
**A Protocol
for
Laves' 1931 Noongar Field Notes**

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on behalf of the Reference Group

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Introduction

The American linguist Gerhardt Laves visited Albany in 1931 and, over a couple of months, he wrote down stories and language information that a number of Noongar people told him.

The field notes he wrote were put away until 1985, when they were sent to what is now the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra. In 2002, AIATSIS decided to have the notes typed up so that they could be more easily used.

AIATSIS organised a meeting in June 2002 at UWA to talk about that material. After the meeting it was decided to consult with the community to develop a culturally appropriate protocol for the right way to return the material. This protocol is the result.

Protocol

A protocol is a way of going about things, which people agree to follow. This protocol is for AIATSIS, UWA researchers, any other researchers interested in the field notes, and – most importantly – the Noongar families and community.

This protocol is recognition that the information in the Laves field notes is part of the continuing culture of Noongar families and people associated with the Albany region.

- We recognise that the field notes contain stories and language information that have great cultural importance for the families and community, especially because the passing down of language and cultural knowledge has been seriously affected in this region.
- We recognise that the information came from a number of individual Noongar people from various families.
- We recognise that the different families today have rights in the stories and language given by their own old people in 1931, and want to decide how the field notes are managed now.
- We want to inform the specific people and families today who have rights through Noongar culture to particular parts of the field notes, and
 - accordingly, we identified and contacted Elders who were descended from the Noongar people Laves spoke with in Albany.
 - These senior contact people should be consulted at all stages by anyone wanting to use the field notes. This follows accepted practice for research with Indigenous communities, as expressed in the AIATSIS *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*.
 - These people have a role as custodian and a great deal of responsibility to their families and the Noongar community. They also have their

own discretion as Elders and may decide what material can be shared and what may be restricted to family.

- The senior contact people will be offered copies of the relevant field notes for their family to hold in trust for other family or community members.
- Access to the field notes is being restricted at this stage, subject to the following:
 - Initially, decisions on restriction are being made by a number of men from the different families.
 - In each family, the senior contact people together with family members will then decide on future uses of the material, and on what may be available to family members, other Noongar families and community, and the wider community.
- The field notes are raw notes which will need more research work to get the most benefit from.
- The families and senior contact people may choose to modify this protocol from time to time.

But this protocol is more than just a list of instructions for people who want to use the information in the field notes. We also want people to understand why this protocol is the way it is, how it was developed, and what the field notes are like. We also want to put forward some ideas for how the field notes might be used.

Significance of the Field Notes

Everyone who has learnt about the field notes recognises their cultural importance for the families and community. In addition to the stories and language, there are genealogies and information on totems and other aspects of traditional social organisation.

The senior contact people, other members of the Reference Group and other people have expressed their views on the significance of the field notes in our meetings. The following are some examples:

Ezzard Flowers stressed the importance of language in knowing about culture: 'Noongar bush tucker, there's no other language for it'.

Helen Nelly expressed a desire to carry on her father's custodianship of this knowledge: 'I just want to be the owner of my father's things.'

Mingli Wanjurri Nungala described her feelings that the stories are 'precious, like gold' to her and her family, and how she felt privileged to be able to do something with this knowledge now.

Roma Winmar talked of the strong feeling of this knowledge being possessed in the families today.

Iris Woods said that it was 'good to see [the old language] written' and to be able to put it together with the language that has been passed down through the families, to 'have the old language alongside the words ... today'.

Copyright

According to copyright law, Laves owned the copyright in the fieldnotes because he wrote them. He didn't 'own' the stories themselves, but he did own the copyright in their written form in the fieldnotes. As we understand it, the copyright in the fieldnotes was given over to AIATSIS in 1985, and is still owned by them. AIATSIS have indicated that they want to work with the families and community on how the fieldnotes are used. We expect that they will be happy for the families to publish their stories in books etc. if that is what the families want to do.

Because the fieldnotes have not yet been published (as a book etc.), the fieldnotes are currently in perpetual copyright. If they are published, then the copyright will run out 75 years after the death of the author, that is in 2068.

Families' Rights in the Field Notes

The research team recognised from the outset of the project that there were Noongar families, especially Elders, who had a direct interest in the Laves collection. It is well accepted that in the past many Aboriginal families and communities have been exploited by researchers and research institutions. Indeed, such exploitation has been a feature of Australian colonial practice. However, Indigenous peoples' rights to their own cultural heritage and knowledges is now being recognised internationally through the developments of international human rights law, and those practices are being implemented in countries including Australia. AIATSIS, chaired by Professor Mick Dodson, now strongly encourages practices that respect Indigenous interests in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. They hold many valuable cultural collections and occupy a position of trust with respect to many Indigenous people, descendants and communities, Australia wide.

Laves wrote down more stories and information with some Noongar people than with others. We have focussed on identifying the close family of the major contributors in 1931:

Nobbie Brown
George Nelly
Bob Roberts
Moses Waibong

Hughie Williams
Freddy Windmill/Winner

Laves did not write down as much from the other people he spoke to:

Jimmy Williams
Markham (Malcolm?) Roberts
Mrs Windmill (Annie?)
Simon Williams
Mrs Harry Esperance (Train Anne)
Yorkshire Bob
Abel Williams.

