

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 13

Researching Ancestors from Abroad

The greatest movement of people into Norfolk from abroad was in the later sixteenth century when many Dutch and French speaking residents of the Low Countries fled to England because of religious persecution: at one time they may have made up a third of the population of Norwich. This page describes records held by the Norfolk Record Office relating to these 'Strangers' as well as immigration earlier and later.

1. Immigration in the Middle Ages

Lists of people who came to England with King William in 1066 are printed in A.J. Camp, *My Ancestors came over with the Conqueror* (London, 1990).

Information relating to the medieval Jewish community, including transcripts of known documents, is given in V.D. Lipman, *The Jews of Medieval Norwich* (London 1967). This is available in the Record Office searchroom. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290.

Records relating to aliens resident in England are held at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>>. These include references in the Chancery Miscellanea from the thirteenth century. From about 1400, acts of naturalisation can be found in the Parliament Rolls and the Patent Rolls. These have been printed by the H.M.S.O. and are available in good reference libraries. The names for the period, 1509-1603, have been indexed by W. Page, *Denizations and Naturalisations of Aliens 1509-1603* (Huguenot Society volume 8, 1893). Lay subsidy rolls of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, also available in The National Archives, list aliens among the taxpayers in each roll.

The only references to immigrants likely to be found in the Norfolk Record Office are incidental mentions of aliens in the records of the City of Norwich and of the boroughs of Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn (the latter are held in King's Lynn). Some of the references in the City of Norwich archives are printed in Hudson and Tingey, *Records of the City of Norwich* (2 volumes, Norwich 1906, 1910) available in the NRO searchroom. They include a return of Frenchmen and Scotsmen in Norwich made on the outbreak of war with these countries in 1542 (volume 2, page 170).

2. 'The Strangers' in Norwich

2.1 Registers of the Dutch church

- A register of baptisms, 1598-1619 is held by the British Library, London. A transcript is printed in *East Anglian Notes and Queries*, new series volume 12, 1907/8. A photocopy is available in the Record Office searchroom.

- A register of baptisms, marriages and burials, 1676-1879 is at the Guildhall Library, London. The Norfolk Record Office has a xerox copy: please order document MS 21490.

2.2 Registers of the French (Walloon) church

- Baptisms and marriages, 1595-1752 are held by The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>> and have been transcribed in W.J.C. Moens, *The Walloons and their Church at Norwich* (volume 1, London 1887-8). This book is available in the Record Office searchroom.

2.3 Other records in the Norfolk Record Office

- Books of Aliens among the Norwich City records including the Dutch and Walloon Book (document reference NCR Case 17d); available on microfilm.
- Militia and Muster Rolls, 1511-1630. Later ones include separate lists of Dutch and Walloons (document reference NCR Case 13a); available on microfilm.
- Strangers' Book, 1583-1600: see list MC 189; available on microfilm MF/RO 410/9.
- Records (not registers) of the Norwich French church: see searchroom list FC 29 for details.

2.4 Other records transcribed by W.J.C. Moens

- Moens' book (see section 2.B above) transcribes many other records relating to the 'Strangers' including: Return of members of the Dutch church, 1568; Return of Strangers in Norwich, 1622; names of aliens in lay subsidy rolls at The National Archives, London.

3. Later records of Immigration

W.A. Shaw, *Letters of Denization and Acts of Naturalisation for Aliens in England 1603-1800* (Huguenot Society) lists the names from Patent Rolls for this period.

A number of Protestant families left France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. They include well-known Norfolk families such as the Boileaus, the Columbines and the Martineaus. The pedigrees of these families are recorded in W. Rye, *Norfolk Families* (Norwich, 1913). Large numbers of people also fled to England from France at the time of the Revolution there in 1789. Regulation of aliens became a responsibility of the Home Secretary in 1793. Records of this department are held at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>>. They include Entry

Books, 1794-1909, Denizations and Naturalisations, 1786-1801, Returns of alien passengers on ships, 1836-69. Records of the Board of Trade, also at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), include Passenger Lists on incoming ships, 1878-1960.

During the First and Second World Wars citizens of enemy countries were interned. There are files relating to Second World War internees at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), London.

As immigrants tended to merge with the local population fairly quickly, information about later generations can be found in standard genealogical sources described in the Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 8 Tracing Your Family Tree.



If you need this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the County Archivist on 01603 222599 and we will do our best to help.

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