

Introduction

In 1878, after working unsuccessfully to better the condition of Aborigines in Brisbane, Fr Duncan McNab returned to Melbourne very discouraged about the situation. He wrote a major report about ill treatment of the natives, and sent it to Archbishop Vaughan in Sydney.

In August in 1879 he sailed from Melbourne with an introductory letter from Bishop Goold. He went to England, Rome, and America, complaining to the British Government, and trying in Church circles to encourage missionaries to be sent to Australia.

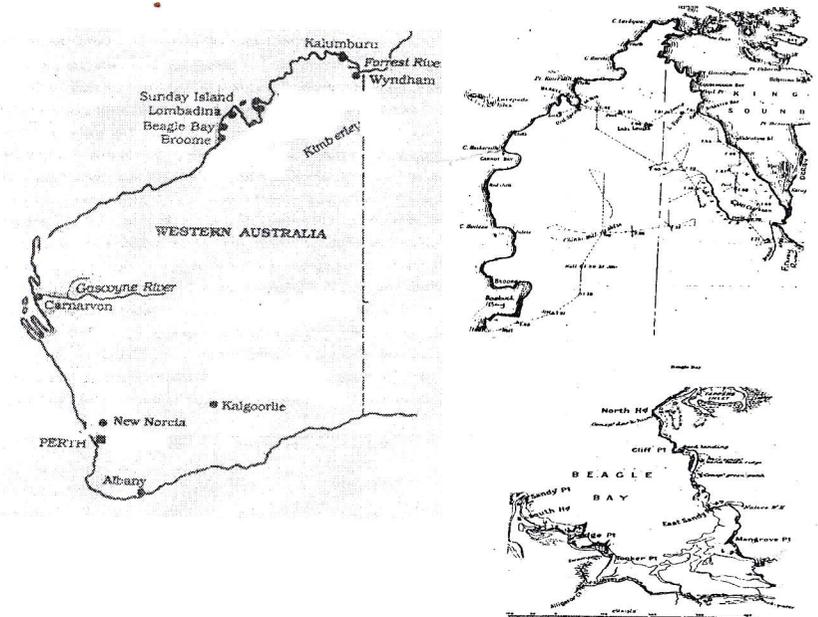
In Rome, in September, he drafted a supplement to his 'Memoria' for Pope Leo XIII.

On his return to Australia, he went to Western Australia and became Chaplain to the Aboriginal prisoners on Rottneest Island near Perth.

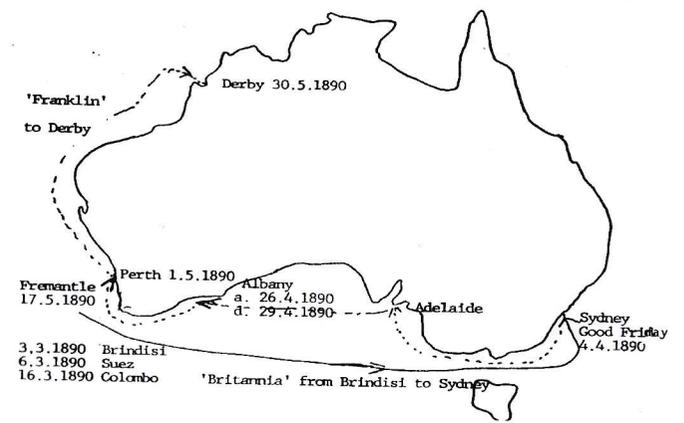
After some time, Bishop Griver encouraged him to start a mission. He travelled up the coast to the Kimberley where worked at Goodenough Bay on the Dampier Peninsula on the other side of the King Sound in 1884. He visited the Gold Diggings in East Kimberley in 1887 and returned to find his mission burnt. Unable to continue because of ill health, he returned to Melbourne via the Jesuit Mission in Darwin in 1877.

That same year, Father Matthew Gibney was consecrated Bishop to minister to the whole of Western Australia from Perth. Having no replacement for Fr Mc Nab, he wrote to Cardinal Moran of Sydney to petition the Pope to send missionaries.

In 1888, Pope Leo XIII asked the French Abbot of Sept to send Missionaries to Western Australia. Two men on their way home from a French mission which had closed in New Caledonia were asked to volunteer. They were Abbot Ambrose Janny and Fr Alphonse Tachon. They immediately turned back to Sydney.



Missionary Journey of the Cistercians, Abbot Ambrose Janny and Fr. Alphonse Tachon to their mission in Beagle Bay



3.3.1890 Brindisi
 6.3.1890 Suez
 16.3.1890 Colombo
 'Britannia' from Brindisi to Sydney
 Sydney Good Friday 4.4.1890
 Perth 1.5.1890
 Albany a. 26.4.1890
 d: 29.4.1890
 Derby 30.5.1890
 'Franklin' to Derby

Based on Documents from Sept Fons Monastery Lyons, France.

Colonial Legislation

At the same time as missionary efforts to help the Aborigines were being made in Western Australia, the British Law, as interpreted by Colonial Australia had harsh penalties for Aborigines.

Peter Biskup, in his book, *Not Slaves Not Citizens*, demonstrated that mandatory sentencing for Aborigines was passed as early as 1849 in Western Australia. It allowed summary trials of Aborigines for any offence not punishable by death.

Legislative Acts 1870-1872 were passed with regard to the use of Aboriginal labour for pearling and other work.

Ostensibly, it was protective legislation, but it treated Aborigines as outside the dominant white population making them objects of discrimination and unacceptable to the General Populace.

This type of law helped to uphold the white Australia Policy.

These attitudes affected the infant Catholic Church in the Kimberley. Most newly baptised Catholics of the Kimberley were coloured.

The majority of Church adherents were Filipinos, or Aborigines. The former were considered aliens and the latter were not counted as citizens.

In 1879, Alexander Forrest discovered good pastoral land on the alluvial flats of the Fitzroy and Ord Rivers. A short time later F H Hann's discoveries brought a second wave of pastoralists to five new pastoral areas in the rugged Kimberley.

The pastoral industry dominated land utilisation in Western Australia. Pastoralists leased holdings from the Crown. There was an inevitable collision between the plans of the pastoralists and land ownership of the Aboriginal peoples.

1883 Irene Shackcloth in *The Call of the Kimberleys*, described the founding of Yeeda station.

Two brothers formed the first Kimberley syndicate, 'The Murray Squatting Company' and applied for 120,000 acres of land. It was granted rent-free for 14 years. One of the men was recorded as saying "*Imagine, thousands of acres of grassland and all a chap has to do is march in and squat on it.*" Such an attitude was typical of white settlers. There was little empathy with the original inhabitants..

When a group of natives was caught killing some sheep for food, there was a skirmish, and a man was killed.

Police troopers kept 40 Aborigines in chains until others apprehended the sheep killers and the alleged murderer. Mandatory sentencing was in vogue and Captain Walcott, as Justice of the Peace, sentenced the sheep killers to Rottnest Island. At the time Fr McNab was chaplain to the prisoners on Rottnest Island. The death rate at Rottnest was phenomenal. Perhaps none of those sheep killers made the thousands of miles back to their homes. The alleged murderer was sent to Fremantle Prison to be hanged.

Later in the year, when Yeeda Station changed owners, it was carrying 10,000 sheep, 45 horses and 50 cattle. Some Aborigines belonging to Yeeda station were starving. The manager asked the Government to provide rations. The police were asked to check. Some months later the manager sent a telegram to Perth to say that the need had passed, that the Aborigines in question were dead.

