



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

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Sources – newspapers

Historical newspapers are a very valuable source for family history. Australian newspapers, especially local and country newspapers, published lots of material about individuals and families in their area.

Newspapers often contain information about people that you can't find anywhere else.

The sorts of information you might find include births, deaths, funerals, marriages, obituaries, inquests, court cases, social events, church activities, school exam results, sporting events, legal notices, land sales, advertisements for businesses and military service.

Many researchers find material in newspapers that help them flesh out their family histories, making them more than just lists of names and dates.

While you are more likely to find non-Indigenous people in newspapers, this can be particularly useful when families include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The State Library of Queensland has produced an excellent online guide *Newspapers: family history info guide* (www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/newspapers).

Trove digitised newspapers

The National Library of Australia provides free access to digitised copies of historical newspapers through its website, Trove . Over 218 million newspaper articles are available and the number is growing all the time

You can search digitised newspapers on Trove using keywords like your ancestor's name and the place they lived. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

You can limit your search in various ways – by date, state, newspaper or article type.

Here are some tips for searching:

- When you search for a name, add a place name to your search. Searching for both a person's name and place at once might bring up more relevant results. Also try variations of the person's name (surname, given name, full name, different spellings). To search for a full name "John Smith", put the name in quotation marks. To add and place, write AND Dubbo.

- Try searching using both your ancestor's name and the term 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' – for example, Tommy AND Aborigine. Newspapers often referred to Aboriginal people by their first names only or by nicknames, using phrases like 'Tommy, an aborigine' or 'the aboriginal Tommy'.
- Try searching using both the name of place your family lived and the term 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' – for example, Bega AND Aborigine. Many newspapers reported in general terms about Aboriginal people, rather than using names of individual people.
- Remember that historical newspapers often reflect the racist attitudes of the white people who wrote and published them. You might find your ancestors described using words that are offensive, or you might find distressing personal details about your ancestors and their lives.

Read more about using digitised newspapers in Trove in the [Trove Help Centre](#).

- Using Trove: Digitised newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers>
- Using Trove: Searching in newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers/searching-in-newspapers>
- Trove tips for family historians - <https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2014/08/25/trove-tips-for-family-historians>

The National Library is continually adding more digitised newspapers to Trove, but not all historical newspapers are available yet. The latest year for the majority of newspapers is 1954 due to copyright restrictions. A very small number of newspapers are digitised beyond that date including *The Canberra Times*. An alphabetical list of newspaper titles by state and territory is available here: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/about>. Read on for ideas about accessing newspapers that aren't available in Trove.

Hard copy newspapers

For newspapers that aren't digitised in Trove, you will need to visit a library that has original hard copies or microfilm copies. This research can be difficult and time consuming unless you have a specific date and/or event to look for.

Some newspaper indexes are available, but they may not include the sorts of terms you would want to look up.

State libraries are the best place to look for newspapers that aren't available in Trove. Copies of suburban or country newspapers might also be held by a local public library, historical society or museum. For information about newspapers in State and Territory Libraries, use the following search phrases or links:

- National Library of Australia: Newspapers <https://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/newspapers>
- State Library of New South Wales: Newspapers <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections-using-library/newspapers>
- State Library of Victoria: How to find newspapers <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Queensland: Newspapers <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/newspapers>
- State Library of South Australia: Newspapers and guide to SA newspapers <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Western Australia: WA newspapers <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/wa-newspapers>
- LINC Tasmania: Tasmanian newspapers <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/Pages/newspapers.aspx>
- Northern Territory Library: Territory Stories: Newspaper NT <http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/190886#>
- ACT Heritage Library: Newspaper holdings https://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/search/local_and_regional_newspapers

Aboriginal newspapers

Newspapers and magazines published by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be useful. The following publications are digitised and available online:

- The Australian Abo Call, published by the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/51>. Click on this link to go to the Trove catalogue entry for this paper. Links to the digitised issues are on the right of the screen
- Dawn and New Dawn, published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1975 (AIATSIS) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>
- Koori Mail, digitised copies are available for issues published from 1991 to 2011 (AIATSIS). <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/koori-mail>
- The Australian Indigenous Index known as InfoKoori is accessible via the State Library of NSW website. It is an index to the *Koori Mail* and to biographical information from various magazines including: *Our Aim* (1907–1961), *Dawn* (1952–1969), *New Dawn* (1970–1975) and *Identity* (1971–1982). <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/> AIATSIS holds an extensive collection of other Aboriginal newsletters and newspapers. Some were published over many years, some only lasted a short time.