

PR00012

NAME: Aborigines, Ethel Creek DATE: 1963
ADDRESS: Ethel Creek Station TEL:
OCCUPATION: INT/ER: Mr Snell
CONTACT: Mrs Anderson
SUBJECT: Messages in TRANSCRIPT:
 local dialect Synopsis only
NO OF TAPES: 1 x 60 ACCESS: Open

OTHER INFORMATION: 1. Message from Ethel Creek
Aborigines to Mikalong, in Perth for an operation.
2. Messages between Bulloo Downs
and Ethel Creek Aborigines describing a muster.
3. Messages between Ethel Creek
Aborigines and desert Aborigines of the McKay Range.
TAPE NUMBER 50

RA



RRF: MB

10th September, 1963

Mrs. Anderson,
 Ethel Creek Station,
North West Australia.

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

I was given your name by Mr. H. L. McGuigan who was telling me about your interesting experiences with the natives and the tape recorder. He suggested that if I wrote to you and told you that we considered the record of this incident to be of historical value you might be prepared to lend us your tape so that we could make a record for ourselves. Any help that you can give us in the matter will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

MOLLIE LUKIS
Librarian, Battye Library

MB

Ethel Creek Station,
Via Meekatharra,
7th October, 1963.

Dear Miss Lukis,

Very many thanks for your letter regarding the tape messages instead of the message sticks, mentioned to you by Mr. McGuigan. Am enclosing the tape which I have told you on it that you may keep and explained why. Rub out all my nattering but thought it might interest you.

I seem to have met you many times on the ABC Women's Session discussing items of historical interest with Mrs. King - that was when I lived down south and 10.30 a.m or maybe 10.45 a.m. was a civilized time to sit down to a cup of tea and listen for a while but fear that even if conditions are reasonable for reception at that hour of the day in this part of the country it is not a convenient listening time - morning tea having been partaken of at 9 a.m., one becomes involved in other activities and so forgets all about the Women's session. I often regret this because many of Mrs. King's programmes were very interesting. I was always interested in her talks with you as I did not grow up in this country and so know very little of Australia's early history and history is a subject which always fascinated me even when I was obliged to learn it!

Kind regards.

I am
Yours sincerely,

Jessie Anderson.

TW

Ref: MB

25th October, 1963.

Mrs. T. Anderson,
Etuel Creek Station,
Via M. MATHARE, S.A.

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

I have delayed answering your letter of 7th October and thanking you for sending the tape as I have been waiting to hear it played. It is the wrong speed for the tape recorder we use, so I took it to Philips who tested it and said it should work on our small dictating machines. We were able to play portions on one of these but could not pick up all four tracks, so I haven't yet heard your explanation and comments. The tape has now gone back to Philips to be transferred to another tape at the right speed for our own machine and all will be well. In the meantime I am afraid you will be wondering if it has arrived safely, or thinking us very ungrateful for not having acknowledged your kindness. I will write again as soon as I have heard the messages properly; I am delighted to have the tape and very grateful to you for the trouble you have taken to help us.

I was interested to hear you were a former fan of the A.B.C. Women's Session; it is a pity it is so hard to pick up in the north and, as you say, the time is less suitable. I will tell Mrs. King about you next time I am speaking to her.

Once again many thanks and I hope to write again soon.

Yours sincerely,

MOLLIE LUKIS
Librarian, Battye Library

T

Etnei Creek Station,
Via Meekatharra,
7th November, 1963.



Dear Miss Lukis,

Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 25th October which arrived on the mail on Saturday 2nd Nov.

I am terribly sorry that I did not tell you that the Recorder is only a Philips Transistor and plays at 1 7/8 to the inch - I think. Having carefully put the book of instructions safely away, I have of course, never found it again!

When I was writing the first letter to you the mail was pounding down the track and of course I was running late as usual and so forgot to put in the most important data re type of recorder etc. It is only 2 track.

Mail here is only fortnightly and it comes in from Meekatharra on the Saturday afternoon and returns from Marble Bar about 7.30 a.m. on the Tuesday morning. The pressure is on all the time as some people come here to meet it on Saturday and they have to be entertained, goods on mail need to be unpacked, and as we run quite a big store for the staff here - the goods have to be priced etc as Sunday morning is pay day and the staff want to shop. After the natives are paid and do their shopping it is nearly lunch time and then the temptation to read some of the two weeks old newspapers is of course acute or as often happens we have visitors, and that finishes Sunday and so one is left with one day to get all the business mail done and what private mail one can fit in. I have a pipe dream of having the mail bag locked on Monday night but I know that it will never happen! I do the books and the store and check up on the house and the kitchen and act as medical attendant etc so life is never boring or dull.

