

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society



Chorley Branch Education Group Talk Handout Further Steps Emigration (Extract from The National Archives)

1. Why use this guide?

This guide to finding out about emigrants from Britain includes:

- information about emigration to North America, Australia and New Zealand
- information about child emigration, including the emigration of pauper children
- a section on finding aids to help you search the records

You may wish to start your research by consulting our introductory research guides on [emigrants](#), [passengers](#) or [transportees](#).

The guide gives an overview of emigration records held at The National Archives, but is not a comprehensive list of all sources.

You may also be interested in our [webinar on emigration](#).

2. Essential information

There are many references in documents in The National Archives to people emigrating to other countries, but no single index of names. Records of emigration are in many different records series and finding information about individual people can be challenging. You will need to refer to the series description in Discovery, our [catalogue](#), to find out how the records are arranged - for example, by date or country.

Many finding aids are available - some of these are listed in section 9. These are available in the reading rooms at The National Archives and in many university and larger reference libraries. Many of the publications listed in the further reading section describe the relevant record series at The National Archives.

The main record series containing information about emigrants and policy on emigration are those of the Colonial Office ([CO](#)), the Home Office ([HO](#)), the Board of Trade ([BT](#)) and the Treasury ([T](#)).

Many libraries and record offices in destination countries have copies of original material. These include the [Library of Congress](#) in Washington, USA, [Library and Archives Canada](#) in Ottawa, the [National Library of Australia](#), and the [State Library of New South Wales](#), Australia.

[The Society of Genealogists](#) also holds extensive printed material which can be consulted for a small fee, and the [Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints](#) maintains considerable collections of lists compiled from both British and North American sources.

3. Passenger lists

Outward passenger lists in [BT 27](#) (1890-1960) contain the names of people leaving the United Kingdom from ports in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland for final destinations outside Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. Some [BT 27](#) records are available to download from findmypast.co.uk. Registers of passenger lists, 1906 to 1951, are in [BT 32](#).

[ADM 30/35](#) contains passenger lists of H.M. steam packets carrying passengers to, from and within the Mediterranean area between 1831 to 1834.

For more information on passenger lists, please see our introductory research guide on [passengers](#).

4. Emigration to North America

4.1 Colonial Office records

Colonial Office records concern mainly those North American colonies which later became Canada. The following record series contain original correspondence and registers of correspondence (entry books), some of which contain names of people who emigrated.

Date range	Type of record	Catalogue reference
1817-1851	Emigration original correspondence. Includes letters from settlers or prospective settlers	CO 384
1815-1833	Entry books	CO 385
1840-1876	Land and Emigration Commission papers	CO 386
1662-1872	Original correspondence and entry books. Contain details of land grants and applications	CO 323 CO 381
1816-1868	British North America original correspondence	CO 6
1633-1849	General registers	CO 326
1850-1863	British North America emigration registers of correspondence	CO 327
1864-1868	British North America general registers of correspondence (including emigration)	CO 328
1872-1880	British North America registers of out-letters	CO 329

4.2 Records of the Treasury

Treasury correspondence and registers show that the department handled a considerable amount of colonial business, and contain references to British people in the colonies or planning to emigrate. The following record series all contain references to North America. For information about indexes and finding aids see section 9. The research guide [Treasury Board: letters and papers 1557-1920](#) gives more information about how to search Treasury records.

Date range	Type of record	Catalogue reference
Up to 1920	Treasury papers	T 1

Up to 1920	Registers of Treasury papers	T 2 , T 3 , T 4
Up to 1920	Indexes to Treasury papers	T 108
1668-1920	General out-letter books	T 27
1667-1870	Minute books	T 29 , T 99
1667-1857	Entry books of royal warrants	T 52
1676-1839	Entry books of warrants relating to the payment of money	T 53
1667-1849	Entry books of warrants concerning appointments and crown leases	T 54
1667-1831	Order books	T 60
1773-1776	Register kept by port customs officials of emigrants going from England, Wales and Scotland to North America	T 47/9 -12

4.3 Foreign Office records

For information about passport registers and indexes in [FO 610](#) and [FO 611](#), see the in-depth research guide on [passport records](#).

