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 (including computer bags and sleeves) in the lockers provided
- leave all food and drink including water bottles in the lockers (we have a researcher lounge 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
- enquire at the reference desk first if you wish to take digital photographs

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We hold numerous other sources—both published and unpublished—and you can search for material on our Online Public Access Catalogues:

- for books, theses, journals, magazines, newspapers, maps, and audiovisual material, use Library Search | Ketu. The advanced search - https://goo.gl/HVNTqH gives you several search options, and you can refine your results to the Hocken Library on the left side of the screen.
  The Library Search Guide https://otago.libguides.com/ketuhelp contains helpful tips and assistance for using Library Search | Ketu;
- for pictures, photographs and archives and manuscripts, use Hākena - https://hakena.otago.ac.nz
some of the photographs from the Pictorial Collections are available for viewing online via Hocken Snapshop at https://hocken.recollect.co.nz/. Some other photographs and artworks can be viewed at http://otago.ourheritage.ac.nz/.
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
- wills

Sources

General

Birth, Death and Marriage Historical Records
You can search online at [https://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/search/](https://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/search/) 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”.

Often the Christian names of both parents are provided in birth records, which can help you to work out if you have the right person, and help you to find siblings. To find out the place of birth, or death, (before 1956) you will still need to look up the Registrar-General’s Index to Births, Deaths & Marriages (see below) to get the folio number and then use the district key books.

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 - [https://goo.gl/64H3k3](https://goo.gl/64H3k3).

**Ancestry**
A number of resources relating to New Zealand birth, death and marriages are now available via the Ancestry database. This is available on any of the public computers in the library. The resources include New Zealand, Cemetery Records, 1800-2007; New Zealand, Death Index, 1848-1966; New Zealand, Birth Index, 1840-1950; and New Zealand, Marriage Index, 1840-1937.

**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 Hākena [https://hakena.otago.ac.nz](https://hakena.otago.ac.nz) for the holdings of other registers and records after 1920. Presbyterian records are held at Presbyterian Church Archives in Dunedin – their website [https://www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz](https://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 (archives@cdd.org.nz). There is an index to pre-1905 baptisms in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch on any of the public computers in the library.

**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 Library Search|Ketu [https://www.otago.ac.nz/library/](https://www.otago.ac.nz/library/) or ask staff to view the *Union List of Newspapers*. Try a search under the individual’s name on Paperspast [https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/). 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 or on the public 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 Library Search\Ketu for holdings of published newspaper indexes.

The Dunedin City Libraries Southern Regional News Index available at https://ent.kotui.org.nz/client/en_AU/srni includes articles from local newspapers. Only recent articles back to 1993, and items from the 1850s, 1930s and 1940s are included in the online version. The full index is available in the McNab Room on the third floor of the Dunedin City Library but it is being made increasingly available online at https://dunedin.recollect.co.nz/pages/newspapers/.

A Memory Tree http://www.amemorytree.co.nz/index.php allows you to search for death notices in New Zealand newspapers from December 2006 onwards. It provides the age of an individual and date of their death as well as the newspaper and date a death notice was published. You can then search Library Search\Ketu for holdings of these newspapers.

Biographical dictionaries

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (available online at https://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies), Southern People, and Cyclopedia of New Zealand (available online at http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-cyclopedia.html or via Ancestry) are located in the ready reference collection. Search Library Search\Ketu for other titles, such as Who’s Who in New Zealand (1908, 1925 and 1938 volumes are available via Ancestry).

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 and they often include the date of birth of pupils. Ask staff to check the Otago Primary Schools database if you don’t know which school your ancestor attended. Search Hākena 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 Library Search\Ketu for holdings of published jubilees and school registers.
Marriages
New Zealand Marriages 1836—1956
This index is available on any of the public computers in the library. 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 https://goo.gl/64H3k3.

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 https://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 public 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

Cremation 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 https://archway.archives.govt.nz/ for the location of an individual’s probate records. FamilySearch provides an index to Archives New Zealand probate records for 1843-1998 https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1865481 and images of these records (except those issued in the previous 50 years) will eventually become available for viewing http://archives.govt.nz/resources/research-resources/searching-digitised-probates.
Other contacts

Archives New Zealand – www.archives.govt.nz

Their research guide on Personal Identity - https://goo.gl/PSxWrt includes some useful information.

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

Births Deaths and Marriages – https://goo.gl/4Pu6nA


Katherine Milburn, Hocken Collections, January 2019
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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For hours, please check our website:
https://www.otago.ac.nz/library/hocken/