

Notebook 23 B

Miscellaneous Notes

Marriage laws

Separation of sexes

Daily life

Fire, how obtained

Food, how procured, how cooked, opossum, kangaroo, turkey, fish, iguana, frog, seasons for gathering

Clothing. Mention man with ballet dress

Hunting, singly and battue, their knowledge of the habits of birds, etc. Anything strange associated with magic.

Games, string, nut, fire, kailees, spearing discs, swimming, jumping wanna.

Dances, songs

Magic, Medicine, Healing, etc.

Message sticks

Methods of justice

Betrothals, polygamy, infanticide, rearing and education of children

Cannibalism

Spirits, three kinds in the north, two south, kaanya and janga, caves

Death never natural, a life for a life

Burial in various positions, earth formed into heaps

Bullroarer, take bullroarer, magic stick and drawings

Weapons.

Methods of making fire, origin of fire, drilling and sawing methods. I have seen them obtain fire with the aid of a shield and spearthrower, the former being of soft wood, the latter of hard wood. The shield is held on the ground by means of the feet and the spearthrower is sawn vigorously over the shield by two men.

FOOD

(This is contained in Section VIII.)

The Australians are dependent on the course of the seasons for their seeds and fruits, and in many parts for their fish food.

They have broadly speaking 4 kinds of food, fish, flesh, insects and grubs, and vegetable food. The fishing season in the North was usually the winter season, the mungaitch season was in the spring and early summer. Some special seed in the Weld Range district was ripe in October. The jilgees or goonyok (species of crayfish) were found in late spring and early summer. Iguanas and snakes, summer time, and certain animals all the year round. They made weirs in the Southern rivers, spearing being the Northern method. When a big fish was caught, when a whale was stranded, messengers were sent to all friendly tribes to come and share in the feast. Oysters and smaller fish were used as bait in Northern waters, the fish being speared as they rose to the bait. Nets were used to catch fish in the Roebourne and other N.W. districts. Torchlight fishing was conducted also in northern waters, turtle being generally caught at night time. Every fish and bird (except the blue pigeon and a few smaller birds) and every animal were caught and eaten.

Poison and muddying the water

Weirs with stakes and boughs and ngoonjock

Fish are also driven into a shallow waters of the estuaries and rivers by means of boughs, the women and men driving the fish before them. This plan is called ngowat.

Oysters and shellfish were not eaten by the South natives but they were by the northern W.A. Method of cooking small fish. Wrapped in a species of melaleuca (paperbark), fish put into this wrapped round with fibre and baked in heated sand covered with hot ashes. Wounded cockateos act as decoys to the others. They are tied to a tree and their cries bring their companions. Emus, about 130 lbs. netted, speared, poisoned, may be caught by a wooden tube or hollow bamboo. Swim and dive underneath duck.

Then tracking, stalking singly kangaroos, drawing out tail sinews before cooking. It might be cooked whole or in portions, an oven made in the sand, stones heated and placed either inside the kangaroo, or on top. Skin of kangaroo not always removed. When cooked it was laid on its back and cut up and divided according to law.

Certain rules limit the animal and vegetable foods, emu, bandicoot, honey, fish, etc. The origin of food tabus seems to have been the desire of the old men to keep the best foods for themselves. In some tribes food rules were communistic, each person having a portion. Property in game, the men who first wounds the animal shares it.

Cannibalism, kidney fat, northern methods of eating

Wongalong fingers

Special implement for drawing grubs out of trees

Mallee roots, certain gum trees (tuart, etc.) a hole or bulge on certain trees (water in these).

There are certainly not less than 300 species of vegetables.

Zamia nuts placed in water and then buried for a time until the pulp is dry, eaten hard or roasted, taste like chestnuts.

Boorn maaja and other roots mixed with red earth, to prevent dysentery. Kwonnert season large gatherings, also mungaitch season. It is very unusual to store food but the zamia nuts and certain jamwood seeds are stored. A kind of tobacco in the Murchison.

Clothing

The booka in the South, and paint and grease and belt and tassel or pearlshell in the North.

Men let their hair grow long, women cut theirs short, the hair cutting ceremony of the South accompanied the initiation of the boy into manhood. A fillet of hairstring or opossum string or even of bark keeps the hair away from the face, tightened, the fillet relieves headache. Of head ornaments they had many, emu, eaglehawk and the crested feathers of the cockatoo were made into tufts and fastened in the headband, dogs' tails, boodee tails, flying fox fur made into small button like ornaments, kangaroo teeth, pieces of shell, etc. and at elaborate ceremonies the hair may be raised artificially on top of the head, and then both head and body covered with white birds' down.

