

PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT
Parts 1-19
and
DESERT PEOPLE

Background notes on a series of films on Western Desert culture produced
by the Australian Commonwealth Film Unit for the Australian Institute of
Aboriginal Studies, filmed in 1965 and 1967.

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1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

These notes have been prepared to supplement the film material shot in 1965 and 1967. They supply background information and are not intended as a study guide. They replace earlier notes I wrote in 1960s/70s.

The term "Western Desert" is used in Australia to denote a cultural and linguistic, rather than topographical, region. It covers an area of over 1.3 million square kilometres, embracing a large part of central Western Australia and extending into the Northern Territory and South Australia (see map Section 4). The Aboriginal people of this area share a common language (with important and group-defining dialectal variations) and culture.

Once European settlement began around the fringes of the Western Desert, there was a gradual movement of desert dwellers away from their traditional lands and their nomadic hunter/food-gatherer life. They began to congregate in and around the cattle stations, church missions, government settlements and towns situated on the fringes of the desert. In the 1960s, this exodus from the desert was accelerated when a few basic dirt roads (such as the Gun-barrel Highway) were built through the heart of the desert as part of the infrastructure for the Weapons Research Establishment's Woomera Rocket Range, which lay far to the south-east in South Australia. These roads enabled Government patrols to rapidly enter this huge area and offer transport to the remaining desert dwellers so that they could join their kin already on settlements. Today, this nomadic way of life has gone, but the desert people retain considerable mobility, travelling large distances around and beyond the desert to visit kin, attend funerals, and participate in ritual activities. The social and religious aspects of Western Desert culture remain strong in the many communities now based in Aboriginal townships and smaller outstations in the Western Desert.

In 1965, following a proposal by me, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS), now the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, agreed to sponsor a film project in the Western Desert. The Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU) for whom I worked agreed to produce this.

My objective was to try to film the daily life of some of the last Aboriginal families still living a nomadic life in the Western Desert. There were, as far as I knew, only a handful of families still living this life-style somewhere in the heart of the desert, somewhere in an area of about a half a million square kilometres. If I was unsuccessful in finding a group, then I hoped to find a family that had been living on a mission or settlement for only a short time, and was willing to go back to its own country to re-enact for the camera aspects of its former hunting and gathering life.

On 30th April 1965, I set out from Alice Springs with Richard Tucker, a very talented cameraman, (and, as I soon discovered, a brilliant bush mechanic) and Bob Tonkinson, who was then a postgraduate student carrying out fieldwork at Jigalong Mission on the western fringe of the Western Desert (and who was, later, to become Professor of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia). Bob was the only person I knew who spoke any Western Desert dialect. He was to be linguist, anthropological adviser and general production assistant. We enlisted the help of various guides from Warburton Mission, but by far the most important one was Paul Porter Djarurru. (See Section 4 of these notes for an account of this 1965 trip.)

Approximately 25,000 feet of 35mm black and white film was shot. I cut this into ten record films, PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 1-10, with a total running time of approximately 3 hours. These fall into three clear sections (i) Parts 1 and 2 - Djagamarra and his family whom we met in the desert; (ii) Part 3 - restricted material; and (iii) Parts 4 to 10 - Minma and his family, who were then living at Warburton Mission and agreed to return to their own country for filming.

From this material I also made a more interpretive "day in the life of" film, DESERT PEOPLE, using footage from the daily life sequences in the other films.

Two years later, in 1967, a Native Affairs Officer from the Weapons Research Establishment, Bob Verburgt, told me he had met three families living a nomadic hunter/food-gatherer life some 180 kilometres northwest of our 1965 filming location. Following this information I submitted a further film proposal to the CFU and the AIAS along the lines of the 1965 proposal. This was accepted and I mounted a second expedition again with Richard Tucker as cameraman, Paul Porter Djarurru as guide, and with Chris McGill as production assistant.

A further nine films, PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 11-19, were made from material filmed on this trip. Like the earlier films, these were all 35mm black and white (except Part 19, which was shot in colour). Part 12 of this second series, AT PATANTJA CLAYPAN, is a general daily life film (equivalent to DESERT PEOPLE from the 1965 trip).

Over each of the nineteen films (or parts) I give a sparse factual commentary. Not having location synchronous sound (see Section 2), I added no other sound except some singing and story telling (recorded on location) over the film titles.

In these notes the spelling of some names, both people and places, is different from that appearing in film titles and older notes due to changes in orthography.

A black and white and a colour photographic record were made of most filmed sequences. Colour slides have been deposited with AIATSIS, black and white photographs with the National Archives of Australia (in the Ian Dunlop collection).

All the films (apart from Parts 3, 11 and 17, which are restricted) have been approved for general release. However many people who appear in the films or who are referred to in these notes have now died, so sensitivity should be shown when discussing and screening the films, especially within Western Desert communities.

My thanks to Emeritus Professor Bob Tonkinson for his valuable comments on these notes.

Ian Dunlop
March 2003

2 LIST OF FILMS, TECHNICAL NOTES AND CREDITS

a) 1965 filming: PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 1-10 and DESERT PEOPLE

PART	SUB-TITLE	TIME
1.	Seed cake making and general camp activity.	21'04"
2.	Gum preparation. Stone flaking. Djagamarra leaves Badjarr.	19'26"
3.	Sacred boards and an ancestral site.*	7'33"
4.	A family moves camp and gathers food.	48'12"
5.	Old campsites at Tikatika. Mending a cracked dish. Quandong medical.	11'20"
6.	Spear making. Boys' spear fight.	9'27"
7.	Spear-thrower making, including stone flaking and gum preparation.	33'32"
8.	Fire making.	7'13"
9.	Spinning hair string. Getting water from a well. Binding girl's hair.	12'16"
10.	Cooking kangaroo.	16'44"

* PART 3 contains secret-sacred material and is not available for purchase.

DESERT PEOPLE - This is a more interpretive film, showing a day in the life of two families of the Western Desert. It is made from most of the material contained in PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT: PARTS 1, 2 and 4, and from a small section of PART 9 (getting water from a well). Duration 51'14".

Approximately 25,000 feet of 35mm black and white film was shot in 1965. At that time, most CFU films were shot in 35mm. Because I saw this as possibly "the last chance" to film nomadic life, and I wanted the result to be as beautiful as possible, I decided to use black and white film. Location synchronous sound for documentary films was virtually out of the question in those days because of the bulky equipment and extra personnel needed. Music and sound effects were normally added in the studio. I did not want to add artificial sound, so the finished films are virtually silent except for a simple commentary. (In the mid 1960s, new light weight 16mm synchronous sound equipment was being developed in USA and Europe. In the following years this would revolutionise documentary filmmaking.)

The singing and speech over the film titles were recorded on location, but separate from the filming.

