The sandalwood industry on Cape York Peninsula from the 1890s to the 1920s

Geoff Wharton

Sandalwood is the common name for trees of the genus *Santalum* in the botanical family Santalaceae.¹ There are six species found in Australia, including *Santalum acuminatum*, *S. album*, *S. murrayanum*, *S. obtusifolium*, *S. spicatum* and the subject of this paper – the most widespread in Australia – *Santalum lanceolatum*. All of these species are hemiparasitic, meaning that they take some of their nutrients and water from the roots of host plants.² The generic name *Santalum* is derived from the Greek *santalon*, which in turn was derived from the Sanskrit *chandana*, meaning ‘fragrant’.³ The specific epithet *lanceolatum* refers to the leaves being about four times as long as they are broad, being ‘broadest in the lower half and tapering towards the tip’.⁴

This paper discusses the early twentieth-century export industry based on Northern Sandalwood (*Santalum lanceolatum*), a shrub or small tree that grows on Cape York Peninsula in north Queensland and in a wide range of areas across the Australian continent.⁵

¹ HJ Hewson and AS George, ‘Santalaceae’, in Alexander S George, ed., *Flora of Australia: Volume 22 Rhizophorales to Celastrales*, Canberra, AGPS, 1984, p. 29 and p. 61. The author is aware that there would be numerous Aboriginal language terms for this species, but his research on this is incomplete. Kaanju elders, Piiramu (Mr George Wilson) and Philip Wilson, provided the term ‘nipira’ in the Kaanju language, personal comment to author, 25 June 2005.
Northern Sandalwood grows to about 7 metres, with drooping branches of grey-green leaves and dark fissured bark. The reddish-purple fruit is edible when ripe.6

Forester EHF Swain recorded in 1928 that Queensland (i.e. Northern) Sandalwood primarily was converted to sandal dust to be processed into incense sticks for religious and burial ceremonies.7 He noted that it was ‘sought after by the Chinese wood-carver for the production of fretted and sculptured fans, caskets, serviette rings, and beads’ and that it also produced a valuable oil used medicinally, in perfumes and soaps, and ‘industrially in mineral separation’.8

During the first three decades of the last century, a wild sandalwood harvesting industry developed on the Peninsula, stimulated by demand from China for the timber and sandalwood oil. Many of the Europeans involved in the industry relied heavily on the local knowledge of Aboriginal people in each area to find and harvest the timber.

Most European sandalwood-getters appear to have operated with small teams of Aboriginal cutters, who may have been traditional owners of the country where they were cutting or had some form of cultural approval to traverse the area.9 There were at least two phases of sandalwood-getting on Cape York Peninsula:

- 1890s. Harvesting was undertaken by a small number of people in the area north of the Jardine River, now known as the Northern Peninsula Area, and between the Nesbit and Pascoe Rivers on the east coast.10
- 1907–28. Cutting occurred over a wide area of Cape York Peninsula.11 By about 1928 the resource appears to have become depleted on Aboriginal reserve lands.12

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7 Edward Harold Fulcher Swain, *The timbers and forest products of Queensland*, Brisbane, Government Printer, 1928, p. 307. Swain was the chairman of the Provisional Forestry Board of Queensland.

8 Swain, *The timbers and forest products of Queensland*, p. 307.

9 It is an important and widespread cultural rule on Cape York Peninsula that permission is sought from traditional owners before traversing across another clan’s country. The rule was strictly enforced by Aboriginal people in the early twentieth century; therefore, it could be argued that at least some traditional owners would have been involved with the European sandalwood-getters in each area.

10 In 1902 the Queensland Colonial Botanist, FM Bailey, noted that Frank Jardine of Somerset had advised him that sandalwood (*Santalum lanceolatum* var. *venosum*) was being exported from the area to China. F Manson Bailey, *The Queensland flora: part V. Loranthaceae to Lemnaceae*, Brisbane, Queensland Government, 1902, p. 1385; James Whiteford, Protector of Aboriginals, N.M.P. Camp, Coen, to Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 14 April 1910, In letter 00718/1910, Chief Protector of Aboriginals Office (A69467), RSI 4356-1-33, Queensland State Archives (QSA). It is possible that some cutting occurred in the Cooktown area then too, but evidence of this has not been uncovered to date.

Some European cutters may have continued into the early 1930s, but by then most harvesting is reputed to have moved south towards Hughenden and other areas in Queensland.\textsuperscript{13}

There has been some historical study of the dominant Western Australian sandalwood industry, but information about the industry on Cape York Peninsula appears to be quite fragmentary and little has been published.\textsuperscript{14} Sandalwood-getting on Cape York Peninsula was soon forgotten when the region’s wild timber resource was exhausted. This was followed by the overall demise of the Queensland industry, due largely to market decline during the Sino–Japanese War and World War II.\textsuperscript{15}

The published history of the Queensland Forestry Department – *Growing up: forestry in Queensland* by Peter Taylor – does not mention sandalwood.\textsuperscript{16} In 1990, GB Applegate and others published a paper that discussed some of the sandalwood habitats in Queensland – including southern Cape York Peninsula – and made suggestions on conservation of the species.\textsuperscript{17} The Queensland Forest Service records consulted to date have revealed surprisingly few files relating to sandalwood cutting and sale on Cape York Peninsula.\textsuperscript{18}

This paper was developed from the author’s research at Weipa in 1985 and a literature review conducted for the Queensland Department of State Development in 2005 to assist the Indigenous Economic Development section to assess possible future development of the industry by Indigenous communities on the Peninsula.\textsuperscript{19} The author’s research on

\textsuperscript{12} ‘Aboriginal Department – Information contained in report for the year ended 31st December, 1928’, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers (QPP)*, 1, 1929, pp. 1220–1.


\textsuperscript{14} For the Western Australian industry, see, for example: Pamela Statham, *The Australian sandalwood trade: small but significant*, Working Papers in Economic History, no. 100, Canberra, Australian National University, 1988, and OW Lonergan, *Historical review of Sandalwood (Santalum spicatum) research in Western Australia*, Como, WA, Department of Conservation and Land Management, 1990.

\textsuperscript{15} ‘Annual report of the Sub-Department of Forestry for the year 1937–38’, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers (QPP)*, 2, 1938, p. 8. This noted that the Sino–Japanese conflict had ‘practically eliminated the sandalwood trade’.

\textsuperscript{16} Peter Taylor, *Growing up: forestry in Queensland*, St Leonards, NSW, Allen & Unwin, 1994; This was redressed to some extent by Peter Holzworth’s unpublished paper in 2005. Holzworth, *A history of sandalwood in Queensland*. Holzworth has also provided a valuable overview of developments in the Queensland sandalwood industry since 1982.

