



# AIATSIS

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

## Manuscript Finding Aid

MS 5363

## Papers of Jeremy Beckett

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## Collection Summary

<b>Collection no:</b>	MS 5363
<b>Title:</b>	Papers of Jeremy Beckett
<b>Creator:</b>	Beckett, Jeremy
<b>Date range:</b>	1957 - 2008
<b>Extent:</b>	1.2m (6 type 1 boxes)
<b>Repository:</b>	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
<b>Reference code:</b>	AIAS 843.150322

## Cultural Sensitivity Statement

### Use of the material

When using this finding aid, and the collection described within it, clients are encouraged to be mindful and sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly with regard to the use of this material.

### Language

This finding aid and collection may contain words and descriptions which may be culturally inappropriate and insensitive. The language used in this collection may not normally be used in certain public or community contexts. Clients may encounter terms and descriptions, which reflect the author's attitude or that of the period in which the manuscript was written, that may be considered inappropriate today.

### Deceased persons

Clients using this finding aid should be aware that in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, hearing recordings, seeing images of the names deceased persons may cause sadness, or distress and in some cases, offend against strongly held cultural beliefs.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Content

## People & Organisations

Includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, family or organisations that are associated with this collection (individuals or groups who have contributed to, performed in, or are mentioned within this collection). Please note that there may be additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or groups that are not included in this Finding Aid, as they have not been identified. If you can provide further information to AIATSIS regarding this, please contact us at [collectionenquiry@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:collectionenquiry@aiatsis.gov.au) or telephone +61 2 6246 1182

Knowledge Holders: Names of knowledge holders in this collection are listed in the individual Item descriptions of this Finding Aid.

## Community & Language

Wangaaypuwan language D18

Wangaaypuwan people D18

Paakantyi / Paakantji / Barkindji language D12

Paakantyi / Paakantji / Barkindji people D12

Ngiyampaa / Ngempa language D22

Ngiyampaa / Ngempa people D22

Kala Lagaw Ya language Y1

## Country

Murrin Bridge (SW NSW SI55-06)

Lake Cargelligo (SW NSW SI55-06)

Mount Manara (NW NSW SI54-04)

Wilcannia (NW NSW SH54-16)

Tibooburra (NW NSW SH54-07)

Broken Hill map area (NW NSW SH54-15)

Hillston (SW NSW SI55-06)

Murray Island (Qld TSI SC55-05)

Badu / Mulgrave Island (Qld TSI SC54-11)

Saibai Island (Qld TSI SC54-08)

Erub / Darnley Island (Qld TSI SC54-08)

Waiben / Thursday Island (Qld TSI SC54-11)

## Collection Overview

### Scope and Contents note

The collection comprises 76 field diaries written by anthropologist Jeremy Beckett while conducting extended periods of fieldwork in Western New South Wales and the Torres Strait Islands over a period of 50 years from 1958-2008. The diary entries include observations of culture, language, kinship, and community understanding of and attitudes to New South Wales and Queensland administrative authorities. The collection also includes transcriptions of selected diaries.

This collection contains both physical and digital material.

### Provenance

This collection was donated to AIATSIS by Sophia Beckett and Simeon Beckett, executors of the estate of Jeremy Beckett, on the 1 November 2023.

### Related material

The NSW research material in this collection was the basis for Beckett's MA thesis *A study of Aborigines in the pastoral west of New South Wales* see AIATSIS Library Collection B B396.72/S1

The Torres Strait Island research material in this collection was the basis for Beckett's PhD thesis *Politics in the Torres Straits Islands* see AIATSIS Manuscript collection MS 95

The Torres Strait Island research material in this collection was the basis for Beckett's publication *Torres Strait Islanders: custom and colonialism*, Cambridge University Press. 1987 see AIATSIS Library Collection B B396.72/T1

Audio cassette titled *Rice Talking* includes songs and discussion by James Rice from Murray Island recorded by Jeremy Beckett in 1995- see AIATSIS Audio Collection AIAS 749.211220

For a complete list of works by Jeremy Beckett held by the library, and for other related material consult [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue.