We encourage elders who are descended from these people to contact AIATSIS if they are interested in obtaining more information.

The people who Laves worked with in 1931 probably thought of themselves as a community. Sometimes they joined together to tell him stories. We thought the best approach was to concentrate on the community of their descendants.

We recognised that the most important people would be the direct descendants, so we began by trying to identify who they were. In some cases this was easy, in others it was more difficult. If we couldn't find a direct descendant who could be a senior contact person for their families interests in the field notes, we tried to find the most closely connected people today who were able to take on this role and sought the agreement of a Reference Group.

Noongar families have suffered great harm from colonisation. Native welfare legislation tore families apart. Racism impacted in ways that are still manifest today. Sickness and lack of proper medical care resulted in many preventable deaths. There has been a breakdown of culture, language and lore. There is a need for healing at the individual, family and community levels. These things mean that it has not been an easy or simple task to return the Laves materials to the families and communities. Connections between members of families and communities are complex. There are many different interests within the Noongar families and community which have been reflected in this project.

We ended up doing a combination of things. We used different genealogical information (Laves, Tindale, etc) and oral histories as supplied by elders to find those descendants we could. We were fortunate that the Laves materials contained a genealogy compiled in consultation with the speakers he worked with in 1931. In general, we found that Laves' genealogies showed a high degree of consistency with other sources and current knowledge. However, some people didn't agree with all details.

We decided to get together a Reference Group, with the senior contact people for the relevant families as the core members. Over the course of months and different meetings we also included some other people so that we had a Reference Group of people who were descendants, and/or elders, and/or language speakers/teachers, and/or individuals who the Reference Group believed were connected to the original community who spoke to Laves, and/or connected to the community of their descendants.

The result is that the people who make up the **Reference Group** as of November 2005 are:

Hazel Brown/Audrey Brown
Jenny Crosbie
Hannah McGlade
Cameron McGlade
Mingli Wanjurri Nungala
Helen Nelly/Russell Nelly
Lomas Roberts
Roma Winmar
Kim Scott
Denise Smith
Iris Woods/Ezzard Flowers
Gerald Williams (Sr)/Gerald Williams (Jr)

After a number of meetings in Perth and Albany, Elders who were regarded as descendants of the people who Gerhard Laves spoke to and who were to be recognised as senior contact people were named. These Elders are custodians, and as such they have a great deal of responsibility towards their family and even the wider community. The research team and Reference Group are also encouraging the Elders to work with linguists and educators so that the stories and language can be revived and brought back, for example, through future educational materials. The Reference Group acknowledged that there are many other people and families who may have relationships to the people that Laves spoke with in Albany, and we should respect those relationships. It is hoped that these personal relationships between Elders, families and other Noongar people can proceed in a spirit of goodwill and respect. Recognising the complex relationships and different interests within the group, we believe that we have achieved a good level of consensus, even if the Reference Group has not always been unanimous on all details. It may be that some other Noongar people will seek access to the family stories from AIATSIS, or even seek to nominate themselves as a senior contact person, and if this happens we ask AIATSIS to respect and maintain the spirit of this protocol by properly consulting the senior contact people named here.

Speakers 1931	Senior people to be consulted
George Nelly	Helen Nelly Russell Nelly
Moses Waibong	Mingli Wanjurri Nungala
Bob Roberts Malcolm Roberts	Lomas Roberts Hazel Brown Audrey Brown
Nobby Brown	Hazel Brown Audrey Brown (for Edward Brown)
Hughie Williams Abel Williams Freddy Winner/Windmill	Ezzard Flowers Iris Woods
Simon Williams	Gerald Williams Jr
Yorkshire Bob	Warren Yorkshire Jenny Crosbie
Jimmy Williams	Darryl Williams Ezzard Flowers
Mrs Windmill (Annie?) Mrs Harry Esperance (Train Anne)	No Senior Contact Person identified.

The Appendix to this protocol contains information from the Senior Contact People on their family connections to the speakers in 1931.

Culturally Sensitive Materials

An area of concern we identified at the beginning of this project was whether any parts of the field notes might need to be restricted because of culturally sensitive material. Different kinds of restrictions may be appropriate. Some materials may be restricted to men only. Some materials may be considered not suitable for children. Other materials may be considered to be restricted to the relevant families.

Since it was mostly men who spoke to Laves, before any other work on the field notes could happen, we decided that the material needed to be first checked by males with the proper authority from the different families. This ensured ongoing respect for Noongar customary law. None of the women researchers or members of the Reference Group viewed the materials until it had undergone this checking process. This has been done for most of the families, but more needs to be done for some of the stories.

The Laves collection at AIATSIS is currently 'restricted' – not open to the public. The research team made this request because of the likelihood of culturally sensitive

men's only material being included. There are some materials that will be restricted for men only, and/or some may be restricted to adults. Other material may be considered appropriate for family members only. In order to give effect to the spirit and intention of the protocol, the whole of the collection may need to be made restricted for a further period of time. A continuing restriction status will ensure that Elders' permission is properly sought and given prior to field notes being used, and will therefore ensure an ongoing level of respect for the protocol that has been developed. Ultimately the Elders will decide on any restrictions.

