

Remembering Mount Margaret Mission

A collection of children's crayon drawings created in 1939



Remembering Mount Margaret Mission

A collection of children's crayon drawings created in 1939

Researched and prepared by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) Aboriginal History WA (AHWA) in partnership with the Mount Margaret Aboriginal community to commemorate the Centenary of the Mission.

Cultural Acknowledgement

The DLGSC pays respect to the Wongatha people as the custodians of the land on which the Mount Margaret Community is located, and to all Aboriginal people past and present who are linked to the area historically and culturally. Most importantly, recognition is given to the children whose drawings are represented in this publication and their descendants who kindly supported this project.

Warning and Sensitivities

Please be advised this publication contains images of people who have passed away.

[Cover] A panorama of Mount Margaret Mission, 1933.

A1340_ER3_84A3, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.

Published 2022 by Nani Creative.



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

Introduction

The year 2021 marks the centenary of the establishment of the Mount Margaret Mission, a place of great cultural and historical significance to Aboriginal people throughout the Goldfields region and beyond.

To commemorate this significant milestone, Aboriginal History WA (AHWA) has taken the opportunity of highlighting a number of 'long-lost' crayon drawings produced by some of the children attending school during 1939.

As a collection these drawings provide a unique window into life on the mission through the eyes and creative minds of the children - a perspective that is almost always silenced in the written record. They vary in context, capturing elements of traditional life, the natural environment and the inner workings of the imagination.

Some of the artists would go on to achieve national recognition in their professional life and within the community, never losing their links to Mount Margaret.



A panorama of Mount Margaret Mission, 1933.

BA1340_ERA3_84A3, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



Reflection by Laurel Cooper

Hello, my name is Laurel Cooper (nee Johnston) and I'm 87 years old. I am the second youngest of the last four girls still alive who were at the Mount Margaret School when the pictures in this book were drawn. Dora, Lorraine and Maisie are the other three. They were my sisters in the Graham Home (the dormitory).

I would have been in the kindergarten at the time and I cannot remember Mr Tindale who collected the drawings but I do remember all of the girls and boys who drew them, even though some of them passed away many years ago.

When I looked at the drawings they brought back memories of the time when I was at the Mission. I can still remember how it looked so long ago, our old school building, the church, the hall and the houses. Some of the people who lived in them had pretty gardens just like you see in this book. I also remember the 'early days' cars and trucks and how loud they were, not like the ones we have today. The boys liked drawing these. There are also pictures of warlku (quandong) and marlukurukuru (sturt pea). The warlku is my favourite and we still go out and collect them as well as Karlkurla (bush pear) today.

When I was at school I liked to draw. My teachers Miss Jones and then Mrs Bennett and others would hand out sheets of paper and crayons and we would draw whatever we wanted to. I can still remember my first drawing, it was one of my pet dog, Roogy. He had big, long ears. I was awarded two cherries by my teacher because the picture was so good. I cried when I had to leave my poor dog behind. On other occasions we were given chalk and a slate which we would use time and time again, just like writing on a blackboard.

A couple of years ago one of the pictures that I drew at school along with a story was found in the Museum in Melbourne. I was flown across there to see it and given a copy to keep.

Even when we were out of school, we would still draw pictures. Sometimes we used charcoal and drew on the tank stand or on the buildings. These pictures didn't last very long, especially in the winter when the rain would wash them off. Our mothers also used charcoal to darken our skin when we knew the policemen or Protectors were looking for us.

We also used our milpirnti (bent lengths of wire) to create pictures in the sand while telling our stories. We would smooth out the sand, draw a picture with the wire, then smooth it out again to allow us to create another picture for the new part of the story. This was our favourite way of telling a bush story, especially for the girls. A few years ago, I found a copper milpirnti at Gwalia where we used to play sport and still have it with me. I also have coloured pencils and paper at home for visitors to use to draw pictures just like I used to.

I think that all of the boys and girls whose work is in this book would be pukulpa (delighted) to know that their work has not been lost. I know that Dora, Lorraine and Maisie would be.

I would like to thank all the people from Aboriginal History WA for all the work they have done in putting this wonderful book together. It not only gives us a picture of what life was like at the time but, most importantly, provides us with a special way to celebrate the centenary of Mount Margaret.



The new School at Mt Margaret almost completed, 1929.
BA1340_ERA3_9A1, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



Arthur Stokes taking the class in reading in Mt Margaret School, 1934.
BA1340_ERA3_28C, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.

History of Mount Margaret Mission

Located 20 km south west of Laverton on the traditional lands of the Wongatha people, Mt Margaret was founded in 1921 by evangelist Rodolphe Samuel Schenk with the assistance of the Australian Aborigines Mission. Initially established as a refuge for the people of the surrounding area, by the end of the decade the ethos would become increasingly diversified with the creation of a school, dormitories, and various commercial enterprises in line with Schenk's vision of evangelicalism and education.

During this period, many children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to the mission in line with government policy whilst others were placed there by their parents. In some instances, entire families were admitted.

For over half a century, countless families would pass through the mission, some staying a short time whilst others more permanently. People were drawn to the Mission from as far east as the Warburton Ranges, Wiluna to the north, with a smaller number coming from the south coast and south-west regions.

From an historical perspective, Mount Margaret is generally acknowledged as being more caring and progressive than other institutions of the era.

Mount Margaret today

By the end of the 1950s the number of families residing at the mission had dwindled significantly with most of the residents leaving to take up opportunities in the surrounding pastoral industry or nearby towns. This trend continued through until the 1975 when the mission closed and responsibility for the community was transferred the Aboriginal Movement for Outback Survival.

Three years later the present school facilities were established catering for students from Kindergarten through to Year 6. An integral part of the school curriculum is devoted to the retention of the Wongatha culture with art continuing to be a valued form of expression.

Child crayon drawings

The crayon drawings featured in this booklet were collected by the University of Adelaide and the Harvard Board for Anthropological Research on 11 May 1939. An additional 17 were acquired from children attending the Mission School at Gnowangerup and 56 from the Moore River Native Settlement school between 1938-1939. A total of 993 drawings were obtained from locations throughout Australia.

The Board also collected genealogies and other anthropological and sociological information. Although a genealogy was not recorded for each person within the location, the number of the sheet on which the individual appears is listed within their profile.

The children were provided with sheets of brown wrapping paper (36 cm by 53.5 cm) and coloured crayons and asked to draw a picture with no limitations placed on the subject matter.

The value of the collection is unquestionable, serving as an important memento to the descendants of the artists and the community as a whole.



Students in the school at Mt Margaret, 1929.

