

FINDING JOSEPH STANFORD IN ENGLAND

For Americans, English counties can be confusing. Counties in England are areas used for the purposes of administrative, geographical, and political demarcation:

For administrative purposes, England (outside Greater London and the Isles of Scilly) is divided into 83 counties. The counties may consist of a single district or be divided into several districts. Six of the counties, covering major cities, are known as metropolitan counties.

All of England (including Greater London and the Isles of Scilly) is also divided into 48 ceremonial counties, which are also known as geographic counties. Most of these county boundaries correspond to the historical counties established in the Tudor period (mid-1500s to about 1700).

For purposes of understanding early migration from England to America, using the county boundaries from the 17th century seems most applicable since this was the England our immigrant ancestor Joseph Stanford knew. The following map shows the 38 counties of England during the Tudor and Civil War periods:



Based on occurrences of the surname Stanford in 19th century census records, place names incorporating Stanford/Stamford/Standford, and genetic markers indicating Anglo-Saxon rather

than Dane heritage, the more probable home county for Joseph Stanford could be, in rough order of probability, one of the following:

- Sussex (today's West Sussex and East Sussex)
- Middlesex (today's Greater London)
- Surrey
- Kent
- Essex
- Cambridgeshire
- Bedfordshire
- Norfolk
- Huntingtonshire
- Warwickshire
- West Midlands
- Staffordshire

However, to find the origins of our family in England, we must (1) assume that our Joseph Stanford (c1660-c1723) was born in England and (2) locate him in English records.

The first place to look are in the local parish and county records. However, local records research in Joseph's time is severely hampered by the great disruption that occurred in England from the early 1640s through 1660. during the English Civil War. During that period, many Church of England parish registers and records were lost as a result of the ravages of war. After the Civil War, during the period known as the "Interregnum," the country fell under Cromwell's Parliament that enacted changes to parliamentary procedural acts specifying the manner in which births, marriages and burials were to be carried out. Consequently, attempting to locate a complete series of births, marriages, deaths, baptism and burials for this approximate 20-year period can be an often futile challenge.

Most parish registers cease around 1642 when civil war broke out . Then, in 1653, the government assumed control of all church registers and appointed civil officers in each parish to keep custody of the books. Those officers were also empowered with the sole authority to make entries in the registers. A fee of one shilling was charged for each entry to be made and thus many births went unrecorded.

During 1654, the performance of marriages became the sole responsibility of Justices of the Peace rather than the clergy. Many couples not wishing to offend their beliefs in the sanctity of a church ceremony opted to not have their marriages performed. Many of those couples, instead, ran the risk of marrying clandestinely in a church ceremony or not at all.

Soon after the restoration of Charles II to the throne during 1660, these provisions for keeping civil records were repealed and civil record-keeping reverted to the parishes. Unfortunately, many of the records of the Civil War and Interregnum period do not survive, and even the ones that do survive are woefully incomplete.

The next place to look for Joseph Stanford would be ship or emigration/immigration records that may identify our ancestor as leaving England and/or arriving in Virginia or Maryland in the period 1660-1690. But, before 1820, the arrival of immigrants in America were not well documented. Very few authentic records of passenger arrivals in Maryland or Virginia exist, though a few ship records have been found and published, not of which list a Joseph Stanford.

The best primary reference for English emigration information is the research by Peter Coldham, published as follows:

The Complete Book of Emigrants. 4 vols. These four volumes covering 1607–1776 contain virtually every reference to English emigrants of the colonial period that can be found in England. They identify only 100,000 emigrants, a small fraction of the total number.

The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614–1775. Lists names of approximately 50,000 Englishmen who were sentenced by legal process to be transported to the American colonies between 1614 and 1775.

More Emigrants in Bondage, 1614–1775. Lists 9,000 additions and amendments to the earlier work, compiling names of Englishmen sentenced to be transported to the American colonies.

Unfortunately, none of these Coldham records list a Joseph Stanford. Research of records provided by CastleGarden.org and TheShipsList.com also fail to include a Joseph Stanford during the 1600s.

Thus, the first records we can find for Joseph Stanford are those when he and Jane are settled in Maryland.