

CHAMBERS PILLAR HISTORICAL RESERVE

Updated: 4th March, 2002

The Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve is located about 162 kilometres south of Alice Springs via Maryvale Station and contains a diversity of features which together comprise its heritage significance. Located in an area of relative isolation the features within the Reserve have a total aesthetic appeal with strong spiritual and historical associations.

Three prominent features known as Chambers Pillar (*Itirkawara*), Castle Rock (*Yayurara*) and Window Rock (*Umarri*), each a remnant mesa (a type of landform usually characterised by a flat 'tabletop') made of Devonian-Carboniferous sandstone, occupy the site.



Chambers Pillar

The Pillar with its spectacular column shape has become a national landmark since it was first encountered by John McDouall Stuart's exploration party in 1860. Stuart named the feature in honour of James Chambers who together with William Finke had been great supporters of his expedition.

Numerous inscriptions record the initials of people who have passed by. Many have since been recognised as having made a

significant contribution to the history of the Territory whereas others represent the diversity of occupations existing and required during the formative years of the Territory's development.

The first known inscriptions were made by members of the Port Darwin Telegraph Expeditions of 1870, followed by various members of the actual Overland Telegraph construction parties in 1871 or people associated with its maintenance.

The names of the pioneer Hayes family, pastoralists who held vast tracts of surrounding land, travellers, policemen and explorers are also represented. The 1890 inquiry into conditions at Hermannsburg Mission and the 3rd Barclay-MacPherson Expedition of 1911 also provided the opportunity for its members to leave records of their passing.

The first ascent to the top of the Pillar (30m) is recorded as having been carried out in 1973 by John and Helen Griffiths with Keith Seddon.

In local Aboriginal tradition, Chambers Pillar is *Itirkawara*, a knob-tailed gecko spirit ancestor. *Itirkawara* was a fierce warrior who travelled widely and killed many men. He was also very evil and wrongly lived with women who, under tribal law were his relatives. On being exiled because of his behaviour, he brought a female relative into the sandhills and while resting he turned to stone. His companion, crouching down with her face averted in shame, became *Yayurara* or Castle rock. To the southern Arrnte Aboriginal community, Chambers Pillar is a permanent reminder of the need to observe moral laws.



Northern Territory Government
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

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(continued)

Historical Inscriptions Chambers Pillar

1870	CRISPE	Thomas	Explorer			Port Darwin Telegraph Expedition
1870	GILES	Alfred	Pastoralist, Overlander	1847c	1931	Port Darwin Telegraph Expedition
1870	HARVEY	William	Surveyor			Port Darwin Telegraph Expedition
1870	HEARNE	William	Explorer			Port Darwin Telegraph Expedition
1870	McMINN	Gilbert Rotherdale	Surveyor	1841	1924	
1870	ROSS	John	Explorer	1871	1903	
1871	CHEESMAN	Piercy	Contractor (O.T.L)	1831c	1891	McMinn Diary S.A.A. 565
1871	MILLS	William Whitfield	Surveyor	1844	1916	M between Collins and Heffron
1872	CUMMINGS	Llewelyn Stirling	lineman... Not likely	1864		
1883	HEFFRON	John	Policeman			Significance of date unknown
1883	MURRAY					? Robert McKellar appointed PM Katherine 1883
1884	HAYES	Elizabeth	Daughter of William	1876	1928	
1884	HAYES	James William	Pastoralist	1867	1902	
1884	HAYES	John	Son of William	1873	1915	
1884	HAYES	Mary	Wife of William	1838	1933	
1884	HAYES	Mary	Daughter of William	1869		
1884	HAYES	William	Son of William	1871		
1884	HAYES	William	Pastoralist, Butcher	1827	1913	No Edward (Born 1884)
1884	WILLSHIRE	William Henry	Policeman	1852	1925	
1884	WURMBRAND	Erwein	Policeman	1849		
1888	EAST	Joseph James	Engineer (Mining), Policeman	1856	1922	Report of Royal Society Vol. X11 (1888-89)
1890	BESLEY	B Charles	Policeman, Protector (A)	1836	1894	Hermannsburg Enquiry 1890
1890	SWAN	Henry Charles	Magistrate Pastoralist	1834	1908	Hermannsburg Enquiry 1890
1890	TAPLIN	Charles Eaton	Missionary, Architect	1857		Hermannsburg Enquiry 1890
1910	TILMOUTH	Henry Edward	Drover, Pastoralist	1868c	1945	
1911	BASEDOW	Herbert	Anthropologist, Geolgoist	1881	1933	3 rd Barclay MacPherson Expd. 1911-12
1911	COLLINS	Edward	Cook			3 rd Barclay MacPherson Expd. 1911-12
1911	HILL	Gerald Freer	Naturalist, Entomologist	1880	1954	3 rd Barclay MacPherson Expd. 1911-12
1911	MacPHERSON	Ronald Horice	Farmer, Mariner (Merchant)	1875		3 rd Barclay MacPherson Expd. 1911-1912
1911	SIMPSON	Thomas	Cameleer			3 rd Barclay MacPherson Expd. 1911-1912
	BENNETT	William				
	BLOOMFIELD	Lewis Alexander	Pastoralist	1870	1944	
	BREADEN	Allan David	Pastoralist	1854c	1943	
	BREADEN	Henry "Harry"	Mailman	1858	1909	
	FARRELLY	E.T.				
	HAWDON	E				A E Hawson ? Memebr of Pearson and Co. 1887
	HERDSMAN	A (An occupation?)				
	K C B	See reference				Kathleen Constance BRADSHAW
	KINLOCK	George	Stockman	1900		
	LACKMAN	Eugene Sylvester "Jim"	Merchant, Mailman	1896c	1967	
	RANDALL	Walter David	Telegraphist, S. M (O.T.L)	1852c	1893	
	TILMOUTH	Edgar	Stockman ?			
	V S	unknown				
	W Y 87	Unknown				
	WALLIS	Frank Blackmore	Storekeeper, Pastoralist	1865		
	WARNE	Richard Edwin	Lineman, Miner	1849		



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