UQFL49
Murray Island Fisheries Ltd Collection

Size
4 boxes

Contents
Correspondence; financial records; articles of Association and Prospectus of Company; newspaper cuttings; photographs.

Biography
In 1931 a crown grant for a 20-year lease was granted over the whole of the Torres Strait Islands of Devar and Waier Islands for the purpose of establishing a sardine factory. The Murray Island Fisheries Ltd was formed in 1931 to develop an export business in sun-dried and salted fish. Fishing operations commenced in 1934 but the company failed in the same year after unsuccessful attempts to obtain a government subsidy. Newman Neville Lyons was Manager and Secretary of the company.

Notes
Open access
This collection may contain culturally sensitive words or descriptions, some of which might not normally be used in certain public or community contexts. Captions transcribed from back of photographs. Square brackets indicate captions created by library cataloguer.

Box 1
49/1 – 42 Correspondence, outgoing, 28 Jan 1933 to 3 Nov 1934
49/43 – 111 Correspondence, incoming, 1933 to 1934
49/112 – 119 Financial records
49/120 – 121 Miscellaneous items
49/122 Articles of Association of Murray Island Fisheries Ltd
49/123 – 124 Prospectus of Murray Island Fisheries Ltd
49/125 Newspaper cuttings

Box 2
Folder 1
Fishing and fishing boats [all photographs predominantly showing indigenous Torres Strait Islander people, unless otherwise indicated]

1. [Four men standing in the water with fishing net full of fish]
2. [Close-up of the catch]
3. [Man pulling back net to reveal catch]
4. a & b [Group of men with net in water – two copies of photograph]
5. [Five men in a dinghy on the water with launch in background]
6. [Group of men on the beach offloading planks of wood from a dinghy]
7. [Four men standing in the water with fishing net full of fish]
8. [Beach landscape photograph]
9. [Men in water with dinghy]
10. [Sailing boat in full sail on the water – photograph taken from beach]
11. [Men at dockside unloading cargo from boat]
12. [Sailing boat “Vera” at dock side moorings]
13. [Man in the water carrying basket of fish]
14. [Man holding up a lobster. Non-indigenous man standing behind]
15. [Three men pulling a fishing net out of the water into the dinghy]
16. [Men in the water carrying baskets of fish]
17. [Men pulling net out of the water onto the beach]
18. [Men in the water standing near dinghy – with fishing net attached]
19. [Five men in the dinghy, rowing]
20. [Men in water with fishing net]
21. [Two men pulling net up onto beach – dinghy and sailing boat in background]
22. [Large ship at dock]
23. [Fish washed up on beach]
24. [Man holding three small fish in the palm of his hand]
25. [Net with fish inside]
26. [Men standing near dinghy loaded with cargo]
27. [Two men carrying cargo along beach]
28. [Men standing at the back of the dinghy using the fishing net]
29. [Two dinghies on the beach]
30. [Cargo in the foreground, two men in a dinghy on the water in background]
31. [Man up the mast of sailing boat]
32. [Man up the mast of sailing boat]
33. [Sailing boat “Melbidir” moored at dock]
34. [Steam boat in distance]
35. [Men working and resting at dock]
Folder 2

Bagan Si Api Api (Sumatra) and Penang. Mainly photographs of fishing.

36. [Temple, showing intricate decoration]
37. Terraced steps]
38. Rice paddies in a terraced arrangement]
39. [Rice paddies]
40. [Women washing clothes in conduit running down the middle of a street]
41. [Women washing clothes in canal]
42. [Women washing clothes in canal]
43. [Stately building]
44. [Women washing clothes in canal]
45. [Photograph of building behind trees]
46. [Stately building]
47. [Sailing boat on water. Other boats in background]
48. [Steam boats in harbour]
49. [Line of wooden sticks protruding from the sea]
50. [Line of wooden sticks protruding from the sea]
51. [Close-up of wooden sticks protruding from the sea]
52. [Six men sitting and drinking aboard a sailing boat. Next to a pile of fish?]
53. [Line of wooden sticks protruding from the sea]
54. [Men at boatyard examining sail]
55. [Sailing boats – dhow – on the ocean]
56. [Underside of jetty with fishing net attached]
57. [Construction site. Building materials foreground]
58. [Two men inspecting sail]
59. [Agricultural activity]
60. [Agricultural activity]
61. [Moored boats]
62. [Moored boats. Village huts behind]
63. [Two men standing in dinghy]
64. [Steam ship on water]
65. [Steam ship]
66. [Steam ship]
67. [Agricultural activity]
68. [Large bundle of wicker/straw material]
69. [Bundles of wicker/straw material]
70. [Bundles of wicker/straw material]
71. [Bundles being hoisted aboard ship]
72. [Men under the jetty]
73. [Man holding fishing net below jetty]
74. [Man in white uniform standing beside boardwalk]
75. [Narrow dirt road between wooden buildings]
76. [Man standing in boat with fishing net]
77. [Agricultural activity]

Box 3

34 loose photographs. Most of these have handwritten captions on the back. 16 are captioned ‘Duplicates’.

