

## **Marriage records**

If you are not sure when someone may have been married check the birth dates of their children or the individual's death records before going to the following sources. These may contain the name of their spouse and their date of marriage 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 birth certificates of children should give the date of marriage of the parents, and school records may provide the dates of births of children.

### **◆ Registrar-General's Index to Marriages**

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 marriage eg., the marriage of a couple in November one year may not have been registered until January of the next year.

Grooms and brides are listed separately for each letter of the alphabet eg., all the grooms with surnames beginning with 'A' are listed first then all the brides with surnames beginning with 'A'. From 1947 there are separate fiche for grooms and brides with their own alphabetical sequences. Don't forget that for brides you will need to search by their maiden name and make sure that you are not looking for a bride in the grooms list or vice versa!

Early years are compiled together on one set of fiche, but there are separate pages for each year for each letter of the alphabet eg., all the grooms whose surnames began with 'A' and who were married in 1853 will be listed separately from those who were married in 1854.

Unfortunately, folio numbers for marriages cannot be used to indicate the quarter of the year and place of registration. However both spouses should have the same folio number. If you do not know the name of the other spouse you can use

Varcoe's New Zealand Marriages Index (see next section) to locate their name. From 1957 each entry had another column with the surname of the spouse.

Registration of European marriages became compulsory in 1856 but registration of Maori marriages was not compulsory until 1911. Maori marriages for the period 1911-1951 are on separate microfiche and are arranged alphabetically for the whole period and not separate years.

Once a marriage is located you can then apply for a certified marriage certificate (currently costs \$26 and needed for legal purposes), or an electronic printout of the marriage register entry (costs \$26 for printouts from the years 1854-1874, 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 1854-1997. Apply to the Registrar-General, by freephone 0800 22 52 52, by e-mail to [bdm.nz@dia.govt.nz](mailto: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](http://www.bdm.govt.nz)) for current prices and contact details.

#### ◆ **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 on the database computers in the reference area or at <http://marvin.otago.ac.nz/marriages>. It covers the whole period until 1957 when spouses' names were included in the Registrar-General's index.

You need to select the year of registration and then put in the folio number of the known spouse. The database will then only provide the first four letters of the surnames of the first and last entries on the pages in the Registrar-General's index containing the bride's and groom's names. You then need to look up the appropriate page on the Registrar-General's index to find the name of the spouse with the same folio number. For example to find who Lorrin Catherine Deeming married in 1953 (folio number 456) you need to select the year 1953 and enter 456 in the folio number box on the search screen. This will then provide the results for the groom as Pano-Park. If you then look up the fiche containing grooms names beginning with 'P' for 1953 you will find a page with the first entry for Wynyard Panoaho and the last entry

for Douglas Aubrey Parke. If you look through the other entries you will find that Roland Frank Burdett Panther has the matching folio number 456.

#### ◆ **Marriage registers**

There are three overall indexes to Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic marriages in the Otago/Southland area to 1920 in the ready reference area. Entries are arranged alphabetically by surname and the surnames of spouses are provided. Each entry contains a reference number that refers to the place of marriage. Each index contains a list of these references at the front of the volume and which church it refers to.

Transcripts of the marriage registers for Knox Church, First Church and some of the Taieri Presbyterian churches are available in the ready reference area and generally cover the period to 1920. Marriage registers of other Presbyterian churches should be held at Presbyterian Archives at Knox College, Arden Street, Opoho, Dunedin. The Knox Church marriage registers include a separate index to the witnesses to weddings that can sometimes be useful for locating other family members. Some of the other marriage registers also include an index to the witnesses and they are usually located just after the index to the brides and grooms.

The Anglican index to marriages also includes Congregational Churches, Associated Churches of Christ, the Wesleyan Mission in Waikouaiti (1841-1857), and Ruapuke marriages and transcripts of these are available in the ready reference area. For the few that are not available there and for Anglican marriages after 1920 you should check Hakena, the archives and manuscripts catalogue, to locate marriage registers.

Marriage registers for Catholic marriages are held at the Diocesan Archives, Catholic Pastoral Centre in Rattray Street, Dunedin.

#### ◆ **Newspapers**

These are used to locate marriage notices and accounts of weddings. Check holdings of the closest local newspaper for the individuals, depending on the place of

marriage and/or residence, in the publications catalogue or ask staff to view the *Union List of Newspapers*.

Catholic marriage notices for the period 1873-1996 from the *New Zealand Tablet* and for the period 1861-1990 from the *Otago Daily Times* have been compiled by Michael Rombouts and these are located in the ready reference section. Ask staff to check the OASES database which contains marriage notices for the period 1848-1861 from newspapers published in Dunedin. Remember that it may take some days after the marriage for a notice or an account of the wedding to be published. Note the pattern each newspaper develops for the places where such items are usually located ie., in the ladies' news 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.

◆ **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 can 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. These notices are held at Archives New Zealand in Wellington for the period 1856-1956.

There is a single volume in the ready reference area containing an index to *Intentions to Marry 1861-1920* and a following, but separate, index to *Marriages at Registry Offices 1866-1920* held at the Balclutha Courthouse. Each section is organised alphabetically by surname and the surnames of spouses are provided. There is a reference number for each entry that refers to the district that the event took place. Each section has a list of the references at the front and which district they refer to.

◆ **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. If you know the date that a divorce took place you could check newspapers eg., *Otago Witness*, *New Zealand Truth* for details.