



Tracing Your Servant Ancestors (Family History from Pen & Sword)

Michelle Higgs

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While there are popular and academic books on servants and domestic service, as well as television dramas and documentaries, little attention has been paid to the sources family historians can use to explore the lives and careers of their servant ancestors. Michelle Higgs's accessible and authoritative handbook has been written to serve just this purpose.

Covering the period from the eighteenth century through to the Second World War, her survey gives a fascinating insight into the conditions of domestic service and the experience of those who worked within it. She quotes examples from the sources to show exactly how they can be used to trace individuals. Chapters cover the historical background of domestic service; the employers; the social hierarchy within the servant class; and the recruitment and responsibilities of servants.

A comprehensive account of the available sources – the census, wills, directories, household accounts, tax and union records, diaries and online sources - provides readers with all the information they need to do their own research. This short, vivid overview will be invaluable to anyone keen to gain a practical understanding of the realities of servants' lives.

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