

ABORIGINES OF THE HUNTER REGION

AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

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ABORIGINES OF THE LOWER HUNTER

Teacher Notes

PHOTOGRAPH STUDY: "TRADITIONAL LIFE"

1. **Manufacture of Implements:** Men are in the process of fashioning items and their weapons. The two in the foreground are grinding their selected stone to a sharp edge. This is the next step from the shaping process that the man at the rear is working on, where skilful blows strike flakes of leaving the desired shape. The grinding medium is an abrasive rock like sandstone.
2. **Initiated Man:** The cicatrices indicate that he has passed through certain initiation ceremonies when he became a full member of his group. There are several stages and degrees of initiation, only the most capable would attain the highest level.
3. **Construction of Shelter:** A co-operative effort where saplings are used to form a frame over which are placed sheets of bark. The site selected here is beside a source of fresh water. Nearby are the predominant trees of paperbark and banksia.
4. **Shield Making:** The men have cut out a shield leaving the characteristic scar, some of such cuts can be seen today. The tree here is a mangrove whose quality was valued because the bark peeled away in a predictable shape. Both stone axe and boomerang were used in cutting and peeling the bark away. In the background are two youths fishing from bark canoes with the multi-pronged spear.
5. **Camp Fire:** Amongst the sand dunes was a favourite spot for cooking the food secured in the course of the day. This was also an opportunity for the man to repair any weapons or to fashion new items. The scatter of stones provided material for the manufacture and repair process. Young children observed and imitated their adults, learning by a gradual method.
6. **Aboriginal Weapons:** A variety of weapons were available, mostly made of wood and stone. These were used to capture animals for food, settle disputes or for defence. (The fence indicates that this photograph was taken in the post-contact period when the Aborigines had their traditional life much altered).
7. **Food Gathering:** Although food gathering tended to be the major role of the women and children, men participated at times as well. Here are two gathering the fruit of the macrozamia plant into a dilly bag. These would later be treated to remove the toxic material before being made palatable and consumed.
8. **Bark Canoes:** The bark preferred was that of the string bark tree (see Traditional Society for construction methods). With it the men and women were able to travel about the waterways, especially in lagoons and enclosed bodies of water, with the aid of small paddles. The fire in the craft was built on a slab of clay for warmth or to cook the freshly caught food. A keen sense of balance was required when standing upright in one of these craft.
9. Photo taken at the Awabakal Culture Camp, January, 1983.
10. Photo taken at the land rights demonstration in the Hunter Mall, July 1982.

ABORIGINES OF THE HUIITER REGION

SLIDE COMMENTARY

MATERIAL CULTURE

1. **MEDAL** - Such medals were given to natives both to impress the natives and to make them feel accepted by white society. This medal was given to Jackey Jackey, a white servant.
2. **MAKING A FIRE** - The dried flower spike of the grass tree (several can be seen in the picture) was used to make sparks, which were then blown on to dried tinder to start a fire.
3. **EXCAVATION SITE** - The coloured umbrella identifies the scene of an archaeological excavation at an aboriginal midden, or kitchen refuse heap. It was at these places that the aborigines ate and dumped the remains of shell and fish meals, as well as broken or discarded artefacts.
4. **PLOTTING PROFILES** - Here the archaeologist is plotting the soil profile of what the 'dig' has uncovered. Each different type of soil can be dated to give an idea of the age of the midden. The deeper the soil stratum, the older it is. This dig was at Birubi Point.
5. **COMPLETED DIG** - Note that the archaeologist uses simple tools such as brushes, pans, buckets and trowels, and that he works in a sectioned area which has been measured out exactly. The black and white stick is a fixed length and so gives the archaeologist an idea of the exact size of the excavated section.
6. **AFTER THE DIG** - This house was built on an aboriginal midden. The value of the aboriginal site was effectively destroyed when the foundations for the house were laid.
7. **ARTEFACTS AND SHELLS** - Many middens look like large piles of rubble and shell. They are made up of aboriginal stone implements and shells. Note how the shells have been broken open. How many different kinds of shells and stone implements can you identify?
8. **STONE SCRAPER** - These were made of a durable material like chert and they were ground razor sharp. They were used to scrape and trim materials, hides, etc.
9. **BONDI POINTS** - So named after the first location where they were found, these small implements were trimmed to an extremely sharp edge. They were used for the delicate work required when cutting up food and trimming hides.
10. **BONE NEEDLE** - These were used by the women to sew hides together to make rugs. They were frequently fashioned from a bone in the kangaroo or wallaby.
11. **SHELL HOOKS** - Discovered at the excavation shown in earlier slides, this slide shows not only the finished shell hook used to catch fish, but it also shows the types of shell from which the hooks were fashioned. The centre of the shell was punched out and then the shell was broken and ground down to the final shape.

