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Leaving Albion.

British Emigrants to the United States in the Great Migration Age

di Mario Varricchio

«British emigration was one of the greatest movements of humanity in modern history»¹.

The Great Migration Age witnessed the arrival on American shores of an impressive number of “new immigrants” (mainly newcomers from southern and eastern Europe), but also saw the sustained and massive inflow of members of the older immigrant groups. This was certainly the case with Britons. Indeed, the American Bureau of the Census figures reveal that close to 2,300,000 English, Scottish and Welsh people entered the United States from 1880 to 1930, about 1,100,000 of whom in the 1880s-1890s and 1,200,000 in the first three decades of the twentieth century². Most of them were workers, both skilled and unskilled, who crossed the Atlantic to seek their fortune in the land of promise. This paper focuses on the phase preceding the actual act of leaving and the patterns of emigration followed by those Britons who decided to move abroad. It draws upon interviews with British emigrants to the United States collected in the 1930s by the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) fieldworkers³ and, mainly from the 1990s, by the staff of the National Parks Service and Oral History Office of the Ellis Island Museum in New York City⁴. Some of the FWP “life histories” are accessible online through the American Memory project of the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), while others are preserved in the archives of historical societies as well as in the Manuscript and Special Collections Departments of various libraries and institutions scattered throughout the U.S. In contrast, the Ellis Island Oral History Project accounts are all to be found at the Ellis Island Museum Oral History Office. The FWP and Ellis Island testimonies analysed in this essay illuminate key aspects of the first stage of all emigration ventures that are well worth investigating. The interviews deal with the motivations that spurred British emigrants to leave, the main factors on which their decision was based, the way their move was prepared and actualized, the hopes emigrants cherished before departure and the long-term strategies they devised prior to taking a step meant to transform their entire life and that of their families. The accounts also reveal the existence of transnational connections between American and British shores, and shed light on the functioning of personal networks, which the emigrants exploited to carry out their plans.

Pushed and pulled

British emigrants chose to move not only to satisfy material needs but also to respond to personal aspirations, or at least this is the way they often articulate their decision to go. However, it appears to be clear that the most important reasons triggering emigration were economic in character and that, except for very few cases, the other factors involved generally provided an *additional*, rather than an essential, inducement to leave. It is also evident that the “push” factor, though normally constituting the necessary background to the move, would not have been a determinant by itself in prompting emigrants to make such a weighty decision. The magnetic pull that America exerted through the flow of information they received from various sources played a crucial role, along with the supportive networks of which potential emigrants could avail themselves⁵. Emigrants, as scholars have demonstrated, were rarely to be found among the poorest members of the working-class⁶. Those who left could usually count on resources that enabled them to undertake the trip (during which they did not earn any wages), show American officials at arrival that they possessed a certain amount of “landing money” and meet the first expenses necessary to settle in the new country, though they often benefited from the economic assistance of relatives abroad. However, even if they were not destitute, many of the Britons who emigrated did so because of pressing economic needs, in a word because they were, were becoming or risked becoming poor. This is the case, for instance, with James Harris, who left England in 1883, when he apparently was only able to earn £10 a year⁷, or with Captain Allan Leight, who after his father’s death left school and started working as an assistant cook on a fishing boat to help his mother support the family⁸. Thomas Sargent’s departure was also essentially due to financial straits. The post-World War I period, in fact, was proving particularly harsh for a machinist in Scotland (as well as for many other categories of workers), and his family was having difficulties in making ends meet⁹. Similarly, the particularly profound economic crisis in Scotland after 1921 “expelled” Jack Carnegie’s father from his native country¹⁰. The sectors worst affected by the post-war depression were shipbuilding, the iron and steel industries and the coal mines. Moreover, in some areas of the country farming and fishing were going through a period of economic malaise, and the jute industry in Dundee was also hit hard by the recession. As a matter of fact, Jack Carnegie’s father was a victim of the «plummeting world demand for jute after the war»¹¹. A number of interviewees forecast a gloomier future at home than abroad, where they thought they could put their skills and capabilities to good use. Indeed, as in the case of Harry Norbury¹², some mention dissatisfaction with their job or working conditions, in other words bleak prospects, as the main reason for leaving. Financial difficulties and dissatisfaction with one’s native land was normally accompanied by a sense of attraction to the New World. In fact, for a number of emigrants the lure of America seems to have been the decisive factor prompting their move. Robert Reese, for example, did not like being a quarryman, and his parents envisaged a brighter future for him across the Atlantic¹³, while going to America had always been ‘the one thought’ in Mr “B”’s mind¹⁴. In the case of Henry Cohen more opportunities also meant the chance of attaining an education in America, rather than just a good-paying job¹⁵. Clearly, as we shall also point out below, many emigrants saw the United States as a modern, mobile and meritocratic society, as a place where individuals could not only be successful in economic terms but also realize their higher aspirations, in short as the opposite of the traditional and hierarchical world from which they came. The fact of believing they would have more opportunities in America always played a crucial role in the emigrants’ decision to move, particularly when their financial conditions and prospects at home were not unsatisfactory. Indeed,

a few of the informants could easily have stayed in Britain but chose to better their lot in the New World. In their case, therefore, emigration was mainly due to the pull America exerted. Edward Brown, for instance, was working as an accountant in London when he elected to leave¹⁶, while Sidney Pike's father sold his business before moving, and after only a few years in New York was able to open three bakeries in the Bronx¹⁷. The case of William Whytock is also worth mentioning. He had learnt the trade of carver, gilder and woodworker in Edinburgh, and had prospects of gainful employment. Yet, in 1884, he was convinced to move to Texas by an immigration agent's subtle rhetoric: «he made the States sound so fine, so wonderful, that we were in a hurry to start»¹⁸. Actually, in the 1870s and 1880s some of the trans-Mississippi states – Kansas, Minnesota and Texas among them – conducted massive campaigns in Britain to attract colonizers by advertising the advantages of their lands in newspapers and posters and, above all, by employing hundreds of emigration agents¹⁹. Since they were mainly paid on commission, it is not surprising that they used a variety of propagandistic techniques (lectures, persuasive advertising, personal interviews) to entice possible emigrants²⁰. Sometimes, as in the foregoing example, the agents also accompanied the emigrants overseas²¹, thus further reassuring them of the truthfulness of the information they had been provided. Many emigrants adopted a sensible and practical approach to leaving. They viewed the United States essentially as a place where they could find a steady, good-paying job, improve their standard of living and be rewarded for their efforts. This relatively moderate, but all the same powerful and enduring version of the American myth was based on a distrust for the possibility of self-fulfilment at home and the vision of the New World as a *better* place to live. The case of Arnold Ambler is emblematic. He decided to move despite being given a far from glowing portrait of America by a woman who had already been there, which incidentally shows that sometimes people were *discouraged* from emigrating (by return migrants or otherwise). Yet, Ambler did not like his job, judged his prospects in Yorkshire to be dismal, and thought that America would offer him more chances for advancement. What clearly emerges from this testimony is that America's lure was based on an essentially *comparative* element. In other words, even when it was viewed more realistically, most people still thought of the United States as a land promising a rosier future:

this Mrs. Wilson [...], she said, «I've been to America», very much businesslike, «I've been to America. You think the streets paved with gold». She says «You'll find your mistake». I said, «I don't care, it couldn't be worse than this»²².

Moreover, the U.S. was seen as a land where an enterprising person could start from scratch and be the maker of one's own destiny. As the informant puts it: «Let's start afresh and see what happens»²³. In some cases, British emigrants embraced a stronger version of the myth of America. Actually, during the nineteenth century the image of the United States as the land of plenty was fashioned and strengthened over time through many channels, and firmly implanted itself in the mind of potential emigrants. No doubt, the positive image of America was partly created by the letters received by those who had been left behind and by the cultural impact of returned migrants. As we shall see below, the FWP and Ellis Island informants were clearly affected in their decision to move by the news coming from overseas and the stories told by those who had been to America. Furthermore, a significant role in the construction of the myth was also played by the wealth of informative and promotional literature to which potential emigrants had access, such as guidebooks or newspapers and magazines discussing emigration issues²⁴. The testimony of Arthur Dickson allows us to gauge the force of the American myth. Dickson does not actually

remember the reason why his family emigrated (he was too young at the time of departure). Interestingly, though, he rationalizes the decision to move by borrowing a common explanation from the collective memory, as his use of epistemic modal *must* clearly shows. The myth of America, ingrained in the social imagination, becomes a substitute for individual memory. Thus, even if life was fairly good at home (the informant's father had a good job), it would certainly have been better in America. In this case it also appears evident that the persistence of the informant's mother in advocating emigration was due to the fact that she had relatives abroad with whom she wanted to reunite, that is to say that there was an emotional element involved in the act of leaving:

I, my, I had some of my relatives on my mother's side, they came through America. And writing, they must have been writing letters back to my parents about how beautiful America was. My mother was [the] adventurous type. My father, he had a good job. He was a drum maker making instruments for the, you know, for bands. And he didn't want to come. But, of course, my mother persevered, and we came over to America in May the 28th, 1925²⁵.

