

# RECORDS TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY ARCHIVES SERVICE NEWSLETTER

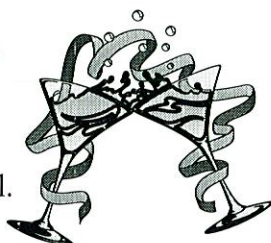
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## Editorial

A happy new  
year to one and all.



As we open up the diary for 1998, the NTAS can look forward to its first year back in full business following three years of relocations and renovations which at times placed limitations on delivery of our services.

On the community front, we plan to advertise our services more effectively through displays and through the provision of core information on a new web site which is to be completed early in the new year.

Other priorities during the transitional period have diverted our attention from processing the archival collections which have been deposited with the NTAS. We have now commenced working through the backlog of over 100 collections of valuable archives which we have received over the past couple of years. This processing will be enhanced by work on the development of the Archives and Records Management System (ARMS) which will also be resumed in the new year to facilitate improved community access to the collections.

Records management matters continue to challenge the NTAS and it is expected that 1998 will see the resolution of pending records storage and policy issues. Participation in the implementation of the NT Government Records Management Strategy should also bring many improvements and benefits to our client government agencies.

We look forward to doing business with all of our community and government clients in 1998.

*Greg Coleman*

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Department of Transport and Works

Northern Territory Archives Service



# Staff Notes



We welcome Linda Pugh back to the camp as Oral Records Transcription Officer. Linda (pictured below) worked with the NTAS several years ago and has returned after studying and working in near and far away places.

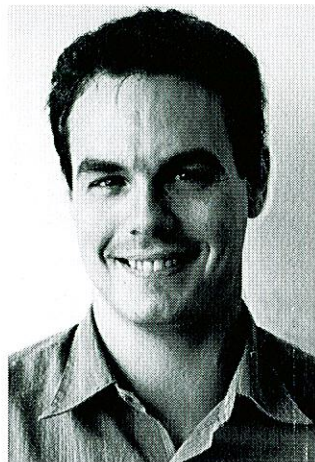


We say farewell to Tanya Davey after only recently bidding her welcome. Tanya came to the NTAS a few months ago

as Administration Officer but was soon lured away to the greener pastures of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (but not before she could host the staff Christmas Party). We wish Tanya all the best out at the Farm.

All has not been lost on the administration front as Anne Marshall will

now be returning to the NTAS as Administration Officer. It has been gratifying to be able to secure the services of someone as competent as Anne and we look forward to having her back with us.



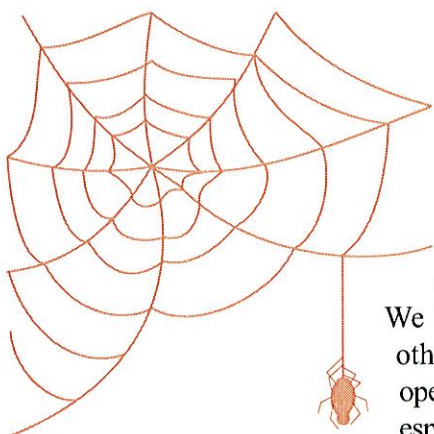
Another welcome addition to the staff has been Jeremy Kirby (left) who has been working in the records services area with the NTAS on secondment until he commences a traineeship with the Office of the

Commissioner for Public Employment early in the new year.

Finally, we have also farewelled Sharon Keay from the position of Archivist (Records Policy).

Sharon has returned to Perth to pursue both archival and entrepreneurial interests with partner, David. Sharon's contribution to the NTAS, particularly with regard to coordinating General Records Disposal Schedules and Policy documents for use by government agencies, and as Editor of Records Territory, has been both valuable and appreciated.

We wish Sharon a happy future in the west.



## Web Site

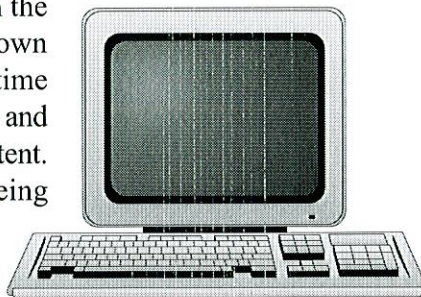
The NTAS is currently in the process of establishing its own Web page. It is an exciting time as we design the architecture and organise the informational content.

