

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society



Chorley Branch Education Group Talk Handout Further Steps Poor Law

Poor Law

- Relief of the Poor Acts date back to 1349 after the Black Death
- It was an attempt to stop labourers roaming the country to find work at better wages and where laws were not too strictly enforced

Rogues and Vagabonds

- During the next two centuries more laws were enforced mainly to keep vagabonds and vagrants off the roads
- The Statute of Legal Settlement in the reign of Edward VI enacted that beggars could be branded or made a slave for two years, but the impotent poor were to be housed in cottages erected for the purpose where they could be cured or relieved

Overseers

- After the 1598 Act Overseers of the Poor were appointed in every parish to find work for the unemployed and set-up parish houses for those who could not support themselves
- The Overseers had to go round the parish and collect the poor relief from the wealthier inhabitants – not a very popular part of an unpopular job

Settlement

- After 1662, not only rogues and vagabonds were removed from parishes, but also anyone who could become a liability on the parish could be removed to their parish of settlement

Parish help

- The impotent poor could be helped in their own homes by being given bread and wheat and potatoes to grow
- Parish houses or poor-houses were built by parishes for housing the poor
- Poor children could be apprenticed by the parish

Apprentices

- An indenture



In loco parentis

- Apprentices could be beaten by their masters, but they very often married the master's daughter