Folder 1

Murray Islanders

78. [Group of Murray Islanders in traditional dress]
79. [Group of Murray Islanders in traditional dress]
80. [Man holding model boat]
81. [Group of eight men, women and children]
82. [Man holding child. Thatched shelter in background]
83. Native Feast, Torres Straits [Postcard depicting a group of Islanders at a communal gathering]
84. Native Dance, Torres Straits [Postcard depicting group in traditional dress]
85. [Islanders boarding a boat and preparing to sail]
86. [Boat – Sedney A36 – on the water with passengers on board]
87. Wedding feast, Murray Island 1929 [Large gathering of Islanders at a meal]
88. Welcome party on beach in front of Teacher’s Residence, Murray Island on arrival Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, Governor of Queensland on Melbidir II. Recognizable [in the photograph]:
   • Sergeant of Police Kaikai Modee (dec’d)
   • Lui Bon (in Scout Uniform) Thursday Island
   • Police Constable Mabo Mopwale (dec’d)
   • Police Constable Josiah Baud (dec’d)
   • Police Constable Benny Mabo, Murray Island
   • Meb Salee (Boy’s Scout Uniform) Murray Island
89. King’s Birthday Sports gathering in old school grounds, Murray Island: Buildings: Left – Government Teacher’s Residence, Centre – Medical Aid Post, Right – School

91. Girls at ball game – Las Bay, Murray Island. From right – Mena (Doboro) Bennyfather, Murray Island; Annie (Loko) Tapim, Thursday Island; Kamazi Wag (dec’d); Godai (Baruna) Williams, 76 Oxley St. Acacia Ridge, Brisbane; Mabigee (Kaumi) Bon, Thursday Island; Dalena (Barsa) Mataika (dec’d); Bakoi Baud, Murray Island; Kabay Sambo (dec’d) (Umpire); Wais (Ansey) Pearson, Yorkey’s Knob; Gagree (Bon) Sailor, Thursday Island; Emily (Agale) Ah Mat, Thursday Island; two at extreme left unrecognisable.

92. Native women from Mer on north side of Dowar Island.

93. Murray Island employees (except white boy sitting in front) [postcard]

94. King’s Birthday Sports gathering on old school grounds, Murray Island. Umpire – circled in centre with white shirt sleeves and white trousers, Lage Jacob Gabey then Chief Councillor and Senior Assistant Teacher. Buildings: Left – Government Teacher’s Residence, Centre – Medical Aid Post, Right – School

95. Two Murray Islanders. One on left is half caste [sic]

96. [Two Islanders. One young man and one elderly man]

97. Three Murray Islanders [two young men and one young woman]

98. [Two men standing outside traditional hut]

99. Two native girls employed by the company [two Islander women]

100. Native girls employed by the company in packing etc. [From left]: Liz?, Wagi, Kamazi, Malina]

101. [As above]

102. Factory workers from left to right: Dalena (Barsa) Mataika (dec’d); Kamazi Wag (dec’d); Dobam (Mataika) Odo, Murray Island; Jessie (Oney) Sagigi, Murray Island; European visitor; Elizabeth (Geas) Tom, Murray Island; Wagi Tabo (dec’d), Gagree (Bon) Sailor, Thursday Island; Mobee (Tabo) Savage, Kubin, Moa Island.

103. At Dowar Island near fisheries buildings. From left to right: Bending (unrecognisable); Alo Tapim Snr (dec’d) holding Company’s mascot “Bargain”; Geede Williams, Yorkeys Knob; Peter Tapau Snr (dec’d) white lavalava; Spear Sambo (dec’d) facing camera; Mataika Maza, Innisfail; Jack Ansey, Murray Island, white tee shirt; Tom Tapau, Murray Island, white athletic singlet & lavalava; Morey Ghee, Murray Island.

