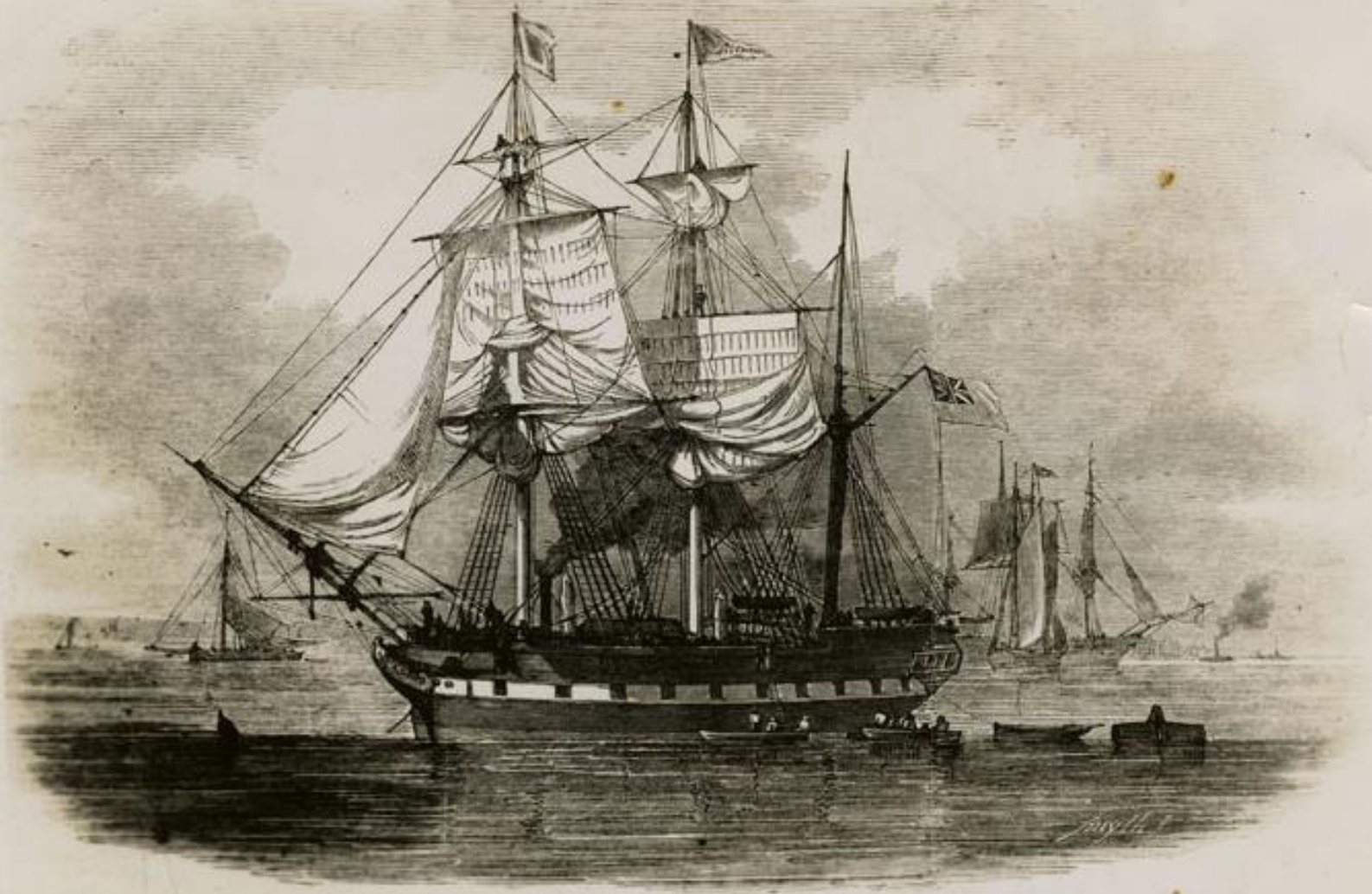


Immigration records



THE EMIGRANT SHIP "ARTEMISIA," BUILT FOR THE BRITISH GOVT. BY W. & A. GIBBS.

DR21885 - Drawing of the first government sponsored Immigrant ship Artemisia, 12 August 1848

Research Guide to Immigration Records
at Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

This guide explains assisted immigration before and after 1901, provides definitions and outline the main series of records held by QSA.

The records of the Immigration Department and its subsequent agencies include lists of immigrant ships and passengers travelling directly from Europe to Queensland from 1848 onwards.

In the early years, the information is fairly limited and may be confined to the name of the immigrant, the date of arrival and the name of the ship. When immigrants disembarked in another Colony and travelled overland or by coastal ship to Queensland there is generally no record of their arrival. In this case a record may survive in the archival agency of the relevant State.

