

RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

No. 6

SEPTEMBER 1994

ISSN 1039-5180

EDITORIAL

Sadly, *Records Territory* has to report the death of **Fabian Hutchinson** at the end of July. Fabian was Archivist of the Central Lands Council in Alice Springs and made a major contribution to the promotion and development of archives and records management among Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia.

During the last few weeks the Northern Territory Archives Service has also been recovering from the sudden announcement that our leased building in McMinn Street had been sold and that the Archives would have to vacate the premises by October. More on the impact of this on our clients and the interim arrangements being made is to be found in this issue.

The list of recipients of this year's NT History Awards strikes a welcome optimistic note. The encouraging implication being that there will continue to be archives available to support the research projects.

And, finally, I have to say farewell to colleagues and clients. This is my last edition of *Records Territory*. I leave the Archives at the end of August to pursue my career, once again, overseas. To everyone who has supported the Archives over the last 10 years and to our readers - thank you and good luck.

Don Brech

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FORMER HEADS VISIT ARCHIVES

Baiba Berzins, who was Principal Archivist from 1987-1990, and **Peter Loveday**, who held the position of Director of the North Australia Research Unit from 1981-1990, returned to Darwin in August.

Now living in Sydney, Baiba and Peter were here to carry out research for their work on the history of tertiary education and tourism in the Territory.



L-R: Baiba Berzins and Peter Loveday

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THE MOVE: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

At the time of this newsletter going to print we are uncertain about a future home for the NT Archives. Our headquarters and archives repository in McMinn Street, Darwin, was sold to our neighbours, The NT News, in August.

The McMinn Street premises are to be vacated in September. The interim arrangement is for the archives to be stored at the Australian Archives' repository in Milner and for the office to be relocated to the old Faculty of Law building on the NT University Campus at Myilly Point, Darwin.

This is an interim arrangement which may last for 6 to 12 months, depending on what decision the Government makes about a permanent home for the NT Archives Service.

Fortunately, the Government records lending service will not be greatly affected by this move because most of the secondary records are housed at our Winnellie repository. Also, the oral history program will continue to operate from Winnellie.

Unfortunately, the area mostly affected will be the public reference service. This is addressed elsewhere in this newsletter.

*Greg Coleman
Principal Archivist*

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GOVERNMENT RECORDS LENDING SERVICE: ARRANGEMENTS DURING AND AFTER THE MOVE

DURING THE MOVE

It is probable that, if there is any disruption to Lending Service operations, it will occur during the physical relocation of our holdings and our office.



Although every effort will be made to maintain strict control over the location of all records at all times, it is possible that some records will be inaccessible for periods of time (especially if they happen to be on the back of a truck somewhere between McMinn Street and Milner).

The only records affected during this period will be those currently stored at McMinn Street. The majority of records issued through the Lending Service are stored elsewhere and services to these will not be adversely affected.

AFTER THE MOVE

For the period that NTAS will be in temporary accommodation awaiting relocation to a permanent facility, it is anticipated that the Lending Service will operate as usual. Some delays may occur with urgent requests as our office will no longer be located on the same site as the records.

In all cases, Records Services staff will endeavour to make records requested by agencies available as quickly as possible and will notify agencies if any significant delay is to be expected.

*Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)*

TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR RECORDS TRANSFERS

Over the last 12 months, the NT Archives Service has been pleased to have been able to recommence accepting transfers of government records. With the introduction of leasing arrangements with the Australian Archives, over 1,500 shelf metres, or approximately 7,500 boxes, of records have been transferred.

Although these transfers have made a significant impact on the backlog of records waiting to be transferred, a substantial quantity of records is still held in the agencies. In the last issue of *Records Territory* I think I jinxed NTAS by confidently stating that the backlog would be eliminated and delays reduced within the next few months. I obviously spoke too soon!

While the good news about the move is that temporary accommodation for our archival records has been found at Australian Archives, the downside is that the space which will be used to store these records includes the area NTAS would have used for new transfers. In short, we've run out of space - again - and the position will not improve until we move into a permanent building.

Those agencies with transfers pending have been notified that transfers will be suspended until about March 1995. This date is wholly governed by our ability to find a permanent home for the archives and to move in before March. Regretably, any delay in finding a home for NTAS will result in further delays in agency transfers.

Once again, I'm afraid, I shall have to ask agencies to be patient (and I know you have patience because you've had to use it so often). We will keep you informed about developments.

Despite the demands placed on our time by the relocation, Records Services staff will continue to assist agencies in preparing records for transfer. Please continue boxing and listing records so that they will be ready when the go-ahead is given. Applications to transfer records will be accepted as usual.

Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)

INTERRUPTIONS TO THE REFERENCE SERVICE

During mid to late September we will be moving our office to the old Faculty of Law building on the former NT University Campus at Myilly Point. A temporary public search room will be established there. Firm dates for the relocation cannot be given at the time this newsletter goes to the printer but we will be able to advise clients by fax or telephone after the newsletter is distributed. We will also be notifying details in the local press.

We expect to be in our temporary building for 6 months (possibly longer) while a decision is taken on the issue of a permanent home. We plan to continue running the reference service during this time but would warn researchers that the service will be severely handicapped by the following:

- The archives will not be located in the same building as the search room; records will have to be recalled from the Australian Archives repository at Milner.

- The Archivist (Information Services) is going on maternity leave at about the same time as the move and a new person will have to be trained while endeavouring to attend to research inquiries.

How researchers can help:

- If you can put off your research for 6 months please do so.

- Please telephone several days in advance of your wish to visit the search room (we will advise any change of telephone number).

- Once you have decided which records you wish to examine, plan for a delay of a couple of days while they are retrieved for you.

- Please be patient. We will be doing our best.

Greg Coleman
Principal Archivist

RECENT ACCESSIONS

The following records were recently processed:

GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Department of Transport and Works, Motor Vehicle Registry:

Licences and vehicle registrations, 1985-1993

Department of Transport and Works, Water Division:

Branch files, 1984-1987

Department of Health and Community Services, Alice Springs Regional Office:

General correspondence files, 1979-1986

NT Treasury:

Budget papers, 1979-1992

NT Tourist Commission:

Advertising videos, 1979-1990

NT Liquor Commission:

Seizure files, transcripts, hearing tapes, exhibits and minutes, 1979-1990.

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DISPOSAL OF PATIENT RECORDS

The long-awaited general disposal schedule for patient records in public hospitals and community health centres has now been approved.

For those personnel in hospitals and health centres who have been awaiting this event, the provisions in the approved schedule are essentially those which were included in the final draft which was widely circulated. An additional condition relates to the use of patient records for medical research.

It is NT Archives' intention to issue the disposal schedule in booklet form and to distribute it to public hospitals and community health centres throughout the Territory. Training sessions will also be conducted in co-operation with the Department of Health and Community Services in the near future.



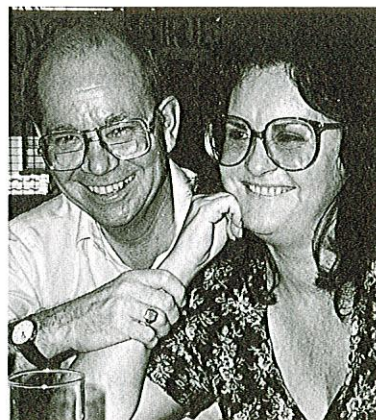
We had hoped to have commenced work on this by now but the upheaval of relocating our office and storage facility has set the project back by a couple of months. Please call Linda Bell or Greg Coleman on 89 5190 for further information.

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STAFF NOTES

In July we welcomed back **Maureen Wilkins** to the position of Administrative Officer. Maureen occupied this post when she first joined NT Archives in 1984.

Two years after his return to the NT Archives we have to say goodbye to **Don Brech** who is returning to Hong Kong where he will be working as a records management and



L - R: Don Brech and Jenni Wright

archives consultant. We are particularly grateful for his role in carrying out the task of editing the first 6 issues of *Records Territory*. All his colleagues at the Archives wish him well in his new professional venture.

Our second departure, albeit on a temporary basis, is **Jenni Wright** who begins 12 months maternity leave in October. We wish Jenni, **Peter** and their son **Ronan** every happiness at the coming event and look forward to meeting the new addition to the family in due course.

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NT HISTORY AWARDS

The recipients of NT History Awards for 1994 were announced by the Minister, **The Hon Barry Coulter**, in July. They were:

Baiba Berzins,
Sydney,
\$2,500, for work on a history of tourism and the Northern Territory, 1945-1975.

Shirley Brown,
Alice Springs,
\$1,000, for a compilation of Central Australian oral histories.

Philip Costigan,
Port Keats,
\$1,000, to assist with a local history project at Port Keats.

Peter Elder,
Canberra,
\$500, for work towards a biography of Administrator, Charles Abbott.

Jon Faine,
Melbourne,
\$2,000, for a biography of Thelma (Ma) Hawkes, formerly of Top Springs.

Pat Forster,
Alice Springs,
\$300, to assist with a compilation of oral histories of Aboriginal ex-servicemen from Alice Springs.