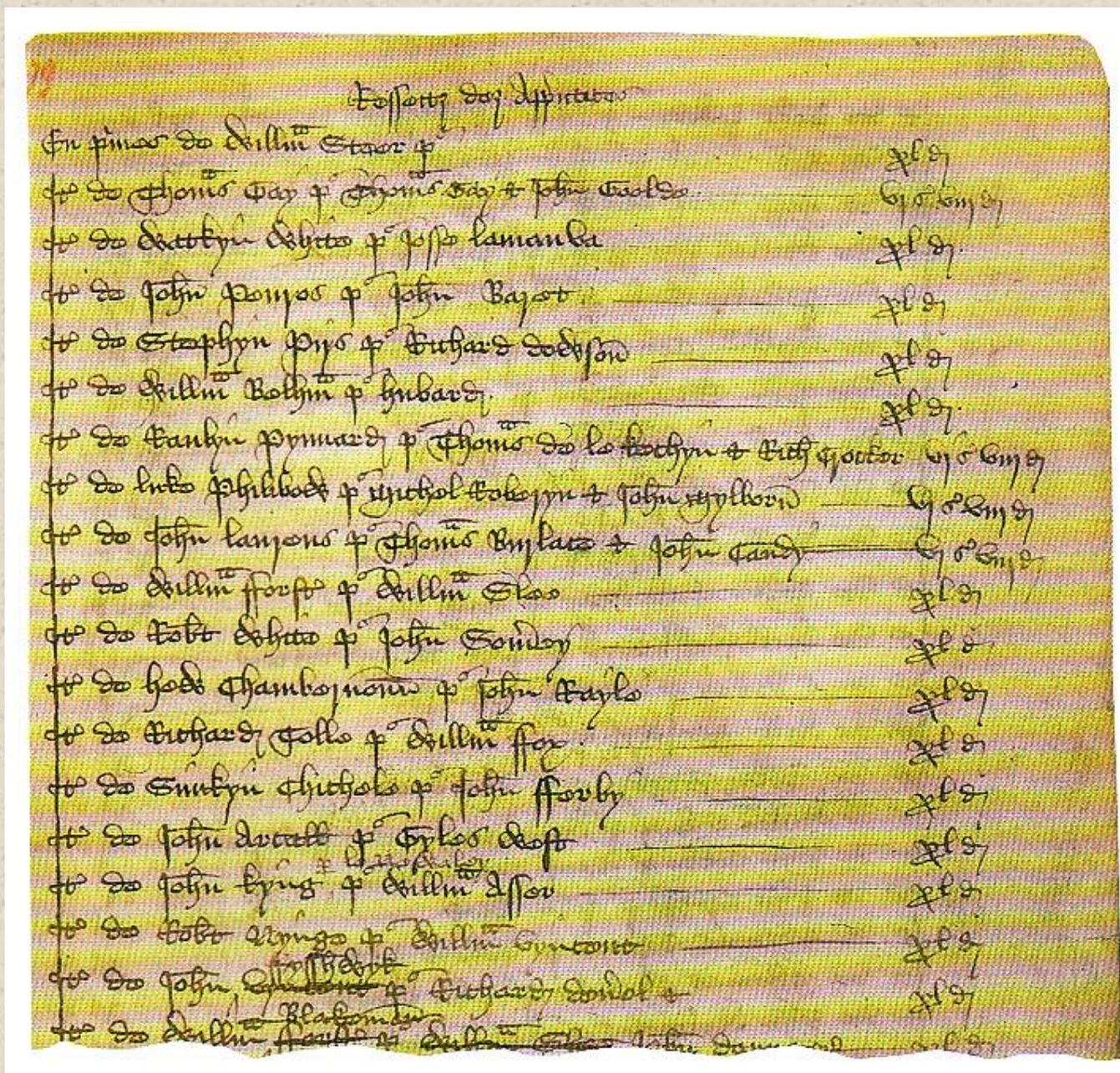
Apprentice records

	Name of the poor child being apprenticed	Name of the master or trader	Place of residence of the master	Occupation of the master	Term of the apprenticeship
1775					
489	Elizabeth GIPSON	Joseph TINKER	Tipton	Housewife to nailer	21 or married
1776					
490	Elizabeth FOSTER	Isaac BALLAMEY	Kingswinford	Pipemaker	21 or married
491	Isaac ROBINSON	James MARSH	Oldswinford	Nailer	Until 24
492	William SIDAWAY	George SIDAWAY	Oldswinford	Nailer	Until 24
493	Henry WIDDOWS	James GREEN	Blocsidge (Bloxwich)	Nailer	Until 24
1777					
494	Nancy GIBSON	Isaac BELLAMY	Kingswinford	Pipemaker	21 or married
495	Edward HILL	Joshua JEVONS	<u>Oldswinford</u>	Nailer	Until 24
496	Francis PERKES	Samuel PERKES	<u>Oldswinford</u>	Nailer	Until 24
1778					
497	Elizabeth GREEN	Thomas CHAMBERLIN	Oldswinford	Housewife to farmer	21 or married
498	Elizabeth BROOKS	Francis SUTTON	Kingswinford	Housewife to bricklayer	21 or married

London apprentices

- There are many records from the various London Guilds or Livery Companies
- These are early records of the Merchant Taylors Company
- First a page from the register of apprentice bindings (1609)

- None of these apprentices were from London
- They were from Wales, Cambridge, Wiltshire, Lincolnshire, Somerset, Staffordshire and Warwickshire
- Each member paid dues (3s 4d) and were entered in the Master and Wardens Account Books



Proof of Settlement

- To live in a parish, and therefore claim relief, you had to prove settlement in several different ways
- Up to 1692 by owning freehold property and residing in it and renting a property or land let at £10 per annum
- After 1692 there were four new ways of claiming settlement
- By holding a parish office
- By paying local rates
- By hiring oneself out to a master in the parish for one year
- By serving an apprenticeship in the parish

Children and Wives

- Legitimate children acquired settlement by birth in the parish, unless their parents' place of settlement was different and could be verified
- Married women gained the settlement of their husbands

Vagabonds

- Inhabitants of Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands had no place of settlement, and could only be removed under the Vagrancy laws
- Settlement certificates are very useful in family history as they can give a lot of biographical detail

Settlement Certificates

- Here is a transcript of a settlement certificate from Cambridgeshire

Soham in the
County of Cambridge

Wee whose Names and Seals are hereunto sett Church=
wardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Soham.
In the County of Cambridge: Do hereby Certifie Orm-
and Acknowledge Margrit Manth^r Widow; to be Law-
fully and Legally Sattled in our Parish of Soham. In
Witness whereof wee have hereunto sett our hands and Seals
the 30th Day of March: In the year of our Lord: 1714