For access to Audio / Visual material please go to the 'Contact us' page on the AIATSIS website at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au) or phone (02) 6246 1111

**Important:** Before clicking on the links to the catalogue entries please read our sensitivity message found on the 'Search the Collection' page on the AIATSIS website at [aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au)

## Access to the Collection

### Access conditions for this collection

Open access – reading, except for the following items

Closed access due to genealogical material: 1/5, 1/6a, 1/6b, 1/8a, 1/8b, 1/14, 1/21a, 1/21b, 2/2, 2/13, 2/17a, 2/17b, 2/21a, 2/26, 2/30, 2/33a, 2/33b, 2/44.

Closed access due to possible cultural sensitivities: 1/4a (men's business), 1/18a, 1/18b, 1/19.

Closed access due to fragile nature of item and not to be accessed until assessed by conservation: 1/1a, 1/1b, 1/9a, 1/21a, 1/23a, 2/1, 2/7a, 2/8a, 2/14a, 2/15a, 2/22, 2/23, 2/28, 2/30, 2/32a, 2/35a, 2/45, 2/52.

Closed access for digital collection items: 3/1, 3/2.

Copying permitted for private study.

### Obtaining access, copying and quotation permission

Clients are advised that the collection materials listed in this finding aid may be subject to particular access and use conditions required by Indigenous communities and/or depositors. Materials are provided for private study and use, in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968, Section 51. Copying of, and quoting from, unpublished material may be subject to the conditions determined by Indigenous communities and/or depositors of the manuscripts.

Permission may need to be sought prior to access being granted. In cases where these permissions are required, they must be obtained in writing and must be signed. Please contact [collectionenquiry@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:collectionenquiry@aiatsis.gov.au) or telephone +61 2 6246 1182.

AIATSIS Manuscripts are not available for Inter-library loan, however they may be available via document supply, subject to access conditions.

## Preferred citation

Items from this collection should be cited as: Title or description of manuscript item, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS Number, Series Number, Subseries Number, Item or Folder Number.

For example: NSW 14, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 5363/1/14.

## Biographical note

Professor Jeremy Beckett was born in 1931. He taught anthropology at the University of Sydney, was a Visiting Professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center, the Australian National University, New York University, and the University of Texas at Austin. Beckett carried out long term field research with Australian Aboriginal people, specifically on Barkindji country in Western New South Wales, and the Torres Strait Islands, and his research contributed to the Murray Island Land Case ('Mabo'), and the 2009 Torres Strait Sea Rights case where he was an Expert Witness. He passed away in December 2022.

Rowse, T (27 February 2023) '[Some contexts of Jeremy Beckett 1931-2022](#)', Thesis Eleven, accessed July 2024.

## Archivists note

The diaries are largely written in pencil, and some have faded with time. Some diary covers missing and/or bindings broken.

The item titles (eg. NSW 1, TSI 2) and descriptions in this Finding Aid were compiled from descriptions written by Lucie Downer under the supervision of Jeremy Beckett. Some words have been changed at the discretion of the archivist, eg. Lucie Downer referred to Jeremy Beckett as Jeremy – these instances have been changed to Beckett in this finding aid.

The spelling of the languages in the description are Beckett's original spelling. Square brackets "[ ]" enclose the preferred term in the AIATSIS AUSTLANG database. For example, Paakantji [Paakantyi/Paakantji/Barkindji, D12] and Ngiyambaa [Ngiyampaa/Ngempa, D22].

## Series Description

### Series 1, Western New South Wales field diaries. 1957-1992.

Series 1 comprises field diaries compiled by Jeremy Beckett whilst visiting North Western New South Wales, including: Paakantyi/Barkindji country (Wilcannia), Murrin Bridge, Mount Manara/Hillston, Broken Hill, Bulla Downs, Tibooburra. These diaries cover the periods 1957-1958, 1964-1966, 1992. The Series also includes transcriptions of selected diaries

#### Item

MS 5363/ 1/1a-b NSW 1. 1957

Cover title: '1957 Dutton A2 Tribal Territs Journey Wilcannia'

This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW. It includes Paakantji [Paakantyi/Paakantji/Barkindji, D12] language translations as well as notes from his conversation with George Dutton. George Dutton told the myths of "The Kangaroo and the Euro" and "The Two Ngatyi " which relate to Pantyikali/ Wanyiwalku country. This notebook informs Beckett's 2003 book 'Mutawintji : Aboriginal Cultural Association with Mutawintji National Park' co-written by Luise Hercus, Sarah Martin and edited by Claire Colyer.

