

Information Sheet 5

T A R R A G I N D I T A S E R O N E

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Reminiscences by Ms Viva Cribb.
- Salvation Army "War Cry" magazine
- Death of Tarra
- The last of Tarragindi

Tarra was a South Sea Islander from the Loyalty Islands who worked for Mr and Mrs Alfred Foote of Quarry Street, Ipswich. Tarra was a prominent member of the Salvation Army in Ipswich for 25 years, most of it as the standard bearer.

"Alfred Foote saw Tarra sitting on the roadside and "took him under his wing". Tarra went to live with the Footes in Quarry Street, Ipswich. He was a friendly and well-liked man who loved children. Mrs Dorothy Payne who lived for a while with her grandmother Mrs Foote, remembered that Tarra drove them and

neighbouring children to Ipswich Central School in a horse-drawn vehicle (the horse was named Charlie).

Another grand-daughter, Mrs Estelle Kahler remembered that Tarra always had jelly beans to give the children. When holidaying with the family at Southport, he would row them across to Main Beach (no bridge then).

Viva said she was told that when land was being cleared for a new house in Brisbane of Mr and Mrs W.D. Grimes (Mrs Grimes was a Cribb) they asked Tarra what they should call the house and he said

"Tarra Gindi". Mrs Payne and Mrs Kahler had a pet parrot which got loose. Tarra climbed a tree to recover it and fell. He injured his hip, complications set in and he died in the Ipswich Hospital". Source: Family reminiscences provided to Robyn Buchanan by Ms Viva Cribb.



The Salvation Army "War Cry" magazine noted that it was in Ipswich that Tarra "came in contact with The Salvation Army through its open air ministry. This could have been linked with his association with the Foote family for records show they were supporters of Salvation Army work. The Foote family later donated buildings to the Ipswich Corps".

The War Cry article continues by describing Tarra's introduction to salvation in 1888: One Good Friday evening Charles Gorman asked Tarra to come along to the barracks, but he would not come, saying he was frightened. At last Charley managed to get him inside, and fixed him in a seat right at the back of the barracks. Before that meeting closed, Tarra was at the penitent-form. Shortly after his conversion Tarra became a soldier of the Ipswich Corps and was made colour sergeant, in charge of looking after The Salvation Army Flag. He would sing in the open-air, play his mouth organ and learned to play the drum and triangle".



Tarra is the man on the left hand side of the photograph. In the centre is Mr Smith (Salvation Army) and Charlie Gorman (from Tonga).

DEATH OF TARRA

On 14 January 1913, the Queensland Time reported: "A familiar figure in the city, largely because of his long and faithful association with the local corps of the Salvation Army, will be seen no more in his accustomed place in the ranks, or at the door of the barracks of that organisation. We refer to the Kanaka Tarragindi. For some time past he had been an inmate of the Ipswich General Hospital, where, about 9 a.m. yesterday he breathed his last. Several months ago he had the misfortune to fall from a tree, with the result that he sustained a severe injury to one of his hips. Since then other complications set in, the result, doubtless, of advancing years. Although his exact age is not

known, it is believed that he was considerably over 60 years old. He is one of the very few Pacific Islanders who came to this district in the early days of State and who have survived in Queensland till 1913. He was for many years in his earlier days engaged in different parts of the Ipswich district, but, practically for the last quarter of a century or more he has been employed by Mrs. Alfred Foote of Quarry Street. 'Tara,' as he was familiarly called, was never able to express himself in English with that facility which some of his fellow-islanders' could. Nevertheless, by his quaint sayings and his peculiar gestures he generally managed to make himself understood. He was naturally

good tempered, and when subjected to 'chaff' – which he had frequently to put up with – he treated it with a characteristic smile. Practically from the inception of the Salvation Army in Ipswich he had been a member of the organization, and in the course of his years of service he filled many positions. He was drummer, door-keeper, and, for a very long time, standard-bearer. Night after night he was to be seen bearing the flag at the head of the army as the soldiers marched along the streets of the city en route to the barracks. The funeral is to take place at 3.30 p.m. to-day"

“THE LAST OF TARRAGINDI”

The Queensland Times carried the following article on 15 January 1913. The mortal remains of the kanaka Tarraginidi, whose death was referred to in yesterday's issue, were laid to rest in the Ipswich cemetery yesterday afternoon. As a mark of respect to the deceased, who has been a faithful soldier of the Salvation Army for the last quarter of a century, the flag at the barracks of that organization in Nicholas-street was flying throughout the day. A special Army service was Conducted in the hall at 3 p.m. The casket containing the body of the departed was placed in front of the platform. The reading-desk

was draped in white, and the drum was muffled in a cloth of the same colour, whilst each member of the corps, who were present strong force, wore a white band round the right arm. The bandsmen and a number of the members occupied the platform, whilst others sat in the body of the hall, where also assembled quite a large Gathering of citizens who are not active members of the organization. The latter included about a score of the members of the Star of Ipswich Lodge, L.O.G.T. (of which society the deceased had been a member), who wore their regalia. The Chief

Templar (Bro. Arnold Thomas) was amongst the number. Ensign Stowe (with whom was Lieut. Brown) conducted the service. Devotional exercises having been engaged in, several brethren bore testimony to the departed soldier's faithful service whilst in the ranks of the Army. A brief appropriate address was delivered by the Ensign, who said that there was no reason to doubt that their departed comrade had been 'promoted to glory'. In accordance with a wish expressed some time ago by the deceased, the band played 'God be with You Till We Meet Again.'



Tarra is buried in the Congregational Section of the Ipswich General Cemetery near the Foote Family.