104. At Coconut Island. Left to Right: Jalag Bob, Coconut Island Councillor; Gordon Bright, European; Lui Bon, Government Teacher Coconut Island now Thursday Island; Visitor, European, Nev Lyons; Olandi Pearson, Chief Councillor, Coconut Island.

105. Josiah Baud (dec’d) standing by flattie on beach Dowar Island

106. On board Troubadour. Back from left: Wagi Tabo (dec’d); David Debewale (dec’d); Sabau Dau (dec’d); Alo Tapim Snr., (dec’d); Bob Ghee (dec’d); David Williams, Thursday Island; Josiah Baud (dec’d). Front: Back to camera (unrecognisable).


109. Fish caught on tow line [two men on fishing boat – one holding fish, other with back to camera]

110. Fish caught on tow line on Troubadour

111. Bob Ghee (dec’d) holding King Fish on deck Troubadour

112. Sabau Dau looking for sardines Dowar Island

113. Type of Murray Islander

114. Gedee Williams – half caste company’s cook on Dowar Island

115. Fisheries Employees, Dowar Island. Back row from left: Mr. Turner (European) standing; Kabere Doo, Murray Island; Sabau Dau (dec’d); Mr. Fletcher (European); Tetor Loko (dec’d); Tapim Bennyfather, Murray Island; Morey Ghee Murray Island (up coconut tree); Timothy Debewale (dec’d); Jack Ansey, Murray Island. Centre left to right: Bob Ghee (dec’d) standing; Gordon Bright (European); Fred Kropp (European) Thursday Island; Mick Tuesley (European); Jim O’Connell (European); European visitor; Kay (European); David Debewale (dec’d); Murray Islander (unrecognisable) Front row left to right: Dalena (Barsa) Mataika (dec’d) kneeling; Waid (Ansey) Pearson, Yorkey’s Knob; Kamazi Wag (dec’d); Wagi Tabo (dec’d); Geede Williams, Yorkey’s Knob, Alo Tapim Snr. (dec’d); Elizabeth (Geas) Tom, Murray Island; Daisey (Ansey) Lui, Coconut Island; Dobam Odo, Murray Island; Gagree (Bon) Sailor, Thursday Island; Jessie Sagigi, Murray Island; Bakoi Baud, Murray Island.

Folder 2
Murray Island Fisheries owners and employees

117. [Four girls standing on a verandah in background. Man in foreground]
118. [Group of children sitting on verandah. Man standing against tree in foreground]
119. [Four men leaning against railing on boat]
120. [Man standing in front of hut wearing white apron and chef’s hat, carrying a bowl]
121. “Nurmi” the captain’s steward on S.S. Pasi[?] loaned to [illegible] on voyage to Bagan Si Api Api (Chinese)
122. [Young Islander girl wearing white dress]
123. [Man sitting in doorway of shed]
124. [Man (European) sitting on bench top inside building]
125. Mr. O’Connell and Turtle. End of Spit, Dowar Island
126. [Five men (European) sitting outside traditional shelter] (2 copies)
127. Circa 1929 [Eight men dressed in suits standing on jetty next to steam boat]

Box 4
Folder 1
Views of Murray Island group of islands, includes Mer Island (Maer Island), commonly known as Murray Island; Dowar Island (Dauar Island) and Wyer (Waier Island)

128. [Coastal cliff formations]
129. [Coastal cliff formations]
130. The coconut grove with black cliffs behind
131. [Cliffs covered with scrub]
132. [Coastal cliff formation, Waier Island]
133. Rounding the end of Waier Island, to come in to the bay
134. Portion of coastline, Dauar Island
135. [Man leaning down to touch cormorant on beach]
136. Company’s transport vessel
137. Portion of coastline, Dauar Island
138. Corrugated iron building on stumps]
139. [Coastline from the water. Several buildings visible]
140. A view from Tur-Paser Gardner’s resting place on hilltop overlooking Government and Mission buildings at Beur Murray Island
141. Log on Dauar Island. Washed up from Fly River in New Guinea [man standing atop log]
142. Murray Island Cutter Tagai at anchor, Deo Murray Island. Gelam Hill in background
143. Mer [Island] in distance [photograph taken from shore showing dinghy in foreground and sailing boat behind]
144. View of the company's buildings
145. [Elevated view of Island]
146. [Rocky coastline]
147. Dowar Mountain meeting sea on northern side
148. Dowar Island showing mountain and spit, where factory stands. Eastern end of Dowar is cut out
149. Right is Dowar Island, left is Wyer Island. Circa 1929
150. Dowar Island as seen from Mer. Fishery sight at right end. Circa 1929
151. Dowar Mountain meeting the sea on the south side of Dowar
152. [View of sea through palm trees]
153. Eastern end of Dowar Island and the whole of Wyer Island
154. Netting fish near Wyer
155. [Cliff rock formations]
156. [Coastal cliff formations]
157. Mer Island
158. The village on Mer, seen from height on Mountain
159. Murray Island native woman preparing a feast from sardines given them by the Company – surplus of haul
160. Ah Mat (Singalese cook) and Gordon Bright at temporary kitchen on northern side of Dowar
161. Fish in baskets. Baskets average 100 lbs
162. Sun drying sardines in trays, Dowar Island. People in picture unrecognisable
163. Canning of sardines in factory, Dowar Island. From left to right: Back to camera (unrecognisable); Kamazi Wag (dec'd); Wais (Ansey) Pearson, Yorkeys Knob; European (visitor); Nev Lyons (European); Unrecognisable (Islander); Bob Ghee
164. [Islander men working with fish]
165. First batch of sardines canned at Murray Island. Packing shed showing behind [group of seven men in picture]
166. View from top of Dowar Hill looking towards Fisheries Building at Giar Pit. Troubadour at anchor off-shore
167. Sun drying sardines in trays at Giar Pit, Dowar Island. Murray Island in distance
Folder 2