Founding of Beagle Bay Mission

The Government had set up an Aboriginal Reserve of 600,000 acres on the Dampier Peninsula.

Fr Mc Nab had suggested to Matthew Gibney to take up a run, rather than accepting a reserve, because these were usually barren and stony without access to water. Bishop Gibney, Abbot Ambrose and a policeman, Cornelius Daly spent 5 months exploring the 'Dampier Peninsula' from 17th May 1880 until the 4th July. The people and place they chose was Beagle Bay.

In Derby, Bishop Gibney paid £25 to lease 100,000 acres of land with water, which he later negotiated to have added to the Aboriginal Reserve. He also negotiated to have 10,000 acres to be given to the mission as 'fee simple' when £5000 worth of improvements to the lease had been made. Since this land would have the springs, the securing of it gave the mission a chance of survival, but did not stop neighbours from casting envious eyes on the land controlled by the mission in the years that followed.

The Bishop's notes recorded a visit to Harry Hunter at Lombadina to the north of Beagle Bay.

21 February 1892 Cornelius Daly, and Harry O'Grady had signed the papers for the sale of the station. It consisted of 100,000 acres Pastoral Lease, a homestead with buildings, 332 sheep, 50 head of cattle, 2 horses, and the schooner 'Jessie'.

Abbot Ambrose had gone back to France to get more missionaries from Sept Fons in Lyons, France. This journey took almost a year leaving Fr Alphonse Tachon with Br Xavier Daly in the Kimberley. 16 more missionaries, mainly French and Dutch, came in two groups in 1892 and 1895.

1895 Father Nicholas Emo

Fr Nicholas Emo came with the group of 1895. He was a Spaniard, he had worked in Patagonia in South America and was already ordained.

Although still a novice in the Cistercian Order, he was delegated to look after the Catholic Filipinos in Broome. At this time, Broome's wealth was derived from pearl-shell and Manillamen were indentured from the Philippines. Native employment was menial and poorly paid.

Fr Emo was welcomed with respect and esteem by the white and coloured population, especially for his medical skills.

In his Census Book of 1896, Fr Emo listed the membership of the Church in Broome as consisting of unmarried Filipino sailors, between the ages of 26-36 years. Most early Church marriages were between these men and Aboriginal women. Later Fr Nicholas assisted them to buy land in Broome for their homes. These families became the nucleus of the Catholic community of Broome.

Fr Emo reported in Spanish 1 August 1897. There were about 250 local Aborigines. He had married 4 couples, an Aboriginal woman to a Manilaman, an Aboriginal woman to a Christian American Negro and two Aboriginal couples. He had established a home for 11 orphans in Broome, three boys and 8 girls.

Paul Hasluck recorded in his book *Black Australians, A Survey of Native Policy in Western Australia, 1829-1897* that when control of Aborigines was handed over by the Colonial Government to the West Australian Government, it had arranged that the new Government was to set aside 1% of revenue to provide for the needs of Aborigines. In 1897 this was nearly £30,000.

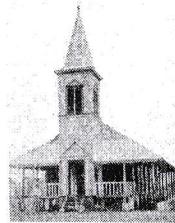
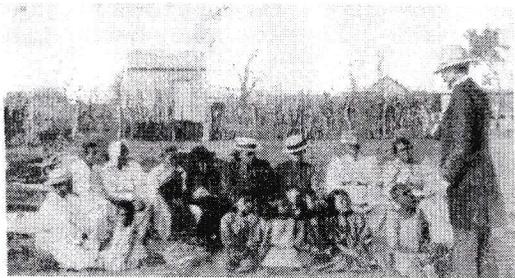
But the new Government made available only £5,000 per annum and any such other amount as Parliament might choose to vote.

In an article entitled 'John Forrest and the Aborigines' in *European-Aboriginal Relations in Western Australian History*, Elizabeth Goddard and Tom Stannage explained how Section 70 of the Government Bill in **1899** was removed because it diverted funds from economic growth.

Paragraph 7 stated, ***It shall be the duty of the Aborigines Department to provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of the Aborigines.*** This Department was small, with a Chief Protector of Aborigines reliant on police and charitable institutions to administer its duties to care for Aborigines.

(Until the 1950's education of Aboriginal children was the responsibility of the Aboriginal Department, and State Schools were under no obligation to admit them.)

In December **1899**, because of administrative problems in France and in Australia, Abbot Chautard appointed Fr Emo to take charge of the Beagle Bay Mission, send the monks back to France, and close the mission.



1898 Broome Church .



Published in
The Leader
16.7.1898

Courtesy
State Library
of Victoria

In August 1900, when Bishop Gibney heard that ten monks had already left, he sailed from Fremantle with Fr Martelli and Daisy Bates.

For three months Bishop Gibney, Daisy Bates, and Fr Martelli worked to reclaim the mission wells and gardens with Fr Nicholas Emo, Brother Xavier Daly, Brother Sebastian, and mission natives.

Using only a compass from an old lugger, they measured 8000 acres near the mission site and 2000 acres at Disaster Bay. Bishop Gibney then applied to the Government for the Title to the 10,000 chosen acres as 'fee simple' for land improvement by the outgoing missionaries.

Bishop Gibney confirmed 153 people in BBM, Disaster Bay and Broome and wrote to thank the French Abbot for the work of the missionaries.. The mission was saved.

Fr Emo wrote to his Abbot in France for permission to continue his ministry in Australia.



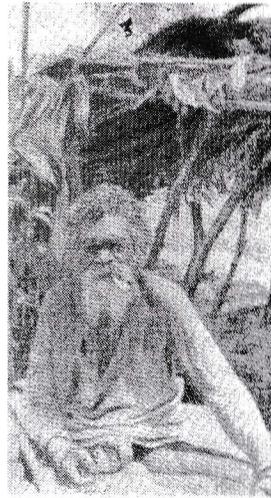
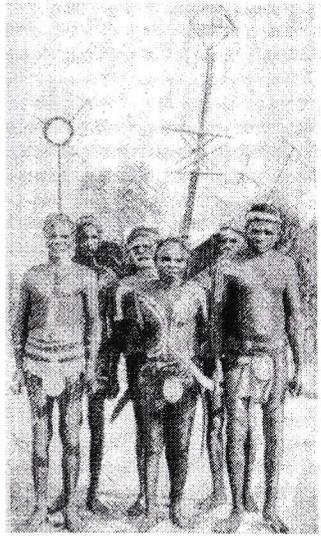
Daisy Bates, Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Battye Library



To increase the numbers of workers

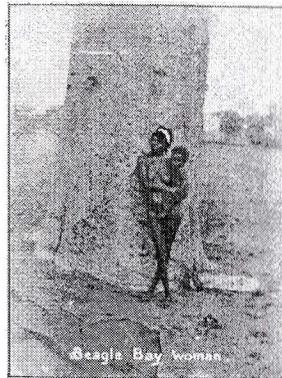
needed on the mission, Bishop Gibney invited a community founded by Vincent Pallotti to send Priests and Brothers from the German Province in Limburg to administer the mission in the Kimberley.

Early in 1901, Fr Emo wrote to France to let them know that, as Superior of the Mission he was keeping up the number of Church workers there with the brothers and a couple of Filipino families who worked as lay helpers, receiving board, food and clothing. Their womenfolk worked in the garden with the Aboriginal women.



From om George Walter, *Australia, Land People Mission* Limburg 1928, 1982.