Consultations

An initial community meeting was held at the School of Indigenous Studies at UWA in June 2002, with the following people present:

Community Members

Edward Brown (Sr) , Cameron McGlade, Hannah McGlade, Mingli
Wanjurri Nungala, Kim Scott, Iris Woods, Warren Yorkshire,

AIATSIS

Patrick McConvell, David Nash

UWA School of Indigenous Studies

Jill Milroy, Sally Morgan

UWA Linguistics

John Henderson

Hannah McGlade and Kim Scott played an important role in bringing AIATSIS together with community members. Bob Howard and Aiden Eades in Albany provided valuable assistance which was very important to the consultations.

A second meeting was held at Murdoch University in November 2002. People there included:

Community Members

Ed Brown, Neville Collard, , Sandra H., Albert Knapp, Hannah
McGlade, Lomas Roberts, Kim Scott, Denise Smith-Ali.

Community Members/ Murdoch University

Len Collard, Marie Taylor

UWA Linguistics

Andrew Gargett, John Henderson

At that meeting, Kim and Hannah were appointed by the community members to liaise between UWA and the families and community. Denise Smith-Ali was also later invited to become part of the liaison team.

In mid-2004, a grant from AIATSIS was given through UWA to develop this protocol for the return of the Gerhard Laves archival material to the relevant

Noongar families. The general procedure we agreed to follow was to contact the most immediate descendants and identify elders. We thought we would also incorporate language speakers connected to the people Laves spoke with in 1931.

Two Meetings were held in Albany. People at the first meeting included:

Bertram Williams, Alma Woods, Ivy Woods, Winnie Woods, Ray Wynne, Lomas Roberts, Carol Petterson, Bob Howard, Shirley Wynne(?)

The second meeting included people like:

Aiden Eades, Ray Wynne, Ivy Woods, Winnie Woods, Lizzie Brown, Olivia Roberts, Malcolm (Boyo) Roberts.

Bob Howard and Aiden Eades helped to organise these meetings.

Three more meetings were held in Perth in 2005. Senior members of many of the families of those people Laves spoke to were represented. Those attending on August 19, 2005 were:

Community Members

Audrey Brown, Hazel Brown, Jenny Crosbie, Hannah McGlade, Connie Moses, Mingli Wanjurri Nungala, Helen Nelly, Lomas Roberts, Kim Scott, Roma Winmar

UWA

John Henderson, Harry Wykman

Curtin University

Tim McCabe

Apologies from Gerald Williams Jr, and from Warren Yorkshire via his brother.

On October 28 these people were present:

AIATSIS

Jane Anderson

Community Members

Audrey Brown, Jenny Crosbie, Ezzard Flowers, Hannah McGlade, Mingli Wanjurri Nungala, Helen Nelly, Kim Scott, Denise Smith-Ali, Roma Winmar, Iris Woods

UWA

John Henderson

Curtin University

Tim McCabe

Jane Anderson from AIATSIS is a specialist in the area of intellectual property law and indigenous control of cultural materials. She talked to the meeting about protocols for cultural materials and practices that have been adopted by AIATSIS

which respect the rights of families and communities to control and manage their ancestral cultural knowledges and property.

The last meeting of the Reference Group was held on November 28 also at Curtin University:

Community Members

Audrey Brown, Jenny Crosbie, Ezzard Flowers, Hannah McGlade, Cameron McGlade, Mingli Wanjurri Nungala, Helen Nelly, Russell Nelly, Kim Scott, Denise Smith-Ali, Roma Winmar, Iris Woods, Lomas Roberts

UWA

John Henderson, Harry Wykman

The People in 1931

The people who gave the stories and language information in 1931 seem to have been a community of people who knew and respected one another. We want to show how the speakers in 1931 live on in the minds and hearts of the members of their families.

We include here just some of these memories:

Woibung Moses was the family of Ethel Woyung McGlade, who passed away in the 1970's and who is loved and remembered by her family today. Ethel's great granddaughter Hannah Woyung McGlade has been involved in the Laves protocol and feels that her great-great grandfather **Woibung Moses** has a presence now today through the Laves collection and protocol. We have learnt about his corroboree in Albany in the 1920's, and heard from Aden Eades how he liked to play backgammon at the Gnowangerup reserve. Alma Woods even remembered his other Noongar name, Wundgarit, which was once recorded by Daisy Bates. Granny Ethel Woyung knew who reared her up and who was her Noongar family and it's proper now to be able to learn from Grandfather **Woibung Moses**. He was born at Karagarining, near Esperance, a white cockatoo man of the Kurin Minang people.

Today, elders of the Roberts family remember **Freddy Winner** and his brother Henry Dongup (same mother) singing for dolphins to bring salmon into shore to be speared. Both these men are mentioned in Ethel Hassell's book *My Dusky Friends*.

Freddy Winner, says Hazel Brown, was like the doctor for the community, and the one who knew most 'magic'. His brother, Dongup, was the boss. 'If you wanted any dispute settled, you had to go to Henry Dongup. He settled all the arguments' He was a very gruff sort of person. He had authority, and he knew it.'

