

# AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GAZETTES

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Greg Slattery, historian

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# QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

BY MARY GEIGER AND ROSEMARY KOPITKE

The *Queensland Government Gazette* commenced on 10 December 1859, just after Queensland was declared a separate colony. Currently it is published in seven sections – *General Gazette, Natural Resources Gazette, Local Government Gazette, Transport Gazette, Queensland Health Services Bulletin, Public Service Vacancies Gazette* and *Special/Extraordinary Gazette*. It was, and remains, the official publication of the government. In conjunction with the *Queensland Police Gazette* (1864), and later the *Education Office Gazette* (1898) it communicated information from the Government to the public.

Copies of the *Gazette* can be found in the State Library of Queensland and in other libraries – usually on microfiche or microfilm. Each volume (up to three per year) has an index though it is far from comprehensive. Many items of interest to a family or local historian will be missed if it is used in isolation<sup>1</sup>. A new project by Archive CD Books Australia will make the *Gazette* to 1899 more accessible by reproducing them in CD format with a search capability.

What information do they contain? Are they just of interest to those whose families worked for the government? The *Gazette* actually contains a wide range of information relating to the general community covering items such as:

- Appointments, promotions and resignations for
  - Civil and Public Service
  - Queensland Defence Force
  - Trustees of cemeteries, racecourses, &c.
  - Members of Boards and Committees
- Brands
- Intestacy returns and notices
- Insolvency notices
- Land records
- Licences
- Lists of unclaimed letters
- Probate notices
- Petitions
- Professional lists
- Transmissions of real estate by death
- Other – including road closures, patent notices, tender notices, trade marks, dissolution of partnerships and justices of the peace

Examining some of these in more detail will show what a wealth of information lies waiting in the *Gazette* to be discovered by researchers.

## Brands

In 1872, an Act was passed requiring the registration of brands for horses and cattle. After this it became an offence to use a brand not registered in accordance with the Act. All brands registered, transferred or cancelled were published monthly in the *Gazette*. In addition to the owner's name and brand, the lists give the run or farm where it was to be used and the nearest post town. This is not just a list of farmers – it includes city residents and school teachers (quite a number of "farms" were recorded as schools). From 1878, annual lists of sheep brands were published in the *Gazette* as soon as possible after the first day of January together with the names and addresses of owners. Unlike the horse and cattle brands, school teachers did not seem to go in for sheep! Registers of both types of brands were still published in the *Gazette* until at least 1940.

Indexes to these lists have been published by the Queensland Family History Society (QFHS) to 1899 for Horse and Cattle Brands<sup>2</sup> and 1900 for Sheep Brands<sup>3</sup>.

## Civil and Public Service

Details of all appointments, transfers and resignations for the officers of the Civil Service (Public Service after 1896) were published as notices in the *Gazette*. In addition, annual lists of the officers (excluding teachers and railway employees) were published in the *Gazette* for 1864-1867 and 1891-1917. After 1917 lists were published less consistently though a good run appears in the 1920s (seven years) with further lists in 1930 and 1948. These lists include position, department, date of birth, a range of dates relating to employment, and salary. Many entries provide additional information about the officer in footnotes - some explaining the allowances received (for example, "Preparing *Gazette* Index out of Office hours" and "Paid to wife as Assistant") and others relating to previous positions held (for example, "Served in the Water Police Force from 4th November, 1864, to 31st August, 1869").

Lists of those employed in the railway service were published from 1889, initially every three years but from 1897 they were published annually until 1922 and then each second year until 1940. The lists give the name, age (from 1899), position, division, salary and qualifications (where applicable) for each employee.

Indexes to the annual Civil (and Public) service lists<sup>4</sup> and to the railway employees<sup>5</sup> have been published by QFHS.

## Education

For people either researching their family history or the history of a particular school the *Gazette* can be a valuable tool. The *State Education Act* came into being in 1875. From 1876 many records relating to schools began to appear in the *Gazette* – the details of new schools, the calling and acceptances of tenders for construction and repairs to buildings, school committee members<sup>6</sup>. Appointments, transfers, promotions, and resignations of teachers first appeared in 1877. These are individual notices rather than monthly or annual lists and give information such as their classification and the name of the school(s). Even after the introduction of *The Education Office Gazette*<sup>7</sup> notices for teachers continued to be published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* until at least 1940.

The appointment of school committee members (the equivalent to our Parents and Citizens Associations) can also give valuable information. Initial appointments and re-appointments appear regularly but appointments that occurred outside of annual meetings can produce the most interesting information. Not only do they give the name of the new member but also that of the outgoing member and the reason for the vacancy – Edmund Filmer Craven could be traced being appointed to and resigning from school committees in Clermont, Aramac and Gayndah over an 8 year period.

