

Article

Workhouse and Outdoor Relief

— Poverty and Policy in 18th and 19th Centuries London —

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Abstracts

The problem of poverty was one of the most serious social problems in modern England. Various measures were taken by the state and city authorities against it. And “workhouse” could be the most important one among them. However, the activities of workhouse, including its inmates, have not been fully investigated by historians so far.

This article tries to reveal aspects of the workhouse of a parish in London, St. Andrew Undershaft Workhouse, by means of studying its documents, Workhouse Committee Minute Books. In particular, it focuses on how the purpose of establishment of workhouse, restricting outdoor poor relief, was realized in the parish in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

KEY WORDS: poor relief, workhouse, St. Andrew Undershaft, London, England, modern, 18th and 19th centuries,

1 The establishment of St. Andrew Undershaft parish workhouse

The movement of establishing workhouses began in 1720s in London, although some earlier forms had been attempted for the London poor.¹⁾ Twelve workhouses existed in London and Westminster at the time of 1725.²⁾ Each parish suffering from rising poor rates seems to have tried to

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- 1) V. Pearl, “Puritans and Poor Relief, The London Workhouse, 1649-1660”, in D. Pennington and K. Thomas, eds., *Puritans and Revolutionaries*, Oxford UP., 1978; S. Macfarlane, “Social policy and the poor in the later seventeenth century”, in A.L. Beier and R. Finlay, eds., *London 1500-1700*, Longman, 1986; As concerns the problem of poverty in England since the early modern times, see my books and articles written in Japanese, and their references.
- 2) *An Account of several Work-Houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor*, London, 1725, p. 112.

lighten the burden through the workhouse.

The Knatchbull's Act (Workhouse Test Act)³⁾ of 1723 promoted the movement and prescribed the character of the workhouse. By this law, the poor requiring relief were compelled to be housed in the workhouse. If the poor refused, he or she would lose the qualification of receiving the relief. This "workhouse test" was to restrain requests for relief by the poor and reduce the amount of poor rates. They set up workhouses for such purposes.

At the beginning of this article, we must clarify the actual activities of St. Andrew Undershaft Workhouse since its establishment, in the full knowledge of the summary view as above. And for such a purpose it is essential to analyze its committee minutes.

St. Andrew Undershaft Workhouse Committee Minutes Books (hereafter,⁴⁾ the Minutes) are the record over about 130 years from 1732 to 1859, consisting of eight volumes. The composition with each volume is as the following.

Volume 1, from 1732 to 1748, Volume 2, from 1748 to 1780
 Volume 3, from 1780 to 1801, Volume 4, from 1801 to 1814
 Volume 5, from 1815 to 1822, Volume 6, from 1822 to 1828
 Volume 7, from 1828 to 1836, Volume 8, from 1836 to 1859

And in this article, we will analyze the documents of about 3 years from 1732, when the workhouse was established, to 1735, and also the documents of about 3 years from 1834, when the poor law was revised, to 1836.

3) 9 George I, c.7 ; G. Nicholls, *A History of the English Poor Law*, Vol. 2, (1854), Frank Cass, repr. 1967, pp. 12ff.

4) *St. Andrew Undershaft Workhouse Committee Minute Books*, 8vols, 1732-1859, Guildhall Library, Ms 4120. (hereafter, *SAUW*. as the abbreviation) I wish to thank the Guildhall Library for the permission to microfilm the books.

(1) Establishment

The Minutes have begun with the records on the process of the establishment of the workhouse. At the Vestry of the parish held on 4th day of October 1732, it was agreed that a committee would be organized for preparing to establish a workhouse for the poor of the parish, and eleven members of the committee were appointed. Then the committee was held on 27th day of December and the following resolutions were formed.

1. Resolved that a House in Hand Alley att Newstreet in Bishopsgate streete belonging to Mr Olmius is the most fitt and Comodious place for a Workhouse that can bee found att present.
2. That Three Hundred Pounds bee borrowed att an Interest not exceeding Five per Cent for repairing and furnishing the said House to bee repaid by Payments of ffifty Pounds att a time according as the surplus of the Poor's Rate shall arise which is proposed to bee kept on the same Footing as att present untill the whole Debt bee discharged.
3. That the said Workhouse shall bee under the Direction and Management of Twelve Trustees whereof the Churchwardens and Overseers for the time being to bee six and the other six to bee Annually elected att the Generall Vestrey held in Easter Week for the Election of Parish Officers and that Five of them whereof One Churchwarden One Overseer and One Trustee to bee Three shall have Power to Act.
4. That a Fitt Person either Master or Mistress bee chosen for keeping the said House and regulating the Poor there.
5. That noe money collected for the use of the Poor bee given away or

disposed of without the Consent of the Trustees Except on sudden and unforeseen Occasions.

