

**LINCOLN MARRIAGE LICENSES:  
AN ABSTRACT OF THE  
ALLEGATION BOOKS PRESERVED  
IN THE REGISTRY OF THE BISHOP  
OF LINCOLN. 1598-1628**

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Lincoln Marriage Licenses: An Abstract of the Allegation Books Preserved in the Registry of the Bishop of Lincoln. 1598-1628 by A. Gibbons

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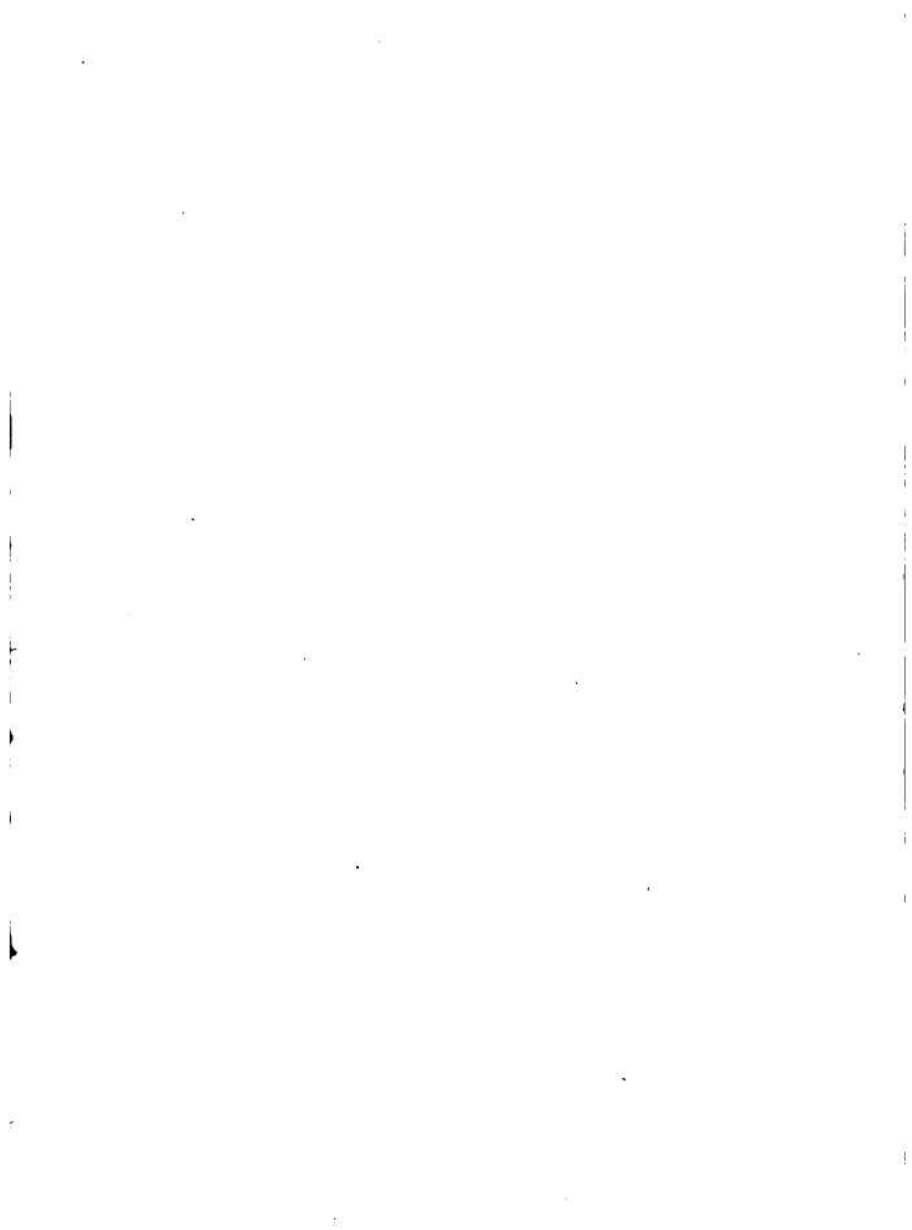
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**A. GIBBONS**

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**Lincoln**  
**Marriage Licences.**



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An Abstract of the Allegation Books

PRESERVED IN

THE REGISTRY OF THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

1598—1628.

EDITED BY

A. GIBBONS,

AUTHOR OF "EARLY LINCOLN WILLS," ETC.

LONDON:  
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1888.

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## Preface.

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In submitting these pages to the consideration of my friends and subscribers, I feel it incumbent upon me to say a few words in response to a request I have received from several of them, that I should give some short account of the existing state of the archives of the Bishop of Lincoln, which I have had the great pleasure and privilege of partially arranging.

A great deal has been written about the condition to which it was said these archives had been reduced by the neglect of their custodians in former years, and I came to the work with a certain amount of prejudice on this point, engendered by the accounts of Mr. BAUCE and others; but I am bound to confess that those accounts are not borne out by my own experience, and that, so far as I am able to judge, the utmost possible care has been taken, at any rate of recent years, for the preservation of these monuments of the past. I say *preservation* advisedly, for, owing no doubt to the necessary circumstances of the case, little or nothing had been done for their *arrangement*, and an apparently hopeless confusion was the result.

