

*Researching & Writing about Nurses,
Midwives and Health Professionals
in New South Wales*



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Sydney Nursing School
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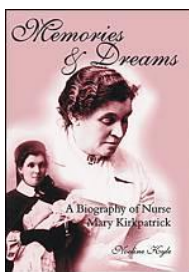
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Front cover photograph: Nurses on verandah of the San Quarters, (Nurses on duty in infectious division lived in these quarters), Coast Hospital, c. 1910s. Source: Maylean Cordia, *Nurse at Little Bay*.

Researching & Writing about Nurses, Midwives and Health Professionals in NSW

Midwives:

The most useful sources are found in local archives or museums or at the NSW State Records Office. Personal details of individual midwives are rarely available and the researcher will need to examine birth, death and marriage and other genealogical records (to re-construct family details) as well as nursing/midwifery records to research careers.



1. **Local Newspapers:** In the years to the late 1930s Midwives worked in a small private hospital sometimes alone, more usually in partnership with a colleague. Midwifery was a highly competitive industry and midwives would advertise their hospital or their services in most editions of the local newspapers.

2. **Register of Licensed Private Hospitals, NSW State Records, Kingswood, 1910-1928.** From 1907 all private hospitals were required to be registered and this included maternity (lying in) hospitals operated by midwives and/or nurses...they are recorded under the name of the place, the hospital and the proprietor, see Series (5/5857-63). 7 vols.

3. **Australasian Trained Nurses Assoc. Register of Members, Midwives.** 1900 -1920, copies are found at the Mitchell Library, NSW State Library.

4. **Local museum records.** Will have some records, oral and written, on individual midwives and private hospitals. Often these are patchy and incomplete but are at least a starting point for your research.



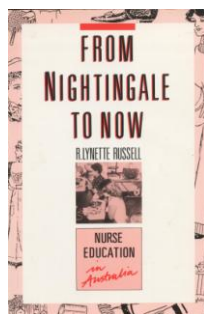
Muriel Knox Doherty
Source:
www.wv2australia.gov.au



Lucy Osburn
Source:
www.asap.unimelb.edu.au

Nurses:

As for midwives, but look also at records of public hospitals, regional health facilities and government health departments for the wide range of material available for research.

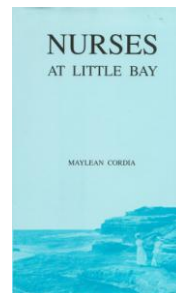


1. **Local newspapers, museum records** as for midwives.

2. **College of Nursing, Burwood** - The College archive is the central repository for all material pertaining to the NSW College of Nursing and its successor organisation, The College of Nursing. The collection of material began when the College was established in January 1949. The archive was formally established in 1985 with the purpose of maintaining a historical record of both the College's work and of nursing in Australia. Since that time the collections have been expanded to include the records of some notable nurses and selected nursing organisations. The archival and historical collection represents a major research resource which may be accessed by bona fide researchers. Contact: Judith Cornell 02 9745 7500

3. **Australasian Trained Nurses Assoc. Register of Members, General Nurses.** 1900 -1920, copies are found at the Mitchell Library, NSW State Library.

4. **Journal of the Australasian Trained Nurses Association, Australasian Nurses Journal,** 1903 to August 1970, Mitchell Library, NSW State Library.



Health Professionals & Social Welfare:

Nurses worked in social welfare areas including child welfare, prisons, women's refuges, charitable and religious institutions. In the 19th and 20th century they worked as bush nurses, in child welfare institutions and as matrons/nurses in prisons and other institutions in the public and the private sector. The records of these are found at NSW State Records, NSW State Library and in religious and private repositories.



NHRU, History Week, 2007

Websites:

Specialist Nurses



NHRU, History Week, 2007

1. **College of Nursing**, 14 Railway Parade, Burwood, NSW
2. **Australasian Trained Nurses Assoc. Register of Members**
3. **Journal of the Australasian Trained Nurses Association**, *Australasian Nurses Journal*, 1903 to August 1970, Mitchell Library, NSW State Library.
4. **Records of the Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association, including Australasian Journal of Neuroscience, Nursing History** Research Unit, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Sydney.



