JEWS IN THE BRITISH ISLES IN 1851: BIRTHPLACES, RESIDENCE AND MIGRATIONS

PETRA LAIDLAW

ABSTRACT

This paper offers the beginnings of a statistical portrait of the Jewish community living in mid-19th century Britain, before the age of mass immigration later in the century. It draws on the 1851 Anglo-Jewry Database (1851 AJDB) which has been under development over the past decade with the aim of offering an improved quantitative dimension to the existing historiography, and records information on 28,773 individuals. The paper suggests some fine-tuning of overall population estimates for this community; it then examines the range of birthplaces and later residence of the population in scope, along with their migrations both before and after 1851.

BACKGROUND

Historical context

Jews are known to have been living in the British Isles since about the time of the Norman Conquest, in 1066. Following mass expulsion in 1290, only very small numbers are thought to have been living in London and one or two other cities until conditions were liberalized under the terms of the Readmission in 1656. The first of the new immigrants were Sephardim from Holland, but they were soon joined by others from Portugal, and by Ashkenazim from both Holland and Germany and then Poland. By the mid-18th century, the Jewish population is thought to have been of the order of 8,000. This number would quadruple by the mid-19th century; then rise to about 300,000 following the greatly accelerated immigration of the late-19th/early-20th centuries.

Compared with many other European countries, Britain in the 19th century presented a relatively benign social and political environment...
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to Jews; and with its early industrialization and global empire, it offered enticing economic opportunities. A number of Jews, like Benjamin Disraeli, Moses Montefiore and Nathan Meyer Rothschild, enjoyed dazzling – and inspiring – careers, although the great mass, inevitably, led more humdrum lives, some living in great poverty. The community as a whole, however, seems to have shared in Britain’s growing prosperity over the course of the century, and Britain remained a powerful magnet for immigration from Europe even as migration to the New World gained pace.

Britain’s political and legal system encouraged acculturation. From the time of the Readmission, it had been made clear, more or less consistently, that Jews could not expect special rights and privileges qua Jews. Anyone born in Britain was on the same legal footing as anyone else. For this reason, Jewish status is rarely identified in official sources, and the mass of ordinary Jews has tended to melt into the background. This has made it hard to get much solid quantitative purchase on the community’s history, notwithstanding notable efforts from the 18th century onwards. The digitization of records and the concomitant explosion of research by community historians and genealogists have, however, opened up the field.

THE 1851 DATABASE

The 1851 AJDB is a ‘prosopographical’ database, that is to say, one built up from an aggregation of summary biographies on everyone included in it. The Database includes details on 28,773 persons and thus covers over 90 per cent of the Jewish population estimated to have been living in the British Isles in 1851. Each entry lists, wherever possible, the subject’s dates of birth, marriage(s) and death; their parents, spouse(s) and children (with birth-years); their place of birth, and of residence at decadal intervals thereafter (up to the 1910s); their occupations at decadal intervals (between 1800 and 1919); their faith affiliations in early-, mid- and late-life; their cause of death and place of burial. On Jewish status, the 1851 AJDB takes a deliberately broad approach, allowing the inclusion of any candidates who were born Jewish, or converted to Judaism, or were likely in their own lifetimes either to have considered themselves, or to have been considered by others, to be Jewish.

Work on the Database began in the late-1990s, when the author invited contributions from community historians, genealogists and others. The response was generous. Some contributors had previously transcribed, from censuses, all the data on apparently Jewish households in a given city or cities. Most of the sizeable Jewish communities in mid-19th century Britain had been covered in this way, with the exception of London, whose 1851 census has since been comprehensively researched by the author. Others had researched particular families in depth. Others
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still had scrutinized particular data sources, such as insurance policies, charity reports or lunatic asylum records, for Jewish listings. Since 2007, the Database has been searchable online, free of charge, by individual name. It has been widely used, prompting in turn the contribution of valuable additional data from researchers around the world. In total, over 250 contributors have participated in the project: their names are listed on the website. The author has however maintained full editorial control throughout, ensuring that all data conform to the definitions and conventions set out on the website.

All entries in the Database relate to people who were living in the British Isles in 1851. Most, but not all, appear in the 1851 population census: some died before the census date; others were born after it; and others again, though attested to have been based in the British Isles at the time of the census, for a range of possible reasons cannot be traced in the census itself. The census however has no specific significance in the project, except as a valuable and fairly comprehensive source of data.

Nor is the year 1851 of particular significance in project terms. The mid-century population generally was of interest because it had been relatively under-researched. A single year was needed as a means of defining a cohort and minimizing duplicates, and a census-year was obviously preferable. 1851 was preferred as a base-year over, say, 1841 (also a census year) because data sources were richer than those ten years earlier. These sources include the one-off religious census taken in that year; the recent introduction of the Jewish Chronicle newspaper; and most importantly the 1851 census itself, which was fuller than its 1841 predecessor and arguably one of the more reliable England and Wales censuses of the 19th century. 1851 was also preferred over 1861, in this case because the target population at the earlier date was that much smaller, and therefore more manageable in a project of this nature.

It is important, however, to appreciate that the data in the Database span two centuries: a significant proportion of those covered were born in the mid-19th century, while others lived through to the mid-20th century. In principle, the Database charts these people’s entire lives; and in practice, though data on many entries are fairly sparse, it yields substantial data-sets covering several decades. By definition, however, the data are richest on the 1850s and immediately surrounding decades. Coverage is progressively thinner in the outlying decades (see Appendix Note 1).

