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Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland

Volume 2

Kate Khan



***Technical Reports of the Australian Museum
Number 12***

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The *Records* publish original research in the fields of anthropology, geology and zoology. *Technical Reports of the Australian Museum* is a series of occasional papers: bibliographies, catalogues, surveys and data bases in the fields of anthropology, geology and zoology. The *Reports* are an adjunct to the *Records of the Australian Museum* and its *Supplement* series.

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Cover photo: E.14485. Reed necklace.
Collected Cape Grafton, 1898. Length 305 cm.
Photo by John Day.

**Catalogue of the Roth Collection of
Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland**

Volume 2

**Items collected from Cairns, Cape Bedford, Cape Grafton,
Cape Melville, Cardwell, Clump Point, Coen, Cooktown, Dunk
Island, False Cape, Flinders Island, Hambleton, Herberton,
Hinchinbrook Island, Ingham, Innisfail, Johnstone River,
Kuranda, in 1887–1904**

KATE KHAN

Australian Museum
6 College Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia

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Preface

This is the second in a series of catalogues on the Roth collection of Aboriginal artefacts held at the Australian Museum.

These catalogues will let Aboriginal people and other interested persons know about this north Queensland material which was gathered together nearly 100 years ago. It will make it easier for everyone to use this valuable collection and will save the delicate objects, registers and original documents being handled too much by people wishing to study them.

The original 18 Roth Bulletins are full of information. Unfortunately, like much nineteenth century and early twentieth century writings, they are written in a manner that is difficult to understand. The lack of an index makes it hard to find information. Production of these new regional catalogues by the Australian Museum will make the older works easier to understand.

The regional catalogues were compiled with the assistance of John Day and Bridget Ohlsson (photographers), and Fiona Duncan, Sara Knuckey, Tania Cleary, Jane Bible and Kelly Bona (cataloguers). Additional photographs have been taken by staff of the Photography Section of the Australian Museum, Ric Bolzan and Carl Bento. The catalogues were designed by the late Brian Bona of Studio B.

Funding support for the project was provided by both State and Federal Governments. During the 1984 financial year \$45,855 was received from the Commonwealth Employment Programme (CEP) towards the cost of employing some of the above people. From 1985 to 1992 the Australian Museum gave \$22,100 from its Consolidated Revenue Funds towards this project.

The first volume was produced in 1993 as part of the Museum's participation in the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

Philip Colman of the Malacology Section of the Australian Museum kindly checked scientific names of shells mentioned in the old Roth Bulletins.

Staff of the National Herbarium, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney and the Queensland Herbarium, Indooroopilly were most helpful in checking botanical names.

Dr Betty Meehan of the Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra made many helpful suggestions when the project was in the conceptual stage.

A special thanks to Drs Jim Specht and Val Attenbrow in the Division of Anthropology at the Australian Museum who spent long hours over the manuscript and offered many useful comments and constructive criticisms, and to Dr Shane McEvey for his editorial assistance.

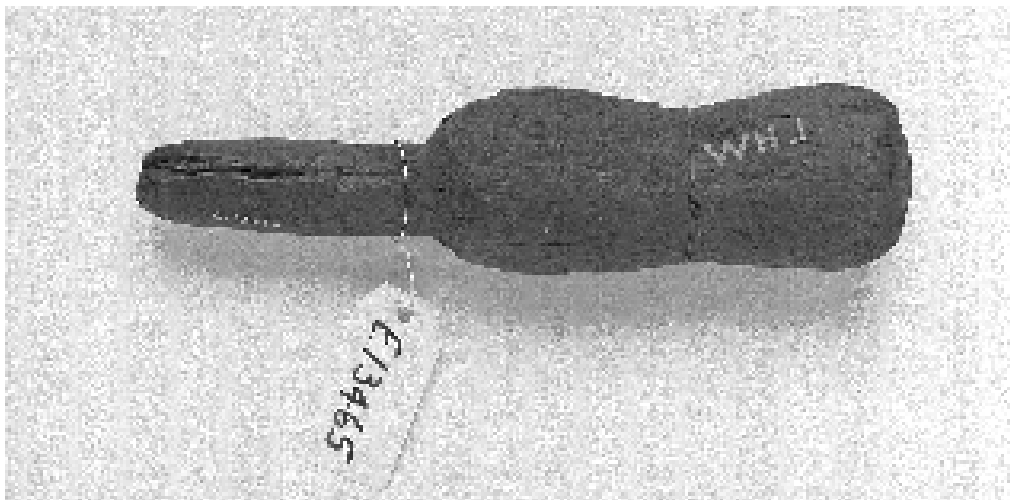
Introduction

These catalogues are about the Roth collection—a collection of Aboriginal artefacts gathered together by the First Protector of Aboriginals in north Queensland, Dr Walter Edmund Roth between 1898 and 1904.

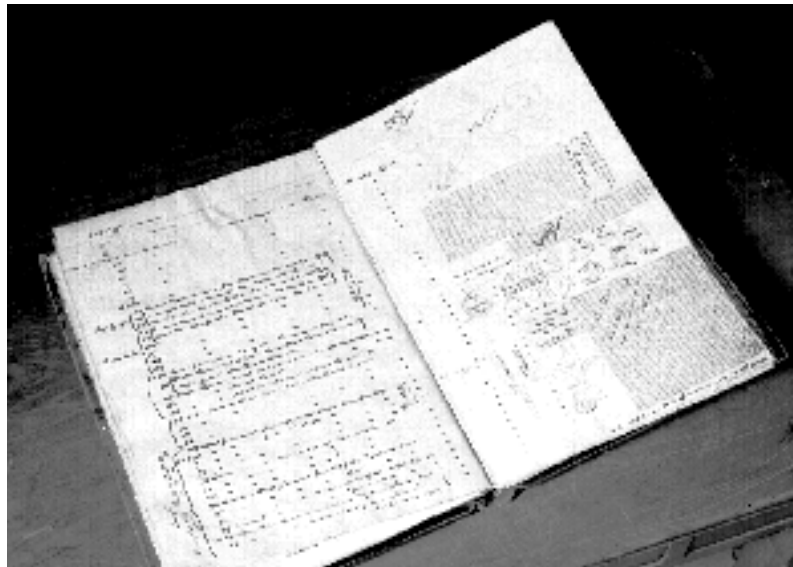
Some 2000 artefacts (not all from north Queensland) and 308 photographic negatives were purchased by the Australian Museum from Dr Roth on 25 February 1905 for what was then 450 pounds (about \$900). The Museum also holds other north Queensland material collected by Dr Roth and either donated or sold to the Museum on other occasions. These artefacts also have been included in the catalogues.

When artefacts arrive at the Museum they are given registered numbers. This number is written on the object in permanent black or white ink and painted over with a coat of clear varnish to protect it. The same number is written in a large, leather bound book called a register, on catalogue cards, and eventually into the computer database. From then on, when this artefact is in storage, on exhibition, being conserved, or on loan, its whereabouts can be traced through its personal number.

Collectors often give their own numbers to objects while they are collecting them in the field. Where Roth did this, his own collector's number is shown after the Museum registration number in the Collection information section.

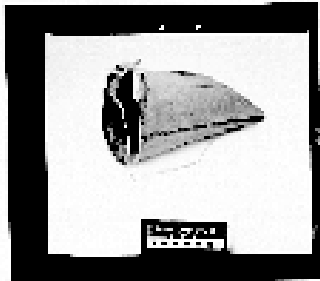


Wooden beater from Princess Charlotte Bay collected by Roth in 1898 showing both the Museum's register number (E.13465) and Roth's own collection number (WH. 1).



A page from Roth's Collection Register showing how the objects were recorded in a leather bound register in 1905 by the then Curator of Ethnography, Mr W.W. Thorpe.

FIELD NO. 12345		DATE OF FIELD WORK	10/10/1905		COLLECTOR'S NAME	W.W. THORPE	
LOCAL NAME		PLACE OF COLLECTION		SPECIES		CLASSIFICATION	
DESCRIPTION		MATERIAL		COLOR		WEIGHT	
COUNTRY		LOCALITY		DATE OF ACQUISITION		BY WHOM	
REMARKS		COLLECTOR'S SIGNATURE		DATE OF ENTRY		BY WHOM	

FIELD NO. 12345	DATE OF FIELD WORK	10/10/1905	
LOCAL NAME	PLACE OF COLLECTION	SPECIES	
DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	COLOR	
COUNTRY	LOCALITY	DATE OF ACQUISITION	
REMARKS	COLLECTOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE OF ENTRY	
			
FIELD NO. 12345			

Both sides of a catalogue card used today to record the known information about an object, including a photograph.

List of registered artefacts collected by Roth

A. Major purchase 25 February 1905 (not all objects come from Queensland).

E.13317 to E.13656	Queensland
E.13683 to E.15154	
E.13657 to E.13658	New South Wales
E.13659 to E.13665	Victoria
E.13668 to E.13682	
E.13666 to E.13667	Tasmania
E.15275 to E.15316	Tasmania (stone tools)
E.15155 to E.15274	These numbers refer to skeletal material, which is not included in these regional catalogues. The Museum has a policy of returning skeletal material to Aboriginal communities for reburial.
V.2077 to V.2316	Photographic negative collection held by the Photography Section,
V.2530 to V.2597	Australian Museum.

B. Purchases and donations made at other times, additional to the major Roth collection purchase of 1905.

December 1899	E.8825 to E.8885	Queensland (mainly ochres and examples of edible shellfish)
January 1900	E.8972 to E.8980	
	E.8982 to E.8987	
February 1900	E.8996 to E.9033	
August 1900	E.9482 to E.9483	
January 1901	E.9722 to E.9755	
September 1901	E.10173	
December 1901	E.10405 to E.10419	
October 1905	E.15725	Queensland (canoe and paddle)
February 1907	E.16395 to E.16397	Skeletal material (not included in this catalogue)
August 1920	E.26065 to E.26124	Tasmania (stone tools)

Museum policy on skeletal remains

The Museum actively supports the concept of returning Aboriginal skeletal remains to Aboriginal communities for reburial. Nearly all skeletal material in the Roth collection has been returned to communities for reburial. This programme is under the guidance of the Museum's Aboriginal Heritage Officer.

Museum policy on secret/sacred material

Secret/sacred material is not collected by the Museum unless specific legitimate requests are received from Aboriginal communities to store material in our keeping place.

The secret/sacred material we have is housed in a separate keeping place in the Museum. The area has restricted access. The objects are stored in such a way that they cannot be seen accidentally by people from other communities.

Repatriation of secret/sacred material is supported by the Museum, to either the community of origin or an appropriate person or persons where rights under Aboriginal customary law can be established.

How to find the Roth material

Aboriginal artefacts at the Australian Museum are stored according to cultural areas set up by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, (AIATSIS) Canberra

(see map). Artefacts in the catalogues come from culture area Y (Cape York) and have been put together in alphabetical order starting with Archer River and ending with Weipa. In some places, Roth collected only one or two objects, in other places, 30 or more objects.

Roth's way of spelling the names of local Aboriginal groups and the names they gave to objects, plants and animals have been kept as he used them. Information in these catalogues is drawn solely from Roth's writings, as a record of events as seen by one man nearly 100 years ago. Sometimes he has a lot of information on how to make an object, sometimes hardly anything. It may reflect what interested him at the time, or maybe people were too busy with daily life to stop and chat. His visit may have been quick, sudden and unexpected, or long, leisurely and enjoyable to both the local Aboriginal community and to Roth himself.

There is a separate section on each region. The information has been organised in the following way.

1. The People. Comments made about the people of each community by Roth or others in the 1890s–1900s are gathered together here. Roth's spelling of the tribal/language names is given, together with the names used today by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

2. The objects. These are listed in alphabetical order at the beginning of each section with page numbers for quick and easy reference.

3. Information from Roth's Bulletins. All the information that Roth wrote about each object, scattered through the 18 Bulletins, has been gathered together under this heading. It deals with such things as how the object was made, who made it, what it was used for, and what it was called by local Aboriginal people in his day. This is useful information about what was happening 100 years ago.

In many places in this catalogue you will see a paragraph printed between narrower margins, like this:

Owing to the rapidly-increasing quantity of scientific material which, in accordance with the Home Secretary's instructions, has been collected since my appointment as Northern Protector of Aborigines, it has been deemed advisable to publish, in the form of Bulletins, those of my reports which may be considered fairly complete in themselves and up to date so far as the subject matter with which they deal.

This shows that these are the actual words that Roth or his colleagues wrote many years ago. Some of his phrases are strange to us today, and he often spelled the words Aborigines or Aborigines with a small "a". Today the Museum uses upper case "A" when referring to Aboriginal people.

4. Collection information. Here in numerical order is listed all the information to be found in the Museum registers and catalogue cards, including measurements and descriptions of objects. This information is especially useful if you wish to visit the Museum to look at a particular object. You can ask to see it by its own registered number.

5. Photographic information. This lists the negative sheet and frame number of each photograph, which is useful if you want to order a photograph from the Museum's Photographic Department.

6. Useful written information. This lets you know where I have found all the written information for the object being written about in this book, so you can refer to it yourself if you wish.

7. Scientific names of materials used. Scientific names used by Roth for the plants and animals he wrote about, are listed here so the reference can be located in the Bulletins, together with the name in use today if it has changed.

New kinds of plants or animals are given a name by scientists; the same name should be used consistently around the world. The scientific name of a species has two parts: the genus and the species. The **genus** is a name shared by closely related species. The second name

is the **species** name. This name identifies a specific plant or animal in a group of related plants or animals. Here is an example:

Eucalyptus tetradonta

Eucalyptus is the group or generic name. There is a group of related species of tree collectively called *Eucalyptus*. The *Eucalyptus* tree being referred to here is the one called *tetradonta* or more precisely *Eucalyptus tetradonta*.

Sometimes (but not always) reference is made to the scientist who described and named the plant or animal. So “*Eucalyptus tetradonta* F.v.M.” was originally recognised as a distinct species and named by Ferdinand von Mueller.

Sometimes scientific names change as more information becomes available. The most common change results from the mistake of naming a species that has already been named. When synonyms are discovered international convention normally rules that the older name should be used.

Scientific names (e.g., *Melo amphora*) are valuable because they are internationally consistent unlike non-scientific or common names (e.g., a melon). A scientist in Russia, South America or Iceland will know exactly what *Melo amphora* is but they might think about different shells if the name “melon shell” is used.

How to get help

If you want to visit the Museum to look at the collection, borrow objects, order photographs or use the Library to read Roth’s books, you should contact the Senior Collection Manager (tel. 02 9320 6195) or the Aboriginal Heritage Officer (tel. 02 9320 6192). If you wish to contact the Photography Section direct, the telephone number is 02 9320 6133. The direct line to the Museum Library is 02 9320 6152. The Museum switchboard number is 02 9320 6000. The fax number is 02 9320 6058. Please ring or write first if you want to look at the collections which may not be on public display.

As well as an Aboriginal Project Officer and an Aboriginal Heritage Officer on staff, there is an Aboriginal person on the Board of Trustees, appointed by the Museum Trust. Communities are welcome to give the Museum their opinion or advice on the management of collections from their areas.

If you have things you know about artefacts and the people who made them, and would like to tell the Museum about it for future generations to learn about the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal people, we would like to hear from you.

If you want to visit us, the Museum’s address is

The Australian Museum
6 College Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Division of Anthropology at the Australian Museum will be happy to help with any questions. You can contact us by writing to:

The Division of Anthropology
The Australian Museum
6 College Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The general switchboard telephone number is 02 9320 6000; Senior Collection Manager 02 9320 6195; Aboriginal Heritage Officer 02 9320 6192; the fax number is 02 9320 6058.

Addresses of institutions

If you wish to do further research on Aboriginal material culture or history of North Queensland, the following institutions may be able to help you.

CANBERRA

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,
(AIATSIS)
Acton House
Marcus Clarke Street
ACTON ACT 2601
tel. 06 246 1111

(The Institute has an excellent research and photographic library. They also have a collection of press clippings and tapes).

The National Museum of Australia
Lady Denman Drive
CANBERRA ACT 2601
tel. 06 256 1111

(The Museum took over the large collection of Aboriginal material culture formerly held in the Institute of Anatomy, Canberra. This includes material from north Queensland collected by McCarthy in the 1960s).

The National Library of Australia
Parkes Place
CANBERRA ACT 2601
tel. 06 262 1111

(A good place to search for early documents and photographs).

SYDNEY

The Mitchell Library
State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
tel. 02 9230 1414

(A good source for documents of early settlement, sketches, photographs, newspaper cuttings, books by explorers).

The National Herbarium
Royal Botanic Gardens
Mrs Macquaries Road
SYDNEY NSW 2000
tel. 02 9231 8111

(The botanists will help identify plants used in making artefacts).

The Australian Museum
6 College Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
tel. 02 9320 6000

(The Museum holds the Roth collection of artefacts, Roth's photographs, and some letters and sketches. It also holds many objects from north Queensland collected by other people).

BRISBANE

The Queensland Museum
 Queensland Cultural Centre
 SOUTH BANK QLD 4101
 tel. 07 840 7635

(The Museum holds about 300 objects collected by Roth, as well as other material from north Queensland).

The State Library of Queensland
 Queensland Cultural Centre
 SOUTH BANK QLD 4101
 tel. 07 840 7666

(Good reference material on early settlement of north Queensland).

The John Oxley Library
 Queensland Cultural Centre
 SOUTH BANK QLD 4101
 tel. 07 840 7880

(Excellent resource centre for early photographs, letters, documents).

Queensland State Archives
 162 Annerley Road
 DUTTON PARK QLD 4102
 tel. 07 844 3215

(Good source for early documents on north Queensland).

TOWNSVILLE

James Cook University of North Queensland
 History Department (Oral History)
 TOWNSVILLE QLD 4811

(also the Material Cultures Unit, tel. 077 81 4111)

(The History Department has an interesting collection of tapes made by Aboriginal people talking of the early days in north Queensland. The Material Culture Unit has an extensive collection of artefacts from north Queensland).

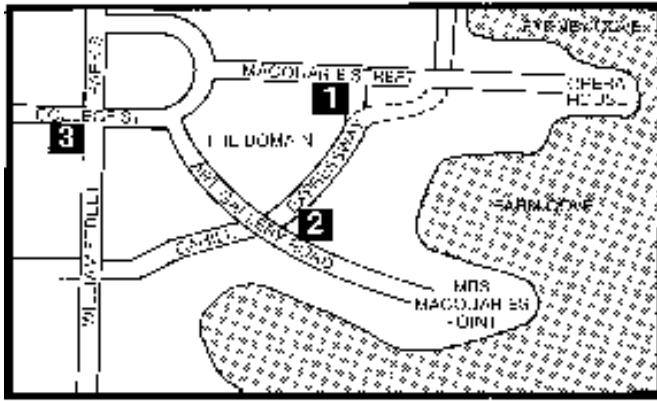
ADELAIDE

The Lutheran Church Archives Office
 101 Archer Street
 NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006
 tel. 08 267 1737
 tel. 08 267 4922

(The Lutheran Church Office holds early records and photographs of mission history in north Queensland.)

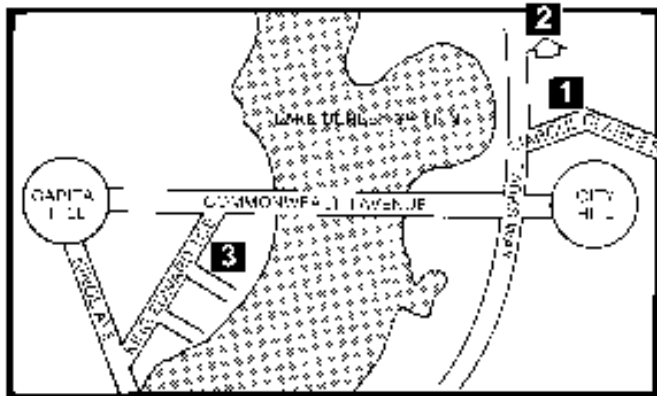
The South Australian Museum
 North Terrace
 ADELAIDE SA 5000
 tel. 08 223 8911

(The Museum has Tindale's notes and photographs of early work in north Queensland. It also holds some material of Ursula McConnel who worked in north Queensland).



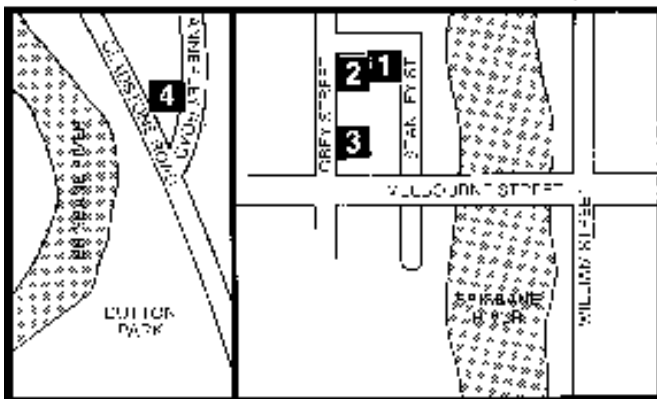
SYDNEY

- 1** The Mitchell Library, which is a wing of the State Library of NSW., Macquarie Street, Sydney.
- 2** The National Herbarium, which is in the Royal Botanical Gardens, just past the Art Gallery of NSW in Lady Macquarie's Road, Sydney.
- 3** Australian Museum, corner of College and Park Streets, Sydney.



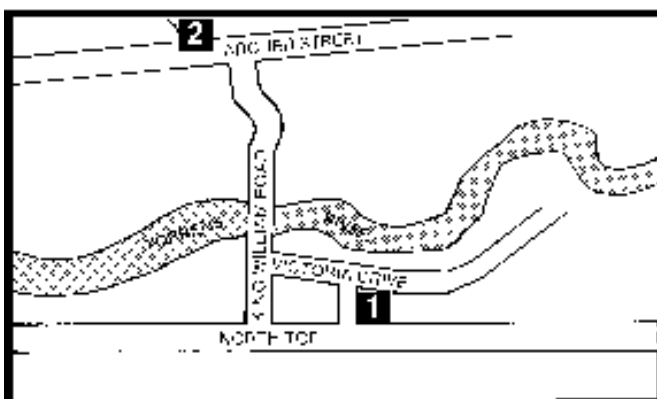
CANBERRA

- 1** The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (known as AIATSIS), Acton House, Marcus Clarke Street, Acton, A.C.T.
- 2** The National Museum of Australia, Lady Denman Drive, 7 kms from city, Canberra, A.C.T.
- 3** National Library of Australia, Parkes Place, Canberra, A.C.T.



BRISBANE

- 1** Queensland Museum.
- 2** State Library of Queensland.
- 3** John Oxley Library.
- 4** Queensland State Archives, 162 Annerley Road, Dutton Park, 4102.

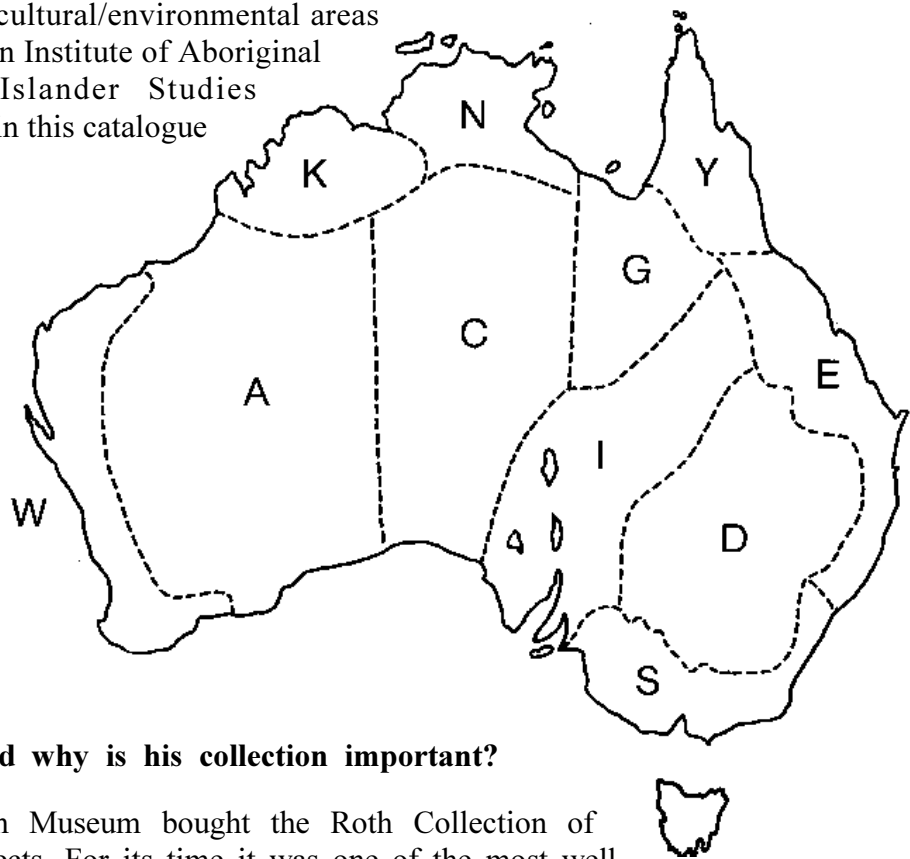


ADELAIDE

- 1** South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide.
- 2** Lutheran Church State Archives Office, 101 Archer St., North Adelaide.

Series of small maps showing how to get to the institutions mentioned "a potted Gregory's Guide".

Australia divided into cultural/environmental areas following the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Classification. Objects in this catalogue come from Area Y.



Who was Dr Roth and why is his collection important?

In 1905, the Australian Museum bought the Roth Collection of approximately 2000 objects. For its time it was one of the most well documented and diverse collections of Aboriginal artefacts ever gathered together by one person.

Walter Edmund Roth was born in London on 2 April 1861. He first came to Australia in 1884, but returned to England in 1890 to further his study in medicine. Dr Roth, MRCS, LRCP came back to Australia in 1894 at the age of 33, and took up the appointment as Medical Officer/Surgeon to Boulia, Cloncurry and Normanton hospitals in north west central Queensland. During the few years he worked here he developed a real and intense interest in the Aboriginal people of the region. This resulted in the publication in 1897 of his first book *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*. In the preface he stated:

... I look forward to the day... when... Queensland will be proud of her
Aboriginals...

This book brought him to the notice of officials as a person interested in Aboriginals and their culture. The following year he was appointed Protector of Aboriginals for the Northern District of Queensland under *The Aboriginals Protection and restriction of the sale of Opium Act, 1897*.

In explaining the duties of this new appointment, W.E. Parry-Okeden, the Queensland Commissioner of Police, under whose jurisdiction he then came, wrote to Roth from Brisbane on 4 January 1898:

Although your selection for the position of Protector of Aboriginals under the new Act has been largely owing to the fact that the enthusiastic interest in the welfare of the blacks you have displayed, gives great promise of the proper performance of the humanitarian work implied, in the fulfilment of the duties of a Protector and that you possess eminent qualifications for the prosecution of scientific investigation in connection with the ethnology and anthropology of the aborigines, it is nevertheless to be borne in mind that your appointment is even more due to the

fact that you are a Surgeon and Doctor of Medicine, which enables the Government to give effect to the recommendation made in my "Report on the North Queensland Aborigines and the Native Police", that it would be a blessing if a doctor were appointed by the Government whose time would be devoted to work among the aborigines...

Directly you have proper and sufficient equipment you should proceed to Cooktown, make all possible inquiry concerning local aboriginals, numbers, disease, present condition, measurements, photographs etc. Collect all information re their "walkabouts" and trade routes so as to learn the boundaries of their territories, gather all particulars concerning friendly and hostile neighbours, making from time to time such local collection of ethnological and anthropological interest as is possible...

Roth himself wrote in a letter to Mr A.B. Stephens:

... I hope to get the opportunity of spending the next 10 to 15 years of my life in working out the anthropology of the whole northern district of the colony...



Roth immediately moved to Cooktown and began to travel by packhorse over the vast territory he was to look after. This took in the whole of Cape York Peninsula as far as the southern shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria and included the Channel country on the west. On the east coast he travelled as far south as Rockhampton.

His appointment had special significance for Aboriginal people living in the rainforest region of north Queensland. This area had been left alone by Europeans until the 1860s–1870s. At about this time gold was discovered in the Palmer River and at Mulgrave, close to Cairns. Tin was found in the Atherton Tablelands. Suddenly some 35,000 Europeans and Chinese rushed to the goldfields, pushing local Aboriginal people to one side. Permanent settlements and ports were set up. European diseases such as measles and influenza caused many deaths in Aboriginal communities. There was wholesale murder. Christy Palmerson, a pioneer prospector, ambushed a group of the Mamu people who had gathered together for a ceremony. He shot all the adult males, except for a small number who escaped. Chinese employers often paid Aboriginal workers in opium rather than money.

A lot of fighting went on between Aboriginals and these new arrivals. Members of many Aboriginal families were seen as trouble-makers and were sent to Palm Island by the Government of the day. Some were never allowed to return to their homeland or their families.

Missions were set up, but the missionaries did not always help Aboriginal people, and often worked to destroy their culture.

However, the new settlers did not have it all their own way.

Walter Edmund Roth in outback northern Queensland. Roth neg. Australian Museum collection.

There were many reports in local newspapers of the times about Aboriginal communities fighting back. At Herberton, European settlers signed a petition saying they could not protect themselves and asked for help to drive Aboriginal people from the district. Similar problems were reported at Port Douglas and Cairns.

In 1890 the government of the day stepped in to halt this warfare over traditional land ownership and food resources. Aboriginal people said they would stop raiding crops and killing cattle if they could be compensated and had food and blankets given them.

When Roth took up his job as Protector of Aboriginals in 1898, he was shocked by the way they were being treated. Publicans employed Aboriginal people and paid them in alcohol. Aboriginal men working on coastal vessels were not articulated, and often were cheated of their pay. The boats which went fishing for the highly prized sea-slugs, also called *bêche-de-mer*, attracted special criticism. Deliberate quarrels would be picked with Aboriginal crew members, who, frightened, would jump overboard and swim for shore. The boat would wait 48 hours before docking, and then claim the men had deserted, which meant they received no money at all. At the end of most trips, men would be dumped many kilometres from home, instead of being returned to their homes at the ship owners' expense.

Roth also tried to change attitudes of the local officials by bringing to their attention the rich cultural history of the Aboriginal people around them. In a letter to the Police Commissioner of 11 March 1898 he wrote:

... with regard to Aboriginal weapons I have about a dozen or more things to forward you as soon as the next escort goes down. To get the various police officials etc. to take an interest in collecting these, I have distributed among them some dozen copies of my book, and would only be too glad were you to suggest to the Home Secretary that copies be sent to all the officers in charge of stations (in Northern and Central Districts) and make Cooktown the depot for arranging, sorting and labelling them.

Considering the distances Roth had to cover using packhorses as his sole means of transport, his industry was remarkable. He was able to write to W.E. Parry-Okeden, Police Commissioner of Queensland, only four months after starting work, as follows (letter dated 15 April, 1898):

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day forwarded you per parcel post, a Report on the Ethnology of the Cape Bedford Aboriginals.

My photography has improved to the extent that the negatives turn out much better now than they did at first: I still am very bad at the printing, and am not certain as yet whether the fault lies in the light, the chemicals, the climate, or in my own ignorance.

During the following six years Dr Roth covered an enormous area of north Queensland in great detail and became a close personal friend of many Aboriginal people. A letter written to him by a young Aboriginal girl, Magdalen Mulun from Cape Bedford in May 1898, translated, reads:

We were pleased you came to stay with us, and treated us in a friendly way. You also had a smile for us, and called us quickly to have a talk with you. You are indeed a friend. We therefore in return cannot (may not) forget you, but bear you in mind. We say you are our friend, and do not know another white-man like you. You spent three nights with us and shewed [sic] us games. So in return we shewed you [sic] (how

to play) “cat’s cradle” with the hands. You will of course come again by-and-by (won’t you?). By that time you will perhaps understand our language.

This letter can be found in W.E. Roth’s book, *Bulletin 2*, 1901, p. 32.

With the help of friends like this he gathered the huge collection now held at the Australian Museum.

These collections include not only many types of weapons, tools, plait work, basketry and such like, but also objects at various stages of manufacture, together with an accounts of how they were made. He also took down information Aboriginal people told him about their daily life, how to collect food, about birth, marriage and death, languages and all things that make up the cultural life of a people.

The first three of his North Queensland Ethnography Bulletins were published by the Queensland government in 1901, and the following five Bulletins between 1902 and 1906. The Australian Museum published the remaining ten Bulletins between 1907 and 1910.

However, trouble was brewing for Dr Roth. His humane treatment and respect for Aboriginals was viewed in a hostile light by local business interests. In 1905 he was appointed Royal Commissioner to look into the conditions of Aboriginal people in Western Australia. During his absence a public meeting was held in Cooktown to try and stop him working in Queensland and to protest against his re-appointment as Protector of Aboriginals.

The main objections thrown at him were that his job was unnecessary and that he overruled decisions made by local police. They claimed he stopped needed changes in the law and that he did not contact Aboriginal people or treat them medically.

It is interesting to note that the most vocal trouble-makers were two parliamentarians, one of whom was the head of the Brisbane office of one of the coastal shipping firms that Roth had complained about. Local businessmen involved in the coastal shipping trade, especially the sea-slug or *bêche-de-mer* trade, did not want Roth re-appointed. They were backed by a publican of a hotel owned by a local shipping firm, and by a solicitor.

Among accusations, Roth was supposed to have acted immorally, taken indecent photographs, and of selling a quantity of ethnological specimens, the property of the Queensland government, to the Australian Museum in Sydney.

The headline in the *Sydney Truth* of 26 November 1905 screamed:

The Dr Roth Scandal—Ructions in Parliament—Sale of Aboriginal Specimens to the Sydney Museum.

Roth replied in the Report on the subsequent Parliamentary investigation,

I am well aware that the general opposition to my administration, and to myself personally, is mainly due to my interference with what has for many years past been considered a vested interest in the flesh and blood of the native. As a matter of fact, the opposition exhibited on these grounds is one of the greatest compliments that could have been paid me, and my happiest satisfaction lies in the knowledge that I have invariably treated all employers of aboriginals’ labour alike, without fear or favour.

The Under Secretary for Public Lands, in the same document, concluded that

Nevertheless, I came to know from my conversations with the police magistrate, the clerk of petty sessions, the subcollector of Customs, and others, that there is a strong element in Cooktown favourable to Dr Roth and his work, and that I had encountered the whole strength of the antagonistic opinion.

The Parliamentary investigation found he was innocent of all charges. Nevertheless, Roth decided to leave Australia, even though pressure was put on him to stay. In 1906 he became Government Medical Officer, Stipendiary Magistrate and Protector of the Indians in the Pomeroon district of what was then British Guyana, in South America. While he was working there he collected artefacts and information for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, United States of America.

He retired from the Civil Service in 1928 at the age of 67 and was appointed Curator of the Georgetown Museum, British Guyana, and Government Archivist. He died there on April 5, 1933. The Museum has been renamed in his honour.

While some of his actions and terms used when writing about Aboriginal people would be unacceptable now, Dr Roth was a man ahead of his time. In an age when Aboriginal people were being exploited and killed he was busy defending their rights, protecting them from unscrupulous employers, trying to change attitudes of officials who had close dealings with Aboriginal people and recording what he saw as a rich culture of a people under threat. The material he collected nearly a century ago remains today so that future generations may know and understand something about the way the Aboriginal people of north Queensland lived 100 years ago.

Books to read

Further information on north Queensland at the turn of the century can be obtained from these books.

- Loos, N., 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897.* Australian National University Press, Canberra.
- Reynolds, H., 1982. *The Other Side of the Frontier.* Penguin, Ringwood.
- Reynolds, H., 1987. *Frontier, Aborigines, Settlers and Land.* Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Reynolds, H., 1989. *Dispossession. Black Australians and White Invaders.* Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Complete list of Roth Bulletins

Owing to the rapidly-increasing quantity of scientific material which, in accordance with the Home Secretary's instructions, has been collected since my appointment as Northern Protector of Aborigines, it has been deemed advisable to publish, in the form of Bulletins, those of my reports which may be considered fairly complete in themselves and up to date so far as the subject matter with which they deal.

By the issue of two or three such Bulletins annually, I trust that within the next eight to ten years the ethnography and anthropology of the North Queensland aboriginal will be a little better understood by the general public than they are at present. (Walter E. Roth. Cooktown, 1st January, 1901 [from the preface to Bulletin 1, 1901]).

- Roth, W.E., 1901. *North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.1. String, and other forms of strand: basketry-, woven bag-, and net-work.* Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–15, plates 1–19.

- Roth, W.E., 1901. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no. 2. The structure of the Koko-Yimidir language. With the assistance of Revs. G.H. Schwarz and W. Poland, Lutheran Missionaries at Cape Bedford Mission Station. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–35.
- Roth, W.E., 1901. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.3. Food: its search, capture, and preparation. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–31, figures 1–23.
- Roth, W.E., 1902. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.4. Games, sports and amusements. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–24, plates 1–38.
- Roth, W.E., 1903. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.5. Superstition, magic, and medicine. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–42, photography 1–41.
- Roth, W.E., 1903. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.6. An elementary grammar of the Ngerikudi language. By the Rev. N. Hey, Superintendent of the Presbyterian Mission, Mapoon, Batavia River, North Queensland, revised and edited by Walter E. Roth. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–23.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no.7. Domestic implements, arts, and manufactures. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–34, plates 1–16.
- Roth, W.E., 1905. North Queensland Ethnography: Bulletin no. 8. Notes on government, morals, and crime. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–12, plates 1–4.

Bulletins 1–8 inclusive were presented to both Houses of Parliament in Brisbane (see Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1901–1906), and subsequently printed and published by the Government Printer (George Arthur Vaughan). The collections, on which much of the matter contained in these “Bulletins” depends, having now passed into the possession of the Trustees of the Australian Museum, Dr Roth’s notes will, from time to time, appear in the *Records*.—Editor [of the Records of the Australian Museum]. (Footnote, Bulletin 9, 1907, p. 1).

- Roth, W.E., 1907. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.9. Burial ceremonies, and disposal of the dead. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 6, number 5, pp. 365–403, plates 68–74. (Walter E. Roth was now Magistrate of the Pomeroon District, British Guyana).
- Roth, W.E., 1908. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.10. Marriage ceremonies and infant life. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 7, number 1, pp. 1–17, plates 1–3.
- Roth, W.E., 1908. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.11. Miscellaneous papers. 1. Tabu and other forms of restriction. 2. Counting and enumeration. 3. Signals on the road; gesture language. 4. Progressive Koko-Yimidir exercises. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 7, number 2, pp. 74–107, plates 17–21.
- Roth, W.E., 1909. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.12. On certain initiation ceremonies. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 7, number 3, pp. 166–185, plates 50–56.
- Roth, W.E., 1909. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.13. Fighting weapons. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 7, number 4, pp. 189–211, plates 58–61.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.14. Transport and trade. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 8, number 1, pp. 1–19, figures 1–13, plates 1–7.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.15. Decoration, deformation and clothing. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 8, number 1, pp. 20–54, figures 14–30, plates 8–10.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.16. Huts and shelters. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 8, number 1, pp. 55–66, figures 31–42, plates 11–17.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.17. Postures and abnormalities. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 8, number 1, pp. 67–78, figures 43–51, plates 18–24.

Roth, W.E., 1910. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no.18. Social and individual nomenclature. Records of the Australian Museum, volume 8, number 1, pp. 79–106, plates 25–31.

Walter Edmund Roth also published a book when he was Surgeon to the Boulia, Cloncurry and Normanton hospitals, before taking up his appointment as Protector of Aborigines for the Northern District of Queensland.

Roth, W.E., 1897. Ethnological studies among the north-west-central Queensland Aborigines. Government Printer, Brisbane, pp. 1–199, plates 1–23.

Places in Cape York (Area Y) where Roth collected the artefacts

VOLUME 1 (1993)

Archer River	15 artefacts
Atherton	40 artefacts
Bathurst Head	22 artefacts
Bloomfield River	112 artefacts
Butcher's Hill	28 artefacts

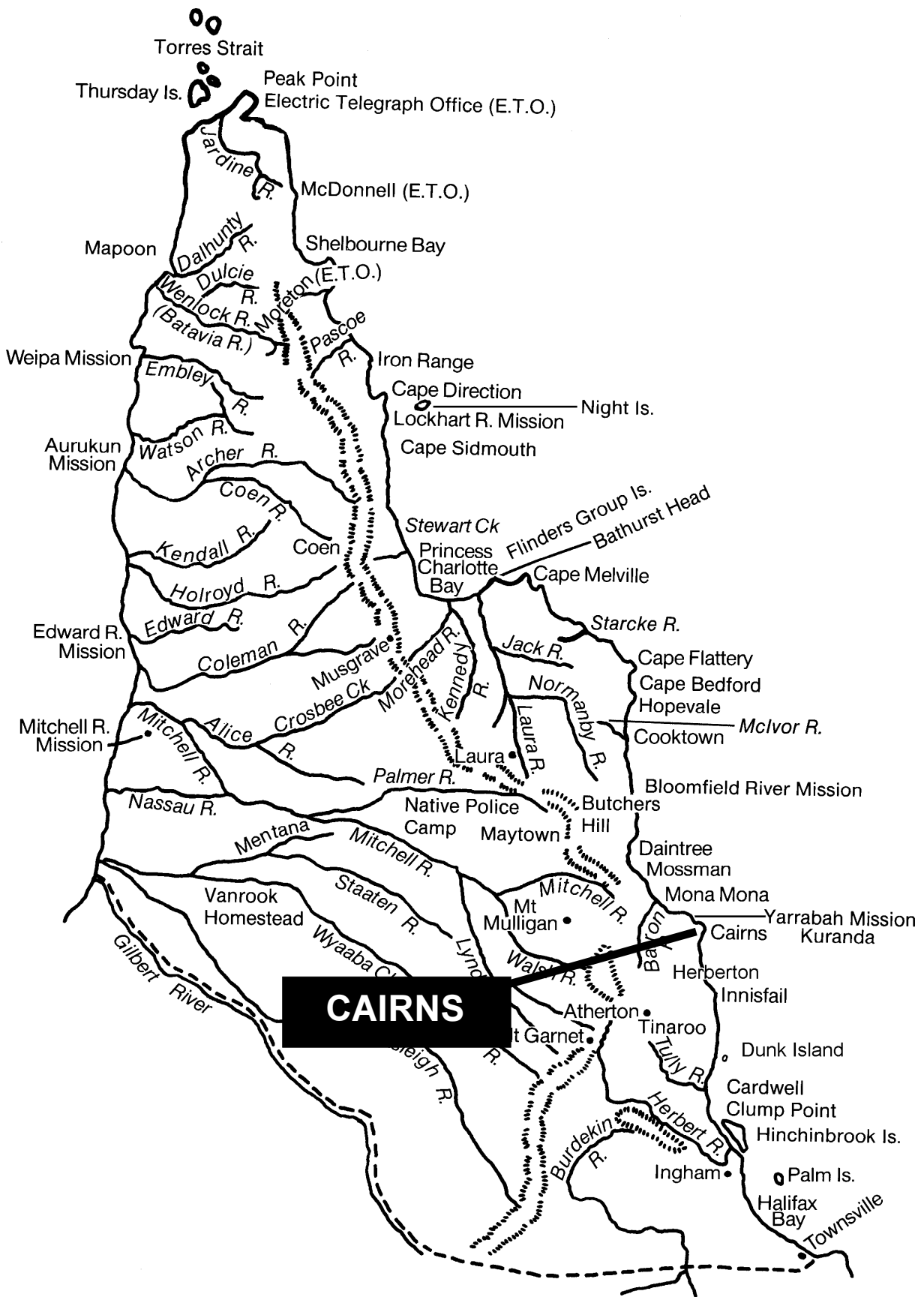
VOLUME 2 (1996)

Cairns	32 artefacts
Cape Bedford	74 artefacts
Cape Grafton	61 artefacts
Cape Melville	3 artefacts
Cardwell	8 artefacts
Clump Point	9 artefacts
Coen	5 artefacts
Cooktown	33 artefacts
Dunk Island	6 artefacts
False Cape	1 artefact
Flinders Island	11 artefacts
Hambleton	1 artefact
Herberton	8 artefacts
Hinchinbrook Island	1 artefact
Ingham	1 artefact
Innisfail	3 artefacts
Johnstone River	4 artefacts
Kuranda	1 artefact

FUTURE VOLUMES

The following list gives only an estimate of the numbers of artefacts from each area, as the documentation on the places and artefacts has not been closely checked to date.

McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office	(1 artefact)
McIvor River	(2 artefacts)
Mapoon the Pennefather River and the Wenlock River, called the Batavia River by Roth	(218 artefacts)
Maytown	(14 artefacts)
Mentana	(1 artefact)
Mitchell River	(13 artefacts)
Morehead River	(1 artefact)
Moreton Electric Telegraph Office	(8 artefacts)
Musgrave	(5 artefacts)
Nassau River	(1 artefact)
Night Island	(1 artefact)
Palmer River, often referred to as the Palmer River Native Police camp by Roth	(46 artefacts)
Peak Point Electric Telegraph Station	(2 artefacts)
Princess Charlotte Bay	(23 artefacts)
Staaten River	(123 artefacts)
Starcke River	(5 artefacts)
Tinaroo	(1 artefact)
Tully River	(12 artefacts)
Vanrook Homestead	(2 artefacts)
Weipa and the Embley River	(23 artefacts)



CAIRNS



Main street, Cairns. Photograph 37 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, Vol. 1. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Roth's sketch map of the Cairns region showed where the main groups of Aboriginal people lived in August 1898. They were the Kingganji, Yirkanji and Yidinji, who spoke kunggai, yirkai and yidi respectively. Roth said the local Aboriginal people called Cairns Ka-moi.

Some of Roth's tribal and language names are spelled differently today. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, spells Roth's Kungganji as Gungganyji, and the language is not spelled kunggai, but gunggay.

Roth thought that by the early 1900s this map was probably not true, because of mission activity at Yarrabah and European settlement around Cairns was forcing Aboriginal people to resettle elsewhere on the mission at Yarrabah.

Europeans had been coming to Cairns since 1876. In 1879 a group of Chinese businessmen started the *Hap Wah* or *Good Luck* cotton and sugar plantation. By 1883, the rush was on for good land to plant sugar.



Books to read

Meston, A., 1895. *Geographic history of Queensland*. Government Printer, Brisbane, p. 60.

Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 18, 1910, pp. 83 and 91.

Sommer, B.A., 1976. W.E. Roth's *Peninsular Vocabularies*. In Peter Sutton (ed.), *Languages of Cape York*. *Australian Aboriginal Studies. Research and Regional Studies* No. 6. AIAS Canberra, pp. 127–136.

Crescent-shaped woven baskets

Information from Roth's Bulletins

These baskets were made from strips of split fish-tail lawyer cane. This cane could not be used to make baskets until the sharp prickles were rubbed off with a stick. Prickle-free stems were held in one hand while the ring of leaves was pulled down and twisted sharply so both leaves and outer prickly layer were removed. Strips of lawyer cane now could be broken off by biting and chewing. Finally they were split into fine lengths with a thumb nail or shell, and scraped smooth with shells or stones. The prepared cane was taken back to camp and woven into baskets. Lawyer cane was not collected until needed, as the cane had to be used within five days of cutting. After this time the lawyer cane could no longer be made pliable by soaking in water.

Baskets were made by weaving two continuous strands of canes with several straight base canes, which went the entire length of the base of the basket.

The curved shape at the base of the basket was made by using a split piece of lawyer cane, strung like a bow, top-stitched to the inside of the basket. Roth's drawing shows the beginning of this basket.

Baskets also were strengthened by top-stitching rings of lawyer cane inside the basket as it was being made. This can be seen in the photograph of the finished basket.

Two handles, one small and one long, were fitted to the mouth. They were held there by tightly woven thin strips of split lawyer cane.



E.14917. Crescent-shaped woven basket. Collected Cairns, 1904. Height 56 cm.

The long handles were looped over the wearer's forehead and the basket hung between the shoulder blades. In addition to carrying foods women had collected, such as roots, eggs and seeds, the basket had many other uses.

Moreton Bay chestnuts were placed in these baskets and soaked overnight in running water. This washed away the poison and made the nuts less bitter and safe to eat.

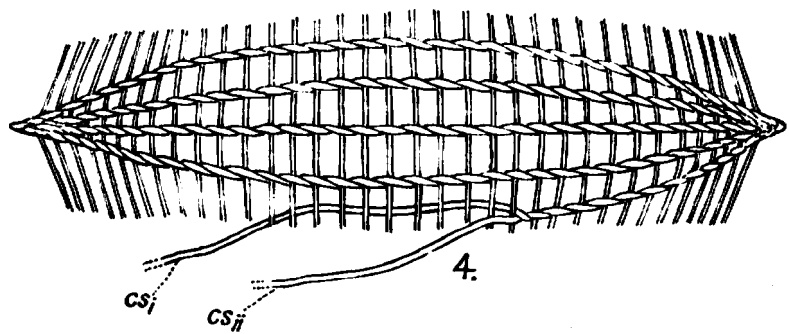
When rivers were in flood, women used to catch fish which travelled in great shoals upstream close to the river banks by dangling the baskets in the water.

Babies were carried in very large baskets, often by men.

Small baskets, some with a painted design, carried mens' personal and ceremonial items.

Roth said that these baskets were used by both men and women. In one place he says that anyone could make a basket although some were more skilled than others. He contradicted himself in another passage by stating that only men made the baskets.

These baskets were made only where the crescent-shaped or bi-cornual bark baskets were made, from Cairns to around Tully.



Collection information

There are two of these baskets from Cairns in the Roth collection.

E.14916 Roth collected this basket in 1898. It is 14 cm high. The handles are missing.

E.14917 Roth collected this basket in 1904. It is 56 cm high. The handles are broken.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both baskets.

E.14916 negative sheet 4204M, frame 1600.

E.14917 negative sheet 4204M, frame 1601.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 13–15. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 27–28.

Scientific name of material used

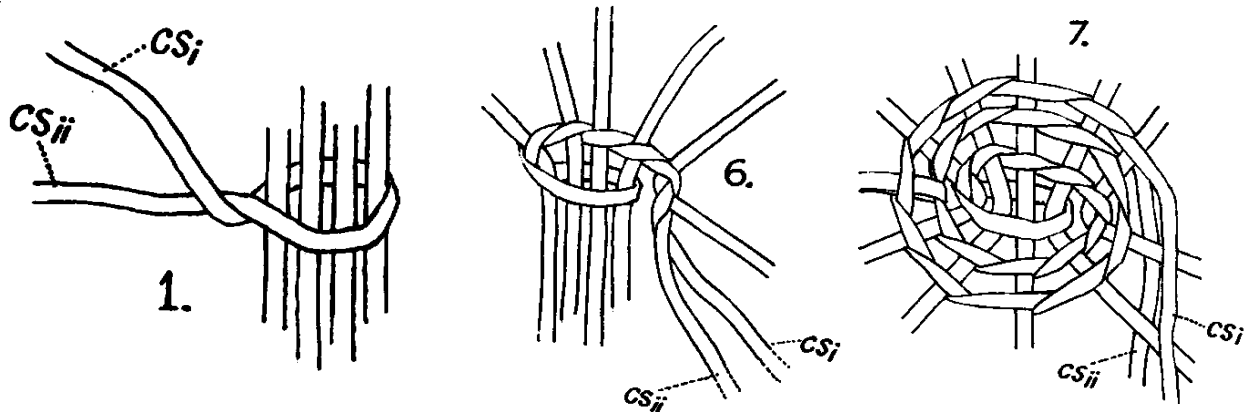
Fish-tail lawyer cane, also known as the small lawyer cane: *Calamus caryotoides*.