- 12.) **A SELECTION OF AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL WEAPONS** - Collected
 13.) by W. Enright across N.S.W., these weapons include:-
- Slide 12 - 6 boomerangs, 1 spear, 2 nulla nullas, 3 hand axes,
 2 handled axes, 1 shield and a pick.
- Slide 13 - 2 spears, a shield, a non-returning boomerang,
 a container. Note also the designs and motifs
 painted onto the boomerangs.
14. **DILLY BAG** - This slide shows the dimensions and shape of the dilly bag, and also on the right the type of knotting used in its construction.
15. **HAFTED AXE** - A typical aboriginal axe, it shows the large, heavy volcanic head hafted onto a slit handle, gummed with resin, and tied with sinew and twine. Several scrapers are also in the picture.
16. **SHARPENING AN AXE** - This aborigine is rubbing a stone axehead to sharpen it. Notice how he positions his body and his hands to be able to put the greatest effort into the sharpening process.
17. **RUBBED GROOVES** - Today, all that remains of this sharpening activity are rubbed grooves on rocks. This is one of the special places which the natives used. The pothole, which contains water, was used to lubricate the rock when sharpening the axeheads.
18. **CAMPSITE SCENE** - Note especially the gunyah, made up of sheets of bark on a sapling frame. The bark was laid to offer the greatest protection from the weather.
19. **CAMPSITE GROUP** - These three members of a tribe are conversing at a campsite. In these ways they discussed plans for a hunt, or mistakes made during a hunt, etc.
20. **OBTAINING BARK VESSELS** - These cut from the swollen insect infestations on trees, were used to carry water and food.
21. **MAKING A CANOE** - The bark was prised off the tree without damaging the tree itself. It was cut using a hand axe and then levered off with strong timber.
22. **USING THE CANOE** - The ends of the bark length were tied and sealed, and then it was ready for use. The aborigine could not only stand up in the thin canoe but could, without tipping the vessel, spear some fish.
23. **CANOE TREE** - Today people pass such canoe trees in car parks without even realising what they are.

FOODS

24. **GRASS TREES** - These provided a good source of food and raw materials. The food consisted of the white bases of the green spikes, and they also obtained a black gum from the plant. This was used to seal parts of implements together.
25. **HARVESTING GRASS TREES** - The aborigines propped sturdy sapling against the crowns to climb to the top.
26. **BUSHFIRE** - This was used by aborigines to promote new growth so as to attract large animals back to eat the tender, new shoots.
27. **GOANNA** - A rich source of food, these were easily caught because once alarmed they scale trees. There they could easily be speared.

28. **"UNCLE MURRI" AFTER THE HUNT** - The animals captured are goanna, snake, echinida, koala and wallaby. Note the implements carried by "Uncle Murri".
29. **UNUSUAL FOOD** - Large sea animals sometimes beach themselves on shore, and this type of food was readily welcomed by the aborigines. This dolphin is being cut open with a hand axe.
30. **BURRAWANG PALM** - These red or orange fruits are highly poisonous. Nevertheless, they could be eaten if they were first treated by soaking them for three weeks. This removed the poison. The nuts were then roasted.
31. **FISHING SCENE** - These paintings were 'touched up' before a fishing trip. The crossed sticks represent the trap, and the dots on either side are the fish. The hands represent the fishermen.
32. **SPEARED EMU** - This painting shows the spearing of emus, and this too was 'touched up' before a hunt to bring 'good luck'.
33. **WEAPON STENCILS** - These stencils of chisel, axes and hands were redone to bring 'good luck' in hunting. This picture gives a good idea of their size compared to the hands.

