



Scottish Migration

To South Australia

There are few records in Scotland that list names of emigrants. There is no central emigration register kept in Scotland of the many Scots who left for North America and Australasia. The Colonial Office, based in London, was responsible for emigration in the 19th century and its records are held by The National Archives at Kew, London. They also hold the surviving outward passenger lists from 1890.



Laird's responsibilities

Under Scottish law the laird was obliged to support his tenants in times of hardship and in an era of growing farm mechanisation coupled with the trend towards sheep rather than crops, many estates had an oversupply of tenants and not much potential for employment. To relieve the burden of supplementing poor tenants with food or to allow for estate clearances it was cheaper for the laird to give his tenant and the family a one-way ticket to a distant place with a prospect of finding streets paved with gold! South Australia was not the only recipient of these folk, but the number was sufficient to create several Scottish enclaves such as Strathalbyn in the young colony. As an example, Gordon of Cluny sponsored 1700 of his tenants and their families in 1851 to leave his estates for Canada and Australia. James Matheson, the owner of Lewis (an island in the Hebrides) sponsored 3200 people in 1851–53 to relocate to Canada and Australia.

These programs were formalised in 1851 with the Emigration Advances Act, which allowed landlords to borrow from public funds to pay the cost of emigration of their tenants.

Emigration societies

Many emigration societies were established to relieve overpopulation in isolated regions with no industry and infertile land and inner city slums. Some were the incentives of those wishing to emigrate while others were benevolent and sought out deserving candidates.

The National Archives of Scotland holds the records of the *Highland and Island Emigration Society*, 1851–1859, set up by private subscription to alleviate destitution in the Highlands by promoting and assisting the emigration of Highlanders. Their passenger lists for the years 1852–1857 have survived and are organised by ship and by family and record the name, age and residence of each emigrant (Series HD4/5). No less than fifteen ships left for Adelaide, Sydney, Portland and Geelong in the period June to July 1852 under the auspices of the *Highland and Island Emigration Society*.

The *Scottish Archive Network* maintains a web site listing passengers in the *Highland and Island Emigration Society*. This database covers arrivals under the scheme for all Australian colonies. The page also has other interesting information about the scheme itself and how it operated including a copy of the Society's rules for 1851 and a map showing the areas where the Society focused its attention.

The web site called *Scotlands Family* maintains a number of links to online passenger lists that may prove useful.

While we have good records of those passengers who came out under the *Highland and Island Emigration Society* and know the vessels engaged, it is not the same for the emigrants assisted by their lairds, the lesser emigration societies, those who sought assisted passage through the usual channels, nor those who paid their own way or received fare assistance from a third party.

There were numerous emigration societies ranging in size and structure. Some were created for the purpose of securing a single vessel for their members. Others were charitable organisations that provided assisted passage to those who qualified according to their rules. The following is a sample of such organisations:

Abercrombie Emigration Society	Cathcart Emigration Society	Lesmahagow Emigration Society
Abercombrie Friendly Emigration Society	Deanston Emigration Society	Mile End Emigration Society
Abercombrie Street Emigration Society	Glasgow Canadian Emigration Society	Milton Dumbartonshire Emigration Society
Abercombrie Street Emigration Society 2nd division	The Glasgow Emigration Society	North Albion Emigration Society
Alloa Emigration Society	Glasgow Junior Wrights' Society	Paisley Townhead Emigration Society
Anderson & Rutherglen Society	Glasgow Loyal Agricultural Society	Parkhead Emigration Society
Balfron Emigration Society	Glasgow Senior Wrights' Society for Emigration	Rutherglen Union Emigration Society
Barrowfield Road Emigration Society	Glasgow Trongate Society	Spring Bank Emigration Society
Bridgeton Canadian Emigration Society	Glasgow Union Emigration Society	Spring Bank Emigration Society 2nd division
Bridgeton Transatlantic Emigration Society	Govan Emigration Society	St John's Parish Emigration Society
Brownfield & Anderston Emigration Society	Hamilton Emigration Society	Strathaven & Kilbride Emigration Society
Cambuslang Emigration Society	Hopetown Bathgate Emigration Society	Wishawton Emigration Society
Camlachie Emigration Society	Kirkman Finlay Society	
	Lanarkshire Emigration Society	

Records

Other references to individual emigrants, including correspondence, may be found scattered among a wide variety of records. The National Archives of Scotland has compiled a number of Source Lists that will make the search easier (Canada, Australasia and America).