Woven basket

E.14927. Woven basket. Collected Cairns, 1898. Height 29.7 cm. Mouth 15.4×20 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Spiny-headed mat rush grass was used to weave these baskets, using two continuous strands and several base strands. The two continuous strands were twisted into a chain, and the ends of the straight base strands were left free. The chain twist was the weft, the straight base strands, the warp. Roth's drawings show how the basket was begun.



Baskets like this were generally firm, unlike soft bags. The only way the baskets varied from each other was in the way the first base strands were started. These baskets usually were finished by either binding the rim with strips of mat rush grass, or burning the unwoven ends of the canes in ashes.

Roth said the baskets were made only by women.

The baskets were used as sieves when soaking *Zamia* nuts to make them safe to eat. They were used from Cairns to Cape Bedford.

Collection information

There is only one of these baskets in the Roth collection from Cairns.

E.14927 This basket was collected in 1898. It is 29.7 cm high. The mouth of the basket is 15.4×20 cm. The handle is broken.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4205M, frame 1611.

Useful written information

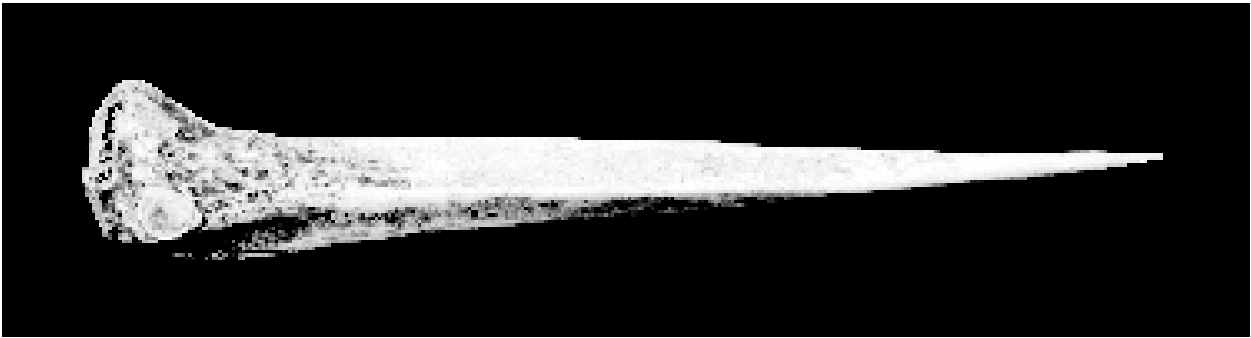
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 14–15. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 28.

Scientific names of materials used

Spiny-headed mat rush grass: *Xerotes longifolia*.

Zamia nuts: *Cycas media*.

Bone needle



E.13895. Bone needle. Collected Cairns, 1900. Length 16.4 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said the bone used usually came from a kangaroo, wallaby or emu. It was ground to a point while the bone was fresh, and the grinding could either be done wet or dry.

He saw bone needles (which he called bone stiletos) being used in the following ways:

1. To remove the outside layer from the cabbage tree leaf before making it into twine (Musgrave River)
2. To assist in hollowing out of earring tubes (Pennefather and Coen Rivers)
3. To pick off bark when making some water-carriers and bark blankets (Atherton)
4. To bore a hole in a spearthrower to fix a peg at one end (Endeavour River)
5. To pierce the edges of bark before threading them when making canoes (Tully and Pennefather Rivers)
6. To pierce the nasal septum
7. To pick kernels from nuts
8. In the early days, to pierce possum skins to sew them into cloaks (Brisbane).

Collection information

Roth collected one bone needle from Cairns in 1900.

E.13895 Roth's collection number is BD.24. The bone needle is 16.4 cm long and is shaped to a point at one end.

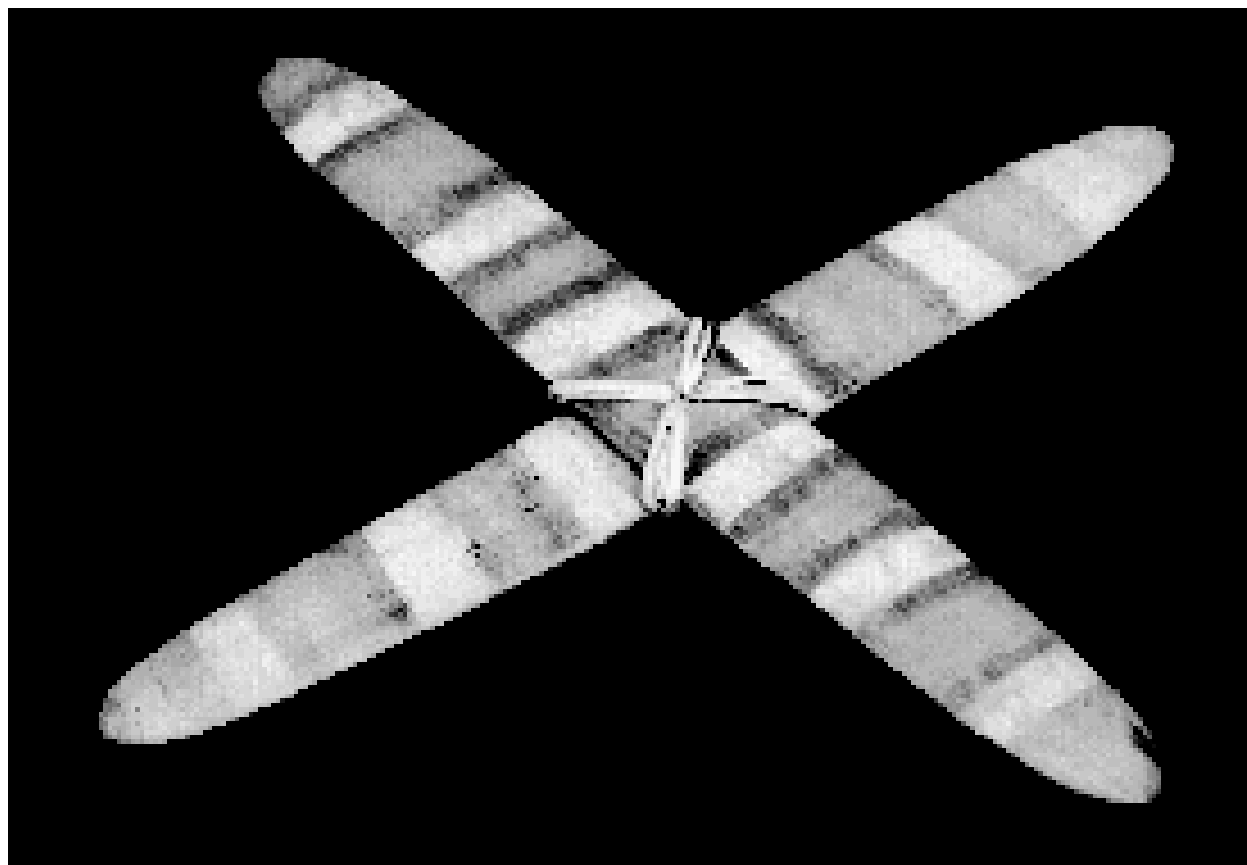
Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4076M, frame 578.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11 and 25.

Cross boomerangs



E.13838. Cross boomerang. Collected Cairns, 1900. Length 30 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Cross boomerangs were made of two pieces of light wood, pointed at each end. A hole was drilled at their centres and they were tied crosswise with strips of split lawyer cane.

These boomerangs were used only by boys and men, and could be thrown in two ways. First, it could be thrown direct into the air. Its flight was similar to that of a boomerang except that it flew in more of a circle than an oval, and it made a double circle around the thrower at the end. A second way was to throw it straight onto the ground in front of the thrower where it curved to the right or left. Younger children used to copy this by using thick swamp grasses plaited or tied together.

Roth said cross boomerangs were found along the coast from Cardwell to the Mossman River.

Collection information

Roth collected four cross boomerangs from Cairns in 1900.

- E.13834 Roth's collection number is 0.26. One piece of wood is 35.5 cm long, the other is 26.5 cm long. Both are painted with bands of red, black and yellow paint. The cross boomerang is not in the collection at present, so cannot be weighed.
- E.13835 Roth's collection number is 0.27. One piece of wood is 41.5 cm long, the other is 30.5 cm long. Both are painted with red, black and white bands on one side. Five bands have been burnt into the wood at one end. The cross boomerang weighs 198.9 g.
- E.13836 Roth's collection number is 0.28. One piece of wood is 32.5 cm long,

the other is 33.1 cm long. Both have been painted red. The cross boomerang weighs 120.6 g.

- E.13838 Roth's collection number is 0.35. Both pieces of wood are 30 cm long and are painted with red and white bands, some outlined in black. The cross boomerang is at present on loan to the Kuranda Museum, north Queensland and cannot be weighed.

Photographic information

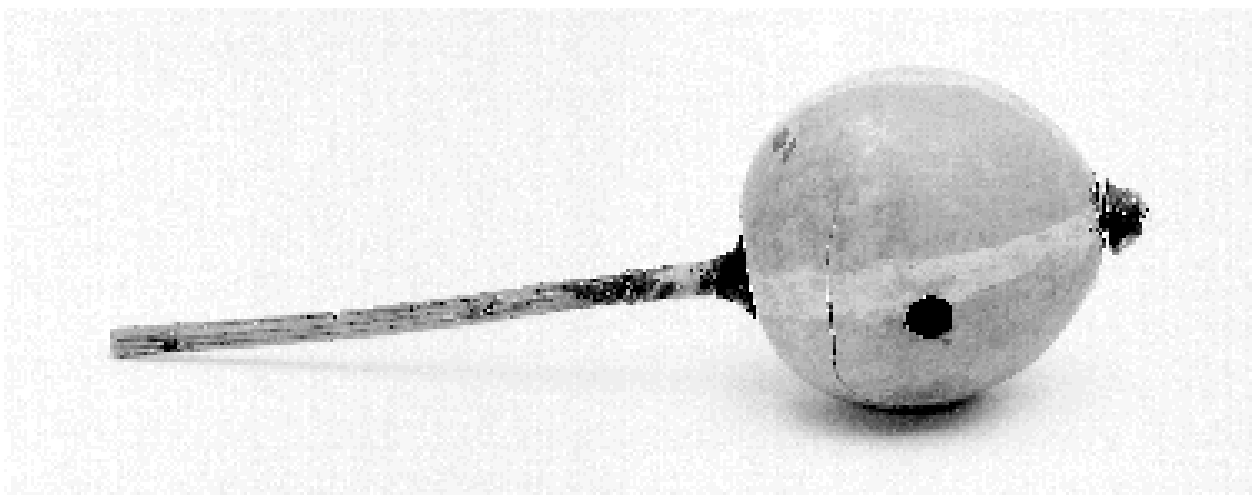
Black and white photographs are available for all cross boomerangs.

- E.13834 negative sheet 4068M, frame 517.
 E.13835 negative sheet 4068M, frame 518.
 E.13836 negative sheet 4068M, frame 519.
 E.13838 negative sheet 4069M, frame 521.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 19.

Spinning tops



E.13804. Spinning top. Collected Cairns, 1900. Length 21.5 cm.
 Diameter of gourd 6.96 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

A stick was stuck through a dried gourd (the dried fruit of a plant) and held tightly with beeswax and handspun bark fibre string. The gourd was spun by twirling the stick between one's open hands. Roth said the hole in the side of the gourd to make it "hum" when spun was a fairly new idea in his day, around 1898 to 1900.

Roth said these spinning tops were made by men in the Lower Tully River and nearby districts. He did not mention them being made at Cairns, even though he collected some in Cairns.

Roth gave the spinning top a local name, bunbuja, a name used by Aboriginal people at Cape Grafton.

Collection information

Roth collected six spinning tops in Cairns in 1900.

- E.13803 Roth's collection number is 0.29. This spinning top was exchanged with the Copenhagen Museum, Denmark in February 1923.
- E.13804 Roth's collection number is 0.30. The spinning top is 21.5 cm long. The diameter of the gourd is 6.96 cm. The gourd of the gourd is 6.4 cm. The gourd has been painted with four bands of red and white paint. A hole has been made in the side of the gourd.
- E.13805 Roth's collection number is 0.31. The spinning top is 20.4 cm long. The diameter of the gourd is 6.4 cm. The gourd has been painted with four bands of red and white paint. A hole has been made in the side of the gourd.
- E.13806 Roth's collection number is 0.32. The spinning top is 21.4 cm long. The diameter of the gourd is 6.8 cm. There is some ochre on the gourd.
- E.13807 Roth's collection number is 0.33. The spinning top is 17.6 cm long. The diameter of the gourd is 6.5 cm. The gourd has been painted with red and has white bands. A hole has been made in the side of the gourd.
- E.13808 Roth's collection number is 0.34. The spinning top is 21.2 cm long. The diameter of the gourd is 6.5 cm. A hole has been made in the side of the gourd.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all but one spinning top.

- E.13804 negative sheet 4064M, frame 487.
 E.13805 negative sheet 4064M, frame 488.
 E.13806 negative sheet 4064M, frame 489.
 E.13807 negative sheet 4065M, frame 490.
 E.13808 negative sheet 4065M, frame 491.

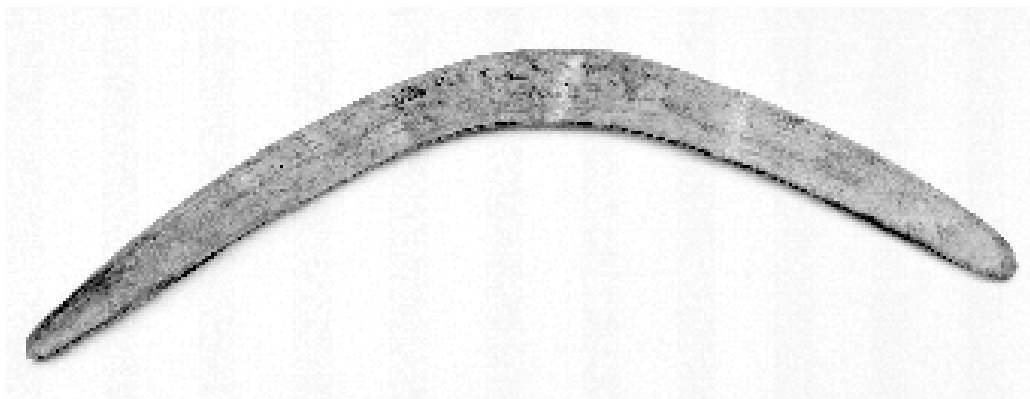
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 18.

Scientific names of materials used

The gourd came from a tree: *Benincasa vacua*, now known as *Benincasa hispida*.

Boomerangs



E.14283. Returning boomerang. Collected Cairns, 1898. 52.2×6.4 cm (at widest part).

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Boomerangs such as these were cut from the exposed root of a tree, by cutting above, below and behind the piece of wood. Roth said a stone axe was used in the old days for this task. In his time steel axes and tomahawks were beginning to be used. The timber was then shaped by splitting, chipping and scraping with a sharp stone and shell. Finally the boomerang was rubbed smooth with a coarse stone.

Roth had only been able to identify one timber used, called yarran. The other Aboriginal names for unidentified woods were yandan, bokabar, charkala, puchera and yalma.

Boomerangs were used for combat and hunting or for sport and amusement. Fighting ones were larger and heavier than the toy ones. Sometimes a toy boomerang was shaped out of a damaged fighting boomerang. Men and boys often threw the smaller boomerangs at flocks of birds.

Roth said there were two ways of throwing the larger boomerangs:

1. straight into the air (common everywhere)
2. straight onto the ground where it was made to bounce off the hard surface (common in coastal areas from Cairns to Cardwell).

According to Roth, no boomerangs were used north of the Palmer River. On the Palmer River, boomerangs were used only as toys.

Collection information

Roth collected six boomerangs from Cairns in 1898.

- E.14246 Roth's collection number is B.49. The non-returning boomerang is 63.7 cm long and 7.2 cm at the widest part. The boomerang weighs 270.8 g.
- E.14247 Roth's collection number is B.50. The non-returning boomerang is 70 cm long and 7.4 cm at the widest part. The boomerang weighs 292 g.
- E.14280 Roth's collection number is B.91. The non-returning boomerang is 53.6 cm long and 6.4 cm at the widest part. It is painted with white bands. The boomerang weighs 169.7 g.
- E.14281 Roth's collection number is B.92. The non-returning boomerang is 41.3 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. It is painted with red bands. The boomerang weighs 98.9 g.
- E.14282 Roth's collection number is B.93. The returning boomerang is 39.5 cm long and 4.8 cm at its widest part. One end has been repaired with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The boomerang weighs 94.5 g.
- E.14283 Roth's collection number is B.94. The returning boomerang is 52.2 cm long and 6.4 cm at the widest part. It is painted with red bands on a white background. The boomerang weighs 166.3 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all boomerangs.

- E.14246 negative sheet 4120M, frame 929.
- E.14247 negative sheet 4120M, frame 930.
- E.14280 negative sheet 4124M, frame 963.
- E.14281 negative sheet 4124M, frame 964.
- E.14282 negative sheet 4124M, frame 965.
- E.14283 negative sheet 4124M, frame 966.

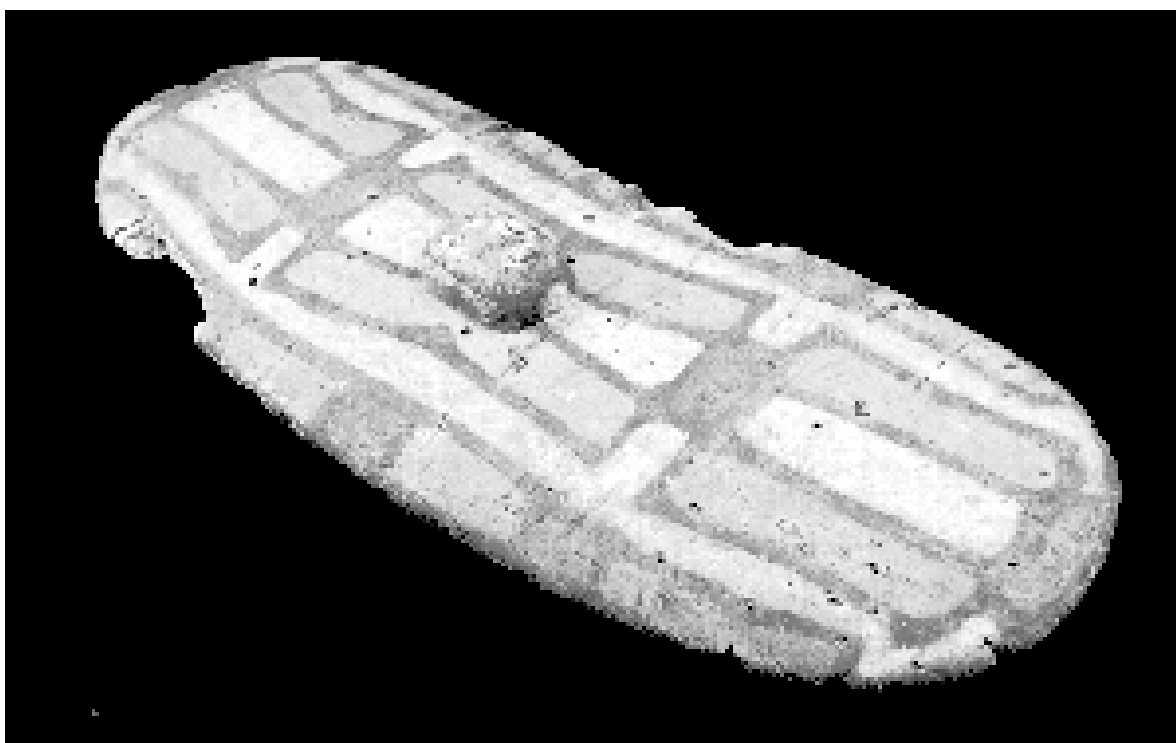
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 19. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 201–203.

Scientific names of materials used

The only wood that Roth identified was called *Rhodomyrtus macrocarpa* its Aboriginal name was yarran.

Shields

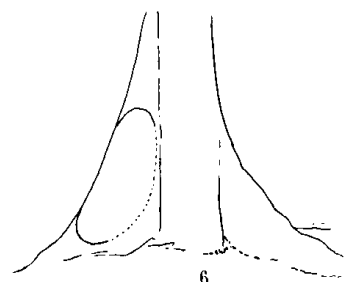


E.13434. Softwood shield. Collected Cairns 1898. 98×35 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these shields were made was based on seeing Aboriginal people making them on the Lower Tully River.

1. Two curved cuts were made in the buttress of a fig tree, about the length of a shield. The sides were chipped, hammered and pushed out. The shape was not quite oval, depending on the curve of the buttress.
2. The wood was chipped away on both sides leaving the centre of the roughed out shield untouched. This left a raised boss in the centre of the shield.
3. At the back of the shield a hand grip was made in the centre by chipping and burning a cavity with cinders.
4. The process of making the shield lighter began with it being soaked for a few days in water. It was then placed in the sun for a few days, slowly dried in shady scrub for a further couple of days, and again placed in water.



5. After a second soaking, the shield was tied to an overhanging bush so that it hung flat about 30 cm above the water. It was left there for two to three weeks.
6. The wood was finally rubbed down with a light, rough stone to give a smooth surface. A striking design was painted on the outer side of the completed shield.

Roth said he could find no meaning for the painted designs on the shields. All shields in the Roth collection have different designs.

These shields were found only where the large swords were used (see later this volume), from the Bloomfield and Endeavour Rivers south to below Cardwell, and along the inland mountain ranges, including Atherton. Roth said Bloomfield River shields were more rectangular and larger than those found on the Tully River.

Roth noted that by 1898 these kidney-shaped shields were not being used much, and were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

Roth collected six painted, kidney-shaped softwood shields from Cairns in 1898.

- E.13433 Roth's collection number is S.22. The shield is 92.7×33.3 cm. A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield, the back is faintly ochred. The shield has bits of wood missing from the edges.
- E.13434 Roth's collection number is S.23. The shield is 97.5×34.6 cm. A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield; the back is red ochred. There are spear point holes in the shield. Lumps of wood are missing from the edges.
- E.13435 Roth's collection number is S.24. The shield is 101.5×36.2 cm. A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield, the back is red ochred. There are spear holes in the shield.
- E.13436 Roth's collection number is S.25. The shield is 90×30 cm. A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield. A red and white cloth is wrapped around the hand grip and covered with gum cement. The shield has spear holes and cuts.
- E.13437 Roth's collection number is S.26. The shield is 88.5×32 cm. A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield, the back is red ochred. There are spear holes in the shield. Lumps of wood are missing from the edges.
- E.13438 Roth's collection number is S.27. The shield is 99×37 cm. A white, red, yellow and black painted design is on the front of the shield. The back is plain except for a large patch of red at one end. There are spear holes in the shield and a large gash on one side.

Photographic information

- E.13433 negative sheet 4015M, frame 117.
- E.13434 negative sheet 4016M, frame 118.
- E.13435 negative sheet 4016M, frame 119.
- E.13436 negative sheet 4016M, frame 120.
- E.13437 negative sheet 4016M, frame 121.
- E.13438 negative sheet 4017M, frame 122.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 9. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 203–205.

Scientific names of materials used

Wood used to make these shields comes from the fig tree, *Ficus* sp.

Curved spearthrower

E.14363. Curved spearthrower. Collected Cairns, 1898. 63×4.6 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

These spearthrowers were fairly short and light. They were usually decorated with red and white paint. Unfortunately Roth did not say what wood was used, or how they were made.

A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "the bent or boomerang woomerah [sic] is used for propelling spears directly up or down, not in throwing straight out from the person." Roth said this at a lecture he gave at The University of Sydney on 19 January 1906.

These spearthrowers were used differently to all other spearthrowers in that the blade rested between the thumb and first finger, instead of between first and second finger. They were used for spearing fish and birds at close quarters.

Curved spearthrowers were used all along the Bloomfield River and along the coast between Bloomfield and Cape Grafton. All other curved spearthrowers in the Roth collection come from the Bloomfield River (see Volume 1 in this series of catalogues).

Collection information

There is one curved spearthrower in the collection from Cairns.

E.14363 Roth collected this spearthrower in 1898 (his collection number is W.74). It is 63 cm long and 4.6 cm at the widest part. The peg is tied on with cane binding and held with gum cement. The spearthrower weighs 193.6 g.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4134M, frame 1046.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 197–201.

Straight spearthrower

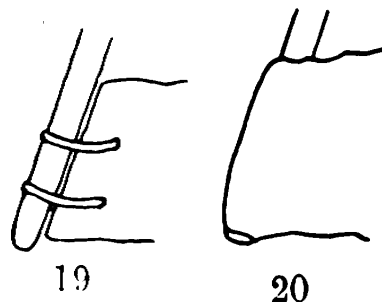


E.14364. Straight ironwood spearthrower. Collected Cairns, 1898. 114×4 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The ironwood spearthrower had a straight long blade and a short peg at one end with a slight nick in one side.

The peg was not flattened or drilled, but was tied on with animal tendon to two holes drilled in the blade. The peg was held secure with gum cement. Roth's drawings show how this was done.



The spearthrower was used to throw spears great distances when hunting or fighting. Roth said it was used at Cape Bedford, on the Endeavour and Bloomfield Rivers, and at Butcher's Hill. It seems possible that it was used further down the coast for Roth wrote about a straight spearthrower such as this being made in the Tully area. Roth did not specifically talk about spearthrowers from Cairns. He did say that spearthrowers were not used on the eastern coast from Townsville to Rockhampton. A friend of his, Thomas Petrie, told him spearthrowers were unknown in Brisbane, but Aboriginal people at Charters Towers had them.

Collection information

There is one straight spearthrower from Cairns in the Roth collection. In the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 it states that Roth called this a *lath womerah*.

E.14364 Roth collected this spearthrower in 1898 (his collection number is W.75).

It is 114×3.5 cm. The peg has no nick in it. It weighs 245.5 g.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4134M, frame 1047.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 197–201.

Single-handed swords

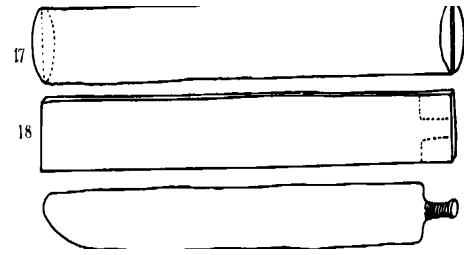


E.15030. Single-handed hardwood sword. Collected Cairns, 1898. 142×14 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these swords were made was based on a visit to the Lower Tully River where he watched Aboriginal people making them. They were made in the same way at Cairns.

1. A hardwood tree was cut down and a length of wood about 120 cm to 170 cm long was chopped off. This was split down the centre, and one of the slabs of wood was chipped into shape. The straighter the tree, the straighter and better the sword.
2. To shape the short handle, a cut was made in both sides of the slab of wood, and then split. Handspun bark fibre string was wound round the handle and covered with beeswax which had been warmed over a fire. Once cold this made a hard glue. Roth's drawings make the operation easier to understand.
3. If the sword was curved, the outer edge was sharper and used in battle. If the weapon was straight, both edges were sharp and could be used to fight.
4. Often the blade would be coated first with blood which was used as a fixative for the red paint which decorated the surface of the blade.



Roth said these swords were used with one hand stretched over the shoulder, with the sword hanging down the back. The sword was swung forward with a sudden jerk, to strike the enemy.

These swords were used only where highly decorated kidney-shaped shields were used—on south east Cape York Peninsula, in the Bloomfield and Cardwell districts, down as far as Tully, and inland along the mountain ranges to Atherton.

Roth said that by 1898 these swords were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

Roth collected four swords from Cairns in 1898.

- E.15029 Roth's collection number is SW.11. The total length is 140.8 cm and its width is 13.7 cm. The handle is 8.8×5.2 cm. The handle is coated with gum cement. The sword weighs 2,122.7 g.
- E.15030 Roth's collection number is SW.12. The total length is 142.2 cm and its width is 13.9 cm. The handle is 9.9×4.6 cm. Handspun bark fibre string is been wound round the handle and covered with gum cement. The sword weighs 1,845.8 g.
- E.15031 Roth's collection number is SW.13. The total length is 131×14.3 cm. The handle is 8.3×3.4 cm. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the handle and covered with gum cement. The sword weighs 2,241.4 g.
- E.15032 Roth's collection number is SW.14. The total length is 123×12 cm. The handle is 8.8×3.8 cm. There is some gum cement on the handle. The sword weighs 1,577.7 g.

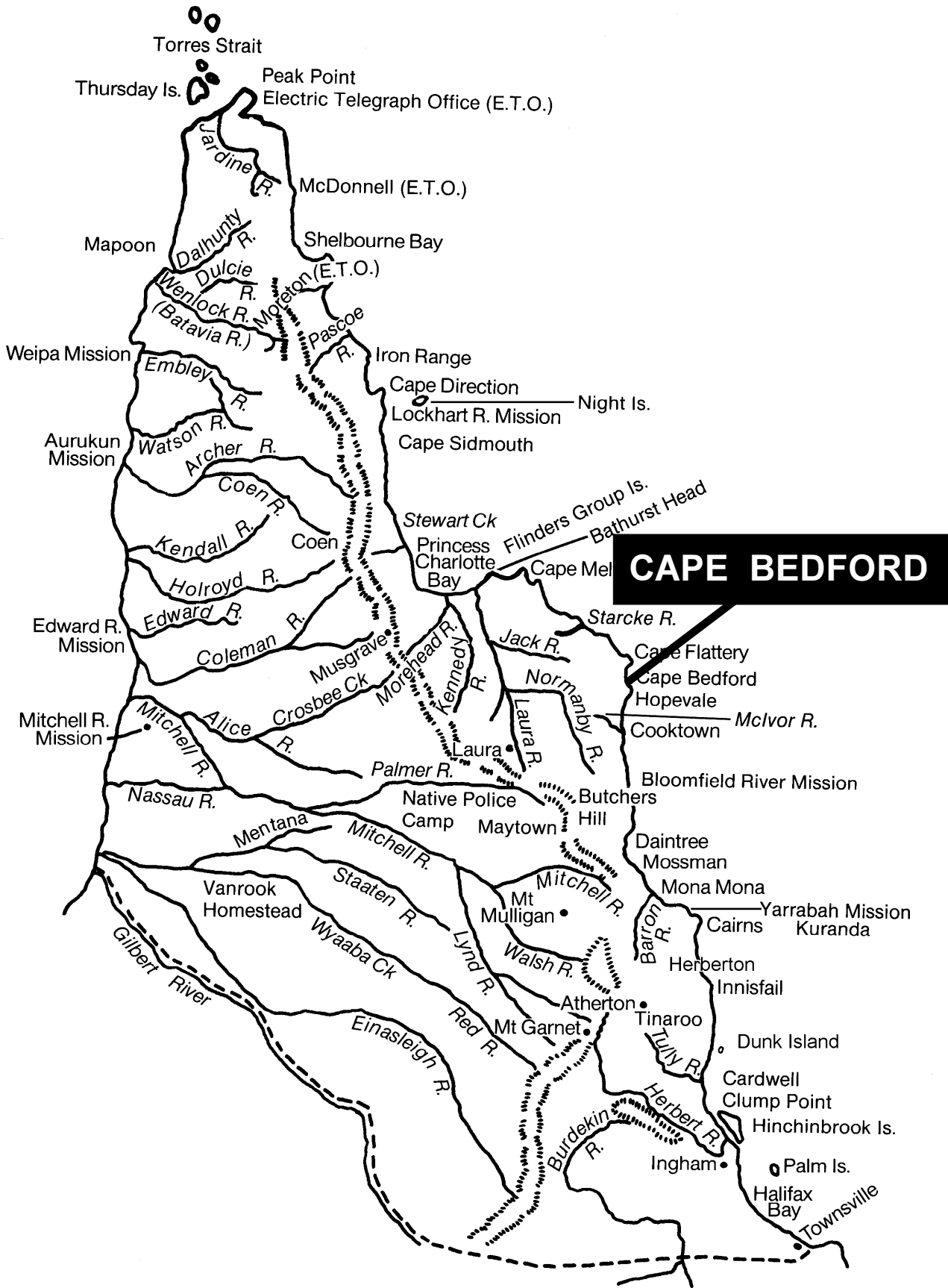
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all swords.

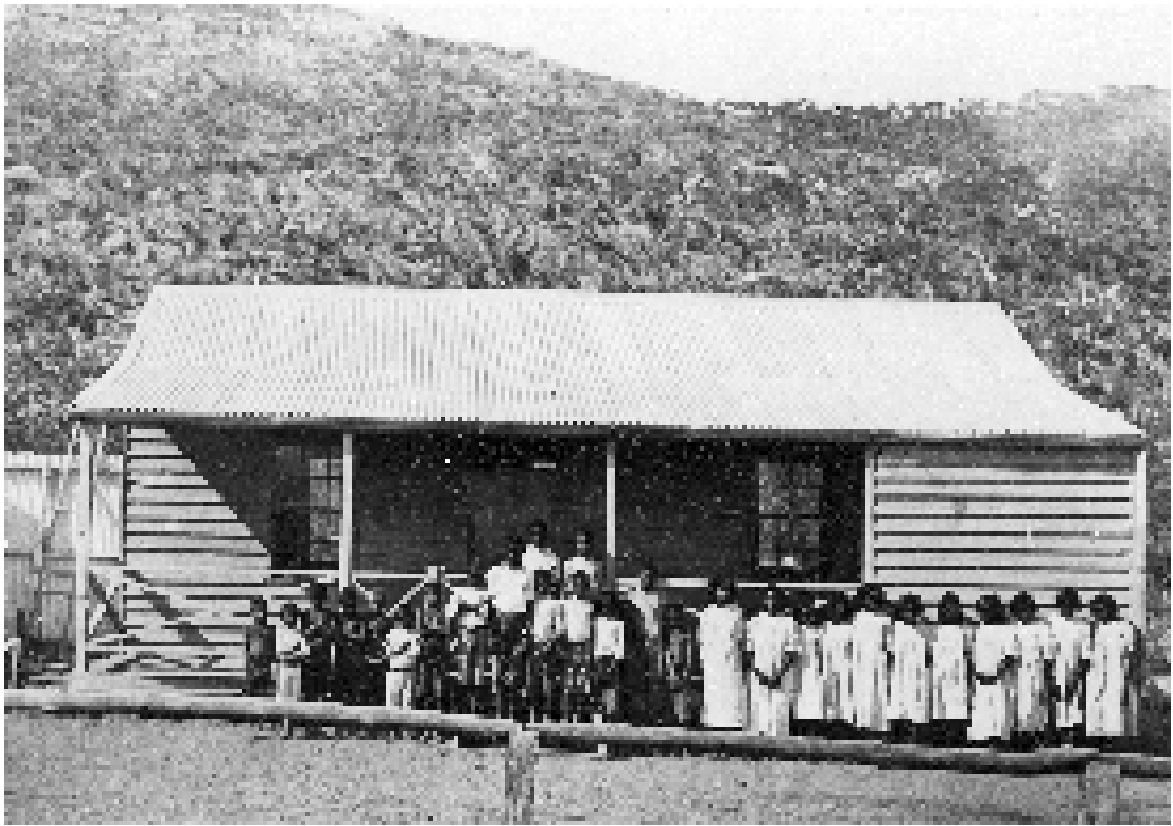
- E.15029 negative sheet 4218M, frame 1713.
 E.15030 negative sheet 4218M, frame 1714.
 E.15031 negative sheet 4218M, frame 1715.
 E.15032 negative sheet 4219M, frame 1716.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 13, 1909, p. 210.



CAPE BEDFORD



School at Cape Bedford. Photograph 40 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, volume 4. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

In July 1881, the Mayor of Cooktown suggested to the government of the day that it:

erect a depot on the north shore where [the aborigines] could live in comparative comfort, and be open to employment at any and every time they might be made useful by the white residents of the district, without any unnecessary intermingling therewith.

Next month the government set aside 50,000 acres on the north shore above Cooktown as a reserve for Aboriginal people. In 1886, this became the Hope Vale Mission. It was also known as the Cape Bedford Mission.

On 4 November 1899, Reverends Wilhelm Poland and George H. Schwarz were appointed Superintendents of the Reserve under the Aboriginals Act. This was necessary because, according to Roth, many undesirable people came over and stayed on the Reserves. At Cape Bedford they had trouble with the cattlemen. Here an organised system of cattle duffing had been going on for some time, and Aboriginal people had been forcibly hunted from their own Reserves.

While this grant of land might have seemed a generous one, it was really 50,000 acres of poor soil, barren sandy hills and infertile swamps. Very little could be done to make the mission a going concern. Cattle were brought in but no-one knew how to look after the stock. The Aboriginal people were coastal dwellers, yet nothing was done to develop coastal industries, except for a little sea-slug or *bêche-de-mer* fishing.

The intention of the missionaries was to turn Aboriginal people into Christians in a remote and unreal mission environment. Aboriginals were to be isolated from all contact with Europeans, except missionaries, to protect them from the outside world. Children were taken from their parents and could only see each other on special holidays.

By 1905, there were 95 permanent residents at Hope Vale, most of whom spoke good English.

Roth asked the Reverends Schwarz and Poland from this mission to help him with the Koko-yimidir language that he wrote about in Bulletin 2. He said Aboriginal people from Cape Bedford spoke the most pure form of the Koko-yimidir language.

According to Roth, the Koko-yimidir language was spoken along the coastline from the Annan and Endeavour Rivers to the northern side of Cape Flattery.

Some of Roth's tribal and language names are spelled differently today. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra uses the spelling Guugu-Yimithirr.

A cyclone hit Cape Bedford in March 1898. Magdalen Mulun, a young Aboriginal woman from the Cape Bedford mission wrote to Mr Parry-Okeden, Commissioner of Police. Translated, the letter read:

A big south-east storm has just passed over here. It broke some of our huts and threw them down. It also destroyed the banana-stalks, leaving

only the young shoots. Our boat used to be a good one. We certainly caught a large quantity of food with it. Now that the boat is old, and has its bottom broken, and we are without money, how should we obtain a new one? If you were to talk to the men of the Queen [i.e. Parliament] they would perhaps give us a boat. Our friend Dr. Roth has now come to pay us a visit. He is learning our language. By him I am sending this (mark etc. i.e.) letter. We will soon send you by boat a button-orchid with tea-tree (attached). (They i.e.) the other girls have instructed me to talk like this to you.

On March 4, 1900, Magdalen Mulun wrote to Roth,

... Friend of ours, we are pleased (with) (the boat)-good the boat very-good (which you) gave and quickly also. You thanks (we)-say also for-the-flour and for-the-boat... (Friend of yours Magdalen)

Books to read

John Davis to Colonial Secretary, 15 July 1881. [Q.S.A. COL/A 317 in letter no. 3205 of 1881.] Reproduced in K.E. Evans, Marie Yamba, Bloomfield and Hope Vale: the Lutheran Missions to the North Queensland Aborigines, 1886–1905, in *Queensland Heritage*, May 1972, Volume 2, number 6, pp. 26–35.

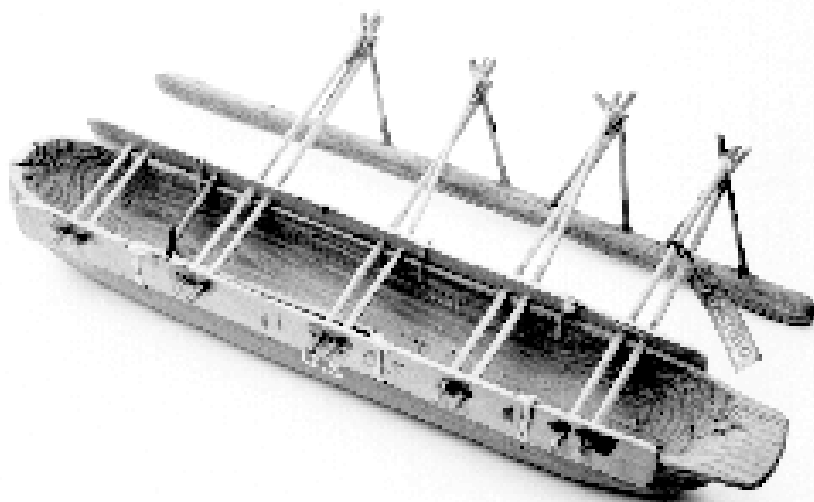
K.E. Evans Marie Yamba, Bloomfield and Hope Vale: the Lutheran Missions to the North Queensland Aborigines, 1886–1905, in *Queensland Heritage*, May 1972, Volume 2, number 6, p. 32.

Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 18, 1910, p. 93.

Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 2, 1901, p. 5 & p. 33.

L. Allen and B. Borey *Cultural and historical records of Queensland* number 3. Annotations to publications by W.E. Roth, University of Queensland Press, 1984, p. 85.

Model dug-out canoe



E.13450. Model dug-out canoe with single outrigger made by Roth to show type of craft used between Cape Bedford and Cooktown. Canoe 26×6×4 cm. Outrigger 25×1 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

A full-size dug-out canoe was made from a tree trunk hollowed out with gouges and shaped at each end into a bow and stern. The bow end was made from the wider end of the tree.

Roth said these canoes came originally from Papua, but they changed shape to suit local conditions the further south down the Cape York Peninsula coast they were used. There were three differences:

1. Two outriggers became one.
On the eastern coast from the Flinders group of islands to Cape Grafton, one outrigger was removed (the port-side one). To make sure the surviving outrigger remained rigid, more booms were added.
2. The way the booms and outrigger were attached.
To restore the centre of gravity of the body to the upright or vertical position, fairly large pegs were used between the ends of the booms and the outrigger. The booms were all doubled, that is, in sets of two, and formed a platform on which spears and harpoons could be laid or tied.
The number double booms depended on the size of the vessel. Roth never saw less than four or more than eight booms on a boat.
3. The stern became more developed the further south one travelled, until it was like the bow, both changing from oval to square.
Between the Flinders and Endeavour Rivers, two washboards were lashed onto the outer sides of the gunwale, with or without a coil of tea-tree bark. Through their upper free margins the double booms were pegged. Roth said he did not understand the significance of these narrow planks or wash boards. They were not found on dug-outs at the Bloomfield River settlement, where booms pierced the gunwale direct.

Roth said the best dug-out canoes were made at Cape Bedford. Inferior ones were traded to Cooktown. At Cape Bedford the pegs were made from a special timber he said the Aboriginal people called dadetchin. Outriggers were cut from a very light wood which was washed up on the beach and saved until needed.

The total width of the vessel as a whole was almost the same at the bow and stern. Roth commented that this was a good arrangement, but did not explain this statement.

At Cape Bedford the dug-out was generally dragged down to the water's edge by three people. It was put in the shallow water and punted along with two poles, one at the bow, one at the stern, until the water was deep enough to use paddles.

Roth said the dug-out was definitely a sea-going craft compared to a bark canoe. With fine weather and strong paddles, these heavy craft could travel 25 to 30 km a day in the open sea.

Roth said the hulls of the dug-outs were traded along the coast up to 1904 from Papua New Guinea to Torres Strait Islands and then to Queensland. In his experience, the trading price charged by Torres Strait people to Cape York coastal people was three kilos of tobacco and a tomahawk. While Aboriginal people could and did make dug-out canoes, it took time and patience, and many people preferred to buy a hull.

According to the Roth's Aboriginal informants, Cape Grafton was the southern limit for the manufacture of the dug-out canoe. Any vessels found further south were not locally made.

Roth collected the local Aboriginal names for parts of the canoe, some of which have more than one spelling.

The dug-out as a whole: ... Wangga banchirn. Also shown as Bantchan.

Bows: Wagga. Also shown as wakk.

Keel: Guramun mok-u.

Stern: Gorumon.

Wash board: Yirmbar. (Also the word for the outside of the boat).

Boom: Dabbul.
 Outrigger: Darman.
 Pegs: Kanna-kanna. (Also the name for the cross-pieces).
 Rope: Gumbin.
 Paddle: Biribe.

Collection information

There is one model of a dug-out canoe with a single outrigger in the Roth collection from Cape Bedford. Roth made this model outrigger canoe himself to show the type of craft used between Cape Bedford and Cooktown.

E.13450 Roth's collection number is C.5. The canoe is 26×6 cm and is 4 cm deep. The outrigger is 25×1 cm. The total width of the outrigger and canoe is 13 cm.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4020M, frame 133.

Useful written information

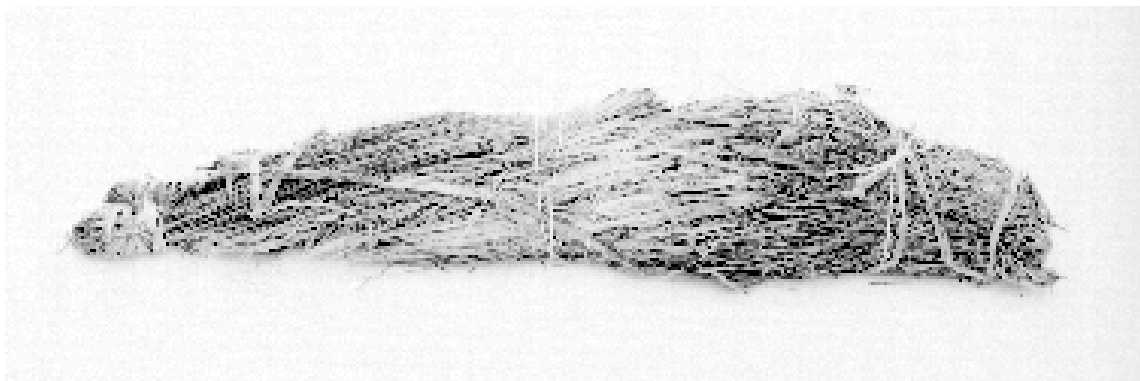
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 15. Bulletin 13, 1910, pp. 13–14.

Roth, W.E., 1908. Australian canoes and rafts. *Man*, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, November 1908, volume 8, article 88, pp. 161–162.

Scientific names of materials used

Timber used at Cape Bedford: *Canarium australasicum*; the Aboriginal name is gundar. Another timber used is *Gmelina macrophylla*; the Aboriginal name is detchi.

Grass bundle charm to bring calm after a storm



E.13714. Grass bundle charm. Collected Cape Bedford, 1899. 55.5×9.5 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said this charm was used to make the wind die down. The charm was called Gumbamu, the name of the local north wind. It was usually made of bundles of grass wound around a stick and tied together with a vine. The charm was either fixed in the sand, or covered with stones so that the waves could touch it, but not wash it away. The charm also could be hidden underground somewhere inland.

Collection information

There is one grass bundle charm from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1899.

E.13714 Roth's collection number is TA.60. It is 55.5 cm long and 9.5 cm wide. Two grass bundles have been tied with vine around a central stick. The ends of the grass bundles also have been tied with handspun bark fibre string. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states: "Gumbamu charm for producing calm after a storm."

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4053M, frame 397.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 5, 1903, pp. 8–9.

Hunting charm



E.13685. Quartz crystal hunting charm. Collected Cape Bedford, date unknown. 10.8×1.8 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that at Cape Bedford, a piece of quartz crystal, wrapped in hair or grass, was carried by men to bring luck in hunting and fishing. The crystal was supposed to be the bone of a man. A bamboo or wooden handle, which was often fixed to the quartz crystal, was hollow. It was supposed to be filled with human blood taken at night from a living person.

Collection information

There is one quartz crystal hunting charm in the Roth collection from Cape Bedford.

E.13685 Roth's collection number is TA.8. Unfortunately Roth did not say when he collected this quartz crystal and bamboo hunting and fishing charm. The charm is 10.8 cm long and 1.8 cm wide. There is gum cement at both ends of the bamboo, but the quartz crystal is missing.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4049M, frame 368.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 5, 1903, p. 27.

Woven bags

Information from Roth's Bulletins

These bags were made from a red fibre twine from a wattle tree, sometimes woven in with white twine from the coral pea tree to give a horizontal striped effect.

Bark from young wattle trees was put into salt or brackish water for a couple of hours until it became red. It was then put in the sun to dry. When dry, it was split into lengths and thicknesses as needed. Finally it was rolled on the thigh with the open right hand, making a strand. The wattle tree was called *dun-dul* by Cape Bedford people.

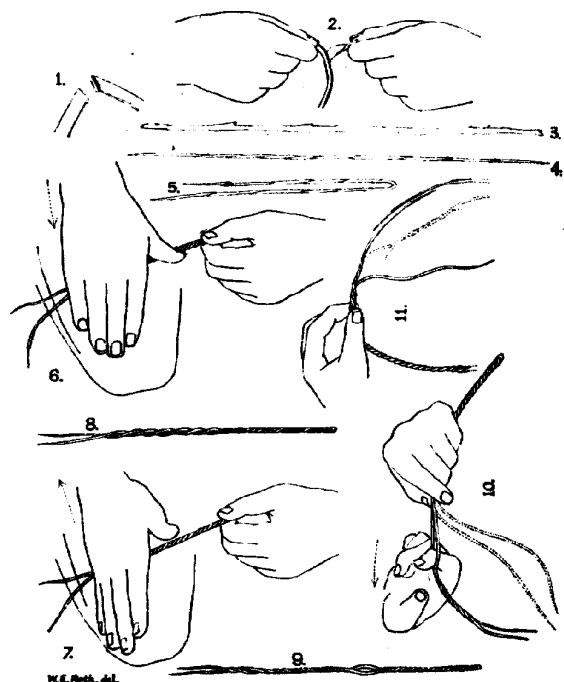
The white twine from the coral pea tree was made by skinning the roots of the tree and biting and sucking the skins until they were dry. They were then untangled, twisted and rolled into twine. This tree was called *gung-an* by Cape Bedford people.

Turning fibre into string was done in the following way, the person squatting on the ground.

1. The strip of fibre was rolled with the open hand, forwards on the outer thigh. This produced a slight tension, and made the strand stronger.
2. The strand was folded in two, and the "bend" held between the left thumb and forefinger.
3. The rest of the string was rolled, under great pressure, with the palm of the right hand slowly forwards, and sharply backwards, without removing the pressure. When rolling forward, pressure was on the thumb side of the hand. When rolling backwards, the pressure was on the other side of the hand.
4. The result of the forward movement was to roll the strand into one twist.
5. The result of the forward-backward movement was to roll the strand into two twists, with a "break" in between.
6. To get rid of the break, the section just above it was held between the left thumb and forefinger to prevent the twine untwisting. The right forefinger was placed in the "break" and it was pulled firmly but carefully outwards.

