

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

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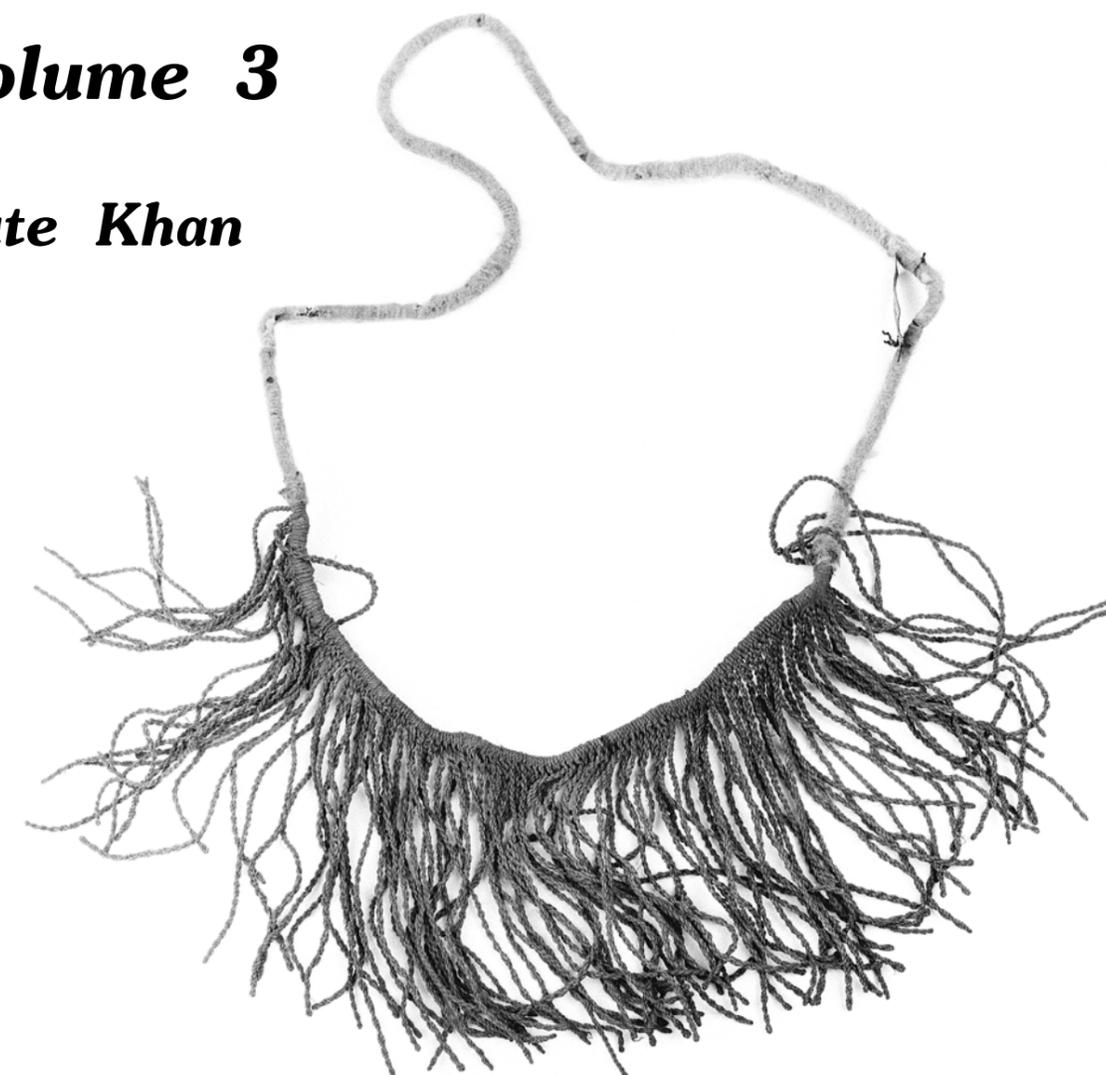


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Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland

Volume 3

Kate Khan



***Technical Reports of the Australian Museum
Number 17***

TECHNICAL REPORTS OF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

2003

Khan • Roth Catalogue—Volume 3

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AUSTRALIAN
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The **cover image** is of a skirt made of fibre string loops knotted to a possum fur band bound over with single-strand plant fibre; this particular one—dated 1898—is from the Morehead River, Musgrave in northern Queensland (Australian Museum E.14702).

Since 1999 Australian Museum Scientific Publications have been released as PDF files at our website, free of charge and six months after publication. This catalogue can be viewed at www.amonline.net.au/pdf/publications/1371_complete.pdf [from September 2003] or purchased as a bound volume from the Australian Museum Shop.

Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland

Volume 3

Items collected from McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, McIvor River, Mapoon and the Pennefather and Wenlock Rivers, Maytown, Mentana, Mitchell River, Morehead River, Moreton Electric Telegraph Office and Musgrave, in 1897–1903

KATE KHAN

Australian Museum, 6 College Street, Sydney NSW 2010, Australia
katek@austmus.gov.au

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pp 34–68 = www.amonline.net.au/pdf/publications/1371_part_b.pdf

pp 69–106 = www.amonline.net.au/pdf/publications/1371_part_c.pdf

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Preface

This is the third in a series of four catalogues on the Roth collection of Aboriginal artefacts from Cape York Peninsula, held at the Australian Museum. These catalogues will make it easier for people to gain access to this material which was gathered together over 100 years ago.

Information presented here is from both the objects and the 18 Roth Bulletins and Reports, published between 1898–1910. Like most 19th and early 20th century writings, the Bulletins are written in a manner that is at times difficult to understand and there is no index. Production of these new regional catalogues by the Australian Museum should make the older works easier to understand and use.

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, Carl Bento and Stuart Humphreys.

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 Program (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.

Ian Loch of the Malacology Division of the Australian Museum and Philip Colman, previously of the Malacology Division, but now Research Associate of the Australian Museum, kindly checked scientific names of shells mentioned in the Roth Bulletins. Peter Hind of the National Herbarium, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney was most helpful in checking botanical names. Dr Betty Meehan made many helpful suggestions when the project was in the conceptual stage. Geoff Wharton, consultant historian has

offered critical advice. Staff of the Australian Museum Library gave me invaluable assistance when I was pursuing obscure references.

A special thanks to Dr Val Attenbrow in the Branch 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

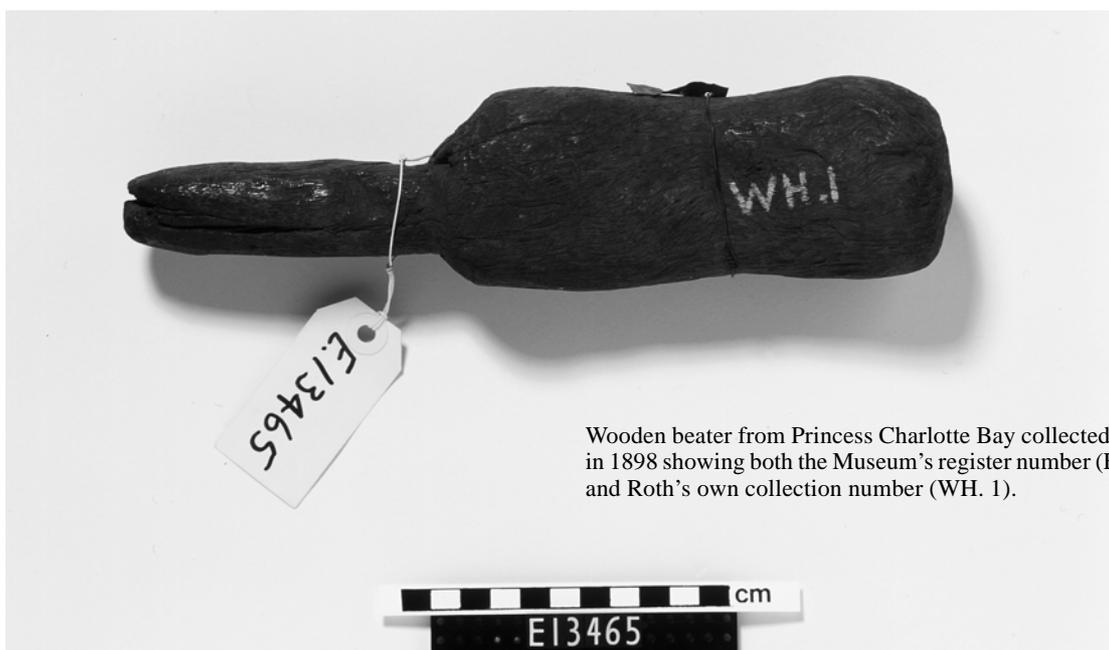
These catalogues are about the Roth collection from Cape York Peninsula—a collection of Aboriginal artefacts gathered together by the First Protector of Aboriginals in north Queensland, Dr Walter Edmund Roth between 1898 and 1904.

Some 2000 artefacts (from Queensland, the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania) and 308 photographic negatives were purchased by the Australian Museum from Dr Roth on 25 February 1905 for 450 Australian pounds. The Museum also holds other north Queensland material collected by Roth which was either donated or sold to the Museum on other occasions. These artefacts also have been included in the Cape York Peninsula catalogues.

When artefacts arrive at the Museum they are given register 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 along with descriptive and locational information is written in a large, leather bound register, on catalogue cards, and into the computer database.

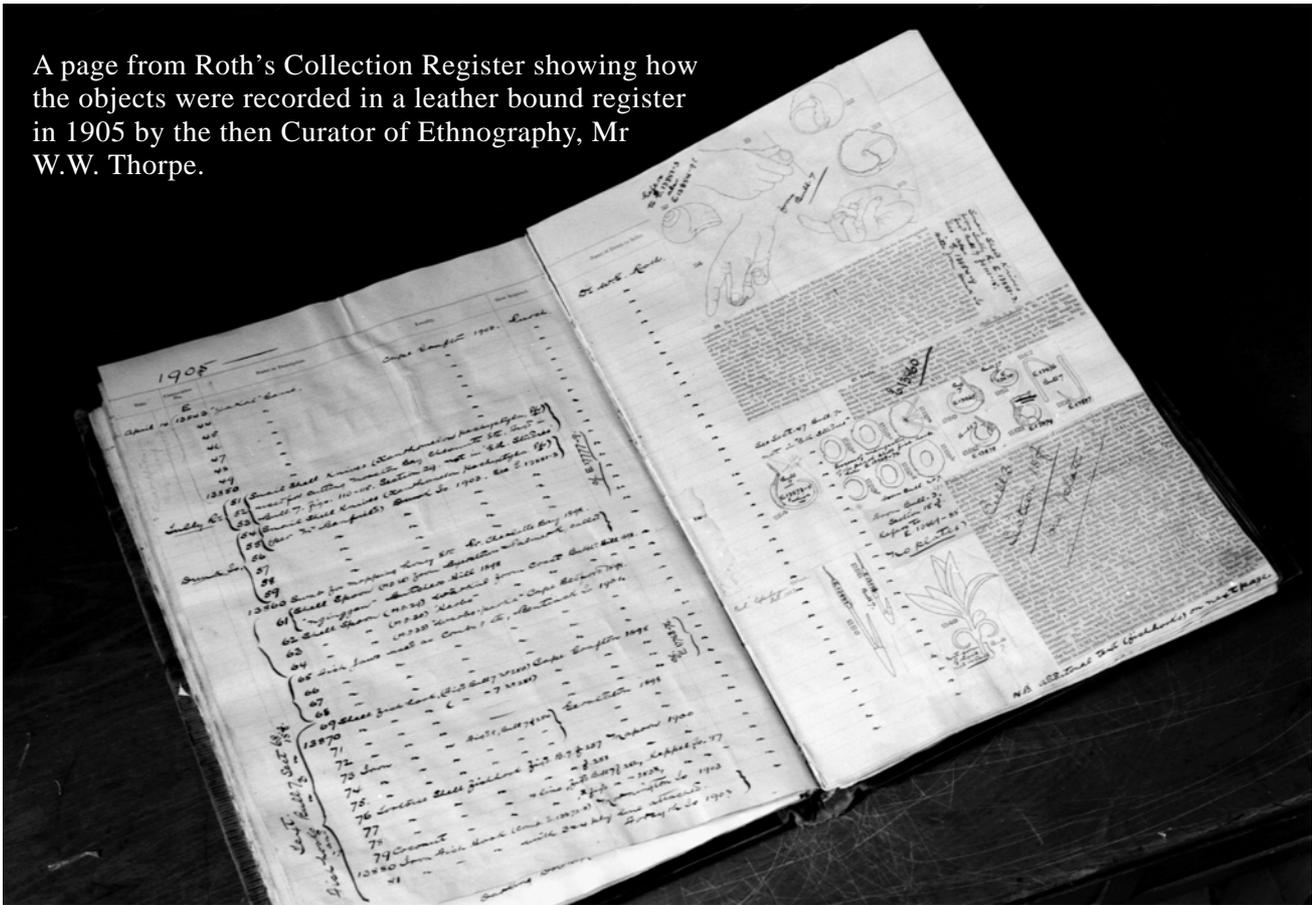
From then, when this artefact is in storage, on exhibition, being conserved or on loan, its whereabouts can be traced through its personal number.

Collectors often give their own numbers to objects while they are collecting them in the field. When 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.



List of registered artefacts collected by Roth

- A Major purchase 25 February 1905
- E.13317–E.13656 Queensland
 - E.13683–E.15154 Queensland
 - E.13657–E.13658 New South Wales
 - E.13659–E.13665 Victoria
 - E.13668–E.13682 Victoria
 - E.13666–E.13667 Tasmania
 - E.15275–E.15316 Tasmania (stone tools)
 - E.15155–E.15274 Skeletal material (see Museum policy on skeletal remains)
 - V.2077–V.2316 Photographic negative collection held by the Photography Section, Australian Museum.
 - V.2530–V.2597 Photographic negative collection held by the Photography Section, Australian Museum.
- B Purchases and donations made at other times, additional to the major Roth collection purchase of 1905.
- 1899 December E.8825–E.8885 Queensland (mainly ochres and examples of edible shellfish)
 - 1900 January E.8972–E.8980, E.8982–E.8987
 - 1900 February E.8996–E.9033
 - 1900 August E.9482–E.9483
 - 1901 January E.9722–E.9755
 - 1901 September E.10173
 - 1901 December E.10405–E.10419
 - 1905 October E.15725 Queensland (canoe and paddle)
 - 1907 February E.16395–E.16397 skeletal material
 - 1920 August E.26065–E.26124 Tasmania (stone tools)

Museum policy on skeletal remains

The Museum actively supports the return of Aboriginal skeletal remains to Aboriginal communities for re-burial. Nearly all skeletal material collected by Roth has been returned to communities for re-burial. This repatriation program is run by the Museum's Aboriginal Heritage Unit.

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 held by the Museum is housed in a separate keeping place which has restricted access.

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 in this catalogue

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. Artefacts in the catalogues come from the 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. The objects and places included in each of the four volumes are summarized later in this introduction.

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 over a 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 organized 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 plus local names for the rivers and land is given, together with the names used today by the

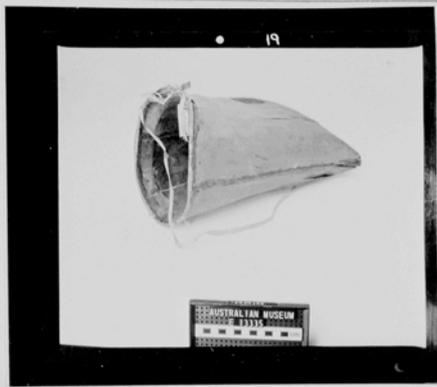
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

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.

4 Collection information. Here in numerical order is listed all the information to be found in the Museum registers, catalogue cards and on the computerized database,

REG. NO.: E.13335	DATE: 21 MAR. 1905	ITEM: BI-CORNUAL BARK BASKET
GEOG. AREA [VALIDATION]: AThERTON, NTH. QUEENSLAND		
		ATAS AREA: Y
OWN/PURCH/COLL/EXCH: WALTER EDMUND ROTH, 25 MARCH 1905		
COLLECTOR: W.E. ROTH	COLL. DATE: 1898	COLL. NO.: W.T. 12
MAKER/S:	AGE:	M/F LANG. GP.:
LOCAL NAME - LANGUAGE:		
FUNCTION/USER(S): USED TO CARRY WATER AND HONEY.		
ARCHIVES: R2., R.6/1905/PURCH. SCH.6/1905		
REFERENCES: W.E. ROTH, NTH. QUEENSLAND ETHNOGRAPHY, Bulletin.7, pp.13-14, 30, 1904.		
OBJECT HISTORY:		
REMARKS: FOUND ONLY WHERE SIMILARLY SHAPED WOVEN BASKETS WERE MADE, I.E. HERBERT RIVER, CARDWELL, CAIRNS, AThERTON.		

NEG. NO.: Neg. Sheet. 4002M, No. 19.	
DIMENSIONS: Height: 32cm; Diam. at mouth. 12 cm. x 24 cm.	
DESCRIPTION: MADE FROM INNER BARK OF A LAUREL TREE, CALLOPHYLLUM tomentosum Wight. OUTER SURFACE OF INNER BARK IS INNER SURFACE OF BASKET. BARK FOLDED IN HALF AND SEWN TOGETHER WITH STRIPS OF LAWYER CANE, CALAMUS SP., AND SEALED WITH GUM CEMENT OR BEESWAX. CANE HANDLES BROKEN	
INVENTORY CHECK: A3, 6/92 [KK]	
COMPILER: K. Khan, 16/2/1991.	

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

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 Section.
- 6 **Useful written information.** This lets you know where other written information about the object can be found.

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

Plants and animals are given a name by scientists. Each plant or animal is given a unique scientific name consisting of two parts: the genus and the species. The **genus** is a name shared by closely related species. The second part of the 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 kind of *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 first recognized and named as a distinct species by Ferdinand von Mueller.

Sometimes scientific names change as more information becomes available. The most common change results from the mistake of giving a new name to a species that has already been named. When synonyms (two different names for the same plant or animal) are discovered international convention normally rules that the older name should be used.

The same name should be used consistently around the world. Therefore scientific names (e.g., *Melo amphora*) are valuable because they are internationally consistent, unlike non-scientific names (e.g., a melon shell). 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.

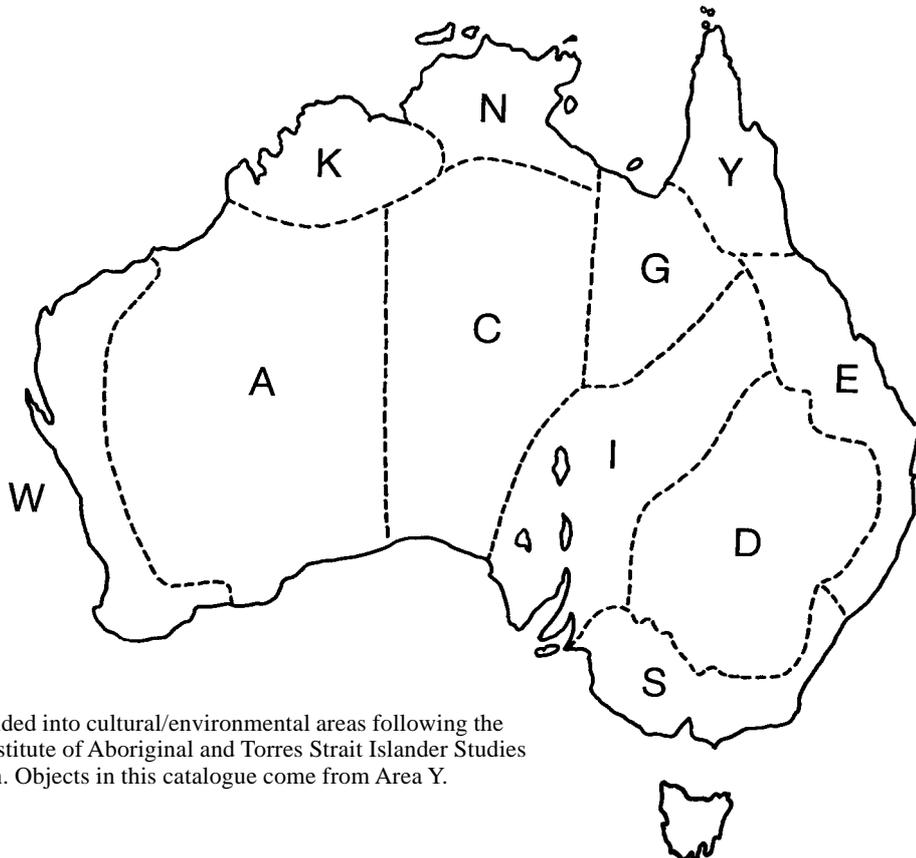
How to get help

If you want to visit the Australian Museum to look at the collection, borrow objects, order photographs or use the Library to read Roth's publications, you should contact the Collection Manager (phone: 02 9320 6195) or the Aboriginal Heritage Unit (phone: 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 6164. The Museum switchboard number is 02 9320 6000. The Anthropology Division fax number is 02 9320 6040. General information also can be obtained by referring to the Museum's website, www.amonline.net.au. Please ring or write first if you want to look at the collection some of which may not be on public display.

As well as Aboriginal Project Officers and an Aboriginal Heritage Unit, there is always an Aboriginal representative 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 information about artefacts and the people who made them, and would like to have this information recorded at the Museum 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 2010.



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.

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 Peninsula,
Lawson Crescent,
ACTON ACT 2601.
GPO Box 553,
CANBERRA ACT 2601.
Phone 02 6246 1123, fax 02 6257 5216.
Reference Library
Phone 02 6246 1175, fax 02 6246 1113,
deveni@aiatsis.gov.au.
The audiovisual archives can be accessed through
audiovisual@aiatsis.gov.au.
Print material can be accessed through
ref@aiatsis.gov.au or phone 02 6246 1182.

The National Museum of Australia

Acton Peninsula,
Lawson Crescent,
ACTON ACT 2601.
GPO Box 1901,
CANBERRA ACT 2601.
Phone 02 6208 5000.
Library: tel 02 6208 5112.

The Museum now houses the large collection of Aboriginal material culture formerly held in the Institute of Anatomy, Canberra. This includes material from north Queensland collected by F.D. McCarthy in the 1960s.

The National Library of Australia

Parke Place
CANBERRA ACT 2601.
Phone 02 6262 1111, fax 02 6257 1703,
infoserv@NLA.gov.au.

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.
Phone 02 9273 1414, fax 2 9273 1255.

A good source of documents of early settlements, sketches, photographs, newspaper cuttings, books by explorers, some of W.E. Roth's original manuscripts on microfiche.

The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

Mrs Macquarie's Road,
SYDNEY NSW 2000.
Phone 02 9231 8155.

The botanists will help identify plants used in making artefacts.

Brisbane

The Queensland Museum

corner Grey & Melbourne Streets,
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101.
PO Box 3300,
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101.
Phone 07 3840 7635, fax 07 3846 1918.

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

The State Library of Queensland

South Bank Building, Level 2,
SOUTH BANK QLD 4101.
PO Box 3488,
SOUTH BANK QLD 4101.
Phone 07 3840 7666, fax 07 3846 2421

The John Oxley Library

South Bank Building, Level 4,
SOUTH BANK QLD 4101.
PO Box 3488,
SOUTH BANK QLD 4101.
Phone 07 3840 7880, fax 07 3846 2421.

Both libraries have good reference material on early settlement of north Queensland. Excellent resource centres for early photographs, documents and letters.

Queensland State Archives

435 Compton Road,
Runcorn QLD 4109.
PO Box 1397,
SUNNYBANK HILLS QLD 4109.
Phone 07 3875 8755.

Good source of early documents on north Queensland.

Queensland Herbarium

Meiers Road,
INDOOROOPILLY QLD 4068.
Phone 07 3896 9326.

The botanists will help identify plants used in making artefacts.

Townsville

James Cook University of North Queensland

Angus Smith Drive,
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4811.
Phone 07 4781 4111.

The History Department has an interesting collection of tapes made by Aboriginal people talking about the early days in north Queensland.

Adelaide

The Lutheran Church Archives Office

101 Archer Street,
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006.
Phone 08 8267 1737, fax 08 8267 7310.

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

The South Australian Museum

North Terrace,
ADELAIDE SA 5000.
Phone 08 8207 7500.

The Museum has N.B. Tindale's notes and photographs of early work in north Queensland. It also holds some material of Ursula McConnel who worked in north Queensland in the 1930s.

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 northwest 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 Aborigines...

This book brought him to the notice of officials as a person interested in Aborigines and their culture. The following year he was appointed Protector of Aborigines for the Northern District of Queensland under *The Aborigines 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 Roth then came, wrote to Roth from Brisbane on 4 January 1898:

Although your selection for the position of Protector of Aborigines 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 aborigines, 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...



Walter Edmund Roth in outback northern Queensland.
Roth negative, Australian Museum collection.

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.

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 beche-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[sic] you (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: 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 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 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 1902 he wrote:

The time has, in my opinion, now arrived when it is imperative that various areas in the extreme Western and Gulf districts be dedicated wholly and solely to the natives. A reserve half full of occupation licences (i.e., annual leases held by private occupiers) will not answer the purpose. The whole question resolves

itself into one of either sacrificing many human lives, or losing a few pounds derived from rents. So long as the land can be taken up at a few shillings per square mile, and no provision made for the dependent blacks who can and are being hunted off it, there will be trouble. The stockowner naturally does his best for his cattle—one cannot for a moment blame him—while I do the best I can for my blacks. The value of one human life, not matter the colour of skin which clothes it, it more to me than that of all the cattle in creation.

W.E. Roth. Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1902. Government Printer, Brisbane, 1903: 23.

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 Aborigines.

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 beche-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 sold a quantity of ethnological specimens, the property of the Queensland government, to the Australian Museum in Sydney.

The headline in the tabloid *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 aborigines' 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.

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.

Ethnographer and physician, Roth was a pioneering humanitarian in territory renowned for “boong bashers”, exploitation of Aboriginal labour and even worse. It is forever to be regretted that his suggestion for a reserve on the east coast of the Peninsula (about Princess Charlotte Bay and inland to Breeza Plains) was never implemented. While Aboriginal communities on the west coast now thrive and expand, the linguist or anthropologist must reconstruct the situation in the east as best he is able, taking account of records such as Roth left behind... Roth's well-documented case was lost, and we are richer, not in humanity, but at least in the impotent documentation.

Bruce A. Sommer, 1976.
W.E. Roth's Peninsular Vocabularies.
In *Languages of Cape York*, ed. P. Sutton, p. 127.
Australian Aboriginal Studies. Research & Regional Studies No. 6, AIAS, Canberra.

Roth was Honorary Member of the Anthropological Societies of Berlin and Florence, 1902; President of the Anthropological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Hobart, Tasmania, 1902; Honorary Fellow, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1932; Honorary Fellow, American Anthropological Association, 1932, and was awarded the Clarke Medal from the Royal Society of NSW for original researches in Natural Sciences.

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Further information on north Queensland at the turn of the century can be obtained from these books. This is not an exhaustive list.

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- Loos, N., 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897*. Canberra: ANU Press.
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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).

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- Roth, W.E., 1901. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no. 3. Food: its search, capture and preparation. Brisbane: Government Printer, pp. 1–31, figs. 1–23.
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- Roth, W.E., 1905. North Queensland Ethnography. Bulletin no. 8. Notes on government, morals, and crime. Brisbane: Government Printer, pp. 1–12, pls. 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* 6(5): 365–403, pls. 68–74. (Walter E. Roth was now Magistrate of the Pomeroon District, British Guyana).
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In 1984 Hesperian Press, Carlisle, Western Australia, published a facsimile edition of the Roth Bulletins and his *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* under the title *The Queensland Aborigines*, volumes I–III, Aboriginal Studies Series 2–4, edited by K.F. MacIntyre.

**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 ¹
Bloomfield River	112 artefacts
Butcher's Hill	28 artefacts

¹ Four artefacts, E.13935–8 are shown in the Roth register as having no locality. However a check of a photocopy of the Roth collection numbers W.80a,b,c,d, relating to these E registered items show they came from Bathurst Head. The entry reads "W.80a,b,c,d. 4 shell hafts ready to put on the womerahs. Bathurst Head, 1899." The handwriting could have been Roth's but is more likely Robert Etheridge, the Curator. At the bottom of each page is written "OK.RE" W.W. Thorpe's initials are on the cover page, written "Registration. WWT." Did W.W. Thorpe forget to transfer the information to the Roth register? The total number of artefacts from Bathurst Head should read 26 artefacts.

Two samples of pigment were collected by Roth from Bathurst Head and given to the Australian Museum. They were registered on 30 January 1900, and so do not form part of the major 1905 Roth collection purchase. E.8977, yellow pigment and E.8978, red pigment, were given to the Port Warnambool Museum, Victoria in October 1900.

Volume 2 (1996)

Cairns	32 artefacts
Cape Bedford	74 artefacts ²
Cape Grafton	61 artefacts ³
Cape Melville	3 artefacts
Cardwell	8 artefacts
Clump Point	9 artefacts
Coen	5 artefacts
Cooktown	33 artefacts ⁴
Dunk Island	6 artefacts
False Cape	1 artefact
Flinders Island	11 artefacts
Hambledon	1 artefact
Herberton	8 artefacts
Hinchinbrook Island	1 artefact
Ingham	1 artefact
Innisfail	3 artefacts
Johnstone River	4 artefacts
Kuranda	1 artefact

² Roth collected some white pigment from Cape Bedford and gave it to the Australian Museum. It was registered on 30 January 1900 and so does not form part of the major Roth collection purchase of 1905.

³ E.13451. This item was omitted from the Cape Grafton section in Volume 2. Cape Grafton should read 62 artefacts.

The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "model canoe as used at present at Cape Grafton, Cairns, etc." Location Yarrabah. Roth's collection number is C.6. Roth made the model canoe E.13450. Did he also make this one? The squared off canoe is 32.4 cm long, 4 cm wide and 4.8 cm deep. The outrigger is 31 cm long, 1.2 cm wide and 1.6 cm deep. A harpoon is attached to the model canoe. It is 29 cm long, with a barb tied to the tip. It is attached to the canoe with fine handspun fibre string. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4020M, frame 134. There is a reference in the register to Queensland Watercraft, Article 88, Man, JRAI, xxxv, p. 56 et seq.

⁴ Roth collected some edible clay from Cooktown and gave it to the Australian Museum. It was registered on 30 January 1900 and so does not form part of the major Roth collection purchase of 1905.

Volume 3 (current volume)

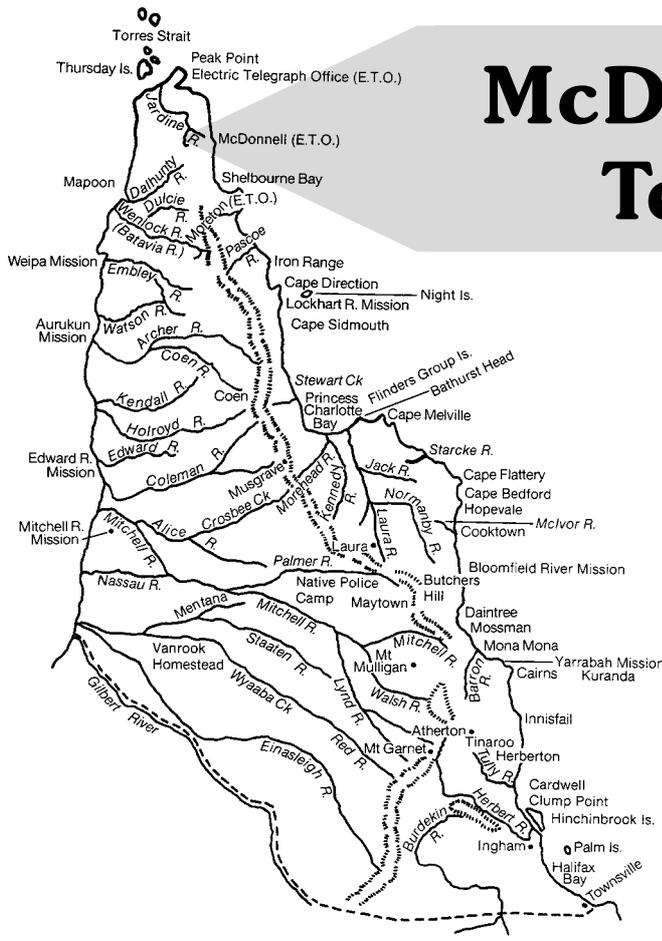
McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office .	1 artefact
McIvor River	2 artefacts
Mapoon, the Pennefather River and the Wenlock River, called the Batavia River by Roth	232 artefacts
Maytown	15 artefacts
Mentana	1 artefact
Mitchell River	13 artefacts
Morehead River	1 artefact
Moreton Electric Telegraph Office	8 artefacts
Musgrave	5 artefacts

Volume 4 (scheduled 2004)

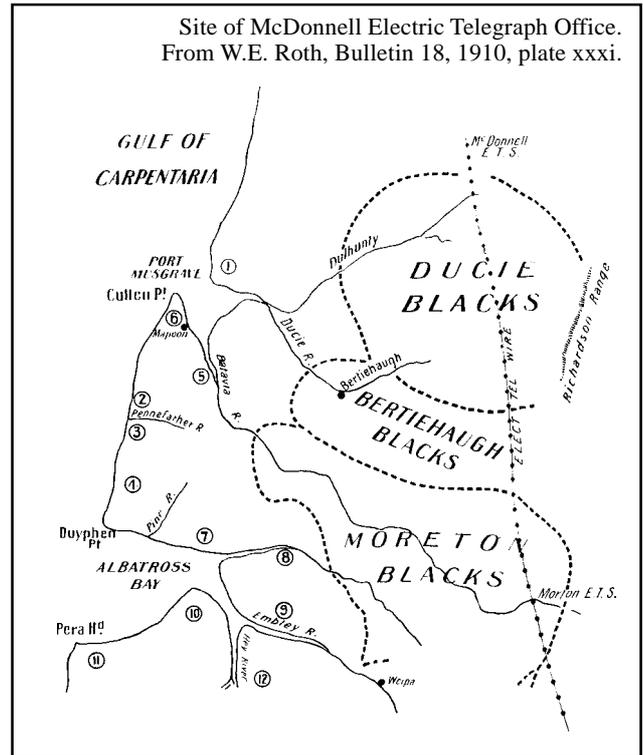
Nassau River	1 artefact
Night Island	1 artefact
Palmer River, often referred to as the Palmer River Native Police camp by Roth	48 artefacts
Peak Point Electric Telegraph Station .	2 artefacts
Princess Charlotte Bay	24 artefacts
Staaten River	124 artefacts
Starcke River	6 artefacts
Tinaroo	1 artefact
Tully River	13 artefacts
Vanrook	2 artefacts
Weipa and the Embley River	21 artefacts

The following shell specimens come from north Queensland but are without further locality data:

E.8996	1 <i>Macra obesa</i>
E.8997	12 <i>Melo diadema</i> , now known as <i>Melo amphora</i> .
E.8998	19 <i>Ostrea glomerata</i>
E.8999	1 <i>Pinna menkei</i>
E.13935–8	are pieces of <i>Melo</i> shell used as hand grips on spearthrowers.



McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office



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The people

In 1899, Roth wrote in his Report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines:

In addition to the work carried on by the Mission and stations in the way of distributing rations to those aborigines unable to provide for themselves, the Government have established various food-relieving centres in different parts of the Northern districts of the colony.

McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office was one of these centres. It had a regular monthly expenditure of three pounds, which was distributed by the post and telegraph officials. The Overland Telegraph Line to Cape York had been completed in 1887, and stayed in operation until 1929.

Roth wrote that in 1899 there were about 150 Aboriginal people living in the region near the McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, and they kept pretty much to themselves. He said the people living around this desert region were often hungry because there was little game and no fish in the area. They did not travel to the coast because of neighbouring tribal restrictions. This food distribution centre

at McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office was thus reported as being “beneficial” to these people.

In 1901, Roth wrote in his Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines, p. 2, as follows

I am convinced that if white settlement is allowed to advance further up into the Gulf Coast and Peninsula, without due provision being made for the blacks who are thereby dispossessed of their native hunting grounds and sources of water supply, the distribution of food relief will in a few years become a very heavy charge upon the state.

In his 1902 Report to the Queensland Government, Roth stated that beef and flour were the main food supplies handed out at these centres.

Helen Harper, a linguist, wrote in 1996 that the Atambaya people, on whose country the McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office was built, are still known today as the McDonnell people. When the Telegraph Office was closed in 1929, they were resettled at Injinoo. From the beginning they had gathered around the Telegraph Station of their own accord. Harper maintained this was unique in Australia, the settlement having been established neither by the

A pair of fire sticks.
 Collected McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, 1902.
 Fire sticks 121.7 × 0.7 cm. Cap 23 × 3.6 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13782

government or the church. Even today in Injinoo, the people believe they belong to the place of their own free will.

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Fire-making equipment

Fire sticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Fire was made by twirling a thin stick into a hole in a flattened piece of softwood. Tinder of dried grass was placed around the hole to catch the spark caused by the friction. When the spark was made, the tinder was 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.

In the Peninsula, both on the mainland and coast, where fire sticks were not thrown away after use, their "business ends" or tips were preserved and protected by a special cap or cover so they could be used again. This cap was usually made from a light pithy kind of wood, from which the pith was removed with a bone awl. Occasionally two pieces of bamboo were used for a cap. One of the ends usually was sealed with beeswax from the native *Trigona* bee. The thin lengths of wood or wands were often made from wood from the grass tree, *Xanthorrhoea arborea*.

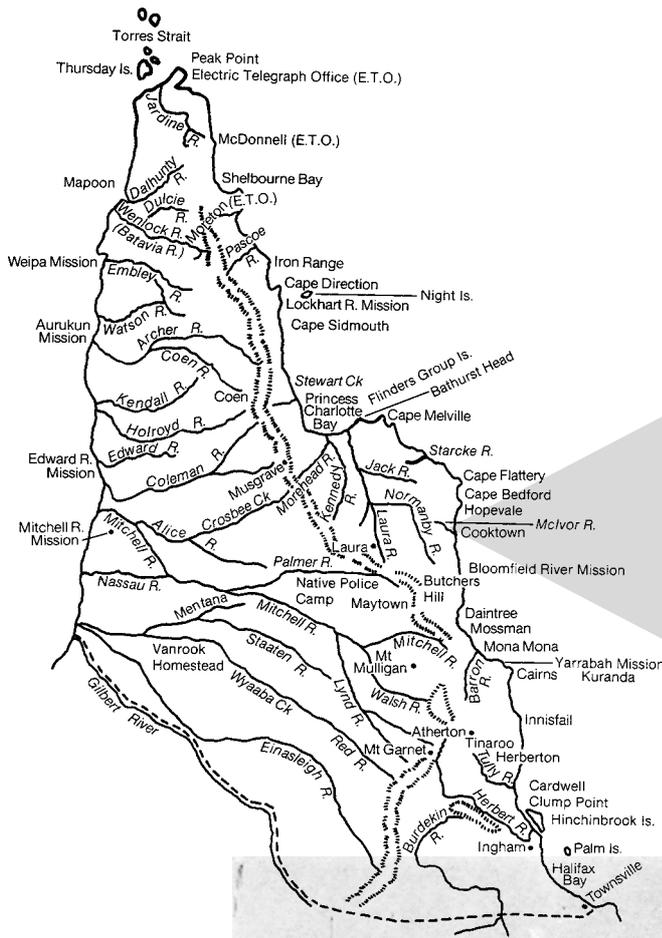
Collection information. There is one pair of fire sticks from the McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, collected by Roth in 1902.

E.13782 Roth's collection number is F.18. The fire sticks are 121.7 cm long and 0.7 cm in diameter. The tips of the sticks have been newly trimmed. The cap is 23×3.6 cm. It is smeared with adhesive and bound with thin strips of fibre, and decorated with red ochre. Three separate bands of yellow fibre complete the decoration on this cap.

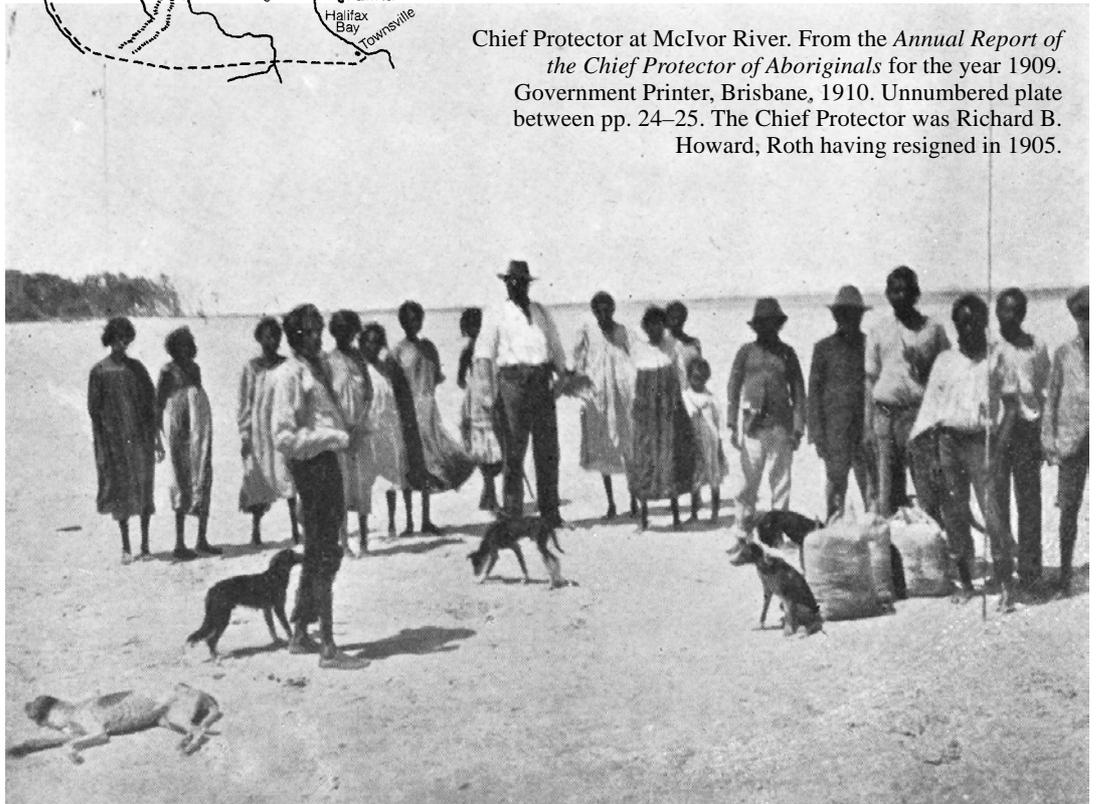
Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4061M, frame 465.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 10–11.



McIvor River



Chief Protector at McIvor River. From the *Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines* for the year 1909. Government Printer, Brisbane, 1910. Unnumbered plate between pp. 24–25. The Chief Protector was Richard B. Howard, Roth having resigned in 1905.

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The people

Roth did not write about the people living around the McIvor River, but he talked about the area. He said that any large size river often carried different names as it ran through the countryside. Thus the mouth of the McIvor River was known as Piri-kulal by the local people. By the time it reached Wallace's Selection (land settled by the Wallace family), it was called Piribindi, and at its junction with Cocoa Creek, was known as Piri-wundal.

In 1909 the Superintendent of Cape Bedford Mission, the Reverend G.H. Schwarz wrote to the Chief Protector of Aborigines (who had taken over from Roth) about the problems of establishing a self-supporting community.

with a view to getting some immediate returns, we started an outstation on the McIvor River during the latter half of last year. The land there, of course, is far superior to any soil we have near Cape Bedford, and should grow almost anything... So far we have cleared about 10 acres, of which half has been ploughed up. We intend to plant sweet potatoes and peanuts on this piece of land... Altogether, I may say the opening of this new station has cost us 250 pounds so far... we will not be able to keep it going without some financial assistance from your Department...

R.B. Howard. 1910. Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for 1909, p. 24. Brisbane: Government Printer.

References

- Howard, R.B., 1910. *Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for 1909*, p. 24. Brisbane: Government Printer.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 80.

Raw material

Pigments

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that red pigment from burnt ferruginous sandstone, a rock containing iron, was found around the McIvor River. It was used by the people living here without any special preparation. Cape Bedford people called it *wo-ba*. Roth identified the yellow pigment as limonite, hydrous oxide of iron. It was dug up from under salt pans in the northern parts of Cape York, dried in the sun, and often mixed with a little fine sand. It reached the people living around the McIvor River and Cape Bedford by trade. Local people called it *barga*. Occasionally dry pigments were used, but sometimes a pigment was chewed in the mouth and spat out, making a spotted pattern over an object, or person. Roth mentioned the use of adhesive, human blood and honey being used as fixatives by people living in the Pennefather River region. Around the Bloomfield River, oil from the candlenut tree, *Aleurites moluccana*, was used to fix pigments when decorating spears. People living around the Tully River and at Cardwell used human blood as a fixative.

Collection information. There are two samples of pigment from the McIvor River. They do not form part of the Roth collection purchase of 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 30 January 1900.

E.8980 this is a sample of red pigment from McIvor River.

E.8981 this is a sample of yellow pigment from north of the McIvor River.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 14–15.

Secret/sacred object

Because of the sensitive nature of this object the Museum will only give the information to those people who have a right to know. The Aboriginal Heritage Officers in the Museum can be contacted on telephone number (02) 9320 6192 or (02) 9320 6186.

Collection information. E.13533—Collected from the McIvor River by Roth in 1899.

Toys

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 of plants 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*. As the McIvor River outstation was settled by people from the Cape Bedford community, it is likely the same name was also used here.

Collection information. There is one spinning top from the McIvor River, collected by Roth in 1899.

E.13809 This top is made from a rounded piece of beeswax from the native *Trigona* bee. It is 2.7 × 2.3 cm across and is 1.8 cm deep.

Spinning top.
Collected McIvor River, 1899.
2.7 × 2.3 × 1.8 cm.



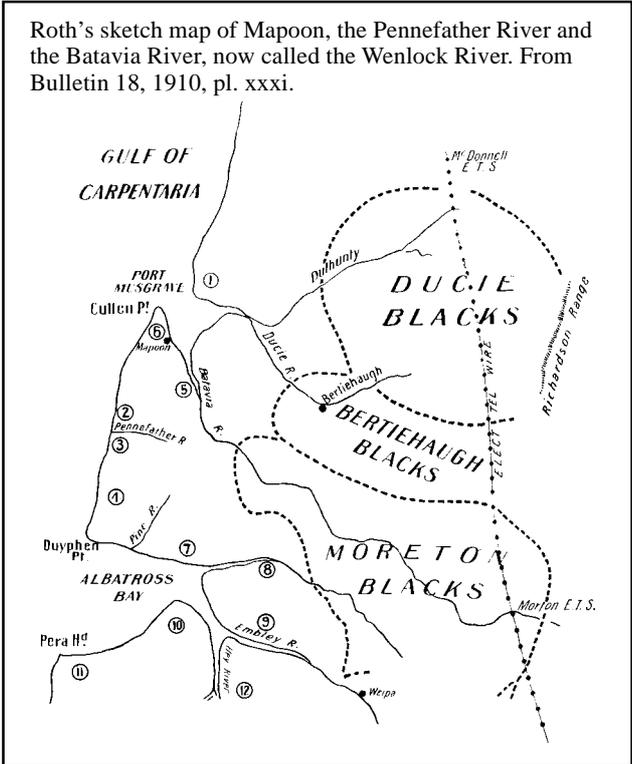
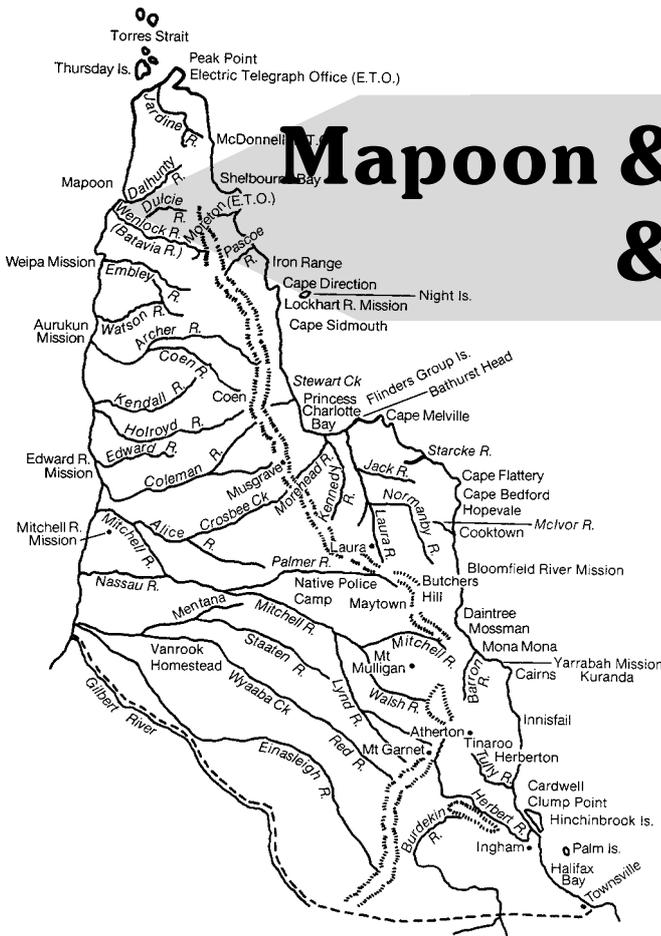
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13809

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4065M, frame 492.

