

Ngurunderi – Aboriginal Dreaming

Introduction

Ngurunderi is one of the main Dreaming ancestors of Southern Australia. This exhibition is about Ngurunderi's people, the Ngarrindjeri of the Lower Murray River, Lakes and Coorong.



"The Bulrushes" on the shores of Lake Alexandrina with Raukkan (Point McLeay) in the background. Photographer: P Clarke (AA651).

This exhibition developed during the 1980s describes the culture of the Ngarrindjeri people of the Lower Murray River and Coorong areas of South Australia. Their environment was rich with animals, plants and aquatic resources and the Ngarrindjeri groups were consequently less nomadic than Aborigines of the inland. A wide range of material culture items - wooden artefacts and basketry in particular - reflected this more sedentary lifestyle.

Ngarrindjeri social structure and religious life was also distinctive. In common with other south-eastern Australian groups, Ngarrindjeri religion was characterised by Dreaming Ancestors who established laws and social practices before leaving the earth to live in the sky. Ngurunderi was the most important of these Ngarrindjeri ancestors. The exhibition uses the story of Ngurunderi, his role in the creation of the Murray River and the Ngarrindjeri lands to introduce Ngarrindjeri culture.

From the early 1830s the Ngarrindjeri people have survived the massive dislocation wrought by the European colonisation of South Australia. While also serving as a refuge, the establishment of Christian missions like Point McLeay (Raukkan) helped weaken the culture of a people already suffering the loss of their land and their rights. Outside the missions, many Ngarrindjeri lived in town fringe camps until the 1860's, when the political situation of Aboriginal people throughout Australia began to improve with the recognition as full citizens. Today the Ngarrindjeri community, located in several country centres as well as in Adelaide itself, is one of the largest Aboriginal communities in southern Australia.

The South Australian Museum has had a long association with the Ngarrindjeri people. Aborigines at the Point McLeay Mission contributed artefacts and natural history specimens to the collections as early as 1864, just two years after the Museum first opened its doors.

Since those early days, several Museum curators have developed a close working relationship with the Ngarrindjeri. Edward Stirling, the first Curator of Anthropology, was responsible for the growth of the collections during the 1890's and 1900's. He reorganised

the exhibition areas and incorporated a diorama depicting a Ngarrindjeri fishing and camping scene. The mural painted for this diorama in 1915 has been retained for the Ngarrindjeri exhibition. Norman B Tindale added significantly to the collections acquired by Stirling. He also worked extensively with Clarence Long (a Tangani man of the Coorong) to record Ngarrindjeri culture and beliefs. At this time, the anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt obtained research material from Ngarrindjeri people, notably Albert Karloan and Margaret (Pinkie) Mack. More recently, Steve Hemming and Philip Clarke have re-established these historic links with Ngarrindjeri communities.

In 1982, the South Australian Museum commenced research and planning for a major exhibition on the culture and beliefs of the Aboriginal people of the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong. Since then the exhibition has developed with the active support of Ngarrindjeri communities and particular individuals. Lola Sumner, Dick Koolmatrie, Henry and Jean Rankine and their family, Doreen Kartinyeri, Marlene Stewart, George Trevorrow, Ronald Bonney, Lola Cameron-Bonney and many other Aboriginal people have all helped. The generous and enthusiastic help of many others has ensured the successful development of this exhibition.

Ngurunderi travelled down the Murray River in his canoe, in search of his two wives....

Bark canoes

The Ngarrindjeri used canoes for fishing, for transport and also in ceremonies. These canoes were made from the bark of the River red-gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

Making a canoe

Mature trees with slightly bent trunks were preferred. The bark had to be thick and free of holes.

Climbing the tree using foot holds cut with wooden chisels, men cut out the canoe's shape with chisels or stone axes. They prised the bark from the tree with wooden wedges and eased it to the ground with ropes. This job sometimes involved as many as eight men.

Shaping the canoe

To shape the canoe, the men put it on a low platform, weighted it with earth and rocks and lit small fires underneath. Wooden struts stopped the bark from curling too much. When dry, the canoe was waterproofed with grease or clay and was ready to launch.



An Aboriginal group on the River Darling at Avoca Station in 1904. The canoe in the photograph was acquired by the Museum in 1910. *Collector: D.H. Cudmore*



A Ngarrindjeri man making a bark canoe. It is in the final stages, being shaped over a low fire. This rare photograph was taken in 1862 by George Burnell. *Photographer: G Burnell, about 1862. Mortlock Library (B12659)*



A scene recorded on the Lower Murray in 1864, showing a funeral procession of canoes. *"Illustrated Melbourne Post", July 18, 1864, p. 6.*

Most bark canoes took several days to make and lasted about a year. Their low, flat shape suited navigation on the slowly flowing Murray and the lakes, but they capsized easily and required skilled handling.

A DINNER CAMP - 5 000 YEARS OF HISTORY



Aboriginal people used this rock shelter for about 5 000 years, until European arrival. Archaeological work here has shown changes in local Aboriginal culture and technology during this period.

An archaeological first

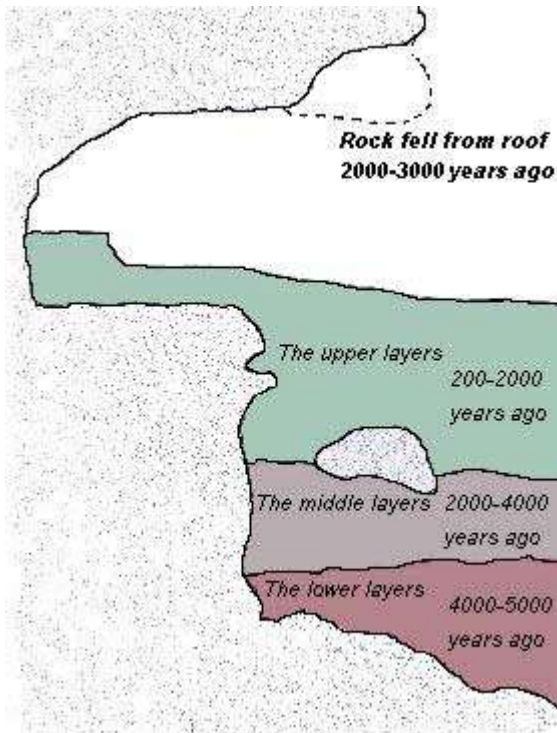
The Devon Downs rock-shelter was the first site in Australia to be scientifically excavated, layer by layer. N.B. Tindale and H. Hale carried out the excavation in 1929. Their results challenged two theories of the time:

- that Aborigines had not lived in Australia long enough to have affected the land or its ecology;
- that Aboriginal culture was unchanging.

The Devon Downs rock shelter.

Lower Murray archaeology

The main archaeological sites of the Lower Murray Valley excavated since the Devon Downs dig of 1929.



The Upper Layers

Very few stone tools were found in these layers. This suggests that people may have been relying on wooden and bone tools during the last 2 000 years.

As in the lower layers, the bones of several mammal species were found.

The Middle Layers

The middle layers were richer in stone and bone tools, shellfish, bones and emu eggshell. Fish seems to have been the main food source in these layers.

This dense concentration of material suggests that Aborigines used the shelter mostly between 4 000 and 2 000 years ago.

Red ochre was present in most layers - people may have used this for ceremonial purposes.

The Lower Layers

The lower levels contain a distinctive stone tool type - the pirri point. These may have been used for woodworking. Bone implements also appear. The river was less salty about 4 000 years ago and fresh water mussels were a reliable food source. The archaeologists found turtle bones and mammal bones, including the tooth of a

Tasmanian Devil. Evidence for the shelter's use disappears at the lowest level of excavation - about 5 000 years ago.



Evidence

Total quantity of stone retrieved - a low 9.1 kg.

Animal remains - 38 vertebrate species, 10 freshwater invertebrate species found

Increase in volume of tools, bone, egg-shell, ochre, in middle layers.

Large proportion of shellfish remains and few stone tools.

Conclusions

Confirms low usage of stone tools in the Murray Valley.

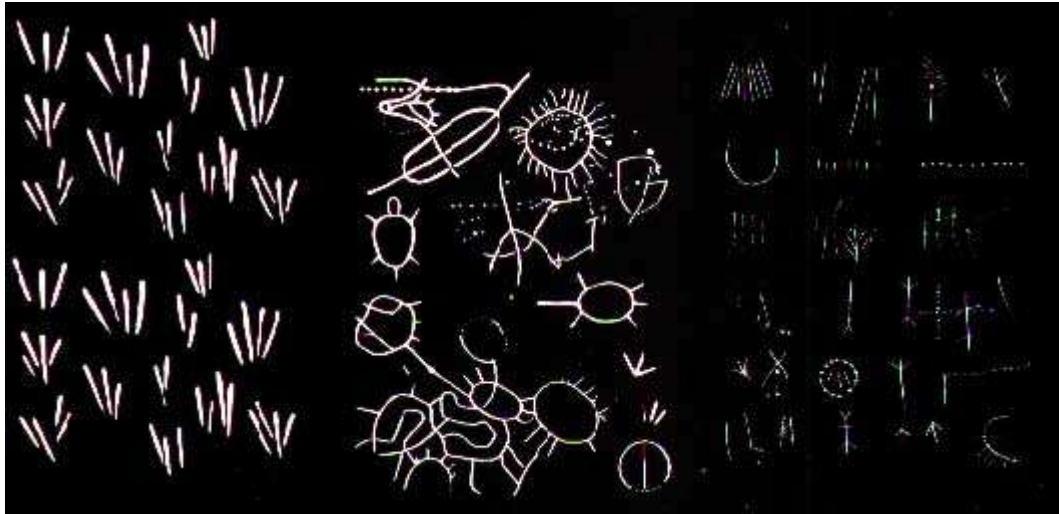
Represents a very diverse diet of mostly modern species.

