Library: Department of External Affairs, *Plan showing principle pastoral areas held under lease, licence and permit, in the Northern Territory of Australia*. Compiled from official records, Melbourne, 1915.
history of Indigenous origins, Chinese connections, labouring classes and female relationships.

On maps from the turn of the nineteenth century the town of Pine Creek was subsumed within the District of Rosebery, one of four districts which were originally surveyed above the 14th parallel. The District of Rosebery was named after the 5th Earl of Rosebery who served briefly as British Prime Minister (1894-1895). He had connections with Australia, having visited twice, once in the 1870s and again in 1884.21 Within the District of Rosebery lay the Hundred of Selwyn, named after another man of European note, Bishop Selwyn. The Hundred of Selwyn defined an area immediately to the north of Pine Creek that encompassed the earliest gazetted township in the area - Burrundie - an apparent corruption of an Indigenous name.

The names of public servants graced smaller areas such as mounts and bluffs in the area, for example Mt McLachlan and McMinn's Bluff. The most humbly European named place in the area was the smallest – Gandy’s Hill, the local trig point, named after a miner who accompanied McLachlan on his survey/exploration of the area in 1870.22 Local pastoral leasehold maps reflected individual naming rights of the leaseholders and their Anglo-Celtic origins.23

The name Pine Creek was unusual in that it went against the grain of European naming of the area where numerous sites were named after European men of greater and lesser importance. The name Pine Creek was testimony to the naming of an area by description because it referred to local native Pines. Early official attempts were made to re-name the town of Pine Creek - Playford after one of the Premiers of South Australia, Sir Thomas

21 Archibald Philip Primrose (1847-1929) at 'The Victorian web: literature, history and culture in the age of Victoria', compiled by Marjie Bloy, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, National University of Singapore, http://65.107.211.206/history/pms/rosebery.html.
22 As historical geographer, Dr. Jim Cameron has pointed out, '...surveyors were often overruled by politicians when it came to naming things.' Jim Cameron to Jane Bathgate, e-mail, [unspecified subject ], 7 July 2003.
23 National Library: Plan shewing pastoral leases in the Northern Territory of South Australia, compiled in the Surveyor General's Office, Adelaide, 1905, Surveyor General's Office, Plan shewing pastoral leases and claims in the Northern Territory of South Australia, Adelaide 1885; Plan showing principle pastoral areas held under lease, licence and permit in the Northern Territory of Australia; Pearce vol. 1, p.18. The other districts were Palmerston, Disraeli and Malmesbury. Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister Disraeli, Lord Malmesbury. See also Mt Porter, Mt Wigley, Mt Devine.
Playford. In what was perhaps a form of local naming resistance against an imposed nomenclature the name Playford never appears to have fallen into common usage.  

The naming of mining leases, rivers and creeks reflected a more egalitarian process that was less class bound than that of larger grids of naming. Mining and pastoral leases made space for the working class, the non-Anglo-Celtic and the feminine. There was Eleanor Gold Reef discovered in 1872 by John Lewis, named after his sister and the El Sharana uranium mine, a composite name made up of the first letters of the names of the three daughters of the owner of the uranium mine. (It was also a double entendre for El Dorado.) In the Pine Creek area the earliest pastoral stations were named after women - Esmerelda, Dorisvale and Claravale Stations. It is not only the names of reefs which signalled the female - rivers too marked women. There was the Mary River and Nellie Creek close by to Pine Creek and Edith River and Maude Creek further to the east. 

The naming of mining leases reflected the aspirations of all miners where luck and good fortune was potentially the province of everyone. They also reflected the political and cultural origins of the owners. A 1913 map of the area listed the following leases: New Caledonian (Scotland) and Maid of Erin (Ireland), Monarch, Democrat, Enterprise, Sultana, Bashi Bazouk, Czarina, Ophir and Christmas, New Thunderer, Rising Sun, North Star, Golden Gate. This was a veritable Aladdin's cave of names (see Figure 26).

This 1913 map was one of a number of maps that a local Pine Creek resident had inherited from 'old timers' who had lived, worked and mined in the area. He had another topographic map from 1915 by Arthur Briggs, the Government surveyor, that also showed the Pine Creek area (see Figures 26 and 27).

Like the geologists' accounts of the landscape these maps are personal expressions of the surveyors who compiled them. What they chose to focus on reflected both mapping standards of the time as well as personal choices. The maps in Figures 26 and 27 reflect both choices. Figure 26 shows the block outline of the gazetted town. The gazetted town was the

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24 J.Y. Harvey. 1987. p.47; National Library: Map of the chief metalliferous regions lying south from Port Darwin – between the 13⁴⁶ and 18⁴⁶ parallels of latitude in the Northern Territory of Australia, n.d; Plan shewing pastoral leases in the Northern Territory of South Australia, 1905. 

25 For reference to naming of the Eleanor mine see Jones, Pegging the Territory, p.8. 

26 Figure 26 is not to scale.
common recurring print on cadastral maps of Pine Creek and continues to be printed. One of the choices of the surveyor in Figure 26 was his focus on the extensive track network in the local area. The surveyor in Figure 27 included places of Chinese settlement outside the gazetted town (see on).

Revealing maps

Both these maps reflected significant details that would not necessarily have been apparent on larger scale maps. The 1913 map of the Pine Creek Goldfields shows how the landscape of the entire area was riven with tracks in and around the town, extending into the mining ridge and the area of Chinese settlement (see Figure 26).

The gazetted town allotments shown in Figure 26 had neat edges in a grid formation which never really coincided with the layout of the actual settlement. The focus on the gazetted town of Pine Creek in numerous maps leaves out more than it leaves in with respect to the actual settlement of the area notably the Chinese settlement and Indigenous camps and the routes people travelled on. This gazetted outline was, in the case of Pine Creek, imposed over a pre-existing settlement. As Figure 26 shows the straight roads of the gazetted town never reflected the reality of the network of travelling pathways which curved in and around the town.

The town of Pine Creek (Playford) did not officially exist until after the North Australia Railway was completed in 1898. It was gazetted in January 1889 as the town of Playford. However the original town was north of the gazetted area and west of the railhead. The establishment of a new town perhaps reflected a bureaucratic desire to create a more formal concept of a town as opposed to the ad hoc settlement which existed at the time. The original paralleled Chinatown's ad hoc layout.

Gun Alley, a housing area along Pine Creek which I discuss further in this chapter was located in the original town (or 'mining camp') where the telegraph station, hotel and police station were first located along the original 'main track' prior to the establishment of the

27 NAA, ACT: A1/1, 1911/18383, Surveyor Generals Office, Northern Territory of Australia. (Playford) - Northern Territory South Australia, Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, February 1889. See Appendix 4, Map 1 for more detailed outline of the gazetted town. 28 NAA, SA: D2827/0, Pine Creek to Katherine permanent survey, book no. 1, 1913-1914; See also Mitchell, A management plan.
Figure 26: Portion of "Topographical Plan Pine Creek Goldfield", 1913.
Source: Earl Gano collection.
Figure 27: Portion of 'Plan of Topographical Survey Southwest of Pine Creek', 1915.
Source: Earl Gano collection.
opposed to 'Tracks' which were not attached to any particular destination. He also distinguished between various tracks. There were 'Old tracks' and a 'Rough Track'.

The terms track and road were sometimes used interchangeably particularly where the road was unsealed. In the first half of the twentieth century the use of the term tracks was widely used to describe a route by which one could travel on horseback or by dray or wagon. Tracks were also synonymous with a certain physical rudeness and roughness. As Jensen observed on his arrival in the region in 1912: '...there was not a cross country road in the Territory fit for vehicular traffic except the Pine Creek to Katherine coach road.' One writer summed up in 1913 that in respect of Pine Creek: 'There were no roads at all. Here and there a track made by horses or vehicles marked the route from a township to a station.

Tex Moar, a later arrival explained: '...there was no such thing as a road. When I say no such thing, there was a wheel track through the bush and of course, naturally all those rivers and creeks - which is thousands of 'em. Plus all the flats and everything, it'd be June-July before they could ever attempt to get in.'

Other signs
The history conveyed on the above maps can be 'read' on numerous cadastral maps of the area to greater and lesser degree particularly on maps of the township of Pine Creek which had a history of continuous settlement. These maps provide serendipitous detail that illuminates various aspects of the township's history including the network of tracks, the location of wells and bores in the town, who lived where and which buildings were occupied or unoccupied, the location of shacks and camps, who owned or had owned various town leaseholds and the location of various public sites ranging from the police station through to the cemetery and the garbage dump.
Figure 28: Map of Pine Creek ridge including 'Mining Village', 1913.
Source: NAA, SA: D2827/0 Pine Creek to Katherine Permanent Survey, Survey Book 170m-180m, No.36.
Figure 29: Portion of Pine Creek ridge, including 'Chinese huts', 1913.
Source: NAA, SA: D2827/0 Pine Creek to Katherine Permanent Survey, Survey Book 170m-180m, No.38.
One can pull out parts of information off maps but their integrity also lies in the fact that they are descriptions or symbolic representations of a space. In this sense they are holistic historical documents. The tracks are not separate from the settlements - they link settlements to settlements and mines to mines and other outlying areas.

If Pine Creek was a mining camp before it was a town then it was a place of myriad winding tracks long before it was a place of straight roads. In 1884 a telegraph operator reported: The main route from Southport to Pine Creek had many small mining townships enroute, and from these a network of narrow foot tracks ran out to the various gold workings. Some were well-worn with constant traffic. The Chinese carried their goods from the railway siding by packhorse along these tracks ....

Around Pine Creek Mrs. Dominic Daly noted the absence of roads and the prominence of tracks. In the twentieth century tracks were still prominent. Earl Gano, a current local resident, described Pine Creek as riddled with tracks. Bill Baird described the landscape as '...quite bushy but there were tracks going every which way [laughs].'

**Original tracks**

Indigenous travelling paths formed an intricate and complex web that preceded the travelling lines of the peripatetic miner, teamster, geologist and so forth. Indigenous walking paths were distinctive and easily recognisable. An early miner and teamster, John Lewis described a '...well-beaten native track going from the Alligator up the gorge...'. Similarly a geologist observed that upon reaching Green Ant Creek,

... a native pad turned off to the right, and Jaberoo, who had carried Daly River mails, was understood to inform us that it was the direct track to the Daly Mine used by blacks carrying mails, &c; he also said there was water close up. We followed this pad,

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38 Daly, 1887; Earl Gano, interview, 1997.
39 Earl Gano, interview.
41 Lewis, *Fought and won*, p.132.
which was fairly straight and in a south-west by west direction, and
at 17 miles came to a deep dry bamboo creek.\textsuperscript{42}

Given that most walking tracks followed the path of least resistance it was highly likely that
a number of Indigenous walking tracks were appropriated by Europeans and later evolved
into packhorse trails and further widened by the passage of drays and carts.\textsuperscript{43} When
McDouall Stuart, the explorer, was south-east of Pine Creek he wrote: 'There are a number
of native tracks both up and down our tracks; one of the natives seems to have a very large
foot. Wind south.'\textsuperscript{44} One must ask if Stuart was travelling a route that was frequently used by
' natives' or were native tracks so ubiquitous he was bound to come across them - probably a
mixture of both.

One of the significant features of an early 'Map of the Chief Metalliferous Regions' in the
Top End were the detailed tracks marked on the map. Many of these tracks converged on the
settlement of Pine Creek (Playford) reflecting its significance as the major settlement in the
area in the late nineteenth century (see Figure 30). It is interesting to speculate on how many
tracks were based on preceding Indigenous tracks and how many were newly formed mining
tracks.\textsuperscript{45} As European tracks like the Overland Telegraph line and railway line became more
established Indigenous people also used these routes as thoroughfares.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{Natural corridors of movement}

Terrain facilitated and precluded certain movements as did the seasons. The map in Figure
30 shows that many of the tracks intersected with creeks which would have flooded during
the Wet season. The map cannot tell us which crossings became impassable with the rains,
which routes were all-weather routes or which, for that matter, were wet and dry seasons
routes.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{42} Reports (geological and general), p.37, p.38. Green Ant Creek is described as being past Mt
Shoobridge - 15 miles from Brocks Creek. The writer notes that the geological party travelled along
the pad until they struck the Daly track again. There seems to be an implication here that the Daly
track is a known European track as distinct from the unofficial 'native pad'.

\textsuperscript{43} In 1912 haulage was done with 'drays drawn by buffaloes' Jensen, Reminiscences of a Geologist.,
p.83.

\textsuperscript{44} Stuart, J.McDouall Stuart's explorations, p.61.

\textsuperscript{45} See comment in Henry Reynolds, Black pioneers. How Aboriginal and Islander people helped build

\textsuperscript{46} Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy and Steve Boyes, interview, 1997.

\textsuperscript{47} I am grateful to Jim Cameron's observations about crossings and convergences in respect of tracks
and settlements. Jim Cameron to Bathgate, e-mail, 7 July 2003.
Figure 30: Portion of 'Map of the Chief Metalliferous Regions, Lying south from Port Darwin', circa late 19th century.
Source: National Library of Australia, map collection.
In the Pine Creek area tracks followed the contours of the granite outcrops that flanked the town. River valleys and creeks also provided natural corridors of movement. The Daly, South Alligator and Mary Rivers in particular were natural corridors of movement for Indigenous people in the region. River corridors were also places of long-term socio-economic and cultural importance to Indigenous people. These rivers surrounded but did not necessarily intersect with the town of Pine Creek.

Large river systems, like the Katherine and Daly River provided not only conduits for travel but sources of food and agricultural potential which drew Indigenous workers to the area. Tex Moar described the Pine Creek area as '... mainly walkabout country' partly because of the absence of 'big permanent water'. Francesca Merlan noted that the Katherine area offered 'a more focussed and continuous set of points for Indigenous people' than Pine Creek which was 'a series of movements around the place.' She also noted the prominence of the peanut farms in the Katherine area which attracted Indigenous workers.

Springs also offered themselves as connecting points in the landscape because like the rivers they provided perennial water. Of particular significance for Wagiman people on the north-west side of Pine Creek were the series of springs between Pine Creek and Douglas Hot Springs (Jiwarlun) which facilitated movement between these two areas.

The river systems also provided obstacles to movement particularly during The Wet. From southern Arnhem Land, it was sometimes easier to travel to Burrundie rather than Pine Creek because of easier access across the South Alligator River further north before it broke up into

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50 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Robert Liddy, interview, 1997.

51 Francesca Merlan to Bathgate, e-mail, Pine Creek etc, 27 October 1997.

52 ALC (UDLC): transcript of proceedings, 4 December 1984, pp. 554 -555.
myriad tributaries. \(^{53}\) Burrundie also had the advantage of being closer to major river systems and therefore having more plentiful food supplies (see also Chapter two). \(^{54}\)

**Pads**

The term 'pad' referred to animal and human pathways of movement. People used the term 'kangaroo pad' not only to refer specifically to these marsupial tracks but also to refer to Indigenous walking tracks. As Helen Liddy pointed out: 'Oh, the kangaroo pads, that's what the blackfella used to use.' \(^{55}\) Other names for Indigenous walking tracks included 'foot pads', 'blackfella pads' and 'native pads'.

The interchangeable terminology between kangaroo and human pads in part reflected the way in which mammalian pathways and human pathways of movement dovetailed. Both these pathways responded to the contours of the landscape and the location of water. \(^{56}\)

The pads of introduced animals such as cattle and horses were identified as distinctive pads. Domesticated horse pads were also known as bridle tracks or packhorse pads/tracks. Joan Frazer described a horse pad as '... a well used one lane track... ' \(^{57}\) Marie Heidtmann, Joan's sister, clearly defined horse pads as: '... the deliberate road going from point A to point B so you can get home again; kangaroo pads generally lead from point A to a drink, water.' Marie noted the familiarity of Indigenous people with 'packhorse pads' although she pointed out that '... the pack horse pad isn't used much at all now.' \(^{58}\)

Walking tracks and horse pads were also short-cuts insofar as they took one directly to one's destination. As one Indigenous man described: 'We used to go shortcut. That's the shortest way on foot, you know.' \(^{59}\) 'Packhorse tracks' could also shortcut a wagon track. In Chinatown the walking track was a quicker route than the wagon track but more dangerous because of

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\(^{53}\) For instance it was easier to access Brocks Creek from Douglas and Ooloo Stations than Pine Creek and easier to access Burrundie from the South Alligator region, Lulu Martin, interview, Old Douglas Station, Brocks Creek and Burnside Station, tape 10, 1997; Sarah and Jill Roberts, discussion notes, 1997; For outline of the Indigenous walking track from the South Alligator region to Burrundie and other tracks in the area see Peter Hiscock, Preliminary report, figure 5.11 'Blackfella roads' after Levitus, Everybody.

\(^{54}\) See Chapter two and Appendix 4, map3.

\(^{55}\) Lily Ah Toy, Steve Boyes and Helen Liddy, interview, 1997; Helen Liddy, interview, 1997; Jack Lewis, interview, 1997; Joan Frazer, interview, 1997; Francesca Merlan, *Caging the rainbow*, p.94.

\(^{56}\) Jack Lewis, interview, 1997; Lily Ah Toy, Steve Boyes and Helen Liddy, interview, 1997; Merlan, *Caging the rainbow*, p.94; Notebook 2 26 February, 1997; Notebook 2, 21 March 1997.

\(^{57}\) Joan Frazer, interview, 1997.

\(^{58}\) Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997.
its closer proximity to mining adits. Lily Ah Toy recalled the walking track between Pine Creek and Chinatown as '…very dangerous …. Because there's mine shafts on both sides, it's only just a track for walking on. On a bicycle you could fall into one of the shafts'.

**Overland tracks**

European and Chinese settlers created new tracks over old ones. McDouall Stuart's exploration route which passed to the north of Pine Creek was remarkable to other European travellers because of this journey's importance in instigating the settlement of the area which included establishing the route for the Overland Telegraph Line (OTL). In the early twentieth century a geologist wrote reverentially about how close he was to Stuart's original track as he neared the Mary River '… on his [Stuart's] celebrated journey, when travelling from Keckwick's to Billiat Springs…'. McLachlan who surveyed the route for the Overland Telegraph in 1870, reported coming across Stuart's camps and his survey map of the OTL in the Pine Creek area revealed his attention to Stuart's journey (see Figure 31).

A track quickly formed alongside the OTL although it would be more appropriate to say that it wound around the OTL. Another of the 1913 railway survey maps shows how closely the track followed the OTL in the vicinity of Pine Creek. This telegraph road, otherwise known as 'The Track', became the main north-south route for travellers on foot, horseback, wagon and later vehicles - not to mention the odd cyclist. The advent of the railway in 1889 alleviated some of the pressure on the 'the track'. Moreover the rail proved a fitter road than the track, particularly across rivers.

