

# Scottish Research

## An Introduction with Internet Resources

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### Statutory Registers

Statutory registration began in 1855. Although the information collected changed throughout the years, the following list gives a basic idea of the information you might expect.

**Birth Registration** - Child: name, sex, date, time and place – Mother: name, maiden name, occupation\*– Father: name, rank, occupation – Parents marriage 1855, 1861+ – Informant

**Death Registration** – Deceased: name, sex, marital status, birth [1966+], occupation, date/time/place of death, age, cause of death, duration of disease [1855-1964]– Parents: Name,rank, occupation, if alive – Spouse: Name – Informant

**Marriage Registration** – Bridegroom: name, marital status, age or birth date, rank or occupation, residence– Bride: name, marital status, age or birth date, rank or occupation – Couple: date and place of marriage, if related– Parents: names, mother's surnames, rank or profession, occupation, if living– Witnesses & Celebrant & type.

Statutory Registers are held at: New Register House, 3 West Register Street, Edinburgh, Scotland EH1 3YT  
[www.groni.gov.uk](http://www.groni.gov.uk)

There is a **Register of Corrected Entries** [RCE] available. Corrected entries might include such items as added given names and Surname of father when the parents weren't married. You will also find **overseas registrations, marine registrations** etc. at New Register house.

Statutory Registrations are available and fully indexed online at <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/>. Scotland follows the general principle of releasing births records after 100 years, marriages records after 75 years and death records after 50 years, as a protection of the interests of the living. Later records are available from New Register House, contact them directly for information on how to obtain a copy. This is a pay per view site, records are not free, but the cost is minimal. You can download clear digital images of the actual documents for less than \$2 per record. The RCE is not yet digitalized, but you can order the revised entries.

### Old Parish Registers

The parish registers [OPR] of the Established Church of Scotland for the period of 1533-1854/6 have been compiled and copies are available from New Register House. The birth/baptismal and marriage records have been fully indexed. Indexes are available on microfiche from the Family History Library [available at both Menlo Park FHL and Santa Clara FHL].

Unfortunately it was not compulsory to register births, marriages/banns or death. It is estimated that up to 70% of events went unregistered. See Church Records for possible dissenting record sources.

The index to Old Parish Registers and images are available at <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/>

**Family History Library** – The Family History Library FHL has some but not all of the Old Parish Register index available online at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). The site also includes many of the statutory registrations from 1855 to 1875. The search features of the site are good, but unfortunately the records are incomplete. The catalog of the Family History Library is also available for searching from this website. Many Scottish records have been filmed and can be ordered and viewed at your local FHC

### Census Records

#### 1841-1901

Although the census began in Scotland in 1801 few records remain for those taken before 1841. Readily available records cover the years 1841 to 1901. Release of census follows the same general rules as birth records, therefore we will not see the 1911 census until 2011. Census Records, Population and Vital Statistics data are available at: Ladywell House, Ladywell Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH12 7TF. Microfilm of the census records is available at New Register House and from the FHL.

While the census is similar to that of England there are some minor differences such as an indication of Gaelic speakers.

1841 to 1901 census images are available on <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/> . Returns for 1881 are indexed and a transcription of the return is available. Indexes to some of the early census records of Scotland [various counties] can be found at <http://freecen.rootsweb.com> and <http://www.censusfinder.com/scotland.htm>. The census finder site will also lead you to directories, church records and other genealogical treasures.

## Church Records

The records of the Established Church of Scotland [Presbyterian] extend beyond births, marriages and deaths. The **Kirk Session** dealt with the moral behavior of parishioners. You can find records of adulterers, fornicators, drunks, illegitimate births, and more. The church was also responsible for supporting the poor, prior to 1845, and often the schools within their jurisdictions.

Records identify church elders, communicants, heads of families within the parish, the poor and teachers. Records covering the years 1593 to 1996 are available for researchers through the National Archives of Scotland [ HM General Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YY] These might include records of illegitimate births, mortcloth accounts, pre-1845 poor relief, list of inhabitants and communicants prior to 1845. The FHL has also filmed many church records.

Scotland Archives Network [SCAN] has begun the digitalization of the Kirk Session and Presbytery records. The project is expected to take approximately seven years. You can keep abreast of the progress at <http://www.scan.org.uk> The National Presbyterian Museum website at <http://presbyterian.ca/resources/links> has links to The Church of Scotland as well as other Presbyterian churches.