BA1340_ERA3_9B, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



Classroom teaching by Queenie, one of the Mount Margaret residents, c.1934.

Bennett, M. "Teaching the aborigines : data from Mount Margaret Mission, W.A. / notes by M.M. Bennett", page 42.

Name Index to the artists of the Mount Margaret crayon drawings

Cunnama	8
Blizzard, Woobalie	10
Brownley, Morris	12
Cooper, Lena	14
Cooper, Lorna	16
Corner, Sadie	18
Dimer, Edna	20
Dimer, Ollan	22
Dimer, Rollick	24
Dimer, William	26

Evans, Teddy	28
Henderson, Bessie	30
Hill, Snowy	32
Jones, Jean	34
McGrath, Lance	36
McGrath, Ray	38
Meredith, Freddie	40
Mindemarra, Mary Josephine	42
Murray, Gracie	44
Murray, Tom	46

Quinn, Dora	48
Roundhead, Jinmar	50
Roundhead, Merle	52
Stokes, Arthur	54
Stokes, Donald	56
Tucker, Charlie	58
Tucker, George	60
Wesley, Billarissa	62
Winter, Charlie	64



Cunnama

Also known as Kanama @ Kunima

Born	Circa 1926, White Cliff Station
Language Group	Ngadadjara
Died	Not stated

Artwork description

Red, orange, yellow, brown, blue, black and lead pencil drawing of a person, fruit, a car and a bird

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	124
SAM identifier	N.2315/1, AA.346/18/15/19





Woobalie

Also known as Robin Blizzard

Born	12 March 1927, Linden
Language Group	Ngadadjara / Nangatadjara
Died	19 August 1974, Perth

Artwork description

Red, brown, yellow, white, green, blue, black and lead pencil drawing of a house, flowers, a person and a truck by Woobalie.

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	125
SAM identifier	N2315/14, AA 346/18/15/29





Noorie

Also known as Morris Brownley

Born	28 February 1929, Yarri
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	12 October 1986, Kalgoorlie

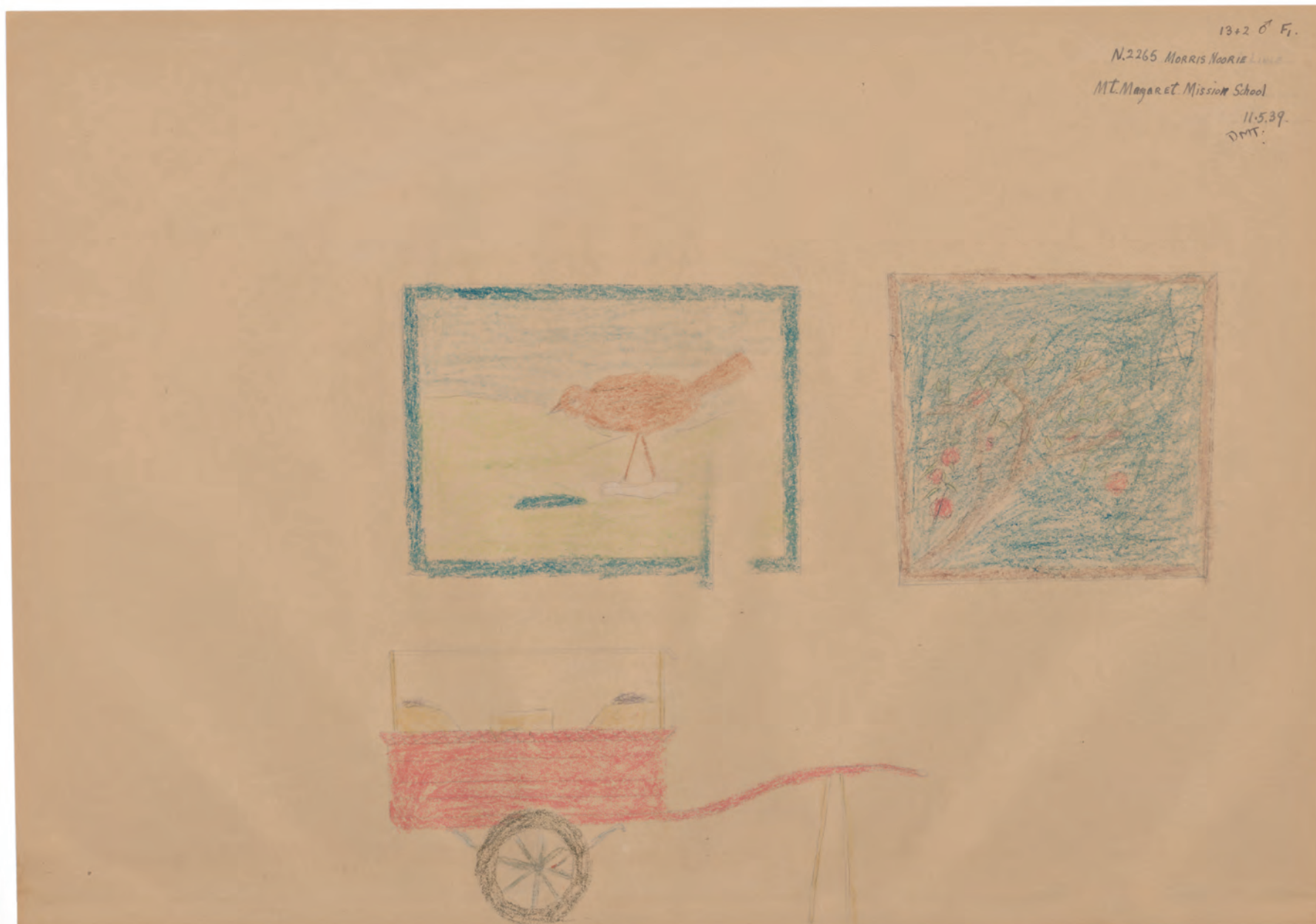
Artwork description

Red, white, brown, blue, green, black and lead pencil drawing including a car, a bird and a tree by Morris Noorie Lince

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	152
SAM identifier	N.2265, AA 346/18/15/9





Lena Gerardi

(nee Cooper)

Born	5 April 1928, Yelma Station
Language Group	Piri
Died	4 November 1970, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Red, white, blue, brown, green, black and lead pencil drawing of a house, flowers, pot plants and two trees by Lena Cooper

11 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	147
SAM identifier	N2315/7, AA 346/18/15/1





Lorna Walker

(nee Cooper)

Born	7 March 1925, Wonganoo Station
Language Group	Piri
Died	19 February 1938, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Pink, brown, blue, green, white, black and lead pencil drawing of two buildings, a pot plant and a rabbit by Lorna