Film Credits:

Direction, editing and commentary	Ian Dunlop
Photography	Richard Howe Tucker, A.C.S.
Anthropological advisor	Bob Tonkinson
Main guide/interpreter	Paul Porter Djarurru
Studio sound	Frank White, Gordon Wraxall
Producer	John Martin-Jones
Production	Commonwealth Film Unit for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Shot 1965; Released 1966

b) 1967 filming: PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 11-19

PART	SUB-TITLE	TIME
11	Water Snake Story and Stone Quarry at Patantja*	10' 33"
12	At Patantja Claypan	54' 44"
13	Stone and Gum Working	25' 12"
14	Making a Wira (small wooden digging dish)	8' 53"
15	Mamu (evil spirit)	7' 51"
16	Headache	5' 24"
17	Feather Boots and Manguri*	10' 35"
18	Quandong Cake	8' 31"
19	Kangaroo Cooking at Kunapurul	19' 29"

* PARTS 11 and 17 contain secret/sacred material and are not available for purchase.

AT PATANTJA CLAYPAN (Part 12) is the main film in this latter series. It covers general daily life, including emu hunting. Each of the other parts covers, in the main, some specific activity.

Approximately 38,000 feet of 35mm film was shot, without sound (see notes on 1965 filming, above, for explanation of this). All the material was shot in black and white except for Part 19, which was shot in Eastmancolor.

The singing over the film titles was recorded on location and is part of the song cycle of the *Yilti Gudjarra*, the Two Water Snake Men.

Film Credits:

Direction, editing and commentary	Ian Dunlop
Photography	Richard Howe Tucker, A.C.S.
Field Liaison	Bob Verburgt
Guide/Interpreter	Paul Porter Djarurru
Production Assistant	Chris McGill
Studio sound	Frank White, Julian Ellingworth
Producer	John Martin-Jones
Production	Commonwealth Film Unit for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Shot 1967; Released 1969

3 FILM SALES

The film series PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts I-19 (excluding Parts 3, 11 and 17) is available for purchase on PAL DVD. DESERT PEOPLE is available on both PAL and NTSC DVD.

Sales enquiries should be made to:
Film Australia Collection
Program Sales Office
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA)
PO Box 397
PYRMONT NSW 2009
AUSTRALIA

PHONE: +612 8202 0144
FAX: +612 8202 0101; 1800 077 471 (within Australia only)
EMAIL: facprogramsales@nfsa.gov.au
WEB: www.nfsa.gov.au

Parts 3, 11 and 17 contain restricted material and are not available for purchase. Applications to view these parts (at AIATSIS in Canberra) should be made in writing to AIATSIS and to Ngaanyatjarra Council, PO Box 644, Alice Springs 0871.

4 GENERAL ACCOUNT OF FIELD TRIPS

a) Account of 1965 location trip

On 30 April 1965 a unit consisting of Ian Dunlop (film director and leader), Richard Tucker (cinematographer), both of the Commonwealth Film Unit, and Robert Tonkinson (anthropological advisor and general assistant) of The University of Western Australia, left Alice Springs. The unit had two long-wheel-base Land Rovers, with trailers, and carried capacity loads of petrol, water, food, camping gear and film equipment, including a generator.

Our objective was to try to locate a nomadic Aboriginal group in the Western Desert and, if its members were willing, to film their daily life. If no groups were located, we hoped to invite a family from a mission or settlement to return with us to their own country for filming scenes of daily life.

My original plan had been to recruit guides from Papunya government settlement, some 200 kilometres west of Alice Springs, and then to travel due west into Western Australia searching for people in the Pollock Hills/Jupiter Wells area. I had accompanied a government patrol in this area in 1964 as a research trip for the present project. However in Alice Springs Mr. W. MacDougall, a Native Affairs Patrol Officer with the Weapons Research Establishment, Woomera, advised me that the Aboriginal wells in this area were dry, and it would be extremely unlikely that we would meet anyone there. Earlier in April, he had met a group of twelve people at Tikatika, not far off the Giles–Warburton road, and had taken them to Warburton Mission. He had, in 1964, met another family in sandhill country in this general area, and thought we might have a chance of locating them in the country to the north of Tikatika. We therefore decided to search in this area.

While at Papunya settlement en route to the desert, we talked to some of the men who had been brought into Papunya from the Pollock Hills/Jupiter Wells area of the Western Desert in April 1964, but could obtain no definite information on people still living in the desert.

From Papunya, we travelled to Giles Weather Station via Sandy Blight Junction. A petrol dump had been established at Giles for the unit, and here we stored some of our film.

Our revised plan was to pick up guides from Warburton Mission but, as Tikatika was about half way between Giles and Warburton and not far off the road, we decided to call in there on our way. Vehicle tracks led from the road towards, we assumed correctly, Tikatika. We left our trailers at the Tikatika turn off, and made this our advance depot for petrol and water.

We arrived at Tikatika on the morning 7 May. There are several Aboriginal wells at Tikatika, at least two of which had some water in them. We saw the fresh campsites of the people MacDougall had met about three weeks earlier. There were also signs of many old campsites.

Clear vehicle tracks continued on from Tikatika to the northwest. We presumed these had been made by MacDougall, and possibly National Mapping parties, and we decided to continue on along these tracks.

Because of our heavy loads and the rough travelling, progress was slow. We made smokes by burning clumps of spinifex grass to announce our presence whenever we could, but the spinifex was so sparse and small we had difficulty making good smokes.

At midday on the 8 May, we arrived at a small clump of desert oaks. A kilometre or two in front of us was a range of hills which we presumed were the Clutterbuck Hills. We were now about eighty kilometres from our base camp at the turn off from the road. The tracks we had been following had become less distinct and were now almost lost in loose sand. Since Tikatika, we had seen one set of old footprints and passed one old campsite near a seemingly dry well. We had seen no recent signs of people at all. To proceed further without guides seemed unwise, as we were getting to the limit of an efficient working distance from our petrol and water at the Tikatika turnoff.

However, I decided to go on in one vehicle to the Clutterbuck Hills for a final look for smokes before turning back. Richard Tucker accompanied me, and we had only been going a few minutes when we saw a smoke coming from the other side of some hills to our left. We drove and then went on foot towards the smoke. Several other smokes sprang up in the same direction, and we made smokes as we went.

When we reached the nearest smoke, on the bank of a dry creek bed, there was no one there, but in the creek bed we saw the fresh tracks of an adult, a child and a dog. We waited some time but no one appeared, so we returned to our desert oak camp and lit a large smoke. That evening, we climbed the Clutterbuck Hills and saw another smoke, but much further off. It seemed that, without guides, we would be unlikely to make contact, and so the next day we returned to the road and headed for Warburton Mission.

We arrived at Warburton on 10 May, and Bob Tonkinson questioned some of the men whom MacDougall had recently brought in from Tikatika. They thought that the family whose smoke we had seen might be at Badjarr Well in the Clutterbuck Hills. We engaged Andrew Lawson to assist Bob with interpreting, and three other men, whose country was around Badjarr, as guides. They were Djildjirrgunu Burungu (Reggie), his brother Djun

Burungu and Buji Burungu. MacDougall had only recently brought Djun into Warburton from Tikatika. We also took Djildjirgunu's son, Bandaju Djarurru, aged about ten.

