

Police Service Records

State Records holds a significant amount of information relating to the New South Wales Police Service. The purpose of this *Archives in Brief* is to outline the major sources to be used for locating police service records.

Historical Background

In August 1789, Arthur Phillip established a night-watch which came under civil control. It consisted of eight of the best-behaved convicts in the Colony. This was the first Police force in the country.

The force was re-organised along English lines by Governor Hunter in 1796, with constables being placed under the control of local magistrates. It remained this way, until Governor Macquarie's time, when a certain degree of centralised control was achieved in January 1811 with the appointment of a Police Superintendent.

As the Colony expanded and the population grew a number of specialised forces were established. These included a Water Police force which was set up in Sydney c.1832, abolished in 1843 and re-established with the appointment of a Water Police Magistrate in 1847; the Native Police corps which operated mainly in northern New South Wales from 1848; and the Border Police, who were responsible to the Commissioners of Crown Lands for policing the land regulations in the remote Squatting Districts.

The most important of these specialised forces was the Mounted Police, which had the responsibility of protecting settlers in outlying areas as well as goods in transit on the roads. It was abolished in 1850. A Gold Escort was formed a year later in 1851 to provide safe passage for gold being transported from the diggings to Sydney.

Unification of the Police force did not come about until the *Police Regulation Act* of 1862. This Act placed the responsibility of the whole Police force into the hands of the Inspector General and it was organised largely along the lines of its present day basis.

How to find early Police Service Records

To locate the early records of the Police Service consult the alphabetical *Index to the Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1825* under 'Police'. Here you will find a list of correspondence relating to appointments, reports, applications, pay lists and other general police information from the early years of the Colony. The Index will also guide you to other Police information within the *Colonial Secretary's Papers* which is listed alphabetically by place names as well as individual names.

The Index is located in both reading rooms of State Records and in other locations on fiche.

Locating Police Service Records

There are two ways to locate Police service records. The first is to consult the *Concise Guide*. This is a comprehensive guide to our holdings and is arranged alphabetically by government agency. Under 'Police' you will find guidelines to locating police service records as well as police correspondence, publications, and records of police stations.

The easiest way to locate Police service records is to consult *Information Leaflet 41: Professions and Occupations*. This *Leaflet* is arranged alphabetically by profession.

General Police Records

- Police: ***Police Salary Registers***, 1838-1915, CGS 10946 (SRNSW ref: 11/16332-37, 3/2988-95; Reels 1970-74 in both reading rooms)

These registers provide the following: register number, name, rank, salary details and remarks (this column usually notes promotions, dismissals or resignations).

- Police: ***Registers of Police Appointments***, c.1857-1913, CGS 10943 (SRNSW ref: 8/3251-53; Reel 3043 in both reading rooms). This series is arranged alphabetically by surname and provides: service number, name, mounted or foot, date of birth, physical description, native place, marital status, calling, district, date of appointment and date and cause of leaving the force.
- Police: ***Registers of Police***, 1862-1904, CGS 10945 (SRNSW ref: 7/6213; Reels 2657 and 1974, Fiche 846-850 in both reading rooms); 1866-May 1913 (SRNSW ref: 8/3255-58; Reels 3044-46 in both reading rooms). This series continues to September 1969, however the records are closed to public access (CPA) after May 1913.

These registers provide details such as: date of appointment, age, physical description, marital status, native country, religion, education, previous occupation and where stationed. They also include demotions, discharges, deaths, and superannuation.

- Police: ***Registers of Pensions***, Nov 1851-Jan 1907, CGS 10944 (SRNSW ref: 11/16339, 7/6219; Reels 3048 and 2658 in both reading rooms). Information provided includes: name, rank, district, gratuity or pension, and amount.
- Police: ***Register of Appointments, Promotions, Dismissals and Retirements***, 1855-61, CGS 10942 (SRNSW ref: 7/6362; Reel 2657 in both reading rooms). Details include: name, physical description, marital status, trade/calling, date of appointments and previous Colonial government service.
- Police: ***Police Service Registers*** 1927-80, CGS 10950 (SRNSW ref: 11/11767-777, 6/20576-609 in the Western Sydney Reading Room)

These registers relate specifically to those officers who left the Police Department between the years 1966-80 (some joining the Force as early as 1927). Details provided include: appointment and promotions, personal descriptions, previous calling, examinations, medical history, uniforms and equipment issued, duties,

misconducts and commendations, and special abilities and qualifications. They relate not only to police officers but also to Junior Trainees, Cadets, Special Constables, Trackers, Matron, and Parking Police.

