

2. Population and Settlement

A recent revision of the structure of VCH parish articles has resulted in the material on population and settlement being taken out of the long introductory section and made into a new section, placed between the Introduction and Landholding sections.

The new section examines three topics: the number of people living in the parish/township; the character of the community; and where the inhabitants lived. As in all sections of a VCH article, the aim is to chart change across the centuries. The section should thus have a threefold structure and be divided into sub-sections, as follows:

1. Population

This subsection should provide a chronological account of the number of people living in the parish/township, starting as early as possible and running to the present day. If the place in question was divided into townships or quarters for which separate population figures are available (even if only for certain periods), the distribution of inhabitants between the constituent territories should be mentioned and charted. Population change was, of course, closely related to trends in the local economy: this section should to some extent act an introduction to themes which will be picked up later on, under 'Settlement' and in the 'Economic History' section.

In the absence of Domesday Book data, 13th- or 14th-century rentals or surveys giving numbers of tenants are likely to be the earliest evidence of population for many places in Cumbria. The generally accepted multiplier for converting numbers of households into numbers of people is 4.5 or 4.75. Sources of population data for later periods include the estimates for each parish in the 16th and 17th centuries, which will be found in Andrew B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor & Stuart England* (Liverpool, 1978), pp. 198-201, and Hearth Tax returns and, from 1801, the decennial census returns.

2. Social character

This will be discussed in greater detail in the Social History section. Here, it would be appropriate to provide a thumbnail sketch of the kind of community the township/parish was. Specific themes to consider when trying to summarise the evolving social character of the community include the following. Again, the chronology of change should be established and charted:

- Whether or not there was a resident lord or squire who dominated local affairs

- Suburban and industrial development and the extent to which these led to the creation of socially distinct communities within the parish/township (i.e. the ‘social geography’ of the parish at the micro-level).
- Immigrant communities and their separation from or integration into the rest of the population.
- The extent to which the parish/township has become a dormitory for nearby urban centres, or a magnet for retired people from elsewhere.

So, a short paragraph should suffice here, fleshing out the main themes. In the following imaginary example, each of the following sentences could be elaborated upon, to provide the overview needed for this section: *‘The lords of the manor were non-resident after c.1450. From the 16th to the 19th century, the township was dominated by independent yeomen holding by customary tenantright. The scattered community of small farmers and cottagers was replaced between 1920 and 1990 by a largely wealthy retired population, as ribbon development of housing took place along the main road and farmhouses were sold separately from their land.’*

3. Settlement (including domestic buildings)

Settlement is best approached chronologically and this section should provide a comprehensive introduction to the major themes picked up in other sections of the parish article. Start with local map evidence: the contemporary Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map (‘Explorer’ or ‘Outdoor Leisure’ series), and successive editions of the Six Inch (1:10,560) (available online at <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/>) will take you back to the mid-19th century. Where available, earlier maps (estate and dispute plans, enclosure and tithe maps) should also be used to gain a cartographic overview of the evolution of settlement.

The sub-section may sensibly be subdivided, if the settlement pattern in the parish/township is complex. If it is divided into a number of villages or hamlets, it will be best to deal with each major settlement separately.

Start with some general statements about the overall settlement pattern. Then move on to provide an account of the development of the settlement pattern from the earliest record to the time of writing, giving a chronological treatment of the development of the layout of existing settlements. Again, this is a section which it will make sense to write only after you have established the demographic and economic history of the parish/township – periods of economic expansion and population growth will have generated new settlements, whether these are new farmsteads in the 13th century; rows of industrial workers’ cottages in the

19th or dormitory housing in the 20th. The following topics should be included in this section:

- **Archaeological evidence** for pre-medieval settlement should be summarised but not discussed in great detail. If, for example, there are physical remains of prehistoric field systems or Romano-British 'native' settlements, the location and suggested chronology of these should be summarised and their relationship to the medieval settlement pattern described. The Historic Environment Record will be a key source here: remember that there are separate HERs for the Lake District National Park and the remainder of the county of Cumbria.
- For the **medieval and early modern settlement pattern** start with the place-name evidence. The earliest reference to the name of a farm or hamlet provides a *terminus ante quem*, at least, particularly when it is used as a habitative surname, confirming that people lived there – such occurrences are marked 'p' in the county place-name surveys. For the earliest reference to particular settlements (and the interpretation of their-names), use the standard works of reference, namely:
 - A.M. Armstrong, A. Mawer, F.M. Stenton and Bruce Dickens, *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, English Place-Name Society Vols XX-XXII (Cambridge, 1950-52) [cite as *PNC*]
 - A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Westmorland*, English Place-Name Society Vols XLII-XLIII (Cambridge, 1967) [cite as *PNW*]
 - D. Whaley, *Dictionary of Lake District Place-Names*, English Place-Name Society Regional Series 1 (Nottingham, 2006) [cite as *Dict. LDPN*]
 - **Do not use older place-name studies, nor popular works!**

Other sources for tracing the evolution of settlement from c.1300 to c.1750 include rentals, surveys, parish registers, probate indexes etc.

- For **settlement change in the century 1750-1850** you may have to rely on estate records and title deeds, in the absence of cartographic sources. Remember that the Land Tax schedules (surviving from c.1780 to 1832) can be useful to identify and date the building of villas and other private residences in rural areas. The printed county maps by Thomas Jeffreys (for Westmorland, 1770), Thomas Donald (for Cumberland, 1774) and William Yates (for Lancashire, 1786) are sufficiently detailed to be useful in establishing the pattern of settlement in the later 18th century.
- **Settlement change from mid-19th century to early-mid-20th** can be traced in outline from the tithe plans and successive editions of Six Inch (1:10,560) and, more particularly, Twenty-Five Inch (1:2,500) maps. For the details, other sources, such as title deeds and the 1910 Valuation records (particularly the 'Field Books' in TNA, IR58) should be consulted.
- **Council housing and private housing estates from the mid-20th century:** these should be dated and described briefly. Local government minutes and planning

applications are the key sources (recent planning applications are available online: remember that the Lake District National Park Authority – not the District Council – is the planning authority for places within the national park boundary). The effects of local authority planning decisions on the location and type of 20th-century development and on the conservation of buildings should also be discussed. Improvements to existing dwellings and houses that have changed their use or have been converted to and from multiple occupancy but which retain their original form should be mentioned. Barn conversions (and conversions of other buildings) are a feature of many modern rural communities: there is no need to give a blow-by-blow account, but a statement giving some idea of the scale and chronology of the phenomenon should be included. (Conversions of places of worship and schools etc will be mentioned elsewhere in the article when discussing those institutions.)

Woven into the account should be a discussion of ***the built character of a place***, the range of building types and periods of building activity. It should show how the building types reflect economic, social and cultural activity and should describe the general architectural character of the settlement(s) at varying periods. The subsection should provide an overview of the development of the style and amenity of ***domestic buildings***, noting particular vernacular building styles. Describe the local building materials and any survivals of early forms (e.g. 'clay dabbins'). Datestones may allow you to say something about phases of rebuilding. The location and date of manor houses, churches and other public buildings (which will be described more fully in later sections) should also be mentioned.