4.4 Records of the Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company's was founded in 1670. Its chief interests were originally the fur trade, exploration and settlement. After 1870, when its territory of Rupert's Land was incorporated into the Dominion of Canada, its interests became more varied.

The Hudson's Bay Company archives, covering 1667-1991, are held on microfilm at The National Archives in record series [BH 1](#). The original [Hudson Bay Company archives](#) are held at the Archives of Manitoba, Canada. The records include names and information about settlers who emigrated to North America and worked for the company.

4.5 Records of the Treasury Solicitor

The West New Jersey Society Records in [TS 12](#), covering 1675 to 1921, relate to tracts of land in West and East New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New England and elsewhere, divided up as shares of the company. The records contain many names in the original correspondence, minute books, registers of shares, original deeds, and papers about claims.

5. Emigration to Australia

See our guide on [Criminal transportees: further research](#) for information about the records available on convicts transported to Australia.

Many of the record series referred to in this section refer to both convicts and settlers since, once in Australia, the two were often less distinct than when they set out. The National Archives holds no lists of passengers who sailed to Australia as ordinary emigrants until 1890.

Date range	Type of record	Catalogue reference
1784-1900	New South Wales original correspondence, entry books and	CO 202 , CO

	registers. These series all contain lists of names of emigrants, settlers and convicts	201 , CO 360 and CO 369
1788-1859	Home Office convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania papers. Contains a series of censuses of convicts which include the names of members of their families. See Criminal transportees: further research for more information	HO 10
1846-1851	War office in-letters contain papers relating to Army pensioners encouraged to emigrate to New South Wales and to New Zealand	WO 1
1803-1857	Correspondence, old series. Contains papers on measures for relief of poor pensioners and the encouragement of emigration	WO 43
1949-1950	Dominions Office correspondence. Contains extensive information on post-war assisted passages to Australia and other colonies	DO 35/3366-3443

The website of [The National Archives of Australia](#) has more information about emigration Australia. In addition, details of some 8.9 million free settlers to New South Wales, 1826-1922 can be searched and downloaded online at [Ancestry.com.au](#), for a fee.

6. Emigration to New Zealand

The first European settlement of New Zealand was around 1820. The New Zealand Company was formed in 1839 and incorporated in 1841 with power to buy, sell, settle and cultivate land in New Zealand, and details of British emigrants can be found in the company's records. It surrendered its charter in 1850 and was dissolved in 1858.

Date range	Type of record	Catalogue reference
1839-1858	New Zealand Company original correspondence	CO 208
1839-1850	Registers of cabin passengers emigrating	CO 208/269-272
1839-1850	Applications for free passage	CO 208/273-274 (indexed in CO 208/275)
1839-1850	Applications for land, lists of landowners, lists of agents and surveyors, lists of German emigrants, and lists of maintained emigrants	CO 208/254-255

For further information see the [Archives New Zealand](#) website.

7. Child emigration

British child emigration schemes operated from 1618 to 1967. About 150,000 children were sent to the British colonies and dominions in this period, mainly to North America and Australia, but also Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), New Zealand, South Africa and the Caribbean. Many of the children were in the care of the voluntary organisations who arranged for their migration. Child emigration peaked from the

1870s until 1914 - about 80,000 children were sent to Canada alone during this period.

An exhibition and website on child migration called [On their own - Britain's child migrants](#) has been developed by the Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Australian National Maritime Museum.

7.1 Emigration of pauper children: 1850-1909

In the mid-eighteenth century around one in three of all paupers was under 16. This put an enormous strain on poor law authorities, who could not find apprenticeships for all pauper children. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1850, cap cI, allowed Boards of Guardians to send children under 16 overseas for the first time, with the majority of schemes beginning in 1870.

The National Archives holds few records of child emigrants for this period. Local Government Board poor law records in [MH 12](#) tend only to record statistical information on the numbers of children sent overseas, though they sometimes include poor law union posters giving notice of the names and ages of children being sent abroad. Try searching the series using keywords such as 'children AND emigration'.