Visit the *Scottish Archive Network* site for information on sources for emigration, passenger lists and emigration societies held in other archives.

The records of the Board of Trade, Colonial Office, Home Office and Treasury held by The National Archives at Kew contain a great deal of information on emigration, some of it more easily accessible than others. These include, for example, passenger lists (1890–1960), medical journals from emigrant ships, letters from intending emigrants and registers of troops shipped to all parts of the world. Many of these records are not indexed.

Large numbers of Scots travelled to the great southern and western ports of England to commence their sea journey. The receiving countries mainly hold these records. The National Archives at Kew holds passengers lists for departures 1890 to 1960.

The Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool was the main port of departure for emigrants from Britain and Europe for much of the 19th century. The Museum at Albert Dock in Liverpool acts as a clearing house for information on sources of emigration. They have built up a select library of emigration sources in published form, including copies of the indexes of assisted emigrants to Australia.

Internal migration

One cannot ignore internal migration, especially in Scotland.

Population pressures had been building up in the rural Lowlands since the mid-19th century and by 1800 rural parishes were facing the prospect that the growth in population as much as ten percent per decade might soon lead to famine. In the following 50 years that prospect was avoided by alterations to the pattern of ownership and hiring of labour.

The land was divided into medium and large sized estates and then carved up into individual farms. By 1830 sub-tenants had disappeared and the typical holding was 200 acres for large farms employing six men. Once the land was divided in this way there was no scope for creating more tenants. The only exception to this pattern was in Aberdeenshire where crofts formed the majority of holdings.

The hiring system led to labourers and ploughmen contracting themselves to a farmer for a period of six to twelve months and as the farmer had to provide board and wages he was unlikely to take on more labour than was necessary to do the job. When extra hands were needed at harvest time the farmer simply employed immigrant Irish labourers.

This led to the use of less labour in the rural lowlands and displaced farm labourers headed for the nearest town in search of work and accommodation. By 1851, it has been estimated that 15% of the population of

Peebles-shire had made its way to Edinburgh.

After 1840 the process of rural depopulation was accelerated by the introduction of labour-saving technology, such as the self-binding reaper and the potato digger.

Industrialisation led to the building of factories in towns and a move away from cottage industries and this added to the depopulation of rural areas too.

Highlanders moved for similar economic reasons even before the pressure of the Clearances. Often the relocation was temporary but gradually trended towards permanent.

Before the railways the main form of transport was by sea and thus migrants from Caithness, Orkney, Shetland and the northeast were channelled to the eastern Lowlands. Other Highlanders and the Hebrideans settled in the western Lowlands. Highlanders tended to settle in and around Edinburgh and Glasgow and as early as 1801 Highlanders constituted 30% of the population of Greenock.

Bound for Australia

In the first part of the 19th century the Scots showed a preference for North America but by the late 1830s this began to change.

The increase in the rate of emigration was rapid, for in 1833 only 253 emigrants sailed for Australia from Scottish ports (as against 5592 for the North American colonies, and 1953 for the United States). This represented a fifth of the total British emigration to the New World. This trend continued and in 1836 the numbers fell lower still when the total number of emigrants sailing for Australia was only 114.

The turning point came in 1837, when 1254 persons left Scottish ports for Australia. A number of factors contributed to the decline in North America as a destination— the NSW bounty system was in full operation by this time, political disturbances in Canada, and the financial panic in the United States, were also responsible.

In 1838 the flow to Australia increased, and no fewer than nine ships with 215 emigrants cleared from Scottish ports. In addition, 1054 unassisted emigrants took passage from Scotland, making a total of 3215 for the year.

In 1841, a record year, no fewer than 4376 assisted emigrants sailed from Leith, Dundee, and Greenock and its out ports.

By 1846, partly as a result of the improvement in business conditions in Scotland and the boost to the economy by large-scale railway building, emigration had slackened considerably, and only three emigrants to the Australian colonies are recorded for that year, as against 2700 to the North American colonies, and sixty to the United States. In 1848 the Land Board reported that it had experienced great difficulty in selecting suitable emigrants for Australia in both England and Scotland because of the demand for labour for railway construction.

The bulk of emigrants to South Australia came under the colony's assisted passage schemes. Others paid their own way or gained support from third parties.