We have greatly appreciated seeing other archives Web sites and the open accessibility of information, especially around hot issues such

as 'electronic records'. Our Web site will include government information such as general disposal schedules and policies along with various guides to our holdings and access to our publications including Records Territory.

It is hoped, fingers crossed, that the site will be up and running in the early months of 1998 and will be continually updated thereafter. The NTAS looks forward to being surfed as well as surfing the Net.

*Sharon Keay*



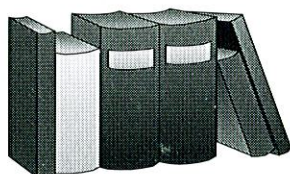


# RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

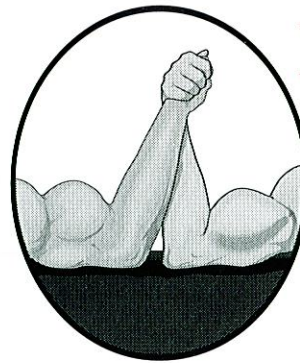
Research projects that have recently utilised the resources available in the NTAS Search Room include:

- Ph.D. thesis 'A force apart' : a history of Northern Territory police 1870-1926/ *Bill Wilson (NTU)*.
- Ph.D. research on how Central Australian pastoralists are dealing with environmentalism and land rights / *Nicholas Gill (UNSW)*.
- The Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation / *Paul Jones (University of Melbourne)*.
- Indexing of Christ Church Cathedral records / *Joy Davis (Genealogical Society of the NT)*.
- History of Eastern Arnhem Land : Pt 1 Elcho Island / *Howard Smith*.  
125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Overland Telegraph Line / *Paul Brodrick (Institute of Engineers)*.  
Photographs of early members of NT Legislative Council / *Graham Gadd (Legislative Assembly)*.
- Biography of Ernestine Hill / *Terri McCormack*.

*Andrew Pitt*



## Archives and Records Management System



The Archives and Records Management System (ARMS) was designed about four years ago to control archives and records in the custody of the NTAS, however, lack of funding prevented us from taking it to the development stage.

We have now resumed work on this system and have undertaken a market survey to see what other systems are out there.

Initially our system was custom designed to be main-frame driven but things have changed considerably over the past four years and we are now looking at the use of commercial software and the Internet.

NTAS would like to thank all the archives and records units that participated in our market survey. At this stage we are comparing the information we have received before taking our next step. If we missed anyone who has a working system we would like to hear from you. All information and input has been greatly appreciated.

*Sharon Keay*

## Kununurra Visit

Linda Bell (Archivist Records Services) visited Kununurra at the invitation of the Kununurra Historical Society to assist with advice on the management and preservation of the Society's collection on 25-29 August.

The visit followed the Society receiving a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia to assist in the preservation of the collection.



# NO MORE JUGGLING

The past few months have seen the further movement but, hopefully, the final resting of our archives and records holdings.

In August 1996, when the office moved into Cavenagh Court, our holdings were located at Australian Archives and our secondary storage building at Winnellie.

The newly renovated Cavenagh Court was designed to store archival records and, in November 1996, 15,875 boxes of archives were relocated from Australian Archives (where they had been stored since September 1994).

Our collection has been split to ensure that all archival records are now stored at Cavenagh Court. Only temporary value or unevaluated (review category) records are stored at our Winnellie building and all records have been removed from Australian Archives.

This has involved the removal of 1000 boxes of archives from Winnellie to Cavenagh Court in August, 13,000 boxes of temporary and unevaluated records from Australian Archives to pallet storage at Winnellie in September, and 35 map cabinets of archival records from Winnellie to Cavenagh Court in October.

