

Guide to the
Archives of
The
Clothworkers'
Company

Part 1: Genealogy

Introduction

This guide offers an overview of the main sources held in The Clothworkers' Company archives for family history and genealogy.

It is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it aimed at those who are just beginning their research: this is not the place to start your family history.

If you have not already done so, you may find it helpful to consult the Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London, EC2P 2EJ and their publication *A guide to genealogical sources in Guildhall Library*, compiled by Richard Harvey, Guildhall Library Research Guide 1 (4th edn. 1997, reprinted 1998).

The Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1M 7BA, may also be of assistance.

Websites:

www.history.ac.uk/gh/
www.sog.org.uk/

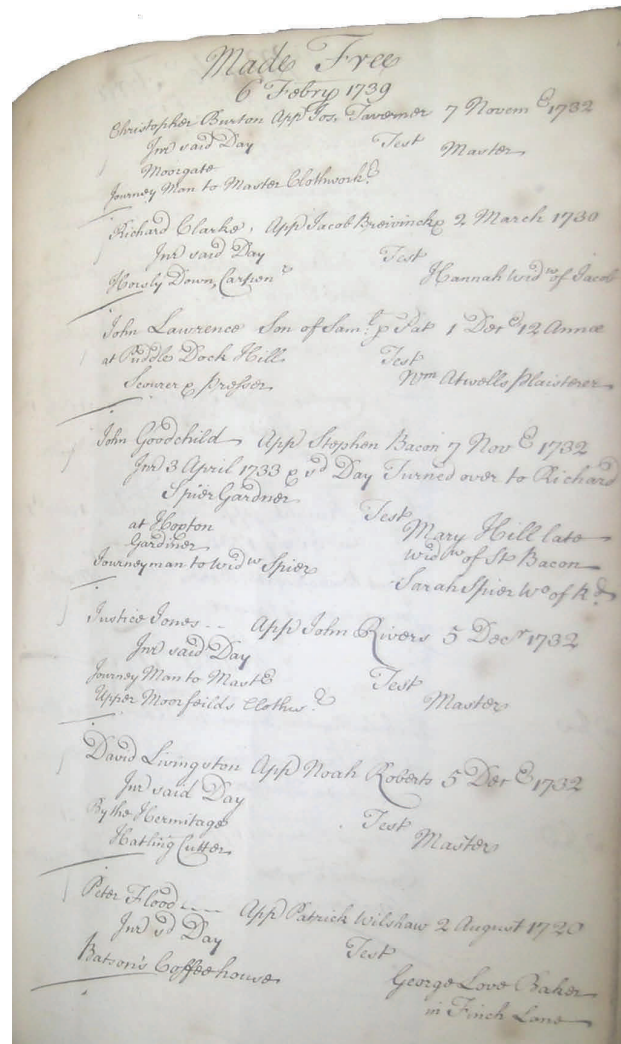
Guide to the sources

My ancestor was a member of The Clothworkers' Company. What records will you hold?

The main sources of genealogical information in the Company's archives are the Freedom and Apprenticeship Records.

The Freedom Registers begin in 1545. We have incomplete records of membership prior to this date and no membership records for The Fullers' Company or The Shearmen's Company (the two Companies which amalgamated to form The Clothworkers' Company in 1528). The early Freedom registers record only the name of the individual and the means by which they became Free. It may be assumed that being made Free indicates an age over twenty one years. From the nineteenth century, more information as to parentage, date of birth, address, occupation and later status within the Company may also be included (see below).

