

TED RYKO – ADELAIDE TO DARWIN BY BICYCLE

Edward Reichenbach (aka Ted Ryko) (1892–1968) was raised near the small pastoral town of Nhill, north-west Victoria, and as a young man, became a budding photographer, storyteller and avid cyclist. Ted, was the eldest child in a second generation Australian family of German descent.

Ted had great ambitions. After entering in long distance cycling competitions, in May 1914 at age 21, Ted and a friend Jack Fahey attempted to set a new cycling record across the 'dead heart' of Australia from Adelaide GPO to Darwin PO. However, just short of the NT border, Jack was injured and had to withdraw. Ted continued alone setting a new record of 28 days and 7 minutes for the almost 1900 mile journey; a record that still stands for the route he took. He was to be the last of the 'Overlanders'. That's an average of over 100 kms per day in mostly inhospitable terrain!

This exhibit chronicles that epic adventure through **real photographic postcards** taken with the latest Kodak camera of the time and all printed on Kodak Austral stock. His collection of images was unfortunately stolen and never re-surfaced. The postcards that have survived in private collections, museums, archives and libraries are **all considered to be scarce**.

The ride was not easy. At Barrow Creek an animal got tangled in his water bag which emptied leaving him without water and only surviving by moistening his lips from a tiny bottle of olive oil. On crossing the Finke River he, his lighter and matches became wet. He lit a fire by sprinkling carbide on the grass, poured water on it and fired his revolver. This saved him from freezing to death.

Ted had been inspired by Albert McDonald whose overland record he broke. On reaching Darwin he opened a photograph shop in Cavenagh St. where he sold postcard prints of his photographs for four pence each, developing and printing his films in a studio out the back. He extensively travelled across the NT, until he left in 1917, documenting Australia's remote wilderness.

The storyline is predominantly Ryko's own annotation on the back of an original set of postcards held by the NT Library. Their copies are not annotated on the front whereas those shown are. Numbering appears to be alphabetical for South Australia and numerical for the Northern Territory.



The Reichenbach Family. Ted with his bike is on the left. Source - <https://adland.com.au/ryko-project/>

Near Hawker & Parachilna, South Australia



Leaving the Adelaide GPO in May 1914 on his cycling trek north, the first photographs on record appear to be north of Port Augusta. Upon leaving Port Augusta, Ryko followed the 3ft 6in Government railway north to Oodnadatta which was the end of the line until 1929.

O.T. B. – Near Hawker S.A. RPPC



The name Parachilna comes from the Nukunu Aboriginal word "patajilnda" meaning "place of peppermint gum trees". Located east of Lake Torrens and west of the Flinders Ranges, it lies 304 miles north of Adelaide and 122 miles north of Port Augusta.

O.T. E. – Dusty Footpaths. Parachilna SA. (Taken outside Napier's Boarding House) RPPC

Enroute to Oodnadatta, South Australia



500 miles from Adelaide near Lake Eyre showing one of the very many sand drifts on the Oodnadatta line, where sand had to be shovelled off to allow each fortnightly train to pass.