Finally, there were emigrants who apparently entertained a highly distorted vision of life in the New World. Indeed, a fabulous image of the United States emerges in the testimony of a number of FWP and Ellis Island informants. Whether they fully believed it or not, it was through such mythical image that they articulated their idea of America, in particular through the recurrent streets-paved-with-gold topos. Gladys Lambert's family, for instance, saw America through distorted lenses, reflecting the very positive description of it provided by some of their relatives who were already living overseas: «Oh, we heard a lot about it. The land of plenty full of gold. Oh, because I had aunts and uncles over here»²⁶. Once in America, reality flew in their face. Patrick Peak, for example, expected «to pick up gold practically on the backyard lots», but then found out America was a place where one had to work hard to make a living²⁷. Similarly, Jack Carnegie said his family «thought there would be gold in the street», though reality proved somewhat different²⁸. Ettie Glaser also comments on the mythical image of America circulating among potential emigrants. This, she observes, was the result of the delusive flow of information absorbed from afar:

Uh, and well what you hear from America when you're, when you're far away, far, far away, miles across the ocean. That America's the land of the gold. Land of opportunity and the streets are paved with gold. Those were the words that we used to hear. But, of course, it's not true. We all know that²⁹.

In this connection we need to remember that, though more realistic or even unfavourable accounts of the conditions overseas were available to potential emigrants, their desire for a better future could operate as a selective filter and encourage them to embrace the myth. Indeed, often people at home clung to unrealistic hopes for their life in the new country, and such hopes «turned the limited possibilities for personal improvement via migration into a secular religion, into an unfounded belief in unlimited opportunity»³⁰. This inevitably clashed with reality, as the two examples provided above clearly show. For the informants who emigrated as children America could also be «fabulous», but in a different sense. Admittedly, some did not know much about the place to which they were going. This was the case with William Rogers for example – «I knew nothing about it, I didn't know, America was just a name to me, you see»³¹, and the same was true for Frances Oakley³². However, others held an image of the New World based upon the opposing myths of the Wild West and the dynamic metropolis. In the case of the interviewees who had left well into the twentieth century, this image was also being powerfully transmitted through the magic of cinema. Henry

Cohen, for example, pictured America as either like Texas or New York, as a place populated by cowboys or a futuristic bustling city³³, while Sidney Pike and his siblings were excited to leave because they imagined the United States to be the land of cowboys and Indians³⁴. Political ideals rarely feature in British emigrants' accounts as the reason for departure. When this is the case, they do not usually represent the main motive to go. There are exceptions, however. Tom Thomazin's father, in fact, seems to have been primarily motivated by a democratic aspiration. He deeply resented the class-based social structure in England, in particular the landowners' attitude towards him and his workers. In this case the traditional status differences of the Old Country are implicitly contrasted with the presumed social mobility characterizing the New World:

That's why my father left England. There a farmer was up on the top notch. His children had private teachers. Father used to go out and build on their farms. He took other men out with him. They would have father come in and eat dinner in the kitchen with the servants and the other men had to eat their lunch out in the cold and drink water out of the dikes. Father didn't like that and sometimes he would beg of the servants to give him something to take out to the men outside. Then he would get in trouble. He thought those working for him should have the same right and privilege as he did. The other men were treated like tramps. That's why he left England³⁵.

Therefore, beside being imagined as the land of plenty, the United States was viewed, by some emigrants more than by others, as the land of freedom. Undoubtedly, one of the elements constituting the myth of America in the imagination of European emigrants was the conviction that people in the New World enjoyed social equality and political democracy³⁶. Emigration might also be prompted by personal motives. Mr Glasson, for example, left Britain when his widowed father decided to remarry because he refused to live under the same roof with his step-mother³⁷. Actually, as Dick Hoerder interestingly observes, key aspects of the potential emigrants' personal and social life – such as inheritance claims, impending military service or childbirth out of wedlock – could increase an individual's disposition to leave and, above all, affect the timing of departure. Indeed, many autobiographical accounts reveal a connection between emigration and the death of a family member or the remarriage of a widowed parent, as this «imposed on the family a restructuring of established relationships. In particular, the death of a mother or the arrival of a stepmother seems to have influenced departures [...]»³⁸. Also, sometimes it was essentially the pull of blood ties that lay behind the emigrants' move overseas. Once all or most family members had relocated abroad, it might become an emotional necessity to join them there. That is why Cyril Cheeseman's parents apparently left England:

I have often wondered why they came. I mean, after all, my father in his fifties and my mother was three years younger. She was probably forty-nine or fifty and why? They had been satisfied all these years in – in England. I have no idea why – why they wanted to come to this country, except to be with part of their family³⁹.

It might also happen that emigration was the unintended consequence of human action. The case of Thomas Cowley is atypical for more than one reason. Mr Cowley was living a perfectly happy life in England, where he was earning a good salary as a mine foreman. At 51 years of age (normally, emigrants were young people or adults in the prime of life) he went to North Dakota to visit an uncle, who asked him to operate his mine while he recuperated from a serious illness. Later on Mr Cowley was persuaded – unfortunately, the testimony does not clarify on which grounds – to send for his family and eventually settled in America. This was something he would regret, because he had no desire to live

abroad and strongly wished to return home⁴⁰. Lastly, it is worth noting that the FWP and Ellis Island informants occasionally couch the story of their emigration in terms of spirit of adventure and personal will, while the prime motives behind the move – revealed by information they supply in other parts of their accounts – are of a different nature. Henry Safford, for example, portrays himself as a man «fired with a desire for adventure and to see the world»⁴¹. However, on closer examination, one realizes that his decision to emigrate was consequent on his father's death and the fact that his mother was left with the responsibility for looking after eight children. Actually, though the decision to leave was undoubtedly the result of a combination of several factors, in most cases the emigrants who mention curiosity, the wish for change and desire for adventure as the primary reasons for their departure are probably downplaying the difficulties they were encountering at home, and recasting their move as voluntary and empowering. They retrospectively reinvent the motives for their departure «along stereotypical lines in which adventure and tradition [are] articulated at the expense of broader structural features of the economy»⁴². Indeed, rarely does a person undertake such a momentous act as emigration to indulge an adventurous disposition. As James Jasper rightly emphasizes, emigration is not a *normal* action: «it is dramatic, unsettling, and costly. Because academic researchers have stressed the “networks” through which immigrants come to the United States, including family ties and ethnic communities, they have downplayed just how traumatic an upheaval immigration can be, even for an energetic teenager»⁴³.

A pondered move

Before departure, emigrants assessed their situation at home, weighed up the information they received from people who lived or had lived abroad, and considered the risks of the move as well as the advantages they would derive from the existence of personal connections in America. The positive and sometimes idealized image they had of the New World did not push them into making rash moves. On the contrary, they made rational choices and devised sensible emigration strategies. Whether they were primarily driven by necessity or aspirations, emigrants usually based their final decision to leave on the specific information they collected about the United States and the image of America they formed in their mind⁴⁴. This was fashioned, as we have seen, through various channels of communication, such as newspapers, advertisements and word of mouth. Particularly important were the letters sent home by relatives and friends that had moved overseas, which were obviously deemed to be «inherently more credible, coming from known persons and including as they did a wealth of individual and local detail couched in familiar language»⁴⁵. Actually, letters are by far the most frequently mentioned source of information on America in the FWP and Ellis Island oral histories. Students of British emigration to the United States are at odds with regard to the predominant tone of the expatriates' correspondence. Charlotte Erickson observes that letter writers did not often encourage emigration, even when they appeared to be satisfied by their situation in the new country⁴⁶. Similarly, David Gerber underlines the “cautious” character of emigrants' correspondence, observing that letter writers pointed out both the gains and losses of their decision to leave. There was a good motive behind such prudence, which must have helped many potential emigrants to set themselves realistic goals. In fact, even when the assessment of their move was clearly positive, «few failed to acknowledge that emigration was not without its costs. Accuracy aside, they wished that those who might follow them and might end up having a negative experience would not

blame the writer for misleading them»⁴⁷. By contrast, other authors have highlighted the generally positive or even extolling character of the correspondence coming from abroad⁴⁸. The evidence from the corpus of interviews analyzed in this work supports the latter interpretation. Indeed, the correspondence received by the FWP and Ellis Island informants seems to have invariably praised the advantages of the new country. The following sentence from George Nunn's interview – «we had been receiving letters [...] telling us of the better wages and conditions that existed in the United States»⁴⁹ – provides a clear example of this. Another case in point is offered by the testimony of Michael Donegal, who was told that a carver would quickly make a fortune in the U.S. Interestingly, Donegal also mentions the friction with the Irish male members of his future wife's family as a factor urging him to leave, confirming the fact that those who moved often had more than one reason for doing so⁵⁰. The consistently-positive picture painted in the letters from America mentioned by the informants, it is worth noting, may depend on the nature of the sources, namely on the fact that in the FWP and Ellis Island interviews we hear the voice of people who eventually decided to leave for America, not the voice of those who did not move or were discouraged to go. Thus, the accounts may reflect the experience of those emigrants who mainly received good news from abroad or whose attention was struck more by the positive than the negative sides of life across the Atlantic. Indeed, the letters informants were sent may have included cautious statements but, even if this was the case, they seem to have been disregarded. The other source of information about America which the Ellis Island and FWP interviews mention fairly often is the stories told by returned migrants. The testimony of Arnold Ambler discussed above shows how returned migrants could also provide a sceptical or even negative portrait of America (and how this could go unheeded). Yet in most cases returnees seem to have induced the informants to leave rather than to stay. For example, when she went back to England for a visit, Doreen Stenzel's aunt talked the informant's father into emigrating⁵¹. George Wray was earning a good salary for a young man in his native country, but the tales of his employer, an Irish grocer who had already been to the U.S. and wished to cross the Atlantic again, made George form a romanticized picture of America that proved decisive in making him choose emigration⁵². Finally, when Harry Norbury's uncle, who was serving in the U.S. army, visited his relatives on furlough during World War I, he told them about his nice home and good job overseas, two things to which a British working-class boy legitimately aspired⁵³. In this case, word of mouth and written communication complemented each other. Actually, before leaving, the informant exchanged various letters with his uncle discussing job openings; eventually, Harry was told to go to Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, where a friend of his uncle would help him find employment⁵⁴. This last example clearly shows that a crucial factor making many people eventually choose emigration was the existence of personal networks. As already noted, personal connections were the most important channel through which information about life in America was obtained. In other words, it was a function of networks to provide information on the job market – particularly on the availability of specific jobs, which might be secured prior to departure – as well as on life in America in general, which aided potential emigrants to decide on the move. As we have seen, Michael Donegal was assured he would find profitable employment in America. The information he was given turned out to be correct, since he went to work in the Vermont stone quarries, where the skills of Scottish masons were in high demand. Furthermore, Elizabeth Nimmo's recently-widowed mother knew she would be employed as the custodian of a Methodist church when she emigrated, a job that had been found by the informant's uncle living in America⁵⁵, while Jennie Jacobson's father decided to leave because his brother had a successful business in Chicago and

