<u>NATAL ARCHIVES DEPOT</u>

GUIDE TO GENEALOGICAL SOURCES
AND RESEARCH

CONTENTS

PREFACE

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Perhaps the most obvious development in the field of genealogical
research during recent years has been the rapid growth in the
number of people doing this kind of research. A world-wide, or at
least Western-world wide, phenomenon, it is sharply reflected in
the Natal Archives Depot research statistics. Genealogical
researchers constitute by far the majority of researchers making
use of the Natal Archives Depot's facilities. This Guide is part
of an on-going attempt to accommodate expanding genealogical
research and is both practically and idealistically motivated. It
makes the staff's work easier if researchers are well-informed.
But at an idealistic level it promotes the realization of the
state archivist's fundamental goal, namely, providing an
efficient service to the public.

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J.L. Donaldson
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1. INTRODUCTION

Genealogical research is extremely time-consuming. Consequently, the Natal Archives Depot is not in a position to undertake it on behalf of researchers. However, assistance is provided in the reading-room and limited research is done for researchers living outside Pietermaritzburg. For more extensive assistance, it is suggested that the secretary of the local Genealogical Society be contacted. (See Section 4 for address).

The reading-room is open to members of the public between 08h00 and 16h00 on week-days. During the hours 12h15-13h15 documents cannot be requisitioned.

The Natal Archives Depot's street address is 231 Pietermaritz Street. Pietermaritz Street runs parallel to and is one block down from Church Street. The entrance to the building is approximately 100 metres from the Commercial Road - Pietermaritz Street intersection. The office telephone number is (0331) 24712.

2. GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 There is no comprehensive guide or inventory to genealogical sources in South Africa. Articles on the most important genealogical sources in the holdings of the Government Archives Depots in Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg and Windhoek have appeared in the South African Genealogical Society's quarterly journal <u>Familia</u> (see Section 5). This Society, established in 1964, undertakes research for members of the public at a fixed fee. (See Section 4 for Genealogical Society addresses and the addresses of the Government Archives Depots).

2.2 The Human Sciences Research Council's Institute for Historical Research established a section for genealogy in 1971 at the request of the "Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns" and with the approval of the Minister of National Education. This section supplies the public with information on the whereabouts of genealogical sources and has compiled a manual on how genealogical research should be undertaken in South Africa. The manual, entitled <u>Handbook for Genealogical Research in South Africa,</u> is by R.T.J. Lombard and is obtainable in bookshops or from the Council. (See Section 4 for address).

2.3 The fundamental source for genealogical research in South Africa is the deceased estate file. In terms of legislation, the Master of the Supreme Court in each province create and retain custody of estate files. However, for practical purposes each provincial Master has transferred his early estate files to the appropriate archives depot. The earliest dates of these files in each depot are as follows: Cape Archives Depot, 1686; Free State Archives Depot, 1836; Natal Archives Depot, 1846; Transvaal Archives Depot, 1873; and South West Africa Archives Depot, 1893. It should be noted that a deceased estate file was not always opened for each deceased person: before legislation made it compulsory, only substantial estates were handled in this way. Four other considerations should be noted. Firstly, it frequently happens that location of property rather than place of death determines which Master will handle a particular deceased estate file. Secondly, many African deceased estate files have been handled by magistrates or commissioners. (See Section 3.2.4). Thirdly, many Indian deceased estate files have been handled by the Protector of Indian Immigrants. (See Section 3.2.6). And fourthly, the files of certain spouses have been filed together.

2.4 The first uniform law for the registration of births, marriages and deaths for the whole of South Africa was the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration Act, No. 17 of 1923. Before this each colony/republic/province had its own legislation. In the Cape Colony the registration of births and deaths was made compulsory by Act No. 7 of 1894. However, provision was made during 1880 for the voluntary registration of births. Matrimonial Courts were established as early as 1804. The registration of marriages was governed by the Marriage Order in Council 1839 as amended by Act No. 16 of 1860. The Board of Orphan Masters requested church authorities in 1711 to submit the names of persons whose funerals they conducted. The earliest remaining registers date back to 1758.

The registration of births, marriages and deaths was first controlled by the Natal Colonial Government in

terms of Ordinance no. 17 of 1846. Law No. 16 of 1867 made provision for the registration of births and deaths. The registration of marriages was governed by the Marriage Order in Council of 1839 as applied to Natal by Ordinance No. 17 of 1846.

In the Orange Free State the registration of births was made compulsory by Proclamation No. 15 of 1902. The first enactment for the voluntary registration of births was contained in Ordinance No. 1 of 1879. Ordinance No. 1 of 1859 laid down that the church or magistrate who performed a marriage had to send a copy of the certificate to the government. Ordinance No. 4 of 1871 made it incumbent on the nearest relative to forward a signed death notice to the Master's Office together with the will, if available.

The earliest registration of births and deaths in the Transvaal was governed by Proclamation No. 27 of 1900 and by Ordinance No. 19 of 1906. The registration of White marriages was laid down by Law No. 3 of 1871, that of African marriages by Law No. 3 of 1897.

