

1995

An analysis of the social profile of the Kilfoyles of Rosewood Station

Geraldine Byrne
Edith Cowan University

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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL
PROFILE OF THE KILFOYLES
OF ROSEWOOD STATION**

**G.F.Byrne
School of Social and Cultural Studies
1995**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL PROFILE OF THE
KILFOYLES OF ROSEWOOD STATION.**

by

Geraldine Byrne B.A.

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for
the Award of**

MASTER of ARTS (History)

**at the School of Social and Cultural Studies, Edith Cowan
University.**

Date of Submission: 12 October, 1995.

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

John Kilfoyle
b: ?
m: Bridget (Dwyer)
d: In Ireland

*Arrived in Australia 25 Jun 1855
per Ship "Golden Era".
Bridget Kilfoyle died 1872*

Margaret
b: 1830
m: Darby Durack
d: 1905
(Arrived Aust 1849)

Kitty
b: ?
m: Carolan
d: 1902
(Remained in Ireland)

John
b: 1824
m: Brigid Carroll
d: 1895
(Arrived Aust 1855)

Patrick
b: 1828
m: Margaret McMahon
d: 1888
(Arrived Aust 1855)

David
b: ?
m: Bridget Doherty
d: ?
(Arrived Aust 1855)

Thomas
b: 1842
m: Catherine Byrne
d: 1908
(Arrived Aust 1855)

**John Augustus
Charles (JAC)**
b: 1893
m: T Ryan (nee Dutton)
d: 1962

Bridget
b: 1848(at sea)
m: Cahill
d: 1934

Catherine
b: ?
m: Nesbit
d: ?

Thomas
b: 1857
m: -
d: 1902

Margaret
b: ?
m: McEvilly
d: 1938

Maryanne
b: 1862
d: 1939

James
b: 1863
d: 1907

Lawrence
b: 1865
d: 1933

Sarah
b: 1867
d: 1925

Will
b: 1869
d: 1911

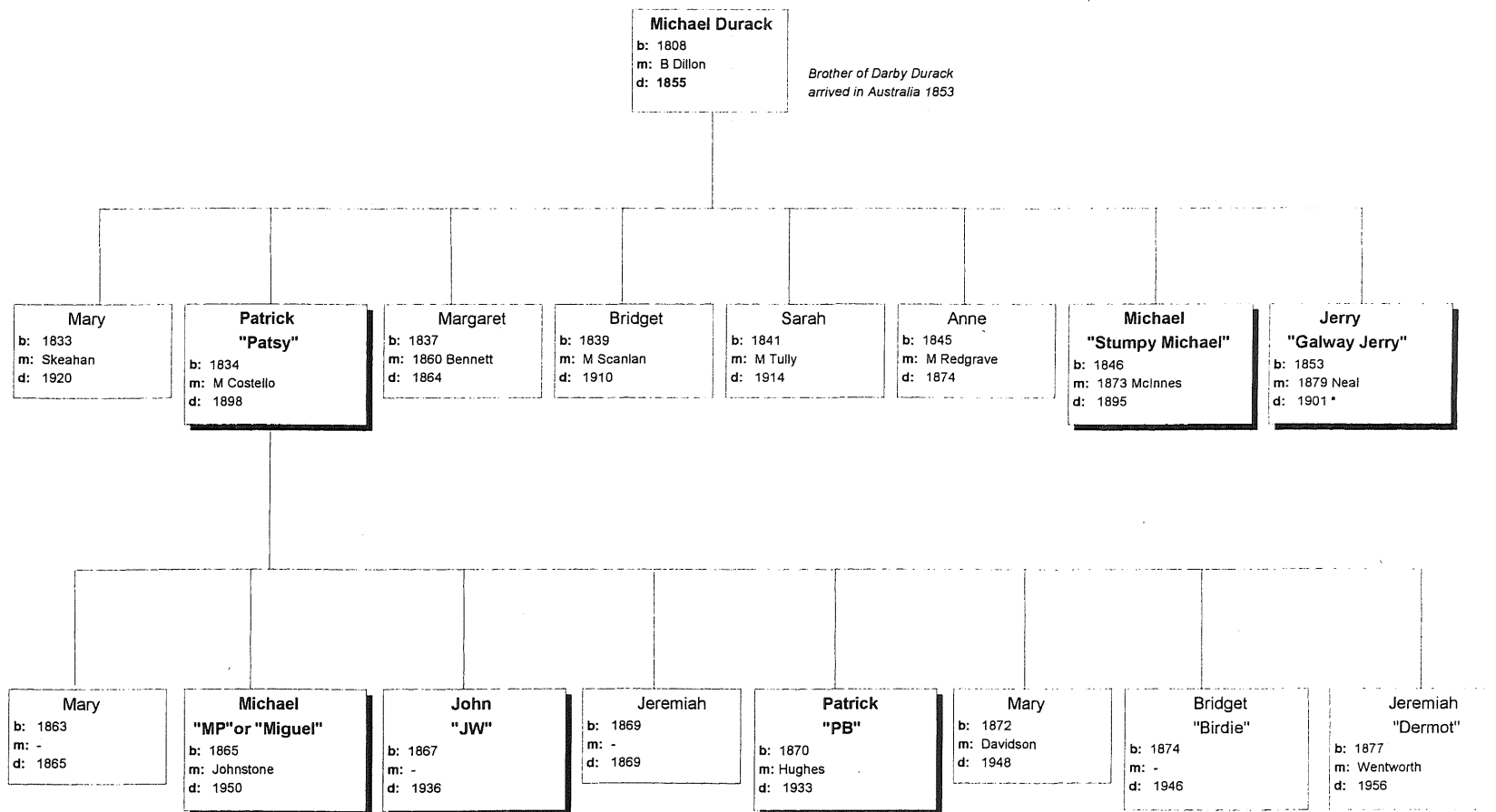
John
"Johnny"**
b: 1849
m: -
d: 1886

Mantinea
"Black Pat"**
b: 1851
m: Downes
d: 1933

Michael
"Long Michael"**
b: 1854
m: Levinson
d: 1936

Jeremiah
"Jerry Brice"**
b: 1858
m: O'Hara
d: 1952

** : Thomas Kilfoyles Nephews



*: Killed by Aborigines

John Byrne
b: 1821
m: Mary (Wall) 1852
d: 1878

*Both arrived in Australia
18 December 1849
per ship "Success"*

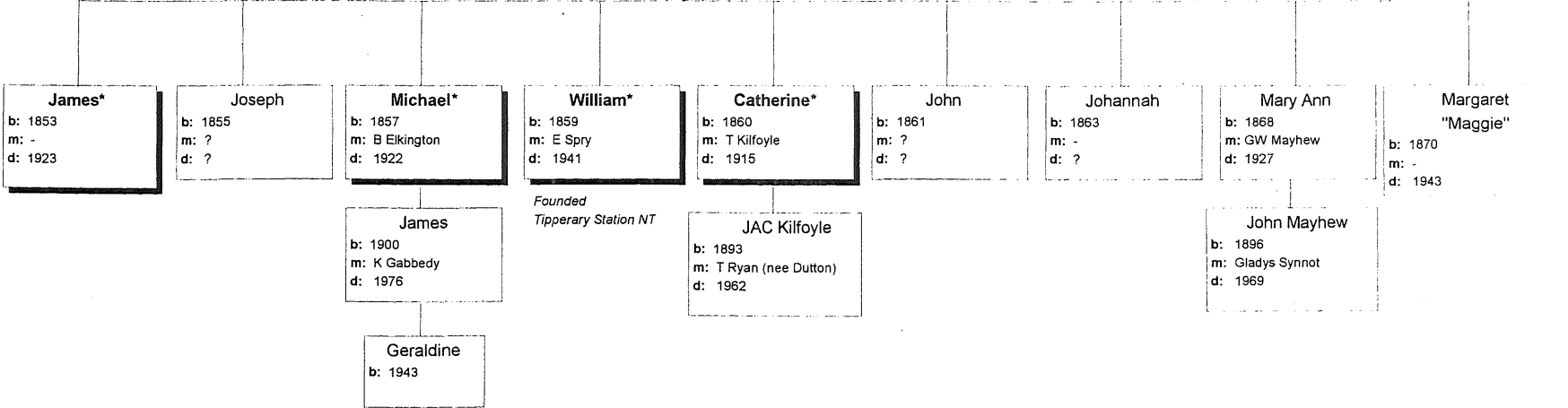


Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter	
Introduction	1
1 The Making of a Kimberley Cattleman	4
2 The Overlanding Expeditions 1882-1885	
The Hibernian and the Hebrew	15
Fremantle	28
Preparations	31
Overlanding 1883-1885	32
3 Taking Possession	52
4 Pine Creek and Fountain Head	74
5 The Kilfoyle Family at Rosewood	86
6 Prosperous Years	104
7 Jack Kilfoyle's Early Years	116
8 Management of Rosewood	127
Improvements	131
Rosewood to Alice Springs - Barren Desert or	
Pastoralists' Paradise?	137
9 Brushes with the Law	141
10 Livestock	149
Cattle	150

	Goats	158
	Horses	158
11	Breach of Promise and Marriage	164
12	Aboriginal Labour Force	172
13	Water Resources	186
14	The War and Post War Years	189
15	Selling the Station	198

Appendix 1 - Design of fencing

Appendix 2 - Advertisement for sale of Stamp Collection.

Bibliography

Abstract

Thomas Kilfoyle (1842-1908) participated in the 1883-1885 overlanding expedition from Queensland to the newly opened Kimberley district. There he became one of the founders of Rosewood Station, a property which under the guidance of Kilfoyle and son Jack (1893-1962) became an outstanding example of successful owner / management of a north Australian beef cattle station.

Among the objectives of this thesis it is important to identify the major features in the Kilfoyles' management policies which enabled them to survive environmental and economic changes which brought many of their neighbours into financial difficulty. An important element was their successful management of Aboriginal labour, which set an unusually enlightened standard among their contemporaries. Attention is also directed to their consistent policy of planned improvements, as well as an at times unconventional approach to legal restraints. Consideration is also given to aspects of northern Australia social history, including the role of women.

The Kilfoyles provide an illuminating case history against which to test the interpretations offered by earlier historians such as Mary Durack in *Kings in Grass Castles* and *Sons in the Saddle*, Ann McGrath in *Born in the Cattle* and Alan Powell in *Far Country*.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

✓
12 October 1995

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my supervisor and friend Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO., for his constant encouragement and valuable suggestions throughout the research and writing stages of this project.

I am grateful for the professional assistance offered to me by the staff of the Edith Cowan University, Perth, the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the Northern Territory Archives, Darwin, the National Library of Australia in Canberra, and the Battye Library in Perth.

I wish to thank my cousin Colin Cooper who, with patience, taught me how to use a computer and my cousin Terry Gabbedy for helping with the layout and printing of the thesis.

I am particularly grateful to Dame Mary Durack's daughter Patsy Millett who assisted me by providing source material and photos from the family's archives.

My thanks to Elizabeth, Reginald and William Durack.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge a debt to my darling friend and mentor, the late Dame Mary Durack, who first took me to the Kimberleys in 1977 and many times thereafter. She fostered my interest in the history of the region, introduced me to the Aboriginal people who lived and worked on Rosewood Station, and engendered in me a love of the North right up until her untimely death in December, 1994.

Introduction

Rosewood Station which has been partly and solely owned by the Kilfoyle family, is situated in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The property had an area of 1,174 square miles and was one of the few stations in the Kimberley area managed by its owners for a period of over sixty years, from 1885 to 1947 with the exception of an interval between 1908 and 1922. More than any other property in the region, Rosewood was cited as a shining example of the benefits of resident owner management, both under the founding pioneer Thomas Kilfoyle and more especially under his son Jack. This thesis, using family, legal, and archival records not previously utilised, as well as oral history from Aboriginal and white sources, sets out to analyse the managerial strategies of the Kilfoyles and to identify the factors which enabled them to succeed in an environment where few small cattlemen prospered.

Studies of this kind have not often been attempted, and when they have, their approach often reflects a sense of challenge well described by Jock Makin in his study of the nearby Victoria River Downs:

Few places in Australia evoke more curiosity - or criticism - than the immense pastoral holdings of the North. Some almost empires within themselves, are held in romantic awe because of their tremendous size, their colourful history, and the dramatic attempts made by their owners to control them¹

In *Kings in Grass Castles*, published in 1959, and drawing upon extensive family archives and oral traditions, Dame Mary Durack has given powerful status to one version of the overlanding tradition in Australian history. It was her

¹ Makin, Jock, *The Big Run*, Rigby Limited, Adelaide, 1971, page 1.

particular achievement to give greater prominence to the role of women and the family than had been evident in classic definitions such as Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend*. There has been curiously little research since 1959 seeking to test and extend Mary Durack's interpretative and journalistic approach, although since that time considerable new archival material has been located and a much more sophisticated technique of oral history has won acceptance. In addition, some of the literary conventions considered acceptable when Mary Durack wrote, such as the reconstruction of conversations from half remembered oral sources, or from hints in the archival records, would not now be used by trained historians. Without in any way detracting from Mary Durack's great qualities of insight and narrative, it seems timely to revisit her subject matter.

Part of the value of *Kings in Grass Castles* lies in its representation of the Kimberleys overlanding parties of the 1880s as extended family enterprises, but within this category, the overlanders included a wide spectrum of interests, ranging from substantial pastoral capitalists such as the Emanuels and Patrick Durack, to penniless stockmen and drovers with only their skills to invest in the project.

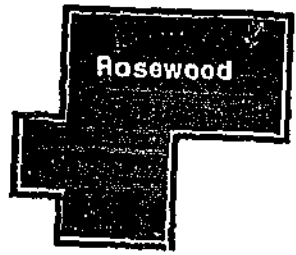
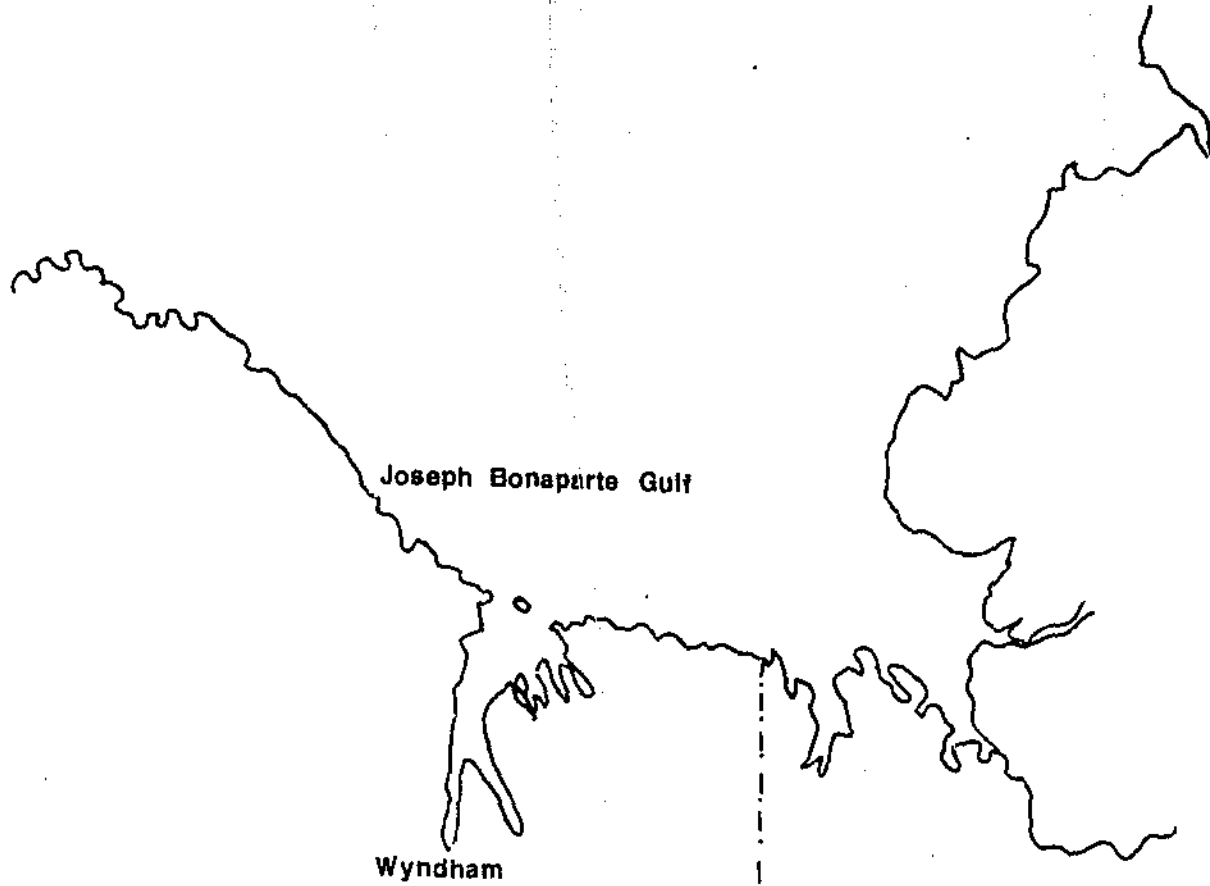
Thomas Kilfoyle stood midway in this spectrum. After more than twenty scarcely documented years as teamster and drover, he had managed to accumulate a stake of more than £400 to speculate in the Kimberley enterprise. He may be seen as representative of the marginal battlers (others include the Bridge, Byrne and Hayes families), less publicised in history than the Duracks but forming an integral part of the pastoral community in the Kimberley and adjacent parts of the Northern Territory.

Some failed because of Aboriginal resistance, poor seasons, inefficient management, or sheer bad luck. Others survived to become members of that small group of resident owner-managers whom many observers in the 20th Century were to see as the most successful examples of pastoral adaptation to the northern environment. Among this group, the Kilfoyles of Rosewood were often regarded as pre-eminent.

This thesis seeks to explore the foundations of this reputation.



1. *Aerial view of Rosewood Station, 1946.*



Rosewood (WA):
19,073 ha

Western Australia

Northern Territory

Rosewood (NT):
258,833 ha

Chapter 1

The making of a Kimberley cattleman

Thomas Kilfoyle was born in 1842 in Derrynarna in the parish of Toomgraney and Scariff, County Clare, Ireland. He was the youngest son of John and Bridget (nee Dwyer) Kilfoyle.² Because of the absence of compulsory birth registration in Ireland before 1864, it has not been possible to trace family records before that date, but it is reasonable to assume that the Kilfoyles were not amongst the very poorest level of Irish peasantry. Because the journey to Australia required a higher fare than migration to the United States, the Irish who came to the Australian colonies were usually those able to amass a basic minimum of capital and goods.

There have always been discrepancies regarding both Thomas' age and when he actually came to Australia. Mary Durack in *An Australian Settler* describes him as a nine year old coming to Australia in 1851 or actually accompanying his sister Margaret to Australia.³ His older sister Margaret married Darby Durack in 1848 and migrated to New South Wales, arriving in the *Duke of Roxborough* in May 1849.⁴ On their arrival in the New South Wales Colony, Darby, Margaret and their small daughter Bridget travelled to Goulburn, where they were employed by James Chisholm on his *Kippelaw* estate.⁵ Mary Durack describes James Chisholm as an outstanding employer who 'had helped many a lost soul to a new start in life'. She also describes the estate as being 'spread about the fertile valley of the Wollondilly River at the head of the Hawkesbury'.⁶

² List of Immigrants, *Golden Era*, as inspected by the Immigration Board, 25 June, 1855.

³ Durack, Mary, *An Australian Settler*, Oxford University Press, 1964, page 3.

⁴ Durack, Mary, *Kings in Grass Castles*, Corgi, 1985, page 31,32.

⁵ *ibid.*, page 41.

⁶ *ibid.*,

Four years later, Darby's brother Michael Durack, his wife Bridget (nee Dillon) and seven children arrived in the colony. Darby had arranged for his brother to work for Chisholm at *Kippelaw*. Tragically, Michael was killed in an accident in 1853 leaving a widow and by then eight children.⁷ Their last child, born after his father's death, was Jerry, later to be known as 'Galway Jerry', who was to be in partnership with Tom Kilfoyle in later years. It was to be these children and those of Margaret and Darby Durack, who would be entwined in Tom Kilfoyle's life in the years to come.

On checking the shipping lists at the Mitchell Library, I found that Tom Kilfoyle did not arrive in Australia until 25 June 1855. His mother, Bridget Kilfoyle then aged 39 and widowed, sailed for Australia in the *Golden Era* with four of her children for New South Wales. The eldest, John, aged twenty one, was accompanied by his eighteen year old wife Bridget (nee Carroll). During the voyage their son John was born. Her other children were Patrick and David aged nineteen and seventeen and described in the shipping list as agricultural labourers and Thomas, who was twelve years old. The adults all paid £5.0.0. for their passage and Thomas £2.0.0.⁸

The shipping records for the *Golden Era* described the Kilfoyles as Roman Catholic, Bridget as illiterate, John as able to read and write and the rest, including Tom as able to read. In adult life, Tom Kilfoyle could certainly write well enough to keep a diary, but his spelling was always uncertain and reflected strong traces of his County Clare accent.

⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 50.

⁸ List of Immigrants per ship *Golden Era*, as inspected by the Immigration Board on 25 June, 1855. Family records suggest that some members of the family, including Bridget, understated their ages in order to qualify for immigration, but Thomas seems correct.

One sister, Kitty, married Patsy Carolan and remained in Ireland. They lived in Glen-varish, Mount Shannon in County Clare. The Carolans had ten children, five boys and five girls. The Carolan family and their descendants kept in contact with Tom Kilfoyle and later with his family until the 1950s. Their correspondence became a useful source in later years.

In a classic example of chain migration, Bridget Kilfoyle and her children settled close to Darby and Margaret Durack in the Mummel area south of Goulburn. Before the Kilfoyles' arrival, Goulburn in the 'forties' had been described by Charles MacAlister in his book *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South* as : 'simply a little bark roofed frontier-town, a tablelander's outpost - midway between the wild and woolly inland and the 'Big Smoke' by the sea'.⁹ By the time of their arrival, changes had taken place. Gold had been discovered in New South Wales and Victoria in the early 1850s, and Goulburn was thriving. Darby Durack's nephew Patsy Durack had done well at the gold fields and his granddaughter Mary Durack in *Kings in Grass Castles* states:

In December '55 some months after his return from the goldfields, Grandfather discovered that blocks of Crown land were open to purchase in the vicinity of Dixon Creek that ran between the parishes of Mummel and Baw Baw in the country of Argyle, about twelve miles north-east of Goulburn. This information he shared with his Uncle Darby and his aunt's relatives the Kilfoyles who were then also looking out for land and who in turn shared the good news with other friends and relatives so that a flock of Irish cockies, all connected in some way, came noisily flapping down around Dixon's Creek Meadow and proceeded to the consternation of neighbouring big holders to make themselves at home.¹⁰

Material regarding Tom Kilfoyle's whereabouts between 1855 and 1882 is

⁹ McAlister, Charles, *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South*, Facsimile Edition, Library of Australia History, Sydney 1977, page 97.

¹⁰ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, pages 57,58.

scarce. As a result of writing *Kings in Grass Castle*, Mary Durack accepted in 1964 a commission from Oxford University Press to contribute to their series for school children *People of the Past*, under the title *An Australian Settler*. She chose Tom Kilfoyle as her subject, but the book's contents are almost entirely an imaginative reconstruction of the experiences which a young pioneer stockman of that period might have undergone. Disappointingly little is based on any verifiable source material and, at times, as in phrases such as 'Tom felt happier than ever before in his life' or in accounts of a droving trip said to have been undertaken by Kilfoyle in 1853, the account is simply a work of imagination. Unfortunately, it is of no value as a historical document." Information has been found in only two sources : *Kings in Grass Castles* and in Charles MacAlister's *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South*.

The Kilfoyle family remained in the Mummel area, and in 1862 Tom Kilfoyle, then aged twenty years old, is described by Charles MacAlister as being in his employ as a teamster. Gold had been discovered at Forbes, 100 miles west from Goulburn. It was originally known as 'Black Ridge'. The name was changed to Forbes in 1861 and at the height of the gold rush, there were about 30,000 diggers in the area.

Within three weeks I had several teams on the road bound for the new rush. Mr. Charles Selmes, of Wheeo, and his father, had charge of one of the teams, and the other carriers were three Mummel men, viz: Tom Kilfoyle, Con McNamara and Darby Durack¹²

Mary Durack relates a 'well worn family anecdote' that during this time while working for MacAlister, Tom Kilfoyle, his brother in law Darby Durack and Con

¹¹ Durack, Mary, *An Australian Settler*, especially pages 14 to 23.

¹² MacAlister, Chas., *Op.Cit.*, page 259.

McNamara were held up by 'bushrangers whilst returning with their teams from the Forbes gold rush'. The perpetrator was 'Darkie Gardiner' one of the most notorious of the bushrangers of those days, but 'on hearing that they were working for Charlie MacAlister had let them pass unmolested'¹³ MacAlister relates a similar story but does not refer to the names of the teamsters.¹⁴

Between 1862 and 1882, it is unclear where Tom Kilfoyle spent his time. His mother died on 28 April 1872 at Bunerra Flats in the parish of Mummel, aged seventy. The informant on the death certificate was John Kilfoyle, her son, who also lived at Bunerra Flats. She was buried with the rites of the Catholic Church at Galong on 30 April 1872.¹⁵

In *Kings in Grass Castles*, it is stated that Kilfoyle left in June 1863 with Patsy Durack and others to travel with stock to Western Queensland. He is described as 'a veteran of the droving tracks at twenty one, was a dashing looking fellow on his fine stockhorse.'¹⁶ There doesn't seem to be any evidence to back up Mary Durack's romantic description of Tom Kilfoyle. On arrival in Australia at the age of 12 years old, his diet would have improved dramatically, but as a small child during the Famine of 1845-47 in Ireland his nutrition levels would have been lower than the average. His son Jack, according to his passport issued in 1953, was only 5'9" so it is probable that Tom Kilfoyle would have been under that height.

Mary Durack states that Tom Kilfoyle was on the books of Thylungra station around 1875, with a carrying contract to bring up loading from Bourke or Wilcannia. This is supported by the testimony of Will Blake, an old stockman

¹³ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 76.

¹⁴ MacAlister, Chas., *Op.Cit.*, page 266.

¹⁵ Death Registered in New South Wales, No 3226/966/1872.

¹⁶ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 87.

interviewed by Mary Durack at some time in the 1930s or 1940s. He states:

Tom Kilfoyle, one of the best bushmen in Australia was doing the carrying for Thylungra. He'd been through a few dry gullies in his time and he knew the ropes and all the tricks of the stockman's trade. Your Grandpa use to reckon he'd sooner have him on his books than his borders. Every time he'd pay him he'd say, 'And here's a bonus, Tom, to keep ye from taking up the block next door'.¹⁷

Unfortunately, Kilfoyle's name does not appear in the census books for the Thargomindah or Cunnamulla police districts in 1875 or 1878, although six male Duracks are recorded as well as other members of the future overlanding expeditions such as Duncan McCaully, Thomas Hayes and John Horrigan. This may simply mean that Kilfoyle was on the road at the time that the policeman called for the census returns, but it could equally indicate that he never saw himself as an employee on Thylungra but as an independent contractor. Certainly he appears to have gained an intimate knowledge of the stock routes of central western Queensland and New South Wales.

In 1880, nearly all the available pastoral country in Queensland had been taken up, and speculators were beginning to look at the Northern Territory and beyond. At this psychological moment there arrived glowing reports of the Kimberley district in the northern part of Western Australia which had just been surveyed by Alexander Forrest, the Western Australian explorer. In a dispatch to the Western Australian Governor, Forrest described the Kimberleys:

The chief results of the expedition have been the discovery of the course and source of the Fitzroy and other large streams, together with an area of 20 million acres of good, well watered country, suitable for pastoral purposes, besides a large area suitable for the culture of sugar, rice, or coffee¹⁸

¹⁷ Durack Mary, *Kings.*, pages 158, 161.

¹⁸ Bolton., G.C., *Alexander Forrest - His life and Times*, Melbourne University Press 1958, page 35.

Geoffrey Bolton's biography on *Alexander Forrest - His Life and Times* describes Forrest's expedition in 1879 to survey and explore this vast region in the north for the first time. Not only did Forrest, who was known as the 'Father of the Kimberleys', explore the country, but he was responsible for setting up business as a 'consulting expert to prospective investors in the Kimberley district'. Bolton states that 'it was the announcement of Alexander Forrest's discoveries in the Kimberley district which literally put these areas on the pastoral map'.¹⁹ This is supported by Jock Makin noting 'with Alexander Forrest's safe arrival in civilisation, the period of discovery ended for the Victoria River district, and the age of settlement began'.²⁰

In *Kings in Grass Castles*, Mary Durack believed that it was reports that reached the Eastern colonies on Alexander Forrest's expedition that sparked her grandfather's interest: 'here, it seemed, was the type of country he most desired - a land of splendid rivers, fine pastures and reliable rainfall.'²¹ The Kimberley region was a long way from markets, but investors seemed to have hoped either that pastoral occupation would be quickly followed by mineral discoveries, as had happened in north Queensland, or possibly that markets might be developed in south east Asia.

Further insight on the process of land selection is provided by Cathie Clement in her Honours thesis on the pastoral leasing in the Kimberley district of Western Australia. Clement said 'that the news that the northern country included twenty million acres (8,093,723 ha) of good pastoral land was well received.'²²

¹⁹ Bolton, G.C., *Alexander Forrest*, page 45.

²⁰ Makin, Jock, *Op.Cit.*, 1971, page 55.

²¹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 207.

²² Clement, Cathie, *Pastoral Leasing in the Kimberley District of Western Australia - Volume 1 : An era of Chicanery, 1879-82.*, Murdoch University, 1982, page 35.

Because of agitation by a member of parliament in Perth, the land had at first been withdrawn from selection. This was to prevent officers of the Survey Department, which included Alexander Forrest from selecting land: 'on one hand, congratulations were being heaped up on Forrest for his exploration and, on the other, he was being accused of land-jobbing by a fellow surveyor and a member of parliament'.²³ Finally, draft regulations were drawn up by a special appointed commission and submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. Clement states that 'although some impatience was expressed at the Government's delay in releasing Kimberley land, Australian colonists seemed content to wait for the new regulations.'²⁴

The first indication of Tom Kilfoyle's interest in the Kimberley district may be found in Clement's analysis of the registers of pastoral leases for 1881. From this source, it appears that several members of the Durack family were granted blocks on the Fitzroy and the Ord rivers in November 1881. Three blocks totalling 300,000 acres were taken up by 'Galway Jerry' Durack and Tom Kilfoyle. At this point in time none of these investors had set eyes on the Kimberley district. It is clear that they were 'map grazing', or taking out blocks in sheer speculation to use as bargaining counters in establishing priority for when they had finally settled on the territory which they wished to occupy. Eventually, an agreement was reached that the Emanuels would consolidate their holdings in the Fitzroy valley, leaving the Ord to the Duracks and their associates, such as Kilfoyle. Three hundred thousand acres taken up for Kilfoyle and Jerry Durack in November 1881 eventually formed part of neither enterprise. This property was situated to the west of Halls Creek and subsequently passed into other hands.

²³ Clement, Cathie, *Pastoral Learning.*, page 35.

²⁴ *ibid.*,

Mary Durack locates the selection of this block as an outcome of a visit by Patrick and 'Stumpy Michael' Durack to Perth in November 1881 where, using Alexander Forrest as their agent, they took up pastoral leases together with:

.. one or two others interested associates including Tom Kilfoyle around the Negri Junction and further blocks along the upper Ord, on the Nicholson Plains and Margaret River and large chunks on either side of the Fitzroy²⁵

This no doubt explains the presence of Tom Kilfoyle's name among the Kimberley pastoral lessees registered in November 1881, but casts doubt on her implication that Kilfoyle's involvement began only with an invitation from Patsy Durack to accompany 'Stumpy Michael' Durack and Sydney Emanuel on a joint expedition in 1882 to trace the source of the Ord.²⁶

According to *Kings in Grass Castles*, Patsy Durack and Solomon Emanuel agreed that Patsy Durack's brother 'Stumpy Michael' would lead the expedition. Tom Kilfoyle was contacted and offered £3.10.0 per week to be second in command. Kilfoyle is described as demanding high pay because the Duracks had 'all the money in the world', but there is no evidence of this conversation.²⁷ Other members of the expedition were Sydney [Sid] Emanuel, Solomon's twenty year old son; John Pentacost who for some time had been a tutor to the Emanuel boys, and was also a surveyor and geologist; James Josey; and Tom Horan who were both experienced bushmen.²⁸ The estimated cost of the expedition was £4,000, which Pasty Durack and Isadore Emanuel agreed to share equally.

²⁵ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 209

²⁶ *ibid.*, page 192.

²⁷ *ibid.*, page 213.

²⁸ *ibid.*,

Kilfoyle's appointment as second in command of the party indicates a respect for his seniority and experience which would entitle him to take command if 'Stumpy Michael' Durack was incapacitated. The point needs stressing because in *Kings in Grass Castles*, Mary Durack tends to depict Kilfoyle as a good stockman, but dashing and a little unprincipled, probably because she was reading back into Tom Kilfoyle's character some of the traits which many years later her family believed they saw in Jack Kilfoyle, his son. Charlie Gaunt, a contemporary who knew Tom Kilfoyle well and accompanied him on the overlanding expedition, remembered him as: 'one of the foremost pioneers, a splendid bushman and stockman and of strict integrity. Almost puritanically so; bluff, quick of temper, but with a heart and simplicity of a child.'²⁹ For Billy Linklater also, Kilfoyle was one of 'the greatest bushmen I have ever known'.³⁰

Yet although Kilfoyle, at forty years of age, was a seasoned bushman, those that worked with him at close quarters were sometimes critical, and a full picture can only be obtained by taking account of these criticisms to an extent not previously attempted by historians of the overlanding expeditions. In describing the 1882 examination of the East Kimberley district by Durack and Kilfoyle's party, it will be necessary to go beyond 'Stumpy Michael' Durack's narrative (which has hitherto been the main source), and to look at the evidence provided by John Pentacost; and by newspaper articles written by 'Stumpy Michael' not long after the completion of the expedition.

²⁹ *Northern Standard*, 22 January, 1932.

³⁰ Linklater, William and Tapp, Lynda, *Gather no Moss*, Macmillan of Australia, South Melbourne 1968, page 62.



2. *Thomas Kilfoyle – c.1882.*

Chapter 2

The Overlanding Expeditions 1882-1885

The Hibernian and the Hebrew

Mary Durack's description of the 1882 expedition provides a clear account of the aims and the achievements of the exploring party. Their main purpose was to examine the lower reaches of the Ord, a major river whose existence had been unknown to white Australians until three years earlier; and to identify the most promising pastoral country which might be expected along the lower reaches of such a major waterway. *Kings in Grass Castles* provides a colourful portrait of the country traversed by the party and the impact on them of the new environment, but is silent about the day to day detail of the journey or occasional personality clashes between its members. In these respects, John Pentacost's testimony deserves to be rescued from its earlier neglect.

Pentacost kept a diary of the expedition, writing it mostly in long hand and parts in shorthand. This source has not been used before and differs in a number of important respects from what is recorded in *Kings in Grass Castles*. Mary Durack states that the expedition set sail from Brisbane in the *Volmer* on 6 July 1882. She goes on to say that the ship went aground near Rockhampton and the party had to return to Brisbane where another ship was found.³¹

To put the record straight, it is necessary to refer to details transcribed from Pentacost's diary. The party actually sailed from Sydney in *Volmer* on Thursday 5 July 1882. Pentacost noted that he 'got up in time to see us going out of the Harbour...she appears to be a steady boat but very slow.....said to be

³¹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 214.

going at 7 knots an hour but I don't believe she has made more than five or six'.³² It is at this point that Pentacost first refers to Kilfoyle being on board. 'Tom [Horan] and Kilfoyle and Michael [Durack] tend to the horses. They seem to get on very comfortably.' It appeared that the party were not happy about the condition of the boat, and three days after setting sail, Pentacost reveals that he was woken by Michael ['Stumpy Michael' Durack] at 7.00 am advising that the Captain had decided that the ship should return to Sydney. Apparently the boilers were in a terrible condition, Pentacost states 'that the Captain had made the decision and the boat had turned back at midnight'. At 8.30 am the following morning, they were about 140 miles from Sydney, and they arrived back on Sunday 8 July. It is interesting to note from the diary that the chief engineer had left the boat in Sydney before they sailed because the machinery was in such bad order.

According to Pentacost, a shipping company 'Stephens & Co' was at fault: 'Stephens should not have chartered ships of this class'. The passengers and stock were transferred to the *Vortigen*, but not without trauma, as Pentacost notes 'we had a great deal of trouble with Stephens & Co. In the office of that firm they seem to be all masters and no men'. He complains bitterly about the treatment given to the horses before being transferred to the *Vortigen* and records that :

I gave Stephens a letter or rather left one at his office which I wrote while there as I could not see him. In this letter I told him that the horses would be starved as they were staying in between docks with their heads over a hatchway from which men could not get at them to provide them with the necessary hay and water and if Stephens did allow this kind of thing I intended to call upon the Secretary of the Animals Protection Society to see if a prosecution could not be instituted.³³

³² Pentacost, J., *Diary of Expedition from Sydney to Ord River 1882*, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

³³ *ibid.*,

Pentacost records that 'Stephens got in a great rage and threatened to publish the letter which is just what I should like. He complained both to Sid and Kilfoyle about having received such a letter when he was doing all he could to send us off again as soon as possible'. Pentacost finally finishes that day's entry with 'there cannot surely be a more selfish and worse managed firm in Sydney'.³⁴

A week had passed and finally the *Vortigen* sailed from Sydney on 16 July. 'We passed through the heads about 5 o'clock and speedily began to feel the swell'. From the diaries, it appears that they had very bad weather for the entire three day voyage between Sydney and Brisbane 'so bad that the passengers disappeared into their cabins'.

Pentacost also found fault with the food:

We had a pretty good dinner on Sunday but the tea in the evening was not enjoyable as there was no soft bread. Nothing but beans which I don't like at all and others have the same objections to it.I complained to the Captain of the absence of soft bread. He said it was not his fault and the steward said it was not his as he had sent for bread and none was delivered....if we do not get a supply at Brisbane or have some baked we shall have a miserable time of it.³⁵

Pentacost notes:

Ship pitching and rolling. Sid and myself got up to breakfast but went to our berths again afterwards as these are the most comfortable places. Michael was sick all night and in his berth today. Tom has not made his appearance either.I must try and get a little sleep as last night I did not sleep comfortably, within five minutes of my being in my bunk that I think I had gone to sleep,

³⁴ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

³⁵ *ibid.*,

I was pitched out upon the floor as I was sleeping in the upper bunk.³⁶

According to the diary, the ship anchored in Moreton Bay only overnight and for a day, waiting for 'the arrival of three fresh horses [and supplies] to come from Brisbane. This date ties in with a article written by 'Stumpy Michael' Durack for the *Daily Mail* ³⁷ and Mary Durack's date for the sailing from Brisbane on 19 July 1882.

The weather between Brisbane and Townsville did not improve as Pentacost notes: Sid Emanuel was in the lower bunk in the cabin and the following night Pentacost reports that he 'did not sleep all night.....bottles on board smashed our berth. Rats running about and over Sid's face'

Sunday 23 July was spent in Townsville which Pentacost described:

We arrived at Townsville early this morning and the steamer lay about three miles from the town.Went ashore in the small steamer..... about 8'oclock we went back to the Queens Head and met the Captain and others and returned on board at approximately 1 o'clock. Townsville was very clean and fresh looking ³⁸

The *Vortigen* called in at Thursday Island and finally reached Port Darwin. A notice in the *Northern Territory Times* states that the *Vortigen* with 113 tons of cargo arrived on 1 August with Emanuel, Durack, Guilfoyle [Kilfoyle] Pentacost and Josey as saloon passengers and Horan in steerage.³⁹

Pentacost states in his diary 'as to our impressions of Port Darwin was that it is

³⁶ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

³⁷ *Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

³⁸ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

³⁹ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 5 August, 1882 .

not an unpleasant place to live in, but rather too warm in summer'. He describes the town itself as being 'built on elevated ground giving a good view of the sea'.⁴⁰ 'Stumpy Michael' Durack wrote 'a great place for talking, but very little done'.⁴¹

Although in Darwin only five days, Pentacost commented that 'there are not very many European families: the bulk of the population being Chinese who seem to be a thriving orderly community.' The 1882 statistics of population reveals that there were only 862 Europeans in the Northern Territory to 4374 Chinese.⁴² He observes how the Government resident watches over the Chinese interests and that they receive no injustices from the white man:

They hold an open market in the middle of the principal street in which they reside and we see plenty of sugar cane, melons, cabbage, meat and other things laid out for sale. It was all cleared off at an early hour.⁴³

While in Port Darwin, the expedition decided to take on two native boys. Mary Durack states 'they engaged two aborigines of the local Larakia tribe - reputedly reliable fellows and good trackers revelling in the white man names of Pannikin and Pintpot' ⁴⁴

Pentacost's account differs and gives more details:

..we obtain two small black boys, one is an orphan named Tommy Cherry. The other is known as David. They can both speak a good deal of English and are well up in vocabulary of this, but it is not to be wondered at considering that one of them used to assist a bullock driver. In order to secure these boys, it was necessary to

⁴⁰ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁴¹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 216

⁴² *Northern Territory Government Residence Inward Correspondence.*, A4776-A5585 Duplicate Roll 8.

⁴³ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁴⁴ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 218.

give about 15 shillings to the father of one boy and then take both of them with the two men [Emanuel and Kilfoyle] before the doctor who acts as Aborigines Protector.

A bond had to be signed that the boys should be taken back or sent back to Port Darwin within or at the end of 12 months. The bonds were signed by Kilfoyle and Sid Emanuel so I suppose one boy will be retained by each, though I believe that Durack intends to have the one Kilfoyle signed over and the other one too, if he can get him.⁴⁵

The party sought the services of Captain Murray of the 120 ton schooner *Levuka* to take them to the Cambridge Gulf. *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* covered the expedition leaving Darwin.

...they are not only exploring for themselves but represent Sydney capitalists who have taken up land on the line of Alexander Forrest's exploration in 1879. The party will go through a line of unexplored country from the Cambridge Gulf to King George's Sound, and they intend crossing Forrest's track at a point named Ord River.....From what we hear the main object of the party is to define and mark out good sheep and cattle country, but will, if appearances indicate the existence of minerals.....⁴⁶

The *Levuka* left Port Darwin on 5 August, 1882 with the party of six and the two aboriginal boys, provisions for three months and twenty three horses. The sea voyage was not without incident. Mary Durack records that 'adverse winds lashed blue walls of water against the *Levuka's* frail hulk'⁴⁷ and goes on to say that the horses were so 'severely injured that 'Stumpy Michael' was forced to shoot them'.

Pentacost, writing in shorthand, records that it took eight days to reach the Gulf

⁴⁵ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁴⁶ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 5 August, 1882.

⁴⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 216.

'owing to the lightness of the winds which only made their appearance early in the morning, and even then sometimes not in our favour.' Pentacost records that 'some of the party seem most obstinate and pig headed and it was evidently a mistake to go on an expedition with such men'. He then describes how the horses came to be shot by 'Stumpy Michael'.