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60 There were, Albert described, two tracks between Chinatown and Pine Creek - the walking track which was pitted with mining shafts and therefore a potentially dangerous route - and the wagon track that went past Jolly's Dam and around Davis Hill. Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996; Albert Que Noy, discussion notes, 1996.
61 Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
63 Figure 31 is not to scale.
64 NAA, SA: D2827/0, Survey book 170m-180m, no. 44, 1913. Note that the earliest 'road' as opposed to 'track' that developed in the area was the old coach road from Southport to the Goldfields. State Records SA: SAPP no. 63, Professor Tate's Report on the Northern Territory, 1882.
65 Coltheart, 'Kurrindju', pp.36-53, p.42; *Reports (Geological and general)*, p.36.
66 A track also formed alongside the rail track. Pearce, vol. 1, p.134. Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; National Library: National Mapping Office, *Northern Territory of Australia*, 1:200,000, Department of the Interior, Canberra, ACT, 1953; One Pine Creek resident described the evolution of roads in the area identifying the Overland Telegraph as the first road, the second being the railway and the third the old Stuart Highway. Brian May, discussion notes, 1997.
connections with the telegraph route is the Mt Wells Road which formed part of the original 'Track' and runs north of the town to Grove Hill.67

Service routes

Hinterlands

Each settlement whether it was small or large, mobile or permanent, generated the development of tracks. Tracks led to and from settlements - and between settlements.

Pine Creek's goods and services were an incentive for people living in outlying areas to travel in and outlying settlements provided incentives for suppliers to travel out. Pine Creek was a supply centre for mining sites, cattle stations and buffalo hunters. It was a point of convergence for trade and travel and a point of departure. Lily, who arrived in Pine Creek in 1936, described the service area for Ah Toy’s store extending in a large circle from Canon Hill and Mudginberri, Mt Bundey and Ban Ban Springs in the North, down through what is now Kakadu, including Gimbat and Goodparla Stations, Florina, Dorisvale and Ooloo Stations and, at one point just after World War Two as far west as Tipperary Station (see Figure 19).68 Cattle stations and mining centres also operated as service centres for Indigenous people.69

Mai Katona described Pine Creek in the 1950s as '... a hub. You know, particularly for the people who worked in the Arnhem Land region - and later on, like the Moline area, the south Moline area, where mining commenced.'70 In 1968 Douglas Lockwood described Pine Creek as '...the overland gateway to Arnhem Land.'71

Lily Ah Toy listed the numerous stations and buffalo camps around Pine Creek that Ah Toy's store supplied. This list reflected the boundaries of the supply hinterland for Ah Toys store (see Figure 19). Mayse Young referred to the pub hinterland as Jindare Station and to the

67 Willey, Ghosts of the big country, p.98.
68 As one person described 'There are numerous feeder tracks leading into Pine Creek'. NAA, NT: F1, 1945/96, letter, Works Supervisor to Chief Clerk and Accountant, 29 April, 1937.
69 For instance Claravale, Jindare, Goodparla, Dorisvale Stations. These ‘service’ boundaries of movement emerge clearly in oral history and people’s recollections of where they travelled. For instance, Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
70 Mai Katona, interview, 1997.
71 Douglas Lockwood, Northern Territory sketchbook, Rigby, Adelaide,1968, p. 47; During World War Two rough tracks in the region such as the old Kakadu Highway were opened up further. Notebook 2, 14 March 1997.
Figure 31: Portion of map showing proposed telegraph line route in the Pine Creek area, 1870.
Source: State Records of South Australia: GRS1 NT 125/1870, Tracing from Rough Plan Shewing Explorations from Government Residence by Mr. G.G. MacLachlan...
Figure 32: Overland telegraph line and associated track in the Pine Creek area, 1913.
Source: NAA, SA: D2827/0 Pine Creek to Katherine Permanent Survey, Survey Book 170m–180m, No.44.
north. For Indigenous people who worked in the cattle industry their hinterlands combined various stations. Helen's brother Lenny Liddy worked at Claravale, Dorisvale, Bulita, Mataranka, Ooloo and Tipperary, Mary River, Goodparla and Gimbat stations. As he described he was 'out bush all the time - cattle station."

Maps of the Pine Creek area often showed local tracks between large and small settlements, between pastoral stations, mines, buffalo and timber camps and between towns. A 1953 map shows various tracks between towns and stations that would have doubled up as both supply, stock routes and footpaths - from Pine Creek to various stations such as Esmerelda Station and from various stations to other stations such as between Lewin Springs Station and Jindare Station, Florina, Dorisvale and Ooloo Stations. The major rivers in the area - the Katherine River, the Fergusson River and the Cullen River - were 'natural' tracks. There were also tracks from Pine Creek to outlying mines notably Moline/El Sharana. The road from Chinatown to Pine Creek was also significant because it continued on to a number of cattle stations in the area, notably Jindare, Tabletop, and Lewin Springs.

**Development roads**

Roads were developed opportunistically in response to specific economic incentives. As Gilbert Williams described in respect of a road into a timber stand. 'Yeah, just chopped the scrub out and go along with the old truck until it finally made tracks.' Mining generated the major roads and tracks in the region in the early phase of settlement and later in the twentieth century with the discovery of iron ore and uranium.

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72 Notebook 8, 15 August 1996.

73 Lenny Liddy, discussion notes, 1997.

74 National Library: *Northern Territory of Australia*, 1953. Marie Heidtman described numerous tracks in the vicinity of Pine Creek - the track to Evelyn Mine out to Wolfram Hill, Canon Hill, Goodparla and Gimbat Stations; the road to Frances Creek and the road to Gun Alley. Marie Heidtman, interview, 1997.

75 NAA, NT: F/1, 1945/96, letter, Resident Engineer to Government Secretary, 4 June, 1937 and letter, Works Superintendent to Works Director from 25 August 1937 and letter, R.M. Balding to Government Secretary, 15 September, 1937.

76 Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996; Robert Liddy, interview, 1997. For related comment on one of these kinds of roads to a timber source see ALC: Jawoyn-Katherine: transcript of proceedings, 17 May 1983, pp.1487-1493 and 24 May 1983, p.2033.

The old Darwin road and the road from Pine Creek into Arnhem Land which formed part of the 'old Oenpelli Road' were two major tracks into the Arnhem Land area. The improvements to these roads, particularly during the 1970s for the purpose of mining, had the result also of expanding tourism in the Kakadu area. As Frank Atkinson reported to Robert Levitus after the Arnhem Highway was built and the Pine Creek-Oenpelli road was graded: 'In the opinion of people who had worked in the area in the years before, those roads ruined Jim Jim. They made Yellow Water "like Bondi".'

But beyond the immediate need of governments and mining companies for particular 'development' roads their long term maintenance was poor and most roads were in a constant state of disrepair.

'Bad' roads
As soon as the first mining routes were being developed in the 1870s miners were petitioning the Government Resident for improvements in tracks and roads to aid mining development. As one man wrote in respect of tracks in the Pine Creek area: 'These tracks varied from time to time at the will of the traveller, and, generally speaking, were impassable during the wet season. No culverts had been made or bridges constructed.' Numerous public files were devoted to roads and their upkeep (or lack thereof) in the region. Descriptions from local residents and public servants were peppered with adjectives describing the 'bad condition' or 'very bad state' of a road invariably in need of urgent 'repair'.

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78 The Arnhem Highway was not built until July 1964 and during the 1970s a bridge was built over the Mary and Adelaide Rivers providing more direct access to the area. The South Alligator Bridge opened in 1975. Before the highway Pine Creek was the nearest town with road access to the Alligator Rivers Peninsula, Arnhem Land and beyond. Dave Lindner, discussion notes, 2000; Levitus, 'Social history since colonisation', p.79, p.83; Barker, Alligator Rivers Region, p.10; Peter Forrest in Godden Mackay, vol. 1, p.58.
79 Frank Atkinson in Levitus, Everybody, p.50.
80 In the 1950s the road between Pine Creek and Goodparla was placed in the context of opening up Arnhem Land and '...developing that part of the country'. However, as the letter writer added 'The case for immediate construction...rests mainly, though not wholly, on the need for the development of the El Sharana uranium deposits.' NAA, ACT: A4940/1, C/1382, letter, Paul Hasluck to Cabinet, 16 May, 1957; See also NAA, ACT: A1209/97, 58/5375, Notes on submission no. 1025; See also ALC (Jawoyn-Katherine): transcript of proceedings, 17 May 1983, p.1587.
81 NTAS: NTRS 829 GRS1 NT Government Resident inwards correspondence A1520, 27 March 1876, A4452 28 January 1881.
82 Report on operations since the transfer to the Commonwealth, p.7; In 1897 one man described Pine Creek as '...almost the end of civilisation at that period, for after leaving Pine Creek the road became very bad...' Thomas L. Coleman, Across Australia on a bicycle. A record of the journey made by T.C. Coleman in 1897, n.d, MS.
There were roads in the town and outside the town with 'deep ruts, bad drainage, and washed out creek crossings'.

Mining roads were often doubly rough as the tracks were located in areas punctuated with holes and mining shafts and generally 'torn up' by prospectors. One local noted that if you went off the beaten track in the old days you would fall down a 'bloody big hole'. In 1955 the road from Pine Creek to the Northern Hercules Mine was described as 'practically impassable' during the Wet Season. However as another public servant summed up 'Little money has been spent on the road hitherto, as beyond Goodparla it was only used by buffalo shooters.

STOPPING PLACES

How does transience fit in with the concept of settlement? As one Pine Creek local remarked: 'Pine Creek is a transient population you see?' This person's remark reflected the continual turnover of people in the town but was also culturally specific insofar as it referred to the non-Indigenous population. Indigenous people who were born in their country had no reason to leave it. With the exception of the forced movement of Indigenous people out of their country through settlement and government controls Indigenous people were both sojourners (moving through and camping seasonally in their country) and inhabitants (living in their county).

83 NAA, SA: B300/2, 9394 Pt 1, Chief Traffic Manager Commonwealth Railway to Secretary, 2 August 1955; NAA, NT: F1, 1945/96, letter, Hon Secretary Sports & Progress Association to Department of Main Roads Alice Springs, 7 September 1945; NAA, NT:F1, 1945/96. Memo, Government Secretary to Director of Works Department Works and Housing, 10 May 1949, NAA, NT: F1, 1967/2286, letter, Director Land and Housing to Administrator, 4 May 1961; NAA, ACT: A1, 1911/20996, letter, Warden to Chief Warden's Office, November 24, 1911; AA, NT: F1 1945/96, letter, Chief Engineer Allied Works to Deputy Director- General Allied Works for NT, 14 March 1945; Gilbert White, Thirty years in tropical Australia, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1918, p.69.


85 Notebook 2, 26 February, 1997


88 NLC: Merlan, Jawoyn (Gimbat) land claim p.49

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In the Pine Creek area most Europeans and Chinese people were also both sojourners and inhabitants, but in a different sense to Indigenous people. Unlike Indigenous people, with their associated family connections, most Europeans and Chinese Australians arrived in the area without family attachments, although some non-Indigenous inhabitants married local Indigenous people.

As I discuss in Chapter six the highly mobile and transient section of the population has bestowed a certain anonymity in the historic record. When people leave they take their stories (and memories) with them.

Most non-Indigenous people who lived in the Pine Creek area but eventually left could best be categorised as 'stayers'. The verb 'to stay' implied that people arrived for shorter and longer periods. The view of the Pine Creek area as a transient mobile space is a relative view. There was a core population of people who were not transient. When the gold rushes passed and when others labelled Pine Creek as a ghost town it still retained its inhabitants and continued as a town. There has been a relative constancy in Pine Creek's population throughout the twentieth century. 89

Perceptions of transience

For long-term stayers there were value judgements associated with transience. For residents living more or less permanently in fixed abodes in town the 'transients' were people of no fixed address who 'camped' in old buildings. The term included itinerant workers and the unemployed. Generally 'transients' were associated with a certain shiftlessness and opportunism such as the so called 'indigent unemployed' during the Depression in the early 1930s. 90 In the context of a town where everybody knew everybody these 'transients' were outsiders - sometimes known and sometimes not known to the local community - comprising both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Some campers were clearly well known and were better defined as locals, others were classified as 'undesirables' and others were travelling through.

In 1920 the old Telegraph Building was empty and as one public servant dutifully reported, 'At the time of my visit a horse was in one room and another room is apparently made a

89 Since the 1970s the population has ranged between 100 and 300 people. A third to a half of this population at various times have been Indigenous. See Appendix 1.
90 NAA, ACT: A1/1, 1936/6262, Extract from The Northern Standard, 1 September 1933.
camping place by the blacks or travellers passing through.\(^{91}\) Jack Roney noted that the old police house he had lived in eventually fell into disuse and was used by 'a lot of hobos'.\(^{92}\) Eddie Ah Toy described 'transient people' staying in an old building next to Bonrook Homestead.\(^{93}\) Various unused railway buildings were at times shelter for the homeless, particularly during the Depression. As the local policeman described in 1931. '...the Running Shed as well as this so called Rest House has been used by certain persons out of employment'.\(^{94}\) During this period the unemployed took over the former (now disused) Pine Creek hospital as part of their protest against being homeless.\(^{95}\)

This building continued to be used by transient people. In 1951 a public servant reported that the building was '...used as temporary accommodation by transient workers...'.\(^{96}\) In 1952 the local Sergeant described it as '...a haven for hobos and persons of no fixed abode'\(^{97}\) while the Pine Creek Progress Association described it as a building used by 'tramps and others' as a 'camping place'\(^{98}\) and described it as an 'eyesore'.\(^{99}\) The Progress Association addressed this situation by making a claim on the building, refurbishing it and turning it into the town hall.

The labelling of people as transient had social connotations and while it embraced a diversity of cultures it was also a definition that Europeans applied to Indigenous people. A local European pastoralist defined transience in such a way that it referred specifically to Indigenous people. He said:

...transient people are people who will go and camp in an area for a period of time and then move on somewhere else and camp there for a while or live around that area for a while and move on.

\(^{91}\) NAA, SA: D96/0, 1932/720 letter, Inspector to Deputy Postmaster-General, 31 August 1920.
\(^{93}\) Eddie Ah Toy, interview, 1997a.
\(^{94}\) NAA, NT: F1, 1948/3, letter, Mounted Constable, Pine Creek, to Superintendent of Police, 23 December, 1931.
\(^{95}\) NAA, ACT: Alii, 1936/1403, Petition, citizens of Pine Creek.
\(^{96}\) NAA, NT: F1, 1945/81, letter, Acting Government Secretary to Director Native Affairs, 7 February, 1951.
\(^{97}\) NAA, NT: F1, 1945/81, letter, Sergeant to Superintendent of Police, 25 August, 1952.
\(^{98}\) NAA, NT: F1, 1945/81, letter, Hon Sec Pine Creek Progress Association to Administrator, 1 September, 1952. See also NAA, NT: F1, 55/1065, letter, Pine Creek Progress Association to Acting Government Secretary, 1 October, 1955.
\(^{99}\) NAA, NT: F1, 1944/486, Hon. Sec Pine Creek Progress Association to Mr Dowling, 1 September 1952. See also related in this file discussing transient workers 15 January 1951.
Another classification I think of transient people is, say, people who take a corroboree group from one place to another. 100

Another European cattle man said he saw no Indigenous camps in the area during his time in the country only Indigenous people who were travelling. 101

Francesca Merlan observed that: 'One of the impressions that European pastoralists of this area appear to have of Indigenous people, is that they were transient: they came and went. Pastoralists speak to them as having been seen only moving through country, to Pine Creek, Oenpelli, Katherine, or some other centre.' 102 Merlan confirmed this impression as '...correct, in that, upon stand-down from pastoral work, Aboriginal people...would usually go off to some agreed place, to camp and often, to organise seasonal ceremony. They would return to the stations, or be picked up in Pine Creek, for the next work season.' 103

Helen Liddy described how Indigenous people 'used to walk everywhere'. '...Oh, they used to walk from here to Katherine; and walk from here to Jim Jim; you know, they used to walk everywhere. Used to be a lot of Aboriginals here from Adelaide River, because they used to walk up the railway line or catch the train...' 104 Violet Smith's 'moving' life included Maranboy Tin fields, Katherine and associated peanut Farms, Goodparla, Douglas and Bonrook Station, Hayes Creek and Ban Ban, Mt Bundy and, in between times, buffalo and crocodile shooting. 105

The post-war period signalled the gradual enclosure of vast areas of land by fences which intercepted the flow of people through the country. 106

102 NLC: Merlan, Jawoyn (Gimbat) land claim, p. 49.
103 NLC: Merlan, Jawoyn (Gimbat) land claim, p.49. For example of local seasonal migration patterns from outlying mining areas see NAA, NT: F1, 1959/7, report, Patrol Officer to District Welfare Officer, 26 November 1958; see also Frank Atkinson interviewed by Levitus, in Everybody, pp.83-84; Jack Lewis, interview, 1997.
104 Helen Liddy, interview, 1997.
105 Violet Smith and Bessie Coleman, discussion notes, 1997; For other examples see Elizabeth Petersen, discussion notes, Kakadu, 1997; Mick Alderson, discussion notes, 1997.
106 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996. Note also Lulu Martin’s ‘memory’ of boundaries. When Lulu was returning to her country her memories often pre-dated fence lines and when we encountered a fence it was disconcerting. The existence of fences particularly following World War Two contrasted with earlier periods. Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; Mayse Young, interview, 1996.

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Cross roads?

Notwithstanding the cultural context of Indigenous movement through their country (see below), historically there was a perception among local Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that Pine Creek was also a cross-roads and not necessarily a settlement place for many Indigenous people. Helen Liddy described Pine Creek as a place Indigenous people 'crossed over everywhere'.\(^{107}\) In the 1950s a patrol officer described Pine Creek as '... a staging camp for natives moving to and from Arnhem Land.'\(^{108}\) Marie Heidtmann at Esmerelda Station noted that 'The blackfellas used to come in from all over the place...\(^{109}\) A Jawoyn man and a European man described Pine Creek *vis a vis* Indigenous people as a place of 'itinerants', including Guniwinggu and Miali people and others from as far away as Oenpelli.\(^{110}\)

**Travelling modes**

The observations of Indigenous people as 'transient' became more codified within the land claim process as claimants were asked to describe their movements through country. Much of the land claim hearings are taken up with determining Indigenous people's spheres of movement and the results are detailed descriptions of the continuous movement of Indigenous people through country inspired by the fact that the informants are on the land they are describing.\(^{111}\)

Descriptions of Indigenous people travelling through country reflected the complex Indigenous associations with the land which were embodied in moving through their country. Walking through country was intrinsic to Indigenous lifestyle for social, ceremonial and economic reasons.\(^{112}\)

In her book *Dingo Makes Us Human* Deborah Bird Rose discusses Indigenous/Yarralin maps as expressions of this cultural connection.

