

Gen-Guide to
**NEW ZEALAND
ELECTORAL ROLLS**



A guide to the information you can expect to find in the rolls, where to locate them, and how to use them in your research.



New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc.

FAMILY HISTORY - PRESERVING OUR PAST FOR THE FUTURE



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Elections 1931.

The election results on the exterior of *Evening Post* building, Wellington

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NEW ZEALAND ELECTORAL ROLLS - a short summary

What do the records deal with?

Electoral rolls in New Zealand are compiled prior to parliamentary elections to record the details of those citizens entitled to vote in forthcoming elections. The main roll and supplement/s for each electorate are alphabetical by surname. Entries contain an entry number, surname, forename, address, occupation and/or qualification.

Where are the records found?

- The New Zealand Society of Genealogists' (NZSG) library and some NZSG Branch libraries.
- The National Library of New Zealand, Wellington; city, district and public libraries, university libraries and some museums.
- Central Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Wellington (rolls from 1928).
- More generic and updated websites such as FamilySearch, Ancestry and Findmypast.

How do you access the resource?

Rolls for individual electorates were originally published as hard copy in newspapers and many are available in libraries. The most complete national sets of rolls, titled *NZ Electoral Rolls* (year/s), are available in libraries on microfiche (1853–1981) and on various websites. From 1982, copies in book form are in some libraries and at the NZSG library in Panmure. The research team can provide look-ups for members.

Are there any indexes?

A national index of women on the 1893 Electoral Rolls, titled *1893 Women on First New Zealand Electoral Roll*, is available in libraries on microfiche. Some, but not all, years' rolls can be found on two websites www.Findmypast.com.au and www.Ancestry.com.au – however the treatment is variable. It is recommended that the websites be checked for the years they hold and the formats offered (whether indexes or images, and whether they are searchable or only browsable).

Also available are the 1881, 1893, 1896, 1911 and 1925 Electoral Rolls, combined as *New Zealand Elections - Five Significant Rolls* on DVD, and published under licence by the New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

Why consult this resource?

To confirm the full names of men, their residential address, occupation and qualifications at a given date. A legal description of land owned may be included in the qualification on pre-1880 rolls. From 1893 the full names, residential address and occupation of women are also recorded.

NEW ZEALAND ELECTORAL ROLLS

Information in New Zealand Electoral Rolls can be useful to family historians wishing to establish a forebear's residential location and occupation at a given time. An examination of main rolls, supplements, corrections and removals (deletions), for an extended time span, may reveal changes of address or occupation, and the names of other family members living at the same address.

From 1853 to 1864, European Rolls, later called General Rolls, were printed in Gazettes published by national and provincial governments or local newspapers. The names of men claiming entitlement to enrol, and for whom objections to their claims had been lodged, were published in the newspapers. Surviving newspaper listings have been included in the microfiche sets of the rolls titled *NZ Electoral Rolls 1853-1864*.

ELECTORAL ROLL, BAY OF ISLANDS DISTRICT, 1854			
Christian and Surnames	Place of Abode	Calling	Qualification
Adamson John	Russell	Butcher	Householder
Adamson John	Hokianga	Carpenter	Freehold estate, householder
Aubrey R.H	Hokianga	Sub-Collector Customs	Householder
Barber John	Paroa	Master Mariner	Freehold estate
Byron John	Russell	Coxwain Customs Boat	Freeholder
Baker William B	Waikare	Nurseryman	Ditto
Baker Charles	Paihia	Missionary	Ditto
Baker Charles P.	Waikare	Farmer	Ditto
Baker Ebenezer	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Busby James	Victoria	Merchant and Settler	Ditto
Bateman Thomas	Russell	Sub-Collector Customs	Ditto
Burrows Robert	Paihia	Missionary	Householder

Fig. 1: Bay of Islands Main Roll, 1854. Note that the surnames are not strictly alphabetical

From 1864-1887 rolls for each electorate were published annually in book form. From 1887 to 1981 they were published every three years, with some exceptions. Since 1981 rolls have been published annually and twice yearly in election years. Main and/or Supplementary Rolls for some electorates, pre-1893, have not survived. European or General Rolls published in anticipation of an election from 1893 have all survived.