6. That all Persons seeking Reliefe of the Parish bee obliged to come into the Workhouse under penalty of having no Reliefe and that every Poor Person being in Health shall bee kept to such Labour or Buisnesse as they can doo according to their Abilites at the Discretion of the Trustees.

7. That some of them bee employed in the necessary Occasions of the House such as Dressing of Meat cleaning the House mending and making of Cloaths.

8. That the Trustees doe agree upon and Deliver a Bill of Fare to the Master or Mistress from time to time of such Provisions as they shall think propper for the House.

9. That an Account of all Receipts and Disbursments relating to the Workhouse bee laid before a Vestrey every Three Months and the Account for the whole Year ending att Lady day bee laid before a Generall Vestrey att Easter every Year And that the Accounts bee preserved for Satisfaction of any Parishioner who shall desire to Inspect the same.

10. That Rules and Orders bee made by the Trustees for the regulating the said House both as to Master or Mistress and the Poor which shall bee hung up there and duly observed.

11. That the Master or Mistress shall bee under such Regulations and Restrictions as shall bee thought necessary by the Trustees And bee

Subject if required by the Trustees to make Affidavit before Magistrate that there hath been no Waste or Embesslement made by them or any other Person or Persons with their Knowledge or Consent of any the Stores or Provisions committed to their Charge And in case the Master or Mistress shall bee thought negligent or incapable of the Trust then it shall bee in the Power of the Trustees or the Major part of a Comittee of them upon Notice given to each of them signifying the Occasion of such Meeting to remove the said Master or Mistress and appoint another.

These resolutions were approved in the general vestry of the parish held on 17th day of January 1733.⁵⁾ The item of number 6 conformed to the Knatchbull's Act of 1723, prescribing denial of relief of the poor who refused entering to workhouse.

(2) Inmates and Management

Thus a workhouse was established in this parish. How large was the institution and how was it managed? According to the Minutes, 14 beds in amount were installed in the workhouse. 12 beds were for adults and 2 were for children. Whether the documents recorded all beds or not is unknown, but it seems that the workhouse was comparatively small-scale institution. A workroom was set up on the first floor and the inmates were employed in the work to spin thread for mops and candlewicks.

The poor person, who was admitted to the workhouse, should take off clothing, and wash the body and wear in a new clothing (the uniform). 17 persons were brought to the workhouse in order to take the size of his or her own clothing. It seems that these persons, whose family names were only recorded, would be the inmates later. And the examination of all poor

5) *SAUW*. Vol. 1, pp. 1-4.

people was took place in order to check whether or not they had some disease. It aimed at giving appropriate treatments before admitting to the workhouse.⁶⁾

As being mentioned in the item 4 of the resolutions above, a master and a mistress should be appointed, who would supervise the workhouse and the inmates. Mr. Henry Walker of the Bishopsgate Workhouse was then elected as the master. His career in the Bishopsgate Workhouse might have been evaluated. He was imposed on the duties to manage the workhouse, residing in the institution, to put the inmates to work through⁷⁾ teaching them vocational skills, to give them meals, and to supervise them. On the other hand, Mrs. Mary Stormer was chosen⁸⁾ as the mistress and was employed with the salary of 8 pounds annually. The salary of the master was not recorded. But because the annual salary⁹⁾ of the new master after Walker's death was recorded as 10 pounds, Walker's salary seems to have been nearly the same amount as his successor's.

The record of the admission to the workhouse began from 17th day of July 1733 in the Minutes.

Beatrix Simonds born in Hony Lane near the May Pole Horsley down
Aged 50 Years desired to bee admitted into the Workhouse also
John Malcomb born in the Parish aged near Twelve Years and William
Moor born in Bishopsgate Parish aged 10 Years
Ordered that their Settlements bee Inquired
Thomas Davis born in Criplegate Parish aged 8 Years
Elizabeth Glover a Black Child
Obadiah Abell born in Whitechappell parish aged 11 Years

6) *Ibid.*, pp. 9–13.

7) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

8) *Ibid.*, p. 10.

9) *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Mary Abell born in the same Parish aged 8 Years
Thomas Hatfield aged 10 Years
Sarah Hatfield aged ¹⁰⁾6 Years
Were all Admitted.

