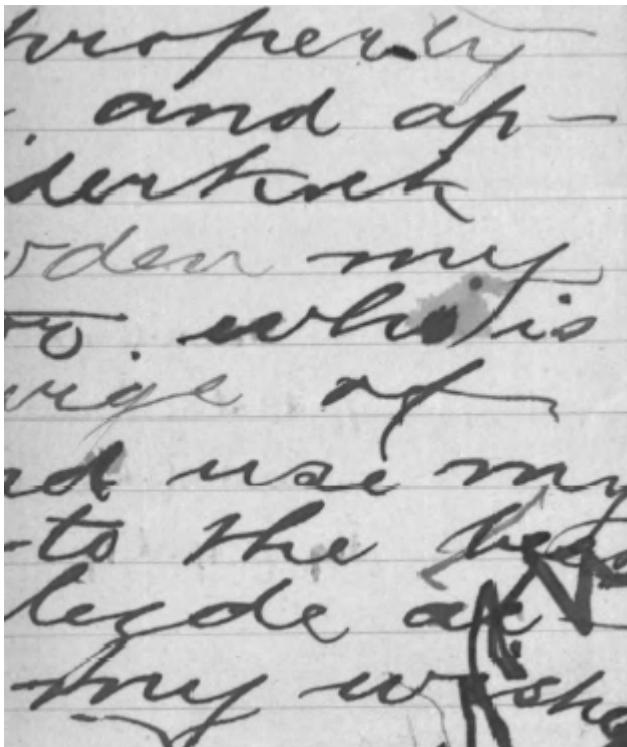


Wills and Probate – Wills and Probate Records 1841 - 1925

Wills and probate records created between 1841 and 1925 have been indexed and are being digitised and made available online free of charge. Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), the Genealogical Society of Utah and the Victorian Association of Family History Organisations are indexing wills and probate records up until 1992. The 1926 - 1992 portion of the Victorian Probate Index will be completed and made available online in late 2009.

This *PROVguide* outlines how to use the online Victorian Probate Index, and access digitised wills and probate records free of charge through PROV's online catalogue at www.access.prov.vic.gov.au. See the [Accessing Wills and Probate Records](#) web page for the current date range of records that can be accessed through PROV. As a general rule, probate records created within the last 7 to 10 years can be accessed through the Probate Office of the Supreme Court of Victoria www.supremecourt.vic.gov.au.



Example record

An excerpt from the will of Agnes Smith; referred to in this *PROVguide*.
PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 302, Item 74/783.

Searching for records

You do not need to create a PROV user account to use the online Victorian Probate Index or view digitised records online.

Step 1: Using the Search Window

- Go to PROV's online catalogue at Access the Collection: www.access.prov.vic.gov.au and click on the link to PROV's digitised records and online indexes.

- Once in Access the Collection click on the link to [Index to Wills, Probate and Administration Records](#). The screen shot below shows the search fields.

Surname:

Given Name:

Alternative Name:

Occupation:

Residence:

Year of Death: to

Number of Records to display per page:

- Enter text in one or more of the fields and click on the **Search** button as in the example above. The example shows the use of an asterisk (also known as a wildcard), next to the letter A in the Given Name field. The asterisk will find all given names beginning with A that have the surname of Smith (see search results below).
- This example also demonstrates how to narrow the search by date range using the year fields. This search will look for entries where the year of death is between 1890 and 1910.
- Click on **Additional Help** at the bottom of the search window screen to see examples of different types of searches.

Step 2: Search results

- The search results screen displays summary details from each entry found and a link to **More** information about the entry for that person. For example:

71 results found, 25 results shown. Links to more results can be found at the bottom of this page.

