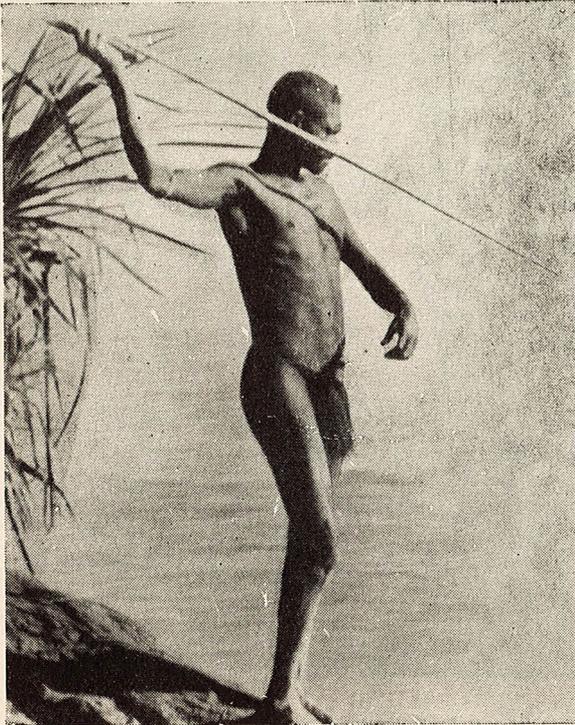


SKY PILOT NEWS

May, 1956



Nargie

Nargie was born on the borders of Arnhem Land, near where the sluggish Roper River winds its way over 250 miles to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Few white men had visited his country in those days; motor cars and aeroplanes were yet things of the future. Nargie belonged to the Mara tribe. He had been brought up strictly according to tribal law; he had married into the correct totemic group; his children already knew the myths and legends that had been handed down from Alcheringa, the golden age, or "dream times" of long ago.

Being an Australian aboriginal, Nargie had no garden and no idea of agriculture. For food he hunted kangaroo, emu, brolga, ducks, geese and other birds and animals. His lubras dug for wild yams and ground nuts; dived in the billabongs for waterlily roots, stems and seeds, and gathered edible berries in the bush. Fish formed a large part of the diet, and Nargie sometimes stood for hours, a black statue on the river bank, fish spear poised ready for the throw as a fish was sighted.

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PATRON: Rt. Rev. Bishop W. G. Hilliard, M.A.

DIRECTOR: K. Langford-Smith, F.R.G.S.

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When native game moved to other parts the tribe followed them, hunting as they went. They were a nomadic, food-gathering people. Their possessions were few—only what could be carried easily. They built no permanent houses, only rough bark or leaf shelters from the hot sun and driving monsoonal rains.

At night fireflies flickered like tiny living sparks along the bank of the Roper. Sometimes a loud splash disclosed the presence of a hungry crocodile which had seized an unwary wallaby or kangaroo. Dingoes could be heard yowling in the distance; their cries mingled with the call of night birds, the squabbling of flying foxes and the sough of the North West monsoon. From the corroboree ground came the stamp of dancing feet, the tapping of boomerangs and the dull boom of the didgeridoo. Occasionally the awe-inspiring roar of the giant "bull-roarer" told that an initiation ceremony was in progress, and lubras and children hid their faces and shuddered in fear.

Thirty years or more passed. Motor cars and aeroplanes brought civilisation to Arnhem Land. Civilisation meant (amongst other things) alcohol, guns, disease; a breaking down of tribal laws and customs; a mixing of bloods. The authority of the old men of the tribe was gone; young men laughed at taboos as they worked for the white man's tucker and tobacco. Then war came. Half-caste girls were evacuated to the cities in the South, and Arnhem Land echoed to the boom of guns and the roar of crashing bombs.