Sources

The national censuses from 1841 to 1911 have been key sources in compiling the 1851 AJDB. Other important general sources include the registration of births, marriages and deaths under the national systems which began in England and Wales in 1837, and in Scotland in 1855.
Jewish sources include the records of the Great, Hambro, New and Bevis Marks synagogues, which go back to the eighteenth century, if not earlier, and become more comprehensive in the first half of the nineteenth. Announcements in Jewish newspapers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century are particularly germane to the 1851 AJDB population, and have been usefully collated by name in two printed volumes covering the period 1861–1880 (Berger, 1999 and 2004) and online in relation to the periods up to 1869 and 1880–95 (www.jeffreymaynard.com). Extensive listings of entries relating to Jews in trade directories and the like in the first half of the nineteenth century are also available online (ibid). An unpublished index to Jewish names in insurance policies from about the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, compiled by Mr George Rigal, has generously been made available to the author, and has proved a rich resource, especially for occupations, on the early nineteenth century. All these sources were extensively trawled in the compilation of the 1851 AJDB and many contributors drew on other sources, for example naturalization papers, court records, published biographies and gravestone inscriptions, for data that were also incorporated.

BRITISH JEWISH POPULATION IN 1851

Estimates of the size of the Jewish population in the mid-nineteenth century have varied quite widely. V D Lipman (1954, p65) suggests that in 1850, ‘there were about 18,000 to 20,000 Jews in London, with about 35,000 in Britain as a whole’, although the different nineteenth century sources he quotes suggested anything from 18,000 to 25,000 in London, and from 27,000 to 40,000 for Britain (1954, p7). Writing more recently, Geoffrey Alderman (1992, p3) concludes, ‘We are … probably on safe ground in asserting that the Jewish population – however defined – of the United Kingdom at the time (say) of the Great Exhibition of 1851 numbered around 30 to 35,000 souls. We are on even safer ground in adding that the vast majority of these – perhaps as many as 25,000 and certainly no fewer than 20,000 – lived in London’.

The 1851 AJDB gives an opportunity to refine these figures. As noted above, it brings together the results of comprehensive census studies in most of the main centres of Jewish population in mid-nineteenth century Britain, namely Birmingham, Cardiff, Exeter, Falmouth, Glasgow, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Merthyr Tydfil, North Shields, Oxford, Penzance, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Sunderland, Swansea, Truro and of course London. It has also been able to draw on, and with the help of the census in many cases to extend, more partial census studies and non-census studies in centres such as Bristol, Canterbury, Chatham, Cheltenham, Dover, Dublin, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Norwich and Sheffield. Data supplied by family
historians and further leads culled from Jewish newspapers add material on families that might not otherwise have been picked up through census trawls. The author has also undertaken extensive searches of census indexes for Jews residing outside the main centres of population, initiating the search with such prompts as mainly-Jewish names or commonly-Jewish birthplaces such as Poland, and then applying a more demanding set of criteria in order to determine Jewish status with a reasonable degree of confidence.

Liverpool

In most cases, estimates of the sizes of different communities arising from the 1851 AJDB exercise seem broadly to agree with earlier estimates. The one significant exception is Liverpool, a major port on England’s north-western seaboard which had long played an important part in transatlantic trade and had in consequence been a magnet for Jewish traders. The city’s Jewish population in the mid-century was estimated by Lipman (1954, p187) to be of the order of 2,500, and by Alderman (1992, p21) to be of the order of 1,500. The author’s own trawl of the 1851 census for Liverpool, however, has failed to turn up more than about 850 Jewish inhabitants.

Against this, Bill Williams (1985, pp 38–39) suggests that the population of Liverpool was notably larger in the 1820s and 1830s than those of Birmingham or Manchester, standing at around 1,000. Lipman, and to a lesser extent Alderman, appear to have taken the view that Liverpool maintained this demographic lead over its rivals into the 1850s. Philip Ettinger, on the other hand, wrote that when the new synagogue in Hope Place was being planned in the mid-1850s, with accommodation for 800, ‘the move to build a new Synagogue, which when completed would possibly be large enough to accommodate the then entire Jewish population of the City, was causing much alarm to those in authority in Seel Street’. An examination of birth figures would support an 1851 population estimate of 800–900.

If this figure is correct, it appears to imply that in the 1840s and 1850s the Liverpool population was shrinking. This is possible: Liverpool would not be alone in facing a decrease in its Jewish population around this time. It may have been affected particularly by emigration to the New World: this was running high in the 1840s, and Liverpool was a key port of embarkation. It was also the main port of arrival from Ireland, and took in big influxes of destitute migrants from the famine there in the 1840s. This would exert downward pressure on earnings and severe strain on accommodation, which may have served as further encouragement to the city’s Jewish population to move elsewhere, in Britain if not abroad. This is only hypothetical, and perhaps a more convincing explanation is that Liverpool’s population was not as large in earlier
decades as has previously been thought. Only further detailed study can settle the matter.

Population size

The difference of over 1,500 between Lipman’s Liverpool figure and that implied by the 1851 AJDB has an important bearing on the overall size of the Jewish population of the British Isles. As noted above, there is little dispute over the figures for other large centres of population; and little over the much smaller centres whose numbers would anyway make little difference to the overall total. The best estimate from the 1851 AJDB project for the total population of the British Isles is about 31–32,000; but if the higher estimates for Liverpool were to prove correct this figure would need to be revised towards or beyond 33,000.

The working assumption here, however, is that 31–32,000 is nearer the truth, of which about 22,500 were in London. The Database, with its 28,773 entries, represents over 90 per cent of the calculated total. While the Database is not presented as a random sample, at this level of coverage, provided it is treated with caution, it may be considered representative for many analysis purposes. Males make up 50.7 per cent of the Database population, a little higher than their proportion in the overall British population in 1851, which was 48.8 per cent. This is to be expected from a population of immigrant origin, in which young single males will often have migrated alone.