The Apprenticeship Registers begin in 1606. They are unindexed until 1718 and therefore unless a date of apprenticeship is known, the only means of finding

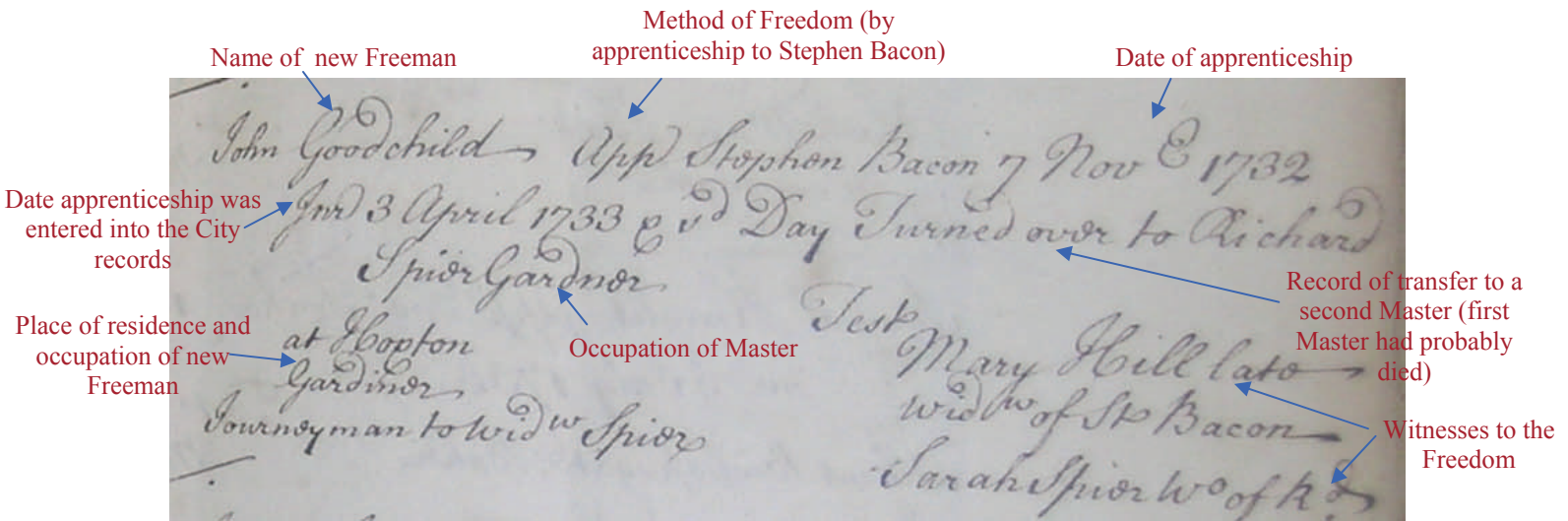


a date of Apprenticeship is to search in the period seven years from the date of Freedom (since Apprenticeship was normally for seven years).

Apprenticeship records will normally include the name of the individual, the name, place of residence and occupation of his father and the name of the master to whom he was bound.

It is not always easy to trace the career of an individual within the Company. There is no index of Masters, Wardens, Assistants or Liverymen until the twentieth century. Progression can be traced through the Court Orders, which are only partially indexed.

Current Clothworker families each have a family tree on file. These trees may not be complete (especially as regards non-Clothworker family members) and the Archivist is always grateful for further genealogical information about past Clothworkers.



Entry from an 18th-century Freedom Register

I think my ancestor may have been involved with the textile industry. Could he/she have been a member of The Clothworkers' Company?

A member of The Clothworkers' Company would normally be described in any legal document (e.g. lease or Will) as 'Citizen and Clothworker'. Members were normally Free of the City of London. The Company did not control its craft in other areas of cloth production, such as East Anglia, Kent or the West Country, although people originating in these areas could move to London and become Free of the City. However unless an individual is known to have been active in London, it is very unlikely that he or she would have belonged to a London Livery Company.

Clothworking was strictly defined as the finishing of woven woollen cloth. Although many early Clothworkers were also retailers, there is no reason to suppose that an individual described as a weaver, tailor, draper, rug-maker or other similar occupation would have belonged to the Company. Gradually from the seventeenth century the Company became divorced from its craft and decreasing numbers of its members were directly connected with cloth-making.

My ancestor rented a property from The Clothworkers' Company. What records would you hold?

If you know the name of the property and the approximate date at which it was held by your ancestor, it is likely that the archivist would be able to trace the lease and, for the later eighteenth century through to the early twentieth century in particular, a record in the registers of rents paid, some of which have been indexed by name of tenant. It is very unlikely, however that these documents would contain material of any genealogical significance.