Highland & Island Emigration Society passengers for Adelaide			
Vessel	Departure	Depart port	Pass
<i>HMS Hercules</i>	26 Dec 1852	Campbelltown	380
<i>Neptune</i>	7 Jun 1853	Liverpool	63
<i>Olivia</i>	30 Jul 1853	Plymouth	25
<i>James Fernie</i>	18 Aug 1854	Liverpool	29
<i>Royal Albert</i>	15 Aug 1855	Plymouth	64
<i>Switzerland</i>	16 Jun 1855	Liverpool	60

The South Australian schemes operated on and off from 1836 until 1886 with eligibility requirements varying over the period according to the needs of the colony.

The South Australian Colonisation Commission was established in London under Robert Torrens in May 1835 to secure colonists.

The project was dependent on a massive publicity program throughout Britain. This was achieved by the appointment of agents in most market towns, making contact with all the guardians of the poor and undertaking a massive publicity program using pamphlets, advertising, posters and lectures.

In 1840 an agreement was in place to manage emigration through the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission rather than using agents appointed by the South Australian government.

The concept of the land sales paying the passages of the workers soon collapsed and the Land Fund coffers were exhausted by mid-1840 causing the suspension of all assisted emigration.

Vessels from Scotland to SA with Assisted passengers

Ref	Vessel	Date	Departure
38/26	<i>Catherine Jamieson</i>	1 Dec 1838	Leith
39/02	<i>Indus</i>	16 Jan 1839	Dundee
39/16	<i>Welcome</i>	3 Apr 1839	Greenock
39/24	<i>Lady Bute</i>	18 Jun 1839	Greenock
39/32	<i>Ariadne</i>	13 Aug 1839	Greenock
39/34	<i>Georgiana</i>	28 Aug 1839	Dundee
39/38	<i>Glenswilly</i>	18 Sep 1839	Greenock
39/47	<i>Palmyra</i>	29 Oct 1839	Greenock
39/48	<i>Superb</i>	29 Oct 1839	Greenock
40/01	<i>Minerva</i>	2 Jan 1840	Leith
40/10	<i>India</i>	23 Feb 1840	Greenock
40/11	<i>Indus</i>	25 Feb 1840	Leith
40/15	<i>Tomatin</i>	10 Mar 1840	Greenock
40/17	<i>Planter</i>	14 Mar 1840	Leith
40/21	<i>Harvest Home</i>	29 Mar 1840	Dundee
40/40	<i>Culdee</i>	7 Jul 1840	Greenock
40/41	<i>Dauntless</i>	10 Jul 1840	Greenock
40/49	<i>Martin Luther</i>	29 Sep 1840	Greenock

Ref	Vessel	Date	Departure
40/64	<i>Birman</i>	7 Dec 1840	Greenock
40/66	<i>Helen Thompson</i>	12 Dec 1840	Greenock
41/09	<i>John Cooper</i>	8 Mar 1841	Greenock
41/11	<i>Edina</i>	8 Apr 1841	Greenock
41/25	<i>Benares</i>	27 Jul 1841	Leith
41/27	<i>Clydeside</i>	3 Sep 1841	Glasgow
40/38	<i>William Nichol</i>	7 Jul 1840	Greenock
41/39	<i>Alcmena</i>	8 Dec 1841	Leith
41/42	<i>King Henry</i>	20 Dec 1841	Greenock
42/05	<i>William Nicholl</i>	4 Mar 1842	Leith
42/15	<i>Iona</i>	28 May 1842	Glasgow
42/10	<i>Welcome</i>	1 Apr 1842	Greenock
43/15	<i>Camoena</i>	28 Aug 1843	Leith
44/03	<i>Symmetry</i>	21 Feb 1844	Leith
45/11	<i>Sans Pareille</i>	26 May 1845	Leith
53/08	<i>HMS Hercules</i>	26 Jul 1853	Campbelltown
66/08	<i>Prince of Wales</i>	17 Oct 1866	Dundee
79/12	<i>Oaklands</i>	23 Sep 1879	Greenock

The pre-1841 records often allow a researcher to cross the barrier created by immigration simply because they contain addresses of the applicants at the time of application!

Despite the collapse of the Land Fund, emigration continued with self-funded or sponsored emigrants. The problem of non-government involvement means we have fewer surviving records for this era.

Assisted emigration resumed in 1846 but the subsidy rarely ever was as generous again for such a broad spectrum of occupations.

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