

I had become a member of the National Institute of Exploration based in Champagne , Illinois a couple of years earlier. At the time they were escorting photography groups into exotic areas of the world and publishing books of photos and stories that were taken on the expeditions!

They were planning a trip to Peru and Machu Picchu, somewhere that I really had an interest in visiting. For various reasons, I was unable to take advantage of that trip and had almost forgotten about them.

One evening , while working in my darkroom, I received a call from them saying that they were planning a expedition of 200 photographers to Australia in June and was inquiring as to the feasibility of me going and leading a group. We would spend a month in Australia, break into groups of 8-10, each group spending approximately a week in an area , then go to a different area and spend a week there.

It was something that I had never given a second thought to , but I almost said yes immediately, but hesitated and said I would get back to them.

If I recruited 10 people and became a team leader, I could get my trip for free. This sounded like an interesting opportunity, so I went for it.

I immediately began issuing press releases and recruiting people who might be interested in spending a month photographing Australia. I finally wound up recruiting 2 people , which was short of my goal, but I decided that for the money, it was still a good opportunity.

As the week of the trip approached, things became really chaotic, We had inadvertently decided to go on an Australian school holiday and it was extremely hard to get airline reservations. My flights were being changed daily or hourly, finally on Saturday about midnight, Barry Barker, the President called me and said that I would be leaving about 1:00 PM from Indianapolis on Sunday and that I should pick my ticket up at the ticket counter . At that point in time I had nothing to go on but blind faith, so my dad took me to the airport and lo and behold , my ticket was there!!

Bidding a quick good-bye to my dad , I scurried thru customs with my 80 rolls of film and boarded the aircraft bound for Chicago on what was the first leg of my 40 hour plane ride. Looking at my ticket I realized I only had a 45 minute layover in Chicago, being that the plane was 20 minutes late leaving Indianapolis, that only left 25 minutes to change planes, not much time. Little did I know that this was only a hint of things to come, the whole trip was going to be about synchronicity.

As the plane nuzzled to the gate I immediately left the plane and began running to my next plane bound for San Francisco. Luckily it wasn't too far away and my self and my luggage boarded with plenty of time to spare!

A bright, sunny, cloudless sky awaited us in San Francisco, with the mountains and the

Golden Gate Bridge in the background , the approach over the bay was breathtaking !

Luckily I had a 5 hour layover , so there was more than plenty of time to eat and relax. We began boarding about 10 PM for our 5 hour flight to Hawaii, taking over an hour to completely load the 747, I began to feel as if I was participating in one of those "Airplane" movies.

After taking off and enjoying a fine airplane meal, the rest of the 5 hours was spent sleeping, as it was already late at night back in Indiana.

Having a short stop in Honolulu I did step outside the airport to enjoy the tropical air and to be able to say that I had been to Hawaii , then we were on our way to our next stop Auckland, New Zealand.

The plane was only about 1/3 full, so there was plenty of room to stretch out for an occasional nap, or so I thought! My original plan was to catch some shut eye after take off, as there were four empty seats between myself and the next passenger. However, that thought disappeared , as during take off I had fallen asleep, when I awoke after being in the air for some time, the clown four seats over from me had taken every seat for himself.

That turned out to be a blessing, as when I made my way to the back of the plane, I began meeting people who would be joining me on my Australian adventure. We all congregated in the back of the plane and started sharing stories and getting to know each other.

A few hours into the flight we crossed the equator, my first time in the southern hemisphere!

The clown next to me had finally moved, so I claimed the seats for myself and settled in for a much needed nap.

I awoke to a beautiful South Pacific sunrise, a couple more hours and we would be in Auckland!

Upon landing in Auckland, they held the plane on the tarmac while the outside of the plane was defumed, our own self service plane wash!! They also walked through the cabin and sprayed , no bugs in New Zealand. We would only be in Auckland a couple of hours , then it was off to Sydney!

Landing in Sydney is worth the cost of the trip, the flight path takes the plane over the cliffs in Sydney Harbour, observing the Opera House and Sydney Bridge from my window seat, I realized that I had come a long way from the corn fields of Indiana.

Five of us adventurers hailed a cab for the short ride to the domestic terminal, it was than that we became acquainted with the friendliness and hospitality of the Aussies. I think the cabbie gave us a complete history of Australia and the Aborigine people in that short five minute ride!

Another 3 hour layover and we are off to Cairns, my sense of direction is normally pretty good, however after taking off I had the distinct feeling that we were going South instead of North, I even asked my seat mate if we were going to Cairns.

He replied that we were, I later discovered that I had the same directional problem all the while I was in the Southern Hemisphere, must have been something about being orientated to the south pole rather than the north .

The plane then made a stop in Brisbane, this was rather confusing as this was an unscheduled stop. I was later told that the flight was over booked, so they added another flight, as some of the passengers were only going to Brisbane, they landed in Brisbane, put us on the original plane, in the same seats as we had on the first plane and off we went to Cairns! Just what I need after spending 38 hours on a plane!

Finally after 40 hours flying time, I landed in Cairns at about 10:30 PM on Tuesday, I had returned to The Land of OZ!