On reaching Tikatika, we decided to leave Richard Tucker there with one vehicle and all the camera equipment while we continued our search for people. We had no idea whether we would be successful in this and the equipment had already received a severe shaking. Dealing with the technical and logistical aspects of driving in rough and remote country were major concerns through our travels and, in particular, the mending of endless punctures seemed to become a dominant occupation!

On 12 May, we reached our desert oak camp near the Clutterbuck Hills and saw a man's footprints around our camp. Our guides told us these belonged to Djagamarra and indicated we should go in the direction of a site called Badjarr, around the northeastern side of the hills. Travel was now extremely slow. Around dusk, we heard shouts and saw smoke and arrived at Badjarr about a quarter of an hour later. Instead of the well we had expected, there was a series of large pools of water in an otherwise dry creek bed. The water was crystal clear, and from the growth of water plants looked reasonably permanent.

One of the guides, Buji, had gone ahead, on foot, to the other side of the pools, and now came towards us with a fine looking man, leading his family of three wives and seven children in single file behind him.

I have no idea how our guides explained our presence or our purpose to this man, who was, indeed, Djagamarra. I doubt if our guides had any knowledge of filmmaking. However, Djagamarra seemed unfazed and treated us with courtesy. We moved back to our vehicles the other side of the pool and Djagamarra and his family came with us and made their own camp beside ours.

Next morning, we left our guides at Badjarr, and Bob Tonkinson, Andrew and I returned to Tikatika to collect Richard Tucker and our equipment and more provisions. We got back to Badjarr that night.

During the next three days, we established camp and started filming. Communication was not easy. None of our guides except Andrew Lawson spoke English, and Andrew was too young to speak to Djagamarra as an equal. Bob Tonkinson had a limited, but vital, knowledge of a related Western Desert dialect.

On the morning of 17 May, we were a few hundred yards away from camp, filming with Djagamarra. When we returned, we found the camp deserted; his wives and children had gone. We assumed that Djagamarra had known that they were going, but we could not be sure of this and nor could we find out why or where the family had gone.

After a short while in camp with our guides, Djagamarra set off after his family. Before he left we tried to persuade him to go with his family to Yalara Well, about half way between Tikatika and Badjarr. He seemed to agree with this. Some hours later, he returned to our camp on his own, now wearing a blazer that Djun had given him. He sat down and talked to our guides for a while, and left once more, and that was the last we saw of him or his family. Bob Tonkinson concluded that our guides had not realised how long we intended to be in the desert, and had now become anxious to rejoin their wives and children back in the Mission. They therefore urged the family to disappear, leaving us no choice but to return with our guides to Warburton.

There was no point in trying to go after this family. They may have left because they had become fed up with us, although there was no indication of this. But supposing this to be the case, we had no right to pursue them. In any case, we could not have traveled in the Land Rovers as fast as they traveled on foot in this country. There being no indication of any other people in this area, we decided to return to Warburton and find a family there willing to be taken back to their own country for filming. In addition, our generator for charging camera batteries had broken down, and I had sent an urgent message over the Flying Doctor radio network to the CFU asking for a new one to be sent to the Giles Weather Station.

Badjarr was an important centre for one of our guides and, before leaving, we filmed him with a number of sacred objects he had stored there. We also filmed him showing us an important ancestral site.

We left Badjarr on 18 May and spent two nights at Yalara, but Djagamarra did not appear. Later, our guides said they saw his smokes going in the opposite direction.

On the 20 May, we returned to our depot at the road. Bob Tonkinson went south to Warburton to return our guides and to try to enlist a family for filming - we had a particular family in mind; Richard Tucker and I went east to Giles to dispatch film, pick up new supplies of film and petrol and, we hoped, a new generator for charging camera batteries.

By the night of the 21 May, we had all returned to Tikatika. Bob had been successful in bringing from Warburton Mission a family that, just nine months before, had been met by a Western Australian Native Welfare patrol and taken to Warburton Mission. This had been the family's first visit to a mission or settlement.

The family, which was happy to work with us, consisted of Minma Djuburula, his two wives, three sons and a niece. His own daughter, the same age as the niece, was in the Mission hospital. (On our first departure from Warburton, Minma had been so keen to come with us as a guide that he nearly started a spear fight. We could not take him then because we had already selected our guides and had no room for more.) Bob had engaged a new

guide/interpreter from the Mission, Paul Porter Djarurru, whose country was in the Rawlinson Range area near Giles.

For the next fortnight, we filmed Minma and his family in and around Tikatika and Yalara. Because we had brought them from a mission situation, each sequence took a certain amount of setting up. The family members were all extremely co-operative and appeared to enjoy their time in the bush with the unit. Paul proved invaluable as interpreter and general factotum. He spoke English, had a good idea of what we were doing, and was a marvelous addition to the unit.

After two weeks, the family expressed a desire to return to Warburton, and on 4 June we packed up and left Tikatika. Richard went straight to Giles, to pick up a new axle for one of our trailers, which we had abandoned a few kilometres out of Giles. Bob and I returned to Warburton with our actors. The next day we rejoined Richard at Giles. We arrived back in Alice Springs on 9 June.

b) Account of 1967 location trip

In June 1967, Bob Verburgt, a Native Affairs Patrol Officer with the Weapons Research Establishment, Woomera, located a group of three families, totalling nine people, still living a hunter/gatherer life in the Taltiwara area of the Western Desert, about 270 kilometres to the north-west of Warburton Mission. For some of the group, this appeared to be their first contact with a European. Others of the group had spent some months at Warburton Mission, about two years before this time.

After checking whether I would be interested in further filming, Bob Verburgt again made contact with the group in August. They had now grown to ten with the birth of a baby. Bob arranged a further rendezvous in a month's time, for filming.

In September, a team from the Commonwealth Film Unit consisting of Ian Dunlop (film director, and leader), Richard Tucker (cinematographer), and Chris McGill (production assistant) met Bob Verburgt in Alice Springs.

On 21 September, the CFU team, in two Land Rovers with trailers, left Alice Springs for Warburton Mission, accompanied by Bob Verburgt in an International truck. At Musgrave Park in South Australia, Bob Verburgt picked up Tommy Dodd as his guide/interpreter.

On 24 September, the party arrived at Warburton Mission. We again engaged Paul Porter Djarurru as the Film Unit's guide/interpreter and Minmarra Djuburula (Minma), whom we filmed on the 1965 film trip, was also engaged. The party left Warburton the same day and traveled along the Carnegie Road, then took the Windy Corner Road towards the Taltiwara area.

On 26 September, we reached the general area where Bob Verburgt had arranged a rendezvous; we lit smokes and started searching the area. Later in the afternoon, we saw smokes and, following them, drove to Patantja claypan where we met the group we were searching for. The three families were camped close to a very large claypan. The claypan itself was largely covered with shallow muddy water. When we arrived at Patantja some of the group were in camp; others came back shortly after with an emu, which they had speared and tracked down earlier that day.

