

Fact sheet: *researching Methodist church buildings and land*

Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives National Archive of the Methodist Church of New Zealand

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Hours: By appointment only. Closed weekends, public holidays, Christmas-New Year and Easter Tuesday

Sources of information about buildings and land held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives

In the nineteenth century, individual parishes or circuits owned property through a system of trustees. This property included churches, parsonages, halls, bare land, schools and cemeteries.

A deeds register, recording details of legal documents which were held in the Connexional Office in Christchurch, also documented ownership details, and dates of sale of properties. This information was also recorded in circuit schedule books and reported to Methodist Church of New Zealand Conference.

When the Property Division of the Methodist Church became responsible for coordinating building projects, it built up a sizable collection of architectural drawings and specifications which have now been transferred to the Methodist Archives. If a building is currently owned by the Methodist Church, it is advisable to first consult the Property Division for information.

If you are writing a Land Story, please contact the Connexional Office Property and Insurance section first for guidelines. Email WendyA@methodist.org.nz

Methodist Archives printed resources and indexes

- *A history of Methodism in New Zealand* by William Morley
- Wesley Historical Society publications index
- Church histories collection
- *Minutes of the New Zealand Methodist Conference* (published and on website)

In depth research using original documents at the Methodist Archives

- Photographs Collection
- Parish Archives Collection (including circuit schedule books)

- Personal Papers and Historical Records Collection
- Architectural Plans and Specifications Collection
- Land Stories Collection
- Rev Ralph Patchett's land research

Researching buildings and land

In some cases, land ownership information will have already been researched for church histories. Parishes may still hold minute books which have information about land. Copies of land titles may also be held.

Published church histories

Often these include information about land purchases and sales.

Parish Archives Collection

This is the collection of records created by churches or parishes kept in the Methodist Archives. It includes minute books for Property Trusts, Quarterly Meetings and circuit schedule books.

Circuit schedule books are hand-written and document property owned by the church or parish. Some date from the 1860s. They also refer to property deeds, which used to be sent to the Connexional Secretary (now called the General Secretary). A detailed list of the Parish Archives Collection is on the Methodist Church website http://www.methodist.org.nz/archives/archives_collection

Connexional Secretary's records held in the Methodist Archives

These records are part of the Administration Division Collection. They are designated restricted access and permission to see them may have to be granted by the General Secretary.



The Connexional Secretary kept registers recording details of church property. These large volumes list all property owned by the Wesleyan Church (which became called the Methodist Church of New Zealand in 1913). The registers date from about 1865 and list land and buildings. They were used to compile the yearly statistics for the Methodist Conference.

These registers ceased being used with the advent of computers in the 1970 and 1980s and information about land ownership in more modern times is recorded in the Administration Division database.

The Connexional Secretary also kept a deeds register, which recorded the date the property deed was issued and when it was given to Connexional Office care. Alongside these, a register of trustees was kept until about 1973. These registers are arranged by name of church or parish, and list trustees' names and dates of appointment.

Church Building and Loan Fund records

These minute books and accompanying files, can have information about property transactions. The minute books are not indexed and to find information requires reading through them.

Internet sources (as at 2021)

See also our fact sheet *internet sites for researching Methodist history*.

If any of the links stop working, just search for the name of the repository.

Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Collection

While few documents have been yet been digitised, our catalogue lists of the Archives Collection are available:

http://www.methodist.org.nz/archives/archives_collection

New Zealand Methodist newspapers 1870-1948

Digital copies of these can be word-searched. They can include information about births, marriages, deaths and obituaries:

<http://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/>

New Zealand newspapers

All newspapers can also include information about the New Zealand Methodist Church and its people. These can be searched on the National Library's PapersPast site :

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>

New Zealand Methodist publications

Many books have been digitised by international libraries or internet companies such as Google, which have information about the New Zealand Methodist Church. Of particular interest is William Morley's *A history of Methodism in New Zealand*:

<http://www.archive.org/details/historymethodis00morlgoog>

The Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, has also digitised publications about the history of the Methodist Church, mostly published by the Wesley Historical Society:

http://www.methodist.org.nz/organisations/wesley_historical_society/history/history_index

Repositories holding New Zealand Methodist archives and manuscripts

Alexander Turnbull Library

Holds records of joint or union parishes in the Wellington region, ministers' papers, Wesleyan missionary records, photographs and artworks.

<http://natlib.govt.nz/>

Auckland City Library Sir George Grey Collection

Holds records for Pitt Street Methodist Church, Hokianga Mission Station

<http://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/>

Hocken Heritage Collections

Holds records of Methodist parish archives for Otago and Southland, manuscripts of Methodist ministers, photographs

<http://hakena.otago.ac.nz/>

John Kinder Theological Library

Holds publications, manuscripts and archives, photographs relating to the Methodist Church

<http://www.kinderlibrary.ac.nz/>

National Library of New Zealand

Holds publications relating to the history of the Methodist Church of New Zealand

<http://natlib.govt.nz/>

Archives New Zealand

Holds the records of New Zealand Government departments including Lands and Survey Department and Land Information New Zealand

<http://archives.govt.nz/>

Information about records held in museums and community archives

Information can also be held in local libraries, archives and historical societies and it is worth making contact with local repositories.

Employing a professional historian to research land history

If you are unable to do this research, this is a site that has details of historians who can do this who are members of the Professional Historians of Aotearoa New Zealand:

<http://phanza.org.nz/>

Bibliography

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Morley, William. *The history of Methodism in New Zealand.* McKee & Co, Wellington. 1900