



Yes
No
Maybe

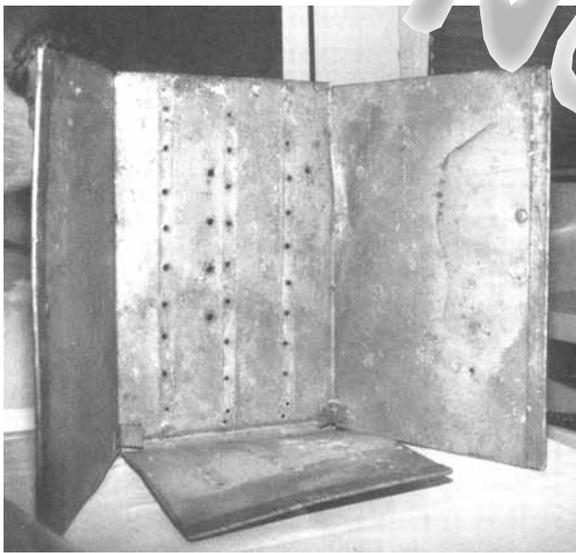
Discovery is a process, not an event. The points listed in the Summary of Evidence are the pieces of the puzzle that have, so far, survived intense scrutiny. Others have not, and still others remain an enigma. Information or objects which appear to be highly significant upon initial, and even subsequent detailed inspection, sometimes prove to be ambiguous or downright disappointing as more information becomes available.

a known wartime B-24 wreck at Canton Island. That wreck appears to be the most likely source of the B-24 parts found on Nikumaroro because it is known that people from the island worked on Canton during the post-war period.

The Airplane Skin

The Navigator's Bookcase

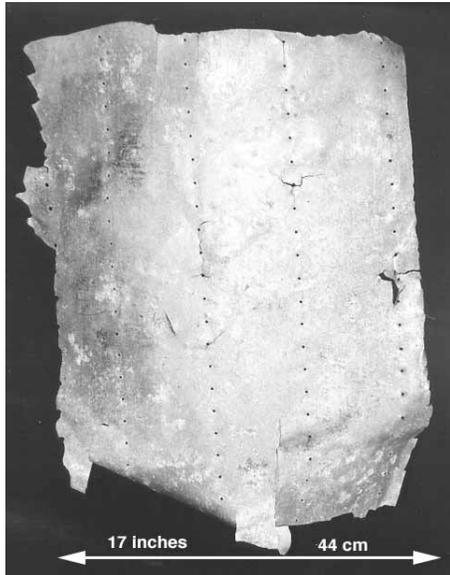
An aluminum navigator's bookcase found on Nikumaroro during our first expedition in 1989 at first appeared to very possibly have been mounted in Earhart's Electra. After two years of investigation we were ultimately able to determine that it matched an installation in a very limited production run of B-24s. Other B-24 parts have been found in the village and there was



No

A section of airplane skin found during the 1991 expedition exhibits literally dozens of features that suggest that it came from a repaired part of Earhart's Electra. The rivet pattern does not quite match anywhere on a Lockheed Electra or any other aircraft type that we have been able to check but nobody knows just how the belly of NR16020 looked after it was repaired following the accident that ended Earhart's first World Flight attempt. The airplane skin remains an enticing question mark.

Maybe



The Shoes

Two shoe heels and a fragmented rubber sole found during our 1991 expedition seemed, for a while, to be very strong evidence.

- The artifacts were found on the same part of the island where a British colonial officer had seen "signs of previous habitation" during an October 1937 visit.
- One of the heels was a "Cat's Paw Rubber Co. – USA" replacement heel that matches a mold used by the company in the mid-1930s.
- Stitching marks in the sole indicated to experts that the shoe was a "blucher oxford" type.
- The tightness of the stitching in the sole and a small brass eyelet found nearby led experts to



conclude that they probably came from a woman's shoe.

- Numerous photos show that Earhart wore blucher oxfords during the World Flight.
- One photo of her standing on the wing of the Electra permitted an accurate scaling of her shoe based on the known spacing of rivets.
- The size of the shoe in the photo and the re-assembled sole found on the island appeared to be similar.
- Variations in the color of the heels of Earhart's shoes in other photographs suggested that she may have had the heels replaced prior to the final flight.
- An early story about Earhart's bones being found on Nikumaroro specifically mentioned the presence of shoes.



For a while it really looked like we had found the replacement heel and the sole of one of Earhart's shoes and the heel from one of Noonan's shoes, but continued research began to change the picture.

- Further work with the shoe-on-the-wing photo pointed up size discrepancies with the re-assembled sole found on the island.
- Extensive archaeological work at the site during the 1997 expedition failed to turn up any other evidence of habitation.
- The discovery of official British documentation describing the finding of bones on Nikumaroro led to the identification of an apparent castaway campsite far from where the shoe parts had been found in 1991.
- Further scrutiny of photos of Earhart's shoes revealed that the apparent variation in heel color was due not to replaced heels but to the presence of unusual two-tone heels – dark colored on the outer half and lighter colored on the inner half – not at all like either heel found on the island.



So what was a woman's blucher oxford shoe with a 1930s vintage American replacement heel doing on Nikumaroro? There remains the possibility that it is an Earhart shoe that does not appear in any of the photos but it is perhaps more plausible that the identification of the sole as being from a woman's shoe (a judgment based primarily on the tightness of the stitching holes) was in error. The presence of a man's 1930s vintage blucher oxford shoe with an American replacement heel might be attributed

to the November 1939 survey of the island by personnel from the USS *Bushnell*. The map of the island that resulted from that survey shows that one of the observation points used was on the lagoon shore just a few hundred feet from where the shoe parts were found.

As the Earhart Project's research continues, other pieces of evidence that now seem compelling may lose their luster, but the search for the truth requires that we follow the facts wherever they lead.