14 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	147
SAM identifier	N.2270 Lorna, AA 346/18/15/2





Sadie Canning

(nee Corner)

Born	11 April 1930, Laverton
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	3 September 2008, Mount Lawley

Artwork description

Red, brown, green, blue, black, white and lead pencil drawing of a house, flowers, potplants, trees and hills by Sadie

9 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	172
SAM identifier	N.2315/10, AA 346/18/15/28





Edna Reid

(nee Dimer)

Born	4 April 1930, Balladonia Station
Language Group	Not stated
Died	Not stated

Artwork description

Brown, green and lead pencil drawing of a tree, grass and a rabbit by Edna

9 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	154
SAM identifier	N.2315/4, AA 346/18/15/3





Ollan Dimer

Born	20 February 1928, Noondania
Language Group	Not stated
Died	24 July 2009, Coolgardie

Artwork description

Brown, green, black, blue and lead pencil drawing including a truck and trees by Ollan Dimer

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	154
SAM identifier	N.2266, AA 346/18/15/4





Rollick Dimer

Born	12 December 1926, Zanthus
Language Group	Not stated
Died	1 August 2001, Kalgoorlie

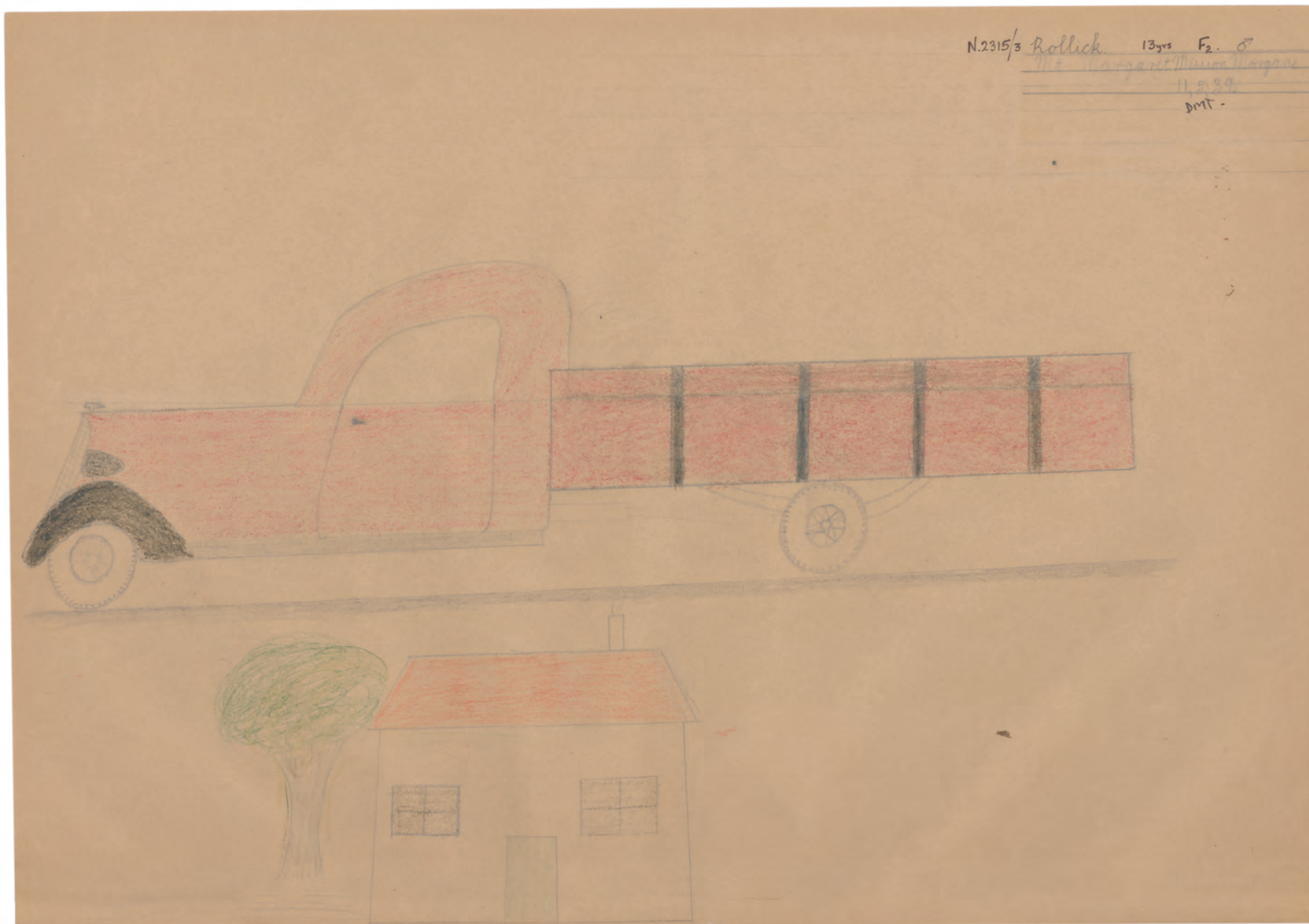
Artwork description

Red, green, black and lead pencil drawing of a truck, a house and a tree by Rollick

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	154
SAM identifier	N.2315/3, AA 346/18/15/5





William Leslie Dimer

Also known as Billy

Born	7 April 1923, First King, Balladonia Station
Language Group	Not stated
Died	21 March 1986, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Red, brown, black, green, blue and lead pencil drawing including two trucks, two people and a well by Billy

16 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	48, 124, 127, 134 & 140
SAM identifier	N.2315/12, AA 346/18/15/11





Coomarnoo

Also known as Teddy Evans

Born	21 May 1930, Darlot
Language Group	Not stated
Died	Buried 12 June 1999, Leonora

Artwork description

Red, white, brown, black and lead pencil drawing including a house, a car and a tree by Coomarnoo

9 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	
SAM identifier	N.2196, AA 346/18/15/17





Ninggarlie

Also known as Bessie Henderson

Born	18 January 1924, Cosmo Newberry
Language Group	Tjalkadjara
Died	28 February 2010, Perth

Artwork description

Red, yellow, brown, green, blue and lead pencil drawing of three birds, a rabbit and flowers resembling the Sturt Desert Pea by Ninggarlie

15 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	174
SAM identifier	N.2250, AA 346/18/15/27





Ngooonjie

Also known as Snowy Hill

Born	Circa 1928
Language Group	Not stated
Died	Not stated

Artwork description

Yellow, green and lead pencil drawing of two people and two lights on an attached piece of paper by Ngooonjie. Labels include: 'bush aboriginal being shown electric lights by a partly civilised child'

Circa 6 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	
SAM identifier	AA 346/18/15/26

Ngoonja
27 Nov 1934
Mt Margaret Mission



Two aboriginal being shown electric
lights by a partly civilized child.