\textsuperscript{17} GB Applegate, A Davis and P Annable, ‘Management for conservation of sandalwood in North Queensland’, *Symposium on Sandalwood in the Pacific*, East–West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1990. Applegate et al. refer to an unpublished paper by Brass, of the Queensland Forest Service, dated 1932, but Brass’s paper has not been located during research for this paper.

\textsuperscript{18} The author is grateful to Mr Jim Nicol, DPI Forest Information and Document Manager, for his advice in 2005 on the archived files of the Queensland Forest Service.

sandalwood is still at an early stage and the purpose of the paper is to discuss some of the results of the work to date.

**Sandalwood: an ancient trade item**

Long prior to the industry's development in Australia, sandalwood from the island of Timor had been traded for many centuries with China, where it is called *t’an-hsiang* or *tanxiang*.

The species found on Timor is *Santalum album* (White Sandalwood), which also grows in the Northern Territory. Roderich Ptak notes in his paper on the Timor/China sandalwood trade that the earliest Chinese reference to the trade was about the mid-fourteenth century.

Following the establishment of the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) in the East Indies in the early seventeenth century, the Dutch became involved in trading Timor sandalwood. Aware of recent shipwrecks on the coast of a land mass south of the East Indies, the VOC government at the Fortress of Jacatra, Batavia, issued instructions in September 1622 for an expedition to the 'South-land' to map its coastline. The VOC orders to Jan Vos, commander of the vessels *Hazewint* and *Haring*, included an interest in commercial opportunities: 'When you get near the northern extremity and the east coast of the South-land, you will diligently inquire whether it yields anywhere sandal-wood, nutmegs, cloves or other spices.'

Vos was unable to undertake the expedition, so the instructions were transferred to Jan Carstenszoon, who set out from the island of Ambon in January 1623 in the vessel *Pera* along with the vessel *Arnhem*. In his journal of the voyage, which took the expedition as far south as the Staaten River before turning north, Carstenszoon wrote about his crew's
exploration of the coastal lands, probably in the vicinity of the Mitchell River (south-western Cape York Peninsula), and commented that ‘it may be safely concluded that the land contains no metals, nor yields any precious woods, such as sandal-wood …’.25

Three hundred years later, the Aurukun and Weipa Aboriginal reserve lands some 300 kilometres to the north of Mitchell River provided valuable income from the sale of sandalwood to the local missions, but it was mainly found 30 to 50 kilometres inland.

**Sandalwood on Cape York Peninsula**

*Santalum lanceolatum* is widespread on Cape York Peninsula.26 The first recorded sighting and collection of the plant by Europeans in Australia was by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander at the Endeavour River (south-eastern Cape York Peninsula) in 1770.27 The type specimen that provided the plant’s original description was collected by English botanist Robert Brown on Sweer’s Island in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria on 18 November 1802, during the voyage of HMS *Investigator*.28

Holzworth notes that the tree is found in ‘both relatively high, rugged country and flats and floodplains’.29 This accords with the author’s experience, as he has found Northern Sandalwood growing on the edges of the Embley Range and a laterite tableland inland from Weipa, as well as on river flats and woodland on western Cape York Peninsula.

An examination of the timber sales registers of the Cooktown Land Agents District has revealed widespread sandalwood cutting at localities such as Alice River, Batavia River (probably the upper reaches of the river now known as Wenlock), Coleman River, Cooktown, Ebagoolah, Laura, Maytown, Mitchell River, Normanby River, Peach River, Rokeby station and Yarraden. Extensive cutting also occurred on the Escape, Nesbit and Pascoe River

26 For example, see the specimen distribution map within the record for *Santalum lanceolatum* on the Australian National Herbarium’s Australian Plant Name Index website, [http://www.anbg.gov.au](http://www.anbg.gov.au), and the herbarium specimens from Cape York Peninsula collecting localities listed in Harbaugh, ‘A taxonomic revision of Australian northern sandalwood’, pp. 412–13.
27 ‘Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander’, List of plants collected by Banks and Solander between 17 June and 3 August 1770 in the Endeavour River valley region, [http://naturespowerhouse.info/banks_list.htm](http://naturespowerhouse.info/banks_list.htm); *Catalogue of Banks’ florilegium: a publication in thirty-four parts of seven hundred and thirty-eight copperplate engravings of plants collected on Captain James Cook’s first voyage round the world in H.M.S. Endeavour, 1768–1771*, with five supplementary plates, London, Alecto Editions in association with the British Museum (Natural History), 1990, plate 292, p. 38.
28 Hewson and George, ‘Santalum lanceolatum’, p. 63.


country of the eastern Peninsula, as well as the McIlwraith Range inland from Lockhart River, and it was harvested by Aboriginal people on the Mapoon, Weipa and Aurukun mission reserves. Peninsula cattleman Fred Keppel cut around the middle reaches of the Archer River inland from Aurukun and his landing site on Kokiallah Creek is still remembered by the Wik people of Aurukun.\(^\text{30}\)

**Government management of the sandalwood industry**

Regulation of sandalwood harvesting in Queensland began with the 1877 proclamation of a regulation for the licensing of sandalwood cutting and removal under the provisions of the *Crown Lands Alienation Act 1876*.\(^\text{31}\) Sadly, this regulation did not enforce sustainable harvesting practices; it simply provided a small income stream from licence fees for the Queensland government.

Land Agents of the Department of Public Lands in each Queensland district were responsible for issuing timber sales licences (which included sandalwood harvesting) and for recording royalties on sandalwood paid by the licensee each year. The Land Agent districts of Cooktown, Normanton and Torres all appear to have had responsibility for parts of Cape York Peninsula during the sandalwood-getting era. Land Agent district boundaries remained unchanged from 1903 to at least the late 1930s.\(^\text{32}\)

The Torres Land Agent’s District extended from Torres Strait down to Aurukun on the western coast of the Peninsula and south to Coen on the eastern side, including the Lloyd Bay/Lockhart River area.\(^\text{33}\) The Cooktown District extended from Coen southwards to Cape Tribulation, while the Normanton District included lands westward of Ebagoolah and Musgrave from the Archer River in the north to Morning Inlet in the south.

The Land Agent’s District of Torres was first gazetted in 1889 and originally included just the islands of Torres Strait north of latitude 11° south.\(^\text{34}\) As late as 1924 the Land Commissioner at Thursday Island was dealing with sandalwood royalties, but to date no records have been found relating to that district’s management of sandalwood licences.\(^\text{35}\) Although there are

\(^\text{30}\) The author acknowledges the kind advice of Dr Peter Sutton who provided this location from his field notes.