## Insolvency

This is no modern phenomenon. The first insolvency listed in the *Gazette* appeared on 17 Dec 1859 for John



Bowen, a storekeeper, of Warwick. Insolvency notices were still published until at least 1940.

To ensure creditors had an opportunity to retrieve their share of funds from the insolvent, a series of notices was published in the *Gazette* – trustees appointed, dividends declared then eventually certificates of discharge issued – a nice paper trail for researchers. People from all walks of life are listed – publicans, builders, graziers, auctioneers, jewellers, master mariners, even gentlemen!

Though insolvents are listed in the index at the front of each volume, our experience indicates it is incomplete and names of the trustees appointed are not included. Further records relating to a particular insolvency may be accessed at the Queensland State Archives. A more complete index to insolvencies for the period 1859 to 1900 has been prepared from the actual notices and published by QFHS<sup>8</sup>.

## Intestacies and Wills

Many notices relating to intestacies and wills appear in the *Gazette*, the earliest being on 17 Dec 1859. As for insolvencies they still appeared in the *Gazette* until at least 1940.

Typically notices give the name of the deceased, residence, occupation, and executors with occasional additional details. Usually just a single notice appeared for each person though where there was difficulty in locating the next-of-kin or heir-at-law further notices appeared. Estates listed represent a wide cross-section of the community – ranging from those with little to leave to those with estates worth thousands of pounds, from ‘unknown’ persons to ‘titled’ gentleman, from those dying on the Burke Rabbit Fence to the large cities and towns – both men and women. As for insolvencies the name of the primary person in the notice is usually listed in the index at the front of the volume.

Where a person died without a will, the Curator of Intestate Estates was often appointed to administer the estate. From 1877, he and his deputies were required by the *Intestacy Act of 1877* to publish a return twice each year in the *Gazette* of all estates administered during the preceding six months.

by them

From 1896 until the lists ceased in 1916, they give the name, where died and born, total amount received, paid and invested for the estates of the listed persons. For example,

9 Oct 1896 Simonelli, Battusta - died Charters Towers - born Italy - received £89 16 7 - paid £5 - invested £79 7 7 - value of estate after payment of ascertained debts £77 7 4

More complete indexes to the actual notices of intestacies and wills (1859-1900) and intestacy returns (1896-1916) have been published by QFHS<sup>9</sup> and further information is available at the Queensland State Archives.

## Land records

The types of land records that can be found in the *Gazette* are many and varied ranging from notification of land sales to setting aside of parcels of land for public purposes.

There are several series of records relating to “Runs” – lists of licences granted to occupy runs situated in Unproclaimed Districts (licensee, name of run, estimated area and a description of the boundaries), annual lists of runs (name of lessee, name of run and rent), and lists of payment for the survey of runs.

As well as records relating to “Runs”, from the early 1860s until at least 1920 many different annual lists appear in regard to the leasing of Crown Land under a variety of different land acts. All give the name of lessee, where situated, area, and rent payable. Other information that may be recorded is number of years held, and type of holding (agricultural or pastoral). Although most leasehold land is now found in western and northern Queensland, in the 1800s much of the coastal land was also leasehold.

Land sales cover town blocks, small acreages and large selections.

Although these are only a notification of sales they do give the lot and portion number

and the price per acre.

Another interesting record is the notification of new streets and roads.

These give the land location, owner’s names and area of land to be resumed, allowing objections to be lodged. Similar notices appear for anticipated closure of roads and applications to erect gates.



## Licences

Lists for a range of licences appear in the *Gazette* – some for just a few years, others for 40 years or more. They include licensee name and location as well as other details which vary for each type of licence. Types of licence covered include

- Timber (1860-1901)
- Miners Rights and Business Licences (1870-1884)
- Publicans (to c1914)
- Billiards and Bagatelle (1869-c1914)
- Packet (1864-c1914)
- Tobacco (1894-1908)
- Fisheries (1896 to at least 1940)
- Auctioneers (1860 to at least 1940)

Several indexes have been published by QFHS covering licences.<sup>10, 11, 12, 13</sup> In some cases further information may be available from the Queensland State Archives.

## Local Government

By-laws of various municipalities appear in the *Gazette*. For example, *Bye-law No. 6. Omnibus and Hackney Carriage Bye-Laws* relating to the provisions for the licensing and regulating of omnibuses, cars, hackney carriages and cabs in Brisbane, appeared in 1865. It contains interesting clauses such as prohibiting the carrying of any coffin or deceased human body!