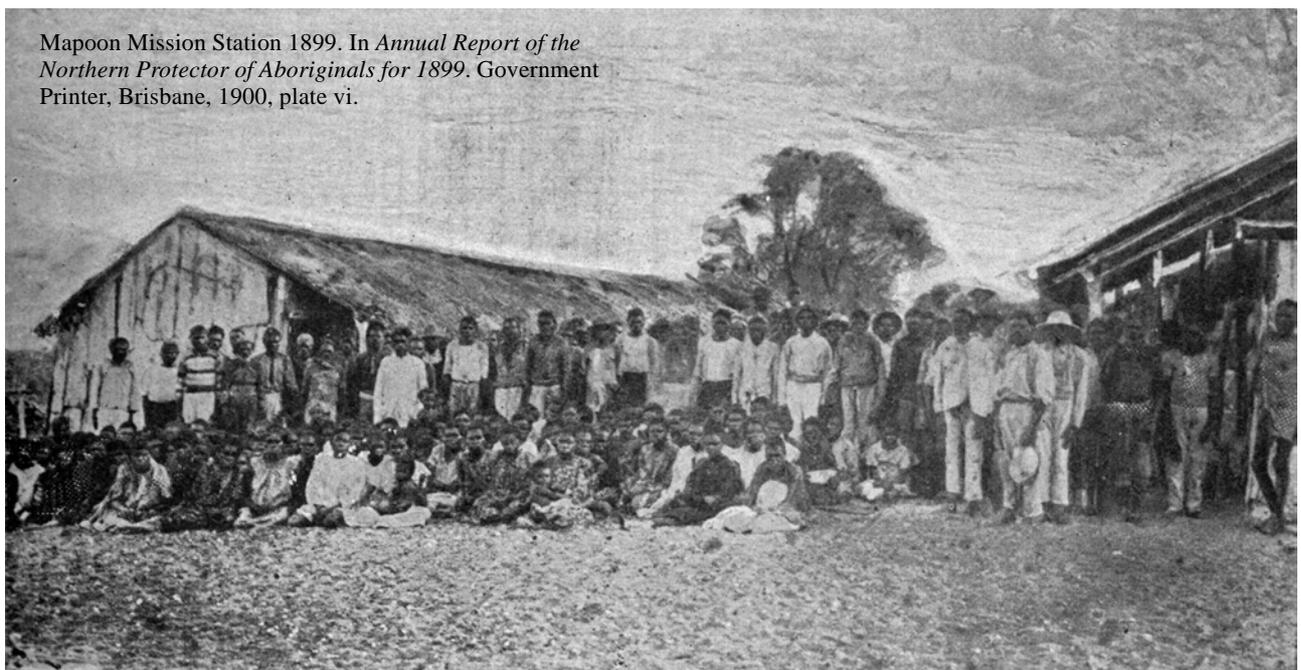
Reference

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

Mapoon & the Pennefather & Wenlock Rivers



Mapoon Mission Station 1899. In *Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1899*. Government Printer, Brisbane, 1900, plate vi.



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The people

In 1899 Roth made his first official visit to Mapoon and wrote

It would appear that there are probably not half-a-dozen remnants left of the original Mapoon people. The following groups of natives are found in this ethnographical district ... the Nggerikudi ... whose home is on the north side of the Pennefather River, they are the most numerous of all the coastal people, and the majority of them are now settled at Mapoon. The Gamiti ... are on the north shore of Port Musgrave, i.e., between the Ducie River and Seven Rivers Country. Ra-kudi ... occupy the south side of the Pennefather River; Taini-kudi ... the country between Pennefather and Pine Rivers, speaking Anga-dimi ... low down on the south side of the Batavia River; and Chong-anji, or Mapoon natives, that portion of Port Musgrave coastline terminating in Cullen Point. Other groups are the Laini-ngadi, O-amro-koro, ... Cherakundi, Gautundi and Winda-Winda.

Bulletin 18, 1910: 96.

He was indebted to Reverend N. Hey of Mapoon for much of the above information. Another of Roth's main informants was an Aboriginal man from the Coen (Pennefather) River district known as Jimmy D. (G. Wharton, pers. comm. 1996).

The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia refers to the people of this region as the Tjungundji whose country was between Port Musgrave and Janie Creek, where Mapoon mission was based. Two other closely related peoples, the Tepathiggi and the Yupangathi had their country between the Ducie and Wenlock Rivers, and Janie Creek to the Pennefather River respectively.

Mapoon Mission had been founded in 1891, and run by the Moravian Missionaries, with help from the Presbyterians. It was situated at Cullen Point, near the mouth of the Wenlock River, known as the Batavia River until 1939. Its name was changed to avoid confusion with the then capital of the Netherlands East Indies, now called Jakarta.

On his visit to the region in 1899, Roth was disturbed by what he saw happening to young men of Mapoon who were recruited to work on commercial fishing boats in the sea-slug and pearling industries. They were lured on ships to Thursday Island without Articles and paper protection and were often left there when there was no work on the boats. Young men who returned to Mapoon often were emaciated, had pains in the back and chest, coughed and spat blood, and many died. He put this down to poor conditions under which they worked on the boats. During his fortnight's stay in 1899, Roth reported that 11 boats called into Mapoon recruiting labour.

Because of the abuse of Aboriginal labour, the government of the day appointed Reverend Nicholas Hey as Superintendent of Mapoon, under the Aboriginals and Sale of Opium Act, 1897. Roth believed the only way to protect Aboriginal people from this sea-going recruitment was to declare Mapoon and Weipa Aboriginal reserves.

Hey ran the Mission with the help of Harry Price, a Tahitian, who apparently was very popular. On page 8 of the Report of the Northern Protector, 1899, he is also referred to as a South Sea Islander, born in Queensland, so there seems to be some doubt as to Harry Price's place of birth.

At this time, there were about 400 Aboriginal people living on the Mission, of which 160 had become permanent residents, the remainder came for short times to fish, hunt and visit relations. There were 70 head of cattle on the land, and a small plantation of coconut and other fruit trees.

In 1901, Mapoon had been proclaimed a reformatory under the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act of 1865. This was mooted to ensure protection for all Aboriginal children on the Mission under 15 years of age. There was a dark side to this Mission too. Children were separated from their parents and kept in dormitories in an attempt to wean them from their cultural traditions. Roth did note that by 1901 numbers living in Mapoon had dropped to 200, with about 400 people camping nearby, and all the coastal and correspondingly inland aboriginals now regard the settlement as a place at which they are always welcome, and where they can obtain medicine when sick, food when starving, and at Christmas time and on Queen's Birthday... a suit of clothes.

Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1901, Queensland, 1902: 13.

In the Annual Report of the Northern Protector for 1904, Roth stated that recruitment of young men on the commercial sea-slug and pearling boats had been discontinued since 31 July 1904. It had proved a health hazard for the young men and disrupted community life too much.

In the 1950s Comalco and Alcan obtained mining leases for bauxite, and the people living around Mapoon were told to move to Hidden Valley or New Mapoon near Bamaga. The Mission was formally closed in 1962 and in 1963 the Department of Native Affairs burned all dwellings and forcibly transported people to Hidden Valley.

In 1973 a few people began moving back to Mapoon, and a year later, with money from the Commonwealth government, housing reconstruction began.

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Love charm. Collected Mapoon, 1900. Length 36 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13706

Charms

Love charms

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote of love charms used by people living around the Pennefather River, near Mapoon. He said when a girl saw a boy she liked, she gave his mother a piece of overcast and raddled fibre twine to give to her son. This love charm from the girl was called a *tangka-a*. If the boy returned her feelings, he wore this as a necklace. The hand spun bark fibre twine called *ku-iperi*, was used to make the *tangka-a*. It came from either *Careya australis*, now known as *Planchonia careya* or *Malaisia* sp., a scrambling creeper.

If the girl's mother approved of the relationship, she put a circular ring of raddled twine in the boy's hair at the top of his head. This was called a *pauri*. If it was lost, the girl's mother replaced it. Hand spun bark fibre twine from the creeper *Malaisia* sp. was used to make the *pauri* charm. Roth said the *pauri* he had in his possession was made of a 3-ply twine. This *pauri* is not in the Roth collection held at the Australian Museum.

Roth could not discover whether the wearing of these strings was a sign of betrothal, or whether they were love charms. Roth concluded however, that when a boy received one or other of the strings, especially the *tangka-a* (the string necklace from the girl), he felt very keen about the matter.

Roth wrote also about methods that a boy might use to attract a girl and make her fall in love with him.



When a man fancied a woman and wished to appeal to her emotions, he painted a stripe of red clay down his legs. He also smeared over the front of his body with a preparation called *kotenni*, which was made from the inner bark of the *tchannan* or *tre-inni*, mixed with charcoal. *Tchannan* is the Aboriginal name for *Denhammia obscura*. The other mixture, *tre-inni*, refers to *Pithecolobium grandiflorum*, now known as *Abarema grandiflora*. This mixture gave off a special perfume that was said to appeal to women.

Similarly in this district, when a younger brother claimed his elder brother's widow, he rubbed the root and bark of the *je-anjata* on his face, body, knees, hands and spear. This bark came from the *Psychotria fitzalani*. The widow would be attracted to him by the perfume of this mixture.

Another way for a man to win the love of a woman was to give her some small pieces of a special root from the *Denhammia* tree mixed with honey in her food. This was to help make her return his feelings.

The bark, stem and roots of a tree, known as *boraga-aganganama*, a species of *Owenia*, were soaked in water and smeared over the chest, belly and thighs of a man, as a love potion.

Collection information. There are two love charms from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1900.

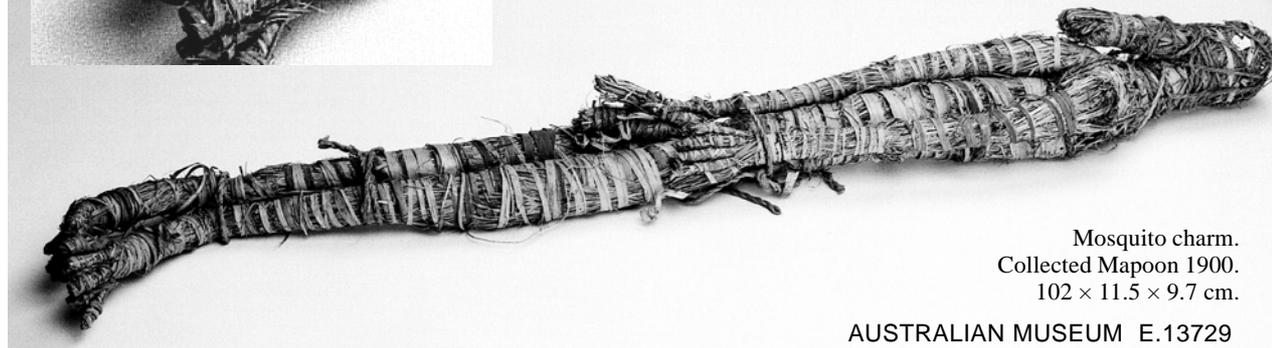
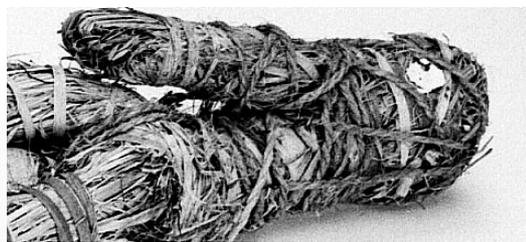
- E.13706 Overcast, ochred and raddled hand-spun bark fibre twine love charm worn by a male. Total length is 36 cm. The four looped strands in the centre are 16 cm long. The thread is 0.2 cm wide. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Love charm *Tangka-a*"
- E.13707 Circlet made of hand-spun fibre twine, knotted at one end and ochred. Worn on the head by a male. Length 4.5 cm; width 0.1 cm. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Love charm. *Pauri*"

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both love charms:

- E.13706 negative sheet 4052M, frame 389.
- E.13707 negative sheet 4052M, frame 390.

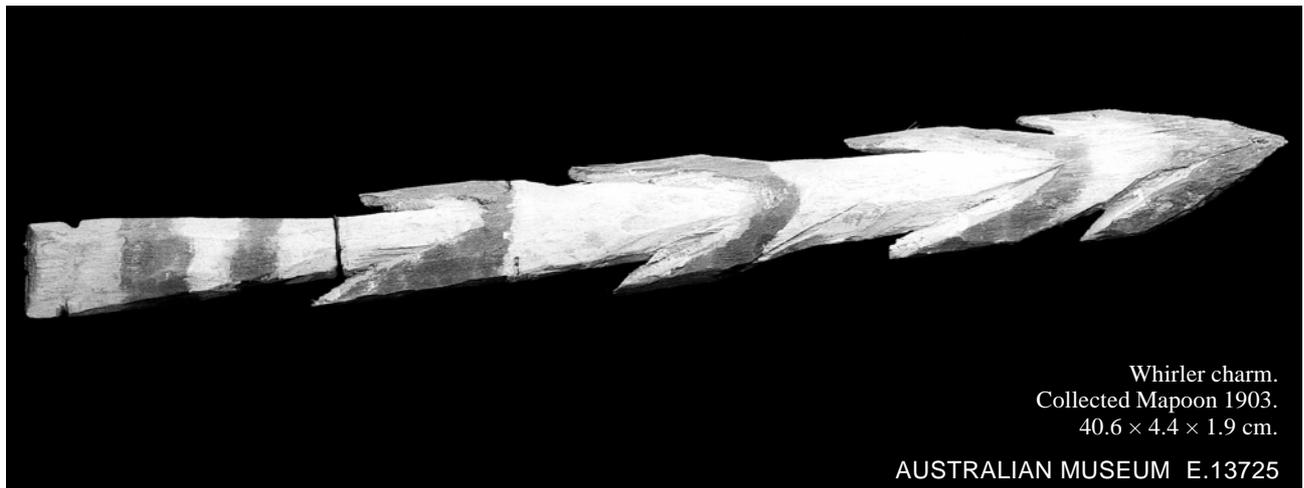
Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 10.
- Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 5: 23.



Mosquito charm.
Collected Mapoon 1900.
102 × 11.5 × 9.7 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13729



Whirler charm.
Collected Mapoon 1903.
40.6 × 4.4 × 1.9 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13725

Mosquito charm

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth described a charm for getting rid of mosquitoes on the Wenlock (Batavia) River. It was made in the shape of a man, 90 to 120 cm long and was tied to a thin flexible twig, in a similar way that a human body was tied prior to cremation. This figure, made of grass, was called *Nguru*. It had a huge nose through which a nose-pin was passed. The eyes were pieces of pipe-clay on which large charcoal pupils were painted. The head was decorated with a few cockatoo feathers.

At night when mosquitoes were worse than usual, two people carried this figure like a human corpse, in front of the camp. They then led a procession into the bush where a fire had been lit. Men, women and children in the procession kept up a terrible din and noise and waved their arms about. As soon as the fire was reached, *Nguru* was thrown into the flames and everyone rushed back to camp. The Reverend N. Hey from Mapoon told Roth that the last time this was tried it was successful and the camp was rid of mosquitoes.

Collection information. Roth collected one mosquito charm from Mapoon in 1902.

- E.13729 dried grass charm in the shape of a man. It is 102 cm long, 11.5 cm wide and 9.7 cm deep. The grass is bound with yellow fibre around the limbs to keep them straight. The figure is complete with fingers and toes, but there is no cockatoo feather head-dress.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet number 4055M, frame 412.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 5: 27–28, fig. 16.
Roth, W.E., 1907. Bulletin 9: 368.

Whirler charms

Information from Roth's Bulletins. A painted wooden charm, referred to by Roth as a form of “roarer”, was hung up by a string, making everything near it or under it tabu. Colours used were red and white. Roth mentions their use on the Bloomfield River, Palmer River and elsewhere. He does not specifically refer to Mapoon in the text, although there are illustrations of whirler charms from Mapoon in Bulletin 11, pls. 20 and 21.

Collection information. There are four whirler charms from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903. In Bulletin 11, plate

20, three whirler charms are shown. [There has been either an error in the captions attached to the illustrations, or in the registration procedure in 1905.]

Figure 2 is identified as coming from Butcher's Hill, whereas the object pictured has been registered as E.13727, from Mapoon. Figure 3 is shown as coming from Mapoon and has been registered as E.13712, from Butcher's Hill. Considering Roth made corrections and additions to Bulletin 11, and did not alter the captions to the illustrations, maybe the error lies in the registration? The collection information shown below is as recorded in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register for 1905, by W.W. Thorpe.

- E.13724 softwood spearhead-shaped charm. It is 40.3×7.3 cm and is 1.4 cm deep. It is painted with red and white stripes. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “Painted ‘spearhead’ hung in proximity to some object to render it tabu” (fig. 1, plate XXI, Bulletin 11).
- E.13725 softwood spearhead-shaped charm. It is 40.6×4.4 cm and is 1.9 cm deep. It is painted with red and white stripes. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “Painted ‘spearhead’ hung in proximity to some object to render it tabu” (fig. 2, plate XXI, Bulletin 11).
- E.13726 softwood, elliptical-shaped charm, rounded at both ends. It is 37.4×4.9 cm and is 1.1 cm deep. A length of looped hand-spun bark fibre string is threaded through a hole at the tapered end, and is 10 cm long. The softwood is painted with a white stripe through the middle of the charm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “whirler, painted? a modern form of E.13724–5”.
- E.13727 softwood, elliptical-shaped charm, rounded at both ends, and painted red and white both sides. Looped fibre twine is threaded through a hole at the tapered end. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “whirler, painted? a more modern form of E.13724–5” (fig. 2, plate XX, Bulletin 11). No further information is available as the object cannot be located at present.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for three of the four whirler charms:

- E.13724 negative sheet 4054M, frame 407.
E.13725 negative sheet 4054M, frame 408.
E.13726 negative sheet 4054M, frame 409.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1908. Bulletin 11: 74–75, pls. xx, xxi.

Containers

Pleated-bark container

Information from Roth's Bulletins. These containers were made from a rectangular sheet of bark. 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 then ready for pleating. A curved, sharply pointed ironwood peg was pushed through the pleats to hold them in place. Sometimes hand-spun bark fibre string was wound around the pegs as well.

Around Mapoon, on the Wenlock and Pennefather Rivers, the pleated-bark container had a handle attached in the form of a stick, which was placed along the container and tied to the two ends of the trough.

These containers were very useful. They held honey as well as water, and 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 the swimmer. Larger ones were used to carry corpses during certain burial ceremonies.

The spiked pleated containers were used on the Gulf coast from Pera Head to the Wenlock (Batavia) River and at Mapoon. They 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.

Local people called this pleated-bark container *ano-a*.

Collection information. Roth collected one pleated-bark container from Mapoon in 1903.

E.13331 Roth's collection number is WT.33. It is 41×12.7 cm and is 10.7 cm deep. The pegs are 14.2×0.9 cm. The stick is 38.6×1.3 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Acquired by W.E. Roth at Mapoon Mission Station, 1903".



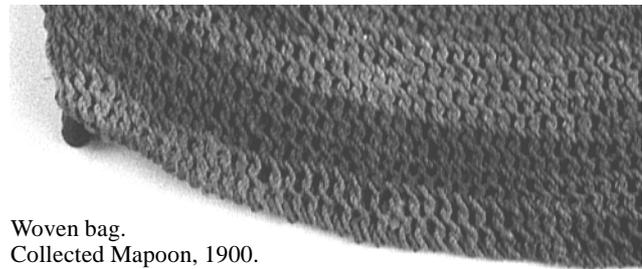
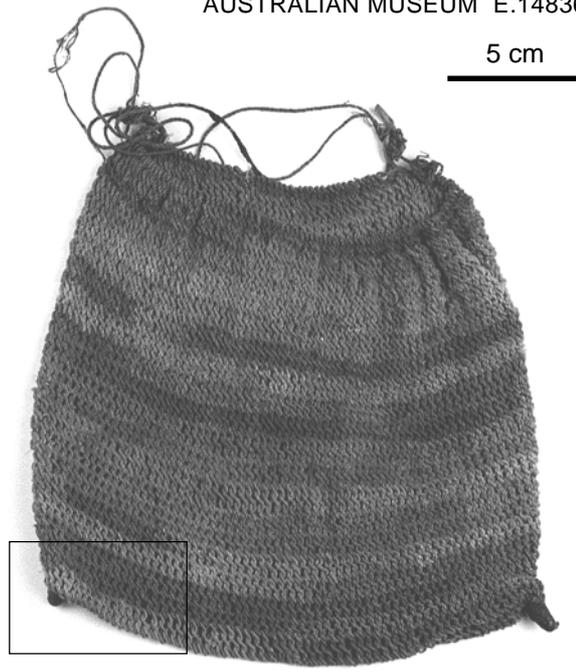
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13331
Pleated-bark container.
Collected Mapoon 1903.
41 × 12.7 × 10.7 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4001M, frame 15.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 30.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14836



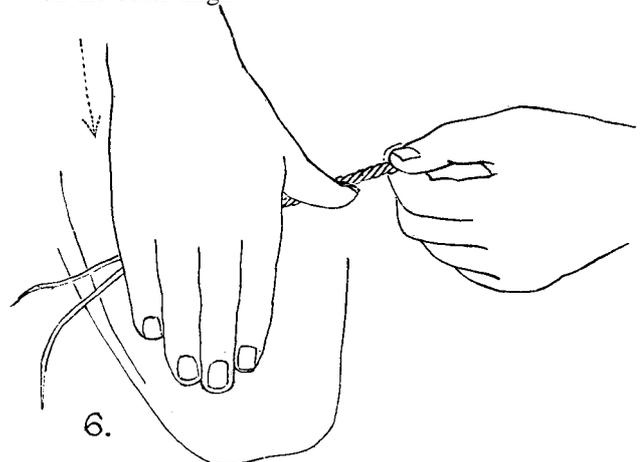
Woven bag.
Collected Mapoon, 1900.
20 × 18 cm.

Woven bags

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Woven bags from the Mapoon region were made from two-ply handspun bark fibre string spun from strips of bark from at least three species of fig tree. Two of the species of fig tree, *Ficus nitida* and *Ficus orbicularis* produced white twine, made from the dried inner bark. Reddish twine was made from the dried inner bark of the roots of the third species of fig tree, *Ficus cunninghamii*.

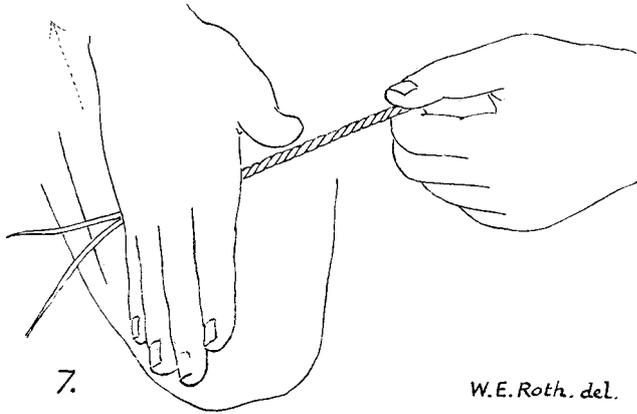
Turning fibre into string was done in the following way, while the person was squatting on the ground. Roth illustrated the process in Bulletin 1, pl. ii, figs. 6–11.

- 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.

- 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 forwards, pressure was on the thumb side of the hand. When rolling backwards, the pressure was on the other side of the hand.



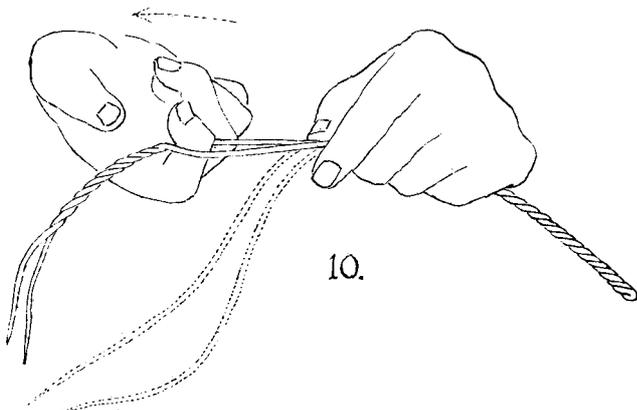
- The result of the forward movement was to roll the strand into one twist.



- The result of the forward-backward movement was to roll the strand into two twists, with a “break” in between.

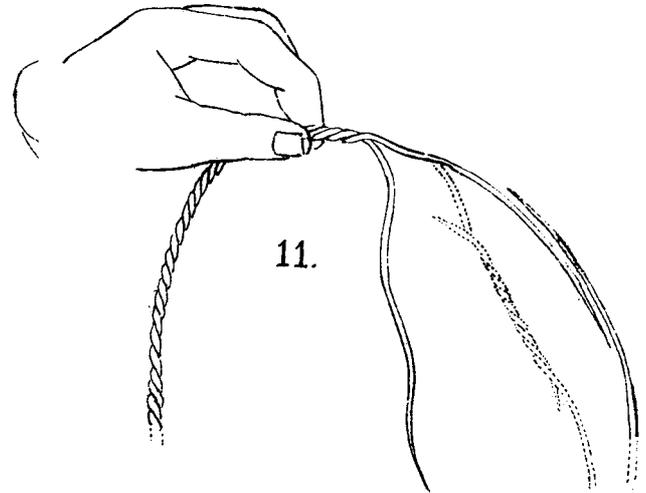


- To get rid of the break, the section just above it was held between the left thumb and forefinger to prevent the twine untwisting. The right forefinger was placed in the “break” and it was pulled firmly but carefully outwards. At the same time the two ends of the strand were freed. While the left hand still held its section, the two freed ends of strand were rolled again with the right hand once backwards and forwards.



This process was repeated again and again. All fibre twines were thus made of two-pplies.

- 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 either a loop and twist pattern or an hourglass or double loop pattern, using two-ply continuous strands, building on one straight strand tied to two sticks in the ground.

The continuous strand of twine was tied to the end of the straight base strand, and worked from left to right. As soon as the end was reached, the continuous strand was fixed in a loop. The sticks would then be taken out of the ground and turned round, so that left became right and right became left, and weaving continued. Alternatively the sticks could be left in the ground and the straight base strand was slipped off and tied again in the reverse position. These two rows formed the bottom of the bag.

This weaving action continued, reversing the sticks each time, until the bag reached the desired size. The base strand was then withdrawn.

This method was the basis for both the loop and twist pattern and the double loop or hourglass pattern. Roth’s drawings in Bulletin 1, plates ix and x show the two patterns.

Roth said this large woven bag with hourglass pattern was made by women but used only by men. He recorded these bags being used on the Wenlock (Batavia) River, Pennefather and Embley Rivers on the Gulf coast. The local people called these bags *to-to, do-do*.

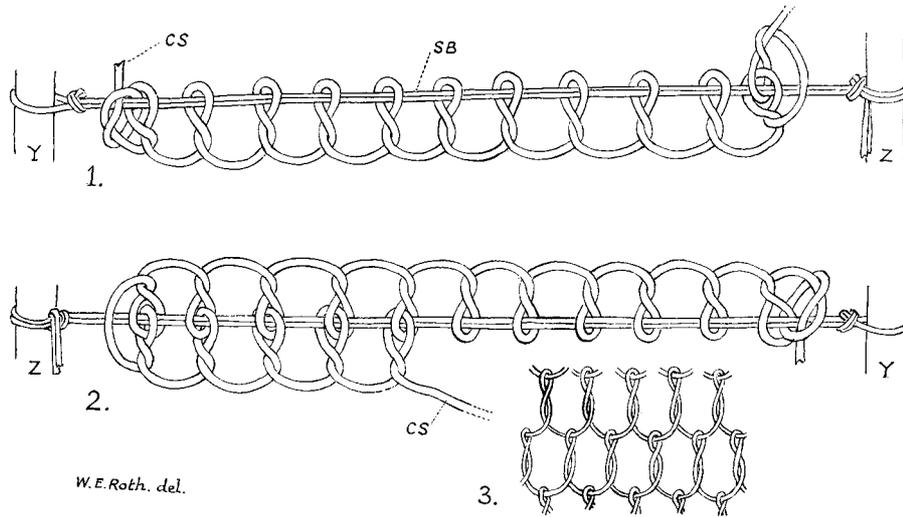
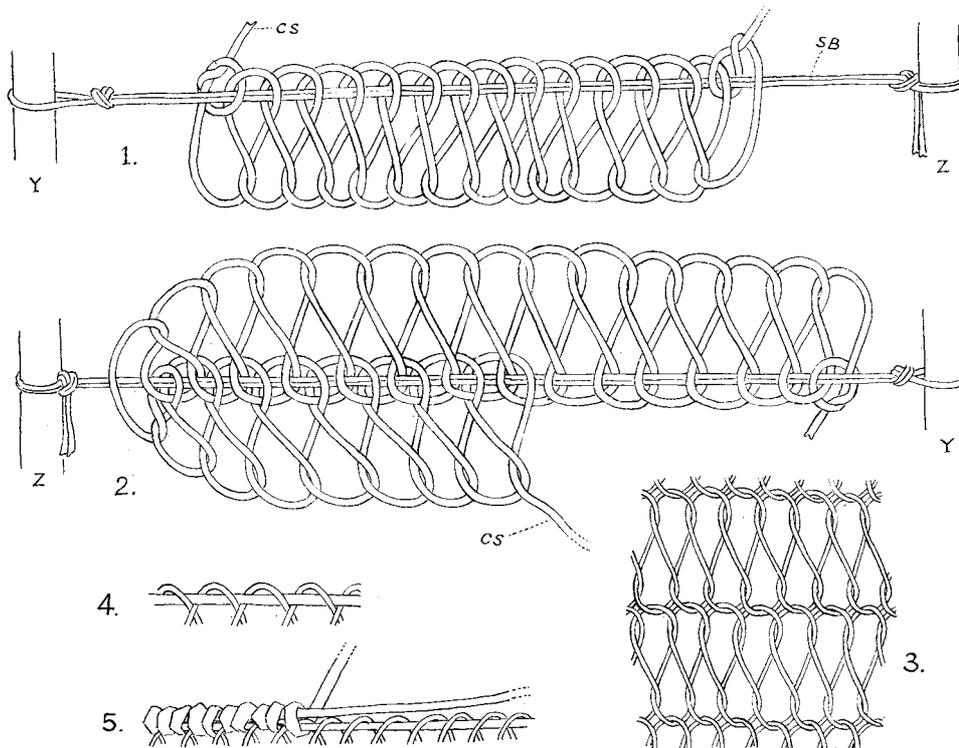


Plate IX. Basketry, &c.—Made with one continuous strand: basal strand straight: loop-and-twist pattern.



W.E. Roth. del.
Plate X. Basketry, &c.—Made with one continuous strand: basal strand straight: hour-glass double-loop pattern.

Collection information. There are three rectangular woven bags from Mapoon.

- E.14812 Roth collected this bag in 1900. The red and white striped bag is 19×15.2 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "loop and twist pattern".
- E.14835 Roth collected this bag in 1903. The red and brown striped bag is 22.5×15.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "double loop or hourglass".
- E.14836 Roth collected this bag in 1900. The red bag is 20×18 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "double loop or hourglass".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three woven bags:

- E.14812 negative sheet 4190M, frame 1496.
E.14835 negative sheet 4193M, frame 1519.
E.14836 negative sheet 4193M, frame 1520.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 8–13.
Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 27.

Woven baskets

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. These baskets or sieve bags were woven from handspun bark fibre string from one of three different plants. Stems from one plant, the tall spike rush, *Heleocharis sphacelata*, now known as *Eleocharis sphacelata*, were split to make larger baskets. Stalks from the cockatoo grass, *Panicum semialatum*, now known as *Alloteropsis semialata* and dried leaves from the blood root tree, *Haemodorum coccineum*, were used for smaller baskets. Dried leaves from this tree were moistened just before use, when they were split into thin strips with the fingernails.

The weaving pattern was a chain twist. Baskets were woven using two continuous strands of string and several base strands, as shown in Roth’s drawings in Bulletin 1, pl. xvi, figs. 1,6–7. 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 threads going up and down).

This weaving pattern was found in baskets from many parts of north Queensland, mats from the Wenlock and Pennefather Rivers, and fish and wallaby traps from Atherton and Cairns.

Baskets like this were generally firm, unlike soft bags. The only way baskets varied from each other was in the way the first base strands were started. Folding over the strands at the end and catching them in the last chain twist row usually finished the making of these baskets.

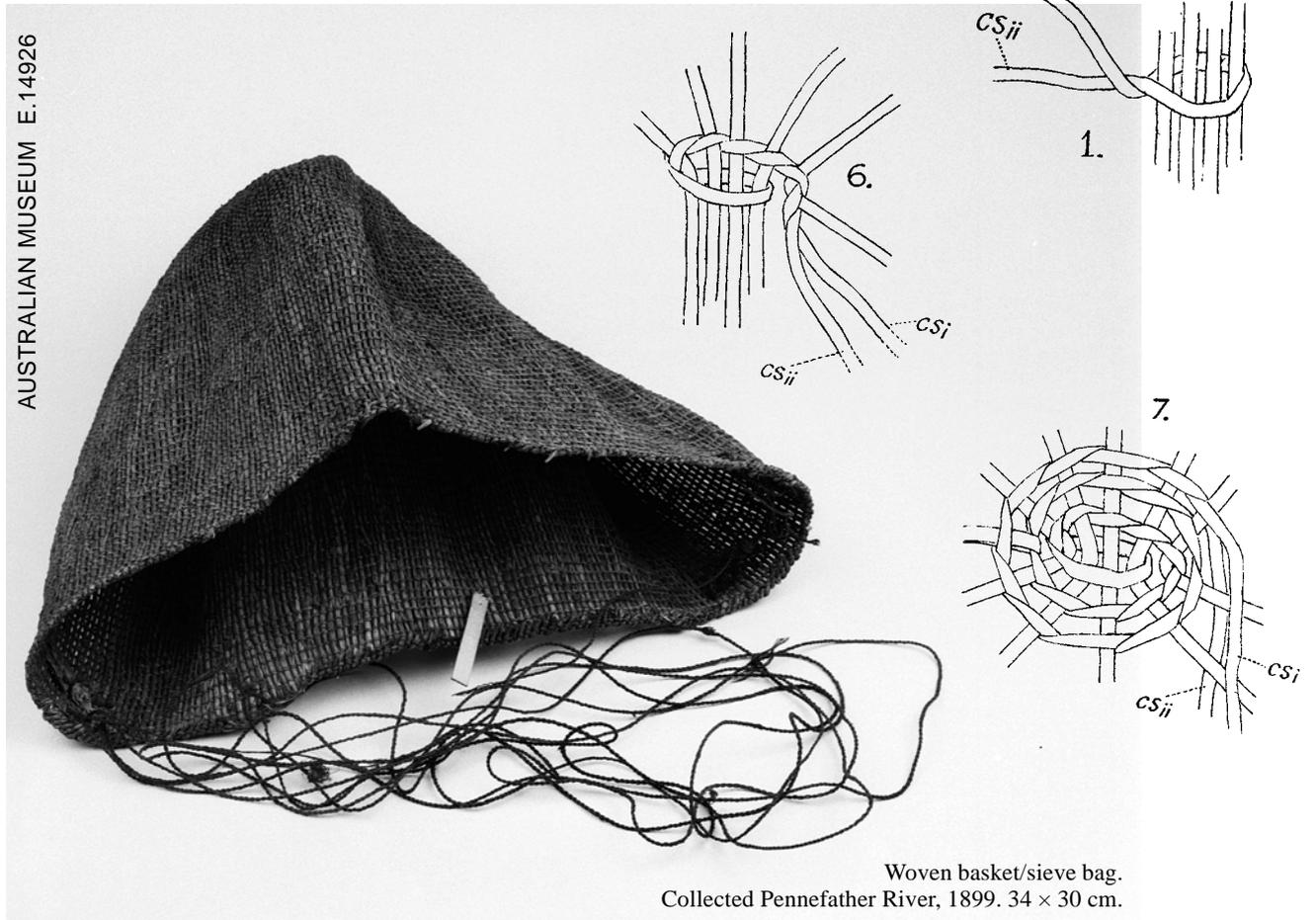
Roth said local people called the large baskets *mbai*, and that they were used by women as sieves or baskets. When used as baskets the long handles were slung across the forehead. This allowed the basket to hang down the back

of a woman. Sometimes they were used as cradles, by looping the handles on an overhanging tree limb.

Smaller baskets were used by men. They held the baskets in the armpit, with the hand string slung over the shoulder. Roth noted that the cockatoo grass and the dried leaves used to make these baskets was called *lo-thi* and *lo-ana*.

Collection information. There are ten baskets or sieve bags collected by Roth from Mapoon (four are in the initial stage of construction, and six are complete). The first four incomplete basket/sieve bags were collected in 1903.

- E.14880 the strands are 74 cm long. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “basket just started, showing primary operation”.
- E.14881 the strands are 30 cm long. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “basket just started, showing primary operation. Closely plaited”.
- E.14882 the strands are 35.5 cm long. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “basket just started, showing primary operation. Closely plaited”.
- E.14883 the strands are 28 cm (bunched up). The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “basket just started, showing primary operation. Closely plaited”.
- E.14926 this basket/sieve bag was collected from the Pennefather River in 1899. The basket is 34 cm long. The diameter of the mouth is 30 cm. The handle is 95 cm long. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “made of *Haemodorum coccineum* R. Br.” This is the blood root tree used in the making of smaller baskets.



The following two basket/sieve bags were collected in 1899.

- E.14941 the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "*Heleocharis sphacelata*", the name of the tall spike rush used to make larger basket. It is 22.9 cm long. The mouth is 22.7×22 cm.
- E.14942 the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "made from *lo-thi*". This is the local name for cockatoo grass, used in the making of smaller baskets. It is 37 cm long. The mouth is 20×14 cm.
- E.14943 the basket/sieve bag was collected in 1900. It is 27.5 cm long. The mouth is 14.5×9 cm.
- E.14944 the basket/sieve bag was collected in 1903. It is 23 cm long. The mouth is 15×15 cm.
- E.14945 the basket/sieve bag was collected in 1903. It is 22.9 cm long. The mouth is 16.8×15.8 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all ten basket/sieve bags:

- E.14880 negative sheet 4199M, frame 1564.
- E.14881 negative sheet 4199M, frame 1565.
- E.14882 negative sheet 4199M, frame 1566.
- E.14883 negative sheet 4199M, frame 1567.
- E.14926 negative sheet 4205M, frame 1610.
- E.14941 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1625.
- E.14942 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1626.
- E.14943 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1627.
- E.14944 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1628.
- E.14945 negative sheet 4207M, frame 1629.

Reference

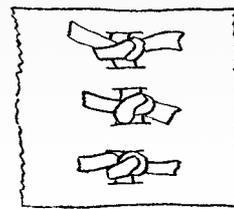
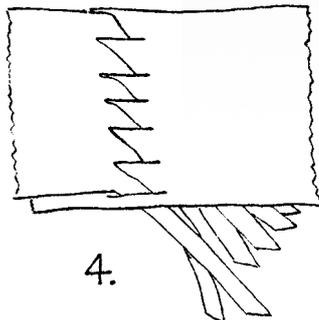
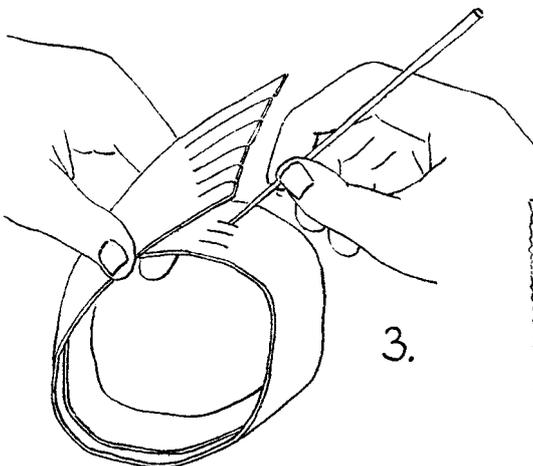
- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 8–9, 14–15.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 27–28.

Death pointers

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Because of the sensitive nature of these objects, information will only be given to those people who have a right to know. The Aboriginal Heritage Officers in the Museum should be able to help in this matter. Their telephone numbers are (02) 9320 6192 and (02) 9320 6186.

Collection information. E.13720—Roth collected this death pointer from Mapoon in 1899.

- E.15153 there is no collection date for this death pointer collected by Roth from the Pennefather River.
- E.15154 this death pointer was collected at Mapoon in 1903.



Dress and ornament

Pandanus armbands

Information from Roth's Bulletins. To make an armband (a) A strip of pandanus leaf was cut straight at one end and at an angle at the other. (b) The angled end was split into four to six strips. (c) The straight end was rolled over the hand a couple of times, then removed and held between the thumb and first finger. (d) Some small holes were made through the two to three thicknesses of leaf with a sharply pointed stick. (e) 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 had been cut at an angle so as to give a fine point to the tags.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14728



Pandanus armband. Collected Mapoon, 1903. Width 7.3 cm. Diameter 10.4 cm.

Roth's drawings in Bulletin 1, pl. iv, figs. 1-5 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.

In the Mapoon region, armbands were often decorated after having been dried over a fire. A zigzag pattern was burnt in with a glowing charred stick. 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 time, down to the Staaten River on the Gulf coast and the Bloomfield River on the east coast.

Roth said people living in the area called this armband *agantra*, which was also the name of the plant.

Collection information. There are two pandanus armbands from Mapoon.

- E.14727 Roth collected this armband in 1900. It is fastened with granny knots and decorated with a burnt in zigzag design. Width 6.4 cm. Diameter 9.2 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pandanus leaf armband (full width)".
- E.14728 Roth collected this armband in 1903. It is fastened with granny knots and decorated with a burnt in zigzag design. Width 7.3 cm. Diameter 10.4 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pandanus leaf armband".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both pandanus armbands:

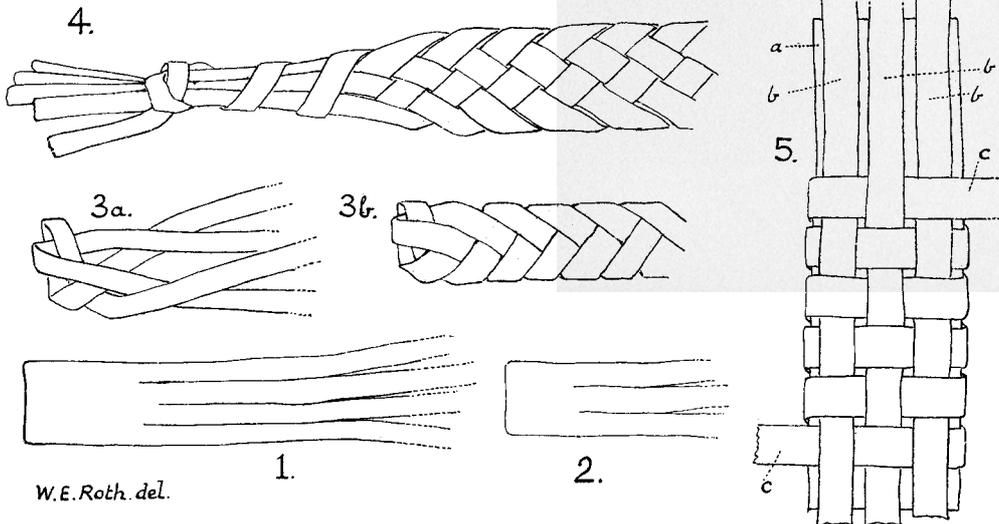
- E.14727 negative sheet 4180M, frame 1411.
- E.14728 negative sheet 4180M, frame 1412.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 11.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 43-44.

Plaited-pandanus armbands

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Before the pandanus leaf could be used to make an armband, it was dried in the sun to make it firmer. To save time, the leaf was often heated over a fire for a few minutes. Roth said this method of drying out the leaf was as good as the slower method of sun drying.



Roth did not see these plaited armbands being made but by unpicking an armband, worked out its construction. A broadish band or strip of pandanus leaf formed the basis on which three smaller strips were laid. These were fixed in position as the strips were worked in and out, as shown in Roth's drawing from Bulletin 1, pl. v.

Roth said these plaited-pandanus armbands were made and worn by men living around the Embley and Moreton Rivers, and on the higher reaches of the Wenlock River.

Collection information. There are four plaited-pandanus armbands from the Pennefather River, collected by Roth in 1899.

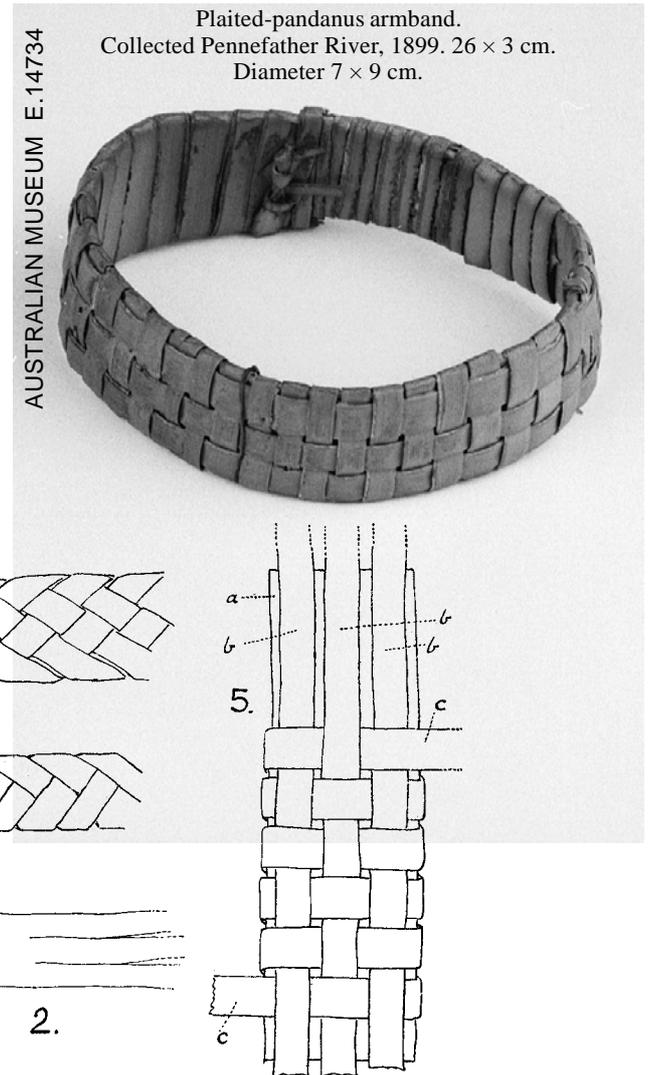
- E.14734 26x3 cm; its oval shape is 7x9 cm.
- E.14735 24x2 cm; its oval shape is 7x9 cm.
- E.14736 24x2 cm; its oval shape is 7x8 cm.
- E.14737 25x3 cm; its oval shape is 7x8 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four plaited-pandanus armbands:

- E.14734 negative sheet 4181M, frame 1418.
- E.14735 negative sheet 4181M, frame 1419.
- E.14736 negative sheet 4181M, frame 1420.
- E.14737 negative sheet 4181M, frame 1421.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9, 11.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 43.





Cone-shell chest ornaments

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said that people living on both sides of Cape York Peninsula and within the extreme tip of the Peninsula, wore a flat circular shell chest ornament, made by chipping and grinding down the base of a cone shell, *Conus millipunctatus*, now known as *Conus leopardus*. A hole was then drilled at one end and a length of handspun bark fibre string was threaded through and knotted so the shell could be worn on the chest. According to Roth, local Nggerikudi people called this shell *devi-devi*. Roth also collected another species of cone shell, *Conus trigonus* used as a chest ornament, giving the same local name to it, *devi-devi*. In Bulletin 3: 18 he stated "Large-sized ones after chipping, etc., form chest ornaments".

Collection information. There are five cone-shell chest ornaments in the Roth collection from Mapoon. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 refers to them as "Conus chest ornament".

The following three chest ornaments were collected in 1903.

- E.14500 diameter 5.5 cm.
- E.14501 diameter 5.3 cm.
- E.14502 diameter 7.8 cm.

The next two chest ornaments were collected in 1902.

- E.14514 diameter 8 cm.
- E.14515 diameter 6 cm.

The next item is a cone shell from which a chest ornament is made. This shell does not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but was given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December 1899. Roth collected it at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1899 includes "The circular base is removed and makes a chest ornament".

- E.8853 *Conus trigonus*. Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38, "base, ground down, used only for chest ornament".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five cone-shell chest ornaments:

- E.14500 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1184.
- E.14501 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1185.
- E.14502 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1186.
- E.14514 negative sheet 4153M, frame 1198.
- E.14515 negative sheet 4153M, frame 1199.

References

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River Districts, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers [visited by the Minister on his last trip]. Cooktown, 8 January: 38.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 36.

Pearl-shell chest ornament

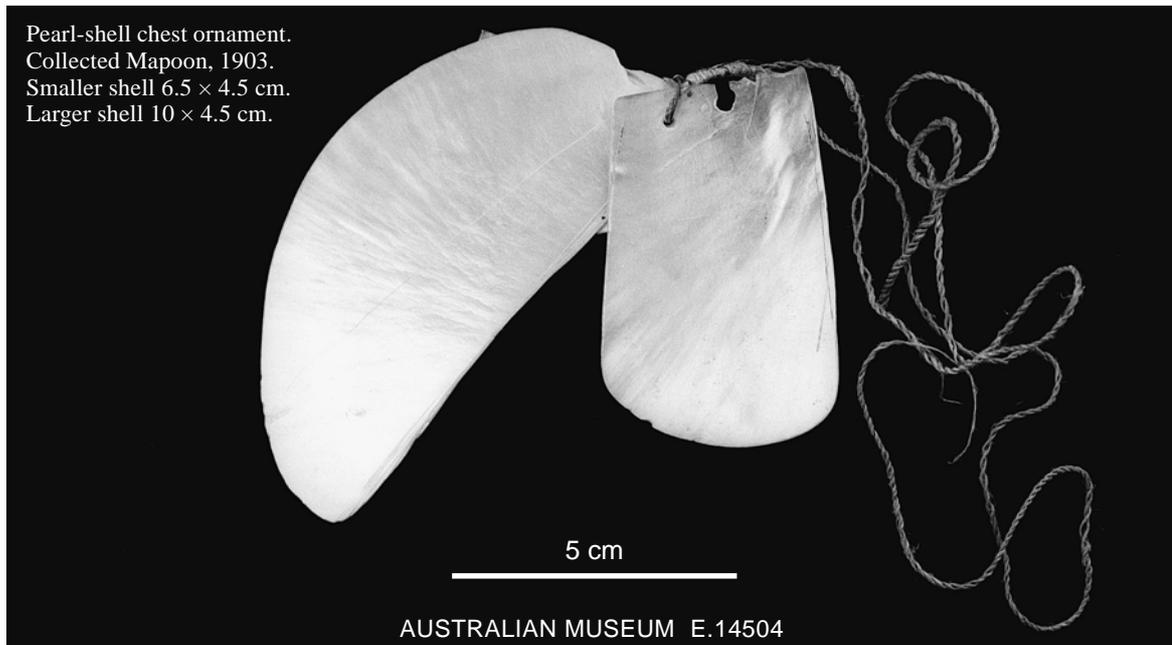
Information from Roth's Bulletins. Most chest ornaments were made from part of a pearl shell, *Nautilus* shell, *Nautilus pompilius* or baler shell, *Melo diadema* now known as *Melo amphora*. The outer layer of the shell was removed by putting it on the ground, face down, and covering it carefully with hot ashes. This made the surface of the shell easier to remove when ground on a stone and splashed with water. When the grinding was finished, the shell then had a hole drilled in one end. A length of handspun bark fibre string was passed through and knotted at the ends.