Necklaces of pipeshells, string, bandicoot tails, kangaroo teeth, arm bands of hair string or rattan covered with string.

A piece of shell in the inland districts is exceedingly valuable. Nose bone and knocking out one or more front teeth.

Painting the body or smearing it with grease and painting it with red and yellow and black and white. Black mourning in men, white mourning for women, red ceremonial, and symbol of manhood, yellow and red decorative, green was said to be the colour used by thammunjoonoo womba, in the Broome district.

Women were greased, but beyond the white for mourning, and red at certain ceremonies, the women were not painted. Huts, either grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea*) or paperbark, or grass or breakwind shelters. Holes are made with the digging stick and in these the stems of the grass tree, or small saplings, were placed to a depth of about 8 inches. The boughs converged and bark or rushes were placed on them, and held in position by the seed vessels of the grass/^{tree}stem, or the tops of the saplings. The thatching of the huts generally began from the ground upwards to the top. Although in the South the huts were substantially built, the natives never returned to them after once going away.

Grey found huts of clay and sods on the Hutt River, and at Hanover

Bay he found a beehive hut of logs of wood, 4 ft. high, 9 ft. in diameter. Peron found log huts which were recesses for storing implements, the entrance being about 3 feet high.

King found a stone hut at Careening Bay, but it was evidently built by Malays or Europeans.

In most tribes the huts face the direction away from the wind. In the North there was a yalme quarter and a jooganoo quarter, the jooganoo being at the back of the yalme.

Message Sticks

In their message sticks they had a system of communication which might in time have developed into a script. In many cases, however, the stick was simply a reminder to the messenger.

In his very earliest youth the native begins the study of the language of footprints and other hunter's lore.

The messengers arriving at the camp, relating the news to the old men, or in a loud recitative as he is desirous of all hearing his news, and he overcomes by this means the social barriers raised by customs of avoidance.

Their gesture language is local in its distribution and some previous acquaintance is necessary to secure its comprehension. A peaceful sign is the outspreading arms and hands, a hostile sign is chewing the end of the beard and spitting it out again, meanwhile working the toes in the dust.

There is a big difference between the art of savages and that of highly civilised beings.

Like all people in the lower stages of culture, the natives are given to much adorning of themselves and their weapons.

Designs on rock faces, in caves and rock shelters, drawings of faces and bodies, hand especially, totem markings.

Page 8

Duels between uncle and nephews, brothers, tribal fights, public and private, justice is meted out. If one man offends another, both stand out and the offended spears the offender. When the combat is over, friendly relations are resumed.

In coming to a camp a friendly visitor goes straight to the hut of a relative or brother-in-law, bestowing not even a glance at any other camps he may pass on the way. When he gets to the camp, if a death has occurred in his absence, the nearest blood relation of the dead man will come over to the visitor and seat himself cross legged on his thighs pressing his breast to that of the visitor (this is a general announcement of death). The women in camp immediately set up a wail and the near relations of the dead man scratch their cheeks until the blood came.

Strangers are always required to sit down away from the camp until the oldest man in camp goes to them, finds out who they are. Many Europeans may have been killed through ignorance of this native rule.

Of games they had many, nut burying, meeja kambong, kala kambong, setting the top of a grass tree alight, string games, cat's cradle, and the making of animals' claws, etc. Girls had little sticks to represent babies and they were taught how to defend these. Guessing games and many other kinds were taught them and a sort of hockey was played by the Southern people.

Page 9

Wounds, Remedies, etc.

A woman having a severe headache will get another woman to hit her on the head with her digging stick. They frequently suffered from skin diseases, often induced from over eating.

Like all savage races our aborigines are singularly lacking in resistance to disease, but as regards wounds, their viability is tremendous. A native will live for years with six inches of spear located in some part of his body. They will receive spear wounds in the thigh with not the smallest sign of pain. Skull fractures are also quickly recovered from.

Page 10

A man suddenly feels a pain in his side and at once believes that the magic of some enemy has entered into him. His reasoning process is simple. Everything must have a cause and as no man or woman would get ill of themselves, there must be an enemy somewhere who has caused the sickness and hence an endless revenge was going on. A Swan district man sent sickness and probably death into a Vasse man, the latter's people must return the compliment by injuring or killing the Swan district man and so on.