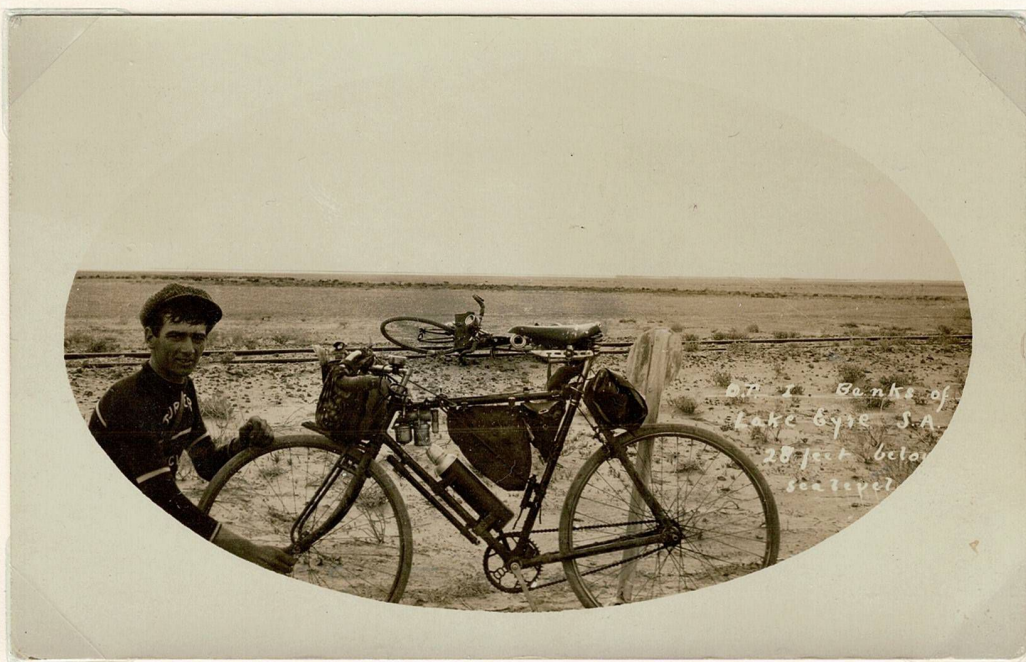
O.T. J. – Drift sand over the Oodnadatta Railway S.A. RPPC



John McDouall Stuart's expedition of 1859 discovered seven artesian springs north of Lake Torrens which he named Hergott Springs. As the railway line ended at Oodnadatta in 1914, Ryko then followed the camel track to Alice Springs used to take supplies to the outback.

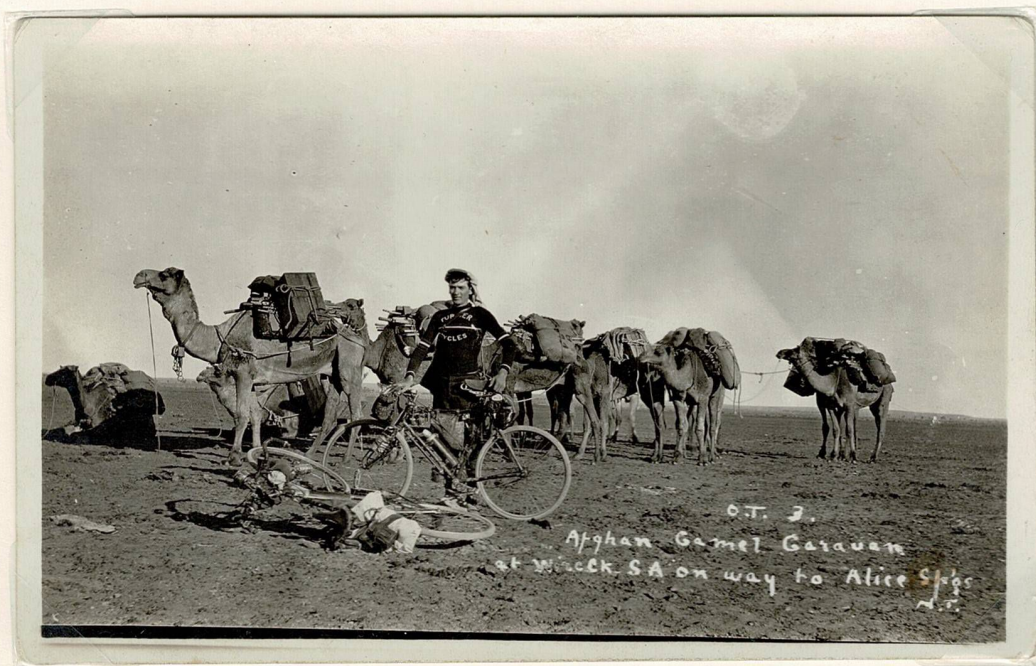
O.T. G. – Typical scenery surrounding Hergott Springs S.A. (Camels grazing) RPPC

Lake Eyre and Afghan Camel Caravan



Ted Ryko adjusting bicycle cams beside the lowest situated mile post in Australia viz 28 feet below sea level. Portion of the boggy salty bed of Lake Eyre can be seen in the distance.