The drill was made with a sharply pointed chip broken off the shell of *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Geloina erosa*. The shell chip was fixed with fibre and adhesive into the split end of what Roth described as a small pencil of wood. It was used to pierce holes in shells to make necklaces and ornaments.

Around Mapoon, there were two kinds of pearl-shell chest ornaments: short ones with rounder pieces worn by women, and long ones worn by men. Women wore them when dancing round someone who had passed away. A mother would wear them on the death of her child. Men wore the longer ornaments at ceremonial gatherings. Children sometimes wore half-broken short shells. Roth said when pearl shells were scarce at Mapoon shell ornaments sometimes were made from the hammer oyster pearl shell *Malleus vulsellatus*, now known as *Malleus albus*.

According to Roth, local Nggerikudi people called this pearl-shell chest ornament *gamaga*.

Collection information. There are nine pearl-shell chest ornaments collected by Roth from Mapoon. The following five pearl-shell chest ornaments were collected in 1903. I cannot find a translation of the word "tondro"



- E.14503 8.8×3 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*tondro*)".
- E.14504 it has two pieces of pearl shell, one crescent-shaped, the other squared, threaded on a length of handspun bark fibre string. One shell is 6.5×4.5 cm the other is 10×4.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*tondro*)".
- E.14505 a curved piece of pearl shell, 14.2×4.8 cm; a hole has been drilled at one end of the shell. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*tondro*)".
- E.14506 11×3.5 cm; a hole has been drilled at one end of the shell; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*tondro*)".
- E.14507 13.8×3.3 cm; a hole has been drilled at one end of the shell; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*tondro*)".

The following four pearl-shell chest ornaments were collected in 1899; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 has "Pearl-shell chest ornament (*gamaga*)" noted against each one.

- E.14521 Roth's collection number is G.175; it is 19.5×5 cm; a length of handspun bark fibre string has been threaded through a hole drilled at one end of the shell.
- E.14522 Roth's collection number is G.176; it is 20×3.3 cm; a length of handspun bark fibre string has been threaded through a hole drilled at one end of the shell.
- E.14523 Roth's collection number is G.177; it is 11.2×5 cm; a length of handspun bark fibre string has been threaded through a hole drilled at one end of the shell.
- E.14524 Roth's collection number is G.178; it is 9×5 cm; a hole has been drilled at one end of the shell.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all nine pearl-shell chest ornaments:

- E.14503 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1187.
E.14504 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1188.
E.14505 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1189.
E.14506 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1190.
E.14507 negative sheet 4152M, frame 1191.
E.14521 negative sheet 4154M, frame 1205.
E.14522 negative sheet 4154M, frame 1206.
E.14523 negative sheet 4154M, frame 1207.
E.14524 negative sheet 4154M, frame 1208.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 35–36.

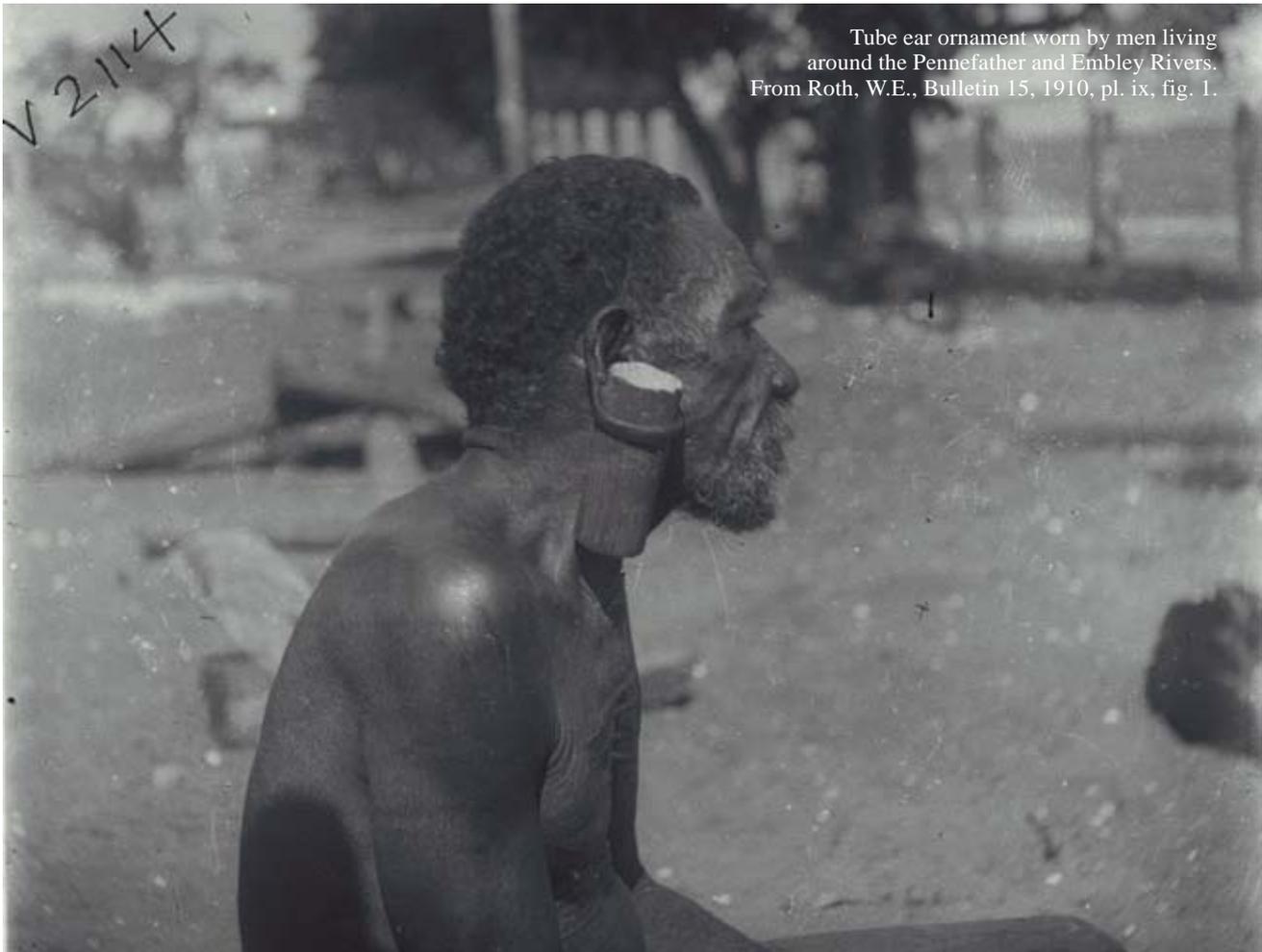
Raw material for shell chest ornament

These shells do not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December 1899. Roth collected them at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River.

Collection information. E.8831—there are six shells of *Solarium perdix*, the partridge sundial shell, now known as *Architectonica perdix*. Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, p. 37 "not for food: used as a chest ornament". Its local name was *devi-devi*, the same name given to the cone-shell chest ornament previously mentioned. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register includes "chest ornament thrown up during 'N.W.' season".

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River Districts, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers [visited by the Minister during his last trip]. Cooktown 8 January: 37.



Bark ear-tube. Collected Mapoon, 1899.
Width 11 cm. Diameter 5.3 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14413



Bark ear-tube

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said that men living around the Pennefather and Embley Rivers, usually had both their ears pierced and many wore large tubular ear ornaments. He noted that some of these ear-tubes were 6 cm in diameter and one was 10 cm long. The ear-tube in the collection was made from a species of the *Bombax* tree, *Bombax malabaricum*, now called *Bombax ceiba* l. var. *leiocarpum*. The core was hollowed out with a kangaroo bone awl. The outer surface was smoothed over with rough leaves from a fig tree, and then painted red.

According to Roth the local name for the ear-tube was *wa-amanu*, and the tree from which it was made *baiperi*.

Collection information. There is one bark ear-tube from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899.

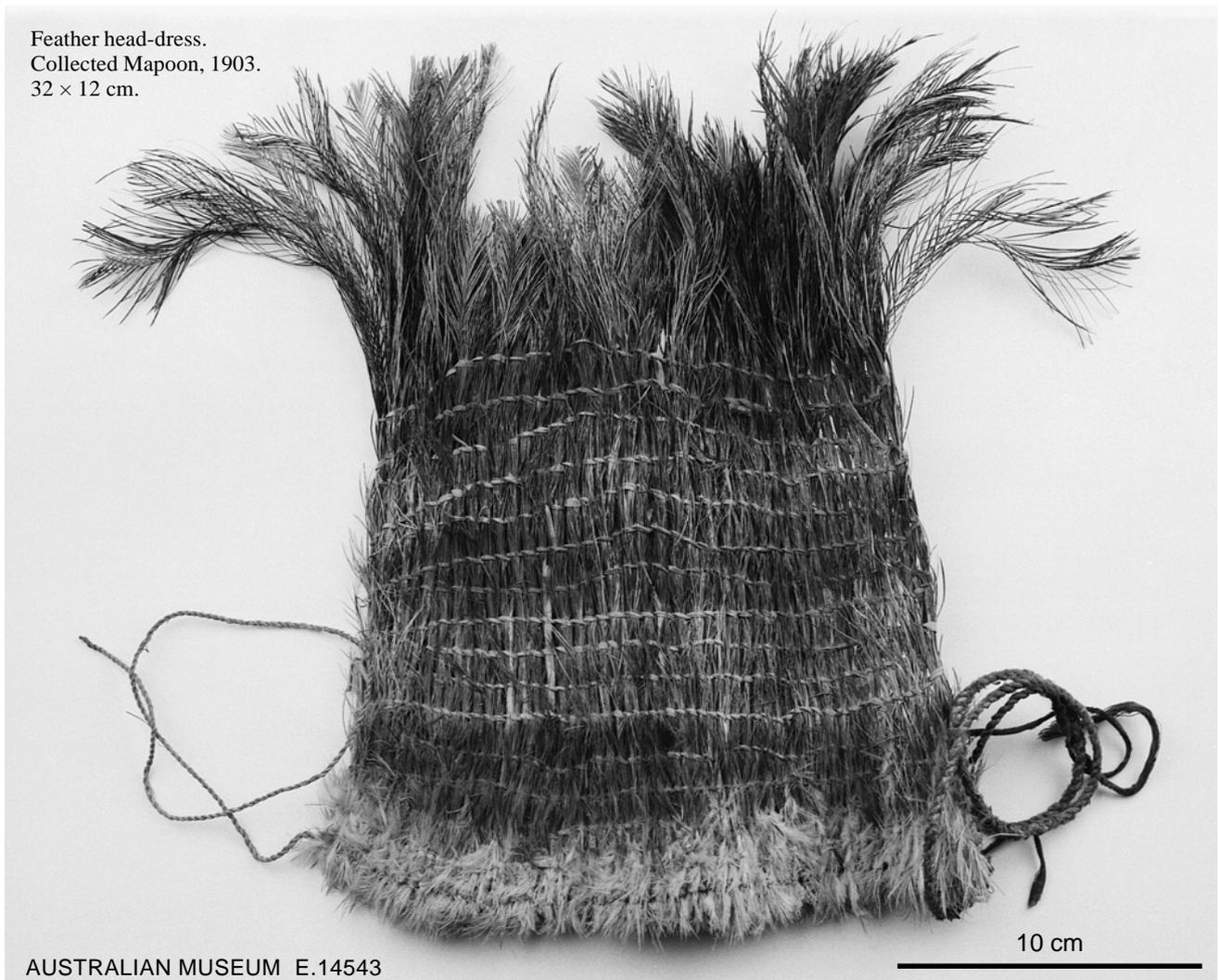
E.14413 Roth's collection number is G.192. The bark tube is 11×5.3 cm. The rim and part of the inner surface is painted white, the outer surface is red.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4140M, frame 1096.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 28.

Feather head-dress.
Collected Mapoon, 1903.
32 × 12 cm.



Feather head-dresses

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth referred to these emu feather head-dresses as forehead feather covers. He said there were two types, the name depending on the species of bird from which it was made. He noted local people called the black feathered ones *araba*, and the white feathered ones *enggenjingana*. The feathers were interwoven at the base with two continuous strands of handspun bark fibre string woven on a chain-twist pattern. Because the feather head-dresses were made on the flat, the chain-twist ran zigzag, alternatively from side to side. The bases were then painted in red and white horizontal bands. The feather head-dresses were shaped like a bishop's mitre, tied at the back of the head with lengths of bark fibre string. They were made by women, but worn by men and boys when dancing and fighting. Roth said local Nggerikudi people called them *tai-pe*.

Collection information. There are five feather head-dresses from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

E.14543 it is 32×12 cm; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "forehead ornament (emu? feathers)".

- E.14544 it is 36×15 cm; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "forehead ornament (cassowary feathers)".
- E.14545 it is 34×12 cm; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "forehead ornament (cassowary feathers)".
- E.14605 it is 34×15 cm; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "forehead ornament (emu feathers)".
- E.14606 it is 16×18 cm; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "forehead ornament (emu feathers)".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five feather head-dresses:

- E.14543 negative sheet 4157M, frame 1227.
E.14544 negative sheet 4157M, frame 1228.
E.14545 negative sheet 4157M, frame 1229.
E.14605 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1289.
E.14606 negative sheet 4165M, frame 1290.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 24.

Shell head- and neck-bands

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Around the Mapoon district local people used many shells to make into necklaces and headbands. They broke the shells into square-shaped pieces that were then drilled with what Roth referred to as an *Onyi* drill. This shell drill, used on the Wenlock (Batavia), Pennefather and Embley Rivers was made with a sharply pointed chip broken off from the shell of *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Geloina erosa*. The chip was fixed with fibre and adhesive into the split end of what Roth referred to as a small pencil of wood. *Onyi*, the local name for the shell used in the drill, became the name of the drill itself. Once the hole had been drilled in each piece of shell, the edges of the shell were bitten to shape, and finally ground on white coral to complete the shaping of each segment. The pieces of shell were then threaded on handspun bark fibre string. Roth said local people called this necklace *lankajana* whether it was made from *lankajana* (*Avicula lata*, a flat red-backed shell now known as *Pteria lata*), from the *wuidi* (*Meleagrina margaritifera*, the black-lipped pearl shell, now known as *Pinctata margaritifera*) or from the *arroangati* (*Nautilus pompilius*). They were worn for decoration, by women around the neck, and by men over the forehead.

Collection information. There are eight shell head- and neck-bands in the Roth collection from Mapoon. The following three head- and neck-bands were collected in 1903:

- E.14442 it has 61 rectangular pieces of *Nautilus* shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 53.3 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 0.8 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "arroangati".
- E.14443 it has 41 rectangular pieces of black-lipped pearl shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string and is 17.8 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 0.8 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "wuidi (black lip of shell)".

- E.14444 it has 47 rectangular pieces of black-lipped pearl shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 74.3 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 0.7 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "wuidi (black lip of shell)".

The next three head- and neck-bands were collected around 1899–1900.

- E.14448 it has 42 rectangular pieces of *Nautilus* shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 89.2 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 0.8 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Nautilus".
- E.14449 it has 39 rectangular pieces of shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 66 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 1.2 cm long.
- E.14450 it has 32 rectangular pieces of shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 53.3 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 1 cm long.

The next two head- and neck-bands were collected in 1903.

- E.14455 it has 27 oval shaped pieces of shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 78 cm long; each oval piece of shell is about 1.4 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Mapoon?".
- E.14560 it has 41 rectangular shaped pieces of *Nautilus* shell threaded on handspun bark fibre string, and is 67.5 cm long; each rectangular piece of shell is about 1 cm long; the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Nautilus shell forehead band".

The next item is a shell from which these necklaces can be made. This shell does not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but was given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December 1899. Roth collected it at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register includes "for making necklaces".

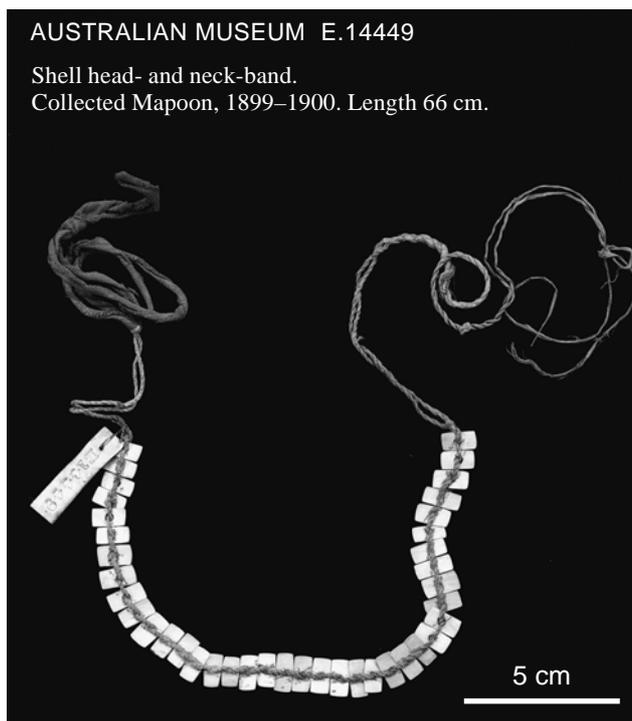
- E.8880 *Avicula lata*, the winged pearl shell, is now known as *Pteria lata*; Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38, "only used for making necklaces".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all eight shell head- and neck-bands:

- E.14442 negative sheet 4144M, frame 1126.
 E.14443 negative sheet 4144M, frame 1127.
 E.14444 negative sheet 4144M, frame 1128.
 E.14448 negative sheet 4145M, frame 1132.
 E.14449 negative sheet 4145M, frame 1133.
 E.14450 negative sheet 4145M, frame 1134.
 E.14455 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1139.
 E.14560 negative sheet 4159M, frame 1244.

References

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River Districts, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers [visited by the Minister on his last trip]. Cooktown, 8 January: 38.
 Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
 Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 32.



Feathered-string necklaces

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth did not write about feathered-string necklaces, but referred to feathered-string cross shoulder ornaments. He noted that on the Pennefather River, women, at any time, would wear a cross-shoulder band made of fibre twine interwoven with either emu feathers (called *taipe-pra*) or Blue Mountain parrot feathers (called *taipe-mandenuto*). This feathered-string could be used as a belt, as well as medical string, to draw

Feathered-string necklace. Collected Mapoon, 1903. Length 112 cm.



bad blood from a sick person. Whether these feathered-string necklaces are the same as the feathered-string cross-shoulder ornaments is not clear as a note in the Australian Museum’s Anthropology register for 1905 stated that Dr Roth said these feathered-strings were used as necklets.

Collection information. There are four feathered-string necklaces from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.14598 a length of fine handspun bark fibre string with very tiny shreds of possibly white feathers entwined in the looped cord; length 100 cm.

- E.14599 the feathered-string necklace is unable to be found at present.
- E.14600 a length of fine handspun bark fibre twine in which a very small piece of red cloth and some remnants of white feathers have been caught; length 176 cm.
- E.14601 a length of fine handspun bark fibre twine entwined with tiny green, white and orange feathers; length 112 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for three of the four feathered-strings:

- E.14598 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1282.
- E.14600 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1284.
- E.14601 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1285.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 34–35.

Kangaroo-skin necklace

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth said that women living near the Pennefather River sometimes wore a strip of kangaroo string, tied at the ends as an everyday ornament. This strip of skin was cut from the flank of the animal with the hairs left on. The kangaroo-skin necklace in the collection however, lacks any hair at all. He said local people called it *do-ana*.

Collection information. There is one kangaroo-skin necklace from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.14602 thin strip of kangaroo skin, knotted at one end to form a loop; length 60 cm; the Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “strips of kangaroo skin(?)”; written in pencil beside this entry is “not in Dr Roth’s list”.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4164M, frame 1286.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 35.

E.14602. Kangaroo-skin necklace. Collected Mapoon 1903. Length 60 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14602



Possum-fur string necklaces

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth referred to these as opossum twine circlets and noted that they were commonly worn by people living in the western parts of north Queensland around Boulia and Cloncurry, but only rarely by people on the eastern side of Cape York Peninsula. He said he only ever saw one necklace on the eastern side of the Cape and it came from the Tully River area. Single possum-string necklaces were common along the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria coastline as well. They were made and worn by men only. Roth made no reference to these possum string necklaces being made at Mapoon.

Collection information. There are two possum string necklaces from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903. A note referring to both necklaces in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "opossum-fur string fillet".

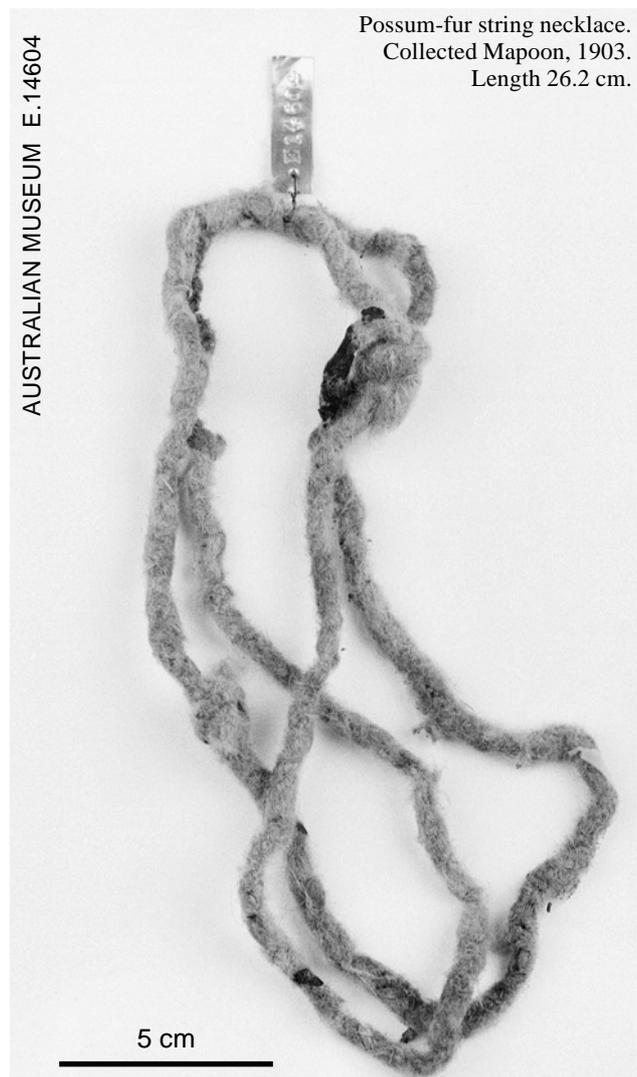
- E.14603 thin strand of possum-fur string; length 58 cm.
- E.14604 thick strand of possum-fur string, joined in several places by knotting; the string has been tied and smeared with black adhesive at one end to form a double loop; length 52.4 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both possum-fur string necklaces:

- E.14603 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1287.
- E.14604 negative sheet 4164M, frame 1288.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 26–27.



Possum-fur string necklace.
Collected Mapoon, 1903.
Length 26.2 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14604

Shark-backbone necklace

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth did not write much about this necklace except to say that among the unusual objects he had seen strung together were the backbones of a young shark. He saw this being made by people living on the Wenlock (Batavia) River.

Shark-backbone necklace.
Collected Mapoon 1902.
Length 22.2 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14432

Collection information. There is one shark-backbone necklace from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1902.

- E.14432 188 shark vertebrae or backbones, painted red and white, threaded on handspun bark fibre twine; length of looped necklace is 22.2 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4143M, frame 1116.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 34.

Shell necklaces and shoulder ornaments

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living in the Mapoon district used a large number of shells for necklaces. The southern olive shell, *Oliva australis*, called *ko-chi* by local Nggerikudi people, was worn by men as a necklace and by women as a shoulder ornament. To make this ornament, the shell was balanced on its end, the apex first hit gently with a wooden hammer, and then chipped off to form a hole. A thread of handspun bark fibre string was passed through the hole at the end of the shell.

Mothers wore this necklace on the death of an infant. It was worn slung from across and over one shoulder to under the opposite armpit. The fingernail shell, *Solen sloanii*, now known as *Solen vagina*, also was used to make this necklace. Local people called both this necklace and the shell from which it was made *chera-a*. Men wore it wound round and round their neck, when going into battle. A *Columbella pardalina* shell was used in a similar way.

Collection information. There are five shell necklace and shoulder ornaments from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 when referring to the five necklace and shoulder ornaments includes "compare E.14452 an *Oliva* sp. (?) necklace."



- E.14458 95 southern olive shells threaded on handspun bark fibre string; length 56.5 cm; each shell is about 1.4×0.7 cm.
- E.14459 southern olive shell and 2 other shells, threaded on handspun bark fibre string; the necklace is in two pieces, one of 77 shells is 107 cm long and the other, of 49 shells, is 61 cm long; each shell is about 1.5×1 cm.
- E.14460 100 southern olive shells threaded on handspun bark fibre string; length 67.8 cm; each shell is about 1.4×0.9 cm.
- E.14461 89 southern olive shells threaded on handspun bark fibre string; length 63 cm; each shell is about 1.3×0.8 cm.
- E.14462 110 southern olive shells threaded on handspun bark fibre string; length 70.5 cm; each shell is about 1.3×0.7 cm.

The next items are four southern olive shells and one fingernail shell from which necklace and shoulder ornaments were made. They do not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December 1899. Roth collected them at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register, referring to the following four southern olive shells includes "for making necklaces".

- E.8863–E.8866 four southern olive shells, *Oliva australis*; Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38, "only for making necklaces and belts".

Shell nose-pin. Collected Mapoon, 1899. 15.4×1.8 cm.



- E.8856 the fingernail shell, *Solen vagina*, was known locally as *chera-a*, which was the name both of the shell and the ornament; the entry in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register includes "pierced and threaded for..."; the rest of the sentence is hard to read. Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38 "used only as a mourning ornament". In Bulletin 15, page 32, Roth wrote that these shells were pierced at one end and numbers of them were strung on hand-spun fibre twine.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five shell necklace and shoulder ornaments:

- E.14458 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1142.
 E.14459 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1143.
 E.14460 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1144.
 E.14461 negative sheet 4146M, frame 1145.
 E.14462 negative sheet 4147M, frame 1146.

References

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River Districts, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers [visited by the Minister on his last trip]. Cooktown, 8 January: 38.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 32–33.

Shell nose-pins

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said both men and women living around the Pennefather, Middle Embley, Palmer, Endeavour and Bloomfield River regions, Cape Bedford and the whole of northwest Queensland generally had their noses pierced. The operation was usually performed by men on men and women on women in the Mapoon and Pennefather River region. The implement used for the operation was either a pointed piece of bone or hardened wood. A short soft piece of wood which Roth called "white wood" was often used after the operation during the next few days to keep the wound open. A proper nose-pin finally replaced this piece of wood.

Nose-pins came in many shapes, sizes and materials used. People living around the Pennefather River made the half-moon shaped pin from the false trumpet shell, *Megalatractus aruanus*, now known as *Syrinx aruanus*. Unless the shell was fresh, it was soaked for two to three days in water. A stone was then used to chip out the required section and ground down with water. This rib, or section of the shell became the nose-pin.

Only men wore the shell nose-pin, called *i-mina*. Women used a piece of grass as a nose-pin.

Collection information. There are four shell nose-pins collected by Roth from Mapoon. The following three nose-pins were collected in 1899.

- E.14423 Roth's collection number is G.179; this curved piece of shell is 15.4×1.8 cm.

- E.14424 Roth's collection number is G.180; this curved piece of shell is 12.9 × 1.2 cm.
- E.14425 Roth's collection number is G.181; this curved piece of shell is 14.7 × 1.5 cm.
- E.14426 there is no collection number; it was collected in 1903. This curved piece of shell is 16.3 × 1.3 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four shell nose-pins:

- E.14423 negative sheet 4142M, frame 1107.
- E.14424 negative sheet 4142M, frame 1108.
- E.14425 negative sheet 4142M, frame 1109.
- E.14426 negative sheet 4142M, frame 1110.

Reference

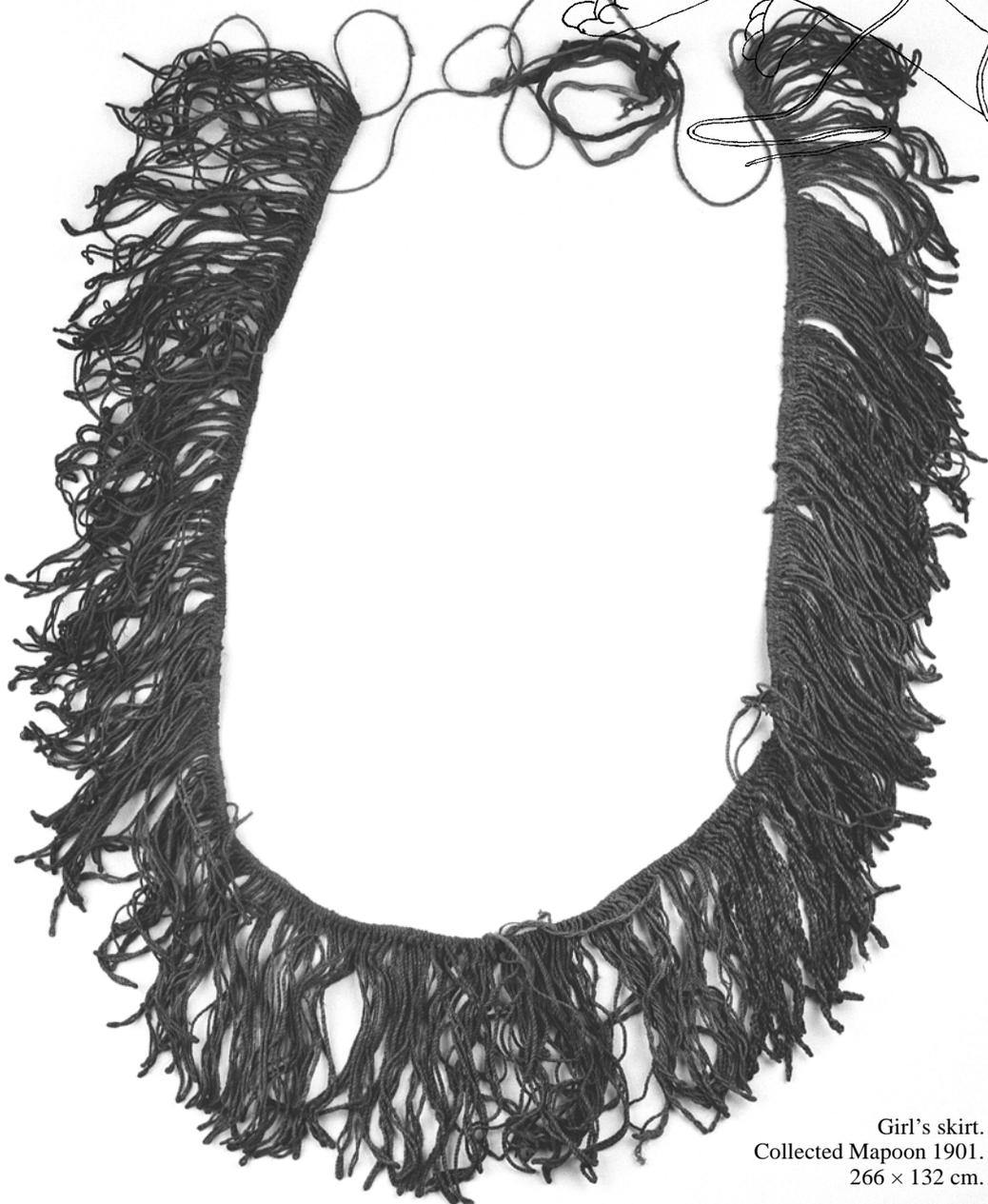
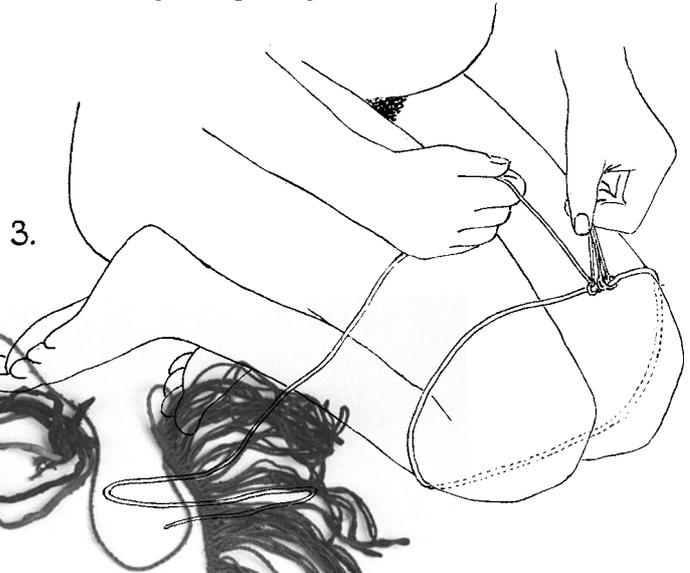
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 29–30.

Girls' skirts

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth referred to these skirts as apron belts. He said the separate tassels forming the apron of the Pennefather River apron belt were made on the same pattern as those of the Cape Bedford waist circlets (Catalogue of the Roth Collection, vol. 2, Kate Khan).

According to Roth there were three stages in making a handspun bark fibre skirt. Roth illustrated the process in Bulletin 1, pl. vii, figs. 3–5.

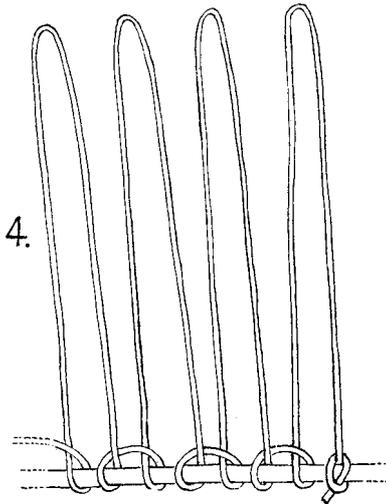
1 Making the top string.



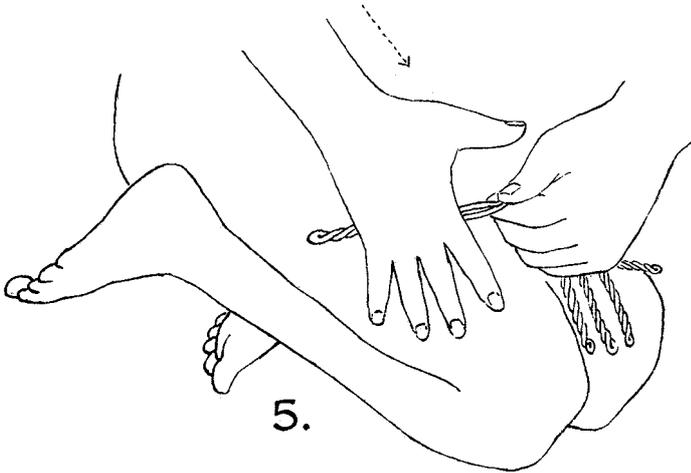
Girl's skirt.
Collected Mapoon 1901.
266 × 132 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14708

2 Forming the loops. The top string was stretched between two sticks.



3 Rolling each loop on the outer thigh to form a tassel.



The tassels were strung on a top string stretched between two sticks and were made from handspun bark fibre twine (also used in making fishing nets). The twine came from the *Careya australis*, now known as *Planchonia careya*. When finished, the skirt was rolled up with the roots of the Cheesefruit or Great Morinda tree, *Morinda reticulata*. These roots had been scraped into a container of water, making a thick yellowish fluid that stained the twine a yellowish red.

The skirt varied in length from 5 to 12.5 cm and was worn double, a loop being inserted in the top string where it was folded over, the two ends of the top string being passed through as shown in Roth's illustration in Bulletin 15, p. 39, fig. 23.

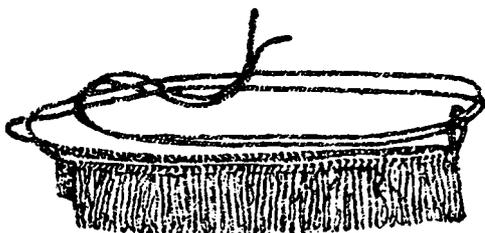


Fig. 23.

This skirt was worn only by women from the time they began to toddle and only discarded at adulthood.

Roth said local people called the skirt *andre-ata*. The top string was called *ngora*. The handspun bark fibre twine was called *kuiperi*. The root used to dye the skirt was called *ada-a*.

Collection information. There are seven skirts from Mapoon. The first two skirts were collected in 1903.

E.14698 it is made from handspun bark fibre string. Some tassels are intertwined with orange, green and red feathers. It is 86 cm long. The tassels are 8 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 33 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron belt, compare fig. 268, Ethno.Stud."

E.14699 it is made from handspun bark fibre twine. The tassels are made from cotton and fur string intertwined with small white feathers. It is 227.5 cm long. The tassels are 14.5 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 82 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron belt, compare fig. 268, Ethno. Stud."

The remaining five skirts were collected in 1901.

E.14704 it is made from handspun bark fibre twine. It is 199 cm long. The tassels are 12 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 86 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron waist-belt".

E.14705 it is made from handspun bark fibre twine. It is 187.5 cm long. The tassels are 9 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 71.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron waist-belt".

E.14706 it is made from handspun bark fibre twine. It is 106.5 cm long. The tassels are 9.5 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 73 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron waist-belt".

E.14707 it is made from possum-fur string twisted with red and blue cotton. The tassels are made from possum-fur string. It is 120 cm long. The tassels are 6 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 47.5 cm.

E.14708 the waistband is made from possum-fur string. The tassels are made from handspun bark fibre string intertwined with strips of a red and blue cloth. It is 266 cm long. The tassels are 16 cm long. The width of the tassel/skirt section is 132 cm.

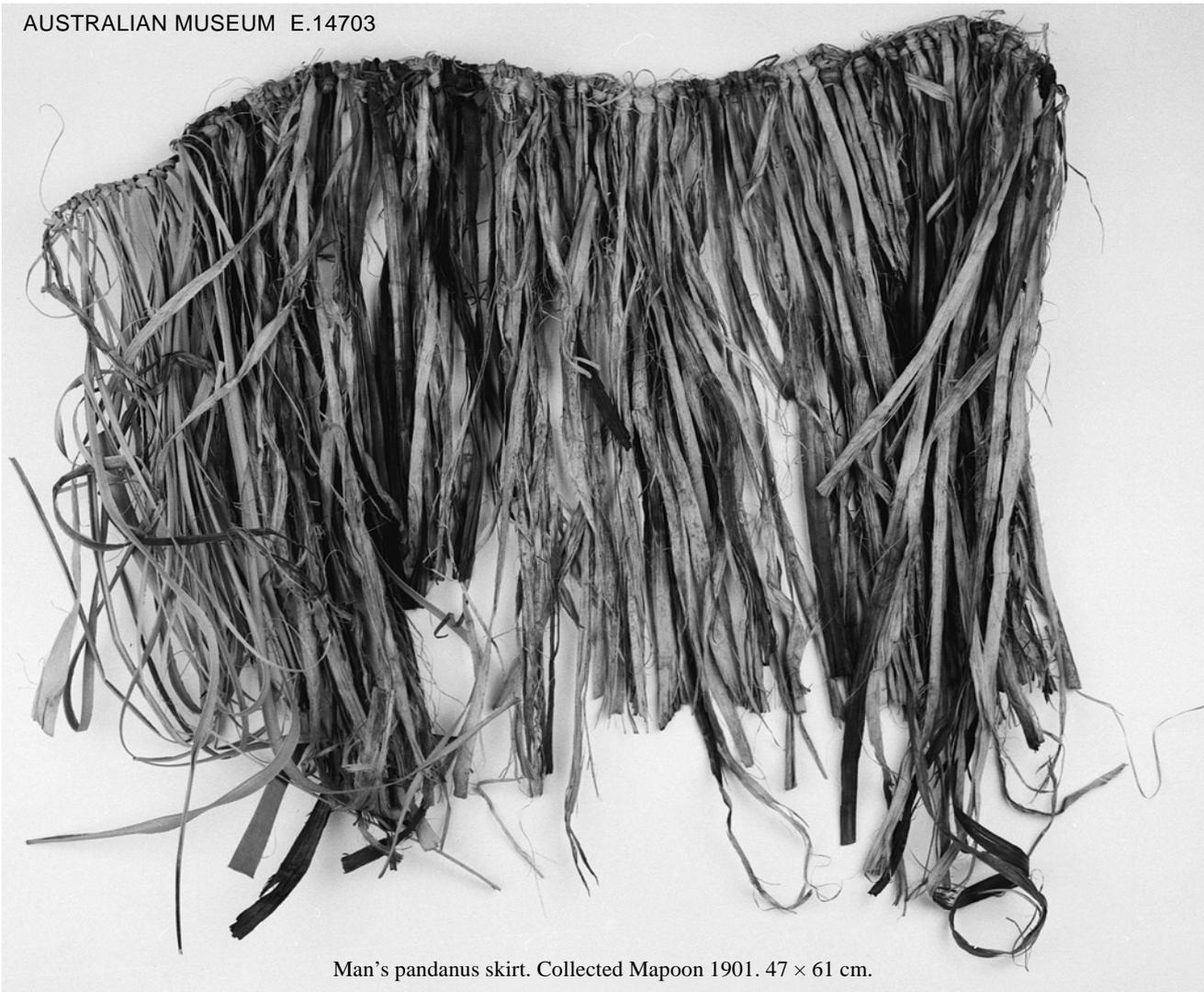
Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all seven skirts:

- E.14698 negative sheet 4176M, frame 1382.
- E.14699 negative sheet 4176M, frame 1383.
- E.14704 negative sheet 4177M, frame 1388.
- E.14705 negative sheet 4177M, frame 1389.
- E.14706 negative sheet 4177M, frame 1390.
- E.14707 negative sheet 4177M, frame 1391.
- E.14708 negative sheet 4177M, frame 1392.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9,12.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 15.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 39-40.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14703



Man's pandanus skirt. Collected Mapoon 1901. 47 × 61 cm.

Man's pandanus skirt

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that there was a male ceremonial or corroboree waist-apron belt worn by men living in the district around Mapoon. The apron part was made from pandanus strips attached in a way different to those found elsewhere in Queensland as shown in Roth's illustration from Bulletin 15 (p. 40, fig. 24).

Collection information. There is one male pandanus skirt from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1901.

E.14703 Skirt made from pandanus strips looped over the waistband. It is 47 cm long, the apron being 61 cm wide. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Male corroboree apron belt with new method of fringing".

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4177M, frame 1387.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 40.

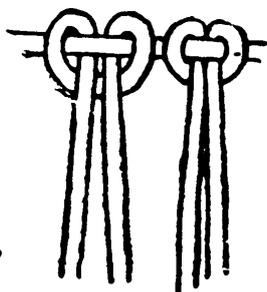


Fig. 24.

Orchid-bark waist and shoulder belts

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth noted that people living around the Pennefather River made bright yellow waist-belts from the prepared outer cortex or layer of the rock lily orchid, also known as the Cooktown orchid, *Dendrobium bigibbum*. Lavarack *et al.* state the dried yellow orchid stems turn a brighter yellow when the stems are exposed to heat from the sun or fire. The authors suggest that the *Dendrobium* used by Aboriginal people on the western side of Cape York Peninsula is *Dendrobium semifusum*. Roth said women made the belts by overcasting two strands of fibre twine stretched between two sticks, or between one stick and the big toe. As the overcasting thread worked under and over, it alternately passed over and under the strip of orchid cortex as shown in Bulletin 1 (pl. VI, fig. 2) and Bulletin 15 (p. 38, fig. 22).

In a later Bulletin published in 1910 (Bulletin 15), Roth reported seeing a variation on the above method, using three strips of cortex and four threads. Men wore large belts, while women wore smaller ones as cross shoulder bands. Roth noted that they were worn when dancing or fighting. Roth said the Nggerikudi people called the orchid *zu-la*. The belt was called *tchi-li*.

Collection information. There are 20 rock lily orchid-bark waist and shoulder belts from Mapoon. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Dendrobium belts". The following four belts were collected in 1899:

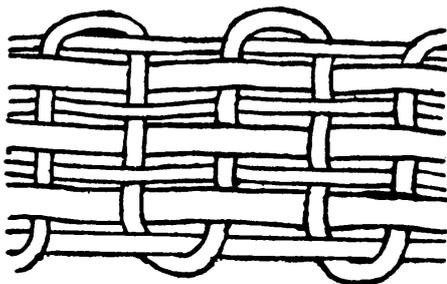
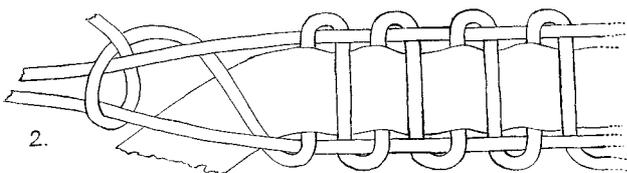


Fig. 22.

- E.14654 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 71 × 0.5 cm.
 E.14655 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 65 × 0.4 cm.
 E.14656 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 104 × 0.5 cm.
 E.14657 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 65 × 0.7 cm.

The following six belts were collected in 1903

- E.14658 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 62 × 1.2 cm.
 E.14659 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. The fibre string is interwoven with small green and white feathers. It is 53.3 × 2.5 cm.
 E.14660 The belt is no longer in the Museum. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "exchanged with Kenyon, October 1921".
 E.14661 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 42 × 1.2 cm.
 E.14662 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 43.5 × 1.5 cm.
 E.14663 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 71 × 1.5 cm.

The following four belts were collected in 1899.

- E.14664 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 68.3 × 1.5 cm.
 E.14665 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 60 × 1.5 cm.
 E.14666 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 53 × 1.4 cm.
 E.14667 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 44 × 1 cm.

The following six belts were collected around 1900–1901.

- E.14668 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 52.7 × 0.9 cm.
 E.14669 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 79 × 1 cm.
 E.14670 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 81 × 0.7 cm.
 E.14671 Bright yellow orchid strip woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string. It is 53 × 0.6 cm.
 E.14672 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string and twisted around a stick. It is 20 × 2 cm.
 E.14673 Three rows of bright yellow orchid strips woven in and out of handspun bark fibre string and twisted around a stick. It is 18 × 1.9 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for 19 of the 20 belts:

- E.14654 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1338.
 E.14655 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1339.
 E.14656 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1340.
 E.14657 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1341.
 E.14658 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1342.
 E.14659 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1343.
 E.14661 negative sheet 4171M, frame 1345.
 E.14662 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1346.
 E.14663 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1347.

- E.14664 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1348.
- E.14665 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1349.
- E.14666 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1350.
- E.14667 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1351.
- E.14668 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1352.
- E.14669 negative sheet 4172M, frame 1353.
- E.14670 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1354.
- E.14671 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1355.
- E.14672 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1356.
- E.14673 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1357.

References

Lavarack, B., W. Harris & G. Stocker, 2000. *Dendrobium and Its Relatives*, pp. 44, 264. Roseville (Sydney): Kangaroo Press.
 Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 11–12.
 Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 38.

Parrot-feather waist-belt

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth did not write about parrot-feather waist-belts, but did mention that in the Pennefather River region women may at any time wear a cross-shoulder band made of handspun bark fibre twine interwoven with feathers of the emu or a variety of Blue Mountain parrot. The one made of parrot feathers was called *taipe-mandenuto*. It could also be used as a belt or a medical string.

