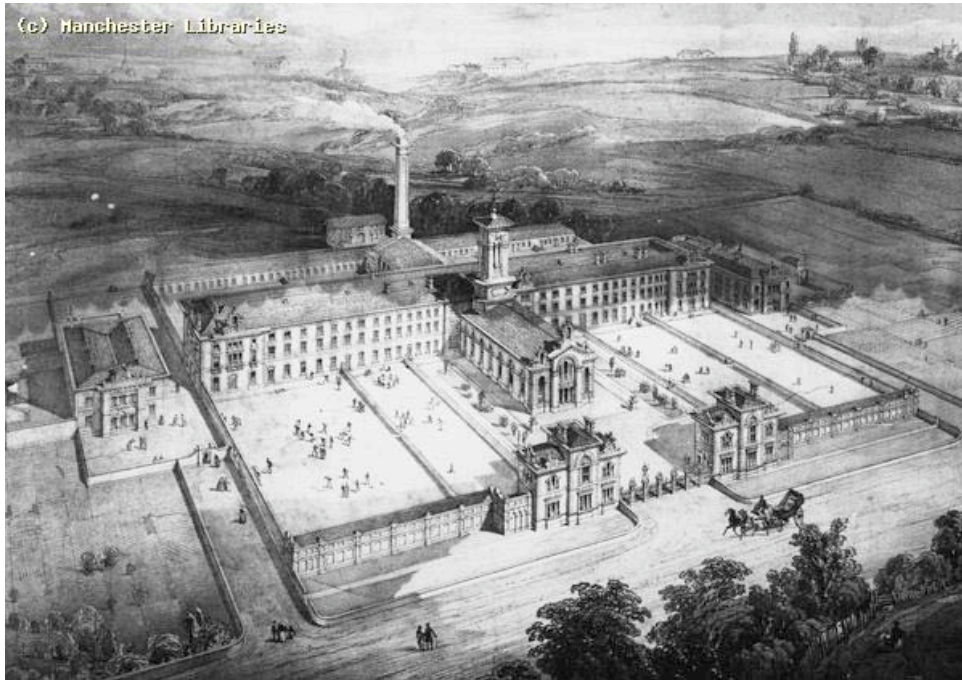


Manchester Archives and Local Studies

A Guide to Poor Law and Workhouse Records



Withington Workhouse 1856 (m53434)

Poor Law Records can provide invaluable information about your ancestors and are important for the study of changes through time in the poor relief system and socio-economic history. The administration of the poor law can be divided into three periods:

1. The Old Poor Law: pre-1834 the poor were the responsibility of the parish or township.
2. The New Poor Law: between 1834-1930 the poor were the responsibility of the Poor Law Unions.
3. Public Assistance Committee: between 1930-1948 poor relief was administered by the Public Assistance Committee of Manchester City Council.

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1. THE OLD POOR LAW

Prior to 1834 the administration of the Poor Law was the responsibility of the parish or township. The system was introduced by the Poor Law Acts of 1597 and 1601, and the Act of Settlement of 1662. The parish appointed Overseers of the Poor who collected rates from the occupiers of land and property, and spent income on helping the destitute.

Parish of Manchester Overseers' of the Poor (ref: M3)

We hold some records of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the parish of Manchester, but in the main they are purely administrative. There are other records closely akin to these in the Muniment Room of Manchester Cathedral and one Overseers' Account book 1664-1711 has found its way into John Rylands Library (English MS No 97, edited in Chetham Society Volume 80).

However, included in our collection are 609 apprenticeship indentures (indexed by name of child and master), mainly for children put out by the Churchwardens and Overseers from 1700-1913 (on microfilm until 1900, MF 3009, 3019, 3020)

Township and parish records

The records of the Townships we hold often include records of the Overseers of the Poor. These include:

- Township of Cheetham (ref: M10/7): Overseers' accounts 1693-1791 and list of Overseers 1707-1719.
- Township of Chorlton upon Medlock (ref: M10/9): Overseers' accounts 1718-1794

You may also find records of the Overseers of the Poor surviving in the parish records. For example these include:

- St Peter's, Blackley (ref: M441): Overseers of the Poor accounts 1754-1755.
- St. Mary And All Saints, Goodshaw (ref: L82)
Records of Churchwardens, Overseers, Vestry and Constables : Overseers' Accounts, 1691-1741, and Churchwardens' Accounts, 1701-1741; Vestry Minutes 1816-1854, Overseers' Accounts, 1810-1832,; Churchwardens' Accounts, 1812-1844.
- Emmanuel Church, Holcombe, formerly Holcombe Chapel (ref: L21)
Overseers of the Poor including High Constables' Orders, 1821-1835; Poor Rate Assessments, 1801-1834; Uncollected Poor Rates, 1809-1833; Overseers' Accounts, 1754-1838; Ledgers, 1821-1830; Workhouse Accounts, 1817-1844; Workhouse Bills, 1802-1844; Legal Costs in Disputed Removal Cases, 1813-1833; Survey of Poor Families, 1817; Applications for Poor Relief, 1822-1842; Printed Accounts of Relief, 1826-1830; Settlement Certificates, 1697-1762; Settlement Examinations, 1743-1810; Removal Orders, 1699-1833; Confirmation of Removal Orders, 1699-1749; Bastardy Orders, 1802-1837; Apprenticeship Indentures, 1709-1815
- St. Mary Oldham (ref: L185): Overseers' Accounts 1794-1796; Bastardy Orders 1709-1831; Removal Orders 1709-1831

- St. Matthew. Stretford (ref: L89)

Overseers of The Poor: Payments, 1754-1759; Account Books, 1779-1831; Statistics of Income and Expenditure, 1783-1785; Justices Orders to Overseers for Payment of Poor Relief, 1721-1808; Agreement of Overseers to Pay Maintenance, 1771; Overseers' Correspondence about Payment of Poor Relief, 1756-1785; Settlement Certificates, 1697-1763; Settlement Examinations, 1748-1812; Bonds of Indemnity Against Becoming Chargeable to Stretford, 1762-1772; Removal Orders (from Stretford), 1717-1812; Removal Orders (to Stretford), 1722-1791; Confirmations of Removal Orders, 1704-1754; Orders for Maintenance of Bastard Children, 1702-1811; Bastardy Bonds, 1715-1794; Miscellaneous Orders Relating to Bastardy, 1716-1756; Apprenticeship Indentures, 1717-1812.

2. THE NEW POOR LAW

The 1834 *Poor Law Amendment Act* replaced the old poor law with a national system for dealing with the relief of the poor. The new poor law was administered by the newly formed Poor Law Unions, each the responsibility of a Board of Guardians. In Manchester three Poor Law Unions were created: Manchester Union, Prestwich Union and Chorlton Union.

The original **Manchester Union** was formed in 1841. It consisted of the following Townships:

Manchester, Blackley, Bradford, Cheetham, Crumpsall, Failsworth, Harpurhey, Moston, Newton, Prestwich, Great Heaton and Little Heaton.

In April 1850 the Township of Manchester was constituted as a separate Poor Law authority and the remaining townships formed the **Prestwich Union**. The Township of Beswick was added in 1858 and Clayton in 1894. Great Heaton and Little Heaton were detached in 1891.

Chorlton Union was formed in January 1837. It consisted of the following Townships:

Chorlton-Upon-Medlock, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Openshaw, Ardwick, Hulme, Stretford, Moss Side, Levenshulme, Rusholme, Didsbury, Withington, Gorton, (divided in 1894 into Gorton and West Gorton) and Burnage.

Barton-upon-Irwell, Flixton and Urmston were added in 1841, but detached in 1849. Stretford was also detached in 1849. In 1910 the Poor Law Union was consolidated to form the Township of South Manchester for Poor Law purposes.

In 1915 the Poor Law Unions undertook a major reorganisation. The Township of Manchester, the Township of South Manchester and the Prestwich Union were joined to constitute the Manchester Union.

Records and Institutions:

Records of the Guardians of The Poor of The Manchester Chorlton And Prestwich Unions, 1837-1948 (ref: M4).

Please consult the catalogue in the archives search room for more detail.

Records of the Manchester Union including general administration of indoor and outdoor relief (45 vols) giving numbers of paupers (statistics only) at the Blackley and Prestwich workhouses 1842-1948; Financial records for the parish of Manchester 1841-1848; General ledgers (Manchester Township) 1894-1930.

Weekly Returns for Blackley Workhouse 1841-1845; Creed Registers for the New Bridge Street Workhouse 1881-1914 (on microfilm 1881-1899, MFPR 1999 and MF 3009); Records of Children sent to Swinton Poor School 1846-1864;

Records of the Chorlton Union including weekly returns 1843-1915; General ledgers 1837-1915 (incomplete); Loan ledger 1910-1930; Register of children emigrated to Canada 1889-1947

Records of Prestwich Union including Weekly returns 1851-1913;

Records of Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylum Committee: Ledgers 1897-1913

Records of Chorlton and Manchester Joint Workhouse Committee including General Ledgers 1902-1912

Crumpsall Hospital and Institution (ref: M326)

The Manchester Union workhouse was originally situated in New Bridge Street (built 1792, see above for Creed Registers, 1881-1914), but when this building proved inadequate for its purpose a new workhouse was built in Crumpsall in 1855 on a site adjacent to the Prestwich Union Workhouse just north of Crescent Road.