Appointments of aldermen and auditors are recorded for the various municipalities. Other items of interest include notices to owners re unpaid rates (1865 to at least 1940)

1880 Warwick Section 26 Allot 1, 2 roads, cnr Wantley & Percy streets, unimproved, E. Connolly or A. Raff £7/15/-

Other notices regarding Statements of Receipts and Expenditure, Contracts, and Applications for Loans, mention names and hence may be of interest to persons working on family or district histories.

## Police records

Early *Gazettes* include some promotions for police officers though few appear after the introduction of the *Police Gazette* in 1864. However, appointments of police to a range of ancillary functions such as inspector of slaughter houses, clerk of petty sessions, registrar of births, deaths and marriages, land agent, electoral registrar, mining registrar, and protector of aboriginals frequently occur in the *Gazette*.

## Professionals

The *Gazette* includes lists for many professions which required registration before they were able to practice in Queensland. These include doctors, chemists, surveyors, and ministers of religion authorized to celebrate marriages – all listed soon after statehood and still appearing in 1940. As the years progressed more professional lists were added. Between 1900 and 1940, veterinary surgeons, architects, optometrists and spectacle sellers, dentists, auditors, nurses and masseurs and engineers were among those that began to be listed.

## Transmission of real estate by death

These notices were lodged to allow anyone to oppose the transfer of the real estate to the claimant. Records give name of deceased proprietor, date of death, name of claimant, description and situation of land, estate claimed to be transmitted, particulars of will or otherwise, and the date within which caveat may be lodged.

Indexes to the actual notices of transmission of real estate by death covering the years 1878 to 1940 have been published by Yesteryear Links<sup>14</sup>.

## Other interesting records

Lists of **unclaimed letters** appeared in the *Gazette* from 1860 until early 1892. They give name and address (sometimes quite obscure) of the person to whom the letter was addressed along with a code for the place of origin of the letter. As well as appearing in the *Gazette*, postmasters were required to place the lists in a position where any person may view them. Although there is no way of obtaining further information from these lists they do give an insight into where our ancestors were believed to reside. An index to these lists up to 1874 has been published by QFHS<sup>15</sup>.

The *Gazette* also includes many petitions. Mostly these relate to attempts to have areas declared a Municipality or Shire and although some only indicate the number of signatures attached most list all the signatories (including those who signed with their mark). In many cases they give the name, occupation and address of the petitioners.

## Conclusion

Despite initial impressions of many that the *Gazette* is “just boring government records”, it is full of information that would be a valuable addition to any historical research. Finding the detail, however, has been very tedious, especially as the *Gazette* indexes are far from complete. QFHS indexing has opened up much of the material – having it available on CD will open further avenues for research.

## Endnotes

1. QFHS's Consolidated Index to the Queensland Government Gazette 1859-1920 includes all the entries from the indexes at the front of each Gazette volume (excluding intestacies, insolvencies, wills and school committee members which are available in other QFHS publications). Available on CD and microfiche
2. Queensland Horse and Cattle Brands Index, available on microfiche for 1872, 1873-1879, 1880-1889 and 1890-1899
3. Queensland Sheep Brands Index, available on microfiche for 1877-1885, 1886-1890, 1895-1900
4. Queensland Civil (Public) Service Index, available on microfiche for seventeen years; to be released on CD for 1864-1948 in 2005
5. Queensland Railway Employees 1889-1940, available on CD (and microfiche, Persons Employed in the Railway Service in Queensland)
6. State School Committee Members in Queensland, available on microfiche 1876-1889 and 1890-1899
7. Queensland Teachers Index, available on microfiche for 1907-1911 and 1912-1920; to be released on CD with the Public Service records in 2005. Teachers appearing in the notices in the *Gazette* are included in the publication Consolidated Index to the Queensland Government Gazette 1859-1920
8. Queensland Intestacies, Insolvencies and Wills 1859-1900, available on CD and microfiche
9. *ibid*
10. Queensland Timber Licences, available on microfiche 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 1880-1889 and 1890-1901
11. Queensland Goldfields Miners' Rights and Business Licences, available on microfiche 1870-1872 and 1873-1884
12. Queensland Hotels and Publicans Index 1843-1900, available on microfiche
13. Queensland Miscellaneous Licences, available on microfiche 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 1880-1889, 1890-1899
14. Transmission of Real Estate by Death Vol. 1-11 1878-1940, available on microfiche from Yesteryear Links
15. Queensland Unclaimed Letters Index 1860-1874, published by QFHS, available on CD