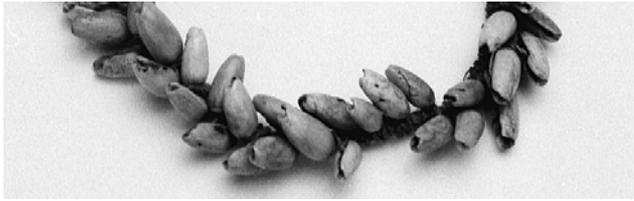
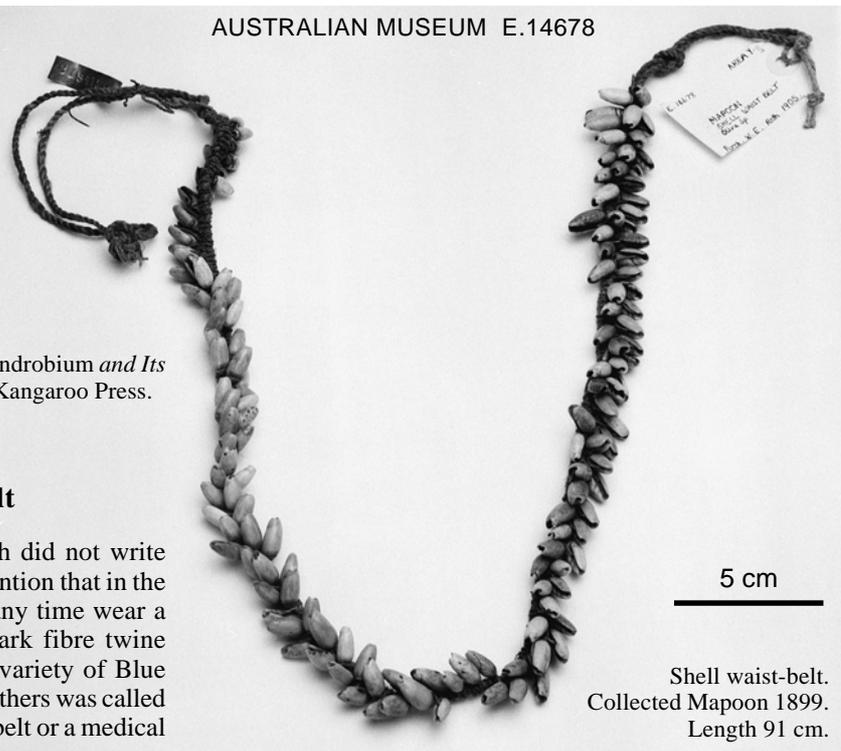
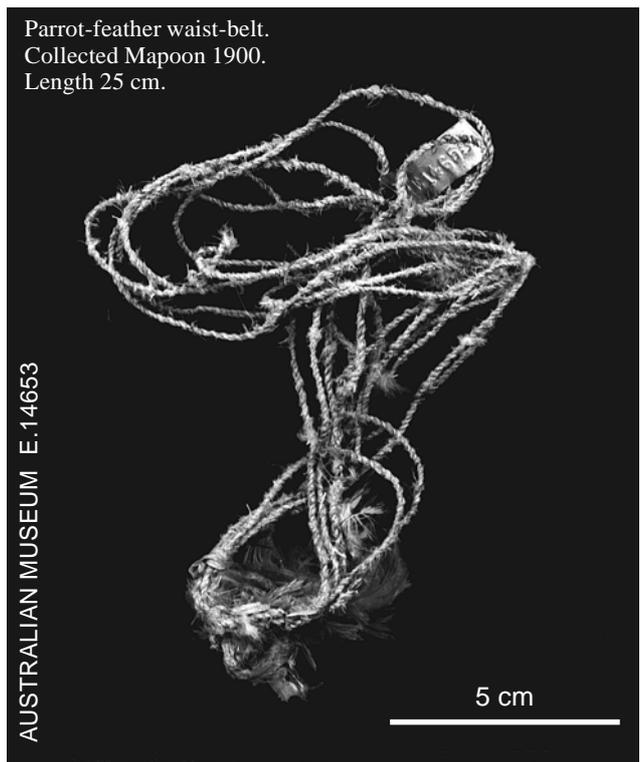
Collection information. There is one parrot-feather waist-belt from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1900.

- E.14653 Four strands of handspun bark fibre string entwined with bright red and green feathers. A beak of a bird is at the centre and fibre strands pass through the holes in the beak. It is 25 cm long.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4170M, frame 1337.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 35.



Shell waist-belts

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth said people living in the Pennefather River district made pretty shell waist-belts from the southern olive shell, *Oliva australis*. The shells were strung together vertically on a top string which had been doubled as illustrated in Bulletin 15 (p. 38, fig. 21).

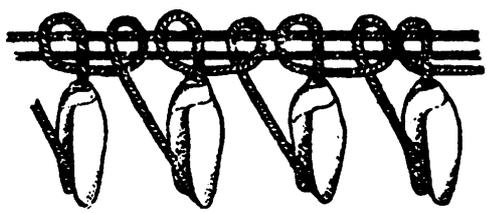


Fig. 21.

They were then tightened together. Roth counted up to 170 shells on one belt. These shell waist-belts were made and worn by women, but could also be worn by men when dancing and for ceremonies. Roth said local Nggerikudi people called the shell *ko-chi*, the name they also gave to the waist-belt.

Collection information. There are five shell waist-belts from Mapoon. The first two waist-belts were collected in 1901.

- E.14676 A densely packed row of shells is attached to a double length of handspun bark fibre twine. Each shell is attached by a small length of fibre twine that has been threaded through a hole drilled at

the top of the shell, then around the whorl, before being looped at the top. It is 75.5 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "shell waist-belt (*Oliva*)".

- E.14677 The belt is made of a double length of handspun bark fibre entwined with fine white feathers. A densely packed row of shells is attached to this double length of twine. Each shell is attached by a small length of fibre twine that has been threaded through a hole drilled at the top of the shell, then around the whorl, before being looped at the top. It is 153.3 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 "shell waist-belt (*Oliva*)."

The following waist-belts were collected in 1899.

- E.14678 A densely packed row of shells is attached to a double length of handspun bark fibre twine. Each shell is attached by a small length of fibre twine that has been threaded through a hole drilled at the top of the shell, then around the whorl, before being looped at the top. It is 91 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "shell waist-belt of the Pennefather River blacks".
- E.14679 A densely packed row of shells is attached to a double length of handspun bark fibre twine. Each shell is attached by a small length of fibre twine that has been threaded through a hole drilled at the top of the shell, then around the whorl, before being looped at the top. It is 69.5 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "shell waist-belt of the Pennefather River blacks".
- E.14680 Roth collected this waist-belt in 1899. Shells are threaded on a length of white European cotton string. It is 55 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "shell waist-belt of the Pennefather River blacks".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five shell waist bands:

- E.14676 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1360.
 E.14677 negative sheet 4173M, frame 1361.
 E.14678 negative sheet 4174M, frame 1362.
 E.14679 negative sheet 4174M, frame 1363.
 E.14680 negative sheet 4174M, frame 1364.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 38.

Fire-making tools

Fire sticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Fire was made by twirling a thin stick 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 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 hole was made in the softwood board 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. Thin fire sticks were usually from 60 to 120 cm long. People living around the Pennefather, Wenlock and Embley Rivers protected the working end of a fire stick with a special cap or cover. The cap was made of a piece of pandanus leaf bent over the end of the two sticks, bound round with handspun bark fibre twine, and covered with warmed beeswax. Beeswax from the native *Trigona* bee was prepared by roasting it over a fire, squeezing it a few times in the hands, and warming and hammering it until soft. Local people called it *andori*. This beeswax coating held the shape of the cover, after it had been moulded into shape. It was finally dabbed over with a local adhesive or beeswax, with a knob left at the end. Poisonous red berries, also known as jequirity seeds, lobster eyes or gidy gidy beans, *Abrus precatorius*, were stuck into the sticky surface as decoration. Roth said the Nggerikudi people called these berries *do-anjinjin*.

On one occasion, Roth saw crab's eyes from a large crab being used as decoration instead of red berries. There is one set of fire sticks and cap decorated in such a way in the collection (E.13787). The cap also could be made of two pipes of light pithy wood, the pith having been removed by a bone pin or awl. The hollowed pipes were then bound together and closed at one end with beeswax. Occasionally, two pieces of bamboo could be used as a cap.

The thin fire sticks could be made from various timbers, the most common being grass trees, *Xanthorrhoea arborea*, now known as *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*. which were used wherever available. Other timbers used came from either *Premna obtusifolia*, now known as *Premna serratifolia*, or *Clerodendron inerme*.

Fire sticks were usually named from the timber from which they were made, but sometimes had a special name.



A pair of fire sticks and cap. Collected Mapoon 1901.
 Fire sticks 131 × 137 cm. Cap 15 × 4.8 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13785

The fire sticks were called *moa-ta*. According to Roth *moa* was the word for fire, and *mo-odo* the name for the wood used.

Collection information. There are six fire sticks from Mapoon and the Pennefather River region.

- E.13781 Roth's collection number is F.10. The fire sticks and cap were collected from Mapoon in 1899. Two rounded, charred sticks bound together with a string of rectangular pieces of *Nautilus* shell threaded on handspun bark fibre twine. There is a twisted piece of red cloth at each end of this string. The cap is made from either pithy wood or pandanus bent on itself, bound with handspun bark fibre twine and smeared with beeswax. There is yellow fibre at the base of the cap. Red jequirity seeds are embedded in the beeswax head of the cap. The two fire sticks are 173 and 171 cm long. The cap is 15.8 × 3.3 cm.
- E.13785 Roth's collection number is F.21. The fire sticks and cap were collected from Mapoon in 1901. Two rounded, charred sticks are slotted into a pithy wood or bamboo cap that is bound with handspun bark fibre twine, smeared with beeswax and decorated with bands of yellow fibre. The beeswax knob at the end of the cap is studded with red jequirity seeds. The two fire sticks are 131 and 137 cm long. The cap is 15 × 4.8 cm.
- E.13786 Roth's collection number is F.22. The fire sticks and cap were collected from the Wenlock (Batavia) River in 1901. Two rounded sticks, one with burn marks, are slotted into a pithy wood or bamboo cap that is bound with handspun bark fibre twine and smeared with beeswax. One end is sealed with fibre string and beeswax. The two fire sticks are 125 cm long. The cap is 14.8 × 3.2 cm.
- E.13787 Roth's collection number is F.23. The fire sticks and cap were collected from the Pennefather River in 1901. Two rounded sticks, charred by fire, are slotted into a pithy wood or bamboo cap that is bound with yellow fibre string and smeared with beeswax. One end has been closed with a knob of beeswax in which white crab's eyes of a large crab and some red jequirity seeds have been embedded. The two fire sticks are 118.8 cm long. The cap is 12.7 × 4.3 cm.
- E.13788 Roth's collection number is F.24. The fire sticks and cap were collected from the Pennefather River in 1901. Two rounded sticks are slotted into a pithy wood or bamboo cap. The cap is bound with strips of red cloth and smeared with beeswax. Strips of yellow fibre are wound along the length of the holder. One end is closed with fibre string and beeswax. The two fire sticks are 117 cm long. The cap is 14.6 × 3.2 cm.

- E.17783 One fire stick was collected from the Pennefather River, but no date or collection number is given. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 6 September 1909 includes "Old Collection ex Roth Collection. Sent to Natural History Museum, New York, Sept. 1911".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for five of the six fire sticks:

- E.13781 negative sheet 4061M, frame 464.
E.13785 negative sheet 4062M, frame 468.
E.13786 negative sheet 4062M, frame 469.
E.13787 negative sheet 4062M, frame 470.
E.13788 negative sheet 4062M, frame 471.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 10–11,14.

Fishing gear

Fish club

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Along the whole Gulf coastline from the Wenlock (Batavia) to the Norman River a common method of fishing was to go into the water at night holding a torch of firewood. This light would attract the fish to the surface where they were clubbed to death with a fish club. This wooden broad flat bladed club with sharpened edges, rounded at both ends, could be up to 75 cm long. It was painted red and white. The handle was often nicked or coated with a cement substance so that it would not slip out of the fisherman's hand. Local people called it *te-ingkajana*. The timber used was *Eugenia carissoides*, now known as *Eugenia reinwardtiana*. Roth mentioned that the fruit of this tree also was eaten.

Collection information. There is one fish club from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.15023 Roth's collection number is SW.19. Broad, flat bladed club with both ends rounded and one end tapered. Painted in bands of red and white. A rough diamond shape has been cut across the middle of the club on both sides. It is outlined in black. It is 75 × 7.4 cm (max. width).

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4217M, frame 1707.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 33.



Fish club.
Collected Mapoon 1903. 75 × 7.4 cm (max.)
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15023

Fish hooks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. The “bent pin” or tortoise shell fish hook used by people living near the Wenlock (Batavia), Pennefather and Embley Rivers on the Gulf coast was made in the following way:

- 1 A more or less irregularly outlined length of shell was wedged out of the breastplate of a tortoise and ground



Tortoise shell fish hook.
Collected Mapoon 1900.
3.5 × 1.5 cm (max.) × 0.4 cm thick.
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13877

down on a piece of bone. It was finished with a shell scraper to produce a headless pin about 5 cm long. The pin tapered gradually from a blunt end to a fine point.

- 2 The pointed end was firmly placed into a small hole in a piece of wood, which was placed upright in the ground.
- 3 Another piece of wood was placed on the projecting pin of tortoise shell, on the slant—one end resting on the ground, the other free. It was prevented from slipping off by being loosely tied on the vertical post with a loop or two of twine.

- 4 A fire was then lit, and as the heat rose, the tortoise shell pin softened and with the weight of the slanting timber, became more and more bent into a gentle curve.
- 5 The tortoise shell pin was then removed, alternatively dipped in water, heated at the fire, and bent with the fingers until the desired shape was reached.

Roth commented that although the people here knew about boiling water, they did not use it to shape and make these fish hooks. He said there may have been a reason for this, but he did not know it.

Bent pin tortoise shell fish hooks also were made on Palm Island on the east coast.

Roth wrote in 1901 that European fish hooks were fast replacing traditional fish hooks. Weights and sinkers were never used.

Collection information. There are two fish hooks from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1900. A note with the two fish hooks states “Hooks E.13876–7 were found in a bag with tags unattached. F. Duncan”.

- E.13876 Tortoise shell fish hook shaped like a bent pin, white paste substance on one side. It is 3.4 × 1.5 cm (max.) by 0.3 cm thick.
- E.13877 Tortoise shell fish hook shaped like a bent pin, white paste substance on one side. It is 3.5 × 1.5 cm (max.) by 0.4 cm thick.

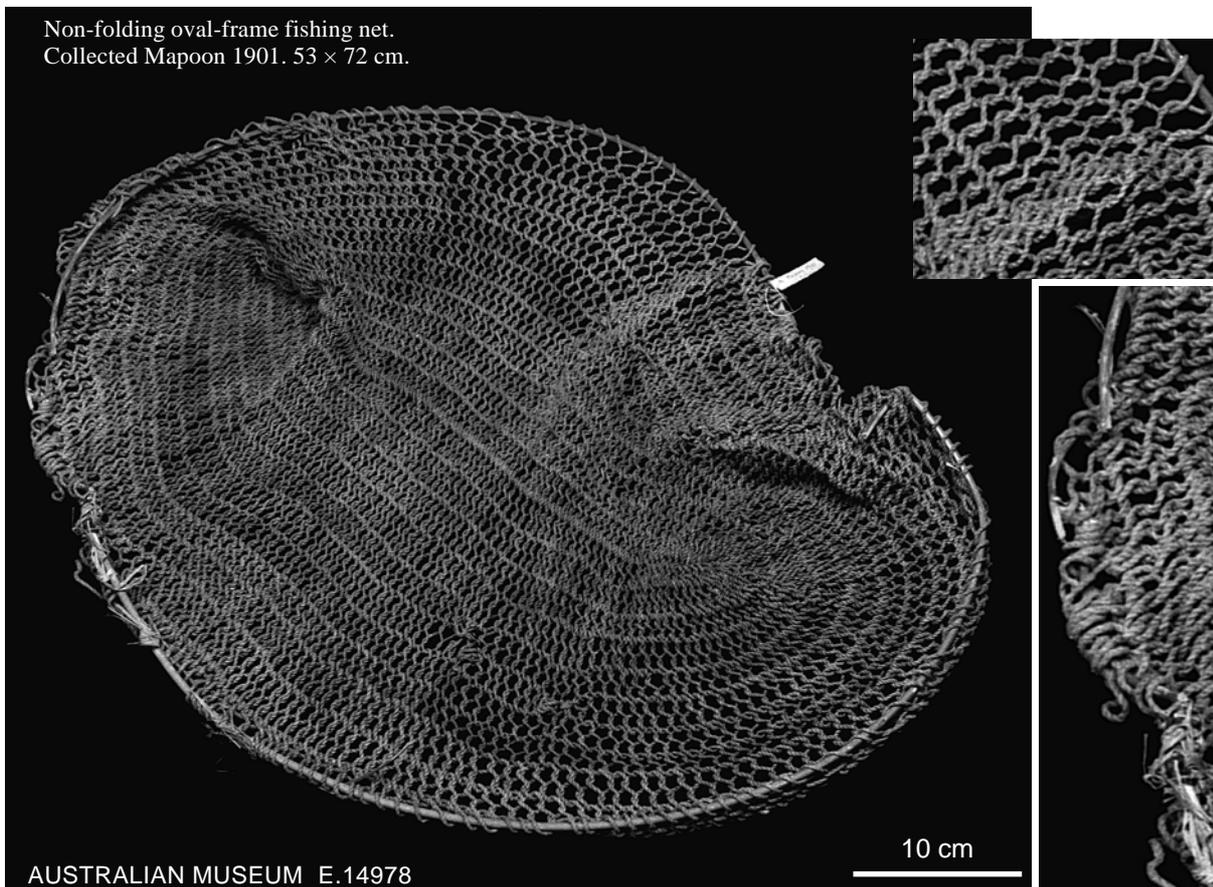
Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both tortoise shell fish hooks:

- E.13876 negative sheet 4073M, frame 559.
E.13877 negative sheet 4073M, frame 560.

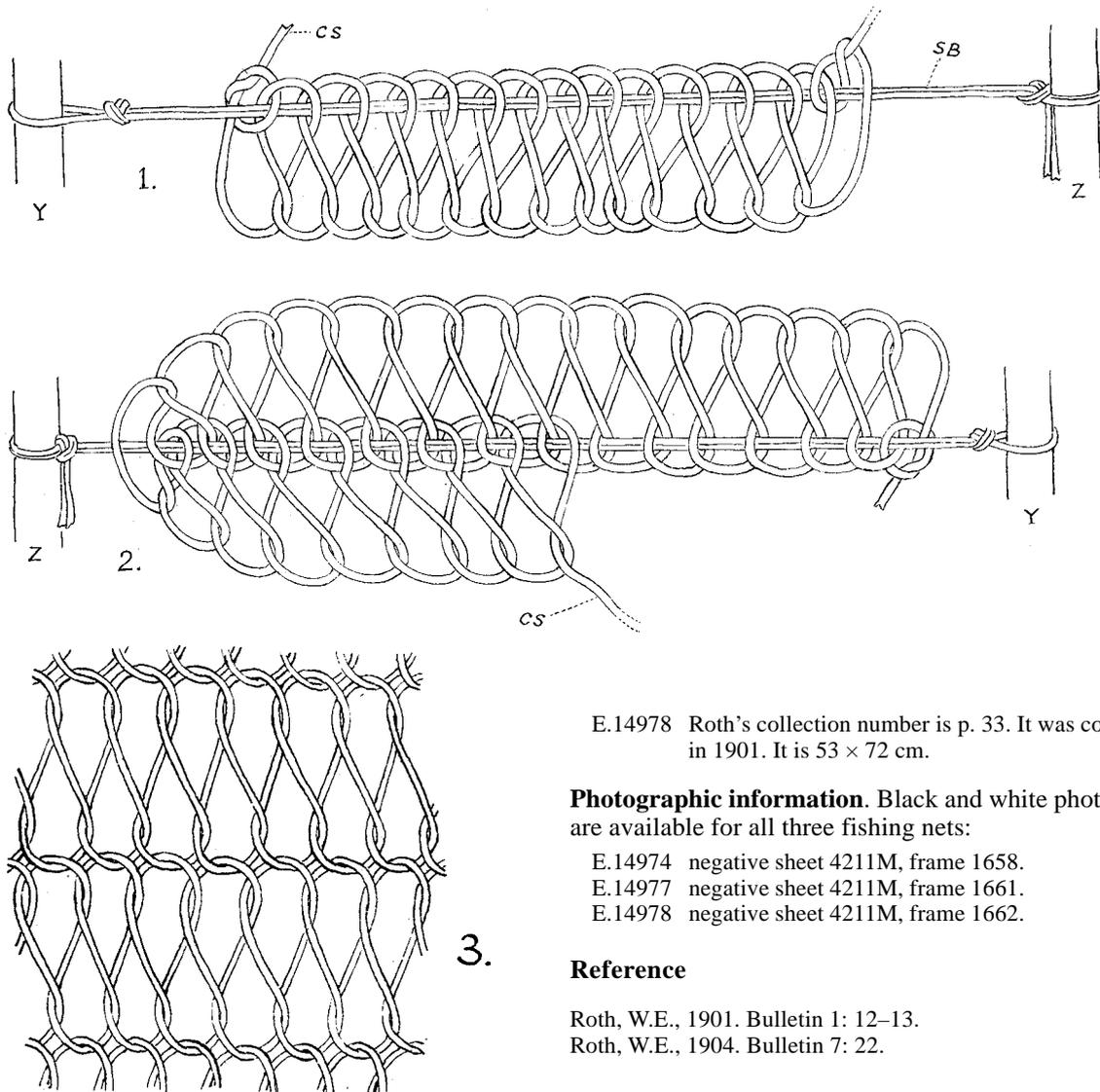
Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 20.
Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 6: 7.
Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 33–34.

Non-folding oval-frame fishing net.
Collected Mapoon 1901. 53 × 72 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14978



E.14978 Roth's collection number is p. 33. It was collected in 1901. It is 53 × 72 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three fishing nets:

E.14974 negative sheet 4211M, frame 1658.

E.14977 negative sheet 4211M, frame 1661.

E.14978 negative sheet 4211M, frame 1662.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 12–13.

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 22.

Food

Non-folding oval-frame fishing nets

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said non-folding oval-frame fishing nets with the net woven on an hourglass pattern were found only on Cape York Peninsula. He saw them being made and used on the Pennefather, Wenlock (Batavia) and Embley Rivers and on the Morehead, Musgrave, Normanby, Palmer and Laura.

The net was woven on an hourglass or double loop pattern with one straight base strand and one continuous strand. The weaving was very loose on fishing nets, unlike baskets using the same pattern. Roth's drawings in Bulletin 1 (pl. X, figs. 1–3) show this weaving pattern.

Roth said this fishing net was made and used only by women.

On the Pennefather, Embley and Wenlock Rivers, the frame was made from rattan cane, a vigorous climbing vine with cane-like stems, *Flagellaria indica*.

Roth said local Nggerikudi people called this net *ngojana*.

Collection information. There are three non-folding oval-frame fishing nets from Mapoon.

E.14974 Roth's collection number is p. 27. It was collected in 1903. It is 44 × 32.5 cm.

E.14977 Roth's collection number is p. 34. It was collected in 1901. It is 58.5 × 65.5 cm.

Edible molluscs—shells

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said most shellfish were roasted in the ashes, but a few were eaten raw. He also wrote that the Aboriginal names he recorded were those used in the localities where he collected the molluscs. He stressed that this did not necessarily imply that the molluscs were used as food, or found only in the specific regions mentioned. Shells not used as food are listed elsewhere in the catalogue under sections that refer to their use, such as necklaces, scrapers etc.

Collection information. Roth collected 1353 shells at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. These shells do not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December, 1899. Charles Hedley, who at this time was the conchologist, or shell specialist, at the Australian Museum and a close friend of Roth, identified the shells for him. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register referring to the following shells includes "Mouth of Batavia River. Used as a food for various purposes by natives of Batavia River".

E.8825 *Meleagrina margaritifera*, the black-lipped pearl shell, is now known as *Pinctata margaritifera*. It was known locally as *wuidi*, and also was used to make forehead bands.

- E.8826 *Thersites barneyi*, Barney's land snail, is now known as *Hadra barneyi*. It was known locally as *tori*.
- E.8827–E.8828 there are 20 ark shells, *Arca scapha*, now known as *Anadara antiquata*. It was known locally as *teuma* or *aruteri*.
- E.8829–E.8830 *Cytherea meretrix*. It was known locally as *androi*.
- E.8832–E.8835 *Tapes hiantinus*, the gaping tapes, is now known as *Marcia hiantina*. It was known locally as *yee*.
- E.8836–E.8837 *Maetra dissimilis*, the trough shell. It was known locally as *dowawanna*.
- E.8838–E.8839 there are 20 *Venus lamarckii*, the lamellate venus, now known as *Venus lamellaris*. It was known locally as *baangkana*.
- E.8840–E.8841 *Cardium vertebratum*, now known as *Acrosterigma reeveanum*. It was known locally as *moangai*. It also was used as a painter's-graining comb for painting lines on the body in preparation for a ceremony.
- E.8842 *Modiola albicostata*, the mussel shell, is now known as *Modiolus philippinarum*. It was known locally as *langanana*.
- E.8843 *Tellina truncata*. It was known locally as *laikana*.
- E.8844 *Spondylus violascens*, the thorny oyster, is now known as *Spondylus violaceus*. It was known locally as *nyurogwe*.
- E.8845–E.8846 *Glyphus* sp., now known as *Diodora* sp. It was known locally as *ngar*.
- E.8849 *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Gelonia erosa*. It was known locally as *onyi*. It also was used as a scraper, in shell drills, and bark cutters. The name *onyi* was the name given to the shell drill.
- E.8850 *Turritella cerea*, the screw shell, is now known as *Turritella terebra*. It was known locally as *mbrurri*.
- E.8851 *Nerita lineata*, the lined nerite, was known locally as *tori*.
- E.8852 *Arca navicularis*, the ark shell, is now known as *Arca subnavicularis*. It was known locally as *koelana*.
- E.8854–E.8855 *Tapes schnelliana*, now known as *Tapes dorsatus*, was known locally as *aronjo*.
- E.8857 *Malleus vulsellatus*, the hammer oyster, is now known as *Malleus albus*. It was known locally as *tondro*.
- E.8858–E.8859 *Tellina perna* was known locally as *boranganama*. It also was used for making body scars before the introduction of glass.
- E.8860 *Mytilus horrida*, the giant hairy mussel, is now known as *Stavelia horrida*. It was known locally as *wipiche*.
- E.8861 *Venus puerpura*, the purple antigone, is now known as *Periglypta puerpura*. It was known locally as *onyite*.
- E.8867–E.8868 there are 36 shells of *Atactodea mitis*, now known as *Atactodea striata*. It was known locally as *androe*.
- E.8869–E.8870 *Arca pilula*, the ark shell, is now known as *Potiarca pilula*. It was known locally as *aruitidi*. It also was used to make babies' rattles.
- E.8871 *Anomia elyros*, the jingle shell, is now known as *Patro australis*. It was known locally as *ngarm-bunya*.
- E.8872 *Placuna placenta*, the windowpane shell, was known locally as *ngarmarata*.
- E.8873 portion of a shell called *Pinna* sp., known locally as *taiperi*.
- E.8874 *Murex adustus*, the murex shell, is now known as *Chicoreus brunneus*. It was known locally as *damandama*.
- E.8875 *Turbo foliaceus*, the squamate turban, is now known as *Turbo squamosus*. It was known locally as *injutru*.
- E.8876 *Chama pulchella*, the leafy chama, was known locally as *trainapugwe*.
- E.8877 There are 43 shells of *Ostrea edulis*, the common oyster. It was known locally as *kantaga*.
- E.8878 *Chama pulchella*, the leafy chama, was known locally as *trainapugwe*.
- E.8879 *Natica bicolor*, the bi-coloured land snail, is now known as *Polinices didyma*. It was known locally as *roanggate*.
- E.8881 there are 45 shells of *Nassa unicolorata*, the one-coloured dog whelk, now known as *Nassarius dorsatus*. It was known locally as *truno*.
- E.8882 there are 46 shells of *Cassis coronulata*, the banded helmet, now known as *Phalium bandatum*. It was known locally as *perate*.
- E.8883 *Pyrula foliaceae* is now known as *Volema cochlidium*. It was known locally as *pandarate*.
- E.8884 there are 51 shells of *Pecten gloriosus*, the glory scallop, now known as *Mimachlamys gloriosa*. It was known locally as *nyuronyunama*.
- E.8885 there are 33 shells of *Cassidula angulifera*, the angular ear shell, which were known locally as *moi*.

The following edible molluscs and barnacles were collected on the coastline at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. E.10405 was entered in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register on 9 December, 1901, the remainder were registered on 31 December, 1901.

- E.10405–E.10406 there are 121 shells of *Placunamonia clyros*.
- E.10407 there are 128 shells of *Vermetus novae hollandiae*, known locally as *rre*.
- E.10408 there are 131 barnacles, *Balanus tintinnabulum*, now known as *Megabalanus tintinnabulum*. It was known locally as *drogie*.
- E.10409 *Pinna menkei*. Roth seems to have given two local names for this mollusc. In Bulletin 3, p. 18 he preferred *taiperi*, but in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 the spelling is *tauumo*.
- E.10410–E.10412 there are 134 shells of *Spondylus tenellus*, known locally as *enea*.
- E.10413 there are 127 shells of *Potamides sulcata*. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Angorgana. (Found in mangrove swamps)". Roth did not explain the meaning of the word Angorgana, which seems to be used for different species of shells.
- E.10414 there are 127 shells of *Nassa glans*. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Angorgana. (Said to be the female)".
- E.10415 there are 125 shells of *Ancilla cingulata*. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Angorgana. (Said to be the female)".
- E.10416 there are 126 shells of Campbell's strombus, *Strombus campbelli*, now known as *Strombus vittatus campbelli*. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Angorgana. (Said to be the male)."
- E.10417 *Cerithium novae hollandiae*. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Angorgana. (Said to be the male)".

References

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River District, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers. [visited by the Minister during his last trip]. Cooktown 8 January 1900: 37–38.
- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 17–19.

Harpoons

Harpoon darts

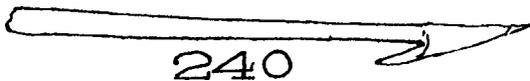
Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said there were three parts to a complete, barbed harpoon; the barbed head, the shaft and the connecting line.

Harpoon dart and bark fibre twine line.
Collected Mapoon 1903.
Harpoon 30.5 × 2 cm. Rope approx. 720 cm long.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13536

- 1 The barbed head was a rounded piece of wood, gradually tapering from base to tip, and could be from 20–35 cm long. The method of fixing the barb was usually by placing it into a slight longitudinal groove, below the point of the head, bound firmly with animal tendon, and covered with adhesive. The Wenlock (Batavia) River people had a bone barb which was attached in such a position that the bone became the extreme tip of the harpoon dart. Roth said this was the only place where bone was used as a barb. His illustration is from Bulletin 7 (pl. xxvi, fig. 240).



- 2 The shaft varied from 213.5–315 cm long, gradually increasing in diameter from butt to tip. A socket was usually picked and drilled at one end of the shaft. However, people living around the Wenlock (Batavia) River made a socket by putting a glowing cinder on one end and blowing on it, so as to char the timber. The cinder was then removed and the burnt surface scraped away. This was repeated until a hole was made.
- 3 The connecting line was made of handspun bark fibre string tied direct to the base of the barbed head. On the Pennefather River it was made from the inner bark of the cotton tree, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, and was about 1 cm thick and about 15 or more fathoms long, depending on the animal being hunted. A longer one was needed for turtle hunting than for fish. When the harpoon was in use, the base of the barbed head, with its dampened coil of handspun bark fibre twine, was jammed tightly into the socket. Just above the base was a ring of adhesive substance that stopped the head being pushed too far into the socket and helped prevent the rope from slipping.

Roth wrote in 1901 that no harpoons had been used for years on the Wenlock (Batavia) River, but judging by models of harpoons made for him, Roth said the method of attaching the connecting line to the shaft was identical to that in use on the Keppel Islands. Here, the rope was firmly hitched to the dart, wound two to three times around the shaft and then to the end of the dart where it was tied. It finally passed through to the thrower's hand where the remaining length of rope was looped into a number of coils.

Both on the Wenlock (Batavia) and Pennefather Rivers, in the early days turtle was hunted with a harpoon. The hunter, having struck the animal, would recover the shaft and re-attach the end of the line held in one hand, or fixed in the canoe, and take a second shot. In this way two barbed heads were made to pierce the soft tissue, thus reducing the tearing through the flesh when the animal dragged on the line. A turtle could put up a fight for nine to ten hours.

According to Roth, in the 1890s, an iron rod, filed to a sharp point at one end was replacing the wooden and bone heads. A metal head was good in that it pierced the shell of the turtle, but because it had no barbs, the hunter could not get a strong pull on the rope.

People living around the Pennefather River assured Roth that prior to iron-headed harpoons being used, a great skill was needed to catch turtles. Now the iron-headed harpoon could gain a firmer hold of the turtle because of its ability to pierce the shell and hold tight. So turtle flesh, in the early days, was fairly rare. For this reason it was forbidden to females and young men.

Although used mainly to hunt turtle, harpoons were often used for larger fish such as shark or trevally, and for dugong.

Roth said people living around the Pennefather River called the harpoon *ngatta*, and the barbed head *ngoma*. Inner bark of the cotton tree used to make ropes for turtle harpoons on the Pennefather River was called *kornbrana*.

Collection information. There are six harpoon darts collected by Roth from Mapoon and the Pennefather River. The following four harpoon darts were collected from Mapoon in 1903:

- E.13535 Roth's collection number is H.6 (the same number as that given to E.13542). The iron dart (E.13535–001) was formerly embedded in wooden shaft (E.13535–002) with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine line attached. The dart has recently become detached from the wooden shaft, and the object is in two pieces. The iron dart is 15 cm long. The shaft is 13.5 × 2.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "harpoon and tackle iron dart".
- E.13536 Roth's collection number is H.5. Bone harpoon dart bound on with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive to wooden shaft. The line is attached at the other end. The harpoon is 30.5 × 2 cm. The rope is approximately 720 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "dugong dart and tackle (no shaft)".
- E.13542 Roth's collection number is H.6 (the same collection number as E.13535). The bone barb is bound to the wooden shaft with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive, the other end is bound with handspun bark fibre string, but there is no line. It is 35.5 × 1.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "harpoon dart".
- E.13543 Roth's collection number is H.11. The bone barb is attached to the shaft with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive. The other end is bound with fibre. There is no line. It is 32 × 2 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "harpoon dart".

The next two harpoon darts were collected from the Pennefather River in 1899.

- E.13544 Roth's collection number is H.13. The bone barb is attached to the shaft with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive. The other end is bound with fibre. There is no line. It is 20 × 1.5 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "harpoon dart".
- E.13545 Roth's collection number is H.10. The bone barb is attached to the shaft with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive. The other end is bound with fibre. There is no line. It is 26.5 × 2 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "harpoon dart".

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all six harpoon darts:

- E.13535 negative sheet 4031M, frame 218.
 E.13536 negative sheet 4031M, frame 219.
 E.13542 negative sheet 4031M, frame 225.
 E.13543 negative sheet 4032M, frame 226.
 E.13544 negative sheet 4032M, frame 227.
 E.13545 negative sheet 4032M, frame 228.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 23.
 Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 31–32.

Mats

Woven mats

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote about "plaited blankets" that were made on the Pennefather, Embley and Wenlock (Batavia) Rivers. He watched blankets being made by people living around the Wenlock (Batavia) River in 1899. The mats or blankets were really woven rather than plaited, and were used as both mats and blankets. These mats could be circular or rectangular.

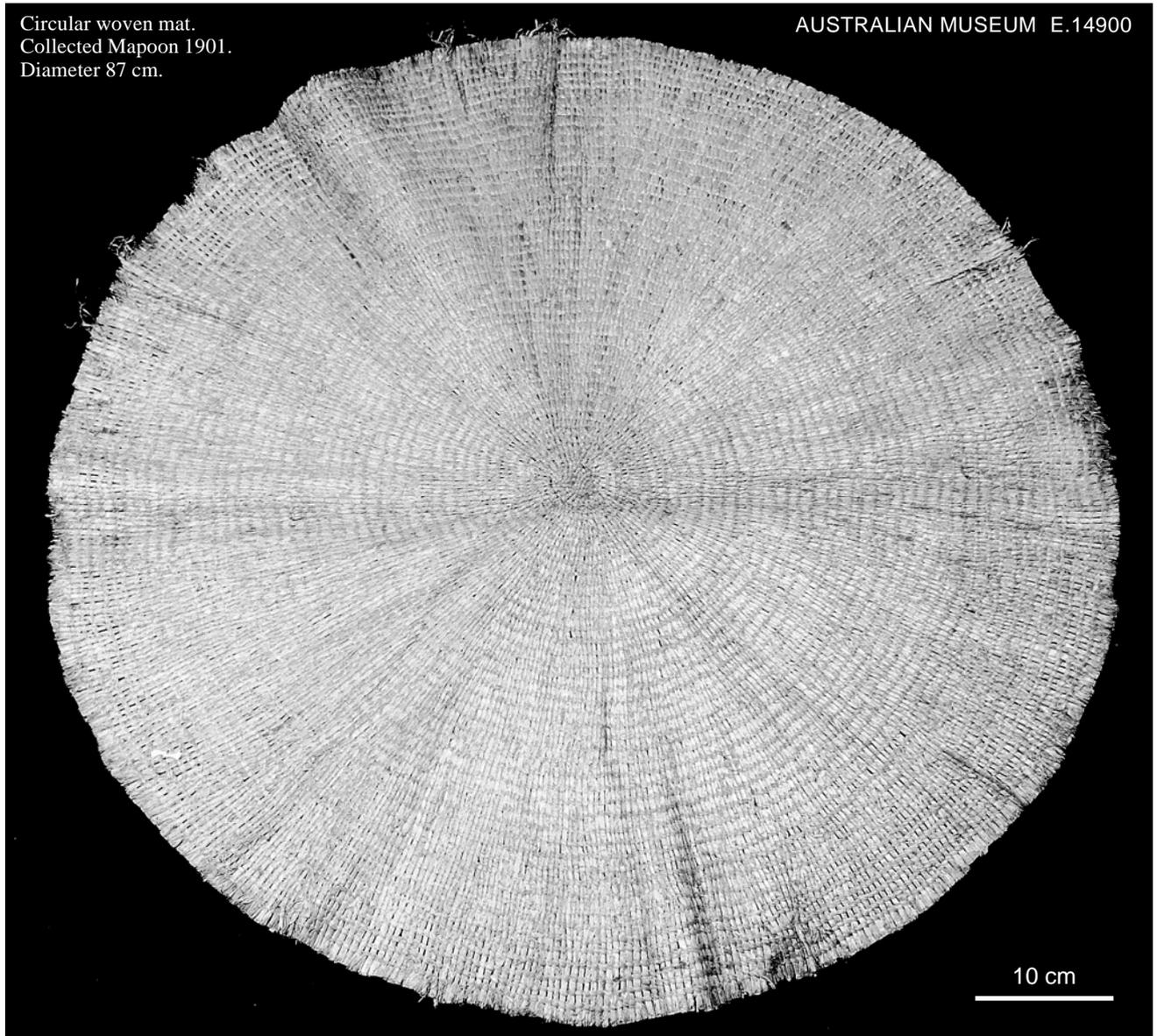
Circular mats were made from whole stems of the tall spike rush, *Heleocharis sphacelata*, now known as *Eleocharis sphacelata*, on a chain-twist pattern from a central core. The pattern was worked round and round until the required size was reached. Sometimes emu feathers were woven in, to make the mats warmer to sleep under on cold nights.

Rectangular mats were made from split pandanus leaves on the same chain-twist pattern, but were woven from side to side rather than round and round. That is, several base strands were interwoven by using two continuous strands in a chain-twist. The straight base strands were the warp. The chain-twist was the weft.

Roth said women made all plaited or woven mats and blankets. He said the local people living around the Wenlock (Batavia) River called these mats *anji-ana-anji*.

Circular woven mat.
 Collected Mapoon 1901.
 Diameter 87 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14900



10 cm

Collection information. There are eleven woven mats in the Roth collection, ten from Mapoon collected in 1901, and one from the Pennefather River with no collection date.

E.14899 This mat was collected from the Pennefather River. It is 65 cm long at the upper edge, 180 cm long at the lower edge, and is 41 cm wide. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Pandanus mat ?complete".

The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 referring to the following ten mats from Mapoon includes "circular mat ?sleeping".

- E.14900 Circular mat. Diameter 87 cm.
- E.14901 Circular mat. Diameter 58 cm.
- E.14902 Circular mat. Diameter 34 cm.
- E.14903 Circular mat with some bird feathers woven in the chain-twist pattern. Diameter 49 cm.
- E.14904 Circular mat. Diameter 94 cm.
- E.14905 Circular mat. Diameter 49 cm.
- E.14906 Circular mat. This mat is missing from the collection at present.
- E.14907 Circular mat. Diameter 148 cm.
- E.14908 Circular mat. Diameter 103 cm.
- E.14909 Circular mat. Bird feathers and red cloth woven into mat. Diameter 92 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for ten of the eleven mats:

- E.14899 negative sheet 4201M, frame 1583.
- E.14900 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1584.
- E.14901 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1585.
- E.14902 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1586.
- E.14903 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1587.
- E.14904 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1588.
- E.14905 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1589.
- E.14907 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1591.
- E.14908 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1592.
- E.14909 negative sheet 4202M, frame 1593.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9,14.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 51-52.

Medical

Medical string

Information from Roth's Bulletins. A medical or healing string was used to draw bad blood from a sick person. It could be made of handspun bark fibre string, human hair string or possum fur.



People living around the Pennefather River used medical string to relieve pain. The string was tied around the part of the body where the pain was located. The practitioner, a woman, then took the free end of the string in her mouth and rubbed it over her lower lip, behind her teeth. She rubbed it from side to side until her lip began to swell and bleed. She spat this blood out, drawing the bad blood from the sick person. Roth said women often had sore mouths for many weeks after these operations.

Roth noted that the practitioner was always a female. If a man was sick, his sister carried out the operation. If she was not there, his mother took her place. If a child was sick, the mother used the medical string.

When the bad blood was sucked from a male, it was spat into a shell and thrown into a creek, swamp or other water. In the case of females, it was buried in an ant hill.

Medical string made from human hair was made only by women. It sometimes had woven into it the bright feathers of the blue mountain parrot. Roth said the Nggerikudi called the mountain parrot and the string by the same name, *mandenuto*. (see feathered-string in dress and ornament in this volume)

Roth wrote that this form of medicine to cure sickness was used, in various ways, on both coasts of Cape York Peninsula and down the east coast to Brisbane.

Collection information. There is one medical string from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1901.

- E.13683 Length of 2-ply handspun bark fibre string. It is 65 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "sucking string for drawing blood out of a patient. Nggerikudi tribe 'mandenuto'".

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4049M, frame 366.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 5: 38.

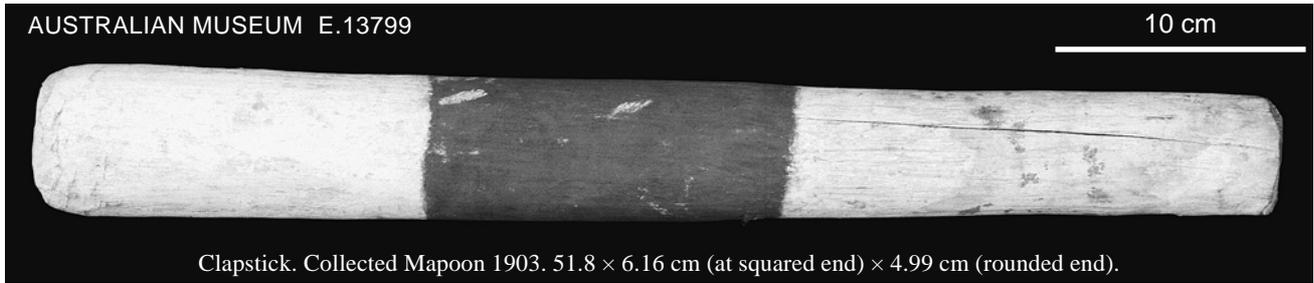
Message stick

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth did not describe how message sticks were made in the Mapoon region, 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, and 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 the same message could be taken with different sticks, and some sticks had no markings at all. If both parties knew the messenger, no message stick was sent.

Roth said the shape of the stick changed from place to place; as one went north, the stick became squarer.

Roth remarked that if a person came across a butt of a tree containing honey, but did not have the time to cut it out and take it with him, he protected his find by placing a marker on it. One or two tussocks of grass would be tied





Clapstick. Collected Mapoon 1903. 51.8 × 6.16 cm (at squared end) × 4.99 cm (rounded end).

around a tree so no one else would touch it. Similarly, immature pods of the matchbox bean vine would be bound round in a similar fashion, to give a message to anyone passing that they belonged to someone else, who would claim them when they were ripe. The matchbox bean vine, *Entada scandens*, is now known as *Entada phaseoloides*.

Collection information. There is one message stick from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

E.13418 Roth's collection number is S.51. A photograph of this message stick is in Roth's Bulletin 8, plate 4, figure 1. Here he described it as "a cylindrical or ruler shaped, but slightly quadrangular blunted ends; soft lightwood. Each of the four faces deeply and widely transversely notched". It is 16.8 × 1.5 × 1.7 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4012M, frame 102. Roth's own photographic reference is V.2342.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1905. Bulletin 8: 9–10, pl. 4, fig. 1.

Mourning

Mourning objects

There are nine mourning objects from the Mapoon region collected by Roth from 1899 to 1903. They are not strictly secret/sacred, but because of the sensitive nature of the objects, information will only be given to those people who have a right to know. The Aboriginal Heritage Officers in the Museum should be able to help in this matter. Their telephone numbers are (02) 9320 6192 and (02) 9320 6186.

Collection information. E.13746, the location given in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 is Mapoon and Embley River, Cape York Peninsula. The collection date is 1899.

- E.13747 Mapoon, 1900.
- E.13748 Mapoon, 1899.
- E.13749 Mapoon, 1899.
- E.13750 Roth collected this mourning object in 1899, and the location given is Mapoon and Embley River.
- E.13751 Mapoon, 1903.
- E.13752 Mapoon, 1903.
- E.13753 Mapoon, 1903.
- E.13772 Mapoon, 1899.

Musical instruments

Clapsticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that sounding-sticks or clapsticks were found only inland and on the coast, from about the Daintree to the Herbert Rivers and maybe a little further south. Roth said that in Cape York Peninsula, where there were no clapsticks, men and women clapped their hands with open or bent palms to provide accompaniment for singing and dancing. Despite this statement, he collected four large clapsticks from Mapoon.

Collection information. There are four clapsticks from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.13799 Large red and white painted wooden stick, one end squared, the other rounded. It is 51.8 × 6.16 cm (squared end) by 4.99 cm (rounded end).
- E.13800 Large red and white painted wooden stick, one end squared, the other rounded. It is 50.4 × 3.5 cm (squared end) by 5 cm (rounded end)
- E.13801 Large red and white painted wooden stick, one end squared, the other rounded. It is 54.3 × 4.1 cm (squared end) by 5 cm (rounded end).
- E.13802 Large red and white painted wooden stick, one end squared, the other rounded. It is 57 × 3.7 cm (squared end) by 4.7 cm (rounded end).

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four clapsticks:

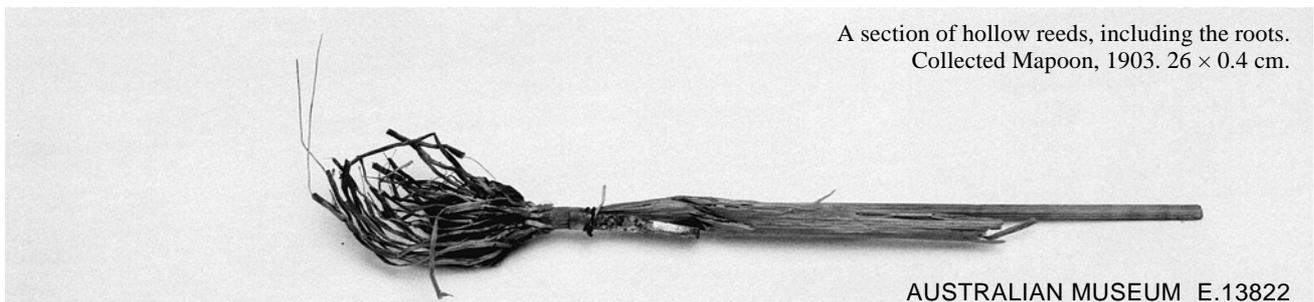
- E.13799 negative sheet 4064M, frame 482.
- E.13800 negative sheet 4064M, frame 483.
- E.13801 negative sheet 4064M, frame 484.
- E.13802 negative sheet 4064M, frame 485.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1902. Bulletin 4: 24.

Reed whistles

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that hollow reeds were used as musical instruments in the Tully River region, but not at Mapoon, yet it was here that he collected three reed whistles. Roth described the Tully River wind instrument as hollow reeds with the ends abruptly cut off. They were blown across the top of the reeds.



A section of hollow reeds, including the roots.
Collected Mapoon, 1903. 26 × 0.4 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13822

Collection information. Roth collected three reed whistles from Mapoon in 1903. They are all formed of a section of hollow reed, including the roots.

- E.13822 It is 26 × 0.4 cm.
E.13823 It is 24.5 × 0.8 cm.
E.13824 It is 15.6 × 0.6 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three hollow reed whistles:

- E.13822 negative sheet 4066M, frame 505.
E.13823 negative sheet 4067M, frame 506.
E.13824 negative sheet 4067M, frame 507.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1902. Bulletin 4: 24.

Raw material

Pigments

Information from Roth's Bulletins. White pigment, known as kaolin, pipeclay or hydrous silicate of alumina, was found on the Embley, Wenlock and Pennefather Rivers. Local people called it *aroa*. Pennefather River people used it as they found it, without any special preparation. People living around the Palmer River and at Cape Bedford pounded it to a powder, mixed it with water and let it dry in the sun before using it.

Roth said people living around the Pennefather River, and elsewhere used a greyish mud, called *mbru-i*, when white pigment was scarce.

Red pigment, red oxide of iron, was known locally as *po-to*. Roth thought it was probably obtained by burning yellow pigment, which was found at the surface, along the Pennefather River. Another red pigment, called *adeatalimi*, was made by mixing ferruginous (a rock containing iron) clay with sand from the Wenlock and Pennefather Rivers. Roth said there was another red pigment from the Wenlock known to local Pennefather River people as *trallabotha*, but he had not been able to obtain any of it for identification.

Yellow pigment, limonite, hydrous oxide of iron, from the Pennefather River was known to the locals as *parna*. It was used direct, without any preparation. Roth also referred to an ochre, clay and sand mixture used by people living around the Pennefather River and at Bathurst Head, also known locally as *parna*. He said it was like the limonite, but it was roasted. During this process it became red, and then was known as *aru-imberi*.

