

A short guide to servant sources

- ◇ **Parish Records** – Pre 1834. Records such as settlement examinations often give some information about the careers of individuals. Apprenticeship records can also be found within some parishes. To find out what records survive for a particular parish, please consult the catalogues in the blue folders in the search room.
- ◇ **Workhouse Records** – Post 1834. Discharge registers can be helpful to see if individuals leaving the workhouse went into service. Please see the Poor Law Union Records catalogue in the black folder in the search room. Unions which have surviving records that might be useful are Atcham, Clun, Ludlow and Oswestry. Please be aware that some records may be closed for 100 years due to data protection. Both parish and workhouse records can also be searched on our online catalogue which can be found on the homepage of our website.
- ◇ **Census Records** – From 1851, the census returns included occupation and address. Shropshire Archives holds the full census returns for Shropshire on microfiche from 1841 to 1901. These census returns are also available for a fee online at www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk We have a subscription to these sites.
- ◇ **Estate Records** – Information on servants can be found in estate records such as cash books, accounts and memo/log books. To find out whether an estate has deposited records here, please check the small green folder entitled 'Guide to Private Lists' at the start of the short list catalogues. Some estate records can be searched on our online catalogue on our website, www.shropshirearchives.org.uk. Large estates such as Powis and Lilleshall have surviving records.

*The Powis estates (Ref 552) servants' records can be found catalogued in the red Private Estates and Business catalogues in the search room. Records can be found in the folder marked Enclosure, Business, Public Undertaking and Employees. The records date from 1774 to 1934 and relate to the Styche, Montford and Walcot estates but there are also a few records from other properties such as Claremont in Surrey and Powis Castle.

* The Lilleshall collection also has a number of servants' records surviving, mainly 19th and early 20th century. These can also be found catalogued in the search room (vol 2, page 153, Establishment, Household) and are available to view on fiche in the reading room starting at fiche number 4506.

* An interesting earlier record is Edward Acton's Cash Book which has an account of household servants and dates from 1753 to 1758 (ref 3925/12/1). Other estates which have records of servants include Downton Hall (ref 6683) and Attingham (ref 112).

- ◇ **Quarter Sessions** – Quarter Sessions Order books can be helpful records as they give the amounts set for minimum wages and have some details of cases of disputes over pay/conditions. Abstracts are available in the search room from 1638 to 1889 (not inclusive and with varying amounts of detail). Original order books can be requested. The main set of books run from 1709 to 1874. Please see the Quarter Sessions records catalogues for references (vol 1 QS/1).
- ◇ **Newspapers** – These are useful for looking at advertisements for and by servants. The most comprehensive set of newspapers we hold is the Shrewsbury Chronicle. These are available on microfilm from 1772 to 1950. Please see staff for a full list of newspapers available on either microfilm or original.
- ◇ **Guild Records** - These records give information on apprentices who worked for masters, such as Drapers, Mercers, Ironmongers and Goldsmiths, Tailors and Skinners and Smiths. Apprentice records for Shrewsbury Guilds are on microfiche in the reading room.
- ◇ **Servant Registries** – Servants' registries were very common in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Unfortunately we do not hold any of their records (they rarely survive) but some details can be found in trade directories, such as Kelly's, for the larger towns in Shropshire. Trade directories are available in the reading room.

◇ **Further Reading**

May, Trevor - *The Victorian Domestic Servant* (ref 640.46).

Hartcup, Adeline - *Below Stairs in Great Country Houses* (ref ES 71.4).

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