CEREMONIAL ART SITES, CEREMONIES AND LEGENDS

34. **ABORIGINAL WARRIOR** - (After Dix). This is a typical aboriginal warrior. Note the strength and litheness of the body, and the characteristic physical features of the aboriginal. The scars on the chest signify that the man has not only been initiated, but that he has achieved a high level in aboriginal society.
35. **AN ABORIGINAL FUNERAL** - (after J. Lycett) - The deceased has been bound in reeds and his wife and child, identified by the white ochre on their heads, follow along behind. Note that the natives have been 'dressed' by the artist to hide their nudity.
36. **ABORIGINAL PUNISHMENT** - (after J. Lycett) - The offender must undergo the ritual of the tribe, where he must ward off spears thrown by his fellows. Once a designated number of spears were thrown, the man was considered to have been 'punished', even if he was not wounded.
- 37.) **THE LEGEND OF THE LIZARD** - In slide 37 is a natural landmark at Broke, called Yellow Rock. The aborigines believed that this was the petrified form of the Great Lizard who had crossed the land in the Dreaming. Yellow Rock itself is the Lizard's head, and his body falls away as the ridge on the right of the rock. Slide 38 shows the view from the top of the rock, and the valley the lizard made as he moved over the land can be seen winding away into the distance.
- 38.)
39. **ABORIGINAL ROCK ART** - The absence of any occupation material in the cave floor indicates that this cave held a ceremonial importance, and this idea is reinforced by the subjects on the wall. Firstly, there are two periods of rock art, a late phase in black charcoal depicting a kangaroo (centre), and emu (left of centre), and a man (upper left), and then an earlier phase in red ochre. This phase has discoloured to brown due to age, and it shows several snakes (behind the kangaroo). Below the kangaroo and a little to the right is a man on a horse, indicating that this figure was drawn after white settlement.

40. ABORIGINAL ROCK ART - This slide shows a sun with red centre, and stencils of a boomerang, hands, and a forearm and hand. This last stencil indicates that the man might have been a karakal.
41. ABORIGINAL ROCK ART - Hand stencils were aboriginal signatures, and these are the signatures of young aboriginal novices who were going to be initiated at a ceremonial ground above the cave.
42. BILL BAILEY - This rock carving is of a man who betrayed the aboriginal people. Note the "eyes" watching him around his body. The white impact of vandalism is evident (bottom right hand corner).
- 43.) These slides show an emu (with lined infill) and a kangaroo,
44.) two spirit figures at the one ceremonial ground. The young aboriginal boys would have been told religious stories about these figures.
45. CORROBORREE - Attributed to James Wallis.

Script of Aboriginal Language from Cassette

Language, apart from age-old physical signs, was the only means of communication and education in tribal state. Aborigines did not develop an alphabet; therefore they had no written records.

But they were able to record some of their ancient beliefs by wood and stone carving and cave painting. Some of this history and information was available to all members of the tribe, but a great deal -- and this dealt with secrets handed down from generation to generation -- was related to the sacred initiation ceremonies.

Thus persons receiving tribal secrets had to pass certain tests of trust and to undergo a disciplined form of education that was a feature of the various rites associated with initiation.

This was indeed a sacred time for the youth or maiden being initiated: the process was strongly based on a spiritualistic ritualism, in which language played a significant part in two major aspects.

The first important change for the youths, who faced ceremonial activity from several months to almost two years -- the time differed according to the status of the tribe -- was the need to learn (and memorise) new meanings for some of the language that had been taught to him -- the language of ordinary communication.

Not only did he acquire a vocabulary of new secret and sacred words, but he also learned how his mother tongue could be altered to such a degree that, having mastered the changes, he could speak to other initiated persons and feel assured that the ritual language would not be understood by outsiders.

Thus two distinct areas of aboriginal languages, such as that of the Awabakal, were ordinary communication and ritual.

The women learned a domestic, or mother-in-law, language, which was not revealed to the men. Women of some tribes in the Hunter region had their own ceremonies, in which men neither played a part nor had a say.

This language was also used when women were required to act as a third party because a son-in-law wished to communicate with a member of his wife's family on the female side. Young men were strictly barred from even looking at their mother-in-law, let alone talk to her.

This feminine language was limited in scope, but it was kept just as much secret as the ritualism of the male initiation ceremonies.

