



State Archives.

NSW State Archives (NSWSA)

The nature of land transactions has laid a good paper trail, commencing with the correspondence ("memorials") requesting land grants. The following series can be consulted:

- ❖ Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 1788-1825
- ❖ Colonial Secretary: Letters received relating to land, 1826-1856

Spotlight on Land Grants

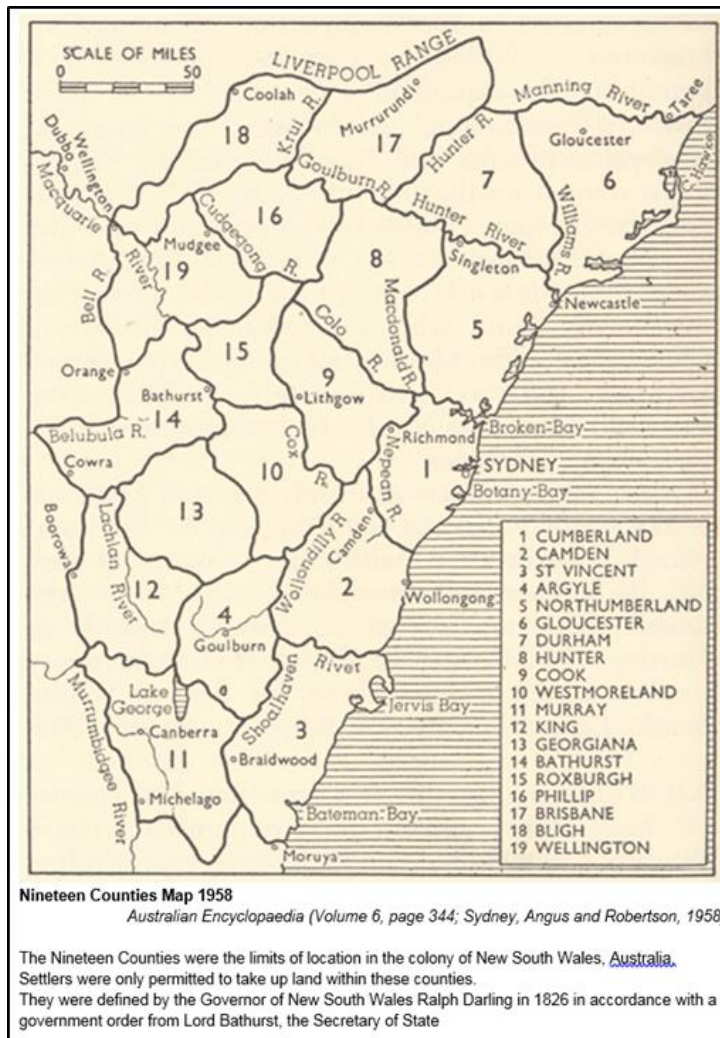
From the beginning of European settlement, all land was taken to be the property of the Crown. In his instructions of 1787, Governor Phillip was empowered to grant land to emancipists. Males were entitled to 30 acres, an additional 20 acres if they were married and a further 10 acres for each child with them at the time of the grant. Women were also entitled to receive grants of land.

In 1789, Phillip was also instructed to grant land to free settlers. For example, commissioned Marine Officers were entitled to 100 acres and privates to 50 acres over and above the land allowed for convicts. Phillip insisted that the land he granted should have a particular use. As a result, he only granted 4000 acres during five years. In 1792, larger grants of land began to be issued. Often these were the subject of land speculation and exploitation.

Land grants issued during the Rum Rebellion (1808–09) were cancelled by Governor Macquarie. However, Macquarie renewed grants, which had been made to 'deserving and meritorious persons'. Until 1825, grants of land were free, with an annual quit rent (similar to rates) payable in perpetuity.

In 1825, a system of sale of land by private tender was introduced. Even after this date the government was empowered to make free grants of land for areas less than 2560 acres or more than 320 acres, unless in the immediate vicinity of a town or village.

In 1826, the limits of location were introduced. Settlers were permitted only to take up land within this area. In 1829, the area of approved settlement was extended to the boundary of the Nineteen Counties.



For anyone researching early land an essential place to check is NSW State Archives. The Online Index to Registers of Land Grants and Leases, 1792-1865, was compiled by University students on work placements.