Before leaving Darwin, one of the iron water tanks was put down in the hold of the schooner with the horses. The tank blocked off part of the entrance, which made it difficult for the horses to move and affected the ventilation. Because of the buildup of manure, the stench was high. Pentacost records:

Some of the horses were continually bleeding at the nostril from the effects the manure gave off and the fuss every time the men had to go down to water them..... I suggested that they should remove the tank first, using the water it contained which would otherwise probably become bad. But Kilfoyle with usual obstinacy refused to do it. 'It would be alright' he said and nothing could move him.⁴⁸

Eventually, Pentacost describes, all the water turned foul: 'Kilfoyle proceeded to amend matters by mixing half the tank of good water with half the tank of stinking water, thus spoiling the good with very little improvements.' One horse was soon found dead, 'probably gripe'. Then a few days later, 'again a horse was found to have dropped dead'.⁴⁹

Pentacost takes the credit for taking up the tank and 'Sid spoke strongly on the same subject so at last it was done and everyone on board the schooner remarked what a great improvement was at once manifest in the atmosphere of the hold'⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁴⁹ *ibid.*,

⁵⁰ *ibid.*,

Mary Durack reproduces a letter written by 'Stumpy Michael' to his wife Kate where he mentions 'bad weather all the time so we could not sail' but this could also be interpreted as being calm, as recorded in Pentacost's diary. 'Stumpy Michael' goes on to say 'we had two of our very best horses died on the voyage' and finishes by saying 'I had a fall into the hold myself while hoisting one of the poor creatures overboard and have come ashore here with my arm in a sling'.⁵¹ An article written by 'Stumpy Michael' which appeared first in the *Australian* in 1883 and later reprinted in Brisbane's *Daily Mail* dated 9 June 1906, states:

I myself met with a nasty accident on 13 August. We were hauling up a dead horse at night time, the pole upon which I was partly standing rolled from under me, and I fell a distance of 10 ft; breaking a small bone below the spine; for a few days afterwards I was incapacitated.⁵²

Pentacost, who was not in command, but obviously thought that he should have been consulted on all matters, records:

that he should have gone on an expedition with men whose ideas are limited to bush affairs but because they know how to ride horses and drive cattle... they are best on everything wherein horses are made useful.If it please God that I ever return from this expedition, I shall have received a lesson that will make me take great care never again to go on such an affair except with gentlemen of money chosen who are willing to render obedience.

He spoke to Sid [Emanuel] and Michael Durack and he informed them that if he wasn't consulted on all matters he would not go on, but would consider returning to Darwin on the schooner:

Sid professed his willingness to follow my directions and Michael Durack said he would take care that things should be different on

⁵¹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 219.

⁵² *Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

shore and that he would consult with me in respect to everything. If they choose to go their own way, I shall leave them to follow it and do the best they can for themselves⁵³

The *Levuka* arrived in the Cambridge Gulf on Sunday 13 August, but Pentacost records that they 'were only able to put in just opposite Lacrosse Island where we lay over a day and part of another'. Once again, there seemed to have been friction between him and Kilfoyle. 'Some of the party went ashore [Lacrosse Island] to seek if water and food could be got for the horses. They went in spite of my opposition as I considered it a most foolish procedure even if water and food were found'⁵⁴

Pentacost does describe sailing down the Cambridge Gulf:

a grander harbour there does not exist in Australia, though not so pretty as that of Sydney, it is six times the size and is very safe with plenty of deep water..... Captain for the schooner [Murray] had no difficulty in bringing her down to her present position that is at the mouth of the Ord which I think is about 45 miles from the mouth of the Gulf⁵⁵

By 17 August, they had got the horses and the provisions ashore. 'Stumpy' Michael records in his letter to his wife 'We will have to give the animals a week's spell here before we start. They are very poor, in fact it is a marvel they did not all die on the little schooner. Now they have plenty of grass and water'.⁵⁶

After resting for the week, the expedition started out following a stream which eventually led them to the junction of the Ord and the Negri where Forrest had previously camped and marked a tree. It appears that Stumpy Michael and Tom Kilfoyle left the rest of the party to survey the country and then return to camp.

Pentacost records:

⁵³ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁵⁴ *ibid.*,

⁵⁵ *ibid.*,

⁵⁶ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 219.

Left camp at 8, travelling for three and a half hours SSW , then remained under some tress near a dry creek or river bed for an half of hour. Durack and Kilfoyle being both absent. When Durack returned he said they had lost the River and we should have to go back on our tracks to some water and there camp while he looked for the river. Asked if we could not go on the same open valley if there were obstacles. None, but they want to find the river. ⁵⁷

Throughout his diary, Pentacost criticises both Kilfoyle and Durack. Sometimes it appeared as if Kilfoyle and Durack went off for days, leaving the rest of the party at the camp often besides a water hole where they fished. On one such occasion they caught 'plenty of fish gropers - spotted and striped fish, types such as we see everywhere in this country and a sort of long fish with long snout a sort of garnish fish - very delicious - good eating - also a kind of black brim' ⁵⁸

Pentacost gives an accurate description of the various types of country that they travelled through: 'Country passed over today better as to grass, it being mostly blue grass but with numerous patches of spinifex and almost everywhere with small stones. Much limestone - volcanic rocks and camped on low hill near Waterhole surrounded by other hills'.⁵⁹

'Stumpy' Michael', writing to his wife, records 'if one were to paint this country in its true colours, I doubt it would be believed. It would be said that the artist exaggerated greatly, for never have I seen such richness and variety of hue as in these ranges and in the vivid flowers of this northern spring.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Pentacost, J., *Diary*.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*,

⁵⁹ *ibid.*,

⁶⁰ *ibid.*,

Pentacost also refers to the 'fine bottle trees.' He comments 'it is evident that the natives do not injure these trees in any way and they must be the source of a valuable supply of vegetable and pleasant food, perhaps when other things are scarce' ⁶¹ Pentacost refers to collecting different seed. In one instant he collected the seeds of the corktree and described the tree as a 'rich coloured very pretty flower in clusters'.

Some of the places where they camped were pleasant, especially those beside rivers with 'large dark green trees, many palms and smelly small plants-'⁶² Another entry in the diary reads 'Saw small blue flowers so like the Lobelia growing in midst of one plain.....Sorry I didn't get the seeds as it was to quote a phenomenon'.⁶³

The expedition had several encounters with Aboriginal tribes, mostly with Aborigines following them. On 3 October, Pentacost records one of the encounters:

At the camp, Josey went to river to wash some clothes and was suddenly started by the appearance of 3 blackfellows, one of them wore feathers and paint, others with spears. They ran upon him with uplifted spears and he in running away fell but cannot say why they did not then spear him unless his fall disturbed them. They were trying to surround him. He reached the camp for his rifle and Sid, Tom [Horan] and I accompanied him to the river where we found the blacks in ambush among the reeds. We fired, Sid shot one fellow and I another. One was found dead, the other crawled some way but his dog hung about ⁶⁴

⁶¹ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁶² *ibid.*,

⁶³ *ibid.*,

⁶⁴ *ibid.*,

Following this encounter, the blacks surrounded the camp that night but did not attack. Pentacost records 'firing a shot in the direction we heard them talking - other shots were fired'. It then appears that the blacks disappeared but Pentacost makes the remark 'it is my opinion blacks would never attack at night - they have not the pluck'. He and 'Stumpy Michael' kept watch 'I could hardly keep my eyes open for drowsiness'⁶⁶

A couple of weeks later they again saw five or six blacks on the top of a hill. Pentacost states 'when they noticed that we saw them - they stood up and one woolly headed fine looking fellow made a speech and often pointed to the West. Though he had a bundle of spears, he used no gestures of defiance and I think merrily bidding us begone to the West whence he suppose we came.'⁶⁶

'Stumpy Michael' also records coming across Aborigines:

We found a large fishing party of blacks of all ages and both sexes. They ran away some distance on seeing us, but after a while they gathered together in a mob on the plain, and sat down watching us. They made no demonstration in particular, friendly or otherwise, beyond flourishing their spears; the men, numbering about half were well made, strong looking fellows.⁶⁷

Through out the expedition, the horses suffered in the hostile rocky hilly country with, at times, no feed and brackish or no water. Pentacost records 'at 4.45pm we camped at a water hole - water very scarce during the day - none to drink -became parched - heat over 142 degrees. The horses were very thirsty having been driven rapidly by Tom, Sid and Self'. At one stage Durack's mare, Vanity, became so ill she had to be left in charge of two black boys to bring along and Durack said he would return after reaching camp. Pentacost records 'after having proceeded a mile or so we could hear the black boys yelling - they

⁶⁶ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁶⁶ *ibid.*,

⁶⁷ *Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

were frightened - I had stopped with the mare and made one of the black boys take off his cap into which I poured water from my water bag - the mare drank it greedily... endeavouring to help her on, but it was no use'⁶⁶

By October 1882, provisions were beginning to run low. 'Only one tin of meat now remains - our sportsmen are poor marksmen'. Kilfoyle obviously redeemed himself as Pentacost recorded that Kilfoyle shot a kangaroo which lasted two days and they also used it to make soup . Pentacost described the soup as 'capital'. At this time, he says that the weather was getting warmer every day 'no flowers, no grass - only scrubby trees.'⁶⁹

White cockatoos were shot, but Pentacost records that they were 'not a nice feed'. He also records that at this time 'they had not come across any of Forrest's marked trees - though certainly during the last few days we have been further south than his track'. By this time Sid Emanuel was suffering from dysentery and the Aboriginal boys had sore feet from spinifex points. 'Stumpy Michael' records that Kilfoyle saved the day by 'being engaged in making shoes for entire party; cutting up the leather saddle bags for the purposes. We had suffered much previously for the want of shoes'.⁷⁰ Ten miles lower down the Fitzroy they found Forrest's first marked tree 'F.137'. Durack records 'its discovery cheered us greatly'.⁷¹ Eventually arriving at the lower Fitzroy, the expedition met up with one of the vanguards of the West Australian sheep graziers moving in from King Sound, W.G. McLarty of the Kimberley Pastoral Company. Mr McLarty was the manager of *Minnie* station.⁷²

⁶⁶ Pentacost, J., *Diary*,

⁶⁸ *ibid.*,

⁷⁰ *Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 9 June, 1906.

⁷² *ibid.*, 9 June, 1906.

The explorers stayed with him a week resting, inspecting his stock, sheep and horses. 'Stumpy Michael' makes the comment 'All in excellent condition'. McLarty accompanied them to Beagle Bay which was over 100 miles away. Leaving them at Beagle Bay he returned to his property with all their horses, which by that time had reduced to eleven. The party waited for three weeks for a boat to take them south to Fremantle. Finally the 'Mary Smith' arrived on 1 December 1882. Stumpy Michael records the passage:

A most disagreeable and rough passage to Fremantle - 1400 miles. Head winds nearly all the way with occasional storms.⁷³

Fremantle

The expedition party reached Fremantle on Monday, 1 January 1883. Kilfoyle on this date commenced keeping a diary and continued to do so on and off for the next twenty six years.

The second day's entry reads 'at the Perth races all day' ⁷⁴ The race meeting is recorded in the *West Australian* as the W.A. Turf Club's Annual Meeting. Five years later it was to be known as it is today - the Perth Cup.

Tuesday last was the opening day of the W.A. Turf Club's annual meeting, and the attendance was somewhat better than on any previous occasion within my remembrances. The weather was all that could be desired ⁷⁵

He spent the following day in Fremantle and then he mentions that he went to Guildford on the 5th for horse sales. Kilfoyle records in his diary 'bought some.

⁷³*Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

⁷⁴Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, Battye Library, Perth.

⁷⁵*The West Australian*, 5 January, 1883.

Good prices'⁷⁶ The sale was of Newmarracarra horses owned by Maitland Brown. Newmarracarra Stud, situated just south of Geraldton, was famous for its horses. The property had just been sold by Maitland Brown to McKenzie Grant and Alexander Anderson. Brown had brought the horses down to Guildford to sell. This particular sale is well documented in *The West Australian* newspaper and in Peter Cowan's book on *Maitland Brown* .:

A special late train was organised for the return trip to Perth. It was something of a gala occasion: Maitland Brown provided a luncheon at which his health was proposed, there were a few speeches, and the sale began at one-thirty.....fifty seven named horses raised almost two thousand guineas, said to be a satisfactory price, yet, considering the quality of the horses and that such a selection had never before been available....⁷⁷

The arrival of the expedition in Perth was reported in *The West Australian* on 5 January 1883, under the heading *Trip of Mr. Durack and Party across Kimberley*:

It is a matter of sincere congratulations by the colony that Mr. Durack and his companions undertook their late trip through the Kimberleys.Upon the report of this gentleman much depended. Had he been dissatisfied and reported adversely, the value of the Kimberley leases would have fallen very low.⁷⁸

Four days later, another report appeared:

The news which we were able to give our readers on Friday regarding the result of Mr. Durack's exploring expedition was of a very encouraging nature.....it is satisfactory to find that Eastern capital as well as Eastern enterprise is being brought to aid in the development of the country....it is to be regretted that the party was unable to trace the Ord river from Cambridge Gulf to the spot where Mr. Forrest left it. This was what it had been expected they would do, and great interest was felt in the result. As it is, we have

⁷⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.

⁷⁷ Cowan, Peter, *Maitland Brown - A view of Nineteenth Century Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press 1988., page 311.

⁷⁸ *The West Australian*, 5 January, 1883.

not very much fresh information and the expedition has been chiefly valuable in that the observations of its members have, notwithstanding the dryness of the season, which did not enable them to see the country to advantage been confirmatory of the account which our own explorer had given.⁷⁹

At the end of his article in the *Daily Mail*, 'Stumpy Michael' Durack states:

I can safely predict that in a short time there will be very little vacant country worth taking up in the Kimberley district. Emmanuel, Kilfoyle and myself, have, of course taken up large portions of the country through which we travelled, both for ourselves and for others. I hope, however, that the Legislature of West Australia, will turn their attention to this part of the colony, and amend certain laws which bear rather onerously and unfairly on the pioneer squatters. The rents are too high in proportion to the rents in settled districts - being just double - no-pre-emptive rights, and a lease limited to only 14 years. They are real drawbacks.⁸⁰

After only a week in Perth, the expedition party left Fremantle on 6 January 1883 in the 267 ton S.S. *Rob Roy* for Albany. Kilfoyle records that there was cold weather and they arrived at Albany on the 9th. They then joined the S.S. *Karawarra* and on 10 January sailed for Adelaide. At this point, Kilfoyle does not mention any other member of the expedition. He spent the day in Adelaide and then caught the S.S. *Franklin* for Melbourne. He writes in his diary 'on sea all day, head winds, sea ruff[rough].'

The S.S. *Franklin* reached Melbourne late in the evening of 18 January. On the 19th, Kilfoyle went to see Emanuel in Melbourne. By comparison, Mary Durack records that the party met with Emanuel and her grandfather in Sydney:

Mr. Solomon Emanuel and Grandfather were both in Sydney to welcome the exploring party on its return from Western Australia and big decisions were made with surprising speed.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *The West Australian*, 9 January, 1883.

⁸⁰ *Daily Mail*, 9 June, 1906.

⁸¹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 215.

Not wasting any time in Melbourne, Kilfoyle left by train for Wodonga on the Victorian-New South Wales border. This railway had been in operation from 1873. From across the border at Albury, Kilfoyle caught the new train which had been in operation from the year before, for Goulburn.⁸² On the morning of 22 January, he records arriving in Goulburn and that night visited Emanuel.

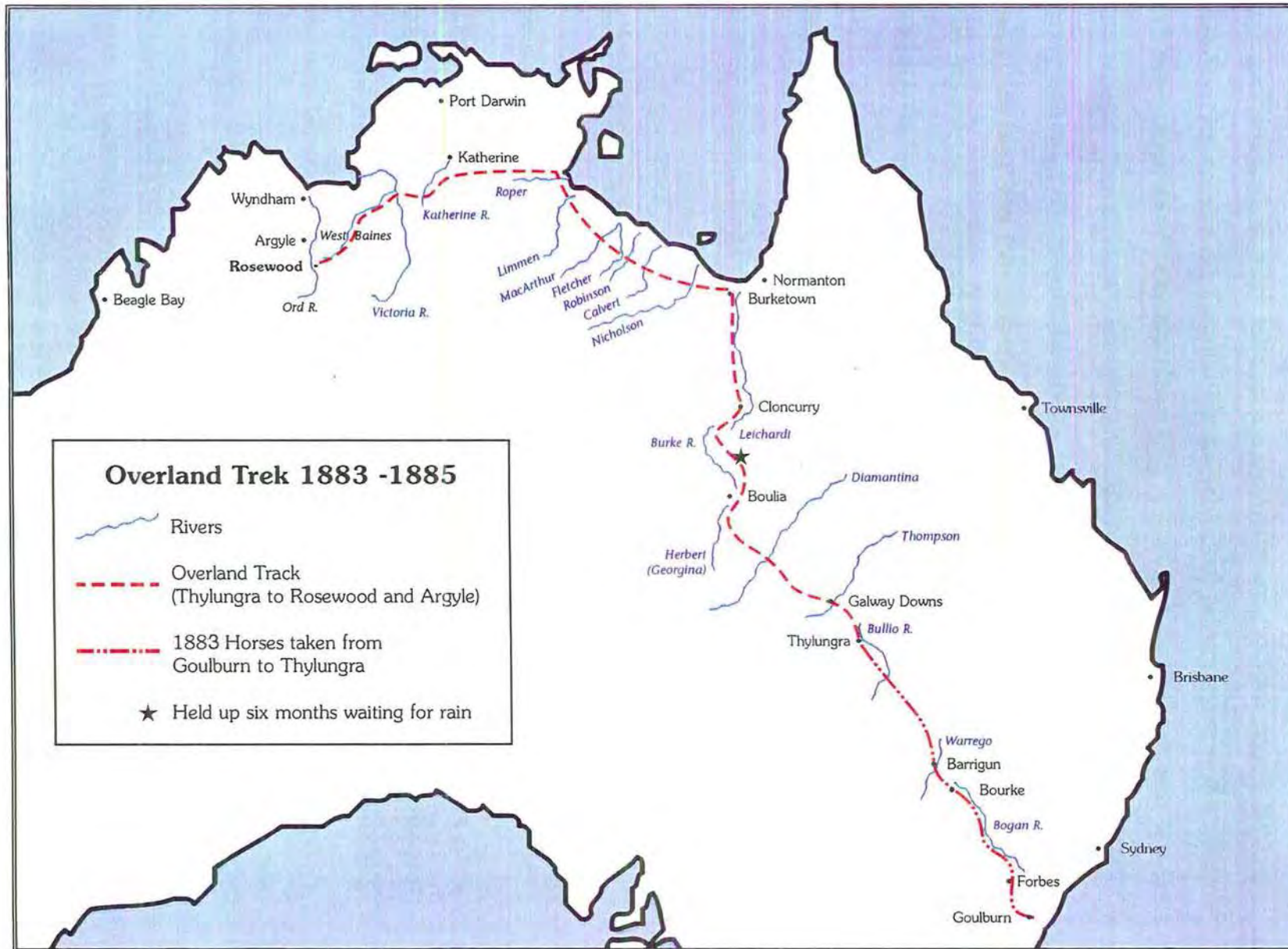
Preparations

From 22 January till 2 March, Kilfoyle was in the Goulburn area, staying with relations at Mummel, and travelling at different times to Queanbeyan and Taralea for race meetings. Kilfoyle met up on several occasions with Emanuel, and with Michael Durack on 1 February. On 27 February he states that he has 'bought a wagon from a local and on 1 March, bought 10 head of horses, took them out to Grena and spent the following day breaking them in.'⁸³

On 3 March, he records starting for Queensland with horses and wagon, but on the 5th was at Perry's blacksmith's shop shoeing horses all day. The following day he started from Bunerra flats to Tully's place and then on Friday 9 March, he stated 'on our way to Coopers Creek. It's very, very dry'. Passing Forbes on 17 March, he notes 'posted letters there'. From the diary, it would appear that this is not the first time that Kilfoyle has made this trip, it all sounds very familiar. On 19 March he reached the head of the Bogangate River and describes the weather as 'warm and dry'. He records passing Guilmores [Gilmore's] old station and remarks as he passes the station 'for outback to Never Never'. He reached Nyngan station, where he states 'had to featch [fetch] horses back to dam. Finally on 23 April reached Bourke for Easter. Before reaching Bourke,

⁸² Blainey, Geoffrey, *The Tyranny of Distance*, Sun Books Melbourne, 1966, page 251.

⁸³ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.



he mentions camping at Pink Hill and Mount Otley. He camped outside Bourke till 2 May, reaching Belalia camp on 26 May and stayed there until 1 June. He reaches Barrington a week later where he first mentions who was travelling with him. He records on 7 June: 'Stopped[stopped] at Barrington all day. Jerry and Tom started away'. It is likely that Jerry is 'Galway Jerry' Durack and Tom is Tom Hayes. Tom Kilfoyle's son, in later years wrote that his father and Tom Hayes had originally bought their cattle from around Bourke. It would appear that it was here that they picked up cattle to take onto Thylungra.⁶⁴ Kilfoyle then travelled up the Paroo River and camped 12 miles from Culgoa and finally reached Thylungra station on Sunday 8 July. The only entry in the diary each day is 'weather fine,' until Tuesday 24 July when he records getting ready to start for the Kimberleys. The following day he records 'starting for WA with horses, camped near Scanlans'.⁶⁵

Overlanding 1883-1885

Historians writing about the overlanding expeditions to the Kimberleys from 1883 to 1885 have not always placed these treks in the context of general northern development. Although the first cattle were overlanded into the Northern Territory by Darcy Uhr in 1872, it was only in the 1880s that investors took much interest in the country west of the overland telegraph line. Properties such as Wave Hill and Victoria River Downs were only taken up between 1883 and 1885. Consequently any party intending to overland cattle from New South Wales or western Queensland to the Kimberleys faced two distinct problems.

⁶⁴ Kilfoyle, J.A.C, Notes written by Jack Kilfoyle in possession of G.F. Byrne.

⁶⁵ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.

For the first half of the journey until they entered the Northern Territory, they would be taking unusually large herds of cattle along stock routes bordered by the properties of established pastoralists who would not welcome the presence of competitors for their feed and water. In the later part of the journey, there would be the simple problem of finding a route through largely unknown territory, as well as dealing with the Aborigines on whose customary lands they were intruding. Not enough is known about the processes by which these problems were negotiated, but Kilfoyle's account affords some valuable clues.

To understand the overland trek, I have identified the four separate parties which collectively made up the Durack overlanding expedition. The first cattle to depart left Thylungra station on 12 June 1883. 'Big Johnnie' Durack [son of Darby] was in charge of 2,000, with the brand 7PD for Western Australia. These were to be owned by himself and Patrick Durack from Thylungra Station.

On 14 June 1883 Patsy Durack's youngest brother, Jerry, left Galway Downs with 1270 cattle. He remained with the cattle for six weeks and then put them in charge of Patsy Moore. Jerry then returned to Galway Downs. Kilfoyle's nephew 'Black Pat' [P.M.] Durack, stated in an address to The Western Australian Historical Society that he left on 29 July, 1883 when he and his brother, known as 'Long Michael', took delivery of 2200 head of heifers from Mount Marlow Station on the Barcoo River in Queensland.

According to Kilfoyle's diaries, between 25 July and 30 September, he was mustering down the channels, spending time branding calves, cleaning the cattle, mustering around Galway Downs, waiting for the horses and on 27 September records 'getting ready to start. Went for the bulls'⁸⁶ On Monday 1

⁸⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *ibid.*,

October, Kilfoyle records: 'Started from this point with cattle for West Australia'
The departure of the cattle is also recorded in *The Queenslander*. Writing on 2 October, a correspondent at Windorah, the nearest settlement of any size to Thylungra, reported :

....Another mob of the like number (1100), property of Kilfoyle, Hayes and Co. Tom Kilfoyle in charge, also left here a few days later, likewise bound for West Australia. These cattle will go from here to the Herbert via the Moonie, following main stock route, and I may state that they will have thirty three mile dry stages in a journey of less than 300 miles. A few tanks are sadly required on this track. An ample supply of water could be secured at a very small cost.⁸⁷

Disappointingly, Kilfoyle is remiss in mentioning the names of other members of the party travelling with him, and P.M. Durack only writes that 'The next lot of cattle were brought overland from Queensland by Messrs. Kilfoyle and Hayes. They were owned by Messrs. Kilfoyle, Hayes and Durack'. Fifty years later Charlie Gaunt published reminiscences which make it clear that he was one member of Kilfoyle's party, and another was Duncan McCaully, a massive Scottish veteran drover known throughout the North as 'the Scrub Bull'. Both were among the finest cattlemen of their generation, so it is an indication of Kilfoyle's standing that he was able to command their respect and loyalty.⁸⁸

In the front of the 1883 diary, Kilfoyle has written that his share in the company was £416.13.0 plus £10.10.0 bringing the total to £427.3.0. However, he does not specify what proportion of the total investment is represented by this sum. In every account of this part of the expedition his name comes first, which suggests that he was regarded as senior partner, and therefore the biggest

⁸⁷ *The Queenslander*, 27 October, 1883.

⁸⁸ *The Northern Standard*, 3 July, 1934.

single investor.

Thomas Hayes, eight years younger than Kilfoyle, was born in Mudgee, New South Wales in 1850. He was in partnership with Kilfoyle and 'Galway Jerry' Durack until the mid 1890s and is referred to continually in the diaries during that time. 'Galway Jerry' Durack, the youngest brother of Patsy Durack, was named after Galway Downs in Western Queensland which was taken up by Patsy for young Jerry in 1873.⁸⁹

Donald Swan who travelled overland as a youngster of fourteen with Nat 'Bluey' Buchanan on an earlier trek, described standard droving methods:

The cattle were usually split into several large mobs travelling several weeks behind one another. A party of about ten men was with each mob, except with the bulls, which required only about two men. Each party comprised a leader, a horse hunter, teamsters for the wagons and drovers. The man in charge of the whole expedition rode backwards and forwards between the various mobs, planning the general progress. The cattle started off at dawn and travelled slowly forward until dusk⁹⁰

By 15 November they had reached the Herbert [Georgina] River, having passed Whichello, travelled along the Diamantina and, camping at various waterholes along the way, including some with unusual names like the 'Clergyman's Hole'. Kilfoyle refers to the weather as 'cloudy' or 'little rain today'. P.M. Durack refers to the country around the Diamantina River as having 'very good Mitchell grass country right through'⁹¹.

Although Kilfoyle's diaries only give a brief description of day to day events of

⁸⁹ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 129.

⁹⁰ Clement, Cathie & Bridge, Peter, Ed., *Kimberley Scenes*, Hesperian Press 1991, page 95.

⁹¹ Durack, P.M., 'Pioneering in the East Kimberleys', *Journal of the Western Australian Historical Society*, 1, 9 (1932), p7.

overlanding the cattle, there are several other sources that fill in daily routines. P.M. Durack gives examples of details of the running of his mob, and his description gives a good indication of the conduct of Kilfoyle's mob. P.M. Durack described the water problems associated with herding a large number of cattle:

Every drover knows well that water, or the want of it, constitutes his greatest problem in this sparsely-watered land. Even the rivers may be mere dry channels in Australia's outback, or mere string of waterholes; and a 50 mile dry stage such as this is a common thing⁹²

Thirsty cattle have trouble feeding, become very restless and often stampede and when they finally reach water: 'they charge for the water like mad things if brought too close to it'. P.M. goes on to say that the cattle were usually divided into two or several groups and sometimes the strong group were taken further down the river while the weaker group were taken straight into the water.

Gordon Buchanan in his book *Packhorse and Waterhole*, described the first trek undertaken by his father Nat 'Bluey' Buchanan on behalf of J.A. Panton and W.H. Osmond to establish the 'Ord River' Station in the Kimberleys. He recounts the process of finding camp sites:

In order to make the right stage of five to twelve miles every day it was necessary to locate the water and site for the morrow's camp...The procedure was simple - the morning a black boy was put on the advance tracks of the previous day, and the cattle driven after him until they reached the camp marked by Buchanan, who by then would be well on his way to investigate the camp for the next day⁹³

Gordon Buchanan describes the main fare for the overlanders as beef, damper,

⁹²Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 8.

⁹³ Buchanan, Gordon, *Packhorse and Waterhole with the First Overlanders to the Kimberleys*, Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, Perth, 1984.

preserved potatoes, rice and dried apples. Ducks and fish were occasional additions to the larder and, if supplies became low, they would have 'staggering bob' [young calf]. The calves were killed as soon as they were born 'a newly born calf cannot travel....Their mothers are driven on with the mob, but are very hard to hold, especially at night, when they often escape'.⁹⁴

We learn from Buchanan that it was usual for each member of the trek to have three to four horses, and that their 'normal working hours, including night watch were from fifteen to sixteen per day. Each man was allowed an hour or two once a week in the afternoon to wash his clothes'.⁹⁵

On reaching the Herbert River, Kilfoyle and company repaired the wagons. After a week, they continued along the Herbert for several days until they reached Morrabilie Station. Travelling on they reached Parapitcherie Water hole on the Burke River and remained there until 17 January. During that time, Kilfoyle records that on 19 December, he left with 'buggy and horses" for Boulia, probably to buy fresh provisions. He stopped in Boulia till 23 December. He had someone with him as he records 'on our way back to camp'. They reached the camp about 11 o'clock on morning of the 24th . There is no mention in his diary as Christmas Day being a special day. He records 'at the camp all day. Very cool weather.'⁹⁶

They remained on the Burke River waiting for rain. Although 1881 and 1882 had been good seasons in Western Queensland, the rainfall in 1883 was considerably below average and the season was late in breaking. Kilfoyle's first Journal finished on 24 February 1884. Between that time and when the

⁹⁴ Buchanan, Gordon, *Op.Cit.*, 1933, page 56.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, page 51.

⁹⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*

second journal begins on 3 June 1884, there is no direct report of Kilfoyle's activities, but they can be inferred from evidence about other parties in the same vicinity. P.M. Durack records in his memoirs that his mob at this time had crossed the Burke to camp on a 'long waterhole of the almost vanished Georgina', where they had to wait for three months for rain. During that time, according to Charlie Gaunt, one of Kilfoyle's drovers, the overlanders allowed their cattle to be 'boxed in together' as one large mob. This was to cause trouble later.

P.M. Durack recalled that 'it was not until the end of that summer at the end of March, 1884 that a little rain fell at last and put a little water in the creeks'. He goes on to say that in April, they received news that 'a big flood was coming down the Burke River':

Anyone who knows that country knows what a flood means there, when dry river channels of hot stones become submerged beneath a rushing inland sea, which blots out the landscape for miles and sweeps all life before it.....A brisk and immediate start was made to muster all cattle without delay,....we worked well, and the main body were just got across when the flood arrived, changing the whole face of the land.⁹⁷

Charlie Gaunt gives a vivid description of the chaos which arose when the time came to separate the five thousand cattle into four distinct mobs so that they could resume overlanding:

When the cutting out began the fun started. Owners cut out and any cleanskin that showed up was the property of the individual who was the first to cut it out of the mob into his respective lot. Disputes arose and from that led to blows. Two of the owners would jump off their horses and settle the difference with fists. If on horseback they would draw their stirrup and 'lock horns'. The heavy iron swung on the end of the stirrup leather in experienced

⁹⁷ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 13.

hands made a very effective weapon. When a fight began we all galloped up and took sides and a Connemara Fair was only a fool to the Parapitcherie cattle camp. Big Duncan McCaulley and Johnnie Durack got in holds. Duncan being one of Kilfoyle's men, I, of course had to holler for Duncan. Hopping around I saw a chance and hit Johnnie a whelt. Quick as thought he swung around and landed me a clout with the stirrup iron and laid me low with a beautiful gash in the forehead. I was as proud of that wound as a Heidelberg student is of sword wound, and when it healed, used to, with pride point it out as a token of the Parapitcherie battle of the cattle camp. Day by day the cutting out continued and also the fights. Black eyes, cut heads, each and every man had a brand of some kind with the exception of Tom Kilfoyle who came out of the melees unscarred.⁹⁸

During the six months from when they reached Boulia in December till 3 June, when Kilfoyle records leaving Cloncurry to rejoin the cattle, they had travelled a distance of approximately 160 miles. P.M. Durack described the country as 'Good green feed was now abundantand at Cloncurry we were able to lay in a further supply of stores.'⁹⁹ Perhaps P.M. Durack and Kilfoyle had some grounds for reticence about their activities in Cloncurry. The local correspondent records in *The Queenslander* 'Our town was pretty lively a few weeks ago on account of several squatters camped here with mobs of cattle for Western Australia and the Northern Territory.'¹⁰⁰ What this meant was spelt out a little more clearly a few months later when a second doctor decided to set up practice in the town. The Cloncurry correspondent of *The Queenslander* commented 'although Cloncurry is noted as the healthiest place in Queensland, the great number of passing strangers, hard drinking, fighting, reckless riding, & c., gives plenty of practice to two doctors.'¹⁰¹

On leaving Cloncurry, Kilfoyle reached Fort Constantine pub and camped

⁹⁸ *Northern Standard*, 3 July, 1934.

⁹⁹ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering.*, page 13.

¹⁰⁰ *The Queenslander*, 5 July, 1884, page 6.

¹⁰¹ *The Queenslander*, 25 October, 1884, page 662.

nearby. He arrived at the Leichardt River to 'old yard' and described it as 'fine water in the river'. He states 'got three of the filleys [fillies] to break them in to saddall [saddle]'. The day after breaking in the fillies, he records that 'Birty roade[rode] the grey filly all day', and comments 'some fine country about theare [there]'. On the following day, he sounds rather indignant when he records that he 'rode the taffy filly and she bucked me off unawares'. On reaching the cattle camp on 10 June, it appears that two of the men leave the camp that day as he records 'let Tom irwin [Irwin] go away and Jack also'.

On 13 June, he 'got Dolly across the river and featch [fetched] her to the camp'. The following day the cattle arrived, and on the 16th he started away for Burketown again. John Durack had arrived at the camp before Kilfoyle left, so that they both went back to Johnny's camp for the night and the following day 'crossed the river and on the road again to Burke town'. Burketown was one of the two small ports established on the Gulf of Carpentaria. Kilfoyle records that the total distance that they covered from Boulia to Burketown was 453 miles.

Kilfoyle states in his diary 'got my order into the storekeeper' and 'whrote [wrote] some leatters [letters] to get away to Brisbane and Goulburn'. He then made his way back with the stores and reached the cattle on 1 July. It is at this point, that he first mentions having the 'fever', by which he meant some variety of the malaria which would trouble him at intervals for the rest of his life. On 5 July, he writes that 'tomy and burty started to Burketown and i [I] camped across the brook with the cattle, camped at lagoon. Got the feaver[fever]'. He then apparently crossed the 'Gregory River' and records 'a lot of the cattle got across the river.' The following day, 'the feaver [fever] very bad I could not start with the feaver [fever]'. Michael and Pat Moore came and helped to get the cattle

across the river.

He appears to have recovered from the 'fever' and on 19 July he first mentions 'enockelocate' [inoculating] the cattle. It appears that he was helping with one of the other mobs. He states 'camped near old yard on the Nicholson River,' and 'working at the old yard all day. Very nearly finished'. The following day 'finished the yard and started the inoculations'.

P.M.Durack tells the story in more detail:

For some time we had noticed with great concern that the deadly pleuro was beginning to break out among the herd. This was owing to their travelling on the new green feed after having been so long used to the dry feed before the rains. Prompt measures were necessary, and we made a camp on the Nicholson and stayed there a month in order to inoculate our cattle which were now dying of the pleuro. We repaired an old stockyard which was on the place, and constructed a crush.¹⁰²

The drovers obtained serum from the slightly affected animals and then inoculated the other beasts. It appears from Kilfoyle's diary that they inoculated all the mobs finishing with his cattle on 31 July. He then repaired the wagon and decided to go back to Burketown for rations. During the stay in Burketown, he attended the races over three days, but describes it as 'very little crowd, only a few there'.¹⁰³

It is at this point that a rather obscure episode occurred which requires further mention. According to Kilfoyle's diaries, he began to get ready to return to the cattle and spent two days 'repairing the wagon'. Then on 12 August he writes cryptically: 'got teaken [taken] before the Baike.'¹⁰⁴ There is no explanation in

¹⁰² Durack, P.M., *Pioneering.*, page 14.

¹⁰³ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*

¹⁰⁴ Beak was slang for Magistrate.

his journal concerning this appearance before a magistrate, and research in Queensland has failed to reveal any newspaper report, police records, or Burketown court records which throw light on the matter.

According to Mary Durack, Kilfoyle was up on a charge of cattle stealing, but she gives no evidence for this allegation, and in an era when convicted cattle thieves usually received a jail sentence it is noteworthy that Kilfoyle was soon able to leave in freedom. His diaries state that he waited in Burketown and on 19 August 'started away from Burketown in the steamship *Bunyip* to more eastern port in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Normanton'. He then set out on horseback for Cloncurry. It appears at this stage that Kilfoyle is travelling with someone else. He states 'travelled 12 miles and camped' and then 'started on again on our road. Very slow horses. No good. All knocked up'.

His diary records that they reached Cloncurry on 5 September. Kilfoyle spent the 6th at the races and on the 8th, writes 'Cloncurry all day waiting to go to the courthouse but did not go'. The following day he states 'at the courthouse and got remanded for a week.' On the 11th he states 'in Cloncurry all day. Got wire from P Durack from Archerfield, all well'. The following day he 'got money by wire from Brisbane from the old fella'. The next day, Saturday 13 September, he 'seattles [settles] up with Skeahan'. [The Skeahans were cousins of both the Duracks and the Kilfoyle families]. Finally, on 16 September, he notes: 'at cort [court] & got aqited [acquitted] from bail.'¹⁰⁶

In *The Queenslander*, the Cloncurry correspondent on 10 August reports an interesting case which may be connected:

¹⁰⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*,

A test case, the first of this kind in the Burke, was tried in the police court on the 9th instant. Mr. Fraine, [Jack Frayne] in charge of a mob of cattle for Western Australia, was charged on the information of Mr. Read, of Clonargh, (1) for trespass; (2) not travelling the distant, (3) leaving a dead beast in the camp. Defendant was fined in all £14. Similar charges brought by Mr. Hopkins against the same defendant were dismissed, as the plaintiff did not appear.

Jack Frayne was almost certainly droving for one of the Durack-Kilfoyle parties. He is mentioned in Kilfoyle's diaries several times in the 1880s and 1890s, and later Patsy's son M.P. Durack refers to him in 1898: 'Jack Frayne from Auvergne, knocked about by a bull, though me thinks Hennessy [Brandy] more responsible for his two black eyes'. Tom Ronan, who wrote the biography of his father *Deep of the Sky*, remarked 'that he was saving Frayne's story for his next novel'. Unfortunately, Ronan died before he started the novel.¹⁰⁶ The report in *The Queenslander* went on to say:

Drovers for Western Australia and the Northern Territory would do wisely to be polite and civil to the squatters if they want to save trouble and expenses, as I understand that the main reason which induced Mr. Read to lay the information was that Mr. Fraine [Frayne], or one of his men, challenged to fight Mr. Read's manager when he remonstrated with him about camping on a certain waterhole.¹⁰⁷

In his memoir published in 1933, P.M. Durack includes some comments which almost certainly refers to the same episode:

At Cabbage Tree Creek, about 300 of our cattle were lost for a time through the stupidity of a new hand, and much trouble and delay were caused. He was supposed to have been a good stockman and to know all about the game, and his blunder in

¹⁰⁶ Durack, Mary, *Sons in the Saddle.*, Constable, 1983, page 371.

¹⁰⁷ *The Queenslander*, dated 6 September, 1884.

cutting off this lot was inexcusable in a cattleman. The Never-Never is no country for the dreamer and the amateur..... it was now necessary to make camp on Cabbage Tree Creek in order to search for the missing cattle. Those that were not rounded up again were finally found mixed up with Clonna [sic] Station cattle.¹⁰⁸

After such an episode, it could be expected that the local pastoralists were on the lookout for any infringement by the travelling overlanders. 'Banjo' Paterson was not exaggerating when he described Saltbush Bill's various fights with squatters to secure good grazing for his travelling stock at their expense.

From the timing of this case it seems possible that the fracas arose while the overlanders were camped on the Nicholson River, southwest of Burketown, inoculating their cattle for pleuro. It would be understandable that local pastoralists would be far from enthusiastic about the presence of large numbers of possibly diseased cattle camped on their properties and grazing on their grass. It still remains to reconcile the discrepancies in timing between the report in *The Queenslander* and Kilfoyle's diaries, and to determine why court appearances were necessary at both Burketown and Cloncurry. Nothing further appears in *The Queenslander* and there are no surviving local newspapers.

It is interesting to note that the reference to Kilfoyle being up before the 'baike' and being remanded in Cloncurry does not appear in the first two editions of *Kings in Grass Castles*. But it does in later copies. I believe Mary Durack had seen Kilfoyle's diaries in 1960 and, after Kilfoyle's son died in 1962, decided to include it in the following editions.

The day after being acquitted, Kilfoyle records that he bought horses, noting 'am now five hundred miles from herd'. Leaving Cloncurry on 18 September,

¹⁰⁸ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 14.

he travelled as far as Fort Constantine Public House and stayed there for the night. He seems rather relieved and records 'bound for the cattle'. Making good time, he reached the Leichardt River on the 21st and without wasting any time, finally reached Burketown on 2 October: 'came into Burketown and stoped[stopped] there all night. Things look very dry and parched'.

He remained in Burketown until 11 October and only records each day the weather 'in Burketown all day, very dry and windy or 'no sine of rain'. On 11 October he left Burketown to travel to Normanton on the *S.S. Bunyip*, he records that the 'boat got stuck in the Albert River and didn't arrive in Normanton until early on the 15th, staying all day at Smiths Hotel'. It appears the purpose of the trip was to receive funds. He received a wire from 'Bourke no account there'. He described the weather as being very warm 'no sines [signs] of rain. Finally on 21 October he received a wire for £80.0.0 from Michael Durack. The next day records 'all day waiting to start back to Bourketown [Burketown] for the cattle'. He finally left Normanton on the 23rd, but got no further than Baffle Brook before realising that he had left his watch at Normanton and having to return. Eventually he left on the 25th. The *S.S. Bunyip* arrived at Burketown on 26 October. Kilfoyle, not wasting any time left Burketown the same day to join the cattle, finally catching up with them on 6 November.

P.M. Durack describes the route that they took after camping on the Nicholson.

We turned off at the Lagoons, where Anderson and Cassidy had a small store and shanty, travelled on north to Settlement Creek..... and we then bore away west for 25 miles to the Calver^t River. ¹⁰⁹

Kilfoyle made notes in his diary about the distance they travelled, he notes that from Burketown to Settlement Creek '75 miles', thus crossing into the Northern

¹⁰⁹ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*., page 15.

Territory, onto to Camp Creek '37 Miles' and finally to the Calvert River '26 miles'. P.M. Durack described the Calvert as 'a fine big stream running into the Gulf, and like all these Gulf Country rivers we found it full of alligators'.

By 11 November Kilfoyle was camped at 'No Name Creek' and describes the land as having 'good grass but dry.' The fever takes hold of him again on the 25th and he records 'bad with feaver [fever], had to lay up all day. Killed roan bullock today'. He mentions a couple of days later that 'Galway [Jerry]' came back from his camp for some sugar. On the days that he appeared to rest, he records 'at lagoon all day, we repairing saddles baggs [bags] Billy Mainn started back to the Robinson'.

During the trek, a substantial amount of time was spent looking for horses. On 11 December, Kilfoyle records 'looking for Turpin all day - got him after dinner time'.¹¹⁰ For an experienced stockman, it seems curiously inefficient to allow the horses to roam in this way, and it can only be concluded either that it was necessary to let them go long distances in search of feed or that after nearly two years on the road, they had run out of hobbles. In either case, this factor added to the length of a journey already of marathon proportions.

P.M. Durack gave a superb description of the country that they were travelling through:

The country here was the typical coastal sort, the only time being small scrub, but there was the tropical aspect which southern Australians never see. Palms, ferns, creepers, and various wild fruits were abundant here, and perhaps the most beautiful tree of all was the Leichardt pine.¹¹¹

The mobs maintained a westward course, until they finally reached the

¹¹⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.

¹¹¹ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 15.

Robinson River on 14 December 1884. P.M. Durack said that they 'crossed [the Robinson] at a point about 15 miles from the sea.. The salty river here was backed up at the time by the sea tide'¹¹². They camped on the Robinson until 26 December. Once again no mention is given to Christmas day. The entry reads 'at the camp all day, no rain but treating [threatening] to rain'. P.M. Durack records that his mob celebrated Christmas on the Rosey river, and because of the 'tropical wet season.... spelled there for ten weeks'.¹¹³

By this time, the mobs had been on the road for fifteen months. New Year's Eve was celebrated on the 'Fleatcher' [Fletcher] River. On 2 January Kilfoyle records that he 'had a look at Poison Creek to see how the water was there'. Not being satisfied, he 'started the cattle and teams away from the Fleatcher [Fletcher] camped over night at Poison creek and then shifted to another creek four miles. Donald Swan described this country as 'eight hundred stretch of spinifex and sand' and then goes on to say:

Along the Gulf this type of country had to be crossed, interspersed with grassy river flats. Fortunately for overlanding parties a range of hills inland discharges numerous rivers and creeks into the Gulf waters¹¹⁴

Again at this time, Kilfoyle records 'looking for the horses all day until evening and then started for the MacArthur River', which they crossed and camped on the other side.

