

# Life in the Workhouse: Impact on One Family

Uncovering Family Stories through Workhouse Records

# Introduction & Agenda

1. Case Study: Thanet Union Workhouse
2. Discussion and Q&A

# Case Study: Thanet Union Workhouse - Introduction

1. Overview of Thanet Union Workhouse
  - a. Location and Establishment
  - b. Historical Development
2. Purpose and Functions
  - a. Roles and Services Provided
  - b. Population Served
3. Significance in Local History
  - a. Impact on the Thanet Area
  - b. Connection to Local Families

# Family Connection to Thanet Union Workhouse: Personal Ancestral Ties

1. Introduction to the Family Connection
  - Relative's Name and Relationship
  - Dates and Duration of Stay
2. Details from Workhouse Records
  - Key Records and Findings
  - Impact on Relative's Life
3. Personal Reflection
  - Family Stories and Insights
  - Significance of the Connection





# Birth Certificates for those born in the Workhouse

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number COL434158

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Thanet

1892 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Minster in the County of Kent

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
275	Seventeenth December 1892 Union Workhouse Minster Kt. & S.	William Thomas	Boy		Alice Jessie Darby General Servant & Warrington		A. J. Darby Mother Union Workhouse Minster	Thirtyninth December 1892	Orlando Golder	Registrar.

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 7th day of December 2004

**BXCA 701339**

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WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.



# Practical Research Tips

1. Starting Your Research
  - Gather Basic Information
  - Identify Key Records
2. Using Workhouse Records
  - Interpreting Records
  - Look for Patterns
3. Expanding Your Research
  - Consulting Secondary Sources
  - Networking with Other Researchers

# Websites Dedicated to the History of Workhouses and their Records

- **Workhouses.org.uk**
  - Comprehensive History and Records
  - Extensive Database of Workhouses Across the UK
- **KentWorkhouses.uk**
  - Focus on Workhouses in Kent
  - Detailed Local Records and Histories

# Other Websites with Records from Workhouses

- The National Archives (TNA)
  - Access to Workhouse Records
  - Guides and Resources for Research
- Ancestry.co.uk and Findmypast.co.uk
  - Digitized Workhouse Records
  - Searchable Databases for Genealogy
- FamilySearch.org
  - Free Access to Some Workhouse Records
  - Community Support and Resources

# Summary and Q&A

1. Summary of Key Points
  - Historical Context of Workhouses
  - Impact on Individuals and Families
  - Researching Workhouse Records
2. Resources and Next Steps
  - Local Archives and Online Databases
  - Community Support
3. Questions and Discussion

# Introduction to (or Refresher for) the Parish Settlement Scheme

- Brief introduction to the topic
- Purpose: to explore how the settlement scheme shaped family lives
- Highlight relevance to genealogy research, especially for tracing movements of ancestors

# The Poor Law Act of 1601: Foundation of the Settlement System

- **Background on the Poor Law Act**
  - Introduced to provide a system for supporting the poor at the local parish level.
- **Concept of "settlement"**
  - Settlement determined which parish was responsible for a person's care.
- **Benefit to rate-payers**
  - Relieving the burden of increasing costs of pauperism
- **Genealogical relevance**
  - Understanding settlement helps trace ancestors' movements and access to poor relief.

# Parish Settlement: How Was It Acquired?

- **Settlement by birth**
  - A person's place of birth often dictated their settlement parish.
- **Residency**
  - Living there for a year and a day
- **Property**
  - Renting property worth £10/year or more
- **Settlement by marriage**
  - A woman typically acquired her husband's settlement status.
- **Other methods**
  - Settlement could also be gained through property ownership, apprenticeship, or residency.
- **Apprenticeship or service**
  - Working in the parish for a set time

# The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834: Changes and Parish Unions

- Reforms introduced by the Act
  - The 1834 Act centralized poor relief and introduced workhouses.
- Formation of Parish Unions
  - Parishes were grouped into unions to share the responsibility for the poor.
- Continuation of settlement laws
  - Despite reforms, the settlement system continued to control where people could access relief.

# Impact on Ordinary Families

- The removal process
  - Families were often forcibly relocated to their parish of settlement, sometimes causing hardship.
- Emotional and legal challenges
  - The threat of removal created anxiety, and legal disputes were common.
- Fear of pauperism
  - The stigma of pauperism influenced many life decisions, including marriage and work.

# Settlement Examinations and Certificates

- **Settlement examinations**
  - These documents recorded an individual's answers regarding their place of settlement.
- **Settlement certificates**
  - Certificates were issued to confirm a person's settlement status when moving between parishes.
- **Removal Orders**
  - Documents enforcing removal from one parish to another
- **Genealogical details**
  - These records often provide personal information, including family connections, occupation, and past residences.

# Removal Orders and the Human Impact:

- What are removal orders?
  - Legal documents for forcibly relocating individuals or families to their parish of settlement.
- How removal orders worked in practice
  - Forced relocation of those unable to support themselves, often with little notice.
- Impact on families
  - Families could be uprooted or separated if members had different settlement rights.
- Fear and anxiety around removal
  - Fear of being removed discouraged people from moving to new parishes or seeking help.
- Genealogical value of removal orders
  - Removal orders contain personal details valuable for family history.

# Real-Life Examples: Case Studies

- **Case study 1**
  - A story illustrating the human impact of settlement laws, such as family separation.
- **Case study 2**
  - Another example showing the disruption caused by removal orders or settlement disputes.
- **Genealogical connection**
  - These stories highlight the kinds of records genealogists can find to trace family histories.

# Impact on Migration Patterns

- Influence on movement
  - Settlement laws made people cautious about moving to new parishes.
- Limited opportunities for the poor
  - Poor families were often stuck in their parish of settlement, even if there were better opportunities elsewhere.
- Impact on seasonal workers
  - Seasonal workers faced difficulty moving due to concerns about settlement rights.
- Impact on urban migration
  - Settlement laws slowed urban migration as industrial centers avoided taking on new poor migrants.
- Effect on family strategies
  - Families developed strategies to avoid the risks of losing settlement rights when moving between parishes.

# Research Tips and Resources

- Settlement records to look for
  - Focus on settlement examinations, certificates, and removal orders.
- Online resources
  - Ancestry, Findmypast, and FamilySearch have digitized settlement records.
- Cross-referencing with other records
  - Use census data, parish registers, and employment records to provide context and verify settlement details.
- Understanding the context
  - Familiarize yourself with the specific settlement laws for the time and place you're researching.
- Collaboration with local history groups
  - Local history societies can provide expert knowledge and access to records not widely available online.

# Remember

**The Settlement Schemes may be the underlying explanation for your ancestors relocating to other parishes**



# Happy hunting!

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