

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

### MIGRATION AND THE 1881 CENSUS INDEX: A WILTSHIRE EXAMPLE

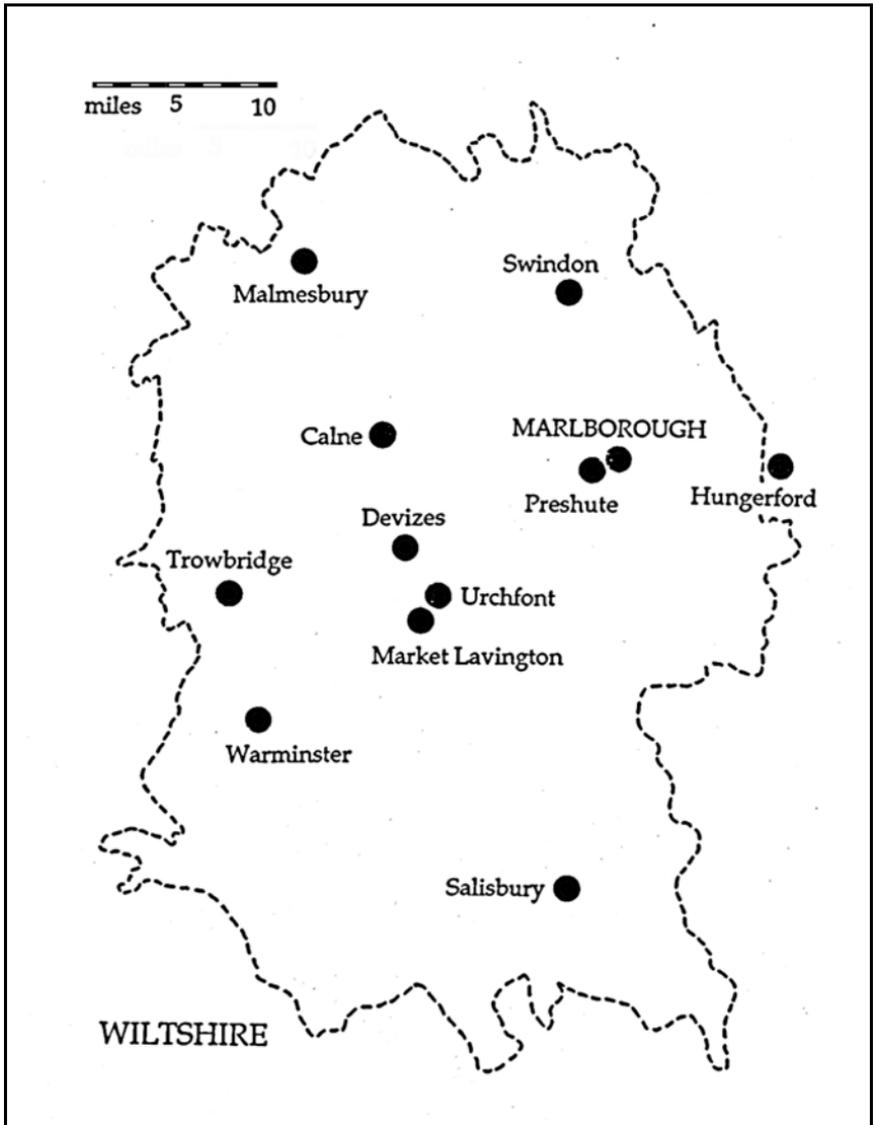
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Readers of *Local Population Studies* will probably be familiar with the use of the nineteenth-century census enumerators' books for the study of migration, but with few exceptions these have been studies of in-migration, or migration between small local areas. My particular interest is in small towns in general, and Marlborough in Wiltshire in particular. The town received its first charter in 1204, and remained a borough until 1974. Its location within the county and relative to other parishes and towns discussed in the text may be seen in Figure 1. Marlborough was something of a backwater between the coming of the turnpike roads (which destroyed its role in providing overnight accommodation) and the days of mass commuting. In the second half of the nineteenth century the only large employer was Marlborough College, and the economic life of the town was otherwise sustained by its role as a market, retailing and social centre, and by a few small industrial enterprises. Although Marlborough was only a small market town, with a population of just over 3,000, any search for the many people who migrated from the town during the nineteenth century would previously have been time-consuming and in many cases impossible. However, with the publication of the 1881 Census Index for England and Wales, it is now possible to study out-migration much more readily.

The Index has been produced through a collaboration between the Public Record Office, where the census enumerators' books are deposited; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), who have a doctrinal interest in genealogy; and the Federation of Family History Societies. As well as the separate county indexes, two national indexes have been produced, one of surnames and one of birthplaces. It is this birthplace index which makes possible the study of out-migration in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The index has been issued as a series of microfiche, and also as a set

Figure 1 Map of Wiltshire, showing the location of Marlborough



of CD-ROMs. An advantage of using the microfiche version rather than the CDs to obtain details of all those born in any locality is that on the microfiche all these people are listed in one sequence, whereas with the CDs each county must be searched separately. On the other hand, the CDs have the advantage

if one is studying persons residing in a locality who were not born there. Those contemplating using the 1881 index to study nineteenth-century migration would be well advised to explore both sources. The present study was originally undertaken using the microfiche version of the index.