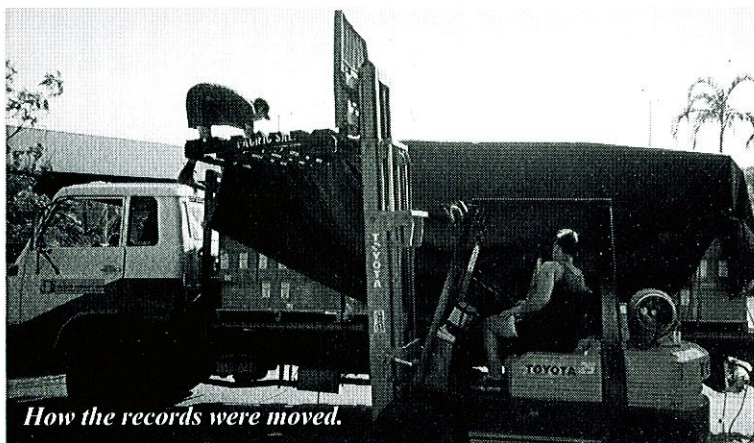
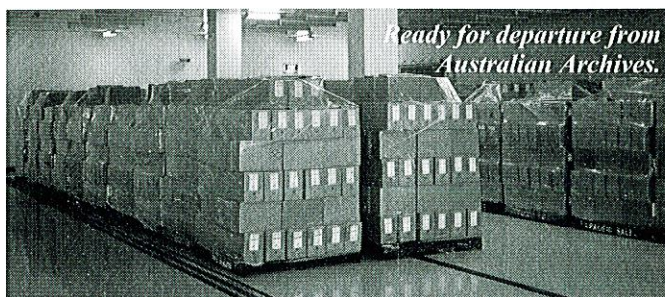
As you can imagine, the past few years have seen us become expert movers but, hopefully, now we'll get a chance to let these skills become a bit rusty.

At the end of these moves we expect that all of our holdings will be stored in suitable storage conditions. The

removal of the last of our records from Australian Archives marked the end of a storage lease arrangement which commenced in July 1993. This relationship included the assistance of Australian Archives in 1994 when we were looking for a temporary home for our archives (although it lasted over two years). We have greatly appreciated Australian Archives' service and assistance over the past two years but are pleased to at last have our holdings back in our own buildings.

Now that our holdings are settled we will be recommencing our transfer program for permanent records. It is anticipated that we will be contacting agencies in early 1998 to discuss transfer arrangements for those on our waiting list.

*Linda Bell*





# Oral History Conference in "The Alice"

After several years of planning, *Crossing Borders*, the tenth national biennial conference of the Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA) was held at the Plaza Hotel in Alice Springs from 3 to 7 September 1997. Over 250 people attended, about twice as many as at any previous OHAA national conference. They came from all around Australia, together with a small contingent from New Zealand and two distinguished oral historians from the USA. To judge from their excited response, clearly it was a resoundingly successful event.

Presented by the South Australian branch of the association (which includes Northern Territory members), both the State Library of South Australia and the NTAS gave major support by providing the services of the co-convenors, Beth Robertson and Francis Good. Other support came from a grant by the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities to assist people from remote Aboriginal communities to take part; the Northern Territory University funded the participation of one of the keynote speakers; and the NT Tourist Commission's Conventions Bureau provided the booking service and excellent glossy shells for the programs.

The *Crossing Borders* theme clearly evoked a wealth of ideas, with enthusiastic contributions from many well-known practitioners, community representatives, academics and media personalities. Most crossed state or national borders to get there, but the borders of technology, culture, language, media and even professional disciplines that are constantly negotiated in oral history work gave us four days of fascinating



*"Crossing Borders" Conference Committee, for O.H.A.A. (Sth. Aust. Branch) Inc. (l. to r.): Joan Durdin, Francis Good (Co-Convenor), Anne Wooddock and Beth Robertson (Co-Convenor) in Alice Springs in September 1997.*

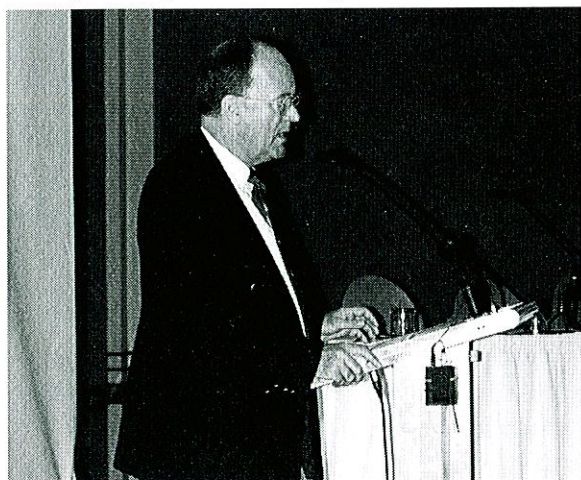
information and often inspiring reflection and discourse. A short report like this can only mention highlights.

