How to search the Old System Grant Index and Register 1792-1862

The Old System Grant Index provides references to Crown grants from 1792 to 1862.

Digitised images of the Old System Grant Index are available online and make it easier for you to research ownership of Old System land and identify associated land title records.

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

This document provides instructions for searching the Old Systems Grant Index using HLRV.

What is the Old System Grant Index?

All land in the colony of New South Wales (NSW) was in possession by the Crown until either granted or sold to an individual or organisation.

The Old System Grant Index provides references to Crown grants from 1792 to 1862.

You can use the Old System Grant Index to find a Crown grant reference number. This number is then used to locate a grant in the Old System Grant Register.

The Grant Index is a chronological record, in alphabetical order, of the surnames or company names of those who bought or received grants of land from the Crown up to and including 31 December 1862. The Grant Index briefly records the location, area, and portion or allotment numbers (if any) of the land granted and the serial and page numbers of the entry in the Grant Register.

The Crown grants are bound together in the Grant Register books and are identified by a grant reference number. This number is made up of the serial number of the bound book and the number allotted to each grant, which is referred to as the page number.

From 1863 onwards, all Crown grants and purchases are recorded in the Torrens Title Purchasers Index.

For more information on the Old System Grant Index and the Old System Grant Register see our Old System Information and Search Guide

Grant Index Dates

Index/Volume	Years	
1	1972-1826	Grant Index 1
2	1792-1826	Grant Index 2 – contains only grants and leases of town allotments
3	1827-1831	Grant Index 3 – contains only town grants and purchases
4	1827-1830	Grant Index 4
5	1830-1839	Grant Index 5
6	1839-1847	Grant Index 6
7	1847-1855	Grant Index 7
8	1855-1856	Grant Index 8
9	1856-1857	Grant Index 9
10	1856-1857	Grant Index 10
11	1858-1860	Grant Index 11 – contains only town grants
12	1858-1860	Grant Index 12
13	1861-1862	Grant Index 13
14	1860-1862	Grant Index 14
15	1860-1862	Grant Index 15 – contains land purchaser forms

Accessing the Old System Grant Index in the HLRV

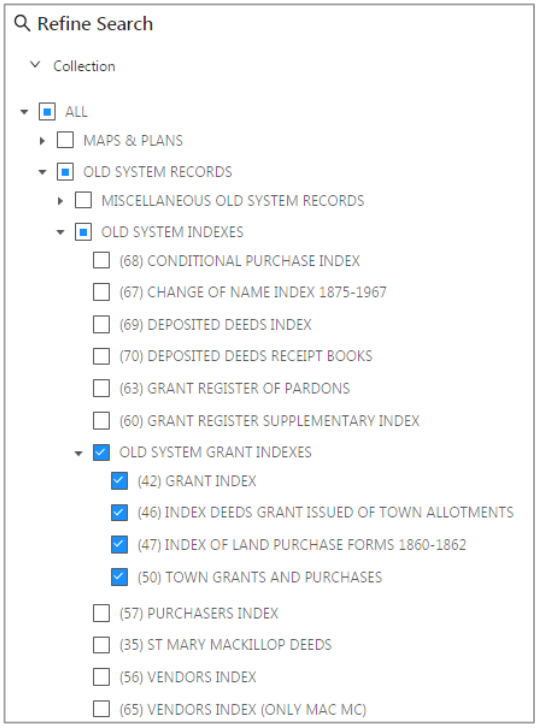
You can access the Old System Grant Index from the Old System Records collection in the HLRV. Under 'Old System Indexes', 'Old System Grant Indexes' you will find:

- Grant Index,
- Index Deeds Grant Issued of Town Allotments,
- Index of Land Purchase Forms 1860-1862, and
- Towns Grants and Purchases.

