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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH A Jurisdictional Approach

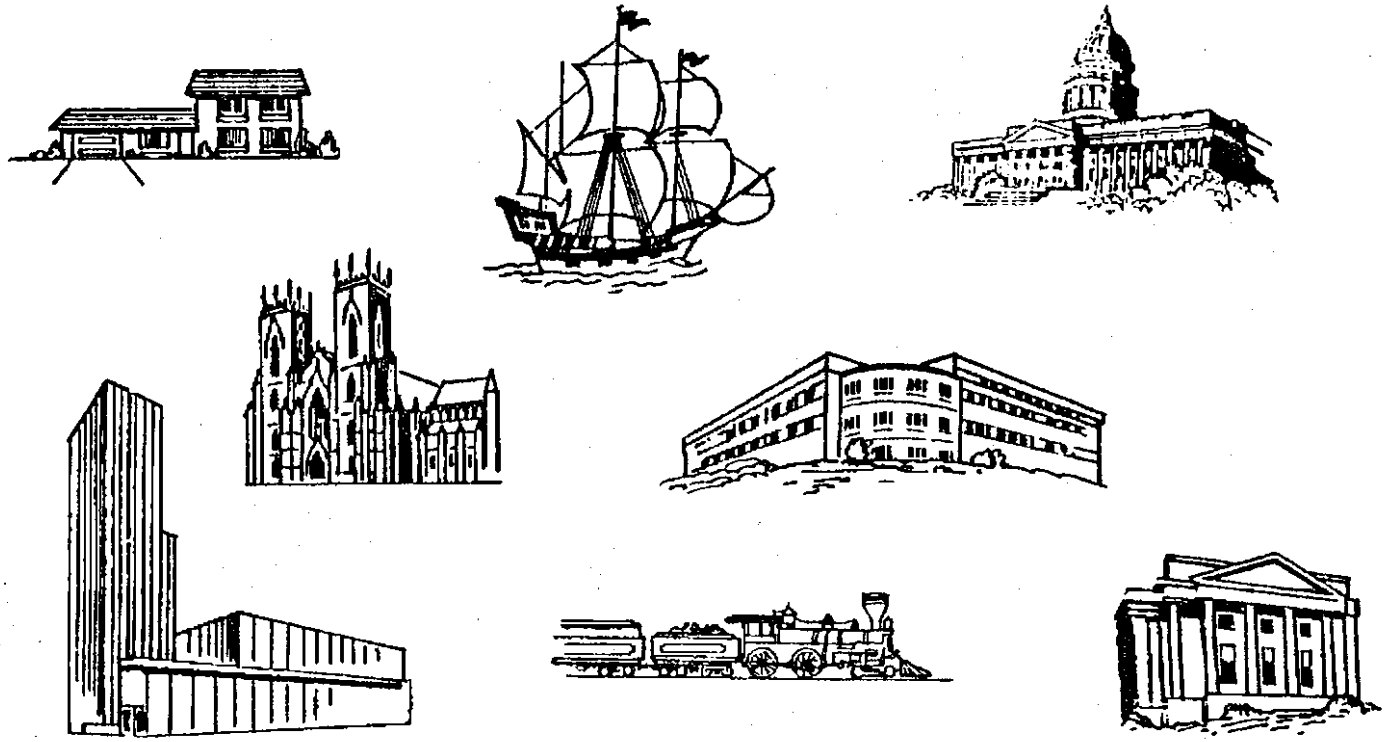
Many genealogists today have become subject to what has been called the "parish syndrome." They think in terms of parish records only. If these do not exist, they cannot identify their ancestry. Let us introduce a new concept in genealogical research-- **A Jurisdictional Approach**

What is a jurisdiction? It is a unit of government which exercises authority or control over the life, the liberty or the property of people within its boundaries. The town, the city, the village, the county, the borough, the central government, the church, the local newspaper--all these agencies are jurisdictions with varying amounts of control over life.

Each of these symbols represents a jurisdiction to which your ancestors were subject.

In order to make their control effective, each jurisdiction creates and preserves records. In times of revolt, one of the first targets of violence is the archive which houses these records--whether it be the private muniment room (records room) of a wealthy landowner or the public depository housing national records. For insurgents believe that destruction of records is destruction of control and they are basically correct.

If jurisdictions create and preserve records and if we need records to prove our ancestry, it makes sense to study the jurisdictions first to determine what they have preserved and then to search the records themselves. From this viewpoint, we see that the parish is only one of the many jurisdictions exercising control over our ancestors' lives and to search only that one is to compile assumed pedigrees.



Guides to Source Collections. It is possible for an American to supervise and direct his search for ancestry from his own home without ever seeing in person, the areas where his ancestors lived and and died. He owes a debt of gratitude to the numberless scholars, archivists and amateurs who have compiled guides and lists for his use. A selection of some most important are discussed below.