On the night before the first full day, IAD Press, the Alice Springs indigenous press that has published many oral history titles, hosted a sunset reception at the venue in the warm red glow from the nearby MacDonnell range. Yami Lester, a founder of the Institute for Aboriginal Development, gave an eloquent speech, and Doug Abbott welcomed us, in Arrernte and English, on behalf of traditional owners of the conference site.

Next morning, Doug repeated his generous welcome to begin the opening session of day one. Then, children from Yipirinya School gave a dance of welcome, followed by the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Dr N R Conn, AO, who officially opened proceedings. They were followed by two keynote speakers who focused immediately on the complex issues arising from the conference themes.

Pat Mamanyjun Torres, artist and writer, has moved through language and cultural borders in twenty years of collecting stories, and spoke of the need to transcend ignorance and cultural mindsets for the sake of a better future for generations to follow. Bill Gammage, with a background of work with indigenous people in Papua New Guinea and Australia, spoke of the need to build bridges across the inevitable social,

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*NT Administrator, Dr. Neil Conn AO addresses the "Crossing Borders" Conference in Alice Springs in September 1997.*



## Oral History Conference

*Continued from previous page....*

physical and material borders that require negotiation between all parties engaged in oral history recording, and the benefit for all in the sharing process this should involve.

For the rest of the first day, the main focus was on technology, with strong demands on the banks of equipment provided by the organisers, and very informative details on the array of possibilities available for exploitation in computer applications. Two presentations used data projection from interactive digital media: the Pitjantjatjara Council's Ara Irititja archival project, and a very moving presentation on the recording by a team based at Massey University in New Zealand of the Maori war effort 1939-1945. Examples and discussion of issues around use of oral records and their documentation on the internet followed, while concurrent sessions looked at histories of technology and life histories in cross-cultural settings.

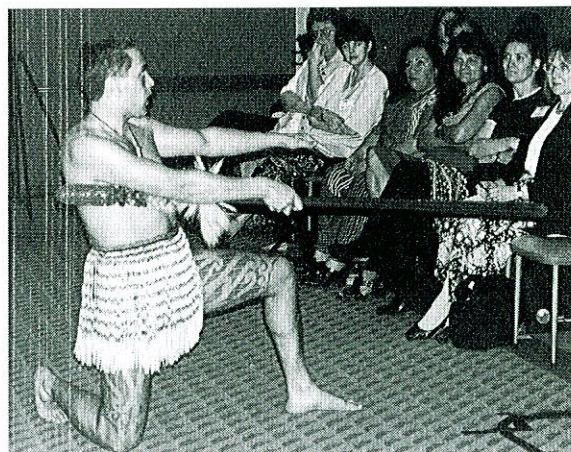
Next morning participants took either a scenic Centralian tour, or one in the town. These were thoroughly enjoyed as very relevant introductions to the local physical and social context. The town tour visited Yipirinya School to look at the work of Intelyape-yape Aketltye curriculum development group; the Strehlow Centre; the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame; and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, where they

### FAMILY HISTORY SEMINAR

The Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory hosted a one day Family History Seminar in the N.T. Archives Conference Room on Saturday, November 15, 1997. About 30 people participated in the seminar, enjoying papers on a wide range of subjects including the use of local and national archival resources, tracing ancestors in other states and overseas and the use of computers in family history research.

Speakers included Vern O'Brien, June Tomlinson, Kaye Schulze, Burniece Cross, Jill Adams, Faye Jensen, John Sawyer (GSNT), Ted Ling (Australian Archives), Gail Fleay (Registrar of Births Deaths & Marriages), Julie Andrews (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) and Andrew Pitt (N.T. Archives).