Suggests increase in intensity of site use between 4000 and 2000 years ago.

Shelter unlikely to have been a permanent camp. Was probably used as a "dinner camp" by people on their way to and from the river.

Rock art at the Devon Downs shelter

The walls and roof of the Devon Downs shelter are covered with three types of rock engravings. We can only guess at their meaning today.



Type A - Carved on the back wall of the shelter at least 3000 years ago.

Type B - Associated with the upper layers of occupation. The same carvings also appear on the underside of a large rock which fell from the roof onto one of the middle layers between 2000 and 3000 years ago.

Type C - Associated with the top layer of occupation - the most recent in the shelter.

A giant cod fish swam ahead of Ngurunderi, widening the river with sweeps of its tail and making swamps and cliffs. Ngurunderi chased the fish, trying to spear it....

The Murray River - A Ngarrindjeri Landscape

In 1940 an elderly Ngarrindjeri man named Albert Karloan spent time with Museum anthropologists, telling them of his people's history and of his country along the Murray River. Some of the places he described are shown here



Albert Karloan demonstrating a traditional string game to the Anthropologist Ronald Berndt in 1940. *Photographer : Ronald Berndt*



The Lower Murray, showing some of the features described by Albert Karloan, and the areas inhabited by the main Ngarrindjeri groups. Karloan belonged to the Yaraldi people. *After N.B. Tindale.*



Pomberuk (Murray Bridge) - A crossing place.

The town of Murray Bridge stands near Pomberuk, at the northern limit of Ngarrindjeri country. Aborigines used this place as a river crossing long before European settlers built an iron bridge there in 1876.

An Aboriginal camp at Murray Bridge during the 1880's, showing the newly completed bridge in the background. *E.J. Schmaal Collection, Mortlock Library (B 18271).*

Tagalang (Tailem Bend) - A trading centre.

Aboriginal people from the north and south came to Tagalang to trade and hold ceremonies. Spears, shields, axes, red ochre, fishing nets and fur cloaks were all exchanged here.



Pitjerungerung (Tailem Bend pine forest) - Timber and glue.

Ngarrindjeri people made fishing spears and punting poles from trees in this forest. They also used the pine resin as a glue and as gum for their babies to chew on while teething. Pine resin was used to fix the head of this greenstone axe. European string and cloth form the binding. *Collector : Unknown. (A29360).*



Murungun (Mason's Hill) - Home of the river monster.

In the Dreaming, Ngurunderi camped near Murungun. The Ngarrindjeri still believe that a water monster or "bunyip" called Mulgewongk lives in the river here. A picture of the Mulgewongk or water monster of the river and lakes, drawn in October 1997 by Jenny Stengle, aged 10 from Raukkan Primary School. Most stories describe the Mulgewongk as about the size of a man, covered in thick hair or rushes. *South Australian Museum (AA675).*

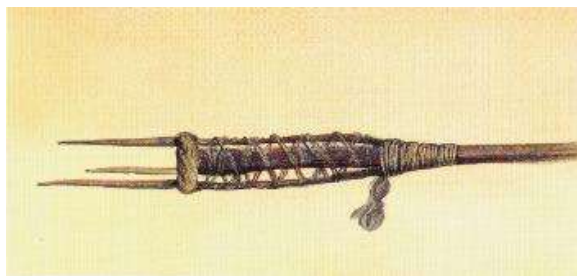
At last, with the help of Nepele (his wives' brother), the giant fish was speared as it entered Lake Alexandrina. Ngurunderi cut it up, creating new species of fish from the different pieces....

FISHING

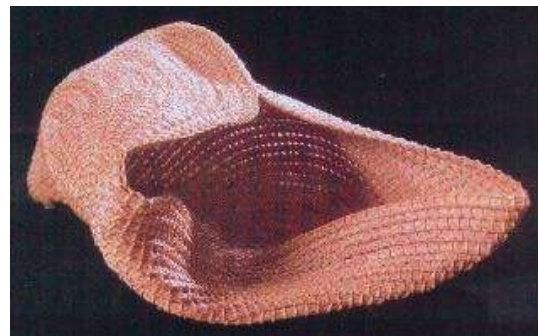
The Ngarrindjeri fished in the rivers, lakes and sea. Using nets, spears and traps, they caught a variety of fresh- and salt-water fish. They also relied on magic charms and songs to ensure a good catch.



An 1840's scene of fishermen using a net in the bay at Second Valley, south of Adelaide.
Artist: WA Cawthorne, ca 1842. Mitchell Library Collection.



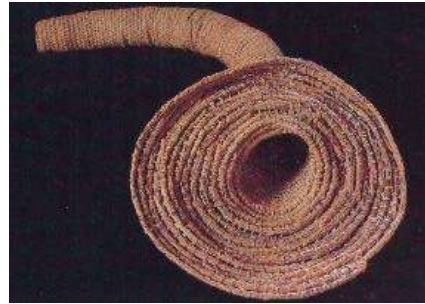
Head of a fishing spear. These long spears also served as punting poles for canoes. *Artist: GF Angus, 1844. (AA8).* Ngarrindjeri fishermen used spears to kill the larger fresh- and salt-water fish, like Murray cod and mulloway.



A coiled basketry scoop made at Point McLeay, South Australia. Obtained in about 1900. The Ngarrindjeri used basketry scoops to collect fish caught in nets and traps. Women also used scoops to collect small fish in the shallows. *Donor: HE Read, (A6404).*



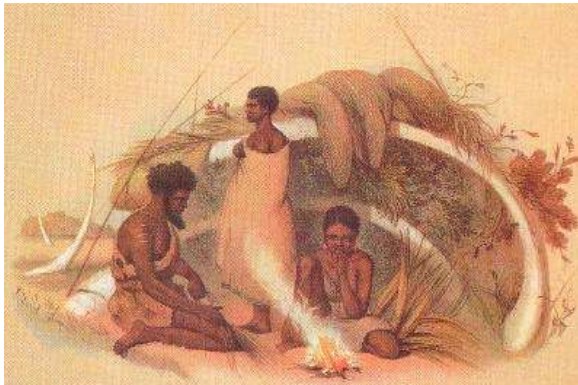
A fishing scene from Chowilla Creek on the Upper Murray, photographed in 1886. The man on the left, Kulkynie Tommy, is holding a hoop net. *Godson Collection, State Library of South Australia.*



This long eel trap was made by Aborigines at Lake Condah in Western Victoria in 1910. The Ngarrindjeri used similar traps. After the autumn rains, large numbers of eels swam into the Coorong from inland creeks. Ngarrindjeri fishermen used a combination of weirs and basketry traps to catch them. *Collector: AS Kenyon (A6431).*

Making Fishing Nets

The Ngarrindjeri used several different fishing nets. Some were made to catch single fish like the Murray cod. Others, several metres long, were used to catch schools of smaller fish. Fishing nets were made from the stems of sedges or from string made of bulrush-root fibre.



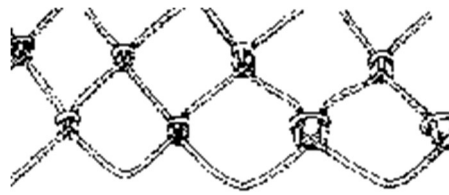
Making a fishing net at Encounter Bay in 1844. The seated woman is softening the bulrush-root fibre by chewing it; the man is rolling the fibre to make cord for a net like the one on the roof of the whale-bone hut. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844. "South Australia Illustrated".*



A sample of bulrush fibre string, collected during the 1860's. Before being made into string, the bulrush root was softened by steaming in an earth oven. *Donor : G Taplin (A1995).*



This is the oldest known example of an Aboriginal fishing net from South Australia. It was collected during the 1840's from near Adelaide—possibly from Lake Alexandrina. Its knotted string is probably made from bulrush fibres. *Donor : AC de Hailes (A2000).*



A diagram of the netting technique

.HUNTING AND FOOD GATHERING

HUNTING

Hunting larger game was a man's activity. In the spring and early summer the larger animals began to gather near permanent water sources. At this time of the year the kangaroo and emu became a major source of food. Sometimes the men hunted alone and at other times in groups.

The Ngarrindjeri used several types of throwing clubs to hunt large game, birds and smaller animals.

On hunting expeditions these clubs were often carried in sedge baskets. *Collector : NB Tindale (A16640). Collector : Dr Clindenning (A5751). Collector : NB Tindale (A17533). Basket : Collector : NB Tindale (A22795).*



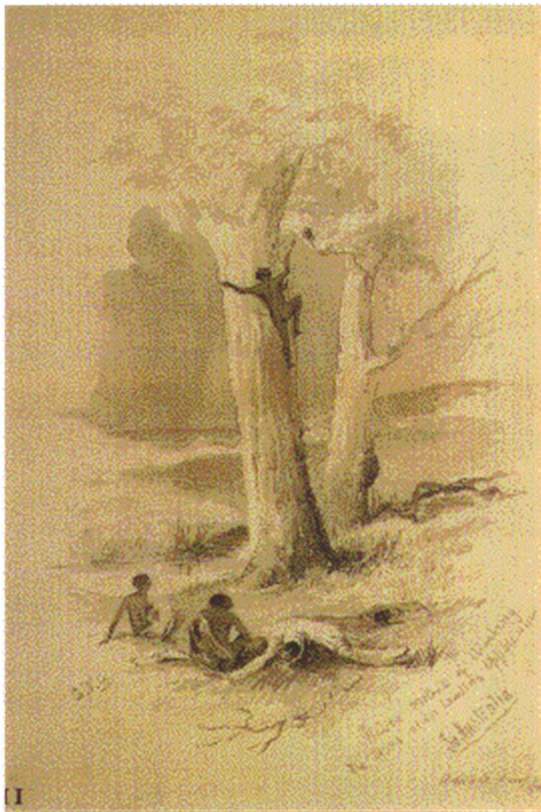
Ngarrindjeri spearthrowers, showing the two main types of pegs, made from animal bone and carved from the solid shaft. *Bone peg : Collector : NB Tindale (A21129). Wooden peg : Collector : Unknown, about 1870 (A4000).*



The Ngarrindjeri used reed and grass-tree spears to hunt larger animals like kangaroos and emus. These reed spears have hardwood tips joined to the main shaft with resin and animal sinews. *Maker : J Koolmatie (A53549). Collector : G Taplin (A5270). Collector : Unknown (A5682).*



A hunting scene from the Lower River Murray. The hunter is using a bunch of grass to hide from his prey. This scene was drawn in 1876 by Yertabrida Solomon, an Aboriginal woman from the Coorong. G Taplin.