And also, Mary Bells whose husband was a soldier, Beatrix Simonds above mentioned as being investigated her settlement, and Elizabeth Nash who was 48 years old and born in the parish of Creechurch were admitted to the workhouse by the General Meeting of the Trustees held on 31st day of July ¹¹⁾1733.

Thus the admission to the workhouse began in this way. As for the number of the persons who were admitted to or sent to the institution by 31st day of July 1734, nearly one year later from the beginning of the admission, the Minutes recorded 22 adults and 10 children, that is, 32 persons in total. Although the possibility that all the members admitted were recorded in the Minutes is low, the workhouse still seems to have been small-scale organization.

The children who were housed in the workhouse would be put to school from there. The record of the General Meeting of the Trustees, for example, being held on the unknown day of November 1733, describes as follows.

Ordered Mary Abel bee put to School
Ordered Elizabeth Glover a Black Child ¹²⁾bee put to School and Inquiry made whether she hath been baptized.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 16.

11) *Ibid.*, p. 17.

12) *Ibid.*, p. 20. The reason why the day is unknown is being not able to read the letters due to stain of ink.

The same record has also an article about the complaint that the Prayers are not read twice every day pursuant to the rules of the workhouse, and the article mentions that the master was called to the Meeting. It is a pity that all the rules of this workhouse are not recorded in the Minutes. It is, therefore, uncertain how severe rules the inmates were obedient to. But the same record of the Meeting includes the following article.

Mrs Brooks a Poor Woman belonging to the House desired to have a Garret to her selfe with a Grate and other Conveniency but it appearing she was somewhat Disordered in her sences and given to Drinking It is ordered that the Master keep¹³⁾ her under Restraint and not suffer her to goe abroad till farther Orders.

Judging from this article, the drinking inside the workhouse or outside it was possible and it doesn't seem that the life at the workhouse was so severe. As for the labour of the inmates, too, it is possible to imagine that it wasn't strictly executed, because Mr. John Smith, who was elected as the new master after the death of the master Walker around August 1735, made the following complaint.

Complaint being made by Mr Smith the Master of the Workhouse that all the Persons in the house except the Boys and Girls refuse to Worke when they are by him required so to Do notwithstanding a Standing Order to the Contrary It is therefore

Ordered that the said Master do Set all Persons in the house to Worke that are able and upon their refusal to Worke that they be Punished according to Law. 〈3/ Sep/ 1735〉¹⁴⁾

13) *Ibid.*, p. 20.

14) *Ibid.*, p. 38. The date of each article is indicated in 〈 〉.

The reason of the inmates' refusal to work might be that they could not yet become familiar with the new master. But the difficulty of putting the poor inmates to work had been insisted since the 16th century, because they were thought ¹⁵⁾ idle. Incidentally, Mrs. Stormer, the mistress of the workhouse, was dismissed, on the ground that she didn't execute full work which the committee had intended.¹⁶⁾

(3) Discharge from the workhouse

Being different from the case of prisons and houses of correction, the inmates could leave rather freely from the workhouse. And some patterns of discharge existed. The following case is one about a child inmate.

Sarah Hatfield was discharged out of the Workhouse and her Cloaths allowed her att the Request of her Mother. <4/ Dec/ 1733¹⁷⁾>

Sometimes, we can also find the case that the inmate was put apprentice to from the workhouse.

Agreed that Richard Valentine bee put Apprentice to Mr John Marshal Whipmaker in Leadenhall streete on Mr Coventry's Gift
Also that Prudence Heath bee put Apprentice to Francis King of Ponder's End and that Mr Mason give five Pounds with her part of Mr Ralph's Gift for putting out Poor Children and that the Churchwarden allow for Cloaths as usual. <4/ Jan/ 1733 (1734)^{18) 19)}>

As being recorded in this article, the foundation to raise the premium to

15) See my books and articles.

16) *SAUW*. Vol. 1, p. 28.

17) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

18) As the old calendar was used in this period, the corrected year is indicated in ().

19) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

pay the master, whom a poor child was put out to as the apprentice, existed as somebody's Gift. After having been discharged, Prudence Heath in the article was admitted to the workhouse again because of illness on 30th of October in the same year.

There are also some cases that the inmates would be put out as servants from the workhouse.

Mary Gibbons desired to be discharged out of the House intending to go to Service and in order to enable her soe to doe prayed she might have a Gown whereupon It is Ordered that a Gown be bought for her not exceeding Ten Shillings Value on her quitting the House she leaving the Gown she received from the House. ²¹⁾〈6/ Feb/ 1733 (1734)〉

Like this case, clothing and so on would be often given to the inmate when being discharged. Therefore, the Trustees made the following agreement.

