



AIATSIS
Australian Institute of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Finding aid

BARKER_J01

**Sound recordings collected by
Jimmie Barker, 1971**

Prepared March, 2021 by BS
Last updated 22 December 2023

ACCESS

Availability of copies

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Restrictions on listening

This collection is open for listening.

Restrictions on use

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Date: 1971

Extent: 2 audio tape reels (approximately 45 min. each) : analogue, mono ; 3 in.

Production history

These recordings were made by Jimmie Barker on 11 February and 8 June 1971. Janet Mathews received a grant from AIAS in 1968 to provide Jimmie Barker with the equipment and tapes to undertake recordings of Muruwari language and culture. These recordings are a form of taped correspondence from Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews. They contain information reporting on the project as well oral history relating to Jimmie Barker's life story. The collection was deposited at AIAS on 23 August 2007.

The recording project was initiated by Janet Mathews, who obtained funding from the AIAS to provide recording equipment and consumables.

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ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

This finding aid was compiled from information provided by Jimmie Barker, Roy Barker, Janet Mathews and audition sheets prepared by AIATSIS staff. Timing points may be slightly out depending on the technologies and procedures in place at the time the recordings were auditioned.

ITEM LIST

Archive number	Field recording number	Description
N/A	1	'Letter tape' from Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews recorded on 8 June 1971. Discussion of visit to and Muruwari language elicitation with Mrs Emily Horneville, sound recording techniques, words beginning with 'N', a request for songs in Ngemba performed by Bertie Hunter and recorded by Luise Hercus at Wilcannia.
N/A	2	'Letter tape' from Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews recorded on 11 February 1971. Discussion of sound recording techniques, fighting and initiation scars with reference to Muruwari man Jimmy Kerrigan, weapons – use and production, emu hunting, objects used at corroborees, marriage customs and the "Stinging Ant" dance.

ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker, Janet Mathews
Personal subject(s):	Mrs Emily Horneville, King Clyde of the Barwon Blacks, Robert Hamilton Mathews, Jack O’Lantern, Judy Trefry
Subject keywords:	Language - Linguistics - Language elicitation - Discussion / Conversation, Sound recording, Subsistence and economy, Mining industry – Opal
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI , D22: NGEMBA
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06), Goodooga (N NSW SH55-07), Wilcannia (NW NSW SH54-16), Glengarry / Sheeppark (N NSW SH55-07)
Recording quality:	Fair

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J01-R00548_1A	00:00:00	Jimmie Barker speaks about recording Muruwari language elicitation with Mrs Emily Horneville.	June 8, 1971	Brewarrina, NSW
	00:04:29	Jimmie Barker speaks about language elicitation more generally – recording King Clyde of the Barwon Blacks and the work of R.H. Mathews.		
	00:09:01	Jimmie Barker speaks about sound recording techniques, current physical ailments and administrative matters – payments to interviewees and postage costs.		
	00:16:14	End of field tape 1 and end of BARKER_J01-R00548_1A.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Jimmie Barker records an ‘audio letter’ to Janet Mathews at Brewarrina on the 8th of June 1971.</u>
00:00:08	Jimmie Barker begins the recording by stating the date - June 8 th , 1971, place - Brewarrina and then addressing Janet Mathews directly in the form of a dictated letter.
00:00:25	Jimmie Barker thanks Janet Mathews for her letters and explains how helpful her suggestions are.
00:01:06	Jimmie Barker explains his decision to make a recording rather than write to avoid postal delays or worse still lost mail as he has experienced in the past.
00:01:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about a difficult field trip to Goodooga where the environment was uncondusive to recording the “old lady (Mrs Ornable - Emily Horneville).”
00:02:48	Jimmie Barker speaks about the content of recordings he made with “Mrs Ornable”

