

## **Wills and Probate records for Family Historians**

–a brief handlist compiled by David Lambert from a variety of sources listed below

### **CHESHIRE**

- Cheshire was solely within the Archdeaconry of Chester after 1540
- Diocese of Chester after 1540 [prior to that **Lichfield** diocese]
- No peculiars
- Prerogative Court of York –archbishops jurisdiction
- Northern Province

#### **1. ONLINE**

a) Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East (in conjunction with FHS of Cheshire). Surviving Cheshire wills are online via the [Cheshire Collection on Find My Past](#) :

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/world-records/search-all-uk-records/special-collections/the-cheshire-collection>

<http://archives.cheshire.gov.uk/>

<http://archives.cheshire.gov.uk/search-and-shop/search-and-shop.aspx>

b) The Genealogist subscription site <http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk> has reprinted 1545-1620;1681-1700;1700-1721;1721-1740 indexes

c) Findmypast website. Previously on Origins website should divert to FMP.

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

*Chester Wills Index* and the *Cheshire Wills Images*. 1519-1940. The *Chester Wills Index* includes indexes to all wills proved at Chester up to 1858 and indexes to wills of Cheshire people from 1858-1940.

#### **2. BOOKS**

Printed volumes of Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society in most good reference libraries in counties

#### **3 ARCHIVES**

The County council of Cheshire was abolished and archives are the joint responsibility of Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Councils. The archives are held at the former county record office on

Duke Street Chester CH1 1RL

Tel: 01244972574

<http://archives.cheshire.gov.uk/>

### **LANCASHIRE**

a) Part south of River Ribble in Archdeaconry of Chester within Diocese of Chester after 1540

b) Part north of River Ribble in archdeaconry of Richmond within Diocese of York

- 2 peculiars
- a) and b) above were both under archbishop's Prerogative Court of York
- Northern Province

#### **1. ONLINE**

a) Lancashire online index (in progress with transcriptions 248,000 deceaseds)

see <http://user.xmission.com/~nelsonb/lws.htm>

b) The Genealogist subscription site <http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk> has reprinted 1621-1650; 1681-1748; 1748-1792; 1793-1812 indexes which include Lancs. and Ches. Record Soc 1660-1680; 1681-1700 referred to below

c) Findmypast previously Origins website.

*Chester Wills Collection* which related to original records now deposited at Lancashire Record Office. The index covers a substantial proportion, though far from all, of Lancashire wills proved at Chester but which are now held at Lancashire Record Office. The images consist of digitised images of the indexed probate documents held at the Lancashire Record Office. The current contains references to over 40,000 Lancashire people. 1736-1844.

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

#### **2. BOOKS**

Printed volumes of Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society in most good reference libraries in counties

### **3. ARCHIVE**

Lancashire Record Office Bow lane PRESTON PR1 2RE Tel: 01772 263039

website: <http://new.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives-and-record-office.aspx>

### **YORKSHIRE**

**Too complex to explain briefly!**

**Archdeaconry courts at: York, Richmond, Cleveland, East Riding.**

- **All within Diocese of York**
- **Within Archbishop's Prerogative Court of York**
- **Northern Province**
- **A large number of Peculiars.**

#### **1. ONLINE**

On-line access for the Probate indexes of the Prerogative and Exchequer courts of York held at the Borthwick Institute from 13<sup>th</sup> century to 1858 are available on Findmypast site (formerly the British Origins site). Can get photocopies to your home after located in index.

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk> should divert from <http://www.origins.net> and also for the Borthwick

#### **2. BOOKS**

Colin B. WITHERS "Yorkshire Probate" published by Yorkshire Wolds 2006 plus integral CD rom

#### **3. ARCHIVE**

a) The Borthwick Institute University of York Heslington York YO10 5DD

Tel 019043 321166

Website <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr>

b) Leeds district Archives for the eastern division of the Archdeaconry of Richmond

c) Sheffield Archives

d) WestYorks. Record Office Wakefield for W R Y Deeds Registry

e) North Yorks. Record Office Northallerton for N R Y Deeds Registry

f) Durham University

### **STAFFORDSHIRE**

- **Archdeaconry Court of Stafford**
- **Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry between 1541-1836**
- **Peculiars including Dean and chapter of Lichfield, Peculiar of the Dean of Lichfield, several Royal Peculiars, Manors and Prebends**
- **Archbishop of Canterbury Prerogative Court of Canterbury**
- **Southern Province**

#### **1. ONLINE**

a) Lichfield Joint record office website

<http://staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/contact/LichfieldRecordOffice>

Can search Indexes online 1650 -1750 at

<http://www.staffsnameindexes.org.uk/StartPage.aspx?Mode=Details&Index>

b) 1516 -1652 search available at

<http://wishful-thinking.org.uk/lichdb/index.htm> from Phillimore Calendars

c) UKBMD website: [www.ukbmd.org.uk](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk) takes one to Ancestry.co.uk

This also includes the 1516 -1652 calendars.