One of the men, Djungurai, had a young wife, Nabula, with a baby a few weeks old. Two years before, in 1965, we had filmed Nabula with her father, Djagamarra, at Badjarr.

We established our camp here and shooting commenced the next day, 27 September. Shooting continued in the Patantja area until 9 October. Much of our time was spent trying to film emus being speared when they came to the claypan to drink.

During this time, Bob Verburgt made one trip to Warburton to return Minmarra Djuburula to the Mission.

The group had expressed a strong desire to be taken to Warburton Mission when our filming was finished. However, Bob Verburgt had to return to Woomera before this. As only he had room in his vehicle to carry everyone, we decided to move with him when he left, to a waterhole near Warburton, where we would continue filming. From there, the families could be moved more easily into Warburton if they wished.

On 10 October, everyone left Patantja claypan and travelled to Mangi in the Todd Range. There appeared to be good water here and it was decided to make this the next location camp. On 11 October, Bob Verburgt left the film party and returned to Woomera with Tommy Dodd. On 12 October, it seemed the wells at Mangi were rapidly running dry and would not be able to support the families. Arrangements were made via the Flying Doctor radio network, and next day David Kininmonth, the Native Welfare Officer at Warburton Mission, arrived and helped move everyone to Spring Granite (or Kunapurul), about forty kilometres from Warburton.

Here the film unit and the three families set up camp. A custodian of the Spring Granite area, Bill, was brought out from Warburton to Spring Granite to help the unit.

Shooting recommenced on 15 October and continued until 26 October. During this time, Richard Tucker expertly repaired a broken axle on one of the Land Rovers, and our camp was saved from a grass fire by the singing of Djungurai.

On 22 October, Nabula's baby became ill and we took her and her mother to Warburton Mission hospital. At the end of shooting, a few of the group were driven, and the rest walked, to Warburton Mission.

Maximum temperatures throughout the whole shooting period were around 40C or higher. We left Spring Granite on 27 October, Warburton on 28 October, and arrived back in Alice Springs on 29 October.

5	FILM SYNOPSES, NOTES ON SHOOTING - 1965 filming (PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 1-10 and DESERT PEOPLE)
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Part I - Seed Cake Making and General Camp Activity

Synopsis

Djagamarra, of the Mandjindjadjara linguistic group of the Western Desert is camped at Badjarr with three of his four wives and seven children. There is a large pool of water in an otherwise dry creek bed. Surface water such as this is rare in the Western Desert except after heavy rain. Water is usually obtained from rock holes or wells.

In the mornings the women and girls go off to collect food. Today they are collecting the seed of *wangunu* or woolybutt grass (*Eragrostis eriopoda*).

In the afternoon, they return to camp and all the family sit in the shade of a tree. The women thresh the seed from the seed heads in their wooden dishes and then separate the seed from the husk by winnowing. They grind their seed into flour with grinding stones, mix the flour with water and bake this in hot ashes to make a seed cake damper. The first seed cake is given to Djagamarra.

Notes on filming

The women were going out daily to collect woolybutt grass seed. On this occasion, we asked the women to collect food, but organised them no more than this, except to ask them to wait, at various stages, until the camera was in position.

We asked Gadabi to grind the seed for us and then simply followed what she did. Nuni, who had been helping himself to the flour, was asked to repeat this for us, hence his mother's pointing to him.

The remainder of the afternoon activities were filmed as they occurred. They are a compilation of two afternoons of filming.

Part 2 - Gum Preparation; Stone Flaking; Djagamarra leaves Badjarr

Synopsis

Djagamarra leaves camp to collect *girdi* or gum from spinifex grass. He finds an area of suitable spinifex (*Triodia sp.*), pulls up tufts of it and beats these with a stick to dislodge the gum. He separates the gum from the broken pieces of spinifex and takes this back to camp in a dish. He holds a piece of flaming bark over the gum to melt it, and collects the melted gum on a stick ready for future use (such as, for sticking a flaked stone blade onto the handle of a spear-thrower).

Djagamarra then goes in search of stone from which to make a blade for the handle of his spear-thrower. He finds an old discarded core, one that has been flaked previously. It is a piece of chalcedony. With a rounded piece of quartzite as a hammer stone, he detaches flakes from the core by percussion.

When we returned to camp we found that Djagamarra's family had left. Djaramara collects his spears from the windbreak of his camp and sets off after his family, following the creek into the Clutterbuck Hills.

Notes on filming

We asked Djagamarra to make gum and knap stone blades for us to film. He separated the gum from the grass himself, by shaking the mixture in his dish, instead of giving it to one of his wives to separate, as seems usual (cf. gum making by Minma in Part 7 of this material). Perhaps he did this because his wives were out food collecting and he thought we wanted to get the whole process there and then. This may account for the trouble he had binding the melted gum onto the stick. He may not have separated the gum from the grass particles as efficiently as one of his wives would have done, since women are more practised than men at winnowing. (Djagamarra's technique is quite different from that shown in T.D. Campbell's film "Palya" made with a Walbiri man, Board for Anthropological Research, University of Adelaide, 1965)

When Djagamarra left Badjarr, this was shot as he actually left to go after his family. We asked him to go to the pool to drink, and we asked him to wait while we got into position once or twice. We never discovered for certain why Djagamarra and his family left so suddenly. Maybe they were fed up with us, although they gave no sign of this. We knew they intended moving sometime soon to an area with a more ready supply of animals. We also knew our guides were putting pressure on Djagamarra to return with them when we returned to Warburton, but Djagamarra did not want to do this for personal reasons. We understood Djagamarra and his family were heading for Yaguri rockhole and then to Liljirr in sandhill country.

Part 3 - Sacred Boards and an Ancestral Site

Synopsis

This part contains secret/sacred material and is restricted. The following synopsis only gives a general description.

Badjarr is an important site for one of our guides, who has sacred objects cached here. Normally these are kept hidden, but he has taken them out so that he may reveal them to us. These objects may only be seen by initiated men, and others by special invitation. They are very sacred for they replicate the objects carried by the ancestral creative beings and are symbolic of both country and ancestral powers.

We are then shown an important sacred site, and the signs left in the rocks by the ancestral beings. This site is a visible link to the great creative era of the Dreaming, a focus of religious sentiment.

Notes on filming

One of our guides had, of his own accord, taken his objects from their hiding place, and shown them to Tonkinson. We asked if we could film them. Tonkinson was given some of them to store for safekeeping in the Berndt Museum at The University of Western Australia. The guide showed us the ancestral site.

Part 4 - Family Moves Camp and Gathers Food

Synopsis

This Part starts by explaining that there are now not many people living a traditional nomadic life in the desert. Nine months before our filming, Minma Djuburula of the Ngadjadjara linguistic group of the Western Desert had been met by a Western Australian Native Welfare patrol and taken to Warburton Mission with his family. Now we have brought Minma and his family back to their own country and tried to reconstruct a typical journey of a family from one well to another.

Minma and his two wives and four children are camped at Yalara. His niece, Nyungala, is getting water from the last wet well here. Next morning the family leaves for Tikatika. The two eldest boys, Burunyaruru and Nun, leave first. It is still early morning when they reach sandhill country.