The local policeman was here the other day and I asked him about the old police records of the district with a view to verifying the Mikalong story, but he tells me that all records before 1952 were destroyed when the building caught fire - what a lot of history of this area was lost then? I often think that there is ample material for a book on this area but feel that a libel action could loom on every page!

Mr. Beadell, the Surveyor who went East across the desert is back in the area having completed the Talawan-Giles- Alice Springs Highway and is expected to be here with

us tomorrow evening to spend a little while, before he drives back along his Highway and so home to South Australia.

There is much activity on the iron-ore leases at Mt. Newman. Mt. Newman is the Etnel Creek outstation and is managed by my husband as well as this property. The Mt. Newman homestead is about 50 miles west of the Etnel homestead. An American company is doing the proving of the leases and have a helicopter there for the survey work and of course much large machinery for road making, aerodrome making and drilling etc.. Much excitement when the helicopter landed at the front gate a couple of weeks ago - they took my husband for a ride but as I only fly when it is absolutely necessary, I let a young native boy of ~~12~~ 12 have my seat. It was much more enjoyable to see his reactions than the doubtful pleasure I would obtain from the trip!

With all the mining etc going on it looks as if the north is at last stirring to life. Etnel homestead is just off the Great Northern Highway (10 miles) and one sees and hears the heavy vehicles coming and going and in the tourist season a tremendous number of cars come through so one has an abundance of visitors.

My typing is rather poor this morning as I am getting frequent interruptions. Hope to meet the plane at Roy Hill on Saturday and get some mail posted.

Do hope that the tape has been sorted out for you by now and that you forgive my stupidity in the first instance.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

Lenny Anderson.

KR

Ref: MB

12th November, 1963.

Mrs. T. Anderson,
Ethel Creek Station,
Via MEEKATHARRA, W.A.

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

We have now had your tape transposed to the right speed for our machine and have been able to play it. It was most interesting to hear and we are very grateful to you for letting us have it to keep here for its historical value. Thank you for your comments too, it is most useful to have the details which you supplied; I had no idea that the natives on the stations still adhered so rigidly to many of their aboriginal customs.

We should like to have a press release about this recording, if you are agreeable, but there are a few additional facts which we should like to have. Could you let me know when (roughly, within a year, say) the natives began to use tapes for sending their messages and how they became aware of this medium. You did mention a dogger who travelled through the area and had a tape recorder, but I was not sure whether this was when the practice began.

I am sorry to bother you again when you have already done so much for us, but it would be a help if we could answer these additional questions.

Yours sincerely,

MOLLIE LUKIS
Librarian, Battye Library

T



Ethel Creek Station,
Via Meekatharra,
14th Nov. 1963.

Dear Miss Lukis,

Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 12th inst received to-day - a road train came to load cattle and brought our mail.

I wrote to you on the 7th inst with the intention of posting it on the 9th at Roy Hill airport, but instead of going to meet the plane, George tripped off into the desert.

Len Beadell came in early on Friday morning to stay a few days and told us of his encounter with natives out in the McKay Ranges. We contacted Mr. Roberts, District Native Welfare Officer, Port Headland, who came down on Friday night bringing with him, Mr. Pinkus N.W.O of Marble Bar. By this time Len Beadell (who speaks the Warbuton dialect quite well) had been telling our staff all about his friends out in the desert - he had contacted them on his way across in August and again as his team were grading the road in this direction - so much excitement all about! On Saturday morning half the population of W.A. seemed to be here - some neighbors had come in, a road train for cattle and parking space seemed to be running short! The male natives had a 'man meeting' with Beadell, Roberts, Pinkus and George (women are small fry and keep suitably in the background) - the outcome was that George agreed to take the ~~NATIVE~~ Native Welfare Officers and Beadell with two station natives out to the McKay Ranges in a four wheel drive vehicle. After an early luncheon, the party took off.

Beadell's grader party (known as the Gun Barrel Construction company) were grading the road back towards Giles and our vehicle caught up with them about 11 p.m. 195 miles east of Ethel Creek, camping the night with them. Next morning our party drove to within 35 miles of the Canning Stock Route - well 23, - they saw some native's fires and made contact with two young men at a water hole. These young men in turn took them to where there was a native family, the father in this group was a previous contact of Beadell's, so they greeted each other as old friends! This fellow decided to send the two young men into civilization and so they are here at Ethel Creek. A rendez-vous was made with this group by Roberts for 8 days ahead (counting in sun ups) when they are to have the tribe assembled to meet Roberts. They were a very happy bunch of people, no sores and looked quite well nourished. All this, you will admit, is a long winded if unusual reason for failing to post a letter!

2.

