

# Mary Watson diaries

**Accession number** OM81-120

**Date** 1 January - 10 October 1881

**Author / Creator**

**Watson, Mary, 1860-1881.**

**Abstract** Diaries kept by Mary Watson with other papers regarding her life and death, along with information about her family.

**Scope and content** Contained in this accession are the diary kept by Mary Watson while she lived at Lizard Island; loose diary leaves kept by Mary Watson while drifting over the Barrier Reef and on No. 5 Island of the Howick Group; copies and transcript of these diaries; a copied photograph of Mary Watson; birth, death and marriage certificates; a genealogical table and photocopied clippings. All original items are in Rare and Restricted. Also included are contact prints of the loose diary leaves as well as negatives for four of these pages. All copies and transcript in Box 9109.

**System of arrangement** Arranged into 5 series

**Description** 2 diaries, transcripts, certificates, papers.

**Additional format** Digital copies available for selected items.

**Administrative / Biographical history** Mary Watson, nee Phillips (1860-1881) was born in Cornwall, to Mary Phillips and Thomas Oxnam and emigrated with her family to Australia in 1877, living first at Maryborough. Mary married Robert Watson in May 1880, who with his partner Percy Fuller, established a beche-de mer fishing business at Lizard Island on the Barrier Reef. Mary accompanied her husband to the island with Fuller, Mr Green, two Chinese workmen - Ah Leong and Ah Sam, and several South Sea Island labourers.

**Access restrictions** Unrestricted access.

**Copyright status** Out of copyright.

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**Custodial history** Unknown

**Preferred citation**

OM81-120, Mary Watson Diaries, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

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## Series 1: Diaries (1881)

**Series number** 1

**Series title** Diaries

**Date** 1881

### Scope and content

Two diaries kept by Mary Watson while she lived at Lizard Island where her husband had set up a bech-de-mer business. In the first diary Mary Watson relates the day's events and weather conditions. The second diary of loose leaves was used by Mary Watson to record events while drifting over the Barrier Reef and on No. 5 Island of the Howick Group.

### Author / Creator

Watson, Mary Beatrice, 1860-1881

### Description

**Description** 1 diary (bound, loose leaves from pocket notebook)

**Additional format** Digital copy available for selected item

### Access

**Access restrictions** Restricted access.

**Copyright status** Out of copyright

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**Other guides** Transcripts available

### Other

**Biographical history**

Lett's No.35 Australasian Rough Diary for 1881 kept by Mary Watson while living on Lizard Island and in Cooktown. Loose pencilled leaves with diary entries by Mary Watson while drifting over the Barrier Reef and on No. 5 Island of the Howick Group.

## Notes

Access copy and transcript available

## Notes

This material has been reproduced in the following publications:

Extracts and photographic copies of some pages published in: Robertson, Jillian: Lizard Island. A reconstruction of the life of Mrs Watson. Richmond, 1981.

Items in this series:

## Diary (1 January -1 October 1881)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/1

**Date** 1 January -1 October 1881

### Scope and content

Lett's rough diary kept by Mary Watson while she lived at Lizard Island and at Cooktown.

In this diary Mary Watson relates the day's events and weather conditions as well as the circumstances of her leaving Lizard Island with her infant son Ferrier and Ah Sam, a Chinese worker, after conflict with local Indigenous people. This diary was later found at her hut on Lizard Island. This item is very fragile.

### Author / Creator

Watson, Mary Beatrice, 1860-1881

## Description

**Description** 1 diary

195 x 120 mm

**Additional format** Digital copy available

**Locate** OMRR Box 16434 O/S

Access

**Other guides** Transcript available

View the items

[View the item](#)

Other

### Notes

Very fragile. A spiral bound photocopy is available.

## Diary (2 October -10 October 1881)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/2

**Date** 2 October -10 October 1881

### Scope and content

Loose leaves with diary entries kept by Mary Watson recording events while she drifted over the Barrier Reef in a steel tank and on No. 5 Island of the Howick Group. Mary Watson had left Lizard Island with her infant son Ferrier and Ah Sam, a Chinese worker, after a conflict with local Indigenous people. On leaving Lizard Island, Mary Watson was confused about the date. Her first entry is for 3 September when in fact it was 2 October 1881. The three drifted over the reef for several days eventually landing at No. 5 Island of the Howick Group. Being unable to find water on the island all three died of thirst and were not found until several months later. These loose leaves were found with Mary Watson's body. The last entry reads: "No water. Nearly dead with thirst".

### Author / Creator

Watson, Mary Beatrice, 1860-1881

Description

**Description** 6 pages (double sided, loose from notebook)

**Additional format** Digital copy available

**Locate** OMRR Box 16434 O/S

Access

**Other guides** Transcript available

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Other

### Notes

Very fragile. A spiral bound photocopy is available.

### Notes

This material has been reproduced in the following publications:

Extracts and photographic copies of four pages published in: Robertson, Jillian: Lizard Island.

A reconstruction of the life of Mrs Watson. Richmond, 1981.

## Diaries (copies) (1 January 1881 - 10 October 1881)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/3

**Date** 1 January 1881 - 10 October 1881

### Scope and content

Photocopies and transcript of diaries kept by Mary Watson [Items 1 and 2]. Transcribed by John Armstrong, Brisbane, October 1998.

