

QUESTIONS

TO ANSWER WHEN STARTING TO RESEARCH A PERSON

BASICS

- What was/is the full name of the person you are researching?
- Where and when were they born?
- Who were their parents?
- Where did the parents live when they were born?
- Where and when did they die?

LIFE AND TIMES

- What was their occupation?
- Where did they work?
- What school did they attend?
- Did they attend university?
- Did they serve in the military?
- What religious denomination did they belong to?
- Did they ever live, work or travel abroad?

FAMILY LIFE

- Did they marry?
- Where did they marry?
- What is the name of their spouse?
- When and where did their spouse die?
- Did they marry more than once?
- Did they have children?
- What were their children's names?
- Did their children marry?
- Where do or did their children live?
- When and where did their children die? What was the cause of death?
- Where are their children buried?
- Did the children have nicknames?

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Pay Rolls - Show who was in receipt of aid, and how much they were receiving.

Letter Books - Correspondence of the Inspector of the Poor, or other associated parties. These can contain details of specific cases that were brought before the parochial board.

School Records

The 1872 Education (Scotland) Act introduced state controlled schools, run by local school boards. Log Books comprise a diary of the life of the school, while Admission Registers record date of admission to the school, name, date of birth, and name of address of parent or guardian. We hold School Log Books, Admission and Attendance Registers for a number of schools in the county from 1874-1974. (Please note that Closure Periods apply)

Ordnance Survey (O.S.) Maps

There are two editions of Ordnance Survey maps; the First Edition made in 1872, and the Second Edition made in 1903. They are available free online via the **National Library of Scotland website** <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Local Authority Records

Records including those of the Commissioners of Supply and Road Trustees, as well as parish, burgh and county councils document the decisions and transactions of different local authorities from 1589 to the 21st century.

Customs and Excise

The main series of records are the Fishing Boat Registers, which give details of Fishing Boats registered in Wick from 1869-1989, and include details of owners, crew, name and description of vessel.

Local Newspapers

Check for birth, marriage or death entries or an obituary in the local newspapers. Nucleus holds hard copies of the John o' Groat Journal (1836- 2018) and Northern Ensign (1850-1922).

Private Deposits

Nucleus currently holds over 1000 Private Deposits.

FAMILY HISTORY



NUCLEUS

THE NUCLEAR AND CAITHNESS ARCHIVES

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<https://www.highlifehighland.com/nucleus-nuclear-caithness-archives/>

PRINCIPAL FAMILY HISTORY SOURCES

Census

A national census has been taken every 10 years since 1841, recording details of all persons living in a household (including occupation, age and place of birth), and those from 1841 to 1921 are open to the public. Nucleus: The Nuclear and Caithness Archives holds microfilm copies of the following censuses for the counties of Caithness and Sutherland:

1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901

We also hold indexes for the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 censuses (Caithness only).

The 1911 and 1921 census are available via the Scotland's People website – www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk; please note that there is a charge for each page accessed.

The Family History room (in the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness) is the only venue in the Highlands with direct access to Scotlands People Network. There are 4 available spaces which can be booked daily at a cost of £15 per day and copies of historic images can be printed for a small fee. To book please contact Inverness Registrars on 01349 781131 or email inverness.registrars@highland.gov.uk

The census can also be digitally accessed for free at <https://www.freecen.org.uk/>

Old Parish Registers

Nucleus holds microfilm copies of Old Parish Registers for all Caithness parishes, as well as for those in Sutherland. They are church records for baptisms and marriages pre-1855, and the only source for that period of time. As it was not compulsory to register births/baptisms and marriages there will be gaps and not everyone will be in them. Dates especially for baptisms, can vary from the expected years by a few months, or years.

The original records are held by the National Archives of Scotland. They can also be accessed for a charge on www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk

International Genealogical Index

Also known as the IGI, this is an index to the Old Parish Register births and marriages prepared by the Mormon Church, and arranged by surname. It was created in 1969 to trace the names and family tree of the Mormon's ancestors who had died without knowledge of the restored Mormon gospel, so that they could be baptised by proxy in the temple. We hold the IGI on microfiche for Caithness, Sutherland, Inverness, Ross & Cromarty, Highlands, Orkney and Shetland.

Valuation Rolls

Compiled annually since 1855, Valuation Rolls give details of properties, owners and tenants/ occupiers, and give an annual rental value, they were produced annually for taxation purposes. Nucleus holds copies of Valuation Rolls from 1855 to 1970 for the county of Caithness (microfilm for 1855-1880, hard copies for 1880-1970). They are organised by Parish, and then geographically and only list the names of the primary tenant, not the names of everyone who lived there. They also do not always give a specific address, and the name of the address may change throughout different years e.g. house with land could become Freswick House the next year.

Monumental Inscriptions

A useful resource for deaths pre-1855. The Cowper & Ross books are transcriptions taken from readable headstones in cemeteries in Caithness, they also contain some entries that are more modern. There is a section for each cemetery in the books, and a key at the front explaining the abbreviations used.

Abridgements of Sasines

The Sasines show the ownerships of lands & property, and the passing of ownerships from one individual to another. They give the names of the parties, the property and some boundary information. **The full Instruments of Sasines are held by the National Records of Scotland, in Edinburgh.**

Kirk Session Records

The Kirk Session was made up of the minister and elders of the church. It oversaw the care of the poor, maintaining the parish mortifications (charity rolls) and licensing beggars, and policing morality among parishioners. The original records of the Kirk Sessions for Caithness are held by the National Records of Scotland, but can be

viewed free of charge on the Scotland's People website but are not indexed.

Poor Law Records

The Poor Law (Scotland) Act of 1845 set up parochial boards to administer poor relief in each parish, and in 1894 this responsibility passed to parish councils. We hold a variety of Poor Law Minute Books and Registers 1845-1930, which record (among other things) the names of applicants for poor relief. All Poor Law Records have Closure Periods. They are divided into sections:

Parochial Board Minute Books - These document individual cases and outcomes of cases, general Parish Business, Inspector's reports, list of paupers and the aid they are receiving from the Parochial Board.

Applications for Relief - These volumes were kept by the Inspector of Poor to record visits throughout each parish, and the outcomes of each visit. They detail the circumstances of those requesting aid and whether the applicant was admitted to the poor roll. If an applicant was admitted to the poor roll then a reference number was provided. This reference number can be cross-referenced with the General Registers of Poor.

General Register of Poor - Often a complete record of an individual's interactions with the Parochial Board, including dates of discussions in the Board Minutes, circumstances, and aid required. If an individual had been struck off the Register as their circumstances had improved, but then re-admitted, they would keep the same reference, and their entry would resume when added back onto the roll. If an individual died while still receiving aid, the date and cause of death would be noted.

Children's Register - Similar to the General Register, but for children under 16. After 16, they are transferred to the General Register.

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