O.T. 1. – Banks of Lake Eyre S.A. 28 feet below sea level. RPPC



Afghan camel team off to Alice Springs with loading at Wire Creek Bore. Afghans say their religion won't allow them to be photographed themselves.

O.T. 3. – Afghan Camel Caravan at Wire Ck on way to Alice Springs N.T. RPPC

Charlotte Waters Telegraph Station and the Finke River



Female aborigines at Charlotte Waters Telegraph Station part of which can be seen in the background. The telegraph station was built just a few miles north of the border with South Australia. From Charlotte Waters to Darwin, Ryko followed the Overland Telegraph Line.

O.T. 11. – Native women at Charlotte Waters Telegraph Station N.T. RPPC



General view of the Finke River in flood, first time in 10 years. This photo was taken from the precise bank that Stuart the explorer stood on when he first discovered the Finke and named it so after an intimate friend of his.

O.T. 19. – General view of Finke River in Centralia N.T. RPPC

Tyre Hazards and Old Crown Point Store



LEFT

Dodging the Finke flood waters. Thorns on the dry flats. These are very dangerous. But most are so big that the forks knock them off before they get a chance to puncture the thornproof tyres.

*O.T. 23. – Thorns near Finke River N.T.
(Note thorns adhering to the rubber tyre)*

BELOW

The Crown Point Store. This was originally the headquarters of the Crown Point Cattle Station which is now rebuilt further down the river $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Overland Telegraph Line.

O.T. 24A – Old Crown Point Store N.T. RPPC



Crossing the Finke and then facing Sand Drifts

RIGHT

Eventually there was no alternative. I had to cross the Finke which was rapidly rising. This shows the bike propped on a stick 4 yards from the edge and still 90 yards from the other side. This was my first retreat to strap valuables on the top of my head.

O.T. 25 – Crossing Finke River N.T. RPPC

BELOW

The summit of one of the 80 sand drifts of the Depot Sand Hills. Sand broken up by travelling stock. The sand drifts made it tough going and the bike had to be walked.