	(Emily Horneville) comprising language elicitation.
00:04:29	Jimmie Barker speaks about Mrs Emily Horneville's tendency to digress during recording sessions and describes a similar tendency in King Clyde whom Jimmie recorded previously.
00:04:47	Jimmie Barker speaks about recording "King Clyde" a Muruwari man and explains that he spoke Muruwari and also the local dialect "Ngemba."
00:06:00	Jimmie Barker speaks about elicitation with Emily Horneville giving the example for a well and variations around this. Jimmie explains his preferred approach to elicitation and refers to the field work of R. H. Mathews (father in law of Janet Mathews) with the Muruwari – particular reference to the Muruwari word for "I'm cold."
00:08:33	Jimmie Barker speaks about the misunderstandings that can arise in elicitation sessions that give rise to false information.
00:08:59	Short break in recording.
00:09:01	Jimmie Barker speaks about his technique of using two recorders. He explains that he records "mainly at night," and speaks about working on his house, a long term knee injury and an ointment that he plans to apply to it to ease the pain.
00:12:14	Short break in recording.
00:12:16	Tape resumes and Jimmie Barker continues to discuss his knee injury and his recovery from a Sinus infection.
00:12:43	Jimmie Barker speaks about providing Janet Mathews with a receipt from Jack for a payment received. (Jack is most likely Jack O'Lantern. An interviewee with whom Jimmie recorded Wangkumara language elicitation – see 'letter tape' collection item MATHEWS_J38-008292_audition).
00:13:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about the postage costs associated with sending the reels of his recordings to Janet Mathews.
00:14:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about receiving a package (of transcriptions) from Mrs Trefry and his plans to correct them.
00:15:23	Tape rolls on – sound of movement.
00:16:15	End of R00548_1A

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Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker, Janet Mathews
Personal subject(s):	Bertie Hunter, Luise Hercus
Subject keywords:	Language - Linguistics - Language elicitation - Discussion / Conversation, Sound recording, Subsistence and economy, Mining industry – Opal
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI , D22: NGEMBA
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06), Goodooga (N NSW SH55-07), Wilcannia (NW NSW SH54-16), Glengarry / Sheeppark (N NSW SH55-07)
Recording quality:	Fair

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J01-R00548_1B	00:00:00	Jimmie Barker reports to Janet Mathews about recording words beginning with “N” for Mrs Judy Trefry and requests a recording of songs in Ngemba performed by Bertie Hunter from a Luise Hercus collection.	June 8, 1971	Brewarrina, NSW
	00:07:14	Jimmie Barker speaks about the local economy of the Brewarrina region and the flourishing industry around opal mining.		
	00:09:16	Jimmie Barker speaks about his Muruwari language work and his hope that it will have enduring value as a language resource.		
	00:14:22	End of field tape 1 and end of BARKER_J01-R00548_1B.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Continuation of a ‘letter tape’ from Jimmie Barker to Janet Mathews recorded at Brewarrina on the 8th of June 1971.</u>
00:00:10	Jimmie Barker speaks about making a tape of words beginning with N for Mrs Trefry to transcribe.
00:01:41	Jimmie Barker speaks about the batteries for his sound recorder and the process of recharging them.
00:03:03	Jimmie Barker addresses Janet Mathews directly and responds to a letter from her.
00:03:57	In relation to this letter Jimmie Barker requests access to a collection of recordings made by Bertie Hunter at Wilcannia.
00:04:18	Jimmie Barker speaks about Bertie Hunter and his performance of songs in Ngemba recorded by Luise Hercus.
00:07:14	Jimmie Barker speaks about the local economy, the lack of work and the emergence of

	Opal mining amongst landowners in Brewarrina and the surrounding areas.
00:07:52	Jimmie Barker speaks about Bertie Hunter's departure for Glengarry.
00:08:05	Jimmie Barker speaks with affection about Brewarrina but bemoans his work load as acting station manager and the lack of time for his own work.
00:09:16	Jimmie Barker speaks about his project recording vocabulary and language elicitation in the Muruwari dialect and hopes it will be useful to others in the future.
00:11:38	Jimmie Barker suggests that the Muruwari dialect project (and here he acknowledges Janet Mathews for her assistance) has developed to a point of being more comprehensive than other similar projects.
00:12:48	Jimmie Barker notes the time ("twenty five to twelve") and signs off thanking Janet Mathews for her most recent letter and wishing both her and her husband all the best.
00:14:22	End of 00548_1B

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Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker, Janet Mathews
Personal subject(s):	Jimmy Kerrigan, Robin Campbell
Subject keywords:	Sound recording, Weapons - Clubs and fighting sticks - Fighting, Social organisation - Kinship, Initiation, Weapons – Boomerangs, Weapons - Clubs and fighting sticks, Weapons - Clubs and fighting sticks – Making, Hunting - Kangaroo / Wallaby, Weapons - Boomerangs - Throwing, Music - Instruments - Wind - Didjeridu, Hunting - Birds - Emus
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06)
Recording quality:	Fair

