

TRACING YOUR ENGLISH PAUPER ANCESTORS

Why were there so many poor in England?

1. Population increase
2. Growth of the cities
3. The search for employment
4. Child labour
5. The housing shortage
6. Slum housing
7. Overcrowding
8. Destitution
9. Homeless children

Poor Law Records

- The Old Poor Law: 1601-1834 the poor were the responsibility of the parish or township.
- The New Poor Law: between 1834-1930 the poor were the responsibility of the Poor Law Unions.
- Old Poor Law Records-Records were kept in the "Parish Chest Records"
- The Old Poor Law Records that survive vary greatly in content and quality from county to county, parish to parish and quarter session court to quarter session court.
- Account Books –Account books are helpful because they often survive when other poor law papers do not. Look for Church Warden Accounts or Overseers Accounts or Vestry minutes.
- Rate Books – Compilation of taxes or rates collected and/or distributed.
- Examination papers - -Interview with the unwed mother or person that is being accessed
- Removal Orders- Papers to remove family or person to a different parish
- Bastardy Bonds-Bastardy records are valuable because they will often give the name of a child's father, even when the parish register baptism for that child does not
- Settlement Certificates- Legal settlement was the overlying principle of poor relief, and there were a number of regulations in place requiring proof that someone was legally in the parish.
- Apprenticeship Records - Apprenticeship indentures are helpful because they will often list a child's father and the child's age. They may also help in tracking down stray children.

<http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1851>

Poor Law Unions – Post 1834 - Workhouses

- What was the Workhouse? -The Workhouse was a building that was owned by local authorities to house those who by illness, disability, situation or age were unable to provide for themselves.
- Many illegitimate children were born in the workhouse and the weekly newspaper '*The Poor Law Union Gazette*' carried many adverts for missing mothers. Runs of the Gazette are housed at the British Library Newspapers <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/blnewscoll/>
- in Colindale with digital online editions available at the British Newspaper archives <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> covering 1857 to 1865.

Children’s Homes and Orphanages – www.Childrenshomes.org.uk and <http://www.formerchildrenshomes.org.uk/> and www.hiddenlives.org.uk

- Many children’s homes were run by national or local charities of which Barnardo’s is probably to best known. <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/index.htm>
- Records of their children’s homes will form part of each organizations archives.
- Access to such records may incur a charge and also be restricted to former inmates or , in case of individuals now deceased, their immediate descendants (subject to proof of death being provided).

Bankruptcies and Court Records

- Bankruptcy was common—there were 87,000 cases between 1780 and 1842, and in 1811 alone there were over 4,500 bankruptcies listed in The London Gazette, with petitions for winding-up companies and notices relating to meetings of creditors etc. The latter publication does have some notices dating back to 1684, and is indexed from 1790 – check British Newspaper archives
- Find My Past has a Bankrupt Directory from 1820-1843
- Find My Past also has a British Newspaper Index with the actual articles attached that you will have to pay a fee to view.

Which Poor Law Record Should I Look For?

If you want to:	Look for:
Trace where a family came from before the current parish of residence.	Settlement certificate, settlement examination, removal order
Trace when a family arrived in and left the parish.	Rate books
Find the father of an illegitimate child.	Parish register baptism, bastardy bond, bastardy examination, indemnification order
Find the father and/or age of a pauper child.	Apprenticeship indenture
Make up for the loss of other types of poor law records. Find information recorded nowhere else.	Overseers’ accounts, vestry minutes, churchwardens’ accounts

Online Sources

Bastardy Bonds- Ancestry.com \$, familysearch.org. (catalogue), Find MY Past.com \$

- www.londonlives.org (London Lives: Settlement/Bastardy Exams, Pauper Removal Orders)
- www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LIN/bastardycases.html (Lincolnshire Poor Law Bastardy Cases)
- www.midlandshistoricaldata.org (Warwickshire Poor Law Index)
- <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~spire/Yesterday/index.htm> (Yesterdays Journey, transcriptions dealing primarily with Derbyshire)
- www.hunimex.com/warwick/index.html (Pickard's Pink Pages for Warwickshire: Warwickshire bastard's index)
- www.sussexrecordsociety.org/plhome.asp (Database of Poor Law records for West Sussex)

including Settlement and Removal 1662-1835, bastard children and of the apprenticing and boarding out of pauper children)