#### **2. BOOKS**

a) Birmingham and Midlands Genealogy and Heraldry Society Probate Index covering whole county open to searches for a fee. Apply to Society.

b) Phillimore Calendars 1516-1652

#### **3. ARCHIVE**

Lichfield Joint Record Office The Friary Lichfield WS13 9QG

Tel: 0300 111 8000

- Website

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/contact/LichfieldRecordOffice/home.aspx>

- 40 year period researched.

- Searches available for a fee (£12.50 currently) –register beforehand.

## **DERBYSHIRE**

- Archdeaconry court of Derby
- Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry between 1541-1836
- Peculiars including Dean and chapter of Lichfield
- Prerogative Court of Canterbury
- Southern Province

### **1. ONLINE**

a) Lichfield Joint record office website **includes** Derbyshire records even though the website refers to Staffs. **There is a link to Derbyshire.**

Lichfield Joint record office website

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/>

**SEE ABOVE.** It includes Derbyshire Index link. 1650-1750.

b) search available at <http://familyhistorydirectory.co.uk/wills-of-derbyshire/>

c) UKBMD website: [www.ukbmd.org.uk](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk) takes one to Ancestry.co.uk

This also includes the 1516 -1652 calendars by Phillimore.

### **2. BOOKS**

a) Handlist to Diocesan Records published by Lichfield Record office

Calendars published in 19<sup>th</sup> century for period 1576 – 1857

Peculiars covering the same period

b) Phillimore Calendars 1516-1652

c) <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DBY/ProbateRecords/about>

### **3. ARCHIVE**

Lichfield Joint Record Office The Friary Lichfield WS13 9QG

Tel: 0300 111 8000 Website at

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/contact/LichfieldRecordOffice/home.aspx>

## **NATIONAL – (ENGLAND AND WALES)**

### **1. ONLINE**

- a) See The National Archives webpages: **period 1384 to 1858**  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/wills.htm> and  
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/Search> for Historic Wills and Admons. **from 1384 to 1858** –includes The Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) [PROB 11] and London Wills and Death Duty Indexes and Registers 1796-1903.[IR26 and 27] Free Index and ability to download a copy of the will for fee-£3.50 currently.
- b) Also available on The Genealogist webpages: <http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>
- c) See [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) Index of National Probate Calendars **1858 to 1959** (later pages not yet online) AND for Death Duty registers 1796-1903
- d) See Ancestry.co.uk for Index of National Probate Calendars **1858 to 1966, and 1973-1995.** (some pages missing) on Ancestry at [www.ancestry.co.uk/probate](http://www.ancestry.co.uk/probate)
- d) Wills and Admons **post 1857 see the Court Service site at**  
<https://www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance> for free search. For years 1858 -1996 and 1996 to 2016 **ALSO** Soldiers wills 1850 -1985  
Fee £10 to get copy

### **2. BOOKS**

- a) Jeremy Gibson and Stuart Raymond Where to look for Wills (Sixth Edition 2016)  
ISBN: 978-1-906280-55-0
- b) The Phillimore Atlas & Index of Parish Registers 3rd Edition 2003 author Cecil Humphrey-Smith

### **3. ARCHIVE**

- a) Historic documents (as above) The National Archives at Kew.
- b) Records from **1858 to date** at the courtservice  
**Postal searches CAN** made including 5 year search and ordering of documents for a fee (£10) to Postal Searches and Copies Department  
Leeds District Probate Registry York House York Place Leeds LS1 2BA  
You should complete the form PA1S and enclose the appropriate fee.
- c) the Principal Probate Service First Avenue House Holborn London  
Various County Record Offices 1858 to about 1940  
Local district Probate Registries from about 1930 to date

**PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE IS BELIEVED TO BE ACCURATE  
BUT WEBSITES, ADDRESSES AND BOOKS QUICKLY BECOME OUT  
OF DATE SO NO GUARANTEE IS GIVEN THAT THEY ARE OR  
WILL REMAIN ACCURATE.**