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J01-R00548_2A	00:00:00	Jimmie Barker and Janet Mathews discuss a technical approach to recording involving two tape machines.	February 11, 1971	Brewarrina, NSW
	00:02:12	Jimmie Barker and Janet Mathews discuss Jimmy Kerrigan, his ancestry and his scars from fighting and initiation.		
	00:05:18	Jimmie Barker and Janet Mathews discuss weapons, their method of creation and their application in fighting and hunting.		
	00:18:57	Jimmie Barker and Janet Mathews discuss emu hunting.		
	00:23:12	End of field tape 2A and end of BARKER_J01-R00548_2A.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Jimmie Barker answers pre-recorded questions from Janet Mathews. Jimmie uses a second tape machine (“the Monster”) to play Janet’s questions so that both questions and answers are captured within the one recording.</u>
00:00:05	Jimmie Barker explains / discusses technical issues with regard to the speed settings of the two tape recorders. Jimmie Barker asks Janet Mathews to record her questions at one seven eights of an inch per second.
00:01:31	Janet Mathews begins by suggesting a recording approach whereby Jimmie can put Janet’s recorded questions to tape and answer them in context.
00:02:12	Janet Mathews speaks about the contents of tape “29B” in particular “fighting

	stories” involving Jimmy Kerrigan (mention of his brother Billy).
00:02:45	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about Jimmy Kerrigan’s bloodline.
00:02:51	Jimmie Barker speaks about Jimmy Kerrigan’s ancestry and his scars from combat and initiation.
00:04:00	Jimmie Barker mentions a recording (a “small one”) he made in which he spoke about Robin Campbell.
00:04:14	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about Jimmy Kerrigan’s scars.
00:04:56	Jimmie Barker speaks about initiation scars and marks from <i>boomerangs</i> and other fighting implements.
00:05:18	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about weapons such as the <i>Gudjeru</i> (<i>Nula nula</i>) and the <i>Bundi</i> . Janet asks about the dimensions and how these weapons were used.
00:07:17	Jimmie Barker pledges to draw some of the weapons for Janet Mathews. Jimmie explains that the <i>Gudjeru</i> were typically about 15 inches long and made of Gidgee, Mulga or other hard woods.
00:08:23	Jimmie Barker speaks about <i>Bundi’s</i> and how they are made from young trees. Jimmie speaks about how the <i>Bundi’s</i> design and its use in hunting and in fighting.
00:10:32	Jimmie Barker speaks about the <i>Muru</i> and its use in hunting Kangaroos, other game and also combat.
00:12:25	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about a word he used in a description of a <i>Wogenurra</i> , a weapon with double bladed head.
	Jimmie Barker explains that the weapons were usually made of Gidgee or other hard wood if Gidgee wasn’t available.
00:13:49	Jimmie Barker speaks about the word <i>Wogenurra</i> and its use as a descriptor for small axes or tommyhawks. Jimmie goes on to explain that the word more specifically refers to a <i>Bundi</i> – like weapon where sharp object like nails or blades are inserted in the head.
00:15:57	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about the “come back” boomerangs and his use of the word “convex” in relation to boomerangs in a previous recording (29B).
00:16:37	Jimmie Barker by way of clarification explains that he used the phrase “double convex” in reference to the <i>Widjenaras</i> - boomerangs that don’t come back. These were relatively “straight” and were used as weapons.
00:18:57	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about a sound instrument used for drawing out emus.
00:19:45	Jimmie Barker refers to his previous discussion of emu lassoing on “last month’s,” “number one tape.”
00:20:22	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about the “netting” of the emus.
00:20:54	Jimmie Barker again refers Janet Mathews to “number one tape.”
00:21:16	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about hunters imitating the sound of dogs as a way of luring emus into nets.
00:22:57	Jimmie Barker affirms much of Janet Mathews’ interpretation and again refers Janet to “number one tape” for more details.
00:23:12	End of R00548_2A

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Performer/speaker(s):	Jimmie Barker, Janet Mathews
Personal subject(s):	Billy Reid, Robin Campbell
Subject keywords:	Weapons - Clubs and fighting sticks, Hunting - Birds – Emus, Music - Instruments - Making - Drum, Dance - Recreational - Corroboree, Ceremonies - Performance and performance practice, Stories and motifs - Birds, Technology - Fire - Fire making, Social organisation - Kinship - Marriage, Social organisation – Kinship, Dance - Ceremonial
Language/people:	English, D32: MURUWARI
Places:	Brewarrina (N NSW SH55-06)
Recording quality:	Fair