Boonatooroo

Also known as Jean Jones

Born	2 March 1927, Darlot
Language Group	Ngadadjara
Died	10 September 1991, Kalgoorlie

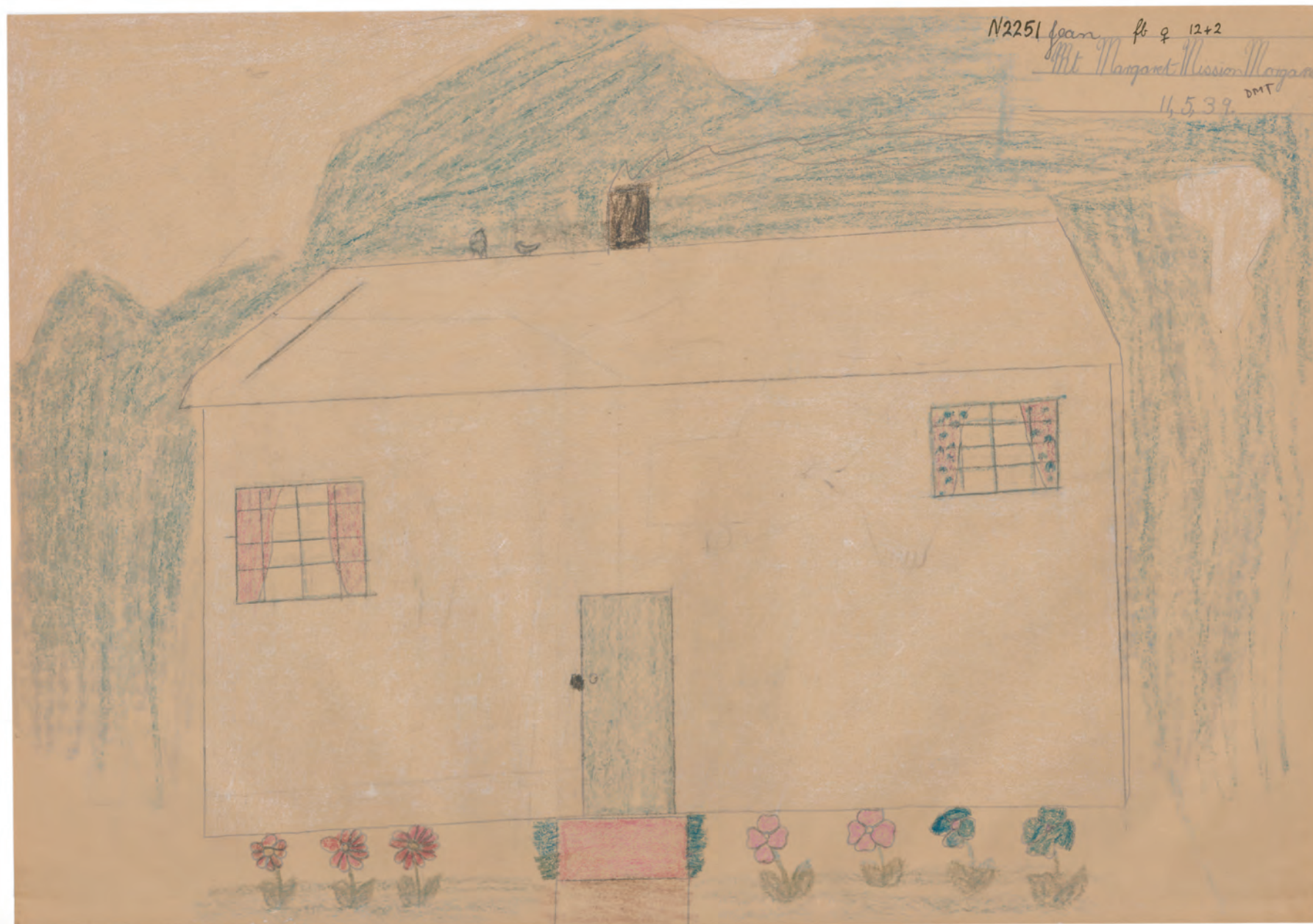
Artwork description

Red, pink, blue, green, black, white and lead pencil drawing of a house, two birds and flowers by Jean

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	185
SAM identifier	N2251, AA 346/18/15/23





Lance McGrath

Born	4 December 1924, Kalgoorlie
Language Group	Not stated
Died	4 June 1985, Medina

Artwork description

Red, white, yellow brown, green, blue and lead pencil drawing of two houses, trees, a man shooting a kangaroo, birds and the sun by Lance

14 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	155
SAM identifier	N2264, AA 346/18/15/6





Ray McGrath

Born	16 June 1926, Yarri
Language Group	Not stated
Died	22 April 1996, Salter Point

Artwork description

Red, yellow, white, brown, green, blue, black and lead pencil drawing of a house, a tree, a truck, a fence, a gate and the sun by Ray McGrath

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	155
SAM identifier	N.2268, AA 346/18/15/7





Freddie Meredith

Born	25 July 1925, Burtville
Language Group	Not stated
Died	6 February 1998, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Brown, green and blue drawing of trees by Freddie

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	171
SAM identifier	N.2225, AA 346/18/15/21