Hazel Brown also says 'Grandfather **Waibern** (??) had the wisdom. He knew languages. He was the one that told you what you could do, what was right and what was wrong. He did the guiding ...'

Hughie Williams used to walk with a limp, and used the support of a 'waana' stick. His knee was busted in a ritual spear fight.

The way these people were one community is shown by the way they seem to have shared stories. Laves notes suggest that these individuals told him stories together:

George Nelly and Bob Roberts
Moses Waibong and Nobby Brown.

In addition, at least **Bob Roberts** and **Freddy Winner** tell stories on separate occasions which seem very similar to one another.

Another way of looking at how these people were a community is to look at how many of them were related in one way or another. This affects how we might look at a community of descendants:

Bob and **Malcolm Roberts** were brothers.

Their sister, Ellie, was married (at the same time) to **Abel Williams** and Henry Dongup, whose brother was **Fred Winner**.

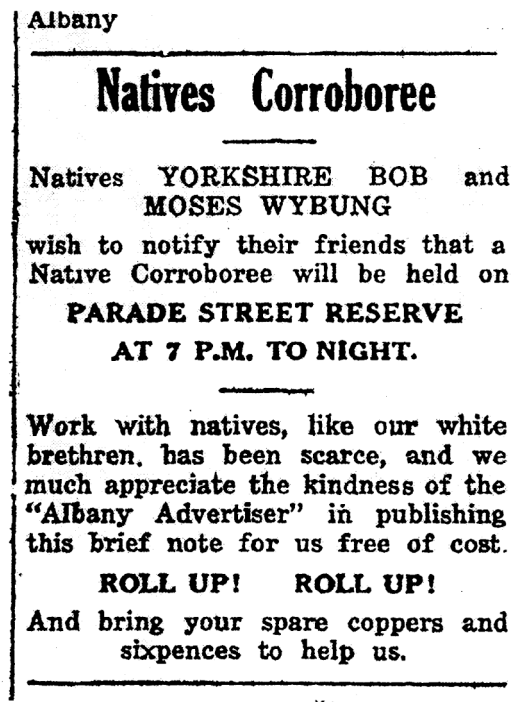
Another sister, Tilda, was married to **George Nelly**.

Yet another sister, Riddlan, was married to **Simon Williams**, whose sister – Connie was married to **Malcolm Roberts**.

Hughie Williams was **Abel Williams'** father. **Abel's** sister, Basleen, married **Bob Roberts**.

The Depression-era notice below is from the *Albany Advertiser* from December 30, 1930. It shows co-operation between **Yorkshire Bob** and **Moses Waibong**, and also suggests that they were well-respected in the Albany region.¹ This event was held just a few days before Laves arrived in Albany.

¹ Thanks to Bob Howard for providing this image.



In recognising the community of 1931, we are not suggesting that the stories all belong to the community as a whole. The Reference Group has recognised that the stories belong to the separate descendants of each of the people that Laves spoke with in 1931.

Place and People

Laves based himself in the town of Albany while he did this work in 1931. The names that groups use today to describe their affiliation vary in some ways from Laves' description. We don't try to resolve these differences here, but we are trying to show some of the connections between these different labels.

The people who spoke to him mostly appear to have identified themselves as either 'Kurinj'/'Kurrinj'² or 'Minong'. The one exception, Nobby Brown, has an association with 'Ngordongore'.

'Ngordongore,' Laves notes tell us, 'is Bunbury (west) proper south west including Cape Leeuwin', but elsewhere he writes, 'Ngordongore is not a real name but a direction term'. His notes also refer to Bibelmen people and he says their area is 'Katanning up to Pingelly ... inland from Pinjarra to Pinjelly'.

² The label 'KURIN' has been stamped on the top right of most of Laves' loose slips. We think the 'j' was left off the end because the stamp that Laves used had space for only five letters. This is consistent with the stamps that appear elsewhere in his notes.

Laves writes that Kurinj 'includes people of Albany to beyond Esperance to East Light Bay'. Assuming that 'East Light Bay' stands for 'Israelite Bay', this is the same area within which members of our Reference Group identify their traditional country today.

Interestingly, Laves also writes that 'Minong (are) a part of Kurinj'. Other non-indigenous historical sources like Norman Tindale and Daisy Bates use similar terms, but do not seem to have one as a sub-set of another.

Daisy Bates, in *Native Tribes of Western Australia*, variously describes 'Kurin' as those east of Albany, and at other times is more specific, naming 'Kurin' as having inhabited the areas now known as Esperance, 'Hopetoun and 'north-west of Bremer Bay'. Bates is so confident that she even describes the 'runs' of different groups. She has 'Kurin Bibbulmun' extending from Cape Arid (East of Esperance) to Hamersley River, and while Laves suggests 'Minong are part of Kurinj', Bates at one point refers to 'the Kurin section of the Minung Bibbulmun'.

Norman Tindale describes the area of the Koreng people as bounded on the west, approximately, by the Pallinup River, to the east as between the Fitzgerald and Gairdner Rivers, and extending inland to around Kukerin/Lake Grace, Katanning, and west of Cranbrook.