\(^\text{31}\) 'Timber Regulations (Licence to cut and remove sandal wood, and amendment of clause 8 of the Timber Regulations proclaimed on the 1st March, 1877)', *Queensland Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly (QVPLA)*, 2, 1882, p. 613.

\(^\text{32}\) The original boundaries of the Cooktown, Normanton and Torres Districts were amended in 1903. *Queensland Government Gazette (QGG)*, 61, 122, 14 November 1903, pp. 929–30.


\(^\text{34}\) QGG, 47, 52, 6 July 1889, p. 701.

\(^\text{35}\) S Wilson, Land Commissioner, Lands Office, Thursday Island, to Lands Commissioner, Cooktown, 7 November 1924, TC 1/24 Keppel, FH, Timber contracts file, 1919–1932, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/10), PRV9359-1-1, QSA. During the Second World War when the military occupied
Normanton Land Agent files held by Queensland State Archives, they do not appear to hold any timber records from that district.

Fortunately, at least some of the records of the Cooktown Land Agent have survived to provide data on sandalwood harvesting in the Cooktown District, which was first gazetted in 1874. There are four registers of sales of timber: the first covers the period 1893–95, but it contains only a few entries and does not refer to sandalwood.

The other three registers, covering the period 8 May 1908 to 5 November 1920, reveal useful information about sandalwood-getting localities. For example, the register for 1908–12 shows: Iven S Williamson, Port Stewart River, date of sale 4 December 1908, description of timber – sandalwood, quantity 5½ tons. It appears that sandalwood-getters cutting around Ebagoolah (a gold-mining town near today’s Yarraden station) were shipping their timber from Port Stewart on the east coast of the Peninsula.

Another useful file from the Cooktown Land Agent’s District is ‘Agreements re royalty on timber, 9 August 1910 to 22 April 1915’.

On 1 December 1914, Coen gold-miner Fred Heinemann applied for a sandalwood licence under the Timber and Quarry Regulations of 1904. Fred’s batch includes a signed agreement under the Land Act of 1910 (Qld) to purchase sandalwood timber growing on crown land in the Coen District. In a report of completion of his timber contract for the period 22 December 1914 to 21 December 1915, dated 8 March 1916, Fred Heinemann paid a royalty of £1 per ton for a total of 2 tons 16 cwt 3 qrs 21 lbs (total royalty £2-16-10).

Thursday Island some official records were lost or destroyed; hence it is possible that this was the fate of the timber records created there. A recent agency search on the Queensland State Archives website, http://www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au, resulted in no records for the Land Agent, Thursday Island.

36 QGG, 15, 114, 22 August 1874, p. 1679.
37 Register of sales of timber, 6 April 1893 to 19 August 1895, (Old QSA LAG13/3), PRV9355-1-1; Register of sales of timber, 8 May 1908 to 13 August 1912, (Old QSA LAG13/4), PRV9355-1-2; Register of sales of timber, 26 August 1912 to 27 October 1915, (Old QSA LAG13/5), PRV9355-1-3; Register of sales of timber, 27 October 1915 to 5 November 1920, (Old QSA LAG13/6), PRV9355-1-4.
38 Timber sales for Iven S Williamson, Port Stewart, 4 December 1908, Register of sales of timber, 8 May 1908 to 13 August 1912, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/4), PRV9355-1-2, QSA. This register also includes an entry for H Giblett at Nesbit River, date of sale 22 May 1909, quantity 146 tons, with a further 114 tons registered from July to December 1909. Timber sales for H Giblett, Nesbit River, 1909, Register of sales of timber, 8 May 1908 to 13 August 1912, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/4), PRV9355-1-2.
39 Agreements re royalty on timber, 9 August 1910 to 22 April 1915, (Old QSA LAG13/9), PRV9358-1-1. There is a variety of correspondence and official forms in this file, arranged in about 127 folded batches under the name of each licensee, which provide details of areas where the licensee was permitted to cut, the licensee’s brand, royalties paid and tonnages of sandalwood cut by each licensee.
40 Timber agreement No. 180, Fred Heinemann, Brand NA, 22 December 1914, Agreements re royalty on timber, 9 August 1910 to 22 April 1915, (Old QSA LAG13/9), PRV9358-1-1.
Until the 1950s, there were few roads on Cape York Peninsula and, once away from the main telegraph line that traversed the centre of the Peninsula from Cape York southwards, sandalwood-getters had to rely on their Aboriginal guides and personal knowledge of the country to travel safely. Fred Heinemann was an experienced sandalwood-getter, but in September 1918 his luck ran out. He died near the Kendall River about 65 miles south-west of Coen while out cutting sandalwood in November that year." The inquest into his death appears to have been inconclusive, but a finding was made that he died of thirst."

Although there is a gap between 1915 and 1918, the Cooktown Land Agent’s timber contracts file for 1919–32 contains similar information to the royalty agreements file, with a total of about 112 folded batches arranged under the name of each licensee." There are numerous sandalwood licences in this file. At the recommendation of Mr Bill Kitson, the file regarding lands open for selection in the Cooktown Land Agents District was inspected for sandalwood material." The file comprised folded bundles and did not appear to have been accessed since transfer to the archives, as they were still infested with termite nest material from Cooktown!"

Selection, harvesting and transport of sandalwood

The selection and harvesting of sandalwood was made in situ by the sandalwood-getters and their Aboriginal workers." The author has not located any official or commercial guide to tree size, cutting methods or quality used during the pre-1930s era. In order to sell the sandalwood timber to the Chinese market, it seems plausible that some specifications would have been required by the buyers and possibly by the government.

