Fact sheet

South Australian maritime records

Maritime records provide a valuable source of information for family historians and maritime researchers. South Australian maritime records held by the National Archives are mostly located in the Adelaide, Sydney and Canberra offices. Many of these records date from the mid-nineteenth century and were created by the South Australian colonial government, with the Commonwealth Government taking responsibility after 1901. They include records relating to functions such as customs administration, vessel registration, crew, passenger arrivals and departures, lighthouses and navigation.

Vessels

Records about many of the well-known vessels that operated in South Australian waters can be located in the collection. These include the *Alert*, *Falie, Nelcebee* and *One and All*, and the paddle-steamer *Marion*.

Records relating to vessels include: declarations and transfers of ownership, certificates of survey, logbooks, vessel licences, Court of Marine Enquiry files, and entries in the British Register of Ships and in registers of vessel arrivals and departures. The British Register of Ships records ship names, official numbers, ports of registration and other details.

Examples of record series relating to South Australian maritime vessels are listed below.

Adelaide

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Customs correspondence files	1871–1962	D596
Register of vessels (arrivals and departures) – Port Adelaide	1874–1923	D1
Declarations of ownership and certificates of survey (detention certificates)	1893–1900	AP212/4
Original agreements and accounts of crew with ships' official logbooks	1895–1984	D13
Correspondence files of the Navigation Section	1921–55	D1911

Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Shipping casualty investigation book	1907–10	AP816/9
Court of Marine Enquiry folders	1950–70	D2910

Sydney

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Boat licence books	1902–24	D5307

All offices (microfilm) - except in Melbourne office

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Main Register of British Ships – prior to Merchant Shipping Act 1854 – Port Adelaide	1838–55	A7505
Main Register of British Ships – subsequent to Merchant Shipping Act 1854 – Port Adelaide	1855–1982	A7509

Passenger and crew records

The National Archives holds both passenger and crew records. For further information on arrival and departure records for passengers at South Australian ports, see *Fact sheet 256 - Passenger records held in Adelaide.*

Examples of South Australian record series relating to crew members are listed below. The records for South Australia date from 1852 and include registers of deserters, discharges, engagements, certificates of competency and service, crew lists, and articles of agreement.

Adelaide

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Registers of ships' crew deserted at Port Adelaide from British and foreign ships	1852–1922	D6
Registers of engagements of ships' crew at Port Adelaide for British and foreign ships	1852–1922	D2
Registers of ships' crew (British and foreign ships) discharged at Port Adelaide	1853–1922	D3
Register of ships' crew and passenger deaths at sea reported at Port Adelaide, with index	1869–1922	D7
Registers of certificates of competency and service (ships officers) presented at Port Adelaide	1882–1921	D5
Original agreements and accounts of crew with ships' official logbooks	1895–1984	D13
Crew lists	1907–	D3064
Shipping Branch correspondence files	1939–51	D1976

Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Registers of indentures of apprenticeships to the sea service	1922–74	D2043

How to find more information

- *Fact sheet 259 - South Australian lighthouse records*
- State Records of South Australia hold other South Australian maritime records.