The birthplace index is in alphabetical order of places within each county, so all the people listed as having been born in Marlborough should appear under 'Wiltshire', no matter where in England or Wales they were residing on census night. It must be remembered, however, that any secondary source is only as good as its input, and for various reasons (mainly to do with errors or ambiguities in the original enumerators' books) not all the entries for people born in a particular locality will be found in the correct place in the index. For instance, a number of people born in Malborough, which is near Kingsbridge in Devon, appear in the Wiltshire listing. Some of these may be mis-spellings of 'Marlborough', whereas others may indeed have been born in Malborough, but their entry has strayed into the wrong county. With Marlborough a further difficulty arises because of variant spellings, both for Marlborough itself and also for the other Wiltshire town of Malmesbury. Entries such as 'Marlbery', 'Marlsboro' or 'Malbridge' could refer to either town. Luckily problems such as these, which are also present for users of the CD version of the index, cause less difficulty for the researcher who does not intend to locate the whereabouts in 1881 of everyone alive in England and Wales who was born in one particular place. However, any sample of persons drawn may include an element of bias if the birthplace name is more likely to be corrupted the further from his or her birthplace that a person is living.

A systematic sample of 100 people stated to have been born in Marlborough was taken from the total of 4,669 unambiguous entries in the Wiltshire section of the birthplace index, by taking alternatively every 46th and 47th name, whether or not the person was living in Marlborough at the time of the census. Note was also taken of all the other people living in each sample person's household. Details of the households can be obtained either from the CD or the microfiche. Using the CD, the individual's name, birthplace and birth year are entered, and a list of individuals matching these criteria are presented. When the particular individual sought is identified, full details of the household in which they are residing may be called up on screen. If using the microfiche version, the PRO reference (e.g. RG11/1306 f.127 p.33) is used to locate the household in the 'as enumerated' set of microfiche. The sample used on this occasion is too small to enable more than very general statements to be made, but has been chosen as a quick way of assessing the usefulness of the index to out-migration studies. Covering over 4,600 individuals, the total list of Marlborough-born persons in England and Wales is significantly greater than the 3,343 people enumerated in the town in 1881, which of course includes many people who were not born there. This suggests a high level of out-migration, but it must also be noted that the majority of those living in Marlborough in 1881 were not born there, indicating that the town had, or had had, a particularly high turnover of population in the late-nineteenth century.

**Table 1 Analysis of movers and stayers by age and sex**

Age	Movers			Stayers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14	4	4	8	9	7	16
15+	18	39	57	8	11	19
Total	22	43	65	17	18	35

**Note:** 'Movers' are persons who were born in Marlborough but not resident in Marlborough in 1881; 'stayers' are persons who were born in Marlborough and resident in the town in 1881.

**Source:** *National index to 1881 British Census*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [CD-ROM] (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1999).

The assumed high level of out-migration is borne out by the sample (Table 1). Out of the 100 people born in the town, only 35 were still living in Marlborough (the 'stayers'), while the other 65 had migrated (the 'movers'). However, within the under-15 year age group, 16 were stayers while only 8 were movers, suggesting that most migrants moved before they settled down and started to produce children. Three of the child movers had migrated only as far as the adjoining parish of Preshute (see Figure 1). One of them had been admitted (with his six small brothers and sisters) to the Marlborough Union Workhouse which happened to lie in Preshute parish.

If the movers aged 15 years and over had indeed migrated in early adulthood, it would be expected that many of their spouses and most of their children would have been born outside the town. Nineteen of the movers had married and had at least one resident child. In only one case was the other spouse born in Marlborough, and in only two cases were the spouses born in other Wiltshire parishes (Table 2). Both of these were people who had moved from Marlborough to the nearby town of Pewsey, where all but one of their children had been born. One other man had married a Dorset woman, but both their resident children had been born in Marlborough, and they had moved only to Preshute. The remaining 15 of these 19 cases can be divided into two almost equal groups. In seven cases all or almost all of the children had been born in the same county as the non-Marlborough spouse, while the other eight cases, the children had been born in different counties from both their parents. For the former group it can reasonably be assumed that the Marlborough person had moved to the locality where his/her spouse was born, and it should be possible to find the relevant marriages, but in the latter group there is no way of knowing where the couple were living when they married. Eight of the sample movers were children of all ages living with both parents. In four of these families one of the parents had been born in Marlborough; in one case one of the parents was born in Market Lavington,

**Table 2** Marriage patterns of movers and stayers with resident children, 1881

	Moved from Marlborough	Stayed in Marlborough	Total
Marlborough-born spouse	1	2	3
Other Wiltshire-born spouse	2	3	5
Spouse born outside Wiltshire	16	0	16
Total	19	5	24

**Source:** See Table 1.

about 14 miles away; but in the other three families neither parent nor any other child had been born in Marlborough, suggesting a few highly mobile families with no local connections. In no case were both parents born in Marlborough.

