

E-newsletter - Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

Welcome to the fourth issue for 2015 of our quarterly e-newsletter Bric-a-BRAC.

BRAC is CLOSED on Wednesday 2 December

BRAC closes for Christmas at 3pm on Thursday 24 December 2015

Reopens at 10am on Wednesday 6 January 2016

In this issue:

[National Family History Month Activities - August 2015](#)

[School Visit September 2015](#)

[Uses of BRAC Records](#)

[Next Petitions Online](#)

[Back in Time - Children in BRAC Records](#)

[National Family History Month Activities - August 2015](#)

BRAC tours, a workshop and a W.C. Vahland presentation were enjoyed by 37 visitors throughout August 2015 to mark National Family History Month. The 'behind the scenes' tours gave visitors a special opportunity to see inside the repository where the historic records are stored in temperature and humidity controlled conditions. The workshop introduced Family Historians to the art of finding ancestors in the enormous variety of records held at BRAC. Our collections hold pieces for many families' jigsaw puzzles - court cases, divorces, staff records, correspondence and petitions to name a few. The W.C. Vahland presentation was a repeat of the one given by Dr. Michele Matthews in May 2015, to mark the centenary of the death of W.C. Vahland, Bendigo's most prolific and insightful Architect. His footprint appears in BRAC records such as the nineteenth century correspondence, Minute Books and Rate Books. You can now download this presentation online at www.brac.vic.gov.au/Digital_Records/WC_Vahland

[School Visit September 2015](#)

In September, BRAC welcomed a Year 9 History elective class from Bendigo South East Secondary College. Students were shown a selection of both Local Government and Court records, and asked to think about the information recorded, their uses, the handwriting styles, and content differences between the eight series of Rate Books held at BRAC.



Photo of the students in the BRAC reading room during their 10 September 2015 visit.

Uses of BRAC Records

People often ask why Researchers use BRAC records. What questions are they trying to find answers to? Here is a sample of the reasons driving Researchers in the months July to September 2015, giving readers insight into the variety of uses BRAC records have.

July 2015

- A PhD student used letters and reports from the Bendigo Hospital to the Bendigo Council, housed in Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence (VPRS 16936).
- Local researchers used the Borough of Raywood Rate books (VPRS 17066) and Minutes (VPRS 17067) to prepare a booklet to mark the 150th anniversary of that Borough being established.

August 2015

- A Heritage adviser, working on the City of Greater Bendigo White Hills/North Bendigo Heritage Study, used a Bendigo Council Building Register, (VPRS 16136) Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate Books, and numerous Bendigo Rate Books (VPRS 16267) spanning 1856 to 1930.
- An ESL BRIT class enjoyed a tour of the BRAC repository. Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence (VPRS 16936), Bendigo Rate Books (VPRS 16267) and Victorian Gold Jubilee Exhibition Cash Book (No VPRS) were shown as examples of records in the collection.

September 2015

- A local researcher used the Bendigo Licensing Court records to trace the history of her ancestors as Publicans.
- Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Heathcote, Huntly, Marong, McIvor, Raywood and Strathfieldsaye Rate books plus examples of Court records (Cause List-Criminal, Insolvency, Licensing and Divorce) were all displayed for a Year 9 History class tour of BRAC.

Next Petitions Online

The next stage of our digitised Petitions' Project is now available on the BRAC website. A total of 2,018 people signed the latest five petitions added online, making a total of just over 13,000 names to search. See the latest at http://www.brac.vic.gov.au/Digital_Records/Petitions_1870-1899

Back in Time

In this issue, I would like to highlight the records held at BRAC, which contain references to **Children**.

Often overlooked by Historians, Children are particularly important to Family Historians. Children appear in three main series of records held at BRAC. Court records, specifically the forerunners to the Magistrates' Court records known as Cause List volumes, contain numerous examples of cases involving Children. There was no equivalent to the Family Court in the nineteenth century so Children appeared before a local Magistrate if they were deemed a "Neglected child" because parents did not care for them, or one or both parents were deceased. In these cases, it was usually stated which Industrial School they were to be sent to, and sometimes their age was recorded. The Murphy boys (James, John, Edward and Thomas) were aged only 3 to 8 years old when they were "Committed to the Industrial School until attaining the age of 15 years." (VPRS 16736 Sandhurst Cause Lists-Criminal, vol. 11, 04/11/1875.)

Children also appeared in Sandhurst Cause Lists-Civil (VPRS 16735) if they were illegitimate and the mother sought maintenance from the biological father. One such case was Agnes Bose, who charged Stephen Williams that he “did leave his illegitimate child without means of support.” (vol. 8, 17/09/1873) This father was ordered to pay “five shillings per week for 12 months”. (vol. 8, 24/09/1873).

From the 1870s-1890, children were referred to if the parents were charged with NOT sending them to school - only the surname is mentioned in the Sandhurst Cause Lists-Civil. The Rochester Cause Lists volumes (VPRS 16702) are slightly different in that they recorded both the first name and surname of the children who had been prevented from attending school by their own parents. Within Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence (VPRS 16936), children sometimes appear in lateral ways.

Head teachers (or the Council’s Health Officer) wrote to the Council to inform them of an outbreak of a childhood illness such as Measles or Diphtheria, which resulted in large-scale absences of their students, or complete closure of the school in some cases. For example, in 1893 Dr. Eadie recommended the closure of three schools - Camp Hill, North Bendigo and Quarry Hill - for three weeks because attendances had dropped so markedly due to the local “measles epidemic”. (Box 38, 27/07/1893)

From the 1870s, the Council’s Health Officer, in his quarterly and annual reports to Council, detailed the cause of death of children aged 0-5 years. For example, in the quarterly report for October-December 1894, Dr. Eadie stated that 29 Males and 18 Females under 5 years of age died from a large variety of ailments and causes including:- Diphtheria (1), Whooping cough (3), Diarrhoea (6), “Want of Breast Milk” (4), “Premature Birth” (3), Teething (1), “Inability to assimilate nourishment” (1), “Injury during birth” (1). (Box 41, 02/01/1895)

Dr. Michele Matthews

Until Next Time

Thank you for subscribing to our e-newsletter. Our next issue of Bric-a-BRAC will be out in February 2016. We will share new updates, details of events and happenings, and more snapshots of our wonderful Records. Until then, happy researching!

BRAC Staff

Dr. Michele Matthews, Archives Officer (Tues, Wed, Thurs)
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Open Hours

Wednesday and Thursday 10am – 4.30pm except public holidays

Wednesday 2 December CLOSED