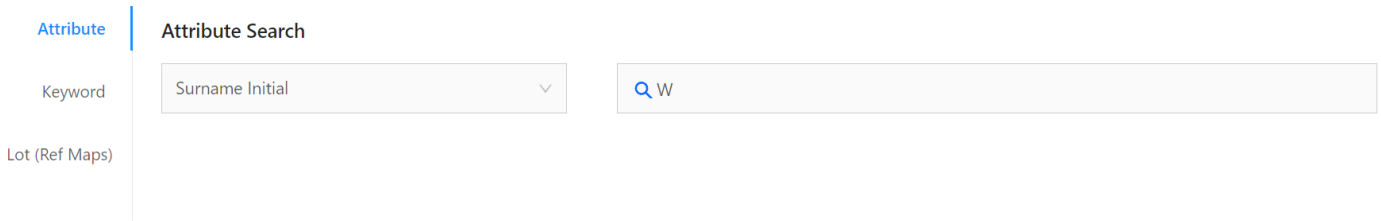
Searching the Old System Grant Index

To search the Old System Grant Register Index:

1. Select 'Old System Grant Indexes' in the HLRV collection tree.



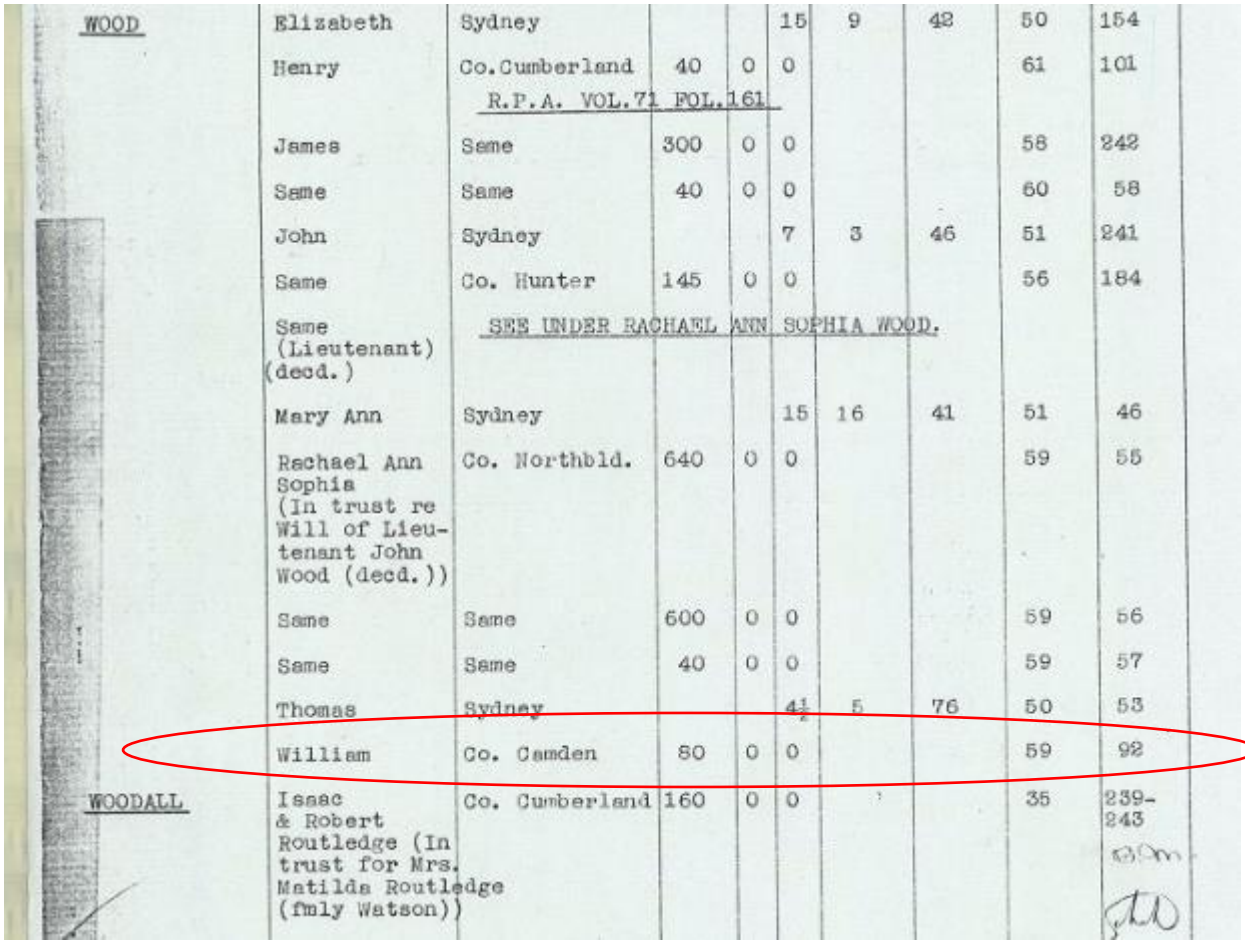
2. In the top search bar select **'Attribute'.** The 'search by' panel will appear.
3. In the 'search by' panel, select **'Surname Initial'**. Type the first letter of the surname you are searching in the 'search' panel to the right.