The fourth level of language was used by men of high degree -- the sorcerer or karakal. It was a special and rich form of language used to communicate direct with the spirits. Only small fragments survived.

The aborigines of Australia very importantly provide a living link with pre-vocal man, in that over the many thousands of years of presence in this country they did not eliminate from their beliefs and practices that there was a time when humans had taken the form of animals and birds and could not speak.

A significant segment on initiation instruction was related to sign language, still used even in modified initiations today. Women were also instructed in sign language to protect them from danger when hostile intruders were about.

Some objects or articles had several names, particularly water.

Freshwater: The names used in the region were Bartoe, koekoin, Ngarpoi, ngar-yoo-wa, kulleeng and ngartong.

It will be noticed that the prefix Ngar is used three times. This was probably to indicate the presence of fresh water, while the end of the word could indicate location or type, such as waterhole, spring or lagoon.

There is another word for water -- yarroe. Actually, this is the noun for egg in Awabakal, but it was used in the initiation ceremonies to have another meaning. It also meant comfort at the same time it was used for water.

Languages in the Hunter Region were:

<u>AWABAKAL:</u>	Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Stockton to Fern Bay, Coal fields, south on the coast to Wyong.
<u>WONARUA:</u>	From wollombi North to Singleton district inland.
<u>DARKINOONG:</u>	South of Wollombi inland, with a slight intrusion to the coast.
<u>DAROOK:</u>	Hawkesbury district.
<u>WORIMI:</u>	Large part of Port Stephens, Maitland.
<u>GRINGHAI:</u>	Dungog, Paterson and Gresford.
<u>BIRRPAL:</u>	Gloucester-Forster line to Taree.
<u>KAMILAROI:</u>	Top of the Hunter Valley.
<u>GEAWEGAL:</u>	In between Kamilaroi and Wonarua.

The regional languages differed in pronunciation, particularly with the use of consonants.

All used the "ng" sound at the beginning, middle or end of words, but the emphasis was not always the same. This also applied to the reverse sound "gn", which mainly belonged to the inland tribal groups.

The Awabakal language was distinctive in that it did not use the Sh... ch... th... or J sounds.

It sounded the "g" in "ng" words harder than most regional languages. This is demonstrated by the survival of the central coast town of Gorokan, which in tribal days was pronounced Ngorakan.

Similarly, near Swansea, Galgabba is still used; again this was an "ng" word, but tribal pronunciation was different and more musical. Ngalgabba.

Throughout New South Wales there is an interchange of consonants, even within large tribal groups.

They are:
P for B
K for G
T for D

A few examples. The island in the middle of Lake Macquarie is called Pulbah; the tribal name for the island is Boolbah.

Lower Port Stephens used Doocal for big; in the upper area Toocal is still used.

Some of the regional languages are more expressive than others. Take the following example for the word "to see".

Hawkesbury (Darook):	Just plain "nar".
Worimi (Port Stephens):	Narkur
Gringhai (Dungog):	Narker
Wonarua (Lower Hunter Valley):	Nartarn
Awabakal (Lake Macquarie):	Narkill-eeko.

Much sentence construction for Major Hunter tribes was written by Europeans when natives were more or less in tribal state. And most of this written work was related to scriptural passages -- the influence of missionaries. Thus we have Rev. L. E. Threlkeld's translation of the Lord's Prayer in Awabakal.

BEE YOONG BAI N GEE ARUNBA WOKKA KARBA MOROKO KARBA KATARN
Father our up in sky in is;

KAR MUN BILLA YITERRA NGIROE OOMBA YIRRI-YIRRI KARKILEEKO:
Let-caused-to-be Name thy most sacred for-to-be;

PAI-PEE-BUNBILLA PERIWAL KOBBA NGIROE-OOMBA;
Let-to-appear king-belonging-to they;

NGARRA-BUNBILLA WEEYELLE-KARNAY NGIROE-OOMBA;
Let-to-obey word thy;

Here are some sections of the Awabakal vocabulary; We begin with members of the family.

There are at least two names for father: BEEN-TOON meaning father or male parent, and....

BEE-YOONG.. that is the respectful form of address in the family circle. Likewise the word for elder brother is Beeng-gai; it is also used as an affectionate way to speak to one's brother at a family gathering.

