



Jersey Archive Information Leaflets

Criminal Records for Family Historians

General Information

Many of us may well have an ancestor who appeared in Court, was sent to prison or even transported from the Island. Finding out the details of their offences and their fate can enhance our understanding of the family and in particular of that individual. The Jersey Archive holds a number of records including Honorary Police incident books, Court documents and Prison registers that can be used to find about more about your criminal ancestors.

Criminal records, like many documents, are subject to closure periods because of the personal nature of the information they contain. However many sets of records relating to criminals that we hold at the Archive date back to the 19th century, with the earliest Court books dating from the 16th Century. Permission to view closed records can always be requested from the States Department or Administration that own the records.

Access

Jersey Archive indexes all its catalogued records by name, place and subject. Therefore any name mentioned in the catalogue description of a record will be indexed on the Open Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) available in the Help Desk area of the Jersey Archive and on the Internet at www.jerseyheritage.org. Simply enter the name of the person you are looking for under names on the Jersey Archive Catalogue on the OPAC. It is important to note that not all names have been indexed from all documents so just because someone's name is not indexed does not mean that there are no records relating to that person.

Each collection held by Jersey Archive has a unique reference code. These collection references have been included in the following information after the collection title. Should you wish to find out about a certain collection simply go to one of the OPACs available in the Help Desk area of the Archive. Click on reference search and enter the collection reference.

Sources for Family History in Criminal Records

Honorary Police Records

The Centeniers of the Parish have the right to charge (prosecute) an individual. The Parish Hall Enquiry allows a Centenier to investigate a reported incident and to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to justify a charge and if so, whether the public interest requires a prosecution or whether the matter can be dealt with in some other way at the Enquiry. Copies of Honorary Police charge sheets and records of Parish Hall Enquiries are passed to the States of Jersey Police.

The Jersey Archive currently holds a number of Police Incident Books which record the name of individuals under investigation, the alleged crime, any witnesses, the Centenier's name and the eventual outcome of the investigation. Police Incident Books are held for the following Parishes:

- F/B/G1 – St Clement, 1868-1950
- F/C/H3 - Grouville, 1922 – 1949
- F/E/G2 – St John, 1901-1938
- F/G/G2 - St Martin, 1881 – 1949
- F/L/G3 - St Saviour, 1868 – 1953
- F/M/G2 - Trinity, 1899 – 1949
- F/N/G3 - St Lawrence, 1866 – 1949

Judicial Greffe - Court Records D/Y

The Courts of Justice are:

- Police Court and the Petty Debts Court (Magistrate's)
- Royal Court
- Court of Appeal

Magistrate's Court (Previously the Police Court) – D/Y/N

The Magistrate's Court adjudicates on traffic offences, assaults and petty thefts. It also hears the committal evidence in more serious cases. It is presided over by a stipendiary magistrate. Every case taken to the Magistrate's Court is in the charge of a Centenier, who presents it on behalf of the Constable of the Parish. The Magistrate's Court cannot impose sentences of more than 12 months and maximum fines of £5,000. Series of records in the Magistrate's Court are:

- D/Y/N2 – Causes Civiles, 1854 – 1982 – Civil Actions
- D/Y/N4 – Cause Criminelles, 1854 – 1964 – Criminal Actions

Details in the registers include the name of the individual, crime and sentence/fine. If the prisoner was then sent to face the Royal Court this fact would be recorded.

Petty Debts Court – D/Y/F21a, 1968 – 1979

The Petty Debts Court sits at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday mornings in The Magistrates Court, Union Street, St. Helier, to settle claims up to £10,000.00. The Court has three divisions: Civil Claims Division; Tenancy Division and Family Division. In addition to simple claims relating to debts, the Court also deals with actions relating to Separation and Maintenance issues and evictions from rented property.

Royal Court

The Royal Court sits under two heads. The Superior Number comprises the Bailiff, Deputy Bailiff or Royal Court Commissioner and a minimum of five Jurats. The Inferior Number comprises the Bailiff supported by two Jurats. The Inferior Number is restricted in the penalties it can impose - maximum 2 years. A defendant may be found guilty of a serious crime by the Inferior Number but must go to the Full Court (Superior Number) if a sentence of more than four years is to be imposed. The Full Court sitting with a jury of 12 constitutes the criminal assizes. The jury can return a majority verdict. At least 10 votes of guilty are needed to convict.

Cour du Cattel - D/Y/E1 , 1504 – 1861

The earliest criminal court from which records still exist - criminals were tried in the Cour du Cattel from 1504 onwards until the establishment of the Poursuite Criminelles volumes in 1797. After 1797 the Cour du Cattel registers mainly concern décrets (bankruptcy).

