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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator: Dermot Smyth

Title: Field notes and bibliography of Cape York

Collection no: MS 3763

Date range: 1977-1982

Extent: 3 boxes (0.52mt)

Repository: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY STATEMENT

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ACCESS TO COLLECTION

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Access conditions

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Preferred citation

Items from this collection should be cited as [Title or description of manuscript item], Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS [insert number], Series [insert number], Subseries [insert number], Item or Folder [insert number].

For example:

Dermot Smyth, Field notes and bibliography of Cape York, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 3763, Series 1, Item 1

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Scope and contents note

This collection contains papers relating to a Grant awarded to Dermot Smyth, field biologist for CAYET, by the AIAS in 1978, with an extension into 1981-82. The papers include meeting agendas and minutes for CAYET meetings, interim reports, correspondence relating to the grant, and papers written by Dermot Smyth relating to his fieldwork in Cape York. Also included are papers by other authors covering ecology, papers relating to closing the mission at Mapoon and moving people to Bamaga, photograph and slide catalogues and caption lists, information about Aurukun closed sites, correspondence about the proposed logging at Terania Creek Inquiry, reports and descriptions of ethnobotanical sites, and Cape York bibliographies.

Provenance

This position of field biologist for the CAYET Project was funded by the AIAS. Outputs and administrative papers belong to AIATSIS.
Material separated from the collection

Slides and Photographs have been separated from the collection. See call number SMYTH.D01.CS (Title: Art, bush tucker, hunting, gathering and environment at various locations on Cape York Peninsula, Queensland) and SMYTH.D01.BW (Title: Forest canopy survey from the Archer river)

Related material

For a complete list of works by Dermot Smyth held by the Library, and for other related material consult Mura®, the AIATSIS catalogue.

For access to Audiovisual material contact AIATSIS Collections.

Important: Before clicking on the links to the catalogue entries please read our sensitivity message.

See also: Manuscript MS 1614, Cape York Ecology Transect Project (CAYET) Interim report, and MS 1501, Ethnobotanical data from Aurukun (QLD) area, by Peter Sutton and Dermot Smyth, in the AIATSIS manuscript collection. Photographs and slides are held in our pictorial collection. See: SMYTH.D01.CS and SMYTH.D01.BW

Archivists note

This material had been placed into archival manila folders prior to the creation of this finding aid. The folders did not have titles, however they were numbered, and this numbering has been retained.

Acronyms

AIAS Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
CAYET The Cape York Ecology Transect Project

Definition

Transect A transect is a line following a route along which a survey or observations are made. The transect is an important geographic tool for studying changes in human and/or physical characteristics from one place to another. [https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-19.pdf]

The following material was found in archival manila folders arranged in numerical order. They have been arranged and described in that order

Administrative Note

Subjects/Places

Aurukun map area (Qld NW Cape York SD54-07)
Flinders Island map area (Tas Bass Strait SK55-02)
Cape York Peninsula (Qld SC54, SD54, SD55)
Mapoon (Qld NW Cape York SC54-15, SD54-03)

Language
Wik Mungkan language (Y57 Austlang)

BIOGRAPHICAL – BACKGROUND NOTE
Dermot Smyth immigrated to Australia in 1959 at the age of 10. Dermot then spent the next 10 years in Canberra attending school and later the Australian National University where he studied zoology. In 1971 he organised a research expedition to study the animals of Taam Island in Eastern Indonesia and won a scholarship to undertake post graduate studies at the University of Ghana.

Dermot’s qualifications include a B. Sc. (Hons zoology) Australian National University, and Ph. D (Biol) James Cook University of North Queensland.

Dermot gained experience from zoological, botanical and ethno-biological research in North Queensland. He was funded by AIAS as field biologist with the Cape York Ecology Transect Project (CAYET) from 1978 to 1982 undertaking field work with Peter Sutton in Western Cape York Peninsula in 1978 and 1979.

In 1985 Dermot Smyth was the co-ordinator of Aboriginal training and liaison for the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

The CAYET Project.
In 1977 a group of biologists and anthropologists from Queensland based institutions decided to act as a co-operative group to study Aboriginal man/land relations across the central Cape York Peninsula, focusing on ethnography, sociolinguistics, territorial organisation and resource exploitation in the context of the mosaic of ecosystems existing throughout the region. The transect extends from Aurukun and the Mitchell River on the west coast, to the Pascoe River and Princess Charlotte Bay on the east coast.

In 1978 the CAYET group obtained an AIAS grant to employ a field biologist for an initial period of three years. Dermot Smyth took up this position and his roles were: 1. To record Aboriginal knowledge about individual animal and plant species, their usefulness, interactions, habitats and cultural associations and, 2. to describe the mosaic of ecosystems with emphasis on exploitable resources in relation to Aboriginal territorial organisation.

It was believed that by combining Aboriginal knowledge of the environment with its ecological description and then superimposing this integration on the social organisation of the landscape it would be possible to gain a substantial understanding of the Aboriginal ecology of this part of northern Australia.

