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MS 2301

**Davies, Arthur Oliver Cromwell; Notes and papers on the Murray
Islands, Torres Strait**

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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:	Arthur Oliver Cromwell Davies
Title:	Davies, Arthur Oliver Cromwell; Notes and papers on the Murray Islands, Torres Strait.
Collection no:	MS 2301
Date range:	1924-1975
Extent:	0.2 metre; 1 x Type 1 box
Repository:	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY STATEMENT

It is a condition of use of this finding aid, and of the collection described in it, that users ensure that any use of the information contained in it is sympathetic to the views and sensitivities of relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This includes:

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Deceased persons

Users of this finding aid should be aware that, in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing images of deceased persons in photographs, film and books or hearing them in recordings etc. may cause sadness or distress and in some cases, offend against strongly held cultural prohibitions.

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ACCESS TO COLLECTION

Access and use conditions

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Although Manuscripts are not available on Interlibrary loan, they may be available via document supply (photocopying), subject to access conditions, if they are already digitized.

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Access conditions

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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 [insert number], Series [insert number], Subseries [insert number], Item or Folder [insert number].

For example: Diary and notes: Murray Island (Mer), 1924-5, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 2301/1/1a

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COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Scope and contents note

Nine items, comprising diaries, notes, correspondence, story drafts, offprints of journal articles, maps.

Diagrams, illustrations, maps

Holographs, handwritten documents, typescripts, typescript (carbon), photographs, mimeograph.

Provenance

The collection was deposited in the AIATSIS Library by John Orrell, date unknown.

Material separated from the collection

Eleven photographic black and white prints have been transferred to Pictorial; see DAVIES.A01.BW

Related material

For a complete list of works by Arthur Oliver Cromwell Davies, held in the AIATSIS Collection, and for other related material consult [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue.

Important: Before clicking on the links to the catalogue entries please read our [sensitivity message](#).

Archivist's note

This finding aid was copied in April 2019 from a typescript version prepared by the AIATSIS Library at a date unknown. The collection was rehoused at the same time as this finding aid was produced.

The original numbering of the items has been retained. The original access conditions have also been retained, on advice from an Indigenous AIATSIS staff member.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Arthur Oliver Cromwell Davies was seconded from the Queensland Education Department to the Home Department, to work in the school on Murray Island/Mer. He was the first qualified teacher to take up this position. Instructed to only teach to Grade Three, he nevertheless taught to Grade Five.

Davies worked on Mer from 1924-25, when departmental policy prevented him from continuing, due to a health condition contracted while working in the tropical environment. At the time, he would not have chosen to leave the island permanently.

His duties extended beyond education, encompassing duties as a magistrate and a paramedic. He gained insight in the life and customs of the Meriam people and was accepted as a member of the community. Not being able to return after health treatment caused him great regret.

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SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1 Personal papers, records and correspondence

Items

- MS 2301/1/1 (a) Diary and notes: Murray Island (Mer), 1924-5
[140] p, illus, maps.
handwritten transcription of original
- (i) Diary, Feb 20 1924 – Sep 8 1925; and notes on various aspects of culture, stories by Pasi, vocabulary
88 p
 - (ii) The cult of Waiet
9 p
 - (iii) Lecture to the Geographical Society, Thursday Island, 'Stone Figures at Mer'
12 p
 - (iv) Short lecture given before the Geographical Society, Thursday Island Branch, 'Notes on Murray Island'
 - (v) The cult of Bomai-Malu
21 p
- (b) Typescript copy of pieces MS 2301/1/1 (a) (i), (iii) and (iv) above
- (i) General notes: Mer Island, 1924-5
81 p

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- (ii) Lectures to Thursday Island Geographical Society
16 p
- MS 2301/1/2 Correspondence between AOC Davies and AC Haddon, 1928-9
 - (a) Letter from AC Haddon to AOC Davies, Apr 20 1928
2 p
Holograph (photograph), typescript, typescript (carbon)
 - (b) Letter from AC Haddon to AOC Davies, Nov 6 1928
1 p
Holograph (photograph), typescript, typescript (carbon)
- MS 2301/1/3 Pasi: a story of the Islands, by John Orrell from the diaries of AOC Davies [274] p
Typescript (carbon), diags
Inserted at the front:
 - supplementary chapter, suggested as chapter 2;
 - map of Mer, 1 photo
 - map of Waier and Dauar, 1 photo
- MS 2301/1/4 Haddon, Alfred Cort. 'The cult of Waiet in the Murray Islands, Torres Straits. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum. 1928, 9 (2); 127-35
- MS 2301/1/5
 - (a) Map of Torres Strait showing route of Davies' journeys
 - (b) Map of Torres Strait showing route of Davies' journeys.
- MS 2301/1/6 Notes of court and council meetings held at Murray Island during 1924-4
48 p, diags
Handwritten
- MS 2301/1/7
 - (a) 7 photographs Malu Island
Held at DAVIES.A01.BW
 - (b) Plan of the pelark Malu
 - (c) Meriam Wed
First page: Credo; Iesu Keriso ra erkepasam; Ade ra gelar, a Meriam wed [The Creed, the Lord's prayer, the Ten Commandments and hymns in the Murray Island language]
24 p, mimeograph
- Ms 2301/1/8 Letter from AOC Davies to University of Queensland Press, May 16, 1972
2 p
Typescript (carbon)
- MS 2301/1/9 Waiet or turtle guts at my funeral feast: an incident in the life of AOC Davies, as told to John Orrell.
13 p
Typescript and typescript (carbon)
2 copies.

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BOX LIST

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Series		
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