

SCOTTISH ANCESTRY GROUP

Background To Research

Although Scotland is geographically a part of Great Britain, it has its own laws and customs, education system, national Church, borders, culture and, perhaps most importantly, a separate national identity, which is distinctly different from the rest of Britain.

In 1603, King James VI of Scotland ascended the throne of England as James I, and since that time the countries of England and Scotland have shared a common Head of State. In 1707, the Parliaments of England and Scotland amalgamated to form the Parliament of Great Britain.

The Irish Parliament was incorporated into the Union in 1801 and the resultant body became the Parliament of the United Kingdom. (It is therefore an irregularity that the present monarch is commonly designated Queen of England - she is in fact Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

In 1999, Scotland regained its own Parliament, with a purpose-built house located in Edinburgh

The people of Scotland possess a very diverse racial and cultural background. The early inhabitants of Scotland were the Britons, a Celtic people who spoke a language that is today called Primitive Welsh. The best known of the British Kingdoms was Pictland, the home of the Picts.

Over the centuries, other races have settled in Scotland. The main groups involved in these migrations were the Angles, Gaels, Norwegians, Friesians, and Flemings. There has also been a continuous trickle of English and Irish migrants into the country.

Three principal languages are spoken in Scotland - English, Scots (depending on who is asked, Scots may be described either as the closest language to English, or the most divergent dialect of standard English) and Scottish Gaelic (a version of the ancient Irish Celtic language). English is now the predominant language, although there is interest in reversing the trend towards the extinction of both Scots and Gaelic - particularly in the Highlands and the Islands off the West Coast of Mainland Scotland.

Scottish Records

To research your Scottish family history, you need to be aware that most of the records relating to Scotland were created specifically to suit Scottish needs, and many are quite different in character and content to those of other places.

Most Scottish records are preserved in Scottish repositories, such as the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) in Edinburgh. However some records created after 1707, such as those pertaining to the military, navy, air force, customs and excise, merchant marine etc will be found in the Public Record Office (PRO) in London.

Civil registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages etc began on 1st January 1855. These records are generally highly detailed, containing much more information than those of England and Wales, and are nearly as good as the records of the three Eastern Australian Mainland States. You can frequently find additional information to that available in the civil records in the census records. Censuses have been conducted every 10 years since 1841, and are presently available up to 1911 (limited by the 100 years privacy rule).

For the period prior to 1855, the researcher must rely heavily on Church records. These mainly consist of birth, baptism, marriage, and in some cases burial records. You can sometimes glean supplementary information from cemetery inscriptions, and from the records of the Kirk Session (a church court with jurisdiction in moral offences and some petty offences, as well as the administration of the poor, etc).

Using microfilm, microfiche and the Internet, it is possible to do a great deal of Scottish research without leaving Victoria. The main resources are: Civil Registration Indexes; 1841 to 1911 censuses; Index to (pre 1855) Old Parochial Registers (OPRs); the International Genealogical Index (IGI); monumental inscriptions; and indexes to testaments, deeds, and Sasines (land transfers).

You can order microfilm records such as Old Parish Registers, held by the Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS), for viewing at the GSV by registering at the web site www.familysearch.org/films/help

The definitive online source for Scottish genealogical records is the pay-per-view *ScotlandsPeople* at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk



Membership Application Form

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