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## 1. Introduction

This document describes the BDM Registrations Deaths dataset.

## 2. Death Registrations

### 2.1 Summary

This database is an index of death records between 1845 and 1993 from the registers of the South Australian Birth, Deaths and Marriages Registrars Head Office.

### 2.2 Coverage

Coverage is deaths from 1 January 1845 to 31 July 1993.

SAGHS holds index records for deaths registered in 1842, 1843 and 1844 however they are yet to be added into this online database. This work is planned to be completed mid-2024.

### 2.3 Source

From the District Registers of the South Australian Birth, Deaths and Marriages Registrar.

### 2.4 Additional information

#### 2.4.1 Details/Fields

The Index contains core details from the registers with the Certificates holding additional information. More detail has been recorded on certificates over the years. Use the table below to see what details are available in the index data and when that data was first collected.

Detail / Field	Year of appearance
Date of death	1842
Name	1842
Gender	1842
Age	1842
Usual residence	1842
Place of death	1842
Relative (usually the Informant)	1842
Marital status	1968
Name of spouse	1968

Note that original Certificate holds additional content. A table of the details available on the Certificates over the years can be found on our website [here](#). More information about Certificates can be found in section 2.4.3 of this document.

In addition to the fields from the Certificate, we also include in the Index dataset:

- *Book/Register Number and Page Number* – which book and page the entry was recorded in
- *District* – which District the death was recorded in
- *Notes* – additional useful information provided by the BDM Registrar or Genealogy SA staff when collating the data. An example might be the Spouse, Occupation, or Age if less than 1 year.

## 2.4.2 Important Notes

- The *Relatives* field for records up from 1 January 1973 contains the names of up to 3 spouses. However for records before 1973, this field contains the name of a relative (any relationship to the person) or the informant.
- *District* is not available in the Index for records from 1 January 1973 but is available on Certificates for all time periods.
- Where the age of the person is less than 1 year (ie, months, weeks, days, minutes) the Age will appear as zero (0). In these cases, the recorded age can be found in the *Notes* field.
- *Marital Status* is set to 'C' for Child for persons aged under 16 years.

## 2.4.3 Certificates

Genealogy SA holds copies of the original District Registration Certificates for Births, Deaths, and Marriages from which this index entry was derived. The original Certificates hold additional information that many researchers find valuable. The Certificate information content varies according to when it was created and [you can see tables here](#) showing what you can expect to see.

However, Genealogy SA is not permitted by law to provide an image copy of these original Certificates, but we can provide a transcription of the Certificate. You can request a transcription of the Certificate via the detailed results page of your search and following the instructions under "Want More Information?" section.

Please note, transcriptions of death certificates are available for the period up to, and for most of, 1989, with the cut off being deaths recorded in 883A. There will be 1989 deaths in book 884A but we only have index details for these as we have not been provided certificates from that book onwards.

## 3. Versions

This is the second update to the BDM Registrations of Deaths dataset since it was first created. The updates are outlined below, and the action taken, where available, is provided for each update.

1. 04/09/2017: Original conversion for MPCviewer. Coverage from 1845 to 1972.
2. 03/10/2017: Added 'missing deaths'.
3. 22/01/2024: Added records from 1973 to 1993.

### 3.1 Version M-20170904

Table T\_RDeath: records 605,992

- Original conversion for MPCviewer.
- Coverage from 1845 to 1972.

### 3.2 Version M-20171003

Table T\_RDeath: records 606,099

- Added 107 records known as the 'missing deaths' from the MiscDB.
- Coverage: various years

### 3.3 Version M-20240122

Table T\_RDeath: records 811,843

- Added 211,744 records.
- Coverage from 1973 to 1993.

## 4. Appendix A

Appendix A is a reproduction of the *Understanding and Using this Index* pages found at the front of the South Australian Death Index of Registrations books compiled and published by the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society Inc.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DEATHS**  
**INDEX OF REGISTRATIONS**  
**1842 TO 1915**

Editor and Project Co-ordinator  
A L Cobiac BMEchE

Compiled by the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society Inc  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

### Some general information

The index contains 225,359 entries including one death prior to 1842 and 604 deaths during January and February 1916. Information for the index was extracted by volunteers from microforms of registrations held by the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages. At all times, the volunteers tried to find the balance between being too literal and assuming too much. Their geographical knowledge of the towns of a particular area often helped to make sense of an otherwise difficult squiggle, but did not extend to the same degree to given names and surnames.

