

WENTWORTH

MS 3494

Papers of W. C. Wentworth

FINDING AID

**Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Studies**

Updated 2005, April 2016, January 2019

CONTENTS

ACCESS

Open access – reading. Partial copying (Copyright applies). Open quotation. Not for Interlibrary loan. (Access code A1 B5).

The access conditions applied by the depositor expired in 2010. They were reviewed in January 2019 by the Senior Archivist, to align with other collections with similar content eg MS 4129 Papers of Lester R Hiatt.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Date range: 1806-1985 (bulk 1948-1985)

Extent: .36 metres (2 boxes) + 1 folio folder in Manuscript Plan Cabinet

This collection was deposited with the AIATSIS Library by W.C. (Bill) Wentworth, former Member of the Commonwealth House of Representatives (1949-77) and Minister for Social Services and Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs (1968-72) in May 1993. The papers contain correspondence regarding the formation of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs) and its early activities. There are also papers on the Wentworth family in New South Wales and the historic properties associated with the family. The papers include original correspondence, legal documents, carbon and photocopies of letters sent by Wentworth, and related publications.

For a complete listing of material by or about W.C. Wentworth, held by the Institute, consult the Institute's [Mura® online catalogue](http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au) at <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>. For related papers see Papers of W.E.H. Stanner ([MS 3752](#)) and Papers of Barrie Dexter ([MS 4167](#)).

National Archives of Australia also holds another collection of papers of Bill Wentworth entitled the Papers of Wentworth, W.C., 1907-2003 ([CP 256](#)).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Charles (Bill) Wentworth was born in Sydney on 5 September 1907. He was educated at The Armidale School, New South Wales and Oxford University where he graduated with an MA. He later received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Sydney.

Wentworth was Economic Advisor to the NSW Treasury from 1933 to 1937. He then entered the Federal Parliament representing the Sydney electorate of Mackellar for the Liberal Party, a position he held from 1949 to 1977. As a former leading campaigner for the Aboriginal advancement movement, he was appointed Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs under the Prime Minister in 1968 becoming the first

federal minister to have sole responsibility for 'Aboriginal affairs'. He held this position in the Gorton

Coalition Government until May 1971. During this period he was responsible for the Council for Aboriginal Affairs which, through him, provided the government with advice on Indigenous issues. He was also responsible for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, an administrative unit which eventually (1973) evolved into a separate department.

Following his death on 15 June 2003, Dr Bill Jonas, then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner paid tribute to Wentworth when he wrote:

'the former federal minister, the Honourable W.C. Wentworth AO...championed Aboriginal people's rights throughout his long and distinguished political career...In 1959 Mr Wentworth argued for a comprehensive effort by the Australian Government to record the culture of Aboriginal peoples [which culminated in the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, and as] The nation's first Aboriginal Affairs Minister worked diligently during his political career to improve the rights of Aboriginal people and played a leading role in advocating for Aboriginal people to be included in the 1967 census'.

References:

Who's who in Australia, 2000

The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, AIATSIS, 1994

'Passing of Aboriginal right champion' *HREOC Electronic Mailing List*, 6/16/03

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1958-85

This series covers the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) now known as Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the issues of concern to the new Institute, such as the appointment of the first Director or Principal, and focus of research, and the finance and purchase of equipment.

Included are carbon typescript copies of correspondence, mainly from Wentworth, original correspondence, handwritten notes, minutes of meetings and a memorandum prepared for the Prime Minister Robert Menzies entitled 'An Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies' that documents the formation of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Affairs, and a briefing note entitled 'Aboriginal Studies. Bibliography, Library and Index'.

Correspondents include W.C. Wentworth, R.G Menzies, H.L.White, W.E.H. Stanner, A.A. Abbie, T.G.H. Strehlow, R.B. Berndt, J. Inglis, J.A. Barnes and A.P. Elkin.

For related material see also the papers of W.E.H. Stanner (MS 3752) and F.D. McCarthy (MS 3713).

Series 2 Correspondence – General, 1958-74

This series comprises Wentworth's correspondence covering books, films and anthropological research on Australia's Indigenous peoples, possible Aboriginal referendum and the conditions of the people at Yirrkala in the Northern Territory. Located within the correspondence is 'The history of Bulga from 1820 to 1921', by W.A. McGregor, a report and address to the Association for the Assimilation of Aborigines entitled 'Our Aborigines – a new look at an old people', by W.C. Wentworth (1963) and a few miscellaneous newspaper clippings.