Back at camp, Minma's wives Manggadji and Yanindu load their *bidi* or wooden dishes, Minma collects his spears, spear-thrower and a firestick and they all leave camp.

Now Burunyaruru and Nun are in an area of mulga trees (*Acacia aneura*). They see the tracks of *gurrjadi*, sand goanna (*Varanus gouldii*). They chase and dig the goanna out of its hole.

By now the main family group have spread out. Nyungala digs out another goanna. Minma passes a plum-bush (*Santalum lanceolatum*) and digs up *djumbura*, another small goanna (*Varanus sp.*). He goes to a place he knows where *ninu*, the rabbit eared-bandicoot or bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) has its burrows. After a huge amount of digging, he retrieves one from its burrow.

Near a clump of desert oak (*Casuarina decaisneana*), Manggadji is collecting the seeds of *wangunu* or woollybutt grass. Minma collects a plant of *minggulba* or bush tobacco (*Nicotiana ingulba*).

Nyungala digs up *linga* or netted dragons (*Amphibolurus inermis*) and then collects the fruit of *gamburarra* or bush tomato (*Solanum centrale*). Djambidjin, Yanindu's young son, chases other *linga*. Nun digs out a *ngirrgi* or witchetty-grub (*Xyleutes leucomochla?*) from *nargalya* (*Acacia dictyophleba?*).

Late afternoon Minma makes smoke and most of the family come together. Minma leads them to Tikatika where they make camp. This consists of a simple windbreak made of branches. The two older boys arrive and cook their sand goanna. Minma chews a mixture of bush tobacco and leaf-ash. Each person settles down to sleep with a small fire on either side of them.

Notes on filming

Because we had brought Minma and his family from a mission situation, the material we filmed with them (Parts 4-10) took a certain amount of setting up.

In so far as material for Part 4 was shot on several different occasions, and the family did not, in fact, walk from Yalara to Tikatika, the story-line for this Part was created in the editing room. By assembling together the different components, leaving camp, gathering food, making a new camp etc., an attempt has been made to re-create a journey from one well to another. How, what and where food was collected was left to the family.

Geographically, a journey from Yalara to Tikatika would normally include two other wells - Yalara, Gankararradjara, Bulara, Tikatika.

The camp at Yalara is the actual camp the family made, cleared of blankets, etc.

Whether Minma would have normally gone to the trouble he went to, in digging up the rabbit-eared bandicoot, is hard to say. It would presumably depend on how hungry he was. Our guide, Paul, helped him (off camera) dig out the bandicoot hole.

Burunyarū's patterns in the sand were in fact made at Tikatika.

The camp at Tikatika was made for the film. The night they had been filmed making this camp and going to sleep, they immediately thereafter went and made a new sleeping camp, similar to the filmed one, at a new spot a few yards off. It was then that they lit the surrounding dry grass.

Minma's actual name is Minmarra but we did not discover our mistake until after these films were finished. (To save confusion, I refer to him by the name used in the films.)

Throughout the filming of Minma and his family the film unit had the services of Paul Porter Djarurru as guide and interpreter. Paul was a Western Desert man from the Rawlinson Range area (near Giles Weather station) and was then living at Warburton. Paul had a reasonable command of English and a complete understanding of what we were doing. His advice was invaluable. (Many years after this, in 1992, I was, with Paul, screening these films to children at Warburton. Paul gave a running commentary in his own language but repeatedly I heard him say firmly "true culture".)

Part 5 - Old Campsites at Tikatika; Mending a Cracked Dish; Quandong Medical

Synopsis

There are many old campsites at Tikatika, some recent, some so old they are hardly recognisable. Broken wooden dishes, grindstones, quandong nuts, and emu feathers litter the area.

There is one new camp at Tikatika, that of Minma Djuburula and his family. Minma's younger wife Yanindu and her son Djambidjin are alone in camp. Djambidjin has a *ngiyapi* or mountain devil (*Moloch horridus*). Yanindu mends a crack in her wooden dish using spinifex gum.

Yanindu then demonstrates making a headache lotion out of quandong kernels (*Fusanus acuminatus*)

Notes on filming

When we first arrived at Tikatika it was deserted but there were signs everywhere that this was an important camping site. Many signs looked ancient but there were also fresh signs left by the group of twenty-two people whom Native Affairs Officer W. MacDougall had met three weeks earlier and taken to Warburton Mission.

We asked Yanindu to mend a wooden dish. The rest was left to her. Djambidjin happened to have the mountain devil at the time. This was unposed. They are sitting in the camp they made for the film.

The family was asked to show the preparation of some medicine. Yanindu elected to prepare this headache lotion.

Part 6 - Spear Making; Boys Spear Fight

Synopsis

Minma selects a suitable tree from which to make a spear. The tree is *windalya*, a species of acacia (*Acacia aneura* or *A. brachystachya*). He uses the metal axe that he possesses. He heats the potential shaft in a fire to straighten it and then shapes it into a spear or *kularta*.

Minma's sons, Nun and Djambidjin, play with toy spears and have a mock spear fight

Notes on filming

Minma was asked to make a spear. The rest was left to him. The spear he made seemed somewhat heavier than most Western Desert spears. Possibly the thin species of Acacia from which spears are often made did not grow in this area. By the 1960s, most desert families had a metal axe head. These often found their way into the desert long before direct Western contact.

The boys frequently played at spear fights.

Part 7 - Spear-thrower Making, including Stone Flaking and Gum Preparation

Synopsis

Minma is going to make a spear-thrower from *wanari*, a species of Acacia (*Acacia aneura* probably). He selects a tree and cuts out a section of the trunk using his metal axe. Using his axe and a metal adze, he shapes the spear-thrower, watched by his sons Nun and Djambidjin.

Minma then searches for a suitable stone from which to make a blade or scraper for the handle of his spear-thrower. He finds a stone and flakes this with a hammer stone.

Next Minma collects tufts of spinifex (*Triodia sp.*) and beats the gum off the leaf sheaths into a dish. Minma's wife Yanindu separates the gum from the fragments of spinifex by panning it in the wooden dish.

Minma melts the gum and collects and moulds it onto a short stick. He then re-heats the gum and wraps it around the handle of his spear-thrower. The gum is again re-heated and the stone blade pushed into position.

Minma now gets a small branch from an Acacia tree. He heats this and then shapes a small peg from it. He takes a length of dry kangaroo tendon and chews this to soften it. With this he binds the peg tightly onto the end of the spear-thrower. He fits the peg into the end of his spear to test it.

Notes on filming

Minma was asked to make a spear-thrower (commonly called a “woomera”), the rest was left to him. Making this spear-thrower was hard work, and I seem to remember that our guide, Paul, gave him considerable encouragement.

In the gum-making sequence, Minma’s technique has slight variations from that of Djagamarra (see Part 2 of this film material). The technique is quite different from that shown in T.D. Campbell’s film “Palya” made with a Walbiri man (Board for Anthropological Research, University of Adelaide, 1965).

