



A Beginner's Guide to tracing your ancestors in the North East

Local Studies Genealogy Guide No. 1

Turn a new page



Newcastle Libraries

Newcastle
City Council 

Records available for genealogical research are varied in type and location. This guide includes the main sources which may be useful.

WARNING You may believe that tracing your ancestors is easy; it is not. Unless you are prepared to invest time, money and patience do not start.

FIRST STEPS

Read one or more of the many books on the subject. These outline the various kinds of records you will have to look at and the places in which they can be found.

Join an evening class on family history. You will get advice from someone who has experience of the problems and you will visit libraries and archives offices where their contents will be described to you.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Many records which you can see in libraries and archives (e.g. the Census) are a hundred years old and more. It is essential first of all to gather together as much information as you can on dates and places of births, marriages and deaths in your family. Ask your parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts for all the information they have, especially birth, marriage and death certificates, family bibles, old photographs etc.

ORIGINAL RECORDS

Civil Registration

If you have no family records, you will have to get the information from the records of civil registration which covers all births, marriages and deaths from 1837. These records are available for particular areas, from the local registrar's office (see telephone directory under REGISTRATION) or nationally from The General Register Office, www.gro.gov.uk. Both charge fees. Several libraries and Record Offices have the index to these records which is the -

General Register of Births, Marriages & Deaths (St. Catherine's House) Index
From **1st July 1837** all births, marriages and deaths occurring in England & Wales should be registered. In the early days many were not registered, however by **1875** penalties were introduced to compel registration.

Records of births, marriages and deaths are filed by year, in quarters ending March, June, September & December. 42 days are allowed to register a birth so try the following quarter if necessary.

Records are in alphabetical order within each quarter. A birth is set out as follows:-
**SURNAME. FORENAMES(S). SURNAME OF SPOUSE. REG. DISTRICT.
VOL. PAGE.**

From 1911 the maiden name of the mother is included after the forename. For marriages before 1912, both names should be searched since there is no indication of spouse's name. After 1912 spouse's name was introduced.

Church Records

If you know the church which your ancestors attended, you should be able to search its registers. For a full list of parish register transcripts held in the Local Studies collection see **Genealogy Guide No. 4**

Many other larger libraries have copies, or transcripts of parish registers for their area. Most of these end at 1812.

Church of England: most original registers are now in county record offices.

Those for parishes south of the Tyne are in Durham County Record Office, those north of the Tyne are in Northumberland Collections Service (Woodhorn). Tyne & Wear Record Office has microfilm copies of registers for areas within the metropolitan county of Tyne & Wear.

Non-conformist: some registers in record offices, others in churches.

Roman Catholic: Some are in county record offices but to date registers have normally been kept at churches, consult parish priest if records are not in the county record office.

Census Records

Potentially the most useful source for family history.

Records are available for **1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, & 1891.**

Returns are released after 100 years. They are arranged by registration sub- district within the city.

Returns for 1841 are difficult to read. The ages of adults are rounded down to the nearest 5 years. Place of birth is not recorded.

Returns from 1851-1891 provide precise details of age, status and place of birth.

For details of Census records held in the Local Studies collection, see **Genealogy Guide No. 2**

Durham Record Office, Tyne & Wear Record Office and Northumberland Collection Service all have returns for their respective areas.

Libraries in Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland & County Durham have returns for their own areas.

The Northumberland & Durham Family History Society have compiled a surname index to the **1851** census covering much of the area.

The Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), have compiled a surname index to the **1881** census arranged in A-Z sequences within each county.

Wills

Most wills and inventories for the diocese of Durham 1540-1858 (which includes the counties of Durham & Northumberland) are in the Archives and Special Collections, Durham University.

Wills for the peculiar of Hexham & Hexhamshire are at the Borthwick Institute, York.

Wills proved at Newcastle 1858-1949 are at Woodhorn.

(part indexed).

There is an index to wills proved at Newcastle, since the 1920's, in the Probate Registry Office, Centralofts, 1 Waterloo St, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE14AL, 0191 211 2170.

Many early wills have been transcribed & indexed, copies are at most major libraries.

The National Archives, has all wills proved in England & Wales from 1858, as well as wills for those who died overseas but had property here. There is an annual index.

Wills may mention descendants, collateral & ancestors. They can also be used to confirm or find deaths.

OTHER USEFUL SOURCES

International Genealogical Index (I.G.I.)

Compiled by the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) this index of christenings marriages & burials covers the whole world. Entries for the British Isles are arranged by county then surname and are in chronological order of event.

This index was not compiled as a research tool so should be used with caution. Errors have occurred so it is wise to check original registers as they may contain additional information.

