

[Back to object](#)



## Collection Explorer

Glass plate negative - A widow, Yandruwandha people, Innamincka station, South Australia, photographed by Herbert Basedow, 1919

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On display

# Glass plate negative - A widow, Yandruwandha people, Innamincka station, South Australia, photographed by Herbert Basedow, 1919

## Description

Reproduced by Basedow in "The Australian Aboriginal", FW Preece and Sons, Adelaide, 1925, plate XXVI/2. Caption reads: 'Yantowannta widow.'

## Physical description

Black and white glass plate negative. Caption: A widow. She has her hair cut short and the head and face covered with a thick paste of pipe clay.

## Educational significance

This is a photograph by Herbert Basedow of the top half an elderly woman who appears to be seated at the entrance to a small hut. Her head has been recently shaved of hair, and her forehead, nose and cheeks are coated in a thick, white clay.

This Yandruwandha widow was photographed at Innamincka station. She has had her scalp shaved and it and her face have been covered with gypsum.

When a woman's husband dies she often covers part of her head with white clay or gypsum - white being the mourning colour for Aboriginal people. In some places a 'cap' of gypsum is worn, while in others small lumps of gypsum are stuck to the hair. Often the face is also covered.

Herbert Basedow was a doctor, anthropologist and explorer. From 1903 to 1928 he ventured to remote regions of central and northern Australia - places rarely seen by Australians even today. Aboriginal people often feature in his photographs. Basedow wanted to document Aboriginal cultures as they had been before British colonisation, and often went to some lengths to craft his photographs to appear as such.

This photograph was taken during Basedow's first medical relief expedition to north-east South Australia.

On display at the National Museum of Australia.

## Object information

 What

Type [Glass plate negatives](#)

Collection [Dr Herbert Basedow collection](#)

Dimensions L 81mm x W 106mm

Material [Photographic emulsion,](#)  
[Glass](#)

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 When

Date photographed  
[1919](#)

 Who

Photographer  
[Dr Herbert Basedow](#)

 Where

[Australia](#)

Place depicted

[Innamincka Homestead, South Australia, Australia](#)



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