O.T. 31 – Summit of typical sand drift Centralia N.T. RPPC

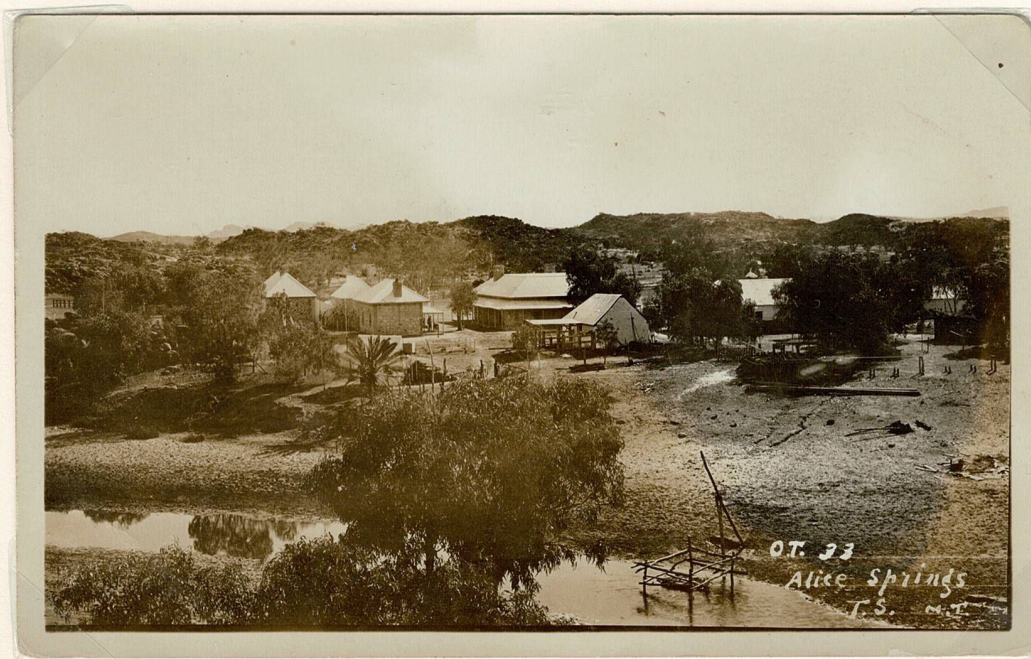


Depot Sand Hills and Alice Springs Telegraph Station



The last of the Depot Sand Hills showing spinifex and some of the desert oaks which is the typical tree in those parts. Its wood is about the hardest in Australia.

O.T. 32 – Desert Oak & Spinifex near Alice Springs N.T.RPPC



Alice Springs Telegraph Station buildings. The town $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles south is called Stuart Town. The billowing hills in the distance are where the track goes through to Darwin.

O.T. 33 – Alice Springs Telegraph Station N.T. RPPC

The Ship of the Desert and his load



LEFT

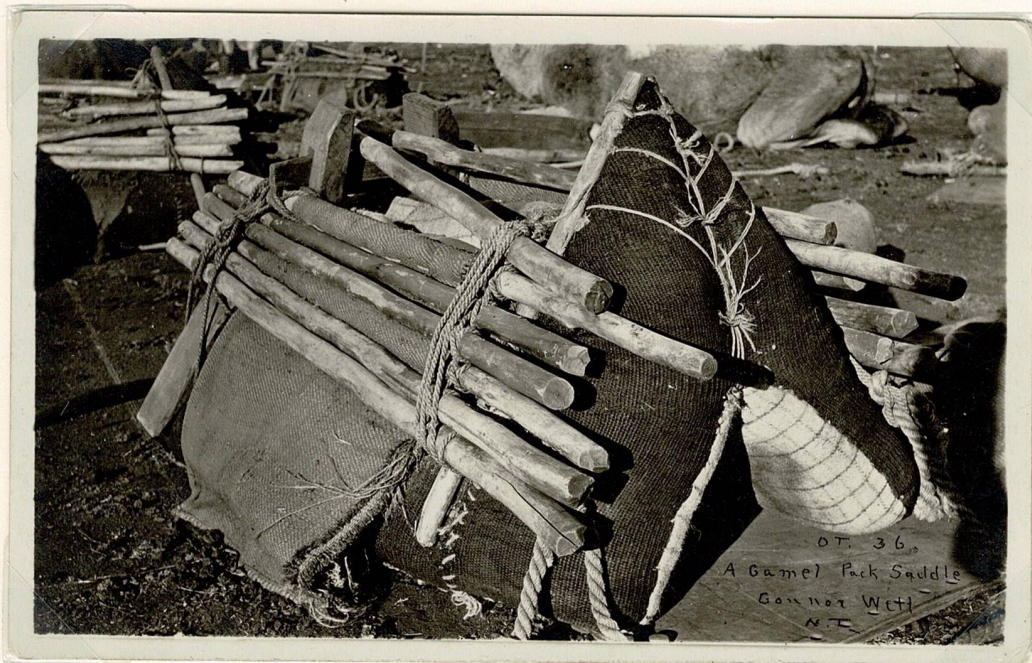
Close-up view of camel's head supposed to show the wooden plug which is inserted in their nose to lead them by. Unfortunately, he shook his head.

