

Family History

Naturalisation records

Why did migrants apply to be naturalised?

The call for migrants to the Australian colonies saw an influx of people from several European and Asian countries. However, non-British migrants did not have the same rights and privileges as British settlers.

Before 1849, aliens could only be naturalised by a special Act of Parliament. However, granting of letters of denization occurred between 1834 and 1848 allowing aliens to enjoy some of the rights of a natural born British. The issuing of letters of denization stopped after 1848. Legislation in 1849 formalised the process of naturalisation. Naturalisation gave settlers most of the rights their fellow British colonists enjoyed, including the right to own land.

Prior to 1904 the States were responsible for naturalisation applications. Records for Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia up to this date are held in the relevant State Archives. National Archives of Australia holds the naturalisation records for Victoria and South Australia.

How can I access naturalisation records?

From 1904 naturalisation became a federal government responsibility. Naturalisation records from this date are in the **National Archives of Australia** (NAA). Name references to early 20th century naturalisation records may be found in the NAA's online database **RecordSearch** [Name Search tab > Immigration & Naturalisations] <https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection>

State Library of Queensland holds:

- **Index to Commonwealth naturalization certificates 1904-1917** / compiled by Australian Genealogical Education Centre (AGEC) volunteers. [microfiche] (MFC 929.394 1996)
- **Certificates of naturalisation : Commonwealth 1904-1937 Commonwealth 1904-1937** [microfilm] (MFL 929.394)

Queensland

State Library holds:

- **Oath of allegiance : 1858-1903 extracts** / compiled by Eileen B. Johnson. (G 929.39432 1994)
- **Wide Bay naturalisations** / compiled by Eileen B. Johnson. (FAMHIS 929.39432 2004)
- **Queensland naturalisation records from 1851-1905** [microfilm]. (MFL 929.3943)

This is a microfilm copy of the records held at Queensland State Archives. The film contains copies of oaths of allegiance, naturalisation certificates or references to lists of naturalised aliens in the Queensland Government's *Votes and Proceedings*. Details provided usually include name, residence, country of origin, age and occupation. Volumes 24 and 25 contain an alphabetic index to the series.

The index is also available online at the Queensland State Archives:

- **Index to Naturalisations Index 1851-1908**
[Indexes > Index categories > Courts > Naturalisations]
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/search-the-records>

New South Wales

Index to Naturalisation 1834-1903 / Museums of History NSW State Archives Collection
<https://mhns.w.au/indexes/naturalisation-and-citizenship/naturalization-index/>

The wildcard search option (using '%') of the online index is useful in tracing frequently misspelled foreign names.

The index includes over 5,500 names and provides details of surname, given name/s, native place, date of certificate, register and page number, and AO/SR reel number. Registers include the certificate number, name, native place and country, age, ship by which arrived, year of arrival, present place of residence, date of certificate, record number of memorial, and remarks. Queensland migrants applying for naturalisation prior to 1859 will be found in the NSW records.

State Library holds:

- ***Index to registers of certificates of naturalization and lists of aliens to whom certificates of naturalization have been issued: 1834-1903*** / Colonial Secretary.
[microfiche] (MFC 929.3944 1985). This is a microfiche version of the online index.
- ***Registers of certificates of naturalization: 1834-1903*** / Colonial Secretary.
[microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 1986) AO/SR reels 128A-141A. See also the following NSW State Archives Collection guide for more information:

See also:

Naturalization / Citizenship guide, 1834-1903

<https://mhns.w.gov.au/guides/naturalization-citizenship-guide/>

Victoria

- ***Nominal index for pre-1904 Victorian naturalizations: 1 Jan 1852 – 31 Dec 1903*** [microfiche] (MFC 929.3945 1991). This name index provides series and item references that can be used to retrieve the relevant files held by the National Archives of Australia.

Tasmania

Index to Naturalisations 1835-1905 / Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office

https://libriaristas.ent.sirsiidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/

This is an online index to approximately 1200 applicants for certificates of naturalisation and denization for the period 1835-1905. It provides details of surname, given name/s, date of application and reference number.

See also Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office guide to **Naturalisations**

<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/tasmanian-archives/guides-to-records/naturalisations/introduction/>

South Australia

South Australian 19th century naturalisations <http://www.jaunay.com/naturalisation.html>

Compiled from lists published in the *South Australian Government Gazette* as well as records held by National Archives of Australia and State Records of South Australia.

National Archives of Australia (NAA) – All South Australian naturalisation records are held at the NAA and can be searched through Explore the collection < RecordSearch (<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection>). Select the NameSearch tab, and in Category of Records select Immigration and naturalisations records. Pre-1904 records have been digitised and are available to view online.

State Library of SA - Naturalisations guide

<https://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/c.php?q=410226&p=2794977>

State Library holds:

- ***Naturalizations, South. Australia, pre-1904*** / Aust. Archives [microfiche] (MFC 929.39423 199-) This name index to South Australian naturalisations 1848-1903 provides series and item references that can be used to retrieve the relevant files held at National Archives of Australia (Adelaide Office)

New Zealand

Archives New Zealand has a guide on **Citizenship** that includes a section on naturalisation records.

<https://archives.govt.nz/citizenship>

Ancestry (Library edition) has the following index: **New Zealand, Naturalisations 1843-1981**.

State Library holds:

- **Aliens naturalized in New Zealand, 1843-1916** [microfiche] (MFC 351.81709931 1988)
This publication includes a copy of 'Names, etc. of alien friends who have been naturalized in New Zealand.
- **Register of persons naturalised in New Zealand to 1948** [microfiche] (MFC 929.393 1995)
This register contains surname, forename, date of birth or age, place of birth, stated former nationality, occupation, place of residence, date of naturalisation, file number, certificate of register and register page number.
- **Register of persons granted New Zealand citizenship, 1949 to 1968** [microfiche] (MFC 929.393 1995)
Arranged alphabetically by surname, this register includes forenames, date and place of birth, date of naturalisation and file number.

Papua New Guinea

- **Some expatriates of Papua New Guinea** / compiled by Joan Ainsworth. [microfiche] (MFC 929.3953 1992). Fiche 2: **'Miscellaneous'** lists applications for naturalisation published in the *Territory of Papua-New Guinea Government Gazette* between October 1947 and January 1956. Entries provide full name, nationality, place of birth, number of years in Australia/PNG, and present place of residence.

Indexes arranged by nationality

- **Early Dutch immigrant naturalizations: an alphabetical index 1849-1903** / by Edward Duyker. (PAM 994.004393 1987). Contents: v1. Victoria, New South Wales & Queensland
An index of 165 Dutch settlers naturalised in the three colonies in the 19th century. Details usually include surname, other names, place of origin, ship and year/date of arrival, date of naturalisation and State, age, occupation, and present residence.

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