Source: M. Cordia,
Nurses at Little Bay

Ancestry.com.au (useful indexes here for researching nurses/midwives include:

- NSW Assisted Immigration
- NSW Unassisted Immigration
- Australia Electoral Rolls, 1901-1936
- First Fleet, 1787-1788, Second Fleet, 1789-1790, Third Fleet, 1791
- Sands Directories: Sydney and NSW
- Plus UK census and other records

This is a pay per view website, however the indexes can be searched for free.

Cyndi's List <http://www.cyndistist.com/> covers all countries and every subject relevant to the researching and writing of family history.

FindMyPast: <http://www.findmypast.com/welcome.jsp> Of interest here are the English census and other including Passenger Lists 1890-1960

NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Index Online: <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>

The Ryerson Index: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nswsdps/>

(The Ryerson Index is an index to death notices appearing in current Australian newspapers. Within NSW, the bulk of the entries are from the two Sydney papers, the "*Sydney Morning Herald*" and the "*Daily Telegraph*". The north coast is covered with notices included from the *Macleay Argus* and *Maitland Mercury*.)

Society of Australian Genealogists: <http://www.sag.org.au/>

College of Nursing, Burwood <http://www.nursing.edu.au/Archives/>

Australian Services Nurses National Memorial

<http://www.members.optushome.com.au/lenorefrost/nurses.html> - the names of the nurses listed were commemorated in the Australian Service Nurses National memorial, any additions to the list are welcome, email Lenore Frost at:
Lenore.frost@optusnet.com.au

The Australian War Memorial Online Encyclopedia -

<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/> - includes nurses memorial but RAANC not listed.

The Australian Nursing History Project:

<http://www.nursing.unimelb.edu.au/anhppros.htm> - seeks to establish an Internet accessible register of nursing historical resources, profiles of significant nursing individuals, organisations and events.

Noeline Kyle's writing family history <http://www.writingfamilyhistory.com.au> (includes a free index to over 600 midwives and their private hospitals on the mid north coast of NSW between 1900 and 1940s.)



Figure 4.4 An advertisement for nurses' uniforms shown in a picture similar to the one above by Miss Clara Hoyle (from Australasian Picture Illustration, June 19, 1902)

Source:
R. Lynette Russell,
From Nightingale to Now



Source:
R. Lynette Russell,
From Nightingale to Now

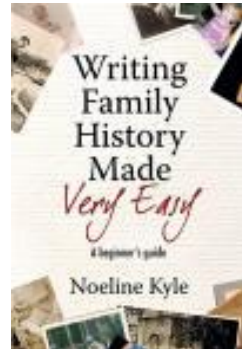
Newspapers, municipal and council records:

Search local newspapers to find advertisements for nurse's homes, rest homes, nursing homes, private nurses and private hospitals. Local municipal and council records are useful too, for example, notices of land transfers, rate books, property records, and valuation notices are helpful for tracking down midwives/nurses who leased or owned buildings from where they operated private hospitals, rest homes or nurse's homes. Municipal and council records are found in local and regional libraries, within council archives/records, in city libraries and state record repositories.

The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, first public hospital for women, established 1856,
<http://www.thewomens.org.au/ourhistory>

London Metropolitan Archives holds records of hospitals in London and Middlesex and have records of nurses and midwives who emigrated to Australia. Information Leaflet Number 36 – History of Nursing – Major Sources in London Metropolitan Archives.
<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk>

The National Archives, Kew, London for Civilian Nurses and Nursing Services Information 79
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>



Sources for research at NSW State Records:

Archives in Brief 118 –Nurses

This Archives in Brief provides an overview of the major sources held by SRNSW. Following are some useful items as listed in Archives in Brief 118-Nurses:

Nurses Registration Board

The Nurses' Registration Board was established in 1926 under the *Nurses' Registration Act, 1924*.

