How to search the

Old System Vendors Index 1825-1986

The Old System Vendors Index is a key component in the first land ownership system in NSW, which used the 'old system' of common law title.

Digitised images of the Old System Vendors Index make it easier for you to research ownership of Old System land between 1825 and 1986 and identify associated land title records.

You can access these records online through the Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV).

What is the Old System Vendors Index?

From the registration of the first grant of Crown land in February 1792 until the introduction of the Torrens Title System in 1863, land ownership in NSW was based on the English common law system of title known as Old System. To offer land holders some degree of confidence in their transactions, a system of registration was introduced in 1802. The *Registration of Deeds Act 1825* established a General Register of Deeds for recording all transactions with land. The operative index for these registrations is called the Vendors Index.

The Old System Vendors Index is a manual index of persons conveying an estate or interest in land from 1825 to 1986. Transactions prior to 1825 were recorded in the Old Register 1 to 9 (1802 – 1824).

Old System Vendors Index information from 1987 onwards can be accessed electronically through NSW LRS authorised Information Brokers, or using the using the Deed name and number search in the NSW LRS Online Portal.

Searching tip

Initially, deed particulars were registered and indexed in large bound books which commenced on 12 December 1825 with Book A. The deeds were numbered serially so that A-257 means Book A, Number 257. This unique reference enables you to easily locate the deed in the General Register of Deeds. The numeric series of cataloguing commenced on 7 May 1842 with Book 1.

Old System Vendors Index entries

Entries in the Old System Vendors Index prior to 1 January 1898 are in alphabetical order by surname only. After 1 January 1898 entries were indexed in alphabetical order by the surname and the first name.

Entries are made in the Old System Vendors Index under the name(s) of all persons granting or conveying an estate or interest in land.
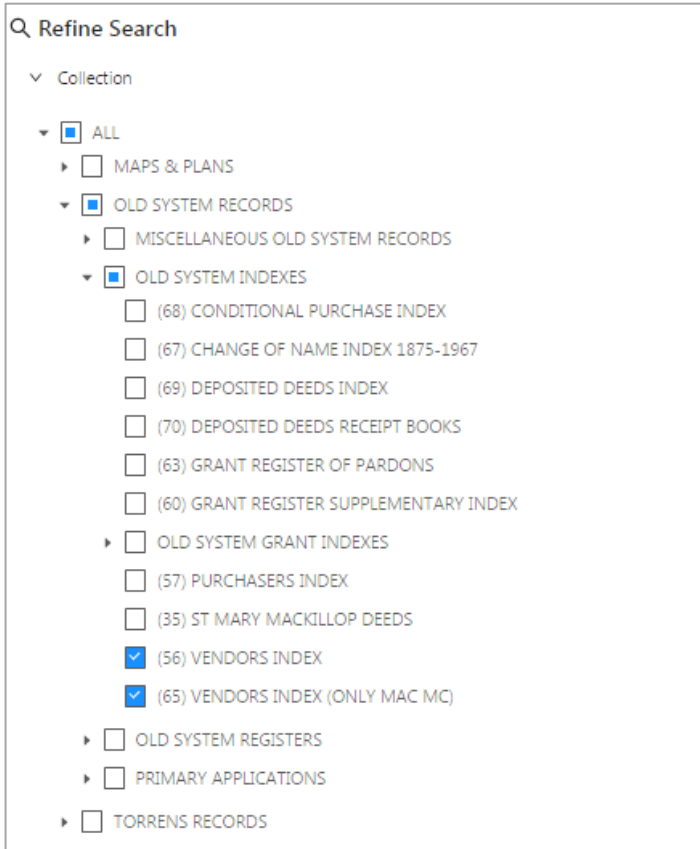
The Index contains details of:
- names of the parties to the deed e.g. the Vendors and the Purchasers
- the type of deed
- the reference to the registered deed as a book and number
- a brief description of the property.