Maori were entitled to vote by declaration and were not required to enrol until 1956. The *NZ Maori Voters' Roll 1908* lists those who voted in Northern, Eastern and Western Maori electorates. A list of Southern Maori voters for 1908 is in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. Those who enrolled in the four Maori electorates in 1919 were listed in *NZ Maori Electoral Rolls 1919*. No further Maori rolls were produced until 1949 from which date they were published under the same criteria as General Rolls and included in each set of rolls on fiche.

<p>A LIST of persons claiming to have their names inserted in the Lists of Voters for the Electoral District of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MARSDEN</p> <p>Allen Edward, Maungakaramea, household, lots 115 and 116, Maungakaramea block</p> <p>Aymes Charles, Maungakaramea, freehold, part of lot 15, Maungakaramea block</p> <p>Atkinson Alfred, Waitama, freehold, part of lot 4, Ruarangi block</p> <p>Aubrey Harcourt Richard, Wangarie Heads, free-hold, Otarakahae, Wangarei Heads, lot 10, 82 acres</p> <p>Baker George, Ahuroa, freehold, Ahuroa, 12 acres adjoining R. Dent's in his occupation</p> <p>Bethell John, Wairoa River, freehold, 80 acres land adjoining that occupied by Mr. Wilson</p>
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Fig. 2: Names of Claimants for Marsden Roll, 1862. The legal description of property identifies its location. *The Southern Cross*, 11 April 1862.

New Zealand had a system of Provincial Government from 1853 to 1876. Some Provincial Rolls with content similar to General Rolls have survived. Electors are listed alphabetically within wards (small geographic areas). Provincial Rolls are more time-consuming to search. Some Provincial Rolls had been bound with national rolls in the Parliamentary Library and the complete volumes were reproduced on the fiche sets of the national rolls.

Over a period of time an elector whose residential address was unchanged could be listed in different electorates because of electorate boundary changes. The *New Zealand Electoral Atlas* by Alan McRobie contains maps illustrating changes to electorate boundaries, 1853-1987. Also included are lists of electorates, their population, the number of registered electors and the dates of elections and by-elections.

The *Index to Places* (from 1938) or *Index to Places and Streets* (from 1981) links a place to an electorate. The index is published in book form before a general election and is usually with the rolls on library shelves. It has been reproduced on fiche 1 of the microfiche copies for 1938 and subsequent years. Use the *New Zealand Electoral Atlas* or the *Index to Places* to ascertain the electorate within which a known address is located.

The roll for each electorate is alphabetical by surname, with forename/s, address, qualification or occupation of those enrolled. Changes of address, occupation or status since the closure of the main roll are included in supplementary rolls; corrections or removals are published about one month before an election – see examples in Figs. 4 and 5.

A national re-enrolment is undertaken in the months before an election. Information on election year rolls may be more accurate than other years. It is important to read the enrolment and residential qualifications and the captions on the illustrations.

2 WAITEMATA – <i>Continued</i>				
No	Christian Name and Surname of each Elector at full length	Place of Abode	Nature of Qualification	Place where Property Situate, And Name and Description of Same.
32	Bass, John	Devonport	leasehold	House and allotment, Devonport, lot 20, section 2 Takapuna
33	Bates, James	Prior's Bush	freehold	Prior's Bush, head of Waitemata, land in his occupation
34	Beaty, Brittain	Aririmu	freehold	Aririmu, section 62
35	Beckham, Thomas	North Shore, flagstaff	freehold	Devonport; lot 9, North Shore
36	Beddoes, George	North Shore	freehold	North Shore; Takapuna, allotment 2, section 1
37	Beeston, John William	Takapuna	freehold	Takapuna ; Lot 4, 5 and 14 of section 9
38	Bell, Charles	Hobson street, Auckland	freehold	Pukeatua ; allotments 88, 103, 104, 110
39	Beetham, Albert	Mount Eden	freehold	Part of allotment 18A, section 2, Takapuna
40	Bell, Thomas Andrew	North Shore	freehold	Takapuna ; lot 2, section 1
41	Bennett, John Robert	Awaroa	household	Awaroa, Kaipapa ; dwelling
42	Bent, Robert	East Tamaki	freehold	Waitakerei, east part of lot 44
43	Berry, John	Taupaki, Muruwai	freehold	Taupaki Block ; lots 1, 2, 26 and 27
44	Berry, Peter	Pleasant Valley	household	Awaroa, Kaipara : dwelling
45	Bethel, Francis	Newmarket	freehold	Waitakerei East ; allotment 42

Fig. 3: An extract from the **Waitemata Main Roll, 1871-72**. Always record the entry number then check the corrections and removals (deletions) which are numerically listed.

