



# Family History Police Records

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Police records consist of police service records, police gazettes and criminal reports.

## How do I find police service records?

### Queensland

**Queensland State Archives** holds police service records. They are not indexed.

Within those records the two of most significance for locating police service employment records are:

- Police staff files 1861 onwards <https://www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au/series/S1108>
- *Register of members of the Police Force* [microfilm] 1864-1917  
<https://www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au/items/ITM663167>

On the Queensland Police website there is the “Queensland Police Memorial”, <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/police-memorial>, which lists police members who have died while on active duty. The records date back to 1859.

### New South Wales

**Museums of History NSW State Archives Collection** has the following index:

- *Register of police 1852-1913* <https://mhnsw.au/indexes/police/police-service-registers/>  
State Library holds the microfilm (*Register of police appointments 1857-1913* on microfilm MFL 929.3944 1991 - SR/AO reel 3043).  
See also the *Police service guide* <https://mhnsw.au/guides/police-service-guide/>

Other resources held by State Library includes:

- [Index to] *Register of police 1862-1904* [microfiche] (MFC 929.3944 1986 – SR/AO microfiche no. 846-850)
- *NSW Police Gazettes 1862-1938* [CD-ROM]
- *Mounted Police Corps, 1839-1850* [microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 199- – SR/AO reels 2901 & 3041)
- *Index to police returns NSW (including some Brisbane and Port Phillip records) [1825-1856] – includes mounted, water and border police* (FAMHIS 929.3944 2009)
- *Colonial Secretary, New South Wales civil establishment, returns of police, Sydney and country districts* [microfilm] (MFL 929.3944 2010 - SR/AO reels 1720-1723) Years 1831-1856

### Victoria

**Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV)** has the following:

- *Police Correspondence Records 1853-1920* <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law/police-correspondence-records-1853-1920>

State Library holds:

- *Index to the members of Victoria Police, 1853-1953* [microfiche] MFC 363.2209945 199-
- *Victoria Police Gazettes* on microfiche and CD-ROMs for various years

### Tasmania

**Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office**

- *Register of the appointment, transfer, resignation and dismissal of members of the Police establishment exists for the years 1832 - 1844 and 1855 - 1955* [POL324].  
<https://stors.tas.gov.au/AI/POL324>

Between 1858 and 1865 the Police Force was de-centralised as Municipalities took responsibility for appointing and maintaining the force in their area. The register does not include policeman employed by the Municipalities. This de-centralised system existed until 1898.

## South Australia

**State Records South Australia:** Collection guide – Police

<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/finding-information/discover-our-collection/police,-courts-and-gaols>

## Western Australia

**State Records Office of Western Australia:** Collection Guide – Police Records

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/state-records-office-of-western-australia/policing>

### What are police gazettes?

Police gazettes were the way that police throughout the states, and country, kept up to date with current policing business.

### What type of information can I find in police gazettes?

Police Gazettes contain a wealth of information for family historians. The information found in the police gazettes varies from state to state but may include:

- Convicts and criminals who have absconded from prison or their masters
- Reports on criminal activities such as murder, arson, robbery, assault etc.
- Criminals discharged from prison
- Persons wanted by the police for criminal activities
- Inquests
- Seamen and soldiers who have deserted
- Appointments, promotions and resignations in the police force
- Reports on missing friends and relatives

### Examples from 1883 Queensland Police Gazette

#### Attempt at Arson

*“About 12:40 am on the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, a malicious attempt was made to burn the dwelling-house of James Johnson, Kennigo street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. An old bag was set on fire under the wall-plate, and some of the weather-boards had caught fire but were soon extinguished. 16<sup>th</sup> March 1883.”*

#### Wanted

*“Peter Reilly is charged, on warrant issued by the Brisbane Bench, with deserting his wife Jane, Sherwood, on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant. Description: - An Irishman, about 55 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches high, slender build, short thin whiskers turning grey, dark-brown hair, round-shouldered, a farmer; wore brown overcoat, dark tweed trousers, striped crimean shirt, grey felt hat, elastic-side boots. 13<sup>th</sup> March 1883.”*

#### Ship Desertion

*“Robert Smith is charged, on warrant issued by the Townsville Bench, with deserting from the ship “Scottish Lassie”, Captain Kerr, at Cleveland Bay, on 30<sup>th</sup> ultimo. Description: - About 20 years of age, 5 feet 4 inches high, no whiskers, small red eyes, no beard, fair complexion, bandy-legged, sailor-like appearance. Supposed to have gone to Ross Island. 28<sup>th</sup> April 1883.”*

### How can I access the police gazettes?

State Library holds copies of the police gazettes for Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. There are also a number of indexes that will assist researchers to locate specific information. The CD versions are keyword searchable. Pre-1900 gazettes are also available through **Find My Past**, available at State Library.

