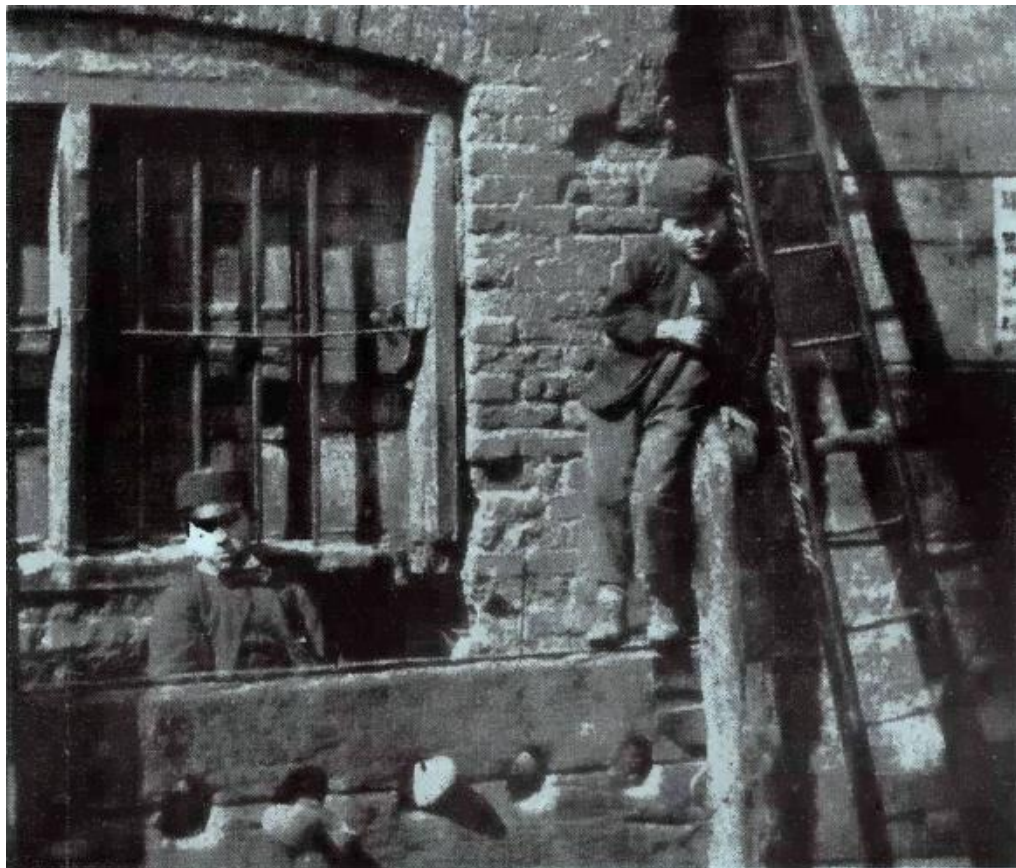


A Guide to the entries from

COVENTRY APPRENTICE ENROLMENTS

1781 – 1775

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Coventry Family History Society

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Cover illustration

A figure standing by the stocks, near the old Market House, Coventry.
From a photograph taken before 1865.

By kind permission of Andrew Mealy, Local Studies Librarian, Coventry.

Acknowledgements

The Coventry Apprentice Enrolment Registers are the property of Coventry City Council and are held at the Coventry Archives Office, Bayley Lane, Coventry. We thank Roger VAUGHAN, the City Archivist, and the Archive Office staff for their help and patience over a long period of time.

Many other people have contributed to the production of this dataset. We are very grateful to the army of volunteers of the **'Coventry Family History Society'** membership for spending many painstaking hours transcribing and checking the Apprentice Registers; to Barbara ROBINSON who managed the original project: to Geoff BARWICK and Paul SALISBURY, both Coventry Apprentices from late 1950s and 1960s, and Freeman of the City, who managed the later additions to the project.

Finally, to Andrew WALTON, who wrote the original program, and updated and re-formatted the new user program for the CD.

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COVENTRY APPRENTICE ENROLMENT

1781 - 1975

Introduction

This booklet contains notes, which correspond with the **‘Coventry Apprentice Enrolment CD’**, which records the names of all apprentices in Coventry, registered to a master and enrolled with The City of Coventry. All these people were living or working in the City, or in the County of the City of Coventry, between 1781 and 1975.