Note: The elector's place of abode was not necessarily the same locality as his land. Look for other men with the same surname as your forebear who own or lease land with the same legal description. They may be relatives.

CHANGES TO THE RIGHT TO VOTE THAT OCCURRED OVER TIME

The system for electing members of the House of Representatives was instituted in 1853. Boundaries of the 24 electorates and the number of members for each were determined. Electorates were based on areas of European settlement. The parliamentary term was set as "five years and no longer". (*New Zealand Gazette*, 10 March 1853).

1853 Male British subjects of 21 years or more who:

Had owned property to the value of fifty pound or more for at least six months before the date set for the registration of electors

-OR-

Possessed leasehold land to the value of ten pounds, for at least three years before the date set for the registration of electors or owned a lease that had three years still to run

-OR-

Occupied property as a householder, where the annual rental was at least ten pound in an urban area, or five pound in a rural area, for at least six months before the date of registration.

(*continued on p. 8*)

122		HAWERA ROLL.	
No. on Roll.	Name in Full, Residence, Occupation, or Addition, and Property Qualification (if any)		
	<i>Errata et Corrigenda:</i>		
	—————		
	For Kaponga read Kapuni		
	428 and 432	For Auroa read Hawera	
	621	For Davey read David	
	673	For Anderson read Alderson	
	745	For Richard read Robert	
	756	For Canfield read Caufield	
	783	For Carrol, Ellen, read Carroll, Ellen Sheridan	
	1194	For Daniel read Daniels	

Fig. 4: Hawera Electoral Roll, Corrections, 1905-06. Even if an entry is not recorded on the roll, check the corrections. The name may have been incorrectly spelt.

Changes in Address			
The following changes in address, corresponding to the numbers indicated, have been made on the Main and No. 1 Supplementary Rolls of Electors since the same closed for printing on the 27th day of July, 1966, and 26th of October, 1966, respectively.			
1/04-34	Arthur St, Oamaru	31/24-38	Arun Street, Oamaru
1/05-34	Arthur St, Oamaru	31/25-38	Arun Street, Oamaru
1/42-	Lister Home, Waimate	31/36-8	Solway Street, Oamaru
2/18-18	Caledonian Road, Oamaru	31/37-	Widow
2/33-2a	Taward St, Oamaru	31/39-8	Solway Street, Oamaru
2/34-2a	Taward St, Oamaru	32/34-	Widow
3/43-55	Taward St, Oamaru	34/35-15	Clyde Street, Oamaru
3/48-55	Taward St, Oamaru	35/37-13	Coronation Street, Waimate

Fig. 5: Waitaki Electoral Roll, 1967 - Corrections. Note that the page and entry numbers only identify the entry to be corrected. Removals or deletions are identified similarly.

THE following Persons are objected to as not being entitled to have their Names retained on the List of voters for the Electoral District of MARSDEN : -				
Christian Name and Surname of each person objected to.	Place of Abode	Nature of the supposed Qualification.	Ground of Objection	Name and Place of Abode of Objector.
Burnett, James	Nelson	Freehold, Rutu, Wangarei, 100 acres adjoining Mr. R. Reyburn's	That he has sold his estate to Dr Perston	<u>Resident Magistrate's Office, Wangarei, 6th May, 1861.</u> H. R. AUBREY, Registration Officer. Harcourt R. Aubrey, Registration Officer, Wangarei Heads.
Charon, Gaston	Auckland	Leasehold Waitangi, Wangarei, 95 acres in his occupation	That at Present he holds no lease for this estate	
De Laincay, Horatio	Pataua	Household, dwelling at Pataua	That he is an Alien.	
Gordon, James	Ngunguru	Household, dwelling at Ngunguru	That he has left the colony	
Lynch, Peter	Ngunguru	Household, dwelling at Ngunguru	That he left the district of Marsden 18 months ago	
McDonald, James	Ngunguru	Household, dwelling at Ngunguru	That he left the district of Marsden 18 months ago	
McLeod, John	Waipu	Freehold, south branch Waipu, 40 acres in his occupation	That he holds no title for this land	

Fig. 6: Objections - Marsden Electoral Roll, 1861. Names of persons for whom objections have been lodged and reasons for the objection. *The Southern Cross*, 14 May 1861.

