



Kimberley Society

Book Note

Reflections of a Kimberley Woman by Lucy Marshall. Madjulla Inc, Broome, 2004, spiral bound, laminated cover, 110 pages, illustrations and maps. ISBN 0-9756706-7-0. RRP \$26.

This intriguing book has been a long time coming. I first heard about work being done on it years ago after the author became a friend through our membership of the Aboriginal Cultural Materials Committee. That State Government committee, for which Lucy travelled from the West Kimberley to Perth every two months or so, is one of many avenues through which she speaks up for her people's culture.

In the book, Lucy explains how her family fits into the complex network of Aboriginal relationships in the West Kimberley. She tells of her happy childhood and of the many ways in which Nyikina parents cared for their children and transmitted knowledge to them. Lucy also mentions less fortunate mixed-blood children of her generation being taken away, never to return to their families, and others, such as Charlie Yeeda and his sister Daisy, who were sent to school at Moola Bulla.

The people mentioned in the book include Lucy's grandfather Karrkirar, her mother Mary, her father Eugene Hunter (Liveringa and Derby), her brother Frank Hunter and sister Jeanni Wabi, Auntie Daisy, Bobby Ah Choo and Yalut, Willie and Con Lennard, the Watson family (Mt Anderson Station), Darcy Ryder (Udialla Station), the Rose family (Mt Anderson Station) and George Wells (Meda Station). Dot Hunter, nee Watson, is remembered fondly for her kindness to children. Joan Rose is similarly remembered for the training that she provided in domestic skills and child care.

In recalling her passage from child to woman, Lucy speaks with sorrow about the impact of being 'under the Act' and thus denied the rights enjoyed by non-indigenous people. It is clear that her life was hard but she speaks of those aspects with a minimum of bitterness. Her ability to convey a clear impression of how people's status and position affected their lives on the stations and in Derby is one of the strengths of the book. Another is her ability to present sharp insights into current issues that include native title, alcohol, drugs and substance misuse.

The foreword to the book, written by Colleen Hattersley, is a valuable addition. As well as providing context, it tells how she and Lucy worked to produce the book.

At the time of writing, *Reflections of a Kimberley Woman* could be purchased by sending a cheque for \$26, which also covers the postage, to Madjulla Inc, PO Box 2747, Broome, WA 6725.

Cathie Clement