Age

The age-profile of the 1851 AJDB population is set out in Figure 1 and should be born in mind when drawing statistical inferences from the Database. For example, over 7,000 of the entries (24 per cent) are aged 11 or under in 1851, and a significant number of these would not survive the 1850s. Tracking the more long-lived of this youngest cohort to the ends of their lives is more problematical than tracking older cohorts, not least because detailed data are not available from British censuses after 1911. At the other end of the age-range, there are nearly 3,000 people in the Database who were born in the eighteenth century, when those surviving to adulthood would not, on average, expect to live much past their sixties. This suggests that many of this older age group would not live beyond the 1850s, although the Database records the deaths of only about 40 per cent of them. (The Database does include in total some 14 apparent, eventual, centenarians, of whom four were supposedly born in or before 1751. True ages may however have been exaggerated: only two of the 14 can be confirmed as centenarians, one of whom was Sir Moses Montefiore.)
**Birthplaces**

Some 80 per cent of the AJDB population (about 23,000) were born in the British Isles. However, the British-born percentage varies by age group, reflecting in part the information available and the way the AJDB is constructed: 70 per cent British-born probably comes closer to the underlying picture for most age-groups. Among those born before 1770, British births represent 55 per cent of the total: this is unsurprising given the relatively recent foundation of the British community. The British-born proportion then rises to 70 per cent for those born in the 1770s, and remains very close to that level for births in the 1790s through to the 1820s. The increase in numbers by birth decade shown in Figure 1 suggests a steady growth in the native-born population that was paralleled by steadily increasing immigration.

The proportion for those born in the 1780s is slightly outside this trend: some 74 per cent of those born in that decade (n = 810) are British-born. The numbers involved are small, but a reduction in the foreign-born would be consistent with reduced immigration of young adults during the Napoleonic wars. It is of interest that this generation of foreign-born Jews remains under-represented in 1851. It suggests that those who were prevented from migrating to the British Isles in early adulthood were unlikely to do so in middle-age when conditions for migration had improved: family responsibilities and business ties may have played a part here.

The British-born proportion increases sharply for those born from 1830 onwards, i.e. the children and young adults in the Database. This reflects the fact that most potential young-adult immigrants in these
birth cohorts would not yet have reached typical migration age, and were still living abroad. Given that immigration was on the rise, if the Database had been built around those living in Britain in 1861 rather than 1851, the foreign-born proportion among those born in the 1830s would probably have been considerably larger than the 1851 figures suggest.

British-born

Not surprisingly in view of the length of settlement and accompanying opportunities for movement around the country, by 1851 the birthplaces of British-born Jews in the Database are highly dispersed. Nevertheless, across all the decades, London birthplaces are predominant: three-quarters of the British-born in the Database were born there (n = 17,531). Furthermore, at least half of these were born in Aldgate, Spitalfields, or Whitechapel, the main constituents of the district known in this project as ‘Central East’. Of these, the single largest concentration of birthplaces was in Aldgate, the tightly-packed area on the eastern borders of the City of London, where the four main synagogues – Bevis Marks, the Great, the Hambro and the New – were situated.

The remainder of the London births are found mainly in the other Central districts: for much of the pre-1851 period, London did not extend much beyond what is now viewed as its centre. The Central West district accounts for about 9 per cent of the London births (n = 1,535). The Central North district, which is sometimes underplayed in the historiography, accounts for 800 births, outnumbering the Central South which accounts for only 618. Smaller numbers of London births can be found over a wider area, mostly in the Inner districts which are round the Central ones: Inner East accounts for 560. The Outer districts would hardly be seen as constituents of the metropolis until later in the 19th century, but they were home to a number of satellite communities, in places like Greenwich, Stratford, Tottenham and Woolwich. These were small by London standards, if less so by provincial standards. Between them, the outer districts account for just over 1 per cent of the London-born (n = 228).

As Figure 3 shows, the highest concentrations of birthplaces outside London are in the North West and South West regions. The number born in each of these two regions is about midway between the numbers born in Central West and Central North London, underscoring London’s predominance. About three-quarters of all the births in the North West and South West regions were in just four cities: Liverpool (n = 575), Manchester (n = 384), Plymouth (n = 324) and Bristol (n = 218). With the exception of Manchester, these are all seaports, and major hubs in transatlantic trade; Plymouth was also an important naval base. As such, they had served as magnets for Jewish traders well back into the 18th
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Figure 2
AJDB grouping of main London residential districts (with area of first settlement in Central East marked by grey circle)

Figure 3
Numbers born in regions outside London, AJDB population
century. Manchester, like Birmingham which was the dominant location in the Central region \((n = 473)\), had relatively newly come to prominence, as one of the manufacturing centres born out of the industrial revolution.

The regions along the Europe-facing east and south coasts of England between them account for about 9 per cent of the British-born AJDB population. Apart from being the entry point for most immigration, the seaboard had great importance for both inland\(^{13}\) and overseas trade, and also for defence, all of which created opportunities for Jews in such traditional 18th/early-19th century occupations as the jewellery trade, clothes dealing and pawnbroking. Chief centres include Sunderland, Hull, Great Yarmouth, Norwich, Ipswich, Canterbury, Chatham, Sheerness, Brighton and Portsmouth, but no particular city dominates to the extent found in the North West and South West regions, suggesting deeper and longer dispersal and penetration.

**Foreign-born**

Just under 20 per cent \((n = 5,611)\) of the 1851 AJDB population are recorded as having been born abroad, plus two at sea. The great majority were born in continental Europe, and the biggest numbers came from Holland, Germany, and Poland.

