



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

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Sources – other records and collections

Biographical indexes and dictionaries

An index is a detailed alphabetical guide to names, places or topics, with a reference to where the information can be found. Indexes don't contain actual information, though they might include a summary.

A **biographical index** is a list of people's names and the location (e.g. page numbers and library catalogue numbers) of the information about them.

There are a number of useful biographical indexes of Aboriginal people. Some are searchable online, others are managed by archives and you will need to contact the archives to request a search of the index.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index – AIATSIS
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index>
- INFOKOORI Australian Indigenous Index – State Library of New South Wales
<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/>
- Bringing Them Home Name Index – National Archives of Australia
<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs175.aspx>
- Indigenous indexes – Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi>
- Index to the Chief Protector of Aborigines files 1898–1908 – State Records Office of WA - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/index-chief-protector-aborigines-files-1898-1908>
- Aboriginal Information Management System (AIMS)– State Records of SA
<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>

Biographical dictionaries are alphabetically indexed lists of people containing information about their lives.

For example, the *Dictionaries of Western Australians* was a major project that includes four volumes about Aboriginal people. Names were taken from the records of the Colonial

Secretary's Office, private journals, newspapers and published journals. For example, the names and details of Aboriginal people imprisoned on Rottne Island are listed.

You can find other biographical dictionaries through a search in Trove. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Census records

Aboriginal people were counted in some early censuses of the Australian population, but were deliberately excluded from others. Section 127 of the *Constitution Act 1900* stated that 'Aboriginal natives shall not be counted', but exclusion also occurred in earlier censuses. It was not until the 1967 Referendum that Aboriginal people were officially included in the census.

The way in which the government defined Aboriginality varied over time. This meant that an Aboriginal person of mixed ancestry might have been counted in one census and excluded from others.

Some census records therefore include information about Aboriginal people. In New South Wales, for example, the 1891 and 1901 Census collectors' books list the names of householders and the number of Aboriginal people living in each household.

The State Library of Victoria has a guide on early Australian census records, <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus> including a section on censuses of Aboriginal Australians. <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus/aboriginal>

Local history collections in public libraries and local museums

Many local public libraries in suburbs and towns collect books, photographs, maps, letters and newspapers about their local area as part of their local history collection. Many towns also have small local museums. These collections can be useful to Aboriginal researchers because they might have records of local properties listing Aboriginal stock workers, local newspapers, family diaries and photographs.

A number of websites maintain lists of family history and historical societies including:

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies - www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History & Historical Societies - www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

You can use **Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library** - www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries - to locate libraries with family history and local history collections. Under location select your state and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Genealogical Societies

Genealogical Societies in each state and territory can be sources of information. They have good collections of genealogical books as well as many records in hard copy, on microfiche, and microfilm as well as online. Many have created online indexes and databases related to various types of records. Genealogical societies are usually staffed by experienced volunteers who can offer advice about research.

South Australia – Genealogy SA - www.genealogysa.org.au

Northern Territory – Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory – www.gsnt.org.au

Western Australia – Western Australian Genealogical Society – www.membership.wags.org.au

New South Wales – The Society of Australian Genealogists – www.sag.org.au

Victoria – Genealogical Society of Victoria – www.gsv.org.au

Family History Connections (formerly the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies) - www.familyhistoryconnections.org.au

Queensland – Genealogical Society of Queensland – www.gsq.org.au

Tasmania – Tasmanian Family History Society – www.tasfhs.org

ACT – The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra – www.familyhistoryact.org.au

Land council records

Your local land council or other Aboriginal organisation (such as cultural and arts groups, training institutes, medical and legal services) might have their own resource collections. They might hold books, pamphlets and newsletters about local events and people, as well as language group information and historical information. To find land councils in your area do a google search with 'land council' and your state territory, area or town. You can find information about Aboriginal organisations on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations website – www.oric.gov.au Some Aboriginal communities have organised their own family history groups and work together recording oral histories and writing community histories.

Union, company and employment records

The Noel Butlin Archives Centre - <http://www.archives.anu.edu.au/collections> centre at the Australian National University collects business and labour records from Australian companies, trade unions, industry bodies and professional organisations. Its collection includes records of trade unions and pastoral properties. If your ancestor worked on a station or in a particular industry, it is possible you might find some information about them in these records.