It could have been a grand-daughter of Nargie who was born in a Sydney hospital a couple of years ago. Mathematically speaking, she was 50 per cent. aboriginal and 50 per cent. white. In colour, she was a golden brown, with pretty, curly hair and dark, sparkling eyes. As her mother could not care for her and earn a living at the same time, she

was brought before the court and charged with being a neglected child. Finally she came to the care of the Sky Pilot Fellowship, and she found love, laughter and happiness in the company of other children of her own colour at the Mission Farm.

Though her grandparents roamed naked in the bush or clothed merely in bark girdles or possum-hair tassels, she learned to wear soft, pretty dresses—even shoes and socks. At night she slept in a comfortable bed covered with warm blankets, just as white children do.

And who is Nargie's grand-daughter? She could be almost any one of our coloured children. She will never go "native". Her education will be the same as that of any white child, and there is a place for her in our community. Instead of the myths and legends, fears and superstitions of her ancestors, she is growing to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ and to realise that there is room for her in God's great family of all colours, races and languages.

WHAT IS THE SKY PILOT FELLOWSHIP? The Fellowship is a non-profit-making company registered as a charity. It was founded by Keith Langford-Smith in 1948 (incorporated as a company, 1955), and has grown from a small beginning into an extensive and ever-growing mission. During the past seven years over 1,800 radio broadcasts have been made on 2CH and other stations. About 2,000 Church services, youth gatherings and other meetings have been addressed by Mr. Langford-Smith. Besides services of all Protestant denominations these have included such varied meetings as The Feminist Club, Soroptimist Clubs, National Council of Women, English Speaking Union, Inner Wheel Clubs, Municipal Council and other Annual Dinners; Business Men's Lunches, Workshop Bible Class Convention, etc., etc.

THE NAME "SKY PILOT". In 1928, Arnhem Land, the topmost corner of the Northern Territory, was a place of isolation and hardship. On the border of Arnhem Land the Roper River Mission was established by the C.M.S. It was 250 miles to the nearest hospital, 200 miles to the nearest township, telegraph or railway. For five months of the year, during the "wet", impassable black soil plains and flooded rivers lay between the Mission and the little township of Mataranka, with its telegraph line and fortnightly train to Darwin, another 300 miles distant. In case of accident or sickness, the plight of the



Soft, pretty dresses — even shoes and socks.

patient was desperate; yet hardy pioneers came to this country and blazed the path for us to enter into a new heritage. The N.T. is dotted with lonely and isolated graves, many of them marked simply with a crude cross made from bush timber. White ants have destroyed the timber, and the bush, creeping in on every side, has claimed its own again; now no one would know where these pioneers were buried. In one such grave a young mother sleeps with her newborn infant in her arms—and the nearest white woman was over 200 miles away. For her the little aeroplane "Sky Pilot" was just a little too late.

In 1928, Keith Langford-Smith went to Arnhem Land as a missionary of the C.M.S. Because of illness, isolation and hardships, over 25 missionaries had been forced to give up their Mission work at Roper River in the 20 years previous. In 1930, Langford-Smith returned South on furlough, determined to return with an aeroplane to break down the isolation. In spite of the great depression, and handicapped as he was by lameness, he raised the money for an aeroplane, learned how to fly, and returned to Arnhem Land with a Gypsy Moth aeroplane named "Sky

Pilot". This name was the popular term for "parson". Dr. Gordon (better known as Ralph Connor) had written a book about a "Sky Pilot" in the Canadian bush. Though they had only met once, Ralph Connor and Langford-Smith formed a friendship through correspondence, and it was with mutual agreement and satisfaction that "Sky Pilot" was chosen as a name for the Mission aeroplane.

