



Britain to America: Mid-Nineteenth-Century Immigrants to the United States (Statue of Liberty Ellis Island)

William E. Van Vugt

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From 1820 to 1860, the United States and Great Britain were the two most closely interconnected countries in the world in terms of culture and economic growth. In an important addition to immigration history, William Van Vugt explores who came to America from Great Britain during this period and why. Disruptions and economic hardships, such as the repeal of Britain's protective Corn Laws, the potato famine, and technological displacement, do not account for the great mid-century surge of British migration to America. Rather than desperation and impoverishment, Van Vugt finds that immigrants were motivated by energy, tenacity, and ambition to improve their lives by taking advantage of opportunities in America. Drawing on county histories, passenger lists of immigrant ships, census data, and manuscript collections in Great Britain and the United States, Van Vugt sketches the lives and fortunes of dozens of immigrant farmers, miners, artisans, skilled and unskilled laborers, professionals, and religious nonconformists.

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