

1880 – 1910 Genealogical Records relating to Western Australians

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The period 1880 – 1910 was a time of great significance for Western Australia. The move to federation was just one of a number of significant developments at this time for West Australians.

Background

The Swan River Colony was colonized in 1829. The growth in the European population was slow. The quality of the soil was found to be poor and the colony's remoteness from trade routes also limited its opportunities.

In 1850 convict transportation was introduced as an attempt to boost the colony that at that time had a population of only just over 7,000. Over 9,500 convicts were transported to WA and together with the convict administration and other migration the population in 1868, when convict transportation ceased, had grown to 24,000. The convicts were used as a labour force in the construction of a number of public buildings and when released on ticket of leave were able to work for wages in private employment.

The isolation of the Swan River settlement from neighbouring colonies and settlements was a constant influence on the development of the colony.

In 1877 the overland telegraph line was constructed. This connected Perth with Adelaide and from there to London.

In the years 1879 – 1885 the government spent money on the construction of the first government railway lines to provide links between Perth and regional areas.

Gradually the isolated colony developed and in 1880 Perth had grown to the point where its first mayor was appointed.

In August 1885 the first major gold discoveries were made in Western Australia at Halls Creek in the Kimberleys. More gold was found in the following years throughout Western Australia culminating with the discovery of gold at Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893.

The gold discoveries were of vital significance to the development of the Western part of the continent at this time. The news of the rich gold strikes attracted thousands of hopeful immigrants to the arid desert areas where the gold had been found. Many of the gold seekers were from eastern Australia which in the early 1890s was experiencing an economic depression. These new arrivals became known as "t'othersiders" and were regarded with suspicion by the native born and long term residents of Western Australia. In the mid 1890s about one third of the population of Western Australia was living in the eastern goldfields.

The 1890s were a very significant decade in the history of Western Australia.

Western Australia had become self governing in late 1890. The Constitutional formalities had been completed in October 1890 and in December the first Legislative Assembly elections were held with John Forrest appointed the first premier. During the years Western Australia had been a Crown Colony it had been unable to borrow funds and so was in need of

improved roads, railways and harbour facilities. The gold discoveries and the constitutional changes enabled the West Australian government to obtain credit and invest in public works.

The Coolgardie Water Scheme, a major engineering venture, was begun in 1895 and opened in January 1903. The aim was to bring water from a reservoir in the hills outside Perth via a pipeline to the dry goldfields. This also enabled the supply of water to the farmers in the developing wheatbelt to the east of Perth.

Fremantle had been an inadequate port until the dredging of the harbour and construction work produced a safer harbour in 1898. Mail steamers and passengers were now directed to the new port facilities which linked with the local railways and the administrative center of Perth. Prior to this Albany located 400 kilometers south of the major settlements around Perth and Fremantle but with a grand natural harbour had been the favoured port in Western Australia.

The 1890s also saw the introduction of a range of legislation improving the legal rights of the ordinary people. In 1892 the law was changed to enable married women to own property in their own right and another which gave servants greater protection and independence from their employers. In 1894 Worker's Compensation for injury was granted by law and trade unions were legalized. An Arbitration Court was established in 1900. Other industrial legislation provided rules for the hours and conditions of work to be observed in gold-mines, factories and the coal industry. Women were given the vote in 1899.

The road to federation

Although Western Australia was still a Crown Colony during the 1880s it was involved in the early discussions about Federation. The delegates from Western Australia faced a long sea trip to attend the convention meetings and on several occasions were a few days late arriving – a reminder of the isolation of Western Australia.

Western Australia had become self governing just a few weeks before the first Federal Convention in Sydney in 1891 while other colonies had gained their independence a number of years earlier. Western Australia did not wish to give up its new found independence but was also reluctant to be left out of an Australian Commonwealth. This dilemma affected the attitude of W.A. to the Federation negotiations.

The locally born land owners of Western Australia – known as Sandgroppers – did not see any advantage in becoming part of a federation of Australian states. However the enormous influx of gold seekers in the 1890s many of whom had come Victoria and the other eastern settlements resulted in a vocal population on the inland goldfields who had links with the eastern states and were very much in favour of uniting with other states in a federation. The frustration of the goldfields population grew as a Constitution Bill enabling a referendum on the issue of federation had not been passed by 1899. A Reform League was formed and following a meeting in December 1899 moves were made to create a separated colony of Auralia that would become a part of the Federation. Albany residents who felt they were being pushed aside by the development of the port at Fremantle joined the separation movement. A petition was begun and the move to separate gained considerable publicity in eastern Australia and the United Kingdom.