Ordered that whenever any Person be discharged out of the house for the Future, the necessarys that shall or may be allowed to any One Person so discharged shall not exceed Thirty Shillings in the whole. ²²⁾〈26/ Jun/ 1734〉

The patterns of discharge also include the case that a sick inmate would be sent to the hospital.

Elizabeth Groves Applied to this Comittee and Alledged she was very infirme and therefore prayed she might be relieved Ordered that

20) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

22) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

she be got into St. Thomas's Hospital for a Cure. <11/Feb/1735
(1736)²³⁾>

(4) Income and expenditure of the workhouse

Mr. Walker, the first master of the workhouse, gave an accounting report relating to the workhouse ending the 29th of March 1734 at the General Meeting of the Trustees held on 3rd of May 1734. It had the income and expenditure of the workhouse during almost one year since its establishment.

According to the report, it paid 8 pounds 7 shillings 6 pence for buying wool. And the income by selling yarn was 11 pounds 10 shillings 7 pence. The net profit was 3 pounds 3 shillings 1 penny. The Trustees approved the report and ordered that 30 schillings in the profit should be given to Mr. Walker and the remainder would be used for the workhouse.²⁴⁾

Although the net profit is mentioned in this way, the expense has no costs relating to maintaining the workhouse. For example, the annual rent of the workhouse was 26 pounds.²⁵⁾ And when Mr. Walker was elected as the master, he was entrusted with the management of the workhouse with annual 20 pounds as funds for buying necessary goods and foods.²⁶⁾

Therefore, to manage the workhouse by the profit, which would be made by labour of the inmates, was absolutely impossible, and the parish must have taken the situation for granted.

(5) Outdoor relief

The Knatchbull's Act of 1723 fixed "the workhouse test", and the persons requesting for relief were obliged to be housed in the workhouse.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 42.

24) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

25) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

26) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Then in fact, was not the outdoor relief carried out in the parish? Although there are only a few descriptions about this point in the Minutes, some related articles need to be referred to.

Christiana Bostock having quitted the House without any Order of the Trustees and since applied to the Churchwarden for Releife. It is Ordered that she shall have no releife out of the House that Mr Baxter give her notice of it. ²⁷⁾ ⟨?/ Sep/ 1733⟩

If we trust this article, the Knatchbull's Act was obeyed. But it was about 10 months later that this woman returned to the workhouse.

Christiana Bostock Applied to this Comittee and prayed She might be admitted again into the Workhouse Ordered that She be admitted and received into the Workhouse accordingly. ²⁸⁾ ⟨31/ Jul/ 1734⟩

The following article is one about pension.

Carter applied to have her Pension continued till Christmas next
Brisby applied to have his Pension continued and his Rent paid
Both these were denied. ²⁹⁾ ⟨31/ Jul/ 1733⟩

Granting pension, fixed period benefit, was the system which had been widely carried out since the early modern times as one of the policies to support the poor at home. Because the above article is a record at the time when the workhouse was established and the admission began in the parish of St. Andrew Uundershaft, we could think it as the abolition of the

27) *Ibid.*, p. 19.

28) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

29) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

pension system which had been maintained before. But it cannot be concluded that the outdoor relief was totally abolished, being based on only this article. It is, therefore, better to think that the truth is still unknown. We can find the following case, as well.

Elizabeth Alworth wife of Thomas Alworth Applied to this Committee and prayed that her child Robert Alworth about two Years Old may be Admitted into the Workhouse. Ordered that Mr Churchwarden Malchar do give her Five Shillings.

Elizabeth Tyler also applied to be relieved It is therefore Ordered that Mr Church Warden Malchar do buy her a Cap and other Necessarys as he shall think proper but not to exceed ten Shillings in the whole. ³⁰⁾
 〈9/ Jul/ 1735〉

Whether or not these two persons were housed in the workhouse is obscure and there is possibility that the temporary poor relief without being housed was given in the judgement of the Trustees. The following case is the same.

Jane Marchall applied to be Releived Resolved that Mr Church Warden do Give her Five Shillings at the same time she promised not to trouble the Parish before Easter next. ³¹⁾
 〈16/ Jan/ 1735 (1736)〉

“Not to trouble the parish” means not making application of the relief. Because this article also has no mention of the admission, this woman might have received the temporary relief without being housed. However, there is also possibility that the describer of the Minutes saved reference about the admission in these articles including the above two. For example,

30) *Ibid.*, p. 34.