Title	Series	Copy
Certificates of registration and miscellaneous certificates, c.1912-56	NRS 10859	
Registers of nursing certificates, 1918-33	NRS 10860	
Registers of general nurses, 1926-47; 1946-54	NRS 10855	Reels 2146, 2620
Register of infants' nurses, 1926-54	NRS 10857	Reel 2620
Registers of mid-wives, 1926-38; 1931-50; 1951-54	NRS 10856	Reels 2620, 2146
Register of psychiatric nurses, 1926-54	NRS 10858	Reel 2620
Minute books, 5 Mar 1925–27 Aug 1959	NRS 10854	Reel 2621

For General Nurses:

The following information is recorded: name, hospital trained at, certificate number, date of registration, records number, and remarks.
1926-47 (6/4430; microfilm copy SR Reel 2146), 1946-54 (6/4534; microfilm copy SR Reel 2620). 2 vols.

For Midwives:

The following information is recorded: name, hospital trained at, certificate number, date of registration or renewal, records number, and remarks.
1926-38 (6/4535; microfilm copy SR Reel 2620), 1931-50 (6/4431; microfilm copy SR Reel 2146), 1951-54 (6/4536; microfilm copy SR Reel 2620). 3 vols.

For Psychiatric Nurses:

The following information is given: name, hospital trained at, certificate number, date of registration, records number, and remarks.
(6/4538; microfilm copy SR Reel 2620). 1 vol.

For infant nurses:

The following information is given: name, hospital trained at, certificate number, date of registration, records number, and remarks.
(6/4537; microfilm copy SR Reel 2620). 1 vol.

The Colonial Secretary's special bundle – Nurses

Contains correspondence about the establishment of the nurses' school at The Infirmary.



'Nursing Sister' (sculpture by Ray Ewers) A nursing sister crouched at the head of a soldier laid out on a stretcher, with her hands on the man's head. World War 2.
Source: <http://www.awm.gov.au/>

Other Useful Archives in Brief from NSW State Records:

- Archives in Brief 6 – Local History Research
- Archives in Brief 7 – Tracing your family history
- Archives in Brief 57 – Hospital buildings
- Archives in Brief 88 – Crown Street Women’s Hospital
- Archives in Brief 106 – Local government records
- Short Guide No. 10 – Guide to professions and occupations

Records of private hospitals, various: see at NSW State Records, NSW State Library (Mitchell Library), and various government libraries.

Individual Hospital Records:

In many instances you will find records for nurses remain with individual hospital archives. Nursing associations and nursing postgraduate organisations also hold records or can help with research. Private hospitals will have their own archives. However in more recent years most of these hospitals have had some public funding and will have some of their records with the public sector.

Sources for research at NSW State & Mitchell Libraries:

See Family History Section on lower ground floor, online databases, pictorial and manuscript collection in Mitchell Library, newspapers, directories and search the catalogue for individual hospital material, nursing journals, ATNA registers, bush nursing and other nursing records.

Nurses and the Armed Services

Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS) (1940 -)

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0573b.htm>

Australian War Memorial (AWM)

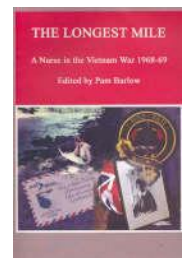
The AWM has an information sheet titled ‘**Researching Australian military service: First World War nurses**’ Australian nurses served in Egypt, Lemnos, England, France, Belgium, Greece, Salonika, Palestine, Mesopotamia and India. In all, 2,139 served with the Australian Army Nursing Service, and 130 with the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service. A further 423 nurses served in hospitals in Australia. Information on nurses in other wars can be found under the various names of military conflicts.

Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) (1903 - 1948)

The Australian Army Nursing Service, which was actually a reserve, was established on 1 July 1903. The Service was staffed by volunteer civilian nurses who would be available for duty during times of national emergency. Members of the Service served in both the World Wars, staffing medical facilities in Australia and overseas. In 1949 the Service became part of the Australian Regular Army and is now known as the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC). See the website <http://www.womenaustralia.info/>

The National Archives, Kew, London see British Army: Nursing and Nursing Services Information 55, Women’s Services First World War Information 74, and Royal Air Force: Nursing and Nursing Services Information 57, check for Australian nurses who were sent to London military hospitals and/or who trained there before or during the war.