The government of Western Australia became involved in complex negotiations. The British Colonial Secretary made it clear that a united Australia was the British governments preferred option. The West Australians negotiated an arrangement to gradually phase out the protective tariffs it had in place on goods imported from the eastern colonies. John Forrest attempted to obtain a guarantee that the Commonwealth would fund the construction of

railway link from Western Australia to the rest of Australia. The new Australian Constitution was proclaimed without referring to Western Australia in the preamble. It became clear that Federation would proceed with or without the western colony.

By mid 1900 it became increasingly clear that there was strong community support for Federation. On 31 July 1900 Western Australia became the final Australian colony to vote for Federation. The vote was 44,800 votes in favour of federation, and 19,691 against. Within 6 months the Commonwealth of Australia had been proclaimed on 1 January 1901 and campaigning for the Federal elections had begun.

Some of the individuals involved as West Australian delegates to the conventions were strong personalities whose names are still known to West Australians.

John Forrest played an important role in the move of Western Australia to Federation. Forrest was born near Bunbury, Western Australia in 1847. He was the fourth of ten children born to Scottish farmers who had come to WA in 1842 as servants. John Forrest showed talent in maths at school and was apprenticed to the assistant surveyor in Bunbury. He completed his training in 1865 and was appointed temporary government surveyor continuing to work as a member of the Surveyor General's Office until 1890. In 1869 Forrest led an expedition inland around Lake Moore and Lake Barlee searching for the lost explorer Leichhardt. In 1870 he led expedition from Perth to Adelaide. This was the first west to east crossing by land and showed that a telegraph line could be erected along the coastline. In 1874 he led a party from Geraldton across the western centre of Australia to arrive in Adelaide. On this journey he encountered hostile Aborigines and dealt with a severe lack of water. With these achievements Forrest became well known as an explorer. He travelled to London in 1875 and was acclaimed as "The Young Explorer". He gave lectures, received a land grant and other honours. In 1876 he married Margaret Hamersley a member of a wealthy local family. From 1883 John Forrest was the surveyor general and commissioner of Crown lands. He was a big man in stature and was well respected locally for his competence and directness. In December 1890 following the declaration of responsible government for Western Australia John Forrest was invited to form the colonies first ministry and became the first premier. Throughout the 1890s Forrest attended the federation convention meetings. He served in the role of premier until 1901. He then moved to become a member of the first federal parliament representing the electorate of Swan. Forrest served in many roles within the Commonwealth but was not prime minister, a position he had wished to attain. However in February 1918 it was announced that he had been recommended for a barony, the first locally born man to receive such recognition. He died in September 1918 while aboard a ship travelling to England to receive his award.

Another delegate of note was Sir John Winthrop Hackett the part owner of The West Australian newspaper and a friend of John Forrest. Hackett was Irish born and had married a member of the notable local Brockman family. He was a conservative and through his newspaper had enormous influence on the colonies politics and affairs. When Hackett died in 1916 the University of Western Australia and the Anglican Church were major beneficiaries of his will. Winthrop and Hackett Halls at the University of Western Australia were enjoyed by delegates to the 9th Australasian Congress in Genealogy and Heraldry held in Perth in September last year. The name Winthrop is also the name of a recent land subdivision to the south of Perth.

John Forrest's brother Alexander a well known explorer of the Kimberley region of Western Australia was also a delegate to the federation discussions.

William Marmion and Frederick Piesse were delegates whose names live on in the names of suburbs around Perth.

Albert Hassell and Sir James Lee Steere were also delegates to federal conventions. Their descendants have been active in the recent political life of Western Australia.

Population

Throughout the period of 1880 – 1910 it is important to note the population of Western Australia in comparison with the other colonies of Australia.

In 1880 the population of Western Australia was 29,561 while New South Wales had 741,142 ; Victoria 858,605 ; Queensland 211,040 ; South Australia 276,393 ; and Tasmania 114,790.

By 1890 the population of Western Australia boosted by several minor gold discoveries in that state had risen to 48,502. New South Wales was 1,113,275 ; Victoria was 1,133,728 ; Queensland 392,116 ; South Australia 318,947 ; and Tasmania 144,787.

