

Researching your Scottish Ancestors

The principal sources of information available concerning Scottish ancestry and where to find them are:

Statutory Records of Births Marriages and Deaths

General Register Office for Scotland, HM New Register House, Edinburgh houses births, marriages and deaths for the whole of Scotland. Categories also include divorces, civil partnerships, dissolutions, Minor Records (statutory register of overseas births, marriages, deaths & civil partnerships), and the Register of Corrected Entries (RCEs).

ScotlandsPeople website

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

holds indexes and images of Scottish births from 1855. Digital images are restricted as follows:

- Births - 100 years
- Marriages - 75 years
- Deaths - 50 years

Local Registrars hold local area records and may have computerised access to indexes and images for the whole of Scotland.

Searching Census Returns

General Register Office for Scotland, HM New Register House, Edinburgh holds the census returns for the whole of Scotland from 1841 - 1911. The 1921 census will be released in 2021. To obtain an official extract with

limited information from the 1939 Register, application should be made. Details are available on the National Records of Scotland site.

ScotlandsPeople website (pay to view) provides on-line access to the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 census indexes, and images of returns. Transcripts of the 1881 census are available on the site free of charge.

LDS Family History Centres have copies of census for 1841- 1891 on microfilm, digitised & put on line, CD-Rom of 1881 census national index, and access to pay to view sites for 1841 - 1901 censuses for Scotland. Only ScotlandsPeople provides access to the 1911 census.

Local libraries have access to internet pay to view family history sites for 1841 - 1901 censuses. They usually have microfilm copies of 1841-1901 censuses and the 1881 name index on microfiche for their own areas. Only ScotlandsPeople provides access to the 1911 census.

Searching Old Parish Registers

General Register Office for Scotland HM New Register House, Edinburgh holds the original registers for the whole of Scotland, with microfilm copies available for public scrutiny.

ScotlandsPeople website has indexes to,

and images of OPR births & baptisms and banns & marriages.

Local Registrars may have access to OPR indexes for whole of Scotland and images for own area.

LDS Family History Centres provide access to Family Search which was compiled from parish registers and other sources including births, baptisms, banns & marriages. Deaths & burials are not as well covered. On-line access is through www.familysearch.org.

Local libraries generally have OPR indexes on microfiche, images on microfilm for own area and access to pay to view family history sites.

Searching for Wills & Testaments and Valuations

National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House, Edinburgh hold the original registers of wills & testaments of both the Commissary and Sheriff Courts, except those of Orkney and Shetland Sheriff Courts, which are held locally.

ScotlandsPeople website contains indexes and images of Scottish Wills & Testaments 1513 - 1925. Wills & Testaments from 1925 - 1997 are not digitised, but may be consulted in the Historical Search Room. Indexes and Images of Valuation Rolls are available on the ScotlandsPeople site. The years are: 1855, 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, 1920, 1925 and 1930.

Other Sources of Information

National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House, Edinburgh has numerous documents of interest to family historians which include:

Wills and Testaments after 1925

Non-conformist church records.

Kirk session records of Church of Scotland (which may record cases of illegitimacy, irregular marriage and hire of the mortcloth for burial).

Sasine records (detailing changes in land ownership).

Register of Deeds (e.g. marriage contracts).

Services of Heirs (recording land inheritance).

Estate records.

Valuation rolls (record land valuation, showing proprietors and occupiers).

Court Records.

Maps.

Gifts and Deposits - archive material gifted to the NAS.

Staff records of industries which were nationalised (railways, coalmines).

Scotlands Places is a free online resource. It provides access to:

Maps, surveys, plans & photographs

Archaeological Records

Drawings

Tax Rolls

Ordnance Survey Name Books

Publications

Statistical Accounts

The 3 Statistical Accounts are free to view online.

(<https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home>)

Transcriptions of the earlier Accounts may be available, but the originals are preferable. Dates are: 1791-99, 1834-45, and 1951-1992

Local Archives

Hold a wide range of records pertaining to their own areas e.g. burial records, church records, Sasines, deeds, school and business records, local family and estate papers.

Local Authorities have responsibility for the records of cemeteries that are still in use, but may have put them online e.g. at Deceased Online

Local Libraries - besides those records already mentioned, they hold monumental inscription and burial records, trade directories, voters rolls, newspapers, obituaries, military records, Rolls of Honour, shipping records, Statistical Accounts and collections of local maps and photographs.

Local Family History Societies may additionally have gathered together invaluable resources on their own localities and are actively involved in recording local genealogical information, e.g. monumental inscriptions.

LFHHS Chorley Branch

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Researching Your Scottish Ancestors

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