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# *POOR LAW*



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# THE POOR LAWS

## An Introduction

Begun in earnest under Charles I and continued through the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the British Poor-Laws were legislative attempts to control vagrancy and pauperism while improving the social conditions of the labouring classes. The connection between the relief of the poor and an orderly community in England appears fully during the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. The laws themselves are a vast collection of expedients blessed and rationalised by numerous Acts of Parliament. Elizabethan Poor Law in particular was a comprehensive and well administered system of relief throughout the whole of the British Isles. It provided work for the unemployed as well as pensions for the impotent.

This intervention has evolved historically from alms and workhouses through to today's government departments for social security and public health.

1834 is known as a reform year for the British Poor Laws systems. In this year Edwin Chadwick and Nassau Senior's famous 'report' was published by the Poor Law Commission. Influenced decisively by utilitarian thought this report was the most detailed social investigation ever undertaken in the United Kingdom up to that time. Chadwick and Senior educated opinion so well, that the 1834 'Poor Law Amendment Act' was in no small measure their own achievement.

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The main focus of the report and subsequent act was to centralise the control and administration of the poor law relief – taking power out of the hands of local overseers and justice's of the peace, whose rule had become increasingly despotic. The Act mirrored the changing political landscape of both England and the Industrialised West of the period. A landscape where by the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century the village and hamlet was no longer the focus of social or rural life. 1834 thus marked a watershed in the political & social significance of the poor law system and led directly to the reforms of the present.

This choice collection of poor law materials includes the full text of Chadwick/Senior's seminal report as well as a number of scarce publications of the original Acts, many dating from the 1760's to the 1850's in particular.

Also included are a selection of Annual reports from the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales from the 1830's and 1840's. The collection concentrates on England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales but includes for discussion some American relief information and a number of academic re-appraisals of the British Poor Law systems as seen in their historical and political context.

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1. **AN ACT. Victoriae Reginae - Anno Decimo & Undecimo.** An Act to make Provision for the Punishment of Vagrants and Persons offending against the Laws in force for the Relief of the destitute Poor in Ireland. CAP LXXXIV. N.P., n.d.. Modern Cloth. **€75.00**
2. **AN ACT. Victoriae Reginae - Anno Nono & Decimo.** To amend the Laws as to District Lunatic Asylums in Ireland; to provide for the Expense of the Maintenance of certain Lunatic Poor removed from the Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Dublin, for Want of Room therein; and to provide for the Salaries and Expences incident to the Office of Inspector of Lunatics in Ireland (28th August, 1846). CAP CXV. Modern Cloth. **€85.00**
3. **AN ACT. Victoriae Reginae - Anno Decimo Quarto & Decimo Quinto.** To provide for the better Distribution, Support, and Management of Medical Charities in Ireland, and to amend an Act of the Eleventh Year of Her Majesty, to provide for the Execution of the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland. 7th August, 1851. CAP. LXVIII. Modern Cloth. **€65.00**
4. **AN ACT. Victoriae Reginae - Anno Decimo & Undecimo.** To Provide for the Execution of the Laws for Relief of the Poor in Ireland. (22nd July, 1847) CAP XC. Modern Cloth. **€85.00**
5. **AN ACT. For The Relief of His Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholick Subjects of Ireland.** Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1793. Rebound in modern brown cloth. Good. **€85.00**
6. **AN ACT. To Amend And Explain and Act Passed in the Sixth Year of His Present Majesty's Reign.** Intituled An Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors. Dublin: Printed by Boulter Grierson, 1768. Rebound in modern brown cloth. **€75.00**
7. **AN ACT. For The Relief of Persons who have omitted to Qualify themselves according to Law.** Saturday the Sixth Day of October, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, Royal Assent Given. John Gayer. Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1798. Rebound in modern brown cloth. **€125.00**
8. **AN ACT. To Continue for a limited time, the Government and Management of the House of Industry for the Relief of the Poor in Dublin, under the Present acting Governors Therof.** Monday the Fourth Day of June, One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, Royal Assent Given. John Gayer. Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1798. Rebound in modern brown cloth. **€160.00**
9. **AN ACT. For Licensing Hawkers and Pedlars, Petty Chapmen, and Other Persons.** Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1790. Rebound in modern beige cloth. **€145.00**
10. **AN ACT. For The Relief of Persons who have omitted to Qualify themselves according to Law.** Saturday the Sixth Day of October, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, Royal Assent Given. Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1798. Rebound in modern brown cloth. **€165.00**