The aged and infirm remained at New Bridge Street until 1875 when an Infirmary was opened with the workhouse at Crumpsall. However the head offices remained at New Bridge Street and destitute people would apply for relief there before they were sent to either the Infirmary or the Workhouse.

By 1930 the Manchester Union Workhouse had become known as Crumpsall Institution. It was renamed Park House Hospital in 1939, and with the introduction of the National Health Services in 1948, became Springfield Hospital. The Infirmary later became known as Crumpsall Hospital. In 1972 the Springfield Hospital and Crumpsall Hospital amalgamated with Delaunay's Hospital to form Manchester General Hospital.

Registrar's Records: Birth registers, 1934-1948; Death registers, 1933-1945; Death register indexes, 1929-1954; Admission and discharge registers (hospital), 1937-1949; Admission and discharge registers (institution), 1933-1938; Register of admissions to the receiving wards, 1944-1946; Mortuary particulars book, 1946-1948;

Medical Registers [RESTRICTED ACCESS]: Operation registers, 1927-1947; Ward registers, 1926-1958; Record of maternity cases (institution/auxiliary hospital), 1917-1952; Register of patients: Prisoners of War and Army, 1944-1959.; Index to venereal disease register, 1920-1953.

Nurses' Records: Nurses' registers, 1891-1944; Day Nurse report books, 1893-1909.; Night Nurse report books, 1889-1914.; Patient diet book, 1891-1892.; Matron's letter book, 1917-1944.; Matron's 'Board Order Book', 1925-1930.;

Miscellaneous Hospital Records: Medical officer's report book, 1929-1933.; Physiotherapy weekly statistics, 1936-1949.; Pamphlets, 1916-1917.; Inventory cards, 1923.; Signs and notices, 1879-1910.;

Plans: Manchester New Workhouse (Mills and Murgatroyd, Architects and Co., Manchester), 1853-1892.; Manchester Union Crumpsall Workhouse additions and alterations (A.J. Murgatroyd, architect), 1901-1911.; Crumpsall Institution and Hospital additions and alterations (Superintendent of Works, Manchester Union), 1911-1930.; Crumpsall Institution and Hospital additions and alterations (City of Manchester Architect's Department), 1937-1947.; Miscellaneous plans, 1858-1948.

Beech Mount Maternity Home: Registers of patients, 1932-1948. [RESTRICTED ACCESS]

A full catalogue for this collection is available on the Access to Archives web site at <http://www.a2a.org.uk/html/127-m326.htm>

For a history of the hospital see Susan Hall and D.L. Perry, *Crumpsall Hospital: "The Story of a Hundred Years, 1876-1976"* (Upjohn and Bottomley, 1976) which is held in the Local Studies Library (ref: 362.11Ha). For a history of the workhouse see Mark Greenwood *Springfield Hospital: The Human History, 1855-1995* (Manchester Health Authority, 1997), also held in the Local Studies Library (ref: 362.21Gr).

Prestwich Union Workhouse

A new Prestwich Union workhouse was built in c.1868 at Crumpsall. After the amalgamation of Prestwich and Manchester Unions in 1915 it was known as Crumpsall Infirmary Annexe. In 1918 it was renamed Delaunay's Road Institution and later became Delaunay's Hospital, which in turn, became part of the North Manchester General Hospital in 1972. Please note that records of inmates of the Prestwich Union Workhouse appear not to have survived although we do hold the following:

Papers of George E T Hill relating to the Prestwich Union Workhouse, Crumpsall, and the Crumpsall Institution and Infirmary, 1872-1934 (ref: M352).
Documents concerning fire at Prestwich Union Workhouse 1917; engraving of Prestwich Union Workhouse 1872; photographs (of building, staff, and guardians) 1912-c1930; souvenir brochure relating to work of Manchester Board of Guardians dissolved 31 March 1930; testimonial presented to Mr and Mrs George Hill 1934.

See also above under Records of the Guardians of The Poor of The Manchester Chorlton And Prestwich Unions, 1837-1948 (ref: M4).

Please note that the records of Prestwich Asylum are held by Lancashire Record Office (ref: QAM/6) and Greater Manchester County Record Office (ref: APRES). The Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society have indexed the admission register for the asylum from 1851-1901 on a CD-ROM which is available for consultation in the Local Studies Library.