By 1900 the population of Western Australia had more than tripled in the ten year period to be 179,967. The discovery of the major goldfields in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie at a time when the Eastern colonies were suffering from an economic recession had resulted in an influx of prospectors and many searching for new opportunities. In 1900 the population of New South Wales was 1,360,305 ; Victoria 1,196,213 ; Queensland 493,847 ; South Australia 357,250 ; and Tasmania 172,900.

By 1911 in Western Australia there were 275,000. New South Wales by then had almost 1,640,000 ; Victoria had 1,311,000 ; Queensland just over 6000,000 ; South Australia 406,000 ; and Tasmania 190,000.

Repositories

In Western Australia the three major repositories for records relating to West Australians are the National Archives which holds the records of federal government ; the State Records Office which holds the records of the state government ; and the J.S.Battye Library of West Australian history which holds the documentary history of Western Australia including books, newspapers, photographs and manuscript materials.

The State Records Office and the Battye Library are both housed within the Alexander Library Building which is located in the Perth Cultural Centre near the WA Museum and the Art Gallery. My talk will focus on the records of use to genealogists researching the period 1880 – 1910 and held within the Battye Library and the State Records Office.

The Alexander Library Building also houses the State Reference Library in which the Genealogy Centre is located. The Genealogy Centre acts as a focus point for genealogists using the resources of the Alexander Library Building. Key resources relating to Western Australian research are housed with the records relating to each of the Australian states ; New Zealand ; and Great Britain to assist researchers beginning their research.

The Western Australian Genealogical Society is a very dynamic group of genealogical enthusiasts. The premises of WAGS is located in Bayswater, a suburb north of central Perth. The members are active in developing and maintaining their own Library, producing indexes, and also provide assistance to researchers using the resources of the Genealogy Centre within the Alexander Library Building on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning.

Useful genealogical records

Under a number of categories I have listed a range of useful genealogical records.

Aboriginal records

The records of Aboriginal people in the period 1880– 1910 in Western Australia reflect a time of great hardship. In this time period there were three royal commissions to inquire into the treatment of Aboriginal people living in Western Australia.

The administration of Aboriginal people went through some changes at this time. From 1828 – 1886 Aboriginal matters were the responsibility of the Colonial Secretary and all surviving records for this time are part of the Colonial Secretary's Office series held in the State Records Office.

From 1887 – 1897 Aboriginal issues were under the administration of the Aborigines Protection Board nominated by the governor and responsible to him alone. In 1897 the Board was abolished and its functions taken over by the Aborigines Department under a Chief Protector of Aborigines.

In 1905 the Aborigines Act was enacted. The Chief Protector was given the statutory power for the relief, protection and control of Aborigines as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal matters that had been held in 1904. The Royal Commission had found many abuses of Aborigines and their rights and recommended the protection of Aborigines by strict controls. The Act legalized the removal of Aboriginal children from their natural families, and encouraged the establishment of reserves and missions.

In 1909 the name of the Aborigines Department was changed to Aborigines and Fisheries.

The files relating to Aboriginal people are held by the State Records Office but application for files from 1909 onwards must be made via the Aboriginal Affairs Department.

The Aboriginal Affairs Department and Department of Family and Children's Services work together via the Family Information Records Bureau to search for Aboriginal family history within the government files and then pass this information on to the Aboriginal families or individuals requesting information.

Another useful source for genealogists interested in Aboriginal records are the four volumes produced as a part of the series *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*. The volumes are entitled Aborigines of the Albany region 1821 – 1898 ; Aborigines of New Norcia 1845 – 1914 ; Aborigines of the southwest region, 1829 – 1840 ; and Far from home, Aboriginal prisoners of Rottnest Island 1838 – 1931.

Birth, death and marriage records

Essential records for the genealogist researching West Australian history for the period 1880 – 1910 are of course the birth, death and marriage records. The official registration of birth, death and marriage began in Western Australia on 9th September 1841. Prior to this date the information was recorded within church registers of baptism, marriage and burial.

An index to West Australian births, deaths and marriages is available on CD Rom as The Western Australian Pioneers Index 1841 – 1905. The index to births is also available on microfiche up to 1911. The index to marriages is available on microfiche up to 1965, and an index to deaths is available on microfiche up to 1980.

Certificates of birth, death and marriage may be purchased from the Registrar General. When researchers provide details of the registration number and registration district and the information requested is sixty years old or more then the cost of certificates is \$17.

