

Subject: Request for information relating to family history research.

FOI reference: FOI/19/00988

Date received: 05 April 2019

Date responded: 09 April 2019

Information requested:

Request for information relating to family history research.

NRS Response:

Our aim is to provide information whenever possible. However, in this instance, the information requested, where indeed it can be traced, should be available through the records provided online via the Scotlandspeople Centre. Under section 25(1) of FOISA, we do not have to give information which is already reasonably accessible, even if a payment has to be made for it.

The best place to begin Scottish genealogical research is through the ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh. It offers access to the Church of Scotland's Old Parish Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials from 1553-1854, together with the Statutory Registers of births, marriages and deaths from 1855 to the present, wills and testaments 1513-1925, valuation rolls from 1855 and census returns from 1841.

If you cannot visit in person, the official Scottish genealogical pay-per-view website is at <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>. There is a large help and guidance section here if you are just starting out <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/help-and-guidance>

You will need to register and create an account, and you can then search the indexes without charge. If you find something you wish to view or download, you will need to pay for it using 'credits' which you can buy online.

I'm sorry, but I'm not aware of any free websites for Scottish birth, marriage and death records. There is <https://www.freeukgenealogy.org.uk/>, which says it has some English and Welsh records available, and that may be of some use if your genealogical search takes you to other parts of the UK. The UK version at <https://www.freeukgenealogy.org.uk/> links to <https://www.freecen.org.uk/>, which has free access to some Scottish census data, and you may wish to explore the parent website to see what else might be useful in your research.

For Jamaica, there are some information available here <http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/>. Ancestry.com also had some Jamaican records at <https://search.ancestry.com/Places/North-America/Jamaica/Default.aspx> - this is a commercial website, so you will need to pay to access the records but you may be able to obtain information from the indexes.

From 1707, Scotland became part of the United Kingdom, and anything 'national', such as defence, migration, and taxes was largely dealt with from London. There are no official outgoing passenger lists for those leaving the UK prior to 1890. From 1890, you can view these online for a fee at <http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-united-kingdom-records-in-travel-and-migration>.

There are no official lists of vessels leaving Scotland for asked period. There are some customs records which list the cargoes and masters of ships leaving Scottish ports, along with their intended destination, but these are in the form of the original records and would be time-consuming to research.

Dr David Dobson has produced a number of books listing Scottish migrants to the Americas, including "The original Scots colonists of early America: Caribbean supplement 1611-1707" (1999). The emigrants include: Scots prisoners-of-war transported by Oliver Cromwell; felons; Covenanters; and Scottish indentured servants. If you can get hold of a copy of this book, it might help answer some of your questions.

In summary: although it may be possible to use our records to provide answers to the enquiries, this is not work which would be carried out by staff here. I am sorry, but we simply do not have sufficient staff to undertake research on behalf of any enquirer. If readers are unable to visit in person, we suggest asking a friend or relative to carry out research on their behalf, or employing a professional record agent. You can find a list of private record agents at [<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/researching-online/paying-for-research>], should you wish to employ someone to undertake research on your behalf. However, the National Records of Scotland accepts no responsibility for these record agents or for the quality or quantity of their work.