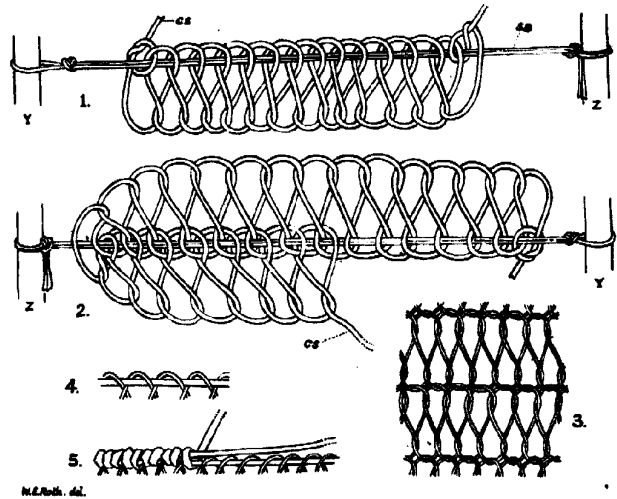


E.14829. Woven bag. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. 51×31 cm.



At the same time the two ends of the strand were freed. While the left hand still held its section, the two freed ends of strand were rolled again with the right hand once backwards and forwards. This process was repeated again and again. All fibre twines were thus made of two-ply.

7. As soon as one end of the strand had been reached, another strand was fixed to it by rolling forwards.



These bags were woven on an hourglass or double loop pattern, using two-ply continuous strands, building on one straight strand tied to two sticks in the ground. Roth's drawings show how this was done.

Roth said these bags were found just about everywhere—Normanton, Gilbert River, Cooktown, Cape Bedford, Cape Melville, the Morehead, Musgrave and Middle Palmer Rivers, at Bloomfield and possibly at Rockhampton.

Cape Bedford people called this bag burn-ga.

Collection information

There are four soft, rectangular bags from Cape Bedford collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.14829 This red and white striped bag is 51 cm long and 31 cm wide. The handle is a length of 2-ply fibre string.
- E.14830 This dark red fibre bag is 45 cm long and 28 cm wide. The handle is a length of 2-ply fibre string.
- E.14831 This dark red fibre bag is 41 cm long and 16 cm wide. The handle is a length of 2-ply fibre string.
- E.14832 This red and white striped bag is 37 cm long and 19 cm wide. The handle is a length of 2-ply fibre string.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all four bags.

- E.14829 negative sheet 4192M, frame 1513.
- E.14830 negative sheet 4193M, frame 1514.
- E.14831 negative sheet 4193M, frame 1515.
- E.14832 negative sheet 4193M, frame 1516.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., 1898. Some ethnological notes on the Aborigines of the Bloomfield River district (Report to the Commissioner of Police, Brisbane), Cooktown. Unpublished manuscript, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

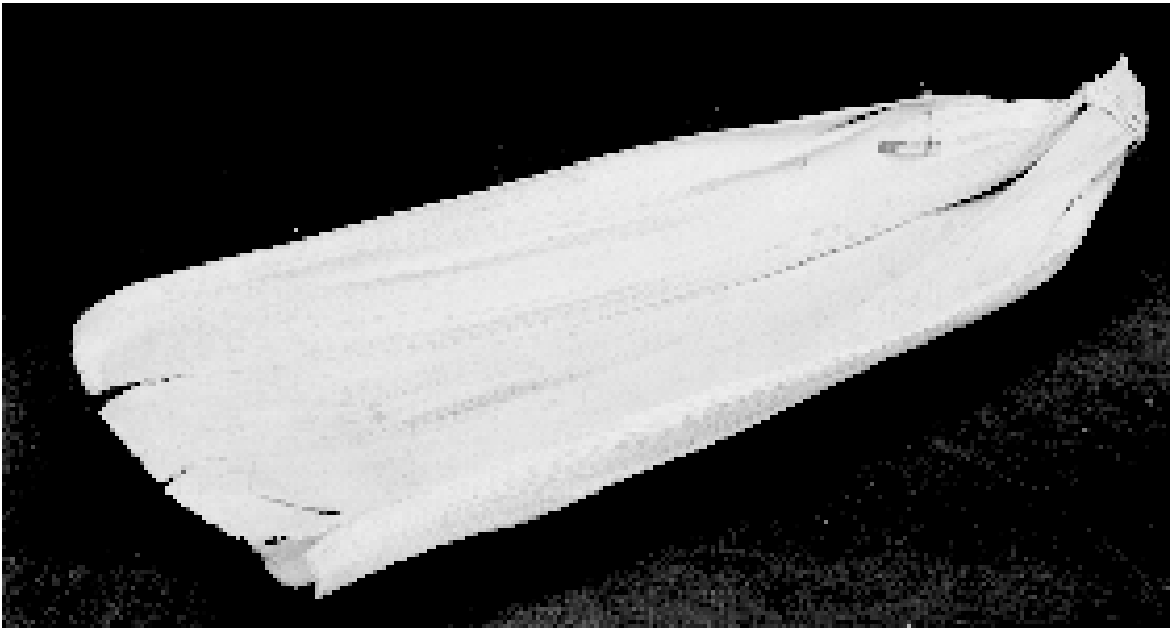
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 8–10, and 12–13. Bulletin 2, 1901, pp. 13–14. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 28.

Scientific names of materials used

The wattle tree: *Acacia flavescens* (red twine).

The coral pea tree: *Hardenbergia retusa* (white twine).

Leaf water carrier



E.13351. Leaf water carrier. Collected Cape Bedford, 1903. 62×21 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

This scoop shaped carrier was made from the sheath stalk of a palm leaf, and was quick and easy to make. A piece was cut from the sheath stalk, and the base of the stalk became the mouth of the scoop. The cut end was pleated and tied with handspun bark fibre string to make a handle.

It was used to carry water just a short way. Roth said he found leaf water carriers in use on the Endeavour, Bloomfield and Tully Rivers, at Cape Bedford, and on the Starcke and Palmer Rivers.

The local Cape Bedford people called this leaf water carrier birla.

Collection information

There is one leaf water carrier from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1903.

E.13351 Roth's collection number is WT.43. It is 62 cm long and 21 cm wide.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4004M, frame 35.

Useful written information

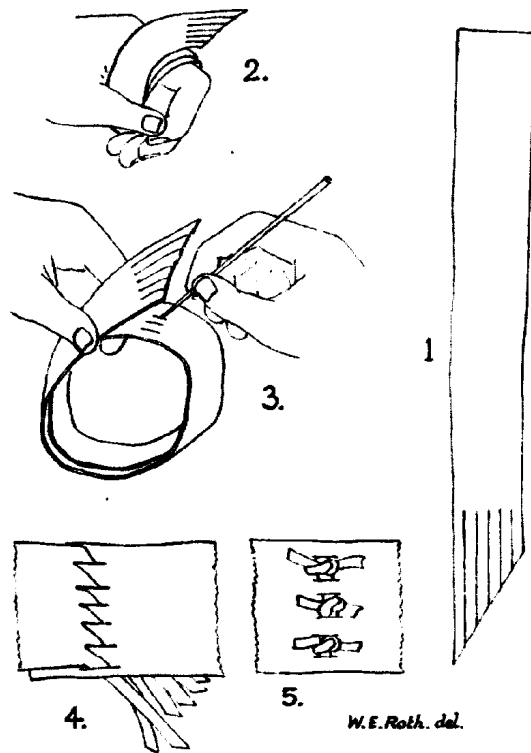
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 31.

Scientific name of material used

The water carrier was made from the palm leaf sheath stalks from *Archontophoenix alexandrae*.

Pandanus armbands

E.14729. *Pandanus* armband.
Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. 8×9
cm.



Information from Roth's Bulletins

To make an armband

1. A strip of *Pandanus* leaf was cut straight at one end and at an angle at the other.
2. The angled end was split into four to six strips.
3. The straight end was rolled over the hand a couple of times, then removed and held between the thumb and first finger.
4. Some small holes were made through the two to three thicknesses of leaf with a sharply pointed stick.
5. Each strip was pulled through its own hole and each pair knotted underneath with a "granny knot", and their ends trimmed off. It was fairly easy to pull the strips through because the main strip has been cut at an angle to as to give a fine point to the tags.

Roth did not say how and when the sharp barbs on the sides and centre of the *Pandanus* leaf were removed.

Roth's drawings show how these armbands were made. Sometimes, said Roth, it was too much trouble to make an armband properly, so the ends of the strips would just be tied together.

These armbands were made and worn by men only, for decoration and when attending ceremonies.

Pandanus strip armbands were found all over Cape York Peninsula in Roth's day, down to the Staaten River on the Gulf coast and the Bloomfield River on the east coast. Roth made special mention of the way armbands were split and tied at Cape Bedford, the Musgrave, Morehead and Middle Palmer Rivers, and at Maytown.

At Cape Bedford the armband was called monggan.

Collection information

There are two *Pandanus* armbands from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14729 Roth's collection number is G.74. The armband is 8 cm in diameter and is 9 cm wide.

E.14730 Roth's collection number cannot be read. The armband is 7 cm in diameter and is 8 cm wide.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both *Pandanus* armbands.

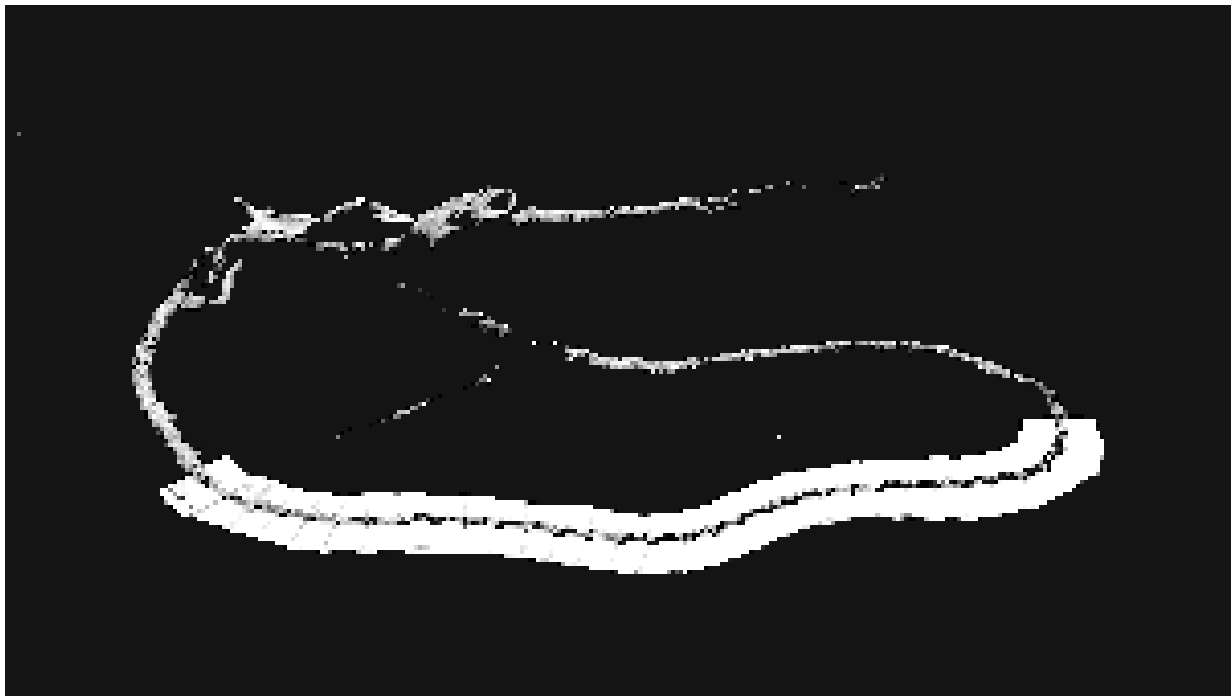
E.14729 negative sheet 4180M, frame 1413.

E.14730 negative sheet 4180M, frame 1414.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 11. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 14. Bulletin 10, 1910, p. 43.

Shell forehead bands



E.14553. Nautilus shell forehead band. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898.
Length 74 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

When working with shell, it was important that it was fresh. If it was an old shell, it had to be soaked in water, otherwise it would not split in a clean fracture. The outer layer of the shell was removed by putting it on the ground, face down, and covering it carefully with hot ashes. This made the surface easier to remove when it was found on a stone and splashed with water.

A hole was drilled in the centre of each rectangular piece of *Nautilus* shell to make up the pieces for the shell forehead band. A double strand of handspun bark fibre string was threaded through the hole, pulling the pieces of shell together so they overlapped.

Roth did not say what the people at Cape Bedford used to drill the hole in the shells. However

he did talk of a kangaroo tooth drill at Princess Charlotte Bay. The incisor was stuck into a short handle and held there with handspun bark fibre string and ironwood gum cement. It was used to drill holes in pieces of shell making a necklace (as well as drilling holes in spearthrowers to fix the peg at one end). Maybe a tool like this was used at Cape Bedford.

At Cape Bedford, the Bloomfield River and at Princess Charlotte Bay, pieces of shell were worn as forehead bands by men, and as necklaces by women. By the time they had been traded to the Middle Palmer River area via the Musgrave River, they were worn by men and women as necklaces only.

Occasionally oval-shaped shell necklaces were found on the eastern coast at Cairns, Cardwell and on the Tully River, but Roth thought they had been traded in from the Gulf of Carpentaria via the Ranges and the Mitchell River.

The Guugu-Yimithirr people of Cape Bedford called this necklace *dirl-ngar*.

Collection information

There are two shell forehead bands from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14553 The forehead band is made of 32 rectangular pieces of *Nautilus* shell and is 74 cm long. Each segment is 2×1 cm.

E.14554 The forehead band is made of 44 rectangular pieces of *Nautilus* shell and is 70 cm long. Each segment is 8×1 cm.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available for one forehead band, the other forehead band is unable to be located at present.

E.14553 negative sheet 4158M, frame 1237.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 14. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 14. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 24–25, and 27. Bulletin 15, 1910, p. 27.

Scientific name of material used

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

E.14478. Orchid stem necklace.
Collected Cape Bedford, 1898.
Length 223 cm.



Orchid stem necklace

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth refers to these necklaces in the Bulletins as grass reed or grass bugle necklaces. Necklaces such as this one were sometimes made of orchid stems or reeds cut into pieces the length of a bugle bead and threaded on handspun bark fibre string and tied at the ends. A necklace could up to 360 cm or even reach 480 cm. Each stem was cut into pieces up to

1 cm long, using the edge of a sharp mussel shell or a stone knife.

Long necklaces could be worn by either winding them round and round the neck, or by rolling them into a thick loop and tying their ends with string. Sometimes the stems were threaded on a number of shorter handspun bark fibre strings and a tying string was attached at either end so it could be worn as a single string necklace.

Roth said that these necklaces were made all over Queensland. On the east coast, from the Endeavour River to as far south as Keppel Island, they were made as one long string of beads. On the Gulf side of Cape York Peninsula they were made in necklaces of many strands.

The necklaces generally were made and worn only by women, except at the Tully River, where Roth said both men and women wore them.

Thomas Petrie, a friend of Roth's living in Brisbane at the time, said that these necklaces also were made by local Brisbane Aboriginals. Usually old men and women made them, but they were mostly worn by men.

Roth said the Guugu-Yimithirr people of Cape Bedford called these necklaces wanggar. Wanggar was the name given to the button orchid, this necklace and to beads in general.

Collection information

There is one necklace from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14478 Roth's collection number is G.91. The necklace is 223 cm long. Each piece of orchid stem is about 1 cm long. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "Wanggar of the Koko-yimidir tribe."

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4149M, frame 1162.

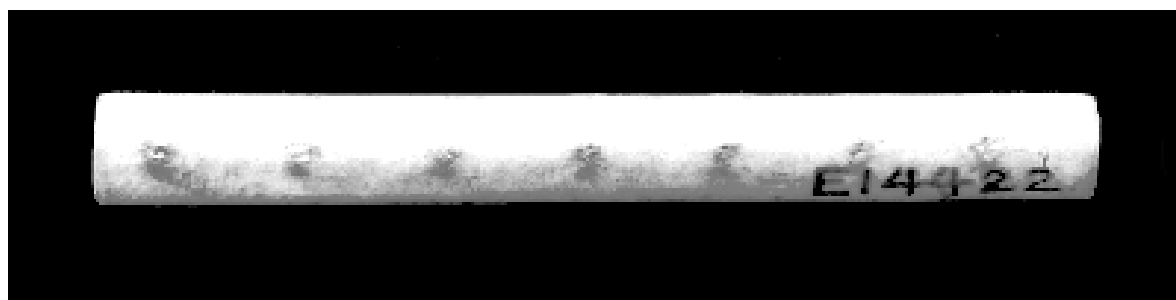
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 2, 1901, pp. 5, 6, 13, 14. Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 33–34.

Scientific name of material used

The necklace was made from the Button-orchid: *Dischidia nummularia*.

Bone nose pins



E.14422. Bone nose pin. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. 13×1 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said nose pins could be made from almost anything and came in many different shapes and sizes.

The tool used to pierce the nose was a pointed piece of bone or hardened wood.

In Roth's time, on the Pennefather River, the Endeavour and Bloomfield Rivers, Cape Bedford, and the whole of north west Queensland, both men and women had their noses pierced. At Princess Charlotte Bay, it was usually only the men who had their noses pierced. At Cape Grafton and on the Wellesley Islands, it was men only. Roth said that in Rockhampton, if men wanted to have their noses pierced they did so, but it was not compulsory. At the Bloomfield River, Rockhampton and around Brisbane, nose piercing was sometimes connected with initiation ceremonies.

On the Bloomfield River Roth saw a flower stalk from a banksia tree being worn as a nose pin, and at Cape Grafton, a piece of wood.

The Cape Bedford and Cape Grafton people called this nose bone tabul.

Collection information

There are four bone nose pins from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898. Only one nose pin has Roth's own collection number written on the object.

- E.14419 The nose pin is 16×1 cm.
- E.14420 The nose pin is 14×1 cm, and is possibly a bird bone.
- E.14421 The nose pin is 10×1 cm.
- E.14422 Roth's collection number is G.156. It is 13×1 cm, and is possibly a bird bone.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all nose pins.

- E.14419 negative sheet 4141M, frame 1102.
- E.14420 negative sheet 4141M, frame 1103.
- E.14421 negative sheet 4141M, frame 1104.
- E.14422 negative sheet 4142M, frame 1105.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 29–30.

Skirts

Information from Roth's Bulletins

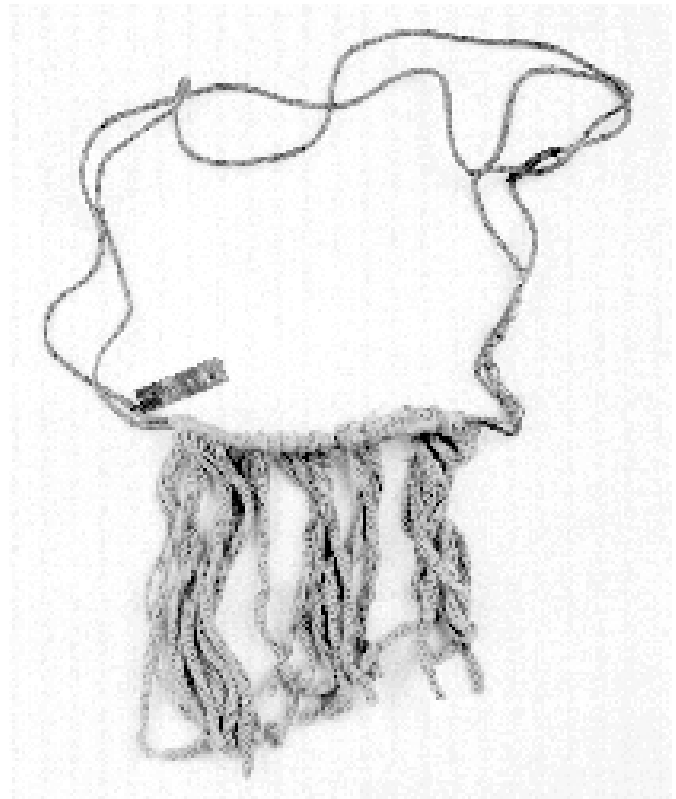
According to Roth there were three stages in making a handspun bark fibre skirt:

1. Making the top string (figure 3).
2. Forming the loops. The top string was stretched between two sticks (figure 4).
3. Rolling each loop on the outer thigh to form a tassel (figure 5).

This way of fixing the loops to the top string was found only at Cape Bedford, Cooktown, Maytown, Princess Charlotte Bay and the Middle Palmer River.

Roth's comments for other regions suggest these skirts were worn only by women.

The Cape Bedford people called this skirt yir-pi.



E.14695. Bark fibre and possum fur skirt. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. Length 40 cm.

Collection information

There are two skirts from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.14694 The total length of the skirt is 43 cm. The tassels each measure 7×10 cm.
 E.14695 The total length of the skirt is 40 cm. The tassels each measure 12×15 cm. It is made of a combination of handspun bark fibre twine and possum fur.

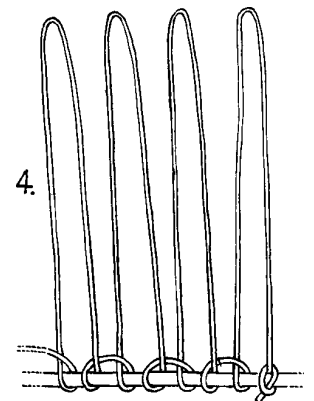
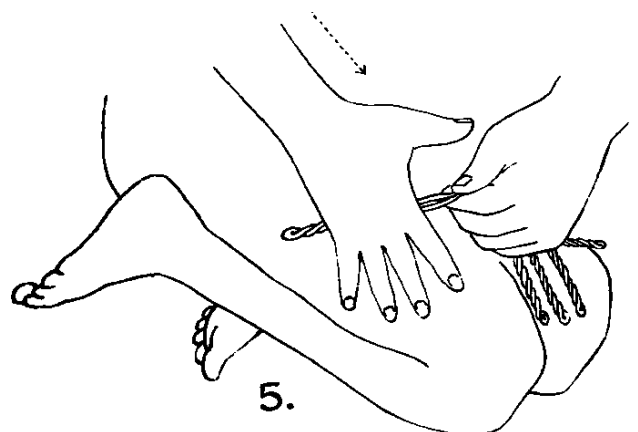
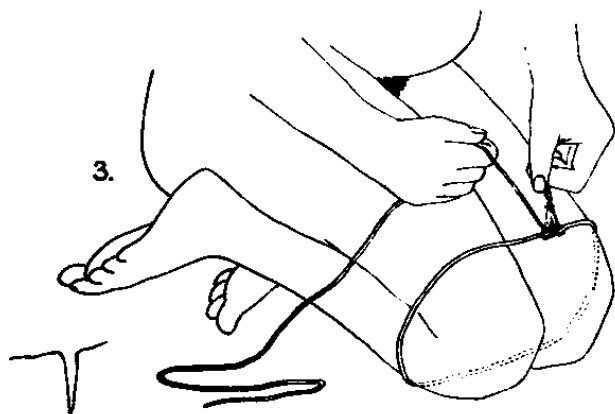
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both skirts.

- E.14694 negative sheet frame
 E.14695 negative sheet 4176M, frame 1379.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 9–10, and 12. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 14. Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 39–40.



Food-shells from edible molluscs

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said most shellfish were roasted in the ashes, but a few were eaten raw.

Collection information

Roth collected 15 shells from the Cape Bedford region. These shells do not form part of the original Roth collection purchase of 1905. The shells were given to the Museum by Roth and registered on 5 February 1900.

Charles Hedley, who at this time was the conchologist, or shell specialist, at the Museum and a close friend of Roth, identified the shells for him.

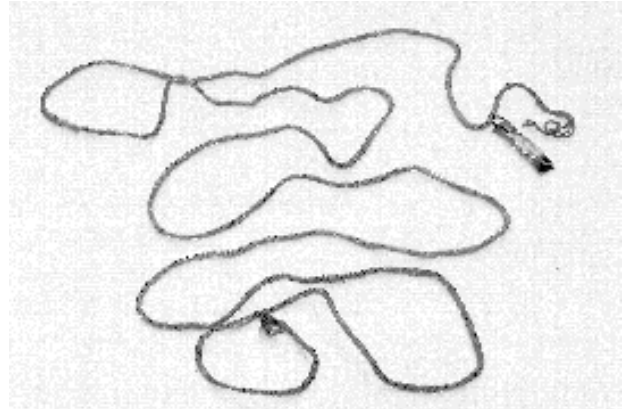
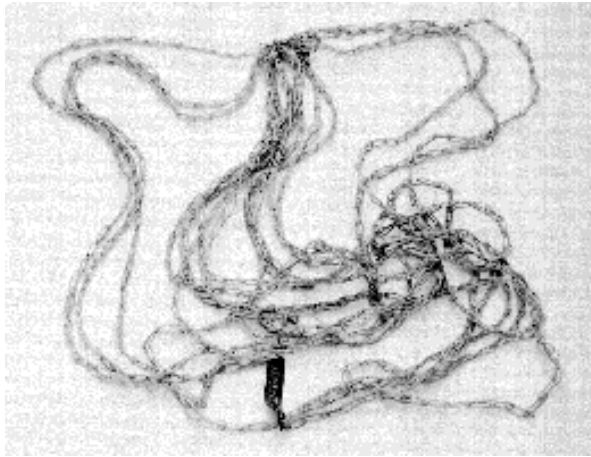
- E.9005 Roth's collection number is 58. He said these shells were found at Cape Bedford and the Bloomfield River. The Cape Bedford people called them woggo. Its scientific name then was *Arca scapha*, but is now *Anadara antiquata*. This is also listed in the Bloomfield River section of the *Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland, Volume 1*, by Kate Khan.
- E.9006 Roth's collection number is 59. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it manigai. Its scientific name then was *Pterocera lambis*, but is now *Lambis lambis*.
- E.9007 Roth's collection number is 60. Its scientific name then was *Meretrix erycina*, but is now *Callista lilacina*.
- E.9008 Roth's collection number is 61. Its scientific name then was *Venus puerpera*, but is now *Periglypta puerpera*.
- E.9010 Roth's collection number is 63. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it dobbi. Its scientific name then was *Trochus niloticus*, but is now *Tectus niloticus*.
- E.9015 Roth's collection number is 69. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called wandi-ngan. Its scientific name then was *Purpura hippocastaneum*, but is now *Thais luteostoma*.
- E.9016 Roth's collection number is 70. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it ta-galgal. Its scientific name then was *Potamides semisulcatus*, but is now *Terebralia sulcata*.
- E.9018 Roth's collection number is 72. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it kana-ungkun. Its scientific name is *Haliotis ovina*.
- E.9020 Roth's collection number is 74. These shells were found at Cape Bedford and the Bloomfield River. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called them barmor. Its scientific name then was *Cytherea gibbia*, but is now *Gafrarium tumidum*. It is also listed in the Bloomfield River section of the *Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland, Volume 1*, by Kate Khan.
- E.9021 Roth's collection number is 75. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it wa-dur. Its scientific name then was *Potamides fuscum*, but is now *Telescopium telescopium*.
- E.9025 Roth's collection number is 79. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it bai-tchen. Its scientific name is *Monodonta labio*.
- E.9028 There is no Roth collection number. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it moku-burnu. Its scientific name is *Nerita costata*.
- E.9029 Roth's collection number is 83. The Guugu-Yimithirr of Cape Bedford called it da-ra. Its scientific name then was *Turbo porphyrites*, but is

- now *Turbo cinereus*.
 E.9032 Roth's collection number is 87. Its scientific name then was *Spondylus victoriae*, but is now *Spondylus wrightianus*.
 E.9033 Roth's collection number is 88. Its scientific name is *Murex aduncospinosus*.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, pp. 17–18.

Mourning strings



E.13754 (left): chainwork mourning string; collected Cape Bedford, 1898; length 200 cm. E.13765 (right): overcast mourning string; collected Cape Bedford, 1898; length 154 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The string chains were made of handspun bark fibre twine and could be several metres long, each link in the chain being about 2 cm long. Roth's drawings show how the first loop was fixed either (a) in a knot at the beginning of the string or (b) twisted between the two plies of string. The knot at the other end (z) stopped the chain unravelling.

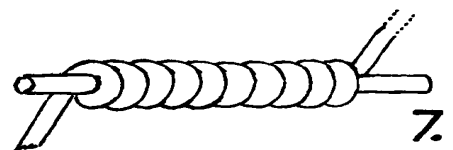
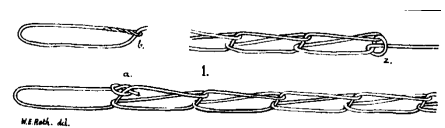
Two of the Cape Bedford mourning strings were made in this way (E.13754 and E.13757).

The chain mourning strings were worn either over one shoulder, across to, and under the opposite armpit, or else around the neck. One person could wear three different sets at the same time. In Bulletin 1, Roth says the mourning chains could be worn by both men and women. Later, in Bulletin 9, he says they were worn only by women. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register for 1905 states that the overcast mourning strings were worn by men around the waist. Mourners also covered themselves with white clay.

These chain mourning strings were worn by Aboriginal people at Princess Charlotte Bay, Cooktown and Cape Bedford.

The other two mourning strings (E.13764 and E.13765) were similar to those from Maytown and the Middle Palmer River. The core or centre of the string was bound over or overcast with handspun bark fibre twine. Roth's drawing shows an example of overcasting.

In Bulletin 9, Roth recorded a detailed account of a burial ceremony at Cape Bedford. It was



written for Roth in the Koko-yimidir language by Magdalen Mulun, an Aboriginal woman who was living at Hope Vale Mission. The English translation was done by the Lutheran Missionaries, Reverends G.H. Schwarz and W. Poland.

Roth said the chainwork mourning string was called bulng-gar.

Collection information

There are four mourning strings from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.13754 The chain mourning string is 200 cm long. It is made of handspun bark fibre twine formed into a series of long loose chain stitches.
- E.13757 The chain mourning string is 136 cm long. It is joined at one end with beeswax.
- E.13764 The overcast mourning string is broken in two places. The pieces are 108 cm long and 333 cm long. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "overcast mourning string worn by men around the waist; from Cape Bedford and Maytown."
- E.13765 The overcast mourning string is 154 cm long. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "overcast mourning string worn by men around the waist; from Cape Bedford and Maytown."

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all four mourning strings.

- E.13754 negative sheet 4058M, frame 437.
- E.13757 negative sheet 4058M, frame 440.
- E.13764 negative sheet 4059M, frame 447.
- E.13765 negative sheet 4059M, frame 448.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 11–12. Bulletin 2, 1901, pp. 14–15. Bulletin 9, 1907, pp. 371–384.

Pigment

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth did not write much about the white pigment from Cape Bedford. He did say the clay was powdered up fine by hammering it between two stones, mixing it with water and then drying it in the sun.

The local people called it garmai.

Collection information

Roth collected one sample of white pigment from Cape Bedford. It does not form part of the original Roth collection purchase of 1905.

- E.8979 This sample of white pigment was given to the Australian Museum by Roth in 1900.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 14–15.

Scientific names of materials used

Roth said white pigment was obtained from two sources at Cape Bedford: pipe clay-kaolin, hydrous silicate of alumina; carbonate of lime and magnesia. Both were called garmai by the local Cape Bedford people.

Shell spoon



E.13864. Freshwater mussel shell spoon. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898.
10×8 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Freshwater mussel shells were often used as spoons to scoop up food and water. They were found both on the coast and inland.

Oval pieces of *Nautilus*, melon or baler shell also were used as spoons on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula. Roth had difficulty deciding whether the shell spoons found on the Bloomfield River and at Cape Bedford should be called spoons or chest ornaments. The spoons sometimes had holes drilled at one end, with handspun bark fibre string threaded through, stuck with beeswax, and hung around the neck.

Roth found these shell spoons also on the Laura and Middle Palmer Rivers.

Roth said the local people called this mussel shell spoon warbo-parka, the same name given to the shell.

Collection information

There is one shell spoon from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.13864 Roth's collection number is MD.33. The freshwater mussel shell spoon is 10×8 cm. There is no sign of the shell being worked in any way.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4072M, frame 547.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 14. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 29. Bulletin 15, 1910, p. 35.

Scientific names of materials used

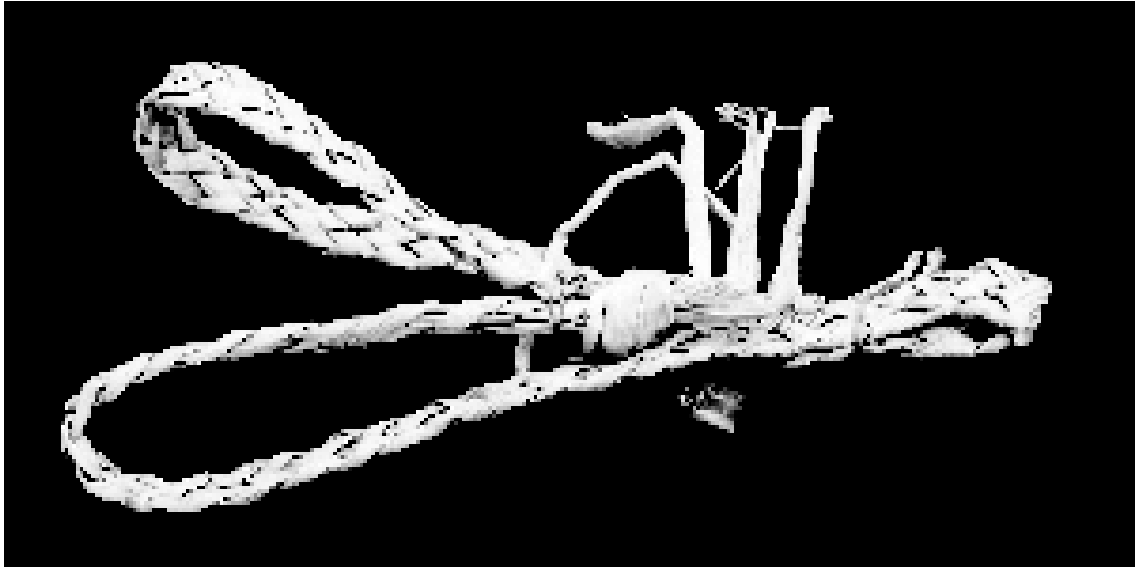
Roth said the freshwater mussel shell used was *Unio* sp., now known as *Velesunio wilsonii*,

but the freshwater mussel shell spoon in the collection was identified in 1995 by Philip Colman of the Malacology department as *Alathyria pertexta wardi*.

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

Melon or baler shell: *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora*.

Plaited *Pandanus* strips



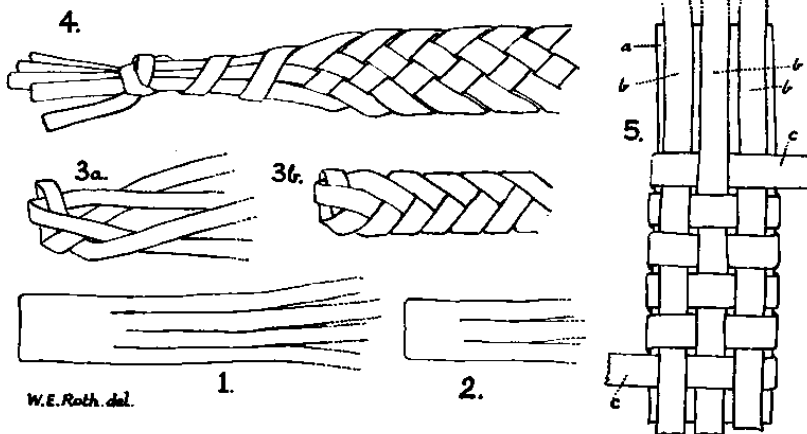
E.13820. Plaited *Pandanus* strip. Collected Cape Bedford, date unknown.
74.5×1.4 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that at Cape Bedford, boys played with these plaited *Pandanus* strips, but he did not say what they actually did with them. Magdalen Mulun, a young Aboriginal woman living at Cape Bedford Mission wrote him a letter about plaitwork.

You sent us another (kind of) plait-string, and asked whether we plaited like it, and why we did so. (In reply) we girls don't plait like that. But the boys do. Though they only do it for amusement...

Pandanus leaves were torn into strips and left to dry in the sun or near the heat of a fire. This made the strands firmer and easier to plait.



W.E. Roth. del.

Plate V. Plait-work.

Depending on the width of plait required, from three to five strands were used. They were tied together with a knot at one end to hold the plait.

The plaited *Pandanus* strip could be up to 45 cm long and 2.5 cm or more wide.

Although these toys were usually made from *Pandanus* strips, Roth said he collected one from Cape Bedford that was made from the folded blades of a blood root tree.

Roth said that plaitwork such as this was found at the Morehead and Musgrave Rivers as well as Cape Bedford.

Collection information

There are two plaited *Pandanus* strips in the Roth collection from Cape Bedford. No collection date has been given.

E.13819 Five strand *Pandanus* leaf plaited strip is 59.6 cm long and 1.3 cm wide.

E.13820 Five strand *Pandanus* leaf plaited strip is 74.5 cm long and 1.4 cm wide.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both plaited strip playthings.

E.13819 negative sheet 4066M, frame 502.

E.13820 negative sheet 4066M, frame 503.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 11. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 32. Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 13.

Scientific names of materials used

Pandanus sp.; Blood root tree: *Haemodorum coccineum*.

Spinning top

Information from Roth's Bulletins

A small wooden splinter was passed through a flattened piece of beeswax to make a small spinning top. Sometimes dried fruits also were used.

The top was spun in the usual way, by rolling the stick between the thumb and middle finger.

Roth said the local Cape Bedford people called this top mamandur.

Collection information

There is one spinning top from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1899.

E.13810 This top is made from a dried fruit. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "made of fruit of *Thespesia populnea*." The top cannot be located in the collection at present.

Photographic information

No photograph is available for the spinning top.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 15. Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 18.

Scientific name of material used

The dried fruit, *Thespesia populnea* is now known as *Thespesia populnea*.

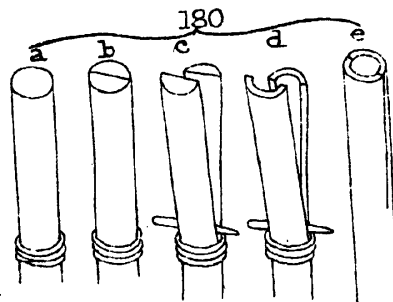
Spears

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Most spears were made of two or more sections, the butt, near the hand, and the shaft, to which the points or barbs were attached.

Roth explained how a spear was made in the Cape Bedford, Bloomfield River, Princess Charlotte Bay and Middle Palmer River regions. He said the time it took to make a spear depended on the sort of timber used.

1. First the wood was cut from the tree and shaped into the desired width and length. Some handspun bark fibre string was then tightly tied around the butt end of the spear about 10 cm from the end. This end was split open with a piece of shell. The wedge was kept open with a peg. Roth's drawings help to make these steps easier to understand.
2. Using a bone awl (a bird or animal leg bone 15 cm to 30 cm long, chipped and ground into shape), the wood was scraped out on each side of the split. This left a circular hole when the peg and twine were removed. Roth's drawings show how this was done.
3. The shaft section of the spear was now fixed to the butt section with gum cement and the joint bound round and round with either handspun bark fibre string or, better still, kangaroo tendon. This was held in place with more gum cement and finally smoothed over with a smoothing board. This was a thin, oval piece of ironwood, about 15 cm long, a comfortable size to be held in the hand. It was like a putty knife. It was used to smooth over the warmed gum cement on spears. The smoothing board was always greased with forehead perspiration before being used.
4. The butt end of all spears thrown with spearthrowers, except bamboo ones, was bound with handspun bark fibre string and coated with gum cement. Once this was done, the bone awl was used to make the hole to receive the spearthrower peg.



The general name for spears in these areas, and at Cape Bedford was *kalka*. Cape Bedford people called the smoothing board *dorunggor*.

Roth listed nine different types of spears made at Cape Bedford. The types of spears with registered numbers beside them indicate they are in the Museum collection.

- a. A single or multi-pointed stingray spine spear, called *mu-lon*. Registered numbers E.15092, E.15095 and E.15096.
- b. A spear with many stingray spine points. Registered numbers E.15078, E.15080, E.15082, E.15083, E.15085, E.15086, E.15087, E.15089.
- c. A quartz-tipped spear, called *ku-yan*.
- d. A many pronged fishing spear, called *yin-ba*.
- e. A long grass-tree spear called *wur-poi*, with a short wooden shaft segment and barb, and a long butt segment.
- f. A long reed spear called *nambar*, with a short wooden shaft segment and barb, and a long butt segment.
- g. A long reed spear called *do-war*, with a short, black palm point.
- h. A spear called *mu-rongal*, with a long wooden shaft segment and barb, and a short grass-tree butt segment. Registered numbers E.15052, E.15055, E.15056, E.15058, E.15059, E.15066, E.15067, E.15069, E.15071, E.15072, E.15075, E.15076, E.15077.

- i. A long reed spear called mon-gil mon-gil, with a short hardwood shaft segment and wooden barbs. Registered number E.15088.

The spears in the Australian Museum Roth collection are described in the following pages.

(a) Single or multi-pointed stingray spine spears



E.15096. Spear with a single stingray spine. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. Length 285 cm.

Spears such as these were made in the usual way as described in the introductory pages on spears in general. The stingray spine or spines pointed forward from the short shaft segment of wattle or local black palm called do-war. The long butt segment, nearer the hand, was usually made of bamboo or reed.

At Cape Bedford these spears were called mu-lon. Roth thought this name probably came from the word mollun, used for stingray at Butcher's Hill.

Roth says these spears were used at Cape Bedford and Princess Charlotte Bay.

Collection information

There are three spears, one with a bunch of stingray spines and one with a single stingray spine, collected by Roth from Cape Bedford in 1898.

- E.15092 Roth's collection number is SP.61. It is 263 cm long. The bunch of stingray spines is missing, one only remains at the end of the spear. The shaft of the spear is painted red and white. The spear weighs 205 g.
- E.15095 Roth's collection number is SP.57. It is 26 cm long. The single stingray spine has been broken. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "pointed, with single stingray spine". The shaft of the spear is painted in red and white bands. The spear weighs 250 g.
- E.15096 Roth's collection number is SP.59. It is 285 cm long. A single stingray spine is attached to the tip of the spear with handspun bark fibre twine and held with gum cement. The spear shaft is decorated with bands of red and white painted bands. The spear weighs 110 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for the three spears.

- E.15092 negative sheet 4225M, frame 1776.
 E.15095 negative sheet 8719M, frames 1–3.
 E.15096 negative sheet 4226M, frame 1780.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 8. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 15. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 12–14, and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 192–194.

Scientific names of materials used

Wattle: *Acacia holocarpa*. The local black palm: *Drymophloeus normanbyi* now called *Normanbya normanbyi*.

(b) Spears barbed with stingray spines



E.15083. Spear with five stingray spines. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898.
Length 272 cm.

These spears were made in the usual way as described at the beginning of this section. In these spears, barbs made from stingray spines were placed one behind the other, pointing backwards. The long butt segment nearest the hand end was made of reed. The short shaft segment was made of black palm or hardwood, known as dekara. These spears were made in the same way at the Bloomfield River and at Princess Charlotte Bay.

Roth did not say how these spears were used.

Collection information

There are eight spears collected by Roth from Cape Bedford in 1898.

- E.15078 Roth's collection number is SP.67. The spear is 267 cm long. Five stingray spines are bound to the shaft segment of the spear with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The shaft segment is decorated with bands of red and white pigment. The spear weighs 177 g.
- E.15080 Roth's collection number is SP.64. The spear is 274 cm long. Three stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and painted in bands of red and white. The spear weighs 215 g.
- E.15082 Roth's collection number is SP.63. The spear is 287 cm long. Five stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with bands of white pigment. The spear weighs 227 g.
- E.15083 Roth's collection number is SP.68. The spear is 272 cm long. Five stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with bands of red and white pigment. The spear weighs 198 g.
- E.15085 Roth's collection number is SP.65. The spear is 281 cm long. Two stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with bands of white pigment. There were originally four stingray spines, but two are missing. The spear weighs 195 g.
- E.15086 Roth's collection number is SP.62. The spear is 289 cm long. Three stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with bands of red and white pigment. There were originally four stingray spine barbs, but one is missing. The spear weighs 227 g.
- E.15087 Roth's collection number is SP.66. The spear is 273 cm long. Four stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with bands of red and white pigment. The spear weighs 179 g.
- E.15089 Roth's collection number is SP.69. The spear is 271 cm long. Five stingray spines are attached to the shaft segment of the spear with sinew and gum cement, and decorated with white pigment. The spear weighs 211 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all eight spears.

- E.15078 negative sheet 4224M, frame 1762.
- E.15080 negative sheet 4224M, frame 1764.
- E.15082 negative sheet 4224M, frame 1766.
- E.15083 negative sheet 4224M, frame 1767.
- E.15085 negative sheet 4224M, frame 1769.
- E.15086 negative sheet 4225M, frame 1770.
- E.15087 negative sheet 4225M, frame 1771.
- E.15089 negative sheet 4225M, frame 1773.

Reference to written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 8. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 12–14, 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 192–194.

Scientific name of material used

The local black palm, *Drymophloeus normanbyi* is now called *Normanbya normanbyi*.

(h) Single-barbed spears



E.15056. Single-barbed spear. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. Length 286 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

These spears were made in a similar manner to that described at the front of this section on spears. Roth said the local Aboriginal people called this spear mu-rongal. These spears have long wooden shaft segments and short butt segments.

Collection information

Thirteen single-barbed hardwood spears were collected by Roth from Cape Bedford in 1898.

- E.15052 Roth's collection number is SP.82. Total length of the spear is 259 cm. The butt segment is 43 cm long and the wooden barb at the end of the shaft segment is 3 cm long. The spear is decorated with a red and white band. The spear weighs 335 g.
- E.15055 Roth's collection number is SP.75. Total length of the spear is 297 cm. The butt segment is 93 cm long. Both the tip and end are broken. The spear weighs 251 g.
- E.15056 Roth's collection number is SP.70. Total length of the spear is 286 cm. The butt segment is 87 cm long. The shaft segment and barb are broken. The spear is decorated with a red and white painted band. The spear weighs 212 g.
- E.15058 Roth's collection number is SP.72. Total length of the spear is 264 cm.

- The butt segment is broken near the centre. The spear is decorated with red and white painted bands. The spear weighs 198 g.
- E.15059 Roth's collection number is SP.71. Total length of the spear is 279 cm. The butt segment is 71 cm long. The spear is decorated with red and white painted bands. The spear weighs 188 g.
- E.15066 Roth's collection number is SP.84. Total length of the spear is 264 cm. The butt segment is 64 cm long. The spear is decorated with a red and white painted band. The spear weighs 352 g.
- E.15067 Roth's collection number is SP.74. Total length of the spear is 293 cm. The butt segment is 90 cm long. The tip has been broken off near the barbs. The spear is broken at the butt end also. There are faint white bands painted at a slant along the butt segment and red and white painted bands near the barbs. The spear weighs 219 g.
- E.15069 Roth's collection number is SP.80. Total length of the spear is 257 cm. The butt segment is 96 cm long. The spear is decorated with white paint. The spear weighs 306 g.
- E.15071 Roth's collection number is SP.83. Total length of the spear is 262 cm. The butt segment is 60 cm long. The spear is decorated with red and white painted bands. The spear weighs 323 g.
- E.15072 Roth's collection number is SP.81. Total length of the spear is 274 cm. The butt segment is 66 cm long. The tip of the spear is missing. The spear is decorated with red and white paint. The spear weighs 362 g.
- E.15075 Roth's collection number is SP.78. Total length of the spear is 270 cm. The butt segment is 66 cm long. The tip of the spear is missing. The spear is decorated with red and white paint. The spear weighs 326 g.
- E.15076 Roth's collection number is SP.76. Total length of the spear is 289 cm. The butt segment is 76 cm long. The spear is decorated with red and white paint. The spear weighs 203 g.
- E.15077 Roth's collection number is SP.73. Total length of the spear is 267 cm. The butt segment is 90 cm long. The spear is decorated with white paint. The spear weighs 192 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all thirteen spears.

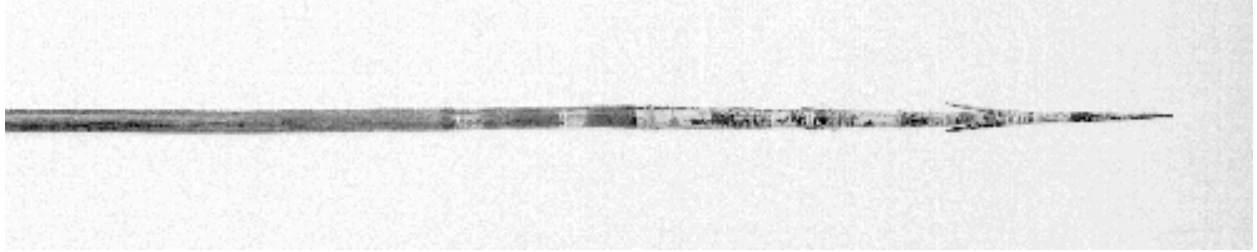
- E.15052 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1736.
E.15055 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1739.
E.15056 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1740.
E.15058 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1742.
E.15059 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1743.
E.15066 negative sheet 4222M, frame 1750.
E.15067 negative sheet 4222M, frame 1751.
E.15069 negative sheet 4222M, frame 1753.
E.15071 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1755.
E.15072 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1756.
E.15075 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1759.
E.17076 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1760.
E.15077 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1761.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 8. Bulletin 2, 1901, p. 15. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 12–14, and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 192–194.

Scientific name of material used

Wood used for the shaft segment of the spears was called *Acacia holocarpa*. There exists some confusion about whether that species should now be called *Acacia julifera* or *Acacia calyculata*.

(i) A long reed spear with wooden barbs

E.15088. Long reed spear with only one complete wooden barb. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. Length 289 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that at times an unusual spear was found, such as this one, which seemed to be a locally made one. He was unable to find out much about it, except that it was known as mon-gil mon-gil, and only found at Cape Bedford.

Collection information

There is one spear collected by Roth at Cape Bedford in 1898.

E.15088 Roth's collection number is SP.59. The total length of the spear is 289 cm. The length of the hardwood shaft segment is 89 cm. Wooden barbs are tied to the pointed end of the spear with sinew and held with gum cement, but only one complete barb remains. The spear is decorated with red and white painted stripes. A note in the Anthropology Department's register for 1905 states "lateral row of stingray barbs" but this description does not match the spear. The spear weighs 191 g.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4225M, frame 1772.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, p. 8. Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 12–14, and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 192–194.

Spearthrowers

E.14320. Straight spearthrower. Collected Cape Bedford, 1898. 94×5 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The ironwood spearthrower had a straight long blade and a short peg at one end with a slight nick in one side.

The peg was made from wood from the quinine bush. It was not flattened or drilled, but was tied on with animal tendon to two holes drilled in the blade. The peg was held secure with gum cement. Roth's drawings show how this was done.

The gum cement commonly used was from the ironwood tree. Gum from the bastard beefwood tree was preferred if available, as it lasted longer.

To get the ironwood gum cement, roots of a young ironwood tree were dug up, and pieces of root were cut away. The outer sticky covering on the root was stripped off by pulling a piece of bark straight up the piece of root. The collected sticky mass was roasted over a fire and hammered between two stones until soft. It was then left to cool and harden. When cold, it set very hard, but could easily be softened in a fire.