### Author / Creator

Watson, Mary Beatrice, 1860-1881

Description

**Description** 2 notebooks (spiral bound)

**Locate** OMBOX Box 9109

Other

### Notes

2 spiralbound photocopies

(2 digital)

## Series 2: Photograph (1879?)

**Series number** 2

**Series title** Photograph

**Date** 1879?

### Scope and content

1 black and white copy print of a carte-de-visite photograph, taken by Louis Buderus at his Rockhampton studios. [Item OM81-120/4]

### Author / Creator

Buderus, Louis, 1840-1906

### Description

**Description** 1 carte-de-visite photograph

**Locate** OMBOX Box 9109

### Access

**Access restrictions** Unrestricted access

**Copyright status** Out of copyright

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### Other

### Biographical history

The original photograph was taken by Louis Buderus of Rockhampton

## Series 3: Certificates (1860-1904 [1979])

**Series number** 3

**Series title** Certificates

**Date** 1860-1904 [1979]

## Scope and content

Six birth, marriage and death certificates recording life events of members of Mary Watson and her family. One original and five certified extracts. [Items OM81-120/5 to OM81-120/10]

## Author / Creator

Great Britain. General Register Office

Anglican Church of Australia. Parish of Cooktown

## Description

**Description** 6 certificates

**Additional format** Digital copies available for selected items

**Locate** OMBOX Box 9109

## Access

**Access restrictions** Unrestricted access

**Copyright status** Out of copyright

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## Items in this series:

### Birth certificate (17 January 1860)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/5

**Date** 17 January 1860

#### Scope and content

Photocopy of certified extract of birth register for the birth of Mary, daughter of Thomas Oxnam and Mary Phillips on 17 January 1860 at the parish church of St Newlyn.( Certified extract issued by the General Register Office, London on 4 May 1978)

#### Author / Creator

Great Britain. General Register Office

## Description

**Description** 1 certificate

### Marriage certificate (14 March 1860)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/6

**Date** 14 March 1860

#### Scope and content

Photocopy of certified extract of marriage register, for marriage of Thomas Oxnam and Mary Phillips on 14 March 1860 at the parish church of St Newlyn. (Certified extract issued by the General Register Office, London on 4 May 1978). Thomas Oxnam and Mary Phillips were the parents of Mary Watson.

#### Author / Creator

Great Britain. General Register Office

Description

**Description** 1 certificate

### Marriage certificate (30 May 1880)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/7

**Date** 30 May 1880

#### Scope and content

Marriage certificate for Robert Watson and Mary Beatrice Phillips Oxnam, on 30 May 1880 at the English Church at Cooktown. This is the original (Schedule D) copy handed by the minister to the parties married.

#### Author / Creator

Anglican Church of Australia. Parish of Cooktown

Description

**Description** 1 certificate

**Additional format** Digital copy available

**Locate** OMBOX 16434 O/S [Rare and Restricted]



## Access

**Access restrictions** Restricted access.

**Copyright status** Out of copyright

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View the items

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## Death certificate (28 June 1886)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/8

**Date** 28 June 1886

### Scope and content

Certified transcribed entry from the Register of Deaths for the death of Thomas Oxnam, the father of Mary Watson, at Rockhampton on 29 June 1886. (Certified copy issued by Registrar General's Office, Queensland on 17 April 1979).

### Author / Creator

Queensland. Registrar General's Office

## Description

**Description** 1 certificate

## Marriage certificate (1892)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/9

**Date** 1892

### Scope and content

Certified transcribed entry from a Register of Marriages for the marriage of John Bartlett and Mary Oxnam, mother of Mary Watson, at Townsville on 10 February 1892. (Certified copy issued by Registrar General's Office, Queensland on 17 April 1979)

### Author / Creator

Queensland. Registrar General's Office

## Description

**Description** 1 certificate

### Death certificate (30 December 1904)

**Unit ID** OM81-120/10

**Date** 30 December 1904

#### Scope and content

Certified transcribed entry from a Register of Deaths for the death of Mary Bartlett, mother of Mary Watson, at Charters Towers on 30 December 1904. (Certified copy issued by Registrar General's Office, Queensland on 17 April 1979)

#### Author / Creator

Registrar General's Office, Queensland

## Description

**Description** 1 certificate

(1 digital)

## Series 4: Genealogical table (undated)

**Series number** 4

**Series title** Genealogical table

**Date** undated

#### Scope and content

Genealogical table presumably compiled for research into the life of Mary Watson and her family. It shows two generations of Mary Watson's paternal ancestors, as well as names and dates of life events of her siblings. [Item OM81-120/11]

## Description

**Description** 1 sheet

**Locate** OMBOX Box 9109

## Access

**Access restrictions** Unrestricted access

**Copyright status** In copyright

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## Series 5: Clippings (1873-1877)

**Series number** 5

**Series title** Clippings

**Date** 1873-1877

### Scope and content

Four photocopied clippings from the Cornwall Post Office Directory and the Royal Cornwall Gazette regarding the Oxnam family, the family of Mary Watson:

1. Post Office Directory, 1873 showing three male Oxnam to be residents of Newlyn.
2. & 3. Royal Cornwall Gazette - presentation to Thomas Oxnam on the eve of the family's departure for Australia
4. Royal Cornwall Gazette - the sale of the Oxnam family household furniture on 27 April 1877 [Item OM81-120-12]

## Description

**Description** 4 newspaper clippings

**Locate** OMBOX Box 9109

## Access

**Access restrictions** Unrestricted access

**Copyright status** Out of copyright

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