MS 5363/1/2 NSW 2. 1957

Cover title: "Lake Cargelligo - Murrin Bridge 1957 (Interviews with white local officers) [may be officials, writing is unclear]'

This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW. It includes notes from interviews with white locals from a variety of professions living around Lake Cargelligo in 1957.



MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/1/3 NSW 3. 1957
- Cover title: '1957 Murrin Bridge Lake Cargelligo field work diary'
- This is Beckett's 1957 fieldwork diary written during his first fieldwork trip to Murrin Bridge and Lake Cargelligo. He writes of his daily activities, interactions and interviews with people living there at the time. The notebook also has information about Beckett's correspondence with his supervisor Anthropologist WEH Stanner regarding his research.
- MS 5363/1/4a NSW 4. 1957
- Cover title: 'Trad K. 1957 Murrin Bridge Fred Biggs Kinship Burba Myths'
- This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Murrin Bridge and contains interviews with Fred Biggs, who discussed kinship systems, and traditions like the burba initiation ceremony.
- Contains possible men's business.**
- MS 5363/1/4b Typed transcription of field diary NSW 4 1957
- MS 5363/1/5 NSW 5. 1957
- Cover title: 'Hillston'
- This notebook contains interviews with Fred Biggs, Alf Kelly, Lucy Pettit (former Biggs) and other members of the Pettit family regarding stars and clever man. The notebook also contains information on the Biggs family and Pettit family.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/6a NSW 6. 1957
- Cover title: '8 NSW 1957 Myth =/ 30'
- This notebook contains Fred Biggs' extended family tree and information on family totems. It also contains information from an interview with Fred Biggs at Mt. Menara [Manara] in 1957 in which he discussed family and totems.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/1/6b NSW 6 transcribed genealogies. 1957
- Handwritten transcriptions of genealogies recorded in field diary NSW 6.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/7a NSW 7. 1957
- Cover title: 'Religion and superstition'
- This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Wilcannia. It contains information regarding religion and superstition including discussion of clever man and Baiami.
- MS 5363/1/7b Typed transcription of field diary NSW 7. 1957
- MS 5363/1/8a NSW 8. 1957
- Cover title: 'Children NSW'
- This notebook contains information about child rearing practices in Murrin Bridge in 1957/1958. There is also information on family relations and age demographic data from the area.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/8b Typed transcription of field diary NSW 8.1957
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/9a NSW 9. 1957
- Cover title: 'Newtown B1 Broken Hill Please return to Beckett c/o Imperial Hotel'
- These notebooks were written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW. They contain Beckett's notes on conversations with key knowledge holders including George Dutton and Walter Newton. The notebooks informed Beckett's 1978 article "George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal drover" and his 1993 article "Walter Newton's History of the world – or Australia".
- MS 5363/1/9b Photocopies of field diary NSW 9. 1957

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

MS 5363/1/9c NSW 9. 1957

Cover title: 'Dutton 2 B2 Tom Buguy from Bulla Downs'

These notebooks were written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW. They contain Beckett's notes on conversations with key knowledge holders including George Dutton and Walter Newton. The notebooks informed Beckett's 1978 article "George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal drover" and his 1993 article "Walter Newton's History of the world – or Australia".

MS 5363/1/10 NSW 10. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'Life and labour NSW'

This notebook was written in Murrin Bridge during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW. It contains notes and interviews with knowledge holders on the topics of working life, marriage and adoption.

MS 5363/1/11 NSW 11. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'Women NSW'

This notebook explores the lives of women living in Murrin Bridge during the late 1950s. Beckett interviewed female knowledge holders such as Anne Moyse about their daily lives and relationships with their families as well as their opinions on work and gender roles.