We all have unexplained events our life, one of the most interesting events that have occurred to me is the saga of the ring, which has a significant part in my trip to Australia.

I made contact with and went to see a physic who had worked with Shirley MacClaine. It was at the same time that I had been considering going to Australia and was uncertain as to whether it was something I should do.

During the reading it was discussed that when I got to Ayres Rock, which neither of us, myself or the physic knew existed, I would find a pit at the top big enough for a human with three 3 ft. circles on one side of it.

It was also disclosed that I needed a basket containing earth products, and a Tiger Eye Ring that should only be worn only on days or months with a five in them because I was moving from a five vibration to a seven and I needed the ring on the five days for protection.

This was on a Wednesday night, on Friday evening, while sitting in my living room; I noticed a basket of stones and arrowheads sitting on my bookcase.

The basket came from grandpa, when he moved out of his apartment; I had put it in the back of my truck, and instructed my kids to give it to my brother Paul. When I got home the basket had been left in the truck, so I put it on the bookcase.

I took the basket containing earth things down and spread the arrowheads out on the floor in no particular fashion, and went to bed.

The next day I had planned on going to Cincinnati to find the ring, after having breakfast Sat. morning, I sat down in my chair and fell asleep. While sleeping, I dreamt of a pawnshop in Louisville and the Tiger Eye ring.

When I woke up, I looked at the arrowheads and they were pointed towards Louisville. I

didn't think much of the idea of going to Louisville and started for Cincinnati, I drove about a mile from home, it just didn't feel right, so I turned around and drove to Louisville.

I just followed my nose and wound up in downtown Louisville, driving around a corner, there was the pawnshop I saw in my dream. I went inside and there was the Tiger Eye ring, I bought it and started home. I put the ring on my little finger, left hand, whereby my finger started to sweat, while the rest of my hand stayed cool.

I went back to the psychic the next week and found that the ring had been owned by a fundamentalist minister who had pawned it when he ran into financial trouble.

I really liked the ring and wanted to wear it every day, but on days that were not five days, it would fall off my finger. I couldn't wait for May, because it was a five month.

While in Australia I found that I could wear it on most days, regardless of whether there was a five in the day or not, but when I didn't need the ring, it would fall off my finger!

After arriving in Cairns late in the evening, we were leaving early the next morning on the first leg of our journey to the little town of Laura located near the Laura River, our purpose for going was to attend a Corroboree, an Aboriginal Songfest.

This was a five day add on to the trip as the original expedition was to begin the following week with my going to Alice Springs and Uluru, with 8 other participants.

A hearty breakfast in the hotel restaurant was enjoyed by all as the time was spent getting to know one another. We boarded the 24 passenger bus for the trip into the York Peninsula. Eucalyptus, gum trees and kangaroos made up most of the scenery as we slowly wound our way through the bush to our destination.

After more miles of dirt roads than I care to remember we arrived dusty, dirty, and thirsty in Laura. I was expecting something a little larger, the town consisted of maybe a dozen houses, a small post office, the Laura Hotel, which was a small metal building that might house 10 people, hostel style. The hotel consisted of a pub and something they called a restaurant, in reality the restaurant was a few picnic tables and a charcoal grill. The front of the hotel featured the only tree in town, a large Mango tree.

Laura, a town of about 60 people, sits in the middle of the York Peninsula and is inaccessible for up to four months every year during the rainy season. The only way in or out is by a single engine airplane that lands on a dirt runway, which undoubtedly turns to mud in the rainy season. The modern era arrived in the 1980's when electricity was finally brought to the town, ending many years of the town's electrical needs being supplied via a gas generator.

As dinnertime approached, the smell of charcoal filled the air, while making our way to the restaurant, our meal was being cooked by our bus driver and guide. The grille was

packed with steak ,chicken ,and the Aussie favorite, shrimp on the barbie!
After stuffing ourselves with all the delicacies, the next order of business was to check out the local pub, it being rather small and rustic was not unlike a bar anywhere else in the world. My initial thought was to have a beer in a quiet corner and retire for the evening. Boy was I mistaken, the place was packed, it seems as though everyone came for miles around! Not only were there Australians enjoying a drink , but also Aborigines, and it seems people from the four corners of the globe!

Several Fosters later, it was time mosey back to the camp ground, it being an open field , it wasn't hard to find my swag, (a canvas sleeping bag) and settle in for the night under the Southern Cross, not a bad way to end my first day in the Land of OZ.

A quick shower in the outdoor bath house and it would be off to the land of nod! I soon discovered that there had to be a better time to shower as several people had beaten me to the showers and the water was ice cold, oh well, I will shower in the morning, wrong again, another crowded shower and more cold water!

I decided it was time to get serious about this shower thing, so the next morning I would arise at 3 AM , shower, and retire back to my swag to finish my nights rest.