Dreaming travels are celebrated in song, dance, story, and ritual.

Tracks and songs are the basis to Indigenous maps and are often

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\(^{107}\) Helen Liddy, interview, 1997.

\(^{108}\) NAA, NT: F1 1959/7, report, Patrol Officer to District Welfare Officer, 26 November 1958.

\(^{109}\) Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997.

\(^{110}\) Notebook 2, 26 February 1997

called 'boundaries'. To say that there are boundaries is to say that there are differences; the universe is not uniform. Unlike European maps on which boundaries are lines that divide, tracks connect points on the landscape, showing relationships between points. These are the 'boundaries' that unite.113

This richness of connection was articulated through movement. As one Indigenous man described for the UDLC hearing: 'Go over that hill, right over Pine Creek, right up. Walk around Pine Creek, Kybrook on foot. Come back same way, over this way, walk up, me and my old man and other. Camp all the way here. Camp other side there, down the river, home.'114 This man not only articulated his association with the country by describing his travels through it but also by stopping, camping and resting in it.

Camping was both a cultural expression and a practical response to the need for rest for all people who were travelling. There was a long established history of camping in the Pine Creek area for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Camping and making do
Camps were quite simply the ground one lay upon whether it was under a roof or under a sky - in a friend's shack or an abandoned building or under the stars - it could be where one slept off the effects of alcohol, a place to sleep when coming into town for supplies, to rest up after the working season had finished, to have sex, to shelter from the monsoons, or keep a safe distance from the law.115 Pine Creek has never ceased to be a camping place.116

Bill Harney wrote that 'The word "camp" is synonymous with "water" with both black and white men in the bush'.117 Pine Creek and associated billabongs provided water for campers and it provided shade and flat areas to camp. As Helen Liddy recalled along Pine Creek 'it used to be nice and flat, and all the shade. You'd get mussels, and this time of the year they

112 McGrath, 'We grew up the stations', p.309; see also Ann McGrath, Born in the cattle, 1987, pp.4-5.
113 Rose, Dingo makes us human, p.52.
114 ALC (Upper Daly River): transcript of proceedings, 5 December 1984, p. 784.
115 NAA,ACT: A1/1, 1911/12138, Acting Administrator, S.J. Mitchell, South Australian, Minutes forming enclosure to Government Resident, no. 18984, 1910, 10 June 1911; NAA, ACT: A659/1, 44/1/1979, HP Butler Chairman Progress Committee Pine Creek to Mr Pigott, Lands and Survey Branch, Alice Springs, c1944; Notebook 2, 26 February 1997
116 See Map 1 and Map 2 in Appendix 4 showing Indigenous camp sites such as Julius Peter's camp, Black Cat and Pussycat Billabong. Note also that abandoned buildings were also used by various people as campsites.
117 Bill Harney, Content to lie in the sun, p.156.

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used to get little fish out of the little billabongs.\textsuperscript{118} Two of the main Indigenous camps in Pine Creek - at Pussycat Billabong east of the railway and Black Cat west of the railway - were on billabongs associated with Pine Creek. Julius Peter's camp, otherwise know as 'Black cat' camp, was located half-way between the town and the escarpment close to the creek.\textsuperscript{119}

Robert Levitus points out that Pussycat Billabong was not only the province of Indigenous people - Europeans also used to camp there. As he pointed out: 'It was conveniently located, a fair distance away from the Pine Creek police, but within easy distance of the town's facilities. The old road from Pine Creek to Burrundie ran past the head of Pussycat Billabong Creek\textsuperscript{120}

The springs from the escarpment also encouraged camping at the headwaters of Pine Creek and enabled Helen Liddy's family to stay on the escarpment which also had caves for shelter. During World War Two the Patrol Officers working for Native Affairs 'mustered' Pine Creek Indigenous people into Julius Peter's camp near the Cullen River which was also close to a spring.\textsuperscript{121}

As discussed earlier camping was also associated in a number of peoples minds with the \textit{ad hoc} use of abandoned buildings in and around the town. Camping could also include staying with friends who had houses or shacks. These places were offered as alternatives to sleeping off 'benders' (excessive drinking) on the ground.\textsuperscript{122} Mickie Page came in to town for 'tucker and booze and camped in the bakehouse or at 'old Doigan's' house.\textsuperscript{123} Merv Lee recounted that next to the Shell 'servo' stood a big Sidney Williams Hut which was a place to sleep off a bender. The old Bonrook Homestead next to Ah Toys and the railway houses opposite Ah

\textsuperscript{118} Helen Liddy, interview, 1997; 'Diary of the Caledon Bay prospecting party' in \textit{Bulletin} no. 3, The Minister of External Affairs, Melbourne, 1912, p.72; Notebook 2, 26 February 1997.
\textsuperscript{119} Helen Liddy, interview, 1996, 1997; Tex Moar, interview, 1997a,b; Emu and Jessie Corrigan, discussion notes, 1997; Jack Lewis, interview, 1997; ALC (Upper Daly): transcript of proceedings, 4 December 1984, p. 548; For other locations of camps see Wolfe, \textit{Pine Creek Aborigines and town camps}, p.13; Pearce, vol. 1, p.145; NAA, ACT: F315, 1949/393A, report, Cadet Patrol Officer Director Native Affairs, March-April 1949; NLC: Kakadu conservation zone inquiry, Extract from Department of Aboriginal Affairs file 77/152(1), Exhibit 11, letter, Regional Adviser (Katherine) to Director of Aboriginal Affairs, 10 March 1975.
\textsuperscript{120} Levitus, Everybody, p 84.
\textsuperscript{121} NAA, ACT: F1, 1944/275, report, Patrol Officer to Director Native Affairs, 9 June 1944.
\textsuperscript{122} Johnnie Hart described sleeping off benders 'anywhere'. Johnny Hart, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{123} Notebook 2, 26 February 1997
Toys were also occasionally occupied. The area along Pine Creek otherwise known as Gun Alley was a primary camping area. After the war the Chinatown area was used as a camp for people travelling through although there were also longer term residents who had ‘camped there for a long time’. When did a camper become a settler? When did a camp become a town?

Settlements

Both the township of Pine Creek and Chinatown started life as camps. Pine Creek was initially an overland telegraph camp and then, like Chinatown, a mining camp. John Lewis, an adventurer and prospector provided one of the earliest descriptions of the town of Pine Creek as a mining camp. Dominic Daly described a settlement amidst roads and tracks with ‘...the usual hotel, store and blacksmith...’

Lewis’s description of Pine Creek defined the ‘town’ in terms of comparatively permanent structures with functioning businesses. Elsie Masson noted the core elements of Pine Creek as comprising ‘...its hospital, two hotels, one or two stores, a school, and the dwellings of white officials such as the Protector of Aboriginals, and the Police.’

Invariably it was these ‘official’ buildings that were identified as constituting the town in these early descriptions in which ‘tin shanties and bark humpies’ were almost incidentally described (see Figure 33 of Pine Creek Chinatown).

The concept of a camp is more fluid than that of a fixed settlement and yet settlements are only comparatively fixed. In the Pine Creek area, the predominance of shacks, the continuing

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124 Railway houses. Extracts PCN, n.d. The site where the houses were located is now known as Alec Gorey Park; Notebook 2, 14 March 1997; Notebook 5, 11 February 1998
126 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
127 Daly, Digging, squatting and pioneering life, p.343; Lewis, Fought and won; p.108. Reverend Bogles’ account from the 1870s places Pine Creek in a broader context of a chain of mining townships, Diary of Reverend A.J. Bogle, September 1875 to January 23, 1877 while stationed in the NT, MS; Reports (geological and general), p.7.
Figure 33: 'Street scene - Chinatown' circa early 1900s.
Source: Kirkbride Album, La Trobe picture collection, State Library of Victoria
presence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous camping sites and the interlinking tracks that connected all these places reflected the more temporal and mobile elements of settlement. 130

Eylmann, a German anthropologist who stayed six weeks in the Pine Creek area in the early twentieth century wrote a description unusual for its incorporation of the diverse elements which constituted the settlement in the area. Pine Creek, he wrote, was a ‘...little mining town ... on the creek of the same name. It consists of 25 or 30 tin huts. About [2 km] south of there one finds China Town – that, as the name says is occupied by Chinese’. He went on to describe that ‘Of natives there was no lack: not far from both villages I found several camps of them’. 131

As Jerome Murif wrote in 1897, ‘Pine Creek... is not itself a large place, but it is the centre of an extensive gold mining district.’ 132 In the early twentieth century Baldwin Spencer did not describe Chinatown per se but the ‘...Chinese settlement’ ‘...which spreads over a wide area that seems to be made up of overgrown mullock heaps with remains of pitheads, representing hundreds of mines. Endless little tracks lead in and out amongst them, forming a perfect labyrinth, and all over the place are groups of shanties.’ 133 Johnnie Hart some decades later described the scattered nature of the Chinese population. ‘Oh, here and there, and everywhere, like natives they were. Wherever they'd find three tins of - three pieces of iron, they'd put up a shack too. That's all they'd do. That was them, they lived the hard way.’ 134

In the 1920s/1930s Gilbert Williams described Chinatown as ‘...built higgledy-piggledy all over the place. There was no really town site.’ 135 In the same period Albert Que Noy described Chinatown as comprising humpies made of bush timber, bark and old pieces of iron. He estimated that there were between twenty and fifty humpies and over five hundred

130 Leonie Ruig, discussion notes, 1997. See also NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 126, Jessie Tamblyn, transcript p.3; Topographical plan Pine Creek Goldfield, 1913; NAA, NT:F1, 1955/90, water supply Pine Creek 1954 -1960 - see map in this file showing seven huts and other buildings in the Gun Alley area; NAA, NT: F1 1960/83, Water Supply Pine Creek 1960-63. See Appendix 4.
131 Eylmann, Kolonie Sudaustralien, p.13.
132 Jerome J. Murif, From ocean to ocean: A record of a trip across the continent of Australia from Adelaide to Port Darwin, George Robertson and Co, Melbourne, 1897, p.176.
133 Spencer, Wanderings in wild Australia, p.630
134 Johnnie Hart, interview, 1997; Murif, From ocean to ocean, p.176; Sowden, The Northern Territory as it is; Diary of Reverend A.J. Bogle, MS; Pearce, vol. 2, p.67ff. Pearce indicates that Chinese settlements were located near Jolly's Battery/Eleanor Hill, Cosmopolitan Battery and on western edge of town near Enterprise Hill and Gandy's Gully respectively.
135 Gilbert Williams, interview, 1996.
occupants. Hudson Fysh described ‘... hovels built of iron sheets and flattened-out kerosine tins, held together with rough-hewn timber from the adjacent bush.’ Jessie Tamblyn described Chinatown as 'ramshackle' with the houses made of bamboo and thatched with tall grass.

A commonly used photo in early travelogues and later National Trust fliers depicts the town of Pine Creek in the early 1900s. It shows a neat and tidy streetscape with uniform shops. But if the photograph had been a panoramic shot the wider reality of the scattered ad hoc settlement would have been revealed (see Figure 34). As Elsie Masson observed in 1915, 'The traveller who has looked out (sic) Pine Creek on the map and sees its name printed in type as large as that of Sydney or Melbourne experiences a slight shock when he alights there. For Pine Creek consists only of a line of iron and wooden buildings straggling down one side of a street.'

When was a humpy a house?
The history of 'improvised' dwellings in Pine Creek by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people continued well into the twentieth century. Anne McGrath made the observation in 1978 when she interviewed a long time local resident Fred Frith that the houses where most 'whites' lived...were low standard and of 'poor appearance'. 'They are made of all galvanised iron, wooden beams, native timbers; unsawn posts act as supports, verandahs and so on. Everything about it has a rather poor appearance. Generally, just plain mattresses on the beds. Certainly, they have junk piled all over the walls and so on, very functional and neat and clean but low standard, very much like the natives live in.' In the early 1980s a report noted the high percentage of these dwellings in Pine Creek.

The structures of occupied private dwellings in Pine Creek in 1981 was quite different to the pattern evidenced in the Northern Territory in general, with over 50% of Pine Creek’s households

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136 Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996 and discussion notes, 1996; Earlier accounts described the existence of '...several substantially built stores'. Jones refers to the 1890s. Jones, *The Chinese*, p.72.
137 Fysh, 'The Northern Territory of Australia', p.253;
139 This photo appears on a number of National Trust pamphlets depicting Pine Creek e.g NTANT, *Early days in Pine Creek, Pine Creek Heritage Trail* and in narratives of the period eg Masson, *An untamed Territory*.
140 Masson, *An untamed Territory*, pp.73-74. See also Sowden, *The Northern Territory as it is*, p.46.
142 Comment by Interviewer, Ann McGrath, NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 214, commentary, Fred Frith, p.13.

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Figure 34: 'Pine Creek township Main Street' circa early 1900s.
Source: Kirkbride Album, La Trobe picture collection, State Library of Victoria.
living in non-standard (caravans) or sub-standard (improved) dwellings. 143

Past residents described the most common building element in Pine Creek as galvanised iron or as Jack Roney described '...old-fashioned angle iron, with timber.' 144 Joan Shaungnessy described that Pine Creek '... was like a shanty town in fifty-eight. Every house was made of corrugated iron but it was wonderful.' 145 Lily Ah Toy described the quarters of the single Chinese men living in Chinatown as 'humpies or shanties.' 146

When was a humpy a house? In the early 1970s the author Colin Simpson noted that a local Indigenous man who worked for the Postmaster General ('PMG Pincher') lived in a house not a humpy. The Coxes and the Fong families lived in very modest houses - corrugated iron was still the main building material and ant bed or earthen floors. 147 One resident reeled a list off of the proper buildings - 'The rest' he said 'were just humpies.' 148

The distinction between houses, humpies and shacks reflected inter-cultural as well as intra-cultural class distinctions. For instance Que Noy and Mon Cham's residences contrasted with the spare shacks of the miners in Chinatown as did the public servants houses from the shacks at Gun Alley. 149

The definition of home was obviously in the eye of the beholder. People made their homes out of accessible materials. In the absence of corrugated iron brush and bark were used and where iron was available it was recycled. 150 Mick Page recalled a man who lived in a stone house in the 1940s. In the 1920s a Chinese gardener lived in a 'mud house, reinforced with bottles.' 151

143 Kinhill Stearns, Pine Creek Gold Mine EIS, 7-4.
144 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 478, Jack Roney, transcript, 1987, p.6
146 NTAS: NTRS: 226, TS1, Lily Ah Toy, transcript, p.22.
147 NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 210/1, Mrs. Shu Ack Fong, transcript, p.12; John Bellinger interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek 1997; Simpson. The new Australia, p.355; Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997.
148 Notebook 7, 2 December 1996.
149 Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
150 Notebook 7, 2 December 1996. For reference to 'humpies' on a mining field see Report of the preliminary scientific expedition to the Northern Territory, p.42.
151 A.C. Battle and H.W. Benson, By Car to Melbourne to Darwin and Wave Hill, Northern Territory, 1925, MS. One woman recalled the bottle house behind the bakery in which bottles were embedded in an antbed flooring. Notebook 5, 13 March 1998.
MIXING, MEETING AND SEPARATING

Places comprised zones of inclusion and exclusion; official and unofficial places of gathering and residence. There were segregated spaces and non-segregated spaces based on culture, gender and class. In the following sections I explore in more detail key places of convergence and separation in the township as defined by culture, gender and class which influenced how these spaces were occupied and who occupied them. Tracks signified these inter-cultural connections as well as serving a pragmatic use of getting from A to B.

Cultural separation and connection

There were the cultural enclaves of Chinese and European Australians, living respectively in Chinatown and Pine Creek. Mayse Young, a resident of Pine Creek, recalled of the residents of Chinatown: '...they never worried us, and we never worried them.' Albert Que Noy did not recollect many white people, with the exception of some prospectors, coming into Chinatown.

But this cultural separation was modified or offset by the level of inter-cultural exchange and communication between all cultures living in the area. The town of Pine Creek was never exclusively European. There was a strong merchant Chinese presence in Pine Creek until the 1920s. Some of these merchants lived in Pine Creek and others lived in the Chinatown area.

Chinese merchants that operated businesses within the gazetted town area included Yet Loong Chan, Que Noy and Leung Man and Wing Cheong (Wing Cheong & Co. later becoming Cheong Ah Yu which Jimmy Ah Toy took over in his own right as a son of the 'Ah Yu' family). There was also a Chinese Butcher Chin Quan on the southern side of town. Extracts PCN nd ‘A look down memory lane on Ah Toys Store by Lily Ah Toy’. NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 483, Ellen Crammond, transcript, p.15. Albert Que Noy, discussion notes 1996; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996.

The Indigenous presence in the town may have diminished over time as the policing of Indigenous movements increased with Commonwealth control after 1912. The prohibitions on Indigenous residency in the town area did not preclude a significant and continuing Indigenous presence in town. See for instance Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.182.

152 Mayse Young, interview,1996; see also NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 144, Mayse Young interviewed by Wendy James, Darwin, 1984, p.11.
153 Albert Que Noy, discussion notes, 1996
155 Chinese merchants that operated businesses within the gazetted town area included Yet Loong Chan, Que Noy and Leung Man and Wing Cheong (Wing Cheong & Co. later becoming Cheong Ah Yu which Jimmy Ah Toy took over in his own right as a son of the 'Ah Yu' family). There was also a Chinese Butcher Chin Quan on the southern side of town. Extracts PCN nd ‘A look down memory lane on Ah Toys Store by Lily Ah Toy’. NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 483, Ellen Crammond, transcript, p.15. Albert Que Noy, discussion notes 1996; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1996.
156 The Indigenous presence in the town may have diminished over time as the policing of Indigenous movements increased with Commonwealth control after 1912. The prohibitions on Indigenous residency in the town area did not preclude a significant and continuing Indigenous presence in town. See for instance Merlan, Caging the rainbow, p.182.
157 Albert Que Noy, discussion notes, 1996.
The distances were so small in the township that people could easily walk to their destination. The tracks people used signified social and economic connections. In the 1950s the railway station was adjacent to the hotel. Immediately south of the hotel was Ah Toy's General Store. Immediately north of the hotel was the Creek with its associated living and camping areas. For the life of both Chinatown and Pine Creek a perennial connecting track crossed over the small range that separated the two settlements. The distance between the two settlements was approximately a mile. Albert estimated that it was a half hour walk from Chinatown to Pine Creek. Lily Ah Toy recalled the old men walking along the single track from Chinatown past Jimmy 'Deafy' Malloy's adit into Pine Creek for supplies.