31) *Ibid.*, p. 41.

the persons in the following case were given money in the same way but they were housed in the workhouse.

John Watts and Mary his Wife Applied to this Committee and prayed to be releived Ordered that Mr Churchwarden do give him Twenty Shillings but that they with John Watts their Child be Discharged the Workhouse by this day Sennight. <3/Mar/ 1735 (1736)³²⁾>

Even if it is the short term of one week, the Trustees housed them in the workhouse, and then gave money. The workhouse test is, therefore, still executed. It might be natural to think that the similar procedure was also taken in the other cases.

Anyway, the activities of the workhouse of St. Andrew Undershaft parish, particularly at the earliest time, can be described as above. The institution was small in scale comparatively but the poor relief was lively executed using the workhouse. And it does not seem that this workhouse was being managed so severely as that the poor would dislike to be housed. The poor relief was basically executed through the workhouse, probably conforming to the Knatchbull's Act, and the Minutes have no record which clearly shows the existence of the outdoor relief.

Our workhouse began to act in this way. But what shape would it be carried in 1834 about 100 years later, when the poor law was revised? And what changes would be happened to the workhouse by the new poor law? The attempt to clarify those points would be taken in the following section. But before that, we need to reflect the general history of making the new poor law.

³²⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

2 The workhouse after 1834

Workhouses were originally established for restraining requests of relief by the poor and lightening the burden of poor rates. Poor relief was limited inside the workhouses and the outdoor relief was generally prohibited.

Such policies with the poor and workhouses, however, had changed dramatically by the late eighteenth century, when various practices of the outdoor relief generally prevailed in England. The reason why the change took place might lie in the influence of the French Revolution or famine due to poor crops. The authorities would fear revolts or disorder by the poor and be conscious of the necessity of protecting the poor through admitting the outdoor relief.

The Gilbert's Act³³⁾ was passed in 1782, which made the basis of the outdoor relief of the able-bodied poor and the allowance system of making up any deficiency in wages of them, prescribing that only the impotent poor would be housed in workhouses. And the William Young's Act³⁴⁾ in 1795 repealed the clause of workhouse test in the Knatchbull's Act, advancing the outdoor relief.

These movements resulted in the Speenhamland System.³⁵⁾ This system prescribed the necessary amount of bread in a week as 3 gallons for men and 1.5 gallons for women and children, making it possible to calculate the minimum necessary sum of a family by the price of bread and the number of the family members. And if the wages of the family fell below the necessary sum, the shortage would be supplemented publicly. The resources of the subsidy were to be raised from the poor rates. It seems that this system was realized widely between 1795 and 1833 in England and Wales.

However, what results did this system bring about? Because the subsidy

33) 22 George III, c. 83 ; G. Nicholls, *op. cit.*, pp. 83ff.

34) 36 George III, c. 23 ; G. Nicholls, *ibid.*, pp. 115ff.

35) G. Nicholls, *ibid.*, pp. 131ff. ; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Beacon Press, 1957.

came out to the labourer even if the employer paid low wages, he tried to keep paying low wages. This system, therefore, became the subsidy for employers more than for labourers. As for labourers, they tended not to work, because they would get the more subsidies if their earnings became less. The results of the Speenhamland System were the prevalence of low wages and the declines of will to work, and the inevitable rising of the poor rates.

Even if the system had a meaning as preventing revolts or disorder by the poor, it seems to be natural that the criticism occurred to such actual state of it. For example, Townsend insisted that hunger would become penalty for the poor to get diligent habitude, and Malthus criticised the poor laws, describing that poor relief would only increase the number of the poor by giving them temporary life and could not decrease their poverty. Their ideas, connecting with Bentham's utilitarianism, formed the thought for the later poor law amendment act.

Thus the poor laws were revised and the new one was formed in 1834.³⁶⁾ The points of the new poor law were as follows. A parish or the union of parishes should construct a workhouse and make the discipline in it very severe. Therefore, the inmates of the workhouse should be compelled to obey so severe discipline that they would dislike the institution. The William Young's Act, which had abolished the workhouse test, was repealed, and the able-bodied poor could not receive relief outside the workhouse. The allowance system giving subsidy for shortage of wages was to be substantially limited, and the allowance in kind could be

36) 4 & 5 William IV, c.76 ; G. Nicholls, *ibid.*, pp. 270ff. As concerns the workhouses after the new poor law, see Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse*, Temple Smith, 1974; M. A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System, 1834-1929, - the History of an English Social Institution*, The University of Georgia Press, 1981; Peter Wood, *Poverty and the Workhouse in Victorian Britain*, Alan Sutton, 1991; Felix Driver, *Power and Pauperism, The workhouse system 1834-1884*, Cambridge University Press, 1993; David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: From Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914*, Longman, 1998; Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse, A Study of Poor-Law Buildings in England*, English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre, 1999.

supplied, if necessary. The impotent poor would be compelled to obey the discipline as severe as the able-bodied poor should be, in the workhouse. In this way, the new poor law aimed at restoring the former workhouse test and restraining requests for relief by the poor.