Street/trade directories

Published for Newcastle from 1778-1968 and for rural areas from 1827-1968. They vary in quality, are selective in their listings and are often inaccurate. Larger libraries have collections although few of them are comprehensive.

Electoral Lists (i.e. voters' lists, burgess rolls, poll books)

Exist for Newcastle from 1722 (Parliamentary Elections)

Until the mid 1870's these are often arranged alphabetically by name.

From 1880 they are arranged by electoral ward then street name.

Up until 1918 they are selective.

They were not produced in 1915-1919 or 1940-44.

For details of electoral lists & poll books held in the Local Studies collection, see

Genealogy Guide No. 5

Most libraries & record offices have collections for their areas.

Newspapers

Carry notices of births, marriages and deaths from 1723.

To use these effectively dates of deaths etc. are required, since few newspapers are indexed.

Obituaries and reports of funerals can be useful sources of family information.

They are selective. See **Local Studies User Guide No. 2**

Marriage Indexes

Boyd's Marriage Index provides brief details of marriages for a large number of parishes in Northumberland & Durham for the period 1500-1812.

Various marriage indexes have been compiled for the local area covering the period 1813-1837.

NOTE

If you require research to be undertaken for you, there are professional researchers in the north-east who will undertake searches for a fee. See

Genealogy Guide No. 6

Genealogical Sources

1. PARISH REGISTER TRANSCRIPTS (WOOD BEQUEST)

Presented by Herbert Maxwell Wood, Fellow of the Society of Genealogists. Over 500 volumes of transcripts for some 160 parishes in Northumberland and Durham, for the period down to 1812. The coverage is not complete. Most of the transcripts were made by Wood. They are legible (some in typescript, some printed, but the majority hand written). Most are exact transcripts but have had the entries rearranged to bring surnames first.

The bequest includes registers of the births and baptisms for dissenting chapels in Newcastle upon Tyne in the 18th century. These have been supplemented by additions from others. See **Genealogy Guide No.5**

2. MARRIAGE INDEXES

***Boyd**

Northumberland and Durham sections (Northumberland 1572-1812, Durham 1538-1812). Note the index does not cover all parishes.

***Readdie**

An extension, in 2 volumes, of Boyd's Marriage Index for Northumberland for the period 1812-1837. Covers the parishes of Alwinton, Whittingham, Edlingham, Felton, Lesbury and all parishes to the north of these. Indexed under the male name.

***Rounce**

Covers all but 9 parishes in County Durham up to 1837 (male names only).

***Wallace**

1813-1837 (male). Covers Bellingham, Birtley, Chollerton, Corsenside, Elsdon, Falstone, Greystead, Kirkharle, Kirkwhelpington, Rothbury, Simonburn, Throckington, Thorneybum, Wark.

3. INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX (1.G.1.)

An index of christenings and marriages, on microfiche, prepared by the Church of the Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, U.S.A., (Mormons)

Entries are arranged by county in alphabetical name sequence, then in chronological order of event. We also hold the indexes for the following countries England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

4. PEDIGREES

Hodgson, John Crawford Manuscript Pedigrees of Families in Northumberland and Durham 12 vols.

Squirearchy and landed gentry are well represented with the professional classes to a lesser extent.

Most of the pedigrees cover the late 18th-early 19th centuries, some as far down as 1920.

Pedigrees include references to authorities, extracts from Wills, newspaper cuttings and letters to families concerning points in their genealogies. Although the handwriting is often minute and the pedigree crowded with detail they are quite illegible. Because of increased use, they have now been microfilmed and are normally only available in that form. However, members of the public with sight problems may still use the originals if care is exercised.

Each volume is indexed and there is a consolidated index by H. M. Wood, which is in Newcastle Records Committee. Miscellanea Volume. Part 2.

***Wood Pedigrees**

Can be used as a supplement to Hodgson. Well-known families are not so evident as in Hodgson. Reference to authorities are given.

Indexes: Newcastle Records Committee. Miscellanea Volume. Part 3.

5. WILLS

***Howe, J.J. Durham Wills 1576-1735. 6 Vols.**

Manuscript extracts from wills, administration bonds, volumes of visitation acts showing proof of wills and administration. Includes Northumberland.

Each volume is indexed.

***Hodgson, J.C. Northumberland Wills**

122 wills arranged alphabetically, with index, covering the late 18th-early 19th centuries. Wills are given in full, sometimes the originals.

6. CENSUS RETURNS

Microfilms of the returns (mainly for Newcastle) for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 with an index of street names

Surname indexes are available for 1851 & 1881.

See Genealogy Guide No. 2

7. OTHER SOURCES OF GENEALOGICAL INTEREST

*Inquisitions post mortem concerning local families

A collection of some 11 typescript and manuscript transcripts from chancery records made by J.W. Robinson

Includes an index to those now at the Diocesan Registry, Durham.