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41 Inquest into the death of Fred Heinemann, Inquest no. 299/1919, Inquest Files, Queensland Justice Department, (Old QSA JUS/N687), SRS36, QSA.
42 Timber sales for Fred Heinemann, Coen, 1919, Register of sales of timber, 27 October 1915 to c. 5 November 1920, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/6), PRV9355-1-4; Inquest into the death of Fred Heinemann, Inquest no. 299/1919, Inquest Files, Queensland Justice Department, (Old QSA JUS/N687), SRS36, QSA. The evidence given at the Inquest reveals the names of some of the Aboriginal people who were cutting sandalwood with Fred and others, as well as some of the sandalwood localities.
43 Timber contracts file, 1919–1932, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/10), PRV9359-1-1, QSA.
44 Files re lands open for selection, 1920–1935, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/17), PRV9352-1-1, QSA.
45 Although most of the bundles have not yet been examined, one selected at random showed some potential. On 23 September 1931, in connection with future settlement plans for the area between the Archer, Holroyd, Kendall and Edward Rivers, east of the Aboriginal Reserve lands, Cairns Land Ranger Chas Goodwin reported that, on a tour of inspection which he had made to the north, he 'interviewed Mr G Byrne of Aurora Holding, Mr F Keppel of Merluna Holding and Mr F Monaghan manager of Rokeby Holding ... These three gentlemen were sandalwood getting over a large portion of the area to be inspected ...' Chas H. Goodwin, Land Ranger, Cairns, to Land Commissioner, Cairns, 23 September 1931, Files re lands open for selection, 1920–1935, Land Agent, Cooktown, (Old QSA LAG13/17), PRV9352-1-1, QSA.
In his notes on Queensland Sandalwood, EHF Swain wrote that 'the roots are harvested as well as the stems. They contain more oil than the barrel, and despite their bad form fetch the same price as good wood, unless they are bush-fire scarred or grub-eaten, when they are marketed as chips'. The Chief Protector of Aboriginals declared in 1910 that he was of the opinion that:

the aboriginals are eminently suitable as sandalwood-getters. Eight agreements were signed during the year [1909], by which 43 natives were engaged for this work. The practice in vogue in my district is for the employer to pay the natives 10s. per month as wages and 10s. per cord extra for all sandalwood cut; and I think this is a most equitable arrangement for the aboriginals, as, besides giving him a fixed wage, it also allows him to be paid by results.

Transport of sandalwood from the tree site to the port of export seems to have been carried out in stages. First, the cut timber and roots were carried by Aboriginal people or by packhorse to a sandalwood-getters campsite.

Aboriginal people carrying pieces of sandalwood in to the Presbyterian mission at the old Weipa site on Spring Creek (now known as Twenty Mile). The photograph was taken by Miss EC Finger, the mission teacher, c. 1922. (Hensel Album, Cape York Collection, Hibberd Library, Weipa)

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47 Swain, *The timbers and forest products of Queensland*, p. 306.

Once the assembled pieces of timber had been prepared for transport, they were loaded onto packhorses and taken to the nearest coastal site to be loaded onto small sailing vessels for transport to Cooktown or Thursday Island. The timber was cut into lengths of 4 to 5 feet weighing about 13 to 18 kilograms each for loading onto the pack saddles, as seen in the photograph by Francis Birtles, apparently taken at Coen.\(^{49}\)

Packhorses with a load of sandalwood standing outside a galvanised iron building, probably Hip Wah & Co, a Chinese firm known to have operated at Coen around 1910.\(^{50}\) This undated photograph is from the Francis Birtles motor car tour collection held by the National Library of Australia. The photograph caption states: ‘Sandalwood packed onto horses, Cape York, Queensland’.

Some of the small craft landing sites identified to date include Giblett’s Landing on Lockhart River and Port Stewart on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula and the upper Embley River (near the old Weipa Mission), Aurukun mission and Kokiallah Creek, Mapoon and possibly Catfish Landing on the Ducie River on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula. In the lower Gulf of Carpentaria region, sandalwood was shipped from Mornington Island and Normanton or Karumba, probably to Thursday Island.

\(^{49}\) Piiramu (George Wilson) and Phillip Wilson, personal comment to author, 25 June 2005. See also the description by former sandalwood-getter, Bloodwood, ‘Sandalwood – a one-time boom trade now long forgotten’, p. 26.

\(^{50}\) Although the name on the building is obscured, the building style and background scenery is typical of Coen township, so it is reasonable to infer that the name reads Hip Wah & Co. The photograph and catalogue entry may viewed at \url{http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn3302365} on the National Library of Australia website.
Wharton •••• The sandalwood industry on Cape York Peninsula

Archie Armbrust and Bill Symes with a load of sandalwood that they had delivered at old Silver Plains homestead, near Port Stewart, c. 1918. (Irene Taylor Album, Cape York Collection, Hibberd Library, Weipa³¹)

Peninsula sandalwood-getters: the ‘Sandalwood King’ and others

Various writers have attributed the foundation of Cape York’s sandalwood industry to one Hugh Giblett, whom novelist Ion Idriess described as the ‘Sandalwood King’.⁵² But government records show that sandalwood was being cut on the Peninsula at least as early as the mid-1890s. The Coen Protector of Aboriginals, Police Sergeant James Whiteford, wrote to the Chief Protector, Richard Howard, on 14 April 1910:

Fourteen years ago – long before Mr Giblett came to this district – a man named George Pim cut tons of sandalwood along the E. coast from the Nesbit River, to north of the Pascoe River. This statement can be verified at Thursday Island as it was to Thursday Island that Mr Pim took or sent all his sandalwood. And both myself and ex-

³¹ This photograph was also published in Mal Brown, Irene’s story 1000 ozs of golden memories: The story of Irene Taylor and the Coen community through the twentieth century, [Mareeba], Mal Brown, 2003, p. 8.

Constable Kenny have met Mr Pim cutting sandalwood near the Pascoe River where Mr Giblett is now working.53

Queensland Colonial botanist FM Bailey noted in 1902 that he had received correspondence from Frank Jardine that sandalwood found near Somerset in the northern Peninsula area was being exported to China.54

Howard had visited Lloyd Bay in July 1907 and spent a week exploring the area with Sergeant Whiteford.55 He met with Aboriginal people at a ‘fairly large camp’ at Orchid Point, where he later recommended to the government that a settlement should be established, and he described some of the area’s vegetation.56 He made no mention of sandalwood or any European camp, yet in the same report he wrote that after leaving Lloyd Bay ‘...I went to Somerset, and visited Lockerbie, where I found a camp of natives, some ten or twelve, who were engaged cutting sandalwood on contract’.57 Orchid Point was the place where Hugh Giblett later established a camp and where the Lockhart River Church of England Aboriginal mission was first settled by Rev John Done and Harold Rowan in July 1924, six months after Giblett’s death.58 Done had sailed down from Thursday Island in the ketch Herald in May 1921 and interviewed Giblett, whom he described as the ‘uncrowned king’ of Lloyd Bay.59 Giblett advised Done about the employment of Aboriginal people, but Done does not mention sandalwood-getting.