Mary Josephine Mindemarra

Also known as Mary Hill

Born	25 September 1925, Katanning
Language Group	Not stated
Died	Not stated

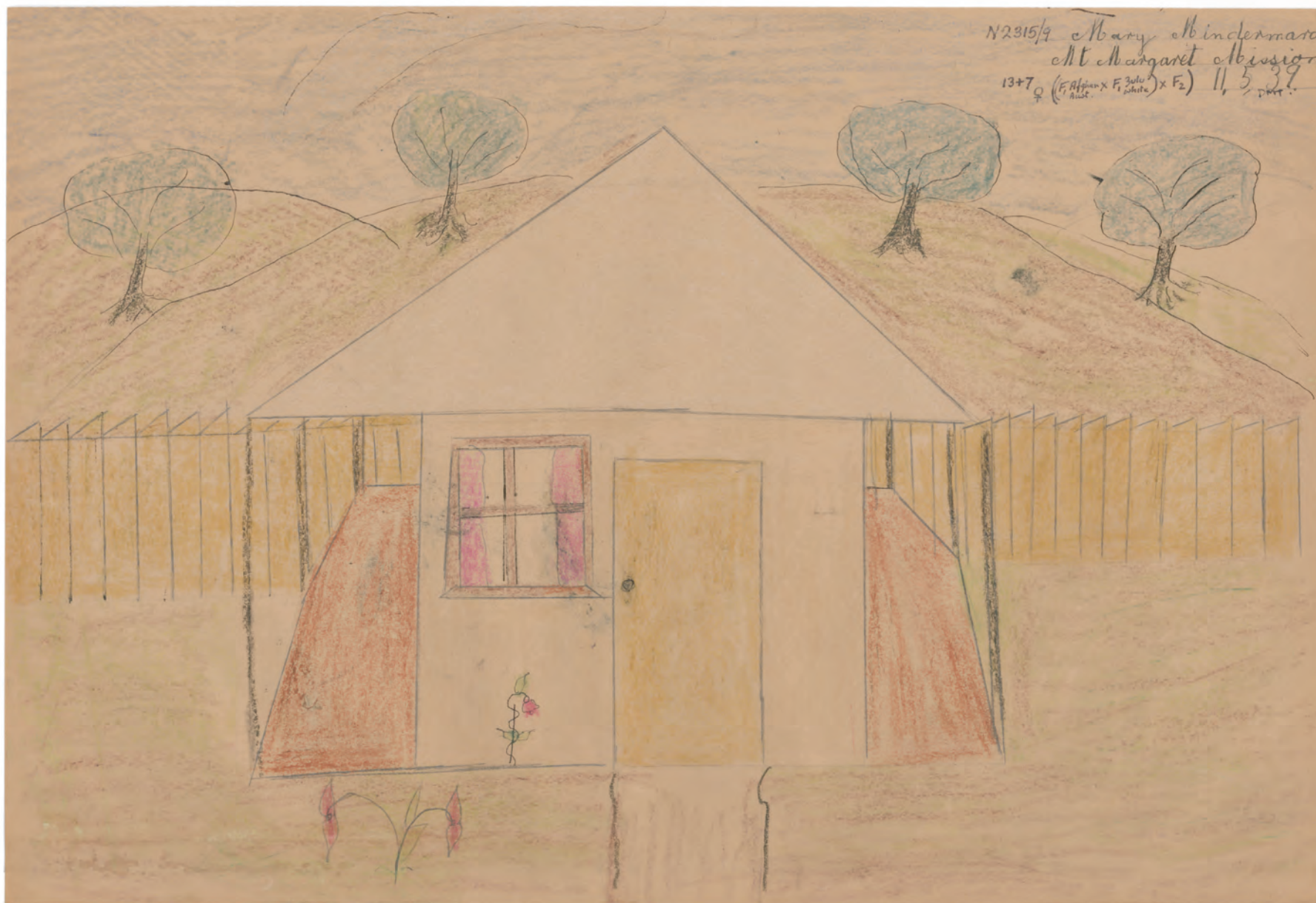
Artwork description

Red, pink, brown, green, white, black, blue and lead pencil drawing of a house, flowers, hills and trees by Mary Mindemarra

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	134
SAM identifier	N2315/9, AA 346/18/15/8





Gracie Murray

(nee Dimer)

Born	10 September 1926, Karonie
Language Group	Not stated
Died	14 July 1995, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Red, pink, green, brown, white, black, blue and lead pencil drawing of a house, three trees, flowers and clouds by Gracie

13 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	157
SAM identifier	N.2269, AA 346/18/15/22



Cumba @ Kumba

Also known as Tom Murray

Born	Circa 1926, South East of Mount Margaret
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	20 October 2001, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Red, white, brown, green and black drawing of a house, trees, phone lines and three people playing with a skipping rope by Cumba

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	166
SAM identifier	N.2224, AA 346/18/15/18





Dora Cotterill

(nee Quinn)

Born	1 August 1925, Mulgabbie
Language Group	Not stated
Died	Not stated

Artwork description

Red, orange, green, brown and black drawing of a fruit tree by Dora

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	173
SAM identifier	N.2315/2, AA 346/18/15/10





Jimmar Reid

Born	29 September 1922, Kalgoorlie
Language Group	Tjalkadjara
Died	4 December 1988, Kalgoorlie