could put him to work. This, it should be noted, was an unusual occurrence, since emigrants could seldom be directly hired by a relative⁵⁶. Along with the likelihood or virtual certainty of obtaining a job, it was the possibility of relying on kith and kin in a foreign land that proved decisive. It was easier for emigrants to muster the courage to go when they knew they would not have to face difficulties alone. Arthur Dickson's parents had relatives in the U.S. with whom they corresponded, and this was the ultimately determining factor for their departure, while Robert Smalley's father left not only because America offered greater opportunities but also because he had a brother there who paved the way for him⁵⁷. Actually, normally emigrants chose their specific destination (the state and town in America where they would relocate) on the basis of personal networks: as we have noted, for instance, Michael Donegal went to a stone-quarrying centre in Vermont and Harry Norbury to Beaver Falls, in Pennsylvania. Furthermore, networks proved fundamental for leavers when it came to obtain lodging, which would enable them to effectively start their life abroad. Knowing that a home had been found for them in America or that they would be helped in finding one made a difference. A case in point is provided by Millvina Dean's family, who chose Kansas as their destination because they had relatives and a place to stay there⁵⁸. In sum, emigrants went where relatives or friends had gone before, where they were told they would find employment or where a job and a place to live had been secured for them. As Angela McCarthy observes,

[t]he guidance and presence of a range of networks of family and friends already settled abroad [...] enticed intending emigrants. These intimate connections offered critical practical assistance in the form of lodging and housing, as well as emotional succour, as apprehensive, wide-eyed newcomers confronted disorienting elements of their new homes. Likewise, these durable transnational ties [...] provided vital financial support, with migrants moving to the United States more inclined to make use of such assistance, while migrants selecting the British World claimed government subsidies⁵⁹.

Interestingly, sometimes the information on America provided by personal connections overseas could be exaggerated or even twisted to meet the emotional needs of the people who had already left, rather than to help those who were considering going. This should not come as a surprise, since emigrants lived an emotionally transnational life that often generated homesickness and alienation, which they tried to overcome also by recreating part of their lost world in the new environment. Edward Brown, for example, was "persuaded" to leave by his brother⁶⁰, while the actual reason why Ken Johnson's relatives painted a rosy picture of America emerged after the informant's move:

My dad was a carpenter who worked in a tram factory in England [...]. And one of my mother's sisters, my Aunt Nell, lived in Aurora, which is near Chicago here, and her husband was my Uncle Joe who was a, is a Congregational minister. And they told my folks about how good things were over here and convinced them, uh, what it really turned out to be was my aunt was quite lonely over here⁶¹.

People normally exploited *personal*, and in particular *family*, networks in the emigration process, but there were exceptions. Ken Johnson's uncle was a Congregational minister who did not have any connection in the United States yet elected to leave when he was offered a post in America. He thus relied upon institutional, and specifically religious, networks to relocate overseas⁶². The testimony of Thomas Powell encapsulates the main elements involved in the emigrants decision-making process with which we have dealt above. It illuminates the role played by information flows and personal networks in the phase preceding departure, and highlights the emigrants' careful planning of their

move. The informant's father left Wales because he thought America would offer him more opportunities for self-fulfilment. Having relatives in the U.S. proved to be a crucial factor in his decision to go, along with the glowing portrait of America painted by his uncle in the letters he sent home and the fact that he strongly objected to his nephew ending up working in a quarry. Making a final decision took time, also because the informant's mother was against moving, and much «corresponding back and forth»⁶³. The mention, in Thomas Powell's testimony, of lengthy discussions and intense corresponding draws attention to an important aspect of the decision-making process emigrants went through before moving, namely the discussion of the emigration option within the family. In fact, the decision to leave often took time to be reached (sometimes a very long time), and might cause disagreement or even generate considerable tension among the members of a family, especially between husband and wife. The evidence supplied by the FWP and Ellis Island interviews shows that, in a married couple, the final decision to go was more frequently made by the husband than the wife. In addition to social and cultural factors – men normally were the breadwinners, and saw themselves and were generally seen as the household heads – this probably also happened because men could better judge job prospects at home and abroad. Admittedly, husbands sometimes imposed their decision on their wives. Agnes Fairchild's father, for instance, decided to emigrate because he had lost his job. Both the informant and her mother followed him reluctantly, envisaging no real alternative to this course of action: «And my mother, she – she didn't want to come either. But it was just a matter of necessity. We had to»⁶⁴. Likewise, Annie Evans was clearly opposed to moving, but realized she «would have to lump it»: «He made up his mind, you know it. Oh, I said, if I was single, I'd go right back»⁶⁵. Finally, as we have seen, Thomas Powell's parents pondered on the decision to leave, but this was eventually made by his father, even though the informant's mother was not convinced and did not want to abandon her family – probably, she was not convinced *because* she did not want to abandon her family⁶⁶. Indeed, an element that emerges from the testimonies is that women seemed to be motivated by family ties more frequently than men, whether they advocated emigration or resisted it. What is sure is that they *expressed* their personal feelings about the move more frequently, while men appeared to be focussed on the necessity to assure their family financial support. In many cases the opinion expressed by women was taken into serious account, and the decision to emigrate made by husband and wife together. George Wray, for example, talked things over with his wife, and eventually both members of the couple were agreed on leaving⁶⁷. Similarly, «after a month's deliberation», Mrs «L.» and her husband determined to go on the basis of the glowing portrait of America painted in letters they had received from friends overseas⁶⁸. Ken Johnson's parents deeply reflected on the subject because they realized emigration would represent a remarkable change in their life: «[d]iscussion went on for a couple of years and finally Mom and Dad decided to make the break and they were both in their early thirties at the time, decided to come over and make the big plunge and relocate in the United States»⁶⁹. Sometimes women warmly advocated emigration overseas, and their attitude proved ultimately decisive in prompting departure. Donald Roberts makes it clear that what caused his family to leave was his mother's «prodding»⁷⁰, while Patrick Peak's mother was so determined to go that she pretended to have already booked the transatlantic passage⁷¹. As we have seen above, Arthur Dickson's father had a good job in Britain and agreed to move only at his wife's insistence, because she wished to join relatives in America. The case of Robert Williams's mother is also worth mentioning. She had lived in the U.S. until she was in her twenties, and simply deemed America had a better life to offer to her family: «Well, my mother, since she was born and brought up in the

United States, thought that the best for us kids, my sister and I, was to come to the United States for our educational purposes and all around, you see, people over there were very poor»⁷². In this case, therefore, the source of information on the U.S. was a person who had been born and raised there, a second-generation immigrant who had “returned” to Britain as an adult. Finally, just as sometimes women were “forced” to go, their strong opposition to emigration could prove decisive in making their husbands give up the idea of leaving altogether. In fact, though Vera Tanner’s father favoured emigration, her parents remained in England due to the openly hostile attitude of the informant’s mother towards the move⁷³. Summing up, as William Van Vugt aptly observes, «the process of transatlantic migration was very often a team effort between more or less equal partners. Any assumption that British women were passive in migration decisions or were reluctant spouses, being dragged across the ocean by their more adventurous husbands, must be avoided»⁷⁴. Carefully weighing up the potential advantages of emigration to the United States might involve considering alternative destinations and, at times, moving to a different place first. The interviews offer a few examples of this dynamic process, at the end of which British emigrants opted for America. Thomas Powell makes it clear that, for people living in North Wales in the 1920s, the only alternative to going overseas was migration to English cities such as London or Liverpool, where young men «could go down and get into the rat race»⁷⁵. Actually, the informant’s father had lived in Liverpool for a while before returning home, changing strategy and deciding on emigration to the U.S. Once it had been established that moving abroad represented a better option, the choice had to be made between possible destinations overseas. Thomas Powell’s father ruled New Zealand out, despite having relatives there, because it was too distant, and he wanted to have the possibility of returning to his native land for visits, if not permanently⁷⁶. Indeed, the emigrants who chose to move to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in this period knew that they were in all probability severing their ties with Britain, as the post-World War II era of transoceanic flights and relative prosperity that made travel faster and easier was yet to come. The geographical location of the Antipodes would have made it difficult for them to return home and discouraged a visit to friends and relatives. Thus, emigrants needed to have very good reasons to leave for such distant places. After the Empire Settlement Act was passed, in 1922, a sound economic motive for emigrants to choose one of the Empire destinations over the United States was the possibility of being the recipient of an assisted passage ticket⁷⁷. As the case of Thomas Powell’s father shows, the desire to maintain a connection with their native country played a significant part in British emigrants’ choice of destination, since many of them evidently took for granted the transnational character of their future life. Along with distance, the decisive factor prompting the final decision of the informant’s father seems to have been, once again, the rosy picture of America painted by Thomas’s uncle in his letters home⁷⁸. The balance tilted in favour of America also in the case of Ellen Pierce’s family. They had connections in both Australia and the U.S., but ultimately chose America because of the information they received through correspondence and word of mouth. The negative sides of relocation to Australia – particularly the dangers of living in the wilderness – played a role in making the informant’s parents direct their attention to an alternative destination:

And, uh, so we thought we were going to go to Australia. But then my friend wrote, one of our neighbors wrote and said they went in the bedroom to check on the baby and a big snake was on the curtain. So after my folks read that letter we started hearing more about America because my uncle, who was a minister, Reverend John Clayton, baptized me in England and then moved to America, so he kept writing and telling us. And then another cousin moved to America and

married an American man, and she kept writing and telling us about it⁷⁹.

