

Emigrants: Documents in the Public Record Office

Introduction

There are very many references in documents in the Public Record Office to individuals and families emigrating to various colonies and places in different parts of the world, but there is no single index to the names of such persons. The chief sources of information are in the numerous classes of Colonial Office records and in a few classes of Home Office, Board of Trade and Treasury records. Much of this material is described in officially published series of Calendars, Lists and Indexes, Handbooks, etc, which are available in the Search Department at the Public Record Office and to which specific reference is made at suitable points in this leaflet.

Some of the earlier lists of names of emigrants found in these main classes have attracted the attention of various publishing bodies and authors whose works can be consulted in major libraries; and some of those books which reproduce such lists are also mentioned at appropriate places below and are available for reference in the Reading Rooms.

Other short lists of, and numerous letters from and to, emigrants and settlers can be found by laborious examination of the separate bundles and volumes in many classes of public records. It is not possible for the Public Record Office to undertake research work of this kind for the general public. Persons wishing to make a search themselves may do so, first obtaining a Reader's Ticket for the Reading Rooms; or alternatively they can employ a professional record agent, and the names of one or two such agents can be supplied by the Public Record Office on request. It must be realised that the chances of success in tracing particular persons must vary with the amount of information already available to the searcher: with little or nothing to start with the search is a desperate one, and can prove very costly and perhaps produce no results at all.

The Guide to the Contents of the Public Records Office (HMSO, 3 vols. 1963, 1968) gives brief descriptions of all classes of records. Further details and full references to individual volumes and bundles of papers are obtained from the Class Lists available in the Search Department.

Main Sources of Information

Chief among the classes yielding names and other details about individual emigrants are those in the following groups:

Colonial Office

Colonial Papers, General Series (CO1) are the papers relating to the American and West Indian Colonies described and indexed in the Calendar of State Papers, covering 1574 to 1738. This Calendar also includes the Board of Trade Minutes (CO391) from 1675 to 1704; but those from that date to 1782 are printed in full in 14 volumes of a separate series of Journals of

the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. The General Series Papers virtually end in 1688, from which date the class

America and the West Indies, Original Correspondence, etc (CO5) contains a variety of material about the business of and the people in that part of the world; and there are also separate classes of Original Correspondence, Entry Books, Sessional Papers, Miscellanea, etc grouped under the names of the various colonies. All of these classes are described briefly in PRO Handbook No 3-The Records Of The Colonial And Dominion Offices (HMSO, London 1964), and in more detail in the PRO Lists And Indexes, No. XXXVI (reissued by the Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York). These two publications cover classes of records relating to the colonies in other parts of the world besides America, as for example:

Cape Colony Original Correspondence (CO48) has letters from settlers and papers about grants of land at the Cape of Good Hope, 1814-1825. For the same colony there are Entry Books (CO49) from 1795, and later (from 1850) some registers (CO336 and CO462) which may be used in the search for names of individual settlers.

New South Wales Original Correspondence (CO 21) commences in 1784, and the class list shows numerous lists of emigrant settlers and convicts, 1801-1821. There is also a typescript Index to the correspondence for 1823-1833 on PRO Search Room shelves (and also, it is believed, at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and at the Melbourne Public Library). Also for New South Wales there are lists of many names in the Entry Books relating to Convicts (CO 207) covering 1788-1825; and other names can be traced in Entry Books (CO 202) from 1786 and Registers (CO 360 and 369) from 1849. Some of the lists from these records have been printed in LL Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia* (Melbourne, 1965)

Emigration Original Correspondence (CO 384) contains many letters from settlers or people intending to settle in the colonies, 1817-1896; and names appear in Entry Books (CO 385) which begin in 1814 and in Land and Emigration Commission Papers (CO 386), 1833-1894. Some volumes of Colonies General, Original Correspondence (CO 323) and Entry Books (CO 324 and CO 381) can also yield details of land grants and applications therefore.

