

1/64/28

Dr. Norman B. Tindale,
c/- South Australian Museum,
Adelaide,
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

12th September, 1972

Dear Dr. Tindale,

I am hoping that this communication will be sent on to you from the Museum, as I believe you have returned to the United States.

I am writing in the first instance to ask you about the text of a Tasmanian song which you heard on Cape Barren Island in 1949. You may remember that you mentioned this text to me in 1965 during a brief conversation prior to the Symposium on the Tasmanians. At the time I assumed the text was in your possession. I am now wondering whether you still have it and whether it is substantially different from others which we now have, including the many versions of Fanny Smith's 'Dance' song. I have reproduced some of them in my paper (which followed the 1965 ANZAAS meeting) "Tasmanian Music. An Impasse?", Records of the Queen Victoria Museum Launceston, No. 26, pp. 1 - 18.

This first query has been prompted by recent conversations with a young linguist at A.N.U. (T.M. Crowley) who recently went to Tasmania to interview two of Fanny Cochrane Smith's granddaughters to see how much of the Tasmanian language they remembered. He succeeded in recording a short song by one of them. I have doubts about the tune, which may be European in origin. The words are probably Tasmanian, though they are not those sung by Fanny Smith.

Mr. Crowley's transcription (which I am sure he would not mind my sending you) is as follows:

Kumerayngow kûnekûneli
-- -- hiriyewa:tatyima:tatyima
(supposedly bird calls)

In the singer's pronunciation he finds crudities.

He would be interested, I think, if the text of your Cape Barren song could be placed alongside those we have unearthed so far.

I should like to take this opportunity to ask you three other questions:-

2. Have you any song texts for your Bentinck Island Recordings? I obtained a few when recording Bentinck singers on Mornington Island in 1966 and am wondering whether these resemble any you might have.
3. Do you know anything about the song collections in Australia

or publications relating to them, of the German, Felix von Luschan?
While on a visit to West Berlin last November, to the

cont..

over page ..

Museum fur Völkerkunde, I found nothing relating to localities
visited by von Luschan, dates of visits, or materials collected.
There were, however, a few old phonograph recordings of Australian
Aboriginal singing.

4. Since my visit to the States last year, I have kept in touch
with the Music Division of the Library of Congress on the subject
of transferring recorded sound from phonograph cylinders to tape
(and subsequently to permanent discs). The Chief Engineer there,
Mr. Robert Carneal, has said he would be glad to assist any one in
Australia I might appoint to construct a similar machine. The
Audio technical officer in the Audio Visual Aids section of Monash
University has expressed interest in such a project and I hope to
start something of this kind soon.

Assuming that the machine when constructed, can be dismantled
and re-assembled with no difficulty, I would like to ask the A.I.A.S.
for a grant to visit Adelaide with the technician and the apparatus
to retrieve whatever material on phonograph cylinders can be made
available to us. I believe there are still quite a number of
recordings from the E.H. Davies collection in Adelaide in cylinder
form. And I know for a fact that there are many of yours.

Would we have your permission to transfer your cylinder
collections to tape in this way? Your support here would give
considerable impetus to the project as a whole.

Hoping to hear from you,

With best wishes and regards,
Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Alice M. Moyle.