Introduction

The Huguenots first arrived in Britain in the mid-sixteenth century, escaping from religious persecution in their native countries, and continued to come for the next two centuries. They were mainly from France, particularly the later arrivals, but also included Walloons and other French-speaking refugees from the Southern Low Countries (now Belgium and northern France). Major groups of Huguenot refugees came after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572 and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (which had granted French Protestants religious and political freedom in 1598) by Louis XIV in 1685. The biggest influx of refugees, some forty or fifty thousand, came from France between the late 1670s and the first decade of the eighteenth century.

The Huguenots tended to concentrate in London, Canterbury, Southampton, Norwich, and Bristol, where they formed distinct communities, creating their own churches and work environments. Wealthier members of the community provided work and relief for later refugees and for those of their co-religionists who had become destitute. Huguenots who had brought over their money and other assets invested in technological or commercial ventures, and the artisans who formed the bulk of the refugee population provided cheap skilled labour. The Huguenots proved a major economic impetus to Britain, often introducing new techniques and ideas in crafts such as silk and cloth weaving. Other major Huguenot industries were the manufacture of glassware and paper, and metalworking.

London was the heart of the Huguenot settlement in England. The immigrants tended to congregate on the outskirts of the metropolis, where food and housing were cheaper and guild control less effective. By around 1700 two distinct communities had evolved, one being based in Spitalfields, the centre of the Huguenot weaving industry, and the other in Leicester Fields/Soho in the western suburbs. The first French Church in London was in Threadneedle Street in the City, but as the communities grew more joined it, and by 1700 there were around fourteen churches in the western area and nine in the eastern.

The Huguenots gradually became assimilated in English society during the nineteenth century, no longer forming a distinct religious, economic and cultural unit, but many people today will be able to trace ancestors back to those earlier refugees. Records of their communities have survived in the form of Church registers, charity and poor relief records, acts of denization and naturalisation (denization was a cheaper and less complicated method of obtaining the status of a British subject, but without obtaining the full rights of a natural born subject), etc. Many of these records have been collected and published by the Huguenot Society of London (now called the Huguenot Society of...
Great Britain and Ireland, which also coordinates and publishes the results of research into Huguenot history and genealogy. There are two main series of publications, the *Proceedings* and the *Quarto Series of Publications*. Below is a list of those volumes from the series which are held by London Metropolitan Archives. They are all located at reference 60.9 H.S.L. on the library shelves. It is not a complete list of the full library holdings on the Huguenots, and readers should consult the card catalogue for further details. General histories of French Protestant churches and chapels will be at 54.9 in the subject catalogue for example, the French Protestant Hospital at 20.29 (HOS), and Huguenot immigration and society at 20.174.

**Further reading**

Library references have been given in brackets


**Proceedings**

The *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* contain a wide range of interesting articles on aspects of Huguenot life, society, religion, immigration, economic life, and other topics. Articles include histories of Huguenot Churches and communities, accounts of professions such as weavers, goldsmiths and bookbinders, or of particular houses or areas, and family histories and biographies. They cover not just London, but other parts of the U.K. and overseas as well. Most of those articles relating to the Huguenots in London have been noted separately under the appropriate subject heading in the Library catalogue. All the bound volumes of the *Proceedings* contain an index to their contents. In addition, Vol. XX contains an author and subject index for Vols. I-XX covering the years 1885-1964, and a separate general index to both the *Proceedings* and the *Quarto Series of Publications 1885-1985* has been produced by the Society and can be found with the Proceedings at 60.9 H.S.L. LMA has the following volumes of the Proceedings:

- Vol. IX (1909-11)
- Vol. XIX, nos. 2 (1954)-6 (1959)

The Quarto Series Publications of the Huguenot Society are invaluable for anyone researching Huguenot history or ancestors. This series of historical monographs, started in 1887, has published specialist studies and transcripts of many of the original records relating to the Huguenots. Publications include almost all the known registers of the Huguenot churches in England, and other useful material, such as Vol X which lists aliens resident in London between 1523 and 1625, or Vols. VIII, XVIII, XXVII, and XXXV which record grants of letters of denization and acts of naturalisation between 1509 and 1800. Another valuable set of sources are those relating to the distribution of relief to French refugees and to the poor or destitute among later generations through the churches, or charities such as the French Protestant Hospital. For example Vols. LII and LIII list inmates of the Hospital and applicants to it from 1718-1957, and applicants to the Coqueau Charity 1745-1901, and Vol. XLIX contains records of relief distributed to the poor through the Threadneedle Street Church, 1681-87.