Langford-Smith made over 200 landings in Arnhem Land, and completed over 20,000 miles of aerial exploration in country where no aeroplane had operated. For this work he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. This young missionary, who had secured his ground engineer's licences, repaired and patched up the old aeroplane time and time again. Proper spares were seldom available; he improvised with parts from the T-model Ford, lengths of water pipe, patches torn from a shirt and "doped" on to the wing with flour and water, green hide and fencing wire. When the final crash came several years later, the purpose for which the plane had been purchased had been accomplished. The "Sky Pilot" was followed by Dr. Fenton and other airmen, and the isolation of Arnhem Land had been conquered. To-day it is the regular thing for missionaries in Arnhem Land to travel by air.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SKY PILOT FELLOWSHIP. The main work of the Fellowship is (1) to care for the neglected, unwanted or orphaned aboriginal children from the city areas; (2) to conduct radio broadcasts to awaken an interest in the aborigines and to present the simple Gospel message in the form of dramatised stories that will hold the interest of those not usually concerned with "religion"; (3) the publication of books, periodicals and stories for the same purpose; (4) to provide a holiday home and recreation for missionaries on furlough.

MARELLA MISSION FARM. Living in the congested areas of the city are hundreds of coloured children of aboriginal descent, most of whom have never seen the bush that was the heritage of their ancestors. To them "home" means a crowded tenement, where drink and vice are rampant. Their only playground is a back street with a "hop-scotch" pitch drawn on the pavement, and a "wicket" chalked on a factory wall. Many of these children are neglected, most of them never hear the name of God, except in blasphemy; some are suffering from diseases and mal-

nutrition. It is our privilege to accommodate such children at Marella Mission Farm, Kellyville. Some of our children are sent to us by the Aborigines Welfare Board (which pays £1 per week towards the cost of feeding, clothing and caring for such children); some children are sent to us for long or short periods by their coloured parents, who, owing to illness or such causes, are unable to care for them. (Usually the parents make a small contribution towards the costs, according to their means.) When parents have deserted their children or are unwilling or unable to contribute towards their upkeep, the Mission accepts them just the same, and undertakes full responsibility for them. It is our aim to bring them up useful citizens; to train them in the Christian faith; to take a life-long interest in their welfare.

BOOKS. Mr. Langford-Smith's earlier books, "Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land" and "Sky Pilot's Last Flight", published by Angus & Robertson Ltd., Sydney, and John Hamilton, London (later translated into Braille), are now out of print. However, the book "Drake's Drum and Other Stories" is still available from the Mission at 5/- per copy, post free. This book contains 16 stories taken from the broadcast, Sky Pilot's Log. Each story has been used of God to bring spiritual help and comfort to listeners, yet the book is by no means what is classed as a "religious" book. The real-life stories are full of humour, pathos and interest; yet each has its application to the deeper things of life. It is a book especially for the non-Christian friend, and his interest will be held to the last page. Yet many Christians have found it a source of help and comfort. If you would like a copy, address your application to the Secretary, Marella Mission Farm, Kellyville, enclosing 5/-, and the book will be posted to you direct.

THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY. The Women's Auxiliary of the Sky Pilot Fellowship consists of a band of active workers who help to provide for the children; organise street stalls and sales of work; attend regular meetings for prayer and discussion of the work. Any women interested in the welfare of neglected aboriginal children are welcome to join the Auxiliary, even if it is not always possible for them to attend meetings. The President is Mrs. F. Hampson, 49 Mercury Street, Beverly Hills (LF 9757); Secretary, Mrs. E. Stevenson, 5 Davis Street, Dulwich Hill.

PREVIOUS GUESTS. Quite a number of dark folk of various ages have stayed at the Mission Farm for various periods. Most of them have done so well that we are encouraged in this work, and we thank God for their witness. Would you add their names to your prayer list? Amongst the girls are: Hazel, Olive, Nellie, Lily, Amy, Rita, Edna, Linda, Priscilla, Gail, Rosita, Alice, Naomi. And the boys: Larrie, Jackie, Eddie, Alec, David, Alan. And please remember our present family: Isabelle, Coral, Dawn, Janet, Ronnie, Rita, Eleanor, Christine.