It is important to remember that the information on the registrations is only as complete and accurate as that given by the informant (usually a relative but often the undertaker), and as heard and understood by the registrar. Many registrations were incomplete. Lapses of concentration by registrars and their inability to read some details from mailed applications in the early years, provide some explanations, but also informants were not always able to supply all the details, typically when a person died alone in a remote area.

Some duplicate registrations are included. Batches of duplication in early registrations were eliminated, but many entries that appeared the same in extracted detail, differed in terms of the informant etc. Where doubt existed, both registrations were entered.

Other resources were used to assist with handwriting queries but the main source was always the registration itself. An uncrossed 't' was extracted as 't', if it was a common feature of a particular registrar's handwriting style. The combination 'fs', used last century as double s was extracted as 'ss'. Cross-referencing was also used to overcome some difficulties.

### Explanation Of The Entry:

Entries are arranged in alphabetical order of surname and given names. Hyphens, spaces and apostrophes are ignored and 'Mc' is treated as though spelt 'Mac'. Names such as 'MACE' and 'MACK' are sorted with those names commencing 'Mc' and 'Mac'. 'St' is indexed as though spelt 'SAINT'.

**ARMATAGE Joseph Julian (M)** 4m of Mitcham Park d 13 Aug 1883 at Mitcham Park *rel* John Edward DAVIES (F) *dist* Ade Sym X b130 p130 *See also* DAVIES Joseph Julian Armatage

The information for the above entry is comprised of the deceased's surname, given names, gender, age, marital status, residence, date and place of death, relative's given names, surname and relationship to the deceased, registration district, symbols, book and page reference numbers, cross-reference surname and given names.

### Deceased's Name

Deceased's surname in bold capitals and given names in bold lower case letters.

The Deceased's name is usually recorded on the registration as the given name and surname. Sometimes in the case of an infant's death only the surname, and occasionally "un-named" with surname is recorded. If a deceased male is recorded with one name only (eg Manthroy) it was extracted as a surname. If a deceased female is recorded with only one name it was extracted as a given name. There are a number of cases where the deceased person was unknown to the authorities. Initials or contractions of names listed on a registration are entered without full stops.

The spelling of some registrars was exceptionally poor and many names were recorded as phonetic representations.

The accent of the informant and the hearing of the registrars considerably influenced the spelling of the names. Many informants in the early years were barely literate and had little chance to correct the registrar's errors.

Some names (eg Francis and Frances) were less well defined as male or female versions during the last century. Some names (eg Henry [Henery] and Agnes [Agnas]) were consistently spelt differently. Foreign or unfamiliar names caused more problems. Letters were often transposed, or omitted. Longer names were often crammed into the space provided, making it difficult to decipher the final letters.

### Gender

Gender codes are (M) male, (F) female and (N) not recorded.

### Age at Death

Age at death codes are y (year), m (month), w (week), d (day), h (hour), IN (infant), SB (stillborn) and N (not recorded).

According to relevant legislation, stillborn babies were not to be registered as deaths, however some registrations with the notation 'stillborn' did appear in the 1842-1915 volumes.

### Marital Status

Marital status codes are (W) widowed, (D) divorced, (M) married, (S) single, (C) child and (N) not recorded.

This information was deduced from the "Rank or Profession", "Age at marriage" or "informant" columns on the registration.

### Residence of the Deceased

Residence of the deceased is preceded by *of*. (not recorded) is a valid code here. When the deceased was not an SA resident, the state or country was added thus: [NSW], [FIJI]. Registration district Palmerston (later the Northern Territory) was considered a part of SA for this index.

### Date of Death

Date of death is preceded by *d*. Dates are as complete as possible. '??' in the date indicates information not recorded on the registration or illegible.

If no death date was available, the registration date was used with the R symbol.

New year date confusions were amended, eg a death occurring in December 1884 and registered in February 1885 if entered on the registration as occurring in December 1885 was amended to 1884 with the A symbol added.

End of month date confusion has not been amended (eg 31 September 1864) since it is not certain if the death occurred on the last day of the stated month or the first day of the new month. In most cases an E symbol indicates the error was identified.

### Place of Death

Place of death is preceded by *at*.

Place names have been standardised to current usage and presentation. (not recorded) is a valid code here.

Registration district Palmerston (later the Northern Territory) was considered a part of SA for this index.

All identified non-South Australian residences have the appropriate state or country added in square brackets eg [NSW] [VIC], [FIJI], [INDIA]. The symbol A is used if the state or country did not appear on the registration. Where any doubt exists, the square bracket indicator has not been used eg 'Victoria' in District of Kapunda may be a small gazetted town in the area of the colony or State of Victoria. Other localities with similar problems include Fitzroy, and Kew and Perth (nr Port Adelaide).

