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Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Library

MS 4667

Bruce Wright field notebooks

1963-1975

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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:	Wright, Bruce J.
Title:	Bruce Wright field notebooks
Collection no:	MS 4667
Date range:	1963-1975
Extent:	0.53 linear metres (3 archival boxes)
Repository:	AIATSIS Collections

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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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

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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:

Bruce J. Wright field notebooks, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 4667, Item [no.].

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Handwritten notes and rough sketches in 31 small field notebooks by Bruce J. Wright, author of papers on Western Australian Aboriginal rock art, educator and former Registrar of Sacred Sites, Department of Sites, Western Australian Museum. The notebooks, which cover sites visited from 1963 to 1975, were the result of Wright's fieldwork in Western Australia, particularly in the Pilbara. Wright's accompanying photographic prints and negatives, transparencies, maps, drawings and inventories are held in the AIATSIS Audiovisual Collection.

Scope and contents note

This collection contains field notebooks with handwritten diary notes and some rough sketches depicting Australian Aboriginal art sites in Western Australia. These were compiled by Wright during fieldwork in Western Australia, mainly the Pilbara, between 1963 and 1975. Most of the notebooks are numbered and have an index to sites visited. Approximately half of the collection is the result of grants made to Wright by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS), now known as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

Provenance

The notebooks were transferred from the AIATSIS Audiovisual Section to AIATSIS Library from the Bruce J. Wright Collection. Wright deposited his collection with AIATSIS in September 2005.

Material separated from the collection

Site drawings, photographic prints and negatives, original drawings, colour transparencies, albums and inventories are held in the Audiovisual Archive Collection.

Related material

For a complete list of works by Bruce J. Wright, held by the Library, and for other related material consult [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue.

For access to Audiovisual material contact AIATSIS [Collections](#).

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

Existence and location of copies

Photocopies of the field notebooks were made by the Library and sent to the Depositor.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bruce James Wright was born in Perth, Western Australia (WA), in 1928. He obtained a Bachelor of Education from Western Australia and a further degree from the University of Armidale, majoring in Prehistory and Anthropology. Wright taught in schools, becoming a Headmaster of several. In the 1960s, while at the Roebourne School, he developed a keen interest in the Australian Aboriginal people, their pre-history and their art.

By 1972 Wright was appointed District Superintendent for the Department of Education of WA, initially for the South-west corner and later for the Kimberley-North-west District. He later became Superintendent of Curriculum for the Department and, in this role was responsible for educational progress and, more specifically for Aboriginal education in the state. From 1975 Wright was Registrar of Aboriginal Sites in the Department of Sites,

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Western Australian Museum, a position he held for seven years. From the early 1960s Wright wrote on Aboriginal Australians in Western Australia. This included his *Rock art of the Pilbara region, North-west Australia*, Occasional Papers in Aboriginal Studies no.11, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1968, [held in the Library at B N 947.77/R1].

Controlled Access headings

Geographic names

Pilbara area (WA SF50, SF51, SG50)

Personal names

Wright, Bruce J.

Subjects

Art – Rock art

Art – Rock art – Engraving

Sties – Sacred sites

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Item

- 1 Pilbara sites and notes May 1963 - October 1964. Includes drawings and hand drawn maps. Includes information from informant, Coppin Dale and 11 loose pages. [See also no. 19 and no. 30 for references to Coppin Dale]. Ms. 140pp.
- 2 Includes: Exercise book including mostly pencil sketches and maps, 'Field notebook no. 2, B.J. Wright. Abydos and Woodstock May 1964; Brown paper cover titled, 'Field notebook – No. 2, B.J. Wright, Abydos and Woodstock May 1964 – empty. Ms. 40pp.
3. Field notebook no. 3, B.J. Wright. Abydos and Woodstock 1964 and Pilbara sites 1965-66. Includes Pilbara sites. Ms. 84pp.
- 4 Field notebook no. 4, B.J. Wright, Pilbara sites 1967-68. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 133pp.
- 5 Field notebook no. 5, B.J. Wright, Murchison River May 1968. Includes had drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 51pp.
- 6 Field notebook no. 6, B.J. Wright, Pilbara sites 1968-69. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 53pp.
- 7 Field notebook no. 7, B.J. Wright, Newman Aug 1969 and Cape Lambert Dec 1970. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 56pp.
- 8 Field notebook no. 8, B.J. Wright, Waroona Oct 1967, Warburton Jan 1970 and Pilbara May 1970. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 52pp.

