

LEIGHTON: GENEALOGIST

To build his family tree, Leighton used a variety of information resources. He needed the help of information guides, such as librarians and church activists, especially since not all information he needed was available online. He also discovered that cost can sometimes be a barrier to obtaining information.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

- Not online
- Online

Libraries

"The librarian who is in charge of this area... is a delightful fellow, very helpful and I've always found librarians helpful... he would suggest different things to look up and what to do... if I haven't got it, perhaps so-and-so has, rather than being the other way, if I haven't got it, to hell with you... they were happy to inter-loan books for me, which of course, I was familiar with the inter-loan system... I knew about the National Library and how to access them."

Leighton also searched directories, old telephone books, microfiche and microfilm of old newspapers, card index of births, deaths and marriages, "...And I was interested to read the minutes and see his actual signature on them, and through reading them, you got a feel for the man."

Land Information New Zealand

"I was getting the maps of the sections and which pieces of land were bought on which day, and that sort of thing."

Society of Freemasons, Grandmaster

Accessed meeting records and took photographs of names on wall related to his grandfather

Agency websites

- **National Library:** *"I would just be fishing. Put in [something] and see what came up."*

- **Department of Internal Affairs:** While Leighton felt that more information should be available online, such as wills, he found many useful online references, nonetheless: *"That's jolly good, there are lots of references... It's got information about various names, look up names. And I must say, this is fundamental but... strange names. If it were Smith [it would be easier and] much better to look for...you can see that somebody's sold a farm such and such and somebody wrote a will and it's recorded."*

- **Archives New Zealand:** His family obtained wills from Archives, *"I believe it's very simple and works very well... [like DIA] the wills are listed so you can know whose will."*

- **Reserve Bank:** A piece of research led him to the Reserve Bank website, which has a tool that calculates the value of money over time, *"I was very interested to know when my grandfather left a particular member of the family with a thousand pounds in 1915. What was it worth? What's a thousand pounds - \$2000 - well that's \$12,500 and the Reserve Bank calculate that. You know the Reserve Bank have got a calculator."*

Museums

He visited several local museums, most of which were staffed by volunteers, *"...the old courthouse... that must be the coldest building I've ever endured, and they have no money and they've got an area that's about as big as this house with a one bar heater on it! So again they are all volunteers... and they are very helpful there."* [The city museum, in particular,] *"...has a library and they've done a huge amount of work. Some of it overlaps with the... public library. A lot of it is quite different, there's a lot of landholdings and I did a lot of research into my grandfather's landholdings... They were very helpful there, and they have lists of immigrants and when they arrived."*

Another museum *"...had a lot of stuff about the shows, the agricultural shows and grandfather got first prize for pigs, best sow, best piglets... he was also on the board of the show committee."*

Google

He searched and found a coat of arms on Google, *"I got one which was nothing like the one I had on my wall."*

Genealogists in Australia and UK

Leighton found interesting relationships through the website of a genealogist in Melbourne who has put up her family tree, *"she's got them right back to 1650... I've got the family tree for that that I've worked out again with the aid of my cousins. She and I have decided that yes, there was this man who was a [surname] and we can trace him back right to a common ancestor with the line that comes down to my mother's family. But they're miles apart."*

"At the moment I'm dealing with two people in England... one lady has email, the other you have to go by post... you write a letter and it takes a fortnight to get there and a fortnight to come back - snail mail, these snails are really getting slow, but email I can send something and it's back in the morning."

Department of Internal Affairs

Leighton felt that it cost too much to obtain Birth, Death and Marriages certificates: *"I've got them in a file. They used to produce a document, I don't think it was a legal document, about births, deaths and marriages - I don't know about \$5 or something like that. They put it up to \$30 or \$35 which is prohibitive for most people. You would really only ask for that if you wanted [it for] some legal [purposes] - and I think that stuff should be on line. Okay it's a hassle for somebody to go and look it up, for me, you know one person, but once it's on line, it doesn't cost you anything... the Society of Genealogists have done a lot of work on these things because they are so costly for their members."*

Society of Genealogists

Leighton is part of the Society who advocates on behalf of genealogists concerning information access issues.

Anglican Church archives

He read synod minutes and other materials related to his grandfather.

Family

Family conversations, stories, by phone and in person, are ways in which Leighton collected and verified information.

Brother's Keeper genealogy software

Leighton's son pointed him to a genealogy shareware programme, which he then used to organise the information from his research.