*O.T. 37 – Forecastle head of a Ship of the Desert
Centralia N.T. RPPC*

BELOW

Camel pack saddle belonging to camel team at Connor Well 57 miles north of Alice Springs. This team is solely in charge of natives who are employed by the Alice Springs Store to convey loading to Stirling Station 168 miles north.

*O.T. 36 – A camel pack saddle Connor Well N.T.
RPPC*

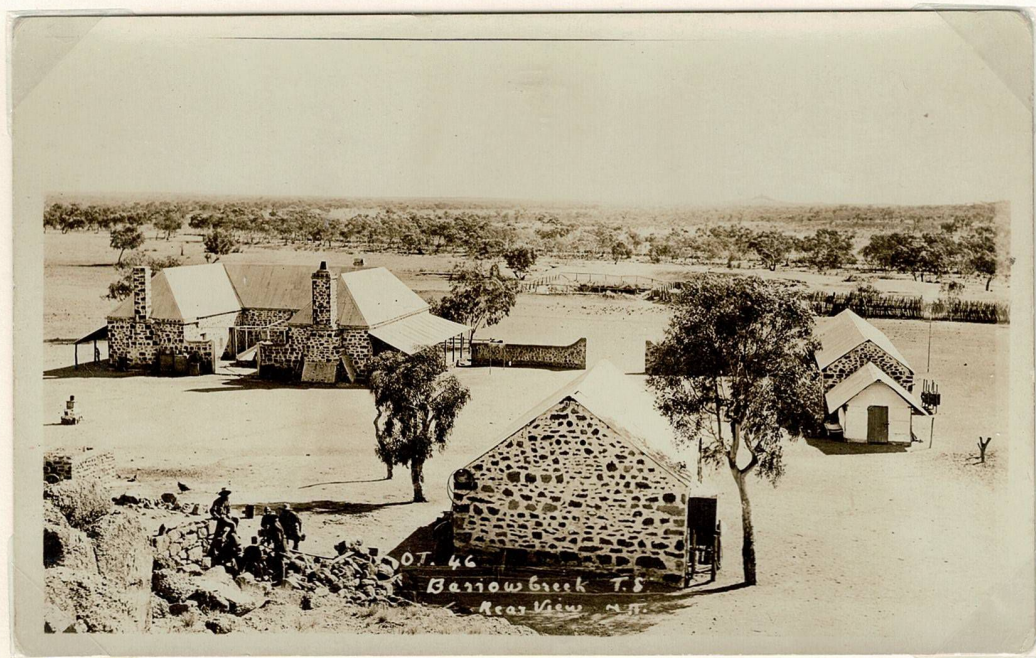


Stirling Station and Barrow Creek Telegraph Station



Stirling Station is situated in the aboriginal Anmetjere lands with the homestead being located near to the Overland Telegraph Line. There is also a school nearby to accommodate all the children of the workers on the station which mainly runs cattle.

