

Family History

Immigration and shipping : more than lists

Where can I find out about immigrant ships and their voyages?

The shipping intelligence column of Australian newspapers for the relevant ports reported the following:

- the arrival and departure of ships; captain's name; the cargo
- the names of some fare paying passengers; number of steerage passengers
- sometimes a report of the voyage and the condition and character of the immigrants.

State Library of Queensland holds the following sources of information about immigrant ships and their journeys.

Indexes: Collinson index and Johnston index; green labelled subject card index and brown book subject catalogue. They include the subject 'ships' among the Queensland items on level 4. These lead to material State Library holds.

Newspaper clippings in files organised by the ship's name as well as items in cutting books held on level 4.

Maritime sources for historians and genealogists (PAM 929.1072 1988) by Vaughan Evans outlines the scope of interest for different researchers, and the information and sources available.

Lloyd's register of British and foreign shipping, produced annually, provides details about a ship's features, when and where it was constructed, its destination, owner and captain's names. Use the specific features of a vessel to find the right ship when there are a few ships with the same name. State Library holds most registers from 1776 (FICHE/S 387.2021 llo 1776-1880; S 387.2 001 1881- 2005/06). Also check Lloyd's Register of Ships Online, <https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/archive-library/lloyds-register-of-ships-online/lloyds-register-of-ships-online>, for digitised copies of many years between 1764 and 2000.

Maritime Information: A Guide to Libraries and Sources of Information in the United Kingdom (FAMHIS 026.3875 1993) outlines the subject coverage, special collections and publications along with contact details of 500 UK repositories. Includes information about crew lists in the merchant navy, records of the Registrar-General of Shipping and Seamen as well as personnel records of the Royal Navy.

B.I. the British India Steam Navigation Company Limited by Laxon and Perry (FAMHIS 387.5065), provides information on the ships of a company that had a contract with the Queensland government during the 1880s. The contract was to bring passengers, mail and cargo through Torres Strait to Queensland ports. It is an authoritative, well-illustrated book on this line. Index held at the level 3 desk.

Orient line guide: chapters for travellers by sea and by land, illustrated [CD-ROM] (QCFS 910.202 2008) edited by W.F. Loftie, was published in 1889 to provide useful information and travelling tips to passengers intending to sail to Australia and New Zealand aboard steam ships of The Orient Line. It contains descriptions and illustrations throughout of voyages from London to Australia. It includes notes and descriptions about places such as Palestine, Cairo, Italy, Athens and New Zealand.

Pageant of the Pacific : being the maritime history of Australasia (CAG 994 1937) by F. Rhodes provides maritime information for the Pacific region. It includes maritime economic ventures, convicts, missionary groups, gold seeking immigrants and blackbirding.

Ships from Scotland to Australasia 1820-1860 (FAMHIS 387.209411 2005) by David Dobson is based, largely, on searches in Scottish newspapers of the period. It also contains some material sourced from government and archival records in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. It is arranged alphabetically by the ship name.

Peter Plowman has at least 10 relevant titles in State Library's collection including:

- ***Across the Pacific: liners from Australia and New Zealand to North America*** (623.82432 2010)
- ***Migrant ships to Australia and New Zealand: 1900-1939*** (387.243 2009)
- ***Emigrant ships to luxury liners: passenger ships to Australia and New Zealand 1945-90*** (REF 387.243099 1992)

He has also written about the Chandris and Sitmar lines as well as coastal vessels. Check the One Search catalogue, <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>, for details.

Ronald Parsons has written dozens of maritime books including:

- ***Australian coastal passenger ships: the details and a brief outline of the career of every steam and motor ship that carried passengers on the Australian coast*** (G 387.243 1981)
- ***Australian shipowners and their fleets*** (PAM 387.5240994 1985-), a 17-volume work, that outlines the background of many shipowners with a brief history of their vessels and shipping activities.
- ***Migrant sailing ships from Hamburg*** (PAM 325.94 1993) provides an overview of the history of Germans migrating to 19th Century Australia, with arrival places and dates of the ships' arrivals.

Where can I locate personal accounts of a particular voyage?

Ships' pictures, diaries, letters and other accounts of journeys

Relevant material related to Queensland may be found in the John Oxley collection through the One Search catalogue (<https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>). There is additional material for Queensland and other parts of Australia on microform and in books throughout State Library.

Log of logs (FAMHIS 016.3875099 1990-), 3 volumes by Ian Nicholson, gathers items on ships including letters, shipboard diaries, books, ships newspapers, illustrations and other accounts. It is very useful but not comprehensive. Each volume needs to be searched separately.