Their soul or spirit of life is associated with the breath. At Beagle Bay a young boy fell off a tree injuring himself fatally. A priest who was attending the dying boy had occasion to leave him for a moment. On his return he found some eight or ten natives lying on top of the boy, all anxious to catch his spirit before it passed out of his body, thus acquiring double strength and spirit.

Kaanya, the spirit of a recently dead native. Janga, spirit which for some reason has not gone to Koorannup but returned to its own country and haunts some shady place, or hill or valley or cave. It is the kaanya who cannot find their way to Koorannup who return and become janga. You are all aware of the beliefs of the old Breton and Irish peasantry in the efficacy of fire to ward off evil spirits, and smoking or firing the magic out of a man, dog, or weapon is common to our aborigines.

The spirit of the dead native hovers about the vicinity for a time, until the body becomes skeletonised, when it goes away to Koorannup. A branch suddenly fell off a tree near a camp which I was visiting, the natives said at once, "Oh, the kaanya stepped on the branch on its way to Koorannup and broke it." That branch became winnaitch or forbidden until the incident was forgotten, or a fire had passed over the place. The name of a dead man is not mentioned because his kaanya or spirit would hear the name uttered, and would come to those who called him, and perhaps work harm upon them. For mourning the men put charcoal on their faces, sometimes adding lines of pipeclay on nose, forehead and cheeks. Women use pipeclay only. Marking large rings round their eyes and drawing vertical line along forehead and nose. Sometimes a widow's skull cap made of pipeclay and mud is worn for a period. In the North an old widow will make mud curls of her hair a very uncomfortable head dress, which she will probably wear during the remainder

of her life. The mud dries and hardens and the curls rattle as the woman runs.

Widowhood may last for three days or a lifetime, according to the age of the widow and other circumstances. The widow passes to the brother of her deceased husband.

Page 14

Burial of the Dead

The methods are varied. Twenty four hours after death, or even less, preparations for the burial are made. The women shriek and howl, scratching their faces until the blood comes and the skin comes off. The male relatives dig the grave, the women clearing away the shrubs etc. in the vicinity. Sometimes the hair or beard of the dead man is cut off to show any absent relatives. The men rub ashes and charcoal on their foreheads, the women pipeclay or ashes. The nail is burnt off, the thumb and the forefinger are tied together to prevent the man from holding his spear. Grave $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and 4 feet deep. Gum boughs are burnt in the hollow made, the direction of the smoke telling the whereabouts of the murderer, or sorcerer. More boughs are placed at the bottom of the grave and the body is lowered down wrapped in a cloak, if below lat. 29. The grave may extend east and west or north and south, according to the tribe. One I saw dug at Mindoola was that of a Yalgoo district woman, whose feet pointed to Yalgoo. Round about the grave every shrub and uneven surface had been removed, so that when the spirit rose it did not stumble. (Describe the small mound when Nellie died.) The earth from the graves in the South forms a crescent at the head. The Darling Range, or Hill tribes buried north and south, the head to the south, the face looking to the rising sun. The lowland or river people bury east and west, the body on its back, the eyes looking to the midday sun. The earth is formed into two heaps, one at the head and one at the foot. A negro is placed in or on the grave, if a man, a wanna if a woman. The spears of the dead man are broken. The grave is regularly visited to see that it is not disturbed, a fire is lighted between the grave and the living (close to the

grave) and a shelter of boughs may be erected over it, also food and water may be placed there.

Page 15

To call the name of a dead man brings his spirit back and the spirit, finding that it has been made a mockery of will bring harm to the person who named it.

Page 16

Their geographical and astronomical notions are on a par with their level of culture. In the northern district there are three earths, that which is under the ground, 2 on the surface, and 3 above the ground or in the sky.

To them the sun is a female, and the wife of the moon, the stars being their children or their dogs, according to the tribe telling the legend. The sun's daughter only comes up in the north, for if the mother came up they would all be burnt. They believed that an eclipse was caused by some native doctor throwing his booka (skin cloak) over the sun. The Pleiades are our sisters, Beering.

Shooting stars are opossums throwing spears.

Magellan's clouds are the smoke of a medicine man's fire that went upwards in to the sky, and stayed there.

Scorpio is a trap for catching kangaroos, etc.