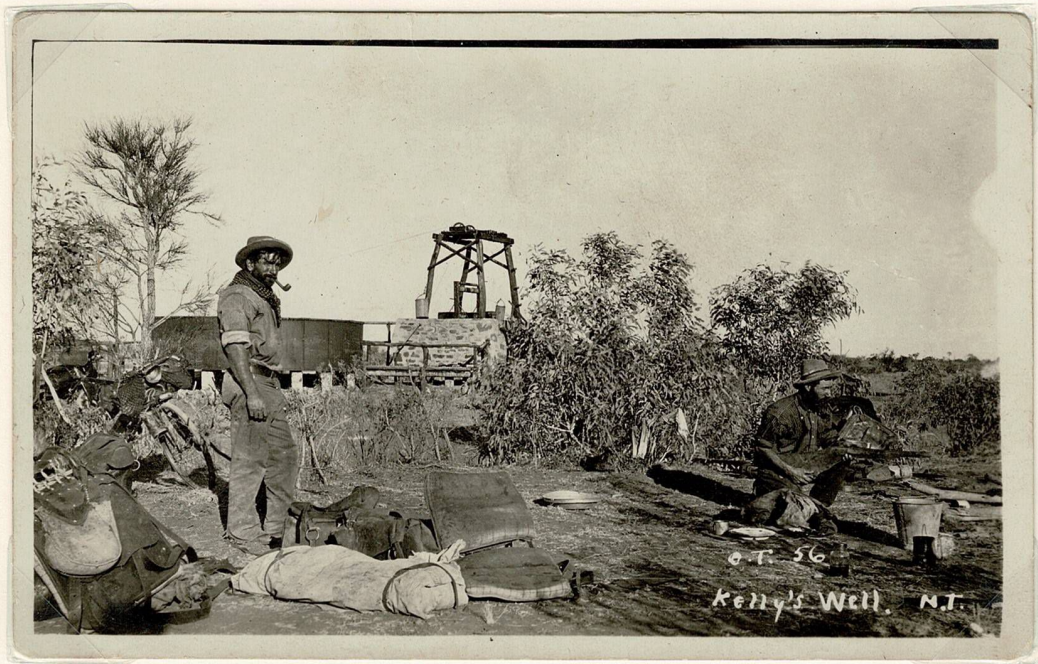
O.T. 44 – Goat shepherds at Stirling Station N.T. RPPC



Barrow Creek Telegraph Station as seen from the mountain at the back. Similar to the buildings constructed in Alice Springs and Charlotte Waters, the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station was a simple stone-walled construction with office and staff quarters under one roof.

O.T. 46 – Barrow Creek Telegraph Station (rear view) N.T. RPPC

Kelly's Well and Tennant's Creek Telegraph Station



Kelly's Well in rear. Couple of overlanders camped in foreground who have to camp 4 days at each well for their horses to recover as all wells are over 30 miles apart and grass for feed is very scarce. A man died within a mile of here from thirst owing to the stage being too long.

O.T. 56 – Kelly's Well N.T. RPPC



Tennant's Creek Telegraph Station famous for its cold winds. This is the most forlorn situated telegraph station of the whole lot. Food supplies are sent up from Adelaide to feed the telegraphists, linesmen and the cook. Their rations were of the best.

O.T. 58 – Tennant's Creek Telegraph Station N.T. RPPC

Banka Banka Station and Powell's Creek Telegraph Station



Front view of Banka Banka Station with some of the stockmen and killer hands. Situated approximately 60 miles north of Tennant's Creek this historic cattle station was the first operational pastoral lease in this region.

O.T. 62 – Front view of Banka Banka Cattle Station N.T. RPPC



Powells Creek Telegraph Station. Once an important station but now like most only has one operator and one linesman in charge of them and the linesman most of the time is out on his beat.