The records are in enrolment date order, and contain surname, forename, dates, masters and trade. They have been produced from fiche taken from the original records. The data is from Volumes 1 to 16 of the Apprentice Enrolments held at The Archives, The Herbert Centre, and Warwick County Records Office.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries freemen of the city were allowed to vote in elections, but to become a freeman it was necessary that an applicant should have served an apprenticeship of seven years in the same trade, and have lived in Coventry or in the County of the City of Coventry for the whole of that time.

To ensure that these conditions were met registers were kept where apprenticeship details were always available to city officials. These were the Coventry Apprenticeship Enrolment Registers. Begun in 1781, they continue to be kept to the present day.

During the early period, there were three types of entrant; the boy apprenticed by a parent, close relative or guardian; secondly the pauper boy apprenticed by his parish and finally the boy apprenticed by charity trustees.

Each entry gave the date of application for apprenticeship; the boy's name; the name of his relative, guardian, parish or charity; the relative or guardian's relationship, their occupation and place of residence; the name and occupation of the master, sometimes his ward in the city and finally, the date of commencement of the apprenticeship.

Information not transcribed into this dataset is the date of application for apprenticeship and the names of the Parish Overseers given with the application of each parish apprentice.

The majority of boys were apprenticed by their parents, close relatives or guardians. The premiums paid differed between trades and over the years. By 1806 a 'lower' trade apprenticeship premium would have cost from £5 upwards, the amount rising for 'better' trades, to perhaps £150 for an apprenticeship to a mercer.

Parish apprentices were usually orphans, had lost their fathers, or the family simply had too many mouths to feed. Here the premium of £3 to £5 for an apprenticeship meant that such boys were taught only the 'lowest grade' occupations - mainly weaving. Many of the masters of parish apprentices are seen to have had very many boys apprenticed to them, and many of the boys came from parishes outside Coventry.

Coventry Charities apprenticed the sons of poor freemen to city trades, indeed many were apprenticed to their fathers, thus producing in families both continuity of trade and possible freeman status. In this case the premium was paid to the father helping to alleviate possible poverty.

Girls were apprenticed in Coventry but as they were not eligible to vote in municipal elections, earlier female apprentices were not noted in these registers. Some women are shown to be masters, often the widow of a master carried on his trade, so a boy was re-assigned to her. Later many boys were once more re-assigned to a man in the same trade.

The column containing Masters shows many examples of the apprentice changing role to become a master himself. Here names of masters are listed with their occupation, ward and any partner reference. The Masters by Trade is a list of trades, occupations and masters, and for the social and economic historian, gives a picture of the balance of trades within the city at the time. There are many examples of a master being given seemingly different occupations, thus in successive entries a master may be described as a 'weaver', a 'ribbon weaver' and a 'ribbon manufacturer'. Each must be taken as correct at the time of writing.

There were many reasons why an indentured apprentice did not become registered as a freeman. The boy may not have completed his apprenticeship for reasons we shall never know; he may have died; he may have enlisted in service; he may have moved away from the city with his parents or his master; his master may have had the boy's apprenticeship cancelled for unsuitability or unacceptable behaviour and the boy may never have been re-assigned. At the same time there were those boys who would not or could not pay the necessary sum of money to be enrolled ceremonially as a freeman. Such boys were trained craftsmen but could not call themselves freemen of the city. They can be found in these records but not on the Freeman's Roll.

Many boys apprenticed in Coventry were born in neighbouring parishes, indeed in neighbouring counties. Here again the apprenticeship enrolment records give the parish of origin before coming to Coventry. The given details of parents and relatives can link the boy to parish baptismal records.

For the family historian these records can provide some details of the years between the ages of about twelve and nineteen years for ancestors found in them. Coventry Archive holds a card index both of the apprentices and of those boys who eventually became freemen. The latter gives a name, ward of the city, occupation and year of becoming a freeman. These can correlate information shown on the apprenticeship enrolment cards.

