

## Historical Parish Maps

Parish maps are an index to identifying historical land records such as titles, survey plans, tenures and gazettes. Most parish maps show:

- boundaries of individual land parcels in relation to physical features such as roads, rivers, railways and water bodies
- references to Crown plans, the official survey plans for portions of land
- names of the first land owner, grantee or lessee and the first title information (Volume-Folio) for each parcel granted after 1863
- administration activities over Crown lands such as reserves, licenses, leases and roads.

There are more than 35,000 early edition parish and pastoral maps online, accessible through the Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV). The viewer can be accessed by selecting the HLRV icon on [www.six.nsw.gov.au](http://www.six.nsw.gov.au).

### What is a parish map?

The parish map was the basic fabric for land administration in New South Wales (NSW) and is a key index to identifying historical land records. The maps were used for more than 150 years recording property boundaries and providing references to Crown land dealings and the first grants.

As parish maps recorded changes to land over time they were progressively superseded once it became difficult to chart or note further information on them. The maps were cancelled and new editions replaced them.

Two sets of county, parish, town and village maps were created and maintained by the former Department of Lands and its predecessors. One set of maps was kept at the district office and a duplicate set was kept in the head office.

The Historical Parish Map collection are all the cancelled Crown land parish maps and pastoral holding maps originally captured as part of the Parish Map Preservation Project.

The majority of these were from the district office. The 'cancelled' maps are a good starting point for research if you are:

- investigating the history of your property
- establishing the history of a locality
- interested in areas that your family settled in NSW.

The historical parish maps complement the 'Charting Map' collection which is accessible online through the Historical Land Records Viewer. The Charting Map collection includes the last editions of the Land Titles Office (LTO) charting maps and Crown land parish maps in circulation before they were digitised.

### History of the maps dividing NSW

In 1825 Governor Brisbane was ordered to undertake a general survey of the colony of New South Wales and break it up into counties for the purpose of land administration.

Each county was to be divided into parishes, the boundaries of which were fixed by convenience such as following the border of surveyed land or natural features like rivers.

The first county in NSW was named Cumberland by Governor Phillip on the birthday of King George III in June 1788.

In 1829 settlers in the colony were only permitted to take up land within an area defined by the 19 Counties. The limits of settlement extended to Kempsey in the north, Batemans Bay in the south and Wellington to the west.

Despite the defined boundaries squatters ran livestock outside the limits. The *Squatters Act 1836* allowed for grazing licenses outside the 19 Counties.

With the introduction of selection of land before survey in 1861, land was quickly settled throughout the state and the limits of settlement became redundant.

By 1848 NSW was divided into the 141 counties that still exist today.

## Historical Parish Maps online

### Pastoral maps

Pastoral maps show boundaries of holdings which were agricultural runs settled by squatters.

After the 1850s gold rush, which saw a large influx of new settlers, there was a demand for land that was already taken up by squatters. As a result the Premier of New South Wales, John Robertson, pushed through the *Crown Lands Acts 1861* opening up free selection of Crown land by permitting any person to select up to 320 acres. The conditions were paying a deposit of one-quarter of the purchase price after survey and living on the land for three years.

Pastoral maps recorded which part of the holding was resumed, and made available to the new settlers, and which part was leased. The part remaining with squatters was usually the area which had undergone improvements. These improvements are sometimes shown on the pastoral holding maps.

Only one copy of these fragile maps on paper and linen exist, and these are the Pastoral Holding Maps available online through the Historical Land Records Viewer.

In 1882 the Garden Palace Exhibition Building in the Botanic Gardens burnt down and with it nearly all the Crown land lease documents, plans and maps which were being stored there while the Lands Department's Bridge Street building was being constructed.

Departmental staff reconstituted records from secondary information with maps showing the runs divided into leased and unleased areas pursuant to the 1883 Morris and Rankine Royal Commission and the subsequent *Crown Lands Act 1884*.



'Pastoral Run Carinda' map extract from the HLRV

### County maps

County maps usually cover an area of about 10,360 hectares. This is 40 square miles at a scale of 4 miles to an inch, which is about 1:250,000. At such a small scale, they are useful as a cadastral map for showing major physical features, large portions and the parishes within the county.

### Parish maps

The parish map is a land administration tool that provided the basis for recording land transactions. Parish maps were prepared by the Crown Lands Office using plans of portions. Portions are sequentially numbered parcels of land in each parish. Parish maps show the relationship of portion boundaries to roads, rivers, railways and water bodies.

As well as recording boundaries, parish maps are an index to land records such as titles, deeds, gazettes, tenure documents, survey plans and other land records for each of the parcels of land in that parish.

For example, grantees' names and dates of grants made prior to 1863 may be shown on the face of the map (marked in the relevant portion) or recorded within a schedule with the portion's number.

Parish maps also reference original land grants and first titles issued between the commencement of the *Real Property Act 1863* on 1 January 1863 and 1 October 1981. First title references issued since 1 October 1981 are shown in a schedule.

For land administration purposes NSW is split into three divisions: Eastern, Central and Western. Few Crown parish maps have been compiled for land in the Western Division (which is roughly west of a line from Mungindi to Balranald).

Private parish maps for land within the Australian Agricultural Company's grant in the county of Gloucester were prepared by the company.

### Town maps

When a town lies within a parish its location is indicated on the map but relevant information is shown on a more detailed scale in a town or village map.