The best gum cement was taken from roots of young bastard beefwood trees. It was impossible to remove gum from roots of old trees. Lengths of root 25 cm to 30 cm long were cut and carefully heated over a fire. The outer sticky bark was scraped off with a sharp-edged stone. These little scraped off chips were tied up in a sheet of tea-tree bark and the bundle was baked for about 10 minutes. When it was opened, the sticky bits were removed and pressed together with fingers and hands into a sticky lump. This lump was then ready to be pounded between two stones which had been greased with oil from a nut.

After the hammering the lump of gum was stuck onto any convenient stick, and held over a fire. It was again hammered and heated for some time, until it was soft enough to use. It was the strongest and most long-lasting of all gum cements.

The hand grip end of the spearthrower was either left plain or else two pieces of melon shell were stuck on with beeswax, and used as a hand grip. Sometimes a thin piece of wood, bent over and held in place was used instead of a shell. Roth's drawings show the different hand grips.

Finally the spearthrower was polished with leaves from a fig tree.

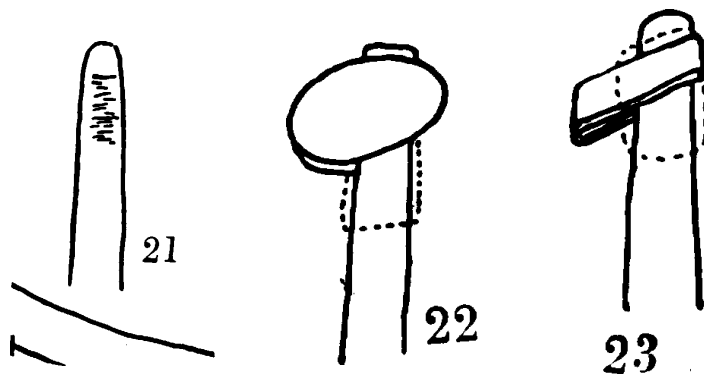
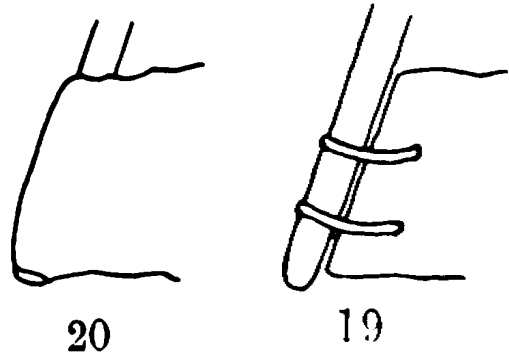
The spearthrower, held between the first and second fingers, was used to throw spears great distances when hunting and fighting.

Men used these spearthrowers at Cape Bedford, on the Endeavour and Bloomfield Rivers and at Butcher's Hill. Roth said spearthrowers were not found on the eastern coastal districts from Townsville to Rockhampton. According to a friend of Roth's, Thomas Petrie, spearthrowers were unknown in the Brisbane area, but Aboriginal people had spearthrowers at Charters Towers.

Collection information

There are six straight spearthrowers from Cape Bedford, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14315 Roth's collection number is W.25. It is 87 cm long and 4 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The hand grip seems to be made from a thick lump of gum cement. The spearthrower weighs 28 g.



- E.14316 Roth's collection number is W.26. It is 86 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The hand grip is made of two pieces of wood held on with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The spearthrower weighs 34 g.
- E.14317 Roth's collection number is W.27. It is 90 cm long and 4 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The hand grip is made with a piece of wood bent over and held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The spearthrower weighs 30 g.
- E.14318 Roth's collection number is W.29. It is 86 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. Gum cement is smeared at the end held in the hand but there is no hand grip. The spearthrower weighs 30 g.
- E.14319 Roth's collection number is W.30. It is 93 cm long and 4 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The hand grip is made of two pieces of melon shell held on with gum cement. The spearthrower presently cannot be weighed as it is on display in the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia at the Australian Museum.
- E.14320 Roth's collection number is W.31. It is 94 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. The grooved peg is held with handspun bark fibre twine and gum cement. The hand grip is made of two pieces of melon shell held on with gum cement. The spearthrower weighs 40 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all six spearthrowers.

- E.14315 negative sheet 4128M, frame 998.
 E.14316 negative sheet 4128M, frame 999.
 E.14317 negative sheet 4128M, frame 1000.
 E.14318 negative sheet 4129M, frame 1001.
 E.14319 negative sheet 4129M, frame 1002.
 E.14320 negative sheet 4129M, frame 1003.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 9, 11–14. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 194–200.

Scientific names of materials used

Ironwood tree: *Erythrophloeum labouchei*, now known as *Erythrophloeum chlorostachyum*.

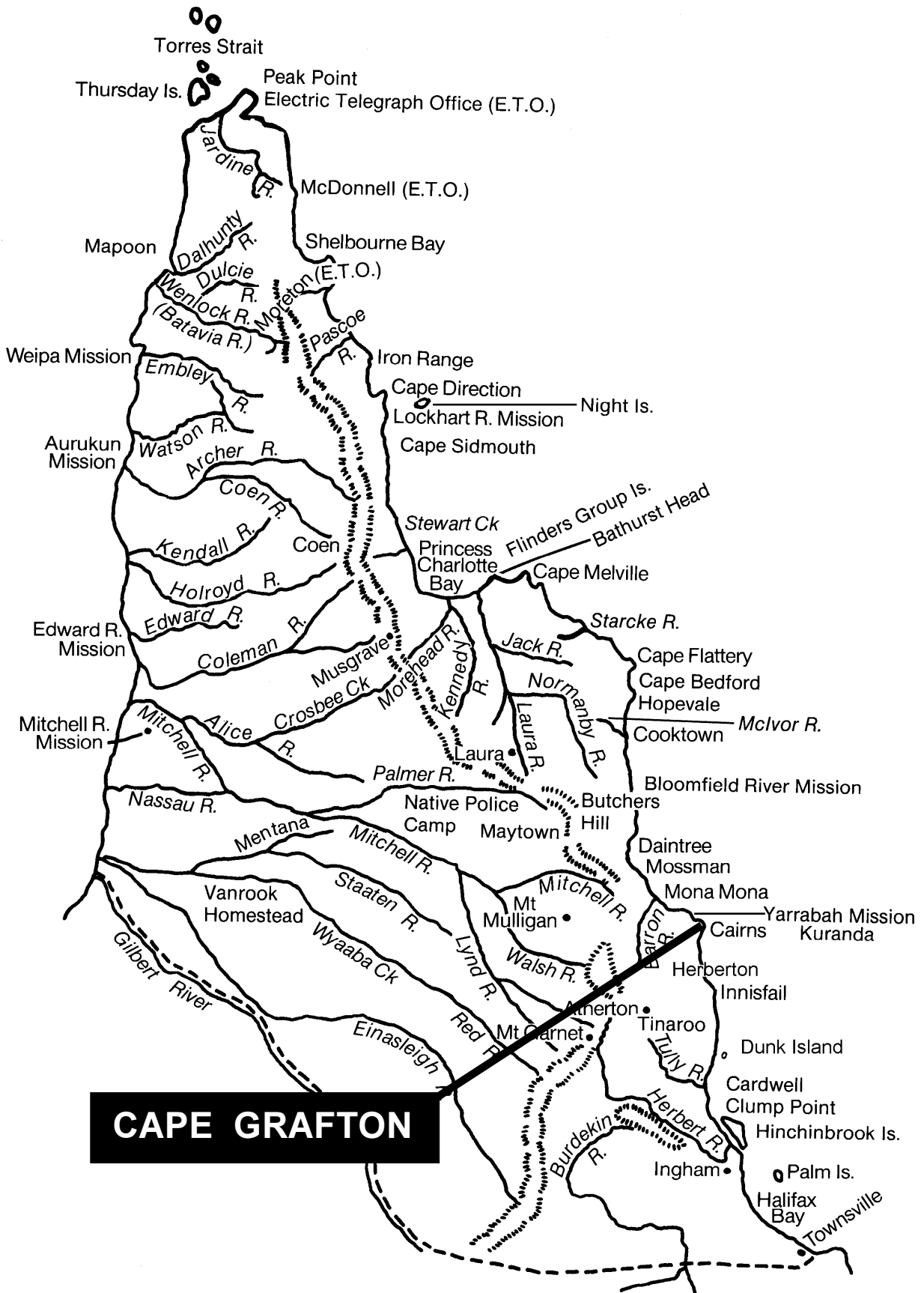
Quinine bush: *Petalostigma quadriloculare*, now known as *Petalostigma triloculare*.

Bastard beefwood: *Grevillea striata*.

Oil rubbed on stones to stop the gum lump from sticking to them came from the nut of the *Calophyllum tomentosum*.

Fig tree: *Ficus opposita*.

The shell hand grip: *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora*.



CAPE GRAFTON



Yarrabah. Photograph 32 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, vol. 4. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Cape Grafton, named by Captain Cook after the Duke of Grafton, is a high red, grey and yellow granite hill at the south entrance to Trinity Bay, and opposite Fitzroy Island. At the north side of the Bay is Cape Tribulation.

Roth said the Aboriginal people, who he called Kungganji, (now spelled Gungganyji) called Cape Grafton Jiliburri.

The sketch-map of the neighbourhood of Cairns... shews the distribution of the three main tribes as they were in August 1898, but what with the progress of the mission work at Yarrabah on the further side of False Cape, and the increase of area under settlement on the Cairns side, the arrangement may not possibly hold good at the present day.



Roth wrote this comment in 1910.

In 1891, the Reverend J.B. Gribble had been granted a tract of land from Cape Grafton, south to the Russell River, to set up a Reserve for the Church of England Mission to Aboriginal people.

In 1892, Gribble and his family had cleared the land, built a two-room house and a school house, and were ready to receive the new Aboriginal converts. There was only one problem, no one was interested in joining them on the Mission.

In the first two years of the Mission, from 1892–1894, only about 80 people came in. By 1909, nearly 500 people were living on the Mission.

Writing about trade in 1910, Roth said Cape Grafton people travelled along the coastline between Port Douglas and the Mulgrave River. Prior to the establishment of Yarrabah Mission, the people at Cape Grafton made crescent-shaped bark baskets, which they took or sent to Port Douglas, the Mulgrave and Barron Rivers, Mareeba and Herberton. Reed necklaces were made for the Mulgrave and Russell River

people, and four-pronged fishing spears, for the Mulgrave and Upper Russell Rivers, Johnstone River and Clump Point people. Straight spearthrowers without the shell hand grip were made for people living around the Upper Mulgrave, Johnstone and Russell Rivers. Bent or moon-shaped spearthrowers, large fighting shields, and long single-handed swords, were made for people living around the Barron River and northwards.

They imported goods from the north, mainly from the Port Douglas and Barron Rivers peoples. These goods included bags woven with an hour glass pattern, round base baskets, beeswax necklaces, straight shell-hafted spearthrowers, a selection of bamboo spears, square cut *Nautilus* shell necklaces, and cockatoo top-knot head-dresses.

The southern trade came from the Mulgrave River people. Objects included long swords, boomerangs, shields, possum string armlets, and the large oval cut pearl shell chest ornaments. Roth thought these chest ornaments came to the Mulgrave River via Atherton, where they originally could have come from the Gulf country.

Trading among Cape Grafton people was not carried out by any particular members of the community; it was apparently personal, each one doing their own business.

Books to read

Gribble, E.R.B., 1930. *Forty Years with the Aborigines*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney.

Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 14, 1910, pp. 18–19. *Bulletin* 18, 1910, p. 91.

Dixon, R.M.W., 1977. *A Grammar of Yidin*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 11 and 22.

Crescent-shaped bark basket

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Baskets such as these were made from an inner bark strip taken from a laurel tree. The outer surface of the inner bark became the inner surface of the basket.

1. The bark was folded in half, the edges were trimmed, and sewn together with strips of lawyer cane. The widest part of the mouth of the basket was always at right angles to the base of the basket.
2. A thin piece of lawyer cane was attached to the outer edge of the mouth of the basket by overcasting it with a finer strand of lawyer cane. On the side where the handle was to be attached, a second piece of lawyer cane was sewn in to strengthen this side. Handles of split lawyer cane were fixed close together to the outside of the basket.
3. Sewn sections of the basket were strengthened by smearing them with gum cement or beeswax. Gum cement came from either the doughwood tree or the pencil-wood tree.

Gum from the doughwood tree could be prepared fairly quickly by removing gum oozing out from the bottom of a new split in the tree. It was then warmed and hammered between two stones. To make the gum even more tough, it was finally mixed with charcoal and again heated and hammered before use.

Gum from the pencil-wood tree was prepared in a similar manner, but it took much longer. Gum could be taken from any old split in the tree. It was heated and hammered with stones, but no extra charcoal was deliberately added to the final gum cement.

Beeswax was roasted over a fire, squeezed a few times in the hands, and warmed and hammered until soft.

These baskets, sewn and sealed watertight, were used to carry honey or water.

Roth said these crescent-shaped bark baskets were found only where similar shaped, woven baskets were made, around the Herbert River, at Cardwell, Cairns and at Atherton.

According to Roth, the Kungganji people (now spelled Gungganyji) called these bark baskets du-bal or tokobil.

Collection information

There is one crescent-shaped bark basket collected by Roth from Cape Grafton in 1902.

- E.13339 Roth's collection number is WT.29. It is impossible to describe as the condition is poor, the lacing is undone and the basket is in two pieces. As a bark bundle it is 36 cm long and 22 cm wide. The basket probably came to the Museum in this condition. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "very old, found in swamp".

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4002M, frame 23.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 13–14, and 30.

Scientific names of materials used

Bark used to make bark baskets: laurel tree, *Calophyllum tomentosum*. The lawyer cane is known as *Calamus* sp. Trees whose gum was used to make the baskets watertight: doughwood tree, *Melicope australasica*, now known as *Melicope octandra*; pencil-wood tree *Panax murrayi*, now known as *Polyscias murrayi*.

Punt-shaped container

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth does not give much information about how these containers were made except to say



E.13340. Punt-shaped container. Collected Cape Grafton, 1902. 106×34×14 cm.

they were made in the same way as paper punt trays made by European children. The bark punt trays differed from these paper trays in that both outside and in, the two smaller sides were supported by sticks laced through them with a vine strip. Folds at the ends of the smaller side were often top-stitched to add strength to the sides of the container. These punt-shaped containers could be up to 120 cm or more long and from 15 to 20 cm deep. Roth said it was used in the preparation of a certain kind of sour yam.

The container was used at Cape Grafton and around Cairns.

According to Roth, the local Kungganji people (now spelled Gunganyji) called it ku-lur or pitar.

Collection information

Roth collected one punt-shaped container from Cape Grafton in 1902.

E.13340 Roth's collection number is WT.30. It is 106 cm long, 34 cm wide and 14 cm deep. Two sticks, laced with vine strips at the ends are 24 cm long and 1 cm wide. The sticks are threaded through a second row of cane stitching, just below the first row of stitching.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4002M, frame 24.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 30–31.

Shell ornaments for beard and hair



E.14607. Nautilus shell ornament for beard and hair. Collected Cape Grafton, 1898. 7×1 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth wrote very little about beard and hair ornaments made from shell except to say

At Cape Grafton, around Cairns and Atherton, etc., a comparatively small oval-cut piece of pearl shell is fixed by means of beeswax to the hair of the beard, temples or forelock. Nautilus shell... is similarly used on the Tully River.

Collection information

There are three shell ornaments for beard and hair from Cape Grafton, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.14607 Roth's collection number is G.110. It is 7 cm long and 1 cm in diameter. A hole has been drilled in the narrow end of the *Nautilus* shell, and handspun bark fibre string threaded through, looped and covered with beeswax.
- E.14608 Roth's collection number is G.111. It is 5 cm long and 1 cm in diameter. A hole has been drilled in the narrow end of the *Nautilus* shell, and handspun bark fibre string threaded through, looped and covered with beeswax.
- E.14609 Roth's collection number is G.112. It is 7 cm long and 1 cm in diameter. A hole has been drilled in the narrow end of the *Nautilus* shell, and handspun bark fibre string threaded through, looped and covered with beeswax.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all three shell ornaments for beard and hair.

- E.14607 negative sheet 4165M, frame 1291.
- E.14608 negative sheet 4165M, frame 1292.
- E.14609 negative sheet 4165M, frame 1293.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, p. 26.

Scientific name of material used

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

Shell ornaments for forehead and neck

E.14456. Shell forehead and neck ornament. Collected Cape Grafton, 1898. Length 88 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth noted that Aboriginal people from the Keppel Islands, the Whitsunday Islands and Cape Grafton were the only ones who strung together large, irregular oval pieces of *Nautilus* shell with two holes drilled in the centre. Elsewhere forehead and neck ornaments of shell were drilled with one hole.

The shells, strung on handspun bark fibre string, were worn by men, tied around the head, so that the shells rested on the forehead. These ornaments were worn as necklaces by women.

Collection information

There are two shell ornaments for forehead and neck from Cape Grafton.

E.14456 Roth collected this shell ornament for forehead and neck in 1898. There is no Roth collection number. It is 88 cm long. There are sixteen irregularly shaped oval pieces of shell with two holes drilled in each through which handspun bark fibre string is threaded. Each piece of shell is about 4×1 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "Nautilus shell necklace (larger)."

E.14552 Roth collected this shell ornament for forehead and neck in 1899. His collection number is G.214. It is 97 cm long. There are nineteen irregularly shaped oval pieces of shell with two holes drilled in each through which handspun bark fibre string is threaded. Each piece of shell is about 4×3 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology

register dated 1905 states “Nautilus shell forehead circlet. ‘Den\der’ of the Kungganji tribe.”

Photographic information

There are black and white photographs of both shell forehead and neck ornaments.

E.14456 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1140.

E.14552 negative sheet 4158M, frame 1236.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 27–28.

Scientific name of material used

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

Reed necklace



E.14485. Reed necklace.
Collected Cape Grafton,
1898. Length 305 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The necklaces were made from hundreds of small lengths of reeds which were cut to size with the sharp edge of a mussel shell or stone knife. They were threaded on handspun bark fibre string. On the east coast of Cape York Peninsula they were usually threaded on one continuous length of string. This style of necklace was found from north of the Endeavour River to as far south as Keppel River.

Roth called these necklaces grass reed necklaces. He said they were made and worn by women.

Collection information

There is one reed necklace in the Roth collection from Cape Grafton, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14485 The necklace is 305 cm long. The length of the average reed segment is 1×1 cm.

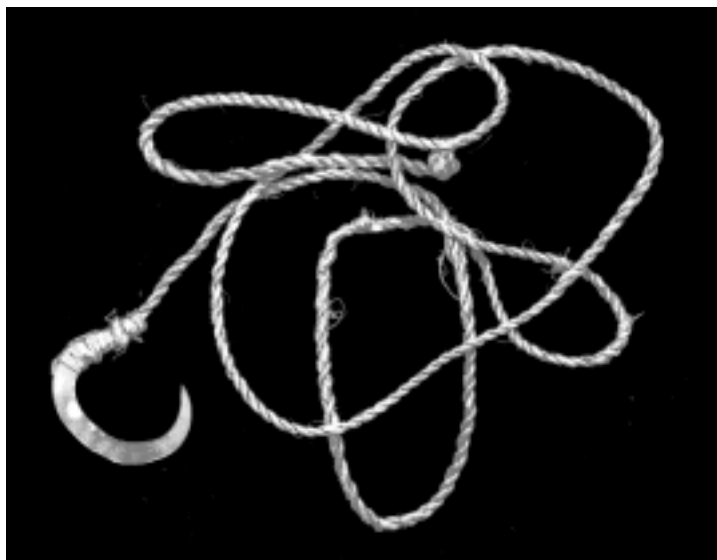
Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4149M, frame 1169.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 33–34.

Fish hooks and lines



E.13872. Pearl shell fish hook. Collected Cape Grafton, 1898. Length of hook 2 cm. Length of line 48 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that in 1898 he saw crescent-shaped pearl shell fish hooks being made at Cape Grafton.

1. A fresh pearl shell was chipped around the valve between two stones until it was a roughly oval plate about 2 cm in diameter, with rough uneven edges.
2. Two pointed hardwood sticks were put on the fire. As soon as their ends were burnt and charred they were placed close to the centre of the shell plate. They were blown on to make the flame play only on the centre of the shell, making it brittle.
3. It was now easy to pierce the centre of the shell with a piece of white coral. Once the hole was made, it was gradually enlarged by grinding back and forwards with the coral. The piece of coral was regularly dipped in water to make the grinding easier.
4. The uneven outer edge of the oval ring was then ground into shape until the desired width of hook was reached.
5. The final step was to carefully grind the middle, up and down on a sharp vertical edge of rock until it broke. It was then finished off with the rock and coral file into a crescent-shaped fish hook.

The pearl shell was called we-ta. The handspun bark fibre fishing line, made from tea-tree bark, was known as ko-mai, and the hook, karkal.

Roth also learnt that Aboriginal people at Cape Grafton made fish hooks using a fresh-water shell as well, but he had been unable to identify it. Its local name was chiberi.

According to Roth, weights and sinkers were never used.

Roth did not mention how the line was attached to the hook.

These fish hooks and lines were used at Cape Grafton and on the Lower Tully River, but on the Tully, fire was not used to weaken the centre of the shell before filing down with a coral pencil.

Roth noted that around Cooktown nothing was known about fish hooks. But they must have used them in the past, as Cook mentioned in his “Voyages” that he saw small neatly made fish hooks and lines, shells and fragments of coral in the tool kit of Aboriginal people on the Endeavour River.

By 1910, Roth said the European fish hooks and lines were fast replacing the traditional shell hooks and bark fibre lines.

Collection information

There are four fish hooks and lines in the Roth collection from Cape Grafton, collected by Roth in 1898. Roth did not give any collection numbers to these items.

- E.13869 Crescent-shaped pearl shell fish hook attached to a handspun bark fibre string line. Length of hook 3 cm. Length of line 36 cm.
- E.13870 This fish hook was given to the Copenhagen Museum, Denmark in February 1923.
- E.13871 Crescent-shaped pearl shell fish hook attached to a handspun bark fibre string line. Length of hook 1 cm. Length of line 29 cm.
- E.13872 Crescent-shaped pearl shell fish hook attached to handspun bark fibre string line. Length of hook 2 cm. Length of line 48 cm.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for three of the fish hooks and lines.

- E.13869 negative sheet 4072M, frame 552.
- E.13871 negative sheet 4073M, frame 554.
- E.13872 negative sheet 4073M, frame 555.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, pp. 20–21. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 33.

Scientific name of material used

The pearl shell, *Perna cumingii* is now known as *Isognomon ephippium*.

Food—shells from edible molluscs

Information from Roth’s Bulletins

Roth said most shellfish were roasted in the ashes, but a few were eaten raw.

Collection information

Roth collected 38 shells from Cape Grafton. This collection of shells does not form part of the original Roth collection purchase of 1905. The shells were given to the Museum by Roth and registered on 5 February 1900 and 8 January 1901.

Charles Hedley, who at this time was the conchologist or shell specialist at the Museum and a close friend of Roth, identified the shells for him.

A note in the Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1900 and 1901 states these shellfish were “used as food by natives of N.E. Queensland.”

- E.9004 Roth’s collection number is 57. He said the Kungganji (now spelled Gungganyji) people called it ger-we. Its scientific name then was *Dolium variegatum*, but is now *Tonna variegata*.
- E.9009 Roth’s collection number is not given. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it kunggaga. Its scientific name is *Oliva tremulina*.

- E.9011 Roth's collection number is 64. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it ku-in-gan. Its scientific name then was *Gyrineum affine*, but is now probably *Cymatium meobaricum*.
- E.9012 Roth's collection number is 66. Its scientific name then was *Mitra caffra*, but is now *Vexillum caffrum*.
- E.9013 Roth's collection number is 67. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it kulgarabara. Its scientific name then was *Natica mamilla*, but is now *Polinices mammilla*.
- E.9722 Roth's collection number is 89. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it we-ta. The shell also was used for knives and fish hooks. Its scientific name then was *Perna cumingii*, but is now *Isognomon ephippium*.
- E.9723 Roth's collection number is 91. Its scientific name then was *Ostrea* sp., but is now *Saccostrea* sp.
- E.9724 Roth's collection number is 92. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it challa. Its scientific name then was *Ostrea nigromarginata*, but is now *Saccostrea echinata*.
- E.9725 Roth's collection number is 93. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it je-rom. Its scientific name then was *Ostrea mytiloides*, but is now *Saccostrea cucullata*.
- E.9726 Roth's collection number is 94. Its scientific name then was *Ostrea* sp., but is now *Saccostrea* sp.
- E.9727 Roth's collection number is 95. Its scientific name then was *Ostrea* sp., but is now *Saccostrea* sp.
- E.9728 Roth's collection number is 96. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it ko-pun. Its scientific name then was *Venus striata* var. *caledonica*, but is now *Pitar citrina*.
- E.9729 Roth's collection number is 97. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it wi-ro. Its scientific name is *Placuna placenta*.
- E.9730 Roth's collection number is 98. Its scientific name is *Pinna* sp.
- E.9731 Roth's collection number is 99. Its scientific name is *Pinna* sp.
- E.9732 Roth's collection number is 100. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it mokere. It also was used as a scraper, drill and bark-cutter. Its scientific name then was *Cyrena jukesii*, but is now probably *Geloina erosa*.
- E.9733 Roth's collection number is 101. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it changurai. Its scientific name then was *Arca semitorta*, but is now *Trisidos semitorta*.
- E.9734 Roth's collection number is 102. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it bilka. Its scientific name is *Cultellus* sp.
- E.9735 Roth's collection number is 103. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it koi-koi. Its scientific name then was *Tellina sulcata*, but is now *Tellina gargadia*.
- E.9736 Roth's collection number is 104. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it wambiram. Its scientific name then was *Unio* sp., but is now *Velesunio angasi*.
- E.9737 Roth's collection number is 105. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it te-rangai. Its scientific name then was *Circe gibbia*, but is now *?Gafrarium tumidum*.
- E.9738 Roth's collection number is 106. Its scientific name then was *Arca* sp., but is now *Anadara* sp.
- E.9739 Roth's collection number is 107. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji)

- people called it chi-boi. Its scientific name is *Mactra maculata*.
- E.9740 Roth's collection number is 108. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it morol-morol. Its scientific name then was *Natica plumbea*, but is now *Conuber sordidum*.
- E.9741 Roth's collection number is 109. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it tualim. Its scientific name then was probably *Psammobia lessoni* (referred to in error as *Psammobia bessoni* by Roth), now known as *Gari lessoni*.
- E.9742 Roth's collection number is 110. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it kerpo. Its scientific name then was *Atactodea mitis*, but is now *Atactodea striata*.
- E.9743 Roth's collection number is 111. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it tabul. Its scientific name then was *Oliva ornata*, but is now *Oliva lignaria*.
- E.9744 Roth's collection number is 112. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it chulkai. Its scientific name is *Donax faba*.
- E.9745 Roth's collection number is 113. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it kwinggan. Its scientific name then was *Mitra vulpecula*, but is now *Vexillum vulpeculum*.
- E.9746 Roth's collection number is 114. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it be-a. Its scientific name then was *Donax lineolatus*, but is now *Donax cuneatum*.
- E.9747 Roth's collection number is 115. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it ko-inggar. Its scientific name then was *Natica bicolor*, but is now *Glossaulax aulacoglossa*.
- E.9748 Roth's collection number is 116. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it jamba ko-ialla. Its scientific name then was *Arca scapha*, but is now *Anadara antiquata*.
- E.9749 Roth's collection number is 117. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it kunggaga. Its scientific name is *Cypraea arabica*.
- E.9750 Roth's collection number is 118. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it mokul-mokul. Its scientific name then was *Mytilus hirsutus*, but is now *Trichomya hirsuta*.
- E.9751 Roth's collection number is 119. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it koi-koi. Its scientific name then was *Circe scripta*, but is now *Circe* cf. *rivularis*.
- E.9752 Roth's collection number is 120. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it moigor-moigor. Its scientific name then was *Littorina filosa*, but is now *Littoraria filosa*.
- E.9753 Roth's collection number is 122. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it chi-nginya. Its scientific name then was *Cassis coronulata*, but is now *Cassis* cf. *cornuta*.
- E.9754 Roth's collection number is 123. He said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people called it charin. Its scientific name then was *Solarium perspectivum*, but is now *Architectonica perspectiva*.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, pp. 17–18.

Bone needle



E.13901. Bone needle. Collected Cape Grafton, 1898. Length 15 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said the bone usually came from a kangaroo, wallaby or emu. It was ground to a point at one end while the bone was fresh, and the grinding could either be done wet or dry.

He saw bone needles (which he called bone stiletos) being used in the following ways:

1. To remove the outside layer from the cabbage tree leaf before making it into twine (Musgrave River)
2. To assist in hollowing out earring tubes (Pennefather River)
3. To pick off bark when making some water-carriers and bark blankets (Atherton)
4. To bore a hole in a spearthrower to fix a peg at one end (Endeavour River)
5. To pierce the edges of bark before threading them when making canoes (Tully and Pennefather Rivers)
6. To pierce the nose
7. To pick kernels from nuts
8. To pierce possum skins to sew them into cloaks (Brisbane)

Roth said the Kungganji (Gungganyji) people at Cape Grafton called it chi-chal.

Collection information

Roth collected one bone needle from Cape Grafton in 1898.

E.13901 Roth's collection number is BD.3. It is 15 cm long and is shaped to a point at one end.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4076M, frame 584.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11 and 25.

Cross boomerang

E.13837. Cross boomerang.
Collected Cape Grafton, 1898.
Length 33 cm.



Information from Roth's Bulletins

The cross boomerang was made of two pieces of light wood, shaped to a point at each end. A hole was drilled at the centre and the two pieces of wood were tied crosswise in position with strips of split lawyer cane. Roth said these cross boomerangs were usually from 20 to 25 cm long.

This boomerang used only by men and boys, could be thrown in two ways. First, it could be thrown direct into the air. Its flight was similar to that of a boomerang except that it flew in more of a circle than an oval, and it made a double circle around the thrower at the end. A second way was to throw it straight onto the ground in front of the thrower where it curved to the right or left. Younger children used to copy this by using thick swamp grasses plaited or tied together.

It was used in the coastal districts from Cardwell to the Mossman and Tully River regions.

Collection information

Roth collected one cross boomerang from Cape Grafton in 1898.

E.13837 Roth's collection number is 0.18. It is 33 cm long. There are faint traces of red ochre on the wood. The two wooden pieces are lashed together at right angles with split pieces of lawyer cane. This boomerang is presently on loan to the Kuranda Keeping Place, north Queensland.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4068M, frame 520.

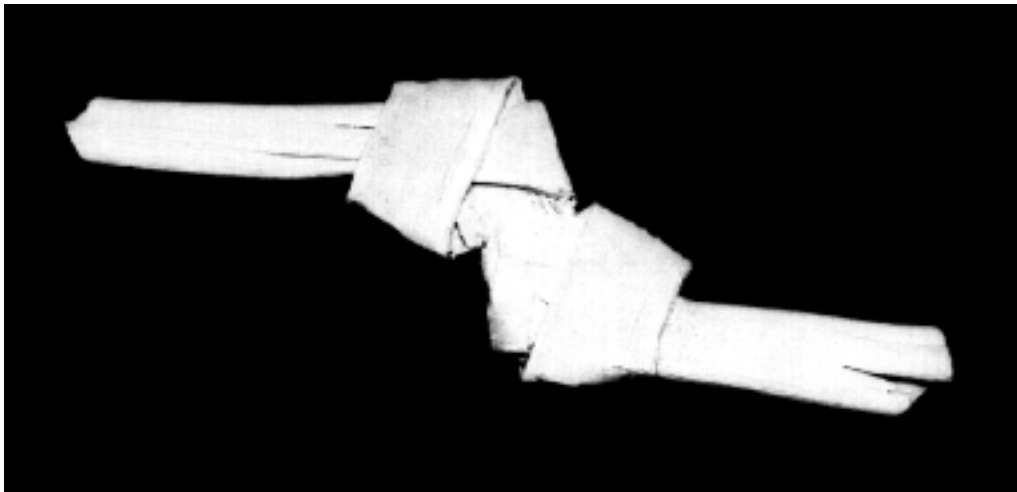
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 19.

Scientific name of material used

Split length of lawyer cane: *Calamus* sp.

Knotted *Pandanus* strips



E.13846. Knotted *Pandanus* strip. Collected Cape Grafton, 1903. 13×6 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth did not write anything about knotted *Pandanus* strips.

Collection information

There are eight knotted *Pandanus* strips from Cape Grafton, collected by Roth in 1903. Each one is a strip of *Pandanus* leaf, knotted twice in the centre. There are no special Roth collection numbers on any of the strips. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "Yakal game."

- E.13843 Length 11 cm. Maximum width 6 cm.
- E.13844 Length 12 cm. Maximum width 6 cm.
- E.13845 Length 13 cm. Maximum width 6 cm.
- E.13846 Length 13 cm. Maximum width 6 cm.
- E.13847 Length 14 cm. Maximum width 5 cm.
- E.13848 Length 15 cm. Maximum width 6 cm.
- E.13849 Length 11 cm. Maximum width 7 cm.
- E.13850 Length 15 cm. Maximum width 7 cm.

Photographic information

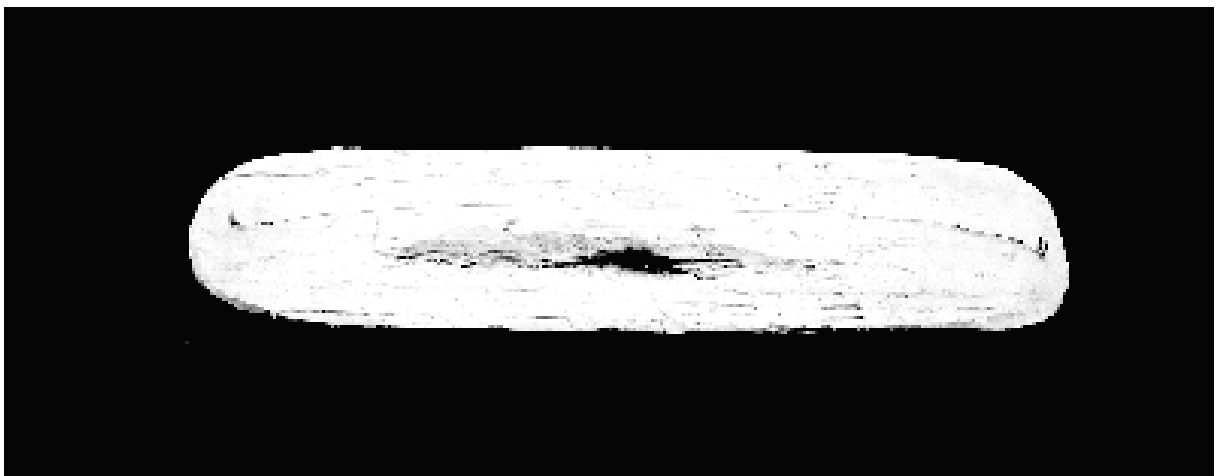
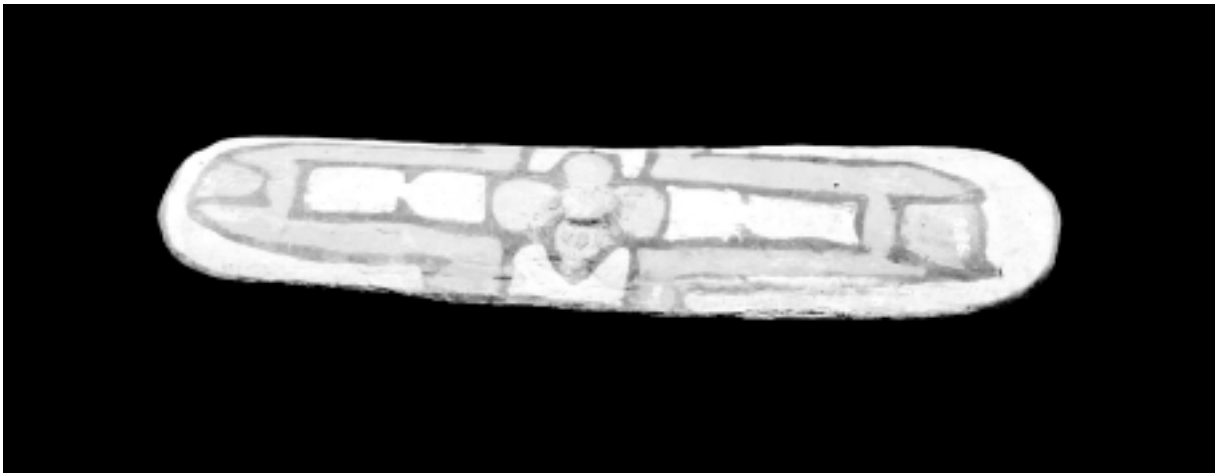
Black and white photographs are available for all eight knotted *Pandanus* strips.

- E.13843 negative sheet 4069M, frame 526.
- E.13844 negative sheet 4069M, frame 527.
- E.13845 negative sheet 4069M, frame 528.
- E.13846 negative sheet 4070M, frame 529.
- E.13847 negative sheet 4070M, frame 530.
- E.13848 negative sheet 4070M, frame 531.
- E.13849 negative sheet 4070M, frame 532.
- E.13850 negative sheet 4070M, frame 533.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902. This section refers to toys in general, but makes no mention of knotted *Pandanus* strips.

Shield



E.13446. Toy shield. Collected Cape Grafton, 1900. 70×19 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Miniature weapons were made for boys by older male relatives or friends. Sometimes boys made their own toy shields. They often had painted designs on one surface, similar to those used by adults, and were found in the same regions, from the Endeavour River to Cardwell and Tully and across the mountain ranges to Atherton.

Collection information

Roth collected one toy shield from Cape Grafton in 1900.

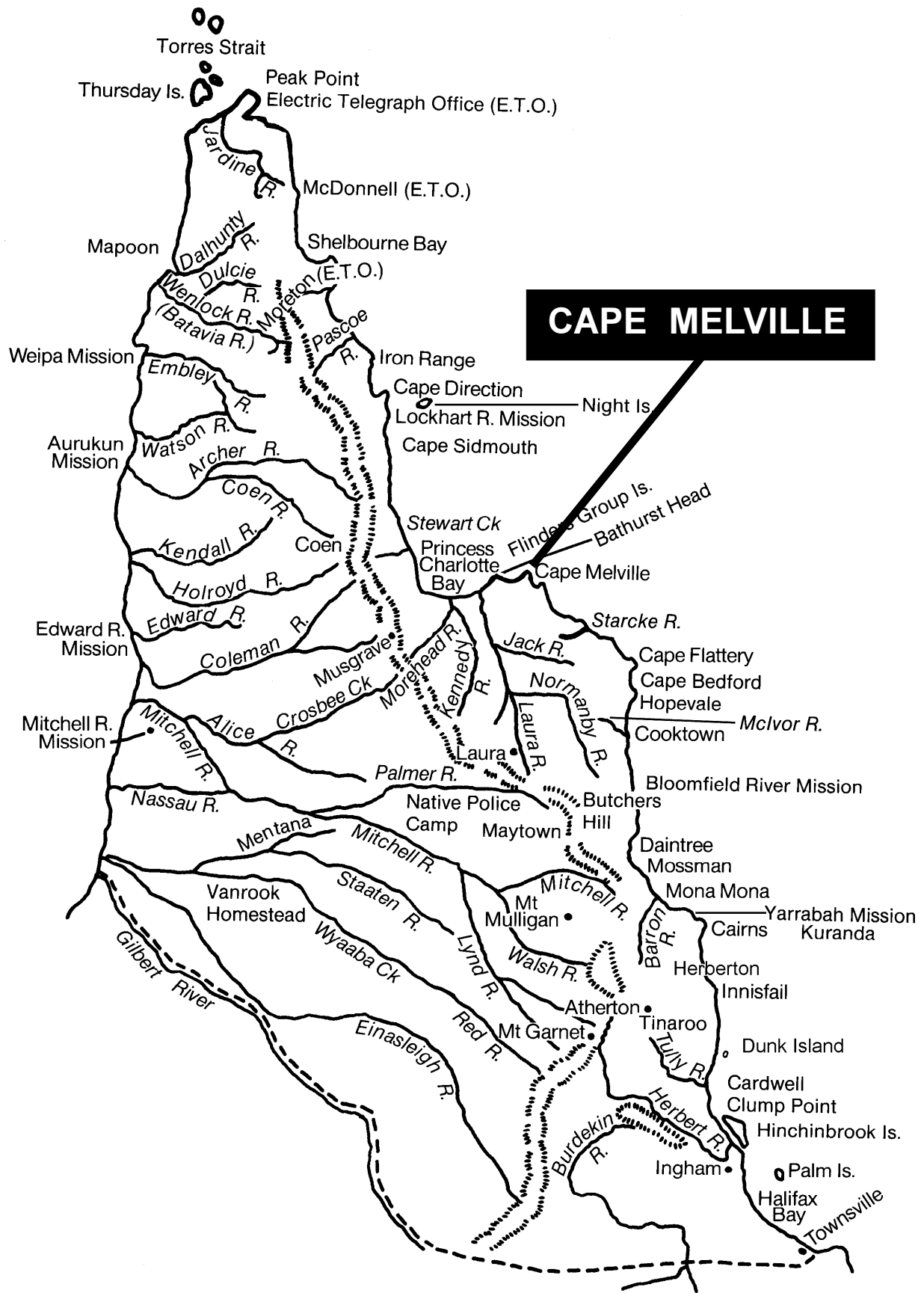
E.13446 Roth's collection number is S.36. It is 70 cm long. Its maximum width is 19 cm. A white, red and black painted design is on the outer surface. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "made for children."

Photographic information

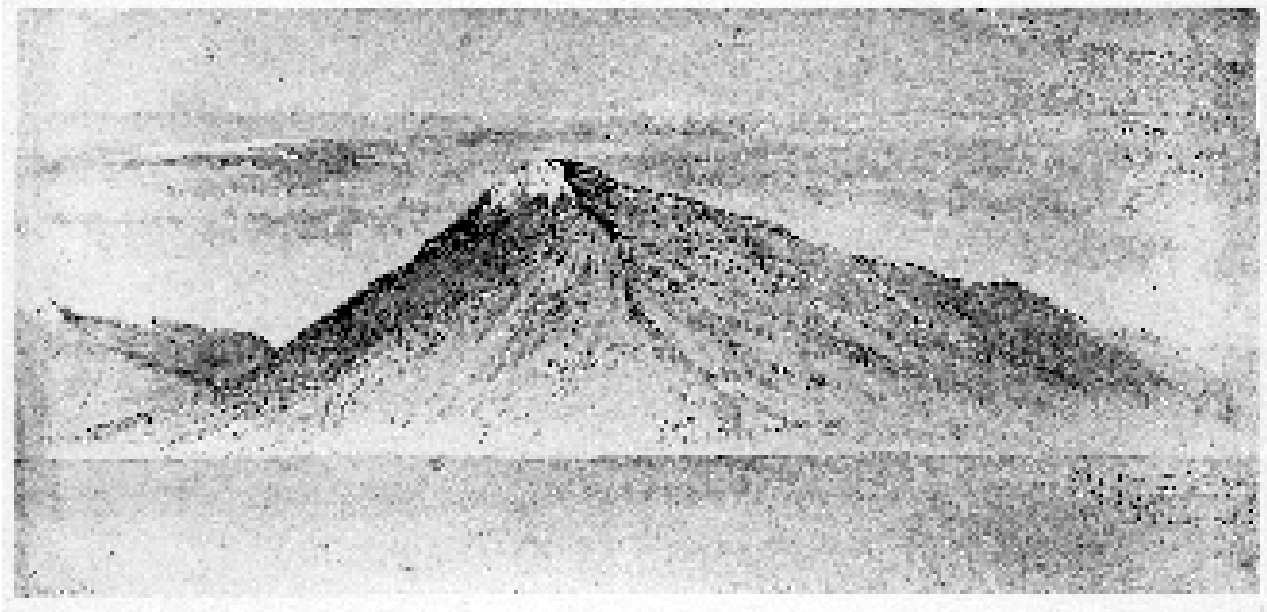
A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4019M, frame 130.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 15. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 204–205.



CAPE MELVILLE



Cape Melville. Unsigned watercolour by Sir Oswald Walters Brierly, dated 21 August 1848. The entry in Brierly's diary (Mitchell Library Reference A. 505) for this date reads in part "... anhd. directly abreast of Cape Melville..." In his sketches on board HMS *Rattlesnake*, f. 36. Mitchell Library reference, small picture file ZPX*D81. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth did not write much about the people living at Cape Melville, except to say that the local Yalnga-bara called Cape Melville Yalnga.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 18, 1910, p. 81.

E.14813. Woven bag. Collected Cape Melville, 1898. 22×15 cm.

Woven bag

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Bags such as these were made from two-ply handspun bark fibre string.

Turning fibre into string was done in the following way, the person squatting on the ground:

1. The strip of fibre was rolled with the open hand, forwards on the outer thigh. This produced a slight tension, and made the strand stronger (fig. 6).
2. The strand was folded in two, and the "bend" held between the left thumb and forefinger. The rest of the string was rolled, under great pressure, with the palm of the right hand slowly forwards, and sharply backwards, without removing the pressure. When rolling forward, pressure was on the thumb side of the hand. When rolling backwards, the pressure was on the other side of the hand (fig. 7).
3. The result of the forward movement was to roll the strand into one twist (fig. 8).
4. The result of the forward-backward movement was to roll the strand into two twists, with a "break" in between (fig. 9).
5. To get rid of the break, the section just above it was held between the left thumb and forefinger to prevent the twine untwisting. The right forefinger was placed in the "break" and it was pulled firmly but carefully outwards. At the same time the two ends of the strand were freed. While the left hand still held its section, the two freed ends of strand were rolled again with the right hand once backwards and forwards (fig. 10).
This process was repeated again and again. All fibre twines were thus made of two-plys.



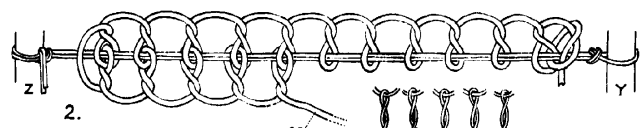
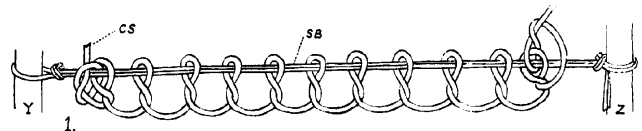
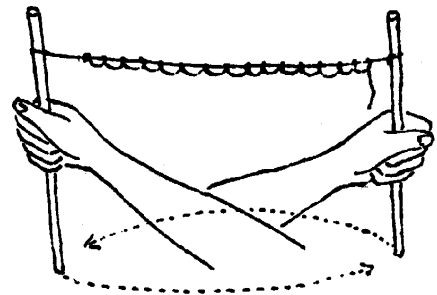
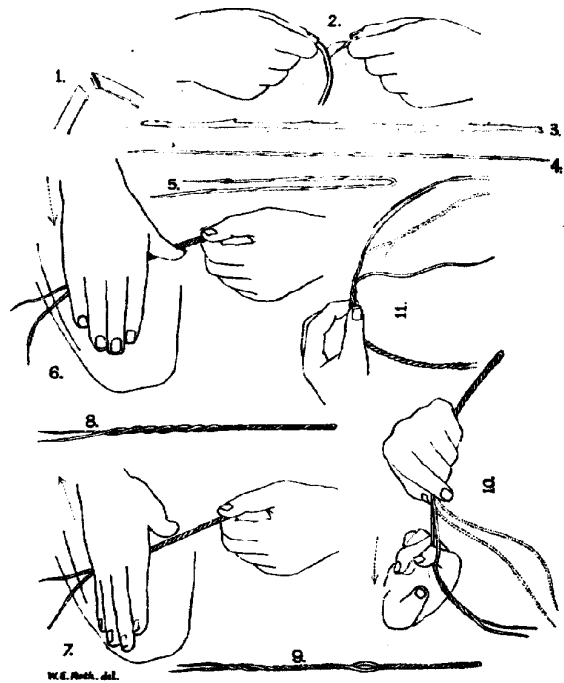
6. As soon as one end of the strand had been reached, another strand was fixed to it by rolling forwards (fig. 11).

The weave was made firm by using one straight base strand and one continuous strand of bark fibre string, weaving a loop and twist pattern. Roth said the loop and twist pattern was made in a similar way to the single loop pattern.

1. This pattern was always worked from left to right.
2. The straight base strand was tied to two sticks in the ground.
3. The continuous strand of thread was tied to the extreme left of this base thread and worked to the right.
4. Then the two sticks were taken out of the ground, turned round, and put in the ground again (the right stick becoming the left stick and vice versa). This meant the weaver could start again, working from left to right, without changing position.
5. These two rows formed the bottom of the bag.
6. The process was continued until the bag was deep enough. The first base strand at the bottom of the bag was then removed.

Roth's drawings show how the loop and twist pattern was woven.

Roth said these loop and twist mesh bags were made at Laura, Maytown, Highbury, Musgrave, Coen, Gilbert River, Delta and Normanton. He did not mention Cape Melville.



W.E. Roth, del.



Collection information

Roth collected one woven bag from Cape Melville in 1898.

- E.14813 This bag has no Roth collection number. It is 22 cm long and 15 cm wide.

The handle is 25 cm long. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "loop and twist pattern." The rectangular bag is woven in irregularly spaced stripes of deep red, blue, green, yellow and natural coloured bark fibre string.

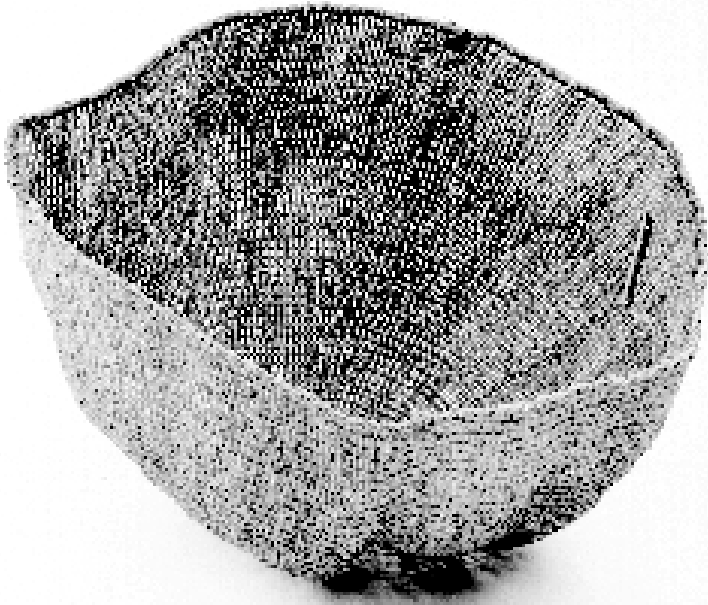
Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4190M, frame 1497.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 8-13.

Woven baskets



E.14939. Woven basket. Collected Cape Melville, 1899. Length 34 cm.