The record series [MH 19](#) contains correspondence of the Poor Law Commission and Board and the Local Government Board with other government departments and local government services. The series includes volumes of internal correspondence and papers of the Poor Law Board and the Local Government Board, some of which relate to emigration. The records are arranged by names of corresponding departments. Registers of correspondence are in [MH 20](#).

[MH 19/9](#) contains detailed reports on pauper child emigrants resident in Canada, covering 1887 to 1892. The reports give comments about the children's condition, health, character, schooling, frequency of church attendance, and each child's view of their new homes. They cite the Union or parish from which they were sent, as well as each child's name, age and host's name and address. Further Canadian government inspectors' reports and statistical information regarding child migrants can be found in [Parliamentary Papers](#) (institutional subscription required).

Archives of the voluntary agencies may provide more details of individual children. Records relating to Maria Rye, Annie Macpherson and those relating to the work of Dr Barnardo's are held by the [Department of Special Collections and Archives](#), University of Liverpool. These records include registers of child emigrants and case files, although such personal archives are subject to access restrictions. The closed period is usually 100 years. In addition to these archives, [Barnardo's Photographic and Film Archive](#) has some 400,000 photographs dating from 1866 showing the work of the charity.

7.2 Home Office policy files: 1908-1960

Before 1972 the Home Office was responsible for putting into effect various Acts relating to children. [MH 102](#) consists of Home Office policy files, which include

policy on child emigration. Most of these records relate to schemes between 1910 and 1960 set up by the UK, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. They include initiatives by Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Fairbridge Society, the Overseas Migration Board, and the Big Brother emigration scheme. This was a voluntary scheme set up in 1925 for the purpose of fostering the emigration of boys to Australia aged 16 and 17 and 'big brothering' them until the age of at least 21. It attracted over 2,000 children before the Second World War and a further 1,400 between 1947 and 1954. The boys, recruited through UK press publicity and applications to orphanages, were selected to work in trades in Tasmania and New South Wales. Some files are closed for 75 or 100 years but can be requested under the [Freedom of Information Act](#).

There are earlier records in Home Office registered papers in [HO 45](#) and [HO 144](#) - try searching using keywords such as 'children AND emigration'. These records are mainly policy and correspondence files relating to the emigration of children under the Children Act, 1908, ch. 67, and include information about schemes for the emigration of children to Canada and Australia.

7.3 Children's Overseas Reception Board, 1940-1944

In May 1940 the growing threat to the UK from both invasion and mass air attack led to spontaneous offers of hospitality for British children from the dominions and the USA. Offers were received through the Canadian government and from private homes in Canada. In a few days similar offers were received from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. On 7 June 1940 the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB) was set up to process these offers.

Before CORB was set up about 11,000 children had been evacuated overseas via private schemes. A total of 3,100 children were sent to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa under the CORB scheme between July and September 1940. Evacuation stopped on 17 September 1940 when SS City of Benares was torpedoed with the loss of 77 Canada-bound children on board. All future CORB sailings were cancelled, but the Board remained active until its disbandment four years later. Many CORB children returned to the UK after the end of hostilities to be reunited with their families.

The records in the series [DO 131](#) consist of administrative files, a selection of case files relating to children ([DO 131/94](#)-105) and their escorts ([DO 131/71](#)-87) and a register of child applicants, searchable by name of child ([DO 131/106](#)-113). The majority of files were destroyed under statute in 1959. Dominions Office policy files relating to the activities of the Board are in [DO 35](#).

Contemporary newspapers in the destination countries are a source of comments and photographs, especially concerning the arrival of evacuees in the summer of 1940. Additional records about child migrants may be held in the archives of the recipient countries.

8. Other records of emigration

The following record series also contain records of emigration. For information about indexes and finding aids to help you search the records, see section 9. The relevant sections of our catalogue contain information about how the records are arranged.

