



Who's Your Mob – First Nations Family History

Photographs

A photograph can tell a story that is often not captured in other formats. State Library of Queensland has a rich collection of images in many different formats – online digitised images, copy prints, photograph albums and glass negatives. First Nations people feature in many photographs in the John Oxley Library and these photos may be very relevant to your research.

Photographs show costume and dress, the health of those being photographed and relationships if there are a number of people in the photograph. There are also photographs in the Tindale collection, and these can be compared with other images to establish the identity of a person.

State Library has obtained photographs from many different sources, including journals, annual reports, newspapers and photographic studios. Many early photographs were staged by anthropologists and photographers, showing groups with body paint and armour in fake settings. Some images were taken in studios, with props that suggested Aboriginal heritage. Other images were taken by the Aboriginal Protectors and government officials at various time periods.

Some images have been made available digitally. Others need to be accessed by requesting them from our repositories via the catalogue. Where digitised, photographic material containing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander content has been made available in accordance with State Library of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections Commitments.

Copy Print Collection

The Copy Print Collection is a collection of photographs collected or received as loans and donations – all with some relevance to Queensland's history and people. From the late 1980s negatives were made of almost all incoming photographs. During this process copy prints of the negatives were printed, given a subject heading and filed in boxes, regular and large sized. Only a small part of this collection has been digitised.

State Library's Copy Print Collection includes many images of First Nations people from the 1800s to the 1950s. Photos in this collection can be searched and requested through our One Search catalogue. You will find catalogue entries under several headings, including:

- [Photographs of Aboriginal Australians;](#)
- [Photographs of Aboriginal Australians at North Queensland;](#)
- [Photographs of Aboriginal Australians at Avon Downs Station.](#)

Folders of photocopied images

Folders of photocopied images are available to view in the John Oxley Library heritage collections area. They are arranged alphabetically by place names, such as Cherbourg, Kowanyama and Weipa.

Archival material and manuscript collections

State Library's archival and manuscript collections include many photograph albums, collections and glass plate negatives relevant to First Nations people. This material ranges from very early images to recent photographs. Some examples of such collections include:

- [Hamish Cairns Palm Island Photographs 2008-2013](#) – photographs of people and places on Palm Island
- [Glass Plate Negatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#) – includes photographs of Barambah, Darnley Island, Mapoon, Saibai Island, Taroom, Yam Island, Yarrabah and York Island
- [Michael Aird photographs 1980s-2000s](#) - these images are mostly portraits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, including people from Brisbane, South-East Queensland, Woorabinda, Townsville and the Torres Strait
- [Craig Holmes Kowanyama photographs](#) – photographs of the Kowanyama community taken in 1974 and 1990
- [Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival Photographs 2009](#) – photographs taken at the 2009 Laura Dance Festival
- [Jo-Anne Driessens photographs 1997-2000](#) – digital and print images and an album, titled Cherbourg Today 1998, documenting people, places and events in Queensland. This collection also includes photos of Indigenous musicians Archie Roach and Seaman Dan.
- [Bloomfield River and District Photographs 1880-1886](#) – digitised photographs of the Bloomfield River and surrounding district with numerous images of local Aboriginal people
- [Hamish Cairns Invasion Day rally 2018 photographs](#) – photographs of Brisbane's 2018 Invasion Day rally.

Soldier portraits

Indigenous soldiers were accepted for service from 1917. Many Queensland soldiers had their photographs taken at Enoggera prior to embarkation. State Library has digitised the more than 30,000 soldier portraits that were published in *The Queenslander*.

Search for these images in our [One Search catalogue](#) using the person's name.

See State Library's blog: [Researching Indigenous soldiers in WW1](#)

Need further information?

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