Apparently, Ellen Pierce's parents finally made up their mind on the basis of what they heard from one of the informant's uncles who was paying a visit home. Ellen's uncle, in fact, emphasized the better economic conditions and greater education opportunities in the U.S., and affirmed that children would not have to work in America⁸⁰. Some of the interviewees actually selected an alternative overseas destination, namely Canada, before moving to the United States. A variety of motives lay behind this choice: along with the key role played by emigration agents in conducting sustained publicity campaigns, the most important were the fact that Canada, besides not being further away than the U.S., was part of the "British" world and at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries offered better chances of land ownership⁸¹. Only after a period there did the informants decide to continue their journey south of the border. Unfortunately, the testimonies rarely clarify why they did so, the most likely reasons being dissatisfaction at their conditions in Canada, the lure of America and the existence of family connections there. In 1856 Alex Russell's family left Scotland for Ontario, and "Dad" Rydell had also opted for Canada first⁸². In 1888 Mrs Whittington's family chose Quebec, only to settle in Vermont the following year; likewise, Henry Safford, aged 18 when he left England in 1885, stayed in Canada about a year before proceeding south to the United States. Apparently, he had initially moved to British North America because a friend of his had extolled the virtues of Canada⁸³. As the foregoing demonstrates, most British emigrants carefully pondered over their decision to leave. Equally rational was the way in which they actuated the process of relocation overseas. The following section illustrates that this was arranged so as to minimize risks for the members of the family moving abroad and guarantee the economic security of those left behind.

Patterns of emigration

The FWP and Ellis Island oral histories reveal only a small difference in the emigration patterns followed in the final decades of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth. As we shall see, examples of family emigration are slightly more numerous in the FWP life histories, which also deal with the pre-1900 period, while the Ellis Island accounts only concern the post-1900 emigration phase. Actually, while in the middle of the nineteenth century it was still more common for family parties to leave together for America, later on emigration increasingly became an individual venture⁸⁴. This does not mean, of course, that emigrants usually travelled alone. Indeed, whenever it was possible to do so, they chose to face the difficulties of the journey with relatives, for obvious reasons (i.e., to receive practical and emotional support). And when they were not accompanied by relatives they shared the pleasures (if any) and pains of the trip with friends or acquaintances, as was the case with Kyffin Williams and Robert Reese, for instance⁸⁵. Though there were several variations in the pattern, it was normally young adults, males more often than females, who departed first and then brought other members of the family over – their wife and children in the case of married men, their siblings as well as, sometimes, their parents in the case of emigrants who were single –, after having secured an adequate means of livelihood, found a house for them to stay and saved enough money to (partly) meet the travel expenses of those who had remained in Britain. In other words, if the move had been successful emigrants were joined by (the) other members of their family, gradually or by all of them together. Indeed, as Eric Richards remarks, using savings to send out young and healthy migrants who would then

remit cash to pay for the passage of their relatives is a classic strategy of proletarian emigration⁸⁶. The remittances newcomers sent home served various purposes⁸⁷. They were used to support the emigrants' family in the Old Country, to finance the journey of their relatives, and to pay back the money that had been pooled to enable them to move overseas⁸⁸. For instance, Archibald Webster's father, who left England in the early 1920s, sent his family twenty dollars a week. Jack Carnegie also remitted cash to his relatives in Scotland, while Robert Reese gradually returned his parents the money they had lent him before departure⁸⁹. Adult emigrants who did not move with their family were able to send remittances home also because they stayed with relatives or lived as boarders in America, which made it possible to cut expenses. This is the case with Myrtle Berlinghoff's father, for instance, who only rented a room in the U.S. in order to transfer money home⁹⁰. Emigrant families evidently functioned as rational units carefully managing resources to attain their objectives. Indeed, as scholars have conclusively proved, it was usually the family, rather than the individual migrant, that made decisions in its economic interest⁹¹. Young married men typically moved first, as we have noted, followed by their wives and children. This was the case, for example, with Archibald Webster's father⁹². Likewise, Frances Oakley's father came out, leaving his little daughter and pregnant wife at home. Only after delivery did his wife, daughter and new-born baby join him in America⁹³. In a similar situation, Jennie Jacobson's father acted differently. Once again, understandably, childbirth at home seemed a wiser choice. Yet he decided to emigrate with his children, leaving only his pregnant wife behind. There must have been a good reason for this, which unfortunately the interview does not explain (perhaps his wife did not live close enough to relatives in Britain who could help her taking care of the children, or there was somebody in America who could do so more easily). A few months later the informant's mother and the newborn baby reunited with the remainder of the family across the ocean⁹⁴. Finally, Ann Nelson's father left for America with two of the informant's aunts. The reason for their move, as Nelson clearly and concisely states, was «to get a job and establish a home for us. So they came those few months before we did»⁹⁵. When parents had passed the prime of life it was the older brothers and/or sisters who led the way, often in the company of other siblings. Thomas Muir, for example, departed when he was 18 with his older brother⁹⁶, while Henry Cohen, who was only fifteen at the time of leaving, moved with his twelve-year old brother⁹⁷. Henry Safford travelled unaccompanied at 17 years of age: on his shoulders rested the responsibility of emigration, since his father had died and he was the oldest child in the family⁹⁸. Sometimes it was the older daughters who emigrated first, as in the cases of Patrick Peak's sister and John Daly's eldest sister, who was joined by her family as soon as a job was found for the household head⁹⁹. The wife and young children of an emigrant travelled together when the time came to join the breadwinner overseas, as the above-mentioned examples of Archibald Webster's and Frances Oakley's families illustrate. When it was the older siblings that moved first the pattern of emigration was often more gradual: over time, they would bring some or all of their brothers and sisters to America, and in some cases they were also eventually joined by their parents. Gradualness was particularly appropriate when those left behind were numerous. Cyril Cheeseman's father was in his fifties and had to take care of a large family when he considered emigration. As expected, the older children were sent to America first. Then, whenever it was possible, one of them returned home to accompany some of the other siblings across the ocean. Step by step the whole family relocated overseas, the last move being made by the middle-aged parents accompanying the youngest children¹⁰⁰. As the foregoing has illustrated, in the period under examination the typical mechanism of chain migration essentially consisted in the successive departure of different members of the same family

(sometimes all of them), obtained through a rational employment of financial resources and the effective exploitation of personal networks. The following excerpt from Marian Matthews's testimony, which provides a paradigmatic example of chain migration, is worth quoting at length. This passage also shows that the process of chain migration did not exclusively concern blood relations but could also involve in-laws, future in-laws as well as in-laws' relatives:

That goes way back to a cousin of my mother's and she came out as a young girl, married and did rather well and she used to come back and visit. And one year she asked my oldest brother, would he like to come to America and of course he stayed with her. And he jumped, and he came. Then the following – he worked and then the following year he sent for my second oldest brother and [...] the girl that he was to marry, Gwenna, they came out and Gwenna took care of the two men. My brother was married. They got married out here and then she took care of the house. Then the next year they sent for my father, my brother, Cyril and my sister-in-law's brother, Oliver, and they three came out. So she had all of them to take care of. The following year they sent for my mother and Doris and I, and that's how we all got here¹⁰¹.

