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BRITISH ALIENS
IN THE UNITED STATES
DURING THE WAR OF 1812

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INTRODUCTION



THE RECORDING of ships' passenger lists was not required by law until 1819, and prior to that date only scattered lists of immigrants exist. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that another source can supply information concerning thousands of British subjects—Canadian, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and West Indian, most of them immigrants—who were residing in the United States during the War of 1812. On June 1, 1812, President Madison sent his war message to Congress, which on June 18 declared war. Subjects of Great Britain were henceforth enemy aliens and were to be dealt with in accordance with an Act of July 6, 1798, and a supplementary Act of July 6, 1812.

Accordingly, notice was promptly given that all British subjects in the United States were to report to the marshal of the state or territory of their residence "the persons composing their families, the places of their residence and their occupations or pursuits; and whether, and at what time, they have made the application to the courts required by law, as preparatory to their naturalization." It was ordered that notice was to be published in the newspapers and that reports by the aliens were to be sent by the several marshals to the Department of State.

The returns, long in the custody of that department, were many years ago deposited in the National Archives and appear to be complete, with the exception of some returns of Pennsylvania and some *detailed* items of Connecticut, although there is a complete list of all British aliens in Connecticut. Extensive supplementary material from the Navy Department (now in the National Archives) deals with British aliens living in or near New York City and a few others who applied for indulgence when ordered inland from coastal towns.

Normally a return gave the name of the alien, aged fourteen or more, years of residence in the United States, number of persons in the family, place of residence and status. Happily, many returns supply further data of no little genealogical value—country of origin, for example.

Massachusetts returns are especially useful, for they usually give month and year of arrival in the United States, names and ages of wives and children, with an indication as to whether they were born

in this country or abroad, names and ages of other occupants of the house—relatives, children of the wife by a former marriage, apprentices or servants. Sometimes height, complexion, and color of hair and eyes are indicated.

Naval returns for New York City and vicinity regularly include physical descriptions, while street and often street number are supplied in the case of residents of the city.

For some states additional material is found beyond what was required in the returns: aliens in New Jersey usually reported the exact date of arrival in the country (day, month and year); in Pennsylvania, likewise, the exact time of arrival is stated, while residents of Philadelphia indicated street and number; reports from Virginia, Georgia and Louisiana in numerous instances include physical descriptions; North Carolina, Ohio, East Tennessee and Missouri returns very frequently indicate country of origin; in the case of passengers and crews of two cartels allowed to proceed to the West Indies, ages, physical descriptions and places of birth are stated.

Special attention was paid to half-pay British officers (some of whom had served in the Revolution), persons who derived income from property in Great Britain, or who failed to report or desired to leave the country, and individuals of bad character.

This material is not only of value for genealogical research. It is clearly of importance for economic and social history. For example, the great number of weavers, spinners, carders and makers of cotton machines throw light on the rapid growth of the cloth industry, notably in Rhode Island, New Jersey and sections of New York. Many British subjects were engaged in the gunpowder business, in Delaware particularly. Almost all crafts and employments are represented: some of the aliens were artists, engravers, printers, silver-smiths, gunsmiths, cabinetmakers, schoolmasters, ministers of the Gospel, to mention only a few occupations.

To facilitate location of the original returns, at the end of each item, where possible, the date of the return by the Federal marshal is noted. Naval records for New York City are indicated by the word "Navy" at the end.

The transcription of the records from microfilm has been extremely difficult because of the many hands involved in the returns. Sometimes the writing is miniscule; frequently a marshal or deputy wrote many different letters which look alike (failure to dot the letter *i* adds to the burden); spelling is often erratic (some used the British *our* and others the *or*). Where a name does not appear certain a question mark has been appended.