The letter 'W' is used in this example

Each volume of the Grant Index with the surname initial ‘W’ is displayed. Select any of the search results to open and view the Grant Index record. The below details are given in each record.

This example shows the grant for William Wood’s 80 acres in the County of Camden. To view William Wood’s grant look for Grant Register serial 59 page 92

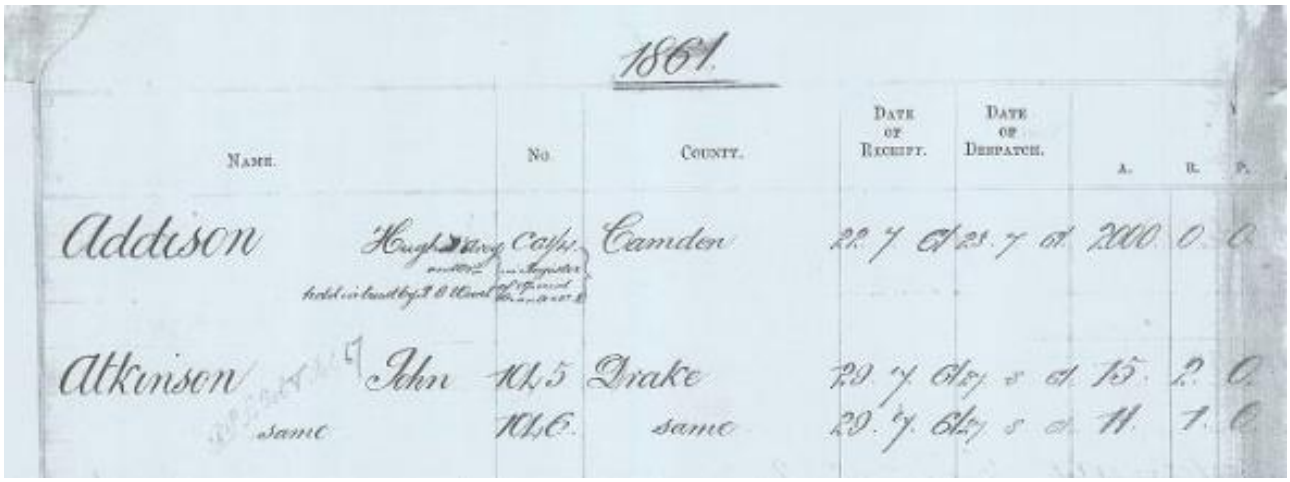


WOOD	Elizabeth	Sydney			15	9	42	50	154
	Henry	Co.Cumberland	40	0	0			61	101
		R.P.A. VOL.71 FOL.161							
	James	Same	300	0	0			58	242
	Same	Same	40	0	0			60	58
	John	Sydney			7	3	46	51	241
	Same	Co. Hunter	145	0	0			56	184
	Same (Lieutenant) (decd.)	SEE UNDER RACHAEL ANN SOPHIA WOOD.							
	Mary Ann	Sydney			15	16	41	51	46
	Rachael Ann Sophia (In trust re Will of Lieutenant John Wood (decd.))	Co. Northbld.	640	0	0			59	55
	Same	Same	600	0	0			59	56
	Same	Same	40	0	0			59	57
	Thomas	Sydney			4½	5	76	50	53
	William	Co. Camden	80	0	0			59	92
WOODALL	Isaac & Robert Routledge (In trust for Mrs. Matilda Routledge (fmly Watson))	Co. Cumberland	160	0	0			35	239-243

Entries in the Old System Grant Index are in alphabetical order of surname. In many instances there will be several entries under the same grantee name. You need to use the area and location of the land to narrow your choices for the correct grant. Even where the current serial and page number is shown in the index, there can still be complications.