In June 1908, Howard again visited Lloyd Bay where he boarded the government ketch Melbidir, reporting that:

53 James Whiteford, Protector of Aboriginals, Coen, to Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 14 April 1910, In letter 00718, Chief Protector of Aboriginals correspondence file Aboriginals – Sandalwood 1910, (Old QSA A/69467), RSI 4356-1-33, QSA. James Whiteford was born at Richmond, Victoria, in 1854. ‘Obituary Mr James Whiteford’, Queensland, 18 October 1928, p. 61. Whiteford joined the Queensland Native Mounted Police on 27 April 1881. He served at Cooktown, Laura, Musgrave and Coen on Cape York Peninsula for about 30 years. Staff service file for Senior Sergeant James Whiteford, Queensland Police Department, AF 2346, ID 565056, QSA. Whiteford retired to Brisbane where he died on 10 October 1928. He was awarded the Imperial Service Medal for 25 years public service in 1912. Chief Secretary’s Batch file 223, part 1, Imperial Service Medals, Box 436, ID 539108, QSA.
55 Chief Protector of Aboriginals to [Home Secretary], 24 September 1907, Health & Home Affairs batch file 07/1971, Item ID 716961, QSA. Richard Howard was Queensland’s Chief Protector of Aboriginals from July 1906 to early 1914.
56 ‘Annual report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1907’, QPP, 3, 1908, p. 926.
57 ‘Annual report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1907’, QPP, 3, 1908, p. 926.
59 Done, Wings across the sea, p. 67. Within a year of its establishment, poor soil and limited water resources at Orchid Point led the missionaries to a new coastal site about 13 kilometres south of Cape Direction. For information on the establishment of the mission, see ‘Aboriginal Department – Information contained in the report for the year ended 31st December, 1925’, QPP, 1, 1926, p. 1022. See also AK Chase, ‘Lazarus at Australia’s gateway: the Christian mission enterprise in eastern Cape York Peninsula’, in Tony Swain and Deborah Bird Rose, Aboriginal Australians and Christian missions: ethnographic and historical studies, Bedford Park, SA, Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1988, pp. 121–39.
on the 24th of the same month set sail for the Escape River, arriving at that place on the 26th. I found a man named Bruce [possibly Roderick Sinclair Bruce of Thursday Island] had established a camp on the river, and was engaged cutting sandalwood, employing some five or six natives to assist him, all under agreement.®

In a letter dated 8 March 1909, Archibald Meston describes the locations where ‘Messrs Giblett and Edmondson’ had had teams of Aboriginal people cutting sandalwood for the past 12 months in the Lloyd Bay/Lockhart River area.® This is the earliest known official reference to Giblett’s sandalwood enterprise on Cape York Peninsula.

Howard called in to Lloyd Bay in August 1910 to find that a homestead had been erected at Lloyd Island by Hugh Giblett and that about 100 Aboriginal people were employed in sandalwood-getting, ‘working under agreement’.® He also referred to ‘two or three other Europeans, who are also engaged in the same industry’ who had similar numbers of Aboriginal people employed.® Howard was scathing of the government for not taking his advice to establish a settlement in 1907, because he argued that the income from the sale of sandalwood would have been valuable for such a settlement.

Hugh Giblett (1873–1923) appears to have operated in the Lloyd Bay/Lockhart River area from 1908 to 1923, with a gap during World War I, although oral testimony by Aboriginal people years later indicates that they continued harvesting sandalwood on his behalf during his absence.®

Anthropologist Athol Chase wrote that:

in 1973, there were Aboriginal people still alive at Lockhart who had worked for Giblett [sic] ... What impressed Aborigines most was the trust and responsibility he placed in their hands. He trained crews to operate his boats, and developed a system, where he could rely on them to continue operations in his absence.®

Chase noted that Giblett attracted Kuuku-ya’u people to his camp, as well as Uutaalnganu, Umpila and Wuthati people, and ‘the start of the dry season in June saw groups coming in from the surrounding areas to Orchid Point to start work with the boats and horse teams’.®

So who was Hugh Giblett? He was born at Two Mile near Gympie on 4 August 1873, the son of Hugh Giblett (a carrier, born at Meare, Somerset, England) and Mary Elizabeth Giblett

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® Annual report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1908’, QPP, 2, 1909, p. 969.
® Letter (No. 9/3685) relating to Archibald Meston’s request for a sandalwood-getting licence on the Lloyd’s Bay Aboriginal Reserve at Lockhart River. HOM/J45 Home Secretary’s Department In-Letters 1909, Bundle Nos 2547–3993, (Old QSA HOM/J45), SRS5263-1-45.
Hugh had only one surviving sibling, an older brother named Albert, born on 2 November 1867. Hugh’s parents later moved to Warwick where they established a drapery store. Hugh senior died on 8 September 1883 and Mary died on 1 June 1885 and they are buried in the Warwick Cemetery. Little is known of Albert’s or Hugh’s activities in the 1880s and 1890s, but a glimpse about Hugh is provided in his Australian Imperial Force (AIF) service record. He was examined by an Army doctor at Parkhouse, England in December 1917 when he was suffering from malaria. The doctor noted on his file that this disability had originated when Giblett lived at Port Darwin and further stated that Giblett had ‘been in the tropics Northern Territory & New Guinea since 1890’.

Hugh Giblett, aged 27, whose occupation was a clerk at the gold-mining township of Ebagoolah (about 40 kilometres south of Coen), registered to vote in the Coen Division of the Queensland electorate of Cook in October 1900. It is probable that this was the future sandalwood-getter, as two long-term Coen district residents gave evidence at his inquest in 1924 that they had known Hugh Giblett for 23 to 24 years.

Giblett enlisted in the AIF at Normanton on 14 September 1916. On his attestation paper Giblett apparently lied about his next-of-kin, stating that she was his sister Mrs Hugh (Marion) Campbell of Warwick. He was posted to the Miner’s Reinforcements, Depot Miners, then to the Tunnelling Company at Seymour in Victoria for training from March to May 1917.

67 Birth certificate for Hugh Giblett, born Two Mile, Gympie, 4 August 1873, registration number 1873/932. Copy from the General Registry, Brisbane, held by the author. This registration was found by tracing back from Hugh Giblett’s death certificate, which recorded that he was aged 50 years at the time of his death, that his parents were Hugh Giblett and Mary Elizabeth Giblett (née Allen) and that he was born at Gympie, Queensland. Queensland Registrar-General’s Office. Death certificate for Hugh Giblett at Port Stewart, 14 December 1923.

68 The Registrar-General’s Queensland pioneer index 1829–1889 records that Albert Giblett, the son of Hugh and Mary Elizabeth Giblett, was born on 2 November 1867. Index to birth entry number 1867/002743, Queensland Registrar-General’s Office. Queensland pioneer index 1829–1889, p. 5312. Microfiche held by the State Library of Queensland.

69 Brisbane Courier, 14 February 1880, p. 4; 29 April 1885, p. 1.

70 I am indebted to Mrs Valmai McKenzie, whose grandfather John Rodgers served with Hugh Giblett in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), for information about the burial place of the Giblett family.