Those from Holland can be numbered reasonably confidently \((n = 1,099)\), because there are few ambiguities of definition. Germany and Poland, however, present problems because of shifting expressions and shifting borders over the lifetimes of those recorded in the Database. The use, in particular, of the expression ‘Prussia’, unless more specifically defined, presents an important difficulty in estimating the numbers born in Germany and Poland respectively. On allowing for this (see Appendix Note 3), the best estimate is that about 1,400 of the Database population were born in Germany and about 2,300 in Poland. This is an unexpected finding: it is commonly supposed that immigration from Poland was small compared with Germany until the second half of the 19th century, although there is evidence of a significant Polish presence in London from as early as the 18th century.\(^{14}\)

In addition, 184 are recorded as having been born in parts of Eastern Europe other than Poland, namely Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Rumania, Russia and the Ukraine. This may well be an underestimate: some of the 2,300 births attributed above to Poland may in fact relate to more easterly locations. Whilst there is a fair margin of uncertainty in all these figures, it seems clear that in 1851 the numbers of Jews in Britain who had been born in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe significantly outnumbered the numbers born in Germany. The section on Migrations below examines when the migrants from Eastern Europe might have begun to outnumber those from Germany.
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A much smaller number of European-born Jews came from a wide range of other locations, including Scandinavia (n = 30); north-western Europe, here covering Belgium, France and Luxembourg (n = 140); Iberia, mostly in this case meaning Gibraltar (n = 60); central Europe, here covering Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Switzerland (n = 63); and the central Mediterranean (n = 43), represented mainly by Italy but also by Greece. A further 260 are recorded as having been born outside Europe: 14 in the Near or Middle East; 43 in Africa (primarily Morocco); 183 in the Americas (primarily the West Indies); 18 in Australasia; and two in South Asia.

RESIDENCE IN 1851

All 28,773 of the Database population were, by definition, living (or based) somewhere in the British Isles in 1851, and three-quarters were living in London. Here the pattern of residence was broadly similar to that in earlier decades described under Birthplaces: the great majority were still living in the Central East district, with the biggest concentration in Aldgate, closely followed by Spitalfields. Both these districts were home to well over 5,000 Jews. Whitechapel, just to the east, would later develop as the dominant Jewish area; in 1851, its Jewish population numbered around 3,000.\textsuperscript{15} The Central West district by this date had a Jewish population of approaching 3,000; Central North about 1,400; and Central South about 700.

As London expanded, however, the Inner districts were also beginning to attract a significant Jewish presence. By 1851 there were about 1,700 Jews were living in this belt, which offered better living conditions – less overcrowding, cleaner air, good transport – in many cases within still-easy reach (half-an-hour to an hour’s walk) of the core of the Jewish community in Aldgate. The biggest numbers were in Inner East, particularly at Bethnal Green, Mile End and Stepney, which like Whitechapel would play host to much larger numbers of Jews later in the century. The Inner North district was home to fairly sizeable Jewish populations (100-plus) in Islington and Hackney, as was the Inner West area, particularly in Belgravia, Pimlico and Chelsea.

A small number of Jews, particularly among the wealthy who could afford an out-of-town residence, had been living in the Outer London areas as early as the 18th century. By 1851, many of these locations were developing apace as populous suburbs, and about 500 Jews are to be found in this belt in 1851. The beginnings of settlement are visible in affluent parts of North West London, like Hampstead and Hendon, that would be very much favoured 50 or 100 years later; but, at this date, larger numbers were to be found in places like Brixton, Hammersmith, Holloway, Kingston-upon-Thames, Stockwell and Woolwich where Jewish settlement later declined.
Figure 4
Centres of Jewish population in 1851
Some 25 per cent of the adult Jews in London in 1851 were foreign-born. Immigrants from different countries tended to cluster in different areas: Spitalfields, for example, was pre-eminently the destination of immigrants from Holland; Aldgate of immigrants from Poland. However, the foreign-born proportion of the adult Jewish population was lower in London than it was in the rest of the British Isles (Figure 5). Part of the divergence is caused by a net-migration into London of British, but not London-born, Jews, who outstripped London-born Jews living elsewhere in the British Isles at that date.

Additionally, foreign-born Jews were settling disproportionately outside the capital. Foreign immigration was one of the main engines of growth in the newer population centres outside London, notably Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. Table 1 ranks by size all cities outside London with over 100 Jews in 1851. The shading in column 6 identifies cities where the foreign-born proportion was 30 per cent or more. Manchester, after London the largest recipient of immigrants, drew in large numbers from Germany and accounted for about 1 in 6 of the German-born Jewish population in the British Isles in 1851. Birmingham’s immigrants
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were predominantly from Poland: well over a fifth of its Jewish population in 1851 was Polish-born. Leeds’ Jewish community was much smaller at this date, but here the Polish-born formed an even higher proportion (40 per cent) of the total Jewish population.

It is noticeable that nearly all the locations with a high foreign-born proportion in 1851 are the new, industrial cities, as distinct from the old seabports where the immigrants had tended to cluster in earlier times. The older centres not only took in fewer immigrants, but tended also to be the communities losing their native populations, particularly to London, as Table 2 indicates. Shading in column 4 of this table identifies cities which by 1851 had lost 40 per cent or more of the Database population born there. Places like Portsmouth, Bristol, and Chatham were all were losing population to London, and Brighton especially so, though its losses appear to have been more than made up by inflows of British-born Jews from other cities. The cities of Hull, Leeds and Sheffield also show high outflows, at least in proportionate terms, but these are dwarfed by their inflows, particularly of foreign immigrants.

Table 1
Inflows to major regional cities as at 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total AJDB population, 1851</th>
<th>Born elsewhere in GB and living in city in 1851</th>
<th>Foreign-born living in city in 1851</th>
<th>Total inflow</th>
<th>Inflow as % of 1851 population</th>
<th>Foreign-born as % of 1851 population</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>796</td>
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More detailed analysis of the figures (eg by age cohort, or by migrations to other cities) would doubtless yield a more nuanced and informative picture, but the bare data suggest quite a stark contrast between the dynamism of the newer communities (attracting in migrants and holding on to their native Jewish populations) and the failing vitality of the old centres of population.