Ngarrindjeri hunters used sharp climbing sticks to cut toe-holds in the trunks of trees when climbing after possums. They smoked the possums out of hollow branches. Artist : ST Gill, about 1849, Australian National Library.

Food gathering

Ngarrindjeri lands were rich in plants and animals. The range of foods available varied throughout the year. The men hunted larger animals, while women and children hunted smaller animals and gathered plant food.



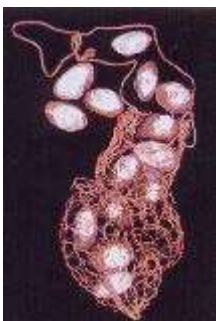
Ngarrindjeri women collected bulrush roots throughout the year. These roots, *Manangkari*, were both a reliable food and a source of fibre for string. Digging sticks were used to dig them out, and sedge baskets and string bags were used to carry them away. *Basket* : Collector: O Lower (A14008). *Digging stick* : Collector : NB Tindale (A33377).



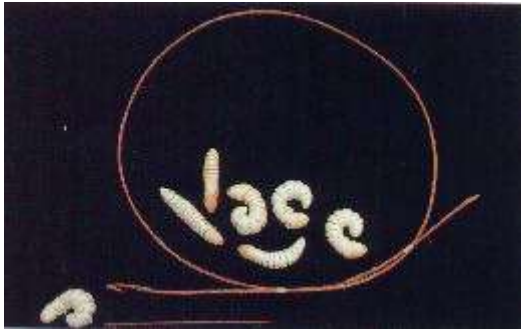
Pellampellamwallah, an Aboriginal woman of the Coorong. She has all her food gathering equipment with her: a net bag, a sedge basket and digging stick. She is wearing a sedge cloak and is carrying live coals between to pieces of bark. *Artist* : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8).



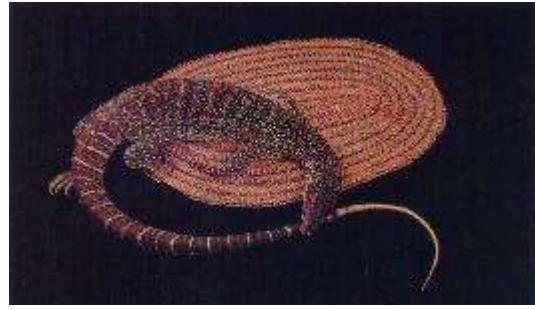
A duck-egg scoop woven from sedge, designed to collect eggs otherwise out of reach, together with a sedge bag for carrying eggs. Made in 1937 by Amy Johnson, an Aboriginal woman from the Northern Coorong. *Collector* : NB Tindale (A26242), (A26240).



A netted bag made from bulrush-fibre string, collected in the 1840's. Women used bags like these to store their catch of crayfish or mussels. *Collector* : A Zietz (A6400).



Women used grub hooks like these to extract larvae from holes in roots and branches. The larvae were eaten both raw and cooked. *Short hook* : Collector : W Howchin (A29295), *Long hook* : Collector : A Zietz (A1658).



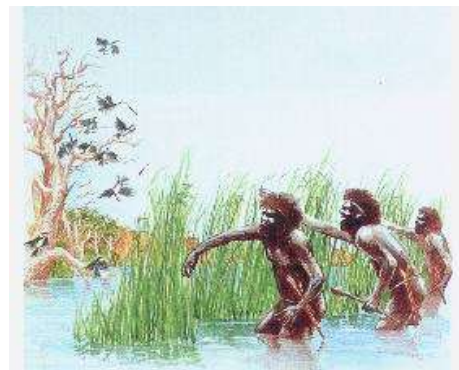
Mats like these were used to keep food free of sand and grit. This mat was made at Kingston in about 1890. *Collector* : D Collins (A67684).

Hunting water birds

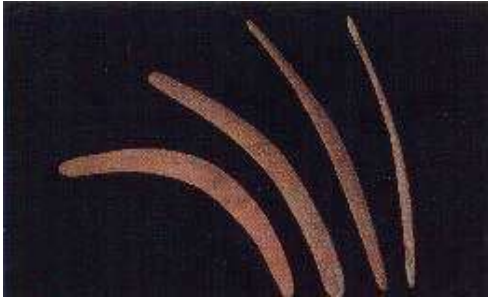
The abundance of water birds in the Ngarrindjeri lands provided a major source of food. Men caught the birds using nets, nooses and hunting weapons.



Hunters frightened a flock of ducks along the river towards a net. By throwing boomerangs above the flock to imitate a hawk, the hunters forced the ducks to fly down into the net. *Artist* : G Aldridge, 1988.



Ngarrindjeri hunters throwing clubs at cormorants. The curved shafts helped them spin when thrown, *Artist* : G Aldridge, 1988.



Boomerangs made from sheoak, arranged to show curvature and motion in flight. *Left to right : Collector : ER Mitchell (A54467), Collector : Mount Gambier Institute (A44336, A44337), Collector : Unknown (A53557).*



Pole and noose used to catch ducks. Made by Clarence Long in 1936. *Collector NB Tindale (A26097).*

PLANT MEDICINE

The Ngarrindjeri used a wide variety of plants in treatments for minor illness and injury. Many of these remedies have been passed down to the present generation of Ngarrindjeri people.



Steam baths were used to treat rheumatic complaints. Wet water-weed was placed on hot stones to make the steam. *Artist : T Newman, 1988)*



Dick Koolmatrie collecting plant medicine on the Coorong in 1984. Much of his knowledge about plant medicine, as well as that of other elderly Ngarrindjeri people, was learnt while living in "fringe camps" near towns like Meningie and Murray Bridge. *Photographer : P Clarke, 1984.*



Wattle gum, *tungari*, was softened in water and eaten to relieve chest pain. *Photographer : P Clarke, 1984.*



The Ngarrindjeri used old man's beard *yalkari*, as a treatment for rheumatism and skin sores. The bruised green leaves were applied to the painful area. *Photographer : P Clarke, 1984.*



Gum leaves were dried with water and drunk as a cure for colds. The smoke from burning gum leaves was also regarded as beneficial. *Photographer : P Clarke, 1984.*



The leaves of the stinging nettle were steamed and applied to cuts and sores. *Photographer : P Clarke, 1984.*

After spearing the giant fish, Ngurunderi made his camp by the lake, waiting for a sign of his wives....

FAMILIES, CLANS AND LAND

Rules and customs linked Ngarrindjeri families to the land and to each other. The marriage rules were among the most important of these.

Clans and Marriage

Every Ngarrindjeri person belonged to his or her father's clan and had links to five other "clans" or groups of families. Marriage provided widespread connections in Ngarrindjeri society. This was because people could only marry outside the six clans with which they had links. Marriages were regarded as exchanges of women between clans. Women were given by their brothers to men of other clans who were seeking wives. In return their brothers often received wives.



A Ngarrindjeri family's summer camp on the shore of Lake Albert.

Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8)

Camps

Camps were usually based around a number of related men, other relatives and visitors.

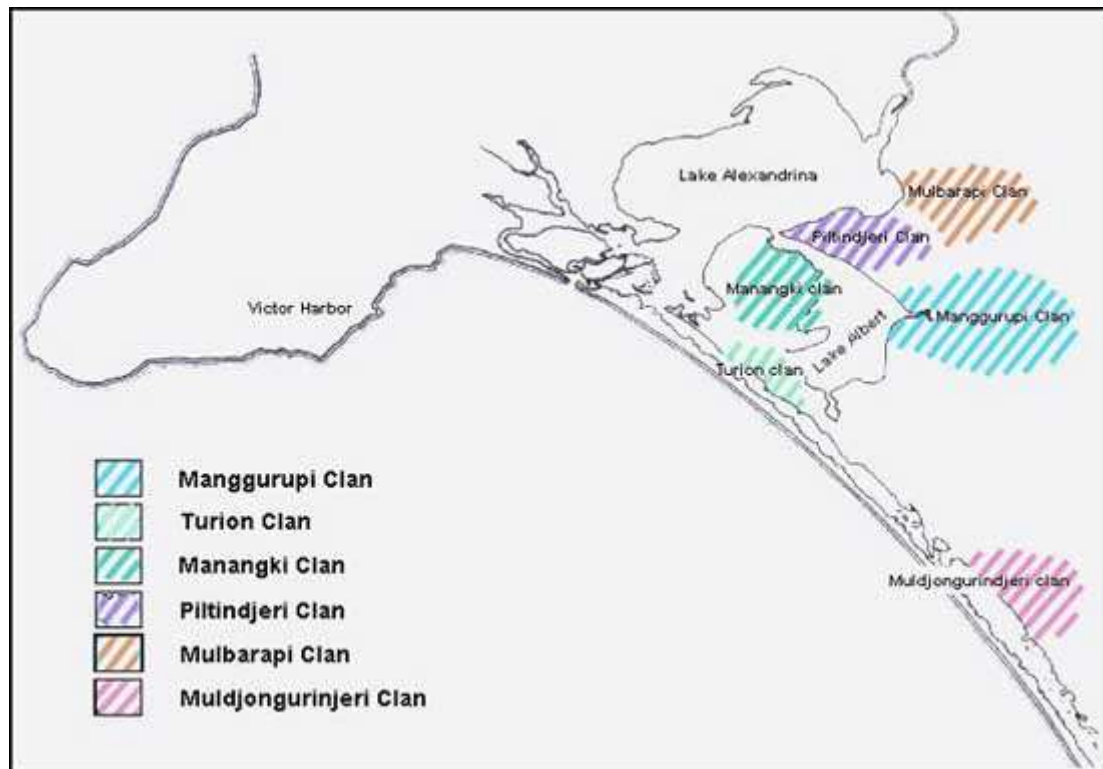
People sometimes lived in large camps made up of many families, for periods of six months or more. Ceremonies, hunting and gathering expeditions, funerals and trade meetings were some of the reasons for large camps.