Despite common patterns of relocation being generally adopted, the FWP and Ellis Island interviews also reveal that there were a number of possible variations on the theme, connected to the specific circumstances of the emigrants' life. To begin with, the overwhelming evidence of small-group or individually-led emigration notwithstanding, the interviews provide various examples of entire families travelling together. The fact that emigrants could rely on personal networks abroad made the simultaneous relocation of many people a viable, though riskier, move. This strategy of emigration appears to have been adopted more frequently by the FWP informants and their families than by the Ellis Island interviewees. This may be due to the fact that, in the post-Civil War decades, the frontier was still significantly expanding in America, which made it comparatively easy to take up farming (a family, rather than individual, enterprise). Indeed, after the end of the conflict large areas were opened to settlement in Kansas, Nebraska, South and North Dakota, the Pacific Northwest and, finally, Oklahoma. By 1890 «three million farms had been added to the million and a half that had existed at mid-century»¹⁰². Furthermore, the restructuring of the work process and the implementation of new efficiency schemes in the American manufacturing system – with the consequent blurring of skill distinctions and the reduction in the number of skilled jobs available¹⁰³ – as well as the effects of the Great Migration still lay ahead or were just in their early stages when many of the FWP informants emigrated¹⁰⁴. This meant that the American job market was not oversupplied with labour and British emigrants did not have to face the competition of large numbers of immigrants, while having more chances of taking advantage of their skills¹⁰⁵. Consequently, compared to the twentieth century, it was easier and quicker for Britons to find a (possibly good-paying) job, which made the relocation of entire families a less hazardous move. Sidney Domoney and Sam Congram, for example, emigrated with both of their parents in 1871 and 1870, at the age of 7 and 14 respectively¹⁰⁶. The emigrant family might include adult sons and daughters: William Platt, for instance, recalls having moved in 1873 with his parents when he was eighteen years old¹⁰⁷. Examples of entire families moving together, however, are also to be found in the Ellis Island corpus of interviews, as shown by the testimonies of Arthur Dickson, Ken Johnson and Thomas Powell, who at the time of emigration were children travelling with both of their parents¹⁰⁸. Though it was usually young people in their prime of life who emigrated, or at least who emigrated *first*, as we have seen, this was not always the case. In fact, Doreen Stenzel's father and grandfather (who was in his fifties) moved together, only to be joined later on by Doreen's mother, grandmother and

the informant herself. Three generations were thus involved in this process of relocation¹⁰⁹. Elsie Hockridge's grandparents on her father's side must have also been in their late forties or early fifties when they emigrated with three of their adult children. The informant's father came out some time later with Elsie's sister, the plan being that Elsie (who was an infant at the time) and her mother would follow them shortly. Sadly, in the meanwhile Elsie's mother died and thus her grandmother had to return to England to pick her up¹¹⁰. Further examples of leavers who did not follow the standard pattern of emigration are offered by the testimony of Arnold Ambler, Thomas Allan, Sidney Pike and William McGuire. Arnold Amber and his wife were a young childless couple who moved together, while Thomas Allan left at a young age with one of his siblings (on the ship, they were looked after by family acquaintances, who functioned as surrogate parents)¹¹¹. Sidney Pike and his brother Arthur were also two young children when they left (Sidney was 11, and his brother must not have been much older), but apparently travelled alone, unsurprisingly putting their personal safety at risk. In fact, as the informant remembers, among other things they «used to hang over the edge of the ship, very dangerous»¹¹². The emigration strategy adopted by William McGuire's parents was also rather unusual (unfortunately, no explanation is offered in the interview as to their behaviour). The male breadwinner moved first, followed after some time by his wife, while the children were left in the care of grandparents. Eventually, the informant's mother returned home to pick up the children and bring them to America¹¹³. Finally, it is worth noting that the interval elapsing between the departure of the first member(s) of a family and the eventual reunion with those who had stayed home could vary significantly. As the examples given above have shown, it might take emigrants only a few months to bring the remainder of the family over. Robert Williams's brother was also joined by the other members of his family after only six months abroad¹¹⁴, and Thomas Sargent's father sent for his family as soon as he got a job (actually, he had made reservations for his wife and children's journey before leaving)¹¹⁵. However, in some cases emigrants lived apart from their kin for quite a long time. Doreen Stenzel's family, for instance, had to wait two and a half years to be reunited, and many years passed before Donald Roberts's father was able to meet with his family again¹¹⁶. The case of John Flint is also worth mentioning, though it was obviously extreme. In fact, Flint reunited with his father after a separation lasting almost nine years, crossing the ocean with his aunt and uncle, since his mother had died just before the trip and was thus never able to join her husband overseas¹¹⁷.

Conclusions

As we have seen, the FWP and Ellis Island testimonies illuminate many aspects of the initial phase of Britons' relocation to America in the Great Migration age. The main pattern of emigration – young married men or older siblings leaving first, joined later by the other members of the family – emerges clearly from the accounts, along with several possible variations. Furthermore, the interviews prove that no single explanation can be given for such a complex phenomenon as emigration, and that the reasons Britons had for moving were many and included structural as well as personal factors. The testimonies also clarify that the pull of America played an important role in the emigrants' process of decision making, and that this pull was based on a core image of the United States as the land of opportunities. Though some emigrants held distorted expectations about life in the New World – typically predicated on the streets-paved-with-gold myth – many cultivated a more restrained dream based on the conviction that America was a better place to live and raise children than Great

Britain. Social and political equality, in particular the perceived absence of status hierarchies, were elements some emigrants considered, but their significance should not be overstated. However, the significance of pull factors notwithstanding, the FWP and Ellis Island oral histories reveal that the difficult economic conditions and bleak prospects of emigrants at home were the prime motive in prompting departure; in short, they usually provided the necessary, though not sufficient, grounds for leaving. This indicates that push and pull factors affected British departures differently in the Great Migration Age compared with the antebellum period. The first three volumes of William Van Vugt's recent collection of materials on British emigration to the United States – mostly letters and biographical sketches – show that it was essentially the magnetic force of America that prompted emigration from Britain before the Civil War (volumes I-III cover the 1776-1859 period, while volume IV is meant to take the discussion to 1914). In the 1830s and 1840s, Van Vugt admits, rural poor people numbered among those who left, and small British villages were hit by the disruptive transformations accompanying the industrial revolution. Yet skilled pre-industrial craftsmen such as miners, quarrymen, woodworkers and building trade workers filled the ranks of British emigrants. These craftsmen, along with skilled industrial workers employed in iron and textile industries, went to America «not so much because of distress but to take opportunities. They emigrated in unusually high proportions at a time when they were generally in demand in Britain and not seriously threatened by industrial change and unemployment. If anything, their future in Britain seemed brighter than ever before, and yet they were choosing that time to go to America. Furthermore, large proportions (more than three quarters in 1831) of these migrants travelled as families and could afford multiple passage tickets [...]»¹¹⁸. Likewise, from 1848 to 1859 pull factors predominated. The motives pre-industrial craftsmen and iron and steel workers had for leaving were similar to those they had in the previous decades. As for farmers, a number of them could buy land upon arrival and most could afford multiple passage tickets to the New World. Indeed, Van Vugt remarks, «[e]ven some of the most troubled farmers and farm labourers were influenced as much or more by the “pull” of American promises than the “push” of British problems»¹¹⁹. Furthermore, at mid-century more and more British merchants, “gentlemen” and professionals (such as clerks, lawyers, doctors and teachers) left for America. Apart from the mention of professionals, which specifically concerns emigration at mid-century, the basic character of British emigration from the 1820s through the 1850s is described by Van Vugt in the following passage:

Taking all occupations together, the rising numbers of British immigrants to the United States during the period did not have much to do with technological displacement, cyclical unemployment or other difficulties associated with industrialization. Unemployed textile workers or foundry workers were relatively rare among the immigrants. Mechanics, engineers, craftsmen, miners and farmers, who were in some demand in Britain, swelled the numbers. Comparatively large numbers of professionals joined them as well, mainly to take up opportunities that were even greater than the ones they were enjoying in Britain. Because they came from the world's most advanced economy, and had many opportunities to take in America, British immigrants were disproportionately skilled. [...] Of course, poor people were among the immigrants, as were persons who thought Britain did not offer a good future. But even among them the promise of America was often more important than the uncertainty in Britain in their migration decision. The prospect of owning land was especially powerful¹²⁰.

Admittedly, the documents on which Van Vugt bases his conclusions are not representative. In fact, as Eric Richards observes, the materials selected do not cover the lowest echelons of British society. Besides, the use of a large amount

of county history biographies appears to be “dubious”, since these «were retrospective celebratory portraits of immigrants, formulaic Smilesian models of dedicated, blameless, and pious lives of enterprising settlers, not a black sheep among them»¹²¹. Therefore, it is likely that a more balanced choice of sources would have shown the push factor to be more important in prompting British emigration than Van Vugt is ready to acknowledge. Nevertheless, the claim that immigrants were more pulled than pushed, or at least pulled as much as pushed, in the antebellum era is a sensible one. The U.S. open and moving frontier offered an abundance of relatively cheap lands, and plenty of opportunities were available overseas to pre-industrial skilled workers as well as to men who could put their skills to good use in the American developing industrial system. Above all, this was still the era of the sailing ship, when journeys across the Atlantic were long, arduous and perilous. The nature of the trip and the fact that farming was a collective rather than an individual enterprise made emigration overseas mostly a family business in this period, and a far from easy step to take. Indeed, many of the workers who were the victims of technological dislocation or became unemployed due to economic recessions tended to move to British cities rather than cross the ocean, because the latter was not a prudent choice to make and was rarely a financially viable option. Unfortunately, Van Vugt’s portrait of British emigration from the outbreak of the American Civil War to World War I does not basically differ from the one he provides for the antebellum era, despite the profound social and economic transformations which occurred in the New World. In fact, as the century drew to a close, less and less land was available for purchase in the United States (the age of the American frontier was gradually ending), there were far fewer openings for pre-industrial skilled workers and more limited opportunities were also offered to skilled industrial workers. Indeed, the fast developing American manufacturing system required and absorbed more and more unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Above all, as we shall see below, a great difference in determining the nature of emigration flows was made by the revolution in transatlantic transport, which Van Vugt does not take into due consideration. Actually, he emphasizes the continuities with the preceding period, dwelling upon the departures of skilled workers and the persistence of the emigrants’ agricultural dream. The waves of British emigrants, he states, «had mostly to do with increases in American economic activity, not the decline of British. The pull was stronger than the push»¹²². One of the reasons that might explain this interpretation is that, despite the chronological interval indicated in the title (1860-1914), the last volume of Van Vugt’s work includes only a few documents produced in the 1890s and almost none in the twentieth century, the story essentially stopping at the onset of the Great Migration age. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, the representativeness of the materials selected by Van Vugt appears to be questionable. The immigrants’ biographies are taken from a rather limited number of county histories and, what is more, often concern emigrants who were already well-off before departure or far from indigent skilled workers¹²³. Obviously, in their case, it was the pull of America that prompted departure rather than grim economic conditions at home, and this must have affected Van Vugt’s reading of the relative importance of push and pull emigration factors in the last decades of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth¹²⁴. Only a few of the emigrants whose life is presented in the book were poor when they left Britain¹²⁵, while in other cases the biographies do not clarify to which social class they belonged, or what were their financial conditions at the time of leaving. In short, it seems to be clear that county history biographies downplay the role of push factors and that, based on them, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions on the push-pull dynamics of British emigration. As for the letters included in the volume, they do not support the editor’s view or any other definite assertions on this subject. As we have seen, in