At the same time, small numbers of Jews can be found in many lesser communities throughout the British Isles: the Database lists some 130 cities and towns with a Jewish presence in 1851. In some cases, the context makes clear that the people concerned had been living there for many years; in others it is hard to tell whether they are short-stay visitors or longer-term residents, and, accordingly, the true picture on these smaller communities is uncertain. The 1851 snapshot does however suggest quite deep penetration of Jews into ‘middle England’ and the rest of the British Isles, including quite a number of the smaller towns of Wales and Scotland, and the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Table 2
Outflows from major regional cities as at 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Born in city living elsewhere in 1851</th>
<th>Born in city living in London</th>
<th>Total outflow as % of those born in city</th>
<th>London residents as % of all outflows</th>
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<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wherever possible, the Database records the residence of each individual at decadal intervals from the mid-eighteenth century through to the 1910s. In principle this allows examination of two separate themes: population shifts *en masse*, and the mobility of individuals. However, as the data are sparser for decades after 1851, particular caution is needed in generalizing about the forward patterns: see Appendix Note 1.

**Internal Migration**

As indicated earlier, the settlement pattern for Jews in London in 1851 was quite similar to that obtaining in earlier decades, save only for the growth of the Central West district and the beginnings of outward migration to the suburbs. By the 1880s, however, these shifts are more marked (Figure 6). The Inner West, with areas like Bayswater, Maida Vale, Notting Hill and Paddington, attracted the wealthier sections of the community; the Inner North, particularly around Islington and Dalston, was favoured by the moderately prosperous. The Inner East, now primarily represented by Mile End, offered decent housing that appears often to have served as ‘starter homes’ for younger families before they expanded and moved north and west.

Much of this change simply mirrors wider changes in London’s social geography, with its burgeoning suburban development. It also suggests the more open society and better economic opportunities that Britain offered compared with many of the countries from which immigrants

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**Figure 6**

1851 AJDB residents in London by district, 1881
Jews in the British Isles in 1851

were now increasingly coming. The marked move out of the East End by earlier immigrants not only helped to create room for the newcomers in a still distinctively Jewish milieu, it also presented possible trajectories for their own lives. It is striking that the foreign-born in London’s population of 1851 seem just as likely as the British-born to be living in the more affluent parts by the 1880s.

On the other hand, the Database indicates that numbers of the 1851 population remained in the same area, sometimes in the same street or house, all their lives. About 1 in 6 of those born in Aldgate and living there in 1851 were still there in the 1880s. The reasons for their staying are not known but we might surmise from the wider context that on the whole they did so more out of choice than otherwise.

Population movements within and between the Regions are more marked than those in London. By 1851, as previously noted, the old seaboard centres of Jewish population were already losing ground to the newer industrial cities. Those shifts had been accentuated and consolidated by the 1880s, with the Central region – primarily Birmingham – showing the greatest gain, and the North West region apparently slipping back. As ever, however, the data need to be read with care. The 1851 AJDB population was, by the 1880s, an ageing population. Any who had been alive as early as the 1800s would now be elderly and in retirement, often living either with grown-up children (in whatever locations attracted that younger generation), or in retirement locations like the south coast. Those who had been children in 1851 were now in mid-life, shifting to wherever work opportunities, marriage, or other circumstances took them. Significant numbers had emigrated abroad, as discussed below. An analysis by birth cohort would doubtless highlight these differences, but the overall message is clear – that the 1851 AJDB population en masse participated in sizeable inter-regional shifts within Britain, if not further afield, between the 1850s and 1880s.

Immigration pre-1851

Some of the foreign-born in the Database would have arrived as children; many would first have entered the country as young adults; and others would have settled only later in life, perhaps joining children already in the British Isles. Reasonably firm arrival dates are available for only about 1 in 20 of the foreign-born, but it is possible to estimate at least the decade of arrival of the rest with tolerable confidence (see Appendix Note 4). This in turn offers some tentative insight into overall immigration flows.

The overall numbers likely to have arrived in Britain before the end of the Napoleonic Wars and surviving to 1851 are very small. There are only about 500 in the Database, but those suggest that the numbers of Polish immigrants were similar to those from Holland and Germany as
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far back as the late-eighteenth century. In the 1810s and 1820s, immigration from Poland appears to have accelerated relative to Holland and Germany, and to have taken off sharply in the 1830s and '40s. In the 1830s and '40s immigration from other East European countries also began to grow, albeit from a much lower base. Flow-patterns from particular areas between the 1850s and 1880s are uncertain but the ADJB suggests that if the numbers arriving from Eastern Europe continued to increase as they had been doing, they would already form a significant mass in Britain before the major immigration flow of the 1880s to 1900s. This would suggest a migration chain which, over the next three decades, might have influenced those immigrants from Eastern Europe who chose to migrate to Britain rather than to other destinations. ¹⁸

Migrations from other regions of origin are not without interest, though their numbers are much smaller. Chief among the lesser sources are France, Gibraltar, Morocco and the West Indies. These had been sources of immigration from the eighteenth century, and their numbers too started to accelerate in the 1820s and 1830s, doubtless reflecting external conditions like the ending of the Napoleonic Wars and the change in the Caribbean economies following the abolition of slavery. ¹⁹

Emigration post-1851

The Database indicates that at least several hundred, and probably more, of the 1851 population, wherever born, subsequently lived overseas. A number of them moved or returned to continental Europe. The Database contains examples of women who left Britain for continental Europe following marriage, and of men who left to pursue their careers there. Some newer immigrants may have returned to their homelands if things did not work out in Britain as they had expected, or if family circumstances at home required their return. Some long-settled immigrants may have returned to their birthplaces later in life, as their preferred place for retirement and eventual burial. All such cases are hard to trace, and it is therefore impossible to estimate their number reliably. ²⁰