After summarizing the history of making the new poor law of 1834, we must clarify the actual activities of St. Andrew Undershaft Workhouse and the parish policy for the poor after 1834.

(1) Plentiful outdoor relief

When transferring our eyes to the approximately 100 years later in the Minutes, the completely different situation emerges. That is, the actual state of the lively outdoor relief turns clear. The quotations from the first record of the Meeting of the Workhouse Committee held on 27th of January 1834 are as follows.

Alice Cave 10s.

Elizabeth Whisson says her husband is confined to his bed 10s.

Francis Simonds 5s She lives at No.22 Old Gravel Lane

John Harding 10s.

Martha Sherrard 5s.

Sarah Dowles 5s.

Hannah Haulin 2s 6d.

Sarah Bates 5s.

Mary M. Kew 5s. <27/ Jan/ 1834³⁷⁾>

These are the records granting the temporary relief to the poor people in the parish and the cases are clearly on the outdoor relief, because the address is sometimes mentioned. As for the persons whose reason or

37) *SAUW*. Vol.7, pp.268-272.

situation for requesting relief is not mentioned, they must have been received many times before. And almost all persons in this article would receive temporary relief monthly after the month. The amount of the money is sometimes changed but the most are the same. These persons come to on the meeting day of the committee for the application, and when they cannot come for disease and so on, their family or the person concerned come instead.

And there are cases that the situation is mentioned in detail, like the following.

Ann Thompson 64 years old [see her examination on the 29th September 1817] She lived at No.52 Lime Street as Servant to Mr. Moses 18 Months and 17 days. Her husband was then dead. She had 5 Children when he died Her youngest son died before she went to M. Moses. Her eldest daughter died at 40 years of age 5 years ago. That Daughter was married when she went to live with Mr. Moses. The second [now 40 years old] then lived with M. Morson Beat Street as Servant of All work where she remained 3 years. She had been in M. Morsons Service 12 Months The Pauper's then youngest Son was 16 or 17 years old and was Apprenticed to Mr. Needles a Cabinet maker for 4 years [the Son of Mr. Needles who kept the Bulls Head] 3 or 4 Months after she went to M. Moses. He came to town to see her from Banbury and then went back to Banbury and a few Months afterwards was bound. Before then he travelled with his married Sister for 2 years or thereabouts as a Pedlar. He had no Wages. He lives now at Banbury. He is married and has 7 Children. She is sure he was Apprenticed before she had lived 12 Months at M. Moses. She did nothing for him during that time. She lives at No. 4 Drapers Buildings. 5s from the Junior Churchwarden. ³⁸⁾⟨27/ Jan/ 1834⟩

As an article which recorded the career of the specific person, the description of this case is short and there are many ones to have mentioned the past of the very person in detail several times longer than the length of this. The reason why such investigation and record had been carried out lied in the need to clarify the settlement of the person, and through doing it, to judge whether or not the person had the qualification for receiving relief from the parish. Because the address is mentioned in this article, it is also the case of the outdoor relief.

The following case is one about the pension.

It was Resolved that Ann Carter be in future allowed 2s a week in addition to her present Pension of 3s a week until the next Vestry and that it be recommended to the next Vestry to increase her Pension to 5s a week. <26/ Oct/ 1835³⁹⁾>

From the judgement that the pension of this woman was too little, it was decided to demand the increase of her pension to the next parish Vestry, and to add 2 shillings weekly to it at present. Because a lot of cases on the pension including this one were recorded in the Minutes, it is clear that this system was widely executed.

On the other hand, the following case is a kind of allowance system giving subsidy for shortage of wages.

Frances Birch says she can only earn 4s a week which upon inquiry of her employer being found correct. 5s were given to her. <27/ Jun/ 1836⁴⁰⁾>

38) *Ibid.*, pp. 268–269. The contents of the brackets [] are the original supplements.

39) *Ibid.*, p. 358.

