

# MOVING TALES: PUSH, PULL, AND THE POWER OF PEERS IN MIGRATION

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Migration research always yields a fascinating story, but it is also a vital tool when solving a genealogy problem. These problems are essentially problems of identity or relationship, and understanding migration principles is vital in reaching a sound conclusion.

## Migration Research Answers ...

Where did they come from? Where did they go? What is their migration story?		
“Birds of a feather flock together”	People move with people they know to join people they know. These <i>peer</i> groups form your research subject’s F.A.N. club.	Compare your subject’s known peer group with that of the corresponding peer group in the hypothesized place of origin. If they are not similar, you are probably dealing with two different people.
“A body at rest tends to remain at rest and a body in motion tends to remain in uniform motion unless acted upon by an outside force”	People are unlikely to leave their home unless circumstances <i>push</i> them from that home or they are <i>pulled</i> towards a better situation.	You cannot determine relationships unless you identify the place of origin or subsequent destination. The <i>push-pull</i> forces in effect provide location clues and will help you find all essential records.
“Water flows downhill”	The likely migration route and means of travel were probably the safest and most efficient possible. Still, events occurred that delayed or stopped travel. Do not forget that migration sometimes reversed.	The written migration story is more than an interesting tale. Like a proof argument, it lays out facts, inferences, and conclusions clearly. When the <i>push</i> , <i>pull</i> , and <i>peers</i> make sense, the genealogical conclusion is probably valid

## Push-Pull Forces

Reason for Migration	Relevant Records
<b>Economic opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Search for land is a primary motive</li> <li>■ Also consider: fishing and other maritime activities, mining and quarrying, logging industries, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deeds and tax records</li> <li>■ Proprietors’ records and town minutes</li> <li>■ Applications for grants patents, surveys</li> <li>■ Maps</li> <li>■ Census records</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Peers tend to be family and neighbors, but may be fellow fishermen, miners, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plat the neighbors in the known location and in the hypothesized original or subsequent location to verify peer group</li> </ul>

<p><b>Religion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dissidents are <i>pushed</i> from one area and settle together in a new region</li> <li>■ New location becomes a <i>pull</i> for others of the same religion</li> <li>■ Congregation members may follow their minister</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Church registers and membership lists</li> <li>■ Church minutes</li> <li>■ Certificates of removal and admission</li> <li>■ Court records</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Peers are fellow congregation members</li> <li>■ The minister's history may provide clues to original and subsequent migration locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If little information is found on your subject, trace fellow congregation members and compare peer groups in hypothesized original or subsequent location</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disasters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Affected people are <i>pulled</i> to the nearest safe location</li> <li>■ Return to the disaster region when safe, or settle in the safe location, or settle in a new location with their peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Histories of the region</li> <li>■ Newspapers</li> <li>■ Manuscripts</li> <li>■ Family records</li> <li>■ Academic studies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Peers are neighbors, friends, family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The immediate safe location may be the peer group's pre-migration location</li> <li>■ Affected persons may relocate with family</li> <li>■ Look for resettlement patterns based on occupation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Military service and armed conflicts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Armed conflicts halt all migration except disaster migration</li> <li>■ Soldiers experience more geographic locations and may be <i>pulled</i> to the new location after the conflict is over</li> <li>■ Forts provide protection, improved infrastructure, and induce soldiers' families and support groups to migrate</li> <li>■ From its start, the country was cash-poor and land-rich, so certain areas were awarded to soldiers or their heirs for service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Military histories and service records for individuals and unites</li> <li>■ Pension and bounty land applications</li> <li>■ Surrendered warrant files</li> <li>■ Statutes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In addition to family, friends, and neighbors, the peer group will include fellow soldiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigate records of fellow soldiers for clues to your subject's origin</li> <li>■ Records of fellow soldiers are especially important if your subject has "disappeared"</li> </ul>
<p><b>Forced migration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All <i>push</i>, no <i>pull</i></li> <li>■ There is no reverse migration for this group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Government records</li> <li>■ Statutes and decrees</li> </ul>

## Steps in Migration Research

- Define the problem
  - Is the fundamental problem one of identity or relationship?
  - Is your goal to tell the migration story?
- Learn the lay of the land
  - Study the local history and geography
  - Identify the probable *push-pull* forces
- Do genealogy!
  - Locate all relevant records – especially those that might show previous residence or birthplace
  - Identify and research all members of the *peer* group (F.A.N. club)
- Put it all together
  - Analyze and correlate all information and evidence
  - Were you able to reach a conclusion?
  - Share the conclusion via narrative, proof statement, or map

## A Few Historical Examples

- Economic opportunity
  - California Gold Rush (1848-1855)
  - Homestead Act claims (1862-1988)
- Religion
  - Roger Williams and followers from Massachusetts founded Rhode Island (1636)
  - Nantucket Quakers migrated to North Carolina (1771) and later to Indiana (1806)
  - The Mormon Exodus to Salt Lake City, Utah (1846-1869)
- Disasters
  - The 1816 “Year Without a Summer” was the last straw for many Vermont and New Hampshire residents. It came on the heels of the War of 1812 and the spotted fever epidemic that peaked in 1813. Many residents migrated to New York or Canada.
  - The 1906 San Francisco earthquake left between 250,000 and 300,000 people homeless. About 75,000 left the region immediately and many never returned.
  - The “Dust Bowl” drought years of 1930-1936 sent millions of people migrating in search of work. Most of these moved west.
- Military
  - The failed 1690 Canada expedition resulted in the 1727 creation of the nine “Canada Grant” towns for heirs of those soldiers. Each new town was paired with the original soldiers’ residences. Although many heirs sold their rights, this pairing will suggest the earlier residence.
  - The “Narragansett Townships” were created to compensate heirs of veterans of King Philip’s War (1675-1678).
- Forced migration
  - About 10,000 Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia (1755-1763)
  - About 100,000 Native Americans were forced from their homes in the southeastern states and relocated in present-day Oklahoma (1830-1850)

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