*This day a motion being made in the session after consideration of the petition following viz the William Gullie Carter at Bonnyton, John Bonnyton son of the said William Gullie Carter, and William Glover Bright Clerk, and the said William Gullie Carter, as the said persons instrument, as the said William Gullie Carter applying under the ruling he had been Secretary in case of this marriage to times where he has the next Sabbath in order to procure the said*

*Gladsmuir, Glasgow & Sec.*  
*After prayer Substant. Min. to G.*  
*This day William Gullie appeared*  
*married Elizabeth at Glasgow 27th*

Gladsmuir Kirk Session Minute  
Book 1737-1779

The Established Church of Scotland was not universally embraced by the populace. Prior to 1843 there were many dissenting churches and in 1843 there was a major breakaway to form a free church. The following list will help identify available records for some of the dissenting churches that are available at the National Archives of Scotland (CH...). Unfortunately, most of these records are not indexed.

### Secession Churches

There are records of breakaway Presbyterian Churches dating from 1678 to 1993 housed at NAS. There are many pre 1855 baptisms in the records.

### Episcopal Church

Records of the Episcopal Church in Scotland date from around 1743 to the present. Congregational records include baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials and service. There might be ecclesiastical drawings and photographs. You will find copies of the many of the records at NAS.

The website of the Scottish Episcopal Church is located at <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/>

### Quakers

Religious Society of Friends, 1569-1965 (CH10) Earliest papers are title deeds. Minutes, including General Scottish meetings from 1786; baptisms, marriages, burials, chiefly for Edinburgh and Aberdeen areas; and other miscellaneous papers. A typescript index of Quaker births, marriages and deaths, [c.1622]-1890 is available in the Historical Search Room at General Register House.

### Methodists

Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Churches, Circuits and Synods, 1764-1994 (CH11). Methodist activity centered on the circuit (equivalent to a presbytery), not on individual churches or chapels. Minutes, baptisms, membership lists, seat rents, Sunday school attendance, correspondence, and other miscellaneous papers are in the collections at NAS.

The University of Dundee Archives has a discussion of Methodist records at <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/archives/ms026.htm>

### Congregationalists

Records of the Congregational Union of Scotland Church, 1821-1983 (NAS CH14) include minutes; baptisms, marriages and

burials; communicants; membership rolls; seat rents; and other miscellaneous papers.

### Unitarians

NAS holds records of the Unitarian Church, 1792-1975 (CH15). They principally relate to St Mark's Unitarian Chapel, Edinburgh and include Minutes; baptisms, marriages, deaths; membership rolls; seat rents; and other papers.

### Roman Catholic Church

Parish registers exist for the years 1703-1970 [prior to 1830 it was dangerous for the Catholics to keep records, so registers are more inclusive after that date.] NAS has photocopies of many of the registers[RH21] but the originals are most likely held at the Scottish Catholic Archives, Columba House, 16 Drummond Street, Edinburgh EH3 6PL. You might also want to consult the lists of Papists noted by Church of Scotland ministers in their Parishes. These lists dated 1700-1714 are contained in NAS record groups CH1/2/5, 29-34. There is a list of the records in *The Scottish Genealogist* xxxviii no 4 [1991] page 142, but it has some errors.

You can find Scottish Catholic Archives at <http://www.catholic-heritage.net/> and the Archives of Glasgow at <http://www.rcag.org.uk/archives/>. Both are also participating in SCAN [see Miscellaneous other records].

## Miscellaneous Other Records

There was no one jurisdiction responsible for records in Scotland. Within the same time period you can find the same document types in Burgh records [urban settlements that enjoyed trading privileges from medieval times, they were abolished in 1975] in Commissary Courts, in Court of Sessions, etc. As you start your search into other record types I highly recommend that you make use of the learning tools of available on the websites of NAS and SCAN [see below].

Many records have been filmed by the Family History Library and searching the catalog there as well as the SCAN catalog will help you locate records in appropriate jurisdictions in the correct time period. Many of the documents you seek are available at NAS. Others are held in archives in the locality where they originated. The following pages tell a little about some of the record types you might want to look for and give some additional pointers on locating them.

**The National Archives of Scotland** – Besides the digitalization of early records the National Archives of Scotland NAS offers a variety of fact sheets discussing the records of Scotland. These fact sheets can be downloaded in PDF format from the Archives website at <http://www.nas.gov.uk/>. The catalog for the archives is available at [www.dswebhosting.info/nas](http://www.dswebhosting.info/nas)

**The Scottish Archives Network** – SCAN is a partnership between the National Archives of Scotland, The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Genealogical Society of Utah. There are 52 archives throughout Scotland participating in the digitization effort and they share a common catalogue to facilitate location of records. The SCAN web site which is located at <http://www.scan.org.uk> has explanations of many Scottish record types as well as sample documents. There is also a digital library containing images of original records, such as the Lanark Commissioners of Supply Cess Books 1724-1725. If you're having trouble deciphering those old documents you will find help at <http://www.scottishhandwriting.com/content/>. There are interactive tutorials that will walk you through the old scripts.