40) *SAUW*. Vol.8, p. 2.

It doesn't seem that there was a method to count the amount of subsidy, based on the price of bread like the Speenhamland system. But it is evident that granting subsidy or relief to the labouring poor with low wages was carried out.

Like the following case, the allowance to keep children existed moreover.

William Blackaby's Aunt applied to have the allowance of 3s per week for his support increased. She lives at Ware Side. The Mother is at Liverpool. He is 6 years Old. She pays 10s a quarter for his Schooling. Ordered that it be increased to 3s 6d per week.
 <29/ Aug/ 1836⁴¹⁾>

We can sometimes find the other articles than this, recording the allowance to keep children.

It is, therefore, clarified as the actual state that the outdoor relief was generally carried out in some forms such as above mentioned, temporary relief, pension, subsidy for wage, allowance to keep children, and so on.

(2) Accommodation

Records about housing the poor to the workhouse are hardly found out, probably because the outdoor relief was lively executed. There is possibility not to have been recorded, but it seems to be correct to think that the accommodation of the able-bodied poor, at least, was hardly done. Only the impotent poor would be housed to the workhouse, as the following article suggests.

Hannah Haulin says she has had a fall and her knee is bad again and

41) *Ibid.*, p. 16.

she applied to be taken into the House. She had no Certificate of her illness. She was told she must bring a Certificate from the Medical Men who has prescribed for her. ⁴²⁾〈29/ Sep/ 1834〉

Although this woman is the person who was granted the temporary relief monthly as above cited, she doesn't seem to have disliked to be housed to the workhouse.

(3) Members of the workhouse committee

When the workhouse of St. Andrew Undershaft parish was established, the institution was managed by the Trustees, which were composed of 12 members as above mentioned. And by this period, the members of governors had been augmented. "The Workhouse Committee", which consisted of 18 members in total, had been organized. And the members were composed of two churchwardens, four overseers of the poor, nine senior members, and three junior members. ⁴³⁾

The members of the Workhouse Committee were elected at the Easter week every year. And the members of the year 1834 were re-elected the next year except for three members. Therefore, the substantial re-election, for example, of the half, was not being taken.

As we can guess from the fact that the outdoor relief prevailed, their activities principally aimed at the whole parish policy for the poor, and they had little to do with the management of the workhouse, in spite of the name "Workhouse Committee".

(4) About the new poor law

The new poor law was ratified and settled on 14th of August 1834. On 15th of May in the same year, when the law was still a bill, the following

42) *SAUW*. Vol.7, p. 313.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 281.

article appears in the Minutes.

The Churchwarden informed the Meeting that they were called together to consider and determine whether any and what measures should be taken to oppose the Poor Law Amendment Bill.

The Heads of the Bill being read

It was Resolved

That a Meeting of the Inhabitants in Vestry be forthwith convened to take the Bill into consideration.

And that the following Gentlemen be appointed a Committee to frame a Petition to the House of Commons against the Bill namely M. Stamper and Mr. Davis the Churchwardens Mr. William Morrice, M. William Nash, Mr Robert Woodward and Mr. Massey. ⁴⁴⁾ (15/ May/ 1834)

The six members were composed of two churchwardens, two members of the workhouse committee, one of the overseers of the poor, one previous member of the workhouse committee. And therefore, the most were the members of the Workhouse Committee.

It is obvious that this parish took the stance against the law, judging from the above quotation, but it is pity that the results of the meeting of the inhabitants had not been recorded in the Minutes.

As for the situation after the bill was passed, there is an article that the committee examined how to answer to the questions from the Poor Law Commissioners at the meeting⁴⁵⁾ of the Workhouse Committee held on 15th of September in the same year. And on 29th of September, the following article is recorded.

The 54th Clause of the New Poor Law Act having been taken into

44) *Ibid.*, p. 287.

45) *Ibid.*, p. 311.

consideration

It was Resolved

That the Pensioners hitherto appointed by the Vestry or the Workhouse Committee shall until further Orders continue to be paid weekly by the Assistant Overseer out of the Poor Rate, as usual. ⁴⁶⁾
 〈29/ Sep/ 1834〉

The contents of the 54th clause of the new poor law have the main point that it is illegal “for any Overseers of the Poor to give any further or other Relief or Allowance from the Poor Rate than such as shall be ordered by such Guardians or Select Vestry, except in Cases of sudden and urgent ⁴⁷⁾Necessity”. It is, therefore, the prescription which restraints the power of the overseers of the poor.