There is more extensive evidence of migrations to the Americas, Australasia, South Africa and other non-European destinations. About 10,800 Database entries contain information on residence in one or more of the decades after 1851: this represents about 42 per cent of those estimated to be still alive after the 1850s. Some 7 per cent of this subgroup are listed as living in the USA, Canada, the Caribbean, Central or South America, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, India or South Africa in at least one of the decades after 1851. ²¹ Easily the most favoured destination was Australia (figure 7). This predominance is slightly surprising. Emigration studies relating to the British population as a whole (Jewish and non-Jewish) in the 19th century suggest that
Jews in the British Isles in 1851

the USA was a more common destination (Baines, 1985, Table 3.3). It is possible that the result here is due to bias in the available data. More contributors to the Database have submitted data on emigrants to Australia than on emigrants to the USA, and this finding could reflect an imbalance of contributions rather than the true balance of destinations.

Another possible explanation is that emigration destinations varied significantly by decade, and that the apparently low figures for the USA are due to the timing of the 1851 snapshot. Taking the British population as a whole, Australia seems to have outpaced the USA as a destination during the period 1853–60, but only rarely thereafter (ibid). Anecdotal evidence submitted in the course of the Database project suggests that significant numbers of Jews emigrated from the British Isles to California for the gold rush in the 1840s; only a few early-returnees actually feature in the 1851 AJDB. By the 1850s, gold rush fever had moved on from California to Australia. Occupational data on 1851 AJDB emigrants suggests that many of those moving to Australia did so to work, if not in mining then in supporting occupations, like running bars and lodging houses, clothing shops and lending/deposit agencies. Taking a long view, we might conclude that the more mobile Jews were just following wherever new opportunities were opening up; some of those in the Database criss-crossed the globe extensively over their lifetimes. The apparent favouring of Australia over the USA may thus be a short-term rather than an enduring effect.

It is important to be aware that we cannot tell how many of those who moved overseas were actually emigrating, in the sense of moving away

Figure 7
AJDB individuals living in main overseas destinations, 1860s–1890s

47
with the intention of starting a new life with no expectation of returning (other than for visits). Some may have planned only to work abroad for a few years. The Database indicates that of the 436 who were living overseas in the 1860s, 30 were apparently living in the British Isles again as early as the 1870s. Similar numbers are found a decade later. The data are too thin for safe generalization, but it is probably reasonable to assume that the overall return rate would be quite a bit higher than suggested by this limited analysis. Whatever their long-term intentions, the 1851 AJDB population seem to have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the British Empire. This would be understandable especially among the British-born segment of the population. Moving to another English-speaking country, with cultural similarities to the country they were leaving, would present relatively little challenge to them. In their propensity to emigrate, they may well have mirrored Britons at large, who were migrating between continents in considerable numbers throughout the 19th century (Baines, 1985, Appendices 2–5), though further study would be required to make a proper comparison.

For those born in continental Europe, a further major migration after the initial journey to the British Isles could have been more daunting. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the foreign-born under-represented in the emigrant data: they account for 78 (one per cent) of the 774 found outside Europe after 1851. The numbers here are small, and the nature of the data collection for the 1851 AJDB may have created other distortions, but a low propensity to re-emigrate appears to be backed up by data on the lifetime mobility of the individuals making up the Database population.

**Individual geographic mobility**

Database information on people’s residence across decades makes possible some estimate of their individual mobility. As noted earlier, some moved very little through the course of their lives; some moved extensively within the British Isles; about a fifth of the Database population made at least one long-distance move, simply in migrating to the British Isles; and after 1851, significant numbers would move further afield.

Some measure of these movements is given in Table 3. Here an estimate of each individual’s lifetime migration has been made, using standard ‘as the crow flies’ distances between all changes in residence to which the Database attests (see Appendix, Note 5). The higher distances travelled by the foreign-born section of the population before 1851 are only to be expected, but it is striking how much less mobile the foreign-born appear to be thereafter. As noted in the previous section, cultural factors may have made inter-continental emigration after 1851 more challenging for the foreign-born than for the British-born population.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis above is designed to show some of the ways in which a prosopographical database can cast new light on the history of a population. A price has to be paid for defining the target population by a more or less arbitrary date criterion, but the advantage is that it yields a rich and relatively manageable data-set. Provided it is interpreted judiciously, it affords a degree of quantitative insight that has hitherto been lacking, and gives due attention to the lives of the broad mass of the population, which can all too easily be underplayed in non-quantitative historiography. The current analysis suggests further inquiry, especially on immigration and emigration flows. Further analysis is planned on other themes covered by the Database, such as occupations, fertility and mortality.

The author acknowledges the great debt owed to the large number of people who have contributed to the Database. They are too numerous to name here, but are listed on the Database website (www.jgsgb.org.uk/contributors). The author would be pleased to hear from readers who might like to contribute to further analysis: email to 1851@jgsgb.org.uk.

APPENDIX: NOTES ON UNDERLYING DATA

1. Data coverage by decade

The Table below shows that data on place of residence for the 1851 AJDB population in any given decade become progressively thinner as one moves away from 1851. Of those in the Database who were already alive in earlier decades, the percentage with known residence in each of the decades up to the 1780s is high, but the absolute numbers are small. From the 1790s to the 1810s, the numbers are higher, but the percentage drops (if never below 50 per cent). The data relating to the 1820s–1840s are increasingly solid in both absolute and percentage terms.