MS 5363/1/12 NSW 12. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'Language NSW'

This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Western NSW and is focused on Barkindji [Paakantyi/Paakantji/Barkindji, D12] language. Beckett provides translations for a variety of words and phrases for everyday living and social interactions.

MS 5363/1/13 NSW 13. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'NSW'

This notebook contains Beckett's notes on historical NSW government reports and historical Anthropological books. Reports include the NSW Legislative Assembly reports "Aborigines. Report of Board for Protection of".

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

MS 5363/1/14 NSW 14. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'NSW'

This notebook contains notes on conversations with George Dutton and other key knowledge holders on traditional kinship relationships and marriage exchanges. It also includes translations for Banjagali and Paakantji [Paakantyi/Paakantji/Barkindji, D12] languages.

**Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363/1/15 NSW 15. 1957-1958

Cover title: 'NSW historical'

This notebook contains Beckett's notes on historical government reports and historical books about life in NSW to understand social equality. Included is John Henderson's 1851 book "Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales" and NSW Department of Education 1941 report "Course of Instruction for Primary schools 1941".

MS 5363/1/16a NSW 16. 1958

Cover title: '1958 Dutton Newton Miller'

This notebook was written during Beckett's first fieldwork trip to Wilcannia. It contains notes on interviews with key knowledge holders including George Dutton, Walter Newton, King Miller and Hannah Quayle. The notebook informed Beckett's 1978 article "George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal drover" and his 1993 article "Walter Newton's History of the world – or Australia".

MS 5363/1/16b Photocopies of field diary NSW 16.1958

MS 5363/1/17 NSW 17. 1958

One typed sheet of paper contains information about stories of The Durupa and the Rainbow Serpent. It also includes comments from George Dutton and Yama Wilyaru on these stories.

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/1/18a NSW 18. 1958
- Cover title: 'Mrs Quayle Moyse Alf Barlow Hannah Quayle'
- This notebook contains interviews with key knowledge holders in Wilcannia about kinship, ceremonies and initiations as well as stories about Clever Man. Key knowledge holders include Hannah Quayle, Gordon Mitchell, Anne Moyse and Alf Barlow.
- Includes possible sensitive cultural material – closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/18b Typed transcriptions of notebook NSW 18.1958
- MS 5363/1/19 NSW 19. 1958
- Cover title: 'Beckett Austr. National University Canberra ACT King Miller Wongumara 1958'
- This notebook contains interviews with and information about King Miller. It includes information on ceremonies and initiations as well as stories like the Bronzewing Pigeon. This notebook informed Beckett's 1958 article Marginal Men: A study of Two Half Cast Aborigine.
- Includes possible sensitive cultural material – closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/20 NSW 20. 1958
- Cover title: 'W-NSW Tibooburra 1958 Dutton Miller'
- This notebook includes information on Beckett's conversations with King Miller and George Dutton in Tibooburra in 1958. This notebook informed Beckett's 1978 article George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal Drover.
- MS 5363/1/21a NSW 21. 1964/1966
- Cover title: 'Wongaibon Maliangaba 1964/1966?'
- This notebook contains information about George Dutton's family and kinship relations. It also contains information on Ngiyambaa [Ngiyampaa/Ngempa, D22] language and traditions.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/1/21b NSW 21 photocopies. 1964/1967
- Hand transcription and photocopy of notebook genealogy in NSW 21 (item number: MS 5363/1/21a)

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

MS 5363/1/22 NSW 22. 1992

Cover title: '1992? Wilcannia'

This notebook was written during one of Beckett's last fieldwork trips to Wilcannia in 1992. It covers topics including history, kinship, and traditional land.

MS 5363/1/23a NSW A. 1957

Cover title: 'Dutton 1957 WNSW'

This notebook contains interviews with George Dutton on marital traditions, Bandjagali language as well as local stories. The notebook informed Beckett's 1978 article "George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal drover".

