

**BDA Source Description Pages**<http://www.bda-online.org.au>**Colonial Secretary NSW, index to letters to Sheriff 1828-1850.**

The Office of Sheriff of New South Wales (formerly known as the Provost Marshal) was established in 1824. The Sheriff's tasks included:

- ) executing all judgments, decrees and orders of the Supreme Court
- ) carrying out executions and sentences imposed by criminal courts
- ) managing gaols, convict ironed gangs, arranging transport of convicts to and from gaols and penal settlements
- ) acting as Coroner and Marshal of the Admiralty

As the colony's chief public servant, the Colonial Secretary sent letters to the Sheriff directing him to carry out his duties. This dataset indexes persons mentioned in the copies of letters sent: mostly police, gaol and court employees, convicts and other prisoners, including court witnesses, officials, soldiers, doctors, lawyers, crew, shipping and transport contractors.

Indexed fields include name and (where available) occupation, place of residence or destination, ship of arrival, regiment, ethnicity (including some Aboriginal people) and in the remarks column a brief summary of the content of the letter.

This can be particularly useful, giving the name of the gaol or penal settlement to which a convict was being sent (at this period often Hobart, Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay or Norfolk Island). Sydney's Gaol and Hyde Park Barracks are often mentioned. Other letters mention families of convicts or prisoners, petitions for mitigation of sentence and convicts received from other colonies.

The donation of this index to BDA by the Convict Connections Group of the Genealogical Society of Queensland Inc is gratefully acknowledged.

The original documents in the series NRS-1000 Copies of letters to the Sheriff are held by State Archives New South Wales at the Western Sydney Records Centre, Kingswood.

| Reference | Microfilm reel | Date range                |
|-----------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 4/3896    | 1062           | 5 Jul 1828 - 31 Dec 1830  |
| 4/3897    | 1062, 760      | 3 Jan 1831 - 27 Jul 1832  |
| 4/3898    | 1063, 761      | 28 Jul 1832 - 4 Dec 1833  |
| 4/3899    | 1063           | 10 Dec 1833 - 8 Jul 1836  |
| 4/3900    | 1064           | 9 Jul 1836 - 28 Jul 1838  |
| 4/3901    | 1064           | 31 Aug 1838 - 29 Jun 1842 |
| 4/3902    | 1065           | 30 Jun 1842 - 31 Dec 1850 |

For more information on these records see:

## BDA Source Description Pages

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

State Archives NSW NRS 1000: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/>  
NSW Government, Communities & Justice Department, Courts and Tribunal Services NSW, About Us,  
History of New South Wales courts and tribunals, History of the Office of the Sheriff:  
[http://www.courts.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/cats/history/history\\_sheriff\\_nsw.aspx](http://www.courts.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/cats/history/history_sheriff_nsw.aspx)

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Source description page written by Michael Flynn, January 2020.

Historical resources available from the BDA Shop:

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

For other Published Biographies included in the BDA see:

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

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