After 1851, however, the numbers of known residences drop off quite rapidly, because it is harder to trace people’s movements forwards than backwards. Moreover, years of death are known for only 23 per cent of the Database population so, in order to gain some idea of the level of data coverage in any given decade, broad decadal mortality estimates need to be applied to each decadal birth cohort. For each birth cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data coverage by decade</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British-born</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3 Average migration distances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average pre-1851 migrations (kms)</th>
<th>Average post-1851 migrations (kms)</th>
<th>Average lifetime migrations (kms)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British-born</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Known residence of the Database population by decade (figures in bold based on estimated mortality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Persons with known residence</th>
<th>Those with known residence as % of those living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1760s</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770s</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780s</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790s</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800s</td>
<td>2,837</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810s</td>
<td>4,488</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820s</td>
<td>7,458</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830s</td>
<td>11,476</td>
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<td>1840s</td>
<td>18,545</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td>28,773</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>8,126</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>6,371</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>5,101</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890s</td>
<td>1,657</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

up to and including the 1830s, known deaths in any given decade from the 1850s onwards have been grossed up in line with the proportion of known deaths to the total cohort size to give an estimated total mortality in that decade. In the case of those born between 1840 and 1851, estimates of infant and childhood mortality in the 1850s and 1860s have been made using standard British mortality figures, then applying the same grossing-up procedure for later decades as was used for the older birth cohorts.

2. Age-related data

Exact (or more or less exact) dates of birth, from synagogue records, birth certificates and the like, are available for just under 14 per cent of the Database total. These match ages reported in the 1851 census with reassuring frequency, leading to the conclusion that the census is generally reliable in this regard. Age as reported in that census is therefore the default source where no more convincing source is available. The 30 March census date in 1851 – and similar intra-year dates for the other censuses – introduces, however, a systemic understatement of ages by a year in about two-thirds of those cases where, as in this project, the year of birth is taken simply as census-year less reported age. This is of minor consequence in most analyses, but needs to be kept well in mind in others, for example if looking at teenage marriages. Other biases (for example, understatement of age by unmarried women at the older end
of ‘marriageable age’, and the tendency of informants to overstate the ages at death of the very elderly), along with occasional confusions on the part of census enumerators mean that, in sum, the age-related data in the 1851 AJDB should be seen as broadly reliable rather than exact.

3. Residence locations

In the nineteenth century the names used for any given location can vary quite widely according to the source and date: ‘Mile End’ and ‘Whitechapel’ are particularly fluid terms, but there is ambiguity around many more. As part of the 1851 AJDB project, the author adopted a set of standard naming conventions and, in the case of London, took them down to street level, developing a street gazetteer as look-up table to ensure consistent usage as far as possible.

For locations abroad, the convention in the 1851 Database and throughout this analysis has been to use modern city names wherever possible (thus Gdansk rather than Danzig), and to place them within their modern borders (thus Gdansk is in Poland rather than Prussia). Where the sources indicate an actual town or city, and one with a fairly distinctive name, it can usually be located with some assurance (allowing always that the sources themselves sometimes render birthplaces inaccurately). Some city names, however, are subject to more uncertainty: ‘Kempen’ might mean ‘Kempen in Posen’, which is modern-day Kepno in Poland; or it might mean Kempen in Westphalia. Sometimes the census will give a clue which may or may not be reliable: ‘Kempen, Prussia’ may well be Kepno, whereas ‘Kempen, Germany’ may be Kempen in Westphalia, though the expressions ‘Germany’ and ‘Prussia’ appear often to be used rather loosely.

Frequently the available sources give no better indication of the subject’s birthplace than ‘Galicia’ (which could be either Poland or the Ukraine), or ‘Silesia’ (which is likely to be Poland, but could be the Czech Republic or Germany), or – much the commonest – ‘Prussia’. This makes for considerable uncertainty when it comes to measuring the relative contributions of the areas occupied by present-day Germany and present-day Poland to the 1851 AJDB population. The approach adopted in counting births in ‘Prussia’ has been to distribute the unspecified/Prussia births between Germany and Poland pro rata to the specified/Prussia birthplaces (eg Berlin, Brandenburg, Bydgoszcz/Bromberg, Gdansk/Danzig, Kalisz, Leszno/Lissa, and Poznan/Posen). This produces 75 German-Prussia births to 352 Polish-Prussia births. If the same ratio is applied to the 895 unspecified-Prussia births and the sub-totals redistributed to Germany and Poland (‘the Prussia adjustment’), births in Germany rise to 1,377, and the Poland figure becomes 2,308. The predominance of Poland over Germany is not particularly sensitive to the ratio adopted for the Prussia adjustment. If, instead of
distributing the 895 ‘Prussia’ births between Germany and Poland on the roughly 1:5 ratio suggested by city-specific Prussian births, they were distributed on a more arbitrary (and scarcely credible) 1:1 ratio, German births would still be only 1,668, and Polish births would be 2,018.

The Polish figure of 2,308 carries further uncertainty because some of those whose birthplace is rendered in the available sources as ‘Poland’ are likely actually to have come from Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania or the Ukraine (as also with some whose birthplace was given as ‘Russia’). Sometimes, as with Prussia, a place-name will settle the location more precisely, but with more easterly birthplaces this appears to happen less frequently, perhaps because of transcription problems. This makes it impractical to redistribute ‘Polish’ births to other Eastern European countries by an equivalent to the Prussia adjustment. Suffice it to say that the adjusted total of 2,308 births in Poland is probably slightly overstated, and the total of 184 for other East European births is probably somewhat understated.