The researcher must always be aware of apparent and real errors contained within the registers transcribed. Details have been copied as written and films of the original registers should be checked wherever possible. There are examples of seemingly duplicate enrolments; re-assignments to another master where there is no record of the first enrolment; a re-assignment date preceding the first enrolment date and different spellings for two references which may be the same boy. Special care must be taken to check for alternative spellings of a surname. In transcription names beginning with 'M' and 'W' along with those ending in 'LL' and 'LE' may have been wrongly written, thus 'WILLS' may have been written as 'MILLS' and 'MILES' as 'WILES'. The dataset should be used with care and thought, allowing for human error both in the originals and in the transcription.

The end date of 1975 for the records, is an attempt to relate the first national name census record in Coventry to apprentices in service, and the later records to the persons still alive.

DATABASE INFORMATION

Searching the Database

To search by any of the fields, enter all or part of the search string in the appropriate box. Any combination of search fields can be used. It is not necessary to capitalise the first characters of names.

Wildcards can be used to guard against spelling and transcribing errors:

A per cent sign (%) represents one or more characters, e.g.

T%lor will extract **tailor, taylor, tellor** etc

Smi% will extract all names starting with **smi**

%ilt % will extract any entry containing those three characters – eg

Wilton, Milton, Chiltern

An underscore mark (_) represents a single character, e.g.

T_lor will extract **Talor, Tiler**, but not **Taylor**

The data grid columns have been sized to fully display most of the contents. To view longer entries, you can resize the column by dragging the border in the header row.

Printing

There are two print options:

Print All

Clicking on the 'Print All' button will print out the full search results at six records per page. The print out may be very large for common names.

Print Selected

Select single or multiple records for printing by holding down the **Ctrl** key while clicking on the dark grey 'Record Selector' column on the left of the

data grid for each record required. This will highlight the complete record across the row.

Clicking on the 'Print Selected' button will print out the selected records at 6 per page.

CONVENTIONS

- The title of each field will be found at the top of every column.
- Where there is nothing recorded, the fields remain blank.
- Blank in the ABODE and WARD fields assumes 'Coventry'.
- Blank in the COU(NTY) field assumes 'Warwickshire'.
- Extra information in the original registers is included in the 'Notes' column.
- All surnames are shown in full capitals.

FIELDS AS DISPLAYED WITHIN THE PROGRAM

APPRENTICE SURNAME: The spellings given in the original registers have been used. If it is obvious that the spelling is different for the same boy, then he has been given the same reference number.

APPRENTICE FORENAME(S): Where additional information is given in the register it is shown here, 'ygr' - 'younger' is often found. The age of the parish apprentices was usually given, '(12y)' - '12 years old'. In later entries birth dates are shown in the registers, and have been recorded in this dataset instead of the given age.

DATE OF INDENTURE: This has been quoted in day / month / year format.

DATE ENROLLED: This has been quoted in day / month / year format.

VOLUME/REFERENCE: Each apprentice has been given his own unique reference number within each volume where his name is found. If a boy has changed master the same reference number may have been used with the added suffix 'a', 'b', 'c' etc. If a boy was enrolled near the end of a decade and then changed master in the next index decade, his reference number will be different in each volume. (If there is a cross reference this is in the notes column). Where

there is no doubt that two or more entries refer to the same boy, he has been allocated the same reference number. If there is any doubt then a different number has been allocated.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S NAME: Forenames only are given unless the surname differs from that of the apprentice.

ABODE: Blank denotes that the abode is 'Coventry'. 'United Parishes' are those of Holy Trinity and St. Michael whose Overseers of the Poor jointly apprenticed poor boys of the two parishes during these years. For parishes outside Warwickshire the abbreviations of the Chapman County Codes are used.

COUNTY: Blank denotes Warwickshire. For others the abbreviations of the Chapman County Codes are used.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S OCCUPATION: In the case of a long trade description e.g. 'Parchment Maker & Leather Dresser' some abbreviation may have been used to keep the entries to less than 30 characters; this example uses 'dsr' instead of 'Dresser'. In this and the 'Master's Occupation' field every entry for the trade of tailor has been spelt 'Tailor' even when 'Taylor' was entered in the register.

CHARITY: An abbreviated code is used to show when a charity paid the enrolment fee for an apprentice. The majority of these codes are listed later in this document. Where there is a combination of two charities in one entry, it is shown as 'CLS/CRO' (Cow Lane School / Thomas Crow's Charity).