contrast to what Van Vugt affirms, the FWP and Ellis Island interviews reveal the importance of push factors – a necessary though usually not sufficient condition – in determining British workers' emigration. This is consistent with the revolution in transatlantic communications that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, by 1870 almost all passengers leaving from English ports embarked on steamships. This significantly shortened journeys, which in turn made emigration cheaper (despite ship tickets were more expensive) because workers lost wages for a much shorter time than in the past. The revolution in transatlantic transport made it possible for single individuals rather than entire families to cross the ocean, enabling virtually everyone but the destitute to find the money for the trip. In other words, those who in the antebellum period emigrated to urban centres or different regions of Britain could now afford to cross the Atlantic. The FWP and Ellis Island interviews also show that personal networks aided potential emigrants to make a final decision about departure and to actualize their move. With regard to the dynamics of emigration, scholars have long recognized the centrality of the web of connections which link people together, and have described the different types of networks and the role they perform. Many kinds of networks (sometimes overlapping) can be identified, ranging from family, kinship or friendship connections to workplace, associational, religious, business or political networks. Interestingly, scholars have distinguished between sending and receiving networks (linkages among people at a given point of origin and connections at destination respectively), and between informal and formal networks (the former involving family, friends and acquaintances, the latter formal institutions such as emigration agencies, clubs, societies and associations). Above all, researchers have examined the role played by networks in the various phases of emigration. Networks, it has been noted, are essential in supplying information about the host country to potential emigrants, and thus in encouraging or discouraging departures, as well as in solving practical problems connected to the move. Moreover, they offer the crucial financial assistance and emotional support necessary to tackle emigration. Once emigrants reach the country of destination networks provide opportunities for employment and supply newcomers initial accommodation or help them to find a home¹²⁶. In the period under examination, it was informal networks made up of kith and kin that usually supplied information and financial resources to emigrants and assisted them with the search for accommodation and employment once they arrived in the United States. Indeed, what appears to be clear is that «informal personal networks are of crucial significance during the short-term process of leaving one society and settling into another. The durability of these networks over time is, however, open to question»¹²⁷. As we have seen, The FWP and Ellis Island testimonies confirm that emigrants normally relied upon informal personal networks in both the phase preceding emigration and during the ocean trip. The networks exploited by British emigrants provided practical, financial and emotional support to those who were considering emigration or had been left behind, along with vital information about the New World (especially about the availability of work, but also about the character and customs of the new country, subjects which were discussed by returning migrants as well). The process of decision-making was clearly affected by the flow of letters and remitted money from the other side of the Atlantic, which was the most visible sign of an operating transnational connection between people living on different sides of the ocean. Actually, many opted for emigration because they would find familiar faces overseas and they knew they would receive help after arrival. Furthermore, when it came to make arrangements for the ocean trip, Britons relied on personal connections at the point of origin (sending networks). Indeed, as has been noted, emigrants usually travelled with relatives or friends. Sending networks thus helped emigrants confront the practical and emotional trials of the

ocean journey and arrival in the new country. In the case of emigrants directed to the United States this involved, from 1892, the feared passage through Ellis Island, where newcomers would have to face the questioning of immigration officials and would be subjected to a thorough physical examination. The exploitation of personal networks before departure and during the trip (as well as in the process of settling abroad, a subject which is outside the remit of this article) provides clear evidence that emigration was a conscious choice and a planned move for most Britons. The move, as we have seen, was arranged so as to reduce risks to a minimum and increase the emigrants' chances of success. In turn, on the emigrants' success rested the economic security and future destiny of those left behind. The foregoing, therefore, testifies to a significant measure of agency on the part of leavers as well as, paradoxical though it may seem, of the people who remained home. This, of course, does not entail denying the conditioning of structural forces on the life of emigrants and the choices they made. However, as Ewa Moraska has pointed out, even though emigrants cannot escape the constraints of social forces, they often find ways to "play" within structures¹²⁸.

¹ E. Richards, *Britannia's Children. Emigration from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales since 1600*, Palgrave, Hambledon and London 2004, p. IX.

² R.T. Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950*, Russell & Russell, New York 1968 (ed. or. 1953), p. 5.

³ The Federal Writers' Project was created by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the largest New Deal agency established in 1935 to implement relief programmes for the needy. Although chiefly aimed at assisting manual workers, the WPA also established art, music, theatre and writers' programmes. The FWP employed thousands of jobless white-collar workers, artists and intellectuals to develop programmes investigating the nature of American identity and culture. The interests pursued by the FWP included the collection of urban and rural folklore, ordinary people's narratives, testimonies of ex-slaves and information about the culture and customs of social and ethnic groups. Among the accounts gathered by the FWP fieldworkers there were hundreds of interviews with first-generation immigrants of various nationalities. Cf. J. Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal. The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943*, Avon Books, New York 1972; M.N. Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project. A Study in Government Patronage of the Arts*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago, and London 1977; J. Hirsch, *Portrait of America. A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 2003.

⁴ The Ellis Island Oral History Project (EIOHP) aims at preserving the memories of men and women who landed in America between 1892 and 1954, when Ellis Island was used as an immigrant centre. The oral history programme was started in 1973 by National Park Service employee Margo Nash under the aegis of the American Museum of Immigration, the precursor of today's Ellis Island Museum. However, most of the interviews have been recorded since the 1990s. Actually, in 1990 the Ellis Island Series of the oral history project was launched, as a final attempt to locate the surviving immigrants who went through America's mythical Golden Door and tape their stories. For a general introduction to the subject see P.M. Coan (ed.), *Ellis Island Interviews: In Their Own Words, Facts On File*, New York 1997.

⁵ As Dudley Baines observes, economists have tended to emphasize the fact that emigrants were more responsive to income differences between the sending and the receiving countries, while historians have often pointed out the importance of the transmission of information. However, in practice these two factors are related, since the flow of information about crucial subjects such as the availability of jobs, for example, had an obvious economic relevance. In fact, it was essential for newcomers to find employment as quickly as possible in their adopted country, and thus they tended to time their journey to the conditions of the job market in America. D. Baines, *European Emigration, 1815-1930: Looking at the Emigration Decision Again*, in «The Economic History Review», 3 (1994), pp. 525-529.

⁶ See J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted. A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1985, pp. 13-23.

⁷ James Harris, interviewer and date of interview not specified, FWP, Washington State Library, Olympia, WA, Manuscript Collections, MS number 031: *Told by the Pioneers, Washington Pioneer Project*, p. 1. In 1880, "normal" wage earnings for all occupations amounted to 18 pounds a year

(they were higher for skilled jobs such as engineering and coal mining). Cf. J. Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850-1939*, Longman, London and New York 1989, pp. 41 and 53.

⁸ Allan Leight, interviewed by George Conway, January 17, 1939, FWP, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC., Wilson Library, Manuscript Department, Southern Historical Collection. *Federal Writers' Project Papers*, Collection #3709, folder 159, p. 1.

⁹ Thomas Sargent, interviewed by Kate Moore, January 25, 1994, EIOHP, KM Series 033, p. 15. As specified in the text, all the Ellis Island interviews are preserved in the Oral History Office of the Ellis Island Museum in New York City.

¹⁰ Jack Carnegie, interviewed by Janet Levine, February 15, 1996, EIOHP, EI Series 729, p. 5. Approximately 447,210 people departed from Scotland from 1921 to the end of 1930. Overseas departures accounted for about 336,000 of those leaving, with a peak of about 88,000 embarkations in 1923. In the 1920s the net emigration from England and Wales was only five per thousand, whilst for Scotland it amounted to eighty per thousand. During this decade, two-thirds of net British emigration was from Scotland. M. Harper, N.J. Evans, *Socio-economic Dislocation and Inter-war Emigration to Canada and the United States: A Scottish Snapshot*, in «The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History», 4 (2006), p. 530.

¹¹ M. Harper, N.J. Evans, *Socio-economic Dislocation and Inter-war Emigration*, cit., p. 542.

¹² Harry Norbury, interviewed by Janet Levine, September 6, 1992, EIOHP, EI Series 167, p. 4.

¹³ Robert Reese, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., January 30, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 242, p. 26.

¹⁴ Mr. "B", interviewed by Elizabeth M. Buckingham, January 11, 1940, FWP, University of Connecticut Libraries, Storrs, CT, Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, Connecticut Works Progress Administration Ethnic History Survey, box 19, folder 109, p. 2.