Marriage

Ngarrindjeri men were permitted to marry only after initiation. Their brides were usually younger - girls who had reached puberty. For the girls marriage meant home and living with the husband's family.

The marriage ceremony took place over several days. The relatives of both parties met in the husband's clan land. The two families camped a short distance apart and at nightfall the bride was escorted by some of her male relatives to the husband's camp. They carried firesticks with them. The couple sat up all night in the company of the male relatives and at daybreak the bride returned to her family's camp. That night she was taken to her husband's camp to stay.

By the 1880's Christian marriages had become the norm in the Ngarrindjeri community.



Ngarrindjeri clan territories linked with Albert Karloan (Born 1860, Died 1941). Each clan had rights to a specific piece of land. Albert Karloan's clan was the Manangki, and he had links through kinship with the five other clans shown here. (After RM Berndt 1987, NB Tindale, 1974).



A bantam feather plume worn on the forehead by young men when seeking a wife.
Collected in the 1840's, south of Adelaide (A68293).

SHELTER AND CLOTHING

The Ngarrindjeri built different shelters to suit the changes in the seasons. They also wore a variety of clothing to protect them against the cold.

Shelter



LEFT : A Ngarrindjeri hut under construction at Point McLeay in about 1906. The framework is of traditional design - a series of branches bent to form a beehive shape. In pre-European times the covering would have been of vegetation like reeds or bulrushes, perhaps coated with mud.

RIGHT : To cover this hut, blankets and hessian have been used. *Photographer : W Ramsay-Smith, about 1906 (AA263).*



A large Ngarrindjeri hut on the shores of Lake Alexandrina in about 1880. The hut is a solid construction, with a timber frame and a windbreak extension. Fishing nets and spears can be seen, together with European billies and pannikins.

Photographer: S Sweet (AA492).

Clothing



Nahraminyeri—a Ngarrindjeri woman from Point McLeay, photographed in about 1880. She is wearing a possum-skin cloak, with a pouch for her child. *Photographer : unknown (AA319).*



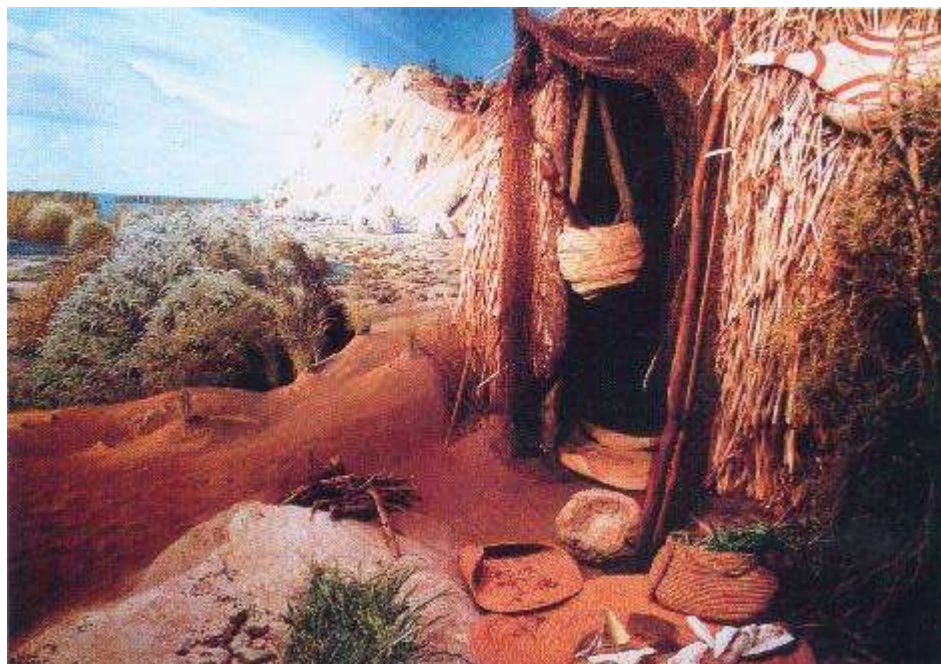
The sedge mats of the Ngarrindjeri were also used as cloaks. Bark fibre used with the sedge made the cloak softer and more pliable. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8)*



The Ramindjeri people at Encounter Bay wore clothing made from the seagrass found on local beaches. This was woven together to form a durable garment. No known examples of these cloaks have survived intact. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8)*

PREPARING FOOD

The women prepared and cooked most of the food. They used earth ovens, cooked smaller animals in the hot coals and dried food for later use.



This scene shows a large Ngarrindjeri hut on the shores of Lake Alexandrina, near Raukkan. Women have been cooking and preparing food here, using an earth oven and an open fire. Food is also being dried for later use. *Museum diorama.*



Drying food

The Ngarrindjeri dried plant foods like the *muntharri* (wild apples), which fruit profusely along the Coorong during the summer months. This limestone dish, a modified natural formation, was used as a container for crushing the *muntharri* at Kilaira in the south east of South Australia in about 1860. The crushed mixture was then made into large dried cakes which could be stored for months. The Ngarrindjeri traded these cakes for other items from as far away as Victoria. *Donor : Mrs WF Tapfield, 1933 (A20314).*



This winnower, made from sedge by a Ngarrindjeri woman at Kingston, was used to separate the leaves and stems from the *muntharri* berries before they were crushed and made into cakes. *Collector : NB Tindale, 1933 (A21141).*



Cooking on the coals

These wooden implements, excavated at Kongerati Cave, south of Adelaide, were probably used as fire tongs to remove food from hot coals. All sorts of food was cooked on the coals—cockles and other shellfish, fish, small and large animals. *Collectors : NB Tindale and CP Mountford (A26742).*

INITIATION

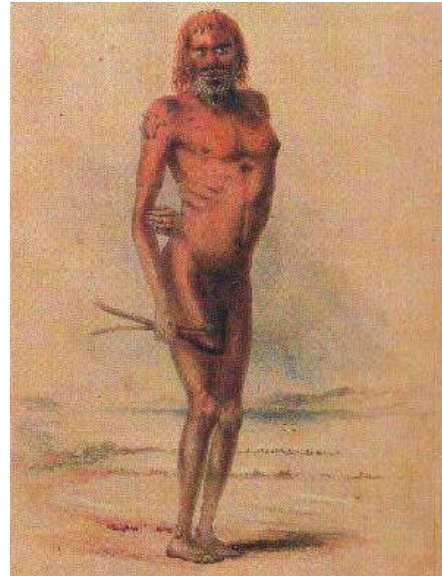
Initiation ceremonies marked the transition from childhood to adult life among the Ngarrindjeri people. Female initiations took place at the onset of a young girl's puberty and involved a short time of segregation and teaching. Male initiations often involved boys from several neighbouring clans, lasted for several months, and had life-long social implications.

Unlike those of inland Australia, neither male nor female initiation ceremonies were secret.

From boys to men

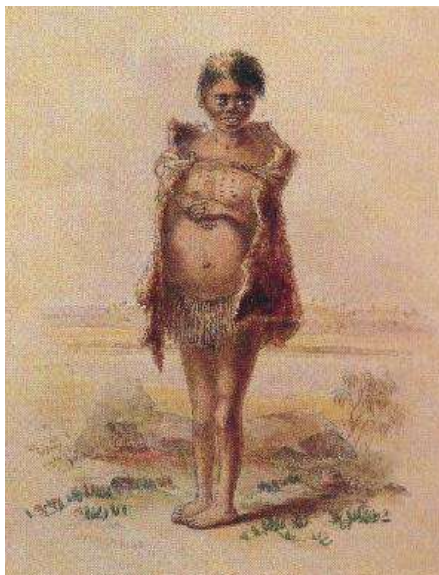
As in the rest of Aboriginal Australia, initiation was a physical and mental ordeal for young men, often lasting several months. It involved a period of hardship and endurance in which the novice was set apart from other people and was taught laws and ritual knowledge by the elders. During this time he was sacred or *narumbe*—in a state of symbolic death. He avoided contact with women or children and could eat certain foods only.

When this period of isolation was over, the initiation ceremony took place. In it, the boy was "reborn" into the social and religious world of adult life. He now had access to higher ceremonial knowledge and took full responsibility for his actions.



A Ngarrindjeri novice near the Coorong in 1845. His body is covered with red ochre, a symbol of sacredness and new life.

Initiation ceremonies ceased during the 1860's and 1870's, the main period of missionary activity. The last initiated men, Clarence Long and Albert Karloan, died in the 1940's, and the last initiated woman, Margaret Mack, died during the 1950's. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844, (AA8).*



This girl has been tattooed on the chest, probably as part of her initiation as a woman. The pubic apron also indicates her new status. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844, (AA8).*



A bunch of feathers, *Kalduke*, worn as an ornament by young initiated men. It was coated with red ochre and fastened to the back of the head by a string of spun human hair. Artist : *GF Angas, 1844, (AA8)*.



Ornaments of bones and animal teeth worn in the hair by initiated youths to indicate their status. Artist : *GF Angas, 1844, (AA8)*.