Archive item number	Timing point	Description	Date	Place
BARKER_J01-R00548_2B	00:00:00	Continuation of a discussion in which Jimmie Barker addresses questions from Janet Mathews about emu hunting.	February 11, 1971	Brewarrina, NSW
	00:00:37	Jimmie Barker addresses a question from Janet Mathews about the pillow drum, how it was used in corroboree ceremonies and how it was made.		
	00:03:49	Jimmie Barker addresses a question from Janet Mathews about the role of the principal singer in corroboree ceremonies.		
	00:05:42	Jimmie Barker speaks more broadly about the performative aspects of corroboree ceremonies.		
	00:09:49	Jimmie Barker speaks about fire making, the techniques and the artefacts used.		
	00:12:42	Jimmie Barker discusses traditional Aboriginal courtship and marriage.		
	00:19:16	Jimmie Barker discusses the <i>Millery Bingha</i> – stinging ant dance.		
	00:09:49	End of field tape 2 and end of BARKER_J01-R00548_2B.		

Timing point	Description
	<u>Continuation of a recording in which Jimmie Barker answers pre-recorded questions from Janet Mathews. Jimmie uses a second tape machine (“the Monster”) to play</u>

	<u>Janet's questions so that both questions and answers are captured within the one recording.</u>
00:00:07	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker whether the <i>Muru</i> was the weapon used to kill the emu trapped in the nets.
00:00:32	Although Jimmie Barker is cut short in his response, he seems to suggest that the implements used to “knock the emu on the head” are non-specific.
00:00:37	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about a pillow drum used as an accompanimental instrument for corroborees.
00:01:07	Jimmie Barker speaks about how the pillows were made and used in corroboree ceremonies.
00:02:52	Jimmie Barker speaks about the technique of making the “pillow” or “bag” sewn from Kangaroo skin and filled with possum fur. Jimmie describes the sound of the pillow drums which provided accompaniment to the boomerang clapsticks and singing during corroborees.
00:03:36	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker what the pillows were filled with.
00:03:49	Janet Mathews reads a description (most likely from a recording provided by Jimmie Barker himself) of the corroboree. Janet asks Jimmie a specific question about the participation of the principal singer in this ceremony.
00:04:25	Jimmie Barker explains how the singers would exclaim and then step into the shadows “out of sight,” momentarily before re-emerging in front of the fire soon after.
00:05:42	Jimmie Barker describes the form of the corroboree and the performative conventions associated with it.
00:06:54	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about a Kamilaroi corroboree song about a Curlew performed for her by Billy Reid. Janet asks Jimmie about the exclamations (“whoosh”) in this song and how they embody or articulate the behaviour of the Curlew.
00:07:49	Jimmie Barker speaks in detail about the vocalisations of the corroboree dancers and the relationship between this element and the principle singer’s role. Many formal aspects of the performance derive from the performers needs.
00:09:49	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about the use of fine “stones” or “needles” (made from the small bones of animals) as fire starters. Jimmie uses the word <i>Thiggiah</i> .
00:10:51	Jimmie Barker affirms Janet Mathew’ description of the use of these artefacts and undertakes to illustrate aspects of their use diagrammatically.
00:11:42	Jimmie Barker refers to Robin (Campbell’s) recorded account, in which he distinguishes the Quandong tree as the best source for these fire-starter sticks.
00:12:16	Janet Mathews suggests that the sparks would be produced only by blowing the fire-starters once they had been dropped on the kindling and leaves. Jimmie Barker confirms this to be the case.
00:12:42	Janet Mathews refers to content on “tape 30B” wherein Jimmie Barker discusses Aboriginal courtship and marriage.
00:13:41	Jimmie Barker clarifies his earlier remarks about the restrictions placed on married Aboriginal women in regard to contact with men other than their husbands. Jimmie explains that married women were only permitted to talk to ‘other’ men if others were present.
00:15:21	Jimmie Barker speaks about how only certain forms of interaction and socialisation were permitted within Aboriginal blood groups.
00:16:08	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker for a description of traditional Aboriginal marriage practices.
00:18:45	Jimmie Barker explains the key role of Aboriginal elders in authenticating traditional

	Aboriginal marriages.
00:19:16	Janet Mathews asks Jimmie Barker about the <i>Millery Bingha</i> (<i>Millery</i> – ant <i>Bingha</i> – sting) - stinging ant dance. Specifically, whether the movement and gestures are a depiction of the experience of being bitten by a particular ant.
00:19:35	Jimmie Barker answers in the negative, explaining that whilst the dance bears the name of the ant it doesn't literally enact the "antics" of the ant.
00:22:03	Jimmie Barker describes the choreography and vocal gestures associated with the dance.
00:23:19	End of R00548_2B

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