Date range	Type of record	Catalogue reference
1540-1978	Privy Council registers. These contain numerous entries about the colonies as well as petitions and letters of people going there or already resident there. These are supplemented by the papers of the Privy Council (PC 1) which include some papers relating to the colonies.	PC 2
1678-1806	Plantation books. These include copies of commissions, instructions, orders and letters to governors and other officials, warrants for the appointment of Colonial councillors, for letters of marque, grants and surrenders of offices.	PC 5/1-16
1557-1920	Treasury Board papers: these contain the original correspondence of the Board. The indexes show the considerable amount of colonial business handled by the Treasury and include many references to people in or going to the colonies.	T 1
1668-1920	Treasury general out-letter books	T 27
1667-1870	Minute books	T 29 and T 99
1667-1857	King's warrants	T 52
1676-1839	Warrants relating to money	T 53
1667-1849	Warrants not relating to money	T 54
1667-1831	Order books. All contain references to the colonies, particularly to North America	T 60
1201-2007	Chancery patent rolls. These contain various entries relating to grants of offices and lands in North America and elsewhere, some of which can be traced in the indexes available at The National Archives.	C 66
c 1250-1859	Chancery Masters Exhibits include material relating to grants of lands and sometimes wills.	C 103-114
1785-1963	A selection of journals kept by the surgeons of HM ships, some hospitals, naval brigades and shore parties. These include journals from convict ships and emigrant ships.	ADM 101
1779-1827	Audit Office declared accounts. These include references to the pensions and allowances paid to emigrants, American loyalists and others.	AO 1
1803-1848	Audit Office declared accounts. These also give lists of establishments in some of the colonies.	AO 2
1539-1886	Accounts various. These list the names of some individual settlers.	AO 3
1773-1917	Transport Department records. These relate collectively to the transport by sea of military forces to various parts of the world.	ADM 108 and MT 23
1834-1890	Ministry of Health Poor Law Union papers. These include material about parish-assisted emigration under the new Poor Law of 1834, arranged alphabetically under county and union.	MH 12
1853-1854	Correspondence between the General Board of Health and the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners	MH 13/252

9. Indexes and finding aids

9.1 Privy Council

PC 1 and PC 2: Privy Council registers. Calendared in the Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial series, 1613-1783 (London, 1908-1912), together with all the register entries from 1613-1783.

PC 5/1-16: plantation books. Calendared in Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial series, 1613-1783 (London, 1908-1912).

9.2 Colonial Office

CO 1 and CO 391: Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1738 (London 1860-1969) includes brief descriptions, which are indexed, of the Colonial papers, general series, and the Board of Trade minutes 1675-1704; the Journals of the commissioners for trade and plantations, 14 volumes (London, 1920-1938) contain a full printed version of the minutes from 1704-1782.

CO 201: an index and a microfiche name index to settlers, military men and convicts are available.

Original correspondence as well as sessional papers, entry books, and miscellanea are described in the Public Record Office Lists and indexes no XXXVI List of Colonial Office records (New York, Kraus Reprint 1963) and CM Andrews' Guide to the material for American history to 1793 in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, 2 volumes (Washington 1912 and 1914), although the references in this may need to be converted to modern references.

The Colonial papers, general series, as well as the registers for passengers requiring licences to travel to New England, Barbados, Maryland, Virginia and other colonies 1634-1639 and 1677 (E 157) were used by JC Hotten to compile Original lists of persons emigrating to America 1600-1700 (London 1874).

9.3 Treasury

For general information about how to search Treasury records, see [Treasury Board: letters and papers 1557-1920](#).

T1: Treasury Board papers. Described in the Calendar of Treasury papers 1557-1728, 32 volumes (London 1868-1889) and continued in the Calendar of Treasury books and papers, 1729-1745, 5 volumes (London 1898-1903).

T 60: included in the Calendar of Treasury books 1660-1718 (London 1904-1958) and in the Calendar of Treasury books and papers 1729-1745, 5 volumes (London 1898-1903).

T 47/9-12: register kept by port customs officials of emigrants going from England, Wales and Scotland to the New World. Bernard Bailyn's *Voyagers to the west* (IB Tauris, 1986), includes much detailed work on emigrants listed in the registers in these records. There is also a card index to this series, available at The National Archives. This gives a person's name, age, occupation, reason for leaving the country, last place of residence, date of departure and destination.