¹⁵ Henry Cohen, interviewed by Janet Levine, April 8, 1994, EIOHP, EI Series 453, 23.

¹⁶ Edward Brown, interviewed by Mayme Corbit, July 17, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 2.

¹⁷ Sidney Pike, interviewed by Nancy Dallett, August 6, 1985, EIOHP, AKRF Series 14, p. 16.

¹⁸ William Whytock, interviewer and date of interview not specified, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, p. 1.

¹⁹ M.A. Jones, *Destination America*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1976, p. 95.

²⁰ M. Harper, *Adventurers and Exiles. The Great Scottish Exodus*, Profile Books, London 2003, pp. 125-126.

²¹ William Whytock, FWP, cit., p. 2.

²² Arnold Ambler, interviewed by Edward Applebome, October 10, 1985, EIOHP, AKRF Series 044, p. 8.

²³ Ivi, p. 9.

²⁴ The army of railway and transatlantic shipping lines agents and land companies representatives operating all over Britain also performed a crucial role – as we have seen, William Whytock was the "victim" of an agent's gift of the gab – along with the propaganda organized by most American states attempting to attract settlers to their territories. The wealth of promotional literature these produced, such as pamphlets, booklets and newspapers advertising highlighted the advantages of moving overseas and painted an embellished portrait of the emigrants' possible destinations. A convincing and detailed description of the "news of America" received by potential emigrants is provided in P. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet. European Emigration to the U.S.A.*, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1971, pp. 66-90.

²⁵ Arthur Dickson, interviewed by Janet Levine, June 30, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 341, p. 2.

²⁶ Gladys Lambert, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., May 2, 1995, EIOHP, EI Series 612, p. 23.

²⁷ Patrick Peak, interviewed by Nancy Dallett, November 15, 1985, EIOHP, AKRF Series 084, p. 4.

²⁸ Jack Carnegie, EIOHP, cit., p. 6.

²⁹ Ettie Glaser, interviewed by Dana Gumb, January 24, 1986, New York City, Ellis Island Museum, Oral History Office, EIOHP, AKRF Series 129, p. 5.

³⁰ D. Hoerder, *From Migrants to Ethnics: Acculturation in a Societal Frameworks*, in D. Hoerder, L.P. Moch (eds.), *European Migrants. Global and Local Perspectives*, Northeastern University Press, Boston 1996, p. 220.

³¹ William Rogers, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., April 25, 1991; EIOHP, EI Series 138.

³² Frances Oakley, interviewed by Nancy Dallett, December 11, 1985, EIOHP, AKRF Series 100, p. 3.

³³ Henry Cohen, interviewed by Janet Levine, April 8, 1994, EIOHP, EI Series 453, p. 17.

³⁴ Sidney Pike, EIOHP, cit., p. 1.

³⁵ Tom Thomazin, interviewed by Maude Swanson, November 25, 1940, FWP, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE, Works Progress Administration Collection, RG0515, box 3, folder 34, p. 2.

³⁶ One of the attractions of America consisted in the fact that in the New World emigrants encountered fewer social barriers: men «did not have to doff their caps when asking for a job, and

[maids] could wear elaborate bonnets, reserved back home for middle- and upper-class women». D. Hoerder, *From Migrants to Ethnics*, cit., p. 222. On the democratic essence of America see also P. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet*, cit., p. 87.

³⁷ Mrs. Richard Glasson, interviewed by Caldwell Sims; December 15, 1938, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, p. 6.

³⁸ D. Hoerder, *From Migrants to Ethnics*, cit., p. 218.

³⁹ Cyril Cheeseman, interviewed by Janet Levine, August 15, 2001, EIOHP, EI Series 1219, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Thomas Cowley, interviewed by Wilton B. Olson, November 12, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 4.

⁴⁰ D. Hoerder, *From Migrants to Ethnics: Acculturation in a Societal Frameworks*, in D. Hoerder, L.P. Moch (eds.), *European Migrants. Global and Local Perspectives*, Northeastern University Press, Boston 1996, p. 220.

⁴⁰ Thomas Cowley, interviewed by Wilton B. Olson, November 12, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 4.

⁴¹ Henry Safford, interviewed by Harold J. Moss, October 17, 1938, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, p. 2.

⁴² A. McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921-65. 'For Spirit and Adventure'*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York 2007, pp. 54-55.

⁴³ J.M. Jasper, *Restless Nation. Starting Over in America*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2000, p. 53.

⁴⁴ This was not always the case, of course. A counterexample is offered by Margaret Whittle's testimony. She recalls that, when she left Newcastle in 1925, aged 17, she did not have much information about the U.S., aside from what she had learnt from films. In fact, she basically only knew that her sister was living there. Margaret Whittle, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., May 17, 1995; EIOHP, EI Series 614, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁵ P. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet*, cit., p. 86.

⁴⁶ C. Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants. The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1972, p. 5. Erickson also mentions three main motives for which emigrants wrote letters home: to arrange the departure of other members of the family, to ask for financial help and, finally, to report about their life in America and keep in touch with relatives. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ D.A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century*, New York University Press, New York 2006, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Marjory Harper notes that letters were inescapably written by people who pursued specific objectives or might even have a hidden agenda. They mirrored the feelings and perspectives of the emigrants, who sometimes wanted to impress or convince relatives at home about their success and the favourable conditions in the new land. M. Harper, *Adventurers and Exiles*, cit., p. 239.

⁴⁹ George Nunn, interviewed by Rector Lilliam M., date of interview not specified, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, North Dakota Heritage Center, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Michael Donegal, interviewed by Roaldus Richmond, September 14, 1940, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, p. 2.

⁵¹ Doreen Stenzel, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., September 21, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 391, p. 11.

⁵² George Wray, interviewed by Charles Taylor, September 13, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 2.

⁵³ Harry Norbury, EIOHP, cit., p. 3.

⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Nimmo, interviewed by Willa Appel, February 11, 1986, EIOHP, AKRF Series 147, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Jennie Jacobson, interviewed by Debra Allee, February 7, 1986, EIOHP, AKRF Series 141, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Robert Smalley, interviewed by Leona A. Gauthier, June 17-18, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Millvina Dean, interviewed by Janet Levine, May 18, 1995, EIOHP, EI Series 616, p. 4.

⁵⁹ A. McCarthy, *Personal Narratives*, cit., p. 224.

⁶⁰ Edward Brown, FWP, cit., p. 1.

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- ⁶¹ Ken Johnson, interviewed by Andrew Phillips, March 24, 1989, EIOHP, DP Series 5, p. 2.
- ⁶² Ivi, p. 3.
- ⁶³ Thomas Powell, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., January 30, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 243, p. 17.
- ⁶⁴ Agnes Fairchild, interviewed by Janet Levine, January 1999, EIOHP, EI Series 1034, p. 20.
- ⁶⁵ Annie Evans, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., January 31, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 246, p. 14.
- ⁶⁶ Thomas Powell, EIOHP, cit., p. 3.
- ⁶⁷ George Wray, interviewed by Charles Taylor, September 13, 1940, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 2.
- ⁶⁸ Mrs. "L.", interviewed by Elizabeth M. Buckingham, December 11, 1939, FWP, University of Connecticut Libraries, Storrs, CT, Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, Connecticut Works Progress Administration Ethnic History Survey, box 19, folder 109, pp. 2-3.
- ⁶⁹ Ken Johnson, EIOHP, cit., p. 2.
- ⁷⁰ Donald Roberts, interviewed by Edward Applebome, August 15, 1985, EIOHP, AKRF Series 018, p. 2.
- ⁷¹ Patrick Peak, EIOHP, cit., pp. 3-4.
- ⁷² Robert Williams, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., July 8, 1994, EIOHP, EI Series 495, p. 25.
- ⁷³ Vera Tanner, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., January 22, 1992, EIOHP, EI Series 120, p. 20.
- ⁷⁴ W.E. Van Vugt, *British Buckeyes. The English, Scots, and Welsh in Ohio 1700-1900*, The Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 2006), p. 48.
- ⁷⁵ Thomas Sargent, EIOHP, cit., p. 18.
- ⁷⁶ Ivi, pp. 15-16.
- ⁷⁷ Indeed, «[a]ccess to an assisted passage was probably the most determining influence in a migrant's decision where to go, all other factors being equal». A. McCarthy, *Personal Narratives*, 71. The Empire Settlement Act «made provision for the British government to spend up to three million pounds a year for fifteen years on loans and grants for assisted passages, land settlement schemes, training courses and other approved ventures in partnership with dominion governments or with public and private bodies in Britain or the dominions. [...] Between May 1922 and March 1936 a total of 405,230 people – 36 per cent of all empire migrants in that period – left the British Isles under the auspices of the ESA, at an overall cost to the government of £6,099,046». M. Harper, *Emigration from Scotland between the Wars. Opportunity or Exile?*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1998, pp. 16-17.
- ⁷⁸ Thomas Powell, EIOHP, cit., p. 19.
- ⁷⁹ Ellen Pierce, interviewed by Andrew Phillips, May 22, 1989, EIOHP, DP Series 25, p. 15.
- ⁸⁰ Ivi, p. 24.
- ⁸¹ M. Harper, *Emigration from North-East Scotland*, vol. I, *Willing Exiles*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen 1988, p. 346. Until 1907 more British emigrants went to the United States than to Canada, yet from about 1880 to the First World War Canada attracted a growing number of emigrants from Britain. *Ibidem*.
- ⁸² Alex Russell, interviewed by Bernard Kjenstad, date not specified, FWP, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND, Works Progress Administration, Ethnic Group File, Series 30559, box 85, folder 17, p. 1; "Dad" Rydell, interviewed by Luline Mabry, March 21, 1939, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, p. 7.
- ⁸³ Mrs. Roland Whittington, interviewed by C. F. Derven, September 6, 1938, FWP, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940, on-line project: American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>>, fieldworker's notes; Henry Safford, FWP, cit., fieldworker's notes.
- ⁸⁴ With regard to English emigrants, Charlotte Erickson notes that 'in the late 1880s males traveling alone or with friends outnumbered those in family groups by eight to one.' C. Erickson, *English*, in S. Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, and London 1980, p. 326.
- ⁸⁵ Kyffin Williams, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., January 30, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series, p. 244; Robert Reese, EIOHP, cit., p. 30.
- ⁸⁶ E. Richards, *Britannia's Children*, cit., p. 167.
- ⁸⁷ There could be exceptions, of course. As the case of Annie Evans shows, sometimes emigrants did not earn enough to send money back home, at least for a while (Annie Evans, EIOHP, cit., p. 21).
- ⁸⁸ On the main purposes of remittances see D. Baines, *European Emigration, 1815-1930*, cit., p. 533.
- ⁸⁹ Robert Reese, EIOHP, cit., p. 27.
- ⁹⁰ Myrtle Berlinghoff, *EI*, 13.