Correspondents include J.D. Freeman, Robert Graves, Edmund Gill, Dexter Daniel, C.E. Barnes M.P. and John Mulvaney

Folder	
1	Correspondence, 1958-61
2	Correspondence, 1962-64
3	Correspondence, 1965-66
4	Correspondence, 1973
5	Correspondence, 1980-85.

Series 3 Wentworth family – Correspondence, 1948-74

This series mainly consists of original correspondence and enclosures received by W.C. Wentworth relating to his family tree and the ancestral family home later known as 'Vaucluse House', and copies of his responses.

Correspondents include the President, National Trust of Australia and the Nielson-Vaucluse Park Trust

Folder	
1	Correspondence, 1948-59
2	Correspondence, 1960-66
3	Correspondence, 1967-69
4	Correspondence, 1970-77 [Includes photograph of drawing of funeral procession of W.C. Wentworth (died 1872)]

Series 4 Wentworth family – Documents, 1806-1941

W.C. Wentworth was the great great grandson of D'Arcy Wentworth, medical practitioner, public servant (1762?-1827), and the first of the Irish Wentworths who came to Australia; and the great grandson of the first William Charles Wentworth (1790- 1872), explorer, author, barrister, landowner and statesman in the colony of New South Wales.

This series consists of original deeds for grants of land in the Illawarra District of New South Wales to D’Arcy Wentworth dated 1821, and ‘Indenture’ agreements of William Charles Wentworth (1793-1872) dating from 1843 to 1848. There is also a map depicting the exploration of Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth across the Blue Mountains (n.d), a copy of the poem entitled ‘Australasia’ (1873) and two speeches (1850), by W.C. Wentworth, a letter to Jack from his brother R.L. McDonald (1879?), an unidentified ‘albumen’ portrait photograph, and a document appointing William Charles Wentworth (1907-2003) to the rank of Lieutenant in the Active Citizen Military Forces of the Commonwealth, 1941.

In addition to these original Wentworth family documents there are also photocopies of letters received by D’Arcy Wentworth dating from 1806. These relate to requests for medicine, payment for work undertaken, the Police Fund, sale of land, and invitations to function. According to a note on one of the letters they were ‘copied from originals in Dorothy Wentworth’s estate’.

Correspondents include Governor Lachlan Macquarie, John Piper and William Redfern.

Folder	
1	Original deeds and indenture agreements, 1821-48, map prepared by Elizabeth Bowden (n.d.), and document appointing W.C. Wentworth to Active Citizen Military, 1941. [9 documents, MS 3494/4/1a - MS3494/4/1j, located in folio folder in Manuscript Plan Cabinet, PC7, drawer 1]
2	Poem (1873) [one original, one copy on archival paper], speeches (1850), photographic portrait (c.1855-1920) [one original, one copy on archival paper], and original letter (1879?) [one original, one copy on archival paper]
3-4	Collection of private miscellaneous numbered letters and Police Fund docketts, 1800s. [Originals in Folder 3, copies on archival paper in Folder 4. For preservation reasons, Folder 4 to be issued to readers.]

Series 5 Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories – Papers, 1958-61

This series includes a small selection of addresses and conference papers dated from 1958 to 1961, by the Hon. Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories. It also includes material on the Native Welfare Conference of 1961, and four Commonwealth Department of Territory booklets on the government’s policy of ‘assimilation’ of Australia’s Indigenous peoples.

Folder	
1	Five papers by the Hon. Paul Hasluck, Minister of Territories:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Future of the Australian Aborigines’, paper read to Section F (Anthropology) of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Adelaide, 22 August 1958

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Are our Aborigines neglected?’, address to PSA Service, Sydney, 12 July 1959
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Native Welfare Conference – Canberra’, statement to the Conference, Canberra, 26 January 1961 that includes agenda, and ‘Opening Statement’, 25 January 1961. Also ‘Social service benefits to Aborigines’, statement by Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Hugh S. Robertson, and decisions resulting from the Conference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The future of missions’ presented to the Missions Conference, Darwin, 17 July 1961; and
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The administration of native welfare’, summary of paper read to the Anthropological Society of Western Australia, 31 July 1961
2	Four booklets published by the Department of Territories. These are also available in Library at p AUS. [Open access]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Our Aborigines</i>, 1957
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progress towards assimilation</i>, 1958
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assimilation of our Aborigines</i>, 1958
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fringe dwellers</i>, 1959

BOX LIST

Box	Series	Folder
1	1	1-9
	2	1
2	2	2-5
	3	1-4
Folio folder in Manuscript Plan Cabinet	4	1
2	4	2-4
	5	1-2