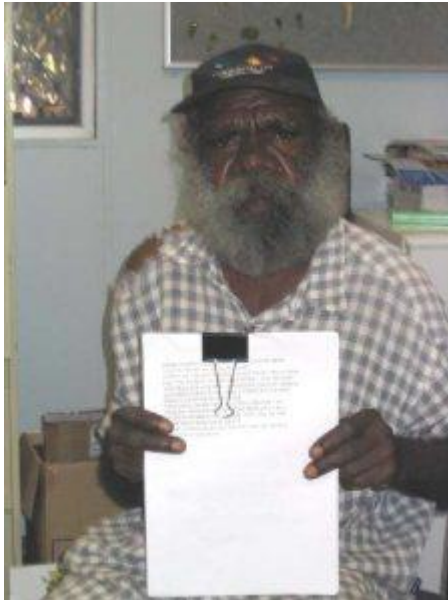


A LIFE

Richard Adrian Narrier

Mr Narrier, who couldn't write, told his story to pupils at Leonora District High School in Western Australia. He also told them some "Dreamtime" stories which the pupils illustrated. This all appeared on a website I was running at the time.



I Richard Adrian Narrier was born in Meekatharra Hospital 10/10/54. Throughout my childhood I've lived in Albion Downs. I have also been at Leinster Downs Station and played with the boss' son Kim White. We had barrow wheels, which we pushed around, on top of the cyanide dump at the station.

My father has worked in Albion Downs Station until us children (Keith and I) got to the age to attend school. My father then shifted to Wiluna. There he work for the Roads Board. Later the Education Department agreed to build a school at Albion Downs Station because Mr Howard (the boss of Albion Downs) want us Narriers to stay at the station with our other families the James and Wongabongs. There the Folvig's children from Yeelerie and from Mt Keith the Jones children. They were the station boss' children.

When I was about 11 or 12 years old I would ask Mr Howard if there is any work around the house garden during the school holidays. I would rake up the leaves, weed the vegie patches or water the garden. I would get \$2.00 paid on Saturday afternoon. With this money I paid my fares at the pictures and buy lollies and cool drinks. West of the Station there is the Lucerne Patch. Whenever my father and Uncle Dempsey James has cut and baled lucerne, hay or sudax, I would offer help to cart and stack them.

During the drought seasons when there was a shortage of grass to feed the sheep, me, Michael and Gary James would go out with dad, Uncle Dempsey or Mr Howard to feed the sheep. We would load the truck with bales of lucerne and go from one windmill to another, throwing off the lucerne from the back of the truck.

Every year on September it's shearing time. After school me, Michael, Gary, Glenis, Lynette, James and Elizabeth Wongabong would walk to the shearing shed to help in the yards chasing the sheep through the drenching pens. Dad, Uncle Dempsey and Uncle Mick Wongabong would stand back and let us do the work. Sometimes Michael and I would ride our push bikes out to the shed. Mr Howard would give us the job of shepherding the sheep. That is looking after the sheep while they feed around. If any should stray, we ride our bikes around and push them back to the mob. Later we'd yard them up and put our bikes on the back of the truck and go home.

I was very keen on riding horses. Mrs Howard had given me a saddle and bridle to use. At the end of each year, before the school break-up there is a prize given to one of the students called "The Citizenship Prize". This prize is presented by Sir David Brand and Premier Mr Burt. I was nominated for the prize because I help at school and outside of school hours.

Then the time has come for me to leave Albion Downs School. It was a Government School. I was asked if I wanted to attend an Agriculture School at Pallotine Mission Tardun. I said yes as this would further my education. I started 10/02/1969. I was taught maintenance on tractors and trucks. To plough, seed and harvest wheat, barley and oats, chicken and animal husbanding. As for fencing and fixing windmills that was easy for me because I learnt that at Albion Downs Station. The first year I passed my exams. The second year I also passed my exams on 02/12/1970. I have graduated and received a certificate, which I have now along with a photo.

After that I worked at Annean Station, Meekatharra for 7 months. Then I came back home to Albion Downs Station. I worked there as a young adult. Went to Yakabindie and worked there, then to Lake Way Station. I was happy to work on these three stations because it is home to me. Kaluwiri and Yeelirie is also my home country and I have worked there also.