Some fuller descriptions of many items relating to America in the above mentioned classes of records (and other classes in the Colonial Office group) will be found in 'C.M.Andrews, *Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1793, In The Public Record Office of Great Britain, part I- The State Papers* (Washington, 1912).' Descriptions of records relating to America in some of the classes mentioned below in this present leaflet are found in the same work, 'Part II- *The Departmental and Miscellaneous Papers* (Washington 1914)

Exchequer, Kings Remembrancer's Department

'Licenses to Pass Beyond The Seas' (E157) are registers which relate to soldiers taking the oath of allegiance before going to serve in the Low Countries between the years 1613 and 1624; to licenses for persons going

abroad (chiefly to Holland) between 1624 and 1632; and to passengers going to New England, Barbados, Maryland, Virginia and other colonies between 1634 and 1639, and in 1677. Much of the material in these registers (including all lists of names of emigrants) , together with some similar documents bearing on the same subject and found in the Colonial Papers, General Series (CO1) mentioned above, has been printed in 'J.C. Hotten, The Original Lists Of Persons Emigrating To America, 1600-1700 (London, 1874),' and see also ' C.B. Jewson, Transcript Of Three Registers Of Passengers From Great Yarmouth To Holland and New England, 1637-1639 (Norfolk Record Society XXV, 1954)

Exchequer and Audit Department

'American Loyalists Claims, Series I' (AO 12) 1776-1831 and 'Series II' (AO 13) 1780-1835 , contain many names of persons who during the American War of Independence had suffered losses on account of their loyalty to the British Crown and were entitled to claim compensation under the Treaty of Peace in 1783 and a new Treaty of Amity between Great Britain and the United States of America in 1794. These records are those of the Commissioners appointed in 1802 to effect payment of claims: series I contains many lists of claimants, and in series II are the original claims and papers in support thereof, examinations, etc. There are typescript nominal indexes to both these classes in the Reference Room. The class lists appear in the printed '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'

Accounts of the payment of the pensions and compensations, etc., are amongst the 'Declared Accounts' (AO 1) of the Audit office. Other records of this American Loyalist Claims Commission are amongst the records of the Treasury, and described below. For a fuller description of the origin, extent and usefulness today of records in these classes see 'Roger H. Ellis, Records of the American Loyalists Claims in the Public Records Office' (The Genealogists' Magazine, Vol. XII: London, 1958)

Home Office

'Convict Transportation Registers (HO11) cover the years 1787 to 1871 in 21 volumes which contain lists under the respective ships of the convicts transported in them. The order in the volume is roughly by the ships' departure dates, but each volume has its own index of ships. The lists give the full names of each convict, the term of his or her transportation, the date and place of conviction. This last piece of information helps to guide further search for other details that might be traceable in the 'Criminal Registers' (see below) and in records of the several Assize Courts (See also below)

'Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania(HO10) is a class of 64 volumes which could be described as a series of Censuses for these colonies for various years between 1788 and 1859, Though these Censuses are primarily concerned with the convict population, Male and female, they contain the names of numerous members of the convicts' families who were not

transported at all and are described as 'Came Free' or 'Born in the Colony'.

The Census of 1828 (in HO10/21-27) is the most complete and therefore the most valuable. It contains the names of more than 35,000 persons with their ages, religions, families, residences, occupations, and details of stock and land held. In addition, there is indication of whether coming to the colony free or in bond, or born in the colony, and of the ship and year of arrival. Transcripts of the returns have been published by the Library of Australian History, 17 Mitchell Street, North Sydney, 2060, Sydney, Australia. Some of the earlier volumes give details of date and place of birth in England, which can be useful in directing search to other classes of records, such as

'Criminal Registers, Series I' (HO 26) and 'Series II' (HO 27), in which are recorded names of all persons charged with indictable offences, sometimes give personal information respecting the prisoners. Series I are registers with names in A to Z sections, year by year from 1791 to 1849 for Middlesex only, which from 1850 onwards is included in series II containing all the other counties of England and Wales arranged in alphabetical order and covering 1805 to 1892.

