

Family History

Convict research: finding out even more

What are the next steps after locating the right convict?

Check British records

Australian Joint Copying Project: Home Office records and M Series.

The Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) has many National Archives (UK) records relevant to Australia on microfilm. This includes Home Office (HO), Prison Commission (PRI COM) records and the Miscellaneous (M) Series. Guidance on holdings and date range is in the *AJCP Handbooks*, one for each set of departmental records, available from the level 3 desk or online through the National Library of Australia (NLA) <https://www.library.gov.au/research/access-collection/australian-joint-copying-project-ajcp>.

Some of the relevant records are the following:

- *Criminal Register of prisoners in English gaols 1805-1867* (HO 27) list prisoners in the various English County gaols, their offences and brief details of their trial. It may include the only reference to the offence of the early convicts. Registers are organised by the convict's date of imprisonment. Records can be found online at NLA <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-728075871/findingaid#nla-obj-728085438> or ancestryLibrary edition, available at State Library.
- *Convict Transportation Registers 1787-1867 (HO11)* list convict ships and their convicts, in chronological order by ship's date of departure. Find a name in the *British convict transportation registers 1787-1867 database* through the One Search catalogue State Library family history indexes <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>. You can find a convict who went to any Australian colony. The digitised records can be found online at NLA <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-728075871/findingaid#nla-obj-728081133>, at ancestryLibrary edition or FindMyPast, available at State Library; or at The National Archives UK <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C8875>.
- *M Series*: The AJCP Miscellaneous Series has documents from British collections other than at National Archives (UK). It includes personal narratives, diaries and county convict records. Level 3 staff have a list of what State Library holds. The *M Series* handbook has an index. The handbook and records have been digitised and are available online at NLA <https://www.library.gov.au/research/access-collection/australian-joint-copying-project-ajcp/ajcp-miscellaneous-m-series>, or through Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>.
- *Index to the Australian Joint Copying Project Prison Registers AJCP P. Com. 2, reels 5971-5991* [microfiche] (MFC 929.394 1995) compiled by the Convict Historical & Research Group, W A Genealogical Society. An alphabetical index of convicts' names showing the date and ship of arrival, destination and a reference to the AJCP reel number for the full record. It indexes convicts in British prisons and hulks, and those transported to NSW, Tasmania, and Norfolk Island. It is particularly useful for locating extra information on "exiles". Digitised records are available through NLA <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-727851581/findingaid>. Some of these records can also be found on FindMyPast, available at State Library, under "Prison registers".
- *Old Bailey Session Papers 8 December 1780-1 November 1834* [microfilm] (MFL 345.4207) are the trial records of prisoners arrested in London and Middlesex. Also available online at www.oldbaileyonline.org/.

Search Museums of History (MH) NSW State Archives Collection

MH NSW State Archives Collection (formerly known as the New South Wales State Archives or NSW State Archives & Records) has released microfilm copies of colonial correspondence and official records relating

to convicts in New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and Port Phillip. Many of these records are described in the *Guide to New South Wales State Archives relating to convicts and convict administration* available at the level 3 desk. More convict records from the MH NSW State Archives Collection are listed individually in State Library's One Search online catalogue <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>

Convict musters

- *Musters and other papers relating to convict ships 1790-1849* includes convict assignment lists, musters, and some letters about the convicts in the colony. [microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 1986)
- *1828 Census*. Available on microfilm (MFL 929.3944 1987), in print (FAMHIS 929.3 1980), and on CD-ROM (QCFS 929.394 2001) plus online at ancestryLibrary edition and FindMyPast. It includes all NSW residents, free, military and convict.
- The *1841 Census* Name index online, <https://mhnsw.au/indexes/census-and-musters/census-1841/>, and the census itself on microfilm reels (AO/SR reels 2222, 2223, 2508, 2509). It includes free settlers and convicts but covers heads of households only.
- *General muster list of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825* (FAMHIS 929.394 1999)
- *General return of convicts in New South Wales, 1837* (FAMHIS 929.3994 1987)
- *Muster and Census Records. Guide to Records* (MFA 929.394 1986). This handbook lists the muster and census records for New South Wales, Norfolk Island, and Van Diemen's Land. It lists records filmed under the AJCP as well as those held by MH NSW State Archives Collection. Available on level 3.
- See also ancestryLibrary edition's collection, *New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849*.

Colonial Secretary's correspondence

This is a large collection of records relating to all colonial matters including convicts' applications to marry, admissions to institutions such as the Female Factory, prison entry books, registers of pardons and more. MH NSW State Archives Collection has indexed the *Colonial Secretary's correspondence to 1825* <https://mhnsw.au/indexes/colonial-secretary/colonial-secretarys-papers-1788-1825/>. State Library holds related microform on level 3.

Joan Reese has compiled indexes 1826-1877. These are: *Colonial Secretary's Correspondence 1826-1877: Index to convicts and others* [microfiche] (MFC 929.3944 1994-) and *Colonial Secretary's Correspondence: letters sent re convicts October 6 1826 - May 18 1855* [microfiche] (MFC929.3944 1996-1997). Information found on these indexes is only available at MH NSW State Archives Collection.