When I was about 19 years old I got Molly Jackman, she had a son name James Narrier. I brought Molly and James back to Albion Downs and worked there for about 8 months. Then I took Molly and the child to Weebo Station to my grannies. They was happy to see us. At Weebo the old ladies has mudoonoo(massage his leg and arm muscles) and spoke to my son James. They also sang songs and rubbed ochre on the top of his head where their soft spot is. This is the traditional way of baptizing newborn babies. This I have done as a law of us Aboriginal for my son. Many young couples would rather party on and wet the baby's head as they say, by drinking beer, but I have done it the proper way, the traditional way.

When Albion Downs was sold to another squatter or boss, it was like losing a home forever. The closer I could get to Albion Downs is by working at Lake Way Station. Live and work there was like another home. Because Lake Way is so close to Albion Downs I was quite happy to work for short periods, like mustering or shearing or fixing windmills. That is if Mrs Lukens wanted any workers to help. One day when we had a day off, I told the boss Chris Jacobs that I am going to Albion Downs for the day and would not be back till 3pm. There at Albion Downs as I spoke to the manager memories of my childhood flashed back to me. Mentally I pictured the families who lived there. Us children who had schooled and played there. I told the manager who I am and where I lived. what families lived in what houses. But the day wore on and I had to leave. Still with the memories and the feeling of being there I was quite happy.

That is all I have to say.

Richard Adrian Narrier

Dreamtime Stories

THE GOANNA AND THE SNAKE



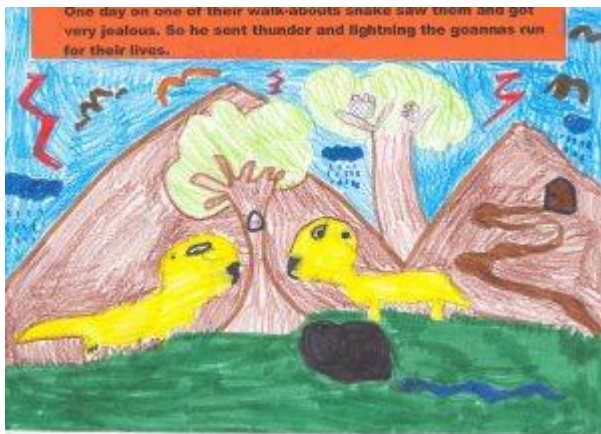
A long time ago in the dream time, the goanna was a poisonous creature before the snake. Goanna carried a poison sac in its mouth. The snake wanted the sac for himself, but didn't know how to get it from him. So he made friends with the goanna. They would go out hunting together and even camp out if they was too far out of the main camp. One day Goanna and Snake went hunting a long way away and had to sleep out. After supper, Snake said he was tired and pretended to sleep. Later Goanna laid down to go to sleep. Every night before Goanna goes to sleep, he would take out the poison sac and place it near him. Then in the morning he would put it back in his mouth. Snake saw this and waited until he was asleep. When the goanna was fast asleep, Snake got up, stole the sac, put it in his mouth and ran off in the middle of the night. When Goanna woke up next morning, he saw that Snake had gone and his poison sac was stolen. Goanna tracked him down and asked him to give it back, but he wouldn't. So they started to fight each other. When Snake bites goanna, he would run and chew on some grass, come back and fight on. Every time when Goanna was bitten he would run and eat the grass. Goanna whipped snake with his tail over and over again until they couldn't fight any longer. Snake crawled away and died, while Goanna kept on eating the grass. Today when the goanna sees the snake he will run up and challenge the snake for a fight. When the snake is bitten he will run and chew on some grass, come back and fight again.