*Andrew Pitt*



*Kiwi Barry Soutar, from Petone in New Zealand, performs a traditional Maori haka during the "Crossing Borders" Conference in Alice Springs.*

heard about an oral history project with RFDS nursing staff. Later, a meeting was called which saw agreement to form a Network for Australian Indigenous Oral History (NAIOH), which will commence soon with the issue of a newsletter.

The afternoon of that day was devoted to issues around oral history and the law, a topic of immediate relevance to the current political context: speakers described a project on the history of the early Australian Aboriginal rights movement, and work on a biography of the late Eddie Koiki Mabo. Then a panel looked at issues that confront historians working with Aboriginal communities in the context of the legal system, on matters such as land title. Here there was much food for thought in the contrasts that emerged in perception of cultural values, relevance, ownership, meaning and verification.

Day three began with reports from institutionally-based projects in New Zealand, which were followed by a forum: 'Who Speaks? Who Listens? The Cross-cultural implications of Oral History.' As context, panel members discussed: work with Italian pioneers in the Kimberley; the experience of an Asian-Australian historian in contemporary Australia; cross-cultural oral history programs in schools; and oral history in the process of reconciliation: Ambrose Chalarimeri, a Kwini from Kalumburu, and his partner Traudl Tan were particularly eloquent here.

Other implications of interviewing provided the focus for three speakers that afternoon, who dealt with the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and also the interaction between political contexts and the writing or publishing of

*Continued next page....*



## Agreement About Aboriginal Access

Both Government Archives in the Northern Territory have now established agreements about access to records with Aboriginal people researching their families.

In March 1997, the Australian Archives, Northern Territory Office, issued a *Memorandum of Understanding* (the MOU) setting out arrangements for access to open period Commonwealth records in the custody of the Australian Archives. The MOU was agreed between the Northern Territory Combined Stolen Generations Reference Groups, Karu Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Agency, Central Australian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and the Australian Archives.

In October 1997, the Northern Territory Government, represented by the Office of Aboriginal Development, followed the lead of the Australian Archives, and issued the *Protocol for Access to Northern Territory Government Records by Aboriginal People Researching*

*their Families* (the Protocol). The Protocol, partly modelled on the MOU, was agreed between the Territory Government and the same representative Aboriginal groups as those involved with the MOU. The Protocol sets procedures for the Northern Territory Archives Service to be the first stop for access by Aboriginal people to Northern Territory Government records, whether the records are in archival custody or not.

Both the Australian Archives and the Northern Territory Archives Service have established Aboriginal Advisory Groups to administer their respective agreements. The two Groups work closely together and comprise the same Aboriginal member representatives who contribute to establishing consistent policies and procedures for Stolen Generations research in the Territory.

Copies of the Australian Archives MOU can be obtained by contacting the Australian Archives in Darwin on telephone (08) 8948 4577, fax (08) 8948 0276, or email [refnt@aa.gov.au](mailto:refnt@aa.gov.au)

Copies of the Northern Territory Government Protocol can be obtained by contacting the NTAS.

## Oral History Conference

*Continued from previous page....*

accounts of recorded events. Later, concurrent sessions looked at ethical implications of sensitive interviewing projects, and cross-cultural implications of oral traditions, which included discussion on issues around the recording of indigenous histories within the legacy of colonial values.

That night saw a memorable evening in the open for the conference dinner at the Old Telegraph Station, itself steeped in history, on the banks of the Todd, where Ted Egan enthralled both visitors and Territorians alike with his songs and stories of the Northern Territory. Thanks go to the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory for their support in providing the venue.