The above resolution clearly means that this parish affirmed the outdoor relief and would grant pensions as before. Even if the resolution was not against the clause, but it was incompatible with the intention of the new poor law which aimed to limit the outdoor relief by the workhouse test.

(5) Helping immigration to overseas

The Workhouse Committee had various activities besides the outdoor relief. In the Minutes we can find, for example, the case to aid the parishioners in immigrating to overseas, like the following quotation.

The Churchwarden was instructed to pay the Expence of sending out the families of Malcolm Stewart William Hey and James Paterson as Emigrants to Sydney with Mr. Lang. ⁴⁸⁾
 〈26/ May/ 1834〉

46) *Ibid.*, p. 313.

47) 4 & 5 William IV, c. 76.

48) *SAUW*. Vol.7, p. 289.

According to the report of the churchwarden in the next month, 14 persons in total, including the family of Malcolm Stewart and other families, were sent to Sydney, and the cost was 112 pounds 9 shillings 4 pence,⁴⁹⁾ which the Workhouse Committee approved.

Such aid was done, being based on “the Report of the Royal Commission in the Poor Laws” in February 1834, which had proposed to give the parish vestry the authority to expend the emigrant cost from the poor rates.⁵⁰⁾ And Mr. Lang in the quotation might have contracted the immigration.

Although the emigrants were not described as the poor, it can be understood as the part of the poor policy to support immigrants, because the cost was paid by the poor rates.

(6) Lending money

The Workhouse Committee would sometimes lend money to the parishioners. The following two articles are such cases.

Ann Elizabeth Newton applied for some assistance to set up in business 10s and the sum of 20s was lent to her to be repaid by Monthly instalments of 5s. ⁵¹⁾⟨29/ Jun/ 1835⟩

John Williams is going to Service at Mrs. Williams Belgrave Square and applied for a loan of Money to enable him to buy some Cloths 10s was lent to him to be returned next Committee. ⁵²⁾⟨29/ Jun/ 1835⟩

Williams in the latter article returned 10 schillings at the next

49) *Ibid.*, p. 290.

50) G. Nicholls, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

51) *SAUW*. Vol.7, p. 343.

52) *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁵³⁾ Committee. We can find out the other articles on lending money than these, and therefore, we should think the practice as one of the policies for the poor in the parish.

(7) Apprentices

The listed persons who were put out to as apprentices from the parish are recorded on 27th of January 1834 in the Minutes. The names of 17 apprentices and their masters' names, addresses, and occupations are mentioned.⁵⁴⁾ The similar list of 24 apprentices is included in the record on 25th of July 1836.⁵⁵⁾

In the earliest period after the workhouse was established, the apprentices were put out from the workhouse, but now they would be put out from the parish not from the workhouse. The practice which sent young men in the parish as apprentices in this way is thought to have been the important duty of the Workhouse Committee. And there are some cases in the Minutes that a parishioner requested his or her son to be put out as an apprentice.

(8) Refusing relief

The application for relief by the poor was not always accepted. The cases refusing it appear here and there. For example,

William Stevens being relieved by the Assistant Overseer, refused.
 〈27/ Oct/ 1834〉⁵⁶⁾

Although the reason for the refusal is not written down, it is certain that the parish did not admit the double relief, as he had been already relieved

53) *Ibid.*, p. 349.

54) *Ibid.*, pp. 274–275.

55) *SAUW*. Vol.8, pp. 9–11.

56) *SAUW*. Vol.7, p. 315.

by the assistant overseer.

The following is the same case.

Martha Sinclair being a Pensioner, refused. ⁵⁷⁾〈29/ Jun/ 1835〉

This woman, who was already receiving pension, applied to the committee for relief, and was refused.

Thus, as having been described above, the Workhouse Committee practiced various policies for the poor in the parish, including the outdoor relief.

3 Conclusion

We have investigated the activities of the workhouse and the policies for the poor of the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft, being based on the Minutes.

In the earliest period, the parish practiced the lively poor relief using the workhouse, even if comparatively small in scale, and conformed to the Knatchibull's Act which prohibited the outdoor relief. But the workhouse doesn't seem to have been managed so severely as that the poor would dislike to be housed there.

On the other hand, as for the situation after 1834 when the poor law was revised, the outdoor relief was extensively carried out and the activities of the workhouse itself cannot be seen. The parish took the stance against the new poor law and continued the outdoor relief even after the bill was passed. Therefore, the restraint of the poor relief by using the severely managed workhouse was not realized at least by the end of the year 1836.

57) *Ibid.*, p. 343.