Murray Island Fisheries buildings, fish drying site and fish processing

168. Laying down concrete foundations for Fisheries Buildings at Dowar Island. From left to right: Gordon Bright (European); Sabau Dau (dec'd); Mick Tuesley (European); Esaka Ghee (Murray Island); Jim O'Connell (European) In foreground (bending): David Williams, Thursday Island

169. [Wooden stick structure on beach with island in distance.] (Photograph has been double-exposed)

170. Old school playgrounds. Buildings: Left – Teacher’s residence; Centre – Medical Aid Post; Right - School

171. Fish drying (Dowar) showing thicket protecting drying site, [photo taken] from factory from north western [aspect]

172. Temporary kitchen. Mr Fletcher, acting cook. Note skeleton of factory

173. Factory – in course of erection

174. [Incomplete factory]

175. [Traditional hut]

176. Skeleton of factory. Native men at work. Mer in distance

177. Freshly caught sardines in fisheries flattie, Dowar Island

178. Sun dried sardines in baskets at fisheries building, Dowar Island

179. Fish drying near the packing shed, Dowar

180. Fish drying on trays. The ground has been levelled. Note the sea sand in foreground. The trays are on the western side of the factory. The lugger [ship] is on the Mer side of Dowar, i.e. the north side

181. Clearing sight [sic] for factory from Dowar Island and looking towards thicket, which is a short distance from end of spit

182. At the end of Spit, Dowar Island

183. Preparing and cleaning of ground for drying trays at Dowar

184. Factory – in course of erection

185. Factory – Dowar Island

186. [Traditional hut]

187. [Piece of coastline showing beach and hillside]

188. [Postcard showing interior of hut including bed and desk]

189. [Traditional hut]

190. Fish drying on trays

191. Giar Pit, Dowar Island showing fisheries buildings at left and Island employees quarters to the right
Item 3

Album containing photos of the Murray Island group of islands and inhabitants. Some photographs are duplicates of others in the collection