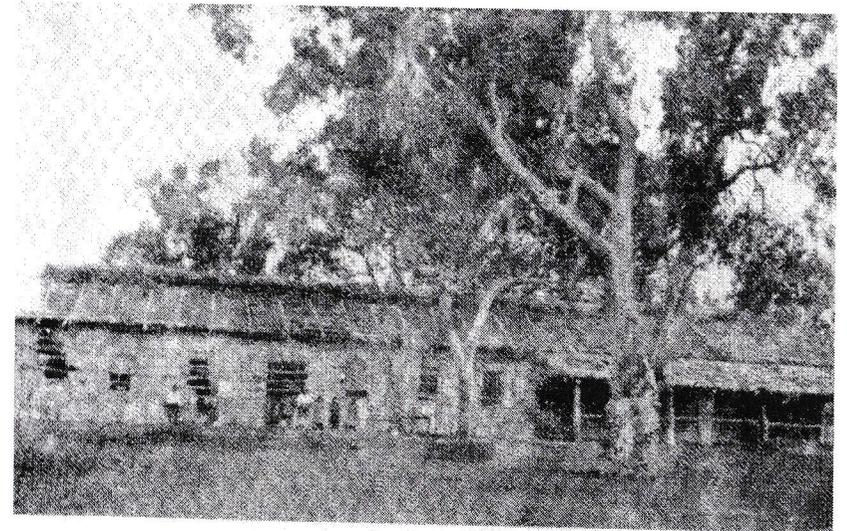
Courtesy of The Pallottines



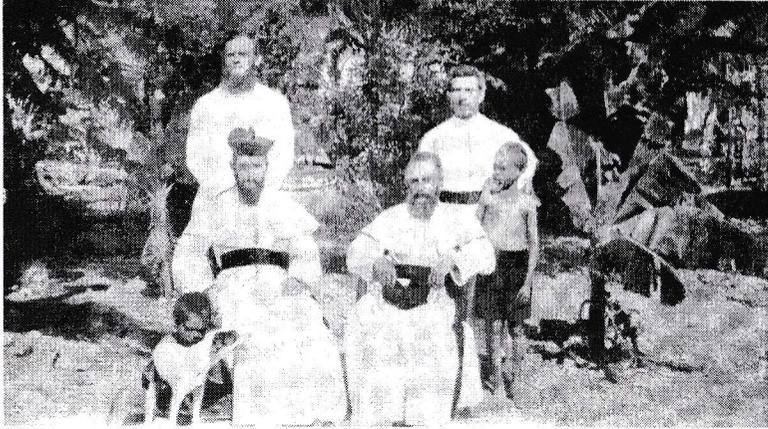
Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Battye Library. 67124P



Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Battye Library 6712P



Mission House from George Walter, *Australia, Land People Mission* Limburg 1928, 1982. Courtesy of Pallottines



1901

The Kimberley Mission was transferred to the new group, *The Pious Society of Missions* (now known as *The Pallottines*). 12th January, three Germans and an Irishman arrived. The day Fr Walter's party arrived at the mission, which was about nine miles from the beach, most of the blacks had gone bush to look for food. The acting Trappist Superior, Fr Nicholas Emo and the two brothers who had remained with him made a good impression.

Fr Walter liked Fr Nicholas so much that he wrote to France to ask if the priest could stay to continue his work in Broome. After some time, Fr Jeanne Marie Janny was sent back from France to collect payment for the cattle and chattels at BBM, Broome and Disaster Bay. Bishop Gibney helped to take out a mortgage on the cattle at 6% interest to enable £1200 to be placed in the mission account.

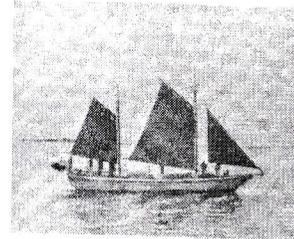
Since Fr Walter forwarded £1000 to France as the first of three instalments, this meant that he still had no money, only another debt on the property and a liability for the guarantor, Bishop Gibney.

When Bishop Kelly of Geraldton became the new Bishop of the Kimberley, he told Fr Walter, "You are not obliged to pay the French anything!"

The 1901 Legislation from the Constitution Act, and 1902 ,Legislation from the Franchise Act, meant that Aborigines were no longer regarded as British citizens. They had become State wards, under the authority of the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Perth.

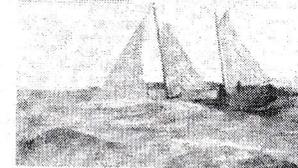
In 1902, Fr Emo was notified from Perth that any half-caste children could be sent to institutions for their care and education. He Broome boys to Beagle Bay Mission for care and education.

Fr Walter still had money problems. Prospective buyers for mission cattle were warned off. He could not sell cattle to raise money. Fr Janny moved from Disaster Bay with Thomas Puertollano's family, mission workers and cattle to Lombadina.



In 1903, the Beagle Bay mission boat was wrecked.

In 1902, Fr Rensmann had been appointed to Beagle Bay but he had a heart attack when swimming in a creek in 1904 and drowned.



In 1904, the Church in Broome was burnt

down. Fr Emo built another with aid from friends.

Fr White, the Englishman, was sent to Broome for the white Catholics, but the move was not a success. He went to Perth to raise money.

To alleviate the native situation, Bishop Kelly wrote to Bishop Gibney about founding more missions. He suggested that the Benedictions of New Norcia had the means and there were many natives between King Sound and Cambridge Gulf.

Fr Emo carried on with his housing settlement, his camp for the 'sick and the aged' and his support of family life and marriages, but destructive rumours circulated in Broome.

Fr Walter demanded a secret ballot among Broome residents to remove Fr Emo. The result was 128 out of 132 in support of Emo, who wrote to Walter, "*If you believe I should go elsewhere for the good of the church and the mission, I will readily do so.*"

At the mission, Fr Walter introduced a policy of self-reliance and education. Some attempts to be self-supporting failed because of climatic conditions, poor soil and distance. His project with hemp plants failed because the soil was poor. Bugs and beetles attacked the cotton buds. Green parrots descended upon the millet plantation as soon as the shoots came.

1905

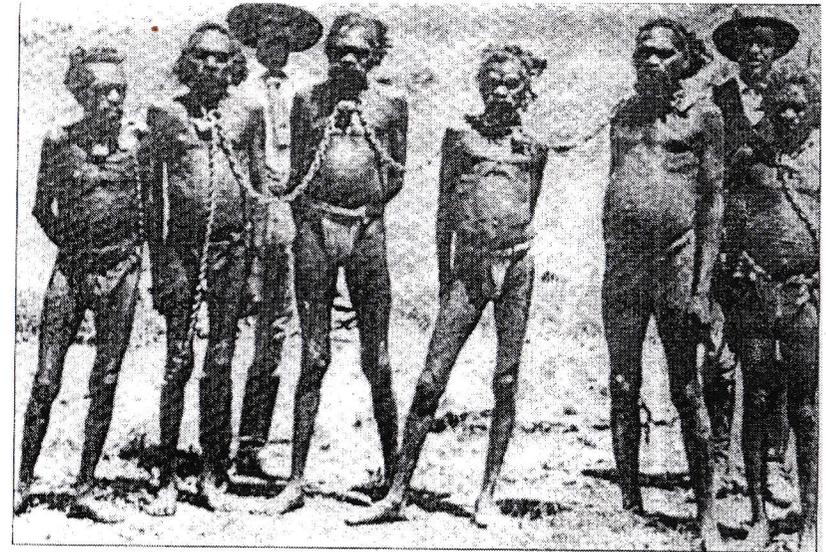
Fr Bischofs came in 1905. He jotted down his first impressions in German:

23 April 1905, numerous blacks and whites at Holy Mass.

23 April 1905, a walk through Broome. There is a mixture of English people. A string of black convicts chained by the necks to each other led through the streets give a warning example. The drinking of spirits is prohibited to the blacks. Whites give a truly disgraceful example of drunkenness.

