

Migrations in and Out of New England

Tracing Families on the Move

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Basic Trends of American Migration

1. Migrations in American history typically follow an east-to-west pattern along geographical markers like waterways and mountains
2. People most often moved from populated areas to less densely populated places
3. Major migration period for the United States: 1790-1880
4. Record keeping became less formal and reliable as families moved West

Migration Patterns

1. New England
 - a. Settlement began along the coast in areas like Massachusetts and Connecticut before spreading north to New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, and southwest to New York
2. Canada
 - a. Pre-Revolutionary settlement of Canada was often part of other New England settlement patterns and/or driven by expulsions from earlier wars
 - b. Many, but not all settlements after 1783 can be tied to Loyalists causes
3. New York/New Jersey
 - a. New York settlements in Long Island, the Oblong, and the Beekman Patent of Dutchess County can trace some roots back to New England
 - b. Areas in northern New Jersey and some settlements on the southern coast were also settled by New England contingents
4. Pennsylvania/Ohio
 - a. The Western Reserve of Connecticut brought early New England roots to these areas
 - b. Settlement was also influenced by religious, military, and financial considerations
5. The South
 - a. In the 1770s, Quakers from Nantucket settled in Guilford and Onslow Counties in North Carolina
 - b. Other early settlements reached as far as the Yazoo River in Mississippi, and New Englanders were also drawn to Southern cities during later periods.
6. Religious Migrations
 - a. The Later Day Saint's migration is one of the most well-known, religiously-motivated resettlements; other groups traveled to areas in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois



Resources and Tips for Finding Records

1. Published genealogies and local histories often contain clues about the relocations of individuals that can help track families backwards through time and across geographic spaces.
2. Some authors of the above-mentioned records or individual ancestors might have left personal manuscripts that contain information not found in published volumes.
3. Land records are some of the most common documents used to identify migration patterns. Deeds were typically composed to identify the residence of the individuals contained within, and can mark moments of resettlement.
4. Veterans applying for pension compensation for their service often had to provide histories of their relocations from their place of service in order to prove their qualification.
5. The rise of DNA analysis in genealogical research has opened other avenues for proving migration theories. DNA results can be compared to potentially matching families of the same name whose New England origins have been proven to make connections when other records fall short.
6. U.S. Census records aid migration research in a number of ways from noting places of birth for individuals to recorded residences during previous years.
7. The Franklin Family Case Study
 - a. Census Records, published genealogies, poor lists, mug books, Civil War pension records, and other resources were employed to trace Lydia Franklin of Pennsylvania and New York to her New England Mayflower origins.
8. NEHGS Resources
 - a. Western Massachusetts Families in 1790
 - b. Early Vermont Settlers to 1784
 - c. Early New England Families
 - d. The Great Migration

Resources for New England and Other Migration Research:

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