

Jurisdiction Levels Affecting England Genealogy Research

Family History Fair - Orange County FamilySearch Center – September 21, 2024

Geographic

Civil Jurisdictions and Placenames

- Country
- County
- Parish

Demographic designations

- Hamlet
- Village
- Town
- City

Civil Jurisdictions at the local/county level

- County
- Poor Law Unions
- Civil Registration District
- Principal and District Probate Registries
- Civil parish (township)

Poor law union: Jurisdiction charged with the responsibility for relief of the poor, beginning in 1834. A township is a division of a parish for levying a separate Poor Rate (poor tax) for providing care for the poor.

Civil registration district: Divisions created for the reporting of births, marriages and deaths for an area, beginning July 1837.

Probate Court: The body charged with the settling of a deceased person's estate, beginning in 1858.

Land Divisions

- County
- Hundred (Wapentake in the Danelaw counties)
- Hide
- Tithing
- Other special divisions: Yorkshire – ridings; Kent – lathes; Sussex – rapes; Lincolnshire – parts
- Manor

A Shire court, or **moot** was an Anglo-Saxon government institution, used to maintain law and order at a local level, and perform various administrative functions, including the collection of taxes for the central government. (Wikipedia) Replaced by the manor court.

Wapentake – a land division, similar to a hundred, but used in shires that were in the area of the former Danelaw – that part of northern and central England once controlled by the Danes and, later, Norwegians, where Scandinavian laws, customs and language prevailed.

Danelaw Shires: Leicester, York, Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln, Essex, Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Northampton, Huntingdon, Bedford, Hertford, Middlesex, Buckingham.

1841 Census was organized by hundreds; thereafter by census enumeration districts which were based on the Poor Law Union boundaries.

If you want to search the hearth tax records or the militia and muster rolls you need to know which wapentake your ancestor lived in.

England Jurisdictions 1851 (online interactive historical map system) <https://www.familysearch.org/mapp>

Church Jurisdictions & Hierarchy

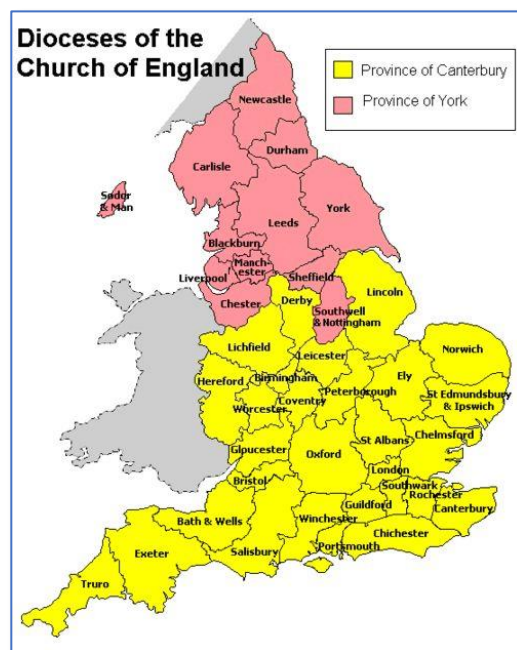
- Province/Archdiocese > Archbishop
- Diocese > Bishop
- Archdeaconry > Archdeacon
- Rural Deanery > Dean
- Parish/chapelry > Minister: Rector, Vicar, Curate

Parish Chest Records

- Parish registers
- Vestry minutes
- Militia records
- Apprenticeship records
- Poor rate books
- Church warden accounts
- Settlement certificates
- Examination records

Many jurisdictions ... many records

- Parish records (parish registers & banns)
- Diocesan records (bishops transcripts, licenses, bonds)
- Poor Law records
- Civil Registration records (birth, marriage, death)
- Probate records
- Manorial records



Source- Wikipedia

The [FamilySearch](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page) website has several specialized webpages related to jurisdictions. Go to the Research Wiki https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page; in the search box enter “england” and select a relevant topic from the dropdown menu selections. To go to these selected webpages directly, click on the link below:

- For England Jurisdictions: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Jurisdictions
- For England and Wales Poor Law Unions: [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England and Wales Poor Law Records 1834-1948](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_and_Wales_Poor_Law_Records_1834-1948)
- For England Hundreds: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Hundreds
- For England Civil Registration: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Civil_Registration
- For England Church Records: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Church_Records
- For England Parish Church Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Church_Records#Parish Chest Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Church_Records#Parish_Chest_Records)
- For England Church History: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Church_History

Online Gazetteers

- GENUKI Gazetteer: <https://www.genuki.org.uk/gazetteer>
- Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of England: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100188159>
- The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/272349?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- Association of British Counties Gazetteer of British Place Names: www.gazetteer.org.uk
- Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles: <https://archive.org/stream/surveygazetteero00bartuoft#page/n5/mode/2up>

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Tate, W.E. *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England*. Third edition. Cambridge University Press, 1969. (FSL-SLC: 942 K2t 1969)

Websites

England Jurisdictions, FamilySearch Research Wiki;
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_Jurisdictions

England Jurisdictions 1851 Maps project, FamilySearch.org; <https://www.familysearch.org/mapp>

England and Wales poor Law Unions:
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/England_and_Wales_Poor_Law_Records_1834-1948

Manors and Manorial Records (research guide), The National Archives;
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/manors/#2-what-is-a-manor>

Manorial Documents Register (research guide), The National Archives;
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/manorial-documents-lordships-how-to-use-manorial-document-register/>

- **Google: Gray's Book of Roads – George Carrington Gray 1824**

ENGLAND PRE - 1974 COUNTY STRUCTURE

This map shows the county structure for England and Wales as it existed before 1974.



Source: FamilySearch-England Research Outline