



Records Description List

Reference Number: **2014.0026**
Collection/Series Title: **ALAN RITCHIE FAMILY AND R.B.
RITCHIE & SON BUSINESS
RECORDS**

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|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Creator | Ritchie, Mr Alan |
| Creator's Activity/Occupation | Graziers |

Creator's Historical Note

Alan Blackwood Ritchie was born in 1895, the second son of Robert Blackwood Ritchie (R.B. Ritchie) and Lillian Ross. After the death of his mother in 1897, his father moved Alan and his elder brother Robin to Scotland to be raised by their grandmother Janet. Alan served in the Royal and Australian Navies during World War 1 a conflict in which his brother Robin was killed fighting in.

After the war, Alan studied economics at the University of Cambridge. After working for a shipping company in London, he returned to Australia in 1924 and eventually took control of the family pastoral company R.B. Ritchie & Son. Pty. Ltd and its Blackwood property. He gained a reputation as an innovative grazier who implemented revolutionary farming practices.

Alan Ritchie has also made a major contribution to Australian public policy through his association and connection to some influential business and public figures. One of which was R.G. Casey later to become a Federal Government Minister and Australian Governor General. Another was Sir Douglas Copland the first Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Melbourne. Through his association with Copland, he persuaded his father R.B. Ritchie to make a huge endowment to the University of Melbourne in order to establish the Ritchie Chair of Economic Research. Alan also served on the selection panel for the election of the Chair. Several leading economists were said to have visited and stayed with Alan at the Blackwood property over the years. He also wrote a series of questions which the commission of an enquiry into the Australian tariff would have to deal with and at one time wrote speeches for Prime Minister Stanley M. Bruce. He also served on the Victorian State Executive of the C.S.I.R.O.

Alan was recalled to the Royal Navy during World War 2 and served in Liverpool and Birkenhead. He was however sent back to Australia as it was thought he could contribute more to the war effort by growing wool and grain.

Alan and his Canadian wife Margaret Witcomb had four children Robin, Judith, Blyth and Linton between 1937 and 1946. He retired from Blackwood to Melbourne in 1965 and died in 1974.

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| Creator | R. B. Ritchie & Son Pty Ltd |
| Creator's Activity/Occupation | Graziers |

Creator's Historical Note

In 1842 James Ritchie took out a license covering the area that became the Blackwood run. Freehold was secured, and the ownership successively passed to James' brothers Daniel (a doctor who had previously served nineteen years as a Royal Navy surgeon) and John, then to Daniel's son Robert (also a businessman and politician), his son Alan and grandson Robin Ritchie. The successive Ritchie generations have nurtured the prosperous pastoral interests, particularly their merino stud. The final fourteen years of Ritchie ownership of Blackwood saw ownership pass onto Jason and Dan Ritchie (sons of Robin Ritchie and grandsons of Alan Ritchie). They transformed the property from being largely livestock based to being a viable cropping enterprise with wheat, barley and canola being most commonly sown each year. The property was sold to investors in early 2014.

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| Date Range of Collection/Series | 1946-1999 |
| Size/Extent | 5 Volumes |

Access Conditions

Access: Open

Scope and Content of Collection/Series

The following series consists of 5 volumes relating to the management of the R.B. Ritchie and Son Pty. Ltd. farm and A.B. (Alan) Ritchies personal affairs. It includes a volume with the title Super and Fencing which was used to record statistics for the management of the farm including for hay making areas, farming, super spread, odd weights and costing of trial paddocks. It also includes the Blackwood Paddock Book which was used to record observations and statistics re: paddocks, silos, sheep counts, studs, wool. Cattle, horses, sales purchases sheep, cattle sales and purchases. The series also includes 3 financial journals which were used to record to record Alan Ritchies personal business affairs such as drawings from the R.B. Ritchie account and his personal share interests.

There is no arrangement apparent in the order of the volumes. Within the journals (units 1,2 and 5), transactions are listed in chronological order by date. The Super and Fencing book (unit 3) contains a series of alphabetical tabs for each section e.g. farming under F, Super Spread under S, Odd Weights under W. Tabs are used within the Blackwood Paddock Book to separate the various sections. The sections are not arranged in alphabetical order.

Collection Category

This document dated

31/03/2015

To request access to records on the list below via the University of Melbourne Archives Reading Room, quote the Unit/Box reference in full.

| Unit/Box | Item Number | Title | Date Range | Description |
|------------------------|----------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 2014.0026 Unit 1 | 2014.0026.0001 | A.B. Ritchie Account Journal. | 30 November 1946-30 June 1971 | |
| 2014.0026 Unit 2 | 2014.0026.0002 | E.S. & A. Bank Melbourne Account Journal. | 1 March 1954-30 September 1970 | |
| 2014.0026 Unit 3 | 2014.0026.0003 | Super & Fencing. | c. 1947-1974 | Includes statistics for hay making areas, farming, super spread, odd weights, costing of trial paddocks. |
| 2014.0026 Unit 4 | 2014.0026.0004 | Blackwood Paddock Book. | c. 1927-1998 | Includes observations and statistics re: paddocks, silos, sheep counts, studs, wool. Cattle, horses, sales purchases sheep, cattle sales and purchases. |
| 2014.0026 Unit 5 | 2014.0026.0005 | A.B. Ritchie General Journal. | c. 1939-1971 | |
| <div>End of List</div> | | | | |