Given Name ^	Surname ^	Alternative Name	Occupation	Residence	Death Date ^	Details
Abraham	Smith		Broker	Melb	23 Nov 1899	More
Adelaide W	Smith		Storekeeper Butcher	South Morang	21 Mar 1908	More
Adolphus G	Smith		Accountant	Toorak	7 Nov 1909	More
Agnes	Smith		Widow	Brunswick	11 Jan 1910	More
Agnes	Smith		Married	Avenel	29 Jun 1901	More
Agnes H	Smith		Married	S Melb	22 Mar 1900	More

Hint - Narrowing your search: If a large number of results is returned (eg. 500) you can narrow the search by navigating back to the search window and adding information such as a date range.

Hint - Broadening your search: A search result may contain abbreviations of the person's name, occupation or residence, so it is advisable to keep your search broad. This can be done by using asterisks. For example, A* will find names in the Given Name field that begin with A, such as Abraham, Adelaide, Adolphus, Agnes etc.

Step 3: A detailed index entry

To see further details about a person click on the link to **More**, and a page about that person will appear:

Given Name	Agnes H
Surname	Smith
Alternative Name	
Title	
File number	74/783
Death Date	22 Mar 1900
Death Date notes	
Grant Date	12 Apr 1900
Grant Date notes	
Nature of Grant	P
General Notes	
Occupation	Married
Residence	S Melb
Country of Residence	
State of Residence	
Residence notes	
To whom committed	
VPRS 28 P0 link	Find this file in our catalogue
VPRS 28 P1 link	
VPRS 28 P2 link	Find this file in our catalogue
VPRS 28 P3 link	
VPRS 7591 P1 link	
VPRS 7591 P2 link	Find this file in our catalogue
VPRS 7592 P1 link	

- Portions of the will and probate records for each person will be found in one or more of seven consignments of records. These consignments (VPRS 28/P0, VPRS 7591/P1 and so on) are listed at the bottom of a details page. If a portion of a person's file is in a particular consignment, a hyperlink marked **Find this file in our catalogue** will be displayed next to that consignment. Click on the hyperlink to go to PROV's online catalogue.

Step 4: PROV's online catalogue

In the example above, a search for file number 74/783 has found two probate records (from VPRS 28), and one will (from VPRS 7591) relating to Agnes Smith. Thus there are three items in the catalogue that make up the complete record. The Item Details page for one of those items is shown below:

Item Details

Series title:	Wills
Description:	74/783
Date range:	-
Public access:	Open
Format:	Physical
Location:	North Melbourne
This Item is part of	
Series number:	VPRS 7591
Consignment number:	P0002
Unit number:	302
Order Item	View digitised Item (File size ~ 2963 KB)

Step 5: Viewing the record online

- To view the digitised record (Item) click on the **View digitised Item** button. The image of the record will be displayed as a pdf file.

Hint: earlier digitised wills and probate files can be quite large, around 10MB on average. On slower connections these large files will take some time to download.

Hint: If you are using Microsoft Windows a **File Download** dialogue box may appear. If it does, click on either the **Open** button to view the record or **Save** button to download a copy of the file to your computer.

Hint: You can use Acrobat's zoom function to enlarge the image and read details.

Step 5: Ordering the original record

- If the record has not been digitised the **View digitised Item** button will not appear on this page. If you wish to order the original record for viewing at the Victorian Archives Centre reading room click on the **Order Item** button.
- If you are not already logged in you will be prompted to do so. If the records are on open access and not on order to another researcher the selected records will be ordered. Entries confirming each of the records ordered will appear in your **My Orders: Current** page.
- If you do not have a user account you can create one from a link on this page. To place your order, return to the online probate index and recommence your search.

Using Will and Probate Images

Images of digitised will and probate documents can be downloaded from PROV's website free of charge and used for personal research. Before any records held by PROV can be reproduced, for example in a printed publication, exhibition or website, the written permission of the copyright holder must first be obtained. Please consult [PROVguide 25 Copyright for Researchers](#) for details.

Further information

See [PROVguide 68 Wills and Probate Records from 1926](#) for detailed information about accessing original wills and probate records created after 1925.

See [PROVguide 70 Wills and Probate Records](#) for information about locating a range of probate-related records held by PROV.