Tindale uses terms similar to Laves, namely **Koreng** and **Minong**, but he also uses the term **Nunga**, for people around Esperance, and **Wudjari**, whose area he says stretches from about Gairdner River to just west of Esperance. Tindale did his research of this area in the same decade as did Laves.

At least some of the people in our Reference Group refer to themselves as 'Wilomin Noongar', a name not recorded by anthropologists or other experts. This may relate to the Laves genealogies which characterises some individuals as 'Wiloborong'. Other members of the group identify themselves as 'Wandjurri' and/or 'Kurin'.

This information suggests that while it is possible to differentiate between peoples in this approximate area along the south coast between Albany and just east of Esperance, there is also clearly a strong association between them. Certainly, at least some of the families in our Reference Group have strong links with people in the Esperance area as well as around Albany.

More recently, in a submission to the Seaman Land Inquiry of the 1980s, this region is said to be distinguished by massive 'depopulation' and the significance of a massacre on Noongar people at Cocanarup is discussed. Gerhardt Laves visit was a mere fifty years after the date of that massacre.

Whatever words we use, it's clear that this area of country and its traditional people have suffered damage. That makes the proper return of the material collected and saved by Gerhardt Laves and our old people all the more important.

The Field Notes

Gerhardt Laves' Research on Australian Languages³

Gerhardt Laves (1906-1993) was an American post-graduate student of German background who conducted research on a number of Australian languages during his time in Australia, from August 1929 to August 1931. He produced a vast collection of field notes (and just a few audio recordings - of Karajarri from the north-west of WA). However, after he returned to America his life took a different turn and he did not continue with linguistic research. He had published only two brief notes from his work in New South Wales in 1929.

Laves achieved a lot in his time in Australia. He conducted major studies of the six languages listed below, and minor studies of more than twelve other languages.

- Gumbaynggir (northern NSW coast)
- Karajarri (Bidyadanga [La Grange], near Broome, northern WA)
- Bardi (Cape L'Évêque Peninsula, north of Broome, northern WA)
- Emdil [Matngele] (Daly River, NT)
- Ngan'gimerri (Daly River, NT)
- Kurrinj [Noongar] (Albany region, southern WA)

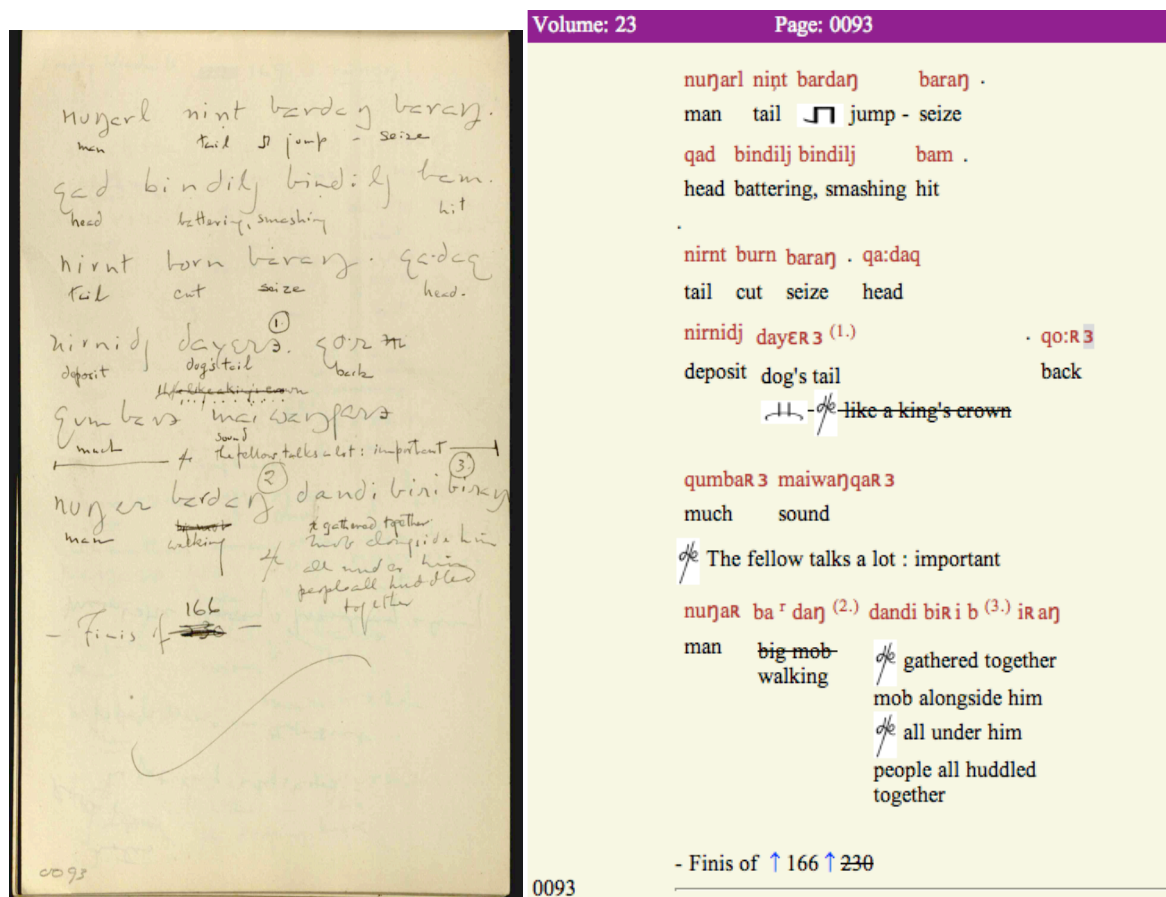
Laves kept his Australian language notes for over fifty years, largely unknown to researchers and the language communities involved. It was only in the mid-1980s that staff at what is now the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) found out about the notes. At first, only photocopies were made and sent to the AIATSIS Library, and later after Laves' death the original notes were sent. The originals are more readable than the earlier photocopies, but are still difficult to read in many places. They are also often difficult to interpret, for reasons discussed below. In 2003, AIATSIS started making digital images of the notes so that they could be made more easily available.

