

HORNER

MS 4112

**Jack Horner's Research Notebooks
on the
Life and Times of Bill Ferguson**

FINDING AID

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

September 2002

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ACCESS

With the exception of personal interviews and letters: Open access reading. Open copying and quotation - copyright conditions. [Access code R1 C1b]

Personal interviews and letters: These have been placed into separate folders and access is closed. The Principal's permission is required for read access, copying and quotation. Personal material should not be used without permission from the families.

Most of the closed material comes from the binder entitled 'Ferguson people'.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Date range: 1965-1970

Extent: 36cm (2 boxes) + 1 folio box

AIATSIS Library received the notebooks from Jack Horner in August 2001.

These papers are the research notebooks Horner compiled for his book *Vote Ferguson for Aboriginal freedom* (Sydney, 1974).

The papers contain material relating to the life and times of William (Bill) Ferguson and include research notes on individual people with whom Ferguson worked for the 'Day of Mourning' Conference in 1938 and for conferences of the Aborigines Progressive Association in the years 1965 to 1970. An Aboriginal from New South Wales, Ferguson dedicated his life to the cause of Aboriginal advancement, particularly in terms of full citizenship rights and the abolition of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board.

Most of the collection consists of typescript transcripts with a few written annotations and notes. The collection also includes a notice regarding visitors to a New South Wales Aboriginal Reserve.

Material has been compiled from a range of sources. For example, from newspapers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Dubbo Dispatch*, *Smith's Weekly*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Argus* and the *Courier Mail*. Also from other printed sources such as the *United Aborigines Messenger*, *Our AIM*, *Who's Who in Australia*, *Parliamentary Handbooks* and titles such as *Letters from the river*, by Eric Irvin (1959) and *The Great bust: the depression of the thirties* (1965), by J.T. Lang.

There are notes of interviews, for example with Herbert (Bert) Groves, Jeff Bate and Mrs Kingsley-Strack and transcripts of material found in sources such as Pearl Gibbs' scrapbooks, parliamentary debates, for example on the 1909 *Aborigines Protection Act*, and from select committee proceedings.

There are lists such as that of New South Wales Chief Secretaries and those on the boards related to Aboriginal affairs, such as the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board

and the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board. There is also a list of the addresses where Ferguson lived and a list of Ferguson's Australian Workers Union shearer's tickets.

The notes cover a wide variety of subjects, for example the Pooncarie epidemic of pneumonia and pleurisy, the Cootamundra and Kinchela Aboriginal Protection Board Homes, a number of reserves, references to a few criminal cases, transfer of Angledool Reserve people to Brewarrina and the government policy of assimilation. Other topics include dental treatment at Coonabarabran Hospital, Armidale Council and the Aborigines, the first Aboriginal woman to be interviewed on radio, land rights, a suggestion for an Aboriginal Military Unit and the 'relief work scale' for 1932-1936.

The notebooks were received in four two-ring binders, the contents of which have been transferred to archival folders for conservation purposes. The pages were numbered before being removed from the binders. The original order has been maintained with the exception that the closed access material, comprising personal interviews and letters, has been transferred to separate folders, mainly from the 'Ferguson people' binder. Details of the removed pages have been noted.

The AIATSIS Library holds Horner's biography of Ferguson entitled *Vote Ferguson for Aboriginal freedom* (1974). The Institute's *Mura*® catalogue record gives further details about this book and extensive notes about Ferguson. For a complete listing of the Ferguson material held by the Institute see the *Mura*® online catalogue at <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>

For a complete listing of the Horner material held by the Institute see the *Mura*® online catalogue at <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>. To access any audiovisual material contact Collections at [Collections enquiry](#)

The National Library of Australia also holds a collection of Jack and Jean Horner's papers at NLA MS 9503. It includes material relating to Horner's biography of Ferguson in Series 3 (NLA MS 9503/3), for which a finding aid is available. at <http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/9503.html#list>.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jack (John) Curwen Horner was born at Sandringham, Victoria on 15 May 1922. He was educated at Sydney High School and studied art at East Sydney Technical College from 1940 until 1942. In 1943 he joined the Australian Army and returned to the College after his discharge.

Horner became involved in campaigns for Aboriginal right after he became aware of discrimination against Aborigines through his activities in Workers' Educational Association which offers adult education courses.+

As Secretary of the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship, Horner was responsible for campaigns to remove discriminating clauses relating to Aboriginal people from New South Wales laws. He was also Secretary of the 'Vote Yes' Committee for the 1967 referendum to remove similar clauses from the Australian Constitution.

Horner was an executive member of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) and of the Australian Council of Churches Commission on Aboriginal Development. He is currently a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Horner's published works include *Bill Ferguson: Fighter for Aboriginal freedom, a biography* (1994), *Vote Ferguson for Aboriginal freedom* (1974), *Aboriginal movements* (1988) 'The day of mourning' in *Australians 1938*, co-authored with Marcia Langton (1987) and *A Peace that is no peace* (1988).

Reference:

NLA finding aid 'Papers of Jack and Jean Horner' (NLA MS 9503) at <http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/9503.html#list>.

BOX LIST

Box	Title	Folder
1	Ferguson people	1-3
	Ferguson people interviews and letters	4 Closed access [Code R2b C3]
	Ferguson people binder only	5
	Ferguson times	6-9
2	Ferguson times interviews and letters	10 Closed access [Code: R2b C3]
	Ferguson times binder only	11
	Ferguson life	12-13
	Ferguson life interviews and letters	14 Closed access [Code R2b C3]
	Ferguson life binder only	15
	Day of mourning	16-17
	Day of mourning interviews and letters	18 Closed access [Code: R2b C3]
	Day of mourning binder only	19
3 (folio box)	N.S.W. Aboriginal Reserve notice	20

Finding aid compiled by J.E. Churches, January 2002 Minor update C Zdanowicz 29 February 2016