1. Thursday Island
2. Wharf at Thursday Island. Melbidir at wharf
3. Luggers [small boats] at Thursday Island
4. Luggers at Thursday Island
5. *Melbidir* at Thursday Island [wharf]
6. Reception to Mr. Agnew and us by the natives on arriving at Mer
7. Dowar Island showing Mountain and Spit, where factory stands [eastern end of Dowar cut out]
8. Dowar Island as seen from Mer [Island]. Fishery at right end
9. Dowar and Wyer [Islands] as seen from Mer
10. Dowar and Wyer Islands
11. Look-out on the luggers [man atop mast of boat]
12. Look-out on the luggers [man atop mast of boat]
13. Beach and Spit. Northern side of Dowar
14. The Spit – Dowar Island. Note the tents!
15. Beach northern side of Dowar. Recently landed luggage. Company’s flatty [dinghy] on beach
16. Beach on northern side of Spit, Dowar island
17. Dowar Mountain meeting the sea on the south side of Dowar
18. Mr O’Connell [standing] on turtle. End of Spit – Dowar
19. Native women from Murray [Island] on northern side of Dowar Island
20. Murray Islanders at play at Las (eastern side of Murray)
21. Eastern end of Dowar Island and the whole of Wyer Island
22. Dowar Island from Murray
23. Dowar and Wyer Islands, as seen from Mer
24. Clearing sight [sic] for factory at Dowar Island and looking towards thicket, which is a short distance from the end of the Spit
25. Cleaning and preparing ground for drying trays – Dowar
26. Preparing and clearing of ground for drying trays at Dowar
27. Factory – Dowar Island
29. Factory – in course of erection
30. Temporary kitchen. Mr Fletcher, Acting Cook. Note skeleton of factory [in background]
31. Ah-Mat (Singalese Cook) and Gordon Bright at temporary kitchen on northern side of Dowar
32. York Island. Mr Murray (Darnley Island) on left; Mr Woods (York Island) on right; Professor Goddard centre
33. Dowar (right) and Wyer (left). Seen from the top of mountain on Mer
34. Mer Island [sloping hillside with buildings visible in distance]
35. Netting fish
36. Netting fish near Wyer
37. Netting fish near Wyer
38. Netting fish near Wyer
39. Carrying fish in baskets from boat on northern beach of Dowar. Mer Island in distance
40. Carrying fish in baskets from boat on northern beach of Dowar. Mer Island in distance
41. Fish in baskets. Baskets average 100 lbs
42. Fish Traps – north-eastern end of Mer
43. First tray of dried fish. Tray carries 1 cwt
44. Fish drying (Dowar) showing thicket protecting drying site from factory, [photo taken] from north-western
45. Fish drying on trays. The ground has been levelled. The trays are on the western side of the factory. The lugger [boat] is on the Mer side of Dowar, i.e. the north side
46. Drying trays with fish – Dowar Island. Each tray carries 1 cwt
47. Drying trays
48. Drying trays
49. At the end of Spit – Dowar Island
50. Mer Island in distance
51. The lugger Nera off northern side of Dowar opposite camp
52. Southern end of Mer as seen from west
53. Southern end of Mer as seen from west
54. Mer Island
55. Darnley Island. Showing Medigee Bay on left; Mission Bay on right; building on hill is residence of native missionary
56. Murray Island
57. Murray Island seen from the western side. Native gardens on left, volcanic crater on right
58. Mer Island seen from the west. Volcanic crater on right of picture
59. Front view of Mr. Agnew’s house
60. Back of Mr. Agnew’s house, Mer Island. The large tree beneath the buildings is the rendez-vous for public meetings
61. The village of Mer seen from height on Mountain
62. Church in centre; Mr Agnew’s house to left, Murray Island
63. [Fleet of sailing boats on water]
64. [Large steam ship in near land. People standing on sea wall]
65. [The lugger Candia]
66. [Men standing around piles of rubble and sand, possibly for building]
67. [Bucket of sardines from above]
68. [Man in diving gear floating on top of the water]
69. [Shells mounted for display]
70. [Shells carved and mounted for display]
71. [View of sun setting through trees]
72. [Mer Island]
73. [Islander men and women working outdoors]
74. [Murray Island employees (except European boy sitting in front)]
75. [Murray Island employees, including five Europeans and child standing at back]
76. [Island men working on building site]
77. [Large group of Islander women and children]
78. [Group of Islanders. Buildings directly behind]
79. [Islander man spear fishing from a wooden structure in the sea]
80. [Partially constructed building]
81. [Partially constructed building]
82. [Group of Islanders holding a baby dugong]
83. [Island man dressed in white apron and cap standing in front of hut carrying bowl]
84. [Island children sitting on and standing around four dead dugong lying on the beach]
85. [Large gathering in clearing near buildings]
86. [Large gathering in clearing near buildings]
87. [Large gathering in clearing under trees]
88. [Wooden scaffolding or fencing standing in front of furniture under trees]
89. [Photograph of Islands from an elevation]
90. [Photograph of Islands from an elevation]
91. [Photograph of Islands from an elevation]
92. [Photograph of Islands from an elevation]
93. [Photograph of Islands from an elevation]
94. [Long white building with corrugated iron roof behind palm trees]
95. [European man holding large fish aboard boat]
96. [Traditionally constructed shelter over long benches]
97. [Drying trays filled with sardines]
98. [Drying trays filled with sardines]
99. [Submersible or other object sinking beneath the sea]
100. [Object almost fully submerged in the sea]
101. [European man standing in front of traditional hut]
102. [Photograph of jetty surrounded by small boats and a large steam ship in middle distance]
103. [Two Islander men carrying a large fish skewered on a stick]
104. [Object almost fully submerged in the sea]