Attested by vs two
Freeholders of the
Parish of Soham:

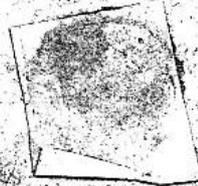
M^r W^m Kin

Edw. Pochey son
Edm^{und} Broock



Church

Luke Staples



Wardens

Lancelott Rely

James France

William Palmer



Overseers

of

Clement Palmer

Wee whose Names are hereunto set
by His Maj^{ties} Justices of the Peace for the County Doe allow
of this Certificate Dated the 9th Day of the year above said.

Rob: Clarke
Esq^r Justice

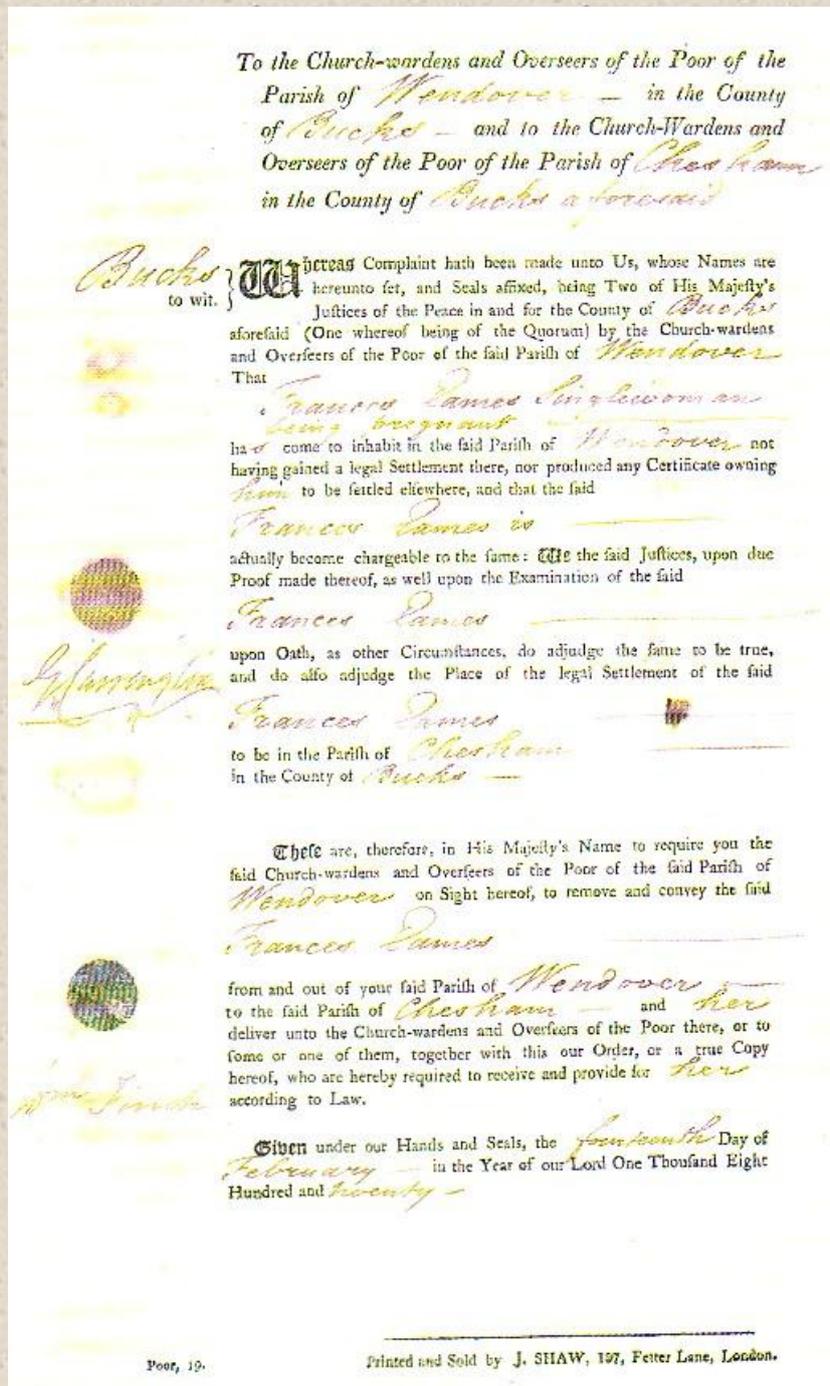


the Poor

p68/13/4/9

Removals

- Some parishes looked after their impotent poor well, but could be quite brutal in their treatment of single women who were pregnant
- Removal to a place of settlement could also be very brutal – old, infirm people could be moved across the country in the depths of winter to their place of settlement and dumped on the local Overseers of the Poor



Indemnity Bonds

- Indemnity bonds were entered into when it was likely that someone could be a drain on the parish resources
- Sureties of up to £50 could be assigned to indemnify the churchwardens, overseers and parishioners against any loss from care of illegitimate children, unsupported wives, etc

E.g.

- 1685 – John BROOKHURST, senr. Locksmith of Stourbridge, Thomas PARKES, weaver of Stourbridge. Bond re. John WHEELER, baker, late of St Nicholas, Worcester, and his wife come to live in Stourbridge
- 1716 – Edward HAYNES, weaver of Stourbridge and William HAYNES, baker of the same. Bond re female bastard child born in Stourbridge to Elizabeth BLUE, singlewoman

Poor relief

- The parish helped people not only with food but with clothing
- When paupers died the parish also paid for their funerals and bread and drink for the mourners

for him	0 9 4
for Thread & making	0 0 3
4 yard $\frac{1}{2}$ of Cloth at 2:8 4 yard for a p ^r of Breeches for him	0 4 0
A skin for Pockets 8. Harding 2. Button & Thread 3: & of Taylor	