It was in April that Bishop Kelly found out that the removal of Emo from Broome was a 'fait accompli'. All of Broome was sharply divided on the issue. Fr Walter disapproved of Fr Nicholas marrying Aboriginal women to Manila men and had reported his disapproval to Bishop Kelly.

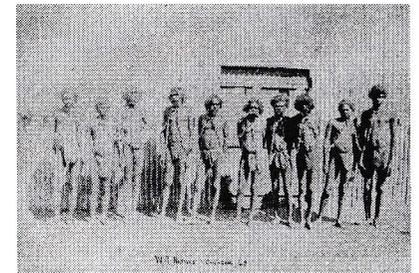
Fr Walter believed that Fr Nicholas had made disparaging remarks about the Beagle Bay Mission to Dr Roth at his interview in Broome. Fr Walter had hoped to take up residence at 'The Point' in Broome after Fr Emo departed but the town site had been proclaimed a Reserve.



ABORIGINES chained by the neck. Confessions were often obtained facing "the muzzle of a rifle."

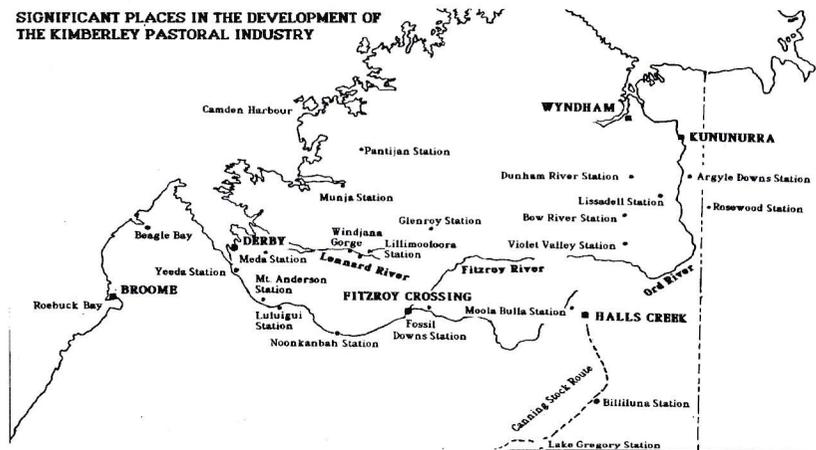
The native predicament was becoming more chaotic. The Roth Report described huge areas of the interior occupied by white squatters. Hundreds of displaced Aborigines were removed from pastoral properties to be imprisoned, or to work in road gangs.

Numbers of children without fathers were found everywhere, in town, in camps, and on the stations. Permission for native women to marry was usually refused. After the Royal Commission and the '**Aboriginal Act of 1905**', there was even more rigid control by the police.



At the 1905 Plenary Council, the Australian Catholic Bishops asked Abbot Torres of New Norcia to open another mission.

SIGNIFICANT PLACES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KIMBERLEY PASTORAL INDUSTRY

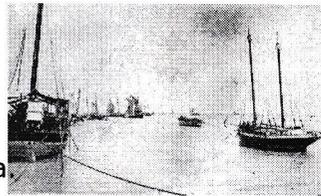


15th February 1905, Emo stayed four days with Abbot Torres in the New Norcia Monastery. Then, accompanied by Bishop Gibney, he visited the Governor who arranged a Reserve of 300 acres south of Broome, and funds for maintenance. About that time, Emo was naturalized.

By the end of April, Abbot Torres, Bishop Kelly, and Fr Emo had met in Broome. In May, Emo wrote to Bishop Gibney about acquiring a boat. He engaged a crew. On his first night aboard, he dreamed he saw Our Lady, 'so shining and beautiful'. She told him, "The ship is blessed and will never be lost at sea."

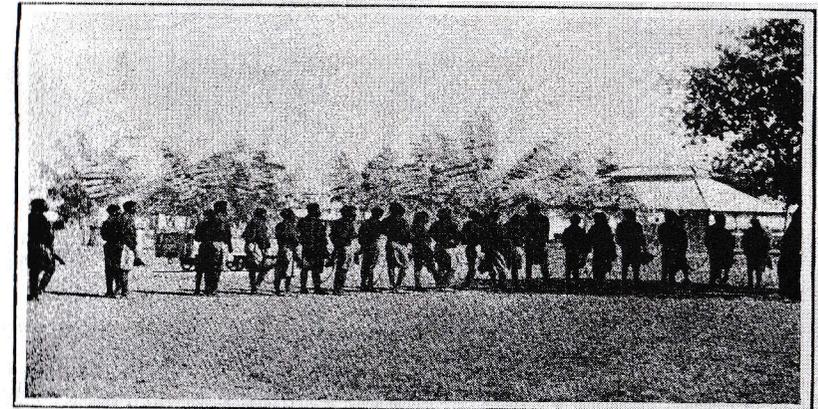
1906

The French Abbot released Fr Nicholas from his Cistercian vows. He could remain in Australia



The Benedictine Abbot of New Norcia, Fulgentius Torres had been encouraged by Bishop Gibney and Fr Nicholas to found another mission in the North West.

Fr Nicholas met him in Broome and together they planned their exploratory trip to found another Catholic Mission in the North West.



CHAIN GANG.

Published in the Australasian, 29.12.1906.

Courtesy State Library of Victoria

Two days were spent on Sunday Island getting experienced local guides.

12th May 1906. The 'Salvador' left with its crew, Captain Johnson and four Manilamen. Torres and Emo visited people and places along the coast as far as Wyndham. Here they found about 30 Europeans living and in the prison Abbot Torres found about 60 Aborigines neck chained together. Meanwhile, Bishop Kelly had sent Fr Walter invoices regarding payment for the boat, but Fr Nicholas had gone.

6th June. Land for 'Drysdale River Mission' had been chosen. Abbot Torres decided to return to Broome by steamer. Perhaps Fr Emo picked Fr Jean Marie up from Lombadina on his way back because he left there in 1906.

7th July, Fr Emo was back in his Broome Reserve.

1907 Fr Walter and Fr White wehad gone on a fund raising mission around Australian dioceses, Fr Walter wrote to Fr Bischofs to go to Perth to bring 9 Sisters to Beagle Bay. After Fr Walter had raised enough money to clear his debts and pay for future enterprises, he went to Europe to discuss the future with his superiors. He had no success with his submissions and tendered his resignation.

Nicholas had now turned his attention to his project at Cygnet Bay.

19th August. Emo anchored his boat in Cygnet Bay
5th October. Emo left with all the blacks from the Reserve at the Point in Broome.

11th October they arrived at Cygnet Bay, and next day Leandro arrived overland with the goats.

Emo wrote, *"Thank God, we built several buildings, and a beautiful chapel to Our Lady Mary on the top of the hill with a Portico and 12 columns that you could make out from far away."*

Once he had set up his new mission at Cygnet Bay Father Nicholas was free to continue his ministry around the coasts of the Dampier Peninsula. Pearlising Boats and their crews were laid up for three months a year on different parts of the West Kimberley coast. A favourite place was Cygnet Bay.

