

STUDENTS AND THE BATTYE LIBRARY: INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The Battye Library is situated on the 3rd floor of the State Library of Western Australia in Northbridge (entry from Francis Street, or the James Street pedestrian mall). There is parking located under the building with an entry off Francis Street. The Battye Library is open Monday to Thursday 9.00am-8.00pm, Friday 9.00am-5.30pm and Saturday and Sunday 10.00am-5.30pm.

The Battye Library collections include all forms of documentary Western Australian material except for artworks and government archives. A significant part of the collections are kept in storage and are only available on request. Retrievals from storage areas are done hourly on the half-hour with the first weekday retrieval at 9.30am available at 10:00 and so on through the day. (If you would like an item to be waiting for you, please ring beforehand on 9427 3291 to arrange.)

Pictorial and Private Archives retrievals are available Monday to Friday only at the following times:

Request in by:	Item ready at:
9.30am	11.00 am
11.30am	1.00pm
2.30pm	4.00pm
after 2.30pm	9.30am next working day

The collections and some suggestions for their use

A teacher should always check to ensure material relevant to that subject is available. Ideally this should be done by coming in to the Battye Library. Increasingly, information or resources are available on-line through the catalogue or on one of the specially created websites.

Do not assume there is information on your topic of interest. For example, a popular assignment has been to get students to research their house. This is difficult as very little information is available. Often the only information which can be found is from the *Post Office Directories* (1893-1949) which tells the student that the house existed at a certain date and who was living in it at the time. Information on some topics may be available, sometimes in volume, but inappropriate for students at certain levels. A grade 7 student trying to do an assignment on the “development of Perth” in the Battye Library will have problems as very little on the topic will be written for students of that age.

Books – written by Western Australians, or books containing information about Western Australia or Western Australians are collected. Over 60,000 book titles are held ranging from early exploration journals to the present day.

The book collection contains invaluable secondary sources and will be familiar and easy to use for most students. Books are valuable starting points for

research and many contain helpful bibliographies and useful references to primary materials for further research. Some students will not find a book on their topic and may need help on how to find topics covered within a book.

Most books can be found on the shelves in the reading room, but some are only available from storage areas (rare books, single copies of works, reading room copy on loan etc). This is indicated on the catalogue record by the words "3rd Fl, Battye Stack" in the location field and the words "Request Needed" in the status field. Books and other material that are only available from stack must be requested by completing a call slip and taking it to the librarian on duty.

Newspapers – except for some minor gaps, the Battye Library has complete sets of all newspapers published in Western Australia since 1830, including a few in manuscript form. A significant part of the collection has been microfilmed while the remainder is available in its original form. Almost 900 newspaper titles are held.

Much of Western Australia's history is only recorded in its newspapers, which provide a rich record of the daily life of local communities and State events. Newspapers document the cultural, social and sporting life of the community, and are significant research sources for students. They are a good way to introduce students to primary source material and projects can be adjusted to meet the level of the student.

For example, younger students can be given the task of finding the newspapers published on their birthdays or their parents' birthdays and be asked to write about or discuss what was reported on the front page for those days. Older students can be set increasingly complex assignments, such as researching how the papers reported on interesting historic events or how newspaper coverage of women or indigenous people has changed. These topics take a great deal of time to research, however, unless the articles have been indexed. It is a good idea to check this first.

Apart from indexing of newspapers carried out by the Battye Library, both on-line and in various card indexes (mostly now microfiched), West Australian Newspapers has indexed *The West Australian* from June 1902 to August 1987. This subject index is held by the Battye Library on microfilm and can be used to find articles from *The West Australian* on a variety of topics. Unlike the Battye Library, which only indexes articles of Western Australian interest, this index contains references to all articles published in the newspaper.

The Battye Library also has on-line access to West Australian Newspapers' database of articles indexed from *The West Australian* since 3 August 1987. Staff of the Battye Library can carry out searches for Western Australian material, but this is not carried out on demand and the student may have to wait up to 24 hours for a printout (providing headline, date and page number). Searches can be requested by telephone on 9427 3291. Some popular topics have already been researched and printouts of the results are kept at the enquiry desk.