Class lists of the above-described and other classes of Home Office records down to 1837 only are printed in 'Lists And Indexes, No. XLIII.' For records of a later date the typescript lists in the Search Department should be consulted.

Privy Council

'Registers' (PC 2) extending, with several small gaps only, from 1540 to the present day contain the notes of proceedings of the Privy Council, its orders and instructions on many matters, and the reports of committees with the papers accompanying them, sometimes entered at length, sometimes in abstract only. There are numerous entries concerning the colonies, and about petitions and letters of people going there or already resident therein; and all such entries as occur in the registers of the period 1613 to 1783 have been printed in vols. I to V of 'Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series (London, 1908-1912).'

'Plantation Books' (PC 5) cover the period 1678 to 1806 and contain, amongst other things, copies (apparently made more or less contemporaneously with the originals) of commissions; instructions, orders and letters issued to governors and other administering Colonial Governments; warrants for the appointment of Colonial councillors, for letters of marque and for grants and surrenders of offices. All but 1 of the 16 Volumes in this class are indexed, and the material in them was included by the editors in 'Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series' referred to above.

'Papers, Mainly Unbound (PC1), which contain few documents before 1700, are of very varied character but do include some papers relating to the colonies. Means of reference to the 4,570 bundles in this class is by

descriptive list available in typescript in PRO search rooms, but most of the colonial papers for the period 1676-1783 are calendered in 'Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series, Vol. VI (1912).' In a sense, the Papers supplement the Registers described above.

Board of Trade

'Passenger Lists, Outwards' (BT 27) are the lists of passengers leaving the United Kingdom by sea. These are the copies furnished by the masters of ships as required by law to port officers of the Ministry of Transport and sent to the Board of Trade for statistical purposes. Lists earlier in date than 1890 no longer exist, but all those from that date onwards are preserved. They are arranged year by year under the names of the port of Departure. Information given in the lists includes the age and occupation of each passenger, and normally some indication of place residence in the United Kingdom.

'Registers of Passenger Lists (BT 32) exist from 1906 and assist in identifying the lists received at the Board of Trade. Prior to 1920 they give under the different ports the names of ships and the month of departure; after 1920 the precise date of departure is recorded. Before October 1908 the registers relate only to the ports of Southampton, Bristol and Weymouth.

Treasury

The financial department of the modern state reached its key position in the administrative system by the late 17th Century. Its records down to 1837 are listed in the 'Printed Lists and Indexes, No. XLVI' The classes in which information about individuals emigrating to and settling in various colonies can be traced are as follows:

'Treasury Board Papers (T 1), which commence in 1557 and contain the original correspondence of the board together with occasional minutes, reports, etc. They are described in the printed 'Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1557 to 1728 (6 Volumes)', and continued in the 'Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, 1729 to 1745 (5 Volumes)'; and the indexes to these printed calendars show the considerable amount of colonial business handled by the Treasury and include many references to people in or going to the colonies.

'Out-Letter Books, General' (T 27) contain entries of treasury out-letters from 1668; 'Minute Books' (T 29 and T 99) contain treasury minutes from 1667, recording the chief matters coming before the board; 'Kings Warrants' (T 52) from 1667; 'Warrants relating To Money' (T 53) from 1676; 'Warrants Not Relating To Money' (T 54) from 1667, and the 'Order Books' (T 60) from 1660 all contain references to colonies, particularly to those in America. These are all included in the 'Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers (5 Vols.)'

'Registers, Various' (T 47) Include three volumes, numbered 9-11 in the class, which give details of emigrants going from England and Wales to the

New World and other places in 1773-1776. There is a card index to this important material in the Reference Room at Kew. The information given in it includes name, age, occupation, reason for leaving the country, last place of residence, date of departure and destination of every person included in the weekly lists bound up to form these volumes. T 47/12 gives similar information about emigrants leaving Scottish ports for America, 1774-1775, but the names in it are not included in the card index mentioned above.

