

In 1928 the Miller brothers offered Bradshaw's Run to the Government for the purpose of establishing an Aboriginal station. In correspondence it was pointed out that the Run had to be sold before the Estate of W.H. Miller could be wound up. They were eager to sell and were prepared to accept a reasonable price and give possession of the property very quickly. They stated that as well as the many improvements on the land there were approximately 8,000 head of cattle and 450 horses. They also pointed out that their boundary adjoined the Daly River Aboriginal Reserve and it was feasible that both blocks could be linked and used for the purposes of breeding cattle to assist the feeding of Aborigines (F5 B327 Bradshaw's Run 1927-1929, N T Archives Service). The proposal was passed on to the North Australia Commission in Canberra for their consideration. Early in 1929 the Trustees were advised that the Commission was not prepared to recommend the purchase.

The realities were that between 1912 and 1930 five blood stallions were introduced, but no new bulls had been brought into the cattle herd. Cost factors may have contributed to that situation and there were still no close markets, but even so, the quality of the herd was drastically reduced from that of Bradshaw's time (F658 Bradshaw's Station 25, Australian Archives, Darwin).

Some problems were still being encountered with the Aborigines. By 1927 the Millers had solved this problem to some extent by surrendering part of this run to them. There obviously had been some improvement, for Mr. N.V. Miller who was visiting the Run during 1929 stated that 'the bush blacks were not interfering with the cattle on the Run. The Police had about cleaned up all the cattle killing natives by arresting them, and on being convicted [they] served a term in gaol'. Mr. Miller felt that the exercise had had a good effect on the Aborigines still on the Run (CRS A1 27/21460 Cattle Industry in North Australia, Australian Archives, Canberra).

The 1935 Northern Territory Pastoral Leasees Investigation Committee reported on Bradshaw's Run that 'the area North of the Fitzmaurice River is not used at all but is left to the Blacks who are troublesome in this locality. West of the homestead to the sea and North to the Fitzmaurice River is very rough, rangy country, much of it inaccessible but with small open flats of feeding country. There are many pockets of good horse and cattle country here, and this part is given over entirely to the horses' (F658 Bradshaw's Station 25, Australian Archives, Darwin).

Although this report was compiled during 1934 the reference to trouble with the Aborigines undoubtedly meant Namarluk, Tiger Chugulla and their followers. In the Port Keats Story, Brother John Pye describes Namarluk as 'a Port Keats native warrior of a giant build 6 feet 2 inches with cat-like movements, was chief of the Chul-a-mar, Red Band of killers, Japs and otherwise. The men close to him and most loyal were Minmara, Mankee, Mangue and Lin' (Pye 1973, 8). Namarluk and his followers lived and camped on the Moyle Plain at the mouth of Port Keats, while his half brother Tiger lived on the Fitzmaurice River.

Namarluk and his band were obviously very clever. With the assistance of several of their women, including Marpu, Namarluk's wife, they boarded the Japanese lugger Ouida and lulled the crew into a false sense of security. Namarluk, Minmara, Lin and others murdered the Japanese crew on 17 September 1931 (CRS A1 33/8560 Namarluk, Australian Archives, Darwin). The Melville Island boys on board the lugger escaped and lived to report the incident.

In October 1931, Constables J.J.(Jack) Mahoney, A.E. Koop, with two Aboriginal Police Trackers left Darwin on-board the Maroubra to look for the Ouida (E72, DL847 Namarluk, Australian Archives, Darwin). They located it on the beach between Port Keats and Port Hay. After that, the police patrols set out and the chase for Namarluk and the others continued for over two years.