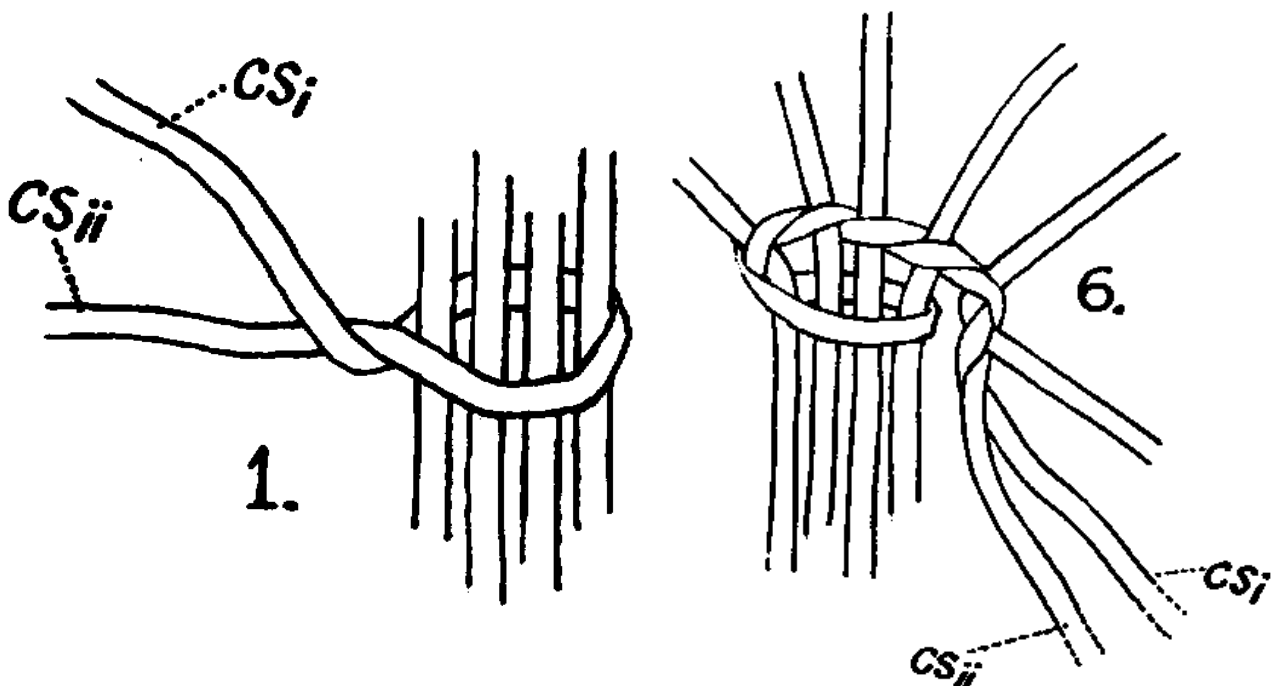
Information from Roth's Bulletins

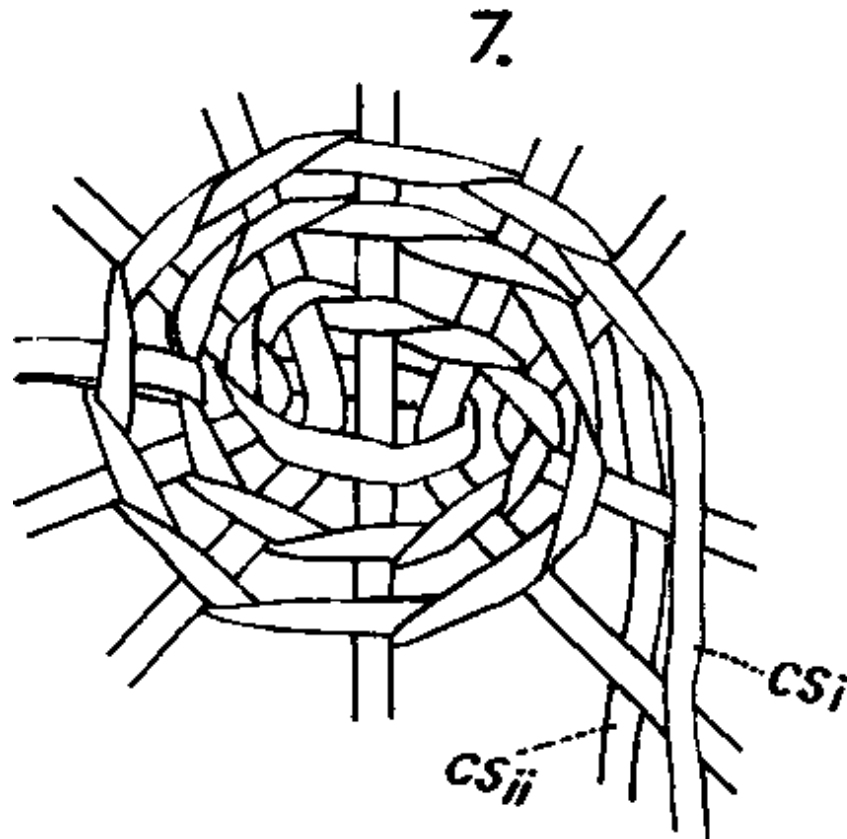
Roth gave no information on these baskets from Cape Melville, although similar ones were made at Butcher's Hill.

These baskets were woven on the chain twist pattern, using several base strands and two continuous strands of fibre string, as shown in Roth's drawings.

The two continuous strands were twisted into a chain, and the ends of the straight base strands were left free. The chain twist was the weft (the thread going across), and the straight base strands, the warp (the thread going up and down).

Bags like this were generally firm, unlike soft bags.





Collection information

There are two woven baskets from Cape Melville, collected by Roth in 1899.

- E.14939 The basket is 34 cm long. The mouth is 39×38 cm. There is no handle. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "dilly basket or sieve bag." The weaving pattern is a chain twist.
- E.14958 Base of incomplete basket is 10×9 cm. The weaving pattern is a chain twist.

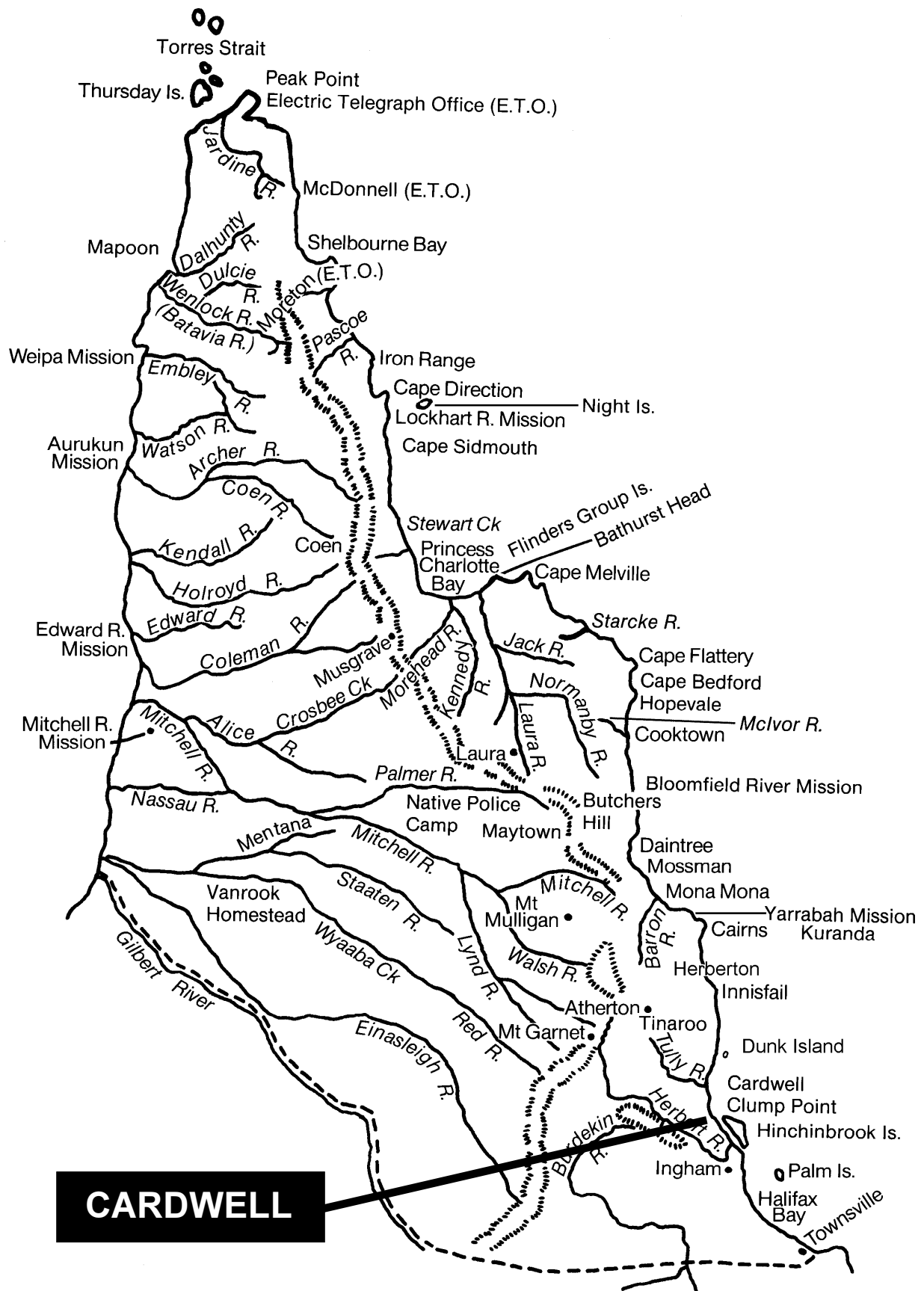
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both baskets.

- E.14939 negative sheet 4206M, frame 1623.
E.14958 negative sheet 4209M, frame 1642.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 14–15. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 28.



CARDWELL



E.14284. Non-returning boomerang. Collected Cardwell, 1902. 61×6 (at widest part) cm.

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The People

Cardwell, near the head of Rockingham Bay, was first settled by non-Aboriginal people in 1863. In March 1865, the first land sales were held at Cardwell, with 80 lots being sold for about forty pounds each. Europeans took over the best parts of the land and began felling the forest to create pasture for their cattle and to grow crops. This must have caused great tensions because the resident magistrate, in 1872, thought an attack on Cardwell by local Aboriginal people was imminent.

Cardwell did not grow to any great size, there were no mineral finds, and no hordes of European and Chinese fossickers descended on the community.

Roth did not say much about the people living around Cardwell except that the Tully River people bartered bags to them in exchange for bark blankets.

Useful written information

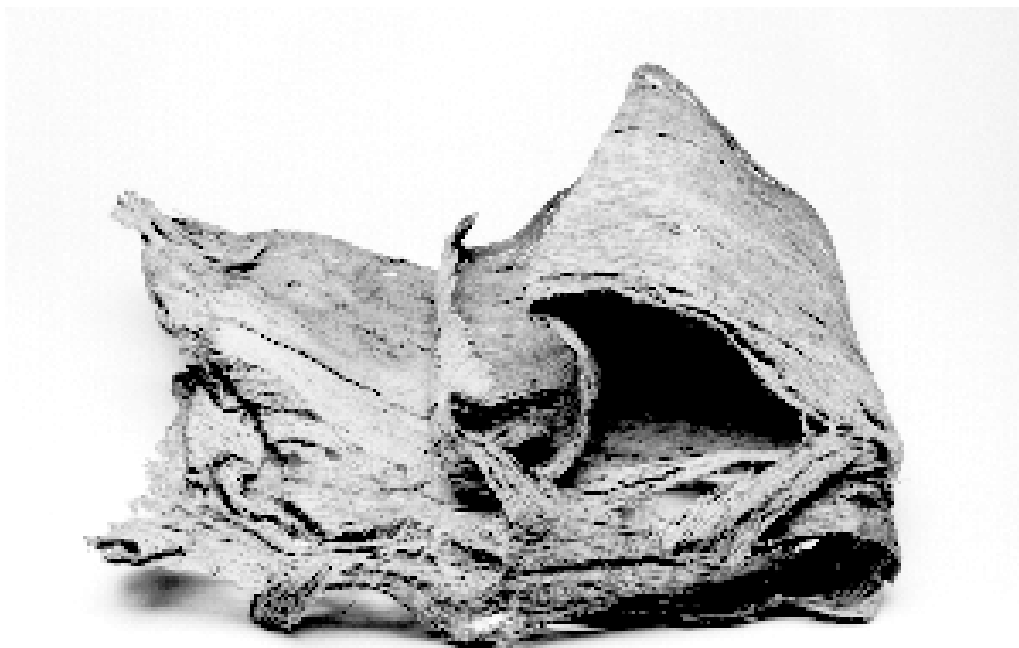
Bolton, G.C., 1970. A thousand miles away. A history of north Queensland to 1920. Australian National University Press, Canberra, pp. 30, 31 and 94.

Dixon, R.M.W., 1972. The Dyirbal language of north Queensland. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 34.

Palmer, E. 1903. Early days in north Queensland. Angus & Robertson, Sydney, pp. 150–151.

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 14, 1910, p. 19.

Bark cloth blankets



E.13517. Bark cloth blanket. Collected Cardwell, 1898. 137×62 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

To make a bark blanket, a sheet of bark was peeled from a fig tree and the outer bark was torn off using the sharp edge of a broken piece of shell of the nut from the candle nut tree. Roth said this took a long time to do, and needed a great deal of skill.

Next the inner piece of moist bark was put over a root or branch of a tree and hammered with a wooden mallet shaped like a narrow cricket bat. This made the bark softer and thinner and increased its size. The blanket was doubled over and hammered repeatedly until it folded into a package about 30 cm square. This was a good size to fit into a woven bag or basket.

The blanket was then opened and left in the sun to dry out the remaining moisture.

Roth said that bark blankets were made only at Cairns, Atherton, Cardwell and the Tully River region. It is possible that they were made and used in other places, but by the time Roth was in the area, government blankets had been given out to local Aboriginal

people. Lumholtz, writing in 1890, said the Queensland government gave blankets to Aboriginal people in the area on the Queen's Birthday, but they had to go to Cardwell to get them.



Fig. 30e.

Fig. 30f.

Roth said Tully River people called this bark cloth blanket *magura* which was also the name of the fig tree from which the bark was taken.

Collection information

Roth collected two bark cloth blankets from Cardwell in 1898.

E.13516 Roth's collection number is G.124. It is 134×61 cm.

E.13517 Roth's collection number is G.125. It is 137×62 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "sent by Constable Holmes. The native name is *magura*."

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both bark cloth blankets.

E.13516 negative sheet 4028M, frame 199.

E.13517 negative sheet 4028M, frame 200.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 52–54.

Scientific names of materials used

Bark used to make blankets: *Ficus ehretioides* now known as *Ficus variegata* var. *variegata*.
The candle nut tree: *Aleurites moluccana*.

E.14391. Cockatoo feather head-dress. Collected Cardwell, 1898. Height 20 cm, diameter 17 cm.

Feather head-dress

Information from Roth's Bulletins

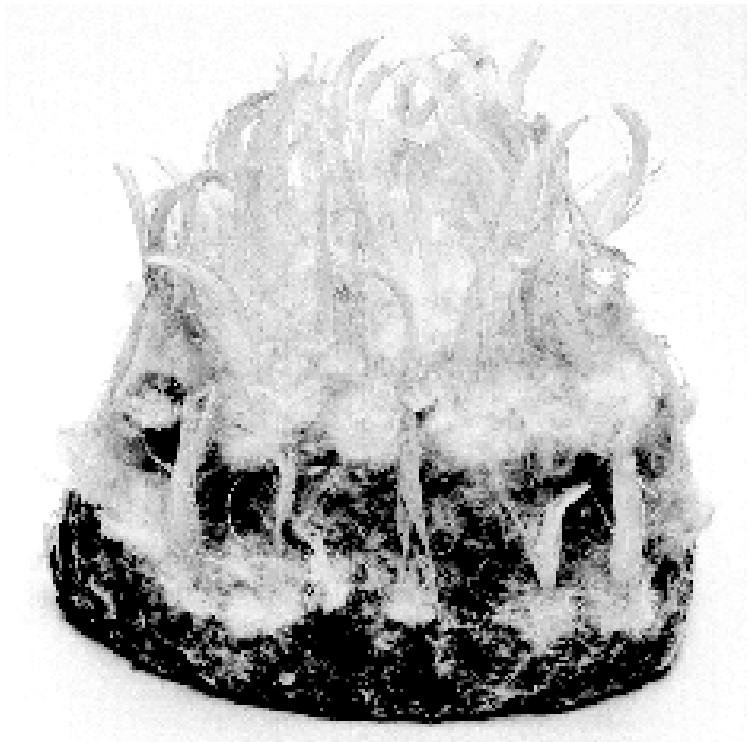
White cockatoo feather tuft head-dresses made from the feathers of the sulphur-crested cockatoo were common all over northern Queensland, and especially so in the eastern half of the state.

In Cardwell and the Tully River areas a particular type of head-dress was made. A man's head was covered with blobs of beeswax or else completely covered with beeswax and feathers stuck in the sticky substance.

According to Roth, these head-dresses were worn by men for ceremonies and fighting.

Collection information

There is one cockatoo feather head-dress from Cardwell, collected by Roth through Constable Holmes in 1898.



- E.14391 Roth's collection number is G.126. Height 20 cm Diameter 17 cm. The beeswax base of the head-dress is lined with human hair curls, and decorated with feathers from the sulphur-crested cockatoo. The yellow feathers from the top-knot have fluffy grey-white feathers bound to their quills by handspun bark fibre string. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "The whole cap of beeswax being cut off the wearer's head. Locality for this is Cardwell '98 per Constable Holmes, Cardwell 1898."

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4138M, frame 1074.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 24–25.

Scientific name of material used

Sulphur-crested cockatoo: *Cacatua galerita*.

Boomerangs



E.14285. Boomerang. Collected Cardwell, 1902. 51×5 (at widest part) cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Boomerangs such as these were cut from the exposed root of a tree, by cutting above, below and behind the piece of wood. Roth said a stone axe was used in the old days for this task. Steel axes and tomahawks were now the preferred tools. The timber was then shaped by splitting, chipping and scraping with a sharp stone and shell. Finally the boomerang was rubbed smooth with a coarse stone.

Roth had only been able to identify one timber used, called yarran. The other Aboriginal names for unidentified woods were yandan, bokabar, charkala, puchera and yalma.

Boomerangs were used for fighting and hunting or for sport and amusement. Fighting ones were larger and heavier than the toy ones. Sometimes a toy boomerang was cut out of a damaged fighting boomerang. Men and boys often threw the smaller boomerangs at flocks of birds.

Roth said there were two ways of throwing the larger boomerangs:

1. straight into the air (common everywhere)
2. straight onto the ground where it was made to bounce off the hard surface (common in coastal areas from Cairns to Cardwell).

According to Roth, no boomerangs were used north of the Palmer River. On the Palmer River, boomerangs were used only as toys.

Collection information

Roth collected three boomerangs from Cardwell in 1902.

- E.14265 Roth's collection number is B.56. The non-returning boomerang is 65 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. The boomerang cannot be located at present, so cannot be weighed.
- E.14284 Roth's collection number is B.95. The non-returning boomerang is 61 cm long and 6 cm at its widest part. The boomerang weighs 170 g.
- E.14285 Roth's collection number is B.96. The non-returning boomerang is 51 cm long and 5 cm at its widest part. The boomerang weighs 120 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all three boomerangs.

- E.14265 negative sheet 4122M, frame 948.
- E.14284 negative sheet 4124M, frame 967.
- E.14285 negative sheet 4124M, frame 968.

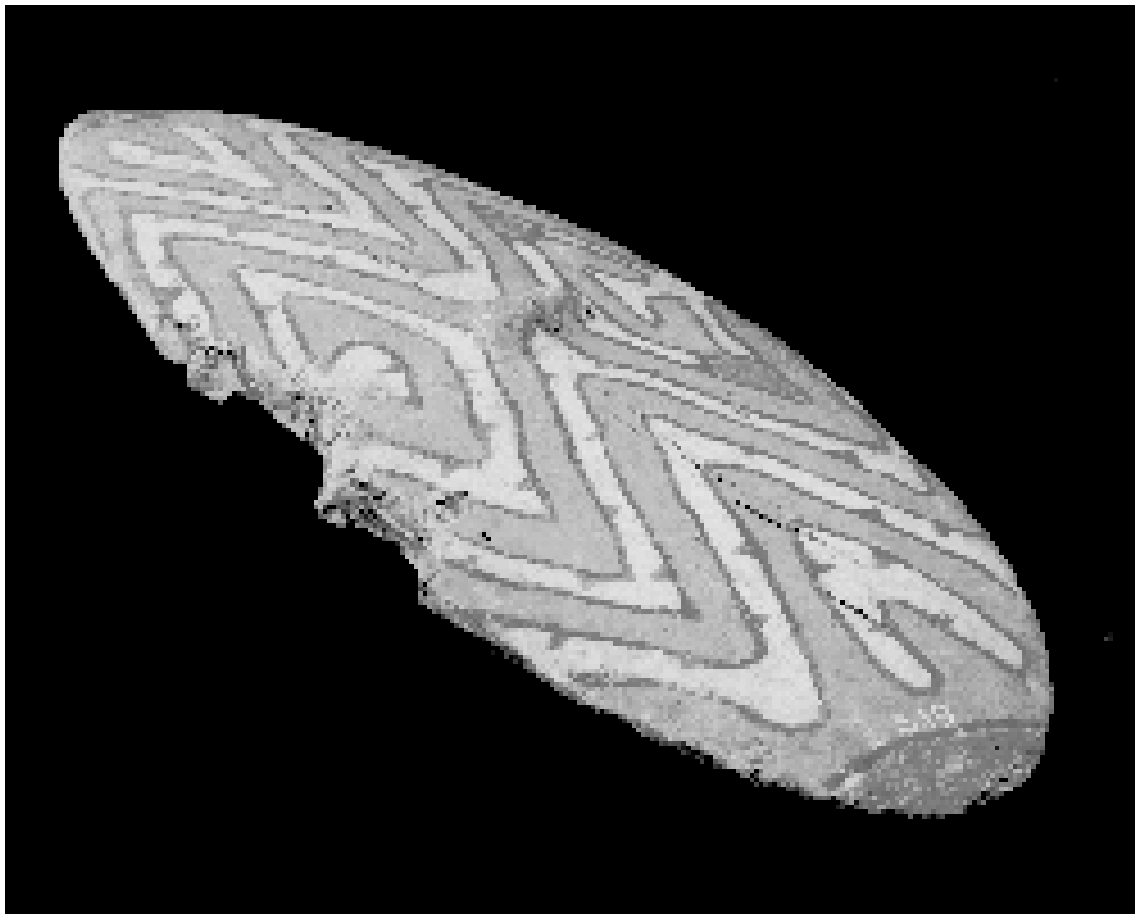
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 19. Bulletin 13, 1910, pp. 201–203.

Scientific name of material used

The only wood that Roth identified is called *Rhodomyrtus macrocarpa*. The Aboriginal name was yarran.

Shields

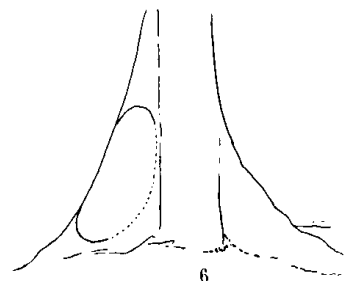


E.13431(-002). Softwood shield. Collected Cardwell, 1902. 99×40 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these shields were made was based on seeing Aboriginal people making them on the Lower Tully River.

1. Two curved cuts were made in the buttress of a fig tree, about the length of a shield. The sides were chipped, hammered and pushed out. The shape depended on the curve of the buttress.
2. The wood was chipped away on both sides, leaving the centre of the roughed out shield untouched. This left a raised boss in the centre of the shield.
3. At the back of the shield a hand grip was made in the centre by chipping and burning a cavity with cinders.
4. The process of making the shield lighter began with it being soaked for a few days in water. It was then placed in the sun for a couple of days, slowly dried in shady scrub for a further day or so, and again placed in water.
5. After a second soaking, the shield was tied to an overhanging bush, so that it hung flat about 30 cm above the water. It was left there for two to three weeks.



6. The wood was finally rubbed down with a light, rough pumice stone to give it a smooth surface. A striking design was painted on the outer side of the completed shield.

Roth said he could find no meaning for the painted designs on the shields. All the shields in the Roth collection have different designs.

These shields were found only where the large swords were used (see previous volume), from the Bloomfield and Endeavour Rivers south to below Cardwell, and along the inland mountain ranges, including Atherton. He said the Bloomfield River shields were more rectangular and larger than those found on the Tully River.

Roth noted that by 1898 these kidney-shaped shields were not being used much, and were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

There are two painted, kidney-shaped softwood shields from Cardwell, collected by Roth in 1902. Both shields have the same Australian Museum registration numbers and Roth collection numbers.

E.13431(-001) Roth's collection number is S.19. The shield is 99 cm long and 30 cm at its widest part. On the front of the shield is a red, yellow and white painted design outlined in black.

E.13431(-002) Roth's collection number is S.19. The shield is 99 cm long and 40 cm at its widest part. On the front of the shield is a yellow and white painted design outlined in black.

Photographic information

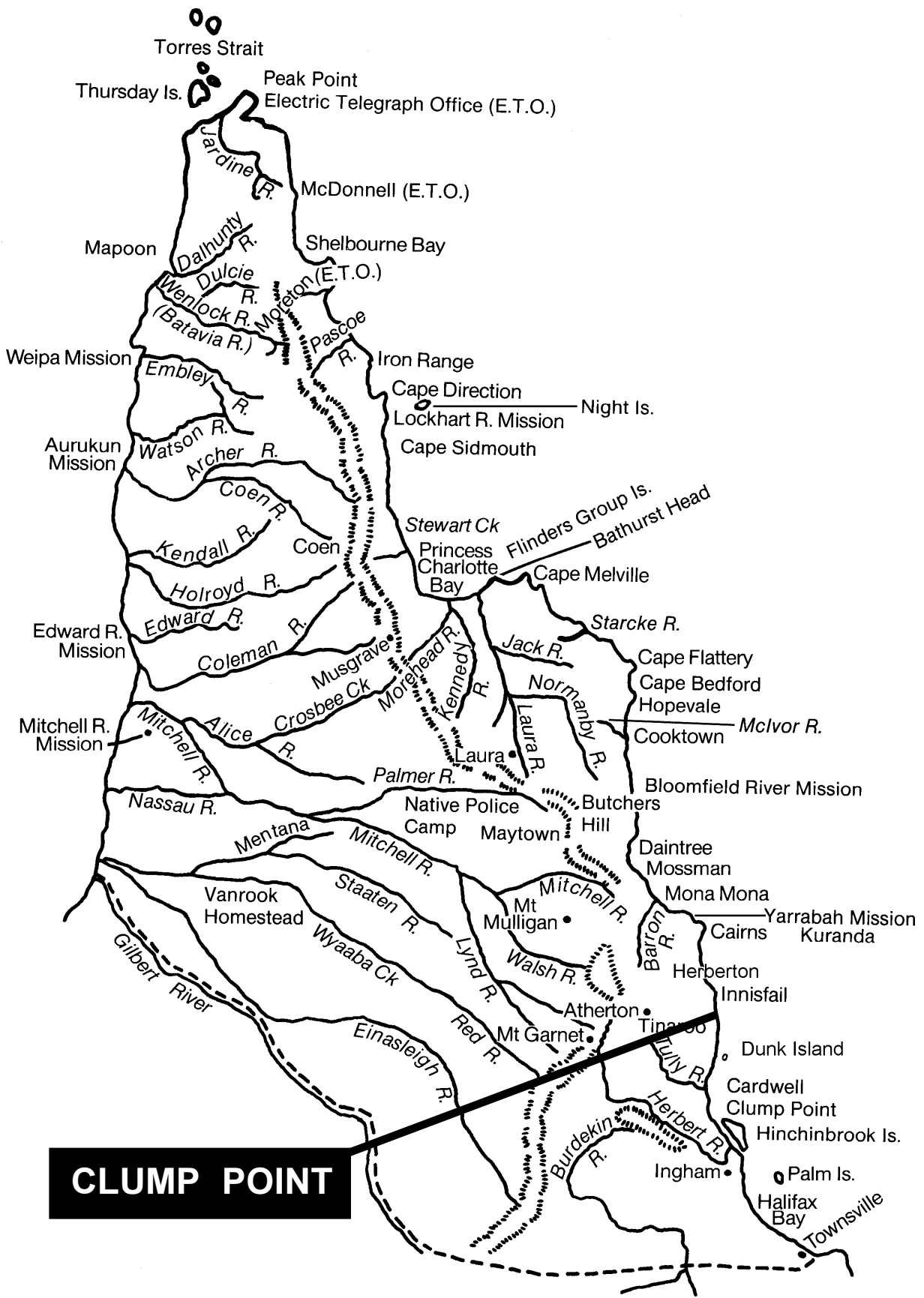
Black and white photographs are available for both shields.

E.13431(-001) negative sheet 4015M, frame 115(a).

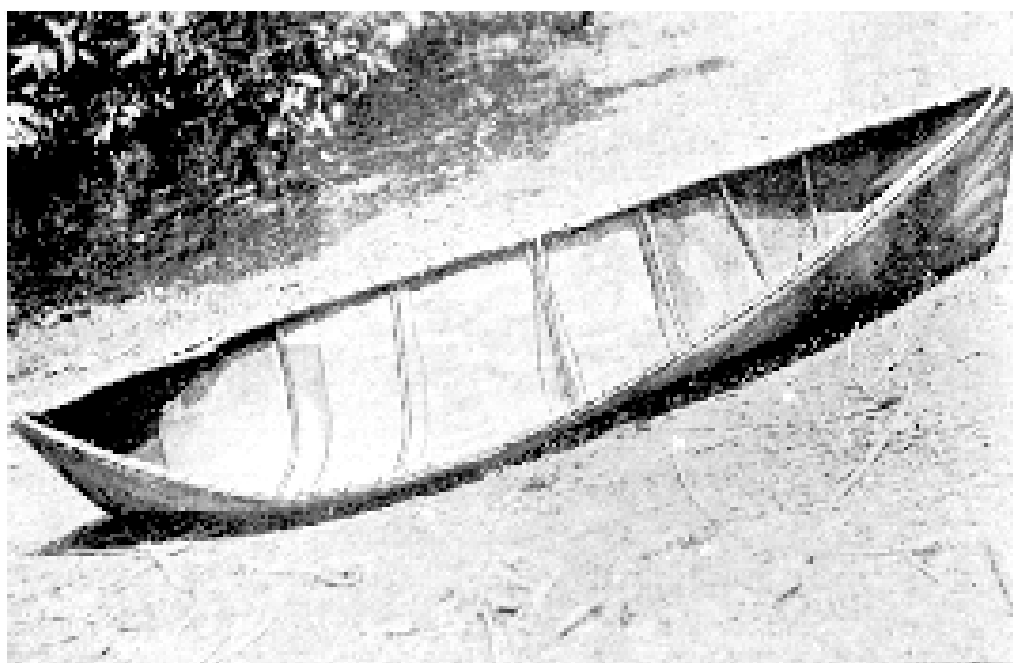
E.13431(-002) negative sheet 4015M, frame 115(b).

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 9. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 203–205.



CLUMP POINT



Canoe in use on the Tully River. It is the same canoe as that used at Clump Point. (This photograph has been incorrectly captioned in Roth's Bulletin 14, fig. 1, based on correspondence from Roth).

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The People

Roth did not write much about the people living at Clump Point. In 1900 he reported a camp of 300 people living there, and in a note added after publication of Bulletin 4, he briefly mentioned tournaments being held at Clump Point. It is however, very close to Cardwell, and the comments made about the people living around Cardwell could relate to Clump Point as well.

Charles Hedley, the shell expert from the Australian Museum was travelling with Roth, and wrote a letter dated 9/8/1901 (reference H.36) to the Curator, Australian Museum

Touching at Clump Point I purchased a beautiful bark canoe. This is the prize of the trip and I look forward to handing it to you. They are most rare and few residents here have seen one...

A further letter from Hedley to the Curator, Australian Museum(reference H.42), dated 30/8/1901 stated

August 1st was spent on Dunk Island... We then called for a few hours at Clump Point. Messrs Cutten Bros coffee planters, entertained us hospitably, presented me with a stone axe for the Museum and assisted me to purchase a bark canoe from the natives. These canoes are on the point of extinction... perhaps in five years there will be none left...

Useful written information

Allen, L. & B. Borey, 1984. Cultural and Historical Records of Queensland. No.3. Annotations to the Publications by W.E. Roth. Anthropology Museum, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, p. 151.

Bolton, G.C. 1970. A Thousand Miles Away. A History of North Queensland to 1920. Australian National University Press, Canberra, pp. 30, 31 and 94.

Dixon, R.M.W., 1972. The Dyirbal Language of North Queensland. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 34.

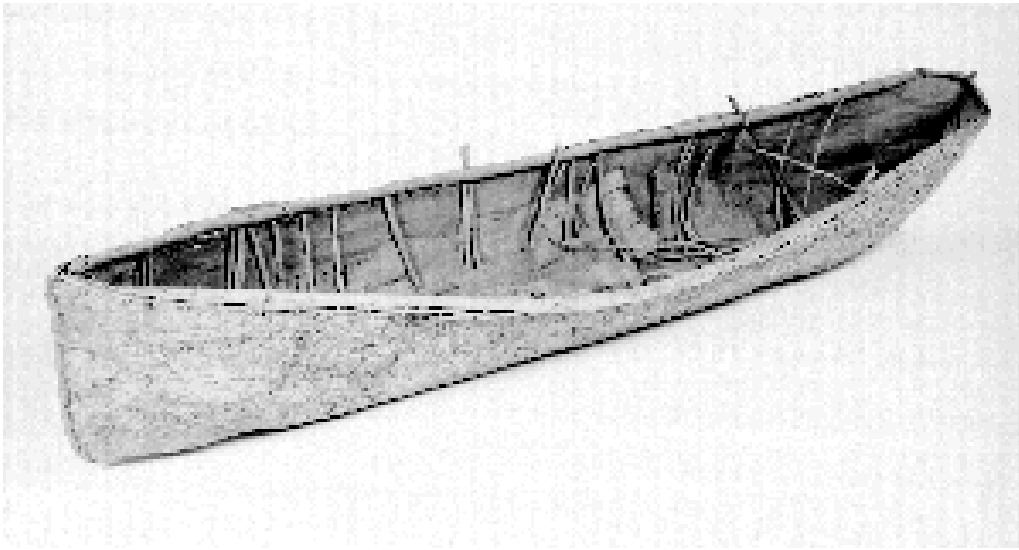
Lumholtz, C. 1980. Among Cannibals: an Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia and of Camp Life with the Aborigines of Queensland. Murray, London.

Palmer, E. 1903. Early Days in North Queensland. Angus & Robertson, Sydney, pp. 150–151.

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 14, 1910, p. 19.

Roth, W.E. On the Natives of the Lower Tully River. Scientific Report to the Under Secretary. Department of Native Affairs, Brisbane, 20 September, 1900, p. 25.

Bark canoe and paddles

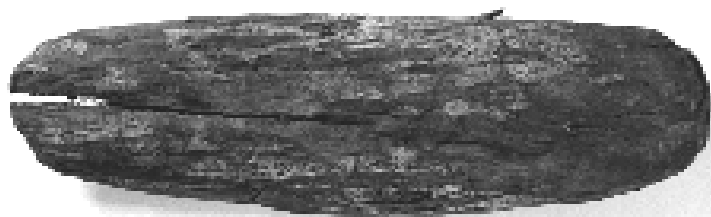


E.13452(1). Bark canoe. Collected Clump Point, no collection date given. 240×61 cm (at widest part).

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth described the making of a single sheet bark canoe in some detail. These canoes were made in a similar manner on both the Gulf and east coasts of north Queensland, but differed a little in detail. Gulf coast canoes for example, have no gunwales or ribs.

1. Wood was usually taken from a eucalyptus tree at the end of the wet season when the sap was rising as this made the bark sheet easier to remove. At the Tully River, near Clump Point, five different types of bark were used. Roth said bark from these trees could be stripped at any time of the year.
2. One end of the bark sheet was then heated over a fire to make it pliable. The whole length of the bark was then folded longways with the outside of the bark facing out.
3. The end of the bark which had been heated was clamped in a vice. The vice was made of two switches, tied tightly together below around a stiff bundle of grass or bark, so as to form a fork. The leg of the vice was pushed firmly into the ground, and the arms were tightly tied over the length of the bark.



E.13452-3. Oval bark paddle. Collected Clump Point, no collection date given. 25×9 cm.

4. A short piece of timber, acting as a spreader or stretcher, was jammed into position to outline the future shape of the canoe. It also acted as a guide when cutting off the end sticking out beyond the vice to make the bow.
5. The end was cut with a strong sharp-edged shell from below, upwards, the cutter cutting towards himself.
6. The bow end was shaped and overcast with a split strip of lawyer cane, through holes drilled with a pointed piece of wallaby bone. When sewing up the cut ends, overcasting started at the centre, worked down first and then the upper section was finally sewn.
7. When the sewing had been completed, the clamp was opened, and the other end of the bark length was similarly treated to form a stern. Usually by the time the stern was ready to be clamped, it had been standing in the sun long enough to make it pliable. If not, it was heated over a fire. The stern and bow of these canoes was much the same.
8. With both spreaders still in position, two strong flexible twigs, tapered at both ends to give greater flexibility, were attached to the inner top of either side of the boat by overcasting with strips of lawyer cane. Sewn in with them were unsplit lengths of lawyer cane. All of this made the gunwale. Although the strong twigs started at the stern, they did not reach quite up to the bow as a rule. On the other hand, the unsplit lawyer cane went round the stern and bows completely.
9. To strengthen the canoe, five to six pieces of bark, bent into position, were laid crosswise, inside the canoe. These were held against the inner surface of the canoe by ribs made of split lawyer cane. The ribs were held under the gunwale to stop them springing out of position.
10. A single tie was now sewn across the top at about the centre of the vessel to prevent the two sides springing apart after the spreaders were removed.
11. A final task was to make a hole at the top of the canoe, a little to one side of the bow. A heavy stone was tied to a rope which was fixed through this hole. This was the anchor.

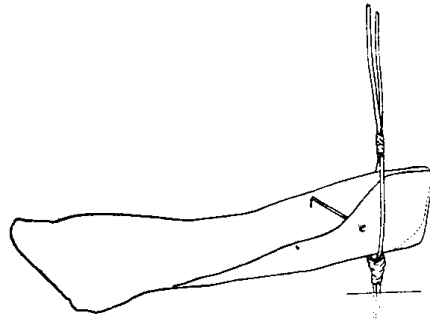


Fig. 4.



Fig. 3.

These canoes lasted a long time providing they were kept out of the sun. If cracks appeared, they were repaired with bark, sewn, and covered with beeswax, and sometimes gum cement.

Such a canoe had fairly abrupt ends, being intended for one person only. When in use, the occupant sat and paddled himself along with a paddle made of a small oval-shaped piece of bark, or a large pearl shell in each hand.

There was usually a shell bailer in the canoe and often a fire, or the material for making a fire.

A canoe Roth saw being made took just over a day to build, and this included stripping bark from the tree.

Bark canoes such as these could be made of either one, two or three sheets of bark. They were usually river craft, though on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula, they were often taken across to neighbouring islands.

Those built of a single sheet of bark were found both on the Gulf coast of Cape York Peninsula from the Wenlock and Dulcie Rivers down to the Archer River. On the east coast,

they were used from the Johnstone River to a little below Cardwell.

Roth thought they were probably in use much further south than this in recent times because the Keppel Islanders, who had no canoes when he first visited them, made him models of single sheet bark canoes to explain the craft they used to have in days gone by.

Collection information

Roth collected one single sheet bark canoe and three paddles from Clump Point. There are no Roth collection numbers on the canoe or paddles. No collection dates are given.

E.13452-1 Bark canoe. The canoe is 240 cm long and 61 cm at its widest part.

It is 42 cm high at the bow and 30 cm high at the centre of the canoe.

E.13452-2 Oval bark paddle. It is 10×26 cm and is broken in two.

E.13452-3 Oval bark paddle. It is 25×9 cm.

E.13452-4 Oval bark paddle. It is 24×7 cm.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for the canoe and three paddles.

E.13452-1 negative sheet 4020M, frame 135.

E.13452-2 negative sheet 8774M, frame 33.

E.13452-3 negative sheet 8774M, frame 34.

E.13452-4 negative sheet 8774M, frame 28.

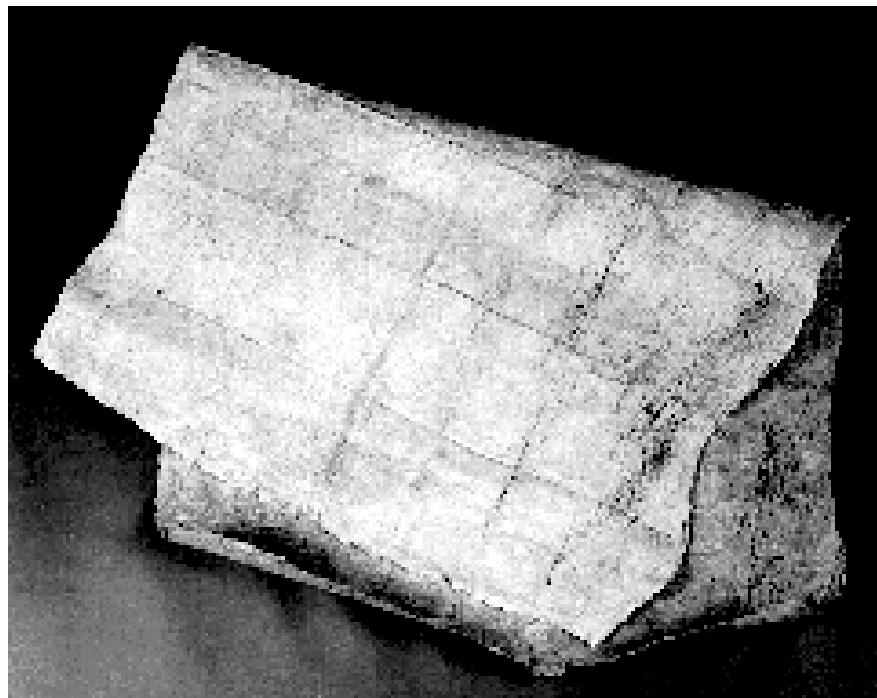
Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 9. Bulletin 14, 1910, pp. 6–9.

Scientific name of material used

Lawyer cane: *Calamus* sp.

Bark cloth blankets



E.13519. Bark cloth blanket. Collected Clump Point, 1898. 165×108 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

To make a bark blanket, a sheet of bark was peeled from a fig tree and the outer bark was torn off using the sharp edge of a broken piece of shell from the nut of the candle nut tree. Roth said this took a long time to do, and needed a great deal of skill.

Next the inner piece of moist bark was put over a root or branch of a tree and hammered with a wooden mallet shaped like a narrow cricket bat. This made the bark softer and thinner and increased its size. The blanket was doubled over and hammered repeatedly until it folded into a package about 30 cm square. This was a good size to fit into a woven bag or basket.

The blanket was then opened and left in the sun to dry out the remaining moisture.

Roth said that bark blankets were made only at Cairns, Atherton, Cardwell and the Tully River region. It is possible that they were made and used in other places, but by the time Roth was in the area, government blankets had been given out to local Aboriginal people. Lumholtz, a Swedish naturalist, writing in 1890, said the Queensland government gave blankets to Aboriginal people in the area on the Queen's Birthday, but they had to go to Cardwell to get them.

Roth said Tully River people called this bark cloth blanket *magura* which was also the name of the fig tree from which the bark was taken.

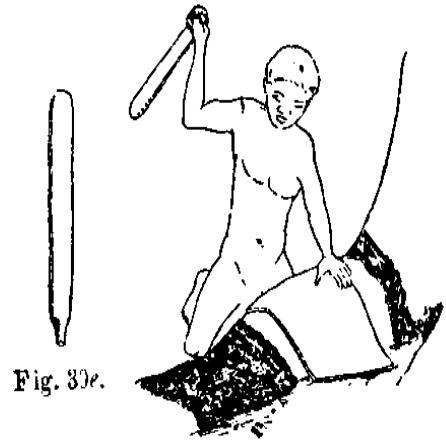


Fig. 30e.

Fig. 30f.

Collection information

In 1898 Roth collected from Sergeant Casey two bark cloth blankets from Clump Point.

E.13518 Roth's collection number is G.119. It is 128×86 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "sent by Sergeant Casey, Clump Point, Cardwell."

E.13519 Roth's collection number is G.120. It is 165×108 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "sent by Sergeant Casey, Clump Point, Cardwell."

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both bark cloth blankets.

E.13518 negative sheet 4028M, frame 201.

E.13519 negative sheet 4029M, frame 202.

Useful written information

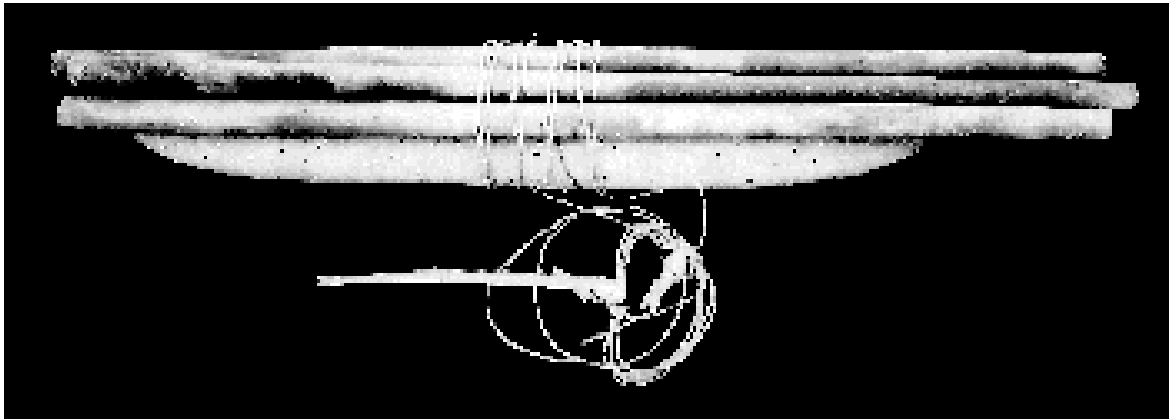
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 52–54.

Lumholtz, C. 1890. Among Cannibals: an Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia and of Camp Life with the Aborigines of Queensland. Murray, London, p. 264.

Scientific names of materials used

Bark used to make blankets: *Ficus ehretioides*, now known as *Ficus variegata* var. *variegata*.
The candle nut tree: *Aleurites moluccana*.

Fire sticks and board



E.13792. A fire board and three fire sticks. Collected Clump Point, 1898.
Board 31×6 cm. Sticks 37×1 cm.

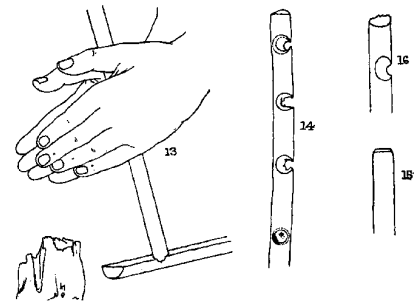
Information from Roth's Bulletins

Fire was made by twirling the thin stick from the cotton tree into a hole in a flattened piece of softwood. Tinder of dried grass, placed around the hole would start to smoulder due to the heat caused by the friction. The tinder was then whipped up quickly, usually with a bunch of dried grass, swung round in the air, perhaps blown upon and so made to burst into flame.

A new hole was started by hitting the board with a sharp piece of stone, so the stick had a firm place to begin the twirling action. If the hole was new, some charcoal dust was often placed in it. Old holes were used many times, until a hole was completely burnt through.

When not in use the fire stick and board were wrapped in bark. Men carried these in handspun bark fibre string bags.

This type of fire-making equipment was found in Roth's time from the Endeavour River to the Herbert River and inland to Atherton. He did not know its southern limits because of recent European settlement.



Collection information

Roth collected one board and three fire sticks from Clump Point in 1898.

E.13792 Roth's collection number is F.6. The oval shaped board is 31 cm long and 6 cm at its widest part. The twirling sticks are 37×1 cm, 37×1 cm, and 37×1 cm.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4063M, frame 475.

Useful written information

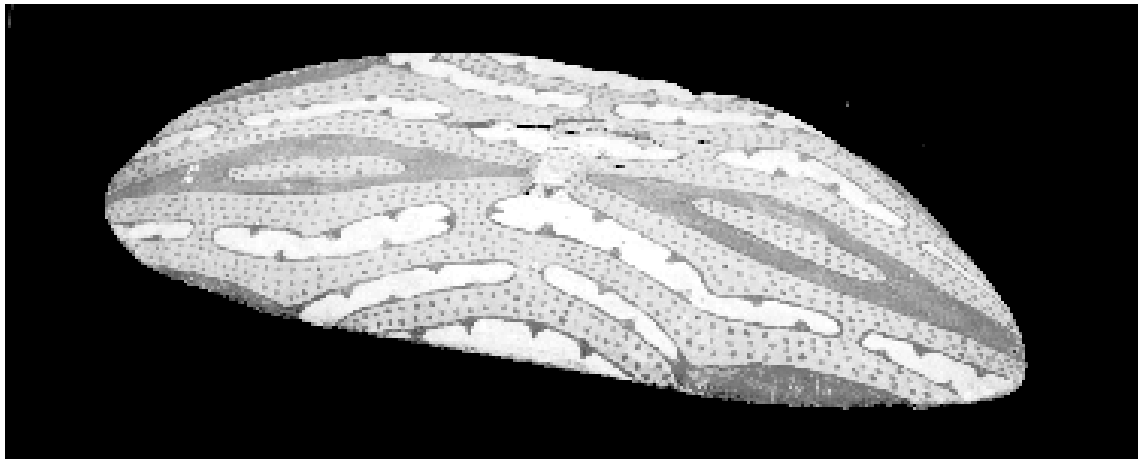
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 10–11.

Scientific names of materials used

Wood from the cotton tree used to make the twirling fire sticks: *Hibiscus tiliaceus*.

The softwood fire board could be made from one of the following: Murray's Laurel, *Cryptocarya murrayi*, *Mollinedia subternata*, now known as *Tetrasynandra pubescens*, or a split length of lawyer cane, *Calamus* sp.

Shield

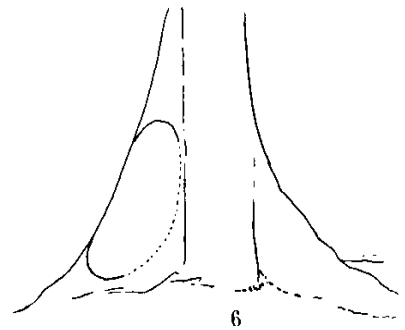


E.13430. Softwood shield. Collected Clump Point, 1897. 92×42 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these shields were made was based on seeing those made by Aboriginal people on the Lower Tully River.

1. Two curved cuts were made in the buttress of a fig tree, about the length of a shield. The sides were chipped, hammered and pushed out. The shape depended on the curve of the buttress.
2. The wood was chipped away on both sides, leaving the centre of the roughed out shield untouched. This left a raised boss in the centre of the shield.
3. At the back of the shield a hand grip was made in the centre by chipping and burning a cavity with cinders.
4. The process of making the shield lighter began with it being soaked for a few days in water. It was then placed in the sun for a couple of days, slowly dried in shady scrub for a day or so, and again placed in water.
5. After a second soaking, the shield was tied to an overhanging bush, so that it hung flat, about 30 cm above the water. It was left there for two to three weeks.
6. The wood was finally rubbed down with a light, rough pumice stone to give it a smooth surface. A striking design was painted on the outer side of the completed shield.