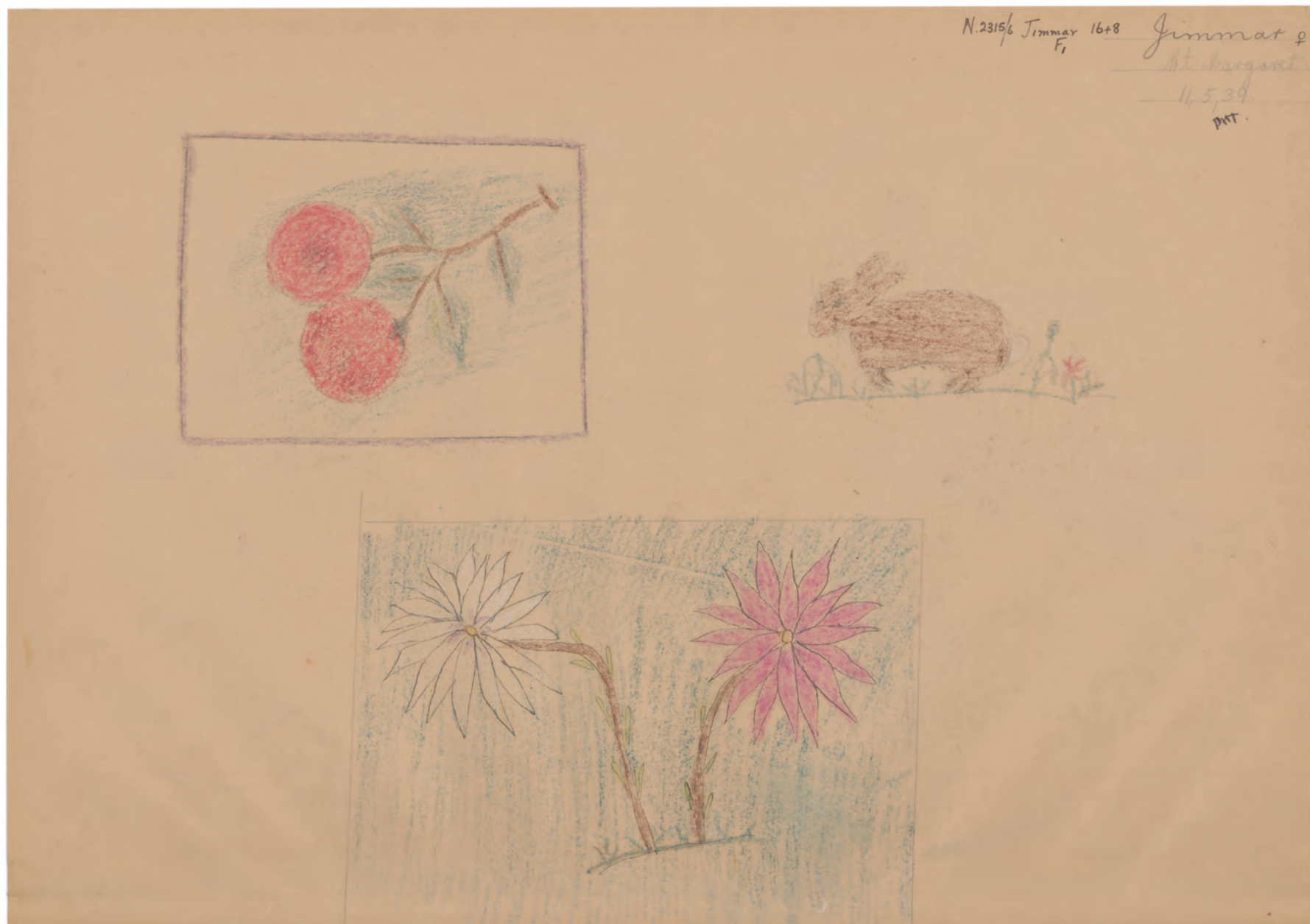
Artwork description

Red, pink, orange, brown, white, green and black drawing of flowers, fruit and a rabbit by Jimmar

16 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	156
SAM identifier	N.2315/6 , AA 346/18/15/24





Merle Cable

Born	26 September 1927, Karonie
Language Group	Tjalkadjara
Died	2019, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

Green, blue, brown and black drawing including a house, a boat, trees, a river and a car by Merle

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	156
SAM identifier	N2315/8, AA 346/18/15/25





Gunjoo Gunjoo

Also known as Arthur Stokes

Born	15 January 1926, Linden
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	26 June 1992, Kalgoorlie

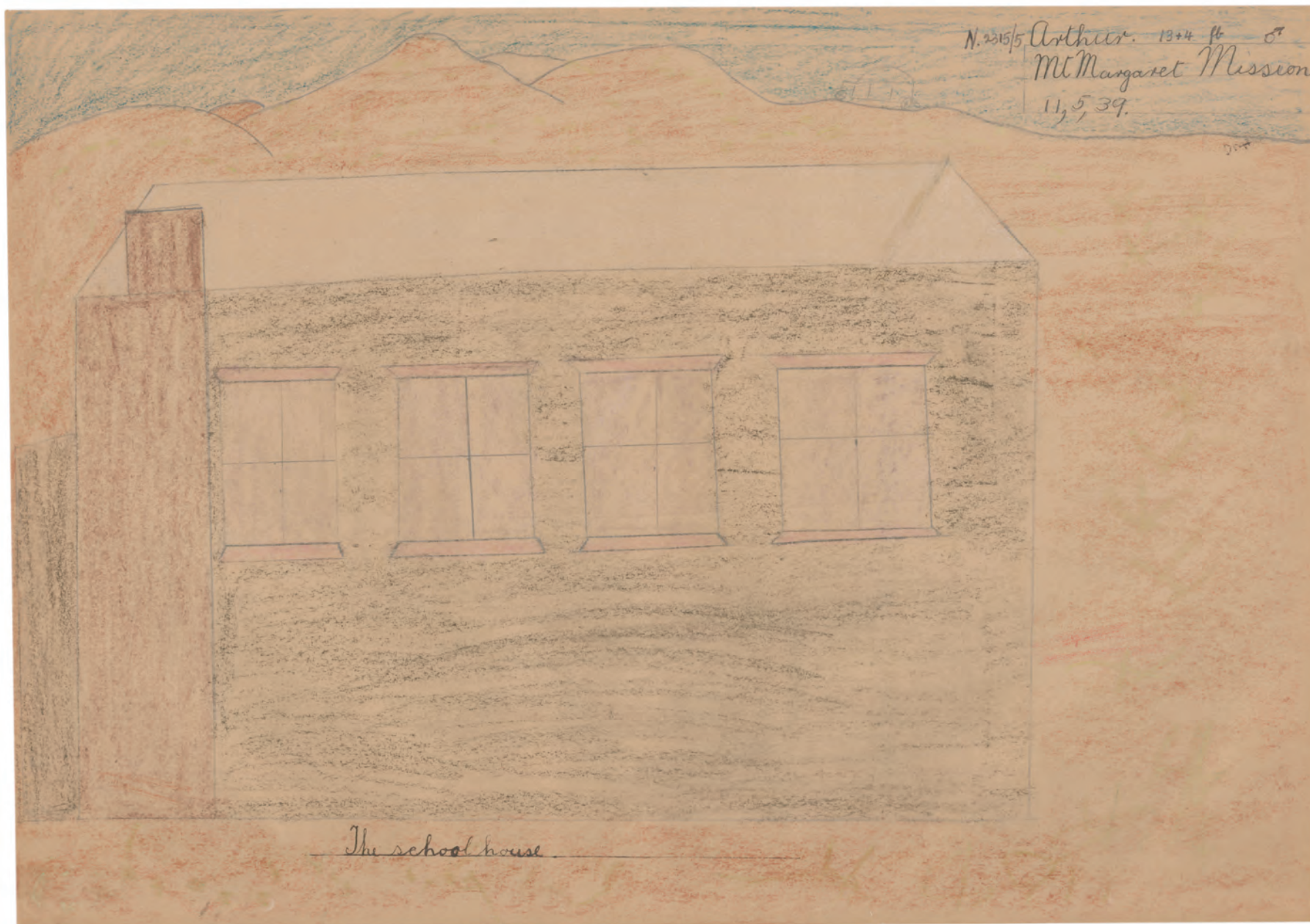
Artwork description

Red, black, white and brown drawing of a house, hills and a car by Arthur

13 years old when drawing was made

Reference

Genealogy sheet	172
SAM identifier	AA 346/18/15/14, N.2315/5





Byarrjarr @ Biajar

Also known as Donald Stokes

Born	20 December 1927, Mount Margaret Mission
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	4 December 1990, Kalgoorlie