The Historical Manuscripts Commission was founded in 1869 to locate and describe the local and private record collections of England and Wales. Consult these references:

Baillie, H. M. G. "The Use of the Resources of the Historical Manuscripts Commission," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, III (1969), 462-66.

Beckham, Jessie E. "The British Historical Manuscripts Commission," *American Archivist*, VII (1944), 41-48.

Dopson, Laurence. "The Historical Manuscripts Commission," *History Today*. (1952).

Ellis, R. H. "The Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1869-1969," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, II (1962), 233-42.

"Historical Manuscripts Commission: Untraced Collections" *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, XIX (1944), 116-20.

Roberts, R. A. "Concerning the Historical Manuscripts Collections," *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 3rd S. IV (1910), 63-81.

The Commission is responsible for three important source aids:

1. **Reports and Calendars** (250 volumes to date) which contain extensive appendices of transcribed documents and catalogues in addition to source descriptions. Later reports briefly list the major documents and describe their contents but do not include transcripts. A full list of these reports is found in E.L.C. Mullins, *Texts and Calendars* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1958), 61-90 and in *Publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, Sectional List No. 17.* (H.M. S.O., 1967). Each volume is separately indexed and the entire series is indexed by general name and topographical entries.

2. **National Register of Archives** formed in 1945 to list and describe the local and private record holdings of England and Wales. A master list of all inventories is maintained in the search room at Quality House, London. An annual *Bulletin* includes accessions and migrations of manuscripts from one archive to another.[1] The following references present a more detailed description of this great finding tool:

Dopson, Lawrence. "Scotland's National Register of Archives," *Amateur Historian*, I (1954), 374-78.

Ranger, Felicity. "The National Register of Archives, 1945-1969," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, III (1969), 452-66.

3. **The Manorial Documents Register** gives a short description and location for manorial documents — court rolls, surveys, maps, tax and boundary records — arranged by name of manor and parish in which it is situated.

The registers of the Historical Manuscripts Commission become extremely important for jurisdictional research. The jurisdiction which exercises the greatest control over the lives, the liberty and the property of the people in Great Britain is the manor--the jurisdiction of the great landed families. Whether these landlords be ecclesiastical (monastery, cathedral, glebe or episcopal holdings), royal (Crown estates), mercantile (burgage lands or tenaments) or landed nobles, country gentlemen, freeholding yeomen or landed merchant--the records of that jurisdiction are usually private archives. While some have found their way into public record archives, the majority are still in possession of the families who created them.

Probate and Parish Research Guides. Before 1858, the probate process was in the hands of a maze of some 300 rival ecclesiastical courts. Often the areas covered by these bodies did not conform to civil boundaries. As a result, to locate the right court which probated an ancestor's estate is a trying and difficult task. The Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City, Utah has compiled a series of 42 research guides to probate courts to simplify the process. Each guide contains a full color map of the county, a description of the courts having probate jurisdiction in that county and a color key to locate the specific courts for any pedigree ancestor. Order:

Genealogical Society of the L.D.S. Church. "English Probate Jurisdictions." *Research Papers* Series A. 42 pamphlets.

The Genealogical Society has compiled a master computer index to a large number of parish registers of England, Scotland and Wales. These are available for searching in computer print-outs at the Library. For more complete information write for Research Paper Series F. #3. The Genealogical Society's Name Extraction Program and Computer Parish Listings (1972).

The National Index of Parish Registers. The Society of Genealogists in London is publishing a major reference tool. Its National Index will list the location of every extant register--original, manuscript, printed, photocopy--every Bishop's Transcript, and Roman Catholic and Non-Conformist register. This comprehensive, 12 volume series will be one of the most valuable aids ever compiled.

The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, Canterbury Kent, plans to index these registers to form a master-name-index to all church registers in Great Britain. A long-term project but one of immense value.

NATIONAL INDEX OF PARISH REGISTERS

The volumes of the National Index are provisionally scheduled below. The compilers reserve the right to alter the number or composition of the volumes. Those already published or in advanced preparation are asterisked.

*1. *Sources of Births, Marriages and Deaths before 1837. I.* Parish Registers, Marriage Licences, Monumental Inscriptions, Newspapers, Clandestine Marriages, Divorce, Medieval Sources, Other Records, General Bibliography.

*2. *Sources of Births, Marriages and Deaths before 1837. II.* The Nonconformist Denominations, Roman Catholics, Jews, the General Registry at the Heralds' College. Index to Vols. 1 and 2.

3. *South-East England.* Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Channel Isles.

4. *South-West England.* Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall.

*5. *South Midlands and Welsh Border.* Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire.