Editing was completed by State Records' Volunteers. The index covers the first six volumes of the Surveyor General's Registers of Land Grants and Leases (NRS 13836). They contain a record of all land grants made (both free and by purchase) to 1843.

From 1843, there are separate registers for land purchases and town purchases. These volumes also include grants and leases made at Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land prior to 1816.

Search the names of owners for wills and other property information.

Parish Maps

Parish maps can often provide the original owner of the land on which the house was built, the size of the original block, the date that it was granted by or purchased from the Crown.

These maps may be viewed at:

http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Charting Maps

Charting Maps are a cadastral land boundary index that may be used to help find plan and title information relating to a parcel of land being researched. The Charting Map collection consists of Regional Parish Maps, Status Branch Parish Maps and Land Titles Office Charting Maps.

Crown Plans

Crown plans are survey diagrams illustrating the state's land boundaries, natural features and may include references to early leasing and ownership of land.

Early Land Records

Prior to 1856, the main agencies responsible for the administration of land in the New South Wales were the Colonial Secretary, the Surveyor General and the Commissioners of Crown Lands.

Surveyor General

The cartographic records of the Surveyor General provide some of the most detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the nature use, agricultural potential and occupancy of land in the colony.

Conditional Purchase Records

A Conditional Purchase was a way of obtaining a Crown Grant for land before it was surveyed. Established in 1861, the grant was dependent on a set of conditions being met.

Soldier Settlement

The passage of the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916, (Act No 21 1916) allowed the settlement of returned soldiers on Crown and Closer Settlement lands. When applying for land, an ex-serviceman was required to complete a Qualification Certificate, which was a declaration of his or her status as an ex-service person and eligibility for land.

Department of Valuer General

Valuation cards, 1916-27

These cards provide information on the valuation of properties in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and many other urban areas. Most cards start in the 1920s.

The cards can contain title details, descriptions of land, locality and improvements such as buildings and fences, owners' names and changes of ownership. The back of the card has information on the valuation.

The cards are arranged alphabetically by valuation district (local government area) and then by wards or localities. Details are arranged by street name or valuation number.

Valuation rolls, c.1928+

This series covers most areas in the State. Information contained in these rolls may include owner's name, address and occupation; lessee's name; address of property to be valued; description of improvements such as buildings; lot; area; value and remarks.

The rolls are arranged by valuation district, (local government area) and within that by wards or ridings and then alphabetically by street.

Field books relating to property valuations (and cancelled Field book entries), c.1920-1978
The Field books contain entries for property valuations which give the original and subsequent valuations of a particular property.

Related property and asset records

For most of the related records listed here, you will need the name of the owner in order to locate the records.

Probate Packets 1817+

Probate packets can include details of property owned by the deceased. Land or building information may be found within the packets, either in the will itself or from 1880 in the Affidavit for Stamp Duty.

Deceased Estate files, 1880-1958

These files can contain a detailed examination of a deceased person's estate and possessions. The files can show occupants, relatives, land and buildings owned at death and inheritors of the land. Information relating to house or property may include:

- ❖ place of residence, the final balance of the estate, a list of assets and their value at the date of death
- ❖ certificates of Valuation of Property which indicate the exact location of land owned by the deceased and what improvements have been made,
- ❖ schedules of furniture and possessions
- ❖ Inquest Records 1788-1963

If a death or fire occurred in a house, information relating to the property may have been included in an inquest file. The files might list the address, description of the structure, value, amount of damage and circumstances of what happened.

Insolvency Records 1842-1928

If the owner of the property was made insolvent or bankrupt there may be a file. This usually provides a list of assets including their value.

Police Records

If a murder or crime occurred in a house or property the Police Gazettes 1862-c.1982 or related records may describe the house or property, as well as circumstances of the murder or crime. The police gazettes are indexed and can be searched by name of offender, house/property owner's name, or location.

Government Property Records

If a house or property was part of a government structure, e.g. railway gatehouse, school building or police station, there may be relevant maps and plans, photographs or files. Search Archives Investigator under the name of station or school for associated records.

Electoral rolls, 1842-63

Electoral rolls can be useful for establishing where a person lived over a period of time.