Accessing the Old System Vendors Index in the HLRV

To access the Old System Vendors Index in the HLRV:

1. Select the '**Old System Records**', '**Old System Indexes**' collection in the HLRV collection tree.

2. In the top search bar, under **'Attribute',** select and search by **'Surname Initial'** and enter the first two letters of the surname you are searching for in the 'search' box. Initials 'GI' are used in this example.
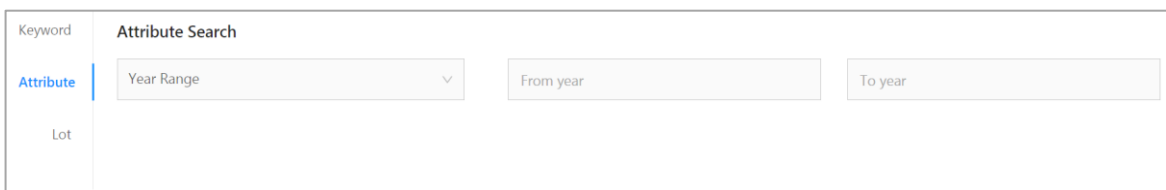

3. Each volume of the Old System Vendors Index 1825-1848 and subsequent years for surnames beginning with 'GI' is delivered. Select any of the **search results** to open and view the Old System Vendors Index record. Results will be displayed in chronological order.

4. You can further refine the results by performing an **'Attribute'** search using **'Year Range'** and enter the known year range of ownership.
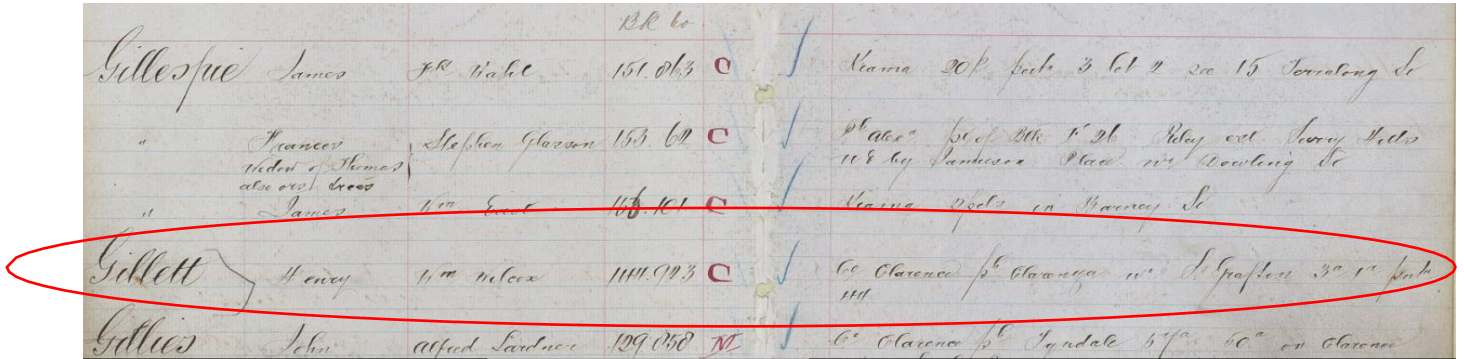
Finding a vendor name in the Old System Vendors Index

Entries in the Old System Vendors Index prior to 1 January 1898 are in alphabetical order by surname only. Entries after 1 January 1898 were indexed in alphabetical order by surname and firstname.

If you find several entries and multiple pages under the same first and surname, you can use the areaand location of the land you are researching to narrow your choices to locate the relevant deed.
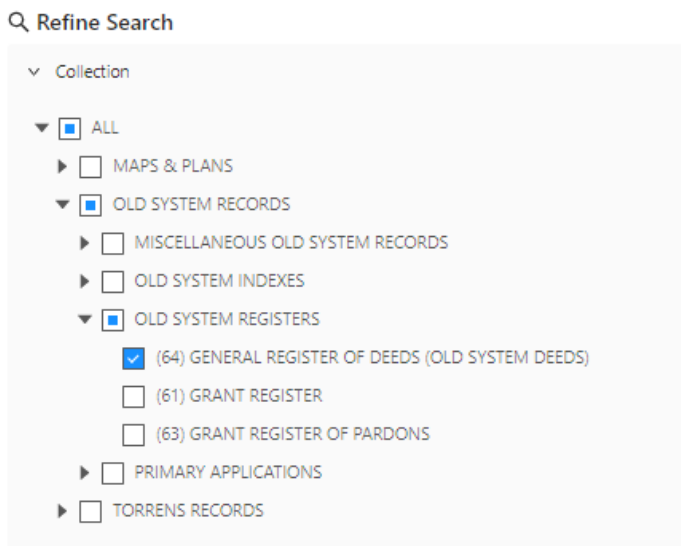

