

As with almost all his contemporaries, Cox had looked to the goldfields and had funded a prospecting party under the management of Thomas Erskine but he was incompetent and nothing came of the venture.

His wife, Catherine Mary, *nee* Bathurst, endeavoured to continue with her husband's interests. She managed the property herself until she left Palmerston with three children on 8 July 1875 leaving a manager, Robert Patrick, in charge. In 1878 the remaining cattle were sold to John McGrath. The Cox family had also suffered further tragedy. Dillon Cox's brother, Thomas Winnal Price Cox, with his wife, Mary, and their children had visited Palmerston after his death. All were lost when *Gothenburg* foundered off the Queensland coast *en route* from Palmerston to Adelaide on 25 February 1875.

A Powell, *Far Country*, 1982; *Advertiser*, 18 March 1873; *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 6 February 1874, 27 February 1874, 6 March 1874, 10 April 1874, 24 April 1874, 28 April 1874, 8 May 1874, 6 March 1875, 14 July 1877, 23 October 1880; Australian Archives, Northern Territory, NTAC 1873/13; Northern Territory Archives Service, NTRS 790, A287 & A 829; State Records of South Australia, GRS 1 119/1871, GRS 1 52 1873, GRS 1 315/1874.

HELEN J WILSON, Vol 2.

**CRAWFORD, LINDSAY** (1852–1901), linesman and station manager, was born in 1852 in Adelaide. Lindsay was the son of E J F Crawford, the head of an old and highly respected, South Australian brewing family. His mother was a sister of George Fife Angus's partner, Flaxman, and thus was a member—through close association—of Adelaide's commercial establishment.

On turning 15, Crawford left school and started to train as a telegraph operator, working at this for two years before he had a change of heart and resigned to join his father's brewery, as an apprentice, in October 1869.

As a member of a brewing family, malt practically ran through his veins. Lindsay's father was keen that he should stay within the family business, so to gain experience he encouraged him to visit New Zealand. But, fired with a determination to succeed on his own, he curtailed his New Zealand visit soon after arriving in the country and booked passage on a ship to Darwin, hoping to start his own brewery in the Northern Territory.

His first experiments in beer making were not very encouraging—due to the water and climate being unsuitable—so he gave up and headed south, hoping to make his fortune digging for gold at the Stuart's Creek settlement.

Gold, although found in payable quantities in the Northern Territory through the 1870s, did not lure a great many miners up from the southern colonies. Miners in the south were still making their fortune on the Victorian goldfields, and it took a man of great optimism to leave, say, Ballarat and head for the Northern Territory. The tropical climate, it was often suggested, was just not suitable for whites to live in.

Crawford never felt at ease as a miner, yearning instead to return to telegraphy. This was particularly so because of the new Overland Telegraph Line; the news of wires connecting Adelaide and Melbourne directly to the outside world was on everyone's lips. Furthermore, Lindsay Crawford was one of the few with appropriate qualifications who were living in the Territory at the time, and whose skills were desperately wanted.

On 20 March 1874 Crawford joined the South Australian Telegraph Service as an operator on the Port Darwin line. He was discharged at his own request five months later, but was reappointed on 23 November 1874. He stayed for a further three years as stationmaster at Powell's Creek, but again resigned on 30 June 1877, this time to open a store at Southport, a settlement just south of Port Darwin.

Southport, a 'tent and split timber' township on the South (or Middle) Arm of Darwin Harbour, was the launching point for supplies to both the goldfields and the construction camps of the overland telegraph. Although this little town never grew to any real prominence, it was, prior to the railway to Pine Creek being opened, nevertheless important. Crawford's store, the second in Southport, turned out to be a financial disappointment, largely through his inability to obtain regular supplies for the miners. His hopes for bettering himself were again dashed.

With brewery, mining and his store behind him, Lindsay Crawford, still only 26 years old, rejoined the South Australian Telegraph Department on 24 June 1878. As section supervisor he stayed with the service for another four years, resigning and taking his retirement allowance at the end of April 1882. Sailing from Port Darwin, he travelled to New Zealand to stay with his sister (the wife of John Edward Kelsey), and after holidaying there returned to the Northern Territory to accompany Ernest Favenc on an expedition seeking new pastoral lands for expansion in the north.

From the time of his first arrival in the Northern Territory Crawford had held a strong desire to involve himself in the pastoral industry, but through lack of experience and knowledge he was unable to gain any kind of foothold. It was on his journey to the

MacArthur River with Favenc—whose reputation was established by locating new pastoral areas in Queensland—that Crawford was able to secure employment on Richmond Downs Station. Subsequently he was appointed full-time manager of Victoria River Downs (VRD). At the time (1884) it was owned by **C B Fisher** and J Maurice Lyons and was later taken over by Goldsbrough Mort and Company Ltd.

Crawford settled well into his managership of 'The Big Run', as Victoria River Downs later came to be known. The station, then 41 155 square kilometres in area, was in the process of being stocked by its owners with cattle brought across from the east coast by **Nat Buchanan**, via Glencoe and Marrakai, and was really little more than a designation on a map. It was one of the most isolated cattle stations in Australia, run by a handful of Europeans and subject to frequent attacks by the Aborigines. Malaria was endemic and rations and supplies that Crawford ordered took months to reach VRD. They had to be shipped up the Victoria River in luggers and then brought by bullock or donkey team to the station. Conditions for Crawford and his men were, in short, abominable. Furthermore, there was practically no communication link with the outside world.

