



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Library

Papers of John Mathew

MS 950

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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:	John Mathew
Title:	Papers of John Mathew
Collection no:	MS 950
Date range:	1840-1926
Extent:	0.43 metres (3 boxes)
Repository	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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ACCESS TO COLLECTION

Access and use conditions

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Preferred citation

Items from this collection should be cited as [Title or description of manuscript item], Papers of John Mathew, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 950, Series [no], Folder or Item [no]

Inter-Library Loan

Manuscripts are not available on Inter-Library loan.

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COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Scope and content note

The series consists of photocopies made by the AIATSIS Library in March 1977 from originals loaned by Dr Randolph Yule Mathew. It contains draft manuscripts of books and papers, correspondence, photographs and related material.

Related material

For a complete listing of material by or about John Mathew, held by the Institute, consult the [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue. To access any audiovisual material contact the [Audiovisual Archive](#)

John Mathew's 'Papers on linguistics' are held by the Library at MS 999. Also, a collection of John Mathew's 'Letters, notebooks etc. concerning his work in Queensland' is held at the State Library of Queensland John Oxley Library, and a manuscript of his work 'The origin of the Tasmanian Aborigines' is held at the National Library of Australia at (NLA MS 2296).

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Archivist's note

MS 950/12/3 was missing from the collection in November 2004. MS 950/12/2 and MS 950/12/4 are held by the AIATSIS library. Copies of MS 950/12/5-10 and MS 950/12/12-14 are held by the AIATSIS library in the Serials and Rare Serials collections.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Mathew, Presbyterian Minister and anthropologist, was born on 31 May 1849 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He was educated at Kidd's School, Aberdeen and at the Inch Free Churches School where he was a pupil teacher from 1862-64. In 1887 he married Wilhelmina (Minnie) Scott and they had a daughter and four sons.

Mathew migrated to Queensland with a brother and a sister to live with his uncle John Mortimer on his station, *Manumbar*, on the Burnett River in 1864. He became familiar with the language and culture of the Kabi and Wakka peoples while working for six years on the property as stockman, book keeper and storeman.

He was a gold digger for two years and a teacher for four years from 1872 until 1876 before moving to Victoria. He matriculated and graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts in 1884 and a Master of Arts in 1886, having also worked as a tutor and station manager for some periods between 1876 and 1886. He was awarded a scholarship in mental and moral philosophy in 1885. Having undertaken the full theology course at Ormond College (1884-86), Mathew was inducted to the Presbyterian parish of Ballan in 1887. In 1889 Mathew moved to Coburg where he was the minister until he retired in 1923.

A home chaplain during World War 1, Mathew was elected Moderator at the Victorian Assembly in 1911 and was Moderator General of Australia from 1922-24. He was a council member of Presbyterian Ladies', Scotch and Ormond (chairman 1910-1926) Colleges, founder and office bearer of the Melbourne College of Divinity, advisory council member of Coburg High School and member of the Royal Society of Victoria and the Australian Literature Society (president 1915-20) and served on the Anthropological Committee of the Australian National Research Council.

For his scholarship, Mathew was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity by the University of St Andrews in 1892 and a Bachelor of Divinity *ad eund.* and a Doctor of Divinity from the Melbourne College of Divinity in 1924.

Maintaining a lifelong interest in Aboriginal ethnography, Mathew published two books and numerous papers and articles between 1879 and 1928. He won the prize and medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales for an essay 'The Australian Aborigines' which was the basis of his publication *Eaglehawk and Crow* (1899). *Two Representative tribes of Queensland* was published in 1910 after his 1906 visit to the Kabi and Wakka people living on Barambah Government Aboriginal Station in Queensland.

Mathew died in Coburg on 11 March 1929.

A photocopy of a biography of the Reverend John Mathew by his son R.Y. Mathew is held by the Library at MS 969. The National Library of Australia also holds a typescript copy of this biography and related papers at NLA MS 4507 as does the State Library of Victoria.