MS 5363/1/23b Photocopies of notebook NSW A.1957

MS 5363/1/24 NSW B. 1958

No cover title

This notebook includes information on Beckett's conversations with King Miller and George Dutton in Tibooburra in 1958. This notebook informed Jeremy's 1978 article George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal Drover.

## **Series 2, Torres Strait Island field diaries. 1956-2008.**

Series 2 comprises field diaries compiled by Jeremy Beckett whilst visiting the Torres Strait Islands, including: Mer (Murray Island), Badu (Mulgrave Island), Saibai, Erub (Darnley Island), Waiben (Thursday Island). These diaries cover the periods 1956-1962, 1967, 1976-1977, 1979, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2008. The Series also includes transcriptions of selected diaries

- MS 5363/2/1      TSI 1. 1956
- Cover title: 'DNA reports etc'
- Beckett's notes on historical reports from the Department of Native Affairs. These historical reports are 1901-1956.
- MS 5363/2/2      TSI 2. 1956
- Cover title: 'Mer Land'
- Beckett's notes on the traditional use of land on Mer including planting and farming styles. It also includes notes about land ownership and includes family tree/relations information.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/3a      TSI 3. 1958
- No cover title
- This notebook was written during one of Beckett's first trips to Mer. Beckett interviewed Wali Giban about: adoption and inheritance of land, yam gardening, Aku Mapa, bride price and marriage, Pentecostalism, garden law
- MS 5363/2/3b      Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 3.1958
- MS 5363/2/4      TSI 4. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Mer/Badu Interviews with Sam Passi Portraits of SP Mye, Marou Also Solomon Nona, Mota Selee'
- General notes and interview with Sam Passi about: sorcery (magic), religion (Pentecostal) marriage and family. Includes details on other individuals including George Mye, Solomon Nona and Mota Salee.

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/5a TSI 5. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Mer 58-59'
- Beckett's diary from one of his first visits to Mer. It includes his day-to-day activities, interviews, interactions and thoughts. Key themes include gardening, sorcery (magic) and Christianity. Key knowledge holders: Aku Mapa, Ben Kudub, Tom Tapau, Sam Passi, George Mye, Marou.
- MS 5363/2/5b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 5. 1958-1959
- MS 5363/2/6a TSI 6. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Gardens Mer 58-59'
- Beckett's notes on his interviews with Ubram, Dela and Sam Passi about garden secrets. The interviews also provided insight into harvesting and the agriculture of yams and usari.
- MS 5363/2/6b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 6. 1958-1959
- MS 5363/2/7 TSI 7. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Mer 58-9'
- This notebook is focused on tribal politics, religion and power relations. It includes information on key knowledge holders including Jack Mabo, George Mye, Sam Passi, Aku Mapa, Ubram.
- MS 5363/2/8a TSI 8. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Mer Council politics'
- This notebook is focused on tribal politics including election results. It includes interview with and information on George Mye, Sam Passi, Marou, Aku Mapa, Abau Noah and Ubram.
- MS 5363/2/8b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 8. 1958-1959
- MS 5363/2/9 TSI 9. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'Mer 58-9 Presents, exchanges, and work bees'
- This notebook is focused on presents, exchanges and work on Mer. Key knowledge holders include James Rice, Dagi Gisu, George Passi and Henry Kabiri.



MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/10 TSI 10. 1958-1959
- Cover title : 'Mer 58-9 Boats'
- This notebook is focused on the boats of Mer Island and includes interviews with key knowledge holders Sam Passi, Asai Baruna, Ubram, Dela, George Mye and Marou.
- MS 5363/2/11a TSI 11. 1958-1959
- Cover title: 'TSI Mer 1959'
- Interview with many residents on Mer including: Marau, Abau Noah, Aku Mapa, Sam Passi, James Rice, Dela Mapoali, Asai Baruna, Peter Tapau, Ubram Kaige, Tom Tapau, Dagi Gisu, Aris Tapau, George Passi
- MS 5363/2/11b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 11. 1958-1959
- MS 5363/2/12 TSI 12. 1958-1961
- Cover title: 'Mer Migratory labor 1958-61'
- This notebook is focused on migratory labor on Mer Island. It includes lists of knowledge holder names and their occupations.
- MS 5363/2/13 TSI 13. 1958-1961
- Cover title: 'Mer households'
- This notebook is focused on household compositions and family relations on Mer Island. It includes information on the families of key knowledge holders including Wailu Giban, Eric Lui, Joe Jib and Henry Kabiri.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/14a TSI 14. 1959
- No cover title
- This is a diary from one of Beckett's first trips to Saibai in 1959. There is a focus on citizen rights and court cases, morality law, freedom as well as daily life on Saibai.
- MS 5363/2/14b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 14. 1959