Daybreak came with the singing of Kookaburra birds, just like in jungle movies. What better way to open the day after sleeping under the stars in our genuine Australian swags!
A breakfast of sausage, eggs, pancakes and all the trimmings cooked over an open fire awaited us ,then it was off to a long and hard rock climb and our first view of Aboriginal Rock Art at Giant Horse Gallery . These paintings that were either painted on with reeds or blown on with a straw were thousands of years old and made with Iron Oxide, very impressive!

As an added treat, the opportunity was presented us to observe Didgeridoo player Marcell Riguett , he was the first white man to be granted permission to play here , this was my first opportunity to actually observe the Didgeridoo being played, it was interesting in that the musician actually breathes in through his nose and out through his mouth at the same time.

On the way back to Laura, the driver dropped us off to see Split Rock where we were able to observe more rock art, as we were relatively close to Laura we hiked back , having to cross Laura River in the process, it being only a small stream this was no problem , It was then that I observed my first view of Aussie openness, white pointers were abundant everywhere, as many people were skinny dipping in the river!

The campground had become rather crowded , as the Corroboree was beginning, native tribes from all over Queensland were converging for this important event. It was quickly turning into what seemed like a spiritual track meet!

One hardly had time to observe everything, as there were boomerang throwing contests, many ancient tribal dances featuring the customs and costumes of the different Aboriginal

tribes, displays of rock art, native food, and talks on the many aboriginal teachings. There will come a time when this songfest will be no longer, as the Aborigines are losing their native customs.

There are many shapes and sizes of boomerangs which they used to hunt and kill food, everything from birds to kangaroos. The boomerang was designed to come back to its original location, that way if the prey was missed, the boomerang would return to the person who threw it, thus eliminating his need to run after it. In today's world most Aborigines have lost the ability to make and throw boomerangs, many times the contests are won by a Caucasian, many are becoming like us and we are becoming like them, in time we will all be the same

One of the most disturbing events happened when another photographer and I ventured down to the river and saw several children playing in the water, amongst several hundred hypodermic needles and beer bottles. Alcoholism and drug abuse is a major problem among the Aborigines, as they have lost their purpose in life. They have lived in the outback for thousands of years and know of no other life. No matter how much the government helps them for the most part, they are unable to adapt.

Being an Aborigine is a way of life or religion, more than a race, anyone can adapt the ways of the aborigine and get assistance from the government. The true Aborigine is Caucasian, when some of them took their shirt off, their chest was white, they are dark because they have lived in the sun for thousands of years.

One of the highlights was meeting Ted Mitchell, one of the last Trackers, the story was told that a child had gotten lost in the bush, after searching with helicopters, dogs and many search teams, Ted was called in to help with the search, within a half an hour he came back with the child in his arms.

We spent several hours listening to Ted tell us of the Aboriginal beliefs:

The Aborigines believe that when we visit a place we leave an image, and a person trained to see that image can follow some one regardless of the terrain or how long they have been gone.

Their teachings show many examples of such happenings, as well as casting spells on someone thousands of miles away, with the victim being affected by it even though he has no knowledge of the spell being cast.

To the Aborigine, life was all about survival, we are taught a work ethic in order to improve our lot and to make a better life.

The Aborigine knew no such thing, because of their extreme environment, their only focus was survival, they don't understand and laugh at us for working so hard.

People say to them that it must be great to live off the land, their reply is "If people think

it is so great, let them try it!"

All nature is sacred, but in creation place spirit power manifests more readily ,these are places where great events of creation took place,

members of a group share common totem each individual has totem.

No better learning than life learning, knowledge not important it's how you feel about it.

Their government structured like ours , there are over 1200 different tribes

Still are tribes no one knows about, not all of Australia has been explored.

Some are living underground.

They didn't know what to think of whites at first, and everyone got along.

There is a time and place for everything

Most believe in UFOs

If we would be more trusting everything would be provided.

Aborigines would swim in water with crocodiles, the crocodiles would only take people

who had done something wrong, they still swim with them ,they also believe the only

time you get sick of a disease is if you did something wrong, the head heals lives,

When someone dies they were dried out, wrapped in leaves and bark, then they were taken home and put in trees.

Living and dead are a link between the present culture and its mythic logical origin.

Older paintings were said to have been done by spirits from the dreamtime.

Mime spirits are ET's

Aborigines are still proud; they won't rummage through garbage or paint graffiti on restroom.

Sacred Site, a place where aborigines find a manifestation of divine power, a sense of contact with a creative form.

With great difficulty they are starting to move into the white society.

The Aborigine who has been taught the Dream time is very intuitive and extremely aware of his surroundings, Crocodile Dundee was all Hollywood, but not very far off on this perspective.

Regretfully, our time to head back to civilization had come, so the next morning we boarded the bus back to Cairns.

Because of the busy holiday traffic, we were going to have to wait a day to leave for Alice Springs and Uluru , we were on the elevator going back up to our room when some of the group caught us on the elevator and told us the bus was waiting downstairs for us to go to the airport.. This was 1:25, the plane was to leave at 1:50, and after much rushing we boarded the plane at 2:10, they held the plane for us; they were backing from the gate as we were finding our seats.

