



Getting started

#1: personal and family sources of information

A member of the family may be in possession of an old family Bible. Often records of family births, deaths and marriages were entered on the special pages of family Bibles. Not all family members may be aware of the Bible's existence, so ask each relative in turn if they have knowledge of such a Bible.

Do not be put off if one member of the family tells you they know nothing about their parents because they never talked about their childhood. This is not necessarily so. Sometimes daughters were better informed than sons, probably because daughters worked in the home with their mothers and grandmothers and there was more opportunity for talking and sharing memories.

Be sure to explain why you are gathering the information, and what you intend to do with it. If you intend to publish a family history, you are required by law, (Privacy Act 1993), to show the person the information you will be printing on them.

When you visit relatives, ask questions. It may take several visits to ask all the questions you have. Questions you may like to consider include:

- full names, (including maiden name), date and place of marriage including the actual church where the ceremony was performed and where the reception was held;
- full names, dates and places of births and the church where baptisms were performed;
- full names, dates and places of deaths and the places of burial or cremation;
- enquire about newspaper cuttings relating to the family, such as birth, marriage or death notices, obituaries, civic honors, silver weddings, golden weddings and similar newsworthy events;
- the names of schools family members attended, during the years;
- where the family lived, when, were the houses owned or rented and the addresses;
- what businesses family members owned and if so, the trade name of the business, where was it located, when it was founded and when it operated;
- the occupations of the adult family members;
- the names of any family members who served in the armed services, which service and regiment, which war as well as when and where they served, their service medals and the location of any war graves;
- the names of any ancestors born outside the British Commonwealth, their country of birth and the date of their emigration to New Zealand and
- enquire about old passports because they contain not only a photograph but useful family information.

Don't forget to record the information you glean from others and from family possessions.