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MS 5363/2/15a TSI 15. 1959

Cover title: 'Badu Transcribed stories in KL1 corrected in exercise book'

This notebook was written during one of Beckett's first visits to Badu. He visited Luna Neliman who told him stories from Badu which focused on kinship and mythology. This notebook contains stories in the local language of Kala Lagaw Ya [Kala Lagaw Ya language Y1] which was later translated into English.

MS 5363/2/15b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 15. 1959

MS 5363/2/16a TSI 16. 1959

Cover title: 'Badu diary Saibai 1959'

Beckett wrote this diary in 1959 during one of his first visits to Badu and Saibai. It contains an account of his day-to-day life on the islands while carrying out his fieldwork. There is a focus on the local elections and island politics.

Key themes: politics (elections), Religion (St Marks Day Mass)  
Key people: Nona family

MS 5363/2/16b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 16. 1959

MS 5363/2/17a TSI 17. 1959

Cover title: 'Badu crews, households Badu '59 Misc data TSI'

Miscellaneous data on boat employment and kinship relations. It includes redrawn family trees for Norwa, Alex Tipoti, Neliman, Zakania, Panuel and Puda, Lopeli, Mota, Cidoldam, Jim Byra, John Byra, Ngukiby, Repam-Bat, Robin, Ben Nona, Salee, Nowoa, Elikus, Git, Blanket, Uani Joe, Sol, Toloa, Manu, TN, Phillip, Olivia

**Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363/2/17b Typed transcriptions of and photocopies of handwritten family trees recorded in notebook TSI 17

**Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/18a TSI 18. 1959
- Cover title: '1959 TSI Badu'
- This notebook contains information on tribal marriage systems and traditional adoption and wedding customs. There are also stories on head hunting and pouri – pouri (sorcery).
- MS 5363/2/18b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 18. 1959
- MS 5363/2/19a TSI 19. 1959
- Cover title: 'Mer adoptions, Sabai, Badu'
- Traditional Torres Strait Island adoption customs, with specific focus on Mer.
- MS 5363/2/19b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 19.. 1959
- MS 5363/2/20a TSI 20. 1959
- Cover title: 'TSI Saibai song and story of Adi Budia'
- This notebook contains information on the story of Adi Budia and Saibai songs. There is also information about marriage laws and moieties on Saibai.
- MS 5363/2/20b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 20. 1959
- MS 5363/2/21a TSI 21. 1959
- Cover title: 'Badu NB5 1959-61'
- Interviews with Nonas and other notes on family names/relations in Badu.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/21b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 21. 1959
- MS 5363/2/22 TSI 22. 1959-1961
- Cover title: 'TSI Saibai: Village map – houses canoe diagrams land households land transactions'
- This notebook was written while Beckett was on Saibai Island. It contains information on and maps of the houses in Saibai Village. There is also information on household compositions and land transactions.

