

Migration



July 2019

So your ancestors came to America. Why didn't they just stay at the place where they first arrived? What made them keep going?

- 1) All the good land was already taken there. My Clontz ancestor arrived in Philadelphia on the ship *Adventure* in September 1732 from Germany. He went to Lunenburg County, Virginia by 1748, where he became a tavern keeper. His grandson Jeremiah was born in North Carolina in 1756. Most of the family is still in North Carolina to this day.
- 2) The winters were too harsh. Some of my ancestors were members of a Presbyterian congregation that came from Ballybay, Ireland to the area of Lake George, New York in August 1764. After one winter, nearly all of them moved to Long Cane Creek in South Carolina.
- 3) Their intended destination was elsewhere. My German ancestor Henrick Adolph, age 38, disembarked from the ship *Dragon* at Charleston, South Carolina in December 1764. He came to South Carolina as the result of a Bounty Act passed in 1761 encouraging Protestant immigration. Shortly after arriving he was granted 300 acres of land on Hard Labor Creek near present-day McCormick, South Carolina and went there to take it up. (Hard Labor is near Long Cane, by the way.)

Once a family was settled in America, what would make them move again?

- 1) Religious zeal. Reverend Charles Bussey, whose family had been in Maryland since 1654, came to Edgefield County, South Carolina before the American Revolution. He is thought to have been associated with the Great Awakening movement. He served many years as the minister at Big Steven's Creek Baptist Church.
- 2) Death in the family. After her husband Joshua Wade was "killed by an injury recd by sliding upon the ice" in February 1800, Anna Boatright Wade packed up her three children. She moved with them, her brother, and her father from Bedford County, Virginia to Franklin County, Georgia.
- 3) Winning the lottery! In 1825, the Creek Indians ceded territory at the Treaty of Indian Springs, Georgia. Heard County was eventually established out of part of this land. Francis Hilley, my distant uncle, drew a winning entry in the resultant Georgia Land Lottery. In January 1838, he moved there with his father, Thomas Hilley, Revolutionary veteran, from Elbert County, Georgia, a distance of 162 miles. It was an unusually cold winter, with deep snowdrifts. Thomas contracted pleurisy and died in March. His obituary says that he was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 30 years. However he is buried at the oldest church in the county, a Baptist church founded in 1828. Francis moved on to Claiborne Parish, Louisiana in 1854. He left some children in Heard County, but they soon moved elsewhere in Georgia, and today none of the family remains there.
- 4) Gold! Some of the Clontz family moved to North Georgia in the early 1800s, to an area where gold was discovered in 1828. One of the Clontz youths dropped off the face of the earth and out of the family history. Many years ago I found a researcher in California who was looking for the origins of his Clontz ancestor, a 49er who had died young. Lo and behold, they were the same person!

More prosaic reasons include moving for work or school, marrying someone from another area, or to be near family members. But I think this definition of “yondering” (from the Urban Dictionary) sums up many situations:

actualizing the **yearning** to adventure, to roam, to **wander** in an unspecified direction toward an indeterminate objective, usually over hill(s) and **out of sight**

Additional internet resources:

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/moving-on/>

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/index.cfm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_trails_and_roads_in_the_United_States

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1784_to_1839_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1784_to_1839_(National_Institute))

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1840_to_1865_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1840_to_1865_(National_Institute))

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1866_to_1919_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1866_to_1919_(National_Institute))

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1920_to_the_Present_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Migration_Timeline_1920_to_the_Present_(National_Institute))

http://www.allinthepast.net/downloads/naturalization_laws.pdf

<https://www.50states.com/maps/usamap.htm>