The Dark Patch in the Milky Way is an emu, a river, and in the north it is the magic bullroarer which once made a road from earth to sky, Koorrwal.

The rainbow is the shade (beega) of a tchooroo (snake).

Thunder is supposed to be the voice of Nalja, who is represented as an old man with white hair. In the South a sorcerer is called mulgarguttuk, mulgar meaning thunder, guttuk = having.

Stone Implements in Museum

Native mill for grinding roots

Flat round stone instrument used at corroborees (Kimberley)

Native stone spear heads, Kimberley and Derby

"Ginda" stone chisel

Stones used by native women for sharpening their fighting sticks
(oval round square, felspar, greenstone crystal quartz) Murchison

"Dandle" used for tattooing (?) Murchison

Stones used by natives for initiation rites (Murchison)

Native tomahawk, Broome

"Tahlee", Kalgoorlie name for gingi

Two-headed hammer from Bunbury district, 6 inches across head,
length of handle, 14 inches
" " " 7 inches, hammer six inches across,
handle fixed on with gum (adzes?)

Tomahawk from Chidlons Wells circular shape, whitish stone

Chipped and unserrated spearheads, Kimberley

Native stone hammer

Chisel made of iron (Kimberley)

Mungan, curious stone implement (sandstone)
by
Kimberley natives (like a hammer head)

A.C. Bradon of Eucla states that the natives there have no
stone hammers, but in circumcision they use a piece of sharp
flint obtained from caves or wells sunk by the whites.

They also use the flint for making their various wooden weapons.

Prof. Keane summarises the essential principles of the totem system as follows :-

Starting from the initial unit of the tribe or family, this becomes divided into a number of clans, each distinguished by its totem, which is in fact its name and its heraldic badge, this badge gradually becoming more and more venerated till it assumes a sacred aspect and may in fact be almost deified.

Names of persons suggested by Resident Magistrates to whom
lists should be sent :

Pass, Geraldton

Knight, W.H., Carnarvon

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Customs, etc.

Carlyon, informant
Yuin
Yalgoo Magisterial District

Burial (native method)

The dead are sometimes placed in the grave in a sitting posture, with face towards his birthplace. A fire is made close to the grave and the direction the smoke takes indicates where the murderer is to be found, and the relatives go in that direction and kill a man or woman of the tribe sojourning there (Greenough). Should two men fight and one of them die, the one that is still living must be speared, even if he kept away from the district for many years (Greenough).

Hair Cutting

Native women place a tugga (or wooden scoop) under the hair and cut it off with a flint. (Greenough)

Game

Mostly speared or caught with dogs. (Greenough)

Carving

Outline of animals chipped with flints on granite rocks.
(Greenough)

Native Justice

Should a native take his brother's wife, the offender is speared in many places, from the toes upward. After committing two murders, the murderer would go and roll on an ant bed and after being badly bitten would return to his tribe and would not be molested, as it was considered he had made a tonement.

Corroborees

"Moondung keenya" An effigy is made resembling a human being, and after the dance the natives spear it and knock it to pieces. The women are present at this dance, but with heads bowed down. Should a woman look up either during the dance round the effigy or its subsequent demolition she will go blind.

Native Names of tribes near Yuin

Thaawaree, Wajerree, Agardees

Remedies

Warm ashes

Territorial Limits

Yuin tribe extends 40 miles north of Yuin, 45 miles south to Wurarga, 25 miles east to head of Greenough River, and west about 30 miles to Tallerang Hill.

Barter

The tribes exchange spears, shields and other objects with each other.

Cannibalism

Cannibalism existed.

Water from roots, etc.

Peeawa tree, always found in a watercourse and bearing a long white flower. The natives dig up the end of the root and trace it towards the tree. It is then taken out, cut into pieces and drained into a tugga (wooden scoop).

Belief in Ghosts

Natives believe that the spirits of the dead are almost always about their graves. They sometimes travel. When they die they believe they go to another country "westward".

Sorcery

Native boylyas in every camp.

Gesture Language

They use gestures much the same as white people.

S.S. Woodley, Gum Creek, via Annean.

Game Traps

Pits - a hole about 7 or 8 feet deep is dug. After "cottering" the earth that is taken out they put two or three pointed sticks two or three feet high standing pointed end up in the bottom of the hole, then the whole surface is covered over with small sticks and grass and a little earth. Some pits have no sharp sticks at the bottom.