Poursuite Criminelles - D/Y/G, 1797 – 1984

The Poursuite Criminelles volumes cover cases tried before the Royal Court from 1797 onwards. The volumes also include details of Inquests from c.1806 onwards. These volumes are closed for 100 years so permission is required to view more recent volumes. Permission can be obtained from the Judicial Greffe.

Appeal Procedure

Appeals against judgements made by the Inferior Number are usually heard by the Superior Number in the Royal Court.

Cause Remise – D/Y/F13, 1676 – 1989

An appeal from the Royal Court could be heard before the greater number at the Cause Remise where as many Jurats as possible, at least 7, sat. The Cause Remise registers basically stop in 1964 with only three cases after that date.

Court of Appeal – D/Y/M1, 1964 – 1990

This volume starts in 1964 after a change in rules in the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal volumes take over from the Cause Remise. Each right to appeal is first granted by the Bailiff or Deputy Bailiff, the appeal is then heard by the Court.

Appeals against judgements made by the Superior Number are heard by the Jersey Court of Appeal. Any further appeal against a determination by the Jersey Court of Appeal is heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which is the supreme court of appeal for Jersey. Appeals are heard in London.

Privy Council – D/Y/F7, 1731 – 1990

Appeals to the Privy Council are a last resort for those whose appeals through the Royal Court, Appeal Court or Review Board have been rejected. It is a very unusual recourse, as most people would probably abandon their case after rejection by the conventional appeal procedures. The Privy Council books at the Jersey Archive do not just contain appeals made to the Council but any Orders in Council that relate to Jersey (mainly confirmation of laws).

Ecclesiastical Court – D/Y/A & G/B

The earliest records of the Ecclesiastical Court date from 1557. The Jersey Archive holds the rolls of the Court from 1557 until 1899. We also have a copy of the earliest register on microfiche, 1557 – 1568. The Court was used to try people who were accused of 'moral crimes' e.g. adultery. The Ecclesiastical Court was also responsible for probate in the Island until 1949 when this function was taken on by the Judicial Greffe. All probate documents that were created by the Ecclesiastical Court have been transferred to the Archive.

Prison Records – D/AG

The Prison Records at the Jersey Archive date from 1814 when the Jersey Prison was located at Gloucester Street. The Gloucester Street prison opened in 1812 after the

demolition of the previous prison at Charing Cross in 1811. The prison at Gloucester Street, also called Newgate Street continued to hold prisoners through the 19th Century and was used for Political Prisoners during the Occupation. The Archive holds the following Prison Registers giving details of inmates.

- D/AG/B1 - Prisoners Registers, 1833 – 1854, 1882 – 1973
- D/AG/B2 - Prisoners Index, 1815 – 1936
- D/AG/B3 - Debtors Registers, 1847 - 2000
- D/AG/B4 - Debtors Index, 1814 - 1933
- D/AG/B5 - Women's Registers, 1932 – 1967
- D/AG/B6 - Transportation Register, 1844 – 1939
- D/AG/B7 - Political Prisoners, 1940 - 1944

Individual Records

The following records that concern criminals have arrived at the Jersey Archive from various sources. It is interesting to note that volume L/F/54/A/A/1 is the earliest existing Prison register and that the main series of Prison Records (see above) follow on from this volume.

- D/AP/W/1 - Journal of the Prison Governor. Lists surnames of prisoners put on the treadmill (wheel) and who broke stones. Additional details regarding lectures to prisoners and visitors 01/07/1838 - 08/02/1841
- L/F/54/A/A/1 - List of Criminals confined in HM's Gaol at Jersey, 1814 - 1833, includes; case number, prisoners names, crimes, by whom seized, date of commitment, by whose order, date of trial, sentence, date of discharge, by whose order, the second half of the book contains a list of prisoners for debt, 1814 - 1847, includes; case number, prisoners names, amount of debt owing, creditors names, officers name, date of imprisonment, date of discharge, subsistence and additional remarks. Back of book gives a list of Visiting Magistrates
- L/F/54/A/D/1 - Research notes by Richard Mayne relating to the history of HM Prison, Jersey and the States of Jersey Police, includes notes on; Elizabeth Fry's time in Jersey, acts of the States, the Newgate Street/Gloucester Street Prison, the Charing Cross Prison, capital sentences, and the structure of the police force. The research spans the dates 1645 – 1953

The purpose of the Jersey Archive is to identify, select, collect, manage, preserve and provide access to the Island's on behalf of the whole community, promoting Jersey's culture, heritage and sense of place, both within its shores and beyond.

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Opening Hours: 9am to 5pm, Tuesday to Thursday. The Reading Room and Help Desk are closed between 1-2pm. Late night till 7pm the last Thursday of the month.

The information in this leaflet is accurate as of March 2010. Please be aware that the Jersey Archive receives new collections on a regular basis and ask staff if you have any queries