

House Histories Workshop

Blennerhasset Village Hall Thursday 14th March at 7.00pm

How to Research House Histories using the Census

Researching House Histories is usually relatively simple nowadays. Copies of the Census for Blennerhasset and surrounding areas exist from 1911 back to 1841. Most of the documents that survive are the Enumerators' Books in which they compiled the individual Household Schedules that they collected on Census night from individual households.

As these are referenced by schedule numbers, which are in effect the distribution list for blank Schedule Forms, the completed Books are a house-to-house record of who lived where, how old they were, their relationship to the head of household, and what they did for a living.

However, the further back in time we go the more 'primitive' each Census is, as they evolved in complexity over time. Thus the 1841 Census – the earliest that survives – recorded individuals not by age but by age band, and recorded where they were born only in terms of whether in or out of the county, and if out whether in Scotland, Wales, Ireland or other.

The other issue going back in time is that modern methods for addressing properties are absent. Thus in the case of Blennerhasset, many of the earliest records contain no address information.

One way of working around this is to look for repeat patterns of households between Censuses. If the Smiths were living 3 doors away from the Browns, and the Browns seven doors away from the Jones over a number of censuses, the chance that they had all moved homes in between but kept the same pattern is fairly remote. Counting back from fixed location – often a pub or named building – helps locate all the households to particular dwellings with a reasonable degree of probability.

It is generally best to work backwards in time from the most certain records to the less so.

Finding Blennerhasset in the Censuses

As a small settlement, Blennerhasset has belonged to clusters of settlements within civil parishes, and these have changed over time. My research reveals the following aid to finding 'house Histories'.

Census	Registration district	Civil Parish
1911	Wigton	Blennerhasset and Kirkland
1901	Wigton	Blennerhasset and Kirkland
1891	Wigton	Blenner Hasset and Kirkland
1881	Wigton	Blennerhasset and Kirkland
1871	Wigton	Blennerhasset and Kirkland
1861	Wigton	Blennerhasset & Blennerhasset and Kirkland
1851	Wigton	Blennerhasset
1841	Wigton	Torpenhow

Researching from Home via the Internet

Online Resources (Free)

www.familysearch.org

international database of the Church of the Latter Day Saints

www.freebmd.org.uk

national index of Births, Marriages & Deaths (BMDs) 1837 on for England & Wales

www.cumbriabmd.org.uk

as above but specific to Cumbria – but only Barrow and Millom for now

www.genuki.org.uk

general useful references especially into church records & histories

www.ukbmd.org.uk

general portal into other sites

www.old-maps.co.uk

archive of old UK maps 1800s on (note: not downloadable for free)

Online Resources (£)

www.findmypast.co.uk

Census/BMDs/other records for UK 1500's on (excludes many Scottish records)

www.scotlandspeople.org.uk

as above for Scotland

www.ancestry.co.uk

US-centred source of UK and international genealogical records (note: Local Libraries have subscriptions - £1 per hour to access/ free first hour for OAPs per session)

Tips

- Start to find your way around using the free resources and/or library access
- To learn about what the Census contains and how to search it, visit www.familysearch.org which allows a free search of the 1881 UK Census
- Irish Records are hard to find. All Censuses prior to 1901 were either pulped or destroyed during the Irish Civil War. The 1901 & 1911 Censuses for the whole of Ireland are freely available at www.census.nationalarchives.ie

Researching Further Away – the Carlisle Archive Centre

Cumbria Archive Centre

Lady Gillford's House

Petteril Bank Road

Carlisle

CA1 3AJ

Tel:01228 227285 or 227284

Email:carlisle.archives@cumbria.gov.uk

Sources available at this Archive Centre include:

Original documents from the twelfth century to the present day, relating to the part of the historic county of Cumberland which is north of the River Derwent.

The areas around Carlisle, Keswick, Penrith and Maryport are amongst those for which material is available.

Carlisle Archive Centre holds the archives of:

Church of England Parishes **

Nonconformist Churches **

Local Authorities Diocese of Carlisle,

Dean & Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral,

Schools, Businesses and Industries,

Families and Landed Estates Civil Parishes,

Solicitors,

Societies,

Official records

Other material include:

I.G.I. for the Northern Counties **

Census returns 1841-1901 for Cumberland**

1881 census transcript and index to Cumberland, Westmorland and the Isle of Man**

Newspapers on microfilm only (Carlisle Patriot 1815-1910 and Penrith Observer 1861-1906 only)**

Ordnance Survey maps Probate records, 1564-1941**

Trade Directories

** Many of these records are available on microfilm or fiche

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