Roth said he could no meaning for the painted designs on the shields. All the shields in the Roth collection have different designs.

These shields were found only where the large swords were used (see previous volume) from the Bloomfield and Endeavour Rivers south to below Cardwell, and along the inland mountain ranges, including Atherton. He said the Bloomfield River shields were more rectangular and larger than those found on the Tully River.

Roth noted that by 1898 these kidney-shaped shields were not being used much, and were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

There is one painted, kidney-shaped softwood shield in the Roth collection from Clump Point. It was collected by Sergeant Casey in 1897.

E.13430 Roth's collection number is S.18. It is 92 cm long and 42 cm at its widest part. On the front of the shield is a red, yellow and white painted design outlined in black.

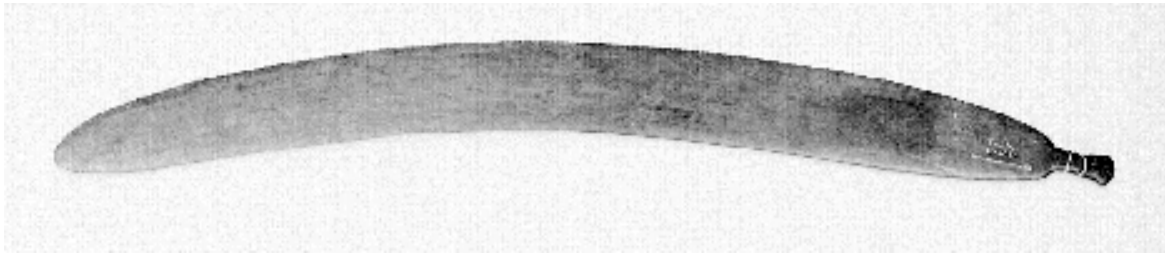
Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4015M, frame 114.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 9. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 203–205.

Single-handed sword

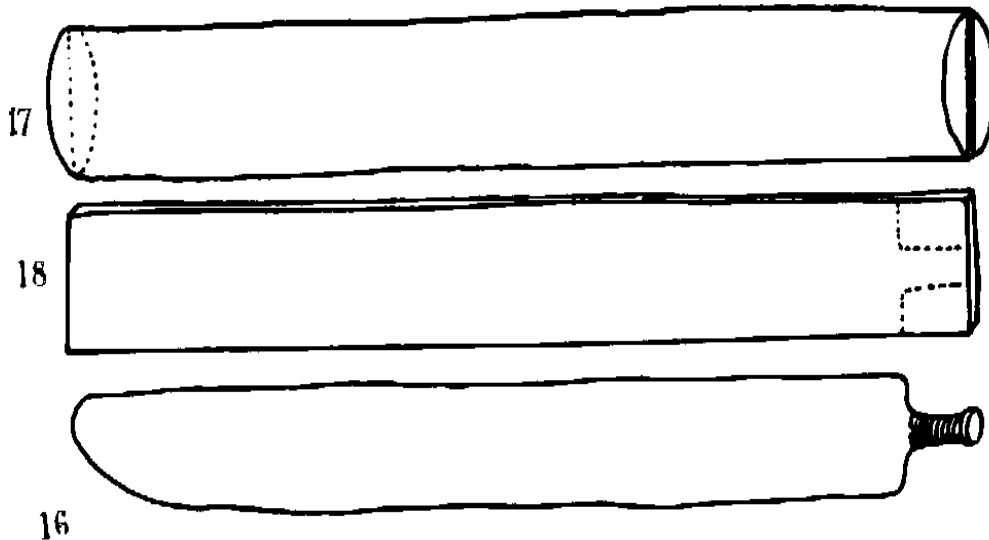


E.15033. Single-handed hardwood sword. Collected Clump Point, 1898.
144×15 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these swords were made was based on a visit to the Lower Tully River where he watched Aboriginal people making them. They were made in the same way at Clump Point.

1. A hardwood tree was cut down and a length of wood about 120 cm to 170 cm long was chopped off. This was split down the centre, and one of the slabs of wood was chipped into shape. The straighter the tree, the straighter and better the sword.



2. To shape the short handle, a cut was made in both sides of the slab of wood, and then split. Handspun bark fibre string was wound round the handle and covered with beeswax which had been warmed over a fire. Once cold this made a hard glue. Roth's drawings make the operation easier to understand.
3. If the sword was curved, the outer edge was sharper and used in battle. If the weapon was straight, both edges were sharp and could be used to fight.
4. Often the blade would be coated first with blood which was used as a fixative for the red paint which decorated the surface of the blade.

Roth said these swords were used with one hand stretched over the shoulder, with the sword hanging down the back. The sword was swung forward with a sudden jerk, to strike the enemy.

These swords were used only where highly decorated kidney-shaped shields were used, on south east Cape York Peninsula, in the Bloomfield and Cardwell districts, and down to Tully,

and inland along the mountain ranges to Atherton.

Roth said that by 1898 these swords were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

There is one sword in the Roth collection from Clump Point. It was collected by Sergeant Casey in 1898.

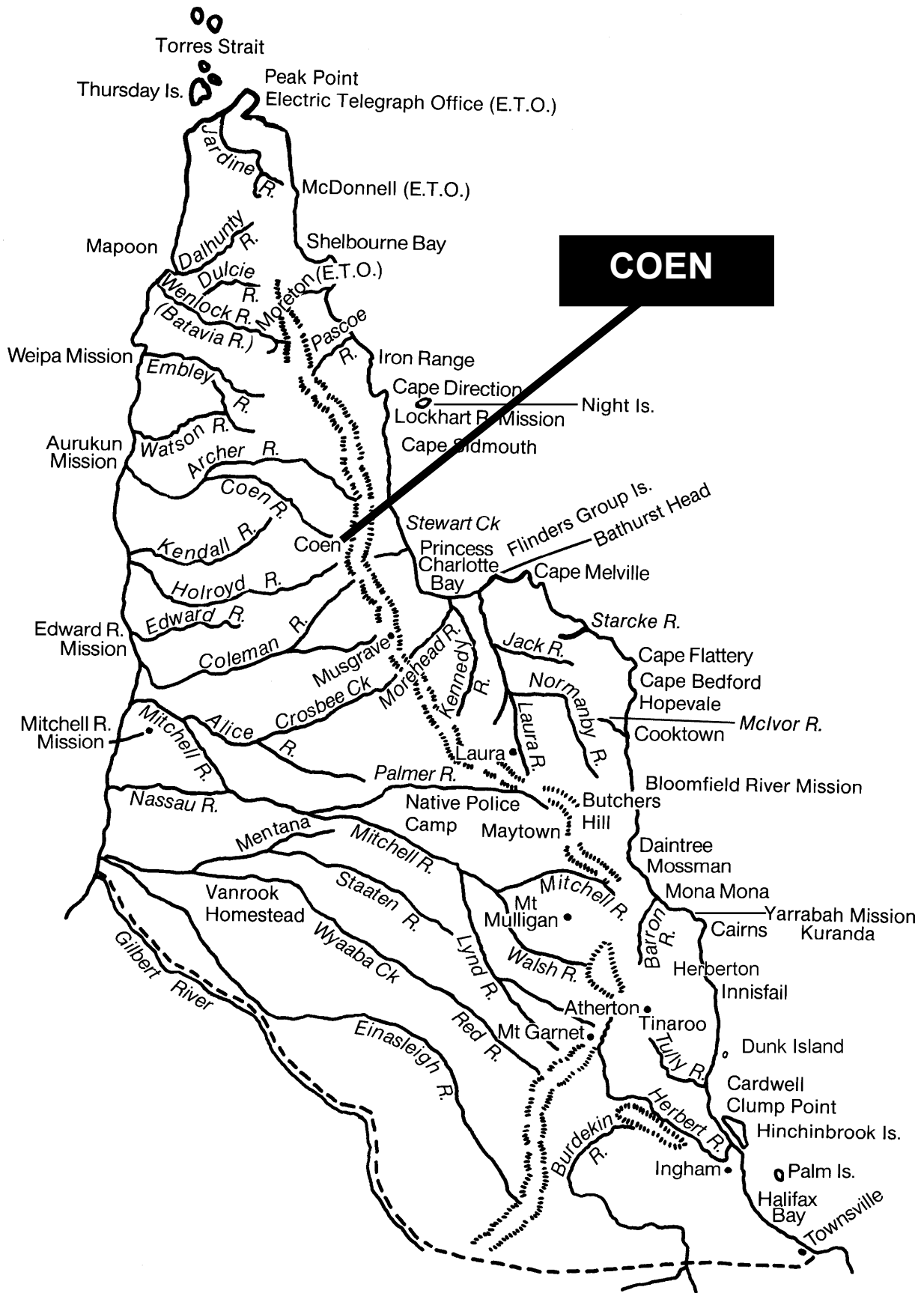
E.15033 Roth's collection number is SW.15. The total length is 144×15 cm wide. The handle is 9×5 cm. Handspun bark fibre string is bound around the handle and covered with gum cement. The sword weighs 2.25 kg.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4219M, frame 1717.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 13, 1909, p. 210.



COEN



A man from Coen climbing a tree with the aid of a bark strip held at either end. From Bulletin 17, 1910, plate 22, fig. 1.

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The People

Gold was discovered by Europeans in the Coen River in the 1880s. Prospectors began to drift in to try their luck and by 1889, a one-street township of tents and bark huts had come into being. There was a hotel, a general store, a butcher, and about 26 European miners, and the same number of Chinese fossickers and wood-cutters.

The Coen goldfield was officially proclaimed in 1892, but because of the isolation and extremely harsh conditions, it had a short life.

Books to read

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 18, 1910, p. 96.

Secret/sacred objects

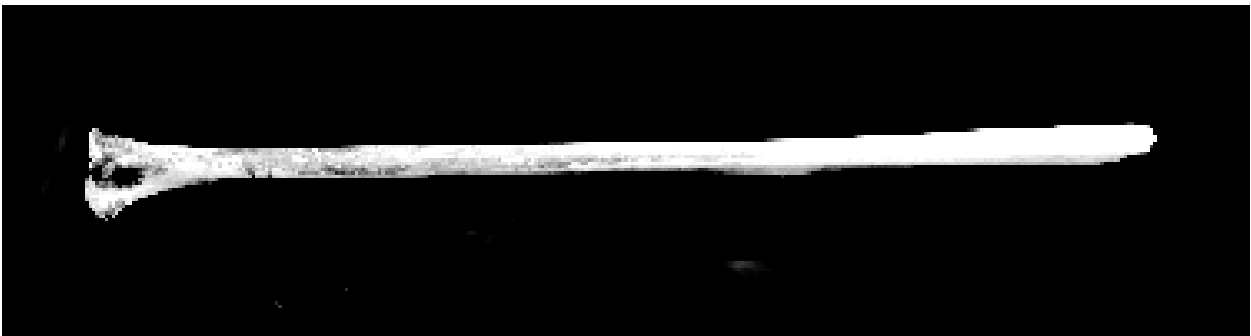
Because of the sensitive nature of these objects, we will only give information to those people who have a right to know. The Senior Collection Manager or the Aboriginal Heritage Officer in the Museum should be able to help in this matter. Their telephone numbers are (02) 9320 6195 and (02) 9320 6192.

Collection information

E.13721 to E.13722 Collected by Roth at the Coen River in 1899. A note in the Australian Museum Anthropology Register dated 1905 states: "or Pennefather River".

E.15153 Collected by Roth at the Coen River. No collection date given.

Wallaby bone awls



E.13899. Wallaby bone awl. Collected Coen, 1898. 18×1 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

An awl could be made from a rib, leg or wing bone of a mammal or bird, ground and chipped to shape on a piece of stone.

It was a very useful tool, found wherever spears were made. The awl was used to scrape out wood when fitting the shaft into the butt part of a spear, and to hollow out the cavity at the base of a spear, so it could be thrown with a spearthrower. Sockets of harpoons, after charring, were dug out with a bone awl. Roth mentioned it being used to hollow out earring tubes in the Pennefather River district.

Bone awls were used by men who carried them in their handspun bark fibre bags.

Collection information

There are two wallaby bone awls from Coen, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.13898 Roth's collection number is BD.4. The awl has a rounded, flattened tip, and is 21 cm long and about 1 cm wide.

E.13899 Roth's collection number is BD.5. The awl has a round, flattened tip, and is 18 cm long and about 1 cm wide.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both bone awls.

E.13898 negative sheet 4076M, frame 581.

E.13899 negative sheet 4076M, frame 582.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 25.

Single-handed sword

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these swords were made was based on a visit to the Lower Tully River where he watched Aboriginal people making them.

1. A hardwood tree was cut down and a length of wood about 120–170 cm long was chopped off. This was split down the centre, and one of the slabs of wood was chipped into shape. The straighter the tree, the straighter and better the sword.
2. To shape the short handle, a cut was made in both sides of the slab of wood, and then split. Handspun bark fibre string was wound round the handle and covered with beeswax which had been warmed over a fire. Once cold this made a hard glue.
3. If the sword was curved, the outer edge was sharper and used in battle. If the weapon was straight, both edges were sharp and could be used.
4. Often the blade would be coated with red paint, fixed to the surface of the wood with blood.

Roth said these swords were used with one hand stretched over the shoulder, with the sword hanging down the back. The sword was swung forward with a sudden jerk, to strike the enemy.

According to Roth, these swords were used only where the highly decorated kidney-shaped shields were used—on south-east Cape York Peninsula, in the Bloomfield and Cardwell districts, and down to Tully, and inland along the mountain ranges to Atherton. The collection of this sword by Roth at Coen is well out of this range. The shape of the sword is also atypical.

Roth said that by 1898 these swords were made, if at all, only by very old men.

There is one single-handed sword from Coen, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.15026 Roth's collection number is SW.8. It is 83 cm long and 15 cm at its widest part. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "Sword (Nalpa)". The sword cannot be located in the collection at present, so could not be weighed.



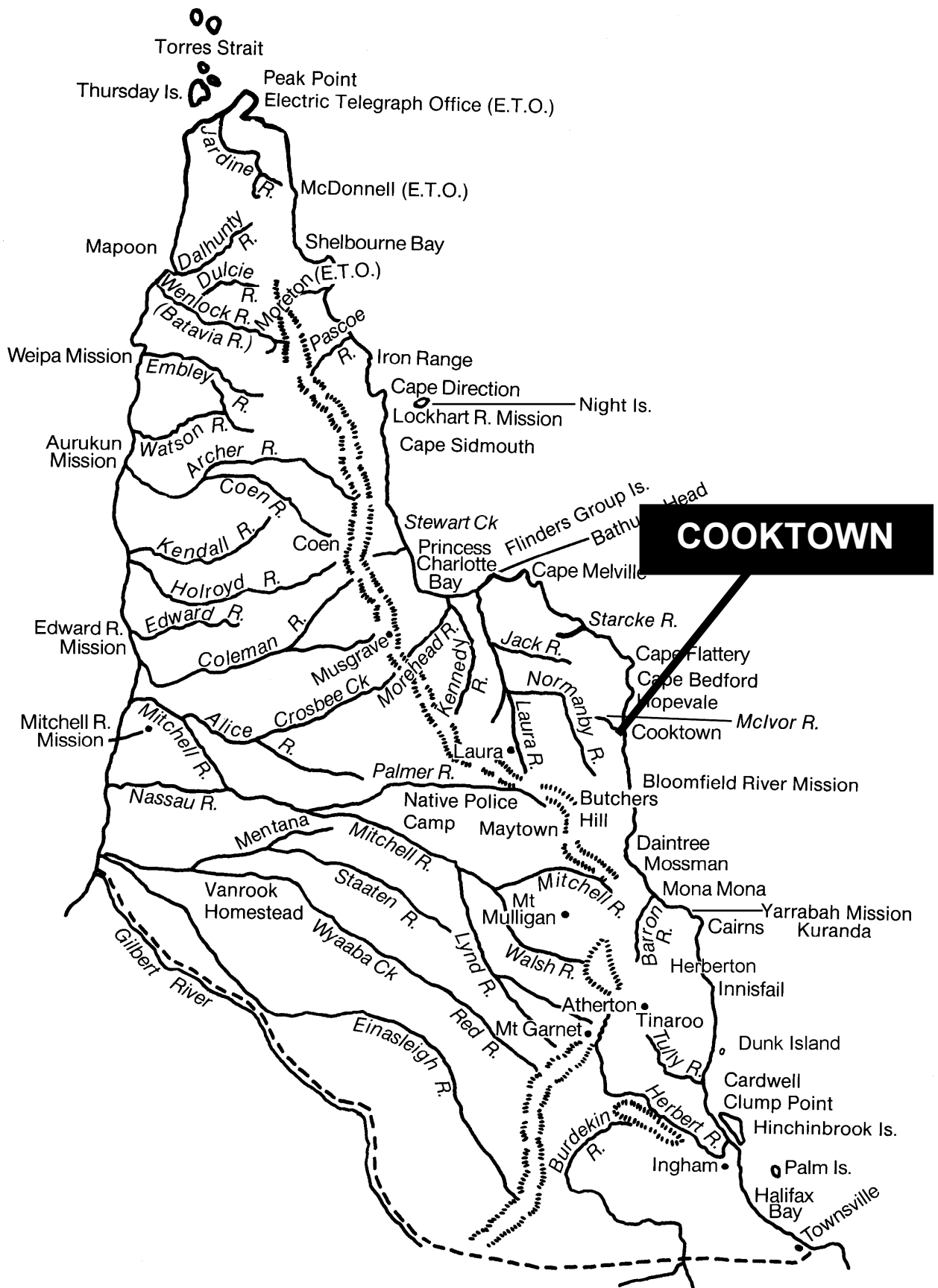
E.15026. Single-handed sword. Collected Coen, 1898. 83×15 cm.

Photographic information

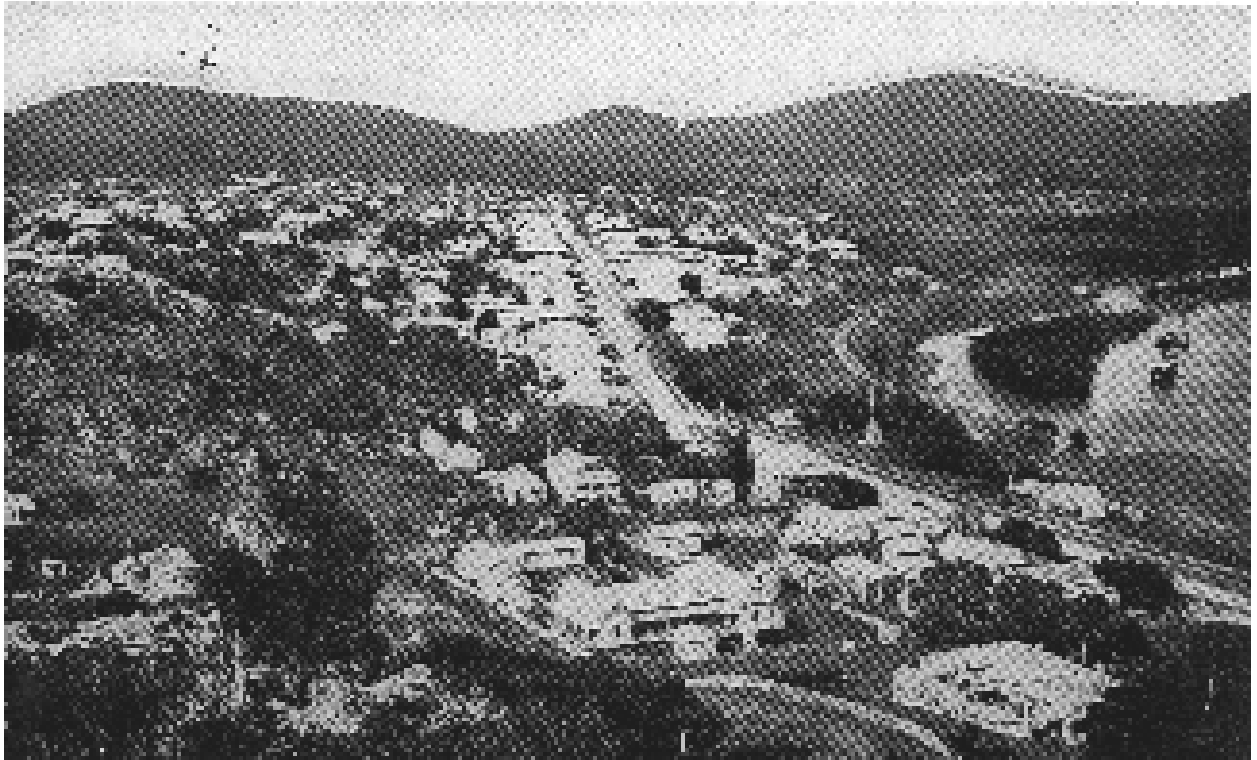
A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4218M, frame 1710.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 210–211.



COOKTOWN



View of Cooktown, north Queensland. From North Queensland, Australia... a land teeming with wealth. Government Printer, Brisbane, 1908, page 34. Mitchell Library Reference 984. 6/Q. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Roth said the people living at Cooktown were known as Kai-ar-ara, meaning people occupying the country around Kai-ar (Mount Cook). Of the Cooktown and surrounding district, Roth wrote

South of the Endeavour River the Koko-yimidir dialect is very corrupt, the natives belonging to this area comprising Mt. Cook, the lower portions of the Annan River, and the coast-country down to Archer Point speaking of it as Koko-imoji. The “homes” of these people are at Mount Cook (Kai-ar), their actual camping ground at the base of the mountain being called Wain-bur, along the Annan River (Yu-ru country), and in the area (Bul-kon) round about Oakey Creek, a branch of the Annan. They visit Cooktown, known to them all as Kankar, and often camp at the 3-Mile (Worra-jagga). North of Cooktown, Cape Bedford is where the native speak the Koko-yimidir language in its full purity. The Starcke River Natives travel to... Cooktown where they camp at the 2-Mile... More or less west of Cooktown is the Boggy Creek Reserve for Aborigines, a stretch of country... on Butcher’s Hill Station...

Captain Cook landed at Cooktown on 13 June 1770 and stayed until 4 August 1770. Matthew Flinders called there in 1802, but the first mention of European settlement at Cooktown was in Dalrymple’s account of his north coast expedition in October 1873, when the steamer “Leichhardt” dropped gold prospectors ashore.

At 6am on the 31st October, the “Leichhardt”, Captain Saunders, steamed out of the Endeavour, leaving a lovely little white seaport gleaming with white tents, and noisily busy with workmen, where a week before we found a silent wilderness.—from A. Meston. *Geographic History of Queensland*, 1895, p. 61.

This was the beginning of the gold rush. By April 1874, Cooktown was a prosperous boom city with up to 4000 people living there.

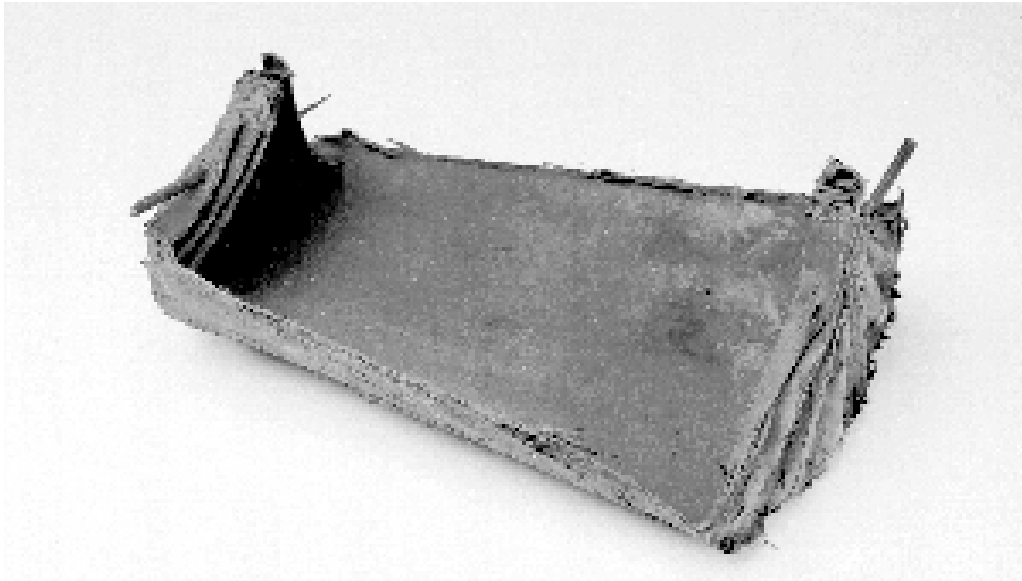
The original track to the goldfields from Cooktown was called “Battle Camp” because Aboriginal people came down from the hills to challenge the right of strangers to travel through their country without permission.

Two years later, in 1876, Cooktown was proclaimed a municipality. In 1885, the municipality imposed a formal curfew on Aboriginal people. They were banned from the town after dark because of the many successful raids on properties of the early settlers. By 1903 it was all over for Cooktown and the nearby Palmer River Goldfields. The only industry keeping Cooktown going now was the *bêche-de-mer* or sea-slug trade.

Books to read

- Bolton, G.C., 1963. *A Thousand Miles Away. A History of North Queensland to 1920*. Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, pp. 66, 96 and 169.
- Loos, N. 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European relations on the north Queensland frontier 1861–1897*. Australian National University Press, Canberra, pp. 78, 135 and 162.
- Meston, A., 1895. *Geographic History of Queensland*. Government Printer, Brisbane, p. 61.
- Mjöberg, E., 1918. *Among the Stone Age Men of the Queensland Wilderness. Bland stenaldersmänniskor i Queenslands vildmaker*. Albert Bonniers Forlag, Stockholm, p. 105.
- Palmer, E., 1903. *Early Days in North Queensland*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney, pp. 153–154.
- Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 18, 1910, pp. 81–83.

Pleated bark container



E.13324. Pleated bark container. Collected Cooktown, 1898. 37×25×16 cm deep.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth saw a pleated bark container being made while visiting the Aboriginal people living on the Endeavour River.

He said a sheet of bark was removed from a tea-tree. A full sheet was taken so that the bark would curl nicely. The outer layer of the bark was picked and peeled off with a kangaroo-bone skewer. The inner surface of the bark became the inner surface of the container.

The ends of the container were made ready for pleating by thinning down the thickness of the bark using a sharply pointed bone skewer. The ends were then warmed over a fire. Two fine cuts were made across the inside of the bark to allow the folds to be pleated. After a second heating, the ends were now ready for pleating. A curved, sharply pointed ironwood peg was pushed through the pleats to hold them in place.

These containers were very useful. They held honey as well as water. They were used as a container when preparing food. Babies and other objects were carried across creeks in them by being pushed along in front of a swimmer. Larger ones were used to carry corpses during certain burial ceremonies.

Spiked pleated containers were used on the eastern coastline from the Bloomfield River to north of Princess Charlotte Bay, and from the Palmer River to the Moreton Telegraph Station. On the Gulf coast they were used from Pera Head to the Wenlock River (formerly the Batavia River).

Roth said the Endeavour River people called the folded ends of the container ngollo, (the same name given to the front of the instep of the foot, which wrinkles when the ankle is flexed). According to Roth, the local Cooktown people called the bloodwood jin-jil.

Collection information

There is one pleated bark container from Cooktown, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.13324 Roth's collection number is WT.6. The bark container is 37 cm long, 25 cm wide and is 16 cm deep. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "water carrier, pleat-type; boxwood bark."

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4000M, frame 8.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 30.

Scientific names of materials used

Roth said the spiked variety of pleated bark container used at Cooktown could be made from the following: the red bloodwood tree *Eucalyptus corymbosa*, now known as *Eucalyptus gummifera*, *Eucalyptus tetradonta*, or *Tristania suaveolens*, now known as *Lophostemon suaveolens* var. *suaveolens*, the bastard peppermint, broad-leaved water gum or swamp mahogany.

E.14920. Woven basket. Collected North Shore, Cooktown, 1898. Length 47 cm. Diameter of mouth 29×15 cm.

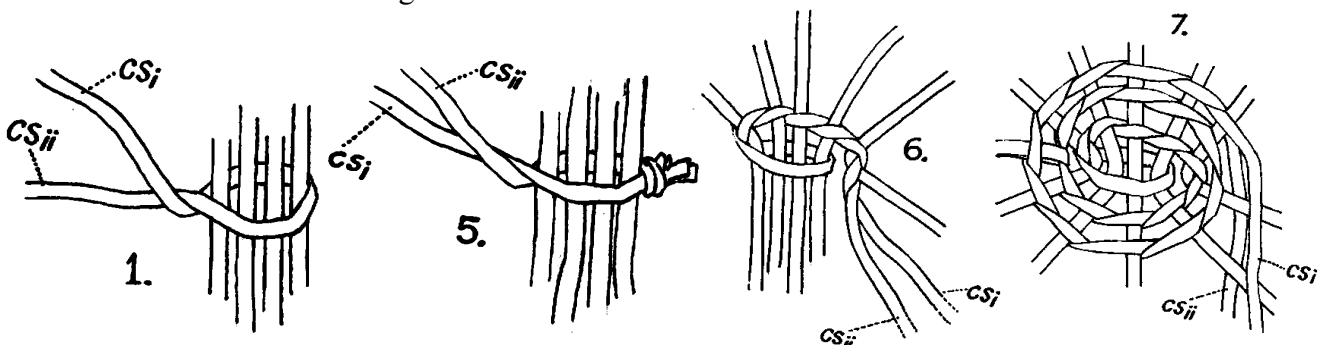


Woven baskets

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The firmly woven baskets were usually made of fibre strands from the blood root. The dried leaves were moistened just before use, and then split into thin strips with the finger nails.

1. These baskets were woven using two continuous strands of fibre string and several base strands. The weaving pattern was a chain twist.
2. The two continuous strands were twisted into a chain, and the ends of the straight base strands were left free.
3. The chain twist was the weft (the threads going across), the straight base strands, the warp (the thread going up and down). Roth's drawing shows how the basket was begun.

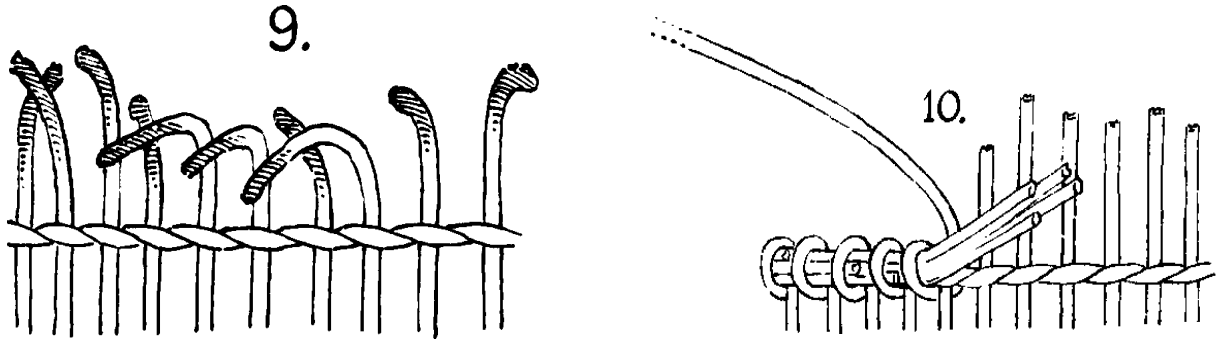


Baskets like this were generally firm, unlike soft handspun bark fibre bags. The only way baskets varied from each other was in the way the first base strands were started.

These baskets were usually finished off by either binding the rim with strips of cane or burning the unwoven ends of the canes in ashes, as shown in Roth's drawings.

A fine handle was made by looping a strand of fibre just under the border of the mouth.

Roth said these baskets were used by women as sieves for preparing *Zamia* nuts by leaching out the poison in water to make the nuts safe to eat.



The baskets were used at Cooktown, Cape Bedford, Middle Palmer River and Princess Charlotte Bay.

Aboriginal people living around the Wenlock (formerly the Batavia River) and Pennefather Rivers on the Gulf coast also used this type of weaving to make mats. People at Atherton and Cairns wove their fish and wallaby traps in this way.

Collection information

There are two woven baskets in the Roth collection from Cooktown. Roth did not give collection numbers to the baskets

E.14920 This basket was collected in 1898. The locality given is North Shore, Cooktown. North Shore was a temporary Reserve set up in 1881, prior to the Mission being established at Cape Bedford. The basket is 47 cm long, and the mouth is 29×15 cm. The basket has been strengthened by a second rim.

E.14940 There is no collection date given for this basket. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "no locality given. ? Cooktown." It is 21 cm long and the mouth is 6×7 cm. The rim has unravelled.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both baskets.

E.14920 negative sheet 4204M, frame 1604.

E.14940 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1624.

Useful written information

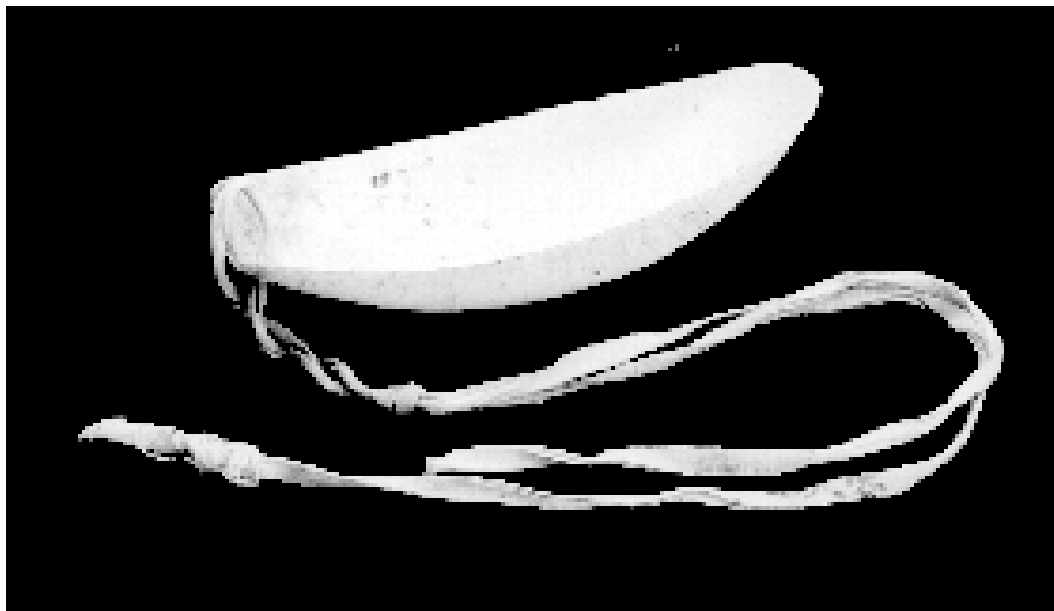
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 1, 1901, pp. 12–15.

Scientific names of materials used

Blood root: *Haemorrhorum coccineum*.

Zamia nuts: *Cycas media*.

Shell chest ornaments



E.14508. Shell chest ornament. Collected Cooktown, 1898. Length 55 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Most chest and back ornaments were made from part of a pearl shell, *Nautilus* shell or baler shell. The outer layer of the shell was removed by putting it on the ground, face down, and covering it carefully with hot ashes. This made the surface easier to remove when it was ground on a stone and splashed with water.

When the grinding was finished, the shell had a hole drilled in one end. A length of handspun bark fibre string was passed through and knotted at the ends.

Roth did not say what was used to drill the hole in the shell. However he did talk of a kangaroo tooth drill from Princess Charlotte Bay. The incisor was stuck into a short handle and held there with handspun bark fibre string and ironwood gum cement. It was used to drill holes in pieces of shell for necklaces, as well as holes in spearthrowers for fixing pegs to the ends. Maybe a tool like this was used at Cooktown.

On the Endeavour River, at Bloomfield, Laura, on the Middle Palmer River and at Cape Bedford, a *Nautilus* shell was worn beteen the shoulders of men and between the breasts of women. Owing to the fragile nature of this shell, Roth did not see any regular bartering of the shell to any great distances inland.

A close friend of Roth, Thomas Petrie, said both men and women living in the Brisbane area wore the *Nautilus* shell between their shoulders or breasts. He said this shell was much valued by Aboriginal people living inland.

On the east coast, oval pieces of *Nautilus* and baler shells often were used as spoons. Roth had difficulty deciding whether to call them spoons or ornaments as they sometimes had a hole drilled at one end and a length of handspun bark fibre twine threaded through and held with beeswax. This could be hung around the neck.

Collection information

There are two shell chest ornaments from Cooktown, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14508 Roth's collection number is G.70. The ornament is 55 cm long. A length of cream cord, threaded through the hole at one end, is 43 cm long.

- E.14509 Roth's collection number is G.71?. The ornament is 14 cm long. The handspun bark fibre string is 70 cm long. This ornament has been missing since March 1985.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available for one ornament.

- E.14508 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1192.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 24–25, and 27. Bulletin 15, 1910, p. 35.

Scientific names of materials used

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

Baler or melon shell: *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora*.

Edible clay

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that white clay was eaten both at Cooktown and on the Bloomfield River.

An early settler, Mr R. Hislop, told Roth that in the Bloomfield district, it was dug out from veins in cliffs or in banks of creeks. It was then carefully pounded and sifted until it was smooth and free from grit. The white clay was then put in a bark trough, and worked into a stiff paste with water. The paste was then made into a cake about 4×10×20 cm. This cake was left in the sun for six to eight days, then wrapped in leaves, buried in some ashes and a hot fire made over it. When cool, it was ready for use, and considered a delicacy. Roth noted it was used both as food and as a medicine.

This same clay was used, either in a raw state, or ground into a fine powder, to decorate weapons.

Roth said the local Cooktown people called this edible clay gamai, or garmai.

Collection information

There are five pieces of edible pipe clay in the Roth collection from Cooktown.

- E.8987 This clay does not form part of the original Roth collection purchase of 1905. The clay was given to the Museum by Roth and registered on 30 January 1900. It could not be located in the collection.
- E.14776 This clay was collected in 1899. It could not be located in the collection.
- E.14778 Rectangular block of prepared edible white clay was collected in 1904. It is 4 cm long, 3 cm wide and 2 cm deep.
- E.14779 Flattened, rounded piece of prepared yellow/red edible clay was collected in 1904. It is 4 cm long, 4 cm wide and 1 cm deep.
- E.14780 Crumbling piece of yellow edible clay was collected in 1904. It is broken into three pieces, 2 cm long, 2 cm wide and 2 cm deep; 3 cm long, 2 cm wide, and 2 cm deep; and 1 cm long, 1 cm wide and 1 cm deep.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for three of the items.

- E.14778 negative sheet 4186M, frame 1462.
- E.14779 negative sheet 4186M, frame 1463.

E.14780 negative sheet 4186M, frame 1464.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, p. 9. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 14.

Scientific name of material used

White clay is a kaolin—hydrous silicate of alumina.

Food—shell from edible mollusc

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said most shellfish were roasted in the ashes, but a few were eaten raw. He said the local Cooktown people called the shell described below ko-mo.

Collection information

Roth collected one shell from Cooktown. This shell does not form part of the major Roth collection purchase of 1905. The shell was given to the Museum by Roth and registered on 5 February 1900.

Charles Hedley, who was at this time the Conchologist or shell specialist at the Museum and a close friend of Roth, identified the shell for him.

E.9019 A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1900 states this shellfish was "used as food by natives of N.E. Queensland." Its scientific name then was *Thersites bipartita*, but is now *Hadra bipartita*.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, pp. 17–18.

Message sticks



E.13405. Message stick. Collected Cooktown, 1898. 8×2 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth did not describe how message sticks were made, but commented on their use. He was convinced that the marks on message sticks did not carry a message in the ordinarily accepted way. He said the message was taken by word of mouth, the message stick was to show that the messenger had been given permission to carry the message and could be trusted. Roth reached this view because he saw that the same message could be taken with different sticks,

and some sticks had no markings at all. If the messenger was known to both parties, no message stick was sent.

Collection information

Roth collected eight of the nine message sticks from Cooktown in 1898. The last message stick was collected by Dr Kortum at Cooktown hospital, and given to Roth. The 8-mile, Cooktown, referred to below was a Native Police Camp near Cooktown where Aboriginal people often stayed for a few days, receiving goods and provisions in return for a little work.

- E.13400 Roth's collection number is S.33. The message stick is 11 cm long and 3 cm wide. There is a photograph of it in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 1, figure 6, where he described it as oblong, flattened, feather-edged, ends rounded. Made by Ku, a man from Morehead River.
- E.13401 Roth's collection number is S.34. The message stick is 10 cm long and 1 cm wide. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "part of message involving E.13403-4." There is a photograph of it in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 2, figure 7, where he described it as cylindrical or ruler shaped, slightly bent, blunt ended, unequally round, irregularly incised with oblique short notches. Light coloured wood, apparently at one time blackened. Made by a Koko-warra man from Cooktown.
- E.14302 Roth's collection number is S.35. The message stick is 8 cm long and 2 cm wide. Wooden, flat, oblong shaped stick with squared off ends. Irregular crosshatched design, both surfaces. One side, hatching and zig-zag infilled with crosshatching: other side, herringbone, hatching and two sets of parallel lines, which eventually meet in a crosshatched pattern. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "message stick given me by a Morehead River woman, at the 8-mile, Cooktown, whose brother "by these presents" had sent in word to say that he was sick. S.35-36 are probably portions of 1 stick." There is a photograph of this message stick in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 3, figure 4, where he described it as being oblong, flat, compressed, square-ended, cut down at one end. Half a stick given by a Morehead River woman at the 8-mile, Cooktown.
- E.13403 Roth's collection number is S.36. The message stick is 7 cm long and 2 cm wide. One side has two chevrons, one comprised of concentric bands of chevrons, the other, slight irregular incisions. The other side has incised crosshatching, concentric chevrons, and herringbone design. The ends are squared. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "message stick given me by a Morehead River woman at the 8-mile, Cooktown, whose brother 'by these presents' had sent in word to say that he was sick. S.35-6 are probably portions of one stick." There is a photograph of this message stick in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 3, figure 5.
- E.13404 Roth's collection number is S.37. The message stick is 12 cm long and 3 cm wide. It is oblong, with rounded ends. Incised long bands which cross each other, are infilled with grids, hatching and crosshatching. There is a photograph of this message stick in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 3, figure 1, where Roth describes the message stick as being oblong, thin and flattened. Dark coloured wood with a reddened and oiled surface. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "message stick given me by a Morehead River woman at the 8-mile,

Cooktown, whose brother 'by these presents' had sent in word to say that he was sick." It is the same message as found on E.13402 and E.13403, and Roth thought they were portions of the same stick. Part of the message also involves E.13401.

- E.13405 Roth's collection number is S.38. The message stick is 8 cm long and 2 cm wide. It is a flat, oblong shaped stick with squared off ends. Irregular crosshatching is incised on both sides of the stick. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "made by a Cooktown boy, who calls it yoko-kapan (tree-mark)."
- E.13406 Roth's collection number is S.39. The message stick is 11 cm long and 2 cm wide. It is flat and oblong with squared ends. The stick is incised with horizontal lines at irregular intervals. There is a photograph of this message stick in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 1, figure 1, where he describes it as oblong, flattened, feather-edged, ends truncate, dark wood. Both sides have 16 transverse incisions. Made by Ku, a man from Morehead River.
- E.13407 Roth's collection number is S.40. The message stick is 9 cm long and 2 cm wide. It is oblong with one end rounded, the other squared. Both sides are incised with chevrons, and irregular hatchings, edges notched. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "stick carried by Roth from his own native servant, a Cooktown boy, to his brother on the Starcke River, telling him he was alright".
- E.13409 Roth's collection number is S.41. The message stick is 7 cm long and 2 cm wide. The stick was collected by Dr Kortum at Cooktown hospital. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "stick made by 'Andy', a Flinders Island man, sick in Cooktown hospital". The stick is oblong shaped with squared off ends. The edges are notched and zig-zag and lozenge shaped designs are incised on both sides of the stick.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all nine message sticks.

- E.13400 negative sheet 4010M, frame 84.
 E.13401 negative sheet 4010M, frame 85.
 E.13402 negative sheet 4010M, frame 86.
 E.13403 negative sheet 4010M, frame 87.
 E.13404 negative sheet 4011M, frame 88.
 E.13405 negative sheet 4011M, frame 89.
 E.13406 negative sheet 4011M, frame 90.
 E.13407 negative sheet 4011M, frame 91.
 E.13409 negative sheet 4011M, frame 93.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 8, 1905, p. 10.

Tobacco pipe



E.13499. Bamboo tobacco pipe. Collected Cooktown, 1898. 36×5 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

When European pipes were scarce, pieces of bamboo were used. One end of the bamboo was closed with beeswax, if necessary, and a small hole was drilled at the side. Tobacco smoke was blown in the open end and inhaled through the drilled hole by each smoker in turn. This could be reversed—blow the smoke in the smaller end and inhale at the larger end. The bamboo pipe also could be sealed at both ends and a hole drilled at each side to let the smoke in and out. This way of smoking meant several people could enjoy one pipeful of tobacco.

Collection information

There are three bamboo pipes from Cooktown, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.13499 Roth's collection number is MD.20. The pipe is 36 cm long and has a diameter of 5 cm. Gum cement is smeared at one end. A length of red cloth, smeared with gum cement is wrapped around the other end of the pipe, but neither end is blocked.
- E.13500 Roth's collection number is MD.21. The pipe is 60 cm long and has a diameter of 4 cm. The pipe is sealed at one end with gum cement.
- E.13501 Roth's collection number is MD.22. The pipe is 76 cm long and has a diameter of 4 cm. The pipe is sealed at one end with gum cement.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all three pipes.

- E.13499 negative sheet 4026M, frame 182.
- E.13500 negative sheet 4026M, frame 183.
- E.13501 negative sheet 4026M, frame 184.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, p. 31.

Gum cement**Information from Roth's Bulletins**

To get gum cement from the ironwood, roots of a young ironwood tree were dug up, and pieces of root were cut away. The outer sticky coating on the exposed root was stripped off by pulling a piece of bark straight up the piece of root. The collected sticky mass was roasted over a fire and hammered between two stones until soft. In Cooktown, these two stones were greased with oil from the *Calophyllum* nut, also known as the beach *Calophyllum*. The gum was then left to cool and harden.

H.G. Smith, the Curator of the Technological Museum in Sydney, analysed this gum cement for Roth. He said it was coloured black, was very hard, and did not soften between the fingers. It softened readily at a high temperature, and he concluded that it was an excellent cement for the purposes for which it was made, although it had a tendency to crack.

Roth saw this gum cement being used on the Endeavour, Laura and Palmer Rivers, along the Princess Charlotte Bay coastline, and on the Gulf coast, between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers.

Roth said the local Cooktown people called it gambar.

Gum from the grass tree was found as lumps among the roots of the tree, and only needed to be heated before use. The local Cooktown people called it punga.

Roth said gum from the bastard beefwood tree also was used in the Cooktown region, and was considered the strongest and most durable of all cements. He wrote that in 1904, it was scarce as all the trees around Cooktown had been destroyed.

Collection information

There are two samples of gum cement from Cooktown, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.14763 A lump of gum cement from the grass tree, stuck to a small pointed stick. The total length of the object is 16 cm. The length of rounded stick protruding at one end is 8 cm and has a diameter of 1 cm. A small point of stick protrudes at the other end through the lump of black gum. Width of the gum lump is 5 cm and the depth is 5 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "gum cement (*Xanthorrhoea arborea* R.Br.) as carried about on a piece of stick (black palm in this case) ready for use."
- E.14773 Gum cement from the ironwood tree. It is 10 cm long by 3 cm wide and is 3 cm deep.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both pieces of gum cement.

- E.14763 negative sheet 4184M, frame 1447.
- E.14773 negative sheet 4185M, frame 1457.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11–14.

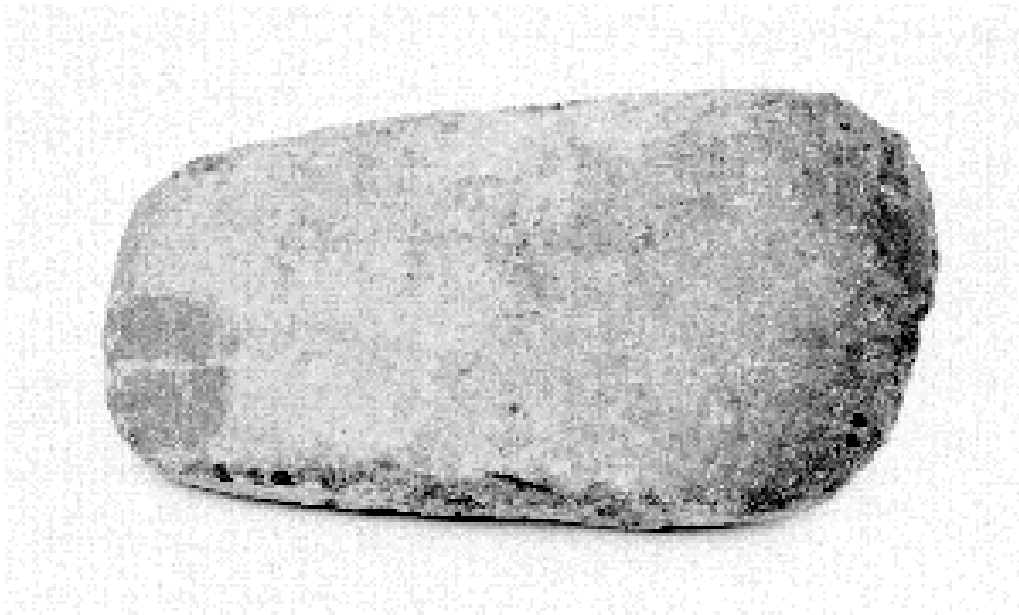
Scientific names of materials used

Grass tree: *Xanthorrhoea arborea*. It is now known as *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*.

Ironwood tree: *Erythrophloeum laboucheii*. It is now known as *Erythrophloeum chlorostachyum*.

Bastard beefwood tree: *Grevillea striata*.

The oily nut comes from the *Calophyllum inophyllum*.

Stone axe heads

E.13625. Edge-ground stone axe head. Collected Cooktown, 1898.
19×10×3.5 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said stone axes were all made in much the same way. The axe head was shaped by rough pecking and grinding, and the cutting edge was ground smooth. In 1904 he wrote that the making of stone axes in Queensland was “a lost art”.

Collection information

There are five edge-ground stone axe heads in the Roth collection from Cooktown.

E.13593 Stone axe head collected by Dr Kortum and given to Dr Roth in 1899. Roth's collection number is ST.27. The axe head is 9×9×4 cm. It weighs 506 g. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states “Stone celt, or axe. Dug up at Jansen's Selection at the '12 mile'. Given to Dr Roth by Dr Kortum”.

E.13617 Stone axe head collected by Dr Kortum and given to Dr Roth in 1899. Roth's collection number is ST.3. The axe head is 10×7×4 cm. It weighs 317 g. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states “Stone celt, or axe. Dug up at Jansen's Selection at the

'12 mile'. Given to Dr Roth by Dr Kortum".

