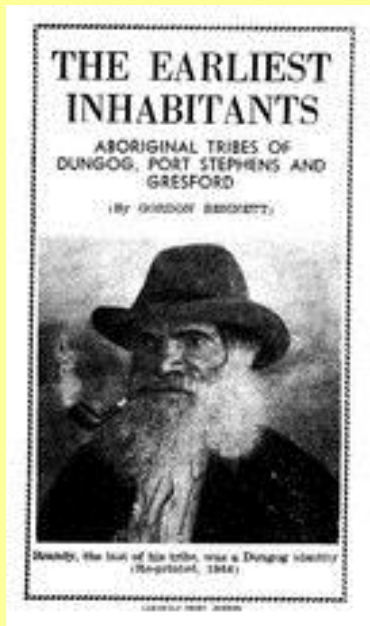


TRADITIONAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CULTURE.

Suggestions for an Easy Introduction?

1/ Just want to satisfy your curiosity about traditional Aboriginal culture?



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A good place to start might be Gordon Bennett's "The Earliest Inhabitants :- Aboriginal Tribes of Dungog, Port Stephens and Gresford."

- It's fairly short
- It's a very easy read
- It's available as a download

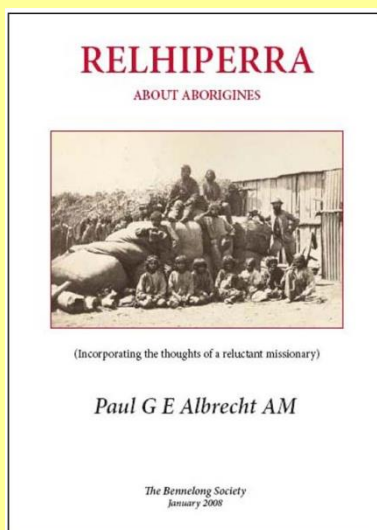
and

- It's not a bad simple summary of Aboriginal culture from across Australia.

Everything that is presented in the book is pretty well backed up by all the other texts.

What it lacks is a deeper explanation of "why" things were the way they were. For that you will have to dig deeper.

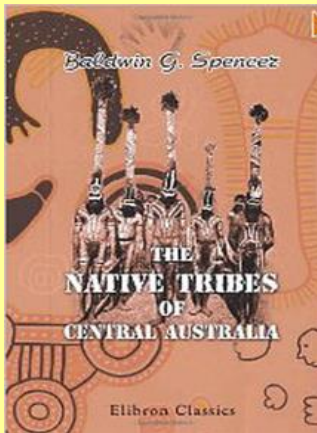
2/ You've read some of the introductory books but you want a deeper explanation?



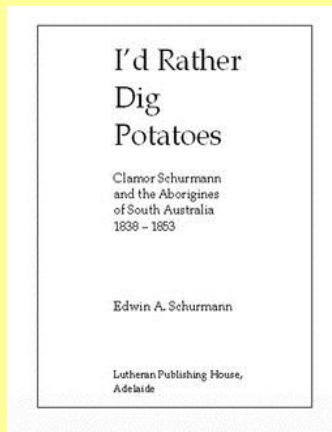
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I found that "Relhiperra" by Pastor Paul Albrecht was a meaty, serious introduction to Aboriginal culture than is still quite an easy read and quite manageable. What's more it has a strong emphasis on the descriptions of the philosophical differences between Aboriginal and Western, particularly Christian, world views. This gives an insight into the reasons behind the misunderstandings which still underlie Indigenous affairs. Reading this book for the first time was a big AAAHH! Light-bulb-going-on experience when I finally began to understand the significance of things like the "Increase Ceremonies", and the inner workings of the marriage laws.

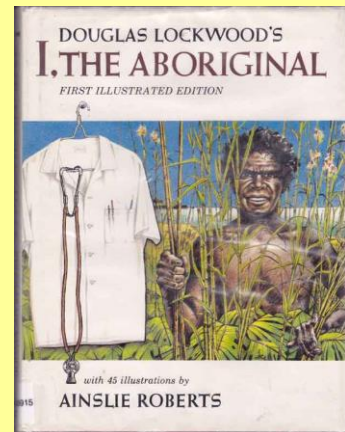
3/ What about this strategy? It's my favourite suggestion.



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One of the things that I found most interesting to do, was to read one (or more) of the works by the great classical anthropologists, like Spencer and Gillen, Berndt and Berndt, Elkin, even Worms and Petrie (one of my personal favourites), followed by one (or more) of the autobiographical books written by Aborigines who had lived through the contact period (“I, the Aboriginal”, and “Moon and Rainbow”) or the autobiographical works of the early missionaries (Taplin's diaries, Anne Wells’ book “Milingimbi” or Bishop Gsell’s book “The Bishop with 150 wives). The two genres, autobiography and anthropological treatise, complement each other very well, such that you can read about the anthropological observations and different cultural practices made by the lofty academics, followed by the descriptions of day to day life made by the Aborigines or missionaries themselves. You then get to see just how those cultural practices actually played out in daily life.

Both Spencer and Gillen and Schürmann are available as free, down loads which make them easy to obtain. I understand that “I, the Aboriginal” is still in print, but “Moon and Rainbow” may be harder to find, but worth the search.

4/ Just want a short cut into the literature?

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A fourth option is simply to download my notes on the reviewed books: “Traditional Australian Aboriginal Culture.” These are in the form of short extracts taken directly from all the books in the reading list, arranged by topic. These extracts come from widely across Australia, from the time of settlement to today, and build a picture of traditional culture as it was practiced.

From these notes you can start to track down the individual books they come from.

It is available as a free download, accessible from the Home page.