71 Service record for Staff Sergeant Hugh Giblett, no. 7211, AIF Headquarters, Item Giblett H, Series B2455/1, which may be viewed online on the National Archives of Australia website at http://naa12.naa.gov.au.

72 Electoral roll for the Electoral District of Cook, Coen Division, 6 January 1905.

73 For example, Archie Armbrust, who gave evidence at the inquest on 23 January 1924, stated that he had known Giblett for ‘23 to 24 years’. Inquest into the death of Hugh Giblett, Inquest no. 373/1924, Inquest Files, Queensland Justice Department, (Old QSA JUS/N780), Item ID 349375, QSA.

74 Service record for Staff Sergeant Hugh Giblett, no. 7211, AIF Headquarters, Item Giblett H, Series B2455/1. There is no official record of Hugh Giblett having a sister.

75 Service record for Staff Sergeant Hugh Giblett, no. 7211, AIF Headquarters, Item Giblett H, Series B2455/1.
overseas service from Melbourne with the Tunnelling Companies Reinforcements on 4 August 1917.

Back row, left to right: Sapper John Rodgers, Sergeant Albert Francis, Sapper Victor Creed. Front row, left to right: Sapper Richard Johnson and Sapper Hugh Giblett. (Postcard photograph in the private possession of Mrs Valmai McKenzie)\textsuperscript{76}

Giblett served at Parkhouse camp and other AIF localities in England, but was found by an Army medical board to be permanently unfit for general service due to malaria, and therefore did not serve in France or Belgium. He returned to Australia, was discharged in Melbourne

\textsuperscript{76} The author found this image on the Tunnellers Research website, \url{http://www.tunnellers.net}, and was kindly directed to Mrs McKenzie by John Reading of the Australian Tunnellers of WWI Association. An apparent extract from this photograph showing Sapper Hugh Giblett and Sapper Bert Francis was published in the \textit{North Queensland Register}, 28 May 1917, p. [45], plate VII.
around 12 July 1919 and was awarded the British War Medal.\textsuperscript{77} The surprising information on his service file is a copy of a certificate showing that he married Mary Leslie Lawton Vince, aged 24 and the daughter of a police officer, at Tidworth on 3 April 1919.\textsuperscript{76} No evidence of Mary Giblett emigrating to Australia has been found to date, and Hugh Giblett died intestate, making no reference to his wife in his surviving papers acquired by the Public Curator in Townsville.\textsuperscript{79}

Hugh died at Port Stewart on 14 December 1923 and at the time was described as a pearlshell and bêche-de-mer fisherman.\textsuperscript{80} As there was no doctor present, local Justices of the Peace held an inquest at Port Stewart (about 50 kilometres south-east of Coen) and at Coen the following year.\textsuperscript{81} At the inquest, Police Constable Leonard Edward O'Brien gave evidence that Giblett ‘resided principally at Thursday Island and Orchid Point also known as the Waterhole’.\textsuperscript{82} O'Brien stated that when he arrived at Port Stewart he arranged for Giblett's body to be exhumed by the harbourmaster Stephen Kennedy, but found no evidence of violence. O'Brien reported that he had spoken with Giblett in early December and had been told that Giblett had moved from Gympie to Warwick when he was about two years old and had attended school there. Giblett allegedly told O'Brien that ‘he had his jaw broken while at the front (meaning at the late war)’, but Giblett’s service record does not support this claim. Despite Ion Idriess’s lurid claim that Giblett had died ‘from the effects of a crack on the head from a nulla-nulla’, Justice of the Peace Daniel Louis Evans found that Giblett’s death had been ‘apparently caused by severe pains in the stomach and vomiting’ and that there were no suspicious circumstances.\textsuperscript{83}

Idriess romanticised Hugh Giblett as a wealthy man, but the intestacy file tells a different story.\textsuperscript{84} The Public Curator received advice from the Clerk of Petty Sessions in Coen that no will was found among Giblett’s papers, yet his army service file shows that Giblett had lodged a will with the Queensland National Bank on Thursday Island at some time prior to his departure overseas with the AIF. It appears that the Public Curator did not discover this

\textsuperscript{77} A search in the Australian War Memorial's World War I nominal roll (at \url{http://www.awm.gov.au}) revealed that Sergeant Hugh Giblett (regimental number 7211) returned to Australia on 12 July 1919.
\textsuperscript{76} Service record for Staff Sergeant Hugh Giblett, no. 7211, AIF Headquarters, Item Giblett H, Series B2455/1.
\textsuperscript{79} Intestacy file for Hugh Giblett, number I 16/24, Public Curator's Office, Townsville, Item ID 124510, QSA.
\textsuperscript{80} Queensland Registrar-General’s Office. Death certificate for Hugh Giblett at Port Stewart, 14 December 1923 which gave his occupation as ‘pearl fisherman’; Inquest into the death of Hugh Giblett, Inquest no. 373/1924, Item ID 349375, QSA, which described his occupation as pearlshell and bêche-de-mer fisherman.
\textsuperscript{81} Inquest into the death of Hugh Giblett, Inquest no. 373/1924, Item ID 349375, QSA.
\textsuperscript{82} Statement of Leonard Edward O'Brien, Police Constable, Coen, taken and sworn before Glen Massy JP at Coen, 29 January 1924, Inquest into the death of Hugh Giblett, Inquest no. 373/1924, Item ID 349375, QSA.
\textsuperscript{83} Idriess, \textit{The tin scratchers}, p. 32; Inquest into the death of Hugh Giblett, Inquest no. 373/1924, Item ID 349375, QSA.
\textsuperscript{84} Idriess, \textit{The tin scratchers}, pp. 23–5.
and the intestacy file shows that he was unable to trace any direct relatives of Giblett, although Hugh's brother, Albert, would have received any personal effects if he had been found. Giblett's assets totalled about £286 and his debts were about £3,112, so it seems that his reputed former wealth had expired by the time of his death — so much for the 'Sandalwood King'.

Perhaps the most intensively harvested area of Cape York Peninsula during the early twentieth century was the country inland from Lockhart River/Lloyd Bay. Giblett and his associates developed a network of packhorse tracks which were partially mapped in an article describing an expedition from Mein Telegraph Station to Lloyd's Bay and Lockhart River and around the McIlwraith Range region by James Dick, John Dickie and Arthur Sheffield that appeared in the *Queensland Government Mining Journal* in 1910. The site of Giblett's landing and a sandalwood landing on the east coast are shown on the accompanying map. There are three published accounts of this expedition, all of which refer to contact with sandalwood-getters and their camps.