Cemetery records

The volume East Perth cemetery : resting place of Western Australian pioneers by James Richardson and David Davies provides details of those buried at the old cemetery and descriptions of the memorials. The East Perth cemetery was in use as a public cemetery from 1847 through to 1899 when it was closed.

W.A. Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has produced an Alpha index for Karrakatta, Pinnaroo, Midland and Guildford cemeteries which consists of 119 microfiche. Karrakatta Cemetery has been the major cemetery in Perth since its inception in 1897 and is still in use. Midland and Guildford are long established areas on the outskirts of Perth, while Pinnaroo is a more recently established cemetery in the northern suburbs of Perth.

Western Australian cemetery transcriptions have also been produced by the Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc. for country locations throughout Western Australia. This collection is also on microfiche.

Lonely Graves of Western Australia and burials at sea lists burials in other than registered cemeteries or churchyards. The book lists alphabetically by the name of the deceased over 2000 graves throughout Western Australia. To quote from the introduction to the volume " Many of the early burials took place on the settlers' properties in private cemeteries, on mining leases; by the roadside or on an island off the coast, and many headstones have been lost through aging, weathering and neglect. In some instances there are graves listed from cemeteries where most plots are unmarked, or where only a few memorials stand in a cemetery which is isolated or inaccessible. Included are a number of burials at sea. "

Church records

Church records are an invaluable source for genealogists as most churches kept baptismal, marriage and burial registers. Some copies of church registers of baptisms, marriages and burials are held for the years prior to the introduction of civil registration in 1841. Other registers are held for the time period that we are discussing. Records of the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches are held within Battye Library.

Convict records

More than 9500 convicts were transported to Western Australia during the period 1850 – 1868. Convict transportation to the eastern colonies had ceased by 1853 but Western Australia was keen to add to its population and the system of convict transportation continued until 1868. Pensioner guards who were employed to supervise the convicts during the journey to the new colony and their families also came out to the colony in this time period. Many of these settlers were of course alive and their families flourishing during the period 1880 – 1910 that we are focusing on. The records of the convicts sent to Western Australia are held in the Battye Library and the State Records Office. The records are fascinating and include lists and registers of convicts, occurrence books for convict working parties, and records of conditional pardons and conditional releases.

An excellent starting point for those tracing convicts who came to Western Australia is the 1994 publication by Rica Erickson and Gillian O'Mara entitled Convicts in Western Australia,

1850 – 1887. This lists alphabetically the convicts and information that researchers have been able to locate about those convicts. This work built on an original volume listing the convicts that was compiled in 1979 as part of the Dictionary of Western Australians publication. Another useful publication designed to assist researchers is Convict records of Western Australia : a research guide by Gillian O'Mara.

The book The veterans : a history of the Enrolled Pensioner Force in Western Australia, 1850 – 1880 by Frank H Broomhall published in 1989 is a very useful source of biographical and background information about just over 1000 veterans who with their families came to Western Australia. Of the approximately 1200 veterans to come to the Western colony about 400 left within a few years of their arrival. Original records relating to pensioner guards held in the State Records Office include alphabetical lists of pensioners and details of land allocation to them.

Court records

Order in the Court : a guide to records of the Supreme Court of Western Australia was published in 1990 and is intended to assist researchers to locate a court record and to place a record in its legal context. The records of the Supreme Court and its predecessors are held from 1830. The records transferred to the State Archives of Western Australia cover a broad spectrum of the Court's activities. These fascinating records include files and volumes relating to wills for 1832 – 1947; divorce for 1864 – 1961; bankruptcy for 1858 – 1928 ;civil and criminal cases for 1830 – 1946; and naturalization for 1871 – 1903. Within these records are many items of significance to genealogists.

Directories

Post Office Directories

Post office directories were produced annually from 1893 – 1949, with the exception of 1948, and are a wonderful source of information for genealogists. The first sequence in each volume is arranged by town and lists residents of each town area with a street by street listing of residents in the largest settlements. This is followed by an alphabetical listing by surname showing postal addresses for residents throughout the state. This sequence sometimes shows the occupation of the person. It is generally the male householder who is listed. The third listing in each volume is the trade directory which lists residents under the type of trade or occupation that they follow including architects, engineers, storekeepers and so on. A fourth listing in the volumes provides a series of directories of certain professions. These include ecclesiastical, educational, insurance, legal and medical professionals. Post office directories may be inaccurate and are not comprehensive but are still a very useful starting point for genealogical researchers. In Western Australia Wises was the major company to produce directories and they were also involved with the publication of directories in some other states. There is one copy of Webster's commercial and general directory of Western Australia 1896-7 and its arrangement is similar to that of the other post office directories.