GAMES AND PLAY

The Ngarrindjeri had many different games and amusements. After the day's work of hunting and gathering food they generally had more time for social activity than most workers in other cultures.

The corroboree

Apart from their religious ceremonies, Ngarrindjeri people often held performances of dance and song for mixed audiences. These performances were known as "corroborees" to European colonists. The performers usually acted out part of a myth or a story based on recent events, against a rhythmic background of song and music.



The Ngarrindjeri used returning boomerangs in games as well as for hunting birds. The smaller of these two boomerangs was made for a Ngarrindjeri boy. Both were collected at Point McLeay, probably during the 1860's. *Large boomerang : Collector : G Taplin (A5281). Small boomerang : Collector : Probably G Taplin (A2863).*



Play-sticks from Lake Alexandrina and the south-east of South Australia. Players took turns to throw the sticks along a cleared ground, aiming for the longest distance or at a target. European colonists called this the "kangaroo-rat" game, after the bouncing motion of the stick and its "tail". *Shorter stick : Collector : probably G Taplin (A9488). Longer stick : Collector : AA Styles (A2971).*



Peter Campbell and his grandson Tarapa, performing in a Ngarrindjeri corroboree at Goolwa, about 1907. *Photographer : Unknown (AP3889).*



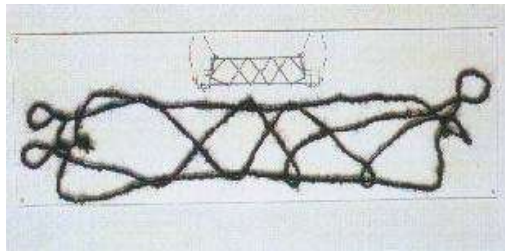
Ngarrindjeri children were quick to learn European schoolyard games, like marbles and skipping. Cricket and football both became popular sports after their introduction in the 1860's. Some of the State's finest footballers today are of Ngarrindjeri descent. Playing cricket at Victor Harbor, about 1890. *Photographer : Unknown (AA670).*



This rare image of an Aboriginal wrestling match was recorded from the Murray River region during the 1850's. *Artist : G Murtz, Provenance unknown*



The *Palti* dance, recorded by George French Angas in 1844. This was typical of Ngarrindjeri ceremonial dances which Europeans saw in the first years of settlement. The women on the left are beating time on drums made of possum skins. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8).*



A string game or "cat's cradle" made of hair string. It represents a fishing net. These games were often used in story-telling by adults as well as by children. *Collector : NB Tindale, (A66733).*

WOOD-CARVING

Using bone, shell and stone tools the Ngarrindjeri decorated the surfaces of carved shields, clubs and spearthrowers with a range of designs.

Materials and Techniques

Carvers preferred the hardwood of sheoaks or eucalypts. The rough shape of the artefact was cut with a stone chopper or axe. Shell or stone scrapers smoothed the surfaces before the designs were carved with bone points or sharpened animal teeth.

The designs

The main designs used were zig-zags, diamond shapes and cross-hatching. Other shapes, like arcs, human figures or plant forms also appear on carved artefacts.

We know very little about the meaning of these designs. They may have served to beautify the object and to make it more powerful in the eyes of its owner. They probably also symbolised the links between the makers, their totems and clan territories.



Details of Ngarrindjeri club handles, carved in concentric rings.
The criss-cross incisions on the shafts provided a better grip.



Carved clubs and spearguns of the Ngarrindjeri.
Left to right : (A5724, A 4015, A39418, A15355, A5768).
Collectors : T Hepp, A Marval, Scrymgour, LN Birks, G Taplin.



Details of Ngarrindjeri carved spearguns and shields.



BASKETRY

The Ngarrindjeri made a range of basketry objects from the sedges growing along Murray River, Coorong and Lakes. This tradition survives today in the Ngarrindjeri community.



Two Ngarrindjeri women laden with baskets and mats for sale in about 1915.

The woman on the right is Louisa Karpany.

Basketry was encouraged by mission and government authorities as a useful activity, from late last century. This, and the market for baskets and mats, has helped the craft survive until

today. *Photographer : Unknown, M Angas Collection.*



Ngarrindjeri women collecting sedges near Point Mcleay , 1982. Sedges are collected during the warmer months, the roots and heads are removed and they are dried in the sun.

Photographer : S Hemming (AA650).

Technique

The dried sedges are moistened with water to make them pliable. The coiled bundles of sedges are bound together by a simple loop knot, repeated at regular intervals.



A "sister" basket, made of two identical halves, by Ethel Watson in 1939. The redder sedges grow in the Kingston area. *Collector : NB Tindale (A15951).*



A detail of a large Ngarrindjeri mat, showing a variation in style. *Collector : Probably G Taplin (A6336).*



Dorothy Kartinyeri made this shopping basket at Point McLeay in 1982. She taught the younger generation the basketry skills, helping to ensure the survival of the tradition. *(A67865).*

Ngurunderi smelt the forbidden fish being cooked by his two wives. He started after them but they escaped across Lake Albert on a raft made from reeds and grass-trees....

REEDS AND GRASS -TREES

Reeds and grass-trees were abundant in the Ngarrindjeri lands before European settlement. These plants were used in many ways - for making rafts, as raw materials for tools and weapons, and as food.

Reeds

Before the impact of pastoralism, reed beds grew abundantly on the banks of most fresh-water rivers, lakes and lagoons in the Ngarrindjeri lands. Reeds were used in many ways - for spear making, hut building, raft making, necklaces, ornaments and clothing. Ngarrindjeri boys also used reeds as drinking straws during their initiation.



An ornament made from pieces of reed on a fibre string. These ornaments were attached to small sticks and worn in the hair. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8)*



As with the reed spears, the grass-tree stem made a strong and lightweight butt. This could easily be replaced if it was damaged on impact. Sinews of the kangaroo or emu have been used as binding on the spear.



Detail of a fighting spear showing remnants of resin and a single barb. The Ngarrindjeri used a special mixture of grass-tree resin and sand to fix tiny barbs of stone or quartz to their fighting spears. *Collector : Unknown (A4932).*

Grass-trees

Grass-trees were a feature of the Ngarrindjeri landscape before land clearance by pastoralists. Most parts of the grass-tree were used by the Ngarrindjeri. They gathered nectar from the flower, used the stem for spear shafts and fire making tools, ate the bases of the young leaves and the roots, and collected resin from the trunk for glue.



The model triangular raft (back), of bulrushes and reeds bound together with fibre rope, was made in 1930 by Amy Johnson, a Ngarrindjeri woman. A raft of this size would support a small child. Large rafts were used by groups of up to ten women for mussel collecting expeditions. *Collector : NB Tindale (A14632)*

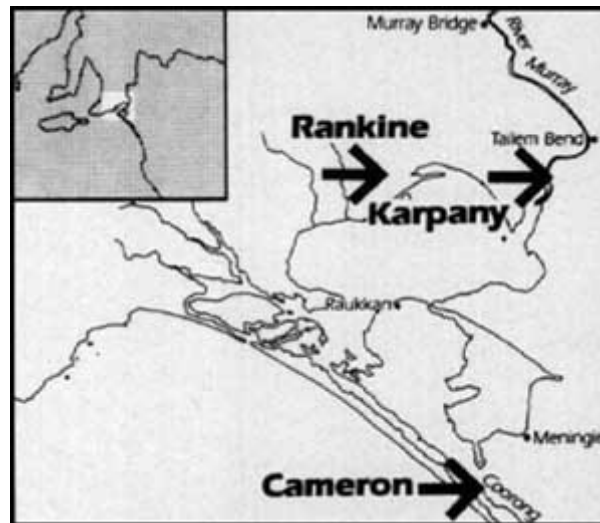
The model raft (front), shows the layered construction of the large rectangular rafts used by Ngarrindjeri people on Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert. The extra layers of reeds and grass-tree stems increased bouyancy. *Collector : NB Tindale (A14633)*. Grass-tree fire making sticks (*front left*). *Collector Unknown (A53558)*. *Museum diorama*.



A young man from Mount Barker making fire by friction with pieces of grass-tree stem. *Artist : GF Angas, 1844 (AA8)*.

FAMILY LAND

Today many Ngarrindjeri people can still trace links with particular pieces of land. Some families own land that once belonged to clans from which they are descended.



The land associated with three Ngarrindjeri families, the Rankines, the Camerons and the Karpans.

The Rankine Family

Henry Rankine is a prominent member of the Rankine family. He is Chairman of the Raukkan (Point McLeay) Aboriginal Community in 1989 and has been in this position for most of the period since 1973. The location of the traditional land of his father's family was passed down to him by his father Hendel Rankine. This land is on the western side of the Murray River, to the south of Wellington.



Henry and Jean Rankine outside their home at Raukkan, 1987. *Photographer : S Hemming.* (AA650)

The Karpany Family

In the 1840's, George Mason began working as Sub-Protector of Aborigines on the eastern side of the Murray River, opposite present day Wellington. The site he selected, Murungun, was an important Aboriginal camping place.

Mason had a close relationship with Louisa Karpany, a Ngarrindjeri woman from Murungun. One of their children, George Karpany, obtained a lease for the Murungun area in 1897. The land passed out of the family's hands but nearly eighty years later, in 1975, another Karpany descendant, Val Power, purchased the Murungun lease again.



