Where Are My Poor Scots Ancestors?

Syllabus

Presenter:
Alison Spring, QG

Overview
This presentation discusses Scottish poor law records from 1845 onwards, the kind of details they feature about individuals and families, and where they can be found.

Scotland's Poor Law System
As a result of a new Act of Parliament passed in 1845, the work of looking after the poor in society was transferred from church to state. The practical daily administration of poor relief was handled by inspectors in the parishes.
The native parish of each pauper held the primary responsibility for their support. For this reason, application forms and other documentation include the birthplace and parentage of applicants, along with much other detail such as religion, occupation, health condition, and names of relatives.

Using poor law records in family history
The level of detail in many of the records allows you to build a nuanced picture of your ancestor's life and family tree. In the case of elderly applicants, their own birth may date back to the 18th century. Their children and grandchildren would also be approached to determine if they were in a position to assist their relative, so their names, occupations, and incomes may also be listed.

Migration
There was a considerable movement of people in and out of Scotland during the Victorian era. Scotland's poor relief records include applications by many immigrants from other parts of the UK and Ireland as well from countries around the world. Records of paupers whose relatives had emigrated from

Scotland often include details of their whereabouts, occupations, and families abroad.

The Poorhouse

Seen as either a last resort, or a litmus test of a pauper's genuine need, the poorhouse in Scotland was not a sought-after experience. Records indicate whether an individual or family was to be admitted to the poorhouse, or if they were to be offered some other form of "outdoor" relief, such as food, clothing, or money. This was the more common type of support.

Links

Information about the different types of document that the system generated can be found here:

Poor Relief Registers
https://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/poor_registers_topic.htm

Online Poor Law Records

Below are links to a few examples of free-to-view poor relief indexes maintained by local archives or library services. You can identify archives relevant to your county or parish of interest using the website GENUKI
https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct

Aberdeenshire
https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/aberdeen-city-and-aberdeenshire-archives/catalogues-and-indexes/poor-relief-records?fbclid=IwAR2DngeFBFgWC3KiAKFiyQW0phf5rZVW7BlYwztyfGygDQvdKe-w0uyhO2w

Dundee http://fdca.org.uk/Index_PoorRegisters.html

Morayshire http://libindx.moray.gov.uk/mainmenu.asp
(Use the "People Search" function, which
 will produce results from a number of different datasets)

Paisley
https://libcat.renfrewshire.gov.uk/iguana/uploads/file/Website%20version%202019.pdf

Stirlingshire http://www.stirlingarchives.scot/poor-relief-indexes/?LMCL=toWP1E&LMCL=r0NIl

You should also search FamilySearch's online Catalog using "Scotland" and the parish name along with the keyword "poor" to identify which digitised record images they hold.

Connect with the Presenter via
E-mail acspring@gmail.com
Website http://scotsancestors.weebly.com
Blog http://scotsancestors.blogspot.com
Facebook www.facebook.com/scotsancestors
Twitter @FrugalFH