4. Immigration

In about five per cent of cases, the date of arrival in Britain of the foreign-born in the Database is known with some precision (for example from shipping returns or naturalization papers), or at least to within two or three years (inferred, for example, from the recorded birthplaces of children). In about 48 per cent of cases, the date of arrival can be estimated to within about ten years, because the last trace on them abroad and the first trace on them in the British Isles are separated by 20 years or fewer. In the remainder of cases, the last trace abroad and the first trace in the British Isles are separated by more than 20 years. If however, for the sake of a broad picture, one allows that the bulk of immigrants in this third group would arrive as young adults, a rough estimate of arrival date can be attained for this group by positing arrival at age 20. This will give seriously wrong estimates in that minority of cases where the person concerned arrived either as a child or as a more mature adult. By and large, however, these might be supposed to balance each other out, and such cases are probably well outnumbered by those who arrived between the ages of about 15 and 25, for whom the ‘year of birth plus 20’ formula will give a reasonable approximation. These assumptions inform the estimates of arrival by decade from the main countries of origin that underlie the discussion of inward migration pre-1851 in the main paper.

5. Mobility estimates

The distance figures in Table 3 must be seen as very broad-brush. The Database records only one place of residence per decade and so intra-decadal moves are not picked up, though for some people they were
extensive. In other cases, the residence data for any given decade are vague, for example ‘London’ or ‘Prussia’. Standardized rules have been applied in these cases, so for example the distance from ‘Prussia’ to London is taken to be the distance from Poznan to London (930 kms) unless more specific information is available.

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**NOTES**

1 A useful summary of early sources is in Lipman (1954, pp 6–9)

2 www.jsgsb.org.uk/1851-database

3 National Archives, class HO 129, summary Jewish data from which are reproduced in Lipman (1954, Appendix). This one-off census does not give information relating to named individuals, but is a useful guide to the sizes of different communities.

4 For example studies of synagogue records or trade directories

5 For example because of their very ordinary British names

6 Ettinger, P (1930), quoted in private correspondence with the author by Arnold Lewis, community archivist for Liverpool

7 These appear under-reported in the data quoted by Lipman (1954, p 187), but can be revised by reference to the 1851 AJDB.

8 There is some uncertainty about many people’s ages: see Appendix Note 2

9 The figures cannot be absolutely precise: there are 165 entries for whom a birthplace has not been traced, and others whose birthplace is recorded inconsistently in different sources.

10 The large number of locations in which Jews are found in this period, both in and outside London, creates a need for standardization and aggregation (illustrated by Figures 2 and 4): see Appendix Note 3.

11 Forming part of what is now popularly known as The East End

12 The true proportion of London births attributable to the Central East district is likely to be well over half. The birthplaces of nearly 3,700 Database
Jews in the British Isles in 1851

...entries are listed only as ‘Middlesex’ or ‘London’, but a high proportion of these would be from Central East. If distributed pro rata, the Central East total comes to 12,319, or some 70 per cent of London births.

13 Before the railways, sea routes were often the main means of transport between inland destinations.

14 For example, from the mid/late 18th century, a number of synagogues in London were labelled as ‘Polish’. Writing in the mid-19th century, Picciotto (reprinted 1956, p 218) says that the increase in the Jewish population ‘during the eighteenth century was mainly confined to the Jews of German and Polish descent’.

15 The author’s trawl of London in the 1851 census has identified about 1,000 Jews, mostly in the Central East district, who have not yet been added to the Database. This suggests that the best estimate for the total population of the Central East district in 1851 is about 15,000. The extra numbers are included in the total London population estimate of 22,500 referred to in the main paper.

16 The figures for the foreign-born proportions of the population need to be treated with some caution for cities which have not been the subject of a comprehensive census trawl, namely Bristol, Norwich, Dublin, Brighton, Sheffield and Chatham.

17 It may need to be stressed that Figure 6 relates only to the Database population, that is to say those living in the British Isles in 1851. It tells nothing about the residence of post-1851 immigrants, so it carries no implication of any decline in the Jewish population of the Central East district at that early date: it remained the pre-eminent centre of Britain’s Jewish population for several decades afterwards.

18 On chain migration generally, see Baines (1985, chapter 2).

19 See Faber (1998). Only small numbers of the Jews listed there as owning slaves appear in the 1851 AJDB.

20 Baines (1985, pp 28–29) suggests in a discussion of later-19th century emigration generally that ‘between a quarter and a third of all emigrants from Europe before the First World War seem to have returned’ although he adds that the return rate was likely to have been less for the Irish and for Jews. If a hypothetical 20 per cent of those Jews in the Database who appear to have arrived in the British Isles between the 1820s and 1840s returned to their homeland after 1851, they alone would account for about 1,000 of the nearly 15,000 in the Database who are likely to have survived the 1850s but whose whereabouts after that decade is not known.

21 The number for the 1860s alone is 436, or about 16 per 1,000 of those not known already to have died. The figure looks high. Baines (1985, Appendix 4) estimates the overall emigration rate for England and Wales to be 2.4 per 1,000 over the period 1853–60, although, within that national figure, the rate from London (where of course most Jews were living) was considerably higher than from most rural counties. The basis of calculation of the two figures is very different, so they are not closely comparable, but closer analysis, for example by age group, might be able to identify if the Jewish section of the population exhibited an above-average or below-average propensity to emigrate.

22 See Note 20.

23 Taken as the average of distances recorded over the number of Database entries for whom post-1851 residence in at least one decade is known
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24 The birthplaces in the 1851 census alone yield extensive residence information relating to past decades, but information about later decades must be sought from later censuses or other sources. Name changes (eg among women marrying, or immigrants anglicizing their names), and the prevalence of some common names, can make it hard to trace people forwards, although the involvement in the project of large numbers of genealogists has been invaluable in reducing these problems.

25 These draw on Woods (2000, chapter 7), and Hinde (2003, chapter 12)

26 As the data on immigration during the Napoleonic period, discussed under Birthplaces in the main paper, suggest would be plausible

27 Modified by the Prussia adjustment described in Appendix Note 2.