Louisa Karpany at Wellington, across the river from Murungun, in 1911. *Photographer : AC Minchin (AA309).*



Val Power at Murungun, standing near the ruins of buildings associated with the Sub-Protector George Mason, 1987. *Photographer : P Clarke (AA651).*



Alfred Cameron, photographed in about 1940. *Photographer : Unknown (AA666).*



Lola Cameron-Bonney, grand-daughter of Alfred Cameron, standing in front of "The Needles" homestead in 1987. Two of Alfred Cameron's daughters remained on this property until the 1970's. *Photographer : S Hemming (AA650).*

The Cameron Family

Alfred Cameron was born in about 1850 on the Coorong. His father was Scottish and his mother was Ngarrindjeri. He decided early in life that he would try to succeed in the new world of the European, although he did not ignore his Aboriginal heritage. After working as a shearer on Lower Murray sheep properties Alfred leased "The Needles" property on the Coorong in 1914. This property was on his mother's traditional land. Through good management he later purchased a second property, also on his traditional land. This property was still in the Cameron family in 1989, being run by Alfred's great-great grandson's family.

Reaching the southern point of the Coorong, Ngurunderi met an evil sorcerer called Parampari. The two fought a great battle. Ngurunderi eventually killed Parampari and burnt his body near Kingston...

CONFLICT AND LAW

Conflict in Ngarrindjeri society was subject to rules that ordered daily life. The local councils of elders, or Tendi, resolved major disputes.

Causes of conflict

Conflicts were usually local and small-scale, although larger numbers could be involved because of kinship obligations.

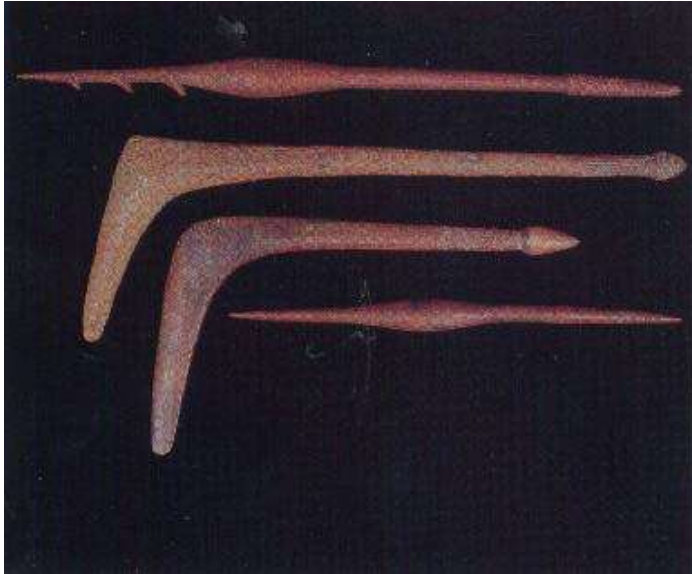
Disputes often followed death or sickness, believed to be caused by human intervention. The stealing of women and insults to young initiated men were two other main cause of conflict.



The large fighting clubs called *Plonggi* could be given special powers and used in punishments ordered by the Tendi. *Top to bottom : Collector : AE Marval (A5719), Collector : NB Tindale (A21124), Collector : W Howchin (A26694), Collector : Miss Klauer (A5723), Collector : G Taplin (A5725).*

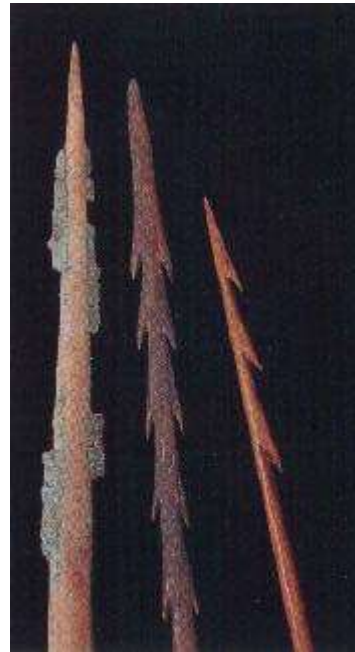


Two Ngarrindjeri men duelling with wooden clubs and narrow shields at Tolderol near Lake Alexandrina. Single combat was a common way of settling disputes (*Photographer : Unknown, about 1900 (AA655).*



Ngarrindjeri fighting clubs. The pick-shaped clubs (*Marpangye*) were used in close combat to strike around the edge of opponent's shields. The barbed and pointed clubs were either thrown or used for stabbing and hitting. *Top to bottom : Collector : W Lyddon Cook (A51705), Collector : T Worsnop (A5789), Maker : J Koolmatie (A1006), Collector : Unknown (A5776).*

Several types of spears were used. The largest single-piece spear (*Jundi*) was thrown by hand. The others were all thrown with a spearthrower. Barbed spears were most often used in fights. The spears with small chips of stone or glass attached to the tip were most feared. These were known to early settlers as "death spears". *Left to right : Collector : Unknown (A4932), Collector : NB Tindale (A21136), Collector : LN Birks (A15256).*



Men used spearthrowers (*Taralye*) with bone, tooth and solid wooden spear pegs to throw spears in fights. (Collector (spearthrower) : Unknown (A3999).



Law and authority

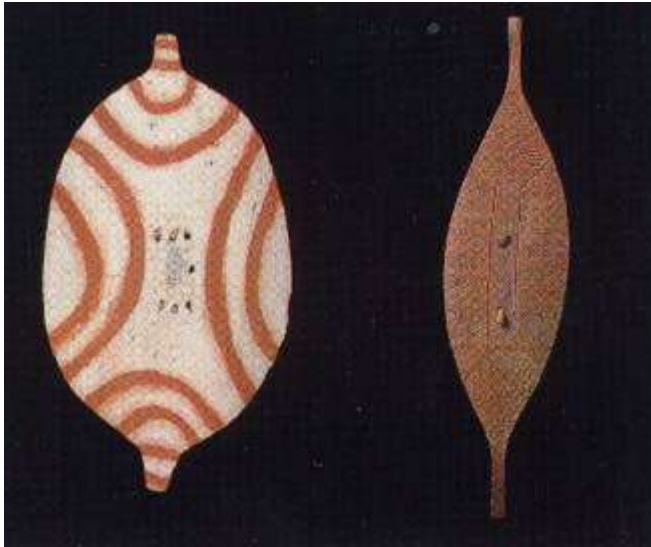
Important decisions about conflicts were made by the Tendi of each group involved. The most powerful men in the Tendi were believed to have special sorcery powers. They were often called upon to fix punishments or to counter the power of opposing elders. Women also held positions in the Tendi.



Pullum the Rupulle was said to be the last head of the Tendi of the Ngarrindjeri living around Point Mcleay during the 1880's. Photographer : Unknown (AA319).



A man defending himself against spears. This test was often used to determine whether men were guilty of a crime. If the accused managed to evade the spears he was considered innocent. Artist : WA Cawthorne, about 1842 (Mitchell Library). The Tendi sometimes decided that fights between opposing groups were required to settle disputes. Fights usually came to an end when a serious wound was inflicted.



The Ngarrindjeri used two types of shields (Wakkalde) for defence against spears. The rounder of the two was made from the bark of the red gum tree. The other was made from wood beneath the bark. Both were decorated with ochres, white pipeclay and carvings. *Left : Maker : J Koolmatrie (A1001), Right : Collector : Unknown (A2211)*

Women fought each other with their digging sticks, exchanging blows until one or other gave in. *Collector (curved stick) : Unknown (A6367), Collector : NB Tindale (A21126)..*



A segde "war basket" with human hair string handle, decorated with feathers of the owner's totem, a boobook owl. Made by Clarence Long in 1930. *Collector : NB Tindale (A67664).*



Ngurunderi's wives fled back along the coorong. Ngurunderi followed their footprints north, camping along the way...

THE ANCIENT TOOLS OF WYRIE SWAMP

In 1973 ancient wooden and stone tools were found at Wylie Swamp. Among them were the oldest boomerangs and barbed spears in the world. This discovery has given archaeologists a unique insight into hunting and gathering technology 8000-10000 years ago.

Archaeological work began in 1973. Three main trenches were dug in 10-20 cm layers to a depth of 2 metres. Twenty eight wooden tools were recovered from the bottom of these trenches. As the fragile wooden tools were found, they were carefully removed in wet peat blocks to keep them safe until they could be properly treated and conserved. This dense matted peat provided perfect conditions for almost indefinite preservation of the tools. *Photographer R Luebbers, 1973, AA661).*



Barbed wooden spear tip, photographed as it was found, encased in wet peat. The barb was carved from the main shaft. Three spears were recovered including the oldest examples of barbed spears yet discovered. This example has been dated at 7 900 years old. *Photographer R.A Luebbers, 1973, (AA661).*

Part of the ancient Wylie Swamp site, near Millicent, now covered with water following its recent use as a peat quarry. During quarrying the first tools were found and the site's importance was recognised. *Photographer R.A Luebbers, 1973, (AA661).*





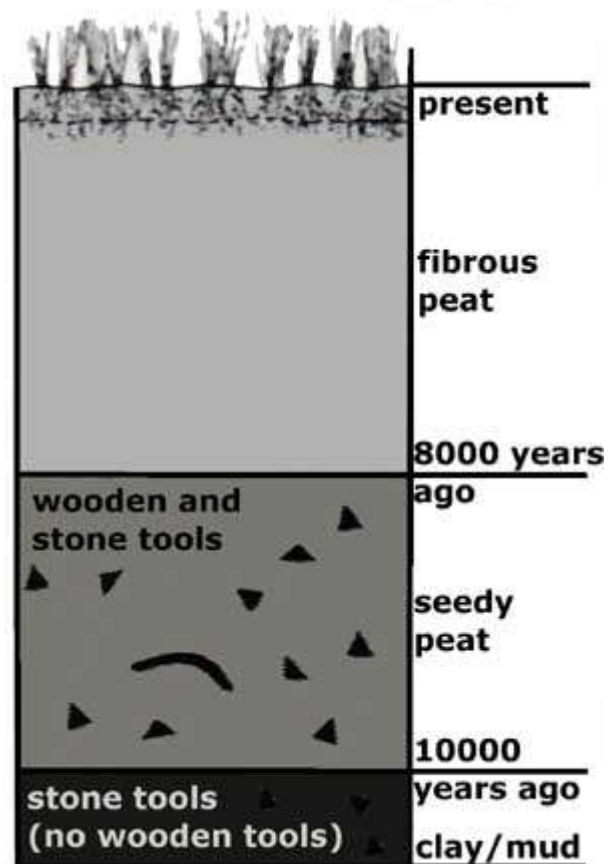
A large number of stone tools were recovered. Most have very sharp, worked edges and would have been scrapers or knives. Some were probably used to make wooden artefacts. As they were encased in peat for thousands of years, they show very little weathering. *Collector RA Luebbers, 1973, (FS 2.6.3; FS 18.1.2; FS 22.1.3; FS 26.2.7; FS 27.2.31; FS 28.2.18; FS 34.2.2).*



One of the three complete boomerangs found. These boomerangs may have been used to hunt waterfowl. The curved upper surfaces prove that 10 000 years ago Aboriginal people had some understanding of aerodynamics. Their small size and thinness contrasts with boomerangs used in the nineteenth century by Aboriginal people of the area. *Collector, R.F Leubbers (FS 36.1.2).*

A typical section of the strata.