This example shows that Henry Gillett conveyed an interest to William Wilcox of a property 3 acres, 1 roodbeing portion 44 at South Grafton in Parish of Clarenza, County of Clarence. The Deed is book 144 number 923.
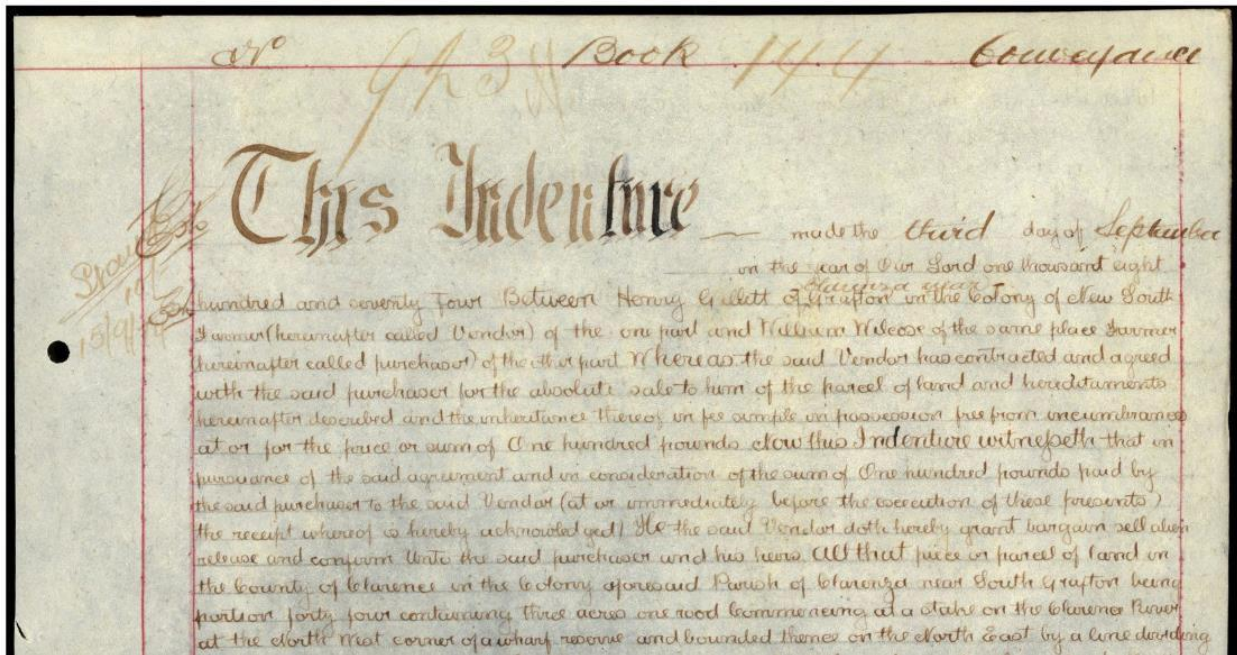

Accessing The General Register of Deeds (Old System deeds) in the HLRV

You can access The General Register Deeds (Old System deeds) from the 'Old System Records', 'Old System Registers' collection in the HLRV.

1. Select the 'General Register Deeds (Old System deeds)' from the '**Old System Records**', '**Old System Registers'** collection in the HLRV collections tree.

2. Using the previous example, the deed book 144 number 923 refers to a Conveyance dated 3 September 1874. A copy of the deed is shown below.

Copies of Old System deeds are available to purchase through NSW LRS authorised Information Brokers or in person from NSW LRS

More information and searching support

For more information on the Old System Vendors Index and The General Register of Deeds (Old System deeds), see our Old System Information and Search Guide.

Further assistance with family and local historical searching can be sought from:

NSW State Archives and Records – www.records.nsw.gov.au

State Library of NSW – www.sl.nsw.gov.au