



Scotland Emigration

Phillip Dunn

dunnpb@familysearch.org

Introduction

Scots have been immigrating to other parts of Europe and beyond since the middle ages. Over 2 million people left Scotland for North America, Australia and other colonies in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many people have also immigrated to Scotland looking for work and just for survival. Emigration between Northern England and Scotland was not unusual and would be the same between Ireland and Scotland.

Early Scottish Emigrants

Scots appear to have been among the earliest European travelers: the Norse saga of Leif Erikson recounts that on a voyage to what is now assumed to be North America around the year 1000AD, two Scots were the first to be sent ashore to explore the New World. Scots took part in the First Crusade in the 1090s and some may have survived to settle in Palestine.

Throughout the middle ages thousands of Scots emigrated, both temporarily and permanently, to England, Scandinavia, Poland and the low countries, as mercenary soldiers, peddlers, and merchants. In the seventeenth century the Scottish diaspora turned westward with the settlement of the Ulster plantation and the opening up of the New World.

Later Scottish Emigrants

Scots improved access to opportunities in Africa and the East Indies, in the form of appointments to the civil administration, missionary churches and, not least, the army and navy. Not all emigrants were voluntary. In the seventeenth century many Covenanters were banished to the North American colonies. Their descendants were joined by Jacobites captured in the 1715 and 1745 rebellions. Transportation to North America continued until 1776. Between the 1790s and 1868 many Scottish criminals, including radicals from the 1820 uprising, were transported to Australia.

Nineteenth and Twenty Century Scottish Emigration

The trickle of emigrants leaving Scotland became a flood from the middle of the nineteenth century until the third decade of the twentieth century. It is estimated that over 44 million emigrants left Europe between 1821 and 1915, over 2 million of them Scots. The most important factor in the advent of mass emigration was the development of the steam engine.

Steamships could cross the Atlantic in a week compared to a sailing ship crossing of six weeks. Rapidly expanding railway networks in Scotland and in North America allowed people to travel rapidly both to ports of departure and away from ports of arrival. Emigration was facilitated by specialist 'passenger line' steamship companies; newspaper advertising; the improvement in communications brought about by the creation of postal services and the telegraph; and British government encouragement via emigration societies.

What records and information can be located about Scottish Emigration?

- **Books**
- **Original records on microfilm**
- **Online Information**
- **Digital Records**
- **Civil Certificates**
- **Census 1841-1940**
- **Church**
- **Government**
- **Passenger Lists**

What records will show emigration into Scotland?

- **Denization and Naturalization**
- **Passenger Lists incoming passengers to the UK 1878-1960**
- **Civil Records Birth, Marriage and Death**
- **Birth Certificates after 1860 will show birthplace but also date and place of parents' marriage.**
- **Birth, Marriage, and death certificates will give parents names and can lead to other records in other countries.**

Where can these records be accessed?

- The National Archives at Kew, near London, England. (Denization)
- Ancestry (Passenger Lists)
- Findmypast (Passenger Lists)
- Thegenealogist.co.uk
- Familysearch.org (Passenger Lists, Census, Civil Certificates) Family History Library and Centres
- Scotlandspeople.gov.uk (Census and Civil Certificates)
- New Register House, Edinburgh (Census and Civil Certificates)

Other Records:

Probate

- Scotlandspeople.gov.uk pre-1926. (Indexes and images)
- Ancestry

Principal Probate Registry 1858-1966 in England 209,000 references to Scotland of Probate Wills and Administrations.

Prerogative Court of Canterbury around 1000 wills proved 1383-1858 of those in Scotland.

Records for emigration from Scotland

- The Clearances online database
- Scan.gov.uk emigration from Scotland 1850's
- Books: Scots to North America 1625-1825
- Scots-Irish Links by David Dobson books on Scottish emigration
- Findagrave
- Ancestry
- FamilySearch.org (Catalog and Find)

The popular image of the emigrant Scot is of a refugee from the Highland clearances, and in the first half of nineteenth century emigrants from the Highlands and Islands made up a disproportionate amount of the total number of people leaving Scotland. However, there were many reasons for emigration, and emigrants came from all areas of Scotland. In the later nineteenth century emigration to the USA was predominantly from towns, while Canada, Australia and New Zealand attracted tenant farmers and farm servants.

www.theclearances.org.

This website has articles, stories and genealogical information on Scottish people who were cleared off the Highlands.

Search by: People, Articles, Parishes, Ships, Ports, and Destinations

www.scan.org.uk

Highland and Islands Emigration Society

Between 1852 and 1857, the Highlands and Islands Emigration Society assisted almost 5000 individuals to leave western Scotland for Australia.

Although poverty and land hunger account for a high proportion of emigrants, many skilled and semi-skilled urban tradesmen were inspired to emigrate for periods of a year or less to take advantage of high wages at certain times in growing American towns. Indeed, it is estimated that by the end of the nineteenth century around a third of emigrants returned to Scotland sooner or later.

Scottish Emigration Publications:

David Dobson publications:

A Directory of Scots in Asia 1600-1900

A Directory of Scots in Australasia 1788-1900

Directory of Scots in the Carolinas, 1680-1830

Directory of Scots banished to the American Plantations 1650-1775

Directory of Scottish Settlers in North America 1625-1825

See a book or digital version through familysearch.org in The Catalog

Monumental Inscriptions:

www.candianheadstones.com

www.findagrave.com

400,000 cemeteries in over 200 different Countries

www.ancestry.com, www.findmypast.co.uk and FamilySearch.org

Emigration records to United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

Pedigrees that have been submitted

Census, Civil, Church, Land and Property Records