It is important to note that records of the Police Service do not generally provide the details of a particular police station where a policeman was working. You will, however, be provided with the district in which they were working.

Mounted Police

- Colonial Secretary: *Returns of Mounted Police*, 1837-50, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7420, 4/7205 located in the City Office)
- Police: *Record of Offences by Members of the Mounted Police Corps*, 1839-50, CGS 10998 (SRNSW ref: 2/671; Reel 2901 in both reading rooms)
- Police: *Orders to Mounted Troops*, Jul 1841-Sep 1850, CGS 11000 (SRNSW ref: 4/5718; Reel 2901 in both reading rooms)
- *Police, Mounted Police Adjutant's Office Sydney: Copies of Letters Sent*, Jan 1842-Sep 1846, CGS 11001 (SRNSW ref: 4/5720; Reel 2901 in both reading rooms)
- Police: *Nominal Roll of the Mounted Police Corps*, 1848, CGS 10999 (SRNSW ref: 2/671; Reel 2901 in both reading rooms)
- Colonial Secretary: *Returns of the Gold Escort*, 1851-56, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7423 in the City Office)

Water Police

- Colonial Secretary: *Returns of Water Police*, 1841-44, 1847-56, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7425 located in the City Office)
- Colonial Secretary: *Border Police – Returns and Covering Letters*, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/1139.1 located in the City Office)
- Colonial Secretary: *Returns of Border Police*, 1845-46, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7321 located in the City Office)

Other Records

The following records contain names of policemen working in both Sydney and Country areas.

- *Blue Books: NSW Civil Establishment, Police*, 1825, 1831, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7419 located in the City Office)
- *Blue Books: NSW Civil Establishment, Returns of Police*, 1833-1835; 1837-43, CGS 906 (SRNSW ref: 4/7385-87, 4/7389-95; Reel 1720 in both reading rooms), 1844-49 (SRNSW ref: 4/7396-401; Reel 1721 in both reading rooms), 1850-53 (SRNSW ref: 4/7402-05; Reel 1722 in both reading rooms), 1854-56 (SRNSW ref: 4/7406-08; Reel 1723 in both reading rooms)

For Police records which have become archives since the publication of the *Concise Guide* consult the index *Records not in the Concise Guide*. One new accession of Police service records that has recently arrived at the Western Sydney Records Centre is:

- ***Police Service Cards***, 1913-c.1986 (SRNSW ref: AK724)

This series provides details such as: name, date of birth, physical description, previous calling, marital status, examinations and qualifications, district and station, duty, and cause and date of leaving the force.

These records are Closed to Public Access – you will need to obtain written permission from the archivist at the Police Department.

Police Gazettes

Another source for locating police is through the publication of the *Police Gazettes*. State Records hold these for the years 1862-1977. Essentially this is a printed publication issued on a regular basis to Police stations. Its purpose is to provide a means of communication between the members of the police force and it contains information such as wanted criminals, crimes committed, missing persons and criminals who have been apprehended

You will, however, find that the *Police Gazettes* also contain information relating to Police officers. There are several supplements to the *Police Gazettes*. Supplement A provides information about Police officers such as vacant positions, appointments, promotions, and administrative arrangements. The years 1862-99 are located on Reels 3129-43 in both reading rooms. The years 1900-77 are located at the Western Sydney Records Centre and you will need to gain written permission from the archivist of the NSW Police Department for records dated after 1928.

Access

Police Service records are Closed for Public Access (CPA) for 30 years from the date of the serviceman's termination; other records are CPA for 100 years unless otherwise indicated.

To obtain permission to view and copy records that are Closed to Public Access write to:

The Corporate Archivist
NSW Police Service
PO Box 45
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Sydney Records Centre
2 Globe Street
THE ROCKS SYDNEY
Telephone: (02) 8276 5600
Facsimile: (02) 8276 5604

Western Sydney Records Centre
143 O'Connell Street
KINGSWOOD 2747
Telephone: (02) 9673 1788
Facsimile: (02) 9833 4518

Our postal address
PO Box 516
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