Germanic place names are listed as recorded at the time of the event. Many names of Germanic origin were changed in South Australia in 1917. To assist researchers a list of these changes is included the end of these notes. (A number of the towns subsequently reverted to their original name.)

The place information included is sometimes less than that which appears on the registration. The intention was to list the town location, rather than a detailed address. Property names, street names, Section numbers etc were not usually included if a town, suburb or Hundred was stated. (District of Adelaide street names were converted to Adelaide or North Adelaide using the ward location or other resources.)

### Relative - Name and Relationship

Relative's given names, surname and relationship to the deceased (in brackets) is preceded by *rel.*

The following codes for the relationships were used:

A	Aunt
AD	Adopted daughter
AS	Adopted son
AF	Adoptive father
AM	Adoptive mother
B	Brother
BL	Brother in Law
C	Cousin
D	Daughter
DH	Deceased husband
DL	Daughter in Law
DW	Deceased wife
F	Father
FD	Foster daughter
FF	Foster father
FL	Father in Law
FM	Foster mother
FS	Foster son
GD	Granddaughter
GF	Grandfather
GM	Grandmother
GS	Grandson
H	Husband
M	Mother
ML	Mother in Law
NC	Niece
N	Nephew
O	Other relationships not covered in this list
PR	Possible family relationship
S	Son
SB	Stepbrother
SD	Stepdaughter
SF	Stepfather
SL	Son in law
SM	Stepmother
SS	Stepson
ST	Stepsister
T	Sister
TL	Sister in law
U	Uncle
W	Wife

The relative's name was usually recorded as given name and surname, or initials and surname. It was sometimes not recorded or incomplete. Cases of Mr or Mrs followed by the same family surname were treated as 'not recorded' because no additional information was provided. Occasionally an informant's name was recorded in the form of given name or initials and surname, and sometimes a relationship. But not all informants were relatives of the deceased and often the undertaker was the informant

### Registration District

Registration District is preceded by *dist.*

The following codes for Registration districts were used:

Ade	Adelaide
Ang	Angaston
Bar	Barossa
BaW	Barossa West
Bur	Burra
Cla	Clare
Cra	Crawford
Dal	Daly
EnB	Encounter Bay
Fli	Flinders
Fro	Frome
Gil	Gilbert
Gre	Grey
Hig	Highercombe
Hin	Hindmarsh
Kap	Kapunda
MoV	Morphett Vale
MPE	Munno Para East
MPW	Munno Para West
MtB	Mount Barker
Nai	Nairne
Nor	Norwood
Onk	Onkaparinga
Pal	Palmerston
PtA	Port Adelaide
PtG	Port Gawler
Rob	Robe
Str	Strathalbyn
Tal	Talunga
TMu	The Murray/Burra
UpW	Upper Wakefield
Wel	Wellington
Wil	Willunga
Yan	Yankalilla
Yat	Yatala

Although it was intended that deaths should be registered in the district in which the event occurred, in practice this was not always the case. Some deaths appear to have been registered at an office geographically convenient to the informant, rather than in the correct Registration District. In practice then, the Registration District was the district in which the death was recorded. Early registration forms included two district indicators; the heading, intended to be the registration district where the event occurred and the residential district of the informant, listed on the lower half of the form. Registrars were often inconsistent in their interpretation of these early forms and used the district of the event, the residential district of the informant, the district in which the death was recorded, or their office location (sub-district), in the heading. Where such confusions were found, the Registration district was amended to the district in which the event was recorded, as determined by the registrar's signature and

the A symbol added to indicate that an amendment has been made.

For example the agent at Port MacDonnell frequently headed registrations as 'District of Port MacDonnell'. These registrations were amended to District of Grey.

### Symbols (Explanatory)

Up to two single-letter symbols is preceded by *sym*. These symbols are used to assist researchers by qualifying items of recorded data.

The following symbols were used:

**A** - volunteers have amended data during the extraction process and the purchased certificate will differ from the entry in this index. It does not include misspelt names. This was done to correct a clerical error or add useful information for example:

- adjust incorrect year; a death registered in February 1867 could not have occurred in December 1867.
- additions of A, B, etc to avoid duplication of reference numbers
- deduction of year
- deduction of registration district
- amendment of sub-district to registration district
- addition of state or country to a place of residence: [NSW] added to 'Broken Hill'.

**B** - the entry was created from information in both the registrar's registration and the district copy. A copy of such a registration will differ from the index detail, because only the details on the registrar's registration will appear on the copy. Reasons for using both registrations include:

- Some central registrations are typewritten and of unknown origin. Such entries were checked against the district copy, and if discrepancies occurred the details on the hand written district copies were extracted.
- Partially damaged or illegible originals.

