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**Race Around Cairns:
Representations, perceptions and realities of race
in the Trinity Bay district 1876-1908**

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June 2010

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of History

James Cook University

Statement on the contribution of others

I was fortunate to receive moral and material assistance to pursue the ideas which became *Race around Cairns*. For financial support in the form of a four year stipend I am grateful to James Cook University and the Commonwealth Government of Australia. For providing conditions in which to work I thank James Cook University and Deakin University. I thank particularly the staff, librarians and archivists of James Cook University, Cairns Historical Society, Menmuncy Museum, University of Queensland, John Oxley Library, Queensland Museum, Queensland State Archives, National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, Australian National University, Noel Butlin Archive, Joskeleigh South Sea Islander Museum, Bundaberg Historical Museum, Mackay City Library, Deakin University, Alfred Deakin Research Institute, State Library of Victoria, Chinese Museum, Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo Chinese Association, Edo Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of History.

I thank especially my supervisors at James Cook University, Russell McGregor and Janice Wegner for their conceptual contributions, pertinent questioning, helpful suggestions, reading of drafts, structural recommendations, editorial advice, comments, criticisms, patience, encouragement, friendliness, and in Russell's case, dexterity with a set of barbecue tongs. For their comments and insights into Melanesian and indigenous Australian ways I am happy to thank Hanington Tate, Noela McNamara, Roxanne Bainbridge and members of the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at James Cook University. Thank you also to Gia Kim, Sibastian Malouf and David Huang for assistance with Chinese and Japanese translations.

Acknowledgements

I am especially indebted to my family and friends whose encouragement and occasional flashes of interest were indispensable. Thanks Mum and Dad, for everything. I acknowledge enduring debts to David Walker, David Lowe and Ruth Lee at Deakin University. I am appreciative of the recorded works of The Great Elevator. For her generosity, understanding and love, my greatest debt is to my darling Rebecca, who flinched not and neither did she falter during the production of this work and for this I offer my heartfelt thanks. I dedicate this to you.

Race Around Cairns: Representations, perceptions and realities of race in the Trinity Bay district, 1876-1908

Abstract

With the colonisation of the Trinity Bay district in the late nineteenth century, people arrived from many points of the compass. Not only Europeans, but also Pacific Islanders and East and South-east Asians imposed themselves on the numerous Aboriginal groups who inhabited Cairns and its vicinity. European Cairnsites perceived their world in strongly racialised terms, in which innate biological and cultural inequalities were assumed to exist between and among the diverse peoples of the area. They built a society based on racial hierarchy with themselves – white Australians – at the apex, the other races ranging down through varying degrees of inferiority. Despite the racial stratification and despite the significant – sometimes murderous – intercultural tensions, this was an interdependent colonial society characterised, to a large extent, by peaceable accommodations and productive inter-racial relationships. Europeans understood themselves to be out of place in the tropics, so when they imagined the district's future they typically saw non-whites continuing to play an important part – a vision not shared by the Australian mainstream around the time of federation. This thesis scrutinises words and images from early Cairns, to recover the ways in which racial representations were used across a range of social and cultural contexts and how they were transformed over time. It shows that European Cairnsites constructed a local racial vernacular, in some ways discordant with the white Australia ideal, in other ways consistent with it, but always serving the interests of white dominance.

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List of Abbreviations

AIATSIS: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

AN: Aboriginal News

ANU: Australian National University

ANU:NB: Australian National University Noel Butlin Archive Centre

BC: Brisbane Courier

CA: Cairns Argus

CC: Cooktown Courier

CDT: Cairns Daily Times

CH: Cooktown Herald

CHPRA: Cooktown Herald and Palmer River Advertiser

CHS: Cairns Historical Society

CI: Cooktown Independent

CP: Cairns Post

CSR: Colonial Sugar Refining

HA: Herberton Advertiser

HRE: Herbert River Express

JOL: John Oxley Library

MC: Mackay Chronicle

MP: Morning Post

MS: Mackay Standard

NAA: National Archive of Australia.

