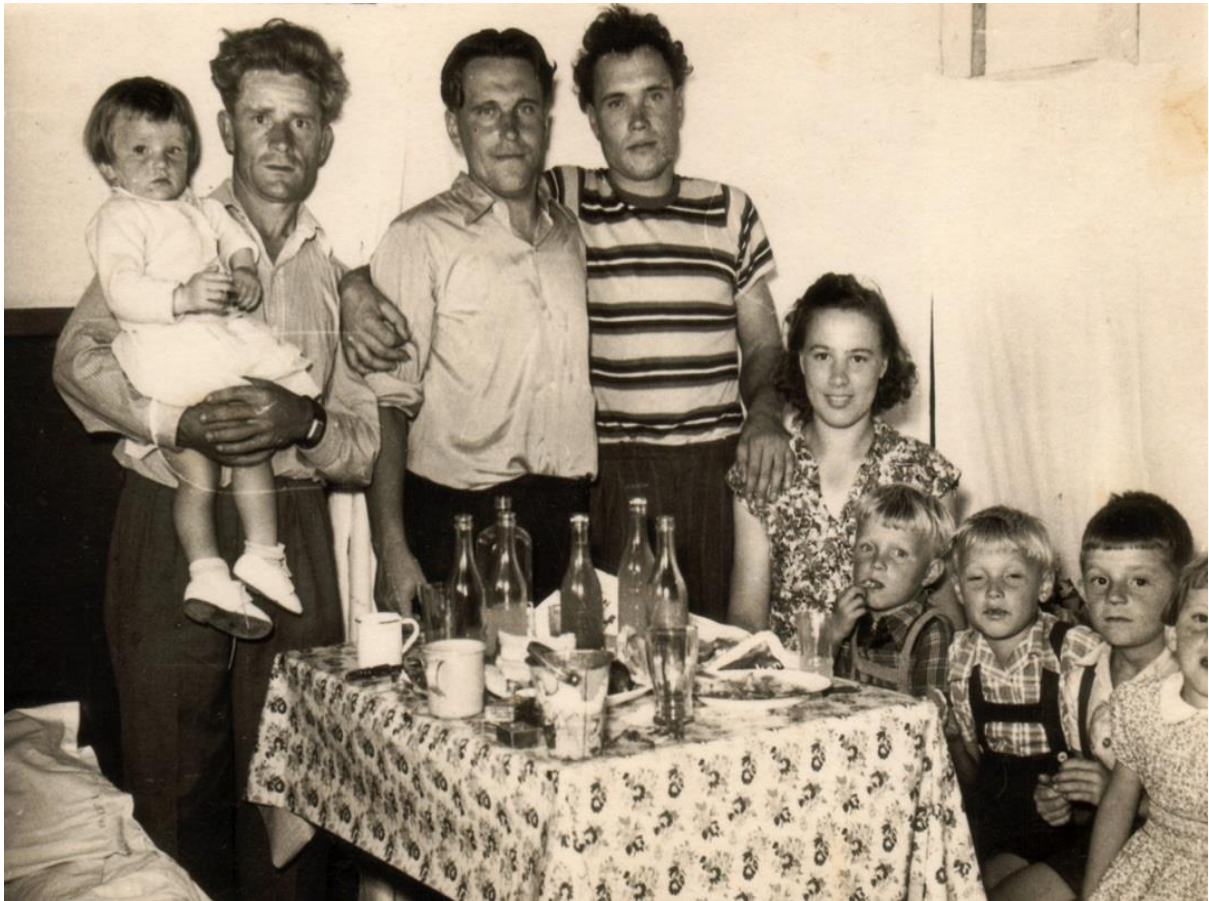


Greta Migrant Camp Research Guide



The copyright in this research guide vests with Cessnock City Council. If you have any questions about any aspect of this guide please contact Council's Local Studies Librarian, Kimberly O'Sullivan. Phone: (02) 4993 4383

kimberly.osullivan@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Cover photo: Greta Migrant Camp: a birthday celebration in Chocolate City 1953. (l-r) Janina Kowalski, Mr Kowalski, Henryk Matusewicz, Wasyl (not Roman, as Roman was his son) Dalibzik, Olga Dalibzik, Henry Dalibzik, Slava Dal and Tony Kowalski, Helena Kowalski (little girl half cut out of the photo). This image is provided courtesy of Newcastle Region Library. Hunter Photo Bank HV16.

