

Archives for genealogists



DR39719 - Archer Household outside military barracks, ca 1880 - 1900

Research Guide to archives for genealogists
at Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

ITM	QSA Item (describes the item)
PR	Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy)
DR	Digital Representation (for a digital image)
S	Series (for a series of records)
A	Agency (for the creating or responsible agency)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.

When conducting genealogical and family history research try searching for a name in:

- online catalogue, ArchivesSearch
- online [indexes](#).

There are many series of records useful for genealogical searches. The most frequently used are listed below.

- **Admission registers for many State Schools**
To determine if QSA holds school admission registers, search ArchivesSearch for the name of the school, eg. Bald Hills State School. For further information see the [Research Guide to School records](#).
- **Asylum files**
Mental asylum - the two main types of records held at QSA are for the Public Curator (protective management files) and Goodna (case books). Most personal files are subject to a restricted access period of 100 years which means access permission is needed to view and copy. Further information in the [Research Guide to Mental asylum records](#). Benevolent asylum - QSA holds Dunwich Benevolent Asylum and Eventide Home resident, staff and administration records. Further information in the [Research guide to Dunwich and Eventide records](#).
- **Deed poll (change of name) files**
QSA holds name changes lodged with the Supreme Court of Queensland. A deed poll was a document commonly, although not exclusively, used when a person wished to change their name. As a general rule, a person was allowed to change both their given name and surname/family/last name without taking any formal legal steps. Not everyone who changed their name lodged a deed poll document.
- **Divorce records**
QSA holds divorce records from 1861 to 1976. Different date ranges are held for the various Supreme Court Districts. An online index to Divorces 1861-1894 is available to search under the heading Courts. For information about divorces after 1976 including [proof of divorce](#) search the [Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia](#) website.

- **Inquests**

Magisterial inquiries establish causes of deaths and causes of major fires. To find inquests you need the approximate date and place of death or the fire. An index to Inquests 1859-1902 is available under the heading Courts on the QSA website. For further information see the [Research Guide to Inquests](#).

- **Insolvency**

QSA holds insolvency and liquidation records from 1857. These are the records of the Supreme Court of Queensland and the Public Curator Office. For further information see the [Research Guide to Insolvency and liquidation records](#).

- **Land tenure**

Records of crown leases of all types, e.g. selections (farms) and pastoral leases (stations), are at QSA dating from the 1840s onwards. A good starting point to find files is to search ArchivesSearch for the name of the selector or the name of the station or run. However, many land records are not individually listed by name in ArchivesSearch. For further information see the [Research Guide to Land tenure records](#).

- **Maps**

These are useful for genealogists firstly to find place names and secondly to find names of original lessees or owners of land (on parish and other cadastral maps). Maps can be searched for in ArchivesSearch. For further information see the [Research Guide to Maps](#).

- **Naturalisations**

An index to Naturalisations 1851-1908, for non-British immigrants only, is available on the QSA website under *Courts*.

- **Passenger lists for immigrants** arriving in Queensland by ship from Europe from 1848 onwards. Immigration indexes are available on the QSA website. Not all shipping lists are indexed, and not all arrivals are in QSA records. For further information see the [Research Guide to Immigration records](#).

- **Police Gazettes**

QSA has the Queensland Police Gazettes from 1864-1997. In addition, the Queensland Police Gazettes are searchable up to 1940, as a full-text database, in the Reading Room. For further information see the [Research Guide to Police gazettes](#).

- **Staff records for Government employees**

Records of occupations include those for teachers, police officers and high-level public servants. However, the collection of staff records is not comprehensive, and QSA does not hold private employment records for individuals. Queensland [Blue books for the years 1869–1916](#) are available online on the State Library of Queensland catalogue. This list was published annually and includes senior employees as well as some unique public servants such as lighthouse keepers.

Also see profession-related [online indexes](#) for other government employee records are available on the QSA website:

- Civil Servants 1865-1867, Imperial Pensions 1872-1915 and Imperial Pensions 1898-1912 under *Government*
- Dental Board 1900-1931, Dentists 1903-1932, Dentist Apprentices 1903-1925, Nurses Examinations 1912-1925 and Teachers 1860-1905, under *Schools, hospitals and orphanages*

- **State electoral rolls**

Electoral rolls are available from 1860 onwards. To search electoral rolls, you need to know the approximate date and place of residence. Use the key maps in the Reading Room to identify the relevant electorate at that time. Many electoral rolls are digitised and are on our Reading Room computers under the Selected QSA records tile. For further information see the [Research Guide to State Electoral rolls](#).

- **Wills and intestacies**

To use these records you need to know the approximate date and place of death. An index to Wills 1857-1940 is available on the QSA website under Courts. For further information see the [Research Guide to Will and Intestacy records](#).

Researchers unfamiliar with archival records may find them rather confusing and difficult to use. Archival records are preserved in their original order, with their finding aids created by the public authority. Finding information is often time consuming and may involve searching large quantities of records, sometimes with limited reward.

If an [online QSA index](#) is available, we recommend researchers search this. The content of online indexes has been sourced directly from original records. Digitised copies of many original registers and indexes are also available in the [QSA catalogue](#), and digitised copies of some microfilmed original records are available on Reading Room computers.

Public programs about researching the records are run by QSA. Refer to the [What's on](#) section, and [QSA social media channels](#) under the *Stay Connected* heading to find QSA opening hours, scheduled webinars, seminars, and other events.

Access at Queensland State Archives

If records are not available online through our catalogue, members of the public may access, view and copy open records in our Reading Room at:

435 Compton Road
Runcorn QLD 4113

All visitors to our Reading Room, Runcorn, Brisbane, need to [book a time](#) through Eventbrite (this means anyone with you also needs an individual booking).

Other sources for family and local history research

For more general advice about compiling a family history, consult one of the specialist family history societies.

For further information on societies specialising in this area of research in Brisbane contact either:

Queensland Family History Society or
PO Box 171
Indooroopilly QLD 4068
Website: www.qfhs.org.au
Phone: (07) 3355 3369

Genealogical Society of Queensland Inc
PO Box 1467
Carindale QLD 4152
Website: www.gsq.org.au
Phone: (07) 3349 6072

The National Archives of Australia maintains a list of research agents for each state/territory. Please refer to their website to locate a research agent: <https://www.naa.gov.au/help-your-research/research-agents>
Your [local public library](#) may be able to assist with general information about local family and local history societies. This is because most public libraries have a genealogical section with books on family history. To make the most effective use of archival sources, you will need to do preliminary work to establish a basic framework about members of your family.

Other archival sources

QSA does not collect manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, books or private archives such as business, church or society records. Additionally, QSA does not hold or issue birth, death or marriage certificates. The [Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages historical indexes](#) are available to search online, and copies of historical certificates may be ordered online, see [How to order historical records](#).

John Oxley Library within the State Library of Queensland collect diaries, original manuscripts, artworks, and other records created by private individuals and agencies.

The [State Library of Queensland](#) collects materials that chronicle events, people, places and the ideas shaping Queensland.

The National Library of Australia's online resource, [Trove](#), provides access to digitised historical newspapers.

Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.