WHEN DRAGON FLY KILLED SNAKE



A long time ago in the dreamtime there lived a dragonfly. This dragonfly went in search of food. He came upon a snake track. The dragonfly followed the snake's track from the north to the south. When Snake saw the dragonfly he went down a hole. A little while later he came out of another hole. Dragonfly then threw his spear and killed it. Later he lit a fire and cooked it. As the snake cooked in the hot ashes it burst open sending hot fat in all directions. Later the dragonfly ate the snake and went on his way. Today north east of Albion Downs Station there is a spring called "Palm Spring". The water there is pure, cold and fresh. If you go there on a calm day a small wind will blow and circle around the spring. This is the water-snake which sends out the wind to get the smell of you. During the night the water overflows a little way out to the flats, watering the kangaroos. This is caused by the snake moving around in the spring. South of Mt Keith there is a quartz hill about two miles long. This is where dragonfly cooked snake. In hot days the hill gets smoky. This is the smoke from the fire that lingered in the air when the snake was cooking. In the break-a-ways near the quartz hill, scattered about are honey-opals and moss-agates these are the fats and juices that exploded from the snake when being cooked. Near Yakabindie towards the south there is a lake. On the edge of the lake are red sand hills. These sand hills represents the blood from the snake. The lake is the final resting place where the snake died.

THE TALE OF THE BLACK GOANNA



In the dreamtime a long time ago there lived two goannas. They were brothers and both were yellow. Every day the goannas would go walk-about and sing songs. They would sing to the trees, the hills and the animals. One day on one of their walk-about Snake saw them and got very jealous. So he sent thunder and lightning the goannas run for their lives. One ran into a hole in the ground and the other climbed a tree then crawled into a hollow. Lightning struck the ground and the grass around the tree caught on fire. The tree where the goanna had been hiding got burnt and so did the goanna. Later when the rain put the fire out. The two goannas called to each other. The goanna that was hiding in the tree came out first and was burnt. When the other goanna came out and saw his mate was burnt he began to laugh. He laughed so much that the other goanna got wild and they started to fight. The two goannas then separated and are no longer friends. Today when the black goanna sees the yellow goanna they will fight each other. If the black goanna kills the yellow one he will eat him.

THE STORY OF THE CROW



In the dreamtime there lived a boy who was very lazy. Everyday the men would ask him to go out hunting with them, but he would say that he is sick in the stomach. His mother would tell him to go out with the men, but he refused to go. This would go on every day and the people could see that he is putting on a lot of weight, although he was sick and would not eat. One day when everyone was going out an old man (the medicine man) told them that he was going to have a rest. When everyone was a good distance away he went back to the camp. He hid in the bushes, keeping an eye on him. Not long after, the boy knowing that everyone was a long way away from the camp, got up and walk from camp to camp picking up scraps that the dog would not touch and started to eat it. The old men saw this and thought of a way to punish him.

“I cannot turn him into a dog. We have too many. If I turn him into a snake,he will bite and kill everyone, so I’ll turn him into a bird.” So the medicine man sang a magic song and danced. Very shortly the boy shrunk and grew feathers, then flew away ashamed of himself. Today you will see the crow going from camp to camp picking up scraps and eating them.

WHY THE EMU CAN'T FLY



A long time ago there lived an emu and a turkey. In those days the emu could fly like the turkey. Both birds had a big family. So when the chicks hatched from their eggs, Emu and Turkey would walk with their chicks to feed them until they could fly. Because the emu is a big bird and could fly a long

way, Turkey was very jealous of Emu because he could fly far out and get the best food for his chicken before him. One day, Turkey thought of an idea to stop Emu from getting the best food. Turkey then tucked his wings so close to his body that his chick couldn't see it. Satisfied with this he told his chicks to do the same. When that was done, he told his chicks never to talk to Emu or his family and let him do all the talking. Off went Turkey to looking for Emu and his family. When they met, Emu asked what he has done with his wings.

"Oh", said Turkey "flying there and everywhere, collecting food is a very tiring job, so I cut off my wings and the chickens too. Besides when walking, we pick up the good food that we miss when we fly. Why don't you do the same?" Emu thought it was a good idea. So he chased his chicks, caught them one by one and cut the little fellow's wings off. Satisfied of what he has done Emu came and told Turkey he has cut their wings off. "Now we can both walk with our families and collect the good food together." "No you don't," said turkey. "Men and his dogs can run you down and kill you, but when I see danger coming towards me I could spread my wings and fly to a safer place". After saying that the turkey flew off. A long time after, when Emu settle down from what he had done, he thought of away to pay Turkey back.