Paintings

Emus' dogs' and man's footprints chipped on granite rocks.

Remedies

For colds, peppermint steeped in water and the liquid drunk, leaves of the kukarra (?) tree also applied.

Barter

Docarree (red ochre) and other articles exchanged.

Cannibalism

This has always existed.

Making Fires

Sandalwood and native peach are the woods used.
Sawing method, also upright.

Obtaining Water

Roots of trees drained into a vessel or tapping trees where a crack is seen.

Ghosts

They believe the dead can rise up and take any shape they choose and can be friendly or hostile at will. This idea varies in different parts.

Sorcerers

"Moondong" men can cure sickness, cause rain, etc.

Gesture Language

Signs with both hands and feet, some for animals, etc.

Smoke Signalling

3 or 4 smokes, one after the other mean "shifting".

One spiral smoke "look out, someone has arrived", "be cautious".

Geoff. Chambers, Peak Hill

Ghosts

Devil called "jingee" or "moonaree".

Women are not supposed to see him, if they do they may be killed
by any native (?)

Gesture Language

To pout the lips means "over there".

To draw the bottom lips down means "no".

T.A. Drage, Murchison

Burial

Round grave, body placed in sitting posture with legs crossed and face set towards the place of his birth. Usually buried two or three hours after death, on sandy ground, easy to dig. No service other than wails and cries of those present.

Hairdressing

Plastered with grease and wilgee until formed into rope-like pieces hanging all round the head.

Game Traps

Pits, dug as described.

Carvings

Nose sticks are often carved with figures of emus, kangaroos, birds, etc.

Native Justice

An eye for an eye.

Diseases

Gonorrhoea (doubtful) and colds.

Remedies

"Bulya" only.

Extent of Country, Boundaries

Wooramel River on the North, Murchison on the east to Elizabeth Springs, and down the Murenison to Geraldine Muir's.

Approx. number of natives, between 200 and 300.

Tribes barter with each other.

Cannibalism existed.

Making fires

Sandalwood or soft dry wood split but not entirely parted, the opening thus made is filled with dry soft grass. A second soft stick is rubbed across (sawing method) the first stick immediately over the opening, which soon ignites the grass.

Water from Roots, etc.

Mallee roots dug up, cut into lengths and drained into a vessel, water passable.

Mount View (continued) (Mr. Drage)
Sorcery

An implicit faith in the bulya, who extracts smooth stones and shells from the patients by squeezing and sucking the affected parts. These are held as great charms or curiosities by the natives who believe an enemy placed them there.

K. Young, Murchison.

Extent of country

Lake Nabberoo at Northeast corner, Eerivilla Station on Gascoyne River at Northwest corner, Milly Milly station on Murchison River at Southwest corner, "Star of the East" at Southeast corner.

About 400 or 500 natives in this district.

Names of tribes

Myallee, kurrathoo, kogara

Myallee inhabit all the country north of the Murchison River, the Kurrathoo inhabit the western half, the Kogara the eastern half, of the country south of the Murchison River.

Making Fires

Upright method, the dry pithy stalks of the "lupin" family, also the wood of the native peach tree are used.

Witchcraft, Sorcery

The mobbernyooa, the mobbernyooa or bulyaman can cure and cause sickness, death, can make rain to fall, etc.

Gesture Language

Gestures are occasionally used, but no fixed code noticed.

Totems

When the initiation ceremony is being performed, the first living creature whether bird, beast, reptile or insect seen by the newly initiated boy is called his ngallingo. He must never kill nor even look at this particular creature and if he hears it spoken about by the other natives he must leave their presence, and the others must not speak of it in his presence.

Constable Pollett, Northampton

Marriage Ceremony

The bride is taken, when he has reached marriageable age, by her brother or father from her father's camp and led by the hand to a spot a short distance away where the bridegroom is sitting down by himself and the bride is made to sit in his lap (?) and she is then informed by her father and mother (?) that she is not to leave the man under pain of being speared. Then the pair are supposed to be married and all her relations leave them and the man and his wife go away and camp by themselves for a day and then the husband takes his wife to his friends and they live with his people.

Mode of Burial

A round hole is dug about five or six feet deep according to the deceased's height. The body is placed in a kneeling position, hands straight down by the side and face towards the east. A stick is placed under the chin to hold the head up and no earth is allowed near the body. Sticks are then put over it to hold the earth up and are piled upon each other close to the surface.

Game Traps

Netting and pits.