P.M. Durack gives a description on crossing water with the cattle:

The drover of cattle (as of sheep) has to know his business here especially when streams are flooded. Sometimes the leaders will not go straight across, but will begin to turn midstream, forming a "ring", when many are likely to drown. It is at times advisable to

¹¹² Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 16.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, page 19.

¹¹⁴ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley Scenes.*, page 94.

take a few over first, so that the rest will then swim across to them. But in a big mob there are always recognised leaders, just as the same cattle will be seen day after day in their own places in the mob; and if the leaders are good there is usually no difficulty in swimming rivers.

But at times it is necessary for some of the men to ride their horses in and swim with the cattle, someone each side, in order to keep them going straight across, often handling the swimming beasts to turn to direct them.. Once a few have reached the far bank all is well, for the rest to follow. ¹¹⁵

Kilfoyle records that they left the MacArthur River, passed the 'shanty and camped 4 miles out on the river' where they stayed for over a week because of the 'good graze and water'. P.M. Durack states the cattle loved the 'milk bush' at this point and were 'continually running out of the mob to get it'. He then goes into more detail:

The MacArthur was crossed to the south at its saltwater head, after which we turned north to take in Reed's [Reid] store and shanty, which stood at the head point of the river's navigable stretch. Here we were able to secure further supplies.¹¹⁶

Mary Durack provides more details regarding Reid at the Shanty, describing him as 'Black Jack Reid' who had brought his schooner full of supplies up the MacArthur to a place named by the aborigines 'Boorooloola'. According to her, Reid had hoped to make his fortune from the overlanders and those making their way to the Pine Creek gold rush. ¹¹⁷

Kilfoyle's diary finishes at the end of January 1885 and does not resume until 1886. I presume, like P.M.[Durack]'s mob, they were held up with the wet season. On the 17 January he records being camped at 'Battons Creek', and

¹¹⁵ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering.*, page 16.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, page 17.

¹¹⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 258.

describes the weather as 'a lot of rain today and last night'. He records on the 28th that MacDonald came up to the camp. Willie MacDonald was known to them in Goulburn. He and his brother Charles had been on the trek more than two years bringing cattle from Goulburn to stock a lease they had on the Fitzroy River, the property later known as Fossil Downs.¹¹⁸

Through P.M. Durack's paper, we can follow the overlanders from this time until they arrive in the Kimberleys. He describes the country and wet season as:

The summer weather was now exceptionally hot and sultry and the track very boggy in places. These were trying, strenuous days and weeks. Life in the open on horseback day after day means no protection from the rains, and our heavy tropical rains can drench as no others can.¹¹⁹

Because of the hot wet sultry conditions, fever was rife. P.M. Durack records one event that stands out in his memory depicting the meaning of mateship where men are brought close together in the Australian outback. He writes vividly:

It was while we were at this depot in remote Arnhem Land that John Urquhart, the bushman previously mentioned, died from the effects of malaria fever, and with the assistance of some 30 O.P.R.[over proof rum] He was buried there under, the usual conditions and we felt a good man and a good mate had passed away.¹²⁰

Kilfoyle also lost one of his men, Jack Sherringham. He shot himself while delirious with fever while they were camped on the Rosey River early in 1885.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Clement, Cathie and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley*, page 31.

¹¹⁹ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 18.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, page 23.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, page 23.

Even the cattle were affected badly by the weather at this time. P.M. Durack writes:

Cattle naturally feed with their backs to the wind or rain, and when on the move they often have to be forced to face strong wind or driving rain. They are always inclined to turn from it and then it's a case of will against will. Sometimes in such weather they will turn back and charge the driver. Wet cattle camps at night, leave little room for glamor, when the men on shift all night in the darkness and teeming rain, after a fatiguing day in the saddle, have to watch carefully, the restless mob.¹²²

P.M. Durack reminisces of the hardships suffered at this point of the journey. Although the Aborigines were evident through out the overland trek it was not until they reached the Roper River that they really came into direct conflict. These Aborigines were well known to the overlanders for killing horses 'which they like to spear for food':

The blacks as well as the alligators were never far from our thoughts, and in the circumstances it was the former which now gave us most concern, for they were notorious thieves. Not long before we were to make another start, half of dozen blackfellows came into our camp, their leader being a young fellow named Lucanus, who could speak a little English. Evidently they had come to take a survey of our position..... a few days before camp was to be struck, I went around the head of the backwater to the waggon, and found it completely empty. The whole of our supplies had been stolen by the blacks.¹²³

When the mobs left the Roper River, they travelled sixty miles to the Red Lily Lagoons. P.M. Durack described the country as 'of basalt ridges and frequent swamps' and that 'all hands suffered from the fever'. The chief remedy that they used was 'Birkley and Taylor's Fever Mixture'. The lagoons are described as being full of 'game of all sorts, while mosquitoes and sandflies were there in

¹²² Durack, P.M., *Pioneering* ., page 23.

¹²³ *ibid.*,

swarms, and the lagoons were full of leeches'.¹²⁴

The mobs then travelled onto the 'Dry river' but quickly moved on because they found 'redwater or tick fever' was breaking out amongst the cattle. P.M. Durack records that hundreds of good cattle were lost there. They then travelled west to the Little Gregory River 'over rough basalt country and then southwards up the Gregory'. Heading in a south-west direction they reached and crossed the Victoria River. There they passed 'Victoria River Downs,' then the outermost cattle station in the western Northern Territory, and proceeded down the Wickham River. Here P.M. Durack and Tom Hayes left the overlanders and headed for Port Darwin.

M.J. Durack gave the final details for the last leg of the trek, recording that they travelled southwest to Black Gin Creek then west along the valley which divided the mountain ranges that separated the 'Victoria, in the Northern Territory, and the Ord, in Western Australia'. He states:

There were no signs of a track across those parts. The party pushed on west for another 50 miles, crossing and following several creeks, till the Negri river was reached, a north-westerly stream which crosses the border and flows into the Ord River.¹²⁵

One after the other, the mobs reached their destination in September/October 1885. The end of the ordeal is summed up by M.J. Durack:

One can imagine the feelings of the party after this successful close of a hazardous trip across the most sparsely settled region of the continent, a trip that had kept them for more than two years on the track with their big herds, covering a total distance of 2500 miles of often most difficult country.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Durack, P.M., *Pioneering*, page 24.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, page 27.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*,

Chapter 3

Taking Possession

While historians have concentrated on the great overlanding treks of 1883 to 1885, less attention has been given to the processes by which the cattlemen established themselves after arrival in the East Kimberley district. Leaving the cattle in the charge of stockmen, Kilfoyle and several others returned to Queensland for Christmas 1885 and in order to undertake various business transactions. According to Mary Durack, soon after arrival, Tom Kilfoyle and his nephews, 'Long Michael' and 'Big Johnnie' Durack, they returned overland via Newcastle Waters, Camooweal and down through Cloncurry, Longreach, Roma to Molong, where Kilfoyle's sister Margaret Durack was living. *Kings in Grass Castles* notes that the three left the Ord in January 1886, but according to Kilfoyle's diaries he was at that time at Rosewood and Archerfield, in Queensland.

Kilfoyle began the year 1886 at *Moorlands*, a property owned by 'Galway Jerry' Durack quite close to the small town of Rosewood after which the station in the Kimberleys was to be named. *Moorlands*, near Ipswich in Queensland is described by Mary Durack as the property where 'Galway Jerry' built stables and began breeding racehorses¹²⁷. Spending much of the next few months at Moorlands, Kilfoyle also visited on a regular basis *Archerfield*, a property purchased by 'Stumpy Michael' Durack, near Darra, a few miles out of Brisbane.¹²⁸ He records in his diary on 28 January, 'came into Brisbane today

¹²⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings*, page 242.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, page 212.

and wint [went] out to Archerfield at night'. On Sunday the 31st he records "went into Ipswich today to Mass and saw M A T there".¹²⁹ Kilfoyle then spent another few days at Archerfield and returned to Moorlands on 4 February, still going into Ipswich for Mass every Sunday and recording that M A T was there. 'M A T' was almost certainly Mary Anne Tully, member of a family connected with the Duracks by marriage. It was an indication that, having at last acquired some property of his own in the shape of his share of Rosewood, Kilfoyle was allowing his thoughts to turn towards matrimony. The harsh lessons taught by the Irish famine ensured the Kilfoyles and their Australian children often showed considerable caution and thrift before committing themselves to marriage.

The entries in the diary in February and March continue in a similar vein until 8 April, when he records 'at Brisbane all day buying things for the station', and on the 9th 'expecting steamer *S S Rajputana*'¹³⁰ The *S S Rajputana* had been chartered by explorers and cattlemen with interests in the Kimberley to land at the Gulf on route to Singapore. He records going to Mass in Ipswich on 11 April and again seeing M.A.T. and the following day 'left Brisbane by boat for the Gulf - *S S Rajputana*'.

The voyage is recorded by Kilfoyle with the entry the first week as 'for the Gulf.
¹³¹ Mary Durack recorded that Long Michael and Tom Kilfoyle were visiting family at Molong and had to hurry back to catch the *S S Rajputana*.¹³² Also on board were Michael Patrick Durack known as M.P., the scholarly eldest son of Patrick Durack, his brother John [J.W.], 'Stumpy Michael' Durack, 'Long

¹²⁹ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*,

¹³⁰ *ibid.*,

¹³¹ *ibid.*,

¹³² Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 284.

Michael Durack, Jim Byrne (whose sister was to marry Tom Kilfoyle four years later) and another nephew of the Duracks,' Jack Skeahan. Also on the passenger list were Harry Stockdale who had two years before explored the west side of the Cambridge Gulf, and Robert Wolfe with his Aboriginal servant Gobo. Wolfe kept a rough diary of the voyage. On 12 and 13 April he recorded:

Started at 2.00 pm. for Cambridge Gulf in the B.I. & Co. s.s.Rajpootanan [Rajpootanna]. Gobo and self.
Fair weather. Deck passage not bad £9 for Gobo and self to Cambridge - have to pay 3/- per day for rations Gobo and self.¹³³

Both Kilfoyle and Wolfe record spending Sunday 18 April on Thursday Island. On the 21st Kilfoyle writes 'got on a reef for a long time' ¹³⁴ where Wolfe records the incident as 'ran on a sand bank near Melville Island (S) at 2.00 pm. Off at 6.00 pm. then anchored for the night' ¹³⁵ The ship arrived in Port Darwin on 22 April. Neither Kilfoyle or Wolfe made any particular comment on Port Darwin except noting their arrival. Wolfe said 'arrived at Port Darwin at 2.00 pm. Went on shore, Off for dinner. ...'.¹³⁶ Leaving Port Darwin the following afternoon, the ship anchored on the night of the 24 April off the Gulf. The following day was Easter Sunday, when both Kilfoyle and Wolfe record reaching Stockdale camp on the Forrest River where Stockdale's horses were landed. Kilfoyle then records on 26 April 'reached to View Hill and landed our goods and horses' ¹³⁷ Wolfe records on the same day 'Landed Stockdale's stores and came further up the Gulf to View Hill and landed Dourax [Durack's] horses.' ¹³⁸

¹³³ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley Scenes*, page 165

¹³⁴ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 21 April 1886

¹³⁵ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *ibid.*, page 165.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, page 165.

¹³⁷ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 25, 26 April 1886 .

¹³⁸ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *ibid.*, page 165

On 27 April, Kilfoyle writes of going into the new township of Windham [Wyndham] stopping there the night and then returning to the camp at View Hill the following day. In April 1886, John Forrest, accompanied by C D Price as Resident Magistrate and E. Radford a surveyor, arrived in the Cambridge Gulf, in the S S *Albany*, to select a site for the township of Wyndham. The original place chosen was where the Wyndham Meat Works now stands, but there was difficulty in loading and unloading without jetties, so the main township was established a mile further up the gulf.

On 29 April Kilfoyle records 'getting stuff for the Steation [Station]' and camped out at the 'Six Mile'. Kilfoyle, MP, JW, and MJ Durack together with Tom Hayes, Jack Skeahan and Jim Byrne started off inland, meeting up the following day with Wolfe who records '...got loan of 2 horses and went after Duracks. They left yesterday. Got to their camp at 10pm travelled S.E. and then South'¹³⁹. Wolfe's diaries give a far more vivid description of the journey than those of Kilfoyle. Kilfoyle records on the 4th 'came to Aleageter [Alligator] Hole in the Oard [Ord] river'. In contrast, Wolfe records 'did not get horses till late. Came on to Lagoon. Got there late had a lot of trouble with Packs. I did some good shooting with Rifle. Saw Blacks'. On the 7th Wolfe records 'started early. Was ill all day. Got Kangaroo. On Durack's country. Camped on Ray Creek. Good Country'. The Creek is named in Kilfoyle's diary as the 'Beans' [Baines] .

Reaching the Durack camp on Saturday 8, Kilfoyle spent Sunday 9 with them, and on the 10th records 'reached to our campe [camp] alwright [alright]'. Wolfe travelled with him as he records 'started early and came over some rough country and arrived at Kilfoils [Kilfoyle's] place at 6.00 pm. Said goodbye &c. to Durack party, had supper and turned in'. Wolfe further records the distance

¹³⁹ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley Scenes.*, page 166.

between Wyndham and Rosewood station. 'Travelled S. 178 miles to date'.

The first day's activities at the Rosewood camp are recorded by Wolfe:

Going to arrange to hire horses to get up to the fields. Have only one horse between us as Duracks lent us horses so far. Camped all day. Washed Clothes, cooking &c. fare Jony [Johnny] Cake & Salt Beef. Duracks came over.¹⁴⁰

Kilfoyle records the day as 'at our camp - the three Michaels came to my camp'

The three Michaels were 'Long Michael' [Kilfoyle's nephew] 'Stumpy Michael', [Patsy Durack's brother] and M P Durack [Patsy Durack's son].

Wolfe describes the station as 'weather warm, green grass and water plenty. Running stream here'.¹⁴¹ Kilfoyle records immediately putting up yards and starting out to muster cattle for branding. Wolfe left on 15 May for the goldfields, but not before he records Kilfoyle's first sale, 'bought 2 horses, grey mare and Blue Roan Cob for £35 from Gilfoil [Kilfoyle].'¹⁴² Kilfoyle remained at the station until 21 May when he records 'shoeing horses for the start away to look at the country'. He travelled through the Territory reaching the Katherine Telegram Station on 7 June. He sent telegrams away and waited for a reply. He then returned back to Rosewood on 27 June, and started out the following day for the 'Gulf' for rations. Returning to the station, he records on July 31, 'me and Michael [M.P.] went to have a look for place to build my station'.

Michael Durack and Tom Kilfoyle must have conferred about the needs of the district, because shortly afterwards, Kilfoyle once again went into Wyndham with horses in order to get his wagons fixed up by the blacksmith. There he took the opportunity on behalf of Durack and himself to send a petition to Governor

¹⁴⁰ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge Peter, *Kimberley Scenes.*, page 168.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*,

¹⁴² *ibid.*,

Broome in Perth with a list of public works and other requests for the East Kimberley District. The list included the construction of a jetty and a surveyed road to the goldfields, at least a monthly shipping service and an overland telegraph line between Derby and Wyndham, the establishment of a local court, and provision for the sale of town lots. They also asked that the Chinese be kept out of the goldfields for at least three years so that they would not compete with European miners.¹⁴³ Kilfoyle was not usually so prominent in coming forward as a spokesman for the district, and it may be that the initiative lay with M.P. Durack. M.P. had political leanings and was many years later M.L.A. for Kimberley, but at the time was only twenty one years old and probably thought that the older man's request would carry more weight.

Kilfoyle's mission accomplished, he loaded up and returned to Duracks' station - the trip taking eighteen days. After spending a few days with the Duracks, he returned to his station. Kilfoyle then spent time rounding up cattle, and separating the 'fats'. This activity was provoked by the gold rush to Halls Creek during the dry season of 1886, which brought at least fifteen hundred diggers to the Kimberleys and provided a ready and unexpected market for the newly arrived cattlemen.

Kilfoyle was spending a good deal of time with the Duracks. He records on 26 September riding over to Durack's Station. M.P. records in his diary of meeting up with Kilfoyle, Johnny, Jim Livingstone, Duncan McCaully, Tom Connors and R.Perry. Livingstone and Connors had brought over the horses from Queensland, together with Mick Byrne who arrived with his brother Jim at Argyle on 18 October. M.P. Durack noted in his diary received all news from M and J.Byrne concerning the future of the diggings, they having arrived

¹⁴³ Green, Neville, *Forrest River Massacres*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 1995, pages 56 to 58.

yesterday'. Many diggers were already leaving, with the approach of the wet season and the failure of the Halls Creek gold to persist, but enough optimists remained for the future to seem promising, especially if the district proved to be rich in reef gold.

On 19 October, M.P. Durack recorded the departure of the Byrne brothers for Rosewood, and Kilfoyle noted their arrival the next day, presumably to look after the station while he took cattle to the goldfields. Leaving Rosewood on 24 October he arrived at Halls Creek on 22 November. On 23 November, he records 'left Halls Creek to look for camp for the cattle, went out with McPhee and found camp for the cattle'. McPhee is also recorded as being at Argyle in September buying cattle from M P to take to the diggings.

Kilfoyle remained at the diggings until the end of December, taking in cattle to be killed on a regular basis. He records on 14 December 'went into the Brockman's with two bullocks to kill. Selling off all the cattle, he bought four horses in Halls Creek and left for Rosewood. Although Kilfoyle doesn't mention it in the diary, P.M. Durack writes in his reminiscences that in November 1886 he also travelled from Wyndham to Halls Creek and helped organise Halls Creek's first race meeting. He recorded 'the goldfields horses were in better condition than ours, so we were beaten all round.....'¹⁴⁴. It would be possible that Kilfoyle purchased some of these horses.

Whilst in Halls Creek, Theodore Wolfe records on 26 November '....News in today J. Durack killed by blacks'¹⁴⁵. This was John Durack, Kilfoyle's nephew,

¹⁴⁴ Durack, P.M., *The Western Australian Historical Society Journal - II. Experiences of the Early Days 1885-86*. Vol. 11. 1933. Part XIV.

¹⁴⁵ Wolfe, R.T.S., *Diary, 26 November, 1886*.

aged 37 years. To distinguish him from Patsy Durack's son, who was nearly twenty years his junior, he was known as 'Big Johnny'. M.P. Durack records in his diary on 12 November '..... The two Johnnys went out for tour round Hicks Creek'. Then five days later records 'After two lonesome days - heard knock of a bell, and then appeared M.J.D. [Uncle Michael] Jerry, Johnny, Duncan and Charley with sad news – Cousin Johnny has been speared by the blacks, and they buried him yesterday'. Kilfoyle stayed on in Halls Creek, but Wolfe records leaving Halls Creek on 30 November with Lamond (a friend of the Duracks' from Queensland days) and three boys to go to the Duracks at Argyle. Arriving at Argyle on Sunday 5 December, they left the following day with 'four police and nine in the Durack party to avenge the death of J. Durack killed by the blacks'¹⁴⁶. The party were out ten days 'looking for tracks'. Wolfe records on 12 December 'close to Niggars. Saw a few'. There is nowhere recorded that the party took their revenge. Kilfoyle's absence from the party is understandable. He was already middle aged and committed to the success of his business ventures in Halls Creek. However, it is also possible that he was reluctant to take any step which might jeopardise his relations with the local Aborigines. It is significant that among all the records that have survived from the early years of contact, there is no trace of hostilities between Kilfoyle and local Aboriginal tribes.

Kilfoyle returned to the Rosewood station camp on 7 January 1887. His next task was the construction of a permanent homestead, and he notes in his diary that he is 'getting ready to go to new place'. M.P. also records on the 7th that 'T Hayes arrived this evening, brought wood over and that T Kilfoyle was at home and about to shift on Monday next'. On the 9th Kilfoyle observes the

¹⁴⁶ Wolfe, R.T.S., *Diary*, 6 December, 1886.

Sabbath and on the following Sunday week he records 'at camp all day washing my close [clothes]'. On another occasion he writes of 'washing my clothes, not out of pride but out of want'.¹⁴⁷ This appeared to be the usual practice for the both the Duracks and Kilfoyle, except if they were out mustering. M.P. Durack records in his diary in 1888 :

here the sabbath is observed by sustaining from more toilsome manual labour; such as mending clothes, attending to stirrups, washing clothes etc. do not with us constitute servile work¹⁴⁸

The men of the Kimberly's mode of dress was certainly not the like the men in the Wild West of America wearing 'sombros and leather chaps, fringed buckskin, pearl handled guns and coloured neck scarves', rather it was more like 'dungaree pants, often held up by a piece of rope, a singlet, battered felt hat and elastic-sided boots....with rifle and revolver for self-preservation and a stockwhip as a badge of their calling'.¹⁴⁹

On 10 January, Kilfoyle left his old camp on the Rosewood Creek and on 12 January states in his diary 'reached to where i [I] am going to form a station'. The first job was to sink a well. Unsuccessful at first, he records 'our well turned out to be a duffer, came on stone and had to stop' but he eventually shifted the well and got water. Kilfoyle, although a more laconic diarist than either J.W. or M.P. Durack, was meticulous in noting the progress of improvements on his property. After sinking the well, he started building a kitchen and records in his diary 'getting stuff for building the kitchen' and 'putting on the roof for the kitchen', and makes the remark 'great rain today'.

Kilfoyle spent the first seven months in 1887 at Rosewood building yards. He

¹⁴⁷ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 3 July 1887.

¹⁴⁸ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 15 September 1888

¹⁴⁹ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley Scenes*, page 87.

records, 'drawing the posts for the yards', and then a few days later 'drawing in the realls [rails].'¹⁵⁰ He made intermittent trips to Wyndham and to visit the Duracks at Argyle. No reason is given in his diary why during one of these trips to Wyndham he caught the *S S Otway* to Port Darwin, remained only in Port Darwin a day and returned to Wyndham again on the *S S Otway*. In February he recorded buying four horses and saddles for £16 in Wyndham.

Now that the future of the district was stabilised by the establishment of the port, Kilfoyle could return to Rosewood and concentrate on putting in the essential foundations of the cattle station. During the first ten years, there continued to be a high degree of practical cooperation between the East Kimberley pastoralists. It appears from the diaries of M.P. Durack and Kilfoyle that they all helped each other to muster, starting first at Rosewood, then Lissadell and finally at Argyle, with all hands helping.

Comparing Kilfoyle's diary with M.P. and J.W. Durack's diary in August 1887 shows the amount of cooperation between the running of Argyle and Rosewood. He also highlights their common interest in horse racing. Kilfoyle records leaving Rosewood with horses and travelling as far as the Ord River where he describes it as 'reached to the fresh and salt on Ord'. He then began 'making shades for the horses'. J.W. records travelling from Argyle with his father Patsy, M.P., Jack Skeahan and Bob Button, where they met up with Kilfoyle: 'reached Kilfoyle's camp where he has erected a shed, yard and stables'. They remained at the camp with trips into Wyndham for nearly a fortnight and trained their horses. J.W. records 'Michael came back from Gulf with two bushels of oats' and '... taking out horses morning and evening and

¹⁵⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 19 April, 1887 and 20 April, 1887.

reading papers in the middle of the day'.¹⁵¹ Kilfoyle also records 'at the camp all day, jumped the mare over the stump'. This camp later became known as 'Racehorse Camp'.¹⁵²



3. *Early Race Meeting at the 'Three Mile'.*



4. *Two-legged race at the 'Three Mile'.*

¹⁵¹ Durack, J W., *Diary*, 27 August, 1 September, 1887.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, 13 September, 1887.

They arrived at the *Three Mile* a couple of days before the races waiting for the races to commence on the 7 September. Kilfoyle appears to have done well and records the first day as 'at the races all day, won the Marken Place'. J.W. Durack notes that over the next few days: 'Kilfoyle was the successful man having won three races' and 'Tom again a winner.' It was not all horse racing. J.W. writes of 'great merriment in town in evening settling up night'. With the races over on 9 September J.W. records 'somewhat dull today'. Kilfoyle notes his £26 winnings in the front of his diary. The Duracks and Kilfoyle all left together on the 11th and travelled as far as 'Byrne's camp'.

The three Byrne brothers had travelled overland with the Durack/Kilfoyle expedition and had set up a camp twelve miles out of from Wyndham. They originally came from Tarago in New South Wales where the Duracks had property. Like the Duracks and Kilfoyle they were Irish Catholic. Will [William] Byrne and his brother Mick [Michael] had set up a butchering business in Wyndham and dealing in cattle for consumption on the goldfields. The other brother Jim, had worked building fences and yards on Argyle and Rosewood and spent time on the mail run to and from the goldfields. The Byrnes were to feature prominently in both Kilfoyle's and the Durack brothers' lives and diaries from this time on.

Kilfoyle arrived back at Rosewood with the horses and then started back to the Ord river for salt. He reached the salt beds and records 'very little salt' and 'getting salt all day, very sparse this time of the year'. Obviously frustrated, he again records 'getting salt all day, very slow and tiresome'. Salt was a very important item to have on a station. It was used for salting beef so that it could be kept indefinitely. The meat would be cut into thin pieces and each side of

the piece of meat would be covered with salt and left in a pile. The salt would penetrate the meat and cure it. When it was ready to be used, it would be soaked in water. Salt was also given to horses with their oats and chaff. It was considered that salt was beneficial to the well-being of horses.¹⁵³

Settling back at Rosewood and before the rains were due to start, Kilfoyle continued to build the basic buildings required for a station. He records on 3 October 'at home all day digging the well in the morning, the following day records 'getting thatch to cover in the harness room, fetching in thatch for [the] house' and 'getting rafters for the house, putting on the battens for the house'. On 18 and 19 October he was 'putting on thatch, had to go and get more' and 'finished our house'. The well took a few more days and finally on the 21st, 'finished slab over our well, made a good job of it'. The whole of November was 'drawing in stuff' for the garden. The 'stuff' would be timber for the fence around the house.

On 16 November, Kilfoyle records in his diary that M.P. and Will Byrne arrived at the station and stayed overnight. Checking M.P.'s diaries, it appears that Will Byrne was arranging to buy some of Kilfoyle's bullocks. Kilfoyle spent the next few days 'out after cattle for fat bullocks for Byrne'. Taking the bullocks back to Argyle on the 27th, M.P. noted that 'Thomas Kilfoyle and W Byrne took horses over to lagoon and camped'. He then goes on to say 'got the milk cows for Byrne by dinner time' Kilfoyle also records 'went to the river for milking cows'. In the front of his dairy, Kilfoyle records receiving a total in cash of £26.7.8. from Byrne. According to M.P., Will Byrne then started for the Gulf with 44 fats and '8 milkers from us'. Leaving on 30 November, Thomas Kilfoyle has an unpleasant trip home: 'reached home got very wet'. M.P. records 'Thomas Kilfoyle left to go

¹⁵³ Durack, Reginald, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995.

home this morning - very heavy shower of rain for about three hours.'¹⁵⁴ As the rains had set in, Kilfoyle spends time indoors 'mending pack saddles' When he went out looking for a beast to kill for beef, he notes the 'creek very high'.

The trips into Wyndham varied, sometimes they would take up to ten days if Kilfoyle took cattle. At other times, he records the journey only taking four days. In December 1887, he made a quick trip into Wyndham and back. He records on the 20th ' getting stuff for garden fence - some rain and then on 21st some must have happened 'at the station all day had a bad nee [knee] laid up'. Two days later he is still drawing in stuff for the yard, but records 'my nee [knee] getting better.'

On 24 December, Kilfoyle records 'at home all day and M.P. Durack - day fine heavy rain this evening.' M.P. records more detail about the visit on 23rd December:

Myself and Pumpkin started out to Thomas Kilfoyles after dinner to spend the Christmas - got there pretty early - received some letters from home - one from mother, grandmother and one from Sonny dated 14 October. Also T. & C. [Town and Country] journal and the Queenslander.

The following day was spent:

reading the papers all day - J Skehan [Skeahan] out shooting ducks - got 9 whistlers - and among them one cream colour whistler which J Skehan [Skeahan] and I saw some time before in the same place where he got the ducks.

M.P. stated 'had a very good Christmas indeed- plenty of fowls and some splendid sweet potatoes'. Skeahan shot more ducks on Boxing Day and M.P. started home the following day after dinner 'having spent three very good days

¹⁵⁴ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 30 November, 1887.

at Thomas Kilfoyles.' ¹⁵⁵ Kilfoyle himself does not mention Christmas.

The wet season had set in and Kilfoyle spent the next couple of months putting down another well, squaring up posts for the kitchen and house and cutting timber for saddler and store. By the end of March, there was a homestead with a separate kitchen and garden.

At the beginning of the 1888 diary Kilfoyle listed in his diary 'things I want to buy'. These included the following:

6 cwt flour, 4 cwt sugar, 12 lb tobacco, 10lb 3' neals [nails] 1 doz. picks 6 lb pepper, 6 lb salt, 6lb mustard, 6 bottles of vinegar, 6 pr. mole trousers, 2 pr. mole trousers 2 pr. boots, 2 doz. matches, 20 lb currants , 20lb. carrots, 20 lb plums Iron, some clay pipes, chaff and oats.

He travelled to Wyndham at the end of February for stores and stayed out at the *Six Mile* to where the Byrne brothers had moved their camp.

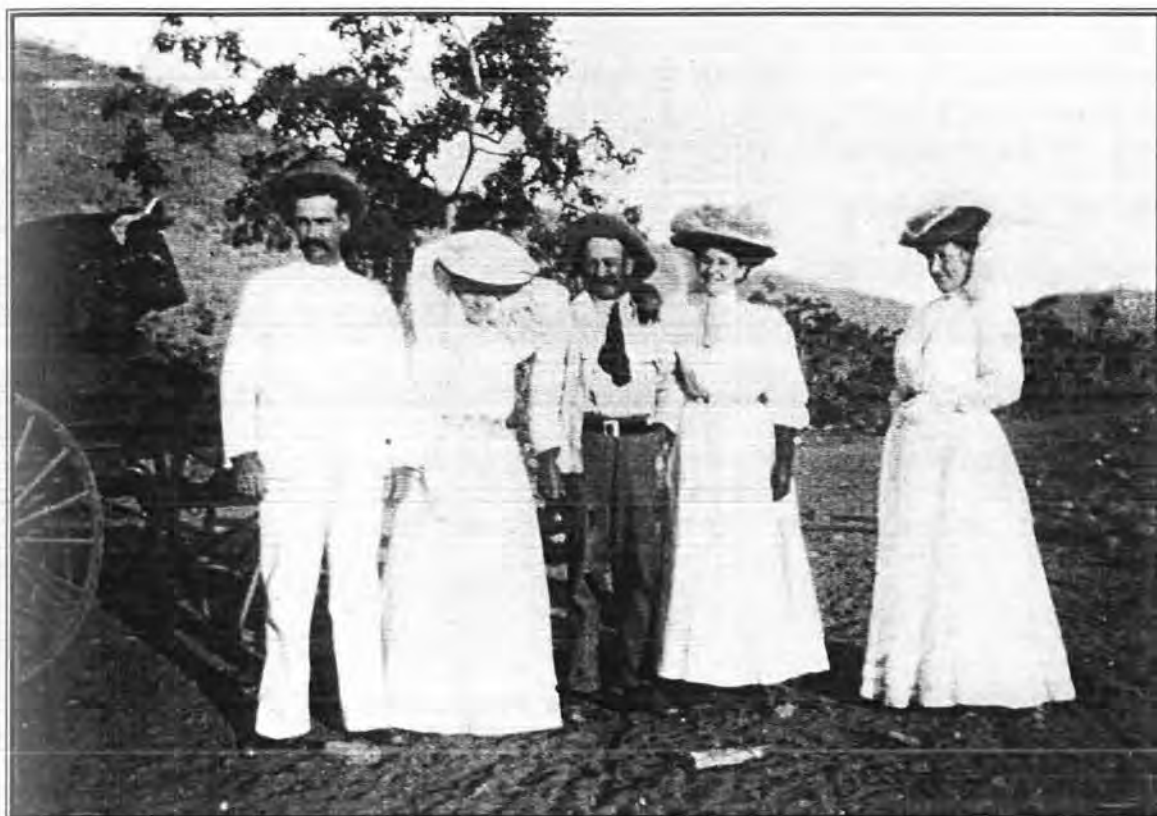
The year 1888 was spent in a similar fashion to 1887, getting together with the Duracks for Easter with M.J.Durack at Lissadell and taking the horses into the Wyndham for the annual races. *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* records the meeting:

The Wyndham Racing Club held their second annual meeting on the 27th and 28th June last. R.C. Hare Esq., acting as judge; Messrs. M.Byrne, M.P. Durack, T.Peacock, J Craigie and Dr. Laffan as stewards. Mr. M.Byrne starter; Mr. H R Head, clerk of scales, Mr. W.Byrne, clerk of the course and Messrs. J.B. McIntosh, W. Jackson, and M. Byrne, handicappers.

The paper goes on to record that on the first day Kilfoyle came in second with his horse *Why Not* . However, the following day, *Why Not* won the Handicap

¹⁵⁵ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 December, 1887.

Hurdle race over 11/2 miles. Another of his horses *Saladin*, won the Wyndham Cup (presented by Connor and Doherty), winning 25 sovereigns with £50 added. Yet another Kilfoyle horse, *Shamrock*, came in second. The front of his diary records that he won £26 on the day.



5. Tom and Cattie Kilfoyle with Jim, Maggie and Johannah Byrne, at the 'Six Mile'.

Kilfoyle's life was to change in February 1890 when the Byrne sisters arrived from Sydney. The eldest of the Byrne brothers, Jim Byrne had gone around by boat to Sydney to bring their four sisters Catherine (29), Johannah (27) Maryann (22) and Margaret (11)¹⁵⁶ to Darwin on the *Chingtu*.¹⁵⁷ They were accompanied by their friend Elizabeth Spry, who was engaged to Will Byrne (32). Patsy Durack was also on board. Will Byrne went to Darwin to meet the party. He and Elizabeth Spry were married on 21 February, the day they arrived from Sydney. The following day the Byrne girls, Jim and Patsy Durack joined the *S S Otway* and continued their voyage to Wyndham.¹⁵⁸ On their arrival in Wyndham they were met by their other brother Mick, and taken out to the *Six Mile*. The Byrne girls had only been at the *Six Mile* a couple of weeks before Kilfoyle met them when he arrived to stay at the *Six Mile* on 8 March 1890. Will Byrne and his bride arrived back in Wyndham from their honeymoon in Darwin on 13 March. Kilfoyle records in his diary that he is staying at the Six Mile and on 17 March records 'at the Six Mile all day - cricket match between town and country'. He doesn't mention that it is 'St Patrick's Day' but the event is recorded in *The Northern Australian* as:

St. Patrick's Day celebration was kept up by a cricket match at Byrnes' Six Mile Hotel. The teams were Town v. Country, the losers to pay for a dinner. The Country being well represented from the station a fair team was picked out, but the Town having too much practice had an easy win by 30 runs. The day being cool a very enjoyable game was played, and in the evening the Oval was graced with the greatest number of the fair sex every yet seen at the Six-Mile. The dinner was provided by Messrs. Byrne Bros., and it gave great satisfaction to everyone.¹⁵⁹

The celebrations may have been dampened by the news that a young

¹⁵⁶ Ages taken from father's death certificate in 1878.

¹⁵⁷ Port Darwin Shipping List, 21 February 1890

¹⁵⁸ *The Northern Australian*, 22 February, 1890.

¹⁵⁹ *The Northern Australian*, 4 April 1890.

stockman named Darley was drowned at the river crossing, but this did not delay Kilfoyle's return to station routine.¹⁶⁰ On his return to Rosewood, he immediately started mustering cows and calves for sale in Wyndham. After having branded 58 calves and cleared the fats he started for the Gulf on 1 April. He records on his trip back to the Gulf some of the hardships that were suffered: 'reached to three miles from Cockatoo Springs - rain today and all night - no fire matches - all wet and cold nearly died'¹⁶¹ The trip took eight days. He arrived at the *Six Mile* and stayed with the Byrnes for six days. During this time, he travelled back and forth to Wyndham.

On 10 April, he 'came into town and stopped all night - went and saw Father Duff' and the following day went on to say 'came back to the *Six Mile* at night - received communion this morning'. This is the first mention of religion since going to Mass in Ipswich. The Priest visiting the *Six Mile* would have been seen as a great occasion - with the women organising the altar, the flowers and the food for the breakfast afterwards. Father Duff was an Irish Catholic priest chosen by Bishop Griver, the Bishop of Perth, to visit Catholics in the far north who had arrived in Australia in 1885. He would sail to the different ports and spend a few days administering the sacraments. In the *History of the Catholic Church* he is described as follows: 'Fr. James Duff was a talented writer and poet, and as well, a man of remarkable toughness and endurance'. Four years later, Father Duff celebrated the first Mass for the miners in the diggings in Coolgardie.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 19, 20, 21 and 22 March, 1890.

¹⁶¹ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 3 April, 1895.

¹⁶² Bourke, D.F., *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, Perth*, 1979, pages 132,144.



6. Catherine (Cattie) Kilfoyle nee Byrne.

There is no mention in Kilfoyle's diary of Catherine (Cattie) Byrne during this visit to the *Six Mile*, but it may be significant that, after his return to Rosewood, he concentrated on getting a garden organised. He records 'sowed some fruit trees in a box and some flowers'. At the end of April, he has organised Sultan (almost certainly one the Aborigines Kilfoyle brought from Queensland) to dig holes and plant fruit trees in the garden.¹⁶³ He continued to put up buildings which included a harness room and putting the finer touches to the house, such as making doors for the kitchen.

¹⁶³ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*, 22, 28, 29 April 1890.

He didn't go back into Wyndham until 21 June, when he took the horses into the races. He arrived at the *Six Mile* on 1 June and he records the *Six Mile* races as commencing on 10 July - 'at the *Six Mile* at the races - some good races' and then the following day 'reaces [races] - at the Ball at night - danced all night'. The first mention of Cattie is on 15 July: 'went to the *12 Mile* for picknick [picnic] and back again - got back late - Cate and me all day together'. The *Twelve Mile* was also known as the *Twelve Mile Lagoon* which was covered in 'waterlilies'.¹⁶⁴ On Sunday 27 July, Cattie gets a further mention: 'At the *Six Mile* all day - went over to the Chineman's after dinner and Cate came'.

As well as pursuing his courtship, Kilfoyle was also lingering in Wyndham because he expected the arrival of his partner, 'Galway Jerry' Durack, with his wife and two children. During 1889 and 1890, the Durack brothers had suffered severe financial reverses on their investments in Queensland, and 'Galway Jerry' was finding it necessary to live in the Kimberleys. Since Kilfoyle was also thinking of taking a wife, this could have created accomodation problems at the Rosewood homestead and may have encouraged Kilfoyle to think of branching out in ways which would not require him to live at Rosewood.

On 31 July he loaded up the waggon, and Sultan brought in the horses to the *Six Mile* from the 'bend' (bend on the Ord River). The trip back to Rosewood took twelve days to complete. Kilfoyle records putting a 'shot in the well' and after three days, 'Byrne came up from the Behn Station' and they start back for the Gulf. He then spent nearly the whole of September at the *Six Mile*. On 1

¹⁶⁴*The West Australian*, 7 September, 1937.

November he records 'Will Byrne came up from the Gulf - got a letter from Cate'. The six months courtship ended with them all travelling to Port Darwin on the *S S Victoria*. On the 18th they arrived at Port Darwin, with Kilfoyle writing that 'the wimmum [women] were sick all the way'. He records Port Darwin as being 'very hot and little rain'.

On 20 December, he and Catherine Byrne were married. In his usual style, the diary entry reads: 'got married this morning'. The local paper records the event:

A marriage was celebrated last week in which the principals were Mr. T. Kilfoyle, a Kimberley pastoralist and Miss Byrne, a member of the popular family of that name who reside at the *Six Mile*, near Wyndham. The ceremony was performed at the Roman Catholic Church by the Rev. Father O'Brien in the presence of a few relatives and intimate friends of the contracting parties.¹⁶⁵

Spending a five week honeymoon in Port Darwin, Kilfoyle records on Christmas Day 1890, 'went to Mass this morning[,] and evening went for a long walk me and my girl'.

The *S.S. Adelaide* left Port Darwin for Wyndham on 28 January 1891 with the Kilfoyles on board. The journey was 'very ruff [rough]'. Leaving his wife with her family at the *Six Mile*, Kilfoyle returned to Rosewood, where he stayed 'at the station all day at saddles - Jerry and Sultan came back from the Quenbownes with break ins'. They also spend time looking for cattle and branding calves. With a quick trip into the *Six Mile* to visit his wife, Kilfoyle returned to the station and on 14 March, 'left home to go to the Territory with cattle'.

By the beginning of 1891, the Halls Creek goldfield retained only a handful of

¹⁶⁵ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 26 December, 1890.

diggers. Returns were poor, and nearly all had left for the Pilbara, the Yilgarn, or Queensland. On the other hand, the Pine Creek goldfield in the Northern Territory, situated conveniently close to the Overland Telegraph line, was turning out well and offered a new market for Kimberley cattle. It made sense for Kilfoyle to set up a butchering business with his brother in law Will Byrne at this new scene, leaving his partner 'Galway Jerry' Durack in charge of the station. Tom Hayes, still unmarried, was occupied around Rosewood and Wyndham. As yet, the venture was not established firmly enough to allow the partners to think of splitting up into three independent holdings. Much would depend on the skill with which Kilfoyle undertook the marketing of Rosewood cattle for the limited duration of opportunities of the Pine Creek / Fountain Head goldrush.

Chapter 4

Pine Creek and Fountain Head.

Gold had been discovered in the Northern Territory as early as 1873. By the early 1880s, mining companies had invested large amounts of money in claims around Pine Creek, 146 miles south of Port Darwin. The South Australian Government, then in control of the Northern Territory, authorised the building of a railway between Palmerston (Port Darwin) and Pine Creek and the laying of the tracks began in 1886 and completed in 1889. The track was laid through 'virgin bush and some 310 streams crossings and floodways, including several major bridges'. The contractors for the railway, E & C Millar, employed over three hundred Chinese at the beginning and by 1887 the work force consisted of over 2970 Chinese, Indian and Sinhalese. The Chinese were used for 'carting buckets of spoil from cuttings to embankment'. J.W. James the Railway Engineer noted the following :

The Chinese labourer averaged nearly one cubic foot of earth each trip, that he moved over the ground much faster than a horse and the contractors employed Chinese to move loaded wagons of up to nine and a half tons from the jetty to the stacking yard..... five Chinese could do the work of one horse and they were more efficient than horses in soft ground.¹⁶⁸

By the time the railway was completed in 1889, there was a decline in European mining around the Pine Creek area. This was due to the fact that most of the miners had joined the Kimberley Gold rush and the Northern Territory had experienced two very dry seasons. During the latter part of the completion of

¹⁶⁸ Jones, Timothy G, *Pegging the Northern Territory - A History of mining in the Northern Territory, 1870-1946*, The Northern Territory University Press, 1987, page 72.

the railway, a large number of Chinese deserted 'the railway to go gold seeking on their own account',¹⁶⁷ although there were Chinese in the Pine Creek district since 1878. One of the Chinese had in fact leased a battery and then bought out another mines. By 1890, a large number of Chinese were working old mines or looking for alluvial gold around the Pine Creek, Brock Creek and Fountainhead area.

Kilfoyle, together with M.P. Durack, realising a potential market decided to overland with a small mob of '169 bullocks and 17 horses'¹⁶⁸. The two men were accompanied by the two Aboriginals, Pumpkin and Sultan, and took three months to complete the journey. They travelled down the Baines 'to marked tree TK' to Auvergne Station, down the Victoria River to the 'Depot' where they replenished their stores.