Further, archival records of immigrant arrivals in Queensland may be incomplete for two reasons: not all passenger manifests survived to the present day; and usually only those people classified as migrants under the terms of the Immigration Acts 1864–1887 were officially recorded. Persons coming under the provisions of the Immigration Acts included those receiving land orders, assisted passengers and free passengers.

In later years, particularly in the twentieth century, more comprehensive information is given. This may include the full name of the immigrant, country of origin, marital status, occupation, whether the immigrant could read or write, religion and nationality, as well as the name of the ship, the date and port of embarkation, and the date and place of arrival in Queensland.

In addition to the records of the Immigration Department, there are some incomplete series of records from Immigration Agents and Assistant Immigration Agents including records for Immigration Agents at Rockhampton, Bowen, Cooktown, Mackay, Maryborough, Toowoomba and Townsville, and the Sub-Immigration Agent at Warwick. The earliest series of records is Registers of Immigrants Per Ship Landed at Immigration Depot at Townsville. These are useful as they frequently give details of where the immigrant went after arrival in Queensland and who employed the immigrant.

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

| | |
|-----|--|
| ITM | QSA Item (describes the item) |
| PR | Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy) |
| DR | Digital Representation (for a digital image) |
| S | Series ID (for a series of records) |
| A | Agency ID (for the creating or responsible agency). |

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.

Assisted Immigration before 1901

The online index, [Assisted Immigration 1848 to 1912](#) contains manifests of passengers (arranged alphabetically by surname of immigrant), departure and arrival dates, ports, surgeons and masters on board and types of passage. This index includes links to scans of the original registers.

Please note: due to the difficulty of deciphering handwriting, names may have been indexed differently to how the name is currently spelt. Variations of spelling should be considered.

The online index, [Land orders 1861–1878](#) is available in the [Immigration indexes](#) on the QSA website. Records of land orders issued usually include the name of the immigrant, the name of person to whom the land order was issued, and in some cases, details of the ship and date of arrival.

Land orders were not for a particular piece of land. Therefore, it is not possible to find out from land order records the locality of real property description of a piece of land selected or purchased by a particular person. A land order was legal tender for the selection and purchase of land at auction, made available under the various Queensland Land Acts in the nineteenth century. Land orders were granted to immigrants by the Government to allow them to select or purchase certain categories of land to a specified value. A land order may act as evidence that a particular immigrant was resident in Queensland on a particular date. The scheme was designed as a means of inducing immigrants to settle in Queensland. The conditions under which they were issued changed over time and the value of the land orders varied. In general, they were available to persons paying their own passage in full or to persons (such as shipping agents) paying the passage in full for someone else. Sometimes they were granted to the following: nominated or remittance passengers, persons nominating immigrants, indentured passengers, employers contracting indentured passengers and assisted passengers. In some cases, a first land order was convertible immediately after arrival and a second land order available after a period of residence in Queensland.

Assisted Immigration after 1901

After Federation in 1901, generally only information on assisted or nominated migrants may be found in QSA records. Records relating to other migrants may be located by searching records held by the National Archives of Australia. Assisted immigration was shared between State and Commonwealth governments until 1920, with the Commonwealth Government handling recruitment, medical examination and transport and the State Governments handling reception, settlement and aftercare.

However, nominated immigrant information from 1908 may be found at QSA. Information may include name and address of nominee, name of spouse and children, occupation, accommodation and employment details, name of ship and date of arrival.

Definitions of types of passages and categories of immigrants

These definitions changed over time, with changes in the legislation, but this list serves as a guide.

Emigrant or immigrant

Any person who has obtained a free, assisted or nominated passage to the colony under the provisions of the Immigration Acts, and includes full paying passengers conveyed by any Queensland Government emigrant ship.

Free passages

Granted by the Government to categories of immigrants, and their families who were required in Queensland from time to time. Categories included female domestic servants and married couples without children. Applicants were required to pay the sum of £1 and a similar amount for each member of the family counted as a statute adult. To be eligible, they had to be unable to pay their own passage, they could not have resided previously in any Australian colony, and they must intend to reside permanently in Queensland.

Assisted passages

Granted by the Government to categories of immigrants, and their families who were required from time to time. Categories include farmers, farm labourers, vine dressers, labourers, mechanics and domestic servants. To be eligible they had to be unable to pay the full passage, could not have resided previously in an Australian colony, and must intend to reside permanently in Queensland.

Nominated or remittance passages

Any natural-born or naturalised person residing in Queensland, desiring to provide a passage to the colony for a friend or relative in Europe, could obtain a passage warrant from the Government on payment of the required amount. The warrant was then forwarded to the friend or relative in Europe. On presentation of the warrant, the Government representative would arrange passage.