My ancestor was descended from John and Frances West. What records would you hold?

The Company holds a nineteenth-century copy of the West family tree, drawn up in 1851. However this pedigree is inaccurate in places and is no longer kept up-to-date. The West records held by the Company relate solely to the administration of West pensions and not to the scholarships to Christ's Hospital.

Christ's Hospital holds a far fuller series of genealogical records and may be contacted at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0YP. You may also wish to contact the John and Frances West Family Group, c/o Stella Bond, 6 Hyde Close, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 7DT.

My ancestor received a grant/pension/scholarship from The Clothworkers' Company or one of its Trusts. Would the archive contain a record of this?

If he or she received the money directly from the Company, it is likely that there would be a record in the Court Orders. The archive contains some registers of grants from the Trusts administered by the Company but the series are not complete and are often not indexed. It is rare but not impossible for records of grants to contain circumstantial details.

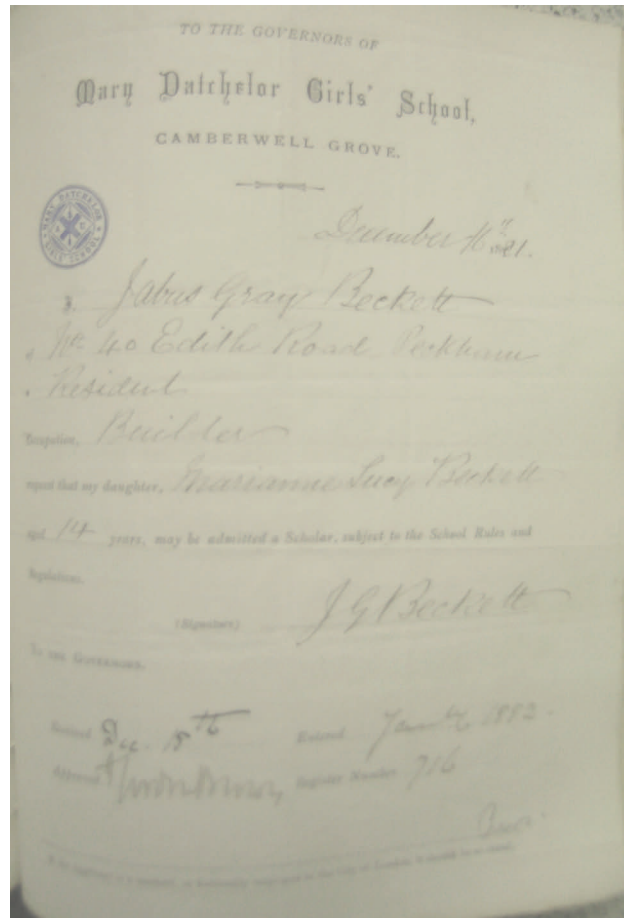
Some of the Trusts formerly administered by the Company have registers of grant recipients. Again, these are rarely indexed. However once it has been established that an individual was a regular recipient of grants from the Company or its Trusts, it is possible that the archive will include such details as age, address, marital status, occupation and state of health.

My ancestor was a pupil at the Mary Datchelor School for Girls in Camberwell, South London. What records would you hold?

The Mary Datchelor archive contains pupil admissions registers for the academic years 1880-1924 only. These normally record the age of the girl (or boy, at infant level only), the name of the parent or guardian by whom she was entered at the school, the parental occupation and address. Later records also include details of departure from the school. These records are not indexed by name and therefore can only be searched by year of admission. Without a known year of admission it is an extremely lengthy task to trace an entry.

My ancestor was a pupil at Sutton Valence school, near Maidstone in Kent. What records would you hold?

The Clothworkers' Company archive has given all its records relating to Sutton Valence to the school. All enquiries should be addressed to the School Archivist, Sutton Valence School, North Street, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3HN.



Mary Datchelor School admissions register

For further details of archives held by The Clothworkers' Company, please contact

**The Archivist
The Clothworkers' Company
Clothworkers' Hall
Dunster Court
Mincing Lane
London**