On 7 April, M.P. Durack, suffering from a jarred hand, records in his diary:

...Six days have elapsed since last entry and now make an attempt to write with my left hand for the suffering of my right by no means eased....Blacks appear on hill close to cattle... seem friendly disposed and Sultan and Pumpkin have conversation with them¹⁶⁹

Conditions were unpleasant because of the weather. On 8 April, M.P. Durack records: 'Rain came on suddenly - no tents rigged, all got drenched'. Both Kilfoyle and M. P. record in their diaries the following day that cattle were missing. Kilfoyle records losing 'three head of cattle near the Divils [Devils] Bite'.¹⁷⁰ M.P. records 'find we are four head cattle short. Pumpkin started back after them returning without them. Reports that blacks encountered yesterday

¹⁶⁷ Jones, Timothy G., *Op.Cit.*, page 74.

¹⁶⁸ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 332.

¹⁶⁹ Durack, M.P., *Diary.*, 7 April, 1995.

¹⁷⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*, 8 April, 1891.

chased them over the range' ¹⁷¹ . Kilfoyle refers to the blacks again on 15 April when he records: 'started on again up the Victoria. Blacks near us all the night - Sultan and Pumpkin wint [went] their fire and gave them a fright' ¹⁷² .

On 17 April, he notes 'some rain and coald [cold] camped on sand on plain - we killed a bullock' ¹⁷³ . The drovers then followed what they thought to be the Gregory River and had to turn back, finally reaching the Little Gregory. Travelling through Delamere station, Kilfoyle 'lost old white cow today ...near Dealemeare[Delamere] station'. Reaching the Spicers Creek, according to Kilfoyle, they made their way to the Katherine River. On 9 May, 'left fat lame bullock behind,' M.P. gives a more vivid description and records the sentiments relating to their beasts:

Goaty, our heaviest beast, somewhat lame after coming through gorge.

The following day:

....Goaty still very lame, doubt if he can go much further.. Passed large lagoon, surrounded by pandanus, crocodiles very numerous.

and finally:

Crossed large creek running into the Katherine.. At last we have to leave poor Goaty, the pride of the Behn, at the mercy of the blacks, disease and alligators. Was half a mind to destroy him but who knows he may recover and come through, and Life is sweet, no doubt to dumb animals as to ourselves.¹⁷⁴

Leaving M.P. with the cattle at an old cattle camp, Kilfoyle arrived in Pine Creek on 12 May 1891. He records travelling around different localities, including the 'Union', 'Ban Ban' and 'Fountainhead' and meeting 'Chinemen about some

¹⁷¹ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 8 April, 1891.

¹⁷² Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 15 April, 1891.

¹⁷³ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *ibid.*,

¹⁷⁴ Durack, M.P., *ibid.*, 3, 4, 5, 8 May, 1891.

cattle'. M.P. Durack names him as *Ah Tin*, a Chinese butcher. He goes on to describe him 'who being unusually big for his race, with pointed beard and a good seat in the saddle, might have been Ghengis Khan himself in a somewhat unusual setting'. The Northern Territory police visited their camp and insisted on the cattle being inoculated before being taken into Ban Ban.

Finding that the Kimberley cattle were not in great demand, Kilfoyle decided to visit Palmerston to see if there was a stronger demand there and to obtain a butchery license: 'started down for Palmerston about killing the cattle'.¹⁷⁵ Kilfoyle caught the train which travelled twice weekly into Palmerston. The train journey took twelve hours with a twenty minute stop at the *Adelaide River* for a cup of tea. In Darwin, he met up with his nephew, 'Long Michael' Durack, who arrived from Wyndham in the *S.S. Rob Roy*. Unable to secure a slaughter license, he returned to Pine Creek where he 'made contact with Ah Tin and an European butcher, Bill Larrey [Lawrie]'.

Shifting the camp closer to Fountainhead, Kilfoyle once again travelled up to Palmerston, 'to get things to start butchering' and on 15 June records 'The *Adelaide* came from Wyndham and Catie [Cattie] and Jo come by it late'. Catherine Kilfoyle, accompanied by her sister, Johanna Byrne arrived to live in Darwin while her husband was working in the Territory. Kilfoyle's frustration regarding obtaining a licence for butchering is apparent from his diary. Finally, the licence issued on 18 June and he returned to Pine Creek on 19 June 'in the train to Pine Creek and had agreement with Chineman for slaughtering'. He then started the butchery business and travelled around the different camps with Ah Tin and 'lending him a horse to go to Yam Creek and back'.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 3 June, 1891.

¹⁷⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *ibid.*, 22 June, 1891.

After a stay of three months around Pine Creek, M.P. Durack returned to Wyndham to bring another mob of cattle across to the Territory. M.P. Pumpkin and Tom Hayes with an Aboriginal boy, Ned Kelly, set off with a mob of 118 cattle. M.P. and Hayes were not as companionable as M.P. and Kilfoyle, and the journey was not a happy one. They lost 35 head of cattle. It appears that 'mysterious affliction' may have been redwater fever, which at that time was not known. M.P. made the trip with various members of his family five times over the twelve months.¹⁷⁷

Kilfoyle spent his time butchering, writing letters and receiving them from Cattie, and making frequent trips between Pine Creek and Palmerston. He records staying Palmerston for three week and moving Cattie into a new cottage to live. He also waited for the *S S Rob Roy* to arrive from Wyndham with Will Byrne and his wife Lizzie. The two men then spent time at the Port Darwin races ' in Port Darwin all day at the reaces [races] - no good came atall [at all] - no G came at all - very dull for reaces [races].¹⁷⁸ He also records while in Port Darwin, going to Mass each Sunday.

Leaving his wife in Palmerston with his sisters, Will accompanied Kilfoyle back to Fountain Head. A notice appeared in the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* on 4 September 1891 that Kilfoyle had applied to the Licensing Bench, Palmerston, for six new slaughtering licences for Pine Creek, Union, Yam Creek, Fountain Head, Brock's Creek and Palmerston. Meeting up with M.P. Durack and 'squaring up with him', Kilfoyle records that M.P. started away for Port Darwin to catch boat for Wyndham and station. Kilfoyle's relation with Ah

¹⁷⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 338.

¹⁷⁸ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 7 August, 1891.

Tin seems to be one of mutual trust, contrasting with another Chinese - Ah Hoy. He records looking for Ah Hoy at Burrandah [Burrendie] 'but he had away cleared for China'.¹⁷⁹ Kilfoyle then decided to return to Port Darwin to see about he affairs: 'Port Darwin all day - seen the Chinkey [Chineman] and got £100 from him'.¹⁸⁰

Cattie Kilfoyle's sister, Johannah, returned to Wyndham in October.¹⁸¹ Cattie joined her husband at what was to be know at the 'Gum camp' on the Douglas River and Lizzie Byrne joined her husband at Fountainhead. Kilfoyle was deeply involved in his trading activities, and stimulated competition among the retailers by transferring his support to some newcomers who set up in opposition to Lawrie and Armstrong's monopoly:

The new Butchery - it may be interest some of our readers to know that Messrs. Cahill and Flynn will start on their plucky undertaking with considerable prospect of success. Their cattle will come principally from the herds of Messrs. Kilfoyle and Durack, who by the way, appear to be establishing themselves pretty firmly in the country.¹⁸²

Kilfoyle spent most of his time building yards with 'mortised poastes [posts]'; travelling by train between Burrendie, Pine Creek, Union Reefs, Fountainhead, Howley and Brock Creek; and killing bullocks weekly for Ah Tin and Bill Laurie, who despite the report in the *Northern Territory Times And Gazette* remained a good customer and eventually became one of Kilfoyle's closest friends. Sultan is always mentioned as out after bullocks or yarding them 'Sultan got the bullocks last night and today went to yard them up.'¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*, 10 September, 1891.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*,

¹⁸¹ Port Darwin Shipping List - *S S Rob Roy* ., 13 October, 1891.

¹⁸² *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 28 November, 1891.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*,

M.P. Durack returned from Wyndham by boat to Port Darwin and travelled down to Fountain Head by train. He records 'Kilfoyle and Hayes met me at the train'. Hayes had remained in Fountain Head helping with the bullocks and the following day, M.P. wrote 'to bring in bullocks to Brock Creek - total 70 being made up as follows: MJD 43, DB 19, DK 8'.

Hayes decided to return overland back to the Kimberley with some horses, but M.P. chose to return by *S S Rob Roy*'. It appears that there was some discontentment within the partnership and he records on 12 December :

Warm discussion this morning about business here and how it is to be continued. Agreed that the present lot of bullocks go £5 a head and Kilfoyle and Byrne responsible for horses left. Horses £15 per head.

M.P. Durack returned with another mob in March 1892 and on 19 March writes that he was:

busy this morning squaring up accounts with Kilfoyle and Byrne and getting ready to start down to train to Palmerston. Drive through to Brock Creek where the train stopped. Only two other passengers beside Kilfoyle and myself.

Arriving in Port Darwin, they stayed at Ryan's Hotel, attending Mass the next morning: 'went to Church this morning - being Sunday good congregation present.'¹⁸⁴ On 21 March the Kilfoyles and M.P. travelled to Wyndham on the *S S Rob Roy*. Kilfoyle records the journey as 'last night ruff [rough and rainy - three passengers sick - water ruff [rough]'. M.P. describes the journey as at first 'calm, placid, exhilarating. Kilfoyles are all on board. Spent uncomfortable night owing to the great heat and mosquito - very sick - put in a very disagreeable time'.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 20 March 1892.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 23, 24 March, 1892.

The Kilfoyles and M.P. were met by Mick Byrne and Jerry Durack, who took them out to the *Six Mile* where they stayed the night. M.P. records 'Uncle Jerry started away this evening with his packhorses. Kilfoyle and self decided to wait till morning and then catch up. JWD comes out in the evening and then goes in again with Barrett and Emery after supper'.¹⁸⁶ Cattie stayed on at the *Six Mile*, but Kilfoyle, M.P. with Mick Byrne and two boys left the next morning for Argyle and Rosewood. M.P. records that :

Kilfoyle and self went away after breakfast, had dinner at Goose Hill where we meet Uncle Jerry who is not too well. Packs up in the evening and go onto the Stables where we camp. Found the buggy left by Rentell - its alright - but he might have had the decency to come down and get it. A most unagreeable chap. Change in weather degrees cooler at night. Byrne and two boys come up to us in night. Their lagging behind was caused by one of their horses having been knocked up.¹⁸⁷

Here, Kilfoyle referred to Rosewood for the first time as 'Rosewood Downs'. He spent several days there with a side visit to Argyle to make up accounts, Tom Hayes joining them from Lissadell. By Easter, he had returned to the *Six Mile*, and they had the 'Easter Monday sports here.'¹⁸⁸

Returning to Darwin on 29 April, Kilfoyle wasted no time going down to Fountain Head and resuming the butchering business with Will Byrne. The main records of Kilfoyle's activities for much of 1893/94 involve his interest in the turf. The *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* reports his involvement in the *Goldfields Cup* held in Pine Creek in June, 1894:

Mr T Kilfoyle was the judge throughout the meeting his decisions were never questioned. Also the settling was a tame affair, but the

¹⁸⁶ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 26 March, 1892.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 27 March, 1892.

¹⁸⁸ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 18 April, 1892.

dinner before it was a credit to Host Schunke and his painstaking better half.¹⁸⁹

Kilfoyle had become well-known in racing circles of the Territory. He attended race meetings and entered horses in Port Darwin, and as far away as Katherine. He was in the chair for the Katherine River Turf Club, when a programme was drawn up for the 'Queen's Birthday' meeting to be held in 1893. This particular meeting is also recorded by William Linklater, who referred to Tom Pearce who at the time was secretary to the Turf club, and found fame later as 'Mine Host' in Mrs Aeneas Gunn's *We of the Never Never*. Linklater remembered:

At the end of the wet, the racecourse, three miles out of the settlement was always covered with grass five feet high. It was too green to burn so Tom sent out a blackboy to go round it for days with four horses pulling waggon tyres tied together. The ground was still damp, but firm and levelled off like this it made a fine course.¹⁹⁰

The following year, the Northern Territory Times and Gazette also recorded his involvement in racing in Palmerston and entering horses in the Palmerston Cup.¹⁹¹

Kilfoyle's absence at Fountain Head meant that the main responsibility for managing Rosewood rested with 'Galway Jerry' Durack, and it was he who dealt with the resistance of the local Aboriginal tribes to the permanent loss of their traditional lands. Once again, the evidence suggests that Kilfoyle tried to avoid direct participation in aggression against the Aborigines and it was left to 'Galway Jerry', who is known from other episodes to have been a much tougher

¹⁸⁹ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 22 June, 1894.

¹⁹⁰ Linklater, William and Tapp, Lynda, *O p.Cit.*, page 114

¹⁹¹ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 29 June, 1894.

proposition.¹⁹² Hostilities reached a climax in September, 1893 when in a battle on the Behn river not far from Rosewood, Constable Collins and thirteen Aborigines were killed. This incident led to reprisals, as well as a demand, rejected by Parliament, for the creation of a native force of troopers.¹⁹³ Although there is no direct evidence, it would not have been surprising if these events had caused the partners to decide that Kilfoyle was needed back at Rosewood. For his part, Kilfoyle, having received a decent income from the butchering business, may have decided that it was time to quit while he was ahead.

Kilfoyle's partnership in the butchery business with his brother-in-law Will Byrne was dissolved in November 1893. Byrne put the following notice in the local paper:

Having now purchased the Butchering Business previously carried on by "Byrne and Kilfoyle" at Fountain Head has much please in intimating that he is prepared to supply First class Healthy Beef at 3d. per lb. Prime Cuts and Corned Beef at 4d per lb.

It is not known whether the partnership ended amicably, although six years later in 1899, the Duracks were still waiting for a debt to be paid. In a letter written from Rosewood to J.W. Durack, Kilfoyle claimed:

In reference to money owned by Byrne and Kilfoyle, Fountain head. I sold out to W.J. Byrne and he received all outstanding debts and to pay all outstanding debts, so you will have to look to W.J. Byrne for it your money owning by Byrnes & Kilfoyle.¹⁹⁴

The Duracks then sent a letter accompanied by Kilfoyle's letter to Will Byrne at Brock Creek. Byrne wrote back four months later, first apologising for the delay

¹⁹² Green, Neville, *Op.Cit.*, pages 67 to 69.

¹⁹³ *Western Australia, Parliamentary Debates*, new series Volume 5, page 1050.

¹⁹⁴ Letter from *Thomas Kilfoyle to J.W. Durack*, 10 June, 1899.

and telling them that he had already spoken to his solicitor Mr Syme in Port Darwin:

All I can say is that Kilfoyle is not telling the truth. I have two letters to prove it. Kilfoyle is responsible for half the debt and also all debts contracted before he sold the business to me. When I bought the business we only had five head of cattle left. I gave him £250 for his share. I collected all the debts so that there was very little money on the books any good. We drew every shilling that was in the Bank... and now he has the common front to ask me to pay the lot. This is my reply to Kilfoyle's letter which you are at liberty to show him...¹⁹⁵

Byrne's letter also revealed that the business was worth £400. Byrne was to pay the £250 owing off with interest. Part of the debt was to be eliminated by Byrne paying the annual rent for Kilfoyle's pastoral leases. Eventually, Byrne paid out Kilfoyle for his interest in 1897, so he was understandably annoyed to learn of this unfinished business over five years after the dissolution of the partnership.

Kilfoyle had spent the previous three weeks (before the business was sold) in Palmerston with his wife, but he did not return for the birth of their child in December 1893. There is no mention of Catherine being pregnant in Kilfoyle's diary and no mention of the birth on 9 December or thereafter. Either his relationship with Catherine was troubled because of a disagreement with her brother Will or, more probably, the fifty one year old Irishman thought that pregnancy and giving birth were just 'women's business'.

He did however, return to Palmerston in January 1894 for christening of John Augustus Charles Kilfoyle. The first mention in the diary of his son is in May: 'went to Port Darwin, little Jack sick-very bad' and then two days later '....Jack all

¹⁹⁵ Letter from *William J Byrne to J.W. Durack*, 8 October, 1899.

well - very nearly'.¹⁹⁶

Cattie had settled into life at Palmerston. Her three sisters had moved to Port Darwin. They soon became active in the musical and dramatic society as well as all the other social activities of a small town. Tom Kilfoyle's visits to Palmerston coincided with the different productions. In *Weak Woman* produced early in the year Maggie Byrne was referred to in the local paper :

Miss M Byrne had a most difficult part to perform more particularly in her tender encounters with her lover... far more ability than might have been expected of one so unused to stage work.. Indeed for the ladies in a general sense it may be said they scored a bit triumph..... the song rendered by Miss M Byrne was so good that an encore had to be submitted...¹⁹⁷

Other productions they appeared in were 'A Musical Box Farce', 'Private Secretary', 'The Magistrate' and they often sang at the Literary and Debating Society'.¹⁹⁸

Kilfoyle left Fountain Head for the last time on the 28 August, 1894.

¹⁹⁶ Kilfoyle, *Diary*, 2, 4 May, 1894.

¹⁹⁷ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 5 January, 1894.

¹⁹⁸ Copy of Original Programme, *The Magistrate*, 25 May, 1895. In possession of G.F. Byrne.

Chapter 5

The Kilfoyle Family at Rosewood

After a visit to Port Darwin, the Kilfoyles sailed on 4 October in the *S S Red Gauntlett* for Wyndham. Cattie Kilfoyle and her son stayed at the *Six Mile* until 14 November when Kilfoyle returned to take his family to Rosewood. Alone at the homestead with a small child must have ^{been} difficult for Cattie, although in later years her son had said 'My mother hated the humidity and fever around the Douglas River near Fountain Head and in Palmerston and was pleased to return to Rosewood'.¹⁹⁹ Cattie and young Jack spent quite a lot time at Argyle in the first year that they returned to live on Rosewood, first at Christmas, then for the whole of February, and another week at the end of March. The Durack Irish hospitality was well known, and must have been appreciated by Kilfoyle and his wife. A portrait of the Duracks' homestead is described by Don Swann in his reminiscences:

The old people [Patsy and Mrs Durack] could not do enough for the caller. They had a nice vegetable garden and a comfortable homestead, built of mud bricks, with a thatched roof, the flooring being made of flat stones from the creek.....When leaving Argyle I always got a plentiful supply of new bread, and some cook beef and a pickle bottle of fresh butter (which was a great luxury).²⁰⁰

Although Patsy Durack's wife Mary died in January 1893, two of his daughters Mary and Birdie were living at Argyle in 1894 and 1895. They were a little younger than Cattie Kilfoyle, but in that isolated environment they would have been welcome company for each other.

¹⁹⁹ Kilfoyle, J.A.C., The writer remembers Jack Kilfoyle telling her about his mother at the Douglas River Camp.

²⁰⁰ Clement, Cathie, and Bridge, Peter, *Kimberley Scenes.*, page 101 and 115.

Cattie was not the only woman with a small child who was living in isolation on a station in the Kimberley area, in the mid 1890s. Jock Makin's reference in his book *The Big Run* to the wife of the manager of Victoria River Downs station known as 'Mrs Bob' who took her young baby to the Kimberleys in 1896, could also equally apply to Cattie Kilfoyle:

'Mrs Bob's' arrival on Victoria River Downs heralded a new age. She must have had the true pioneering spirit, going out into the 'never-never' alongside her husband. Hers was the courage needed to conquer the North, and this in a way, she did. The old days were over, and with them went the nineteenth century Australian conquistador.²⁰¹

Charlie Gaunt described Cattie as being a 'fitting helpmate to that fine old pioneer'.²⁰²

There is no official record as to when the partnership of Kilfoyle, 'Galway Jerry' Durack and Tom Hayes dissolved, but newspaper reports have dated it as around 1895, when 'Galway Jerry' took his share of the cattle and moved to the Dunham River, Tom Hayes briefly took up land near Goose Hill but later sold it to Connor Doherty and Durack.²⁰³ Mary Durack implies that 'Galway Jerry's' family came to believe that their father had been 'shabbily treated' by Tom Hayes and Tom Kilfoyle, but gives no grounds for this belief, and there is no supporting evidence. Galway Jerry's new property at Dunham river was so inferior in its carrying capacity to Rosewood that he must have regretted the move, and this may have coloured the family's later impressions.²⁰⁴

That the partners were now able each to afford an independent property was

²⁰¹ Makin, Jock, *The Big Run.*, page 105.

²² *The Northern Standard*, 22 January, 1932.

²³ *The Wyndham Gazette*, 19 July, 1930.

²⁰⁴ Durack, Mary, *Sons in the Saddle*, page 127.

probably a response to improvements in the marketing of East Kimberley cattle. From 1890 the marketing of West Kimberley cattle had been taken in hand by Alexander Forrest with Isadore Emanuel as his local partner. In 1894, Francis Connor and Denis Doherty, the leading storekeepers in Wyndham, decided to enter into competition and began despatching mobs of East Kimberley livestock to Fremantle to take advantage of the very rapidly growing demand for beef on the Eastern goldfields.

In March 1895, Kilfoyle mentions for the first time a cattle market in Perth; 'reached out to Cattle Creek to muster for Perth'.²⁶⁶ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* dated 31 May, 1895, recorded the marketing of the Kimberley cattle to Fremantle:

The *S S Tagliferro* last season took 2200 head of cattle from Wyndham to Fremantle and lost 30 head only, 16 dying on the first trip when the fittings were hardly complete. This export is not bolstered up with a subsidy like our own, and strange to say the contractor who supplies the ship pays the pastoralist about twice the money for his cattle that the Territory squatters get for theirs from the subsidised exporter. Looks like a screw loose somewhere.²⁶⁶

This information was probably given to the editor, George Mayhew, by Kilfoyle, when he and Cattie returned to Port Darwin for Mayhew's marriage to Cattie's sister Maryanne. The wedding ceremony was performed by the Rev. D Mackillop SJ on 10 June 1895.²⁶⁷ Mayhew was a long time resident of Palmerston, and over the next few years, regular reports on the whereabouts of

²⁶⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 6 March, 1895.

²⁶⁶ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 31 May, 1895.

²⁶⁷ Father D MacKillop was the Superior of the Austrian Jesuit Mission to the Aborigines in the Northern Territory between 1882-1899. Father MacKillop was also the brother of Mother Mary MacKillop. *Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography*, Volume One: to 1945. NTU Press 1990. page 194.

the Kilfoyles and their relations appeared in the local paper.

Kilfoyle had scarcely taken over the sole ownership of Rosewood when unexpected disaster struck. The East Kimberley herds became infected with red water fever, resulting from the spread of cattle tick from the Northern Territory. Quarantine regulations were put in place by the Western Australian government which limited the export of East Kimberley cattle to the south of Western Australia. The Ord River pastoralists believed that these restrictions were imposed to benefit their competitors in the West Kimberley district and their powerful patron Alexander Forrest. Curiously one of the Ord River pastoralists' strongest spokesmen was J.J. Holmes, when he was elected to the Legislature Assembly in 1897. Holmes and his brother had established the leading retail butchering business in the Perth metropolitan area with support from Alexander Forrest, but despite this connection Holmes took up the cause of the East Kimberley cattlemen, and after some spirited agitation in Parliament, the regulations were eased. Holmes had threatened to import chilled beef from Queensland.²⁰⁸ Some years later he was to become Kilfoyle's partner in Rosewood.

In 1896, Patsy Durack was persuaded by his family to return to Ireland for a visit. During his holiday, Patsy made contact with Tom Kilfoyle's sister Kitty Carolan who had remained in Ireland. She had not heard from her brother since he left Ireland. Patsy Durack told her all about Tom, his wife and his son. Mrs. Carolan, wrote to the Kilfoyles in late 1896:

It causes me feelings of inexpressible joy to get your address from P Durack Esq, and also to learn from him that you getting along so well to get such a nice respectable companion. Mr. Durack is never done talking of her and he says you have a very nice little

²⁰⁸ Bolton, G.C., *Alexander Forrest.*, page 157.

boy.....he is telling us all about the country and how ye live we were surprised to learn that it took such a long time of ye to go out there with al your cattle he told us the wheel of his waggon broke down going out there and that you made a new one and he has it at his place yet..... he never speaks of poor Johny Durack but he cries we were all very sorrow to he [hear] [him] to be killed for he was so good and dutiful to his mother.... he give a great character of Long Michael as he calls him he says he is very well to do.

The letter finishes with: 'Dear sister, I expect if Thomas dont answer this letter I hope you will take an interest of doing so as Mr. Durack said you are as good natured woman as he ever spoke a word to ...'.²⁰⁹ The letter then had a postscript 'Dear Sister, I'm sending this little meddle [medal] to the little boy and be sure to keep it around him, it was blessed ^{by} the Holy Father'.

In April 1897, Kilfoyle records 'Jacko's eye sore'. Two days later, 'left for the Gulf - reached to *four mile creek*' and the following day 'reached Goose Hill - days warm - Jack's eye sore'.²¹⁰ Jack's eye had been bitten by fly and become infected. Leaving Cattie and Jack in Wyndham, he made a quick trip home and returned to the Gulf with horses to sell. While in Wyndham, Maggie and Johannah Byrne with their sister Maryann Mayhew arrived from Port Darwin.²¹¹ They all returned to Rosewood where they stayed until August. During this time while the Byrne girls were in residence, Kilfoyle took the opportunity to travel with M.P. Durack up the Baines River. After returning to Rosewood he started mustering and records on 6 August 'branded 31 calves'. Jack's eye did not improve and finally Kilfoyle took all the women and Jack back to Wyndham. He records on 21 August, 'boat started away with Jack, Cattie and Jo - and me to the *Three Mile*'.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Letter from Kitty Carolan to Thomas and Catherine Kilfoyle, 17 November, 1896.

²¹⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*,

²¹¹ Port Darwin Shipping List 17 May, 1897.

²¹² Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, April to August, 1897.

Cattie and her sister Johannah sailed for Melbourne with Jack who at that time was nearly four years old. Jack's eye was so badly damaged that he lost the sight in his left eye. While in Melbourne, Jack had his eye removed and from then had a glass eye. Maggie Byrne and her sister Maryann Mayhew stayed on in Wyndham for another two months and Kilfoyle records on 4 November 'The *Cygnets* left for PD (Port Darwin) with Mrs Mayhew on board' and two days later also records 'The *S S Albany* left for Fremantle with Maggie'.²¹³ The rest of 1897 was spent on the station with a visit to Argyle for Christmas. He records in his diary on 31 December, 'that ends the year 1897 - so far so good'.



7. Cattie Kilfoyle, Jack Kilfoyle and Johannah Byrne (photo taken Melbourne 1897).

²¹³ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 6 November, 1897.

Cattie and Jack did not return to the Kimberley until the following year. Kilfoyle records in his diary at the end of March 'fixing the house all day - dirty work'.²¹⁴ Kilfoyle expressed his disappointment in April 1898 when he went into Wyndham to meet the boat 'got into Wyndham - boat in last night - no Jack or Cattie'.²¹⁵ . Returning to Rosewood, he began mustering and getting horses ready for the races to be held in June in Wyndham.

Kilfoyle left for Wyndham at the end of May, trained the horses on the Ord as in previous years, and arrived for the races which commenced on 11 June. He records on Sunday 19 June, that the 'S S Albany came in. Cattie and Jack home - came in laite [late] in the evening.' The financial hardship suffered by Kilfoyle, with his wife, son and her sister being away from Rosewood for nearly nine months and seeking medical help in Melbourne is recorded in the same letter written by his brother in law Will Byrne to J.W. Durack in 1899 in regard to the debt left in the 'Territory':

After his wife and child came back from Melbourne, he was hard up for money. I then to oblige him paid him up in cash, instead of paying £50 every year, at the same time paying the interest - when I might have payed [paid] you.²¹⁶

Even though money matters were in dispute with the Duracks, they still continued to visit on a regular basis. In October 1898, M.P. Durack visited Kilfoyle at Rosewood to discuss Connor Doherty and Durack handling his cattle for the coming year. Kilfoyle had fluctuated between Forrest Emanuel and Connor Doherty Durack. The competition between the two companies was keen and resulted in producing reasonable prices for cattle. During this visit, M.P.

²¹⁴ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 31 March, 1898.

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, 25 April, 1898.

²¹⁶ *Letter from W.J. Byrne to J.W. Durack.*, dated 8 October, 1899.

records the Kilfoyles' relationship with their only child Jack: 'Their lives are wrapped up in the boy. He commands them at will.'²¹⁷



8. Jack Kilfoyle with Aboriginal playmates, c.1898.

The Kilfoyles spent Christmas at Rosewood in 1898 and Kilfoyle records early in January 1899 'some rain and like more - plenty of grass and water all round'.²¹⁸ The rain continued for the next couple of weeks with Kilfoyle recording 'good rain last night - creek up - good floods'.²¹⁹ In September that year, the Mayhews arrived from Port Darwin to stay on Rosewood, although Kilfoyle only mentioned their visit at the end of November, he records on 5 December taking Mayhew back to Wyndham. He put him on a boat to Port

²¹⁷ Durack, M.P., *Sons in the Saddle*, page 41.
²¹⁸ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 2 January, 1899.
²¹⁹ *ibid.*, 12 January, 1899.

Darwin, but two months later Mayhew writes an editorial under the heading 'Notes on a Visit to Wyndham, Western Australia'. This article gives a valuable insight into life on Rosewood:

The station is personally managed by its owner, and the only defect seems to be there is not nearly enough stock for the capacity of the lease. Mr. Kilfoyle nevertheless has a few thousand head of cattle, from which he obtains a satisfactory increase, and from which also he every year raises a profitable shipment, receiving \$5.5.0 a head on the run, less a small amount for cash payments. His horses, too, can always be depended on for a stout, healthy constitution.²⁰

Mayhew then went on to make a comment regarding the Aborigines on Rosewood:

It has not always been 'beer and skittles' at Rosewood.. When Mr Kilfoyle first settled in the West with Messrs J. Durack and T. Hayes as partners, the district was about the wildest corner of Australia. In addition to the ordinary exigencies of settling stock on new country, there was constant friction with the blacks, and police being an unknown quantity, the settlers had to exercise their own discretion in defending themselves. The country round the the homestead was some protection to the station people, being open downs with low grassy untimbered rises here and there whereon the natives could obtain no shelter; but out back on the run they were a perfect pest among the cattle. Nowadays they are scarcely heard of, being satisfied, I presume that indiscriminate slaughter carries a rather fearsome penalty.....The many weeks I was on Rosewood I never saw a solitary native except those employed on the station. And let me say right here that far and away the best 'boys' in the district are Northern Territory aboriginals....²¹

With his finances improving, Kilfoyle took Cattie and Jack to Perth for a holiday in April 1900. Travelling in the *S S Bullarra*, the voyage took two weeks. While in Perth, Kilfoyle continually refers to the 'nice weather' or 'beautiful day nice and warm'. He also remarks 'Perth and Fremantle have changed'. Kilfoyle

²⁰ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 2 February, 1900.

²¹ *ibid.*,

had not been in Perth since 1882. The Kilfoyles spent their time in Perth attending the races on Saturdays, Mass on Sundays followed on one Sunday by a visit to the Zoo. Another Sunday, Kilfoyle records 'went ...with A [Alexander] Forrest to see his horses'²²² Kilfoyle records visiting friends 'went out to Mr. Givsons house for dinner - a nice day's outing' came back late at night and went to bed - nice and cool'.²²³ M.J. Durack must have sent a colt down on a later boat as Kilfoyle records on 8 May, 'went to Fremantle today to get M, J's [Durack] colt off the boat - fine colt [colt] looked well and nice'. Spending the last few days fixing up his business and travelling back and forth between Perth and Fremantle, the Kilfoyles left for the Kimberley on the 27 April when he records 'on our way for home in the *S S Kolya* nice weather'.

Waiting in Wyndham for a few days for a new buggy to arrive on the *S S Bullarra*, Kilfoyle settled his wife into the *Six Mile*, and then continued back to the station. The day after he arrived, M.P. arrived from Argyle for the news from Perth. Together they travelled back to Wyndham for the races on 26 and 27 June. After making two trips over to the market garden in Wyndham, Kilfoyle records 'getting ready for home - got things from garden - ready for home - looks like rain.' Cattie and Jack also returned to Rosewood and the next six months were spent mustering, branding and getting horses ready to go to Wyndham for sending south for sale. In September M.J. Durack visited Rosewood on his way to Wyndham to sail to Perth. Kilfoyle followed M.J. into Wyndham and saw him sail on the *S S Calypso* on 22 September. While in Wyndham, Kilfoyle becomes bad with the 'fever'. Finally he left on 25 September for home. In October he records that 'John Butler started at the well weather warm', and he

²²² Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 7 May, 1900.

²²³ *ibid.*, 30 April, 1900.

is, 'at home all day day doing saddles.' ²²⁴ He then returned to Wyndham with the team to collect supplies for the wet season.²²⁵

The Kilfoyles spent Christmas Day 1900 at Rosewood, but travelled to Argyle for New Year's Eve. M.P. Durack records 'Mr. & Mrs Kilfoyle arrived from Rosewood' and then the following day :

So the old year 1900 has passed over and still finds us Durack Bros resident in the Kimberleys. Whittaker and Alec Campbell arrive looking rather seedy. Reports Lincoln wants fresh horses - cant get along. Heavy rain. Ambrose finds fence across river washed away. Whittaker returns from delivery horses 8 pm And we celebrate New year and the Commonwealth of a United Australia.²²⁶

The Kilfoyles returned to Rosewood on 3 January with M.P. recording 'Kilfoyle, wife and young Jack start up for Rosewood'....²²⁷ It is possible that Kilfoyle took Jack into Wyndham early in January to send him by ship to Perth for school. Kilfoyle records on 7 January: 'getting ready to go to Wyndham for Cattie'.²²⁸ He stayed in Wyndham and on 19 January states 'waiting for telegram'. This supports Jack's statement that he left the station in 1901 when he was eight years old.²²⁹

Kilfoyle returned to Rosewood briefly. He commenced mustering and organised 'Pumpkin to take 27 young bulls to Argyle'.²³⁰ He employed Jim Durack to keep an eye on the station, went back to Wyndham and he and Cattie then left by

²²⁴ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 16 October, 1900.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, 21 November, 1900.

²²⁶ Durack, M .P., *Diary*, 1 January, 1901.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, 3 January, 1901.

²²⁸ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 7 January, 1901.

²²⁹ *Letter from J.A.C. Kilfoyle to Mr. & Mrs. Carolan* in Ireland 10 April 1956.

²³⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *ibid.* , 6 February, 1901.

boat on 21 February for Fremantle. The boat called at all ports on route and arrived at Fremantle on 13 March, 1901. Although no mention is given in Kilfoyle's diary, upon arrival in Fremantle, he would have heard that his ex partner 'Galway Jerry' Durack had been fatally shot while sleeping at the Dunham station on 24 February. J.W. Durack sent a telegram from Wyndham to Frank Connor at Connor Doherty and Durack and asked him to tell Mrs Jerry Durack, who was on holidays with her younger children in Perth, of the tragedy. The telegram was published in the paper:

'Patsy' [Jerry's son] arrived from Dunham last night, seven. Reports father shot dead through forehead about 3 yesterday morning, while asleep. Patsy was shot at the same time; bullet grazed skull, came out over eyebrow. They were both asleep, verandah, on bunks., not three feet apart and were alone.Patsy has no recollection of the shots....strikes match, sees his father shot through head, on his bed, last gasps, saturated blood. Patsy looked around house could not see anyone.²³¹

The story continued that Patsy, then walked about two miles, caught a horse and rode barebacked into Wyndham seventy miles away for help.

Four days after his arrival in Perth, Kilfoyle wrote in his diary 'getting ready to go to Sydney' and 'around to the shipping company no room on board'. Finally on the 20th, 'went and got my ticket for Sydney by the French boat'. The 'French boat' referred to in his diary was the '*Ville de la Ciotat FMS*', a 6531 ton boat from Marseilles.²³² Setting sail from Fremantle the boat arrived in Melbourne

²³¹ *The Western Mail*, 2 March, 1901. Two station Aborigines were arrested and taken to Perth for Trial. Both were acquitted. Galway Jerry's son J.P. Durack wrote later: 'When they [Aborigines] were on trial down here I ran along the river bank from the C.B.C. College to the Court and ran up to Banjo and said to him "Oh Banjo why did you shoot the Boss". The tears rolled down his eyes and he said "Oh Jack devil devil been jump up". By this he meant to say he was just overcome by the desire to kill my father and he couldn't help it. Both boys afterwards became trackers for the police and did good work'. *Recollections by Early Days in East Kimberley*, by J.P. Durack

²³² *The West Australian*, 21 March 1901, page 4.

on 28 March, he records 'in Melbourne all day had a look round the seales[sales]'. He bought a horse and the following day on Saturday, 'went to the reaces [races] - the reaces not mutch [much]'. He records the weather on 1 April as being very nice and warm.

Leaving Melbourne by train for Sydney on 2 April from the Spencer Street Station at 4.55 pm,²³³ Kilfoyle records that he 'got to Sydney at night, all day in the train'. Kilfoyle's first day in Sydney was spent at the 'Easter Royal Agricultural Society's Show' looking at horses that were for sale. The Show was described as a record exhibition:

The Royal Agricultural Show inaugurated the great Easter Show at Moore Park....The total number of prize list this year is £3400, a sum which enabled the Council to offer liberal prizes in the numerous competitive classes'.....²³⁴

The following day, Kilfoyle again went to the 'Show' for the horse sale, 'good many was sold'. Horses from as far away as Victoria were up for sale.

The attraction of the 'Sydney Mail' Plate of 1900 brought about the largest show of thoroughbred horses that has yet been witnessed at Moore Park.²³⁵

Over Easter, on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday, Kilfoyle attended the 'Autumn Meetings' at Randwick. Each day he recorded 'went to the reaces - seen some good horses'. The Sydney Morning Herald reported each meeting::

The first act in the great equine drama of the autumn will be played out to-day at Randwick under the management of the Australia Jockey Club, and, judging from the star performers engaged in the different events on the card, first-class sport is

²³³ *The Age*, 2 April, 1901

²³⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April, 1901

²³⁵ *ibid.*, 4 April, 1901, page 3.

almost assured. There is a strong inter-State flavour about the contests, inasmuch as Victoria is represented by a very strong team.²³⁶

On Easter Tuesday he again went to Randwick, but this time it is for the thoroughbred yearlings annual sales. Kilfoyle states in his diary 'went to Chismons to the Horse Sale'. *The Sydney Morning Herald* records the sale as 'Sensational prices obtained' and then goes on to say:

The annual sales of thorough bread yearlings commenced yesterday, when Messrs. H Chisholm and Co. at their yards, [at] Randwick, submitted a lengthy catalogue of youngsters. The attendance was very large, and the prices obtained were beyond general expectation.²³⁷

The prices varied, one filly sold for '850 guineas'. Kilfoyle is recorded in the newspaper as paying '26 guineas' for a 'Br c, by Prince Chester - Dainty, by Rumley(imp).' ²³⁸ Kilfoyle then records over the next few days going back to the 'Show' and on two consecutive days buying on each day 3 bulls.²³⁹ On 12 April he records buying another colt. The Agricultural Show appears to have been an outstanding success with 'two record attendance returns of 50,000 and 65,000 respectively demonstrating that the Agricultural Show is itself and in its own resources to command popular favour'.²⁴⁰

Kilfoyle then set about looking for a boat to take the stock back to Western Australia, but to no avail. On 16 April, he recorded 'looking for boat - cant get any to take stock'. Finally, on 17 April, he and the stock went by train to Melbourne, where he spent his time trying to get a boat for the cattle and horses

²³⁶ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 April, 1901, page 10.

²³⁷ *ibid.*, 10 April, 1901, page 11

²³⁸ *ibid.*, 10 April, 1901, page 11

²³⁹ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary.*, 10,11 April, 1901.

²⁴⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April, 1901.

and going to the races. While in Melbourne he made the observation on 30 April 'great preparing for the royal visit - Melbourne all aglow [aglow] with flags and bunting'. The opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament by the Duke of York (later King George V.) was scheduled for 9 May, but Kilfoyle had already lost too much time to linger for the festivities.

On 8 May, the cattle and horses left for Fremantle on board the *Eagermont*. Unable to get a passage from Melbourne to Perth, Kilfoyle travelled by train to Adelaide and left the following day on the *Rome* for Fremantle. He describes the journey across as 'ruff [rough] and really cold'.²⁴¹ The *Rome* arrived on Fremantle on 14 May. The *Eagermont* did not arrive until a few days later and on 26 May, the cattle were boarded on the *S S Kolya*. The boat called at Geraldton for the day, then Broome where Kilfoyle records 'leave bulls at Broome for Forest and Emanuel. Weather getting warm'.²⁴² Kilfoyle returned straight to Rosewood and commenced branding and mustering cattle. In July he went back into Wyndham and on 1 August records 'In Wyndham getting ready for home with bulls'. He took the bulls out to the *Six Mile*, but records that one is sick with a fever. The two bulls made it to the *Twelve Mile*, then one of them died from fever.

With help of Jim Durack, he started mustering the 'fats' for a boat that would be leaving Wyndham on the 17 September. On 8 September, they travelled with the cattle as far as the Lagoon where they waited for the 'Lissadell' cattle and on 11 September, met up with the Argyle drovers at Granite Creek. After arriving in Wyndham on the 17th they yarded all the cattle for the boat which left the following day for Fremantle.

²⁴¹ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 12 May, 1901.

²⁴² *ibid.*, 31 May, 1901.

October 1901 was spent going after draft horses and then breaking in the horses and making hobbles for the drafts to go to Wyndham. Leaving Wyndham on the 17 December, the Kilfoyles sailed for Fremantle on the *S S Bullarra*. Kilfoyle records 'weather nice'. The boat arrived in Fremantle on the night of 23 December: 'stayed on board and got off today- weather very nice and cool and went out to Micks'. Tom, Cattie and Jack spent Christmas with Cattie's brother Mick Byrne. By 1896, Mick Byrne had left the Kimberleys and managed 'Moher and Smith' butcher shops in Coolgardie and then Menzies north of Kalgoorlie. While in Menzies at the end of 1898, Mick Byrne married Blanch Elkington, a petite English woman who was the matron of the Menzies hospital. Blanche Byrne lost her first child in 1899, and when pregnant again insisted that they leave the goldfields. They bought a property on the Serpentine river 30 miles from Perth.

It is likely that Maggie, Johannah and Molly Mayhew would have also been at Serpentine for Christmas Day. Kilfoyle records in his diary on Christmas Day 'out at Mick Byrnes - lovely Christmas - cool and nice'. It is interesting to note in the diary that 'lovely Christmas' is crossed out and in another handwriting (presumably Cattie's) 'lie' is written. The comment suggests discontentment by Cattie with Tom's activities. Obviously there must have been some tension between himself and Cattie as he left Cattie and Jack out at Serpentine. Kilfoyle probably wasn't prepared to stay out with all his in-laws for more than Christmas Day and was wanting to get to the races on Boxing day. He stayed in town, and attended the races over the following couple of days. On Saturday the 28th, he records 'going to the reaces[races] and to the Play afterwards' Cattie again adds 'took your friends'. It would seem that Cattie was outraged with Tom's galavanting about town, and felt neglected as she was staying out at

Serpentine.

Kilfoyle had obviously had a good day at the 'Perth Cup' which was held on 28 December that year. 'Australian' won the Cup with *Limber* 2nd and *Sport Royal* 3rd. The play to which he refers was a military drama called *To Arms*. The play is recorded as being 'one of the sensational! efforts in which he dived and swum for life by Mr. Alfred Woods.'²⁴³

On the 30th Kilfoyle records once again going to the races and to the Play afterwards - again Cattie writes above 'enjoyed youself'. He records the end of the year as 'was in Fremantle [Fremantle] and back to Perth again - days lovely and cool the last of the old year 1901'.

On New Year's Day, 'went to the reaces to the Perth coarse [course]', and on 3 January to Fremantle to stay, 'in Fremantle[Fremantle] all day waiting for Cattie to come in' Cattie writes above 'sorry she came'. Tom and Cattie appear to have patched up their differences as on the 4th, he went to Byrnes' place at Serpentine and back again to Perth.

At this point Cattie decided she would not be separated from her only child and announced she would not be returning to the station. Kilfoyle set about looking for a house to rent. On 8 January, he records 'lookin [looking] for hous [house] to go into, they are hard to procure' and 'cant get one to suite'. On 10 'got house at last - to go into on Monday'. Kilfoyle then spent the next three weeks, being the dutiful husband helping to put the new house in order 'getting things together - got them allwright [alright].' He attended Mass every Sunday and then spent the day at the museum.