Laves' work is valuable not only because his more detailed studies were done at a time when more people spoke these languages fluently, but also because he was the first researcher of Australian languages who had professional training in Linguistics. The quality of his description is much better than many other early researchers.

³ This section draws on work by David Nash published at <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves/>

'I have made a study of a language in the region of Albany...'⁴

Laves spent around two months at the start of 1931 studying the language of the Albany region. He filled ten notebooks, 1570 pages in total, which are mostly stories told to him in Noongar by a range of speakers. There are also loose translations of these stories. Laves calls these résumés. There are some other notes including genealogies of the speakers' families (which he probably collected so that he could properly understand the kin-relation words in Noongar). Apart from the notebooks, there are also another 2,453 loose 'slips' with vocabulary and extra notes on some of the language in the notebooks. In 2002-2003, the Library at AIATSIS scanned each page of the notes into computer images.



This page is from a story by Freddy Winmer. Reproduced here with permission.

In 2002, AIATSIS contracted Linguistics at the University of Western Australia to type up the notes so that they would be easier to read. It is now possible to fit on one CDROM colour images of all the original pages together with the keyboarded notes.

⁴ Letter from Laves 1931. Cole correspondence, Fay-Cooper Cole papers, Anthropology Department papers. Department of Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. Cited by David Nash at <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves/letters.html>.

UWA also made a version of the keyboarded notes that can be viewed on a computer using browser software (such as Internet Explorer). The browser version is formatted to look something like the original pages and can show an image of the original page together with the keyboarded version in order to make it easier to interpret the original notes.

UWA also made a new version of the family tree diagrams in Laves' genealogies of the speakers he worked with.

Making the browser version available on a CDROM has the great advantage that it makes it much easier for more people to have a copy: one CDROM is easier and cheaper to make than photocopying over 4000 pages. However, because it's easier for more people to have copies, it's also more important now to work out the questions of access to the notes.

Identifying the separate authors of different parts of the notes

For most of the stories in the notebook volumes, Laves gives the name of the Noongar person who told him the story. In a couple of cases, two authors are named. In a few other cases, the authorship is less clear.

A few pages are attributed to '*Hughie Williams et al*', meaning '*Hughie Williams and others*', but there's no clue as to who the others were. In one case, Text 163(Q), the author is not identified at all.

For a few pages in the notebook volumes, Laves gives conflicting information and it's not clear which of two or more authors are involved. In the CDROM version, this is indicated by, for example '*Hughie Williams and/or George Nelly*'. In the different CD-ROM packages made for the different families, we have provided copies of these pages to both families involved.

The loose slips contain individual words, sentences and other bits of information, rather than whole stories. However many of these are drawn from the stories in the notebook volumes and Laves sometimes indicates on the slip the volume number and the text number that it comes from. For those pages, it would mostly be possible to relate the content to a particular author, though for most slips this will probably not be possible. Further work could be done in this area.

Reading the Notes

As with any historical document, it is important to understand both what Laves made them for and what condition they are in, in order to properly understand the notes as they are today. There are many reasons why we cannot just accept them at face value as a completely accurate record of the language at that time and place. This also explains some of the limitations of the typed-up version of the notes,

because the people who typed them up had to understand the originals as best as they could.

Physical condition

Laves stored the notes in his various homes over the years, at least sometimes in a basement or attic. Many pages were damaged by water, mildew and the ravages of time. Some pages are now completely unreadable, and many require some educated guesswork where the handwriting is obscured or faded. The image below is one where you can just see that there is writing there but it is too faded to read what it says.