Observing the ground on our three hour flight from Cairns to Alice Springs , I couldn't help but notice the starkness of the land, it is very sparsely populated with very few roads during the whole route!

arrived in Alice springs late afternoon, walked down to Maxims to eat dinner, being winter in Australia it was very chilly, about freezing, nice cowboy type pub, I was completely exhausted ate and went to bed by 9:00.

The next day, June 27th, was going to be a very busy day, as a trip to a dreamtime ceremony on the Tropic of Capricorn was planned. Many of the customs and beliefs of the Aborigines were explained to us,

Only healthy babies were kept, they were suckled for seven years and if the mother couldn't keep up with work and the child, the baby was killed.

Most tribes contained 20- 30 people, with 4-5 in each family, some lived to be 100 and some had more than one wife.

It took about six acres of land to support one person, they survived by eating whatever was available, including termites, ants and grub worms

We even had the chance to eat a grub worm; it was prepared in the usual fashion which was being roasted in an open pit fire.

If the tribe became too large and there wasn't enough food, the weaker ones were either killed or left to die. They would rub animal fat on their bodies to shut down sweating in order to conserve water. They still don't wear many clothes because clothes create body odor in the heat.

In the dry years, women would not ovulate, they had 0 population growth, sometimes the droughts would last 10 years, so there would be no children born in that time. The lack of food and environmental stress ruined the sex drive.

When woman first felt kick of child, the first animal they saw was believed to be its totem or spirit animal, because that is the closest source of energy, it could be a snake, kangaroo or anything.

Aborigines are the 1st people

Same totems can't marry

Inbreed s become stupid

4-5 in family, some lived to be 100, some had more than 1 wife

Buried in trees, graves cremated, embalmed, wrapped up bones and put in tree.

Some tribes cut off heads, can't find skull

They have water tanks in Alice, but can't use them, too much dust.

After the grub worm experience it was time to visit Emily Gap, and sample another tasty Australian bush delight, Spotted Dog Cake and Billy Tea, with Damper Bread for desert!

Recipe for Australian Damper Bread

This is a traditional bread baked in the coals of an open fire or in a Dutch Oven (huge lidded cast iron pot) but nowadays we bake it in a normal oven. Of course there are as many variations as there are days in the years but the basic recipe is as follow:

- Ingredients

4 cups self-raising flour

3/4 - 1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons sugar

2 tablespoons butter at room temperature

1 cup milk

1/2 cup water

Method Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and mix in the sugar.

Rub in the butter with your (clean) hands until a fine breadcrumb texture is achieved.

For a well in the top of the flour, pour in the milk and water, and mix well with a knife until the dough come clean from the sides of the bowl.

Turn out onto a floured board and knead until smooth and silky, like a baby's bottom.

Shape into a mounded loaf, (some people cut a deep cross in the top) and bake in a preheated oven, 200 c / 400 F, for 25 minutes.

Then lower the temperature to 180 c / 375 f and cook a further 10 - 15 minutes until done.

The loaf should be a light golden brown colour and sound hollow when tapped.

If you are "game" try cooking it on a camp fire; nothing beats that extra smoky flavour, especially using Australian Eucalyptus wood to give it that special something.

If you are cooking in an oven at home, try putting a few Gum Leaves in the over to smoke as your are cooking the bread.

Damper is very similar to Irish Soda Bread, and probably developed from recipes brought over by Irish immigrants/convicts. Variations of the basic recipe are seemingly endless, but you could try substituting other liquids, such as beer for a darker colour/flavour, or varying the ratio of milk to water, and so on.

Try adding more sugar and butter and some dried fruits for a dessert damper. Basically use your imagination. If you are cooking on an open fire you could try wrapping the dough in aluminium foil before you place it in the coals, or even try wrapping the dough around a stick and cooking suspended over the flames.

Good Baking!

As luck would have it, while visiting Alice Springs, we had the pleasure of staying at the Alice Springs Motor Lodge.

The manager belonged to the local camera club and they were having their monthly meeting that very night!

Most of us were extremely tired ,as we had spent the last five nights telling stories around the camp fire and sleeping in swags.

It turned out to be one of our most enjoyable evenings, upon arriving, we were met at the door by several members of the camera club, who proceeded to lead us to a table filled with sandwiches and refreshments.

The approximately 50 members in attendance couldn't wait to show us their favorite slides.

It was an impressive exhibition, most of the transparencies were medium format, and I have never seen any better photography anywhere!

It was close to midnight and they were still going strong, as much as we hated to we had to excuse ourselves, as we were leaving for Uluru at 6 AM.

I will never forget the hospitality and warmth shown to us that evening in the middle of the outback.

Ayres Rock, Northern Territory Australia

As the "Rock" came into sight; I began feeling the energy from this ancient monolith, which was formed from a featureless landscape during the Tjukurpa, or creation. As the bus approached Uluru, I began to wonder what adventure awaited me.

The "Rock" became a very impressive sight, rising from the floor of the outback. It was the only object to be seen for miles!

To Aborigines, Uluru is a Cathedral and though the outside form is visible, the underlying spiritual concepts are not a matter of public record. It is a living reminder of the Dreamtime struggle. The stories which relate to every aspect of its extraordinary form carry clear moral codes, good prevailing over evil. The spiritual over the physical, the importance of hospitality and the maintenance of the law.