There were various sites of trade in and around the town, the most formal being constituted by the general store and the least formal being constituted by illicit trade. The trade in opium, alcohol and sex continually over-rode cultural divisions. One example of this was the constant demand of European and Chinese men for access to Indigenous women and the ways in which Europeans working on the railway participated in the opium trade through the supply of opium to Chinese merchants.

**Railway station, general store and hotel**

The primary place where people of all races and classes converged was the railway station. As Dorothy Hall pointed out: '…everyone that lived in Pine Creek at the time came down to meet the train when it arrived.' For many years the railway station also doubled up as the post-office and during World War Two it also doubled as a bank and telegraph station.

The railway was of social significance not only as a meeting place but economically in terms of the human freight and cargo it brought. It was the largest employer in town and had the largest single conglomerate of public buildings which included living quarters for the various employees including the Station master and gangers' huts.
Like the railway station the general store was also a significant gathering point: everyone frequented it at one time or another. Lily Ah Toy described Ah Toy's General Store as a meeting place: '...for about 40 years it was the hive of activity in Pine creek when it was basically the only store in town.' Outside the front of Ah Toy's was, as Lily Ah Toy describes, '...a strong wooden form outside the shop, where customers sat, rested and talked to friends, it was also very popular as a meeting place for the elderly.' As Helen Liddy pointed out Indigenous walking tracks converged at Ah Toy's store from the various points around town including a track from the Gorge/Escarpment area, a track from Jolly's Dam and a track from Pussycat Billabong.

While the general store was the province of potentially everyone the Hotel for many years remained the staunch province of European male workers. The Hotel was a significant physical space in town not only because it supplied alcohol but also room and board. However, for many years it was culturally exclusive. Indigenous people had no drinking rights until the referendum in 1967 and Chinese people tended not to drink at hotels although there was no legal prohibition on their patronage. In the early years of the Hotel, as elsewhere in the Territory, Chinese cooks were employed in the kitchen and for many years European women held the licence for the Hotel.

Hotel accommodation made space for those sleeping off hangovers after coming into town to 'blow' their cheques. Alistair Quest described the 'drunks' room at the hotel '...a special room mainly for drunken people from Mt Wells...', where Alistair was working at the time.

NAA, NT: F1 1955/90, Commonwealth of Australia Department of Works & Housing Northern Territory, Details of Water Supply - Pine Creek 29 August 1947.
Notebook 3, 13 May 1997. For earlier account of store purchases see Diary of the Caledon Bay prospecting party, p.72.
A look down memory lane on Ah Toys Store by Lily Ah Toy' Extracts PCN, n.d.
Helen Liddy, interview, 1997.
In 1922, in addition to the bar, the Hotel had seven outside bedrooms and three inside bedrooms.
NAA, ACT: A1/1, 1926/6763 Schedule furniture and fittings - Pine Creek Hotel. nd circa 1922.
NAA, ACT: A432/86, 29/2342, Local Court of Darwin in its full jurisdiction, before Edward Copley Playford S.M. & Common Jury, 10 June 1929. In 1926 Christina Gordon was leasing the Hotel. Grace Davies was the publican in 1929 and subsequently the Dowling family took over and the Dowling's daughter, Mayse Young, eventually took over the running of the hotel in conjunction with her husband, Bagger Young. The Hotel is still in the Young family. NAA, ACT: A1/1, 26/6763, Schedule Furniture and Fittings - Pine Creek Hotel c1922; Mayse Young interview, 1996, Young with Dalton, No place for a woman.
Alistair Quest, interview, 1997.
Mayse Young, one of the former owners and licencee of the hotel, described the gender division in the hotel before the war and how women drank in the saloon, in a small room away from the bar.\textsuperscript{171} She also described a code of mutual understanding about the nature of this separation. 'For all their rough exteriors, most of these men [from the station] were gentlemen and always treated women with consideration and respect. If a swear word slipped out in conversation when we were within earshot, it was followed by an apology. On the other hand, females also respected the bar as the men’s private sanctuary, and we knew that we weren’t supposed to listen in on their talk.'\textsuperscript{172}

The Hotel also had an obvious social function where people gathered to find out what was going on. As Mayse Young described: 'I found that you didn't have to go out to meet people in the pub, people came to you. That's why I know so little about the town, I think, I must have just sort of been in that little area, and that was my life.'\textsuperscript{173} She went on to describe the hotel as '... the meeting place of all my friends, there was always company... and that it was '...the only place you'd get to meet anybody.'\textsuperscript{174} In more recent years Robert Liddy has made a similar observation about the hotel. In the 1960s/1970s he described the Hotel as '...one of the main meeting areas where you could catch most people on any evening during the week...'.\textsuperscript{175}

**Gun Alley**

While the Pine Creek Hotel was historically primarily a European male space other areas around the town, like Gun Alley, were far more egalitarian.

The term Gun Alley was used to describe an area between the old police station and Pine Creek where there were a number of shacks. Joan Frazer described Gun Alley physically as '... a row of houses, old places, old shacks...'.\textsuperscript{176} Merv Lee remembered half a dozen houses and big mango trees.\textsuperscript{177} Joan Frazer recounted that all the places - shacks - along Gun Alley were '...bulldozed away, cleaned up you know.'\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{171} Mayse Young, interview, 1996; NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 228, Dorothy Hall and Noel Hall, transcript, p.32.
\textsuperscript{172} Young with Dalton, *No place for a woman*, p.62.
\textsuperscript{173} Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{174} Young with Dalton, *No place for a woman*, p.167, see also NTAS: TS144, Mayse Young, p.73.
\textsuperscript{175} Robert Liddy, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{176} Joan Frazer, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{177} Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997.
\textsuperscript{178} Joan Frazer, interview, 1997.
The term Gun Alley was bestowed by Europeans sometime in the mid-twentieth century, possibly after the war. As Darkie Dempsey described. 'They called it Gun Alley because they fought round trees there. Two blokes with guns – no one hurt – one bloke standing behind trees.'

When Tex Moar was out at Jindare station he used to meet up with other cattle station men - from Gimbat and Goodparla and others from Mudginberri Buffalo Camp - and camp at Gun Alley. He alleged that that was how Gun Alley got its name. '...there was often a few bullets flying around there sometimes.' [Laughter]. Joan Frazer recounted that Gun Alley was '...supposed to have been a wild sort of place, they'd pull their guns and fire a few shots, and the women had a few rows down there. They just got named Gun Alley after a few years. You know, it was just a road that didn't go anywhere, because it came to a creek and you had to come back out again.' Leonie Ruig described Gun Alley as the 'Wild West'.

One resident believed people had been shot there and that there had been a couple of murders.

The Gun Alley area was defined by Europeans as a place that was potentially 'wild' and egalitarian outside the boundaries of a neatly defined town and lawfulness. As one European prospector described: 'Gun Alley was gins, booze, fights. If you were crook with no dough somebody would have metho or something.' In this latter respect it was also an area where the law tended to turn a blind eye. One person said that if you drank at Gun Alley you could keep out of trouble with the police.

Gun Alley had a certain local notoriety among some European residents because it was the area where the European 'ringers' went to find Indigenous women for sex. Mayse Young summed up: 'The only whites that ever went down there [Gun Alley] was anyone with a flagon looking for a little bit of company.'

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179 Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997
180 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
182 Notebook 2, 21 March 1997.
184 Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997.
185 Notebook 7, 2 December 1996.
186 '...so there was all sorts of goings on down here and it got the nick name Gun Alley I think because it was the rough end of town ...' Earl Gano, interview, 1997.
187 Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
Because of the short distances in the town it was easy to walk from the hotel to Gun Alley.\textsuperscript{188} Robert Liddy mentioned that station men knew if they '... wanted a lady friend that's where a lot of them went'.\textsuperscript{189} In the 1960s one resident recalled Indigenous women being 'sold' at the pub. He described these women as second wives.\textsuperscript{190}

In the 1960s Colin Simpson asked the publican at the Pine Creek Hotel if '... there was a lot of prostitution.' "Yes, a good bit. Bottle of port or a dollar. Ringers in from the stations-never drunk port in their lives- will say, "Think I'll take a bottle of port to the room... They bring it down here, [Gun Alley] silly buggers... Or the women go up to the hotel-not into the rooms, mind you, but I've tripped over them out at the back."\textsuperscript{191}

\textit{Outsider}

To an outsider European Australian observer, Colin Simpson, in the 1960s, Gun Alley was a place that embodied a kind of decrepitude where Indigenous people lived in the derelict police station or humpies on the 'outskirts' of town close to 'a large heap of rubbish' of bottles, and wine flagons.\textsuperscript{192}

Gun Alley is the local name for what is referred to as the blacks' camp on the outskirts of the town, stony red earth and spindly gums. About thirty Aboriginal people usually lived there. The camp was, in part, the old police station. In one room of a derelict corrugated iron structure there remained, attached to a ringbolt in the cement floor, a chain that was used to tether prisoners. There was also an old sheet-iron prison bed; bedding indicated that it was still in use. The other structures were humpies made of sheet iron. One family had mattresses on the ground and a kitchen-table arrangement on two oil drums, out in the open.\textsuperscript{193}

Simpson's account was not informed by any knowledge of the long history of Indigenous encampment on that site or in the general area. While true in an observational sense it lacked

\textsuperscript{188} Notebook 8, 15 August 1996.
\textsuperscript{189} Robert Liddy, interview, 1997.
\textsuperscript{190} Notebook 2, 21 March 1997
\textsuperscript{191} Simpson, \textit{The new Australia}, p.355.
the complexity or knowledge of family ties and associations for the people who lived at the camp, such as Topsy Stevens, or the nearby camp of Julius Peters and PMG Pincher.194

Insider

Gun Alley was always in the eye of the beholder. It meant different things to different people, including locals. Class and race borders were less defined in the area along Pine Creek. It comprised an area of inter-living of both European and Indigenous people - a place of shacks and a place to put down one’s swag. One Indigenous woman remembered it as ‘… a camping area for everybody actually.’195

The focus by some Europeans on sexual trade also glossed over the long term relationships between Europeans and Indigenous people. As Tex Moar related in respect of these relationships in general: ‘…there were some genuine bloody unions, too. Very genuine unions where the man reared up a damn good family.’196 As Johnnie Hart pointed out: ‘Well, Europeans were married to Indigenous. They used to have them there, don’t worry about that [laughs]. They were equal amount, I suppose you may as well say. Whites and - you know, Indigenous.’197

Gun Alley was both a home and a camping area. As Helen Liddy described: ‘All the bush people used to come in, you know, all the miners, station owners. You know all these white people, they used to come in there. One old woman called Martha Hart, she used to have an old house there…’ ‘And there was another house just over there again, an old fella called Charlie Sagabiel, used to live in it. It used to be an old camp, you know, every bush people used to come in. Stockmans from bush used to chuck their swags down in the flat there and sleep. On the grog - used to stay for weeks on end. [Laughs] The old ringers, yeah.’198

Jack Lewis described Gun Alley as a welcoming, social space.

195 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996. Note that a number of people did not have a specific name for this place - they simply called it 'that place where the old police station was'. In the case of Violet Smith and Bessie Coleman, discussion notes 1997, it was the place where they stayed occasionally with Topsy Stevens. See also Notebook 10, 5 April 1995; Sue Neall, discussion notes, 2000; Clem Hill, discussion notes, 1997.
196 Tex Moar, interview, 1997b; See also Bill Baird, interview, 1997. See also NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 230, Dorothy Hall and Noel Hall, transcript, n.d. pp.16-17.
198 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
All galvo huts, you know, nothing any good. Nothing flash. But the atmosphere was good, the people were pretty friendly and that. There was a lot of people used to come and go, Pine Creek was sort of a centre just like Katherine is, or was. It's people that are drifting in all the time and going out. 199

In the post-war era, as in Colin Simpson's above description, Gun Alley was defined more specifically as an Indigenous 'camp'. One man stated there were Blackfellas 'all along there' - behind the old police station. 200 As Russell Young put it: 'It was more an Indigenous type camp. Not full-bloods, more like half-caste families and that sort of thing.' 201 Mickey Page recalled 'old Jamus and Julius Peters and Martha Hart their sister and...some real old timers [lived there]. 202

Robert Liddy, almost a generation younger than Russell also described Gun Alley as '...just like a big Indigenous camp,...a lot of people lived down and around there, especially in the old police station.' But he also identified individual Europeans living there, like Fred Turvey, in 'an old house there...right there where Union Reef [camp] is now there was a very big old style house... 203

The other side of town

If Gun Alley was a place where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people co-existed it remained exclusive to the extent that it retained a gender and culture exclusivity. For instance European and Chinese women did not appear to venture into Gun Alley. They were linked into their own family and business context in the town such as Mayse Young at the hotel and Lily Ah Toy at the store.

Among town dwellers, there was a perception of social division within the town that was intra-cultural and intercultural. A number of people I spoke with, Indigenous and European, commented on the public servants who lived on the eastern side of the railway along Railway Terrace. 204 This area was where the original telegraph station/post office was located (now the museum) along with the housing for the so-called professional classes

200 Notebook 2, 26 February 1997.
201 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
202 Notebook 2, 26 February 1997, see also Notebook 1, 18 February 1997.
204 See Appendix 4, Map 1.
notably the policeman and the teacher. In the middle of the twentieth century this area was known variously as 'Snob Street', 'Snob Hill' or 'Angora Heights'. Johnnie Hart described the area as the 'legs' as in 'heads' or bosses area. Gangers and fettlers in contrast to these public servants lived in more modest quarters and often came and went as part of their work. They were more properly defined as working class while the teacher and policemen were more obviously middle class.

Apart from Gun Alley the other main area of Indigenous residency was along Pine Creek on the eastern side of the railway line (Gun Alley was to the west of the railway line). Mai Katona observed that the town was divided into 'white' and Indigenous housing areas with Indigenous residences at the northern end '...somehow the Indigenous were at the bottom end of the town, and the white people were at the top end of the town. Now, I'm not sure whether that was a deliberate segmentation, or it's just the way things happened because of the housing situation'. Bill Baird also recalled the significant number of Indigenous families, including his own, in this part of town after World War Two (see Chapter four). There were a number of established dwellings in this area. However the borders were somewhat fluid - Bill Baird's home was next to the hotel and in the area Mai described there were also European residents.

**World War Two**

World War Two signalled a break in occupancy of these places of habitation. Most of the residents were evacuated down south and many, such as the old Chinese men from Chinatown, never returned. Some tracks ceased to be used. New tracks formed on top of old, such as the Stuart Highway, which was built and bitumised by the military and overlay an older ungraded north-south track. The army appropriated many of the main buildings in town and added a few others - such as the camp hospital close to Chinatown and the 'mess' building constructed of asbestos, iron and fly wire near the railway station. Other buildings were allowed to run down or were destroyed when the army recycled the sheet iron cladding

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205 Jack Lewis, interview, 1997; Notebook 10 25 May 1995; Russell Young, interview, 1996.
208 For instance, the Lew Fatts, Bensons and Markhams. Bill Baird, interview 1997.
209 NAA, NT: Fl, 1955/90, map, Commonwealth of Australia Northern Territory Department of Works & Housing Northern Territory, 29 August 1947. See also NAA, SA: D646/7, 70/180/11.
210 NAA, SA: B300/2 9425, letter, Manager Commonwealth Rail Darwin to Secretary, Melbourne, 4 July 1955.
and other materials from buildings.\textsuperscript{211} Lily recalled the loss of the Chinese temple during World War Two when soldiers dismantled it for the iron which was, she said '... a sacrilege really. The ground is still there, the concrete floor'.\textsuperscript{212}

Mining machinery was uplifted in its entirety from mining sites and re-used and even the most durable buildings such as Ah Toy's Store and the Hotel were damaged.\textsuperscript{213} As Tex remembered: 'The army had just moved out, moving out, and all the old buildings were pulled down and there wasn't much left of Pine Creek in those days'. Pine Creek constituted '...a dozen I s'pose, properly built houses in Pine Creek. The rest were only tin humpies and old prospectors camps, and that sort of thing'.\textsuperscript{214} Ellen Crammond said that after World War Two she lost her bearings upon returning to Pine Creek for a visit. 'It was a different town altogether'.\textsuperscript{215}

The 1990s

In the 1990s Clem Hill, thinking back, noted that Pine Creek had changed. It had nothing to begin with he said – just the old pub, bakehouse and Ah Toys. There were no drains and water was out of wells.\textsuperscript{216} Mayse Young pointed out there were 'better' buildings in the town these days - a better police station and post office. 'But other than that it's still the same old town.'\textsuperscript{217} Her son Russell proffered that Pine Creek was '...a town that dies and comes back. Its mainly on the gold, but I mean, the same families have been there for that many years its not funny.' But he still noted the transience of the town. Pointing to the demountables that were being used by miners or tourists: 'They can stick them on the back of a truck and take 'em out in two days, and Pine Creek's back to where it was again...They're only caravans without wheels.'\textsuperscript{218} As one resident pointed out: 'we have a hugely transient population.'

Many public servants - teachers, policemen, railway workers - have come and gone over the years. Soldiers continue to pass through the town as part of the innumerable military training

\textsuperscript{211} One local described this in blunter terms as 'pilfering and stealing'. NTAS: NTRS 226 TS 406, Ted Yates, transcript, 1984, p.29.
\textsuperscript{212} Lily Ah Toy, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{213} For uplift of mining equipment see NAA, NT: F1, 1946/657, letter, Superintendent of Police to Chief Clerk 2 June 1942. For correspondence relating to Bakery refurbishment in post war period see NAA, NT: F1 1944/486, Part 1 Brigadier to Jimmy Ah Toy, 7 December 1944. For re-use of other domestic buildings see NAA, Vic: B542, 'Pine Creek Box NT-AW' and B985/1 Nu/12/38
\textsuperscript{214} Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.
\textsuperscript{215} NTAS: TS 483/3, Ellen Crammond, p.8.
\textsuperscript{216} Clem Hill, discussion notes. 1998.
\textsuperscript{217} Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
\textsuperscript{218} Russell Young, interview, 1996.
exercises that have become an increasingly regular feature of the Top End. Local residents continue to note this transience in population at the onset of the twenty-first century.\(^{219}\)

The major change in respect of residency has been the return of Indigenous people to their country in the Pine Creek area as a result of the return of their land. As they return to their country old tracks are renewed.\(^{220}\) Some tracks however, like the one between Chinatown and Pine Creek, have gone forever. The Goldfields mine dug the hillside away and in doing so split the road/track network along the local ridge and created numerous dead ends. In the local tourist map of the town reproduced in the Introduction (Figure 4) the Goldfields Road which leads to the mine, is a dead end. Mining pits and roads are mutually exclusive!