THE DARK CHILDREN. The latest addition to our family is Coral, aged 12. Coral was a lonely child who did not fit in well with her white foster parents, who did not understand her, and she pined for those of her own colour. Coral was at the office of the Aborigines Welfare Board when Isabelle called for her. The little girl took an immediate fancy to Isabelle. She said: "Are you the girl who is to take me home?" "Yes," she was told. "Oh, dear, I'm so happy!" "And why are you happy?" asked Isabelle. "You're so nice," was the reply. "I think you're a lovely girl. I'm going to be so happy. Are there any other coloured children at the Mission Farm?" "Yes," said Isabelle. "There are six other others, but they are younger than you." "I hope some of them are dark. I'm very dark, and I do so want to be with other dark children. Are Mr. and Mrs. Smith dark, too?" "Oh, no," said Isabelle, "they're white. Mr. Smith was a missionary in Arnhem Land." Coral looked thoughtful as she replied: "Oh, dear, they must love us, to have so many coloured children there!"

As a supporter of this work, you are sharing in bringing great joy to the hearts of these dark children. Their gratitude is not usually expressed in words, but if sparkling eyes and radiant faces count for anything, you should feel rewarded even without waiting for the "well done" of our Lord and Master.

FINANCE. This work is supported by the free will offerings of Christian people. Some who cannot afford monetary gifts or who are

already giving all they can afford to other branches of Mission work, are able to help by the gift of used clothing for the dark children. Others make gifts or supply clothing for the street stalls and sales of work. Many friends have home-offering boxes in which they place a few pence from time to time, and each quarter the contents are forwarded to the Mission. Whatever method of giving you adopt, your contribution will assist in carrying on this work for God and the aborigines.

THE SKY PILOT NEWS. In order to keep in touch with our numerous friends and supporters, it has been decided to publish a monthly paper such as this. It will include articles on the aborigines, photographs, stories from the "Sky Pilot's Log", and particulars about the work being done by the Fellowship. In the past we have been forced to pay 3d postage on every duplicated "News Bulletin" sent out. When handbills are sent to all our friends on the mailing list the postage has been over £60 for each issue. With a printed "News Bulletin", registered at the G.P.O., the postage will be less than £5. This saving in postage will be sufficient to pay the cost of printing the "news". However, the regulations of the G.P.O. specify that at least 75 per cent. of those receiving the "News Bulletin" must be subscribers. Naturally, we want to keep the cost as low as possible, and it has been decided to charge 2/6 per annum for 12 copies, post free. If you would like to receive a copy regularly, it would be a great help if you would fill in the enclosed subscription form and forward it, together with 2/6, to the Secretary, Sky Pilot Fellowship, Marella Mission Farm, Kellyville, N.S.W.

ACCOMMODATION. Although our temporary accommodation is taxed to the utmost, we cannot bear to refuse accommodation to any needy dark child. Mr. Langford-Smith's eldest daughter has offered to give up her own bedroom in order to overcome the immediate shortage of accommodation. However, we do need at least one double-decker bedstead in order to make this possible. If you can supply such a double-decker bedstead, we would be most grateful for it.

PATRON: Rt. Rev. Bishop W. G. Hilliard, M.A.

DIRECTOR: K. Langford-Smith, F.R.G.S.

Sky Pilot Fellowship

RALLY and SALE of WORK to be held (D.V.) in the

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

(LOWER HALL)