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- 9 Field notebook no. 9, B.J. Wright, Pingandy Dec 1970 and Pilbara sites Jan 1971. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 54pp.
- 10 Field notebook no. 10, B.J. Wright, Lamboo station Oct 1972, 'Directions from Ben and Margaret Bridge, Kimberley (S. of Halls Creek', written in biro on front cover). Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 10pp.
- 11 Field notebook no. 11, B.J. Wright, Packsaddle Oct 1975, Lake Muir Jan 1976, Roebourne June 1976, Derby June 1976, Pilbara dam site survey July 1976. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 223pp.
- 12 Field notebook no. 12, B.J. Wright, Yeelirrie survey Oct 1976, Newman railway Oct 1976 and Mandurah burial Jan 1977 and one foolscap sheet. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 160pp.
- 13 Small spiral bound notebook with text, hand drawn maps and drawings; Field notebook no. 13, B.J. Wright, Bush meeting Yandearra Feb 1977 and Kimberley trip Mar 1977. Includes hand drawn drawings and maps. Also a list of photographs and place names 3pp. Ms. 119pp.
- 14 Field notebook no. 14, B.J. Wright, Hamersley and Chichester ranges – Stan Aspinall trip – May 1977. Includes hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 104pp.
- 15 Field notebook no. 15, B.J. Wright, In service programme, Dec 1977, Woodstock visit May 1978, Site disturbance investigation Aug 1978, Dampier Archipelago survey Sep 1978. Also includes a 'Notice to all staff' about the in-service training programme. Ms. 50pp.
- 16 Field notebook no. 16, B.J. Wright, Pilbara bush meeting (Kangan – 1) Sept 1979, Woodstock Sept 1979, Noonkanbah Oct 1979. Ms. 48pp.
- 17 Field notebook no. 17, B.J. Wright, Broome Nov 1979, Balgo mobil visit Apr 1980, Pilbara bush meeting (Kangan – 2) May 1980, Dampier salvage May 1980, AIAS conference May 1980. Ms. 51pp.
- 18 Field notebook no. 18, B.J. Wright, Kimberley trip – Turkey Creek Jun 1980, Dampier and Roebourne Jun/Jul 1980, Woodside visit Jul 1980, Crown Law visit Aug 1980, Woodside visit Aug 1980, Dampier visit Aug 1980, Woodstock visit Aug 1980, Dampier visit Aug 1980, Argyle (Turkey Creek) visit Sep 1980. Ms. 90pp.
- 19 Field notebook no. 19, B.J. Wright, Pilbara trip with Coppin Dale Sep 1980, Dampier visit Oct 1980. [See also notebooks no. 1 and no. 30 for other references to Coppin Dale]. Ms. 22pp.
- 20 Field notebook no. 20, B.J. Wright, Dampier site disturbance Feb 1981. Ms. 39pp.
- 21 Field notebook no. 21, B.J. Wright, Strelley Mar 1981. Ms. 21pp.
- 22 Field notebook no. 22, B.J. Wright, Pannawonica May 1981, Dampier salvage May 1981, Dampier (Herbert Parker) May 1981, Woodside (Woodstock written in biro above) sites survey May 1981, Newman May 1981, MRD Quarry June 1981, Harding dam survey Jul 1981, Woodstock sites survey Jul 1981. Some drawings and maps. Ms. 78pp.

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- 23 Field notebook no. 23, B.J. Wright, ANZAAS conference Aug 1977, Harding River salvage Aug 1981. Ms. 37pp.
- 24 Field notebook no. 24, B.J. Wright, Snake soak Sep 1981. Ms. 10pp.
- 25 Field notebook no. 25, B.J. Wright, Woodstock Dec 1981, Roebourne Dec 1981. Ms. 14pp.
- 26 Field notebook no. 26, B.J. Wright, Minatome Onslow Survey – ethnography Jun 1982. Ms. 88pp.
- 27 Field notebook no. 27, B.J. Wright, Minatome Onslow survey – archaeology Aug 1982. Hand drawn maps and drawings. Ms. 70pp.
- 28 Notebook. Harding dam. Follow up discussion and notes on the ethnography Mar 1983. Ms. 55pp.
- 29 Notebook. Rockhampton 1984. Inside cover 'Apsley Gorge' 1984. Hand drawn map. Ms. 18pp.
- 30 Coppin. Exercise book. 1964. Ms. 6pp.
- 31 References. Exercise book and two loose sheets of writing paper containing reference notes and diagrams on Indigenous art. Ms. 50pp.

BOX LIST

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1-10	1
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Finding aid initially compiled by J.E. Kirkham in April 2010, updated by C. Zdanowicz in August 2016

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