***Craster, H.H.E. Manuscript Index of the Northumbrian (i.e. Northumberland) Entries in the Recusancy Roles in the Public Record Office 2 vols. (1914) (SL272)**

Indexed rolls 1-82 for the period 1591-1691.

Entries give name, place, profession and date.

The library has an original, pencilled copy and a typescript copy.

***Lay Subsidy Roll for Northumberland. A..D. 1296**

Typescript copy.

Coverage of the County incomplete. North Tyneside, Redesdale, and Hexhamshire were excluded as not being under the direct control of the king's sheriff.

Now edited in translation by Dr C.W. Fraser published by the Society of Antiquaries as Vol.1 of their Record Series.

No index

***Freeman's List for Newcastle Upon Tyne 1409-1738, 1755-1836 2 vols. (L338.6)**

Manuscript lists arranged alphabetically by surname, sub-arranged chronologically within each letter.

Gives names and guild.

A shorter printed list with index was published in the Newcastle Records Committee Publications Vol. 3 and Vol. 6

***Registers and Poll Books (L324)**

Electoral registers showing every person qualified to vote were published from 1832.

Poll books which were issued after parliamentary elections were produced between 1691 and 1871.

The library holds various volumes mainly covering Newcastle. See **Genealogy Guide No. 5**

***Scott's Necrology 1808 - 1838**

Manuscript list, concerned principally with Newcastle people. The Library also has a typescript copy, with an index.

***Forster, Matthew Obituary**

Kept from the beginning of the 19th Century to 1860 and from that date by his son.

Arranged alphabetically by name and chronologically within the letters.

Following the main list is a partial alphabetical rearrangement of Scott's Necrology.

8. FAMILY PAPERS, INDIVIDUAL PEDIGREES AND EVIDENCES

***Radcliffe Letters 1798-1825 (L929.2 R125)**

Collection of letters addressed to William Radcliffe who was compiling a pedigree intended to prove that he and his brothers were heirs to James Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater's estates, hoping thereby to oust the Government's claim to the confiscated estates.

***Delaval Family**

***Robinson, John The Delaval Papers (1891) (L929.32 D343R)**

He rescued many of the papers from destruction. Gives extracts and a commentary on a selection of the papers illustrative of the more picturesque activities of the family and their part in the industrial development of Seaton Sluice.

For a history of this remarkable family consult -

Northumberland County History Vols. 8, 9 and 11 (rich in accurate genealogy)
(L942.82)

Archaeologia Aeliana 2nd Series Vol. 12, pp 215-228 (L913.06)

Askham, F. The Gay Delavals. Cape 1955 (describes the 18th century Delavals)
(L929.3 D343A)

Family papers for additional names are listed in the Local Studies card catalogue.

9. DURHAM MARRIAGE BONDS 1594-1815 15 Vols.

Transcribed by E. Dodds and J.W. Robinson from the Durham Consistory Court Act Books. Includes many Northumberland entries.

The Local Studies Collection has Wood's copy, which contains manuscript additions, mainly dates, places and parties to the subsequent marriages.

Each volume has place and name indexes and there is a consolidated index for women, 1662-1754.

10. FAMILY NOTICES

***Newcastle Courant 1723-1820 6 vols.**

Typescript copy of the notices appearing weekly.

Surnames underlined in red ink to facilitate reference.

Includes newspaper cuttings. Paper and typescript are in poor condition. Indexed.

***The Journal 1906, 1915-1920 6 Vols.** Indexed except Vol. for 1920.

11. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

The Local Studies Library contains c. 1,500 volumes of local newspapers and c.1,100 reels of microfilm. See User Guide No. 2

12. MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

*50 volumes covering 100 churchyards and burial grounds in Northumberland and Durham. See Genealogy Guide No. 3

***Dodds, E. Pedigrees from Stones in All Saints (Newcastle upon Tyne) Churchyard 3 vols.**

Manuscript pedigrees in rough alphabetical order, with some additions from the parish registers. The majority are short and lacking in detail.

All Saints was the most populous of the city's parishes.

***Hill, Holy Island Pedigrees**

A small collection of pedigrees for 17th-18th centuries.

No references to authorities.

Based mainly on Parish Registers and Monumental Inscriptions.

***Dand, M.H. and Hodgson, J.C. Epitaphs and Monumental Inscriptions of Warkworth Church and Churchyard**

The library has Hodgson's copy - a large paper edition, interleaved with manuscript pedigrees. Genealogical information is also given as marginalia. Indexed.

***Durham Genealogy (SL 929.2)**

Some 135 manuscript pedigrees by many hands, collected it seems by Robert Surtees of the History of Durham fame, a work noted for the accuracy of its pedigrees.

