

Family History - a bibliography



A family of seven members of the Cyclists' Touring Club, 1953

City of Westminster Archives Centre offers a large collection of reference materials to help support your family history research. This bibliography highlights some of our most useful and frequently consulted resources.

All books listed are located in our special 'Family History' section in the Archives Searchroom, unless otherwise indicated by **ED** (Enquiry Desk) or **QR** (Quick Reference). For assistance with finding any of the resources, please ask a member of our Searchroom staff.

General guides to resources and research methods

BEVAN, A. – *Tracing your ancestors at the National Archives*. 7th ed. Richmond: The National Archives, 2006. [929.3 BEV]

The family historian's definitive guide to accessing the National Archives' collections. Includes detailed descriptions of how to select and interpret records for particular areas of research, including tracing people by occupation, geographical area, institutions and events.

SWINFIELD, G. – *Smart family history: fast track your family research*. Kew: The National Archives, 2006. [929.107]

This pocket guide to family history is structured around life events and experiences, from birth, through schooling and employment, to passing away. With a focus on finding aids, the book aims to provide the quickest route to following your ancestor's trail.

BARRATT, N. – *Who do you think you are? encyclopedia of genealogy: the definitive guide to tracing your family history*. London: Harper Collins, 2008 [929.1072 BAR]

Easy-to-use handbook to family history, covering basic research tips. Focus on how to approach more complex areas of research, including migration, institutional records, and 'family secrets' such as illegitimacy, poverty and crime.

Quick Reference

Dates and times: a handbook for local historians. Salisbury: British Association for Local History, 1997 [941.0072] **QR**
Advice on how to date documents and guides to different dating systems, including reigns and religious calendars. Useful tables of regnal years.

RAYMOND, S. - **Words from wills and other probate records, 1500-1800: a glossary.** Bury : Federation of Family History Societies, 2004. [929.3]
A guide to terminology, with definitions given according to their probable use in probate records and wills.

SAUL, P. – **The family historian's enquire within.** 5th ed. Birmingham: Federation of Family History Societies, 1995. [929.103]
An encyclopaedic survey of historic terms, and information on institutions, sources and resources. Includes references to relevant sources for further information.

'Gibson guides' series [Family History pamphlets boxes]

An extremely useful guide to where records are located, published by the Federation of Family History Societies

Understanding the sources

HIGGS, E. – **A clearer sense of the census: the Victorian censuses and historical research.** London: HMSO, 1996. [312.0942]

This useful guide explains the historical context and structure of census returns, as well as how to interpret and use the data within them. Appendices include a table of census days for the 1841-1901 censuses and explanations of topographical terminology. Set out the strengths and limitations of the census as a historical source.

LUMAS, S. – **Making use of the census.** 4th ed. Kew: Public Record Office, 2002. [929.1]

Although based on accessing census returns at the Family Records Centre, which has since closed, this remains a handy guide to interpreting census data.

GRANNUM, K. & TAYLOR, N – **Wills and other probate records: a practical guide to researching your ancestors' last documents.** Kew: The National Archives, 2004. [929.341]

Grannum and Taylor explain how and by whom wills were made, and how to locate and interpret them today. Other probate records held by The National Archives, the British Library and the Bank of England are also covered.

RAYMOND, S. – **Words from wills and other probate records.** Bury: Federation of Family History Societies, 2004. [929.3]

This text explains the large number of administrative conventions given in wills.

Occupations

WATERS, C. – **A dictionary of old trades, titles and occupations.** Newbury, Berks.: Countryside Books, 2002. [331.700941 WAT] **ED**

Gives an easy-to-understand definition of nearly 4000 old trades, titles and occupations mentioned in historical records.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR – **A dictionary of occupational terms [...].** London: HMSO, 1927 [f603] **ED**

An extremely comprehensive dictionary of occupations, based on the classification issued with the 1921 census.

'My ancestors were...' series [Family History pamphlets boxes]

This excellent series from the Society of Genealogists consists of research guides on a wide variety of trades and occupations.

If you know your ancestor's occupation, looking at institutional records can open up new leads and reveal more detail about their working lives. Listed below are a few guides that offer guidance for researching particular occupations:

FOWLER, S. – *Tracing your army ancestors*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2006. [929.1]

WADE, S. – *Tracing your police ancestors*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2009. [929.1072 WAD]

EDWARDS, C. – *Railway records: a guide to sources*. Richmond: Public Record Office, 2001. [38.0941]

Migration, nationality, ethnicity and faith groups

CORY, K. – *Tracing your Scottish ancestry*. 3rd ed. Edinburgh: Polygon, 2004. [929.10720411]

Presents the sources available at the General Register Office of Scotland and National Archives of Scotland, including birth, marriage and death records, census returns and ecclesiastical records. With dedicated sections on heraldry, clans and tartans.

ADOLPH, A. – *Tracing your Irish family history*. London: Collins, 2007. [929.1 ADO]

Adolph has written this book for family historians who, having discovered ancestors who had emigrated from Ireland, wish to trace this line back further. A colourful and easy-to-read guide.

RAYMOND, S. – *Irish family history on the web: a directory*. 3rd ed. Bury: Family History Partnership, 2007.

Listings of useful websites by type of institution and type of source.

KERSHAW, R. – *Emigrants and expats: a guide to sources on UK emigration and residents overseas*. Richmond: Public Record Office, 2002. [929.341]

Covers passenger lists and British Overseas records, child emigration schemes, and records of transported prisoners. Not only covers records held by UK institutions, but also documents in record offices elsewhere in the world.