FROM MASTER SURNAME:

FROM MASTER FORENAME:

Where an apprentice has changed master, the first master's name is given here. Note that this database is the combination of two separate transcription projects. In the earlier work, the first master was recorded in the "Master" field with "(From)" appended. The later records have these dedicated fields.

MASTER'S SURNAME:

MASTER'S FORENAME:

These fields contain the information relating to the latest master.

REL(ATIONSHIP): An abbreviation used to show a family relationship of the master to the apprentice. Where a boy is apprenticed to a master who appears to be a relative but is not stated as such, no entry has been made in this column. Only stated relationships have been shown.

WARD: Sometimes abbreviated, showing the master's place of work, where stated.

TRADE: The master/apprentice trade shown in full.

PARTNERS: A field indicating that the master shown had one or more partners.

NOTES: Any other information noted on the record.

CHANGE OF MASTER

In the earlier records 'William WILLERTON (from)....' indicates that the boy has been re-assigned from William WILLERTON and the name of the new master is shown in the usual way in the MASTER'S SURNAME and MASTER'S FORENAME fields. By law apprentices had to be reassigned to a master in the same trade as the past master, although this did not always happen. This past trade was not always given in the reassignment entry but in the vast majority of cases it can be assumed to be the same as that of the new master.

ABBREVIATIONS OF CHARITIES

ABL	-	Abell of Atherstone
ARN	-	Countess of Arron, Banbury, OXF
BAB	-	Bablake Boys, Coventry
BB	-	Baker & Billings, Coventry
BBC	-	Baker Billings & Crow, Coventry
BIL	-	Samuel Billings, Coventry
BLY	-	Mrs. Bailey, Coventry
BLG	-	Mr. Billington
BOU	-	Mr. Boughton, Dunchurch
BST	-	Bathurst, Oxford
CLS	-	Cow Lane School, Coventry
COL	-	Mr. Collins, Coventry
CRO	-	Thomas Crow, Coventry
DEL	-	Sir Richard Delves, Warwick
FEE	-	Mr Feltham, Warwick
F FX	-	Mr. Fairfax, Coventry
GMS	-	Great Meeting House School, Coventry
HAD	-	Thomas Hadley, Warwick
HER	-	Mr. Herbert
JES	-	Mr. Jesson, Coventry
JON	-	St. John's parish, Coventry
KED	-	King Edward VI th Grammar School, Nuneaton
LAP	-	of Lapworth
PIC	-	Sir Thomas Pickering, Warwick
PLE	-	Robert Poole, Lutterworth, LE I
SHP	-	Mr. Sharp for Market Bosworth & Atherstone
SMD	-	Simmonds of Warwick
SYD	-	William Symonds, Atherstone
SYM	-	Mr. Symcox, Coventry
THA	-	Gilbert Thacker, Harborough Magna, WAR
WEN	-	Sir Peter Wentworth, Wolston
WHD	-	John Whitehead, Berkswell
WIL	-	of Willoughby, WAR

ABBREVIATIONS

Relationship

Bro	brother
BroL	brother-in-law
Cous	cousin
Path	father
FatL	father-in-law
GFat	grandfather
GMot	grandmother
Gdn	guardian
Moth	mother
MotL	mother-in-law
ParL	parents-in-law
SFat	stepfather
SMot	stepmother
Unc	uncle

Note –

Prefix G = grand...

Prefix S = step...

Suffix L = ...-in-law.

Others as used in 1881 census.

General

dec'd	deceased
jnr	junior
snr	senior
ygr	younger
p.a.	parish apprentice

Ward or street

[-]	denotes Coventry
B	Bishop Street
C	Coundon
DI	Dead Lane
Es	Earl Street
F	Foleshill
Fs	Fleet Street
Hs	Hill Street
H T	Holy Trinity parish
J	St. John's parish
K	Keresley
M	St. Michael's parish
MI	Mill Lane
MPs	Much Park Street
R	Radford
Se	Spon End
Ss	Spon Street

Note

In 1983 the Dugdale Society published "*Coventry Apprentices and their Masters, 1781 - 1806*", edited by Joan LANE M.A., PhD.

The names and all details of apprenticeships between these dates are listed in surname, then forename alphabetical order. Copies of this book are to be found in the Coventry Record Office and the Warwickshire County Record Office.