John Kadiba,
Darwin,
\$1,000, for work on the history of the Methodist Mission and Aboriginal Church in Arnhem Land.

Jeremy Long,
Sydney,
\$1,500, for work on the diaries of the Walker brothers' NT prospecting expedition of 1913.

Graham McKenzie-Smith,
Canberra,
\$2,000, for work on the history of the Australian Army in the Northern Territory, as part of a national series.

Donna McLachlan,
Perth,
\$500, towards work on an oral history about the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA).

Eileen McRae,
Alice Springs,
\$1,500, for a history of the pioneering Price family of Central Australia.

Jose Petrick,
Alice Springs,
\$1,100, to assist with researching the second edition of the *History of Alice Springs through Street Names*.

Alan Powell,
Darwin,
\$600, to assist with work on an illustrated history of the Northern Territory.

Cameron Raynes,
Darwin,
\$1,500, for a compilation of oral histories of Amanbidji (Kildurk) Station.

Judy Robinson,
Alice Springs,
\$1,000, to assist with the story of the Ryan family of Central Australia and Ryans Well.

Paul Rosenzweig,
Darwin,
\$1,500, for a history of Norforce.

Claire Smith,
Armidale,
\$2,000, for work on the history of Barunga.

John Strehlow,
London,
\$5,000, for a biography of Carl Strehlow, including translation of German documents.

Jan Wositzky,

Melbourne,

\$3,000, for an oral history relating to the life and times of Bill Harney Junior.

The NT History Awards are administered by the NT Archives Service. Information about the Awards scheme and about past Awards is available from the Principal Archivist.

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ORAL HISTORY NEWS

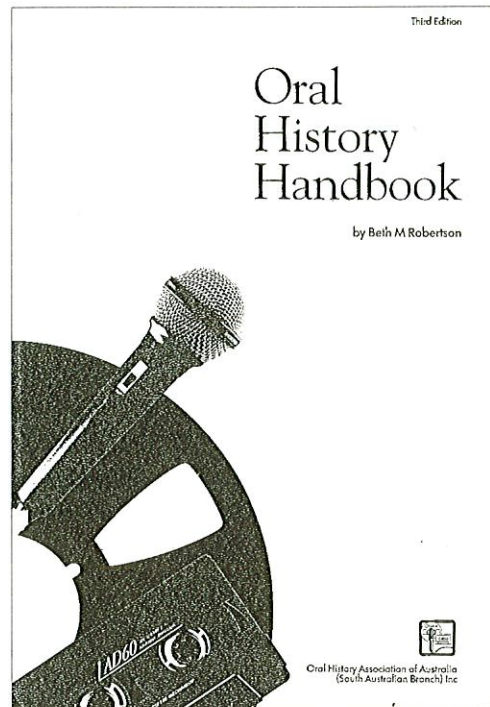
At the very successful oral history seminar and workshops held in April in Darwin, participants expressed interest in the formation of a Northern Territory branch of the Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA). At present, members from the Northern Territory, either individuals or institutions, belong to the South Australian Branch.

This Branch, under the very able Presidency of **Beth Robertson**, who is also the Oral History Officer for the South Australian Library Service, produces by far the best newsletter of all the Branches twice a year. It is called *Word of Mouth*, is free to all members and, in addition to a regular segment on Northern Territory news, contains a range of reports on projects and events, as well as publication reviews.

Members also receive free the national *OHAA Journal* each year, which contains many interesting papers and reports on oral history issues, methodology and projects, both in Australia and world-wide, as well as papers presented to the OHAA biennial national conferences. It would be an essential acquisition for any good library, and institutional memberships by libraries are a sound move.

The South Australian Branch has recently published the 3rd edition of Beth Robertson's *Oral History Handbook*. This has been received by the oral history community with acclaim, as being the best of its kind available so far. It is written in a clear, readable style, and gives very helpful, practical guidance on a wide range of aspects, while being very solidly based on a thorough understanding

of the many practical and ethical issues of this complex discipline.



The NT Archives Service has a small stock on hand, and these can be purchased from the reception desk at \$10-00 each. However, if you join the OHAA at the same time (or are already a member) you pay only \$6-00, which, given the quality of its presentation and scope, must be the bargain of the year.

Membership of the OHAA is well worthwhile to anybody with an interest in oral history. The NT Archives Service would like to encourage more Territorians and Territory institutions and agencies to join. The possibility of forming a Northern Territory branch of the Association is something that needs to be considered now. So, if you would like further information on the OHAA, or would like to attend a meeting either in Darwin or Alice Springs later this year to discuss the Association and the possibility of founding a Northern Territory branch, or would just like to express your view on this, please contact **Francis Good** at the Archives' Oral History Unit on (089) 470 756.