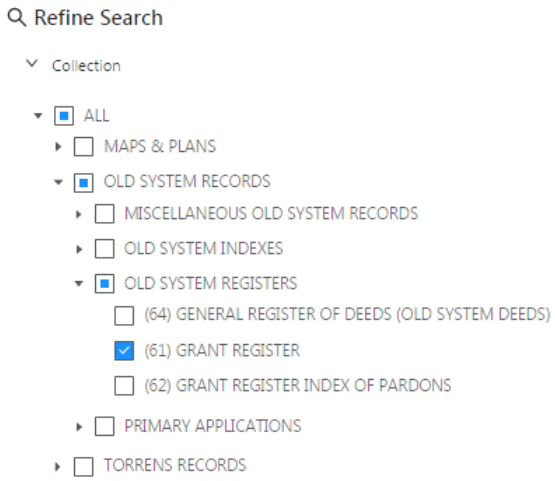
If no page number is listed you will need to look for the serial number in the Supplementary Index which was located in the first few pages of each grant register. ***See Accessing the Grant Register Supplementary Index.***

The handwritten indexes are also in alphabetical order of surnames and sometimes do not quote the current page number.



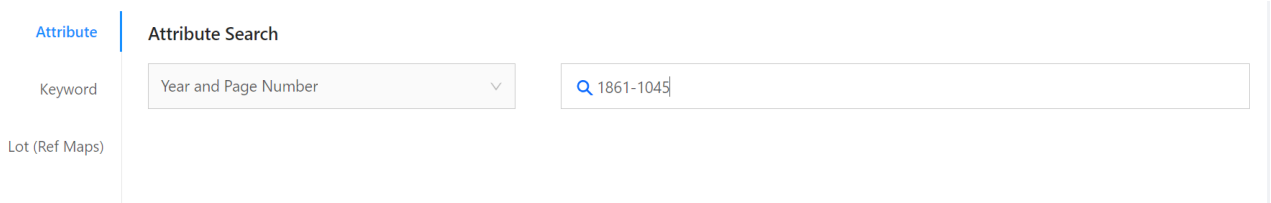
In this scenario

1. Select ‘Grant Register’ in the HLRV collection tree.

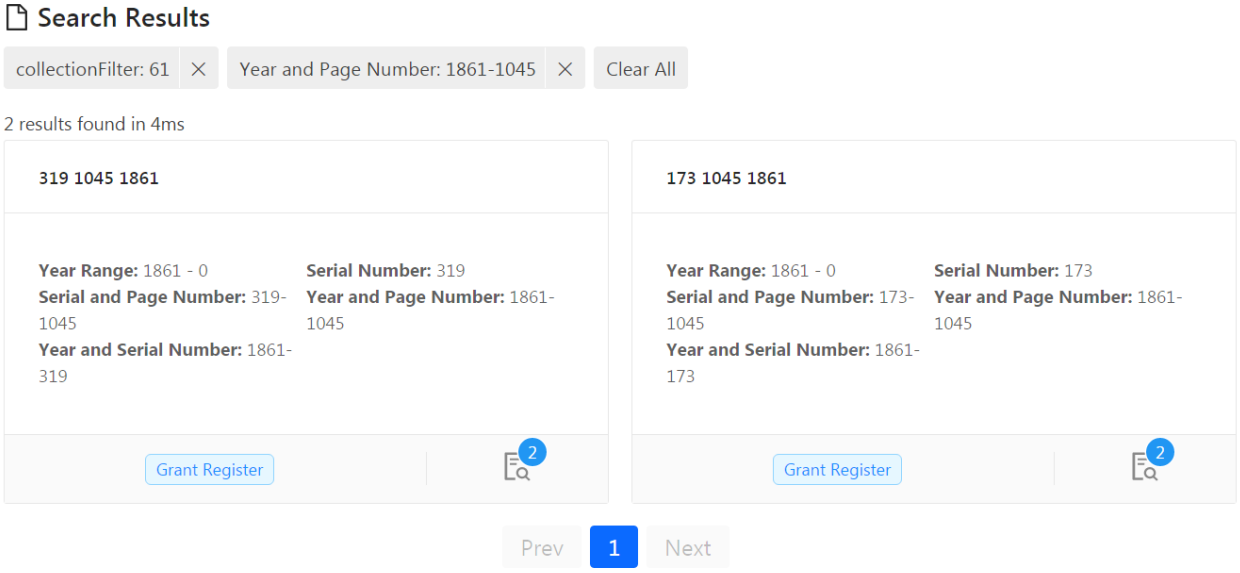


2. In the top search bar select **‘Attribute’** and in the ‘search by’ panel, select **‘Year and Page Number’.**

   In this example we are searching for the Grant to John Atkinson of 15 acres and 2 roods therefore the Year 1861 page 1045 has been searched



More than one result can be returned as in this example. Both results will need to be investigated to determine which is the Grant for John Atkinson



If no page number is listed, look for the index (serial number/book) in the Supplementary Index, which was located in the first few pages of each Grant Register and lists in alphabetical order all the grantees contained in that register.

Go to the appropriate surname and note the page number written next to the grantee's name.
The handwritten indexes are also in alphabetical order of surnames, but sometimes do not quote the current page number. You can refer to the Supplementary Index, which lists in alphabetical order all the grantees contained in that register.

Early grants rarely show portion numbers, often omit parish and county names, and sometimes refer to a district the name of which has since been changed. Some of the grants pre-date the allocation of portion numbers and the creation of the 141 counties, which occurred in 1848.