When Emu saw Turkey walking in the flats he hid all his chicken in the bush except one. When Turkey asked what happened to his chicks, Emu said "Oh I find it hard to feed all my chicks. It's easy to feed one so I killed them all but saved one. Why don't you do the same?" So turkey chased his chicks and one by one hit them on the head killing all but one. "There you are," said turkey, "We both can walk and feed one chick each." Emu smiled and gave a whistle towards the bush where his chicks was hiding. Out they ran to Emu. "There you are, you tricked me to cut off my wings and my chicks too. You said that men and his dogs would run me down and kill me because I can't fly. But I have a big family, they can get one while the others will get away. You will have one chick only. Every time you look at him it will remind you of a fool you are for the rest of your life." Today when you see an Emu running with his brood, you will notice one chicken(the smallest one), is way behind the rest of them. This chick will sacrifice his life so the others will get away. You will hear the turkey calling during the night. That is because when the turkey settle down for the night and looks at his mate or his chick, he will remember what he has done in the past and then cry all night thinking of his family.

Bush Skills

HOW THE HUNTER GETS THEIR EMU BY COPYING EMU'S METHOD



In the old days when guns wasn't known our ancestors has hunted emu with spears. They would go and sit at a water hole and wait for an emu to come for a drink. When the hunter see the emu coming he would get his spear ready to throw and lay down. As the emu comes closer the hunter kicks around. On seeing this the emu comes closer thinking that it is another emu. The hunter gets up quickly, throw his spear and if he is lucky he would hit one.

MY COMPASS THE KANGAROO

I was told by my father how to tell the direction out in the bush by day and night. During the day you go by the sun, by night the stars. Problem solved, you would find your way home but what if it's at night and sky is covered with clouds! Well you go to a reasonably tall shady tree and look at the ground. There you would see your compass. Sounds funny? But it is true. For on the ground you will see where the kangaroos have dug holes in the shade. During the day, when the sun rises in the morning it travels slightly to the north, not right above us. Therefore the tree cast its shadow always on the south side. The kangaroos follow the shade from west to south then east, leaving the north side untouched. When you turn your back toward the tree you are facing north.

HOW THE EMU WEANS IT'S GROWN CHICKS

When the emu wants to wean their chicks the father emu runs fall down and kicks about. Then it stops kicking and lays still. The chickens walk around looking at him. Thinking that he is dead, the chicks wanders off leaving him laying there. When the emu sees that he gets up and runs in the opposite direction as far as possible away from them.

THE USE OF THE SANDALWOOD SEEDS

Our ancestors use sandalwood seeds for spear wounds and cuts from fights. Women collect as many seeds as possible. They then light a fire and cook the seeds. When that is done the seeds are taken out and left to cool. When the seeds are cooling, the women go and strip the bark off the tree. The inside fibre is peeled off. The women crack open the nuts and take out the seeds. The seeds is ground into powder. The powder is mixed in a wooden bowl, to make a paste. The paste is then applied on the wounds. The fibre is wrapped around the wound acting as a bandage.

SURVIVING THE BUSH

Galahs and zebra finches constantly need water three times a day. So if you are out in the bush and need water, you will see a flock of galahs or zebra finches flying pass you. First thing in the morning you will see the galahs fly in one direction. Ten minute later they will fly back to where they came from. Walk in the way they first flew. Very shortly you will come across a rock hole or a pool of water. These birds need water in the morning, midday and before sunset.

THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS

In the early days our ancestors walked the land where animals roamed. Free to go from one waterhole to another, but within their boundaries. Men hunted kangaroos and emu. Teaching the young boys the skill with great care. This goes from father to son and so forth to survive the harsh land. Women like the men, show the girls how to track goannas, echidnas and other creatures that claws. They are taught to identify edible roots, fruit and seeds to make dampers which is ground to make flour.

TODAY

Today we jump in our car, drive from one town to another. Nothing to care about but ourself. There is no boundaries but our freedom. Where is our freedom? That is a question you, me or anyone cannot answer. We roam the land but cannot find what we are looking for.

FUTURE

What is ahead of us? Would we see the future? No not I.
Not what is happening today? But would there be one for the young people?

These stories that I have printed have been told to me by my grandfather. Stories he told us were passed on by his father. Like the stories of the dreamtime, the method and skills of hunting, the knowledge of animal and bird habits to be able to find water and food to survive in the bush. The sandalwood tree played a big part in healing wounds and keeping insects at bay, helps with breathing. Being just one of the medicines I was told about. These stories have helped me and my people survive in the bush.