

A true account of The Ragged Thirteen

By Winklater

Billy Miller

Captain Bert Stroman
204 Bancroft Street
Ottawa, Ont. N. A.

The above man sent me a cutting from Perth's
Morning daily paper the Northwesters assertion that
he was the last of the Ragged 13. also the par
incised by the Historical Society of W A asking for
authentic confirmation of them.

421

The Ragged Thirteen

By H. Finklater
Who lived continuously in N.T. & The Kimberley
from 1887 to October 1938.
This manuscript is presented

To
Mrs Dawson "Mavis Hallison"
as an appreciation of Her excellent
drawings of aboriginals, illustrating my Story's
Sydney August 16 1941

11
22
33
44
55
66
77
88
99
a man called Harburton Perth W.A. posing
as the last of the Ragged Thirteen, told a
journalist that he was the last of them &
could not remember the name of the others
W.A. Historical Society put an advertisement
in paper asking for particulars of the 13.
Hence Ernestine Hills article.

The Ragged Thirteen

1886 a mob of bushmen camped at a waterhole called Johnston's the waterhole is between Newcastle Waters, and Daly Waters Telegraph Station, They were making for Halls Creek Goldrush in East Kimberley W.A. Their names were as follows.

These men
travelled
along the
O.T. line
from Alice
Springs

Sandy Myrtle. Alexander McDonald

Jim Woodford

Jack Dally

Honoka Jack John Brown

George Brown Brother to the above.

Hugh Campbell a Sailor from Port Augusta

Tommy the Rag. No one knew his name.

The following six men
travelled from Jack Hoods from New England

Tom Holmes Tom Nugent (Captain of 13)

Jim Carmody

Jim Fitzgerald

Bob Anderson

Larrakin Bill Smith

As they camped at Johnston's, Nat Buchanan "Old Bluey" and his young son Gordon about Sundown arrived at Johnston's. They pulled their packs off lit their fire boiled the billy, had supper then Nat

(2)

and his son walked over to the mob, sat down at their Campfire, and as bushmen do, discussed the track they had travelled over such as waterholes (how long the water would last) grass and in those days hostility of the natives.

Old Nat Buchanan happened to count the number of men travelling together it was thirteen. He said there are thirteen of you travelling together - the devil's number -

Next morning they travelled along the O.T. line towards the Katherina River. Arriving at Bitter Springs (Mr Angus Gun Country) they camped and some of them rode to Abrahams Billabong - a distance of two miles. a man kept a store & sold grog illicitally. They had a few drinks. The two men who owned the store, killed a bullock late in the evening. The men asked them to sell them some fresh beef so they could take it to their camp and cook it for supper. The men said they would not cut the bullock up until morning

and that they intend to leave it hanging on the gallows all night.

They was annoyed at being refused beef, which they was willing to pay for. So some of them rode up to the stockyard - where the carcass of the bullock was hanging - they took half of the carcass - about 250 pounds - to their camp. The following morning Mat Kirwin one of the partners in the store & shanty rode down to the Bitter Springs, he sat on his horse and told them off. he said he would fight the best man they could produce - that is if he would be given a fair go -

Hugh Campbell jumped out took his shirt off and said he would accommodate him. Honoka Jack, picked Mat Kirwin up & Sandy Myrtle picked Hugh Campbell up. Both Honoka Jack and Sandy Myrtle were good bare knuckle fighters.

During the fight Mat Kirwin broke his arm. The fight was declared off. All hands went up to the shanty.

14

and put the day & Evening, buying liquor & having a good dinner. Arriving at the Katherine - there was a Telegraph Office and a store and a Shanty illicit liquor sold. There was a fair number of men who was travelling out to Kimberley Gold fields - camped along the Katherine river, from the Katherine to the Halls Creek Gold fields was approx 570 miles with only about three Cattle Stations between. A man called Tom Cashman - afterwards made a big rise on Groydon Gold fields North Queensland - was trying to find the 13 he would ride up the men camped along the river and ask them where the 13 was camped, at one camp a man asked him what he was looking for? He replied, The 13 with Tommy the Rag in it, The Ragged 13 he said and so the name was born.

Leaving the Katherine later on they arrived at Victoria River Downs, the station was only just formed. The

of Station in
Crawford's
absence

Manager Lindsay Crawford was out riding & camping around the Cattle. The Store Keeper Lockard in Charge The 13 had a large number of horses they was very short of horseshoes, a lot of their horses was tender footed The Country (Basalt) was too stony to ride & drive horses with out shoes. So the mob camped about a mile away from the Station Tom Holmes accompanied by his black boy rode up to the Station, he introduced himself to the Storekeeper as a Queensland pastoralist looking for Country. After Supper Tom & he played Crib the men came from the River they prized the Stabs loose of the Store, it was a slab but easily opened they took about 4 cwt of Horseshoes, & some Flour Sugar Etc. on they travelled by Depot Creek - so named by Gregory the Explorer who in 1856 was looking for Leichhardt. Then the Stirling River & Negri which they followed down to where it junctioned

6

Into the Ord River close to Red Butte a Red bastion of the Osborn Range named by Alice Forrest, they followed the Ord river up a few miles and came to a salt pan - where there is a large deposit of salt from the Salt Springs. They killed a few Bullocks salted the beef & built a smoke house smoked the beef then on to Halls Creek Goldfields where they disbanded.