(Continued from p. 6)~

(1853) Prisoners and aliens (persons born outside the British Commonwealth who had not been naturalised) were not entitled to enrol.

Note 1: Prior to 1889, when the “one man, one vote” principle was enshrined in law, men could enrol for each property that met the above qualifications. There could therefore be multiple entries for one person in one or more electorates.

Note 2: It was not compulsory to enrol. The name of every person entitled to enrol was not necessarily recorded. Men enrolled in 1853-54 numbered 5,849 but the estimated European population (including women and children) was 33,793. Men enrolled in 1861-62 numbered 13,196 whereas the European population in the 1861 Census was 137,735.

1860 *Miners Franchise Act 1860* (abolished 1879) entitled a man who had held a miner's right continuously for three months to register as an elector. Miners who were not registered but met the criteria on Election Day were entitled to vote.

- 1867** Four Maori seats, created in 1867, were reaffirmed in 1876. Adult males over the age of 21 years with half or more Maori blood were eligible to vote for one of the four Maori seats. As they were not required to enrol, rolls were not printed. From 1867-1893, Maori males who met age, residential and property franchise provisions were entitled to enrol in the electorate where their property was located and have their names included on European rolls. (*New Zealand Electoral Atlas*, page 133).
- 1875** *Lodgers Franchise Act 1875* (abolished 1879). Enabled some tenants to enrol.
- 1879** *Qualifications of Electors Act 1879*. Entitlement to enrol was extended to all men over the age of 21, providing they were British subjects who either:
Owned property
-or-
Had lived in New Zealand at least one year and in an electorate for six months before registering as an elector.
These changes which came into effect in the 1880-81 rolls did not apply to Maori.
- 1889** Multiple voting was abolished and the law entitling 'one man, one vote' was passed.
- 1893** Residential qualification reduced from 6 months to 3 months.
Women (including Maori) were granted the right to vote. Note: More women are listed on the 1894 rolls than in 1893.
Men or women with half or more Maori blood could vote only in a Maori Electorate. Those with exactly half-Maori blood could vote in either a Maori or the General Electorate while people with less than half-Maori blood could vote only in the General Electorate. Persons voting in Maori Electorates were not required to enrol so published rolls do not exist.
- 1896** The qualification for registration of an elector changed with the repeal of the non-residential provision. Registration was determined solely on residential grounds. Persons of more than one-half Maori descent could vote only in one of the Maori Electorates.
- 1905-6, 1908, 1911, 1914 and 1922**
Separate rolls for 'Absent Voters' and 'Seamen' exist for some electorates.
- 1924** Enrolment for Europeans, 21 years and over, became compulsory. Prosecutions for failure to enrol are rare.
- 1949** Maori Rolls published under the same procedure as General Rolls from 1949.
- 1956** Enrolment for Maori, 21 years and over, became compulsory. Prosecutions for failure to enrol are rare.
- 1969** Age of enrolment reduced from 21 to 20 years of age.
- 1974** Legal definition of Maori was changed to enable persons of Maori descent to register on either a Maori or a General Roll according to their cultural identification.
- 1975** Age of enrolment reduced to 18 years. Voting rights granted to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who had resided in an electorate for one month.

1976 Residential period was extended to three months.

1985 Residential period reverted to one month.

2 NORTHERN MAORI ELECTORAL DISTRICT				
Name	Tribe	Hapu	Address	Sex
Aata Kingi	Ngapuhi	Ngati-Pakahu	Houhanga	M.
Ahenata Manihera	Ngapuhi	Ngati-Hineira	Te Ahuahu	F.
Ahinoama Mohi	Te Aupouri	Te Whanauuikau	Te Wharau	F.
Te Ahuahu Mangu	Ngapuhi	Ngati-te-Ara	Kopuru	M
Akarana Rewi	Ngapuhi	Te Uriroroi	Poroti	M
Akiaha Hini	Te Rarawa	Te Uriohua	Ngatikawa	M.
Akinihi Heiwari	Te Aupouri	Ngati-Hine	Manukau	F.
Akinihi Hemi	Ngapuhi	Ngati-Waiharo	Kaikohe	F
Akinihi Henare Kingi	Te Rarawa	Ngati-Haua	Peria	F.
Akinihi Hone	Ngapuhi	Ngati-Rua	Wainui	F.
Akinihi Hone	Ngapuhi	Te Uriotahi	Mangamuka	F.
Akinihi Ngatikopaki Tamehana	Ngapuhi	Te Uritaniwha	Peria	F.

