

Emigration Series: 2



Emigration To Canada

*... a Canadian likes his religion, and dislikes the Bostonnes;
he likes smoking tobacco and drinking rum, and dislikes
spending his money extravagantly. These appear to be his
chief partialities and repugnancies ...*

*Journal kept probably by an army surgeon named Samuel Holmes
in 1814 and 1815 (PRONI Reference T1970)*

Settlers of Ulster stock set up home in every Canadian Province and played an influential role in the national life of their adopted home. A considerable number of letters deposited at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) relating to the period 1815-45 are from emigrants writing from Canada. This is not necessarily confirmation, however, that the authors settled in Canada. Many Ulster people migrated to the United States via Canada. It was cheaper to travel to Quebec from the port of Londonderry than to go from Belfast or Liverpool to Boston or New York. The voyage was also usually shorter. The first large-scale settlement of Upper Canada came when Loyalists - many of them Scots-Irish - fled from the United States during the American War of Independence. A second wave of immigration, coming directly from Ulster, consisted of disbanded soldiers and small farmers hit by the agricultural slump which followed the Napoleonic Wars. Canadian territory in the post-Napoleonic war era was attractive in that there was less competition for it than for land on the eastern seaboard of the United States. One visitor to Canada in the early part of the nineteenth century commented that *'from the number of Irish and Scotch who have found their way into Canada by a detour through the States, for few or none have come direct, and from the satisfaction they express with their situation and prospects, one might be led to consider this country as the natural receptacle for our superabundant population. But the northern Irish only, chiefly from the counties of Down, Antrim, Londonderry, Tyrone and Donegal, have as yet, settled in the province ...'*

By far the largest collection of Canadian material in Northern Ireland can be found in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). These records cover a vast range of topics and illustrate the close relationship between Ulster and Canada for more than two centuries. There is a vast body of emigration material which includes shipping lists, school records, travelogues and regimental records. The easiest way to locate these records is to use the **Subject Index** in the Search Room. Also of interest is the publication *Northern Ireland & Canada: A Guide to Northern Ireland Sources for the Study of Canadian History, c.1705-1992* available for sale in PRONI.

Of particular interest to researchers interested in emigration to Canada are the passenger lists, the most important of which are listed below:

Three volumes of passenger lists, February 1847-1849, February 1850-August 1857, March 1858-July 1867, of J & J Cooke, shipping agents, Londonderry. The Canadian destinations are Quebec and St John's, New Brunswick, with details also being given for Philadelphia and New Orleans. **D2892/1/1-3**, see also **MIC13**.

Typed transcripts, compiled in 1984, of notices which appeared in Canadian local newspapers, mostly the New Brunswick Courier, 1830-46, and the Toronto Irish Canadian, 1869. The notices include queries as to the whereabouts of various persons who had emigrated from Ulster to Canada and the United States. **D3000/104/1-10**

Typed transcripts, compiled 1984-5, of notices inserted in Canadian local newspapers by passengers arriving from Ireland. The newspapers were the New Brunswick Courier and the Saint John Morning News, covering the period 1828-58. There are also summaries based upon these notices which list the passengers involved, their ports of embarkation in Ireland and the dates of arrival in Canada. **D3000/104/11-13**

List, 1833-34, of emigrants from Coleraine parish, Co. Londonderry, giving information on the names, ages, religion, townlands of residence and date of departure of those involved. The destinations are also given and include St John's, New Brunswick and Quebec. **T768/1**

Passenger list, 11 May 1847, issued by A.C. Buchanan, Chief Agent for Emigration at Quebec, giving the date of sailing, the names of the ships involved, their point of departure and the number of passengers carried. **T3168**

Many of the emigration archives that are deposited in PRONI have been indexed and either transcribed or digitised and form part of the Emigration Database of the Centre for Migration Studies which can be accessed in PRONI and at certain public libraries.