'Documents Relating to Refugees' (T 50) vols. 1-28 and 31-56 contain compensation and pension lists for American Loyalists, 1780-1835; but are not indexed. The records of the 'American Loyalists Claims Commission' (T 79) consist largely of minute books of the commissioners, with reports on individual claims; and an index to claimants' names is printed on pages 105-110 in 'Lists and Indexes, No. XLVI'. (Other records relating to the American Loyalists are described above, see Exchequer and Audit Department, classes AO12 and AO13). Similar claims for compensation to loyalists in East Florida, ceded to Spain in 1783, are found in records of the 'East Florida Claims Commission' (T 77), and for these also an index to claimants' names is printed in 'Lists and Indexes, No. XLVI (at pages 95-97)'.

'Warrents Relating To Money' (T 53), already briefly mentioned above, include in Vols. 27-42 lists of felons transported to American colonies between 1719 and 1744. References to some of these lists can be found in the printed 'Calendar of Treasury Books, 1729-1745', but no names are given. There is however an Index of Names of persons transported from London, Surrey, Middlesex, Kent, Sussex, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire published in 'M and J Kaminkow, Emigrants in Bondage (Baltimore, Maryland 1967)'; and this covers the whole period 1719 to 1744, after which date lists of names of this kind no longer appear in the class of Money Books.

Lists of names of Palatine subjects who emigrated to America via Holland and England in 1709 are contained in several classes of records of the Colonial Office and the Treasury. Many of these lists of names have been printed in 'W A Knittle, Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration (Philadelphia 1937)', in 'L D MacWethy, The Books of Names especially relating to the Early Palatines and the First Settlers in the Mohawk Valley (New York 1933)', and in 'New York Genealogical and Biographical Records, XL and XLI (New York, 1909 and 1910).

Other Sources of Information

In addition to the above-described principal sources of material supplying details of individual emigrants, numerous other classes of records in the Public Records Office can supply scraps of information about persons going abroad for periods of service of one kind or another, or to settle in overseas lands. Descriptions of some of these classes follow; but it must be emphasised again, even more strongly with respect to this material, that search for particular persons is usually of a very laborious nature. The finding aids are often very inadequate, and only when some precise dates and/or places or other specific information is already known will it be

really practicable to dig hopefully in some of these under-listed classes.

ADMIRALTY: 'Medical Journals' (ADM 101) include those of emigrant ships 1815-1853, and convict ships, 1817-1853; 'Registers, Various' (ADM 6) include registers of convicts on ships, 1819-1834; 'Transport Department Records' (ADM 108 and MT 23) relate collectively to transport by sea of military forces to various parts of the world, 1773-1917

ASSIZE RECORDS: 'Indictments, Depositions, Crown Minute Books and Miscellanea' classes of records of the six assize circuits into which England was divided in the 17th and 18th Centuries can provide details about felons who were sentenced to death on conviction for Manslaughter, Horse-Stealing and House-Breaking etc. but afterwards reprieved for transportation to the colonies. There are some links traceable between these records and those of the Home Office described above (Criminal Registers, Convict Transportation Registers etc)

AUDIT OFFICE: 'Declared Accounts (in rolls)' (AO1) include references to the pensions and allowances paid to emigrants, American Loyalists and others in the colonies, 1779-1827; and 'Declared Accounts (in books)' (AO 2) include similar material and also give lists of establishments in some of the colonies. Both these classes are listed in 'Lists and Indexes, No. XLVI' which also includes the list of 'Accounts, Various' (AO 3) in which the names of individual settlers in some of the colonies can be found- e.g. a list of names enrolled at Edinburgh for settlement in Canada during 1815 is found in AO3/144.