2.5   In terms of Act. No. 81 of 1963 (as amended) all birth, marriage and death records fall under the control of the Director General for Home Affairs. Apart from certain registers and indexes kept in the Intermediate Depot, Pretoria, and in the Natal Archives Depot (see Section 3.2.2), the Director General of Home Affairs retains custody of these records. Certificates can be obtained from him (Private Bag X114, Pretoria, 0001).

2.6   Prior to the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, records were kept by the churches. During the 17th and 18th centuries the Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) was the only officially recognised church in South Africa. The earliest baptismal, marriage and death registers in the keeping of the Dutch Reformed Church Archives (Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, 8001) date from c.1665. Photocopies of the originals are in the keeping of the Transvaal Archives Depot.

In 1778 freedom of public religious worship was granted to the Lutherans at the Cape. The marriage registers (1783-1890) and baptismal registers (1780-1888) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cape Town, are in the keeping of the Cape Archives Depot (reference A2362). Microfilm copies are in the custody of the Human Sciences Research Council's section for genealogy.

The birth, marriage and death registers kept by the various churches active in the South African colonies and republics during the 19th century constitute a vital source for genealogical research of the period.

3. GENEALOGICAL SOURCES IN THE NATAL ARCHIVES DEPOT

3.1 An increasingly important finding-aid for all researchers in the Natal Archives Depot is the computer. This provides access to a growing volume of data-coded material in the custody of the Government Archives Service (and to the holdings of institutions participating in the NAREM project).

3.2 **Official Sources**

3.2.1 Master of the Supreme Court (MSC)

The bulk of this archive is made up of estate files (deceased, insolvent, minor, assigned, etc.), which cover the period 1846-1969. By far the most important from a genealogical point of view are the deceased estate files. These contain inter alia a death notice, will, inventory, distribution accounts and correspondence. The death notice usually provides the following information about the deceased person: name; birthplace; nationality; names and addresses of parents; age; occupation; ordinary place of residence; marital status; name of surviving spouse; name(s) and approximate date of death of pre-deceased spouse(s); place of last marriage; date and place of death; and names of children (with date of birth of each minor). Deceased estates can be traced by computer or by the use of indexes.

3.2.2 Department of Home Affairs
Certain birth, marriage and death registers for Natal have been transferred with their indexes to the Natal Archives Depot from the Durban office of this Department. Lists of these registers are available in the reading-room. Researchers may only consult the indexes, but may obtain photostat copies of register entries. The following information is entered in the registers:

Birth Registers: date and place of birth; usual place of residence of parents or guardian; name; sex; place of marriage of parents; parents' names; birthplaces; ages; race and occupations.

Marriage Registers: date and place of marriage; couples' names; ages; marital status; professions and residences at time of marriage.

Death Registers: name; name of parents or guardian if under 10; sex; age; race; birthplace; marital status; occupation; date and place of death; usual place of residence; intended place of burial; cause of death; duration of disease or last illness; name of medical practitioner.

3.2.3 Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO)

There are several important genealogical sources in this archive:

Indexes to letters received and sent, 1846-1919.

Memorials with indexed registers, 1843-1876.

Marriage declarations, 1847-1888. These recorded marriages for which banns were not read out in a church.

Naturalisation registers, 1849-1888.

Further Natal naturalisation records for the periods 1881-1889 and 1902-1910 are in the possession of the Department of Home Affairs, Pretoria.

3.2.4 Magistrates' Archives

In the colonial period the administrative functions of magistrates were as important as their judicial functions. Consequently their archives are often rich in a wide range of material of value to genealogical researchers, e.g. land records, tax records, marriage and divorce registers, African estate files, licence records, correspondence, etc. And of course records of court proceedings can bring to light useful information.

3.2.5 European Immigration Department (EI)

The most important series for genealogical researchers in this archive are shipping registers (containing lists of passengers) for the period 1845-1876 and registers of immigrants for the period 1849-1911. Indexes are available for the former and for the latter covering the years 1849-1874 and 1887-1911.

3.2.6 Indian Immigration Department (II)

Assignment registers (1874-1911) record details of indenture for indentured Indian labourers. They are indexed. Other important series are marriage registers (1891-1963) and deceased estate files (1900-1961). Registers of indentured Indian immigrants (1860-1911) are still in the custody of the Department of Home Affairs, Durban. These registers contain inter alia the immigrant's colonial number, date of arrival, ship, name, father's name, age, sex, caste, district from which he/she comes, village, height, bodily marks, name of next-of-kin and relations accompanied. The University of Durban-Westville's documentation centre possesses microfilm copies of these registers.

3.2.7 Natal Mounted Police (NMP) and Natal Defence Records (NDR)

In these archives can be found muster, medal, enlistment and record of service rolls for the Natal Mounted Police, Natal Police and Natal Volunteer regiments.

3.2.8 Supreme Court (SC)

Of particular value to genealogical researchers are illiquid cases, containing divorce orders and usually marriage certificates as well. Those heard in Pietermaritzburg date back to 1846 and those heard in Durban to 1860.