NGAROE-NGAYIEEN is old woman and NGAROE-MBAI is old man. The suffix "Bai" is found at many words relating to the family circle. Here are two more:

WUNGOONBAI, youngest-born female; and NGIR-RINBAI, the first born, a female. MUK-KEEN is a young girl and MURRAKEEN is a young maiden.

KOR-REE is man and NU-KOONG is woman.

KOOMBAL is younger brother.

Here are now two examples of the use of the sacred language, involving the element of human creation. Thus....

PORIBAI is husband and PORI-KOON-BAI is wife. "POR" is the root to a number of words relating to "birth of a new Life" and is identified with the ritual language.

YINARL is son and YINARL-KOON is daughter. So "Koon" is an infix to denote the feminine act of creation.

The youngest male is called TAI-YOL.

WONNAI means child and BOEBONG infant.

On some occasions MITEE is used to indicate the youngest son.

TOON-KAIRN is used to indicate mother, dam or mare.

An old person is called NGAROE-KARL; the elder would be called NGAROEKARL.

Young lad is WUNG-GURRAPEEN and eldest son is NGAROE.

KUR-REENBAI is daughter-in-law and MARBOE-GOON a widow.

AWABAKAL

Common Nouns

BAIBAI	Axe
BOE ARTA	Catfish
BOONG KEEN	Vermin
BULBOONG	Wallaby
NGOW-WOE	Sea gull
NGURAKEE	Initiated person
KARN	Brown snake
KURRI-WIR-ORA	Diamond snake
MOE-TOE	Black snake
KARAH-KAL	Sorcerer
KARO-BURRA	Whiting
KEEKOI	Native Cat
NUK-KOONG	Native bee
KONG-KORONG	Male emu
KOIWON	Rain
KOYOONG	Fire
KOYONG	Native camp
KOKERA	Native hut
KOK-OONG	Frog
KOREEL	Shield
KULLEENG	Shell
MAKORO	Fish
MARLARMA	Lightning
MINMAI	Giant Lily
MOOLOE	Thunder
MURRI-NAUWAI	A ship
PILLAPAI	Valley or hollow
PIREE-WAL	Chief
POROON	Dream or vision
POONA	Sea sand
PUNNAL	The sun
PURA-MAI-BARN	Platypus
TEMBIRI-BAY-EEN	Death adder
TEENG-KOE	Bitch
TIR-REEKEE	Fire flame
TIR-REEL	Tick
TOEKOI	Night
TOE-PEENG	Mosquito

TUK-KARAH	Winter
TOOL-MOON	Mouse
TOON-OONG	Rock
NEEN-AIRNG	Flathead
WAI-RAI	Battle spear
MOTE-TING	Fish spear
WAI-YORNG	Yam
MORRONG-KAI	Dingo
WILLAI	Possum
WIPPEE	The wind
WOIYOE	Grass
WOMBAL	The beach
WOMMERA	Spear-thrower - also NGOR-ROE
WOROE-WAI	Battle
WATTA-WAN	Mullet
YAR-POONG	Path or road
YURAIR	The clouds
YIR-RA	Wooden sword
YOON-OONG	Turtle
YUE-LOE	Footstep or track
YUR-OIN	Black bream
WALLOONG	Head
KAPPARAH	Skull
NOOKOROE	Nose
KURRAKAH	Mouth
TIRRAH	Teeth
TALLANG	Tongue
YAR-REE	Beard
WROKOAH	Neck
MUR-REEN	The body
MATTARAH	The hand
NARAH	The ribs
PARRAH	The stomach
MUKKOE	The heels
WIR-OONG-KANG	The ankles
BULL-BULL	The heart
PURRAMAI	The kidney
MOON-OONG	The liver
TEE-BOON	The bone
YOE-KOL	The lungs
PUTTA-RA	Flesh
TURRA-KEEL	The veins
BUKKAI	The skin

Here is a poem in Awabakal recorded by a family south of Swansea in the 1850's.
It is a camp song praising and welcoming the morning dawn.... Ngoe-ro-kan.

This name is perpetuated in a Central Coast town called Gorakan.

* * * * *

Ella! Ngoe-ro-kan-ta killi-bin-bin katarn;
Hail! Dawn is shining, glory doing.

Punnal-la bulleeko koo-kooleen;
The sun shining.