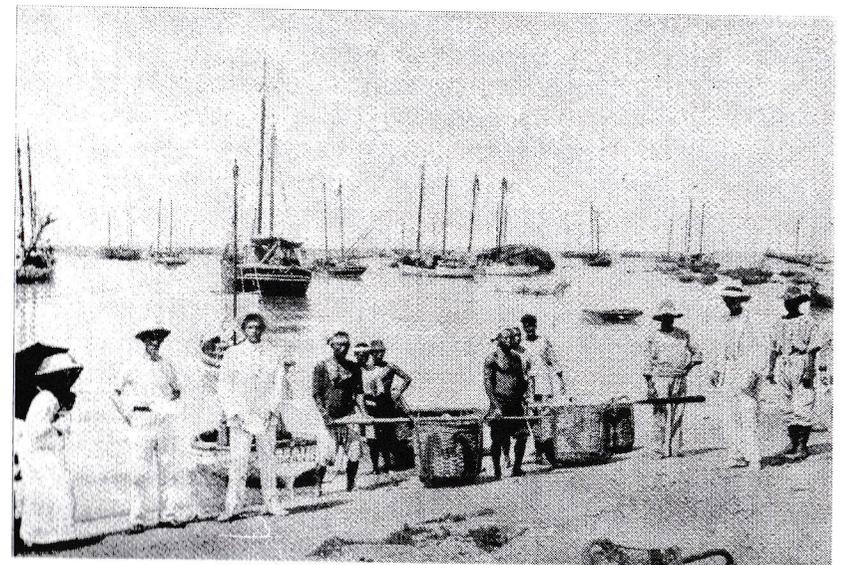
HV Howe wrote to Mary Durack:

"Father Nicholas was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable pioneer characters in Australian history. He came straight from Chaucer's Canterbury tales to Broome. He was one of the most unusual men I have ever met. His asceticism was, I am sure, practised from choice and not from necessity. He was always a welcome guest, well known both to old George Francis, owner of the fleet and his nephew Hughie who skippered the schooner".

It took at least three days sailing north from Broome, past Lacepede Islands, Beagle Bay, Lombadina and Sunday Island to arrive in Cygnet Bay, within King Sound. Much shell could be found there but many deaths occurred. Tides become caught in a swirling pattern out from the steep red cliffs, as they pass through the islands at the entrance to the Sound. This causes great whirlpools. One of the bays just within the entrance of the Sound is called the Graveyard because of the divers who perished in its depths.



Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Batty Library 003986d



Courtesy State Library of Western Australia, Batty Library 00873D

1907

It was in 1907 that Bishop Gibney asked the Sisters of St John of God to go to Beagle Bay to assist with the Mission by educating the girls and the women.

Pallottine brothers were teaching their trades and training young men to work with windmills and cattle. Some adults stayed as permanent residents, and others moved into the wider community for work to support their families.

A mission sub-culture evolved from relationships formed between the Nyul Nyul and persons brought to the Beagle Bay Mission as children and this enabled survival. Some felt secure enough to have large families.

The Aboriginal predicament on the Stations

As H V Howe read Mary Durack's book, *The Rock and the Sand* in 1969, he wrote to her:

"The settler's first care over the first decade or so of settlement was to keep the binghis away from their stock, the binghis regarded the sheep and cattle as merely a new kind of animal wandering on their tribal territories and therefore to be killed as required. They had no conception whatever of ownership of property of any kind, especially animals.

A stereotyped pattern of settlement for the first twenty years or so prevailed. Whites unaccompanied by white women, taking up new country, moved in with their stock, occupied the best waterholes, built a bush homestead then 'rode down a couple of gins' as concubines, shot up the adult male binghis and settled in. Gradually the gins and children came into the homesteads for protection from hostile tribes and for tucker and tobacco.

The binghi women and children were the first labour employed by the pastoralists on most of the stations. It will never be known how many male binghis were shot off during the first twenty years; whites boasting of the way the binghis were 'cleared off' until they were tamed. Tobacco was the most important civilizing agent, the binghis

It will never be known how many male binghis were shot off during the first twenty years; whites boasting of the way the binghis were 'cleared off' until they were tamed.

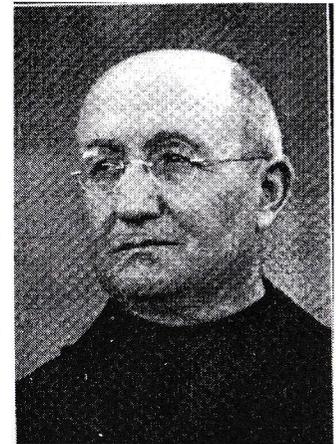
Tobacco was the most important civilizing agent, the binghis became addicts immediately they smoked it and would do anything for it. The effect of 'binghi twist' on a binghi who has never previously smoked is remarkable. I have given a pipe full of such tobacco to such binghis and can only describe the result as comparable to them 'taking a trip' on LSD, as described by drug addicts."

"Nicholas told us of his plans to found a mission at the Drysdale River with Spanish monks from New Norcia monastery, natives from Lombadina and Manilamen from Beagle Bay."

"George Francis did not like his chances of survival among the Drysdale River binghis, who were altogether too handy with their spears when approached by strangers. The conversation on the schooner became specific and turned around the projected expedition."

"Contact between the people of the dream and the people of the clock was virtually confined to the area south of Cape Leveque, between Leveque and Londonderry it was minimal and brief."

2nd September. Father Planas of New Norcia began arrangements for Drysdale River Mission. The State Ship 'Bullara' as well as mail steamers which called at the North West Ports were available.



1909

By May after a terrible storm, Fr Emo was suffering from deep depression. His father had died. A letter from Barcelona had upset him and Leandro and some workers were planning to leave. The 'Salvador' was in constant use by the missionaries and Fr Planas was in charge.

4th October. All over the Kimberly, police were collecting children to send away for care and education. One memo from East Kimberley read '*disposal of 25 half caste children*'.

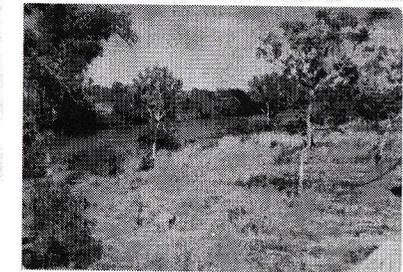
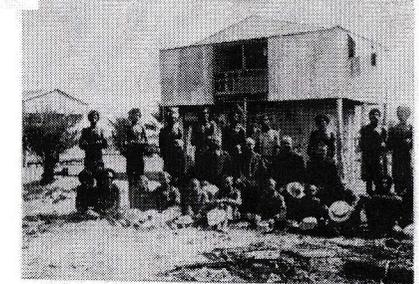
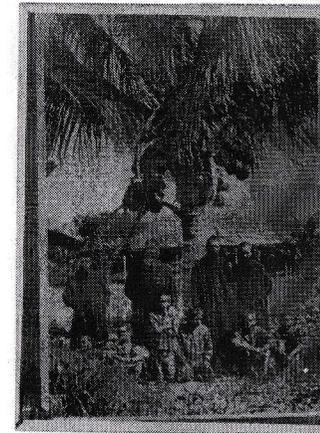
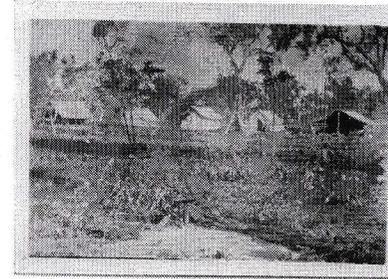
9th October, Abbot Torres wired Perth that the 'Koombana' which left Derby could take some boys to the Drysdale River Mission. The next ship would not leave for another three or four months.