Occasionally dry pigments were used, but sometimes a pigment was chewed in the mouth and spat out, making a spotted pattern over an object, or person. People living around

the Pennefather River used an adhesive to fix the pigment to general painted surfaces, human blood for men's weapons and implements and honey on women's digging sticks.

Collection information. There are five samples of pigment from the Wenlock River. They do not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 30 January 1900.

- E.8982 white pigment.
E.8983 red pigment. Given to Port Warnambool Museum, Victoria in October 1900.
E.8984 yellow pigment. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register of 30 January 1900 includes "this is never roasted".
E.8985 yellow pigment. Given to Port Warnambool Museum, Victoria in October 1900. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register of 30 January 1900 includes "said to turn red when roasted".
E.8986 red pigment. Given to Port Warnambool Museum, Victoria in October 1900.

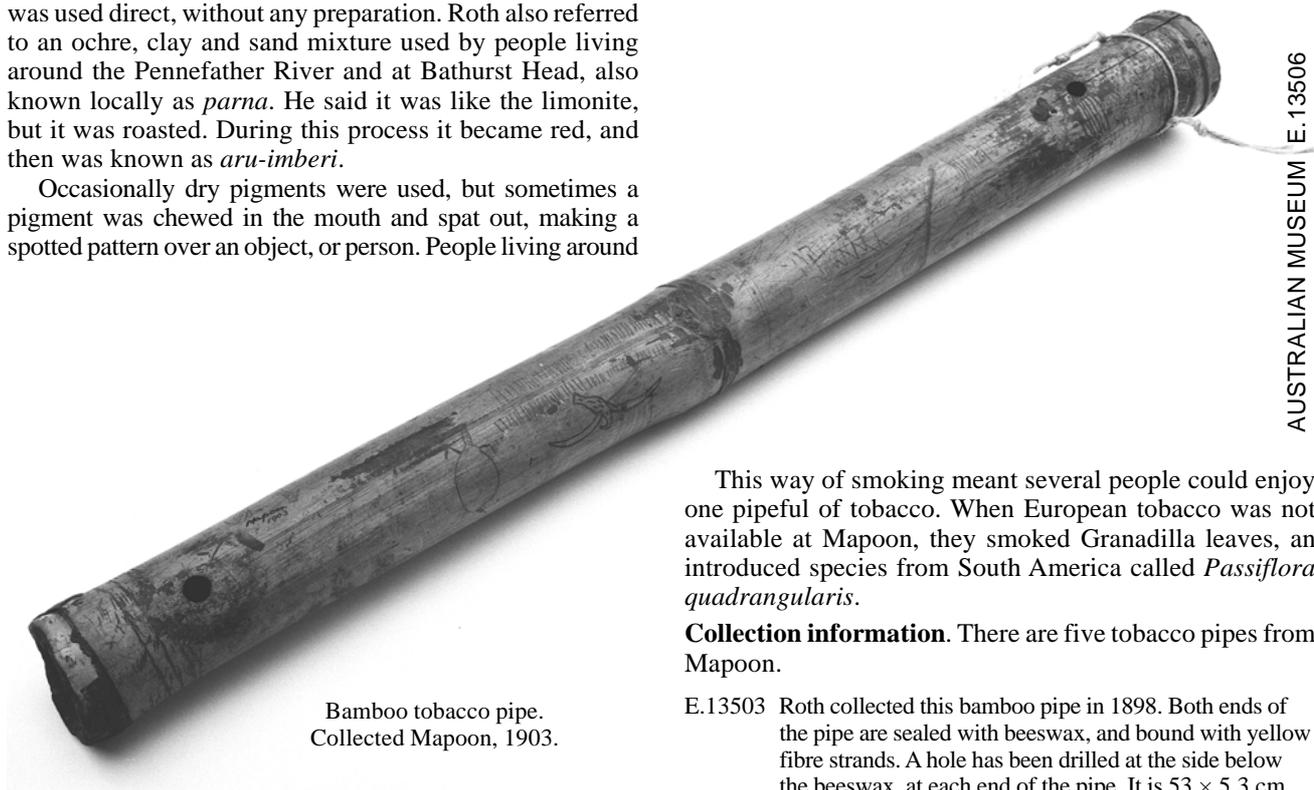
Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 14–15.

Tobacco pipes

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote in 1901 that with few exceptions, most Aboriginal people in north Queensland now used tobacco. Exceptions were those living on Bentinck and Mornington Islands, in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Pieces of bamboo were used when European pipes and tobacco were scarce. One end of the bamboo was closed with beeswax, if necessary, and a small hole was drilled at the side. Tobacco smoke from an ordinary pipe 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.



Bamboo tobacco pipe.
Collected Mapoon, 1903.

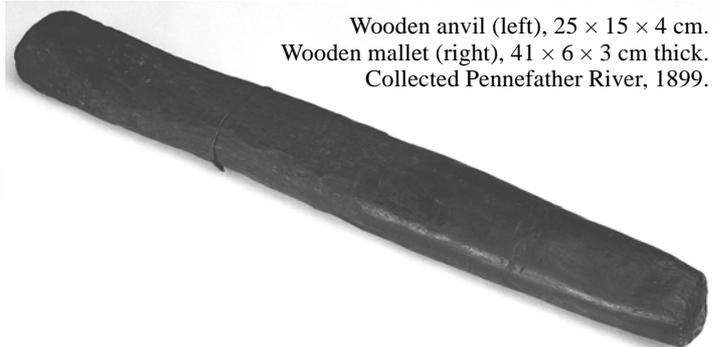
This way of smoking meant several people could enjoy one pipeful of tobacco. When European tobacco was not available at Mapoon, they smoked Granadilla leaves, an introduced species from South America called *Passiflora quadrangularis*.

Collection information. There are five tobacco pipes from Mapoon.

- E.13503 Roth collected this bamboo pipe in 1898. Both ends of the pipe are sealed with beeswax, and bound with yellow fibre strands. A hole has been drilled at the side below the beeswax, at each end of the pipe. It is 53 × 5.3 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13470



Wooden anvil (left), 25 × 15 × 4 cm.
Wooden mallet (right), 41 × 6 × 3 cm thick.
Collected Pennefather River, 1899.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13469

The following four pipes were collected in 1903.

- E.13504 One end of the pipe is sealed with beeswax. Beeswax is smeared around the opening at the other end. A hole has been drilled at the side, below the beeswax, at each end of the pipe. The pipe is decorated with incised figures of birds and dugongs. It is 73 × 6 cm.
- E.13505 One end of the pipe is stuffed with plant fibre, the other end plugged with beeswax. Two holes have been drilled at the side, one at each end of the pipe. It is 65.5 × 4 cm.
- E.13506 A label attached to the pipe states “assumed to be E.13506. J.Bible” One end of the pipe is sealed with beeswax. Beeswax is smeared around the opening at the other end. Two holes have been drilled at the side, one at each end of the pipe. It is decorated with drawings of birds, dugong, turtles, zigzag patterns and a rectangle. It is 63 × 6 cm.
- E.13507 Both ends of the pipe are blocked, one by bark, the other by cloth. Two holes have been drilled at the side, one at each end of the pipe. It is 68 × 5 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five pipes:

- E.13503 negative sheet 4026M, frame 186.
- E.13504 negative sheet 4027M, frame 187.
- E.13505 negative sheet 4027M, frame 188.
- E.13506 negative sheet 4027M, frame 189.
- E.13507 negative sheet 4027M, frame 190.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 31.

Tools

Anvil and mallet

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth said that the people living around the Pennefather, Wenlock (Batavia) and Embley Rivers used wooden anvils and hammers or mallets to pound food stuffs to soften them for eating.

Both objects were made of ironwood. The anvil was a flat, rectangular shaped block of wood up to about 27 cm long. The mallet was a relatively straight piece of wood with no difference between the head and the handle. It could be up to 47 cm long.

Roth said Nggerikudi people called the anvil *ko-ri*, and the mallet *ko*.

Collection information. There is one wooden anvil and mallet from the Pennefather River, collected by Roth in 1899.

- E.13470 Roth’s collection number for the wooden anvil is WH.6. It is 25 × 15 by 4 cm. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “used with E.13469, a wooden mallet”.
- E.13469 Roth’s collection number for the wooden mallet is WH.5. It is 41 × 6 cm and is 3 cm thick. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “used with E.13470, a wooden anvil”.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both the anvil and mallet:

- E.13470 negative sheet 4022M, frame 153.
- E.13469 negative sheet 4022M, frame 152.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 23.

Bone awls

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 tip into the hand held end 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.

Roth said the Nggerikudi people called the awl *rte-uma*.

Collection information. There are four bone awls from Mapoon.

- E.13890 Roth collected this bone awl in 1899. His collection number is BD.10. The awl has a rounded, flattened tip and is 27.7 × 1 cm.



Bone awl. Collected Mapoon, 1899.
27.7 × 1 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13890

The following three bone awls were collected in 1903

- E.13893 Roth's collection number is BD.27. The awl has a rounded, flattened tip and is 18.3 × 1.3 cm
- E.13902 Roth's collection number is BD.29. The awl has a rounded, flattened tip and is 30.3 × 2.6 cm.
- E.13903 Roth's collection number is BD.30. The awl has a rounded, flattened tip and is 25 × 1.8 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four bone awls:

- E.13890 negative sheet 4075M, frame 573.
- E.13893 negative sheet 4075M, frame 576.
- E.13902 negative sheet 4077M, frame 585.
- E.13903 negative sheet 4077M, frame 586.

Reference

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

Stone axes

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said stone axe heads were all made in much the same way. Rough pecking and grinding shaped the axe head. 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 (see volume 2 of the Roth Catalogue by K. Khan) 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 a block of stone into shape or just by breaking a piece of stone.

The wedge-shaped axe head of the Wenlock and Pennefather Rivers was both used as an axe for cutting into trees, and as an adze for such work as hollowing out the body of a canoe. When used as an adze, the handle was unfastened and re-fixed at right angles to its previous axis as illustrated in Bulletin 7, pl. IX, fig.56.

The next illustration from the same plate, fig.57, shows an alternative fixing of an axe blade.

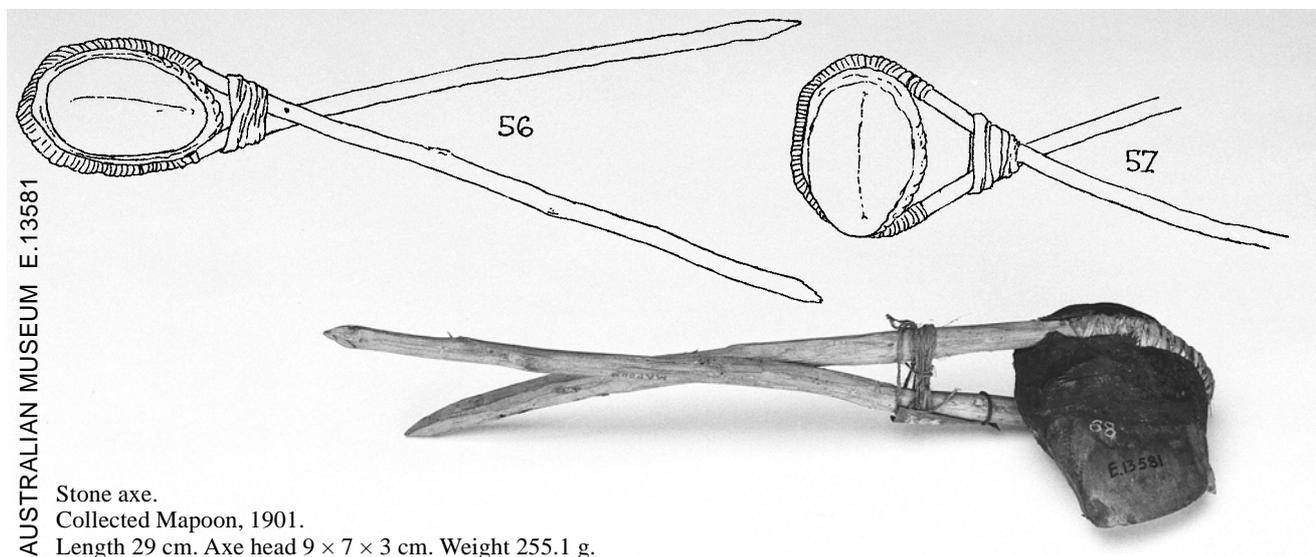
Roth said this ability to reverse the handle to suit the task at hand was shown in iron axe heads used at Mapoon. They were made to serve this dual purpose, depending on their angle of fixation to a handle. In 1902, Roth wrote that the superintendent in charge of Mapoon station, while fencing, unearthed such an axe, mounted as an adze.

Judging by models of axes made by older men from the Wenlock and Embley Rivers, the handle was made from cane from a small straggly tree called *pre* by the Nggerikudi people. It came from a plant called *Coelospermum reticulatum*, now known as *Pogonolobus reticulatus*. The cane was bent at its middle so as to form two limbs. The stone axe head was fixed into the bend with twine and beeswax or adhesive. The two cane limbs were bound by twine, tied closely below the axe head. This resulted in crossed handles or limbs. When these limbs were held, there was an increase in springiness in the handle and a tightening up of the axe head in a pincer-like grip. Roth thought grooving found on some axe heads suggested a hafting process at some stage, otherwise why make a groove.

Collection information. There are two edge ground axes and one axe head from Mapoon.

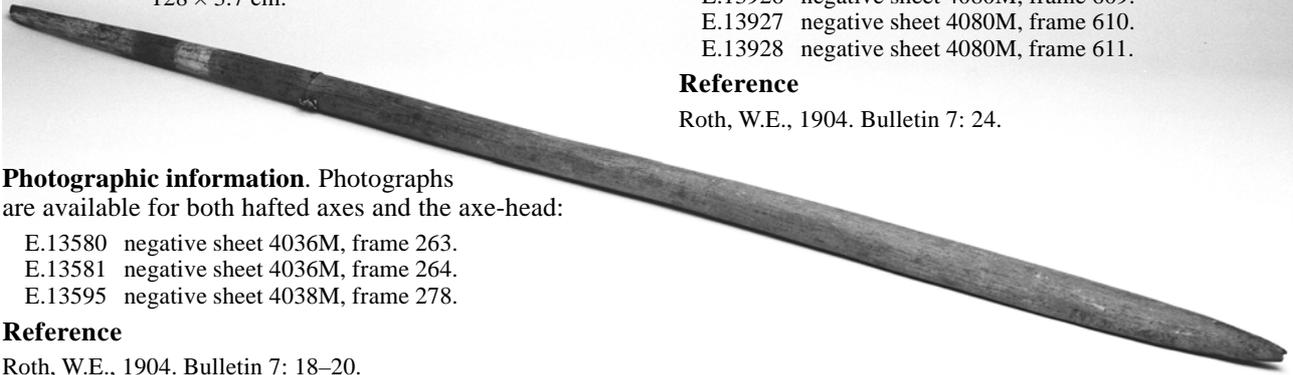
The two small edge ground axe heads were collected in 1901.

- E.13580 Roth's collection number is 67. The small edge ground axe head is held in a handle made from a strip of cane bent in the middle. Handspun bark fibre string embedded in adhesive holds it in place. The two handles are bound with tendon and tightly tied just below the axe head so that the handles cross over each other. There are strips of fibre binding underneath the stone axe head. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "celts found at Mapoon, Batavia River and fixed by local natives by their original method of fixation". It is 35 cm long. The stone axe head is 9 × 7 × 3 cm. It weighs 324.25 g.
- E.13581 Roth's collection number is 68. The small edge ground axe head is held with handspun bark fibre twine and adhesive. The two handles are bound with handspun bark fibre twine just below the axe head so that the handles cross over each other. There are also strips of fibre binding under the axe head. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "celts found at Mapoon, Batavia River and fixed by local natives by their original method of fixation". It is 29 cm long. The axe head is 9 × 7 × 3 cm. It weighs 255.1 g.
- E.13595 Roth's collection number is ST.33. It was collected in 1899. Small, square, wedge-shaped edge ground stone axe head. There is no handle. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "stone celt or axe". It is figured in Bulletin 7, figs. 63 and 63a. It is 7.7 × 6.9 × 3.9 cm. It weighs 348.15 g.



Stone axe.
Collected Mapoon, 1901.
Length 29 cm. Axe head 9 × 7 × 3 cm. Weight 255.1 g.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13927
Digging stick. Collected Mapoon, 1899.
128 × 3.7 cm.



Photographic information. Photographs are available for both hafted axes and the axe-head:

- E.13580 negative sheet 4036M, frame 263.
- E.13581 negative sheet 4036M, frame 264.
- E.13595 negative sheet 4038M, frame 278.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 18–20.

Digging sticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that these were essentially women's implements, carried about by them and used to dig up yams and roots. They were well designed for the use to which they were put. Made of strong and heavy timber, the digging sticks could be anything between 60 to 120 cm long. The attenuated spatulate end easily dug into the ground, and not only offered increased leverage in loosening the soil, but also helped to shovel it to the surface with a to-and-fro movement. The end was often charred with fire to harden it.

Roth wrote that in 1904, when Aboriginal people lived close to European settlements, the spatulate end was replaced by a length of rounded scrap-iron, or sometimes a table knife blade, firmly cemented into a handle. Similarly, a broken spear tip was occasionally used as a digging stick.

The timber used came from the harder species of mangrove and eucalyptus trees, and from ironwood where available. Other timbers used by people living around the Pennefather River were ones they called *lar*, *Acacia rothii* and *niadoa*, *Unona wardiana*, now known as *Desmos wardianus*.

The handle was often decorated with red and white painted bands, or one colour may be smeared on indiscriminately. On the Pennefather River, the women fixed pigment to the digging stick with beeswax.

Roth said local Nggerikudi people called the digging stick *kirtru*.

Collection information. There are three digging sticks from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899.

- E.13926 Roth's collection number is YS.6. Hardwood, one end rounded, the other spatulate-shaped. Most of the stick is painted red. Faint markings suggest that white bands may have been painted on the stick. It is 117 × 3 cm.
- E.13927 Roth's collection number is YS.7. Heavy wooden stick, one end rounded, the other spatulate-shaped. Faint red and white painted bands at the hand held end. It is 128 × 3.7 cm.
- E.13928 Roth's collection number is YS.4. Heavy wooden stick, one end spatulate-shaped, the other end chiselled to a blunt point. There is evidence of red paint on the stick, with faint white bands at one end. It is 97 × 2.6 cm

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three digging sticks:

- E.13926 negative sheet 4080M, frame 609.
- E.13927 negative sheet 4080M, frame 610.
- E.13928 negative sheet 4080M, frame 611.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 24.

Shell drills

Information from Roth's Bulletins. The shell drill used by people living around the Wenlock (Batavia), Pennefather and Embley Rivers was made with a sharply pointed piece of broken shell from *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Geloina erosa*. The chip was fixed with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive into the split end of a small straight wooden stick. It was used for piercing segments of shell for necklaces and such like. Roth the local name used was *onyi*, which was also the name of the shell used.

Collection information. There are four shell drills from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899. In all four drills the shell chip is fixed with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive into the split end of a small straight wooden stick.

- E.13910 Roth's collection number is BD.15. Its total length is 27 × 1.2 cm. Length of exposed fragment of shell is 2.1 cm.
- E.13912 Roth's collection number is BD.33. Its total length is 39.6 × 1.6 cm. Length of exposed fragment of shell is 1.4 cm.
- E.13913 Roth's collection number is BD.34. Its total length is 36.3 × 1.5 cm. Length of exposed fragment of shell is 2.6 cm.
- E.13914 Roth's collection number is BD.35. Its total length is 36 × 1.7 cm. Length of exposed fragment of shell is 1 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four shell drills:

- E.13910 negative sheet 4078M, frame 593.
- E.13912 negative sheet 4078M, frame 595.
- E.13913 negative sheet 4078M, frame 596.
- E.13914 negative sheet 4078M, frame 597.

Reference

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

Shell drill. Collected Mapoon, 1899. 39.6 × 1.6 cm. Length of exposed chip of shell 1.4 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13912

Food-collecting stick

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. A long twig from the Crow Ash tree, *Malaisia tortuosa*, now known as *Malaisia scandens*, was used by people throughout northern Queensland to mop up honey and green ant “mush”. The ends were prepared by being well chewed and then dried, so as to become frayed. Roth sketched the frayed end of a food-collecting stick in Bulletin 7, pl. xxii, fig. 188.

The stick was poked up into a tree-hole after a bees’ nest, and the honey stuck to the frayed end. It was then pulled out and sucked by the hunter. On the Pennefather River a species of bamboo also was used. Local people called this *ngoro*.

Such twigs were usually carried from camp to camp and named after the plant used. Roth said the Nggerikudi called it *kai-inuna*, the name of the *Malaisia* (also used in making fishing lines, woven bags and skirts).

Roth noted that once the beehive was located, various materials that acted as mops and sponges were commonly used to get the honey out to save cutting away the timber.

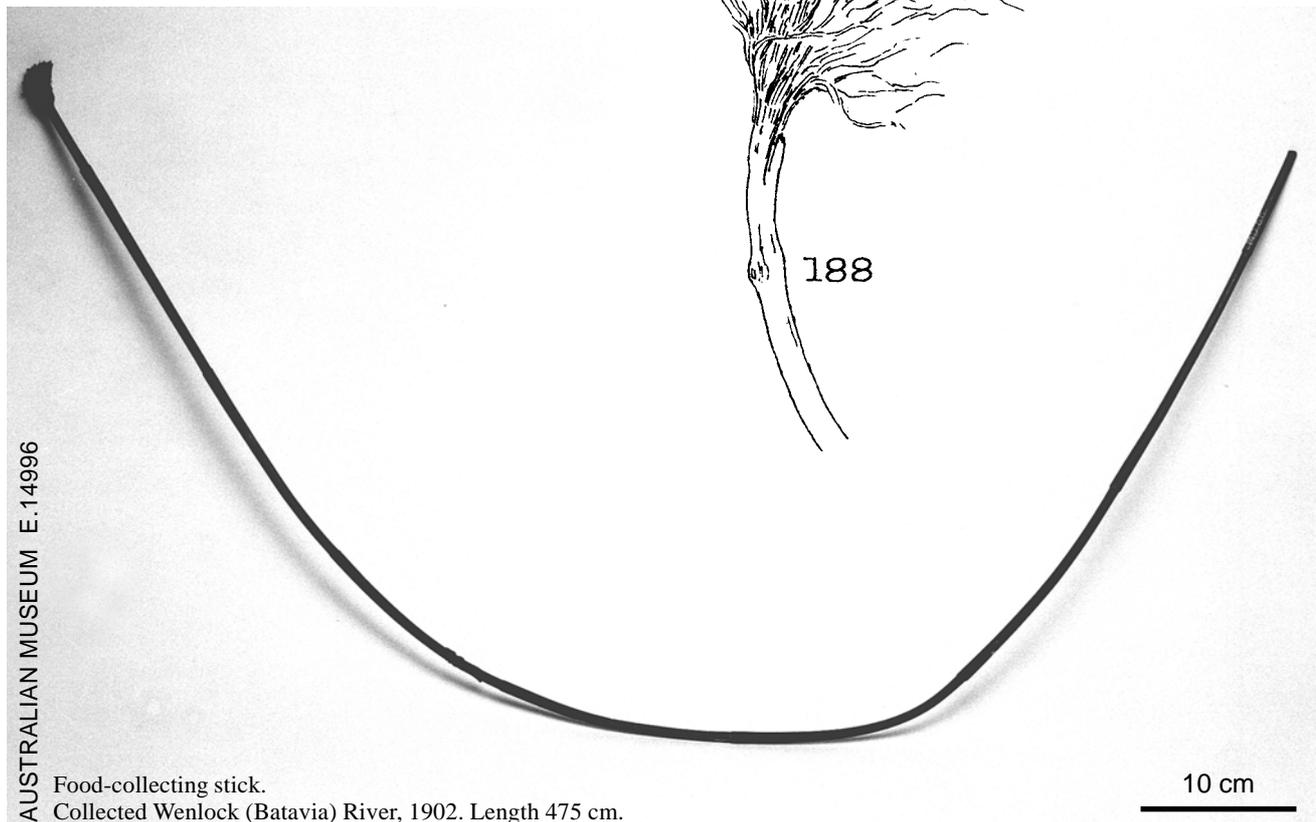
Collection information. There is one food-collecting stick from the Wenlock (Batavia) River, collected by Roth in 1902.

E.14996 Roth’s collection number is MD.66. It is a curved length of Crow Ash with one end frayed. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “the sugarbag stick”. It is 169 cm long and 0.6 cm in diameter.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4213M, frame 1680.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9.
- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 17.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 26.



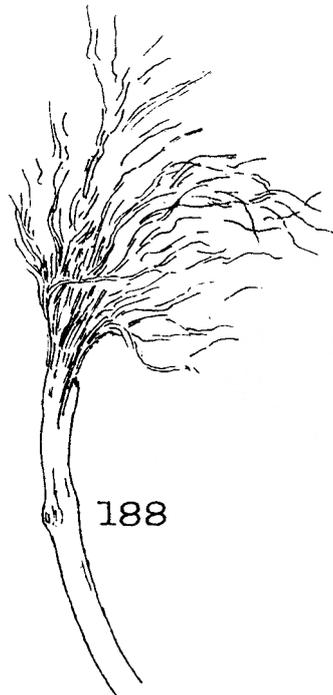
Stone hammer

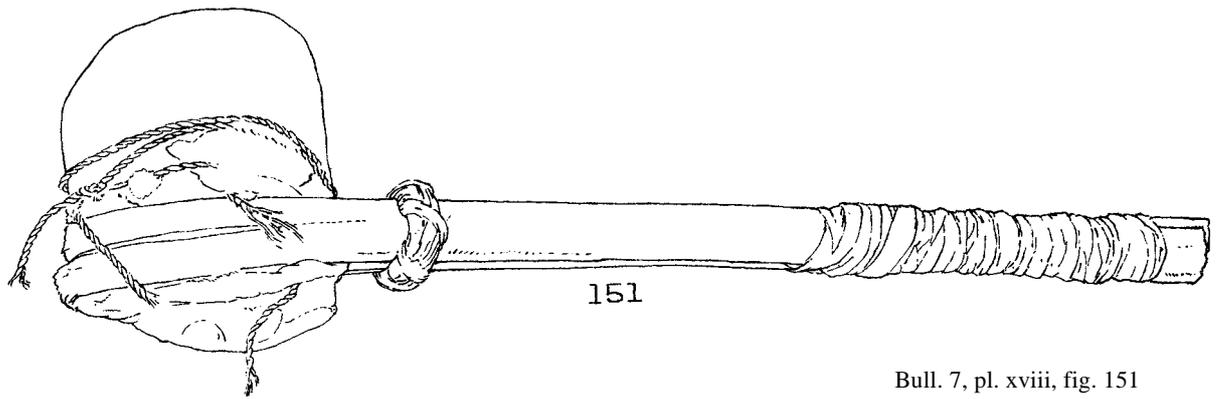
Information from Roth’s Bulletins. The head of a stone hammer was made from a sub-angular pebble, without any shaping by flaking or grinding. The worn face often showed how the tool was used. The pebble was fixed into its handle in the same angle as a stone axe head when used as an axe. It was fixed to the handles in a similar manner too, with handspun bark fibre twine and adhesive as shown in Roth’s drawing in Bulletin 7, pl. xviii, fig. 151.

Stone hammer. Collected Mapoon, 1902–1903.
7.5 × 7.2 × 4.6 cm. Weight 356 g.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13634





Bull. 7, pl. xviii, fig. 151

The stone hammer was used to tap on bark when the sheet was removed from a tree trunk. Removal of bark from a tree was usually done at the end of the wet season when the sap was up, and the bark slipped easily. When a sheet of bark was required, one long and two transverse cuts were made on the tree trunk. The bark was removed by tapping on the sheet with stones or a stone hammer. Hammering helped loosen the bark from the sub adjacent tissues after the cuts had been made.

Stone hammers also were used to break open some of the harder nuts, like that from the pandanus.

Roth found stone hammers being used by people living in the Princess Charlotte Bay hinterland in 1898, and again on the Palmer River in 1899, but did not specifically mention their use around Mapoon or the Pennefather River region. He also commented that stone hammers could have been used in the making of stone axes.

Collection information. There is one stone hammer from Mapoon, collected by Roth around 1902–1903.

- E.13634 Roth's collection number is ST.66. A small square-shaped stone hammer with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive covering half the implement. The edge of the hammer is blunt and does not appear to have been ground. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Stone celt (hammer?)". It is $7.5 \times 7.2 \times 4.6$ cm. It weighs 356 g.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4043M, frame 317.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 9, 23.

Shell knives

Information from Roth's Bulletins. It was only in the Peninsula, on the Pennefather River that Roth saw the whole valve of a shell fixed into a handle to make a shell knife. This was used to make body scars, before glass was introduced by Europeans.

More usually a fragment of shell, *Tellina pharaonis*, was fixed into the split end of a small wooden stick with the cutting edge projecting as shown in this sketch from Bulletin 7, pl. xvii, fig. 142.

Occasionally two valves were similarly fixed in the one end of a handle. Roth said the reason given to him was that if one were to get broken during the course of the operation, the other would be available. The patient would then have no excuse to postpone the painful operation.

Roth said local Ngerikudi people called this *tchui*. The shell was called *boranganama*.

Collection information. There are two shell knives from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.13918 Sharpened piece of shell inserted at one end of the stick, and held in place with handspun bark fibre string. Its total length is 21.8×1.1 cm. The shell is 4×1.5 cm.
- E.13919 Sharpened piece of shell inserted at one end of the stick, and held in place with handspun bark fibre string. Its total length is 22.7×1.3 cm. The shell is 4.2×1.8 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both shell knives:

- E.13918 negative sheet 4079M, frame 601.
E.13919 negative sheet 4079M, frame 602.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 22.

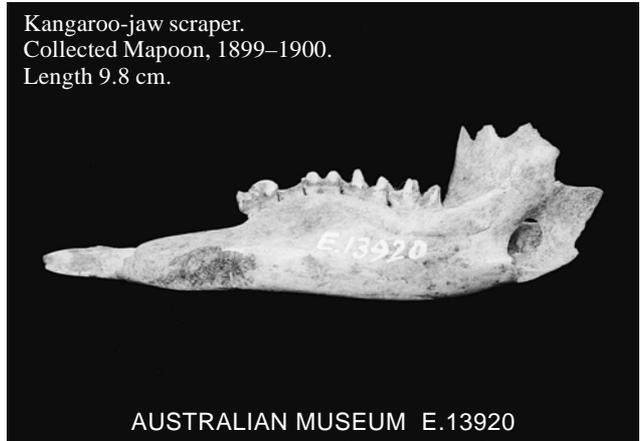


Shell knife. Collected Mapoon, 1903. Total length 21.8×1.1 cm. The shell is 4×1.5 cm.

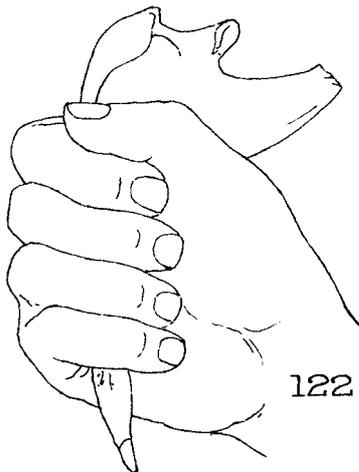


Kangaroo-jaw scraper

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living around the Wenlock (Batavia), Pennefather and Embley Rivers, and in the McDonnell, Moreton and Mein districts used half the lower jaw of a kangaroo with molars and one incised



tooth as a scraper to sharpen spear tips. In addition, it was used to cut the groove into which a barb was fixed in some spears. The only preparation was to heat the incisor over a fire to make it easier to break off a section to create a sharp cutting edge. It was used by scraping towards the operator as illustrated by Roth in Bulletin 7, pl. xvi, fig.122.



The kangaroo-jaw scraper was a regular article for barter and was known as *no-ana* by the Pennefather River people. Roth noted that Mr Etheridge, the then Director of the Australian Museum told him an identical implement was used in the Collingwood Bay district of what was then known as Eastern British New Guinea.

In the same district where these kangaroo-jaw scrapers were found, kangaroo-tooth scrapers also were used for a similar purpose, but with a little bit more preparation to structure the tool. It is the next tool to be described in this catalogue.

Collection information. There are three kangaroo-jaw scrapers from Mapoon, collected by Roth around 1899–1900.

- E.13920 Roth's collection number is BD.13. Half of the lower jaw of a kangaroo with four molars and one incisor tooth. It is 9.8 cm long.
- E.13921 Roth's collection number is BD.14. Half of the lower jaw of a kangaroo with five molars and one incisor tooth. It is 12.5 cm long.

- E.13922 Roth's collection number is BD.15. Half of the lower jaw of a kangaroo with five molars and one incisor tooth. It is 15.8 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three kangaroo-jaw scrapers:

- E.13920 negative sheet 4079M, frame 603.
- E.13921 negative sheet 4079M, frame 604.
- E.13922 negative sheet 4079M, frame 605.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 21.

Kangaroo-tooth scraper

Information from Roth's Bulletins. The kangaroo-tooth scraper was used by people living around the Wenlock (Batavia), Pennefather and Embley Rivers, and in the McDonnell, Moreton and Mein districts, and most of the northern part of Cape York Peninsula.



The main body of the scraper was made from a flat, rectangular piece of ironwood shaped like a small bat. One side was left rough or roughened with adhesive, and the other side had a smooth surface.

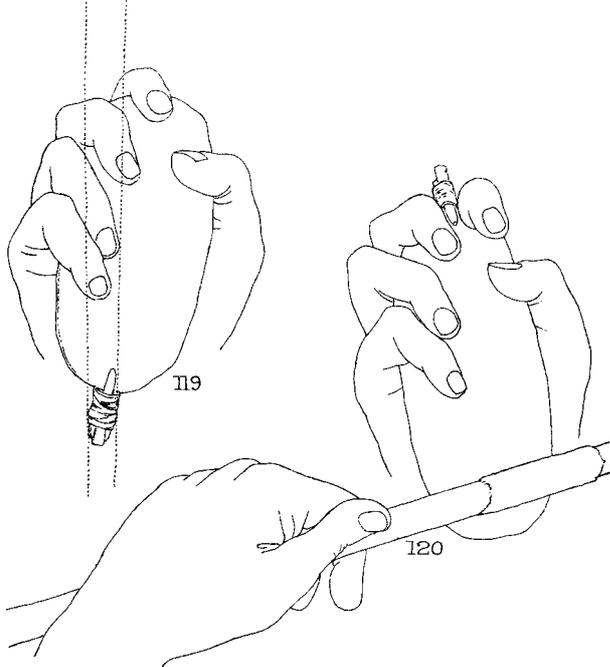
A kangaroo's lower incisor tooth, called *mbau-u*, was fixed with gut or handspun bark fibre string and adhesive to the small protruding piece of wood at the middle of one end, on the smooth side of the ironwood.

The tip of the tooth had been previously put into the edge of a flame and broken off abruptly by well-directed and graduated pressure, so as to give a sharp cutting edge

to the enamel. The tool, called *forma* by local people, was used to sharpen spear tips and in some spears, for cutting the groove into which the barb was fixed.

For these tasks, the tool was held as shown in Roth's illustration in Bulletin 7, pl. xv, fig. 119. The blob of adhesive usually found on the rough side of the ironwood helped prevent it slipping along the palm of the hand. The scraping was made in a direction towards the operator. The smooth surface of the ironwood, greased with face perspiration, was used as a smoothing board, the right hand held fixed, the left one doing the twirling. Roth's illustration in Bulletin 7, pl. xv, fig. 120 shows how the kangaroo-tooth scraper was used.

In the same district where this scraper was found, half the lower jaw of the kangaroo with tooth in place was also used for a similar purpose without any preparation other



than sharpening the incisor by fire and pressure (see previous page).

Collection information. There are seven kangaroo-tooth scrapers from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899.

- E.13955 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 21.2 cm. Board 19.7 × 6.2 cm; tooth 5 cm long.
- E.13956 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 18.6 cm. Board 17.6 × 5.3 cm; tooth 4.2 cm long.
- E.13957 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 18.6 cm. Board 18.2 × 6.2 cm; tooth 2.3 cm long.
- E.13958 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 20.5 cm. Board 19.7 × 7.4 cm; tooth 3.1 cm long.

- E.13959 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 21.7 cm. Board 21 × 6 cm; tooth 3.5 cm long.
- E.13960 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 17 cm. Board 14.5 × 5 cm; tooth 4 cm long.
- E.13961 Ironwood board with kangaroo incisor tooth attached to the smooth side of the wood with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The tip of the incisor has been trimmed to a cutting edge. Total length 19.7 cm. Board 15.5 × 5 cm; tooth 4.7 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all seven kangaroo-tooth scrapers:

- E.13955 negative sheet 4083M, frame 638.
- E.13956 negative sheet 4083M, frame 639.
- E.13957 negative sheet 4083M, frame 640.
- E.13958 negative sheet 4084M, frame 641.
- E.13959 negative sheet 4084M, frame 642.
- E.13960 negative sheet 4084M, frame 643.
- E.13961 negative sheet 4084M, frame 644.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 21.

Shell scraper

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Shell scrapers could be made from either pieces broken from robust shells to make a sharp edge or whole shells with a strong lip or margin. Thin pieces of *Donax* shell, *Donax australis*, now known as *Donax cuneatus*, were used by people living on the Keppel Islands as scrapers. Broken shells of *Pedinogyra cuminghamii*, now known as *Pedinogyra hayii*, at Miriam Vale, and *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora* shells on Bentinck Island were used similarly as scrapers. *Cyrena* shells, *Cyrena jukesii*, now known as *Geloina erosa*, were used throughout the entire northeastern and Gulf coasts of Cape York Peninsula. A *Donax*, *Cyrena* or *Mytilus* shell could also be used in one piece, without breaking or chipping, because its lip or margin was strong enough to withstand the pressure involved in scraping.

Shell scraper. Collected Mapoon, 1903.
7.8 × 7.2 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13916

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13817
Doll. Collected Mapoon, 1903. 32.5 × 1.2 cm.



Collection information. There is one shell scraper from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903. It is just one valve of the shell.

E.13916 Oval triangular shell, the outer edge showing chipped use. Shell is 7.8 × 7.2 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4078M, frame 599.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 21.

Toys

Dolls

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote about little girls playing with dolls only on the Lower Tully River, Cape Bedford and Cairns. These dolls were made from forked sticks, but they had no head, arms or dress. On Keppel Island girls and women nursed dolls in the form of cones, painted red. Roth said he wondered if the dolls from Keppel Island were also charms to ensure strong healthy children. He had found several of these cone dolls mixed up with bones and debris in a cave in the North Keppel Island.

Collection information. There are two dolls from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Rhizophora seed? not described".

E.13817 Handspun bark fibre string skirt twined around a slightly curved stick that has been painted black and white. It is 32.5 × 1.2 cm. The skirt is 7 × 4.2 cm. The skirt tie is 12.7 cm long.

E.13818 Only the handspun bark fibre string skirt remains. It is 21.2 × 5.5 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both dolls:

E.13817 negative sheet 4066M, frame 500.

E.13818 negative sheet 4066M, frame 501.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1902. Bulletin 4: 13.

Baby's rattles

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth did not write much about shell rattles except to state that people living around the Pennefather River made children's rattles by stringing together certain shells and tying the ends.

Collection information. There are three shell baby rattles from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899.

E.13811 26 cowrie shells, *Cypraea subviridis*, are strung together on handspun bark fibre string threaded through holes drilled in the shells. Length of tied rattle is 29 cm. The average shell is 3.1 × 1.7 × 1.7 cm.

E.13812 41 *Arca pilula* shells, now known as *Potiarca pilula*, are strung together on handspun bark fibre string threaded through holes drilled in the shells. Length of tied rattle is 16 cm. The average shell is 2.8 × 2.7 × 1.8 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13812

Shell baby rattle. Collected Mapoon, 1899.

Length of tied rattle 1.6 cm.

The average shell is 2.8 × 2.7 × 1.8 cm.





AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13480

Two handed club. Collected Mapoon, 1903.
71.3 × 6.5 × 3 cm deep.

E.13813 13 *Strombus campbelli* shells are strung together on handspun bark fibre string threaded through holes drilled in the shells. Length of tied rattle is 16 cm. The average shell is 5.8 × 2.8 × 1.8 cm.

The next four shells do not form part of the Roth collection purchased in 1905, but were given to the Australian Museum by Roth and registered on 11 December, 1899. Roth collected them at the mouth of the Wenlock (Batavia) River. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register includes "for children's rattles".

- E.8862 two greenish cowrie shells, *Cypraea subviridis*. Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38, "*koeri* (cf. *cowry*) only for making children's rattles".
- E.8869–E.8870 two ark shells, *Arca pilula*, now known as *Potiarca pilula*. It was known locally as *aruitidi*. Roth noted in his 1900 manuscript, page 38, "and for making children's rattles". These molluscs also were a source of food.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three shell baby rattles:

- E.13811 negative sheet 4065M, frame 494.
E.13812 negative sheet 4065M, frame 495.
E.13813 negative sheet 4065M, frame 496.

References

- Roth, W.E., 1900. [A Report to the Under-Secretary, Home Dept.] On the Aborigines of the Pennefather (Coen) River Districts, and other coastal tribes occupying the country between the Batavia and Embley Rivers [visited by the Minister on his last trip]. Cooktown, 8 January: 38.
- Roth, W.E., 1902. Bulletin 4: 24.

Weapons

Club

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth writing in 1904 said the two-handed club used by people living around the Pennefather, Wenlock and Embley Rivers was no longer used. It was made from an aerial root of the black mangrove, *Rhizophora mucronata*. An aerial root was chosen with a bend in it, so that when cut away to a length of about 75 cm it would include the markedly flattened portion beyond it, which made the head of the club.

After the root was removed from the tree, it was stripped of its bark, while being heated over a fire, and finally painted red and white. The convex edge of the enlarged head was the striking surface.

The club was used for breaking up fragments for firewood, for removing a tree limb after it had been hacked round by a stone axe, and for splintering rotten timber containing edible grubs.

Local people living around the Pennefather River called this club *au-nu*.

Collection information. There is one two-handed club from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1903.

- E.13480 Bent, with a broad head, tapering to the hand grip. Both ends have been squared off. The club has been painted red at the grip end and white at the flattened end. It is 71.3 × 6.5 × 3 cm deep.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4024M, frame 163.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 24.

Spears

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living around the Pennefather River, called spears *che-a*. In Bulletin 13 Roth states the spears were made by morticing the butt or hand-held end into the shaft or tip. In Bulletin 7, he says the reverse, that spears were made by morticing the tip or shaft into the hand-held or butt section. It is hard to tell which was correct because the spears are heavily bound at this juncture. A bone awl made from a marsupial or bird leg bone, chopped and ground to shape was always used in the morticing process.

Roth described this morticing process in Bulletin 7 as it related to spears from the Pennefather River region.

- 1 Some twine was tied tightly around the hand held end of the spear, about 10–13 cm from the end. It was then split open with a piece of shell. The wedge now formed was kept open with a piece of wood.
- 2 The awl was now used to scrape and pick out the core on either side of the split, so as to leave a circular opening when the piece of wood and twine were removed.
- 3 The shaft or tip section was now fitted in and held there with adhesive. The mortice was bound round and round, either with vegetable fibre twine or kangaroo tendon. This was all fixed into position with adhesive and finally smoothed over with a smoothing board, which was like a putty knife. It was greased with forehead perspiration before use.

The tip could be single or multiple barbed. Multiple pointed spears, such as fishing spears, were morticed as one. To give springiness, wood shavings were wedged in before being permanently bound in place. The extreme tip was called *pe-udana*.

The barb, except in stingray spine spears, was of a kangaroo-bone (now often replaced by thick iron wire) fixed into a longitudinal groove. The groove was cut with a tooth scraper and the bone tip fixed into the groove where it projected beyond the body of the spear. It was then bound round and round with fibre twine and finished with a loop. This was all finally covered with adhesive to give strength.

The extreme butt end of all spears thrown with spearthrowers, except those made of bamboo, was covered with twine and adhesive, prior to the hole being made by the awl for the reception of the spearthrower peg. Occasionally some spears could occasionally be thrown with the hand alone.

While timber used for the barbed end of all spears varied, wood used for the grip end of nearly all spears came from *Acacia rothii*, which local people called *lar*.

These spears were usually coloured the same way. They were painted with a small band of white at the tip end, then a similar width of red, then a longer stripe of black. Fixative used was either gum from a *Melaleuca* tree or human blood from the arm.

Roth wrote that in Pennefather River country kangaroos were killed by spearing, but the method of getting within striking distance varied. If the hunter was alone, he would paint himself completely with yellow ochre (which was rubbed well into the armpits to kill the smell of perspiration) and try to look like an ant bed under the guise of which he could gradually get very close to the kangaroo. If a hunting party was formed, everyone spread out and so gradually reduced the contained area around the kangaroo. At another time a general drive may be organized, the younger men hunting the animals into the direction of the older ones who were waiting with their spears. Alternatively, in the circling

method just mentioned, instead of closing in on the marsupials in the centre, a $\frac{3}{4}$ circle of fire may be lit, the best spearthrowers watching for the animals to emerge from between its two extremities.

In Roth's general discussion on spears, he refers to *Type a*—short, light spears; *Type b*—stingray spine spears; *Type c*—heavy long spears with the butt or hand held end shorter than the shaft or tip; and *Type d*—similar to *Type c* but with the butt end longer than the shaft.

Type a spears: A short light spear, the butt end longer (up to $2\frac{1}{2} \times$) than the shaft or tip, and without barbs. It was used only to play with, and called *po-ini*. It could be made of five different timbers named by the Nggerikudi people as follows; *Hibiscus brachysiphonius*, called *yi-awara* (the roots were roasted and hammered for spears), *Croton triacros*, called *bo-atha*; *Macaranga tanarius*, called *arnabuta*, *Desmodium umbellatum*, now known as *Dendrolobium umbellatum*, called *owona*, and *Pluchea indica*, called *onogona*.

Collection information (*Type a* spears). Lightwood spears. There are three of these lightwood spears from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899. A note in the Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 states "lightwood shafts and plain hardwood points".

- E.15120 Roth's collection number is SP.101. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Ambuta = name of timber—the *po-ini* spear". This wood is *Macaranga tanarius*. It is 92.6 cm long.
- E.15121 Roth's collection number is SP.102. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Yi-awara = name of timber—the *po-ini* spear". This wood is *Hibiscus brachysiphonius*. The spear has been missing since 1989.
- E.15122 Roth's collection number is SP.103. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 also states "Bo-atha = name of timber—the *po-ini* spear". This wood is *Croton triacros*. This spear has been missing since 1989.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available for one of the spears:

- E.15120 negative sheet 4229M, frame 1804.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 13, 29.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 191–192.

Information from Roth's Bulletins (*Type b* spears). Stingray spine barbed spears. Long, heavy spears with the butt end longer than the shaft or tip end. The point or barb was made of stingray spines—a few central ones surrounded by others in a circle. These spears were used for fighting. The Nggerikudi people called them *larna-pe*, the same name as that used for a stingray spine. These spears were made of different woods named by the Nggerikudi people as follows: the cotton tree, *Hibiscus tiliaceus* called *kornbrana*, *Wedelia biflora* (known in NSW as *Melanthera biflora*) called *tondronga-nama*, *Cordia subcordata* called *lava*. Roth suggested a bamboo called *ro-amada* also could be used.

Collection information (*Type b* spears). There is one heavy spear with stingray spines fixed to the tip collected by Roth from Mapoon in 1899.

- E.15093 Roth's collection number is SP.96. Five stingray spines are fixed to the end of the spear with adhesive and handspun bark fibre string. There

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15120
Lightwood spear. Collected Mapoon, 1899. 92.6 cm.

a



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15093
Heavy spear with stingray spines. Collected Mapoon, 1899. Length 206 cm.

b



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15060
Single bone barbed spear. Collected Mapoon, 1898. Length 234.5 cm.

c



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15131
Multiple-barbed spear. Collected Wenlock (Batavia) River, 1902. Length 266 cm.

d



are remains of white paint near the end of the spear. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "pointed with bunch of stingray spines. Wood *Hibiscus tiliaceus*. *Larnape* = spear." It is 206 cm long.

Photographic information. There is a black and white photograph available, negative sheet 4225M, frame 1777.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 191–192.

Information from Roth's Bulletins (Type c spears). Heavy, long spears, the butt end of which was much shorter (one fifth or even less) than the shaft end. It was used for hunting kangaroos, fish etc. It was made from a timber called *ombo*, bartered from the Embley River. Other timbers used were *Premna obtusifolia*, called *mo-odo*, or *Eucalyptus tessellaris*, now known as *Corymbia tessellaris*, called *winnichanna*. The Nggerikudi people called these spears *to-ono*.

Collection information (Type c spears). Single bone barbed spear. There are two heavy spears from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1898. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "spear (single barbed). Spear called *to-ono*".

E.15060 Roth's collection number is SP.97. A bone barb is attached with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum's Anthropology

register dated 1905 includes "*ombo* = timber". It is 234.5 cm long.

E.15073 Roth's collection number is SP.98. A bone barb is attached with adhesive and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "*mo-odo*—timber". It is 234 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both spears:

E.15060 negative sheet 4221M, frame 1744.
E.15073 negative sheet 4223M, frame 1757.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 29.
Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 191–192.

Information from Roth's Bulletins (Type d spears). These spears are similar to *Type c* spears but the butt end of the spear was much longer (five times) than the shaft or pointed end, which was multiple (3–4 pieces) barbed, and used for hunting kangaroo, fish etc. Roth said the Nggerikudi people called these spears *de-ro*. The hand held or butt end was made from *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, *Thespesia populnea*, called *pe-amanggan*, or *Tristania suaveolens*, now known as *Lophostemon suaveolens* var. *suaveolens*, called *ta-andruno*. The shaft or pointed end was made from *Carapa moluccensis*, called *adaimbite*.