²⁴³ *The West Australian*, 24 December, 1901, page 9.

To an ageing man there would be an increasing conflict between his love of the outback and his family responsibilities, with the growing realisation of the comforts and amenities available in the fast-growing city of Perth. In the end, he never abandoned Rosewood, despite lengthy periods of separation from his wife and son. Perhaps he hoped to keep going until Jack was old enough to take over. Unlike the Duracks who were spending their money in overseas travel, he was putting his capital back into Rosewood and its improvements.²⁴⁴ The quest for capital would shortly prompt him to give up some of his hard won independence and to find himself a partner.



9. *Thomas Kilfoyle, c.1900.*

²⁴⁴ Durack, Mary, *Sons in the Saddle*, Chapters 18 and 21.

Chapter 6

Prosperous Years

In 1902, Kilfoyle was in his sixieth year. During early February he sold a half share in Rosewood to John Joseph Holmes and his brother Robert Hardy Holmes.²⁴⁵ As previously stated the Holmes brothers were in the butchery business and involved with Forrest Emanuel. It is possible that they thought that it would prudent to have an interest in a station. When Alexander Forrest had died in 1901 their association with Forrest Emanuel changed. Emanuel had gone into partnership with Sidney Kidman to purchase the great Victoria River Downs Station to the south east of Rosewood, and the Holmes brothers probably thought that they needed to establish themselves independently in the same region.²⁴⁶

In May, Kilfoyle travelled into Wyndham for the races, where he obviously had a good time: 'weather grand for travelling'. He once more got the 'fats' together and returned with them to Wyndham for loading and records on 15 June, 'reached Goos [Goose] Hill. Sold fats to Forest and Emanuel'.

One of Kilfoyle's new partners, J.J. Holmes visited the property for the first time in July 1902. Whether it was because he was in partnership or was just becoming more efficient, Kilfoyle began to keep records. His diary notes the following number of cattle that were mustered just as J.J. Holmes left.

Rosewood mustered the following number of cattle:

²⁴⁵ *Original Pastoral Leases No 2120 and 1910.*, in possession of G.F. Byrne.

²⁴⁶ Bolton, G.C., *Alexander Forrest.*, page 185. [Alexander Forrest died on 20 June, 1901.]

7 July:	branded 27 head
20 July:	branded 59 head at Bell Creek.
22 July:	branded 90 head at Cattle Creek.
24 July:	branded 76 head
30 July:	branded 114 head
5 August:	branded 114 head
6 August:	branded 63 head
21 August:	branded 123 head
28 August:	branded 145 head
3 September:	branded 211 calves ²⁴⁷

As the wet season was about to set in and the mustering had been completed Kilfoyle records on 31 October 'started to the Behn to get the coarse [course] ready.' He was referring to the Behn River Races which were to be held on Rosewood for the next thirty years. Unfortunately on this occasion he was struck with the fever and was laid low for over two weeks.²⁴⁸

Probably feeling lonely, he decided to return to Fremantle to visit Cattie and Jack. He arrived in Fremantle on the 15 December. While Kilfoyle was in Perth, M.P. Durack visited Rosewood and commented: 'lonely deserted and tumbling down, no one there but a Chinaman, boy, a couple of gins and pics.'²⁴⁹

Kilfoyle stayed in Perth until 18 March. During that time he followed the same pattern as in previous years, going to Mass, visiting, going to the races to the Perth Cup and taking Jack to the Zoo. The weather received constant comment. On 16 January 'In Perth all day - getting warm again for another scorcher time'. On the 10 February 'by jove it was a real scorcher - no rain'. On 5 March he was

²⁴⁷ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.

²⁴⁸ *ibid*,

²⁴⁹ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 7 January, 1903.

starting to prepare to go home, but before leaving he took Cattie and Jack on an outing: 'went down the river in the river boat.'²⁵⁰

The rest of 1903 was spent with infrequent trips to Wyndham to load 'fats'. It was a good season, and in most East Kimberley properties the numbers of cattle were starting to build up. Cattle numbers had increased from an estimated 58,528 in 1896 to 112,552 in 1900, and prices were holding. On 23 December, Kilfoyle went to Argyle, but didn't stay for Christmas, he returned the next day, recording 'came back home from Argyle. Brought a pig with me'. Christmas day was spent 'free at home all day fine and dry - a good day today'.

By the beginning of 1904, it would appear that Kilfoyle's financial position had improved, to the extent that he began to think about building another house on the station: 'getting ready to build again and the men getting rafters'.²⁵¹ Cattie was obviously happy about this, and wrote to Kilfoyle's relatives in County Clare. Julia Brody from Ireland wrote back:

...Indeed Poor Uncle should have a lonely time while you and little Jack were away from home so long while he was building the new house. Indeed I am sure it must be a splendid one.²⁵²

Probably because the house had been built, Cattie and her sister Maggie spent some of that year at Rosewood. During that year the Kilfoyles also had a letter from Ireland saying Tom's sister Kitty had passed away. Kilfoyle immediately sent off £10 to the deceased's daughter Julia Brody who then continued to write to the Kilfoyles over the next eight years. In her letter of thanks for the £10,

²⁵⁰ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 8 March, 1903.

²⁵¹ *ibid*,

²⁵² *Letter from Julia Brody to Catherine Kilfoyle*, September, 1904.

Julia Brody expressed her gratitude:

Dear Uncle I cannot find words strong enough to express my thanks to you and my loving aunt for doing such a good turn on me after my poor mother's death. Not one single person or friend that heard of your action but applauded you for it...²⁵³

In 1904, the pattern of Kilfoyle's diary changed. He obviously had more help and instead of taking the cattle into Wyndham, he writes about the teams getting ready to take the 'fats' into Wyndham. He did not accompany the cattle, a journey of about ten days - rather he left later and arrived in Wyndham before the cattle. He was then able to supervise the loading of the cattle and records 'went into town to square up with chaps all around.'²⁵⁴

Changes were beginning to occur in the Kimberleys. P.B. Durack, who had come overland with the cattle, had decided to leave the Kimberley: M.P. Durack records in his diary: 'Pat taking his things and old associations of so many years one feels sad.'²⁵⁵

For the first time in his diary, Kilfoyle actually uses the word 'Xmas'. On 24 December 'went to get some ducks for Xmas - one got one teal, and on the 25th he records 'Xmas day - A.C. Campbell came hear [here] settled up with Grantham.'²⁵⁶ He leaves for Wyndham on the 26th and stayed at the *Six Mile*. He refers to the *S S Bullarra* leaving on the 14 January 'good many passengers on board' and then makes the comment 'sorry I cant go by Bullarra'.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Letter from Julia Brody to Thomas and Catherine Kilfoyle, 30 June, 1904.

²⁵⁴ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*,

¹ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 29 August, 1904.

²⁵⁶ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 24,25 December, 1904.

²⁵⁷ Kilfoyle, Thomas, *Diary*, 14 January 1905.

While staying in a hotel at Wyndham in early January, Kilfoyle's cheques were stolen from the hotel safe. M.P. who was in Wyndham at that time with young Patsy Durack from Dunham station records the incident:

Toomy fined on charge of stealing \$170 from Wyndham hotel safe. Mrs Toomy tells me Don is innocent charge 'although Don is not much to me I don't see why he should suffer to screen another man. - another party not named is guilty in that she intimated to me A Watt - threatened exposure.²⁵⁸

Kilfoyle went back to Rosewood briefly, but returned on 22 February for court proceeding: 'went in again to town for the tryal [trial] as witness for the Crowne [Crown]: '..... the prisoner was let go free'.

The drought year of 1905 and the good season of 1906 were uneventful. Cattie Kilfoyle and her sister Maggie returned to live on Rosewood in 1907. Cattie was concerned about her husband's health and it would appear that Jack, now nearly fourteen, would have been more interested in being with his friends and playing sport than spending time with his mother and aunt. While on Rosewood they entertained J.J. Holmes. They also agreed to take on some of the cooking for £2 a week. The year was saddened by the death of Kilfoyle's nephew Jim Durack. George Mayhew, Cattie's brother in law, also died in Darwin.²⁵⁹

In November 1907, Cattie Kilfoyle began to keep a diary on Rosewood. It would appear that Kilfoyle's health was beginning to fail. In his later years, he suffered badly from rheumatism, no doubt the result of many years of sleeping out. On 23 November, Cattie records that Kilfoyle left Rosewood with '..Mrs Deacon and Mr Patterson for Wyndham'. Kilfoyle travelled to Perth where he

²⁵⁸ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 4, 5 January, 1905.

²⁵⁹ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 14 April, 1907.

met J.J. Holmes and M.P. Durack who mentions in his diary 'met with Kilfoyle and discussed business - prospects coming season and trade.'²⁶⁰ Kilfoyle then travelled with Robert Holmes to the hot springs in New Zealand searching for a cure for the rheumatism. Cattie obviously worried about his health, wrote and told Tom's relatives in Ireland about his failing health and his journey to New Zealand to seek a cure. Sometime later a letter was received back from Ireland offering an alternative:

I was sorry for poor uncles illness. I hope he is better by this time. I wish it was home to Ireland he came instead of going visiting there. [New Zealand]. I would wish if he was here and I would take him to Lisdoonvarna to the spaw [spa] its our place of resort for the summer season, it is curing the whole of people, they comes there from all the county's. I was there this summer and it did me great good, I also had little Josie with me it made her very strong.²⁶¹

Julia Brody also asked Cattie to give her uncle the news of Ireland that: 'All the Land Lords are selling out their properties, and in a few years the lands of Ireland will be free.'²⁶²

While he was away, Cattie religiously recorded the day to day events in running of the station. On 17 December she records 'Nipper and Pluto went to the Top Hole. Jim Darcy settling the spiriting - Butler and Woodhouse at the creek. Jo McSherry came from Whittakers'. Christmas Day was recorded as 'very cool - settled up with Skinner' and New Years Eve 'all by ourselves, stopped up last night to see the New Year.'²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 19 December, 1907.

²⁶¹ Letter from *Julia Brody to Cattie Kilfoyle*, dated 11 November, 1908.(this letter was received after Kilfoyle had died on 8 October, 1908).

²⁶² *ibid.*, 11 November, 1908.

²⁶³ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 30 December, 1907, 1 January, 1908.

Although Cattie devoted only a line to each day, her diary is very similar to some of the accounts related by Mrs Aeneas Gunn in *We of the Never Never*. Despite spending only one year on *The Eisey*, Mrs Gunn recorded a useful intimate account of day to day life on the station. She wrote of the resentment shown to her at first by employees on the station, and how she had to work at earning their respect. She recorded the male attitude to women in a 'man's country'. On one occasion a passerby comes to the station for help for his mate who is struck down sick:

If you please, ma'am. If the boss'll excuse me, me mate's set against a woman doing things for him... he'd rather have me; and then there came that deep word of praise from stricken comrade. 'a good mate's harder to find than a good wife.'²⁶⁴

Cattie, had a similar experience: 'traveller sick at creek - went to see him.'²⁶⁵ The Chinese cook took ill and each day Cattie recorded: 'cook very bad', a fortnight later, 'cook still alive' and then 'Jim Darcy waiting to bury the cook' finally five days later she recorded: 'Cook dead, Nipper went for police' and then the next day 'men digging a grave, buried the cook this morning waiting for police to come. Nipper came back. Police did not come'.²⁶⁶ Cattie and her sister filled in their day, varnishing chairs, looking for snakes, entertaining Kilfoyle's friends as they pass through on their way to Lissadell and Ord River stations. Another time she records 'Maggie and I went to the low down water hole - a good day's fun.'²⁶⁷ Probably accompanied by some of the Aboriginal women they would have gone swimming in the water hole.

²⁶⁴ Gunn, Mrs Aeneas, *We of the Never Never*, page 147.

²⁶⁵ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 5 July, 1908.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 12 to 27 March, 1908.

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 26 January, 1908.

At the end of April, Cattie is 'waiting for Tom' and finally on 30 April, he returns to Rosewood. Cattie's concern for him is reflected in the diaries, when he goes into Wyndham 'Tom getting ready for Wyndham' and when he left she records 'miserable all day.'²⁶⁸

It was an especially trying time for a woman to be in charge of a station as there was unrest in the East Kimberley region. A Queensland-born Aboriginal from Texas Downs south of Rosewood, Major, was on a rampage with an outlaw gang whom many pastoralists feared would become a focus for hostilities.

M.P. Durack recorded in his diary that he heard about Major from two stockmen named O'Leary and Spadier from the Ord station: 'Major shot Scottie McDonald in early morning as going down to river after horses. Bastardly act - all organised to get this nigger before he does any more damage'.²⁶⁹ Major then went on to kill Fettle and Davies and their two Aboriginal boys at the Ord River station while they were mustering and then shot another young man. M.P. recorded: 'Ambrose and party in - say young George Fettle shot dead in bed the other night at Blackfellow creek'.²⁷⁰

Cattie Kilfoyle's laconic diary disguises the fact that she was very close to these hazards. George Fettle had stopped overnight at Rosewood early in July 1908, shortly before he was killed. M.P. Durack called in mid July to keep a neighbourly eye on the two lone white women, but Cattie and Maggie Byrne do not appear to have been intimidated as on 20 July, the day after Durack's visit, the sisters actually took a party of station Aborigines out looking for Major.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 20 and 21 May, 1908.

²⁶⁹ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 10 June, 1908.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 10 August, 1908.

²⁷¹ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 20 July, 1908.

But nothing happened, and it was several weeks before Major was finally brought to his end.

Tom Kilfoyle returned to Rosewood from Wyndham but remained only three weeks. Still feeling unwell, he left Rosewood for the last time on 26 June, 1908. Cattie recorded: 'Tom left for Wyndham - very lonely day'.²⁷² Kilfoyle had decided that he should see a medical practitioner in whom he had great faith in Port Darwin. Keeping in touch, Cattie and Tom exchanged letters and telegrams. In July, *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* reported that the new Catholic Convent was opened in Palmerston. Kilfoyle was listed as donating £1.1.0. His brother in law, Will Byrne who had been in the butchery business with him and was now the affluent owner of a successful station near Brock Creek donated £10.10.0.²⁷³

While Tom was in Palmerston, M.P. Durack made several trips to Rosewood to keep an eye on the two women. He made arrangements to take them into Wyndham for the races which were due to start on 28 August. They stayed the first night at the Argyle homestead and they left the following day with M.P. and his ^{cousin} sister Kit, who was holidaying in the Kimberleys. They took the new shorter route into Wyndham, travelling up over a steep hill, which later became known as 'Duracks' Folly'. M.P. recorded 'Dyer started down with the dray and a couple of trunks'. Cattie records 'Twenty five started down got to the big hill - camped this side - good fun.'²⁷⁴ M.P. Durack, recorded the trip: 'Kit and Maggie Byrne in own buggy and self and Mrs Kilfoyle in other, camped foot of big hill, also Kenivan, Norman Wellman, Dave Suttie, Jim Darcy and five boys'. M.P. Durack

²⁷² Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 26 June, 1908.

²⁷³ *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 24 July, 1908.

²⁷⁴ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 25 August, 1908.

obviously relieved that all went well noted: 'put two ponies in buggy - leaders for four in hand team - got to the top in great style - find that four horses in buggy makes it lot easier to get top of hill. Reached Stud in evening. Duncan McCauley, wife and Ina well'.²⁷⁵ Finally arriving in Wyndham on 27 August, Cattie immediately sent a wire to Tom and received a reply the next day. According to M.P. there there were over two hundred at the races, including sixty women and children.²⁷⁶ The women enjoyed the races and Kilfoyle's horses won many prizes. Thrilled about the event Cattie organised for a telegram to be sent to her husband:

Trial Heiress, King Tom won by nose hurdles. Scotty flying Karrakatta and Rainbow dead heat. Kalveric second disqualified. Hacks. Chieftan shorts Heiress, Rainbow. Visitors Divinity King Tom good racing. King Tom or Karrakatta should win the cup. Mrs. Kilfoyle and Miss Byrne delighted.²⁷⁷

The following day, Cattie wrote: 'at races all day, Tom won the Cup and handicaps'. The women must have loved being in Wyndham, seeing friends, going on picnics and for drives. Two evenings later they all attended the race ball - although Cattie being a married woman without a husband present 'sat on the stairs and looked on.'²⁷⁸ M.P. noted: 'Race Ball - singing and music, Maggie, Red and Bennett'.²⁷⁹

Before leaving Wyndham to go back to Rosewood on 7 September, Cattie 'got wire just as I was leaving. Tom much better, thank God'.²⁸⁰ The two women said goodbye to Kit Durack who was leaving the following week for Perth, to get

²⁷⁵ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 25 and 26 August, 1908.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 29 August, 1908.

²⁷⁷ Copy of telegram, 29 August, 1908 in possession of G.F. Byrne

²⁷⁸ Copy of telegram, 2 September, 1908 in possession of G.F. Byrne

²⁷⁹ Durack M.P., *Diary*, 2 September, 1908.

²⁸⁰ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 7 September, 1908.

married, and then, accompanied by Tom Pearce, returned to Rosewood on 11 September.

On 24 September, Sir Alex Cockburn Campbell arrived at Rosewood with news that Kilfoyle's health was failing rapidly. The women began preparing to leave Rosewood. Cattie's diary finishes on the 1 October with ' busy packing..',²⁸¹ but before she could get to Palmerston, Tom Kilfoyle died on 8 October, 1908. He was sixty six years old. The local paper recorded his demise:

At the Palmerston Hospital at an early hour on Monday morning, Mr. Tom Kilfoyle who has now been under treatment at this institution for several weeks past - quietly passed away on that momentous journey which is the inevitable and ultimate bourne of all.....The funeral of the deceased gentleman took place on Monday afternoon, the remains being interred at the 2 1/2 Mile cemetery, and the funeral service being performed by the Rev Father Gisell. Deceased has been in a very low state ever since his admission to the Palmerston hospital. We understand the deceased made a will a few days before his death, Mr. W. Laurie being one of the executors.²⁸²

An obituary that appeared in a Perth paper described him as: '.....an excellent bushman and [who] had a splendid all-round knowledge of cattle and station management. Though very modest and retiring in his demeanor, he was a kindly, thoughtful man, who never spoke of or referred in any way to his many charitable generosities.'²⁸³

After Kilfoyle's death, J.J. Holmes made arrangements for Darcy Oliver to take over the management of Rosewood. Cattie Kilfoyle and Maggie Byrne travelled down to Perth in December. Maggie Byrne wrote to Tom Kilfoyle's niece in

²⁸¹ Kilfoyle, Catherine, *Diary*, 1 October, 1908.

²⁸² *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 9 October, 1908.

²⁸³ *The Mirror*, 8 December, 1908.

Ireland telling her of his death and how they were moving to Perth. Julia Brody wrote back to Cattie:

...very sorry indeed for trouble about poor Uncle, may god have mercy on his dead sould, we did not forget praying for him ever since we hard of his death. It is indeed needless to say how much we felt for you and dearest little Jack. how said [sad] it must have been for him, and especially ye not being present when he was dying. I need not tell you Aunt but I know something about, but I find yours a very sad case, and ye just about to settle down in comfort. It is a blessing for you to have little Jack with God's help he will soon be able to manage for you.....I must tell you not to be fretting it will do no good but harm you, one prayer will do more good than all...we wont forget to pray for his poor soul.²⁹⁴

Cattie never returned to Rosewood, but Maggie made several visits when Jack Kilfoyle took over the running of the station.

Some time after Catherine Kilfoyle died and was buried at Karrakatta cemetery in Perth, Jack Kilfoyle had his father's remains exhumed and reburied in Perth with his mother.

²⁹⁴ Letter from Julia Brody to Catherine Kilfoyle , 14 October, 1909.

Chapter 7

Jack Kilfoyle's early years

Jack Kilfoyle left Rosewood, as a small child and did not return to the Kimberleys for nearly fifteen years. In a letter to a cousin in Ireland in 1956, he described his departure from the Kimberleys:

In 1901 when I was 8 years old, I said a fond goodbye to my Mother and my playmates (Abos) and rode into Wyndham 136 miles away, I was put in charge of a captain of a cattle boat there and was taken to Perth 2000 miles away. I was met in Perth by my Aunts who arranged for me to go in as a boarder at the Christian Bros. College there.²⁸⁵



10. Jack Kilfoyle c. 1901.
'Saying goodbye to his pets on Rosewood'.

²⁸⁵ Letter from Jack Kilfoyle to Mr. & Mrs. Carolan - written from London on April 10, 1956.

The Christian Brothers College had been established in Perth in 1894. It was situated on the corner of St George's Terrace and Victoria Avenue, Perth.²⁶⁶ It would appear that until he was eight years old, Jack had received no formal schooling, therefore he was three years older than his class mates. The mollycoddling by his parents and aunts because of losing his eye as a small child would probably have influenced the decision to keep him with them on Rosewood as long as possible.

The Christian Brothers College was both a boarding and day school. In 1912 there were 141 boarders and 190 day boys at the college, making the college the largest public school in the State.²⁶⁷ The students were made up of all ages and came from a variety of backgrounds and denominations. The Christian Brothers instructed the Catholic boys in the rites of the Catholic Church, but also respected the religious opinions of non Catholics. Those not of the faith were not required to attend Catholic prayers or instruction or service. The formation of character was the great aim of the Christian Brothers in relation to their pupils, whether boarders or day boys, hence habits of 'industry, truthfulness, and manliness' were strongly inculcated.²⁶⁸ The young boarders were always under strict supervision and were kept fully occupied with their studies and playing sport. This was set out in the Christian Brothers Prospectus and Review in 1911:

Boarders are always under supervision. They are not allowed to wander about the street, nor to leave the precincts of the College without express permission. Strict decorum is enforced in the dormitories at all times.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Bourke, D.F., *History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia -1829-1979*, Vanguard Press 1979, page 139.

²⁶⁷ *The Christian Brothers College Annual Review*, 1912, page 4.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, page 71.

²⁶⁹ *The Christian Brothers Prospectus and Review 1911*, page 4.

Special features of the College as set out in the 1912 *Prospectus and Review* were large airy dormitories, the most up to date lavatories, fully equipped classrooms with both physical and chemical laboratories and regular excursions to the river and bathing.

The Christian Brothers were also well known for their interest in all sports. The boys were encouraged to participate in different ball games such as cricket and football, as well as track athletics, swimming and rowing. Kilfoyle's sporting prowess is first recorded in 1907:

J Kilfoyle cleaned bowled five of C.E.G.S.[Church of England Grammar School] (fourth X1) with five consecutive balls. He did not bowl his last ball as there was no batsman to face him. At that time an over consisted of six balls.²⁹⁰

It would appear that Jack settled into school well. In the first years, he saw his father every year. His mother stayed in Perth at times and his three aunts Maggie, Johannah and Molly (Mrs Mayhew) who lived at 268 Hay Street, Perth²⁹¹ also looked after his welfare.

When Tom Kilfoyle died in 1908, Catherine Kilfoyle left the North for the last time and settled in Perth, at first renting 281 Hay Street, and then in 1912, buying a house known as 'Westlands' at 147 Hamersley Road, Subiaco.²⁹² Jack's uncle ^{A. L. L. L.} Michael Byrne had brought a property near Moora, and holidays were spent with him and his family. Young Jim Byrne, then aged nine years old, wrote to his parents describing an afternoon's horseplay with his cousins, the sixteen year old Jack Kilfoyle and the thirteen year old Jack Mayhew:

²⁹⁰ *The Western Australian Record*, 17 December, 1927.

²⁹¹ *The Legislative Council Electoral Roll*, 1909. Batty Library, Perth.

²⁹² Subiaco Rates Book, 1912, Batty Library, Perth.

... Jack [Kilfoyle] and I was tying [tying] Jack Mayhew up till only he could hop up and down stears [stairs], we ceped [kept] up this for a long time till we were tide [tired]. Jack Mayhew was playing the gilford [Guildford Grammar] and beet [beat] them by one hundred and one wickets. Jack Kilfoyle is playing the high school today....²⁹³

The first school records available date from 1911. Jack was not a scholar and is only mentioned in the sporting section. The 1912 *Annual Review* of the College records the Junior University results. Jack didn't make the 'general honour' or even 'special honour' list but is mentioned in the 'pass list' as passing history, geography, French, arithmetic, algebra and geometry.²⁹⁴ He is however, recorded in 1912 as competing in the Public School of Western Australia Athletic Meeting held at the WACA ground. He won the *throwing the cricket ball* competition, the length recorded as 94 yards, 5 inches.²⁹⁵ 1912 had been an impressive year for the school. The school were the winners of the four oared and eight oared races, and inter Public School competition.²⁹⁶



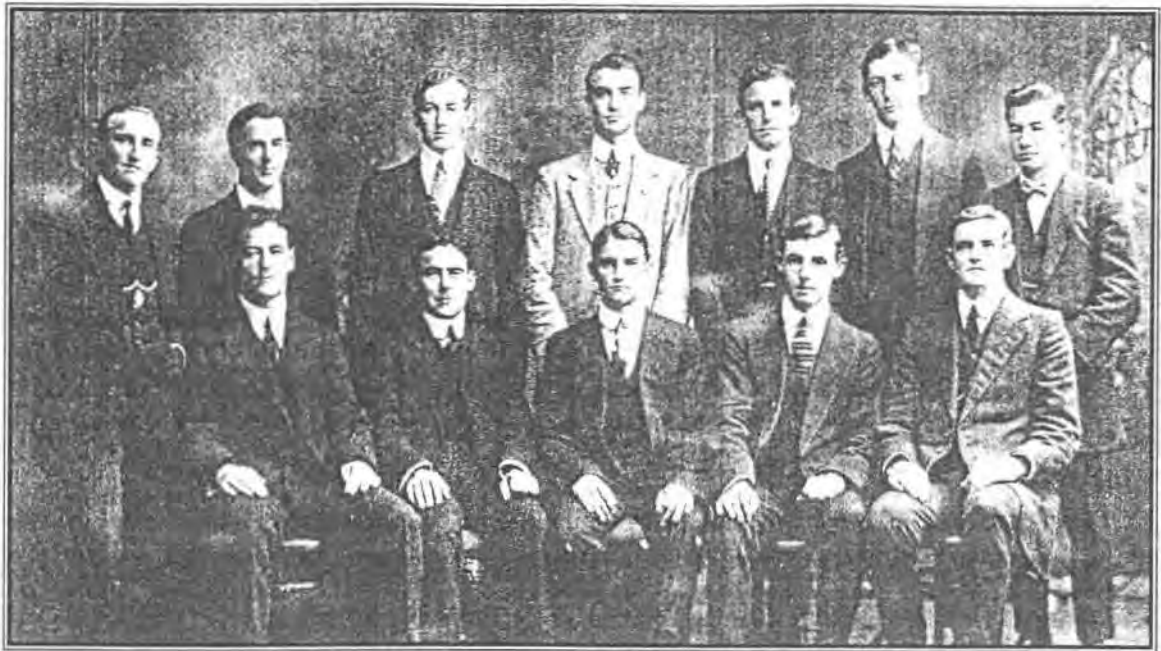
11. *Royal Life Saving Society class from Christian Brothers' College.*

²⁹³ Letter from Jim Byrne to his parents, 26 November, 1909.

²⁹⁴ *The Christian Brothers Annual Review* 1912, page 14.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*, page 46.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, page 5.



12. CBC 1914 Prefects.

Kilfoyle stayed on at CBC for another two years. In 1913 he competed in the track events and was a member of the *Head of the River* crew both in 1913 and 1914. It wasn't all sport for Kilfoyle, as in September 1913 he is recorded in *The Cygnet* as being one of the committee to organise the Christian Brothers College dance:

The fourth annual dance of the Christian Brothers' College was held on Thursday evening of last week in St George Hall, and was a pronounced success, over 300 attending. The hall was gaily decorated with flags and palms, the college colours, black and red, appearing throughout. The supper table decorations were richly carried out in black and red, with red flowers interwoven with maidenhair and fern.

Amongst those listed as being present at the function were his mother and aunts:

Mrs Kilfoyle wearing wedgewood blue ninon with touches of applique on corsage. Mrs Mayhew in black charmeuse with

oriental applique trimming, Miss [Johannah] Byrne, black silk with tunic in net. Miss M Byrne in rose silk voile, softened with oriental lace.²⁹⁷

In his final year in 1914, Kilfoyle was made a prefect. The editorial for the 1914 Annual Review of the College differed from the previous year and was devoted to the outbreak of the 1st World War:

The year 1914 will go down in history as a landmark, one of those dates future young historians must learn as the beginning of the battles of the nations, the year that saw the struggle that has no parallel in history.

the editorial then continues:

...work has gone on as usual in spite of the war, and the following advice given to the schools in England has been followed: The schools should carry on their work as calmly as possible in present conditions, the students should continue their studies, and not waste their time in discussing war news, mostly false, and in attempting to reconstruct the map of Europe.²⁹⁸

The Annual Review also mentions those of Kilfoyle's classmates who had enlisted. Kilfoyle would not have been eligible, because he had only one eye.

In April 1914, Cattie Kilfoyle bought 7866 acres of grazing lease near her brother at Moora. A thousand acres were purchased in her own name and the rest as a half share with her son.²⁹⁹ Jim Byrne, Catherine's bachelor brother, was to manage the property, with Jack eventually taking over. The *Moora Herald* reported in 1914:

The Moora football enthusiasts can scent a probable recruit when the incoming train is about at Mogumber. Mr. Kilfoyle, who has come to live in the district, had hardly put a cautious foot on the Moora platform before a rover gave him the 'gladeye' and an

²⁹⁷ *The Cygnet*, 26 September, 1913.

²⁹⁸ *Christian Brothers College Annual Review 1914*, page 7.

²⁹⁹ Grazing Lease Melbourne Location No 2402 and Grazing Lease 2372 Melbourne Locations 2370, 2371, 2372, in possession of G.F. Byrne.

invitation to join the team. He joined.

The article goes on to say:

The new athlete - Mr. Kilfoyle is a Christian Brothers athlete who has distinguished himself in many forms of college sport. He is one of the best four on the river, has been heard of in cricket and held a prominent place in the college 18 on the football field. He has now joined his uncle Mr. Jim Byrne and will be a local resident.³⁰⁰



13. Jack Kilfoyle, Jack and Molly Mayhew sitting in front of Cattie Kilfoyle, c.1914 (at Westlands, 147 Hammersley Road, Subiaco).

It is not known why he didn't stay on the property near Moora, but family gossip has it that he was not behaving himself. After many years under female supervision and an unusually prolonged schooling it would not have been surprising for a normally constituted twenty two year old to kick over the traces at his first experience of independence. In mid 1915, he was sent to the Kimberleys to work under the supervision of the manager, Darcy Oliver, on Rosewood.

³⁰⁰ *Moora Herald*, 22 May, 1914.

During this time his mother became very ill and was nursed by her sisters at her home 'Westlands'. Cattie Kilfoyle died on 1 December 1915, suffering from pernicious anaemia and heart failure.³⁰¹ The funeral took place on 3 December 1915. A large crowd attended the Requiem Mass at St Joseph's Subiaco, followed by a burial at Karrakatta cemetery. The pall bearers were J.J. Holmes M.L.C, M.P. Durack, J. Ryan, M.P. Cogan and Alex Watson, later to be principal shareholder in a number of West Kimberley properties. Jack was unable to get back to Perth in time to see his mother before she died. He arrived on the State Steamer *N2* accompanied by J W Durack on 17 December 1915.

Kilfoyle's six months on Rosewood were not enough to ensure his permanent commitment to life in the Kimberleys. During 1916, Jack spent time with his Aunt Molly and travelled up and down to the property at Moora. His mother had left her share in Rosewood Station to him, so that he was then half owner in Rosewood with the Holmes brothers. He inherited the house in Subiaco and his mother's share in the property at Moora. Catherine Kilfoyle left her sister Maggie a quarterly payment of £104 per year, or if she wished a lump sum of a £1,000 and that would discharge Jack of his responsibility.

Jack Kilfoyle was the executor of his mother's estate. The contents of the house in Hamersley Road were auctioned in February 1916 and the house rented. Probate was issued on 20 May 1916.

A new partnership deed in the name of *The Rosewood Pastoral Company* was prepared by Sir Walter James of the law firm James and Darbyshire. It consisted of Robert Hardy Holmes and Joseph John Holmes of the first part and

³⁰¹ Certified Copy of an Entry in Register of Deaths 295/15.

John Arthur [Augustus] Charles Kilfoyle of the other part. The partnership was to commence from 1 January 1916 and continue for six years. The Schedule referred to the description and stock on Rosewood Station:

Leasehold Lands in the Northern Territory of South Australia containing about 1,120 square miles held under lease from the Crown expiring in the years 1939, 1942, and 1944, Numbers 1910, 2120 and 2228 and Leasehold Lands in the Kimberley District of Western Australia containing about 50,000 acres held under lease from the Crown expiring in the year 1918, Number 2683/102. All stock cattle and horses on the said leases comprising about 200 horses and about 14,000 cattle. All buildings and other erections on the said leases and all carts, harness furniture utensils and other chattels on the Rosewood Station.³⁰²

At the same time as the Partnership Deed was drawn up, Kilfoyle put the Moora property on the market. This may have meant that he was not yet committed to life in the Kimberleys. He maintained his interest in sports such as rowing, and in 1916 competed in the Swan River trial pairs:

The Swan River trial pairs were held on last Saturday afternoon in the presence of a very fair number of lady friends and supporters. Though occasional showers fell during the course of the afternoon they did not interfere with the rowing to nearly the same extent as the strong head winds... Ross was first to show in the final and kept a slight lead for about 150 yards, the heavier weight of Child and Kilfoyle told, and half way they were in front and kept the lead to the finish in spite of a couple of game sprints by Ross.³⁰³

At the end of 1917, the CBC *Old Boys' Notes* recorded:

Jack Kilfoyle is managing his station up North. He does not intend to stay there too long. Station life would not suit Jack too well.³⁰⁴

³⁰² *Partnership Deed*, - The Rosewood Pastoral Company, original in possession of G.F. Byrne.

³⁰³ *The West Australian*, 24 June, 1916.

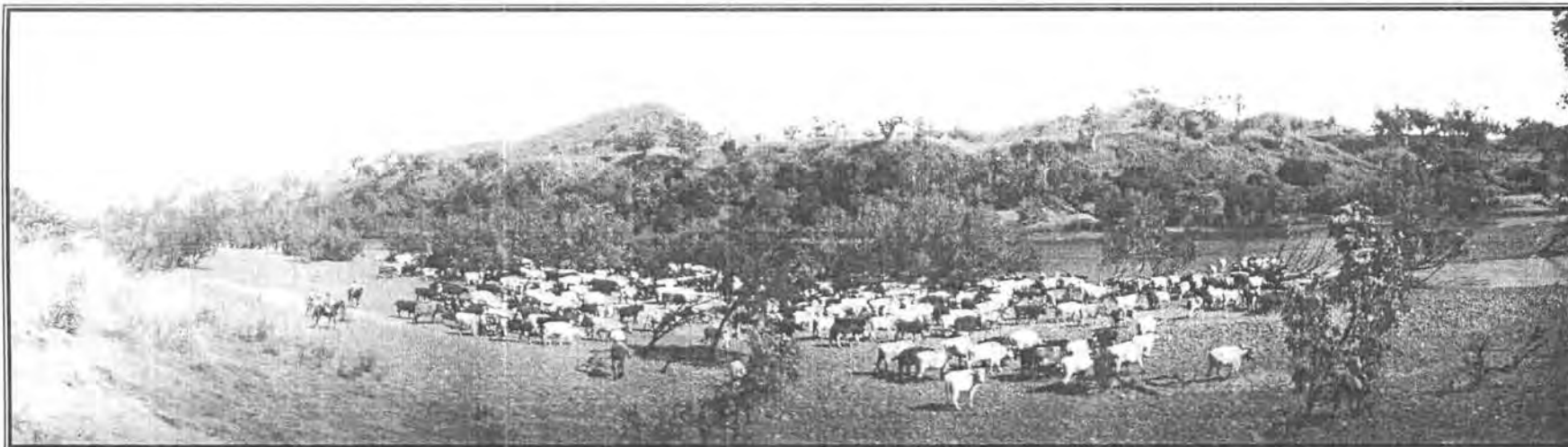
³⁰⁴ *Christian Brothers College Annual Review 1917*, page 49.

Kilfoyle did not in fact go back to Rosewood to run the station, but worked on Lissadell which borders Rosewood in 1917 and 1918 under the supervision of a veteran manager with a memorable name, Athanasius Patrick McNamara. In 1918 he rode with a mob of bullocks from Halls Creek area to the Queensland border at Camooweal, the journey taking six months to complete.³⁰⁵ During this time, he travelled to Perth in the wet season and stayed with his aunt Molly Mayhew.

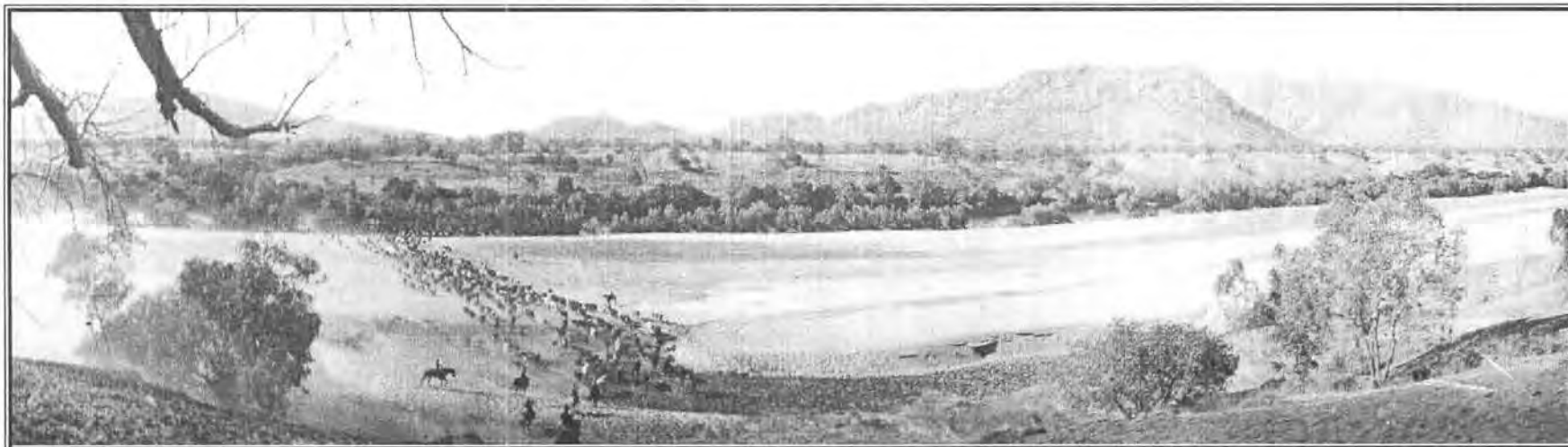
In 1919 he went back up north to Rosewood and worked under the supervision of the then manager, Darcy Oliver. At this time he was listed in the Rosewood books as earning £2.10.0 per week.³⁰⁶ He took over the management of Rosewood in March 1922 at the age of twenty nine.

³⁰⁵ Kelly, J.H., *Report on the Beef Cattle Industry in Northern Australia.*, (appendix A), page 7.

³⁰⁶ Rosewood Record Books held in the Northern Territory Archives.



14. *Rosewood cattle at Boorana crossing, on the Ord River.*



15. *Rosewood cattle crossing the Ord River.*

Chapter 8

Management of Rosewood

Kilfoyle took over the management of Rosewood at an inauspicious time. During the preceding three years, beef cattle prices had slumped from their war time heights. The major outlet for producers in the Ord valley was the government - owned meatworks which opened at Wyndham after many years of delay in 1919. After a year of closure in 1921, it re-opened in response to sustained pressure from local cattlemen, including M.P. Durack in his role as MLA for Kimberley, but it never ran at a profit. Its output consisted almost entirely of frozen meat for the British and Belgian markets, where it competed on uneven terms with chilled beef from South America. Prices at the Wyndham meatworks seldom exceeded £3.10.0 a head throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

For a few large producers such as Connor Doherty and Durack and the Australian Investment Agency Company (Vesteys) a more promising alternative existed in the shipping trade of live cattle to Fremantle. East Kimberley producers had been blocked from this trade for nearly twenty years because of the presence of cattle tick amongst their herds, but after the tick was identified in the West Kimberley about 1916 there was no pretext for excluding East Kimberley livestock provided they were landed at a special fat cattle market at Copley's Siding. Because the Holmes brothers were amongst the largest retailers of meat in the metropolitan area, Rosewood was able to participate in this trade, and this gave them a potential edge over most of the smaller producers in their neighbourhood. However, much depended on the quality of their cattle and their managerial policies.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Bolton, G.C, M.A. Thesis, *ibid.*, page 274.

Between 1908, when Thomas Kilfoyle died, and 1922, when Jack Kilfoyle took over, the management of Rosewood was entrusted to Darcy Oliver, a seasoned cattleman of the old school endowed with lengthy practical experience, but little concept of scientific management. Under his regime improvements and station equipment had been sadly neglected, but a good head stockman had been employed with the result that the cattle were still of a good quality and tractable. The letter book at the Bow Hills Police Station in 1915, described brands of cattle and description of horses on the stations in the vicinity, and records that in 1915, Rosewood had 12,000 head of cattle.³⁰⁸ Two years later when the new partnership agreement was formed with the Holmes brothers in 1917, the Partnership Deed stated that there were about 14,000 head of cattle.³⁰⁹

One of the most eminent authorities in his day on the northern beef cattle industry, J.H. Kelly, who knew Kilfoyle well, testified in 1952 report on the industry about the progressive approach shown by Kilfoyle when he took control:

Kilfoyle started out with the view that the success of cattle raising venture in this difficult country would depend primarily on sound management and good judgment....At the outset, his plan was the station should be so watered that all of it could be utilised at any time of the year, and so fenced that the cattle could be properly controlled; that sufficient yards (of good design and solid construction) should be located throughout the run so that cattle could be handled conveniently and efficiently; that each branding yard should have adjacent holding paddocks for the cattle, and, particularly, for stock horses, so that the horses could wander and feed in comfort, unhampered by hobbles.....he also provided comfortable stock camps and a comfortable homestead establishment.

³⁰⁸ Bow Hill Police Station - *Letter Book*, page 41, Northern Territory Archives, Darwin.

³⁰⁹ *Partnership Deed* -- Rosewood Pastoral Company, dated 17 February, 1917. In possession of G.F. Byrne.

With limited resources to begin with, he planned the full improvement of Rosewood by the steady re-investment of surplus earnings from the sale of cattle.³¹⁰

Kelly's testimony is valuable because it emphasises the extent of conscious planning, unusual among Kimberley pastoralists of that era, with which Kilfoyle embarked upon the task of rehabilitating Rosewood. Kilfoyle did not employ a head stockman, he went out onto the runs for mustering and branding and ran the camps himself. He did employ a few white stockmen, but the majority of his stockmen were Aborigines.