23rd October. Fr Emo wrote to the Editor of the *Chronicle* asking for support for the Broome and Beagle Bay missions. He identified himself as the last of the missionaries which had come from Sept Fons Monastery in France and pleaded with the public to help the BBM cope with costs to care for the increasing number of the children being sent.

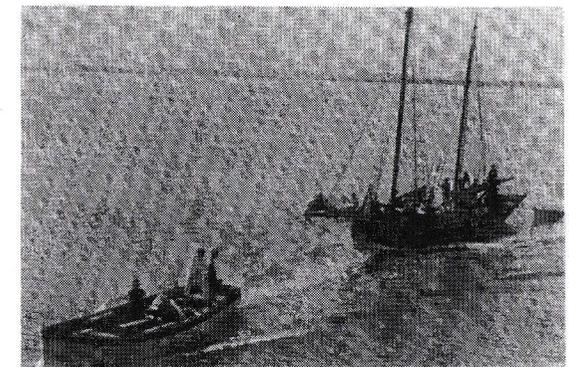
18th. December. The 'Salvador' collected nine half-caste boys sent from Derby to be trained and educated at the Mission. The rest of the group was sent to BBM.

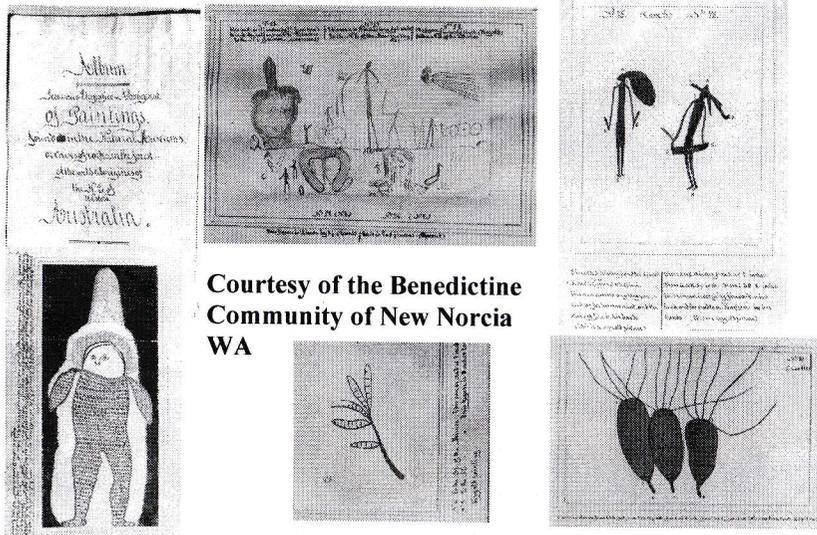
Sick from his heart with sadness and worry, Fr Emo sent a five page letter written in Spanish to Abbot Torres, informing him that Leandro, his wife and fellow Filipinos were leaving because of the authoritarian manner of the Superior, Fr Planas.

Fr Emo indicated that he also might leave in May or June. The following day, the Filipinos sailed away on the SS 'Koombana'.



Courtesy of the
Benedictine
Community of New
Norcia WA





Courtesy of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia WA

25th January 1910 Big Charlie, one of the boys placed in care, was accidentally killed from a stray rifle shot. Fr Emo blamed the 'two Fathers' because they did not collect all the rifles. The Fathers blamed Leandro because he had left his two rifles for Catalino and Amat to defend the Fathers in chance of a native attack.

Fr Nicholas and the boys at Big Charlie's Grave
 Courtesy of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia WA



1910

11th July. Fr Emo left Drysdale River Mission with more of the Filipinos for Cygnet Bay. He would work with the black people, sell wood to cover their debts, and regain peace of soul.

16th September. Nicholas came back, packed his belongings, had dinner with the community, and left the following day.

30th September, Fr Emo wrote to Abbot Torres of groups of Blacks which had arrived in groups of 30 or 40, shouting loudly. The missionaries needed help.

16th November. C F Gale wrote from Perth to the police to use Emo and his boat to make contact with Boolgin and Sunday Island.

Brief History of the Lombadina Station

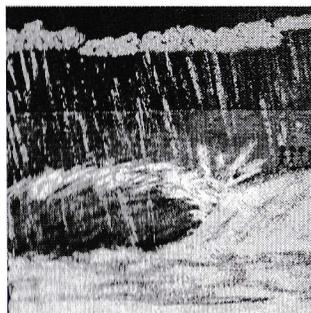
In 1892, Bishop Gibney had bought a property from Hunter to the north of the Beagle Bay Mission..

Disaster Bay was another extension of the Beagle Bay Mission property. When the French missionaries were preventing Fr Walter from selling the BBM cattle, Fr Jean Marie Janny and Thomas Puertollano, moved back to Lombadina with the mission cattle and some of the natives who had been living at Disaster Bay with them.

In 1906, Fr Janny was transferred from Australia to Brazil leaving Thomas Puertollano building up the Lombadina property.

In 1910, Fr Droste with a Brother, from Beagle Bay Mission, had erected a small building at Chilli Point.

This was destroyed by a storm the same year that Father Emo came back from Drysdale.



Leaving Chilli Point with the Blessed Sacrament

Painted for the Centenary 2011 by Jenaya Cox.

1911

At Beagle Bay, 109 children were being educated. There were 28 boys and 20 girls of full descent, and 20 boys and 41 girls of part descent.

The government funded their education with a yearly subsidy of £800, which worked out to be 4d per day per head.

There were also 45 indigent natives who were receiving rations, for whom the Mission received 9d per head per day.

While Fr Nicholas major interest was his pastoral care for Lombadina Mission, he continued to maintain an interest in both the Beagle Bay Mission and the Drysdale River Mission.

18th August The 'Dickie' belonging to the Drysdale River Mission was wrecked at Jones Island

4th October. Father Nicholas wrote from Lombadina to the priest in charge, either Fr Thomas Bachmair or Fr Droste at Beagle Bay Mission about the wreck of the 'Dickie'. Because of sickness he was unable go himself but had arranged with Thomas Puertollano to take supplies instead.

20 November, Father Altimira sent a telegram from Broome to Abbot Torres:

Received plenty stores from Father Nicholas, also few from Jones Island, all well at Mission, writing.

1912

Fr Emo wrote in the Chronicle: "*The School opened with 15 children. In the camp there are about 76 aborigines. Te sick, old, and destitute natives are fed three times daily. An epidemic of small pox surprised us, with nearly all the camp and the family of the station afflicted, but thanks to the isolation and prompt measures adopted, the disease is now disappearing.*"

1913

23rd March Nicholas Emo wrote from Broome (in Spanish) to Dom Fulgentius Torres, still Vicar Apostolic of Kimberley, again asking if he would be allowed to stay on in Lombadina.

He included two letters, one from the Sisters indicating that they would be happy to come to the mission, and two from Father Bischofs asking for permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament at the mission in a Chapel he has built and blessed, in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Inscribed on the door in the shape of a heart are the words *Sacratissimo Cordi Jesu, anima ponitens et devota*'. Fourteen Stations of the cross had also been erected.

Nicholas had received notification from the General House in Rome, with approbation for his book called '*My Jesus, My All*'. It was finished but he also asked for the Abbot's approval to publish it. He was waiting for '*San Salvador*' to be repaired so that he could go to Broome in April to pick up provisions for Drysdale Mission.

Thomas had pointed out that since the cargo would fill the boat, there would be no space for the people, and Nicholas suggested using the steamship so that the *Salvador* could remain at Parry Harbour. Abbot Fulgentius could then use it to go to the mission.