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85 Intestacy file for Hugh Giblett, number I 16/24, Item ID 124510, QSA.
88 'Prospecting in the York Peninsula: Tour of Mr Dickie and party', p. 601.
The account by RL Jack is perhaps the most useful, as he had access to James Dick's diary as well as the manuscript of Dick's report to the Queensland Mines Department. Jack provides details of the sandalwood camps and tracks which can be identified approximately by reference to the sketch map. Jack recorded (Jack's italics and occasional capitalisation have been removed from the text):

Starting from Camp 37 on 3rd August [1910], Dick and Sheffield followed a path which led them down the valley of Dodd Creek to the coast, where they found a long sandy beach and a large camp, with yards and huts, evidently a depot for sandalwood. A track led northwards from the depot. They returned to Camp 37 after dark.

On 4th August, Dick and Sheffield rode out to see if the track from the sandalwood depot on the coast led to Hays Creek. The 'good blazed track', however, led them to the NW, until they were satisfied that they were on western waters, among the heads of Falloch, Gelkie or Hull Creek, as they imagined, but more probably on the head-waters of the Batavia [Wenlock River]. In many places old yards and camps were observed, showing that this part of the range was already well known to the sandalwood men. After a long day's ride, the travellers returned to Camp 37 in the dark.®

RL Jack also notes that, in 1913, surveyor JT Embley 'indicated a site for a reserve' at Giblett's landing on Lockhart River.®

**Buyers and shipping agents**

According to Stan Boyd, Chinese merchants operating at Coen – Tommy Ah Kum and Hip Wah & Co. – purchased sandalwood from sandalwood-getters, but Boyd did not specify how it was exported.® The Protector of Aboriginals at Coen, James Whiteford, reported on 22 April 1910 that ‘Hip Wah a Chinese storekeeper residing at Coen was telling me ... that he had received advice from his firm in Cooktown that sandalwood delivered in China at present is only worth nine pounds per ton’.® This indicates that Hip Wah’s firm was exporting sandalwood to China as early as 1910 and may have continued to trade until the 1920s, indicated by the Cooktown Land Agent’s comments in a 1921 letter to the Land Commissioner, Thursday Island:

Hip Wah, in common with other Chinese buyers, almost invariably did not pay royalty on wood other than what had actually been sold and delivered to him. In fact, I have usually had the greatest difficulty in collecting any royalty from them before the wood was actually being shipped to China.®

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92 Jas Whiteford, Protector of Aboriginals, Coen to Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 22 April 1910, Aboriginals – Reserves – Mapoon – Sandalwood, SRS 4356-1-31, QSA.
93 Hip Wah and Co. are listed as general storekeepers and bakers at Coen in the *Pugh's Almanac* country directory for 1916. *Pugh's Queensland official almanac, directory and gazetteer for 1916*, Brisbane, Edwards Dunlop & Co., Ltd, [1916], p. 621. A photo of Mrs Hip Wah and her children appears in the biography of Irene Taylor: Brown, *Irene's story 1000 ozs of golden memories*, p. 8; Carbon copy of letter from [Land Agent], Cooktown to Land Commissioner, Thursday Island, 10 October 1924, regarding royalties paid in 1921, Timber contracts file, 1919–1932, (Old QSA LAG13/10), PRV9359-1-1, QSA.
North Queensland Register columnist Bob Bloodwood (RC Pearce) wrote that during World War I a Chinese man named See Yick was the 'chief agent' for the sandalwood trade.\(^4\) See Yick & Company – with headquarters in Hong Kong – was still operating on Thursday Island in 1924, where it was listed as a buyer of sandalwood.\(^5\)

Stan Boyd recorded that the firm of Morey & Co. exported sandalwood from Thursday Island.\(^6\) The register of harbour dues compiled by the Shipping Master on Thursday Island for the period 1911 to 1930 shows that Morey & Co. and Burns Philp & Co. appear to have been the prominent shipping agents of the era, while Hodels Ltd and Bowden & MacKenzie were two other shipping agency firms operating on Thursday Island.\(^7\) The register does not include information about products exported from Thursday Island. During World War I, Burns Philp were steamship and forwarding agents for the Eastern and Australian Steamship Company's (E & A Co) steamers to China, while Morey and Co. were agents for the China Navigation Company's line of steamers.\(^8\) Both firms were still listed as agents for these shipping lines in the 1926 Pugh's Almanac.\(^9\)

Burns Philp was also involved in sandalwood exports from New Guinea to China. Although the official history of Burns Philp makes only passing reference to sandalwood exports from Thursday Island in 1902, the firm's records relating to Thursday Island in the period from the late 1890s to the 1930s may hold relevant data.\(^10\) Pearce wrote that Burns Philp also exported sandalwood from Townsville in the mid-1920s, although he does not state whether any of that timber came from Cape York Peninsula.\(^11\)

The author has endeavoured to find records of Morey & Co., without success, but correspondence regarding the firm's business association with Hugh Giblett is included in his

\(^{5}\) P Seekee, See Yick & Coy, Douglas Street, Thursday Island, to Deputy Public Curator, Townsville, 3 March 1924, Intestacy file for Hugh Giblett, I 16/24, ID124510, QSA. Another Thursday Island firm advertising as a sandalwood buyer in 1914 was Lai Kum Tai & Co. Torres Straits Pilot and New Guinea Gazette, 7 February 1914, p. [3].
\(^{7}\) Register of harbour dues, 1911–1930, Shipping Master, Thursday Island, SRS5382, QSA.
\(^{8}\) Pugh's Queensland official almanac, directory and gazetteer for 1916, Brisbane, Edwards Dunlop & Co., Ltd, [1916], p. 808.
\(^{9}\) Pugh's for 1926: incorporating Pugh's almanac and directory, Brisbane, Edwards Dunlop & Co., Ltd, [1926], p. 557.
\(^{11}\) Bloodwood, 'Sandalwood – a one-time boom trade now long forgotten', p. 26. Pearce had personal experience as a sandalwood-getter. The register of timber sales for the Land Commissioner, Hughenden, lists Robert Cecil Pearce of Hughenden Station as holding a sandalwood timber sale in the period 15 November 1924 to 15 February 1925. Register of timber sales 1922–1929, Folio 56, Land Commissioner, Hughenden, (Old QSA A/73389), RSI13255, QSA.
The sandalwood industry on Cape York Peninsula

The card register of Brisbane and country firms compiled by the Principal Registrar of Firms under the Registration of Firms Act 1902 (Qld) reveals that Morey & Co. was formed by Frederick Edward Morey and Arthur Thomas Sullivan on 26 March 1903. The business carried on by Morey & Co. included pearl-shelling and general commission agency, as well as shipping and general agency, and the company had its office at Douglas Street, Thursday Island. The firm was dissolved on 24 June 1947.