Newspapers that have been microfilmed are available at any time the Library is open. Current editions of major metropolitan and country newspapers, which are not yet microfilmed, can be found on shelves in the reading room. Back issues, ie previous years, can be requested from stack.

Serials – over 12,000 serial titles are held, including magazines, annual reports and newsletters of various agencies and associations such as government departments, societies, businesses and social and sporting clubs.

Serials can be helpful secondary sources of information on particular topics or about particular organisations but the information they contain can be very difficult to locate without a reference from another source. The on-line catalogue provides limited indexing of key articles. Various other card and microfiche indexes provide similarly limited access to serials indexed prior to 1997. Nearly all serials are held in stack and have to be requested.

Maps – range from charts of the early Dutch and French explorers and the first surveys of the Swan River Colony to the latest maps issued by the Department of Land Information and other authorities.

Maps can be a fascinating source of information about the physical geography and natural history of Western Australia and their influence on the State's development. Maps can provide useful information relating to settlement and family history (eg townsite maps where property boundaries, and even owners' names, may be shown). All maps are held in stack and have to be requested.

Ephemera – the Battye Library houses an extensive collection of ephemera and minor publications such as souvenir brochures, invitations, theatre programs, art exhibition catalogues and election material.

Ephemera can provide a very immediate contact with the objects of the past. While the information provided by any individual item in the ephemera collection may not be great in comparison to other sources, it may offer an interesting insight into a larger topic, such as the leaflet published at the time of the 1917 conscription debate. Some ephemera is kept in large filing cabinets in the reading room and the rest has to be requested from stack.

Film and Video – the State Film Archives houses an extensive collection of Western Australian film and video produced by government agencies, commercial organisations and private individuals. Most archival films have been transferred to video and arrangements to view can be made in the Music and Performing Arts Library on the 2nd floor.

While film and video are fascinating and an invaluable part of the popular history shows on television, they are more difficult sources to use than the other materials in the Battye Library and are only recommended for advanced tertiary students pursuing specialised research.

Oral History – the Battye Library holds the largest collection of oral history interviews outside the National Library. The collection consists of interviews with people who are Western Australian by birth or migration and who are from all walks of life, different ethnic groups, major political parties and many and varied occupations. Tapes and, in many cases, transcripts of interviews are held.

Oral histories are an excellent primary source for students. They can be challenging to use and are most suitable for advanced students. A successful application of oral history to the curriculum has been students doing their own oral history interviewing. This is best if the questions are carefully prepared and limited. Interviewing parents or grandparents about a topic, such as what their leisure activities were during childhood, gives the interviewee useful information which can be compared to today.

Topics can also be tailored to the local school community. For example, many local communities will have a large migrant population, and oral histories relating to the migrant experience will be especially valuable. Furthermore, information gathered from these oral histories can be compared to other information, such as the migrant experience in the “Settlement” section of the State Library’s *Western Perspectives on a Nation* website (<http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/wepon/index.html>).

Oral history interviews and transcripts are available in the microfilm section of the reading room. Students can help themselves to transcripts, but if they wish to listen to a tape they must ask a librarian for assistance.

Photographs – the collection consists of over 500,000 images and covers the period from c1845 to the present day. Most images are from the 1890s to the 1960s, with an emphasis on social life, agriculture, mining, townscape, landscape, portraits and Aboriginal subjects.

The pictorial collection is a rich source of visual information about Western Australia and its history. For most students, this pictorial information will be most useful to illustrate assignments. Students using the collection in this way are best advised to search for appropriate images included in the on-line catalogue. The easiest way to find a suitable image is to search the catalogue (<http://henrietta.liswa.wa.gov.au/>) by keyword using the topic term and the phrase “on-line image”. For example, a keyword search on “play on-line image” or “migrants on-line image” produces a variety of photographs on these topics.

In depth research using pictorial materials is difficult because most of the collection is still only available through a card catalogue and photocopy images kept in the Battye Library. This sort of research is only suitable for advanced tertiary students pursuing specialised research.

Private Archives (or manuscripts) – These are the records of private individuals, families, churches, trade unions, companies and businesses and other non-government organisations. They include diaries; correspondence;

baptismal, marriage and burial records; station records; newspaper scrapbooks; and architectural plans. (**Note:** State Government and local government records are held by the State Record Office and not by the Battye Library.)