Tickets-of-leave, pardons and certificates of freedom

Convicts could receive permission to work for themselves or others within a specified area. The butts of their tickets of leave provide personal information about them. There is an index to butts 1810-1875 titled *Convict pardons: tickets of leave issued in the Colony of New South Wales* [microfiche] (MFC 929.3944 1995).

Museums of History NSW State Archives Collection online index, *Convicts index 1791-1873*, covers certificates of freedom; bank accounts; deaths; exemptions from Government Labor; pardons; tickets of leave; and tickets of leave passports. <https://mhnsw.au/indexes/convicts/convicts-index/>

Tickets of leave and certificates of freedom were issued from printed registers, which have been filmed by the NSW State Archives Collection [microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 199-). For *Ticket of Leave Passports, 1835-1860* see AO/SR reels 966-981 and for *Certificates of Freedom 1827-1867*, AO/SR reels 604 & 982-1027. There is a name index at the beginning of each register, with a reference number for the convict's ticket of leave or certificate.

Convict pardons were issued and registered by the Colonial Secretary's Office. The records have been copied by NSW State Archives Collection [microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 199-). There is a name index at the beginning of each volume. See *Copies of Conditional Pardons, 1826-1870* (AO/SR reels 775-796, 3037) and *Register of Convicts recommended for Conditional Pardons, 6 May 1826-30 June 1856* (AO/SR reels 797-798). The entries record the convict's date of pardon, year of arrival, native place, crime, sentence, year of birth, physical description and other general remarks.

NOTE: Many records relating to convicts from the Colonial Secretary's Office have been individually catalogued. To locate details of these, search State Library's One Search online catalogue <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/> using "Colonial Secretary?" as a search term.

ancestryLibrary edition, available at State Library, has digitised images for several collections including *New South Wales, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856*; *NSW Certificates of Freedom for 1810-1814*; *1827-1867*; and *NSW Tickets of Leave 1810-1869*.

Moreton Bay records

Moreton Bay was established as a penal settlement until 1840. Convicts committed another offence in the colony to qualify for Moreton Bay. Track them via MH NSW State Archives Collection gaol records. Check Sydney and Darlinghurst, Windsor, Parramatta and Campbelltown gaols. Use the NSW State Archives Collection handbook and the catalogue. Some records are also available on ancestryLibrary edition, onsite at State Library.

Also check the **Queensland State Archives** "Convicts and early settlers" section, which includes *Indexes to the Chronological Register of Prisoners 1824-1839*

<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection/convicts>.

State Library holds:

- *Letters relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland, 1822-1860* [microfilm] (A2 Series, open access level 3, or request Film/s 759, reels 2702-2716) cover a range of documents relating to the Moreton Bay establishment. This material has been digitised and is becoming available online through our catalogue. Check the Collection Guide for more information, <https://bit.ly/ColSecCollectionGuide>. Also check the online index, <https://bit.ly/ColSecIndexes>.
- *Lists of men in irons from Norfolk Island & Moreton Bay 1839-40* include a range of prisoners sentenced to work in iron gangs [microfilm] (AO/SR reel 708)
- *Copies of letters sent to the Sheriff 1828-1851* [microfilm] (AO/SR reels 1062-1065, 1036, 624). Shipping lists of convicts sent to and from Moreton Bay, 1824-1827 are also included.
- *Copies of letters from the Colonial Secretary 27 August 1824 - 5 August 1853* [microfilm] (AO/SR reels 749-750) are copies of letters to the Commandant and officers of the Moreton Bay penal establishment, and later letters to the Police Magistrate, and other officials and individuals at the settlement. Moreton Bay ceased to be used as a penal station in 1839 but the correspondence continues with miscellaneous matters concerning it until August 1853.
- *Miscellaneous returns from Moreton Bay* [microfilm] (AO/SR reels 750-751) include various returns about convicts at Moreton Bay and general correspondence relating to the colony. Covers years 1822 to 1840.
- *Hashemy convict ship - exiles: year 1849-60* [microfilm] (AO/SR reel 704) records the history of the individual convicts, "exiles" landed off the *Hashemy*, June 1849 noting tickets of leave, passports and pardons received; assignments, any later convictions, death etc. There is an index in the front of the volume.
- *Worthy of reclamation: index to probationary convicts to Sydney and Moreton Bay 1849-1850*. [microfiche] (MFC 929.3943 1993) These were the convicts who came out as "exiles" after transportation officially ceased.
- *Queensland Family History Society pre-separation population index of Moreton Bay region 1824-1859* [microfiche] (MFCB 929.3943 1990) indexes a range of land, court, newspaper reports and hospital records which track convicts. Also available on CD ROM under the title *Queensland early pioneer indexes, 1824-1859* (QCFS 929.3943 2004)

This is a select list of material relating to convicts available at State Library. Check the catalogue (<https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>) and NSW State Archives Collection online for more.

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | slq.qld.gov.au/ask

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