Francis Good
Archivist (Oral Records)

RESEARCHERS' PROJECTS

TENNANT CREEK

A project which will make considerable use of the holdings of the NT Archives Service and the Australian Archives at Milner is the forthcoming heritage survey of the town of Tennant Creek to be carried out by **Helen Wilson**. The study is being funded through the National Trust by a National Estate grant.

The original town lots were designated garden and residential tenements within the mining leases at the nearby minefields. Tracing their history and the buildings which stood, or now stand, thereon will require a great deal of research in the files held by the two Archives. A fascinating study of a unique town should be the result.

NT UNIVERSITY HISTORY

The University of the Northern Territory has commissioned **Baiba Berzins** and **Dr Peter Loveday** to write a history of the University and of preceding institutions of post secondary education from the 1950s. The history is to be completed in 1998, ready for publication at commemorative celebrations in 1999.

Baiba and Peter would be glad to hear from people who have played a part in the history of the Darwin Community College, the Darwin Institute of Technology, the University Planning Authority, the University College of the Northern Territory or the Northern Territory University and have collected relevant material or would like to be interviewed.

Baiba and Peter can be contacted through the NT Archives Service or through **Christine Edward** at the NT University on (089) 46 6808.

HISTORY OF TOURISM

Baiba Berzins has been awarded an NT History Award for work on a history of tourism in the Northern Territory from the late 1940s to 1974. She has already started work on the project and expects to report on it early in 1995.

Baiba has recently completed a manuscript of a history of women on the North Coast of NSW for the Royal Australian Historical Society and is now working not only on tourism but with Peter Loveday on a history of the Northern Territory University.

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ALICE SPRINGS/TENNANT CREEK VISIT

On 3rd July, I flew down to Alice Springs to visit government agencies and discuss with their staff the services that NT Archives Service provides.

I managed to meet with registry staff from the CCNT, Alice Springs Hospital, Alice Springs Town Council, Department of Lands, Education Department, Courts, Transport and Works Department, Department of Health and Community Services, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Tennant Creek Hospital and Tennant Creek Town Council.

My visit to Alice Springs allowed me the opportunity to inspect personal records of historical value to the Centre and the NT as a whole. It is unfortunate that the lack of an archival facility in Alice Springs could place these valuable records at risk.

*Linda Bell
Archivist (Records Services)*



Linda Bell at the Alice Springs Court House

OBITUARY



FABIAN HUTCHINSON 1950 - 1994

During the last week of July 1994 Fabian died suddenly in Darwin. He was 43. Born in Launceston on 4 October 1950, Fabian grew up and was educated in Hobart. He completed his postgraduate training in archives at University College, London in 1980-81, beginning a career and contribution to the archives profession that will be long remembered.

Back in Australia he worked as an archivist for Mobil Oil and then Westpac. His subsequent move to South Melbourne City Library was prompted by economic necessity but the intellectual stimulus that he craved came from his position during that time as Tutor in Indian Studies at Melbourne University.

It was his profound and genuine interest in indigenous peoples that encouraged him in 1990 to take up the option to work in the Royal Archives in Tonga under the auspices of UNESCO and, on his return to Australia, to accept the position of Information Services Supervisor at the Central Land Council in Alice Springs in 1991, thus beginning his brief but memorable association with the Territory.

Although on the staff of the Central Land Council, Fabian saw his role in Central Australia as extending to the records of other Aboriginal organisations. It was the wider vision of the archival and 'keeping place' needs of Aborigines and their communities and institutions that resulted in his initiating the Central Australian Archives Project (CAAP) in 1993. This project covered the records of Yipirinya School, Tangentyere Council, Central Land Council and the Institute of Aboriginal Development.

From this grew the Central Australian Aboriginal Archive Programme and in the months and weeks before his death he was working towards setting up a Certificate in Information Studies course which was aimed at training local Aboriginal people in the management of information and records. He believed that this course would break new ground as it would include components specifically relating to 'keeping places' and Aboriginal archives.

Fabian was a cultured man, widely read, with interests in art, film, music, religion and an abiding concern for other people. In 1993-94, between starting CAAP and coming back to the Territory as Archivist of the Central Land Council, he spent a year working to establish an archival collection of HIV/AIDS educational materials at the Australian National University in Canberra, an assignment which, despite its difficulties, he pursued in his singular and professional way.

He will be greatly missed by his Territory friends and colleagues and especially those with whom he shared his work and his life in Central Australia. It is for us who remain to continue what he began.

Don Brech

NT ARCHIVES SERVICE

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