**C** - an officially stamped or signed correction made by the registrar on top of the registration, after the event, has been included in the index entry. Such corrections will not appear on any version of the certificate issued prior to the date of the correction, and in many cases the district copy will not have been amended.

**D** - extractors experienced great difficulty in deciphering the handwriting. Use of other resources failed to resolve the problem, and the extracted detail represents a 'best guess'. The D symbol may mean the whole entry is difficult to read or perhaps only one word.

**E** - a possible clerical error exists that has not been amended by extractors. Some examples are:

- Incorrect date '31 September 1872'.
- Apparent incorrect gender of a child 'Mary Jane, Male'.
- Apparent transposition or phonetic spelling of names 'Lousie' (Louise? or Lucy?) or 'YENSCH' (JAENSCH?).
- The gender of the deceased was not recorded.

**F** - a possible family member was the informant (same surname but no relationship stated)

**G** - guessed age. The age on the registration is indeterminate and volunteers have entered a specific figure

- 'about 60 years' entered as 60y
- 'under 2 years' entered as 2y

- 'between 2 and 3 years' entered as 2y (the lowest age of the range is used in such cases).
- 'less than 1 day' entered as 1d

**H** - the person died in a hospital or similar institution.

Examples: Mount Gambier hospital, Home for incurables (Fullarton), Parkside Asylum, Fullarton Refuge, Escort House Grange, Koorunga, Burra Hospital, Industrial School Edwardstown, with place name as underlined.

The Destitute Asylum and the Lunatic Asylum in Adelaide are indicated by the S symbol.

**I** - an indefinite date of death such as '7th or 9th April' or 'about 10th March'. When two dates were given, the earlier date was entered.

**M** - identifies the death of an infant in a multiple birth and indicates to researchers that at least one other child was born to parents of the same names. If the registrations of the deaths of multiple birth children are separated by a large number of other registrations, the multiple birth aspect may have been overlooked by the extractor.

**R** - the date of registration was used as the date of death because the latter was not recorded or is indecipherable.. Most deaths were registered soon after the event and an incomplete death date was used in preference to a registration date. Also, some lone deaths were registered well after the event and in these cases the use of the registration date would be misleading.

**S** - supplementary information of benefit to the researcher, other than what is included in this compilation, is available on the registrar's registration.

Most registrations have information regarding the occupation of the deceased, cause of death and the informant's details etc, which have not been extracted for this project. The S symbol refers to other information, not usually found on registrations.

Some instances where the S symbol is used are:

- Previous residence listed
- Length of residence in colony stated
- Deceased child's father deceased
- Deceased's maiden name listed
- Junior/Senior (of deceased)
- Younger son
- Prison
- State child
- Guardian named
- Adelaide Destitute or Lunatic Asylum residence or death place
- Unusual death or additional information on the circumstances of death
- Sister of Church (if 'known as' religious name stated)
- Fuller details available re deaths at sea - longitude & latitude
- Final names reduced to initials due to space problems.
- Remarriage on post 1906 registrations (unusual enough to warrant its use)

The S symbol was **not** used for:

- occupations
- extra family members as informants
- single mothers
- age in colony, number of issue, etc in post 1906 registrations was standard information.

In general the S symbol suggests the researcher may benefit from examination or purchase of the certificate if possible.

Use of the S symbol is very subjective, some volunteers have added it where others would feel the situation did not warrant it.

**V** - indicates a variation in the spelling of names.

- Where differences exist in the spelling of surnames within the registration, the registrar's version was used.
- Where the difference is slight and it is suspected the stated family member informant's version is likely to be correct, the alternate spelling is recorded in the relative's name.

**X** - a cross reference to another listing has been included because there were two possible interpretations of the same registration. The names recorded at the end of the entry indicate the alternate listing. Researchers should note the book and page number reference and search for the entry with the alternative names and the same reference numbers. Some reasons for cross references are:

- Ambiguous surname or alias surnames
- Foster or adoptive parent name included in deceased child's name,
- Last name in deceased child's name possibly child's surname.

**Z** - for internal use only. Alerts staff at the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office to issue a certificate from the re-filmed version of the registration found at the end of a subsequent film.

#### **Book and Page**

BDM Registration Office book and page reference numbers are preceded by *b* and *p*.

#### **Cross Referenced Entries**

Surname and forenames of cross-referenced entries are preceded by *See also*.

### **Other Features Of Death Registrations And Policies Used In The Index**

#### **Abbreviations**

To avoid incorrect expansion of abbreviated names, unless the relative/informant signed his/her name in full, the abbreviation used by the registrar was retained.