Tom Holmes whose right name was Tom Nugent was a native of The Hunter River N.S.W. He was manager of Lake Nash Cattle Station Georgina River, 1882.

John Costello bought the property - & he sent John Farrar to take the prop over & manage it. Tom left Halls Creek went back to The Overland Telegraph line formed a Cattle Station Banka Banka - The writer was two years 1900 & 1902 with him during that time Jack Woods turned up & stopped about 2 months. I heard Tom & Jack talk the Ragged 13 trip over often.

Also during those years I mentioned Lindsay Crawford - who was the Manager of Victoria River Downs Station, when The Ragged 13 took Horseshoes & Tucker from the store. Tom Holmes had just got his 12 months supply of rations By Camels from Oodnadatta a distance of between 6 and 7 hundred miles. There was a good supply of whisky in the loading. Tom & Lindsay got on a bender - like all bushmen, who are living hundred of miles from a pub. As there was a lot of blacks working on the station & also a lot in the Munyong Camp, I had to leave the whisky alone to watch the blacks did not have some grog. If they had got hold of some there would have been hell. Lindsay Crawford would chide Tom Holmes for the depredations of the Ragged 13. Tom would say. That is ancient history, why bring it up so I from a different angle would hear it discussed. Tom about 1909 took ill at The Tennent Telegraph Station where he died.

8.

Sandy Myrtle. Alexander McDonald is Manager of a Station out from Fares S.A. owned by Murray - the Station was called Myrtle, hence the Nickname. From Halls Creek Gold fields he went back to the Alice he formed a Cattle Station out from "The Alice" where he died.

The two Brothers Wonoka Jack and George Brown were Moonta Miners leaving Halls Creek they went back to The Katherine they pit sawed Timber for Barney Murphy who built an Hotel at the Katherine and at a Small Goldfield 12 miles from the Katherine - Called Maude Cree. Wonoka Jack got a disease called Hydatids went South & died.

Jim Carmody was brother-in law to Black Jack Reid, who arrived - at the McArthur River landing - where Percololora is now, - with a Schooner The good Intent, he should have gone to Darwin declared his Cargo & paid Custom dues, but a small thing like that did

not trouble Mouri Reid, he quietly sold out his Cargo of Flour Sugar Tea & Clothes & grog to Men travelling by with Cattle. That was the time when mob after mob of Cattle was travelling out the Coast road, to Stock up Country in N.I. & H.A. Customs Officer Gearcey Took possession of the Schooner took it & Mouri Reid ^{to Darwin} It was put up for Auction, no one bid against Mouri Jack, he bought it back for £30.0.0 He renamed it The Smuggler then off he sailed down the North west Coast of Western Australia.

Jim Carmody went back to The Katherine & was drowned, in the Katherine River.

Jimmie Woodford went back to the Alice Springs Country he finished up looking for Meteorites & selling them. Jack Woods ~~was~~ was a native of New England from Halls Creek he went to Coolgardie Goldfields where he was sheep driving for Goldfields Butchers, 1900 he came to Barrow

Bangka Station where he stopped about 2 months then off back home to England, N.S.W.

Bob Anderson was the boy of the mob. He had not long landed in Australia from Isle of Skye Scotland. He done no good at Halls Creek Goldfields, he went back to Normanton & had a team of bullocks carrying Croydon & Georgetown & Cloncurry. Later on he formed a Cattle Station west of Eurandangie got married had a big family, & died there. Jack Dally was a young farmer from Terowie S.A. After Halls Creek he settled down about Cloncurry married & reared a family his sons is Condroving - or was - in North West of Quee. They went to the 1914 war. He died well over 70.

Hugh Campbell was a Sailor who deserted his ship at Port Augusta he stopped about Halls Creek Goldfields and was Cooching on Flora Valley 25 miles from Halls Creek. The Station was owned

(11)

by Gordon Buchanan & his two uncles
Hugh & Hattie Gordon. 1908 he got
a illness - could not breathe -
went to England for treatment &
died.

The other ones followed the Gold rushes
from Halls Creek, down to Coolgardie
and got absorbed in the big crowd
of men about Coolgardie

This is a true account of the Ragged
Thirteen. I have met men who told
me they was a member of the 13.
I could easily bowl them out. I have
heard wonderful accounts of their
doings all fabricated.

Ernestine Hill has wrote an
account of them, from information
I gave her. Articles appeared in
Sydney Morning Herald & "The West
Australian" of Perth, no body contradicted
my facts. No body had the same opportu-
-ity of getting the true facts as I did

W. Lintell