Earlier land district names used around Sydney may have also been altered since the grant or reallocated to a more distant area. This can affect your search results.

Searching the grant register supplementary index

The supplementary index can assist researchers if there is no page listed on the index for the relevant record. There is a supplementary index for each of the Grant Register books.

In the HLRV, the grant register supplementary index is under 'Old System Indexes' in the collection tree and the **'Attribute'** search is performed against **'Serial Number and Alpha'** using the Grant serial/volume number – the surname initial.

This provides the correct page number for that Serial. You can then search on 'number – page' to view the required grant.

Finding a grantee on parish or town maps

Parish maps were used by The NSW Land Registry Services (NSW LRS) to register all land holdings, show boundaries, land use and types of ownership. NSW LRS' collection of historical maps is a rich source of information about land ownership and boundaries going back to the beginning of European settlement in NSW.

Parish maps also reference original land grants issued between the commencement of the *Real Property Act 1862* on 1 January 1863 and 1 October 1981 and include a reference to first titles issued after 1863.

Grantees' names and dates of grants made before 1863 are typically shown on the face of the parish map (marked in the relevant portion) or recorded within a tabulated statement (or schedule) with the portion's number.

Town maps also show the grantee particulars of each allotment in a section in separate schedules or within the allotments. In later parish maps, names are usually on the schedule or table that records the portion or allotment, plan number and associated title information.