References:
AIAS Registry file: 78/45 part 1
Smyth, Dermot, Cape York Ecology Transect Project (CAYET), Interim Report of field biologist, June 1981, MS 1614
SERIES DESCRIPTION

This series includes reports on ethnobiological fieldwork, Jessica Point (Weipa), and Aboriginal occupation in Cape York, and papers relating to flora, CAYET – including agendas and reports, Mapoon, Aurukun closed sites, bibliographies and correspondence. Papers include typescript, photocopies and manuscript material.

MS 3763/1 Series 1 Field notes and bibliography of Cape York 1975-1982

Items

MS 3763/1/1 Manila folder. Includes: Interim report AIAS, Dr Dermot Smyth, affiliated with CSIRO, and University of Queensland. Grant commenced 18-4-1978. Period of this report: 18-4-1978 to 12-12-1978; 2 copies of, In Wik Kath: Kaap Thonam, Ang’an Want, by Stanley Ngakyunkwokka, illustrated by Rebecca Wolmby, Wik-Munkan. (Produced as a curriculum development project during 1978); correspondence 1981, relating to the grant (which was extended for 1981/82), and with Peter Sutton, 1981 relating to CAYET; CAYET meeting agendas; comments on CAYET publication.


MS 3763/1/3 Manila folder. Includes: Positional paper, Towards an open-ended but operationally unifying theoretical framework for ecological analysis, or: should ecologists become more promiscuous?, RA Hynes, draft I; CAYET project:- participation by ecologists in pilot trip, November 1977; Linguistics and Cape York ecology, CAYET meeting 12-5-77; CAYET: interdisciplinary project RA Hynes; The Cape York Ecology Transect (CAYET) Group, Proff. B Rigsby; photocopies of journal articles; ‘An anthropological viewpoint of the Cape York project’, Athol Chase; Report on the problems, needs and possible solutions in the situation of the Aboriginal Community living at Jessica Point (Weipa South Qld); Some notes about Mapoon – with some general comparisons (in figures) taken from reports of Department of Native Affairs (E. and O.E), and other papers.
MS 3763/1/4  
Manila folder. Includes: The Mapoon story by the Mapoon people, 1975, photocopy [printed copy also held in AIATSIS library at P ROB); other papers relating to saving Mapoon, closure of the mission and transferring people to Bamaga; photo catalogue for film no’s MP 1,MP 2, PMP 3, PMP 4, PMP 5, PMP (B&W) A, PMP (B&W) C; Minutes of CAYET executive meeting 1980; correspondence between Dermot Smyth and Peter Ucko about Dermot beginning employment with the Institute, 1978.

MS 3763/1/5  
Manila folder includes: Welcome letter to Dermot from the AIAS, 1978; Aurukun closed sites; ‘Record of trip to Flinders Island group and Cape York in August 1979: among others on the trip were: J Beaton, D Smyth and T Negerevich. Caption list”; Queensland Acts relating to the preservation of Aboriginal relics, 1967, 1975, 1976; Bloomfield specimens, 1980, 2 copies; Photographs from Don Brady’s fieldwork, North Queensland Oct 1980, caption list, photographer Dermot Smyth; Correspondence relating to the Terania Inquiry; Summary of ethnobotanical site descriptions, Aurukun, 1978, [includes caption list]; Dermot Smyth – photo slide catalogue film no’s PJT 5, PJT 6PJ 7, [identifies secret/sacred]; Catalogue of colour transparencies taken by Dermot Smyth at Aurukun Sept/Oct 1978.

MS 3763/1/6  

MS 3763/1/7  
Manila folder includes: Minutes of CAYET meeting 27-7-1978, 3 copies, and 13-4-1978; ‘CAYET project – participation by ecologists in pilot trip, Nov 1977’; ‘The need to make the CAYET project interdisciplinary and not anthropological’, Glen Ingram; Environmental problems, theoretical links and interdisciplinary practice, RA Hynes, 1979; CAYET interdisciplinary project: Some theoretical elements and their possible links with interdisciplinary practice, RA Hynes; ‘CAYNET and interdisciplinary interaction’, 2-6-1977; ‘Towards an open-ended but operationally unifying theoretical framework for ecological analysis’, RA Hynes, draft 1; CAYET Research resolution levels; Pascoe River pilot study, AK Chase, 2 copies; Report on a field trip to Lockhart community. 11 July – 18 July, 1977; other papers.

MS 3763/1/8  
Manila folder includes: ‘Use of remote system data in remote system mapping’, AL Chandica, 1978, 3 copies; correspondence with the AIATS re CAYET, 1978; CAYET meeting agenda Feb 1979; Minutes of CAYET meetings, Feb and June 1978; Minutes of CAYET meetings, Feb 1979
Meeting agendas; List of CAYET membership; Income and expenditure account for CAYET; correspondence and other papers.

**MS 3763/1/9** Manila folder includes: Correspondence 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982; interim report 12 Dec 1978; CAYET meeting minutes Feb, April, June, July 1978, Feb, April, May, June 1979, Aug 1981; Photo catalogue, Film number MP 1, MP 2, PMP 3, PMP 4, PMP 5, PMP (B&W) A, PMP (B&W) C; CAYET meeting agendas, other papers relating to CAYET.


**MS 3763/1/12** Cape York, list of authors, Bibliography.

**MS 3763/1/13** Cape York, list of authors, Bibliography, continued.


**BOX LIST**

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Finding aid compiled by Cathy Zdanowicz, January 2020

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