Each of these volumes of the Publications contains a name index, and there is also the general index to both the Proceedings and the Quarto Series of Publications for 1885-1985, shelved with the Proceedings at 60.9 H.S.L. For further information on these and other sources see the section on tracing Huguenot ancestors in Robin D. Gwynn, Huguenot heritage: the history and contribution of the Huguenots in Britain, pp.176-187, listed in the further reading above. The library has the following volumes of the Quarto Series of Publications:

- Vol. IX - Registers of the French Church of Threadneedle Street, London. Part I
- Vol. X - Lists of Aliens Resident in London, Henry VIII to James I. Parts I, II, and III and Index
- Vol. XI - Register of the French Church of La Patente, Spitalfields, London
- Vol. XIII - Register of the French Church of Threadneedle Street, London. Part II
- Vol. XVI - Registers of the French Church of Threadneedle Street, London. Part III
- Vol. XXI - Le Livre des Tesmoignages de L'Eglise de Threadneedle Street, 1669-1789
- Vol. XXII - Le Livre des Conversions et des Reconnoissances faites a L'Eglise francoise de la Savoye, 1684-1702
- Vol. XXIII - Register of the French Church of Threadneedle Street, London. Part IV
- Vol. XXV - Register of the French Church of Le Carre and Berwick Street, London
- Vol. XXVIII - Registers of the French Churches of the Chapel Royal, St. James, and Swallow Street, London
- Vol. XXIX - Registers of the French Churches of the Tabernacle, Glasshouse Street, and Leicester Fields, London
- Vol. XXX - Registers of the French Church of Rider Court, London
- Vol. XXXI - Register of the French Church of Hungerford Market, later Castle Street, London
- Vol. XXXII - Registers of the French Churches of Le Petit Charenton, West Street, Pearl Street, and Crispin Street, London
- Vol. XXXIII - Extracts from the Court Books of the Weavers’ Company of London
- Vol. XXXV - A Supplement to Dr W.A. Shaw's Letters of Denization and Acts of Naturalization (Vols. XVIII and XXVII)
- Vol. XXXVII - Register of the Church of St. Martin Orgars with its history and that of the
LMA has few holdings which relate directly to Huguenot religious or charitable organisations. The main exception is the records of the Spitalfields Great Synagogue, Brick Lane, Stepney (ref A/SGS), which include deeds for the New French Church or Neuve Eglise. This was established, together with a school, on the corner of Church (now Fournier) Street and Brick Lane in 1743-4, was later used by the Jewish community as a synagogue, and is now a mosque.

The records of the City of London Chamberlain's Department include papers relating to the collection of alms for the relief of Huguenots, including returns for parishes in the Diocese of Ely, Cambridgeshire, Diocese of Winchester, Hampshire (including Isle of Wight), Peculiar of Canterbury, Kent, Peculiars of Canterbury, Sussex, Diocese of Chichester, Sussex, Diocese of Lincoln, Hertfordshire, Diocese of London, Essex and Diocese of Rochester, Kent, 1688; accounts and acquittances of money received and distributed, 1693 - 1704; orders to the Chamberlain for payments out of the collection for the relief of French Protestants,1681 - 1706; articles on the Huguenots in London, 1976 (COL/CHD/PR/04-05). These have been published in the proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London vol. XII no. 4 (1922).

LMA also holds material relating to individual Huguenots and their descendants, and to businesses founded and run by Huguenots - most notably the solicitors practice established by the Gascherie, Gashry and Hanrott families (ACC/2079).

We hold the parish records of Christ Church, Spitalfields, and St Matthew, Bethnal Green. Further references to Huguenots may be found by searching the LMA catalogue or by searching parish registers (see Information Leaflet No.2) and wills (see Information Leaflet No.6).

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