3.3 Accessions

The Natal Archives Depot's collection of accessions is made up of over 1 600 donations incorporating a wide range of material. An indexed guide to 1 383 of the individual accessions is available to researchers. Many contain valuable genealogical source material. For example, the Bird Papers, made up of notes and reminiscences of early settlers compiled by the Principal Under Secretary in the Colonial Secretary's Office, Kit Bird, contain information on the history and genealogy of many of Natal's prominent settler families. To assist researchers, a card index to the Papers has been compiled. Another valuable accession is the Register of Military Graves in Natal, 1842-1913, prepared by S. Watt in 1986.

3.4 Publications

3.4.1 The collection of Natal colonial publications (NCP) contains several items of genealogical interest, _inter alia_ Civil Service Lists, Voters' List and indexed minutes of evidence to government commissions. Voters' Lists are also to be found in Natal Provincial Gazettes.

3.4.2 The Natal Archives Depot's library contains many books, pamphlets and periodicals obtained because of their genealogical value. Worth special mention are the series of Natal Almanacs and Directories, dating back to 1863. Most of the items of genealogical value are housed in the reading-room for the convenience of researchers.

3.5 Photograph Collection

The Natal Archives Depot's extensive photograph collection contains a large number of portraits. A portion of the collection is indexed.

ADDRESS LIST OF OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES, ARCHIVES DEPOTS, INSTITUTES AND BODIES WHICH HOUSE GENEALOGICAL SOURCES

4.1 Masters of the Supreme Court

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag X20584, Bloemfontein, 9300.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag X9018, Cape Town, 8000.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag 1010, Grahamstown, 6140.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag X5015, Kimberley, 8300.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag 9010, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag X60, Pretoria, 0001.

The Master of the Supreme Court, P/Bag 13190, Windhoek, 9100.

4.2 Government Archives Depots

The Chief, Archives Service, P/Bag 13250, Windhoek, 9100.

The Chief, Cape Archives Depot, P/Bag X9025, Cape Town, 8000.

The Chief, Central Archives Depot, P/Bag X236, Pretoria, 0001.

The Chief, Free State Archives Depot, P/Bag X20504, Bloemfontein, 9300.

The Chief, Natal Archives Depot, P/Bag X9012, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

The Chief, Transvaal Archives Depot, P/Bag X236, Pretoria, 0001.

Senior Staff Officer, SADF Archives, P.O. Box 289, Pretoria, 0001.

4.3 Church Archives Depots

The Archivist, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, P.O. Box 3171, Cape Town, 8000.

The Archivist, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, P.O. Box 398, Bloemfontein, 9300.

The Archivist, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, P.O. Box 649, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

The Archivist, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Synod Centre, P.O. Box 433, Pretoria, 0001.

The Archivist, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, P.O. Box 389, Windhoek, 9100.

The Archivist, Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk, 224 Jacob Mare Street, Pretoria, 0002.

Archives of the Gereformeerde Kerk, c/o The Librarian, P.U. for C.H.E., Potchefstroom, 2520.

Catholic Church Archives, c/o Archdiocese of Durban, 154 Gordon Rd., P.O. Box 47489, Greyville, 4023.

The Archivist, Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, P.O. Box 1639, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

4.4 <u>Genealogical Institutes in South Africa</u>

The President, Human Sciences Research Council, (Section for Genealogy), Private Bag X41, Pretoria, 0001.

The Hon. Secretary, Genealogical Society of South Africa, P.O. Box 3057, Coetzenburg, 7602.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (Free State Branch), P.O. Box 20075, Willows, 9320.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (Transvaal Branch), P.O. Box 20143, Alkantrant, 0005.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (Durban Branch), 54 Rockdale Avenue, Westville.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (Pietermaritzburg Branch), 60 Taunton Rd., Pietermaritzburg, 3201.

The Curator, Huguenot Memorial Museum, P.O. Box 37, French Hoek, 7690.

The Director, 1820 Settlers Museum, Somerset Street, Grahamstown, 6140.

Southern Africa Genealogical Library, P.O. Box 33642, Jeppestown, Johannesburg, 2043.

4.5 <u>SA Branch Libraries of the Genealogical Society of Utah</u>

Branch Genealogical Library, c/o Main and Grove Roads, Mowbray, Cape, 7705.

Branch Genealogical Library, 1 Hunter Street, Highlands, Johannesburg, 2198.

Branch Genealogical Library (No. 482), 144 Silverton Road, Berea, Durban, 4001.

4.6 <u>Overseas Repositories and Genealogical Institutes</u>

Ontario Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 66, Station "Q", Toronto 290, Ontario, Canada.

The Society of Genealogists, 37 Harrington Gardens, London S.W. 7, England.

Societe de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Francais, 54 Rue des Saints-Peres, F75007 Paris 7e, France.

The Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle, Dublin, Republic of Ireland.

Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Surrey, TW9 4DU, England.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6NY.