CHANCERY: 'Patent Rolls' (C66) contain various entries relating to grants of offices and lands in America and elsewhere. Some of these can be traced in the 'MS. Indexes' available in the PRO Search Room, and those for the period 1606-1702 are included in 'J C Hotten, Original Lists of Persons Emigrating To America'. 'Proceedings' in chancery suits, arranged in a variety of classes for different date ranges and sub-divided by names of Clerks who shared the business and custody of records thereof, extend over a long period from the late 14th Century to the mid-19th Century. Amongst them may be found references to people who had become settlers in the colonies; but the difficulties in searching the lists, arranged under Plaintiffs' names only, are considerable. 'Chancery Masters' Exhibits' (various classes) are linked with suits proceeding in the Chancery Court and contain some helpful items, e.g. C 105/44 relates to grants of lands in East Florida, 1765-1783, and C 107/169 concerns estates in New Jersey and wills of persons in Philadelphia, 1775.

FOREIGN OFFICE: 'Passport Registers' (FO 610) contain entries in chronological order from 1795-1898 of names of intended destinations abroad of all applicants to whom passports were issued, and the names of people recommending the applications. 'Indexes Of Names' (FO 611), covering 1851-1862 and 1874-1898, give date of issue of each passport and its serial number. It should be noted, however, that the issue of passports to persons going overseas was far from being the norm at this period.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH: 'Poor Law Union Papers' (MH 12) cover many aspects of

local government and public health administration, 1834-1890, and include material about parish-assisted emigration under the new Poor Law of 1834. For example MH12/8156 containing the papers of the Aylsham Poor Law Union, Norfolk, for 1834-1837, includes lists of persons emigrating with occupations and destinations (mainly Canada). The class is arranged alphabetically by counties and Unions. 'General Board Of Health And Local Government Office Correspondence' (MH 13) includes some letters from the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1853-1854 (in MH 13/252). 'Correspondence and Papers' (MH 19) of the Poor Law authorities with government departments also includes some correspondence with the Emigration Commissioners, 1836-1876 (in MH 19/22).

TREASURY SOLICITOR: 'West New Jersey Society Records' (TS 12), 1675-1921, relate to tracts of land in West and East New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New England and elsewhere divided up as shares of the West New Jersey Society, a company formed about 1691. The records contain many names in original correspondence, minute books' registers of transfers of shares, original deeds, papers about claims, etc. 'General Series Papers' (TS 18) include a series of contracts, 1842-1867, for the transportation of named convicts to Australia (TS 18/460-515).

WAR OFFICE: 'In-Letters' (WO 1) contain papers relating to Army pensioners encouraged to emigrate to New South Wales and to New Zealand, 1846-1851. 'Old Series Papers' (WO 43) contain papers on measures for relief of poor pensioners and the encouragement of emigration. Precise references to files on these matters and to other classes of War Office records are found in the 'Alphabetical Guide To The War Office and other Military Records Preserved in the Public Records Office-Lists and Indexes, No. LIII'. There are various classes giving details of service of officers and soldiers, and other valuable information; and these are described in a separate PRO leaflet.

Transcripts of Public Records, and Publications

Photostat and Microfilm copies of many of the records included in the classes described above have been made over a long period and are available for research in other countries. In America material of this kind can be consulted at the Library of Congress, Washington DC, and to a lesser extent in some State Libraries amongst collections of historical papers. In Canada there is much copy material at the Public Archives in Ottawa; and in Australia microfilms of many PRO manuscripts are available at the National Library in Canberra and at the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Many of the records of transportations to Australia have been indexed by the Society of Australian Genealogists, Richmond Villa, 120 Kent Road, The Rocks, Sydney NSW 2000.

Public Record Office publications referred to in this leaflet are available in many of the major libraries throughout the world; and copies of them, with certain exceptions, can be purchased from HMSO, PO Box 569, London SE1

9HN, and in America from British Information Services, 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022. The Handbook of the Joint Australian Copying Project, issued by the National Library of Australia, gives details of those public records available in Microfilm in Australian libraries.

There are two sites for the Public Record Office. The documents described in this leaflet may be seen only as follows;

At PRO Chancery Lane:- AO, PC, ASSI, C and TS class of records.

At PRO Kew:- CO, AO, HO, BT, T, ADM, FO, MH and WO class of records.

The respective addresses are:- Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1LR. Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU.

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