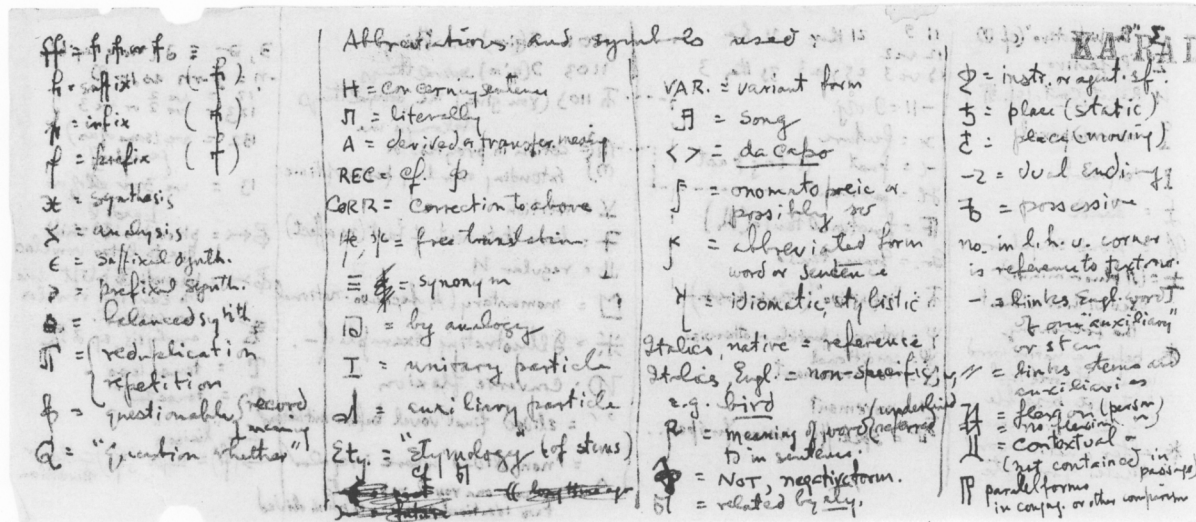
Notes

Field notes are just that: notes. Researchers' generally write their field notes only for their own use, as the basis for writing up a book or a paper to be published or a thesis. For convenience sake, they often use shortcuts which only have to be clear enough to remind the researcher what they meant at the time. It can sometimes be difficult enough for a researcher to be able to interpret something in their own notes, especially if it is a long time since they made them. It is usually much more difficult for other people to interpret the notes without the assistance of the researcher's memory.

Nowadays when we can easily use video cameras and audio recorders, it's hard to imagine how Laves could accurately get down the stories in writing as they were told to him. It's extremely difficult to write as fast as people can talk. If he had to ask people to repeat things word by word so he could get it down, it's quite common for people to say things a little differently when they repeat it and there's more chance that some words might get left out.

Special symbols and Abbreviations

Laves used a large number of special symbols that he seems to have made up himself. Many of these are a kind of shorthand for technical linguistic descriptions, and he provided some brief descriptions of what they mean, though it's not always clear what he intended by the description he gives.



However, there are other symbols that he doesn't explain the meaning of, and some of these seem to bear on the reliability of the information. One of them in particular, ϕ , is very common in the notes. In different places it possibly has meanings like: 'query', 'possibly', 'presumably', 'check this', 'alternative(ly)'. It is tempting to just ignore the special symbols when reading the notes, but with unexplained symbols like this you run the risk of misinterpreting the notes. You might end up think that something is an accurate record when it actually something that Laves wasn't sure about at all.

Hand-writing

A different problem is that the notes are all hand-written. As we all know, it can be hard to read someone else's handwriting if we're not familiar with it, especially if they were writing quickly or less carefully. And even though the more you work with Laves' notes, the more familiar you become with his handwriting, there are still places where it is hard to follow and readers can only make an educated guess.

Spelling

To write Noongar words, Laves uses many of the standard letters that are used to write English, but he also uses some technical phonetic symbols that linguists use to represent sounds in different languages. Most people aren't familiar with these phonetic symbols and this can make it difficult for them to work out exactly how the

speakers pronounced these words. You can probably make a pretty good guess most of the time, though. A short guide has been included on the CDROM packages and in the front of the Wordlist to explain what sounds go with the special symbols.

It is important to recognise that Laves' spelling is not necessarily how Noongar words are written today. In fact, there are various different systems of spelling Noongar words, and other one-off spellings are also used from time to time.

CD-ROM Packages

UWA has made a browser version of the entire field notes, with images of the original pages together with the recently typed-up version. A copy of this version will be held by AIATSIS.

Different CD-ROM packages have also been made for the different families, so that each has a copy of the stories and language information from their own old people. For some of the families there are two versions of their CD-ROM package:

- Open access. This package will be given to the senior contact person in each case. They can make them available to other family or community members.
- Access restricted because it includes culturally sensitive information. These CD-ROMs will only be made available to the senior men.

The Future: Using Laves' Field Notes

This protocol is recognition that the information in the Laves notes is part of the continuing culture of Noongar people from the Albany region today. In addition to indicating the right way for people to deal with the field notes, we also want to put forward some ideas for how the field notes might be used.

We recognise a pressing need for materials and activities to be developed to assist in language revitalisation. Family and community members want to encourage more teaching of the language, especially to children.

Wordlist

The Reference Group agreed that a wordlist (or basic dictionary) could be made from the notes. Harry Wykman from UWA has worked with the typed-up version of the notes to make a list of all the Noongar words that appear in the notes. He has also made a simple version of this list to be made into a book for family and community members as an introduction to the Laves materials.

