

Birth records

If you are not sure when someone may have been born check their marriage and/or death records before going to the following sources. These may contain their date of birth or at least give their age so that you can calculate an approximate year. Try to look for clues from the details of other known relatives, eg., the death certificate of their parents should give the age and sex of living issue.

◆ Registrar-General's Index to Births

This is in the microfiche collection. Searches can be carried out alphabetically year-by-year from 1848-1990 for all of New Zealand. Remember that these indexes give the year of registration which is not necessarily the year of birth eg., the birth of someone in November one year may not have been registered until January of the next year.

Early years are compiled together on one set of fiche. For the first few years there is only one index and the year is given beside the folio number eg., 48/215 (year is 1848 and folio number is 215). But from 1855-1858 there are separate pages for each year for each letter of the alphabet eg., all the individuals whose surnames began with 'A' and who were born in 1861 will be listed separately from those who were born in 1862.

Folio numbers can indicate the quarter of the year and place of registration by using the district keys books which are available up to 1955. First make sure you have the correct year (indicated at the bottom of each page) and then look for a folio number closest to, but less than the one you have. For example, the birth of an individual with the folio number 864 in 1885 will have been registered in Dunedin some time between January and March 1885. From 1956 there is a separate column for each entry on the microfiche providing the place of birth however the quarter of the year that the birth occurred is not provided.

Registration of European births became compulsory in 1856 but registration of Maori births was not compulsory until 1913. Maori births for the period 1913-1960

are on separate microfiche and are arranged alphabetically for the whole period and not separate years. They do not indicate which quarter of the year or place of registration.

Once an individual is located you can then apply for a certified birth certificate (currently costs \$26 and needed for legal purposes), or an electronic printout of the birth register entry (costs \$26 for printouts from the years 1848-1874, or \$20 for the years after 1874) which usually contains more information and will be free from transcription errors, and is available for the years 1848-1997. Apply to the Registrar-General, by freephone 0800 22 52 52, by e-mail to bdm.nz@dia.govt.nz or by writing to PO Box 10-526, Wellington or PO Box 6147, Wellesley Street, Auckland. Check the Registrar-General's website (www.bdm.govt.nz) for current prices and contact details.

◆ **Baptismal records**

The index to, and transcripts of, baptismal registers for First Church 1848-1904 are housed in the ready reference area. Also located there is an index to the Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church Baptismal Register 1859-1920. Other Presbyterian baptismal records will be held at Presbyterian archives at Knox College.

There is an index to St Paul's Anglican Church (later Cathedral) Baptismal Registers 1852-1864 in the ready reference area. There are also photocopies of St Paul's Baptismal Registers for the period 1864-1878 in the ready reference area but they have not been indexed. You will need to check Hakena, the archives and manuscripts catalogue, for the holdings of other Anglican baptismal registers.

◆ **School records**

Ask staff to check the Primary Schools database as this contains entries from Otago primary schools' Admission Progress Withdrawal registers (transcripts on the stand in the ready reference area) which may include the dates of birth of children. Remember to search Hakena 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 class lists as these provide the ages of children from

which you could calculate a year of birth. For further details about these records check the Educational Records section of this Genealogical Reference Information.

◆ **Newspapers**

These are used to locate birth notices. Check holdings of the closest local newspaper for the individual, depending on the place of birth and/or parents' residence, in the publications catalogue or ask staff to view the *Union List of Newspapers*. Ask staff to check the OASES database as this contains birth notices for the period 1848-1861 from newspapers published in Dunedin. The *Alexander Turnbull Library Biographical Index* (on microfiche) may also be useful for locating possible years of birth. Remember that it may take some days after the birth for a notice to be published. Note the pattern each newspaper develops for the places where such items are usually located ie., before the editorial column.

◆ **Biographical dictionaries**

The main ones, eg., *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (various editions), *Southern People* and *Who's Who in New Zealand*, are located in the ready reference collection. Entries are usually arranged alphabetically, but also check the indexes.