New tracks
But people will never stop walking, finding old tracks and making new ones. There will always be short-cuts, like the one that the Pine Creek school children take when they cut across the water gardens and abandoned railway line to school, or make a bee line for the 'rock hole' to go swimming (see Figure 23). Gun Alley has gone and the footpaths with it. But the Creek is still there - a water-filled track that has outlasted the footprints of former residents.

In Chapter six I explore remembering and forgetting particularly in the context of those who have lived and died in the Pine Creek area and the nature of anonymity associated with transient populations.


\(^{220}\) Levitus, \textit{Everybody}, p.68; 'The grant of land in the Alligator Rivers region to a Land Trust encouraged movement back into the region especially from the fringes of Darwin and Pine Creek, as a recent census (August and December 1979) shows.' NLC: Keen, Alligator Rivers, p.63.
CHAPTER SIX

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING
Figure 35: Pine Creek airstrip banner.
CHAPTER SIX
REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

I think sometimes one of the main problems we have is we forget. We don't remember.

Sogyal Rinpoche 1

To Sogyal Rinpoche remembering is a practice of mindfulness and an antidote to ignorance. 'Because if you're mindful and aware, then we might have the remembrance.' In this chapter I explore remembering and forgetting in the context of what survives as history and what elements of the past are forgotten. I comment on the partiality of historical sources, contemplate the incompleteness of memory and the legacy of memory loss in respect of the histories of the Pine Creek area. I speculate on the unknowable and mysterious elements of history and explore the gap between what was privately remembered and what was publicly acknowledged in order to describe the spaces in-between what is known in Pine Creek's history.

The Town Banner of the Airstrip that introduces this chapter is on one level a memorial to the past and how it was remembered. It shows how the airstrip was used variously as a hunting, recreation and landing site. The banner depicts military medals symbolising the presence of the military in Pine Creek during World War Two and later the veterans who 'settled' in Pine Creek. The banner also displays an image of the local cemetery. There is also an image of an owl which Gaye Lawrence sewed in memory of her brother who had died suddenly a few years earlier. 2

This chapter continues exploring the theme of transience pursued in Chapter five but extends this discussion to embrace the theme of loss which occurs inevitably with the passing of people and the struggle to survive that people faced in their day to day lives. In this respect this chapter is in part a homage to all those who have lived and died in the area. This is not a

2 Gaye's brother identified with the owl as his symbol. Interestingly, a couple of nights after his death an owl flew into Gaye's loungeroom. Gaye Lawrence, verbal communication, 11 June 2003.

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celebratory or heroic view but rather an 'as it is' view of history where living and dying and surviving were, and are, part of the human condition.

**Vestiges of the past**

I spoke in the introduction about vestiges of the past and how the term described both an outlining of the past through observation and the inherent impermanence of the past. I described vestigial history both in psychological and physical terms - as both memory, which is inherently partial, and as the physical remnants of the past, such as documentary or archaeological evidence, which constitute the basis for orthodox history.

The richness of the physical remains of the past in the Pine Creek area are quite literally the vestiges of history, deteriorating and being weathered even as I write about them. One can see for oneself or, alternately, learn about these physical signs through exposure to peoples' recollections in which they continually remark on the physical remnants of past habitation scattered over the landscape: from rice wine jars and square Holland's gin bottles to mining machinery; from stock yard posts to rusting barbed wire and abandoned tracks.

Placed in their historical context, these items are fragments of historical processes powerfully reminding one of the past. I remember being excited about coming across these signs of the past in the Pine Creek area, literally peering into the past down a mining adit or being reminded of the Chinese gardening presence in the landscape through the remnants of rice paddies on Esmerelda Station or, in a more subdued fashion, when Lulu Martin showed us the dry dusty compound site where she and her family were forced to live. The same compound where her sister had died in childbirth.

And yet history, in the form of material remains, is constantly being destroyed through the inroads of mining development or dissolved by the tropical climate. This is literally a disappearing and decomposing history. One archaeologist observed, of an old abandoned engine, 'Its surroundings have been massively disturbed, and there is no evidence of the engine's relationship to other components of the former mill. The engine is in the shade of a large fig tree, whose roots have partly enveloped the vertical exhaust duct.'

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The touchstone for archaeological work are such physical remains and yet archaeologists too are hard pressed in a climate like the Top End to find solidity in the physical. As Dan Gillespie observed at Imarlkba Gold mine, though Indigenous people lived and worked at the mine site in comparison with Europeans there was very little archaeological evidence of their presence. He proposed that one of the reasons for this absence of evidence was Indigenous people's mobility and the climate in which floods washed away signs of their encampments.\(^5\)

Abandoned tracks are broken down with each successive wet season and gradually their outline dissolves back into the ground. Is the ground the same as it was before the track was established? Perhaps not. We are reminded of the past even when the physical signs of it have disappeared because of what we remember, what is recorded and what we are told.

**Flux and change**

The washing away of signs of past habitation by the natural elements also describes another aspect of the past - its mutability and changeability.

The history of constant recycling of building materials in the Pine Creek area and the transience of people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, describe a history of both impermanence and flux. There is also environmental change both natural and introduced. There is displacement of indigenous people with the waves of new immigrants. There is a 'breaking down' of socio-cultural relationships in Indigenous culture and a re-composition of these relationships in a different form. There are the continuous cycles of life and death. Pine Creek was a place where people have laboured, lived and died - where life was tenuous and death could come unexpectedly.\(^6\)

There was constant population flux, particularly during mining periods, as the peaks and troughs in mineral prices invariably brought peaks and troughs in the numbers of European and Chinese miners in the area. Equally, Indigenous populations fluctuated as they moved seasonally from one place to another. Settlements in the area, including Pine Creek, peaked and declined. In 1882 William Sowden described the town as 'fast declining' with crumbling

\(^4\) Bell, Pine Creek – fig 74. Mount Wells battery
\(^5\) Gillespie, Imarlkba, pp.84-89, p.106.
\(^6\) NAA, NT: CRS A3, NT 1918/2764. Return showing the number and nature of mining accidents which occurred in the mines during the years 1900 to June 30 1916.; NAA, ACT: letter, KM Rundle to Squadron Leader, commanding no. 2 base. Personnel staff office to the Secretary, Air Board, Melbourne, 7 October 1943; ‘Helen Liddy retires from Clinic’ PCN September 1996, p.3.
and burnt buildings. In 1895 a handbook described Pine Creek as 'almost abandoned.' But Pine Creek survived this period, if only just. Between the 1920s and 1940s Pine Creek was described variously as 'flourishing' 'civilised' 'enchanted', 'primitive' 'weather-beaten' 'derelict' and 'half-deserted'. In 1996 Russell Young proffered that Pine Creek was '...a town that it dies and comes back.' These days there are the peaks and troughs of tourist numbers as they pass through the area.

Other signs of the past
In the aftermath of the killing times European men read signs of violence on the bodies of surviving Indigenous people. Dead men tell no tales but living ones bear the scars of reprisals such as the two Indigenous men who were observed at the turn of the nineteenth century near Daly River with bullet scars. As the geologist/observer pointed out: '...one has a groove along his forehead, where a white man's bullet grazed him, and the other carried a bullet in his leg, planted there by a white man.'

We can never know the actual extent of loss of life of Indigenous people as a result of colonisation. There is, however, an ethical imperative to acknowledge historical events that lie outside the empirical realm. Is history simply about proof and making a case about what is known, seen or viewable - or is it something more subtle - tracing the gaps, ellipses and shadows that surround facts? History comprises both the seen and unseen and both parts create a more representative and holistic picture of the past.

In the Daly River massacres in which at least one hundred and fifty Indigenous people were killed the most publicly commemorated figures were the European victims. Two of the miners killed at the Daly River Copper mine by Indigenous people had headstones to mark their graves. The first headstone that was erected read 'T. Schollert. MURED (sic) BY BLACKS. Sept. 24-'84'. Some years later Herbert Basedow, Protector and anthropologist, erected a headstone over a second victim, Noltenius. Bill Harney wrote: 'Shollett and

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9 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
10 Reports (geological and general), p.39.
Noltenious are remembered by their graves and the ruins above, but I see no monuments over the countryside to mark the resting-places of the tribesmen who fell...

The nameless and the missing

Headstones carry the name of individuals and so they are 'known'. The main meaning of the word anonymous is to be nameless. There was anonymity in the historical record and the anonymity produced by forgetting. There were more graves without headstones than with them.

The Index of deaths (1880-1948) for the Pine Creek Police Station Journals showed many deaths recorded under the name 'anonymous' most commonly in respect of Chinese men. The term 'anonymous' was rarely bestowed on European men and until the early 1900s no Indigenous deaths appear to have been recorded in the Pine Creek police journals: after this period only Indigenous deaths involving murder or suspicious circumstances were recorded. The number of anonymous deaths ascribed to Chinese people by the Pine Creek police was reduced by the presence of a Chinese liaison person who reported the deaths of Chinese people to the European policeman. 12

Even if Indigenous and Chinese people were occasionally named in these records there was another layer of anonymity inherent in their written names which were not originally their own but ascribed or anglicized by Europeans. This disguised their cultural origins and reflected a kind of naming assimilation into European culture - with, in some cases, pejorative overtones and in others simple physical description. 13

Who defines anonymity? For instance the anonymity of death for Indigenous and Chinese people outside western systems of identification was not necessarily coincident with being forgotten within their own culture. Both Indigenous and Chinese people retained their original tribal and ancestral names signifying a cultural life outside the domain of European naming. The anonymity of paternity in the case of children with Indigenous mothers and

11 Harney, Life among the Aborigines, p.44, p.43.
13 Two examples in respect of Indigenous people from the Pine Creek area include 'One eyed Tommy' and 'Fortymile', NTAS: NTRS 226, TS 483, Ellen Crammond, transcript, p.6; Merlan, Caging the rainbow, pp.99-100; Cowlishaw, Love against the law, p.33. Chinese people's family names were confused by Europeans. Frequently Chinese people's first name became their 'English' surname. For
non-Indigenous fathers contrasted with the self-chosen anonymity of non-Indigenous men who lived in the North far from their original families.

Another category of anonymity was that of missing persons - whose life or death could not be confirmed. In the Pine Creek area a history of people who had mysteriously disappeared was woven into the fabric of community memory. Had they died or just left town? Had they been murdered and their body disposed of down a mineshaft? Had they been eaten by a crocodile while crossing a river? Had they got lost?14

As Douglas Lockwood pointed out, the Katherine, Daly and Pine Creek areas were '...notorious badlands for people who don’t know their way home.'15 But even experienced guides and bushmen could get lost - some found their way home and some did not.16

There were other cases of individuals who had never returned to their camp such as Jimmy Nee Lee who set out from Driffield camp in 1916. His horse returned to camp without rider, bridle, swag or saddle. In the absence of a body the passing of life exists in a hiatus and cannot be memorialised in an obvious way. In 1936 a person found a parcel of human bones at the Pine Creek Rubbish Dump. Whose bones were they?17

Darkie Dempsey recalled a mining man, Alf Hawker, a New Zealander who also served in World War One and was supposed to have shot down the Red Baron. He went missing from his hut on the Fergusson River thirty years previous. Darkie speculated that a big croc ‘Old Charlie’ might have got him.18

Graves
The anonymity of the dead in the history of Pine Creek was highlighted in the history of gravesites and cemeteries in the area. Gravesites were scattered throughout the Pine Creek

instance Jimmy Ah Toy’s ‘first’ Chinese name was Ah Toy but on the birth certificate it was registered as his surname. Eddie Ah Toy, verbal communication, 18 July 2003.
15 Douglas Lockwood, Up the track, p.174.
area. Numerous Indigenous graves had already been lost to mining excavation (see Chapter three).

No one in the town quite knew who was buried in the town cemetery and there was a gap in the historical record about the 'official' cemetery. There was no death register for the Pine Creek cemetery until 1882 (when police journals commenced) but it was not until 1890 that a cemetery was actually planned for the 'Town of Playford' and not until 1914 that the cemetery was 'officially' gazetted. In 1994 the local Council established a Cemetery Committee to gather data on who might be buried there. One local has taken the time to memorialise the known graves in the Pine Creek cemetery with headstones.¹⁹

Notwithstanding the non-gazettal of the cemetery for many years, the whereabouts of the cemetery seems to have moved in and out of local memory. In 1936 the 'old' cemetery was re-surveyed and replaced by a larger one to the south-east of the town. The location of the original cemetery kept moving in and out of local memory - lost and found again. During World War Two the Royal Australian Airforce rediscovered the old cemetery. It was rediscovered again in the 1950s by a local policeman. Vern O'Brien recalled seeing the old cemetery in the early post-war years but by 1980 it had been bulldozed over. In 1984 it was re-pegged and historically 'remembered'.²⁰

The uncertainty of where people were buried in Pine Creek was revealed during the last re-routing of the Stuart Highway that took the road around the town. When the Highway was realigned to make more room for the open cut mining pit a wooden cross was found adjacent to where the road was to go - there was a flurry of activity to find out who was buried there but on closer inspection it turned out to be the site of a former shack. The standing timber that had survived was in the form of a cross.²¹

¹⁹ In 1914 Judge Bevan noticed the lack of cemetery gazettal and promptly addressed the situation. NAA, NT: E475/0, letter, J. Bevan, Correspondence to Administrator from Judge of the NT, 18 May 1914. See also NAA, NT: A3, NT 1914/5016, Pine Creek Cemetery proclamation for cemetery dated 25 May 1914; NTANT: Correspondence, V. T. O'Brien, Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory re 'Cemeteries & Lone Graves' to Bob Alford, 5 December 1994. Earl Gano, a local resident and craftsman, has made a number of headstones.


²¹ Steven Boyes, interview, 1997.
Forgetting - remembering

If there is such a thing as collective memory where a community holds shared memories and stories then the antithesis of collective remembering is both transience (taking one's memories with one) and death (taking one's memories to the grave).

In respect of transience one local resident described her feeling of displacement in a place of continuous population movement and loss of connection due to people leaving: 'People remember you for a few months afterwards but it's a transient population so over the years nobody remembers you because everybody that knew you has left'.

The passing of each generation brings a loss of remembering. In the time I have been writing this dissertation over half-a-dozen of the people I interviewed have died - mostly of old age. In Chapter four I talked about the perception within the town community of the death of a generation of 'old timers' and how their history was 'lost'. As a Wagiman man summed up: 'All the people died out, old people all died out.' The loss of generational knowledge is made more acute where whole generations of people died prematurely, for instance Indigenous families during epidemics.

But not everyone wanted to be remembered or noticed. And some people simply moved on leaving no traces behind. Keith Willey:

    I do not know where most of the croc hunters are now...When I asked about him [Long Mac] recently no one had seen him in years and the newer residents had not even heard of him. Maybe he sought refuge in the anonymity of clerical work, or driving a truck, or labouring in some mine. Maybe he has left the Top End altogether, for the place holds very little now for men like him. I do not know.

In 1906 the police journal recorded 'a swag man' 'lying nearly dead at the Cullen [River]'...'

He did not want to be disturbed and for the purposes of the police record was not identified.

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22 Toni Eperjesy interviewed by Bathgate, Pine Creek, 1997.
24 Keith Willey, Ghosts of the big country, p.132.
To be unrecorded in European generated records is not synonymous with being forgotten. As mentioned earlier 'unrecorded' Indigenous deaths were remembered by Indigenous people. But inexorably with the passage of time comes forgetting. As Mayse Young summed up in respect of a European man: 'A chap was going from one place to the other and he fell down a bit of a hole and died, but I can't think of his name.'

Lily Ah Toy who knew the pensioners from Chinatown had difficulty recalling their names sixty years later. In contrast to Lily's memory Darkie Dempsey reeled off the names of some of these Chinese men from the top of his tongue - Ah Fat, Quan Sing and Charlie Sing. Lily and Darkie's respective memories reflected the different span and quality of their association with the area.

*Handwriting*

In my researches I came across an elegantly written ink brush note in Mandarin from the early 1890s. It is a fragment from an unknown hand. It contains the Chinese characters for soil and gold suggesting it was written by someone ascertaining the properties of a prospective mining lease. It is written in a formal manner by an educated writer, more educated than the Chinese miners who had written their signature roughly on mining transfer forms of the same period. However one of these miners, Leung Que, had along with his Chinese signature, written his English signature in a clear flowing hand suggesting his familiarity with English in its written form. On Leung Que's form there is a shadow of another letter composed of English and Chinese characters perhaps transferred by carbon copy. Both the anonymously written ink brush note and the shadowy writing on Leung Que's form are symbolic of the barely discernible outlines of these writers and their histories (see Figures 36 and Figures 37).

*Legacies*

This handwriting reveals glimpses about the past and reveals fragments of individual lives in the form of signatures. Who were these writers and miners? Where did they come from and where did they go? When did they die and why? Who remembered them? Frank Flynn remarked on the Chinese miners who never returned to their homeland: 'Others died here, their short stay marked only by the holes they dug in the ground, and the broken Sam-sue

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26 Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
27 Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997; Lily Ah Toy interview, 1996.
28 Translation and interpretation of handwriting by Calvin Chen, April 2003 in figure's 36 and 37. South Australian State Records: GRS 22 circa 1891/92, Ink brush notation and GRS 23, Mining Transfer Forms, 10 August 1886; 26 April 1888; 29 June 1888; 10 November 1888; 28 July 1897, 5 June 1889, 17 October 1889.
jars, that litter their deserted camp sites.' 29 There were many Chinese miners who had lived most of their lives in Australia and who died here, such as Ah Won who died in 1915 at the age of fifty-five years but who had already been in the Northern Territory for thirty-three years, or Ah Ket who died at sixty years of age at May Brown's Wolfram Camp in 1915, or Cheong Sam who died in Chinatown at seventy-six years of age. 30

Others also left behind little trace of their passing. There was a poignancy in the meagre personal possessions that they left behind at death. When Thomas Kiely died in 1916 his possessions comprised a meagre and spartan testimony to the life he lived. His possessions included a tin trunk, spectacle frames, a tent, an old Gladstone bag and a wooden box. As the police journal disclosed Kiely had more than most. 31

Indigenous people, unlike the transient European and Chinese miners, had been born into family connections in the area with the significant exception of those who were being taken away from their families like, 'Mary' a half-caste child who arrived by coach in Pine Creek from Katherine in 1916. 32 More recently one Indigenous woman, recalling how she and her sisters were suddenly taken away from their family to Darwin, asked why this happened to her and her family? 33

There was the ongoing mystery of paternity for many Indigenous people whose fathers were non-Indigenous. Helen Liddy recalled that her mother told her that her father was a Scotsman 'just passing by' while others thought her father was a station cook in the area. '...I don't know' Helen summed up and 'I don't care in this day and age...' 34 Freddie Muggleton's father was a Chinese man but he had no recollections of him - instead he had strong memories of his Indigenous step-father. Larry Ah Lin on the other hand remembered his father showing him how to fossick for gold. 35

People want to find out about their family's history, particularly where there has been dislocation and relocation. One Indigenous woman, who lived on the east coast of Australia,
Figure 36: Mining note in Mandarin, ink brush, circa 1891/1892.
Source: State Records of South Australia: GRS 22.
SCHEDULE No 10
Form of transfer

I POOK HING of Springhill for valuable consideration do hereby transfer to LEUNG QUE of the Howley my Battery site of ten acres situated at T2 Mile being the old Rosalie Battery site subject to all the terms and conditions under which the said Battery site has been held by me And I LEUNG QUE of the Howley do hereby accept thesaid Battery site subject to the terms and conditions aforesaid.