Dictionary

It is hoped that these materials will make a major contribution to a substantial dictionary of Noongar, which would contain a lot of information on each word and would show the different words belonging to different geographical areas.

Learner's Guide

This could be a way to help people learn to speak Noongar in the right way. This would mean not just choosing the right words, but also put words and parts of words together in the right way to make sentences in the Noongar language from the Albany region.

Books on Cultural Knowledge

The organising group and the Reference Group look forward to appropriate stories being published for the family and community members to read. The relevant families will decide which stories they want to have published.

One idea is that, if some stories are published, it would be good if the book also talked about the people who originally provided the stories and also about their descendants. It would be good if their descendants could also tell in the book about how the stories connect with their own lives and knowledge. This would reinforce the recognition that the information in the Laves notes is part of the continuing culture of Noongar people from the Albany region today.

There are many Noongar artists who may assist with artwork for educational resources.

Workshops

Given that the notes can be difficult to understand, it may be that some families would like to hold workshops for family and community members to work through the stories.

Appendix: **Senior Contact People's Connections to the 1931 People**

These statements were submitted after the final meeting of the Reference Group.

1. Submitted by Hannah McGlade.

Mingli Wanjurri Nungala grew up in the bush of Jerramungup, Borden and Quaalup with her father Rod McGlade and her grandmother, Ethel Woyung McGlade, who was a 'mummy' to her. Ethel Woyung's own mother Mary or Meriji had passed away when she was little and she been grown up by her mothers family, Meriji's brother *Woibung Moses* and his wife Tilly.

Granny Ethel, who was born around the 1880s, always told us her family were the Moses'. When Mingli's daughter, Hannah Woyung McGlade first found out about the genealogies in the Laves collection it was like finding the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle. Hannah had some years ago given her son the Moses name in recognition of her grandmother's family.

Woibung Moses spent much time with Laves, and that was probably because Laves stayed at the White Star Hotel in Albany, owned by Granny Ethel's husband, Jim McGlade's family. Even though this family was not happy with Jim for taking a young Aboriginal girl as his wife, it's quite possible they helped bring Woibung and Laves together for their important talks.

The McGlade family look forward to looking after and bringing back the language and stories of their great-grandfather Woibung Moses born at Karagarning near Esperance, a white cockatoo man of the Kurin Minung people.

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2. Prepared by Kim Scott on behalf of the senior contact people listed below. The information was provided by these senior contact people, as well as drawing on the Laves and Tindale genealogical information and the Bates papers.

Lomas Roberts, Audrey Brown and Hazel Brown are the nephew and nieces of *Bob and Malcolm Roberts*, and the three surviving members of their generation of the Roberts clan.

The mother of these three was Sybil/Nelly Roberts, nee Limestone. Hazel's father was Fred 'Yiller' Roberts. The father of Lomas and Audrey was Fred 'Tjinjel' Roberts. Yiller and Tjinjel were the brothers of Bob and Malcolm, both of whom

spoke with Gerhardt Laves. It is believed that neither Bob nor Malcolm had children who survived to adulthood.

Edward Brown is *Nobby Brown's* great-grandson. Nobby Brown's son, Russell Brown, had two sons – James and Harry – who married **Audrey and Hazel Roberts**. Edward wanted his mother and Aunt Hazel named as 'senior people to be consulted' out of respect for their status as elders. Edward is taking on the role of senior contact person on behalf of the wider Brown family.

Gerald Williams (Jr.) is the grandson of *Simon Williams* and Riddlan Roberts. Gerald Williams (Sr.) married Molly Ruby.

Jenny Crosbie's mother was Carol Moses. Carol's mother was Dolly Yorkshire, the daughter of *Yorkshire Bob* and Bessie Bevan. Dolly's brother was Bob Yorkshire. Dolly Yorkshire married Sandy Waibern, the son of Moses Waibern (according to Tindale), whose name was also written as Waibong (by Laves and Bates). He was also known as Wungarit (Bates).

Iris Woods' mother was Lexie Dongup, the daughter of Ellie Roberts and Henry Dongup. Henry Dongup was Ellie Roberts' first husband. Henry Dongup's brother was **Freddy Winmer** (Tindale, p.22). Freddy Winmer is Iris's grand-uncle.

Darryl Williams is the grandson of *Jimmy Williams*.

Sources

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| Tindale, Norman. | <i>Genealogical Data on the Aborigines of Australia gathered during the Harvard and Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, 1938-9.</i> South Australian Museum, Adelaide. |
| Bates, Daisy. | <i>Papers, 1907-1940. MN 1406 MS 365, Section III. Social Organisation. Genealogies of Western Australian Natives. (a) Southern Western Australia. Book 1 folio 8/1-75.</i> Battye Library. |

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3. Prepared by John Henderson from information provided by the senior contact people listed below.

Darryl Williams is the grandson and senior descendant of *Jimmy Williams*. He has nominated Ezzard Flowers as a senior contact person to work with him.

Ezzard Flowers has described his relationship to *Freddy Winmer* as follows: Freddy was the brother of Henry Dongup who was the first husband of Ezzard's grandmother. (Her second husband was *Abel Williams*.)