No privacy for writing: shipboard diaries 1852-1879 (G 994.03 1995) and ***Sailing to Australia : shipboard diaries by nineteenth-century British emigrants*** (SBG7110) by Andrew Hassam.

Immigrant diaries (1822-1895) held in the Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Australia (<https://www.library.gov.au/discover/what-we-collect/manuscripts-collection/immigrant-diaries-1822-1895>)

Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) Admiralty and Colonial Office Records are copies of records from The National Archives in London relevant to Australia. These contain, at [Admiralty] ADM101, medical registers of convict ships 1816-1856 and emigrant journeys 1825-1853. There are also reports of Emigration Societies and applications for free passage in the Colonial Office (CO) material. The *Miscellaneous Series* holds some shipboard diaries. The handbooks are on the reference shelves on levels 3 and 4. This material is digitally available through National Library of Australia. <https://www.nla.gov.au/using-library/research-tools-and-resources/australian-joint-copying-project>

What resources can I use to find a ship's picture?

- ***Maritime illustration indexes Vols 1-3*** (FAMHIS 387.50994 1990) by Vaughan Evans, covers maritime illustrations in the *Illustrated Sydney news* (1853-1889); the *Illustrated London news* (1842-1891); and the *Australasian sketcher* (1873-1889). State Library holds all these publications.
- **Australian ships' pictures** can be found through **Trove: Images, maps, artefacts** (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/search/advanced/category/images>). Includes photos from State Library.
- **Pictures of ships in the Australian trade**
An Index to ship pictures that lists ship images held in the Australian National Maritime Museum's collection. State Library holds many of the books indexed. Available at the level 3 desk.
- **Ship pictures and images**, Cora Num's site 'Cora Web'
<https://coraweb.com.au/websites/ship-images/>
- **Royal Museums Greenwich** includes the National Maritime Museum.
<https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/object> Search for images of vessels using "Filters".
- ***Great passenger ships of the world*** (G 387.243 1975-) by Arnold Kludas, is a 6-volume illustrated series containing details on the history of many of the world's passenger ships, 1852-1956.

- **Norway heritage: hands across the sea** (www.norwayheritage.com) covers historical detail and images.
- ***Ships' pictures index*** (MFC 387.2 1995), by Nick Vine Hall, indexes illustrations in books and periodicals.
- ***Sail in the South: a selection from the A D Edwardes Collection of Shipping Photographs in the State Library of South Australia*** (G 387.2209034 1975) by Ronald Parsons, provides a wealth of well-captioned illustrations of ships and the way of life associated with them.

Where can I find information on the immigration experience?

The long farewell (G 304.894041 1981) by Don Charlwood, and ***Rights of passage*** (FAMHIS 325.94 1986), by Helen Woolcock provide information a variety of records about specific ships' journeys and on some individuals. ***Rights of passage*** is particularly relevant for those investigating Queensland immigration and the problems of German immigrants in the 19th Century.

Nineteenth century government assisted immigrants from the United Kingdom to Australia : schemes, regulations and arrivals, 1831-1900 and some vital statistics 1834-1860 (FAMHIS 325.94 1995) by Robin Haines, provides an overview of schemes of assisted immigration. It provides profiles of those who came to Australia under the various systems, which differed widely over time and among the Australian colonies.

Robin Haines' ***Life and death in the age of sail: the passage to Australia*** (FAMHIS 304.894041 2003), extends the work of Don Charlwood and Helen Woolcock. It explores the health issues of government assisted immigration in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The book is organised in a chronological sequence from the 1820s to the 1950s.

Good Food, Bright Fires and Civility: British emigrant depots of the 19th century (G 361.650941 2001) by Keith Pescod, details the process of emigration from Britain to Australia under the organisation of the British Colonial Office in the mid-nineteenth century. Includes extracts from emigrants' diaries and official correspondence reveals British government attitudes of the time regarding the emigration schemes.

The passage makers (G 387.506542753 1978) by Michael K Stammers, provides an account of James Baines and his Black Ball Line that brought many people to Australia from 1852. Includes a chapter on 'The Queensland Venture', the agreement to bring passengers to Queensland in the 1860s and the land order system.

Shipboard newspapers charted the journey and recorded immigrant hopes, regrets and anticipations.

Emigrant handbooks had practical hints on clothes and life in colony at the time.

Where can I find records of seamen?

For the 19th Century there are only a few lists of ships' crews. Check the NSW State Archives Collections Genealogical Kit Handbook as well as the One Search catalogue, <https://onesearch.slg.qld.gov.au/>, for lists taken from newspapers.