During data entry the field length of 40 characters for forenames was sometimes exceeded. In such cases final given names were reduced to initials. The S symbol was added to indicate additional information is available on the registration.

Again due to data entry limitations, some place name abbreviations were used eg:

Hd = Hundred	Nr = Near
Rd = Road	St = Street
St = Saint	R = River
Nth = North, etc.	

#### **Chinese Names**

Chinese registrations, primarily in Registration District of Palmerston [NT] are a problem. The naming patterns of the Chinese do not match the given names and surname layout of the index. In most cases the first stated name of the father has been extracted as the family surname. Ah (a title of respect rather than a surname) has been extracted as a given name. Errors have undoubtedly occurred at the time of registration and as a result of the extraction policy

researchers are advised to search under all variations of name order and possible spelling.

#### **Death Registration Document Types**

There were two main types of documents used.

1) Multi-entry: These varied from large ledger style pages with up to eighteen entries per sheet to smaller volumes with three entries per sheet. Multi-entry documents were used between 1842 and 1875. Each multi-entry sheet has a common book and page number.

2) Single Entry: The more familiar layout of one entry per page was introduced in some districts as early as 1865. Several variations in the layout of the sheet occurred over the years.

The quarterly returns which the district registrars were required to forward were also bound in some of the earlier multi-entry volumes.

#### **Punctuation**

To avoid confusion, punctuation was limited to commas in the place name field and apostrophes for names such as D'Arcy, O'Reilly, etc.

Accents, umlauts, cedillas and so on were not included. Initials or contraction of names listed on a registration are entered without full stops.



**GERMAN PLACENAMES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
CHANGED BY NOMENCLATURE ACT OF 1917**

From:	To:
Bartsch's Creek	Yedlakoo Creek
Basedow, Hd of	French, Hd of
Bauer, Cape	Wondoma, Cape
Berlin Rock	Panpandie Rock
Bethanien	Bethany
Bismarck	Weeroopa
Blumberg	Birdwood
Blumenthal	Lakkari
Buchfelde	Loos
Carlsruhe	Kunden
Ehrenbreitstein	Mt Yerila
Ferdinand Creek	Ernabella Creek
Mt Ferdinand	Mt Warrabillinna
Friedrichstadt	Tangari
Friedrichswalde	Tamma
Gebhardt's Hills	Polygon Ridge
German Creek	Benara Creek
German Pass	Tappa Pass
Germantown Hill	Vimy Ridge
Gottlieb's Well	Pamggi Well
Grunberg	Karalta
Grunthal	Verdun
Hahndorf	Ambleside
Hasse's Mound	Larelar Mound
Heidelberg	Kobandilla
Hergott Springs	Marree
Hildesheim	Punthari
Hoffnungthal	Karawirra
Homburg, Hd of	Haig, Hd of
Jaenschton	Kerkanya
Kaiserstuhl	Mt Kitchener
Klaebes	Kilto
Klemzig	Gaza
Krause Rock	Marti Rock
Krichauff, Hd of	Beatty, Hd of
Krichauff	Beatty
Kronsdorf	Kabminye
Langdorf	Kaldukee
Langmeil	Bilyara
Lobethal	Tweedvale
Meyer, Mt	Mt Kauto
Muller's Hill	Yandina Hill
Neudorf	Mamburdi
Neukirch	Dimchurch
New Hamburg	Willyaroo
New Mecklenburg	Gomersal
Oliventhal	Olivedale
Paech, Hd of	Cannawigara, Hd of
Petersburg	Peterborough
Pflaum, Hd of	Geegeela, Hd of
Rhine Park	Kongolia
Rhine Hill	Mons
Rhine River Nth	The Somme
Rhine River Sth	The Marne
Rhine (Nth), Hd of	Jellicoe, Hd of
Rhine (Sth), Hd of	Jutland, Hd of
Rhine Villa	Cambrai
Rosenthal	Rosedale
Scherk, Hd of	Sturdee, Hd of
Schoenthal	Boongala
Schomburgk, Hd of	Maude, Hd of
Schreiberhau	Warre
Seppelts	Dorrien
Siegersdorf	Bultawilta
Steinfeld	Stonefield
Summerfeldt	Summerfield

Vogelsang's Corner  
Von Doussa, Hd of  
Wusser's Nob

Teerkoore  
Allenby, Hd of  
Karun Nob

(Source: S A Government Gazette, 10 January 1918.  
Subsequent nomenclature changes resulted in the  
dropping of the 's in place names.)