The density of stone material indicates that Aborigines were living here, rather than just visiting to hunt and gather food. *After R.A Luebbers, 1973.*



PARNKA MIDDEN

The Parnka shell midden was excavated on the shores of the northern Coorong in 1982. Like others in the region, the midden is made of material discarded by Aboriginal people over a period of 1 600 years. These middens contain vital evidence about Aboriginal use of the coastal environment.

The Parnka midden - a coastal camp of the Tangani people

This midden, the largest of four at Parnka, is 430 metres long and up to 1.5 metres deep. It contains the remains of about 250 million cockles, 1 million crabs and 230 million fish - enough food to provide one meal for a family for each day of the 1600 years of occupation. Like other Coorong middens, this midden was probably a base camp for much of the year. Its occupants collected from the ocean beach, the sandhills of the Peninsula, and the Coorong lagoon.

What we can learn from middens

The different layers in the midden reveal important clues about the way the site was inhabited. For example, greater numbers of mixed and broken shells in the upper layers suggest that more people used the midden in the recent period. The amount of charcoal from campfires and the range of cockle sizes in the midden suggest that it was used throughout the year, in colder and warmer weather. Evidence from these Coorong middens tells us that the Tangani lived here semi-permanently and were not nomadic people.



A portrait of Clarence Long (Milerum), a Ngarrindjeri man of the Tangani group. Milerum was one of the last Ngarrindjeri people to be brought up in a bush camp, away from Europeans. As a result, his knowledge of traditions and sites in his country, the upper Coorong was extremely detailed. *Artist. L Wilkie, 1932, (AS4070).*

What is in a midden?

The midden shells are mostly those of the Goolwa cockle (*Plebidonax deltoides*), brought from the ocean beach 300 metres away. The dark colour is caused by fine sediment from the Coorong lagoon.

Although the midden is composed mainly of shells and silt, it can be divided into three main levels, each containing evidence from different periods of occupation. *Museum diorama*



The upper section contains much less material, indicating a change in traditional patterns of land use after European contact. After the 1850s cattle and sheep were grazed here and these animals were probably responsible for breaking up most of the shell. The presence of ochre suggests that Aborigines were still living at the midden at the time. Ngarrindjeri people (including Tangani descendants) have continued to visit the Parnka area during recent times and today several families still camp there during summer holiday periods.

The middle section contains denser material with large numbers of whole shells. Very few stone tools were found in the midden. The presence of ochre throughout probably indicates ceremonial activity. Increased disturbance of the shell layers indicates that people were using the midden more intensively than in the earlier period.

The first signs of occupation, about 1600 years ago. Ash and stones from cooking fires and remains of fish, crab, land mammals and birds are found among the layers of shell deposited on top of the dune sands.

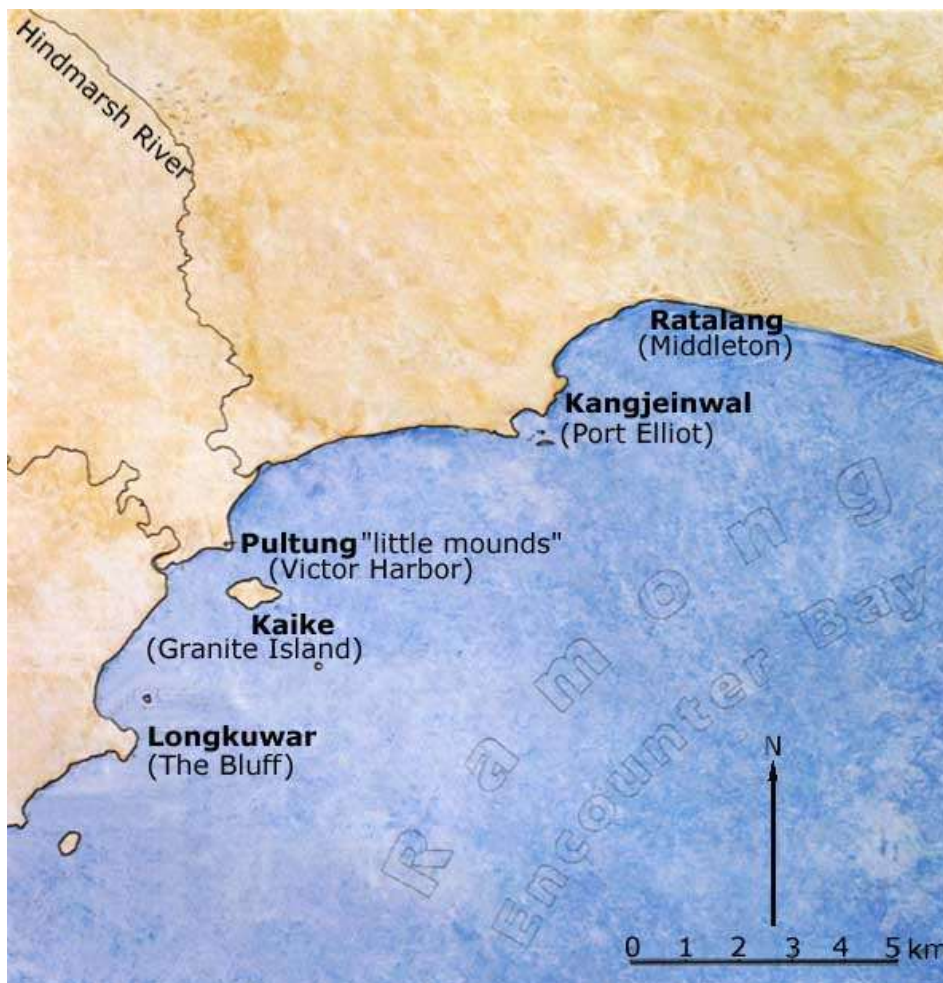
Ngurunderi crossed the Murray mouth and followed his wives around Encounter Bay, creating fishing grounds and islands. He rested near Pultung (Victor Harbor)-

RAMONG (ENCOUNTER BAY)

Ngurunderi created many natural features around Encounter Bay. The Ramindjeri people who fished and hunted there were a local group of the Ngarrindjeri.



One of the last Aboriginal camps at Middleton Beach. The seated woman is making a sedge basket, probably for the tourist market. Photographer VR. Radman, 1907 AA245)



The territory of the Ramindjeri people. Much of this information was recorded during the 1930s from Reuben Walker, a Ramindjeri man. *After N.B. Tindale.*

Ratalang (Middleton)

Middleton was known as a good camping and fishing place, providing an abundance of fish and shellfish. Plant foods and land animals were obtained further inland. Remains of all these resources are contained within the coastal middens. It was here that Ngurunderi created a fishing ground.

Kangjeinwal (Port Elliot)

Like Middleton, Port Elliot was a favourite fishing ground for the Ramindjeri. Ngurunderi camped here and each day at low tide he fished in the shallow bay while waiting for a sign of his runaway wives.



To the Ramindjeri, this was the rock used by Ngurunderi to kill a seal here. The sound of air being forced through the rock hole at its base was like the seal's dying gasps. Photographer S Hemming, 1989, (AA650).



A throwing club with burnt designs and a coiled rush basket made by a Ramindjeri man of the Wilson family in 1939. These items were probably made for the tourist market of the time. (*Basket*) Collector. N.B. Tindale, (A27369); (*Club*) Collectors. Mr and Mrs CA. Hurford, (AS1441).



Four hammer-stones found at old campsites at Port Elliot. These may have been used by women to break up shellfish collected from tidal rock pools. Largest: Collector. J.B. Cleland, 1941, (A56155). Smaller hammer-stones: Collector. W Howchin, 1921, (A28554).



A shell artefact found at Commodore Point. It has been hollowed out, possibly indicating use as a drinking vessel. Collectors. N.B. Tindale, H. Bowshall, 1954, (A45517).



A Ramindjeri camp at Victor Harbor (Pultung). The framework of the hut is made from whale ribs. A sailing ship can be seen in the background beyond The Bluff (Longkuwar). Figures of ships have been carved on two of the whale bones. *Artist W.A. Cawthorne, about 1842, Mitchell Library.*

Pultung and Longkuwar (Victor Harbor and the Bluff)

The sheltered bay at Victor Harbor provided fresh water from two rivers and an abundance of seals, whales, penguins, fish and shellfish. These resources supported a large local Aboriginal population.

The first prolonged contact between Aborigines and Europeans in South Australia dates from the American and British whaling operations at Victor Harbor during the 1830s. Many Ramindjeri people worked at these whaling stations. Although there was little open conflict, the Ramindjeri population declined sharply through social breakdown and introduced diseases. Much of our knowledge of traditional Ramindjeri culture comes from observations recorded by Lutheran missionaries working at Victor Harbor during the 1840s.