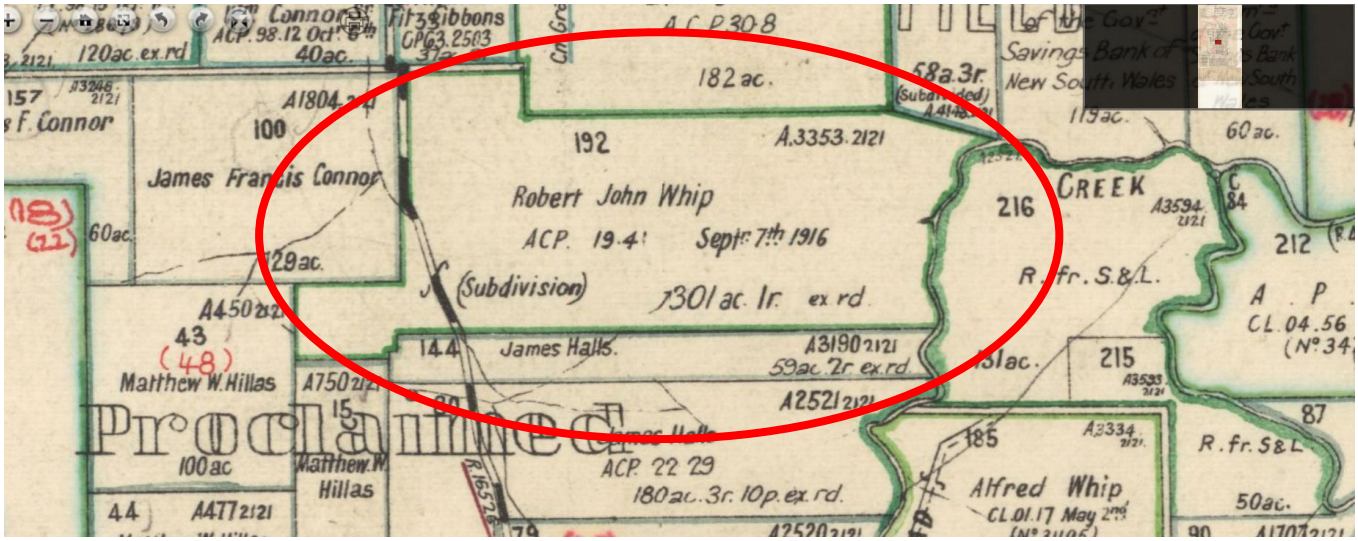
The grantee name and date of the grant registration found on the parish map can then be searched in the Old System Grant Index to find the associated serial and number of the grant.

Parish and town maps are available to view in the Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV)

You can view the parish maps in the LTO, Regional and Status Branch charting map collections under 'Maps & Plans', which were in circulation prior to computerisation, or view records in Historical Parish Maps which are the cancelled edition Crown Parish Maps.

Tip: 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. A search by locality or suburb will reveal the parish and county name for the are you are researching.

For more information about how to search these records, see the guide to Searching the Registrar General's Maps and Plans.