- E.13622 Stone axe head collected by Roth in 1898. Roth's collection number is ST.6. The axe head is 8×7×3 cm. It weighs 246 g.
- E.13625 Stone axe head collected by Roth in 1898. Roth's collection number is ST.15. The axe head is 19×10×3.5 cm. It weighs 1134 g.
- E.13633 Stone axe head collected by Roth in 1899. Roth's collection number is ST.30. The axe head is 13×9×4 cm. It weighs 634 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all five axe heads.

- E.13593 negative sheet 4038M, frame 276.
- E.13617 negative sheet 4041M, frame 300.
- E.13622 negative sheet 4041M, frame 305.
- E.13625 negative sheet 4042M, frame 308.
- E.13633 negative sheet 4043M, frame 316.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 18–20.

Single-barbed spears



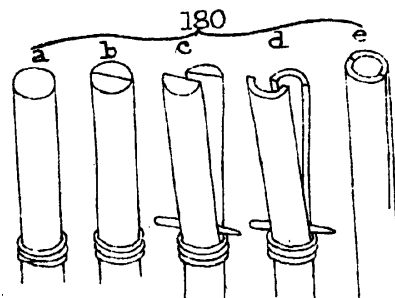
E.15074. Single-barbed spear. Collected Cooktown, 1898. Length 300 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Most spears were made of two or more sections, the butt, nearer the hand, and the shaft, to which the point or barbs were attached.

Roth did not specifically explain how a spear was made in Cooktown, but did so in great detail for the Bloomfield River, Princess Charlotte Bay, Cape Bedford and the Middle Palmer River regions. He said the time it took to make a spear depended on the sort of timber used.

1. First the wood was cut from the tree and shaped into the desired width and length. Some handspun bark fibre string was tightly tied around the butt end of the spear about 10 cm from the end. This end was split open with a piece of shell. The wedge was kept open with a peg. Roth's drawings help make these steps easier to understand.
2. Using a bone awl (a bird or animal leg bone 15 cm to 30 cm long, chipped and ground into shape), the wood was scraped out on each side of the split. This left a circular hole when the peg and twine were removed. Roth's drawings show how this was done.
3. The shaft section of the spear was now fixed to the butt section with gum cement and the



joint bound round and round with either handspun bark fibre string or, better still, kangaroo tendon. This was held in place with more gum cement and finally smoothed over with a smoothing board. The smoothing board was a thin, oval piece of ironwood, about 15 cm long, a comfortable size to be held in the right hand. It was like a putty knife. It was used to smooth over the warmed gum cement on spears. The smoothing board was always greased with forehead perspiration before being used.

4. The butt section of all spears thrown with spearthrowers, except bamboo ones, was bound with handspun bark fibre string and coated with gum cement. Once this was done, the bone awl was used to make the hole to receive the spearthrower peg.

According to Roth, the general name for spears in these areas and at Cooktown was *kalka*.

Collection information

There are three of these spears from Cooktown, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.15054 Roth's collection number is SP.55. The spear is 276 cm long. A wooden barb is attached with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The long softwood butt segment of the spear is attached to the hardwood shaft segment with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. One end of the butt segment of the spear has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. There is evidence of red and white paint on the spear. The spear weighs 330 g.
- E.15074 Roth's collection number is SP.49. The spear is 300 cm long. A wooden barb is attached to the shaft segment with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The softwood butt segment of the spear is attached to the hardwood shaft segment with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. One end of the butt segment of the spear has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. There are signs of white paint on the spear. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "single barbed du-a-r spear". The spear weighs 330 g.
- E.15094 Roth's collection number is S.56. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "to show fixation of barb". The spear is no longer in the collection, it was given in exchange to the South African Bureau of Archaeology in 1943.

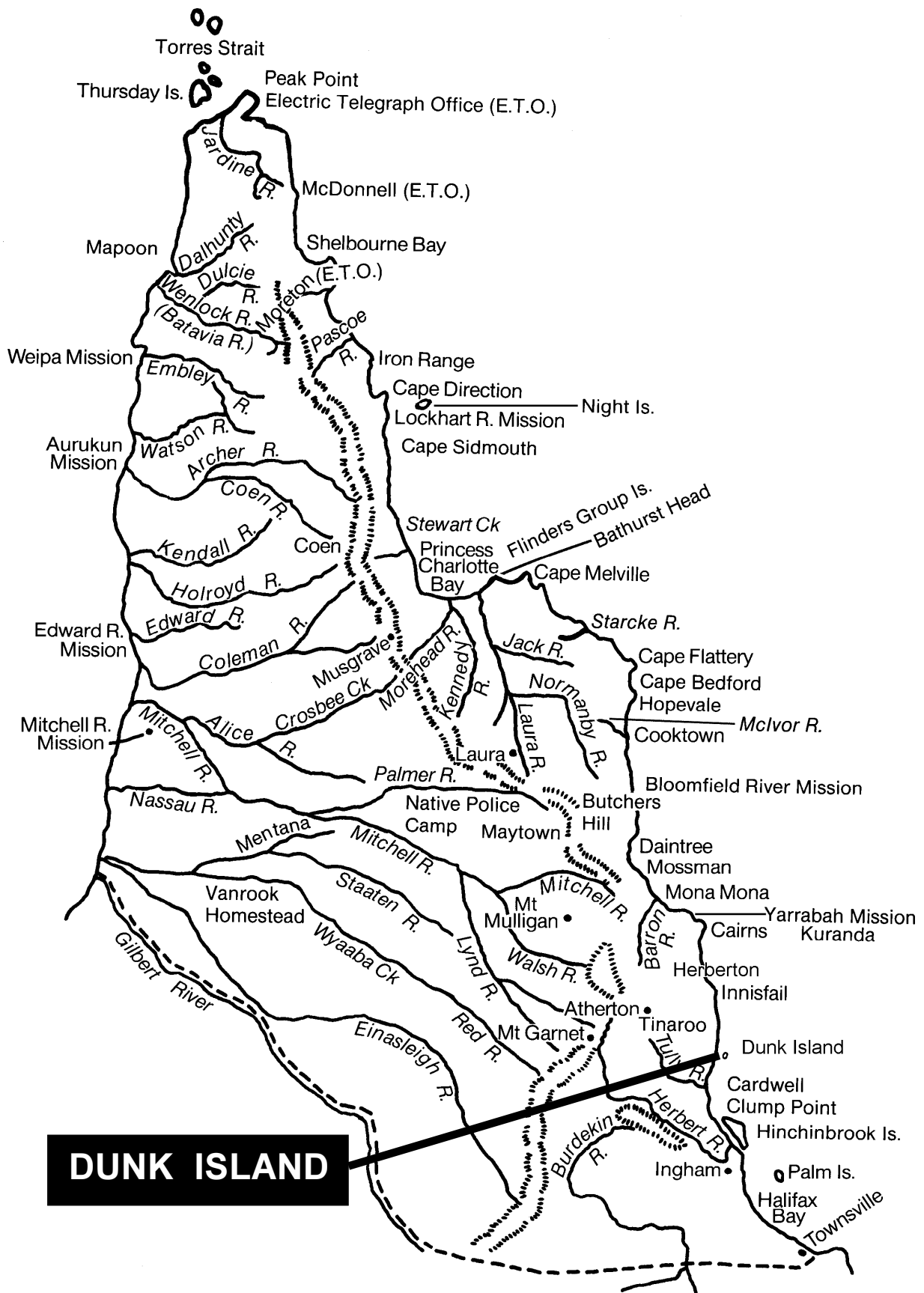
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for two of the spears.

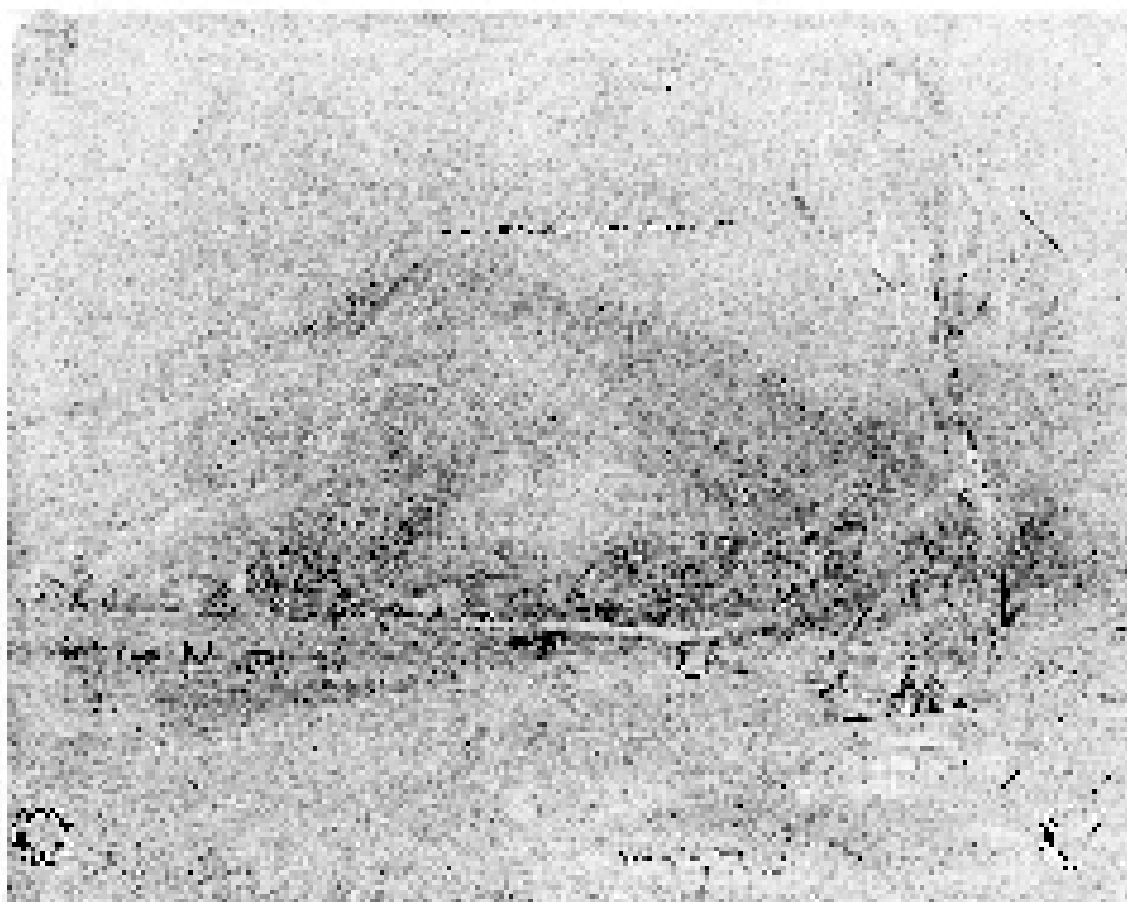
- E.15054 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1738.
E.15074 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1758.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11, 15 and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 190–194.



DUNK ISLAND



Watering place, Dunk Island. Unsigned watercolour by Sir Oswald Walters Brierly, dated 5 June 1848. In his sketches on board HMS *Rattlesnake*, f.2. Mitchell Library Reference. Small Picture File ZPX*D81. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Roth did not write about the people of Dunk Island. However, a note from Charles Hedley (the shell specialist at the Museum in Roth's time) to the Curator of the Australian Museum, dated February 11 1901, in part, reads:

To the Curator,

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that Dr W.E. Roth, Protector of the Aborigines of North Queensland writes to me in a private letter dated Cooktown 30 Jan. 1901 that (1) a 24 ton patrol cutter is placed at his official disposal (2) that about March 1st he starts in her from Bowen or Townsville on a tour of inspection northwards along the coast visiting the islands and settlements and (3) that if I can be spared for 6 to 8 weeks for the purpose of collection for the Museum, he invites me to accompany him...

A further letter from Hedley dated 9 August 1901, in part, reads

... re-crossing the Tully Bay we reached Dunk Island. I here secured some message sticks, the last example of a peculiar type or woomera, ornaments and various articles of lesser interest...

E.J. Banfield wrote about living on Dunk Island in 1908 in a book called *The Confessions of a Beachcomber*. It was Banfield that gave Roth the shell knives in the collection.

Dunk Island is about 15 km off the Queensland coast, midway between the northern and southern limits of the Great Barrier Reef, and is 180 km south of Innisfail.

Banfield wrote of the beauty and richness of Dunk Island, called Coonanglebah by the local Aboriginal people. He said there were hills, valleys, forests and jungles, sandy beaches, quiet coves and mangrove flats.

There was prolific marine life, with lots of dugong, turtle, fish, oysters and bird life. The mainland was only a half hour's canoe trip away.

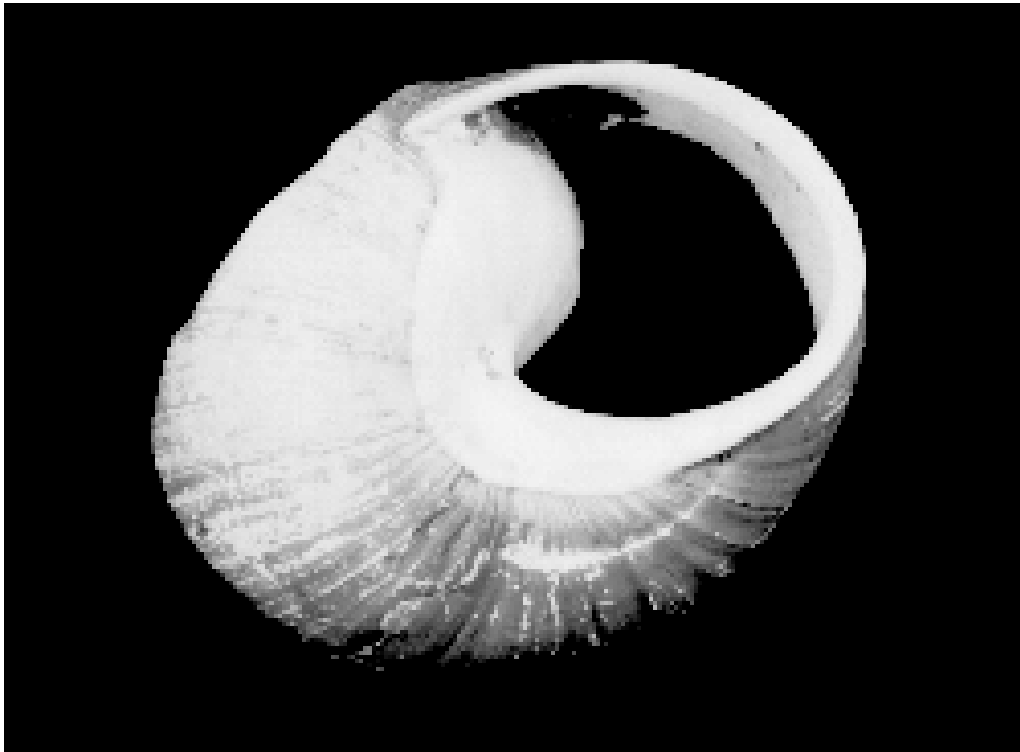
Banfield mentioned that the local Aboriginal people were hostile to European visitors to the island. He also wrote in 1908 that artefacts common to the island a few years ago were fast disappearing.

Books to read

Banfield, E.J., 1908. *The Confessions of a Beachcomber: scenes and incidents in the career of an unprofessional beachcomber in tropical Queensland*. Fisher Unwin, London.

Banfield, E.J., 1925 *Last Leaves from Dunk Island*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney.

Snail shell knives



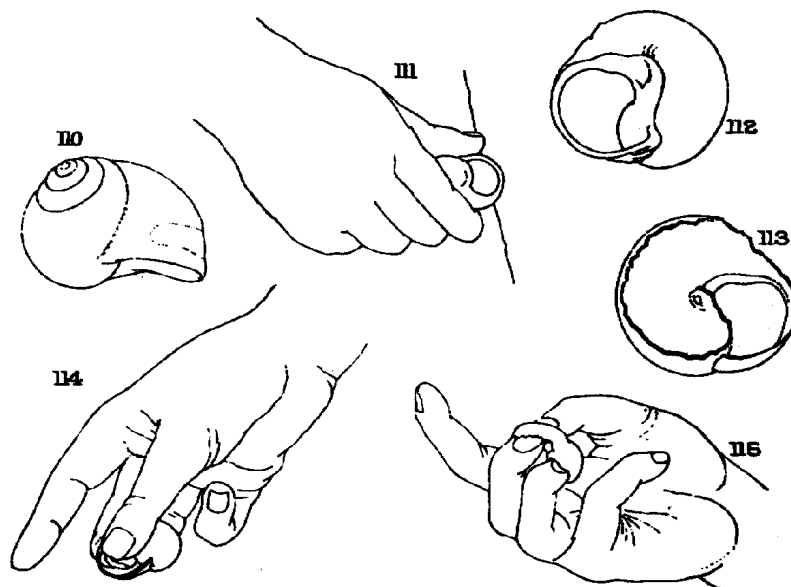
E.13854. Snail shell knife. Collected Dunk Island, 1903. 4×3×2 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said the snail shell slicer or knife was used only in the Tully River region and the neighbouring islands.

An empty shell of a land snail was stuffed firmly with grass and the body whorl behind the opening was ground over a sharp piece of stone. The grinding was helped with a little water. Soon this part of the shell became so thin that it was split across with the thumb nail.

When once this cut had been made, the whole top or spire of the shell was removed by cracking it on a stone around the edge. In this way a section of shell with a sharp cutting



edge was made. As well as cracking on a stone, the removal of the top of the shell was also helped by sharply tapping on the shell, and biting it between the teeth. These steps are shown in Roth's drawings.

To use, it was held with the base up, and the fore-finger left free. The top of the thumb rested on the centre of the base, while its extreme tip met and pressed on the tip of the middle finger, passing through the opening from underneath. The top of the "ring" finger pressed into the hollow on the under side, giving the whole implement more stability. The blade of the knife was thus made by the ground-down and broken edge behind the opening, so that as each slice of a particular nut, the Moreton Bay chestnut or a *Zamia* nut, was removed by the cutting edge pressing down, the separate portions passed upwards between thumb and shell-lip. That is, this snail shell implement acted like a spoke-shave, the thinness or thickness of each slice being determined at will. The sliced pieces of nut would later be soaked in water to make them safe to eat.

Banfield wrote that he saw this knife being used at Dunk Island. He said the chief vegetable food on the island was the Moreton Bay chestnut, but it needed special treatment to remove the poisons.

He said this land snail was called kurra-dju by the local Aboriginal people.

Banfield's description of how the snail shell was turned into a knife and how it was used was the same as that given by Roth. It is unclear whether Roth was using Banfield's description or his own independent account.

Banfield added that women collected the Moreton Bay chestnuts, made the shell knives and shredded the nuts. First the nuts were cooked in an earth oven of hot stones covered with leaves. After 3–4 hours, they were taken out, sliced, and the shredded nuts were put into a lawyer cane basket. This was immersed in running water for two to three days, . . . the food was then safe to eat. He said it looked like coarse tapioca, and had no particular flavour. To add zest, it was dipped into a shell of sea-water before eating.

Collection information

There are six snail shell knives in the Roth collection from Dunk Island. They were collected by E.J. Banfield on Dunk Island in 1903, and given to Roth.

- E.13854 It is 4 cm long by 3 cm wide and 2 cm deep.
- E.13855 It is 4 cm long by 4 cm wide and 2 cm deep.
- E.13856 It is 4 cm long by 3 cm wide and 1 cm deep.
- E.13857 It is 4 cm long by 3 cm wide and 1 cm deep.
- E.13858 It is 4 cm long by 3 cm wide and 2 cm deep.
- E.13589 It is 4 cm long by 3 cm wide and 1 cm deep.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all six snail shell knives.

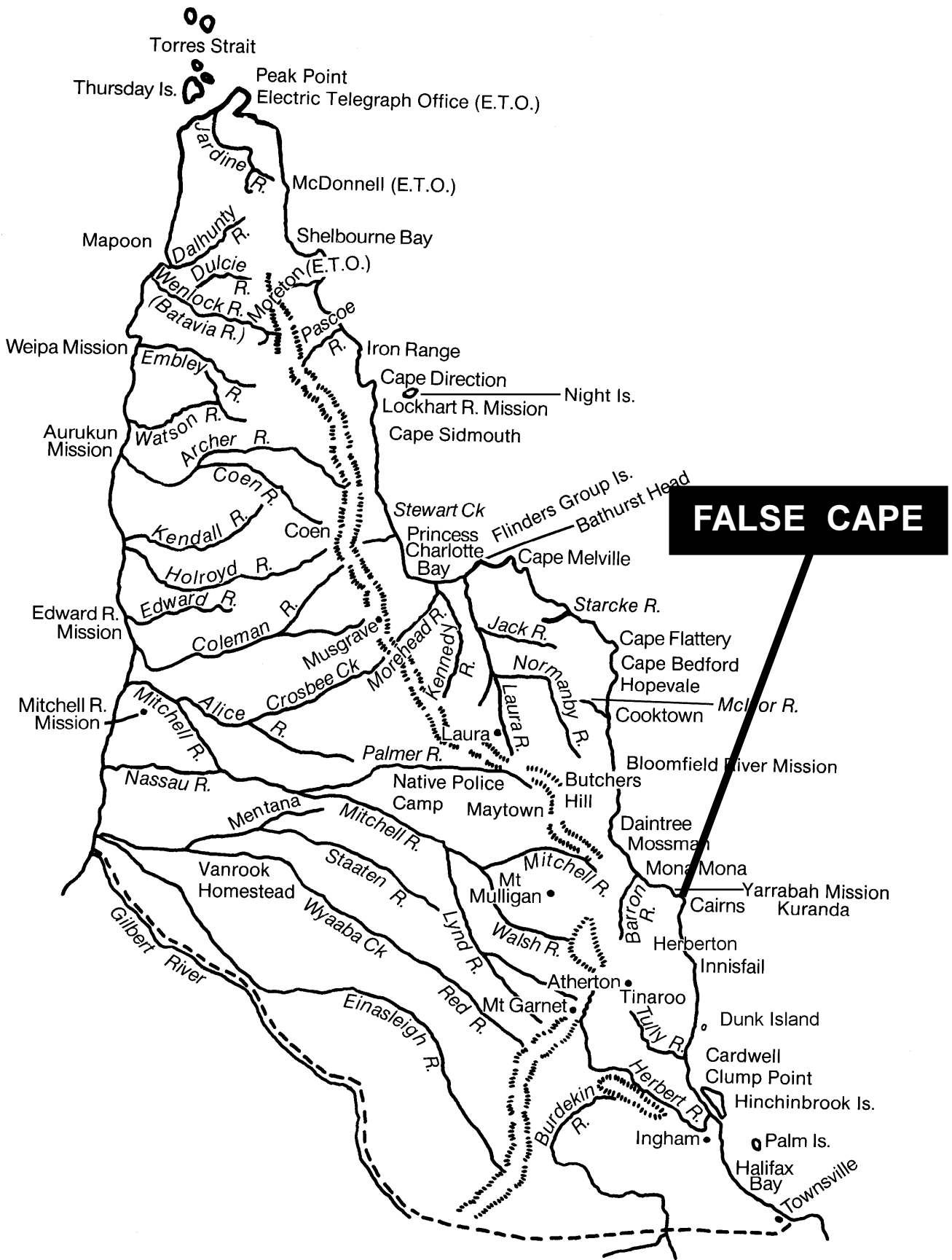
- E.13854 negative sheet 4071M, frame 537.
- E.13855 negative sheet 4071M, frame 538.
- E.13856 negative sheet 4071M, frame 539.
- E.13857 negative sheet 4071M, frame 540.
- E.13858 negative sheet 4071M, frame 541.
- E.13859 negative sheet 4071M, frame 542.

Useful written information

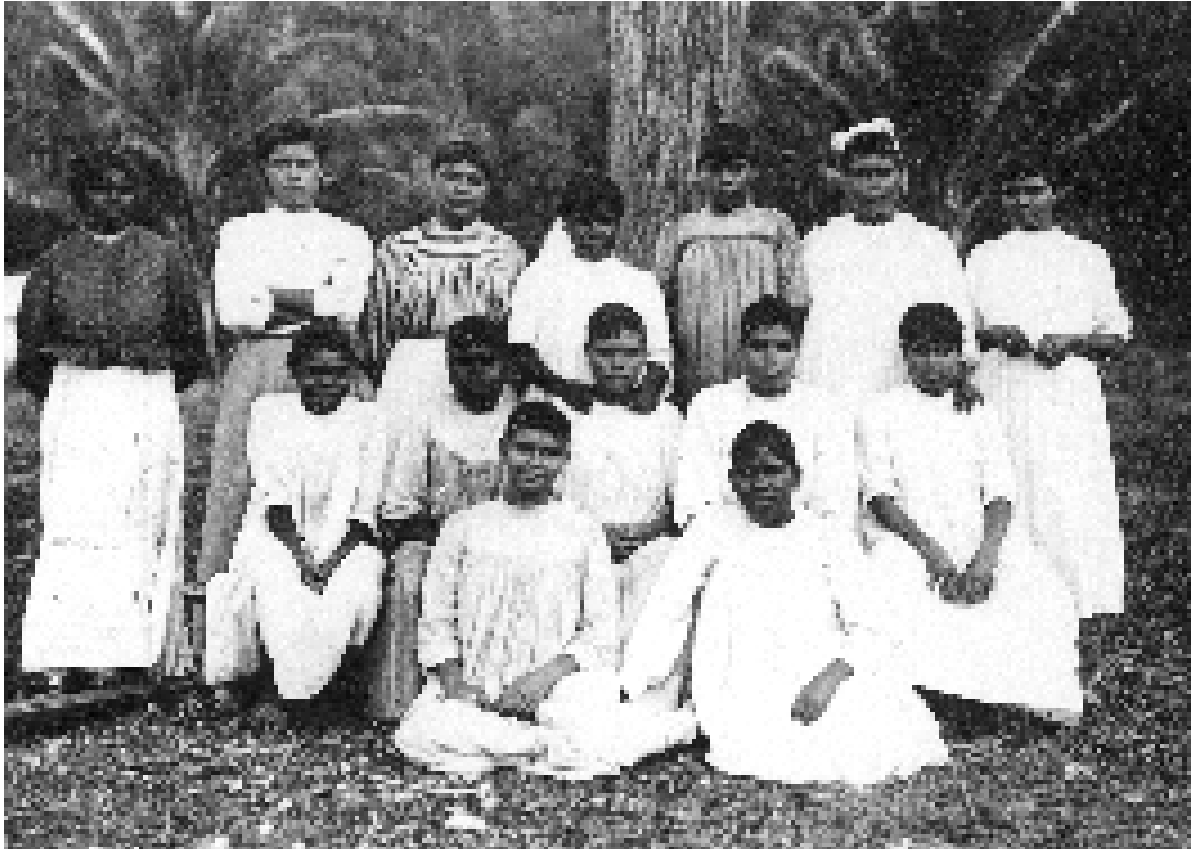
Banfield, E.J., 1908. Confessions of a Beachcomber, pp. 260 and 261.
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 21.

Scientific names of materials used

Land snail: *Xanthomelon pachystylam*.
Moreton Bay chestnut: *Castanospermum australe*.
Zamia nut: *Cycas media*.



FALSE CAPE



Yarrabah. Photograph 8 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911. Vol. 4. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

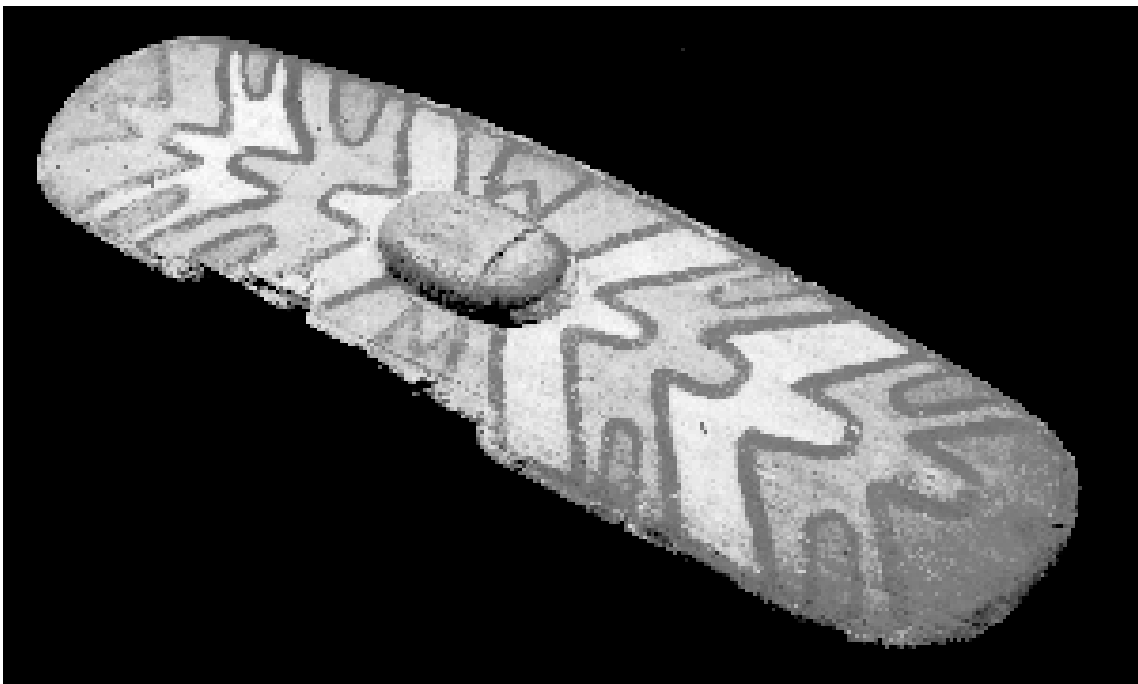
Roth said False Cape was known as Kai-ka by the local Aboriginal people.

The sketch map of the neighbourhood of Cairns . . . shews the distribution of the three main tribes as they were in August 1898, but what with the progress of the mission work at Yarrabah on the further side of False Cape, and the increase of area under settlement on the Cairns side, the arrangement may not possibly hold good at the present day. (Roth, W.E., Bulletin 18, 1910, p. 91.)



Roth's sketch map of Cairns and surrounding district, showing the locations of various tribes. From Bulletin 18, plate xxvii.

Shield

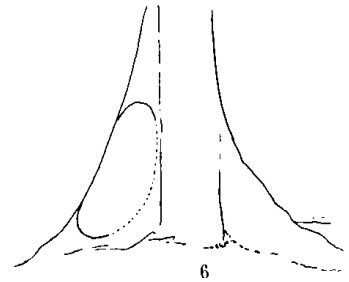


E.13441. Softwood shield. Collected False Cape, 1887. 101×23 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth's description of how these shields were made was based on seeing Aboriginal people making them on the Lower Tully River.

1. Two curved cuts were made in the buttress of a fig tree, about the length of a shield. The sides were chipped, hammered and pushed out. The shape was not quite oval, depending on the curve of the buttress.
2. The wood was chipped away on both sides, leaving the centre of the roughed out shield untouched. This left a raised boss in the centre of the shield.
3. At the back of the shield a hand grip was made in the centre by chipping and burning a cavity with cinders.
4. The process of making the shield lighter began with it being soaked for a few days in water. It was then placed in the sun for a couple of days, slowly dried in shady scrub for a further day or so, and again placed in water.
5. After a second soaking, the shield was tied to an overhanging bush so that it hung flat, about 30 cm above the water. It was left there for two to three weeks.
6. The wood was finally rubbed down with a coarse stone to give a smooth surface. A striking design was painted on the outer side of the completed shield.



Roth said he could find no meaning for the painted designs on the shields. All the shields in the Roth collection have different designs.

These shields were found only where large swords were used, (see this volume and volume 1) from the Bloomfield and Endeavour Rivers, south to below Cardwell, and along the inland mountain ranges, including Atherton. Roth said the Bloomfield River shields were more rectangular and larger than those found on the Tully River.

Roth noted that by 1898 these kidney-shaped shields were not being used much, and were made, if at all, only by very old men.

Collection information

Roth collected one painted, kidney-shaped softwood shield from False Cape in 1887.

E.13441 Roth's collection number is S.31. The shield is 101×23 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register for 1905 states "picked up close to beach". A white and red painted design outlined in black is on the front of the shield, the back is faintly ochred. The shield has bits of wood missing from the edges.

Photographic information

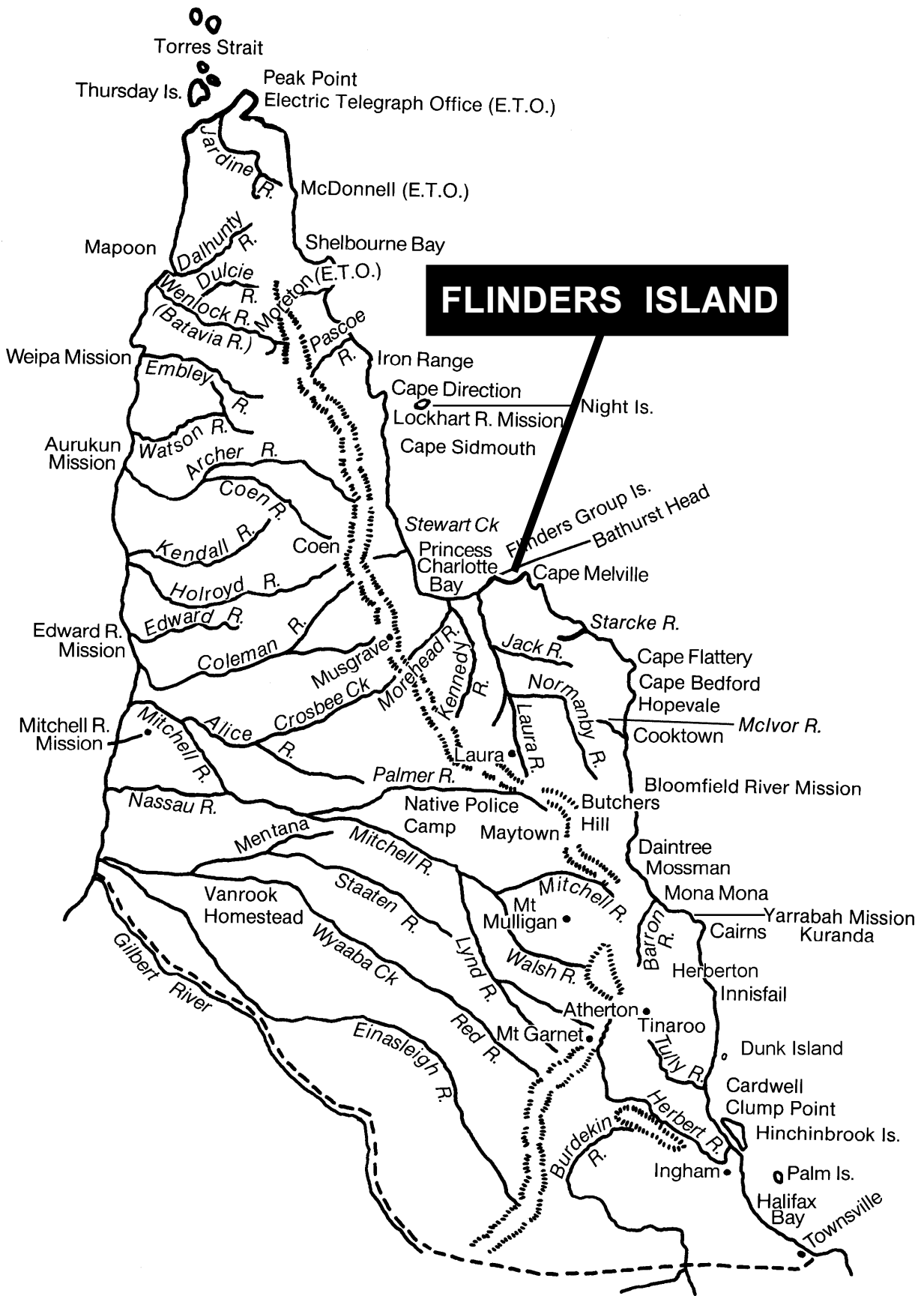
A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4017M, frame 125.

Useful written information

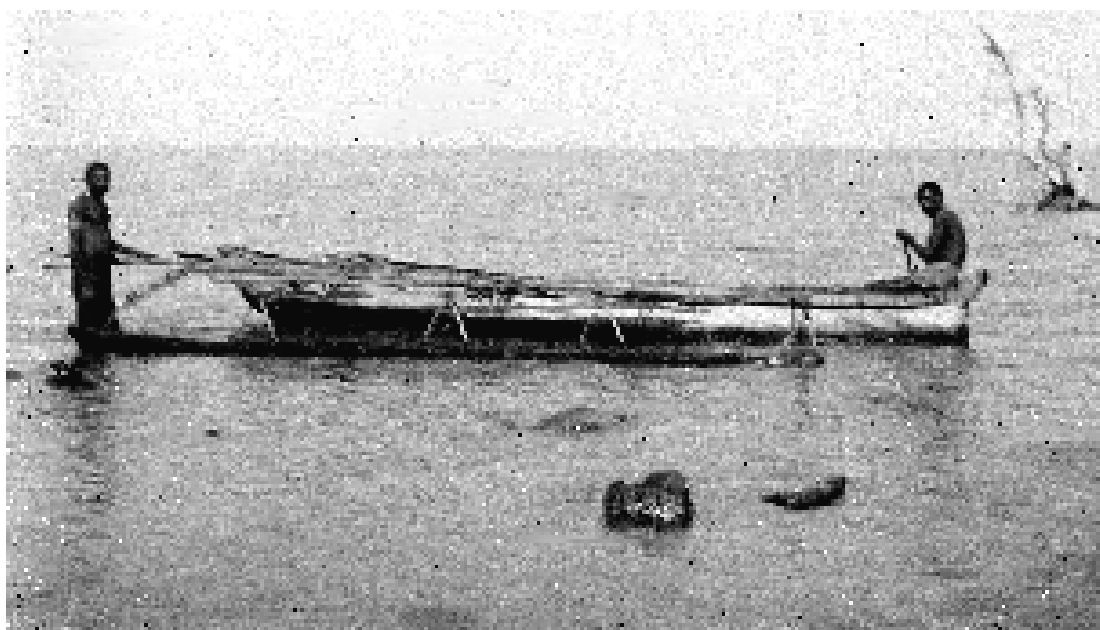
Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 9. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 203–205.

Scientific name of material used

Wood used to make these shields comes from the fig tree, *Ficus* sp.



FLINDERS ISLAND



Outrigger Canoes, Flinders Island, 1892. Roth photos V.2104 and V.2151

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The People

Roth did not write about the people living on Flinders Island. He did write about single outrigger dug-out canoes from Flinders Island, but there are no examples in the collection.

The Flinders group of islands is at the south entrance to Princess Charlotte Bay. Off the Flinders group is Clack's Island where Captain King of the "Bathurst", in 1821, saw many drawings on a black rock done with white lines and spots on a red ochre background. Sharks, porpoises, turtles, lizards, sea-slugs, starfish, clubs, canoes, gourds, dogs and kangaroos—over 150 figures were represented. Captain King said those were the first specimens of Aboriginal art they had ever seen.

Books to read

Meston, A., 1895. *Geographic History of Queensland*. Government Printer, Brisbane, p. 134.



E.13323. Bark knot container. Collected Flinders Island, 1900. 38×27×24 cm deep.

Bark knot container

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The bark knot container was made from the gnarled outgrowth which forms on the butt of some eucalyptus trees. The knot was hacked from around its base and a pointed stick was used to loosen its edges. The hollow bark knot was removed in one piece. Its inside was charred with fire and scraped with a piece of shell or stone to give it a smooth surface. Any cracks or holes were repaired with gum cement.

This container was often carried around by a handspun bark fibre string handle, strung through holes at opposite edges.

Roth said that in his time this type of container was rare. It was found along the coastline from Princess Charlotte Bay south to the Bloomfield River, and was generally no bigger than 38 cm high and 39 cm in diameter. Thomas Petrie, a friend of Roth, said he had seen these

containers, called nyugam, used by local Aboriginal people in Brisbane. Petrie said they were made by men and were used to carry honey.

Collection information

There are three bark knot containers in the Roth collection from Flinders Island.

- E.13317 Roth collected this bark knot container in 1898. His collection number is WT.7. It is 49 cm long, 26 cm in diameter and 12 cm deep.
- E.13322 Roth collected this bark knot container in 1902. His collection number is WT.26. It is 26 cm long, 31 cm in diameter and 24 cm deep. Gum cement has been used to repair cracks.
- E.13323 Roth collected this bark knot container in 1900. His collection number is WT.27. It is 38 cm long, 27 cm in diameter and 24 cm deep.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all three bark knot containers.

- E.13317 negative sheet 4000M, frame 1.
- E.13322 negative sheet 4000M, frame 6.
- E.13323 negative sheet 4000M, frame 7.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 29.

Palm leaf water carrier



E.13367. Part of a palm leaf water carrier. Collected Flinders Island, 1901. 75×6 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

This scoop-shaped carrier was made from the sheath stalk of a palm leaf, and was quick and easy to make. A piece was cut from the sheath-stalk and the base of the stalk became the mouth of the scoop. The cut end was pleated and tied with handspun bark fibre string to make a handle.

It was used to carry water just a short way. Roth said he found leaf water carriers in use on the Endeavour, Bloomfield and Tully Rivers, at Cape Bedford, and on the Starcke and Palmer Rivers.

Collection information

There is one leaf water carrier from Flinders Island, collected by Roth in 1901.

E.13367 Roth's collection number is WT.50. It is only part of a leaf water carrier, and is 75 cm long and 6 cm wide.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4006M, frame 51.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 31.

Head and neck band of shell

Information from Roth's Bulletins

When working shell it was important that it was fresh. If it was an old shell, it had to be soaked in water, otherwise it would not split in a clean fracture.

Square-shaped pieces of pearl shell were made by breaking the shell into chips. Holes were then drilled into the chips with a shell drill, and edges shaped by being bitten with the teeth. The square-shaped pieces of shell were finally ground down on white coral, and then strung together with handspun bark fibre twine.

According to Roth, men wore these decorative bands around their heads and women wore them as necklaces at the Bloomfield River, Cape Bedford and at Princess Charlotte Bay.

The drill used to make the holes in the rectangular squares of shell was made with a sharp pointed chip of broken shell. The chip of shell was fixed with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement into the split end of a small wooden shaft as shown in Roth's drawing. Roth said these shell drills were found around the Wenlock (formerly the Batavia River), the Pennefather and Embley Rivers.

Collection information

E.14463 This head and neck ornament with square shaped pieces of shell was collected in 1898. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "from Evanson, Cooktown". A later reference in the register refers to a Captain Evanson. This object has been missing from the collection for some years.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11 and 25. Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 27–28.

Scientific names of materials used

Three different shells could be used to make the ornament: *Avicula lata*; a flat, red-backed shell, *Meleagrina margaritifera*, now known as *Pinctada margaritifera*; and *Nautilus pompilius*. The chip of shell used in the shell drill was from *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Geloina erosa*.

E.13368. Message stick. Collected Flinders Island, 1898. 12×2 cm.

Message stick

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth did not describe how message sticks were made on Flinders Island, but wrote about their use. He was convinced that the marks on message sticks did not carry a message in the ordinarily accepted way. He said the message was

taken by word of mouth, the message stick was to show the messenger had been given permission to carry the message and could be trusted. Roth reached this view because he saw that the same message could be taken with different sticks, and some sticks had no markings at all. If the messenger was known to both parties, no message stick was sent.



Collection information

There is one message stick from Flinders Island, acquired by Roth in 1898.

E.13368 Roth's collection number is S.1. It is 12×2 cm. It is cigar shaped, with rounded sides incised with a herringbone design. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "Given me by Capt. Evanson".

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4006M, frame 52.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 8, 1905, pp. 9–10.

Hardwood spears



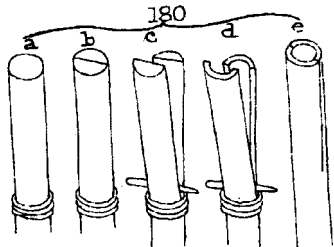
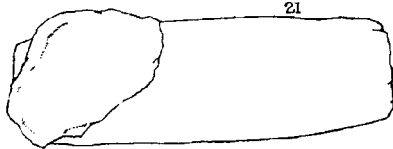
E.15117. Hardwood spear. Collected Flinders Island, 1898. Length 159 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Most spears were made of two or more sections, the butt, nearer the hand, and the shaft, to which the points or barbs were attached.

Roth did not specifically explain how a spear was made on Flinders Island, but did so in

great detail for the Bloomfield River, Princess Charlotte Bay, Cape Bedford and the Middle Palmer River regions. He said the time it took to make a spear depended on the sort of timber used.

1. First the wood was cut from the tree and shaped into the desired width and length. Some handspun bark fibre string was tightly tied around the butt section of the spear about 10 cm from the end. This end was split open with a piece of shell. The wedge was kept open with a peg. Roth's drawings help make these steps easier to understand.
- 
2. Using a bone awl (a bird or animal leg bone 15 cm to 30 cm long, chipped and ground into shape), the wood was scraped out on each side of the split. This left a circular hole when the peg and twine were removed. Roth's drawings show how this was done.
3. The shaft section of the spear was now fixed into the butt section with gum cement and the joint bound round and round with either handspun bark fibre string or, better still, kangaroo tendon. This was held in place with more gum cement and finally smoothed over with a smoothing board. The smoothing board was a thin, oval piece of ironwood, about 15 cm long, a comfortable size to be held in the right hand. It was like a putty knife (see illustration below). It was used to smooth over the warmed gum cement on spears. The smoothing board was always greased with forehead perspiration before being used.
- 
4. The butt section of all spears thrown with spearthrowers, except bamboo ones, was bound with handspun bark fibre string and coated with gum cement. Once this was done, the bone awl was used to make the hole to receive the spearthrower peg.

According to Roth, the general name for spears in the areas listed above was kalka.

Collection information

There are three plain hardwood spears from Flinders Island, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.15117 Roth's collection number is SP.46. The spear is 159 cm long, the long softwood butt segment being 108 cm long and the hardwood shaft section 51 cm long. The long butt section is attached to the short shaft section with binding and gum cement. The butt section of the spear has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. The spear weighs 97 g.
- E.15118 Roth's collection number is SP.47. The spear is 182 cm long, the long softwood butt section being 123 cm long, the hardwood shaft section 59 cm long. The long butt section is attached to the short shaft section with binding and gum cement. The butt section has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. There are signs of white and red paint on the butt section of the spear. The spear weighs 113 g.
- E.15119 Roth's collection number is SP.48. The spear is 162 cm long, the long softwood butt section being 106 cm long, the hardwood shaft section 56 cm long. The long butt section is attached to the short shaft section with binding and gum cement. The butt segment has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. There are signs of white and red paint on the butt section of the spear. The spear weighs 113 g.

Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all three spears.

- E.15117 negative sheet 4228M, frame 1801.
- E.15118 negative sheet 8719M, frames 8–10.
- E.15119 negative sheet 8719M, frames 4–7.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11, 15 and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 190–194.

Single-barbed spears



E.15057. Single-barbed spear. Collected Flinders Island, 1898. Length 229 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

The method of making spears is described in the preceding section on hardwood spears.

Collection information

There are two of these spears from Flinders Island, collected by Roth in 1898.

- E.15057 Roth's collection number is SP.41. The spear is 229 cm long, the butt section being 70 cm long and the shaft section 159 cm long. A bone barb is attached with binding and gum cement. The short softwood butt section of the spear is attached to the hardwood shaft section with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The butt section of the spear has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. There is evidence of white paint on the butt section of the spear. The spear weighs 280 g.
- E.15064 Roth's collection number is SP.43. The spear is 45 cm long, the butt section being 51 cm long and the shaft 194 cm long. A wooden barb is attached with binding and gum cement. The short softwood butt section of the spear is attached to the hardwood shaft section with handspun bark fibre string and gum cement. The butt section of the spear has been hollowed out to take the peg of a spearthrower. The spear weighs 420 g.

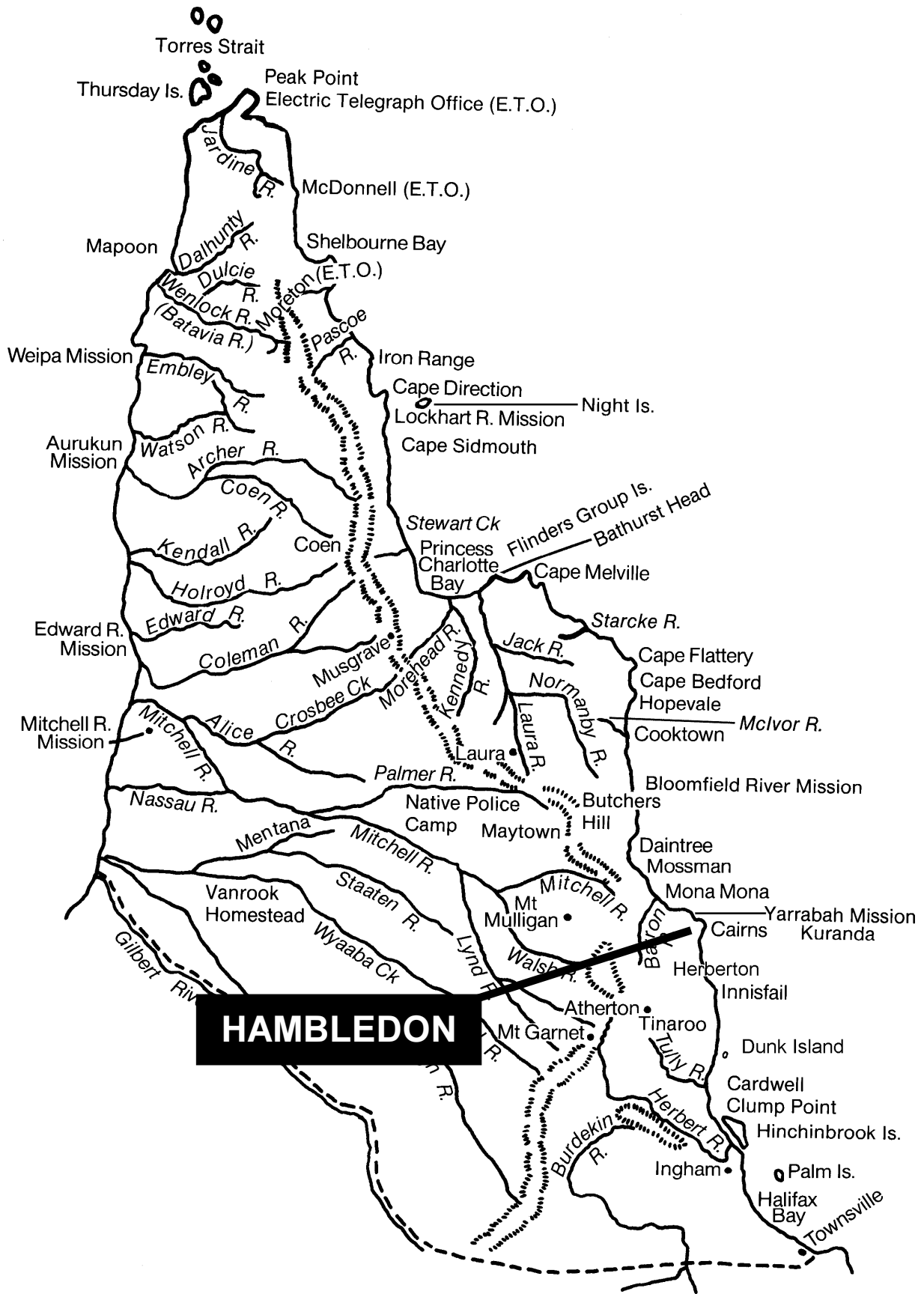
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for both spears.