A Ramindjeri camp on the foreshore at Victor Harbor in about 1895. Ramindjeri people lived at this camp until about 1915 when it was dismantled by town authorities. *Photographer. Unknown, (AA 108).*



This whale ear-bone was found among the remains of an Aboriginal camp at Pelican Point, at the northern end of the Coorong in 1956. Part of its surface has been scraped flat. It was probably used as a water container. *Collector. Mrs. O. T. Cleggett, 1956, (A49445).*



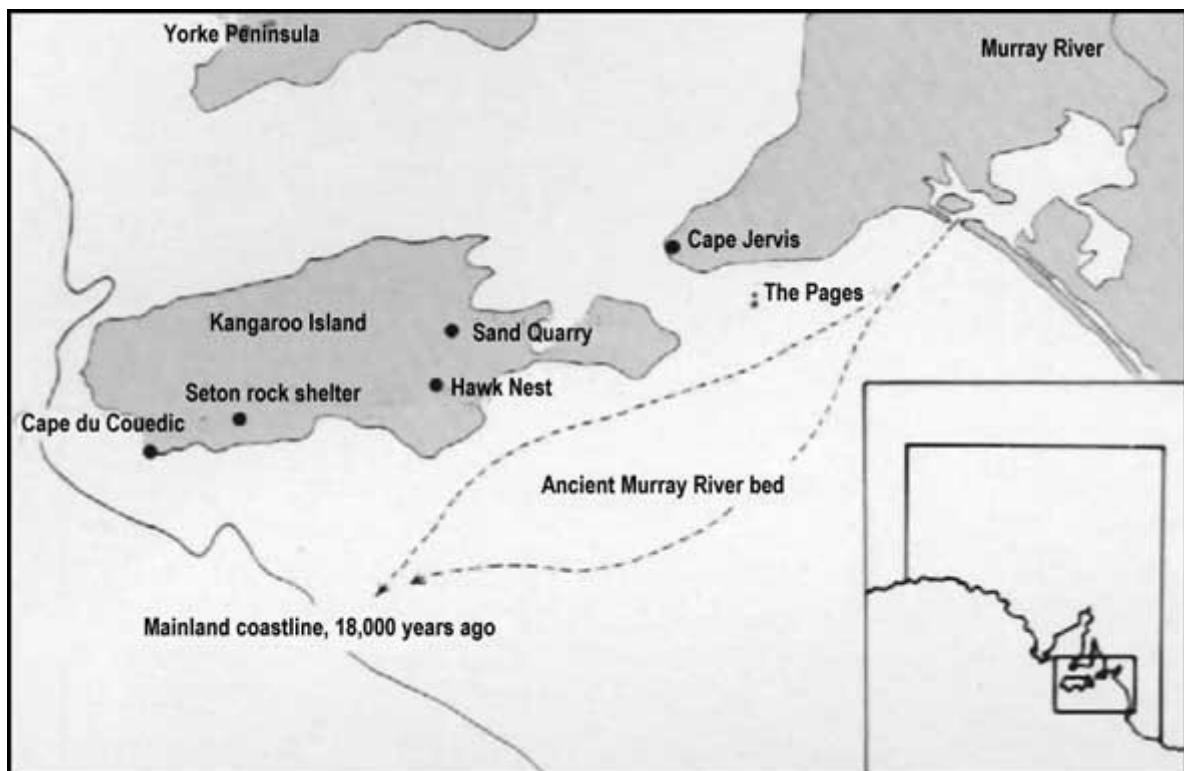
'King plates' like this were used by Europeans throughout colonial Australia as gifts or to identify local Aboriginal leaders. This brass king plate, possibly dating from the 1850s, was ploughed up in a paddock at Yankalilla in about 1912. The inscription reads: '*Youngerrow, Chief of the Rormear Tribe*'. The terms Rormear and Ramindjeri are based on Ramong, the local name for Encounter Bay. *Donor: C Pearce, 1946, (A37524).*

Ngurunderi's wives escaped again, running ahead to Cape Jervis and across to Kangaroo Island, ignoring his call to stop. Ngurunderi called for the waters to rise, to drown the women. Mourning, he crossed to the island and prepared himself for the spirit world...

KANGAROO ISLAND - AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MYSTERY

When Europeans first saw Kangaroo Island it was uninhabited. Mainland Aborigines called it 'Karta' - Land of the Dead. We now know that Aborigines had lived on the island until at least 4,000 years ago - long after the island was isolated from the mainland by rising sea levels.

Who were the Aborigines of Kangaroo Island?



Ten thousand years ago Kangaroo Island was not an island, but an area of higher land to the west of the ancient Murray River mouth. Since the 1930s archaeological discoveries on the island have added to our knowledge of its people.

Hawk's Nest

During the 1930s stone choppers and hammerstones were recovered from this site, an ancient lagoon. Archaeologists Harold Cooper and Norman Tindale later found more of these 'Kartan' tools throughout the island.



Three types of large stone tools found on the island: a hammerstone, 'horsehoof' core, and pebble chopper. After their discovery in the 1930s these large tools became known as 'Kartan implements' - based on the Ramindjeri word 'Karta' for Kangaroo Island. Collectors H. Cooper, N.B. Tindale, 1930s, (A2244, A20420, A30163).

Seton Rockshelter

This site, on the shore of a small semi permanent lagoon, contains evidence of two distinct occupation periods around 16,000 years and 11,000 years ago. During this more recent period the island became separated from the mainland. This material from the middle levels of the dig is around 11,000 years old. Many small tools were found, and animal remains such as the jaw-bones of a western grey kangaroo and a brush-tailed rat kangaroo and the tooth of a hairy-nosed wombat. Shells like the cockle shown here would have been brought from the nearest beach, at least 16 kilometres away. *Collector: R Lampert, South Australian Museum. Jaw-bone (prob. western grey kangaroo), (P29775). Rat kangaroo jaw-bone, (P29774). Tooth, (P2977).*



Cape du Couedic

Aborigines were attracted to this area by a sea lion colony. The bulk of their meat diet came from sea-lion hunting, supplemented by kangaroo, shellfish, goannas, emu eggs and other foods. They used this cliff-top shelter for about 600 years, until 6,800 years ago when rising sea levels may have forced the sea-lions to abandon their beach colony. A range of stone tools excavated from the Cape du Couedic site. A tooth and a rib bone of the sea lion, a fragment of kangaroo bone and some egg-shell pieces (probably of the extinct dwarf emu) indicate the range of food eaten here. *Collector. N. Draper, 1985-88.*



The Continuing Mystery

Archaeologists are continuing to uncover new evidence. For example, examination of pollen spores from ancient bushfires suggests that Aborigines may have been living on the island until only 2,000 years ago. The fate of the Kangaroo Island Aborigines is still a mystery. If they left the Island, why and how did they leave? If they remained, what became of them?



Before Ngurunderi left the earth to live in the Milky Way he told the people: 'I am going first, you will come after me.'

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

FUNERAL RITES

The death of a Ngarrindjeri person involved a series of rites and obligations. These rites helped to strengthen social ties across a wide network of relatives.

Funeral rites involved an inquest, a funeral ceremony, a period of mourning, and a final burial. These rites ensured that the soul of the dead person followed Ngurunderi's path safely to the spirit world.

Waleruwar - the spirit world

The spirits of the dead were believed to follow Ngurunderi's path to Kangaroo Island, the Land of the Dead. After cleansing themselves in the sea they joined Ngurunderi in Waleruwar, the spirit world. *Photographer. S. Schrapel, 1986*



The Inquest

Even if a person died of disease or injuries, the Ngarrindjeri believed that someone was responsible through sorcery of some kind. After an inquest to identify the culprit, punishment was fixed by a group of elders to compensate for the death. This engraving shows an inquest, in which the corpse was carried through the camp until mourners detected a sign indicating the culprit. After a death, other people in the camp immediately shifted to another site and the dead person's name was placed under a temporary ban. *Artist. Unknown, about 1870, (AA389).*



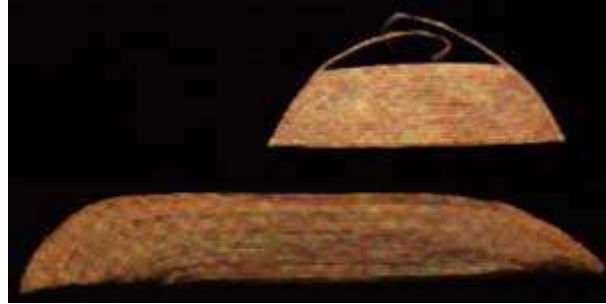
The funeral ceremony

The most elaborate ceremonies were staged for young initiated men. Mourners prepared the body by removing internal organs and by anointing it with red ochre and grease. Next they bound it in a sitting position on a platform in the camp. As the body dried over a slow fire for several days the mourners 'sang' the dead person's spirit to Waleruwar, the spirit world. *Artist G.F Angas, 1844, (AA8).*



The mourning period

When the funeral ceremony was complete, the dried bones were wrapped and placed in a specially woven mat which served as a coffin. Relatives kept this coffin with them for as long as two or three years, until the mourning period was over or until the death had been avenged. These basketry coffins were made for the Museum by Clarence Long (adult's); and Amy Johnson (child's). *Collector N B Tindale, (A26246, A26236).*



The burial

After a time the remains were placed on a burial platform. The bones were covered with rushes and sedge mats and in the case of young men, their weapons were left with them. Finally, when the time was right, the nearest relatives took the skull to use as a water vessel and buried the rest of the bones. The skull was believed to carry the protective powers of the dead person. Ngarrindjeri burial platforms were built in the shape of a raft. The belief was that the spirits used rafts to follow Ngurunderi's path across the sea to Kangaroo Island, the land of the dead, before entering the spirit world. *Artist G.F Angas, 1844. (AA8).*