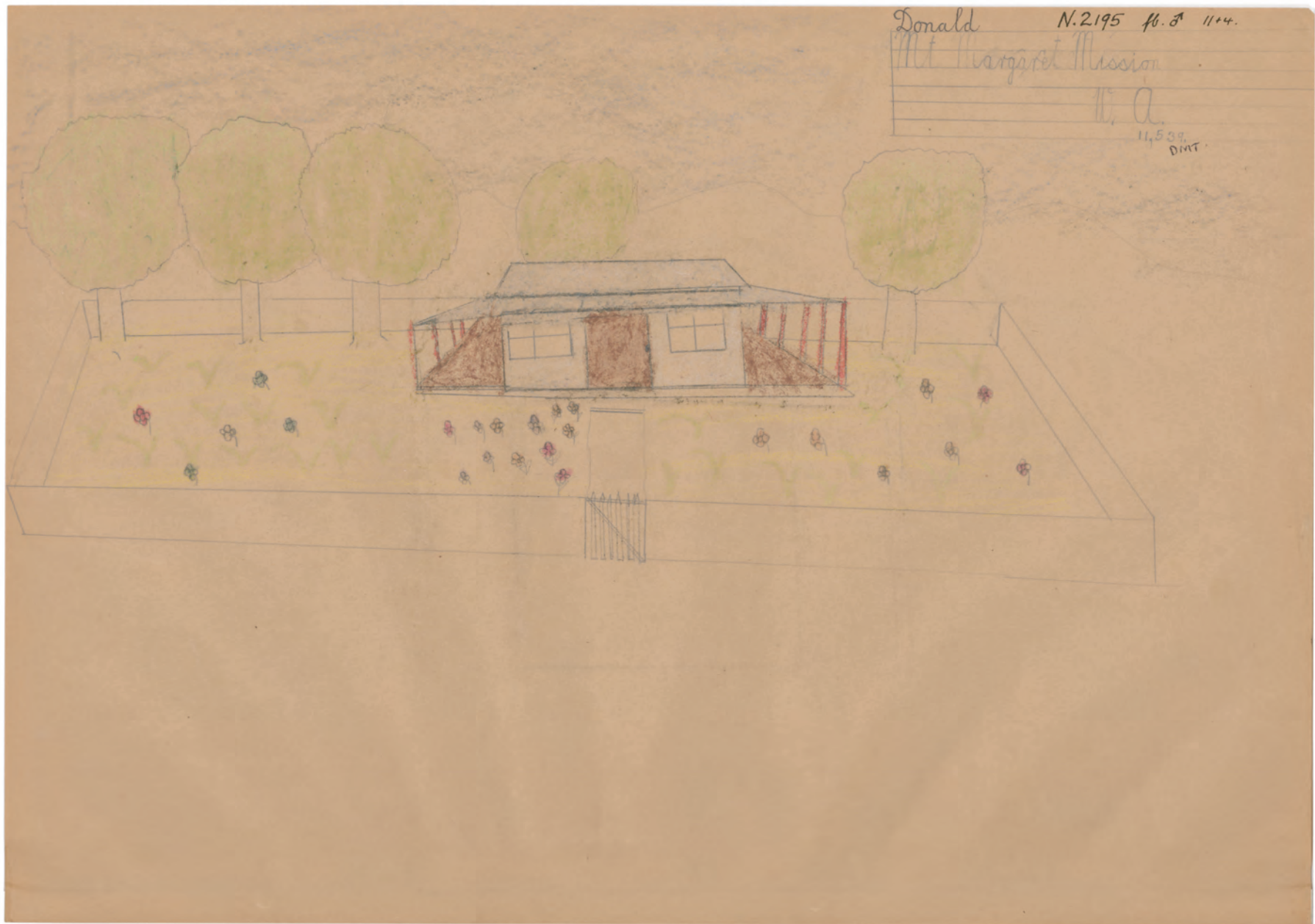
Artwork description

Red, white, brown, green, pink, blue and lead pencil drawing of a house, flowers, trees, a fence and a gate by Donald

11 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	172
SAM identifier	N.2195, AA 346/18/15/20



Charlie Tucker

Born	18 November 1927, Kalgoorlie
Language Group	Nyunga
Died	9 Sept, 1994, Fremantle