KERSHAW, R. & M. PEARSALL - *Family history on the move: where your ancestors went and why*. Kew: The National Archives, 2006. [929.103 KER]

Many people in Britain have incidences of migration in their family history, be this Huguenot ancestors arriving in England in the 17th century or relatives arriving on the SS Empire Windrush in 1948. This easy-to-use guide investigates why people crossed borders, and explains which sources are available for tracing migrant ancestors.

'My ancestors were...' series [Family History pamphlets boxes]

This excellent series from the Society of Genealogists consists of research guides on a wide variety of faith groups, ethnic groups, referring readers to relevant national and local sources for their specialised areas of interest.

GANDY, M. – *Tracing your catholic ancestry in England* (Basic Facts About... series). Bury: FFHS, 1998. [929.1072]

Catholic family history: a bibliography of general sources. London: Michael Gandy, 1996. [929.3016]

Catholic family history: a bibliography of local sources. London: Michael Gandy, 1996. [929.3016]

Gandy's guides, arranged in an easy-to-use and logical order, list the principal sources for tracing Catholic ancestors.

WENZERUL, R. – *Tracing your Jewish ancestors: a guide for family historians*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2008.

[929.1072 WEN]

A step-by-step guide to researching Jewish ancestry, as well as a handy directory to archives and museums with Jewish history sources both in the UK and abroad.

GRANNUM, G. – *Tracing your West Indian ancestors*. 2nd ed. Richmond: Public Record Office, 2002. [929.1]

Listings of British West Indies resources by country, life cycle records, military and colonial office records make this an indispensable guide to tracing West Indian ancestry.

Maps, plans, directories and gazetteers

The A to Z of Victorian London. Lymgne Castle: Harry Margary; Guildhall Library, 1987. [912.4211] QR
A bound and indexed facsimile edition of G.W. Bacon's large-scale map of London, 1888.

The A to Z of Regency London. Lymgne Castle: Harry Margary; Guildhall Library, 1985. [912.4211] QR
Facsimile of the Horwood map of London (Faden's edition 1813). Bound and indexed.

The A to Z of Georgian London. London Topographical Society, 1982. [912.4211] QR
A facsimile edition of John Rocque's map of London (1738- 1747). Bound and indexed.

The A to Z of Restoration London. London Topographical Society, 1992. [912.4211] QR
A bound and indexed facsimile of Ogilby and Morgans' 1676 survey of the City of London.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL – **Names of streets and places in the administrative county of London** [f942.11(64)] QR
Essential reference work. Includes Ordnance Survey map references, name changes and dates of changes to numbering and names.

LOCKIE, J. – **Topography of London: facsimile of John Lockie's Gazetteer, 1813.** (London Topographical Society Publication no. 148). London: LTS, 1994 [942.11(88)] ED
Lists 10,000 place names with detailed description of location. A handy tool for researching minor streets and places that are not indexed on contemporary London maps.

ELMES, J. – **A topographical dictionary of London[...].** London: Whittaker, Treacher and Arnott, 1831 [942.11(03)] ED
A gazetteer of London streets, buildings and businesses, with detailed references to location and, in some cases, historical notes.

Other family history sources at City of Westminster Archives Centre – a quick checklist

- London directories – Good coverage of commercial and residential streets from mid 19th century onwards; available on microfilm in the searchroom.
- Rate books – useful for tracing rate-paying occupants in Westminster.
- Electoral rolls – good 20th century coverage; published on an annual basis, and organised by ward and street.
- Records of institutions and businesses, including schools – searchable via our online catalogue WESTCAT: www.calmview.eu/Westminster/CalmView
- Newspapers – Source of information on coroner's inquests, which are otherwise closed to the public for 75 years
- Original prints and photographs – searchable via the card index in the Archives Search Room. Indexed primarily by street.

Useful websites

Westminster City Archives website – www.westminster.gov.uk/archives

The Westminster City Archives website offers in-depth listings and catalogues of its collections, and downloadable helpsheets for family historians.

Westminster Gateway to Websites – www.westminster.gov.uk/gateway

Use this webpage as a shortcut to a wealth of quality resources. As well as a dedicated Family History section, you can access a wide range of other valuable sources, including online newspaper archives and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, when you become a member of Westminster Libraries.

Ancestry – www.ancestry.com [Free in any Westminster Library or at Westminster Archives Centre]

A vast database for international family history, Ancestry includes digitised versions of national indexes of births, marriages and deaths from 1837 onwards (BMD), census returns for England and Wales, and a growing collection of records from parish registers.

FreeBMD – www.freebmd.org.uk

Provides free access to information from the General Register Office's BMD indexes.

Directgov – www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Registeringlifeevents

The General Register Office's pages on the Directgov website give detailed information on how to obtain and interpret civil registration records, as well as general research tips.

FamilySearch – www.familysearch.org

At the heart of the Family Search site is the International Genealogical Index, which is a growing source of references to baptism, marriage and burial records in parish registers. The site offers genealogists the opportunity to share their research with others, and gives contact and location details for the Mormons' network of Family History Centers.

National Archives – www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The UK government's official public archive, The National Archive's collections are some of the most extensive in the world. In addition to catalogues and guides to its own collections, The National Archives' website provides a number of useful databases for locating archival material in other UK archives, including Access 2 Archives and the National Register of Archives.

United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials – www.ukniwm.org.uk

A UK wide database of war memorials commemorating all conflicts, including WW1 and WW2

Mapco – www.mapco.org.uk

An outstanding online source for historic maps of London, with each map reproduced as a series of high quality digitized images.

BBC Family History – www.bbc.co.uk/familyhistory

If you are new to family history, this site provides plenty of advice on how to get started, and guidance to help you hone your research skills.



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