- E.15057 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1741.
- E.15064 negative sheet 4222M, frame 1748.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 11, 15 and 25. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 190–194.



HAMBLEDON



E.13806. Spinning top. Collected Cairns (near Hambledon), 1900. Length 21.4 cm. Diameter 6.8 cm.

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The People

Roth apparently did not spend much time around Hambledon as he did not write about the people living in this area. In his book, Bulletin 18, 1910, p. 83, he wrote:

I propose referring only to those few where, during the past thirteen years I have lived with the natives on terms of fairly personal intimacy...

Stone axe head



E.13618. Stone axe head. Collected Hambledon, 1899. 24×19×19 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said stone axe heads were all made in much the same way. The axe head was shaped by rough pecking and grinding, and the cutting edge was ground smooth. In 1904 he wrote that the making of stone axes in Queensland was "a lost art".

He thought there were probably two regions where certain types of stone axe heads were made. He said the large oval, slab-like, double-edged, centrally grooved axe head came from the Herberton Ranges while the small, square, wedge-shaped axe head came from Cape York Peninsula.

The axe head, in its simplest form, was a water-worn pebble. It could also be made by flaking from a larger block of stone or just by breaking a piece of stone.

Axe heads were not always used mounted as axes. They were domestic tools, especially used to cut timber and to chop out footholds in trunks of trees and such like.

Collection information

There is one stone axe head from Hambledon, collected by Roth in 1899.

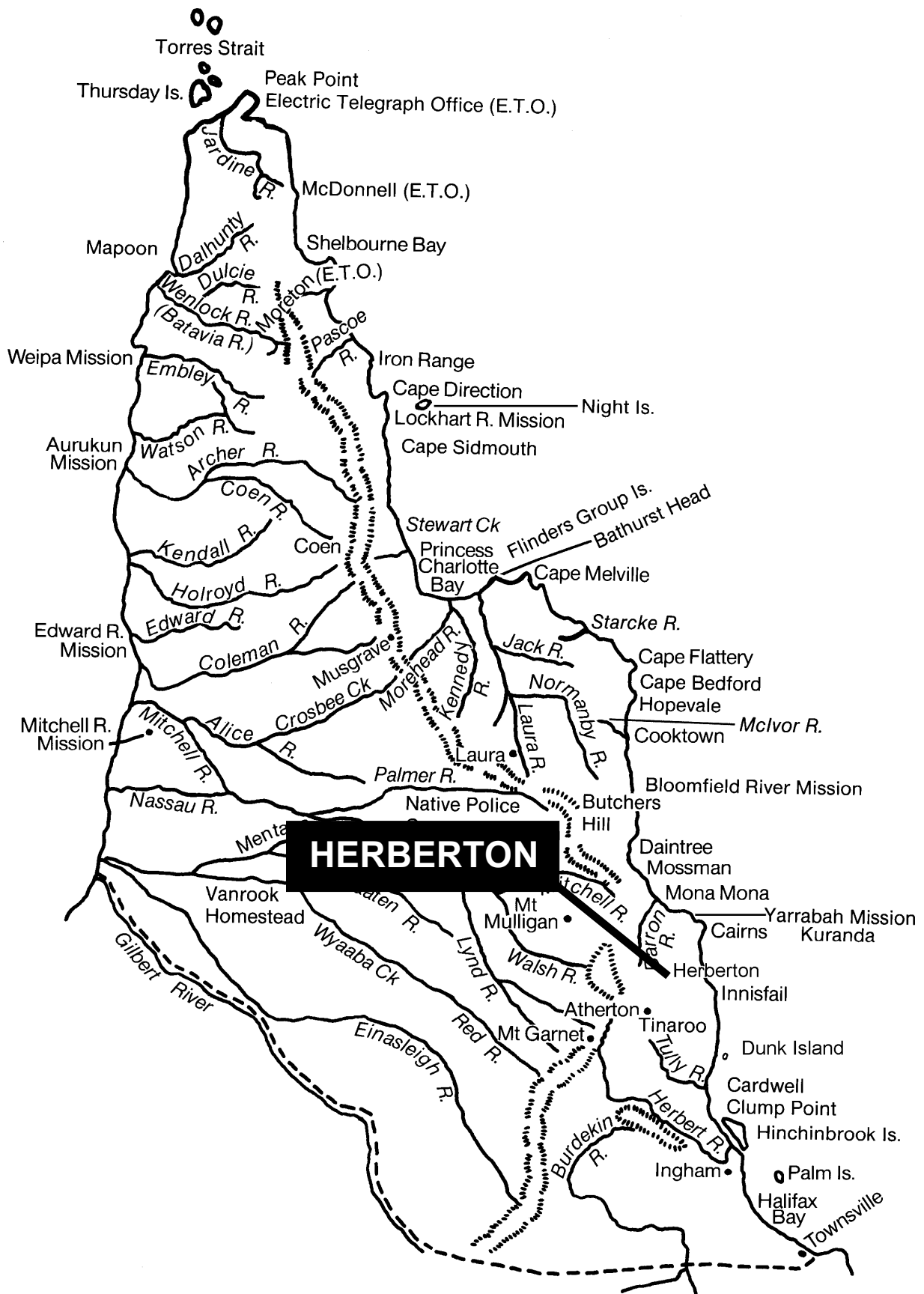
E.13618 Roth's collection number is ST.34. It is 24×19×19 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "stone celt or axe". The axe weighs 2950 g.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4041M, frame 301.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 18–19.



HERBERTON



Herberton. Photograph 31 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, Vol. 1. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Helen Brayshaw in her book, *Well Beaten Paths: Aborigines of the Herbert Burdekin district, North Queensland*, wrote on p. 21

Incomparably the finest source of information about traditional Aboriginal life in north Queensland are the writings of W.E. Roth, noted ethnographer and Northern Protector of the Aborigines between 1897 and 1905... only occasionally did Roth refer directly to areas within the Herbert/Burdekin region. While much of what applied to the lower Tully River doubtless also applied further south within the same ecological zone, in the absence of actual evidence often one can only infer this...

Roth did comment that prior to Yarrabah mission being established, Aboriginal people at Cape Grafton used to make and trade crescent-shaped baskets with the people living at Herberton.

In 1878 tin was discovered on the Atherton Tableland. There was a rush by miners to Tinaroo Creek and the Wild River, where the town of Herberton was founded.

Within a year Herberton was under attack by Aboriginal people. From 1885 to 1889, local newspapers carried many reports of horses and bullocks being killed, and robberies in camps and houses.

Books to read

Brayshaw, H., 1990. Well Beaten Paths: Aborigines of the Herbert Burdekin district, north Queensland. James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville.

Loos, N., 1982. Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897. Australian National University Press, Canberra, pp. 94–99.

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 14, 1910, p. 19.

Stone axe heads

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said stone axes were all made in much the same way. The axe head was shaped by rough pecking and grinding, and the cutting edge was ground smooth. In 1904 he wrote that the making of stone axes in Queensland was “a lost art”.

Roth thought that there were two types of axe blank or head, the large oval, slab-like, double-

edged, centrally grooved implement found in the Herberton Ranges, and the small, square, wedge-shaped head found in Cape York Peninsula.

He said the grinding of the stone to make a cutting edge was sometimes in all directions, the final touches roughly following the shape of the edge. The cutting edge could be straight or curved. A stone axe head could show grinding without any chipping or flaking.

When hafted axes were used, the handle was made of a thin, narrow strip of wood bent at its middle to form two limbs. The stone was held in place and fixed with twine and beeswax or gum cement into the bend so formed. The two limbs were bound tightly with handspun bark fibre twine close below the blade as well as at the other end of the handle.

These hafted axes were found as far south as Herberton and Atherton; Roth said grooving found on axe heads from Herberton proved this was so. Where the groove was wound around the axe head and the head was wedge-shaped, not slab-like, maybe it was used both as an axe and adze, by readjusting the handle.



E.13588. Grooved stone axe head. Collected Herberton, 1900. 22×15×4 cm.

Collection information

There are eight stone axe heads from the Herberton region, collected by Roth in 1900 and 1901.

- E.13588 Roth collected this grooved stone axe head in 1900. His collection number is ST.53. It is 22×15×4 cm and weighs 2001 g. It was found at Herberton. Roth drew this axe head in Bulletin 7, 1904, figure 62.
- E.13612 Roth collected this edge ground stone axe head in 1901. His collection number is ST.57. It is 20×14×3 cm and weighs 1375 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton, Glen Alice, Waroora, Tirrebella and adjacent ranges.
- E.13613 Roth collected this edge ground stone axe head in 1901. His collection number is ST.58. It is 11×11×3 cm and weighs 558 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton, Glen Alice, Waroora, Tirrebella and adjacent ranges.
- E.13614 Roth collected this edge ground and grooved stone axe head in 1901. His collection number is ST.59. It is 17×14×4 cm and weighs 1516 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton, Glen Alice, Waroora, Tirrebella and adjacent ranges.
- E.13615 Roth collected this edge ground axe head in 1901. His collection number is ST.60. It is 19×12×4 cm and weighs 1223 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton, Glen Alice, Waroora, Tirrebella and adjacent ranges.
- E.13619 Roth collected this edge ground and grooved stone axe head in 1900. His collection number is ST.55. It is 25×16×3.7 cm and weighs 2116 g. It was found at Herberton.
- E.13627 Roth collected this axe head in 1900. His collection number is ST.50. It is 12×12×2 cm and weighs 263 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton and Glen Alice.
- E.13628 Roth collected this edge ground stone axe head in 1900. In the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 it shows Roth collection number as "ST.51 (no 52)". It is 12×9×4 cm and weighs 533 g. It was found somewhere between Herberton and Glen Alice.

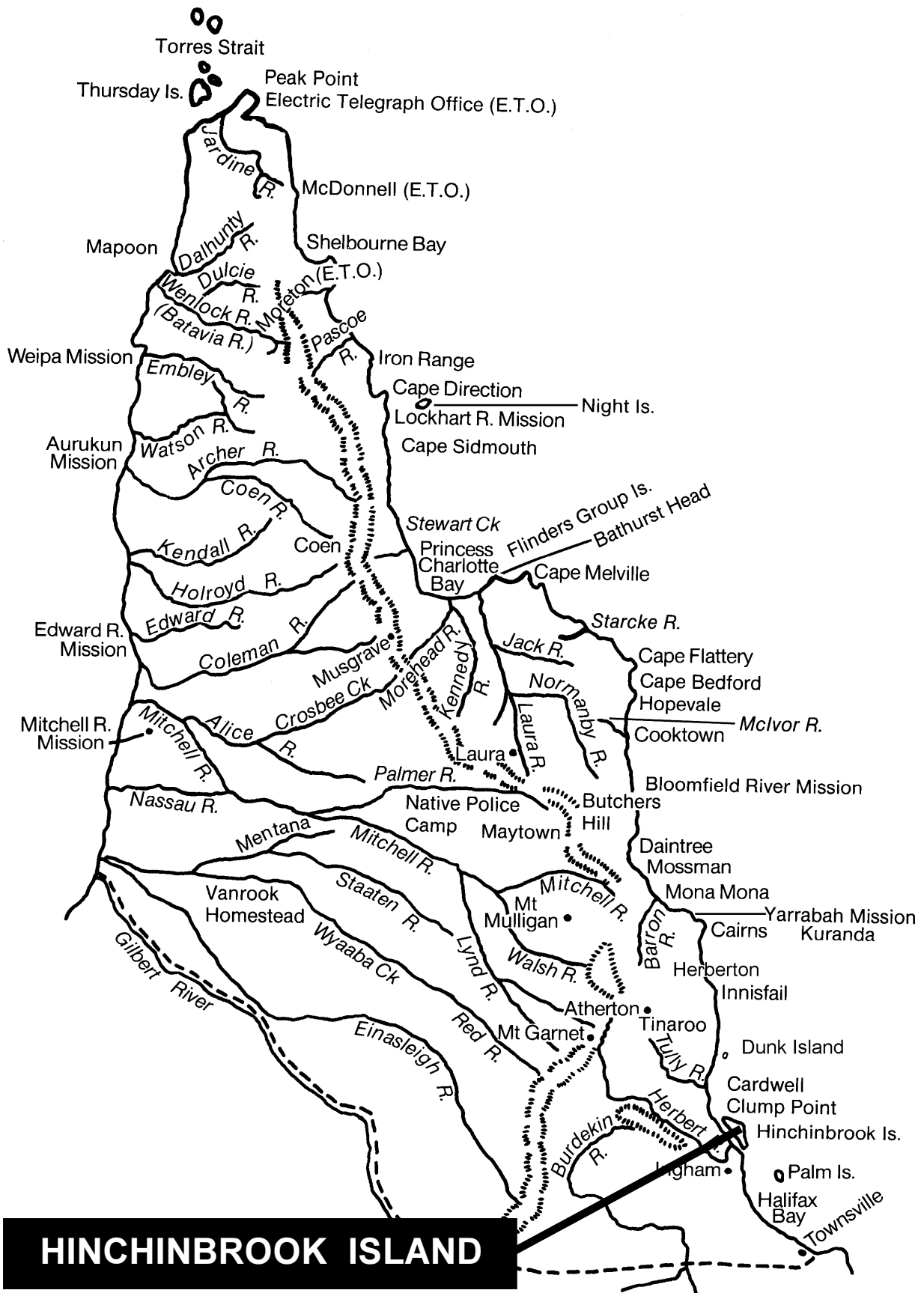
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all eight stone axe heads.

- E.13588 negative sheet 4037M, frame 271.
- E.13612 negative sheet 4040M, frame 295.
- E.13613 negative sheet 4040M, frame 296.
- E.13614 negative sheet 4040M, frame 297.
- E.13615 negative sheet 4041M, frame 298.
- E.13619 negative sheet 4041M, frame 302.
- E.13627 negative sheet 4042M, frame 310.
- E.13628 negative sheet 4042M, frame 311.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 18–20.



HINCHINBROOK ISLAND



Haycock Island, Hinchinbrook channel. Photograph 1 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, Vol. 4. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Roth seems not to have written about the Aboriginal people of Hinchinbrook Island. However, Charles Hedley of the Australian Museum, who was a friend of Roth, wrote of his travels with Roth.

In a letter from Cairns, dated 9.8.1901, to the Curator of the Australian Museum, he wrote

Dear Mr Etheridge,

We arrived here last night and paid off our cutter... Leaving Lucinda Point we sailed up the Hinchinbrook Channel. Disappointed of the hope of securing an ethnological collection there, we steered to the Tully River...

A further letter dated 30.8.1901 stated

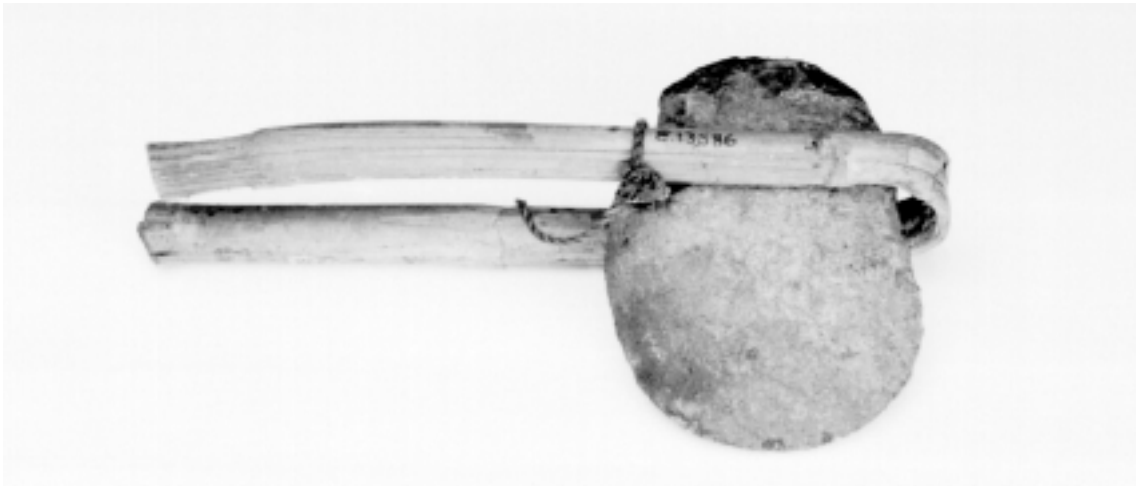
... Hearing that a numerous and savage tribe resided at Hinchinbrook Island we visited it for the purpose of ethnological work. On arrival there no blacks could be found and we were advised to try the Tully River...

Loos noted in his book *Invasion and Resistance* that Roth said the effects of fishermen having unchecked contact with coastal Aboriginal people had been disastrous, especially for such places as the Whitsunday Islands, Palm Island, Hinchinbrook Island and Dunk Island. Although still owning their land, their death rate was high and infant survival rate low.

Books to read

- Brayshaw, H., 1990. *Well Beaten Paths: Aborigines of the Herbert Burdekin district, North Queensland. An Ethnographic and Archaeological Study.* James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville, p. 35.
- Loos, N., 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897.* Australian National University Press, Canberra, p. 153.

Stone axe



E.13586. Edge-ground, grooved and hafted stone axe. Collected Hinchinbrook Island, 1902. Axe head 13×10 cm. Length of cane handle 25 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said stone axes were all made in much the same way. The axe head was shaped by rough pecking and grinding, and the cutting edge was ground smooth. In 1904 he wrote that the making of stone axes in Queensland was “a lost art”. Roth thought there were two types of axe heads, the large oval, slab-like, double edged, centrally grooved implement found in the Herberton Ranges, and the small, square, wedge-shaped axe head found in Cape York Peninsula.

Roth said the grinding motion was sometimes in all directions, the final touches roughly following the shape of the edge. The cutting edge could be straight or curved. A stone axe head could show grinding without any chipping or flaking.

When hafted axes were used, the handle was made of a thin, narrow strip of wood bent at its middle to form two limbs. The stone was held in place with handspun bark fibre twine and beeswax or gum cement into the bend so formed. The two limbs were bound tightly with twine close below the head as well as at the other end of the handle.

These axes were found as far south as Herberton and Atherton. Roth said grooving found on axe heads from Herberton proved this was so. Where the groove wound around the axe and the axe head was wedge-shaped, not slab-like, maybe they were used both as axes and adzes, by readjusting the handle.

Collection information

There is one hafted stone axe in the Roth collection from Hinchinbrook Island.

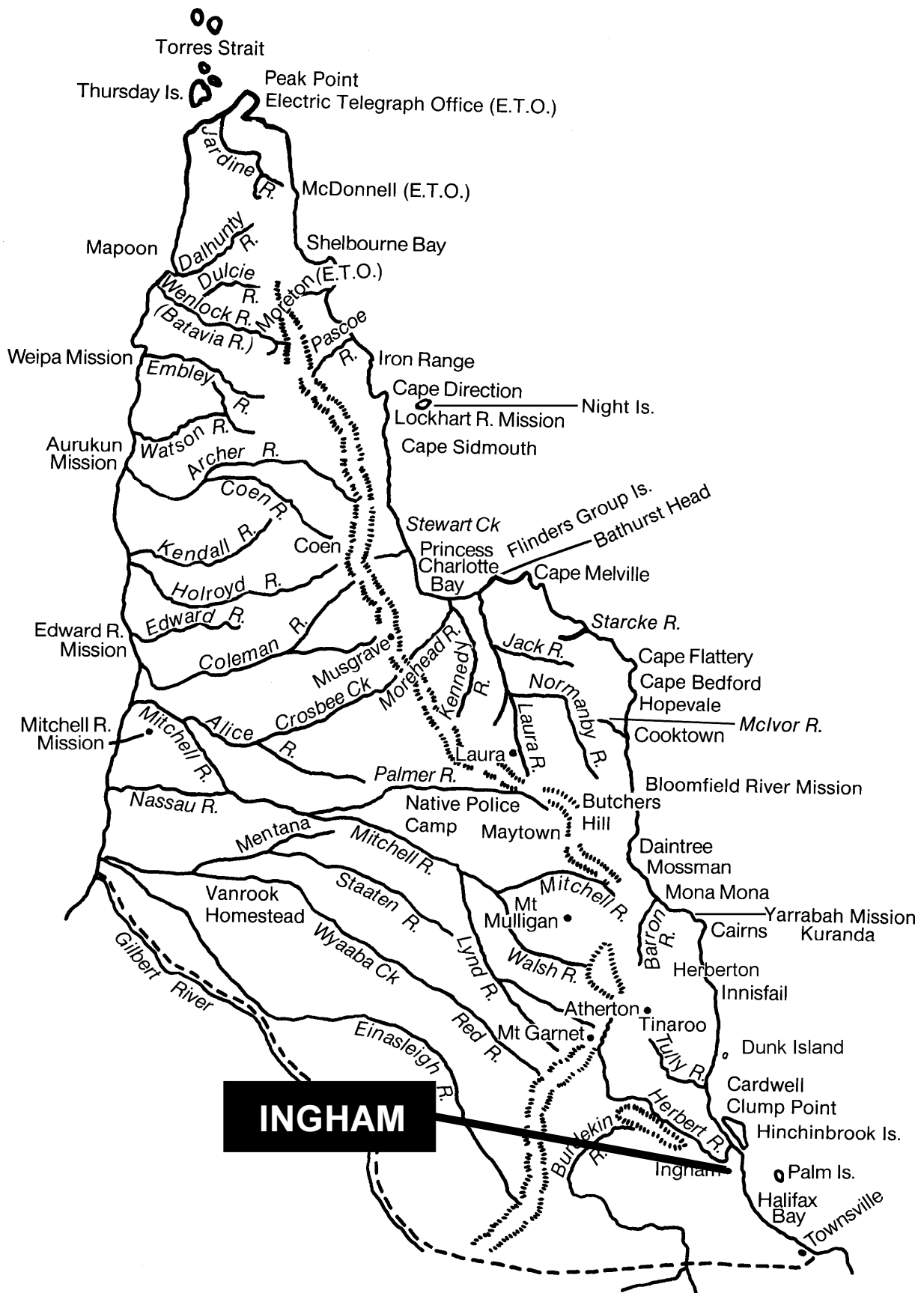
E.13586 Roth collected this edge-ground, grooved and hafted stone axe in 1902. His collection number is ST.65. The axe head is 13×10 cm. The cane handle is 25 cm long. The axe weighs 560 g.

Photographic information

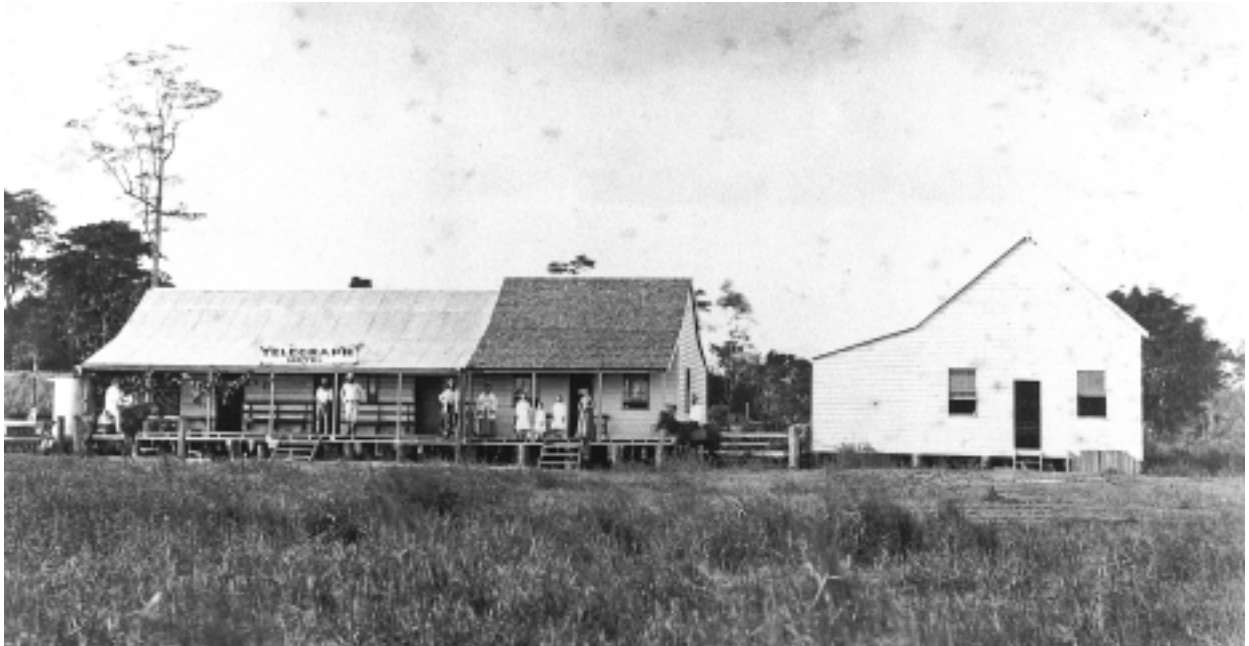
A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4037M, frame 269.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 18–20.



INGHAM



Telegraph Hotel, Ingham, 1882. Published with kind permission of the John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

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The People

Roth did not write about Aboriginal people living in the Ingham area. In his book, *Bulletin* 18, 1910, p. 83, he wrote

I propose referring only to those few where, during the past thirteen years I have lived with the natives on terms of fairly personal intimacy...

Stone axe head



E.13603. Edge-ground, grooved stone axe head. Collected Ingham, 1900.
14×9 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said stone axes were all made in much the same way. The axe head was shaped by rough pecking and grinding, and the cutting edge was ground smooth. In 1904 he wrote that the making of stone axes in Queensland was "a lost art". Roth thought there were two types of axe head, the large oval, slab-like, double edged, centrally grooved implement found in the Herberton Ranges, and the small, square, wedge-shaped axe head from Cape York Peninsula.

Roth said grinding was sometimes in all directions, the final touches roughly following the shape of the edge. The cutting edge could be straight or curved. A stone axe head could show grinding without any chipping or flaking.

When hafted axes were used, the handle was made of a thin, narrow strip of wood bent at its middle to form two limbs. The stone was held in place with handspun bark fibre twine and beeswax or gum cement into the bend so formed. The two limbs were bound tightly with twine close below the axe head as well as at the other end of the handle.

These axes were found as far south as Herberton and Atherton; Roth said grooving found

on axe heads from Herberton proved this was so. Where the groove wound around the axe and the axe was wedge-shaped, not slab-like, maybe they were used both as axes and adzes, by adjusting the handle.

Collection information

There is one edge-ground, grooved stone axe head in the Roth collection from Ingham.

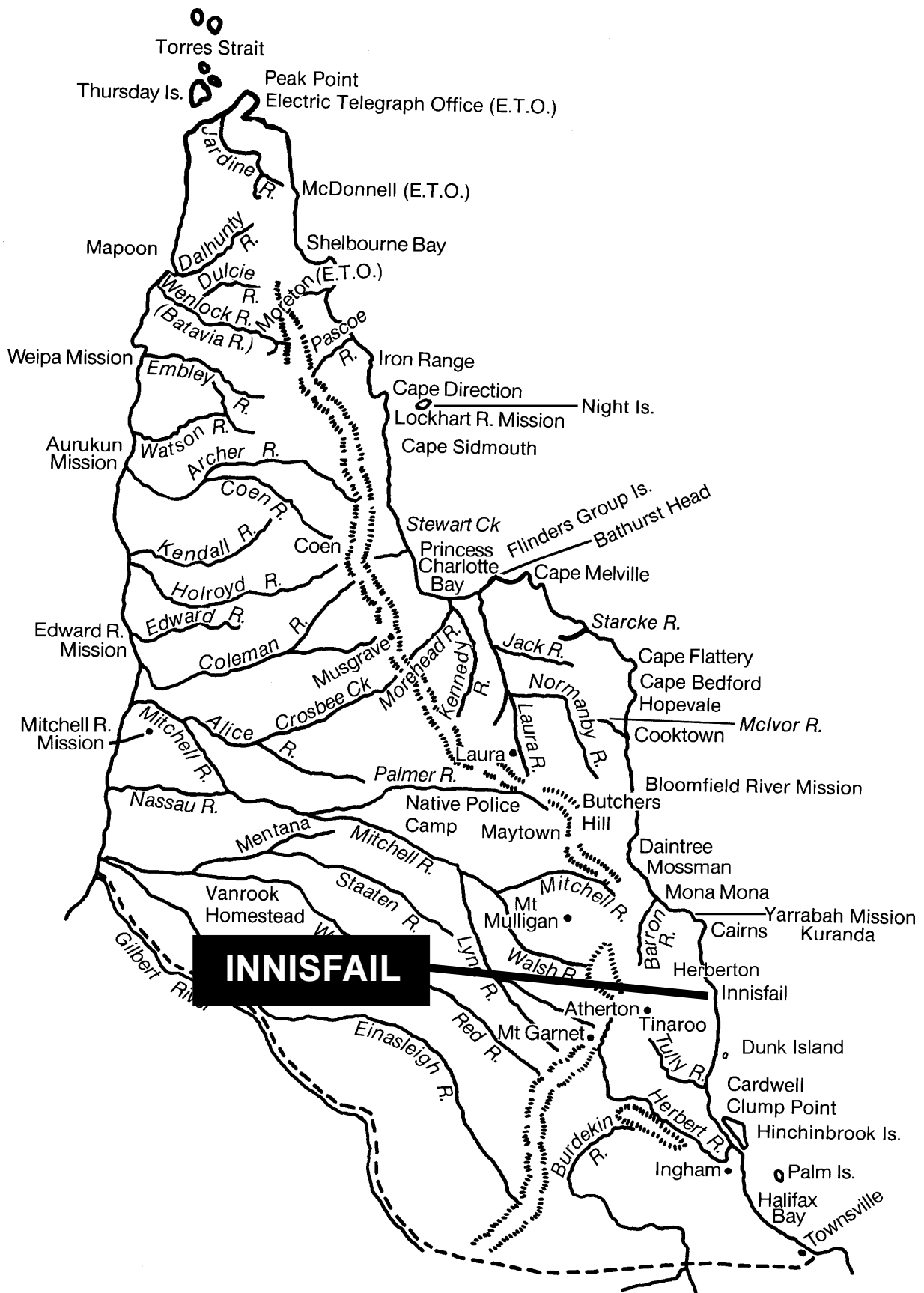
E.13603 Mr White gave Roth this stone axe in 1900. Roth's collection number is ST.49. It is 14×9 cm. The axe head weighs 798 g.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4039M, frame 286.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, pp. 18–20.



INNISFAIL



E.13874. Iron fish hook attached to handspun bark fibre twine. Collected Geraldton (= Innisfail) 1898. Line 23 cm long. Hook 3 cm long.

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The People

Roth did not write about the people living around Innisfail. In Roth's day it was known as Geraldton. The name was changed to Innisfail in 1910, after a Russian cargo ship turned up at Geraldton, Queensland instead of Geraldton, Western Australia.

Books to read

Bolton, G.C., 1970. *A Thousand Miles Away. A History of North Queensland to 1920*. Australian National University Press, Canberra, p. 238.

Jones, D., 1961. *Cardwell Shire Story*. Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, p. 303.

Fish hooks and lines



E.13873. Iron fish hook on a handspun bark fibre line. Collected Geraldton (= Innisfail), 1898. Hook 3 cm long, line 22 cm long.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Roth said that fish hooks varied in both shape and the kinds of materials used to make the hooks. Weights and sinker were never used.

The most basic form of fish hook, made from a plant, was used around the Lower Tully River and at Innisfail.

As the plant matured, the tendrils became strong and hard, and were then ready to be removed and attached to a line. Local Tully River people called this plant *katakarkal*. Bait, generally shrimp, or sometimes a small crab was always tied on a hook, never pierced through. The bait usually was chewed first. Iron and telegraph wire often was twisted into the shape of these plant hooks at Innisfail and on the Tully. Roth, writing in 1901, said that the traditional fish hooks were fast being replaced by European fish hooks.

Collection information

There are three fish hooks on lines collected by Roth from Geraldton (Innisfail) in 1898.

- E.13873 Iron fish hook attached to handspun bark fibre twine. Total length is 25 cm, the line being 22 cm long and the hook 3 cm long.
- E.13874 Iron fish hook attached to handspun bark fibre twine. Total length is 26 cm, the line being 23 cm long, and the hook 3 cm long.
- E.13875 Iron fish hook attached to handspun bark fibre twine. Total length is 22 cm, the line being 19 cm long, and the hook 3 cm long.

**Photographic information**

Black and white photographs are available for all three fish hooks and lines.

- E.13873 negative sheet 4073M, frame 556.
E.13874 negative sheet 4073M, frame 557.
E.13875 negative sheet 4073M, frame 558.

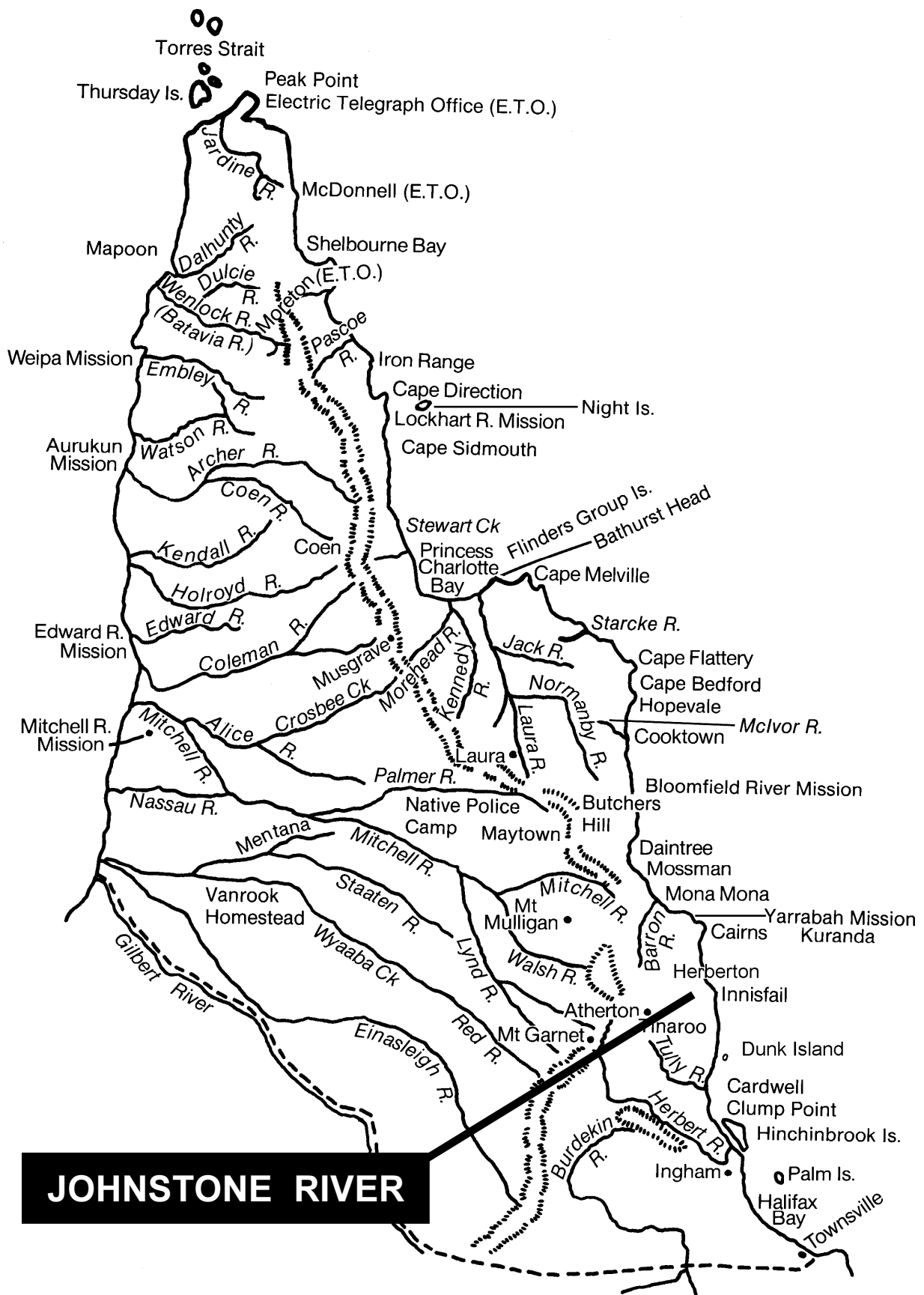
W.E. Roth, del.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 3, 1901, pp. 20–21. Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 33.

Scientific name of material used

The plant used as a fish hook: *Hugonia jenkinsii*.



JOHNSTONE RIVER



E.14243. Returning boomerang. Collected Johnstone River, 1898. 46×5
(at widest part) cm.

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The People

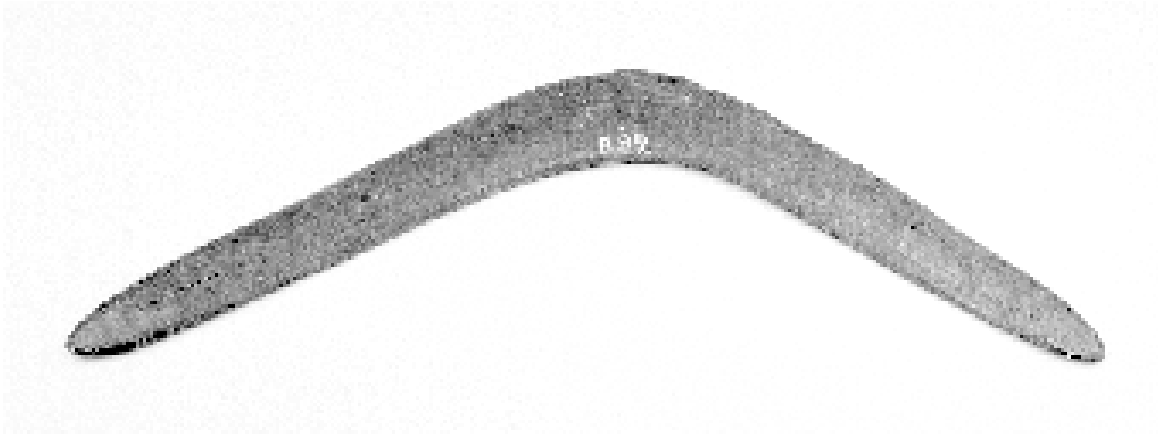
Johnstone River was named in 1873 by G.E. Dalrymple, after Robert Johnstone, then native police officer, enters the sea six miles north of Mourilyan Harbour; navigable for small craft for 12 miles. Spring tides rise 7 to 9 feet.—From A. Meston. *Geographic History of Queensland*, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1895, p. 148.

Roth noted that Johnstone River people travelled between Clump Point and Liverpool Creek. He said that prior to Yarrabah Mission being set up, Aboriginal people at Cape Grafton used to trade four-pronged fishing spears and straight spearthrowers without the hafted shell hand grip with the Johnstone River people. He did not mention what the Johnstone River people made for trade in return.

Books to read

Meston, A., 1895. *Geographic History of Queensland*, Government Printer, Brisbane, p. 148.
Roth, W.E., *Bulletin* 14, 1910, pp. 18–19.

Boomerangs



E.14278. Returning boomerang. Collected Johnston River region, 1898.
48×6 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

Boomerangs such as these were cut from the exposed root of a tree, by cutting above, below and behind the piece of wood. Roth said a stone axe was used in the old days for this task. In his time steel axes and tomahawks were being to be used. The timber was then shaped by splitting, chipping and scraping with a flint and shell. Finally the boomerang was rubbed smooth with a coarse stone.

Boomerangs were used for fighting and hunting or for sport and amusement. Fighting ones were larger and heavier than toy ones. Sometimes a toy boomerang was cut down from a damaged fighting boomerang. Men and boys often threw smaller boomerangs at flocks of birds.

Roth said there were two ways of throwing the larger boomerangs:

1. straight into the air (common everywhere)
2. straight onto the ground where it was made to bounce off the hard surface (common in coastal areas from Cairns to Cardwell).

According to Roth, no boomerangs were used north of the Palmer River. On the Palmer River, boomerangs were used only as toys.

Collection information

Roth collected four boomerangs from the Johnstone River region in 1898.

- E.14243 Roth's collection number is B.46. The returning boomerang is 46 cm long and 5 cm at the widest part. It has a flat under surface, the other surface being convex. The ends are shaped to rounded points, one end is broken. The boomerang weighs 130 g.
- E.14277 Roth's collection number is B.88. The returning boomerang is 63 cm long and 5 cm at the widest part. It has a flat under surface, the other surface being convex. The ends are shaped to rounded points. The boomerang weighs 200 g.
- E.14278 Roth's collection number is B.89. The returning boomerang is 48 cm long and 6 cm at the widest part. It has a flat under surface, the other surface being convex. The ends are shaped to rounded points. The boomerang weighs 165 g.
- E.14279 Roth's collection number is B.90. The returning boomerang is 45 cm long and 6 cm at the widest part. It has a flat under surface, the other surface being convex. The ends are shaped to rounded points. The boomerang weighs 130 g.

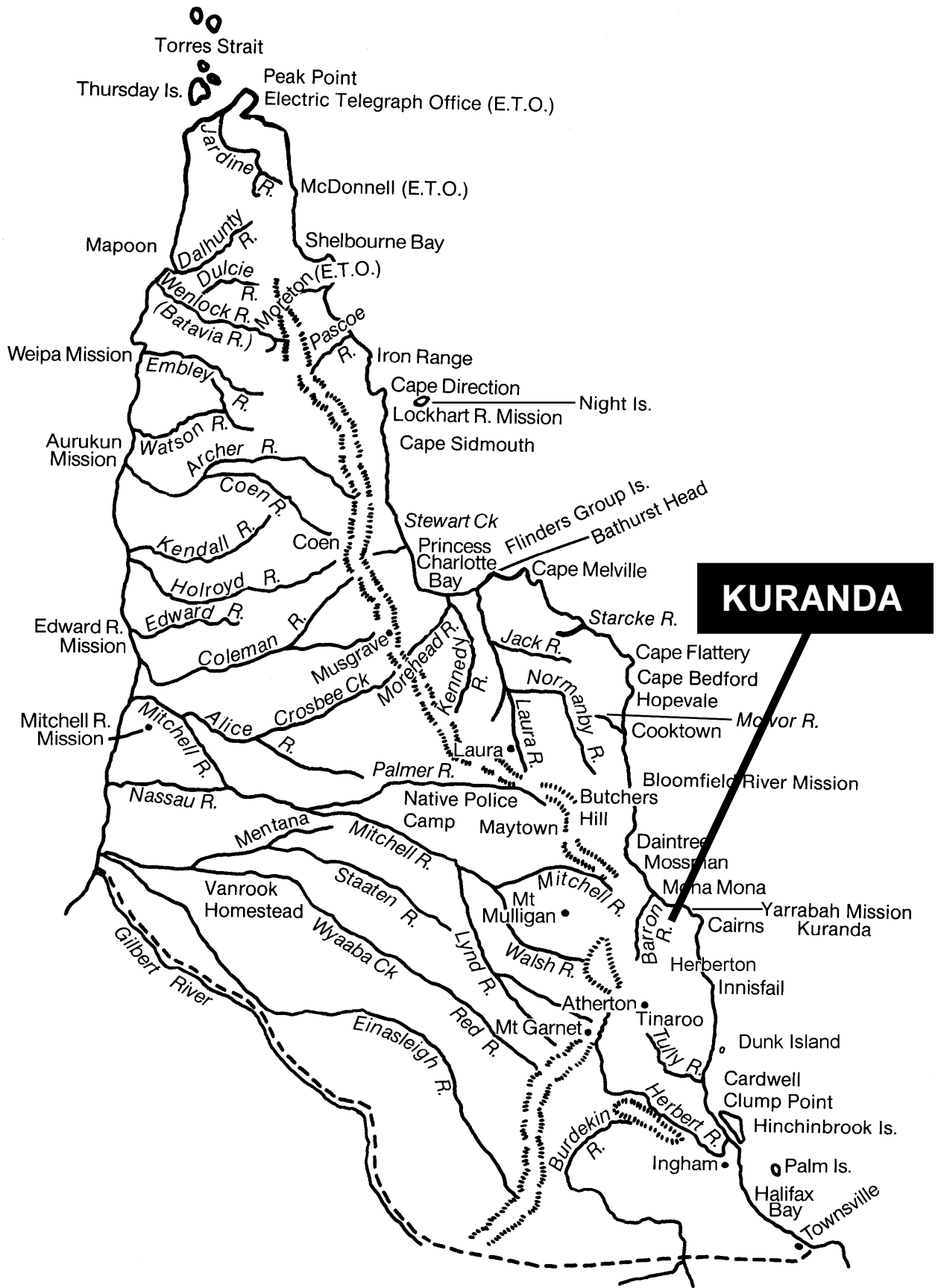
Photographic information

Black and white photographs are available for all four boomerangs.

- E.14243 negative sheet 4119M, frame 926.
E.14277 negative sheet 4123M, frame 960.
E.14278 negative sheet 4124M, frame 961.
E.14279 negative sheet 4124M, frame 962.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 4, 1902, p. 19. Bulletin 13, 1909, pp. 201–203.



KURANDA



Tropical scrub, Kuranda. Photograph 40 from the family album of Colin Y. Caird, 1901–1911, Vol. 1. Mitchell Library reference PXA-388, 1–4. Published with kind permission of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

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The People

Roth did not say much about the Aboriginal people at Kuranda, except to note that the Aboriginal people at Cape Barron River wandered up the coast as far as Port Douglas and inland to Kuranda and Mareeba.

Books to read

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 14, 1910, p. 18.

Head and neck band of shell



E.14434. *Nautilus* shell head and neck band. Collected Kuranda, 1899.
Length 26 cm.

Information from Roth's Bulletins

When working with shell, it was important that it was fresh. If it was an old shell, it had to be soaked in water, otherwise it would not split in a clean fracture.

The little rectangular pieces of pearl shell in the head or neck band each had a small hole drilled through the centre. A double strand of handspun bark fibre string was woven into a fine chain. This was threaded through the holes to link all the pieces of shell together.

According to Roth, men wore them around their heads and women wore them as necklaces, at the Bloomfield River, Cape Bedford and at Princess Charlotte Bay. He did not write about them from Kuranda.

Collection information

There is one shell head and neck band of *Nautilus* shell in the Roth collection from Kuranda.

E.14434 Roth collected this shell band in 1899. His collection number is G.215. It has 35 pieces of shell making up the band. It is 26 cm long, and each rectangle is about 2 cm long. The necklace has been on loan to the Kuranda Museum since 1992.

Photographic information

A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4143M, frame 1118.

Useful written information

Roth, W.E., Bulletin 7, 1904, p. 11. Bulletin 15, 1910, pp. 27–28.

Scientific name of material used

Nautilus shell: *Nautilus pompilius*.

BOOKS TO READ

This is a list of books and articles for further reading on the regions in this catalogue—Cairns, Cape Bedford, Cape Grafton, Cape Melville, Cardwell, Clump Point, Coen, Cooktown, Dunk Island, False Cape, Flinders Island, Hambleton, Herberton, Hinchinbrook Island, Ingham, Innisfail, Johnstone River and Kuranda. It is by no means a complete list but should give some idea of the information available at present.

All State, University and Museum libraries hold good reference material. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra provides an excellent library service. If your local library does not have a particular book itself, it may be possible for them to arrange an inter-library loan for you.

Cairns

- Bolton, G.C., 1959. The founding of Cairns. Royal Australian Historical Society, *Journal and Proceedings*, 45(1): 28–37.
- Bolton, G.C., 1970. *A Thousand Miles Away. A History of North Queensland to 1920*. Australian National University Press, Canberra.
- Bottoms, T., 1992. *The Bama, People of the Rainforest: Aboriginal-European Relations in the Cairns rainforest region up to 1876*. Gadjja Enterprises, Cairns.
- Bramell, E., 1941. Some Australian Incised Stones. *Australian Museum Records*, 21(1): 17–18.
- Cairn, E.J. & R. Grant, 1890–1891. Report of a collecting trip to north-eastern Queensland during April to September, 1889. *Records of the Australian Museum*, 1(1): 27–31.
- Collinson, J.W., 1939. *Early days of Cairns. The Valley*. W.R. Smith & Paterson, Brisbane.
- Collinson, J.W., 1942. *More about Cairns. I. The second decade*. W.R. Smith & Paterson, Brisbane.
- Collinson, J.W., 1945. *More about Cairns. II. Echoes of the past*. W.R. Smith & Paterson, Brisbane.
- Dixon, R.M.W., 1972. *The Dyirbal Language of north Queensland*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Etheridge, R., 1895. The game of teetotum as practised by certain of the Queensland Aborigines. *Royal Anthropological Institute Journal*, 25: 259–262.
- Gale, R., 1986. *Cairns, Cape York and Gulf*. Jacaranda Press, Milton.
- Haagen, C., 1994. *Bush Toys. Aboriginal Children at Play*. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- May, C.R., 1979. Chinese-European relations in Cairns during the eighteen nineties. *Lectures on North Queensland History, Third Series, 1979*, James Cook University of Townsville, 1978, pp. 157–168.
- O’Gorman, A.P., 1991. *Ursula McConnel: the Archaeology of an Anthropologist*. Unpublished BA (Hons) Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.
- Sommer, B.A., 1976. W.E. Roth’s Peninsular Vocabularies. In P. Sutton (editor) *Languages of Cape York*. Australian Aboriginal Studies. Research and Regional Studies No.6. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, pp. 127–136.

Cape Bedford

- Allen, L. & B. Borey, 1984. *Cultural and Historical Records of Queensland Number 3. Annotations to Publications by W.E. Roth*, University of Queensland Press.
- Evans, K.E., 1972. Marie Yamba, Bloomfield and Hope Vale: the Lutheran Missions to the north Queensland Aborigines, 1886–1905. *Queensland Heritage*, May, 2(6).
- Gribble, E.R.B., 1932. *The problem of the Australian Aboriginal*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney.

- Haviland, J.B., 1985. The Life History of a Speech Community. Guugu Yimidhirr at Hopevale. *Aboriginal History*, 9(2): 170–204.
- Haviland, J. & L. Haviland, 1980. “How much food will there be in heaven?” Lutherans and Aborigines around Cooktown to 1900. *Aboriginal History*, December 4(2): 119–149.
- Haagen, C., 1994. *Bush Toys. Aboriginal Children at Play*. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Kennedy, K., 1951. An Aboriginal Spinning Top. *North Queensland Naturalist*, 98(19): 1.
- MacPherson, J., 1935. More Aboriginal fish poisons. *Mankind*, 1(12): 9–12.
- Pearson, N., 1986. Ngamu-ngaadyarr, Muuri-bunggaga and Midha Mini in Guugu Yimidhirr history = Dingoes, sheep and Mr Muni in Guugu Yimidhirr history [Guugu Yimidhirr]. Noel Pearson, iv.

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