Fig. 7: Northern Maori Voters' Roll, 1908. Names are not necessarily in surname order and a forename may be first. Check all possible combinations. Tribal affiliations were included until 1969.

ST KILDA MAIN ROLL	
Page	Name in full, Residence, and Occupation or Description
154	
Line	
	01 – Kitto, Bernice, 84 Musselburgh Rise, widow.
	02 – Kitto, Bridget Mary, 161 Bay View Road, married.
	03 – Kitto, Francis Edmond, 158 Hillhead Road, truck driver.
	04 – Kitto, Hannah Frances, 74 Loyalty Street, married.
	05 – Kitto, Hector Edward Eric, 161 Bay View Road, dairy employee.
	06 – Kitto, Laura Mary, 48 District Road, Macandrew Bay, married.
	07 – Kitto, Laurence Richard, 48 District Rd., Macandrew Bay, baker.
	08 – Kitto, Lesley Isobel, 158 Hillhead Road, married.
	09 – Kitto, Shirley Fay, 74 Loyalty Street, spinster.
	10 -. Kitto, Vera Ethel, 209 Tomahawk Road, widow.

Fig. 8: St Kilda Electoral Roll, 1960. See the 'KITTO' entries. From the addresses and occupations it seems there are three married couples and possibly a mother and daughter. Check all entries for the surname you are seeking to see if there are other entries with the same address. Record the page and entry number, and check the corrections and removals.

USING THE NEW ZEALAND ELECTORAL ROLLS

1. If you know a residential location, consult the *New Zealand Electoral Atlas* by Alan McRobie or (from 1938) the *Index to Places* for the required time period to identify the name of the electorate within which the address is situated.
2. When the residential address is unknown, the main and supplementary rolls for each electorate must be checked. The names and locations of electorates within specified time frames are listed in the Electoral Atlas and on fiche 1 of each set of the *NZ Electoral Rolls*.
-or-
Check the appropriate volume of *Wise's NZ Post Office Directory* for a possible address. Directories, 1879-1956, contain a national alphabetical listing of householders by surname (with forename initials), address and occupation. Up to two years may have elapsed between the collection of the information and the publication of the directory. Therefore, for example, check the 1930 directory listing and then the 1928 rolls. Always use the electoral rolls to verify forenames, address and occupation and search for other family members living at the address.
3. *NZ Electoral Rolls* – When consulting the microfiche copy, always read the introduction on fiche 1. Check the table of contents to find the number/s of the fiche containing the required electorate. Note whether there are supplementary rolls, corrections or removals for the electorate. These should also be checked.
 - Locate the required fiche and electorate and look for the name/s you are seeking.
 - Write down the full entry including the number.
 - Check for other persons with the same surname and address as your forebears.
 - On pre-1880 rolls a legal description of qualifying land may be recorded. Details of ownership of the property can then be checked with Land Information New Zealand.
 - Check all supplements, alterations and removals for the electorate.
 - The date the roll closed on either the first or last page of the roll may help establish a length of settlement in an electorate.
 - Official polling places (often with a name and address) are listed on fiche 1 of the 1865-1928 sets of rolls.
 - From 1981, as composite rolls were published each election year shortly before the election, supplements, corrections and removals became unnecessary.
 - When conducting a blanket search of the whole country for any given year it is important to ensure that every electorate has been checked. Sometimes the bound hard-copy sets in libraries are incomplete.

Note: There is provision under the Electoral Act for electors' names to be excluded from the printed rolls, at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer. See *An Introduction to New Zealand Government* by JB Ringer for more information.
4. *Electoral Rolls on disk*: In 2013, the NZSG published under licence a DVD containing full transcripts of five significant electoral rolls:
1881 - The first electoral roll for universal manhood suffrage.

- 1893 - The first electoral roll after women won the right to vote.
- 1896 - Three years after women's suffrage was granted, who were the women who enrolled again, who did not, and who did so for the first time?
- 1911 - The last electoral roll before the First World War and the 1918 influenza epidemic decimated the nation's families.
- 1925 - The first electoral roll after it became compulsory to register as a voter.

The rolls on this disk are fully searchable by name, given name, and year(s). Copies of the DVD can be purchased from the New Zealand Society of Genealogists' online shop at www.genealogy.org.nz

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