

A Short Study of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Linlithgow **1841 to 1881.**

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In Victorian Linlithgow the boot and shoemaking industry, and its related trades, provided employment for more than one third of the employed male population and the numbers employed continued to rise over the period.

Occupations are given in the 1841 census but it does not give any information on who are employers and have other people working for them, so all we know is who are shoemakers, tanners, curriers, skimmers, boot binders or glue makers. The only other piece of information given is whether the person is a journeyman, meaning they have completed an apprenticeship in their trade. In the 1861 census the jobs of leather cutter, shoe manufacturer and shoe binder can be added to those given in 1841 and by 1881 job descriptions have widened further and differentiation is emerging between those making only boots and those concentrating on shoe making.

OCCUPATIONS and NUMBERS EMPLOYED in the LEATHER TRADE

Occupation	<u>1841 to 1881</u>		
	1841	1861	1881
Boot closer	0	0	29
Boot closer (apprentice)	0	0	2
Boot fitter	0	0	1
Boot Maker	0	0	7
Boot Manufacturer	0	0	4
Boot riveter	0	0	7
Boot/shoe binder	4	15	0
Boot/shoe machinist	0	0	9
Currier	18	30	24
Currier (apprentice)	10	8	2
Currier (journeyman)	15	8	0
Glue maker	3	3	4
Leather cutter	0	4	5
Leather Merchant	0	0	5
Shoe finisher	0	0	2
Shoe Manufacturer	0	2	5
Shoe Merchants	0	0	4
Shoemaker	144	211	294
Shoemaker (apprentice)	37	37	9
Shoemaker (journeymen)	132	52	0
Shoemaker (Master)	0	7	0
Skinner	4	4	3
Skinner (apprentice)	2	0	1
Tanner	9	12	18
Tanner (apprentice)	0	3	0
Tanner (journeyman)	15	3	0

Tanner (Master) 0 3 0

In the 1841 and 1861 censuses many tradesmen declared whether they are apprentices, journeymen or Masters but by 1881 very few provided this information.

The raw figures above can only be compared if expressed as a percentage of those in employment in the town.

**Shoemakers and Associated Trades expressed as a percentage of the
Employed Male Population**

DATE	Shoemakers	Shoemakers + Associated Trades
1841	22.11	28.44
1861	30.02	36.47
1881	27.54	37.26

The above figures are calculated using male employees only; in 1841 there are only 4 women employed in the industry, by 1861 this had risen to 14 and by 1881, 25 women are employed. An interesting observation is that 9 women in 1881 are machinists in the shoe factory, so mechanisation has arrived, but this is seen as a job for women.

Where had the Shoemakers been born?

Throughout the period the majority employed in the leather trade had been born in the Burgh of Linlithgow, but the proportion of employees born in the town is decreasing by the time of the 1881 census.

There appears to be a small influx of Irish shoemakers, 22 in total; 4 of them have families and have set up home in the town and the other 18 are boarding, either in lodging houses or with families.

Age Profile.

The age profile in the leather industry remains extremely wide over the period. In 1841 the youngest shoemaker apprentices are 12 years old and the oldest shoemaker 80 years old..

In 1861 the youngest are only 11 years old and the oldest, Thomas Glen, is 88 years old.

The Education Act of 1872 required children to remain in school until they reached a required level in English and Arithmetic or reached their 12th birthday. This ruling meant that the majority of children now stayed in education until age 12, so in the 1881 census the youngest apprentices were 13 years old and the oldest shoemaker was James Rule, aged 84.

Who Emerged as the Important Families in Linlithgow's Leather Trade?

In the 1841 census the only indication given to status in the various leather working trades is the designation of 'journeyman' after the trade name, indicating the individual had completed a trade apprenticeship. There is no indication to suggest any individual is employing others.

In the 1861 census the term 'journeyman' is still used and now also the term 'Master' is seen after the trade name; most of those with the designation 'Master' are employing others. A total of 18 people were employers, the most prominent family is the Hardie family, but the biggest employer is James Cuddie at Rivalds Green, who describes himself as a tanner, currier and glue maker employing 41 men and 6 boys.

Those Who Employ Others in the 1861 Census.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Boys</u>
Boyd, Thomas	47	Skinner (Master)	1	0
Callendar, Alexander	44	Currier/leather merchant	9	3
Cuddie, James	47	Tanner/Currier/Glue Maker	41	6
Glen, John	38	Shoemaker (Master)	5	5
Hardie, Alexander	37	Currier	3	2
Hardie, James	45	Currier (Master)	3	2
Hardie, James	72	Shoe manufacturer	7	0
Hardie, George	57	Shoemaker (Master)	15	0
Henderson, Collin	55	Shoemaker (master)	3	0
Law, William	79	Tanner/Currier	2	2
Liddel, William	40	Shoemaker	8	2
Morrison, Alexander	47	Currier (Master)	1	1
Park, Charles	50	Shoemaker (Master)	3	2
Robertson, John	38	Tanner	12	7
Speeden, Robert	59	Tanner	3	0
Spence, Robert	49	Shoemaker (Master)	5	2
Spence, Alexander	65	Shoemaker (Master)	20	6
Watt, Alexander	58	Boot Maker	13	7

In the 1881 census there are only 9 employers in the leather trade, two families are now employing the majority of men; the Dougal's and Alexander Morrison. James Cuddie was still enumerated at Rivalds Green but the number of men he is employing is not given.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Boys</u>
Callendar, Patrick	68	Currier	5	1
Dougal, Alexander	43	Boot manufacturer	80	0
Dougal, George	58	Shoe manufacturer	59	0
Dougal, William	69	Shoe manufacturer	82	0
Duncan, David	43	Boot/shoe manufacturer	7	4
Glen, John	57	Shoe manufacturer	4	0
Mack, William	49	Shoemaker (Master)	5	0
Meek, Alexander	37	Shoemaker (Master)	10	2
Morrison, Alexander	67	Currier/Shoe Manufacturer	98	0

Two of the above employers stated they are employing girls; David Duncan employs two girls and Alexander Morrison three. Since a further 20 women give a leather trade occupation in the census return we have to assume they have been counted in with the men.

It is clear to see that the structure of the boot and shoe making trade in Linlithgow has altered in the 20 years from 1861 to 1881. In 1861 there are many small employers, but by 1881 the Dougal family and Alexander Morrison emerge as the dominant employers.