Before Kilfoyle took over the running of Rosewood, the open run cutting method (sometimes called the bronco method) of branding the cows was used. The mustering would take place out in the open, by throwing the animal to the ground and branding it and then letting it loose. However, he rejected this and reverted to the method that his father had used of drafting and branding the cattle in the branding yards, because he believed that the other method contributed to the high mortality amongst the cattle and was a contributing factor to injuries and disease. Years later, Kilfoyle wrote to the *Australian Shorthorn* magazine expressing his view regarding the bronco method:

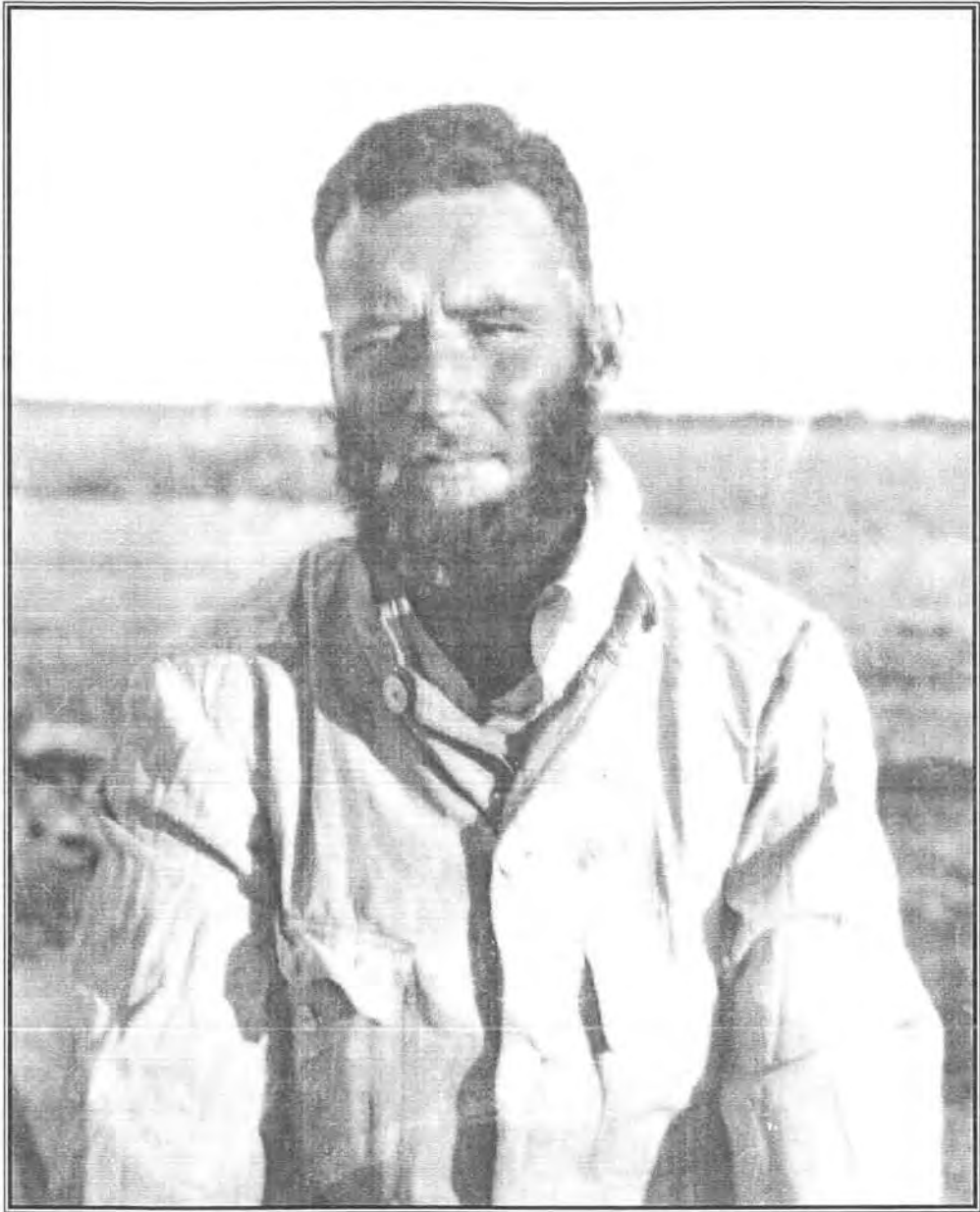
I consider bronco is bad enough in bronco yards, but open bronco work is wicked on the cattle. I don't know how men who like cattle and cattle work can possibly look on and see the brutality that takes place in bronco yards or worse in the open. All I can say for bronco is, it is quick cheap and very nasty.³¹¹

Kilfoyle also believed in the policy of shifting cattle amongst the various waters on the property instead of allowing uncontrolled grazing on favourite spots.³¹²

³¹⁰ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, pages 7 and 8.

³¹¹ *Australian Shorthorn*, October, 1959.

³¹² Kelly, J.H., *Report.*,



16. *Jack Kilfoyle, c.1925.*

Improvements

Within two years of taking over the management of the property, Kilfoyle established a fencing programme. Between 1924 and 1928 he had completed 23 miles, 22 chains of paddocks near the homestead (37.25 kilometres).³¹³

According to the station records the programme consisted of:

<u>Paddocks near Homestead:</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Chains</u>
1924	-	55
	4	20
	3	36
	3	0
1925	1	5
-	-	-
1927	1	40
1928	1	55
		30
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	17	22
Stallion Paddock - old fencing	6	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	23	22

He had also completed between 1924 and 1928, 7 miles 70 chains elsewhere on the station, all with wooden posts (about 12.6 kilometres).

³¹³ *Rosewood Record Books* held in the Northern Territory Archives. See Appendix for copy of designs.

Other paddocks on station as recorded in station books:

	<u>Miles</u>
1924 Spitfire Yard paddock	2
Faraday's Yard paddock	2
1926 Cowdy Yard paddock	1 5/8
1927 Gum Creek paddock	2 1/4

	7 7/8 miles

Ernie Chapman, a half caste who was employed by Kilfoyle in 1920s as a fencing contractor, described Kilfoyle as 'the best man I had ever worked for'. Chapman began working for Kilfoyle in 1924 and continued to do so for the following seven years. He also stated that Kilfoyle paid above average contracting rates for those days, but expected the work to be done properly and to his specifications. Chapman said that while he worked on Rosewood, some of his work was maintaining boundary huts, yards and fences in the bush and when he was about to go out on these occasions he stressed how generous Kilfoyle was with supplies. He remembered him as saying:

By jove! By jove!
now what do you want,
no you'll be out for
a month Ernie,
now help yourself.



17. Caricature by
Elizabeth Durack,
c.1934.

Ernie thought it was unusual for a white man to be so generous to a half caste.

He continued:

I just pick up what tucker I want, he [Kilfoyle] just jot them down.
He supply me with wagon and horses and everything.³¹⁴

Chapman said that he was paid £3 per week and his offsider £2.10.0. Sometimes he was also paid £3 per week for cleaning out and fencing off water holes to prevent cattle from walking through them.³¹⁵

Kilfoyle certainly expected work done to his specifications, but if it was completed to his satisfaction, he was willing to pay a bonus. For example, he paid Ernie Chapman a bonus of £3 on 12 May 1930, apparently for extra work with the horses. The station cook, C. Duigemuller received £3.10.0. per week for carrying out various duties on the station. On 30 June, 1930, however, he received a bonus in addition to his wage for the following:

Clean kitchen, beef house and making butter	£1.6.5
Clean goat yard, blacks camp and around homestead	1.6.5
Attending to watering of stock	1.6.5
Vegetable garden	5.5.8

Total bonus	£ 9.4.11

316

By the closing years of the 1920s, Kilfoyle's programme of systematic improvements was advancing vigorously, but it seems possible that his neighbours had not realised to the full extent of his achievement. In 1928, M.P. Durack was appointed by the Western Australian Government as chairman of a

³¹⁴ Chapman, Ernie, *Interview*, 2 September 1977.

³¹⁵ Chapman, Ernie, *Interview*, 2 September, 1977.

³¹⁶ *Rosewood Record Books*, held in the Northern Territory Archives, page 149.

three-man Royal Commission making an extensive investigation of the State's meat industry. The commissioners travelled throughout Western Australia interviewing numerous witnesses, but although they were in the vicinity they did not visit Rosewood or interview Kilfoyle, preferring to take evidence in Perth from J.J. Holmes. They preferred the elderly partner who lived in the city and had rarely visited Rosewood to the practical manager on the spot who was to provide a model of the advantage of resident ownership. Perhaps M P Durack considered that, at thirty five years of age, his neighbour and kinsman was not yet experienced enough to qualify as a star witness.

The evidence given to the Royal Commission by J.J. Holmes was a curious mixture. Much of his testimony concerned the operation of the Navigation Act which permitted only ships using Australian labour to serve the North West ports, thus giving the State Shipping Service a virtual monopoly on transport of beef cattle and other forms of cargo. On this issue his evidence was businesslike, although somewhat unmindful of the strong political pressures favouring the White Australia policy at that time.

On the other hand, he seemed unaware of the programme of improvements initiated by Kilfoyle as the managing partner. For instance, although he agreed that the open range method of herding cattle should be replaced by fenced paddocks, he asserted that: '....money required for fencing cannot be made out of cattle production in Kimberley at the present time'.³¹⁷ Either he was unaware that more than thirty seven kilometres of fencing had been erected on Rosewood by Kilfoyle during the last four years, or maybe he was keeping quiet about this in order to paint a grim picture of the needs of Kimberley cattlemen.

³¹⁷ *Report of the Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the Meat Industry . W.A. Parliamentary Papers 1928, No. 14, page 101, question 3423 .*

J.J. Holmes gave Kilfoyle credit for improving the calibre of Rosewood's shorthorn herds by introducing milk strain bulls from Nestle's in Queensland. Prior to this innovation, the station experienced considerable losses among the calves. The practice of breeding a beef strain of shorthorns had continued too long, so that the cows were not always able to give adequate nourishment. 'If the industry were profitable, one would go on improving',³¹⁸ he said. However, until the cattle tick and buffalo fly were eradicated, it would never pay station owners to upgrade water supplies and other improvements. 'The inducement rather is to get out if you can find someone to take your place.'³¹⁹ When Kilfoyle read his partner's evidence he must have thought that if Holmes got out he himself would have the full run of station. Certain events over the next few years point in this direction.

³¹⁸ *Royal Commission Report.*, page 100, question 3419.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*, page 100, question 3411.



Excavating for a site at
Searcy's yard, Rosewood Station



A Solid Corner post for
"Rosewood" Yards



Pat Tipping at Rosewood
"Dimesteak" Yards



The Oak River
at Davis Station
about 20 miles
from Rosewood
as it passes through
the Carrizo
Ranges.



18. Rosewood Station and the Ord River.

Rosewood to Alice Springs, Barren Desert or Pastoralists' Paradise?

In looking for new markets and technologies, Kilfoyle was assisted by improvements in transport during the late 1920s and early 1930s. As early as 1926 he was writing to a neighbouring manager, H.G. Giles of Waterloo Station:

The first motor bike and truck has put in its appearance at Rosewood, -Flinders carted timber for house repair and Clancy Proctor showed how times are advancing by looking for a job on a motor bike. It will soon become an anxious question for Managers whether bagmen motor bike, motor car, and motor truck drivers are to be put in the creek, kitchen or government house.²⁰

Considering the long sequence of low prices offered by the Wyndham Meatworks, Kilfoyle formed the view that he should look for other markets within Australia. One of his ideas was to drive cattle down to Alice Springs and then truck them by train to Adelaide. He decided, after the 1930 muster, to drive from Rosewood Station overland to Alice Springs to study the possibilities for stock routes. He secured the services of Robert Anderson, a contractor and experienced mechanic from Wyndham who owned a light truck, which was loaded with sufficient petrol, water and provisions for the trip of approximately 1,000 miles. Kilfoyle and Anderson left Rosewood on 6 December 1930. With the wet season likely to break within a few weeks, the annual routine of the station had been completed, and normally this would not have been thought of a good time for travelling; but Kilfoyle's route lay through desert or semi-desert country where a viable stock route could be established only with the identification of reliable watering points. Probably Kilfoyle's thinking was influenced by the Western Australian government decision in 1930 to send the

²⁰ Letter from J.A.C. Kilfoyle to H.G. Giles., 14 November, 1926

veteran surveyor A.W. Canning to reopen the stock route bearing his name between the East Kimberley district and Wiluna. This also traversed hundred of kilometres of desert country, and Kilfoyle may have calculated that for Rosewood's purposes a similar stock route to Alice Springs would be shorter and more convenient, as well as lending itself more readily to the use of motor transport.



19. *On the banks of a creek, 22 miles from Staffords, and 181 miles north-west of Alice Springs.*

Kilfoyle and Anderson first travelled through excellent pastoral country owned by Vestey's to Banana Springs. Then they passed through poor country to Tanami, scene of a goldrush around 1910, but later neglected until the rising price of gold brought about by the Great Depression made mining profitable again. At Tanami they inspected gold mines that were being developed quite

successfully with gold being transported to Wyndham over 500 miles away.³²¹ By 1930, only a few cars had ventured into this country, and the tracks were made by those few cars. The journey from Tanami to Cockatoo Creek, a distance of approximately 230 miles was described as 'desolate desert....no habitation of any kind was seen.. not even natives'. An account of the trip, appeared three months after completion, in the *Daily News* in Perth:

The dry stages of the track followed by Mr. Kilfoyle would pull up anyone but a motorist, and even a motorist required to be well acquainted with the bush. At times, Mr. Kilfoyle had to act as pilot for the car, walking in front and making out the old tracks.....the country is practically all sand and desert and with the exception of the patches of mulga the country from the pastoralist's point of view is useless.³²²

Kilfoyle and Anderson travelled, not only through drought stricken country which was treeless, but more unexpectedly got caught in heavy rains and swollen rivers. Kilfoyle described the consequences:

The soil is like blotting paper and after rain is left in a heavy boggy state. A car when it strikes these bogs immediately sinks to the running boards.³²³

Kilfoyle and Anderson had to lay down spinifex to try and prevent the truck from sinking. The final stage of the trip from Cockatoo Creek to Alice Springs a distance of 150 miles, was described by Kilfoyle as: 'a pastoralist's paradise'. The two men finally arrived in Alice Springs on Christmas Eve, 1930. The journey of over 1500 kilometres had taken only 18 days. Kilfoyle met with Alice Springs stockmen who at that time were experiencing drought, and discussed with them the possibility of replenishing their stock from the East Kimberley.

³²¹ *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 7 January, 1931.

³²² *The Daily News*, 10 March, 1931.

³²³ *ibid.*, 10 March, 1931.

The *Adelaide Advertiser* gave a detailed account of the epic journey, under the heading 'Wyndham to Alice Springs Barren Desert and Pastoralists' Paradise', but did not go into the practicalities of trucking cattle from the Kimberley area to Alice Springs and then by rail to Adelaide. In Perth, the *Daily News* headed its article 'Stock Route Possibilities', but was no more explicit about detail.

Anderson stayed on in Alice Springs to work, while Kilfoyle returned to Perth and Sydney for a holiday, before returning to the North. There may have been another motive for their expedition which was understandably not publicised. Kilfoyle's association with Anderson had involved more than this trip to Alice Springs, for the pair had previous dealings of a nature that would later be revealed and result in criminal charges.



20. Shorthorn Stud Bull being brought from Wyndham to Rosewood; Family leaving for the Behn Races; String of Camels and Afghan owners; Branding horses on Rosewood; A Swag Pack Mule at Rosewood. c.1931.

Chapter 9

Brushes with the Law:

In February 1932, Kilfoyle was arrested along with the same Robert Anderson and one Edward Whelan (alias Webb, alias Philip Ward) for stealing 20 stud bulls which were the property of the Wyndham Meat Works. It was alleged that the bulls had been stolen in November 1930 by Whelan and Anderson and then taken to Rosewood where Kilfoyle paid for them. The date is significant. It can be no coincidence that only a matter of a few weeks later, Kilfoyle and Anderson were taking considerable pains to locate a stock route to Alice Springs which would not involve the Wyndham Meat Works.

As the bulls were known to be on Rosewood, the police held a special muster and seven of the bulls and their progeny were discovered. Frank Johnston, twenty years later, noted that the bulls were wholly or partly Devon cattle, with a distinctive reddish hide.³²⁴ Their influence was still discernible in the Rosewood herd in the 1950s, so in 1930 it would have been easy, even for a policeman with no great stock experience to identify strangers in the Rosewood cattle. When the charges were made, the police accompanied by a couple of Wyndham residents went out to arrest Kilfoyle at the homestead on Rosewood. Kilfoyle met them at the front gate, telling them that they would need to get an extradition order because they had no authority to arrest him, as the front fence of the house was the Northern Territory/Western Australia border and he was in the Northern Territory. According to Joe Williams, one of the Wyndham residents who accompanied the police, 'he left them at the fence and then after a couple of hours, relented and they were invited into the house for a beer, before returning with them to Wyndham.'³²⁵

³²⁴ Johnston, Frank, *Photographic Collection*, Book 13, N.C.3.

³²⁵ Williams, Joseph, *Interview*, 26 February, 1978.

When the news of Kilfoyle's arrest reached Perth, J.J. Holmes then MLC for North province and partner in Rosewood, expressed his deep concern to M.P. Durack 'that he would not be drawn into anything like that'.³²⁶ The Durack family were also understandably concerned, because on the one hand they were related, and had known Jack since he was a baby, on the other they had long suspected Kilfoyle of helping himself to their outside cattle.³²⁷ From M.P. Durack's diary it appears that he believed that Kilfoyle could be guilty. M.P. had received a telegram from Hector Fuller who was then the manager of Newry, one of Connor Doherty and Durack's properties stating that Kilfoyle had been suspected of taking a bullock out of a Newry paddock. Another Nor'wester, Tom Wilson, told M.P. that 'he knew (of Kilfoyle) last year and that Whelan and Anderson were mixed up in it.'³²⁸

A week later, M P Durack conferred at the Weld Club with his brother J.W. Durack and his cousin M J Durack of Lissadell. M.J. had met with prominent lawyer Sir Walter James, to see what could be done to help Kilfoyle.³²⁹ On 12 February, M.P. Durack records:

... Sir Walter James said hoping there was no truth in the rumour re Kilfoyle - could not believe Kilfoyle would employ an agent to steal. He may have innocently bought them.³³⁰

At the trial on 23 February, 1932, before Dr. V.H. Webster sitting as a Supreme Court Commissioner in Wyndham, Kilfoyle did not deny that the bulls belonged to the Wyndham Meat Works and had been found on Rosewood Station. The *West Australian* quotes Kilfoyle as saying:

³²⁶ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 4 February 1932.

³²⁷ Letter from J.A.C. Kilfoyle to P.M. (Patsy) Durack., 9 July 1931.

³²⁸ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 11 February, 1932.

³²⁹ *ibid.*, 11 February, 1932.

³³⁰ *ibid.*, 12 February, 1932.

...that about November 10, 1930, he met Anderson by appointment about six miles from Rosewood and accompanied him to Whelan's camp. He went with Whelan and inspected 18 bulls for which afterwards in the presence of Anderson he promised to pay Whelan £180. He subsequently paid this money to Anderson who collected it on behalf of Whelan.³³¹

Anderson was acquitted because of lack of evidence of his involvement. Kilfoyle and Whelan (Ward) were sentenced to two years each in jail and were fined £500.³³²

The jail sentences was treated as a joke by the residents of Wyndham. There were only limited restrictions on Kilfoyle's and Whelan's movements. They were able to fish all day and walk about the town. At night, although the cells were locked, a piece of iron was removed and two ladders enabled them to join the school teachers next door to play bridge. Edward Whelan who was described by Reg Durack as 'a real womaniser, but a interesting character who loved quoting poetry' later married Miss McIntyre, one of school teachers³³³. According to Mr. Len Nickels, who was in Wyndham at the time with the then Premier of Western Australia, Philip Collier, and an official party:

Kilfoyle was showing Collier, Munsten and myself and a couple of other chaps around the town, come lunch time he took us back to the hotel. Collier turned to Jack and asked him to join us for lunch. Jack had to decline as the 'pub' was off limits.³³⁴

In March after Kilfoyle's conviction, J.W. Durack, wrote to the manager of Connor Doherty and Durack in Wyndham Mr. H Ottewell expressing his

³³¹ *The West Australian*, 26 May, 1932.

³³² *ibid*,

³³³ Durack, Reginald, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995. This interview threw light on the discovery of the theft from Wyndham Meat Works. Apparently Whelan had been in a relationship with the proprietor the the *Six Mile* Clara MacAdam, but dumped her for Miss MacIntyre the school teacher. MacAdam, a woman scorned, tipped off the police.

³³⁴ Nickels, Len, *Interview*, 16 December, 1977.

disappointment in Kilfoyle:

... He has blasted his life and no one to blame, only himself. No one likes to glory in another mans downfall rather all no matter how one may have fared at his hands all I can say is the pity of it, more especially for his own people, and I take it they would feel the position as much as he would. They would not be expecting this from him and he must have known what he was courting ...³³⁵

Owing to a flaw in the original indictment, the Crown Law Department ordered a retrial. The Commissioner for the Supreme Court of Western Australia Commissioner Colonel W.O. Mansbridge at the retrial on 26 July 1932 reduced the sentences but was scathing of Kilfoyle. In the summing up of the case he is reported thus:

...that it was evident that Kilfoyle was the master mind. If he had not offered to buy the bulls from Whelan, Whelan would not have stolen them. Taking into consideration that, with allowance for good behaviour, both accused had served five months in prison, the Commissioner sentenced each to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. He fined Kilfoyle £500, in default two years' imprisonment, and Whelan £100, in default six months' imprisonment ³³⁶.

Kilfoyle was allowed to keep the bulls, but the Court suggested he pay the Meat Works £765 for them. Frank Johnston, commenting in 1953, believed that this was the outcome which Kilfoyle had hoped for, in order to build up the quality of the Rosewood herd. ³³⁷ For that purpose, Kilfoyle was willing to risk the inconvenience of a jail sentence. Possibly he may have calculated that the Holmes family would not wish to remain partners with a convicted felon, so that he would be able to recover the whole property for himself. Whether he planned it or not, such was the outcome.

³³⁵ Letter from J.W. Durack to H Ottewell, 14 March, 1932,

³³⁶ *The West Australian.*, 26 July, 1932

³³⁷ Johnston, Frank, *Photographic Collection, Book 13.*, N.C. 3.

As soon as Kilfoyle had been sentenced to serve a jail sentence, J.J. Holmes contacted Kilfoyle's solicitor, Sir Walter James asking that the partnership with Kilfoyle in Rosewood be dissolved. He gave Kilfoyle the option of buying out his quarter share and as Executor of the Will of the late Robert Hardy Holmes the other quarter share. J.J. Holmes received via Sir Walter James a deposit of £4500.00 dated 17 March, 1932, just three weeks after the conviction. Although the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent, all debts due and owing by the late firm were to be paid by Kilfoyle.³²⁸

The assets of the partnership consisted of the following:

- (a) the said leases with improvements valued at £8000
- (b) livestock comprising: 9865 cattle, 440 horses and valued at £10,000

which resulted in an apportionment of the purchase price of £4,000 for the leases and £5000 for the livestock and plant.

For taxation and other purposes the respective values of the assets in the Western Australian and the Northern Territory had to be apportioned as to one-fifteenth to Western Australia and fourteen-fifteenths to the Northern Territory. This gave the following result in the apportionment of the purchase price:

Pastoral lease in Western Australia	£ 266
Stock and Plant in Western Australia	£ 333
Pastoral Lease in Northern Territory	£3,734
Stock and Plant in Northern Territory	£4,667

	£9,000
	----- ³²⁹

³²⁸ Original Documentation, 17 March, 1932 in possession of G.F. Byrne.

³²⁹ *Statutory Declaration* signed by J.A.C. Kilfoyle, 8 August, 1933. In possession of G.F. Byrne.

The following year, M P Durack called at Rosewood, as Kilfoyle's two aunts Maggie and Johannah were visiting him. M.P. Durack recorded in his diary:

Kilfoyle and the two Misses Byrne were there. Maggie much changed. I had not seen them for 25/ 30 years. Spoke to Kilfoyle about the past and he assures me everything will be fair and above board from now on.

M.P. records the following day again :

...had a friendly and moral talk with Kilfoyle. He says he will go straight. Expressed hope that he would now pursue a more honest course. I remarked that he had now served the penalty and did not desire to show my hostility to him.³⁴⁰



21. Jack Kilfoyle with Aunts Maggie and Johannah Byrne on a visit to Argyle Station, 1933. L to R: Unknown with Maggie Byrne, Lilius Durack, Bessie Durack, Elizabeth Durack, Unknown, Beatrice Darbyshire, Jack Kilfoyle and Johannah Byrne. In front are Patsy and Neal Durack.

³⁴⁰ Durack, M P., *Diary*, 8 & 9 April, 1933.

Subsequent events were to raise occasional doubts in the minds of the Durack family, as Kilfoyle seemed to have had a kleptomaniac streak when it came to cleanskins, (a cleanskin is a cow that has not yet been branded). He would send his 'boys' out to look for cleanskins and would not be at all disturbed if they ventured onto neighbouring stations and brought back cleanskins from there. Eric Durack, at that time manager of neighbouring Argyle station station said:

You would get just so mad with him that you'd feel like shooting him, but then that was just Jack.³⁴¹

Through the 1930s the Duracks of Argyle and Kilfoyle were continually in contact over problems respecting their mutual boundary. In 1931, Kilfoyle was put to some trouble to mollify Patsy Durack, Argyle's manager, when some of his cows and calves turned up in the Rosewood muster.³⁴² Between 1934 and 1936 Kilfoyle and M.P. Durack exchanged extensive correspondence when it emerged that some of Kilfoyle's fencing trespassed on Argyle property, in particular a small holding paddock. Kilfoyle pointed out that it would be too expensive to take the fences down and rebuild them, and offered to pay an annual rent for the Argyle country enclosed on his side of the fence, but the matter appears eventually to have been settled by aligning a new fence line so that Argyle took in some Rosewood land as compensation.³⁴³ Even old friends and neighbours such as the Duracks seemed to have learned from experience that they should be watchful in their dealings with Kilfoyle.

Kilfoyle was 5 feet 9 inches and of a stocky build. It is interesting to note that, as

³⁴¹ Durack, Eric, *Interview*, 20 January, 1978.

³⁴² *Letter from J.A.C Kilfoyle to P.M. Durack*, 9 July, 1931.

³⁴³ Durack, M.P., *Letter from M.P. Durack to J.A.C. Kilfoyle*, 5 October, 1934.

a native of the North he never suffered from the malaria which had been such a trial to his father. Chapman described him as always walking with a little quick step. Instead of a shirt he always wore a 'Chinaman's' coat which he had specially made in Wyndham, and a cabbage tree hat (a cabbage tree hat is made out of cabbage palm woven with a big brim). He also had a habit of having the corner of his handkerchief in his mouth when he was working. A story related to Mary Durack summed it up:

Most blokes sucked a pipe or a cigarette, always to something in their mouth like - well Jack don't smoke so he chew a handkerchief.³⁴⁴



22. Caricature by Elizabeth Durack, c.1934.

As a postscript to this information, Mary Durack made the comment:

No wonder he was an odd man out in that environment - non-smoking, non drinking to excess and celibate! If he had been 'normal' no one would have taken such strong exception to his activity among the clean-skins.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Letter from Mary Durack to G.F. Byrne, 9 September, 1977.

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*,

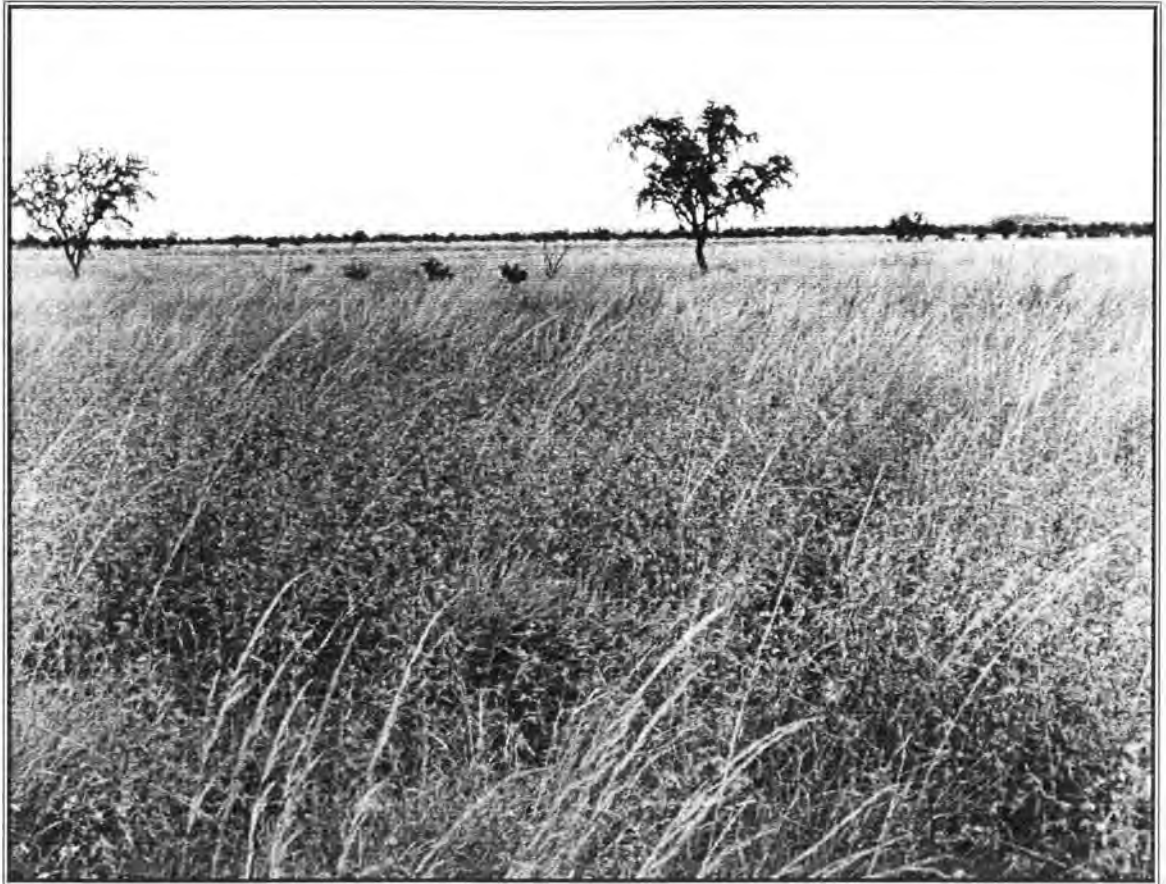
Chapter 10

Livestock

Now that Kilfoyle was in full control of Rosewood, he embarked on his program of improvements with renewed vigour and commitment.

The topography of Rosewood ranged from undulating downs to hilly and stony ridge country. It was well grassed with a variety of grass which included Mitchell, Flinders, Kimberley couch, kangaroo, some sugar grasses, button grass, pig weed, and peabush in odd seasons. With such significant variations in soil types and variety of grass, Kilfoyle enquired as to on what to do about deficiencies in the soil. He was advised to send samples of soil, water and grass to Germany where they would be analysed by chemists to find out if there were any deficiencies that would affect the well being of cattle. When he received the results, he had salt licks made up for the different deficiencies and put them in troughs [salt licks were big blocks of salt with different minerals added]. After a short time, the difference could be seen in the cattle. Their condition improved and their coats were soft. Kilfoyle employed a part Aboriginal named Gerald Beattie whose job was to go around and put the right licks in the right place. If this didn't happen and the licks were mixed up, it would just be a waste of time.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁶ Warton, Ted., *Interview*, 16 January, 1978.



23. *Flinders Grass grows tall at Rosewood.*

Cattle

The mustering began in the middle of April with the cessation of the rain, and finished at the end of October. Kilfoyle ran the stock camp himself in a fastidious manner. There were between fourteen and sixteen staff for the muster. 'Cattle were always mustered from approximately the same points and in the same direction'.³⁴⁷

Kilfoyle would not tolerate the mustering accompanied by noise of galloping. Everything was done to keep the cattle calm.

Ted Warton described what the camp was like:

³⁴⁷ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, (Appendix A.) page 15.

When Kilfoyle was there he was the boss and he would never yard up until about sunset. It used to drive us mad because of the dust, when trying to get the cattle into the yard, but he was determined to leave them so that they spent the shortest possible time in the yard, and as long as possible out feeding.³⁴⁸

He also liked to get an extremely early start in the mornings, much to the horror of the stockmen. Alfie Deakin, an Aborigine, related an incident when he was a young boy working in the stock camps on Rosewood. Kilfoyle would wake up a couple of hours before dawn, the cook would have the fire alight and breakfast cooking. Kilfoyle would go around the 'boys' shaking them to wake up. 'The first time [Alfie said] we would just pull the blanket up over our heads'. Whereupon Kilfoyle would pull them up and over to the fire saying 'come on you smart young fella, wake up'.³⁴⁹ Ted Warton, remarked that while he was there Kilfoyle would invariably tell the cook that he would like him to start preparing the breakfast about two o'clock in the morning.

Calves were taken from their mothers and put into roofed calf pens for branding. They were 'scruffed gently' and then rejoined their mothers in the yards. At the same time male calves were dehorned. Kilfoyle didn't believe that the calves should be weaned, he allowed the weaning to proceed in a natural manner. The only calves that were weaned were those belonging to spayed cows. Kilfoyle had definite views on the spaying of females. Any female that was nervous or of a wild nature was spayed promptly. This meant that spayed cows were segregated into paddocks for fattening for market and did not leave a weak strain in the herd. The bullocks were allowed to run freely with the herd. There was no controlled breeding, although Kilfoyle considered this desirable when the station's improvements were sufficiently advanced.

³⁴⁸ Warton, Ted, *Interview*, 16 January, 1978.

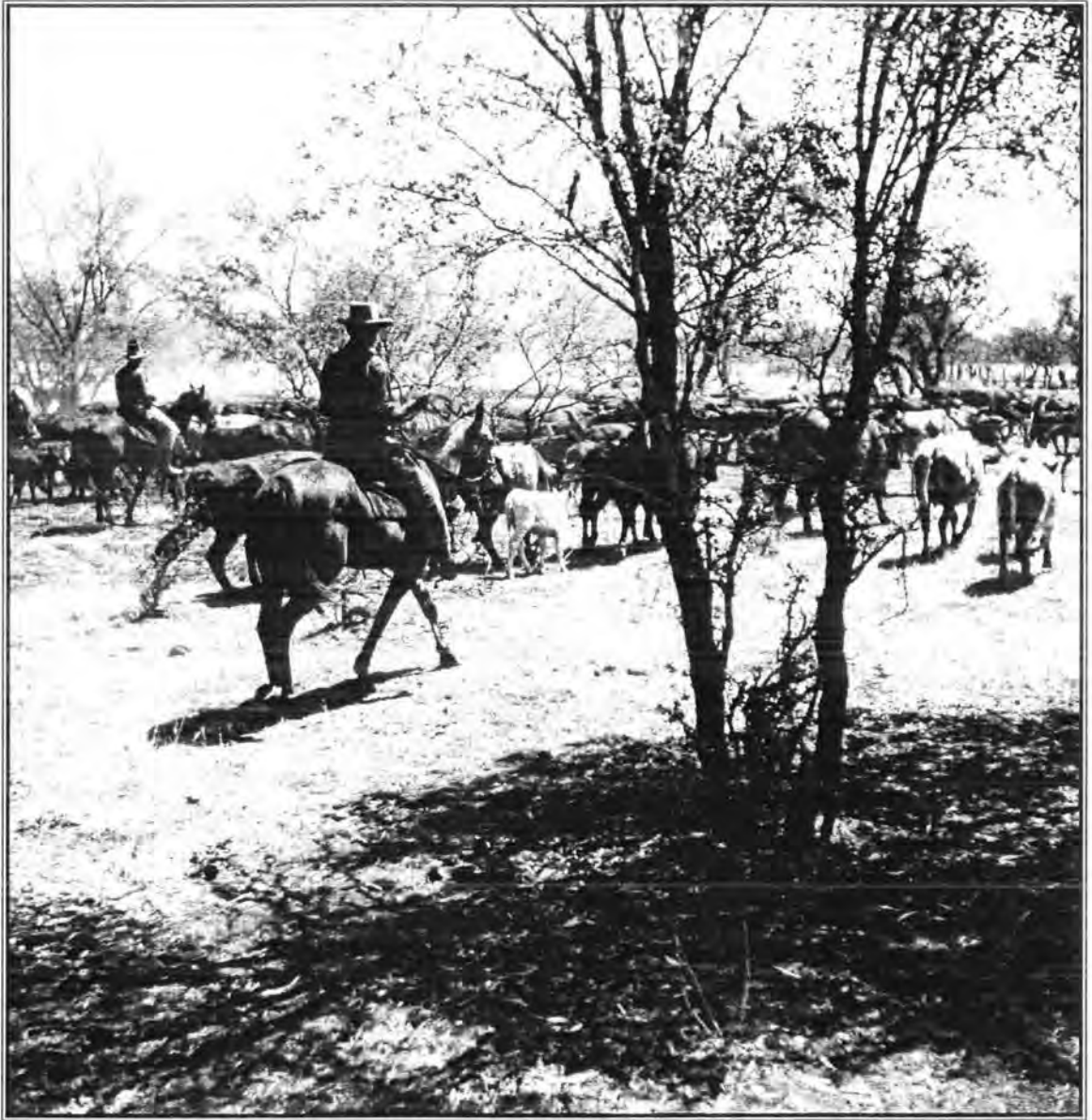
³⁴⁹ Deakin, Alfie, *Interview*, 5 September, 1977.

Through his practice of keeping the cattle calm and keeping them in holdings paddocks, the cattle did not require night watching during the muster. Kilfoyle designed the yards so that the entrance faced the direction from where the cattle were being mustered so that there would be a minimum of dust. He also believed in building the mustering camps and yards on black-soil country which drained well. This type of country was usually dust free. Kilfoyle would put together six to seven hundred bullocks for delivery to the drover in fourteen to sixteen days.

In 1914, Darcy Oliver introduced the dipping of cattle on Rosewood. Neighbouring Argyle and Rosewood were the only stations in the Kimberleys with cattle dips. The cattle were dipped on a regular basis. The tall grasses harboured the ticks, but a variety of birds acquired the taste for tick, and this minimised the infestation. It was also thought that some tick in a herd did not do any harm as it kept the herd immune from Redwater fever. When Kilfoyle took over the management he began the planned burning of the country on Rosewood which was so successful in controlling the tick infestation that dipping was no longer necessary.

In addition to improving the herd by 'borrowing' the government bulls, Kilfoyle was continually improving the quality of his stock by more orthodox means. In 1935, he purchased four pedigree beef shorthorn bulls, two came from the Glentromie herd at New Norcia owned by the Edgar Bros. and the other two from A.W. Padbury at Koojan. The following year when he was on holidays in Perth, he purchased fourteen more bulls, again six from A.W. Padbury, and the other eight were selected from Mr. C.J. Roberts' Kayanaba Stud at Dandarragan. *The West Australian* reported:

It is pleasing to see a prominent Kimberley station owner achieving such good results from the use of these bulls, and supporting local studs so strongly.³⁵⁰



24. *Bringing the cattle together.*

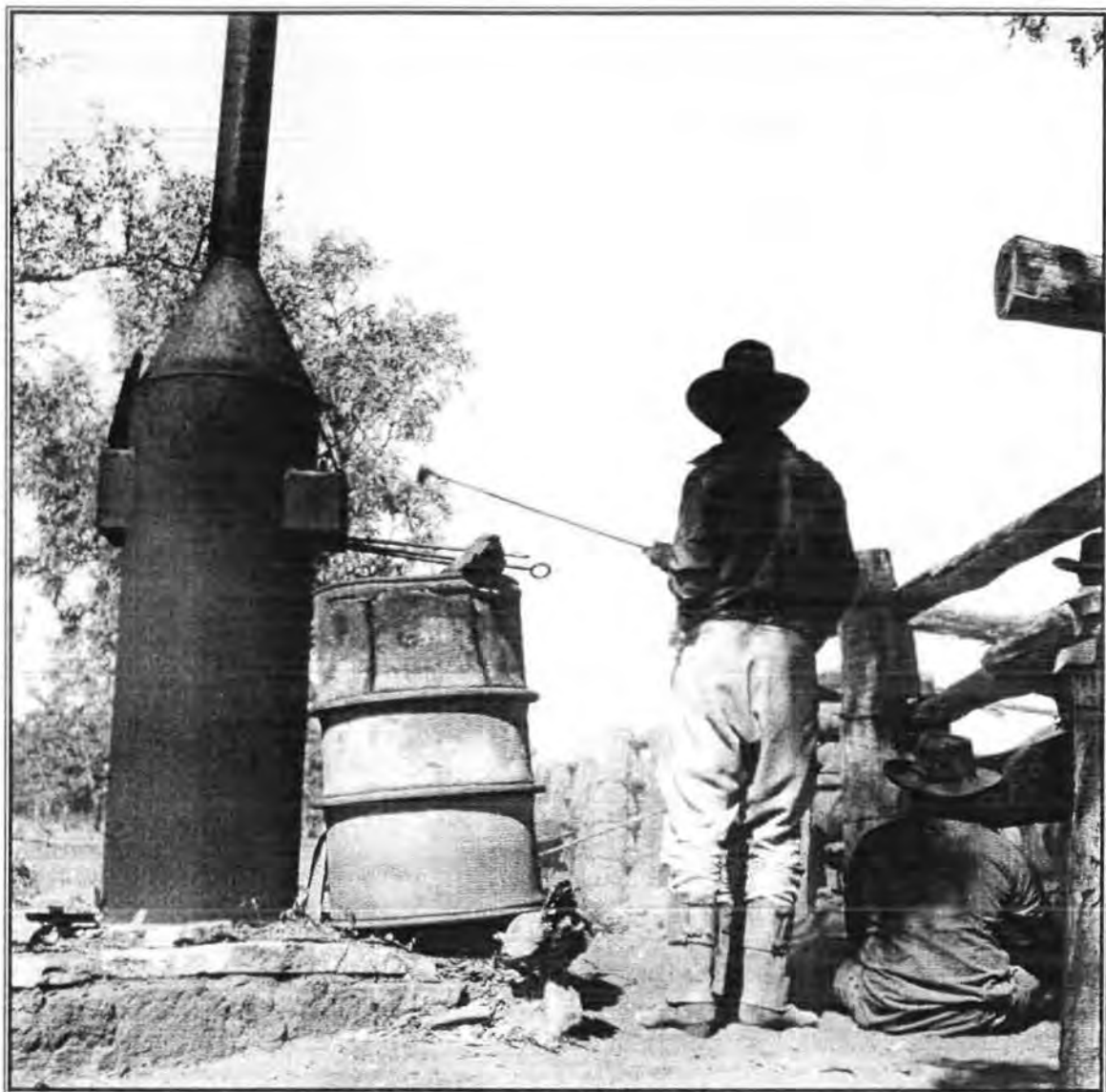
³⁵⁰ *The West Australian*, 11 March, 1936.



25. *Stock Camp.*



26. *The Cook's offside.*



27. Furnace used for heating branding irons.



28. *Castrating and branding calves. L to R: Pluto, Monkey, Nipper and Selwyn, c.1946.*

Goats

Rosewood supported a troop of angora goats dating probably from around the 1890s, the date at which they are first recorded on the neighbouring station of Argyle. They were used both for milk and meat. Their numbers were depleted by dingos for a time, but when the property was sold in 1947 its assets included 250 goats.

Horses

Like his father, Kilfoyle had a special interest in good horses. In this respect he was again somewhat unusual among neighbouring cattlemen. Because of the presence in the district of Kimberley horse disease, the cause of which was not positively identified until the 1950s, most would have agreed with M.P. Durack who stated in 1927 that:

Horses are of such negligible value in the east Kimberley that the time devoted to seeking a remedy for the Kimberley horse disease has been largely wasted.³⁵¹

Kilfoyle was well to the fore in adapting to motor transport, and by 1937 was in a position to purchase a top of the range Chevrolet truck 'especially equipped with a device for hoisting heavy weights such as engines for driving windmills'.³⁵² Nevertheless, despite his progressive policy with mechanisation, Kilfoyle continued to use horses, and even to increase horse numbers on the property through the years of his control. In the 1920s, he was breeding horses for sale, his customers even including the controversial John Gribble of Forrest River Mission in 1925.³⁵³ In the 1930s and 1940s nearly all were kept for use on

³⁵¹ *Pastoralist and Grazier*, 30 November, 1927, also *Western Mail*, 1 December, 1927.

³⁵² *The West Australian*, 14 March, 1937.

³⁵³ *Rosewood Record Books*, Northern Territory Archives.

Rosewood. There were 414 horses on the books at the end of 1924, 428 at the end of 1930, 465 in 1935, 568 in 1940 and no fewer than 700 at the end of 1945.³⁶⁴ As the number of foals born on Rosewood was in fact decreasing after 1930, it looks as if Kilfoyle was building up a stable of working stock horses so that his Aboriginal station hands as well as the white stockmen would have a serviceable plant of horses, especially during the war years when shortages of fuel and parts discouraged reliance on motor transport.