Wages	0 2 1
for his shoes mending in y ^r half year	0 1 1
for Geo: Urton a p ^r of shoes soeling & covering	0 1 3
for a p ^r of Stockins for him	0 2 2
for a new Hat	0 2 0
for a p ^r of new shoes	0 4 0
for 5 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ of Cloth for 2 Shifts for him	0 4 1
for a p ^r of shoes soeling, covering & nails	0 1 7
for 2 Shifts for Mary Cudworth 4 yards at 9 byard	0 3 0
The Expences at Martha Motforth's Funeral	0 14 0
for repairing Tho: Woodhead's House at Birdwell	

Exp ^d at of acc ^t taking	0	2	0
Exp ^d of shoes for Geo: Upton	0	4	0
His shoes mending	0	1	3
Exp ^d of Breaches for him & his Coats mending	0	3	6
Catharine's Rent	0	6	0
Benjamin Hamerton	0	1	0
Tobias Holland's Eighth Month's Pay	2	8	7
Timor	0	1	6
Geo: Upton's Coffin	0	6	0
his Burial Fees	0	2	10
Bread & Drink at his Funeral	0	8	2
Exp ^d of a J. To some Balsam?	0	0	4
Exp ^d of Lindley's Coal	0	2	6
Tobias Holland at home	0	2	6

- If your ancestors kept on the right side of the law and were not the indigent poor nor the very richest in a parish you might have to use a very large magnifying glass to find a mention of them in older records
- Keep looking though and they will wave at you from the sidelines – usually where you least expect it

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society
Chorley Research Centre at Astley Hall Farmhouse

Opening times

First & Third Saturdays Noon—4:00pm
 Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00am—4:00pm
 Last appointment 3:00pm

Booking advisable—Tel. 01257 231 600 (When centre is open),
 Tel 01257 262 028 (When centre is closed)

or

Book in line at - Chorley Family History Research Centre Website – www.cfhrc.com

Research Enquires - chorleyresearch@lffhs.org.uk

Chorley Branch Website - www.lfhhsschorleybranch.com

LFHHS

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