Dated at Palmerston this 28th day of July 1897.

[Signature of Transferor]

[Signature of Transferee]

Figure 37: Mining Transfer Form 1897.
Sources: State Records of South Australia: GRS 23.
accompanied me to Pine Creek looking for the family of her father. Her father had left Pine Creek when he was three years old. She knew that her paternal Grandfather was Chinese and her paternal Grandmother was ‘traditional Aboriginal.’ On this occasion we could find no people who remembered her Grandfather. Later I talked to Albert Que Noy, a member of an older generation who remembered that her Grandfather had worked for the Chinese Butcher – Chin Quan in Pine Creek – and that he was a ‘pretty lively fella.’ Albert’s memory was a fragment of one man’s life. How many more fragments would be needed to create the density of experience that makes up a human life or at the very least convey a sense of this man’s past?

SECRETS

There were reasons to keep secrets because of the tension between European law, what people desired, what was acceptable and what was lawful. But what was desire based upon? In the Pine Creek area there was poverty linked with the desire to make ends meet, the search for gold was linked to greed and the desire for relationships also included sexual desire.

Dead men told no tales but living people were careful about what tales they told and to whom. What was common knowledge? Who turned a blind eye and when did they turn a blind eye? Who told the truth, who lied, and what did they lie about? Whom did they trust? How does one separate fact from fiction where self-interest is at stake?

Mining secrets

Where desire lived so did greed and evasion. Miners hid from the wardens to avoid payment of mining rights and concealed the true amounts of gold they had found. Claims were jumped and gold was stolen. Mining prospectus exaggerated the viability of their leases. What is truth in a mining prospectus designed to entice shareholders with ‘...an exceptional investment opportunity in an advanced gold explorer trading at a substantial discount...’?

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37 D.E. Kelsey, The Shackle, p.57; Jensen, Reminiscences, p.86; Reports (geological and general), p.7; Lulu Martin interviewed by Bathgate, Brocks Creek and Burnside Station, 1997.
38 Norm Miskilly, gold analyst cited in David Haselhurst ‘Tom’s Gully out of a hole. Fair wind: Sirocco’s $5.8 million commitment to NT mine’ in The Bulletin May 13, 1997, p.46.
The nature of mining was invariably secretive. I made the mistake of asking one miner where his latest 'show' was located. I was met with blank silence realising at that moment that I had crossed the line of miner's etiquette. Darkie Dempsey recalled fights down at Gun Alley with Indigenous people fighting each other over gold and also 'shysters' extracting the gold from Indigenous people giving them nothing in return.

Where greed existed the racial inequities became more pronounced. One of the more notorious events inspired by the greed for gold occurred in World War Two when the Army was camped in the Pine Creek Chinatown area. An officer and his men decided to exhume the body of a Chinese store keeper based on the rumour that gold was buried with him.

Other secrets

Robert Levitus wrote that '...most people, Aboriginal and European, led makeshift lives with more interest in the possible than the permissible...'. Interest in the possible rather than permissible meant that people often had to cover up their tracks so-to-speak. There was concealment of sexual relationships between Europeans, Chinese and Indigenous people, concealment of Indigenous children from police to stop them being taken away from their mothers, grog running, opium smuggling and cattle duffing.

Tom Cole, the erstwhile buffalo hunter and adventurer, pointed out that 'Morals of course were somewhat flexible' referring to a man who lived with a 'half-caste woman whom he called 'Bill' as it was illegal to have a woman in the house after sunset. Tex Moar used the term 'common knowledge' to describe illicit sexual activity notably during World War Two when soldiers were consorting with Indigenous women.
Yorky Billy Alderson showed an interviewer the scars of retribution on his body apparently due to his pursuit of women: 'He pulled up his shirt and showed me a great ragged scar extending halfway across his belly.' Yorky Billy told the interviewer: 'I reckon I got into more fights over lubras than I did over cattle.' Bert Nixon noted that getting 'touched' as Yorky Billy had by a spear was not something to mention to the police.

Keith Willey wrote that in the mid-twentieth century the Mt Wells Road from Pine Creek or the 'back road' as it was otherwise named '...was known as the way to avoid Pine Creek if you had been duffing cattle or doing something else illegal on the plain and wanted to dodge the local law for a while.'

In the 1970s the escarpment area above Pine Creek was known as a place of hippies and 'hooch' and there were a number of high profile drug raids in the area in the 1980s.

Making do
Those people who did not have sufficient means such as public servants on regular wages to undertake the 'permissible' were people who largely lived outside the cash economy.

The word 'survival' in its simplest form means to stay alive. Many people in the Pine Creek area lived with poverty. The most extreme cases of poverty I came across were those of destitute Chinese miners at the turn of the nineteenth century and emaciated Indigenous people living on the outskirts of Pine Creek at the end of World War Two. As Minnie Alderson noted when Indigenous people had no financial means of support they survived on sugarbag and porcupine near the town. After Frances Creek Mine closed in 1974 Toni Eperjesy recalled that 'There were a lot of people in need.'

Marie Heidtmann noted the absence of cash and the reliance on a barter system growing up on Esmerelda Station: 'It was difficult to get money, we were always dreadfully poor,'

45 Willey, Ghosts of the big country, p.114. 'Lubra' was a colloquial European expression for an Indigenous woman.
46 NTAS: NTRS226, TS 97/2, Bert Nixon, transcript, pp.30.
47 Willey, Ghosts of the big country, p.98; Henry Scott described his association with an illegal still in Pine Creek during World War Two and Leo Cox described collecting opium from the engine driver at Pine Creek Station. Both were part of a wider network of participants in these activities. NTAS: NTRS 226, TS33, Leo Cox, transcript, p.4; Henry Scott interviewed by Francesca Merlan, tape 9, 4 December 1991, p.4.
everyone was, so you had to make do with everything. You made your own bread, soap, and rendered the fat. Everyone seemed to have their own meat, chooks, pigs, goats.  

Survival was thus a conditional mode of existence ranging from the most basic level (eating to live) to surviving through trading, bartering, self-sufficiency to engaging in illicit activity such as stealing and selling opium or alcohol which generated additional income. In a community living with poverty what was considered reasonable or honorable behaviour? Who defined these standards?

Most people did not starve but they worked the system in order to meet their needs. Numerous people undertook illicit activities for their own ends but also 'to make ends meet'. One European man was known as a 'bower bird' for his propensity to scavenge items. As one ex-miner put it there was not a lot of money around and you had to 'grab' what you needed. In his case it meant 'borrowing' equipment that was lying dormant on other mining leases and knowing where scrap piles were located. Paul Williamson a resident in Pine Creek summed up that: 'If you live here long enough you'll eventually steal your own gear back.'

Violence

In order to answer these questions one has to have a context. Violence is one example of this. How much was violence hidden and how much of it was considered a normal part of daily life? There was domestic violence and rape. People endured beatings and flogging as a result of drunkenness, in retribution for past grievances and as punishment for contravening social mores.

Beatings reflected the assertion of power - for instance between Indigenous workers and their non-Indigenous employers, between wife and husband and between lawmakers and law breakers. Beatings could be routine such as the physical punishment meted out by some pastoral station owners to their Indigenous workers. A number of Indigenous interviewees I

50 Marie Heidtmann, interview, 1997; Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997; Tom Harbrow to Bathgate, letter, 25 March 1997.


52 Paul Williamson, interview, 1997; Gillespie, Iramikha, p.48; Clem Hill, discussion notes, 1998; Re disappearing mining items at Enterprise. NAA, ACT: A1/1, 37/11211, letter, Director of Mines NC Bell to the Administrator, 10 August 1937.

53 See Notebooks 1, 2 and Notebook 5, 13 May, 1998.

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spoke with remembered the actions of European cattle men in terms of being ‘good’ (not beating people), ‘cheeky’ (beating people) and ‘cruel’ (being violent) bosses.\(^{54}\)

One man recollected that police used to bash buffalo hunters who cohabited with Indigenous women. Another long time resident recalled the habitual beating of Indigenous prisoners by policemen. ‘Used to punch ’em too. Give ’im a hell of a hiding... Arrest ’em, bring ’em up and put ’em in the cell, and then into them. Have a bit of practice. Very few policemen who don't bash the blackfeller. Very few of them.’\(^{55}\) As one long time resident summed up in respect of the police: ‘Some [police] was all right, while some was, oh, no good at all.’\(^{56}\)

There were habitual bashings in some marriages, often after the husband had been drinking. How much of this was condoned and how much was considered unacceptable? Indigenous women were frequently in receipt of sex related violence. One writer described the practice of European men abusing Indigenous women at their drinking ‘parties’. As he recounted of such events it was ‘... not unusual for the period; nor was it very unusual for an Aboriginal woman to die at such a party... which, horrifying though it may seem today, appeared fairly normal to us at the time.’\(^{57}\) This is a chilling description particularly because it describes these activities as normative for the period - a period half a century earlier. How does one reconcile endemic violence from the past with the present day?

Alcohol fueled violence and self-harm. How much was alcohol an escape and how much was it an addiction? As one European man described: ‘The real Pine Creek was a culture of hard work, sacrifice and drunkenness’\(^{58}\) Some were so desperate for drink they would drink brake fluid to counteract the ‘horrors’. As Leonie Ruig detailed these men worked hard and drank hard - they used to go together. Some people made wine out of methylated spirits and Condy’s Crystals.\(^{59}\) Opium offered another kind of escape. As Johnny Hart related ‘...he’s in dreamland. You talk to him and he’s still asleep. Not a word come out of him.’\(^{60}\)


\(^{56}\) Gorrie (sic) in Levitus, *Everybody*, p.94.


\(^{58}\) Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997. In 1916 there was a man simply named ‘The Rager’ who was described as being in a state of ‘simmering’ drunkenness for 4-8 days. NTAS: F294, A663 NT police journal Pine Creek, vol. 6, 5 February, 1916.

\(^{59}\) Leonie Ruig, discussion notes, 1997; Notebook 10, 5 April, 1995; Merv Lee (et al), discussion notes, 1997.

\(^{60}\) Johnnie Hart, interview, 1997.
My immediate response to descriptions of violence, addiction and poverty is to look for a kinder and softer view of life - to some kind of respite from the harshness in which even suicide was deemed an honorable death 'a bushman's way to go'. It would be remiss to focus only on what appeared to be a level of normative violence people lived with. There was skullduggery, murder, betrayal, domestic violence and suicide. People lived with addictions to alcohol, opium and tobacco. People fought and they also made up. There was joy, humour and community which tempered the harshness of life and humour to leaven it.

FACT AND FICTION

True story?
In an inquest into a fire in 1928 at the Cosmopolitan Battery in Pine Creek the coroner noted that 'Only three of the nine witnesses at the Inquest gave material evidence and even that was contradictory.' In 1969 the Town Hall was burnt down. The actual cause of the fire was widely disputed. I heard four versions about what caused the Hall to burn down ranging from accident to arson.

Who was telling the truth? In light of the lack of any kind of definitive truth in the above scenarios perhaps this question should be rephrased. What was the motivation and background to the versions of the 'truth' people gave? Henry Scott alleged that when Ernestine Hill was interviewing 'old characters, bushies' in Katherine for her history of the Northern Territory '...a lot of them, oh' d have her on a lot, you know that, and tell her all kinds of [nonsense]'. He accordingly advised his interviewee to 'take some of that [Hill's book] with a grain of salt.'

61 Gaye Lawrence interview, 1997.
64 These reasons included a steriliser being left on overnight in the medical centre; the fire was an insurance 'job' as the Hall was rotting away from termites; some 'kids' lit a match in the Hall just after the floors had been varnished; a 'kid 'was smoking. Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997; Notebook 2, 20 February 1997. Sue Neall, discussion notes, 2000.
I was under no illusion that I was always being told the truth in some interviews. One man I spoke with candidly told me that he had altered the location of certain events he was describing to me. I later found out that wasn't his real name! One man said he came into Pine Creek in 1934. Another person disputed this fact saying he didn't come in until the 1950s. All I could do - as anyone researching the past does - was attempt to verify my facts. In doing so I became interested in the actual interview process and the nature of truth.

But people in Pine Creek did not necessarily want to disclose their past to a stranger and/or to an interviewer. In my attempts to interview some of the older men I found that some did not want to speak. 'I don't have anything to say', said one man I tried to interview, there were better people to ask, he said, he wanted to be 'left alone.' Another man simply stonewalled my requests for interview. It was never the right time.

Frequently I heard from those I talked with in the town 'stories I can't tell' 'I know too much' and in respect of my own work one person said 'She's going to know all our secrets soon'. Darkie Dempsey half-jokingly and half-dramatically said of himself that he'd 'Probably seen too much – that’s why I’ve gone blind.'

In his novel *Maestro* set in Darwin Peter Goldsworthy recounts the story of his father's contact with men on his rounds of Darwin hospital including '...beaters, fugitives from justice, alcoholics and maintenance dodgers.' He continued on describing Darwin as 'A town populated by men who had run as far as they could flee. From here there was only one further escape. And each day on his rounds he saw any number of those hell bent on taking it.'

Pine Creek was perhaps a place even farther to flee than Darwin. In Pine Creek there were numerous European men who had left behind marriages, who had encountered the law to greater and lesser degrees, men who were alcoholics or addicted to opium. Tex Moar described one man he knew in no uncertain terms as '...the biggest shyster, rogue, mongrel bastard, you've ever struck in your life.'

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As Bernie Brian summed up: It was a common claim that people coming to the Territory 'were running away from something...from a wife, or debts, or a criminal offence...'. Tom Ronan was told by one bushman that 'Those of us...who aren't dodging the police are dodging wives...'. There were men described as 'death adders' men who had little or no money and who attached themselves to men with pay checks in order to get a drink - and others who passed bouncing cheques.

People fled when they felt threatened. Albert Que Noy recalled the police method of capturing Indigenous children and taking them away. 'They find out where the camp is - early morning just before daylight, gallop around the camp just like cowboy mob.' In Pine Creek Helen Liddy's mother did not wait for the police to come. As Helen summed up: 'My mother didn't want to lose me, so we hid in caves around Pine Creek and were fed by the Chinese who were mining the area then.' Helen remembered her mother disguising the lighter colour of her skin with charcoal and burnt grass.

The escarpment area that provided refuge for Indigenous families, including Helen Liddy and her mother, also provided a hiding place for the odd murderer escaping from the law and for European men who lived with Indigenous women.

**Characters and putting names to faces**

Not all people were running away but there remains a mystery about their origins and why they travelled so far from their birth places. Who were the 'single' men who inhabited the Pine Creek area and how many lived alone? In the 1920s Jensen recalled one man Jimmy Seymour who had worked for Olaf Jensen and subsequently lived at Mt Wells. 'He was single, lived alone, even without a blackboy or blackgin....He liked a drop of whiskey but was too poor to buy it.' Others were self-confessed loners such as Frank Atkinson, a long time prospector in the Pine Creek.'

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72 Henry Scott interviewed by Francesca Merlan, transcript, tape 9, 4 December 1991, p.3; NAA, NT: F1, 45/96, letter, Field Officer to Chief Clerk Lands 3 October, 1949.
73 Notebook 5, 10 March, 1998.
74 'Into the Past with Helen Liddy', *Extracts PCN*, nd
75 Helen Liddy, interview, 1996.
poetry and grew vegetables, conveyed to Lily Ah Toy that he did not mind being alone because he had brought up his step brothers and sisters.79

In the absence of family connections and partners many European men established intimate and/or familial relationships with Indigenous people both men and women. In the absence of women, male to male relationships were more emphasised as in the case of the old men of Chinatown or Paddy Lewin who, at the turn of the century, worked his claim with the help of an old Indigenous man named 'George'.80

It was hard to determine how many men were actually alone, who desired minimal contact with other people or who ended up alone. Robert Liddy speculated about these old single men when he was growing up in the 1960s in Pine Creek. 'Now whether wives have passed on, or they've walked on or whatever, I don't know. But way back then, I mean it was mainly a men's town, there weren't many women here at all.' He went on to describe Billy Roberts, an ex-dingo scalper and horse hide Skinner, who Robert recalled collected and shone buffalo horns and who wore the same pair of 'old khaki army trousers'.81

There were remittance men, ex-miners, crocodile hunters, railway workers, dingo scalpers and army veterans, peanut farmers, teamsters and patrol officers. Darkie Dempsey was a crocodile hunter before the war and a miner. He had been a regular drinker at the hotel for so long that the owners had his name painted on the wall under the verandah just above where he drank. Alistair Quest, another local, described himself as a 'blow in' who came to the NT after Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and worked for the railway, 'Aboriginal Affairs' and, prior to that, in Papua New Guinea. He had been a mobile plumber who worked on diesel engines on the rail, a self-described 'multi-trader'. He went prospecting while on the job. I asked him what the attraction of mining was and he replied 'It's like crocodile shooting, a bit of excitement.' 82

There were men who were simply different to the mainstream and perhaps best described as eccentric. As Mayse Young summed up: 'A lot of them are characters in their own way.' 83 There was 'old' Rupert Palmer who wore a white long sleeve shirt with long pants, had a

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80 Reports (Geological and General), p.7.
82 Alistair Quest, interview, 1997; Darkie Dempsey, interview, 1997.
83 Mayse Young, interview, 1996.
push bike and carried a Gunnsack around with him. There was 'Mad' David Nightingale who lived at Police Paddock and the man who used to run everywhere. Mayse Young described the 'rather sad' situation of men who were survivors of war. '...we'd have chaps there that'd walk up and down the street giving orders, you know, like as if they're still in the Army.'

