

BDA Source Description Pages

<http://www.bda-online.org.au>**NSW Colonial Secretary's Papers Index 1788-1825**

BDA acknowledges and thanks State Records New South Wales for supplying an electronic version of the Colonial Secretary's Papers Index 1788-1825 created under the direction of Dawn Troy, former Senior Archivist, and also acknowledge information supplied by Christine Shergold, Senior Archivist and her predecessor Christine Yeats.

The index was originally published for internal use by State Records (the then Archives Office of NSW – AONSW). Only about 5 sets of volumes were reproduced in hard copy but a microfiche version was also produced. It comprised a name index with a brief abstract of the content of the letter in which the name appeared.

The electronic version did not reproduce the format of the hard copy and microfiche where all entries relating to an individual were grouped together in a chronological sequence under that individual's name. BDA has done its best to link those entries back together.

In the process of capturing these entries, it became clear that whilst every letter had originally been indexed under a name heading, some additional individuals mentioned in the abstracts had not been cross referenced under their own name.

The original index contains many subject entries but these have not been included. BDA has only extracted names of individuals. The result was a dataset of 123,681 entries.

Volunteers (see Acknowledgements <http://www.bda-online.org.au/about-us/acknowledgements>) have indexed additional individuals mentioned in the abstracts which resulted in a final tally of 161,078 entries.

Not every name mentioned in a letter was indexed and some series of letters were not indexed at all. Major officials like Governors whose names appear repeatedly have been omitted. The State Records NSW website details what was not indexed (see below **What has been excluded from the index?**). Parts of the Office's correspondence were lost or destroyed over a long period.

The following text is a summary of advice received from Christine Yeats and Christine Shergold concerning the destruction of post-1825 Colonial Secretary's Papers:

Pre 1827 Papers

The State Records NSW website provides a short history of the Colonial Secretary's Office, including a detailed account of loss of Papers and the re-arrangement of those that survived. See *The Letters Received and other Papers, 1788-1826 in the Colonial Secretary Correspondence Guide*

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/colonial-secretarys-papers>

1826-32

The 1826 to 1832 Letters were re-arranged into registered number order by Henry Augustus Young in the Colonial Secretary's/Chief Secretary's Department between 1920 and 1925. Prior to this re-arrangement the letters were in order by agency/subject (same as the 1833-49 Letters). During this time it is believed that Young did extract, for destruction/disposal, some Letters which he considered to be of little importance (File A25/496 in [9/162]). While it is believed that some re-arrangement was carried out by the Mitchell Library between 1935 and 1961, and some has taken place in State Records since 1962 (particularly for Special bundle creation), no known destruction of Letters has taken place.

1832-1934

Essentially, any culling done would have been done by the Department, but just when and how much is really not known. The exception to this is some 1925-35 Letters which following appraisal by Archives Office (State Records) staff were approved for destruction by the Archives Authority in 1983 (DR2912).

However in the section *Notes on Bundle Titles and Notations in Registers* in the *Colonial Secretary Correspondence Guide* there is one mention of destructions taking place -

“To be destroyed

Papers culled out of the years 1881 to 1885 in the 1940s but not always destroyed. Those surviving are kept in a separate run following those which it was planned to keep.”

The 1907 to 1921 Letters may or may not have been culled.

1935+

As part of the appraisal process State Records' staff extensively culled the Letters, recommending the destruction of the less important and more routine (this culling was approved for destruction by the Archives Authority at various times).

What has been excluded from the index?

Material excluded from the Project

Two collections of papers have not been included in the project. These are:

Norfolk Island Papers, 1794-1813, 1825 [4/1167-70]

The condition of these papers was too poor to allow them to be microfilmed to a satisfactory standard.

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NRS 1155, Musters and other papers relating to Convicts Ships, 1790-1849
[2/8240-82] *ARK

Reels 2417-2428

These papers are arranged alphabetically by ship and hence the relatively few early papers are interspersed with later material.

The series is published as part of the Archives Resources Kit.

Limited Indexing

For various reasons, mainly relating to the time available, the indexing of some bundles has been more limited than others. In particular, the following records come within this category:

Main series of letters received, 1821-25 [4/1752-3, 4/1756-94, 4/1798-1813, 4/1815-6, 4/1818]

Reels 6052-6069

A number of volumes in this period have not been indexed in detail. There is little subject indexing to these particular volumes unless the subject was a person. The majority of entries are made under the author of a letter - either a public officer or a private individual. Hence it is necessary to know who may have been writing on a particular subject and look under that heading.

Main series of letters received - Van Diemen's Land, Mar 1804 - Jul 1821 [4/6576-9]

Reels 6071-6072

The indexing of these volumes, which were late additions to the project, is very incomplete. For the most part only general entries relating to prominent persons have been made.

The relevant section of the Summary of Colonial Records in the Colonial Secretary's Office, 1788-1826 (Reels 6071-6072; [5/2331]) has been filmed with the papers to assist in their use.

Naval Officers' Quarterly Reports, 1810 - 30 June 1824 [X698-701]

Reel 6023

Some personal entries have been made, but the ships have not been indexed.

Returns of births, deaths and marriages, 1811-25 [2/8293-8303 pt]

Reels 6024-6025

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These Returns have been indexed:

- * by place (e.g. WINDSOR; SYDNEY; St James);
- * under the name of the signatory (clergyman); and
- * with block entries under BIRTHS; DEATHS; MARRIAGES.

No entries have been made for the parties in marriage, on the basis that these have been adequately covered by the Index prepared by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and published on microfiche; and by the T D Mutch Index held and published on microfilm by the Mitchell Library.

Applications for free passengers for wives and families of convicts, 1824-5
[4/1112.1A]

Fiche 3285-3288

Only the applicant's name has been indexed. Names of wives, children, clergymen etc have not been included.

For other Sources included in the BDA see

<http://www.bda-online.org.au/sources/>

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