During the 1880s, Fisher and Lyons' Northern Territory holdings brought the partnership to the brink of bankruptcy. Only a rescue by Goldsbrough Mort saved Fisher and Lyons from mustering and selling all their VRD stock. Crawford, meanwhile, battled on keeping the blacks at bay, his men working and attempting to maintain the herd within controllable areas.

Apart from establishing the camp on the Wickham (as VRD's head station came to be known) Lindsay Crawford, the down-to-earth stockman, was able to coax an adequate number of good stockhorses out of the new owners, Goldsbrough Mort, and has since been given credit for the policy of running good horses on the station. But stockhorses were not enough for Crawford, and toward the end of 1889 he tendered his resignation. On 5 March 1890 his employees gathered at the head station to 'testify their esteem' for their former boss. An address was presented to Crawford that read:

Sir -

We, the undersigned employees of the Victoria River Downs Cattle station, extremely regret to hear that you have resigned your position as manager. Some of us have been working under your supervision for many years, and consider you a thoroughly practical man, and, moreover, always considerate and obliging to those around you. We cannot show our esteem and regard better this night—it being the eve of your departure—than by asking you to accept the attached purse of sovereigns as a gift and token of our goodwill towards you wherever you may go.

(Signed)

W N Rees, T Nelson, A Lock, John Inman, C E May, C Smith, G H Ligar, Ah Mong, W H Willshire, John Mulligan, L S Benison

Once again, in 1897, Crawford joined the South Australian Posts and Telegraph Department, this time as a member of A Pybus's line party. Three years later, in April 1900, Pybus died and Crawford was placed in charge. But the country, probably some of the toughest in Australia, all too often took its revenge on those who, like Crawford, tried to tame it. On 20 March 1901, within weeks of the celebrations associated with Australia's gaining nationhood, Crawford died at Sturt's Plain, to the north of Newcastle Waters. Although it was said that he had died from dysentery, it is more plausible that lack of food (he only had flour left in his saddle bags), exposure to the wet (he was unable to light a fire) and confusion (he was, the papers said, sensible 'up to within a short time of his death') each, combined, exacted this toll. A colleague, W Holtze, buried the body on the southern edge of the plain, in ground so hard that the burial party had to use tomahawks to dig to a depth of one metre.

Lindsay Crawford was 48 years old at the time of his death. Hard working, respected, a bachelor throughout his life, he was one of the many quiet men who put his life and soul into opening up the Northern Territory.

P F Donovan, *A Land Full of Possibilities: A History of South Australia's Northern Territory*, 1981; F Goss, *Never Never Telegraphist*; E Hill, *The Territory*, 1963; Jock Makin, *The Big Run*, 1983; *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 22 March 1901; Telecommunications Museum Biographical Notes Relating to L Crawford prepared by M Gooley, Adelaide, 1985.

J MAKIN, Vol 1.

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**CREAGHE, EMILY CAROLINE:** see **[BARNETT, EMILY CAROLINE](#)**

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**CRESWELL, (Sir) WILLIAM ROOKE** (1852–1933), Vice-Admiral, pastoralist and explorer, was born at Gibraltar on 20 July 1852, son of Edmund Creswell. His father was the colony's Deputy Postmaster General. The family came from Hampshire. Creswell was educated at Aitkens Private School at Gibraltar and at the Naval Academy at Southsea, England. He entered the Royal Navy on a training ship *Britannia* in December 1865 and was Midshipman on the HMS *Phoebe* when she visited Australia in 1869. His later postings included China, the Malay Coast and Zanzibar. He took a torpedo course in 1878 but, disappointed at uncertain prospects in the Royal Navy, he retired later that year to try his luck as pastoralist and explorer in the Northern Territory.

This period of his life did not last long. The Acting Government Resident in the Northern Territory, **G R McMinn**, noted that 'in May 1885 Messrs T Holmes and F Traine guided by Lieut Creswell [*sic*] arrived at Jeraminy from Creswell [not named for W R Creswell] or Anthony Lagoon'. McMinn later reported on an application by Creswell for a reward for opening up a route from Tennant Creek to Creswell Downs and MacArthur River; but Creswell's persistent hope of recognition for his Northern Territory explorations was not realised. By January 1886 he had joined the South Australian Defence Forces vessel HMCS *Protector* (950 tonnes) at Largs Bay in Adelaide as First Lieutenant with the rank of lieutenant commander.

On 29 December 1888 he married Adelaide Elizabeth, the daughter of Mr R I Stow, at Port Elliott. Creswell became a persistent advocate for the establishment of an Australian naval force and, in Allahabad in November 1894; he recommended the establishment of an Indian Government Horse Depot in the Northern Territory for the breeding and training of remounts for the Indian army. This proposal was republished in 1899 by the South Australian government; nothing came of it. In May 1900 Creswell was appointed Commandant of the Queensland Naval Forces. He was released to the British government on the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in China. He commanded his old ship, *Protector* on the China coast from August 1900 to January 1901, earning the commendation of the China Fleet commander.

In 1904 Creswell became Naval Officer Commanding the Commonwealth Naval Forces and, in 1905, a member of the Council of Defence and the Australian Naval Board. He saw advocacy become reality when the Royal Australian Navy was created in 1911.

He became a Rear Admiral and First Naval Member of the Australian Naval Board in 1911, received his Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) in the same year and a Knight of the Order of the

# **NORTHERN TERRITORY DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY**

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