



## LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY GENEALOGY GUIDE NUMBER 6 ELECTORAL REGISTERS AND POLL BOOKS

### WHO COULD VOTE

- Prior to 1832, in boroughs there was no fixed qualifications for the franchise, eligibility depended upon local circumstances and tradition, for example in Newcastle voting was limited to freemen.
- The 1832 Reform Act added householders of property of £10.00 or more in annual value in towns and £10.00 copyholders and others in counties.
- 1867 the vote was extended to all householders who had been in residence for at least 1 year and to all lodgers paying £10.00 a year or more in boroughs. In counties to all occupiers of houses rated at £12.00 or more and all householders with property of at least £4.00 annual value.
- 1884 the county franchise was brought into line with the boroughs. Even then only 59% of the adult male population could vote. Women could vote if they had relevant property qualifications.
- 1918 the property qualification was abolished - all men and women aged 30 and over were enfranchised.
- 1928 women aged 21 and over could vote i.e. male and female adult franchise was achieved.
- 1948 plural voting i.e. a vote for both home and place of business was abolished.
- 1969 the voting age was lowered to 18 .

### ELECTORAL REGISTERS

- These were required to be published after 1832. They listed every person qualified to vote, giving address and (pre 1918) details of property providing the qualification.
- As the franchise extended electoral registers listed greater proportions of individuals.
- They were issued under various names and until 1918 those for local elections differed from those for parliamentary elections but for the purpose of this list no distinction has been made.

The Local Studies Collection contains the following:-

**DURHAM CITY** 1870-1871

**NEWBURN PARISH** 1939-40

**NEWCASTLE** 1832, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1836-37, 1837-38, 1839, 1847, 1848, 1851-52, 1853, 1854-59\*, 1858-59, 1864-65, 1867-68, 1868-69, 1870, 1872, 1875, 1877, 1880-81 to 1914-15, 1918-19 to 1939- 40, 1945 to date

- on microfilm.

**NORTHUMBERLAND** 1963, 1964

**Berwick Division:-** 1886, 1888, 1890-92, 1904  
**Hexham Division:-** 1886, 1890-92, 1904  
**Hexham Constituency:-** 1969-73, 1975, 1977-78, 1981-83  
**Tyneside Division:-** 1887-88, 1890-92, 1904, 1963, 1964  
**Wallsend :-** 1963-64, 1969, 1971-75, 1977-79, 1981-83, 1987  
**Wansbeck Division:-** 1886, 1890-92, 1904

Some of these contain sections which later became part of Newcastle.

**SUNDERLAND** 1832, part of 1835

## **POLL BOOKS**

- Poll books were authorised by an Act of Parliament 1696, and were published until 1871 (secret voting was established in 1872.)
- They were issued only after contested Parliamentary elections and only when there was local demand.
- Information contained in them varied: always name and vote, sometimes address and occupation.

The Local Studies Collection contains the following:-

**Durham City** 1802-52 (contains 1802, 1813, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1837, 1843 (April & July), 1847, 1852), 1871

**Durham County** 1790, 1802, 1820, 1832, 1837(Northern Division only)  
1841 (Southern Division only), 1857 (Southern Division Only),  
1865 (Northern Division only) 1868

**Gateshead** 1837, 1852

**Newcastle** 1715, 1722, 1734, 1741, 1774, 1777, 1780, 1820, 1832, 1835,  
1836, 1837, 1847, 1852, 1859 (April & June)

**Northumberland** 1705, 1710, 1715, 1721, 1722, 1734, 1747-48, 1774, 1826, 1832  
(Southern Division) 1841 (Northern Division), 1847 (Northern  
Division), 1852

**Sunderland** 1833

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