Anyway, Nicholas was waiting for the Abbot to contact him. The letter included two photographs of the new mission and the chapel.

15th July. Fr Emo again returned from Drysdale Mission.

He looked forward to hearing from the Abbot as soon as possible, and asked for forgiveness for the past. In the next letter, he promised to explain his idea.

26th September. 113 natives attacked Drysdale Mission

16th October. Nicholas had wired Bishop Torres from Broome: "*Tomorrow I shall go with Sisters Beagle Bay et Lombadina. (sic) I leave at presbytery for your Lordship Popular Science Kind regards. Please send application for ground for Sisters. Father Nicholas*"

The *Lombadina Chronicle* recorded that it was a great event for the Blacks and for Lombadina when the three Sisters arrived, Mother John, Mother Bernardine, and Sister Joseph. A relief for Father Nicholas and a blessing for the education and care of the small girls and women.

The Puertollano family vacated their little home for the Sisters until a convent was built for them. Given the increased security of mission life, large families became common. The Sisters had their fair share of deprivation and worry. Communication with Broome and Beagle Bay was very difficult, either by the little boat 'San Salvador' or by donkey cart.

18th October, there is a résumé of a nine page letter which Nicholas wrote from Broome to Abbot Torres about events from 21 July to 16 August:

Nicholas is tired but he wants to tell the Abbot about his last visit to Drysdale. Normally it would take eight days to go to Drysdale but on the last trip they spent 21 days going and 13 days returning, Admiralty Gulf was extremely dangerous on the way back. On the way to Drysdale, after passing Augustus Islands, four Aborigines came to their boat and he gave them food

Thomas was going to Broome because he owed money. He (Nicholas) wanted to go to Drysdale to bring the wood but he could not go because he could not leave the nuns alone. If Father Droste came to Lombadina to look after the nuns Nicholas could go to Drysdale.

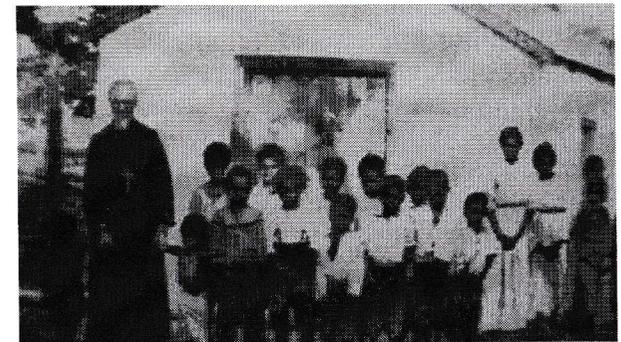
5 December. Father Nicholas wrote from Broome to Bishop Torres that he had been busy with applications for the land in Lombadina.

Father Droste sent the stockman Brother from Beagle Bay with his mules to help to mark Thomas' cattle. The same person also built a stone oven for the sisters so that they could heat water. He left the mission 4 December and returned to Beagle Bay.

Father Thomas (Bachmair) had gone to Broome leaving Father Nicholas looking after his house and everything else at Beagle Bay Mission.

Nicholas translated the gospel into English and preached every Sunday. He gave blessings every week, taught catechism every day at 9.00, and heard confessions.

Daily Mass and Communion was celebrated and Rosary with litanies were said each evening.



Courtesy of Sisters of St John of God, Broome

In her book, *Mister Neville*, Pat Jacobs described Nicholas Emo as living an easy co-existence on the Dampier Peninsula, as he happily tended his mixed flock, baptising and marrying without worrying about racial or cultural distinctions.

1914

24 February, from Broome, Father Nicholas typed a letter in Spanish to Abbot Torres explaining the correct location of Drysdale Mission on the map so that Captain Francis could find it. Nicholas wanted to go to Drysdale Mission at the end of February because the situation had changed. They would bring wood but not food to the mission.

Contact was now being made with more than 60 black people and he thought that for that number of people something good could be done. He was careful about safety, because Aborigines could appear friendly at first but later become dangerous and they were known to have murdered white people.

Since the police were going to capture the other Aboriginal murderer (the first was in prison) it could be a good opportunity for Sister Illma (?) to visit Drysdale.

Mother Bernardine, Sister Mary John and Sister Mary Joseph liked the happy and peaceful life in Lombadina. When Father Nicholas told them that there were many black people in Drysdale they were enthusiastic to go if Sister Illma went with them. Nicholas would write to her about the mission and the Sisters, so that she would have news for her congregation.

Nicholas was grateful for the cheque received. Later on he would tell the Fathers about finances and money earned through the government expedition. Since he had spent a great deal he was now as poor as before. The £20 from Father Abbot had been spent buying from Thomas, 50 goats, 12 hens and a billy goat for the Sisters.

As soon as the weather improved he would visit Drysdale Mission as the Abbot wished. Nicholas had received a letter in Spanish from Valencia bringing news about 'the sale' (of family property? Also £100 would be sent to help with the impression of the Memorial. Father Symphorian, General Secretary of the Cistercians, who had written regularly to Father Nicholas, had died.

World War 1

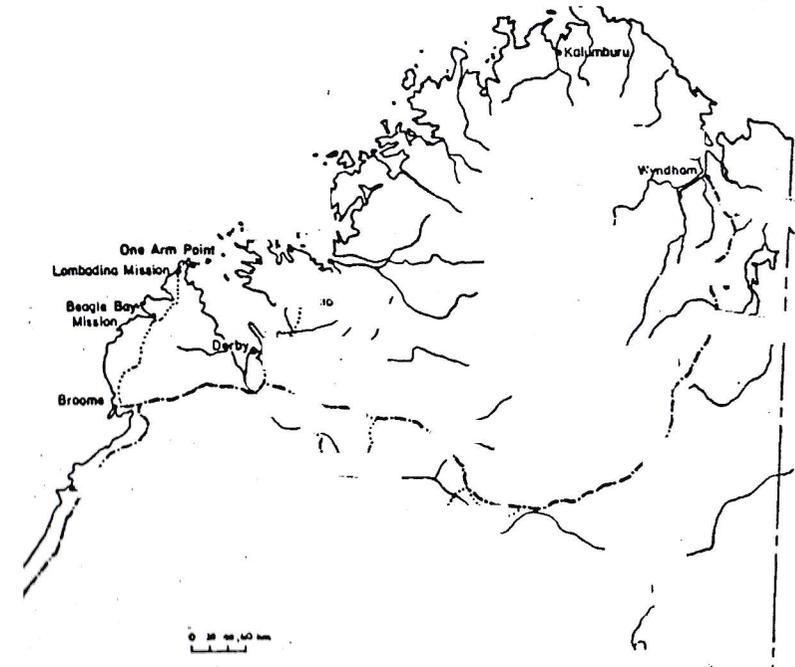
31st July. Germany declared war on Russia,

3 August Germany declared war on France.

4th August England declared war on Germany.

23rd August Japan declared War on Germany.

In Perth it was rumoured that if German ships sheltering in the Indian Ocean needed meat, there were plenty of cattle available in Beagle Bay. Negotiations had to be made to protect the threatened German missionaries. Father Bischofs made the long journey of 1800 miles to Perth to discuss the situation but Captain Corbett would do anything to discourage Germans from coming to Broome and other centres of white population, particularly Father Bischofs, Father Droste, and Brother Wollseifer. They were confined to the mission.



The war made little impression on Lombadina Mission directly, but since the movements of the German Pallottines became restricted to Beagle Bay Mission, Father Nicholas became indispensable. He could now navigate the schooner *San Salvador* himself, and was constantly at the disposal of Beagle Bay Mission.