No authorities are given for the period 13th-17th centuries.

Includes some famous old families, e.g. Conyers, Harpyn, Trollop, Hiltons of Durham, Raddcliffes of Dilston (Northumberland), Fenwick of Brinkburn and Newcastle, Johnson of Twizell Northumberland)

No index.

13. WILLS

The Local Studies section holds the index to wills proved at Durham pre 1858. This covers Durham and Northumberland excluding Hexhamshire; a partial index to the wills proved at York has been completed by Dr Mitchell. The following may also be of interest:

***Robinson, J.V. Index of Durham Wills 1540-1812 (1915)**

Typescript index which attempts to make a list of all the wills in the Durham Probate Registry and wills of Durham people proved in other Probate courts; these form a second and subsidiary list.

Index entries include the dates of signature, proving (years only) and parish.

***Raine, I. Testamenta Dunelmensia 14 vols. in 2**

Transcribed by H. M. Wood from Canon Raine's manuscript volumes in Newcastle Society of Antiquaries Library.

Covers Northumberland and Durham.

Chronological order within each volume.

Sometimes the wills are given in full, but usually as abstracts only.

Index volumes

***Raine, J. Testament Eboracensia**

Contains many Northumberland and Durham wills. A better collection with indexes is given in various volumes of the Surtees Society (4, 30, 45, 53, 79, and 106).

Name Index.

14. ESTATE PAPERS, DEEDS ETC.

***Sevmour Bell Collection**

The collection was made by four members of the Bell family, land agents.

600 plans, charts, valuations, inventories, field survey books concerning estates in Northumberland, especially the Newcastle area. Includes some histories of estates.

Covers 18th-20th centuries.

***Gowland Manuscripts 4 vols.**

Collected by Ralph Gowland, M. P. for Durham, 1761.

Concerns collieries and estates in Durham. Includes lists of copyholds, memos concerning surface flooding and subsidence, grants of rights to sink and work pits, plans of workings for the period early 17th-18th centuries.

Papers grouped by places.

Vol.4 devoted to the estates of the Lilburne family of Sunderland.

No index.

*** Caley Papers 2 vols.**

A record of tithes, etc. Vol.1. Northumberland, Vol.2 Durham. Alphabetical by parish within each vol.

John Caley, 1763-1834, seems to have been a professional searcher, the papers are a result of his commissions. Consisting of copies of material in Chancery records, Augmentation office records, letters from incumbents, concerning grants of tithes, leases of tithes, grants, sales and lettings of church lands and property, including histories of tenure. Papers are factual, concise and legible.

No index.

***Matthew Wood Collection**

The business papers of a brewer in South Shields at the beginning of the 19th century.

Include deeds concerning property in South Shields and Westoe (its suburb). Calendared.

15. LOCAL HERALDRY

***An Original Heraldic Roll of Arms**

Painted in colour on vellum containing 160 shields of the arms of North country families. Anonymous manuscript list arranged alphabetically by family name giving heraldic descriptions. Place after name is rarely given.

Probably work of some Tudor Herald. Carefully drawn and coloured Crest of the bearer is a valuable addition to many of the shields.

Arranged into earls, barons and gentry. Scope: noblemen and gentry of the five northern counties, mainly belonging to Northumberland and Yorkshire. Noticeable absence of Durham arms.

Purpose of roll not evident, could have been a record of the arms associated with the 5th Earl of Northumberland and having to serve under him in time of war. He was Chief Commissioner of Array in the four northern counties 1511-1514, and Warden General of the Marches in 1522. His arms are given in full followed by those of his two deputies, the Earls of Westmorland and Cumberland.

Forms a valuable record of the armorials of those men of the north prominent in public life during the first half of the 16th century (at the time of Flodden, Pilgrimage of Grace, border raids).

For a detailed description see C. H. Hunter Blair Arms of families in Northumberland and Newcastle. etc. In Archaeologia Aeliana 3rd series Vol. 3.

16. MAPS

The Local Studies Collection contains thousands of maps in various styles and Formats. See **User Guide No. 5**

NOTE

The principal keys to the rich collection of local material housed in the Local Studies Library on the 6^d floor are:-

***Card Catalogue**

***Card Indexes**

to persons, places, subjects and pedigrees mentioned in local books and manuscripts, can be checked by staff. Please ask a member of staff for further information.

***Newcastle upon Tyne Public Libraries Committee and Newcastle upon Tyne Records Committee, Publications, Vol.9, A Volume of Miscellanea, 1930.**

Contains:-

Part I. List of transcripts of parish registers of Northumberland and Durham in the City Library.

Part 11. List of J.C. Hodgson's MS pedigrees of families in Northumberland and Durham in the City Library.

Part 111 Index to pedigrees recorded in local histories.

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