Part 8 - Fire Making

Synopsis

Burunyaruru is going to make fire, helped by his younger brother Nun. He collects an old log of mulga (*Acacia sp.*) with a crack in it. Into this he pushes some dried grass and sprinkles dried kangaroo dung on the grass. He then rubs the edge of his spear-thrower across this. The friction between the hard mulga-wood spear-thrower and the log soon causes smoke to appear, but it takes a lot more rubbing before the dung ignites. He empties the smouldering dung into a cup of grass, gently blows - and has *waru*, fire.

Notes on filming

Burunyaruru was asked to make fire, and the rest was left to him. However, he had difficulty getting the dung to ignite and our guide, Paul, took over the rubbing (off camera) at one stage.

Part 9 - Spinning Hair String; Getting Water from Well; Binding Girl’s Hair

Synopsis

Minma’s two wives Manggadji and Yanindu are going to make hair string. Yanindu picks twigs from a mulga tree (*Acacia sp.*) to make into spindles. They spin human hair by rubbing it on their thighs and twisting it onto their spindles.

Young Nyungala and Djambidjin make bird tracks in the sand. Then Nyungala goes off to fetch water. She climbs down into one of the deep wells at Tikatika and scoops out water with a wooden dish. Then Manggadji binds Nyungala's hair with an elaborate hair string band.

Notes on filming

I had brought some cut hair with me in the hope of filming a demonstration of hair spinning. I suspect this hair was shorter than their own hair is when they cut it for spinning, and that it was therefore more difficult to use. Apart from having the hair supplied, the women were left to their own devices. Paul informed us that Manggadji's spindle had two crosspieces (whereas Yanindu's only had one) because she was the senior wife; this, however, might have been a matter of choice.

This was the well from which the family was actually getting water. The children were normally sent to fetch it. We were told that, by digging, it was always possible to get water from the Tikatika wells.

We asked to see an example of hair being bound with hair string.

Part 10 - Cooking Kangaroo

Synopsis

Minma Djuburula has a large buck Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*). He guts it before carrying it back to camp. There, Nun and Djambidjin play with the kangaroo while Minma digs the cooking trench and fills it with firewood. Kangaroo cooking follows strict guidelines and is normally carried out by men. While the fire is still blazing, Minma throws the kangaroo on. This singes the fur and gives the animal a hard crust. The kangaroo is taken out and the tail and hind legs are cut off. When the fire is a mass of embers, everything is put back on and covered in hot ash and sand.

Manggadji and Yanindu are sitting in camp making patterns in the sand. Minma makes a mat of green leaves and puts the cooked kangaroo on this. He cuts the meat up and distributes it to his family.

Notes on filming

Kangaroos were extremely scarce in this area. Paul shot the one for this sequence with a .22 rifle with telescopic sights after several unsuccessful excursions in the Land Rover.

The preparation, cooking, and children playing and eating were shot as they naturally occurred.

The dingo that appears in this sequence may have been the dog Djagamarra had at Badjarr. It may have followed the unit to Yalara and then Tikatika.

DESERT PEOPLE

This more interpretive film tells the story of a day in the life of two families of the Western Desert, Djagamarra and his family at Badjarr, and Minma and his family on their walk from one well to another, from Yalara to Tikatika. It is made from most of the material contained in PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT: Parts 1, 2 and 4, and from a small section of Part 9 (getting water from a well). See descriptions of these parts, above, for a more detailed synopsis and notes on filming.

6 SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE FAMILIES FILMED IN 1965

a) Djagamarra and his family whom we met at Badjarr, May 1965 (Film Parts 1 and 2)

Djagamarra self-identifies as a member of the Mandjindjadjara linguistic group of the Western Desert. We guessed he was born about 1925. Everyone in the Western Desert belongs to one of four sections and/or one of eight subsections (both indicated, below, in italics). Often people are known by their section or sub-section name. Djagamarra's section was *Garimarra* and his subsection *Djagamarra*. He had three wives at Badjarr, all of whom were *Burungu* section. All his children were *Banaga*. His eldest wife, Gadabi (b.1927?), had one daughter, Danara (b. 1953?), and three sons: Ngindagadjugurr (b. 1955?), Nuni (b. 1959?) and Ngambugudju (b. 1963?). Manuba (b. 1935?) had one daughter Nyanyawa (b. 1962?). Djungubi (b. 1949?) had no children. There were also two daughters whose mother had died, Nabula (or Naburula) (b. 1950?) and Nunyi (b. 1960?).

When we arrived at Badjarr the first evening, Djagamarra led his family up to us. Then Djagamarra came right up to us with his two elder sons, Ngindagadjugur and Nuni, while the rest of the family sat down in something of a huddle a few paces away. After a few minutes, Nabula got up and squatted down by our guide Djun, and both wailed. They were mourning the death of Nabula's grandfather, an old one-legged man who had lived for many years in the bush. He came to Warburton Mission in 1964 and died there.

When we met them, all the adults and older children were wearing cloth pubic covers hanging down from hair string belts. This was the only time Djagamarra wore a pubic covering. As well as hair string belts, some members of the family wore hairstring headbands. Ngindagadjugurr was wearing a hair string necklace with rag wrapped around it. This was heavily anointed in red ochre. It was called *yawulyu*, and is what the Ancestral Kangaroo is said to have worn on his travels. Its function is curative.

On our third day at Badjarr, Nabula wore a wooden peg through her nose. Her nasal septum had been pierced by her one-legged grandfather. On the same day, Djun also wore a nose peg, shorter than Nabula's, that he fashioned himself while at Badjarr. We do not know who made Nabula's. This was the first time Bob Tonkinson had ever seen or heard of a woman wearing a nose peg in Western Desert culture.

When we met this family, they had one pet dingo with them. When we returned to Yalara and Tikatika, a pet dingo appeared at each of these campsites. It was probably the same dog. It may have belonged to our guide Djun and been adopted by Djagamarra when Djun left the desert.

Djagamarra and Gadabi had apparently visited Warburton Mission long ago. The family had been met once prior to our filming by WRE Native Affairs Officer W. MacDougall in 1964. Subsequent to our filming, MacDougall met them again, north of Badjarr, about June or July, 1965. In October, 1965, a patrol took the family into Warburton. A few weeks later Djagamarra became ill and sadly died.

In 2000 Gadabi, now called Pulpuru, was one of the leaders of the Western Desert women who came to Sydney to participate in the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games, the 27th Olympiad.

b) Minma and his family whom we brought from Warburton to Tikatika for filming, May 1965. (Film Parts 4-10)

Minma belongs to the Ngadjadjarra linguistic group of the Western Desert. He and his family were met by a Western Australian Native Welfare patrol in April, 1964. This was, apparently, their first contact with Europeans. They were met again by a W.A. patrol in August, 1964, at Taltiwara, and taken to Warburton Mission. This was the family's first visit to a mission or settlement.

