



## How to carry out a search on a convict

In the archive collections of the colonial penitentiary establishment, numerous documents are devoted to the management of convicts. Amongst these we can see the two main types of nominal documents which should be consulted: the individual dossiers and the personal numbers of the convicts.

### 1 – Researching an individual dossier:

- **Search:** Research using a name is possible on-line.  
[http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/bagnards\\_dossiers\\_individuels/?](http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/bagnards_dossiers_individuels/?)  
  
The printable answer sheet provides the references of the documents you should come and consult, as well as all the useful information for making progress in the research.  
  
*Note: For dossiers less than 120 years' old however, this research will be performed by the ANOM.*
- **Consult:** Only the original of the dossier can be consulted in the reading room, unless the sheet mentions a restriction due to its state of conservation. It is wise to note the numbers and communication code of the dossier. Photographs are authorised.
- **Find:** Generally the dossier includes the memorial of judgement and the individual notice establishing the legality of committal to penal colony and all the attachments linked to the detention (records, correspondence, appeals, death certificates)  
  
*Note: After 1885, and only for Guyana, the dossiers are kept in two copies, one held by the central administration (Ministry for the Colonies), and the other by the local penitentiary administration.*

### 2 - Researching in the convict personal numbers:

- **Search:** It is not possible to search by a name, the personal number registers should therefore be searched in the inventory using information supplied in the database for the individual dossiers.

### **Research step-by-step**

- Go to the [Penal Colonies Collection search tool](#)
- - At the bottom of the page click **Central administration**
- then **Convict management**
- then **Convict personal numbers**
- then on the penal colony where the convict served his sentence
- if it is a woman, click **Female convicts**
- then you will need to establish the category applicable to the person sought, using the number of the individual dossier
- [Table of convict categories depending on the number of the dossier](#)  
or, if the sentence delivered is known, using the description of the [Convict categories of the colonial penitentiary administration](#)
- then find it in each category using the personal number mentioned in the database for the individual dossiers.

Sometimes it is necessary to consult several registers to find the convict.

**Tip:** *If several personal numbers are on the sheet, start with the first: consultation of the register will make it clear how to use the following numbers.*

**Note:** The numbers are sometimes held in two copies: in this case, a link is available at the top of the series (in the label

**Related documents**).

- **Consult:** Consultation takes place on microfilm, and only in the reading room. For this it is wise to note the numbers and communication code for the register, as well as the convict's personal number. It is possible to print.
- **Find:** From his arrival, each convict is numbered in a category. All the information related to this convict and certifying that the sentence is correctly applied are carried in personal number leaflets bound in registers. So the personal number register systematically includes the identity and initial sentence of the convict, ship, escapes, commutations of sentences, pardons, convictions being served, etc.
- **Progressing the research:** The information contained in the personal numbers is precious because it may make it possible to enrich the research by consulting other types of document linked to convict management (e.g. ministerial decisions, judgements by the special maritime tribunal, concession registers, etc.).

Warning: These archive documents were written for the administration. They are not always explicit and in order to understand them better it is wise to gather material beforehand from the publications available on the subject.