



EARLY SUSSEX RECORDS FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS

Researching records created in the mid-19th Century and beyond is comparatively easy because information extracted from parish registers can be used in conjunction with the GRO birth, marriage & death indexes and also with the 1841 and subsequent decennial census returns. Problems can arise when researchers attempt to go further back in time. We have already created handouts covering Manorial, Poor Law and Probate records, so this Handout describes a selection of other types of records created in the 16th, 17th & 18th Centuries that exist for Sussex.

Apprentices & Masters

These records have been transcribed and indexed for the period 1710 to 1752. You will find them in SRS volume 28 and a digital copy is available from their web site at <https://www.sussexrecordsociety.org>.

Church Monuments

Monuments inside churches have a much better chance of survival than those in churchyards. There is a comprehensive listing in East Sussex Monuments 1530 to 1830, SRS volume 93 (ISBN 9780854450756)

Coroners' Inquests

Four volumes of Coroners' Inquests by R. F. Hunnisett have been published:

Sussex Coroners' Inquests 1485 to 1558, published by SRS as volume 74 (ISBN 0854450335)
Sussex Coroners' Inquests 1558 to 1603, published by PRO (ISBN 1873162286)
Sussex Coroners' Inquests 1604 to 1688, published by PRO (ISBN 9781873162538)
East Sussex Coroners' Inquests 1688 to 1838, published by SRS as volume 89 (ISBN 0854450688)

CCED

If you have Church of England clergy in your family, you can search the Clergy of the Church of England Database online at <https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> to obtain the details of their education & ministry. Covers the period 1540-1835.

Fines

Fines were a written agreement to settle a legal dispute between two or more parties, with the consent of the judge. Three volumes have been published by the SRS:

Volume 2 for 1150 to 1248
Volume 7 for 1250 to 1307
Volume 23 for 1307 to 1509

PTO

Created October 2020

Hearth Tax

Between 1662 and 1689 the Government imposed a levy on all householders across England, Wales and Ireland that was assessed by the number of hearths in each property. There are a number of published transcripts for Sussex:

1662 Lewes Rape by M. J. Burchall & J. H. Farrant, Sussex Genealogical Centre Occasional Papers No. 3

1662 Pevensey Rape by M. J. Burchall, Sussex Genealogical Centre Occasional Papers No. 4

1662 Hastings Rape by T. P. Mitchell (ISBN 0952388111)

1662 Bramber Rape by T. P. Mitchell (ISBN 095238812X)

1670 Hastings Rape by T. P. Mitchell (ISBN 0952388138)

1670 Arundel Rape by T. P. Mitchell (ISBN 0952388146)

Land Tax

The 1785 Land Tax assessment has been published by SRS. Volume 77 is for East Sussex and volume 82 for West Sussex.

Militia Lists & Muster Rolls

The list of available records for Sussex will be found in Militia Lists and Musters 1757 to 1876 by Jeremy Gibson & Mervyn Medlycott, published by the Federation of Family History Societies (ISBN 1872094155).

Poll Books

There are a number of pre-1832 election records. You will find a listing for Sussex in Poll Books 1696 to 1872, by Jeremy Gibson & Colin Rogers, published by The Family History Partnership (ISBN 9781906280093).

Post Mortem Inquisitions

Available for the period 1485 to 1649 in SRS volume 14. This can be viewed online at <https://www.sussexrecordsociety.org> .

Protestation Returns

This is effectively a census of all males taken in 1641/42 of 18 years and upwards who were required to affirm their allegiance to the protestant faith. The records have survived for most of the West Sussex parishes, but none have survived for East Sussex. Published by the SRS as volume 5 and a digital version is available to view at <https://www.sussexrecordsociety.org> .

School Records

Sussex Schools in the 18th Century, SRS volume 81, provides details of all the schools, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, and scholars.

Abbreviations used:

PRO / TNA = Public Record Office, subsequently renamed The National Archives

SRS = Sussex Record Society. These volumes are available in both the Sussex Record Offices and also in many libraries across Sussex.

WSRO = West Sussex Record Office in Chichester