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The Dade Registers of Yorkshire
by Barbara J Starmans

Up until the late 18th century, notations of baptism and burial events in Yorkshire parish registers were frustratingly brief. Although the Lord Hardwicke Marriage act of 1754 had mandated that parishes keep a separate marriage register that included the bride and groom's full names and abodes, names of witnesses and signatures of all parties, the general register that recorded baptisms and burials was still usually kept in the old style with very limited information.

Bramham, Yorkshire, 1731

Will'm son of Will'm Hudson bap't Nov ye 13 th

Will'm son of Will'm Hudson buried Jany ye 6 th

Baptism records often only showed the date of the baptism, the child's name and the parent's names or even just the father's name, while burial records only noted the burial date and the name of the deceased.

Then, in 1770, William Dade, the curate of two parishes in the city of York, introduced a new standard for recording baptisms and burials in his parishes. He wrote: "This scheme, if properly put into execution, will afford much clearer intelligence to the researches of posterity than the imperfect method hitherto generally adopted." For baptisms, Dade recorded the child's name, it's seniority in the family, date of birth, date of baptism, father's name and occupation, mother's name, the family's abode and the grandparent's names, occupations and abodes. Similarly, for burials, Dade included deceased's name, date of death, date of burial, abode, occupation, parentage, age at death and cause of death.

In 1777, William Markham, the new Archbishop of York, decided to implement Dade's standard throughout his diocese, including all of the East Riding and the city of York, most of the West Riding and part of the North Riding of Yorkshire. Some parishes resisted adopting the new format but many did comply and the result is an absolute goldmine for the family historian lucky enough to have ancestors in these parishes. In total, more than 180 parishes are known to have kept Dade style registers, mostly in Yorkshire but some also in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire, Essex, Surrey and Devon. Some clergymen created headed and ruled books to record the required information while others elected to write freeform. The amount of detail included varies from parish to parish.

When George Rose's act of 1812 introduced standardised printed registers throughout the Church of England, to be used for all baptisms, marriages and burials, the ruled registers introduced considerable detailed entries to many parishes throughout England, but unfortunately the new standard forced an end to the richly detailed Dade registers of Yorkshire and the surrounding counties.

For descendants of Yorkshire families, the comprehensive Dade style registers created between 1777 and 1812 are an incredible legacy, and for all other researchers, they provide a fascinating glimpse into the social history of this time period, giving an insight into cycles of birth, baptism, death and burial, family naming patterns, mobility of the population and mortality, morbidity and health during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Document annotations

Baptisms for the Year 1795 continued

Child's Name – David Smith

Degree – son of [in some registers, the seniority of the child is shown. Example: 5th child, 3rd son of]

Father's Name, Abode, Profession and Descent – David Smith of Upton, Labourer, Son of Joshuah Smith of Upton, Coal Miner, by Mary daughter of Edman Tatterson of Normington, Labourer

Mother's Name and Descent – Hannah daughter of Jonathan Key of Badsworth, Labourer by Anne the daughter of Edman Chatteron of Normington, Labourer

When Born – Friday, July 24

When Baptised – Sunday, August 23

Burials for the Year 1796 continued

Christian and Surname – Sarah Cookson

Abode – of this parish

Descent, Profession and Abode – Wife of Pheonix Cookson of Upton, Labourer, daughter of Joshuah Longbottom of Methley, Labourer

Died – May 20th

Buried – May 22nd

Where – in the churchyard

Age – 35 years

Distemper – Complication of disorders

Source Citation

West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; *Yorkshire Parish Records*; Old Reference Number: *D19/4*; New Reference Number: *WDP19/4*. Church: Badsworth, St Mary the Virgin, Event Years: *1795 and 1796*

Source Information

Ancestry.com. *West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011. Original data: *Yorkshire Parish Records*. Leeds, England: West Yorkshire Archive Service.

Key collections to search

The York University, Borthwick Institute for Archives holds many parish registers and bishops transcripts for Yorkshire. The Borthwick Institute, located in York, is one of the largest archives outside of London. For open hours and details of their research service, see their extensive website www.york.ac.uk/library/borthwick/

The West Yorkshire Archive Service collection includes many Dade-style parish registers. In June of 2011, the WYAS partnered with Ancestry.co.uk to digitise and index almost 9 million individual parish records, making them available on Ancestry at www.ancestry.co.uk/yorkshire.

Finding aids

The research wiki at Family Search has an excellent finding aid for Yorkshire Parish registers at familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Yorkshire#Parishes or search their catalogue of microfilms www.familysearch.org/catalog-search for parish registers on microfilm and have the films sent to a Family History Centre near you. Find your nearest Family History Centre at www.familysearch.org/locations/centerlocator

Another finding aid for parish registers is the Access to Archives (A2A) database on The National Archives website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/. Use the search term 'Dade Parish Registers' or enter the name of the parish you are searching for.

Terminology tips

Parish Registers – Handwritten record of baptisms, marriages and burials, normally kept in a parish church. Most have now been deposited in County Record Offices, or an alternative archive repository.

Bishop's Transcripts – Copies of records in parish registers that were sent to the archdeacon or bishop annually. These copies are often referred to as the BTs.

Index – Countless indexes to church records have been prepared by family history societies and record offices. Covering a geographical area including many parishes, indexes should be used as a finding aid for parish registers.

Transcriptions – Family history societies and other groups have transcribed many parish registers. Many of these transcriptions are available on CD or searchable online. Transcriptions usually contain standard information and more detail is often available from the original parish register.

Sidebar

Useful Indexes and Register Transcriptions

Dr Williams' Nonconformist Records

Dr. William's Library opened in 1729, established by the will of Dr. Daniel Williams, a leading nonconformist minister in London. This library became home to a central registry of births within nonconformist families prior to the Births and Deaths Registration act of 1837. These registers are now part of the collection of The National Archives in the RG4 series. Transcriptions of records from the RG series can be searched online at The National Archives partner website www.BMDregisters.co.uk.

Joiner Marriage Index

Paul Joiner has spent more than 30 years researching and collating marriage records prior to 1837 and his online index can be searched for a fee at www.joiner-marriage-index.co.uk. His homepage states "Online there are now 2,399,131 hand verified marriage records from 3,532 parishes in 31 counties in England and Wales."

Phillimore's Marriage Index

W.P. Phillimore was born William Phillimore Watts Stiff but took the name Phillimore from his grandmother's family. In his later years, he began a project to transcribe marriage registers and at the time of his death in 1914, he had transcribed 200 volumes worth of records from 1200 parishes in various counties. The coverage in some counties is better than in others. These can be searched online at www.thegenealogist.co.uk

Boyd's Marriage Index

Boyd's Marriage Index contains records from more than 4,300 parishes with more than 5.6 million names between 1538 and 1837. It is especially helpful for historians researching Yorkshire, Cambridge or East Anglian ancestry. The index contains first and last name of the bride and groom, the year, the county and the parish, along with the source of the record. It can be searched online at www.findmypast.co.uk or view many of the printed volumes by searching the Family History Books using the search term 'Boyd's Marriage Index' <https://books.familysearch.org/>

Pallot's Marriage Index

Pallot's Marriage Index includes 1.5 million marriages between 1780 and 1837 and includes all but two of the 103 parishes in the old city of London and Middlesex and more than 2,500 parishes in 38 other counties. The index once belonged to Messrs Pallot & Co but now belongs to The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. It can be searched online at www.ancestry.co.uk.

IGI – International Genealogical Index

The International Genealogical Index was created by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The IGI currently contains several hundred million records from around the world, including births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials. Entries in the IGI came from two different sources. The first, and more reliable source was indexed information from vital and church records and includes events from the early 1500's to 1885 while the second, and less reliable source, originated from community contributed personal family histories. The IGI can still be accessed online at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website familysearch.org/search/collection/igi. Searching can be limited to indexed records only, community contributed records only, or both.

Online Parish Clerks Indexes

The Online Parish Clerks are volunteers who collect and transcribe parish records within a geographical area to assist others with their genealogical research. There are now OPC projects in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire, Lancashire, Somerset, Sussex, Warwickshire and Wiltshire. Links to the various websites can be found on www.ukbmd.org.uk/online_parity_clerk

County Indexes

There are many local parish record indexes that have been compiled by the genealogical community or by family history societies. Some of these indexes are available online like the baptism, marriage and burial index from East Kent compiled by Frank Watt Tyler, searchable on ancestry.co.uk. Other indexes are on CD like those compiled by the Hampshire Genealogical Society, available to purchase through their website www.hgs-familyhistory.com/. Still other indexes, like the name card index for all known baptisms, marriages and burials from 1539 to 1900 from surviving Isle of Wight parish registers can so far only be searched by visiting the Isle of Wight County Record Office, although efforts are currently underway by the Isle of Wight Family History Society to transcribe the card catalogue and make it available in the members only area of their website www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk. Check with the local County Record Office for available indexes for your area of research.

FreeREG

While not strictly speaking either an index or a transcription, the FreeREG website www.freereg.org.uk is an excellent finding tool for parish register entries. Volunteer transcribers have provided transcriptions of baptisms, marriages and burials from parishes in England, Wales and Scotland that have been loaded into a searchable database. Not all parishes are included, but records are being added regularly by countless volunteers and their homepage currently shows there are currently over 4.3 million marriages, 13 million baptisms and 9 million burial records available to search.