Family History
Police Records

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

State Records NSW has the following index:

- *Register of police 1852-1913* https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/node/1461/browse
  State Library holds the microfilm (*Register of police appointments 1857-1913* on microfilm MFL 929.3944 1991 - SR/AO reel 3043).
  There is also a guide, *Archives in Brief – Police service records*
  https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/police-service-registers

Other resources held by State Library are as follows:

- [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

South Australian Police 1838 to 1920 (includes Northern Territory police until 1911)
https://www.familyhistorysa.org/sahistory/police.html

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 13th 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. 16th March 1883."

Wanted
"Peter Reilly is charged, on warrant issued by the Brisbane Bench, with deserting his wife Jane, Sherwood, on the 8th 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. 13th 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 30th 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. 28th 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 are 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.

Queensland	1867 – 1945 [CD-ROM] 1867 – 1907 imperfect [microfilm] (MFL 363.209943)
New South Wales	1856 – 1862 [microfilm] (MFL 364.9944 199-) under the title ***New South Wales reports of crime*** 1862 – 1930 [microfilm] (MFL 364.9944 199-) 1862 – 1938 [CD-ROM]
Victoria	1853 – 1870 [microfiche] (MFCS 364.9945) 1855, 1864 – 5, 1868 – 1876, 1885 – 1924 [CD-ROM]
South Australia	1862 – 1947 [CD-ROM]
Tasmania	1861 – 1933 [CD-ROM] *Issues to 1885 under the title ***Reports of crime***
England	1797 – 1810; 1828; 1830 – 1840 [microfilm] (MFSCA 364.941) under title ***Police gazette or Hue and cry***

Indexes to the Police Gazettes

- ***Queensland Police Gazette Index 1864-1874*** [CD-ROM] QCFS 363.209943 2006

- ***Queensland Police Gazette Inquests index 1875-1885*** Queensland government open data set
  https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/slq-police-gazette-inquests-1875-1885?cid=

- ***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 a large number of historical newspapers for Brisbane, regional Queensland and other states. Check the **One Search** online catalogue for details http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au

State Library has some online newspaper databases, https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/research-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 http://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.

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/plan-my-visit/services/ask-us

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