



And...The Catalogue Record Stated This Was Used for *What?*



L to R: pāan box; Bakelite anklet; pewter hollow anklets (with gravel)

Pāan box, with scissors

The Furlough Kit of Miss Irene Stringer, Missionary to the Bhils of India

The items above were used by Miss Irene Stringer, missionary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to India, to familiarize members of the PCC about the Bhil people of India and her work among them. Miss Stringer, of Lansdowne, Ont., had been the first student enrolled at the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home when it opened on Huron Street, Toronto after Church Union in 1925.

A unique feature about this collection, donated by the family of the late Miss Stringer, is that, in itself, it represents all that remains of an earlier museum collection. It was owned by the Rev. Dr. Robert Ellis. Dr. Ellis catalogued items received from many missionaries working in various countries. Although Miss Stringer identified the tin box with its containers, trays and accessories as a pāan box, she must not have had the opportunity to provide a

description of it to Dr. Ellis. He described it as an "India woman's vanity box". The explanation that *Wikipedia* provides about pāan is likely the most accurate one. Pāan, (Hindi: पान, Urdu: پان; "betel vine"), is an Indian, Pakistani, Uttarvarshi and Southeast Asian tradition of chewing betel leaf with areca nut and slaked lime paste. Tobacco is used in pāan fillings in India. Offered to guests and visitors as a sign of hospitality, pāan is claimed to be chewed as "palate cleanser, a breath freshener and for digestive purposes".

Unique household and homecraft items brought by missionaries from the countries in which they worked constituted their furlough "kits". These souvenirs assisted them in illustrating their accounts as they encouraged church members to remember their work in prayer and with contributions.

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