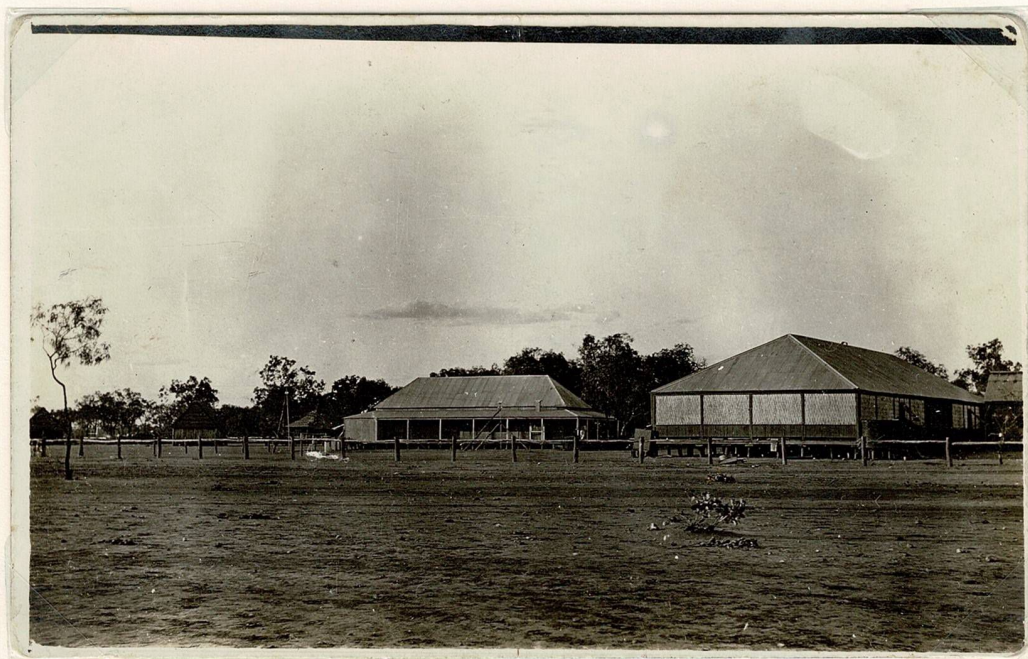
O.T. 67 – Powell's Creek Telegraph Station N.T. RPPC

New Castle Waters Station and Daly Waters Telegraph Station



New Castle Waters Cattle Station also store and Police Station. Constable Taylor in foreground. Camels now bring all stores from Oodnadatta about 800 miles for £33 a ton. Teams used to originally bring them from Pine Creek 340 mile for £46 a ton.

New Castle Waters Cattle Station – Uncaptioned with no number but recorded by Ryko as 70. RPPC



Daly Waters Telegraph Station. In the early days when the aborigines were bad linesmen they were fined 2/6 every time they were caught without having their revolvers on them.

*Daly Waters Repeater Station, Overland Telegraph Line N.T.
Uncaptioned with no number but recorded by Ryko as 74. RPPC*

Elsy Homestead Ruins and Northern Territory Teamsters



The ruins of the Elsey Homestead where Mrs Gunn wrote the book "We of the Never Never".
McAdam the dauntless Borrooloola mailman in foreground who does his 1,000 mile trip
every month and does it with as little concern as the average man lights his pipe.

O.T. 78 – Ruins of the old Elsey Homestead RPPC



Dick Hart's team just past Katherine on the way to Daly Waters with the annual provisions.
Just imagine living as remote as only getting provisions delivered once a year.

O.T. 81A – N.T. Teamsters RPPC

Katherine River and Horseshoe Creek



LEFT

The Katherine River. Operator Deane ready to take me across the first crocodile infested stream met with on the trip. The first European to see and name the Katherine River was explorer Stuart, naming it after the daughter of expedition sponsor James Chambers.

O.T. 83 – Crossing the Katherine River N.T.
RPPC

BELOW

Pandanus flats nearing Pine Creek. *Pandanus Spiralis* is native to Northern Australia. It is commonly called common screwpine, iidool, pandanus palm, screw pine, screw palm or spring pandanus. It is neither a true palm, nor a pine.

O.T. 85 – Main track near Horseshoe Creek N.T.
RPPC



Pine Creek and one of Ryko's "Top End Real Life" shots



Pine Creek Hotel and main street. The character on extreme left is Mr McLellan who was one of the principal characters of Mrs Gunn's book "We of the Never Never" where he is known as the "Sanguine Scot".

Pine Creek N.T. - Uncaptioned with no number but recorded by Ryko as 87 RPPC



Following his record-breaking ride, Ryko set up a shop in Cavenagh Street, Darwin (1914-1917) selling "real life" postcards from his images for 4 pence each. He would venture out from Darwin to all corners of the Top End capturing life on stations, in camps and elsewhere.

A vicious Buffalo Bull defends his dying mate MARRAKAI N.T. Copyright (Ryko Photo) RPPC