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/23 TSI 23. 1959-1961  
Cover title: 'Boats etc Saibai'  
This notebook details fisheries and boat customs/politics in Saibai, including details of employment histories and ports. Key knowledge holders include Solomon, Ben, Morseo, Moira, Pilemon, Joey, Ted, Toloa
- MS 5363/2/24 TSI 24. 1960-1961  
Cover title: '1960 or 1961 Lingo'  
This notebook contains information on the languages in the Torres Strait, including common lingo and translations.
- MS 5363/2/25 TSI 25. 1960-1961  
Cover title: 'Lingo xL1'  
This notebook contains information on the languages in the Torres Strait, including common lingo and translations.
- MS 5363/2/26 TSI 26. 1960  
Cover title: 'PoW TSI'  
This notebook contains family trees for Mrs. Maleta Luta, Mrs. Eselina Nawie, Mr. Isaiah Wigness and Mrs. Lela Eseli. This notebook also contains information on gardening practices on Badu.  
**Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/27 TSI 27. 1960  
Cover title: 'Draft novel (TS)'  
This notebook is a draft transcript of Beckett's novel. Themes include devolution to a wrong idea, democracy at work, and the search for power.
- MS 5363/2/28 TSI 28. 1960  
Cover title: 'Mer '60 TSI'  
Beckett's notes on Marou's Diary from 1939-1950. Marou was a leading government official on Mer during this time.

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/29a TSI 29. 1960
- Cover title: 'Badu 1960'
- This notebook details Nona family tensions, including pearling lugger and income.
- MS 5363/2/29b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 29. 1960
- MS 5363/2/30 TSI 30. 1961
- No cover title
- This notebook contains historical information and an analysis of predominant families on Badu. Key families and people: Getawans, Bowies, Masts (Tipots), Bairas, Gagai, Tamwoys, Yalla, Panuel, Mabua and Madua.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/31a TSI 31. 1961
- Cover title: 'Diary TSI 1961 TI, Mer, Saibai'
- This notebook contains Beckett's observations of day-to-day activities of knowledge holders on Thursday Island, Mer and Saibai.
- MS 5363/2/31b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 31 1961
- MS 5363/2/32a TSI 32. 1967
- Cover title: '1967 Mer TSI'
- This notebook contains information about the Pagan Cult Malo. There is also information on council politics and kinship voting.
- MS 5363/2/32b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 32 1967
- MS 5363/2/33a TSI 33. 1967
- Cover title: 'TS 1967 (?)'
- This notebook contains Beckett's notes on conversations with Robert Pitt Senior and Sam Passi. Family relations and adoption practices were discussed.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

MS 5363/2/33b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 33 1967

**Includes genealogical information - closed access.**

MS 5363/2/34a TSI 34. 1976

Cover title: 'TS '76  
TI, Erub, Mer'

Beckett wrote this notebook on his return visit to Erub and Mer in 1976. It contains notes of his observations and conversations throughout his days on the islands.

MS 5363/2/34b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 34 1976

MS 5363/2/35a TSI 35. 1977

Cover title: 'Qld Parliament TS question'

Beckett's notes on the Parliament of Queensland's historical proceedings. This notebook also contains information on important historical events in the Torres Strait Islands.

MS 5363/2/35b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 35 1977

MS 5363/2/36a TSI 36. 1982

Cover title: '1982 Mer'

This notebook contains information on politics, finances, and the pearling and fishing industries on Mer. Key knowledge holders include Ricky Doolah and George Mye.

MS 5363/2/36b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 36 1977

MS 5363/2/37a TSI 37. 1960-1962

Cover title: 'Mainly Saibai 1960 - 1,2 TSI'

This notebook contains information about sorcery and German Wislin and informed Beckett's chapter 'Whatever happened to German Wislin?' In: Barwick, D. E., Beckett, J, and M. Reay. Metaphors of Interpretation: Essays in honour of W. E. H. Stanner. 1985. Rushcutters Bay, Australian National University Press.

MS 5363/2/37b Typed transcriptions of notebook TSI 37. 1960-1962

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

MS 5363/2/38a TSI 38. 1985

Cover title: 'TS 1985 Mainly Badu (+TI) Some Mer'

This notebook was written in 1985, primarily in Badu but it also contains information on Thursday Island and Mer. The notebook has a focus on council politics, land rights and Land Right Acts. Beckett has also included a demographic breakdown of Murray Island, as well as content on marriage, adoption and inheritance.

MS 5363/2/38b Typed transcriptions of Notebook TSI 38.195

MS 5363/2/39 TSI 39. 1985

Cover title: 'TV '85 Meriam work narratives'

Beckett's notes from interviews he had with Torres Strait Islanders who were living in Townville in 1985. James Dow is a key knowledge holder for this notebook.