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- Pine, William, age 46, 3 years in U.S., wife & 8 children, 248 Pearl St., NYC, merchant (17-22 Aug. 1812)
- Pinkerton/Pinckerton, James, age 23, 2 years in U.S., 15 Henry St., NYC, bricklayer (28 July - 2 Aug. 1812); 5ft. 8in., age 23, sandy complex., brown hair, black eyes, Henry St., brick (Navy)
- Pinkey, Robert, 5ft. 10in., age 36, dark complex., black hair, grey eyes, Pearl St., tanner (Navy); Pinkney, Robert, age 36, 2 years in U.S., 142 William St., tanner (28 July - 2 Aug. 1812)
- Pinsam, James, age 31, 2 years in U.S., 3 in family, Geneva, Ontario Co., butcher (21-26 Sept. 1812)
- Pinser, Thomas, age 42, 8 years in U.S., wife & 2 children, Newburgh, Orange Co., farmer, applied 19 Feb. 1810 (14 Aug. 1812)
- Pitcairn, Robert, age 24, 18 years in U.S., Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co., carrier (12-17 Oct. 1812)
- Planter, Anthony, age 36, 16 years in U.S., wife & 2 children, City of Albany, blacksmith, applied 5 Aug. 1812 (17-22 Aug. 1812)
- Plasket/Plaskit, William, age 69, 4 years & 10 mos. in U.S., wife, Bowery, NYC, cordwainer, applied 16 July 1810 (3-8 Aug. 1812); 5ft. 7½in., age 70, dark complex., dark hair, dark eyes, Mulberry St., shoe (Navy)
- Plomedon, Ennis, 5ft. 7½in., age 38, dark complex., brown hair, blue eyes, Greenwich St., labourer (Navy)
- Plume, John, age 45, 4 years & 9 mos. in U.S., wife & 2 children, 259 William St., innkeeper (3-8 Aug. 1812); 5ft. 10in., age 45, dark complex., brown hair, brown eyes, William St., tavern-keeper (Navy)
- Pluncket/Plunkitt, Brien/Bryan, age 23, 2 years in U.S., Republican Alley, NYC, carpenter; 5ft. 6in., age 23, dark complex., brown hair, dark eyes, Read St., carpenter (Navy)
- Pocock, John, age 40 on 11 Nov. next, 10 years in U.S. on 8 Nov. next, wife & daughter, Whitestown, Oneida Co., tinplate worker (29 Sept. & 28 Sept. - 3 Oct. 1812)
- Pogue, William, 5ft. 7in., age 27, light complex., brown hair, brown eyes, Broome St., labourer (Navy)
- Pollock, Samuel, 5ft. 9in., age 25, light complex., light hair, blue eyes, Liberty St., grocer (Navy)
- Pollock, William, 5ft. 8½in., age 30, light complex., light hair, blue eyes, grocer (Navy)
- Polson, Daniel, age 36, 8 years & 11 mos. in U.S., wife & 3 children, Onondaga, Onondaga Co., joiner & carpenter (5-11 & 14-19 Sept. 1812)
- Pool, Edmond, 5ft. 6in., age 35, fair complex., brown hair, grey eyes, Chapple St., carpenter (Navy)
- Poole, James, 5ft. 7in., age 28, fair complex., light hair, grey eyes, Harman St., labourer (Navy)
- Pootly, John, age 24, 4 years in U.S., NYC, cooper (10-15 Aug. 1812)
- Popham, Thomas F., age 49, 2 years in U.S., 231 Church St., NYC, mason (20-25 July 1812); 5ft. 7in., age 50, light complex., brown hair, grey eyes, Church St., mason (Navy)
- Poppleton, Thomas H., 5ft. 4½in., age 47, fair complex., brown hair, hazel eyes, Bowery, surveyor (Navy)
- Port, George, age 25, 12 years in U.S., wife & child, Johnstown, Montgomery Co., farmer (5 Nov. - 9 Dec. & 17-19 Dec. 1812)
- Port, John, age 59, 14 years in U.S. wife & 2 children, Johnstown, Montgomery Co., farmer (11-17 Aug. 1812)
- Port, William, age 31, 7½ years in U.S., wife & child, Johnstown, Montgomery Co., farmer (6 Oct. - 4 Nov. & 9-14 Nov. 1812)
- Porter, Alexander, age 29, 3 years in U.S., wife, 11 Jefferson St., NYC, grocer (17-22 Aug. 1812); 6ft. 1in., age 30, brown complex., sandy hair, blue eyes, Jefferson St., grocer (Navy)