Another item is the Herald WA Almanack and Commercial Directory published from 1886. This provides a list of individuals for different regions around Perth and Western Australia

Electoral rolls

The first Legislative Council in Western Australia met in 1832 soon after the foundation of the colony. The members of the Council were appointed by the Governor until 1870 when a

decision was made to allow two thirds of the council to be elected under restricted franchise. The first electoral rolls date from this time and are held within the State Records Office.

Responsible government was granted in 1890 and a two house parliament was formed. The Legislative Assembly was elected by manhood suffrage and the Legislative Council was elected under a restricted franchise according to property and other qualifications. Women were given the right to vote in Western Australia in 1899.

The collection of published state electoral rolls begins in 1904 with another published in 1907 and then about every three years. The electoral rolls for these early years are arranged by electoral district and then alphabetically within the district. Details of surname, other names, residence, occupation and gender are provided.

Government Gazettes

Government Gazettes are another source of genealogical information well known to researchers. In Western Australia the first government gazette was published in 1836. During the period 1880 – 1910 the indexes to the government gazette reflect the excitement of the gold rush time. Under the heading Companies Registered there are many mining companies listed eg: Boulder Central, Camel Gold Prospecting Group, Hannan's Reward North, Hannan's Wealth and so on. Index entries also appear for the Estates of deceased, medical professionals and so on.

Maps

An extensive collection of maps showing land surveys and allocation in Western Australia is held in Battye Library and the State Records Office. Maps showing mining leases and pastoral and farming land allocation are available for use. Battye Library also holds a fascinating collection of commercial real estate maps.

Military records

The South African War of 1899– 1902 was an important influence on West Australians in the time period that we are focusing on. More troops per head of population were sent from WA than from any other colony. It was the only war to which Western Australia contributed as an individual colony. The contingent left Albany on 7th November 1899 aboard the transport Medic accompanied by Victorian, Tasmanian and South Australian units and arrived at Cape Town on 27 November. The Contingent from Western Australia consisted of 5 officers and 125 men of other ranks. During the conflict 2 officers and 4 others died or were killed. Four were struck off in South Africa and there were 2 promotions from within the ranks. Five officers and 115 others returned to Australia.

Some original records are held in the Archives and Battye Library relating to this conflict. The bibliography lists volumes by Burridge and Campbell which provide details of names of those who served, and a history of the war.

Monographs

The Battye Library aims to acquire a copy of every book published in Western Australia or relating to Western Australia . The collection includes personal and family histories; town and local histories; as well as corporate and business histories.

A useful starting point for researchers interested in Western Australia at the turn of the twentieth century is History of Western Australia : a narrative of her past together with

biographies of her leading men compiled by W.B Kimberley and published in 1897. This volume provides a outline of the history of the colony with biographies and photos of local notable men.

The cyclopedia of Western Australia by James Sykes Battye, a two volume work which was published in 1912 – 1913. The J.S. Battye Library of West Australian history is the major repository of Westraliana and was named in honour of James Sykes Battye who was also the first librarian of the State Reference Library. The cyclopedia provides details of the history, places and people of Western Australia. Leading figures in government and society are featured.

Dictionary of Western Australians

One of the important projects for the 150th anniversary of Western Australia in 1979 was the compilation of a biographical index of persons resident in the state prior to 1915 known as the Dictionary of Western Australians. The first editor of this series was Rica Erickson. The first volume published provided details of free settlers in the foundation years of the colony and covering the years 1829– 1850. The second volume in the series listed convicts arriving in Western Australia in the period 1850 – 1868. The third volume produced lists free settlers. Each volume provided details about individuals recorded within the colonial records of the period including details of the arrival into the colony. At the time of the bicentenary the project was expanded and a total of ten volumes were produced listing residents of Western Australia with other editors appointed. Volumes 1 – 4 were produced as The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians covering the years 1829 – 1888 and listing all those recorded as living in Western Australia in these years. Volume 5 is entitled Asian immigrants to Western Australia, 1829– 1901; Volume 6 is Aborigines of the Albany region 1821 – 1898 ; Volume 7 Aborigines of New Norcia 1845 – 1914 ; Volume 8 Aborigines of the south-west region, 1829 – 1840; Convicts in Western Australia 1850 – 1887; and Volume 10 Far from home Aboriginal prisoners of Rottneest Island 1838 – 1931. These volumes are an excellent source of information for genealogists.