Russell Young recalled meeting 'a young fella, long blond hair, blond beard, only ever wore a pair of shorts' whom they nicknamed 'Jesus Christ' who used to turn up unexpectedly on the roadside to the north of Pine Creek: 'You'd be sitting on the side of the road, on your own a million mile from nowhere, and he used to just walk in and sit down. He'd only ever be looking for a bit of bread, he wouldn't eat beef or anything like that; just a bit of bread and jam.'

In memoriam

I recount the names of these people who I have never met but whose existence resides in local memory. When Earl Gano talked about the mining history of Pine Creek he talked in the same breath about the 'old characters that used to be around the place' such as Jimmy Escreet otherwise known as Cast Iron Chicken for his ability to eat almost anything, Iron Duke and Darkie Dempsey. There was 'Cranky Franky' Atkinson who was also known as the 'human scoop' for his strength. There was Georgie McGregor (otherwise known as Lord George McGregor). There was Deafy Malloy who worked in the Kohinoor Adit and Ted Curtis and Don Octron who transported their supplies in a wheel barrow from Pine Creek to Wandi.

Bill Baird, who grew up in Pine Creek, talked about Martha Hart. Martha was the daughter of Blue Peter, a Ceylonese man, who had come to work on the railway and had jumped ship after working as a diver. He married Polly Imoripa who had Jawoyn, Wardaman and Dagoman connections and had three children Jamus, Julius and Martha. Martha Hart was Johnnie Hart's mother. Martha had married Jimmy Hart whose father had come from Ireland and who had owned nearby Lewin Springs Station. In her time Martha had mustered

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84 Mayse Young, interview, 1996; Pat Smith, interview, 1997.
85 Russell Young, interview, 1996.
cattle and been a buffalo shooter. As Bill Baird summed up: '...she was quite a woman, old
Martha...'

Alec Gorey, a Russian who lived to be over a hundred years old had arrived in Pine Creek
when the railway line was being extended to Katherine in the early part of the twentieth
century. He was from south Russia and left there in 1906 after a period in the Army. He went
wandering via South America and later ended up in Bombay as part of a Cossack troupe.
There was Topsy Stevens who camped with her family at the site of the old police station
and PMG Pincher who lived nearby and who for many years, as his name indicated, worked
for the Postmaster General. There was the 'song man' 'old' Nym and Bobbie Wilson a so-
called 'half caste' Chinese man who Leonie remembered camped in the bakery.

ENDINGS
Perhaps all that one can say about the purpose of remembering those who have died with
particular reference to the Pine Creek area is that their lives remind us of the transience and
struggle of human life. And yet their lives, are like all human lives, expressive of the range
of human experiences, both joyful and tragic, banal and adventurous, courageous and fearful,
harmful and compassionate. Those who have lived and died before us are part of the
continuum of life. They remind us of ourselves.

There is a tree next to the Union Reefs Camp in Pine Creek, near the town oval. Miners hang
their boots in this tree as a sign they have finished working at the mine and are leaving. As
one worker described: 'Well it's sort of, it's a tree and it happens on other mine sites as well
that when people leave they sort of leave their "I've been here mark" and they just throw it
up in the tree and its like a tradition and like a symbol I suppose that they've worked there
and they can come back and its still there in a couple of years and it'll be probably there for a
while yet...' 

87 Johnny Hart, interview, 1997; Albert Que Noy, interview, 1997; Notebook 2, 20 May 1997,
Notebook 5 10 February 1998 and 11 February 1998, 12 March 1998; Bill Baird, interview, 1997,
Batchelor; Tex Moar, interview, 1997b. Note that Blue Peter appears to have got his name from the
Blue Peter mine at which he worked.

88 'The Pine Creek Cossack', Northern Territory Newsletter, May 1976, p.15; Willey, Ghosts of the big
country, pp.91-92; Leonie Ruig, discussion notes, 1997; Tex Moar, interview, 1997b.

89 Pablo Neruda, 'There's no forgetting (sonata)', Selected poems, edited by Nathaniel Tarn, Penguin

This boot tree is a sign of transience and yet a memorial at the same time to those who have come and gone, and lived in the area, who have inhabited the place perhaps like a well worn boot. Good boots last for a while but not forever. Those that leave their footprints take their memories with them. Footprints eventually dissolve. Kim Mahood describes the diaphanous quality of memory and its illusive nature:

The business of memory. It is something to do with geography and light. I have dreamed of this country continuously since I left it. Now I am no longer sure if my memories are real or dreams.\textsuperscript{91}

In the next section, the conclusion, I synthesise the various themes I have been exploring in this thesis, including memory, and re-connect with my original purpose- to explore sources of meaning and sources of history.

\textsuperscript{91} Kim Mahood, \textit{Coolamons}, (a joint exhibition with Pamela Lofts), nd.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

...when pure view comes, it's literally invisible...

When pure change comes,
when real change comes
you have nothing to show your friends
...because the change is inside.

*Jetsunma Ahkon Norbu Lhamo*

I began this thesis with an image of a spring and my search for replenishment. In conclusion I have been replenished by integrating my historical praxis with what I have identified as personally meaningful discourses. In many ways this has meant an internal change in which replenishment describes a meaningful interior process reflected in outward practices, in this case meaningful historical discourses.

The meaningful discourses I have explored in this thesis include a focus on ethics and how that applies to history both in terms of the subject matter and in terms of applying history in a community context. I described this process as Engaged history. The doorway for this exploration was a reflexive, almost philosophical mode that was anchored by the subject of local and place history and by physically visiting, and occasionally residing, in the place of the history I was describing.

This inquiry is part of a broader inquiry about interrogating one's own discipline through the rubric of local and regional history. This inquiry is not particular to the Pine Creek area. It can be applied to any historical inquiry where one is interrogating the notion of an unmediated history in which historicism and empiricism in historical writing can potentially mask a lack of critical thinking about writing history.

Historicism and empiricism are the natural tendency of all historical writing because of the way history is built on evidence. I am arguing for pushing against this tendency in order to provide a more subtle, reflexive, kind of historical writing. This has particular application to the Northern Territory which is so vast and rich in historical subject matter and yet in terms of local and regional history has produced very little in the way of imaginative, critical and
theoretically strong histories that are inclusive rather than exclusive of particular classes, groups and cultures.

But whatever criticisms I may have about my own discipline they are essentially about the history I write, not about what others have written. These criticisms are directed at my own attempts at writing a history in which I have interrogated the basis of my own practice in order to ascribe meaning to that practice. So what have I tried, tested and uncovered?

At a foundational level I have applied an ethical framework to the writing and research of history. The philosophical question I asked was how may this history and research be of benefit to others? I was broad ranging in my response to this question which included interrogating my research methodology and the thematic subject matter of my inquiry. In other words this purpose unfolded in a number of ways practically and theoretically.

In practical terms I have found the writing of history meaningful when I could return history in some form to the community. This involved applied research or more specifically, matching in some way my needs with the needs of a living community. The result was the 'Talking Banners' project. But applied research also means observing ethical protocols for research which naturally includes returning information to communities whether it is at the project/community level or at the individual level such as the return of oral history transcripts.

At a theoretical level I attempted to express benefit in terms of scrutinising written historical accounts and public presentations of history in order to open up the debate about how history has been constructed at a regional level. At the same time I have attempted to present a way of writing about local history that is very wide ranging in order to fully understand this construction of history. Thus in Chapter one and Chapter three I devote significant space to what has been written and said about Pine Creek's history. Out of this inquiry I can begin to construct an alternative route, so to speak, for engaging history in another way that is more inclusive and more reflexive. This history incorporates cultural diversity, transience and 'hidden histories'. I have looked at a variety of people's relationships and perceptions of the land in Chapter two, the nature of transience in Chapter five, the less known aspects of history in Chapter one and the unknowable aspects of history in Chapter six. These subjects

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1 Jetsunma Ahkon Norbu Lhamo, Developing pure view, tape, Kunzang Palyul Chöling, Poolesvile, Maryland, 1994.
are not easily conjoined - they require wide ranging research and alternative routes for analysing history. Hence my focus on space through various mapping strategies involving both oral history interviews and archival map research.

The reward of these strategies are I think two fold: firstly an opening up of the discourse to scrutiny - in this case discourses on regional and local history in the Top End of the Northern Territory, and secondly, making an offering in respect of other ways of looking at local and regional history that did not artificially separate cultures from one another.

I have not lost my interest in history but I have deepened my interest in history by deepening my understanding of the social and ethical application of history.

There is a picture hanging in the National Gallery of Australia of the Grand Canyon by David Hockney. The painting is about perspective, about how the artist has endeavoured to capture the expansiveness and immense scale and breadth of this site in a painting. I am not a painter and my perspective is limited but what I have been attempting to do in this thesis on a modest scale is to capture the breadth and expansiveness of historical inquiry based on a geographic area. This has been a vertical exploration - not about the accumulation of facts - although that is woven into the history- but rather about embracing the density and complexity of history in order to deepen my understanding of the discipline.

One local resident summed up, in respect of Pine Creek's history, 'You couldn't get a bigger puzzle' and on one level I have set about piecing the puzzle together and then pulling it apart sometimes to see what constitutes history. So for instance I pulled apart the historiography in Chapter one and asked what and whose history constituted the history of the Pine Creek area as part of an attempt to draw together disparate sources and present more of a culturally holistic approach to the social history of the area. In Chapter two I deconstructed the environment through looking at it elementally in order to build a picture of the land and country based on perception. In Chapter three I deconstructed what public history has said about Pine Creek in order to begin to outline histories that I thought required more delineation in the public domain. In Chapter four I deconstructed my role as a researcher in order to reconstruct tools for community feedback and appropriate methodologies for exploring place. In Chapter five I looked at the limitations of defining the settlement of the Pine Creek area in sedentary terms in order to describe transience. In Chapter six I
acknowledged the unknowable aspects of the past in order to look at ways of writing about these gaps.

At a philosophical level this thesis marks the beginning of a journey to integrate my Buddhist practice and philosophy into my understanding of history and the writing of history, through the application of an ethical framework and through pursuing elements of Buddhist philosophy within historical processes. I began to view historical processes in terms of impermanence and change whether that be in regards to material phenomena or less concrete phenomena such as memory and loss. I became acutely aware of the emptiness of conceptual thought. So this thesis became a meditative journey but not a quiet meditation! It was more like a cathartic process - everything was tossed and turned around inside out in order that it could be reviewed, interrogated and restructured.

My praxis has been replenished (and restructured) and stretched in many directions because I have had the opportunity to ask questions and propose answers to them.
I began this thesis with the story of arriving and bumping into the low stone wall outside the Pine Creek hotel. I have been reminded of the intransigence of my own structures and perhaps I have had the opportunity to internally restructure some of the more inflexible parts of my conceptualisation. Walls are a point of separation between inside and outside. In my original story the wall was mundane yet deceptive; maintaining a protective border between the hotel car park and the verandah. Walls have their purpose. This engagement with the stone wall outside the hotel was also a source of levity. I could not see the wall so I bumped into it. Onlookers could see the wall and they laughed. Perhaps this journey has been about lightening up - making the structures of my engagement with history lighter and finer and at the same time more robust.

I am still travelling. As Lily Ah Toy said to me: 'The world is destiny.' The world has been in Pine Creek and now I am in the world.
In memory of Lily Ah Toy (1917-2002), Lulu Martin Dalpbalngali (circa 1920-2001) and all those who have gone before me.
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APPENDIX 1

Population and mineral profit estimates (1872-1916)
Appendix 1
Population and mineral profit estimates (1872-1916)

Most of this discussion concerns the period 1894-1916 and the associated documentation presented by the Chief Mining Warden of District A, E. Copley Playford, who collated figures for the mining population and mining revenue for this period (see NAA, NT: A3, 1918/2764). These are only preliminary estimates and calculations. Further verification and clarification of these figures are required.

Copley's figures reveal fluctuations in both population and mineral returns over this period. These figures also provide some basis for assessing differences in Chinese and European population numbers. However, they also reveal that much more work remains to be done in determining the actual population on specific fields like Pine Creek and how accurate population estimates actually were during this period. Moreover, Indigenous populations and their participation in the mining industry were excluded from Copley Playford's assessment.

District A
Pine Creek was included in District A for government purposes. District A comprised most of the important Top End Goldfields at the turn of the century. In 1916 District A included Coronet Hill, Mary River Tin field, Randfords Mary R, Wandie, Wolfram Camp, Hidden Valley, Horseshoe Creek, Mt Todd, Yenberrie, Woolngie, Pine Creek, Umbrawarra, Stray Creek, Burrundie, Yarn Creek, Brocks Creek, Bridge Creek, Howley, Mt Shoebridge, Daly River, Fletchers Guilty, West Arm & Bynoe Harbour, Finnis & Mt Tolmer, Maranboy, Hayes Creek, Darwin, Miscellaneous. There were also three other districts B, C and D and one other area 'outside the boundaries of proclaimed districts' - Davenport Ranges.

Revenue
If the initial gold rush was over by 1873, then it was over again in 1896, 1903, 1911 and 1915. Conversely there were the boom times in 1872, 1894/95 and 1916. Gold profits were surpassed in 1906 when tin became for the most part the ascendant mineral until the end of the period (1916) although often it was neck and neck with gold. In the 22 years between 1894 and 1915 eleven years showed negative returns reflecting the overall decline of mining in the area. This trend was most marked in the years 1913 to 1916.

Mining population figures
Based on Copley-Playford's figures the ratio of Chinese to Europeans in District A over the period 1894-1916 was approximately 9:1. I obtained these figures by dividing the total number of Chinese and European on the mining fields by 22 years (1894 - 1915). The total numbers of European miners for this period was 2,751 while the total number of Chinese miners for this period was 23,915. These total figures do not of course reflect the actual population as a number of miners would have stayed on in the district over a number of years. Hence, the average is a more accurate estimate of the numbers of miners from year to year. I calculated the ratio of Chinese to European miners on the field at 8:1 (23,915 divided by 2,751 = 8.696)

In the year ending 30th June 1916 Pine Creek had the highest population of Europeans and Chinese miners and the highest Chinese population in the district. There were 110 Chinese miners and a few assorted Chinese labourers - and 7 European workers. This is a ratio of about 15-16:1 Chinese to Europeans - a much higher ratio than for the whole of District A.
Given that the Chinese population peaked around 1894/95 it is conceivable that the ratio's were possibly even higher during this earlier period.

The European mining population fluctuation showed a similar trend to the Chinese mining population in this period although there was less overall decline and increased periods of fluctuation. The European mining population declined after 1897 rather than 1896 with the exception of 1899 when there was a slight increase. Moreover the periods of European population increase lasted longer than for Chinese miners. For instance there was an increase of European Miners in the district from 1903 to 1907. The largest increase of European miners in the district occurred in 1904. Thereafter the European mining population fluctuated, increasing in 1909, 1913, 1914 and 1916 but declined from 1910 until 1912. (For other population estimates during see Jones, 1987 and Jones ,1990 and Levitus, 1982.

Mining census figures from 1895-1915 show that there was a steady decline of miners from the Top End goldfields, both Chinese and European, up until 1915 with miners diversifying into other minerals and base metals. There was a dramatic exodus of Chinese miners during 1896 and to a lesser extent in 1898 and 1908. However, this decline was reversed in 1903 and 1914. In 1916 most of the Chinese miners at Pine Creek were mining for Copper (60) although some were still mining reef gold (16) and 30 Chinese miners were at Umbrawarra mining tin. In 1916 most of the mining population throughout all the localities was concentrated on tin (154) followed by copper (97).

Other sources on population in the early mining period
Howard Pearce has estimated that by 1872 there were 150 to 200 miners working on the Pine Creek goldfields and by 1876 about 300 Chinese and Europeans were working on the goldfields and that by 1878-1879 the Chinese population of Pine Creek had risen to 800 - to 900 inhabitants.

Between 1880 to 1895 there were approximately between 700 and 900 Chinese people in Pine Creek. The average annual number of Chinese mining in the Top End district annually between 1894 and 1915 was 1,087. In contrast the average annual number of Europeans mining in the district between 1894 and 1915 averaged 125 (see also Kearney 1991).

In 1894 the mining population peaked in the Pine Creek goldfields with approximately 700 miners on the local fields, mostly Chinese. By 1898 the number of miners in the immediate Pine Creek area was back to about 200 and between 1905 and 1914 there were about 100 miners on the fields. These figures are against the background of a NT population numbering under 1200 in 1878 and 8000 non-Indigenous people in 1888, most of whom were Chinese (approximately 6000) and most of whom at some time or another were working or living on the Top End goldfields. The number of Chinese on the goldfields was declining by 1889. By 1890 only about 1000 Chinese people were engaged in mining (Pearce vol. 1. 1982 p.25, p.54,p.55, p.97,p.109 p.83, p.85 , vol. 3, p.68).

Other population estimates including more recent estimates

Town only
In 1916 Pine Creek was the second largest town in the Northern Territory. The Pine Creek School had the second largest attendance in the Territory (67) – the most well attended being Darwin (113). It also had the second most profitable Hotel in the Top End (NAA, NT: A3, 1918/2764)
Kinhill Stearns 1984 reported that the population of Pine Creek had remained virtually static at approximately 215 people since at least 1971. Anthony Cook (1987) reported a lower figure in the mid 1980s, estimating that the population numbered about 100 comprising approximately 50 Europeans and a similar but more variable number of Aboriginal people. The figure for Aboriginal people is higher for this period in another report in 1986 which estimated that there were 93 people resident in the local Pine Creek area (J.C. Altman and DE Smith. Resource Assessment Commission Kakadu Conservation Zone Inquiry, Australian National University for research purposes only, December 1990, p.69.)

Indigenous population estimates
Actual Indigenous population statistics for the area are not readily identifiable in the early mining period. In 1929 there were 93 Indigenous people in the Pine Creek area while there were 873 at nearby Brock's Creek (Pearce vol.1, p.129). In 1933 97 Indigenous people were listed in Pine Creek (of which 10 were identified as half-caste) - 105 Europeans and 26 Chinese (NAA, NT: F504 Census 3 July 1933).
APPENDIX 2

List of military units in Pine Creek during World War Two
Appendix 2
List of military units in Pine Creek during World War Two

Sources for information below:
Graham R. McKenzie Smith, Australian Army Units in Pine Creek Area, NT, 1998 (printed list).

