Convict Research

This is a guide to convict records held by Cairns Libraries, City branch.

### Convict Arrival Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales (including Qld)</td>
<td>1788-1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton Bay (Queensland)</td>
<td>1849-1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land)</td>
<td>1812-1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1803-1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1850-1868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Where Do I Start?

**Work back through the generations from yourself.**
Death and marriage records may give important clues, including place of origin, age, occupation, time in Australia as well as conditions applied to getting married, although some former convicts were keen to obscure their background and recorded incorrect information. If you cannot find your ancestor in free immigration records, now is the time to search convict indexes. Check convict records in the following order:

1) Convict indents  
2) Census and muster  
3) Tickets of Leave  
4) Pardons  
5) Trial records

For a comprehensive guide to convict records read Convict records in Australia by Cora Num (GEN 919.2 CON).

### Records Available on Ancestry Library Edition

Search the Australian Convict Index, 1788-1868 (results in here will often lead you to all records relating to a particular individual). Search other relevant Australian collections on Ancestry in Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills and Immigration (eg. convict transportation registers, Tickets of Leave).

Search relevant United Kingdom collections on Ancestry in Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills (eg. Prison hulk registers and Letter books, Licences of parole for female convicts, Criminal registers for England and Wales)

### Records Available on Findmypast

Search Convict arrivals in New South Wales 1788-1842

### Online Indexes

**Convicts to Australia** [http://convictcentral.com](http://convictcentral.com)  
Comprehensive guide to convict research in Australia.

**British Convict transportation registers 1787-1867**  

**Irish transportation records**  
Provides convict's crime, date and place of conviction, name of ship, and sometimes the names of accomplices and aliases.

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Need further information?  
Contact your local Cairns Libraries branch,  
or Contact Us on www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library
Proceedings of the Old Bailey, London 1674-1834
http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/
Searchable, digitised collection of over 100,000 criminal trials held at the London Central Criminal Court.

Tickets of Leave 1810-1875 Society of Australasian Genealogists.
This index is derived from the butts of the original tickets of leave. The butts can be ordered for a fee.

New South Wales (includes Queensland)

NSW Convict Index, Applications to Marry, 1825-51, Convict Exiles, 1849-50, Convict Pardons, 1791-1825, 1837-47

Convict Indents
Indents were the official government lists of convicts transported, arranged by ship name in order of arrival date. They provide information about the convict’s crime, place and date of trial, sentence, place of birth, former occupation and sometimes a physical description.

We have an index to the New South Wales convict indents:

Convict indents index (FICHE NSW)
These indexes list all convicts transported to NSW. Note the fiche and page number to locate the convict’s full entry in the “convict indents”.

Colonial Secretary’s papers 1788-1825 (FICHE NSW).
This is the most comprehensive record of early NSW settlement which includes interesting detail about individual convicts as well as settlers. Locate an entry with the Index to the Colonial Secretary’s Papers 1788-1825 (CDROM NSW)

1828 census of NSW (GEN 919.44.CEN)

General return of convicts in NSW 1837 (GEN 919.44 CON)

Guide to NSW State Archives relating to convicts and convict administration (GEN 919.44 CON).
Essential guide to convict records in the NSW State Archives.

Register of absolute pardons 1791-1843 & register of recommendations for absolute pardons 1826-46 (FILM NSW 266)

Wives and families of convicts on bounty ships 1849-55 (FICHE NSW)

The Library also holds various musters; 1800-1802 NSW & Norfolk Island; 1805-1806 NSW & Norfolk Island; 1811 NSW; Norfolk Island & Van Diemen’s Land; 1814 NSW; 1822 NSW. All titles at (GEN 919.44 NEW).

Tasmania (Van Diemen’s Land)

Index to Tasmanian convicts 1804-53
http://portal.archives.tas.gov.au

Index to Convict Applications For Permissions to Marry 1829-1857
http://portal.archives.tas.gov.au

Convict applications to bring out families to Van Dienmen’s Land (also NSW, Vic, WA) (GEN 919.46 TAS)
Notorious strumpets & dangerous girls, convict women in Van Diemen’s Land 1803-1829 (GEN 919.46 TAS)

Transcribing Tasmanian convict records (GEN 919.46 TAS)
Useful guide to Tasmanian convict research.

Victoria

Convicts to the Port Phillip District (GEN 919.45 VIC)
Includes the Exiles from Pentonville, Millbank and Parkhurst prisons who were granted a conditional pardon on their arrival, as well as NSW and Tasmanian convicts who came with their masters or were sent to the district to work. Gives extensive details of ship & date of arrival, trial, sentence, release, occupation, master, and other remarks.

Western Australia

W.A. convict registers.
This resource is online at: http://www.fremantleprison.com/
Provides details of over 10,000 men who were transported to the Swan River Colony between 1850-1868. Lists when and where tried, name of ship and date of arrival.

Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians (GEN 919.41 WES)
Gives brief details of ship, date of arrival, conviction.

Other Resources

Convict records in Australia by Cora Num (GEN 919.2 NUM)
Lists information about the types of records available and which institutions hold them.

The convict ships, 1787-1868 (GEN 919.44 CON)
Provides comprehensive information about the convict voyages.

Founders of Australia; a biographical dictionary of the First Fleet (GEN 919.44 GIL)

Norfolk Island 1788-1813, the people and their families (GEN 919.44 CON)
Trace your family history using Cairns Libraries latest FREE databases.

**Ancestry.com Library Edition**
This is the largest family history database available containing over 3 billion names in over 6000 databases. Ancestry includes a number of Australian immigration indexes and some original images for NSW. Use this database from any public access PC from all Cairns Libraries.

**Findmypast**
Access to the entire Australia & New Zealand, United Kingdom, Irish and United States Findmypast collections. Use this database from any public access PC from all Cairns Libraries.

**The British Newspaper Archive**
Contains over 200 newspaper titles from the 18th to 20th century - with 4.7 million digitised pages, and millions more to come. Use this database from any public access PC from all Cairns Libraries. **Trove**
A discovery service developed by the National Library of Australia, which gives users a single point of access to more than 45 million items, including library, archive and museum collections and Australian digitised newspapers (up until 1956) and images - [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au). See Trove LibGuide.

**PapersPast**
Contains more than one million pages of digitised New Zealand newspapers and periodicals 1839-1932 - [http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast](http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast).

**London Digital Archive 1785-1985**
Complete digital edition in full text of “The Times (London)”, searchable by keyword. Search this databases at home from the State Library of Queensland, signing up with your Cairns Libraries membership card. Go to [https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library](https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library), and click on Online, then eResources.

**19th Century British Newspapers, 1800-1900**
Full text digital newspaper collection for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Search this database at home from the State Library of Queensland, signing up with your Cairns Libraries membership card. Go to [https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library](https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library), and click on Online, then eResources.