Records of merchant shipping and seamen (FAMHIS 387.50941 1998) by Kelvin Smith and Christopher J. Watts, is useful if the ancestor was a British resident who joined a ship in the UK using his correct name.

Trying to find a seafaring ancestor (PAM 929.1 1988), by Ronald Parsons, discusses some of the problems. It also covers records available through The National Archives (UK) and the Certificates of Competency that may be found through the AJCP records in State Library.

Registers of Discharge of Seamen NSW [1859-1887] (FAMHIS 929.3944), compiled by Kate Vernon and Billie Jacobsen, and sourced from records held at NSW State Archives & Records. The entries are arranged alphabetically by surname. Each entry provides discharge date, the seaman's names; name of the ship, ship's master's names, with the NSW State Archives Collections item number. The original record will often give the place of origin. Published in 3 volumes.

Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) Board of Trade Records contain registers of certificates of competency for masters and mates in the colonial trade at BT128. There is a handbook at the level 3 desk to help find the material. The records are digitally available through National Library of Australia. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-743600484/findingaid?digitised=y#nla-obj-743616150>

See also *Records of merchant seamen 1861-1913* and *Merchant navy seamen 1918-1941* on FindMyPast, available at State Library.

When trying to locate information about a seaman who deserted or who signed off a ship from overseas it is important to identify the port where he left the ship. Sources on deserters include:

- ***An alphabetical list of deserters from ships, taken from the Australian Archives 1852-1882; 1883-1890*** (MFC 929.39423 1986)
- ***Discharged and deserted seamen, Queensland*** (MFC 929.3943 1991), compiled Margaret Verran, covers 1882-1913.
- ***Queensland ship deserters 1862-1911*** [CD-ROM] (QCFS 929.39 2011) contains 3 800 entries.
- ***The deserters: a complete record of military and naval deserters in Australia and New Zealand, 1800-65*** (G 355.1334 1985) compiled by Rae Sexton
- ***Ships' deserters 1852-1900: including stragglers, strays and absentees from H.M. ships*** (FAMHIS 387.54044 1986) compiled by J. Melton, lists almost 10 000 desertions and other absences listed in the NSW government gazette and NSW police gazette. After 1864 Victorian desertions were listed, and eventually those from other Australian colonies. Information provided will include a physical description.

Internet sites on crew and deserters include:

- Queensland State Archives, *Register of Seamen 1882-1919* [Index categories < Professions] <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/search-the-records>
- *Ship Deserters in South Australia* <http://www.portgermeinhistory.com/ShipDeserters.html>
- Maritime History Archives (Canada), Crew Agreements and Lists for British Empire Vessels 1863-1938, Crew Agreements Indices Search <https://mha.mun.ca/mha/holdings/searchcombinedcrews.php>
- Crew Lists of the British Merchant Navy – 1915 <https://1915crewlists.rmg.co.uk/>

How can I find out about shipwrecks?

Australian shipwrecks: a pictorial history (910.452 2009) by Peter Christopher, is a unique collection of stories and photos covering not only the lost ships, but also the tragic and heroic stories of those aboard and their rescuers. Australian shipwrecks featured range from pre-colonial wrecks to modern steamships.

Lance Paterson's books ***Wreck-ollections: ships and shipwrecks in Queensland waters*** (FAMHIS 919.43 2002-2018) is a three-volume series. It covers where and when a ship was wrecked, and usually an account of the event. Sources are acknowledged.

Jack Loney was an Australian writer who wrote about shipwrecks. Many of his books have information relating to specific locations and ships, and include an atlas. His work is a good starting point for further research. State Library holds nearly 30 titles of his work including:

- ***An atlas history of Australian shipwrecks: state-by-state including maps and diving notes*** (G 919.4 1981)
- ***Famous wrecks*** (G 919.4 1983)
- ***Wrecks in Australian waters: an illustrated survey of shipwrecks, fires, collisions, and strandings on the Australian coast from 1629*** (G 919.4 1978)

Titles for shipwrecks for Australia and beyond include:

- ***Australian and New Zealand shipwrecks and sea tragedies*** by Hugh Edwards (GSA 910.453 1978)
- ***Shipwrecks of Great Britain and Ireland*** by Richard Larn (G 910.453 1981)
- ***Sailing ships, shipwrecks & crime in the 19th century: a handbook for historians, genealogists, shiplovers and criminologists based on Supreme Court records, Criminal Sessions 1840s-1860s*** by Jean Uhl (PAM 910.4530994 1985)

Consult the catalogue online at <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/> for further titles and copies

Need further information?

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

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