6. *North and East Midlands.* Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland.

7. *London and Home Counties North of the Thames.* London, Middlesex, Essex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire.

8. *Eastern England.* Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire.

9. *North-East England.* Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire.

10. *North-West England.* Cheshire, Cumberland, Lancashire, Westmorland, Isle of Man.

11. *Wales.*

*12. *Sources for Scottish Genealogy and Family History.* Historical Background, Parish Registers, Ancillary Sources, Nonconformists, Bibliography.

Published for the
SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

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London and Chichester

1A & 3A

Parish Records
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Choir Diaries
Church Books
Church Seatings
Clerks Notebooks
Daybooks
Delegates Records
Donation Lists
Fabric Repairs
Glebe Terriers
Penances
Pew Assignments
Pew Rents
Reading Room Registers

Registers
- Births
- Burials
- Bishops Transcripts
- Christenings
- Marriages
- Deaths

Removals
Sacramental Certificates
Scholars Lists
Tithe Records
Touching for King's Evil
Mission Societies
SPG (Soc for Propogation of the Gospel)
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- Brasses
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- Hatchments
- Memorials
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- Rolls
- Pastoral Register
- Daybook
- Accounts
- Diaries
- Correspondence
- Military Chapels
- Presentations
- Benefices
- Inductions
- Consecrations
- Licenses
- Character Vouchers
- Dependents
- Sermons
- Directories
- Yearbooks
- Insurance Fund
- Visitations

NON-CONFORMIST RECORDS

Account Books
Charities
Daybooks
Deceased Ministers
Diaries
Disciplinary Proceedings
Disownments
Magazines
Marriage Certificates
Membership Rolls
Memoirs
Memorials
Minute Books
Monumental Inscriptions
Letters
Mortuaries
Newspapers
Official Registers
Pensions

Registers
- Baptisms
- Births
- Burials
- Christenings
- Confirmations
- Marriages
- Deaths
- Banns

Removal Certificates
Reports
Special Collections
Subscription Lists
Sufferings Books
Testimonies
Trust Deeds
Yearbooks

Identifying Non-Conformists
- Archdeacon Visitations
- Churchwarden Presentments
- Episcopal Returns
- Episcopal Visitations
- Indemnity Rolls
- Licenses to Preach
- Oath Rolls
- Quarter Sessions Records
- Recusant Censuses
- Recusant Rolls
- Registration of Meetinghouses
- Returns of Meetinghouses
- Papists
- Sequestration Records

Biographies
Correspondence
Histories

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Parish Records
Civil Parish

Accounts
- Charity
- Constables
- Churchwardens
- Sextons
- Surveyors
- Vestry

Applications for relief
Causal books
Clothing Clubs
Correspondence
Charities
- Title deeds
- Accounts
- Letters
- Loose papers

Collection lists
Contracts
Committee reports
Bell ringing list
Bills
Burials in Woollen
Daybooks
Diaries
Donations
Easter books
Emigration papers
Fire brigades
Glebe terriers
Glebe leases
Indemnity certificates
Journals
Loan fund
Indentures
Lighting and paving inspectors
Marriage registers
Militia lists
Marriage banns
Marriage licenses
Orphans
Parish histories
Parish officers biographies
Preacher lists
Provident Clubs
Preservation of the peace orders
Protestation Oath rolls
Perambulations
Processioning lists
Paupers lists
Photographs

Poor Law records
- Apprentices
- Bastardy bonds
- Bastardy examinations
- Examinations
- Overseers accounts
- Overseers minutes
- Pauper lists
  - Deserted women
  - Foundlings
  - Orphans
  - Pauper lunatics
  - Vagrants
- Rate books
- Removals
- Settlement certificates
- Transportations

Rate lists
- Church
- Constables
- Lighting
- Militia
- Paving
- Poor
- Roads
- Watch

Relief of militiamen's wives
Recusant rolls
Papists lists
Sextons' burials
Sanitation records
Surveys
Subscription lists
School records
- Admissions
- Applications
- Apprentices
- Creed registers
- Daybooks
- Death registers
- Discharges
- Enlistments
- Minutes
- Logbooks

Watch
Water rights
Vaccination lists
Vestry records
- Accounts
- Letters
- Bills
- Minutes
- Orders

Workhouse records
- Almshouse
- Workhouse
- Accounts
- Admissions
- Births
- Boardingout registers
- Burials
- Burials in woollen
- Creed registers
- Christenings
- Deaths
- Discharges
- Marriage licenses
- Marriages
- Minutes
- Outdoor relief
- Pension petitions
- Relief lists
- Residents registers

Daybooks

1A & 3A

Resources materials prepared to accompany presentation on English Poor Law Records and How to Use Them by Arlene H. Eakle.
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