Through a search of the collection database, we learned that the item was a part of the Father Leo Hayes bequest to the University. While Father Hayes’ collection of books and manuscripts in the Fryer Library is well known, less often appreciated is that he also amassed a substantial collection of anthropological items and artefacts, the contents of what he called his “museum”. These are now housed in the University Anthropology Museum.

The Collection

The anthropological part of Father Hayes’ collection consists of over 1500 items. The largest portion of it consists of stone tools, at least 680 of them. Of these, over 90% are stone axes. It is not uncommon for such items to loom large in collections of Australian archaeological artefacts, partly because they have their own intrinsic interest and fascination for people, and partly because they are easily identified by lay collectors, unlike other kinds of stone tools, which to the untrained eye are often difficult to discern among the other stones on the ground.

Among ethnographic items, that is, items of more recent origin usually made of perishable materials, the spread of kinds of items in the collection is more even, with items associated with food collecting, hunting, and fishing (e.g., baskets and bags, wooden and bark containers, bows and arrows, and fishing hooks, nets and spears) and weapons (e.g., clubs, knives and daggers, throwing sticks and boomerangs, and fighting spears) being the two largest categories of items present. Next are ceremonial items (e.g., religious carvings, ceremonial staffs and sticks, and headdresses) and items of dress and ornament (e.g. armbands, waist belts, decorative hair combs, and ornamental walking sticks).

Many other kinds of items are also included in the collection, however. Among them are message sticks, musical instruments, toys, items associated with water transport (especially canoe paddles), examples of raw materials (which are extremely valuable in shedding light on manufacturing processes and environmental relationships), smoking utensils and paraphernalia associated with the chewing of betel nut (the nut of the palm Areca catechu, well known and chewed as a stimulant throughout much of southern Asia and Melanesia), and various domestic implements,
including headrests, fire-making tools, food and water containers, eating utensils, and drinking vessels.

The localities from which the objects originated are equally widespread. While the majority are from Australia (about two thirds), which reflects the predominance of Australian stone tools in the collection), other places represented include Africa, China, Nepal, Malaysia, parts of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, and many locations in Melanesia and Polynesia.

The collection contains a great many objects of considerable interest. A few examples are shown in these pages. They include a shield painted in dark colours, once probably brighter, and lacquered. The anthropological fascination this item holds is that, although its form is that of a Murray River shield, the paints used on it, as well as the lacquer, are of obvious European origin. The production of artefacts for sale to tourists on the Murray began quite early, in the 19th century, and this item may instance this. As such it exemplifies the ability of Aboriginal cultures to be dynamic and adaptable, while at the same time maintaining continuity in their distinctive identities.

Amongst Father Hayes' collection of Australian artefacts, boomerangs are, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the most well represented types of artefacts, incorporating a variety of shapes and forms from all over Australia, including a number with incised designs. He also collected artefacts more usually associated with women, such as coolamons – wooden containers essential for carrying as well as used for processing seeds and for digging.

A bag from Papua New Guinea demonstrates a high level of skill on the part of the maker in weaving with hand-rolled string. The armlets feature another example of Pacific weaving; the decoration is comprised of intricately interwoven coloured orchid bark, combined with an armlet made from coconut shell which is finely incised with geometric designs. The carved wooden headrest was initially considered to be Pacific in origin, but has since been identified as African (Shona), indicating something of the breadth of Father Hayes' collection.

There are also items of significance from colonial Queensland, notably the collection of surveying equipment used by explorers such as Sir Augustus Gregory, best known for marking the boundary between Queensland and New South Wales. Augustus Gregory's sextant, compass and artificial horizons have been identified as the ones used on his expedition to find Ludwig Leichhardt in 1858. Gregory used a tin cup with black tea as an artificial horizon, noting in his journals that tea was easier to work with than the mercury used in the boxed artificial horizon. A compass and artificial horizon used by William Landsborough were also bequeathed by Father Hayes.

What the Collection Says

There are many things to learn from museum collections, and Father Hayes' collection is no exception. Certainly one can learn much about the cultures tangibly represented among the items in the collection. But as with all collections, the Hayes' collection also reflects the handiwork of its maker – it reflects Father Hayes' character and personality.

Here there are at least two things about Father Hayes that are embodied in his collection: his passion for collecting and his eclecticism. According to Chris Hanlon, in his entry on Father Hayes in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, his overall collecting activities included acquisition of books and periodicals, pamphlets, manuscripts, letters, documents, legal papers, press-cuttings, book-plates, stamps, notes and coins, postcards, photographs, maps, terns, pistols, cattle-bells, and birds' eggs. This same passion for collecting is reflected in his anthropological collection, which, although emphasising Australian archaeology, is similarly large and diverse.

Father Hayes spent virtually all his life in northern New South Wales and Southern Queensland. To obtain as wide-ranging an anthropological collection as he did, he must have had an extensive network of sources — other collectors with whom he made exchanges, clergy posted overseas, parishioners who had originated in or travelled to other places, friends in many walks of life and occupying many stations (including both the high and the humble), dealers willing to assist him, and so on. His collection is thus probably as much a reflection of his well known amiability and ready ability to establish enduring, and endearing, friendships with people as
some years ago we were approached by a young Indigenous Australian man wishing to see the material collected by Father Hayes. He was given a tour of the collection and assisted in examining the items attributed to Father Hayes. He was clearly affected seeing and handling them. It eventuated that his parents were married by Father Hayes, who was also a close friend of theirs. This young man had grown up hearing stories of Father Hayes and this, combined with Father Hayes' importance in his family's history, was highly significant to the young man. The Museum was able to provide this young visitor with a personally moving experience and help him establish a tangible connection with his personal past. So in addition to all its other values, there is inherent in the Hayes collection a humanness, a humanness the Museum works to respect and maintain with regard to the Hayes Collection, as with its other holdings.

The Collection's Values

The Hayes Anthropological Collection is an important one. It has much value for a museum based in an academic institution. The possibilities for research involving the collection are almost limitless. Each object has a story to be deciphered and poses a puzzle to be solved through research on it. Furthermore, the scope of the collection offers many opportunities for comparative studies, studies of the similarities and differences among sets of objects of the same or different type and within the same or different locales, and the reasons for this variability. Contextualising the objects in the collection, that is, connecting them with the original cultures, societies and peoples from which they were derived, and coming to an understanding of their manufacture, use and meaning, is an especially important research task.

The collection can also be studied as a whole. In recent years there has been increasing interest among researchers in the processes by which collections come into being, the role that they play in the relationships among peoples, and the things they reveal about their creators. The Hayes Collection is especially suited to studies of this type.

Objects from the collection have featured in several of the Anthropology Museum's exhibits, and since most of the Museum's exhibits are mounted by students as teaching and learning exercises, these objects have played a significant role in both the Museum's public programs and in its teaching activities.

And then the collection has cultural significance. The items in the collection are each human expressions, each instances of human creativity and ingenuity given physical form. They are things for us to admire, to contemplate, to be inspired by, and to learn from.

So the collection has scientific, educational, and cultural values. But there is something more to it. The Museum frequently hosts Indigenous visitors and researchers, and...