If I was to climb this monolith, it would be very difficult as my right arm was still very weak from my motorcycle accident three months earlier. The way to the top was very steep and the only way was to pull oneself up by a large chain that had been provided. I almost quit climbing twice.

I had to do it, several months earlier I had felt the need to climb to the top and find a man sized pit surrounded by three circular ones, this was one of the reasons I had come to the Land of Oz.

Intuition had told me to leave my forty pounds of camera equipment in the bus, I didn't do it, the reason became apparent, and I and some of the other photographers had extreme difficulty. Our light meters would not give a correct reading. After I had returned home and had the slides developed, they were all black! Whatever energy that emits from this shrine had played havoc with the electronics in our cameras. I encountered the same problem in Egypt, as I had to replace some of the electronics in my camera after trying to

photograph the step pyramid.

Arriving at the top I immediately found the pit and three circles that had been carved into the stone many ages ago.

As I Lay in the pit I could only imagine what ancient ceremonies had taken place here.

It was very beautiful, standing on top of this ancient landmark, with the Australian plain stretching out before me, I could see forever.

After several minutes of contemplating the wonder of being in this great place, it was time to start the trip down the side of the "rock". The trip down was a lot easier, as the old saying goes; it's all downhill from here.

By the time everyone reached the bus it was nearing sunset, so we raced to get a photo of Uluru as the sun sat behind us. As the sun raced down, the sky changes from blue to orange and back to purple, the color fading as darkness descended upon us.

Time to eat!! Time for a tinnie (can of beer), our dinner of streak, shrimp, beans and potato was being prepared on the barbie! It doesn't get any better than this!!

The weather was turning cold, we were headed for a record low of twenty degrees F, and it would be a long night with only my light jacket and an uninsulated swag to sleep in!!

The effects of the tinnies and long necks were being felt, three o'clock in the morning and it was time for a bathroom call, freezing, I made the long trip to the latrine, being chilled to the bone, there would be no sleep the rest of the night.

Went to Olga's the next day, didn't stay long, very tired, cold and sick.

Stayed the night at Walleras Ranch, very dusty roads, the only way I could get back in that Swag was to get drunk, very cold again.

Went to Kings Canyon the next day, very pretty, man fell 40 feet in Garden of Eden, didn't get hurt.

On way back to Alice, had flat tire and broken fan belt, chased Dingo across outback with bus that caused the broken fan belt. Went past the US air base in Alice, lot of strange stories about it.

Sat, day of rest, did laundry, shopping, went to AJ's in evening and ate and danced.

Sunday, went ballooning at 5:30 went shopping, ate at Diplomat, very nice had Barramundi, crocodile and Kangaroo.

Left Monday at 7:30 for Darwin on Toddy's bus. First stop was Barrow Creek, Aborigines killed line master and men, Calvary came in killed all the men, took the women and children and killed them at Skull creek.

Stopped at Tenant Creek, Devils Marbles, Daly Waters, celebrated July 4th in Daly waters

Stayed at Mataranka, had chicken on the barbie, driver bought fireworks for Americans, saw snake along path to hot springs.

Bus broke down on way to Cooinda, started again stayed overnight, went for pontoon ride early morning in crocodile infested Billy Bong.

Yellow waters in Cooinda, Aborigines burn off jungle to keep growth down, government gave back a lot of land to them, they also profit from parks, all they do now is drink and do drugs, also get welfare and housing.

Had Wallabies walk through camp ground at Alligator River.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING PUBS IN AUSTRALIA.

We rolled in about 2:00 PM on the 4th of July, and they were celebrating. We asked them why they were celebrating an American holiday, their reply was that they were grateful for what the U.S. did for them during WW 2, The U.S. had troops there, plus the Aussies are always looking for a reason to party.

As everywhere in Australia, the people were friendly and wanted to know everything they could about America. They do have quite a gift of gab and tend to stretch the truth at times.

I have posted some facts about Daly Waters below, if you would like to know more do a Google search on Daly Waters. There are several photos worth seeing. In the photos you will see a traffic light; it is billed as the most remote traffic light in the world.

DALY WATERS FACTS

Population:

18 (Permanent)

Seasons:

Daly Waters lie in the sub-tropical region of the Northern Territory. Although it doesn't experience the complete monsoonal seasons of places such as Darwin, seasons are essentially limited to the Dry Season and the Wet Season with the Build Up occurring during the transition between the two.

The Dry Season - The Dry Season begins around April and this indicates the beginning of the tourist season. Traveling during the Dry Season is rarely interrupted as there is virtually no rainfall in the area. The Dry lasts until September or October when the Build Up begins in preparation for the Wet Season.

The Build Up - During the Build Up the local temperatures rise, as does the humidity. Rainfall comes in patches but is only a taste of things to come.

The Wet Season - The Wet Season begins around November and continues through to the end of March. Traveling through the Northern Territory can be difficult with some

roads cut by rising waters. Daly Waters has been flooded out a number of times in its history but waters usually only last a few days. The causeway on the road into town is often inaccessible and a detour around to the bridge is used. For information when traveling in the Wet Season contact us on the above details.