Reference:

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SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1 *Manuscripts*

**Folder/
Item**

- 1 Handwritten draft manuscript and proof of 'Eaglehawk and crow' [published version held in Library at RB M428.31/E1. See also Series 5 and 7]
- 2-3 'Two representative tribes of Queensland'. Includes draft manuscripts; letters and notes on production and handwritten information on Marrinyeri tribe received from David Unaipon (1914). [Published version held in Library at RB M428.31/T1]

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Series 2 *Papers on religion and linguistics*

**Folder/
Item**

- 1 'Gleanings in Aboriginal grammar', typescript
- 2 'Man is naturally constituted a religious being', untitled, handwritten, [21] leaves numbered 1-13, 46-52
- 3 'Primitive religions', handwritten
- 4 'The religious cults of the Australian Aborigines', handwritten and typescript drafts
- 5 Letter to Editor, *World's News*, 2 February 1922, handwritten
- 6 'The Australian languages', handwritten
- 7 'Explanations of some of the Australian class names', one handwritten and one typescript
- 8 'Linguistic points of contact between the Aborigines of Australia and those of New Guinea', handwritten
- 9 'Note on the Australian languages', handwritten
- 10 'Some special features of the languages', handwritten
- 11 'Three Aboriginal words', handwritten

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Series 3 *General papers*

**Folder/
Item**

- 1 'The Aborigines of Victoria', handwritten
- 2 'The Anthropological literature of Australia', handwritten
- 3 'The Australian Aborigines - who they are, what they do', (handwritten); two abstracts (typescript)
- 4 'Note on the Gurang Gurang tribe of Queensland', typescript
- 5 'Meaning of some Australian phratry names and the origin of the Australian phratries', handwritten
- 6 'The origin of the Australian phratries and explanations of some of the phratry names', typescript
- 7 'The origin of the Tasmanian Aborigines', handwritten
- 8 'The story of the Australian race' - chapter 1, Origin (handwritten and typescript; chapter 2, Relationship to Tasmanians (typescript). Two copies
- 9 'The most radical and important feature of Australia social organization', untitled, handwritten
- 10 'Career of [Johnny] Campbell: the Aboriginal bushranger', handwritten; court proceedings, April/July 1880 and letter from Prisons Department, Comptroller-Generals Office, Brisbane, 28 August 1870; and four clippings from the *Queenslander*, 17 April-31 July 1880 (photos)
- 11 'Australia's primitive man', letter to the Editor of *Argus*, handwritten

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Series 4 *Research material on linguistics*

This series includes correspondence, notes, word lists and questionnaires on linguistics.

Folder

- 1 Aboriginal place-names and words, letters and notes, holograph, manuscript and typescript, pp 1-114
- 2 Aboriginal place-names and words, letters and notes, holograph, manuscript and typescript, pp 115-163
- 3 Letters from Edward M. Curr on the Kabi language, April-May 1880
- 4 Notes on grammar of Wororra tribe, holograph
- 5 Vocabulary of the Kiramai language, Herbert River, Queens and of the Walili language, Auburn, Redbank, Camboon, Walloor on the Dawson

Folder

- 6 Vocabulary of Kitapul spoken about Allora, holograph and typescript
- 7 Vocabulary of the Wakka Wakka, holograph and typescript
- 8 Vocabulary questionnaires and correspondence, Parts 1-24
- 9 Vocabulary questionnaires and correspondence, Parts 25-41
- 10 Vocabulary questionnaires and correspondence, Parts 42-63
- 11 Vocabulary questionnaires and correspondence, Parts 64-90

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Series 5 *Eaglehawk and crow*

John Mathew's book, *Eaglehawk and crow: a study of Australian Aborigines including an inquiry into their origin and a survey of Australian languages* was published in 1899. The book is held in Library at RB M428.31/E1.

This series consists of correspondence and notes relating to Mathew's book including letters from A.H. Keane (25 October 1900, 19 February 1908, 16 October 1909) and Walter E. Roth (7 June 1902) and a letter to the Editor of *Nature* in reply to A.C. Haddon's review in the issue of 28 December 1899. See also Series 1 and 7.

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Series 6 *Correspondence*

Correspondence received on Aboriginal subjects in general from: Jose Bradshaw (7 July 1891); Edward M. Curr (incomplete and undated, 8 April, 3 and 7 May and 6 July 1880); S.C. Gibson (16 February 1926); P. Godley (27 June 1914); A.C. Grant (19 March 1907) including vocabularies and music score, Burnett District, Queensland 1862; Mary Agatha Pembroke (31 April 1915); H.H. Scott (19 March 1907); and Joseph Shaw (25 June 1898, 8 Feb. 1909).

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Series 7 *Newspaper clippings*

Folder

- 1 Reviews of *Eaglehawk and crow*, notebook. See also Series 1 and 5
- 2 Aboriginal subjects in general, notebook.

