



Assisted Emigration of Wiltshire Paupers 1834-1848

Nineteenth-century assisted emigration has long been associated with the phrase 'shovelling out paupers'. This view is challenged by the actions and attitudes of the sponsors of parish-assisted emigration who invested considerable time and energy in supporting the emigration of their poor.

Assisted emigration was conceived as a way of helping individual paupers and in a lot of cases whole families while simultaneously displaying a continued concern for the labouring population. Faced with the challenges of the New Poor Law, the farming class viewed assisted emigration as part of an older tradition of paternalistic help for the 'deserving poor'. Sponsors were well aware of the ambivalence of the subject and sought to develop a conscious ideology of assisted emigration, which focused on the hope of a better life, for those who left and for those who remained.

In the county of Wiltshire it was the responsibility of the local Unions to put forward candidates for assisted emigration mainly to Canada and Australia. Records exist in the National Archives at Kew in Class MH12. Several volumes cover up to about 4 years of correspondence each between the Poor Law Commissioners and the Local Poor Law Unions. They can be found first in County and then in Union order. The information found is variable and informative. The volumes also mention some paupers by name who were not part of the Government and Poor Law Commissioners Scheme but were still assisted by the parish to start a new life in the Colonies.

It is possible to extract names of individuals and families who were resettled but would be very time consuming. However there is an overview available that provides information from the Unions of the number of paupers who they assisted and from which parishes they came

from. Therefore the table below may assist someone in finding a lost individual or family that do not appear in the 1841 or 1851 census records. Please bear in mind that several parish returns for Wiltshire are lost for the 1841 census (see separate list for those parishes affected).

Parishes from which paupers were assisted to emigrate 1834-1848 extracted from tables found in the volumes as Appendices to Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners 1835, 1836 and 1847-1848

| DATE PERIOD | PARISH | NO. OF PAUPERS ASSISTED | DESTINATION |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jul 1838 - April 1839 | Bishopstone | 56 | Canada |
| April 1841 - January 1842 | Bramshaw | 6 | Canada |
| January 1842 - December 1842 | Bramshaw | 6 | Canada |
| 1842 | Brinkworth | 35 | Canada |
| 1843 | Brinkworth | 34 | Canada |
| 1847 | Brinkworth | 18 | Canada |
| 1842 | Broughton Gifford | 5 | South Australia |
| 1842 | Broughton Gifford | 7 | Canada |
| 1847 | Calne | 11 | Canada |
| 1843 | Charlton | 7 | Canada |
| July 1838 - April 1839 | Charlton | 7 | Canada |
| April 1839 - April 1840 | Chilton Foliat | 7 | South Australia |
| 1844 | Christian Malford | 9 | South Australia |
| 1844 | Collingburn Ducis | 16 | Canada |
| 1847 | Donhead St. Mary | 5 | Canada |
| April 1839 - April 1840 | Donhead St. Mary | 3 | South Australia |
| July 1838 - April 1839 | Donhead St. Mary | 18 | Canada |
| July 1835 - July 1836 | Downton | 220 | Quebec, Canada |
| July 1835 - July 1836 | Durrington | 36 | Upper Canada |
| July 1835 - July 1836 | Endford | 8 | Canada |
| July 1836 - July 1837 | Fittleton | 14 | Upper Canada |
| Apr 1840 - Apr 1841 | Great Bedwin | 5 | Australia |
| April 1839 - April 1840 | Lea | 6 | South Australia |

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|-------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| Apr 1840 - Apr 1841 | Little Bedwin | 6 | Australia |
| 1846 | North Wraxall | 7 | Canada |
| 1844 | Purton | 14 | Canada |
| July 1835 - July 1836 | Purton | 38 | Upper Canada |
| July 1836 - July 1837 | Purton | 21 | Canada |
| April 1839 - April 1840 | South Newton | 14 | South Australia |
| July 1835 - July 1836 | Whiteparish | 45 | Upper Canada |
| 1845 | Wootton Bassett | 7 | Canada |

This list is by no means a definitive one and is meant to provide a guide to finding potential lost ancestors. Perhaps the ships passengers lists could provide further information.

If anyone has further information they can add to this item please contact Teresa Lewis (Administrator) who will update this information. It would be great to name some if not all of these assisted paupers.