Utilities

Power - Local power is provided by the Daly Waters Power Station, situated on the road out of town. There is the occasional power outage in the Wet Season due to weather conditions.

Water - Town water comes from two local bores and is perfectly fine for drinking. Some locals supplement supplies with rainwater collected during the Wet Season

While walking down the path to Mataranka Springs, a nice thermal spring located just outside of Daly Waters in The Northern Territory While walking down the path to Mataranka Springs, a nice thermal spring located just outside of Daly Waters in The Northern Territory, Steve, Kathy and I were discussing the fact that we had been told about all of the dangerous snakes in Australia.

We had been in the outback of Australia for over three weeks and hadn't seen our first snake.

As luck would have it , the words were barely out of our mouth when this mint green , six foot long snake came out of the bush and crossed in front of us, not more than two feet away. We immediately froze in our tracks and never moved!

We were mortified, as the snake slithered away on the other side of the path; he seemed to be saying, " OK you losers, now you have seen me, so what?"

July 7th , This was to be our last day in the outback of Australia, I was beginning to feel as though I didn't want to go back to the states, this felt like home to me.

Our final stop of the day before traveling to the Alligator River Campground to camp for the night was to be at Jabiru, a new uranium mining town in Kakadu National Park.

The Australian government is trying to correct some of the mistakes that we Americans created in dealing with our American Indians, having ruled that when any minerals are found on Aboriginal Land, the wealth is shared with the native peoples. The city of Jabiru is one such instance of this policy being put into effect. It is a very modern city with beautiful parks and lakes.

The problem that has been created is that the Aborigines have lived in the bush for 40,000 years and are having trouble adapting to their new life, new housing is built for them, but they refuse to live in it, living instead out side the houses.

They have lost their motivation because everything is given to them by the government,

as a result alcoholism and drugs are a major problem.

After dining at one of the many outdoor restaurants, we were looking forward with great anticipation of having the afternoon off and spend it swimming in a large lake nearby. It would have been a welcome relief after spending 6 grueling days traveling the Outback of Australia, sleeping in Swags (canvas sleeping bags) stretched out on the ground.

It was about this time that Mark, our driver suggested that if we wanted to see one more Aboriginal Site, he would be willing to drive us.

Many things began racing through my mind, we had visited many ancient sites in the last week and I really didn't want to see any more, the swimming sounded really refreshing, but what the heck, I could go swimming in Batesville next week if I wanted, this was my last day in The Land of Oz, I wanted to enjoy it to the max. I knew deep down that this was going to be a very special afternoon, being in the Outback for almost a month, I was unaware of the date, July 7th, as I found out later it would be a highlight in my search for truth.

Besides that , everyone knows that all the rivers in Australia are filled with crocodiles and after swimming in those uranium infested waters I would probably glow like a porch light all night.

With that, nine of us boarded the bus for a bumpy dusty 40 miles of dirt road that lay ahead. Sitting near the back of the bus I had plenty of time to contemplate what lay ahead and what it would all mean to me. As we bounced along the dusty road occasionally crossing crocodile infested creeks and rivers it seemed as though I was going back in time, to a time long forgotten, a time remembered only in the Aboriginal Dreamtime. I was a little awed at what was going on around me, I could sense and see the other people on the bus, but it was as though I wasn't really a part of their reality and they perhaps weren't part of mine.

As the dust from the road filtered into the bus and a red layer settled on everyone and everything. At times when passing another vehicle, yes there were others out here; it became so dusty in the bus that we could barely see the driver. At these times it seemed as though we were passing into another dimension.

It was at this time that I felt as if I was actually alone with no one else sharing my experience. I could actually feeling my body becoming lighter and lighter, at the same time becoming less aware of the surroundings around me, while at the same time becoming aware of the sacred lands we were passing through, the warning not to enter without permission of the tribal elders.

My thoughts were interrupted by a sudden jerk and a screeching of brakes, the bus was coming to a stop; we had reached our destination, Ubirr Rock, the home of Lightning Man, a very powerful figure from the Aboriginal Dreamtime.

Namarrgon is a fascinating, lanky, horseshoe-shaped character painted on the rock. His colors are fairly simple; he was probably painted with some sort of makeshift paintbrush, possibly a crushed stick dipped in some iron-based paint most likely made from the crushed ochre rock. He is mostly white with the exception of some reds on the right side of his thunder. We could not tell, however, if the red coloration was rock bleed or intentional coloring. This piece of rock art was painted by Nayombolmi (Barramundi Charlie).

LIGHTNING DREAMING:

Namarrgon, commonly known as the "lightning man," is responsible for the violent electrical storms which occur on the Arnhem plateau. According to Aboriginal Dreamtime explanation of this work, Namarrgon and his family came from the sea and traveled Australia for many years. He uses the stone axes that are mounted on his head, elbows and knees to split the dark clouds and strike the ground, creating lightning and thunder. In addition to his axes, he also has a band wrapped around his body. This band belongs to thunder and works side by side with the axes to shake the earth and the heaven

NAMARRGON'S FAMILY:

Barrinj, his wife, is also mother to the grasshoppers.