Naturalisation

Registers of naturalization certificates recorded in the Supreme Court are held for the years 1871 through to 1903 when the responsibility for naturalization was transferred to the Commonwealth Government.

Occupational Lists

Police

The State Records Office holds files relating to the police service of Western Australia. This includes details of police business; police station occurrence books; and the personal files of individual police. An interesting file amongst the collection for Kalgoorlie out on the goldfields is a file of missing friends – a file kept by the local police recording individuals searching for one another in the chaos of the early goldfields.

Public Service lists

The Western Australia Public Service Lists were published annually from 1909 to 1987. Each edition provides an index to the names of officers on permanent staff within the public service. The full entry lists the name , title of office, present salary, allowances, classification,

date of birth, age in years and months, date of 1st appointment followed by continuous service, and date of appointment to present position.

Schools and teachers

The Education Circular lists schoolteachers throughout Western Australia. This was an annual publication that was first produced in 1899 and continued to be produced through to 1969. This provides details of the school, position, salary and deduction for rent.

A very useful source of information about the history of schools and the teachers that served in them is the three part publication by John Ridders entitled Western Australian schools 1830 – 1980. The sections are Part 1 schools and teachers 1830– 1871; Part 2 schools and teachers 1872 – 1885 ; and Part 3 schools in Western Australia 1830 – 1980. The author viewed many of the Education Department files relating to individual schools. An interesting comment is made about the Coolgardie school that “In 1897/98 out of the 500 children on the roll at Coolgardie State School not one was born in Western Australia. Eight out of ten had come from Victoria with their parents. “

Education department files are held in the State Records Office and include fascinating documents about Western Australia for the time period we are focusing on.

Politicians

A useful source of biographical information about politicians in Western Australia are the two volumes by David Black entitled Biographical register of members of the Parliament of Western Australia. Volume 1 covers the period 1870 – 1930, and Volume 2 covers the period 1930 – 1990. David Black, who is a well known political commentator in Western Australia, has also compiled a volume with the title An index to parliamentary candidates in Western Australian elections, 1890 – 1989. Another of his works is Legislative Council of Western Australia : membership register, electoral law and statistics 1890 – 1989. This collection provides coverage of basic biographical details of W.A. politicians.

Railway employees

The State Records Office holds records relating to railway employees and the railway system of Western Australia. These files are comprehensive and include lists of locomotive drivers, firemen, fitters, blacksmiths, porters and labourers for the time period in which we are interested.

Passenger lists

Passenger lists of arrivals into Western Australian ports are held in a variety of sources and formats in Battye Library and the State Records Office.

Indexes

Most early passenger lists found in the Colonial Secretary's Office records and early newspapers have been indexed. There are a number of indexes on microfiche including Arrivals Index Fremantle 1829 – 1890 ; Arrivals Index Fremantle 1885 – 1908, inward from Eastern States ; Arrivals Index Albany 1873 – 1925, noting only passengers from overseas ; Arrivals Index Albany 1873 – 1924 inward from the Eastern States ; and Ships Index for All Ports 1829 – 1890.

Passenger and crew lists are held for a range of time periods for Albany which was the principle port in Western Australia in the nineteenth century ; Esperance, which was an important port for those travelling to the goldfields in the 1890s and early 1900s ; and Fremantle, which became the principle port following major harbour works in the early 1900s. It is important to remember that these lists often list only cabin passengers and not those in steerage.

The West Australian branch of the National Archives holds inward passenger lists for ships arriving at Fremantle from overseas for the period 1898 – 1963. Microfilm copies of these records are held in Battye Library.

Photographs

The Battye Library holds an extensive collection of photographs relating to all aspects of life in Western Australia. Some of these photographs are now available via the Internet. A substantial collection is available with captions in files for browsing within the Battye Library. This collection is a treasure for researchers with family links to Western Australia.

Shipping Records

Shipping registers and manifests may provide useful information about arrivals and departures of ships including details of the number of passengers and type of cargo. Details for the time period we are focusing on are held for Albany and Fremantle.

Conclusion

The years leading to and just after Federation were times of great change and development in the history of Western Australia. Genealogical researchers interested in West Australian records for this time period will find a wealth of interesting resources in the repositories in Western Australia. We look forward to welcoming you to our state and assisting you with your research.

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