Minma's actual name is Minmarra, but at the time of filming we understood it to be Minma (and to avoid confusion in these notes I continue to refer to him as Minma). His Warburton Mission surname is Carnegie. Minma belongs to the *djiburula* sub-section. We guessed he was born about 1921. He had two wives. The eldest Manggadji (*djarurru*, b.1925?) has two sons in the film. The eldest, Burunyar (*djambidjin*, b.1950?) is a foster son of Minma and Manggadji. His actual father, who died when he was young, was Minma's brother. He was adopted by Minma when he was about nine. Their second son is Nun (*djambidjin*, b.1955?). They also had a daughter, Nyumanu, who was in hospital at Warburton so did not come out with us. Instead they brought with them Manggadji's brother's daughter Nyungala (*burungu*, b. 1954?).

Minma's second wife Yanindu or Bingga (*djarurru* or *nungarayi*, b. 1940?) had one son Djambidjin ((*djambidjin*, b.1962?)

Minma had lived around Tikatika for some time as a boy, but had not been back there for many years. Nun, who was born at Badjarr, had never been to Tikatika.

7	FILM SYNOPSES, NOTES ON SHOOTING - 1967 filming (PEOPLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN WESTERN DESERT Parts 11-19)
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Part 11– Water Snake Story and Stone Quarry at Patantja

Synopsis

This part contains secret/sacred material and is restricted. The following synopsis only gives a general description.

Djungurai of the Western Desert Mandjindjadjara linguistic group shows two ancestral sites, one in a cave and another by a dry creek bed, associated with the journey of the *Yilti Gudjarra*, the two Ancestral Water Snake Men. Djungurai was born in this area and *yilti* is his Dreaming. Then he and a younger man, Garimarra, go to a quartzite quarry, also associated with the Water Snake Men, and knap stones for tools.

Notes on filming

Shot in the Patantja area. We asked Djungurai if he would be happy to show us these sites, and to demonstrate stone working at the quarry. The singing was recorded on location, and is part of the song cycle of the *Yilti Gudjarra*, the two Water Snake Men.

Part 12 – AT PATANTJA CLAYPAN

Synopsis

This is the main daily life film from the 1967 filming (equivalent to DESERT PEOPLE from the 1965 filming). It shows two days in the life of three families who were still living a nomadic hunter-gatherer life. They are camped together by a large claypan. They are Djungurai, his young wife Nabula and their new baby, together with two children, Nyungala and Nulu, from his first wife who had died; Burungu who is nearly blind, his wife Maualingu and their young son Ilipo; and a younger man Garimarra, who is married to an older woman, Natuna. Ten pet dingoes complete the group.

Good rain fell some months ago, the claypan is largely covered with water, and game and vegetable food are relatively plentiful. But the water in the claypan is only a few inches deep and is receding rapidly. Djungurai and Garimarra hunt *kalaya*, emus (*Dromalus novae-hollandiae*) from behind a hide. This is a tense and time-consuming business. The emus are wary as they leave the cover of the mulga and cross the bare claypan to reach water. Eventually, an emu is speared and later cooked and eaten. As with kangaroos, custom decrees how an emu must be cooked.

Women collect and grind mulga seed (*Acacia sp.*), collect grubs (probably one of the *Cassidae* family) from the trunk of a gum tree (*Eucalyptus microtheca?*), and cook them and collect the fruit of *ngaru*, bush tomato (*Solanum phlomoides?*), which they eat uncooked. It is early summer and the daily temperature is often around 40C or more. During the heat of the day everyone retires to their shades, made of branches, to rest. This film shows life in the desert during a period of relative bounty.

Notes on filming

Most sequences in this film are of activities that were being regularly carried out by the three families at Patantja. Sometimes the actions were filmed as they naturally occurred. On other occasions, we asked for some activity to be carried out at a particular time for filming. The "two days" of the film was shot over a period of two weeks. When these families were met by a government patrol, a few weeks before filming, they were given clothes. They tended to wear these, at least when the film unit was with them. However, they willingly removed their clothes for filming. Two sequences were re-enacted: the tracking of the speared emu, and the family leaving Patantja at the end of the film. The sequences of the families resting in their day shades was shot at Kunapurul and not Patantja.

Nabula also appears in the 1965 filming at Badjarr. She is the daughter of Djagamarra.

Part 13 – Stone and Gum Working

Synopsis

Djungurai collects gum from a suitable species of spinifex grass (*Triodia sp.*). His wife, Nabula, separates the gum from spinifex particles. Djungurai then melts the gum and moulds it into a ball.

He then goes to a quartzite quarry and collects a large core; back at camp, he knaps this to obtain a stone knife, a scraper for his spear-thrower, and a hand chopper.

Using his prepared spinifex gum, he puts a gum handle on the knife and then sticks the scraper into the handle of his spear-thrower, his previous scraper having fallen out.

He then sharpens a spear using the scraper mounted on the handle of his spear-thrower. He re-sharpens the scraper by secondary flaking with a small pebble and also by biting the edge of the scraper with his teeth. The spear is of the kind known as *mukurlyara*, having a barb of mulga wood bound onto it with kangaroo sinew

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite (Kunapurul). Djungurai was asked to carry out these typical activities for the filming.

Part 14 – Making a Wira (small digging dish).

Synopsis

Djungurai looks amongst a stand of river gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis?*) for a suitable tree from which to make a *wira*, a small digging dish. He starts cutting a section of the trunk by using the stone hand chopper he had made earlier (see Part 13), but after a time he reverts to his metal axe.

Back at camp he shapes the wood into a dish, using a home-made metal adze.

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite. Djungurai was asked to do this for our filming. It was difficult to find out how often he had used a stone hand chopper in the past. He said he had possessed a metal axe, at least periodically, since he was a young man.

Part 15 – Mamu (evil spirit)

Synopsis

Djungurai and Garimarra chase a *mamu*, or evil spirit, out of camp. Both men are *mapantjarra*, men who have the power see *mamu*, and to remove powerful bones and stones from their stomachs and use these for magic and medicine.

They chase the *mamu* away by removing bones (*maparnpa*) from their stomachs and hitting these along and into the ground with their spear-throwers.

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite. One night Garimarra felt himself being attacked by a *papa* or dog spirit. Djungurai and Garimarra successfully chased it away. Next day, we asked if they would re-enact this event so that we could film it. When questioned about this some months later, Djungurai said that when they got up to re-enact this event he in fact saw another *mamu*, *numbain numbainpa*, waiting there to be chased away. This is not a secret activity.

Part 16 – Headache

Synopsis

Burungu has a headache and Garimarra, who is a *mapantjarra*, one who can cure sickness, operates on him. He takes powerful bones, or *maparnpa*, from his stomach and pushes these into Burungu's head. He then sucks at the back of Burungu's head to draw the sickness out.

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite. We had indicated that we would like to film one of the *mapantjarra* men at work, curing sickness, if the opportunity arose. When Burungu got a bad headache after carrying a large kangaroo back to camp on his head, Garimarra decided to operate on him. The event was filmed as it happened with no intervention at all.

