

Grand Canal of near to Kakada

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Oenpelli Station

March 20 1914

Professor Spencer Esq
University Melbourne.

Dear Professor

you will be thinking that Oenpelli had gone off the face of the earth long ere you receive this. The fact is that I have not had a chance to get or send a mail to Darwin since October. That is one of the drawbacks of this place, no communication for such a long time. Smith, the man who used to live at Worrolocal passed here three weeks ago & told me that he saw both Mr Stretton & Mr Beckett, and asked them if there was any letters or mail for Oenpelli; but all the mail I got, was one short note from Mr Carey. No other mail of any kind. Smith had a few local papers with him & left them with us. It would not have been much trouble to have sent along my mail, in fact it should have been the duty of the people in the Abo Office to have seen that my mail had been sent to me by the first chance. Mrs Cahill was very disappointed, she was expecting letters from our son, Tom, who is in Sydney

but will have to wait until I go in & return. I start weather permitting as early in April as I can. I did not get the blank cylinders for the Phonographs so cannot send you the corroborations that you want, but will do so as soon as possible. I have a fair number of paintings on bark and a few Mission sticks. These I will send along as soon as possible; which will be as soon as the plain is dry enough to get them to the river bank. The natives that you sent me the money for, were as pleased as possible. In fact they thought that they were the only natives worth speaking to. Old Macalmarkt was as proud as a peacock. It would have been very hard to find natives more pleased than they were, when I read portions of your letter & the names that you wrote and then handed each their share of the goods. I am doing as well as I possibly can with the work here. I have just finished five miles of fencing with the natives. Other work done is a large house for the natives 45 x 40 feet, open each side 3 ft 6 inches high for the full length of the place. and no partition. It carried about 100 natives one night that there was a big fall of rain & they said that they had plenty of room. The working boys have a house of their own. and keep it nice & clean. I have no timber to make beds for them, but will try and get some this time. I have

a large house 40x50 feet, completely enclosing a yard, for the female goats; and another 35x28 for the weaners + wether goats. A strong yard for stocks; fenced the garden; a blacksmith shop, veranda on big shed, extended veranda and made fly proof room at dwelling house and lots of other work about the place. When I am with the natives, they work as well as white men; and seem pleased to do so. When I am away; (well some of the big trees have very nice shades & when a native has a full belly, a shade is very enticing + natives are not very strong minded; so a good camp is indulged in) They don't do too much work. A big number of the reserve natives, go over to the buffalo hunters camps on the Adelaide, Mary and Wildman's Rivers, so the lower end of the reserve is almost deserted, when the shooting season is on. Smith, I hear, has taken up Kupalgoo and is building a house there, so I expect that a big number of the Banyan natives will be over at his place, off and on. It will help to keep the natives away from Bunnindie and the Chinese there. I did not meet Mr. Dy but from what I hear, I think that he had more than swelled head. His ideas of himself + his powers were too much for the N.T. Beresford will have to draw a good deal on his imagination, for I do not think

that he had any communication of any consequence with the Bathurst Islanders. He may have had more time with the Melville Islanders, but even then, the stuff he would get, would not be reliable. Language, he could do in a kind of way, but I would not take much notice of any thing else.

I lost the whole of my pawpaws, the beetles beat me, but I have kept replanting & now have a good few young ones coming on. The custard apple trees gave us a few doz. of fruit, & a few limes and Kumquarts have had a few fruit on. A little cyclone broke down most of the bananas, but others are coming on rapidly. Menu for 25 natives breakfast ^{today} was three large eggs (geese) each person, Bread, tea & Melon. One goose egg is about equal to the egg from a hen, I sent Miel ^{Narragoot} out on the plain yesterday & he came back in about 7 hours; and had 463 eggs, Old Harrys crowd are camped at Birreduct about twelve miles E.N.E along Spencers Range, They come in for tobacco, so I made them understand that any thing that they get from me; they must give me something in return, so they send along sugar bag, (Mormo) The last lot they brought filled a small washing tub, so my crowd had a ~~glorious~~ feed of honey. I have three little girls in the kitchen, one (Darimo) does the cooking for the natives

glorious

one does the washing up; and the other is
waitress. The whole crowd here seem very contented
I had two visits from natives over near the head
of the Liverpool. Second visit they brought their wives
and children, shy little things, but a few lollies soon made
them gain confidence. There is a far greater number of
children among them, than there is any where among the
natives closer in to the coast. I am sending enclosed
in this, some notes that I hope will be of use to you
You remember the lubra that died while you were
here and was buried under ^{or near} the big rocks. Her
husband was buried alongside of her ^{this year}. I am giving
you details of his death on a separate page. I hope
that the black kangaroo reached you safely.
We could not keep any specimens during the wet
season, for the dampness penetrates everywhere and spoils
everything in the skin line - I have some beetles &
heads of snakes in small bottles, that I will forward
later on. I had a great number of sick natives
at the place; fever + influenza being the principle
causes. During the fly pest season, I treat most of
the natives for sore eyes. If any sickness occurs
anywhere within 20 miles, the patient is brought
along for medical treatment. Even the little children
comes along to have their first teeth drawn. One
little chief named Gayemby, about six or seven years

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of age, came by himself, holding on to one of his teeth and said that he wanted medicine. I gave him a slice of watermelon and after he had eaten it, I asked him which tooth was sore, it took him quite a while to find the offending tooth, but after a good search, he said this one boss, I got the tooth out, (for it would have fallen out in a few days if left alone) and gave it to him, he took the tooth along and showed it with great pride to the other youngsters. The others seem quite down hearted to think that Gagebe Gageby had all the honour. Just as I am writing this, one little chap came along at full speed for medicine; saying that he had a headache. He was promptly cured with some treacle and sulphur. I am building a two roomed house, and hope to have it ready shortly and I am then going to apply for a teacher for the children. I can get a good few around here. I only want them taught singing Reading writing and arithmetic, in the first stages. I am enclosing you a photo of the cottage built by the two natives standing in front of the building (Kachooya and Mitchel-lackie) I hope soon to have all the houses that I require, built. and then I shall be in a position to take the natives in hand I shall require a good deal of food for the first

year or so, and then hope to be able to grow what we require. If I can get cattle, I am certain that I could make this place a great success. Well Professor, I think that you are about tired of trying to make out what I have scribbled here, so must give you a chance of trying to read about Pudowers death. Trusting this will find you fit and well I beg to remain
 your's sincerely
 Paddy Cahill.

April 20. 1914

P. S. I start for Burundi tomorrow Egg total to date 7228 seven thousand two hundred and twenty eight. By this you will understand that your old friends have been fairing right royally. Rain free for this week amount 50, inches less, inches less than last rain fall.

all send you kindest regards
 P Cahill