Private Archives are an essential primary source for research but using private archives is difficult because of their nature and complexity. Research in private archives is only suitable for advanced tertiary students pursuing specialised research unless the research is carefully guided. Some private archives have been microfilmed, but most have to be requested from stack.

There are well selected available archival sources which can be used in the curriculum. These are available on a variety of websites. For example, several of Western Australian interest are *Western Australia and federation* at <http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/federation>, which contains sections on federation 1890-1910, the secession movement 1929 to 1939 and issues 2001, which deals with Commonwealth/State relations at the beginning of the 21st century; *Western perspectives on a nation – images from Australia’s west 1901-2001* at <http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/wepon/index.html>, which contains sections on land, sea, architecture, mining, transport, settlement, clothing and women; *Rica Erickson* at <http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/erickson/index.html>, which documents the life of this remarkable Western Australian naturalist, author, historian and genealogist and includes details of her many publications; *Documenting a democracy: Australia’s story* at <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/>, which includes key documents in the foundation of Western Australia; and the documents relating to Prime Minister John Curtin at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/>.

Finding information and getting help

Catalogues and Indexes – The main catalogue is available on-line at <http://henrietta.liswa.wa.gov.au/>. The catalogue has keyword, author, title, and subject access to most of the material mentioned above. The subject access is by Library of Congress subject headings. Digitised material (for example photographs, ephemera, etc.) and PDF listings of collections of material are being added regularly to the catalogue.

The catalogue can be searched as a whole or different indexes and collections can be searched separately if the student has an enquiry tailored to a particular topic or format. Indexes include ships, songs and Australian poetry and collections include oral history, maps, private archives and pictorial.

Additionally, there are older card indexes (mostly microfiche) which would be useful for students but can only be consulted in the Battye Library:

- the General Index (microfiche) which contains references to Western Australian subjects found mainly in newspapers and serials and covers the periods 1830-1890 and 1950-1984;

- the new General Index (card) which covers the same subjects as the General Index, but contains references to material indexed from 1984-1997;
- the Biographical Index (microfiche), which contains references to Western Australians and covers the same time period and same indexed sources as the General Index, and;
- the Wrecks Index, which covers the same periods and sources as the General Index and contains information on wrecks off the Western Australian coast and ships which came to Western Australia.

Reference Services – The enquiry desk at the Battye Library is always staffed and the librarians on duty will be pleased to assist students with enquiries or projects. Staff will not research assignments for students, however, or interpret the questions they have been set. As it is often busy at the enquiry desk, some waiting for attention may occur. There is also a staff member on hand some of the time to assist with microfilm instructions and problems.

Tours – The Battye Library carries out introductory tours for school groups. Tours should be arranged well in advance and need to be limited in size (a group numbering 12-15 is best) in order not to disrupt other library users. Larger groups may be able to be accommodated, but will need to be split into smaller, more manageable groups undertaking different activities, because of space limitations and in courtesy to other clients. Tours are limited and it is not always possible to book a tour on a particular day. If a tour has been booked and for some reason the group cannot get there on the day, please notify us.

Genealogical Centre – The Genealogical Centre (on the 1st floor of the State Library) is staffed by volunteers from the Western Australian Genealogical Society Tuesday to Thursday 9.30am-1.00pm. They are there specifically to help the public with tracing family history. At other times the Centre's resources are available on a self-help basis or the student can ask the staff on duty on the first floor for assistance.

Sources and copying

All students should be encouraged to provide appropriate references for the sources they use in any assignment. It is a help if students are told how to provide references to the different types of sources they may use in the Battye Library.

Copying – Many of the books, serials, maps, and oral history transcripts can be photocopied. All material on microfilm or microfiche can also be copied. Photocopying must be done in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968, which limits for example, copying to 10% or a chapter of a book or one article from a serial.

Photocopying is carried out by loading money onto a swipe card (this can be most cards with a black magnetic strip on the back - cash card, bank card, Medicare card, fly buys card are some which can be used). Photocopying costs 17 cents for A4 size, 22 cents for A3 size and 44 cents for microfilm (A4 and A3 sizes).

Some rare or fragile material, such as private archives, ephemera, bound newspapers and rare books, serials and maps, *cannot* be photocopied under any circumstances.

Images and website information available on-line can also be copied.