

Apprenticeship Records

Background

If a person had a skilled occupation, they probably served an apprenticeship. This would usually begin between the ages of 10 and 14. Apprenticeships lasted for 7 years or until the apprentice was 21. The master would house, feed and train the child, and for this they would receive a payment from the child's parent. Some apprenticeships were arranged by the parish overseers of the poor. This was usually for orphans or children of paupers.

An indenture is a legal document drawn up as an agreement between the master and parents or guardians of the child. The indenture will state the terms of the apprenticeship, such as the cost and length. They can often give a lot of information about the family of the child.

What records are there?

City of Gloucester Corporation records (GBR/C10)

The Corporation (the City Council) kept registers of apprentices in the city of Gloucester. The registers give the name of the apprentice, the name of the master, the trade they were learning and the length of the apprenticeship (usually 7 years). The name of the apprentice's father and the amount of money paid to the master is sometimes given.

The following registers are available and have been transcribed in *A Calendar of the Registers of the Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1595 – 1700* and *A Calendar of the Registers of the Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1700 – 1834*, both edited by Jill Barlow. These volumes should be used rather than the original registers.

Finding Ref	Title	Date
GBR/C10/1	Apprentice register	1595-1646
GBR/C10/2	Apprentice register	1646-1668
GBR/C10/3	Apprentice register	1668-1742
GBR/C10/4	Apprentice register	1765-1834

If a boy was apprenticed at the age of 14 he could become a freeman after 7 years (see Research Mini Guide: *Freemen of Gloucester*).

Tewkesbury Corporation Records (TBR)

These are similar to the records for Gloucester described above but fewer have survived. The registers are kept in volumes which also contain other information. The references are:

Finding Ref	Description	Date
TBR/A1/1	Registers of apprentices	1540-1615
TBR/A1/2	Alphabetical registers of apprenticeships	1608-1684
TBR/A4/1	Alphabetical registers of freemen and apprentices.	1686-c.1850

Parish Records

Details of apprenticeships can sometimes be found with overseers' papers¹ (Ref: P.../OV) and occasionally in overseers' accounts. The apprentices were mostly placed within their own parish but overseers were keen to move them away (even to the mills in Lancashire) so that they did not become a liability for the parish if they slipped into poverty.

The level of survival of these records varies greatly from parish to parish.

Charities

In some places there was a charity which paid for children to be apprenticed to local tradesmen. Some charity registers of apprentices or individual indentures have survived. Notable charities include:

- George Townsend's Charity (Winchcombe, Northleach, Chipping Campden, Cheltenham and surrounding parishes) Reference: **D3576**
- Langton's Charity (Dyrham) Reference: **D1034**

Other Records

Some records may be found in the records of various guilds and businesses which took on apprentices. Indentures may also be held within family collections of the apprentice or the master.

Some records relating to apprentices can be found in the Quarter Sessions collection (Ref: Q/)

The National Archives also holds some records relating to apprenticeship. (See *further reading* below.)

How to find the records

- There is no comprehensive name index to apprenticeship records and there is no guarantee that records you are looking for have survived.
- For the registers of Gloucester and Tewkesbury Boroughs see above. To view a list of records in other collections mentioned, please use our online catalogue available on our website at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives. Use the collection references given above as your search term.
- For more information on searching for parish overseers records see Research Mini Guide: *Overseers of the Poor records*. Some of these records have been indexed on the genealogical database (<http://www3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/genealogy/Search.aspx>)
- To search for other records on the online catalogue, search "apprentice*". You can narrow your search by adding the parish you are interested in.
- Some records have been indexed by name in the catalogue so it is worth searching the catalogue using the name of the person you are interested in.
- For guidance on using our online catalogue, see our Help page and FAQs. Or watch our tutorial on YouTube

Further Reading

See the National Archives guide to records held there: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/apprentices-and-masters/>

¹ For more information see Research Guide: *Overseers of the Poor records*.
Research Guides: Apprenticeship Records