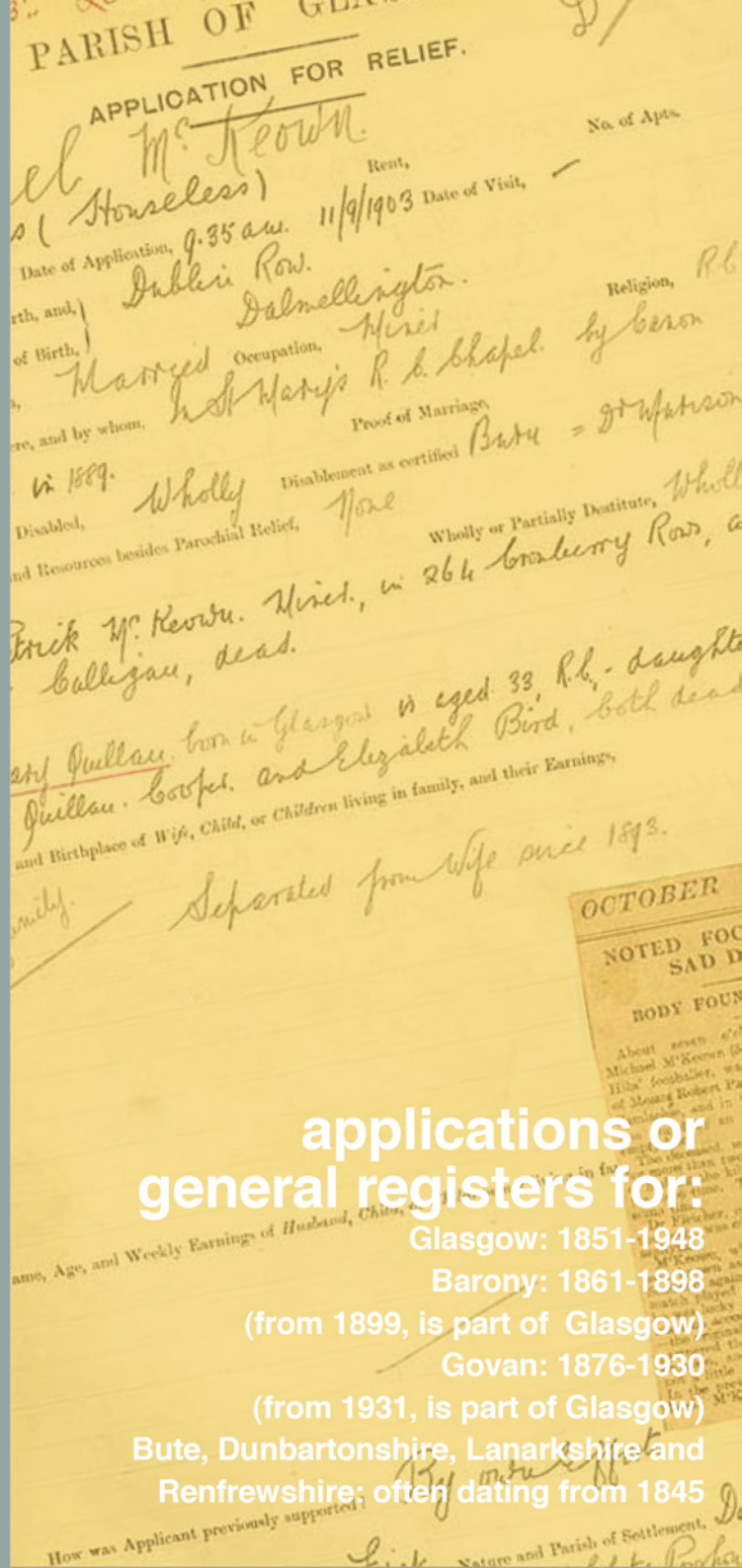




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 Discover the fascinating stories of Glasgow and its people.

glasgow's archives

Poor Law: Discover vital clues about your family's history and reveal details about their daily lives.



applications or general registers for:
 Glasgow: 1851-1948
 Barony: 1861-1898
 (from 1899, is part of Glasgow)
 Govan: 1876-1930
 (from 1931, is part of Glasgow)
 Bute, Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and
 Renfrewshire; often dating from 1845

the archives

The City's Archives most important source for the family historian are the records of the poor law authorities. These began in 1845, and ended with the introduction of social security in 1948. Many of the applicants for poor relief were born pre-civil registration and a number as early as the 18th century.

Background

The system was controlled by a central body in Edinburgh and organised locally by Parochial Boards, later Parish Councils. Each parish was responsible for maintaining its own poor, namely those who had settlement by birth, marriage, or length of residence. The sick and disabled (not the unemployed) were

eligible for relief, which could be indoor in a poor house, or outdoor, either monetary or in kind.

Records

To establish needs and eligibility, Inspectors of Poor recorded large amounts of personal data in prescribed registers of applications or general registers. There have been some notable losses in these records throughout Scotland. However, they largely survive for the Glasgow area, with more than 1 million applications still in existence up to 1948. We also have large numbers for other areas in the west of Scotland.

Where gaps exist, other records may assist, e.g. minute books (useful in rural parishes); printed annual rolls; poor house registers.

Who do you think they are?

Difficult personal circumstance may mean that any of our ancestors may be among applicants for poor relief. Prevalent are the aged, sick and disabled. They include many of the unskilled workforce, unable to work because of illness, and their dependents. Also common are: married women with children, widowed or claiming desertion, or women with an illegitimate

child; foundlings or separated children; and many Irish and other migrants.

The wide-range of biographical information about so many of the poorer members of society whose lives are rarely recorded elsewhere in such detail, makes these records one of the most important sources for family history in Scotland. The large number of Irish applicants, with details of their place of birth in Ireland, means they are also vital for those with Irish ancestors.

the poor law applications and general registers include:

- name, including maiden name of women
- age, sometimes with actual birth date
- birthplace, including county of birth (made compulsory in 1865)
- religion (from 1865)
- dependents, including children's names, ages, place of birth
- marital history
- names of applicant's parents and parents-in-law, confirming where born and if still alive
- previous addresses.

The Glasgow applications sometimes add more detail: living conditions; character comments (usually unflattering); press-cuttings; certificates, letters, and an occasional photograph.

services

The public searchroom has a large number of finding aids, including databases for the family historian, as well as paper catalogues and indexes of most of our holdings. You can also access summaries of many of our catalogues online at www.scan.org.uk. The duty archivist is happy to help and will point you towards records which will assist with your enquiry. Those undertaking a research project may wish to make an appointment with an archivist to discuss possible sources. Some records may be closed for 30 to 100 years in line with Data Protection. We can supply photocopies of documents and plans, as well as laser and other photographic services.

Talks and workshops: We are happy to talk to groups, either in The Mitchell or elsewhere.

preservation of historical documents

The Archives exist to preserve and give access to the historical records of Glasgow. We are always keen to accept further gifts and deposits (on long-term loan) of records of historical significance, which will help us understand the ordinary and extraordinary people and events, which helped shape the history of Glasgow.

Searchroom Opening Hours

Mon / Wed - Sat 9am-5pm
Tues 9am-8pm

Document Productions

Mon / Wed - Fri 9am-1pm, 2pm-4pm
Tues 9am-1pm, 2pm-7pm
Sat 9am-12pm, 2pm-4pm

Please check to confirm about evening and Saturday productions.

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How to find us:

