



Trade Directories

The first Trade Directory in our region was published in 1766 *Gore's Liverpool Directory*. I don't have a copy so can't comment. I do have a copy of the first one published in the Manchester Region. *Mrs Raffald's Directory of Manchester and Salford 1772* reprinted by Neil Richardson. Here is Mrs Raffald's introduction:

To the PUBLIC

The want of a directory for the large and commercial town of Manchester, having been complained of, and several useful Regulations being lately made; I have taken upon me the arduous task of compiling a Complete Guide for the easy finding out every Inhabitant of the least Consequence; as also most of the County Tradesmen, and the Places where their Warehouses are situated; likewise an account of the Stage Coaches and Carriers with the Times of their coming in and going out of Town &c. &c.

But as the Difficulty of a private Person's knowing every one and his Connections, without the Assistance of the People themselves, must be apparent to every one, it cannot be expected but that some Errors and Omissions will appear; Any Person's Name and, therefore, that may be omitted, shall, on proper notice, be inserted in the next Edition, by the Public's.

N.B As it is an Agitation to number the Houses in each Street, for the more readily finding the Inhabitants; if this or any other Regulation should take place, it shall be carefully added to the next Edition.

Eliz. Raffald March 20 1772

Mrs Raffald was quite a remarkable woman and the wife of a Manchester business man and she did produce another directory in 1781. There is another one published in 1788, but not by Mrs Raffald this time. Another early Manchester directory was published in 1800, *Banck's Manchester and Salford Directory, An Alphabetical List of the Merchants, Manufacturers and Principal Inhabitants with the Numbers as affixed to their Houses:*

Also, An Alphabetical List of the Streets, Squares, Lanes and Passages – A List of Carriers by Land and Water; with the Days of their arrival and return – An Account of the Stage Coaches going out from the different Inns – the Situation of the Public Offices with the Names of Agents, the Situation of the Fire Plugs and Engine Houses, with the Names of the Conductors and Firemen – And other Matters of useful Information.

All published by Neil Richardson

From these early beginnings trade directories began to evolve at county level concentrating on the main towns and villages. They were the 'Yellow Pages' of the day, with different publishers and formats; sometimes in alphabetical order, sometimes under categories of occupations, sometimes both and later also developing into Street Directories. Most included a description and brief history of the places listed.

I have transcribed some early directories for the towns which now make up Tameside in East Manchester on my website: tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk/contents.htm

- Ashton-under-Lyne 1814
- Mottram in Longdendale 1821
- Stalybridge 1825
- Mottram and district 1832
- Denton, Droylsden and Audenshaw 1832
- Ashton and District 1832
- Hyde 1834

Marjorie Hadfield has also transcribed the following directories on her www.disley.net website: Disley - Pigot's for 1835 and Bagshaw's 1850 for Disley, Taxal, Lyme Handley and Whaley Bridge.

If anyone knows of any other transcriptions on personal websites, please let me know and I'll list them.

Stockport Heritage Library have transcribed early trade directories in their area and made them searchable on line: <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/atozindex> then click on Genealogy Database.

Chester Record Office has an excellent selection searchable online: cheshiredirectories.manuscripteye.com/index.htm

- 1789 Cowdroy's Directory of Cheshire
- 1822/3 Pigot's Directory of Cheshire
- 1857 Post Office Directory of Cheshire
- 1864 Morris & Co.'s Directory of Cheshire
- 1871 Worrall's Directory of Warrington
- 1878 Post Office Directory of Cheshire
- 1883 Slater's Directory of Cheshire and Liverpool
- 1895 Slater's Directory of Warrington, Widnes & St Helens
- 1902 Kelly's Directory of Cheshire
- 1906 Kelly's Directory of Cheshire
- 1910 Kelly's Directory of Cheshire

These are just a representative sample of their collection.

Pigot's 1817, 1822 and 1834, plus 1906 for Altrincham and area, are also available to search via ancestry.co.uk you will have to search their card catalogue to find them. Ancestry also has British Phone Books 1880-1984.

Family History Societies have scanned several Trade Directories and have made them available to purchase on CD: www.fhsc.org.uk click on CD/DVDs in the bottom Right Hand Menu. Most of our groups have a CD library loan facility at their monthly meetings. Check what is available from your own local Family History Society.

Both our Society Libraries at Crewe and Alderley Edge have a large selection. Most local studies libraries also have an excellent collection. Manchester Central Library has a huge range for the whole of the British Isles and Manchester and Lancs FHS have compiled these holdings into their "Orange Book", price £4.50 www.mlfhs.org.uk Sadly the library is currently closed for renovation and these are in storage until it reopens circa 2013/4.

Trade directories are very helpful in tracking down your ancestors who were either in business or tradesmen, both before 1837 and between census dates. Some later ones show both business address and private residence, and those which go as far as the 1960/70s give a flavour of the place when we were much younger, looking at the shops in your high street and remembering the names of all your neighbours. They are also fascinating historical documents in their own right, helping to create a picture of the places your ancestors lived.