

Notes on Tasmanian Aborigines

Mr Edward O. Cotton, Kelvedon near Swansea East Coast of Tasmania informs me that many years ago an old settler showed him the Aborigines method of obtaining fire by friction. He first found a dry log or dead trunk of She oak (Casuarina) which had longitudinal cracks in the hard dry wood. He ~~then~~^{next} collected from a gum (eucalyptus) or wattle (mimosa) a quantity of the ~~dry~~ fine dust contained in the borings of grubs often found in these trees. ~~With~~ This finely powdered wood dust he filled up a crack in the log. He then chose a dry stick, & shaped it a little at one end until it roughly fitted the crack. Inserting the stick in the crack he rubbed it firmly & vigorously up & down for some time. After continuing this process perseveringly the dust began to smoke & eventually took fire.

Mr Cotton says that when the blacks wanted to go over to Maria Island distant 2 or 3 miles from the main land, they chose a day when the wind was blowing towards the island. They then ~~seated~~^{launched} themselves on dry logs of the Oyster Bay pine, & seating themselves on these, holding up a branch by way of sail & so were drifted across the channel.

He confirms the account of the blacks spearing Stingaree (Sting-ray) on the mud flats, but does not know of their ever eating fish.

Flints found by Anderson & French in baskets were probably Chert hatchets