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11. **AN ACT. For Ammeding an Act mad in the Eleventh and Twelfth Years of His Present Majesty's Reign.** Entitled, An Act for Badging Such Poor as shall be found unable to support themselves by labour, and otherwise providing for them, and for restraining such as shall be found able to support themselves by Labour and Industry from Beggin, and also to amend an Act mad in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Years of His present Majesty's Reign, Entitled, an Act for amending an Act made the last Session of Parliament, Entitled, An Act for Badging such poor as shll be found unable to support themselves by Labour, and otherwise providing for them, and for restraining such as shall be found able to support themselves by Labour or industry from Begging.. Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1787. Rebound in modern brown cloth. **€95.00**
  
12. **HORTON, J. WILMOT. An Inquiry into the Causes and Remedies of Pauperism.** London, 1830. 1st, 2nd & 3rd Series. Modern Cloth. 38pp. **€75.00**
  
13. **BRERETON, REV. C.D. A Practical Inquiry into the Number, Means of Employment, and Wages of Agricultural and Labourers.** Norfolk, n.d.. Second edition. Modern Cloth. 12pp. **€75.00**
  
14. **BROWNING, GRACE A. The Development Of Poor Relief Legislation In Kansas.** With Introductory Note by Edith Abbot & Appendixes with Court Decisions. Edited by Sophonisba P. Breckinridge. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1935. Rebound in modern green cloth. Title label on front cover. 157pp Incl. Index. **€35.00**
  
15. **CHALMERS, THOMAS. Art XI. Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the Experience of the last eight years.** N.P., Modern Cloth. 30pp. **€75.00**
  
16. **COLQUHOUN, P. Propositions for Ameliorating the Condition of the Poor, and for improving the moral habits, and increasing the Comforts of the labouring People.** by Regulations calculated to reduce the parochial Rares of the Kingdom, and generally to promote the Happiness and security of the Community at large, by the Diminution of immoral and penal Offenses and the future Prevention of Crimes. N.P., n.d.. Modern Cloth. 37pp. **€75.00**
  
17. **COWHERD, RAYMOND G. Political Economists And The English Poor Law.** A Historical Study of the Influence of Classical Economics on the Formation of Social Welfare Policy. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977. Original Blue Cloth in d.j. Good condition. 300pp Incl. Index. **€65.00**
  
18. **DOUGLAS, JOHN. Observations on the Necessity of a Legal Provision for the Irish Poor Law.** London, 1828. Modern Cloth. **SOLD** **€75.00**

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19. **FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS. For England And Wales.** Together with Appendices A.B.C. & D. London: Printed by W.Clowes & Sons, 1839. Original green cloth. Gilt title on Spine. Loose from hinge. Bumped & Rubbed. Some foxing. 220pp. **SOLD €425.00**

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21. **HAMILTON, J. On Poor-Law and Labour-Rate: A Letter From An Irish Landowner.** Dublin, 1847. Modern Cloth. **SOLD €75.00**

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23. **LONGMATE, NORMAN. The Breadstealers.** The Fight Against The Corn Lewis, 1838-1846. New York: St. Martin's Press & London: Temple Smith, 1984. Original Black Cloth in d.j. Gilt title on spine. D.w. good. 270pp. **€45.00**