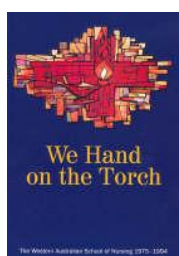
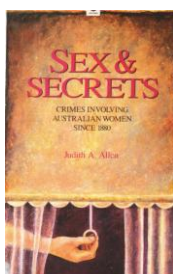
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>



The Dark Side of Nursing – Scandals, Crime and Corruption

The portrayal of women and crime is almost always sensational. The reality is much more prosaic – most women (including nurses) in Australia and elsewhere, are in prison for minor crimes – theft, petty larceny or drug related offences. In the late 19th and early 20th century NSW midwives and nurses were involved in abortion and some did go to prison. Crimes against the person are rare. For general information about the criminal and judicial system ‘Archives in Brief 31 – Supreme Court of NSW selected criminal records’ available at State Records Office of NSW. For more specific information on nurses and midwives involved in crime see Judith Allen *Sex & Secrets: Crimes Involving Australian Women Since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990

Source: M. Cordia, *Nurses at Little Bay*



Published Nursing/Midwifery History – Select List:

Adam-Smith, Patsy, *Australian Women at War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984.

Adcock, Winifred et al (compilers), *With Courage & Devotion: A History of Midwifery in New South Wales*, NSW Midwives Association (RANF), Anvil Press, Wamberal, 1984.

Armstrong, Dorothy Mary, *The First Fifty Years: A History of Nursing at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, from 1882 to 1932*, RPA Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association, 1965.

Barlow, Pam, ed *The longest mile : a nurse in the Vietnam War, 1968-69 : letters from nursing sister Joan B.F. MacLeod who served in Vietnam as a member of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps*, Townsville, 2006.

Bingham, Stella, *Ministering Angels*, Osprey Publishing, London, 1979.

Brodsky, Isadore, *Sydney's nurse crusaders*, Old Sydney Free Press, Sydney, 1968.

Burchill, Elizabeth, *Australian nurses since Nightingale, 1860-1990*, edited by John Morley, Spectrum Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1992.

Castle, Josephine, *Nursing at the Wollongong Hospital, 1926-1982*, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 1984.

Cordia, Maylean, *Nurses at Little Bay*, Prince Henry Trained Nurses' Association, Little Bay, 1990.

Crouch, Joan, *One life is ours: the story of Ada Joyce Bridge*, St Lukes Hospital, Nightingale Committee, Darlinghurst, NSW, 1989.

Downie, Angus, *Our first hundred years: the history of nursing at the Royal Hobart Hospital*, Royal Hobart Hospital, Hobart, 1975.

Durbin, Joan, *They became nurses: a history of nursing in South Australia, 1836-1980*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991.

Everingham, Georgette, *The nurses of the LBH: nursing experiences and a brief history of the Lismore Base Hospital*, Dragonwick Publishing, Goonellabah, NSW, 2005.

Fenton, Peter, *Olive Weston: the heroic life of a World War II nurse*, HarperCollins, Pymble, 2003.

Fleur, Finnie, *Don't stand on the grass: memoirs of early nursing in Melbourne*, (with Christine Mitchell), Vista Publications, St Kilda, Vic, 1996.

Gill, Isabel Spark, *The lamp still burns: Nursing in Victoria 1936-1981: an autobiographical account*, Faculty of Health Sciences, Bendigo College of Advance Education, Bendigo, Vic, 1989.

Godden, Judith, *Lucy Osburn, a lady displaced : Florence Nightingale's envoy to Australia*, Sydney University Press, c2006.

Goodman, Rupert, *Our war nurses : the history of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps 1902-1988*, Boolarong Press, Brisbane, 1988.

Goold, Sally S. & Liddle, Kerryanne, eds *In her own right: black Australian nurses' stories*, eContent Management, Sydney, 2005.