Greta Migrant Camp Research Guide

Most of the research into Greta Migrant Camp records needs to be done online. If you do not have access to a computer, or don't use a computer for research, you will need someone to assist you. The Local Studies Librarian at your nearest public library can help and this research guide will take you through all the steps to access online records.

National Archives of Australia

www.naa.gov.au

Immigration to Australia is an Australian Government responsibility. So the details of all individuals or families who applied to immigrate to Australia after 1901 appear in Australian Government records. These records are held in the National Archives of Australia. This is the starting point for your research.

The National Archives of Australia introduces these immigration records, known as migrant selection documents, on its website:

Migrant selection documents were completed by or for migrants applying to migrate to Australia under one of the many schemes implemented after World War II, including those for the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

The Australian Government's role in sponsoring or assisting migrants before World War II was limited to providing funding to state-run schemes. Following World War II, Australia promoted immigration, motivated by a need to increase the population and thereby, improve the security of the nation. The National Archives holds migrant selection documents dating from 1945.

Migrant selection documents vary in the amount of detail they provide. Generally they contain a range of personal details such as name, address, place and date of birth, gender, marital status and nationality. Other details may include physical description, occupation, education, proposed employment and names of other family members, health checks and sometimes photos.

Migrant selection documents were completed by, or for, migrants applying to migrate to Australia under one of the many schemes implemented after World War II, including those for the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

Begin on the National Archives of Australia home page. Here you can search for anyone arriving in Australia under a migration scheme. Choose: 'Explore the collection', 'Immigration and Citizenship', 'Passenger arrival records; 'Searching passenger records'.

When you successfully search for an individual's record a hyperlink will appear on the right-hand side of the screen 'request a copy'. You may find that some records you request are described as 'not yet examined records'. What this means is that an Archivist hasn't assessed these files to see if it is reasonable to open them to public access. Your next step is to apply for access to the records; your request will trigger an examination of the records.

To do this you will need to fill in the form provided as a hyperlink on this page, but before you are able to do this you will need to create an account with the National Archives of Australia. If assistance is needed contact National Archives of Australia and they can help you with your enquiry.

A very good service the National Archives of Australia provide is called 'Ask an Archivist', you can find the link to this on their home page. You can have a live online chat with an Archivist, or send a request. Don't hesitate to use this service if you get stuck at any time with your research into National Archives records.

As these are the primary records of immigration these are very important to your research as they are their first entry point of immigrants into Australia.

Registered Alien records

This series of records held in the National Archives of Australia comprises documents known as 'RA' (Registered Alien) documents which were used to register aliens under the *Aliens Act* between 1948-1965.

The *Aliens Act* required that a Register of Aliens be established in each state under the Department of Immigration. The Act stated that every alien residing in, or entering the Commonwealth, must make application to be registered, and that upon doing so, he/she will be issued with a certificate of registration.

The majority of items in the series contain an RA 2, 'Application for Registration by Alien Entering Australia', form. However, a number of other items are made up of an RA 1, 'Application for Registration Form', accompanied by an Incoming Passenger Arrival card. There are some items which do not contain a form, but have only a file removal notice. Where this is the case it is indicated in the title.

The RA 2s are blue sheets, usually stapled on to a stiffer backing sheet. The forms generally have the words 'Application for Registration by Aliens entering Australia' across the top, followed by the personal particulars of each applicant. These include name; address; nationality; physical appearance; passport number and details of issue; occupation and family details.

There is also a photograph of the applicant attached to the bottom left hand corner. Some items do not contain a photograph. Where this is the case it is indicated in the title. Accompanying correspondence includes notifications of marriage, change of name, address, occupation or employment and applications for issue of a new certificate to replace one lost or destroyed.

