

MY STORY

My name was Edna Walker, my mother's name was Daisy and my father's name, I have been told, is William Walker.

I do not know old I was when I was taken from Nutwood down, a cattle station in Northern Australia owned by a company called Vesties at the time.

I vaguely remember the last night with my mother, we slept on the floor on the veranda of a house in Darwin. The next day I was taken from my mother and put in a place I later knew as the convent.

I think it was such a shock that I must have suffered a mental block as I cannot remember that day or much of the next few years on Melville Island.

On Melville Island there was a Catholic mission which was built to take for half-caste boys and girls when they were taken from their Aboriginal mothers. So I went there with some other girls and three nuns. The nuns looked after us, taught us, fed us, clothed us and sometimes even loved us as if we were their own children.

We went over by boat as the mission was about ninety miles north of Darwin.

Sister Annunciata was in charge of us she was kind to us and we were happy.

They taught us many useful things that helped us in later life when we had children of our own. Our children still call her sister granny but I know now.

I lost so much by being taken away from my mother. I never saw my mother again and a priest later told me my mother had died during the time I was on Melville Island.

I remember I used to watch out for a brother named Nugget to come back from cattle musters on the cattle station but it was like a dream.

Years later when I was in my sixties I found Nugget again, he was staying at Burunga, a settlement near Katherine in the Northern Territory.

My grown up children and grandchildren who met him had an instant rapport with him but I would not let myself think of all the years we missed out on, not knowing him was too traumatic.

For me, I felt my sons should have grown up with this uncle to look up to. We had no one on my mother's side except me, we could have had ties with the people of Nutwood Downs and other places who would have loved us and taught us things too.

One day just before I found my brother, I was in Darwin sweeping the floor of my house and I suddenly started crying, for my mother and what she must have felt when I was taken from her. I finally cried for all the times she must have missed me, for her never seeing my children her own grandchildren. Did they think when they took me and so many others like me away that our mothers had no feelings.

I would have liked to have known my aunties and uncles and maybe other brothers and sisters. I am glad I found Nugget one day. My eldest son Peter and I took Nugget down the track to Elliot. People all along the highway knew Nugget and came calling his name and greeting him. I wished they'd known me too.

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Birthday celebrated on 12 May each year - Passed away on September 2010 (aged 78 or thereabouts).