<b>Queensland</b>	1867 – 1945 [CD-ROM] 1867 – 1907 imperfect [microfilm] (MFL 363.209943)
<b>New South Wales</b>	1856 – 1862 [microfilm] (MFL 364.9944 199-) under the title <b><i>New South Wales reports of crime</i></b> 1862 – 1930 [microfilm] (MFL 364.9944 199-) 1862 – 1938 [CD-ROM] 1860 – 1930 Available online through Trove <a href="https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/1476">https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/1476</a>
<b>Victoria</b>	1853 – 1870 [microfiche] (MFCS 364.9945) 1855, 1864 – 5, 1868 – 1876, 1885 – 1924 [CD-ROM]
<b>South Australia</b>	1862 – 1947 [CD-ROM]
<b>Tasmania</b>	1861 – 1933 [CD-ROM] *Issues to 1885 under the title <b><i>Reports of crime</i></b>
<b>England</b>	1797 – 1810; 1828; 1830 – 1840 [microfilm] (MFSCA 364.941) under title <b><i>Police gazette or Hue and cry</i></b>

## Indexes to the Police Gazettes

- **Queensland Police Gazette Index 1864-1874** [CD-ROM] QCFS 363.209943 2006
- **Queensland Police Gazette Inquests index 1875-1885** State Library Family History indexes <https://bit.ly/QldPoliceGazetteIndex>
- **Victorian Police gazette consolidated index 1859 – 1863** [microfiche] MFC 364.9945 1992
- **Victorian Police gazette consolidated index 1864 - 1868** [microfiche] MFC 364.9945 1998
- **Victorian police gazettes: criminals index, 1853-1858** [microfiche] MFC 364.309945 1997
- **Victoria deserters from ships index 1853 – 1880** [microfiche] MFC 929.3945 1996
- **Index of deserters of wives and children 1880 – 1890** [microfiche] MFC 346.994017 1999-
- **Army deserters from H.M. service** [book – 2 volumes] PAM 929.3945 1988
- **The Deserter Index, 1828-1840** [CD-ROM] QCFS 929.341 1999 [Deserters from British Army units, Royal Marines, and the Honourable East India Company's service. Extracted from *Hue and Cry*]
- **Missing friends in the Victoria Police Gazette** [microfiche] MFC 929.3945 1995
- **Index to Tasmanians in the Victoria Police Gazette 1853–1893** [microfiche] MFC 929.3945 1997

## Where else can I look for reports of crimes?

### Newspapers

Reports of crimes can also be followed up in the local newspaper of the day. Newspapers can provide a great deal of information by reporting on court trials, inquests and executions. State Library holds many historical newspapers for Brisbane, regional Queensland and other states. Check the **One Search** online catalogue for details <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>

State Library has some online newspaper databases, <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/collections/information-collections/newspapers>, available at the library or from home through the website (log in from home if you are a Queensland resident, using your username and password, or your library card barcode and surname).

Also search digitised historical Australian newspapers online via the National Library of Australia's website, Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

### Criminal reports

**Queensland criminal reports: 1860-1907** / [by Thomas Macleod]  
[CD-ROM] (QCFS 636.201025 2008)

A compilation of selected criminal cases that were reported in the *Supreme Court Reports* Vol. 1-8 (1860-1881), the *Queensland Law Journal* and *Notes of Cases* Vol. I-XII (1881-1901) and the *Queensland State Reports* and *Weekly Notes* (1902-1907).

**New South Wales Weekly Notes Compendium, 1884-1900 (Court Reports)**

[CD-ROM] QCFS 348.944043 2009

Summaries of court cases reported in *NSW Weekly Notes*. Individuals named as defendants or plaintiffs in a variety of cases - bankruptcy, probate, custody, libel, divorce as well as criminal cases.

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## Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/services/ask-librarian>



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