Saturday, 19th May, 1956

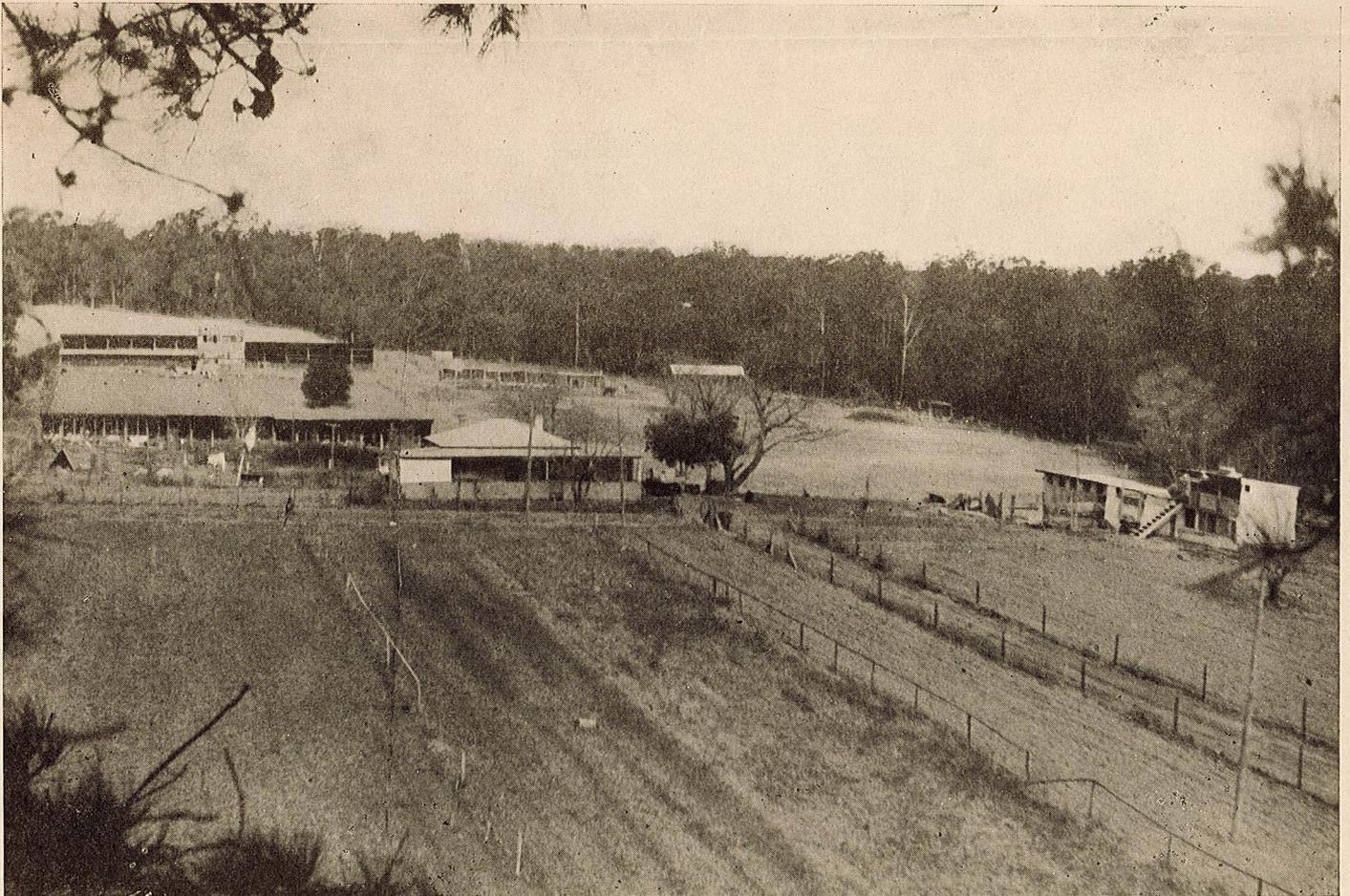
DOORS OPEN 10.30 a.m.

PUBLIC MEETING, 2 p.m.; Chairman, Rev. A. Hayman (ex-C.I.M.)

Our Responsibilities include: Christian Radio Broadcasts, Mission Farm and Home for Neglected Aboriginal Children, etc.

Gifts for Stalls should be mailed to "Sky Pilot," Parramatta Railway Station, or brought to the Town Hall on the day of the Rally. Letters to "Sky Pilot," Marella Mission Farm, Kellyville.

Come, Bring a Friend, and Support this Work for the Dark Children.



PORTION OF 30-ACRE MARELLA MISSION FARM, KELLYVILLE, N.S.W.