The increase in the number of horses from 1935 onward also reflects Kilfoyle's policy of introducing good stallions to maintain the quality of stock horses. This was required in the Kimberleys, as the heat and rough terrain was a great strain on 'horseflesh'. In 1935, he purchased an Arab stallion from a Mrs McLean who at that time was a well-known Victorian breeder. It was thought to be the first on record brought to the Kimberleys.³⁶⁵

Each stockman was supplied with four or five horses. The horses were well shod and particular care was taken to see that young horses were not overworked during the muster. None of the horses worked for more than two months in any one year. Kilfoyle had a policy that the young stockmen rode young horses and the older stockmen rode the older horses. G.W. Broughton describes the role of the horse during the muster:

one may see Australia's best in the stockman's saddle; see a stockwhip handled, right or left, in either hand, and watch the old camp horses working with their heads, wheeling, balking, shouldering, keen and quick as polo ponies.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Rosewood Record Books, Northern Territory Archives.

³⁶⁵ *Western Mail*, 16 May, 1935.

³⁶⁶ Broughton, G.W., *The Lone hand - Cattle Runs in the Farthest North*, Queensland, 1 December, 1920.

The horses were broken in by experienced horse breakers. George Kinivan whose name appears on the books at Rosewood during the 1930s and 1940s claimed that he had broken in more than 1000 horses in his day and explained:

Yes, some of them threw me, ... but I could count them on one hand. They're easy, horses. You've got to know them, that's all. One of the secrets of the game is knowing the temperament of different horses. They're like human beings - all different.³⁵⁷

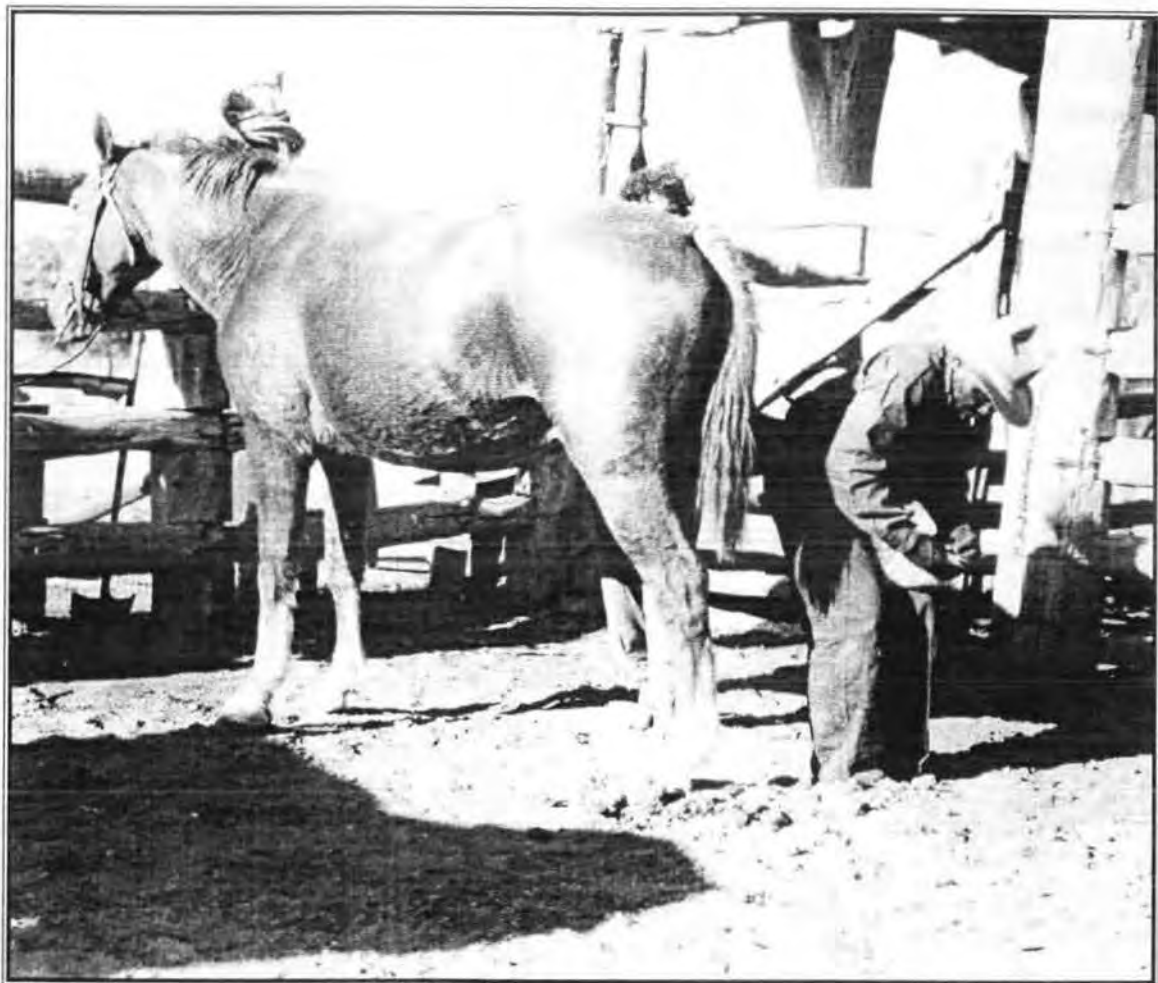


29. *Horses on Rosewood.*

³⁵⁷ Notes kept by J.A.C. Kilfoyle in possession of G.F. Byrne.



30. Arab Stallion's Mares, c.1946.



31. Shoeing, c.1946

Unlike his father in previous days, Kilfoyle did not go in for racehorses, although he did involve himself in the local races, especially the 'Annual Behn River' races held in September. This meeting was held on the Behn River on Rosewood and would attract people from all over the Kimberleys. Bookmakers would come from Wyndham, Derby and Halls Creek for the two day race meeting. Each station would take its own camping gear or run up its own bough sheds, cart its own stores. There was always a bough-shed bar, 'a wives natter corner', two up game and a church meeting to fill in time between the race programs. The rules and regulations were strict, and only horses bred within three hundred mile radius of Rosewood were allowed to enter.³⁵⁸ The last meeting was held on 28-29 September 1931. The reason that it wasn't held the following year may have had something to do with Kilfoyle spending time at the 'King's Pleasure' in Wyndham.

Apart from further improvements to the livestock, watering points and buildings, Kilfoyle now had to consider the amenities of the homestead. The era was passing when the development of the Kimberley could be seen as a largely masculine concern. It was a sign of the times when one of the neighbouring Durack properties, Ivanhoe, was left in charge of M.P. Durack's daughters Mary and Elizabeth, when barely out of their teens. Several other East Kimberley stations were owned or managed by married men. Kilfoyle's background and temperament might have suggested that he would keep his bachelor status, but before the 1930s were out Rosewood would have its own 'Missus' for the first time since 1908.

³⁵⁸ Chapman, Ernie, *Interview*, 2 September, 1977.

Chapter 11

Breach of Promise and Marriage

Jack Kilfoyle, not only had the stigma of going to jail to worry about but also matters emotional. Following his overland trip to Alice Springs, he had been in Sydney on holidays in January 1931. During that time he became romantically involved with Dorothy May Hayes, a daughter of Tom Hayes, one of the original partners in Rosewood. He had known the Hayes family through his father, and when visiting Sydney, he always called on them at their home in the very fashionable Frenchman's Road, Randwick. Tom Hayes had died in 1929, and Miss Hayes with her mother and sister had moved to Edgecliff. According to newspaper reports he proposed in January 1931 and gave Miss Hayes a ring worth £135.³⁶⁹

They had intended to get married six weeks after the engagement was announced. During that time, Kilfoyle returned to Perth for business. When he returned to Sydney he asked her to postpone the wedding until the end of the year. He then wrote several times asking her to break the engagement. In one such letter written in December 1932, he described himself 'a bit mule-ly, in saying as far as he was concerned the engagement was off'. Miss Hayes refused to break the engagement. Finally in March 1934 while travelling on board a ship en route to Darwin, he wrote asking for the ring back and added 'whatever regard I had for you is all gone now.'

Miss Hayes consulted a solicitor, and sued him for breach of promise, claiming that because of her social position and the special circumstances, 'she suffered

³⁶⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September, 1938.

a great humiliation.'³⁵⁰ In September 1938, the case was finally heard in the Supreme Court of New South Wales before Mr. Justice Maxwell and a jury of four. Each party was represented by two of Sydney's leading silks - Brian Clancy KC, for Miss Hayes, and Jack Cassidy K C for Kilfoyle. The defence was a plea of mutual rescission.³⁵¹

The papers had a field day, the case made headlines across Australia, 'Woman Claims damages from Grazier'³⁵² and 'Girl asks £10,000 of Station - Owner'.³⁵³ The 'Truth', a tabloid, had one and a half inch headlines with 'I never loved anyone else, said Edgecliff woman - Broken Promise'.³⁵⁴

Miss Hayes was described a 'slim, handsome and tastefully-dressed. Her age was given as 35 years, although according to her birth certificate she was approaching her 37th birthday'³⁵⁵.



32. Dorothy Hayes, 1938.

³⁵⁰ *The Sun*, 23 September, 1938.

³⁵¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September, 1938.

³⁵² *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September, 1938.

³⁵³ *The Sun*, 23 September, 1938.

³⁵⁴ *The Truth*, 25 September, 1938.

³⁵⁵ *Birth Registered in New South Wales*, No 35224. 23. October, 1901.

The papers stated that Miss Hayes claimed in her evidence that:

She had known Kilfoyle for about 23 years. On their becoming engaged he mentioned that he was making £5,000 a year and said, 'I don't know where other girls are going to find such wealthy husbands.' When she spoke of buying things, he told her she had better buy a shipload as she would be 1700 miles from the nearest town.³⁶⁶

Her counsel put forward that:

something occurred that tested to the full loyalty and affection of Miss Hayes. She read in a newspaper that Kilfoyle had been sentenced to imprisonment for cattle-stealingMiss Hayes immediately wrote expressing sympathy saying it did not make any difference, and that she would stick to him.³⁶⁷

Miss Hayes had also claimed that Kilfoyle had written and told her that he was brought into the cattle stealing to 'shield a Mr. Holmes'.³⁶⁸ Although Kilfoyle attended the trial he was not required to give evidence. When addressing the jury, Mr. Cassidy KC said:

Every letter written by Kilfoyle was in evidence. What is there to put him in the box for?So that the papers may spoil his name in the community, and satisfy her desire for revenge? His letters were nothing but the letters of a decent man who was worried. ... He thinks that it might not be for their mutual happiness if they marry and he tries to spare her the humiliation by asking her several times to break it off.³⁶⁹

Finally the verdict was given for the plaintiff for £850. When Kilfoyle flew back to Rosewood after the Court case and landed at the Argyle station airstrip to be met by Eric Durack, Kilfoyle's only comment to Durack about the whole affair was: 'Oh dear! Oh dear! these women are expensive'.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ *The Sun*, 23 September, 1938.

³⁶⁷ *ibid.*

³⁶⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September, 1938.

³⁶⁹ *ibid.*

³⁷⁰ Durack, Eric, *Interview*, 20 January, 1978.

Marriage

The breach of promise case, somewhat surprisingly, did not make a confirmed bachelor of Jack Kilfoyle. Within twelve months he was married. His wife Thelma Ryan, was the daughter of Henry and Ada Dutton, born in Northam in 1904. Thelma married Geoffrey La Tournelle Ryan, a commercial traveller in 1926. They had one son, Peter. Presumably because of the depression, in May 1933 Geoffrey Ryan went to Canberra to a temporary job for twelve months as a civil servant. Eighteen months later he wrote informing Thelma that he was not coming back and did not wish to see her or the boy again.³⁷¹



33. Jack Kilfoyle and Thelma Ryan?

³⁷¹ *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in the Supreme Court of W.A. No. 145 of 1937.*

There are tantalising clues to suggest that by the time this letter was written, Thelma Ryan was already acquainted with Jack Kilfoyle. In February 1934, Kilfoyle's portrait appeared in a newspaper featuring, as was the custom in those years, snapshots taken of identities seen in St. George's Terrace. Kilfoyle, wearing his customary northern tropical rig, was accompanied by a smartly dressed woman who was certainly not Dorothy Hayes, but who may have been Thelma Ryan. If so, this would explain both Kilfoyle's unwillingness to follow through on his engagement to Dorothy Hayes and Geoffrey Ryan's decision to end contact with his wife. Further support for this speculation arises from Ted Warton's recollection that Thelma and her mother visited Rosewood when he was working there in 1934. The Rosewood accounts included a substantial payment of £37 in March 1935 to T Ryan.³⁷² At that time she was living with her parents in William Street, North Perth, but in 1936 managed to afford a sea voyage to Colombo. Jack Kilfoyle was a fellow passenger.³⁷³ No evidence has come to light about the progress of their acquaintance, but on 23 February 1939 they were married at the Perth Registry Office.³⁷⁴

Kilfoyle was very firm about not wanting Thelma's son on Rosewood. He said 'Thelma could go down to see him when ever she liked but he was taking no responsibility for him on the station. He did not want to encourage Thelma's son to come to the country where he saw no future for the boy. Thelma thought this was hard.'³⁷⁵ Many years later, Ernie Chapman, the Aboriginal contractor who knew Kilfoyle well, offered what could well be an illuminating comment when he said 'Old Kilfoyle, he didn't want to get married, he like an old woman - Mrs

³⁷² *Rosewood Books*, held in the Northern Territory Archives. I can't find any evidence, but the family say that Thelma Ryan went up to work on Rosewood as a housekeeper.

³⁷³ *The Colombo Times*, 29 January, 1936. Listed among passenger on the Blue Funnel liner *Sarpedon*. Kilfoyle and Ryan were among the passengers disembarking at Colombo.

³⁷⁴ Marriage Certificate No. 1375/26 in Western Australia. dated 26 November, 1926.

³⁷⁵ Peter Ryan, grew up with his grandparents in Perth. He then joined the Government Railways, and was a train driver in Yalgoo for many years. He never married.

Kilfoyle [Thelma], her old mummy put her foot down and make him marry her.³⁷⁶

Kilfoyle was now forty five years old, a mature age for matrimony. Like many Irish Australian males of his generation, he found most of what he required in the way of female companionship in his family of origin. Although his mother died when he was only twenty two, her two unmarried sisters remained a strong influence in his life, and visited him frequently at Rosewood, providing the opportunity for social visits to neighbouring properties such as Argyle. Mary Durack remembered the Misses Maggie and Jo as 'little elderly ladies, they still had about them, much of the Irish sparkle and sprightliness...

Miss Maggie painted religious statues for a living and could still coax from the old Argyle piano - all the way from Thylungra - some of the ditties woven around the happenings of her youth - words by all and sundry and the tunes her own. I regret now that I did not record as she sang these jaunty Kimberley folk songs that went with her to oblivion.³⁷⁷

As good Catholics, the aunts disapproved of his marriage to a divorcee, and the visits ceased. Thelma Kilfoyle however, adapted well to station life, and visitors to Rosewood during the 1940s reported favourably on her hospitality and sense of involvement with station routine. Meeting her for the first time at the Port Hedland races in 1941, M.P. Durack mentioned in his diary that he was very taken by Mrs Jack Kilfoyle at the Hedland races in a black dress.³⁷⁸

Unlike many of his neighbours, Jack Kilfoyle never involved himself with Aboriginal women. In 1977, Mary Durack talked to many of the Aborigines who had worked on Rosewood, and their testimony on this issue was unanimous

³⁷⁶ Chapman, Ernie, *Interview*, 2 September, 1977.

However, Thelma's mother died over two months before the wedding in December, 1938.

³⁷⁷ Durack, Mary, *Kings.*, page 315.

³⁷⁸ Durack, M.P., *Diary.*, 14 August, 1941.

and unequivocal. One man who knew him pretty well, Peter Fraser said:

No, Jack Kilfoyle as far as I know got no time for women that way - even white women; they reckon he didn't want to marry that Missus - he only want a housekeeper only she been too strong for him.³⁷⁹

Johnny Walker, another Aborigine who worked mainly on Argyle and Ivanhoe, but had done contract work on Rosewood also told Mary Durack that Kilfoyle was never interested in the Aboriginal women: 'Him not like that, him too much under the influence of the h'aunties' [the aunties- Maggie and Jo].³⁸⁰

She worked side by side with her husband, sometimes going out with him to the cattle camps for mustering, and sometimes staying by herself at the homestead for weeks on end with only the 'lubras' for company. She had never ridden a horse before she came to Rosewood. On her arrival, she took control of stores, the ordering of supplies for the station, the issuing of rations to the Aborigines and typing her husband's correspondence. Reminiscing about her early days on Rosewood, she said: 'The thought of bread-making frightened me most of all'.³⁸¹ She conformed to Ann McGrath's model of the protective 'Missus' who:

.....treated their workers' illnesses, and doctored wounds caused by work accidents or incurred for tribal reasons....She often took an interest in the young children on the station, providing them with nutritious foods such as goat's milk.³⁸²

When this thesis comes to examine Jack Kilfoyle's relationship with his Aboriginal workforce, it will be argued that his policy of non-interference with Aboriginal women was one of his strengths as an employer.

³⁷⁹ Letter from Mary Durack to G.F Byrne, 9 September, 1977.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ *The Western Mail*, 27 November, 1947.

³⁸² McGrath, Ann, *Born in the Cattle*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987, page 101.



34. Jack and Thelma Kilfoyle, Rosewood Station, c.1940s.

Chapter 12

Aboriginal Labour Force

The *Australian and New Zealand Weekly* in February 1954, published an article with the heading *Australian Aborigines Can Be A Major Human Asset on Outback Stations*. The article quotes pastoralists as saying that the Aborigines are the *backbone* of the grazing industry in the Northern Territory. The article goes on to say:

Too few white men have recognised the Aborigines' latent qualities as skilled labour. Examples of what can be done by humane treatment and sensible training are provided by men who grew up from childhood with the natives and have valued their ability and loyalty if given fair treatment and opportunities to learn.³⁸³

Jack Kilfoyle was an example of a station owner who believed in these principles. This was remarkable because in 1922 when he took control of Rosewood, the period of conflict between Aborigines and white settlers was not yet at an end. In 1926 a local pastoralist, Frederick William Hay was fatally speared at Nulla Nulla station, and historical controversy has raged ever since about the conduct of the police party sent out to deal with the attackers.³⁸⁴ News of this affray caused considerable excitement among the white and Aboriginal residents of East Kimberley and caused considerable strain on race relations. This makes Kilfoyle's policies at Rosewood all the more remarkable.

At times, Rosewood employed forty Aboriginies who lived on Rosewood with their families. Kilfoyle believed that they were 'extremely honest and

³⁸³ *Australia & New Zealand Weekly*, 13 February, 1954.

³⁸⁴ Green, Neville, *Forrest River.*, Chapters 7 to 12, but note the contrary view of Rod Moran, *West Australian*, 8 October, 1994.

truthful.....they had a good sense of humour.'³⁸⁵ He had spent his very early years on Rosewood and because of the isolation of the station his only playmates were the Aboriginal children. When he returned to the station in 1922 these were the same people who showed their loyalty to him. One of them, Nipper, who was only a couple of years older than Kilfoyle, became Kilfoyle's right hand man. Eric Durack referred to Nipper as being a marvellous horseman who showed a remarkable ability when dealing with cattle. When Kilfoyle was mustering the cattle for the Wyndham Meat Works, Nipper would be working alongside him. Kilfoyle would be muttering out loud: 'What do you think Nipper? Will we send him? No, a bit small on don't you think Nipper?'³⁸⁶ Nipper's reply would be a grunt, and it probably gave Kilfoyle confidence in his own opinion and Nipper confidence that he was being consulted.

Kilfoyle's egalitarian approach to his Aboriginal stockmen sometimes went beyond his neighbours' comprehension. On completion of mustering on the Argyle/Rosewood border with M.P. Durack, Kilfoyle and he would share a ceremonious swig of rum, but when Kilfoyle then passed it on to his two leading stockmen, Nipper and Pluto, Durack was provoked to ride off muttering crossly: 'Doesn't he know that it's illegal?'.³⁸⁷

According to Ted Warton, a white stockman who worked on Rosewood, Nipper was unusual for an Aborigine:

Old Nipper, he's the only blackfellow that I have known who would do anything on his own... and could persuade the other blacks to do what he told them.

³⁸⁵ *Australia & New Zealand Weekly*, 13 February 1954.

³⁸⁶ Durack, Eric, *Interview*, 20 January, 1978.

³⁸⁷ Durack, Reg, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995.

Warton went on to relate an incident that happened the year before he went to work on Rosewood. Kilfoyle had gone south and usually caught a boat back to Wyndham in March and would arrive at the station in early April. This particular year, the Aborigines had arrived back from walkabout early in April to find that Kilfoyle had not returned. Nipper realised something must have happened to Kilfoyle and he would not be back for another month:

Old Nipper.....broke into the store and got rations, broke into the harness room and got saddles and packs..Nipper got the boys together and they mustered the horses.....They had the muster half finished by the time Kilfoyle got back and that's the only example in 24 years up north that I became aware of one black fellow with that kind of initiative, and he was only a tiny little fellow.³⁸⁸

Kilfoyle's attitude towards interference with Aboriginal women and their established customs emerged early in his career. In October 1926, Constable Tas Fitzer, officer in charge of the Timber Creek police station visited Rosewood in order to take into custody 'a half-caste' child named Alice in conformity with current legislation requiring children of partly white parentage to be institutionalised. He informed Kilfoyle that if he were a married man it might be possible for Alice to remain on the station. Kilfoyle informed Fitzer that it was her intention when she became of marriageable age, to marry another part Aboriginal who was working on Rosewood, and Kilfoyle wanted the child either to be left at Rosewood or sent to Mrs Patsy Durack for care at Argyle.

When Fitzer returned to Rosewood in July 1927 he found that Alice was missing. She had apparently been sent to Argyle, Kilfoyle blandly asserting that he thought that the constable had given approval, although as this meant transporting her across a State boundary, it was illegal in the eyes of the law. It

³⁸⁸ Warton, Ted., *Interview*, 16 January, 1978.

was yet one more example of Kilfoyle's cheerful readiness to flout the law when it was inconvenient and to take advantage of Rosewood homestead's position on the Northern Territory/Western Australian border. In November 1927, Alice was taken into custody at Rosewood and sent to the half-caste home in Darwin. Kilfoyle attempted to use his authority as a Justice of the Peace, but although he had received a written appointment in the previous May, he had not yet been sworn in and was advised not to exercise his powers until a commissioner for affidavits could visit Rosewood for the purpose. Interestingly, the police favoured empowering Kilfoyle as soon as possible as there was no other of the Justice of the Peace within two hundred and forty kilometres, so his intervention on Alice's behalf does not seem to have told against him.³⁸⁹

Kilfoyle was not unique in resisting the law providing that 'half-caste' children should be taken away from their mothers to the half-caste home in Darwin. Twenty five years later, Charlie Schultz of Humbert River station was moved to protest when the police came by the mail plane to take two children from their Aboriginal mothers.³⁹⁰ Ann McGrath notes that one of the Duracks, when manager of Newry in 1926, lodged an angry complaint when Fitzler took away an Aboriginal woman and her part Aboriginal child.³⁹¹ At such properties, the Aboriginal community came to trust the boss who they knew rather than the alien policeman who called twice a year.

Ted Warton, who worked on Rosewood in the 1933/34 seasons said that Jack Kilfoyle's treatment of the Aborigines was out of keeping with the general standard of the North. Kilfoyle wouldn't hesitate to sack a white man in the

³⁸⁹ Timber Creek Police Station, *Old Letter Book.*, 2, 5, 24 August, 1927, 9 September, 1927, 1 October, 1927, also McGrath, Ann, page 104.

³⁹⁰ Schultz, Charlie, *Beyond the Big Run*, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1995, page 146, 147.

³⁹¹ McGrath, Ann, *Born in the Cattle*, page 100.

camp if he ill-treated one of the Aborigines. Warton went on to say that the Aborigines were just as valuable to Kilfoyle as were the white stockmen.³² The Aboriginal men worked on Rosewood in the capacity of stockmen, boundary riders, assistants to the fencing contractors, yard builders and farriers. In keeping with the custom of the North, Kilfoyle did not pay his Aborigines a wage. They received their full keep which consisted of their tucker, clothing, which included moleskin trousers, shirts, boots and cowboy hats, tobacco, playing cards and a small liquor supply. By today's standards it would be considered inadequate, but at that time, Kilfoyle was considered much more generous to them than the other station owners. In 1938 there were 15 or 16 half-castes working on Rosewood who received £3.10.0 per week. A report in the Northern Standard stated that a union man visited Rosewood. On visiting other stations he said that 'men complained bitterly of the fact that they had to work alongside blacks who were getting no wages at all', but on Rosewood:

I found men complaining as bitterly of the fact that they had to work with half-castes who were receiving 22/- above the award. There are 15 or 16 half-castes employed on Rosewood, who all get £3.10.0. per week. The number of white men is six or eight; and these were, for the most part, angry because the half-caste were receiving the same conditions as themselves.³³

In the early days, after the mustering was completed and the camps had closed down for the year, Kilfoyle would hire a truck and later when he had his own truck, take all the Aborigines into Wyndham for a week's holiday. He was the only station owner in the Kimberleys who did this. Kilfoyle would make arrangements with an old Chinese man named Lee Tong to feed them. They were also allowed to go into the stores in the town and order whatever they needed. At the end of the week, Kilfoyle would settle up the accounts and take

³² Warton, Ted, *Interview*, 16 January, 1978.

³³ *The Northern Standard*, 6 September, 1938.

them all back to Rosewood. An Aboriginal woman named Ida said how lucky they were 'cause only white man go to Wyndham for a holiday.³⁹⁴ He would also take them all down in the truck to go fishing in the Behn River, which ran through the property.

Kilfoyle was also adamant that the food for the Aborigines was of a high standard. Several Aboriginal informants volunteered 'that the tucker was real good'.³⁹⁵ Ted Warton said that the food given to the white stockmen and the Aborigines on Rosewood was far better than most stations in the North of Australia. He relates:

Kilfoyle employed a Chinese gardener at the homestead. The fellow could grow anything; tomatoes, lettuces, oversized chilies, capsicums, root vegetables and citrus fruits. Every few days when they were out at a stock camp, someone would be sent into the homestead for a fresh load of vegetables.

Warton went on to say in the 1930s when he was there:

On the other stations you were lucky to eat beef with anything other than onions or potatoes. There was always a cook employed in the stock camp and the diet would be stews with fresh vegetables, steak when they first killed, with salads and for a change in diet they would have Angora goat meat. The Aborigines were fed the same as the whiteman, though they seemed to prefer just the meat and bread, except for a few of the more sophisticated young Aborigines. The others would use the fruit and tomatoes to throw at each other and have a great time like children.³⁹⁶

Kilfoyle claimed that one of the reasons for his success with the Aboriginal labour was because he interfered as little as possible with their mode of life. Any trouble between the Aboriginal people themselves was settled in their own

³⁹⁴ Rosewood Ida, *Interview*, 9 September, 1977.

³⁹⁵ Deacon, Tommy., *Interview*, 10 September, 1977.

³⁹⁶ Warton, Ted, *Interview*, 16 January, 1978.

tribal way. He is however known to have interfered on one occasion when a boy was born with deformed hands. The mother died and Kilfoyle took him and gave him to one of the other girls who reared him up on goats milk. If this had not been done, the boy would have been allowed to die in accordance with tribal custom. The boy, named Albert, was taught by Kilfoyle to ride and eventually became one of his best stockman. Albert remembered 'Kilfoyle, he just a good man'.³⁹⁷



35. Albert, 1936.

³⁹⁷ Rosewood Albert, *Interview*, 8 September, 1978.



36. *Albert, 1946.*

A story which illustrates Kilfoyle's style of management tells how when he was away from the station he would leave a glass eye on the counter and tell the Aborigines that his eye was watching them. But his Aboriginal stockman, Ernie Chapman had a different slant:

One year going down to Wyndham we were camped and after Kilfoyle rolled up his swag in the morning and went to look at the cattle, there was a little square box laying where he slept. I looked around the morning in the camp to see if anything had been left behind and I seen this little square box and I had a look to see one of his eyes, his marble eye. Anyway I just caught up with old Kilfoyle and I give him the box, didn't tell him I looked in it though.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ Chapman, Ernie, *Interview*, 2 September, 1977.

Kilfoyle's reply, according to Chapman, was 'Oh Dear! Oh Dear!'

The Aboriginal women helped in the homestead kitchen, performed the housework, milked the cows and goats and generally assisted in the gardens. Sometimes there would be up to a dozen women, and a few boys working around the homestead with a great number of children playing nearby. The women were not employed as stockmen on Rosewood. This was the practice on many stations, but it may be that Kilfoyle's Irish Catholic background gave him decided ideas about appropriate roles for women, including Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal health was also of great importance to Kilfoyle, who knew that because of the isolation, it was impossible to get to a doctor or dentist in a hurry. If any of his employees were in urgent need of medical attention, he organised to take them to Wyndham. One such case was Jinny, a middle aged Aboriginal woman who broke her thigh bone. She had climbed a tree, felt giddy and then fell. Kilfoyle took her to Wyndham by car, then flew her to Derby, where she was put on board a ship for Perth. A journalist from the Daily News went along to Royal Perth Hospital to interview Jinny, who she described as 'lying back in bed her injured leg suspended in air, Jinny showed her white teeth in a smile and tried to converse in pidgin English', she said 'leg better bimeby'. Kilfoyle had received a copy of the photo and article about Jinny from the Department of Native Affairs. He promptly sent back a station cheque for £5.0.0. to make sure Jinny had everything that she needed.³⁹⁹

The Rosewood Aborigines did not live in humpies, Kilfoyle had built concrete

³⁹⁹ *The Daily News*, 8 October, 1941.

huts with hot and cold running water. The huts were inspected on a regular basis and were expected to be kept up to a certain standard. He had also built special accommodation for 'receiving and entertaining the itinerant aborigine traveller'.⁴⁰⁰ Frank O'Loghlen, Editor of *Country Life* said in praise of Kilfoyle's management about the cleanliness of the huts: 'It will not be denied that insistence was necessary, but when it was there, the standards set could be maintained to common advantage.'⁴⁰¹

Ann McGrath has argued:

Although the cattle industry was an oppressive institution and crucial to the overall colonial takeover of the north, its peculiar characteristics also enabled Aborigines to retain a higher level of autonomy than was possible within other institutions....Relatively flexible work relationships followed because employers were an isolated minority in a predominantly Aboriginal environment. They needed comparatively few workers, but wanted these to remain.⁴⁰²

For owners and managers also this system had advantages, but it was adopted most readily by individuals such as Jack Kilfoyle who had spent part of their childhood or youth in the country and were receptive to Aboriginal viewpoints. E.P. Thompson has argued that in rural England in the 18th Century an apparently harsh and inequitable legal system was moderated by a 'moral economy' within which rich and poor, landowners and working class understood how power relations could be brokered to ensure socially acceptable outcomes.⁴⁰³

A similar 'moral economy' can be discerned in the northern cattle industry until the 1960s. No less an authority than C.D. Rowley believed that 'the station

⁴⁰⁰ *Country Life, Sydney*, 18 August, 1952.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² McGrath, Ann, *Born in the Cattle*, page 173.

⁴⁰³ Thompson, E.P., *Whigs and Hunters*, Hammonworth, 1975, pp 558-269.

native had a freedom seldom enjoyed by civilised man and had 'nearly' all that was needed for the kind of comfort that he wanted'.⁴⁰⁴

Jack Kilfoyle would have agreed with these sentiments, and his reputation as the model of an effective owner/manager owed much to his successful negotiation of acceptable working conditions with the Rosewood Aboriginal community.

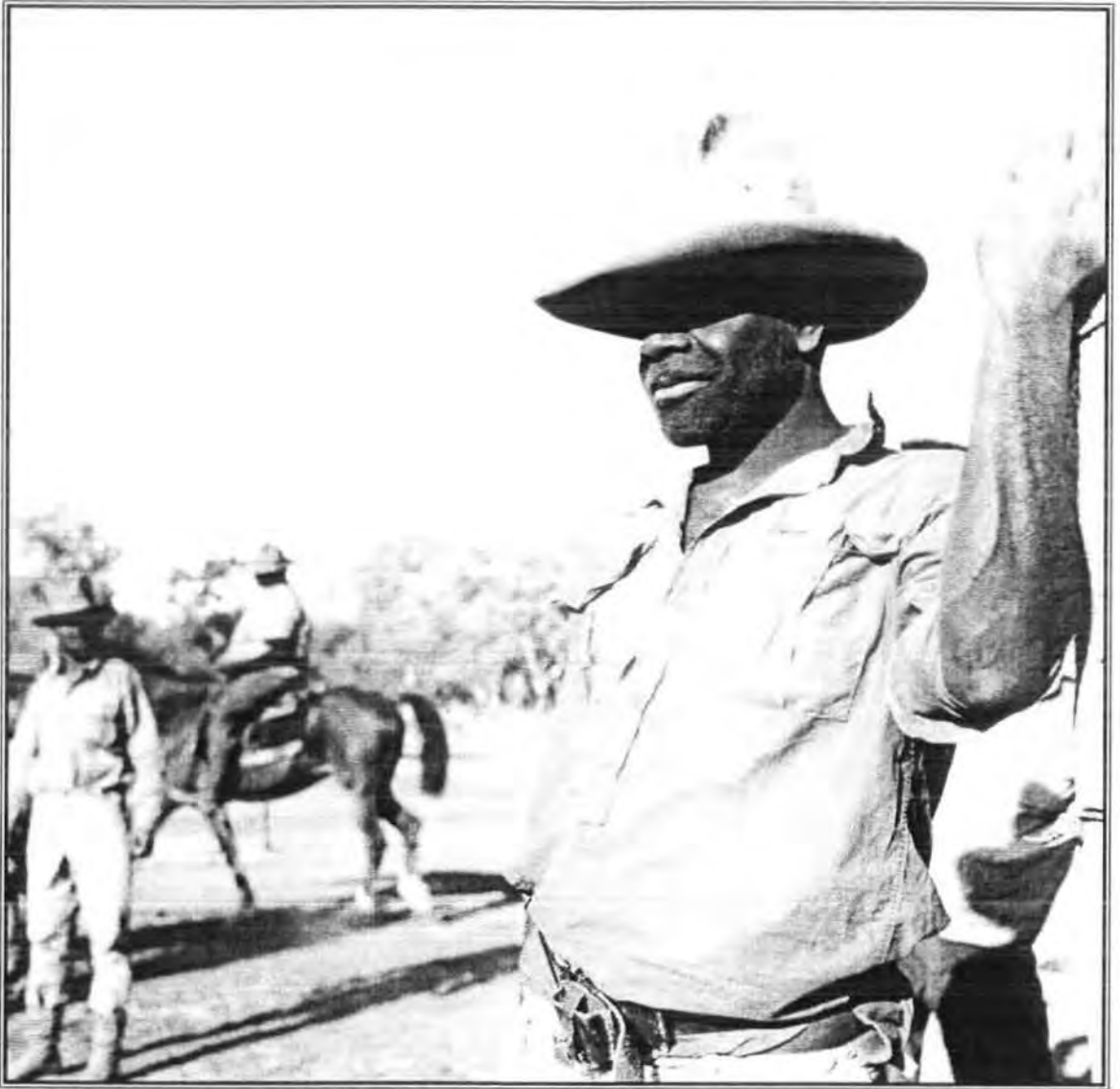


37. 'Big Paddy', Aboriginal Stockman.

⁴⁰⁴ Rowley, C.D., *The Remote Aborigines*, ANU, 1971 page 249.



38. *Stockman.*



39. *Stockman, Rosewood Station, c. 1950s.*



40. *Rosewood Stockmen watering horses on the Behn River.*

Chapter 13

Water Resources

The station rainfall record had been kept since 1886 and was the only continuous record kept in the North of Australia.⁴⁶⁵ The annual rainfall usually averaged 23 inches. The wet season began usually in November, with monsoonal rain from January to middle of March. The climate was hot and humid in the wet season and mild in winter. In his report Kelly said:

Lowest recorded annual rainfall was 8.69 inches. In 33 months, 1933 to 1935, the total fall did not equal the annual average of 23 inches. From the beginning of 1927 to the end of 1936, the total fall was 70 inches below the annual average of 23 inches.⁴⁶⁶

From the outset when Kilfoyle began the management of Rosewood in 1922, one of his first concerns was that the station should be watered so that it could be utilised all year round. Until Kilfoyle took over the management of Rosewood, there were no artificial waters. The Behn River, which ran through the station, like most of the big rivers in the Kimberleys had permanent water holes, even in the very dry seasons. The Keep and East Baines Rivers also rise on the station. There were numerous creeks, which ran a banker during the wet, but often failed in the dry season. The Station also had three big springs near the eastern boundary and a large waterhole four kilometres from the homestead. This waterhole was permanent, but other waterholes might seem permanent up to as many as up to eight years, and then fail. In the main the waterholes depended on the amount of rain received during the wet season.

⁴⁶⁵ *Rosewood Rainfall Record Book - 1886-1940*. The Record Book is still kept on Rosewood Station.

⁴⁶⁶ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, (Appendix A) page 10.

Reg Durack remembered Kilfoyle installing troughs at Sugar Springs, where he put in 'unusual plumbing works that went with the contour of the land'.⁴⁰⁷

In April 1934, the Federal Government subsidised a contractor to bore for water near Rosewood. 'Over £300 worth of equipment was shipped to Wyndham and it will be possible to bore to 1200ft, although water is expected at 300ft'.⁴⁰⁸ The contractor's wife, Mrs L.A. Brown was the diviner and the expedition was apparently successful.

According to J.H. Kelly in his report, the geological formation on Rosewood consisted of 'about three-fifths basaltic, two-fifths limestone, with a minor sandstone intrusion on the Auvergne boundary.'⁴⁰⁹ Kilfoyle put down bores on the station wherever possible, mainly where limestone and basalt were found, as it was thought there was always underground water and each time was very successful.⁴¹⁰

In 1939 Kilfoyle contracted to have a 30,000 gallon earth tank built at the homestead. The tank was to double as a swimming pool and to be used for irrigation. The Governor General, Lord Gowrie on a visit to the Kimberleys, at the same time as the tank was being built, was asked by the builder if he would lay the foundation stone.

His Excellency replied 'I am pretty good at that sort of thing', and obliged. The *West Australia* reported:

The ceremony was performed. His Excellency declared the stone well and truly laid before an audience of gaily-clad natives, whose

⁴⁰⁷ Durack, Reginald, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995.

⁴⁰⁸ *The Daily News*, 15 April, 1934.

⁴⁰⁹ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, Appendix A). page 7.

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.*,

shirts were selected for sartorial brilliance rather than the European method of political expression.⁴¹¹

The tank supplied water to the homestead which by 1939, hot and cold water was flowing. It also had a septic tank. The vegetable and flower gardens with fruit trees were irrigated by the tank. Girls from the Forrest River mission worked in the garden and had shows of zinnias and marigolds. As time progressed, Kilfoyle installed mechanical pumping, which kept the herds supplied with water during October, as close to the grass as possible.⁴¹²

In 1937, the Federal Government established a committee to inquire into the land and land industries of the Northern Territory. When the report was finished, it became known as the 'Payne Fletcher Report'. Payne and Fletcher visited Rosewood, and were so impressed with Kilfoyle's management of the station, that when writing the report, used Rosewood as an example of 'what can be done on a holding of reasonable size, moderately improved and well managed'. The Report went on to say:

It is to be noted that this lessee uses the same stock route as every other station and his holding is not superior country to that of other lessees. The success of this station can be attributed to its careful and thorough management, to the close personal supervision of the owner and to the policy of continuous improvement. What one lessee has done, others may do by improving their present methods.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ *The West Australian*, 11 July, 1939.

⁴¹² Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, (Appendix A).

⁴¹³ Payne, W.L. and Fletcher, J.W., 1937 No. 4. (Fifteen Parliament). The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia., *Report of the Board of Inquiry, appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia.*, dated 10 October, 1937, page 877.

Chapter 14

The War and Post War Years

With the increasing likelihood of Japan's entry into the Second World War, Kilfoyle seems to have felt pressure to use all available resources in developing Rosewood and this led him into another brush with the law.

In the middle of 1941, M.P. Durack recorded in his diary that there were rumours that an arrest had been made on Rosewood relating to 4.5 tons of Government windmill property being stolen some months before and found on Rosewood. He went on to record that Police Constable Ryall of Timber Creek had arrived at Argyle and confirmed that one Norman Osman had been arrested and Kilfoyle was also implicated.⁴¹⁴ M.P. Durack records a fortnight later that 'Kilfoyle not yet charged'.⁴¹⁵ Following the events at Rosewood closely, M.P. Durack records on 10 September '[Constable] Stott is giving Kilfoyle a bit of time to sort his affairs - he then will be charged with having stolen Government property on his premises'.⁴¹⁶

The Timber Creek Police Station records state that the Government windmill equipment which was at the Government Bore, Rockhole, (south of Inverway Station) had been stolen the previous year. PC Stott, interviewed Eric Nicholson, the Manager, and a yard builder, Jack Beck, on Inverway Station. He then checked the station's diary for the previous year. It appeared from the station diary, that Norman Osman, who owned a 'Thornycroft truck', with another

⁴¹⁴ Durack, M.P., *Diary*, 20 August, 1941.

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*, 2 September, 1941.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, 10 September, 1941.

man and some Aborigines had passed through Inverway in August 1940. The reason for this visit to Inverway was to pick up a 'portion of frame for his truck'. The diary also confirmed that Osman went through again in April 1941. When interviewing Nicholson, PC Stott was told that when Nicholson visited the Government Bore at Rockhole at the end of July 1940, the equipment was still there, but by the 20th August it had disappeared. PC Stott visited Rosewood on 26 August 1941 and questioned an Aboriginal man named Joe Beckett. He told PC Stott that the equipment was on Rosewood, and what had happened. Stott recorded the following:

Norman Osman and another white man (who worked at VRD) and himself removed material from GB Rockhole per Osman's truck and that he visited the bore on three occasions within a week. ... some of the material was at the limestone (west of station) engine on its own, (south of station) and balance of material near Cowday Yard (2 places) and that a month ago, Osman and ? the other white man took casing and a galvanised -iron tank into W.A.⁴¹⁷

PC Stott accompanied by a tracker had arrived at Rosewood on horseback. He requested the loan of a truck and driver from Kilfoyle to visit the places in question. He also asked Kilfoyle to accompany him. When PC Stott told Kilfoyle that it was thought that the stolen goods were on his property, Stott recorded Kilfoyle's answer; 'it may be' and 'then admitted having heard about a larceny from the bore in question'. Kilfoyle admitted that he knew there was an engine on his property 'but did not investigate nor report to police stating 'I wouldn't report anything to the Police, I always like to see peace and quietness' but denied knowing about the rest of the equipment. The Aboriginal Joe Beckett led PC Stott and Kilfoyle to the different locations, where the material had been hidden. PC Stott arrested Osman and detained ten Aborigines who were then transported to Wyndham. PC Stott recorded 'prisoner [Osman] appeared to be

⁴¹⁷ Timber Creek Police Station, *Record Book*, dated 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 August, 1941.

very worried, his razor was taken away and he is being constantly watched'. Arrangements were made to have the equipment transported to Wyndham and then sent by ship to Darwin. Constable Fitzer arrived from Darwin, via Wyndham to interview witnesses. Constable Fitzer interviewed a W. McGowan at the *Six Mile* who gave a voluntary statement. Constables Fitzer and Stott then proceeded to Halls Creek to interview another witness, Kevin Kay who also gave a 'voluntary' statement. Kay was asked to accompany the police back to Rosewood. On 9 September Constable Fitzer and Stott cautioned, then questioned John Augustus Charles Kilfoyle on a receiving charge. PC Stott then recorded 'Gave him (2) days to attend to business prior to arresting'.⁴¹⁸ While Kilfoyle was organising his departure from Rosewood, Joe Edwards, the gardener on Rosewood reported to the police that the witness Kevin Kay had disappeared with '22 rifle and a cartridge.'

