

# Basic Detail Report

---



## Yarra River Indigenous Tied Bark Canoe

### Vessel number

HV000527

### Description

The canoe is made out of a single piece of mountain ash bark with the ends gathered and tied with rope. Both ends of the canoe are symmetrical and the bark has begun to crack at both ends. There are three barrel hoops placed

along the length of the canoe, two towards one end and one towards the other end, these help maintain its shape. It is not known if they are part of the original construction or added later, nor is it recorded whether the hoops were already fitted to the canoe when it arrived at the museum. Two types of rope are attached to the barrel straps, one is made from a plant fibre and the other appears to be made from processed hair, however neither the types of plant or hair have not been determined. Ropes are attached to the canoe through holes pierced along the top edge of the canoe sides. The canoe may also have been treated with fire during its construction. In 1999 research was undertaken by the museum to determine the kind of bark used to construct this canoe. Mountain Ash was found to be the most likely species of gum tree; these trees were found in deep gullies and steep slopes of the region. It is recorded that canoes in Victoria were made in a number of different ways and this was influenced by the kind of bark used to construct the canoe. In one instance the bark was placed over a fire and turned inside out, otherwise it was used as it had been cut from the tree and the ends were folded and tied with bark rope. In some instances the ends were plugged with clay if the bark was too thick to fold. Long poles were known to have been used to propel and steer the canoes in this region. According to museum curator notes made in 1941, businessman John Buchan acquired the canoe from the Aboriginal people at Studley Park in Kew. John Buchan (c 1808-1874) arrived at Geelong, Victoria on 21 March 1852 and established a business in Collins Street, Melbourne. He was known to be living in Fitzroy by 1858 and on the Yarra River at Studley Park, Kew by 1873. When the canoe came to be in his possession is unknown. The canoe came into Museum Victoria's collection via E. J. Reed who rescued it from the demolition pile of Buchan's house in January 1941. Prepared from research by Museum Victoria.

### Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 3.02 m x 0.9 m (9.91 ft x 2.95 ft)