Booth Hall Infirmary (ref: M302)

The Booth Hall Infirmary was originally built in 1908 for the general hospital needs of the Prestwich Union. On the amalgamation of the Manchester and Prestwich Unions in 1915 it became a childrens' hospital.

Admission registers, 1938-1955; Summary of admissions, 1956-1966; Creed registers, 1909-1945; Mortuary register, 1942-1948; Receipt and Refund ledger, 1927-1930; Operation registers, 1909-1956; Post Mortem books, 1926-1947; Dental Patients register, 1939-1944. [RESTRICTED ACCESS].

A full catalogue for this collection is available on the Access to Archives web site at <http://www.a2a.org.uk/html/127-m302.htm>

For a history of the hospital see Raymond Hargreaves, *The Story of Booth Hall Hospital: curing and caring for northern children* (Ross Anderson, 1987) which is held in the Local Studies Library (ref: Q 362.11HA).

Withington Workhouse and Hospital (Chorlton Union Workhouse) (ref: M327)

The first Chorlton Union workhouse was located on Stretford New Road, near Leaf Street, and accommodated 300 inmates. However, this became inadequate to cope with the demands of the rapidly increasing population of the area and the Guardians decided that a completely new workhouse was needed.

The Chorlton Union Workhouse, Nell Lane, Withington was opened in 1855. The workhouse site also included the Chorlton Union Cemetery which served the Chorlton Union area as well the workhouse and hospital until it reached its capacity in 1920. The cemetery was formally closed in 1970 and the remains were re-interred at Southern Cemetery where some remains had already been re-interred in order to accommodate the building of Princess Road over the old cemetery site. During the First World War the hospital became a military hospital and it is sometimes known as Nell Lane Military Hospital.

Registrar's records: birth registers 1857-1920 (on microfilm, MF 3000, 3002); death registers 1857-1949 (on microfilm, MF 3000-3002); death register indexes 1907-1949. Workhouse and hospital registers: admission and discharge registers 1870-1884; creed registers 1869-1916 (on microfilm until 1898, MF 3003-3008); registers of inmates 1914-1946; registers of patients 1930-1948; interment registers 1898-1951; cemetery reference book 1857-1891; chaplaincy registers, of baptism 1849-1924; Auxiliary Hospital admission and discharge register 1940-1948 and registers of paying patients 1926-1948.

Medical registers [RESTRICTED ACCESS]: operation registers 1899-1940 (includes operation registers for military patients, 1916-1919 and prisoners of war, 1917-1919); ward registers 1946-1961; emergency medical services (EMS) register 1939-1952; register of ante-natal private patients 1939-1947. Nurses' records: probationers' registers 1911-1920; probationer nurses' undertakings 1890 -1918; probationer nurses' reports 1914-1924; nurses' register of holidays and sickness 1913-1939; seamstress and maids register 1936-1964.

A full catalogue for this collection is available on the Access to Archives web site at <http://www.a2a.org.uk/html/127-m327.htm>

Lancashire Record Office holds Roman Catholic baptism and confirmation registers, 1857-1973, and chaplains' report books, 1921-1955, for Withington Workhouse and Hospital (ref: RCWI acc 9126).

For a history of the hospital see Gerard Edwards, *The Road to Barlow Moor. The Story of Withington Hospital, Manchester* (Gerard Edwards, 1975) which is held in the Local Studies Library (ref: Q 362.11 EDI).

Tame Street Institution

The Tame Street Institution was responsible for male vagrants. One admission register for 1896 exists (ref: M4/11/12, on microfilm MF 3009). No other records appear to have survived of this institution.

The Langho Colony / Centre (ref: M484)

The Langho Colony was founded by the Joint Asylum Committee of the Chorlton and Manchester Board of Guardians in the Ribble Valley in 1906 as a hospital for epileptics. In 1929 its control passed to Manchester City Council. It closed in 1984.

Manchester Archives holds the records of the Langho Colony. These includes admission and discharge books, Nov 1906-Sep 1940 (lacks 1917-1921); religious creed register, 1906-c.1974; registers of deaths, 1907-1984; and a burial register, 1907-17 Jun 1929. Records less than one hundred years old which contain personal information are on restricted access.

For a history of the colony see Jean Barclay, *Langho Colony/Langho Centre. 1906-1984: A Contextual Study of Manchester's Public Institution for people with Epilepsy* which is held in the Local Studies Library (ref: Q 362.196853Ba(850)).