His children are the bright orange and blue grasshoppers, *Petasida Ephemigera*. They come out early in the storm or wet season to look for their father.

DREAMTIME:

The Dreamtime is the period of creation in Aboriginal culture. It is the beginning of knowledge and it is when the laws which guide Aboriginal life today were created. The natural elements, the landscape, the plants, and the animals were also created by the first ancestors. It is the basis of Aboriginal religion and culture.

Dreaming is the term used for an Aboriginal group's beliefs. Different groups have different animals that figure prominently in the stories and serve to explain their beliefs. One area of land might have "Long Necked Turtle Dreaming" while another section belongs to "Caterpillar Dreaming." The area around Nourlangie Rock is "Lightning Dreaming."

Mabuyu is located at Ubirr Rock. A trail winds up, around, and through giant boulders that are decorated with Aboriginal rock art. Some of the paintings at Ubirr are believed to have been painted by the first people of the Dreamtime or creation era and the Mimis, Others, such as Mabuyu, are more recent. The red spindly figure juggles his possessions: spears, a fan, and a dilly bag. Next to him are the Long Necked Turtles, the Dreamtime symbol of the local Aboriginal people.

THE STORY:

According to local lore, Mabuyu was a fisherman. One day, he caught a lot of fish, but some other Aborigines cut his line and stole the fish from Mabuyu. Mabuyu found out who the thieves were and went to their cave. He rolled a rock in front of the opening, trapping them in the cave. The men who stole the fish and their wives died because they could not escape from the cave. This story is used in Aboriginal lore to demonstrate morality and

the consequences of stealing

SYMBOLS:

Spear in his right hand

Dilly bag for collecting food (over right shoulder)

Two barbed spears in his left hand.

Goose wing fan for fanning a fire (in left hand).

pubic tassel signifies that he is a male.

MIMI PAINTINGS IN AREA:

A Mimi painting is above Mabuyu. Mimis are shy spirits who live in caves and paint pictures where no Aborigine could reach. They pull the rocks down to paint on them and then lift them back up when they are finished. The Mimis were the ones who taught the other Aborigines how to paint, and even though they no longer exist as a people, they remain as spirits. As the bus came to a stop, I anxiously made my way to Ubirr Rock, completely oblivious to my surroundings. In my reality no one else existed, only me and the sacred land. I began walking down a trail that was so familiar to me, even though in this life I had never been to this world. I stopped for a moment to view the rock art, the most ancient in Australia, believed to be at least 20,000 years old.

As I walk up the trail leading to Nourlangie Rock, an enormous boulder rising from the dry earth becomes visible. Our first lesson of the day will come from this rock we see before us. To those uneducated in Aboriginal culture, the rock does not appear to be anything particularly special, however, its importance in Aboriginal culture, from the perspective of the Aborigines, the rock is not just any ordinary rock, and rather it is a sacred site depicting their history and culture. The rock, named Dove Rock, or Feather Rock, represents the story of a man named Namanjolg

THE STORY:

The story of Namanjolg is one of incest. It is said that Namanjolg and his sister had sex and later eloped. Ashamed of what they did, Namanjolg's sister told their family. Upon hearing of their sin, Namanjolg's family sought him out to punish him. When they found him, he was on top of what is now known as Feather Rock, dancing around a fire. A member of his family then pushed him into the fire. Namanjolg, covered in ash, dove into a nearby billabong and became a crocodile. Namanjolg's sister took a feather from his headdress and placed it at the site to remind others of the Aboriginal laws regarding incest which she had broken with her brother. Namanjolg's sister later becomes the Rainbow Serpent, Ngalyod, the subject of many Aboriginal stories from the Dreaming lore.

That rock now contains her eternal spirit which is why the native aborigines come here to tune into these sacred powers.

COMMUNICATION:

As with many other Aboriginal stories or rock art sites, the site of Feather Rock serves to educate and remind people of Aboriginal laws:

Namanjolg teaches that incest is wrong

The Corroborree teaches the importance of ceremonial law

Mabuya teaches not to steal

Namanjolg is a perfect example of how Aboriginal people use rock art to inform and instruct. When laws are broken, there are always consequences. The Aboriginal people never developed a written language and spoken languages between different Aboriginal clans vary greatly. They see the rock art as the most effective and universal form of communication between groups. It is also the most effective way to instruct successive generations on their law, culture, and history.

At this point I left the main trail and began walking around the back of the rock and began climbing the 100 ft. vertical wall, at the time carrying 40 lbs. of camera gear on my back.

As I began my ascent my reality began to change, I was no longer as American photographer visiting Australia, I was transformed into a native carefully climbing a vertical wall, placing each hand and foot in a strategic place, never pausing, but slowly climbing upward as I had done many times before. Always finding a tree, root or rock ledge enabling me to continue my climb, never pausing but slowly climbing upward in my search for truth. Reaching the top of this sacred Shrine in the middle of some of the most isolated land in the world I began to feel overwhelming love and peace and a sense of being home, I had returned to The Land of Oz.