Of the stayers, only two were heads of household, while another six were the wives of heads. The two men had married women from nearby parishes, and all the women had married Wiltshire men, mainly from Marlborough and nearby villages, and in any case no further than Urchfont which is 11½ miles away, and the only locality beyond the hinterland supplied by Marlborough market. All the children of these couples had been born in Marlborough or within a few miles of the town. Twenty of the stayers were children of all ages living with both parents. In three of these cases both parents were born in Marlborough, and in another ten both parents had been born in Wiltshire (including Marlborough). One other father had been born in Hungerford, just over the Berkshire border and only nine miles away. One head of household told the enumerator that he did not know where he had been born, and since his surname was Smith his origin would be very difficult to find. In the other five families, one of the parents had been born in north Wiltshire, and the other in five different counties, but in all cases all of the children were Marlborough born. This supports the conclusion inferred from the movers, that most people moved before marriage rather than after.

How far did the movers move? About one quarter (17 out of the 65) were still living in Wiltshire. All but four of these were living with other family members, and in every case most of the rest of the family were also Wiltshire-born. The two servants, one living in Calne and the other in Trowbridge, were resident in families with mainly Wiltshire-born members. Only the theology student at the Missionary College in Warminster was living in a household composed largely of people from other counties.

Nine of the movers were living in the adjacent county of Berkshire. The largest group, 18 in all, were those who had moved to London, although since this was before the formation of the County of London in 1885, they were scattered

over the counties of Middlesex (11), Surrey (3), Essex and Kent (2 each). Another migrant had also moved to the rural Surrey parish of Egham. Twelve other movers were to be found in the south of England: four each in Somerset and Gloucestershire, two in Hampshire and one each in Oxfordshire and Cornwall. Three movers had migrated to eastern England and five to the Midlands and North.

Unlike the movers who had stayed in Wiltshire, those who moved into other counties were far less likely to be accompanied by other family members born in Marlborough, again suggesting that those who were most mobile were likely to have moved early in their adulthood. The type of settlement lived in by the movers also tends to differ between those living in Wiltshire and those outside. Those in Wiltshire were living in villages or small towns, and none had moved to Swindon or Salisbury, the two largest towns in the county. By contrast, those who moved out of Wiltshire tended to favour the larger towns and cities of the counties in which they were to be found. As well as the 18 in metropolitan London, six of the nine Berkshire residents were living in Reading, all of those in Gloucestershire were either in Bristol or Cheltenham, and others had moved to Southampton, Birmingham and Manchester.

In analysing the moves of Marlborough people, it must be remembered that it is only the counties of England and Wales have been included in the index. Anyone moving to Scotland or Ireland, or emigrating abroad, will not be recorded. By contrast, all people living in England and Wales on census night are recorded, so that the numbers and percentages of immigrants to and emigrants from any locality cannot be compared unless it is certain that no-one has moved into the locality from outside England and Wales.

Since employment opportunities in Marlborough were limited largely to retail and service occupations, a different occupational distribution is to be expected between those who moved and those who stayed. Table 3 includes all those who were economically active, together with the spouses of married women in the sample. The table again indicates that the Wiltshire movers were more like the stayers than the other movers. This is particularly true in the 'labourers and domestic' category. Those in this category who stayed in Marlborough or only moved within Wiltshire were mainly men working as farm or domestic servants, or as agricultural labourers. By contrast, almost all the long-distance movers in the same category were female domestic servants; only one was a male general labourer. Of those who had moved outside the county, far more were likely to be working as tradesmen and craftsmen. The people at the bottom of the economic spectrum seem not to have had the enterprise to move away to find work, while anyone who had learnt a craft or trade was more likely to find employment in a more economically active area. It must be remembered, however, that there is no way of knowing from the census data whether the job that a mover was doing in 1881 was the same as the job he did before he left Marlborough.

This pilot study has concentrated on the town of Marlborough, and it is impossible to make any broad comments on the conclusions reached without

**Table 3 Occupations of movers and stayers, 1881**

Occupation	Stayed in Marlborough	Moved within Wiltshire	Moved outside Wiltshire	Total
Professional	1	1	3	5
Trades and crafts	6	2	21	29
Retail	2	0	3	5
Labourers and domestic	9	6	15	30
Total	18	9	42	69

**Source:** See Table 1.

comparing the results with those of other localities. Migration patterns at this period were almost certainly different between town and country areas, and different again between towns, particularly those of different sizes. It will be instructive to compare the migration data from Marlborough with those of the other leading Wiltshire towns. Swindon was a dynamic industrial town, and would certainly have had far more in- than out-migration. Trowbridge was also industrial, but its economy may have been less vibrant than Swindon's. Salisbury was the ecclesiastical and social centre of the county, while Devizes showed signs of continuing prosperity, although its textile trade had declined. The migration patterns of all these towns would surely be different, and it is possible that a study of a larger sample of towns from the 1881 index would give results which would enable the economic history of any town to be understood through its migration pattern alone. Use of the microfiche and CD versions of the birthplace index in conjunction should enable a full picture of the migration profile of any locality to be fully evaluated.