This confusion has now I trust been to some extent remedied, mainly through the instrumentality of the Rev. A. R. MADDISON, Priest-Vicar and Librarian of Lincoln Cathedral, of whose acquirements as a genealogist it would be impertinent for me to speak, but for whose unvarying kindness to me I may be permitted to express my very deep gratitude.

Some three years ago Mr. MADDISON was engaged, as a labour of love, in attempting to rescue the Transcripts of Parish Registers for some of the more interesting periods from the chaos of the remainder—a chaos well



described in a Paper which he read before the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society in 1882; and in this work he allowed me to assist him, thus enabling me to pursue my own researches at the same time in a way that would not otherwise have been possible. But he also did much more than this; for, by enlisting the sympathy and influence of Dr. BUTLER, Dean of Lincoln, and Precentor VENABLES (to whose graceful pen the antiquaries of this county are indebted for a large part of the interest now taken in its antiquities), he ultimately succeeded in convincing the Bishop that something ought to be done in order to remedy the confusion into which the records of his Diocese had fallen; and, for this purpose, the Bishop (with the consent of JOHN SWAN, Esq., the Registrar of the Diocese) authorized me, at his own expense, to occupy myself for twelve months in a systematic arrangement of the contents of his Registry, with special reference to the Transcripts of Parish Registers, Archdeacons' "Visitations," and other records of a kindred nature.

It is hardly necessary to say that twelve months' single-handed work in so vast a storehouse of documents—where the Transcripts alone number some two hundred thousand, and to which the work of a lifetime might well be devoted—must of necessity seem small in comparison with what has to be left undone; but it is at any rate a work well begun, and it is from the experience thus gained that I now speak.

The most ancient and most valuable records in the Registry are of course the Episcopal Registers, a series commencing in 1209, and rivalled only by those of York, which commence about the same time.

The earliest of these Registers is a book called Bishop Wells's *Liber Antiquus*, which is now in course of being printed; and there is then a regular series of Rolls and Registers of Institutions and Episcopal Memoranda down to the present time, with the exception of a break between 1608 and 1660.

The Bishop's Transcripts of Parish Registers for the County of Lincoln are practically complete from 1585, with the exception, in many cases, of the period between 1640 and 1660. There are also Transcripts for six or seven odd years between 1561 and 1585.

For the other Archdeaconries included in the old Diocese of Lincoln—

Bedford, Buckingham, Huntingdon, Leicester, Northampton, and Oxford—the Transcripts were as a rule returned to their own Registries, and there are only a few bundles of them at Lincoln.

Of the Wills at Lincoln I have spoken in the Preface to another volume.

The Episcopal and Archidiaconal Visitations of Monasteries and of the Diocese generally form an invaluable series of Records, dating from the early part of the fifteenth century, and appear not to have received the attention which they deserve from the antiquary and Church historian.

Of the Terriers, Tithe Books, Ecclesiastical Court Books, Court Rolls, Deeds, Ancient Correspondence, and Miscellaneous Records, which exist in immense masses in the Bishop's Registry, it is impossible here to speak in detail, and I must content myself with attempting to describe the particular records to which the following pages are devoted, viz., those relating to Marriage Licences.

These, as now existing in the Bishop's Registry, are of four kinds:—

1. The Early Marriage Licences or Dispensations entered in the Episcopal Registers between 1280 and 1547.

2. Marriage Licences granted to Clergymen in pursuance of Queen Elizabeth's ordinance forbidding priests to marry except with the consent of the Bishop upon a certificate by two Justices of the Peace as to the good name and fame of the proposed bride.

3. A Series of Allegation Books between 1598 and 1628 (with the exception of a break from 1606 to 1612), and some portions of books between 1660 and 1690.

4. The original Marriage Bonds and Allegations from 1580 to the present time, except for the period of the Commonwealth.

These Records have hitherto been practically inaccessible, owing to the want of any calendars or indexes; but, in the course of the arrangement of which I have already spoken, the Allegation Books above mentioned have come to light, and the following pages form a complete abstract of them down to 1628.

A second volume has also been prepared, and is ready for the press, dealing with the Early Licences in the Episcopal Registers, and with all the

later Licences down to 1670. This second series has involved considerably more labour than the present one, because, owing to the want of Allegation Books, it could only be compiled from the original Bonds and Allegations themselves one by one; but, on the other hand, the additional information derived from the Bonds, and particularly the Heraldic notes furnished by the seals attached to many of them, will render the volume, if printed, of greater interest to the antiquary and genealogist.

The Marriage Licences granted by the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, and by some of the Prebendaries in their Peculiar jurisdictions, extending over about fifty parishes, are preserved in the Muniment Room of the Cathedral, and are entirely distinct from the Bishop's Licences.

My thanks are due to Messrs. MITCHELL and HUGHES, the Publishers, for the exceedingly careful manner in which they have printed this volume.

A. GIBBONS.

4 MINSTER YARD, LINCOLN.

*July 1888.*