Collection information (Type d spears). Multiple barbed spears. There are five spears, two from the Wenlock River and three from Mapoon. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Fish spear (3 barbed points)". This refers to all but the last spear listed.

E.15124 Roth collected this spear from the Wenlock River in 1899. His collection number is SP.7. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "*Thespesia populnea* timber". It is 181.9 cm long. This spear has lost the barbs and head.

Roth collected the next three spears from Mapoon in 1899.

E.15126 Roth's collection number is SP.91. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "*Thespesia populnea* timber". This spear is incomplete, consisting of the shaft only.

According to the register entry this fish spear had three barbed points. It is 181.5 cm long.

E.15127 Roth's collection number is SP.92. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "*Hibiscus tiliaceus* timber". This spear has been missing since 1984.

E.15128 Roth's collection number is SP.94. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "the *diro* = spear". This spear has been missing since 1984.

E.15131 Roth collected this spear from the Wenlock River in 1902. His collection number is SP.8. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "fish spear (4 barbed points)". It is 266 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for three of the five spears:

- E.15124 negative sheet 4229M, frame 1808.
- E.15126 negative sheet 4230M, frame 1810.
- E.15131 negative sheet 4230M, frame 1815.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 3: 29.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 25.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 191–192.

Incomplete spears

There are two portions of spears in the collection but not enough is left to identify them as a particular type of spear. The only information is as follows:

Collection information.

E.13887 Roth collected this spear segment at the Pennefather River, but no collection date is given. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "proximal end of spear to show reed stuffed with pandanus to act as support to womerah peg". It is 4 cm long.

E.15150 Roth collected this spear shaft at Mapoon, but no collection date is given. Roth's collection number is SP.104. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "portion of shaft(?) to show insertion of point". It is 79.9 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both portions of spears:

- E.13887 negative sheet 4075M, frame 570.
- E.15150 negative sheet 4233M, frame 1834.

Spearthrowers

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living near the Pennefather River called spearthrowers *arai-i*. They were used both as a spear-guard and as a spearthrower. The width of the blade varied, the greater the width the larger the peg. According to Roth greater width was not necessarily an advantage.

Spearthrowers could be made from five different timbers, which Roth said the Ngerikudi called *nau-muta* (ironwood) *Erythrophloeum laboucherii*, now known as *Erythrophloeum chlorostachyum*, *lar* (*Acacia*) *Acacia rothii*, *rarru* (the desert bloodwood) *Eucalyptus terminalis* now known as *Corymbia terminalis*, *ngo-ru* (the Wongi plum) *Mimusops parvifolia*, now known as *Mimusops elengi*, and *andro-e*, *Aglaia eloeagnoidea*. Timber was often buried in



Spearthrower.
Collected Mapoon, 1899.
73.6 × 12.1 cm (max. width).

the ground for two to three months to stop it from splitting after being cut from the tree.

The spearthrower peg was a circular stick of ironwood that projected a little below the lower edge of the blade, or main body of the weapon. It was fixed into the edge of the blade that had been split with either a shell or with the teeth. Two holes were drilled and handspun bark fibre string threaded through to tie the peg into position. The peg was positioned even firmer by a thick covering of resin. People living around the Wenlock, Pennefather and Embley Rivers prepared the resin in two ways:

- 1 Resin from the outer bark of a brown cedar tree, *Canarium australasicum* was boiled with stingray fat in a melon shell, which local people called *pera*. This mixture was used to cover over the twine when fixing the spearthrower peg in place. (It was also used to fix barbs to spears); or
- 2 Resin from inside a hollow brown cedar tree was roasted on the ashes and hammered to soften it. This resin was used only on the handle of the spearthrower to prevent it slipping from the hand. Local people called both the tree and the resin in its rough state, *adambar*. It could also be referred to as the “fruit” or *troka* of the tree.

Henry G. Smith, F.C.S., the then Curator of the Technical Museum, Sydney (now the Powerhouse Museum) identified all the resins, and wrote about this resin as:

This resin is in large tears, is brittle, and readily powders: it has a bright fracture, and in physical appearance resembles a dark colophony or resin of commerce. It readily melts, burns away with a very smoky flame, and gives an odour of ordinary resin. It softens easily when rolled between the fingers, and becomes quite soft at 40 degrees C. It consists almost entirely of a resin soluble in petroleum ether (a very unusual occurrence with resins). It is entirely soluble in ether, but is largely precipitated by the ethereal solution by alcohol. This peculiarity is only known to a few resins... It melts readily in boiling water, emitting an agreeable aromatic odour. It is very indifferently soluble in alcohol... (H.G. Smith)

The handle of the spearthrower was covered with the same resin so as to stop it slipping through the hand. The resin at one or both ends of the blade may be decorated with dried yellow strips from the outer covering of the rock lily orchid, *Dendrobium bigibbum*.

The shell haft was made of two oval cut pieces of melon shell, *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora*, attached with beeswax. A few red seeds, *Abrus precatorius*, were often stuck in the beeswax around the edge as decoration. Roth said the angle at which the shell haft was fixed varied a great deal, and seemed to depend on individual taste.

The blade of the spearthrower was often covered with a mixture of resin and fat, giving it a polished or varnished appearance. The wood could be stained as well using the outer bark of certain timbers such as the Red Ash, *Alphitonia excelsa*, Mountain Ash, Leather-Jacket or Cooper’s Wood.

This outer bark was scraped off, rubbed between the hands and mixed with water. The mixture was then rubbed

on a lighter coloured spearthrower. It was left to dry in the sun, where it became stained a reddish-brown colour.

Roth gave the following names for different parts of the spearthrower: handle *to-o*, peg-held end *kwanna*, blade *a-rar*, peg *ko-kan*, edge of blade *bu-ni*, shell haft *pe-ra* (also name of shell) extreme end of blade, beyond the haft *teriwan* (= tail).

Collection information. There are seven spearthrowers from Mapoon, collected by Roth in 1899.

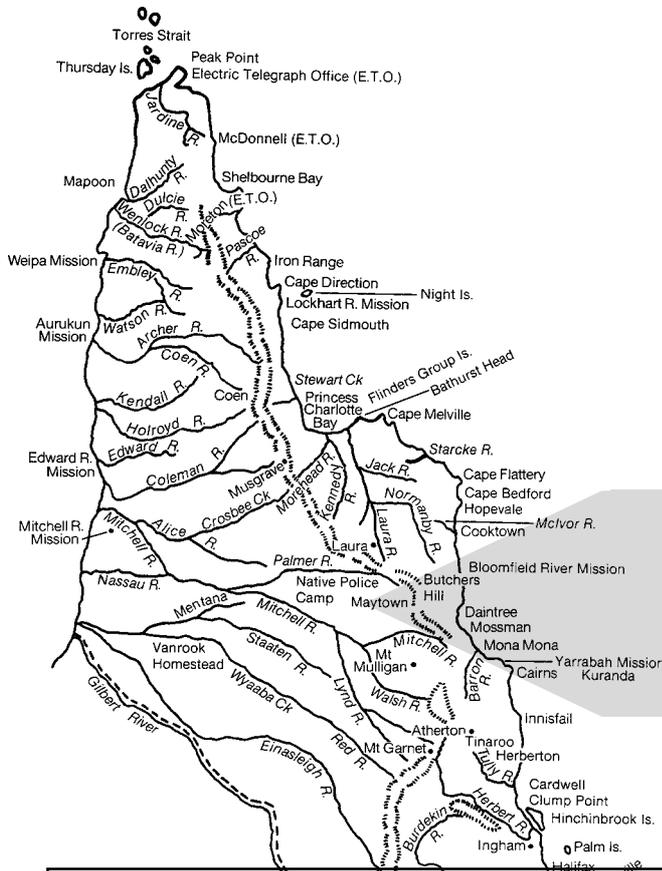
- E.14370 Roth’s collection number is W.81. Two *Melo* shells are attached to the grip end with resin. At the other end, the peg is held with resin and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “*Acacia rothii*”. It is 72.3 × 7 cm (max. width).
- E.14371 Roth’s collection number is W.82. Two *Melo* shells are attached to the grip end with resin. Two red seeds are lodged between the shells. At the other end, the peg is attached with resin and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “wood = *Erythrophloeum laboucherii*”. It is 71.2 × 10 cm (max. width).
- E.14372 Roth’s collection number is W.83. Two *Melo* shells are attached to the grip end with resin. Six yellow strips of the dried outer covering of the rock lily orchid are bound round the narrow end near the *Melo* shells. At the other end, the peg is attached with resin and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “wood = *Erythrophloeum laboucherii*”. It is 73.6 × 12.1 cm (max. width).
- E.14374 Roth’s collection number is W.85. The shell handgrip is missing from this spearthrower. The peg is attached with resin and handspun bark fibre twine. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “wood = *Mimusops parvifolia*”. It is 74.2 × 8.4 cm (max. width).
- E.14375 Roth’s collection number is W.86. Two *Melo* shells are attached to the grip end. One red seed is lodged between the shells. There are yellow rock lily orchid strips wound round the narrow end below the shells. It is 80.1 × 10.2 cm (max. width).
- E.14376 Roth’s collection number is W.87. The two *Melo* shells are missing from the grip end. It has no decoration at all. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “*Mimusops* sp.” It is 71.7 × 11.1 cm (max. width).
- E.14377 Roth’s collection number is W.88. This spearthrower was exchanged with the Copenhagen Museum, Denmark in February 1923.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for six of the seven spearthrowers:

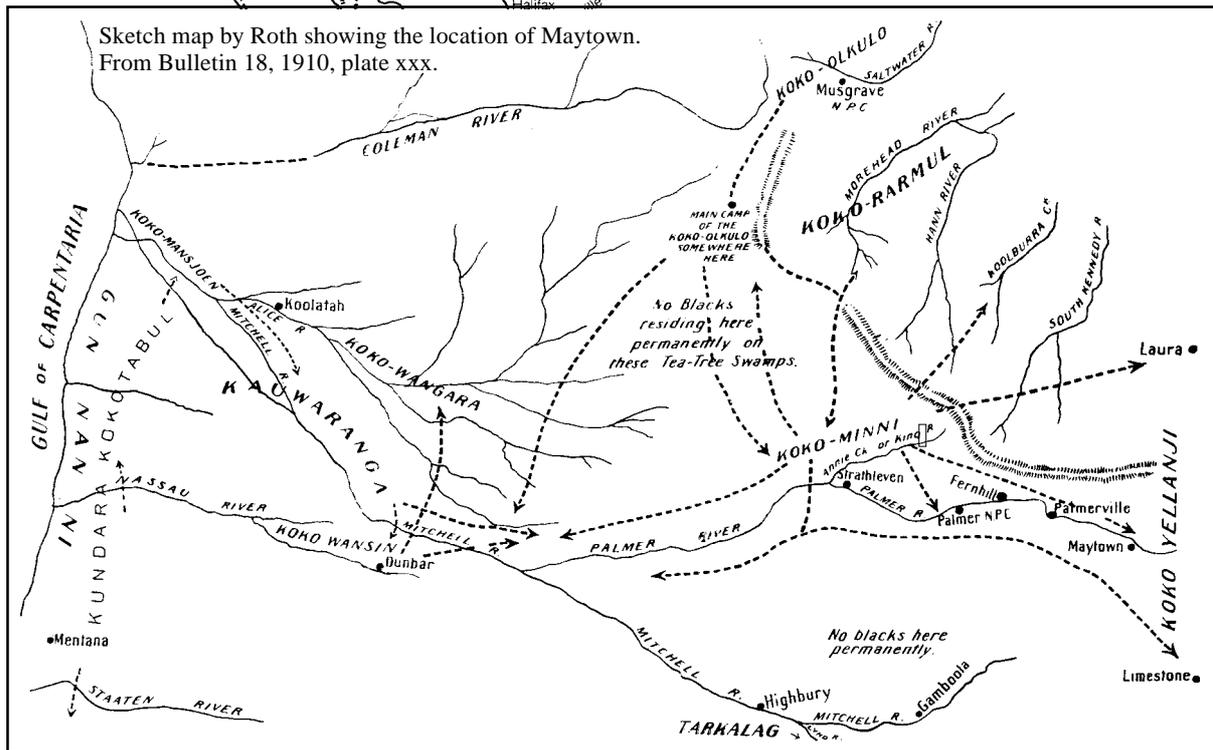
- E.14370 negative sheet 4135M, frame 1053.
- E.14371 negative sheet 4135M, frame 1054.
- E.14372 negative sheet 4135M, frame 1055.
- E.14374 negative sheet 4136M, frame 1057.
- E.14375 negative sheet 4136M, frame 1058.
- E.14376 negative sheet 4136M, frame 1059.

Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 11–12, 15, 29.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 197–198.



Maytown



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The people

Roth did not write a lot about the people living around Maytown, on the Palmer River. He said Aboriginal people living on Boggy Creek Reserve on Butcher's Hill Station used to travel to Maytown, known as Wulburjurbur by local Aboriginal people. By 1899, feuding had curtailed travel.

At Maytown, the Boggy Creek Reserve people visited the Wulbur-ara, who wandered between Maytown, Laura and Palmerville, and spoke a language Roth called Koko-minni. He said the Koko-minni language was a common means of communication between people living on the Gulf and east coasts on opposite sides of Cape York Peninsula. The main camp of the Koko-minni (now the Kokomini) people was at the head of the King River at a place known as Irrangga. They called their country south of the Palmer River they called Churamada, while that to the north was called Oninta. Roth said that in 1896 the Koko-minni numbered over 200 people. They had a large circle of friends and acquaintances, and visited the Koko-yerlantchi people living around the Laura River. When foraging for food, they travelled via Maytown to Limestone, because yams were plentiful along this route.

In the Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899, Roth wrote that as well as work carried on by missions and stations, the government had established various food-relieving centres in different parts of the Northern districts of the colony. Maytown was one of these centres, which had a regular monthly expenditure of 2 pounds. This relief was distributed under police supervision.

Dr Noel Loos, a historian, wrote that Maytown became a fairly permanent gold mining town on the Palmer River with lines of communication to the goldfields and the coast. It had been the centre of the Palmer River gold rush from 1873 to 1885. The presence of Europeans, constantly moving around Aboriginal lands was a cause of conflict. Aboriginals, Chinese and Europeans struggled to come to terms with each other at Maytown. When the gold was finally exhausted, Maytown was left in ruins.

References

- Anderson, C., & N. Mitchell, 1981. Kubara: a Kuku-Yalanji view of the Chinese in North Queensland. *Aboriginal History* 5(1): 21–37.
- Loos, N., 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897*, pp. 67–68. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Roth, W.E., 1900. Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899, Brisbane: Government Printer, p. 2.
- Roth, W.E., 1910, Bulletin 18: 93–95.

Charms

Fishing and hunting charms

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that quartz crystal charms were used to bring luck in hunting and fishing for the people living at Cape Bedford, but no mention was made of Maytown.

Collection information. There are two quartz crystal fishing and hunting charms from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1898. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "luck charm (quartz crystal) for fishing and hunting. Also used as medicine man's gee-gaws (stock-in-trade)".

E.13686 Roth's collection number is TA.21. It is a small piece of quartz crystal with adhesive and hand-spun bark fibre string at one end. It is 7.5 × 4.5 × 4 cm.

Quartz crystal fighting and hunting charm.
Collected Maytown, 1898.
7.5 × 4.5 × 4 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13686

E.13687 Roth's collection number is TA.22. It is a small piece of quartz crystal with adhesive and hand-spun bark fibre string at one end. It is 3.7 by 2.7 × 2 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both charms:

- E.13686 negative sheet 4049M, frame 369.
E.13687 negative sheet 4050M, frame 370.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 5: 27, 29.

Dress and ornament

Skirt



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14696

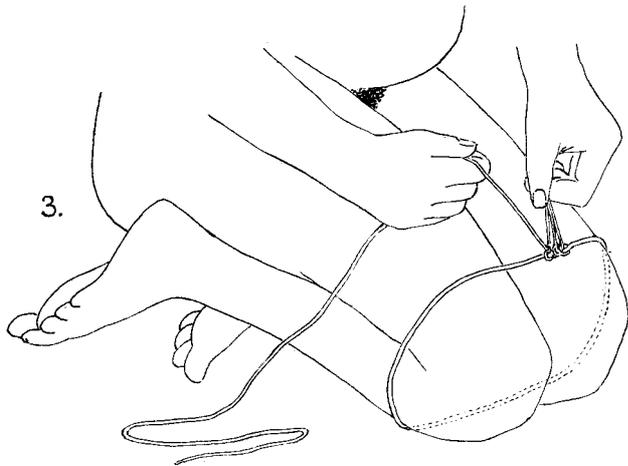
Skirt. Collected Maytown, 1898.
Length 37 cm.



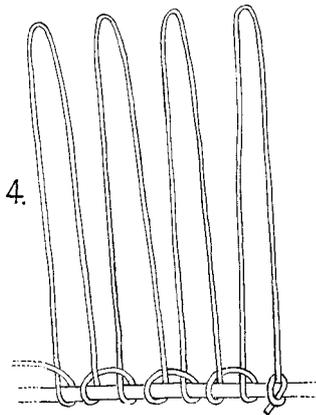
Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote about waist-circlets being worn by people living around the Middle Palmer and Cape Bedford districts. He said people put them on from below up and it was often very difficult to get them into the proper position. Those made to be worn by women were smaller than those for men. The circlet part was usually made on a core of human hair overcast with kangaroo or possum hair twine. Soft down from the belly of the animal was used. Kokomini people called both kangaroo and possum hair twine *aln-jo*, according to Roth. It was used in skirts, waist-belts and other items. Tassels making up the fringe of the skirt were often made of handspun bark fibre twine, from *Careya australis*, now known as *Planchonia careya*.

According to Roth there were three stages in making a skirt as illustrated in Bulletin 1, pl. vii, figs. 3–5.

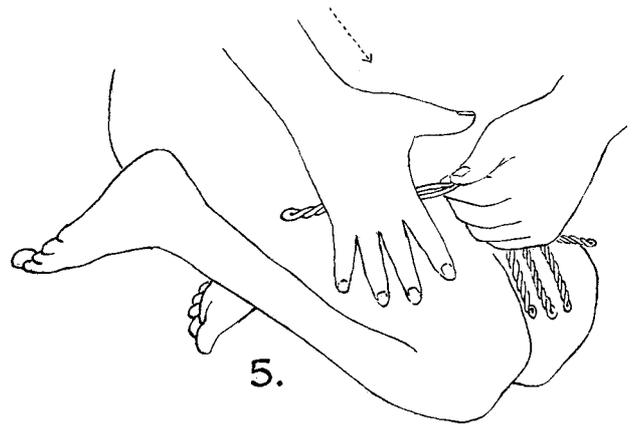
1 Making the top string.



2 Forming the loops, when the top string was stretched between two sticks.



3 Rolling each loop on the outer thigh to form a tassel.



Collection information. There is one skirt from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14696 Roth's collection number is G.107. The waist band core of human hair is overcast with possum fur and red wool. The tassels are made from handspun bark fibre string. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "apron belt, opossum top string, fibre tassels". Roth's description in Bulletin 15 relates more to what he refers to as a waist-circlet than the apron-belt. The skirt is 37 cm long. The tassel section is 16.5 × 9.5 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4176M, frame 1380.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 12.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 38–39.

Fire-making tools

Fire sticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. In some parts of north Queensland fire sticks were thrown away after being used, but in Cape York Peninsula, both on the mainland and coast, they were kept and their working ends were protected by a special cap or cover. It was common to decorate the cap with red jequirity seeds from *Abrus precatorius*. People living around the Middle Palmer River region also used the seed of *Adenantha abrosperma*, called *rokowarra* by Kokomini people.

The cap, called a matchbox by European settlers of the time, was made of two wooden pipes bound together and closed at one end with beeswax. These pipes were made of a light pithy wood, the pith being removed by a bone pin or awl. Occasionally two pieces of bamboo were used as a cap.



Pair of fire sticks.
Collected Maytown, but no collection date given. Length 169 cm.
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13789

Collection information. There are two fire sticks from Maytown.

- E.13775 Roth's collection number is F.8. It was collected in 1898. Two thin fire sticks, one with a hole burnt near the end, the other with a charred end, are protected by a cap. The cap is sealed at one end with beeswax that is also placed down the centre and around the bottom of the cap. Total length is 71.5 cm. The cap is 14 × 3 cm. One stick is 65 by 1 cm and the other is 66 × 1 cm.
- E.13789 Roth's collection number is F.29, no collection date is given. Two rounded sticks, with blackened, rounded ends, are slotted into a bamboo cap. The cap is held together with handspun bark fibre string, beeswax and a binding of dried yellow rock lily orchid strips from the rock lily orchid, *Dendrobium bigibbum*. Red jequirity seeds are embedded in a lump of beeswax at the top of the cap. Total length 169 cm. The sticks are 133 × 1.5 cm and 166 × 1.5 cm. The cap is 15.4 × 4.2 cm (max.). The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "25 missing, not catalogued." Could this mean that Roth had collected another fire stick, numbered 25, which was missing when the register was written up in 1905?

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both fire sticks:

- E.13775 negative sheet 4061M, frame 458.
- E.13789 negative sheet 4062M, frame 472.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 10–11.

Palmer River. The core or centre of the mourning string may be single or multiple, and was made of human or possum hair or handspun bark fibre twine. Roth's drawing in Bulletin 1, pl. vii, fig.7 shows an example of overcasting.

Collection information. There are two mourning strings from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1898. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "mourning string (looped) worn by women over neck and across shoulder to opp. armpit".

- E.13762 Roth's collection number is F.23. Lengths of finely entwined or overcast handspun bark fibre string are bound at the centre. There are ten strands each side. It is 42.5 cm long.
- E.13763 Roth's collection number is F.24. Lengths of entwined handspun bark fibre strings are bound at the centre. There are 11 strands each side. It is 44.4 cm long.

There are another two mourning strings collected between Cape Bedford and Maytown, by Roth in 1898. They are numbered E.13764 and E.13765. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "overcast mourning string worn by men around the waist, from Cape Bedford and Maytown". These mourning strings have been written up in Volume 2 of this catalogue, under the regional section Cape Bedford.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both Maytown mourning strings:

- E.13762 negative sheet 4059M, frame 445.
- E.13763 negative sheet 4059M, frame 446.

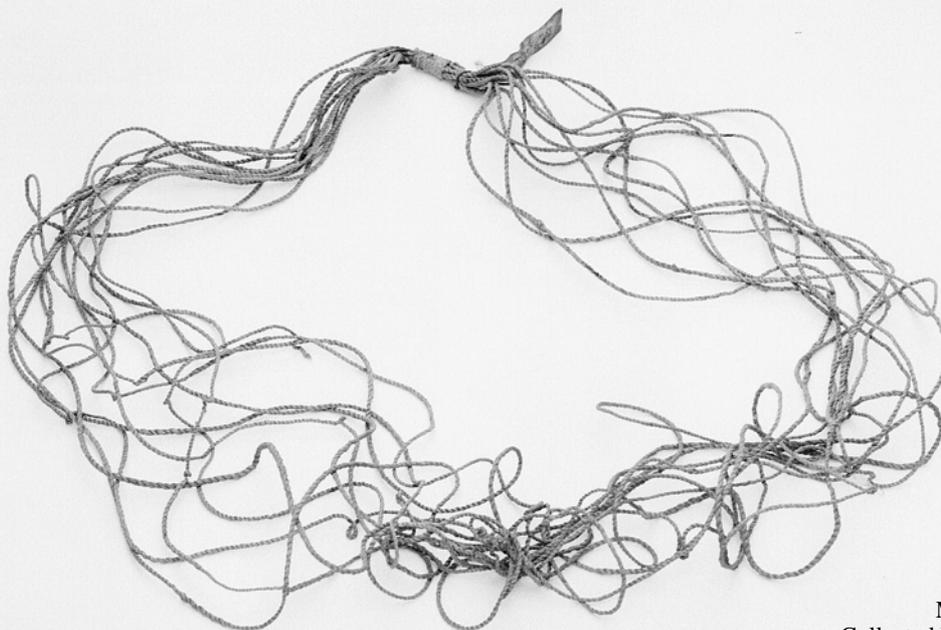
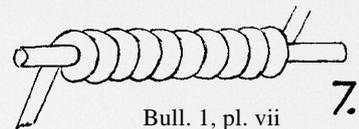
Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 12, 14.

Mourning objects

Mourning strings

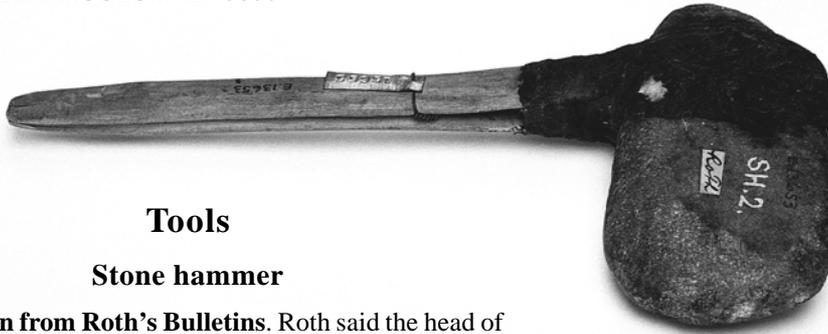
Information from Roth's Bulletins. Examples of winding or overcasting were to be found in the mourning strings made by the people living around Maytown on the Middle



Mourning string.
Collected Maytown, 1898.
Length 44 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13763

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13653



Tools

Stone hammer

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said the head of a stone hammer was made without any signs of flaking or grinding. A sub-angular pebble was used, the worn face often showed the work that had been done with the hammer. Among other things, Roth suggested they may have been used to split rocks to make stone axe heads. The pebble was fixed into its handle in the same way as a mounted stone axe head, and held in place with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive.

The stone hammer also was used to tap on bark when the sheet was being removed from the tree, and for breaking open some of the harder nuts like pandanus. When loosening the bark, the hammering helped to free the bark from adjoining tissues after incisions had been made through the bark.

The removal of bark from trees was usually made at the end of the wet season, when the sap was up and the bark slipped easily. When a sheet of bark from the whole circumference of a tree was required, it was necessary to make only two transverse incisions and a long one joining them.

Roth found stone hammers being used by people living in the Princess Charlotte Bay hinterland in 1898, and on the Palmer River in 1899. He suggested these tools might have been used in making stone axes. He said Kokomini people called the stone hammer *no-ra*.

Collection information. There is one stone hammer from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1899.

E.13653 Roth's collection number is SM.2. Stone pebble fixed into handle bent over the stone and held with adhesive and handspun bark fibre string. It is heavy. Blade $15 \times 8 \times 2$ cm. Handles 30×2 cm. It weighs 647 g.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4045M, frame 336.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 9, 23.

Stone axe.
Collected Maytown, 1899.
Blade $15 \times 8 \times 2$ cm.
Handles 30×2 cm.
Weight 647 g.

Iron scraper

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said that with the advance of European settlement scrap iron filed or ground down was rapidly replacing stone for scrapers. On the Palmer River and the hinterland of Princess Charlotte Bay the people used a piece of iron from a barrel hoop or spade to sharpen spear-tips.

The handle in which the iron scraper was attached was interesting in that it was made of two flat pieces of wood, with the blade in between, the whole tied round with twine, and covered with adhesive.

Collection information. There is one iron scraper from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.13942 Roth's collection number is IR.3. The wide rectangular-shaped iron blade is fitted into a handle of two pieces of flat wood. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the handle and covered with adhesive. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "iron spokeshave from shovel". It is 29.6×8.5 cm (max). The width of the handle is 5 cm.

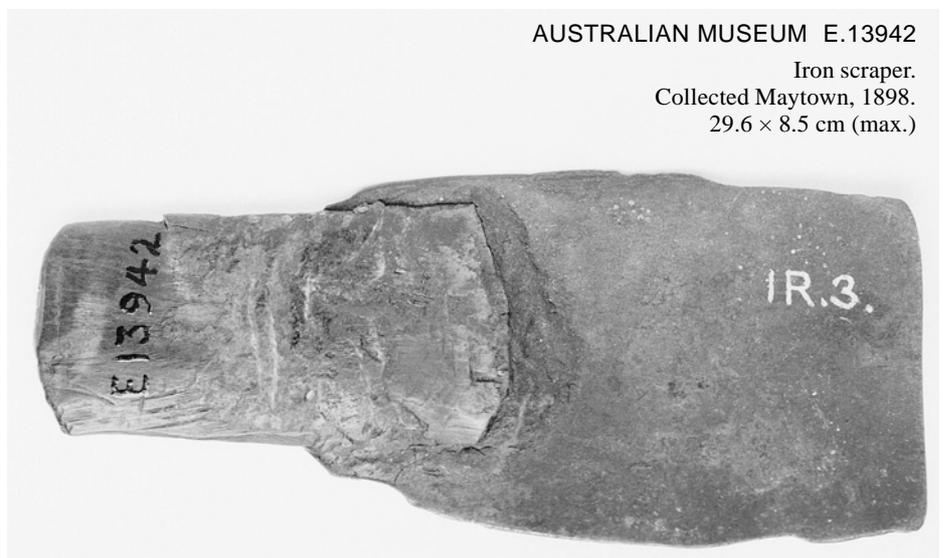
Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4082M, frame 625.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 21–22.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13942

Iron scraper.
Collected Maytown, 1898.
 29.6×8.5 cm (max.)



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15111



a Quartz-tipped spear. Collected Maytown, 1899. Length 297 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.15123



c Spear. Collected Maytown, 1899. Length 158 cm.

Weapons

Spears

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth described spears from Princess Charlotte Bay, Cape Bedford, Bloomfield River and the Middle Palmer River under the general description for those from Cape Bedford. He said all spears were made of a shaft morticed into the butt or grip section. The extreme end of the barb or point usually formed the very tip of the completed spear. Roth said the local name the Kokomini people gave for spears in general was *kalka*. This name was also used for spears made by people living around the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers, on the Gulf coast.

Roth described three types of spears made by the Kokomini people: stingray spine barbed spears called *tikara*, quartz-tipped spears called *tural*, and multiple-pronged fishing spears called *urr-che-ra*. The stingray spine barbed spears are not represented in the Roth collection at the Australian Museum.

(a) Quartz-tipped spears. A slot was made in the spearhead with a fingernail and the small quartz flakes were inserted and held there with adhesive. This exercise demanded some skillful manipulation with the fingers to fix the stone flakes in place. The axes of the flakes were not at right angles with that of the spear, but projected backwards. The stone flakes got smaller as they reached the tip of the spear. Roth noted that in his day, glass now often replaced the stone chips.

Roth recorded that the head of the spear was made of wood from a shrub, *Clerodendron inerme*. He did not mention what wood was used for the other parts of the spear.

Roth said people living around the Middle Palmer River called this weapon *tural*. Wood used to make the spear head was called *ochi-illa*.

Collection information. There is one spear collected from Maytown in 1899.

- E.15111 Roth's collection number is SP.106. Hardwood head inserted into a softwood shaft and bound with handspun bark fibre string and adhesive. There are two long indentations running down each side of the spearhead, covered in adhesive. The quartz chips are missing. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "with chips of stone etc. inserted in two lateral rows in gum cement. Shorter spear the "*tural*" of the Koko-minni tribe". The spear is 297 cm long.

There are three quartz-tipped spears collected between Bloomfield River and Maytown in 1900. These spears are also listed in the Bloomfield River section in Volume 1 of the Roth catalogue, 1993.

The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905, referring to the following three spears includes "with chips of stone etc. inserted in two lateral rows in gum cement".

- E.15108 Roth's catalogue number is SP.52. It has a hardwood head or shaft inserted into a softwood butt and held with adhesive. Remains of quartz chips are stuck in adhesive along the head, which is painted in bands of red and white. Both ends of the spear are broken. It is 319 cm long.
- E.15109 Roth's catalogue number is SP.53. The only part of this spear that is in the Australian Museum collection is the butt of the spear painted with red and white bands. It is 71 cm long.
- E.15110 Roth's collection number is SP.54. It has a hardwood head or shaft inserted into a softwood butt that is held together with lawyer cane and adhesive. Chips of stone are stuck into adhesive along the head of the spear that is painted with red and white bands. The tip is broken. It is 367 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all four quartz-tipped spears:

- E.15108 negative sheet 4227M, frame 1792.
 E.15109 negative sheet 4227M, frame 1793.
 E.15110 negative sheet 4228M, frame 1794.
 E.15111 negative sheet 4228M, frame 1795.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 192–194.

(b) Multi-pronged fishing spear. Roth wrote about a four-pronged fishing spear with a wooden barb was attached to the end of each prong.

Roth said that people living around the Middle Palmer River made the butt end out of bamboo, which had been bartered from the Princess Charlotte Bay people.

Collection information. There is one four-pronged fishing spear from Maytown, collected by Roth in 1899.

- E.15132 Roth's collection number is SP.105. The spear is missing from the collection. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register includes "fish spear (four barbed points) the "*arrorta*" of the Koko-minni tribe".

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 192–194.

(c) non-specific spear-type. Roth did not write anything specific about the next spear.

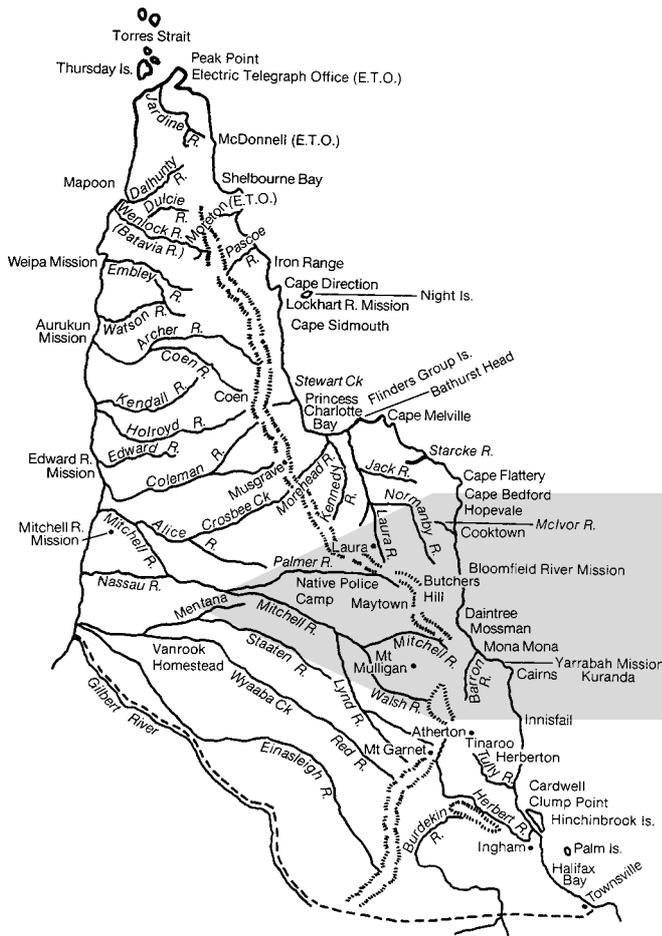
Collection information.

- E.15123 Roth's collection number is SP.110. It was collected from Maytown in 1899. It has a lightwood butt and a plain hardwood shaft which tapers to a point. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "said to be a 'play about one'". It is 158 cm long.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4229M, frame 1807.

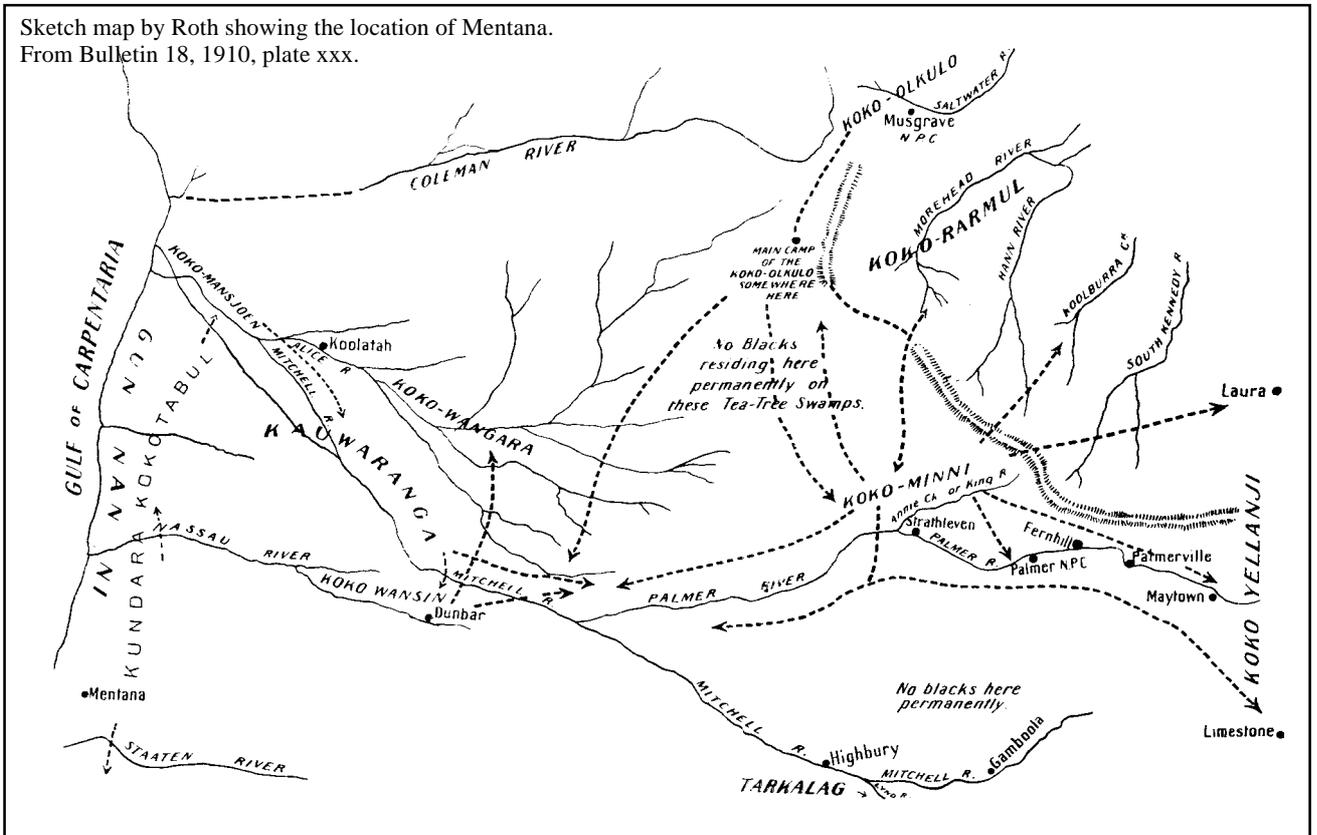
Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 192–194.



Mentana

Sketch map by Roth showing the location of Mentana.
From Bulletin 18, 1910, plate xxx.



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The people

Roth did not write much about the people of Mentana. He referred to them as the Kundara, one of the two important Gulf tribes, the other were people he referred to as the Gunanni. The Kundara people are now known as the Koknar, and the Gunanni are called the Koko-bera.

Roth said the Kundara exercised rights over the coast country between the Nassau and Staaten Rivers. Mentana Station which was near their main camp was known as Ngabengamadam.

References

- Horton, D., ed., 1994. *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, pp. 555–556, 565–566. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 95.

Weapons

Spearthrower

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth said spearthrowers were not found in the eastern coastal districts from Townsville to Rockhampton and according to his friend, Thomas Petrie, were unknown in Brisbane, but could be found at Charters Towers. A basic form of spearthrower, of just a hooked stick, was found in the Wellesley Islands and the neighbouring mainland.

Roth did not describe the spearthrowers from Mentana but they look similar to ones found around the Pennefather River region. (see the Mapoon section in Vol. 3, Catalogue of the Roth collection by Kate Khan).

The spearthrower had a wide blade, which could be covered with a mixture of adhesive and fat to give the appearance of varnish. The peg was a circular piece of ironwood that projected below the lower edge of the blade. It was fixed into the vertical edge of the blade that had been split with a piece of shell or with the teeth. Two holes were drilled, handspun bark fibre string was passed through the holes and the peg was tied into position. A thick covering of adhesive over the string prevented the peg from slipping.

The handle was similarly covered with adhesive to prevent it slipping through the hand.

The shell handgrip was formed of two oval cut pieces of melon shell, *Melo diadema*, now known as *Melo amphora*, attached with beeswax. The angle at which the shell handgrip was attached was thought by Roth to depend on individual taste.

Collection information. There is one spearthrower from Mentana, collected by Roth in 1897.

- E.14312 Roth's collection number is W.22. Two melon shells are attached to one end with adhesive. The peg at the other end is secured with adhesive and handspun bark fibre string. It is 73.7 × 8.9 cm (max.).

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4128M, frame 995.

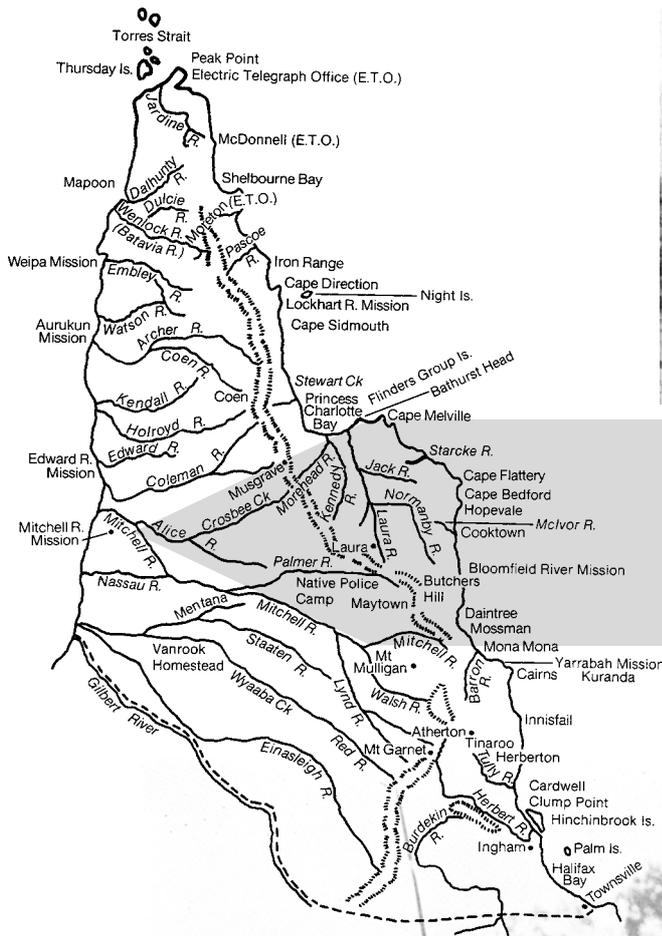
Reference

- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 197–198.



Spearthrower.
Collected Mentana, 1897.
73.7 × 8.9 cm (max.)

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14312

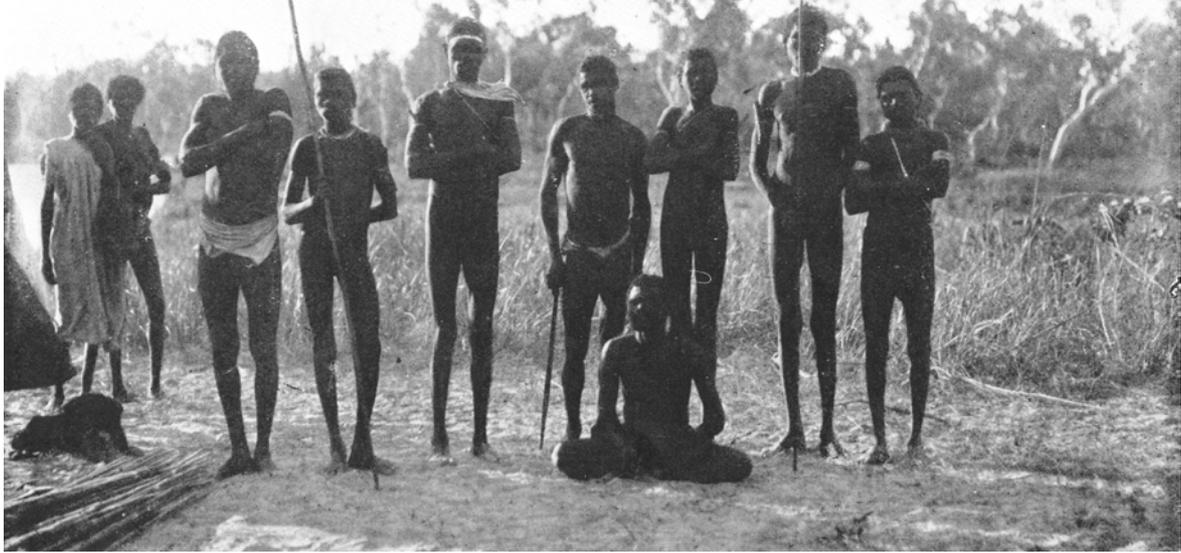


“Composite huts at the Junction of the Palmer and Mitchell Rivers”. Photographed by Inspector Garraway, 1899. From Bulletin 16, 1910, fig. 2.



Mitchell River

“Group of Natives, Mitchell River”. From *Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1910*. Government Printer, Brisbane, 1911. The Chief Protector at the time was Richard B. Howard.



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The people

Following James V. Mulligan's explorations around the Upper Mitchell River region in 1874–5, pastoralists established cattle stations, some of which struggled to survive. H.A. Standfast, writing in the *Queensland Naturalist* stated that the average annual rainfall in this region was 48 inches, most of which fell between December and March. In the dry season, flooded rivers and swamps either disappeared or turned into isolated waterholes.

In 1901 Roth reported that on the lower Gulf country in the neighbourhood of the Mitchell River at places such as Lochnagar and Dunbar Stations, managers were warned by police not to take Aboriginal men and women against their will to work on the cattle stations.

In 1903, Roth said that financial assistance had been promised to establish two new mission stations along the Gulf coast, on the Archer and Mitchell Rivers respectively. The Mitchell River settlement, under the control of the Anglican Church, was to receive 100 to 150 pounds for rations and 100 pounds per annum for a teacher.

In 1904 Roth reported that a permanent start to the mission would be made from Yarrabah, on the east coast, at the end of April with a staff of three Europeans and some Aboriginal people from Yarrabah. Stores were to go by boat from Normanton to the north of Tobannaman Creek in June, and then to Tobannaman Lagoon or Yeremundo. The idea was to stock the reserve with cattle, so the mission would become self-supporting within a few years. The main problem was to find permanent fresh water near the coast.

The site finally chosen for the Mitchell River Mission, referred to as the Trubanaman Mission, was on the upper reaches of Trubanaman Creek, where it became a large freshwater lagoon. Standfast in the *Queensland Naturalist*, described the land at the mission station as being one of tropical tussock grassland and tropical woodland, typified by coarse grass and scrubby eucalypts, Leichhardt trees and Cabbage Tree Palms along watercourses, and mangrove trees.

At first Aboriginal people were apprehensive, but by 1905, Roth reported that 22 people, all male, were being fed at the settlement. There was plenty of fish, and a South Sea Islander, Bob Ling, was in charge of a vegetable garden. The Mission also owned 15 horses.

Roth, writing in 1910, stated:

The Kau-waranga follow the course of the Lower Mitchell River as far as its junction with the Palmer River. Two important Gulf tribes with which these Kokominni come into indirect contact are the Gunanni and the Kundara. The Gunanni are coast-blacks running between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers: they certainly cross the Mitchell River and on the south may proceed to the Gilbert River to meet the Kundara whose territory extends down to Normanton, while to the eastwards, they do not go further than Dunbar. The main camp of these Gunanni is believed to be in the close proximity of Topsy's Waterhole, not very remote from the New Mitchell River Aboriginal Reserve.

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 95.

In 1919 the Mission was moved from Trubanaman on the Mitchell River delta because of water problems, and re-established itself as the Mitchell River Mission on the site known today as Kowanyama.

The Kunjen people may have been known as the Kau-waranga. The Gunanni people are now known as the Kokobera and the Kundara are called the Koknar.

References

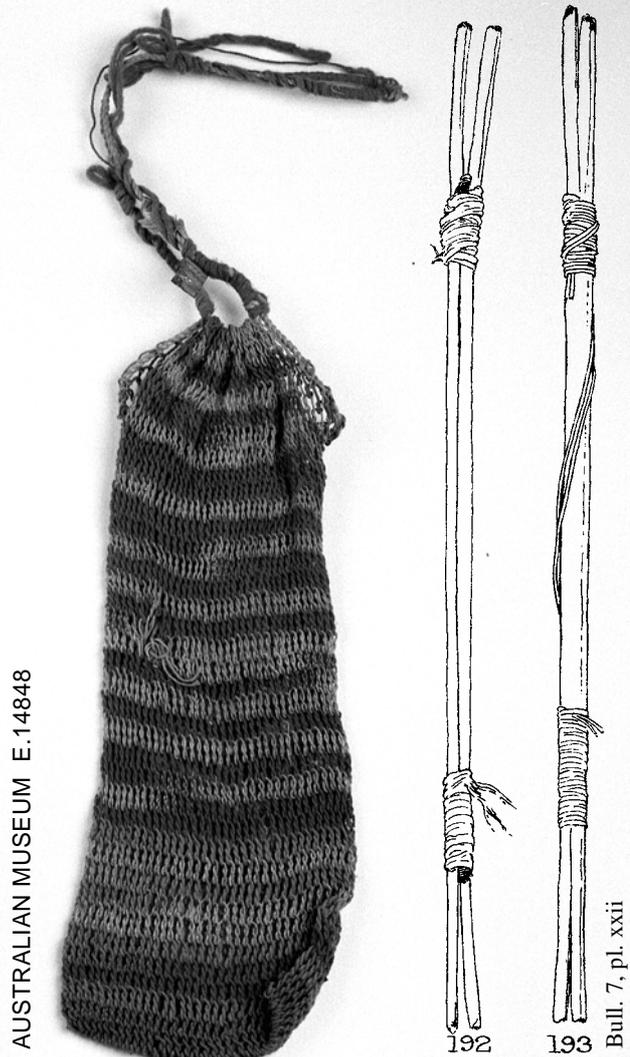
- Bolton, G.C., 1970. *A Thousand Miles Away. A History of North Queensland to 1920*, p. 92. Canberra: ANU Press.
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 Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 95.

