

On the whole, working adults, especially men working stock, were the best fed. Women and children and older natives and others not employed were often not adequately fed.

The bulk of the diet of most groups consisted of meat, flour or bread, sugar, and tea. On cattle stations, or on settlements close to cattle stations, the consumption of meat was often exceptionally high by average standards. In this respect the aboriginals in the Territory differ from many native peoples in other parts of the world who subsist on diets that are notable for the most part for a low consumption of animal foods, which are the main sources of protein.

In general, it was found that all groups ate a diet that provided enough calories, that is, it was sufficient in amount. The intake of protein, iron and vitamin B₁ was generally more than adequate because of the high consumption of meat and flour. Many diets, however, were deficient in certain nutrients, particularly calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C. About 60 per cent. of the diets surveyed provided only half or less of the recommended intake of calcium. Sixty-five per cent. were similarly deficient in vitamin A, and 80 per cent. in vitamin C. This deficiency cannot be easily overcome, as these nutrients are provided by milk, fruit and vegetables, all of which are in short supply in the Territory.

These diets would be improved if the natives ate more of their indigenous foods, such as berries, seeds, roots, wild fruits, leaves, snakes, goannas, grubs and insects. Once they are issued with regular rations, however, many of them do not bother to hunt or collect much "bush tucker," except on occasional expeditions. The substitution of a more settled existence for their former nomadic life, and the utilization of their hunting grounds for other purposes, also make it more difficult for them to get indigenous foods.

Methods of cooking are usually a compromise between native habits and the white man's ways. Damper is made from flour and water, sometimes with baking powder, and cooked in hot ashes, or baked in a billy can or a camp oven. In some parts, the natives make flour into a thin watery gruel particularly unappetising to our tastes.

Meat cooked for natives was usually stewed in large pots with some water. When left to their own devices they prefer to roast it in hot ashes. Ribs of beef were particularly popular, and cooked in this way they really are juicy and succulent. Indigenous foods such as kangaroo, goanna, snake and fish are usually cooked whole in the ashes. The skin is then peeled off and the whole of the flesh and much of the intestines are eaten. A favourite snack is a length of intestine or "milk gut"; after a bullock or cow is killed a small boy might be seen carrying a piece around with him to chew at periodically, as his more civilised brother chews or sucks an all day sucker.

Information gathered from this survey has been used as a basis for the formulation of ration scales for aboriginals in the Territory. There are many difficulties to be overcome and the task is not an easy one.

Besides the problem of educating the natives to utilise foods to the best advantage, there is the broader problem of organising food supplies for the population as a whole in these isolated regions.

DEATH OF ARCHIE BONEY

Well-Known Walgett Resident

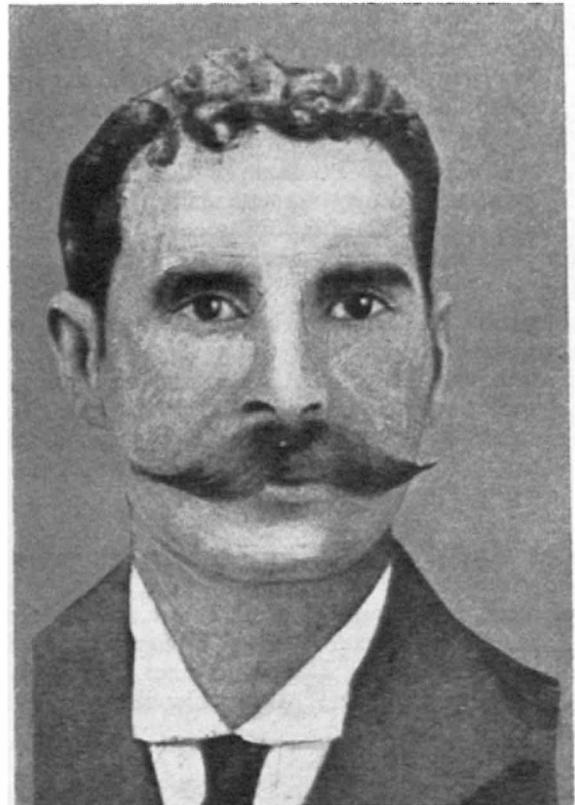
Archie Boney, one of Walgett's best known identities, died suddenly last month following a stroke.

Archie, who died shortly after being admitted to the Walgett District Hospital, leaves three sons, Archie, Tommy and Percy, and a daughter, Zillah.

Almost the entire aboriginal population of Walgett and of the Walgett Aboriginal Station attended the funeral.

Wreaths were made by the senior girls of the aboriginal station.

Archie was a fine old full-blood aborigine and a half brother of Mrs. Sarah Murphy of Walgett Aboriginal Station.



Harry Hamilton, of Condobolin, is now 85 years of age. This is how he looked 44 years ago.