

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION

By Carolyn H. Brown

England, Holland, France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Scotland and Russia provided the majority of the early settlers to the new world. Most of the very early eastern seaboard settlements were from England. Each of these settlements were from different areas of England, with different values and life style ways. People settled where others who spoke their language, and had similar ways, had settled. Pockets of ethnic groups can be found throughout the U.S.

WHY THE LEFT

There are many reason for people to leave their homes such as: 1) famine; 2) religion; 3) war; 4) land ownership; or 5) hope of doing better.

WHEN THEY CAME

In the 1500s the western settlements were started by the Spaniards and Mexicans coming from Mexico. They settled in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Also in the 1500s were early settlements of Russians down the western seaboard from Alaska to the state of Washington. These settlements were very small and had little effect on the rest of the nation.

In the 1580s there was a Spanish settlement in St. Augustine, Florida.

Though the Dutch had landed in the New World around 1585 in what is now New York City, their settlement did not take hold until about 1630. Their settlement included lower New York City, which they named New Amsterdam, and continued up the Hudson River Valley to Albany. The churches in this area were mostly Dutch Reform.

The French settled the area of Louisiana, and along the Mississippi River starting in the late 1500s. Since Louisiana started as a French settlement, their land development and laws followed the French format. What constitutes a county in all other states are parishes in Louisiana. They were mostly of the Catholic faith. Some of the settlers intermixed with the Negro population to become the Cajuns we know today.

The English had settled in Roanoke Island, North Carolina in the very late 1500s, however, that settlement had dissolved before they could return. The first permanent English settlement in the new world was in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. For the most part, they were English gentry and indentured servants who came from central England. They brought with them the Church of England, which once established, became the Episcopal Church.

The Swedes came to New Jersey in 1612. Immigration from there continued up into New York in 1633. They later moved into the upper central U.S.

The Puritans were from the East Anglia section of England and came to Massachusetts in 1620. They were mostly of the middle class who came for religious freedom. The established church of New England was Congregationalist. Their values and life style ways were much different than those who settled Virginia.

The Quakers came from the northern England about 1654. In 1662, there was a big exodus from Scotland when the Quakers were removed. Some other groups who had sympathy for the Quakers came with them. Part of this group settled in eastern Virginia.

In 1677, William Penn received permission from the King of England for a large section of land above Virginia for settlement of his German Quaker Friends. The Friends have very different values and life style ways from both the Virginians and the New Englanders.

The Huguenots came from France to North Carolina in 1690. Some also settled in Virginia about 1701.

Lutheran Germans started settling in New York in 1706. By about 1714 they had moved into Virginia, and around 1752 they moved into Massachusetts.

In the early 1700s the warring factions of northern England and Scotland — including the Hatfields and McCoys—settled in the back country of Virginia. The back country was known as the area of western Virginia and North Carolina which backed up to the eastern mountain ranges. Their values and folk ways were very different from those in eastern Virginia, New England and the Pennsylvania settlements.

Scots-Irish came to the back country of Virginia in 1740. They moved into North Carolina about 1750.

“High” Scots came to North Carolina about 1774 and later settled in South Carolina.

The Irish came to New York starting in 1803. That movement continued through 1860s of the Irish famine.

PORTS OF ENTRY

There were many ports of entry and customs houses before 1790. Each costal settlement had a port of entry. All records were kept by the governing country.

The U.S. Customs Service was established on 31 July 1789 as part of the Department of Treasury. The Bureau of Customs was not created until 3 March 1927.

PORT OF ENTRY RECORDS

Most groups had six different lists. Others had up to twelve different lists. You may find Port of Entry records at the following locations:

Port of embarkation	Ports of call along the route	Cities of arrival
Port cities of departure	Port of arrival	Ship's logs

Lists were also kept by the group or company sponsoring the emigrants.

LOCATING PORT RECORDS

It may be hard to locate the old records, as many customs houses are now closed. However, you may find them in the National Archived Group 36 under the area of interest. Use the following list to locate the applicable National Archived Regional Facilities:

Region	Location	Holdings
Alaska	Anchorage, AK	Alaska
California	Laguna Niguel, CA	AZ, So. CA, Clark Co., NV
California	San Bruno, CA	No. CA, HI, NV (except Clarke Co.) Pacific Trust Territory, American Samoa
Colorado	Denver, CO	CO, MT, NM, ND, SD, UT, WY
Georgia	East Point, GA	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN
Illinois	Chicago, IL	IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI
Maryland	College Park, MD	D.C., MD, VA
Massachusetts	Waltham, MA	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
Missouri	Kansas City, MO	IO, KS, MO. NB
New York	New York City, NY	NJ, NY, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Ohio	Dayton, OH	OH, IN, MI
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	DE, PA, WV
Texas	Fort Worth, TX	AR, LA, OK, TX
Washington	Seattle, WA	ID, OR, WA

EARLY SETTLEMENTS BY GROUP

When coming to the new country they went where their friends or family had settled. Often the entire congregation of a church moved together. When they moved they settled where others who spoke their language, and had similar ways, had settled

MIGRATION ACROSS AMERICA

As the east began to fill up, people started looking for more land. By the late 1700s the movement west had begun. More land was available further west and north into Canada. New groups of people coming into America moved into the central area of the country by water. Until 1800 the “west” meant up to the eastern mountain ranges. Many immigrants coming into Texas and Louisiana moved up the Natchez Trace to Ohio.

GENERAL RULES OF MIGRATION

From the earliest days most settlements were within ten miles of navigable water or existing roads. Most roads were originally Indian trails. People went in groups from one area to another. Whole families or church groups moved together. It may help to research the friends and neighbors of your ancestors for more information.

OPENING UP THE WEST

Until the late 1790s few people except trappers had traveled west of the Allegheny Mountains. All land east of the mountains was under state rule. Since the federal government was not established until after 1776, there were no lands to be purchased or granted from the federal government. After the American Revolutionary War land along the Mississippi River was opened up by the new government. Some states acquired large chunks of land to give to their soldiers. Virginia owned land in Ohio and Missouri. Connecticut purchased land in Ohio for its soldiers.

WAGON TRAINS WEST

Before 1800, people moving west went on horse back often with small wagons. Most of the roads west were through Pennsylvania or the passes through the mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. As the west opened up, the first wagon trains left from Pennsylvania. By 1830 most wagon trains left from Kansas City, but not all. The first wagon trains to the far west went to the Oregon Territory following the path of Lewis and Clark. Other wagon trains went south through the Arizona Territory to California.

RAILROADS ACROSS COUNTRY

The first railroad line across the continent was completed in 1860. By 1865 the railroad companies start to expand their tracks across other parts of the country, making it easier from those in the east to visit family in the west. Many stayed and never went back.

STUDYING IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION

There are several books available about the roads and migration flows in America.

Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America – by David Hackett Fischer.

Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement – by David Hackett Fisher.

Map Guide to American Migration Routes – by William Dollarhide.

The Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South – by Parke Rouse, Jr.

Happy Hunting,

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