I felt my consciousness leave my body and rise high above the earth, looking down I could sense two realities, I had a sense of being high above the earth and looking down upon my lifeless body lying on the rocky cliff, I could observe a bird walking on my right arm, at the same time I was the lifeless body on the cliff, feeling and sensing that same bird walking across my arm.

As I lay on this sacred monument my mind began to pass through the veil of time, into a place from whence all things are seen, back in time, back to a previous millennium, back to the birth of Australia. .

As the land rose from the sea, the mountains began to form high above the plains, the Rainbow Serpent began to transform the land into a new world called Australius. I suddenly re-entered my body and came back to the present reality, slightly dazed about what had just taken place.

Upon my return to the bus, Mark, our Aborigine driver informed me that I had been on sacred ground, where no one is allowed without permission. There is a \$5000 fine for that. He then looked at me , winked and said” But you had permission!”

Partied down in Darwin till 3:00 AM at the Sportsman Bar. Left fro Cairns at 6:00Am, met up with George and Steve Shields, partied at Downunder and went back to George’s room.

When the trip was nearly over, and I was flying to Sidney, while walking thru the airport in Cairns, I put the ring in my passport wallet and folded the wallet over. When I boarded the plane and sat down, I checked for the ring and it was gone! I checked every where on the plane , the ring had disappeared. The wallet had not been out of my pocket and there is no way it could have fallen out.

My time with the ring had passed, I had moved to a time when I no longer needed it, however it had happened, the ring had found a new owner.

I arrived in Sydney several hours ahead of Steve went to room and slept all day. Steve came in about 8:00PM, we went out for a while.

Went sightseeing in Sydney and Blue Mountains with Steve and Kathy. Stayed next to King’s Cross, Interesting. Hated to come back to States

.
They believe that newspapers print only bad things, I guess I agree with that.

Earth was flat and void, spiritual beings created what they needed

Rock Art only has meaning to the author, it tells the story of some happening, corrabbee, retelling of old stories, creations, photograph carries spirit.

Wouldn't let anyone photograph paintings, can't have creation without creator

Corrabee was teaching red facial paintings, costumes, were all teaching aids, stories are memory aid, stories are laws on which Abo life is based, music , memory aid.

Dreamtime has different meaning, sometimes you are just using memory, or into future it is imagination. Sleep dreamtime is just anytime past

All spiritual beings instead of settling earth they say they dreamed it, when you go on trip, you dream up. All travel costs in energy,time,money

When you go to Cairns, time and travel is just dream, money doesn't disappear, when you spend all your time and money on earth physical body dies, have a bank of energy when you are born

Spiritual energy doesn't die, car suddenly stops just ran out of petrol .

Lifetime called a dreaming(destiny) Abos are scientist, we are spiritual/

Abos have been traced to Iraq, Iran, Malaysia, they are Caucasians, abo refers to religion, not color of skin. If you follow the way of life you are Abo, regardless of color, can get welfare regardless of color.

Color breeds away, after first mating, regardless of color it grads away $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$ you can either be Australia. Or Abo can change each census, and you can be anything you want, German French, etc. $\frac{1}{10}$ Negro $\frac{9}{10}$ European, would be Negro.

Nothing to do with color or physical features, same as being Christian, only 2 types of people, abos, and the rest, If you are European Negro , you are white feller,

No scientific evidence they have been here more than 12,000 years

African Negroid has been here 3 civilizations.

Australian Aborigine Negroid have possible been here 200,000. How come every painting 40,000 years old.

Most paintings not very old less than 200 years it flakes off

Used paintings as teaching aids

Nature has caused thousands of species to disappear

Fire is part of nature ,shouldn't be put out.

Ted Mitchell

Rainbow Serpent like a God, controls water, doesn't know where abos came from.

They can sense spiritual sites , which ones are most important, can predict when water will dry up. Cannot cross another tribes land with out permission, not that way any more.

Rock Art not important anymore

Rainbow Serpent has been seen, snake, similar as meeting god, an Angel.

Made all water

Compare to Loch Ness Monster only certain people see it.

Snake is more feeling than visual. Like a God, if you believe it there, like wind blowing.

We believe God is our creator, they believe Rainbow Serpent is creator

Rainbow Serpent created everything and watches over us, only tribal Elders meet him.

Came from Sun

Rock art is like map, can only paint in own territory. Age is only guess, no records

Tribe tablet, only tribal elder has it; they don't know where they came from some still in their culture. Women can be leaders but men usually leaders, it's through blood. If no one in bloodline, next best takes over.

Suicide disgrace, no suicide didn't see burden could die when they wanted, spiritual way when depressed, they talk to themselves

When the trip was nearly over, and I was flying to Sidney, while walking thru the airport in Cairns, I put the ring in my passport wallet and folded the wallet over. When I boarded the plane and sat down, I checked for the ring and it was gone! I checked every where on the plane , the ring had disappeared. The wallet had not been out of my pocket and there is no way it could have fallen out.

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