Genealogical Sources Guide

Births, Deaths and Marriages

Mr & Mrs William Esquilant. 1900. De Maus Collection. c/n E3024/34

Hocken Collections/Te Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago Library
Nau Mai Haere Mai ki Te Uare Taoka o Hākena:

Welcome to the Hocken Collections

He mihi nui tēnei ki a koutou
kā uri o kā hau e whā arā,
kā mātāwaka o te motu,
o te ao whānui hoki.
Nau mai, haere mai ki te taumata.

As you arrive
We seek to preserve all the taoka we hold for future generations. So that all taoka are properly protected, we ask that you:

• place your bags in the lockers provided
• leave all food and drink including water bottles in the lockers (we have a lunchroom off the foyer which everyone is welcome to use)
• bring any materials you need for research and some ID in with you
• sign the Readers’ Register each day

Beginning your research
Most of the commonly-used genealogical sources available at the Hocken Collections can be found on microfiche or in the Ready Reference section of the main reference area on the ground floor. Please ask staff if you need help locating any of these.

We hold numerous other sources—both published and unpublished—in our closed stacks, and these can be searched and requested through the Hocken’s Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs). There are two different OPACs:

• for books, theses, journals, magazines, maps, and audiovisual material, use http://otago.lconz.ac.nz - the University of Otago Library catalogue;
• for archives & manuscripts, you will need to consult Hākena - http://hakena.otago.ac.nz/nreq/Welcome.html.

Upstairs on the first floor in Pictorial Collections, some photographs are available for viewing in the Reader Access file, but you will need to ask staff to help you locate further photographs, as well as all pictures, paintings and posters.
What do you know already?

Use the information you already have about your ancestor and their closest relatives (parents, children, siblings) to search for possible dates of events, such as

- birth, death, or marriage records,
- school records,
- headstone entries,
- first or last entries in directories and electoral rolls, and
- wills.

Sources

General

Registrar-General’s Index to Births, Deaths & Marriages [microfiche]

An index of births, deaths and marriages for all of New Zealand for the period 1848-1990. Registration of European births, deaths and marriages became compulsory in 1856 but registration of Maori births and deaths was not compulsory until 1913. Maori marriage registration became compulsory in 1911. Maori births 1913-1960, Maori deaths 1913-1960, Maori marriages 1911-1951, War deaths 1914-1919, War deaths 1939-1945 are included on separate microfiche. For births and deaths to 1955 you can use the district key books to find the quarter of the year and place of registration. From 1956 the place of registration for births and deaths is recorded. The quarter of the year and place of registration cannot be calculated for marriages but both spouses should have the same folio number. For full details of the birth, death or marriage (available as certificates or electronic printouts), apply to Births, Deaths, Marriages in Wellington.

Birth, Death and Marriage Historical Records

You can now search online at [http://bdmhistoricalrecords.identityservices.govt.nz/home/](http://bdmhistoricalrecords.identityservices.govt.nz/home/) for births that occurred at least 100 years ago; stillbirths if registered at least 50 years ago; marriages and eventually civil unions that occurred 80 years ago; and deaths that occurred at least 50 years ago or the deceased’s date of birth was at least 80 years ago. You still need to apply to Births, Deaths and Marriages for the full details – just click on “Order product”.
Results include a registration number but this number is different to the folio numbers given on the microfiche for Births, Deaths and Marriages. To find out the place of birth, or death, (before 1956) and the quarter of the year that the event took place you will still need to look up the microfiche to get the folio number and then use the district key books. One advantage of the online indexes is that for some births the Christian names of both parents are provided, which can help you to work out if you have the right person, and help you to find siblings.

Church records
Look for transcripts of marriage and baptismal registers in the ready reference area. There are three overall indexes to Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic marriages in the Otago/Southland area to 1920. Check Häkena, the archives and manuscripts catalogue, http://hakena.otago.ac.nz/nreq/Welcome.html for the holdings of other registers and records after 1920. Presbyterian records are held at Presbyterian Church Archives in Dunedin – their website www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz contains online indexes to marriages and baptisms for the period 1848-1920. Catholic records are held at the Diocesan Archives in Dunedin. There is an index to pre-1905 baptisms in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch on the database computers.

Newspapers
Look for birth, death, and marriage notices, obituaries and accounts of weddings and funerals once you know the date the event occurred. Check holdings of the closest local newspaper, depending on where the event took place or the usual place of residence, in the publications catalogue http://otago.lconz.ac.nz/ or ask staff to view the Union List of Newspapers. Photocopies of compiled obituaries can be found in the Obituaries folders in the ready reference section. Newspaper indexes, available in the ready reference area, on microfiche and on the database computers, include the Alexander Turnbull Library Biographical Index, Otago Daily Times Headlines Index 1946-1996 (incorporating Personals and Obituaries), and Catholic marriage and death notices from the New Zealand Tablet and Otago Daily Times. Search the publications catalogue for holdings of published newspaper indexes.