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- ⁹¹ J. Jackson, Jr., L.P. Moch, *Migration and the Social History of Modern Europe*, in D. Hoerder, L.P. Moch (eds.), *European Migrants. Global and Local Perspectives*, Northeastern University Press, Boston 1996, p. 57.
- ⁹² Archibald Webster, interviewed by Janet Levine, January 3 2005, EIOHP, EI Series 1363, p. 6.
- ⁹³ Frances Oakley, EIOHP, cit., p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ Jennie Jacobson, EIOHP, cit., p. 14.
- ⁹⁵ Ann Nelson, interviewed by Janet Levine, December 8, 1996, EIOHP, EI Series 832, p. 3.
- ⁹⁶ Thomas Muir, interviewed by Nora L. Lorrin, April 19, 1938, FWP, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, OK. Works Progress Administration Project S-149 – Federal Writers' Project, Indian-Pioneer History Collection, vol. 81, pp. 148-153, p. 2.
- ⁹⁷ Henry Cohen, EIOHP, cit., p. 19.
- ⁹⁸ Henry Safford, FWP, cit., p. 2.
- ⁹⁹ John Daly, EIOHP, cit., p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁰ Cyril Cheeseman, EIOHP, cit., p. 7.
- ¹⁰¹ Marian Matthews, interviewed by Janet Levine, March 11, 1999, EIOHP, EI Series 1039, p. 15.
- ¹⁰² P. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet*, cit., p. 18.
- ¹⁰³ J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, cit., p. 65.
- ¹⁰⁴ Between the early 1880s and 1921, when the first restrictionist law was enacted, more than 23 million people emigrated to the United States. In this period, which historians have called the "Great Migration", the main flow of immigration shifted from northern and western Europe to the southern and eastern European countries such as Italy, Poland and Russia. By the turn of the century the large majority of newcomers in America came from these areas of the Old World. A.M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses. The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921*, Harlan Davidson, Arlington Heights, IL 1982, p. 2.
- ¹⁰⁵ After about 1890 «America's demand for skilled labour could more and more be met from domestic sources, and for unskilled labour from southern and eastern Europe». P. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet*, cit., p. 44.
- ¹⁰⁶ Sidney Domoney, interviewed by Ruby James, 1936, FWP, Salina Public Library, Salina, KS, Archive Collection, Kansas Works Progress Administration Records, Osborne County, S205, p. 1; Sam Congram, interviewed by Robert W. Small, January 12, 1938, FWP, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, OK. Works Progress Administration Project S-149 – Federal Writers' Project, Indian-Pioneer History Collection vol. 100, pp. 166-171, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁷ William Platt, interviewer not specified, March 3, 1939, FWP, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, Wilson Library, Manuscript Department, Southern Historical Collection, Federal Writers' Project Papers, Collection #3709, folder 1005, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁸ Arthur Dickson, EIOHP, cit., p. 2; Ken Johnson, EIOHP, cit., p. 1; Thomas Powell, EIOHP, cit., p. 24.
- ¹⁰⁹ Doreen Stenzel, EIOHP, cit., pp. 6, 46.
- ¹¹⁰ Elsie Hockridge, interviewed by Paul E. Sigrist Jr., October 29, 1993, EIOHP, EI Series 405, pp. 4-6.
- ¹¹¹ Thomas Allan, interviewed by Janet Levine, June 25, 2001, EIOHP, EI Series 1206, p. 7.
- ¹¹² Sidney Pike, EIOHP, cit., p. 10.
- ¹¹³ William McGuire, interviewed by Kate Moore, July 30, 1994, EIOHP, KM Series 077, pp. 6, 12.
- ¹¹⁴ Robert Williams, EIOHP, cit., p. 26.
- ¹¹⁵ Thomas Sargent, EIOHP, cit., p. 19.
- ¹¹⁶ Doreen Stenzel, EIOHP, cit., p. 21; Donald Roberts, EIOHP, cit., p. 2.
- ¹¹⁷ John Flint, interviewed by Anna R. Barry, December 15, 1937, FWP, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, OK. Works Progress Administration Project S-149 – Federal Writers' Project, Indian-Pioneer History Collection, vol. 105, pp. 230-241, p. 1.
- ¹¹⁸ W.E. Van Vugt (ed.), *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, vol. II, *The Age of Jackson: 1829-47*, Pickering & Chatto, London 2009, p. XVIII.
- ¹¹⁹ Id. (ed.), *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, vol. III, *The Developing Nation: 1848-59*, Pickering & Chatto, London 2009, p. XII.
- ¹²⁰ Ivi, p. XVIII.
- ¹²¹ E. Richards, book review of *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, vols. I-IV, edited by W.E. Van Vugt, Pickering & Chatto, London 2009, «Economic History Review», 4 (2010), pp. 1172-1173.
- ¹²² W.E. Van Vugt (ed.), *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, vol. IV, *Civil War and Industry: 1860-1914*, Pickering & Chatto, London 2009, p. XVII. On the emigration of skilled British workers see, in particular, Ivi, p. XX. Van Vugt emphasizes that «the British, especially the English, were the most likely immigrants to be in the professions or working as managers, supervisors, clerks and bookkeepers», and also that «the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries still saw British immigrants from all background taking up American agriculture and succeeding». Ivi, pp. XX-XXI.
- ¹²³ The following are various examples of (rather) well-to-do emigrants whose biographical profiles are included in the county histories: James Cousin was a successful brick and tile manufacturer in Hertfordshire when he left for America in 1868 to buy a farm in Michigan; Thomas Topham,

educated at Eton college, moved overseas with his family in 1872 – as Van Vugt notes, «[t]hey must have been well-off, as the father bought a developed farm of 420 acres soon after their arrival»; Kelso Sim had received private education, which reveals his comparatively elite background; Captain Henry Ernest Boyes, a member of a prominent Yorkshire family, headed to the American West in 1883 to acquire land; William Tulloch was a highly educated medical doctor who landed on the California coast on a trip in 1887 and decided to stay; Thomas Eadington was «well educated and doing very well in England» but decided to leave for California, where he «succeeded in various business ventures connected with the fruit industry»; Alexander Fraser, a marble-cutter in Scotland, resumed his trade in California – «he seems to have been relatively well-off, as his father was the manager of a large Scottish estate»; William Richardson, an experienced engineer, «left England in 1906 to use his expertise in California»; Lord Wellington Greenwood «learned the plasterer's trade from his father and rose to prominence in that business, emigrating in 1903 to do the same on a larger scale in California». W.E. Van Vugt (ed.), *British Immigration to the United States, 1776-1914*, vol. IV, pp. 138, 150, 161, 162, 175, 177, 181, 183, 185.

¹²⁴ The essential character of the county histories is often revealed quite clearly by their titles. Two examples will suffice: the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Will County, Illinois*, presents *Biographical sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the County*, while the history of Orange County, California, includes *Biographical Sketches of The Leading Men and Women of the County*. Ivi, pp. 122-123.

¹²⁵ For example, Frank McGarvy worked in a cotton factory before emigrating, while John Steele, raised in poverty in Manchester, was already working in the cotton mills at the age of 8. Ivi, pp. 145, 173.

¹²⁶ On emigrants' networks see: A. McCarthy, *Introduction. Personal Testimonies and Scottish Migration*, in Id. (ed.), *A Global Clan. Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities Since the Eighteenth Century*, Tauris Academic Studies, London and New York 2006, pp. 7-11; A. McCarthy, *Ethnic Networks and Identities Among Inter-war Scottish Migrants in North America*, in Id. (ed.), *A Global Clan*, cit., pp. 206-215. See also E. Delaney, D. MacRaild, *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities Since 1750: An Introduction*, in Idd. (eds.), *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities Since 1750*, Routledge, London and New York 2007, pp. VII-XXII; E. Delaney, *Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland*, ivi, pp. 278-281.

¹²⁷ E. Delaney, *Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland*, cit., p. 289.

¹²⁸ E. Morawska, *The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration*, in V. Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Reconsidered. History, Sociology, and Politics*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 1990, p. 191.

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