Part 17 – Feather Boots and Manguri

Synopsis

The first sequence of this Part contains, or hints at, secret/sacred material and is restricted. The following synopsis only gives a general description.

Djungurai demonstrates the making of *jinakarrpil*, emu feather boots. These are used to conceal a man's tracks when he is going on a killing expedition. To the people of the desert a man's footprint is as recognisable as his face. Djungurai has used such boots in the past.

Natuna makes a *manguri* or head roll out of emu feathers. She binds this with string made from human hair. Women use *manguri* to help them balance wooden dishes on their heads.

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite. Djungurai and Natuna were asked to carry out these activities so that we could film them. The emu feathers came from birds shot at Patantja. Djungurai left out certain sacred/secret stages in the making of the boots, but he nevertheless asked us to classify this film as restricted.

Part 18 – Quandong Cake

Synopsis

Nabula nurses her usually placid, but today unhappy, baby daughter. She then grinds the dried skin and flesh of the fruit of the quandong (*Fusanus acuminatus*), and mixes this with water to make an uncooked cake, which is then eaten.

Notes on filming

Shot at Spring Granite. Nabula was grinding quandong and we asked her if we could film this. The nursing activity was specially carried out for us, although it was simply a repetition of her normal handling of the baby. (The night after this the baby became ill and the following day was taken to Warburton Mission hospital.)

Part 19 – Kangaroo Cooking at Kunapurul

Synopsis

Burungu guts a red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) and carries it into camp. Djungurai cooks the animal and then divides it into its various cuts, using stone and wooden tools. Every stage in the preparation, cooking and division of a kangaroo is governed by the Law, which must be strictly adhered to.

While the kangaroo is cooking two of Djungurai's children, Nyungala and her younger brother Nulu get water from the well at Kunapurul. The well is in the folds of a rocky hill. At present, the water is quite high in the well, but sometimes one must descend far down and dig deep to get water.

Notes on filming

Filmed at Spring Granite (Kunapurul). These activities were carried out so that we could film them. Stone tools were used at our request. However, on other occasions, when kangaroos were being cut up, stone tools were often used in preference to metal ones. During the cutting up of the cooked animal, Djungurai became ill, and the later part of the cutting up was done by Garimarra (showing his hands only). In fact, several things went wrong during the filming of this sequence so that it is only a shadow of what it might have been.

The children get water from the well that was in regular use, but they were asked to approach and leave the well from directions that would show up the rock outcrop surrounding the well. They bring the water to Burungu and his family, as their own family was not in camp at the time of filming.

We took a small amount of Eastmancolor film with us in 1967, and decided to use it on these sequences.

The three families we met at Patantja claypan, September 1967 (Film Parts 11-19)

In these notes, individuals are referred to by the names used in the films.

Names in Western Desert culture can be confusing, since everyone has more than one. A person may be referred to by different names at different times or, as is often the case, by his section or sub-section term. This group follows the subsection system, but the equivalent section terms (as practised at Warburton) are also given, below, after the sub-section term.

Djungurai's personal name was Yalamana (*djungurai/djarurru* sub-section/section). We estimated that he would have been born around 1907, but I met him again in 1992 and he seemed younger than eighty-five then. His young wife (see below) was Nabula (*naburula/banaga*, b. 1950?). Their baby daughter was about two months old (*napangarti/burungu*).

With them were a son and daughter of Djungurai, whose mother had died. The daughter was Nyungala (*napangarti/burungu*, b. 1954?) and the son Nulu (*djapangarti/burungu*, b. 1961?).

Garimarra's personal names were given as Nuni Nuni, Dalpo and Tjakamara (*jagamarra/garimarra*, b. 1939?). His wife (see below) was Natuna (*napangarti*, b. 1912?). Natuna's daughter by a previous marriage, now dead, was a former wife of Djungurai, and probably the mother of Nyungala and Nulu.

Burungu's personal name was Nadjupilina (*?/burungu*, b. 1927?). His wife was Maualinggu (*purkulu/garimarra*, b. 1932?). They had one son Ilipo (*?djarurru*, b. 1958?).

The country of these three families appears to be the Taltiwara, Patantja, Tikatika, Badjarr area of the Western Desert, although at least some of this group have walked much further afield than this (to Jupiter Well, Pollock Hills, Walter James Range, Rawlinson Range).

Garimarra was born near Spring Granite and went to school at Warburton Mission during part of his boyhood. When his father died an uncle took him away to Badjarr. In August 1964, a Western Australian Native Welfare patrol met Garimarra (with Minma Djuburula; see notes on 1965 filming) at Taltiwara and took him to Warburton Mission.

Later in 1964 Djungurai, Nulu, Nyungala, Garimarra and Natuna, were met at Tual near Windy Corner by a WRE patrol and taken to Warburton Mission.

In mid 1965 Djungurai, Nulu, Nyungala, Garimarra and Natuna, together with some others, were taken back to their own country, to Badjarr. Here they met Djagamarra and his family (whom we filmed in 1965). While camped at Badjarr, Djungurai married Djagamarra's eldest unmarried daughter Nabula.

Garimarra went north from Badjarr with Natuna and married her. Nulu and Nyungala also went with Natuna, their grandmother. Djungurai and Nabula then followed Garimarra's tracks and caught up with him. The two families then traveled together until they met Burungu and his family in the Taltiwara area. Burungu and his family had apparently been living on their own for several years, and had never had any contact with Europeans. Burungu was partially blind.

The three families then moved around the Taltiwara/Patantja area for probably several months. In June 1967, they were met by WRE Native Affairs Officer, Bob Verburgt. He met them again in August, and a month later led us to their camp. In October 1967, after the filming, the three families were taken, at their own request, to Warburton Mission. A few months later, Burungu died. Shortly after their arrival at Warburton, Garimarra took Nyungala as his second wife.

9	FILM REVIEWS AND INTERVIEWS (a selection)
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M, P-L. (1968) "Hommage au cinema australien: La famille du sable", *Cahiers du Cinema*, #197, pp. 23-24.

Loizos, Peter (1968) "Film Review - **Desert People**", *Man*, vol.3 (1)

Tindale, Norman B. (1968) "Film Review - **Desert People** and **People of the Australian Western Desert Pts 1-10**", *American Anthropologist* vol. 70 (2)

James C Pierson (1986) "Film review - **People of the Australian Western Desert**", *American Anthropologist*, vol 88, no 1.

10	FILM AWARDS
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Desert People

Prix Special du Comite Directeur. IX Rencontre Cinematographique Internationale de Prades, 1967.

Diploma of Merit. Edinburgh International Film Festival, 1967.

Golden Bucranium (best film of festival): XII International Festival of Scientific and Educational Films, Padua, 1967.

Special Citation (out of competition): Australian Film Awards, Australian Film Institute, 1968.

Diploma of Merit. Melbourne Film Festival, 1969.

Blue Ribbon (First Prize in Anthropology and Archaeology section): 11th American Film Festival, New York, 1969.

Golden Decade Award: U.S. Industrial Film Festival, Chicago, 1971.