Town maps have similar detail to the parish map but show allotments and sections of the town instead of portions of the parish. It is important to record the section in a town as allotment numbers are duplicated in each section which can lead to confusion.

Crown town maps have not been created for private towns which were subdivided out of privately owned land.

### Why use parish maps?

Historical parish maps provide information about a location and its people. It is a key index for identifying land title related records. By starting your search with the earliest parish map you can trace land status from when the land was first granted by the Crown and work forwards over time.

By examining previous editions of maps at different points in time you can also see how subdivisions and other actions have altered property boundaries.

**STEP 1:** To reduce the number of search results only select 'Historical Parish Maps'

**STEP 2:** Select attribute and parish name in the 'search by' windows, then type in the parish

**STEP 3:** Click on any of the map attributes in the search results window to view the map

Collection	Image Type	Parish name	County name	Edition year	Edition number	Sheet references	Image name
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	-	1	1	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1913	6	1	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1905	5	1	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1924	7	1	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1981	9	2	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1981	9	3	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	1981	9	1	Parish of Narrabeen
Historical Parish Maps	Parish Maps	Narrabeen	Cumberland	-	0	1	Parish of Narrabeen

Pastoral Map index available online in the HLRV

## How the records are identified

The historical parish maps (cancelled editions) are identified by county, parish and edition. It is important to select the correct county as the same parish name can exist in more than one county.

Other than town maps, a parish map name does not necessarily relate to a location. If you do not know the parish use the Geographical Names Board's online Name Search [www.gnb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au). A search by locality or suburb will reveal the parish and county name.

## Identifying pastoral holding maps

To identify a pastoral holding map name you can view the Pastoral Map Index. The index allows you to geographically locate the pastoral holding on a state map which will have a number and a corresponding name of the pastoral holding map on a schedule.

The Pastoral Map Index can be accessed in the Historical Land Records Viewer by searching on Keyword, and entering 'pastoral map index'.

## Search example

Your first step is to search for the cancelled editions of the parish map which covers the area of land you are interested in.

The map can be accessed by searching on county and/or parish names in the Historical Land Records Viewer **Search By** window. To reduce the number of search results only have the 'Historical Parish Maps' box ticked in the **Search For** option of the viewer.

In this example we are searching on Scotland Island, in Pittwater. Scotland Island is in the parish of Narrabeen. You can search for the cancelled editions of the parish of Narrabeen by keyword or attribute search, selecting parish and entering 'Narrabeen' as shown in the graphic above.

The **Search Results** window will list all the historical maps (cancelled editions) available for that parish, showing map edition and year (when this attribute is available). Click on any of the maps in the search results window to view.

Not all the editions still exist and as such, were not able to be made available online. To view the last parish map in circulation search for the parish in the Charting Maps collection in the Historical Land Records Viewer.

Once you have found the parish you can use the viewer to zoom into the area of interest.



Extracts of cancelled Narrabeen Parish maps which shows the original grantee of Scotland Island

The parish map will typically show the boundaries of land, often with a portion number (or allotment and section if within a town).

Later parish maps will have schedules which identify the corresponding plan number and title references for each of the portions.

Titles and plans can be ordered through LPI's Online Shop <http://shop.lpi.nsw.gov.au> or LPI's authorised information brokers – see LPI website for a list of brokers and their contacts [www.lpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au).

## Searching Guides

To find out how to interpret a parish map LPI has prepared a detailed guide *Searching the Registrar General's Maps and Plans*. This resource includes a glossary for the different acronyms used on parish maps.

This guide, along with others, is available to view or download on the LPI website [www.lpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au).

## More Information

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

### State Records

The Western Sydney Records Centre (WSRC)  
143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood  
(original archives and microform)

[info@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@records.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au)

### State Library of NSW

Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

[library@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:library@sl.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)

Por.	Plan	Loc.	Vol.	Fol.
1	A 54 1572	N.W.	15202	112
1A	M 210 1438	S.W.	9	128
2	A 54 1572	N.W.	10028	77
2A	M 207 1438	N.W.	9	126
3	A 54 1572	N.E.	472	94
3A	M 195 1438	N.E.	7	226
4	A 54 1572	N.E.	522	144
5	A 54 1572	N.E.	4210	243
5A	M 190 1438	N.W.	7	233
6	A 54 1572	N.E.	5182	27
6A	M 28 1438	S.W.		
	A 1488			
7	A 286 1572	N.W.	285	122
8	487 1572	N.E.	1939	198
9	485 1572	N.E.	7454	35
10	486 1572	N.E.	7468	62
11	230 1572	N.E.	64	44
12	230 1572	N.E.	64	45
13	288 1572	N.E.	1971	46
14	288 1572	N.E.	1971	47
15	288 1572	N.E.	68	170
16	90 1572	N.W.	72	225
17	90 1572	N.W.	72	226
18	187 1572	N.E.	15209	211
19	179 1572	N.E.	2860	15
20	179 1572	N.E.	3477	248
21	184 1572	N.E.	34	76

Portion number

Original grantee name

Portion number

Plan number for portion

Location on the face of the parish map

Torrens Title (Vol. Fol.) for portion 20

This parish map extract shows the original grantee for portion 20. The schedule shows the plan for portion 20 is 179-1572 and the Torrens Title is Volume 3477 Folio 248. Images of these records can be purchased from the LPI Online Shop.

### Disclaimer

This fact sheet must not be relied on as legal advice. For more information about this topic, refer to the appropriate legislation.

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T 1300 052 637  
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