Containers

Woven bag

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living on the Gulf coast from the Mitchell River past Karumba to the Flinders River on the Gulf of Carpentaria, and those living across Cape York Peninsula to the eastern coastline, made

Woven bag. Collected from the coast between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers, 1898. 27 × 12 cm.



Bull. 7, pl. xxii

woven bags in much the same way. They used one continuous strand, and a straight base strand, with a loop and twist, hourglass or netting stitch pattern. The geographical distribution of the loop and twist pattern though, appears to be limited within this area to people living in the country north of the Gilbert and west of the junction of the Mitchell and Palmer Rivers.

Only women made the loop and twist and hourglass patterns and used no netting needle. Roth said the finished bag was named after the plant fibre used—known by the Gunanni as *omba*.

Similarly only women used the netting stitch pattern but this time used a netting needle. According to Roth, the Gunanni called the bag *kaljo-ma*.

In Cape York Peninsula, along the coastline between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers, the Gunanni people used a netting needle similar in form to the European netting needle, the re-da, for making fish nets and netting stitch bags. This needle was made either of two pieces of stick from the Cabbage Tree Palm, tied together a couple of centimetres at each end, or of one single piece split at the ends, with a twine tied round each to prevent the splits enlarging. The larger needles used for making bigger meshes had charred ends to harden them. Roth has sketched these needles in Bulletin 7, pl. xxii, figs. 192–193.

Collection information. There is one woven bag collected from the coast between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers by Roth in 1898.

E.14848 Rectangular woven bag. Banded with vivid shades of green, yellow and red dyed hand spun bark fibre string with natural coloured layers between the coloured bands. Strands of European wool also used. It is 27 × 12 cm. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "dilly bag loop and single twist".

Photographic information. A black and white photograph of the woven bag is available, negative sheet 4195M, frame 1532.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 12–14.

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 27.

Wooden bowl

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Wooden bowls could be made from many different types of timber. When made from the local cork or coral tree, *Erythrina variegata* var. *orientalis*, they were split out straight away, two, three or four bowls at a time, according to the size of the butt of the tree. The natural contour of the tree dictated the final shape of the bowl.

Some timbers did not lend themselves to splitting, such as the Eucalyptus, Slaty Gum, Yellow Box, Grey Box or Bastard Box. When this happened, a slightly bent trunk or limb of the tree was chosen as near as possible to the shape of the bowl. This became the outer surface of the bowl.

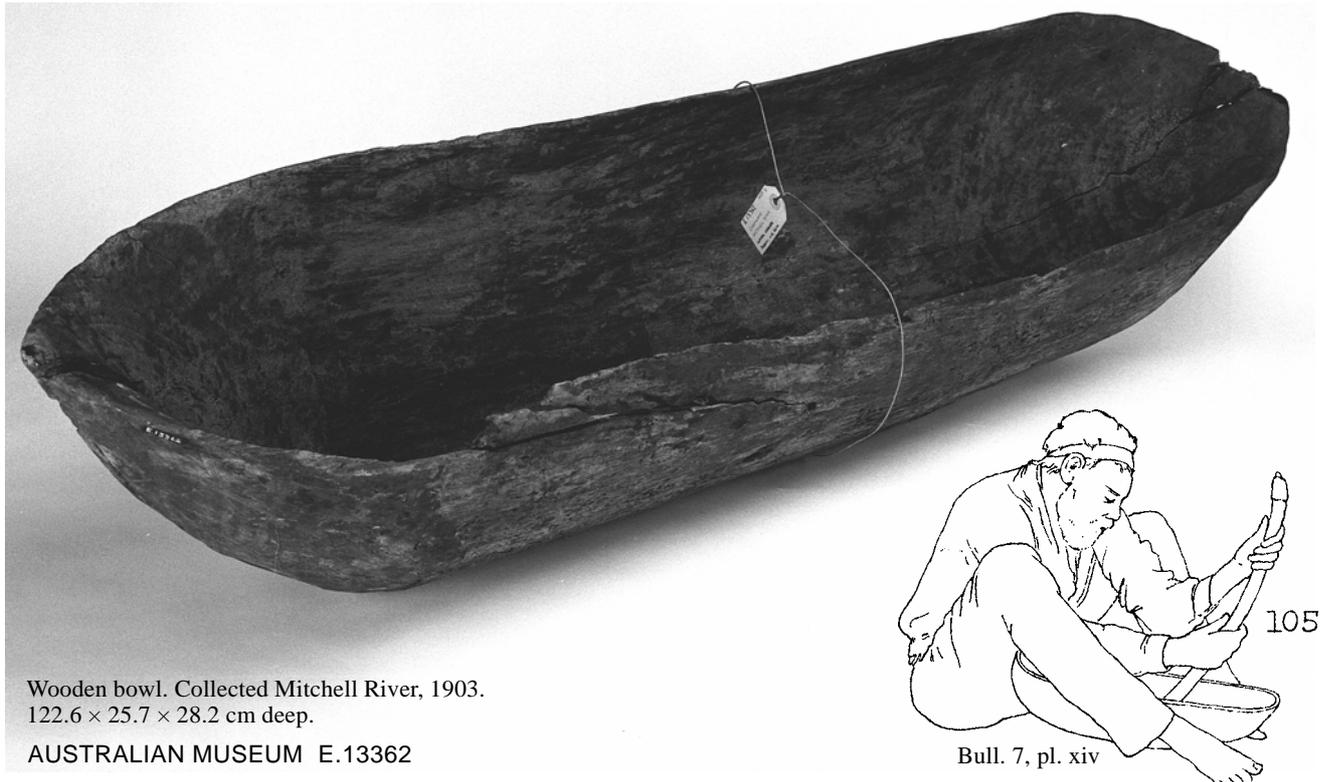
Once a suitable length of timber was removed, split or hacked away, its outer surface was trimmed down into the final shape as required.

When hollowing out was necessary, as was the case with this wooden bowl or water carrier, it was carried out in the following way:

- 1 The wood had to be absolutely dry.
- 2 The surface was then picked over with a piece of hardened, pointed stick, a bone stiletto or a traditional gouge. A great deal of wood was removed in this way.
- 3 Some red-hot cinders were next placed on the scraped surface of the wood, and after being blown on and removed, the surface was again picked out or gouged out and the process repeated again and again until the desired depth was reached

A stone scraper, fixed into one or both ends of a curved wooden handle with adhesive, and was used as a gouge. The handle was a curved piece of wood up to 50 cm long. Larger gouges were used for cutting in the rough, smaller ones for finishing off. They were used on charred timber with one or both hands moving towards the worker as shown in Roth's illustration in Bulletin 7, pl. xiv, fig. 105.

Sometimes the stone scraper was replaced by pieces of iron, ground down and rounded to shape.



Wooden bowl. Collected Mitchell River, 1903.
122.6 × 25.7 × 28.2 cm deep.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13362

Bull. 7, pl. xiv

- 4 When roughly shaped, the bowl was soaked in water for some days.
- 5 The bowl was taken from the water and wound round with twine to fix it in its permanent shape.
- 6 The bowl was given a final shaping with the gouge, and it was finished.

Such wooden bowls were usually coloured red or black, and often had a fine outer fluted decoration scored into the wood. The irregular fluting on the inside showed the action of the scooping or gouging tool while the bowl was being shaped. The markings remained or were replaced by a regular ornamental design.

These bowls or water carriers varied in size from 32.5 cm to over 122.5 cm and up to 33 cm wide. They could be either convex or slightly flat-bottomed, and deep or shallow, with corresponding differences in the angles at which the ends sloped towards the centre. These variations were influenced by the natural contour and adaptability of the timber used and to the uses to which the bowl was to be put. This included a basin for carrying water, food or baby, a miniature canoe for carrying objects across a stream, and a vessel for washing and soaking yams.

Wooden bowls were used by people living in the western districts of north Queensland and along the Gulf coast, as far north as the Mitchell River.

Larger bowls were carried either on the head or at the side or back of the body. If carried at the back, it was supported just below the waist by a cord passed over the opposite shoulder, and held with the wrist and hand underneath the bowl. Small twigs of leaves were laid on the surface of the liquid to stop fluid spilling out of the bowl.

Only men made wooden bowls. Roth said local people living along the coastline between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers called the water carrier *marija-anga*.

Collection information. One wooden bowl was collected from the Mitchell River in 1903.

E.13362 Roth's collection number is WT.46. Deep wooden bowl with tool marks evident on the inner smoothed surface. Adhesive has been used to repair the bowl. It is 122.6 × 25.7 × 28.2 cm deep.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph of the bowl or water carrier is available, negative sheet 4005M, frame 46.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 9, 20, 31.

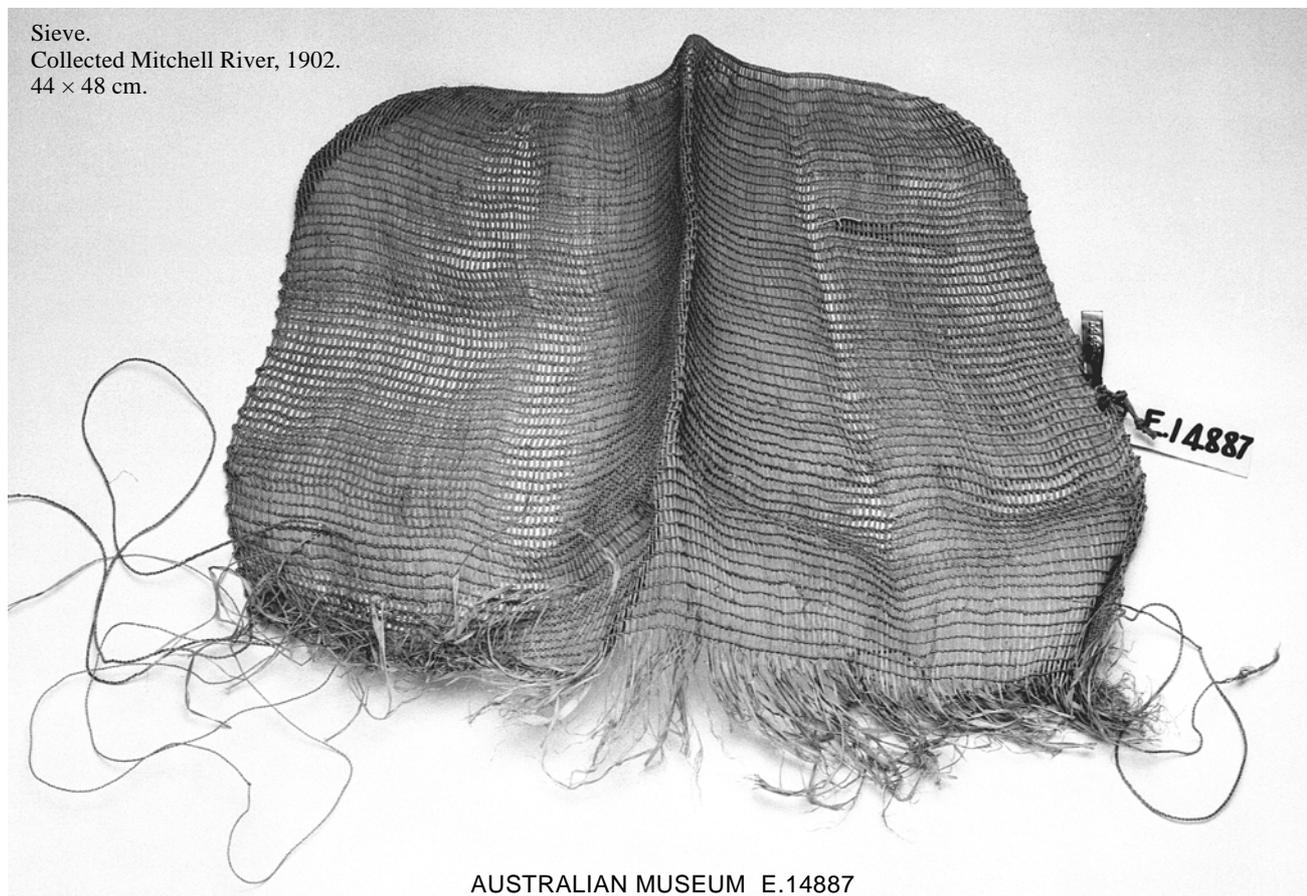
Sieve

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Sieves or strainers were woven using several straight base strands of handspun bark fibre string interwoven with two continuous strands of string in a chain twist pattern, depending on the type of basketry being made. The straight base strands however, were doubled over a "border string" attached to two sticks, which were discarded as soon as the straight base strands were fixed in position by the first row of the chain twist. The border string was given this name because it formed the border of three of four sides of the sieve or strainer when completed.

As well as the sieve being made on the flat, the chain twist ran alternatively zig-zag from side to side. Such a sieve, made of *Livistona* or *Pandanus* may be over 30 cm wide and longer in proportion.

The sieve was stretched across the top of a long wooden container. It was clutched at the sides of the container by the woman's knees to hold it taut. She would at the same time briskly rub and strain such foodstuffs as yams through

Sieve.
Collected Mitchell River, 1902.
44 × 48 cm.



the meshwork into the container below, as illustrated by Roth in Bulletin 7, pl. xxii, fig.198.

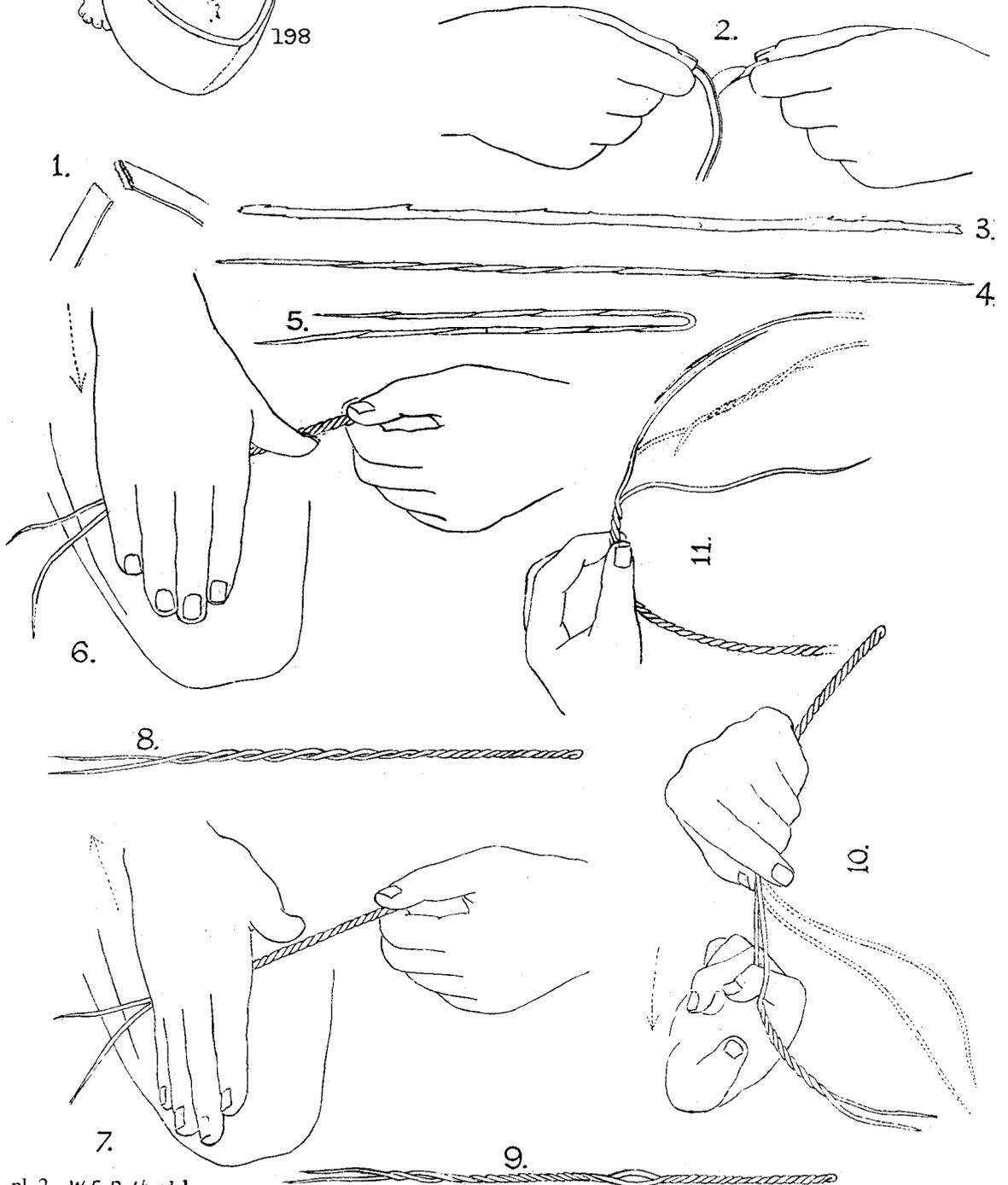


In areas which didn't have what Roth called true strainers, certain baskets were used, called sieve bags or baskets.

Among the Gunanni people, the only group who Roth saw using true strainers, they were made and used by women. Roth said they were called *tarbulanga*. This was the same name given to the pliable baskets or sieve bags. Pliable baskets, made from *Livistona* or *Pandanus* on the sieve pattern, that is, the chain twist pattern, were used by other people living on the Gulf coast between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers. Roth noted that they were often replaced here by what Roth called true strainers.

Fibre thread was obtained from the cortex of the Cabbage Tree Palm, *Livistona australis* leaf in the following manner:

- 1 The young unopened leaf shoot was cut off as low down and as cleanly as possible.
- 2 It was then firmly tapped on a piece of log. The leaf shoot then unfolded, and could be easily split along its natural folds.



3 The outer cortex was then stripped off each piece of leaf with a finely pointed ironwood pointer or pin, or with a sharp kangaroo bone drill.

4 These cortical strips were rolled up after being dried in the sun.

Turning the 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. 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. Roth's sketches from Bulletin 1, pl. ii, clearly show the process.

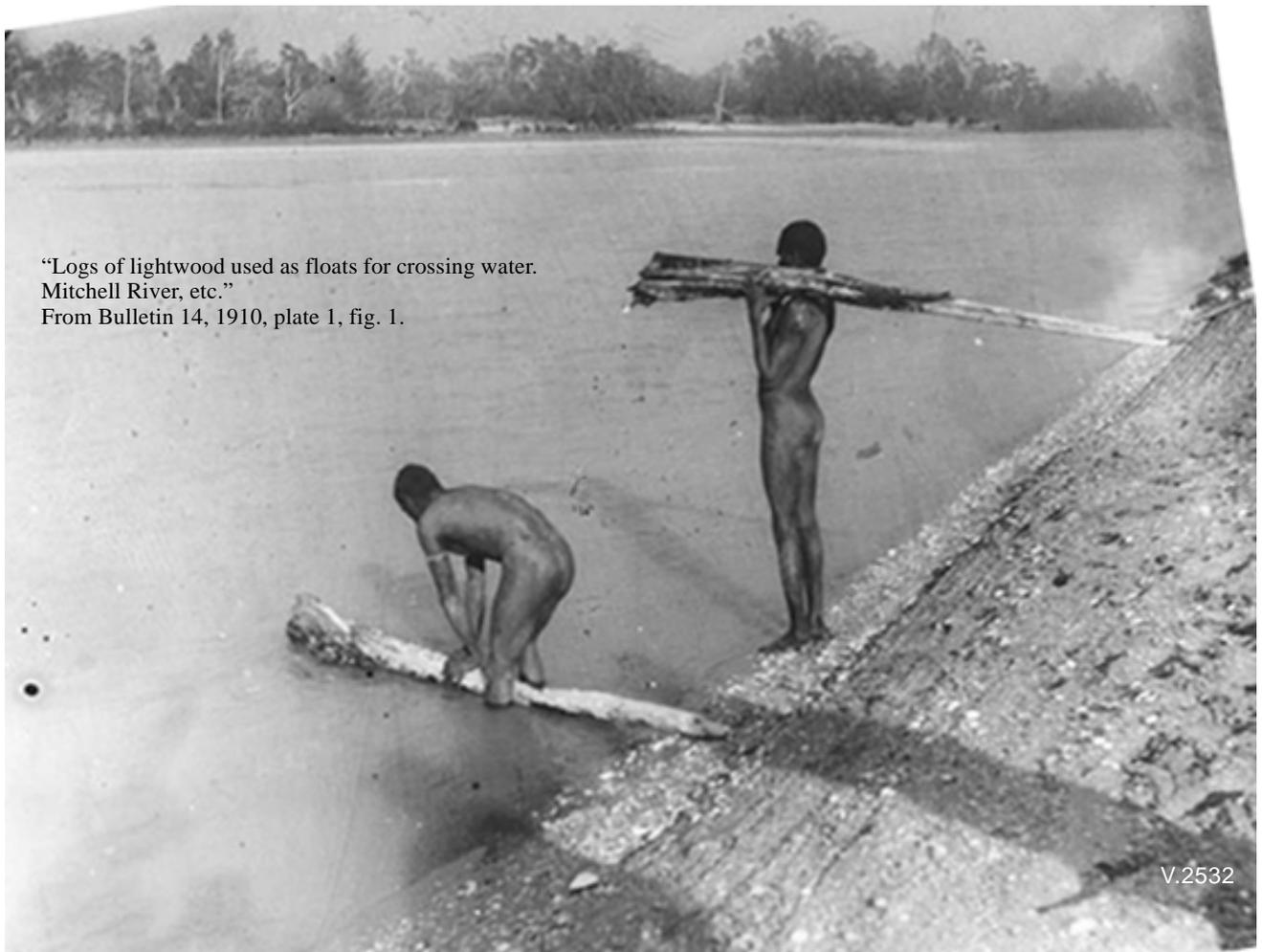
Collection information. One sieve was collected from the Mitchell River in 1902.

E.14887 Rectangular, with several base strands and one strand of fibre twine stitched side to side. Three sides are 2-ply plant fibre overbound by base strands that are knotted at the end. It is 44 × 48 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14465

Possum-fur string necklace.
Collected between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers,
but no collection date was given. Length 52 cm.



“Logs of lightwood used as floats for crossing water.
Mitchell River, etc.”
From Bulletin 14, 1910, plate 1, fig. 1.

V.2532

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4200M, frame 1571.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9–10, 13–14.
Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 27–28.

Dress and ornament

Possum-fur string necklaces

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Roth referred to these necklaces as circlets. Single possum string circlets were common along the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria coastline, where, as a general rule, they were left free from both pigment and fat. They were made and worn by men only. The Gunanni called them *minganda*. The necklaces in the Museum collection however, are not single string, but are all made of several strands of possum-fur string. A note on these possum string necklaces has also been included in the section dealing with the Staaten River in Volume 4.

Collection information. Three possum-fur string necklaces were collected between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers.

- E.14464 Roth’s collection number is G.104. No collection date given. Necklace made of several strands of possum-fur string. It is 42 cm long.
E.14465 Roth’s collection number is G.105. No collection date given. Necklace made of several strands of possum-fur string. It is 52 cm long.

- E.14467 No collection number given, but it was collected in 1898 by Sub Inspector Garraway. The extremely bad condition of the object does not allow for a description or measurement. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “Koko-kowarunga tribe. Opossum-fur necklace”.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for two of the three possum-fur necklaces:

- E.14464 negative sheet 4147M, frame 1148.
E.14465 negative sheet 4147M, frame 1149.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 27.

Swimming pole

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. People living around the mouth of the Mitchell River and near some rivers to the south, and a few of the creeks to the north used the cut trunk of a light tree as a float. Roth suggested they could have been using the white mangrove tree. The log was cut about 150 to 180 cm long. Floating in the water it could easily support a man, stretching himself on it straddle-legged with the thicker butt end of the log in front of him. In this manner he could paddle himself through the water. He kept his balance and paddled with one hand, and used the other hand to carry his spears and other items, as shown in Roth’s sketch from Bulletin 14, p. 3, fig.1.



Swimming pole.
Collected at the mouth
of the Mitchell River, 1903.
235 × 21 × 18 cm diameter.

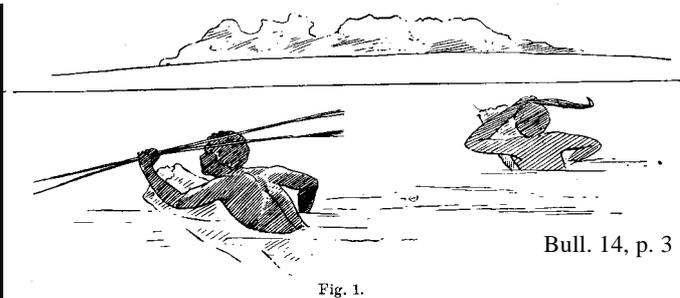


Fig. 1.

Bull. 14, p. 3

To see these logs for the first time, lying here and there on the sides of river banks did not immediately suggest what they were used for. Local Aboriginal people told Roth that by having their body so much out of the water, they could, with the help of the logs, swim these estuaries with great ease.

Roth wondered if this form of water transport, mimicking in a way the movement of crocodiles, was initiated to protect swimmers from the attentions of crocodiles. He said the thinner end of the swimming pole resembled a crocodile tail. Crocodiles were much in evidence here. Roth reported that one time when the Government ketch the "Melbider" was in the Mitchell River, eleven crocodiles were seen from the vessel's deck.

Roth noted these floating logs also were used on the eastern coastline, at Keppel Island on his last visit in 1897. They were used to get to and from the mainland to the islands, which was quite a distance. From the mainland to Big Keppel Island was almost 10 km.

Collection information. One swimming pole was collected at the mouth of the Mitchell River in 1903.

E.13457 Roth's collection number is C.13. Log with a gnarled surface. It is 235 × 21 × 18 cm diameter.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4021M, frame 140.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 14: 3–4.



Mallet/anvil.
Collected at the mouth of the
Mitchell River, 1903.
43 × 16 × 3 cm thick.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13471

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14269
 Non-returning boomerang.
 Collected from the Lower Mitchell River, 1903.
 67.4 × 6 cm.



Tools

Mallet/anvil

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth referred to mallets or hammers, and anvils being used by people living around the Pennefather, Wenlock and Embley Rivers and in the hinterland of Princess Charlotte Bay and on Bentinck Island. However he reported that while visiting the people living at the mouth of the Mitchell River he found a large combined flat mallet and anvil, made of ironwood. He made no further comment, but going by the description of the use of this tool by people living in the other regions mentioned, it was used to break nuts and pound foodstuffs.

Collection information. The combined mallet/anvil was collected from the mouth of the Mitchell River in 1903.

E.13471 Roth's collection number is WH.7. Rectangular solid piece of wood, with a handle at one end. There is a well-marked hollow section in the rectangular piece of wood, showing it had been well used. The total dimensions are 43 × 16 cm. The handgrip is 10.5 × 4 cm. The overall thickness of the wood is 3 cm. It is illustrated in Bulletin 7, fig.168

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4022M, frame 154.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 23–24.

Weapons

Boomerangs

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Boomerangs were either made from the exposed root of a tree by cutting above, below and behind the piece of wood, or else cut from a block of wood. They were used for both fighting and hunting.

On the coastline between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers, the Gunanni people called both the returning and non-returning boomerang by the same name, *we-angala*. The non-returning one was used for fighting at close quarters by throwing it on the ground. The curved returning boomerang was used for knocking over wallabies, native companions and bandicoots.

Collection information. There are two boomerangs from the Lower Mitchell River, collected in 1903.

E.14268 Roth's collection number is B.79. A returning boomerang with both ends rounded. It is 57.5 × 9.1 cm.

E.14269 Roth's collection number is B.80. A non-returning boomerang. Incised vertical lines are cut into both sides of one end of the boomerang. There are patches of black gum cement over the boomerang on both sides. It is 67.4 × 6 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both boomerangs:

E.14268 negative sheet 4122M, frame 951.

E.14269 negative sheet 4122M, frame 952.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 201–203.

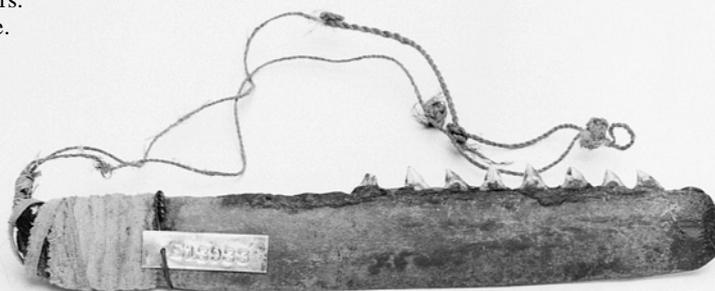
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13933

Shark teeth knife.

Collected from the coastline between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers.

There is no collection date.

20 × 3.7 cm.



Shark-teeth knives

Information from Roth's Bulletins. These knives were made of an elongate piece of ironwood with a slot in one side where eight to nine shark teeth were inserted and fixed with adhesive. Adhesive also was found on the rounded and grip ends of the knife. It was at the grip end that looped handspun bark fibre string was wound round and attached with adhesive. Roth said that when a man used this weapon, he first hid it from view, either in his left armpit, or hung it by a loop over his forehead so that it hung behind his neck and out of sight of his opponent. At close quarters the knife was brought out, and hacked into the victim's flank or buttocks. Roth reported seeing some of these weapons up to 20–23 cm long. He first saw one on the Palmer River, where it had been obtained from a man Roth identified as being a Kudara man living around the mouth of the Mitchell River. He said the man called it a *Kulkong* which he took to mean tooth. The knife was only used for hacking purposes, never for sawing meat. Roth said the Gunanni people called it *kappatora*.

Roth noted that P.B. King had reported a similar weapon being used at King George Sound, Western Australia, in 1839. Robert Etheridge Jr. of the Australian Museum also had illustrated a weapon with shark's teeth in 1902, but no locality was given.

Collection information. There are five shark-teeth knives collected from between the Staaten and Lower Mitchell Rivers coastline. There is no collection date. These knives also are listed in the section on the Staaten River in Volume 4 of the Roth Catalogues by Kate Khan.

E.13930 Nine shark's teeth are fixed in position in a slit on one side with adhesive. Adhesive also is on the rounded end near the teeth. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the grip end and attached with adhesive. This knife is illustrated in Roth, Bulletin 7, plate xvii, fig.143. At present two teeth are missing. The knife is 36.6 × 5.3 cm.

E.13931 Twelve shark's teeth are fixed in position in a slit on one side with adhesive. Adhesive also is on the rounded end near the teeth. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the grip end and attached with adhesive. Gaps suggest several teeth are missing. The knife is 35.7 × 5.7 cm.

E.13932 Five remaining shark's teeth are fixed in position in a slit on one side with adhesive. Adhesive also is smeared all over the wooden surface of the knife. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the grip end and attached with adhesive. Some teeth are missing. The knife is 32.7 × 5.2 cm.

E.13933 Eight shark's teeth are fixed in position in a slit on one side with adhesive. Adhesive also is smeared on both ends of the knife. At the grip end, a piece of white European cloth has been wound round the wooden knife and adhesive. The looped handle of handspun bark fibre string and human hairstring has been threaded through between this binding and the adhesive. The knife is 20 × 3.7 cm.

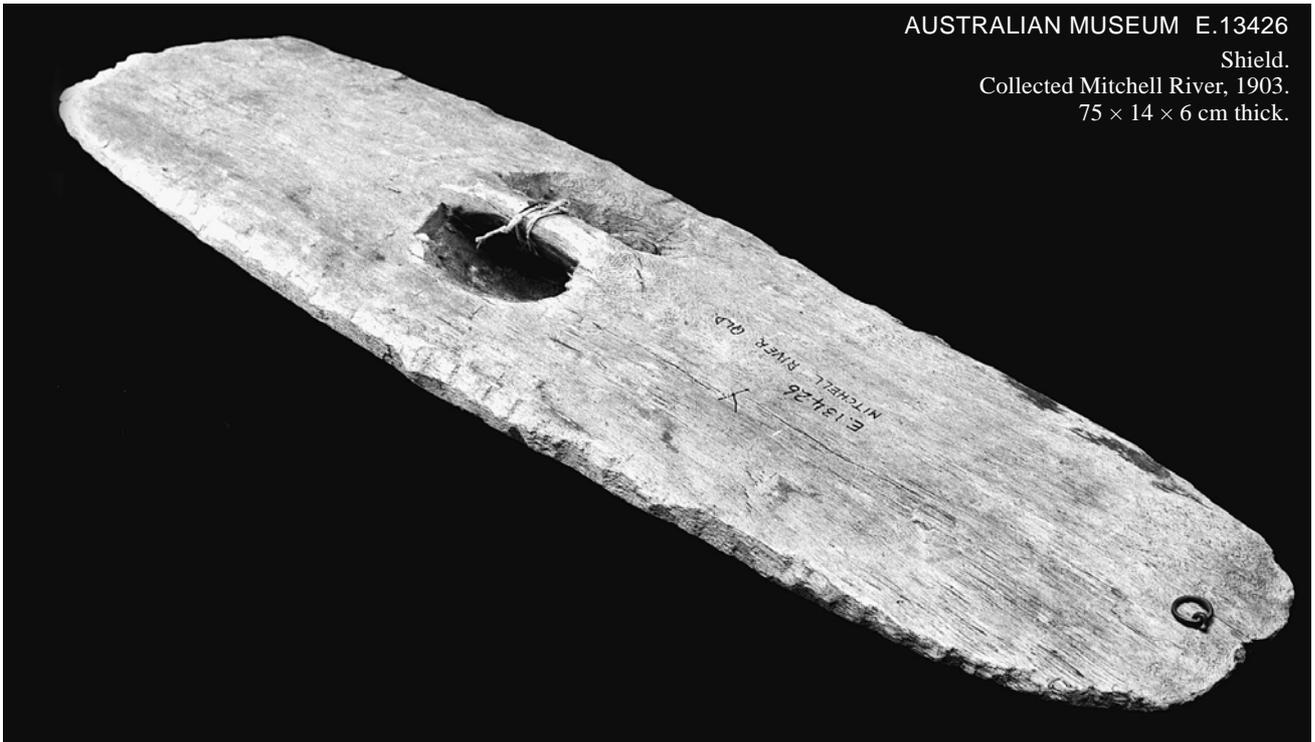
E.13934 Eight shark's teeth are fixed in position in a slit on one side with adhesive. Adhesive also is smeared all over the wooden surface of the knife. Handspun bark fibre string is wound round the grip end and held with adhesive. The knife is 25 × 5 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all five shark-teeth knives:

- E.13930 negative sheet 4080M, frame 613.
- E.13931 negative sheet 4080M, frame 614.
- E.13932 negative sheet 4080M, frame 615.
- E.13933 negative sheet 4080M, frame 616.
- E.13934 negative sheet 4081M, frame 617.

References

- Etheridge Jr., R., 1902. *Records of the Australian Museum* 4(5): 207, pl. xxxvi.
- King, P.B., 1839. *Intertropical and West Coasts of Australia*, II: 139.
- Roth, W.E., 1904. *Bulletin* 7: 23.
- Smyth, R., 1878. *Aborigines of Victoria*, p. 341, fig. 151.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13426

Shield.

Collected Mitchell River, 1903.

75 × 14 × 6 cm thick.

Shields

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Shields used around the Mitchell River were similar to those used by people living at Normanton and the surrounding districts, in that they were made from split timber and subsequently trimmed down to shape. Roth said the Normanton shields usually were decorated with red and white painted bands. It is assumed the Mitchell River shields were similarly adorned. Roth noted that on the Gulf coastline, people living north of the Mitchell River would not normally use shields

Collection information. There are two shields from the Mitchell River, collected by Roth in 1903.

E.13426 Roth's collection number is S.8. Elongate/oval shield. Faint evidence of red pigment. It is 90.6 × 23.8 × 7.5 cm thick.

E.13447 Roth's collection number is S.12. Elongate/oval shield in poor condition, with spear holes and weapon marks. Very faint evidence of red pigment. It is 75 × 14 × 6 cm thick.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both shields:

E.13426 negative sheet 4014M, frame 110.

E.13447 negative sheet 4019M, frame 131.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 203–204.

Spearthrower

Information from Roth's Bulletins. On the Gulf coastline between the Mitchell and Staaten Rivers the Gunanni people called spearthrowers *yur-nganya*. Roth did not specifically describe spearthrowers from the Mitchell River.

Collection information. There is one spearthrower from the Mitchell River, collected in 1903.

E.14389 Roth's collection number is W.100. Long, thin spearthrower, with a wooden peg inserted at one end and secured with adhesive and handspun bark fibre string. The other end of the spearthrower has been broken. It is 37.6 × 2.1 cm.

Photographic information. One black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4137M, frame 1072.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 13: 197.

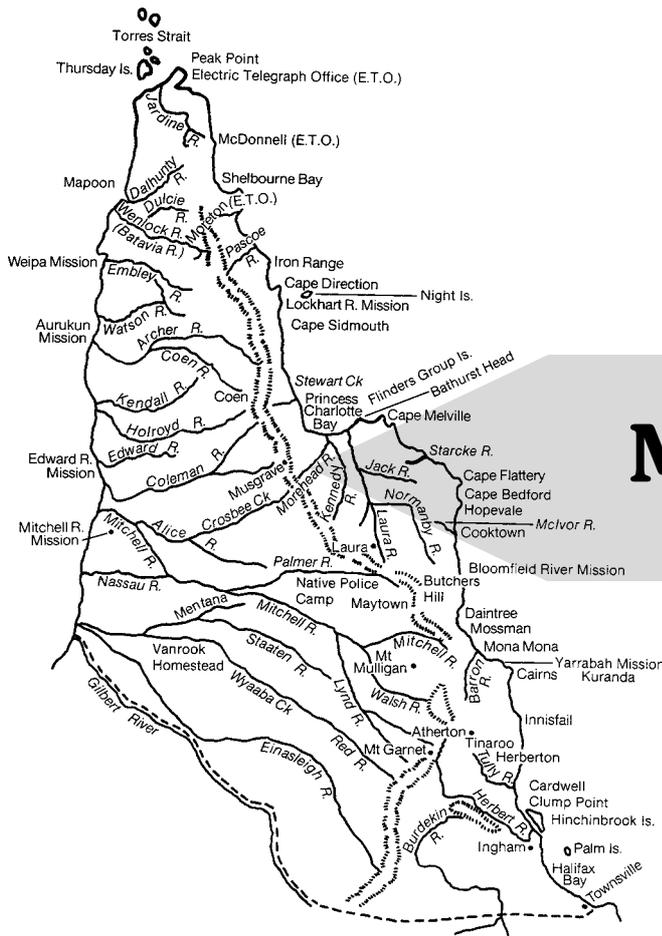


Spearthrower.

Collected Mitchell River, 1903.

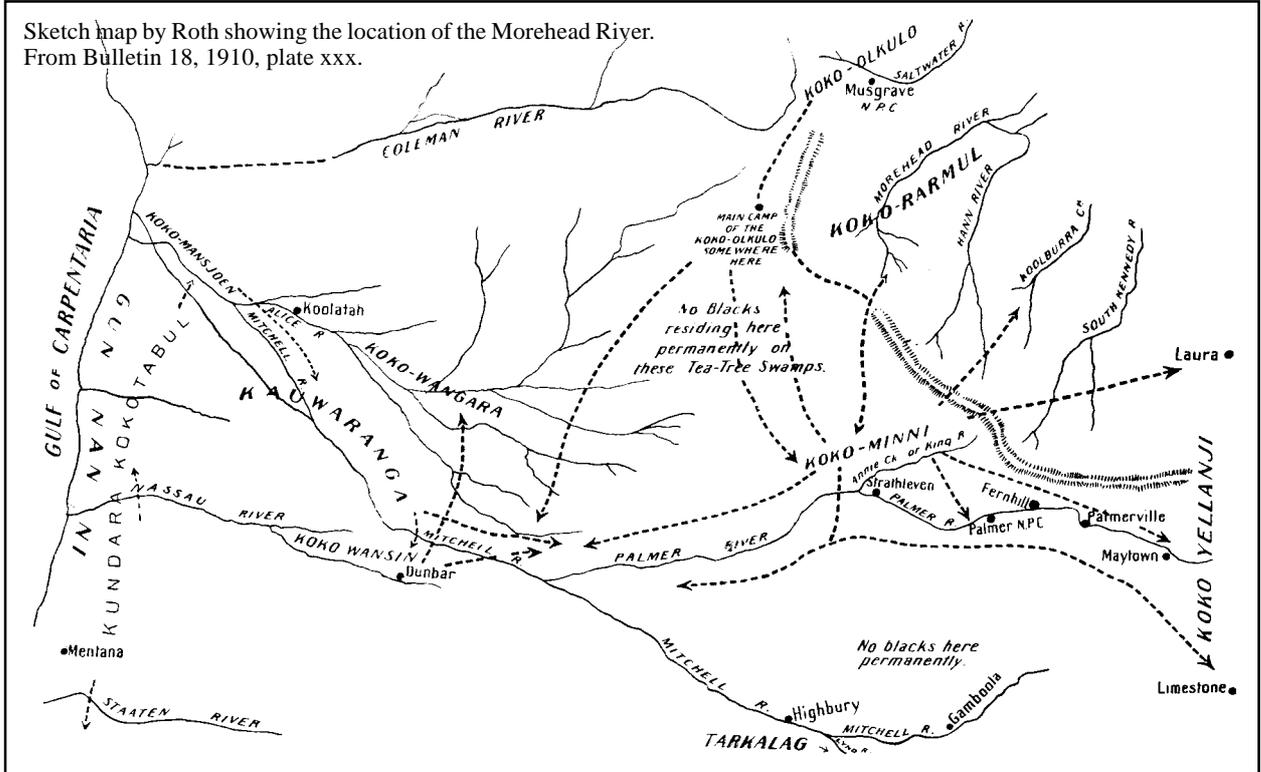
37.6 × 2.1 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14389



Morehead River

Sketch map by Roth showing the location of the Morehead River.
From Bulletin 18, 1910, plate xxx.



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The people

In 1910 Roth wrote:

In the Princess Charlotte Bay district... the main original camp or home of the Koko-warra, i.e., where most of their initiation ceremonies usually take place is in close vicinity of Balsers's Knob. They follow the Normanby and Deighton Rivers as far as the Laura Settlement, they travel up Station and Sandy Creeks to the Morehead River, and westward they wander over Jeannette's Tableland. In the course of their travels south-wards, these Koko-warra come into communication with the Kokomini from the Middle Palmer River. ... primarily they are thus coastal blacks, though of late years they have commenced to wander along the tracks of, but not quite to such lengths as, their southern Koko-warra neighbours. In days gone by, the Kokolkulo had their "home" at the water-holes in the neighbourhood of what is now the Musgrave Native Police Camp. At the present time (1899) they "walk-about" along the higher portions of Saltwater River, and across to the upper reaches of the Hann and Morehead Rivers... The Koko-rarmul, the last of the more important Princess Charlotte Bay Tribes are somewhat limited in their peregrinations along Saltwater and Morehead Rivers.

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 94-5.

According to Roth the local Koko-warra people called the Morehead River rar-mul.

At Princess Charlotte Bay, the Koko-rarmul of the Morehead River give the Koko-warra (whose "country" extends along the course of the Normanby and Deighton Rivers) reed spears, iron-scrap, European tomahawks, etc., getting in return melo shell, grass-reed-spears, nautilus-shell necklaces, stingaree spears and fishing-nets. The Endeavour and Bloomfield Blacks travel up in the direction of the Laura River, and supply the Koko-warra with red ochre, white-clay, grass-tree spears, etc., which are paid for with the same articles as are supplied to the Koko-rarmul.

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 14: 18.

Roth's Koko-olkulo people, were referred to as the Oikolo by Tindale, and the Kunjen in the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia. The people Roth referred to as the Koko-rarmul, were called the kokojawa by Tindale, and the Kokowarra in the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia.

The impact of European settlement in the region has been recorded in Quinkan art of the rock shelters near the Laura River. Here earlier paintings are often overpainted with figures of troopers, horses and guns.

References

- Horton, D., ed., 1994. *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, pp. 556-557, 565-566. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 14: 18
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- Tindale, N.B., 1974. *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia. Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits and Proper Names*, pp. 174, 176, 177, 284. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Treize, P., 1971. *Rock Art of South-East Cape York*. Australian Aboriginal Studies 24. Prehistory and Material Culture Series 4, AIAS, Canberra.

Containers

Woven basket

Information from Roth's Bulletins. These firmly woven baskets usually were made of fibre strands from the leaves of the blood root bush, *Haemodorum coccineum*. The dried leaves were moistened just before use, and then split into thin strips with the finger nails.

Woven basket. Collected Morehead River, 1898.

23 × 11.5 cm.

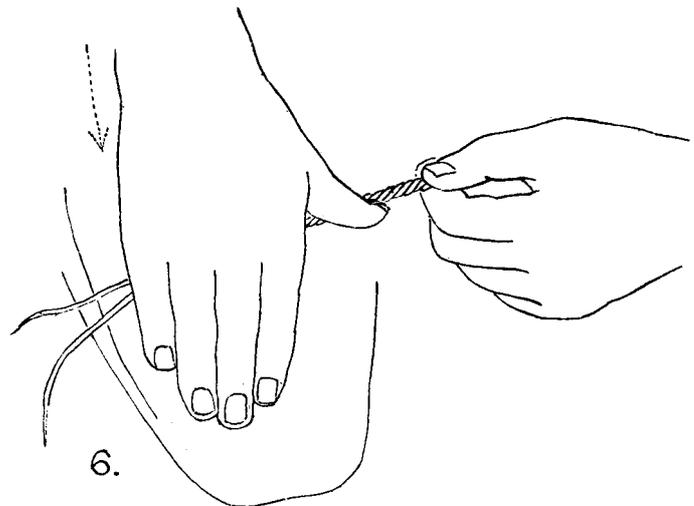
Mouth 8 × 5 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14931

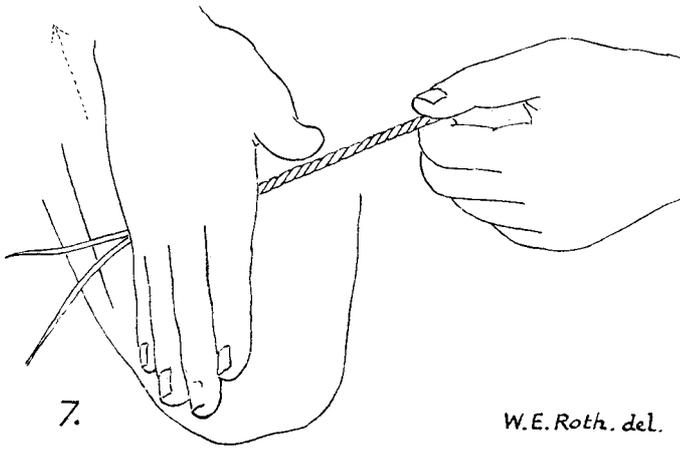


Turning fibre into string was done in the following way, the person squatting on the ground. Roth illustrated the process in Bulletin 1, pl. ii, figs. 6-11.

- 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.



W.E. Roth, del.

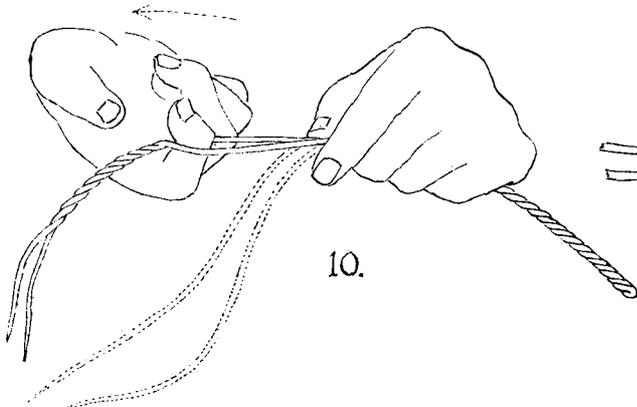
4 The result of the forward movement was to roll the strand into one twist.



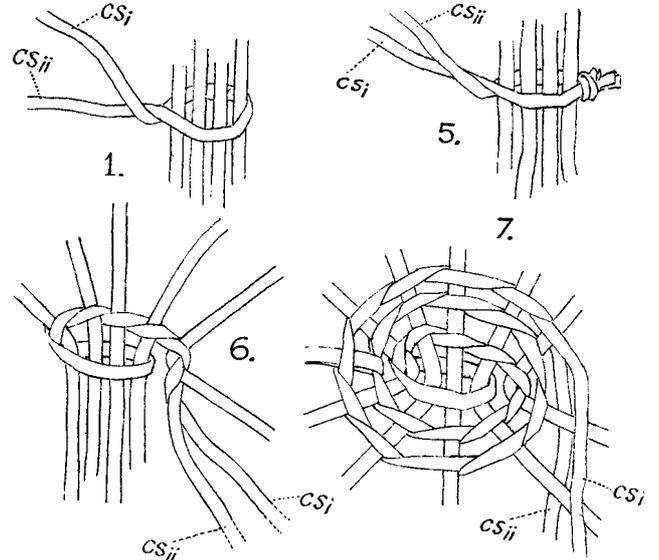
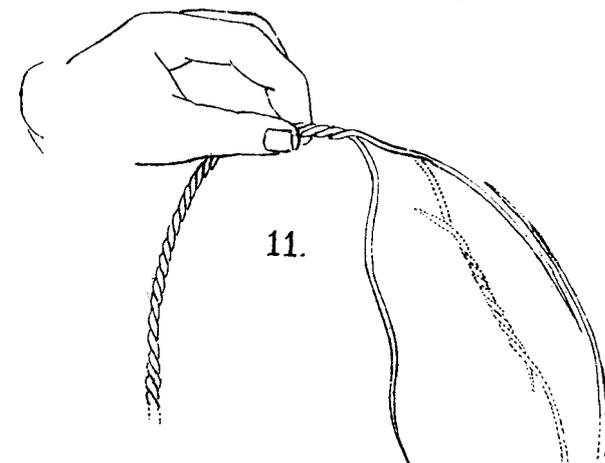
5 The result of the forward-backward movement was to roll the strand into two twists, with a "break" in between.



