NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL

MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 12

EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

Australia

The first emigrants to Australia were those forcibly transported in the late 18th century. The American War of Independence in 1783 meant an end to transportation to the American Colonies, and following the establishment of a Penal Colony at Port Jackson, New South Wales in 1788, Australia became the focus for transportation. Thousands were transported as convicts, and often their wives and families were sent out with them.

"Free settlers" such as farmers and traders also emigrated to Australia seeking new opportunities, or assisted by emigration societies encouraged by colonists to help with the labour shortage. This was especially the case in the mid-19th century during the Irish famine, and also large numbers of Scottish emigrants from the Highlands (1851-1859) were assisted by the Highland and Island Emigration Society. Emigrants made a variety of new lives for themselves in Australia and New Zealand; they found work on farms, in industry and building railways. Emigration to Australia peaked during the 1850s when many people hoped to find their fortune on the newly discovered goldfields.

Child emigration was undertaken by religious and charitable organisations with Canada and Australia being the main destinations. The Children's Friend Society, established in 1830, sent out its first party of child migrants to Australia in 1832. In 1844 the Ragged School Movement began, and sent out 150 children to New South Wales in 1849. In 1850 Parliament legalised Poor Law Guardians to fund emigration of children to the colonies. In the 20th century Australia became the main destination for child emigrants, attracting over 3,000 between 1947 and 1953, and was active in promoting the emigration of British families after the end of World War II (see Information Sheet 10: Child Emigration, for further details).

New Zealand

Emigration to New Zealand did not really begin until the 1840s when it became a British Colony. This was because New Zealand had never been a penal colony and had only been settled by Europeans in the 1820s. Immigration schemes began in 1840. The British Colonial politician, E.G. Wakefield, manager of the New Zealand Company (1839-1849) was opposed to offering free land to settlers, so instead advocated that land should be sold and the profits used to finance emigrants, to obtain labourers, who would have their passage paid for in return for their labour. (He had previously instigated this scheme in Australia a decade earlier.) Land was aggressively purchased from the Maoris to sell to the settlers, resulting in a number of wars between the settlers and the natives. Emigration escalated in 1861 with the discovery of gold, with New Zealand's population rocketing from 99,000 in 1861 to 256,000 in 1871.[1]

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[1] BENDER, Henning & LARSEN, Birgit. *Danish Emigration to New Zealand*. Denmark: Danes Worldwide Archives, 1990, p. 13.

From the 1870s onwards, a large number of public work projects to build roads and railways, required labourers who were mainly recruited in England and Northern Europe. They were given assisted passage, with as many as 46,000 arriving in 1874 alone. Immigration continued in lesser numbers until the economic depression in the 1890s and World War I. Travel subsidies were still available between both the wars and after Word War II into the 1960s, when a more cautious, limited immigration assistance was offered mainly to British subjects. Many emigrants to New Zealand travelled via Australia, so Australian records may be of assistance for research.

South Africa

In 1806 the Cape of Good Hope was ceded to Britain from Holland and Britons began to settle there. Despite armed clashes with the Boers and Zulus, an assisted emigration scheme to help settle the colony was introduced by the government in 1819; the first party of settlers arriving at Algoa Bay in 1820 after a three month voyage. From 1870 onwards emigration to the colony increased following the discovery of gold and diamonds.

Some settlers sailed from Liverpool to South Africa. The British settlers of 1820 are extremely well documented. The original records are in the Public Archives of the Cape Province, Cape Town, Republic of South Africa (Reference Vol. CO 6137 and CO 6138). Others sailed for Natal around 1850 and are documented in the Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.

Departure from Liverpool

Between 1830 and 1930 over nine million emigrants sailed from Liverpool bound for a new life in the New World of the United States, Canada and Australia. For much of this period Liverpool was by far the most important port of departure for emigrants from Europe, largely because by 1830, she already had well established transatlantic links for the import of cotton and timber. Liverpool was also well placed to receive the many emigrants from the countries of North Western Europe. Irish emigrants first crossed to Liverpool by steamship, while Scandinavians, Russians and Poles crossed the North Sea to Hull and travelled to Liverpool by train. Liverpool's share of the emigrant trade began to decline from the late 19th century as emigrants increasingly came from the countries of southern and eastern Europe. Some passed through Liverpool, but more sailed from the nearer German and Italian ports.

There were three main motives for emigration. Some of the emigrants were fleeing from the hardships of poverty and unemployment; this was particularly applicable to the 1,250,000 Irish who emigrated between 1845 and 1851 as a result of the potato famine. For Russian and Polish Jews, emigration was a way of escaping from political and religious persecution. Other emigrants were not suffering the hardships of poverty or the terror of persecution, but were attracted by the possibility of a higher standard of living.

