

MY ANCESTORS, THE ABORIGINES

Amongst the many very creditable essays for the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee's essay contest this year were a group submitted by pupils of St. Michael's School, Palm Island.

Some of the essays were prize winners, but all were of great interest as pointers to the thoughts of the youngsters of today on their ancestors and their own people.

The theme of the essay required for this year's competition was, "My Ancestors, the Aborigines."

We publish some of the entries below, and in other editions of Dawn will publish entries received from other parts of Australia.

By Loretta Stanley, aged 12

Many many years ago in 1314 there was an old witch doctor named Kurrooman, who came from the tribe Barrioon. These Aborigines were happy and free to roam around. When the people were sick Kurrooman cured them with his magic bone.

When they wanted food the men of the family went out and hunted. They hunted for wild ducks and kangaroos, and they collected some kind of nuts that grow around wild.

When the men come home with the food the women cook it. They make their fire with a straight stick and a flat one.

They put the straight stick on the flat one, and then they rub them together. They make their house out of grass and leaves and call it a gunyah.

Every time they have a big feast they hold a corroboree and paint themselves. Their special colours are white, yellow, red and black, and they paint themselves all over. The warriors only paint themselves, not the women.

When the baby girls were born their marriages were fixed straight away, and at 12 they were married to an old man of 50. They were forced to get married by their parents.

They made their weapons out of wood and stone. Their weapons were nulla-nullas, spears and shields, which they used for fighting and hunting.

The warriors do not let the women know about the young boys becoming warriors. They cut marks on their body and if they sing out, they get a spear through their body. ●

By Anthony Williams, aged 14

In a little village made of gunyah there lived a tribe of Aborigines with their families. Every morning each man or boy from each gunyah took his boomerang or spear to go out hunting for food.

In one of these gunyahs there was a little boy named Jackie Jackie. He was 15 and he was willing to go out hunting with his bigger brother, but his mother wouldn't let him. She said he was too small.

Years passed and Jackie was now 18, when a night came for a big ceremony called "The Making of a Warrior." All the boys who were 18 were to go to a special gunyah and lie down. An old man with a stone knife would plunge the knife into the boy's chests, and when the blood was dripping, hot ashes would be rubbed in.

**ESSAYISTS
FROM PALM ISLAND:
Left to right, Anthony
Williams, Thelma
Sibley, Fay Thimble,
Loretta Stanley**