*With b&w illustrations.*

24. **MACKAY, THOMAS. A History of the English Poor Law.** Being a Supplementary Volume to "A History of the English Poor Law" by Sir George Nicholls, Poor Law Commissioner and Secretary to the Poor Law Board. Re-Issue. Volume III - A.D. 1834-1898. 1904. Original Maroon Cloth. Gilt title on Spine. Bumped & Rubbed. Uncut. Some pencil markings & biro markings to Appendix. 617pp. **€95.00**

25. **MARSHALL, J.D. The Old Poor Law, 1795 - 1834.** Macmillan, 1968. Softback. Good condition. 50pp Incl. Index. **€12.00**

26. **NICOLL, S.W. A Summary View of the Report and Evidence relative to the Poor Laws.** Published by order of the House of Commons, with Observations and Suggestions. n.d.. Modern Cloth. 39pp. **€75.00**

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29. **NOLAN, MICHAEL. The Speech of Michael Nolan Esq..** Delivered in the House of Commons, Wednesday, July 10 1822 on moving for Leave to bring in a Bill to alter and amend the Laws for the Relief of the Poor. N.P., 1822. Modern Cloth. 16pp. **€75.00**
  
30. **PEREGRINE-COURTENAY, THOMAS. A Treatise Upon The Poor Laws.** London: John Murray, 1818. Pencil Markings. Modern Marble Board. 122pp. **€550.00**
  
31. **POLLOCK, FREDERICK. The Land Laws.** London: Macmillan & Co, 1883. Original cloth. Bumped & Rubbed. Hinges loose. Spine faded. 218pp Incl. Index. **€68.00**
  
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36. **REPORT FROM HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS. For Inquiring Into The Administration and Practical Operation of The Poor Laws.** Published by Authority, 1834. Original cloth. Title on spine, but faded. Spine torn. Hinges loose. Bumped & Rubbed. Worn. 128pp Incl. Index. **€595.00**

*The exact authorship of the Report had for long been a matter of some controversy.*

*The exact extent of Chadwick's authorship of the Report had hitherto been disputed, since in their old age both he and Senior made incompatible claims. This problem can now be solved. Senior wrote 'The exposition of the evils of the old system', the sections of Vagrancy, Bastardy, and Settlement, and all others coming after the conclusion of the parts relating to the administrative machinery. This leaves Chadwick as the author of the remedial Measures down to page 340 of the Report: 'I may claim' he wrote, 'to having devised the machinery by which the principle (I.e. less eligibility) could be carried into operation, I.e. the Central Board and its peculiar powers and duties and modes of operation by regulations, the constitution of local boards and their functions and practical modes of operation'.*

37. **RICHMOND, REV. LEGH. Annals of the Poor.** An new edition, enlarged and Illustrated with an introductory sketch of the author. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1846. Frontispiece with b&w illustrations. Original cloth. Gilt title on Spine. Gilt on front cover. Bumped & Rubbed. Blindstamped. Loose from hinge. Uncut. Some foxing. 271pp. **€225.00**

38. **ROSE, MICHAEL E. The Relief Of Poverty, 1834-1914.** Macmilan, 1972. Softback. Good condition. 64pp. **€12.00**

39. **SENIOR, NASSAU W. Statement of the Provision for the Poor and of the Condition of the Labouring Classes.** In a considerable Portion of America and Europe. London, 1835. Modern Cloth. 38pp. **€75.00**

40. **SHAFFER, KEEFER & BRECKINRIDGE. The Indiana Poor Law.** Its Development and Administration with Special Reference to the Provision of State Care for the Sick Poor. Social Service Monographs, Number 28. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1936. Rebound in modern cloth. Label on spine. Good. 378pp Incl. Index. **€60.00**

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47. **Y GUARINOS, D. JUAN SEMPERE. Art XI. Biblioteca Espanola Economico-Politica.** Madrid, 1801. Modern Cloth. 14pp. **€75.00**

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