The forms are arranged in alphabetical order by nationality and then by surname. Item titles have been constructed from information provided on the forms. Included in

the item titles are: nationality, full name, port of arrival, name of ship or aircraft, date of arrival and any other additional information deemed relevant.

Previous surnames or aliases have been included, if this information is available on the file. Where an 'alien' has a common name shared by others (such as the same first and surname of another person), then the date of birth has been included to assist individual identification.

If a search on name produces a large number of results you should try narrowing your search by date (or year) of birth, the name of the ship, or the date (or year) of arrival if known.

The nationalities represented in this series of records are:

- American
- Albanian
- Andorran
- Argentinian
- Armenian
- Austrian
- Belgian
- Bolivian
- Brazilian
- Bulgarian
- Chilean
- Columbian
- Costa Rican
- Cuban
- Czechoslovakian
- Danish
- Dutch
- Estonian
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Honduran
- Hungarian
- Icelandic
- Indonesian
- Iranian
- Iraqi
- Israeli
- Italian
- Jordanian
- Latvian
- Lebanese
- Lithuanian
- Luxembourgish

- Mexican
- Monagesque
- Moroccan
- Norwegian
- Palestinian
- Panamanian
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Russian
- Salvadorian
- Spanish
- Stateless
- Swedish
- Swiss
- Syrian
- Tunisian
- Turkish
- Ukrainian
- Undetermined
- United Arab Republic (UAR)
- Uruguayan
- Venezuelan
- Yugoslavian

Migrant hostels in NSW

The National Archives of Australia has produced a good fact sheet on this topic:

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs170.aspx>

Scroll down the page to the information under the fact sheet. Work through the hyperlinks here to open documents. May camp residents were classified as 'resident aliens'. To look for the registration of resident aliens, known as 'RAs', it is necessary to search records from the Department of Immigration, New South Wales Branch (CA 957), series no. SP1121/1.

Vaughan Evans Library, Australian National Maritime Museum

www.sea.museum/discover/library

The Vaughan Evans Library is part of the Australian National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour. They have an extensive collection of material related to Australia's maritime heritage, including migration to Australia by ship. They host the beautiful Welcome Wall at Darling Harbour www.sea.museum/discover/welcome-wall

The Library have good research guides available as downloads from their website

www.sea.museum/collections/library/research-guides

They may be able to assist you in research into the ship on which you, or your family, travelled to Australia.

Local Studies, Cessnock Library

www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries/Home

The Local Studies collection, Cessnock Library holds a newspaper clippings and other material research file on the Greta Migrant Camp. A copy of the digitised contents of this file can be mailed.

Unfortunately it is not possible to email this file as it is so large that the size of the file prevents its delivery. However it can be downloaded directly from the Cessnock Library catalogue on to your device. Alternatively if you bring a USB to the Library, or purchase one from us, the research file can be downloaded onto it.

Migration Heritage Centre

www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings

At the 'Belongings' online exhibition of the Migration Heritage Centre you can search for information about the Greta Camp and the experiences of the people who lived there. Search using the field 'migrant accommodation', then choose 'Greta' from the drop-down menu. This opens stories and photographs collected from people at the camp. The stories of the people there will give you a wonderful feel for how the camp operated on a day-to-day basis and what life was like for the residents.

Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild

www.immigrantships.net

The ISTG site has full passenger lists for immigrant ships across the world. There is a specific section for World War II refugees to Australia, here are lists of passengers resettling in Australia under the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). The IRO was a temporary specialised agency of the United Nations which operated 1946 - 1952 to assist refugees and displaced persons from World War II who could not return to their countries of origin.

This site has lists of immigrant passengers to Australia, which ship they travelled on and a great deal of personal information on each passenger. It is not known how comprehensive the information on the site is, i.e. if every post-WWII immigrant and refugee ship is listed, however, there is a great deal of information available.