- www.findmypast.co.uk (Lincolnshire Parish Bastardy Cases)
- [Gloucestershire Archives' Genealogical Database](http://www.gloUCEstershire.gov.uk/CalmView/) (Records of the Overseers of the Poor including settlement papers, pauper apprenticeships and bastardy documents. Also try searching for a named individual at the Gloucestershire Archives Online <http://www3.gloUCEstershire.gov.uk/CalmView/> which includes the General Personal Names Index and other specialist indexes)
- www.batharchives.co.uk/what_we_hold/records_for_family_history/bath_ancestors_database.aspx (Bath Record Office: Bath Ancestors Database: Register of Bastardy Orders, 1844-1885)
- www.thekeep.info/collections/getrecord/GB179_AAB_2_1 (East Sussex Record Office: Bastardy Bonds and Examinations. List of nearly 900 illegitimate children born to women in East Sussex between 1793 and 1834)
- www.onlineparishclerks.org.uk (Online Parish Clerks: The project is run by volunteers who collect and transcribe parish records for a chosen Parish and make the data available for free online. The range of information covered includes Apprentice Indentures, Census Returns, Parish Registers, Bastardy Bonds, Settlement Certificates & Removal Orders, Militia/Muster records, Directories, Land Tax Assessments, Workhouse/Poor Law records, Churchwardens Accounts, Tithe Apportionments, Wills, Poor Rate Payers, Lay Subsidies, Protestation Returns, MIs, Church Memorials and Hearth Tax records. Old parish maps and photos are often included)

Settlement Certificates and Removal Orders

- www.kentgen.com (Kent Family History Research: East & West Kent Settlement and Removal Index lookup service)
- Hertfordshire Names Online -0The site provides online access to the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies indexes including Removal Orders & Settlement Certificates. Searching the indexes is free but a charge is made for copies of a document. The indexes could also be of use for those with ancestors in the neighbouring counties of Bedford https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ufs/ufsmain?ebz=1_1487013298002&ebd=
- Gloucestershire Archives' Genealogical Database <http://www3.gloUCEstershire.gov.uk/CalmView/> Records of the Overseers of the Poor including settlement papers, pauper apprenticeships and bastardy documents. Also try searching for a named individual at the Gloucestershire Archives Online Catalogue, which includes the General Personal Names Index and other specialist indexes for Cambridgeshire, Essex & Middlesex)
- www.findmypast.co.uk (Devon, Plymouth & West Devon Parish Chest Records 1556-1950. Records from the parish chests of Plymouth and West Devon including: Examinations, Jury Lists, Settlement Papers, Bastardy Papers and Overseers and Churchwardens' Accounts)

Workhouse Records- Guide to Records

- <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/workhouse.asp>
- www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_studies/3812/poor_law_and_workhouse_records/1 (Manchester Archives and Local Studies: Poor Law and Workhouse Records)
- www.madaboutgenealogy.com/illegitimacy-documents (Mad About Genealogy: Illegitimacy Documents)

- https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Illegitimacy_in_England (FamilySearch Wiki: Illegitimacy)
- www.pricegen.com/resources/illegitimacy.htm (Bastardy or Illegitimacy in England)
- www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LIN/poorbastard.html (Poor Laws Bastardy Papers)
- www.londonlives.org/static/Bastardy.jsp (Researching Bastardy)
- www.londonlives.org/static/Poverty.jsp (Researching Poverty)
- www.londonlives.org/static/PoorLawOverview.jsp (The Poor Law and Charity: An Overview)
- www.londonlives.org/static/ThePoor.jsp (The Parish Poor)
- www.londonlives.org/static/Workhouses.jsp (Workhouses)
- **Ancestry.co.uk has the following records online**
- London Poor Law Records 1517 – 1973
- Dorset Poor Law Records 1511 – 1997
- Warwickshire Poor Law Records 1546 – 1904
- **FindMyPast.co.uk** - Cheshire Workhouse Records 1781 – 1910
- Derbyshire Workhouse Report 1842
- Manchester Workhouse Registers 1847 – 1881