Tokoi-ro oowarleen;
Night moving.

Koree-la ngara-been;
Man stirring.

Wonnai-baran Korien Koe-roon Yikora;
Children restless.

Nu-koong-baran kullai tirriki koe-tilleen;
Women fire-wood thinking.

Tibeen-tara wee-yarleen;
Birds singing.

Bootleekke-arng Korien bere-karbeen yikora;
Animals awakening.

Kolbee Koi-yoong koba kowaul;
Camp noise grows.

Koree-baran keroong koolarng oowarleen;
Men bush towards moving;

Nu-koong baran bahtoe boah-marleen;
Women water gathering.

Winnai-baran koppiri yarnteen kai-baillin;
Children they hungry, all shouting.

Nu-koong bahtoe boah-mah;
Women water collected.

Koree baran tura makoroe-lo mar-kullarn;
Men spear fish, return.

Kuri yarnteen tarkilleen;
People all eating.

Katarn ta-ba koi-yoong wee wee.
Camp quiet again.

* * * * *

A W A B A K A L

BUNBILLA KARAI BOOWAH
Permit kangaroo be-hit
Let the kangaroo be hit or hit the kangaroo.

BUT

In command form the usage would be...
KARMUNVILLA KARAI BOOWAH
Let-caused-to-be kangaroo struck or hit.

* * * * *

The next two sentences are examples of how the subject become an object.

WARKOON MEENAREENG TARTAN?
Crow what eats
What does the crow eat?

MEENAREENG-TOE WARKOON TARTAN?
What-of crow eats
What eats the crow?

* * * * *

WONTA-KA BEEROONG NOAH?
What-place from he?
What place did he come from?

* * * * *

MULOOBINBA-KA BEEROONG
Newcastle from
From Newcastle.

* * * * *

NGARN KAY BEE?
Who be thou?
Who are you?

* * * * *

NGAR TOAH BONNI
It-is-I, Bonni.

* * * * *

Some short sentences.

YARKOE-TA NUREE-LE KOE?
How to throw.
How thrown or how is it thrown?

* * * * *

UNNEE KOTARA-KA NARKA
This club see
Look at this club.

* * * * *

NGARN-KA OOMAH?
Who-it made?
Who made it?

* * * * *

NGARTOAH OOMAH
It-it-I-who made
I made it.

NOTE: There are two words for the first person singular. When replying to a question, it is Ngortoah... It is I who... But in a simple statement the word "Barnng" is used for I. Thus:

OOMAH BARNG UNNEE
Made I this
I made this.

* * * * *

NGARN KARKILLEEN?
Who having
Who owns it.

* * * * *

The reply is:

UNNEE EMMOE-OOMBA
This belongs-me
This is mine.

NOTE: The possessive case for persons and proper nouns is "oomba", otherwise it is "koebar".

* * * * *

CONTEE NGOROO TUMMARA-TARA
Here three boomerangs-they
Here are three boomerangs.

* * * * *

UNNEE TUMMARA-TA TETTI-KOE
This boomerang it-is dead-for
This is a killing boomerang.

* * * * *

UNNEE TUMMARA Ooarleen TEEN
This boomerang moving itself
This is a returning boomerang.

* * * * *

UNNEE-TA YIRRI TUMMARA KAR-KILEEN
This it-is sacred boomerang being.

Described separately, boomerangs would:

TUMMARAKOA TITTILEEN
Hunting or killing boomerang.

TUMMARA-TA NGARWLEEN
Returning boomerang.

TUMMARA KO-KA YIRRI:
Sacred or ritual boomerang.

Sometimes the ko-ka is shortened to koah.

TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL MUSIC

SOURCE: "Songs of the Northern Territory by Alice MOYLE,
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

1. Yirrkala. Children's songs:
 - a. "Wind"
 - b. "Buffalo"

2. Yirrkala. Sung by MUN-GARAWI with stick percussion.
 - a. "Spring Water"
 - b. "Red Kangaroo"

3. Didjeridu by Sandy DJAWIDA

4. DARWIN
 - a. Two camp songs sung by school boys from Bathurst and Melville Islands.
 - b. Dance Chants from Bathurst and Melville Islands sung by schoolboys with handclapping.
 - c. Sing songs from Daly River by male and female voices with stick percussion.