Photographs of Greta Migrant Camp

Greta Migrant Camp, along with other migrant camps, was of great fascination for many Australians. Given this news and magazine stories on the camp were popular, showing how the (then called) 'New Australians' were settling into life in Australia. These stories often contained photos of the camp and its residents. Here some sources:

1. **National Archives of Australia.** At the home page, www.naa.gov.au, choose 'Explore the collection', then 'RecordSearch', then 'PhotoSearch'. Use the

search term 'Greta' and you will find 65 images here of the camp, people from the camp outside the camp i.e. on visits to Sydney and children from the camp.

Separate to this a large number of photographs appear in Department of Immigration files in the National Archives of Australia. The Department's files begin in 1946. They document the massive task of resettling hundreds of thousands of displaced persons from Europe post-WWII.

These new migrants went to many camps, but primarily to: Bonegilla in Victoria, Northam in Western Australia and Greta in New South Wales. Photographs within the Department of Immigration records document their arrival of new residents and their daily lives in the camp. Some of these photographs will appear in 'PhotoSearch', as described above; others come from Department of Immigration files.

It would be worth pursuing access to these files, their identification is NAA: [A12111, 1/1962/33/38](#).

2. **State Library of New South Wales.** The Library contains copies of the (now defunct) *Pix* magazine, which was published by ACP Magazines Limited. It was a photo-based, large format news magazine. *Pix* ran a number of features on the Greta Migrant Camp. The Library holds copies of the magazine and copies of photographs used in the magazine which were donated by the publisher.

The Library's finding aid describes this holding as: 'Sub-series 14: *Pix* magazine photographs' and identifies that most of these photos were taken in 1950, so at the very beginning of the camp's life as a migrant facility.

These magazines and photos are held in the Library's storage facility which is off site and access to this material requires three days' notice. They would be worth looking at as they cover the period your parents were at the camp. To access have a look at the Library's website and fill in the forms for access.

If you need assistance this has to be lodged via the 'Ask a Librarian' form. You can find this here: on the Library's home page www.sl.nsw.gov.au choose 'Research and Collections', then 'Need help? Ask a Librarian'.

3. **Cessnock Library.** At the Cessnock City Library homepage <https://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries/Home> at 'search the catalogue' type 'Greta Migrant Camp'. This will bring up research files and photographs held in the collection. See previous note on the research files.
4. **Online search.** A simple Google image search throws up hundreds of images of the Greta Migrant Camp, some of these are to the sources above. Others are to local newspaper photos from the *Cessnock Eagle*, *Maitland Mercury*, *Newcastle Morning Herald*, *Singleton Argus* and the *Newcastle Sun*.

5. **Newcastle City Library.** Newcastle Library holds hundreds of photos of the Greta Migrant Camp and its residents: www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/Library At the Library's home page choose 'Newcastle Stories', 'Hunter PhotoBank' and enter the term 'Greta Migrant Camp'.
6. **Trove.** The National Library of Australia is a one stop shop of information relating to Australia Their search facility is called Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au> A simple Trove search 'Greta Migrant Camp' on their home page will find nearly 2,000 records related to the Camp.
7. **Greta Museum.** Greta Museum have a large collection of original material related to the Greta Migrant Camp, including photographs. They are located in the old Greta Council Chambers, High Street, Greta. 0427 657 150. Open Wednesdays and Saturdays.
<https://mgnsww.org.au/organisations/greta-tidy-towns-historical-museum>

Residents of Greta Migrant Camp

The Greta Migrant Camp operated 1949-1960 on a site which had previously been the Greta Army Camp. The site is within the Cessnock Local Government Area. The first migrants arrived at the camp on 7 June 1949 and it continued to operate as a until 15 January 1960 when the camp closed permanently.

