



Ancient English Marriage License Records and “Fleet” Clandestine Marriages

FindmyPast has released one of the oldest genealogy record sets. It is a collection of marriage licenses from the Church of England (and prior to Henry VIII, the Catholic Church). The records go as far back as 1115.

The 536,000 records in this collection come from fifteen different counties in England including London, Lancashire, Suffolk, Exeter, Lincoln, Yorkshire, and more.

In England, a marriage license was often used by wealthy people who were in a hurry and wanted to skip the banns period, which could last several weeks (sometimes they did not want to broadly announce the marriage and sometimes they were in a hurry because the bride was already pregnant). In exchange for the payment of a fee, the bride and groom would fill out a sworn declaration that there were no legal impediments to the marriage (which was the functional reason for having a banns period).

With each result, you will find a transcript of the vital facts and an image of the digitised volume of marriage licences. The details in each volume vary depending on the age of the document and the individuals named in the licence. You could find a combination of the following facts in the marriage licence:

- Name
- Residence
- Father's name
- Spouse's name
- Spouse's residence
- Spouse's father's name
- Marital status
- Marriage place

These records can be searched by first name, last name, year, place and county.

Also available at FindmyPast – **England, Clandestine Marriages 1667-1754**

Did your ancestors enter into marriage through a clandestine or irregular marriage? Search thousands of “Fleet” marriages from The National Archives. These digitised records include both images and transcripts that will reveal where and when your ancestors tied the knot.