Gregory, Helen, *A Tradition of Care: A history of Nursing at the Royal Brisbane Hospital*, Boolarong Publications, Bowen Hills, 1988.

Helen Paterson, *'5.30, Nurse!' The Story of the Alfred Nurses*, History Books, Kew, Vic., 1996.

Kelly, Beatrix, *A Background to the History of Nursing in Tasmania*, Davies Bros Limited, 1977.

Kyle, Noeline, *Memories & Dreams: A biography of Nurse Mary Kirkpatrick*, Mullumbimby, 2001.

Kyle, Noeline, *Writing Family History Made Very Easy*, Allen & Unwin, 2007.

- Laube, Lydia, *Behind the veil: an Australian nurse in Saudi Arabia*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, SA, 1991.
- Longhurst, Robert, *In the footsteps of the mercies: a history of nursing at the Mater Misericordiae Hospitals, Brisbane*, Mater Misericordiae Hospitals, South Brisbane, 1992.
- MacBryde, Brenda, *Quiet Heroines: nurses of the Second World War*, Chatto & Windus : Hogarth Press, London, 1985.
- Madsen, Wendy, *Nursing history : foundations of a profession*, Pearson SprintPrint, Frenchs Forest, 2007.
- Mitchell, Ann M., *The Hospital South of the Yarra: A History of Alfred Hospital Melbourne from foundation to the nineteen-forties*, Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, 1977.
- Nelson, Sioban, *Say little, do much: nurses, nuns, and hospital in the nineteenth century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2001.
- Newman, Janet, R. N. (with Jennie Warren) *Royal Canberra Hospital: an anecdotal history of nursing 1914 to 1991*, the authors, Mawson, ACT, 1993.
- Nolan, Peter, *A history of mental health nursing*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1993.
- O'Rourke, Narelle, *A country nurse and midwife: the life career and times of Mary O'Rourke/Bowers, M.B.E. in the Queanbeyan district of New South Wales, 1889-1973*, the author, Queanbeyan, NSW, 1989.
- Parker, Colleen, *A Century of Care: Mount St Margaret Hospital Ryde, 1891-1991*, The Corporation of the Little Company of Mary, Hurstville, 2001.
- Parramatta Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association, *A history of nursing in Parramatta, PDH Graduate Nurses' Association, Parramatta, NSW, 1979*.
- Perry, Shirley J Durston, Betty(ed), *We Hand on the Torch : A History of the Western Australian School of Nursing 1975-1994*, Western Australian School of Nursing Network, 2006
- Potter, Lesley, ed *A passion to care: nursing and nurses Western Suburbs Hospital 1894-1982*, Western Suburbs Hospital Graduate Nurses' Association, North Strathfield, NSW, 2008.
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- Rae, Ruth, *Jessie Tomlins: an Australian army nurse - World War One*, the author, 2001.
- Rice, Margaret, *The Close of an Era: A History of Nursing at The Royal North Shore Hospital 1887 to 1987*, The Royal North Shore Hospital of Sydney Graduate Nurses Association, 1988.
- Riggs, Patricia, *A Century of Caring: Kempsey District Hospital, 1881-1981*, the hospital, Kempsey, 1981.
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- Schultz, Bartz, *A tapestry of service: the evolution of nursing in Australia. Volume 1, Foundation to federation, 1788-1900*, forward by Judith Cornell, Churchill Livingstone, Melbourne, 1991.
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- Strachan, Glenda, *Labour of Love: The History of the Nurses Association in Queensland 1860-1950*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996.
- Tattan, Amanda, ed *From the heart: true stories by Australian nurses*, Lothian Books, Port Melbourne, Vic., 1997.
- Trembath, Richard & Hellier, Donna, *All Care and Responsibility: A History of Nursing in Victoria, 1850-1934*, Florence Nightingale Committee, Australia, Victorian Branch, 1987.



Nurse (who has been many hours on duty – to patient’s mother), *“When do you think I shall be able to go to bed?”*

Patient’s Mother, *“Got to bed! I thought you were a trained nurse!”*

Punch, 1902