For many years after its closure the former residents of the camp held annual reunions. There is usually heightened interest in the camp's history at significant anniversaries. People's memories of the camp vary widely, some having had positive experiences there and others the opposite. Here are two newspaper articles to give you background to the reunions, they also contain photos of families who lived there:

<http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/2419873/greta-migrant-camp-celebration-falls-flat/>

<http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/3140449/greta-camp-memories-a-world-away-photos-video>

Publications on the Greta Migrant Camp

- *Greta: a history of the Army Camp and Migrant Camp at Greta, New South Wales 1939-1960* by Christopher Keating (1997). This book was funded by the Australian Heritage Commission. Copies are available to borrow from Cessnock Library, or through inter-library loan from your local public library. The book is also for sale from Cessnock Library for \$20.00.
- *Greta* (1993) by Val Randall contains reminiscences of life at the Greta Migrant Camp. It is available for sale from the author, or to borrow from Cessnock Library.
- *Greta's Great* (undated, but c. mid-1980s). This self-published booklet is from Greta Public School. It has anecdotes about the Greta Migrant Camp and contains a two-page account of the camp from a camp resident Philomena Rumel. Available from Cessnock Library.

- *Beneath the Shadows of Mount Molly Morgan* by Alec Schulha. This book includes over 130 individual stories told by former camp residents, or their descendants. The book is available to borrow from Cessnock Library, or is for sale through bookshops or from the author.
- *Greta Migrant Camp: as seen from the migrant's view and from the Australian public's point of view*. This 1980 multicultural field study is available at Maitland Library, it is not available to borrow and must be read in the Library.
- *Greta Migrant Camp information* (2010) compiled by Sisters of St. Joseph, Lochinvar. Held at Maitland Library. This is not available to borrow and must be read in the Library.

Newspaper and magazine articles

<https://trove.nla.gov.au>

Migrant camps such as Greta and their residents were the most public face of Australia's new post-World War II migration program and as such attracted a great deal of mainstream media interest. It was the subject of many articles in magazines and newspapers both locally in the Hunter Valley, in the NSW media and to a lesser extent nationally.

The best way to access these is to use Trove the search facility of the National Library of Australia. In their digitised newspapers collection focus on local newspapers: *Cessnock Eagle*, *Maitland Mercury*, *Newcastle Morning Herald*, *Singleton Argus* and the *Newcastle Sun*. However once you have done this widen your search to the Sydney newspapers.

Local historical societies

There are a number of historical societies in the Hunter Valley who may have material related to the Greta Migrant Camp, usually because this material has been donated by camp families, or their descendants, to their collections.

Few historical societies have digitised their collections, so it might be necessary to visit them in person, or write to them for assistance. Local historical societies are:

Cessnock Local Government Area

- Greta Museum, Old Greta Council Chambers, 96 High Street, Greta. Phone: 0427 657 150. Open Wednesday and Saturday 11.00am-3.00pm.
- Cessnock Historical Society c/- the Endeavour Museum, 2896 Wollombi Road, Wollombi. Phone: 4998 3375. Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 11.00am-1.30pm, Friday 11.00am-3.00pm, Saturday and Sunday 11.00am-4.00pm.
- The Coalfields Local History Association, c/- Abermain School of Arts, 209 Cessnock Road, Abermain. coalfieldshistory@gmail.com Open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Sundays. 10.00am-2.00pm.

Maitland Local Government Area

- Maitland Historical Society, 3 Cathedral St, Maitland. Phone: 0468 438 990. www.maitlandhistorical.org and maitlandhistorical@gmail.com
- Morpeth Museum, 123 Swan Street, Morpeth. Phone: (02) 4934 4301. Open Thursday to Sunday 11.00am-2.00pm.

Singleton Local Government Area

- Singleton Historical Society and Museum, Burdekin Park, 76 Bourke Street, Singleton. Phone: (02) 6571 1895. Open Tuesday, Saturday, Sunday, public holidays.
- Singleton Family History Society, 51 William Street, Singleton. Phone: (02) 6572 2235. www.family-history-society-singleton-inc.org and famhissocsinginc@yahoo.com

In the Newcastle Local Government Area, the University of Newcastle has information on the Greta Migrant Camp in their Cultural Collections, Level 2 Auchmuty Library, Academic Division, University of Newcastle. Phone: (02) 4921 5354 or (02) 4921 5819 www.newcastle.edu.au/library/access/places-and-spaces/special-collections