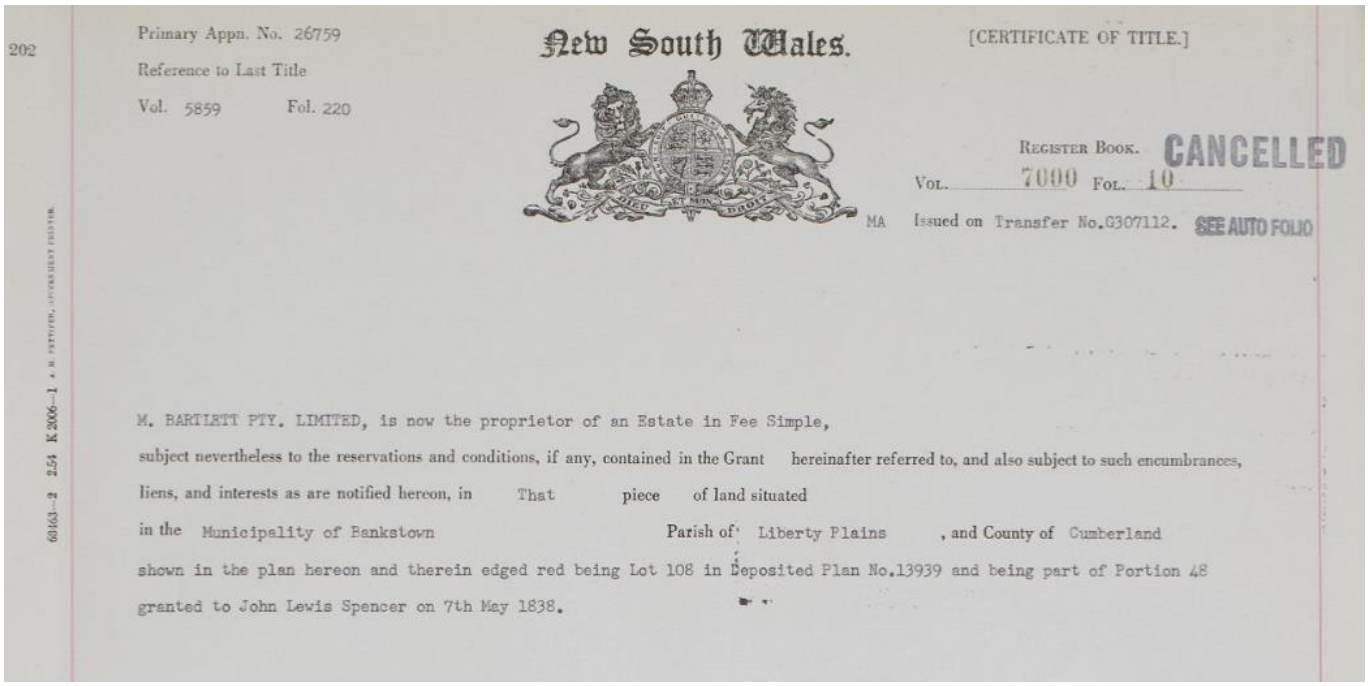


Using Portion 192 In the parish of Bannaby the grantee name on the map face is Robert John Whip. The date of grant, in this case September 7th 1916 is also shown on the map. In the portion table the corresponding portion number (192 in this case) displays the volume and folio title of the first grant.

Parish N°	Catalogue N°	LOC'N	VOL. OR DATE	FOL.
181	A3325.2m	NE	8348	141
182	.3323.	NW	3511	38
183	.3324.	NW	8391	44
184	.3332.	SW	7468	25
185	.3334.	SE	11185	229
186	.3354.	NW	10392	59
187	.3347.	NE	3886	73
188	.3348.	NE	15349	157
189	.3350.	NE	2132	145
190	.3351.	NW	8348	142
191	.3352.	SE	4117	50
192	.3353.	SE	8222	53
193	.3390.	SE	2392	18
194	.3385.	NE	3464	208

Finding a grantee's name on a manual title

Most manual titles including the Old Form Torrens titles and New Form Torrens titles contain grantee details as part of the land description on the first page.



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Primary Appn. No. 26759

Reference to Last Title

Vol. 5859 Fol. 220

New South Wales.

[CERTIFICATE OF TITLE.]

REGISTER BOOK. CANCELLED

VOL. 7000 FOL. 10

MA Issued on Transfer No.G307112. SEE AUTO FOLIO

M. BARTLETT PTY. LIMITED, is now the proprietor of an Estate in Fee Simple, subject nevertheless to the reservations and conditions, if any, contained in the Grant hereinafter referred to, and also subject to such encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified hereon, in That piece of land situated in the Municipality of Bankstown Parish of Liberty Plains , and County of Cumberland shown in the plan hereon and therein edged red being Lot 108 in Deposited Plan No.13939 and being part of Portion 48 granted to John Lewis Spencer on 7th May 1838.

In the Old Form Torrens Register title Volume 7000 Folio 10 the land was originally granted to grantee John Lewis Spencer.

The top left hand corner shows Primary Application No 26759 which is the 'packet' of documents used in the conversion of this land from Old System to Torrens Title.

The Old Form Torrens Register (titles from 1863 to 1961) can be viewed online on Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV) in the 30 collection.

Copies of both Old Form and New Form titles can be purchased from authorised Information Brokers

Old System Grant Register

The Old System Grant Registers contain a mixture of handwritten copies and typed or written extracts of the original grants. The Grant Registers were originally grouped in series such as Land Purchases, Town Purchases and Special Grants etc. They were given distinguishing letters or numbers in that series or referred to by the year of the grant e.g. 1861 Land Purchases.

Accessing the Old System Grant Register in the HLRV

Before you begin searching in the HLRV, you will need to know the serial and page number of the record you are researching. This information is found in the Grant Register Index..

The HLRV can then be used to search and view the grant. Grants can be searched by the following attributes:

- serial number
- serial and page number
- year and serial number

To use the previous example the grant for William Clarke, found in the Grant Register Index, can be searched by serial and page number, 18–102.

Tips for searching and interpreting the Old System Grant Register

The Grant Register was compiled from various sources. As a result, some of the original books had an old serial/volume number on the middle of the spine. Some of these numbers were referenced in older documents. However, the Grant Register volumes were later renumbered.

The Grant and supplementary index refer to the current serial. To aid search and discovery of the grants, a finding aid lists both old and new serial numbers and is available on the HLRV homepage.

More information and searching support

For more information on the Old System Grant Register and Old System Grant Index and the Old System Grant Register 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

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