

OLD COUNTRY — 1600–1610 (Drivers & Timeline)

This document summarizes Old World settings (England/Wales, Dutch Republic, France, Switzerland/German lands) that shaped New World theaters for ancestors in this decade.

AT-A-GLANCE: WHERE OUR PEOPLE WERE (AND WHY IT MATTERED)

- England & Wales (Midlands, Lancashire/Yorkshire, Monmouthshire, Essex) — Rural yeoman worlds with enclosure tensions (Midland Revolt, 1607) and pockets of recusant Catholicism (notably Lancashire). In Essex, a Puritan culture of long sermons and literacy readies later New England migration.
- Dutch Republic (Amsterdam and Holland towns) — A tolerant, booming refuge for Huguenots/Walloons; Amsterdam around 1600 is cosmopolitan, with a large foreign-born share and rising prosperity—fertile ground for later New Netherland links.
- France (Brittany/Rennes) — Early-decade fragile peace after the Wars of Religion; the Edict of Nantes is enforced in Rennes circa 1600, easing daily life for Protestants (uneasily) until Henry IV's assassination in 1610.
- Switzerland & German southwest (Bernese Oberland; Palatinate borderlands) — Swiss alpine communities enjoy stability/neutrality while nearby German lands stand at the calm before the storm that will explode in 1618; this backdrop later fuels out-migration.

TIMELINE — OLD WORLD (1600–1610)

- 1600 — Rennes registers the Edict of Nantes; Brittany's towns experience a tentative religious peace. Rural Lancashire/Yorkshire life continues in small farming villages; Catholic recusancy persists.

- 1602 — VOC chartered in the Dutch Republic: a new scale of war-making, trading, and colonizing capacity that will later point toward the Hudson. (Old-World driver of a New-World scene.)
- 1603 — James I accedes in England; Puritan hopes for sweeping reform cool, nudging restless congregations toward emigration in coming decades.
- 1606 — Virginia Company chartered in London—an English joint-stock experiment that will plant Jamestown the next year. (Old-World finance → New-World colony.)
- 1607 — Midland Revolt against enclosures peaks; economic pressure on commoners is visible and remembered in village talk.
- 1608–1609 — Amsterdam’s tolerant boom continues; Huguenot/Walloon refugees integrate; Henry Hudson sails from a Dutch commission in 1609.
- 1609 — Twelve Years’ Truce begins (Dutch–Spanish), ushering calm and capital that benefit Dutch towns and migrants.
- 1610 — Henry IV assassinated in France; the peace feels fragile again. In Britain, the decade closes with tensions unresolved (religion, land, livelihoods).

WHAT LIFE FELT LIKE (HOME COUNTRIES, ANCESTOR’S-EYE)

England & Wales — Villages of stone farmhouses and timber cottages; yeomen tending mixed husbandry; winter weaving in cottage industry. In the Midlands, hedges go up and commons close; in Lancashire, recusant households persist under watch; in Essex, “godly” households read, sermonize, and eye the Atlantic.

Dutch Republic — Canals, countinghouses, and congregations: Amsterdam as a refuge for skilled Protestants; a marketplace where a French/Walloon artisan or merchant can restart—and eventually look toward New Netherland.

France (Brittany/Rennes) — A city healing from religious war—crafts resume, churches and Reformed “temples” coexist by law; everyone senses the truce could fray (and in 1610, it does).

Switzerland & German southwest — Alpine pastoral stability in Bern's valleys; beyond the passes, Palatinate prosperity with an uneasy sky—normal work and worship now, catastrophe ahead.