NA: Northern Advocate

NEB: New Endeavour Beacon

NLA: National Library of Australia

NQH: North Queensland Herald

NQR: North Queensland Register

PDMR: Port Douglas and Mossman Record

QJCU: James Cook University, University Library Archives

QSA: Queensland State Archives

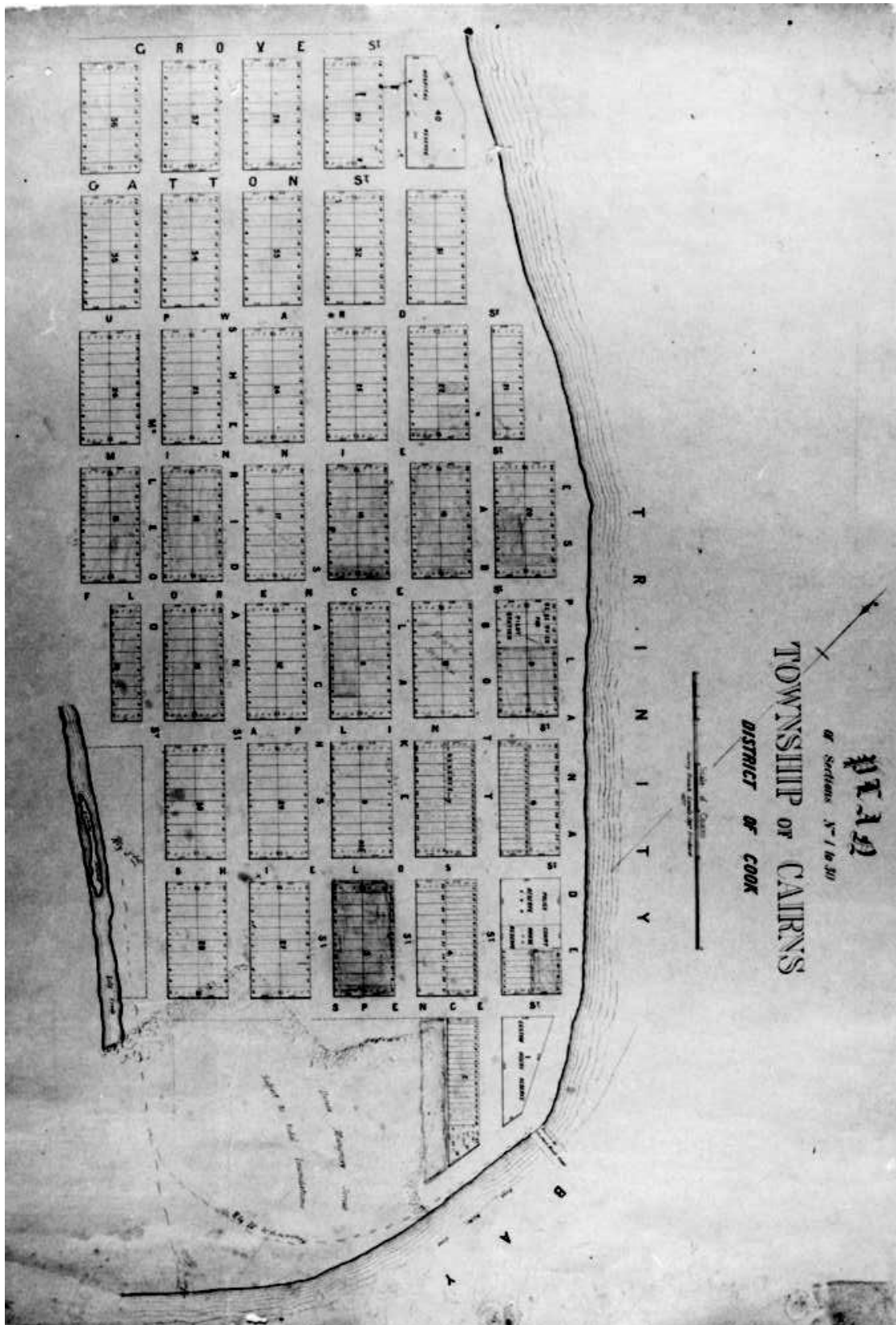
TSP: Torres Strait Pilot

