

Immigrants to Fairfield County Introducing a Series for Post-colonial Families

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When the Revolutionary War ended and travel was safe again, a flood gate opened and immigrants streamed into the new United States of America looking for freedom and opportunity, perhaps fleeing from poverty and persecution. The new arrivals provided labor and new businesses, new religions and new languages to the established towns. They made an indelible mark on the county and the country.

This new series provides an opportunity for descendants of these immigrants to publish short sketches about their immigrant ancestors and the families they raised here. It will be an attempt to represent the many ethnic groups who came here and to acknowledge their contributions to the wealth and history of the county.

Goals

The goal of the project is to produce sketches about immigrants who settled in Fairfield County at any time after the Revolutionary War. A sketch is a short essay containing biographical information about the immigrant, spouse(s), parents and children. We will publish the sketches in *Connecticut Ancestry*. We prefer to focus on families that have not been previously published, but we are interested in sketches for as many families as possible.

Besides providing information about individuals, this project may attempt to draw conclusions about the immigrant experience. Therefore, we will be interested in knowing whether the family lived in neighborhoods with others from the same country. What church did the family attend? Were they skilled workers or day laborers? Did they do some kind of work that was traditional in the old country? Did they become citizens?

Content

Sketches included in this project will contain relevant information but will not be heavy on details. For example, there might be a statement that a man served in the Civil War. The man's unit would be included, but not every bit of action that the unit saw, since this information is readily available elsewhere. A sketch is not intended to be a lengthy narrative about the family—most sketches are two to four pages long. It should give the basic information but also be a guide to sources of additional information on the subject family.

How to write and submit a sketch

See below for general submission guidelines. The first sketch in the series, found on the following pages, can serve as an example. A guide detailing the various sections can be found on our Web site at www.connecticutancestry.org/projects. Final page formatting will be done by the editor, but please adhere to the order of information as shown in the guidelines. Documentation of facts is *essential*. Use the footnote feature in your word processor to add citations for all facts. Completed sketches can be emailed to editor@connecticutancestry.org. Feel free to write us with any questions about this project.

Items to include (in this order):

- Immigrant name and vital statistics
- Spouse and vital statistics
- Short section about life in the old country (if information is available). This might include reasons for leaving, family left behind, etc.
- Section on immigration and naturalization
- Section on life in the United States and Fairfield County including work life, and experience as an immigrant. This section can include census, land, probate and church records. It can include information from newspapers and city directories.
- List of children and their vital statistics

We realize that all of this information may not be available for each immigrant.

Immigrant statistics from the 1850 census: Our challenge

These statistics from the 1850 US census show the number of people living in Fairfield county who reported they were born in foreign countries.¹ Earlier counts would have far fewer people from Ireland since they began immigrating in numbers during the Great Famine in the 1840s. In another 50 years we will see many immigrants from Italy, Russia and many other countries that are not shown here and the proportions from each country will be very different.

<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u># Individuals</u>
Ireland	4,325
England	692
Germany	300
Scotland	170
Canada	109
Wales	48
France	32
Poland	7
Spain	6
Africa (1 specified Cameroon)	4
Sweden	4
Denmark	2
Portugal	2
Switzerland	2
Norway	1
China	0
Italy	0
Japan	0

So, all of you who have immigrant ancestors, start researching or get out your notes and write a sketch. We want to hear from you.

¹ Ancestry.com search for residents of Fairfield County (exact location) and a birthplace in the countries shown (exact location). The count of the hits was used in the table.