The Pallottines, in order to meet a financial crisis had some time before been forced to sell their pearling lugger 'Leo', and in April 1912, the 'Pio' had been wrecked in the hurricane that sank the 'Koombana' and scuttled the 'north-west pearling fleet'.

This left Beagle Bay without any independent transport pending the building of a new lugger. But for Father Nicholas's readiness to carry their cargo, passengers and hospital patients to and from Broome, they would have been at a loss.

Though he was in no fit state of health for strenuous work, Nicholas was so often at sea, he became exhausted trying to make up for lost time when he returned to Lombadina mission.

H V Howe wrote, "The little town of Broome had been particularly hard hit when the owners of about 120 pearling boats joined up. Six months later most of them had been sold and were back at work again. Only the Filipino pearlmen still had their boats. It was said that new owners were renting the boats to Japanese divers for £5 a week, and only those boats being legitimately worked by their white owners employed Malay or Filipino divers."

1st October. The Beagle Bay Mission was now sheltering, clothing, feeding and educating 143 children, 65 boys and 78 girls. 9 new arrivals of part descent had come from Liveringa, Station, Carnot Bay and La Grange. Fr Emo had predicted this situation escalating when he wrote to the *Chronicle* 23rd October 1909, asking for support for the Beagle Bay Mission.

5th October Abbot Torres died. His death left the office of Vicar Apostolic in the Kimberley vacant.

30th November. In a letter to New Norcia, Fr Emo explained how, after Thomas Puertollano's wedding (1898) as Superior at BBM, he had entrusted the 25,000 acres of land at Lombadina to Thomas who had made improvements to the station with animals, gardens, paddocks, and windmills, etc. Therefore, at this point of time, Thomas should be eligible to claim titles to 100 - 150 acres, as 'fee simple'.

1915 8th March, Fr Nicholas died of consumption. A great wailing was heard in the camp. His brave little schooner 'San Salvador' was beached at Beagle Bay, never defeated by the sea. His camps and his anchorages were honoured. When drifting dunes moved to cover his grave, his remains were taken to the Djarindjin Lombadina cemetery. He had been sent to Beagle Bay Mission to Aborigines and worked among them to the end.

After the burial.

Mary Durack, in *The Rock and the Sand*, related that after the Requiem, when Thomas Puertollano set out in the 'San Salvador' to convey the sad tidings to the Pro Vicar in Broome, Father Droste accompanied him, expecting to be put ashore at Beagle Bay.

The following account is apart of Fr Droste's account of the voyage, as written in German to the motherhouse in Germany.

"We pulled out to the Salvador in a dinghy and got aboard. The anchor was weighed and the sails set; the wind was against us and presently it blew more strongly and grew to a storm. The waves crashed over the deck and washed away everything that had not been fastened down. I became sick and made a bee line for the little cabin. The ship tossed hither and thither and I rolled about on the floor, the musty smell of the cabin aggravating my nausea until my stomach was empty. For thirty hours I lay there in

the most abject misery, not heeding the straining of the masts or the bluster and howling of the wind – I felt as though I should prefer to die.

Suddenly I heard a shout: 'Bring out the priest!' Terrified I endeavoured to rise, but was unable to move. At the same time two aborigines came down and dragged me on deck. The vessel had been driven violently on to the coast and the rocks threatened to smash it to pieces. With their last ounce of strength the dog-tired sailors pushed long oars against the rocks to ward off destruction, and as the gale had by this time abated, in an hour's time we were out of danger.

We had been hammered by the storm for two days and had not covered a greater distance than one could walk in a couple of hours. The crew swam ashore to get some shellfish and when the tide had run right out and left the ship aground so that she toppled over on her side, I resolved to walk ashore. I tried to clamber down the side of the ship, but I was too weak and Peter, my aboriginal assistant, had to carry me.

There was a pearling boat with a Japanese crew ashore not far from us, and we asked them for drinking water, but they had none. We lay down on the sand, it having grown dark meanwhile. Peter got some wood and kindled a fire. The other Aborigines (the crew) caught some small fish and crabs and roasted them in the ashes. The sailors decided to refloat the ship and return to Lombadina.

Thomas Puertollano had been resident in Western Australia since 1891. After two years working in pearling he was employed as Captain of the Beagle Bay Mission schooner. He was married by Fr Nicholas in 1898 and was Godfather to the first Aborigines baptized at the Beagle Bay Mission.

For many years he had provided the pearling fleet with meat and vegetables and rendered help to the steamer 'Phantom' with the survey of the coast. When news was received of the wreck of the Drysdale River Mission boat he offered to help with the rescue of the crew.

Some believe that through Thomas Puertollano and the 'San Salvador', Father Nicholas worked a miracle a few weeks after his death.

Here is the story as recorded by Mary Durack, was related by Captain James MacKenzie as well as by missionaries and people at Lombadina mission. The Captain was generally known as 'Long Mac' and was a much loved and respected resident of the Broome district to the time of his death in December 1957. He is buried in the Broome pioneer cemetery.

Captain James MacKenzie had left Queensland in charge of thirty luggers that James Clarke, 'The Pearl King', had decided to transfer to Western Australian waters. The parent vessel 'Alice' had lost sight of the remainder of the fleet somewhere south of Timor and had been alone when the cyclone struck off the Lacepedes.

The ship had stuck on a submerged reef and while the three Koepangers rowed in for help the rest of the crew had endured an agonizing wait of five days and four nights with only a small canvas bag of drinking water between them.

Thirteen men who, half crazed with hunger, thirst and cramp had insisted on swimming to an exposed part of the reef in search of shellfish had been swept away by the returning rip tide and the others had almost given up hope of rescue when the mission schooner was seen fighting towards them through the heavy swell.

The 'San Salvador' not long before had been declared unseaworthy and lay beached awaiting repairs when the out-of-season storm took the pearling fleets by surprise.

The weather was still rough when the three exhausted Koepangers staggered into the mission to tell how the schooner Alice had been driven on to Brué Reef in the nearby Lacepedes.

They had managed to detach a small whaler from the wreck and, leaving the skipper and the rest of the crew clinging to the rigging, had struggled ashore to seek help.

Thomas Puertollano explained that since their lugger was out of commission they were powerless to assist.

He appealed to the nuns to confirm the state of the 'San Salvador'.

Torn between pity for the seafarers and concern for Thomas they were completely at a loss until Mother Bernardine recalled the dream in which Father Nicholas claimed to have been promised Our Lady's special protection for his ship.

Thomas, insisting that it meant suicide, then made a few hurried repairs, called for a volunteer crew and ordered the rest of the community into the church to pray for a miracle.

Some hours later, a cry from the dunes made known that the 'San Salvador had returned with the survivors of the wreck.

Bibliography

George Walter, *Australia, Land, People, Mission*,
Limburg Lahn-Verlag, Germany, 1928

Irene Shackloth, *The Call of the Kimberley*,
Hallcraft, Melbourne, 1950

Mary Durack, *The Rock and the Sand*
London Constable 1969

Brigida Nailon, *Nothing is wasted in the household of God: Vincent Pallotti's Vision in Australia 1901-2001*,
Spectrum Publications, Richmond, 2001

Brigida Nailon, *The Writing on the Wall Father Duncan McNab 1820-1896*
Echuca Brigidine Sisters, 2004

Brigida Nailon, *Emo and San Salvado, Book 1 Broome and Beagle Bay*
Echuca Brigidine Sisters, 2004

Brigida Nailon, *Emo and San Salvado, Book 2 Cygnet Bay Drysdale River and Lombadina*