**Testamentary Records**– Between 2000 and 2004 SCAN digitized all 520,000 surviving wills and testaments registered in Scottish commissary courts and sheriffs courts between 1500 and 1901. The index can be searched for free at [www.scottishdocuments.com](http://www.scottishdocuments.com). The digitized images are available for purchase at the same site.

**Property Records** – Property in Scotland is either heritable or movable. The records associated with heritable property are generally, Sasines, Valuations, Title deeds and inventories, Tax Rolls and estate papers.

**Tax Rolls** – Prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, taxes were usually levied for a specific purpose and the burden was shared by Barons, burghs and the church. Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the government sought to broaden the tax base.

**Estate Papers** Besides the testamentary records and the sasines there are records of death duties imposed beginning in 1804. Various registers and indexes can give such information as death date, beneficiaries, executors and lawyers. Records are closed for seventy five years. [NAS IRS5-14]

A key to the abbreviations used in sasines can be found on <http://www.scan.org.uk>. Knowledge Base on the same site will walk you through using Valuation records. [http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/valrolls\\_topic.htm](http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/valrolls_topic.htm)

**Poor Relief Records** – Poor relief prior to 1845 was the responsibility of the parish jointly through the heritors [landowners] and the kirk sessions. It was not uncommon for the heritors to make voluntary contributions rather than be assessed. The kirk sessions raised funds through fines and payments for marriages, christenings and funeral and also through

church collections. Those who received relief included orphans, sick, disabled, too old to work and the insane. The “sturdy beggar” was more likely to be punished than paid.

In 1845 the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, setting up parochial boards in each parish to administer relief. The records of these parochial boards are most often found in District, County or Burgh records. They can provide details on name, age, place of birth, marital status and details on the family. NAS has many pre-1845 and parochial board records in their collections. Others are held in local archives.

**Passports** – Passports issued in Scotland before the eighteenth century are included in published sources such as the Register of the Privy Seal, the Register of the Privy Council of Scotland and the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland. They might also be found with Burgh records if the individual came from a town.

You can find passports at the Public Record Office in London for the period 1795-1948. They have been indexed for the years 1851-1862 and 1874 to 1898. They are located in Foreign Office records at FO610-611. The National Archives of Scotland holds some passports as well

**Burgh Records** – besides the common documents that might be found in Burgh records you can find: Burgh Charters, including royal charters[1318-1940]; Council Minutes; Dean of Guild Books; Account Books; Licensing records: applications for licenses for sale of ale and other liquors for inns or shops; Police Commissioners Minutes: supervision of police, street cleaning and lighting and water supplies, 1833-1890. Police Commissioners were often also town councillors; Burgesses: Burgesses were originally any inhabitant of a burgh who held land there. It was later restricted to merchants and craftsmen; Craft and Trade Records; Voter Records and more. Be aware that records are not the same within each Burgh. You can find lists of Burghs on the NAS and SCAN websites.

## Further Internet Resources for Scottish Research

**National Library of Scotland** - <http://www.nls.uk/digitallibrary/index.html> has a great collection of digital documents, maps dating as early as the 1500s, pictures, maps and more. There are catalogs of Scottish history and full transcriptions of many early documents.

Visit **Genuki** [www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct) for background information on each county. You can find parish mail lists on this site. <http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/> offers statistical information for every county and parish in Scotland.

We all like to add maps to our genealogies. **Old-Maps.co.uk** has some free maps available for downloading. There are some restrictions on their use so be sure to read the terms and conditions. They also have maps available for sale.

<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/> For more detailed maps of Scotland try **Godfrey Maps** at <http://www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk/scotland.htm>. Most maps appear to be priced at £2.20 or less than \$5.00. You can find an interactive map delineating the new and old Scottish Administration districts at <http://www.trp.dundee.ac.uk/data/councils/newregions.html>

Search the **British Archives** Catalogue [www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk) for service records of your Military ancestors. The catalog fully indexes the WO97 records.

**Scotland GenWeb** can be found at <http://www.scotlandgenweb.org/> You will find vital record exchange pages, transcriptions of City directories, world war I deaths and more.

Genealogical and Historical Societies are always a great information source. You can find information on the **Scottish Genealogy Society** at <http://www.scotsgenealogy.com/>. **Scottish Association of Family History Societies** [www.safhs.org.uk](http://www.safhs.org.uk)

Some resources for clan information include: [www.scotclans.com](http://www.scotclans.com), <http://digiserve.com/heraldry/scottish.htm>, and [www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/3145/scotmap.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/3145/scotmap.html) which offers a great clan map of Scotland.

The **Scottish Studies foundation** is located at [www.electricscotland.ssf/index.htm](http://www.electricscotland.ssf/index.htm)

This is just a beginning. Cyndislist, and web search engines like Google and Yahoo will help you find sites specific to the areas and records you are researching.

### Bibliography

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