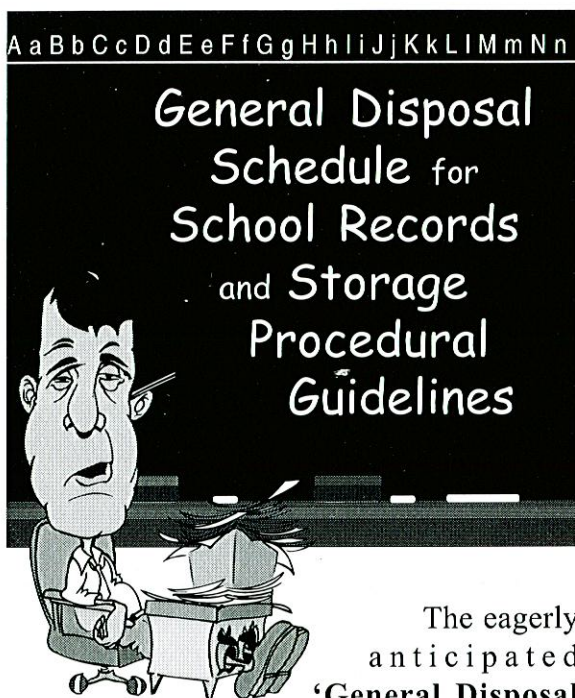
On the last day, short reports on a variety of work and projects were presented, and *Australia's Oral History Collections: A National Directory* was launched by Mark Cranfield of the National Library. The remainder of the conference then centred on oral history and the sense of place: folk stories of immigrants, childhood and change for migrants, and identity and culture of workers in a

foreign setting were some of the contexts. Jane Bathgate and Joanna Barrkmann talked of their Pine Creek project, which included a much-admired collection of large colourful banners made by that community, and which they had provided as decorations for the conference venue. The last gasp was given to Baiba Berzins, who showed a fascinating archival film about tourism in the Northern Territory in the 1930s.

*Crossing Borders* was held in a wonderful location that was very meaningful to conference themes, and this added to the remarkable enthusiasm expressed by so many attending. It took a lot of technological support (which was embraced with alacrity by presenters), was intense at times, often emotional, yet managed to maintain a strong sense of continuity and relevance within its diversity. As conferences go, this was one acclaimed as being very much at the cutting edge for its discipline. Many papers are already available in the OHAA's *Journal* for 1997, and others will appear in later issues. For more detail, contact the NTAS Oral History Unit, which also has several reports published by people attending.

**Francis Good**





The eagerly anticipated 'General Disposal Schedule for School Records and Storage Procedural Guidelines' has been completed and will be issued in early 1998.

The new Schedule, which has resulted from the combined effort of the NTAS and the NT Department of Education, has received some very positive feedback from an initial pilot project incorporating five new Schools. The Schedule is very comprehensive and covers a broad range of record classes and functional areas and includes a quick reference summary Schedule.

Complementing the Schedule are practical step-by-step guidelines for secondary storage procedures including establishing finding aids and location codes, boxing and storing records and some records management definitions and concepts.

The Schedule will be officially issued in the middle of the first school term in 1998 with training courses on understanding and implementing the Schedule commencing in early March.

At this stage training will be undertaken in both Darwin and Alice Springs closely followed by some rural areas. It is envisaged that the Schedule will be accessible (and able to be downloaded) via the NTAS's Web site in the early months of 1998.

For further information about the Schedule or training courses please contact the NTAS.

**Sharon Keay**

## NT HISTORY AWARDS

While the recipients of the 1997 NT History Awards (announced in last edition of *Records Territory*) are working on their projects, acquittals of NT History Awards from previous years continue to come in.

Howard Smith of Nhulunbuy, a 1995 recipient, has recently produced *The Story of the Elcho Island Naphtha Petroleum Company, 1922-1928*; and Bev Phelts of Darwin, a 1996 recipient, has completed her thesis, *Switching On: Darwin's History of Electricity Supply*.

For those interested in applying for a 1998 NT History Award, advertisements requesting applications will appear in major Territory newspapers and in the *Weekend Australian* one Saturday in mid March.

## WHO'S WHO AT THE NTAS

<b>Greg Coleman</b>	
Principal Archivist	8924 7648
<b>Linda Bell</b>	
Archivist (Records Services)	8924 7649
<b>Vacant</b>	
Archivist (Records Policy)	8924 7650
<b>Francis Good</b>	
Archivist (Oral Records)	8924 7651
<b>Andrew Pitt</b>	
Archivist (Information Services)	8924 7652
<b>Anne Marshall</b>	
Administration Officer	8924 7677
<b>Cheryl Phillips</b>	
Archives Officer (Rec. Serv.)	8924 7653
<b>Linda Pugh</b>	
Transcriber (Oral Records)	8924 7655
<b>Chris Spicer</b>	
Lending Officer/Courier	8924 7654

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