Most emigrants usually spent between one and ten days waiting for their ship in a Liverpool lodging house. In the mid-19th century emigrants passing through Liverpool were liable to harassment and fraud by local confidence tricksters, who became known as "runners". Runners frequently snatched the emigrants' luggage and would only return it if the emigrant paid a large fee. In the late 1840s and 1850s, lodging houses were often inhospitable, dirty and overcrowded.

Until the early 1860s most emigrants left Liverpool on a sailing ship, and the voyage to Australia would take about 3-4 months. Most emigrants travelled in the cheapest class of accommodation, known as the steerage. This was similar to a dormitory with bunks down the sides and tables in the centre. It was frequently overcrowded with poor ventilation. Emigrating in a sailing ship could be unpleasant, particularly during a storm; it was only better in degree in the early days of steamships! Diseases such as cholera and typhus

frequently reached epidemic proportion as infection spread through the confined decks. Scores of emigrants died on this account.

The 1855 Passenger Act helped to improve conditions, laying down minimum standards for rations, space and sanitation. From the 1860s the situation began to improve as steam started to replace sail, and the steamship companies started to look after emigrants during their stay in Liverpool, with their representatives meeting the emigrants on arrival in Liverpool. The emigrants were taken to lodging houses which were frequently owned by the steamship companies, but delays still occurred and there continued to be complaints about treatment in Liverpool even in the early 20th century.

By 1870 virtually all emigrants went by steamship. Competition between the steamship companies helped, to some extent, to improve conditions for the emigrants. From about 1900 third-class cabins began to replace the steerage accommodation. Accommodation was still spartan, but it was a considerable improvement.

Passenger Lists

Official lists of passengers to Australia and New Zealand are generally to be found in the appropriate archives in the receiving country; viz. the National Archives in New Zealand, State Archives in Australia prior to 1901, afterwards in the National Archives.

No official lists of passengers exist in any local repositories in the UK (see Information Sheet 31, *Passengers on Board Ship*). The National Archives (PRO), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, holds Board of Trade passenger lists of vessels travelling inwards to and outwards from British ports, including Liverpool, from the 1890s to 1960 (BT 26, 27 and 32), the outward list BT 27 is now available online at www.findmypast.com, and some New Zealand Company records, 1839-1850 (CO 208). Inward passenger lists from 1878 to 1960 are also available online at www.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1518.

No permission, passport or application form was necessary, in order to emigrate from Britain or Ireland in the 19th century. Only when financial assistance, from or via the government was required, did application forms have to be completed. There were many assisted emigrants to Australia and New Zealand in the 19th century and early 20th century. Records of these schemes do not seem to have survived in the National Archives, except for the New Zealand Company for 1839-1850 (see above). However, some records may survive in the various Commonwealth archives.

There are no records of the shipping company hostels or boarding houses. If people stayed over a census night they might be recorded, but one would need to know the address of the hostel first.

Shipping companies who sailed to Australia and New Zealand for which the Maritime Archives & Library holds archive material

Black Ball Line of Australian Packets

The Liverpool Black Ball Line of Australian Packets was started in 1852 by James Baines & Co., to carry emigrants and cargo at the height of the gold rush to Melbourne. Its first large vessel, the *Marco Polo*, made a record-breaking round voyage in 1852 and the line's reputation for past passages, its large clippers, built by Donald Mackay at Boston, attracted national attention.

The gold rush traffic declined after 1856 and the line diversified by starting a service to Queensland and ran a joint service with the British and Australian Steam Navigation Co. In 1864 there was an unsuccessful attempt to merge with White Star and Gibbs, Bright & Co. of

Liverpool. A year later the firm was involved in floating as a public company the bank from which they had borrowed heavily. In 1866, in one of the worst banking crises of the 19th century, the bank suspended payment. The Black Ball Line was one of its major debtors and was forced into selling many of its vessels, relying on chartered ships to maintain its sailings. By 1871 the line had declined into financial ruin and there was an unsuccessful attempt to revive it in 1873.

Records

Mortgages, receipts, letters, etc., between James Baines, Thomas Mackay and John Bonus of London, re ownership of *Elizabeth Ann Bright* and *Spirit of the North*, and salvage claims on the former vessel, cargoes, etc., 1860-1866.

Mortgage, receipts, correspondence, etc., re purchase and operation of the *Sydney Dacres*, 1864-1866. Memorandum of Agreement, account sheets and receipts, re the *Castlemaine*, 1863-1867. Assignment of freights and policies of insurance, certificates of registration, mortgage, etc., re the *Marco Polo*. Also wages accounts, receipts for mooring, etc., for same vessel, 1862-1867.