The Dunedin City Libraries Southern Regional News Index available at http://www.cityofdunedin.com/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=remote includes articles from local newspapers. Only recent articles back to 1993, and items from the 1850s and 1930s are
included in the online version. You must visit the McNab Room (third floor) to consult the complete index.

Biographical dictionaries

*Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (various editions), *Southern People*, *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* and *Who's Who in New Zealand*, are located in the ready reference collection. Search the publications catalogue for other titles.

Births

School records

Transcribed Admission Progress Withdrawal registers are available for many Otago primary, and only a few secondary, schools in the ready reference area. Ask staff to check the Otago Primary Schools database if you don’t know which school your ancestor attended. Search Hakena, the archives and manuscripts catalogue, if you cannot locate the register you are looking for as not all registers have been transcribed. If we do not hold the necessary register check the Otago Education Board Annual Examination Class lists as these provide the ages of children from which you could calculate a year of birth. Check the publications catalogue for holdings of published jubilees and school registers.

Marriages

*New Zealand Marriages 1836—1956*

This index is available on CD-Rom - ask desk staff. It allows you to look for marriage records by name and can help you locate the name of the other spouse when only one spouse’s name is known. Only the names of the spouses, year of marriage and the folio number are provided. For full details of the marriage, you need to apply to Births, Deaths & Marriages in Wellington.

*Varcoe’s New Zealand Marriages Index*

If you know the name of one spouse but not whom they married then you can use this database, available at [http://marvin.otago.ac.nz/marriages/marriages.php](http://marvin.otago.ac.nz/marriages/marriages.php), in conjunction with the Registrar-Generals’ Index for the period 1840-1956.

*Notices of Intention to Marry*

These notices have to be completed by one of the marriage partners for the district registrar before a marriage takes place. They sometimes provide additional useful details, such as
length of residence in the district which, for some individuals, can equate to length of residence in the country, and who gave consent when the marriage involved a minor. Notices of Intention to Marry are held at Archives New Zealand Wellington Office for the period 1856-1956. An index to Balclutha Intentions to Marry 1861-1920 is available in the ready reference area.

Divorce records
The Dunedin Regional Office of Archives New Zealand holds records of divorces for the Otago and Southland area but these are restricted until 60 years after the divorce. Some of these files have been indexed and you can locate records on Archway, the online catalogue for Archives New Zealand, at [http://archway.archives.govt.nz/](http://archway.archives.govt.nz/) under the names of the individuals involved. If you know the date that a divorce took place you could check newspapers eg., Otago Witness, New Zealand Truth for details. Divorce information extracted from New Zealand Truth Newspaper is available on microfiche and covers the period 1946-1966.

Deaths and Burials

New Zealand Cemetery records [microfiche]
Use New Zealand Cemetery Records A List of Holdings to see what cemeteries are listed for a particular district and to help you locate the appropriate microfiche. Hard copies of some Otago and Southland cemeteries are also located in the ready reference area.

New Zealand Burial Locator Version 2
This index is available on the database computers. It allows you to look for burial records by name, and provides the location of that burial or death. You then need to consult the appropriate cemetery records or other sources. It is helpful when you are not sure where someone may have died, or been buried, in New Zealand. You can also locate people with the same surname buried in the same location.

Dunedin City and other Cemeteries
The Christchurch City Libraries webpage has links to further cemetery records – [http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Resources/NewZealand/History/FamilyHistory/Cemeteries](http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Resources/NewZealand/History/FamilyHistory/Cemeteries)
Cremation records
Cremation records for Dunedin for the period 1927-1950 and 1960-1989 are available in the ready reference area. Records for 1951-1960 are included in the Andersons Bay Cemetery records.

Undertakers’ records
There is one volume in the ready reference area containing a transcript of Cole and Springer, Dunedin undertakers, Registration of Death and Ledger Book for the period 1896-1902. For holdings of other undertakers’ records you should check Hakena, the archives and manuscripts catalogue.

Wills
The Hocken Collections do not hold wills. Check Archway, the online catalogue for Archives New Zealand, at http://archway.archives.govt.nz/ for the location of an individual’s probate records. Index to New Zealand Probates pre-1900 is available on microfiche.

Other contacts
Archives New Zealand – www.archives.govt.nz

Presbyterian Church Archives of Aotearoa New Zealand - www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz

Births Deaths and Marriages – www.bdm.govt.nz


Dunedin City Libraries – www.dunedinlibraries.com/home/

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Other guides in this series include:

A General Guide
Shipping Records
Occupations
Residences
Education
Internet Sources

First Church and School 1848. Photograph of Pen and Ink Drawing by DC Hutton. 1889. S06-443d

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reference.hocken@otago.ac.nz
http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/hocken/index.html

Monday - Friday 9:30am - 5pm
Tuesday 9.30am - 9pm
(pictorial collections closed 5pm-9pm)
Saturday 9am - 12noon