



Excitement as Aborigines Married

Excited guests began to shower confetti over five aboriginal bridal parties before they had left the church on Tabulam Reserve one Saturday recently.

The five couples who were married were:—

- Geoff Phillips and Susan Hickling.
- Colin Hickling and Iris Avery.
- Purvis Mercy and Cecilia Walker.
- John Robinson and Kate Torrens.
- Erkie Archie Green and Gwen Logan.

The last mentioned couple are from Woodenbong and the others from Tabulam.

The couples took part in probably the first mass wedding ceremony among aborigines on the Northern Rivers.

They were married by Pastor Frank Roberts of the United Aborigines' Mission.

The zoo strong congregation packed the church and spilled into the church grounds.

The guests began arriving in Tabulam from early Saturday morning.

Some of them came in taxis.

They gave the bridal parties a rousing reception as they left the church to attend separate wedding breakfasts.

Only white people to see the ceremony were the Tabulam Station Relieving Manager, Mr. S. P. Walker and his wife and family, school teacher Mr. A. Soorley, and the taxi drivers.

The wedding service was dignified with few hitches.

Each party remained in the church until all five services had been completed.

Brides in White

The brides wore ankle length frocks of white and were attended by bridesmaids dressed in pink, and tiny flowergirls in lemon.

Each carried bouquets of dahlias and roses which were grown on the Station.

Fathers or guardians gave away each bride.

A resident at the Station, Marjorie Marsh, made most of the frocks.

Best men fumbled nervously when they were asked to produce the wedding rings.

Some of the 'grooms were all thumbs when they tried to place the rings on their brides' fingers.

The wedding ceremony was the climax of a spiritual upheaval which is sweeping the aboriginal community, particularly in the Tabulam area.

Knew Vows

Mr. Walker said he was convinced the couples understood the true implications of the wedding vows.

Because no hall was large enough five separate wedding breakfasts were held.

The guests drank cordials, tea and ate the usual dainty foods.

There was no intoxicating liquor.

Reserve "elders" Jack Walker and Eddie Hickling helped Pastor Roberts organise the wedding ceremonies.

Many of the guests remained in Tabulam to attend a special service in the church.

"The singing was excellent," said Manager Walker.



June Roberts (12), of Coff's Harbour, with the Headmaster of Lismore High School, Mr. Jenkins. June is in first year and hopes to become a teacher. Mr. Jenkins is very pleased and proud of the dark children who always attend school dressed so neatly in their school uniforms.