Manchester Certified Industrial Schools (ref: M369)

Manchester Juvenile Refuge and School of Industry was established in 1846 at Nelson St., Angel Meadow, Manchester. In 1851 it moved to St. John's Parade, Byrom St., Manchester, and on 17 September 1858 to a school for boys and girls at Ardwick Green. In 1853 its name changed to Manchester Ragged and Industrial Schools, in 1859 to the Manchester Ragged and Certified Industrial School, and in 1874 to the Manchester Certified Industrial Schools. On 2 Aug 1871 the Barnes Home Branch for boys was opened at Heaton Mersey, being named after Robert Barnes, cotton spinner (Mayor of Manchester, 1851-1853) who provided £12,000 towards its erection. A new school for girls was opened at Sale on 4 July 1877 and from then until its closure in 1922, Ardwick Green was for boys only. A new boys' home was opened at 59 Ardwick Green in 1900.

Following the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act, (Section 29 (1)) the schools became approved schools under the Home office and from 1935 were known as the Manchester Home Office Schools.

The Barnes Home closed in December 1955 leaving the Northenden Rd School for Girls, Sale (so named from 1924). In April 1973 it became a controlled community home under the City of Manchester Social Services Department. The home closed on 31 May 1980.

We hold general records including minutes and annual reports, records of the school at Ardwick Green, Barnes Home, Heaton Mersey, Northenden Road Girls School, Sale; Manchester Industrial School Boys Home Ardwick Green. Records which name children and are less than 100 years old are on restricted access.

A full catalogue for this collection is available on the Access to Archives web site at <http://www.a2a.org.uk/html/127-m369.htm>

Swinton Industrial Schools

Manchester was one of the first unions to set up a large separate institution specifically for pauper children in 1846. The building was demolished and replaced by a town hall in the 1930s.

We hold a list of children sent to the school, 1846-1865 (ref: M4/20/1) and a log book (boys), Mar 1919-Sep 1927. (ref: M66/85/1/1/1).

Lancashire Record Office holds institution admission and discharge books, 1846-1848, 1850-1934; school admission and discharge books, 1892-1926; indices, 1848-1935; and a Master's journal, 1922-1929.

Other Homes for Children

Styal Cottage Homes was founded in 1898 for the care of children under the control of the Chorlton Board of Guardians. In 1929 it was transferred to the Education Committee of Manchester City Council and closed in 1956.

Manchester Archives holds log books for the home, 1904-1956 (ref: M66/84 – RESTRICTED ACCESS). However, these very rarely mention the names of individual children.

Manchester City Council, Services for Children and Families, hold some admission registers 1903-1956 for the home. Enquiries regarding these records should be made in writing to Services for Children and Families, Town Hall Extension, Albert Square, Manchester, M60 2AF.

“**Rose Hill**”, Longley Lane, Northenden, was acquired by the Manchester Board of Guardians and opened as an Ophthalmia School in September 1915. It later became a Children's Convalescent Home, and then a Residential Nursery for the under fives. The Nursery was moved out to accommodate the boys from "Brookfield", and it became "Rose Hill Remand Home" from 11 August 1955.

No early records of “Rose Hill” appear to have survived. Manchester Archives does hold some records for Manchester Remand Home for Boys, ‘Rose Hill’, Longley Lane, Northenden (formerly 'Brookfield', Wilmslow Road, Cheadle), 1938-1990 (ref: M579 – RESTRICTED ACCESS). Please consult the catalogue in the archives search room for more detail.

Dr Rhodes Memorial Home was also a Manchester Union home for children located on Cavendish Road in West Didsbury. It appears to have closed in c.1937 at which time Swinton House School was transferred into the site on Cavendish Road. From this time the school was known as the Manchester Residential School for Crippled Children. No records of Dr Rhodes Memorial Home have survived, but we do hold some records for the Manchester Residential School for Crippled Children which later became Margaret Barclay School, Mobberly (ref: M66/161 – RESTRICTED ACCESS).

3. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Manchester Board of Guardians was dissolved on 31 March 1930, by the local Government Act, 1929 and its functions transferred to the Public Assistance Committee, later the Social Welfare Committee, of Manchester.

Minutes of the Public Assistance Committee, 1930-1939 (4 volumes) and the Social Welfare Committee, 1937-1948 (7 volumes) are available for consultation at Manchester Archives. However advance booking is necessary in order to see them.

The National Assistance Act 1948 and National Health Service Act 1946 came into effect from 5 July 1948 and brought the end of the Poor Law. Public Assistance Committees ceased to exist and their functions were transferred to various Government and Local Government Departments.