T 27: Treasury out-letters, T 29 and T 99: minute books, T 52, T 53, T 54: warrants, and T 60: order books. Included in the Calendar of Treasury books 1660-1718 (London, 1904-1958) and Calendar of Treasury books and papers 1729-1745 (London, 1904-1958).

T 79: records of the American Loyalist Claims Commission. an index to American loyalist claimants from the minute books of the Claims Commission is printed in Public Record Office Lists and Indexes No XLVI Records of the Treasury, the Paymaster General's Office, the Exchequer and Audit Department and the Board of Trade to 1837 (London 1922) pp105-110; a similar list of East Florida claims for compensation for territory ceded in 1783 to Spain is in the same volume, pp95-97.

9.4 War Office

WO 43: details of these records are in the Public Record Office lists and indexes An alphabetical guide to War Office and other military records (London 1931).

9.5 Directory covering various series

David Dobson's *Directory of Scottish settlers in North America 1625-1825* (Baltimore, 1984) draws on records in the Audit Office accounts (AO 3), Prince Edward Island original correspondence (CO 226/23), Home Office correspondence and papers, Scotland (HO 102) and the Treasury registers (T 47).

9.6 Immigrant Ancestors Project

[The Immigrant Ancestors Project](#) - sponsored by the Center for Family History and Genealogy at Brigham Young University, uses emigration records, including sources at The National Archives, to locate information about the birthplaces of immigrants in their native countries. Volunteers working with scholars and researchers at Brigham Young University are creating a database of millions of immigrants based on these emigration sources.

10. Further reading

The following publications are available in The National Archives' library. Those with a link can be bought from The National Archives' online bookshop:

Bernard Bailyn, *The peopling of British North America: an introduction* (Random House, 1986)

Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the west: emigration from Britain to America on the eve of the Revolution* (Random House, 1987)

JNW Blewett, *Guide to the National Archives of the United States* (Washington, 1987)

JM Bumsted, *The people's clearance: Highland emigration to British North America 1770-1815* (Edinburgh University Press, 1982)

Peter Wilson Coldham, *English adventurers and emigrants, 1609-1660: abstracts of examinations in the High Court of Admiralty with reference to Colonial America* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1984)

Peter Wilson Coldham, *American migrations, 1765-1799: the lives, times and families of colonial Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown before, during and after the Revolutionary War, as related in their own words and through their correspondence* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 2000)

David Dobson, *Directory of Scottish settlers in North America 1625-1825* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980)

Ira A Glazier, *The famine immigrants* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983)

Guy Grannum, *Tracing Your Caribbean Ancestors* (Bloomsbury, 2012)

WL Grant and James Munro (eds), *Privy Council, Acts of the Privy Council of England, colonial series 1613-1783* (Hereford Press for HMSO, 1908-1912), I-VI

David T Hawkings, *Bound for Australia* (The History Press, 2012)

John Camden Hotten, *Original lists of persons emigrating to America 1600-1700* (Chatto and Windus, 1874)

Robert Hughes, [*The fatal shore: a history of the transportation of convicts to Australia, 1787-1868*](#) (Viking, 2003)

Maldwyn Allen Jones, *Destination America* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976)

Roger Kershaw and Mark Pearsall, *Family history on the move: where your ancestors went and why* (The National Archives, 2006)

Roger Kershaw, [*Migration records: a guide for family historians*](#) (The National Archives, 2009)

Roger Kershaw and Janet Sacks, *New lives for old - the story of Britain's child migrants* (The National Archives, 2008)

TJ Kiernan, *Irish exiles in Australia* (Clonmore & Reynolds, 1954)

WA Knittle, Early eighteenth century Palatine emigration (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997)

LD MacWethy, The books of names especially relating to the Early Palatines and the first settlers of the Mohawk Valley (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1933)

New York genealogical and biographical records, XL and XLI (New York Genealogical & Bibliographical Society, 1909 and 1910)

RB Pugh, The records of the Colonial and Dominions Offices (HMSO, 1964)

Babette Smith, [Australia's birthstain](#) (Allen Lane, 2009)

Anne Thurston, Records of the Colonial Office, Dominions Office, Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office (HMSO, 1995) I-II

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