Indentured immigrants

An employer in Queensland wishing to secure the service of any mechanic, labourer or servant in Europe for employment in Queensland could authorise the representatives of the Queensland Government in Europe to engage such labour on their behalf. The employer paid the Government a sum of money for the passage of the immigrant and the immigrant was bound under contract to work for the employer for a set period of time when they arrived in Queensland.

Full paying passengers

Those who paid the full passage, or for whom the full amount was paid.

The bounty system

This involved the payment of set amounts of money or 'bounties' per immigrant to persons who arranged and paid for the passage of certain categories of immigrants including workers such as female domestic servants, shepherds, mechanics, agricultural labourers. The system was established in New South Wales in 1837 and was financed from the sale of Crown land.

First, second and third class, saloon, intermediate, cabin and steerage

Refers to the type of accommodation onboard.

Other online immigration indexes

The online indexes are available [on the QSA website](#). *Digital records attached* indicates digital scans of the original records are linked to the online index entries. The online indexes are listed below.

- Assisted Immigration 1848-1912
- Immigrants 1909–1932 (Immigration Department)
- Immigrants 1885-1892 (Immigration Depot, Bowen)
- Immigrants nominated for passage 1884–1907 (Assistant Immigration Agent, Maryborough) - *Digital records attached*
- Immigrants promissory notes (Maryborough) 1874-1903

- Immigrants 1882–1915 (Immigration Depot, Rockhampton) - *Digital records attached*
- Immigration 1922–1940 (Immigration Department)
- Land orders 1861–1878 (Immigration Department) (2 online indexes 1861-1874, 1862-1878)
- Nominated immigrants 1908–1922
- Oronsay immigration 1925–1972
- Passage certificates 1887–1906 (Sub-Immigration Agent, Warwick)
- Passport clearances 1923–1940
- Rations issued to immigrants, Maryborough 1875–1884 - *Digital records attached*
- Redeemed land orders 1860-1907
- Register of engagement of immigrants 1873–1912 (Immigration Depot, Bowen) - *Digital records attached*
- Register of immigrants 1864–1878 (Assistant Immigration Agent, Toowoomba)
- Register of immigrants 1880–1888 (Immigration Agent, Toowoomba)
- Registers of immigrants 1885–1917 (Immigration Depot, Brisbane) - *Digital records attached*
- Register of immigrants 1882–1938 (Immigration Depot, Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Cooktown, Thursday Island, Mackay and Bowen) - *Digital records attached*

Other series created by Immigration Department (and subsequent agencies)

Dossiers of Assisted and Nominated Immigrants (with photographs)

8/4/1909–31/12/1941

[S13090](#)

Files Concerning Intending Immigrants and Immigrants Who Arrived in Queensland

2/1/1914–28/11/1944

[S5642](#)

Passenger Lists and Papers Re-Immigrants Arriving by Ship in Queensland

9/7/1909–15/1/1932

[S13104](#)

Contains files of immigrant ships' passengers.

Files regarding Immigrant Ships' Arrivals

24/10/1925–1940

[S13077](#)

Contains correspondence files about the arrival of immigrant ships, and their passengers.

Personal Files for Nominated Immigrants

28/12/1924–3/11/2001

[S4227](#)

Most files are for migrants nominated between 1940s and 1980s – search the catalogue by name of immigrant.

Card Index to Personal files of persons nominated to migrate to Queensland

Circa 1/1/1908–31/12/1995

[S5611](#)

Card Register of Immigrants (by marital status)

Circa 1/1/1960–31/12/1985

[S17597](#)

Migrant Ship and Aircraft Files

[S10683](#)

Circa 1/1/1947–31/12/1978

Files record travel of nominated/sponsored immigrants between 1947 and 1976, and may include passenger and luggage lists, notes of travel arrangements after arrival, correspondence on payment of rail fares, etc.

Card Register of Immigrants' Nominators

[S17586](#)

Circa 1/1/1946–1985

Contains registers of nominators and persons nominated as immigrants.

Card Index to General Files of the State Migration Office

Circa 1/1/1945–31/12/1985

[S17592](#)

Other sources of information

Digital copies of some of these records are also available on the computers in our Reading Room at Runcorn under either the *Selected QSA records* or the *Resources by Others* tiles, including:

- Correspondence with Agent-General for Emigration to Qld, London, extract from COL/12, ca. 1869. This correspondence is about immigrant ships, and is collated in 6 volumes. The digital copy is available on the Reading Room under *Selected QSA records > Immigration > Agent General for Immigration*. The 6 parts are numbered pp. 1- 779.
- Health Officer Reports from *Inwards correspondence to Colonial Secretary*, 1861 to 1870
- Immigration Agent. *Standard Contract for the transport of immigrants to Queensland*, ca. 1869, and as [DR10793](#) on our catalogue
- *Instructions to Surgeon-Superintendents of Queensland ships*, 1875

Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.