- Pierson, Thomas, age 38, 11 years in U.S., wife & 5 children, Baltimore, skin dresser (1-8 Aug. 1812); naturalized (11 Oct. 1813)
- Pilgrim, Nathaniel, age 35, 15 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, plane maker (11 Oct. 1813)
- Pine, Rare, age 47, 11 years in U.S., Washington Co., house-car-penter (8-22 Aug. 1812)
- Platt, John, age 38, 2 years in U.S., wife & 2 children, Baltimore Co., cotton machine maker (1-8 Aug. 1812)
- Poor, Thomas, age 47, 12 years in U.S., wife & 2 children, Baltimore, cabinetmaker (11 Oct. 1813)
- Poppleton, Thomas, age 47, 2 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, land surveyor & draughtsman (10-18 July 1812)
- Porter, John, age 36, 2 years in U.S., wife & 3 children, Baltimore, weaver (11 Oct. 1813)
- Porter, Robert, age 34, 4 years in U.S., Baltimore, weaver (11 Oct. 1813)
- Powell, Patrick Bourk, age 47, 3 years in U.S., wife & child, Baltimore Co., storekeeper (8-22 Aug. 1812)
- Powers, James, age 26, 7 years in U.S., Baltimore, storekeeper (10-18 July 1812)
- Powers, Michael, age 27, 5 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, weaver (11 Oct. 1813)
- Pryor, Edward, age 45, 7 years in U.S., wife & 3 children, Baltimore, dyer (25 July - 1 Aug. 1812)
- Quie, Samuel, age 27, 2 years in U.S., Baltimore Co., weaver (11 Oct. 1813)
- Quinn, Patrick, age 24, 7 mos. in U.S., Baltimore, student of divinity (18-25 July 1812)
- Raney, David, age 31, 9 years in U.S., wife & 4 children, Baltimore, shoemaker (11 Oct. 1813)
- Ready, David, age 43, 5 years in U.S., Baltimore, weaver (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reardon, Morrice, age 49, 23 years in U.S., wife & 7 children, Baltimore Co., shoemaker (25 July - 1 Aug. 1812)
- Reder, Arthur, age 50, 12 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, maltster (16 Sept. - 31 Oct. 1812)
- Reed, George, age 27, 5 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, brush maker (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reed, Henry, age 25, 2 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, whitesmith; applied Mar. 1812 (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reed, John, age 30, 3 years in U.S., Baltimore, gardener (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reed, Patrick, age 26, 9 years in U.S., Baltimore, drayman (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reeve, John, age 35, 28 years in U.S., Frederick Town, blacksmith & farmer (8-22 Aug. 1812)
- Reeve, John, age 37, 10 years in U.S., Baltimore, blacksmith (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reeve, Thomas, age 36, 3 years in U.S., Baltimore, storekeeper (2-12 Sept. 1812)
- Reeves, Thomas, age 43, 8 years in U.S., Baltimore, grocer (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reily, Patrick, age 30, 9 years in U.S., wife & 2 children, Baltimore, drayman (11 Oct. 1813)
- Reyburn, Thomas G., age 22, 2 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, clerk (18-25 July 1812)
- Ricard, James, age 46, 8 mos. in U.S., wife & 3 children, Baltimore, tailor (18-25 July 1812)
- Rice, Charles, age 36, 8 years in U.S., wife & 4 children, Funks Town, mason (8-22 Aug. 1812)
- Rich, Thomas, age 63, 24 years in U.S., Montgomery Co., farmer (22 Aug. - 2 Sept. 1812)
- Ringrose, John W., age 22, 14 years in U.S., wife, Baltimore, tailor (11 Oct. 1813)