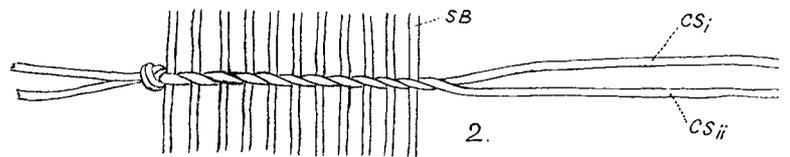
6 To get rid of the break, the section just above it was held between the left thumb and forefinger to prevent the twine untwisting. The right forefinger was placed in the "break" and it was pulled firmly but carefully outwards. At the same time the two ends of the strand were freed. While the left hand 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-plies.



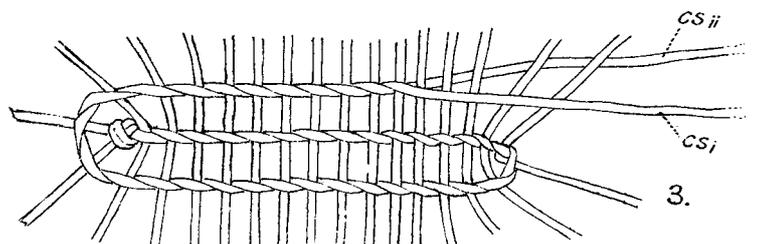
7 As soon as one end of the strand had been reached, another strand was fixed to it by rolling forwards.



- 1 Two continuous strands were knotted together some distance from their ends, and held between the left thumb and forefinger.
- 2 One base strand, at about its middle, was placed in the fork of the knot, the two continuous strands were twisted around it and pressed in the fingers. Another base strand was fixed as before and so on as illustrated by Roth in Bulletin 1, pl. xvi, fig. 2.



- 3 A certain number of base strands having been included, working all the time from left to right, the two horizontal strands made a sharp double twist round the last inserted base strand, which was simultaneously bent into an acute angle.
- 4 The length so far made was then turned round, so the end furthest removed from the knot was held in the maker's left thumb and forefinger, while the second row of the chain-twist was made by picking up from left to right each base strand of fibre string in regular rotation. This operation was repeated as shown in Roth's sketch in Bulletin 1, pl. xvi, fig. 3.



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.

Roth commented that baskets made from the blood root fibre were apparently made by women only. These baskets were used as sieves or colanders for preparing food by people living around Princess Charlotte Bay, the Middle Palmer River, and at Cooktown and Cape Bedford. Aboriginal people living on the Gulf coast of Cape York Peninsula used this type of weaving when making mats.

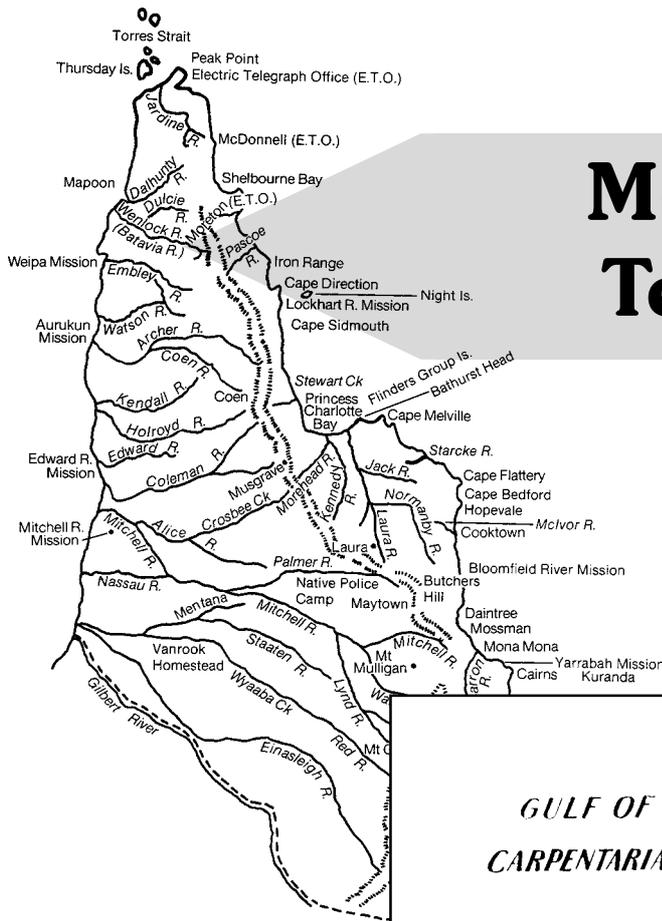
Collection information. There is one woven basket from the Morehead River, collected by Roth in 1898.

E.14931 There is no Roth collection number. One small section of the mouth of the basket has a rim intact, the rest is frayed. The basket is 23×11.5 cm and the mouth is 8×5 cm.

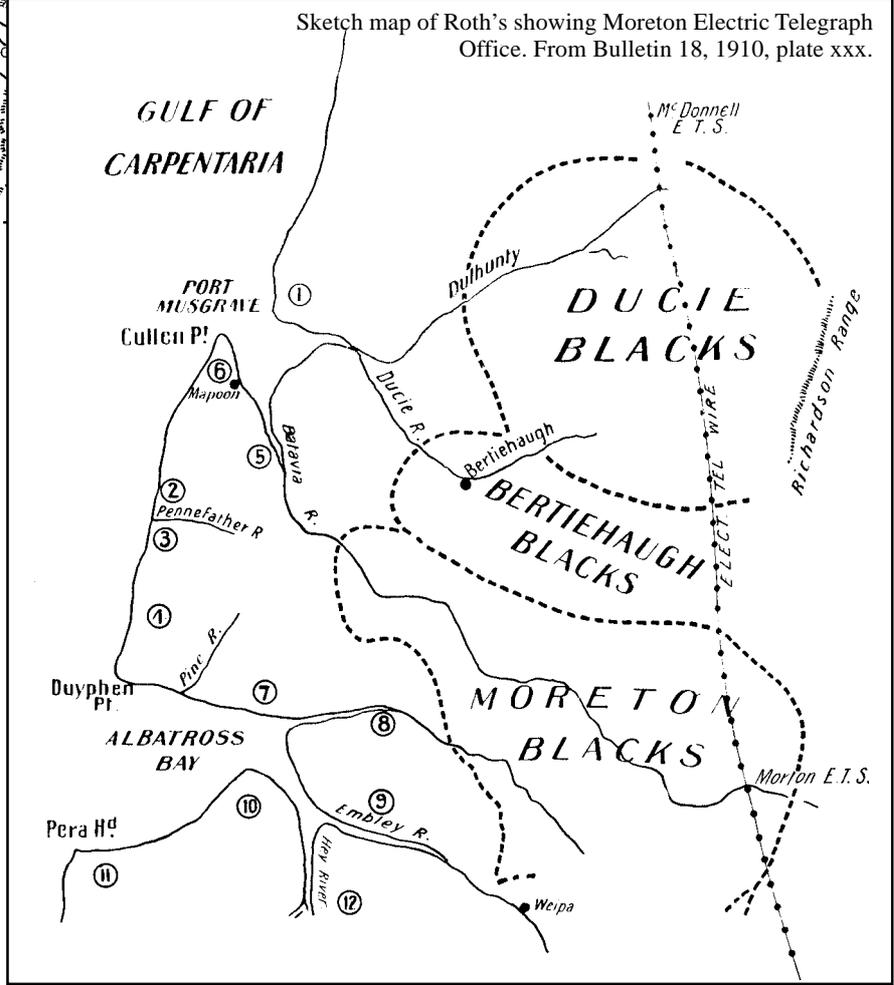
Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4205M, frame 1615.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9, 14.
Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 28.



Moreton Electric Telegraph Office



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The people

The Moreton Electric Telegraph Office opened on 1st September 1887.

All stations were built like forts to protect staff and equipment from "wild blacks". Buildings were constructed of heavy gauge galvanised iron and on two diagonally opposite corners, a protruding gun turret was built. Each gun port gave a clear view along two sides of the building as well as forward viewing. All windows were fitted with iron shutters which could be bolted from within.

D.J. Sheehy, 1991. *A Century at the Top. A History of Telecommunications on Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland 1887-1897*, p. 11. Telecom Australia. July 1987. Revised July 1991. Queensland: Government Printer.

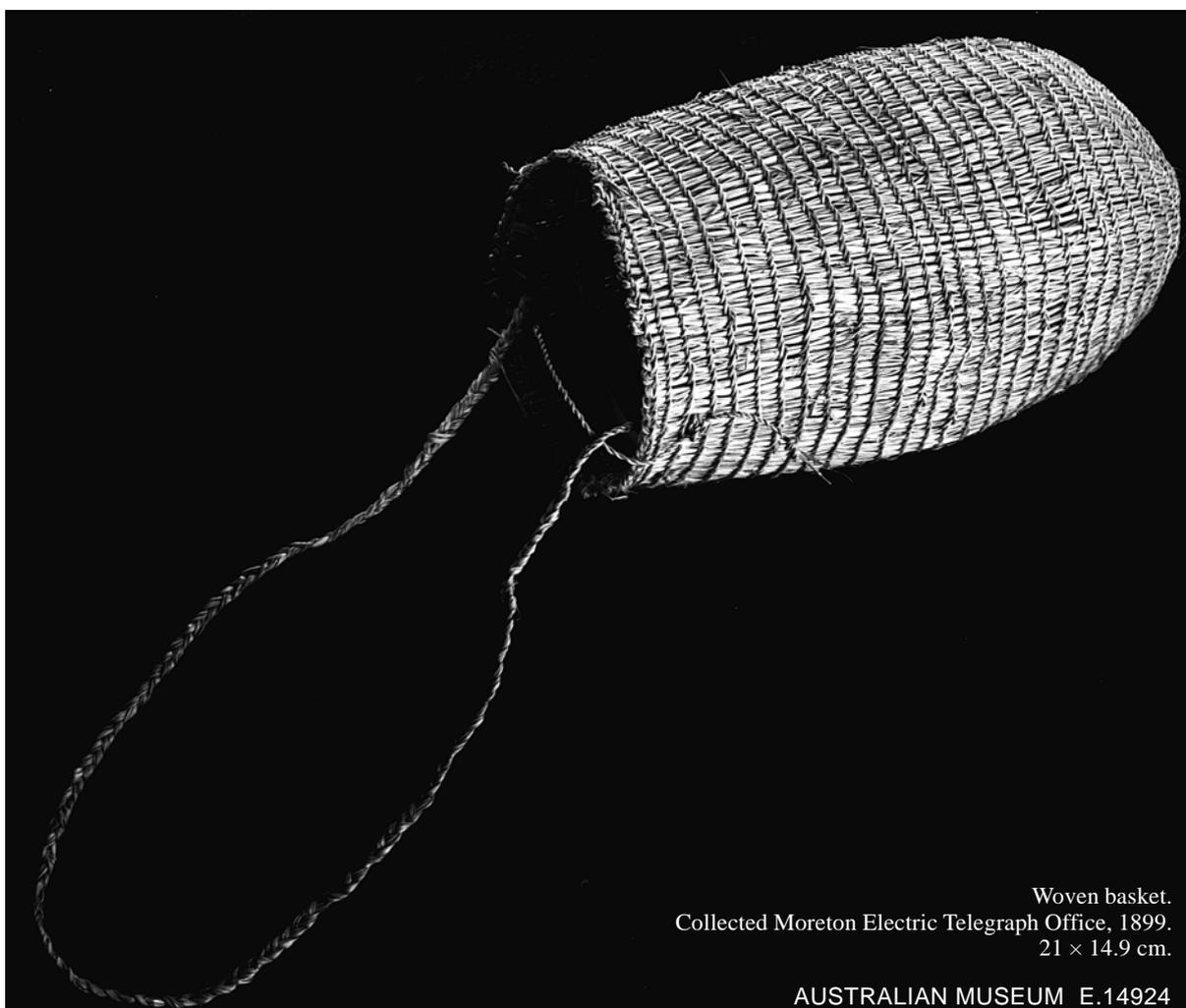
The only transport at this time was by horse, so Electric Telegraph Stations were strategically placed close to water. Hence the Moreton Electric Telegraph Station could draw on water from the Wenlock (Batavia) River. Most water tanks were built inside the station to protect them from being punctured by poisoned spears from hostile Aboriginal people. An 1888 report requested a police station in the Moreton area because of increasing Aboriginal problems.

By the time Roth arrived in the area 11 years later it seemed times were more peaceful. He wrote in his Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899 that as well as work carried out by Missions and Stations, the

government had established various food-relieving centres in different parts of the Northern districts of the colony. The Moreton Electric Telegraph Office was one of these centres. It had a regular monthly expenditure of five pounds, distributed by post and telegraph officials. Roth wrote:

With regard to the distributions at one or two of the above-mentioned food relieving centres, I may mention a few items of interest. At Moreton I found a very good system whereby, in the absence of dates, the savages up there manage to come in regularly on one and the same occasion: they are taught to put in an appearance when the moon is at the full. The telegraph officer in charge here, Mr P.S. Lindeman, writes to me (7.5.[19]00) as follows: "Everything is progressing satisfactorily with the aboriginals. The monthly bullock in the wet season, and flour in the dry months, is a great treat, and also tends towards establishing friendly relations between the different tribes. Some of the blacks who meet each other here and spend a friendly evening together, eating, singing, and smoking most amicably, would have fought and eaten each other on sight a few years ago. Tomahawks and fishing-lines, supplied by Government, enable them to greatly increase their natural food supplies, and I think that the aboriginals about here are in a much better condition to-day than they were even three years ago."

Roth, W.E., 1900, Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899. Cooktown: 2.



Woven basket.
Collected Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, 1899.
21 × 14.9 cm.

References

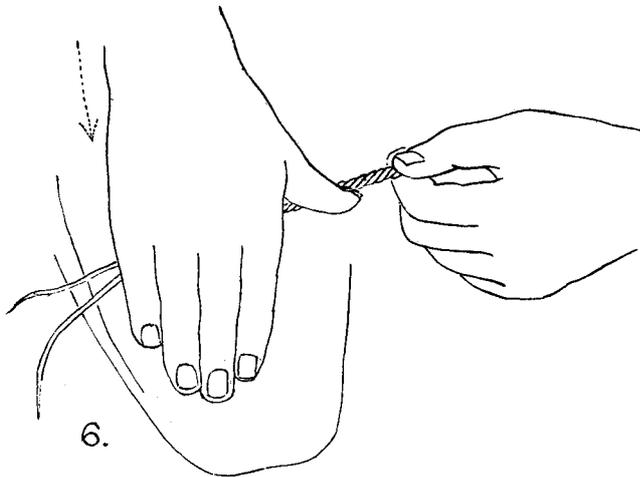
Gribble, P.J., 1981. *What God Hath Wrought. The Story of the Electric Telegraph—Queensland*. Brisbane: Telecom.
 Roth, W.E., 1899. *Report of the Northern Protector of Aborigines for 1899*, p. 2. Cooktown.
 Sheehy, D.J., 1991. *A Century at the Top. A History of Telecommunications on Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland 1887–1987*. Telecom Australia, July 1987. Revised July 1991. Queensland: Government Printer.

Containers

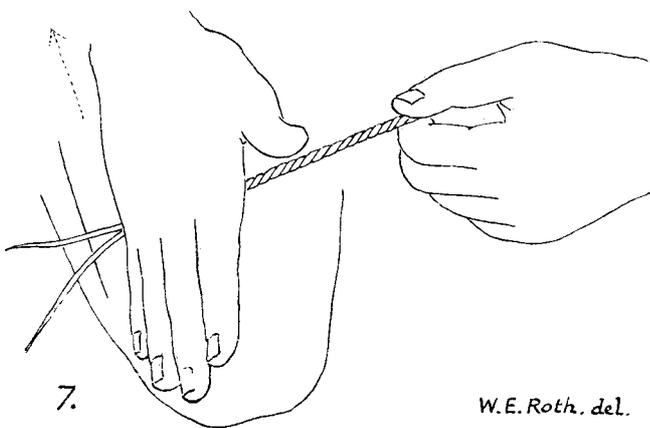
Woven baskets

Information from Roth’s Bulletins. Turning vegetable fibre into string to make baskets was done in the following way, the person squatting on the ground. Roth illustrated this process in Bulletin 1, pl. ii, figs. 6–11.

- 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.



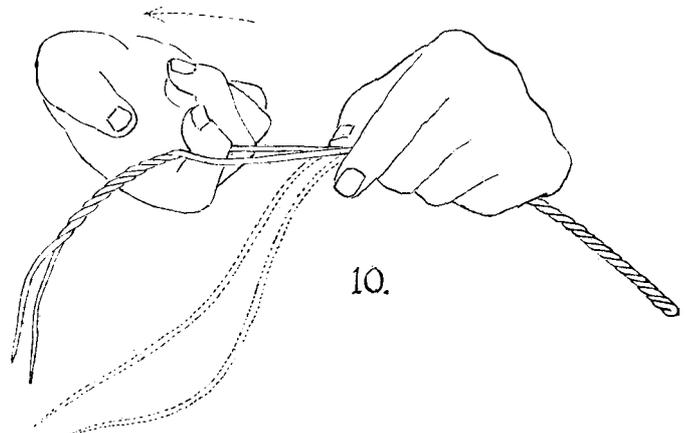
- 4 The result of the forward movement was to roll the strand into one twist.



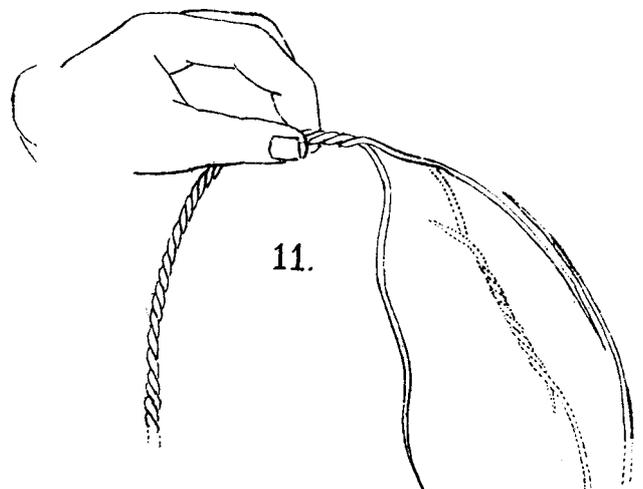
- 5 The result of the forward-backward movement was to roll the strand into two twists, with a “break” in between.



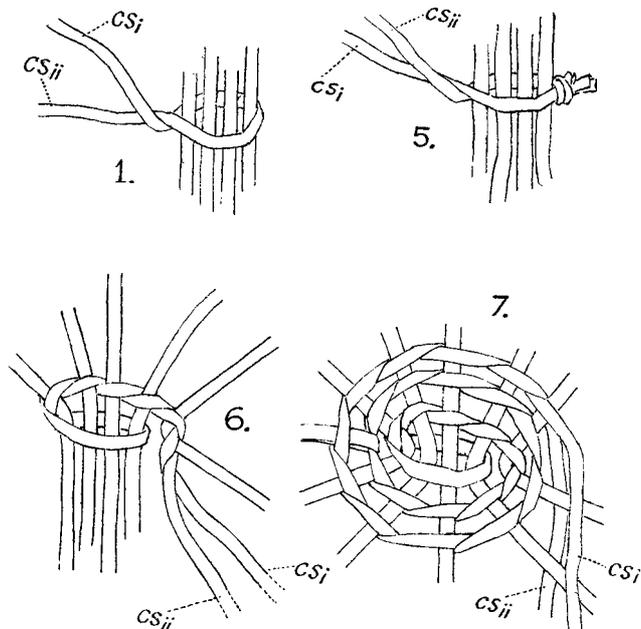
- 6 To get rid of the break, the section just above it was held between the left thumb and forefinger to prevent the twine untwisting. The right forefinger was placed in the “break” and it was pulled firmly but carefully outwards. At the same time the two end of the strand were freed. While the left 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-plies.



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



The baskets Roth collected from the Moreton Electric Telegraph Office were woven using two continuous strands of fibre string and several base strands. The weaving pattern was a chain-twist pattern. This was done by twisting into a chain the two continuous strands, and leaving the ends of the straight base strands free. Roth's drawings in Bulletin 1, pl. xvi, figs. 1, 5-7 show how the basket was begun.



The handles of bags from the Moreton region were made of three strand plaits, using thin strips from the leaf of the pandanus. The leaf was usually dried in the sun to make it firmer, but to save time it could also be heated over a fire for a few minutes.

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.

Collection information. There are two woven baskets from the Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, collected by Roth in 1899. Roth did not give collection numbers to the baskets.

E.14923 The basket is 28×17 cm. The plaited handle is 31 cm long.

E.14924 The basket is 21×14.9 cm. The plaited handle is 25 cm long.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both baskets:

E.14923 negative sheet 4204M, frame 1607.

E.14924 negative sheet 4205M, frame 1608.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 9, 11.

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 28.

Dress and ornament

Shell chest ornaments

Information from Roth's Bulletins. People living around the Pennefather and Embley Rivers, and in the hinterland and on both sides of the coasts of the extreme end of Cape York Peninsula, wore a flat circular chest ornament. It was made by chipping off and grinding down the base of a *Conus* shell, *Conus millipunctatus*, now known as *Conus leopardus*. A hole was drilled at one end and a length of handspun bark fibre string was threaded through.

Collection information. There are two shell chest ornaments from the Moreton Electric Office.

E.14512 Roth's collection number is G.182. It was collected in 1899. The diameter of the shell is 5.5 cm. The thread is 29 cm long.

E.14513 There is no Roth collection number. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "collected 1899", but written on the shell chest ornament in faint ink is "Moreton 1902". The diameter of the shell is 5.5 cm. There is no string.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for both shell chest ornaments:

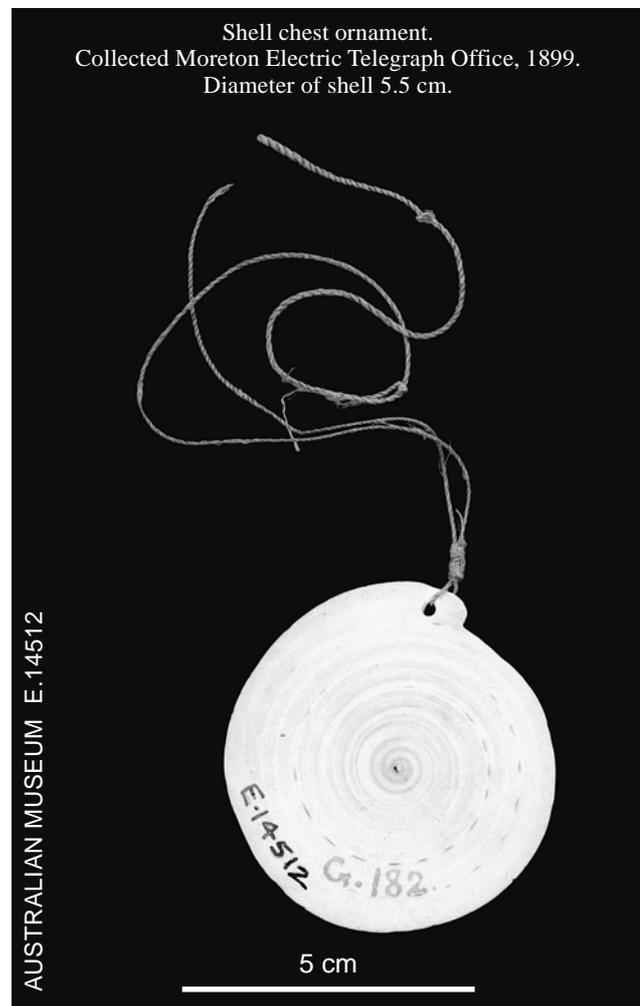
E.14512 negative sheet 4153M, frame 1196.

E.14513 negative sheet 4153M, frame 1197.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 36.

Shell chest ornament.
Collected Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, 1899.
Diameter of shell 5.5 cm.



Fire stick.
Collected Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, 1901.
Length 174.3 cm.



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13783

Fire-making equipment

Fire sticks

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Fire was made by twirling a stick 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 whipped up quickly, usually with a bunch of dried grass, swung around in the air, perhaps blown upon and so made to burst into flame.

On the Gulf side of Cape York Peninsula a special cap or cover protected the working end of a fire stick. The cap was made of a piece of pandanus leaf bent over the end of the two sticks, bound round and round with handspun bark fibre string and covered with warmed beeswax.

Beeswax was prepared by roasting it over a fire, squeezing it a few times in the hands, and warming and hammering it until soft. This beeswax coating held the shape of the cover, after it had been moulded into shape. The cover

was finally dabbed over with a local gum cement or beeswax, with a knob left at the end. Poisonous red berries, *Abrus precatorius*, also known as jequirity seeds, lobster eyes or gidy gidy beans were stuck into the sticky surface as decoration.

Collection information. There is one set of fire sticks from the Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, collected by Roth in 1901.

E.13783 Roth's collection number is F.19. Two large, charred, rounded sticks, slotted into a holder. Total length is 174.3 cm. The holder is 16.5×1.5 cm. The sticks are 168.8×1.5 cm.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4062M, frame 466.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 10–11.

Tools

Stone scraper

Information from Roth's Bulletins. According to Roth a small piece of stone broken to form a sharp edge was the basic form of scraper. The edge also could be sharpened by the removal of minute flakes.

Roth said this was not the same as the second variety of scraper he found which had part of its edge trimmed according to the purpose for which it would be used, such as cutting or scraping. The trimming could be on both faces of the edge.

Collection information. There are three stone scrapers from Moreton Electric Telegraph Office, collected by Roth in 1899. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated

1905 includes "primitive stone scraper". The edges of all the scrapers have been chipped and flaked.

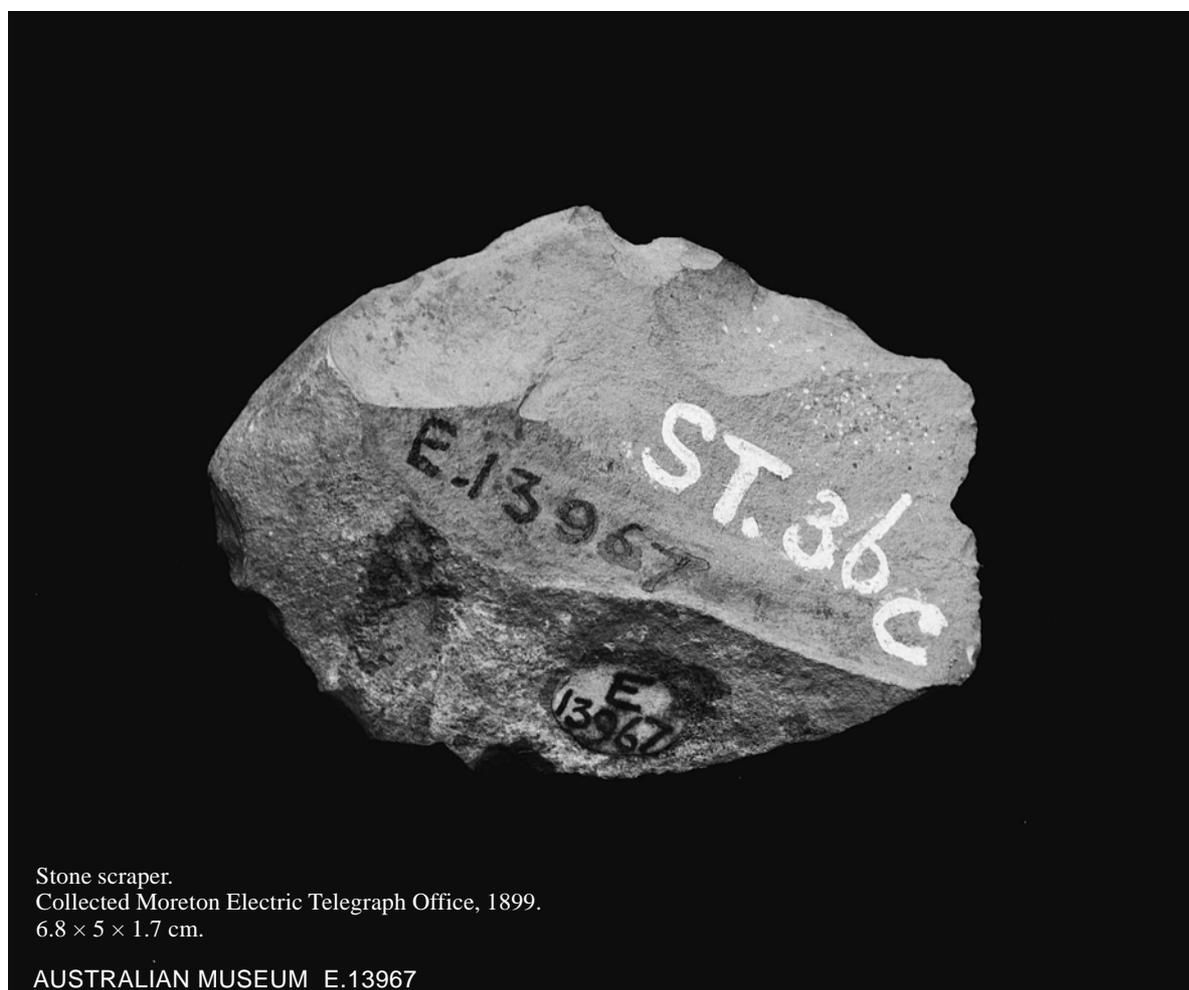
- E.13967 Roth's collection number is ST.36c.
It is 6.8 × 5 × 1.7 cm.
- E.13968 Roth's collection number is ST.36b.
It is 6.6 × 5.3 × 1.4 cm.
- E.13969 Roth's collection number is ST.36a.
It is 5.6 × 6.2 × 2.5 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three stone scrapers:

- E.13967 negative sheet 4085M, frame 650.
- E.13968 negative sheet 4085M, frame 651.
- E.13969 negative sheet 4085M, frame 652.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1904. Bulletin 7: 20.



The people

On 23 December 1886 the Musgrave Electric Telegraph Station, on Saltwater Creek, was opened for business. It was built, in the manner of all Stations, like an armed fort for protection from the “wild blacks”.

Roth visited the area 12 years later. He said that one of the main Princess Charlotte Bay tribes, who he called the Koko-olkulo, used to have their main camp and waterholes in the neighbourhood where the Musgrave Native Police Camp was set up.

Roth noted that they travelled around the higher parts of the Saltwater River and across the upper reaches of the Hann and Morehead Rivers and wandered as far north as Port Stewart.

Roth also referred to the Koko-rarmul people. He said they stayed around the Saltwater and Morehead Rivers. They called Musgrave Station *par-jan-ja* and Musgrave Station 18 mile camp *arnau-o*.

The Koko-olkulo people are now known as the Kunjen, and the Koko-rarmul as the Kokowarra.

In a preface to private notes of Roth's in Report [to the Commissioner of Police, Queensland] on the Aboriginals occupying the “hinter land” of Princess Charlotte Bay, together with a preface containing suggestions for their better protection and improvement. Notes collected during November 1898, pp. ii,iv,v, he wrote:

In company with Sergeant Whiteford and trackers—left the station 18 November and travelled via the 18-mile (Musgrave) camp to the Morehead and then across the Kennedy and Normanby along the headwaters of Birthday Creek to Bower Bay, and so to the Jeannie and Starcke, reaching Cooktown on 2nd December... I beg to draw your attention to the fact that of late the aboriginals on the coastline north of Princess Charlotte Bay... have become somewhat troublesome, e.g., “sticking up” travellers on the Musgrave-Coen Road for tobacco etc....

The remedy I propose, to put the matter shortly, is a central aboriginal Reserve at the Musgrave... its limits would be Saltwater River on the west, Morehead or Basalt River on the east, the Telegraph Line on the south, and the small portion of coastline on the north... an important advantage in favour of such a reserve is that it already constitutes the meeting-ground of Starcke River blacks from the southern coast, and of Coen blacks from the northern...

In the Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899, page 2, Roth noted that Musgrave was one of the places the government had established as a food relief centre. Musgrave had a regular monthly expenditure of 5 pounds. The relief was distributed under the personal supervision of the police. Assistance was to be given to those Aboriginal people who because of old age, youth, infirmity, disease, or other good causes, could not get food for themselves.

The advance of white settlement gradually made it necessary to increase this expenditure on foodstuffs. Aboriginal people were being forcibly hunted from their water supplies and hunting grounds, and were prevented from seeking fresh lands by traditional Aboriginal laws of trespass. They would have needed to fight other Aboriginal groups who had rights over that land. Roth said they were all in danger of starving.

In 1929 the Electric Telegraph Office at Musgrave was closed down to save costs. It was sold and subsequently used as a Station homestead.

References

- Horton, D., ed., 1994. *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, pp. 556, 565, 566. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Loos, N., 1982. *Invasion and Resistance. Aboriginal-European Relations on the North Queensland Frontier 1861–1897*. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 18: 94.
- Roth, W.E., 1900. *Annual Report of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899*, p. 2. Brisbane: Government Printer.
- Roth, W.E., 1898. *Report [to the Commissioner of Police, Queensland] on the Aboriginals occupying the “hinterland” of Princess Charlotte Bay, together with a preface containing suggestions for their better protection and improvement*. Cooktown, 30 December 1898.
- Sheehy, D.J., 1991. *A Century at the Top. A History of Telecommunications on Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland 1887–1987*. Telecom Australia, July 1987. Revised July 1991. Queensland: Government Printer.

Dress and ornament

Plaited pandanus-leaf necklaces

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that at Princess Charlotte Bay a necklace was worn by women and young girls which was made of three to five strips of pandanus leaf plaited together. He said it was called *al-wura*. In the Morehead and Musgrave River regions, women made these plaited necklaces.

Thin strips from the leaf of the pandanus usually were used. The leaf was dried in the sun to make it firmer. To save time it was often heated for a few minutes over a fire. To begin the plaiting, the strands were either continuous or free. The four-plait was sometimes made of two strands folded over at their centres.

When this flat-plaited band was completed a string of some sort was attached at either end, so as to tie it at the back of the neck. The length of these plaited necklaces was from 20–22.5 cm long and from 2–2.5 cm wide.

Collection information. There are three plaited-pandanus-leaf necklaces from Musgrave, collected in 1898. There are no Roth collection numbers for the necklaces. The



Plaited-pandanus-leaf necklace.
Collected Musgrave, 1898.
Total length 25 cm. Length of plaited
section 18 × 0.2 cm.

Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes for all three necklaces "Pandanus leaf plaited necklaces (3–5 strands) the *alwura* of the Musgrave".

- E.14494 Fine single plait necklace with no string ties.
13×0.2 cm.
E.14495 Single plait necklace with thin single thread of pandanus at each end. Total length 25 cm. Length of plaited section 18 × 0.2 cm.
E.14496 Single plaited necklace with loose end.
63 × 0.3 cm.

Photographic information. Black and white photographs are available for all three plaited-pandanus-leaf necklaces:

- E.14494 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1178.
E.14495 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1179.
E.14496 negative sheet 4151M, frame 1180.

Reference

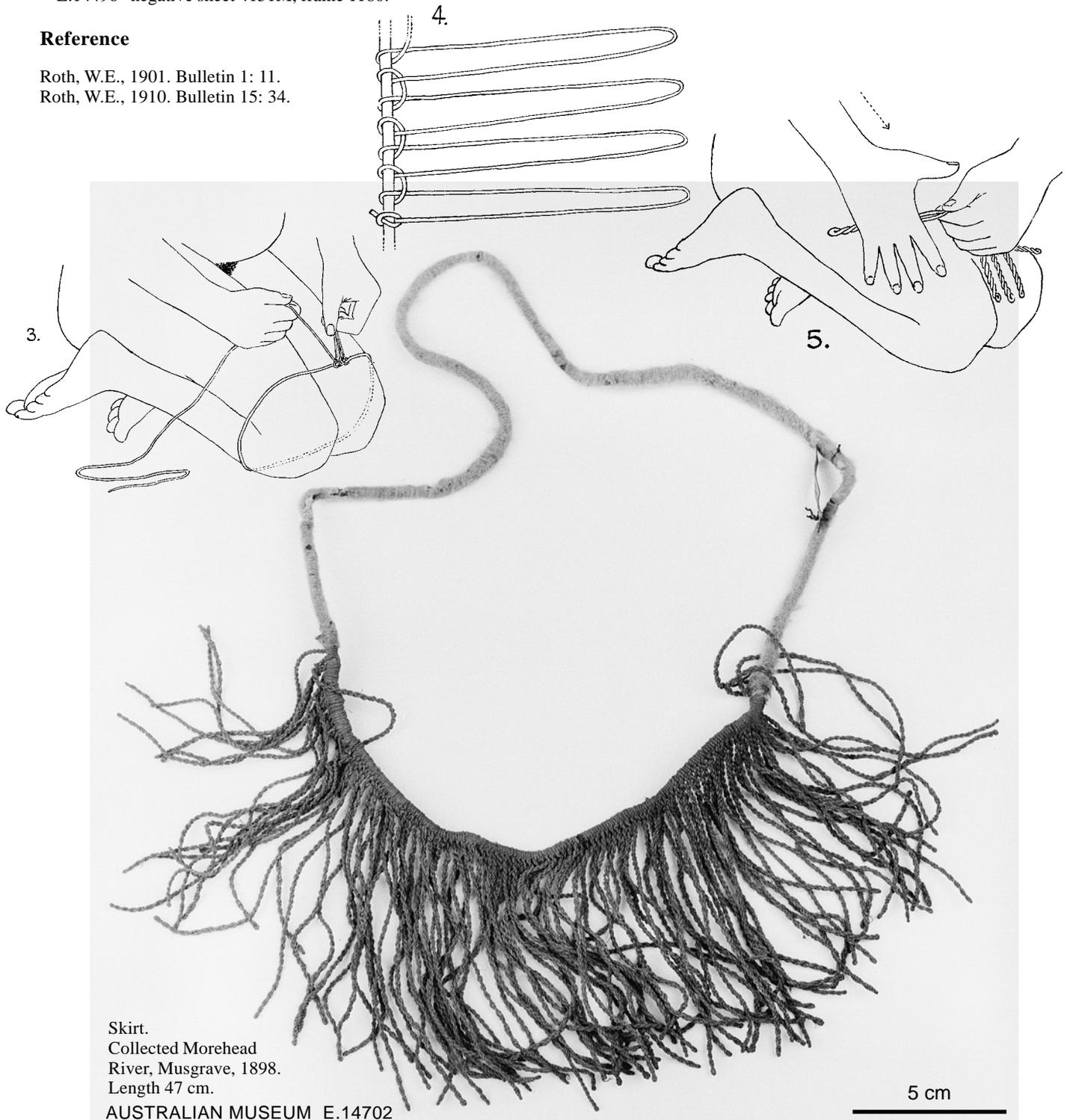
- Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 11.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 34.

Skirt

Information from Roth's Bulletins. Roth wrote that women living around the Middle Palmer River and other areas wore waist circlets with a fringe in front. The circlet part was usually made on a core of human hair overcast with kangaroo or possum hair twine. Tassels making up the fringe were often made of handspun bark fibre twine.

Roth set out three stages in making a handspun bark fibre skirt. Illustrations of a Cape Bedford skirt clearly show these steps.

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



Skirt.
Collected Morehead
River, Musgrave, 1898.
Length 47 cm.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.14702

5 cm



AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM E.13695

Healing string.
Collected Musgrave, 1898.
Length 84 cm.

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. Inland from Princess Charlotte Bay these skirts were made of vegetable fibres from one of three plants.

- 1 The roots of the yakooro tree, *Barringtonia racemosa*, were used. The thick outer layer was sliced off in strips and the exposed white shreddy fibre was pulled off. This was washed and rubbed for a few minutes in water (which became milky) and then dried in the sun. When dry, it was split into shreds ready for use.
- 2 The kapok tree, *Bombax malabaricum*, now known as *Bombax ceiba* L. var *leiocarpum* was used, but Roth did not give any details.
- 3 The bark of the crowwash tree, *Malaisia tortuosa*, now known as *Malaisia scandens*, was used. The thin outer covering of the bark was scraped off with a sharp mussel shell or a piece of glass. The exposed green fibre layer was stripped off in narrow lengths of from 45 to 60 cm. Each green strip was chewed for two to three minutes to soften it. Then it was split into fine strips with a fingernail. When fresh, the twine had a greenish colour.

Roth reported that sometimes he saw women wearing these skirts around their necks.

Collection information. There is one skirt in the collection from the Morehead River, Musgrave, in 1898.

E.14702 The skirt was made of fibre string loops knotted to a possum fur band bound over with single strand plant fibre. Total length of the belt is 47 cm. The skirt section is 23 cm wide. The fibre string loops are about 11 cm long. The Australian Museum's Anthropology register dated 1905 includes "Apron belt, females only, all ages, the 'mi-n' of the Morehead River blacks, Musgrave. Compare fig. 268 Ethnographic Studies".

Photographic information. A black and white photograph of the skirt is available, negative sheet 4177M, frame 1386.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1901. Bulletin 1: 12.
Roth, W.E., 1910. Bulletin 15: 39-40.

Medical equipment

Healing string

Information from Roth's Bulletins. A length of human hair, possum fur, or occasionally hand spun bark fibre twine was tied around a sore or painful part of the body when a person was feeling sick or in pain. People living in the Princess Charlotte Bay area tied human hairstring tightly on the spot where an injury or pain was said to be. If a headache, it was tied around the forehead, and around the belly for a stomach ache. This type of healing string was used in the Boulia district and on the Palmer River (where bark fibre twine was used), Keppel Island and Rockhampton. According to Roth, people living around the Musgrave and Morehead Rivers used hairstring only as a healing string.

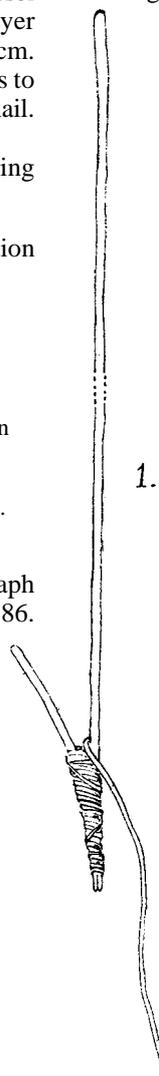
Roth gave a detailed description of how the people living around the Musgrave and Moreton Rivers made human hairstring, which they called menangan. He illustrated the process in Bulletin 1, pl. 1, figs. 1-8. Both men and women could make the hairstring, but, according to Roth, women usually spun it.

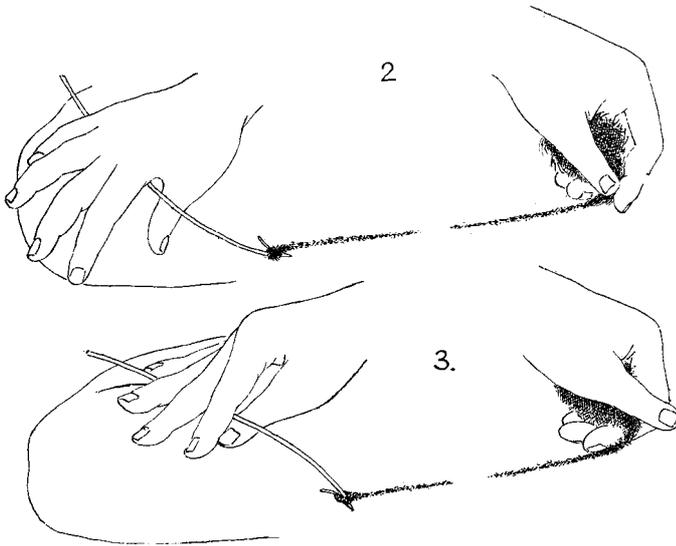
A spindle, called *ng-gai-aja*, was made from a piece of grass-stem about 12 cm long. Roth referred to this as the "handle". A grass-stem hook was tied on at one end with a piece of string, the free end passing over the fork.

The hair, cut short, was now teased out and the bundle held in the palm of the left hand.

The thumb and forefinger of the left hand entwined the free end of the spindle string with a small pinch of hair stretched away (but not detached) from the bundle in the palm.

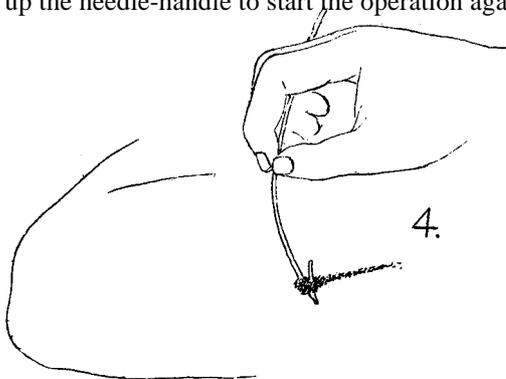
The fingers of the right hand next rolled the handle end of the spindle backwards along the outer side of the lower thigh. At the same time the left hand thumb rolled the free end of the spindle string together with its entwined portion of hair (stretched away from the bundle) forwards onto the forefinger. Figure 2 shows the position at the start of the roll, figure 3 shows the position at the end of the roll.





Rolling in opposite directions increased the tension of the newly made strand as soon as the spindle-string and hair were twisted into one.

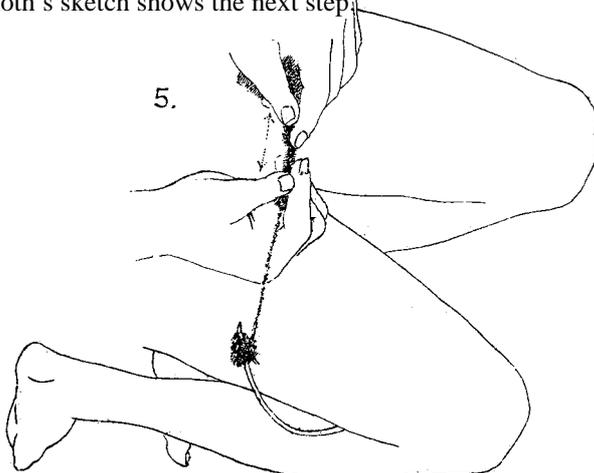
The next illustration shows the thumb and forefinger lifting up the needle-handle to start the operation again.



As the piece of hair between the left thumb and forefinger was used up, another piece of hair was again stretched away from (but not off) the bundle. The bundle acted as a “feeder” to the newly made hair-strand that was always kept as taut as possible. Consequently, as the right hand kept on “rolling” and the left hand continued “feeding”, the new piece of hair-strand got longer. At the same time the pinch of pair held between the left thumb and forefinger got larger and “lumpier”.

This illustration shows the operator reducing the “lump”, by carefully stretching it out into the required shape. During this process the handle of the spindle was gripped in the bend at the back of the knee. To prevent the hair-strand slipping off the spindle-tip on which it had been wound, it was always secured in the spindle fork.

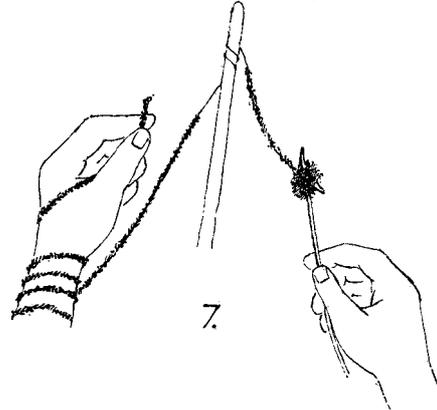
Roth’s sketch shows the next step.



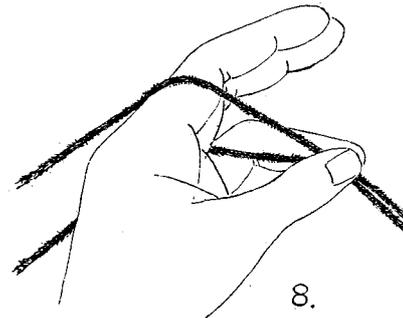
W.E. Roth. del.

A second spindle was now taken, and a second length of hair-strand similarly made, wound and fixed on it. These two strands were then intertwined to form the permanent piece of human hairstring. By taking the free end of the hair-strand between the left thumb and forefinger it was unwound from one spindle, and at the same time tightly rewound onto the left wrist. The spindle string end was finally tied onto the free end of the hair-strand on the other spindle.

Where these two strands were knotted, the strand was looped once or twice round a stick planted firmly in the ground.



The operator walked slowly backwards, unwinding the one hair-strand from the left wrist and the other hair-strand from the spindle in the right hand.



As soon as these two strands were finally unwound, their two ends were tied together to form one endless string of human hair.

Now the last tied ends were fixed to the spindle with the spindle string and rolled along the outer thigh with the right hand, while at the same time stretching and rolling the two strands with the left hand in the opposite direction to that of the spindle.

The hairstring was finally unwound from the spindle-tip and wound into a tight ball. The result of twisting the two strands in the same direction gave the hairstring greater elasticity, and the short lengths of hair used, gave the hairstring a rough appearance.

Collection information. There is one length of healing string collected by Roth from Musgrave in 1898.

E.13695 Roth’s collection number is TA.17. Length of tightly coiled human hair, 84 cm long. The Australian Museum’s Anthropology register dated 1905 includes “Ligature of human hair”.

Photographic information. A black and white photograph is available, negative sheet 4051M, frame 378.

Reference

Roth, W.E., 1903. Bulletin 5: 37–38.

Additional references

This is a list of books and articles for further reading on the regions in this catalogue—McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, McIvor River, Mapoon & the Pennefather & Wenlock Rivers, Maytown, Mentana, Mitchell River, Morehead River, Moreton Electric Telegraph Office and Musgrave. It is by no means a complete list but should give some idea of the information available at present.

All National, 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.

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