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Series 8 Notebooks

Folder

- 1 Aboriginal legends and notes on Victorian Aborigines, 1906
- 2 Aboriginal matters, some church notes
- 3 Bibliography for Australian languages
- 4 Index to vocabulary of Kabi Kabi dialect
- 5 Notes on a lecture, 'Aborigines of Australia', by E.S. Barker delivered 10 May 1854
- 6 Notes on Queensland Aborigines collected c.1912
- 7 Notes on Queensland Aborigines collected 1923
- 8 Notes received from John Green (Greer?), Healesville, maps
- 9 Record of visits to Home Mission Station, Wimmera and Mallee, 1909
- 10 Review aspects of *Die Gliederung der Australischen Sprachen* by W. Schmidt; notes on phratries
- 11 Shamanism and religious beliefs of Aborigines; and geological notes by J.M. Mathew

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Series 9 Photographs

This series comprises a proof sheet (with captions) of photographic images of Aborigines, including one of Isaac MacDuff and his wife, Maria, Lake Condah Mission Station, with letter from Maria (12 September 1912). In addition there are photographs and/or photocopies of plates.

The bulk of the photographic images are held in Photographic Archives. To access any the photographs contact the Photographic Archives.

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Series 10 Maps

State of Queensland map showing the Commonwealth Electoral Division of Wide Bay for 1906 and map of 'Continental Australia' showing the routes by which the Aboriginal race spread itself through the continent, 1887.

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Series 11 Other papers

This series includes papers by authors other than Mathew.

Folder/**Item**

- 1 Curr, E.M. *The Australian race*, volume 1, 1886, pp. 152-213, and title-page inscribed by the author
- 2 *South Australian [Colonist]*, copies of articles (typescript) from the issues of 23 and 30 April, 17 March, 23 June, 7 July, 18 and 29 September and 4 December 1840; and 'Notes on the Aborigines of Victoria and Australia from information furnished by Mr. Ballantine of Seymour and others', 1889-1905

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Series 12 Published papers

The papers in this series were written by Mathew.

The original offprints located in this series have been missing since November 2004. However, most have been replaced with photocopies of the journal articles.

Folder

- 1 'Aboriginal arithmetic', in *Alma Mater*, v. 4, no. 4, July 1899, pp. 15-16
- 2 'Is the dingo indigenous to Australia', a letter to the Editor in *Science of Man*, v. 4, no. 3, 1901, p. 47, 'Aboriginal words; and is the dingo indigenous to Australia?' 1900, [missing from collection from November 2004] [Copy held in Library at S 57/63].
- 3 'Aborigines of Western Australia', 1905. [Missing from collection from November 2004]
- 4 'The Australian Aborigines', in *Royal Society of New South Wales Journal and Proceedings*, v.23, 1889; pp. 335-449. [Copy Held in Library at RS 50/2]
- 5 'The cave paintings of Australia, their authorship and significance', in *Royal Anthropological Institute Journal*, v. 23, no. 1, 1893, pp. 42-53.
- 6 'Note on the Gurang Gurang tribe of Queensland, with vocabulary', in *Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Report*, v.14, 1913, pp. 433-44
- 7 'On the Kabī dialect of Queensland', in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, v. 9, 1880, pp.312-316
- 8 'The origin, distribution, and social organization of the inhabitants of Victoria before the advent of Europeans', 1910, in *Victorian Historical Magazine*, v.1, no. 3, 1911, pp. 79-89.
- 9 'The origin of the Australian phratryes and explanations of some of the phratry names', in *Royal Anthropological Institute Journal*, v. 40, 1910, pp.165-70.
- 10 'The religious cults of the Australian Aborigines', in *Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Report*, v.18, 1926; pp. 524-540.
- 11 'Three Aboriginal words', in *Alma Mater*, Sept. 1898, pp.51-52

Folder

- 12 'Vocabulary of (i) the Kiramai language, Herbert River, Queensland, and of (ii) the Wulili language, Auburn, Redbank, Camboon, Walloor on the Dawson', *in Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science report*, v.18, 1926, pp. 547-550.
- 13 'Vocabulary of the Kitapul, spoken about Allora, Killarney and generally the source of the Condamine and the Logan Rivers', *in Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Report*, v. 18, 1926, pp. 551-52.
- 14 'Vocabulary of the Wakka Wakka' *in Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Report*, v. 18, 1926, pp. 540-47.

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	3	1-11
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	8	1-11
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	10	
	11	1-2
	12	1-2; 5-14
	12	3 Missing from collection since November 2004
	12	4 Held in Library at RS 50/2

Finding aid updated by Janet Phillips February 2000; updated November 2004, May 2008, May 2024

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