Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

Bendigo & District Rate Records at BRAC

Municipality	Date Range	VPRS No.
Bendigo Volumes	1856—1958	16267 P1
Bendigo Computer printouts	1971—1992	16268 P1
Eaglehawk Volumes	1864—1947	16263 P1
Heathcote Volumes	1864—1892	16334 P1
Huntly Volumes	1936—1947	16333 P1
Marong Volumes	1864—1964	16266 P1
Strathfieldsaye Volumes	1864—1973	16136 P1
McIvor Volumes	1878-1896; 1903;1910	None
Raywood Volumes	1865-1915	None

Please contact BRAC staff to access the Rate cards created by each Council:

- Bendigo   1958—1971
- Eaglehawk   1980—1994
- Huntly   1947— unknown
- Marong   1974—1994
- McIvor   1986—1995
- Strathfieldsaye 1988—1994

What you will find in a Rate Book:

Rate Books typically list the owner's full name, occupation, street address or location, a brief description of the dwelling, rates to be paid (based on the property's nett annual value), and sometimes the occupant's name. The level of information provided varies from municipality to municipality. Estimates of Councils' Receipts and Expenditure are often given.

How the Rate Books are generally arranged:

These records were created annually, often arranged by streets within Council Wards or Ridings. Sometimes streets were arranged alphabetically, but more often they were arranged according to an established route taken by the Council's Valuer. In the latter case, it is common for entries for each property to be allocated a consecutive rate (or assessment) number which reflects the particular route taken. The rate numbers usually changed each year due to the addition or removal of rateable properties along the route.

How to Use the Rate Books:
Determine the Local Government area your land or building was originally located in.

This is important as the present day City of Greater Bendigo was formed in 1994 after the amalgamation of the City of Bendigo (formerly Sandhurst), the Rural City of Marong, the Borough of Eaglehawk, and the Shires of Huntly, Strathfieldsaye and McIvor. A reference map showing these former Councils' boundaries is on display in the BRAC Reading Room.

How to Use the Rate Books continued:
Search by either Owner's or Occupier's name, or location of the property.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, only the location was listed; house numbering and street addresses did not appear until later. Section and allotment numbers were sometimes noted too. (Be aware that some street names and district boundaries did change over time.)

VPRS 16267 Bendigo Rate Books (1856-1958)
Bendigo Rate Books are recorded in concentric circles running off High Street beginning at Alder Street (Golden Square), which was the boundary between Bendigo and the Shire of Marong. Bendigo always had three wards, Barkly, Darling and Sutton, which were named after nineteenth century Governors of Victoria. Property numbering began in 1906/07. From 1910 Rate books had an extra column which stated how many people were living in the house at the time the information was compiled- a census column.

VPRS 16263 Eaglehawk Rate Books (1864-1947)
Some street names appeared around 1880-1884. By 1930, there is occasionally a street index located at the front of the volume. Details, such as materials used and the function of the building (hotel, hut, house, cottage), appear within the description column. An extra column states the weekly rental charged by landlords.

VPRS 16334 Heathcote Rate Books (1864—1892)
These show the history of land ownership when this town was a Borough. There are examples of female and Chinese land ownership. Gullies and creeks were often the only geographic identifiers used for a property's location.

VPRS 16333 Huntly Rate Books (1936—1947)
This is the only Rate Book series at BRAC which lists "Soldier Settlers" properties, established after World War I.

VPRS 16266 Marong Rate Books (1864-1964)
An index to individual volumes was created until 1887. Owners' names appeared alphabetically within each of the 22 Parishes located within each of the three Ridings:- South, North East and North West. Section and allotment numbers were noted in the location column, especially in the large farming areas. Detailed descriptions of properties were often given, including the function of non-dwellings (factory, shop, hotel, crushing plant). The numerous gullies, flats and hills were the locations given for properties not located in a township.

VPRS 16136 Strathfieldsaye Rate Books (1864-1973)
The three original Ridings were West, East and North, but they changed names to Mandurang (West), Strathfieldsaye (East) and Axedale (North) in 1873. The owner's trade or occupation was listed for the first time in 1874. Section and allotment numbers were often given in the location column. By 1945, some street numbers were listed for the first time.

Name Index Database for Rate Books:
Name Indexes for the Bendigo Rate Books span 1856 – 1902 (compiled by volunteers and converted to a searchable Database, an ongoing project). The Database will soon be available online via the Goldfields Libraries website www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au.

You can search for names in the Database in person on one of the designated 'Family History' computers (there are two) in the Goldfields Research Centre (GRC) located on the first floor of the Bendigo Library.