**Statistics on income received from sales**

Publication of sandalwood export statistics did not commence until 1898, when 2,120 feet valued at £86 was exported to Hong Kong. By the next year exports had increased to 3,000 feet (£23) to Japan and 72,500 feet valued at £602 to China. The regional source of the timber was not cited in the official statistics. The 1900 Queensland colonial export statistics show that 3,347 pieces of sandalwood valued at £125 sterling were exported to Hong Kong. No weight was given.

Some of the annual reports of the Government Resident Thursday Island in the *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* refer to sandalwood exports. The report for 1909 indicates that exports of sandalwood from Thursday Island began in that year with 320 tons.

Several extracts from the report of the Land Commissioner for the Torres District give an indication of being a fruitful source of statistical information. Unfortunately, the extracts for the Torres District were only reported occasionally; consequently, the author intends to seek the full Land Commissioner's annual reports between 1907 and the 1930s if they are still held within departmental records. The Torres District Land Commissioner's report for 1922 noted:

> Sandalwood is practically the only timber worked [i.e. in the Torres Land Agent's District]. The revenue from this source amounted to only £94 as against £208 for the previous year. The falling-off is due principally to the poor prices obtainable, owing to the unrest in China, the principal market. Several cutters went out of the business

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102 Databases searched include the National Library of Australia's Australian Historic Records Register, the Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts, the Noel Butlin Archives Centre Records of Business and Labour, the John Oxley Library and the James Cook University Library Archives. Intestacy file for Hugh Giblett, number 1 16/24, Item ID 124510, QSA.

103 Morey and Company, registration card, card register of Brisbane and country firms compiled by the Principal Registrar of Firms, (Old QSA C/790), RSI14135, microfilm Z7397, QSA.

104 The last known addresses of the partners were: FE Morey, Kismet Street, Coorparoo, and AT Sullivan, Ryan Road, St Lucia.


106 Queensland, Registrar-General, *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland for the year 1899*, Brisbane, Government Printer, 1900, p. 188.

107 "Table LVII General exports – from the Colony of Queensland – in the year 1900", *Statistics of Queensland, QVPLA*, 102, 1901, p. 1087.

during the year. The total collection for 1922 amounted to £550 as against £625 for the previous year.\footnote{Extracts from the report of the Land Commissioner for the Torres District, \textit{Annual report of the Department of Public Lands for the year 1922}, Brisbane, Government Printer, 1923, p. 126.}

In the following year the Land Commissioner was gloomier and blamed the further decrease in sandalwood quantity on the depletion of accessible supplies near the coast and on the unsettled market in China.\footnote{Extracts from the report of the Land Commissioner for the Torres District, \textit{Annual report of the Department of Public Lands for the year 1923}, Brisbane, Government Printer, 1924, p. 118.}

A future research task will be to gather archival and published statistics of timber sales from each of the three Land Agent’s districts to endeavour to compile an accurate picture of the tonnage and value of sandalwood taken from each cutting area.

Prior to federation of the Australian colonies in 1901, the control of the export of sandalwood was by the Colony of Queensland. Given that Thursday Island was the most likely port of export to China from northern Cape York Peninsula, it is probable that records of the Customs House on Thursday Island would have included information on the quantity and value of sandalwood exports. When the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901, customs responsibilities were transferred from the Colony of Queensland to the Commonwealth and usually any department records were also transferred around that time.\footnote{The Customs House at Thursday Island was closed between May 1942 and 1946, due to the proximity of Japanese enemy forces to Torres Strait. David Day, \textit{Contraband & controversy: the customs history of Australia from 1901}, Canberra, AGPS, 1996, p. 239 and p. 256.} No relevant Thursday Island customs records have been found to date.

**Conclusion**

The Cape York Peninsula sandalwood industry was driven by the economic opportunism of small-scale operators, the ready supply of a skilled but cheap Indigenous labour force and demand from China. Like the gradual depletion of the sandalwood resource on Timor during the colonial and post-colonial eras, the unrestrained harvesting of this valuable timber on Cape York Peninsula from the 1890s to the 1920s led to the eventual demise of the industry in the far north.\footnote{McWilliam, ‘Haumeni, not many: renewed plunder and mismanagement in the Timorese sandalwood industry’, p. 286. McWilliam laments that the ‘history of sandalwood on Timor has been an exemplary model of natural resource destruction with little or no regard for long-term management and ecological sustainability’.} The industry left little physical evidence or long-term benefits on the Peninsula, and although it is still remembered by Indigenous elders in Peninsula communities, it is all but forgotten by the many people who venture north each year on the overland track to Cape York.
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Appreciation is also extended to: Kaanju elders Piiramu (Mr George Wilson) and Mr Philip Wilson of Napranum for sharing their local knowledge and identification of ‘nipira’ (Santalum lanceolatum) specimens growing on Sudley station; the Condon family of Sudley station for access to their property in 2005; Ms Antonia Atoniu, Mrs Trish Bassett, Ms Danielle Burette and Ms Cheryl McNamara for access to archival records and library collections; Mr Ron Booth and Dr Gordon Guymer, Queensland Herbarium, for botanical advice; the Cairns Historical Society for access to their papers and photographs of Stan Boyd; Dr Athol Chase for his comments on this paper; Ms Clair Hill, linguist, Lockhart River, for comments on a possible spelling of the Kaanju language term ‘nipira’ for sandalwood; Mr Bill Kitson PSM for advice on Lands Department records; Mrs Valmai McKenzie for permission to reproduce the photograph of a group of Australian soldiers at Seymour Training Camp (including Sergeant Hugh Giblett); Mrs Glenda Murrell, Diocesan Archivist, Diocese of Brisbane; the National Library of Australia for permission to use image number nla.piv-vn3302365; Mrs Kath Newman for permission to copy photographs in the Cape York Collection, Hibberd Library, Weipa; Mr Jim Nichols and Ms Marcia Tommerup of the Department of Primary Industries Forest Service for access to archived records lists and annual reports of the Forestry Department; Mr John Reading of the Australian Tunnellers of World War I Association; Dr Peter Sutton, South Australian Museum, for sharing information from his fieldwork in the Aurukun area and for comments on this paper; Ms Teri Wong for advice on the Chinese word t’an-hsiang; Miss Andrea Wharton for transcribing extracts relating to sandalwood-getting from the annual reports of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals and Miss Claire Wharton for her encouragement and support during preparation of the paper.