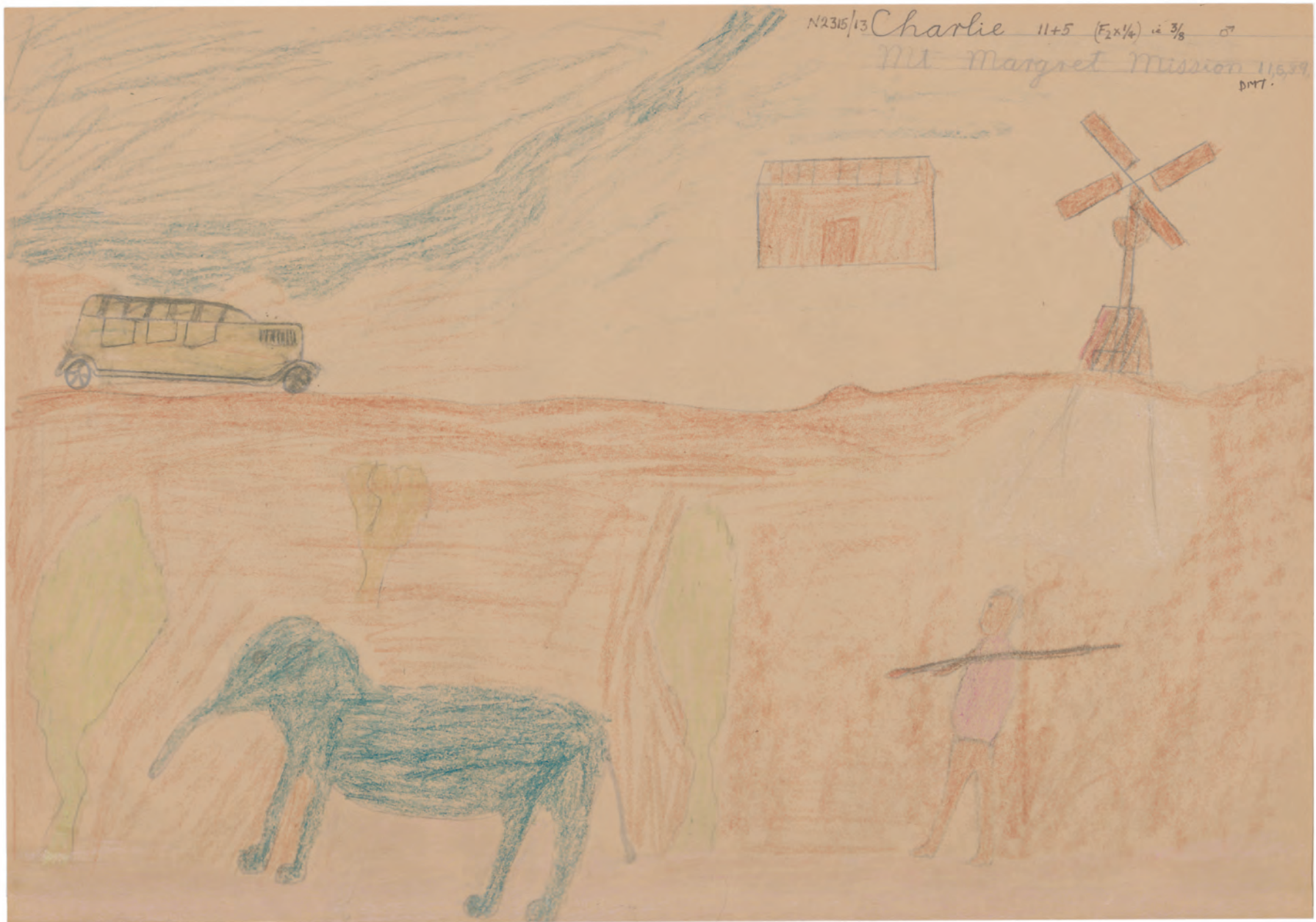
Artwork description

Red, brown, green, blue, white and lead pencil drawing of an elephant, trees, a person, a windmill, a building and a car by Charlie

11 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	140
SAM identifier	N2315/13, AA 346/18/15/12



George Tucker

Born	7 September 1926, Circle Valley
Language Group	Nyunga
Died	6 Feb 1984, Morley

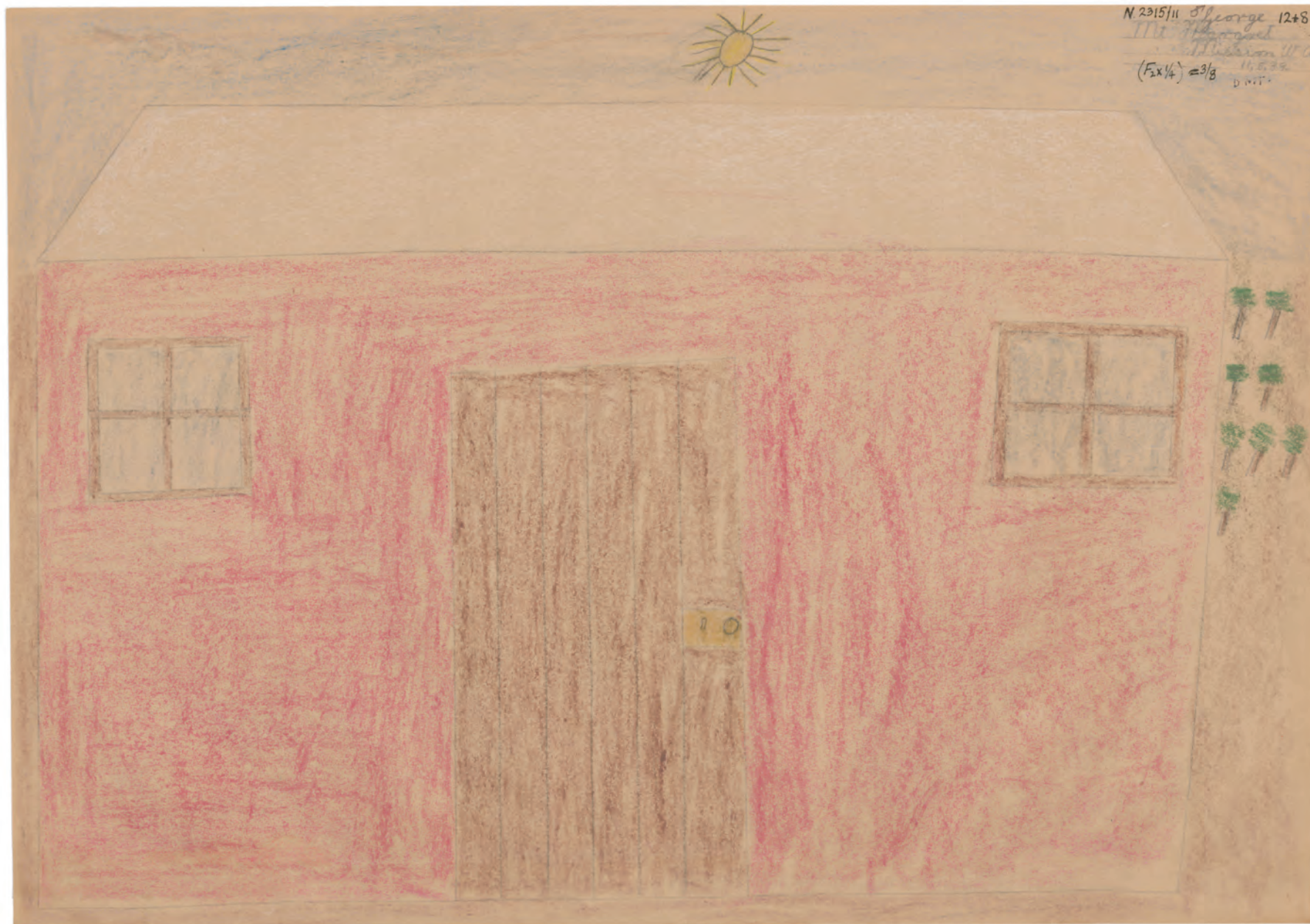
Artwork description

Red, brown, black, green, blue and lead pencil drawing including two trucks, two people and a well by Billy

12 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	140
SAM identifier	N.2315/11, AA 346/18/15/13





Billarissa

Also known as Bill Wesley

Born	1 December 1929, East of Laverton
Language Group	Ngadadjara
Died	11 July 1994, Kalgoorlie

Artwork description

White, brown, green, blue, yellow and black drawing including a boat, a house, a tree and the sun by Billarissa

9 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet	165
SAM identifier	N.2193, AA 346/18/15/15





Boongie

Also known as Charlie Winter

Born	Circa 1925, Burtville
Language Group	Nangatadjara
Died	29 August 1989, Laverton

Artwork description

Red, yellow, green, pink, blue, brown and lead pencil drawing including houses, trees, two people birds, plants and two ponds by Boongie

Circa 14 years old when drawing was made.

Reference

Genealogy sheet

SAM identifier

N.2223, AA 346/18/15/16





The Mt Margaret Minstrels in Melbourne, 1947.
Era4/53A2, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



New Years Day at Mt Margaret, 1940s – Boys Tyre Race.
 Background: Schenks house, Ration house, Garage and Workshop
009973d, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



The Chev. Truck – A picnic. Mt Margaret 1930.
 009701d, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



Junior girls sewing class with Mrs Lovick, Mt Margaret, c.1937.
 009797d, Schenk Family Collection, State Library of Western Australia.



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**