

E-newsletter - Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

Welcome to the third issue for 2016 of our quarterly e-Newsletter, Bric-a-BRAC.

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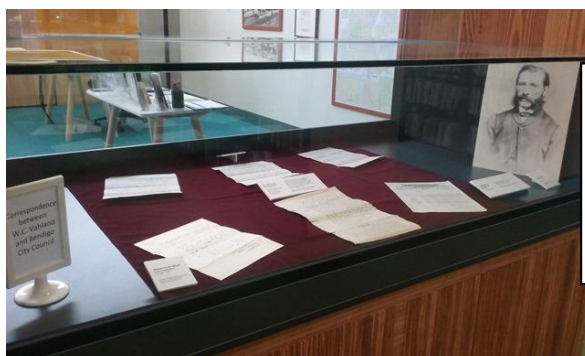
Family History Month Events in August 2016

Family History Month is fast approaching. Michele is presenting “Discovering Ancestors in the Archives” on Tuesday 9 August from 2-3pm. There is an opportunity to hear first hand from PROV staff and records in “Researching your family history at Public Record Office Victoria Library” on Wednesday 17 August at 12noon. Look for a full list of events in Bendigo at www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/familyhistorymonth. All events are free, but require bookings. Book through the Goldfields Library website www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/familyhistorymonth. For more information contact BRAC by email brac@ncgrl.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 5449 2703.

We hope you have a chance to attend one or all events, add to your knowledge of the BRAC Collection and find out which records are gems for genealogists.

Vale W.C. Vahland Exhibit May-July 2016

The BRAC-curated exhibit highlighting William Charles Vahland’s extensive career, as seen through his correspondence to the former Sandhurst/Bendigo Council, other records held at BRAC, and artefacts on loan from the Bendigo Art Gallery and Bendigo Library, ended in late July. BRAC records, and artefacts on loan, generated much interest among visitors and BRAC clients. In the lead up to the restored Vahland-designed water troughs/lamps being unveiled in October, this exhibit enabled visitors to learn more about this remarkable man, whose contributions to Bendigo were described in the following words: “the city’s buildings in their ornate architecture bear silent but eloquent testimony to a brain fertile and resourceful.”



Left- Photo of Vahland exhibit case, showing original handwritten reports sent by him to Sandhurst Council in the 1880s.

Uses of Our Records

What questions are BRAC researchers trying to find answers to? Here is a sample of the reasons driving them in the months May-July 2016, giving readers some insight into the varied questions BRAC records can answer.

May 2016

- A variety of records were used for the tours and display during the National Trust's Festival activities at BRAC- **Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Marong, Strathfieldsaye, Raywood, Heathcote and Mclvor Rate books, Bye Laws and Regulations** booklets, **VPRS 16736** Cause Lists- Criminal, **17031** Divorce cases, **Surveyor's Day book, Staff Salary book, Bendigo Building Register, Vic. Gold Jubilee Exhibition Entries vol (all no VPRS).**

June 2016

- A Melbourne Historian used numerous records to trace the history of an 1870s cess pit located in Forest Street, close to the CBD- **Bendigo Committee Minutes** (VPRS 16342), **Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence** (VPRS 16936), **Bendigo Surveyor's Day Book and Contracts** (no VPRS), **Bendigo Council Sanitary charges for non-rateable properties** (no VPRS)
- The Post Office Gallery's (POG) Curator examined large quantities of **Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence** (VPRS 16936), in preparation for her next exhibition.

July 2016

- A local researcher used **Bendigo Council Minutes, Bendigo Committee Minutes** and **20th century correspondence** to trace the history behind the large Queen Victoria statue, located in Pall Mall, Bendigo.
- A consultant for the City of Greater Bendigo used many volumes of **Bendigo Council Rate books** spanning 1856-1958, to trace the CBDs history for a Heritage study for the Council.

New series arrivals at BRAC

Goornong Cemetery Trust records were handed over to BRAC in June.

There are three series, all created by **VA 5156 Goornong Cemetery Trust:-**

VPRS 18261/P1 Goornong Cemetery Trust Minute Books (1881-1994)

VPRS 18262/P1 Goornong Cemetery Interment Books (1884-1988)

VPRS 18284/P1 Index to 18262 Goornong Cemetery Interment Books (1884-2014)

These records are available to be ordered online at www.prov.vic.gov.au using their series numbers, or ring BRAC staff for assistance.

Back in Time

In keeping with August being Family History Month, I would like to reflect on the life of **George William Knight**, one of the city's more multi-faceted staff members. **George** was a trained Architect, Surveyor and Engineer. He completed his studies in England before arriving in Victoria in 1857. In 1872, his first appointment was as the Sandhurst Council's Building Surveyor. In 1873, he was also appointed the City Valuer. In 1880, he accepted a further six positions:- the City Inspector, Cab, Health, Nuisance, Cattle Slaughter and Abbatoirs Inspector. In 1883, he took up the City Surveyor's position; he then ceased all his other Council positions. **(19/01/1883, Box 20)**

The extensive surviving Inwards Correspondence (**VPRS 16936**) from Knight to his employers gives us great insights into this employee's work history, and his ultimate dismissal by the Council. In 1877, he sent a 7 page letter defending himself against the charge that, as City Valuer, he had given "preferential advantage" to his two sons' nursery trade. **(08/05/1877, Box 14)** Four years later, he again defended himself against Councillor Bayne's allegation that his home had been over-valued by Knight. **(05/05/1881, Box 16)** A few months later, Knight was caught up in the dispute between the Council and Vahland, when the Council threatened to take the final stage of the Alexandra fountain's construction away from Vahland and give it to Knight to complete!! **(27/09/1881, Box 17)** In January 1886, two petitions were presented to Council regarding Knight's work behaviour; one supported the "old and respected servant of the Ratepayers", one was against him **(01/01/1886; Jan. 1886, Box 23)** Knight's 40 page defence of his own actions was penned three weeks later; his resignation followed the following week. **(22/01/1886; 29/01/1886, Box 23)**

*My thanks for non-BRAC biographical and historical information provided to me by Knight's great great granddaughter, Robyn Hunter. She is using BRAC records as part of her research for her PhD biographical study of Knight.

Until Next Time

Thank you for subscribing to our e-newsletter. The next issue of Bric-a-BRAC will be available in November 2016. We will share updates, events and happenings as well as more snapshots of our wonderful records. Until then, happy researching!

BRAC Staff

Dr. Michele Matthews, Archives Officer (Tues, Wed, Thurs)
Vivien Newton, Archives Officer (Wed, Thurs.)

BRAC Contact

email: brac@ncgrl.vic.gov.au

phone: (03) 5449 2703

web: www.brac.vic.gov.au

Address: Find us on the 1st Floor, Bendigo Library, 251-259 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo

Opening Hours: Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4.30pm (except public holidays)