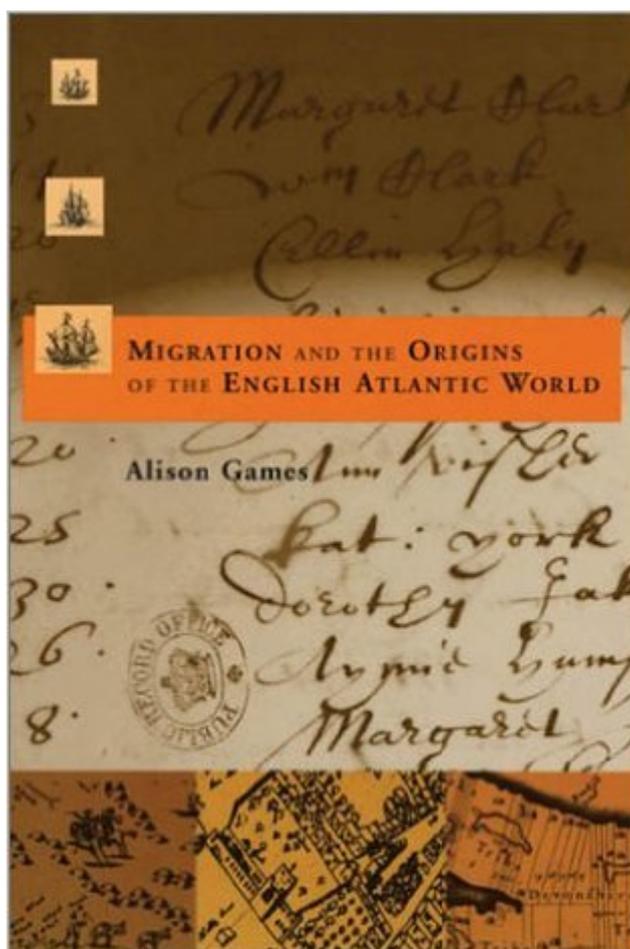


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Migration And The Origins Of The English Atlantic World (Harvard Historical Studies)



Synopsis

England's seventeenth-century colonial empire in North America and the Caribbean was created by migration. The quickening pace of this essential migration is captured in the London port register of 1635, the largest extant port register for any single year in the colonial period and unique in its record of migration to America and to the European continent. Alison Games analyzes the 7,500 people who traveled from London in that year, recreating individual careers, exploring colonial societies at a time of emerging viability, and delineating a world sustained and defined by migration. The colonial travelers were bound for the major regions of English settlement--New England, the Chesapeake, the West Indies, and Bermuda--and included ministers, governors, soldiers, planters, merchants, and members of some major colonial dynasties--Winthrops, Saltonstalls, and Eliots. Many of these passengers were indentured servants. Games shows that however much they tried, the travelers from London were unable to recreate England in their overseas outposts. They dwelled in chaotic, precarious, and hybrid societies where New World exigencies overpowered the force of custom. Patterns of repeat and return migration cemented these inchoate colonial outposts into a larger Atlantic community. Together, the migrants' stories offer a new social history of the seventeenth century. For the origins and integration of the English Atlantic world, Games illustrates the primary importance of the first half of the seventeenth century.

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Customer Reviews

A scholarly investigation into the Atlantic voyages and destinations of those listed in the 1635

London Port Register. The author follows their careers in the extant colonial and English records before and after their voyages. Excellent insights into the English colonies in New England, Virginia, Bermuda, and Providence Island in the Caribbean. Questions of why these travelers left, how they traveled, what they found when they arrived, how they prospered or failed, and those that returned to their homeland or traveled to other colonies are all dealt with. Excellent sections on the age and sex compositions of the different destinations under study and the effects of this on their colonial development. Lots of information on the flight of the puritans from Archbishop Laud and the different gathered church societies they established in the puritan colonies. The continuous migration over the life cycle of these English travelers within England, to London, across the Atlantic and within and between colonies is the ongoing theme of the book.

This book by Alison Games, based on her PhD dissertation if I am to understand correctly, is an outstanding piece of original research. Games successfully combines her torturous mining of the archives of the UK, Bermuda, US & elsewhere, with a good understanding of statistics, with intellectually honest speculations about the data (where it exists & where it does not, carefully showing where each hold), with a comprehension of the sweep of history in which this work fits, with a fine writing style. This book is denser than most colonial history, but it is worth pushing through that density for the unique insights the history carries with it & the stimulation of mind the book provides to the reader. Fundamentally, as Games shows, history is about ordinary human beings. The aggregation of their actions is what makes something worthy of the historians attention. In Games work, we can see the individual actions of UK "citizens" in the 1500s & 1600s in making the trek to colonies. This book should be on anyone's required reading list for understanding what happened in the British colonies early-on.

Alison Games' *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* is primarily a study of people on the move. More demographic history than social history, Games stresses the importance of migration- the actual physical movement of people from England to colonies and from colony to colony- to the creation of the Atlantic World, especially the English Atlantic World. Examining passenger lists, Games contends that no other European power came close to generating the number of settlers as the English did, making them an exceptional power. Games really stresses the importance of the individual to the creation of the early modern Atlantic, a theme she continues in *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* that contrasts greatly with historians, such as John Brewer in *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English*

State, 1688-1783, who argue the importance of the state and bureaucracy. As other reviewers have noted, at times, Games provides too much data without enough analysis. Games needed to find a better balance between presenting data rich evidence with analysis of that data for the reader.

There are numerous charts and numbers that help the reader visualize this data, however, it can be overwhelming at times. As this was originally a dissertation that was later adapted to be a book, this is not necessarily surprising. Also, it is rather typical of demographic history in which the numbers tend to speak for themselves. I would encourage scholars of the English Atlantic World to read this book along with her second book, *The Web of Empire*. Many of Games' arguments from *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* are further explored in her second book and provides a bit more analysis instead of simply data.

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