Letters, receipts, Memorandum of Agreement, re the sale of *Mayflower*, 1862-1863. Indenture between James Baines and John Bonus, Shipbroker of London, re insurance on the *Netherby*; mortgage, receipts for various vessels and correspondence, newscuttings, etc., re wrecking of the *Netherby*, Melbourne, Australia, 1861-1866.

Assignment, accounts, letters, re sale of *Prince Consort*, 1860. Assignments and mortgage, re the *Runnymede*, 1864-1865. Assignment, mortgage, accounts and letters, re the *Duke of Newcastle*, 1862.

B/Baines   1860 - 1867   1 Box

Items in miscellaneous collections, SAS/DX:

Correspondence between James Baines & Co. and the Emigration Commissioners, re the outbreak of cholera on the *Conway*, 1854.

SAS/3/2/2 & DX/1017b

Ship's newspaper (photocopy) *Commodore Herald*, 1857, SAS/33E/1/2
Research notes including photocopies of logs and other records, business and ship details compiled by M.K. Stammers, author of *The Passage Makers, the History of the Black Ball Line of Australian Packets, 1852-1871* (Brighton, 1978).

D/MKS   c.1852 - 1871   2 Boxes

Shaw Savill & Albion Co.

Shaw Savill & Albion Co. was formed as a limited company in 1882 by the merger of Shaw Savill & Co. of London with Patrick Henderson's Glasgow-based Albion Line. Both ran sail services for cargo and passengers (mainly emigrants) to New Zealand. They joined forces to invest in steamers and to compete with the government-backed New Zealand Shipping Co., also launched in 1882. In the event, both lines shared the mail service and benefited from the development of the refrigerated meat trade. In 1883 Shaw Savill & Albion Co. ordered its first two steamers and negotiated with White Star to use three of its surplus ships. This link continued, with White Star taking a share of ownership. In 1910 Ellerman also took a major share but the line continued to operate separately until White Star was bought by Lord Kylsant in 1926, who then purchased the Ellerman share in 1927. As a result, Shaw Savill & Albion Co. was caught in the Kylsant crash and was acquired by

Furness Withy. In association with the British Maritime Trust, it was rebuilt and operated a fleet of cargo liners and a few large passenger liners until the early 1970s. In 1978 a New Zealand and Australian "combi" service to the West Indies was started with Bank Line. From 1980 to 1986 this was an all-container service using one last ship under Shaw Savill & Albion Co.'s colours.

Records

Sailing Cards, c.1870 in Gracie Beazley collection.

B/GBE

Official Guide and Handbook, 1910.
Sailing Bills, Timetables, 1880, 1901, 1911, 1938.
Passenger Lists and Logbooks, 1887, 1915, 1926, 1936.
Miscellaneous Voyage Ephemera, 1892-1901.

SAS/29   1880 - 1936   approx. 2 Boxes

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VINE HALL, N.J., *Tracing your Family History in Australia*. New South Wales: Rigby Publishers, 1985.

South Africa

CAFFREY, K. *Great Emigrations (3) - The British to Southern Africa*. Gentry Books, 1973.

SPENCER, S.O. *British Settlers in Natal - a Biographical Register, 1824-1857*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1987.

Useful Addresses

The National Archives (PRO)
Ruskin Avenue
Kew, Richmond
Surrey   TW9 4DU
Tel: 020 8392 5200
Fax: 020 8878 8905
Email: enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk
Website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

National Archives of Australia www.naa.gov.au

For details of convicts transported to Australia see the State Library of Queensland's new database- Convict Transportation Registers www.slq.qld.gov.au has been compiled from British Home Office (HO) records which are available on microfilm as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP).

Over 123,000 out of the estimated 160,000 convicts transported to Australia are recorded in this database. These include prisoners sent to New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), Moreton Bay (Brisbane), Western Australia and Norfolk Island. Also recorded are some ships which were bound for Gibraltar. The records cover the period of 1787 to 1867. The database also includes soldiers who had been court-martialled and sentenced to transportation. These "soldier convicts" may have been convicted in various British colonies including the West Indies, India, Pakistan and Canada.

Archives in New Zealand: www.archives.govt.nz

Information on passenger lists, fleet lists and ship arrivals can be found at:
www.theshiplist.com

The Highlands and Islands Emigration Society's passenger lists, 1852-1857, are available on line at www.scan.org.uk/researchrtools/emigration.htm

Find My Past   www.findmypast.com - a website launched by the National Archives with millions of records online. Anyone researching their UK ancestry and family tree can search census records and trace births, marriages and deaths. UK passenger departure lists 1890 to 1960 are being added to the site, currently 1890-1929 are available. The Indexes are available free but you need to buy credits to view the results.