TT: Trinity Times

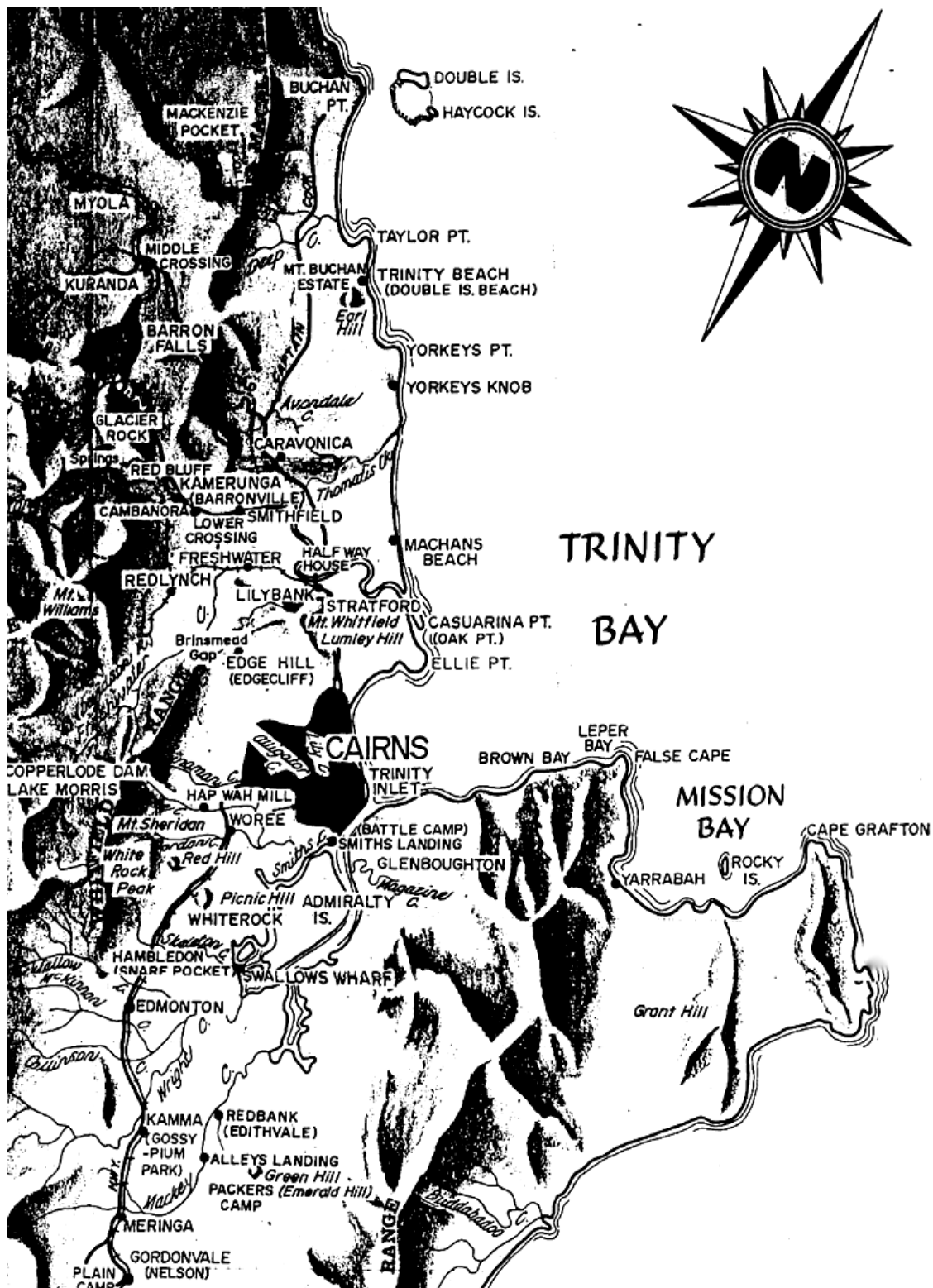
UQFL: University of Queensland Fryer Library

WRT: Wild River Times

Maps: Cairns and its district



Map 1. The streets of Cairns, 1877. JOL image no.133415.



Map 2. Historical map of the Cairns district. Dorothy Jones, *Trinity Phoenix*, Cairns Post, 1976, flyleaf.