The Police and Tracker went looking to Kay and PC Stott recorded:

..followed tracks of Kevin Kay who was found to have walked 20 paces and then fired a 22 rifle calibre cartridge into his chest, he apparently walked a few yards and discharged a second shot (both near the nipple of the left breast) placed rifle against a tree, contd: walking for 20 yards, then ran for 87 yards on bed of creek in heavy sand, walked 110 yards and was found lying on his right side, half way up bank in long grass with his right arm supporting his head⁴¹⁹

Constable Fitzer went on to record:

He was conscious and was very weak through loss of blood.....a mattress and brandy was obtained from Kilfoyle.....when Const..Stott said to Kay 'what did you do this for' he replied 'I couldn't stick it any longer, it would be gaol for them if I gave evidence wouldn't it?'

⁴¹⁸ Timber Creek Police Station *Records.*, dated 9,10,11 September, 1995.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 11 September, 1941.

Constable Fitzer took Kay to Argyle, where he contacted Wyndham hospital who sent a plane out to the Argyle airstrip to take Kay direct to Darwin hospital for treatment. Kilfoyle was formally charged on 12 September and taken to Wyndham where he and Osman and the Aboriginal witness were shipped on the *Koolama* to Darwin. On their arrival in Darwin, Stott records: 'Kilfoyle admitted to bail in afternoon for £100 and Osman £200'.⁴²⁰

On 25 September, Osman appeared before Special Magistrate C.K. Ward Esquire. The case took two days, but ended up being 'thrown out because no evidence of identification available'. One of the witness who could identify the equipment failed to attend the Court and another when in the witness stand changed his evidence.

Kilfoyle's case was due to commence on 30 September, but when the witness failed to attend, the Magistrate 'ruled adjournment could not be granted and there was insufficient evidence'. The case was dismissed.⁴²¹ Kilfoyle returned to Rosewood without any further incident with the Timber Creek police. Considering his earlier brush with the law, this episode might have affected his local reputation, but within three months Japan had entered the War, and the inhabitants of the Northern Territory had more pressing matters to think about.

Until 1941, the Wyndham Meat works provided the sole outlet for cattle properties in the East Kimberley District and adjacent parts of the Northern Territory. The entry of Japan into the War in December 1941 transformed the scene. Kilfoyle, who was with cattle in Katherine a few days after Pearl Harbour, noted in his journal the number of men fleeing from Darwin:

⁴²⁰ *ibid.*, 16 September, 1941

⁴²¹ *ibid.*, 30 September, 1941.

Many car loads of men fleeing from a likely war zone, some of the men nearly hysterical from the way they spoke whilst drinking at the Bar of Bill Pearce's Daly Waters Hotel.⁴²²

Early in 1942 the armed forces set up a meatworks at Katherine for the purposes of supplying the large concentration of airmen and soldiers who were rushed to northern Australia at that time, and this became the market for beef producers in the region between 1942 and 1944. The Commonwealth Government offered a flat rate of £5 per head, which marked a considerable improvement at the prices which growers had been receiving at Wyndham during the past twenty years. All Rosewood cattle were disposed of in this way during the war years and, although it was not possible for Kilfoyle to invest profits in improvements, the income accumulated at this time provided a useful nest egg for the post war years.

During the war years especially, Thelma Kilfoyle must have felt the isolation. The homestead had a piano and excellent library, but the Kilfoyles only contact with the outside world was through the wireless. Thelma told how during the war, she spent a year without seeing another white woman. 'She only stayed for morning tea ... and then it was another six months before I saw another'. Another hardship suffered during the war was that they would go at least six months without receiving mail.⁴²³ This was a typical story in the Kimberley. Nothing had really changed. Back in 1923, a visitor from England recorded that when she and her husband visited Auvergne station, it was the first time in nine months that the station manager's wife had seen a white woman.⁴²⁴ The transport improvements of the 1930s reduced such isolation for a time, but the

⁴²² Bolton, G.C., M.A. Thesis, *Kimberley Pastoral Industry from 1885-Present.*, 1953, page 294, quoting from Rosewood Rainfall Book.

⁴²³ *Western Mail*, 27 November, 1947.

⁴²⁴ *Western Mail*, 13 November, 1923.

disruptions of wartime soon put an end to all but the most essential travel and communication.

A Property worth filming

The end of the war found the Australian public much more conscious of the importance of its North. Thousands of servicemen had spent time there when invasion was feared, and knew at first hand the conditions under which pastoralists and their families and staff worked. Government policy promised added emphasis on northern development, and examples of successful adaptation to Northern conditions were frequently sought. At this favourable moment Rosewood was seen as a model of what might be done by intelligent owner-management.

By 1946, the improvements were such on Rosewood that it was considered to be one of the best run stations in the North of Australia. Kilfoyle was proud of his achievements, and contacted Arthur Viveash, a well known commercial photographer in Perth to invite him to travel to Rosewood and film 'life on a station'. Completed at the end of 1946, the film described:

native stockmen mustering and drafting cattle, branding scenes, the station's herd of Angora goats....'scruffing' calves and yearlings and breaking in wild cows to the milking bails⁴²⁵

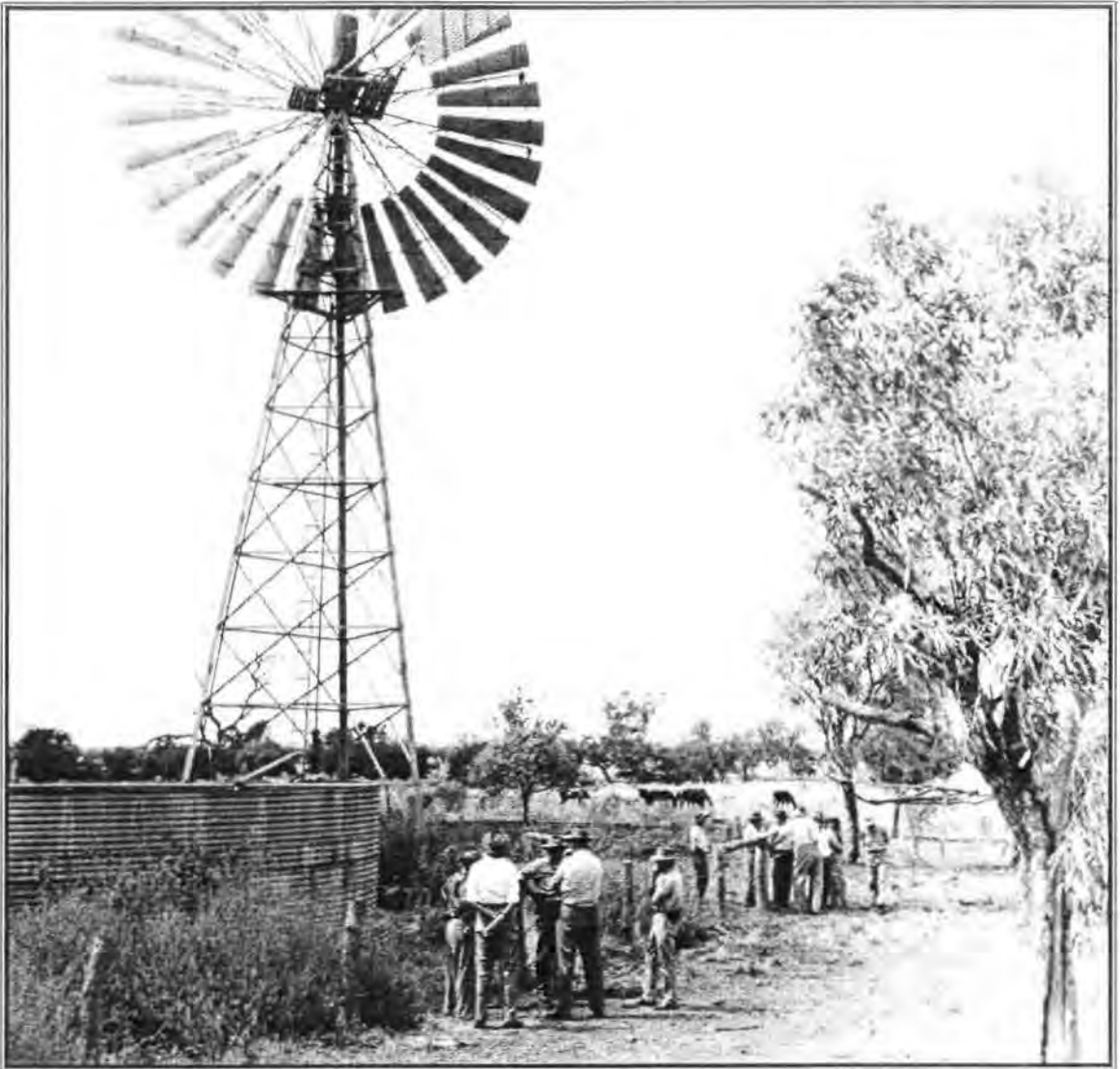
The Western Australian Institute of Advertising Inc. held a preview. *Beef - on the Hoof! - Cameras and Cattle - in the Kimberleys!* Invitations were sent for the event which was held on 12 December, 1946, at the Red Cross Club Rooms, Withnell Chambers, Howard Street, Perth.⁴²⁶ Everyone was there except Kilfoyle. His accountant, A. Sims, took Kilfoyle's bank manager along. Mr

⁴²⁵ *Western Mail*, 26 December, 1946. The film is in the possession of Mr. Jim Durack in Perth.

⁴²⁶ Copy of invitation in possession of G.F. Byrne.

Higgins, the then Manager of Southern Cross Windmill and Engine Company Limited, wrote to Kilfoyle at Rosewood:

I would like to tell you that last night I attended a Preview of the movie that Mr Viveash took this year on Rosewood.....Mr Viveash explained that you had not yet seen the film, but I would like to say here how very much I enjoyed it, as I am sure everyone else did who saw it, and the audience included many prominent pastoral and business men.⁴²⁷



41. Windmill with 22' wing-span on Rosewood Station.

⁴²⁷ Letter from J. Higgins to J. Kilfoyle, dated 13 December, 1946. In possession of G.F. Byrne.

Rosewood had an abundance of water which included permanent pools, numerous springs and '22 windmills all equipped with large storage tanks, troughs.' The windmills were pumping water into new troughs which were arranged in cement blocks, for up to 1,000 head of cattle each day. Kilfoyle had also made arrangements with Southern Cross Windmills in Perth to send up three experts each year for fourteen to sixteen weeks to 'overhaul all water supply equipment' and put up new equipment, and organised supplies and parts that may be needed for the following year. Whilst on the station, the Southern Cross Windmill people also maintained 'the station lighting and auxiliary pumping plants'.⁴²⁸

There were six branding yards with iron furnaces for heating brands. Each of the yards had water connected, and a horse paddock attached. There were seven, new, big tailing yards. Four yards had additional larger paddocks for holding cattle. Three of these large paddocks had troughs with running water also connected.

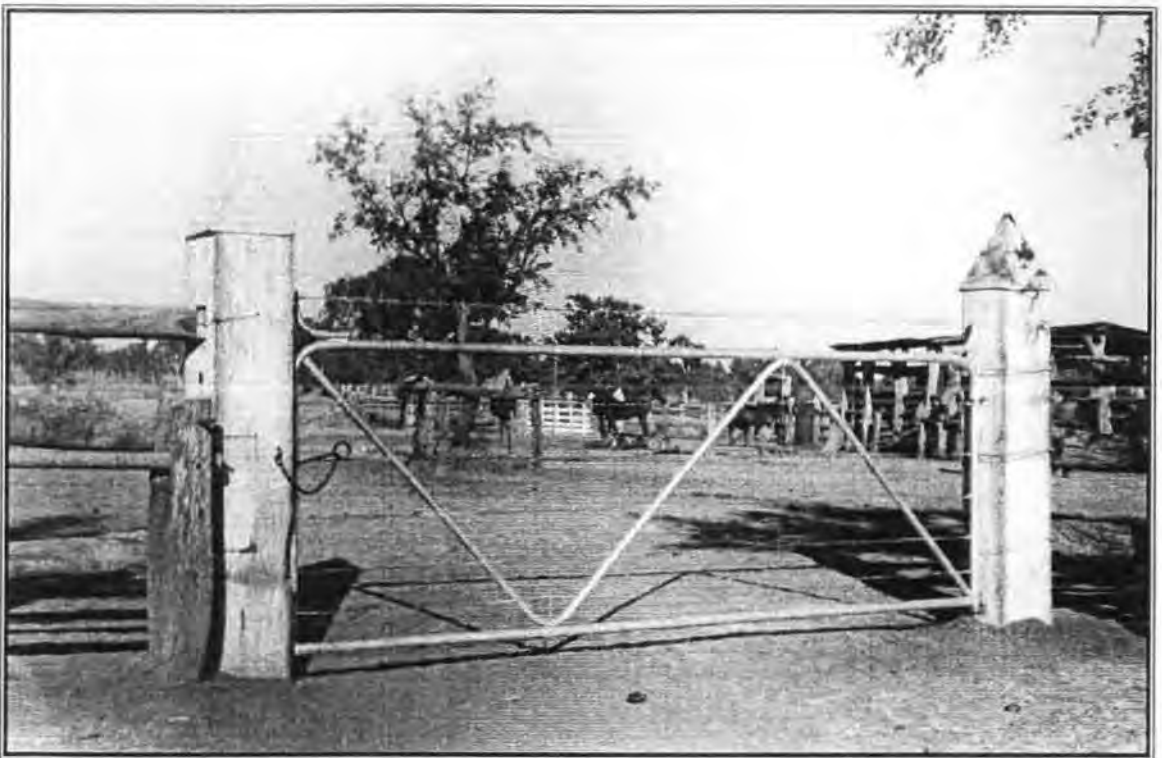
In 1926, Kilfoyle had erected a weatherboard and iron homestead. It had five main rooms and as with most homesteads, a verandah all round, and in keeping with the North, the kitchen, meat house, and store were separate from the living quarters.

The men's quarters were close to the homestead and were comfortable. Kilfoyle designed and built six large iron huts at the branding yards and also erected three boundary riders' huts.

⁴²⁸ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, (Appendix A) pages 9,11.

By 1946 there was 160 miles of good fencing. In addition to the branding yards and holding paddocks, part of the fencing surrounded fourteen paddocks. All fence posts were regularly treated with arsenic, caustic soda or oil for protection against termites. With the controlled burning for ticks, the area near the fences and posts were kept clear of rubbish or grasses to prevent fires.

Since taking over the management of Rosewood, Kilfoyle systematically continued to improve the plant and equipment. By 1946, he had two 1941 model 3-ton Chev. trucks. The toolroom illustrated his fussiness, every item had to be documented when taken out and checked in on return.⁴²⁹ The saddles, harness and various tools for shoeing, fencing and building were of the highest quality and ample spare parts were available for the wet season.⁴³⁰



42. Gate at Homestead Paddock showing meticulous construction.

⁴²⁹ These books are still being used on Rosewood.

⁴³⁰ Kelly, J.H., *Report.*, (Appendix A) page 12.

DELIVERIES TO WYNDHAM MEATWORKS FROM ROSEWOOD STATION

YEAR	ANIMALS lb.	APPROVED lb.	PASSED lb.	REJECTED lb.	CONDEMNED lb.	TOTAL lb.
1932	BULLOCKS & COWS STRAGGLERS	190,157 798	439,780 6,725			
	TOTAL	190,955	446,505	197,232	27,237	861,929
1933	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	154,779 17,656 4,187	472,633 39,964 33,442	215,959 38,203 13,952	22,380 5,975 473	865,751 102,798 52,054
	TOTAL	176,622	546,039	268,114	29,828	1,020,603
1934	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	69,761 1,307 3,020	466,643 32,172 16,925	216,067 23,551 12,725	11,082 4,222 1,624	763,553 61,252 37,294
	TOTAL	74,088	516,740	252,343	16,928	862,099
1935	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	94,048 5,721 4,639	560,534 104,329 52,199	206,584 45,046 23,849	11,516 10,440 1,836	872,662 165,536 82,725
	TOTAL	104,408	717,062	275,478	23,794	1,120,943
1936	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	129,603 1,175 5,625	441,223 40,595 40,693	189,626 67,806 26,211	5,402 12,168 4,666	765,754 121,744 77,136
	TOTAL	136,403	522,511	283,643	22,236	964,694
1937	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	86,977 3,536 1,367	407,933 36,489 22,834	221,731 79,038 27,287	10,017 10,193 3,269	726,664 189,258 54,477
	TOTAL	91,780	467,256	328,056	23,499	870,399
1938	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	152,907 8,624 -	305,218 188,080 17,182	240,685 107,365 16,814	5,164 4,380 1,380	1,004,174 308,449 37,376
	TOTAL	161,531	510,480	367,064	10,924	1,349,999
1939	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	69,032 2,328 2,454	339,822 110,129 26,421	339,519 107,866 24,622	7,929 3,585 267	1,050,302 223,605 53,764
	TOTAL	73,814	476,372	472,009	11,781	1,327,571
1940	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	165,701 - 4,235	502,200 16,590 25,255	293,895 33,350 26,837	7,226 5,526 143	969,021 55,465 57,474
	TOTAL	169,936	544,049	354,082	12,895	1,081,360
1941	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	244,216 3,735 4,451	324,178 59,036 14,049	195,571 65,689 17,402	4,391 1,293 -	768,356 129,973 35,902
	TOTAL	252,402	397,263	278,652	5,684	934,231
1942	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	320,675 6,407 63,782	553,648 13,109 275,380	270,725 19,175 144,100	8,072 3,963 18,768	1,153,320 44,654 522,030
	TOTAL	413,064	842,137	434,000	30,803	1,720,004
1943	BULLOCKS COWS STRAGGLERS	205,722 2,713 125,401	556,327 10,698 235,929	397,728 8,959 152,217	12,818 641 10,800	1,172,595 23,011 525,347
	TOTAL	333,836	801,954	558,904	24,259	1,720,953

Please note that during the war years from 1942 to 1945, cattle were sent to the army abattoirs at Katherine in the Northern Territory. These figures were compiled from material in J.H. Kelly's *Report on the Beef Cattle Industry in Northern Australia*, Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Economics, Canberra, 1952.

Chapter 15

Selling the Station

Kilfoyle began to think about selling the station and retiring to the South. It might have been logical for Connor Doherty and Durack to seize the opportunity of buying out a neighbour whose free and easy habits with their unbranded calves had caused them considerable annoyance, but old M.P. Durack was also beginning to think about selling out, and Kilfoyle was obliged to try his luck on the open market. The property was advertised :

The Well and Favourably Known Pastoral Property "Rosewood" Station, Northern Territory via Wyndham. 1147 Square Miles of Pastoral Lease.

Elders Smith & Co Limited have received instructions from the owner, J.A. Kilfoyle Esq., to offer his well-known Northern Territory Station for private sale.⁴³¹

Eventually, in 1947 he sold Rosewood to W.L. Buckland, a millionaire from Melbourne for £92,000.⁴³² Buckland was the nephew of Sir Thomas Buckland, a veteran of the Charters Towers goldfields who had been chairman of the Bank of New South Wales in his old age in the 1930s, but William Buckland himself owed his wealth to a chain of retail bicycle shops in Melbourne. At the time of the sale, the station had:

26,000 head of shorthorn cows composed of:
12,000 males.
6,500 spayed cows.
7,500 breeding cows.
Approximately 800 mixed horses.
40 donkeys and mules.
approximately 250 Angora goats.⁴³³

⁴³¹ *Country Life*, Sydney, 1947.

⁴³² Kilfoyle, J.A.C., *Contract of Sale and Purchase to W.L. Buckland, Esq.*, 19 August, 1947.

⁴³³ Kelly, J.H. *Report.*, page 10.

Kilfoyle may have been influenced by the recollection that after the First World War, beef prices had gone into a long recession, and he may have calculated that the period of strong post war demand in the later 1940s would not last. On the other hand, he also had Thelma to consider. She had spent nearly ten years on Rosewood and had probably influenced him to thinking about retiring. Kilfoyle had no interest in Thelma's son taking over the station and having no children of his own to inherit the property, it was understandable that in his mid-fifties he would want to take the opportunity of leading a more comfortable way of life.

Reg Durack was able to throw some light on to why Kilfoyle didn't choose to retire and employ a manager on Rosewood. He met Kilfoyle in the passage going into Connor Doherty and Durack's office in Howard Street, Perth, just after Rosewood had been sold. Durack said 'Jack had his hanky in his hand and was mopping his brow. I then asked him why he didn't put a manager on Rosewood and retain an interest in the place [Rosewood]. Kilfoyle replied:

O'Dear O'Dear Reg! I'd hate a manager to come up to me one day and tell me it was impossible to do something on Rosewood.

Reg Durack said he didn't realise what he meant until some thirty years later when he sold *Kildurk*, 'I then understood exactly how he felt as I would have felt the same way if I had not sold Kildurk and employed a manager'.⁴³⁴

When the decision to leave was finally made, Kilfoyle was concerned about what would become of the Aboriginal employees who had been so loyal to him over the previous twenty five years. After much thought, and legal advice from

⁴³⁴ Durack, Reginald, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995.

lawyers in both Perth and Melbourne, he decided that a trust fund should be set up. An amount of £8,000 was invested and the interest paid as a monthly pension to the Aboriginal people, who had spent most of their life on Rosewood. An article in *The West Australian* sums up his feelings regarding his relationship with his Aboriginal employees:

They were loyal and true-blue and they stuck by me through all the ups and downs....In return I am making preparation so that they can spend the eventide of their lives in comfort as a reward.⁴³⁵

The amounts were decided by Kilfoyle partly on a basis of length of service, but principally on the grounds of individual needs. The oldest, Nipper, who was then aged about sixty years old and described by Kilfoyle 'as one of my oldest friends',⁴³⁶ and who had by that time been a Rosewood hand for more than fifty years, was to receive £14 a month. Pluto, the same age as Kilfoyle, received £10 per month. Pluto had been abandoned by his tribe at the age of six or seven, when 'he fell ill' during a raid on Rosewood cattle. He had stayed on Rosewood ever since. The amounts then varied down to Monkey who was the youngest. He was to get £2. The trust was such that as each person died his pension would be distributed in proportion to the others.⁴³⁷ Kilfoyle also gave the Aborigines the pick of fifty of his best horses on the station.

When all recipients of the Trust passed away, Kilfoyle instructed that the capital was to be divided in the following way:

Two thirds to be divided between Roman Catholic Mission, Aboriginal Schools and Hospitals in Derby and north of Derby for the benefit of Aboriginals only and the other third to be divided between other Aboriginal hospitals and Missions in Derby and north of Derby for the benefit of Aboriginals only.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ *The West Australia*, 22 November, 1947.

⁴³⁶ *The West Australia*, 25 June, 1959.

⁴³⁷ Kilfoyle, J.A.C., *Declaration of Trust*, dated 4 April, 1952, in possession of G.F. Byrne.

⁴³⁸ *ibid.*,

On leaving the North at the end of 1947, Kilfoyle and his wife initially moved to Sydney. They had a number of friends there, some dating back to Kilfoyle's school days. Some commentators predicted that he might play a part in official policy making. 'What a valuable Member for or Administrator of the Northern Territory he would make' wrote one journalist in 1948.⁴³⁹ Kilfoyle had no such ambition and later, moved on to Melbourne. In 1952 he returned for his first visit to the Kimberleys. This was on an air tour with a group of southern cattlemen. The tour was organised to learn about the workings of the Air Beef Limited in the Kimberleys.



43. *Rosewood revisited. A group of Southern Cattlemen visiting Rosewood in 1952.*

⁴³⁹ *Country Life Stock and Station Journal*, 21 May, 1948.

Kilfoyle, impressed with the idea of airlifting beef, thought that the days of cattle droving would be over. He believed that cattle would be 'killed where they were raised and the meat sent by air for shipment.'⁴⁰ During this trip, Kilfoyle expressed his disappointment to Frank O'Loghlen, the then editor of *Country Life*:

Dearie, dearie me.....its just as well Thelma didn't come she wouldn't like to see these children so untidy....Thelma wouldn't like to see Nipper in that old suit.⁴¹

In 1953, not having the opportunity to travel Europe before, the Kilfoyles left Australia and made their headquarters in a flat in Berkeley Square, London. A far cry from the Kimberleys he recorded : 'In my wildest dreams on Rosewood, never did I consider that it would come my way to be able to spend five years in England or abroad'. Each year, they spent time in London and the surrounding countryside. Kilfoyle, impressed with the English countryside wrote to his cousin in Australia in 1957 :

In rural England, one can see square miles of the most perfect pastoral scenes that one could ever imagine,intersected by clear running streams and green pastures everywhere. And we must never forget their really beautiful wide spreading big shady trees. Oh what I would have given for a few of them on Rosewood.⁴²

Although based in Berkeley Square, Kilfoyle kept up with matters relating to the cattle industry in Australia. He received copies of rural magazines, and in turn would write letters to the editor, giving his point of view on branding or the spaying of cattle, one such letter had the heading : 'Boiling the Quart in

⁴⁰ *Australia New Zealand Weekly*, 7 November, 1953.

⁴¹ *Country Life*, 18 August, 1952.

⁴² Letter from J.A.C. Kilfoyle to Jim Byrne, dated 15 October, 1957.

Berkeley Square.⁴⁴³

Time was also spent travelling abroad, usually by cargo ships. Travelling for three months at a time, they visited Russia, West Coast of South America, Egypt, and journeyed a thousand miles up the Amazon.



44. On the RMS Queen Mary on way to New York, April 1956. L to R: English Shipping Magnate, Thelma, Jack, and wife of Shipping Magnate.



45. Jack Kilfoyle outside Ukraina Hotel, Moscow, c.1955.

⁴⁴³ *The Australian Shorthorn*, January, 1957.

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(Sello del Consulado)

J. A. Kilgyle

[Handwritten signature]
Firma del funcionario

de _____ de _____

Recibí los documentos _____

Visitador de Inmigración

While living in England, Kilfoyle maintained constant contact with his solicitors and accountants in Perth regarding the welfare of the Aboriginal people at Rosewood. The manager on Rosewood, Hector Fuller, had authority to write to the accountants on behalf of the Aboriginal people and request what ever their needs were. Items like portable gramophones, meat mincing machines, blankets and pipes, were among the items that found their way back to Rosewood.

Kilfoyle also wrote to Nipper. The Manager or overseer would read out Kilfoyle's letters and Nipper would then relay the news and messages to the 'boys'. In 1959, on a visit back to Australia the Kilfoyles bought a station wagon and made a 2,500-mile journey to Rosewood to visit their old employees and to judge for themselves whether the pension scheme was effective. This was to be Kilfoyle's last trip back to the Kimberleys.⁴⁴⁴



47. *Thelma and Jack Kilfoyle, 1959, at the start of a 2,500 mile journey to visit Rosewood.*

⁴⁴⁴ *The West Australian*, 25 June, 1959.



48. 'The Old Kilfoyle People'.

When he was a boy, Kilfoyle had started collecting stamps and when he sold Rosewood, he began collecting them seriously. In 1961 his collection was put up for sale for £35,000.00⁴⁴⁵ and was regarded by experts as the premier twentieth-century collection of any one country. It bought him gold medals from New York, Oslo, Stockholm, Johannesburg and Helsinki.

When asked in a newspaper interview to comment on his collection he said:

If I do anything, I have to do it thoroughly. With my stamps I have held to the same principle as in my cattle station - everything has had to be first class and in the best order I can make it.⁴⁴⁶

In December 1961, the Kilfoyles returned to Australia. Four years previously, he wrote: 'under normal conditions we intend to return to Australia late next year, and I suppose find a place, probably in the West for us to settle down'. He bought a house at 45a Mount Street, Perth. His health was failing. He had chronic emphysema for several years and living in England he also became a sufferer of chronic bronchitis. On the 26 May the following year he passed away at home, aged 69 years.⁴⁴⁷ A Requiem Mass was held at St Mary's Cathedral in Perth. It was attended by many of the descendants of those who had travelled overland with his father in the 1880s. His internment took place at Karrkatta Cemetery in Perth. Thelma Kilfoyle survived her husband by 10 years. She passed away on 5 March, 1972. She was buried in the same grave as her husband.

Kilfoyle's will provided very comfortably for Thelma. She owned the house in

⁴⁴⁵ See Appendix . . . Advertisement for *Australian Commonwealth - The J.A. Kilfoyle - Gold Medal Collection*.

⁴⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, from Staff Correspondent in London, 3 February, 1961.

⁴⁴⁷ *Death Certificate*, Registration 1962/1506.

Mount Street, had other properties and shares. She also had access to interest and dividends from Kilfoyle Investments Pty Ltd. On her death, Kilfoyle Investments Pty Ltd as set out in Kilfoyle's Will, was divided after an amount was left to his Byrne and Mayhew relations to:

Two thirds to the Sisters of St. John of God for use to help the
Aboriginals north of Broome and the other third to the Australian
Inland Mission for use to help Aboriginals north of Derby.

To her son Peter, Thelma Ryan left her own money and property including a house in Hamersley Street Cottesloe where she had lived five years before her death. When Peter Ryan died unmarried in 1992, he left the major part of his estate to *Imagination Enterprises Pty Ltd*, supposedly a subsidiary of the 'orange' Rajneeshi movement.⁴⁴⁸ This outcome would have confirmed Jack Kilfoyle's misgivings about his step son.

The Kilfoyle family, especially Jack Kilfoyle, have frequently been singled out as example of the beneficial effects of resident ownership in the management of North Australian cattle properties. In 1936, and then again in 1947, Gordon Buchanan, perhaps the most highly respected veteran cattleman in the region, contrasted Kilfoyle's outstanding performance in comparison with large absentee firms such as Vestseys and Bovril.⁴⁴⁹ Another experienced pastoralist, Reg Durack, despite his family's moments of exasperation with Kilfoyle, summed him up as the best of his generation, with only Charlie Schultz of Humbert River station in any way comparable.⁴⁵⁰ Official confirmation of these opinions may be found from a number of sources ranging from the Payne

⁴⁴⁸ *Supreme Court of Western Australia Probate Jurisdiction*, 24 July, 1992. Peter Ryan died on 25 April, 1992.

⁴⁴⁹ *The Northern Standard*, 24 March, 1936; *The West Australian*, 27 June, 1947.

⁴⁵⁰ Durack, Reginald, *Interview*, 21 May, 1995.

Fletcher Report of 1937 to J.H. Kelly's Report in 1952. Considering the habitually independent - minded Northern cattlemen there is a remarkable unanimity about these opinions.

A close examination of the surviving records confirms this verdict. A number of special factors need to be stressed. First, it was probably relevant that both Kilfoyles enjoyed considerable authority in planning policies for the management of their property. Thomas was the acknowledged senior, in age and experience, to his colleagues Tom Hayes and 'Galway Jerry' Durack. Similarly, Jack was an only son who, unlike the Duracks, did not have to reconcile the claims of competing family members or (after buying out the Holmes family) of partners. On the other hand, he benefited from the advice of mentors such as his uncle W.J. Byrne, owner/manager of Tipperary station until 1941, and M.P. Durack of Argyle. Secondly, it is impossible to escape the suspicion that the Kilfoyles benefited from their proximity to the larger and more unwieldy Durack properties, not simply in terms of any Durack cleanskins who may have finished with the TK brand, but also in remaining on sufficiently good terms with the Duracks to benefit from some of the economies of scale which went with the larger property. When all this is considered, it remains that the Kilfoyles, partly through close attention to the day to day techniques of management, but also because of their unusually enlightened attitude towards their Aboriginal employees, provided a model which other resident owners often envied but seldom followed effectively.

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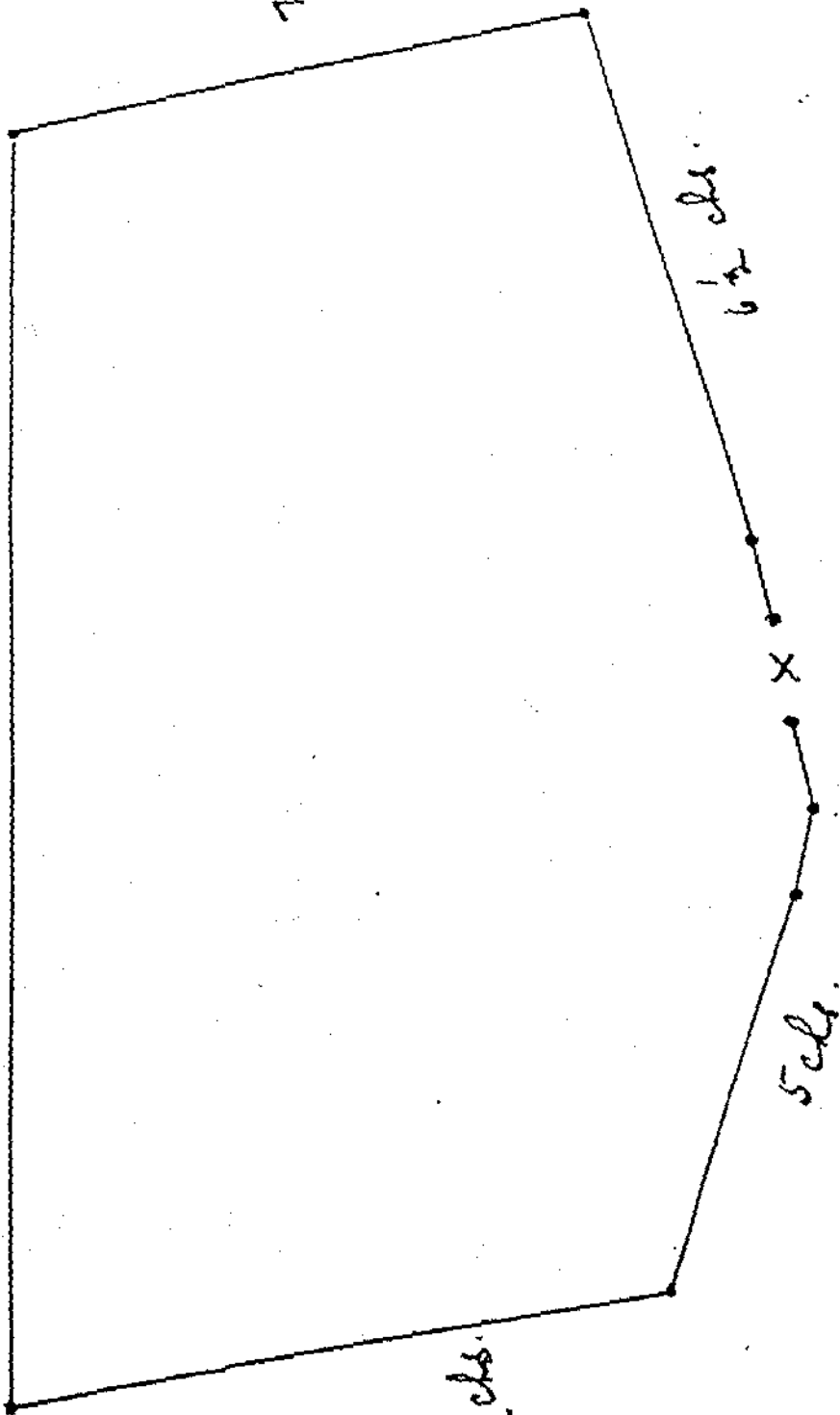
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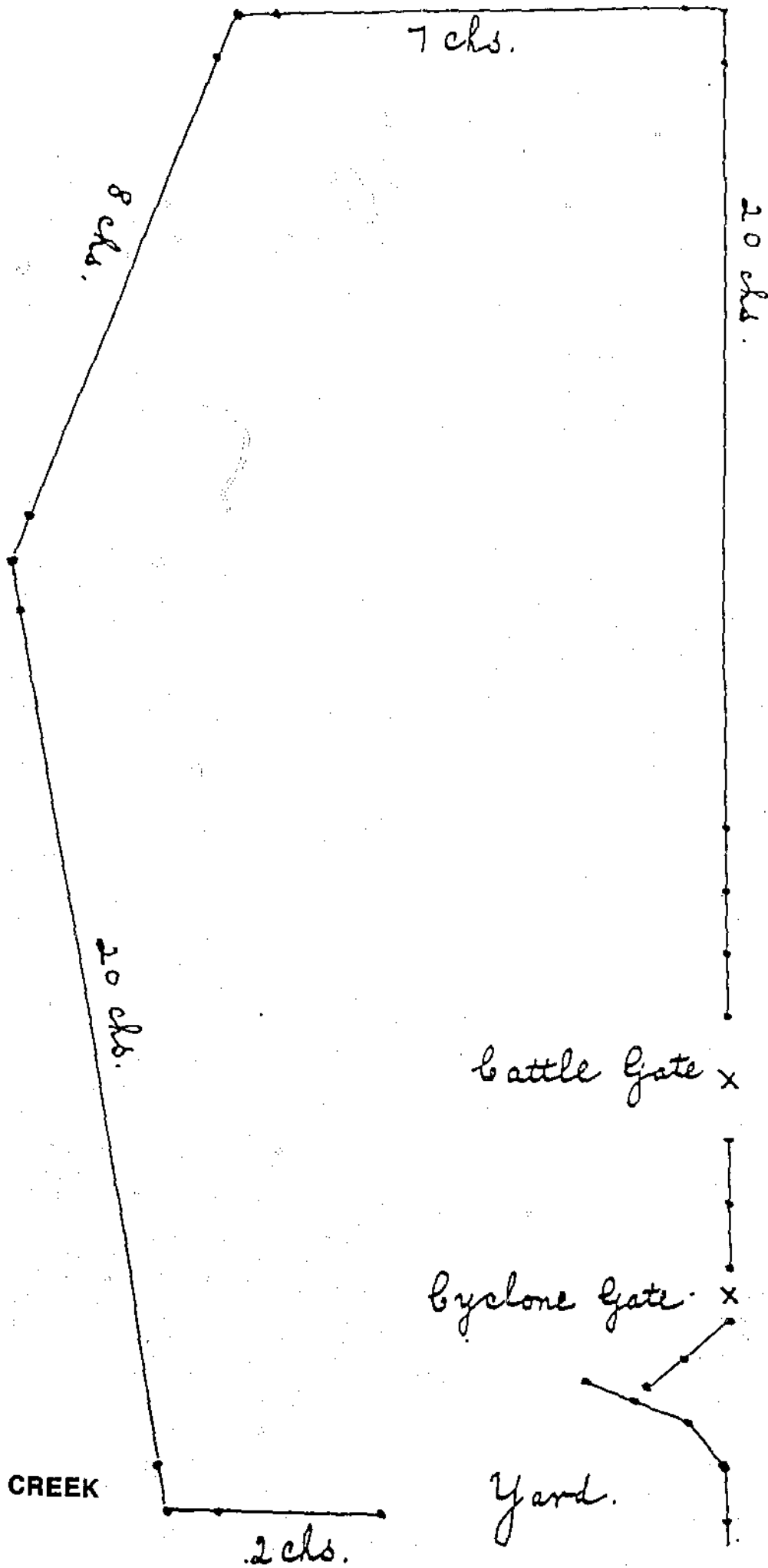
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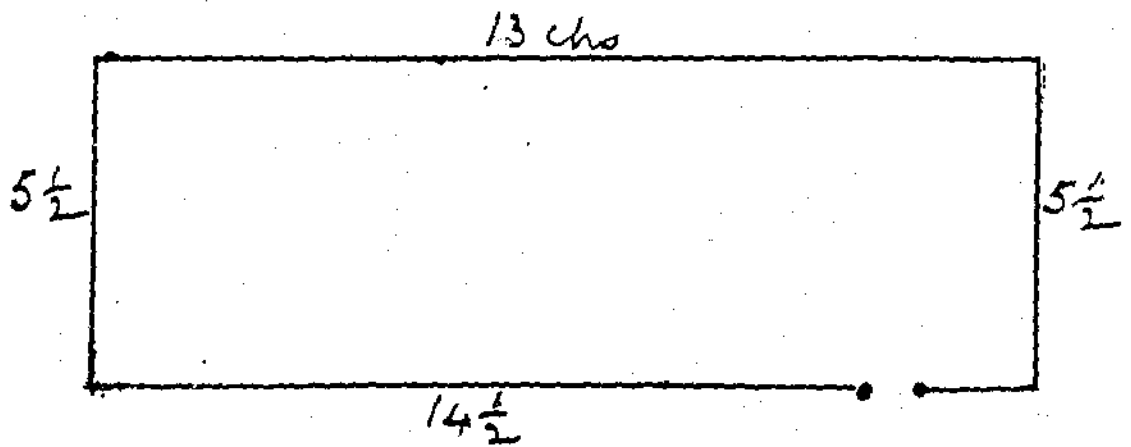
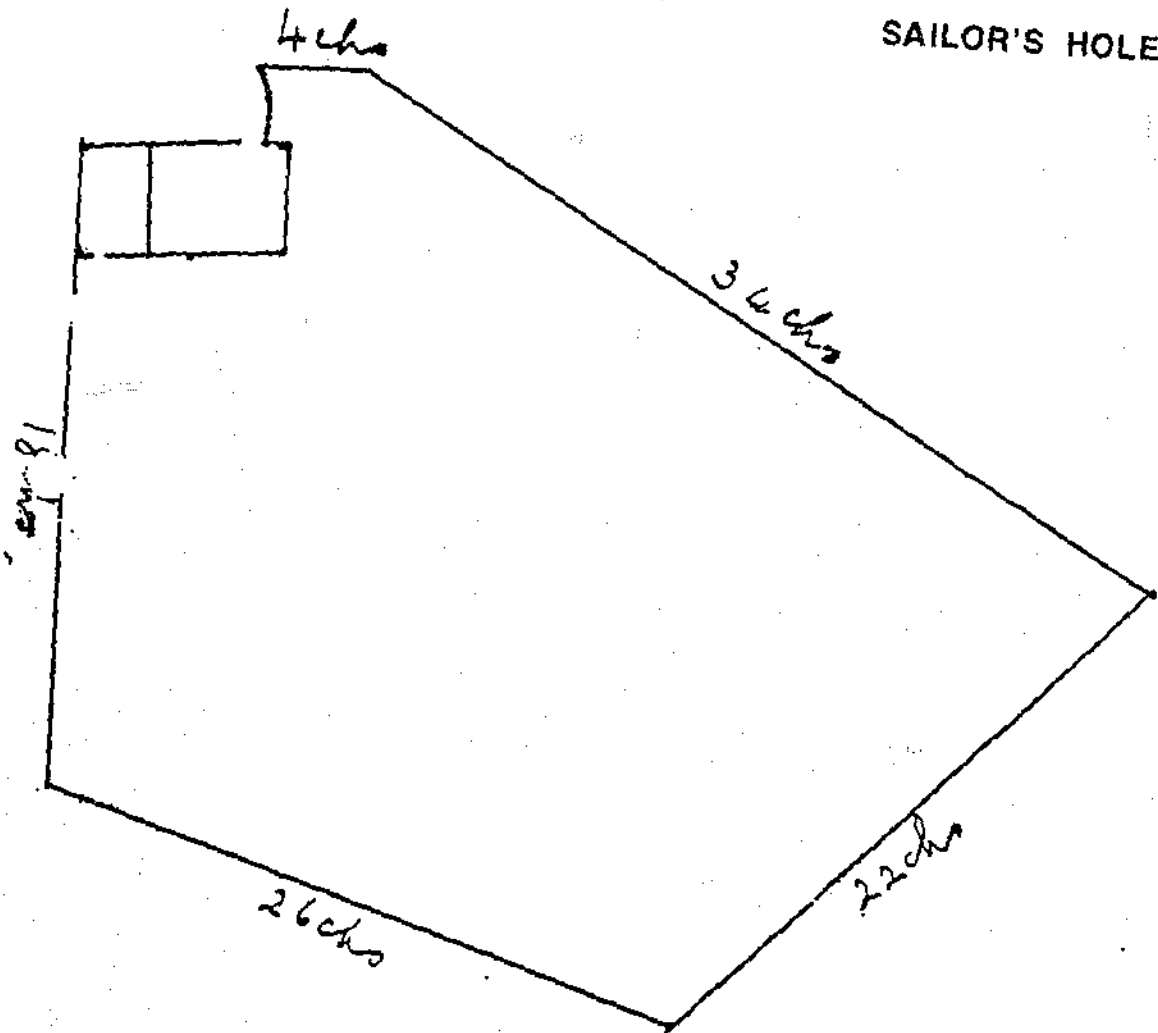
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