Now re tapes: We got our tape recorder about November 1962 - prior to that I had not heard of one in the district. To my knowledge the first message taped from native-to native was by us here, with the Ethel Creek staff sending their greeting and singing a song to the native pensioners who live on Mt. Newman, (our outstation - about 50 miles away). A little colony of old people are living their lives out happily at Mt. Newman on the pension and are cared for and get their provisions from Ethel Creek - they are Jackie Forrest and his wife Kitty, Painkiller and at that time Mikalong was alive and living there, and a man named Carlo. These old fellows were amazed - they thought it was a radio and then of course they enjoyed the joke and sent all sorts of messages to the fellows at Ethel and sang them a song - this all got wiped off a tape unfortunately. The next messages taped were from the fellows at Ethel Creek to Mikalong when she was in Perth, which I took to her at Bennet House and her reply thereto.

About February 1963 I heard that Mr. Snell who is with the Vermin Branch of the Dept. Agriculture and hunts dingoes somewhere in this area - c/- Meekatnarra would probably be his address, had a tape recorder and was taping corroborees at the big holiday camp 30 miles from the Ethel Creek homestead. He sent the tape from the natives at Bulloo Downs to our staff here - the one I re-recorded for you May-June 1963. The Bulloo fellows were all on pink-1 here and would have told him we have a tape recorder here. These are the only messages that I know of that have been taped in this area until last Saturday 9th.

When the party were getting their food and swags ready for the trip to the McKay ranges, the natives asked to have a message taped and taken out to the wild ones in the desert. This was done and three or four of them spoke to their kin, explaining who they were and who their daddy and mummy were etc.. This was played to the desert natives and replied to by the old chap they met - he nearly crawled into the machine in his wonderment.! I will tape this off and send it on the mail for you as this I think would be quite unique - it is only short but will send it along.

It is quite all right with us to release this to the Press.

Len Beadell left this morning - he is writing a book and pauses where ever there is a typewriter so that he can type his handwritten script. He is a delightful person with an extraordinary sense of ligh hearted fun and we shall miss his gay presence. He is quite firm in his statements that he will remember not to come to Ethel Creek when writing his next book as we get far too many callers! I believe the title of the book is to be "Too Long in the Bush" - a firm of publishers have requested him to write it. I read the first 5 chapters and think it should go well.

with kind regards
S. G. J.
J. Anderson



0113
Ethel Creek Station,
Tuesday 19th Nov. 1963.

Dear Miss Lukis,

As promised in my last letter am enclosing herewith the fragment of greetings from the Ethel Creek natives to their friends and relations out in the McKay Ranges. Toby and his wife Thea Thea (these have been in and gone out again and come in again, Pansy - has been in some 20 odd years, and Margaret (Wildeba) was brought in by her mother when she was about 2 years. Her daddy old Wilbur is still alive and is a very old man - has had five wives altogether - 4 still living.

Long Bob and Old Peter went out with the party and were chatting to desert Charlie. All the natives out there have been long aware of civilization and also of course have seen the mobs of cattle going down the Canning Stock Route and may have been named by the drovers. One happy old boy named Lolly got five lollies off Len Beadell when they first met while Len was waking up to the fact that Lolly was his name. Len says that Lolly is completely covered with long hair except for a bald patch on the top of his head and was a very gay old boy. Len gave him a hat and has sketched him for us - will show you when we come down holiday time if I may call on you then - sometime during February.

The mail here and waiting for xxx
me. Kind regards.

John Conderson

JJ

Ref : MB

26th November, 1963

Mrs. E. Anderson,
Ethel Creek Station,
via MEEKATHARRA.

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

Thank you very much for your letters, the last, dated 19th November, accompanying the tape with the greetings from Ethel Creek natives to the desert tribe in the McKay Range. I have left the tape to be transposed to the right speed for our machine so haven't heard it yet. As soon as I get it back I shall return it to you with the earlier tape which has already been successfully transposed. We sent a press release about these messages to the papers and to the ABC, and I believe the ABC have already mentioned it in their news - possibly you may have heard it.

I was so pleased to hear you will be down in February and will look forward to meeting you then. Again many thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely,

MOLLIE LUKIS
Librarian, Battye Library

RA

REF: MB

16th December, 1963

Mrs. T. Anderson,
Ethel Creek Station,
Via MEEKATHARRA. W.A.

Dear Mrs. Anderson,

This is just a note to say that I am returning your two tapes which have now been transposed for use on our recorder and can therefore be cleared by you for other use. Thank you once again for letting us have them and for all the trouble you have taken in the matter.

I certainly hope you will have time to call when you are down in February and shall look forward to meeting you. Please ring before you come in as I should not want to miss you and as we all work on shift this could easily happen. The A.B.C. are hoping you may be able to spare time for an interview with them about the tapes; I told them you would be down and someone from the Talks Department was going to write to you.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

MOLLIE LUKIS
Librarian, Battye Library

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