A review of Graham McKenzie’s list reveals that of the 56 units only 23 units stayed more than a year and it appears that only 7 units stayed for more than 2 years. The total combined total months served by all 56 units was 500 months, hence the average stay was 8.93 months. The units serving 12 or more months in the area RTO & Staff, “A” Sec, 2/107 Gen Tpt. Coy, det C Pl, 134 Gen Tpt. Coy, det 1 Aust MAC, det 12 Fd Bakery, det 3 Fd Butchery, E Sec, NT Force BIPOD, det No 2 Coy L of C Sigs, 28 Carrier Pigeon Loft, det 2 Pl, 28 Employ, det 8 Censorship Sec, det 1 Aust Fd Censorship Coy, 53 Fd Am Depot, 65 Camp Hospital, Army Post Office (APO) 066, det 2 L of C (Postal Unit), det NT force Provost Coy, det 2 L of C Provost Coy, det Aust Army Canteen Service.

In 1989 Peter Dermoudy completed a Military Buff’s guide which I also draw upon for the above figures. There are discrepancies in the numbers cited by Dermoudy and McKenzie. Dermoudy’ figures are 34 units in the Pine Creek area between 1942 and 1945 compared with McKenzie’s figure of 56. I am relying on McKenzie’s figures because of what appears to be his concise tabulation of the unit data.

The longest serving unit in the Pine Creek area appears to have been a detachment of the 25 Australian Works Company. Peter Dermoudy locates approximately 29 detachments at 156 Mile (or Pine Creek) The longest serving detachment/companies in the area were:

Det 53 Fd Amn Depot 30/6/42-31/6/44
Det 25 Aust Works Coy 31/12/43-30/10/45
Det Aust A Canteens Service 30/9/43-31/1/45
Det 4 Aust BIPOD 29/2/42-31/5/44
Det 65 ACH (30 beds) 15/12/42-15/12/43
RTO 30/7/42-31/12/44
26 Adult FS Sec 30/9/43-30/6/44
Sec 2 Aust L of C Pro Coy 31/1/44-31/1/45
Det 54 Aust Fd Pk Coy (AIF) 30/12/42-30/4/44
The services provided by the military during this period included a bakery, butchery, post office, canteen and camp hospital. Many of the units staying for shorter lengths would have been involved in the establishment phase of basic infrastructure such as bitumising the Stuart Highway. Army engineers were in Pine Creek for a short time as were the US Engineers (808th Aviation) who were involved in the establishment of McDonald airstrip some miles north of the town. The US Engineer regiment (808th Aviation) was stationed in Pine Creek for three months. McDonald airstrip was one of a series of airstrips built by US Engineers. The Americans knew it as Burkholder.

The 18th Squadron was formed in 1942 and was unique in comprising both Dutch, Javanese and Australian men. It's strength was eighteen B25 Mitchell twin engined bombers. It comprised 40 Dutch (NEI) and 8 Australian (RAAF) officers, 254 Dutch Airmen, 56 Javanese airmen and 300 Australian airmen. 18th Squadron was based at McDonald from the 18th of January to the 13th of April 1943 although significant elements of the squadron were at McDonald as early as November 1942.
APPENDIX 3

Interviews and protocols
Appendix 3

Interviews and protocols

Two methods were used for interviewing people - recording and discussion notes (see below). The recordings include oral history interviews and interviews relating to the content of the banners.

Consent and storage

Permission for use of oral history was undertaken through consent forms and, in the case of people who did not read, consent was obtained verbally in conjunction with the consent form. Where possible this latter consent was recorded on tape. In the case of the school children permission was received by the Principal to use these recordings. Individual permission was also gained from each child which also functioned as a writing/understanding lesson. In some cases adult interviewees signed two consent forms - one for the purposes of my PhD research and one for the purposes of lodging copies of tapes and transcripts with the Northern Territory Archives Service. For examples of consent forms see on.

Recordings were stored at the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) in Darwin, the Pine Creek Library and Kybrook Farm. A number of these recordings were also transcribed through the services of the Oral History Unit in the NTAS. Individual interviewees received a copy of the tape and if their interview has been transcribed by the NTAS they also received a transcription.

Discussion notes

Discussion notes were a time-saving way of recording information. Hand written notes were taken during interviews/discussions and these were later returned to the interviewee for checking, approval and, where necessary, amendment. Discussion notes were often a less immediately intrusive method of gathering information than oral history recordings.

Rationale for choosing oral history interviewees

While attempts were made to balance culture, gender and age in interview selection this was not always possible. The Talking Banners project and Discussion Notes did however assist in bringing diversity into the interviewee pool.

Overall 26 oral history interviews were undertaken on the subject of Pine Creek and local history. In addition 8 women were interviewed from Kybrook Farm on the subject of their banner images and 14 children were interviewed for their banner. Twenty one discussion notes were generated some of which were joint interviews.

Overall 55 adults were interviewed. Of this number 24 were women, 17 were Indigenous people and three were Chinese Australians. The children were a mixture of Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds.

This group most under represented in my interviews were Chinese Australians. This was partly due to the absence of a Chinese presence in Pine Creek today where I undertook most of my interviews. I chose to interview two Chinese Australians with continuing contact with the town – Eddie Ah Toy and Lily Ah Toy. In addition I interviewed Albert Que Noy who had grown up in Pine Creek. In addition I interviewed two sisters of Chinese descent - Joan Frazer and Marie Heidtmann. It should also be noted that the NTAS holds a number of
significant interviews with Chinese Australians with connections to Pine Creek including members of the Fong family, Ellen Crammond (Lily Ah Toy's sister-in-law and Eddie's Auntie) and Mrs Shu Ack Fong.

**Biography/pictures of some of the oral history interviewees**

The following list provides a very basic biography of some of the main oral history interviewees. For some biographical background for Lulu Martin see Chapter 4. The following list, in alphabetical order, is not complete.

Lily Ah Toy: Former Pine Creek store owner in partnership with her husband, Jimmy Ah Toy. Lily was born in 1917 and arrived in Pine Creek in 1936 to work with her husband in the store. She also raised her family in Pine Creek. She was evacuated with her family during World War 2 and returned to Pine Creek after the war.


William (Bill) Baird: Bill was born in 1939. Bill was in Pine Creek until he was 11 years old. His mother, originally from Borroloola, had, like many children of her generation, been removed from her family and sent to Kahlin Compound. Bill's father was European Australian and worked as a truck driver on the railways.

Steve Boyes: Born in England. Steve was the Mine Planning Engineer for Renison Goldfields in Pine Creek where he worked for 10 years before working briefly at Mt Todd.

Paddy Huddleston: (Wagiman) Elder. Born in the 1930s. Worked for many years as a stockman on nearby pastoral stations Currently resident on Kybrook Aboriginal community just outside of Pine Creek.

Mai Katona: (Murrumburr) woman born in 1942 on Esmerelda Station. Mai grew up with her mother and her step-father Andy Knight until she was removed from her family by Native Welfare. She lived with the Ah Toy family for a while before being removed to Retta Dixon home in Darwin. She is the daughter of Tom Cole, buffalo hunter and author.

Jack Lewis: European stockman and later tin miner who arrived in Pine Creek overland from Queensland droving cattle. He came to the Northern Territory in 1956. He was born in Bundaberg and grew up in the Channel Country in North Queensland.

Helen Liddy: (Wagiman) Elder. Born 1930s at Brocks Creek, another 'Top End' mining town. She was raised by mother in the hills above Pine Creek and brought into nearby Claravale station by her Uncle in her early teens to work on the cattle station. Subsequently she married station owner Mick Liddy and raised a family. She came into Pine Creek to live in the early 1960s.

Robert Liddy: Helen Liddy's son. Born in 1957. Robert grew up on Claravale Station and later Pine Creek with his siblings when Helen moved into town. He has periodically managed Kybrook Farm in the 1980s/1990s and undertook buffalo hunting prior to this period.

Albert Que Noy: Chinese Australian. Born 1911 just outside of Chinatown. His father ran his own mining battery as well as a carting business. He later served in the Australian military.
Tex Moar: European stockman, station owner and miner. Tex arrived overland in Pine Creek from Quilpie in Queensland droving cattle. He managed Jindare Station and for a time owned Dorisvale Station. He currently runs his own gem shop in Pine Creek.

Fred Muggelton senior (Wagiman): Born 1923 Bernang waterhole. Captured by ‘welfare’ at about 5 or 6 years of age. After being ‘taken away’ Fred was brought into Pine Creek and subsequently spent a number of years in the Aboriginal boys home in Pine Creek.

Gilbert Williams: European Australian. Born 1919. Arrived in Pine Creek with family as a boy. His father ran his own saw milling business outside of Pine Creek. He later worked in the mines and did various odd jobs as a young man.

Mayse Young: European Australian. Born 1913. Arrived in Pine Creek in 1929 with her family who eventually became the owner operators of the local hotel. Mayse eventually also became the publican (owner) of the Pine Creek Hotel and was there up until the mid-1960s. One of her daughters continues to run the hotel.

Russell Young: European Australian. Born 1937. Oldest son of Mayse Young. Grew up in and around Pine Creek and subsequently took on mine and cattle work with his father.
INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

PINE CREEK ORAL HISTORY AND MAPPING PROJECT:
Map, Field Notes and oral history access and rights agreement

I Edward Cheong Ah Toy
(print name)

Of P.O. Box 121
(postal address) Pine Creek NT 0847

GIVE PERMISSION FOR MATERIALS FROM THIS RECORDED INTERVIEW TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF RESEARCH BY JANE BATHGATE. (Research here refers to any work undertaken for the purposes of Jane Bathgate’s PhD through the Northern Territory University).

WOULD LIKE ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY NAME IN ANY RESEARCH [✔]
WOULD LIKE TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS FOR THE PURPOSES OF ANY RESEARCH [ ]

I UNDERSTAND THAT

- IN THE EVENT OF OTHER OR SUBSEQUENT PUBLICATIONS, MY PERMISSION FOR USING THIS MATERIAL WILL BE SOUGHT

- THAT, IF I SO CHOOSE, I CAN RETAIN A COPY OF ANY COMPLETED MATERIALS AS OUTLINED BELOW

I would like a copy of:
the tape [✔]
the map [✔]
the field notes [ ]

- THAT A MASTER COPY OF THE TAPE WILL BE STORED AT THE NT ARCHIVES. (See separate oral records access and rights agreement).

- THAT THE NT ARCHIVES WILL PROVIDE INTERVIEWEES WITH A COPY OF THE TRANSCRIPT TO CLEAR BEFORE LODGEMENT, AND A COPY OF THE FINAL TRANSCRIPT TO KEEP.

Signed Interviewee

Signed Interviewer

Date 19/5/97
ORAL RECORDS
ACCESS AND RIGHTS AGREEMENT

I, (print name)__________________________, of
(postal address):

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
State:____ Postcode:____

hereby agree to allow lodgement in the Northern Territory Archives of the tape
recordings and transcript of an interview with me conducted by
(interviewer)________________________________
on (date/s)__________________________,19____

and also hereby assign all rights in the material to the Northern Territory of
Australia.

RESEARCH USE
I further agree that the tapes and transcripts of this interview lodged in the
Northern Territory Archives may be inspected by researchers and that copies may
be supplied by this Archives for private research purposes.

PUBLICATION
Publication, broadcast, public performance or display of the tapes and transcript
during my lifetime is permitted:
(strike out one of the following):
- at the discretion of the Northern Territory Archives
- only with my written permission

Signed:__________________________ Date: / /19

NTA 87/1
To whom it may concern:

Jane Bathgate has permission to lodge the children's tapes in the NT Archives in Pine Creek and to use where relevant in her PhD.

Mary Belloward
2015/97
Head Teacher
Pine Creek School

I give permission for Jane Bathgate to use my interview for the NT Archive.

The Pine Creek Records
her PhD

Signed Philip
APPENDIX 4

Maps of Pine Creek
TOWN OF
PINE CREEK.
MAP 1.

KEY

Road
Track
Railway
Creek
Open woodland

Building:
1. Roman Catholic Church
2. Court House
3. School
4. Mining Warden
5. Men's boarding house
6. Chinese store
7. Church of England
8. Saddler shop
9. Bell store
10. Aboriginal school
11. Hotel
12. Jeweler's store
13. Chinese blacksmith
14. Store & tailor shop
15. Blacksmith shop
16. Playfield
17. School blacksmith
18. Police station

Scale: 1:5000

After: Howard Peacock, 1981 National Trust
APPENDIX 5

Publicity and funding: Talking Banners project
Appendix 5
Publicity and funding: Talking Banners project

Funding Bodies: Talking Banners Project.
The Community Cultural Development Unit of the Australia Council, the Northern Territory Library Services, the Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums, the Northern Territory History Awards. In kind support was received through the Oral History Unit, Northern Territory Archives Service, which provided copying, transcription and storage facilities for the Master copies of the tapes and editing facilities for the Soundscape for the exhibition.

Project Strategy and Objectives submitted to Australia Council, 1996.
'To access the wealth of history from many of the elderly residents, as well as impressions from newcomers, in and around Pine Creek. Pine creek has a very long and colourful history which comes to life in anecdotal storytelling, and the aim is to capture these very personal accounts and record and display them in an easily accessible and public way.
The project will give expression to people's sense of place, what brought them to the area, what distinguishes the Pine Creek area from other places. The focus will be on living history, and explore the relationship between memory, local history and present day sense of place.'
Theme of the banner making would be 'Memory and Place'
The banner making process would be '...a catalyst to draw oral history, stories and memories from people in the surrounding district which can be recorded before and during the banner making process. These stories would be "woven" into the banners in some form.'
Proposal included a multi-lingual display of materials with collection housed in the library.
OVER the past few weeks we have had banner making. It is fun. I learnt lots of things about it. Before we started I thought I knew everything about banner making but Jane and Joanna taught me a lot more. I can sew better now than I ever could before. I know how to use glue paper and how to tack.

Timothy Ody

Years five, six, and seven students have been going for nice trips to the Resource Centre for banner making. It was fun for some people, but if you don’t like sewing it could have been boring. I thought it was great fun but when it came to tacking you sure needed a chair! Now that the banner is all planned out and some of it is sewn on it looks great. Once the banner is finished it should be respected because it is something wonderful for us to look back on. The banner has the historical buildings on it so it would be even more historical than you think. The historical buildings might get knocked down but that banner can show everyone what they looked like back in the 1990’s. That banner looks stunning, especially with the colours on it.

Rochelle Sunjich

THIS year class 5/6/7 did a banner making project at Pine Creek Community Resource Centre. I like the banner making because I put my own ideas on the banner and because Joanna our banner making teacher never got angry and she was very helpful. Banner making was a good experience for me because I’ve never sewn before and I didn’t get left out. It was fun.

Jack Johnson

Our class has just been involved in a banner making project. I thought that banner making was easy but it is a lot harder than I thought. I learnt how to plan and sew different things, but I wasn’t very good at sewing. You have to plan a lot or the banner won’t be all that good. I like the creek on the banner the best and the different colours. I really enjoyed working on the banner. While we were working on it Jane (an Historian) was interviewing us.

Liam MacIrwaine
Riccardo Martinelli

*My name is Riccardo Martinelli and I made a picture that I contributed to the banner. It is of the mine because I like the way the mine runs and the tractors and bulldozers and I think that influenced me. We did the banner because it brings the community together and to do something that’s going to be with us for the rest of our lives and our children’s lives. When we made the banner I learnt how to sew properly and how to tack things down. One thing I think we all learnt is how to co-operate a lot better than before. We also learnt that big banners like ours don’t take one day to make, it takes time. 

Ricardo Martinelli*
What a whirlwind two and a half weeks. Joanna and Jane have been in town watching seven banners come to life!

First up was the senior class at Pine Creek School. Everyone in the class pitched in with their story and designs about Pine Creek. For two weeks the class has walked across the multipurpose resource hall where they have learnt to cut, sew and plan their designs.

The result is a wonderfully colourful picture of Pine Creek crammed full of everything - the windmill and community. Children’s stories about the banners are being collected by Jane and will form part of a tape about their banners. The tape will be a resource for the school and the library.

The second banner is taking place at Klybrook where many women have spent hours each afternoon screen printing and cutting designs bush tucker - goanna, turtle, yam, goose - and cocoloom and spears. The women started out by screen printing on tea towels and then moved on to the big picture - a powerful collection of plants and animals around the central symbol of Klybrook Farm, which will form the basis of their banner.

After three meetings with towns people, which included Lily Ah Toy, Helen Liddy, Lomaine Ruge, Steven and Susan Boyes, Tanya Turnbull, Chris Hunter, Judith Stevenson, Joy Pulley, Jesusa Dogdson and Pauline Ah Toy, five additional smaller banners were decided on.

Many images were discussed - not all could end up on the banners but in the end the themes of mining, the Chinese, the land, old local industries such as buffalo hunting and transport and communications were decided upon. Work on two of the five banners is beginning.

Not everyone can sew but everyone can tell a story. If you have any ideas, suggestions, sewing skills or stories please come and see us at the multipurpose resource hall behind the netball courts or just come for a cup of tea.

Thank you to everyone who has helped so far. The school banner is on display at the post office for one week.

 Farewell to John Porter and Maureen de Ron who are leaving Pine Creek for parts unknown after 11 years in the community.

John and Maureen established the bird park, Maureen’s Nursery and the Gun Alley Video Hire outlet.

Their business has been purchased by Adele and Pat Fargher.

Adele will be baking fresh bread every day so ring her with your orders. Pat will also operate his electrical business, Mann Mine Maintenance, from Gun Alley.

Twenty seven volunteers gathered at the hall on Sunday morning for Clean Up Day.

They found the usual cans, paper and rubbish, but VB cans made up the bulk of the 35 bags collected. Everyone gathered for a sausage sizzle after the work was done.

Thanks to the volunteers who turn up every year to help, and to Assay Lab and John Bellinger for the use of vehicles.

A gala cocktail party was held at the historic railway house on Saturday night to celebrate Jill Foggett’s 21st birthday.

Sixty gloriously dressed people attended the party, which was held on the lawns with flickering garden torches adding to the atmosphere. Interesting cocktail mixtures and delicious food made the event a roaring success.

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Women honoured

Ten great women achievers were honoured on Saturday night by becoming the first entries in the honour roll of Katherine women.

The presentation was made as part of local celebrations for International Women’s Day.

Women who were honoured included the late Daisy Angas, along with Emma Collins, Myrtle McBean, Ereene Somalios, Merle Wright, Betty Vandeleur, Natalie Walker, Lily Kruger, Nadia Pascoe and Mary Peterson.

The names of the women, who have all contributed decades of service to the town, will be recorded in a book at the museum and added to every year.

Other highlights of the celebrations included a special performance by a group of women dancers from Kalkaringi. A group of local Filipino dancers also mesmerised the crowd, while the uniquely talented local combination Different Dancers produced a performance to mark International Women’s Day.

Kylie Berlowitz, granddaughter of the Territory’s first woman parliamentarian Lyn Berlowitz, conducted a tree planting ceremony.