MS 5363/2/40 TSI 40. 1985

No cover title

This notebook contains information about the people and language of Saibai. It also contains Beckett's notes on historical records from the Department of Native Affairs.

MS 5363/2/41 TSI 41. 1985

Cover title: 'Townsville c. 1985'

Beckett's notes from interviews he had with Torres Strait Islanders who were living in Townville in 1985. Sani Townson and Gobeda Noah are key knowledge holders for this notebook.

MS 5363/2/42 TSI 42. 1986

Cover title: 'TV '86'

Beckett's notes from interviews with Torres Strait Islanders who were living in Townville in 1986. Aba Tapau is a key knowledge holder for this notebook.

MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/43 TSI 43. 1985
- Cover title: 'TV '86 TSI'
- Beckett's notes from interviews with Torres Strait Islanders who were living in Townsville in 1986. Ted Neliman is a key knowledge holder for this notebook.
- MS 5363/2/44 TSI 44. 1989
- Cover title: 'TI/Mer 1989'
- Beckett's notes on his conversations with Sam Passi about myths and burial practices on Mer. The notebook also contains information about the Pitt family on Thursday Island.
- Includes genealogical information - closed access.**
- MS 5363/2/45 TSI 45. 1996
- Cover title: 'LMS rewards (missionaries)'
- Beckett's notes on reports from The London Missionary Society. These reports range from the late 1800s to the late 1990s.
- MS 5363/2/46 TSI 46. 1993
- Cover title: 'TS 1993'
- This notebook contains information about island politics and issues concerning the mainland government. Key knowledge holders include Agnes Fox, Ned David and Henry Garnier.
- MS 5363/2/47 TSI 47. 1996
- Cover title: 'Later pt of Myers Diary Interview Eses 1996'
- Beckett's diary and notes from a return visit to Badu and Mer in 1996.
- MS 5363/2/48 TSI 48. 1999
- Cover title: 'Mer 1999'
- This notebook contains information on Mer islander's reactions to marine boundaries. Key knowledge holders include Henry Kabere, Eto Baruna and Bill Ipseg.



MS 5363 Field diaries of Jeremy Beckett

- MS 5363/2/49a TSI 49. 2001
- Cover title: 'Mer 2001'
- This notebook contains information about sea territory including the opinions of Mer Islanders on the topic.
- MS 5363/2/49b Typed transcription of notebook TSI 49 2001
- MS 5363/2/50 TSI 50. 2008
- No cover title
- This is a diary Beckett kept during a return visit to Mer in late 2008 to early 2009. He kept notes of interviews and observations he made about daily life, politics and territory concerns.
- MS 5363/2/51 TSI 51. 1979, 1982
- Cover title: '1979 1982 Erub, Mer, Badu'
- This notebook includes information about religion and daily life on Erub, Mer and Badu in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It also includes interviews with key knowledge holders including George Mye and Jimmy Tapau.
- MS 5363/2/52 TSI A. 1959
- Cover title: 'Songs back Weipais stories (1959)'
- This notebook includes song and stories from Saibai, Badu, as well as Papua New Guinea. English translation of Kala Lagaw Ya. Knowledge holders included Ailan Mast, Weipa Solomon and Luna of Badu.
- There are two sides to notebook. Side B= songs and Side A=stories
- Some of the included songs:
- Song of Damanab
  - Diver's Lament by Paul Bowia, Badu Island
- Some of the included stories:
- The Snake and the Bird
  - The Story of Koaka
  - A New Guinea Story
  - The Great Sorcerer- NG Story

## Series 3, Digital Carriers

Housed separately. Access to original digital materials in this collection is currently unavailable, while AIATSIS develops its digital preservation and management infrastructure.

MS 5363/3/1

Thumb drive containing digital copies of NSW notebook inventory compiled by donor plus scans and transcriptions of selected notebooks.

MS 5363/3/2

Thumb drive containing digital copies of TSI notebook inventory compiled by donor plus scans and transcriptions of selected notebooks.

Finding aid compiled by Louise Mayoh, July 2024.

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