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# The number of Huguenot immigrants in England in the late seventeenth century

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## Abstract

The task of assessing the number of Huguenots seeking refuge in later Stuart England is exceptionally difficult. They left France by stealth, so no emigration lists exist. French names could be anglicized almost immediately on arrival across the Channel or otherwise changed beyond recognition, and marriage and burial records concerning Huguenots are often entered in the registers of English churches rather than those of the French congregations themselves. As refugees the mobility of the Huguenots was great. Guesses as to the numbers reaching England, exaggerated in the eighteenth century and since reduced, have varied from 20,000 to 150,000. A study of surviving baptismal records, in conjunction with other evidence including informed contemporary estimates, suggests that some 40,000–50,000 Huguenots settled in England between the late 1670s and the reign of Queen Anne. Refugee communities were located south of a line drawn from the Severn to the Wash. Almost all were near the sea, normally in towns

rather than in the countryside. By far the largest concentration was in London; living for the most part in the eastern and western suburbs, Huguenots comprised about 5% of the total population of the capital at the end of the seventeenth century. Their contribution to the commercial and political transformation of England which took place at that time was significant and deserves re-evaluation.



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