

Helen Smith

Title

Distressed cotton weavers emigration scheme

Summary

This presentation talks about the Queensland scheme. There were many types of immigration schemes but this one was unusual as it was basically a humanitarian scheme where money was raised in Queensland to help fund the emigrants to leave England.

Abstract

This presentation shows how one particular immigration scheme worked, based on a humanitarian idea to help people. It explores how the US Civil War impacted massively on the manufacturing areas in England and how this, in turn, impacted on the population. We will look at how it was reported in the newspapers in the Australian colonies and how the Queenslanders reacted. We will also look at the information that can be obtained from the newspapers both in Australia and overseas and also from books of that time.

We will consider the political decisions made and what happened when insufficient of the target group decided to emigrate. We will also look at where others were recruited from and the conditions in those places that made emigration a better proposition than staying. Silk ribbon weavers from Coventry, flax weavers from Scotland and Ireland all became involved.

A major purpose is to show that immigration is not just one scheme. There were many reasons for Governments to help people to emigrate and delving deeper into these reasons, using a variety of records, can give us a greater understanding of our ancestors.

Audience

Intermediate